



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
111 INDEPENDENCE DRIVE PROJECT  
CITY OF MENLO PARK**

**Date:** June 14, 2019

**To:** State Clearinghouse  
State Responsible Agencies  
State Trustee Agencies  
Other Public Agencies  
Interested Organizations

**From:** Kaitie M. Meador  
Senior Planner  
City of Menlo Park  
701 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

**Subject:** **Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Initial Study and Environmental Impact Report for the 111 Independence Drive Project**

**Lead Agency:** City of Menlo Park, Planning Division

**Project Title:** 111 Independence Drive Project

**Project Area:** Bayfront Area, City of Menlo Park

Notice is hereby given that the City of Menlo Park (City) will be the lead agency and will prepare a focused environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed 111 Independence Drive Project (project). An Initial Study has been prepared along with this Notice of Preparation (NOP), which scopes out several environmental topics from further review. The focused EIR will address potential physical environmental effects of the project that have not been scoped out, as outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is requesting comments on the scope and content of this focused EIR.

A scoping session will be held as part of the Planning Commission meeting on **June 24, 2019, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025. The scoping session, which is part of the focused EIR process, is the time when the City solicits input from the public and agencies on specific topics they believe should be addressed in the environmental analysis.

Written comments on the scope of the focused EIR may also be sent to:

**Kaitie M. Meador**  
**City of Menlo Park**  
**Community Development Department, Planning Division**  
**701 Laurel Street**  
**Menlo Park, CA 94025**  
[KMMeador@menlopark.org](mailto:KMMeador@menlopark.org)  
**Phone: 650.330.6731**

Comments on the NOP are due no later than the close of the NOP review period (5:00 p.m. on **Monday, July 15, 2019**). However, we would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date. Please send your written comments to Kaitie Meador at the address shown above or by email to [KMMeador@menlopark.org](mailto:KMMeador@menlopark.org) with “111 Independence Drive Project EIR” as the subject. Public agencies that provide comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

The Initial Study is available online at: <https://www.menlopark.org/1572/CEQA-documents>. Paper copies are also available for review at:

- Menlo Park Library (800 Alma Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025)
- Belle Haven Branch Library (413 Ivy Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025)
- Community Development Department, Civic Center (701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025)

**PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The project site is located north of US Highway 101 (US 101) in the City of Menlo Park, as shown in Figure 1. The site is bounded by Independence Drive and Marsh Road to the north, a single-story commercial and office building and Constitution Drive to the east, a single-story office building to the south, and the Independence Site of the Menlo Gateway project to the west.

The project site is designated Mixed Use Residential within the Bayfront Area on the City’s General Plan Land Use Designations Map and is within the Residential-Mixed Use-Bonus Zoning District. The generally-level site is currently developed with an approximately 15,000-square-foot single-story office building, as shown in Figure 2. The existing building was constructed in 1972 and is currently occupied by a commercial business. Vegetation on the project site consists of landscaped areas along the site perimeter fronting Independence Drive. A small portion (approximately 88 square feet) of the Independence Drive right-of-way is located within the project site. A public utility easement, approximately 10 feet in width, runs along the eastern border of the project site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The proposed project would result in the redevelopment of the project site with an approximately 145,350-gross-square-foot, eight story multi-family apartment building with 105 dwelling units and a potential 712-square-foot commercial space, as well as associated open space, circulation and parking, and infrastructure improvements, as shown in Figures 3, 4, and 5. In addition, the proposed project would include dedication of the approximately 88 square feet of Independence Drive that are currently within the project site as well as a public access easement to construct a portion of the public sidewalk within the project site. The project sponsor is currently proposing that a total of 14 residential units (15 percent) be affordable to moderate and low income households (the City’s Below Market Rate Housing Program requires 15 percent affordable to low income households). Density above the maximum bonus level residential density and gross floor area would be achieved through the density bonus provision of the City’s Below Market Rate Housing Program.

The ground floor would be raised 30 inches above grade to accommodate flood plain design requirements. The proposed building would have a maximum height of 95 feet not including parapet walls, mechanical equipment, and elevator and stair overruns. Height above the maximum average height would also be achieved through the incentives provided in the City’s Below Market Rate Housing Program. The parapet walls would vary but generally be 5.5 feet in height around the perimeter of the building and elevator and stair overruns would extend up to 99 feet. An at-grade, three-level, approximately 49,582-square-foot, 115-space parking garage would be located within the proposed building at the northeast corner.

The proposed project would be constructed to complement the adjacent Menlo Gateway buildings on Independence Drive, which have a convex curved façade, with a concave curvature to the façade on the upper floors. The base of the proposed building would be a convex curved façade with metal awnings and amenity space set back from Independence Drive via public open space. A total of approximately 16,729 square feet of open space would be provided at the ground floor and the fourth and eighth floors of the proposed building.

**PROJECT APPROVALS:** The following City discretionary approvals would be required prior to development at the project site:

- Environmental Review
- Use Permit
- Below Market Rate Housing Agreement
- Architectural Control

There will be a fiscal impact analysis conducted regarding the project. In order to qualify for bonus-level development within the R-MU-B zoning district, the proposed project will also be required to complete an appraisal process to identify the value of the community amenities to be provided in exchange for the opportunity to develop at the bonus level.

**RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES:** The agencies listed below are expected to review the draft focused EIR to evaluate the proposed project:

- Pacific Gas & Electric
- California Department of Transportation
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board/San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program
- Native American Heritage Commission
- City/County Association of Governments
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District
- San Mateo County Transportation Authority
- San Mateo County Environmental Health Division
- West Bay Sanitary District
- Menlo Park Fire Protection District

**INTRODUCTION TO EIR:** The project site is within the ConnectMenlo study area. ConnectMenlo, which updated the City's General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements and rezoned the land in the M-2 Area (now referred to as the Bayfront Area), was approved on November 29, 2016. Because the City's General Plan is a long-range planning document, the ConnectMenlo EIR was prepared as a program EIR, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Section 15168(d) of the CEQA Guidelines provides information for simplifying the preparation of environmental documents by incorporating by reference analyses and discussions. CEQA Guidelines Section 1512(d) states that where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program or plan, the environmental review for a later activity consistent with the program or plan should be limited to the effects that were not analyzed as significant in the prior EIR or susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance.

An Initial Study for the project, which is available for review online, at the City libraries, and at the Community Development Department (as listed above) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and determine what level of additional environmental review is appropriate. In accordance with the requirements outlined in Section 15168 of the CEQA

Guidelines, the Initial Study has been prepared to disclose the relevant impacts and mitigation measures covered in the ConnectMenlo EIR and discuss whether the project is within the parameters of the ConnectMenlo EIR. In addition, as a result of the settlement agreement between the City of Menlo Park and the City of East Palo Alto, certain topics are required to be analyzed. Based on the findings of the Initial Study, a focused EIR will be prepared for impacts that need further discussion and/or mitigation beyond that provided in the ConnectMenlo EIR. The focused EIR for the project will be prepared and processed in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

**PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:** Based on the conclusions in the Initial Study, the following topics will be scoped out of the EIR: aesthetics; agriculture and forestry resources; biological resources; cultural resources; energy; geology and soils; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; mineral resources; public services; recreation; tribal cultural resources; utilities and service systems; and wildfire. Therefore, the focused EIR will analyze whether the proposed project would have a significant environmental impact in the following areas:

- Air Quality;
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- Noise (traffic noise);
- Population and Housing; and
- Transportation

**ALTERNATIVES:** Based on the significance conclusions determined in the focused EIR, alternatives to the proposed project will be analyzed to reduce identified impacts. Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines requires the evaluation of a No Project Alternative. Other alternatives may be considered during preparation of the EIR and will comply with the CEQA Guidelines, which call for a “range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.

**EIR PROCESS:** Following the close of the NOP comment period, a draft focused EIR will be prepared that will consider all NOP comments. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105(a), the draft focused EIR will be released for public review and comment for a required 45-day review period. Following the close of the 45-day public review period, the City will prepare a final EIR, which will include responses to all substantive comments received on the draft focused EIR. The draft focused EIR and final EIR will be considered by the Planning Commission in making the decision to certify the EIR and approve or deny the project.



Katie M. Meador  
City of Menlo Park

June 14, 2019

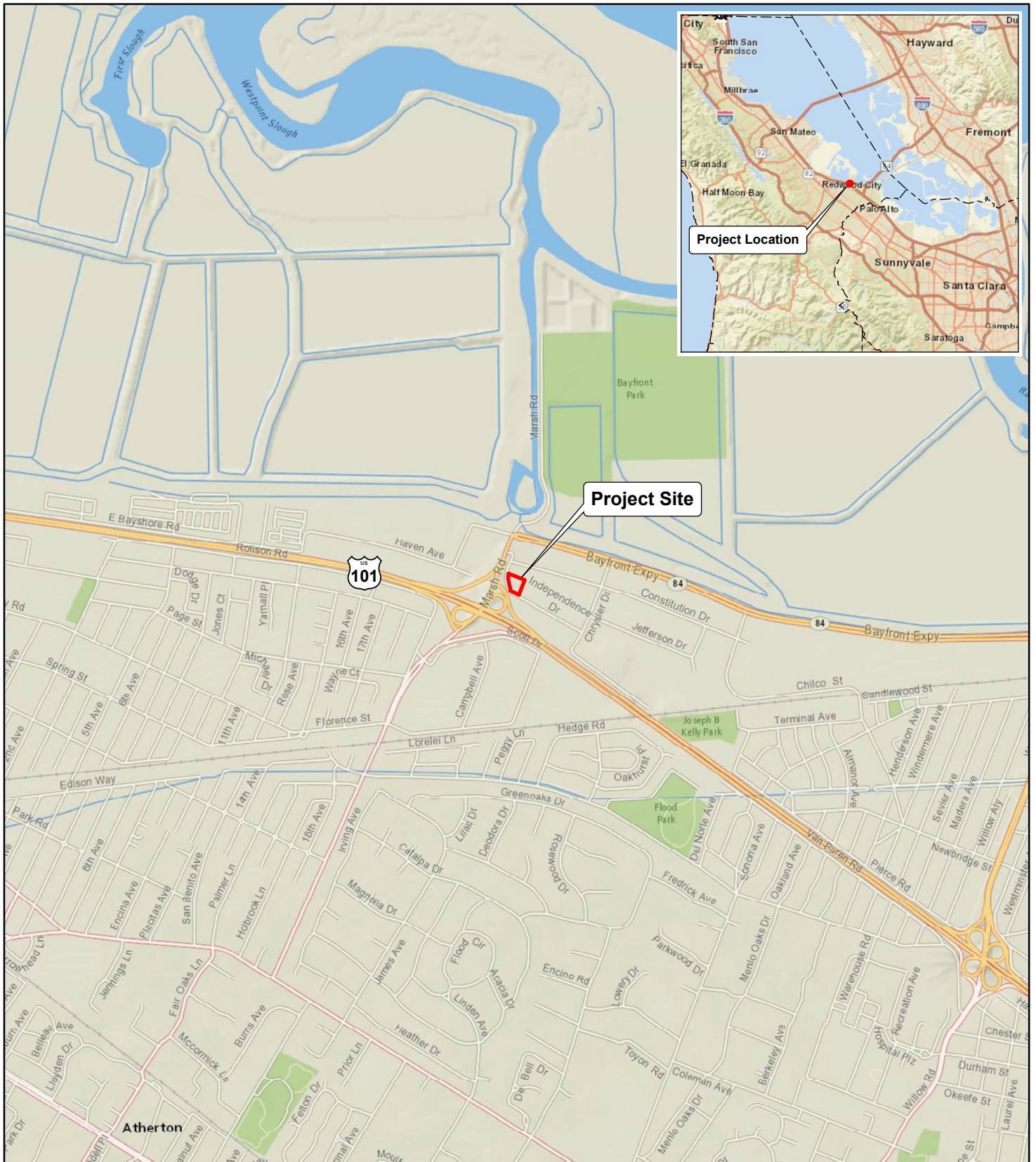


FIGURE 1

LSA

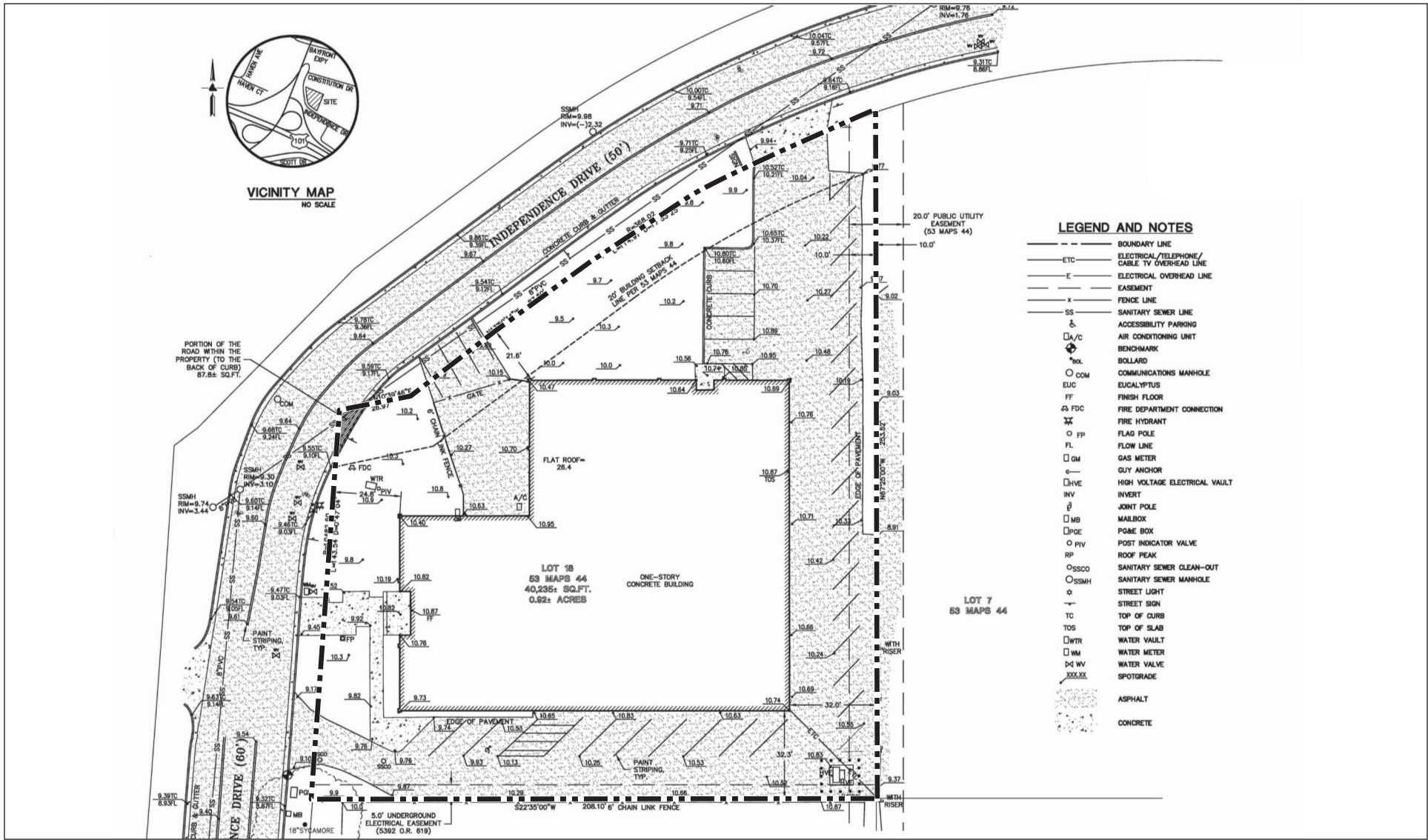
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111 Independence Drive Project NOP  
Project Location and Regional Vicinity Map

SOURCE: National Geographic (c) 2018; Esri World Street Map (c) 2018.

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LSA

FIGURE 2



Project Boundary

SOURCE: BDE ARCHITECTURE, FEBRUARY 2019.

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111 Independence Drive Project NOP  
Existing Site Conditions

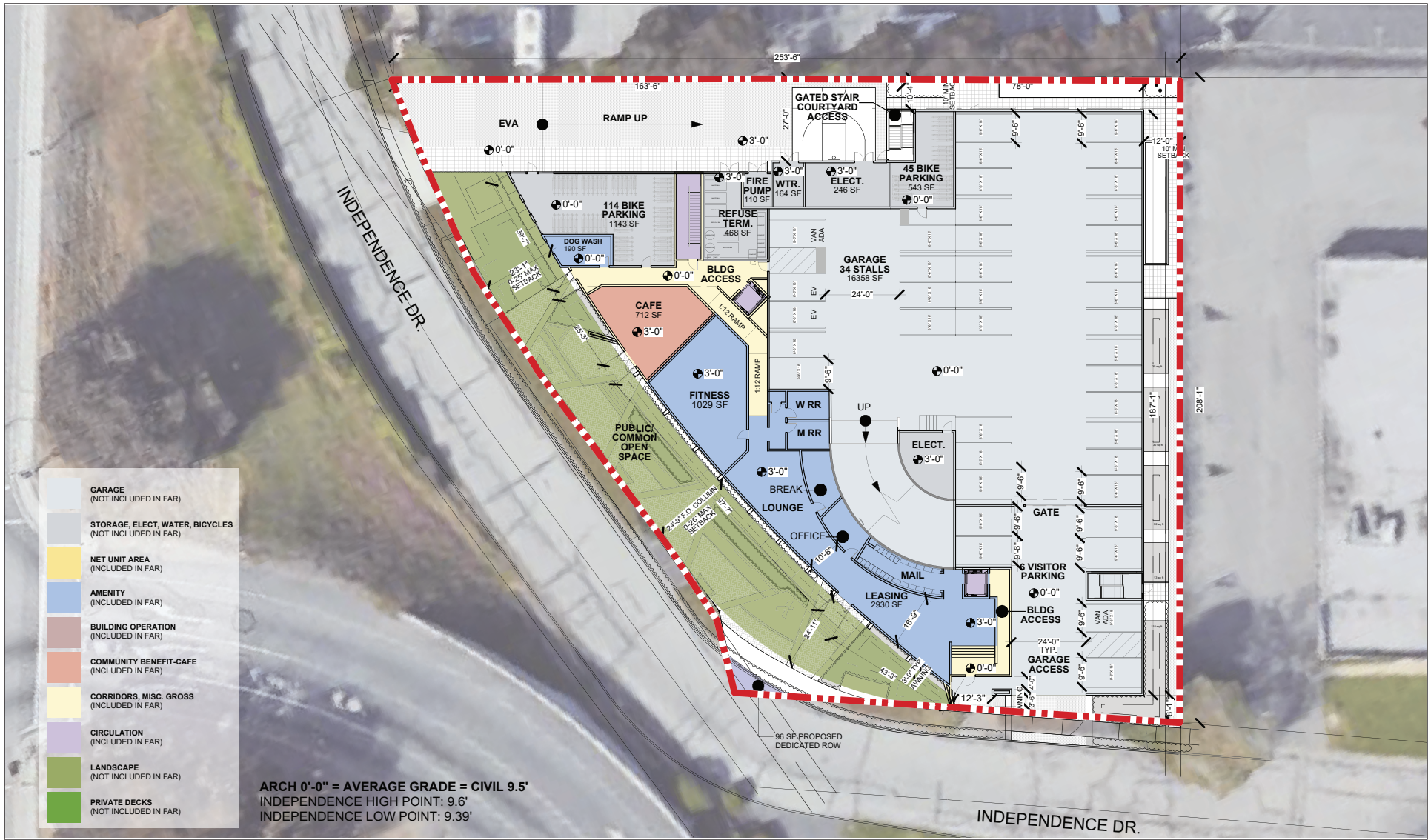


FIGURE 3

LSA



NOT TO SCALE



111 Independence Drive Project NOP  
 Conceptual Ground Floor Site Plan




FIGURE 4

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NOT TO SCALE



 Project Site

111 Independence Drive Project NOP  
Conceptual Fourth Floor Site Plan





SOUTHWESTERN ELEVATION - INDEPENDENCE DRIVE



NORTH ELEVATION

LSA

FIGURE 5

NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: BDE ARCHITECTURE, MAY 2019.

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111 Independence Drive Project NOP  
 Conceptual Building Elevations - Southwestern and North