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**PLANNING AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

Planning  
Community Development  
Administrative Operations

**DATE:** February 28, 2024

**TO:** See Attached Mailing List

**FROM:** Kern County Planning and Natural  
Resources Department  
Attn: Jamal Ferguson  
2700 "M" Street, Suite 100  
Bakersfield, CA 93301  
(661)862-5017; [Fergusonj@kerncounty.com](mailto:Fergusonj@kerncounty.com)

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE ELK HILLS BLUE HYDROGEN PROJECT BY LONE CYPRESS ENERGY SERVICES**

The Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department as Lead Agency (per CEQA Guidelines Section 15062) has determined that preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (per CEQA Guidelines 15161) is necessary for the proposed project identified below. The Planning and Natural Resources Department solicits the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval of the project.

You are invited to view the Initial Study/NOP and submit written comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information in connection with the proposed project should you wish to do so. Due to the limits mandated by State law, your response must be received by **Friday, March 29, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.** Comments can be submitted to the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department at the address shown above or to [Fergusonj@kerncounty.com](mailto:Fergusonj@kerncounty.com). A Scoping meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.** at the address listed above.

**PROJECT TITLE:** Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen by Lone Cypress Energy Services (PP24403); GPA No. 4, Map 119; ZCC No. 6, Map 119; PD Plan No. 1, Map 119

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** The Notice of Preparation for the above referenced project are available for public review at the Planning and Natural Resources Department, which is located at 2700 "M" Street, Suite 100, Bakersfield, CA 93301, or it can be accessed on the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department website at: <https://kernplanning.com/environmental-doc/elk-hills-blue-hydrogen-project/>


**PROJECT LOCATION:** The proposed project is located in an unincorporated area of western Kern County, within the administrative boundary of Elk Hills Oil Field, approximately one quarter mile southwest of the intersection of Elk Hills Road and Skyline Road and, 8.5 miles north of the City of Taft. The project site is located in Section 35 of Township 30 South, Range 23 East in the Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDB&M).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen Project would include the construction and operation of a hydrogen processing plant that will produce 65 Metric Tonnes (MT) per day of liquid hydrogen to be used as a low-carbon fuel alternative.

Implementation of the project as proposed includes the following requests:

- a) General Plan Amendment No. 4, Map 119 to amend the Land Use Element of Kern County General Plan from a map code designation of Mineral Petroleum (8.4) to Heavy Industrial (7.3) on approximately 32 acres.
- b) Zoning Classification Change No. 6, Map 119 to change the existing Zone Classification from Exclusive Agriculture (A) to Heavy Industrial, Precise Development Combining District (M-3 PD) on approximately 32 acres.
- c) Precise Development Plan No. 1, Map 119 to allow for the development and operation of a hydrogen facility (A.40.020.E) on the approximate 32-acre project site in an M-3 PD zone district.
- d) Parcel Map Waiver No. 4-23 proposing the division of a 1,286.52-acre parcel of record into three separate parcels consisting of a: (1) 43.89-acre parcel; (2) 40.00-acre gross parcel; and (3) 1,202.63-acre gross parcel. The 32-acre project site will be located on the 40.-acre gross parcel.

Signature:



Name:

Jamal Ferguson, Planner I

I:\Planning\WORKGRPS\WP\LABELS\Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen NOP.docx  
**Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen NOP**  
cc 11/28/2023

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Steven Ng, Manager  
Renewal Dev, T&D Intercon  
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San Francisco, CA 94105

Wayne Mayes  
Iberdrola Renewables  
Dir Tech Serv  
1125 NW Couch St, Ste 700, 7th Fl  
Portland, OR 97209

Robert Burgett  
9261 - 60th Street, West  
Mojave, CA 93501

Carol Lawhon  
Association Executive, IOM  
Tehachapi Area Assoc of Realtors  
803 Tucker Road  
Tehachapi, CA 93561

City of Arvin  
P.O. Box 548  
Arvin, CA 93203

Bakersfield City Planning Dept  
1715 Chester Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Bakersfield City Public Works Dept  
1501 Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

California City Planning Dept  
21000 Hacienda Blvd.  
California City, CA 93515

Delano City Planning Dept  
P.O. Box 3010  
Delano, CA 93216

City of Maricopa  
P.O. Box 548  
Maricopa, CA 93252

City of McFarland  
401 West Kern Avenue  
McFarland, CA 93250

City of Ridgecrest  
100 West California Avenue  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

City of Shafter  
336 Pacific Avenue  
Shafter, CA 93263

City of Taft  
Planning & Building  
209 East Kern Street  
Taft, CA 93268

City of Tehachapi  
Attn: John Schlosser  
115 South Robinson Street  
Tehachapi, CA 93561-1722

City of Wasco  
764 E Street  
Wasco, CA 93280

Inyo County Planning Dept  
P.O. Drawer "L"  
Independence, CA 93526

Kings County Planning Agency  
1400 West Lacey Blvd, Bldg 6  
Hanford, CA 93230

Los Angeles Co Reg Planning Dept  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

San Bernardino Co Planning Dept  
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, 1st Floor  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182

San Luis Obispo Co Planning Dept  
Planning and Building  
976 Osos Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Santa Barbara Co Resource Mgt Dept  
123 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Tulare County Planning & Dev Dept  
5961 South Mooney Boulevard  
Visalia, CA 93291

Ventura County RMA Planning Div  
800 South Victoria Avenue, L1740  
Ventura, CA 93009-1740

U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
Caliente/Bakersfield  
35126 McMurtrey Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93308

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Division of Ecological Services  
2800 Cottage Way #W-2605  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

North West Kern Resource Cons Dist  
5080 California Avenue, Suite 150  
Bakersfield, CA 93309

Environmental Protection Agency  
Region IX Office  
75 Hawthorn Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

U.S. Dept of Agriculture/NRCS  
5080 California Avenue, Ste 150  
Bakersfield, CA 93309-0711

West Side Mosquito  
Abatement Dist.  
P.O. Box 205  
Taft, CA 93268

So. San Joaquin Valley Arch Info Ctr  
California State University of Bkfd  
9001 Stockdale Highway  
Bakersfield, CA 93311

Caltrans/Dist 6  
Planning/Land Bank Bldg.  
P.O. Box 12616  
Fresno, CA 93778

State Dept of Conservation  
Director's Office  
801 "K" Street, MS 24-01  
Sacramento, CA 95814-3528

State Dept of Conservation  
Geologic Energy Management Division  
11000 River Run Boulevard  
Bakersfield, CA 93311

California State University  
Bakersfield - Library  
9001 Stockdale Highway  
Bakersfield, CA 93309

California Fish & Wildlife  
1234 East Shaw Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93710

California Regional Water Quality  
Control Board/Central Valley Region  
1685 E Street  
Fresno, CA 93706-2020

State Dept of Toxic Substance Control  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1515 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93612

Cal Environmental Protection Agency/  
Dept of Toxic Substances Control, Reg 1  
Attn: Dave Kerezais, Permit Div - CEQA  
8800 Cal Center Drive, 2nd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95826

Kern County Public Works Department/  
Building & Development/Floodplain

Kern County Public Works Department/  
Building & Development/Survey

Kern County  
Env Health Services Department

Kern County Fire Dept (Put in FIRE BOX)  
Regina Arriaga  
Roxanne Routh  
Jim Killam

Kern County Library/Beale  
Local History Room

Kern County Library/Beale  
Andie Sullivan

Kern County Sheriff's Dept  
Administration

Kern County Public Works Department/  
Building & Development/Development  
Review

Kern County Public Works  
Department/Operations &  
Maintenance/Regulatory Monitoring &  
Reporting

Shafter High School Dist  
526 Mannel Avenue  
Shafter, CA 93263

Taft Union High School Dist  
701 - 7th Street  
Taft, CA 93268

Buttonwillow Union School Dist  
42600 Highway 58  
Buttonwillow, CA 93206

Elk Hills School Dist  
P.O. Box 129  
Tupman, CA 93276

West Side Rec & Parks Dist  
500 Cascade Place, Building C  
Taft, CA 93268

Buttonwillow Rec & Parks Dist  
P.O. Box 434  
Buttonwillow, CA 93206-9320

Kern High School Dist  
5801 Sundale Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93309

Kern County Superintendent of Schools  
Attention School District Facility Services  
1300 - 17th Street  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Local Agency Formation Comm/LAFCO  
5300 Lennox Avenue, Suite 303  
Bakersfield, CA 93309

Kern County Water Agency  
3200 Rio Mirada Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93308

San Joaquin Valley  
Air Pollution Control District  
1990 East Gettysburg Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93726

Adams, Broadwell, Joseph & Cardozo  
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South San Francisco, CA 94080

Center on Race, Poverty  
& the Environmental/  
CA Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
1012 Jefferson Street  
Delano, CA 93215

Pacific Gas & Electric Co  
Land Projects  
650 "O" Street, First Floor  
Fresno, CA 93760-0001

Southern California Gas Co  
Transportation Dept  
P.O. Box 513249  
Los Angeles, CA 90051

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Attn: Robert Robinson, Chairperson  
P.O. Box 401  
Weldon, CA 93283

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Bakersfield, CA 93301

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Beyond Coal Campaign/Sierra Club  
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Aron Narderoslan  
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Weldon, CA 93283

Los Angeles Audubon  
926 Citrus Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90036-4929

Defenders of Wildlife  
P.O. Box 401  
Folsom, CA 95763

Sierra Club/Kern Kaweah Chapter  
P.O. Box 3357  
Bakersfield, CA 93385

Verizon California, Inc.  
Attention Engineering Department  
520 South China Lake Boulevard  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Kern Valley Indian Council  
Historic Preservation Office  
P.O. Box 401  
Weldon, CA 93283

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Oakland, CA 94612

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San Diego, CA 92130-3025

David Walsh  
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Tehachapi, CA 93561

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Sean Kiernan  
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San Francisco, CA 94104

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Bakersfield, CA 93311

Center on Race, Poverty  
& the Environment  
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Emeryville, CA 94608

Verizon California, Inc.  
Native American Heritage Council  
of Kern County  
Attn: Gene Albitre  
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Woody, CA 93287

Southern California Gas Co  
35118 McMurtrey Avenue  
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Bakersfield, CA 93390

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85350 Bagdad Ave.  
Coachella, CA 92236

Indian Wells Valley Groundwater

So. San Joaquin Valley Arch Info Ctr  
California State University of Bkfd  
9001 Stockdale Highway  
Bakersfield, CA 93311

Renewal Resources Group  
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113 South La Brea Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90036

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Oakland, CA 94612

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158 090 04 00 9  
CALIFORNIA RESOURCES ELK HILLS  
LLC  
27200 TOURNEY RD STE 200  
SANTA CLARITA CA 91355-4910

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# Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P. O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613  
For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

|             |
|-------------|
| SCH # _____ |
|-------------|

**Project Title:** Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen by Lone Cypress Energy Services

Lead Agency: Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department

Contact Person: Jamal Ferguson

Mailing Address: 2700 "M" Street Suite 100

Phone: (661) 862-5017

City: Bakersfield

Zip: 93301

County: Kern

**Project Location:** County: Kern

City/Nearest Community: City of Taft

Cross Streets: Elk Hills Road and Skyline Road

Zip Code: 93313

Lat. / Long.: 35° 16' 32.8" North; 119° 28' 10.2" West

Total Acres: 32

Assessor's Parcel No.: 158-090-19

Section: 35

Twp.: 30 S

Range: 23 E

Base: MDB&M

Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: N/A

Waterways: N/A

Airports: N/A

Railways: N/A

Schools: N/A

## Document Type:

- CEQA:  NOP  
 Early Cons  
 Neg Dec  
 Mit Neg Dec

- Draft EIR  
 Supplement/Subsequent EIR  
(Prior SCH No.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

- NEPA:  NOI  
 EA  
 Draft EIS  
 FONSI

- Other:  Joint Document  
 Final Document  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Local Action Type:

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Plan Update               | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Plan            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rezone                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Annexation     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Plan Amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Master Plan              | <input type="checkbox"/> Prezone                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Plan Element              | <input type="checkbox"/> Planned Unit Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Permit                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Permit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Plan                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Plan     | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Division (Subdivision, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |

## Development Type:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential: Units _____ Acres _____                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Facilities: Type _____ MGD _____                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____     | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation: Type _____                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining: Mineral _____                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Power: Type _____ MW _____                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational _____                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Waste Treatment: Type _____ MGD _____                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational _____                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Waste: Type _____                                |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Hydrogen 65 Metric Tonnes per day</u> |

## Project Issues Discussed in Document:

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Parks                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vegetation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Land   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flood Plain/Flooding       | <input type="checkbox"/> Schools/Universities                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Quality            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Land/Fire Hazard    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Septic Systems                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Supply/Groundwater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archeological/Historical                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geologic/Seismic           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sewer Capacity                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetland/Riparian         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minerals                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildlife                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Zone   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solid Waste                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Growth Inducing          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drainage/Absorption   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing Balance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Toxic/Hazardous                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic/Jobs   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services/Facilities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traffic/Circulation             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cumulative Effects       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>GHG, Wildfire, Tribal Cultural Resources, Energy</u> |  |   |  |

## Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

Agricultural Land/Zoning: A (Exclusive Agriculture)/General Plan: 8.4 (Mineral Petroleum)

**Project Description:** The Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen Project would include the construction and operation of a hydrogen processing plant that will produce 65 Metric Tonnes (MT) per day of liquid hydrogen to be used as a low-carbon fuel alternative.

Implementation of the project as proposed includes the following requests:

- a) General Plan Amendment No. 4, Map 119 to amend the Land Use Element of Kern County General Plan from a map code designation of Mineral Petroleum (8.4) to Heavy Industrial (7.3) on approximately 32 acres.



- b) Zoning Classification Change No. 6, Map 119 to change the existing Zone Classification from Exclusive Agriculture (A) to Heavy Industrial, Precise Development Combining District (M-3 PD) on approximately 32 acres.
- c) Precise Development Plan No. 1, Map 119 to allow for the development and operation of a hydrogen facility (A.40.020.E) on the approximate 32-acre project site in an M-3 PD zone district.
- d) Parcel Map Waiver No. 4-23 proposing the division of a 1,286.52-acre parcel of record into three separate parcels consisting of a: (1) 43.89-acre parcel; (2) 40.00-acre gross parcel; and (3) 1,202.63-acre gross parcel. The 32-acre project site will be located on the 40.-acre gross parcel.

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with and "X".  
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <u>  S  </u> Air Resources Board                     | <u>      </u> Office of Emergency Services                         |
| <u>      </u> Boating & Waterways, Department of     | <u>      </u> Office of Historic Preservation                      |
| <u>  S  </u> California Highway Patrol               | <u>      </u> Office of Public School Construction                 |
| <u>      </u> CalFire                                | <u>      </u> Parks & Recreation                                   |
| <u>  S  </u> Caltrans District # <u>  6  </u>        | <u>      </u> Pesticide Regulation, Department of                  |
| <u>      </u> Caltrans Division of Aeronautics       | <u>  S  </u> Public Utilities Commission                           |
| <u>      </u> Caltrans Planning (Headquarters)       | <u>  S  </u> Regional WQCB # <u>Central Valley</u>                 |
| <u>      </u> Central Valley Flood Protection Board  | <u>      </u> Resources Agency                                     |
| <u>      </u> Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy | <u>      </u> S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Commission       |
| <u>      </u> Coastal Commission                     | <u>      </u> San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers and Mtns Conservancy |
| <u>      </u> Colorado River Board                   | <u>      </u> San Joaquin River Conservancy                        |
| <u>  S  </u> Conservation, Department of             | <u>      </u> Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy                   |
| <u>      </u> Corrections, Department of             | <u>  S  </u> State Lands Commission                                |
| <u>      </u> Delta Protection Commission            | <u>      </u> SWRCB: Clean Water Grants                            |
| <u>      </u> Education, Department of               | <u>      </u> SWRCB: Water Quality                                 |
| <u>  X  </u> Energy Commission                       | <u>      </u> SWRCB: Water Rights                                  |
| <u>  S  </u> Fish & Game Region # <u>Fresno</u>      | <u>      </u> Tahoe Regional Planning Agency                       |
| <u>      </u> Food & Agriculture, Department of      | <u>      </u> Toxic Substances Control, Department of              |
| <u>      </u> General Services, Department of        | <u>  S  </u> Water Resources, Department of                        |
| <u>      </u> Health Services, Department of         | <u>      </u> Other _____  |
| <u>      </u> Housing & Community Development        | <u>      </u> Other _____  |
| <u>  X  </u> Integrated Waste Management Board       |  |
| <u>  X  </u> Native American Heritage Commission     |  |

**Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)**

Starting Date February 28, 2024 Ending Date March 29, 2024

**Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):**

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Consulting Firm: _____ | Applicant: _____      |
| Address: _____         | Address: _____        |
| City/State/Zip: _____  | City/State/Zip: _____ |
| Contact: _____         | Phone _____           |
| Phone: _____           |                       |

**Signature of Lead Agency Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_ /s/ \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 02/28/2024  
Jamal Ferguson, Planner I

# **NOTICE OF PREPARATION/INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST**

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## **Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen Project by Lone Cypress Energy Services, LLC**

General Plan Amendment No. 4, Map 119  
Zone Classification Change No. 6, Map 119  
Precise Development Plan No. 1, Map 119  
Parcel Map Waiver No. 4-23

**PLN23-00800  
(PP24403)**

---

### **LEAD AGENCY:**



Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department  
2700 M Street, Suite 100  
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2370

Contact: Jamal Ferguson, Planner I  
(661) 862-5017  
Fergusonj@kerncounty.com

February 2024

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# INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department (County) will initiate the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen Project in the unincorporated area of western Kern County, California.

## 1. Project Description

### 1.1. Project Location

The Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen (proposed project) is a proposal by Lone Cypress Energy Services (project proponent) for the construction and operation of a hydrogen production facility. The proposed project will include the construction of a hydrogen production facility on an approximate 32 acres of a 40 acre parcel, with an associated 190 square feet Security Room. The proposed project located is on an approximately 32-acre portion of an approximate 590 acre privately owned parcel (current Assessor's Parcel Number 158-090-19) at the southwestern end of the San Joaquin Valley in unincorporated Kern County, California as shown in **Figure 1**, *Regional Vicinity Map*. The project site is within the administrative boundary of Elk Hills Oil Field, one quarter mile southwest of the intersection of Elk Hills Road and Skyline Road, shown in **Figure 2**, *Local Vicinity Map*.

The project site is approximately 26 miles west of the City of Bakersfield, 8.5 miles north of the City of Taft, and 8.5 miles Southwest of the unincorporated community of Buttonwillow. The project site is situated approximately 9 miles southeast of Interstate 5 (I-5) and approximately 6.8 miles east of Highway 33 (HWY-33). Regional Access is approximately 16 miles off I-5 to Stockdale Highway exit. Local access to the project site is available from Highway 119 to Elk Hills Road and then approximately 7 miles north to Skyline Road.

The project site is located on the *West Elk Hills, California* United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Topographic Quadrangle Map, Township 30 South, Range 23 East, Section 35 (Latitude 35° 16' 32.8" North; Longitude 119° 28' 10.2" West).

### 1.2. Environmental Setting

The project site is situated in the southwestern end of the San Joaquin Valley, in unincorporated Kern County. Kern County is California's third largest county in land area and encompasses approximately 8,161 square miles. The County's geography includes, among others, mountainous areas, agricultural lands, and deserts. Bakersfield is the largest city in Kern County and has a current estimated population of 408,865 residents (California Department of Finance [CDF] 2022). The County's current estimated population is 909,813 residents (CDF 2022).

The project site ranges in elevation from roughly 1,000 to 1,300 feet above mean sea level (AMSL), with elevation sloping gradually upward from north to south. While this area may be generally characterized as "open flats," outside of leveled fields and orchards, it is better described as an uneven plain consisting of extensive alluvial fans, debris flows and over-bank deposits. Vegetation on the valley floor is predominated by modern cultigens and other non-native species, such as Russian thistle (tumbleweed) and grasses, but also includes cheatgrass and doveweed.

Land uses within the region and the area of the site consist of oil fields. Land uses surrounding the site include the following:



**North**—Oil fields, with Elk Hills Power LLC being directly north of the project site.

**South**—Oil Fields.

**West**—Oil Fields.

**East**—Oil Fields.

The immediate project area has no nearby residences. The nearest residence is approximately 6 miles to the southeast in the community Dustin Acres. **Table 1, Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses, Figure 3, Existing General Plan Map, and Figure 5, Existing Zone Classifications.** presents the existing land uses, Kern County General Plan designations, and Zoning classification for the project site and surrounding area. The nearest existing schools are in the City of Taft, approximately 8 miles south and in the Town of McKittrick approximately 8 miles northwest.

**Table 1. Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses**

|              | Existing Land Use                      | Existing Map Code Designation | Existing Zone Classification                            |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Project Site | Oil fields/ Elk Hills Power Substation | 8.4 (Mineral Petroleum)       | A (Exclusive Agriculture)                               |
| North        | Oil fields                             | 8.4 (Mineral Petroleum)       | A (Exclusive Agriculture) and A-1 (Limited Agriculture) |
| East         | Oil fields                             | 8.4 (Mineral Petroleum)       | A (Exclusive Agriculture)                               |
| South        | Oil fields                             | 8.4 (Mineral Petroleum)       | A (Exclusive Agriculture)                               |
| West         | Oil fields                             | 8.4 (Mineral Petroleum)       | A (Exclusive Agriculture) and A-1 (Limited Agriculture) |

### 1.3. Project Description

The Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen Project would include the construction and operation of a hydrogen processing plant that will produce 65 Metric Tonnes (MT) per day of liquid hydrogen using proven technology. The hydrogen will be manufactured by feeding approximately 13 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of natural gas and 0.32 acre-feet per day (2,440 barrels per day (bpd)) of water into a Steam Methane Reformer (SMR). In an SMR, water and natural gas react with the help of a catalyzer to produce hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub>. A total of 721 MT per day of CO<sub>2</sub> will be generated as a byproduct of hydrogen production. From that total, a minimum of 95%, or 686 MT per day, will be captured, compressed to supercritical state, and piped to Carbon TerraVault’s EPA Class VI sequestration well. The remaining 5% or 36 MT per day will be released into the atmosphere due to the inherent efficiency of the technology available.

After the hydrogen is produced and separated from the CO<sub>2</sub>, it will be compressed and liquified to be loaded into cryogenic tanker trucks for distribution throughout California.



The Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen Project will sequester over 200,000 MT of carbon dioxide annually, keeping harmful emissions from impacting the local community all while creating a low-carbon alternative fuel option.

Implementation of the project as proposed includes the following requests:

- General Plan Amendment No. 4, Map 119 to amend the Land Use Element of Kern County General Plan from a map code designation of Mineral Petroleum (8.4) to Heavy Industrial (7.3) on approximately 32 acres.
- Zoning Classification Change No. 6, Map 119 to change the existing Zone Classification from Exclusive Agriculture (A) to Heavy Industrial, Precise Development Combining District (M-3 PD) on approximately 32 acres.
- Precise Development Plan No. 1, Map 119 to allow for the development and operation of a hydrogen facility (A.40.020.E) on the approximate 32-acre project site in an M-3 PD zone district.
- Parcel Map Waiver No. 4-23 proposing the division of a 1,286.52-acre parcel of record into three separate parcels consisting of a: (1) 43.89-acre gross parcel; (2) 40.00-acre gross parcel; and (3) 1,202.63-acre gross parcel, of which the proposed 32-acre project site will be located on the 40.00-acre gross parcel.

The proposed project site is within the administrative boundaries of the Kern County General Plan. **Table 2, Project Assessor’s Parcel Number, Existing and Proposed Land Uses, and Acreages** identifies the proposed project parcels, existing land uses, and the proposed land uses for the proposed project.

**Table 2: Project Assessor’s Parcel Number, Existing and Proposed Land Uses, and Acreages**

| Count   | APN        | Zone Map | General Plan | Existing Map Code Designation | Proposed Map Code Designation | Existing Zoning | Proposed Zoning | Acres |
|---|------------|----------|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1.  | 158-090-19 | 119      | Kern County  | 8.4                           | 7.3                           | A               | M-3 PD          | 32    |
| <p><i>Kern County General Plan (KCGP) Map Code Designation:<br/>8.4 (Resource – Mineral Petroleum); 7.3 (Heavy Industrial)</i></p> <p><i>Kern County Zoning District:<br/>A (Exclusive Agriculture); M-3 PD (Heavy Industrial, Precise Development Combining)</i></p> |            |          |              |                               |                               |                 |                 |       |

#### 1.4. Project Facilities, Construction Activities, and Operations

##### Project Facilities

The overall proposed development is a 32-acre facility dedicated to hydrogen manufacturing, liquefaction, hydrogen storage, hydrogen loading, and CO2 removal and compression for sequestration.

The proposed facility has a footprint of approximately 32-acres, including a 190 square foot Security Room to identify and check-in any person(s) entering the plant. This room includes a small office and a bathroom.

**Table 3, Project Summary** provides a project summary of the proposed project.





**Table 3: Project Summary**

| <b>Acreage</b> | <b>Proposed End Use</b>  | <b>Percentage Building Coverage</b> | <b>Maximum Building Height</b> | <b>Handicapped Parking Spaces</b> | <b>Standard Parking Spaces</b> | <b>Automobile Parking Spaces</b> |
|----------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 32 acres       | Hydrogen processing plant with approximately 190 square foot building. Used for security of plant. | 0.01%                               | +/-18 feet                     | 1                                 | 4                              | 5 Parking Spaces Total           |

Source:

***Substation***

The proposed substation will be located at the northeast portion of the site and will include circuit breakers, disconnect switches, metering protection equipment, and main step-up transformers. The substation will occupy an area that will be approximately 140 feet by 230 feet in size. The substation will be enclosed by a 6-foot-high chain link fence topped with barbed wire, and gravel will cover the ground surface in accordance with Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) Substation requirements. Lighting will be installed in the substation for security and for use at times when nighttime emergency repair work is required.

***Vehicular Access and Circulation***

Primary access to the project site will be via existing access off Elk Hills Road to be upgraded for the proposed project. Such improvements will meet applicable California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Kern County Public Works Department development standards. A secondary access point will be at the southwest corner of the plant which connects to an existing field road.

**Construction Activities**

***Schedule and Workforce***

The plant construction will last approximately 18 months. Grading of the proposed project will start in September 2024, and last 60 to 90 days. Construction will be completed in a single phase, beginning in September 2024, and concluding in March 2025. It is anticipated that the proposed project will be operational in 2025. Should commencement of construction be delayed, the commencement date of September 2024 represents a conservative estimate for the purpose of this document.

Construction will primarily occur during daylight hours, Monday through Friday, as required to meet the construction schedule. Additional hours/days may be necessary to facilitate the schedule. Any construction work performed outside of the normal work schedule be coordinated with the appropriate agencies and will conform to the Kern County Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.36).



The on-site construction workforce will consist of up to 125 individuals; however, the average daily workforce will vary depending upon the stage in construction. The average daily workforce will include construction, supervisory, support, and construction management personnel on-site during construction. It is anticipated that the construction workforce will commute to the project site each day from local communities and report to the designated construction staging yards prior to the beginning of each workday. Parking for construction personnel will be provided on-site. Portable toilets will be used and will be maintained by a private off-site company during the construction period.

### ***Construction Activities and Equipment***

Construction activities will consist of civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical construction with heavy equipment will be utilized during construction from the beginning of civil through startup.

### ***Construction Water Use and Wastewater***

During construction of the proposed project, water will be required for common construction-related purposes, including but not limited to dust suppression, soil compaction, grading, and general site cleanup. Dust-control water may be used for ingress and egress of on-site construction vehicle equipment traffic and for the construction of the warehouse infrastructure. A sanitary water supply will not be required during construction because restroom facilities will be provided by portable units to be serviced by licensed providers.

### **Operations**

The proposed facility will operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and typically consist of both day and night shifts. The facility will employ 1 to 5 employees per shift. Approximately 10 operational employees will work remotely.

Vehicular access and circulation operations for the proposed project will generate approximately 16 to 20 daily truck trips.

Ingress to the plant will be off Elk Hills Road and requiring check-in at the Security Room. Employee parking will be located immediately after the entrance, directly to the east of the Security Room. After loading, the cryogenic tanker trucks will egress through the same access point.

## **1.5. Applicant Submitted Project Objectives**

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b) requires that a project description include a clearly written statement of objectives. The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project and may discuss the project benefits. The following are the applicant objectives for the proposed project:

- Construct and operate a low-carbon hydrogen plant.
- Provide the California Market with clean transportation fuel.
- Support California's Carbon neutrality goals by 2045.
- Site and design the project in an environmentally responsible manner consistent with current Kern County guidelines.
- Promote economic development and bring living-wage jobs to the region throughout the life of the proposed project.



## 1.6. Proposed Discretionary Actions/Required Approvals

The Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department as the CEQA Lead Agency (per CEQA Guidelines Section 15052) has discretionary responsibility for the Elk Hills Blue Hydrogen owned by Lone Cypress Energy Services, LLC. To implement this project, the project proponent may need to obtain the following discretionary and ministerial permits/approvals, but not be limited to:

- **Federal**
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Section 10 Incidental Take Permit and Habitat Conservation Plan (if required).
  - United States Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit (if required)
- **State**
  - California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
    - Section 2081 Permit (State-listed endangered species) (if required)
  - Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
    - Regional Water Quality Certification (401 Permit) (if required)
    - Waste Discharge Requirements
    - National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit
    - General Construction Stormwater Permit (Preparation of a SWPPP)
  - California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
    - Right-of-Way Encroachment Permit (if required)
    - Permit for Transport of Oversized Loads (if required)
- **Local**
  - Kern County
    - Certification of Final Environmental Impact Report
    - Adoption of 15091 Findings of Fact and 15093 Statement of Overriding Considerations
    - Adoption of Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
    - Approval of Amendment to the Land Use Element of the Kern County General
    - Approval of Change in Zone Classification
    - Approval of Precise Development Plan
    - Approval and recordation of Parcel Map



- Approval of Kern County Grading and Building Permits
- Approval of Kern County Encroachment Permits
- Approval of Fire Safety Plan
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
  - Authority to Construct (ATC)
  - Construction Fugitive Dust Control Plan
  - Permit to Operate (PTO)
  - Indirect Source Rule and Voluntary Emission Reduction Agreement
  - Other permits as required

The preceding discretionary actions/approvals are potentially required and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive list of all possible discretionary permits/approvals required. Other additional permits or approvals from responsible agencies may be required for the proposed project.



Figure 1 – Regional Vicinity

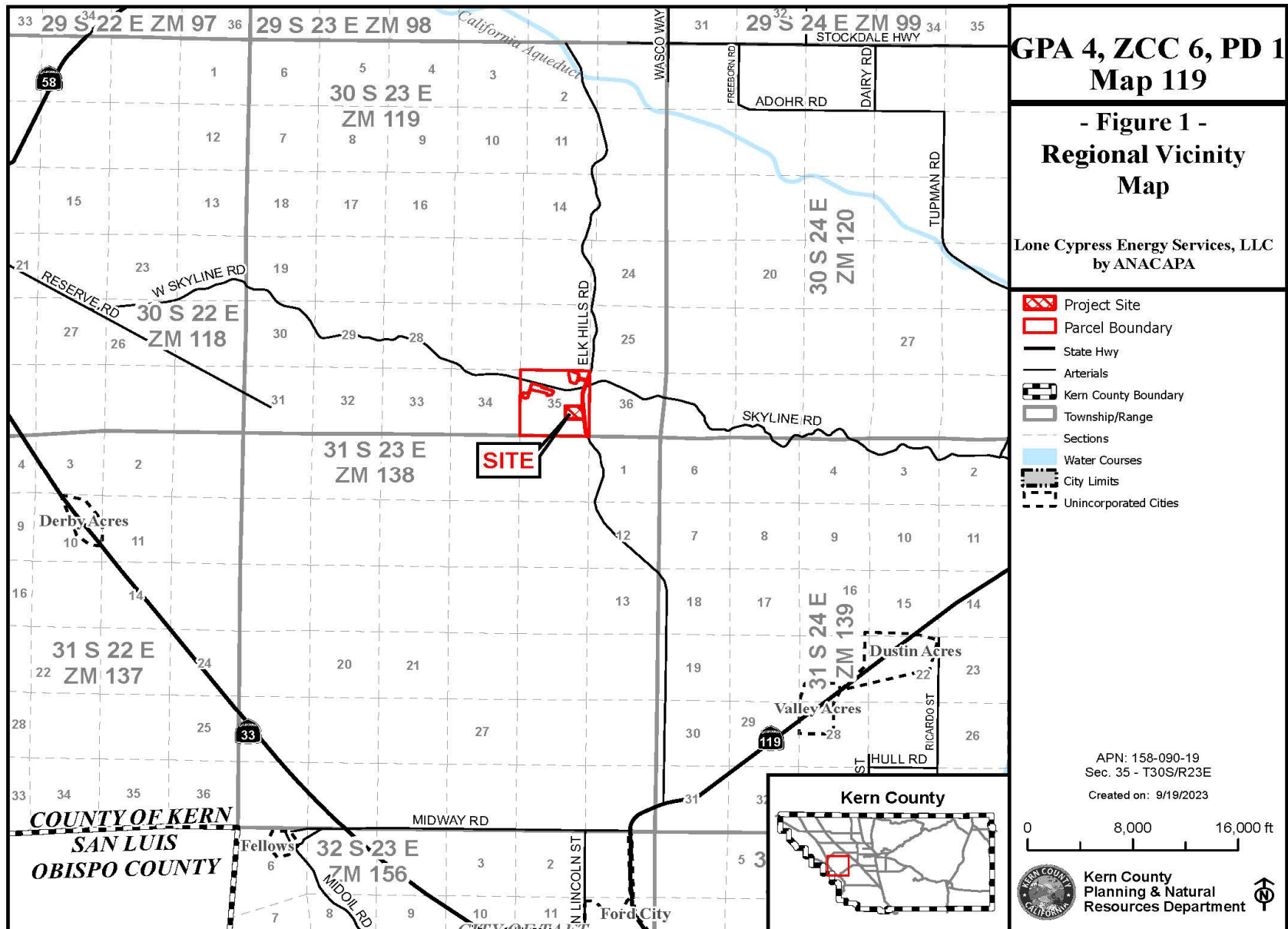




Figure 2 – Project Vicinity

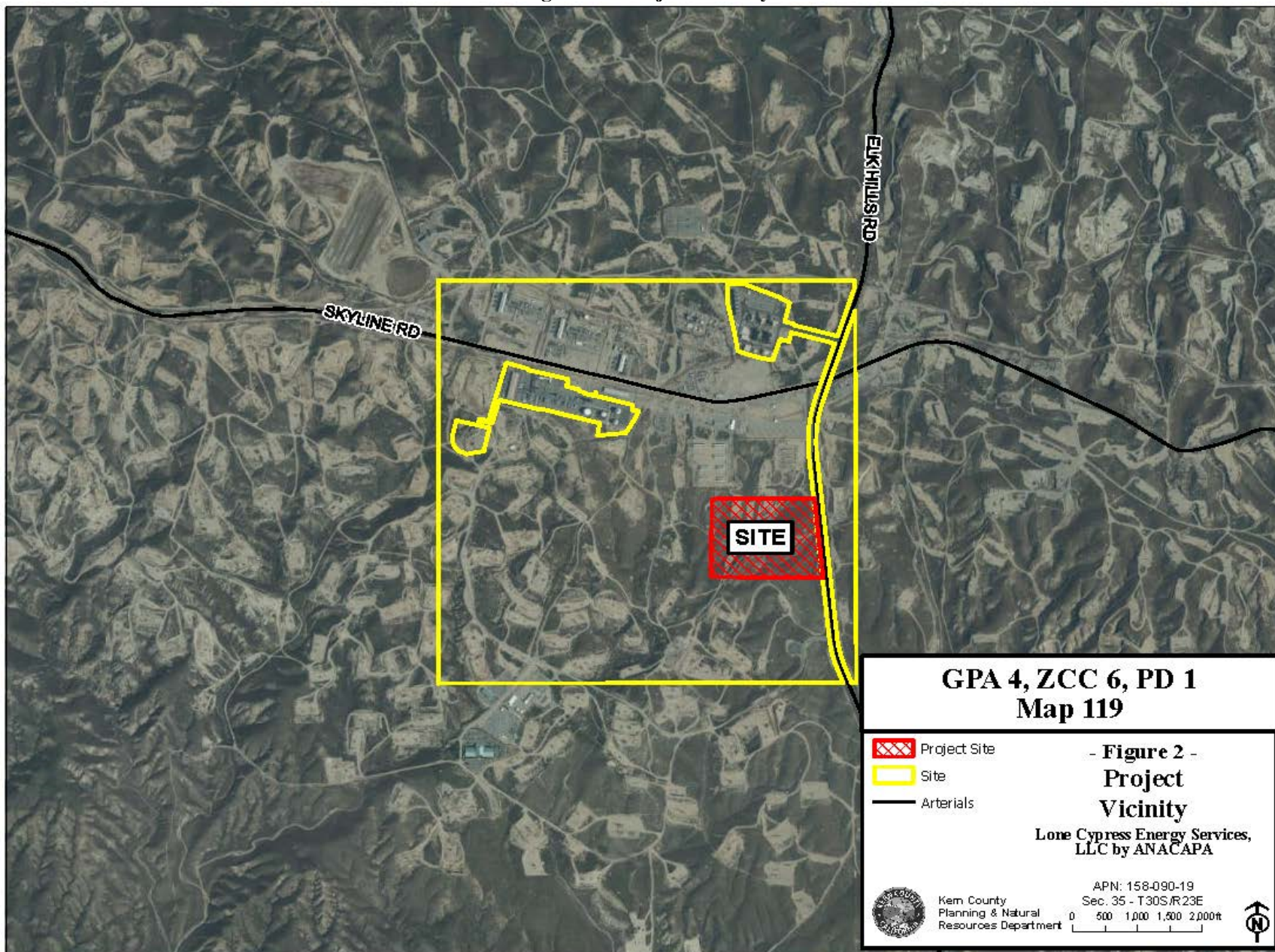




Figure 3 – Existing General Plan Map

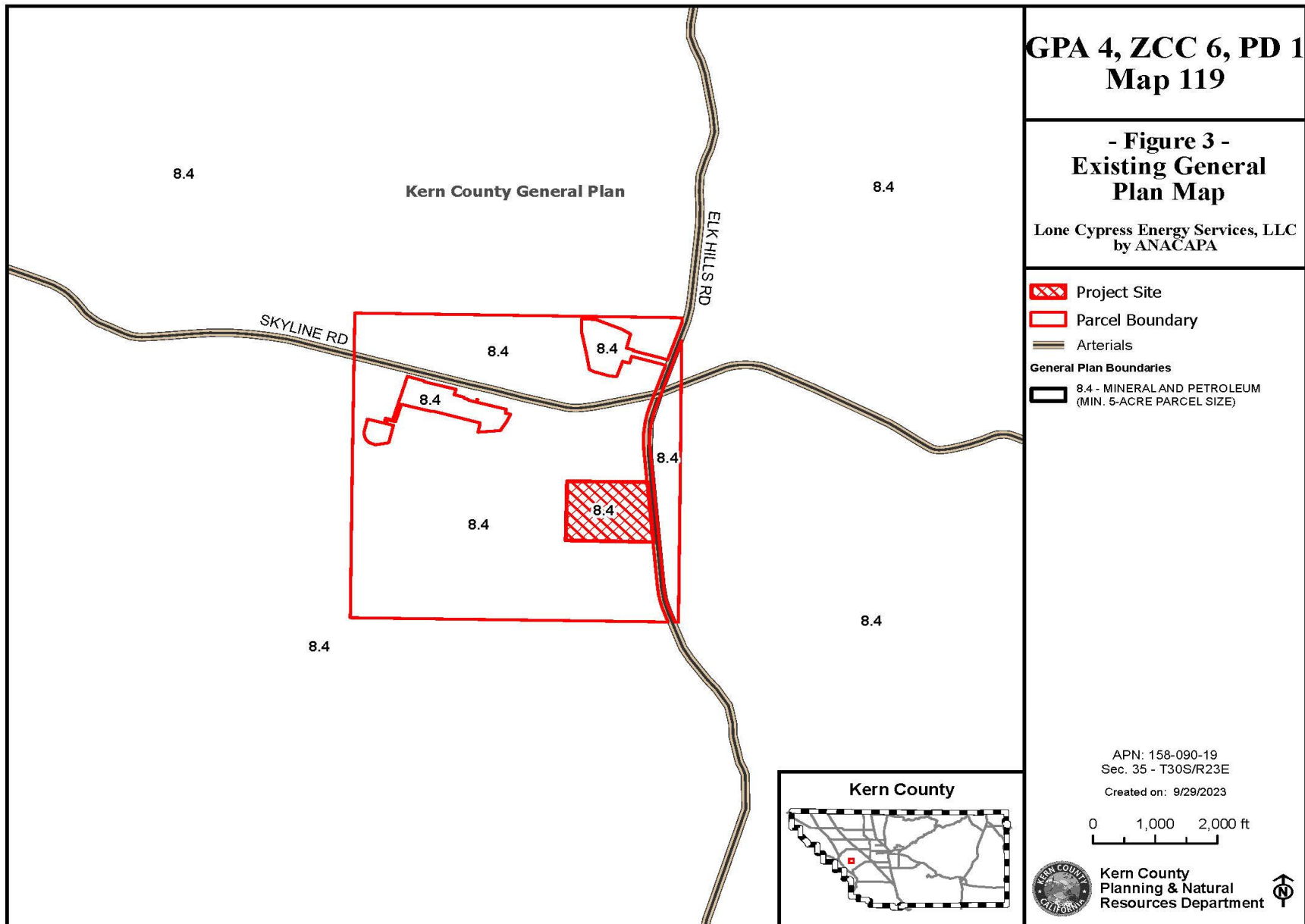




Figure 4 – Proposed General Plan Map

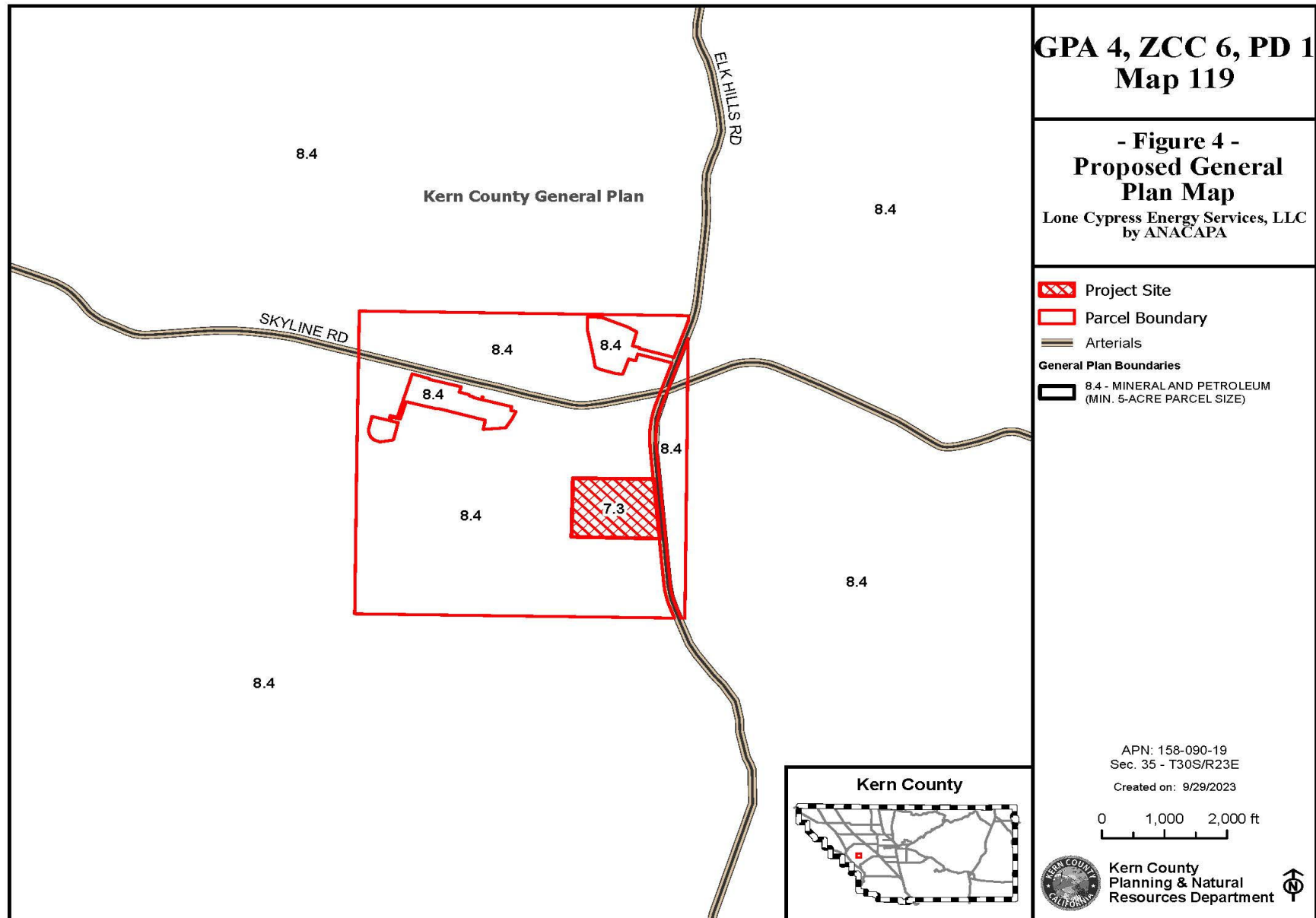






Figure 5 – Existing Zoning Classifications

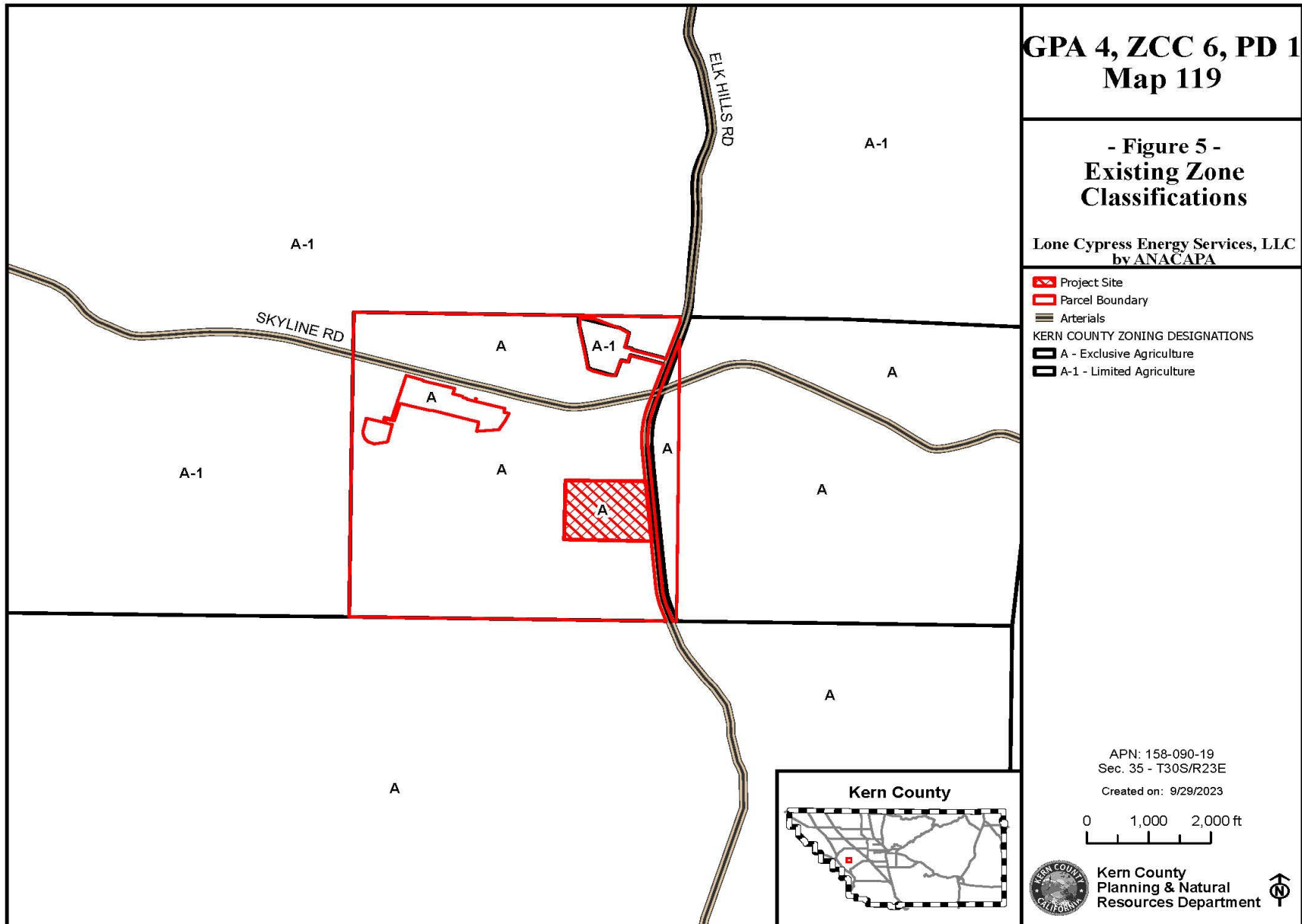




Figure 6 – Proposed General Plan Map

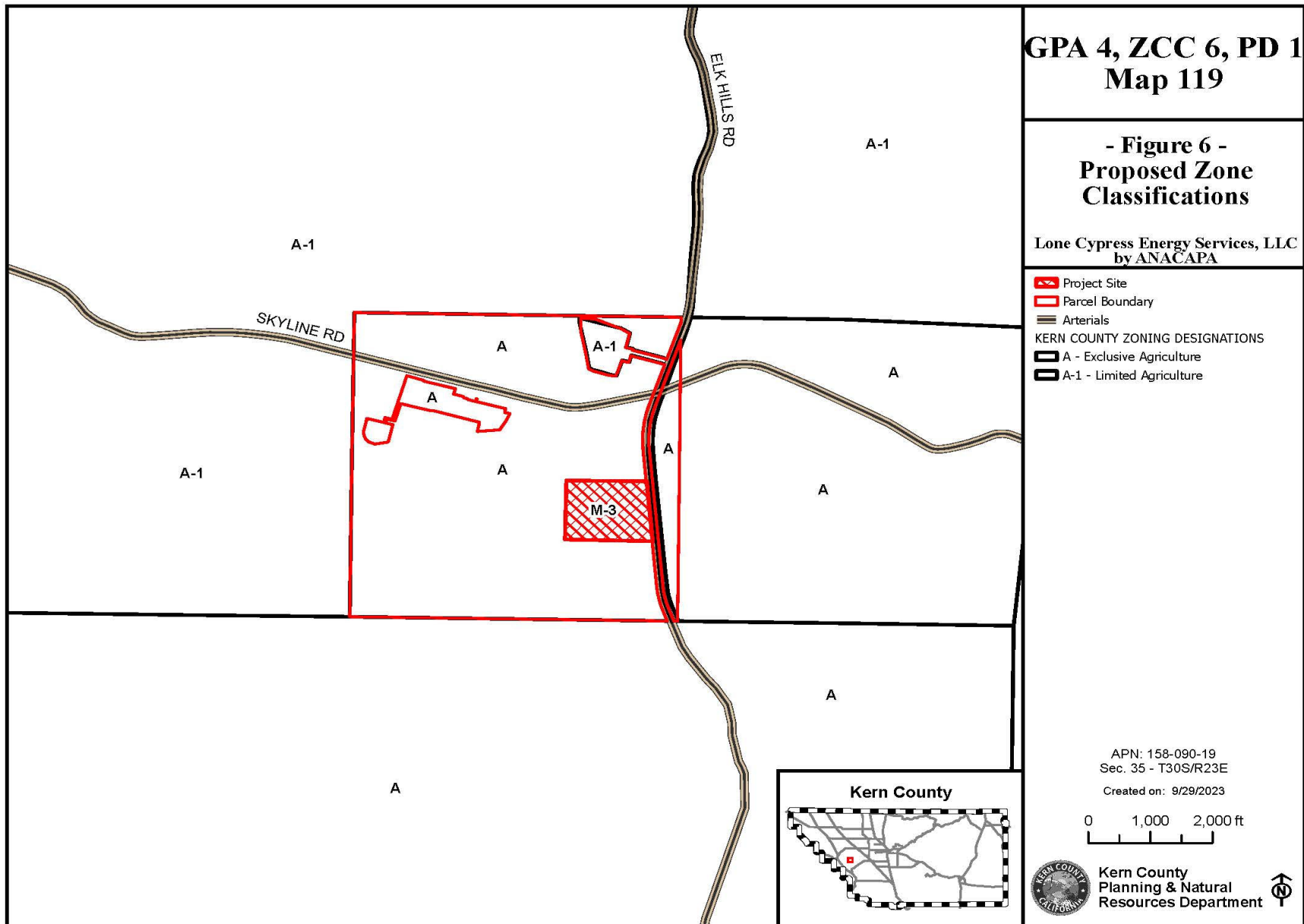
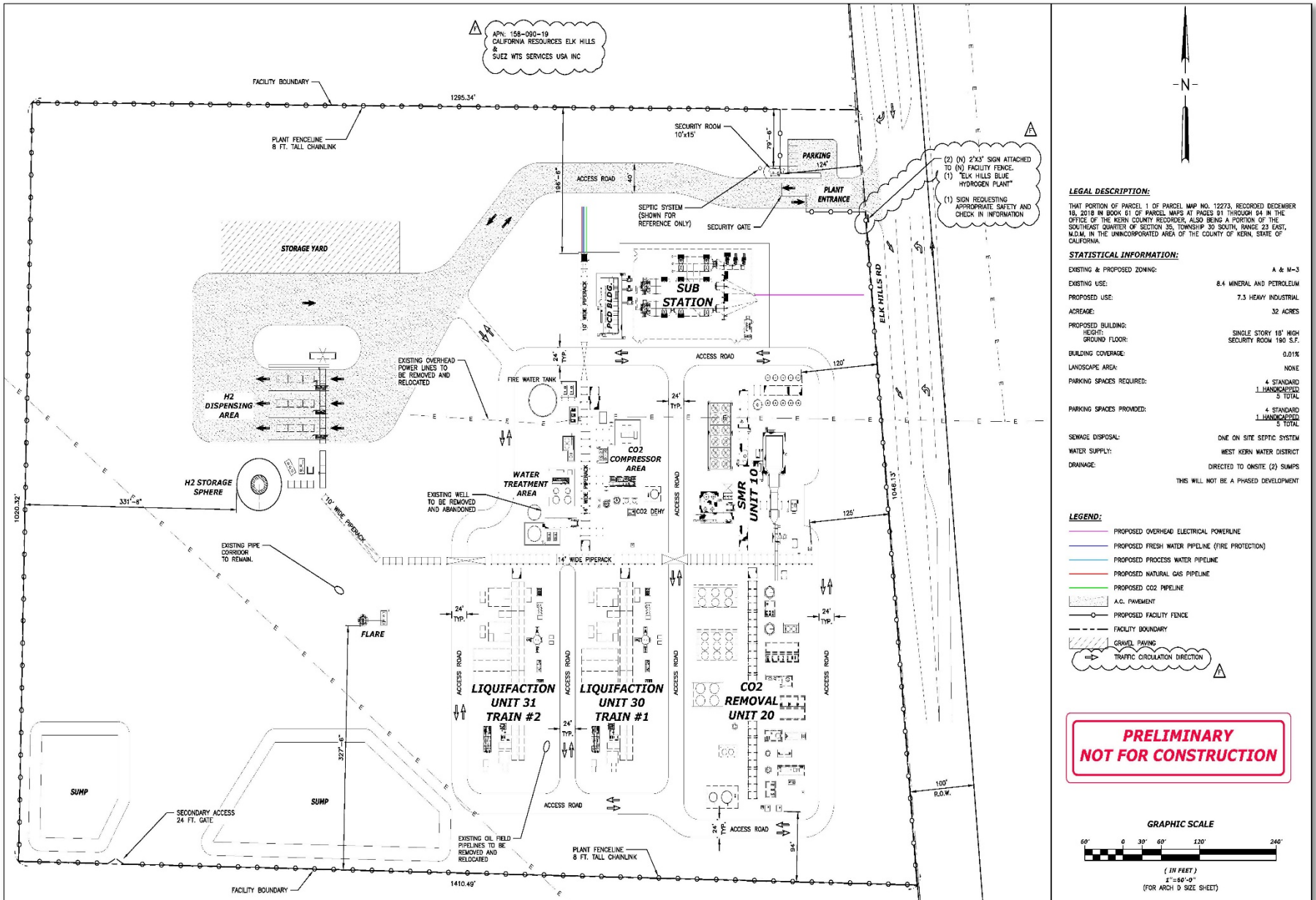


Figure 7a – Proposed PD Plan – Overall Site Plan



**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**  
 THAT PORTION OF PARCEL 1 OF PARCEL MAP NO. 12273, RECORDED DECEMBER 18, 2018 IN BOOK 81 OF PARCEL MAPS AT PAGES 81 THROUGH 84 IN THE OFFICE OF THE KERN COUNTY RECORDER, ALSO BEING A PORTION OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 30 SOUTH, RANGE 23 EAST, M.D.M. IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA OF THE COUNTY OF KERN, STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION:**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| EXISTING & PROPOSED ZONING: | A & M-3                                |
| EXISTING USE:               | 8.4 MINERAL AND PETROLEUM              |
| PROPOSED USE:               | 7.3 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL                   |
| ACREAGE:                    | 32 ACRES                               |
| PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT:   | SINGLE STORY 18' HIGH                  |
| GROUND FLOOR:               | SECURITY ROOM 190 S.F.                 |
| BUILDING COVERAGE:          | 0.01%                                  |
| LANDSCAPE AREA:             | NONE                                   |
| PARKING SPACES REQUIRED:    | 4 STANDARD<br>1 HANDICAPPED<br>5 TOTAL |
| PARKING SPACES PROVIDED:    | 4 STANDARD<br>1 HANDICAPPED<br>5 TOTAL |
| SEWAGE DISPOSAL:            | ONE ON SITE SEPTIC SYSTEM              |
| WATER SUPPLY:               | WEST KERN WATER DISTRICT               |
| DRAINAGE:                   | DIRECTED TO ONSITE (2) SLUMPS          |
|                             | THIS WILL NOT BE A PHASED DEVELOPMENT  |

**LEGEND:**

- PROPOSED OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL POWERLINE
- PROPOSED FRESH WATER PIPELINE (FIRE PROTECTION)
- PROPOSED PROCESS WATER PIPELINE
- PROPOSED NATURAL GAS PIPELINE
- PROPOSED CO2 PIPELINE
- ▨ A.G. PAVEMENT
- PROPOSED FACILITY FENCE
- ▭ FACILITY BOUNDARY
- ▨ GRAVEL PAVING
- TRAFFIC CIRCULATION DIRECTION

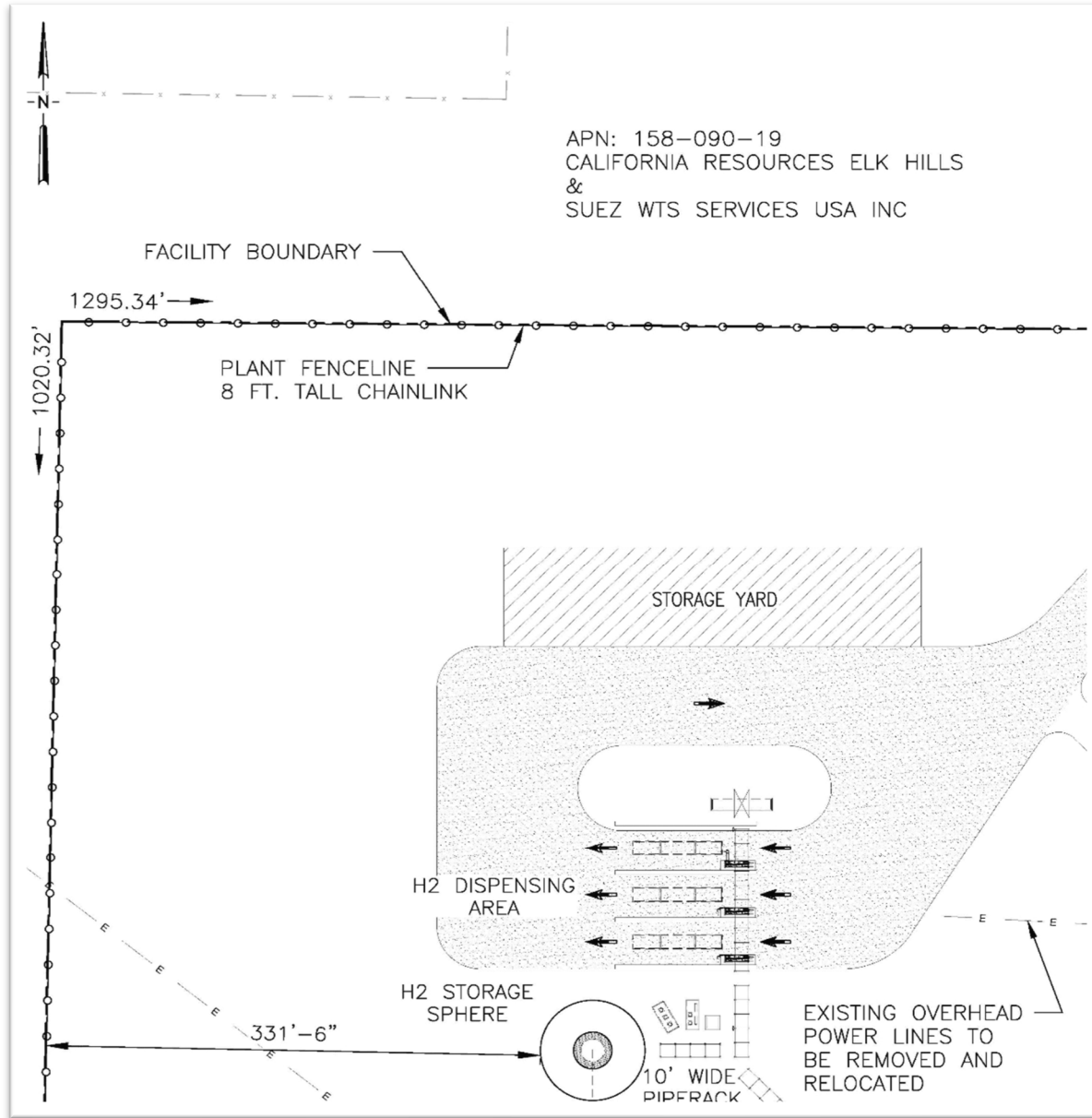
**PRELIMINARY  
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

**GRAPHIC SCALE**

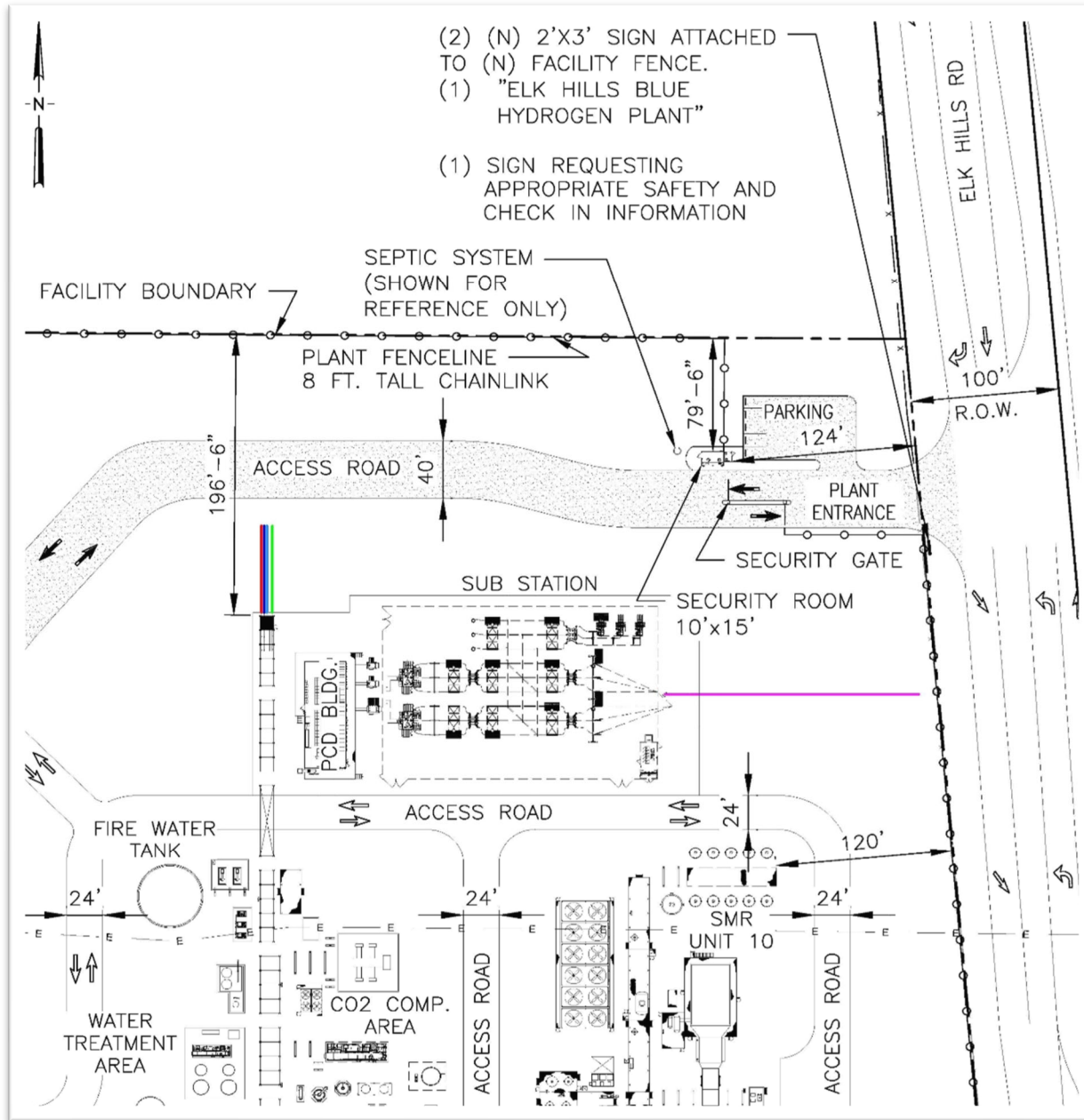
60' 0 30' 60' 120' 240'

( IN FEET )  
 1" = 60'-0"  
 (FOR ARCH D SIZE SHEET)

**Figure 7b - Proposed PD Plan – Enlarged Northwest Site Plan**



**Figure 7c - Proposed PD Plan – Enlarged Northeast Site Plan**



**Figure 7d - Proposed PD Plan – Enlarged Southeast Site Plan**

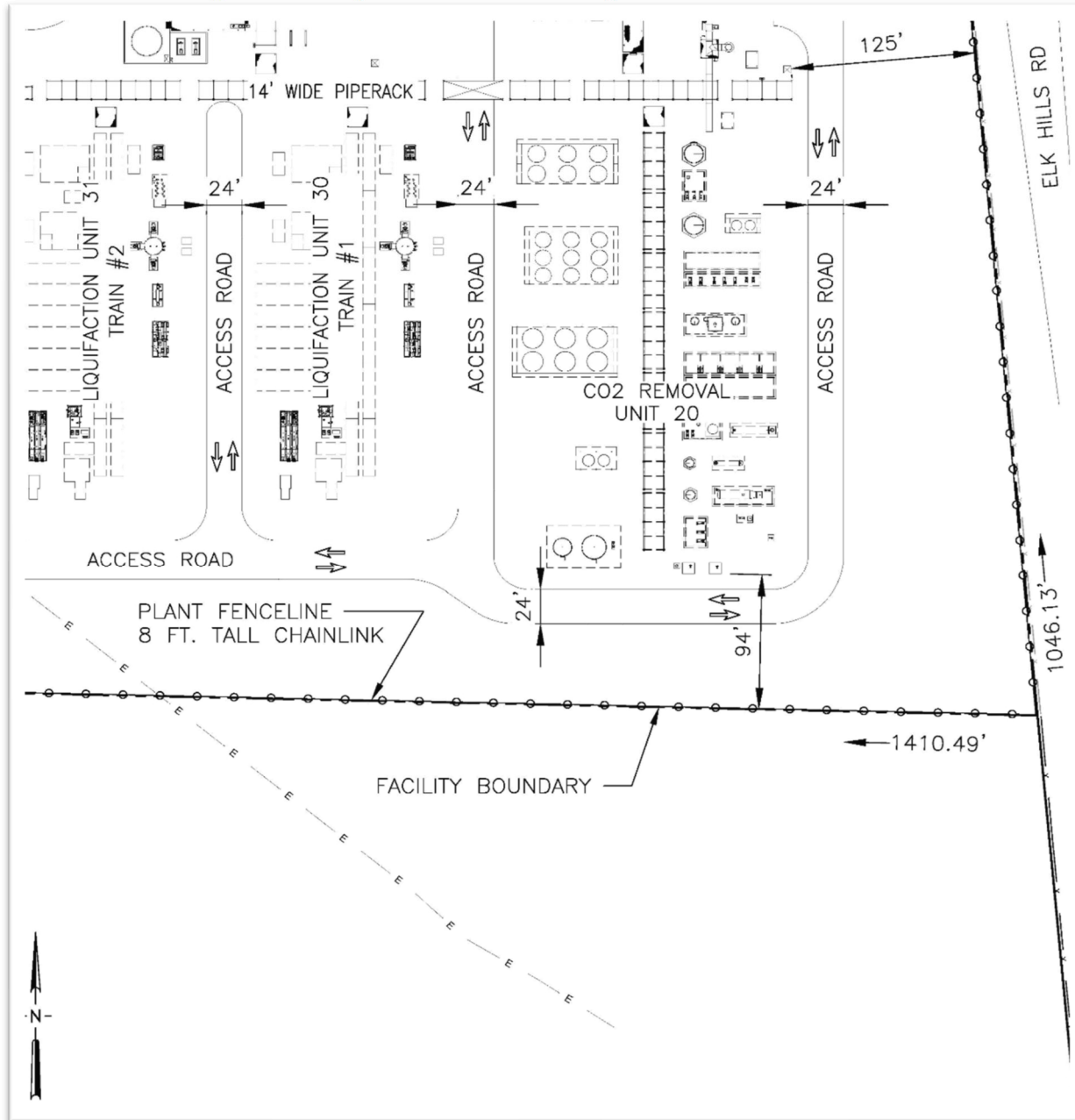
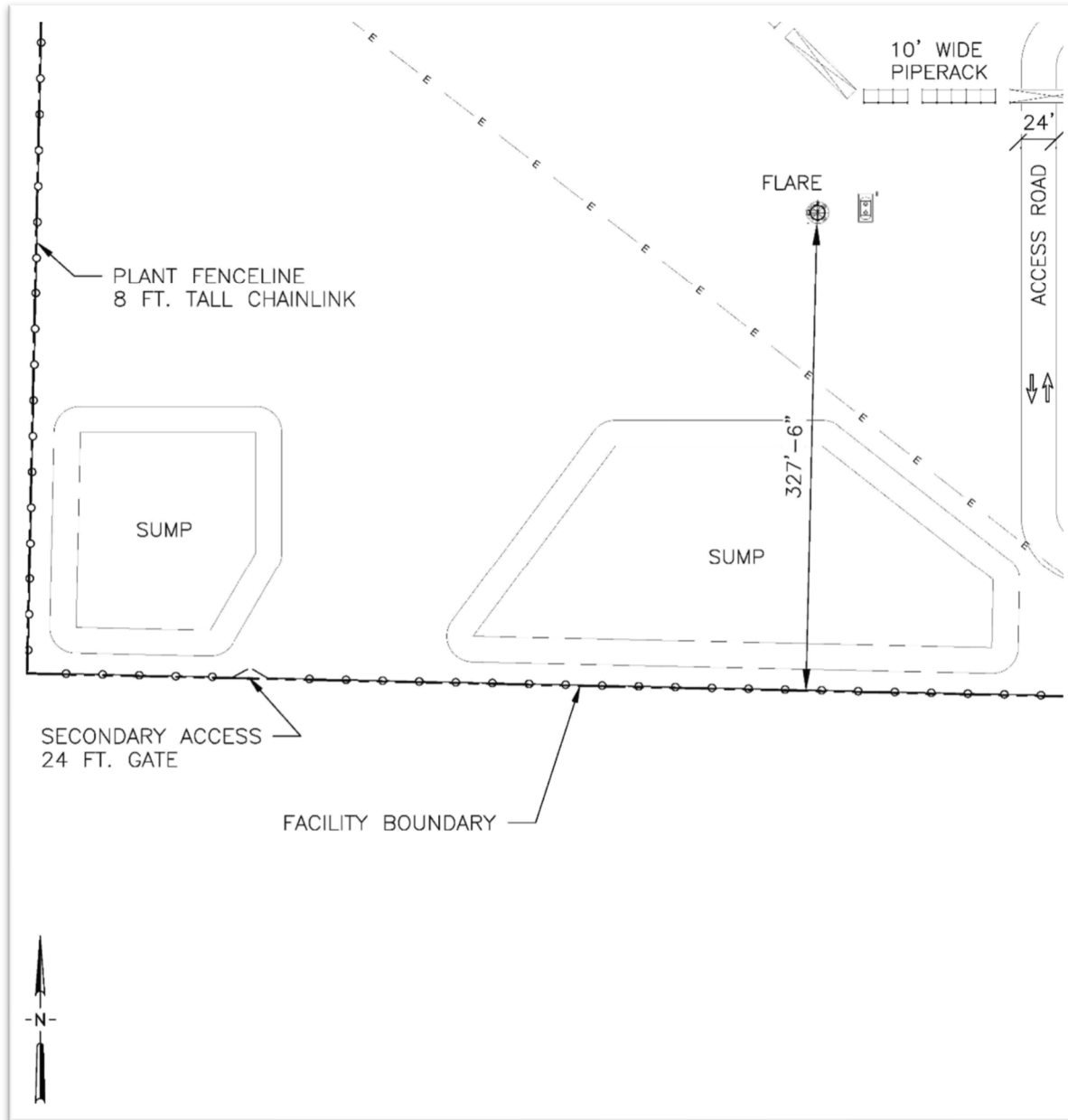


Figure 7e - Proposed PD Plan – Enlarged Southwest Site Plan





## 2. Kern County Environmental Checklist Form

### 2.1. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, the County intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate potential environmental effects of the project and to propose mitigation measures to reduce any significant effects identified.

The environmental factors checked below will be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “potentially significant impact” as indicated by the Kern County Environmental Checklist. As such, the analysis contained within the EIR will focus on these issue areas.

|                                     |                             |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Aesthetics                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Agricultural and Forestry Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Air Quality                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Biological Resources        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cultural Resources                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Energy                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Geology and Soils           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Greenhouse Gas Emissions            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Hazards and Hazardous Materials    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Hydrology and Water Quality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Land Use and Planning               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mineral Resources                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Noise                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Population and Housing              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Public Services                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Recreation                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Transportation and Traffic          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Tribal Cultural Resources          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Utilities/Service Systems   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Wildfire                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory Findings of Significance |

### Other Environmental Issues

The County conducted a preliminary review of the proposed Project and has determined it is not likely to result in significant environmental effects to the following resources. Therefore, further analysis is not warranted in the EIR.

**Population / Housing:** The proposed Project will not induce substantial unplanned population growth through the construction of new homes, roads, or other infrastructure nor displace any housing units or people.

Although the proposed project would provide new employment consistent with the adopted Kern County General Plan goals, plan, and policies, long-term employment opportunities would be minimal. The proposed project would require approximately 10 operational employees working remotely per day. Full-time onsite employees will vary from 1 to 5 employees per shift with 3 shifts per 24 hours.

The on-site construction workforce will consist of up to 125 individuals; however, the average daily workforce will vary depending upon the stage in construction. The entire construction process is anticipated to take 18 months. Therefore, the majority of project-generated jobs would be from the local and regional area and would occur on a temporary and short-term basis. If temporary housing should be necessary, it is expected that accommodations (i.e., extended stay hotels, apartments, RV parks, homes for rent or sale) would be available in the nearby communities of Taft City, or Bakersfield. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to directly or indirectly induce the development of any new housing or businesses within the local communities.

The proposed project is located in the administrative boundary of Elk Hills Oil Field which consists of oil fields which has no existing housing.





**Recreation:** The Kern County General Plan does not identify any existing or proposed recreational facilities near the project area.

The proposed project itself does not include new recreational facilities and is not anticipated to increase demands on existing facilities. The number of workers needed during the construction phase will consist of up to 125 individuals; however, the average daily workforce will vary depending upon the stage in construction. These workers are not likely to visit local parks or recreation facilities during the workday and the workers that are relocating temporarily during construction would create little or no impact on local recreational resources after work hours.

Operation of the proposed project would require from 1 to 5 full-time onsite employees for maintenance and monitoring activities, but they would likely be drawn from the local labor force and would commute from their existing permanent residence to the project site. However, even if the maintenance/monitoring employees were hired from out of the area and relocated to western Kern County, the addition of any such families to the project area would not result in a substantial increase in the number of users at local parks or recreational facilities. As a result, there would not be a detectable increase in the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities, and therefore, no deterioration of any such facilities would occur or require the construction of new facilities as a result of project implementation.

**2.2. Determination**

(To be completed by the Lead Agency)

Based on this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect (a) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (b) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENT IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature:

Date:

02/28/2024

Printed Name:

Jamal Ferguson

Title:

Planner I