
2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section contains the project description for the Mission Place Project (project). The purpose of the project description is to present the project in a way that will be meaningful to the public, reviewing agencies, and decision-makers. As described in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15124, a complete project description must contain the following information, but is not required to supply extensive detail beyond that needed for evaluation and review of the environmental impact: (1) the location and boundaries of the project on a regional and detail map; (2) a statement of objectives sought by the project; (3) a general description of the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; and (4) a statement briefly describing the intended uses of the EIR.

2.0.1 OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

REGIONAL AND LOCAL SETTING

The project is located in the surface parking lot portion of the South Pasadena Unified School District (SPUSD, District) administrative office site at 1020 El Centro Street in South Pasadena (**Figure 2.0-1**). South Pasadena is located in Los Angeles County in the San Gabriel Valley. The city is surrounded by the city of Pasadena to the north, the city of Los Angeles to the west and southwest, the city of San Marino to the east, and the city of Alhambra to the south and southeast.

Regional access to the project area is provided by Interstate 110 to the north. Local access to the project area is provided by Mission Street to the north, El Centro Street to the south, Diamond Avenue to the west, and Fairview Avenue to the east. Direct access to the project site is provided from Fairview and Diamond avenues for vehicles, and from Mission and El Centro streets for pedestrians. The area is served by public transit, with Bus Route 176 stopping approximately 0.2 miles northwest at the intersection of Santa Fe Lane and Mission Street. The South Pasadena Metro Gold Line Station, served by the Metro Gold Line, is located approximately 0.1 miles west of the project site.

The project site is located north of the South Pasadena Public Library. The project site contains the existing SPUSD headquarters and a parking lot with an entrance off Fairview Avenue (**Figure 2.0-2**).

PROJECT SITE SETTING

Existing Setting

The project site is the surface parking area of the SPUSD's Administration Building site. The portion of the site proposed for development (1.27 acres) is an asphalt-paved surface parking lot; the balance of the 1.89-acre parcel contains the SPUSD's Administration and Boardroom buildings. **Figure 2.0-3** presents an aerial photograph of the site.

The two on-site existing SPUSD buildings, which would be preserved in place, are built in a Romanesque Revival architectural style and are contributing structures in the Mission West Historic Business District. These existing structures are one-story buildings with rooflines that reach approximately 25 feet in height.

The existing parking lot contains 128 parking spaces and is surrounded by a brick and masonry perimeter wall along the Mission Street, Diamond Avenue, and Fairview Avenue frontages. This parking lot is used by staff and patrons of the District's administrative offices, staff and volunteers

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at the South Pasadena Public Library, and patrons of the weekly (Thursday) South Pasadena Farmers Market. The District also occasionally permits filming activities on the parking lot.

Landscaping on the parking lot site is limited to 23 ornamental trees, which are located along the perimeter of the site and include street trees along Mission Street, Diamond Avenue, and Fairview Avenue. Project implementation would result in the removal of 21 ornamental trees.

EXISTING LAND USE REGULATIONS

The project site is governed by the City of South Pasadena General Plan and the City's Zoning Code. The General Plan designates the project site as Mission Street Specific Plan. The project site is zoned as MSSP (Mission Street Specific Plan) District A or Core Area.

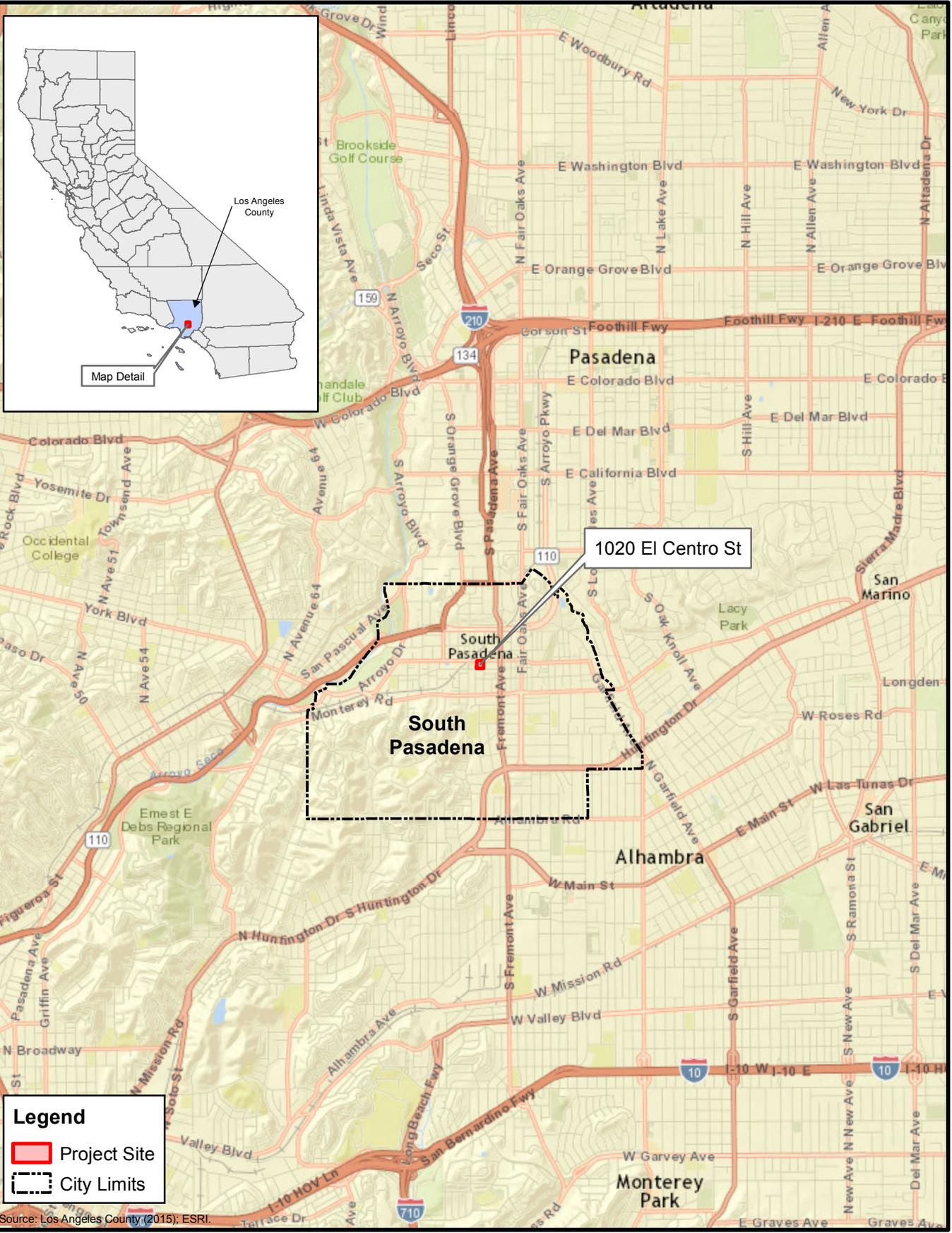
SURROUNDING LAND USES

The project site is located on the south side of Mission Street in the downtown portion of South Pasadena and in the city's Mission West Historic Business District. The site is bounded by Mission Street on the north, El Centro Street on the south, Fairview Avenue on the east, and Diamond Avenue on the west. The land uses on the opposite sides of these streets are depicted in **Figure 2.0-4** and described in a clockwise fashion, starting from the north, in the following bullets:

- North of the project site, across Mission Street: one- and two-story commercial buildings with ground-floor storefronts and a dining patio facing the sidewalk; to the rear (north) of these buildings is a three-story mixed-use building fronting on Fairview Avenue
- Northeast corner of Mission Street and Fairview Avenue (cattycorner from the site): a one-story automotive repair shop
- Southeast corner of Mission Street and Fairview Avenue (east of the site, across Fairview Avenue): the vacant one-story Oroweat commercial building
- Northeast corner of Fairview Avenue and El Centro Street (east of the site, across Fairview Avenue): a two-story office building
- Southeast corner of Fairview Avenue and El Centro Street (cattycorner from the site): a two-story multi-family residential building
- South of the project site, across El Centro Street: the South Pasadena Public Library
- Southwest corner of El Centro Street and Diamond Avenue (cattycorner from the site): a two-story mixed-use building
- Northwest corner of El Centro Street and Diamond Avenue (east of the site, across Diamond Avenue): the three-story Golden Oaks apartment building
- Southwest corner of Diamond Avenue and Mission Street (east of the site, across Diamond Avenue): a two-story mixed-use building with ground-floor storefronts on Mission Street

Additional uses in the project vicinity include:

- South Pasadena Metro Gold Line Station, approximately 400 feet west of the site
- South Pasadena City Hall, approximately 900 feet east of the site



Source: Los Angeles County (2015); ESRI.

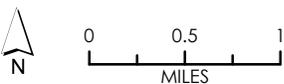


Figure 2.0-1 Regional Vicinity

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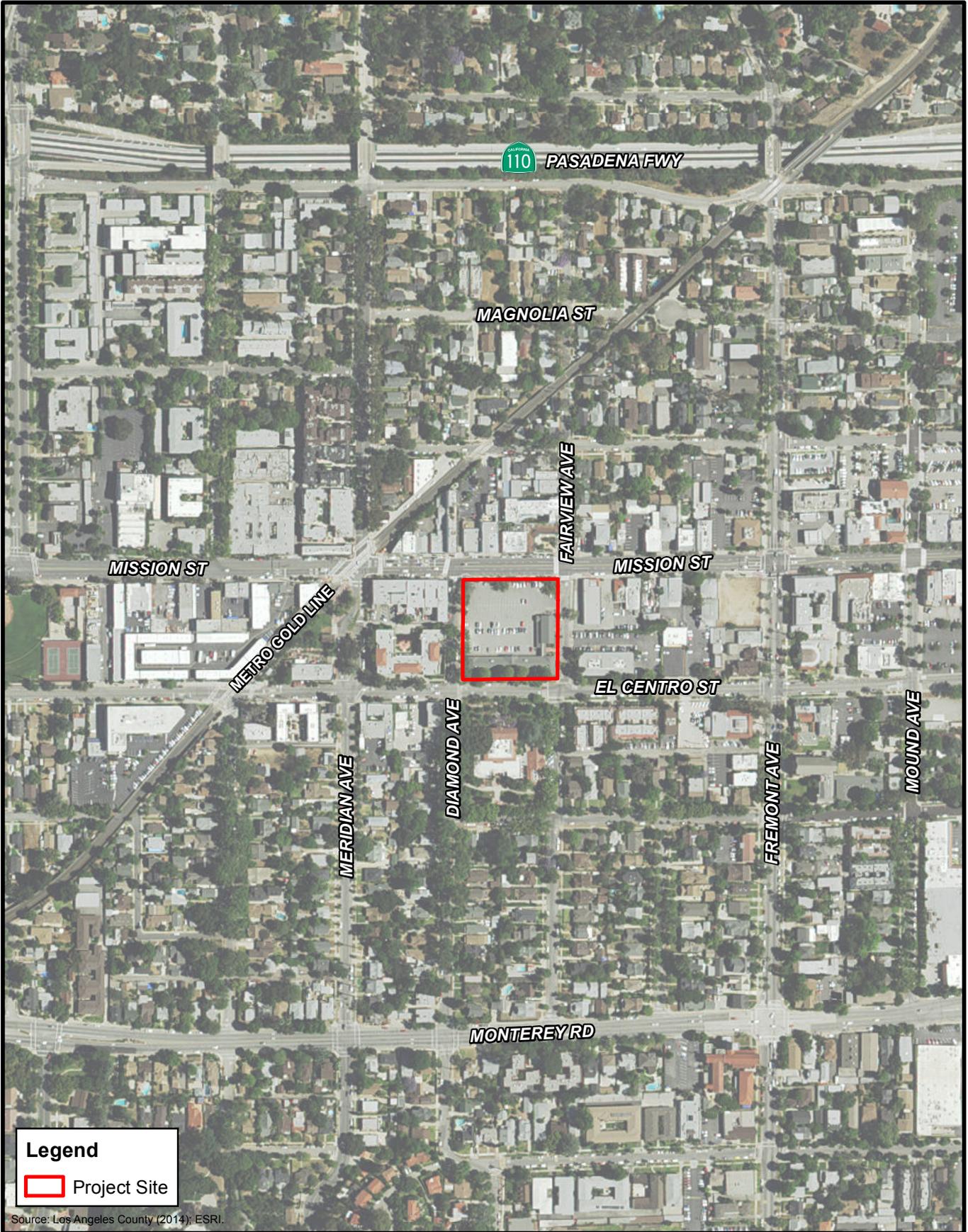


Figure 2.0-2
Project Location

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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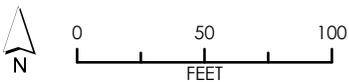
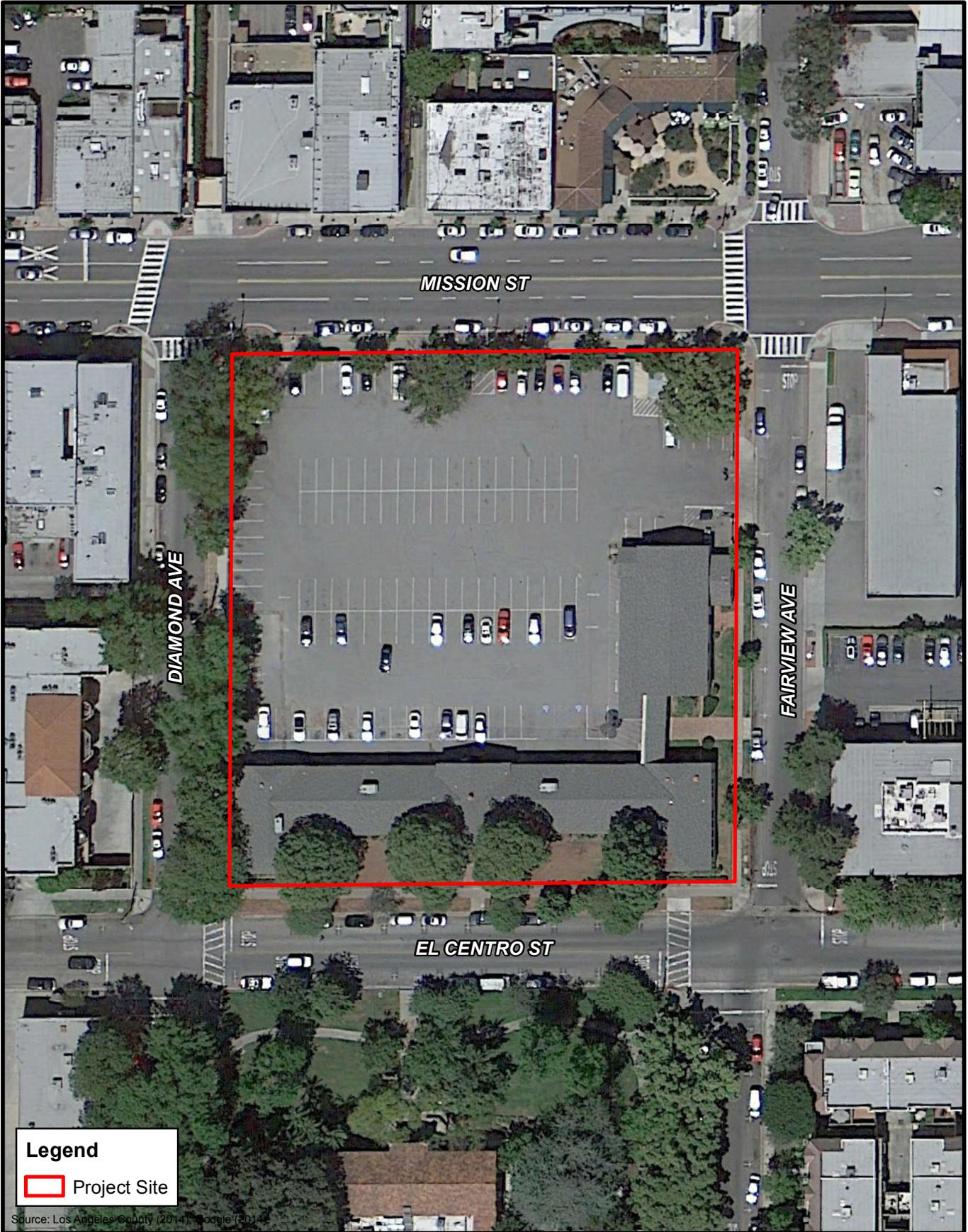


Figure 2.0-3
Aerial Photograph of Project Site

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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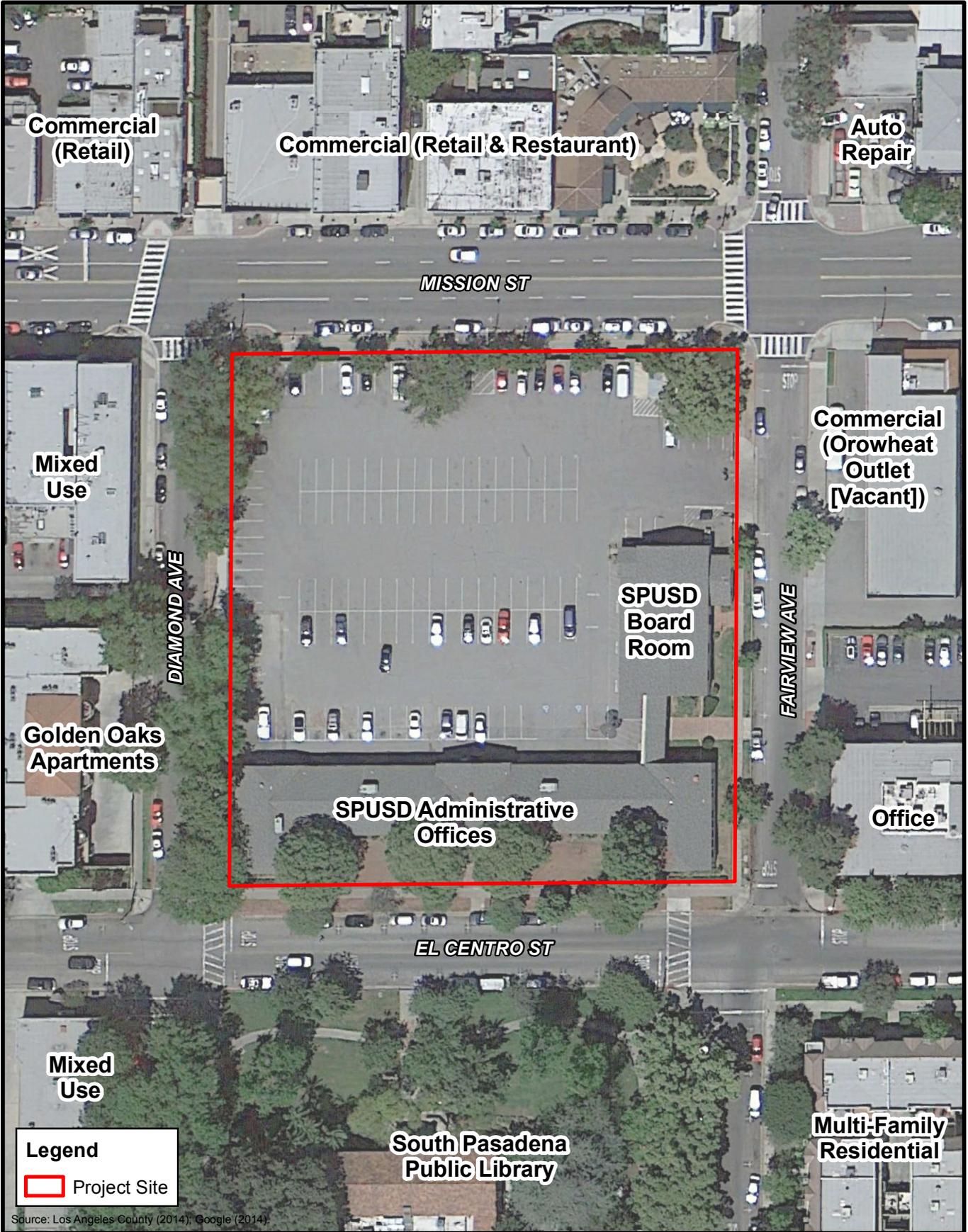


Figure 2.0-4
Surrounding Land Uses

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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2.0.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The South Pasadena Unified School District has identified the following objectives for the project:

- Utilize the District's land resources to enhance revenue through lease agreements in a manner that allows for improved educational facilities and programs.
- Develop the surface parking lot of the District's administrative offices/boardroom building site with compatible adjacent land uses that allow continued use of the District's facilities without a long-term reduction in functionality.
- Develop the surface parking lot of the District's administrative offices/boardroom building site in a manner that is consistent with the Mission Street Specific Plan.

The project applicant has identified the following objectives for the project:

- Provide local residents and employers with a luxury living option with access to public transportation and walkable retail locations which satisfies the objectives described in the Mission Street Specific Plan.
- Provide Class-A rental housing to address a growing demand for rental apartments in the US, as the national homeownership rate is decreasing and currently is at its lowest level (63.4% through 1H2015) since mid-1960s.
- Replace underutilized surface parking lot with residential and retail uses over a subterranean parking garage.
- Provide sufficient parking to residents, District employees, and the general public with access to the development and Mission Street retail.
- Create usable open space in an urban infill location by providing public courtyards, landscaping, walkways, and retail in order to improve public engagement of the project.
- Maximize the value of the currently underutilized site through the development of a new, luxury housing project.
- Achieve premium apartment rents by meeting the high market demand for housing that is close to retail, jobs and transportation.

2.0.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project would develop a 1.27-acre surface parking lot owned by the SPUSD with a three-story, 85,775-square-foot mixed-use project comprising two new buildings. The project proposes 91 multi-family residential units (8 two-bedroom units and 83 one-bedroom units), 7,000 square feet of ground-floor commercial space fronting Mission Street, and 228 parking spaces in three levels of underground parking. **Figure 2.0-5** provides an overview of the proposed project, and **Figures 2.0-6a** through **2.0-6d** depict the proposed ground-floor, second-floor, third-floor, and roof plans. Cross sections of the proposed buildings are shown in **Figures 2.0-7a** and **2.0-7b**. **Figures 2.0-8a** and **2.0-8b** depict the buildings in photo view simulations and architectural renderings, while **Figures 2.0-9a** and **2.0-9b** depict the building within the neighborhood context.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

The project consists of two new buildings (east and west buildings) that would be oriented with the District's existing Administration Building to create a central courtyard and a north-south paseo. The paseo would frame the main entry to the existing Administration Building and would allow for pedestrian circulation. The proposed west building consists of 3,420 square feet of ground-floor retail space fronting Mission Street, 8 garret units (above the proposed retail space), 5 townhomes fronting Diamond Avenue, and 36 flats (above the proposed townhomes and/or facing the proposed courtyard).¹ The proposed east building consists of 3,580 square feet of ground-floor retail space fronting Mission Street, 8 garret units (above the proposed retail space), and 34 lofts.

The north elevations of the proposed buildings would provide a new, block-long street frontage along Mission Street, and the proposed west building would provide a new, nearly block-long street frontage along Diamond Avenue. The proposed east building would provide a new façade along Fairview Avenue near Mission Street, which would share the Fairview Avenue block face with the District's existing Boardroom and Administration buildings.

The proposed buildings would total 85,775 square feet of habitable floor area. Both proposed buildings are three stories, with a maximum height of 45 feet and main roof lines at a height of 40 feet. Proposed architectural features include brick and glass storefront ground-floor façades with varying canopies/awnings along Mission Street, modulated brick and stucco façades in the west building along Mission Street and Diamond Avenue, varying flat and pitched rooflines with primarily mission tile roof materials, and setbacks of the top floor with dormer windows.

Proposed outdoor spaces include a publicly accessible paseo connecting Mission Street to the District's Administration Building and private outdoor areas for residents of the proposed units. The proposed paseo measures 28 feet 7 inches in width and approximately 200 feet in length. It is anticipated to be tree lined, with a central fountain. Private courtyards for residents are proposed on either side of the fountain, along with an outdoor pool area, also for private resident use. In addition to landscape improvements, the paseo and courtyards would include safety lighting and pedestrian light standards on both sides of the paseo. Building accent lighting is also proposed along the Mission Street frontage. The proposed Diamond Avenue frontage would include landscape planters and accent/safety lighting.

USES AND OPERATION

The project proposes 91 multi-family residential units and 7,000 square feet of ground-floor commercial space fronting Mission Street. The proposed residences are anticipated to be rental units. The commercial spaces are anticipated to be filled with retail shops and restaurants. Per the Mission Street Specific Plan, permitted commercial uses include convenience retail and services, restaurants, and specialty retail.

¹ A garret is a small living space at the top of a house or other building. The proposed garrets are 1-bedroom units.



Source: GMP Architects, 2014

Not to scale



Figure 2.0-5
Project Overview

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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Source: GMP Architects, 2014



Figure 2.0-6a
Ground Floor/Level 1 Plan

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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MISSION STREET



EL CENTRO STREET

DIAMOND AVENUE

FAIRVIEW AVENUE

Source: GMP Architects, 2014

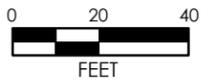


Figure 2.0-6b
Level 2 Plan

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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MISSION STREET



Source: GMP Architects, 2014

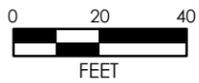
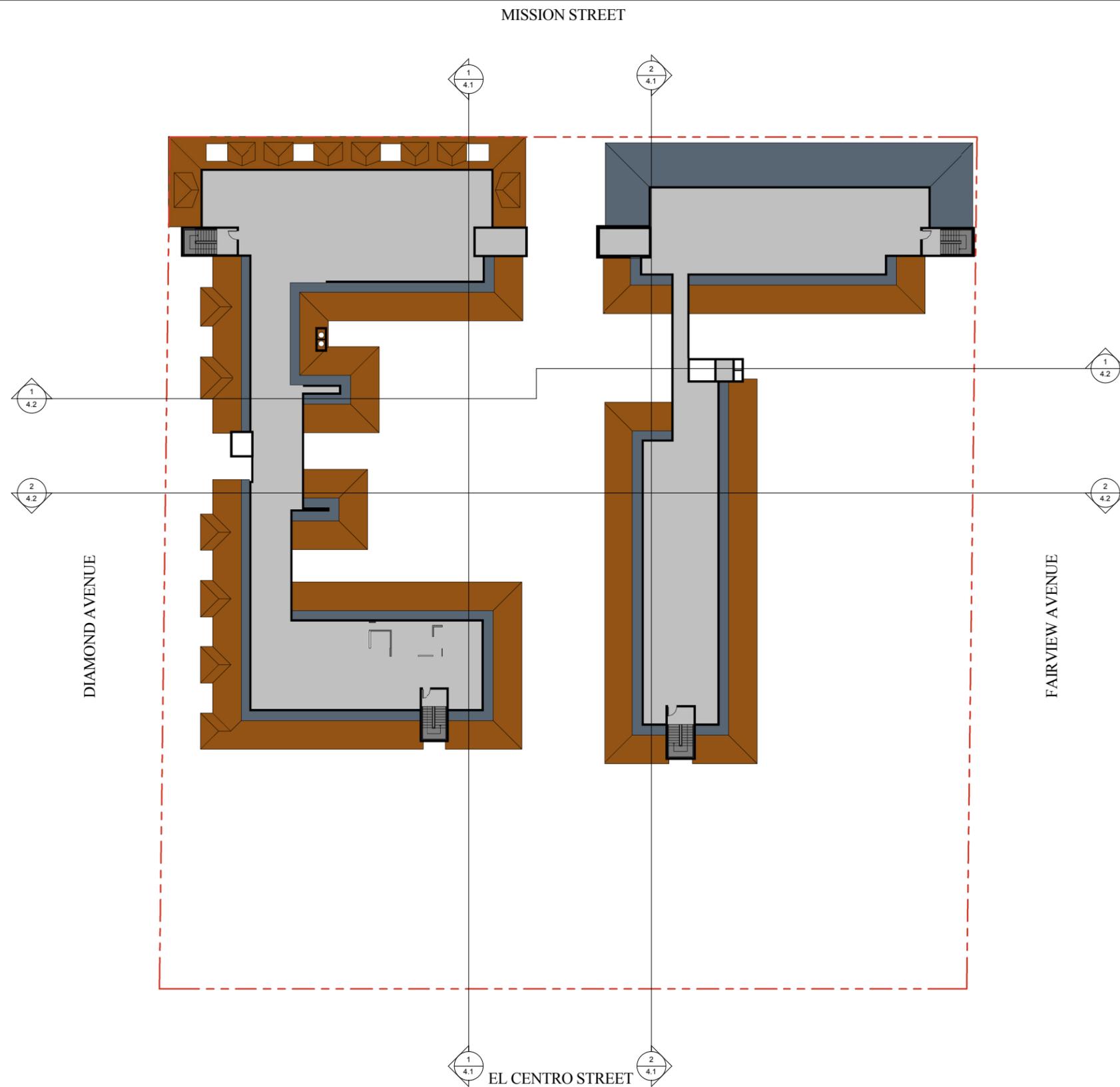


Figure 2.0-6c
Level 3 Plan

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Source: GMP Architects, 2014

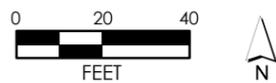
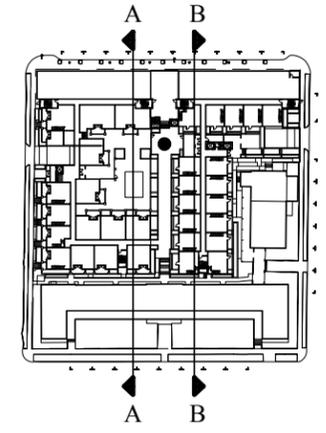
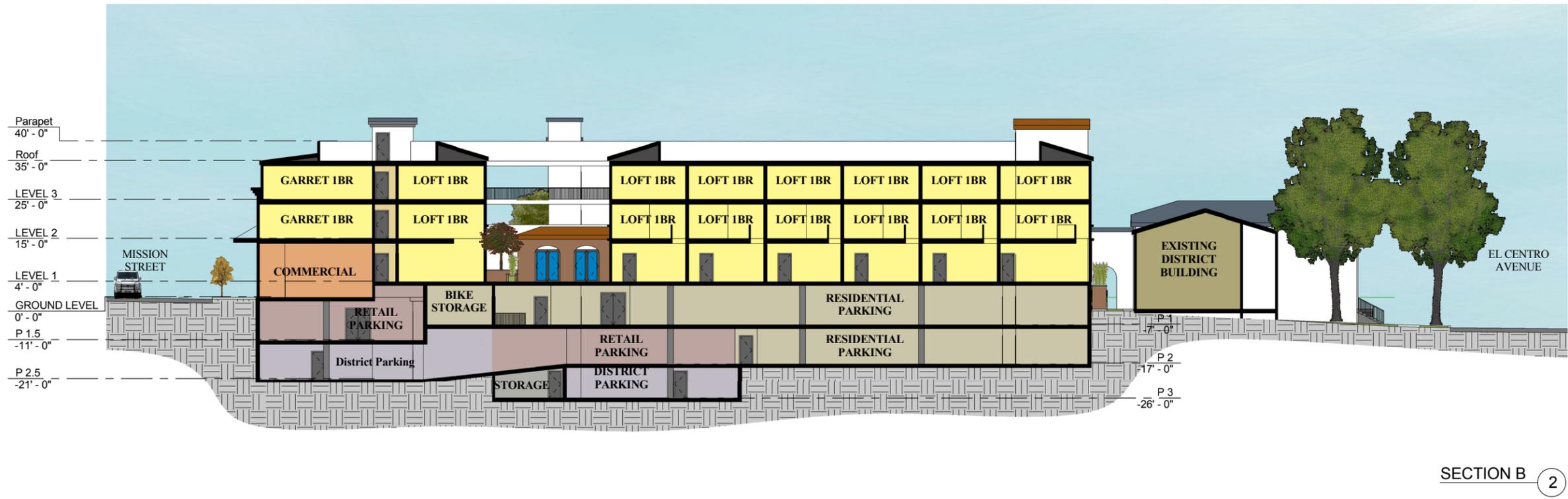
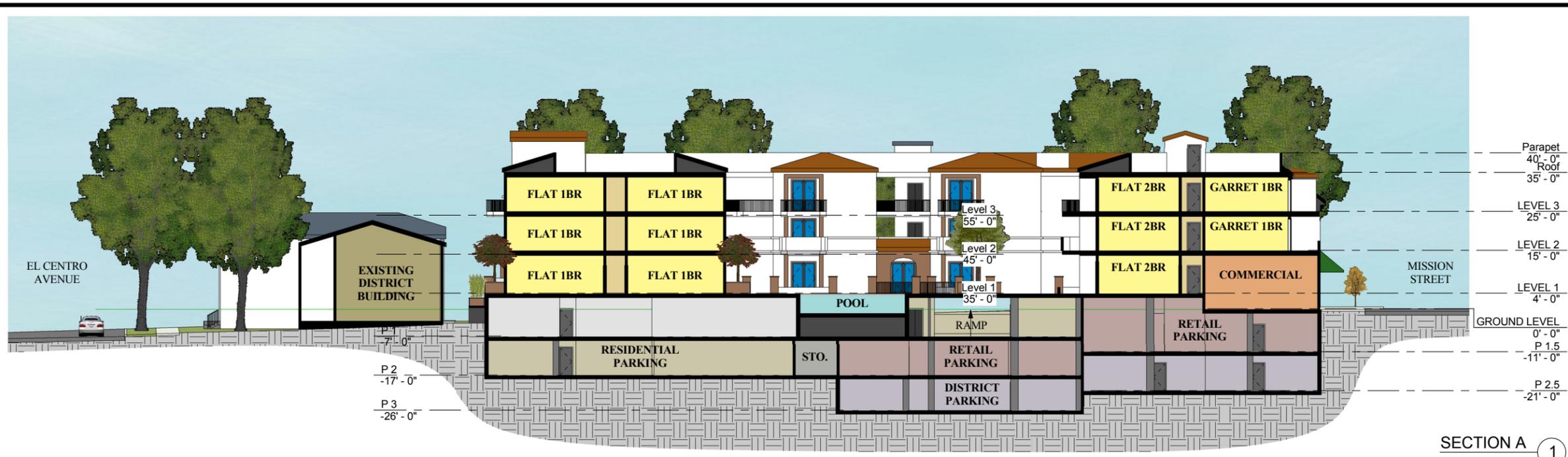


Figure 2.0-6d
Roof Plan

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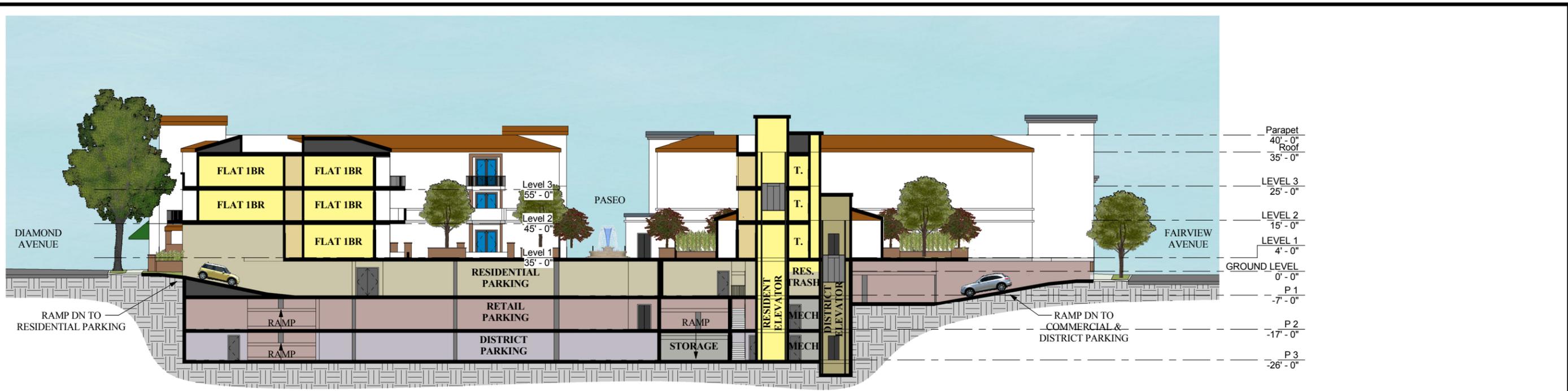
Source: GMP Architects, 2014

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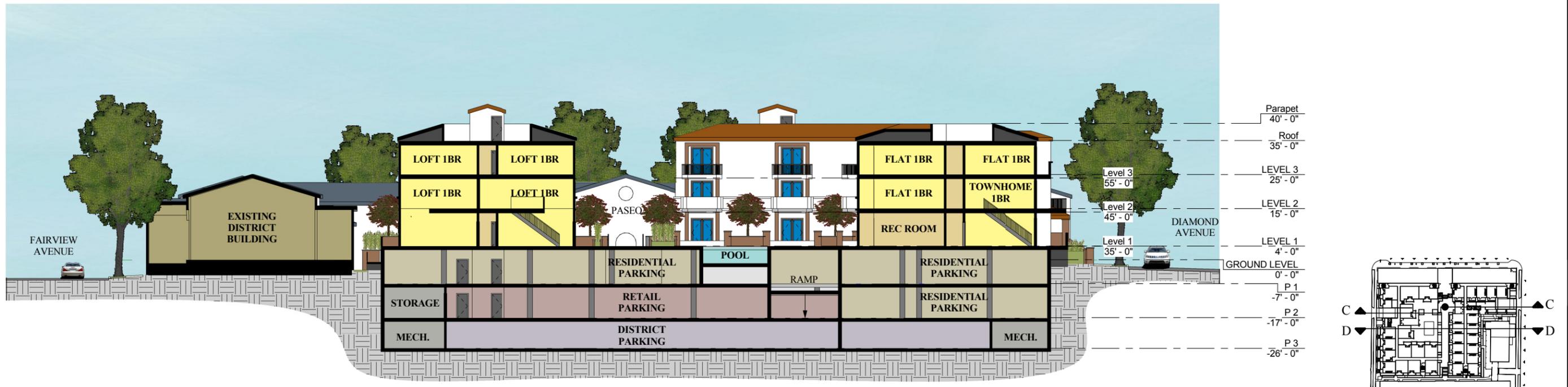
Figure 2.0-7a
North-South Cross Sections

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SECTION C 1



SECTION D 2

Source: GMP Architects, 2014

Not to scale

Figure 2.0-7b
East-West Cross Sections

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08-28-15

3D MODEL VIEW LOOKING EAST/SOUTH EAST DOWN MISSION ADJACENT TO THE RAIL CROSSING

Source: GMP Architects - LA

Figure 2.0-8a
Project 3D Views

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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08-28-15

3D MODEL VIEW LOOKING NORTH/NORTH EAST FROM DIAMOND ADJACENT TO THE LIBRARY

Source: GMP Architects - LA

Figure 2.0-8b
Project 3D Views

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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08-28-15

3D MODEL VIEW LOOKING NORTH/NORTH WEST FROM FAIRVIEW ADJACENT TO THE LIBRARY

Source: GMP Architects - LA

Figure 2.0-8c
Project 3D Views

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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VIEW LOOKING EAST/SOUTH EAST DOWN MISSION ADJACENT TO THE RAIL CROSSING



08-28-15

VIEW LOOKING EAST/SOUTH EAST DOWN MISSION ADJACENT TO THE RAIL CROSSING

Source: GMP Architects - LA

Figure 2.0-9a
3D Model in Context

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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VIEW LOOKING NORTH/NORTH EAST FROM DIAMOND ADJACENT TO THE LIBRARY



08-28-15

Source: GMP Architects - LA

VIEW LOOKING NORTH/NORTH EAST FROM DIAMOND ADJACENT TO THE LIBRARY

Figure 2.0-9b
3D Model in Context

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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VIEW LOOKING NORTH/NORTH WEST FROM FAIRVIEW ADJACENT TO THE LIBRARY



08-28-15

Source: GMP Architects - LA

VIEW LOOKING NORTH/NORTH WEST FROM FAIRVIEW ADJACENT TO THE LIBRARY

Figure 2.0-9c
3D Model in Context

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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ACCESS, CIRCULATION, AND PARKING

Vehicular access to the proposed project would be provided via two full-access driveways into the proposed three-level subterranean parking garage: a resident parking driveway on Diamond Avenue and a commercial and District parking driveway on Fairview Avenue. In total, the proposed garage would encompass 228 parking spaces and is intended to provide parking for the proposed uses, for existing District uses, and for general public use. The proposed garage provides 28 parking spaces for retail uses, 99 spaces for residential use, 60 spaces for SPUSD use, and 41 public parking spaces, for which the MSSP allows a density bonus.

Pedestrian access to the proposed project would be provided via existing sidewalks along Mission Street, Diamond Avenue, and Fairview Avenue. Commercial uses would have direct pedestrian access from Mission Street, and some of the proposed townhomes would have direct pedestrian access from Diamond Avenue. Pedestrian walkways would be provided from adjacent sidewalks to resident lobbies for the proposed indoor-entry residential units; a walkway is proposed to maintain the existing pedestrian access to the north elevation of the District's Administration Building and to the south and west elevations of the Boardroom Building. The proposed paseo would provide additional pedestrian circulation on-site.

OPTIONAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS

As an option of the project and upon request from the City of South Pasadena, Diamond and Fairview Avenues along the project block would be converted to one-way streets, which would continue the existing traffic flow pattern south of El Centro Street. Currently, between Mission Street and El Centro Street, both Diamond and Fairview Avenues are two-way streets, with one travel lane in each direction. However, south of El Centro Street, both avenues become one-way streets, with Diamond Avenue providing one northbound travel lane and Fairview Avenue providing one southbound travel lane. With this option, between Mission and El Centro Streets, Diamond and Fairview Avenues would be striped as one-way streets with one travel lane. Converting Diamond and Fairview Avenues to one lane of one-directional travel would allow for these street segments to be striped with diagonal street parking, resulting in a net increase of on-street parking spaces. This optional improvement would require an encroachment permit from the City of South Pasadena.

DRAINAGE AND UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed project includes connections to the existing water, sewer, electrical, and telecommunications networks. Stormwater flows on-site would be directed to proposed retention planters, with outflows and excess flows directed to the adjacent streets for capture by the City's storm drain system.

CONSTRUCTION

Construction activities are anticipated to last approximately 18 months. Consistent with the City's Noise Ordinance, construction would occur Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Occasional work may occur on a Saturday, which would be limited to the hours between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Work on Sunday and City recognized holidays would take place as needed between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Construction activities would include site preparation, grading and excavation, and building construction. Site preparation, including removal of existing vegetation and asphalt, would last

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

for approximately one month. Grading and excavation would last approximately three months. Excavation for the three-level subterranean parking would result in the export of approximately 48,000 cubic yards of soil. Building construction is expected to last 14 months. The last phase of construction activities would be exterior coating, which would last approximately one month.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The project will be subject to a Construction Management Plan to minimize disruption of the surrounding uses and neighborhood. During the final design phase of the project and prior to construction, the Developer and General Contractor (GC) will work closely with the City of South Pasadena to develop a Construction Management Plan in order to reach these goals. The Construction Management Plan will minimally include the following:

Estimated Work Hours and Noise Control:

Work hours will be as follows:

- 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
- 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturday
- On Sundays and City-recognized holidays, work can take place between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Construction Parking:

Due to site constraints, on-site construction parking will be limited to supervisory staff and delivery/work support vehicles (e.g., welding rigs). Parking for construction workers will be arranged through rental agreements with local parking structures and/or lots, as well as several retail locations surrounding the site. Workers will be encouraged to carpool by limiting the number of spaces available to each subcontractor. On-site parking areas will be identified at each construction phase and as availability of site space permits become available. Off-site parking is also an option by utilizing the Metro Gold Line and the South Pasadena Station, located one block west of the site. The retail corridor surrounding the Fillmore Station, the next station northeast of the site, and making use of the Metro line to commute to the site would provide ample parking. Upon completion of the concrete parking structure (approximately eight months from start), construction parking will be provided by this structure pending approval of the building official.

Once a GC is identified for the project, the SPUSD and the GC will work together to identify off-site parking locations.

Public Safety:

The site will be entirely enclosed by a construction fence. Construction entrances will be located at the north and west sides. Entrances will be gated and flagmen provided during heavy traffic uses such as earth hauling. Periodic lane closures, or use of flagmen, on Diamond Avenue and Fairview Avenue will be limited to specific activities, such as concrete pumping, over a duration of about six to eight months. Sidewalk canopies will be used where needed to protect pedestrians and allow foot traffic. Trucks will most likely be staged at the proposed garage entrance on Fairview Avenue, and will likely require blockage of the parking lane on the western side of the street with the use of flagmen to direct traffic around the closure. These activities will

be temporary and will likely be limited to specified work hours or City-identified hours. Lane closures for the duration of the project are not being considered.

Haul Route:

Hauling and deliveries will be limited to approved haul routes, to be identified by the City of South Pasadena. It is anticipated that small loads/equipment (less than 6,000 pounds) will utilize the CA-110 route as described below. Trucks greater than 6,000 pounds will utilize one of the three alternate routes, also described below.

Route from CA-110:

The inbound haul route will exit Arroyo Seco Parkway (CA-110) south on Orange Grove Avenue, then head east on Mission Street to the project site. The outbound route will exit the project site north on Diamond Avenue, then will follow the reverse of the inbound route.

Alternate #1 from I-210:

The inbound haul route will exit I-210 south on St. John Avenue, then head east on California Boulevard. From California Boulevard, trucks will head south on Fair Oaks Avenue, then west on Mission Street to the project site. The outbound route will be the reverse of the inbound route.

Alternate #2 from I-10:

The inbound route will exit I-10 north on Fremont Avenue. Trucks will head north on Fremont Avenue, then east on Huntington Drive, then north on Fair Oaks Avenue, then west on El Centro Street to the project site. The outbound route will be the reverse of the inbound route.

Alternate #3 from I-710:

The inbound route will exit I-710 East on W. Valley Boulevard to Fremont Avenue. Trucks will head north on Fremont Avenue, then east on Huntington Drive, then north on Fair Oaks Avenue, then west on El Centro Street to the project site. The outbound route will be the reverse of the inbound route.

Dust Control:

Dust will be controlled by watering down during grading operations. Rumble plates and gravel base will be installed at two construction entrances to control soils tracked out from truck traffic. Street sweeping will be used as needed to clean spillage and/or tracked soils onto streets.

Traffic Control:

Flagmen and temporary traffic control cones/barriers will be used for events requiring temporary lane closures such as utility connections and concrete pumping. Street use permits will be applied for through the City of South Pasadena on an as-needed basis for temporary lane closures.

Temporary Facilities:

Restrooms – On-site restrooms during construction will be placed in such a location that they are not fronting Mission Street.

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Staging:

Staging will likely occur off of Fairview Avenue, just north of the existing SPUSD building, at the proposed garage entrance. Delivery trucks and concrete pumping trucks will likely block one parking stall on Fairview Avenue until materials are unloaded or concrete pumping hours are complete. Once the proposed garage is completed, staging can occur on the courtyard/landscape areas of the development. The construction crane will likely be erected in the middle of the site, off of any public streets or rights-of-way.

2.0.4 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15050 and 15367, the South Pasadena Unified School District has been designated as the CEQA lead agency for the project. The lead agency is defined as the "public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project." The City of South Pasadena has been designated as a responsible agency, which is defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15381 as an "an agency other than the lead agency (that has) discretionary approval power over the project."

Project implementation would require the following approvals from the South Pasadena Unified School District:

- Final EIR Certification
- Development and Disposition Agreement (DDA)
- Lease Agreement

Project implementation would require the following approvals from the City of South Pasadena:

- Certificate of Appropriateness
- Design Review
- Conditional Use Permit
- Building Permit
- Encroachment Permit