

EXHIBIT A

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

ENSIGN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District (District) proposes to upgrade facilities at Ensign Intermediate School (EIS) by providing security fencing, access and parking improvements. This supplemental information provides justification for the Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines under California Code of Regulations, Title 14 § 15301 and 15302.

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is at Ensign Intermediate School at 2000 Cliff Drive, City of Newport Beach, Orange County. The campus is approximately 0.2 mile north of State Route 1 (Pacific Coast Highway). The EIS campus is rectangularly shaped and bordered by Coral Place to the north, Irvine Avenue to the west, St. Andrews Place to the west, and Cliff Drive to the south (see Figure 1, *Regional Location* and Figure 2, *Local Vicinity*). Newport Bay is directly south across Pacific Coast Highway

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EIS is a 7th and 8thth grade public school with a 2018/2019 enrollment of 1,175 students, according to the California Department of Education (CDE) (CDE 2019). The campus is currently developed with permanent and portable classroom buildings, administration buildings, a gymnasium, two parking lots, baseball fields, multipurpose athletic field, hardcourts, outdoor lunch quad, pedestrian walkways, and landscaped planters (see Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*).

Main vehicular access to the intermediate school student loading zone is provided along Cliff Drive. Vehicles stop on both sides of Cliff Drive to drop-off students, with U-turns and double parking occurring (vehicles stopped in the traffic lane rather than stopped at the curb). The majority of activity along Cliff Drive occurs at the north curb (westbound). In the morning, it was observed that 66% of drop-off activity occurred on Cliff Drive, and in the afternoon 34% of pick-ups occurred on Cliff Drive.¹ Access to the main faculty parking lot is provided via Irvine Avenue. Beacon Street is also currently used as a drop-off area. Signage and curb improvements around the school site recently completed by the City of Newport Beach include alternating “No Parking” and “5 Minute Pick-Up/Drop-Off” zones along Cliff Drive, a “5 Minute Pick-Up/Drop-Off” zone on Coral Place, and a bus loading area along St. Andrews Road (see Figure 4, *Existing Pick-Up/Drop-Off Zones*). With the existing curb signage, there are 25 spaces at the street curb on Cliff Drive, including the specified pick-up/drop-off areas. The majority of students arrive at and depart the school by car, while additional modes of transportation include bus, bike and walking.

SURROUNDING LAND USES

The EIS campus is in a residential community. Single family homes border the campus across Coral Place to the north, Irvine Avenue to the west, St. Andrews Place to the west, and Cliff Drive to the south.

¹ According to the Newport Heights Neighborhood School Traffic Study, Kimley Horn, May 2018 and the Review of Access & Circulation for Proposed Site Plan Improvements, The Mobility Group, February 2019

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The District proposes to install access, parking, and security fencing improvements at EIS (see Figure 5, *Facility Improvements*). A new onsite pick-up/drop-off zone and visitor parking for 18 vehicles (Lot “B”) will be created to the south of the campus along Cliff Drive where landscaping currently exists between the sidewalk and classroom buildings (see Figure 6, *Visual Simulation – School Entrance*). The new zone between the school building and Cliff Drive would have an entry driveway at the east end, and an exit driveway at the west end, to provide one-way westbound vehicular circulation for drop-off and pick-up activity. The zone would accommodate an onsite 10-foot sidewalk directly adjacent to the school, an 8-foot drop-off lane, an 11.5-foot travel lane, and a 26-foot travel lane and angled parking area with a shared access aisle, which would equal the available 44 feet between the school building and the public sidewalk. The new onsite zone would provide a total of 24 visitor parking spaces and 20 new curb spaces for pick-up/drop-off, and would allow for the mid-block island in Cliff Drive close to the east driveway of the new zone be removed in order to facilitate vehicle turns into the driveway² (see Figure 7, *Pick-Up/Drop-Off Zone Layout*). It is not recommended that the 18 new parallel parking spaces be used for pick-up/drop-off activity as children would be entering/exiting cars from the travel lane, and instead be used as visitor parking. The existing 25 street curb parking spaces and signage would remain. Parking spaces available for pick-up and drop-off under the proposed project would increase by 80%.

A new staff parking lot with 39 spaces (Lot “C”) will be created between Irvine Avenue and the track and field in the northwest portion of the campus, where bicycle parking is currently housed (see Figure 8, *Visual Simulation – Visitor Parking*). The ingress/egress point for this parking is located from Irvine Avenue opposite Beacon Street and will be redone as a four way stop intersection. A maintenance building and other features will be demolished, and bicycle parking will be relocated southeast of the parking lot. The improved fencing will extend around the entirety of the campus (see Figure 9, *Visual Simulation – Faculty Parking*).

A new, eight-foot-tall security fence (chain-link and ornamental metal) will be installed around the perimeter of the school and a main entry point will be designated next to the Administration Building on Cliff Drive. Students currently enter and exit the campus from many points but will be redirected to using the main entry after completion of the fence. Existing access points at Irvine Avenue and Beacon Street, on Coral Place, and on St. Andrews Road will be closed. Landscaping, outdoor learning spaces, and courtyards will be implemented at the school site. Surrounding site signage and curb markings would be updated to reflect changes in circulation due to the pick-up/drop-off zone on Cliff Drive. The bus zone on St. Andrews Road would remain in its current location.

Students entering the school from the bus zone on St. Andrews Road would utilize walkable grass as pathways where sidewalks are not available, and their path would not conflict with any pick-up/drop-off zone. Existing pick-up/drop-off activity on Irvine Avenue would continue and students instead of accessing the campus at Beacon Street would use the east sidewalk on Irvine Avenue and the new off-street pedestrian path around the east side of the existing staff parking lot to access the main school entrance. Pick-ups/drop-offs on Coral Place could continue but would involve a longer walk to the new main entrance.

Public access to the campus will be restricted after school hours and during weekends. Only groups permitted under the District’s Use of Facilities process will be permitted on campus during these times. Community members currently using the campus for recreation and exercise will no longer have such access. The project does not involve an increase in student capacity and is intended to improve student drop-off/pick-up efficiency and safety and increase the number of on-campus parking spaces.

² The installation of new driveways at the east and west ends and the removal of the mid-block island in Cliff Drive closest to the east end are subject to City approval.

CONSTRUCTION

Construction of landscaping, fencing, pick-up/drop-off and parking lot improvements will occur on the school campus; off-campus work consists of changes in driveway alignment at the northwest parking lot and southern pick-up/drop-off and parking zone. Construction activities will be implemented beginning in summer 2019 continuing to summer 2020. Construction will be split into four phases (see Figure 10, *Construction Phasing*) as depicted in Table 1, *Construction Phasing*. HVAC Upgrades are listed in the table below but are not part of the proposed project.

Table 1 Construction Phasing

Phase	Segment	Dates
Preconstruction	Site Parking and Security "Bus Garage" selective demolition	Summer 2019
Preconstruction	Site Parking and Security "Bike Rack" temporary installation	Summer 2019
HVAC Upgrades	Temporary admin offices and temporary fence for HVAC summer project	Summer 2019
HVAC Upgrades	2019 HVAC Upgrades	6/21/19 – 8/26/19
Phase 1	Site Parking and Security "Back Lot"	1 st Semester 2019 to 2020
Phase 2	Site Parking and Security "Front Lot"	2 nd Semester 2019 to 2020
Phase 3	Site Parking and Security "Bike Rack" permanent installation	Summer 2020
Phase 3	Site Parking and Security "Bus Loop & Perimeter"	Summer 2020
TBD	Ensign Engineering - Planning Only	TBD

Source: Newport Mesa Unified School District, 2019

To the extent possible, construction will be limited to summer months to minimize classroom disturbances. School administration and the construction contractor will work together to coordinate and stay informed about construction activities, location, and schedule. Contractors will adhere to construction noise regulations to avoid disruption to campus operations. No subterranean construction would occur; as no new building construction would occur.

3. REASONS WHY THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The project is exempt from further environmental review under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§ 21000 et seq.) because it is consistent with Class 1, Existing Facilities; and Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, as explained below.

- » **Class 1, Existing Facilities (CEQA Guidelines § 15301)** consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use.
- » **15302. Replacement or Reconstruction.** Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity of the structure replaced.

The project involves the installation of security fencing, parking lots, a student pick-up drop off zone and the restriction of campus access points, in addition to minor alterations. No new building construction will occur. No changes in occupancy capacities or square footage increases will occur, and off-campus improvements are limited to the conversion of existing landscaping to the southern pick-up drop off zone connecting to Cliff Drive. Existing uses of the facility would stay the same under the proposed project.

4. REVIEW OF EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

The project has been reviewed under CEQA Guidelines § 15300.2 - Exceptions, for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the project is exempt from CEQA. Each exception is listed below followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the project.

- (a) **Location.** Classes 3,4,5,6 and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project would be located—a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The project site is on an existing school campus surrounded by a developed residential community. The campus has buildings, asphalt hardcourts and parking lots, concrete driveways and walkways, turf playfields, and ornamental landscaping. Due to the school's developed nature and frequent human disturbance, it does not contain any sensitive biological species or habitat. No mapped wetlands exist on the site (FWS 2018). Additionally, there is no evidence of hazardous materials or substances (see section (e) below). Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.

- (b) **Cumulative Impacts.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

No other cumulative projects are ongoing at the project site with the exception of HVAC upgrades. Several other District projects are currently underway at nearby schools, including a new aquatic facility, district-wide HVAC upgrades, modernization projects, and security fencing. These projects include the Corona del Mar High School sports fields and security fence; Estancia High School pool and theater; Newport Harbor High School kiln project; and introduction and upgrades to HVAC systems in all schools and district facilities. Current and future HVAC projects include Whittier, Mariners, Newport Heights, Newport, Harbor View, and Back Bay High School anticipated to be completed in 2019; and Costa Mesa Middle School/High School and Newport Harbor High School anticipated to be completed in 2020. Those within a one-mile radius of the project site include Newport Harbor High School located approximately 0.4-mile northeast of EIS, and Newport Heights Elementary, located approximately 0.9-mile northwest of the project site. Construction schedules of these schools' projects at that at EIS could potentially overlap in 2020, however due to the scale and routine nature of the HVAC upgrade projects, a cumulative impact is not anticipated at any of the project sites. Similar projects at nearby schools would not have an impact on the proposed project, and the proposed project, when combined with cumulative District projects, would not create a cumulative impact under CEQA.

The proposed project will increase the number of spaces available for pick-up and drop-off by 80% and will provide a safe on-site sidewalk for pick-up and drop-off activities. The project will avoid instances of "double parking" on Cliff Drive with the proposed new zone and will reduce the number of U-turns occurring on Cliff Drive, replaced by drivers turning left into or out of the driveways for the onsite zone. Additionally, the project will provide a more efficient traffic flow on Cliff Drive, more efficient pick-up/drop-off operations, and provide visitor parking. Cumulative impacts would not apply. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (c) **Significant Effects.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

The project site is on a currently occupied middle school campus and surrounded by development. There is no reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

Proposed improvements will not alter the capacity of the campus or existing uses. The construction manager will execute construction activities per current local, state, and federal laws, regulations, construction Best Management Practices, District standards and guidelines. Facility improvements have been designed to enhance pick-up and drop-off circulation and increase parking capacity on-site. Fencing improvements will increase security and are not expected to inhibit circulation.

The new on-site pick-up/drop-off zone is not expected to fundamentally change the number of vehicles dropping off and picking up on Cliff Drive, though some vehicles using Coral Place would divert to using Cliff Drive due to the longer walk to the single-entry point on Cliff Drive. Given the additional spaces provided by the on-site zone and the relatively low volumes on Cliff Drive, the increase in vehicles should be able to be accommodated. The addition of onsite parking for staff will lessen existing staff parking that occurs on streets adjacent to/near the school. Traffic would not increase substantially along Irvine Avenue and Beacon Street and existing conditions would accommodate a slight increase in traffic. Pedestrian and bike traffic along Irvine Avenue are anticipated to increase, and bike utilization of the sidewalk in addition to pick-up/drop-off activity could potentially increase congestion. Students would continue to utilize safe pathways to enter the school campus from various pick-up/drop-off locations, and no new conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles would be created.

As public access to the campus under the proposed project will be restricted after school hours and during weekends, only groups permitted under the District's Use of Facilities process will be permitted on campus during these times. Community members currently using the campus for recreation and exercise will no longer have such access. The loss of access to recreational facilities would be considered a CEQA issue only if it resulted in other recreational facilities receiving such an increase in use that there was a physical deterioration in those facilities, which is not considered likely. Other public recreational facilities available for walking and jogging in the general area include Cliff Drive Park, approximately 0.65 miles west of the project site, and Castaways Park, approximately 0.8 mile east of the project site. The number of neighborhood recreational users is not sufficient to create a significant physical deterioration of these facilities. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (d) Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

There are no designated State scenic highways near the EIS campus. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the closest eligible state scenic highway is Route 1 (Pacific Coast Highway), approximately 0.2 mile south of the school (Caltrans 2019). The project would not affect this highway due to intervening development and the types of surface improvements proposed. The project would not affect scenic resources along any officially designated or eligible scenic highways. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the compiling of lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated.

Five environmental databases were searched for hazardous materials sites and within a quarter mile radius:

- » GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2015)
- » EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2019)
- » EJScreen. US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2018)
- » EnviroMapper. US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA n.d.)
- » Solid Waste Information System. California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle 2019)

The site is not identified on any of the sites; therefore, the project site is not identified as a hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and the project would not create a hazard to the public. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (f) **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Under Public Resource Code § 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, historical resources included in a local register of historical resources are presumed to be historically or culturally significant, and a lead agency can determine whether the resource may be an historical resource.

There are no historic resources on the campus that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NPS 2014), the California Register of Historical Resources (OHP n.d.), or as a California State Historical Landmark (OHP n.d.). Project implementation would not cause significant impacts to historical resources, and the historical resources exception would not apply to this project site.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed project at Ensign Intermediate School is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and 15302. As substantiated in this document, the proposed project would not meet the conditions specified in § 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines, and the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 and Class 2.

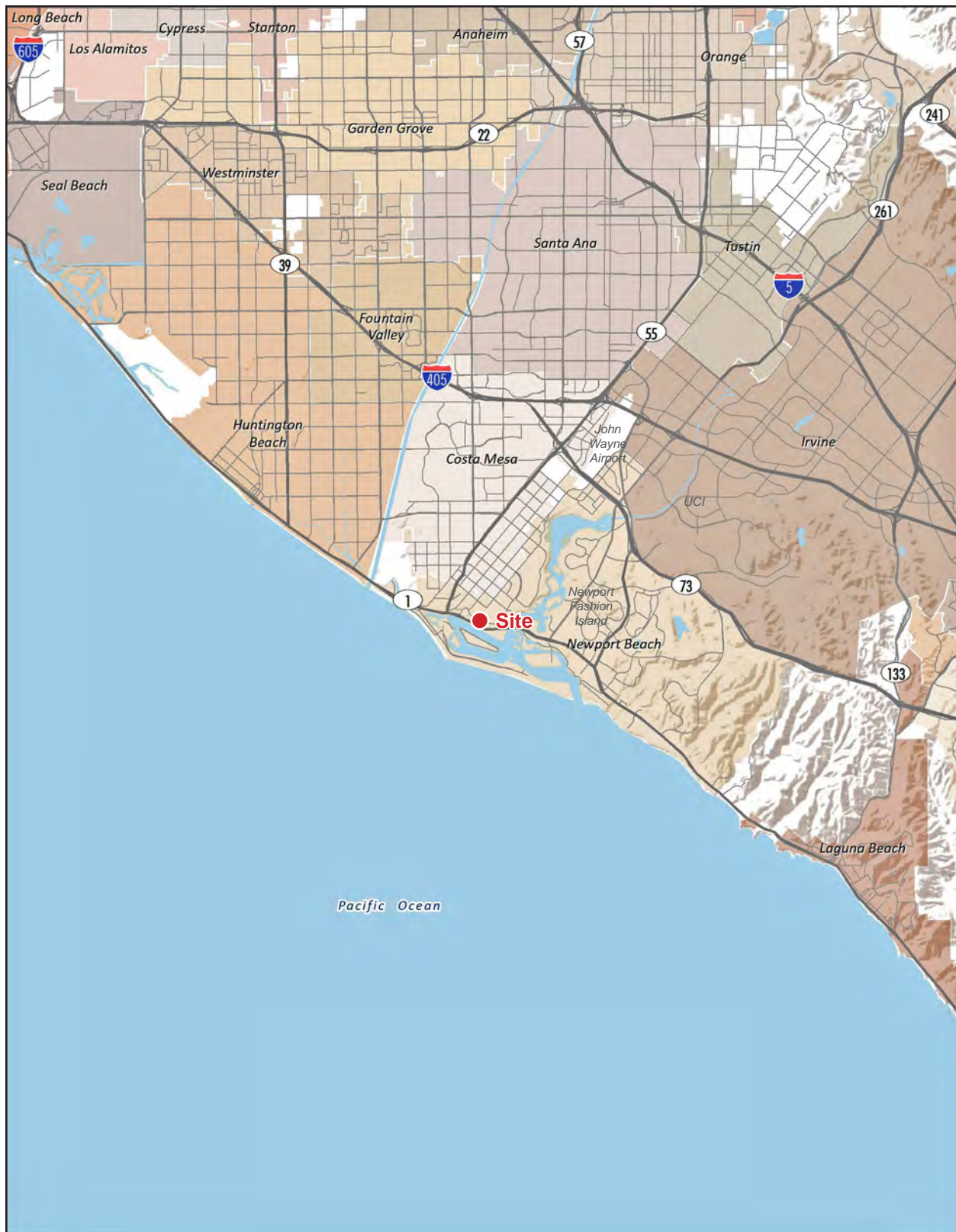
6. REFERENCES

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- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2011, September 7. California Scenic Highway Mapping System.
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US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). n.d. EnviroMapper for EnviroFacts.
<https://www3.epa.gov/enviro/index.html>.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). 2018, April. National Wetlands Inventory – Wetlands Mapper.
<https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.HTML>.

Figure 1 - Regional Location



Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.

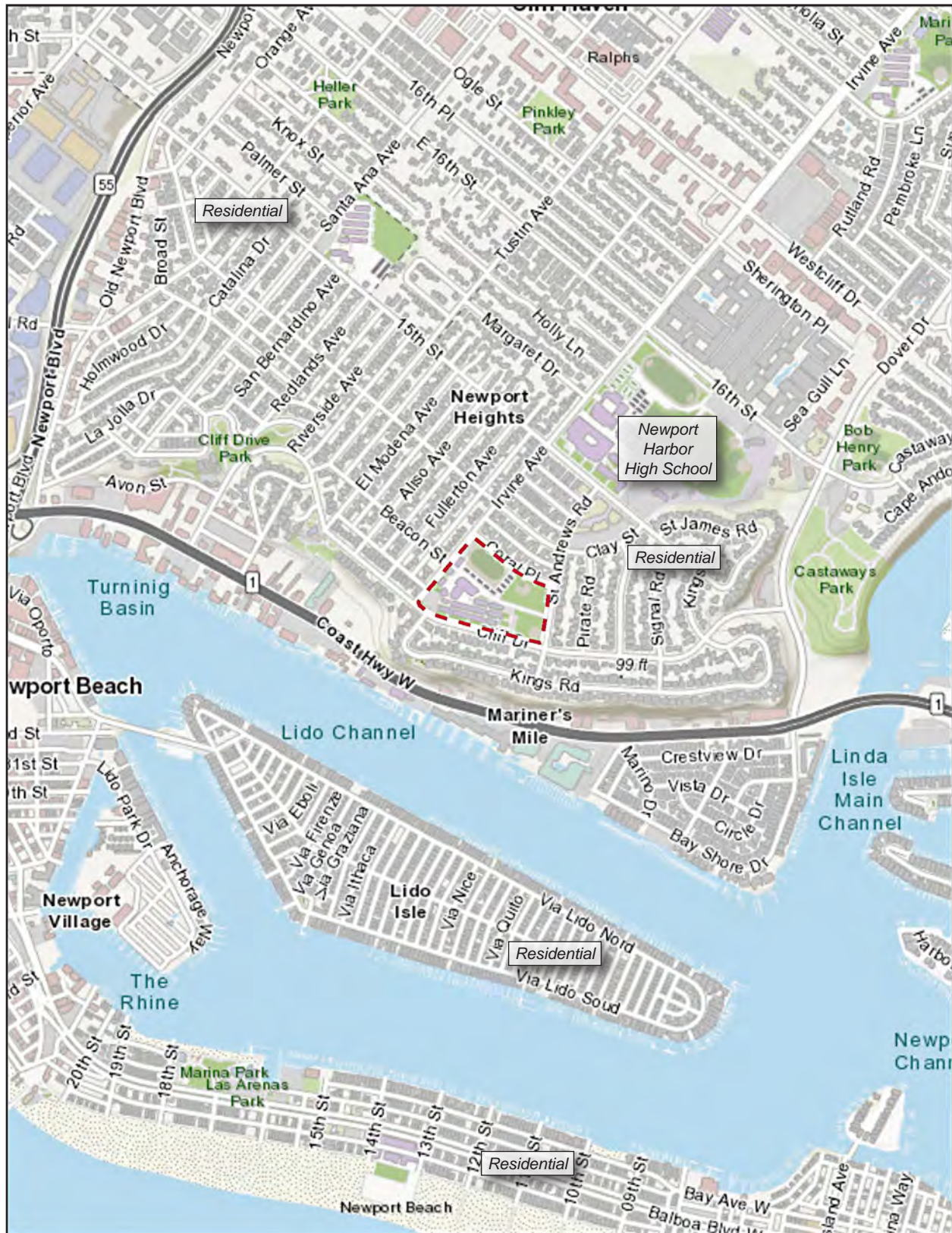
Source: ESRI, 2019

0 3
Scale (Miles)



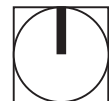
PlaceWorks

Figure 2 - Local Vicinity



--- School Boundary

0 1,000
Scale (Feet)



Source: ESRI, 2019

PlaceWorks

Figure 3 - Aerial Photograph



— School Boundary

Source: Google Earth Pro, 2019

0 300
Scale (Feet)



PlaceWorks

Figure 4 - Existing Pick-Up/Drop-Off Zones



— School Boundary

— 5 Minute Pick-Up/Drop-Off Zone

••••• No Parking

— Bus Loading Zone

0 200
Scale (Feet)



Source: Google Earth Pro, 2019

Figure 5 - Facility Improvements

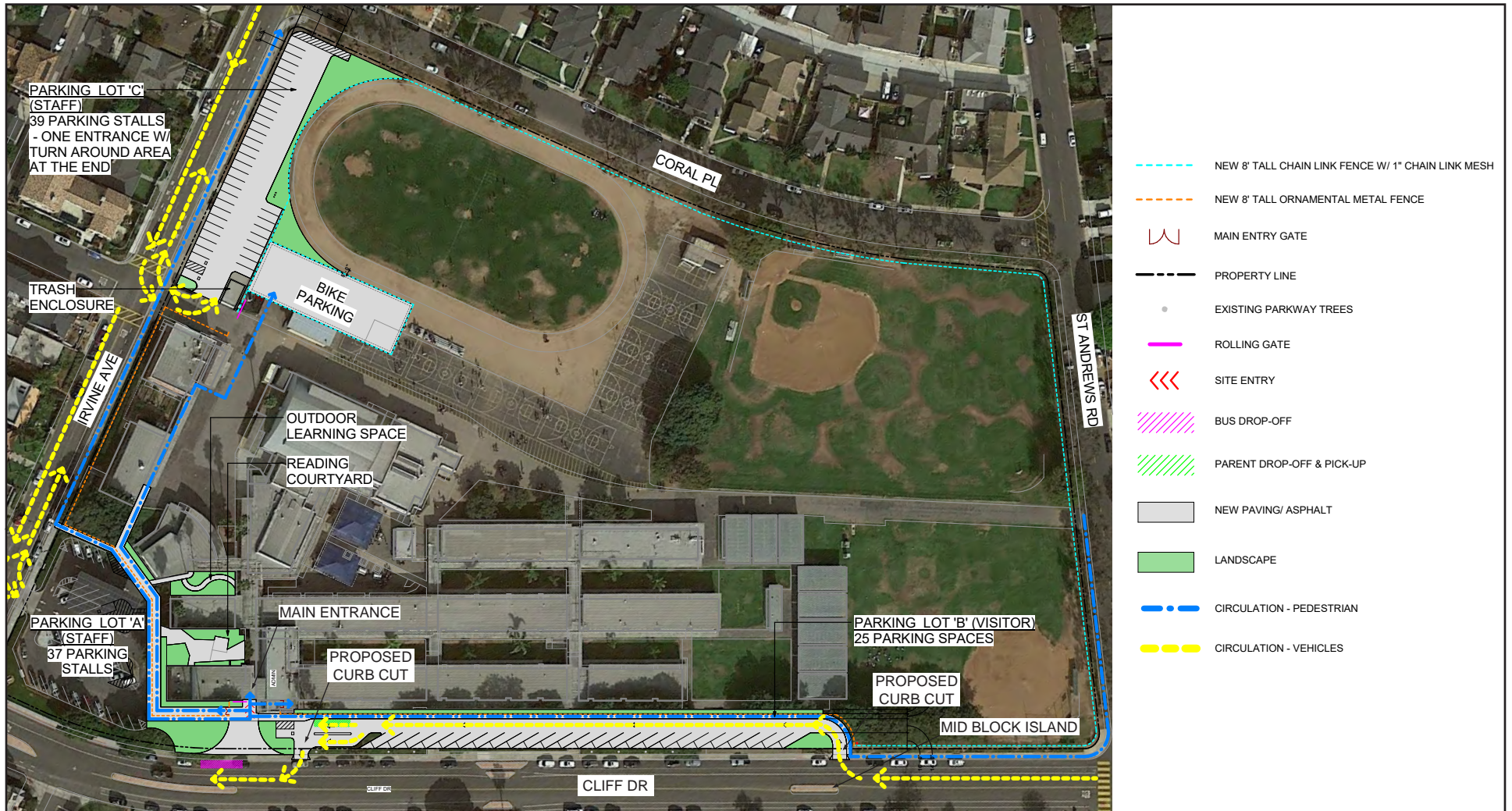
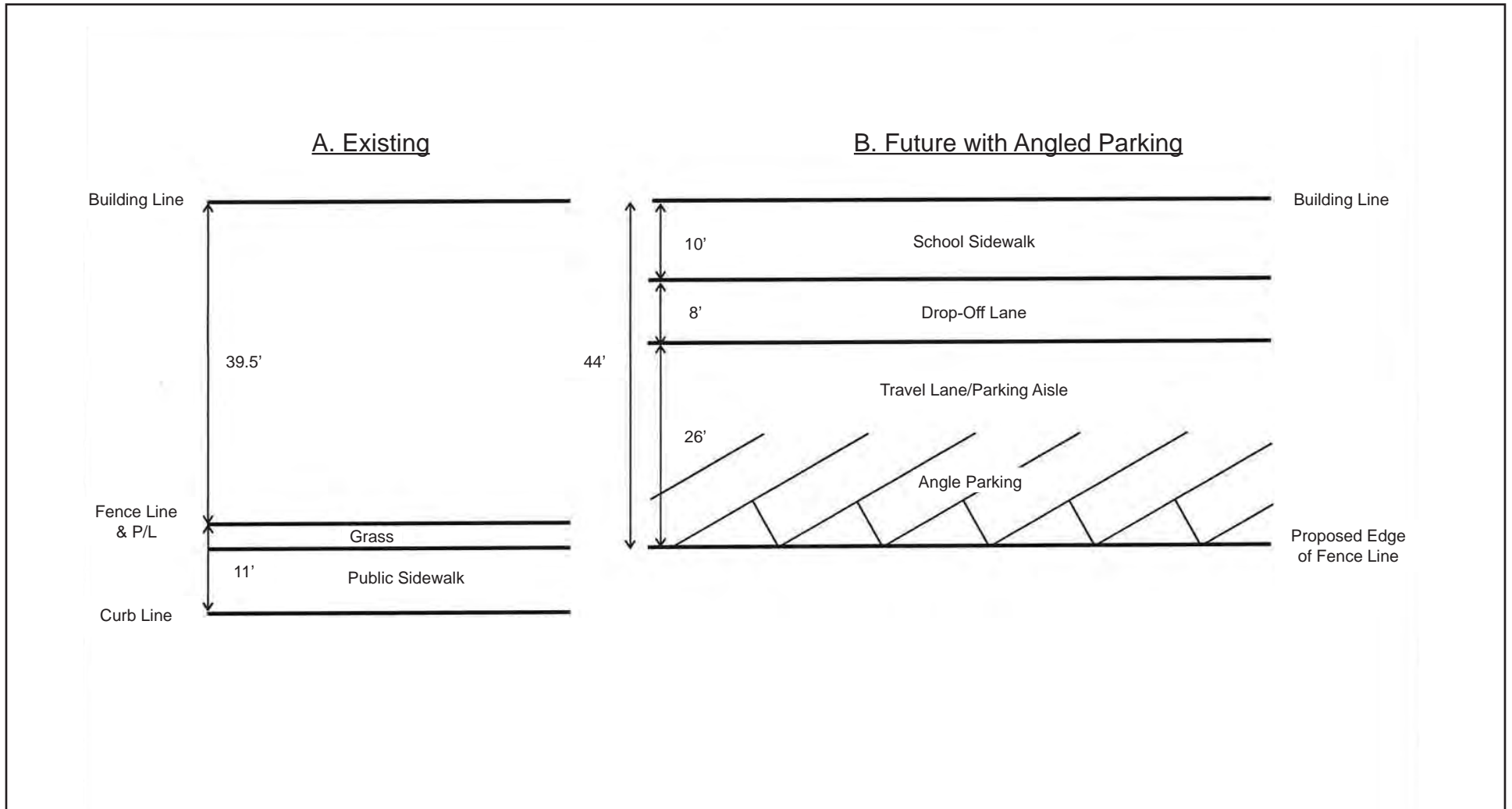


Figure 6 - Visual Simulation - School Entrance



Figure 7 - Pick-Up/Drop-Off Zone Layout



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Scale (Feet)

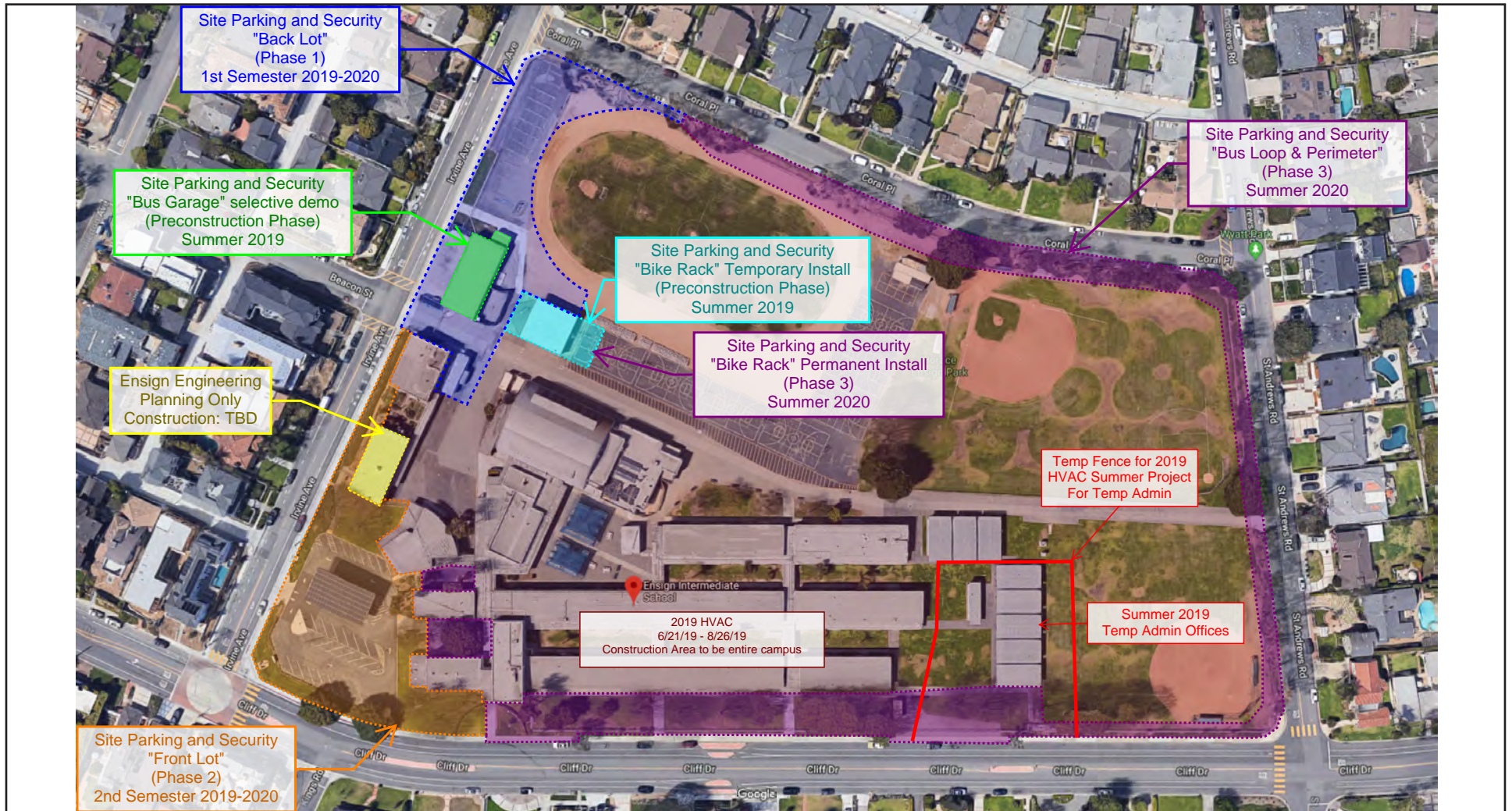
Figure 8 - Visual Simulation - Visitor Parking



Figure 9 - Visual Simulation - Faculty Parking



Figure 10 - Construction Phasing



0 200
Scale (Feet)