

3

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 15125 of CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, from a local and regional perspective. Knowledge of the existing environmental setting is critical to the assessment of environmental impacts. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the description of the environmental setting shall not be longer than necessary to understand the potential significant effects of the project.

The Project Description chapter of the EIR provides a comprehensive description of the United Auburn Indian Community School Project (proposed project) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. Please note that this chapter provides an overall general description of the existing environmental conditions; however, detailed discussions of the existing setting in compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, as it relates to each given potential impact area, is included in each technical chapter of this EIR.

3.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) School Project (proposed project) site is located in unincorporated Placer County, adjacent to the Town of Loomis (see Figure 3-1). The site is a 45-acre parcel of land at 3141 Taylor Road (see Figure 3-2), identified by Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) 043-013-010.

3.3 PROJECT SETTING AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

Background information regarding the UAIC’s existing school operations, as well as the proposed project site’s existing characteristics and surrounding land uses are discussed below.

Background

Currently, the UAIC operates a private pre-K through eighth grade tribal school, located at 10720 Indian Hill Road in Auburn, California. The school is administered by the UAIC Education Department, and has been operational since May of 2008. Upon completion of the proposed project, the existing school location in Auburn would continue to be used by the UAIC for administrative/office purposes; however, all classroom operations would be relocated to the proposed project site.

**Figure 3-1
Regional Project Location**



Figure 3-2
Project Vicinity Map



Site Characteristics

The proposed project site is bounded by Taylor Road to the north and Tumble Lane, an unpaved dirt road, to the east. The project site and the areas to the north, south, and east of the site are within the planning area of the Horseshoe Bar/Penryn Community Plan. The Town of Loomis limit is contiguous with the project site's western boundary. Per the Community Plan, the site is designated Rural Residential. The site is zoned Residential-Agriculture, Minimum Lot Area 100,000 square feet (sf) (RA-B-100). Currently, the project site consists of open, rolling grassland, oak woodlands, and existing development. The project site was previously used as an orchard before being partially developed for use as a bed and breakfast, as well as an event center. The bed and breakfast has not been operational for the past 10 years. In general, the northern third of the project site has been subject to a relatively high level of disturbance, while the southern two-thirds is primarily undeveloped.

Existing development on the northern portion of the site includes five structures, an associated water supply well and septic system, 65 parking spaces, and an irrigation stock pond. The Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) currently supplies raw water to the pond by way of the PCWA's Red Ravine irrigation canal located north of the project site. The existing parking lot and associated structures are located in the northwest portion of the site, directly south of Taylor Road. The project site's frontage along Taylor Road largely consists of an elevated berm with associated landscaping, such that the majority of the project site is screened from Taylor Road.

The irrigation stock pond is situated near the eastern site boundary. The pond is separated from the eastern site boundary by a narrow strip of oak woodland, which extends to the north and south of the pond along the length of the site. It should be noted that a second, smaller pond is located at the undeveloped southeastern portion of the site.

Surrounding Land Uses

Surrounding land uses include a single-family residential subdivision (Legacy Lane) to the west, within the Town of Loomis, rural residential developments to the south and east, and additional rural single-family residences to the north of the site, across Taylor Road and to the south of the nearby railroad tracks. A commercial boat repair business (Cal's Marine Power Center) is situated to the east of the single-family residences, north of the intersection of Taylor Road and Tumble Lane. A multi-family development (The Orchard) is located adjacent to the southeast corner of the project site. Other nearby land uses include Del Oro High School to the southwest and Smart Start Preschool to the south.

3.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The following project objectives have been developed by the project applicant for the proposed project:

The primary objective of the proposed project is to provide a state-of-the-art permanent campus for a new pre-K through 8th grade school to serve approximately 100 UAIC students, along with a Tribal Education Center for approximately 30 adult and high school aged Tribal members

throughout the week. Additionally, a Cultural Center will provide space for galleries, archives and cultural activities. The Tribal School would serve UAIC students and their families through a program of experiential learning and cultural immersion, and is not proposed for open enrollment to the general public. To serve the unique needs of UAIC students and families, the Tribal School's basic objectives are as follows:

1. Establish and maintain a high-quality academic pre-k through 8th grade campus program alongside extra-curricular programs that together create an enriching school experience. For such a program to be offered, the following elements are necessary:
 - a. Adequate acreage to accommodate a pre-k through 8th grade requisite academic, administrative, cultural, outdoor/nature interactive and athletic activities.
 - b. Adequate classroom space to establish and maintain a broad program of academic courses, electives and cultural programs and activities required for a state-of-the-art pre-K through 8th grade school campus for Tribal members.
 - c. Adequate classroom space to establish and maintain a continuing education program for adult members of the UAIC.
 - d. Adequate space for administrative offices, a library and service areas.
 - e. Athletic and recreational areas on the campus site, accessible year around and in evenings, including a small (non-regulation) lighted ballfield and play areas.
 - f. A kitchen and dining facility to provide nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon meals for students, faculty and staff.
 - g. A vibrant pre-k through 8th grade student life on campus with buildings and places designed for both work and play.
 - h. A cultural center to further the study and research of Tribal history and traditions and to promote cultural participation, outreach and exchange among Tribal members and eventually the general public.
 - i. Consolidate Tribal education activities and programs, including pre-k through 8th grade and adult education, onto a single integrated campus.
2. Provide safe and efficient access, parking, and internal circulation to accommodate students, faculty/staff and families, along with a private shuttle service for attending students.
3. Accommodate pre-k through 8th grade school graduation, admissions and other student-centered events.
4. Create a positive relationship with the community by creating a campus that will have minimal impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
5. Utilize a site of sufficient area and topography for a school campus, with adjacent major roadway and convenient freeway access, and available wet and dry utilities, including sewer connection.
6. Integrate a keen awareness of the environment and other factors that comprise the natural setting for the Tribal School and utilize the unique location in the school's educational environment.
7. Preserve the majority of pond, riparian and oak woodland habitat and rock outcroppings on the project site.
8. Comply with existing County development standards.
9. Create a low-impact, low-intensity, and primarily one-story accessible campus environment with multiple buildings housing classroom and non-classroom uses.

10. Provide for a safe and secure educational environment for Tribal students and family members.

3.5 PROJECT COMPONENTS

The proposed project includes demolition of all on-site structures, including the main house, carriage house, event center, caretaker's cottage, and barn. The site would be redeveloped for use as a pre-K through 8th-grade school designed to serve up to 100 UAIC students with 35 staff members (see Figure 3-3, Figure 3-4, and Figure 3-5). In addition, the project would include construction of a Tribal Education Center and a Tribal Cultural Center. Up to six staff members would serve the Tribal Education Center and an additional two staff members would serve the Tribal Cultural Center. As noted previously, the site is designated Rural Residential per the Community Plan and zoned RA-B-100. The project would be consistent with the existing land use and zoning designations of the project site. The project components, including requested entitlements, are discussed in detail below.

It should be noted that since the release of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed project, certain aspects of the project have been refined. For example, whereas previously four school buildings were proposed (Buildings A through D), now two buildings are proposed (A and B). As a result, the total building square footage has been reduced, though not substantially, as Building A has been increased in size. The original Site Plan included 52,000 sf of building area, whereas the current Site Plan includes 48,650 sf.

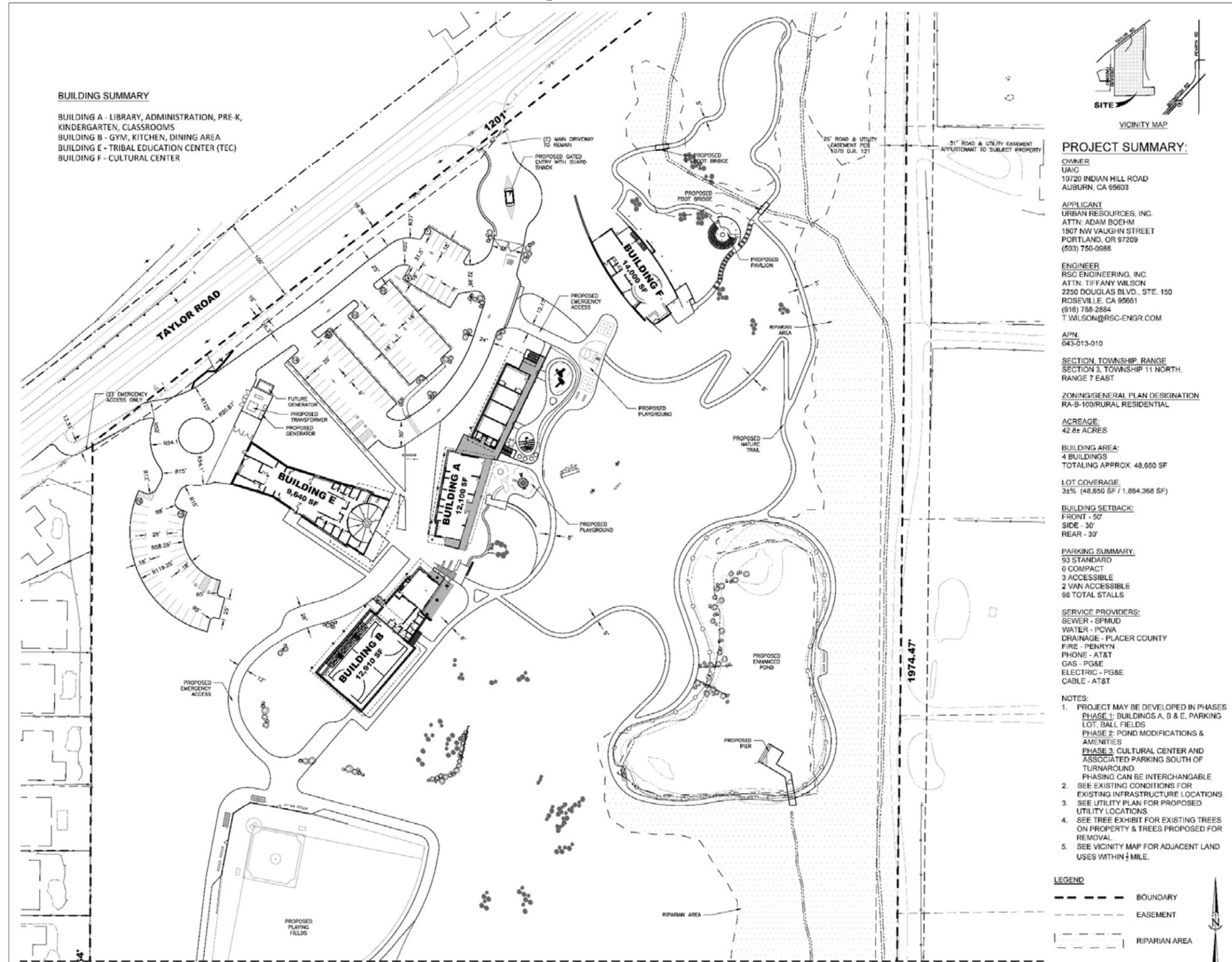
Proposed Buildings

Following demolition activity, the project site would be developed with a school, a Tribal Education Center, and a Tribal Cultural Center (see Figure 3-6 through Figure 3-8). The proposed structures would total approximately 48,650 sf, with individual building sizes ranging from approximately 9,640 to 14,000 sf.

The structures would primarily be one-story; however, the proposed administrative/classroom building for the school would have a partial lower level for classroom and service spaces. Similarly, the second school building, which includes a dining area, would have a partial lower level for classroom and service spaces. The Tribal Cultural Center would include a partial lower level for offices and archives. The maximum building height would be 35 feet and eight inches above the finished floor level.

The proposed grade school facilities would include two buildings totaling 25,010 sf. The buildings would be located in the northwestern portion of the site, and would be separated from each other by open, landscaped areas (see Figure 3-3, "Buildings A and B"). Building A would include a library, administrative offices, and a pre-kindergarten classroom. Building B would include a gym, a dining area, and a kitchen to provide meals for students and staff.

Figure 3-3
 Proposed Site Plan (North)



**Figure 3-4
 Proposed Site Plan (South)**

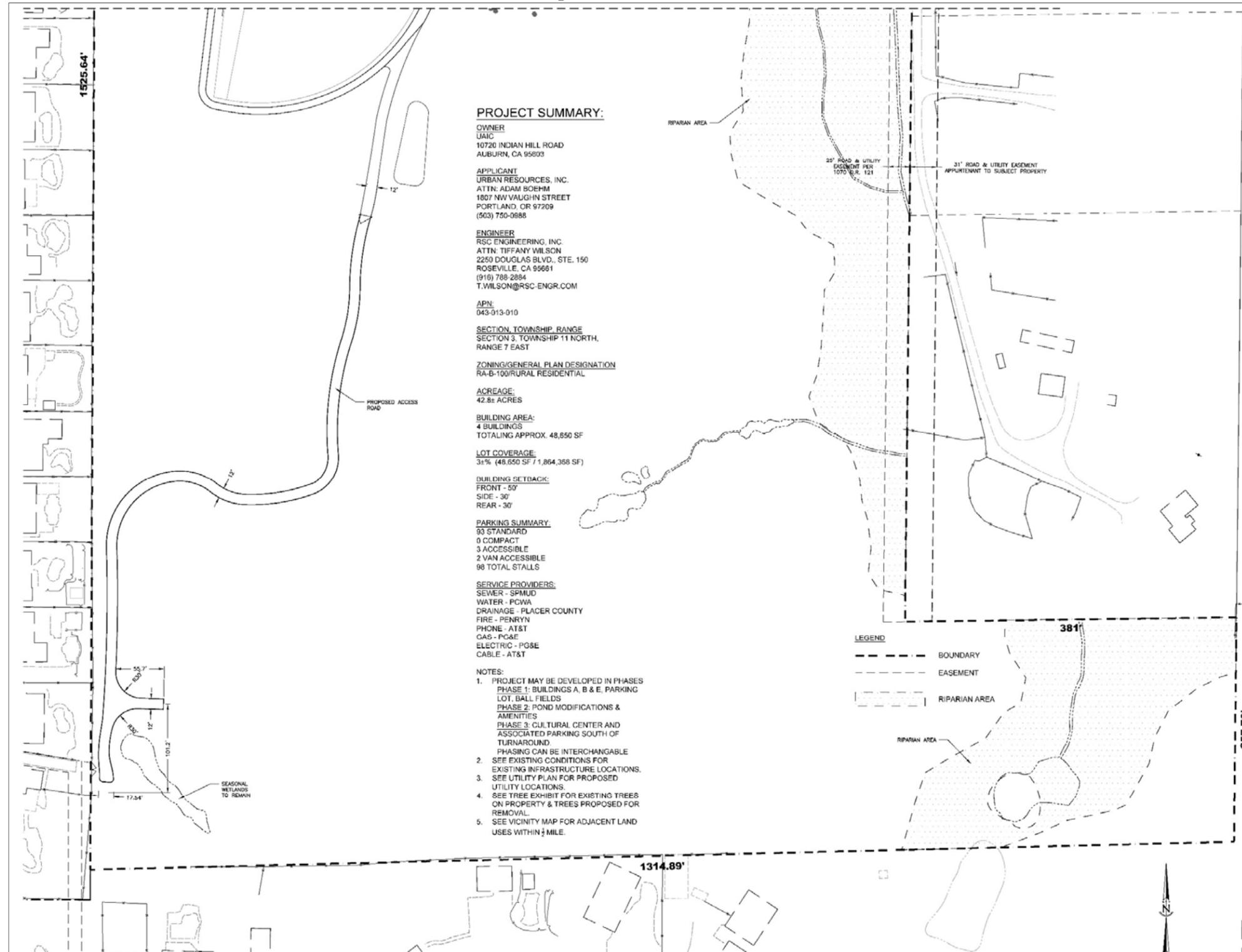


Figure 3-5
Proposed Site Plan (Aerial Overlay)

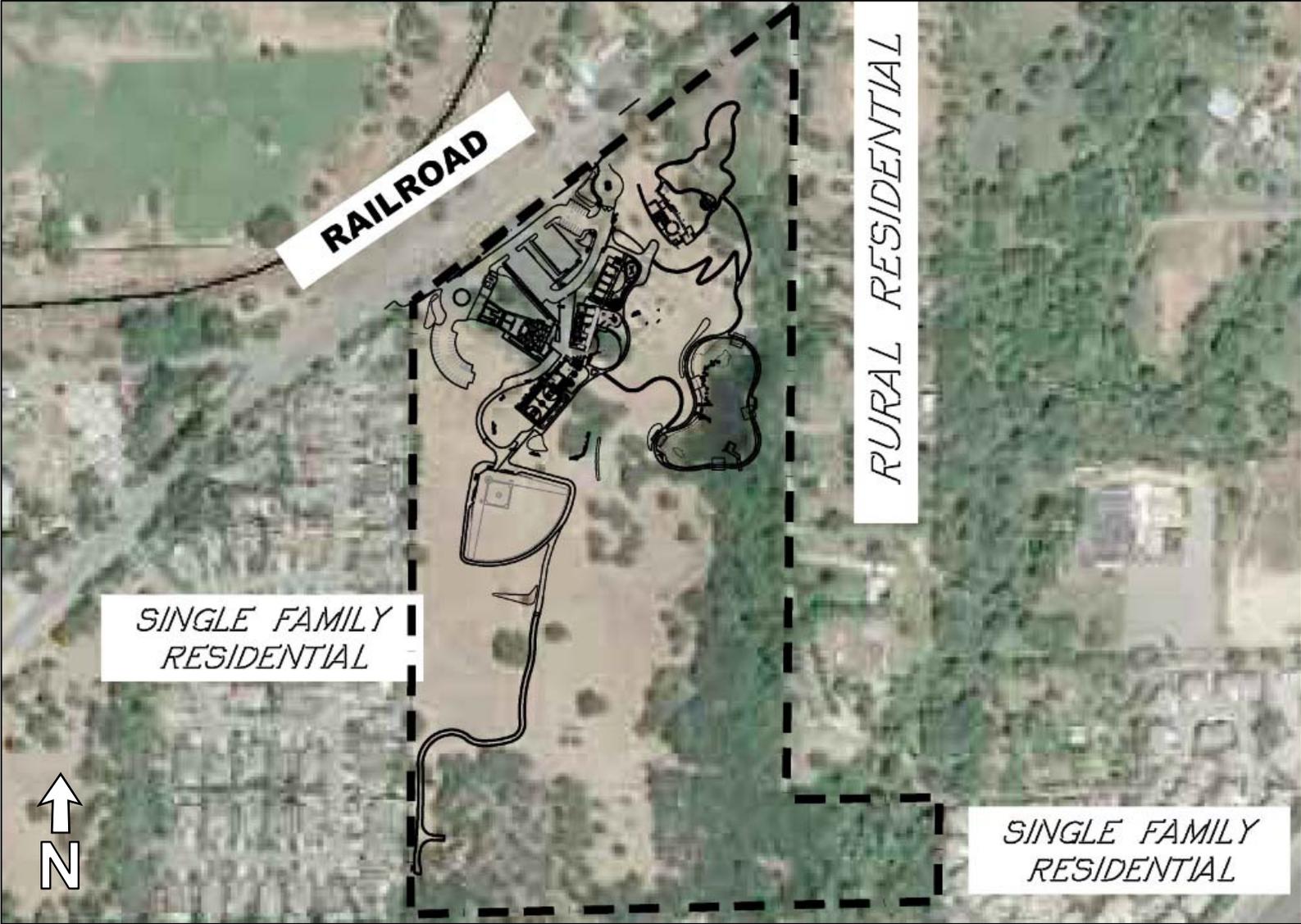


Figure 3-6
Building A Elevations



Figure 3-7
Building B Elevations

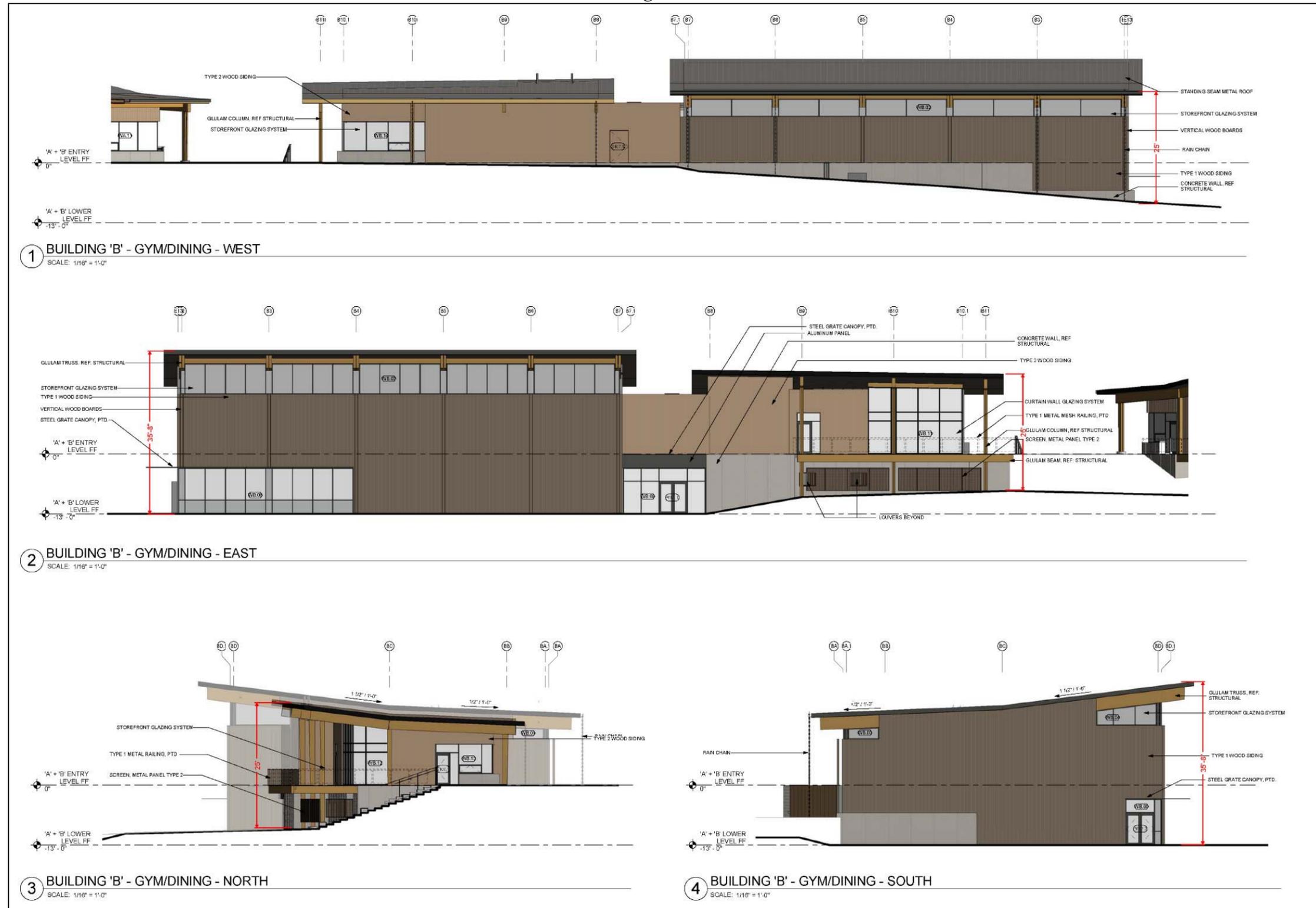


Figure 3-8
Building E Elevations



The Tribal Education Center would comprise a single 9,640-sf building located at the northwestern portion of the site (see Figure 3-3, “Building E”), in the same approximate location as the existing main house on the property. The Tribal Education Center would provide recreational and continuing education classes for adult tribal members during the week as well as tutoring services and supplemental classes to home schooled and high school age tribal members.

The Tribal Cultural Center would comprise a 14,000-sf facility located at the northeastern portion of the site (see Figure 3-3, “Building F”). The Tribal Cultural Center would include gallery and exhibit spaces, artifact archives, storage, and administrative spaces. A small outdoor pavilion area would be located adjacent to the east side of the building. Only 3,000 square feet of the current design is publicly accessible space (reception area, gift shop, gallery/theater, and exhibit space).

The tribe may also invite researchers, community groups, tribal groups, and school groups by appointment only. Eventually, the tribe hopes to open the Cultural Center to the general public, Monday through Friday from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with an average of 12 visitors per day/60 per week.

Operations

The school facility would serve approximately 100 UAIC students and operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The Tribal Cultural Center would operate daily from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Approximately 35 staff members would be employed at the school facility, up to six staff members would be employed at the Tribal Education Center, and two staff members would be employed at the Tribal Cultural Center, for a total of 43 employees.

Operation of the proposed school facility would include in-classroom and outdoor activities. During school hours, the proposed ballfield would be used for typical outdoor Physical Education (P.E.) activities. Activities related to P.E. could include team sports, track and field, archery, and other traditional games. Appropriate measures would be taken to keep errant projectiles away from adjacent residences.

Assuming the tribe fields a baseball and/or soccer team, the ballfield would be used for baseball and soccer games with the capabilities of nighttime use. Practices could be held twice a week with games both onsite and offsite, on weekdays and/or weekends. Should nighttime activities related to either sport occur, nighttime use hours would not extend past 10:00 PM. To facilitate nighttime activities, the ballfield would be illuminated by five 40-foot light poles, placed throughout the field. Each of the five light poles would include six LED fixtures mounted onto a bracket; the LED fixtures would be tilted at approximately 40 degrees toward the field. When the light poles are in use, light levels at the western property line are anticipated to range from 0.0 to 0.2 foot-candles thus, light spillage onto neighboring residential properties would be minimal. For reference, one foot-candle is roughly equivalent to the illumination produced by one candle at a distance of one foot.

In addition to the use of the ballfield for nighttime games, the project site may occasionally be used to host special events. Events could occur after hours and on the weekends, but such events would not begin earlier than 7:00 AM or continue past 10:00 PM. The largest potential events

could occur up to three times a year and could take place during school hours, from approximately 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on weekdays, or outside of school hours, from approximately 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the evening. The large events could accommodate approximately 200 people, though some students and staff may already be on school property. Events could include outdoor and/or indoor activity.

Mid-size events, such as open houses, could occur six times per year, and would be held on weekdays from approximately 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Open house events could involve a further 100 attendees in addition to the students and staff that are already on school property.

Smaller events could occur four times per year and could take place during school hours or on weekdays from approximately 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Smaller events may include indoor and/or outdoor activities. Such events are anticipated to involve 35 additional attendees as well as the students and staff already on school property.

Recreation, Landscaping, and Open Space

The proposed project would include the provision of a small (non-regulation) lighted ballfield to the south of the proposed buildings, as well as two dedicated play areas for students, a nature trail, improvements to the existing on-site irrigation stock pond, and pier. The enhancements to the existing irrigation pond would create an outdoor learning environment for the UAIC community. A trail would encircle the pond and provide access to a pier/pavilion that would afford educational opportunities at the water's edge and in the pond. The aforementioned pond enhancements include draining the pond, removing invasive species, regrading the edges to support native aquatic plantings, and potentially relocating the existing PCWA pond supply line in the southwest corner to the north to increase water movement. Prior to draining the pond, the existing fish and other animals would be removed and provided a protected, temporary home, or relocated in coordination with California Department of Fish and Wildlife. While the pond is empty, the contractor plans to use the pond as a sediment basin for the duration of the Phase 1 construction. Water from the PCWA supply line would be temporarily turned off or diverted to the existing outfall while the pond is being used as a sediment basin. Once the sediment basin is no longer necessary for construction activities, the pond would be dredged, regraded, have an aeration system installed, planted around the edges with aquatic vegetation, then filled with water.

The proposed trail system would be located within the northeast portion of the site, to the east of the proposed school facilities, and would be designed to avoid on-site aquatic features. The trail would extend eastward from the Tribal Cultural Center before curving southward along the western edge of the existing oak woodland area. As discussed above, the trail would continue southward, encircling and providing access to the pond area.

Two playground areas would be constructed adjacent to the school facilities, to the south of the Tribal Cultural Center. The playgrounds would incorporate play structures, a multi-use sport court, lawns, and various associated landscaping features. Access to the playgrounds would be limited to students of the school facilities.

It should be noted that approximately 62 percent of the project site would remain undisturbed after project completion, as development would primarily occur on the northern third of the site. With the exception of a proposed unpaved sewer maintenance access road, the southern two-thirds of the proposed project site would remain vacant and undeveloped. Existing oak woodland along the eastern and southern boundaries of the proposed project site would be retained.

Access and Circulation

Access to the proposed project site would be provided via Taylor Road. Currently, two driveways are located along the project site's frontage. The westernmost driveway would remain gated and would be used only as an emergency vehicle access for the project. The easternmost driveway along Taylor Road would serve as the project's vehicular access point and would be reconfigured to accommodate a guardhouse and a security gate with turnaround. The security gate would include a Knox Box system to allow for emergency responder access. In addition, Taylor Road would be widened approximately one foot along the project's frontage. All on-site roads would meet local fire district requirements in effect at the time of building permit application.

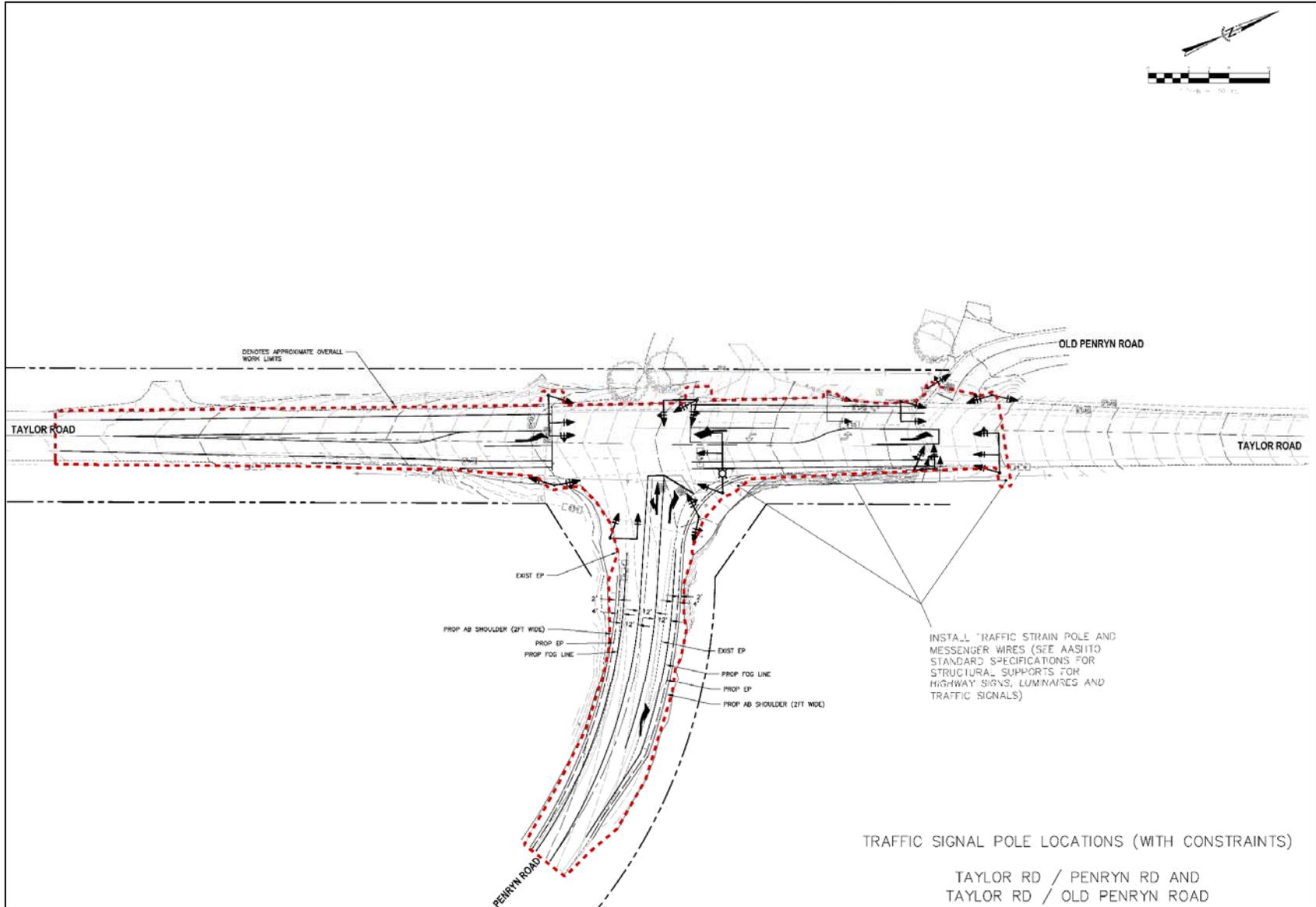
The 65 existing parking spaces located in the northeastern portion of the site would be reconfigured and reconstructed resulting in a new surface parking lot including a total of 66 parking stalls. The new parking lot would serve the school campus, the Tribal Education Center, and the Cultural Center. In addition, an ancillary parking lot with a total of 32 parking spaces would be constructed to the west of the proposed Tribal Education Center building. Overall, the project would provide a total of 98 parking stalls, including 93 standard stalls and three American Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible stalls, and two van accessible stalls. A private shuttle system of passenger vans would provide transport for approximately 90 percent of the UAIC students.

Taylor Road/Penryn Road Traffic Signal Improvement

The traffic study prepared for the project determined that the project would have a significant traffic impact at the intersection of Taylor Road/Penryn Road in the AM peak hour, though the intersection currently operates unacceptably (level of service F) during the AM peak hour (see Chapter 9, Transportation and Circulation, for more discussion). As a result, the project is required to install a traffic signal prior to certificate of compliance. This is a split intersection which will require additional signal heads and a strain pole and messenger wire for the intersection (see Figure 3-9). This configuration is due to the vertical drop past the existing guardrail on the south side of Taylor Road and the adjacent irrigation canal. The northbound Penryn Road approach will also need a right turn lane. The widening of Penryn Road in this location will occur on both sides of the road due to the existing drainage ditch on the east side.

The construction impacts of this mitigation measure are evaluated throughout this EIR, where appropriate. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1)(D), the effects of the mitigation measure may be discussed in less detail than the significant effects of the project.

Figure 3-9
Taylor Road/Penryn Road Traffic Signal Design



Utilities

Potable water supply service would be provided by the PCWA by way of a new connection to the PCWA's existing 24-inch water supply main located in Taylor Road. The on-site pond at the northeastern portion of the site would be used to irrigate the property, as has been done historically. The proposed project would not impact the function of the existing PCWA ditch feeding the pond.

The proposed project would require annexation into the South Placer Municipal Utility District (SPMUD) for the provision of sewer service. A proposed 6-inch sewer line would extend south paralleling a proposed 12-foot access road. The proposed sewer line would connect to the SPMUD's existing six-inch sanitary sewer main located at the southwest corner of the site. It should be noted that the proposed sewer infrastructure improvements would include limited off-site improvements on an adjacent private property (APN 043-240-019). Such improvements would include, but would not necessarily be limited to, minor fencing alterations, modification of the existing concrete driveway to access an existing sewer manhole, and installation of the proposed sewer line. The fence and driveway would be restored to pre-project conditions upon completion of the required improvements.

The project is subject to the NPDES Phase II MS4 Permit and would be designed to meet the requirements of the State Regional Water Quality Control Board permit. Generally, the proposed project would include the construction of on-site stormwater drainage and treatment facilities sized to appropriately manage runoff from all impervious and pervious areas, including roofs, sidewalks, and all paved areas. The site would be divided into "sheds", each of which would include a bio-retention facility to detain and treat runoff within the shed.

Construction and Phasing

The proposed project is planned to be phased as follows:

- Abatement of the buildings for asbestos & lead based paint;
- Demolition of the buildings;
- Soil remediation pursuant to the Removal Action Workplan; and
- School Construction: Buildings A, B and E, primary parking lot, and ballfield.

The remainder of the project, consisting of pond modifications and site amenities, as well as construction of the Tribal Cultural Center and associated secondary parking south of turnaround, could be constructed in subsequent phases.

3.6 REQUIRED PUBLIC APPROVALS

The proposed project requires Placer County approval of a Minor Use Permit.

Other Agency Approvals and Permits

The proposed project would require approvals from other agencies, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Annexation into the SPMUD for the provision of sewer service. Annexation of the project site to the SPMUD service area is subject to Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) approval;
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit;
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife – Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement;
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board – 401 Water Quality Certification;
- US Army Corps of Engineers – Section 404 permit; and
- Department of Toxic Substances Control – approval of Removal Action Workplan.