



Planning Commission Staff Report

April 4, 2024

PROJECT: **The New Zoo at Elk Grove**
PROJECT NO.: SP0009
REQUEST: Establishment of a Special Planning Area and Rezoning; Amendment to the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan; Conditional Use Permit; Tentative Subdivision Map with Subdivision Design Review; District Development Plan; Level 1 Design Review; Art Plan; and Consistency with the General Plan for Inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program
LOCATION: 8663, 8665, and 8675 Kammerer Road
APNs: 132-0320-001, 002, & 010, and 132-2390-006
STAFF: Christopher Jordan, AICP

PROPERTY OWNER:

City of Elk Grove
Jason Behrmann (Representative)
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Cosumnes Community Services District
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PROJECT APPLICANT:

City of Elk Grove
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Sacramento Zoological Society
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Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution (Attachment 1) recommending that the City Council:

- a. Certify the Environmental Impact Report for The New Zoo at Elk Grove Project (SP0009), making Findings of Fact and adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program;
- b. Adopt the Zoological Park Special Planning Area and rezone the Project site to the Zoological Park Special Planning Area;
- c. Approve an amendment to the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan;
- d. Approve a Conditional Use Permit, Tentative Subdivision Map with Subdivision Design Review, District Development Plan, Level 1 Design Review, and Art Plan for The New Zoo at Elk Grove Project (SP0009), based on the findings and subject to the conditions of approval included in the draft Resolution; and
- e. Find that inclusion of the Project in the City's Capital Improvement Program is consistent with the General Plan.

Project Description

The New Zoo at Elk Grove (the "Project"), involves the construction of a new zoological park and associated facilities and activities on an approximately 103-acre site at the northwest corner of Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway.

The zoological park would include various facilities and buildings to be developed in phases. The main facility would be on approximately 65 acres and would be designed to support an average annual attendance of between 1.1 and 1.6 million visitors at buildout. The facility would be organized into four primary zones: Green Corridor, Africa, California, and Australasia. The Green Corridor would be the main pedestrian pathway through the New Zoo.

Components of the Project include:

- Adoption of a new **Zoological Park Special Planning Area** to establish zoning regulations (development standards, allowed uses, required permits), and rezoning of the site.
- Amendment of the **Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan** to reflect the updated pedestrian and bicycle facilities around the Project.
- A **Conditional Use Permit** for the operation of a zoological park. Components and features include, but are not limited to, the keeping of animals and insects, veterinary care, educational activities, food and beverage service (inclusive of alcohol service, including limited on-site brewing of beer), retail sales, administrative offices, caretaker's quarters, greenhouses/gardens/nurseries, and warehousing and storage of goods and materials for on-site usage. This also includes overnight accommodations (hotel/motel and patron/guest camping) and special events and programs where the facilities are either provided as a special ticketed event or are available for rent.
- A **Tentative Subdivision Map with Subdivision Design Review** to subdivide the site into seven parcels and to set aside public right-of-way for public streets and other utilities, as well as the dedication of easements for public utilities.
- A **District Development Plan**, as required by the Zoological Park Special Planning Area, establishing the overall site plan, parking/access/circulation, and major components of the Project.
- **Level 1 Design Review**, as required by the Zoological Park Special Planning Area, approving building design and architecture for the Entry Complex, Giraffe Café/Lodge, and Animal Care Center/Nutrition Center/Gelada Café.
- An **Art Plan**, as required by the Zoological Park Special Planning Area, providing a process for integration of public art into the Project, including establishing a budget for the purchase and installation of art and the process to solicit, select, and install the artwork.
- A **Financing Plan** for the Project.

Background

In 1927, the City of Sacramento consolidated several public and private animal collections and established the Sacramento Zoo in Land Park. Over the following decades, the facility was expanded from an initial 4.2 acres to the current 14.7 acres. The existing facility hosts more than

500,000 visitors annually and, as of 2024, includes 380 animals across 94 species. In 1997, the City of Sacramento transferred operation of the facility to the non-profit Sacramento Zoological Society (the Society). The facilities (e.g., buildings) continue to be owned by the City of Sacramento; much of the animal collection is on loan from other zoos across the country or is owned by the Society, while a small number of animals are owned by the City of Sacramento. The Zoo operates as an accredited institution under the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA).

Since the 1990s, the Zoo has been at risk of losing its AZA accreditation, as many of the animal habitats do not conform with modern design standards. Multiple species have been transferred out of the facility so that existing habitats can be merged or reconfigured. For example, in 2018, the tigers were transferred out and their habitat was merged with the adjoining lion habitat to provide the lions with more space.

On multiple occasions, the City of Sacramento and the Society have studied expansion of the existing facility or relocation to other sites within the City of Sacramento. Expansion of the Land Park site has been deemed infeasible due to impacts to other facilities in the park, compatibility with the adjoining residential neighborhood, and availability of parking. No alternative site has been selected by the City of Sacramento. Without a viable relocation or expansion of the existing Zoo, the facility would most likely lose its accreditation or would be forced to continue relocating animals, thereby reducing the number of animal species, and impacting the visitor attraction and viability of the operation.

Following relocation discussions with the City of Sacramento in 2020, the Society approached the City of Elk Grove (City) to discuss opportunities that may exist for the Zoo in Elk Grove. In September 2021, the City and the Society executed an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA), requiring the two parties to only work with each other relative to relocation of the Zoo. Additionally, the City began investigating approximately ±100-acres along the north side of Kammerer Road and west of Lotz Parkway as a potential Zoo site, with the [City Council directing acquisition](#) of the site in February 2022. On April 8, 2022, the City acquired the property. As discussed later in this report, this site has sufficient acreage and access to support the Zoo.

In [March 2022](#), the City Council received a Feasibility Study, along with a Financial Impact Analysis, for the development of a Zoo in Elk Grove, replacing the Land Park facility. The Study and Analysis concluded that development of a Zoo in Elk Grove was potentially viable, subject to the financial assumptions and site program considered in the reports. Based upon these results, the Council directed staff to continue working with the Society on the Project. In [May 2022](#), the City and the Society entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, outlining the activities, responsibilities, and outcomes of the next phase of work: developing a design plan for the potential zoo, along with a financing plan and environmental impact report. At the conclusion of this phase, the City Council would consider approving the Project, allowing it to move forward to construction, pending the terms of the Financing Plan.

Project Setting

The Project site (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APNs] 132-0320-010, -001 and -002; and 132-2390-006) is located at the northwest intersection of Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway in the City of Elk Grove. The Project site is a fallow field surrounded by single-family residences to the east, agriculture to the south and west, and active construction of a new residential subdivision to the north. Historically, the Project site was used as rangeland for cattle from April to December. The

Project site is within the Livable Employment Area (LEA) Community Plan and the core of the site has a land use designation of Parks and Open Space (P/O). The LEA Community Plan includes consideration of the Project site as a zoological park.

Table 1 lists the uses adjacent to the project site. **Figure 1** shows the location of the Project.

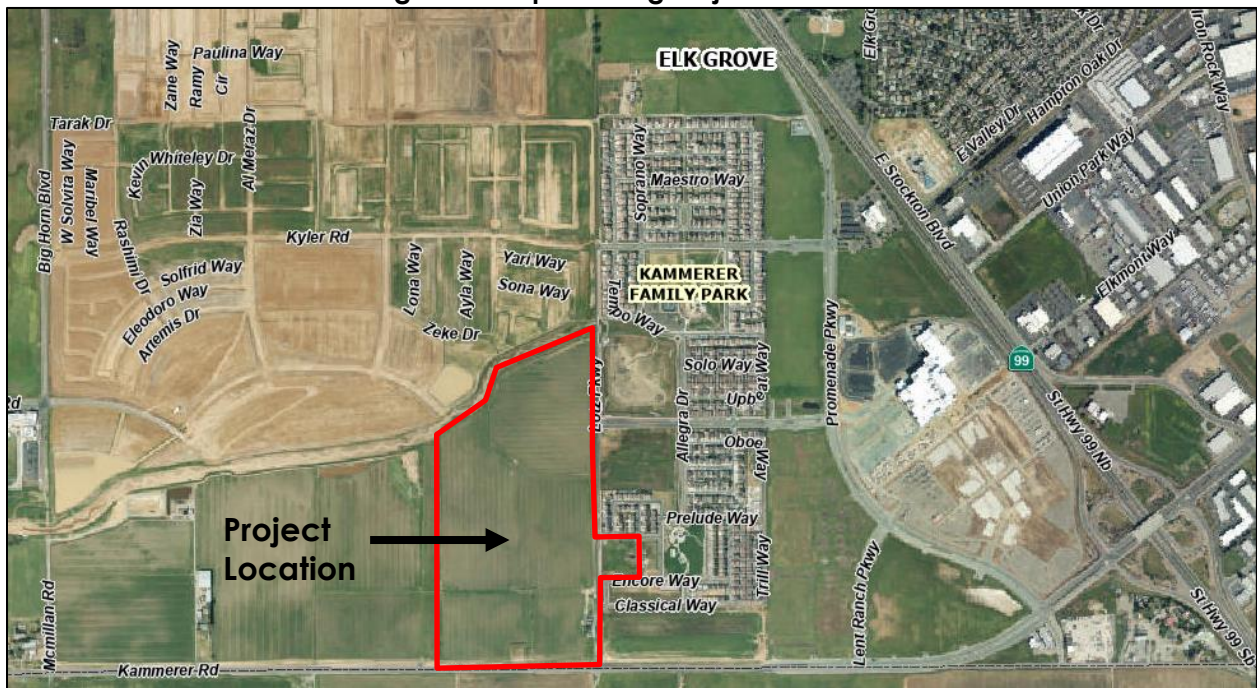
Table 1: Adjacent Land Designations and Uses

	Existing Uses	General Plan	Zoning
Project Site	Agriculture/Grazing	Parks and Open Space Public Services	SEPA SPA ¹ RD-15
North	Residential	Low Density Residential, Resource Management and Conservation, Parks and Open Space	SEPA SPA
South	Agriculture	South Study Area/ Livable Employment Area Community Plan	Ag (County)
West	Agriculture	Livable Employment Area Community Plan	SEPA SPA ¹
East	Residential	Medium Density Residential High Density Residential Resource Management and Conservation Public Services	RD-30 RD-15 Parks and Recreation (PR)

Notes:

1. These sites are currently within the SEPA SPA, because prior to December 2023 they were part of the SEPA Community Plan. However, with adoption of the Livable Employment Area Community Plan in December 2023, staff intends to bring forward and recommend a new SPA for the area later in 2024 .

Figure 1: Map Showing Project Location



Analysis

The proposed Project has been reviewed in accordance with the City's General Plan, as well as other relevant City goals and programs. As it proposes the establishment of a new Special Planning Area (SPA), creating new zoning regulations for the site, the content of that SPA is described below, then the consistency of the Project to the SPA is provided.

General Plan and Other City Goals

Consideration for development of a zoo in Elk Grove can be viewed from several vantage points. In the most immediate sense, zoos provide opportunity for conservation and education about animals and their habitats by introducing the community to these species and helping to foster an appreciation of the natural world. Most people will not travel to the African savanna or Australian Outback to view animals in their natural habitat, so having the opportunity to experience these animals in the local community provides immediate accessibility. These educational opportunities can extend into classroom programs, both at the K-12 levels and in higher education. On an annual basis, the Sacramento Zoo hosts over 35,000 school-age children as part of various educational programs, including field trips, zoo mobiles, summer camp, and group overnights. More than 700 schools across the region visit the Zoo each year. And the Zoo and UC Davis enjoy a unique partnership that helps to make UC Davis's Veterinary Science program one of the best in the world.

At a social level, zoos provide a recreational activity for area residents and visitors. [According to the AZA](#), more than 183 million people visit zoos and aquariums in the United States annually – more than attend NFL, NBA, NHL, and MLB games combined. In the [2021 National Community Survey](#), only 43% of Elk Grove residents rated the City favorably as having opportunities for activities and events. The need for more family-oriented activities is a frequent resident comment.

A zoo could address some of the City's broader goals and priorities. In 2023, the Council reviewed, updated, and affirmed its [Mission, Vision, and Goals](#). A zoo furthers the first goal (Vibrant Community), which is provided below, because it involves the attraction and expansion of a non-profit business to the community with substantial capital investment, is an opportunity to increase tax revenues in the City (see discussion later in this report) and would enhance the experiences available to residents and visitors. Further, it would be the intent of the Society and the City that the design and character of the facility would be of the highest standard.



- **A vibrant community and sustainable economy with diverse businesses and amenities**

- Facilitate business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts that maximize employment, capital investment, and tax revenues, reduce barriers, and that promote equity and inclusion in entrepreneurship
- Facilitate development of enhanced retail, dining, arts and entertainment, hospitality projects and experiences that serve residents and visitors
- Ensure public and private development that is high-quality and attractive, contributing to a sense of place
- Plan and facilitate development of neighborhoods of varying densities and characteristics - from rural to suburban to urban
- Support efforts that further a resilient business community

The Zoo would also address the City's economic development-specific goals and focus areas, including:

- Lifestyle Amenities: Facilitate attraction and development of increased and enhanced lifestyle amenities (retail, dining, entertainment, nightlife, recreational, and public amenities) that will improve quality of life for residents and employees.
- Visitation: Position Elk Grove as a competitive location for business and personal travel and visitation.
- Marketing and Branding: Develop and deploy a robust business brand, creative properties, and marketing materials that distinguishes Elk Grove and positions it as an exceptional location for business and visitation.
- Regional Leadership: Position Elk Grove as a driving force in regional economic development decision making and business attraction efforts through enhanced branding and marketing and building and leveraging relationships with key agencies.

On a land planning level, the approval and development of a zoo in Elk Grove, and specifically at the proposed site, is consistent with the City's General Plan. The Vision Statement of the General Plan provides that Elk Grove is "great place to make a home, a great place to work, and a great place to play" and describes the community as being "family-oriented" and plentiful in parks. General Plan Goal RC-1 notes that "Elk Grove aims to become a center within the larger region, providing opportunities for employment, recreation, education, retail, industry, and residential development. This objective aligns with regional goals for economic development, sustainability and resiliency, and quality of life." Accompanying Policy RC-1-3 provides that Elk Grove should invest in public infrastructure, including developing "great public spaces including urban plazas and parks, and adequate community services." Policy CIF-5-1 provides that "community facilities should be planned and designed to provide services and programs available for residents. The proposed Zoological Park implements the General Plan Vision and the noted goal and policies as it provides for a family-oriented activity in a park-like environment and expands the range of community services and amenities.

Additionally, the proposed Project site is located on a site designated as Park and Open Space in the General Plan and the underlying LEA Community Plan. This designation was applied in December 2023 as part of the adoption of the LEA Community Plan. Prior to this action, the site was within the Southeast Policy Area (SEPA) Community Plan with a land use designation of office and industrial (where a zoo was allowed upon approval of a conditional use permit). The Project is consistent with the current General Plan designation of Park and Open Space as zoos function as a type of park.

Zoological Park Special Planning Area

Early in the master planning process for the proposed New Zoo, staff analyzed the existing zoning regulations to see how they would be applicable to the Project. At the time, the site was within the SEPA Community Plan and accompanying SEPA SPA. While the then zoning allowed for a zoological park upon approval of a conditional use permit, there were concerns identified regarding the development standards and permitting process for a zoo. Those regulations are structured for traditional commercial development, such as an office building or a research and development campus, where streets are established through the subdivision process and each

building goes through a design review. Staff considered working within the system, but, ultimately, the regulations were seen as a poor fit for the Project. Specific conditions such as parking standards, landscape requirements, access limitations, design standards, and, most importantly, the approval process, were challenges that would have required extensive management and potentially deviations from standards.

With the adoption of the LEA Community Plan in December 2023, new zoning regulations for the site and the larger LEA area are necessary. Staff considered incorporating requirements for the Project into that forthcoming SPA but ultimately decided that a stand-alone document was better given the timeframe necessary to complete the LEA SPA (public review on that document began in March 2024 and consideration by Planning Commission and City Council is not scheduled until later this year).

A SPA is a special purpose zoning district. It is adopted into the City's zoning regulations (within Title 23, Zoning, of the Elk Grove Municipal Code [EGMC]) by reference, with the document itself being uncodified (not published within the text of the EGMC). The SPA tool allows the City to establish unique and imaginative planning standards and regulations that otherwise could not be provided through the application of the City's standard zoning districts. A SPA must include the following minimum components:

- A list of permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses.
- Performance and development requirements relating to yards, lot area, intensity of development on each lot, parking, landscaping, and signs.
- Other design standards appropriate for the specific site and development.
- Reasons for establishment of the SPA land use zone on the particular property.

A SPA may also include a number of optional components, including but not limited to the following:

- Regulations relating to nonconforming lots, uses, structures, and signs.
- Time, phasing, and sequence of development projects.
- Infrastructure plan.
- Circulation plan.

SPAs are a useful tool for regulating special conditions or circumstances. They can provide unique development standards, approval processes, and can provide deviations from other City regulations (e.g., City Improvement Standards). However, in some instances an SPA may be silent on a particular matter; in which case the user is directed to the Citywide zoning regulations or other standards. For example, while an SPA may describe the minimum parking requirements for a particular use, which could deviate from the required ratio in the Citywide zoning, none of the City's SPAs specifically provide the standards for parking lot design (e.g., stall and drive aisle dimensions), referring to the Citywide zoning.

The proposed Zoological Park SPA is organized into the following chapters:

1. **Chapter 1: Introduction** – This chapter gives a brief description of the overall objective and function of the SPA.
2. **Chapter 2: Land Use Plan** – Chapter 2 establishes the land use plan for the SPA, defines the particular SPA Districts, and establishes the allowed uses and activities in each of the Districts.
3. **Chapter 3: Development Standards and Design Plan** – This chapter establishes the applicable development standards for development of the Project, including setbacks, height limits, parking, landscaping, lighting, signage, and other components.
4. **Chapter 4: Design Plan and Guidelines** – Chapter 4 establishes provisions for the design (look and feel) of the Project, including both design standards and design guidelines.
5. **Chapter 5: Public Infrastructure** – This chapter outlines the required public improvements necessary to serve the Project, including circulation, water, sewer, storm drainage, and dry utilities. Specifically, it specifies roadway design requirements for all public streets.
6. **Chapter 6: Administration and Implementation** – Finally, Chapter 6 provides for the administration and implementation of this SPA and addresses the process for approval of subsequent design and development plans.

Three Districts make up the SPA, which are described below and shown in **Figure 2**.

- The Zoo District: The Zoological Park itself.
- The Parking District: Provides for the guest and employee parking areas.
- The Public Resources District: Provides for the detention basin serving the SPA and the Shed C Channel along the northern edge of the site.

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Figure 2: SPA Land Use Plan



Notable development standards provided in Chapter 3 of the SPA include the following:

- Setback and height standards are divided between the Zoo and Parking District and are shown in **Table 2**. These standards are substantially similar to other development in the City; however, specific flexibility is provided along Lotz Parkway based upon the adjacency of residential uses and the detention basin in Sterling Meadows, along with the needs of the overall site design, as discussed later in this report.
- Parking for guests visiting the Zoological Park shall be provided at the following rates:
 - 1 parking space for each 1,000 persons of estimated annual attendance; or
 - 1 parking space for each three (3) people at peak hour presence; and
 - A minimum of 1,600 parking spaces.

- Bicycle parking shall be provided at a minimum rate of five percent (5%) of the number of provided guest vehicle parks spaces.
- Fencing must comply with the requirements of the US Department of Agriculture for the housing of warm-bodied animals. Along the exterior of the Zoo, fencing must be a minimum of eight-feet tall. Along public frontages (Lotz Parkway, Classical Way, and B Drive) fencing must be of a high-quality aesthetic, including concrete masonry block and preformed concrete panels. Along the Shed C Channel chain link with vinyl slats, concrete masonry block, or preformed concrete panels are allowed.
- Various forms of signage are allowed, including:
 - Entry signage, of no more than one per entry, measuring a maximum of 150 square feet of sign area and 20 feet tall.
 - Major identification signage, one each at the intersections of Classical Way and Lotz Parkway and Classical Way and B Drive, with a maximum area of 250 square feet of sign area and 30 feet tall.
 - Building signage at a maximum area of 2.5 square feet for each one lineal foot of building frontage for a maximum of 250 square feet of signage per building.

Table 2: Proposed Setbacks and Height Limits

Development Standard	District	
	Zoo District	Parking District
Setbacks		
Lotz Parkway, Generally	40 ft	40 ft
Lotz Parkway, from Bilby Road to the Shed C Crossing	0 ft ¹	n/a
Classical Way	25 ft	25 ft
B Drive	40 ft	25 ft
Height		
Within 250 feet of the centerline of the Lotz Parkway	40 ft	40 ft
Otherwise	60 ft	60 ft

Notes:

1. While no setback is required, the minimum landscape corridor as provided in Section 3.4 (Landscaping) of the SPA shall be provided

Chapter 6 provides for a unique approval process for the design of the Project. Traditionally, each building in a development that is more than 1,000 square feet would be subject to the City's Design Review process. For a development as large and complex as the Zoo, with multiple phases, staff has developed an alternative process:

- Approval of the overall site plan, including the configuration of parking facilities, pedestrian spaces, building sites, animal habitats, back of house and utility areas, and the strategy for landscaping, lighting, shade structures, and other physical attributes about the site requires approval of a **District Development Plan**. The approval authority is the City Council.
- Design review for individual buildings is divided based upon the type of building as follows:

- **Level 1 Design Review**, which is subject to City Council approval, is required for "major buildings and facilities that reflect on the overall design character and quality of the Zoological complex. This includes, but is not limited to, the Entry Complex, dining facilities larger than 1,000 square feet, Animal Care Center/Nutrition Center, Education Building, Administration (permanent buildings only), and Tent Camp/lodging buildings."
- **Level 2 Design Review** is for secondary buildings and facilities that support the overall operation of the Zoological Park. This includes, but is not limited to, modular offices, animal barns and holding facilities, shop buildings, life support system buildings, freestanding restroom buildings, party/classrooms buildings, and accessory retail and food buildings (e.g., beer garden). Because of the smaller nature of these buildings, and the fact that they may be added at various points in time, the Development Services Director is the designated approving authority for Level 2 Design Review.

The SPA also requires that prior to the issuance of the first building permit for any signs at the zoo, a Sign Program must be prepared and approved. The Sign Program shall detail the size, location, and design characteristics (e.g., colors, lettering, materials, sign typology, illumination, construction details) of major and minor signage across the site. The Sign Program shall create a uniform design for signage across the Zoological Park. The approving authority for the Sign Program is the Development Services Director.

Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan Amendment

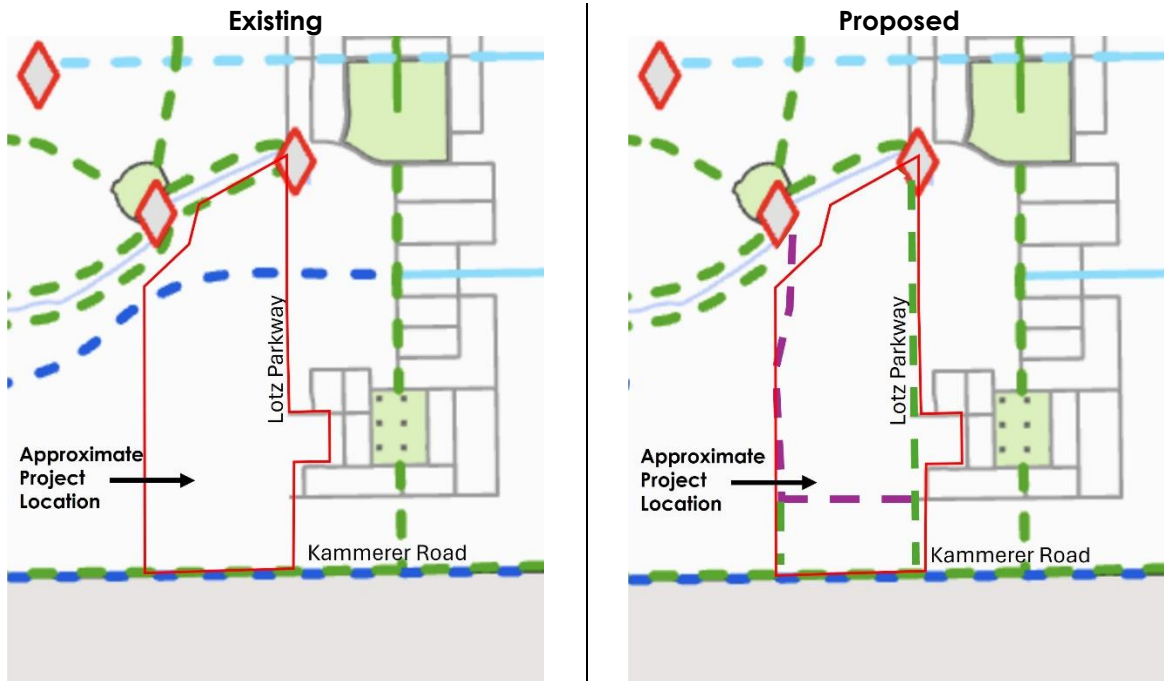
As discussed later in this report, various bicycle and pedestrian facilities are proposed around and leading to the Project site. To reflect these improvements, the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan would be amended as illustrated in **Figure 3**. These revisions are consistent with the General Plan's Transportation Plan (Figures 3-6 and 3-7) as amended in December 2023. More details regarding these improvements are described below in the section on Access, Circulation, and Parking, but the changes can be summarized as follows:

- Eliminating the Class 1 trail along the south side of the Shed C Channel along the Zoo site.
- Adding a Class 1 trail along the west side of Lotz Parkway from Shed C to Kammerer Road, and along B Drive from Classical Way to Kammerer Road.
- Adding a Class 4 facility parallel to B Drive from the Shed C Channel to Classical Way, and along the north side of Classical Way from B Drive to Lotz Parkway.

These changes will provide substantial bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the Project site.

The Trails Committee reviewed the Project and the proposed changes at their August 21, 2023, meeting and their feedback has been incorporated into the Project design.

Figure 3: Proposed Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan Amendments



Existing and Proposed Bicycle Network
Legend

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Proposed Class I Multi-Use Path
- Proposed Class II Bicycle Lane
- Proposed Class II Buffered Bicycle Lane
- Proposed Class III Bicycle Route
- Proposed Class IV Bikeway
- Proposed Class II Green Painted Bicycle Lane

Proposed Crossing Improvements

- ◇ Proposed At-Grade Class I Bikeway Crossing
- ◇ Proposed Grade-Separated Class I Bikeway Crossing
- Proposed Bicycle Specific Approach/Crossing Improvement

Zoo Design (District Development Plan, Level 1 Design Review, and Tentative Subdivision Map)

Historically, zoos have been designed to showcase a single animal species at each exhibit, and similar animals (e.g., cats) were shown in a single row. Modern zoos are trending towards multispecies habitats and presenting animals based upon their geographical origin (e.g., Africa). This modern approach has been a foundational principle for designing the Project. Three “lands” were identified early in the design process:

- Africa
- California
- Australia/Asia, or Australasia

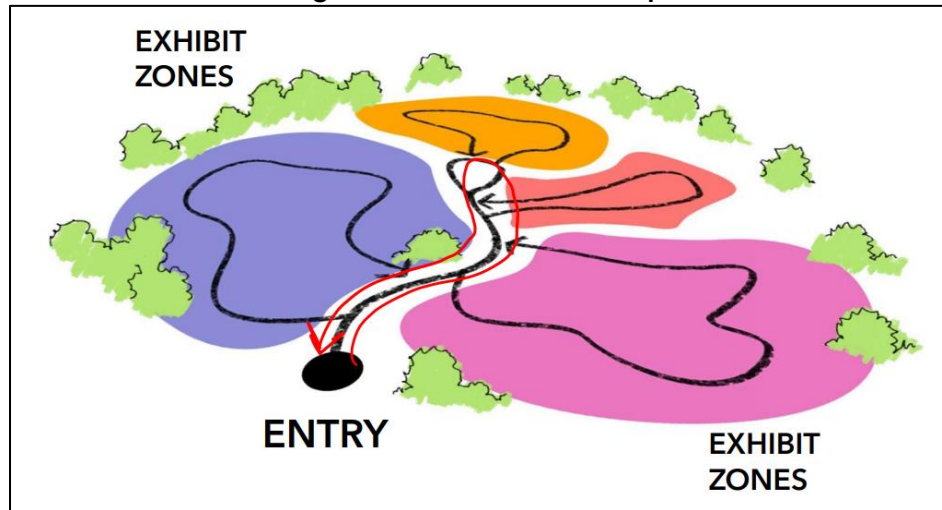
Next, the design team considered a number of options for the spatial organization of the site. Key considerations that informed the site plan included:

- Overall access to the site and connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods and future development.
- Limiting impacts to the adjoining Sterling Meadows neighborhood to the east.
- Ensuring that construction of the site could be phased in a logical way as funding is made available.
- Providing sufficient parking for the maximum attendance possible. The existing Land Park facility has no dedicated parking and on peak days guests must travel extensive distances across the park to access the Zoo, often impacting the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- Guest experiences and paths of travel that are logical and present immersive views into animal habitats.

Ultimately, the following design decisions were made:

1. The on-site design would utilize a “Main Street” concept (see **Figure 4**) where a central pedestrian spine runs down the length of the site. Different exhibit zones (e.g., Africa, California, etc.) would then loop off and back onto the central spine. This spine has taken on the name “Green Zone” as it features landscaping and aquatic elements with a lush, green character.
2. The Green Zone would terminate in a discovery/fun zone that includes a carousel, train ride, play area, dining opportunity, and the animal care center.
3. Internal services for the Zoo would be provided through a “ring road” between the habitats and the exterior fencing. This would separate utility and service activities from the guest spaces, increasing visitor safety and allowing for more intimate interactions with the animals.
4. Outside the Zoo:
 - a. Classical Way would be extended across the site east-to-west, integrating the site with the Sterling Meadows neighborhood on the east and the future urban development on the Livable Employment Area to the west.
 - b. Parking would be provided in two lots, north and south of Classical Way, as described later in this report.
 - c. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity would be provided from trails/corridors that extend north/south along either side of the Zoo, connecting with Sterling Meadows, the Southeast Planning Area, the Shed C trail corridor, and the future trail corridor along Kammerer Road. These trails and corridors would connect and bring guests directly to the entry of the Zoo along a “City Walk.”

Figure 4: Main Street Concept



Details of the site plan are provided in the following figures:

- **Figure 5:** Buildout Site Plan
- **Figure 6:** Phasing Plan
- **Figure 7:** Overview Site Plan for Phases 1A & 1B
- **Figure 8:** Key Map and Zoom-in for Phases 1A & 1B

For financing and project complexity reasons, the development of the site has been broken down into four phases:

- Phase 1 of the Project would involve construction of the Green Corridor and Africa. However, specific animal habitats within these zones may themselves be phased depending on Project funding. Phase 1A would include the base Zoo footprint and Phase 1B would include additional zoological features as shown on the Project plans. Phase 1C would include the hippopotamus and additional savannas in the northwest corner of the site.
- Phase 2 of the Project would include the California zone with exhibits at the southeast portion of the site. The California zone would include restrooms, a possible rehab and rescue facility, as well as a building for changing exhibits and an education building. Additional overnight guest accommodations may also be included, with views into the animal habitats and holding areas.
- Phase 3 would consist of construction of a permanent administration office building, replacing the modular buildings constructed in Phase 1. The Administration building would be located between the California zone and the entry complex. The building(s) would be no more than three stories tall.

- Phase 4, the Australasia zone, would be located north of the Animal Care building near the northeast corner of the site. Additional overnight guest accommodations may also be included, with views into the animal habitats and holding areas.

Within each of the phases, sub-phasing may also occur. For example, Phase 1 has already been divided into 1A, 1B, and 1C. While approvals for the overall site design are proposed at this time, the current focus is on the constructability of Phases 1A and 1B. This provides the core elements of the Project and is a viable opening day facility.

Other notable elements of the site design include the following:

- Three restaurants/dining options are included in the site.
 - The “Gelada Café”, which is adjoining the Animal Care Center (vet and nutrition) and provides typical zoo food options for families.
 - The Beer Garden/Ice Cream area, located between the South Savannah and the Cheetah habitat, provides for light refreshments and can serve as a rentable space for small events.
 - The “Giraffe Café” near the main entrance. This facility includes a restaurant that is available to people both inside the Zoo (with a ticket) and those outside (without a ticket). The restaurant provides views across the savannah, with the lion [kopie](#) in the background. It also includes an event space for approximately 500 people, either on a lawn or under a pavilion structure.
- Multiple overnight accommodations are provided in the Project.
 - A lawn area, located between the rhino habitat and the carousel, provides space for family campouts (recreational-style tents), with programming similar to the Zoo's existing [overnight safari](#) program.
 - A series of overnight suite cabins are proposed at various locations around the site. Some are directly attached to a habitat, such as at the giraffe barn or at the lion habitat, where others are freestanding and provide views out across the rhino or hippo habitats. Similar suites may occur in the California and Australasia zones as those phases are designed.
- Educational facilities include:
 - A dedicated entry for school groups, separate from the main gate and the Giraffe Café entries.
 - An education lawn for introduction of school groups to the site, with space for storage of group materials, including lunches.
 - In Phase 1, classroom space is provided near the gelada habitat and doubles as rentable space for parties or group functions.
 - In Phase 2, a dedicated education building is provided in the California zone.

Based upon the overall site plan, staff proposes to subdivide the site into seven parcels, along with the reservation of public right-of-way for Lotz Parkway, Classical Way, B Drive, and Kammerer Road, along with the drainage facilities of the detention basin and the Shed C Channel.

In addition to the images provided in this report and the Project plans provided in **Attachment 1 Exhibit H**, the design team has also prepared a digital 3D model of Phases 1A/1B. This model helps to understand the relationship of the site elements and provides a platform to resolve viewshed conflicts, operational concerns, and address other issues that may be identified. This model has been provided to the Franklin High School Full Stack Developer Club who, in partnership with the design team and the City, has augmented the model with animals and built a website for the public to view and interact with the design. The model can be accessed from the City website at www.elkgrovecity.org/zoomodel. This academic partnership between the City and the Franklin High students is an implementation effort of the City's Smart City Plan.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

The following section describes the access, circulation, and parking configuration planned for the Project. **Figure 9** provides a visual illustration of this information.

Access to the Project is provided from the extension of Classical Way west from Lotz Parkway. East of Lotz Parkway, Classical Way exists as a two-lane residential street. The extension would, at buildout of the Project and surrounding uses, be constructed as a four-lane road. Intersections of Classical Way and Lotz Parkway, as well as two other intersections west of Lotz Parkway are designed as roundabouts. This intersection design was chosen to provide efficient turning movements as vehicles arrive to the site. The average visitor is anticipated to take Highway 99 south from Sacramento, exit onto Kammerer Road, then turn right onto Lotz Parkway. Upon completion of the Kammerer Road extension, access from Interstate 5 will also be an option. From Lotz Parkway, the roundabout at Classical Way is designed to provide efficient opportunity for the left turn onto Classical Way. Two additional roundabouts are planned at the main driveway into the Zoo parking lots, as well as at the far western edge of the site where Classical Way will intersect with B Drive, a future street that extends south from the Souza Dairy development north of the Shed C Channel.

The roundabout concept was also selected because of the increased safety this intersection design provides. As noted by the [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety \(IIHS\)](https://www.iihs.org/), roundabouts are safer for pedestrians because they only have to cross one direction of vehicular traffic at a time and the vehicle speeds traveling through the intersection are slower.

Pedestrian and bicycle access to the site is provided by an extension of the sidewalk and trail systems from the north and east. This includes:

- Development of a 40-foot-wide landscape corridor along the Project frontage of Lotz Parkway, developed with a 10-foot-wide trail with decomposed granite shoulders and landscaping.
- A pedestrian sidewalk and a separated bicycle trail (referred to as a Class 4 bike facility) along B Drive.
- Sidewalk and bicycle facilities along Classical Way (to be installed in phases as development occurs to the west).
- The "City Walk" along the entrance to the Zoo, between the north parking lot and the entry gates.

Bicycle parking is provided in two lots, one at the main entrance and a second at the Giraffe Café. In total, 120 bicycle parking spaces are provided, or about 5-7% of the total vehicle parking.

As noted, the Project includes two automobile parking lots. A minimum of 1,600 stalls are planned at buildout. The north parking lot, with approximately 530 stalls, is directly adjacent to the Zoo and Giraffe Café entrance. Based upon an analysis of the average daily visitors at the existing Sacramento Zoo and factoring in increases in attendance as a result of having a dedicated parking lot and expanded campus, this parcel is anticipated to meet the needs of visitors for approximately 75% of the operating days of the year. Therefore, this lot is planned to include all of the necessary ADA parking spaces, as well as the required electric vehicle parking infrastructure.

A second lot, to the south of Classical Way, is planned to meet the needs of the other 25% of the operating days. It includes approximately 1,090 stalls. Because of the reduced demand for this parking facility, and for cost reasons, this parcel is intended to be developed as a gravel-paved lot, rather than as a traditional parking lot with paving and extensive landscaping. This parcel will also serve as the parking area for school buses during school trips.

Between the north parking lot and the guest entry gates is a drop-off zone (the "City Walk"). Guests arriving by bus (typically school groups), transportation network company (or TNC, e.g., Lyft, Uber), or needing special accommodations with closer access to the entry (e.g., disabled access drop-off, family drop-off) can arrive along this curb and easily disembark. Separate drop-off zones are provided for the main entry, education entry, and the Giraffe Café. This area can also provide for valet service during special events at the Giraffe Café. The drop-off zone is a one-way drive lane that connects from the driveway at Classical Way to the exit on B Drive. Drivers looking to return to the curb or return to one of the parking lots would need to go south on B Drive and turn east on Classical Way. Roadway and intersection design has accounted for this needed capacity.

Service access to the Project is provided from several gated driveways. Deliveries for human food and products for the gift shop will arrive at a driveway on B Drive, just north of the parking lot. Product will be unloaded at the Giraffe Café, with most materials stored here. As needed, the product will be delivered to the gift shop (at the main entrance), the Gelada Café, the Beer Garden, and other locations via cart. Deliveries for animal operations will arrive at a new driveway along Lotz Parkway, between the Shed C Channel and the Bilby Road intersection. This driveway will include a new left-turn in/out access. Deliveries at this location include animal food, maintenance and operational equipment, certain human food products arriving at the Gelada Café, and the animals themselves. Additional service driveways are located along Lotz Parkway at the intersections of Bilby Road and Overture Way, though these are primarily for emergency access. An additional gate is provided near the main guest entrance along driveway off Classical Way.

In the early phases of the Project, employees will park onsite. Parking areas are provided near the main entry and at the administration center. As the site builds out, the Project anticipates possible acquisition of the former Fire Station site at Lotz Parkway and Overture Way in Sterling Meadows (east side of Lotz Parkway). This parcel would be developed with a fenced employee parking lot. Employees would then cross Lotz Parkway at a signalized intersection and enter at the Overture Way gate. The timing of this improvement is not likely until either Phase 3 or 4 of the Project. The site remains owned by the Cosumnes Community Services District.

Guest Experience

Two overarching objectives for the Project design have been considered. The first is the care and safety of the animals within their habitats and holding spaces. The second has been on the guest experiences. In many respects these two objectives go hand-in-hand. For example, to the extent feasible, habitats have been designed for multi-species occupancy so that guests can experience a more natural habitat and see the interactions of the animals. Examples of this include the savannah, which includes giraffe and other hoof stock/ungulates, and the Gelada habitat, which includes Gelada monkeys and klipspringer. While multispecies habitats are not possible for the carnivores, the placement of their habitats has been considered such that they can be viewed in the distance in relation to the herbivores. An example of this is the lion kopje that is just north of the savannah.

Within the animal habitats themselves, viewing opportunities have been carefully planned. Holding and care quarters have been screened with berms and landscaping to the extent feasible (e.g., see the Giraffe barn and how it is screened from the savannah). Multiple viewing angles are provided for all habitats so that guests have multiple opportunities to see the animals. The location and condition of these viewing opportunities has also been considered relative to the potential location of sunlight and reflection on glass barrier surfaces. Many habitats include both glass viewing (for up close experiences) and open view fencing or barrier walls.

The design of the Zoo also allows for a variety of programming. Special events, including weddings and banquets can be held on the Giraffe Café event lawn. Additional space is available at the Beer Garden and other locations around the site. These spaces are in the center of the site or along the western edge, providing a buffer from the residences at Sterling Meadows.

Night programming is also an opportunity. The existing Zoo has recently tested a Night Zoo program with light shows and music and the proposed design incorporates opportunities for projected video and images within the habitats and on building and rock walls. Night Zoo events provide the opportunity for additional revenue sources for funding operations. Again, the location of these activities is planned on the western half of the site to limit conflicts with the adjoining neighborhood.

Building Architecture

As previously noted, the proposed SPA establishes a process for the review and approval of so-called "Level 1" buildings. These are major buildings facilities "that reflect on the overall design character and quality of the Zoological complex." As part of Phase 1A/1B of the Project, this includes the Entry Complex, the Animal Care Center/Nutrition Center, and the Giraffe Café. Major buildings in future phases will require additional review and approval by the City Council at that time.

Renderings of the Phase 1A/1B Level 1 buildings are provided in **Figures 10, 11, and 12**. While each of the proposed buildings is unique and reflective of its place on the site and the intent and use of the building, a common architecture language is established for the site, with the use of similar colors, materials, and overall building style. This includes the use of corrugated metal, roof overhangs and trellises, and approachable building massing and articulation. The architecture and landscaping design for each is consistent with the design provisions for architecture and landscaping provided in the Zoological Park Special Planning Area. Building designs provide for clearly defined public entrances or access points and detailing is provided in the respective roof designs, building articulations, and material and color pallets. Long blank façades are avoided.

Roof planes and forms change in heights and character based upon the respective aspects of the building, including accenting entries and guest spaces from utility areas. The building designs positively contribute to the character and quality of the site by incorporating a common architecture language across the site. Further, the design of the buildings complements the surrounding area by being of high quality.

Zoo Operation (Conditional Use Permit)

The proposed SPA requires the approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) before establishment of the Project. As noted in the Elk Grove Municipal Code, a Conditional Use Permit "is for the individual review of uses typically having unusual site-development features or operating characteristics, to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas and uses." A CUP also allows for the imposition of conditions of approval, which are actions, improvements, or other things that the operator is required to do either as part of the initial development or the ongoing operation of the use.

Throughout the process, staff has sought to understand the unique operating characteristics of zoological parks. This has included visits to the existing Zoo in Land Park, to other zoos, including Fresno and Houston, and discussions with Society staff and the design team. Based upon these discussions and the design of the Project, staff believes it is appropriate to issue the CUP, subject to certain conditions. These conditions, which are integrated with the site development conditions in **Attachment 1**, and include the following:

- Limiting the use of amplified sound (except for in the event of an emergency) that is audible at or beyond the boundaries of the Project, between the hours of 10:00 pm and 8:00 am.
- Conducting regular emergency drills in coordination with the Police Department and Cosumnes Community Services District Fire Department.
- Implement, as applicable, the Mosquito Reducing Best Management Practices as published by the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District.
- In coordination with City Public Works and Police, develop and implement an Opening Day Traffic Control Plan.

Continued on next page

Figure 5: Buildout Site Plan Overview

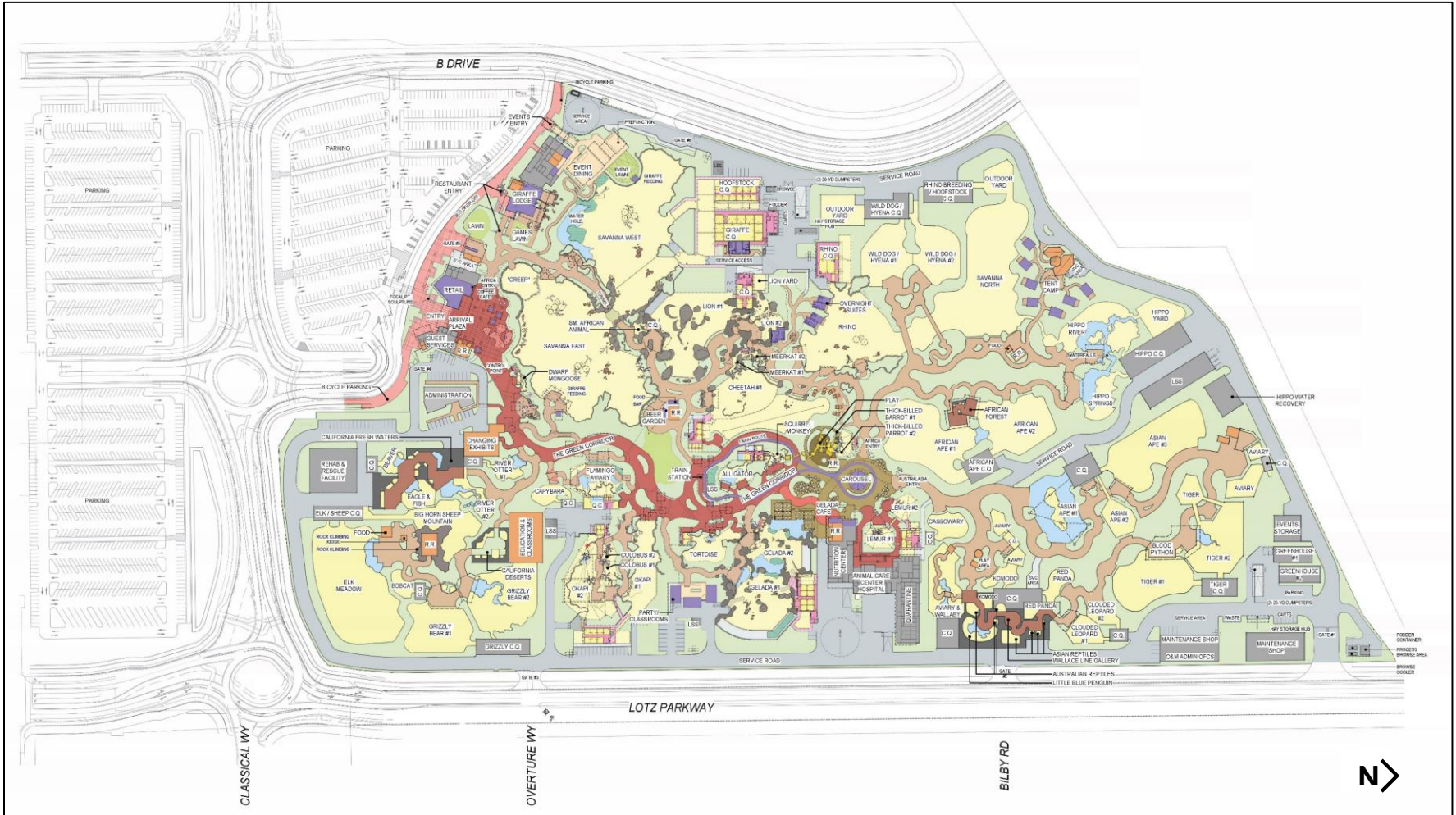


Figure 6: Phasing Plan

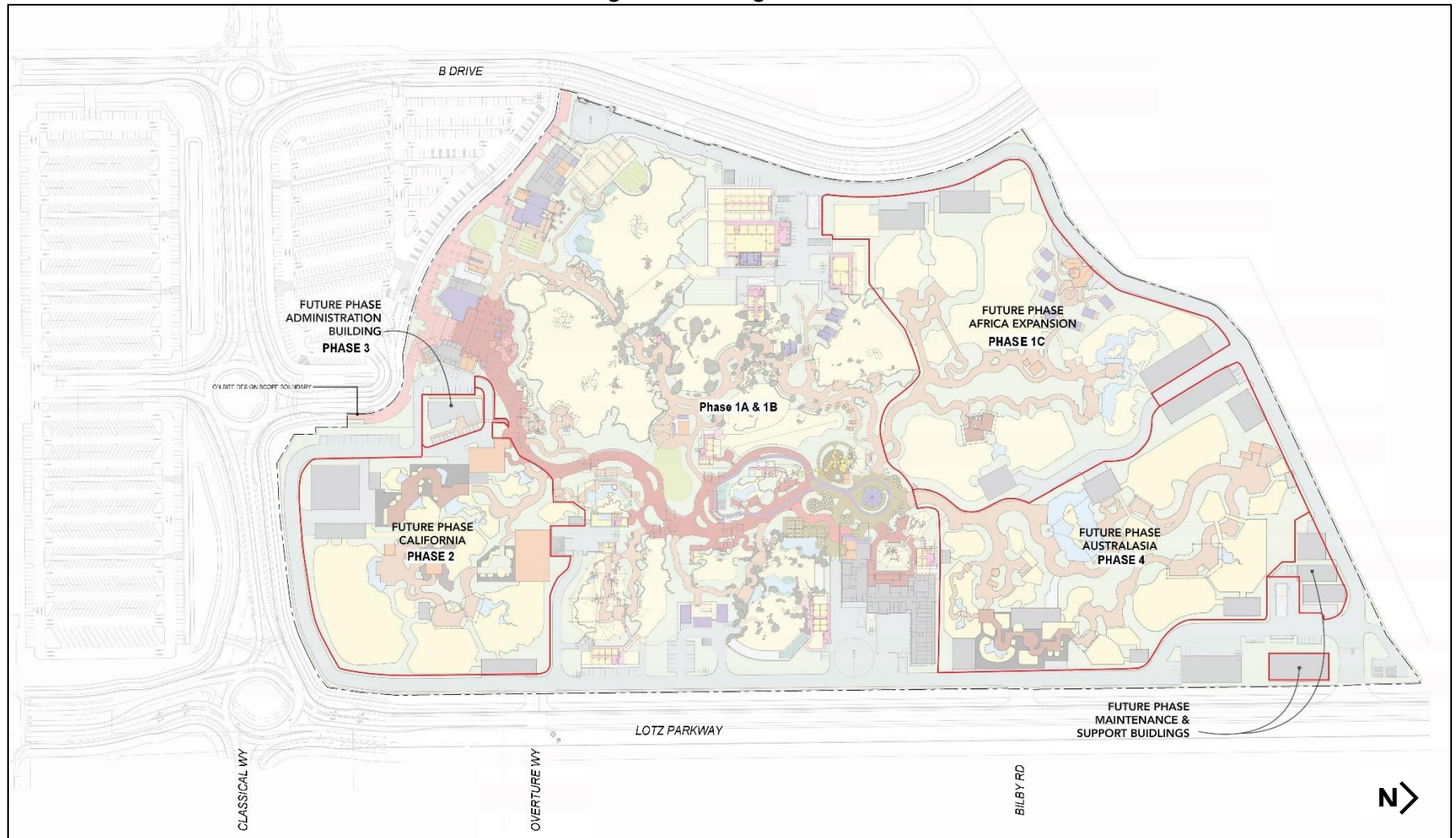


Figure 7: Overview Site Plan for Phases 1A & 1B

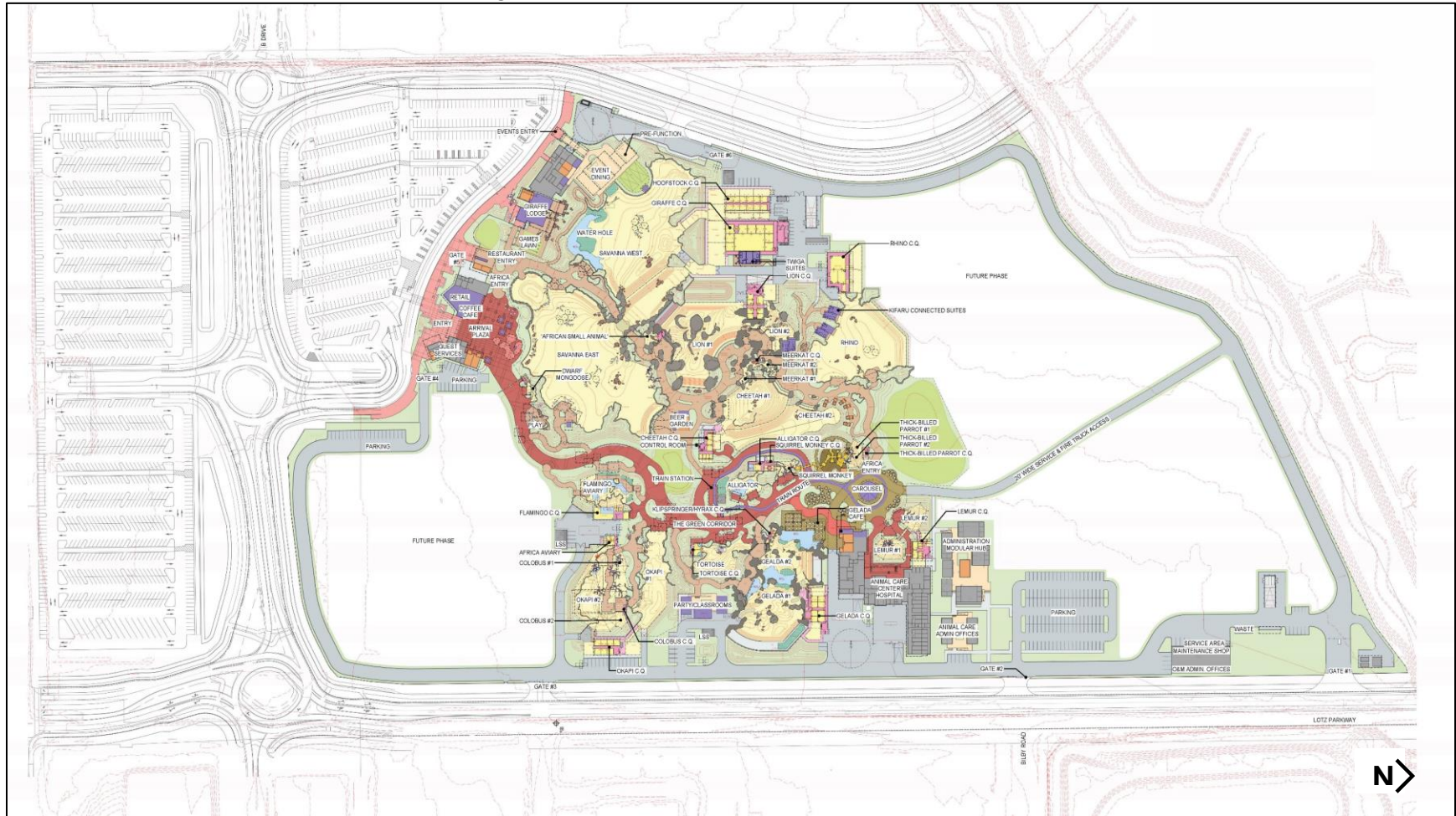


Figure 8: Key Map and Zoom-In for Phases 1A & 1B

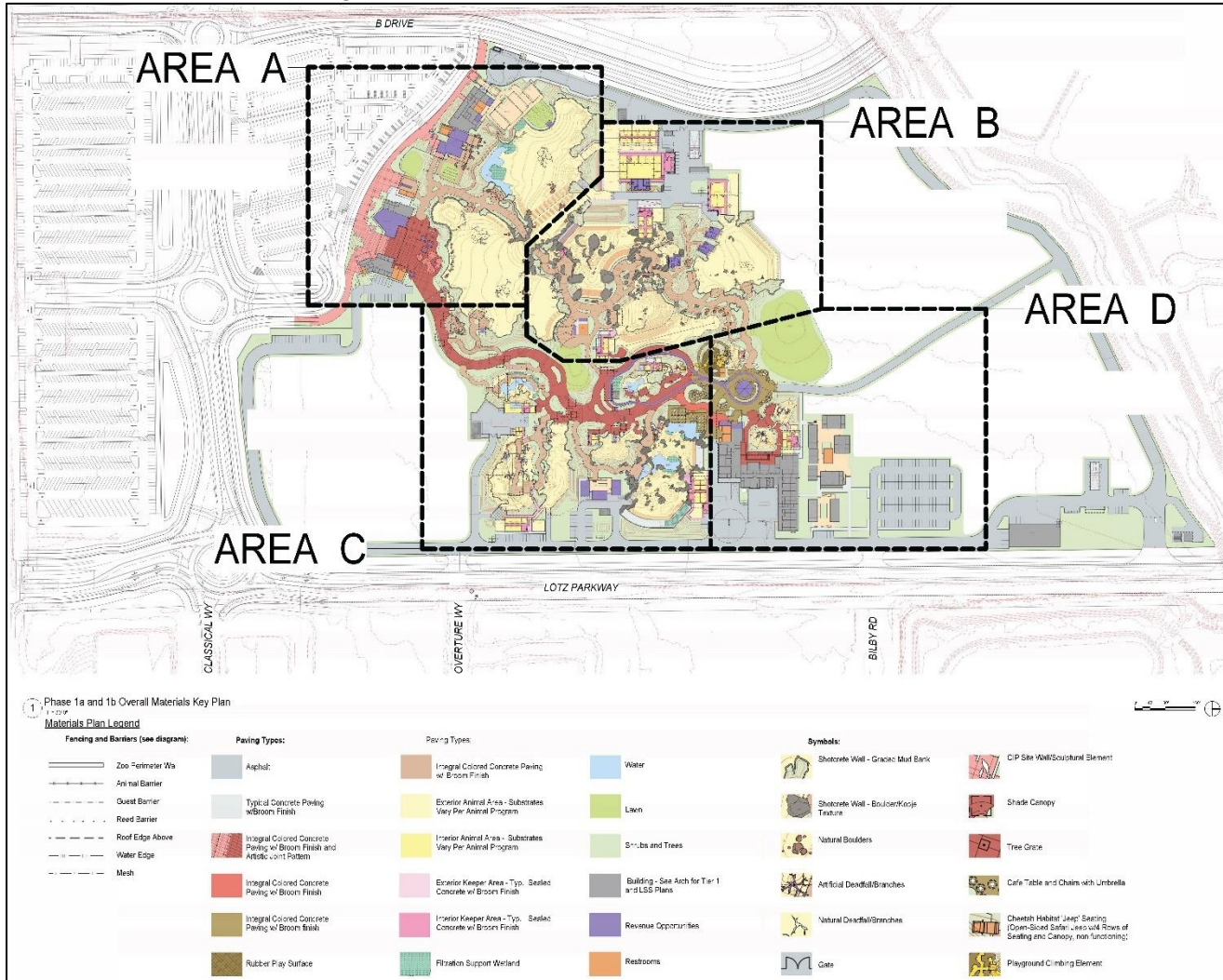


Figure 8A: Area A

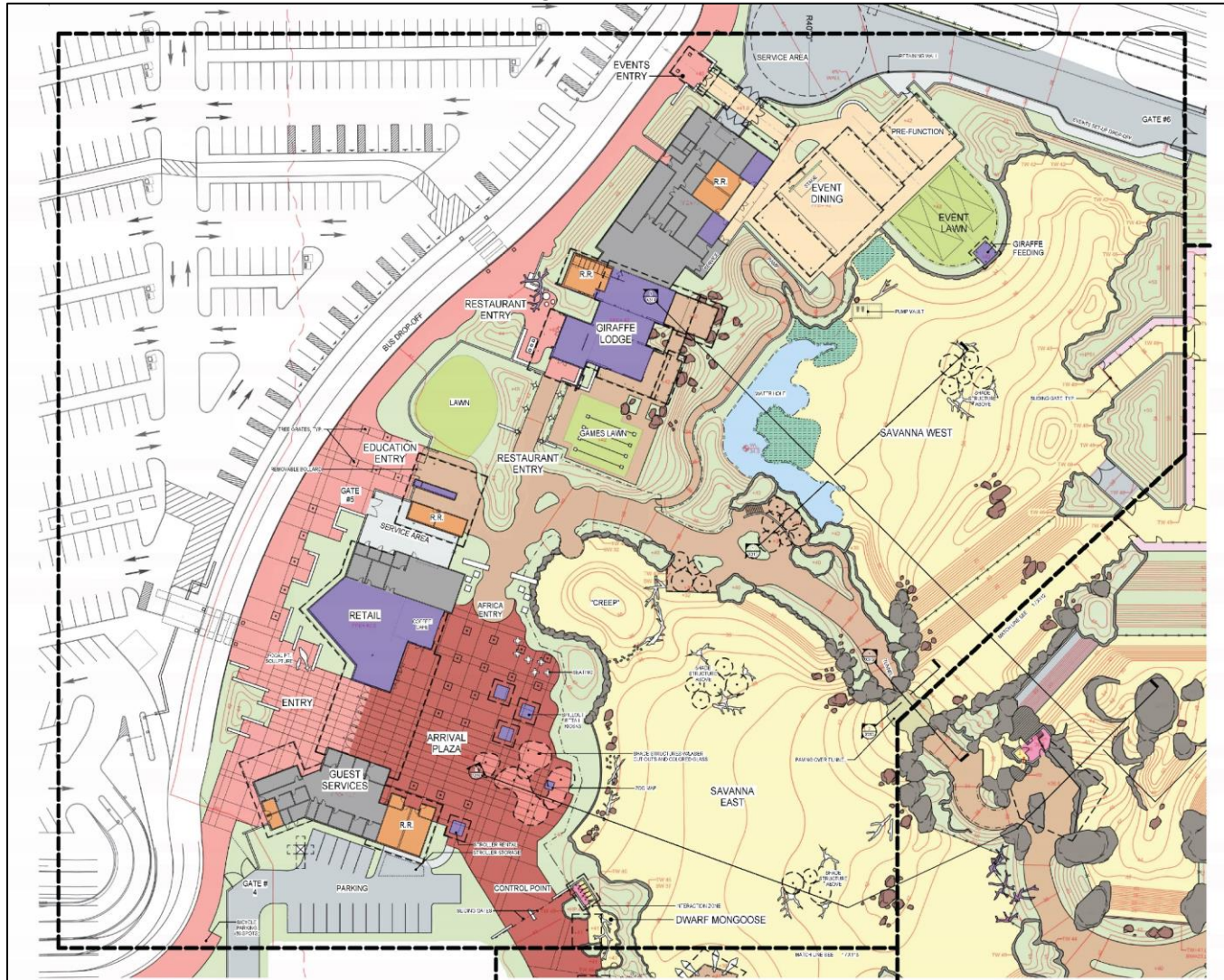


Figure 8B: Area B

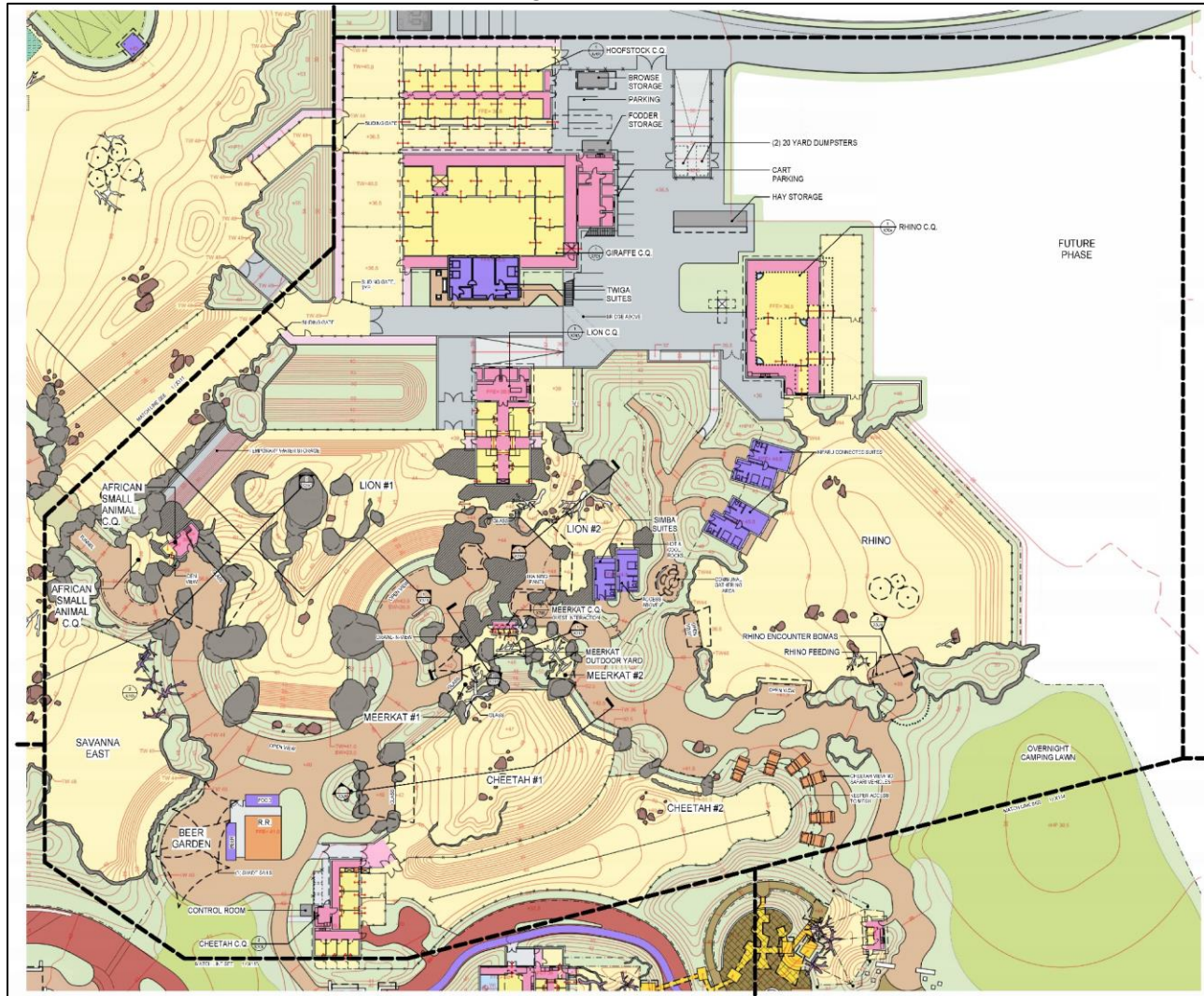


Figure 8C: Area C

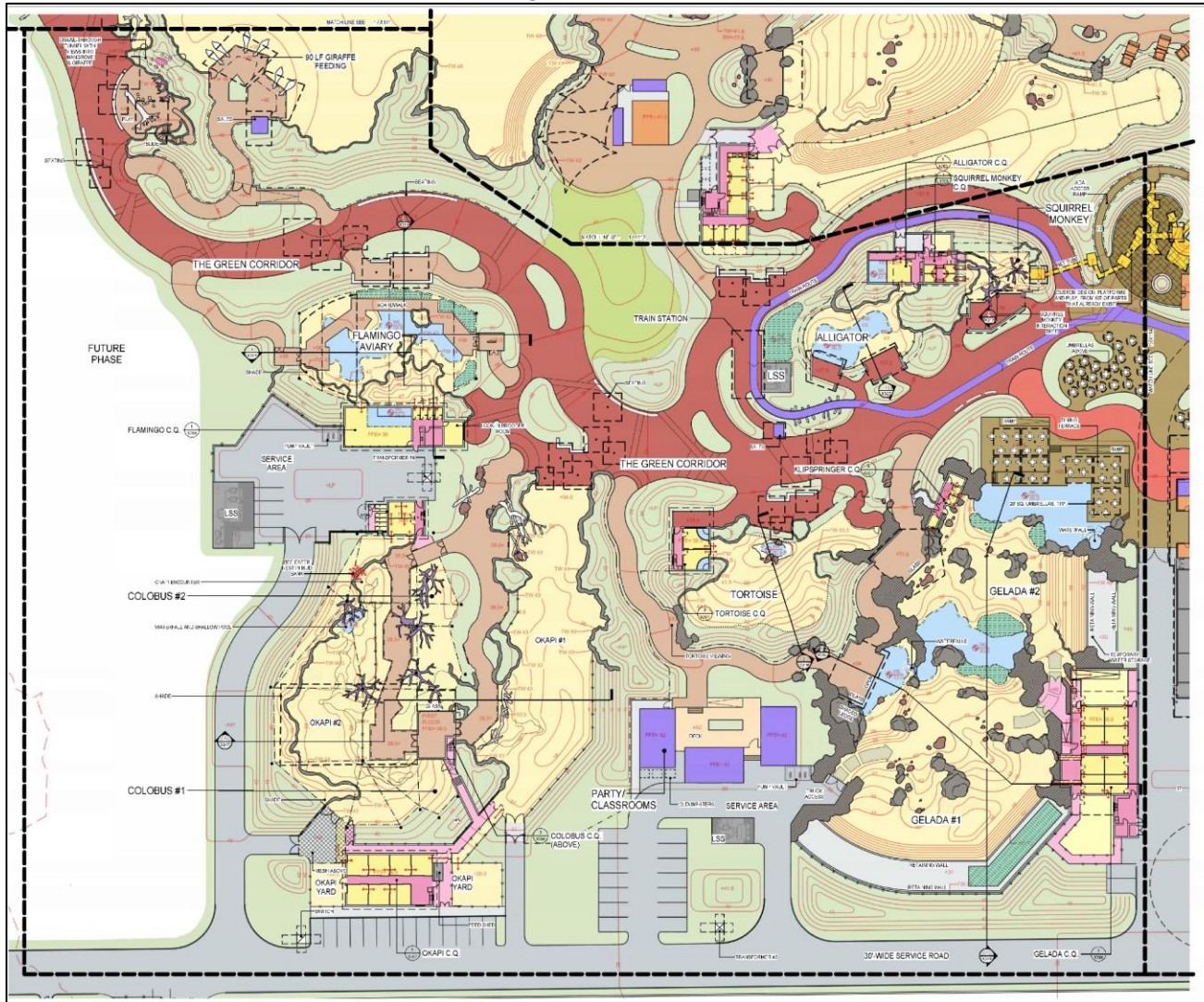


Figure 8D: Area D

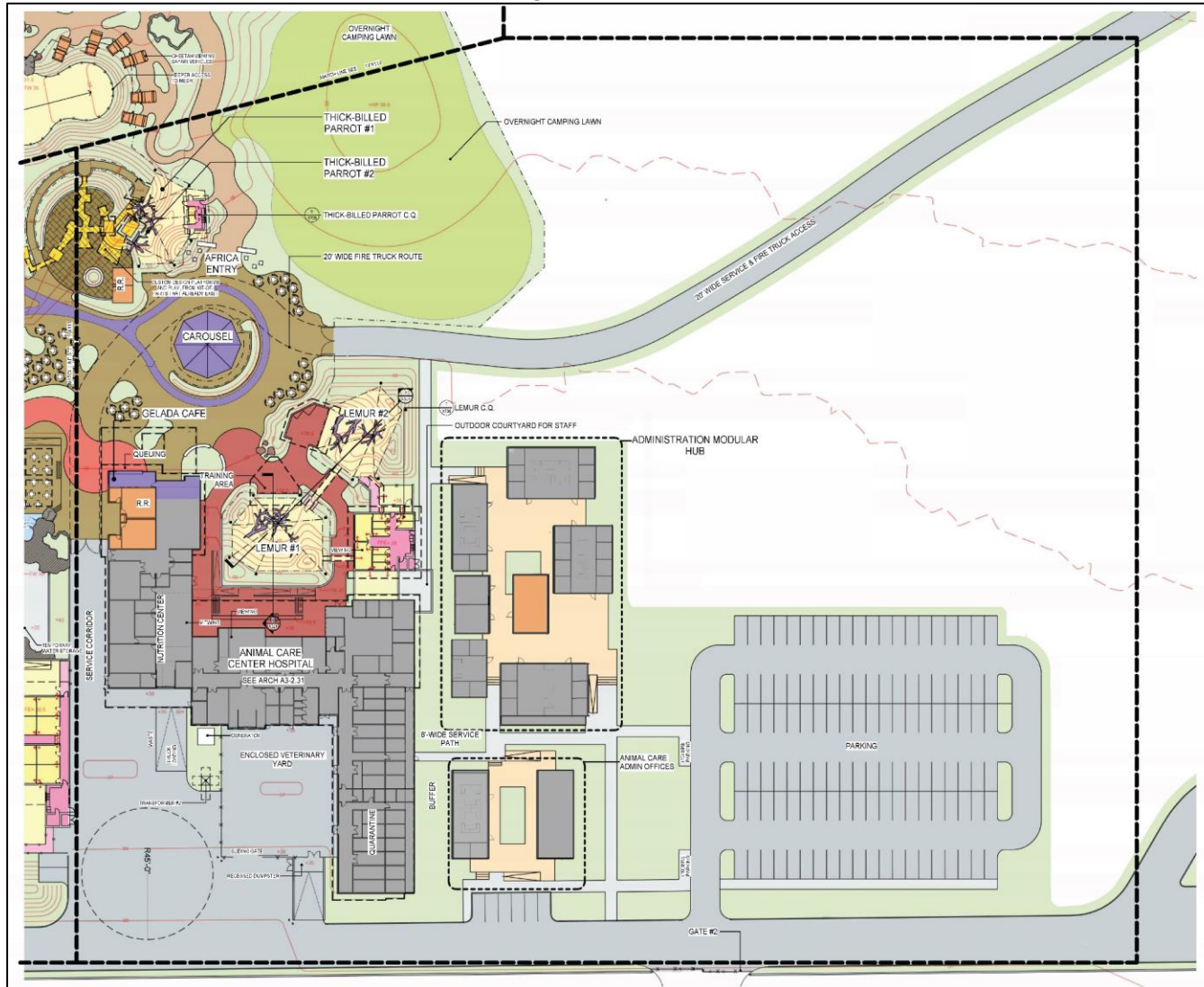


Figure 9: Access and Circulation

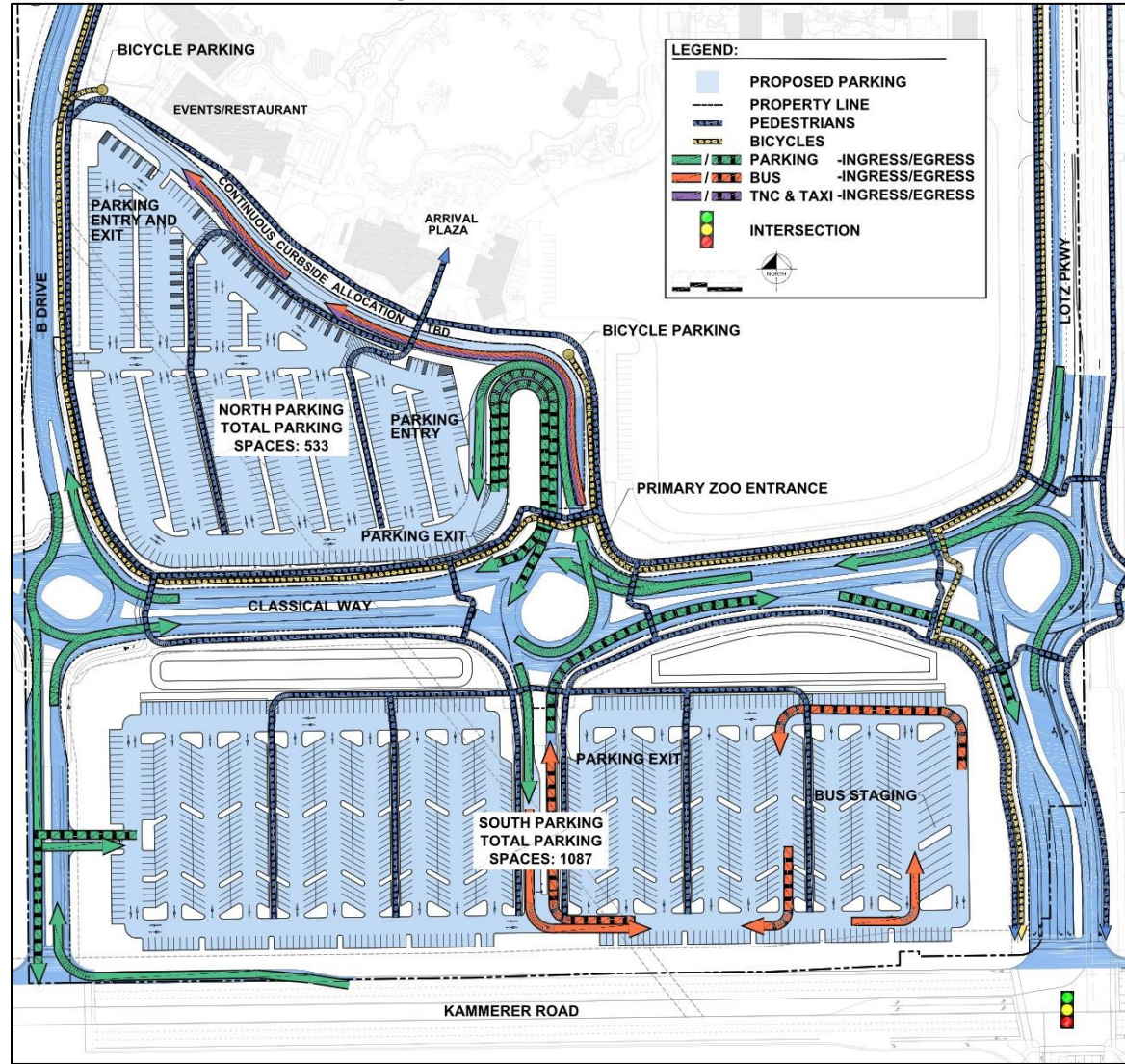


Figure 10: Entry Complex as Seen From the Drop Off Curb/City Walk



Figure 11A: Giraffe Café, View from Parking Lot/City Walk



Figure 11B: Giraffe Café, View from Dining Lawn



Figure 12A: Gelada Cafe



Figure 12B: Animal Care Center



Zoo Art Plan

Section 4.12 of the draft Zoological Park SPA requires the preparation of an Art Plan for the Project. The requirement for the Art Plan follows from adopted [City policy](#) requiring artwork at facilities developed with public funds and when designated by the City Council. The draft Art Plan establishes a budget and overall approach for public art for Phases 1A and 1B of the Zoo. Subsequent phases will require updates to the Art Plan to identify the approach for artwork in those phases. The budget for artwork is the same as in existing City policy: 2% for the first \$10 million in construction costs and 1% of costs above \$10 million.

The Art Plan was developed through extensive discussion and planning with the City's Arts Commission. The Commission reviewed the final draft of the Art Plan at their meeting on February 22, 2024, and voted 3-0 (Mahon and Guttridge absent) to recommend approval.

Three sites for artwork are identified in the Art Plan, each with a unique intent:

- **Main Entrance:** A spacious plaza with seating and shade trees creates a place for visitors to gather, meet, wait, and relax before and after their visit. The plaza presents an opportunity for the placement of a monumental and iconic artwork (or artworks), that sets the tone for the visitor's journey and experience and embodies the unique identity of the New Zoo.
- **The Green Corridor:** The artworks in this area should reinforce the visitor's experience of an intuitive journey through the Zoo. Here, there is an opportunity for the artist to create multiple surprising, intimate, and interconnected artworks.
- **The Play Area (Fun Zone):** The art in this area should function as a gateway between the Green Corridor and the Play Area and, like the Play Area itself, it should be colorful, lively, and interactive.

Artwork will be selected through a competitive process. Should the Project be approved by the Council this spring, staff intends to release a Request for Qualifications in fall 2024 to solicit interest from artists and develop a list of qualified candidates. Selected candidates are then invited to develop their ideas and from those the final selections are made. The Arts Commission, along with a technical panel, are involved throughout and the City Council makes the final determination. The current schedule allows for the selected artists and their artwork to be integrated into the overall design work well in advance of construction.

Financing Plan

As noted in the City/Society MOU from May 2022, part of the consideration of the Project includes the development of a Financing Plan. Zoological facilities are major community investments. The 2022 Feasibility Study noted that a combination of public and private sector funding would be necessary to construct the Zoo. However, the Feasibility Study did not identify all the specific sources of funds or the definitive costs for the Project. Throughout the development of the Project the City and Society have commissioned multiple rounds of cost estimates and have had extensive discussions on the funding responsibilities. From this, the City has prepared a Financing Plan, which is included as **Attachment 2**.

While the Financing Plan is not part of the Planning Commission's purview and the Commission is not being asked to recommend to the City Council the adoption of the Plan, it is included in this report to provide context for the Commission and to provide full transparency and a complete picture of the Project to the community.

This Financing Plan addresses the funding needs for Phases 1A and 1B of the Project. The Plan outlines the cost of constructing the on- and off-site improvements, including both soft and hard costs, and identifies a range of funding sources to meet these costs. Financing for the later phases will require the preparation of other financing plans as applicable. This Financing Plan also does not address the annual maintenance obligations for the operation of the New Zoo once constructed; the annual maintenance and operational costs are the sole responsibility of the Zoological Society. As discussed later, an updated Operating Proforma/Business Plan has been prepared to understand the Society's responsibilities in managing the Project operations.

Project Costs

The cost estimates presented in the Financing Plan are based upon the design included in the attached Project plans. They are priced based upon current market conditions, meaning they are based upon similar work and material types for recent construction projects (e.g., paving costs are based upon recent paving work on recent projects). As the Project moves forward into the next round of design work (Design Development and Construction Design) additional estimates will be prepared to ensure alignment between the vision and Project budget.

The costs are divided into two components, on-site and off-site:

- **On-site** costs include construction of the Zoo itself, including animal habitats and holding areas, the animal care center (veterinary and nutrition facilities), guest facilities and amenities (e.g., gift shops, restaurants, restrooms, plazas), and office and storage/maintenance facilities. This component also includes public art, impact fees, and the north and south parking lot and related drive aisles.
- **Off-site** costs include public roadways (Lotz Parkway, Kammerer Road, Classical Way, and B Street), water and sewer infrastructure, an off-site detention basin and associated drainage pipelines, and dry utilities (electrical and telecommunications) to the site.

Costs are further divided into four major categories:

- **Construction Costs** are the costs involved in constructing the improvements. This includes both materials and labor and is generally paid to the construction contractor.
- **Contingency** is an additional budget identified to account for changes in the design or other costs associated with the Project that have been unidentified at the time the estimate is prepared. Contingency is calculated as a percentage of the construction cost estimate. Early in the design process, a high contingency percentage is utilized; as the design is finalized and more details are resolved, the construction costs are refined (and may increase), and the contingency percentage is reduced. At the current Schematic Design stage, a 15-30% contingency is utilized, depending upon the project component.
- **Soft Costs** are non-construction related costs and include design fees, construction management services, fees paid for plan review and inspection or by governmental agencies or impact fees for shared infrastructure, and expenses for furniture, fixtures, and equipment to outfit the Project. In some cases, soft costs are based upon a percentage of the estimated construction costs; in others, they are based upon an estimate of fees or charges expected based on the best available information at the time the estimate is prepared.

- **Escalation** is anticipated increases in the construction costs because of inflation or other increases in labor or material cost anticipated from the time the estimate is prepared until, generally, the mid-point of construction. The escalation factor utilized is based upon the category of the improvement (i.e., on-site, off-site) and the anticipated timeframe before the improvement can be constructed (e.g., 2025-2026 for off-site infrastructure or 2026-2028 for on-site improvements), and historic market trends for increases in construction cost.

Table 3 summarizes the Project costs. Of the on-site component, the total costs for the Zoo exclusive of parking facilities, public art, and impact fees is approximately \$226 million.

Table 3: Proposed New Zoo Project Costs, Phases 1A and 1B Combined

Component	Construction Estimate	Contingency	Soft Cost Estimate	Escalation	Total Costs
On-Site	\$173,806,174	\$22,964,385	\$42,892,480	\$18,650,236	\$258,313,275
Zoo Facilities	158,361,908	\$15,836,191	\$34,839,620	\$16,904,105	\$225,941,824
All Other Costs	\$15,444,266	\$7,128,194	\$8,052,860	\$1,746,131	\$32,371,451
Off-Site Infrastructure	\$28,233,202	\$8,469,961	\$5,230,201	\$2,096,668	\$44,030,032
TOTAL	\$202,039,376	\$31,434,346	\$48,122,681	\$20,746,904	\$302,343,307

Note: Totals may not equal due to rounding.

Project Financing

A wide range of funding sources have been identified for the Project. These include:

- Development Impact Fee Programs
- City Funding Opportunities
- Community Partnerships
- Bond Financing

Table 4 summarizes the funding sources identified to achieve the \$302.3 million Project cost identified in Table 3.

Table 4: Summary of Proposed Project Funding

Funding Source	Funding Amount	Funding Distribution
Development Impact Fees	\$14,834,221	5%
City Pay-Go	\$93,002,538	31%
Community Partnerships	\$80,000,000	26%
Bond Financing	\$114,506,548	38%
TOTAL	\$302,343,307	100%

Note: Totals may not equal due to rounding.

The Financing Plan describes each of the funding sources in more detail.

Some of the key takeaways of the Financing Plan are:

- The City has been saving substantial funds over the past 24 years towards a major project, such as the Zoo. This Project would take advantage of those funds. None of these funds are necessary to support ongoing City operations and the use of these funds should not impact any City services.
- The Financing Plan **does not** utilize the City's Economic Uncertainty Reserve, which is used to address severe economic downturns and represents 25% of adjusted appropriations, equaling \$22.7 million as of the current Fiscal Year.
- The Financing Plan **does not** require or propose the use of any Measure E funds, and those funds will continue to be used to support the community's highest priorities.
- The Society is directly responsible for securing partner funding in a minimum amount of \$50 million, with an additional \$30 million jointly secured by the City and Society for energy efficiency and animal care components.
- Bond financing is necessary to complete the financing. Approximately 68% of the annual repayment will come from the City, with the balance 32% from the Society.
- **When specifically looking at the City's share, exclusive of development impact fees, the City is contributing 57% towards the overall costs.** This includes the City Pay-Go and 68% of the Bond repayment. This percentage is lower (39%) when excluding funding elements related to the Wilton Rancheria MOU.

Managing Risks

The Financing Plan identifies a number of potential risks to the City and the Project and identifies five management tools and techniques to manage that risk. Potential risks include:

- Utilization of the City's discretionary reserves for the Project and limits on funding similar major projects in the future.
- Increasing construction costs that are outside the City's control.
- Increasing bond financing costs due to changes in the market rates for bond issuances.
- Design and construction challenges or elements that may not be fully recognized in the cost estimates.
- Challenges in securing partner funding.

To manage these risks, the Financing Plan identifies the following (see additional details on each in the Financing Plan):

1. Prepare additional cost estimates throughout the Design Development and Construction Design phases.
2. Securing the services of a Construction Management firm to assist with refinements to the Project plans and to incorporate means and methods for the construction of the Project into future estimates.

3. The City will not issue the bonds and proceed with on-site facility construction unless then-current bond rates are at a level that allows the City to afford the annual payment.
4. The City and Society will need to coordinate fundraising activities and market the Project to a wide range of potential partners. The timing of these funds is of paramount importance. To address this:
 - a. The Society has agreed to a schedule for securing their portion of the partner funding, with 25% necessary at time of Project approval (spring 2024) and 100% due prior to on-site construction. Additional interim milestones have also been identified, which allows for tracking of the funding progress relative to progress in completing construction design.
 - b. The Society will work to identify the cash flow requirements of the Partner funds once the actual donations are better known and identified beyond the Project approval date. The Society will seek to identify incremental funding relative to the construction fund needs and any potential short-term borrowing that could be pledged against the outstanding pledge commitments.
5. Consideration of development of a Preview Phase that advances a core element of the Project in a way that can showcase the opportunity to potential community partners and that reduces some of the potential exposure to escalation in construction costs.

Financing Summary and Next Steps

City staff believes that the Financing Plan, as presented, is a realistic and viable approach to completing the Project. Should the Council ultimately approve the Project, the following next steps are planned:

- The City and Society will prepare an agreement to memorialize terms and conditions for financing the Project and roles and responsibilities for delivering the Project.
- The City will work with Sacramento County Water Agency (SCWA) and SacSewer on agreements relative to fee obligations and credits and reimbursement for the construction of their facilities as part of the Project.
- As of July 1, 2024, there are sufficient City funds on hand to proceed with Design Development and Construction Design work for the Off-Site Facilities. The City will proceed with developing Capital Improvement Program projects for these elements and move forward with these phases of work. There are also sufficient funds available over the next five years to proceed with the construction of these facilities. The improvements will ultimately be needed for any future development in the area.
- Sufficient City and Society funds are available to advance Design Development and Construction Design for the on-site facilities.
- On-Site Facility construction may occur in phases (the Preview Phase, then the balance of Phases 1A and 1B) based upon securing Community Partner funding.

In advance of City Council consideration, staff is preparing to host a community meeting to further present and discuss the proposed Financing Plan. This meeting will occur on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. The meeting will begin at 6pm and will be hosted online. More information and an

opportunity to register for the meeting can be found on the City's website at www.elkgrovecity.org/zoo.

Operating Proforma/Business Plan

In 2022, the Society prepared a Feasibility Study for the Project, which included an operating proforma. The 2022 MOU between the City and Society provides for an update to the operating proforma to reflect the Project design. The latest analysis is provided in **Attachment 3**, a Business Plan Update. Key components and outcomes of the Operating Proforma/Business Plan are:

- Phase 1A/1B annual attendance is projected at a baseline of 850,000 (a 63% increase over the Land Park site), with opening year at 935,000 and decreasing to the baseline by year five.
- Admission pricing will continue to be dynamic, as has been implemented at Land Park, but will increase to an average of \$39 for adult, \$36 for senior, \$30 for children, and \$15 for school groups. The dynamic pricing enables, encourages, and incentivizes advance planning through online ticket purchases. The increased price reflects the value proposition of the New Zoo with increased parking, improved exhibits, amenities, and experiences, and highly programmed guest experiences with unique interactions and experiences and longer guest stay times (2.5 hours compared to 1.5 hours for Land Park).
- Membership is anticipated to increase to 24,000 households from 13,500. Pricing for memberships for Elk Grove households would receive a 20% discount compared to the general rate.
- Parking is included in the price of admission.
- No annual operating support from the City of Elk Grove is programmed.
- The five-year projections identify a viable and sustainable financial model with annual net operating income projections that range from 7.6% of total operating revenues in year 1 to 3.4% in year 5.
- Visitor per capita spending will increase by 30% over the 2022 per capita with new and expanded food, dining, and retail venues.
- The pro forma includes payments towards the City bond debt service, as described in the Financing Plan.

Economic Impact Analysis

Also in 2022, the City commissioned an Economic Impact Analysis for the Project. An update to this Analysis (March 2024) has been prepared and is included as **Attachment 4**. Key conclusions of the updated Economic Impact Analysis are:

- Based on projected annual attendance of more than 935,000 visitors per year in the opening year, and stabilized long-term attendance of 850,000 people per year, the New Zoo could create a total economic impact of \$249 million in the City over the next five years.
- Zoo employment at the new facility is estimated at 140 to 144 people with an annual payroll of \$11 million to \$12 million, which represents a 37% increase over current employment levels. In addition, there could be 75 to 80 third-party employees of food and retail concession operators with an annual payroll of \$3 million.

- Through vendor purchases, employee spending, and visitor spending, the Zoo could support 176 indirect and induced jobs and \$7.9 million in labor income each year at other businesses in Elk Grove, as well as 215 jobs and \$9.1 million in annual payroll in other parts of the metro area. Some of these impacts represent existing economic activity associated with the zoo that would simply shift to a new location, but a portion of the impacts would be new given the projected expansion of the zoo at the new site.
- There could be one-time construction impacts associated with the Zoo relocation that are estimated at \$425 million along with 2,405 total jobs and \$171 million in labor income in Elk Grove and throughout the metro area during the construction period.
- Visitor and employee spending associated with the relocated zoo could generate an estimated \$4.0 million in City sales and transient lodging tax revenues, and \$9.4 million in county and state sales taxes over the next five years. Not all of the revenues to the county and state are net new, given the Zoo's existing operations in Sacramento, but all of the City tax revenue would be new to Elk Grove.

Inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program

The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) describes capital improvements planned by the City related to community facilities and enhancements, roadway and alternative transportation improvements, drainage facilities, and other City construction efforts, and sets forth a funding strategy for their implementation. The CIP is a five-year plan that is prepared each year and adopted as part of the Fiscal Year budget. State law (Government Code Sections 65103(c) and 65401) requires the City's planning agency (the Planning Commission and City Council) to review and report on proposed CIP projects for conformity with the General Plan. Traditionally the Planning Commission's review occurs at the second meeting in April. However, given the nature of the proposed Project, staff recommends that the Planning Commission review this Project as part of its overall consideration.

As previously described, the Project is consistent with the General Plan and is eligible for listing in the CIP. The exact configuration of the Project within the CIP, including the number of discrete projects and their project code are still being determined. Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend the totality of the Project consistent with the General Plan at this time, giving the Public Works Director the flexibility to recommend the specific configuration of the Project in the CIP to the City Council at a later date.

Project Next Steps

Should the City Council ultimately approve the Project, the following next steps would occur:

- Agreements between the City and the Society would be prepared and executed addressing:
 - Funding and delivery responsibilities for the Project
 - Long-term operation of the Project by the Society, including responsibilities for maintenance of the improvements, management of the collection, and other topics.
- Master services agreements would be prepared and executed with the design teams and the City would take over management of the consultant activities for all design services.

Task orders for the next round of design services would then be executed and construction design work would commence.

- Upon adoption of pending State legislation ([Senate Bill 739](#)) the City would release a Request for Proposals for a Construction Manager At Risk (CMAR) firm to serve as the overall construction manager and general contractor for the Project.

While a definitive timeline for completion of Phases 1A/1B is variable based upon fundraising, completion of construction design, and bond issuance, staff believes an opening in 2029 is possible. Opportunities for streamlining and accelerating delivery will be explored to the extent that it does not impact the Project costs or the integrity of the Project.

Public Engagement

The City has undertaken extensive public outreach activities as part of the development of the Project. Over 30 zoo related community events, presentations, and informational booths have been held over the past two years. Some of these activities have included:

- Outreach events at the 2022 4th of July event at Elk Grove Park and the 2022 Multicultural Festival at District 56.
- A neighborhood BBQ in the Sterling Meadows neighborhood (directly east of the site) in July 2022.
- Community open houses and presentations in August 2022 and November 2023
- Presentations at various community groups, including but not limited to, Rotary Club meetings, Chamber of Commerce, EGUSD staff meetings, Al Misbaah, Civic Summer program, and Del Webb/Glenbrooke.
- Community surveys in 2022.
- A public meeting to accept comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report in February 2024.

The City has also received extensive written comments on the Project, both in support of and opposed to the Project. These comments are provided in **Attachment 5**.

Letters from Commenting Agencies

This project was routed to various City, County, and State agencies for review. Comments from agencies have either been addressed through the processing of the Project or have been included as draft conditions of approval in Attachment 1. Specifically, the Project would be conditioned to continue coordination with the City's Police Department and the Cosumnes Community Services District Fire Department on final design and operational conditions relative to life/safety, and coordination with Sacramento County Water Agency, SacSewer, and SMUD on utilities and services. Additional coordination would occur between the City and SacRT to extend transit services to the Project and determine the location for bus stop(s).

Environmental Analysis

The California Environmental Quality Act (Section 21000, et. seq. of the California Public Resources Code, hereafter CEQA) requires analysis of agency approvals of discretionary “projects.” A “project,” under CEQA, is defined as “the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.” The proposed project is a project under CEQA. Approval of the proposed New Zoo at Elk Grove Project requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The City prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and circulated it to public agencies and interested parties (including the general public) on November 18, 2022. The NOP provided an introduction to the Project. Comments on the scope of the EIR were requested by January 13, 2023, consistent with the requirements of the State CEQA Guidelines. Comments received on the NOP are included in the Draft EIR (Appendix B of the Draft EIR) and responses are provided in Chapter 1 of the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR has been prepared to meet the requirements of a project EIR as defined by Section 15161 of the State CEQA Guidelines. A project EIR focuses on the changes in the physical environment that would result from the implementation of a project, including its planning, construction, and operation. The State’s intention is that a lead agency preparing a project EIR would not be required to provide further environmental analysis for additional regulatory approvals following approval of the project, absent conditions requiring a subsequent EIR, a supplement to the EIR, or an addendum. As such, the EIR has been prepared to address the potential environmental impact of all phases of the Project.

The Draft EIR identified a range of potential impacts resulting from approval of the Project. Some of these impacts are analyzed in comparison to existing Zoological Park in Land Park in Sacramento. The impact areas come from the State’s CEQA guidelines (the CEQA Checklist).

The EIR has identified the following environmental issue areas as having potentially significant environmental impacts from implementation of the Project:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Public Services
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems

Conclusions to the potential impacts are classified as either less than significant, less than significant after incorporation of mitigation measures, or significant and unavoidable. Significant and unavoidable impacts do not limit the City’s ability to approve a project. Rather, given CEQA’s role in providing disclosure of potential impacts, the City may approve a project with significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level. CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 states that “CEQA requires the [City] to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits,

including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered 'acceptable.' When the [City] approves a project which will result in the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the final EIR but are not avoided or substantially lessened, the [City] shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record. The statement of overriding considerations shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record." A statement of overriding considerations is necessary to approve the General Plan Update as two impacts, Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Transportation, remain significant and unavoidable after application of all feasible mitigation measures.

On January 5, 2024 the City released the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR was made available for public review and comment on the City's website, at City Hall, and at the Elk Grove library for a period of 45 days. Public comments on the Draft EIR were due to the City on February 20, 2024. Comments were received from five agencies and 35 individuals on the content of the Draft EIR. Responses to these comments have been prepared by staff and are included in the Final EIR.

The Final EIR also includes an erratum of changes to the Draft EIR as a result of the public comments on the Project, the comments to the Draft EIR, and other revisions to the Project as identified by the City and Society. The Final EIR indicates that the modifications to the Project are minor in nature and do not cause any change in significant impacts that were analyzed in the Draft EIR.

Recommended Motion

Should the Planning Commission agree with staff's recommendation, the following motion is suggested:

"I move that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution recommending that the City Council certify the Environmental Impact Report, make Findings Of Fact and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and adopt the Zoological Park Special Planning Area and rezone the Project site to the Zoological Park Special Planning Area; amend the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan; approve a Conditional Use Permit; approve a Tentative Subdivision Map with Subdivision Design Review; approve a District Development Plan and Level 1 Design Review; adopt the Art Plan; and recommend that inclusion of the Project in the City's Capital Improvement Program is consistent with the General Plan, for The New Zoo at Elk Grove, based on the findings and subject to the conditions of approval in the draft resolution."

Continued on next page

Attachments

1. Planning Commission Resolution Recommending Approval to City Council
 - Exhibit A – Draft Environmental Impact Report
 - Exhibit B – Final Environmental Impact Report
 - Exhibit C – Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations
 - Exhibit D – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
 - Exhibit E – Zoological Park Special Planning Area
 - Exhibit F – Amendment to the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan
 - Exhibit G – Project Description
 - Exhibit H – Project Plans
 1. Cover
 2. Civil Plans
 3. Site Design
 4. Architecture
 5. Life Support Systems
 6. Lighting Design Concepts
 7. Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Basis of Design
 8. Tentative Subdivision Map
 - Exhibit I – Conditions of Approval
 - Exhibit J – Art Plan
2. Financing Plan
3. 2024 Business Plan Update/Operating Proforma
4. 2024 Economic Impact Analysis
5. Public Correspondence

Note, due to length and file size, some of the above attachments and exhibits are provided under separate cover. They are available from the Planning Commission Secretary or on the City's website at www.elkgrovecity.org/zoodocuments.