

MEMORANDUM

<i>DATE:</i>	July 22, 2015
<i>PROJECT NAME:</i>	Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo
<i>SUBJECT:</i>	Memorandum to the Parks and Recreation Commission
<i>DISTRIBUTION:</i>	Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning Department, Public Works Department, Rob DeGues
<i>BY:</i>	Friends of the JMZ and CAW Architects.

Introduction

The Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo (JMZ) mission statement, “to engage a child’s curiosity for science and nature by encouraging exploration to build a foundation for understanding and a lifelong respect for nature,” directly aligns with the mission of the Palo Alto Community Services department “to engage individuals and families in creating a strong and healthy community through parks, recreation, social services, arts and sciences.” The JMZ is a treasured, local museum, zoo, and education center uniquely situated in Rinconada Park to serve Palo Alto families and children. The museum and zoo are a valued amenity and integral aspect of the visitor experience at Rinconada Park.

The current JMZ building was built in the 1930’s and the zoo was built in the 1970’s and are not adequately sized or designed to accommodate the JMZ’s vibrant programs, current requirements to support living and non-living collections, expanding educational programs, and current accessibility or seismic code requirements. The goal of the proposed re-build project is to provide the JMZ with adequate storage and support space to meet standards for zoo accreditation, museum accreditation, and provide adequate storage and prep space for the on-site and off-site educational programs. In addition, the goal is to improve circulation to allow universal access for children with disabilities to all exhibits and areas of the facility, which requires considerably more space than allowed for in the existing facility. The re-build project is geared toward allowing the JMZ to better serve its current, local visitors and schools while still maintaining an intimate experience for children to explore science and nature.

The existing JMZ building is located in a complicated and constrained corner of the city owned parcel including Rinconada Park, the parking lot, the girl scout building and Lucie Stern community center. There are a number of existing site constraints as well as goals from the Rinconada Park Long Range Plan that our design team is striving to work within for the JMZ re-build project. The site constraints include an existing utility corridor that runs under the existing zoo, adjusting to appropriate property line setbacks (the existing building does not meet setback requirements), the Rinconada Park boundary line (currently the existing zoo sits in the park and museum outside of the park), and preserving a number of heritage and special specimen trees surrounding the existing facility. The Rinconada Park Long Range Plan outlines a number of goals for the shared area of the site surrounding the JMZ including maximizing spaces and clarifying circulation in the parking lot, creating a strong park arrival experience from Middlefield and Lucie Stern through the Main Entrance Plaza to Rinconada Park, and integrating the park visitors experience with the Zoo through art installations, educational features, and possibly views into the zoo.

Proposed Design Presented at the February PRC Meeting

The complexity of the site constraints, goals of the Rinconada Park Long Range plan, and the programmatic goals and requirements for the JMZ re-build informed, shaped and reinforced the proposed design the Friends of the JMZ

and CAW Architects brought forward at the February PRC meeting for reference. Please refer to the attached site plan illustrating the previous design presented in February along with diagrams that analyze the site constraints and goals outlined in the Introduction section above.

Since the February PRC Meeting, we have prepared three alternatives that address the primary concern identified at the February meeting by reducing the expansion of the Zoo footprint into parkland. For each alternate footprint, we have evaluated the site plan against the same site constraints, Long Range Plan goals, and JMZ programmatic goals. This analysis presents pro's and con's for each alternate option, which we would like to discuss in more detail with the Commission at the July 28th meeting. Please refer to the attached site plans and site diagrams for Alternate Footprints #1, #2 and #3.

In addition to the main concerns, we also heard three additional comments regarding additional parking congestion on the site, the addition of a public restroom accessible from the park, and questions about the "face" of the zoo to the park. We are planning to address these comments in more detail in our presentation on July 28th.

Alternate Footprint #1 - Density or Reduce Museum & Zoo Footprint

Since the February PRC Meeting, we have studied options to densify and find efficiencies in the layout of the museum and zoo floor plans and massing to reduce the footprint in the park land. In this alternate, we have compressed the museum building to sit completely outside of the park boundary and reorganized the exterior zoo exhibit spaces and circulation to remove approximately 1,900 square feet allowing for a 10% reduction of the footprint in the park compared to the previous design. This allows for more turf area in the park to be preserved while still accommodating the JMZ programmatic needs and accessibility requirements. This alternate footprint does not adversely impact the site constraints previously identified in the February PRC meeting design.

Alternate Footprint #2 - Take up more Park Entrance Plaza Space Instead of Parkland

This alternate footprint relocates the Zoo Support building and some of the zoo back of house space to the Main Park Entrance Plaza reducing the footprint in the parkland. This relocation keeps all buildings out of the official Park Boundary and preserves additional turf area in the park.

Although this option frees up more parkland, it chokes off the park entrance, impacts parking and impacts prominent trees identified in the environmental assessment arborist report.

Alternate Footprint #3 - Relocate Museum and Zoo to Take up more Frontage along Middlefield

This alternate footprint completely relocates all of the indoor building program (education center, museum and zoo support building) into one large building situated between Middlefield, Walter Hays and the Park Boundary. This alternate removes all buildings from parkland and shifts the exterior zoo footprint to align with the existing zoo footprint in the park. While this alternate minimizes the impact on the existing turf area of the park and locates the building completely outside of the official Park Boundary, there are a number of concerns and unknown risks associated with this alternate.

This alternate footprint has the largest impact on existing trees including removing two mature and special specimen trees (Pecan Tree and the Dawn Redwood) and numerous trees along Middlefield. The increased mass of one large building in this location will severely impact the street presence along Middlefield, which may expose the city and project to issues and complaints from the residential neighbors across the street. In addition, this alternate reduces the amount of parking spaces (10 less spaces than the proposed design) and relocates the public park restroom much further away from park activity.

The Friends of the JMZ and CAW Architects Recommend Alternate Footprint #1

The Friends of the JMZ and CAW Architects recommend Alternate Footprint #1 as the best compromise between the goals of the Rinconada Park Long Range Master Plan, the goals of JMZ re-build project, and the goals of the Parks and Recreation Commission to protect open space and parkland. This Alternate Footprint works within the complex site constraints, maximizes parking (20 spaces more than the existing parking lot), creates a strong park arrival experience, protects mature specimen trees, and reduces the impact on parkland from the previous design. In addition, there are many exciting opportunities to link and connect the zoo and zoo support building with the visitor experience in the park in this alternate footprint. We will bring examples of these opportunities forward at the PRC Meeting on July 28th.

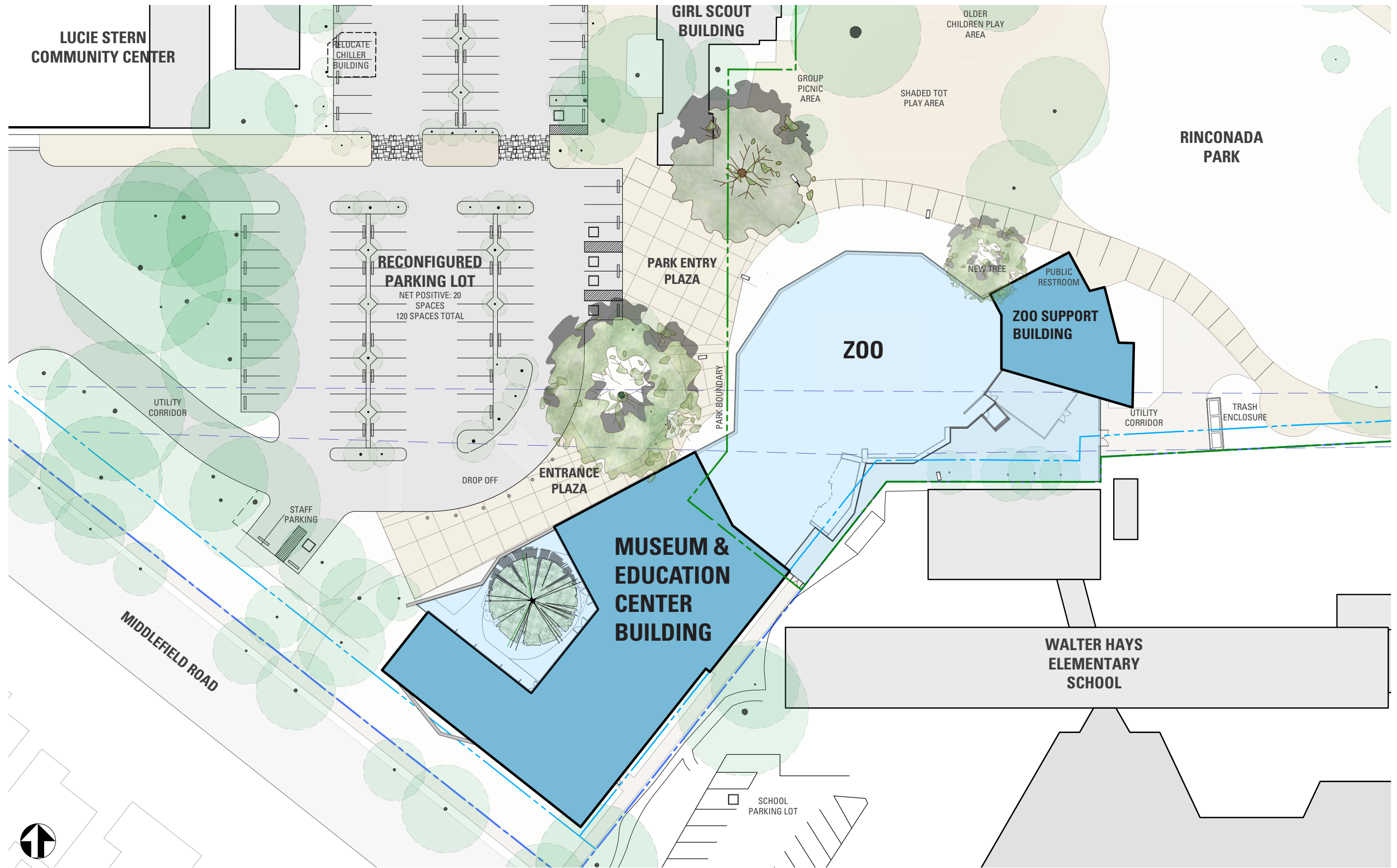
PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

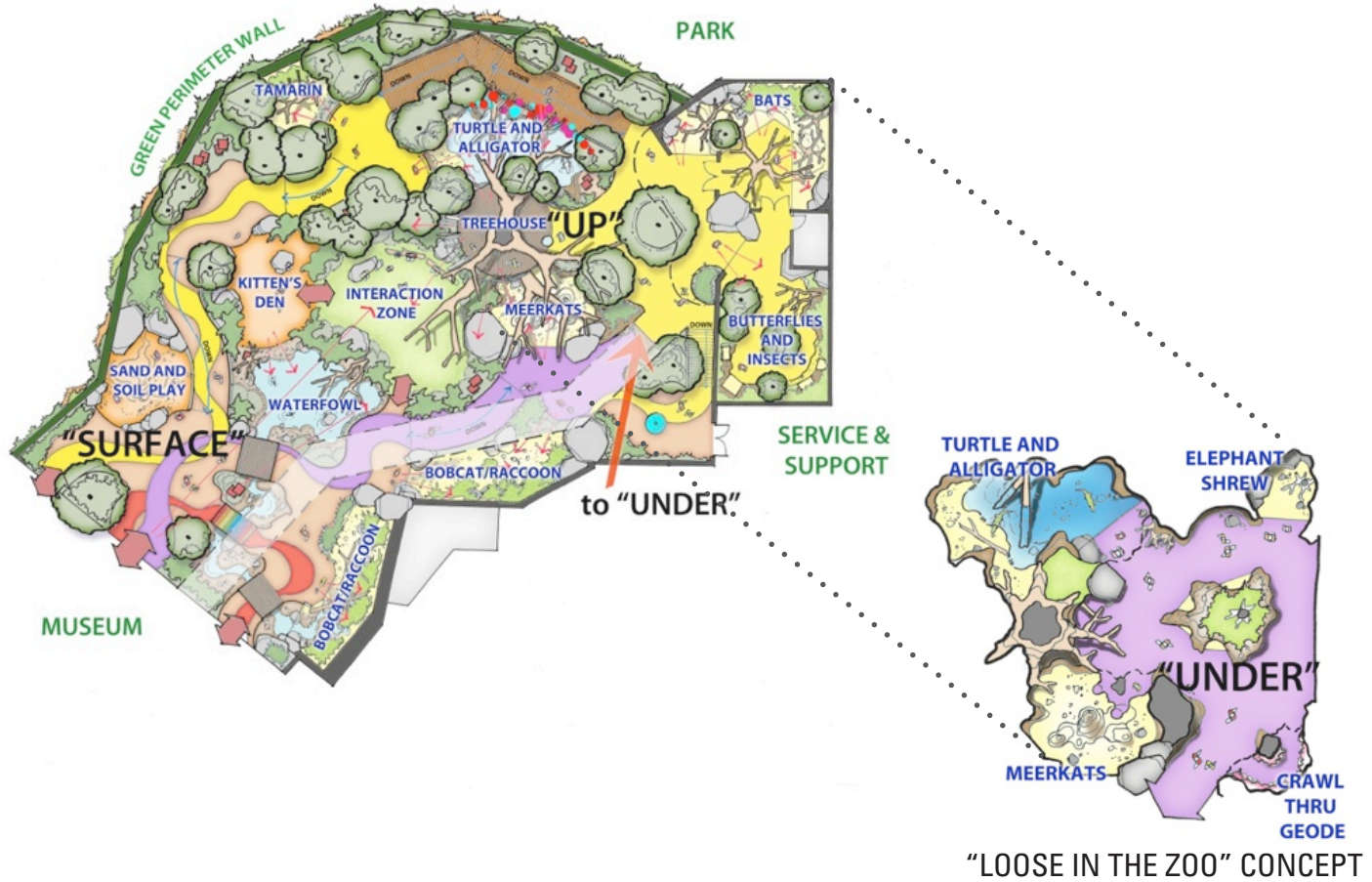
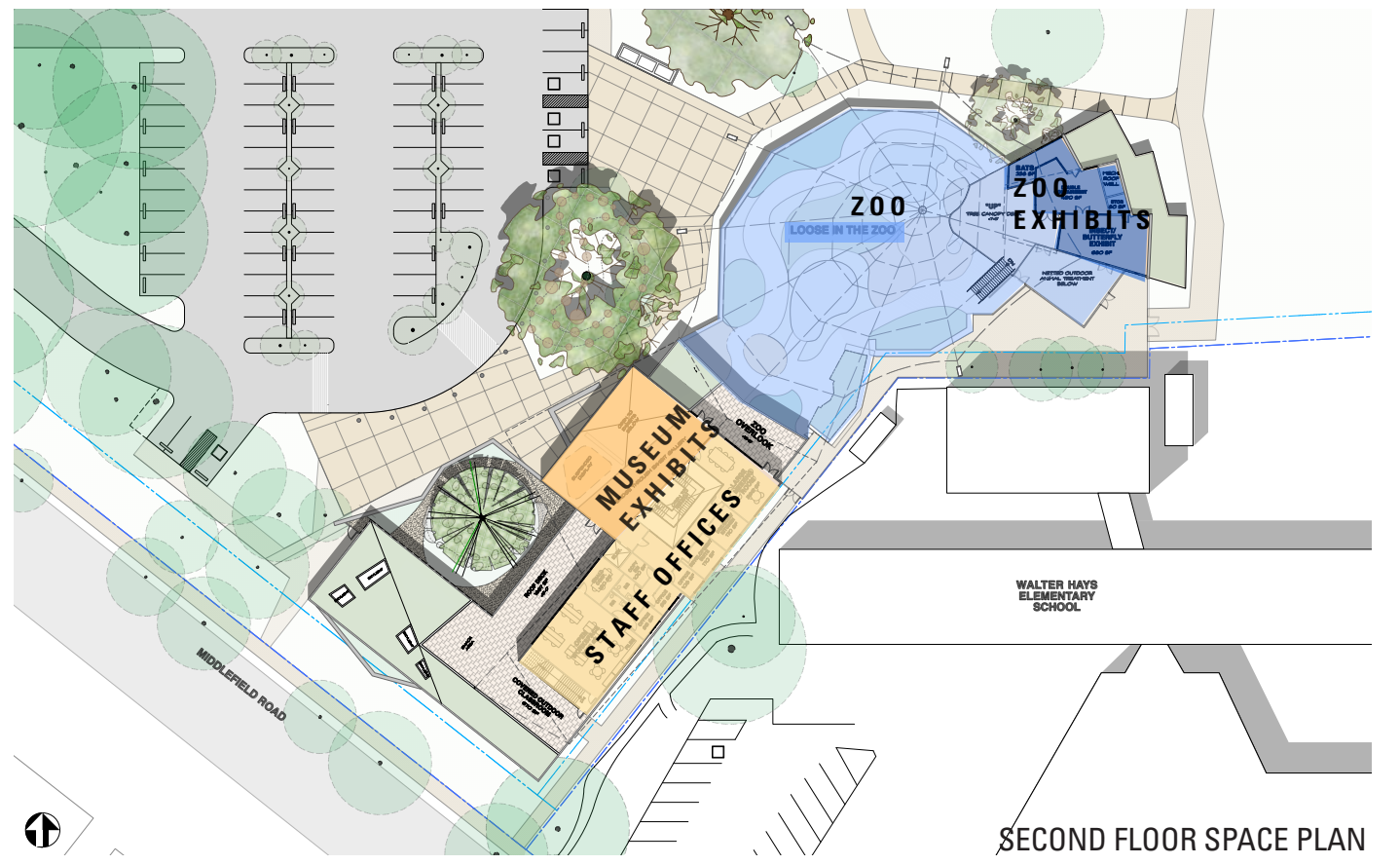
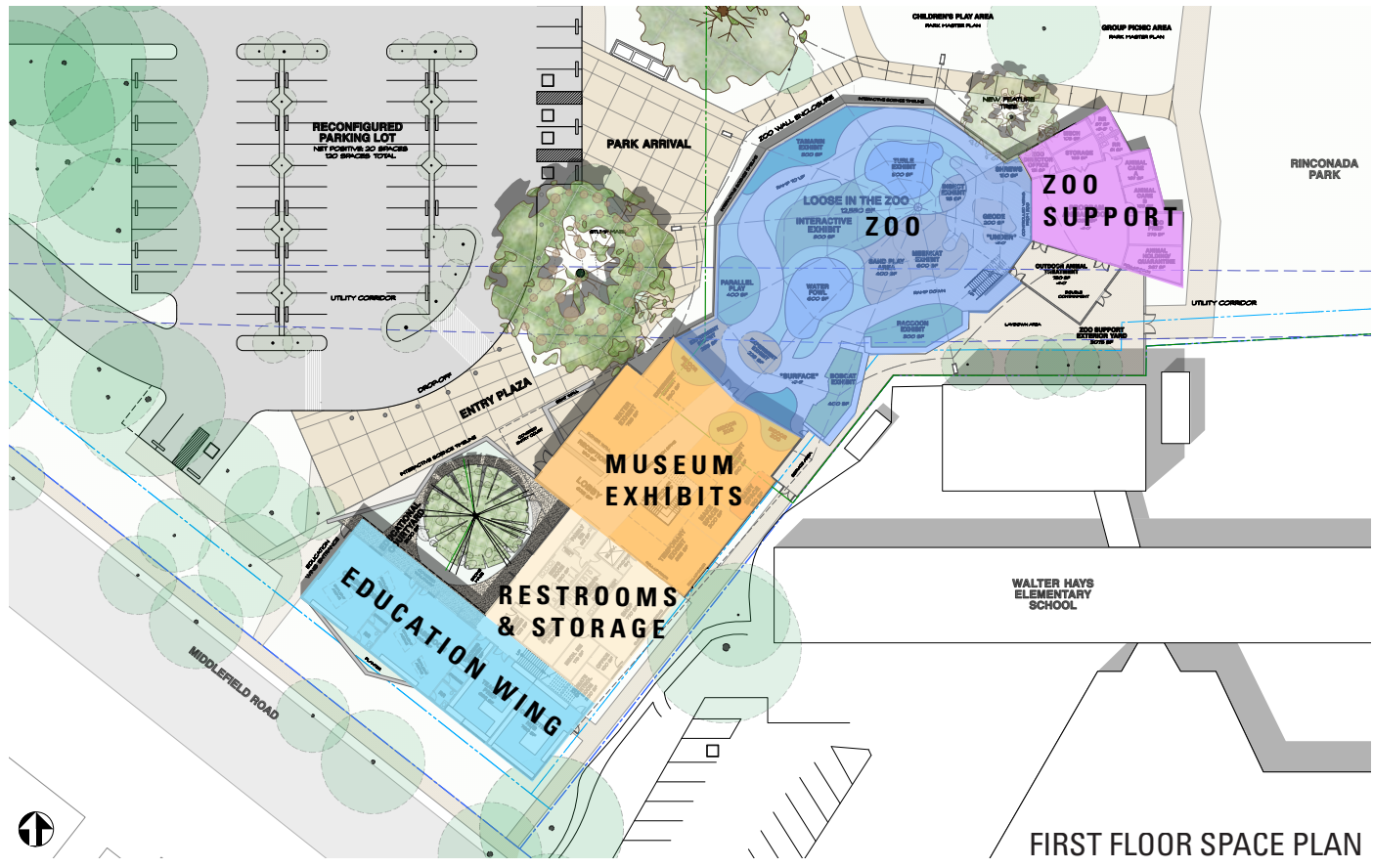


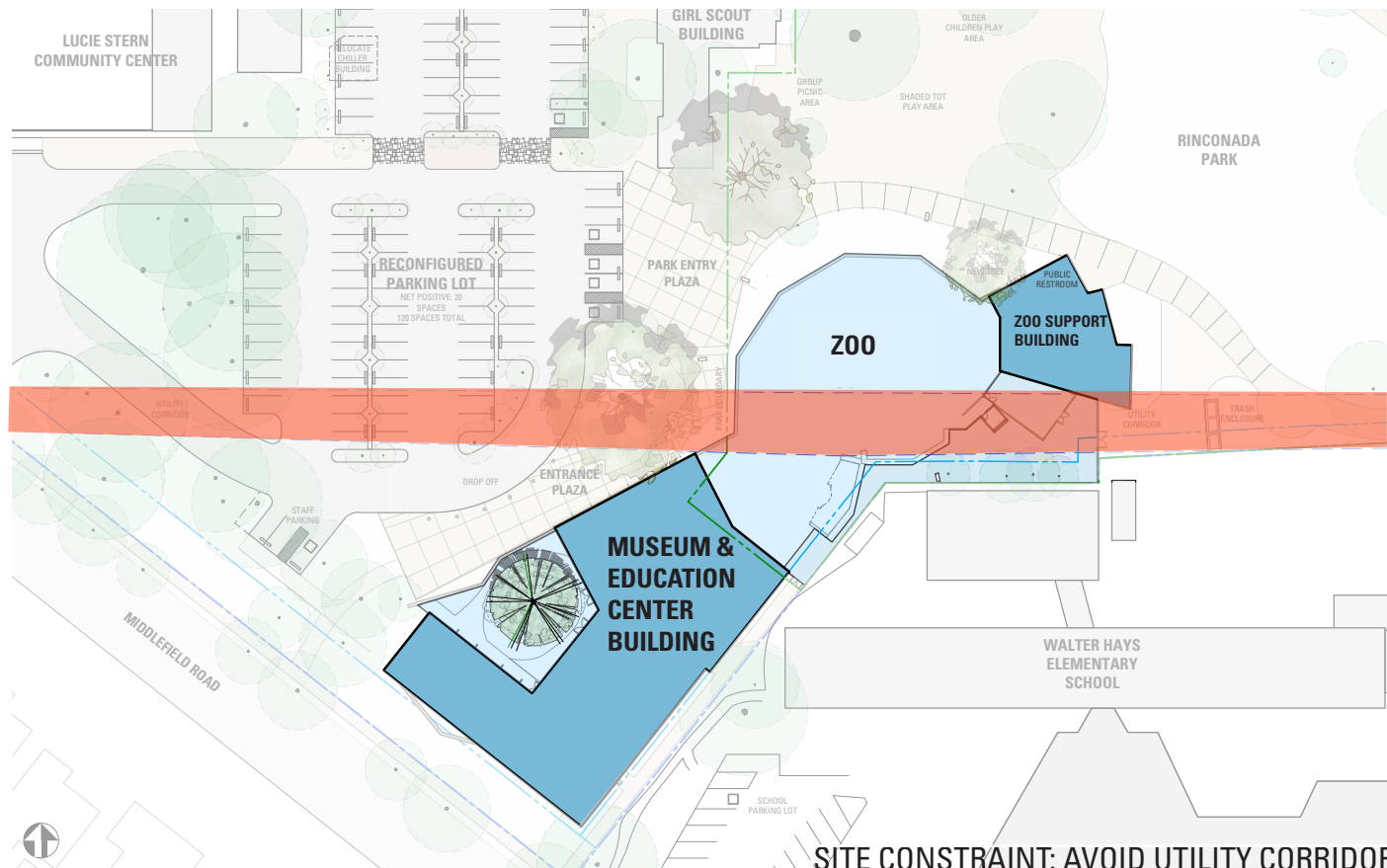
JULY 28, 2015

CODY ANDERSON WASNEY

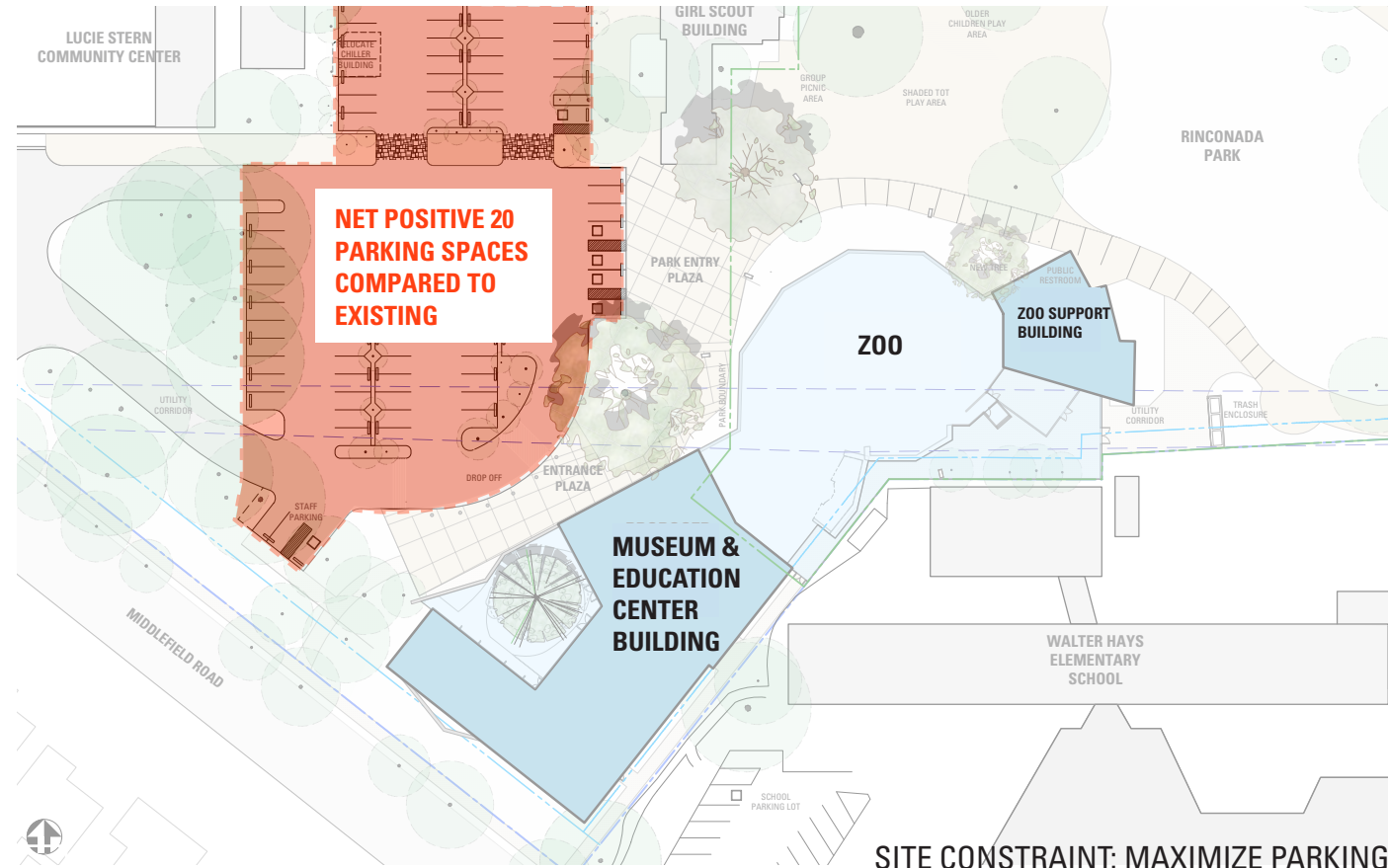
ARCHITECTS



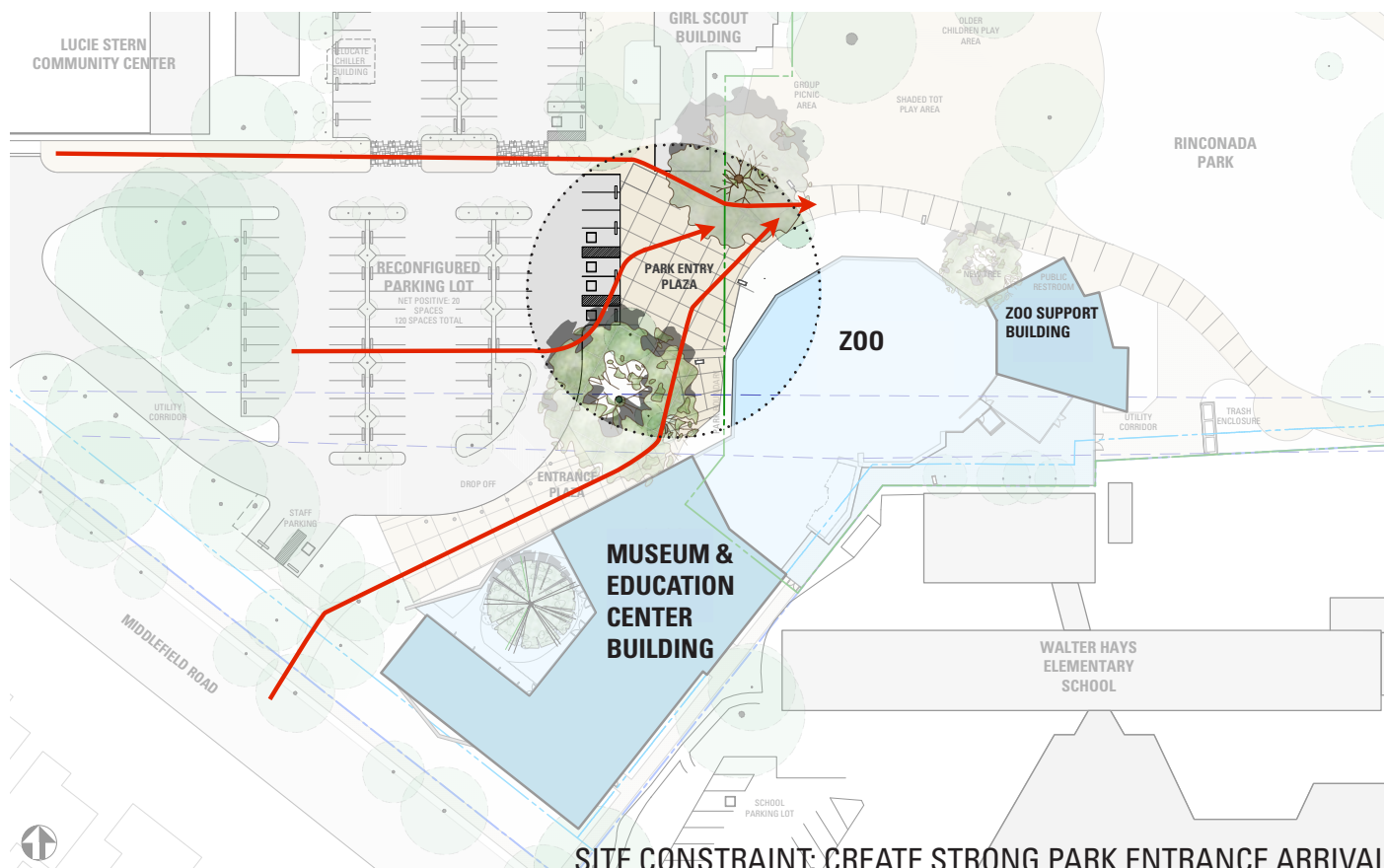




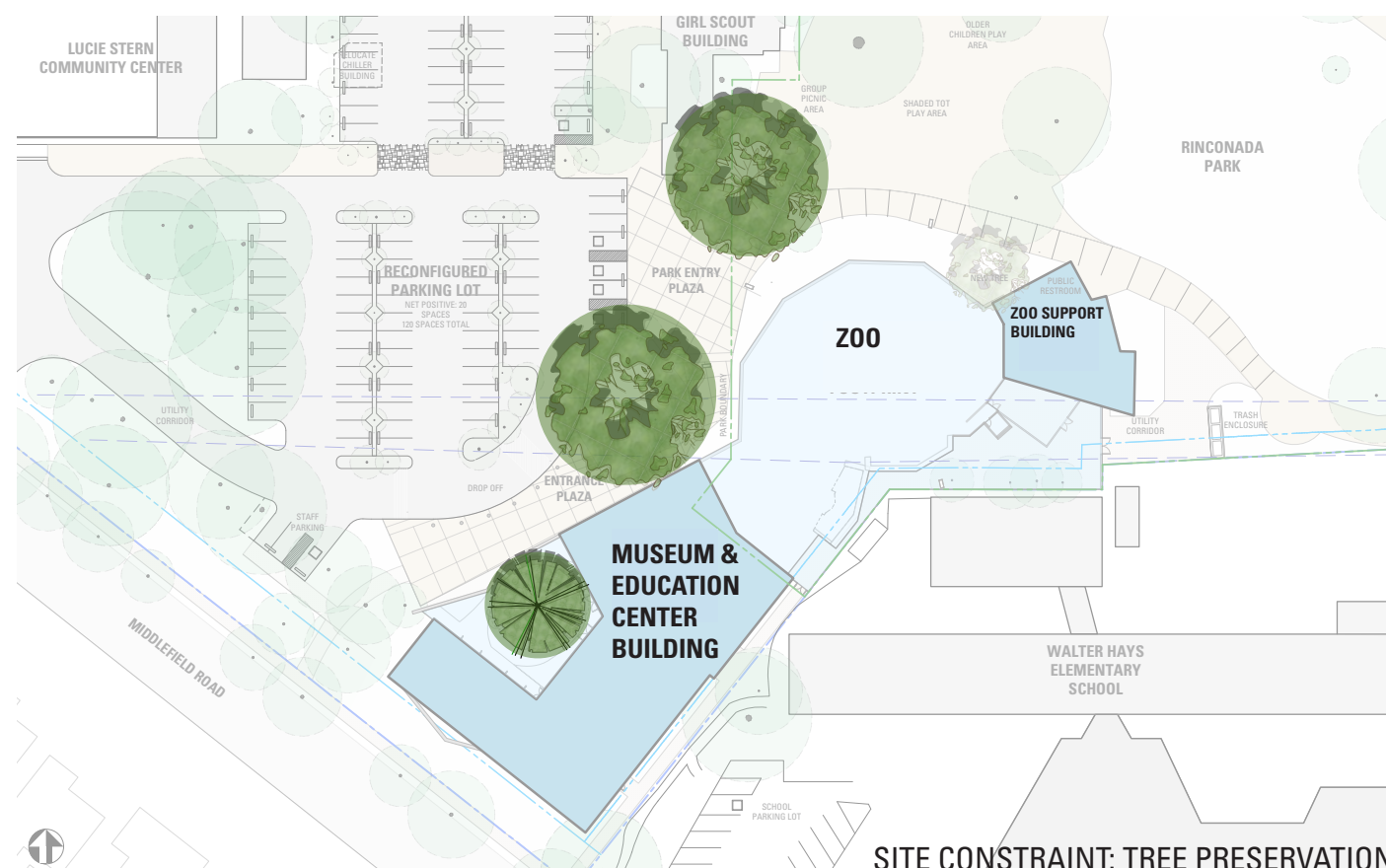
SITE CONSTRAINT: AVOID UTILITY CORRIDOR



SITE CONSTRAINT: MAXIMIZE PARKING

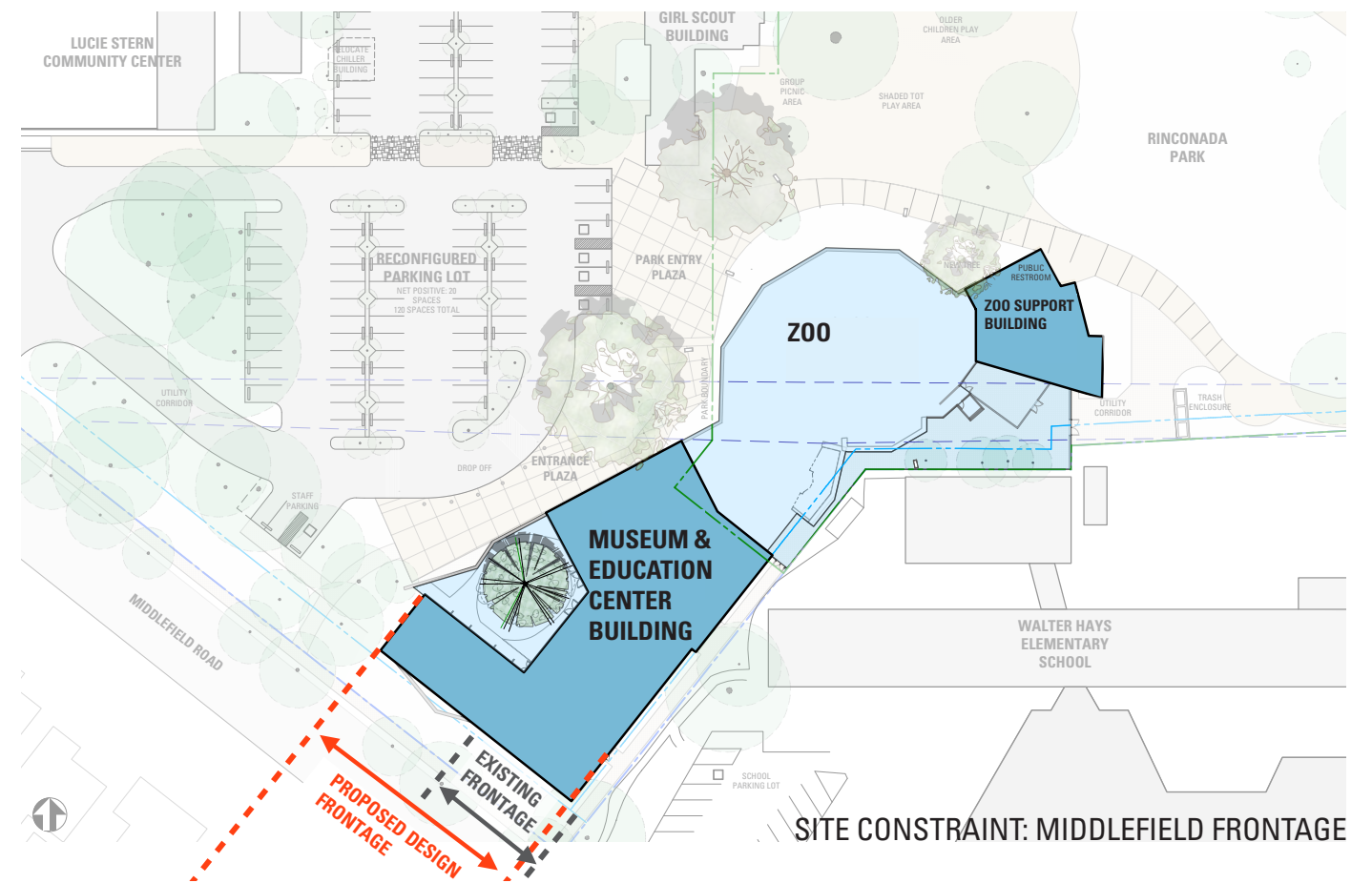
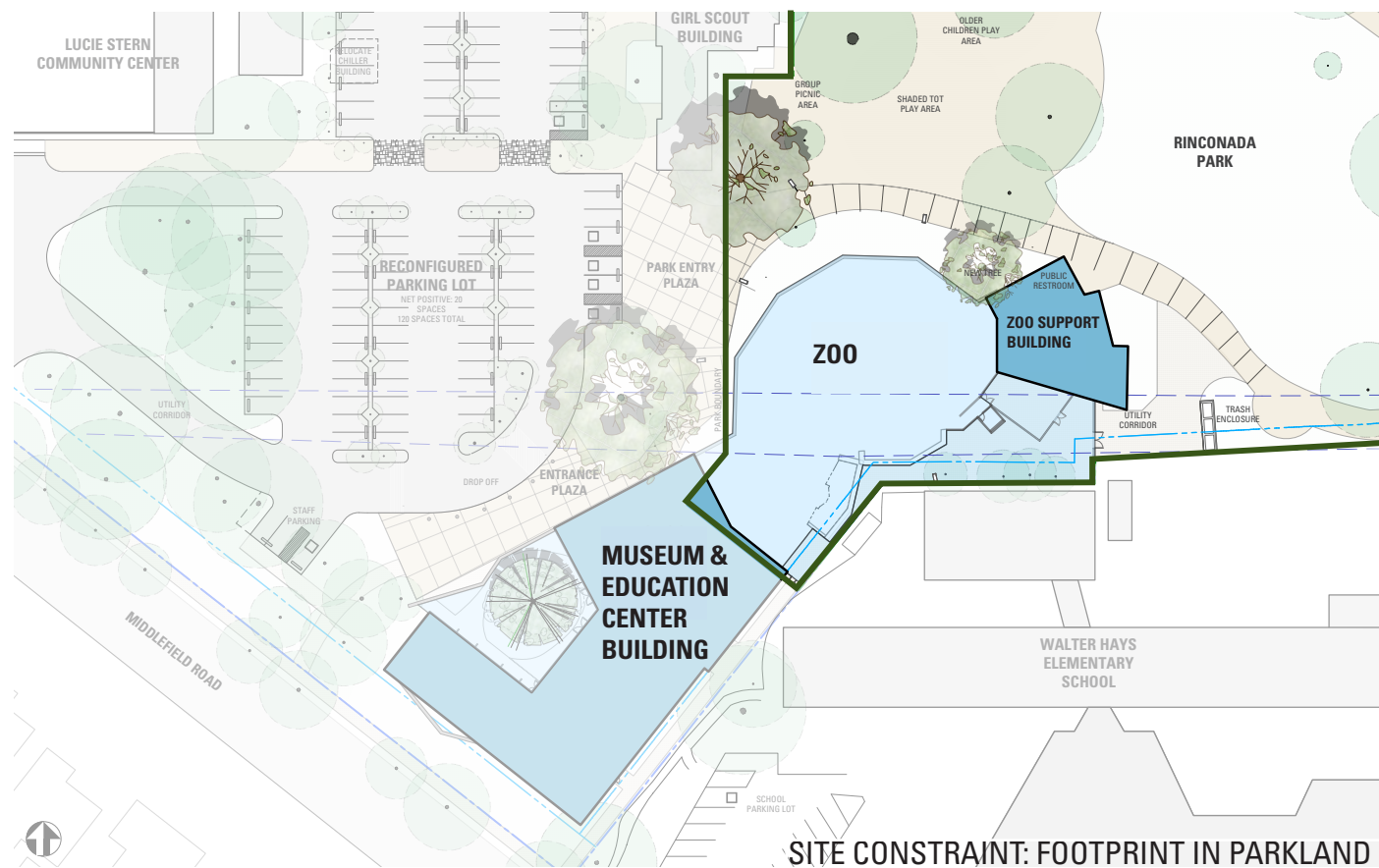


SITE CONSTRAINT: CREATE STRONG PARK ENTRANCE ARRIVAL



SITE CONSTRAINT: TREE PRESERVATION

PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
 SITE CONSTRAINTS - (FEBRUARY PRC DESIGN SHOWN)



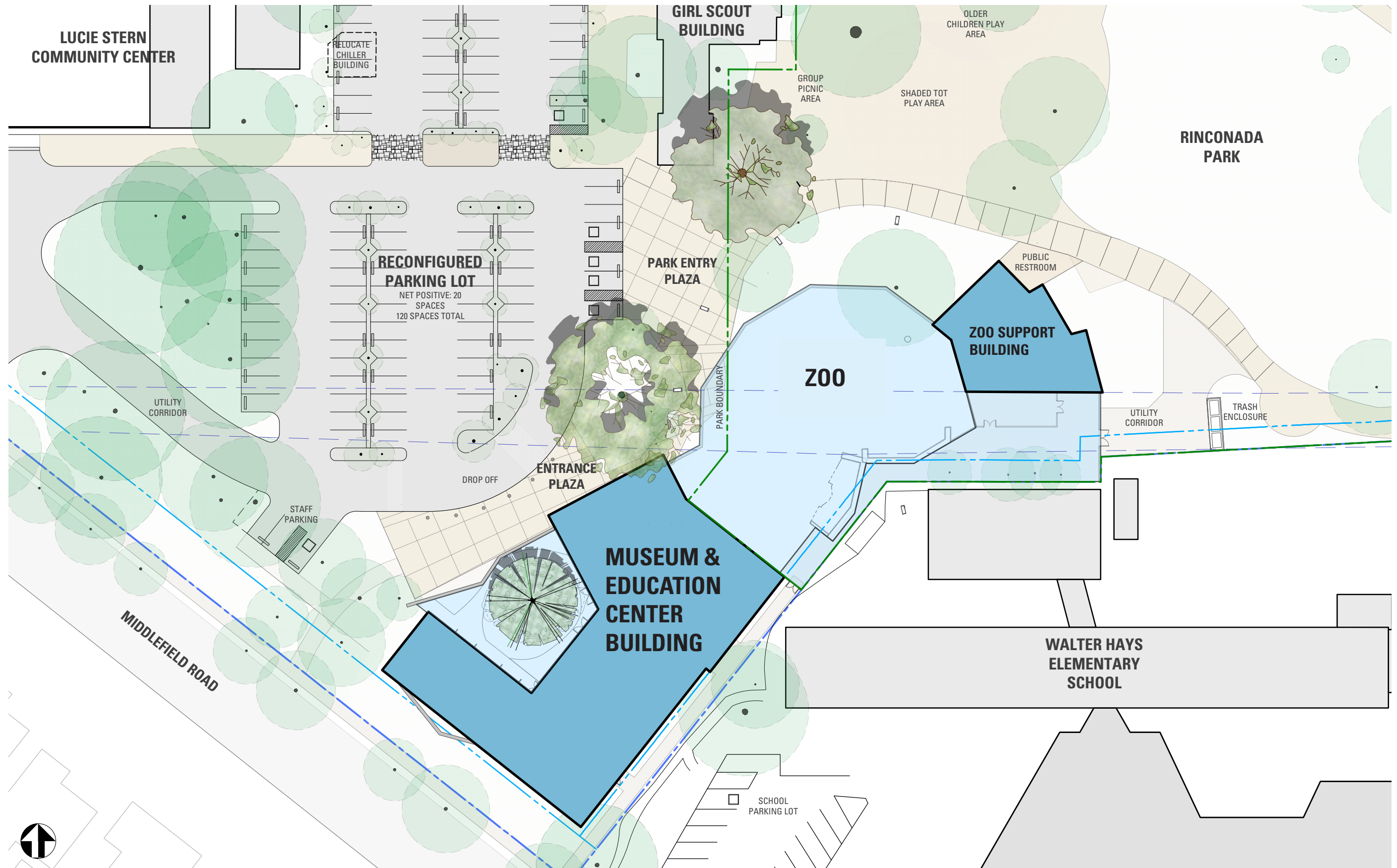
PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
SITE CONSTRAINTS - (FEBRUARY PRC DESIGN SHOWN)

JULY 22, 2015

CAWARCHITECTS.COM 650.328.1818

CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS

Copyright © 2015 by CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS, INC.



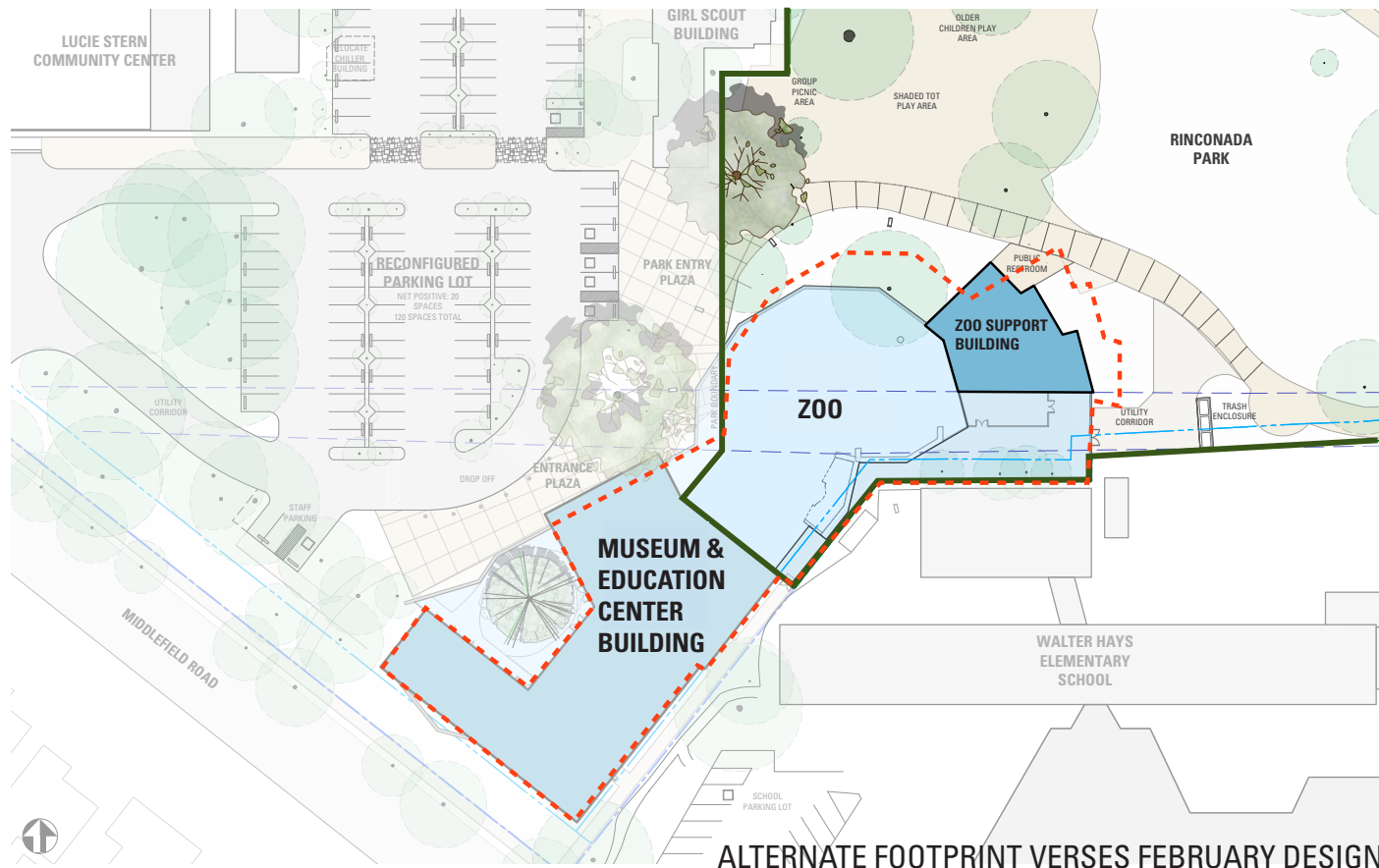
PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
ALTERNATE FOOTPRINT #1: DENSIFY OR REDUCE MUSEUM & ZOO FOOTPRINT

JULY 22, 2015

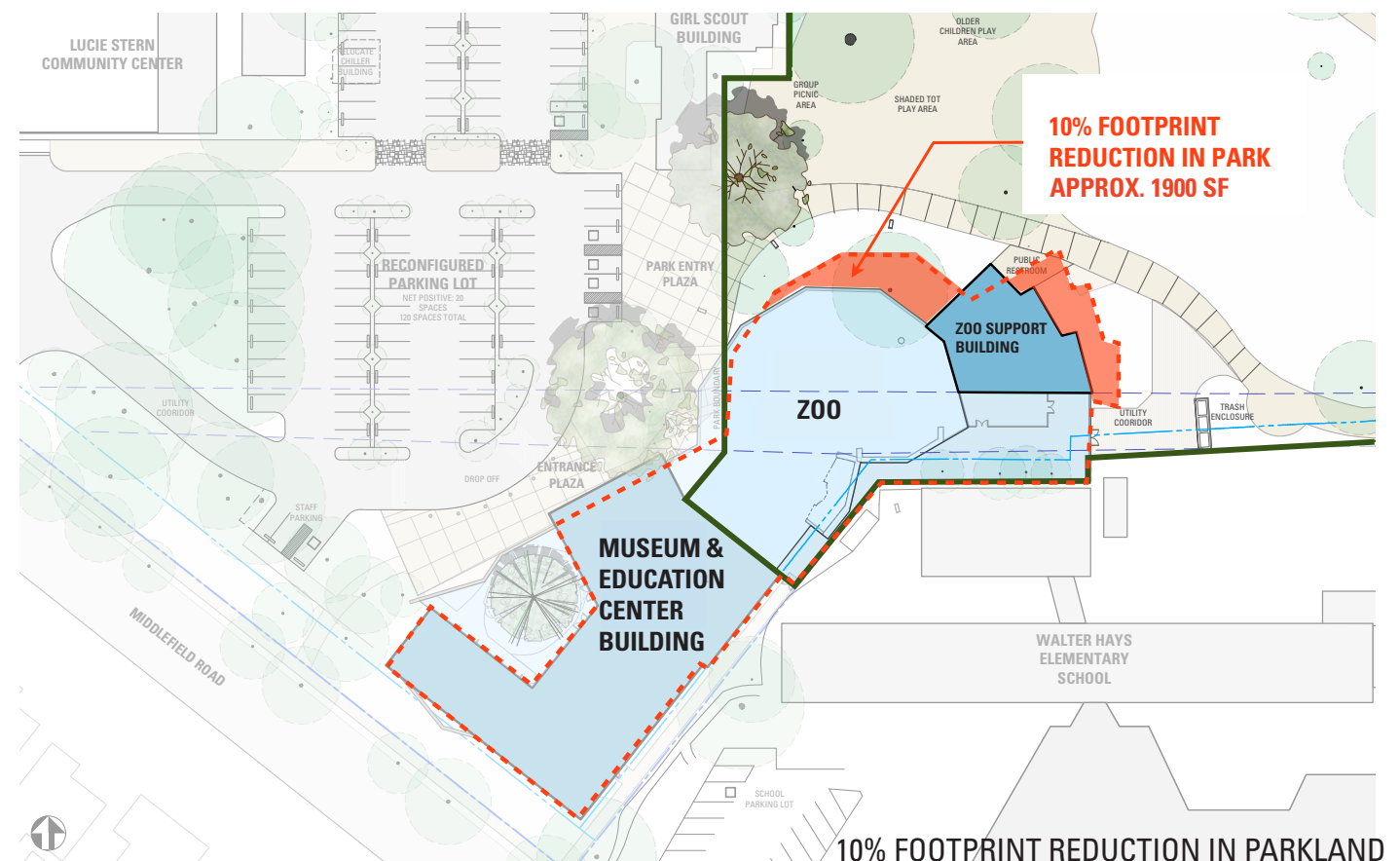
CAWARCHITECTS.COM 650.328.1818

CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS

Copyright © 2015 by CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS, INC.

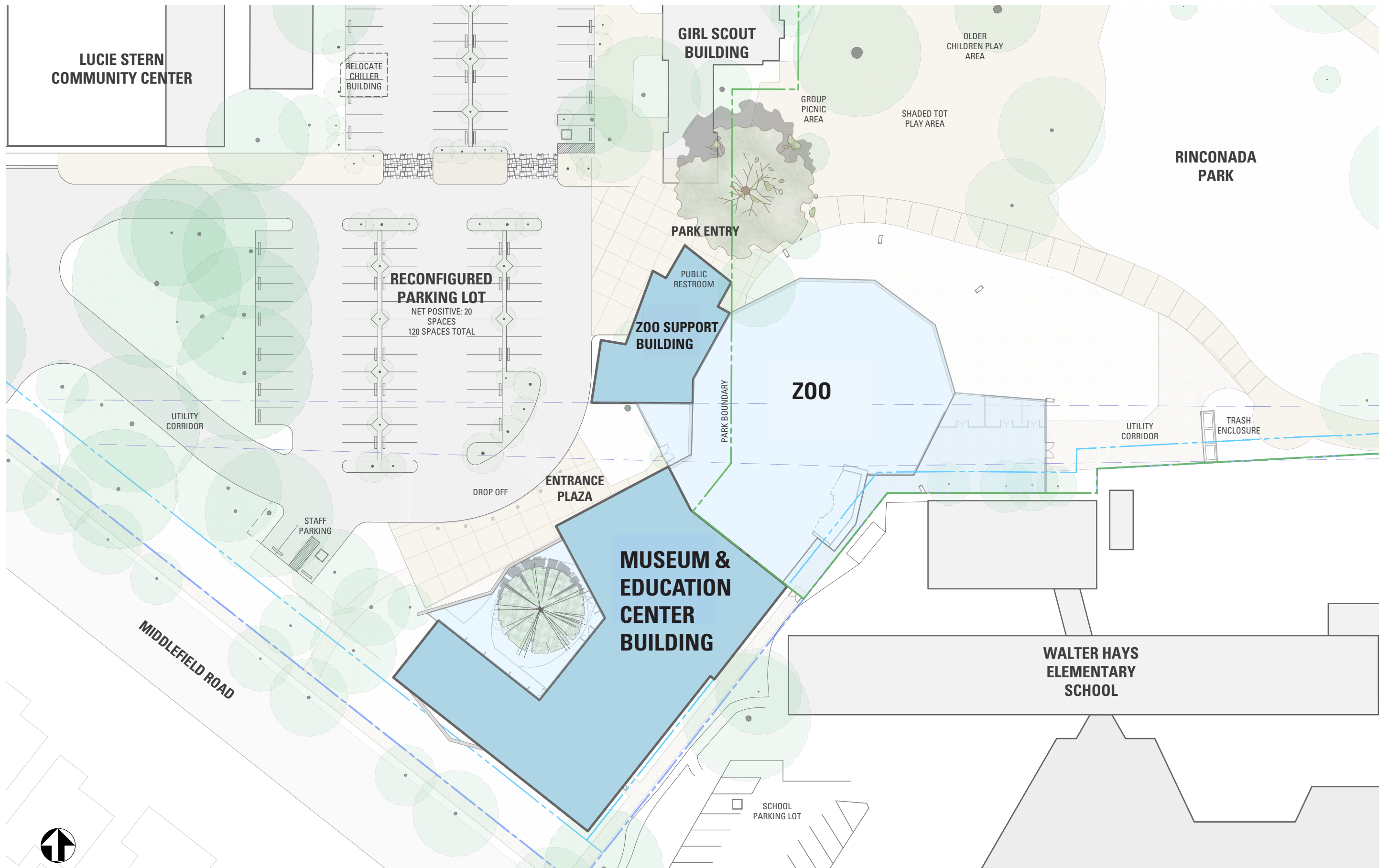


ALTERNATE FOOTPRINT VERSES FEBRUARY DESIGN



10% FOOTPRINT REDUCTION IN PARKLAND

*NOTE: ALL OTHER SITE CONSTRAINTS ARE MET AS SHOWN IN PROPOSED DESIGN



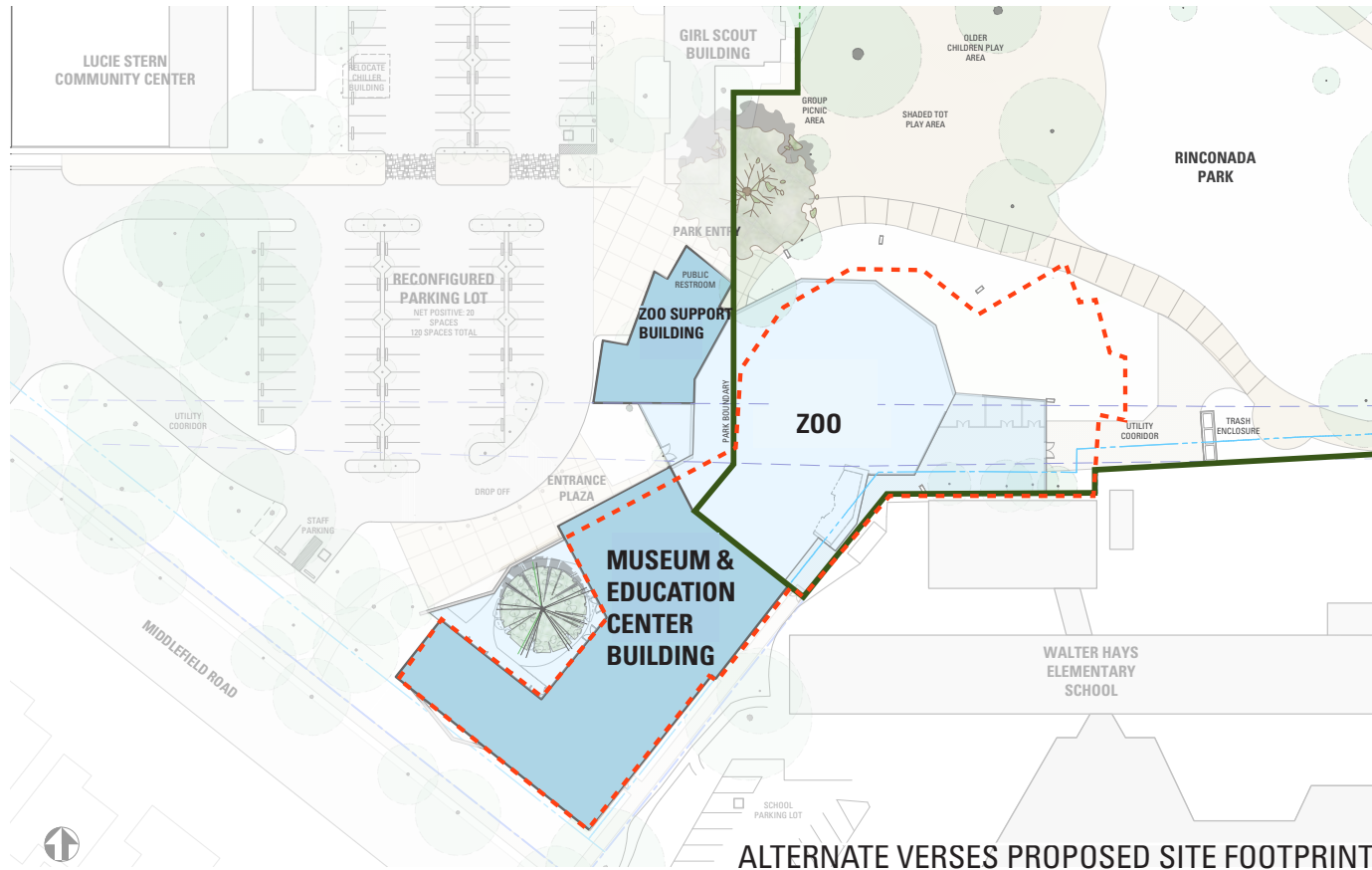
PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
ALTERNATE FOOTPRINT #2: TAKE UP MORE PARK ENTRANCE PLAZA SPACE INSTEAD OF PARKLAND

JULY 22, 2015

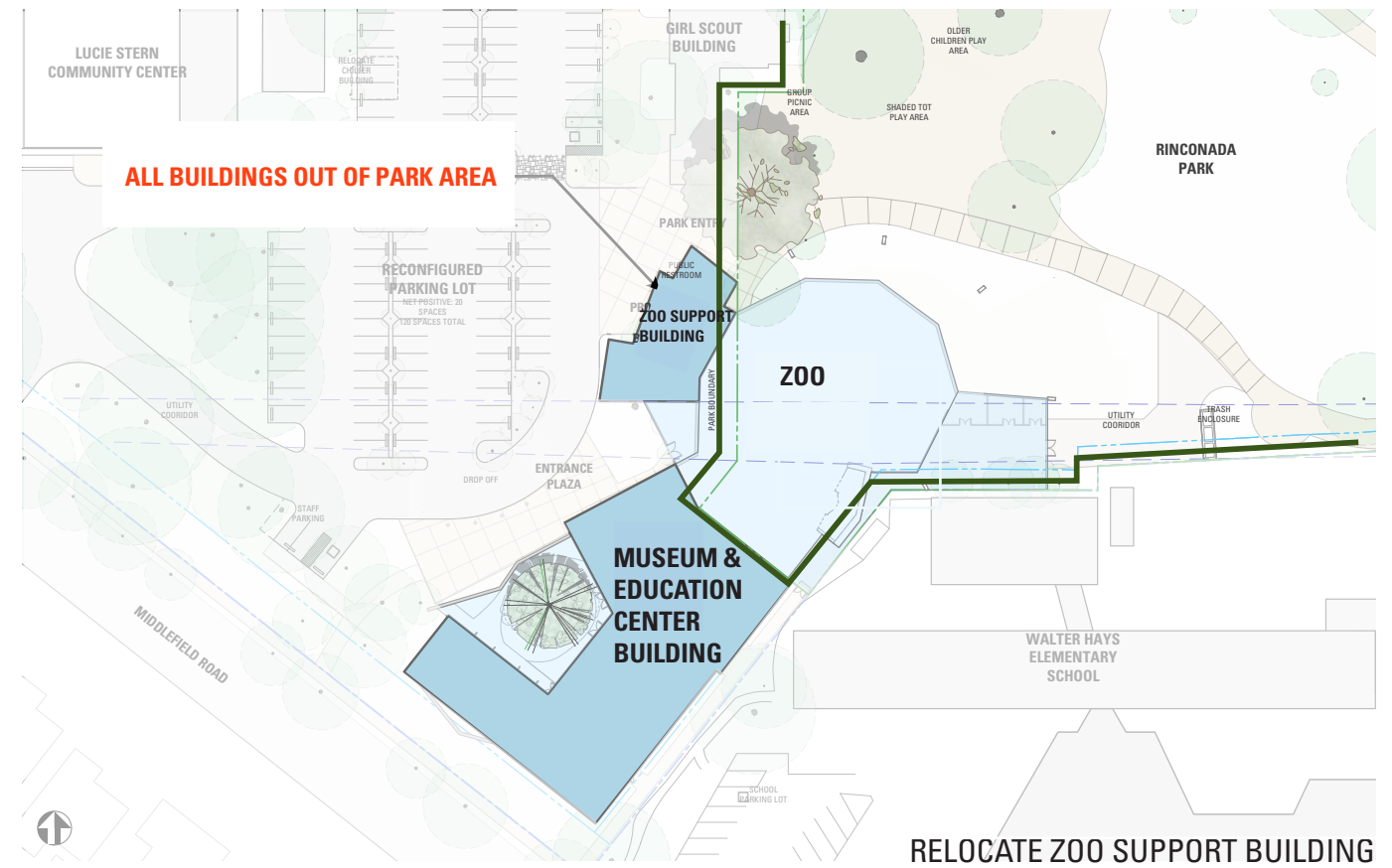
CAWARCHITECTS.COM 650.328.1818

CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS

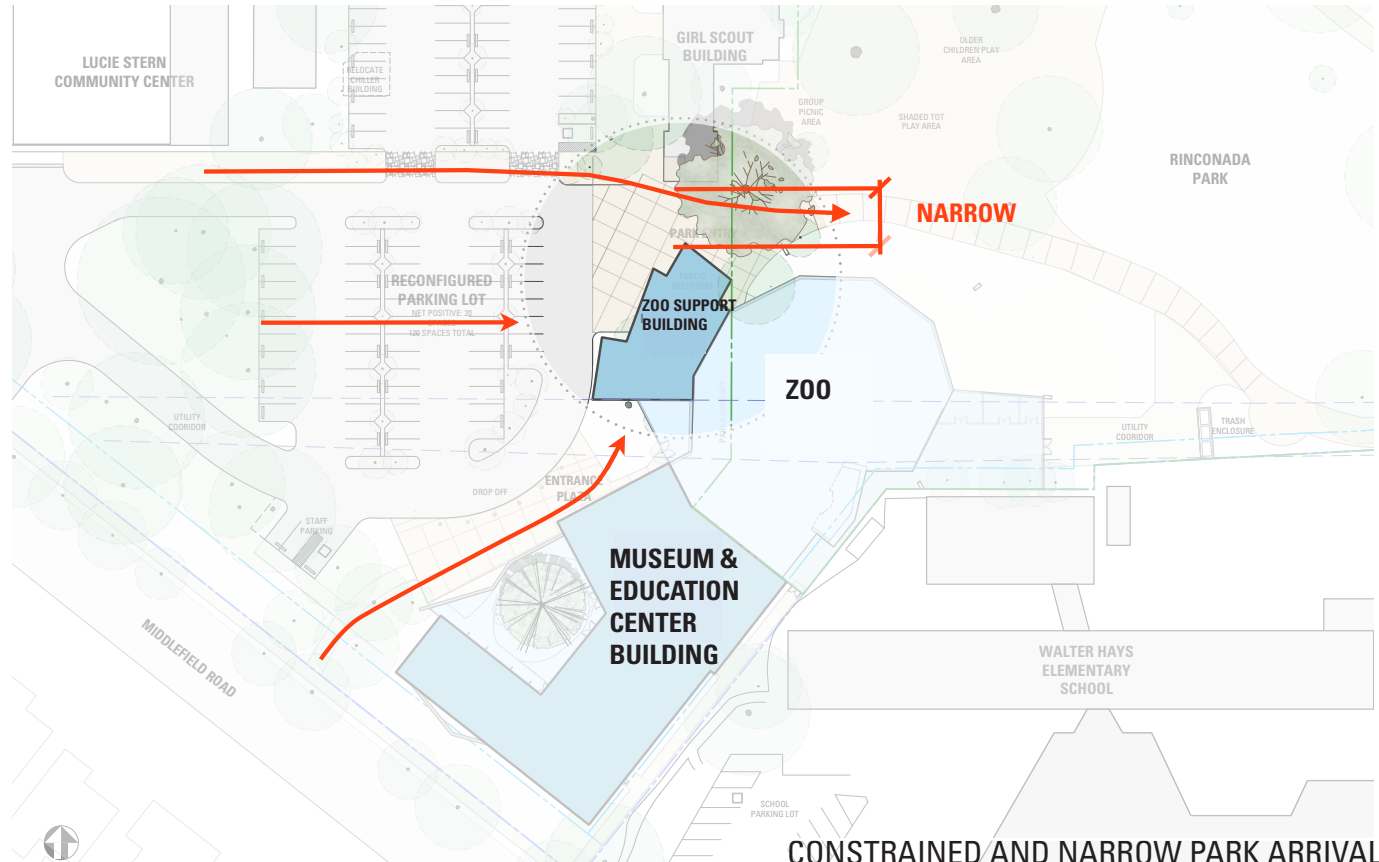
Copyright © 2015 by CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS, INC.



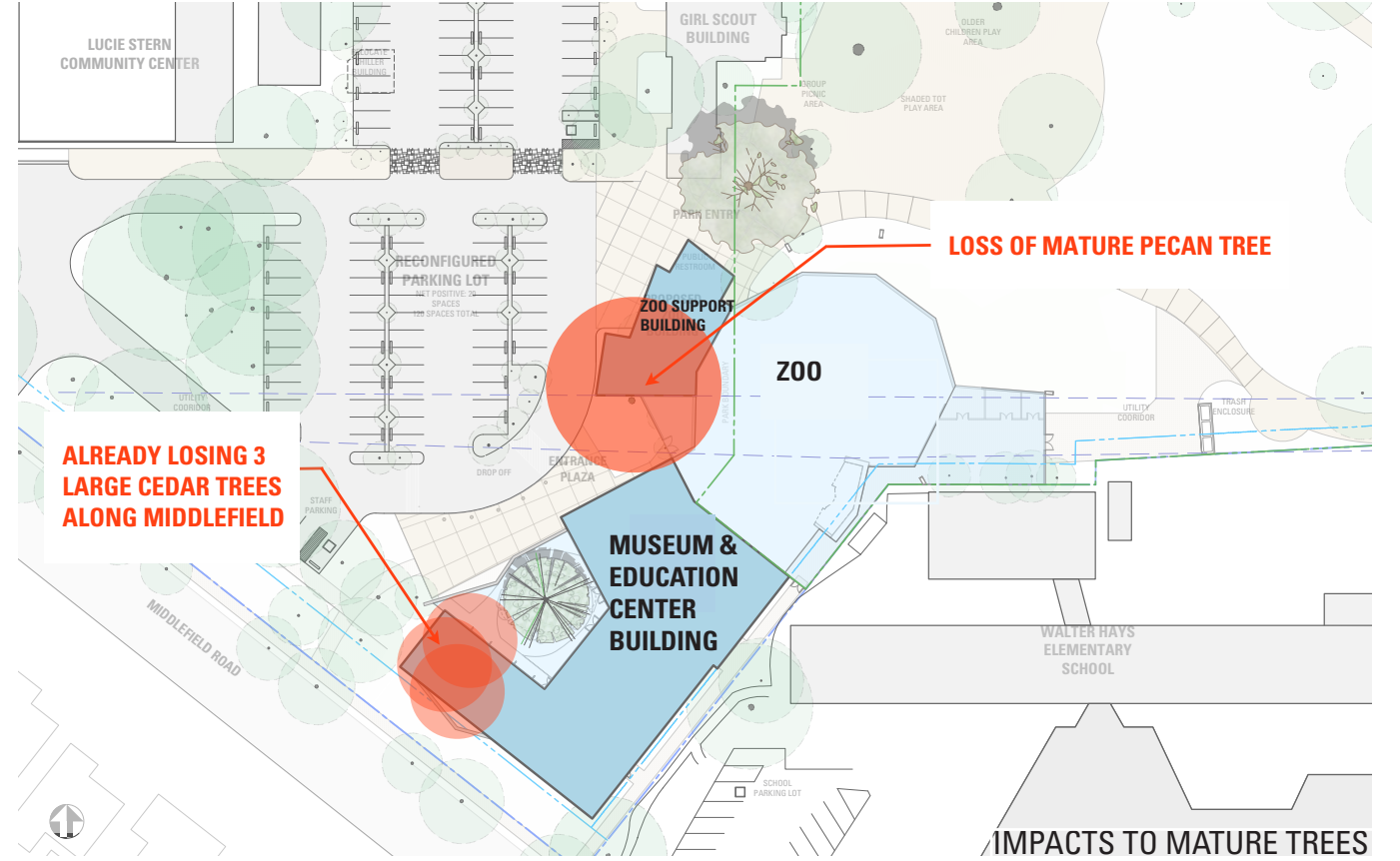
ALTERNATE VERSES PROPOSED SITE FOOTPRINT



RELOCATE ZOO SUPPORT BUILDING



CONSTRAINED AND NARROW PARK ARRIVAL



IMPACTS TO MATURE TREES

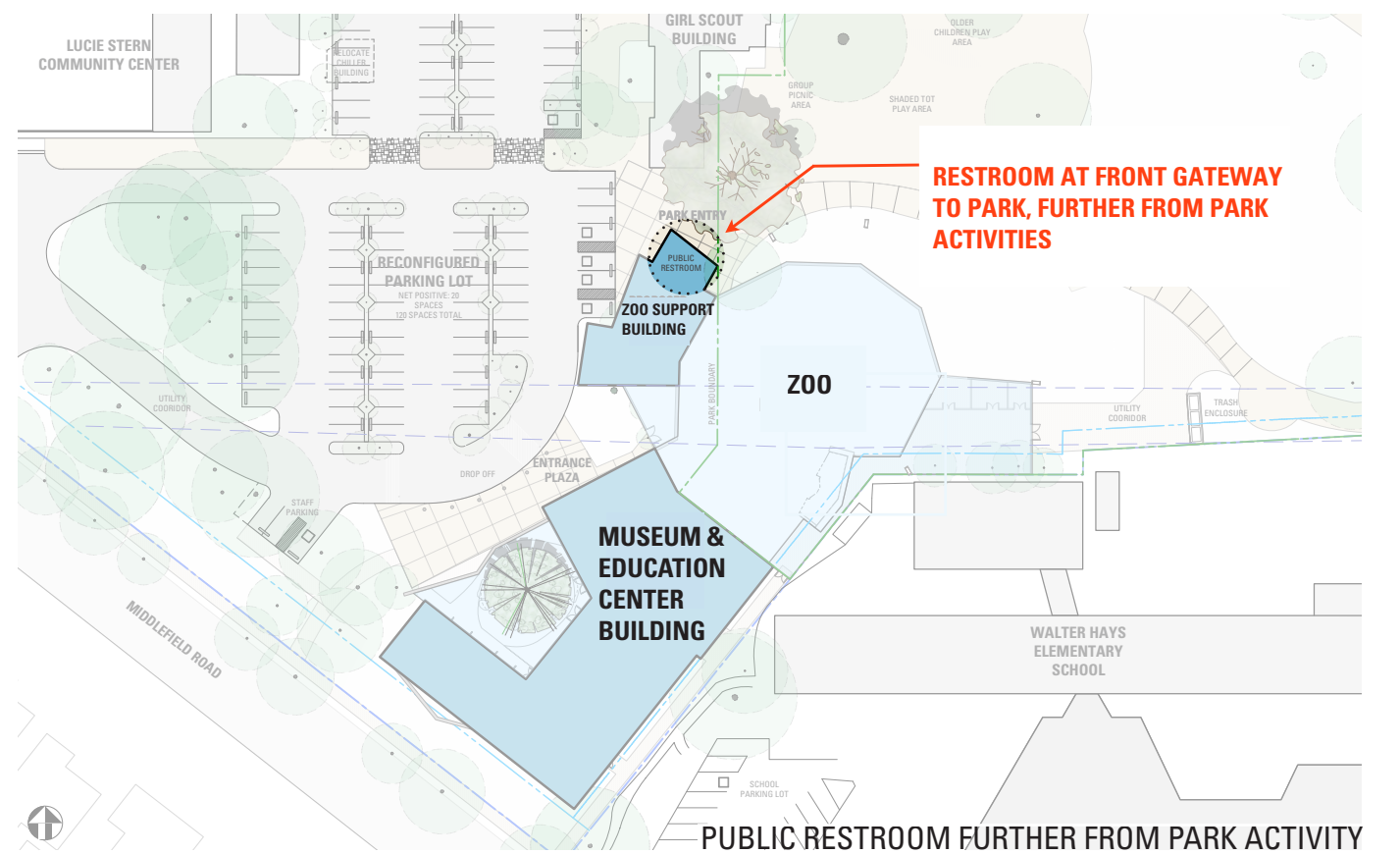
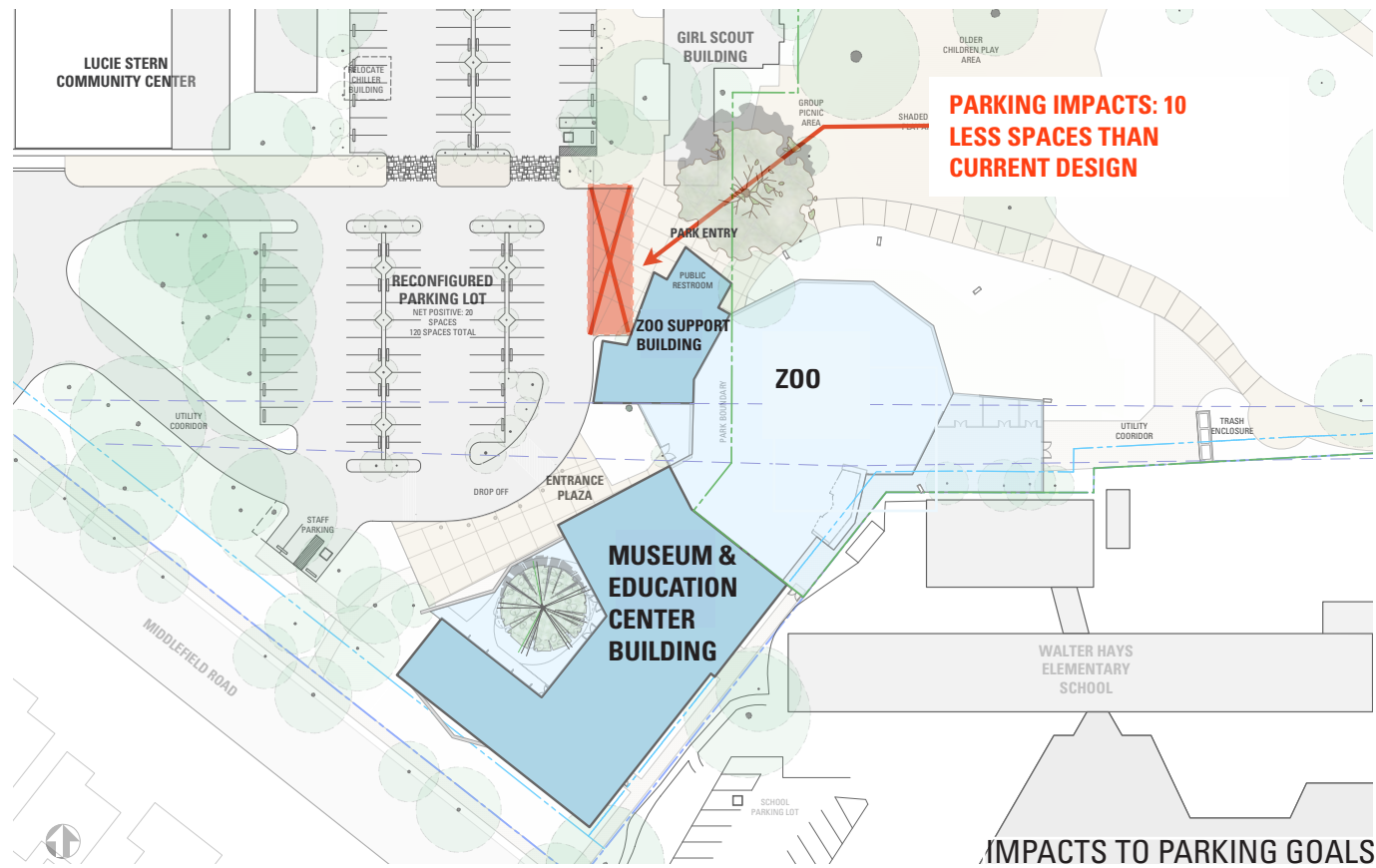
PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
ALTERNATE FOOTPRINT #2 SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS

JULY 22, 2015

CAWARCHITECTS.COM 650.328.1818

CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS

Copyright © 2015 by CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS, INC.



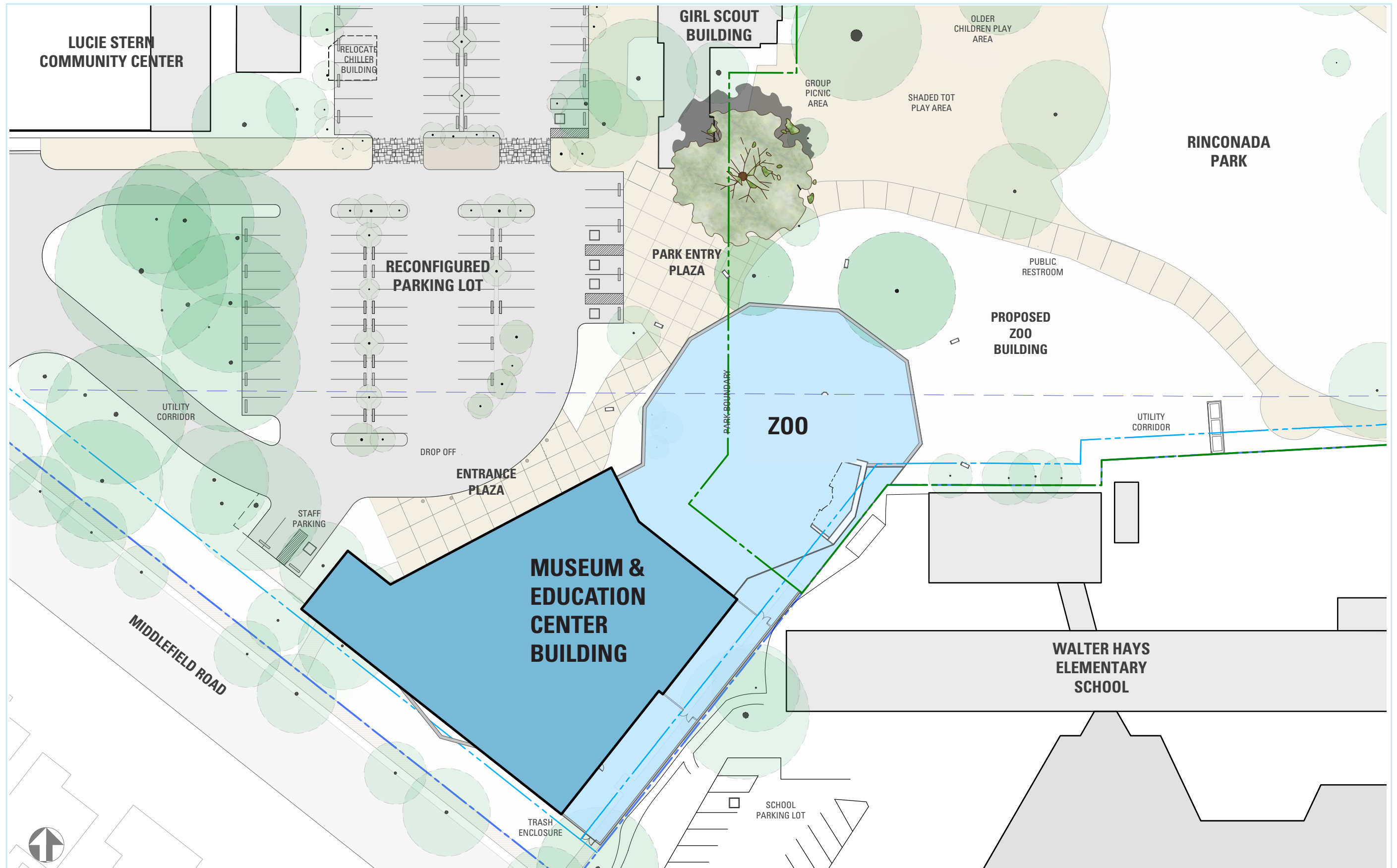
PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
ALTERNATE FOOTPRINT #2 SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS

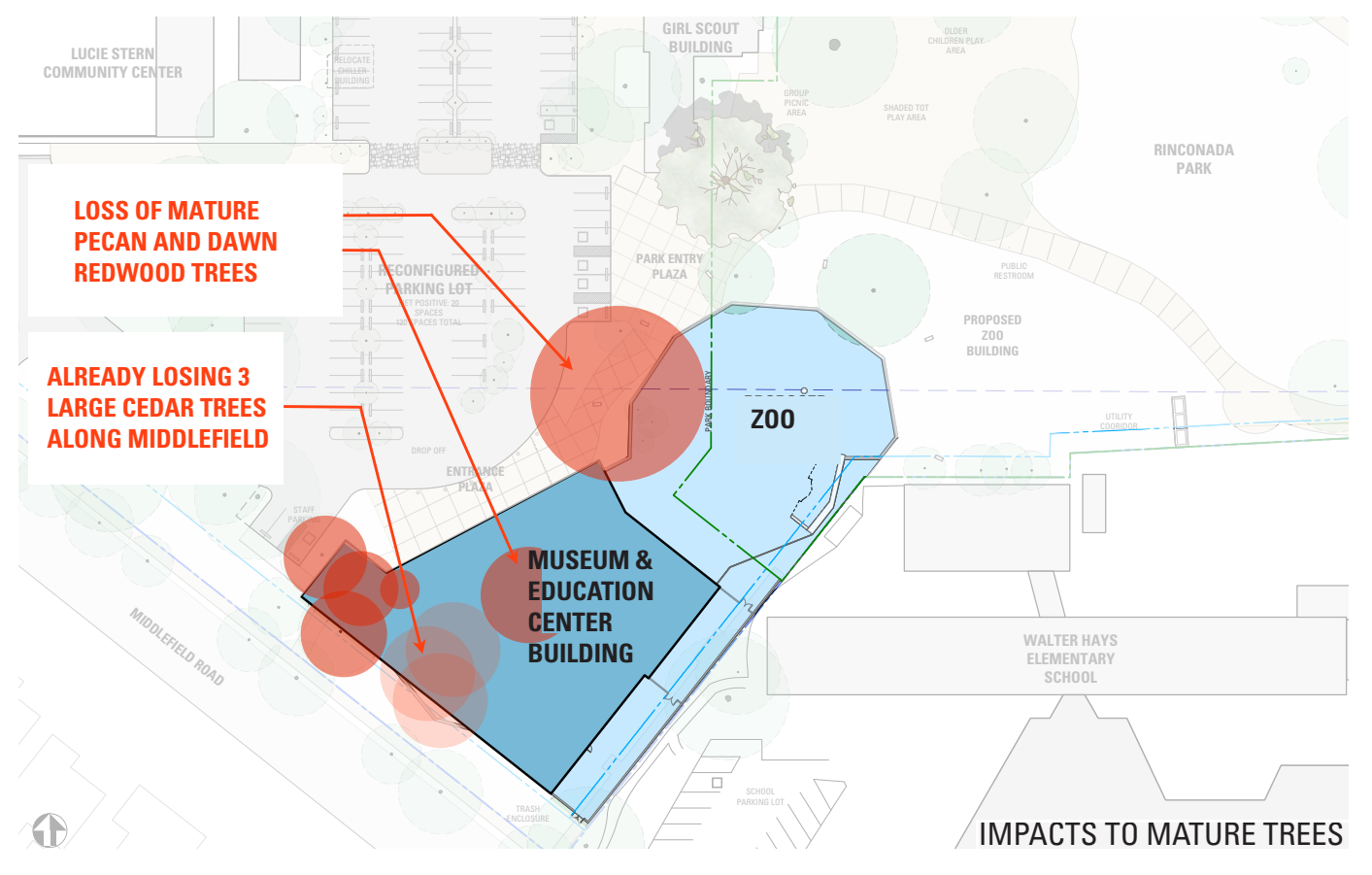
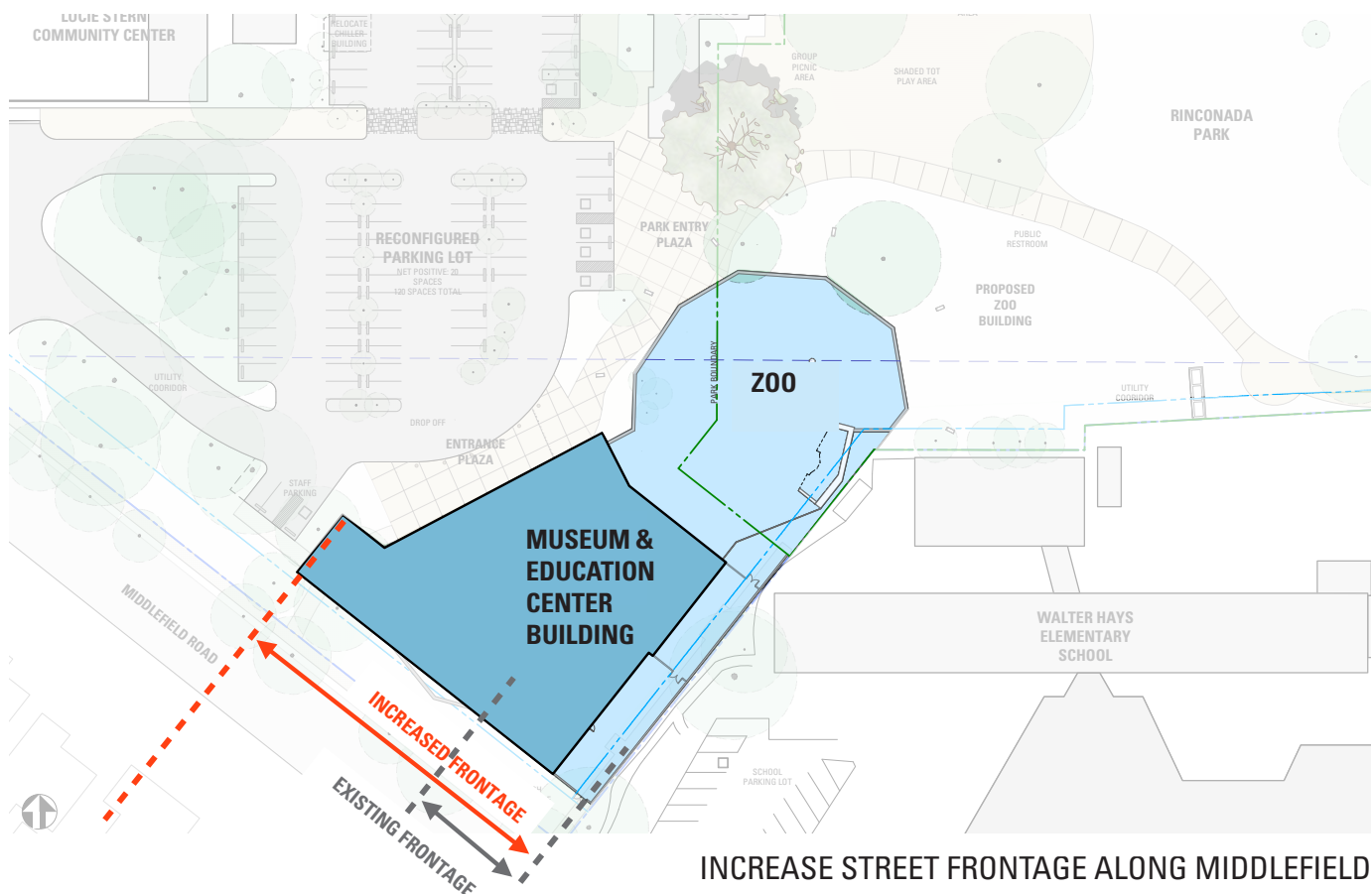
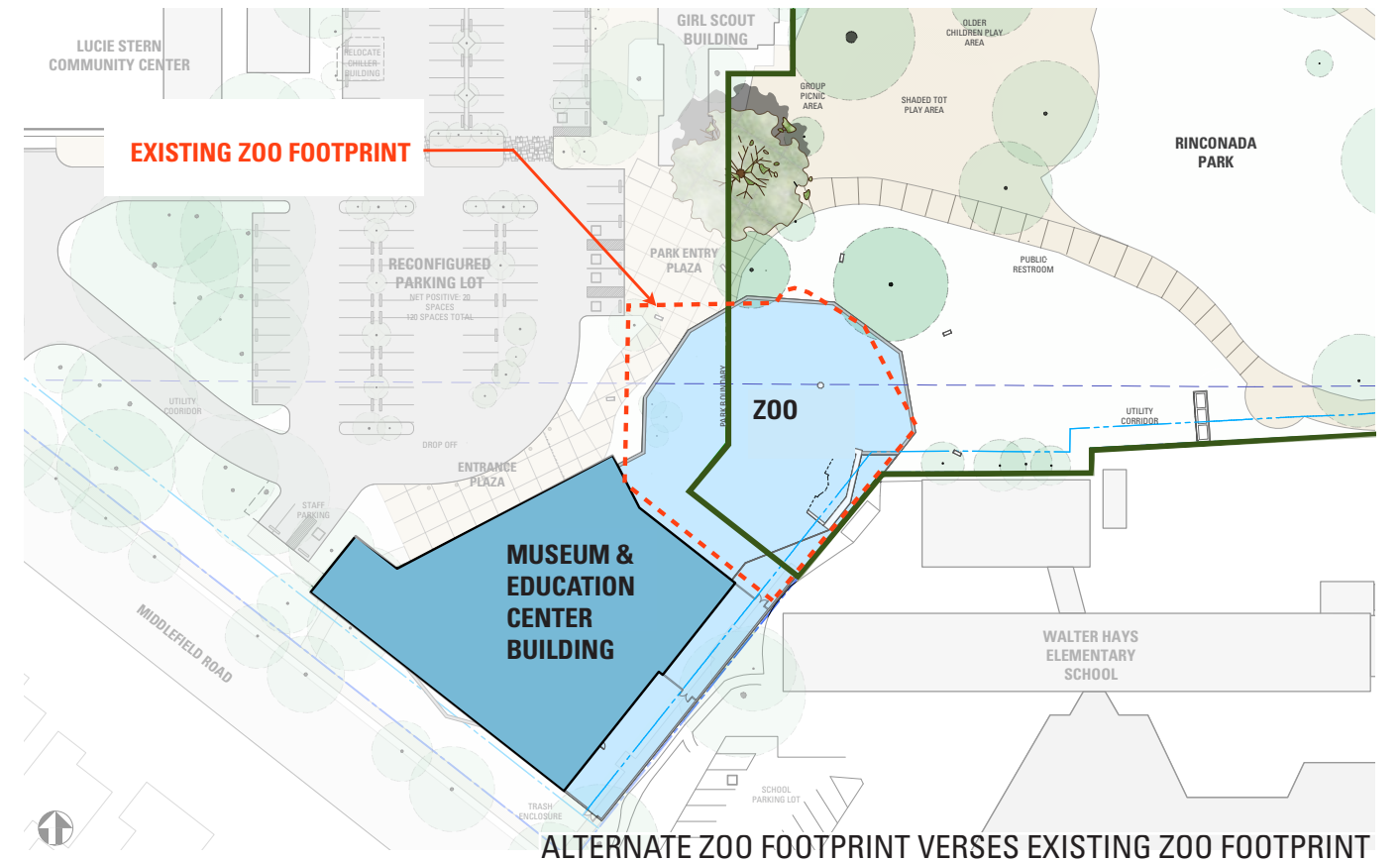
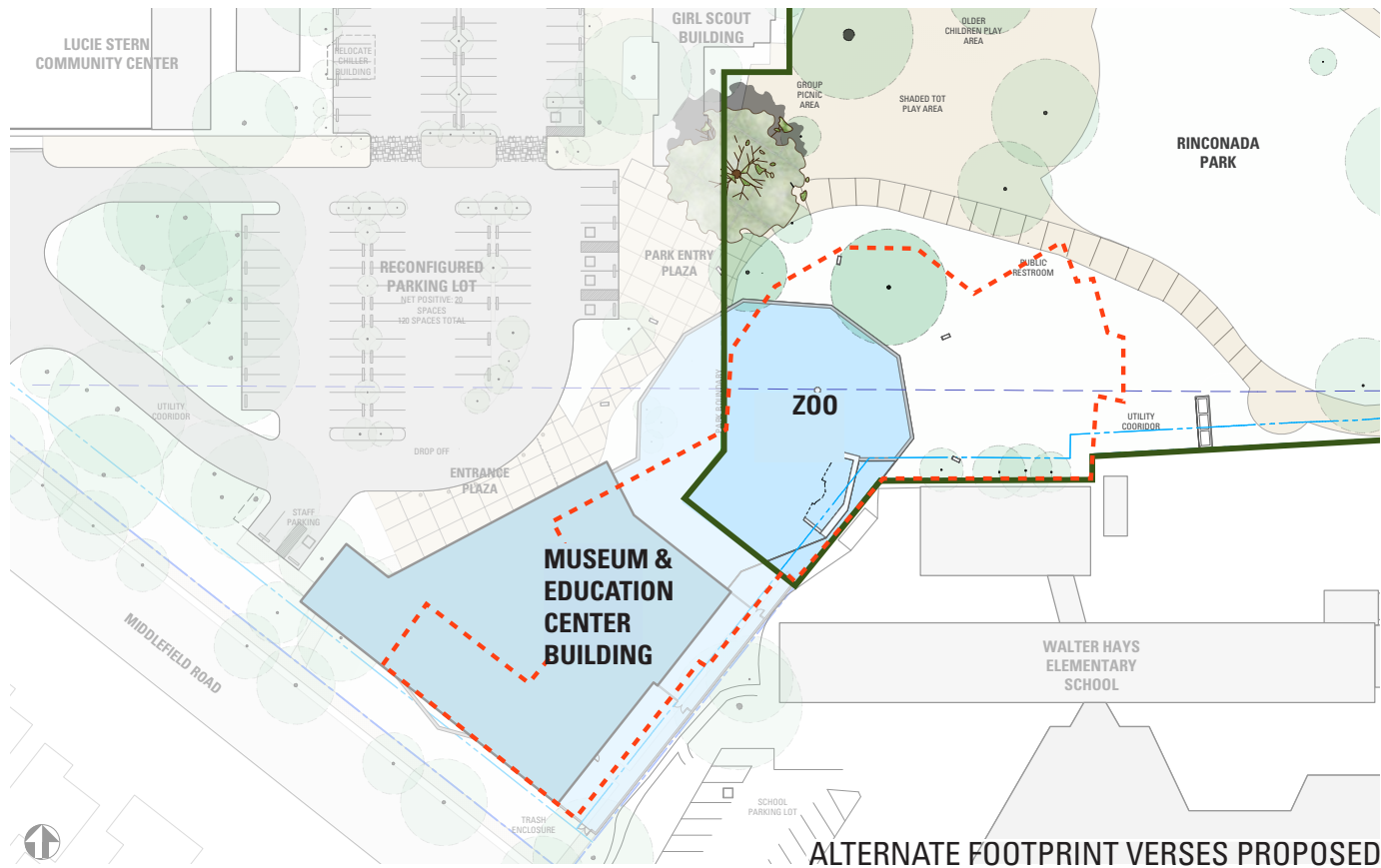
JULY 22, 2015

CAWARCHITECTS.COM 650.328.1818

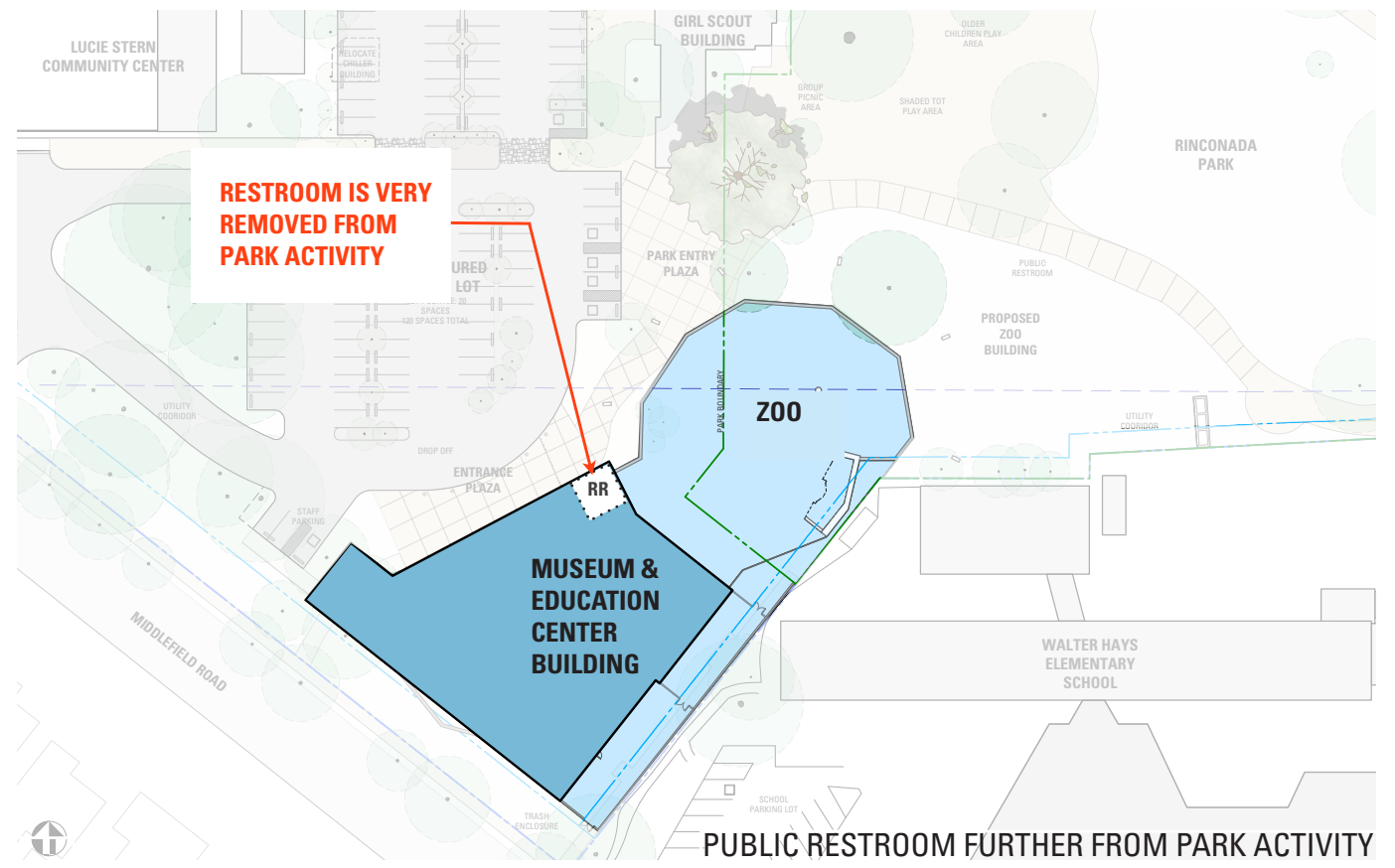
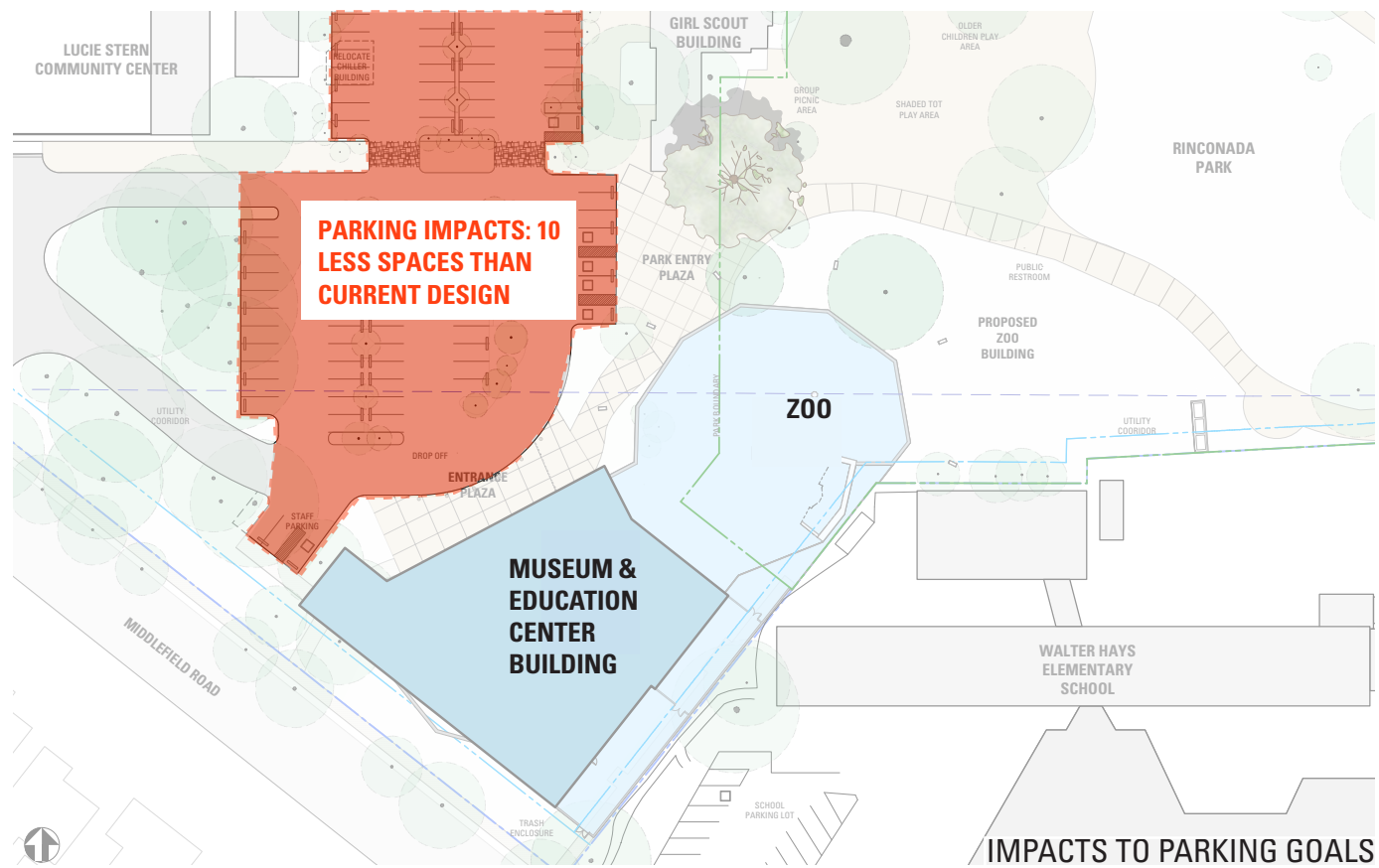
CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS

Copyright © 2015 by CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS, INC.





PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
ALTERNATE FOOTPRINT #3 SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS



PALO ALTO JUNIOR MUSEUM & ZOO
ALTERNATE FOOTPRINT #3 SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS

JULY 22, 2015

CAWARCHITECTS.COM 650.328.1818

CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS

Copyright © 2015 by CODY ANDERSON WASNEY ARCHITECTS, INC.