CHAPTER 5
Variants

The project sponsor (Reservoir Community Partners LLC) has requested that this EIR include an environmental analysis of variants to the Developer's Proposed Option. Variants are variations of the proposed project at the same project site, with the same objectives, background, and development controls, but with a specific variation that may or may not reduce environmental impacts. Therefore, this chapter describes and analyzes the associated environmental impacts for the following four variants to the proposed project:

- **Variant 1, Above-Ground Public Parking**, would locate the 750-space public parking garage above grade on Blocks A and B, with residential units wrapped around the garage.
- **Variant 2, South Street Alignment and Below-Grade Public Parking at North End of Site**, would shift South Street to the southernmost portion of the site and locate the 750-space public parking garage below Block G.
- **Variant 3, Assumes Pedestrians and Bicycles Do Not Access Site via San Ramon Way**.
- **Variant 4, North Street Extension**, would shift the off-site north access road to align with the project site's North Street.

These variants modify limited features or aspects of the project, unlike the alternatives to the project (described and analyzed in Chapter 6, Alternatives), which analyze different approaches to developing the project site to address significant impacts that would result from the project. All four variants are being considered by Reservoir Community Partners LLC for the Developer's Proposed Option, while only Variant 4 is under consideration for the Additional Housing Option. Each variant would be available for selection by the project sponsor and decision makers as part of an approval action.

For some environmental topics, the impacts under a variant would be the same as those of the proposed project. However, in some cases, the impacts of the proposed project under a particular variant would differ somewhat from the impacts identified for the proposed project in Chapter 3, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, and in Appendix B, Initial Study. Unless otherwise stated, all mitigation and improvement measures described in Chapter 3 and the initial study that would be required to reduce impacts associated with the proposed project would also be applicable to each of the variants.

[Note to Reviewers: Discussion related to transportation and circulation, noise, air quality, and archaeological resources will be included in the ADEIR-1/IS-2 submittal.]

5.A Variant 1: Above-Ground Public Parking

Description

Variant 1 would not include changes to the land use program, intensity of development, or street configuration for the Developer's Proposed Option. Under this variant, the 750-space multilevel public parking garage would be constructed above grade instead of below grade on Blocks A and B and would be wrapped by housing. As a result, some building components at Blocks A and B would be taller than the Developer's Proposed Option. However, as shown in **Figure 6-1, Variant 1 Site Plan and Height Ranges**, the maximum height (seven stories) would not change between the Developer's Proposed Option and Variant 1; rather, under this variant, it is anticipated that the entirety of Blocks A and B would be built to a height of seven stories (78 feet). As with the Developer's Proposed Option, vehicle access to the public parking garage under this variant would be from South Street (see **Figure 6-2, Variant 1 Parking Facilities Plan**).

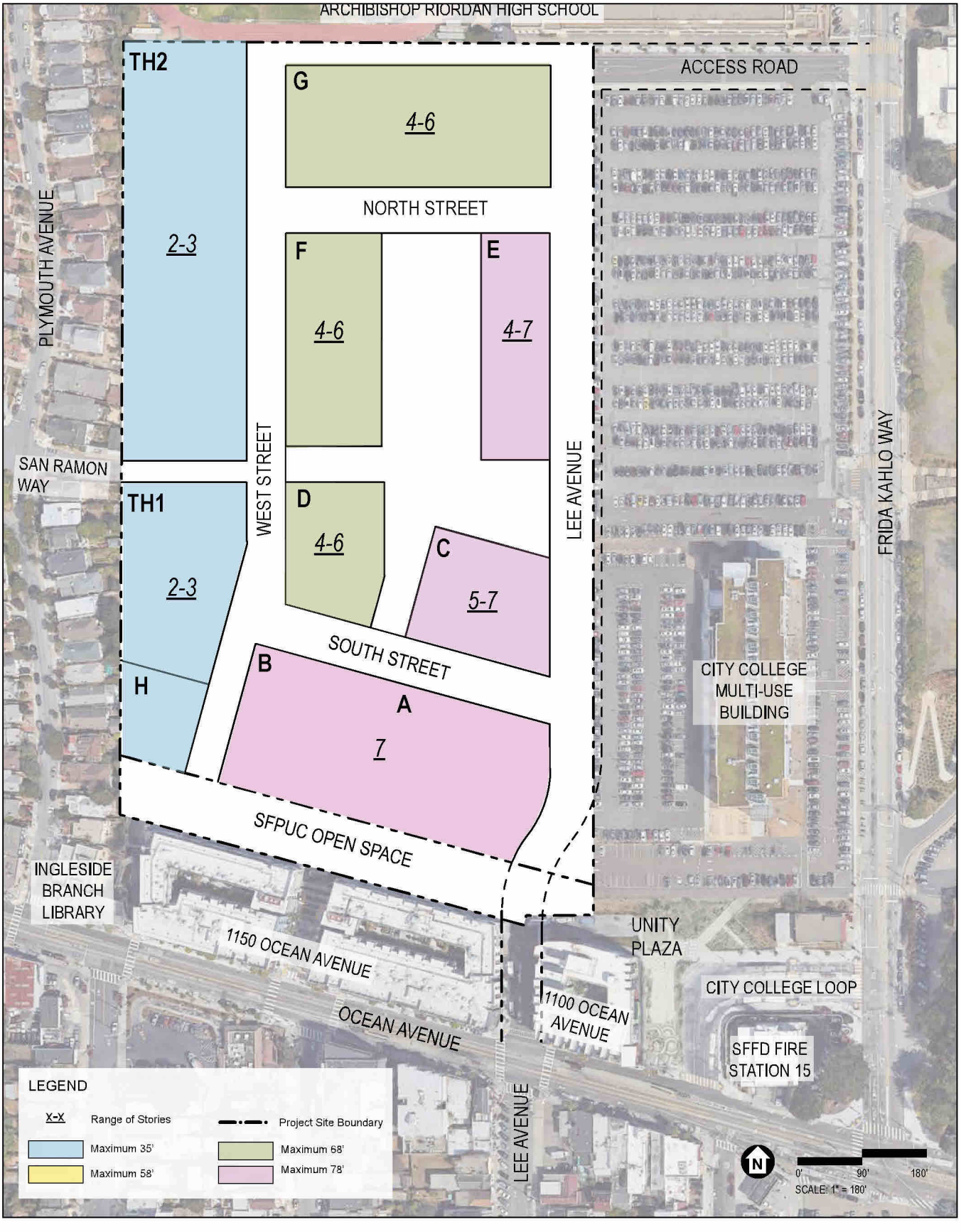
Under Variant 1, demolition of the berm, grading, excavation, construction of site infrastructure, and vertical construction activities would have the same phases and timing as the Developer's Proposed Option. The variant would not change aspects of the Developer's Proposed Option related to demolition, site preparation, and the construction of the internal circulation, open space, or other improvements. The excavation assumed for the below-grade public parking garage for the Developer's Proposed Option would not occur under this variant. Therefore, Variant 1 would reduce the overall excavation on site by approximately 57,000 cubic yards, as well as the associated off-haul trips.

Impact Analysis

Environmental Topics Not Requiring Further Analysis under Variant 1

Under this variant, the 750-space multilevel public parking garage would be constructed above grade instead of below grade on Blocks A and B and would be wrapped by housing. Although some building components at Blocks A and B would be taller than the Developer's Proposed Option; the overall site plan, mix of land uses, and intensity of development would be the same as the Developer's Proposed Option. Therefore, land use and land use planning impacts would be unchanged from those of the Sponsor's Proposed Option and would be less than significant.

Variant 1 and the Developer's Proposed Option would have the same mix of land use types (i.e., residential, retail, community facilities/child care, open space). Variant 1 would not change the number of residential units or space allocation of the retail and community facilities/childcare uses. As a result, the number of on-site residents, employees, and construction-related employees would be the same for Variant 1 and the Developer's Proposed Option, as would the conclusions regarding less-than-significant impacts associated with population and housing. Impacts on public services, utilities and service systems, and recreation, which are based largely on the increased demand associated with population and housing growth, would be the same under Variant 1 and the Developer's Proposed Option.



SOURCE: Van Meter Williams Pollack LLP, 2018

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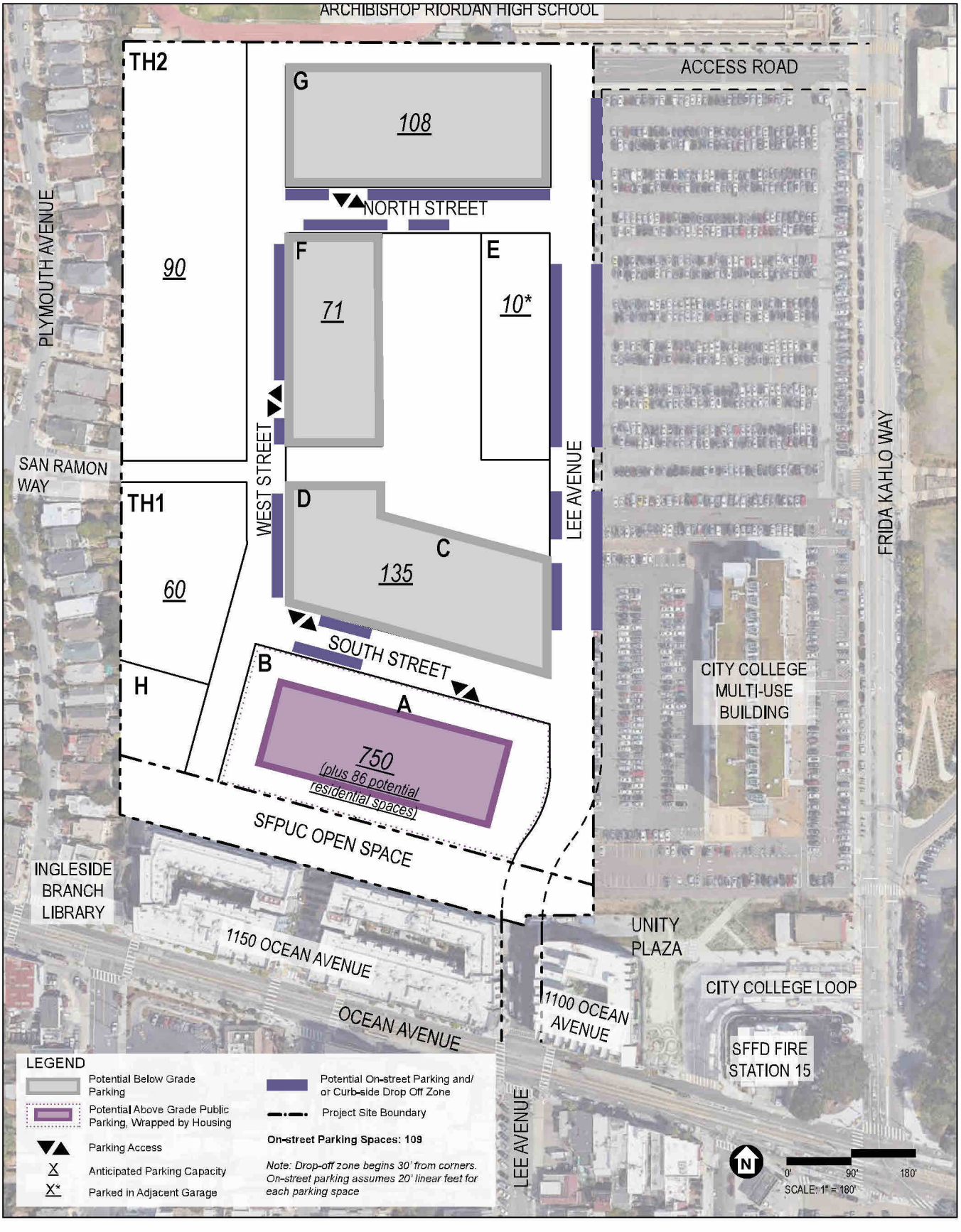
Figure 5-1
Variant 1 Site Plan and Height Ranges



SOURCE: Van Meter Williams Pollack LLP, 2018

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Figure 5-2
Variant 1 Parking Facilities Plan

This variant would have similar construction phases and timing as the Developer's Proposed Option and would require similar construction activities. Although this variant would not require excavation for a below-grade public parking garage, the entire site would still require grading and ground disturbance. Therefore, Variant 1 would not result in any meaningful difference in potential physical environmental impacts related to cultural resources, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, and hazards and hazardous materials because the impact analysis in Appendix B, Initial Study, considers surface and subsurface impacts across the project site, and the analysis and conclusions would be the same.

With respect to wind, Variant 1 would result in a four- to five-story change in building height in building height, from two to three stories up to seven stories, at the western edge of Block B, facing West Street. This would be a step up in height greater than under the Developer's Proposed Option and potentially greater than under the Additional Housing Option, depending on the ultimate design of specific buildings. This exposed building wall would be 40 to 50 feet tall and would face into the prevailing westerly winds. This exposed building wall could result in somewhat greater winds at its base, and particularly at the southwest corner of the building, than would be the case under the two principal development options. However, the Blocks A and B building under this variant would not be considered to extend substantially above adjacent structures and would result in a seven-story building proximate to the existing five-story building at 1200 Ocean Avenue. Therefore, it would not be expected to result in pedestrian wind hazards, and therefore wind effects would be less than significant, as with both project options.

Concerning shadow, the increased building height under Variant 1, compared to the Developer's Proposed Option, would occur primarily at the western end of the Blocks A and B building. Because shadow would only reach Unity Plaza very late in the day in late spring and early summer when shadows are already near their maximum length, this variant would not substantially affect shadows cast on Unity Plaza. Other shadow cast under Variant 1 would be similar to that cast by the Developer's Proposed Option. Shadow effects would be less than significant, as with both project options.

All mitigation measures identified for the topics above under the Developer's Proposed Option would be applicable to this variant. Therefore, these environmental topics require no further analysis under Variant 1.

5.B Variant 2: South Street Alignment and Below-Ground Public Parking at North End of Site

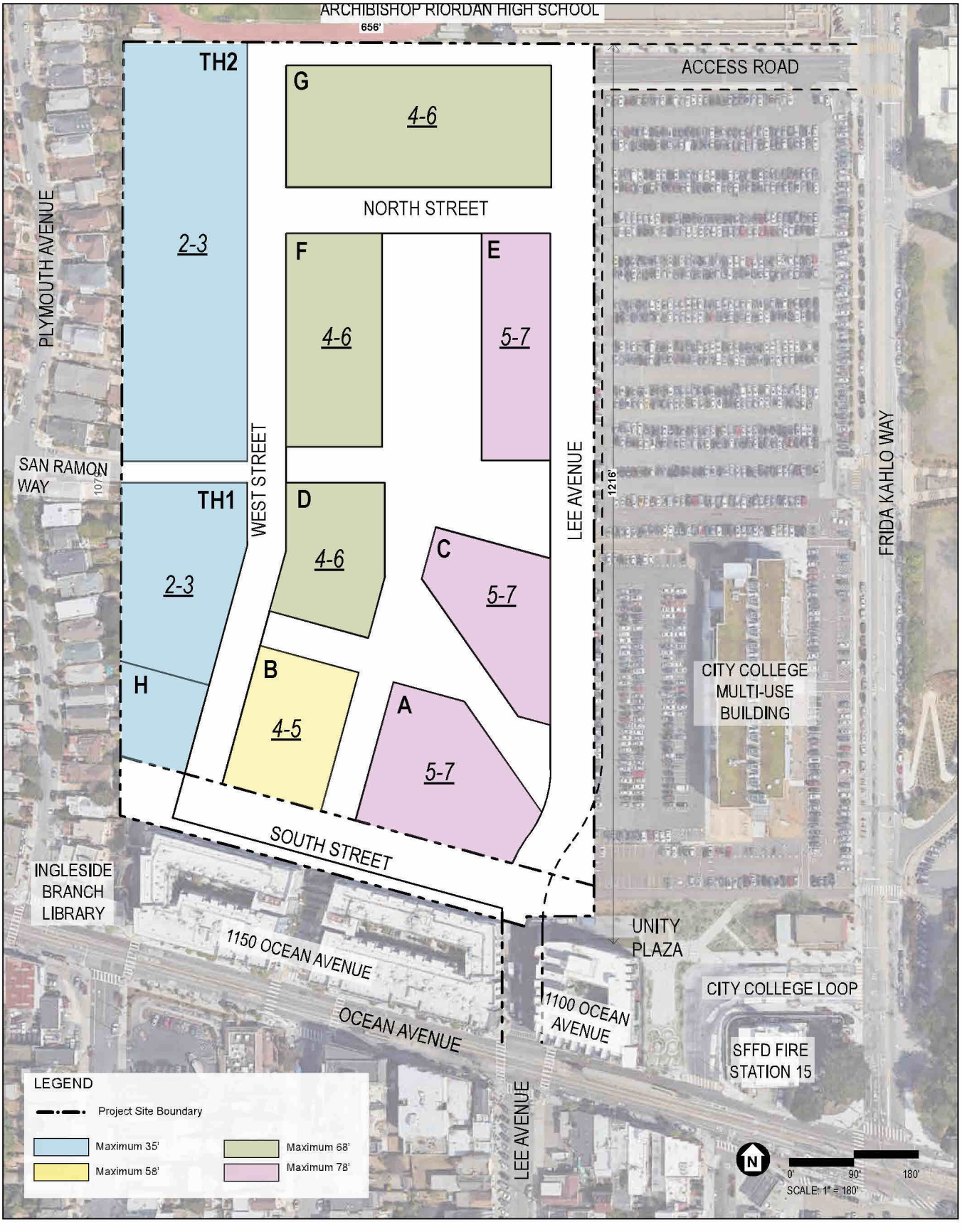
Description

Variant 2 would have the same mix of land uses, square footages, and construction and operational characteristics as the Developer's Proposed Option, except the 750-space multilevel public parking garage would be constructed below Block G towards the north end of the site, and South Street would be shifted south and occupy SFPUC's 80-foot-wide portion of the parcel south of Blocks A and B. As a result of this change in configuration, Blocks A, C, and D would have slightly different footprints. However, as shown in **Figure 6-3, Variant 2 Site Plan and Height Ranges**, the maximum height (seven stories) would not change between the Developer's Proposed Option and Variant 2.

As with the Developer's Proposed Option, vehicle access to parking on Block G would be from North Street under Variant 2. Under the Developer's Proposed Option, vehicle access to residential parking on Block G would be from North Street. Because of the South Street alignment under this variant, vehicle access to parking on Block A would be from the north side of South Street instead of the south side under the Developer's Proposed Option (see **Figure 6-4, Variant 2 Parking Facilities Plan**).

Under Variant 2, demolition of the berm, grading, excavation, construction of site infrastructure, and vertical construction activities would have the same phases and timing as the Developer's Proposed Option. The variant would not change aspects of the Developer's Proposed Option related to demolition, excavation, site preparation, and the construction of the internal circulation, open space, or other improvements. As under the Developer's Proposed Option, excavation of the below-grade 750-space public parking garage would also require the net export of approximately 57,000 cubic yards of soil under Variant 2.

No additional construction beyond what is assumed for the Developer's Proposed Option would be required. Under this variant, the project footprint would not be altered, and no additional excavation would be necessary.



SOURCE: Van Meter Williams Pollack LLP, 2018

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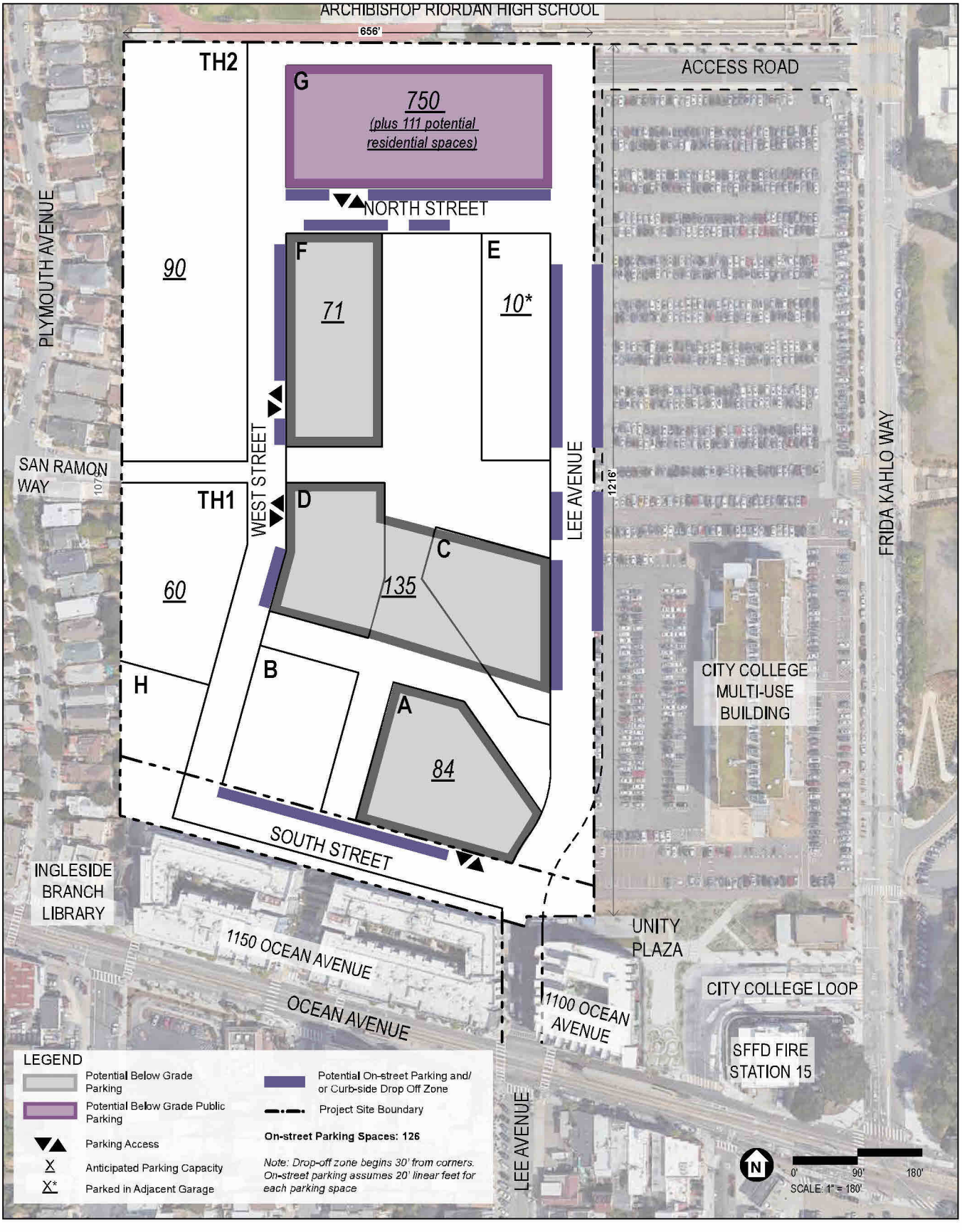
Figure 5-3
Variant 2 Site Plan and Height Ranges



SOURCE: Van Meter Williams Pollack LLP, 2018

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Figure 5-4
Variant 2 Parking Facilities Plan

Impact Analysis

Environmental Topics Not Requiring Further Analysis under Variant 2

Variant 2 and the Developer's Proposed Option would have the same mix of land use types (i.e., residential, retail, community facilities/child care, open space). Variant 2 would not change the number of residential units or space allocation of the retail and community facilities/child-care uses. As a result, the number of on-site residents, employees, and construction-related employees would be the same for Variant 2 and the Developer's Proposed Option, as would the conclusions regarding less-than-significant impacts associated with population and housing. Impacts on public services, utilities and service systems, and recreation, which are based largely on the increased demand associated with population and housing growth, would be the same under Variant 2 and the Developer's Proposed Option.

This variant would have the same construction phases and timing as the Developer's Proposed Option and would require similar construction activities. Construction and excavation related to the public parking garage would occur during Phase 2, as under the Developer's Proposed Option, except it would be at the north end of the site. The amount of excavation and net export of soil would be the same as the Developer's Proposed Option. There would be no meaningful difference in potential physical environmental impacts related to cultural resources, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, and hazards and hazardous materials because the impact analysis in Appendix B, Initial Study, considers surface and subsurface impacts across the project site and the analysis and conclusions would be the same.

Wind effects of Variant 2 would be essentially the same as those of the Developer's Proposed Option because building heights would be the same. Although the configurations of Blocks A and C, and to a lesser extent, Block D, would vary from those under the Developer's Proposed Option, these changes would result in only incremental changes in pedestrian winds. In particular, Block C would present less of its building façade directly into the prevailing westerly winds, thereby likely resulting in incrementally better pedestrian wind conditions around the base of the building. The change in Block A configuration would affect the trailing edge of the building relative to the prevailing winds, and would not substantially affect pedestrian wind conditions. As with both project options, no wind hazards would be anticipated, and wind effects would be less than significant.

Shadow on Unity Plaza would be unchanged compared to that with the Developer's Proposed Option because project shadow on the plaza would be entirely the result of the project's southerly and southeasterly building facades and corners, and these would not change under Variant 2. Other shadow cast under Variant 2 would be similar to that cast by the Developer's Proposed Option. As with both project options, shadow effects would be less than significant.

All mitigation measures identified for the topics above under the Developer's Proposed Option would be applicable to this variant. Therefore, these environmental topics require no further analysis under Variant 2.

5.C Variant 3: Assumes Pedestrians and Bicycles Do Not Access Site via San Ramon Way

Description

Under Variant 3, there would be no pedestrian or bicycle facilities connecting the project site to San Ramon Way. The site plan, building footprints, building heights, and construction characteristics would be the same as the Developer's Proposed Option. No additional construction beyond what is assumed for the project would be required.

Impact Analysis

Environmental Topics Not Requiring Further Analysis under Variant 3

Variant 3 would not change the site plan, mix of land uses, building footprints, building heights, residential unit counts, or the space allocation of uses of the Developer's Proposed Option. The construction activities, equipment, phasing, and durations for Variant 3 would be the same as the Developer's Proposed Option. Therefore, the physical environmental effects and conclusions related to construction and operation of the of this variant would substantially be the same as those identified for the Developer's Proposed Option for the following: population and housing, cultural resources, noise, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, wind and shadow, recreation, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, and hazards and hazardous materials. All mitigation measures identified for these topics for the Developer's Proposed Option would be applicable to Variant 3.

Land Use and Land Use Planning

Similar to the Developer's Proposed Option, Variant 3 would extend a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities through the project site except at San Ramon Way. Variant 3 would generally be consistent with applicable plans and policies; however, this variant could conflict with portions of Balboa Park Station Area Plan Objective 5.1 and Policy 5.1.1 regarding the creation of new public open spaces. Policy 5.1.1 includes design guidelines for the open space at the Balboa Reservoir site. With respect to adjacent areas, the design guidelines in Policy 5.1.1 states: "[d]evelop clearly marked access gates, pedestrian pathways, and visual site lines aligned with the streets of adjoining neighborhoods" and "[p]ay careful attention to the design of edges between the open space and surrounding neighborhoods as well as Riordon High School. It is important to provide access into the park from the surrounding neighborhoods while respecting the privacy of adjacent homes. Trees and shrubs should be planted to provide a buffer between the houses that abut the reservoir site to the west. Entrances to the park should align with existing streets for direct pedestrian access and to extend clear views into the park from public streets."

Removing pedestrian and bicycle access at San Ramon Way could potentially conflict with Policy 5.1.1 as this variant would remove connectivity between the project site's open space and neighborhood to the west. However, conflicts between a proposed project and adopted plans, policies, and regulations do not, in and of themselves, indicate a significant effect on the

environment within the context of CEQA. The decision makers will consider other potential inconsistencies with the general plan (of which the area plan is a part) when deciding to approve or disapprove a proposed project. The staff reports and approval motions prepared for the decision makers as part of the entitlements approval process will include a comprehensive project analysis and findings regarding the consistency of the proposed project with applicable plans, policies, and regulations independent of the environmental review process. To the extent that physical environmental impacts may result from such inconsistencies, these impacts are analyzed in the EIR and initial study. Circulation impacts resulting from no pedestrian and bicycle access at San Ramon Way under Variant 3 are analyzed in the following "Transportation and Circulation" section.

Transportation and Circulation

[Note to Reviewer: To be included in ADEIR-1 submittal.]

5.D Variant 4: North Street Extension

Description

Variant 4 would be applicable to both project options. The Developer's Proposed Option and the Additional Housing Option would have the same configuration under this variant, except North Street would be extended through the east basin site and would connect to Frida Kahlo Way. Under this variant both project options would have the same mix of land uses, square footages, and construction and operational characteristics. Vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation to and from the site would not change, except instead of the access road along the north side of the east basin, the North Street Extension would provide east–west access from Frida Kahlo Way, as shown in **Figure 6-5, Variant 4 Site Plan**.

The North Street Extension would displace approximately 110 spaces at City College's surface parking lot on the east basin. The loss of the parking spaces would be offset by relocating surface parking spaces to the area currently occupied by the access road at the north end of the east basin. Under Variant 4, the existing east–west access road connecting the west basin to Frida Kahlo Way would be closed off and would require relocating the traffic signal currently at the access road/Frida Kahlo Way intersection south to the new North Street/Frida Kahlo Way intersection. Under Variant 4, the Lee Avenue/North Street intersection would be controlled by a stop sign.

The North Street Extension would include a 10.5-foot-wide vehicle travel lane in each direction, a 5-foot-wide bicycle facility, and 6.5-foot-wide sidewalks on both sides of the street. An 8-foot-wide parking lane would be provided on one or both sides of the street. The North Street Extension right-of-way would be approximately 72 feet wide. The sidewalks would be buffered from vehicular traffic by a 4-foot-wide planting strip and 2-foot-wide courtesy strip.

No additional construction beyond what is assumed for the project would be required. Under Variant 4, the project footprint for both options would not be altered, and no additional height or excavation would be necessary.

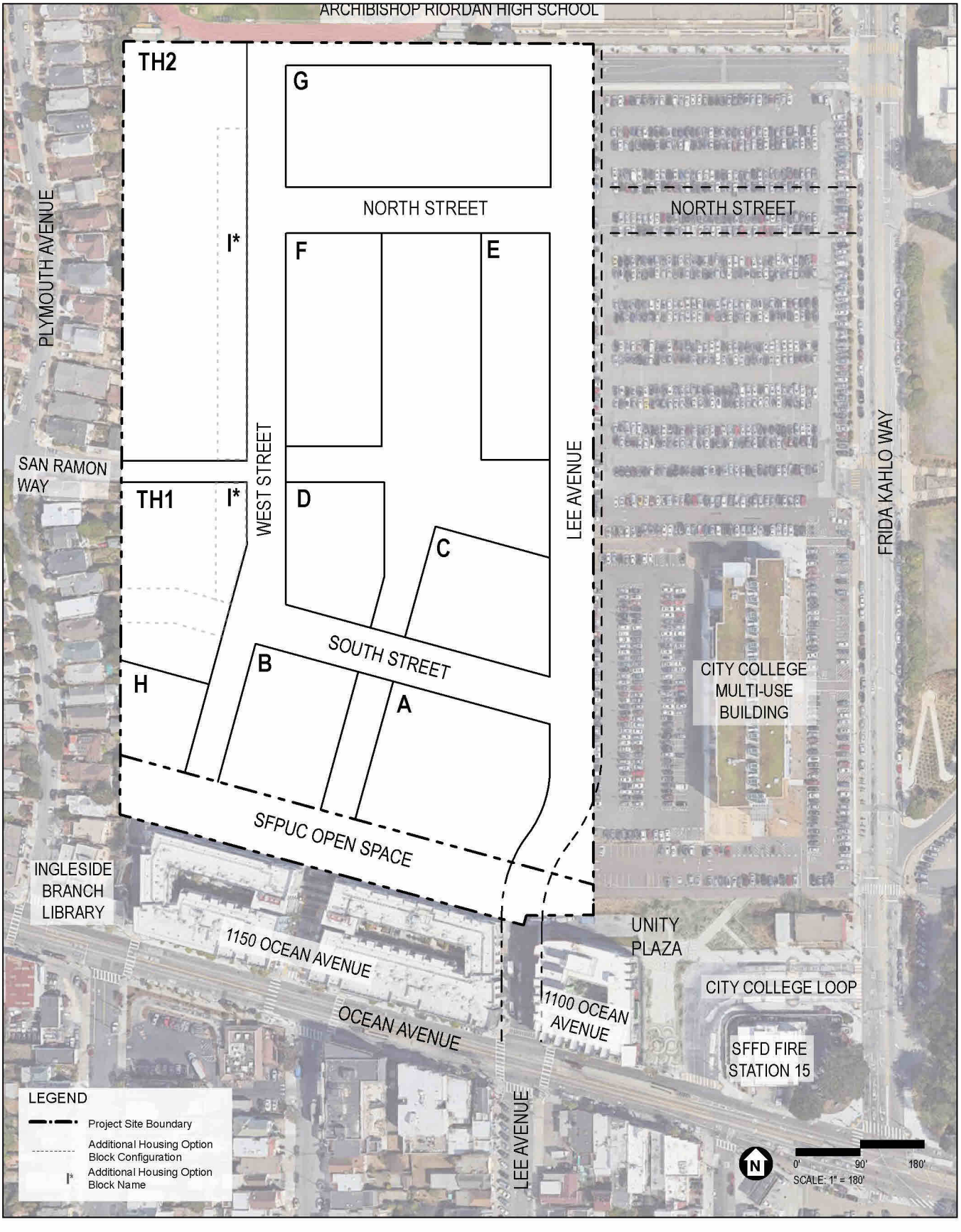
Impact Analysis

Environmental Topics Not Requiring Further Analysis under Variant 4

Variant 4 would not change the site plan, mix of land uses, building footprints, building heights, residential unit counts, or the space allocation of uses of either proposed project option. The construction activities, equipment, phasing, and durations for Variant 4 would be the same as for both proposed project options. Therefore, the physical environmental effects and conclusions related to construction and operation of the of this variant would substantially be the same as those identified for both the Developer's Proposed Option and the Additional Housing Option for the following: land use and land use planning, population and housing, cultural resources, noise, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, wind and shadow, recreation, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, and hazards and hazardous materials. All mitigation measures identified for these topics under both proposed project options would be applicable to Variant 4.

Transportation and Circulation

[Note to Reviewer: To be included in ADEIR-1 submittal.]



SOURCE: Van Meter Williams Pollack LLP, 2018

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Figure 5-5
Variant 4 Site Plan

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