



## Item No. 4 Town of Atherton

### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER**

**FROM: ROBERT OVADIA, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

**DATE: APRIL 3, 2019**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF A POTENTIAL UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING  
DISTRICT IN THE CIVIC CENTER AREA AND/OR THE  
SALE/TRANSFER OF RULE 20A UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING  
WORK CREDITS AND PROVIDE STAFF WITH DIRECTION**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Consider the option of creating an underground utility district in the Civic Center area or selling accumulated Rule 20A work credits.

#### **BACKGROUND**

At its June 20, 2018 Council meeting, the Council received a report regarding the formation of underground utility districts in the Civic Center area, extending along Dinkelspiel Station Lane and along Watkins Avenue. Following questions and the opportunity for public comment, the Council opted not to form a District at in the Civic Center area at that time.

At its February 20, 2019 Council meeting, the Council received a report regarding the potential of selling of accumulated Rule 20A credits. Following questions and the opportunity for public comment, the Council requested additional information regarding the potential formation of an underground utility underground district in the Civic Center area.

The following summarizes information provided to the Council regarding utility undergrounding and associated PG&E work credits:

#### **Utility Underground Districts**

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and utility companies established a program to underground utilities across the State in 1967, commonly known as Rule 20. Under Rule 20A, investor-owned utilities allocate funds to communities to convert overhead electric facilities to underground facilities. These funds are not provided directly to communities but rather allocated

as credits to cover the utility provider's project costs, primarily design and construction, for approved projects. The local jurisdiction is required to fund project costs associated with project support, and more significantly the relocation of other impacted municipally owned utilities and facilities, such as street lights and traffic signals.

To create an underground utility district, the Town Council is required to determine, pursuant to a public hearing, that the undergrounding is in the general public interest for one or more of the following reasons:

- 1) Such undergrounding will avoid or eliminate an unusually heavy concentration of overhead electric facilities;
- 2) The street or road or right-of-way is extensively used by the general public and carries a heavy volume of pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
- 3) The street or road or right-of-way adjoins or passes through a civic area or public recreation area or an area of unusual scenic interest to the general public; and
- 4) The street or road or right-of-way is considered an arterial street or major collector as defined in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research General Plan Guidelines.

#### Undergrounding Work Credits

The Town receives an allocation of approximately \$25,000 Rule 20A work credits annually and, including the 2019 allocation, has accumulated approximately \$1.4 million in credits to fund PG&E's costs associated with utility undergrounding projects. Jurisdictions may borrow future allocations, up to 5 years in advance, to implement projects. PG&E has indicated that their recent undergrounding projects have varied significantly and have ranged between \$1,000 and \$2,000 per linear foot (depending on the type of lines to be underground). The Town would be responsible for certain costs in implementing the district including staff time, project coordination and inspection, and infrastructure associated with street light conversions in the district boundaries. The various communication companies would be responsible for the costs associated with relocating their facilities underground, and affected private properties would be responsible for converting their properties to accept underground utility service.

Local agencies are permitted to trade or sell unused Rule 20A credits. Several local agencies have done so to raise funds for their projects. Typically, credits are sold or traded at less than their dollar value due to their limited use. Credit market value has varied depending on need, interest, and availability, ranging between 5 to 50 cents on the dollar. Example transactions are noted in the table below.

#### ANALYSIS

As outlined in the June 20, 2018 staff report, Town staff met with PG&E on June 5, 2018, to review the potential boundaries of an underground utility district in the Civic Center area, the process for adoption as well as the timeline for implementation. PG&E requires that districts be a minimum of one (1) block or 600 feet in length. Based on the current amount of Rule 20A funds accumulated and a borrow ahead of 5 years, the Town could underground approximately 750 linear feet. However, that amount represents the PG&E cost that could be paid by Rule 20A funds, there could

be additional funds required and until the Town begins the process and prepares the required Engineer's Report, those specific additional costs are not known.

Further, PG&E may require additional poles to be included in the District in order to complete a necessary circuit. If Rule 20A funds are insufficient for the District as designed, the Town would be required to supplement with General Funds. Property owners would be required pay for their private underground portions of the project. Maple Avenue may not qualify for the use of Rule 20A funds given that it is not a primary collector street.

Staff reviewed the area around the Civic Center and noted the following:

1. The primary Civic Center Buildings are currently served with underground utility service.
2. Utility services to the new Civic Center buildings will be underground.
3. Utilities along Ashfield Road from Dinkelspiel Station Lane to El Camino Real are currently underground.
4. Utilities along Dinkelspiel Station Lane from Fair Oaks Lane to Maple Avenue are currently underground.
5. The overhead telecommunication lines in the Caltrain right-of-way fronting the Civic Center were recently removed (see attachment 1).
6. Fair Oaks Avenue is served with over-head utilities.
7. Maple Avenue is served with over-head utilities.

As noted above, the minimum length of an underground utility district is one block or 600 feet. There are two potential districts in the Civic Center Area: 1) Fair Oaks Lane and 2) Maple Avenue. The over-head lines along Fair Oaks Lane are closest to the new Civic Center. A map showing the existing poles and overhead lines along Fair Oaks Lane with a potential boundary are provided as Attachment 2. A map showing the existing poles and overhead lines in the Civic Center Area is provided as Attachment 3.

There are options for design of a "block" based on PG&E's definition that would allow the Town to use Rule 20A funds to underground a pole directly in front of the new Town Center on Fair Oaks. In order to underground this singular pole, the Town would need to maintain the pole at the SW property line and would be required to underground wires under the Caltrain right-of-way to the pole/cell site at the north side of the Caltrain right-of-way. It is highly likely that this singular project would meet or exceed the amount of Rule 20A funds available given the requirement to bore under the Caltrain right-of-way.

It is important to note the following:

- Riser and termination poles are often needed at the boundaries of the utility undergrounding district to transition from over-head to underground facilities.
- A cellular antenna is located on the joint pole east of the Caltrain right-of-way on Fair Oaks Avenue.
- Coordination with Caltrain will be required for any undergrounding district directly adjacent to, or crossing Caltrain right-of-way.

As noted in the June 20, 2018 staff report, Rule 20A funds can be “sold” to interested communities in exchange for General Fund dollars. Prior to PG&E’s declaration of bankruptcy, it was estimated that the Town could expect to receive 40-50% on the dollar for the funds. A listing of recent work credit transactions (2016-2018) was provided in the February 20, 2019 staff report. The average value of recent credit transfers was approximately \$.39 per credit. With PG&E’s recent declaration of bankruptcy, the value in the current market is unclear.

### **POLICY FOCUS**

The Council’s policy discussion should focus on the desire to create an undergrounding district in the Civic Center area and its boundaries, and the potential sale/transfer of Rule 20A work credits to interested communities in exchange for General Fund dollars. If the Council is interested in pursuing an undergrounding district, the discussion should also include if the Town would include any allocation of work credits towards service panel conversion for private properties.  
creation

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact of creating an underground utility district will vary depending on the size and scope of the district(s) and the number of street lights within the district(s) that are to be converted and replaced. The sale of Rule 20A work credits would provide additional on-time revenue into the Town’s General Fund that could be used to address other Town priorities.

### **COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL**

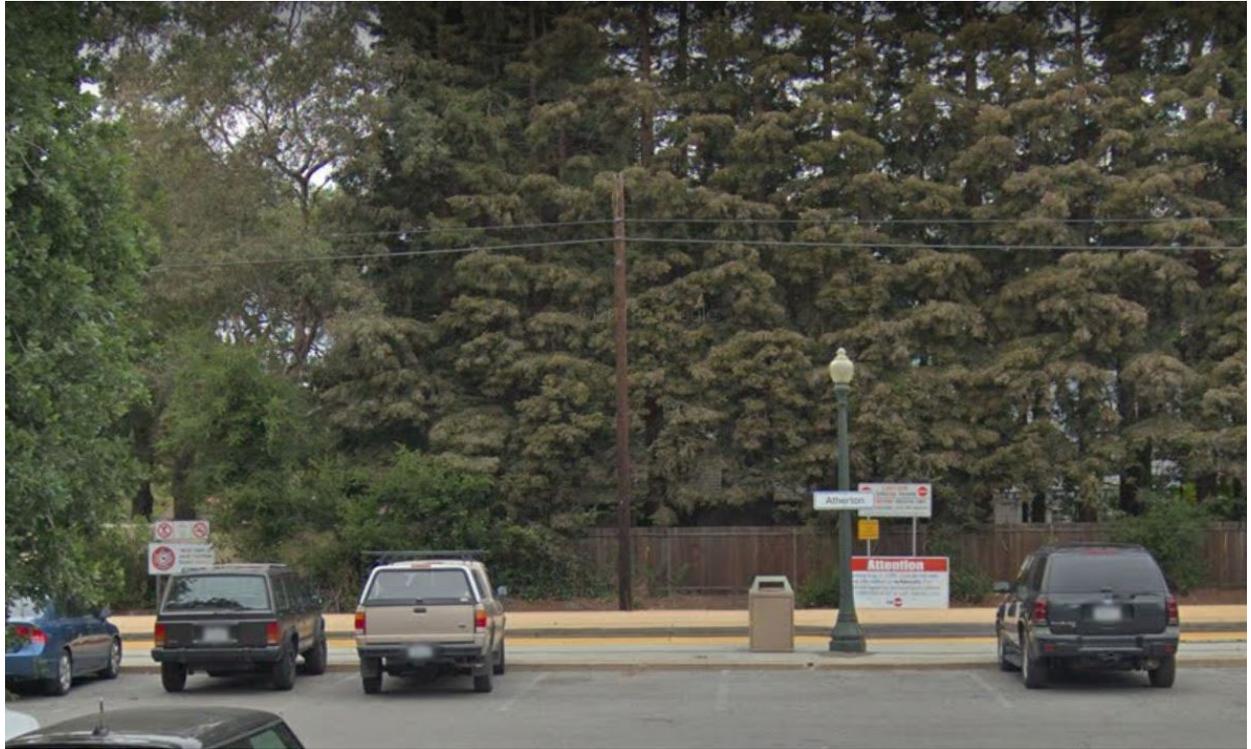
This item \_\_\_ has or X has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- \_\_\_ Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- \_\_\_ Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- \_\_\_ Civic Center Advisory Committee (meets as needed)
- \_\_\_ Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- \_\_\_ Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- \_\_\_ Planning Commission (meets each month)
- \_\_\_ Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- \_\_\_ Transportation Committee (meets every other month)
- \_\_\_ Tree Committee (meets each month)

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Before/After Caltrain Right-of-Way
2. Civic Center Layout
3. Map of Over-head Utilities

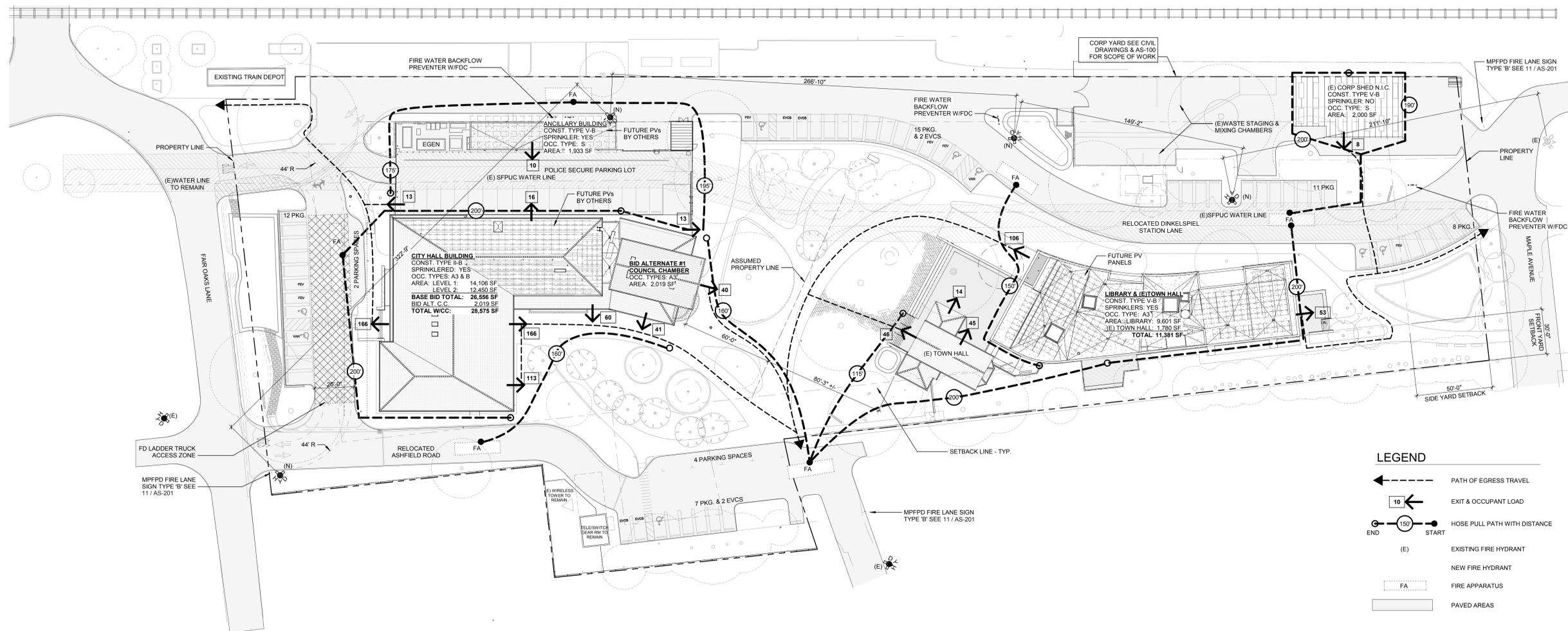
# ATTACHMENT 1



ATTACHMENT 2

SHEET NOTES:

1. ALL CURBING LOCATED WITHIN PROPERTY LINES THAT IS NOT SHOWN AS PARKING SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS "NO PARKING FIRE LANE". CURBS TO BE PAINTED RED AND LABELED IN WHITE "NO PARKING FIRE LANE". SEE DETAIL 13AS-201.
2. PROVIDE ENTRANCE SIGN 'B' OF MPFPD AT EACH POINT OF ENTRY TO PROPERTY. REFER TO PLAN FOR LOCATIONS.
3. FIRE APPARATUS ROADWAYS INCLUDING PUBLIC OR PRIVATE STREETS OR ROADS USED FOR VEHICLE ACCESS SHALL BE INSTALLED AND IN SERVICE PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION.
4. FIRE PROTECTION WATER SERVING ALL HYDRANTS SHALL BE PROVIDED AS SOON AS COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL ARRIVES ON SITE. SCHEDULE INSPECTION OF ROADWAYS AND FIRE HYDRANTS WITH MPFPD PRIOR TO COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL ARRIVAL ON SITE.
5. PLANS SHOWS TOTAL BUILD OUT CITY HALL WITH BID ALTERNATE #1 COUNCIL CHAMBER.



| ISSUES  | DATE       |
|---------|------------|
| BID SET | 01/03/2019 |

| REVISION LIST | DATE |
|---------------|------|
|---------------|------|

1 FIRE LIFE SAFETY SITE PLAN  
1" = 30'-0"

ATHERTON CIVIC CENTER  
80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027

KEYPLAN



PROJECT NO.: 15007.00  
DATE: 01/03/2019  
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

SHEET TITLE:

SITE PLAN FIRE LIFE SAFETY

SHEET NO:

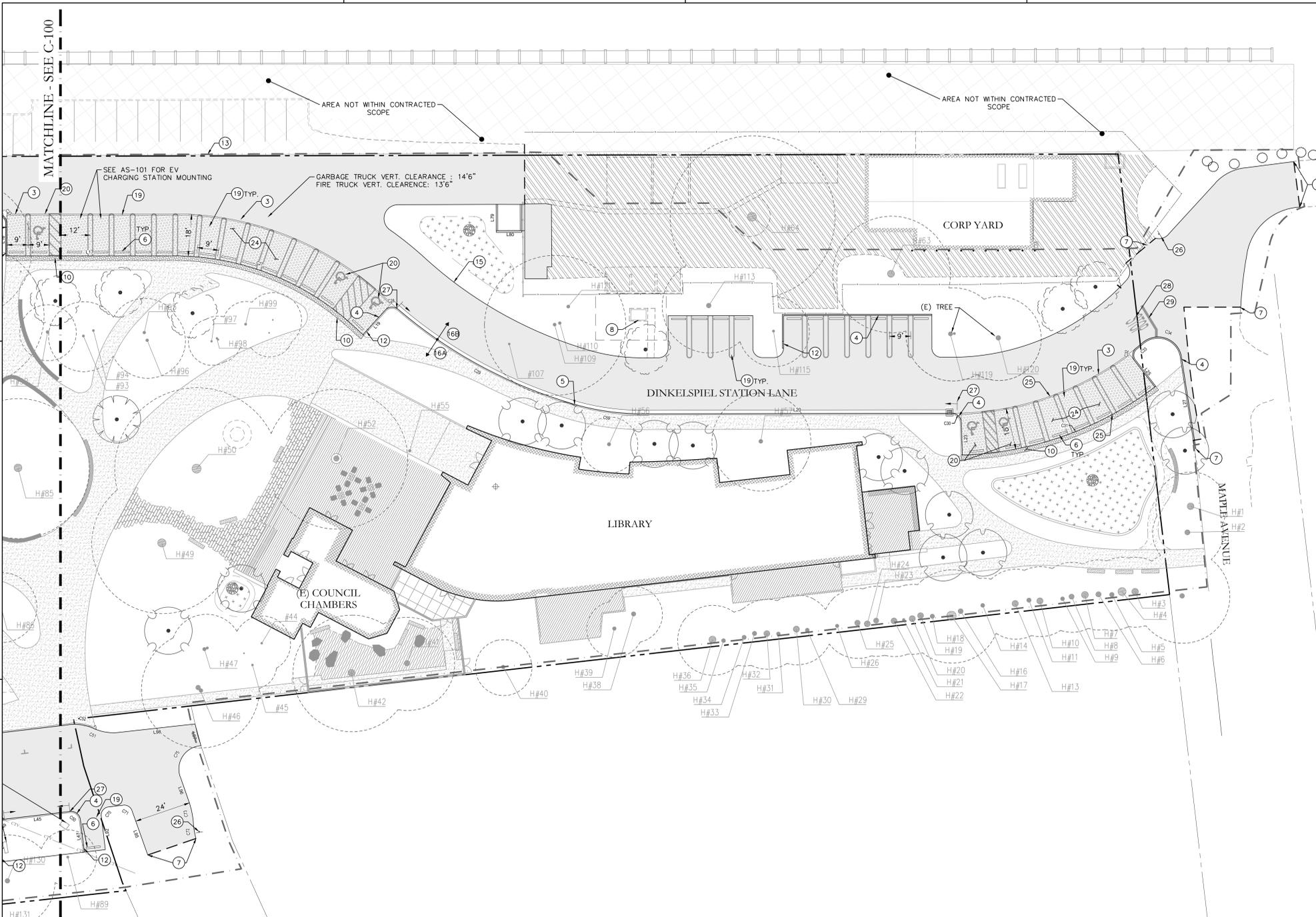
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| ISSUES  | DATE      |
|---------|-----------|
| BID SET | 1/03/2019 |

| REVISION LIST | DATE |
|---------------|------|
|               |      |

| LINE & CURVE<br>FACE OF CURB, EDGE OF PAVING |        |                  |        |
|--|--------|------------------|--------|
| Line #/Curve #                               | Length | Direction/Delta  | Radius |
| C1   | 3.18   | 045.5141         | 4.0    |
| C2   | 6.28   | 090.0000         | 4.0    |
| C3   | 5.62   | 064.2781         | 5.0    |
| C4   | 23.03  | 030.6893         | 43.0   |
| C5   | 41.61  | 049.6674         | 48.0   |
| C6   | 28.30  | 090.0851         | 18.0   |
| C7   | 6.28   | 090.0000         | 4.0    |
| C8   | 5.03   | 057.5913         | 5.0    |
| C9   | 5.00   | 057.2761         | 5.0    |
| C10  | 18.74  | 044.7360         | 24.0   |
| C11  | 19.85  | 094.7580         | 12.0   |
| C12  | 3.14   | 090.0000         | 2.0    |
| C13  | 11.04  | 063.2569         | 10.0   |
| C14  | 11.01  | 063.0960         | 10.0   |
| C15  | 13.91  | 020.9687         | 38.0   |
| C16  | 3.62   | 034.5653         | 6.0    |
| C17  | 28.56  | 034.0935         | 48.0   |
| C18  | 16.85  | 032.1884         | 30.0   |
| C19  | 14.54  | 104.1168         | 8.0    |
| C20  | 6.28   | 089.8837         | 4.0    |
| C21  | 6.29   | 090.1163         | 4.0    |
| C22  | 6.28   | 089.9123         | 4.0    |
| C24  | 9.88   | 037.7271         | 15.0   |
| C25  | 25.89  | 074.1675         | 20.0   |
| C26  | 32.59  | 046.4089         | 40.2   |
| C27  | 72.59  | 037.1348         | 112.0  |
| C28  | 6.20   | 088.8765         | 4.0    |
| C29  | 85.17  | 024.4000         | 200.0  |
| C30  | 6.16   | 088.2347         | 4.0    |
| C31  | 89.18  | 035.9823         | 142.0  |
| C32  | 6.16   | 088.2092         | 4.0    |
| C33  | 3.58   | 001.6529         | 124.0  |
| C34  | 21.30  | 122.0652         | 10.0   |
| C49  | 6.28   | 090.0000         | 4.0    |
| C50  | 6.28   | 090.0000         | 4.0    |
| C51  | 1.07   | 003.0671         | 20.0   |
| C52  | 10.92  | 031.2704         | 20.0   |
| C53  | 7.75   | 044.4140         | 10.0   |
| C55  | 28.27  | 089.9724         | 18.0   |
| C56  | 11.31  | 081.0205         | 8.0    |
| C59  | 29.98  | 016.5144         | 104.0  |
| C60  | 20.02  | 055.0125         | 20.9   |
| C61  | 10.47  | 060.0000         | 10.0   |
| C62  | 10.03  | 057.4454         | 10.0   |
| C63  | 24.50  | 093.5830         | 15.0   |
| C65  | 24.27  | 049.6674         | 28.0   |
| C66  | 32.61  | 027.8898         | 67.0   |
| C67  | 4.64   | 044.3035         | 6.0    |
| C68  | 6.00   | 085.9400         | 4.0    |
| C69  | 4.37   | 062.6374         | 4.0    |
| C70  | 5.50   | 090.0000         | 3.5    |
| C71  | 4.73   | 077.4570         | 3.5    |
| C72  | 6.73   | 011.0189         | 35.0   |
| C73  | 9.17   | 015.0088         | 35.0   |
| C75  | 17.06  | 097.7199         | 10.0   |
| L1   | 14.00  | S31° 30' 00.00"W |        |
| L2   | 28.00  | S58° 30' 00.00"E |        |
| L3   | 14.00  | N31° 30' 00.00"E |        |
| L4   | 16.00  | S53° 56' 10.83"E |        |
| L5   | 12.19  | N04° 21' 14.29"W |        |
| L6   | 99.35  | S54° 01' 17.09"E |        |
| L7   | 15.32  | S38° 03' 52.11"W |        |
| L8   | 15.00  | N53° 56' 10.83"W |        |
| L9   | 7.77   | S83° 34' 42.70"W |        |
| L10  | 137.83 | S51° 41' 07.52"E |        |
| L11  | 1.63   | S38° 11' 53.63"W |        |
| L12  | 0.95   | S36° 03' 49.17"W |        |
| L13  | 1.32   | S38° 11' 53.63"W |        |
| L15  | 24.82  | N51° 41' 07.52"W |        |
| L16  | 14.01  | S38° 14' 40.66"W |        |
| L17  | 71.32  | N51° 41' 07.52"W |        |
| L19  | 14.04  | N80° 14' 09.99"E |        |
| L20  | 131.22 | N51° 48' 06.37"W |        |
| L23  | 14.06  | N36° 25' 58.72"E |        |
| L24  | 35.68  | N58° 41' 39.73"W |        |



**LEGEND**

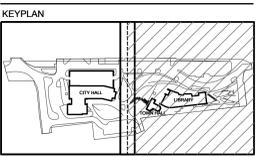
|                                      |                        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>EXISTING</b>                      | <b>PROPOSED</b>        |
| GUTTER                               | _____                  |
| FACE OF CURB                         | _____                  |
| BACK OF CURB                         | _____                  |
| EDGE OF PAVEMENT ONSITE              | _____                  |
| VALLEY GUTTER FLOW LINE              | _____                  |
| SAWCUT LINE                          | _____                  |
| ASPHALT PAVEMENT PER B/C-400         | [Hatched Box]          |
| POROUS ASPHALT PER K/C-400           | [Dotted Box]           |
| GRIND & OVERLAY                      | [Diagonal Hatched Box] |
| VEHICULAR CONC. PAVEMENT PER A/C-400 | [Cross-hatched Box]    |
| PEDESTRIAN PAVEMENT, SLP             | [Stippled Box]         |
| KEYNOTE                              | (X) _____              |
| LINE / CURVE NUMBER                  | L xx      C xx         |
| VEHICULAR SIGNAGE                    | _____                  |
| PROPERTY LINE                        | _____                  |
| LIMIT OF WORK                        | _____                  |
| AREA NOT WITHIN CONTRACTED SCOPE     | [Dashed Box]           |
| PARKING STRIPING                     | _____                  |
| CROSSWALK STRIPING                   | [Striped Box]          |
| DIRECTIONAL ARROW STRIPING           | [Arrow]                |

**STRIPING & SIGNAGE NOTES**

- ALL SIGNS AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS SHALL CONFORM WITH THE STANDARDS OF THE 2012 CALIFORNIA MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES (MUTCD) AND THE 2010 CALTRANS STANDARD PLANS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
- ALL PAVEMENT MARKINGS TO BE THERMOPLASTIC.
- LOCATION OF THE SIGNS SHALL BE DETERMINED IN THE FIELD AND VERIFIED FOR FEASIBILITY.
- ALL NEW SIGNS TO BE FASTENED ON GALVANIZED STEEL POSTS EMBEDDED IN CONCRETE FOOTING.

- KEYNOTES:**
- 1 VALLEY GUTTER PER I/C-400
  - 2 TRENCH DRAIN PER I/C-402
  - 3 FLUSH CURB AT POROUS PAVING PER L/C-400, CASE 2
  - 4 VERTICAL CURB PER E/C-400
  - 5 CURB AND GUTTER PER D/C-400
  - 6 RECYCLED RUBBER WHEEL STOP PER J/C-400
  - 7 CONFORM TO EXISTING
  - 8 (E) AT&T CEV TO REMAIN IN PLACE
  - 9 CLEAN AIR & EV CHARGING STATION, PER AS-201
  - 10 DETECTABLE WARNING SURFACE, PER AS-201
  - 11 ACCESSIBLE PARKING WITH EVCS, PER AS-201
  - 12 3' TRANSITION FROM FREE STANDING CURB TO FLUSH CONDITION
  - 13 GRIND & OVERLAY (E) ASPHALT BEYOND SAWCUT, TYP
  - 14 CONC. FLUME-TYPE 1 SEE A/C-402
  - 15 PAVEMENT EDGE RESTRAINT SEE B/C-400
  - 16 PEDESTRIAN HARDSCAPE & LANDSCAPE AREAS PER LANDSCAPE PLANS
  - 17 PERVIOUS/IMPERVIOUS PAVING SEPERATION PER L/C-400, CASE 1
  - 18 VALLEY GUTTER TO BERM SEE C/C-400
  - 19 STANDARD PERPENDICULAR PARKING SPACE PER AS-201
  - 20 ADA PARKING SPACE PER AS-201
  - 21 CONC. FLUME-TYPE 2 SEE B/C-402
  - 22 FIRE TRUCK ACCESS RADIUS
  - 23 PAVEMENT EDGE FLUSH W/ADJAC. SURFACE
  - 24 POROUS ASPHALT PAVEMENT PER K/C-400
  - 25 POROUS ASPHALT AGAINST PERVIOUS CONC. PER L/C-400, CASE 3
  - 26 FIRE LANE ENTRANCE SIGNAGE PER AS-201
  - 27 PAINTED FIRE CURB BETWEEN ARROWS PER AS-201
  - 28 INSTALL "STOP" PAVEMENT MARKING PER CALTRANS STD. PLAN A24D
  - 29 INSTALL 12" STOP BAR AS SHOWN ON PLAN 4FT IN ADVANCE OF PERPENDICULAR ROADWAY

**ATHERTON CIVIC CENTER**  
80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027



PROJECT NO: 15007.00  
DATE: 1/3/2019  
SCALE: 1"=20'  
SHEET TITLE:  
**SITE LAYOUT PLAN**

All drawings and written material appearing herein constitute original and unpublished work of the Architect/Engineer and may not be duplicated, used or disclosed without consent of Architect/Engineer.

If this drawing is not 30"x42", then the drawing has been revised from its original size. Note: scales must be adjusted. This line should be equal to one inch.



**Terminal PGE**

**Cell Site on top of Pole**

**Caltrain right-of-way**

**No Overhead Poles on Station Lane**

**Civic Center Boundary**

**No Overhead Poles on Ashfield Rd**

Fair Oaks Ln

Maple Ave

Walnut Ave

Watkins Ave