

REIMAGINING
Ojai City Hall Campus

A CITY CAMPUS FOR EVERYONE

Ojai City Council

August 12, 2025

Contents

1. Project Overview and Narrative
2. Community Workshop
 - Workshop report
 - Workshop plans and maps
3. Site Analysis
 - Phase I Tree Removal List
 - Phase I Tree Removal Map
 - Site Analysis- Request for Information (in process)
4. Schematic Process
5. Schematic Presentation Slides (including next steps)



Project Overview and Narrative

Project Description: City of Ojai 8-acre Campus Master Plan - Development through Completion, Council and Community Engagement, and Presentations

Contract total: \$72,000.00

Completion Date: By May 31, 2026

Scope of Work:

1. Coordinate with City of Ojai on existing conditions, historical data, site utilities, easements and excluded areas.
2. Coordinate with other organizations and businesses with existing projects on site
3. Coordinate input and development of site base plan
4. Create preliminary schematic plans and programming based on the emergent themes from October 2023 OVGC City Campus Community Input Report + March 2025 Workshop
5. Provide City Council Preliminary Schematic presentation (receive input from Council)
6. Provide Preliminary Concept Open House with the community (receive input from community)
7. Provide City Council final Master Plan Presentation
8. Provide community wrap-up and celebration: Master Plan Presentation and Next Steps

Deliverables:

- Community workshop: programming, future opportunities
- City council progress presentations
- City council final presentation
- Community final presentation and celebration
- 4 progress reports
- Progress plans and final plans in PDF format
- Presentation boards: final presentation
- Basic marketing, registration forms, on-line survey/input, project workshops, project scheduling, coordination, and management

Narrative

We started the process of master planning by gathering site information by observation and analysis and conducting stakeholder meetings with city staff, related commissions, and other stakeholders. Engagement included meetings with City Manager Ben Harvey,

Community Development Director Lucas Siebert, Public Works Director Lindy Palmer, Gina McHatton the chair of HPC and our new liaison, Brian Aikins. In addition, we met with representatives for several on site projects: David White/Once Upon A watershed/The CREW regarding the compost program and have a meeting scheduled with Scott Tomkinson botanist with PAX Environmental later in August. We interviewed several individual community members regarding their experience, input and knowledge of the demonstration garden.

Next steps will be inquiring with a structural engineer on the viability of what if anything is needed for the Carriage House to possibly be used. Workshop wishes for the Carriage House that emerged generally included a children's nature center, library of things, and a small meeting/workshop room.

We conducted our first public outreach workshop on March 20, 2025 at the Ojai Retreat. We used the world café style format for attendees to brainstorm and share. A series of site analysis plans and maps were displayed to provide existing site information. The three general topics were

- programming – what activities and elements would you like to be able to see and experience on the property?
- stewardship-how do you see the property being developed and maintained in the future, who could provide this service?
- partners – who could the potential partners be in constructing and maintaining the property and holding classes, events, and workshops etc.

The results along with data collected from workshops and a survey previously gathered under a past Community Service Grant will continue along with City input to influence the direction of the master plan.

Late in April of 2025 we received the survey of the site which we are using as the base for all of our mapping and planning. We continued the site analysis collecting information on site inventory and existing conditions. We met several times with consulting arborist Jan Scow to further refine the tree assessment conducted in 2023 to identify a Phase I trimming and removal list for safety purposes, to remove a portion of native trees and non-native trees that are considered invasive especially as they relate to the existing Middle Stuart Canyon Creek Restoration. We continued with site inventory – what is presently on the site and evaluating if the item should remain, be modified, relocated or removed.

A list of additional site information requiring verification and input may be found under Site Analysis.

This additional information has been added to the survey base and has enabled us to start the schematic design process creating two options. Schematic design generally includes identifying potential site elements or items, where they could be located, site circulation, relationships and connections, opportunities and constraints.

Ojai Valley Green Coalition
March 20, 2025 Community Input Workshop Results
8-Acre City Hall Campus

On March 20, 2025, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition held a community workshop at the Ojai Retreat to gather additional input on the future of the City Hall Campus. 48 people were in attendance.

The conversation built on the top responses and themes from the Community Survey and three World Cafe workshops that the Green Coalition hosted in 2023. These envisioned that the Campus would include:

- Nature-based activities
- Areas for workshops, demonstrations, gatherings
- Workshops and classes
- Public amenities - e.g. restrooms, trails, signage

At the March 20, 2025 event, input from the participants was gathered through lively facilitated discussions in five categories:

- Partnerships
- Programming
- Stewardship
- “Feel” of the site
- Gardens

A summary of the top ideas and themes are described below.

Partnerships

Participants identified the following partners to potentially help provide support such as funding, site development and maintenance.

Boy Scouts
Chamber of Commerce/business sponsors
City of Ojai
Future Farmers of America
Green Building Council
Hotels/Corporate retreats (Ecotourism)

Lions Club
Ojai Civic Association
Ojai Trees
Ojai Women's Fund
Pickleball players
Rotary Clubs
The C.R.E.W.
Ventura County Solid Waste

The following partners were identified who could potentially provide programming - e.g. workshops, tours, events:

Artist residencies
Bike Shops
City of Ojai Recreation Department
Compost program
Food for Thought
Future Farmers of America
Master Gardeners
Ojai Trees
Ojai Valley Museum
Once Upon A Watershed
Pax Environmental
Santa Barbara Permaculture
Student projects
The C.R.E.W.'s Green Valley Project
Ventura Wild
Watershed Progressive

Programming

The following ideas emerged for programming at the site:

- Provide interpretive signage and a virtual/audio tour so that visitors can implement knowledge at their home gardens on topics such as:
 - Rainwater capture
 - Native plants
 - Soil health
 - Wildlife habitat

- Sustainable/ecological design
- Provide an “outdoor laboratory” for hands-on educational activities that enable participants to:
 - Learn gardening, composting, native plant landscaping
 - Learn fire-safe landscaping
 - Build with novel/resilient materials
 - Citizen science
 - Create and enjoy art
 - Take classes on repair
 - Star gazing
 - Learn Chumash/indigenous stories
 - Learn oak tree preservation
- Utilize the Carriage Barn
 - Put in concrete floor
 - Use as a small meeting room for classes, gatherings, quiet exercise such as yoga, even weddings
- Offer nature walks on a trail system that also has interpretive signage
- Offer after-school as well as weekend programming
- Offer a children’s nature-based play area.

Stewardship

The following ideas emerged for sustainable, long-term stewardship:

- Determine costs for site development and ongoing maintenance
- Enlist financial and volunteer support from the community through sponsorships, memberships, donations and grants
- Include as an ongoing City budget item.
- Establish easements and partnership contracts to ensure continual maintenance and ongoing protection.

- Implement income-generating programming (such as program fees, rentals, fundraisers), ensuring that this is in keeping with the quiet, natural feeling of the space.

“Feel” of the Site

Participants clarified the desired feeling of the site, with its connection to the creek, open spaces, and natural beauty:

- Keep contemplative spaces, quiet, meditative
- Awe, reverence and respect for nature
- Inviting - to give a sense of joy, curiosity, and exuberance for educational experiences
- Sense of community
- Feeling of connection to ancestral and historical land - keep a sense of wildness, don't let it become over-developed

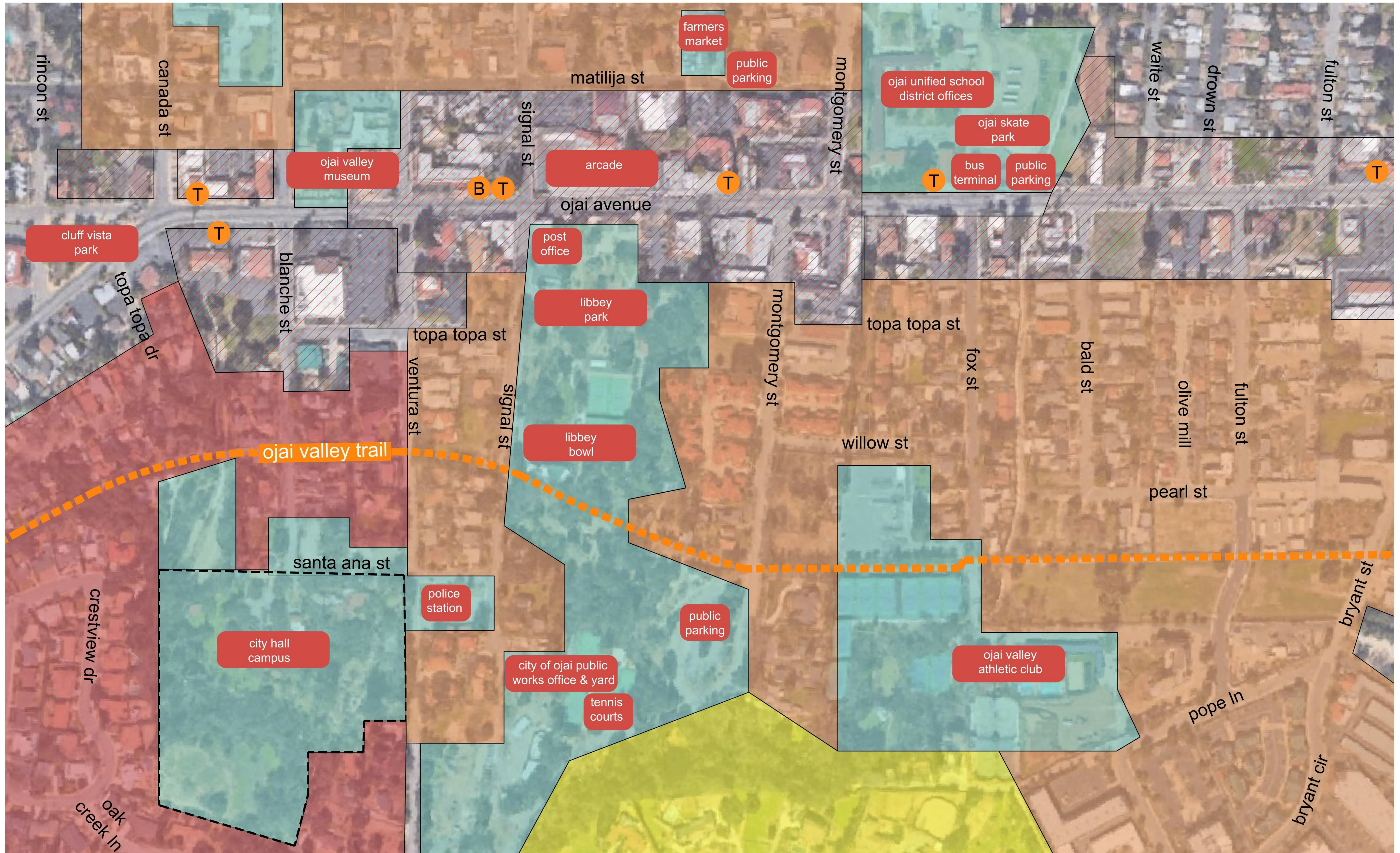
Gardens

Topics Discussed








- A place for children to interact with nature
- Pollinator garden
- Leave as is, an area that is left for nature
- Invites people in but not large events
- Less is more
- Walking areas, benches
- New gazebo
- An area to practice plant identification/botany
- Generational activity, sharing information
- Overall theme to preserve – no formalized activity
- A place for wildlife
- Continue to work with PAX
- Japanese garden

- Community members are the staff, community managers
- Remove eucalyptus and restore native oaks
- Fire safe garden
- Blend unique ecosystems
- Water wise
- Engage with master gardeners
- Planning, work, and expertise that is inspired by nature
- The area is Zen, soothing, calm, contemplative
- Rocks for sitting
- Japanese inspiration– “borrowed view”
- Plant what belongs– native
- Engage with local partners and land managers – Meiners Oaks Park, OVLC
- Staff housing?
- Principles of sustainable design
 - Compost
 - Native gardens
 - Restoration
- Incorporate art
- Plant plants with the community!

Overall, there was a theme of desire for a multifaceted demonstration of sustainable designs that incorporate current successes (restoration, composting) while improving the space to be a place of community, gathering, active learning, and peace.



**DOWNTOWN OJAI
NEIGHBORHOOD
VICINITY MAP**

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | PUBLIC LAND |  | COMMERCIAL |
|  | VILLAGE MIXED USE VMU |  | RESIDENTIAL R-1 |
|  | RESIDENTIAL R-4 |  | TROLLEY STOP |
| | |  | BUS STOP |



OJAI CITY HALL CAMPUS

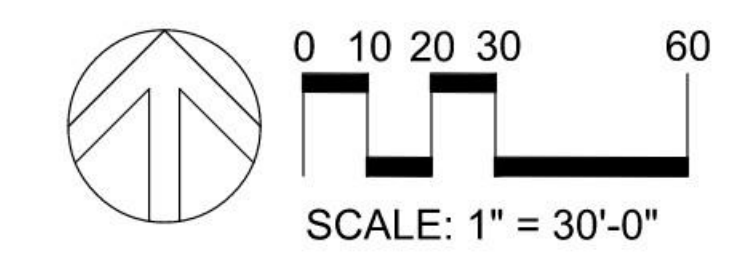




photo M



photo L



photo K



photo J



photo I



photo A



photo B



photo C



photo D



photo H



photo G



photo F



photo E

CITY HALL CAMPUS SITE MAP



Smith-Hobson Home (Ojai City Hall)

Originally built as the family home of Abram and Helen Hobson in 1907, the Hobson house was a craftsman style structure of all wood construction located in the small town of Nordhoff, California. This home featured a stunning fireplace constructed from handmade ceramic tiles and a beautiful built-in sideboard including a long serving surface and a china cabinet. These two original architectural features can still be viewed in the Council Chambers today, which occupies the original parlor and dining room of the home.

Some year's later, Ohio Glass magnate and Ojai visionary, Edward Drummond Libbey, persuaded the town leaders of Nordhoff to perform an architectural over hall of the town. In 1917, Libbey contracted with the San Diego based architectural firm of Frank Mead and Richard Requa to redo much of the western-style architecture that existed in the downtown area into the mission revival style. This included building the Spanish style arcade on the storefronts along the main street, and a new post office with its iconic bell tower. Both of these architectural features help to define our community's charter to this day. The reinvention of the town was complete with the change of its name from Nordhoff to Ojai.

While the mission revival style architecture was becoming so prevalent in Ojai, the Hobson family also sought the help of the San Diego architect firm of Mead & Requa to redesign their home. In addition, the builder of the arcade, Robert Winfield, was hired for this renovation. By 1925, the remodel of the Hobson home was complete. The original craftsman style home was transformed into a Spanish style home with beautiful arches and wide patios. A smaller Spanish style guest house was also built, located immediately to the west of the original home. The two structures were connected by walkway under a wisteria covered pergola supported by stucco covered columns. In addition to the homes, the grounds of the estate now included a tennis court, a miniature golf course, and formal gardens. What had started as a rather simple structure had truly become a splendid estate.

After the passing of Abram Hobson in 1929, his daughter Grace and her husband Fred Smith took up residence in the guest house so Grace could be near her mother, Helen Hobson. Then early in the 1970s, after Grace's death, Fred Smith, generously donated the Smith-Hobson estate to the city of Ojai as a gift on the behalf of the Smith-Hobson family.

Royston
Hanamoto
Beck &
Abe

August 28, 1973

The Honorable James D. Loehl
Mayor of the City of Ojai
107 North Ventura Street
Ojai, California 93023

Dear Mayor Loehl:

The Master Plan for Libbey Park is complete in accordance with our agreement with the City of Ojai.

Attached hereto are reduced copies of the overall plan and sketches. A brief text and cost estimate completes this initial report.

It has been a great pleasure for me, the staff, and Tom Church to work with the Council, Commissions, staff and community on this particularly delicate design assignment.

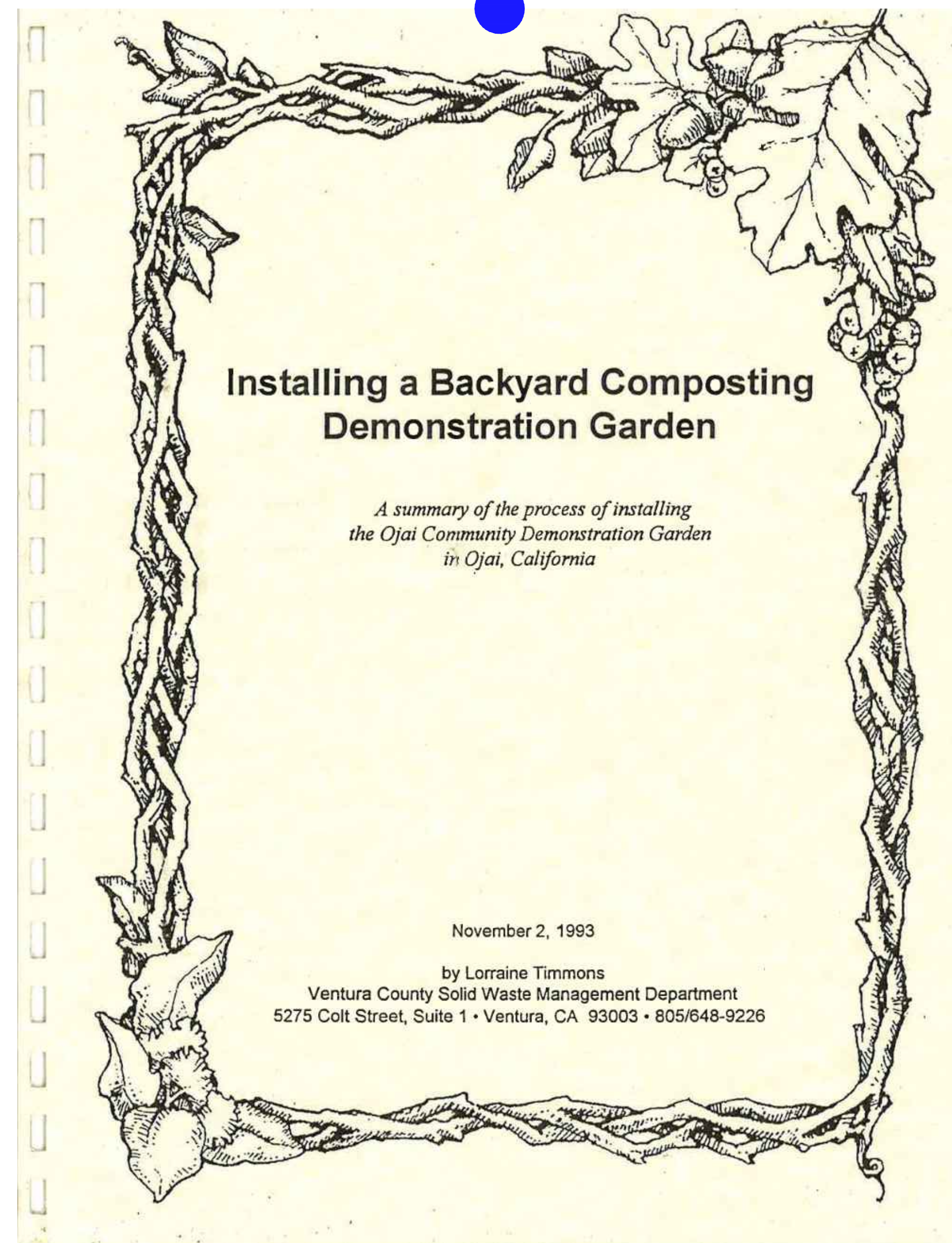
We will look forward to working with you as each phase of the work moves into working drawings and the construction begins.

Sincerely,
ROYSTON, HANAMOTO, BECK & ABEY

Robert Royston
Robert Royston
jm

Enclosure

Landscape Architects	Principals	Associates		
Land Planning	Robert Royston ASLA	Patricia Carlisle ASLA	Eugene R. Kimis ASLA	50 Green Street
Urban Design	Ann Hanamoto ASLA	Louis G. Alley, Architect AIA	Robert T. Butteron	San Francisco
Park Planning	Eidon Beck ASLA	Harold N. Kobayashi ASLA	George W. Girvin	California 94111
Environmental Planning	Kazuo Abe ASLA			(415) 397-0594



PHASE I HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY REPORT
SMITH-HOBSON HOUSE / OJAI CITY HALL
401 SOUTH VENTURA STREET
OJAI, VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
(APN 023-090-010)



PREPARED BY:
Carole Denardo, M.A., RPA and Joshua Severn, M.A.
PROVENIENCE GROUP
1552 N. Refugio Road
Santa Ynez, California 93460
(805) 350-3134
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PREPARED FOR:
City of Ojai
Community Development
401 S. Ventura Street
Ojai, California 93024
(805) 646-5581

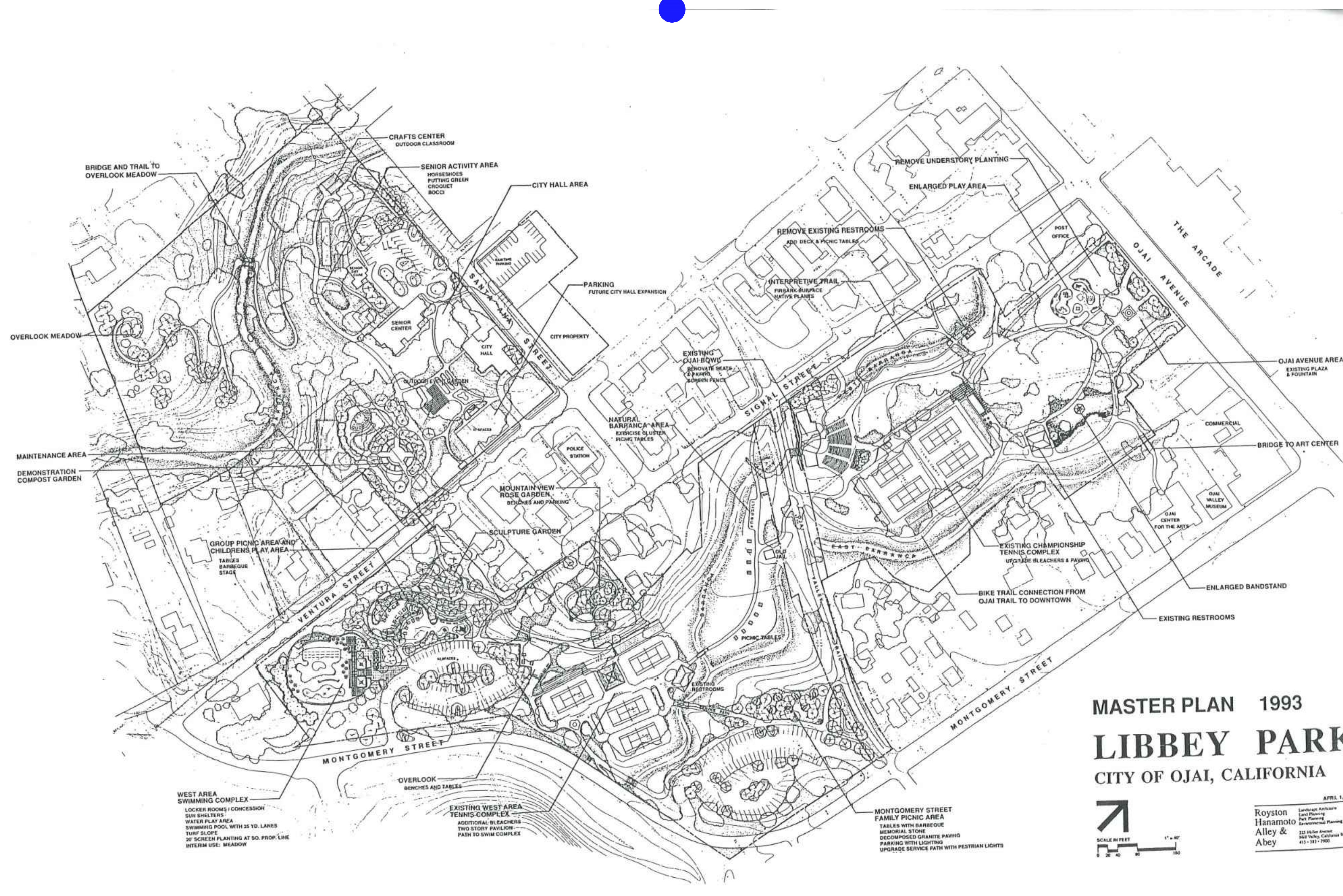
November 2016

Middle Stewart Canyon Creek Restoration Project
City of Ojai, California
RESTORATION DESIGN PLAN



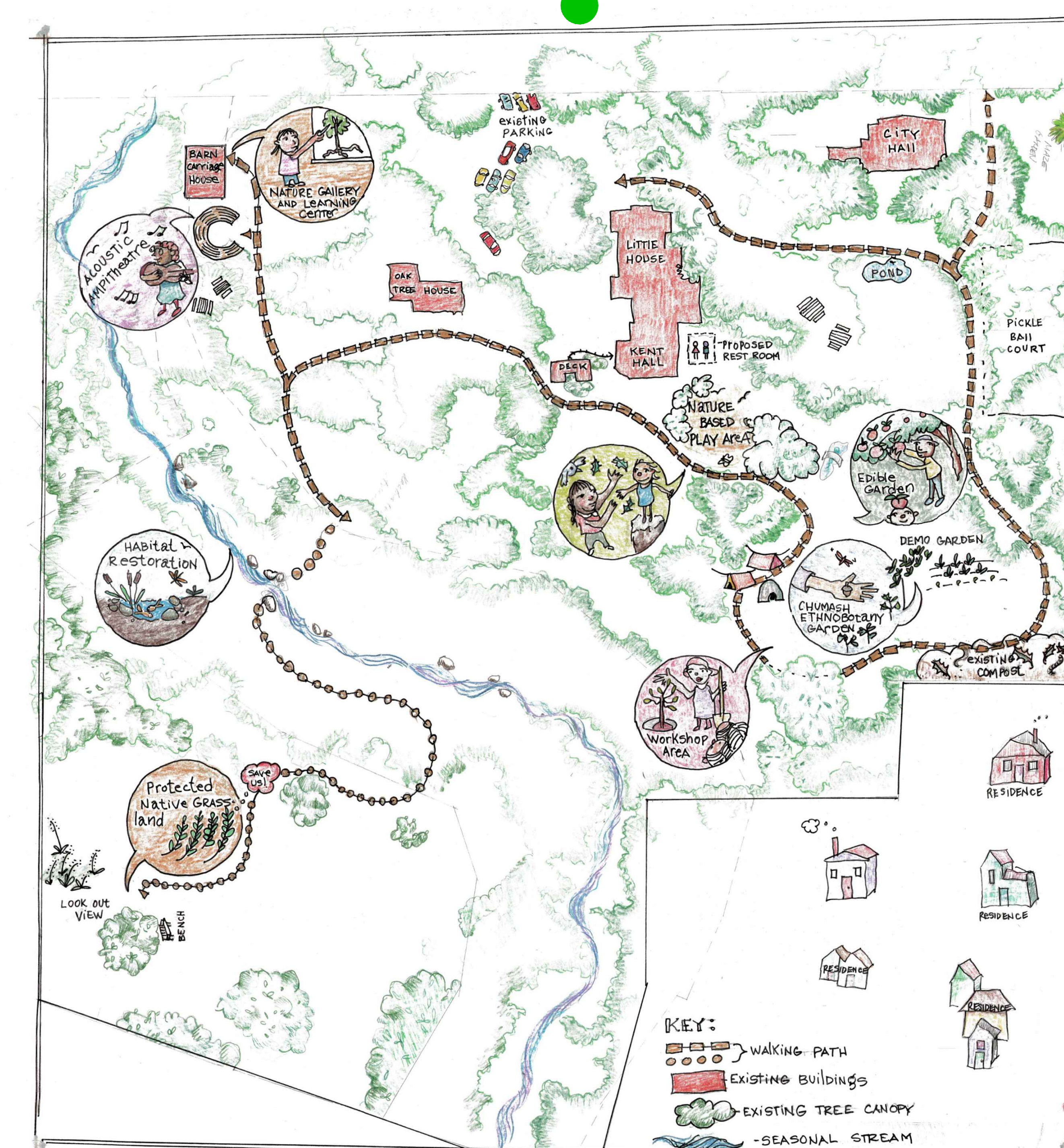
Prepared by:
PAX
Environmental, Inc.
Pax Environmental, Inc.

Prepared for:
Greg Grant, Public Works Director
City of Ojai
Fall 2019



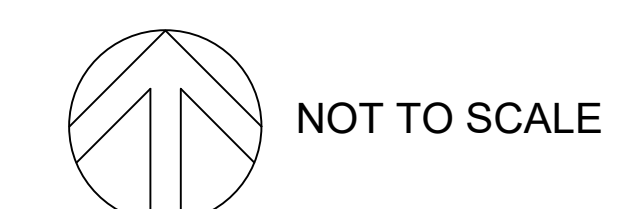
MASTER PLAN 1993
LIBBEY PARK
CITY OF OJAI, CALIFORNIA

Royston
Hanamoto
Alley &
Abe



OJAI VALLEY GREEN COALITION 2022-2023
COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANT/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MAP
FEATURED ARTIST: CHRISTINE BRENNAN

**HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND**



OJAI VALLEY
**green
coalition**
Advancing a Regenerative
and Resilient Ojai Valley

Site Analysis - Request for Information (in process)

1. Site Setbacks (verify)
2. Ada requirements (verify)
 - Parking
 - Site circulation
 - Amenities
3. CEQA (verify)
4. Parking and traffic requirements (verify)
5. Existing site elements (identify to remain, modify, relocate, or remove) :
 - Shed on the south side of Kent Hall
 - Oak Tree House
 - Walkway
 - Fencing
 - Memorial garden and signage
 - Memorial wooden sign
 - Wedding arbor - posts are rotting (we recommend removing)
 - Compost kiosk and demonstration garden acknowledgement (we recommend relocating and repainting)
 - Concrete miniature golf and pond (we recommend removing)
 - Badminton court (we recommend resurfacing or replacing hardscape)
 - Wood arbor – members are rotting (we recommend removal)
 - Existing paths to remain (we recommend widening and re-surfacing where needed for safety and possible ADA requirements)
6. Encroachment at southwest corner of property (MOU?)
7. Existing utilities (verify) (DIG ALERT)
8. Planter on west side of city hall at parking lot ingress/egress (to remain or redesign?)
9. Carriage House
 - Analysis by structural engineer
10. Existing tool shed at demonstration garden (we recommend replacing and relocating)
11. Wood raised garden beds (we recommend removing)
12. Tree trimming and removal (we recommend to repurpose):
 - Mulch, reuse on site
 - Primitive site furniture (benches, rounds for seatings)
 - Use for nature-based play features (logs, poles, rounds)
 - Hugelkultur/Keyline design for soil building
13. Minor site features: birdbath, concrete bench, bulletin board, miscellaneous

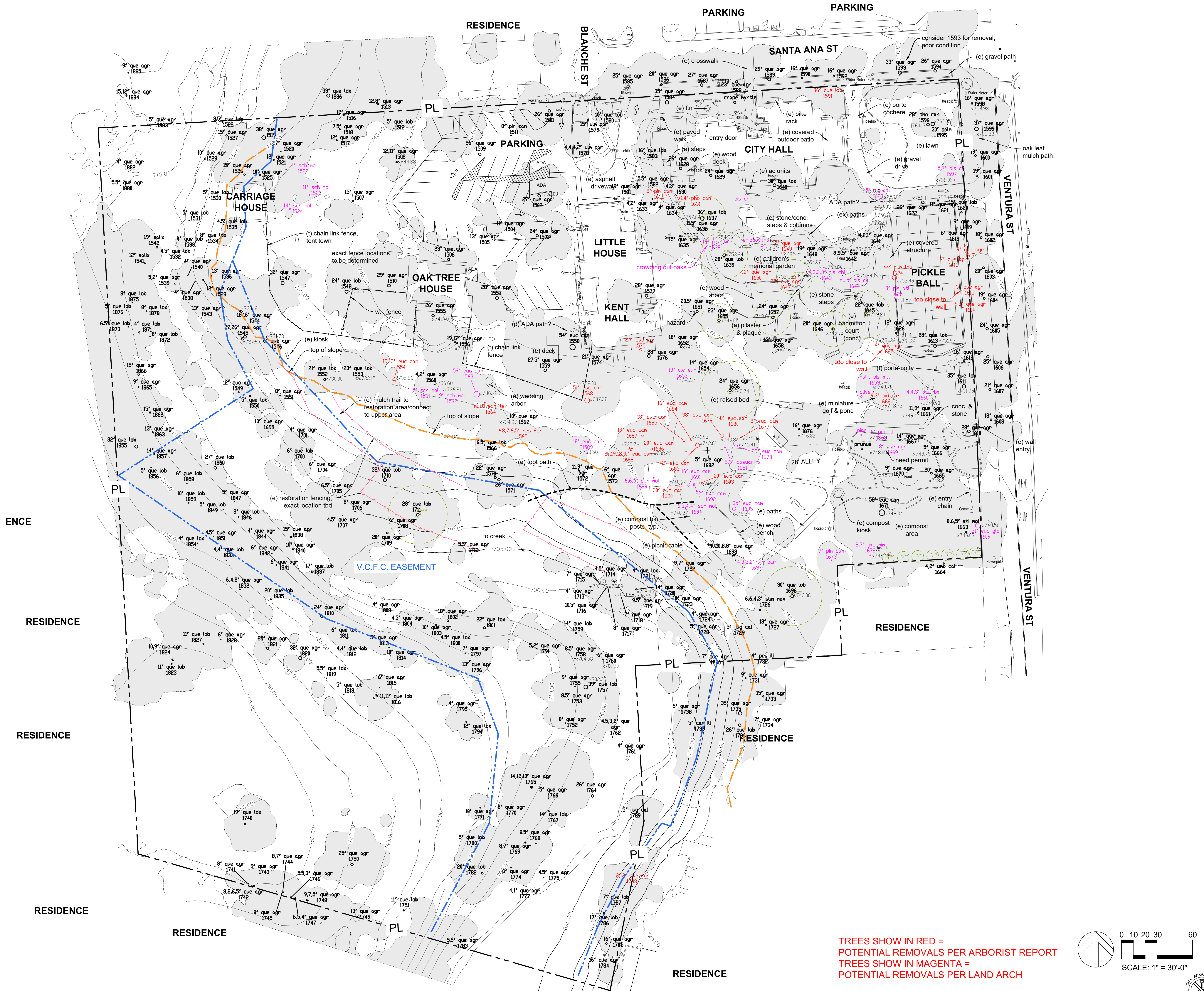
Tree #	Species	Location	Reason for removal	Priority	
1522	SCMO	NW east of carriage house	invasive, non-native		
1523	SCMO	NW east of carriage house	invasive, non-native		
1524	SCMO	NW east of carriage house	invasive, non-native		
1554	EUCA	S of Oak Tree House	invasive, safety	high	
1561	SCMO	S of Oak Tree House	invasive, non-native		
1562	SCMO	S of Oak Tree House	invasive, non-native		
1563	EUCA	S of Oak Tree House	invasive, safety	high	
1564	SCTE	SE of Oak Tree House	invasive, non-native		
1565	HEFO	SE of Oak Tree House	poor health, non-native		
1568	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1569	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	invasive, safety	high	
1575	QUAG	S of Kent Hall	hazard	high	permit required
1591	QULO	Santa Ana St	hazard	high	permit required
1597	PICH	N of pickle ball cts	non-native		
1609	EUGL	SE corner, Ventura St	safety, invasive	high	
1614	QUAG	E edge pickle ball cts	hardscape issues		permit required
1615	QUAG	E edge pickle ball cts	hardscape issues		permit required
1616	QUAG	E edge pickle ball cts	hardscape issues		permit required
1617	QUAG	E edge pickle ball cts	hazard	high	permit required
1622	QUAG	N edge pickle ball cts	hazard	high	permit required, could possibly mitigate by pruning
1623	PIAT	NW of pickle ball cts	invasive, non-native		
1624	QULO	W edge pickle ball cts	hazard	high	permit required
1625	PIAT	W edge pickle ball cts	invasive, non-native		
1627	QUAG	SW edge of pickle ball cts	hardscape issues		permit required
1631	PHCA	NE of Kent Hall	invasive, non-native		
1632	PICA	NE of Kent Hall	poor health, non-native		
1638	PICH	E of Kent Hall	crowding oaks		
1643	PICH	W of pickle ball cts	non-native		
1644	PICH	W of pickle ball cts	non-native		
1647	QUAG	S of City Hall	hazard	high	permit required
1649	QUAG	S of City Hall	hazard	high	permit required

1650	QUAG	S of City Hall	hazard	high	permit required
1652	QUAG	SE corner Kent Hall	safety issues	high	permit required
1653	OLEU	SE of Kent Hall	invasive, non-native		
1659	PIAT	SW of pickle ball cts	invasive, non-native		
1660	ACBA	S of pickle ball cts	invasive, non-native		
1662	PICA	SSW of pickle ball cts	poor health, non-native		
1668	PRIL	SW of pickle ball cts	suppressed, health		
1669	QUAG	SW of pickle ball cts	suppressed, health		permit required
1672	JAMI	SE property line	non-native		
1673	PICA	SE property line	non-native		
1677	EUCA	SE Kent Hall	dying, invasive		
1678	EUCA	SE Kent Hall	invasive, safety	high	
1679	EUCA	SE Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1680	EUCA	SE Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1681	CAsp	SE Kent Hall	non-native		Casuarina sp.
1683	EUCA	SSE Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1684	EUCA	SSE Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1685	EUCA	SSE Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1686	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1687	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1688	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1689	SCMO	S of Kent Hall	invasive, non-native		
1690	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1691	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	invasive, non-native		
1692	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	invasive, non-native		
1693	EUCA	S of Kent Hall	hazard	high	
1694	SCMO	S of Kent Hall	invasive, non-native		
1695	EUCA	SSE Kent Hall (wood bench)	invasive, non-native		
1697	ULPA	SSE Kent Hall (wood bench)	invasive, non-native		
—	OLEU	SW of 1659	invasive, non-native		
—	PICH	S of City Hall (ac units)	invasive, non-native		
—	ERJA	S of City Hall	non-native		loquat

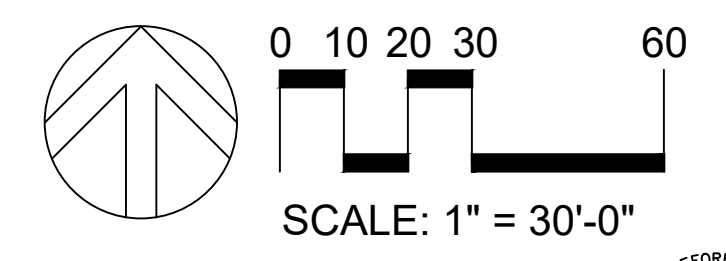
— pine

W of 1668

non-native



TREES SHOW IN RED =
 POTENTIAL REMOVALS PER ARBORIST REPORT
 TREES SHOW IN MAGENTA =
 POTENTIAL REMOVALS PER LAND ARCH



PROGRESS PRINT, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

REVISIONS	
NAME	DATE

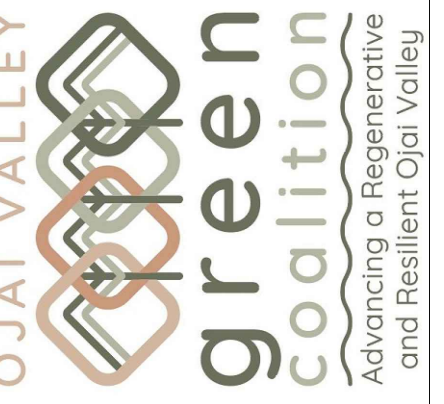
PHASE
 CONCEPT

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

JOB NUMBER:	xx-xxx
ORIGIN DATE	01.25.25
PLOT DATE	07.08.25
DRAWN BY:	AS
CHECKED BY:	KN

SHEET OF X

OJAI VALLEY GREEN COALITION
 CONTACT: KATHY NOLAN
 TEL: 805.798.4246



OJAI CITY HALL CAMPUS - MASTER PLAN
 401 S. VENTURA ST
 OJAI, CA 93023

APN #: 023-0-090-01, 02, 03

THE DRAWING, SPECIFICATIONS, NOTES, AND DIMENSIONS REPRESENT THE DESIGN AND INTENT OF THE ARCHITECT. THE ARCHITECT HAS CONDUCTED VISUAL VERIFICATION OF THE EXISTING CONDITIONS AND INFORMATION PROVIDED TO HIM. THE ARCHITECT HAS CONDUCTED VISUAL VERIFICATION OF THE EXISTING CONDITIONS AND INFORMATION PROVIDED TO HIM. THE ARCHITECT HAS CONDUCTED VISUAL VERIFICATION OF THE EXISTING CONDITIONS AND INFORMATION PROVIDED TO HIM.

Schematic Process

The following were the general drivers for the schematic design options

Opportunities:

- Re-design the existing campus
- Use of the Carriage House
- Community nature based educational center (native plants, Chumash, pollinators)
- Stormwater capture
- Multi use gardens and trails

Constraints

- Protect the restoration area
- Protect existing buildings
- Site topography
- Existing site features (gardens, hardscape, trees)
- Pickle ball operating hours
- Parking

Identified Key Elements:

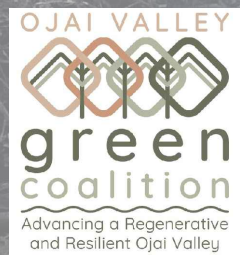
- Workshop/Meeting building
- Public restroom
- Tool/storage Shed
- Outdoor flex use areas (multifunctional, all ages)
- Circulation existing and proposed
 - ADA
 - Paths
 - Trails
 - Connections
 - Points of entry (ingress/egress)
 - Protect and preserve specific site elements
- Protect: existing tree canopy, identified site features
- Considerations for tree removal: safety, fire, invasive qualities
- Work with existing topography
- Parking
- Accessible site elements

Theme/Feel:

- Nature based
- Passive Park

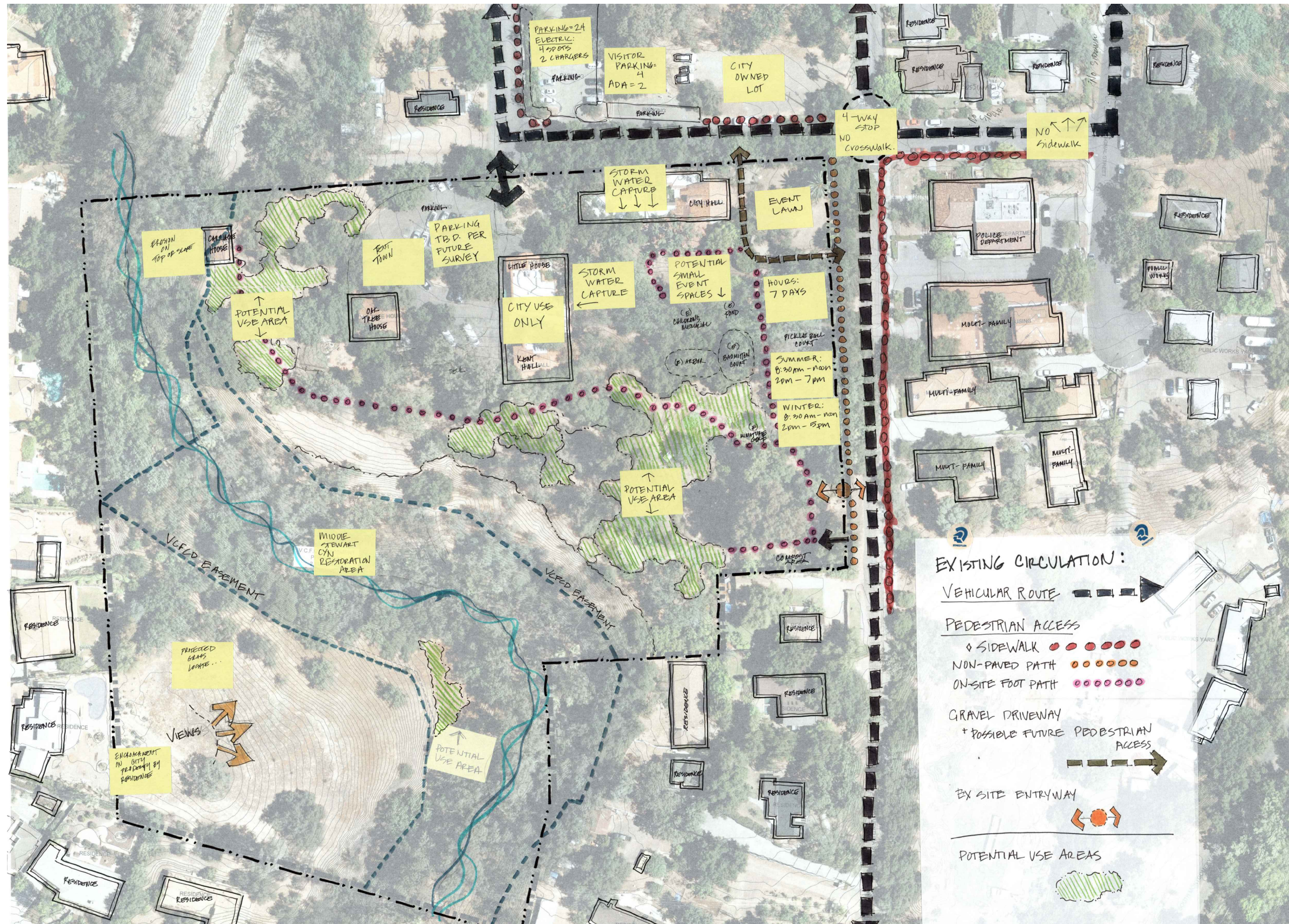


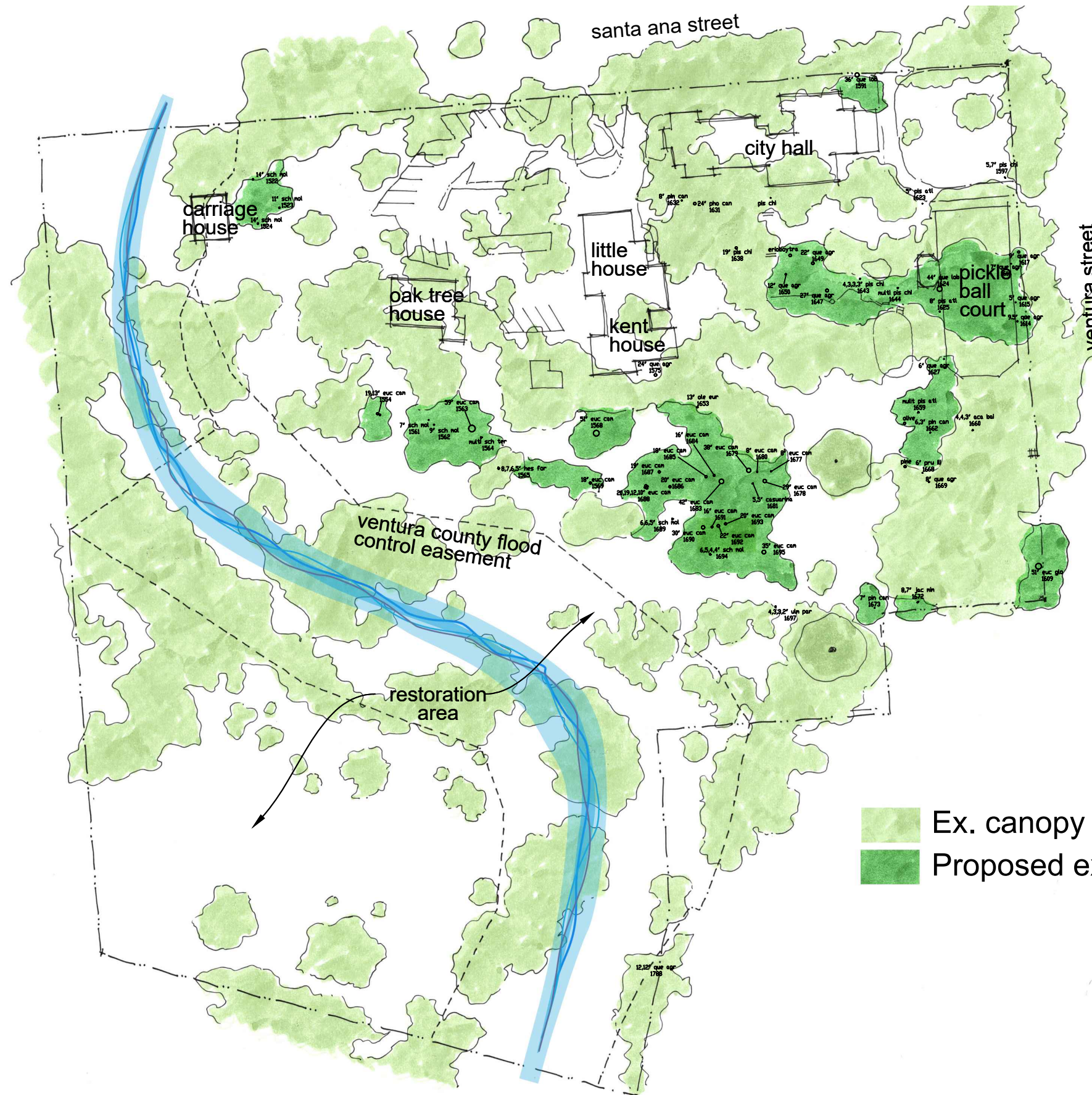
REIMAGINING OJAI CITY HALL CAMPUS



A CITY CAMPUS FOR EVERYONE
OJAI CITY COUNCIL
AUGUST 12, 2025
6 PM

Reimagining Ojai
City Hall Campus
08.12.25





Ex. Tree Canopy Study

*Opportunities to repurpose tree removals into site amenities such as furniture, nature play, hugelkultur and mulch.

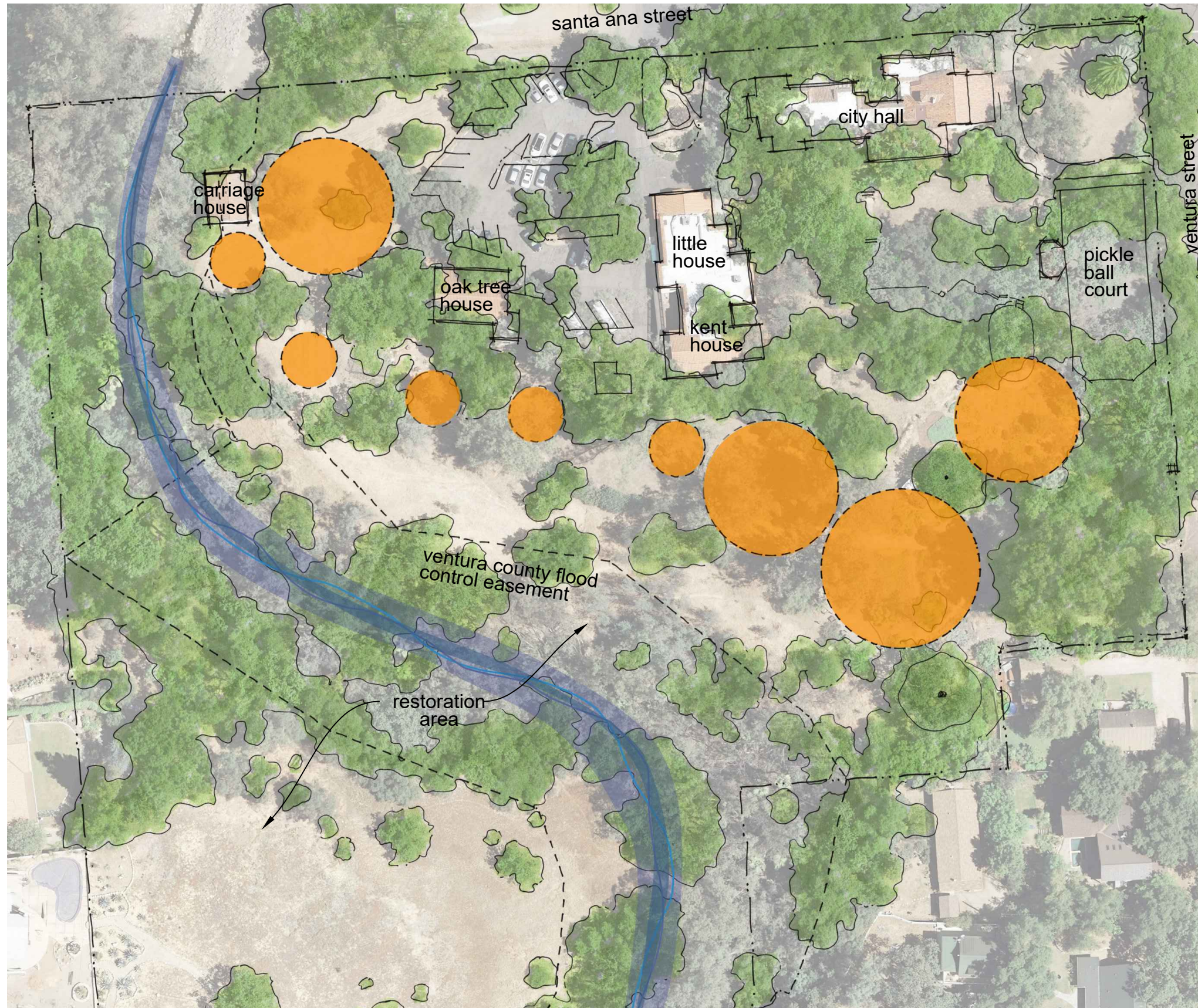
Tree Canopy

Ex. canopy: 273,905 SF
 Reduced canopy: 34,042 SF
 Remaining canopy: 239,863 SF

Tree Count

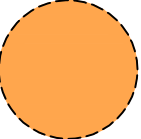
Existing trees: 422
 Proposed tree removals: 92
 Total trees remaining: 330

Ex. Tree Canopy Study



Potential Use Areas

*Identified potential use areas after tree removal based on degree of slope and distance away from remaining tree canopies.

 potential use area

WORKSHOP BUILDING

Location: option A or B

Uses: kitchen, indoor workshops, films, lectures, library, lab

Size: 1,200 sf show on schematic, 50 ppl = 900-1200 sf

Sustainable methods + materials

CARRIAGE HOUSE

Renovations (structural, safety)

Uses (nature center, library of things)

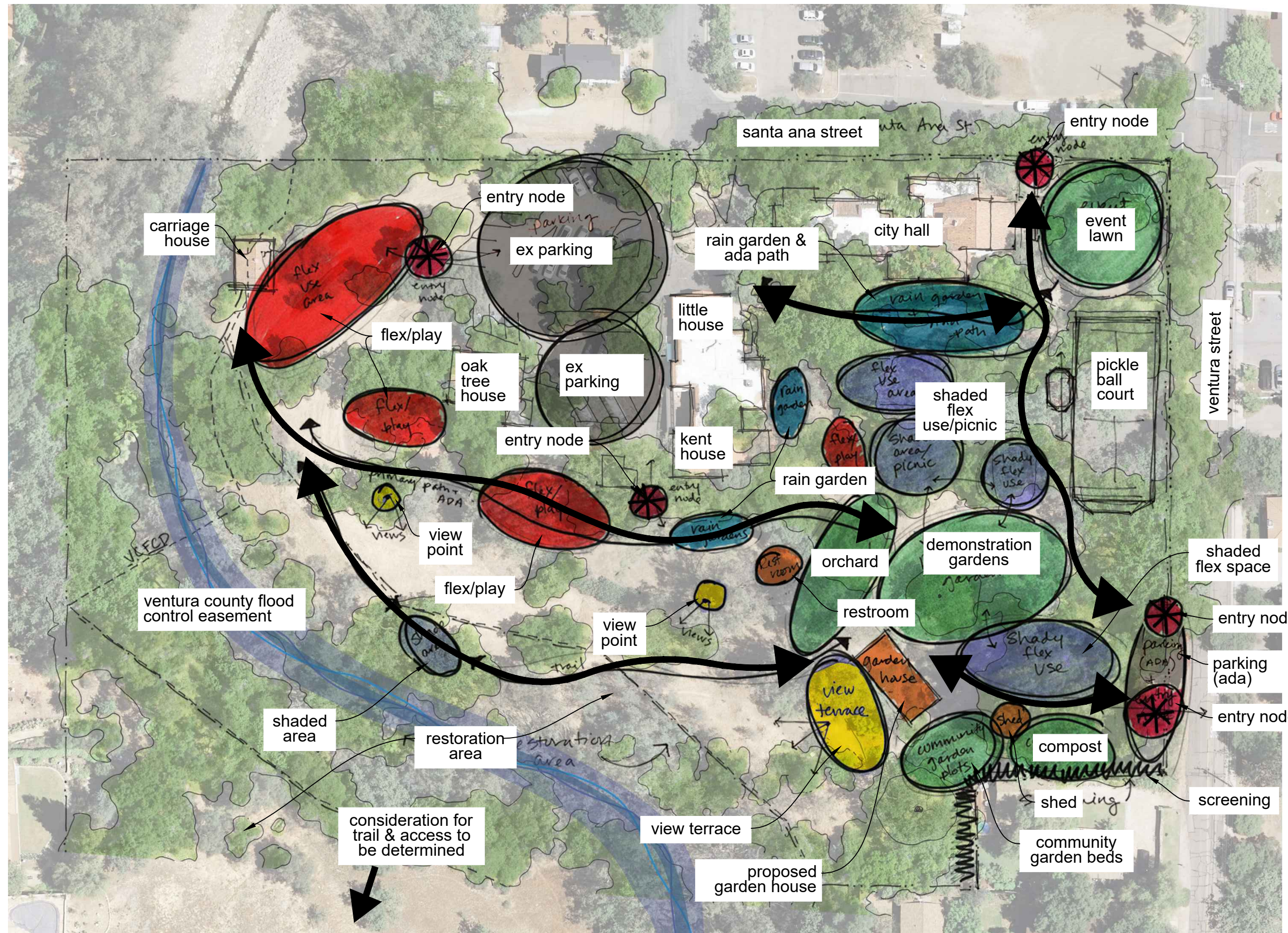
STORMWATER CAPTURE

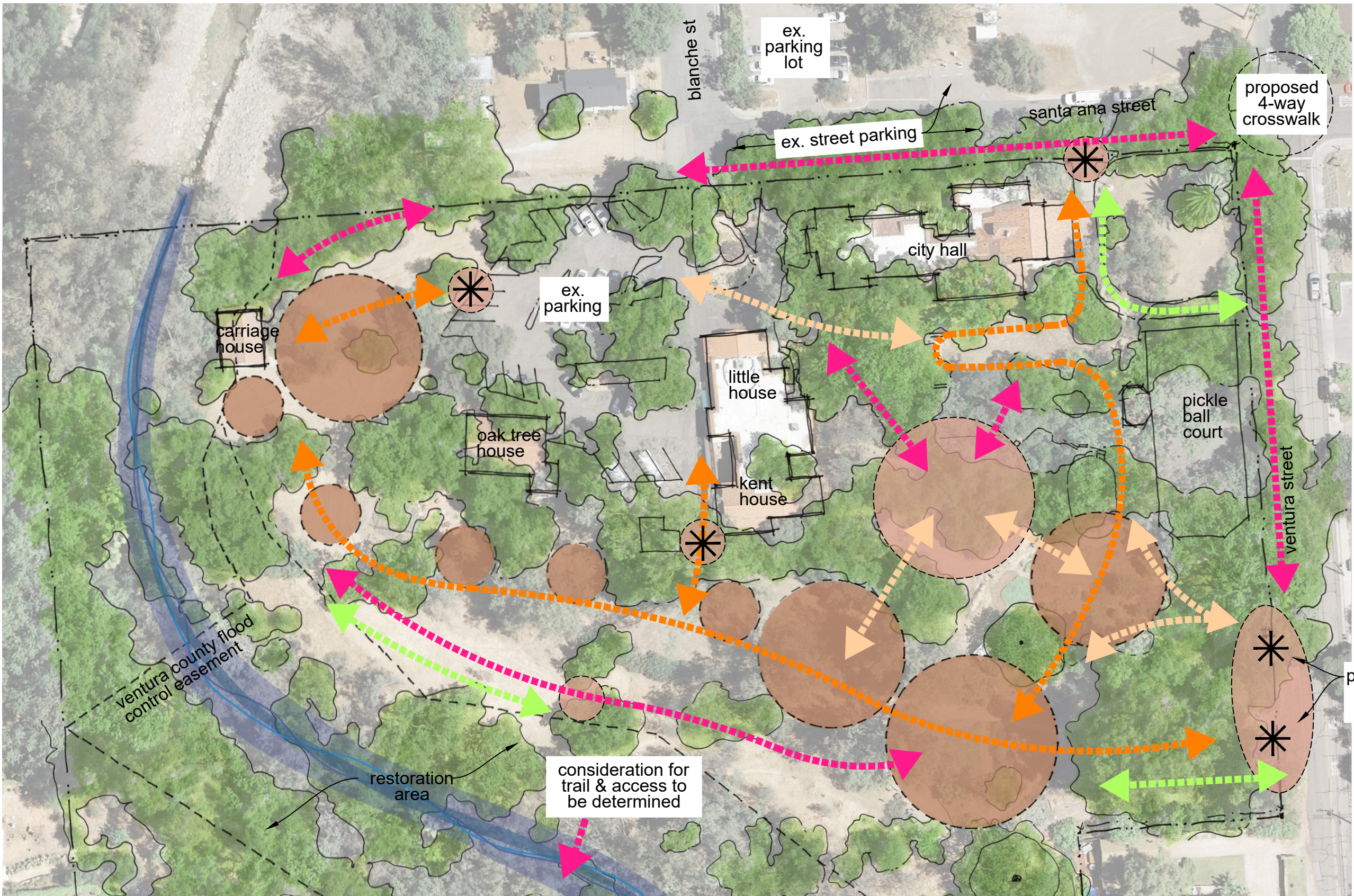
Storage tanks (in and/or above ground)






Uses: irrigation, fire suppression

REPURPOSING EX. SITE MATERIALS

Tree removals



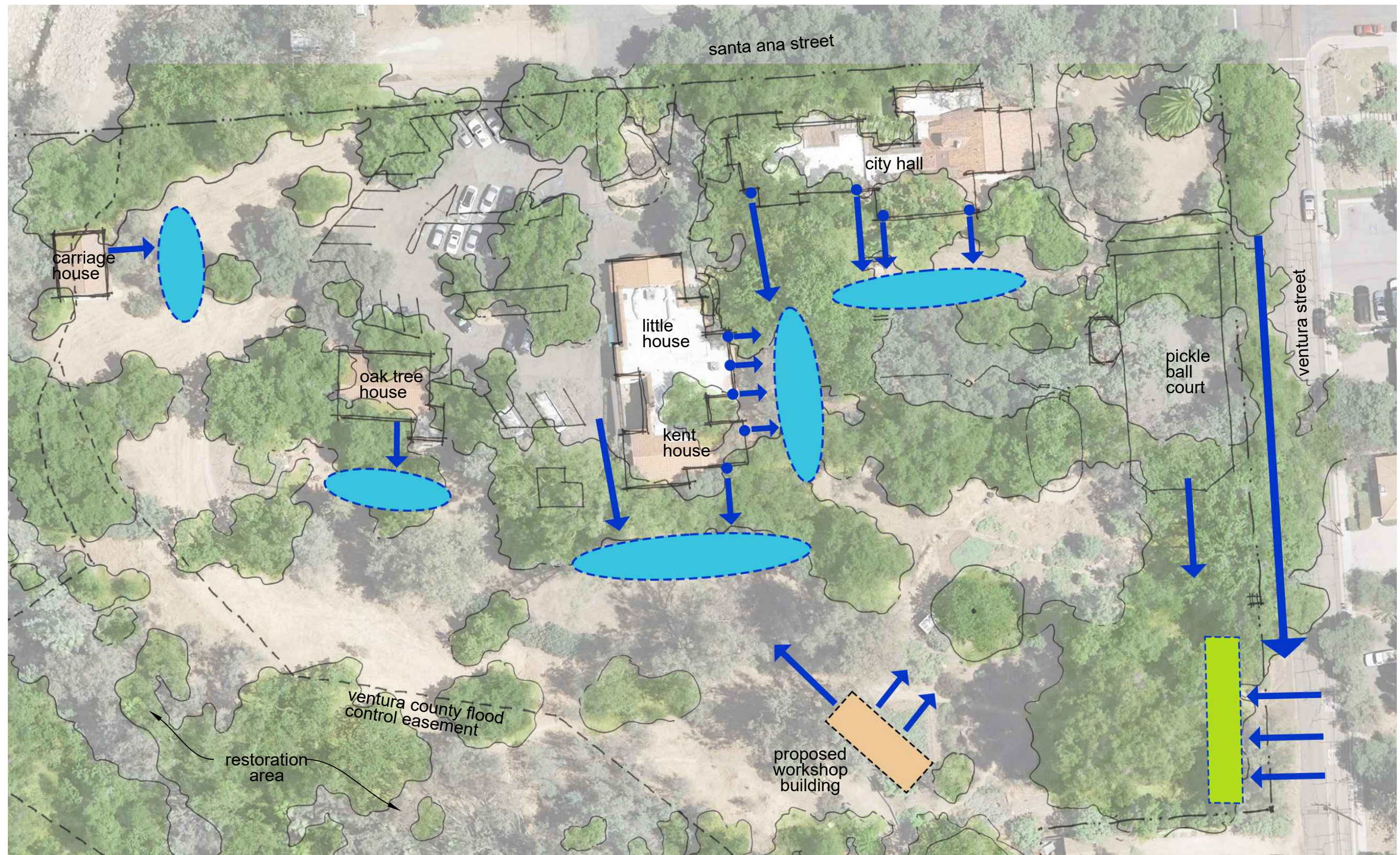


-  Primary path / ADA accessible
-  Trail (gravel or mulch)
-  Secondary path / ADA accessible
-  Small vehicle access
-  Entry nodes




*includes connections to existing circulation

Proposed Circulation Diagram

 NOT TO SCALE



*Identified potential areas for stormwater catchment based on ex. and proposed roofwater run-off. Alternate catchment systems such as rainwater storage tanks for irrigation & fire suppression to be considered

-  direction of stormwater flow
-  raingarden
-  bioswale along street

NEXT STEPS:

2 week comment period: go to the OVGC website ojaivalleygreencoalition.org to submit comments by Tuesday 8/26

Site volunteer clean-up day Saturday 10/04

Open house + site tour on Saturday 10/25

Next city council meeting on Tuesday 10/28