

## 2 Project Description

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This section describes the proposed project, including the project applicant, the project site and surrounding land uses, major project characteristics, project objectives, and discretionary actions needed for approval.

### 2.1 Project Applicant

Foothill Partners  
1121 White Rock Road, Suite 205  
El Dorado Hills, California 95762

### 2.2 Lead Agency Contact Person

County of Monterey  
RMA – Planning Department  
1441 Schilling Place  
Salinas, California 93901  
831-755-5233  
Contact: Craig Spencer, Senior Planner

### 2.3 Project Location

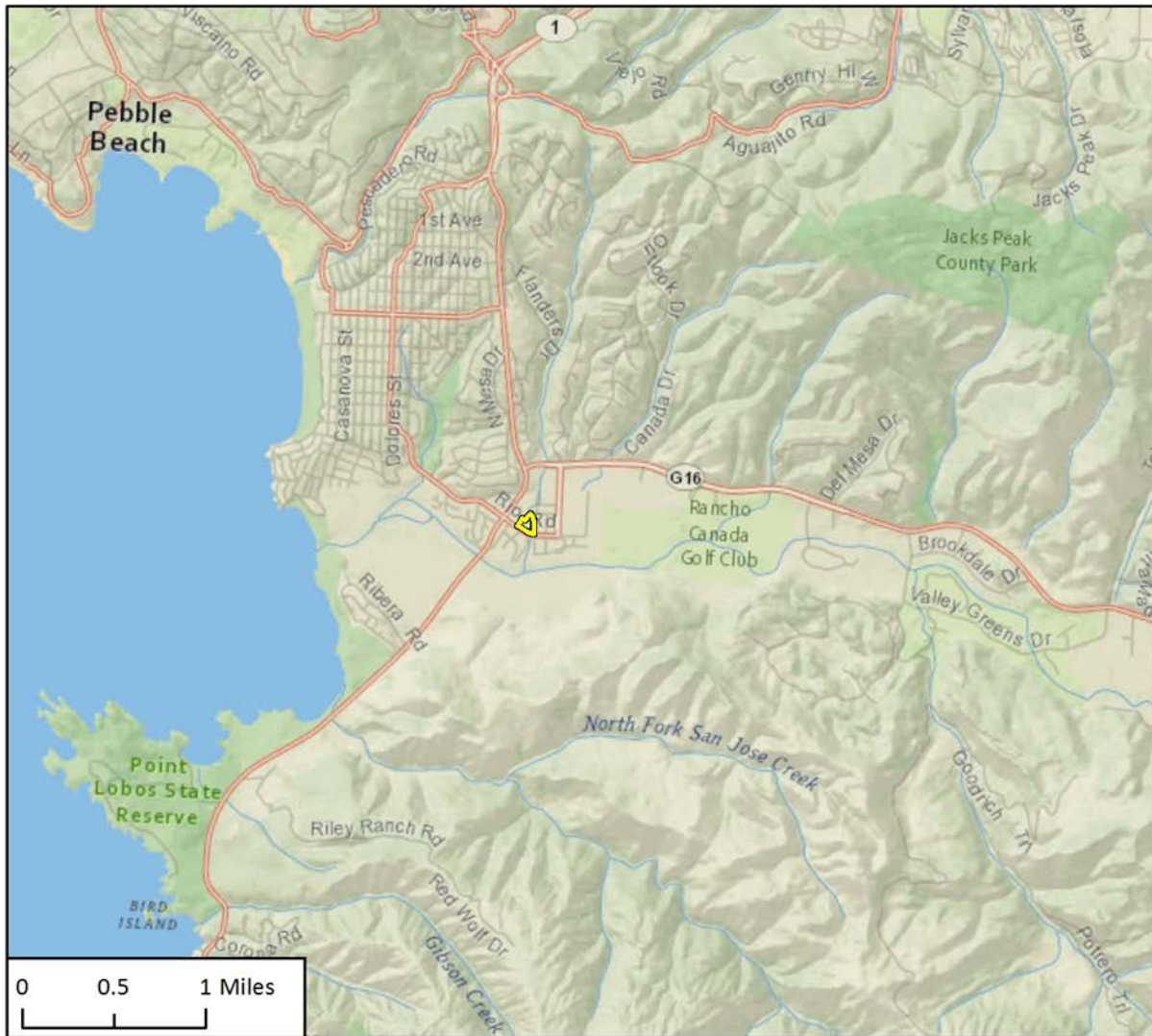
The approximately 3.8-acre project site is located at 3705 Rio Road within the Carmel Valley Master Plan Area, in unincorporated Monterey County, California. The project site lies approximately 2,500 feet southeast of the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea corporate boundary and is outside of the City's formal sphere of influence (LAFCO 2012). Primary access to the site is currently provided from Rio Road near the intersection of Rio Road and Carmel Center Place, approximately 375 feet southeast of State Route (Highway) 1 and approximately 0.3 mile south of Carmel Valley Road. The project site is comprised of three legal parcels: Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APN] 009-562-002-000, 009-562-015-000, and 009-562-016-000.

Figure 2 illustrates the location of the proposed project within the region, and Figure 3 shows the project within the local context.

### 2.4 Existing Site Characteristics

The 3.8-acre irregularly-shaped project site is currently undeveloped except for a paved driveway entrance, a gravel driveway, a section of the Carmel Mission Inn parking lot, two wells, utility connections, and an existing above-ground propane tank and shed building located in the northern portion of the site. The site was previously developed with an apartment complex that was

Figure 2 Regional Location



Imagery provided by ESRI and its licensors © 2017.

 Project Location 



Fig 1 Regional location



Figure 3 Project Site Location



demolished in the 1980s. The site is sparsely vegetated on southwestern half of the property and more densely vegetated on the northeast of the site. On-site trees are primarily located on the northern and eastern portion of the site and include, but are not limited to: Monterey cypress, Coast live oak, and Monterey pine. The remainder of the site, primarily in the western half, is clear of trees and other mature landscaping. Existing views of the project site are shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5. The vegetated and open portions of the site are generally divided by a partially improved driveway that connects to Rio Road at Carmel Center Place. Carmel Center Place is one of the existing primary access points to the Crossroads Shopping Center, which borders the site to the south, across Rio Road.

The project site is relatively flat and ranges in elevation from 26 feet to 30 feet above mean sea level at the highest knolls. Piles of imported dirt and debris ranging from one to six feet in height are located in the eastern half of the project site. The site is located on a flood-plain terrace on the northern banks of the Carmel River. The river is located approximately 1,000 feet south of the site. The majority of the site is within the 100-year flood zone. The site elevation is lowest in the southwest corner; however, there is no defined surface sheet-flow over the site.

Regional access to the project site is provided by Highway 1 and Carmel Valley Road. Local access to the site is provided by Rio Road and Carmel Center Place.

The existing characteristics of the project site are summarized in Table 3 and in the discussion as follows. Additional details of the current setting at the site can be found in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*, and in the individual issue area discussions in Section 4.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

#### 2.4.1 Current Land Use Designation and Zoning

The project site is located in the Carmel Valley Master Plan (CVMP) area. The existing CVMP land use designation is Commercial, and the existing zoning designation is Light Commercial, Design Control, Site Plan Review, and Residential Allocation Zoning (LC-D-S-RAZ). The purpose of the Light Commercial Zoning District (Chapter 21.18 of the Monterey County Code) is to provide a zoning district to accommodate and maintain a broad range of light commercial uses suitable for the convenience of nearby residential areas. LC Zoning District regulations list the type of commercial uses permitted within the zoning district, and depending on the type of use proposed, the type of land use permit required. In addition, a General Development Plan is required prior to the establishment of any development in the LC District that is more than 1 acre in size, contains more than one use, or includes any form of subdivision. The subject site is more than 1 acre in size, is proposed to contain more than one use, and includes a lot line adjustment. The Design Control (D) Zoning District regulates the location, size, configuration, materials, and colors of structures and fences to assure protection of the public viewshed, neighborhood character, and to assure the visual integrity. The Site Plan Review Zoning District (S) requires review of the location of the development with a required Site Plan Approval Application, as the project is located in an area of the County where development has the potential to adversely affect or be adversely affected by natural resources or site hazards. The Residential Allocation Zoning (RAZ) District limits the number of lots or units which may be created in a given period of time. No new lots or residential units are proposed. The proposed project would not require amendments to the County's General Plan or the Monterey County Code.



Figure 4 Site Photographs: Existing Project Site



A-1 LOOKING SOUTHEAST



A-2 LOOKING SOUTHWEST



A-3 LOOKING SOUTHWEST



A-4 LOOKING NORTHWEST



A-5 LOOKING NORTHEAST



A-6 LOOKING EAST



Site Key Plan  
N.T.S.



Source: Perkins, Williams & Cotterill Architects, May 2016

Figure 5 Site Photographs: Existing Project Site



B - LOOKING NORTH



C - LOOKING NORTHWEST



D - LOOKING NORTH



E - LOOKING NORTHEAST



F-1 LOOKING NORTHEAST



F-2 LOOKING NORTH



*Site Key Plan*  
N.T.S.



Source: Perkins, Williams & Cotterill Architects, May 2016

## 2.4.2 Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is bordered by the Chevron Gas Station to the west, by the Carmel Mission Inn to the north, by two-story professional offices and mixed-use professional office/residential to the east, and by Rio Road and the Crossroads Shopping Center to the south, which is anchored by a grocery store and drugstore. The site is a vacant parcel surrounded on all sides by improved land containing light commercial, visitor serving uses, and multi-family residential uses. Surrounding land uses are described in Table 3.

The Carmel River is located approximately 1,000 feet south of the site, and Carmel River Elementary School is located approximately 0.9 mile west of the site, Junipero Serra School is located 0.6 mile west of the site, and Carmel Middle School is located 0.4 mile northeast of the northernmost end of the site.

**Table 3 Characteristics of the Project Site and Vicinity**

Project Site	
Address	3705 Rio Road
Assessor's Parcel Numbers	009-562-002-000 (Lot 2), 009-562-015-000 (Lot 15), and 009-562-016-000 (Lot 16)
Lot Size	3.8 acres
Existing Use	Undeveloped/Vacant
Carmel Valley Master Plan Land Use Designation	Commercial
Zoning Designation	Light Commercial, Design Control, Site Plan Review, and Residential Allocation Zoning (LC-D-S-RAZ)
Vicinity	
Surrounding Land Uses	<p><b>North:</b> Carmel Mission Inn</p> <p><b>South:</b> Crossroads Shopping Center, anchored by a grocery store and drugstore</p> <p><b>East:</b> Professional offices and mixed-use professional office/residential</p> <p><b>West:</b> Chevron Gas Station</p>
Surrounding Land Use/ Zoning Designations	<p><b>North:</b> Visitor Accommodations/Professional Offices</p> <p><b>South:</b> Planned Commercial and Visitor Accommodations/Professional Offices</p> <p><b>East:</b> Visitor Accommodations/Professional Offices and Commercial</p> <p><b>West:</b> Visitor Accommodations/Professional Offices and Planned Commercial</p>
Source: County of Monterey, Carmel Valley Master Plan, Amended November 5, 1996; and Supplemental Policies Amended February, 2013	

## 2.5 Project Characteristics

The project, Rio Ranch Marketplace, is a proposed 42,310-square foot retail development on a 3.8-acre undeveloped, infill site. The retail development would consist of four commercial retail buildings, including a maximum 23,000 square foot convenience market/grocery store and three smaller buildings ranging from approximately 5,000 to 8,335 square feet. The development would additionally include two commercial retail farm sheds of 250 square foot each. In total, the building footprint of all buildings would occupy 26 percent of the 164,421-square foot site. The project characteristics, including square footage of each building, are presented in Table 4. A preliminary site plan is shown in Figure 6.

The market building would house a grocery store. The remaining store buildings would house small retail shops, restaurants and cafes, and consumer-oriented professional food services. The estimated square footage for each building shown in Table 4 is preliminary and subject to change. However, it is anticipated that the market would be a maximum of 23,000 square feet. If the market is ultimately smaller than 23,000 square feet, Buildings A through C may increase in size and the tenant mix would shift. However, the gross leasable area would not exceed 42,310 square feet.

**Table 4 Project Characteristics**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Size (SF)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Floors</b>	<b>Maximum Height (feet)</b>	<b>Potential Occupant(s)</b>
Market (grocer)	23,000	One	47.0 (tower element) 33.5 (main)	Specialty grocery store
Store A	8,335	One	28.0 (tower element) 20.0 (main)	Small retail shops, restaurants and cafes, and consumer-oriented professional services
Store B (southeast)	5,475	One	33.7 (tower element) 28.0 (main)	Small retail shops, restaurants and cafes, and consumer-oriented professional services
Store C	5,000	Partial Second	33.7 (tower element) 28.0 (main)	Small retail shops, restaurants and cafes, and consumer-oriented professional services
Farm Sheds (2)	500 (250 SF each)	n/a		Casual food and beverage service, seasonal merchants
<b>Gross Leasable Area</b>	<b>42,310</b>			

Note: On the Site Plan summary table, the 41,810 SF Gross Leasable Area does not include the two farm sheds.

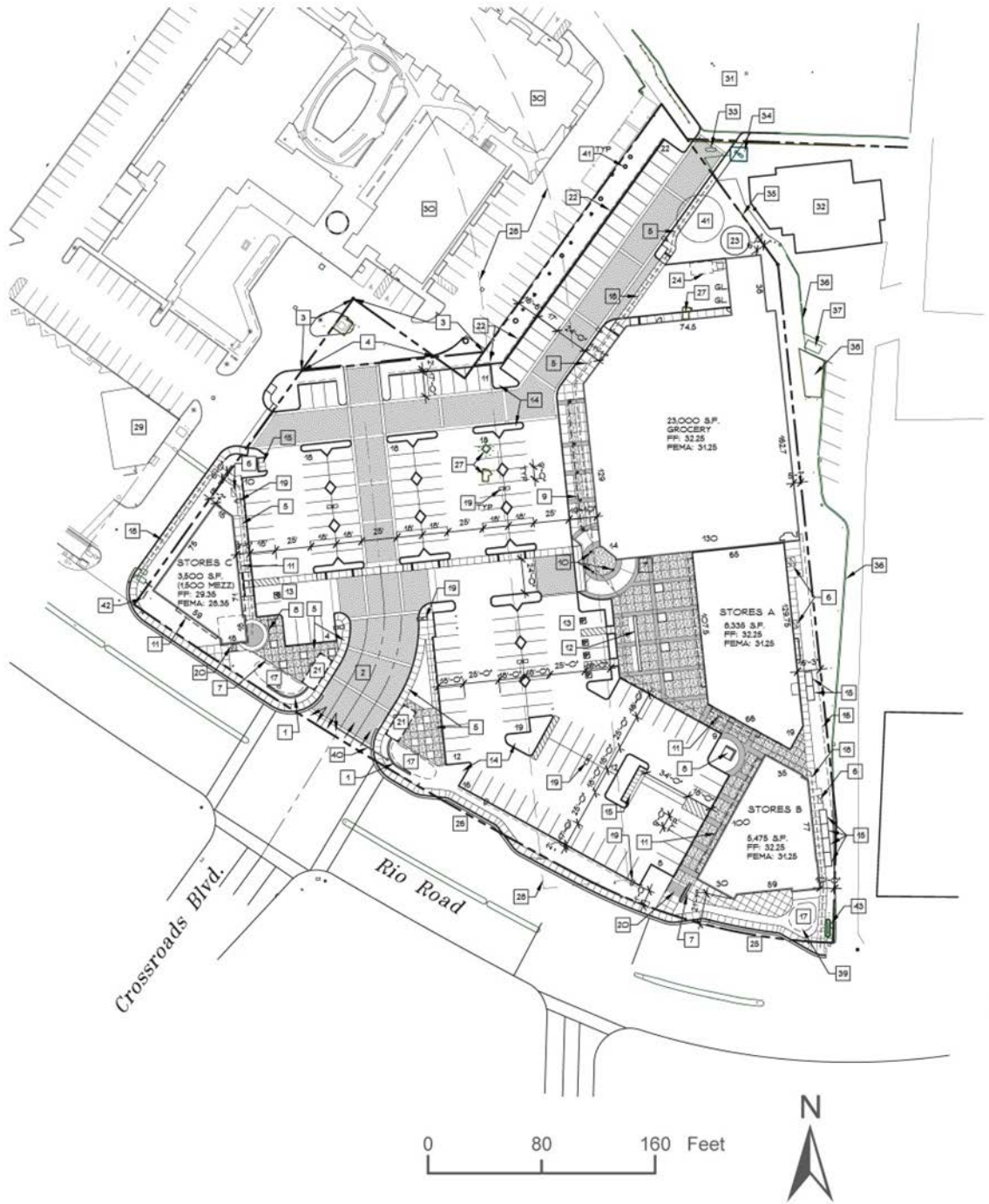
<sup>1</sup>The breakdown per building shown herein and on the site plan (Figure 4) is preliminary and subject to change. However, the gross leasable area would not exceed 42,310 SF.

The two proposed farm sheds, which would be located on either side of the project’s main entrance on Rio Road, would be open air type structures and would serve multiple and rotating uses. One of the farm sheds would house casual food and beverage service; the other would house seasonal merchants, such as pumpkin patch and Christmas trees; floral and agricultural product sales; and community and fund-raising events.

The design theme for the market and Store A building is rural agricultural-industrial architecture, intended to reflect the agricultural nature of Carmel Valley. The building facades of the market and Store A would predominantly be finished with cement plaster and pre-finished metal siding accented with earth-tone colors, metal awnings, and a green screen cable system. The tower element, reaching 47 feet in height, is an entryway feature with the appearance of a silo, and would be finished with wire mesh and metal panels. Store A would predominantly be finished with board and batten siding with cement plaster finish and horizontal wood lattice accents, fabric awnings, and prominent store front windows. Stores B and C would be in the design theme of traditional Carmel Village Spanish revival, with facades with a cement plaster finish, prominent store front windows, and Spanish-style arched entryways and a tile roof. Accents include green screen cable systems and tile accents. The design theme for the Farm Sheds is a pole barn form. Proposed building elevations are shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

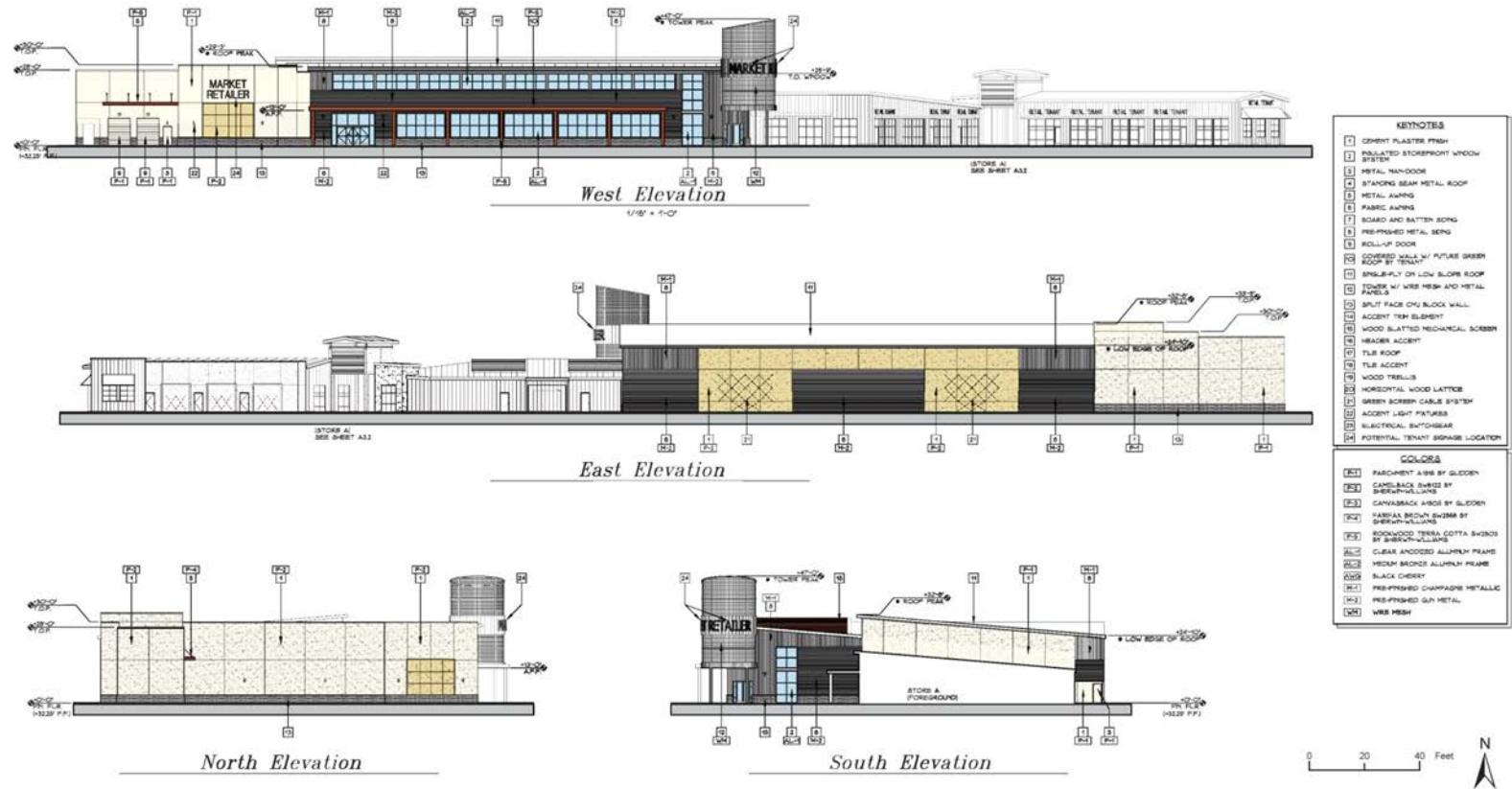


Figure 6 Proposed Preliminary Site Plan



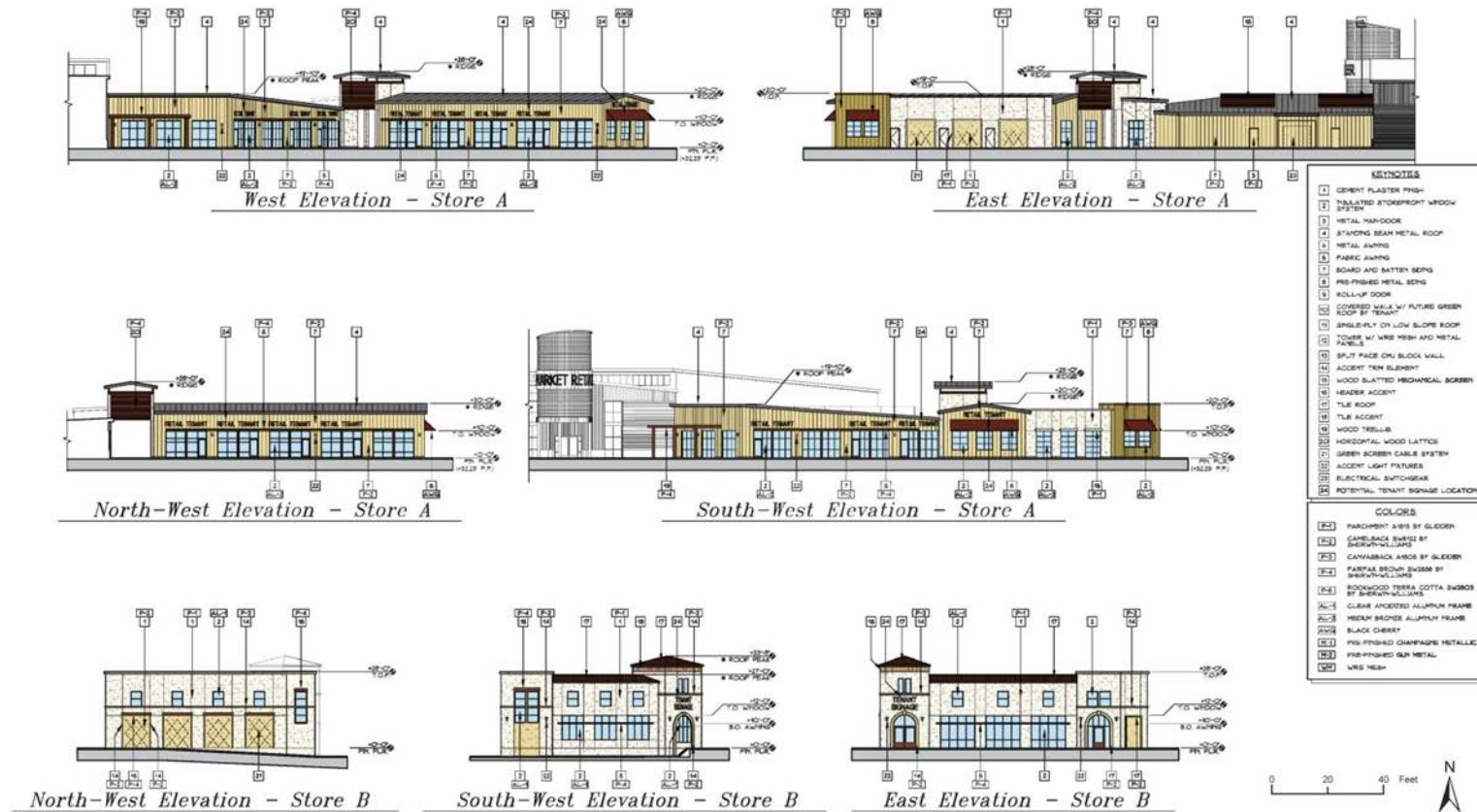
Source: Perkins, Williams & Cotterill Architects, January, 2017.

Figure 7 Preliminary Elevations: Specialty Grocery Store



Source: Perkins, Williams & Cottorill Architects, May 2016

Figure 8 Preliminary Elevations: Stores A and B



Source: Perkins, Williams & Cottorill Architects, May 2016

Landscaping would consist of a combination of California native and drought tolerant, adaptive species. There are four planting areas in the project landscaping plan, as described below and shown in Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12.

- **Bio-Retention Ponds.** Bio-retention ponds would be located around the perimeter of the site, including along with Rio Road frontage, in the southeast corner of the site, and between the parking lot and northern property boundary. The lowest zone of planting in the bio-retention ponds includes river rock and native rush species, which are able to tolerate the wet and dry conditions of the swale. The upper slopes of the swale contain fescue grasses and other native plants. Upper conditions of the swales include some taller non-native grasses. The planting in the swale has been chosen to facilitate the visible inspection of the working function of the swales.
- **Perimeter and Streetscape Planting.** Perimeter and streetscape planting, which may also include stormwater detention swales, contain plants with color and texture. Plant height either maintains visibility into the project site or softens the walls of buildings. Plants have been selected to enhance entry to the project site, and compliment entry signage.
- **Parking Islands.** Planting in parking islands is designed to maintain the function of these areas to accommodate the use by people, cars, and grocery carts. Trees are planted in wells where there is suitable space.
- **Pedestrian Seating Areas.** Providing comfortable seating spaces is important to the proper function of the project as a retail site. To achieve this effect, colorful plant palettes in these areas have been selected for the landscaping.

Landscape irrigation would be distributed through a water efficient, subsurface irrigation system. Irrigation water would be supplied from a combination of potable water and a rainwater harvesting system. The rainwater harvesting system, designed to collect roof runoff from the grocery building roof and drained to the cistern, would provide a supplemental supply of irrigation water. The landscape plan includes native and drought tolerant species to reduce water demand.

The two existing on-site wells, one located in the northern portion of the site, and the other located in the center of the site, would be abandoned voluntarily by the applicant. MCC Section 15.08.030 would require the applicant to obtain a permit from the Health Officer of the County prior to abandoning any well.

### 2.5.1 Lot Line Adjustment and Right-of Way Abandonment

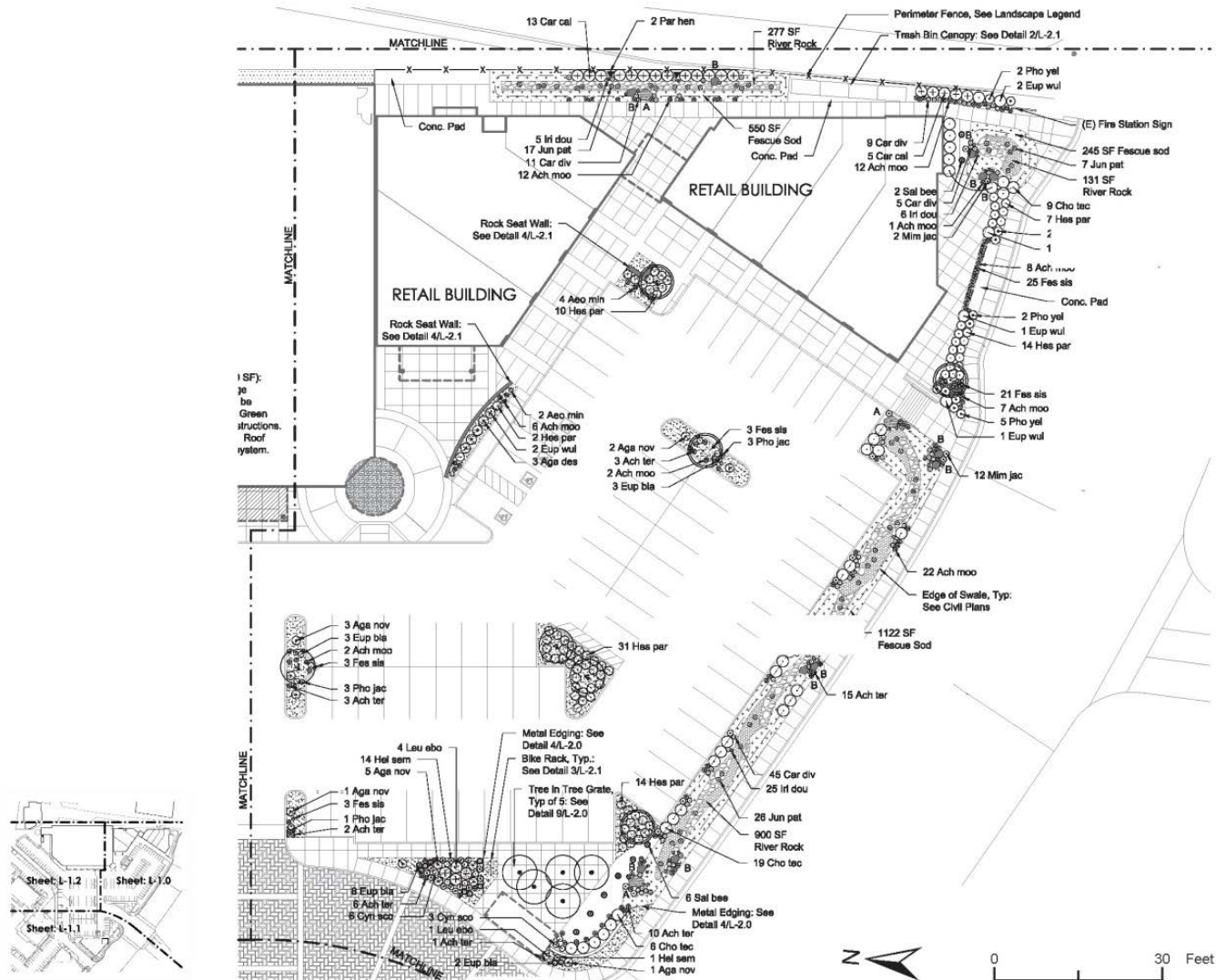
The project also includes merging three legal lots of record (APN 009-562-002-000, Lot 2; APN 009-562-015-000, Lot 15; and APN 009-562-016-000, Lot 16) into one legal lot of record; and adjusting the lot line between the new legal lot and the adjacent lot containing the Carmel Mission Inn (APN 009-562-013-000; Lot 13). The proposed lot merger and lot line adjustment are shown on Figure 9. In addition, the site includes a 60-foot right-of-way that runs north to south, bisecting the property, as shown on the Preliminary Site Plan, Figure 6. The applicant is requesting approval of abandonment of this right-of-way.



Figure 9 Proposed Lot Line Adjustment



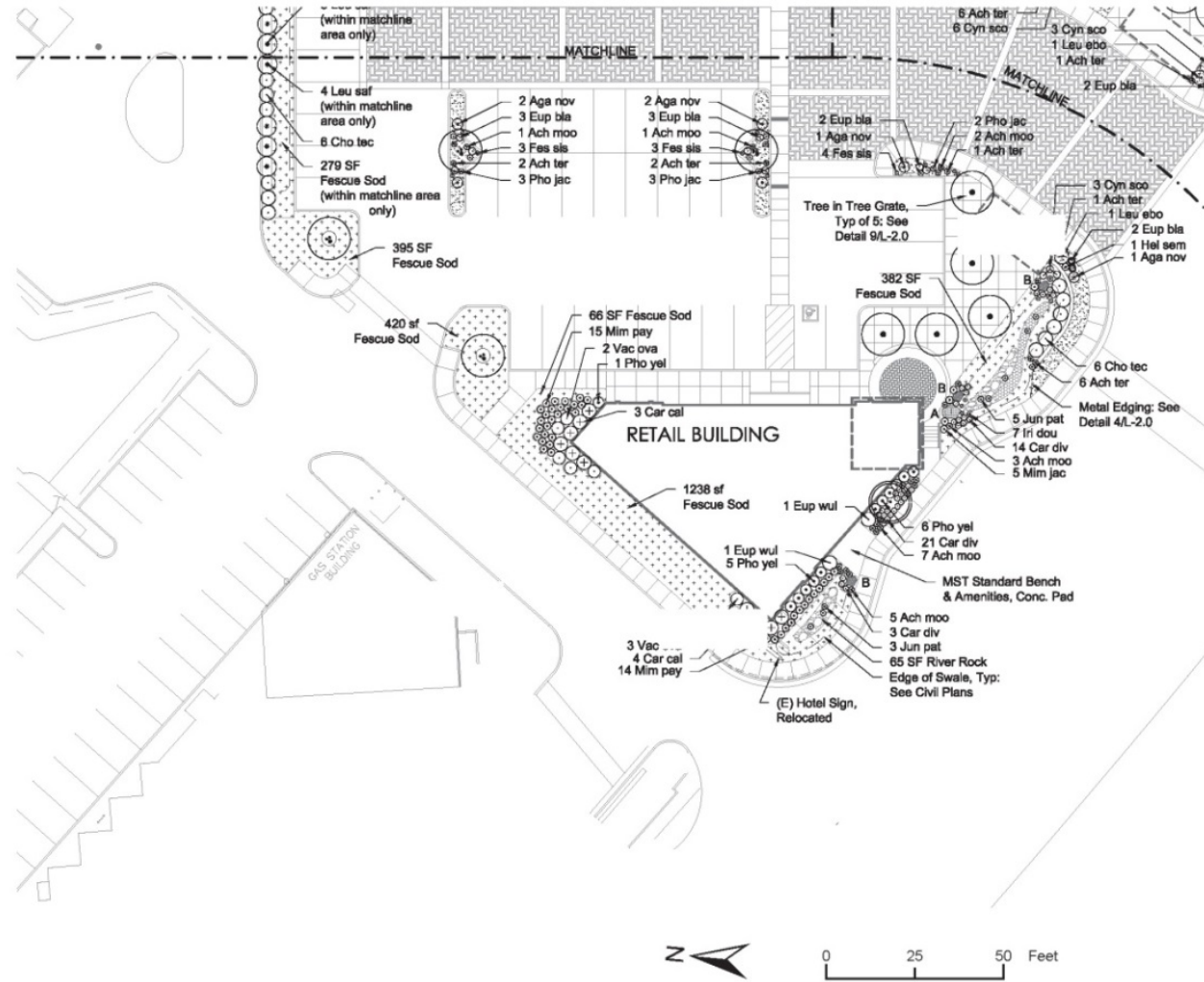
Figure 10 Preliminary Landscaping Plan Sheet L-1.0



Source: C3 Engineering, March 2016

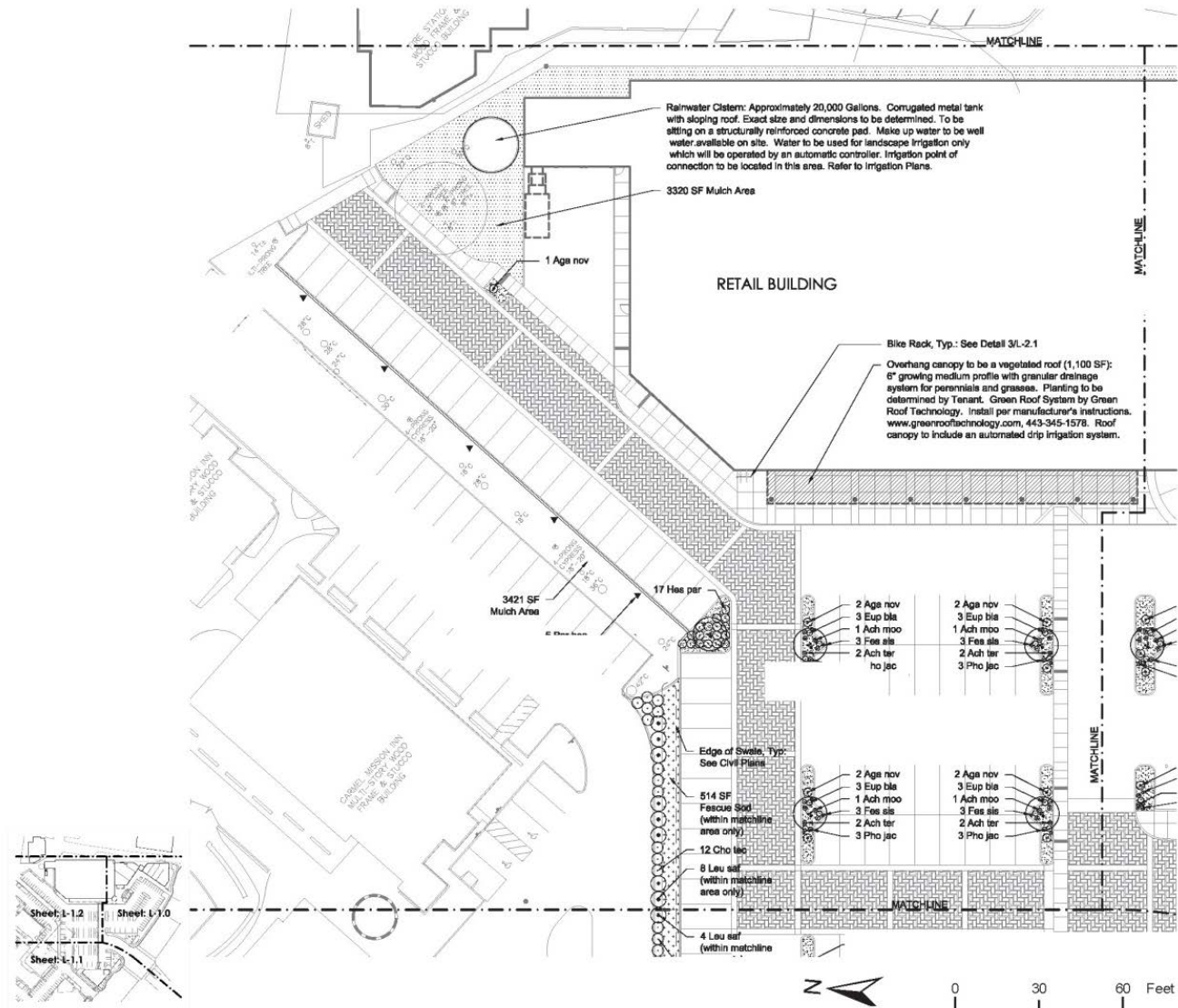


Figure 11 Preliminary Landscaping Plan: Sheet L-1.1



Source: C3 Engineering, March 2016

Figure 12 Preliminary Landscaping Plan: Sheet L-1.2



Source: C3 Engineering, March 2016



## 2.5.2 Site Access and Parking

Primary access to the project site would be via a reconfigured traffic-signal controlled intersection at Rio Road and Crossroads Boulevard. The intersection of Rio Road and Crossroads Boulevard is currently a three-way traffic-signal controlled T-intersection; this intersection would be expanded to a four-way intersection through the addition of the project main entrance at Crossroads Boulevard. Three secondary access points to the project would be provided to the site including:

1. On the western boundary of the project at the existing main driveway to the Carmel Mission Inn along the east side of the existing Chevron Gas Station.
2. At the north corner of the project connecting to Clocktower Place in the southwest corner of the existing Barnyard parking lot; and
3. As an extension of the main driveway aisle to the existing traffic circle near the lobby entrance of the Carmel Mission Inn.

The current access point to the project site at Rio Road and Carmel Center Place would be eliminated, reducing this four-way intersection to three-way intersection. These changes would require the following additional alterations to the section of Rio Road adjacent to the project site, which are all shown on Figure 6, Preliminary Site Plan:

- **Bus Stop Relocation.** An existing bus stop with pullout is located on the north side of Rio Road immediately west of the Crossroads Boulevard/Rio Road intersection. As the main project access would be constructed in this location, the bus stop and pullout would be relocated approximately 100 feet to the east, approximately mid-way between Crossroads Boulevard and Carmel Center Place.
- **Loading Turnout.** A turnout would be added on the north side of Rio Road near the eastern edge of the project site, east of Carmel Center Place. The purpose of the pull-out would be for loading and trash pick-up
- **Sidewalk Replacement.** The sidewalk located along the project's Rio Road frontage would be replaced.
- **ADA Compliant Improvements.** Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements along Rio Road would include an accessible bus stop, as described above; and accessible ramps in the following locations: at the main project access at Rio Road and Crossroads Boulevard; and at the Carmel Mission Inn driveway at Rio Road, which is located off-site but would provide secondary project access.

The project would provide a total of 186 on-site parking spaces, including five ADA stalls. Parking would be concentrated near the center of the site, with the three largest buildings along the eastern edge of the site and the smallest building (Store C) located in the western corner of the site. Four of the proposed ADA stalls would be located in front of proposed Store B in the eastern portion of the site; one ADA stall would be located in front of Store C in the western portion of the site. The proposed 186 spaces would provide a ratio of over four parking stalls per 1,000 square feet of building area, or over one stall per 250 square feet. Bicycle lockers for long-term bike storage would be provided behind proposed Stores A and B. Bicycle racks for short-term storage would be provided in several locations throughout the site.

## 2.5.3 Utilities

### 2.5.3.1 Water Supply

The project would be served by California-American Water Company (Cal Am). The project would connect to an existing Cal Am water supply line beneath Rio Road. The connection would be located near the western edge of the project site, behind proposed Store C, as shown on Figure 6. Additional domestic water service lines would be located beneath the proposed parking area in the easternmost portion of the site, with a water meter located beneath the sidewalk adjacent to Rio Road.

Based on projected uses, the project would require 4.49 acre feet of allocated water per year (AFY). This requirement is proposed to be met through three sources:

- The fee-title owner of the land underlying the project, Carmel Properties Company, has a credit from adjacent property holdings of 1.519 AFY that would be applied to the project site.
- The adjacent hotel, Carmel Mission Inn, is currently under renovation, including water saving features. These features would generate additional water credits. These credits are proposed to be applied to the project site, as the land underlying the Inn is also owned by Carmel Properties Company.
- Any additional water credits needed to make up the balance of the demand for the operation of the project are proposed to be acquired from the Malpaso Water Company, which has recently received approval to sell 80 acre-feet of water to commercial and residential users in Carmel and Carmel Valley.

Water supply is further described and assessed in Section 4.6, *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

### 2.5.3.2 Sewer

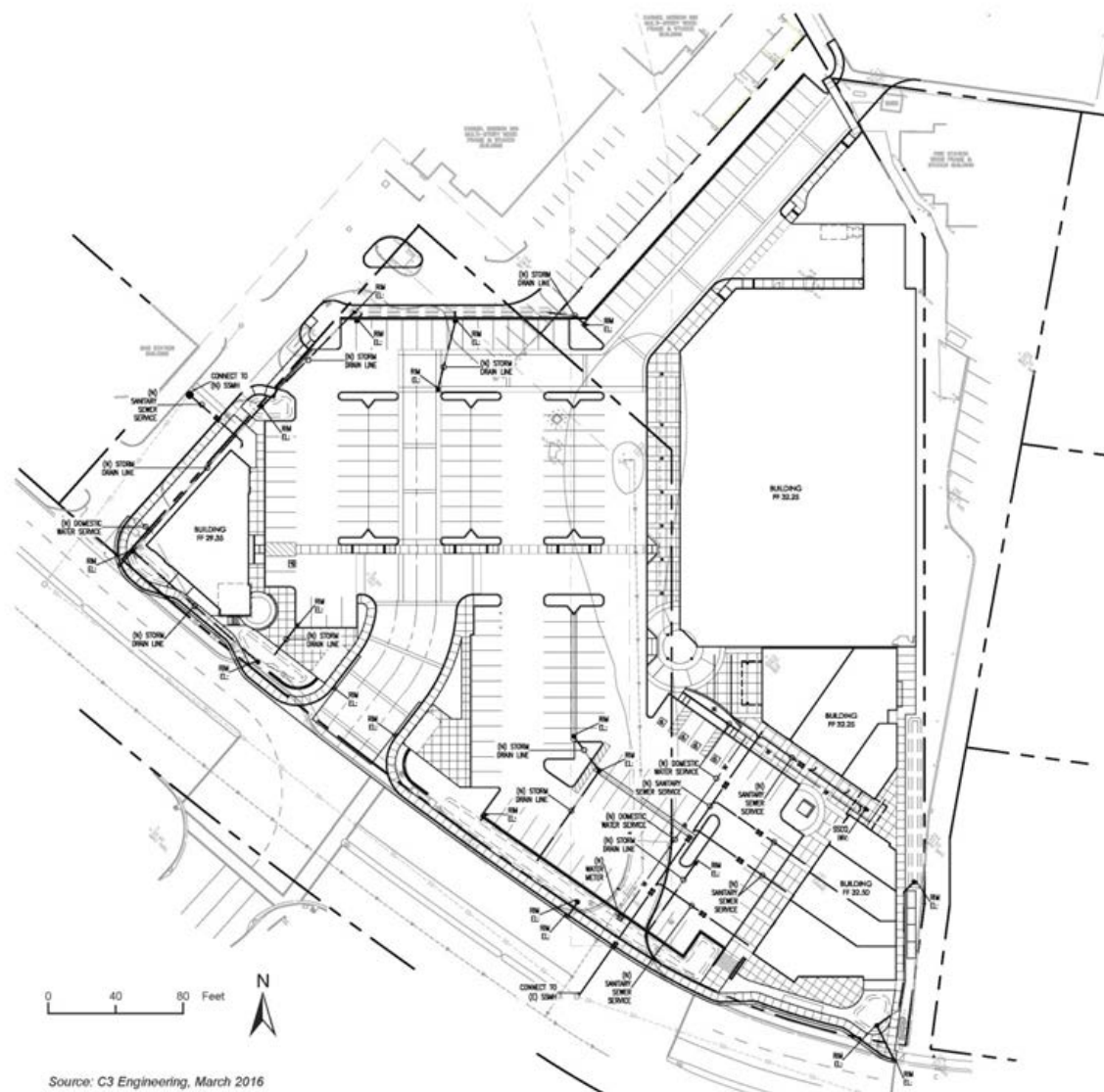
Sewer services would be provided via connection to the Carmel Wastewater District (CAWD). Wastewater generated by the proposed project would be collected and conveyed through a conventional gravity system of proposed four- to six-inch sanitary sewer pipes located within the proposed parking areas, as shown in Figure 13. The wastewater collected on-site would be conveyed through a six- to eight-inch diameter pipe extending approximately 45 feet in the public right-of-way to an existing 24-inch CAWD sanitary sewer main located beneath Rio Road.

The CAWD confirmed in an April 20, 2016 will-serve letter that service could be provided to the proposed project. The site is within the CAWD service area.

### 2.5.3.3 Stormwater Management

Most on-site stormwater runoff would be detained or filtered by bio-retention ponds located around the perimeter of the site, including along with Rio Road frontage, in the southeast corner of the site, and between the parking lot and northern property boundary. However, runoff from the grocery store building would be collected through a rainwater harvesting system and directed to a cistern, providing a supplemental supply of irrigation water for the site. The remainder of on-site runoff would be detained or filtered by bio-retention ponds located around the perimeter of the site, including along with Rio Road frontage, in the southeast corner of the site, and between the parking lot and northern property boundary. Runoff from impervious surfaces would surface drain or be routed by underground piping to the bio-retention ponds where it would be treated and retained.

Figure 13 Utility Plan



The ponds would be sized to treat and retain runoff from the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile storm, in accordance with the Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program. The project applicant would be required to prepare and submit a Preliminary Stormwater Control Report (SWCP), including a Site Design and Runoff Reduction Checklist, as part of building permit approval.

#### 2.5.3.4 *Electricity and Natural Gas*

Electricity and natural gas to the site would be provided by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

### 2.5.4 Construction and Grading

Construction would begin with vegetation removal and site grading. The project would require tree removal, including the removal of thirty-five existing on-site trees, including Monterey cypress, Coast live oak, and Monterey pine trees. The tree removal plan is shown in Figure 16. However, some trees would be retained. The existing shed in the northern portion of the site would be demolished. An existing above-ground propane tank located immediately west of the existing shed would be relocated approximately ten feet to the east.

The project would require approximately 355 cubic yards (cy) of cut and approximately 14,006 cy of fill for a net of 13,651 cy of imported fill to raise the floor level of the proposed buildings out of the mapped flood plain. A grading and drainage plan is shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15.

The project may be constructed in a single phase subject to market conditions. For the purpose of this EIR, it is assumed that construction would be initiated within six months of project approval and that construction would be completed within approximately nine months of construction commencement, or 15 months after project approval.

## 2.6 Project Objectives

The applicant's objectives of the proposed Rio Rancho Marketplace project are:

1. To develop a new retail center anchored by a specialty grocery store and complementary commercial uses to provide the local trade area with shopping alternatives in a high-quality shopping environment;
2. To divert to the project shopping trips from Carmel Village, Carmel Valley, Carmel Highlands and Big Sur Coast currently destined for Monterey and Pacific Grove for shopping at Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and other specialty grocers;
3. To contribute to the local economy through new capital investment, the creation of new employment opportunities, and the expansion of the County's tax revenues;
4. To develop full-service retail uses near regional roadway and highway facilities, and near other commercial uses, to minimize travel lengths and utilize existing infrastructure to the maximum extent possible;
5. To implement the County of Monterey General Plan;
6. Implement a high-quality architectural design that improves the overall aesthetics of the project site and surrounding area.



Figure 14 Grading and Drainage Plan: North

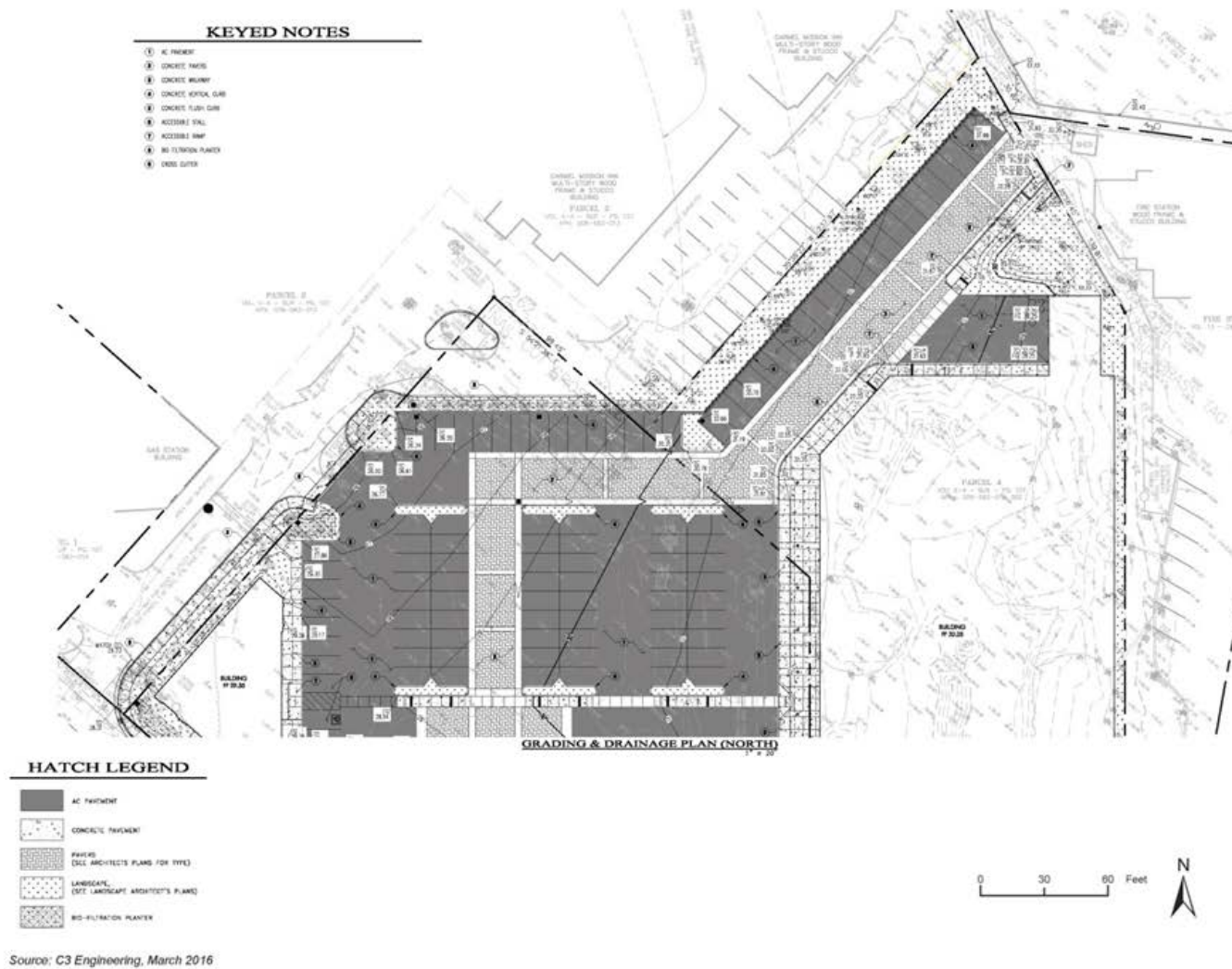


Figure 15 Grading and Drainage Plan: South

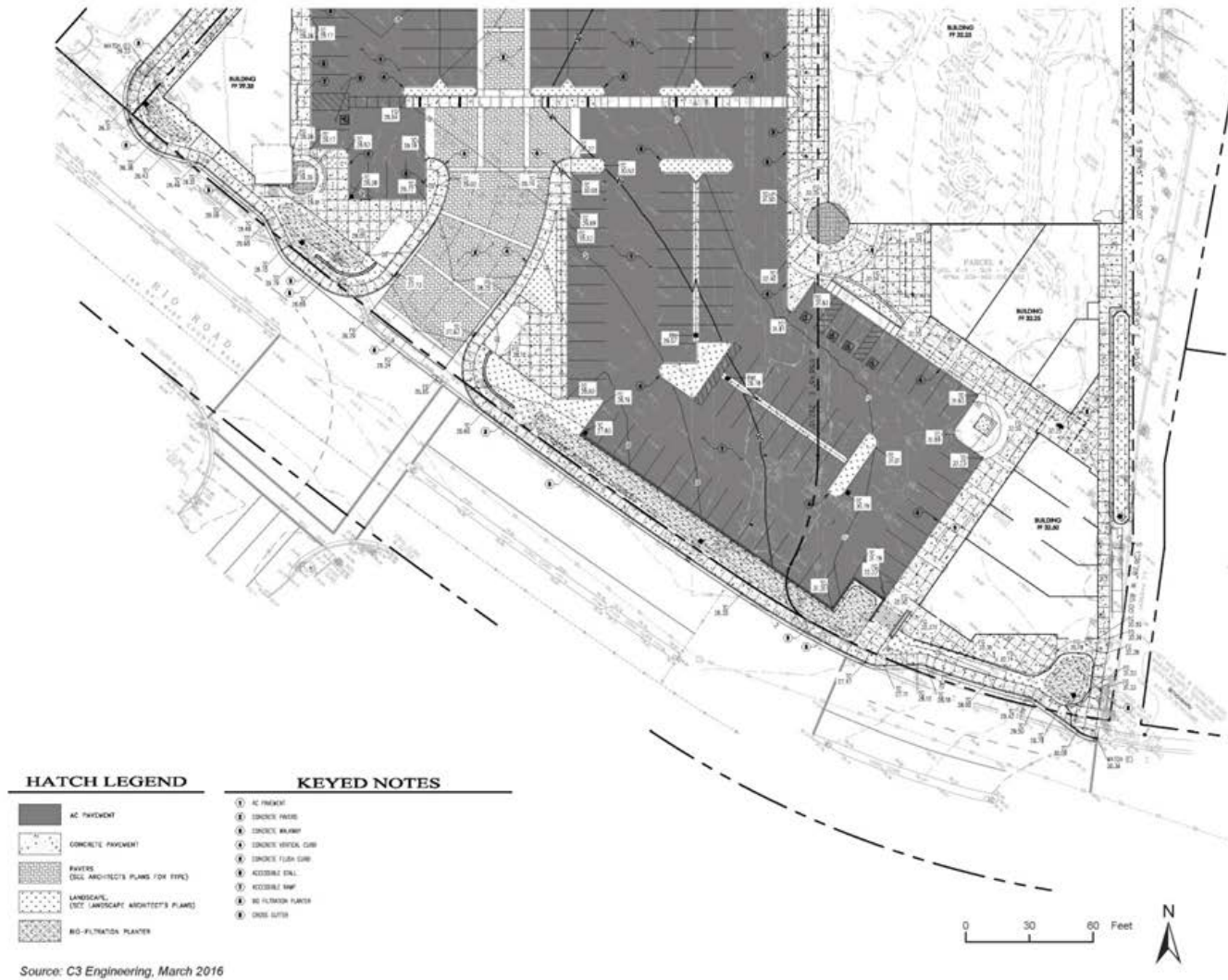
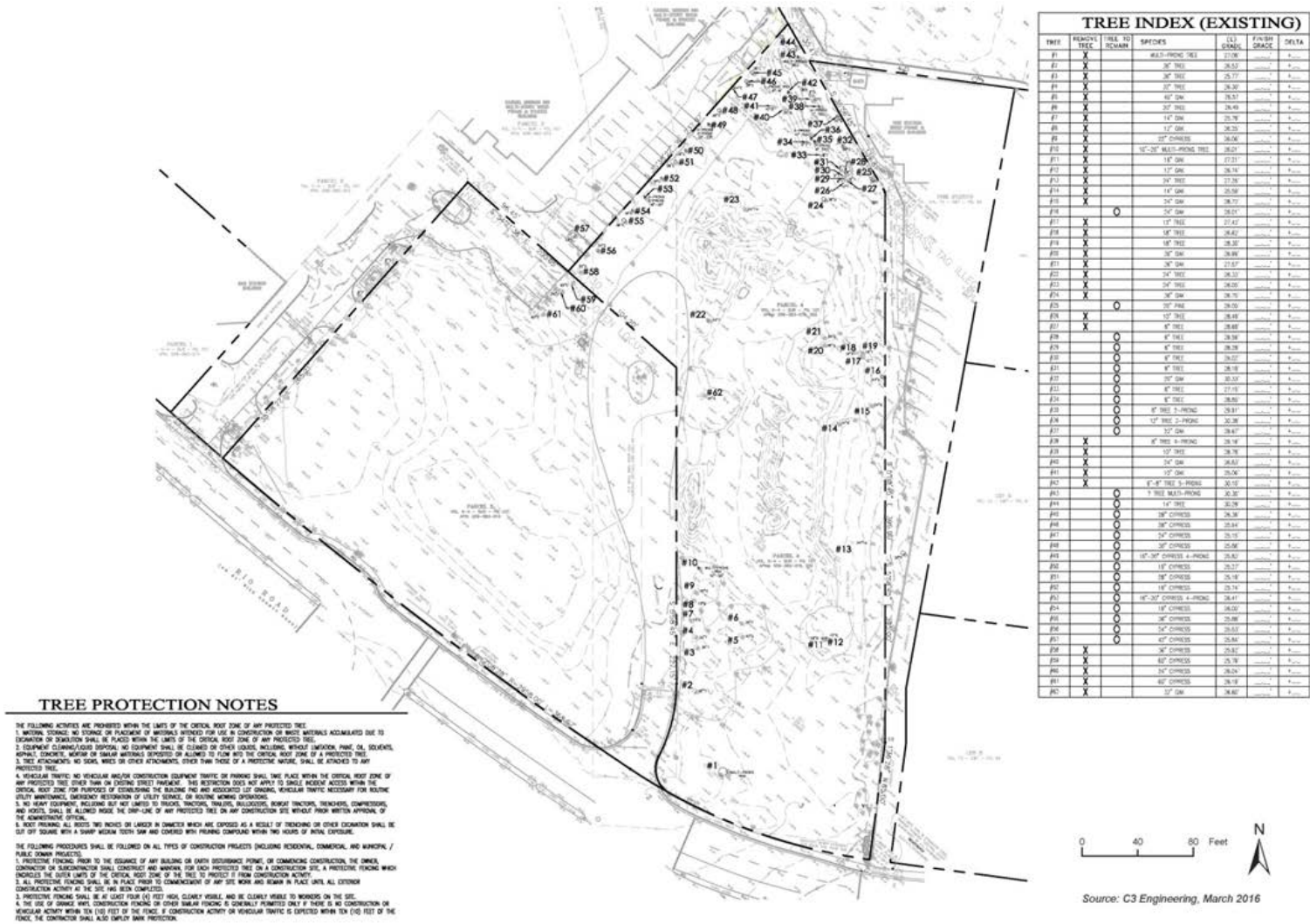


Figure 16 Tree Plan



## 2.7 Required Approvals

The proposed project will require the following discretionary permits from the County of Monterey.

- Certification of Final EIR
- Approval of a Combined Development Permit and General Development Plan consisting of:
  - Administrative Permit to allow the development of a maximum 23,000-square feet grocery store/convenience market;
  - Use Permit to allow the development of three separate multi-tenant buildings ranging in size from 250 square feet to 8,335 square feet;
  - Lot Line Adjustment;
  - Design Approval;
  - Use Permit to allow removal of 35 trees.;
  - Monterey County Health Department Water Well Permit to allow well abandonment;
  - MPWMD Water Permit