



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-25-127
Meeting 25-29
October 22, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Consideration of the Draft Schematic Design for the Skyline Field Office Project as the project description to initiate CEQA Environmental Review

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *se den*

Accept the Draft Schematic Design for the Skyline Field Office Project, with any amendments by the Board of Directors, as the project description and scope to initiate environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

SUMMARY

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) is establishing a new Skyline Field Office (SFO) to meet current and future operational needs for the Skyline region. The Project Team has developed a Draft Schematic Design for the new office facility that is ready for review by the Board of Directors (Board). This Draft Schematic Design adheres to the Board-approved goals for the Skyline Field Office Rebuild Project (Project) and was prepared with extensive input from field staff who are deployed at the Skyline Field Office and other key District staff. The Board is asked to consider accepting the Draft Schematic Design, with any amendments made by the Board, as the project description and scope to initiate CEQA review and complete the necessary environmental clearance for the Project.

BACKGROUND

The current SFO site, which no longer effectively supports current or future District operational needs, consists of an office and auxiliary buildings on Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) near the intersection of Page Mill Road/Alpine Road. Discussions to expand and improve the SFO facilities first began in 2009, but the project was deferred after 2012 due to other competing priorities as well as limited capital funding and project management capacity.

The Skyline Field Office Rebuild Project re-started in late 2023 with a Board presentation of the SFO Needs Assessment Report and Board approval of the following **Project Goals** ([R-23-117](#)):

1. Address facility deficiencies and improve functionality.
2. Address needs related to administration, shop use, utilities (including back-up power and cell service), parking and circulation, materials/equipment storage, and locker room/shower facilities.
3. Accommodate current and projected staff growth identified in the Coastal Management Plan and Financial Operational and Sustainable Model (FOSM) Update for the next 30-

40 years, looking holistically at both the Skyline and Coastal regions (and future Coastal Office).

4. Incorporate design elements to reflect and complement the existing character of the site.
5. Include sustainable building and site features that support Climate Action Plan priorities and comply with climate-related state mandates.
6. Maintain internal equity for staff facilities.
7. Enhance workplace interactions and efficiencies and allow for standard start times and space for large staff gatherings/meetings.
8. Create a workplace environment that attracts and retains staff.
9. Incorporate fire resiliency goals into the design and construction.
10. Implement the project for cost and time efficiency.
11. Maximize efficiency of the available buildable land and locate as many of the uses at the existing site as possible to centralize ranger and maintenance needs.

At the April 24, 2024 regular meeting, the Board awarded a contract to Siegel & Strain ([R-24-50](#)) to provide architectural, landscape architectural, and engineering services, including a rapid assessment of potential field office locations, and to develop conceptual and schematic building and site plan options for the selected site. At the October 9, 2024 regular meeting ([R-24-121](#)), the Board approved numerous operational/functional, public interface, and environmental criteria to evaluate three potential sites for the SFO facility. Siegel & Strain, together with District staff, completed a rapid assessment of the three sites and evaluated them against the Board-approved selection criteria. In January 2025, the Board selected the Sherrill Site in Monte Bello Open Space Preserve as the preferred location that best meets current and future District operational needs ([R-25-10](#)). The selection was informed by test fit plans (a test fit determines whether operational uses can fit within the site) and the existing conditions that support efficient design, minimal viewshed impacts, avoid disruptions to current field office operations during construction, and do not impact public access. At the meeting, the Board expressed a desire to minimize impacts on the adjacent Christmas Tree Farm during site design and directed the General Manager to prioritize the project and return at a later date with a re-use plan for the existing SFO once the new SFO is built.

Technical Studies

The Project Team continues to conduct technical studies to inform environmental review, permitting and design. The studies and their progress are noted in Attachment 2.

The most notable potential constraints identified thus far are the driveway ingress/egress point from the highway and its associated Caltrans permitting requirements, and the development of a new well with sufficient water. Insufficient information still exists at this time to determine whether these two items will result in major challenges. The Project Team will keep the Board apprised of their status as more information and confirmations are secured. In addition, the Project Team is coordinating with the City of Palo Alto and County of San Mateo to determine the most efficient permitting pathway given that the site plan falls within both jurisdictions.

DISCUSSION

Conceptual and Schematic Design Processes

An inter-departmental Design Working Group was formed to guide early Conceptual Design. As a reminder, Conceptual Design is the first stage of the design process, and is focused on exploring high level space programming, big ideas, and initial rough building diagrams, to produce one or multiple high-level concept alternatives. The Design Working Group held two in-person presentations at the SFO to solicit feedback from field staff and biweekly meetings with the architects to arrive at draft conceptual plans. The initial rough order of magnitude cost estimates prepared during the January test fit were refined using the draft conceptual plans, which included potential Highway 35 traffic safety measures and driveway improvements.

The Project Team proceeded with Schematic Designs to further flesh out a preferred conceptual alternative with greater clarity on the building floorplans and layouts, and added attention given to functional adjacencies, sufficient space allotments, and flow/ circulation. Early value engineering was also incorporated to identify opportunities for reducing project costs while still achieving the project goals and maintaining a high level of operational functionality (Table 1). The cost estimate was also further refined. The Schematic Design provides enough specificity to begin exploring potential permitting requirements.

*Table 1. Comparison of Costs During Different Design Phases**

Test Fit Cost Estimate (Jan)	Conceptual Design	Draft Schematic Design
\$29,105,000	\$31,874,000	\$31,065,000

*Costs are in 2025 dollars and represent construction costs only (soft costs, estimated to be 20%, are associated with design, technical studies, permitting, and construction administration as shown in Table 2).

Draft Schematic Design Under Board Consideration

The proposed Draft Schematic Design for the new SFO fits well into the rolling and complex site topography, with a compact layout that still provides safe and ample circulation/workflow for team coordination and the use of large vehicles, equipment, tools, and materials. The design takes into consideration long-term District staffing growth for the next 30-40 years based on FOSM projections and is responsive to climate change impacts.

Building elements of the site include:

- 12,500 square feet (sq. ft.) of shop and shared support space (various shops, kitchen/break room, locker rooms, laundry, mudroom)
- 5,500 sq. ft. of office and administrative space (private/shared offices, hoteling desks, conference/focus rooms, restrooms)
- 700 sq. ft. of covered equipment storage space

The interior space includes ample storage for gear, supplies, and equipment, a wood shop, a welding shop, a chainsaw room, and a pull-through three-bay general-purpose shop with one bay dedicated to vehicle maintenance. Pull-through covered equipment storage areas are provided for storage of tractors, UTVs, mowers, etc.

Exterior elements of the site include:

- ~130 parking spaces (patrol, maintenance, and personal vehicles)
- Material stockpiles for gravel, boulders, lumber, fencing/gates, etc.
- Vehicle fueling and washdown area
- Dumpster area
- EV charging infrastructure for a future all-electric fleet

Cost Estimates

The range of potential costs for the Draft Schematic Design are as follows.

Table 2. Total Project Cost Estimates

Item	Lower Range (-5% of Mid-Range)	Mid-Range	Upper Range (+15% of Mid-Range)
2025 Construction Cost Estimate	\$29,511,750	\$31,065,000	\$35,724,750
*Soft Costs	\$5,902,350	\$6,213,000	\$7,144,950
Total Project Cost in 2025 Dollars	\$35,414,100	\$37,278,000	\$42,869,700
Total Project Cost in 2028 Dollars (5% escalation rate)	\$41,000,000	\$43,154,000	\$49,628,000

*Soft costs estimated at 20% of construction costs and include design, technical studies, permitting, and construction administration. Soft cost estimates will be refined as the project progresses.

At the schematic stage of design there are still many uncertainties that can influence cost. The ranges presented in Table 2 represent different ways to estimate uncertainty. The mid-range cost includes contingencies for uncertainty, while the lower range of costs represents a less conservative approach, and the upper range of costs represents a more conservative approach. The biggest cost drivers for this project include the remote location, labor costs, high construction costs for the Bay Area, and the uncertainty and potential increases in material costs due to tariffs. In addition, there may be permitting approval delays, especially since the project spans multiple jurisdictions.

The Project Team is committed to implementing this project as timely and efficiently as possible due to the current immediate needs of staff and potential cost escalation. As the design process continues, the Project Team will continue to look for cost saving measures that avoid compromising functionality. As the design advances into Design Development, the cost estimates will become more refined.

Christmas Tree Farm

Impacts to the Skyline Christmas Tree Farm operation were minimized by reducing the footprint of the original test fit plan as the floor plan and site plan were being developed. The updated footprint of the site is more compact than the previous test fit plan, and the area of impact has been reduced from 2.5 acres to 2.1 acres out of the larger total lease area of 52-acres within Monte Bello and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserves. Creating a more compact footprint requires more retaining walls, which has increased the cost. As the design process continues, the

Project Team will investigate if costs can be reduced by lessening the amount of retaining wall needed, while still keeping the site footprint compact. Staff have discussed the new plan with the tree farm tenant Donna Ducca and are assessing potential solutions to mitigate the change in vehicle circulation and loss of parking spaces due to the SFO build-out. Note also the lease requires compensation for Christmas trees removed in the affected 2.1 acres.

Existing SFO Reuse Plans

Staff will continue to explore leasing the existing SFO site once the new office is complete and staff have moved out of the existing space. Leasing the SFO allows the District to keep the field office in the event additional space is needed for unforeseen future uses. Leasing the space will also alleviate the District of certain ongoing maintenance obligations, which become increasingly challenging in a rural setting when a building is not in use. Developing new facilities is a challenging prospect, so maintaining a functional existing facility like the SFO may be prudent.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommended action has no immediate fiscal impact. Sufficient funding remains this fiscal year to continue moving the project forward. Additional funding will be requested in future fiscal year budgets, as shown below, to fund the next phases of work. Construction is scheduled to occur after FY28.

31914 - Skyline Field Office Renovation	Prior Year Actuals	FY26 Adopted	FY27 Projected	FY28 Projected	Estimated Future Years	TOTAL
District Funded (Fund 40):	\$332,063	\$330,000	\$200,000	\$135,000	\$29,180,000	\$30,177,063
Total Budget:	\$332,063	\$330,000	\$200,000	\$135,000	\$29,180,000	\$30,177,063
Spent-to-Date (as of 10/06/25):	(\$332,063)	(\$80,346)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$412,409)
Encumbrances:	\$0	(\$217,620)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$217,620)
Project Costs (mid-range) with rounded escalation to 2028:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$43,154,000)	(\$43,154,000)
Budget Remaining (Proposed):	\$0	\$32,034	\$200,000	\$135,000	(\$13,974,000)	(\$13,606,966)

This recommended action is not funded by Measure AA.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

October 11, 2023 Board Study Session: Board received the Skyline Field Office Needs Assessment Report, reviewed and approved goals of the Skyline Field Office Rebuild Project, reviewed and approved the Phase I project scope. ([R-23-117](#), [meeting minutes](#))

April 24, 2024 Board Meeting: Board awarded contract to Siegel and Strain to provide architectural and landscape architecture/site design services for the Skyline Field Office Rebuild Project and Coastal Field Office Project ([R-24-50](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

October 9, 2024 Board Meeting: Board provided feedback on the Skyline Field Office Site Evaluation Criteria for three potential site options for the Skyline Field Office Rebuild Project ([R-24-121](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

January 22, 2025 Board Meeting: Board accepted the Skyline Field Office Rapid Assessment and Site Selection Report and selected the Sherrill Site as the new Skyline Field Office location to advance into the conceptual design phase ([R-25-10](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. The District has also been in communication with the Skyline Christmas Tree tenant to keep them informed of the draft schematic design.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Board review of the schematic designs are not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pending Board input on the Schematic Design, which will form the basis of the CEQA project description, the District will conduct environmental review prior to permitting and an award of contract for construction for the SFO Project.

NEXT STEPS

Pending Board action, Siegel & Strain will further develop schematic designs and the District will initiate environmental review and land use permitting. Design development options are anticipated to be presented to the Board in spring of 2027, with construction anticipated to begin in 2028.

Attachment(s)

1. Skyline Field Office Rebuild Draft Schematic Design
2. Summary of Technical Studies Supporting the SFO Project

Responsible Department Head:

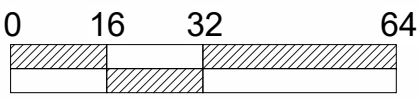
Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Manager, Planning Department

Prepared by / Contact person:

Galli Basson, Planner III, Planning Department



1 SITE PLAN
A1.00A 1/32" = 1'-0"



Project Title:
**MIDPEN REGIONAL OPEN SPACE
SKYLINE FIELD
OFFICE REBUILD**
1185 SKYLINE BLVD., PALO ALTO, CA 94304
APN#: 351-06-025 & 351-06-017

Design Firm:
SIEGEL & STRAIN Architects
6201 Doyle Street Suite B
Emeryville, CA 94608
TEL 510 / 547-8092
info@siegelstrain.com

Consultant:

Stamp:

No.	Description	Date

Issue Note:
**DRAFT SCHEMATIC
DESIGN
10/15/25**

Key Plan:

Project Code:
Designed by: Designer
Drawn by: Author
Checked by: Checker
Scale: 1/32" = 1'-0"

Sheet Title:

SITE PLAN

Sheet No.:

A1.00A



1 ENTRY DRIVEWAY SITE PLAN
A1.00B 1/32" = 1'-0"

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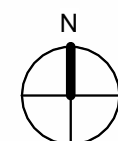
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Drawn by:	Author
Checked by:	Checker
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SITE PLAN

Sheet No.:

A1.00B



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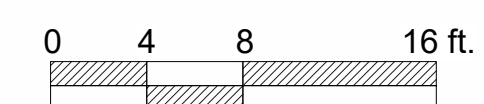
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OVERALL PLAN

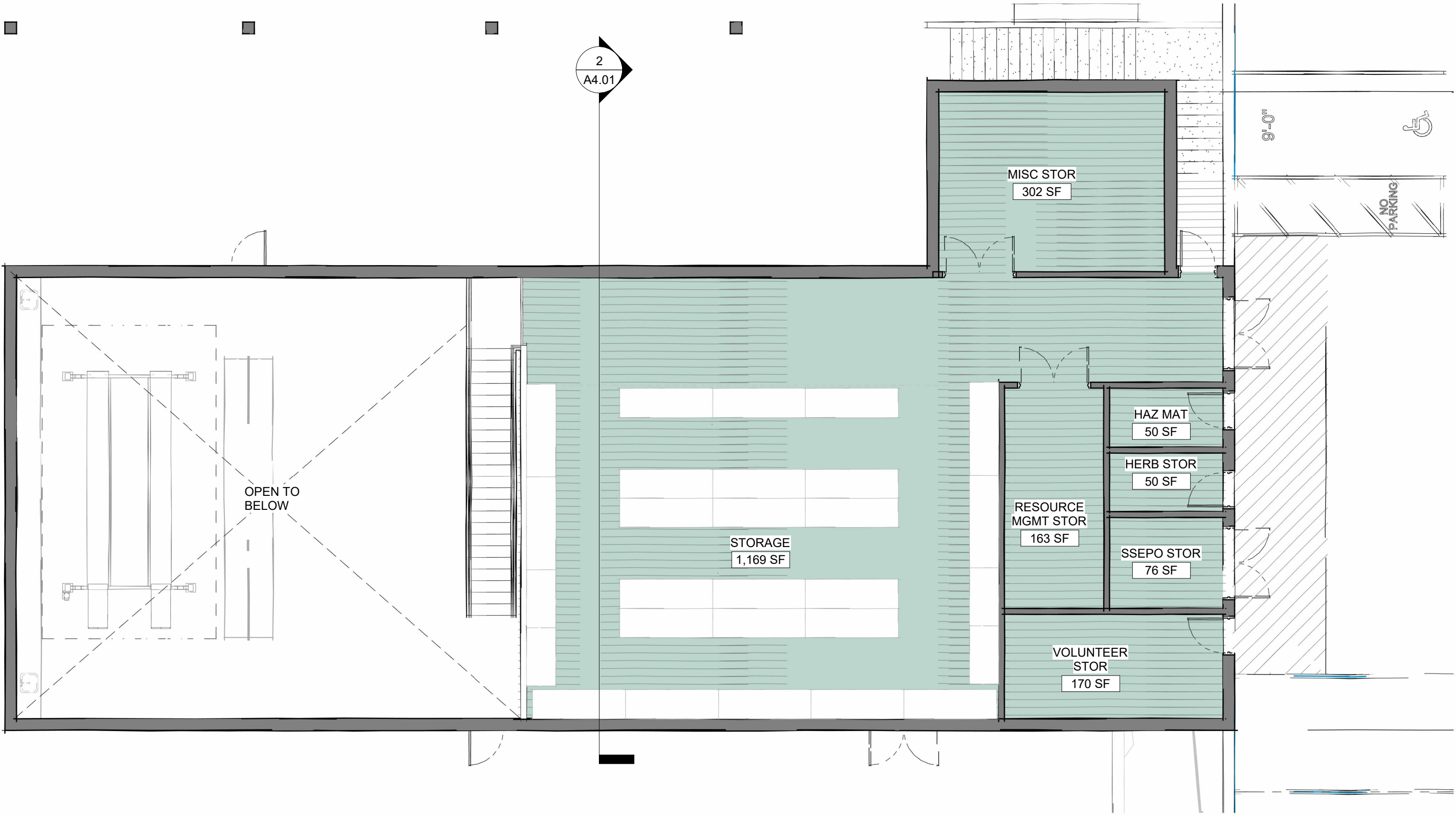
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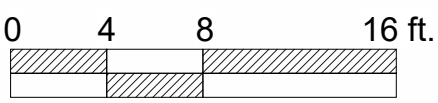
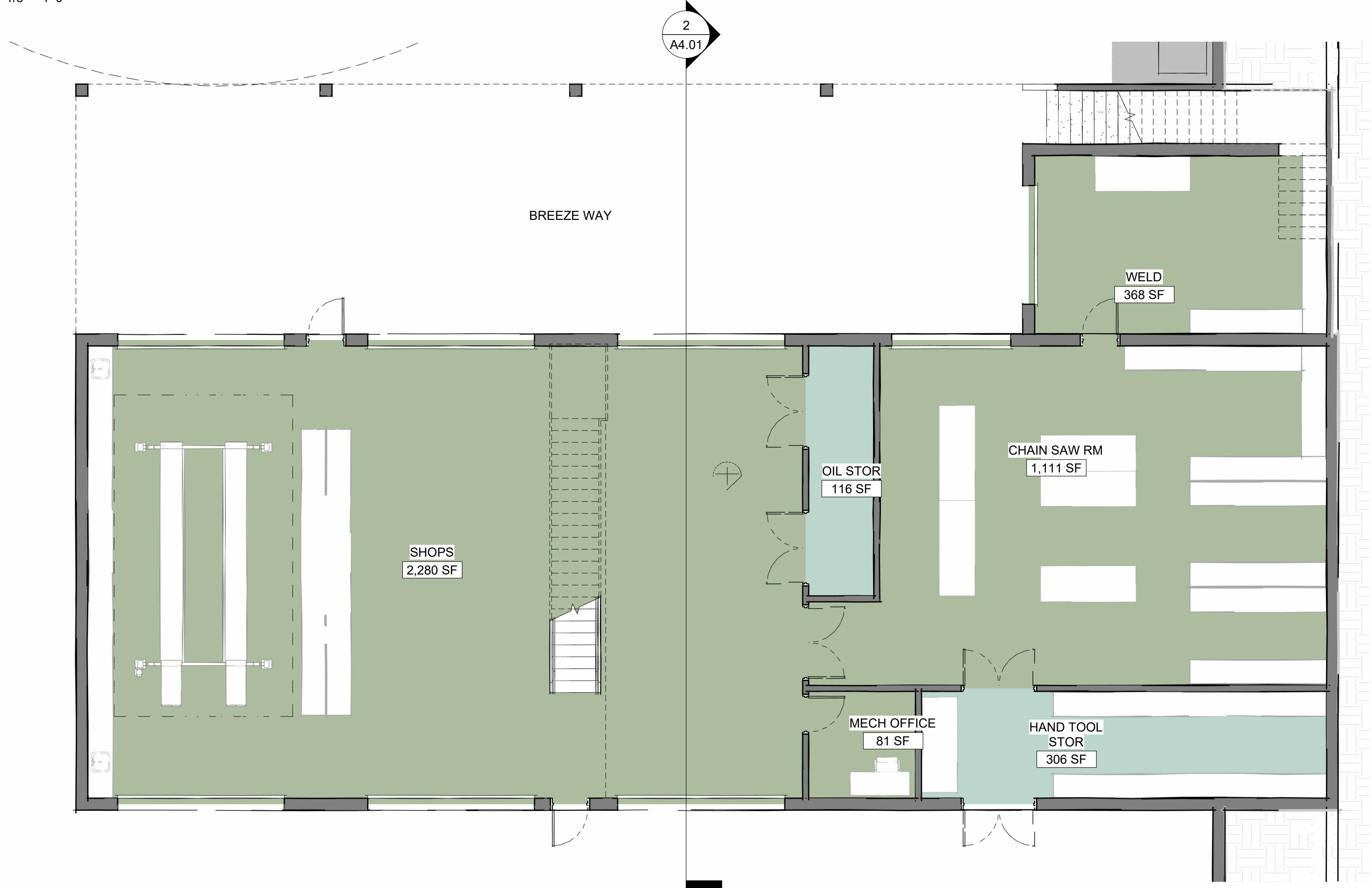


A2.01

2 SECOND FLOOR PLAN - SHOPS
A2.02 1/8" = 1'-0"



1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN - SHOPS
A2.02 1/8" = 1'-0"



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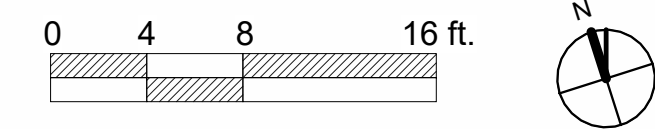
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**FLOOR PLANS -
SHOPS**

Sheet No.:

A2.02



1
A2.03

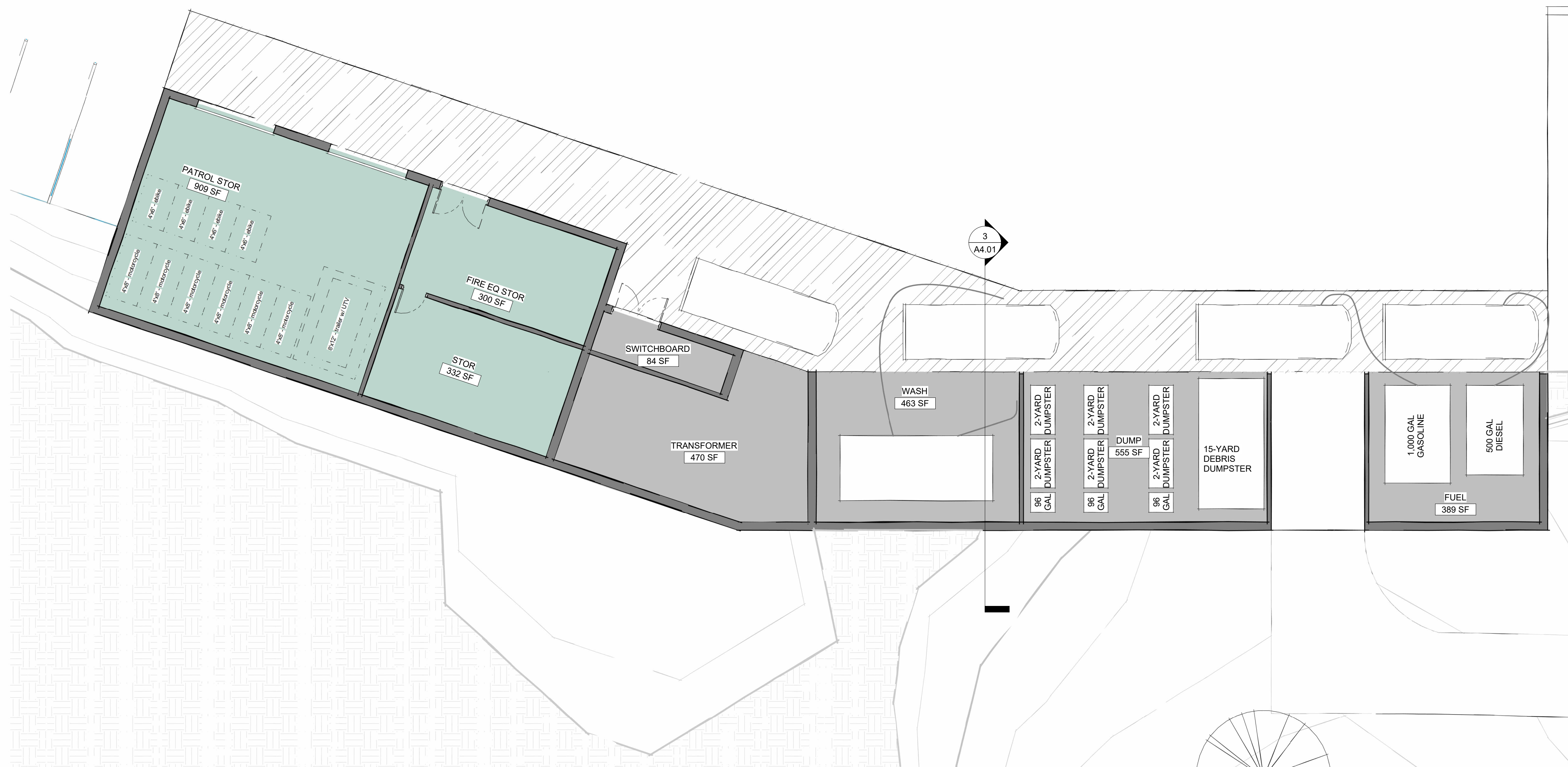
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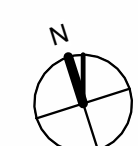
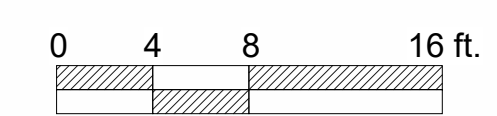
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FLOOR PLANS -
EQUIPMENT

A2.03



1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN - FUELING AND WASH
A2.04 1/8" = 1'-0"



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Key Plan:

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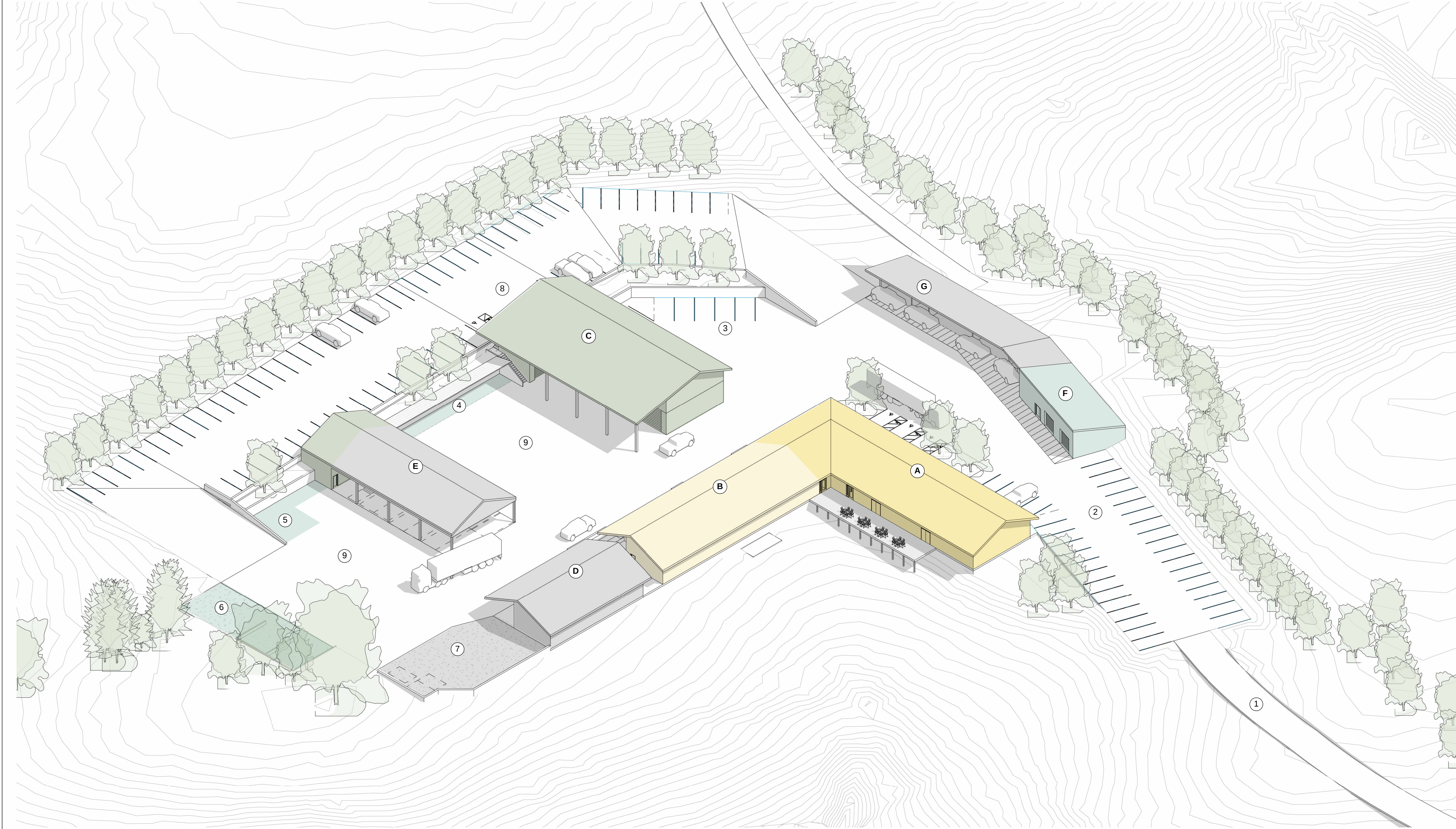
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Sheet Title:

FLOOR PLANS - FUELING AND WASHING

Sheet No.:

A2.04



1 Massing Axon
A3.00

LEGEND:

BUILDINGS:

- A-ADMIN BLDG
- B-SUPPORT BLDG
- C-SHOPS AND STORAGE BLDG
- D- EQUIPMENT STORAGE SHED
- E-EQUIPMENT STORAGE BLDG
- F-PATROL STORAGE
- G-WASH, FUEL, DUMPSTER STORAGE

SITE ELEMENTS:

- 1-ENTRY DRIVE
- 2-ENTRY PARKING
- 3-VEHICLE SUPPORT PARKING
- 4-WORK YARD & LUMBER STORAGE
- 5-CULVERT & PIPE STORAGE
- 6-RIPRAP & BOULDER STORAGE
- 7-UNCOVERED EQUIPMENT STORAGE
- 8-UPPER PARKING LOT AND SHOP ACCESS
- 9-WORK YARD & MANEUVERING SPACE

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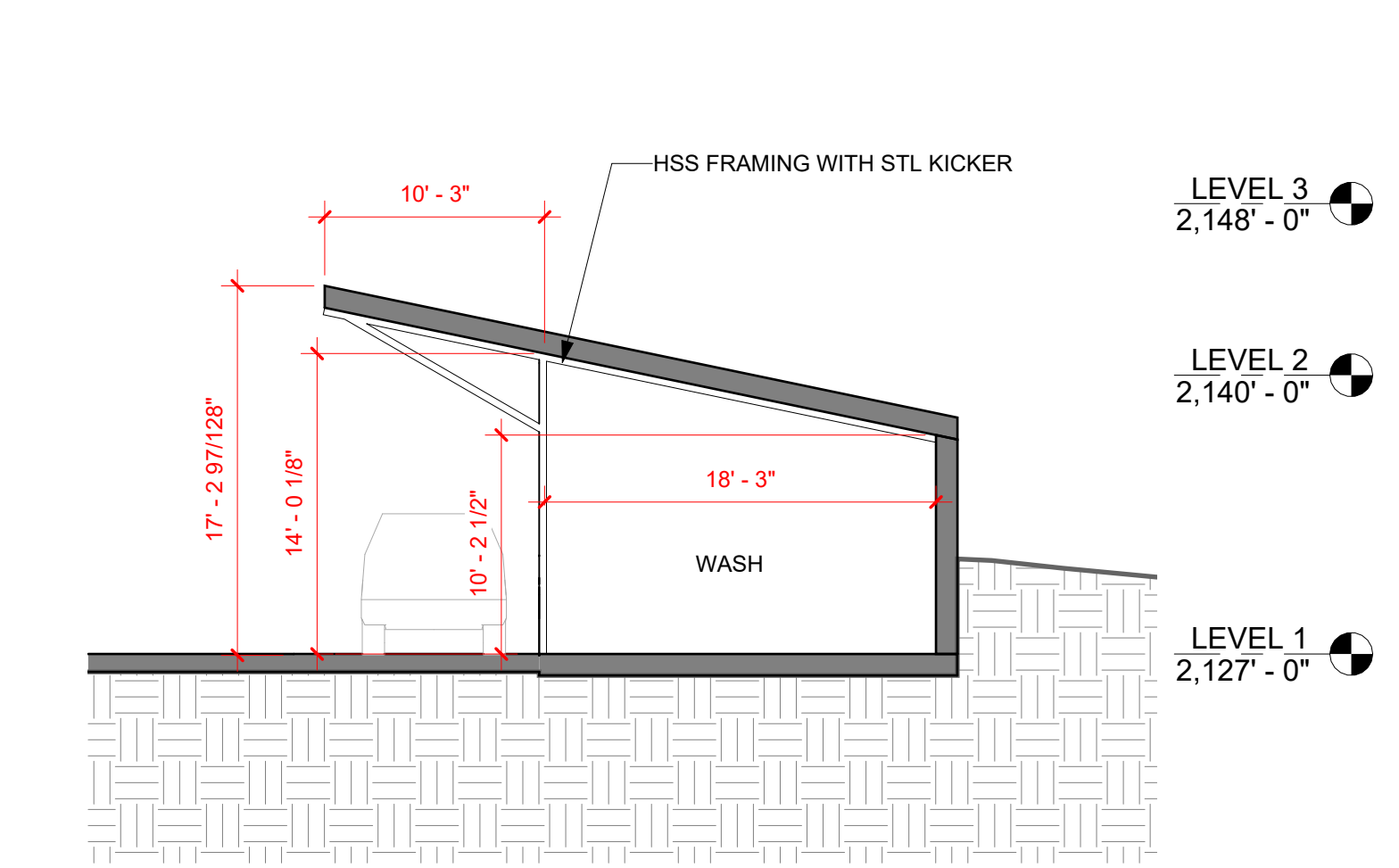
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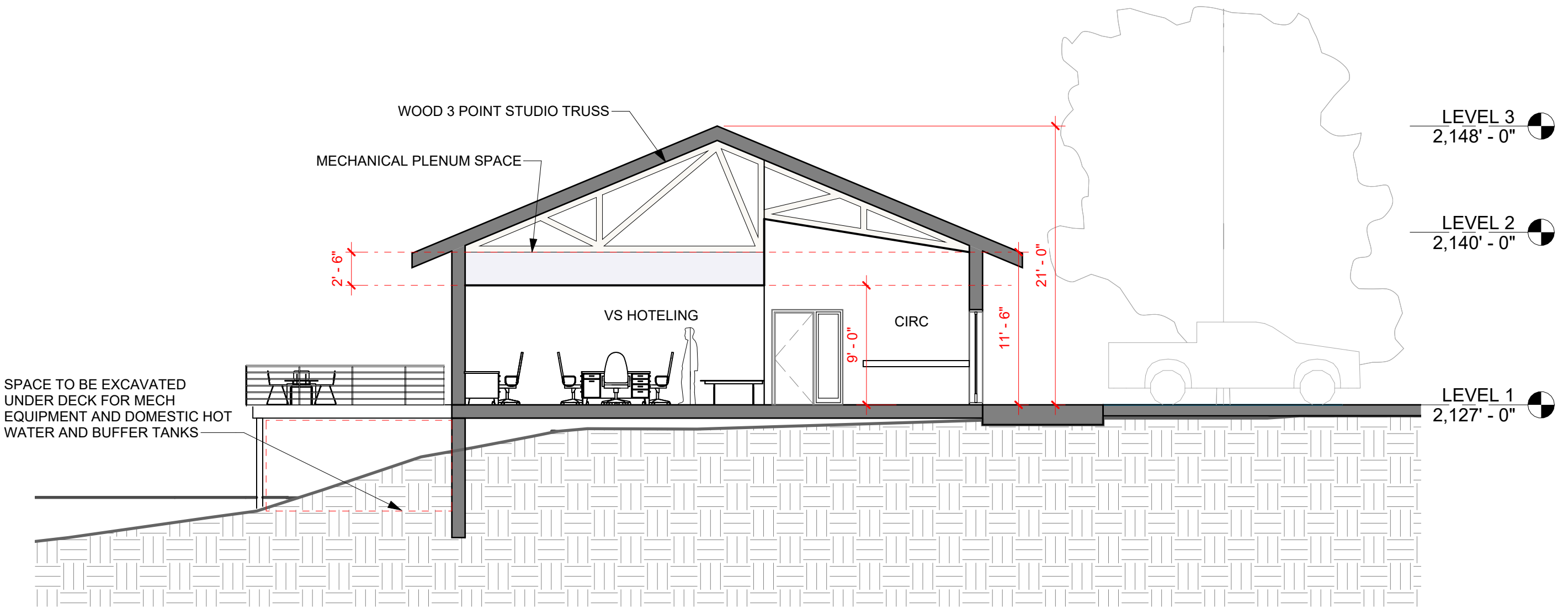
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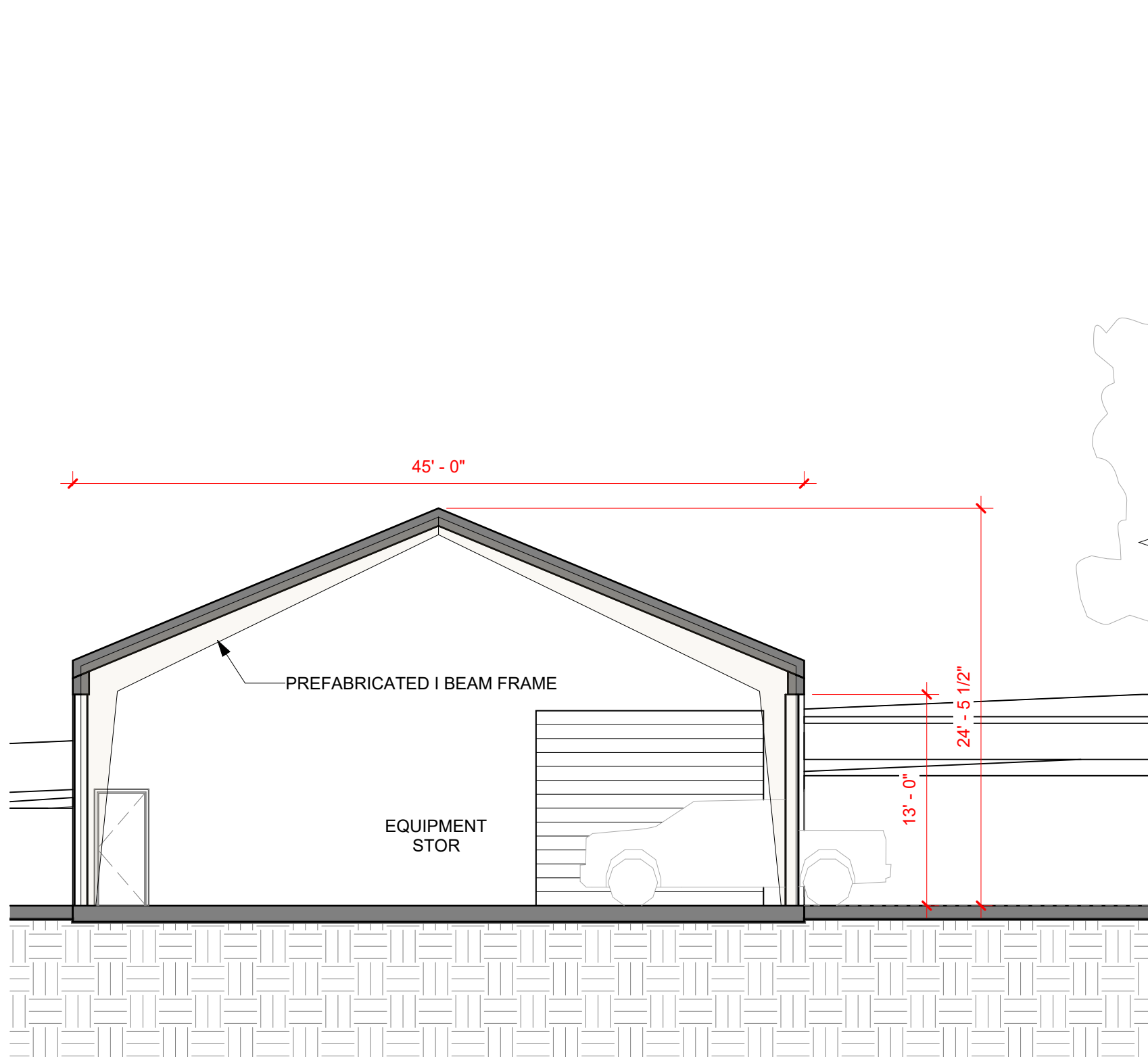
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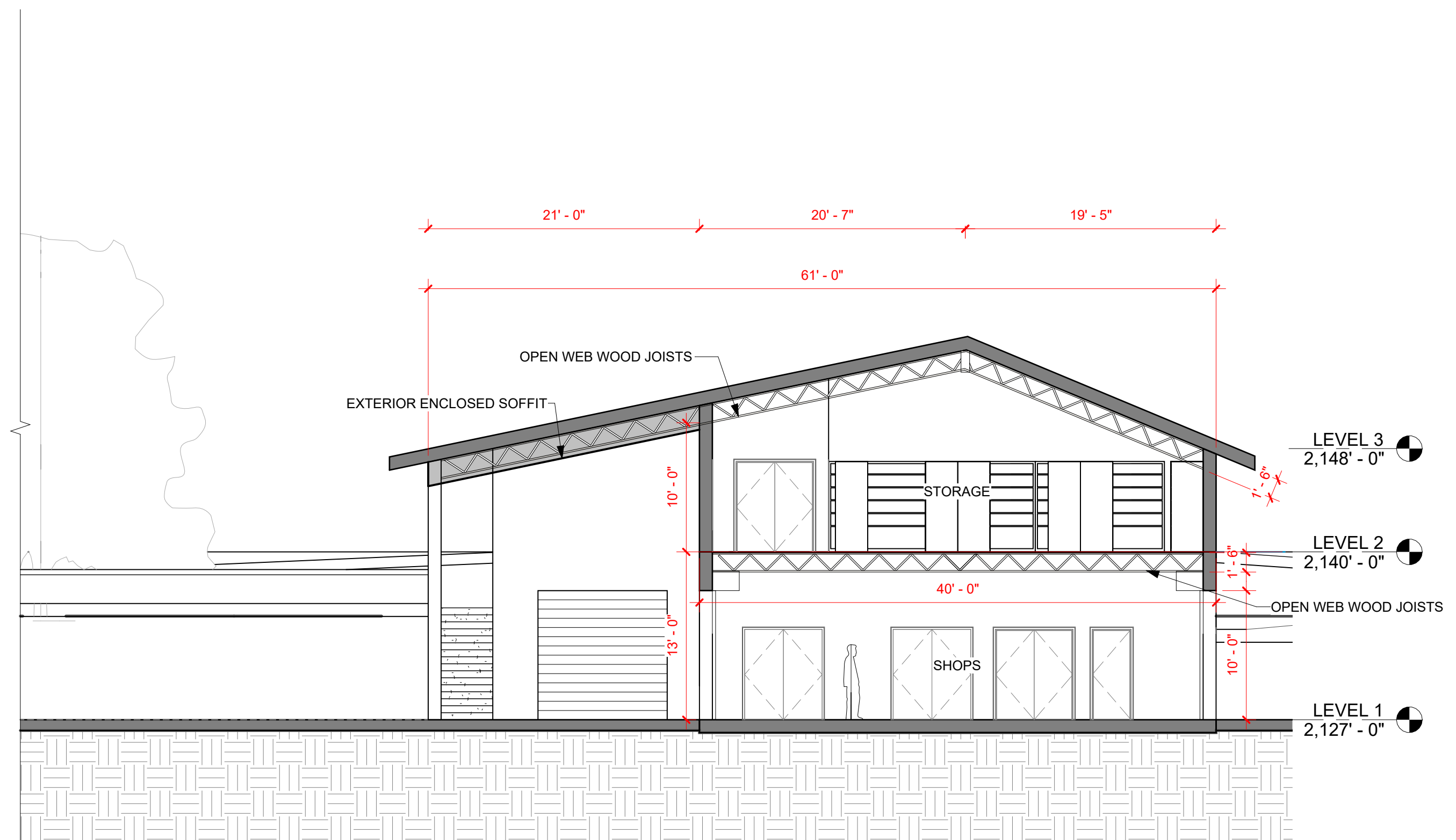
3 FUELING SECTION
A4.01 1/8" = 1'-0"



1 ADMIN BUILDING SECTION
A4.01 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 SHOP & EQUIPMENT SECTION
A4.01 1/8" = 1'-0"



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Key Plan:

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SECTIONS

Sheet No.:

A4.01

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Skyline Field Office Rebuild

Cost Estimate Summary

Based on R. Borinstein Co. 9/18/25 Estimate

Buildings (29,355sf total)	\$19,851,000
Infrastructure – Utilities storm drainage, domestic and fire water, sanitary septic system, electrical, solar and battery backup, generator, EV charging, site lighting, data/communication	\$4,357,000
Sitework – Hardscape & Landscape Rough grading and retaining walls, vehicular paving, pedestrian paving, outdoor gathering spaces, site furnishings, fencing, gates, landscape and planting; highway widening, grading and paving	\$6,413,000
Mobilization, Site Prep, Demolition Job trailer and storage, temporary utilities, erosion control during construction, tree protection, miscellaneous demo	\$444,000
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST	\$31,065,000

Technical Studies Supporting the SFO Project

Table 1. Technical Studies and their Status

Technical Study	Progress	Notes/Outcome
Topographic Survey	Complete	Used to inform site layout and design.
Boundary Survey	Complete	Used to confirm county/city boundaries and parcel locations that will confirm jurisdictions responsible for land use permitting. Since the proposed building footprints span two separate jurisdictions, a lot line adjustment or merger may be needed for permitting.
Vegetation Survey and Wetland Delineation	Complete	A 0.067-acre wetland located along the existing roadway in the Christmas Tree Farm area will be impacted by the project and will require mitigation. The wetlands are growing in old roadbeds (when the road was wider) that have become revegetated and are not connected to other water drainages. The habitat for the rest of the site is generally of low ecological quality.
Well Feasibility Study	Complete	The reuse of the existing onsite wells is not feasible due to outdated construction, and a new onsite well is recommended. Cost estimates have been prepared for installation of a new onsite well and will be evaluated against the cost of supplying water via new distribution infrastructure from the existing SFO well.
Geotechnical Desktop Study	Complete	Used to inform design.
Phase I Environmental Site Assessment	In Progress	Used to confirm absence of hazardous conditions.
Cultural Resource Survey	In Progress	Used to inform presence of significant cultural resources that need protection.
Traffic Impact Study	In Progress	The location of the driveway ingress/egress point from the highway to achieve adequate line of sight and associated requirements from Caltrans may be challenging.
Percolation and Infiltration Testing	Not Started	Will be implemented after the Board approves the draft schematic design. Studies will inform the scale and design of the stormwater drainage system.
Subsurface Geotechnical Investigation	Not Started	Will be implemented after the Board approves the draft schematic design. Study will inform grading work, compaction, and foundation design.

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