

# Appendix I

## VMT Screening Analysis

# MEMORANDUM



To: Mr. Matthew Turk  
Holland Partners

Date: September 26, 2024

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Subject: ***Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening Analysis for the Magnolia Residential Project, Fountain Valley***

Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (LLG) is pleased to submit this Vehicle Miles Traveled<sup>1</sup> (VMT) Screening Analysis Memorandum for the proposed Magnolia Residential Project (hereinafter referred to as “Project”) located in the City of Fountain Valley, Orange County, California. This Technical Memorandum outlines the VMT screening criteria, analysis methodology and conclusions. It should be noted that the approach and methodology outlined in this Technical Memorandum is consistent with the *City of Fountain Valley's Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines for Land Use Projects in CEQA and General Plan Consistency (dated June 2020)*, which provides additional detail on the language and analysis procedures described in this Technical Memorandum.

The following sections of this Technical Memorandum summarize the Project description, present City of Fountain Valley’s VMT screening criteria, analysis methodology and conclusions.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Project site is located east of Magnolia Street, north of Recreation Circle and south of I-405 in the City of Fountain Valley. The triangular-shaped 6.87-acre Project site consists of four (4) parcels that are addressed at 16800 Magnolia Street and 9025 Recreation Circle. The Project site is currently developed with surface parking lots, but was previously occupied by Boomers, a defunct amusement/recreation facility which included an arcade, miniature golf, batting cages, etc. Access to the Project site is currently provided via two full access driveways, one located along Recreation Circle and the other located along Magnolia Street, north of Recreation Circle.

**Figure 1** presents a vicinity map that illustrates the general location of the Project and the surrounding street system. **Figure 2** is an existing aerial photograph of the site.

<sup>1</sup> Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) measures the total distance driven by vehicles in a given area.

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The Project is proposing to demolish the currently vacant Boomers site and in its place construct two (2), seven-story residential apartment buildings with a total of 657 apartment units and 4,460 square-foot (SF) of retail space with two parking structures and one surface lot. It should be noted that 12% (78 units) of the total apartments will be reserved for rental to lower income households. The proposed Project will include:

- North Building:
  - 339 units
  - 2,774 SF of retail space
- South Building:
  - 318 units
  - 1,686 SF of retail space

*Table 1* provides a summary of the Project development, inclusive of the Project's proposed parking supply based on information provided by *MVE + Partners*. *Figure 3* presents the conceptual site plan prepared by *Holland Partner Group & MVE Architects*.

### **PROJECT SCREENING CRITERIA**

Under the VMT methodology, screening is used to determine if a project will be required to conduct a detailed VMT analysis. The following section discusses the various screening methods recommended by the *City of Fountain Valley's Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines for Land Use Projects in CEQA and General Plan Consistency (dated June 2020)*, and whether the Project will screen-out, either in its entirety, or partially based on individual land uses.

The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has also formally adopted VMT as the metric for reviewing the transportation impacts of a land use development project. Caltrans has released the Vehicle Miles Traveled-Focused *Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG)*, dated May 20, 2020 in order to provide guidance on Caltrans' review of land use projects.

Caltrans' TISG references the *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts In California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)*, dated December 2018, prepared by the State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) as the basis for its guidance on VMT assessment. The City of Fountain Valley adopted new traffic impact criteria to be consistent with the CEQA revisions and OPR recommendations. These new guidelines provide screening criteria and methodology for VMT analysis. Since the City's guidelines are generally consistent



with OPR guidelines, no separate VMT analysis has been prepared for Caltrans' review of the proposed project.

There are three types of screening that the City will apply to screen projects from project-level assessment. Land development projects that have one or more of the following attributes is sufficient to screen the project out of further evaluation and therefore may be presumed to create a less than significant impact with respect to VMT. These screening steps are summarized below:

### Step 1: Transit Priority Area (TPA) Screening

The *City of Fountain Valley's Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines for Land Use Projects in CEQA and General Plan Consistency (dated June 2020)* state:

*"If the entirety of the project is located within a TPA<sup>2</sup> may be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary. This presumption shall **NOT** be appropriate if the project includes any of the following:*

- 1. Has a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of less than 0.75;*
- 2. Includes more parking for use by residents, customers, or employees of the project than required by the jurisdiction (if the jurisdiction requires the project to supply parking);*
- 3. Is inconsistent with the applicable Sustainable Communities Strategy (as determined by the lead agency, with input from the Metropolitan Planning Organization); or*
- 4. Replaces affordable residential units with a smaller number of moderate- or high-income residential units.*

*TPA's in Fountain Valley are mapped and shown on **Appendix A**. Please note that Fountain Valley is not in control of transit routes within the City as OCTA manages the network. Transit routes should be periodically reviewed and this document updated accordingly"*

As shown in **Figure 4**, the proposed Project, in its entirety, is not within a TPA. Therefore, the proposed Project will not screen out.

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<sup>2</sup> A TPA is defined as a half-mile area around an existing major transit stop or an existing stop along a high-quality transit corridor per the definitions below:

Pub. Resources Code, § 21064.3 - 'Major transit stop' means a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

Pub. Resources Code, § 21155 - For purposes of this section, a 'high-quality transit corridor' means a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours.



Step 2: Low VMT Area Screening

The City of Fountain Valley's Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines for Land Use Projects in CEQA and General Plan Consistency (dated June 2020) state:

*“When a residential or office project is located within a low VMT-generating area it may be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary.”*

*“To identify if the project is in a low VMT-generating area, the analyst may review **Appendix B**, which provides a map of low VMT-generating zones in Fountain Valley as compared to the County. Additionally, as noted above, the analyst must identify if the project is consistent with the existing land use within that TAZ and use professional judgment that there is nothing unique about the project that would otherwise be misrepresented by using the data from the travel demand model.”*

This criteria is only applicable to the residential component, and not to the retail component. *Appendix B* of the City of Fountain Valley's Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines for Land Use Projects in CEQA and General Plan Consistency (dated June 2020) has been used to verify if the proposed Project is within a low VMT area. As presented in **Figure 5**, the proposed Project is within a low VMT area (yellow area [0 to 15% below the City Average]).

Utilizing the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model (OCTAM) version 5.1, the City of Fountain Valley has a density of 3.29 households per acre. It should be noted that the proposed Project is located within Transportation Analysis Zone<sup>3</sup> (TAZ) 969 and after the proposed Project is developed, the TAZ will have a density of 7.20 households per acre as shown below. The proposed Project is consistent with the existing land use within that TAZ.

Table 2. Development Density Consistency

	Households	Acres	Density
City of Fountain Valley	18,416	5,595	3.29
TAZ 969 (After Development)	1,152	160	7.20

Additionally, the proposed Project will add 657 apartments to TAZ 969. Based on the Socioeconomic Data provided in OCTAM, the allowable households growth by buildout year is 659 units, which is more than the provided households units of 657.

<sup>3</sup> Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ), is the unit of geography used to model and analyze travel behavior and traffic flow within the region.



Therefore, the proposed Project is consistent with the General Plan as it falls within the development envelope of the TAZ.

Hence, the residential component of the proposed Project will screen out.

### Step 3: Project Type Screening

The *City of Fountain Valley's Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines for Land Use Projects in CEQA and General Plan Consistency* (dated June 2020) states:

*“Local serving retail projects less than 50,000 square feet may be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary. Local serving retail generally improves the convenience of shopping close to home and has the effect of reducing vehicle travel. Minor interior or exterior expansions could be screened from assessment. The increase in square footage applies to the net new or increase in square footage of a new project or re-tenanting of a project. The following uses can be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary as their uses are local serving in nature:*

- *Local-serving K-12 schools*
- *Local parks*
- *Day care centers*
- *Local-serving retail uses less than 50,000 square feet, including:*
  - *Gas stations*
  - *Banks*
  - *Restaurants, bars, cocktail lounges*
  - *Shopping Center*
  - *Service uses such as hair salons, barbers, gyms, equipment sales and rentals, home electronics and small appliance repair, laundromats, tailors, and other uses listed as permitted in Section 21.10.030 of the Fountain Valley Municipal Code*
- *Local-serving hotels (e.g. non-destination hotels)*
- *Student housing projects on or adjacent to college campuses*
- *Local-serving assembly uses (places of worship, community organizations)*
- *Community institutions (Public libraries, fire stations, local government)*
- *Local-serving community colleges that are consistent with the assumptions noted in the RTP/SCS*
- *Affordable or supportive housing*



- *Assisted living facilities*
- *Senior housing (as defined by HUD)*
- *Re-tenanting of existing non-residential space*
- *Interior expansions*
- *Minor exterior expansions*
- *Projects generating less than 110 net new daily vehicle trips<sup>4,5</sup>*
  - *This generally corresponds to the following “typical” development potentials:*
    - *11 single family housing units*
    - *16 multi-family, condominiums, or townhouse housing units*
    - *10,000 sq. ft. of office*
    - *15,000 sq. ft. of light industrial<sup>6</sup>*
    - *63,000 sq. ft. of warehousing<sup>5,3</sup>*
    - *79,000 sq. ft. of high cube transload and short-term storage warehouse<sup>5,3</sup>*
- *Other local-serving projects as approved by the Planning and Building Director, City Engineer and/or Public Works Director”*

As described above, the proposed Project will provide 4,460 SF of retail space, which is less than 50,000 SF is local serving. Therefore, the retail component of the proposed Project will screen out. Further, the residential component of the proposed Project will not screen out since it is not a local serving use.

## **CONCLUSION**

Consistent with the *City of Fountain Valley's Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines for Land Use Projects in CEQA and General Plan Consistency (dated June 2020)* and the VMT screening criteria and analysis methodology outlined in this Technical Memorandum, the proposed Project will screen out since it is located

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<sup>4</sup> Note that a redevelopment project replacing an existing use would estimate the net increase in trips above trips what already exists.

<sup>5</sup> This threshold ties directly to the OPR technical advisory and notes that CEQA provides a categorical exemption for existing facilities, including additions to existing structures of up to 10,000 square feet, so long as the project is in an area where public infrastructure is available to allow for maximum planned development and the project is not in an environmentally sensitive area. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15301, subd. (e)(2).) Typical project types for which trip generation increases relatively linearly with building footprint (i.e., general office building, single tenant office building, office park, and business park) generate or attract an additional 110-124 trips per 10,000 square feet. Therefore, absent substantial evidence otherwise, it is reasonable to conclude that the addition of 110 or fewer trips could be considered not to lead to a significant impact.

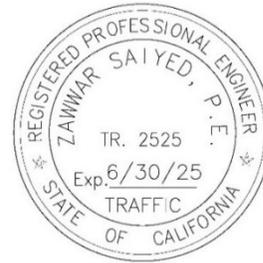
<sup>6</sup> Threshold may be higher depending on the tenant and the use of the site. This number was estimated using rates from ITE's Trip Generation Manual.



within a low VMT area. Additionally, the retail component of the proposed Project will also screen out since it is a local serving use of less than 50,000 SF. Therefore, in accordance with the City of Fountain Valley's guidelines, the proposed Project is exempt from the preparation of any further VMT analysis and is presumed to have a less than significant CEQA-related transportation impact.

\* \* \* \* \*

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Analysis Technical Memorandum. Should you have any questions regarding the memorandum, please contact us at (949) 825-6175.

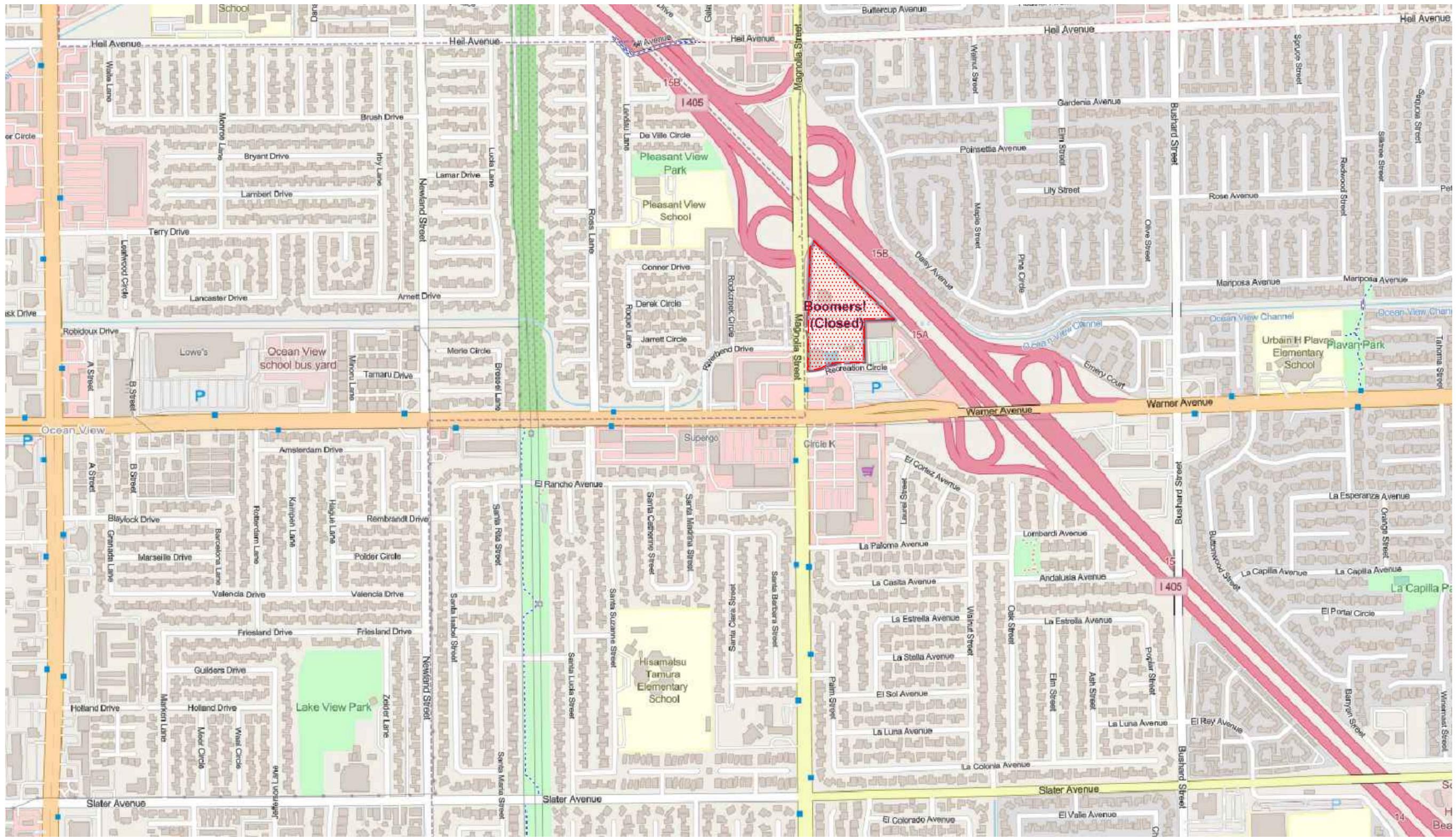




**TABLE 1**  
**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Land Use / Project Description</b>	<b>Total Project Development</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> North Building Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Studio</li> <li>○ 1 Bedroom/1 Bath</li> <li>○ 2 Bedrooms/2 Bath</li> <li>○ 3 Bedroom/2 Bath</li> </ul>	57 units 167 units 103 units 12 units
<b><i>North Building Residential Units:</i></b>	<b><i>339 units</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/> South Building Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Studio</li> <li>○ 1 Bedroom/1 Bath</li> <li>○ 2 Bedrooms/2 Bath</li> <li>○ 3 Bedroom/2 Bath</li> </ul>	43 units 153 units 112 units 10 units
<b><i>South Building Residential Units:</i></b>	<b><i>318 units</i></b>
<b><i>Total Residential Units:</i></b>	<b><i>657 units</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Retail/Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ North Building (Retail)</li> <li>○ South Building (Retail)</li> </ul>	2,774 SF 1,686 SF
<b><i>Total Retail/Commercial Space</i></b>	<b><i>4,460 SF</i></b>

<sup>7</sup> Source: Holland Partner Group / MVE + Partners.



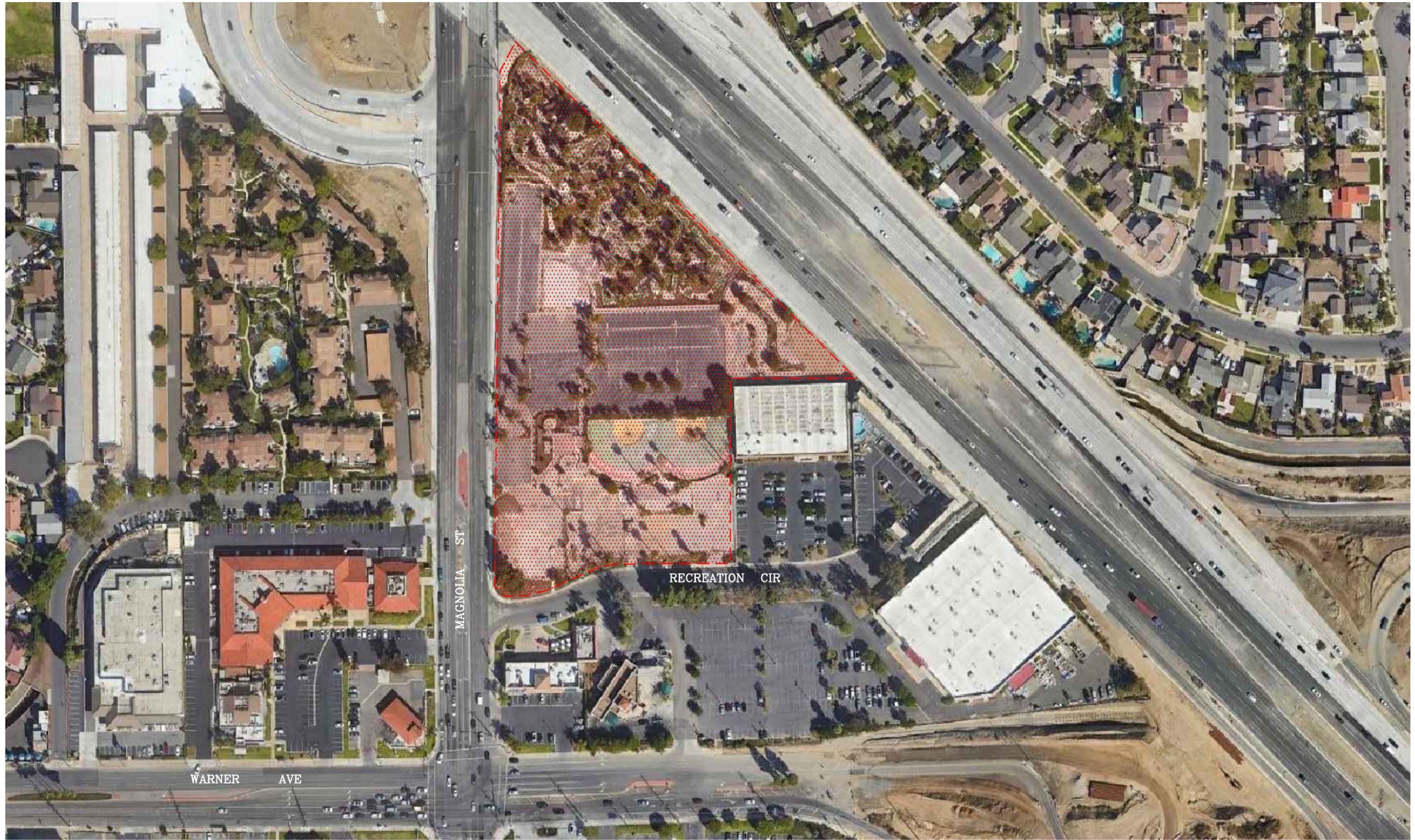
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SOURCE: OPEN STREETS  
 KEY  
 [Red hatched box] = PROJECT SITE

# FIGURE 1

VICINITY MAP  
 MAGNOLIA RESIDENTIAL, FOUNTAIN VALLEY



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SOURCE: GOOGLE

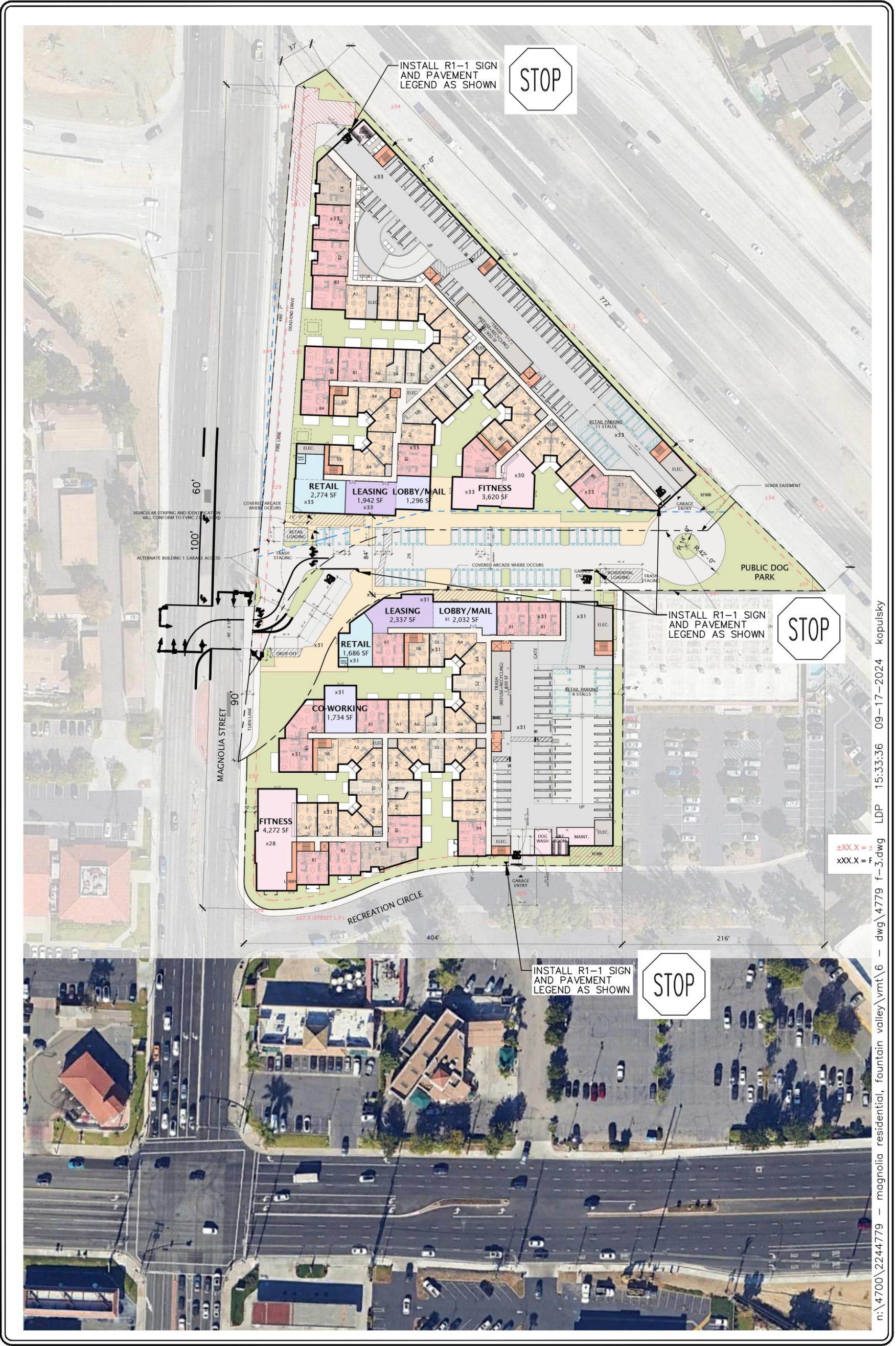
KEY

 = PROJECT SITE

FIGURE 2

EXISTING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH  
MAGNOLIA RESIDENTIAL, FOUNTAIN VALLEY





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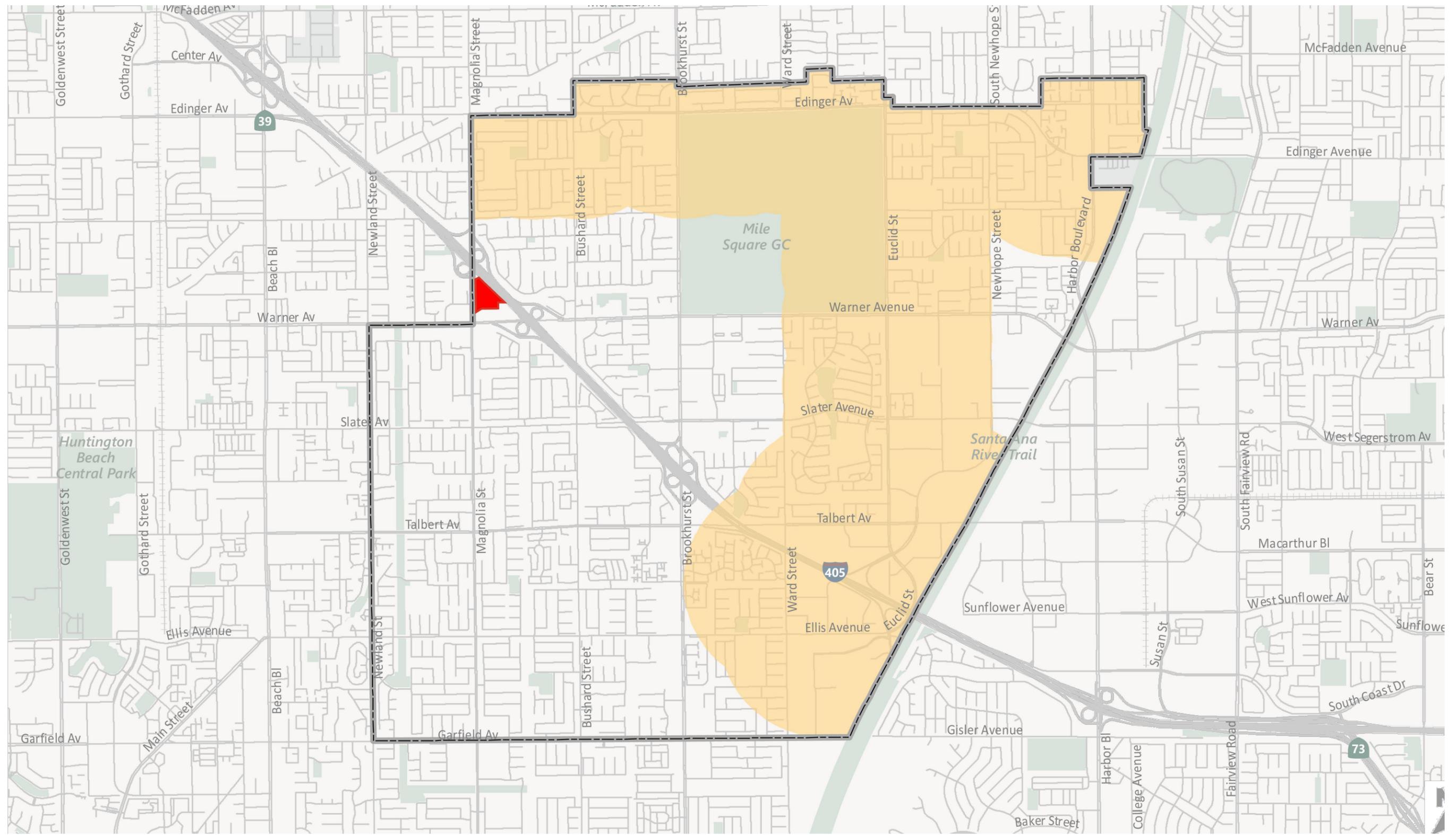
SOURCE: HOLLAND PARTNER GROUP

**FIGURE 3**



 SCALE: 1"=100'

**PROPOSED SITE PLAN**  
MAGNOLIA RESIDENTIAL, FOUNTAIN VALLEY



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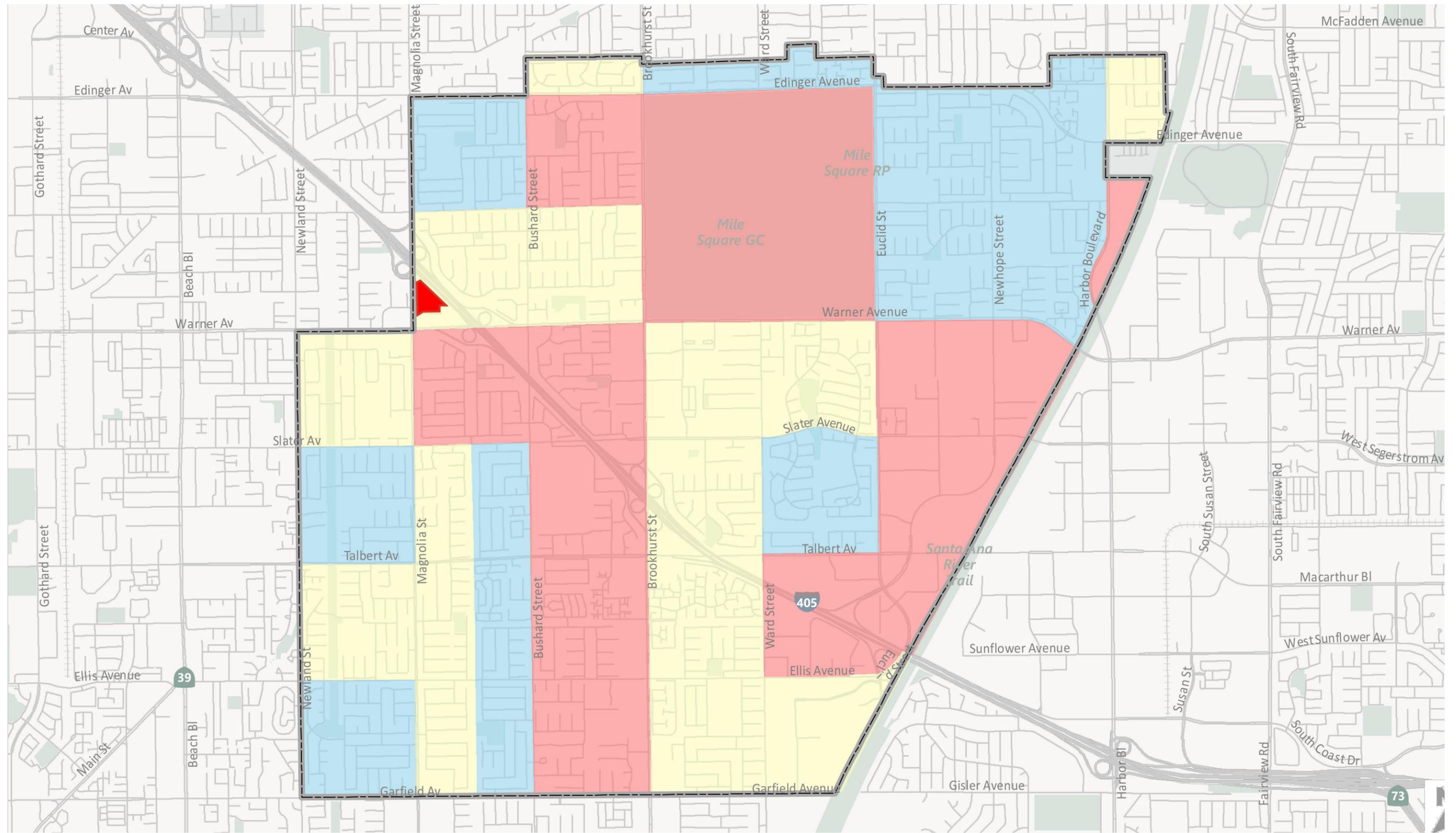
SOURCE: CITY OF FOUNTAIN VALLEY TIA GUIDELINES (DATED JUNE 2020)



- KEY**
-  = PROJECT SITE
  -  City Boundary
  -  Transit Priority Area

# FIGURE 4

**TPA SCREENING MAP**  
MAGNOLIA RESIDENTIAL, FOUNTAIN VALLEY



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SOURCE: CITY OF FOUNTAIN VALLEY TIA GUIDELINES (DATED JUNE 2020)



KEY	
	= PROJECT SITE
	City Boundary
	<-15% below City Average City Average: 27.51 VMT/SP
	0 to -15% below City Average
	Higher than City Average

**FIGURE 5**

**LOW VMT SCREENING MAP**  
MAGNOLIA RESIDENTIAL, FOUNTAIN VALLEY