Application for Urban Design Committee Review

Department of Planning and Development Review
900 E. Broad Street, Room 510
Richmond, Virginia 23219 | (804) 646-6335
https://www.rva.gov/planning-development-review/urban-design-committee

Application Type (select one)

- [x] Location, Character, & Extent
- [ ] Section 17.05
- [ ] Other:
- [ ] Encroachment
- [ ] Design Overlay District

Review Type (select one)

- [x] Conceptual
- [ ] Final

Project Information

Submission Date: 3/20/2025

Project Name: A Path Forward at Amelia Street School

Project Address: 1821 Amelia Street, Richmond, Va, 2322

Brief Project Description (this is not a replacement for the required detailed narrative):

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, in collaboration with Richmond Public Schools, Virginia Commonwealth University's Office of Sustainability, and design firm Marvel, seeks to implement green stormwater infrastructure(GSI) improvements at Amelia Street School in Richmond, VA. This project will reduce stormwater runoff, increase urban tree canopy, and reduce heat island effect while also directly reflecting the school community's vision for an ADA-accessible, outdoor learning environment for students of all abilities.

Applicant Information (a City representative must be the applicant, with an exception for encroachments)

Name: Ronald Hathaway

Email: rhathawa@rvaschools.net

City Agency: Richmond Public Schools

Phone: 804-780-6251

Main Contact (if different from Applicant): Neal Friedman

Company: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Phone: 7572772706

Email: nfriedman@allianceforthebay.org

Submittal Deadlines

All applications and support materials must be filed no later than 21 days prior to the scheduled meeting of the Urban Design Committee (UDC). Please see the schedule on page 3 as actual deadlines are adjusted due to City holidays. **Late or incomplete submissions will be deferred to the next meeting.**

Application

It is important that the applicant discuss the proposal with appropriate City agencies, Zoning Administration staff, and area civic associations and residents prior to filing the application with the UDC. Applications should be emailed to the Urban Design Committee Secretary, Ray Roakes, at Raymond.roakes@rva.gov.

Background

The UDC is an 11 member committee created by City Council in 1968 whose purpose is to advise the City Planning Commission (CPC) on the design of projects on City property or right-of-way. The UDC provides advice of an aesthetic nature in connection with the performance of the duties of the Commission under Sections 17.05, 17.06, and 17.07 of the City Charter. The UDC also advises the Department of Public Works in regards to private encroachments in the public right-of-way.

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RICHMOND PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
PDR

Submission Requirements

- An electronic copy (PDF) of all application materials, which can be emailed, or delivered by FTP or USB.
- Plan sheets should be electronically scaled to be 11" x 17" if printed.
- All applications must include the attached application form and the support materials listed below, as applicable to the project, based on Review Type.

It is strongly recommended to request the Zoning Administration to review a project's compliance with the City Zoning Code prior to application to the UDC.

Conceptual Review:

- A detailed project narrative which includes the following: project purpose, background, and context, details of community outreach and copies of distributed materials if applicable, project budget and funding sources, description of construction program and estimated construction start date.
- A site plan for the project indicating site characteristics which include: building footprints, parking areas, pedestrian routes, recreation areas, open areas, and areas of future expansion.
- A set of floor plans and elevations, as detailed as possible. Precedent images if applicable.
- A landscaping plan which shows the general location and character of plant materials and notes any existing tree to be removed.

Final Review:

- A detailed project narrative which includes the following: project purpose, background, and context, details of community outreach and copies of distributed materials if applicable, project budget and funding sources, description of construction program, and estimated construction start date.
- A site plan for the project indicating site characteristics which include: building footprints, parking areas, pedestrian routes, recreation areas, open areas, and areas of future expansion.
- A set of floor plans and elevations, as detailed as possible. Elevations should show directly adjacent development.
- A landscaping plan that includes a complete plant schedule, the precise location of all plant materials, and a landscape maintenance analysis. The plant schedule must show number, size and type of each planting proposed. If existing trees are to be removed, their size, type, and location must be noted on the landscape plan.
- The location of all lighting units should be noted on a site plan, including wall-mounted, site, and parking lot lighting. Other site details such as benches, trash containers, and special paving materials should also be located. Include specification sheets for each item.
- Samples of all proposed exterior building materials, including but not limited to brick, mortar, shingles, siding, glass, paint, and stain colors. When an actual sample cannot be provided, a product information sheet that shows the item or a photo of an existing item may be substituted.

Review and Processing

- Once an application is received, it is reviewed by Staff, who compiles a report that is sent to the UDC.
- A copy of the report and the meeting agenda will be sent to the applicant prior to the meeting.
- At the UDC meeting, the applicant or a representative should be present or the application may be deferred to the next regularly scheduled meeting. It is also strongly suggested that a representative of the City Agency which will have final responsibility for the item be present.
- Once the UDC recommends action on the application, it is automatically placed on the agenda for the next City Planning Commission (CPC) meeting. Exceptions to this are encroachment applications, recommendations for which are forwarded to the Department of Public Works.
- At the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant or a representative should be present, or the application may be deferred to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

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Regular meetings are scheduled on the second Thursday after the first Tuesday of each month at **10:00 a.m. in the 5th floor conference room of City Hall, 900 E. Broad Street**. Special meetings are scheduled as needed.

Meeting Schedule 2025

UDC Meetings	UDC Submission Deadlines	Anticipated Date of Planning Commission Following the UDC Meeting
January 16, 2025	December 19, 2024	January 21, 2025
February 13, 2025	January 16, 2025	February 18, 2025
March 13, 2025	February 13, 2025	March 18, 2025
April 10, 2025	March 20, 2025	April 15, 2025
May 15, 2025	April 17, 2025	May 20, 2025
June 12, 2025	May 15, 2025	June 17, 2025
July 10, 2025	June 19, 2025	July 15, 2025
August 14, 2025	July 17, 2025	August 19, 2025
September 11, 2025	August 14, 2025	September 16, 2025
October 16, 2025	September 18, 2025	October 21, 2025
November 13, 2025	October 16, 2025	November 18, 2025
December 11, 2025	November 13, 2025	December 16, 2025

The Richmond Urban Design Committee is an 11 member advisory committee created by City Council in 1968. Its purpose is to advise the City Planning Commission on the design of City projects. The Urban Design Committee reviews projects for appropriateness in "location, character, and extent" and for consistency with the City's Master Plan and forwards recommendations to the City Planning Commission. The Urban Design Committee also advises the Department of Public Works in regards to private encroachments in the public right-of-way.

For more information, please contact the Urban Design Committee Secretary, Ray Roakes, at (804) 646-6335 and raymond.roakes@rva.gov.

ALLIANCE
for the Chesapeake Bay

A PATH FORWARD AT THE AMELIA STREET SCHOOL

A COLLECTIVE VISION FOR AN ECOLOGICAL, ACCESSIBLE EDUCATIONAL TRAIL

MARVEL

Amelia Street is a RPS school located in Richmond's historically redlined, underserved Randolph neighborhood that serves students ages 5 to 21 years with significant intellectual disabilities, behavioral issues, or complex health needs (which include physical disabilities).

Principal Mark Phillips has a goal of creating partnerships within the community that can bring expertise and resources to his school. Specifically, he is seeking partnerships that support hands-on activities, build functional life skills, highlight the outdoors, and create safe learning environments for his students.

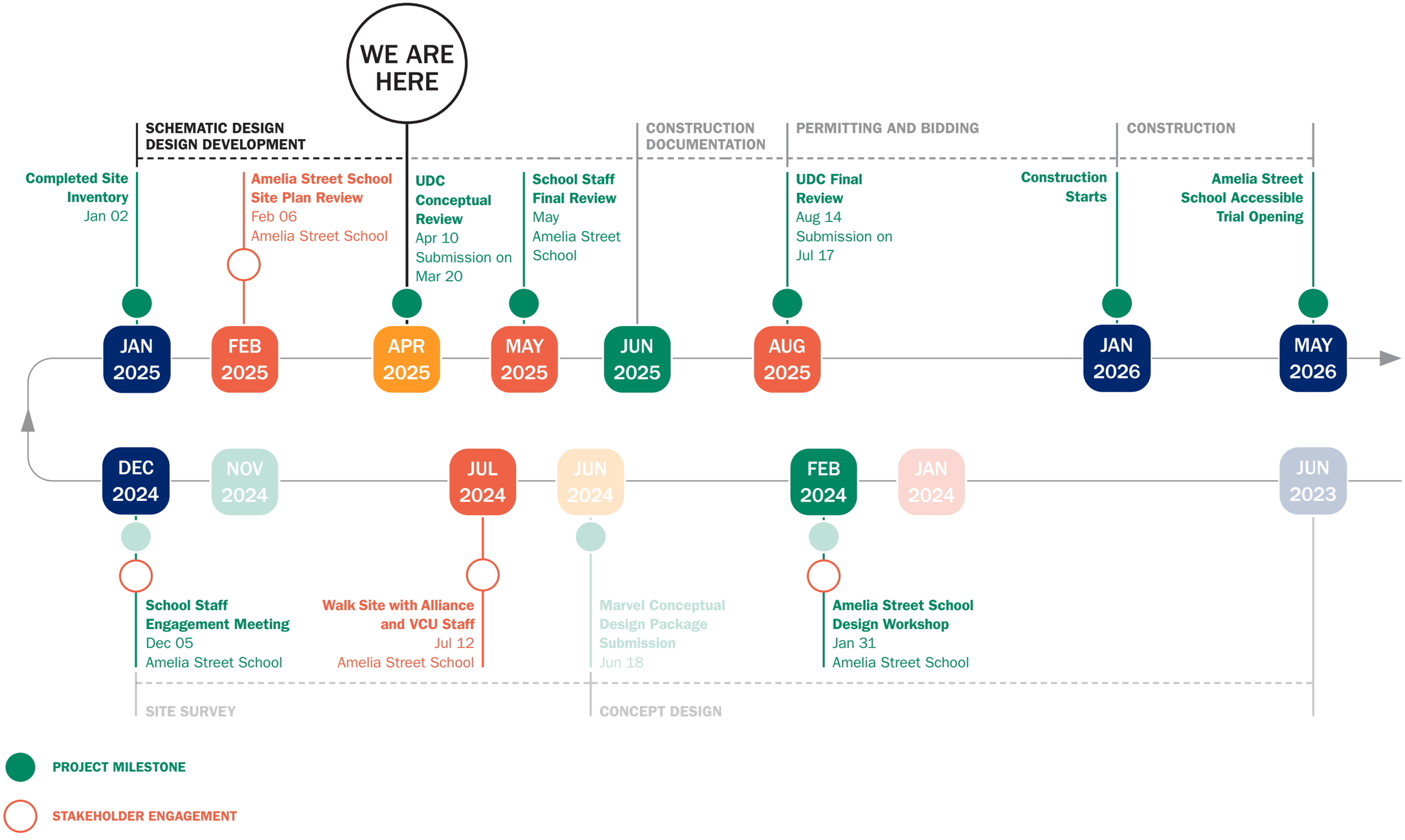
The goals of this project are to improve water quality in the James River and Chesapeake Bay by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution and to promote outdoor learning and environmental literacy through enhanced access to the schoolyard for all students, regardless of ability level. Proposed best management practices (BMPs) include bioretention areas, conservation landscaping, increased native tree canopy, and a permeable, ADA-accessible trail. At the Amelia Street School, the Alliance focused on utilizing stormwater infrastructure as a child-friendly, playful demonstration of how water flows.

The Path Forward at the Amelia Street School will demonstrate that the confluence of accessibility, ecology, safety and education can also be beautiful and engaging.

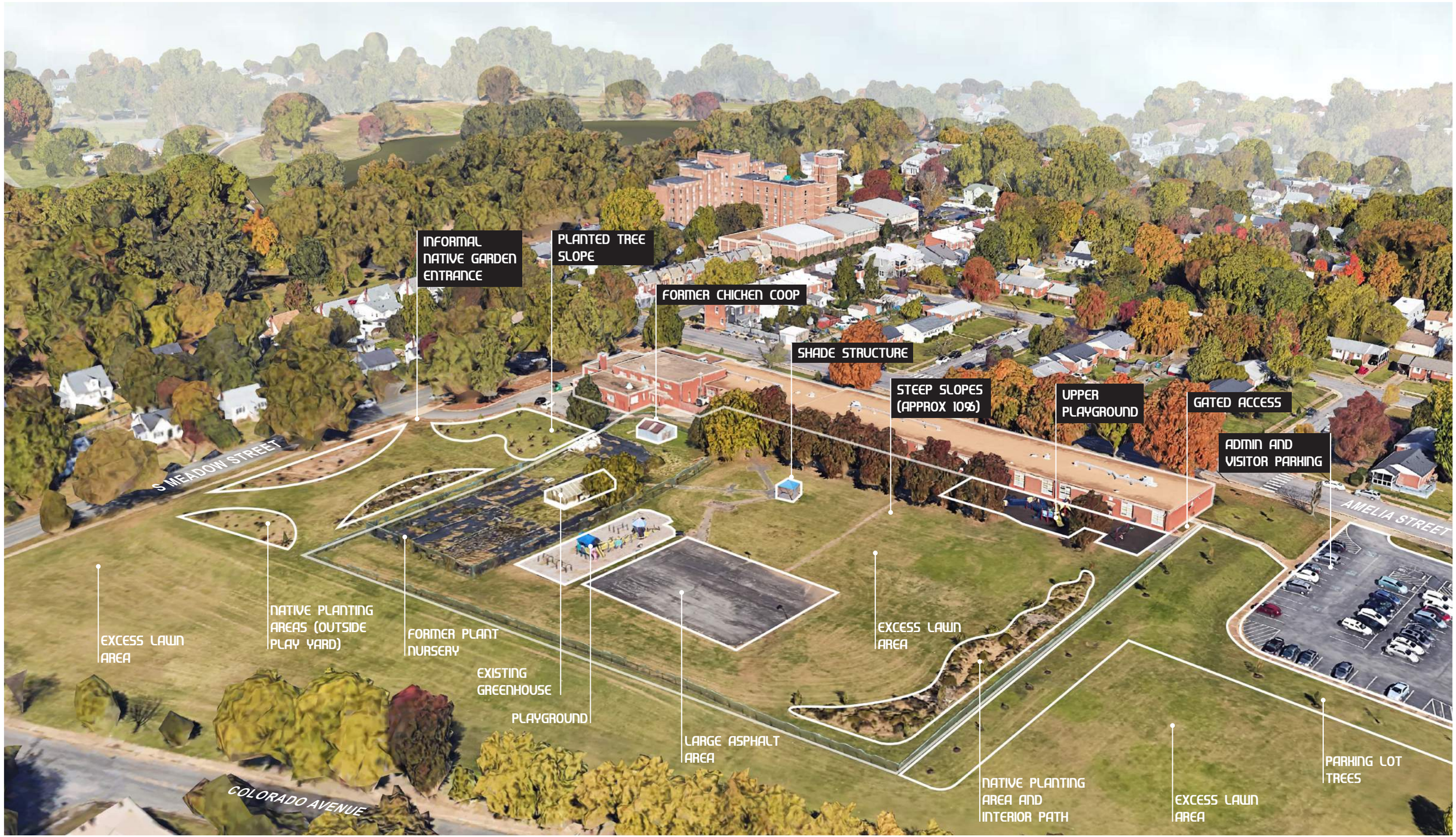
This project had been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement 4I-95325001, 4I-95303301, and/or C2-96387301.

MARVEL

PROJECT SCHEDULE



PROJECT SITE



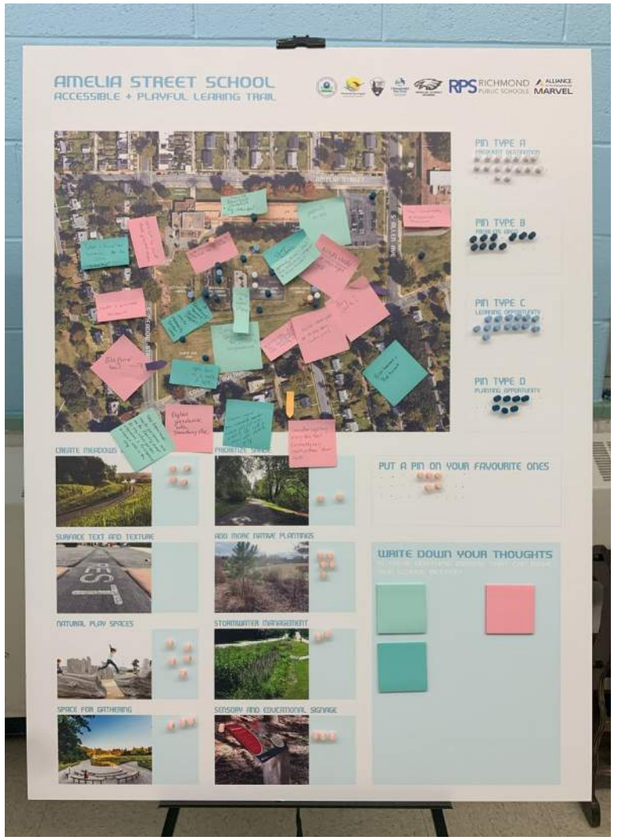
PROJECT SITE

The rear yard in the fall highlights the severity of the slope and existing pathwork designed to traverse the grade change

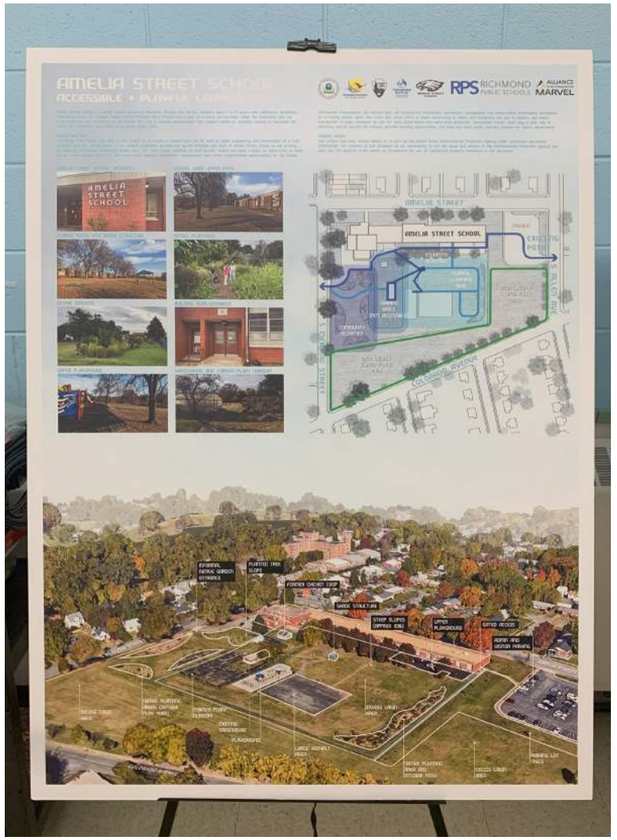
A underutilized and gated greenhouse sits within the school campus and is located in a space that can be repurposed for educational or ecological purposes

Summer in the western native gardens highlights the diversity and beauty of the plants installed in 2021. Students currently do not have direct access to this space as it is located west of the school yard fence enclosure

STAKEHOLDER + STAFF ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



2024.01.31 AMELIA STREET SCHOOL ACCESSIBLE TRAIL STAKEHOLDER + STAFF ENGAGEMENT BOARDS



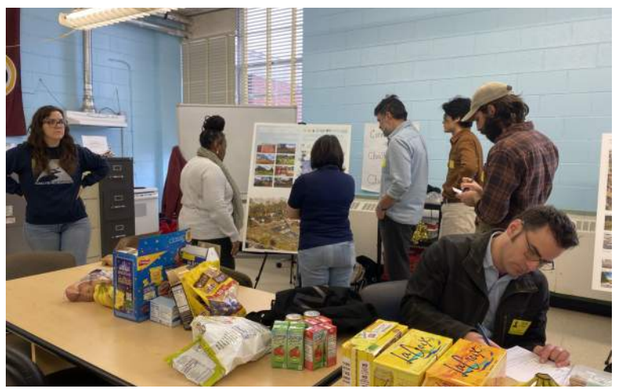
2024.01.31 AMELIA STREET SCHOOL ACCESSIBLE TRAIL STAKEHOLDER + STAFF ENGAGEMENT BOARDS

2024.01.31 AMELIA STREET SCHOOL DRONE FLYING

2024.07.12 AMELIA STREET SCHOOL SITE WALK WITH ALLIANCE AND VCU STAFFS

2024.11.12 BIRDHOUSE FARMERS MARKET COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

2024.01.31 AMELIA STREET SCHOOL SITE WALK WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFFS



2024.01.31 AMELIA STREET SCHOOL DESIGN WORKSHOP

2024.07.12 AMELIA STREET SCHOOL SITE WALK WITH ALLIANCE AND VCU STAFFS

2024.11.12 BIRDHOUSE FARMERS MARKET COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

STAKEHOLDER + STAFF FEEDBACK

PRINCIPLES OF ACCESSIBILE DESIGN

- Providing **full access to all areas of the site** for students with mobility devices, all pathways should remain under 5% slope if possible as to avoid using handrails and flush/level with the school's doors/gathering spaces adjacent to it.

- Providing **adequate sight lines** across the schoolyard to monitor the students during play.

- **Create an array of spaces or 'nodes'** for students and community members with sensory disabilities or sensitivities that provide opportunities for quiet, textural experiences, or to improve their gross motor skills. The ADA trail should also have playful elements.

- Use of **scented plants** in a calming environment to stimulate the students' olfactory nerves. All the plants should be durable and easy for maintenance.

- **Companion seating**, free of obstructions, next to all of the benches and picnic tables for a wheelchair user to sit comfortably among others

- **Outdoor classroom** could possibly include low amphitheater-type seating with companion seating (see above). A chalk or dry-erase board should be included in a structure that can withstand vandalism.

- **Multi-use ball court** the basketball court should be repaved and redesigned to handle multiple sports.

- **Shade and seating** adjacent to the gathering "nodes", playground, and the ball court.

SITE SURVEY

NOTES:

1. THIS TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY IN THE CITY OF RICHMOND, VA WAS COMPLETED UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION AND RESPONSIBLE CHARGE OF KAREN A. HUBBARD FROM AN ACTUAL GROUND SURVEY MADE UNDER MY SUPERVISION; THE IMAGERY AND DATA WAS OBTAINED BETWEEN 12/10/2024 AND 12/13/2024; AND THIS MAP MEETS MINIMUM ACCURACY STANDARDS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

2. VERTICAL DATUM: NAVD88

3. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DATUM ESTABLISHED WITH VRS NETWORK RTK SOLUTIONS FOR GPS OBSERVED POINTS.

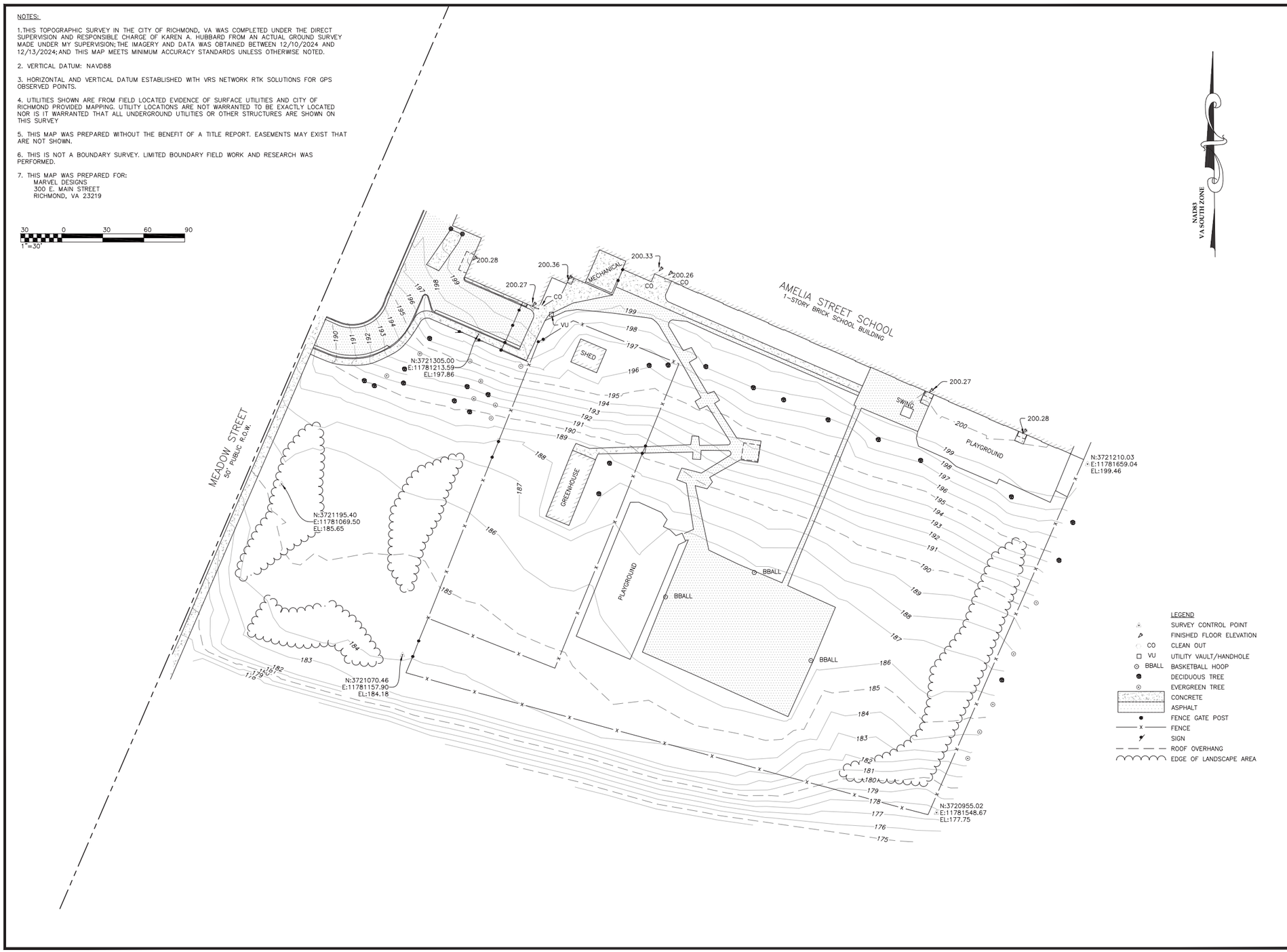
4. UTILITIES SHOWN ARE FROM FIELD LOCATED EVIDENCE OF SURFACE UTILITIES AND CITY OF RICHMOND PROVIDED MAPPING. UTILITY LOCATIONS ARE NOT WARRANTED TO BE EXACTLY LOCATED NOR IS IT WARRANTED THAT ALL UNDERGROUND UTILITIES OR OTHER STRUCTURES ARE SHOWN ON THIS SURVEY

5. THIS MAP WAS PREPARED WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A TITLE REPORT. EASEMENTS MAY EXIST THAT ARE NOT SHOWN.

6. THIS IS NOT A BOUNDARY SURVEY. LIMITED BOUNDARY FIELD WORK AND RESEARCH WAS PERFORMED.

7. THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR:
MARVEL DESIGNS
300 E. MAIN STREET
RICHMOND, VA 23219

30 0 30 60 90
1"=30'



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
KAREN A. HUBBARD
Lic. No. 3668
12/30/2024
LAND SURVEYOR

NYFELER SURVEY
619 W CARY STREET, RICHMOND, VA 23220
804-277-4231 nyfelersurvey.com

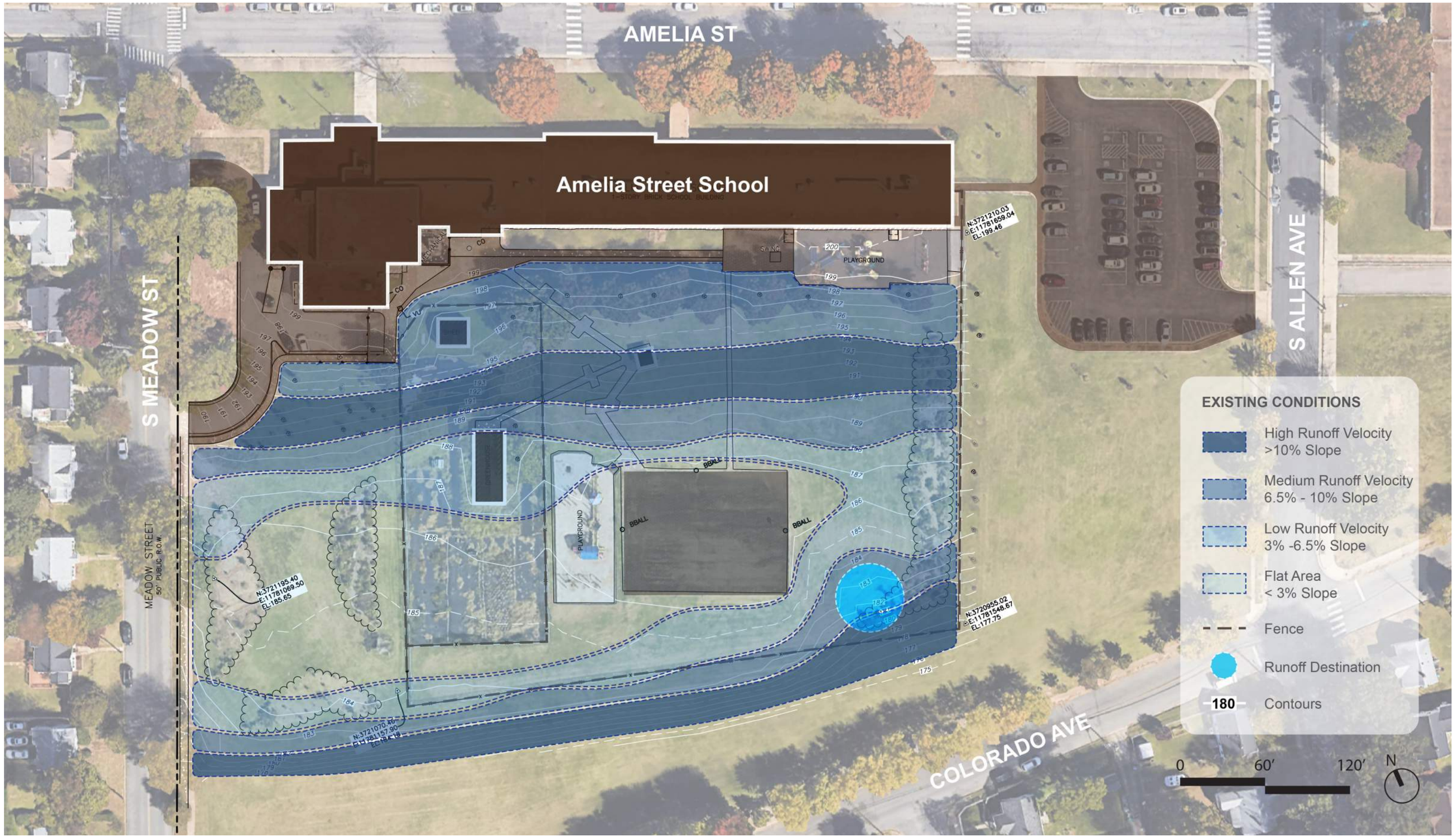
DATE: 12/30/2024
JOB NUMBER: 24156
SCALE: 1"=30'
DRAWN BY: KAH

TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY FOR
A PORTION OF
AMELIA STREET SCHOOL
1821 AMELIA STREET
CITY OF RICHMOND, VA

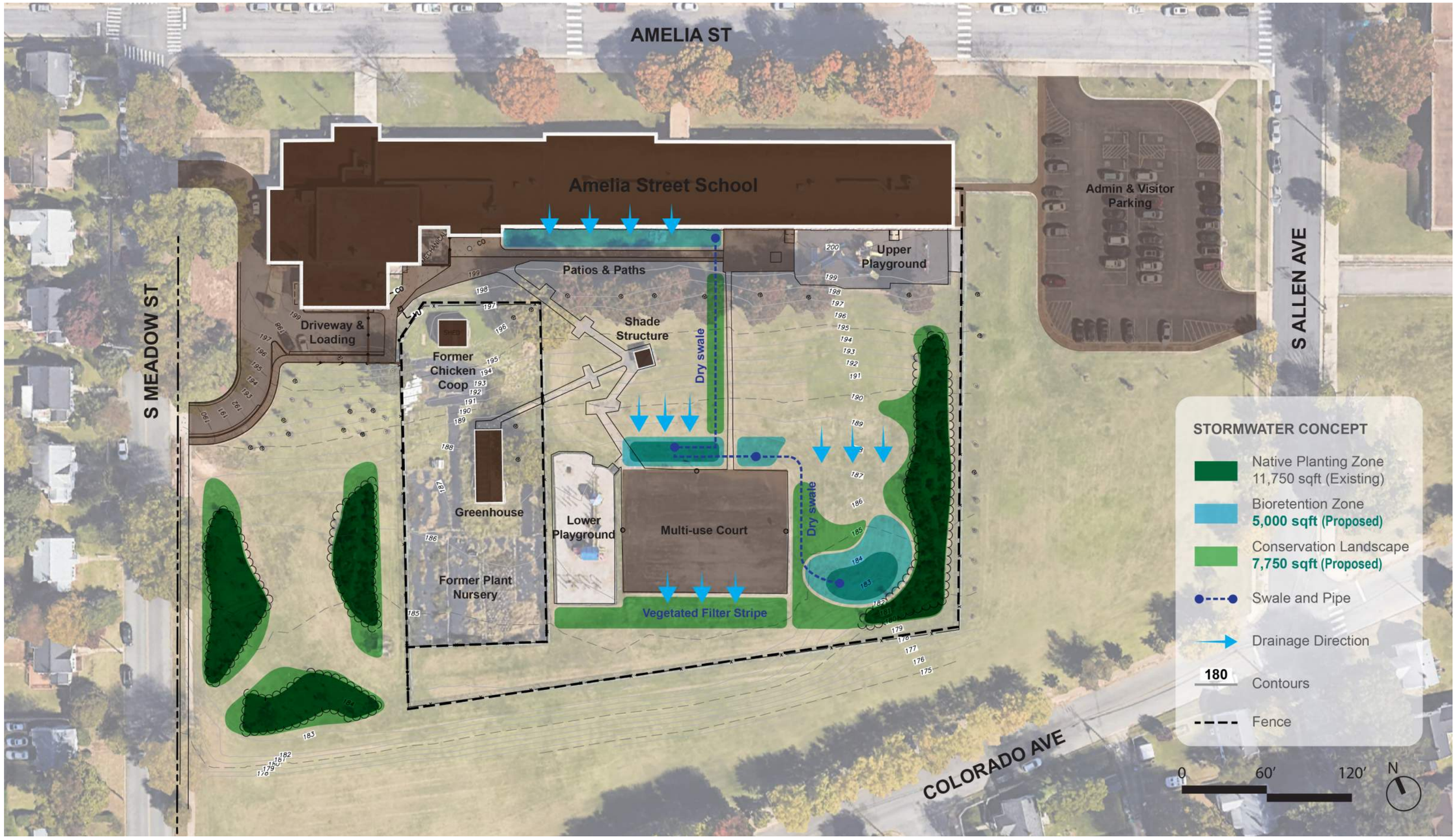
SHEET NO.: 1 OF 1

EXISTING SITE DRAINAGE

EXISTING SITE RUOFF AND SLOPING



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN



CONCEPT PLAN

PLANTING PLAN - CONCEPTUAL

PLANT PALETTE - BIORETENTION AREAS

GRASSES

Virginia Wild Rye
Elymus virginicus

Broomsedge
Andropogon virginicus

Shenandoah Switch Grass
Panicum virgatum “Shenandoah”

Purple Love Grass
Eragrostis spectabilis

PERENNIALS

Joe Pye Weed
Eutrochium fistulosum

Swamp Milkweed
Asclepias incarnata

New York Aster
Symphyotrichum novi-belgii

New England Aster
Symphyotrichum novae-angliae

UNDERSTORY TREES/SHRUBS

Paw-Paw AT
Asimina triloba

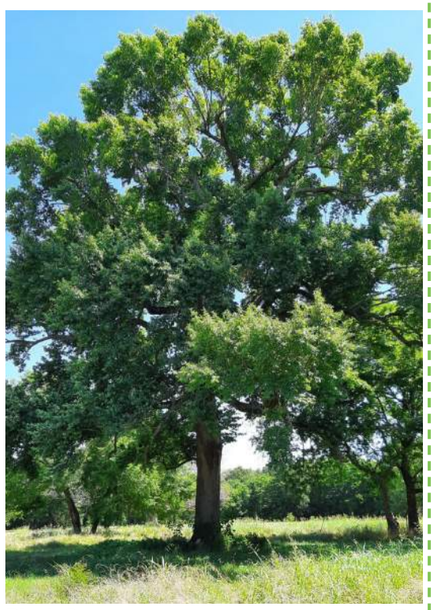
Sweetbay Magnolia MV
Magnolia Virginiana

Silky Dogwood CA
Cornus amomum

CANOPY TREES

Persimmon DV
Diospyros virginiana

River Birch BN
Betula nigra



Black Gum NS
Nyssa sylvatica

Eastern Red Cedar JV
Juniperus Virginiana

PLANT PALETTE - CONSERVATION AREAS

GRASSES

Virginia Wildrye
Elymus virginicus

Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium

Shenandoah Switch Grass
Panicum virgatum “Shenandoah”

Broomsedge
Andropogon virginicus

PERENNIALS

Sweet Goldenrod
Solidago odora

Black Eyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta

Wild Senna
Senna marylandica

Mouse Eared Coreopsis
Coreopsis Auriculata

Foxglove Breadtongue
Penstemon digitalis

Spotted Bee Balm
Monarda punctata

Rough Blazing Star
Liatris aspera

Butterfly Weed
Asclepias tuberosa

UNDERSTORY TREES/SHRUBS

Paw-Paw
Asimina triloba
AT

Sweetbay Magnolia
Magnolia Virginiana
MV

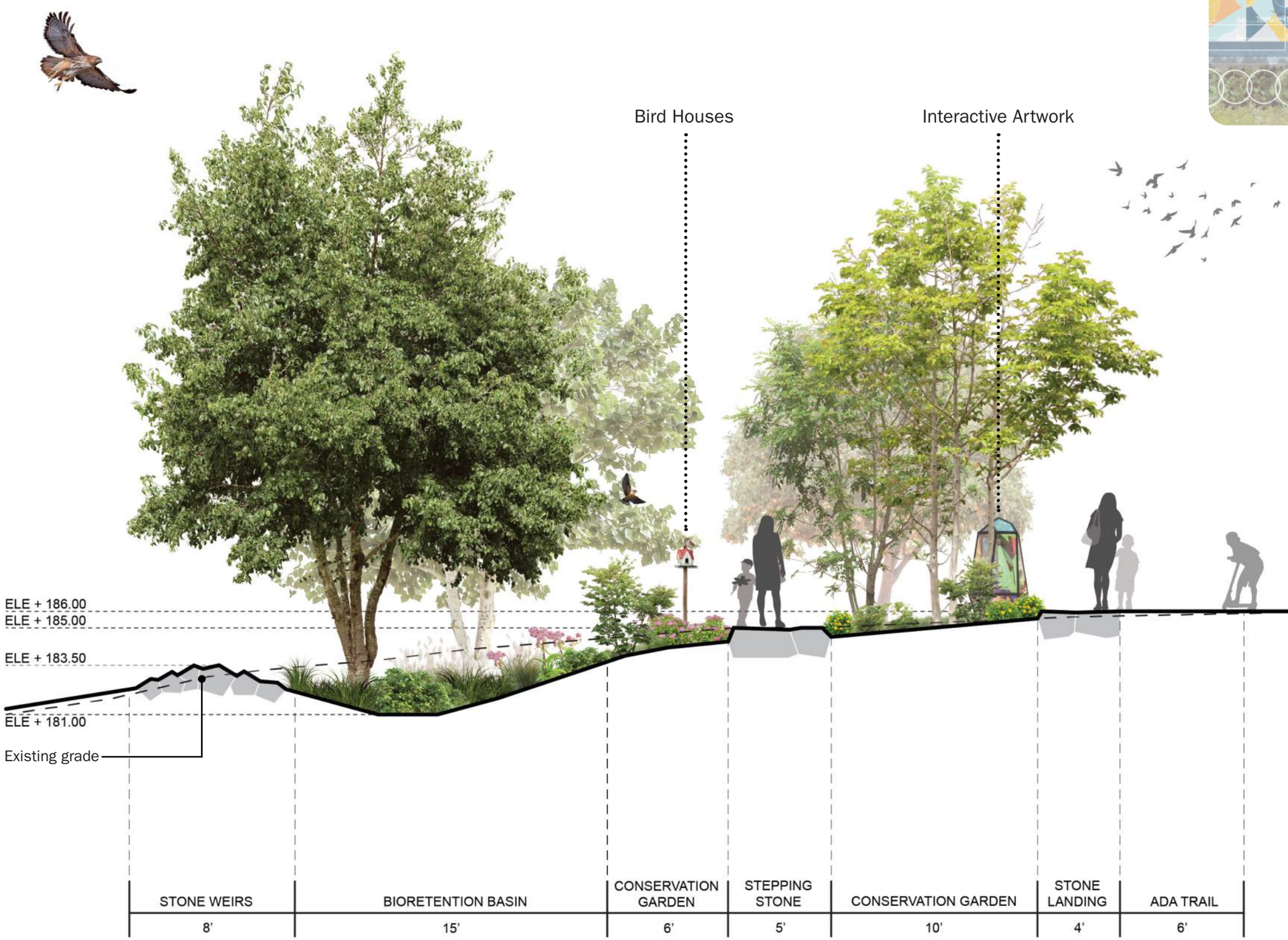
Southern Arrowwood
Viburnum dentatum
VD

CANOPY TREES

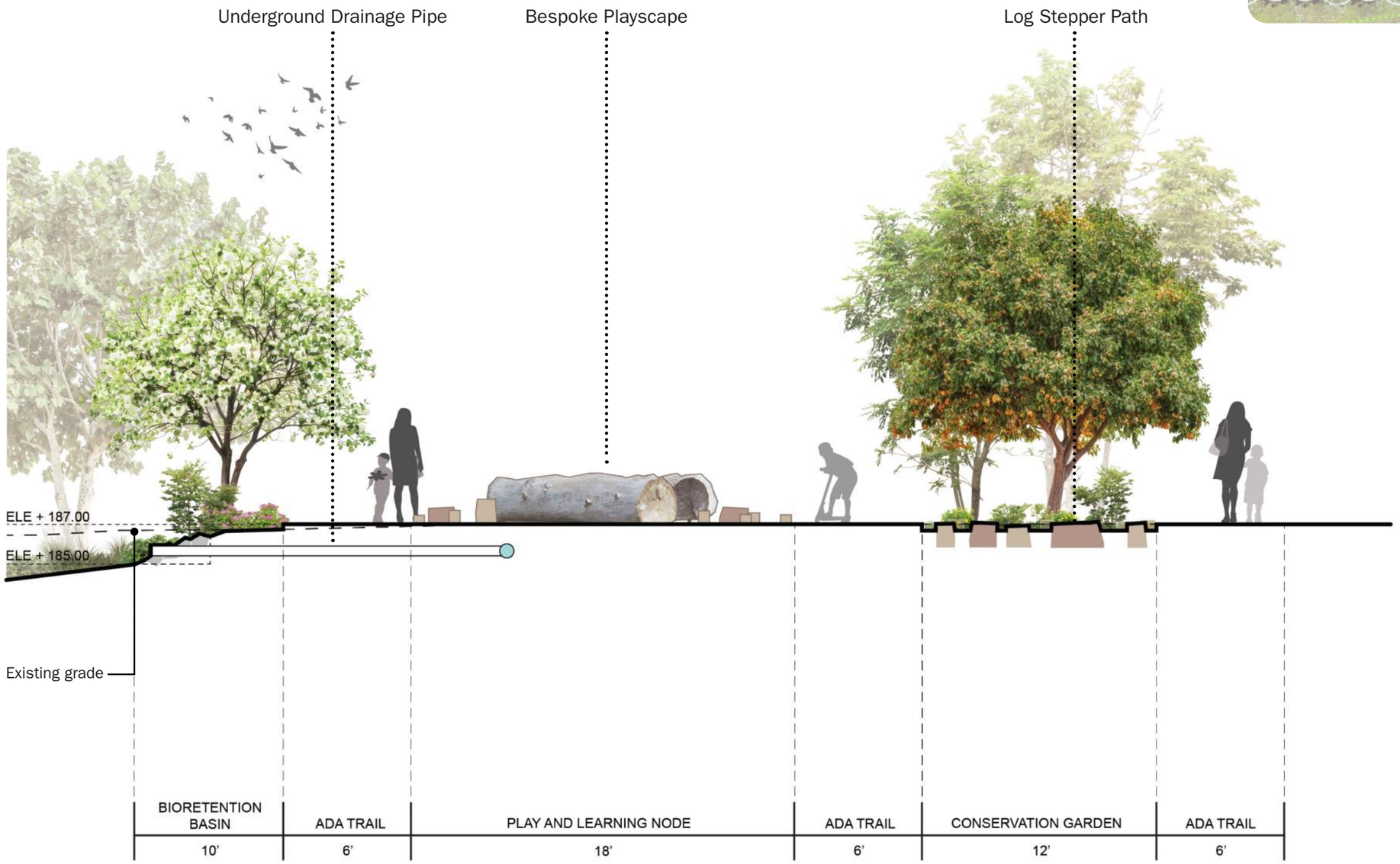
Persimmon
Diospyros virginiana
DV

Black Gum
Nyssa sylvatica
NS

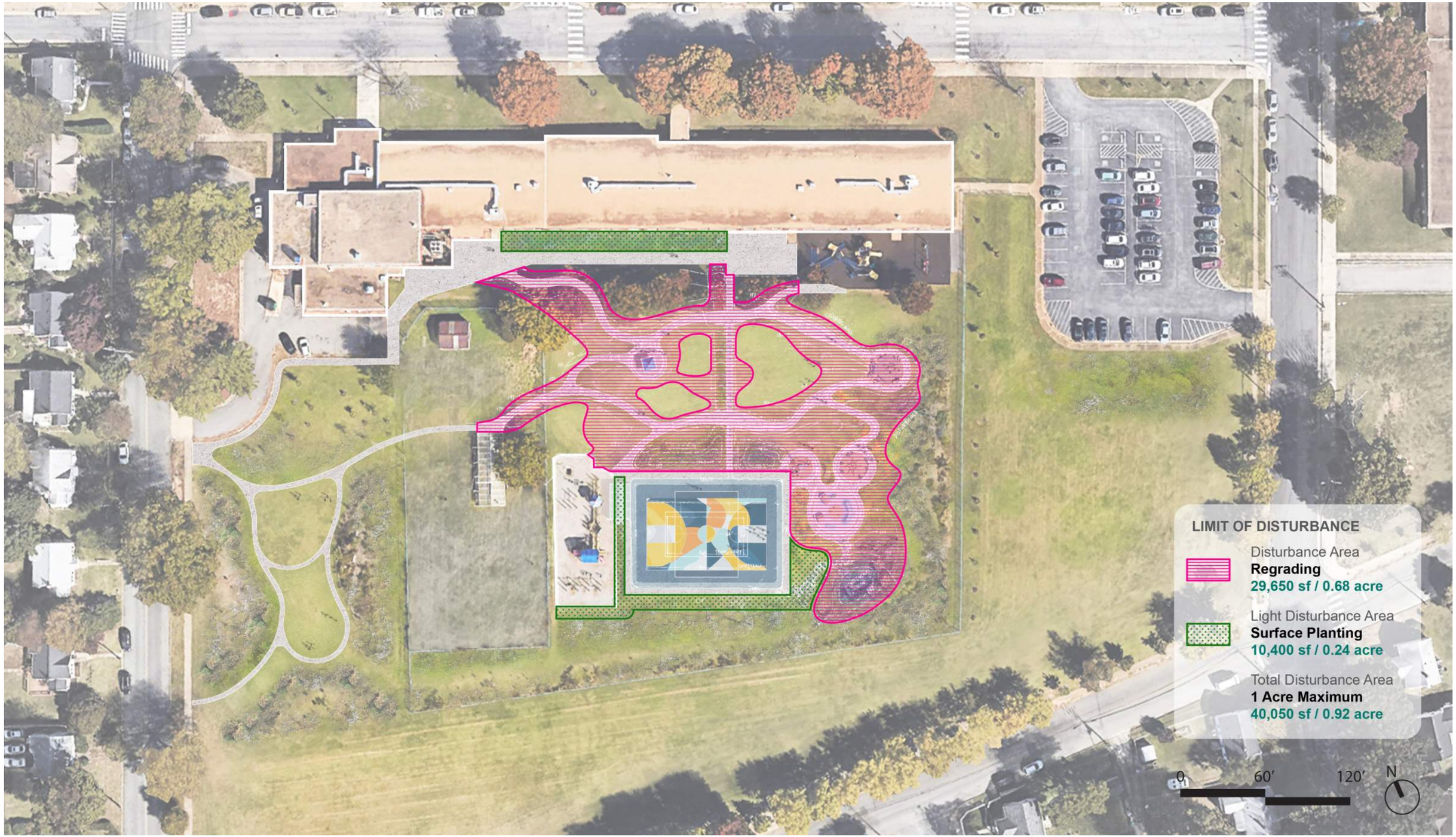
LANDSCAPE SECTION - BIORETENTION



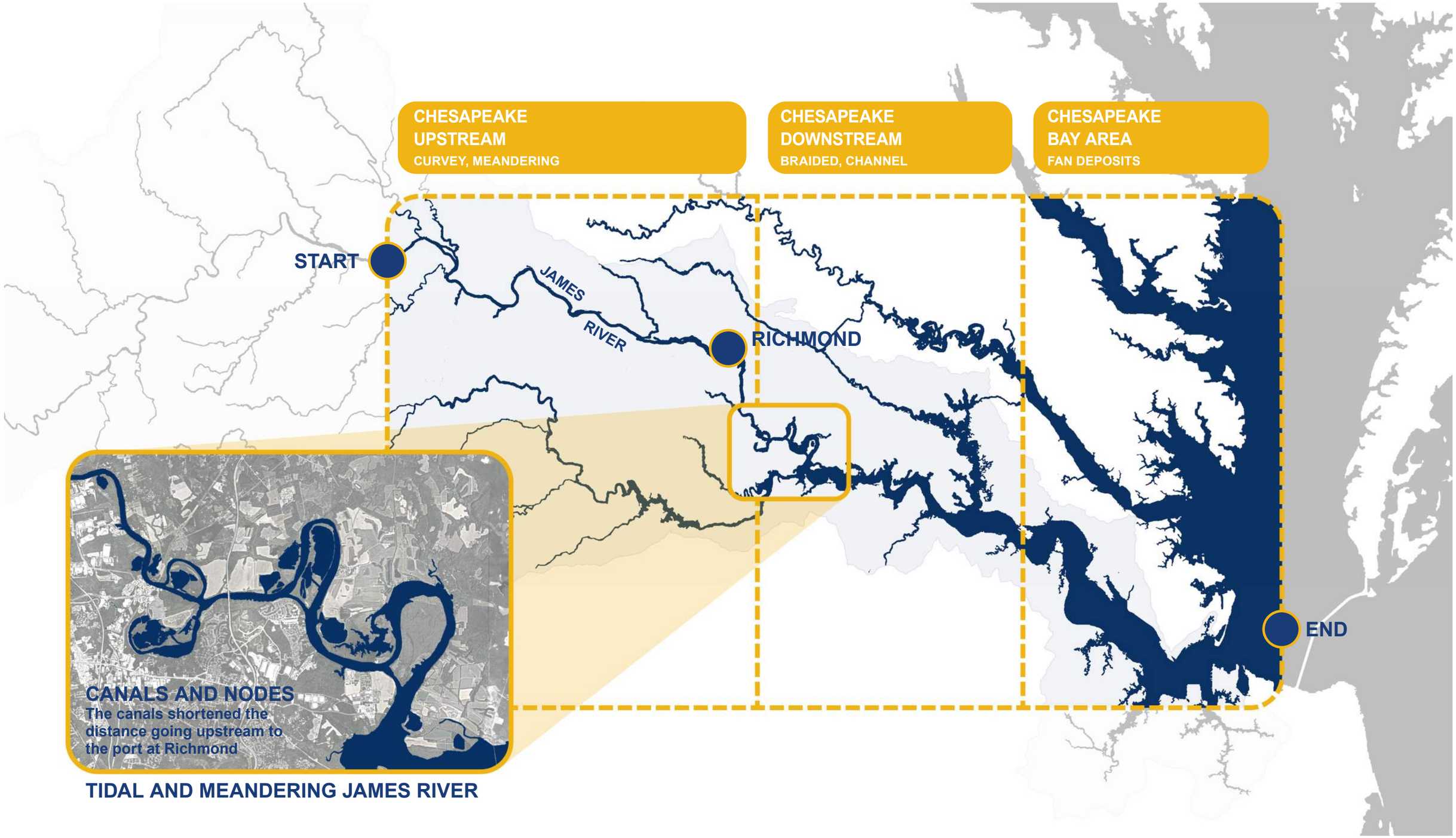
LANDSCAPE SECTION - CONSERVATION



LIMIT OF DISTURBANCE

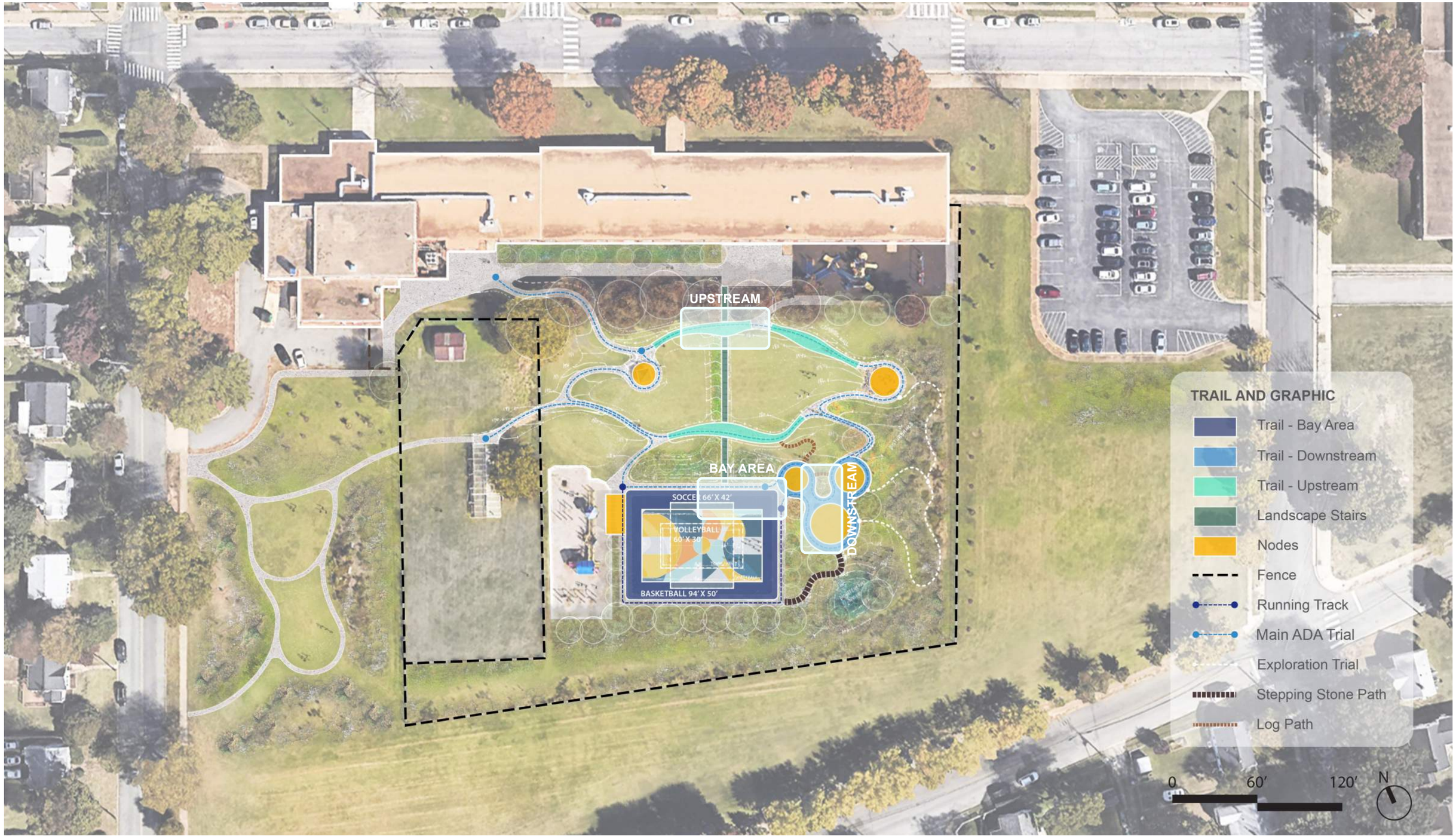


CHESAPEAKE WATERSHED - EDUCATIONAL TRAIL AND GRAPHIC

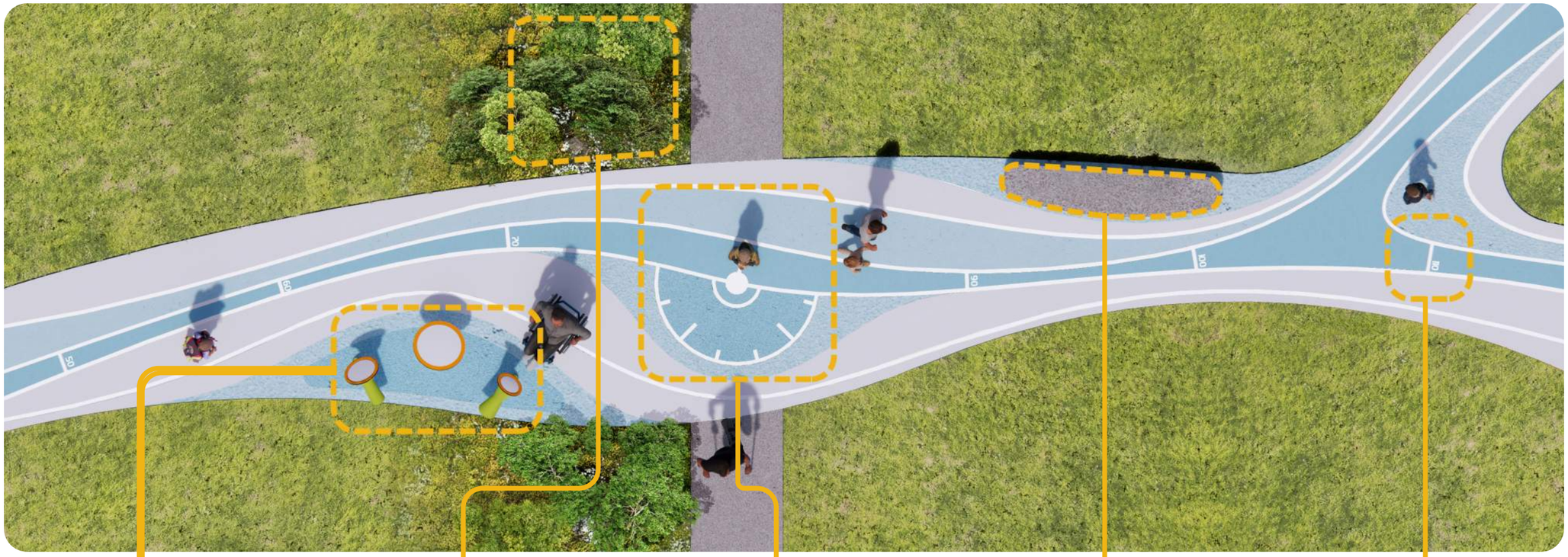


TIDAL AND MEANDERING JAMES RIVER

CONCEPT PLAN - EDUCATIONAL TRAIL AND NODES



EDUCATIONAL TRAIL - UPSTREAM



INTERACTIVE + PLAYFUL ZONE

Playful learning on the ADA accessible trial

BIOSWALE + EXPLORATION

Stormwater management and plant display

GAMES + GRAPHICS

Small nodes and spaces with immersive graphics

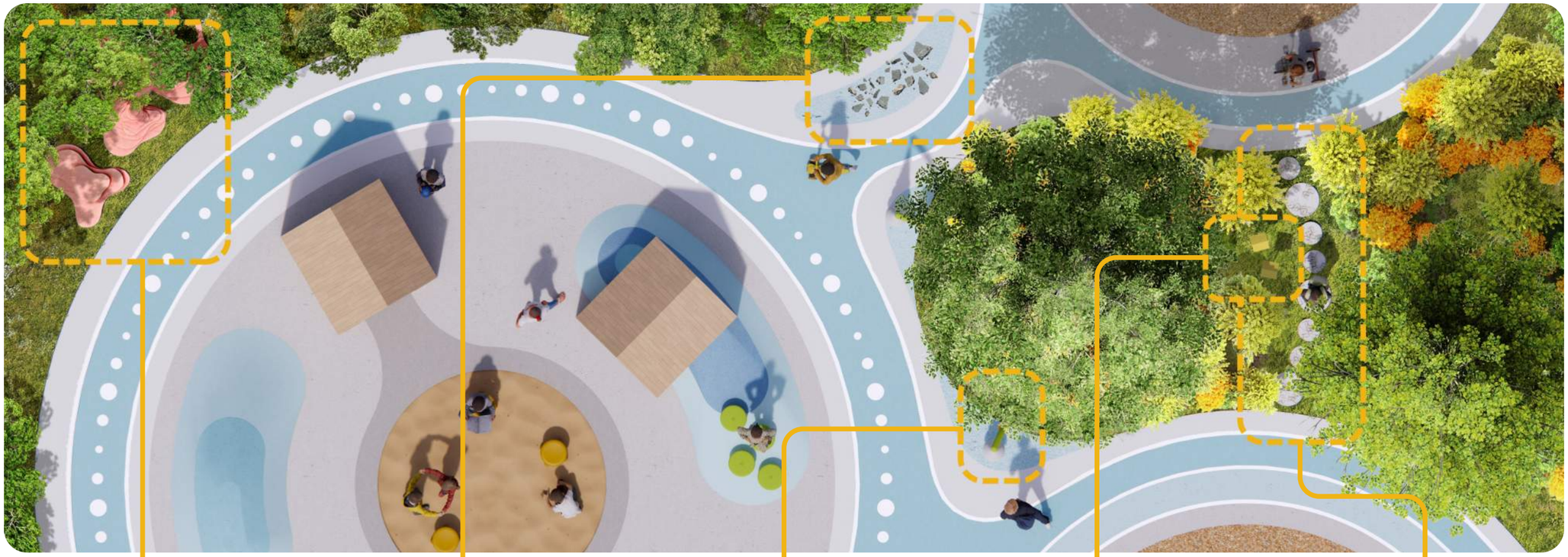
SEATING + GATHERING

Eddy spaces for chilling, gathering and resting

MILE MARKER + RUNNING TRACK

Meandering trail mimic the natural water flow

EDUCATIONAL TRAIL - DOWNSTREAM



ART + DISCOVERING

Art installations waiting for discovery

LEARNING + COLLECTING

Outdoor collection area and playful learning

SOUND + INTERACTIVE

Tactile and auditory sensations / stimuli

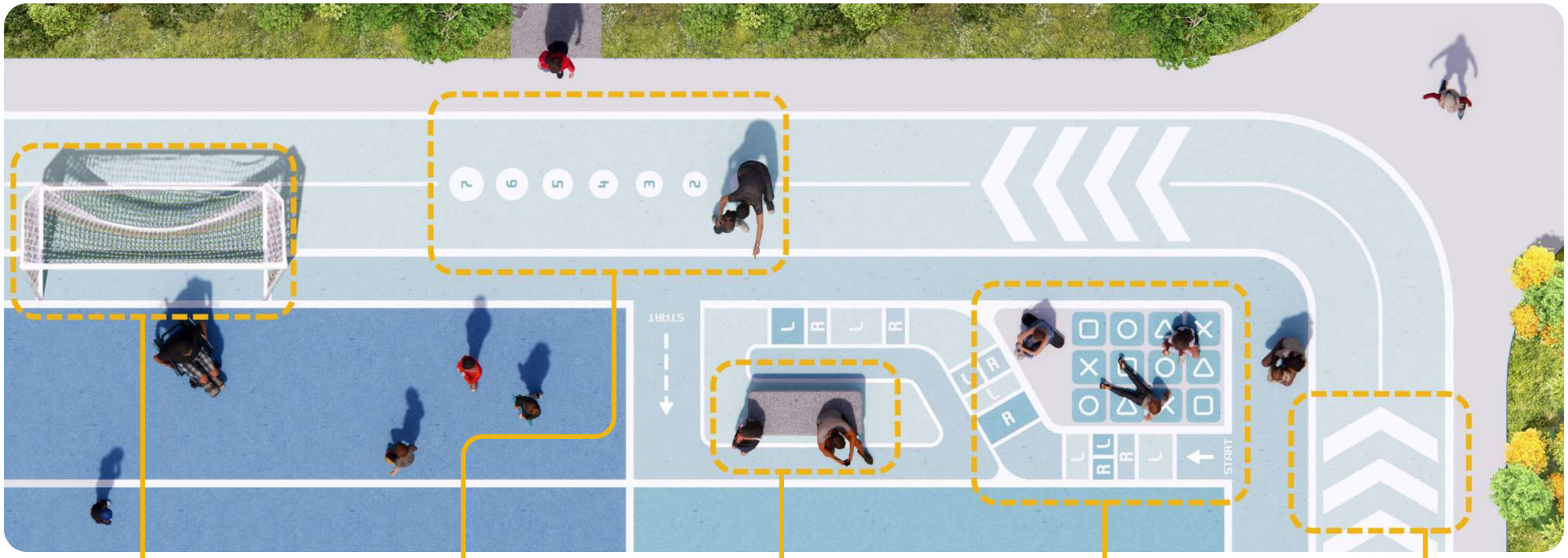
PLAY WITH NATURE

Oberserve and enjoy the native wildlife

ADVENTURE + MEANDERING

Explore the conservation garden

EDUCATIONAL TRAIL - BAY AREA



SUPERGRAPHIC + MULTI-USE COURT

Versitile and variable active recreation options

PAINTING + WAYFINDING

Redefine the boundary of recreation and learning

SEATING + TEACHING

Rest and take in active recreation

GAMING + GATHERING

Graphics and games painted on the ground

MILE MARKER + RUNNING TRACK

330 ft (100 m) running track for races

EDUCATIONAL NODES

Climbing Berm

Crawling Tunnel

Cozy Playhouse

Seating Boulders

Stepping Logs

Stepping Features

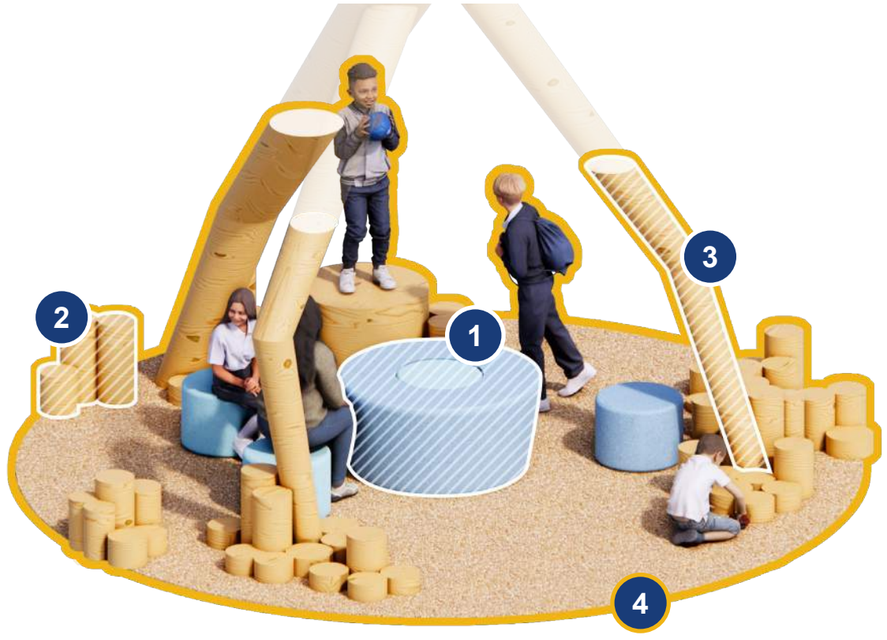
Sand Pit

Poured Rubber Surface

Stepping Stones

Engineered Wood Fiber

EDUCATIONAL NODES



Crawling Structure

Stepping Stones

Corkeen Surface

Engineered Wood Fiber

Moveable Seating

Stepping Logs

Climbing Structure

Corkeen Surface

CONCEPT PLAN - PLAYFUL ELEMENTS

PLAYFUL ELEMENTS

Suggested Elements

Interactive Playscape
Along Trails

Seating Boulders
In Nodes

Playful Instruments
Along Trails

Stepping Logs
In Nodes

Climbing Berm
In Nodes

Companion Seating
Along Trials

Stepping Stone
In Nodes

Optional Elements

Climbing Wall
Along Trials

Crawling Structure
In Nodes

Stepping Features
In Nodes

Paving Texture Changes
Along Trails

Cozy Playhouse
In Nodes

Crawing Tunnel
In Nodes

Climbing Structure
In Nodes

Bird Houses
In Gardens

Shade + Outdoor Classroom
Along Trials

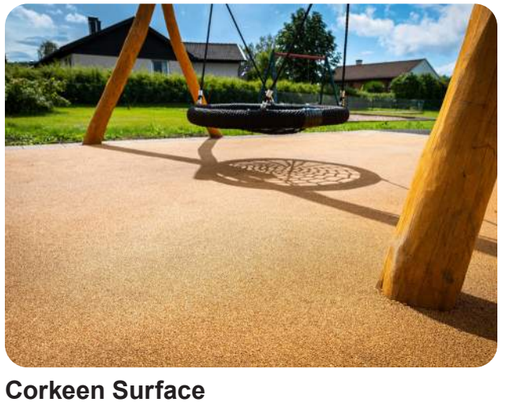
Movable Seating
In Nodes

Artwork Installation
In Gardens

MATERIAL PALETTE

C.I.P. Concrete Surface
On Trail + Multi-use Court

Stepping Logs
In Nodes



Corkeen Surface
In Nodes

Poured Rubber Surface
In Nodes

Digging Sand
In Nodes

Engineered Wood Fiber
In Nodes

Natural Boulders
In Nodes + Gardens

Stepping Stones
In Gardens

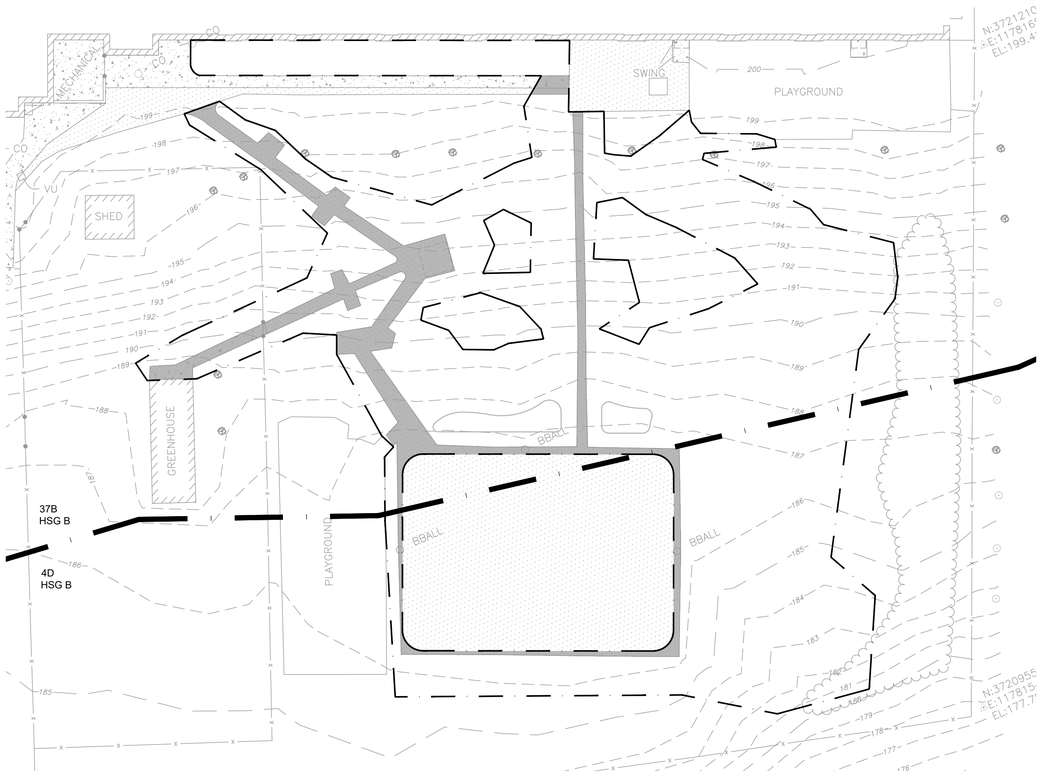

GATHERING PAVILION
NEW SHADE TREES
ACCESSIBLE PLAY & SEATING AREAS
COMPANION SEATING
PAINTED CONCRETE SURFACE FOR FLEXIBLE USE
EXPANDED NATIVE PLANTING
PAINTED CONCRETE SURFACE


ROOF DOWNSPOUTS:
RUNOFF DISCHARGE
BIOSWALE:
RUNOFF CONVEYANCE
& VELOCITY REDUCTION
BIORETENTION AREAS:
STORMWATER RETENTION
& BIOFILTRATION
SHEET FLOW


RED TAILED HAWKS
GATHERING PAVILION
EXISTING CANOPY TREES
EXPANDED NATIVE PLANTING
PLAY LAWN
COMPANION SEATING
NEW SHADE TREES
ACCESSIBLE PLAY & ENGINEERED WOOD FIBER SURFACE
PAINTED CONCRETE SURFACE

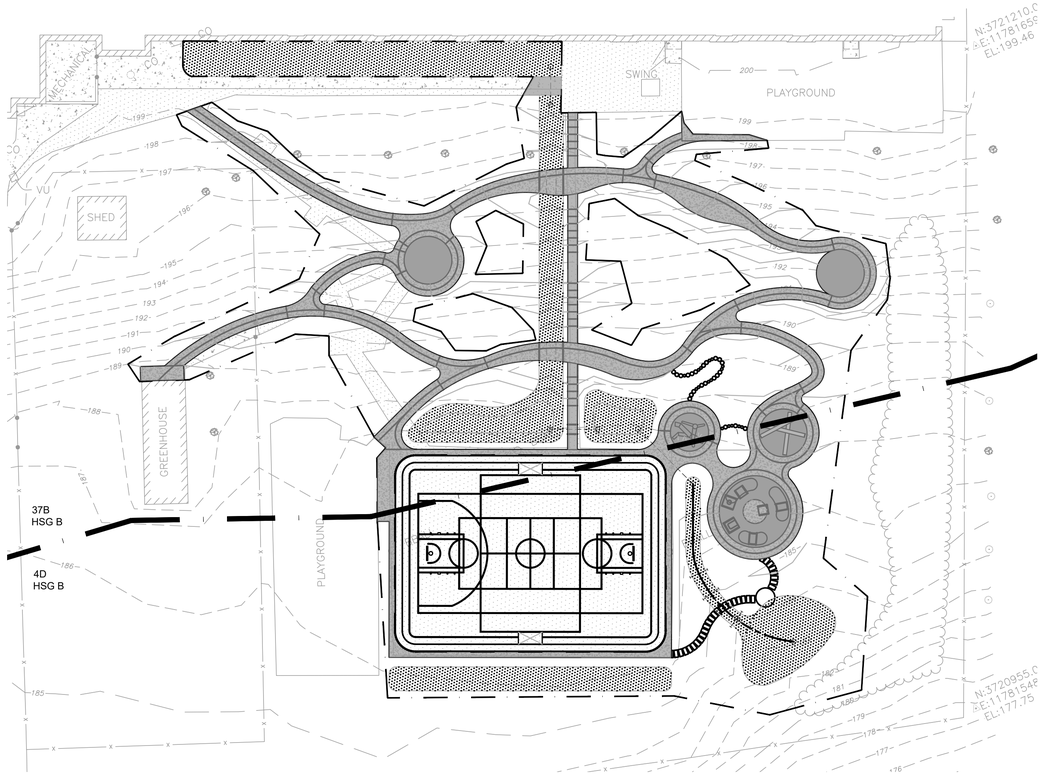

BIORETENTION AREAS:
STORMWATER RETENTION
& BIOFILTRATION
BIOSWALE:
RUNOFF CONVEYANCE
& VELOCITY REDUCTION
SHEET FLOW
ROOF DOWNSPOUTS:
RUNOFF DISCHARGE

AMELIA STREET SCHOOL
1-STORY BRICK SCHOOL BUILDING



PRE-DEVELOPMENT LAND COVER

AMELIA STREET SCHOOL
1-STORY BRICK SCHOOL BUILDING



POST DEVELOPMENT LAND COVER

SCALE:
1" = 30'
30 15 0 30 60

LEGEND

LOD
IMPERVIOUS COVER
PERVIOUS COVER
STORMWATER BMP
SOILS

Pre-ReDevelopment Land Cover (acres)

	A Soils	B Soils	C Soils	D Soils	Totals
Forest (acres) -- undisturbed, protected forest or reforested land					0.00
Mixed Open (acres) -- undisturbed/infrequently maintained grass or shrub land					0.00
Managed Turf (acres) -- disturbed, graded for yards or other turf to be mowed/managed		0.81			0.81
Impervious Cover (acres)		0.09			0.09
					0.90

Post-Development Land Cover (acres)

	A Soils	B Soils	C Soils	D Soils	Totals
Forest/Open Space (acres) -- undisturbed, protected forest or reforested land					0.00
Mixed Open (acres) -- undisturbed/infrequently maintained grass or shrub land					0.00
Managed Turf (acres) -- disturbed, graded for yards or other turf to be mowed/managed		0.66			0.66
Impervious Cover (acres)		0.24			0.24
Area Check	OK.	OK.	OK.	OK.	0.90

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AMELIA ST SCHOOL
LAND COVER MAP
1821 AMELIA ST, RICHMOND, VA 23220

PREPARED FOR:
MARVEL ARCHITECTS
300 E. MAIN STREET, RICHMOND, VA 23219

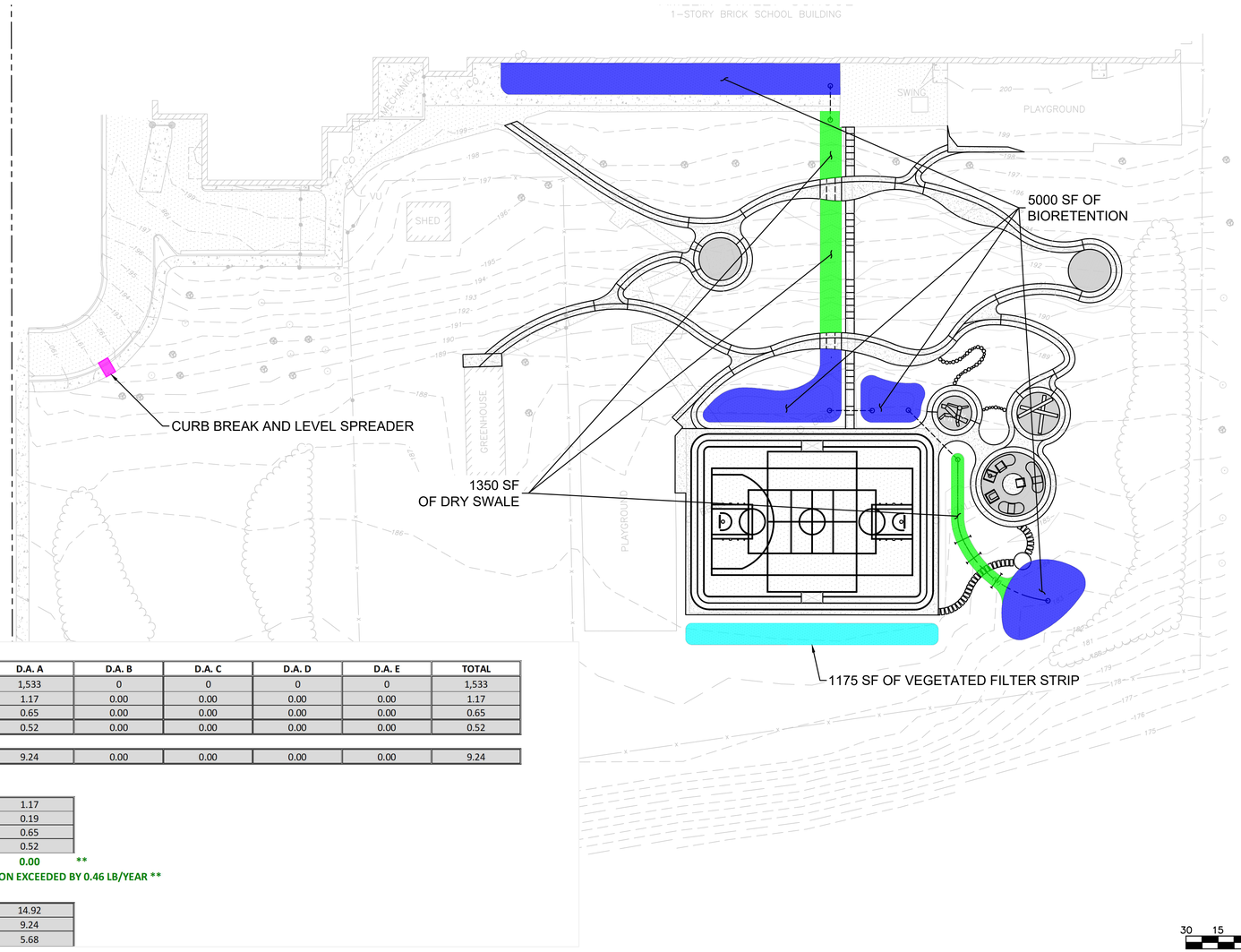
REV.	COMMENTS	DATE
	REVISIONS	

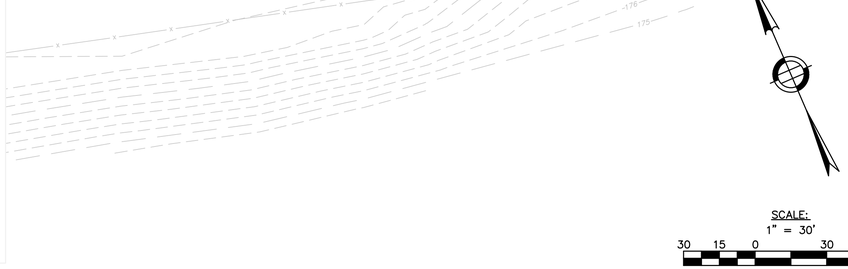
NITSCH PROJECT #	16140
FILE:	16140 - CPLC
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DATE:	3/4/2025
PROJECT MANAGER:	JOHN CARTY
SURVEYOR:	NYFELER SURVEY
DRAFTED BY:	AO
CHECKED BY:	JD

SHEET:
C-1
OF REV.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SUMMARY:
THE PROJECT WILL CONSIST OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PATHWAYS FROM THE EXISTING SCHOOL TO THE EXISTING GREENHOUSE, PLAYGROUND, AND BASKETBALL COURT. INCLUDED IN THE CONSTRUCTION ARE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS) TO PROVIDE WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY TREATMENT. THE TOTAL LAND DISTURBANCE IS 0.90 ACRES. THE MARJORITY OF THE SITE DRAINS FROM NORTHWEST TO SOUTHEAST AS SHEET FLOW UNTIL IT CHANNELIZES IN THE GUTTER ON COLORADO AVE. AND ENTERS THE STORM DRAIN NETWORK.

THE EXISTING SITE IS MOSTLY MANAGED TURF. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL INCREASE THE IMPERVIOUS AREA BY 0.15 ACRES. PROPOSED BMPS INCLUDE A CURB CUT AND LEVEL SPREADER, ROOFTOP DISCONNECTION TO BIORETENTION, DRY SWALES, ADDITIONAL BIORETENTION AREAS, AND A PROPOSED VEGETATED FILTER STRIP. A TOTAL OF 0.76 ACRES OF IMPERVIOUS AREA AND 0.72 ACRES OF MANAGED TURF WILL BE TREATED WITH ONSITE BMPS RESULTING IN PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION OF 0.65 LB/YR. ADDITIONAL TREATMENT IS ALSO POSSIBLE WITH TREE PLANTING.





Runoff Reduction Volume and TP By Drainage Area

	D.A. A	D.A. B	D.A. C	D.A. D	D.A. E	TOTAL
RUNOFF REDUCTION VOLUME ACHIEVED (ft^3)	1,533	0	0	0	0	1,533
TP LOAD AVAILABLE FOR REMOVAL (lb/yr)	1.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.17
TP LOAD REDUCTION ACHIEVED (lb/yr)	0.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.65
TP LOAD REMAINING (lb/yr)	0.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.52
NITROGEN LOAD REDUCTION ACHIEVED (lb/yr)	9.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.24

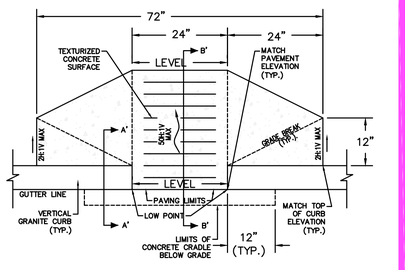
Total Phosphorus

FINAL POST-DEVELOPMENT TP LOAD (lb/yr)	1.17
TP LOAD REDUCTION REQUIRED (lb/yr)	0.19
TP LOAD REDUCTION ACHIEVED (lb/yr)	0.65
TP LOAD REMAINING (lb/yr):	0.52
REMAINING TP LOAD REDUCTION REQUIRED (lb/yr):	0.00 **

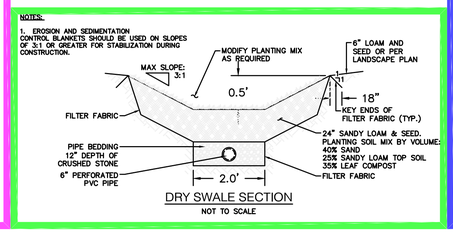
** TARGET TP REDUCTION EXCEEDED BY 0.46 LB/YEAR **

Total Nitrogen (For Information Purposes)

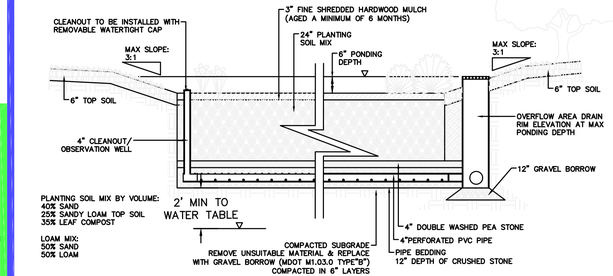
POST-DEVELOPMENT LOAD (lb/yr)	14.92
NITROGEN LOAD REDUCTION ACHIEVED (lb/yr)	9.24
REMAINING POST-DEVELOPMENT NITROGEN LOAD (lb/yr)	5.68



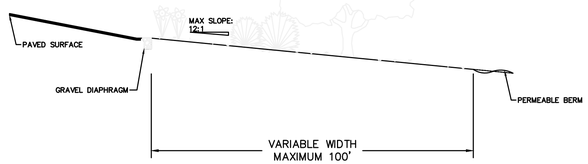
CURB BREAK AND LEVEL SPREADER
NOT TO SCALE



DRY SWALE SECTION
NOT TO SCALE



BIORETENTION BASIN
NOT TO SCALE



VEGETATED FILTER STRIP
NOT TO SCALE

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AMELIA ST SCHOOL
BMP EXHIBIT
1821 AMELIA ST, RICHMOND, VA 23220

PREPARED FOR:
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300 E. MAIN STREET, RICHMOND, VA 23219

REV.	COMMENTS	DATE

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NITSCH PROJECT #	16140
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SHEET:
C-2
OF REV.

Amelia Street School
Urban Design Committee
April 10, 2025

Project Purpose:
Amelia Street School is a Richmond Public School located in Richmond's historically redlined, underserved Randolph neighborhood that serves students ages 5 to 21 years with significant intellectual disabilities, behavioral issues, or complex health needs (which include physical disabilities).

Principal Mark Phillips has a goal of creating partnerships within the community that can bring expertise and resources to his school. Specifically, he is seeking partnerships that support hands-on activities, build functional life skills, highlight the outdoors, and create safe learning environments for his students.

The goals of this project are to improve water quality in the James River by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution and to promote outdoor learning and environmental literacy through enhanced access to the schoolyard for all students, regardless of ability level. Proposed best management practices include bioretention areas, conservation landscaping, increased native tree canopy, and a permeable, ADA-accessible trail. At Amelia Street School, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (the Alliance) is focused on utilizing green stormwater infrastructure as a child-friendly, playful demonstration of how water flows.

The path forward at the Amelia Street School will demonstrate that the confluence of accessibility, ecology, safety and education can also be beautiful and engaging.

Background:
In 2020, Virginia Commonwealth University Office of Sustainability (VCU) converted 8,500 square feet of previously mowed turf lawn to "tree islands." These tree islands are native, conservation landscapes containing a combination of trees, shrubs, grasses, and perennials. In 2021, VCU reached out to the Alliance for their expertise in environmental education because Principal Phillips was seeking ways to connect his students to this new outdoor asset. The location of these five "tree islands" is problematic, however, because they sit downhill from the school building, over 100 feet away with no accessible pathway. A brainstorming session with the Alliance, Principal Phillips, and VCU led to the idea of an accessible nature trail that could link all these spaces.

Since the initial idea was proposed, the Alliance received both funding for a conceptual trail design and engineered design from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, as well as implementation funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Partners have met monthly with Principal Phillips to brainstorm ideas and plan community engagement activities to inform the final engineered design. Additionally, Bobby Hathaway, Director of Facilities for RPS, is invited to all partner meetings and attends when possible or is responsive to questions via email.

Once completed, this project will become part of Alliance's larger showcase of projects with Richmond Public Schools, and will be the first of its kind to use innovative green infrastructure to highlight the importance of inclusivity in the outdoors. It can be used as a model of what is possible as older school buildings are renovated and new schools are constructed. Together, these efforts will ultimately better prepare the school and Randolph communities for the impacts of climate change.

Project Context:
Amelia Street is situated on 10 acres of a large city block just north of the James River in the Randolph neighborhood. Existing site conditions include a one story school building, two playgrounds with rubber mulch, and an asphalt basketball court. Since its construction in the 1950's, Amelia Street has received building upgrades to become ADA-accessible. The schoolyard, however, features a steep grade, which is problematic for students with mobility issues. Oftentimes, these students have few opportunities to access green space, so this project intentionally centers inclusivity in the outdoors for children of all abilities. According to conversations with school staff, the expansive, open turf also presents an issue to students with behavioral concerns for "eloping." These students tend to use this strategy to "run away" and have no explicit boundaries with the exception of the fence around the perimeter of the schoolyard. This project will apply innovative solutions to mitigate this concern by planting native shrubs to create a hedge and visual barrier, as well as by creating "nodes" or clearly defined stopping points along the nature trail that can double as learning opportunities. With intentional placement of green stormwater infrastructure and an accessible outdoor trail, the Alliance will create safe, nature-inspired boundaries while also providing equitable access to green space for students of all abilities.

Community Driven Design:
The Alliance, along with Marvel and VCU, has led a robust community engagement effort for this project. Meetings have been held with Amelia Street school staff, including Principal Phillips, teachers, aides, physical therapists, and occupational therapists who work closely with the student population. A public open house was hosted on site and a booth was set up at Byrd House Market to gain feedback from the larger community who uses the space outside of school hours. Feedback methods used for this engagement included an interactive poster board, sticky notes, a paper survey, and postcards with prompts to solicit comments about existing spaces. Additionally, Common Table Church, a house of worship in the Randolph community, and the Richmond Master Gardeners have expressed an interest in volunteering to help maintain the newly planted spaces.

These key stakeholders provided the following feedback, which has been incorporated into the design:

- Providing full access to all areas of the site for students with mobility devices
- Providing adequate sight lines across the schoolyard to monitor the students during play
- Create an array of spaces or 'nodes' for students and community members with sensory disabilities or sensitivities that provide opportunities for quiet, textural experiences, or to improve their gross motor skills

- Companion seating, free of obstructions, next to all of the benches and picnic tables for a wheelchair user to sit comfortably among others
- Outdoor classroom space
- A redesigned basketball court that can accommodate multiple sports
- Shade and seating adjacent to the gathering “nodes”, playground, and the ball court

Project Budget and Funding Sources:
The Alliance has approximately $375,000 allocated for construction from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, as well as an additional pending $100,000 proposal for green infrastructure improvements. The Alliance continues to seek funding for the ADA trail.

Construction Timeline:
Improvements made to Amelia Street’s schoolyard include an ADA-accessible trail, a bioswale, a bioretention area, native landscaping and tree plantings. Construction is anticipated to begin in January 2026 with a 6 month construction timeline. The anticipated schedule is below:

Task/Process	**Target Completion Date**
Community Engagement and Conceptual Design	June 2023 - November 2024
Survey, Environmental, and Utility Location	December 2024
Schematic Design and Design Development	January - June 2025
Construction Documents and Permit Drawings	July 2025
Urban Design Committee Final Review Meeting	August 2025
Permitting	September - December 2025
Bidding and Contractor Award	October - December 2025
Construction	January - May 2025