

Diamond District Public Realm | Design Standards



*City of Richmond, Virginia
June 7, 2024
Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we present this report, we wish to extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to its completion. We thank The City of Richmond for their time and effort in the development of this report.



Credit: Chad

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1 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To be completed before submittal of final document.

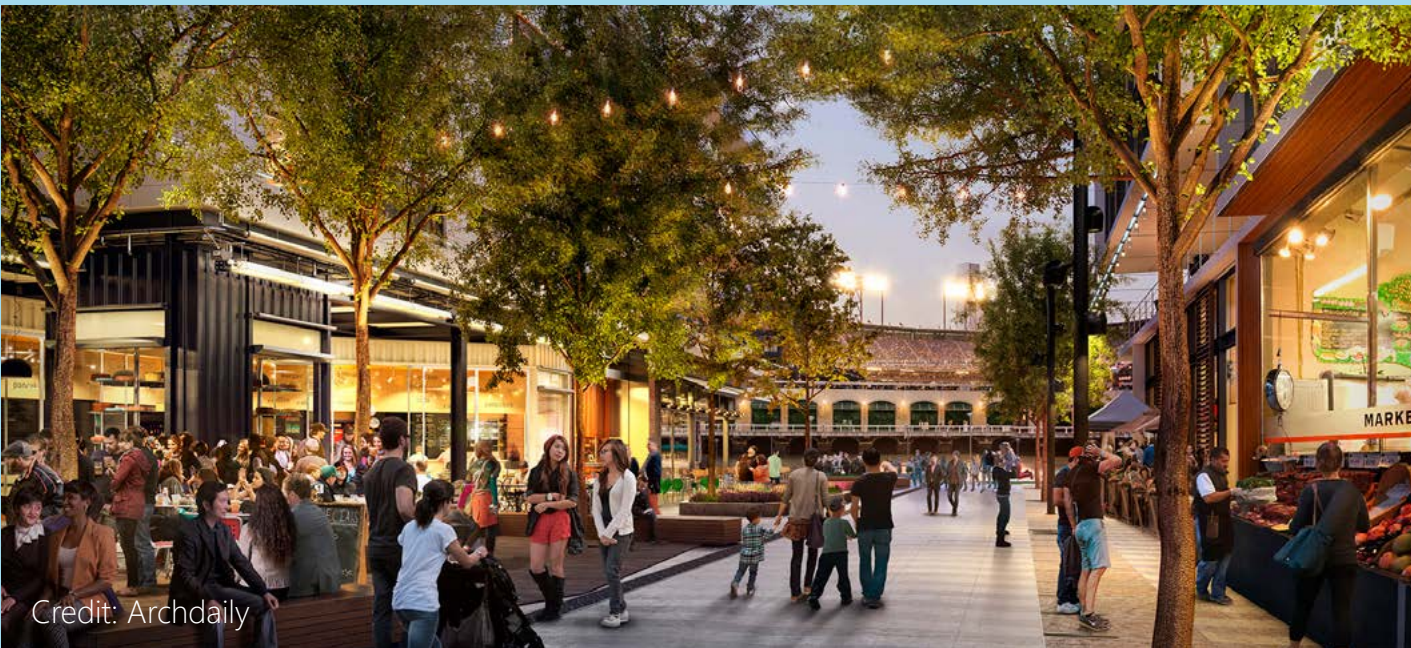
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2 | INTRODUCTION



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2.1 BACKGROUND

The neighborhoods surrounding the Diamond District site have seen a substantial increase in investment over the past several years—with more investment in the works. In late 2021, the City of Richmond issued a Request for Information (RFI) to redevelop the Diamond District itself. This 66.7 acre underdeveloped, publicly owned property was to be redeveloped into a mixed-use, mixed income urban destination anchored by a regional baseball stadium. An emphasis was placed on creating a place where visitors could arrive safely on foot, bike, car, or transit. The new development was to include a signature linear park that would connect visitors and residents to a series of smaller parks and greenways nearby. Any proposal for this site was to be guided by the vision described in the Greater Scott's Addition Small Area Plan found in the City's comprehensive plan, Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth.

In September of 2022, the City of Richmond chose RVA Diamond Partners to be their development partner in redeveloping the Diamond District. The plan submitted by Diamond District Partners LLC is a mixed-income, mixed use community that features:

- A state-of-the-art baseball stadium that anchors the development
- A signature linear park meandering through the site with several distinct areas and programming planned for all Richmonders to enjoy throughout the year
- Trails, playgrounds, dog parks, and multiple outdoor gathering spaces
- Much needed pedestrian, bike, and vehicular connectivity throughout the site and into the surrounding neighborhoods
- A hotel
- Class A office space
- Retail
- Mixed income, multi-family residential housing

The City and RVA Development Partners desire to create vibrant, attractive, and safe streets and public spaces that will effectively connect people to the surrounding land uses and be frequented by residents and visitors to the Diamond District year round. It became apparent that it was necessary to develop these Diamond District Public Realm Design Standards to meet this goal and ensure that a cohesive design language is used throughout the Diamond District; one that identifies the Diamond District as its own unique destination while adding value to the surrounding neighborhoods and city.

2.2 SCOPE & APPLICATION OF DESIGN STANDARDS

The Diamond District Public Realm Design Standards are design requirements for spaces that fall within the public right-of-way and as well as publicly owned open spaces. They should also be used to inform design decisions on private property. These standards shall be used by all stakeholders when deciding on elements when making design decisions for the public realm. The Design Standards present a vision for the public realm along with design options that allow for some flexibility and creativity. Designers shall adhere to the requirements put forth in the Design Standards. There may be instances when site constraints may require flexibility in applying the Design Standard. **In those instances, every attempt should be made to meet the intent of the Design Standards.**

- **Need paragraph from CoR about implementation & enforcement of standards?**
- **Need clarification from CoR - will the standards be applied anywhere outside of the immediate DD now that the TIF has been dissolved?**

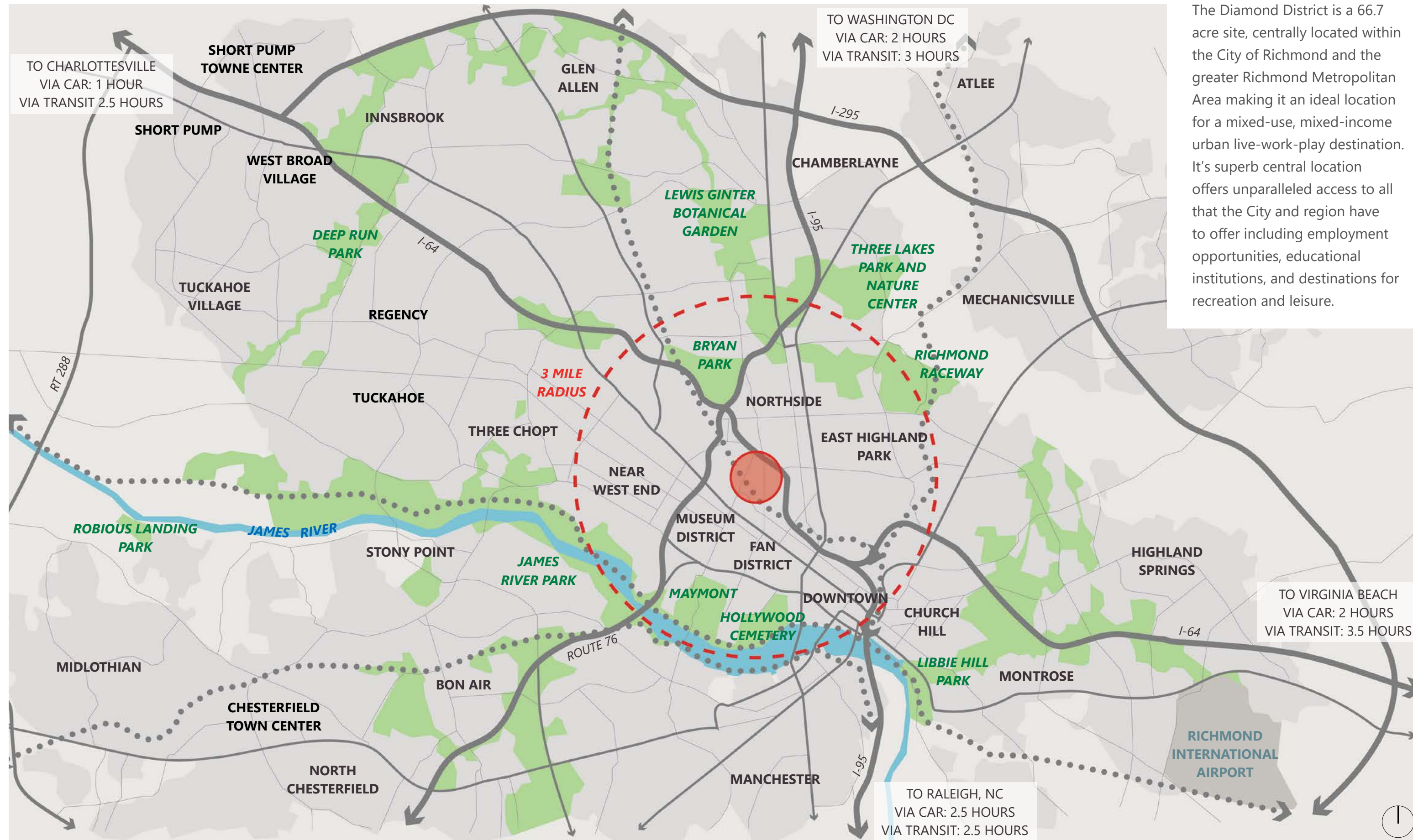
2.3 OTHER APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

The following City of Richmond documents provided guidance in developing the Public Realm Design Standards and should be used in conjunction with these standards:

- The City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance
- Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth
- Better Streets Manual
- Diamond District Transportation Study
- Richmond Sustainable Design Standards
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Sidewalk Design Guidelines
- City of Richmond Vision Zero
- Richmond Bicycle Master Plan
- Revealing Richmond: A Public Art Master Plan for the City of Richmond, Virginia
- Richmond Connects
- RVA Green 2050

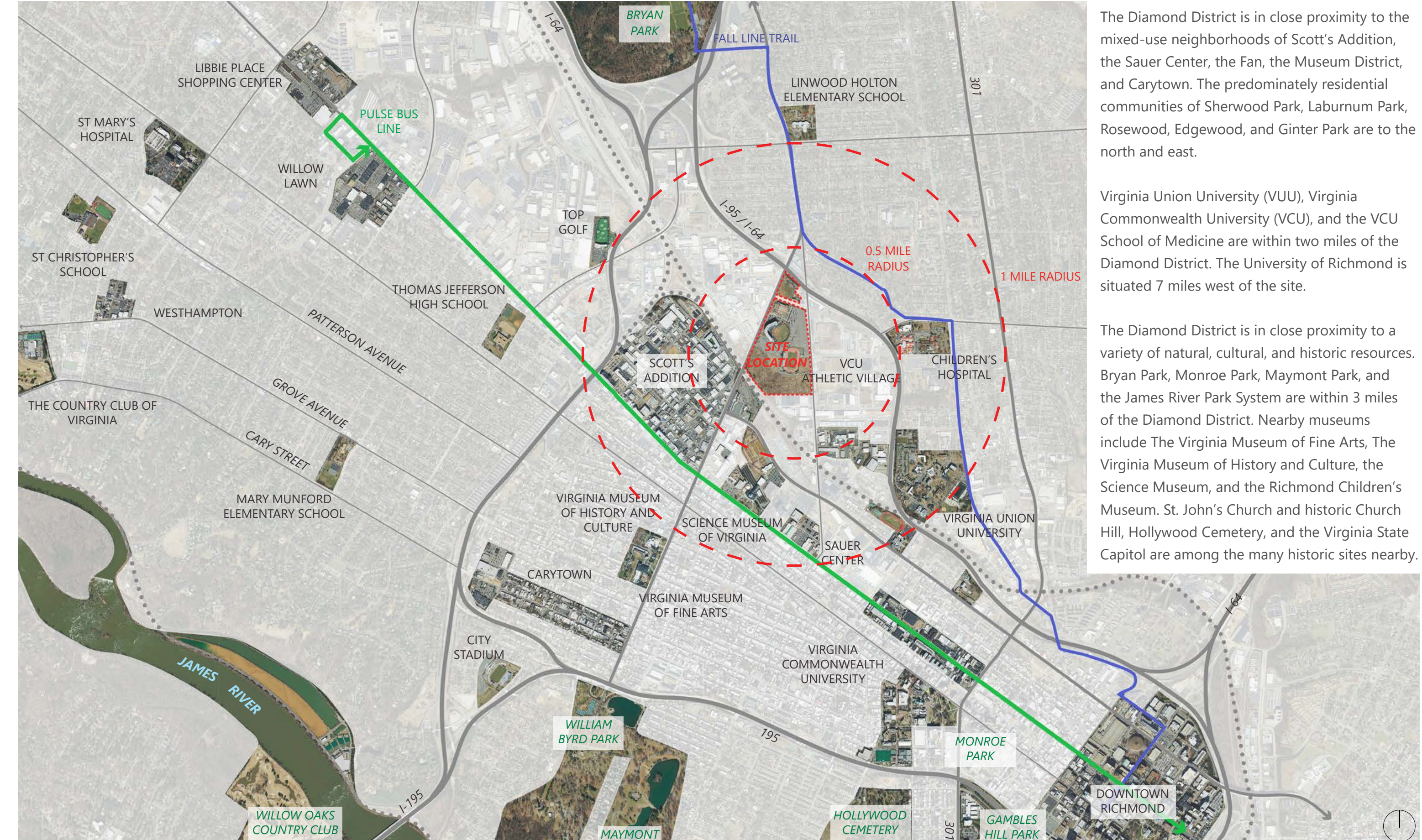
This is not an exhaustive list of all documents and regulations applicable to the Diamond District. The Diamond District Public Realm Design Standards are not a substitute for complying with codes and ordinances associated with the development review process.

2.3 SITE LOCATION



The Diamond District is a 66.7 acre site, centrally located within the City of Richmond and the greater Richmond Metropolitan Area making it an ideal location for a mixed-use, mixed-income urban live-work-play destination. It's superb central location offers unparalleled access to all that the City and region have to offer including employment opportunities, educational institutions, and destinations for recreation and leisure.

2.4 EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



The Diamond District is in close proximity to the mixed-use neighborhoods of Scott's Addition, the Sauer Center, the Fan, the Museum District, and Carytown. The predominately residential communities of Sherwood Park, Laburnum Park, Rosewood, Edgewood, and Ginter Park are to the north and east.

Virginia Union University (VUU), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and the VCU School of Medicine are within two miles of the Diamond District. The University of Richmond is situated 7 miles west of the site.

The Diamond District is in close proximity to a variety of natural, cultural, and historic resources. Bryan Park, Monroe Park, Maymont Park, and the James River Park System are within 3 miles of the Diamond District. Nearby museums include The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Virginia Museum of History and Culture, the Science Museum, and the Richmond Children's Museum. St. John's Church and historic Church Hill, Hollywood Cemetery, and the Virginia State Capitol are among the many historic sites nearby.

2.5 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS & SURROUNDINGS



The site is comprised of 7 publicly owned parcels of land for a total of 66.7 acres. The Diamond District Public Realm Design Guidelines shall be applied to those parcels in addition to N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard, Hermitage Road, and Robin Hood Road where they are adjacent to the site. The underdeveloped site is currently home to a Diamond baseball stadium, the Arthur Ashe Jr. Athletic Center, Sports Backers Stadium, a recreational baseball field, and Parker Field Annex Recycling Center. A large amount of the site is either vacant or asphalt surface parking lots. The City of Richmond plans to relocate city functions, demolish the current baseball stadium and other buildings, and remediate the Diamond District site to prepare for the proposed development.



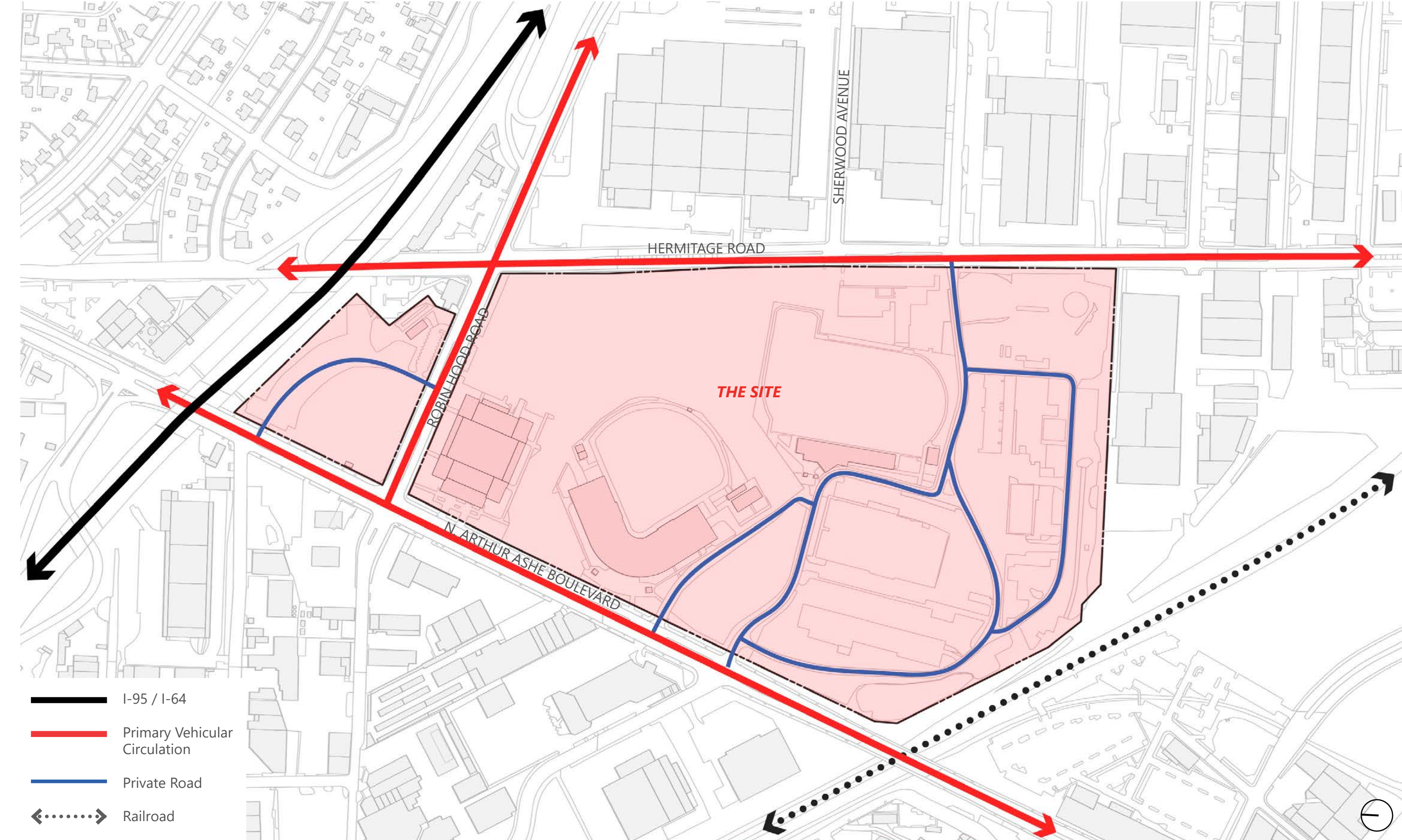
RECENT & FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- 1 Scott's Walk; 16,000 SF of retail and restaurant
- 2 1801 Ellen Road; 7 story, 148 apartment building with 12,000 SF of medical office space
- 3 2902 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard; NOVEL Scott's Addition. 272 apartments
- 4 1117-1209 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard; The Ace 295 apartment building with 13,000 SF of commercial space
- 5 2700 W Leigh Street; 375 Unit, 5 story apartment building
- 6 2300 Hermitage Road - Duplex Station on Hermitage. 3 story, 142 apartment building with 24,000 SF of office
- 7 1613 Ownby Lane; The Porter 5 story, 314 unit apartment building
- 8 The Cooperage Apartments; 150+ apartment units
- 9 VCU Athletic Village
- 10 The Park RVA
- 11 1415 - 1601 Rhoadmiller Street 4 story, 180 unit condo building
- 12 Stylecraft Homes; The Outpost at Brewers Row
- 13 Tommy's Car Wash
- 14 375 Unit Multi-Family Development

DIAMOND DISTRICT SITE BOUNDARY











EXISTING STREET NETWORK



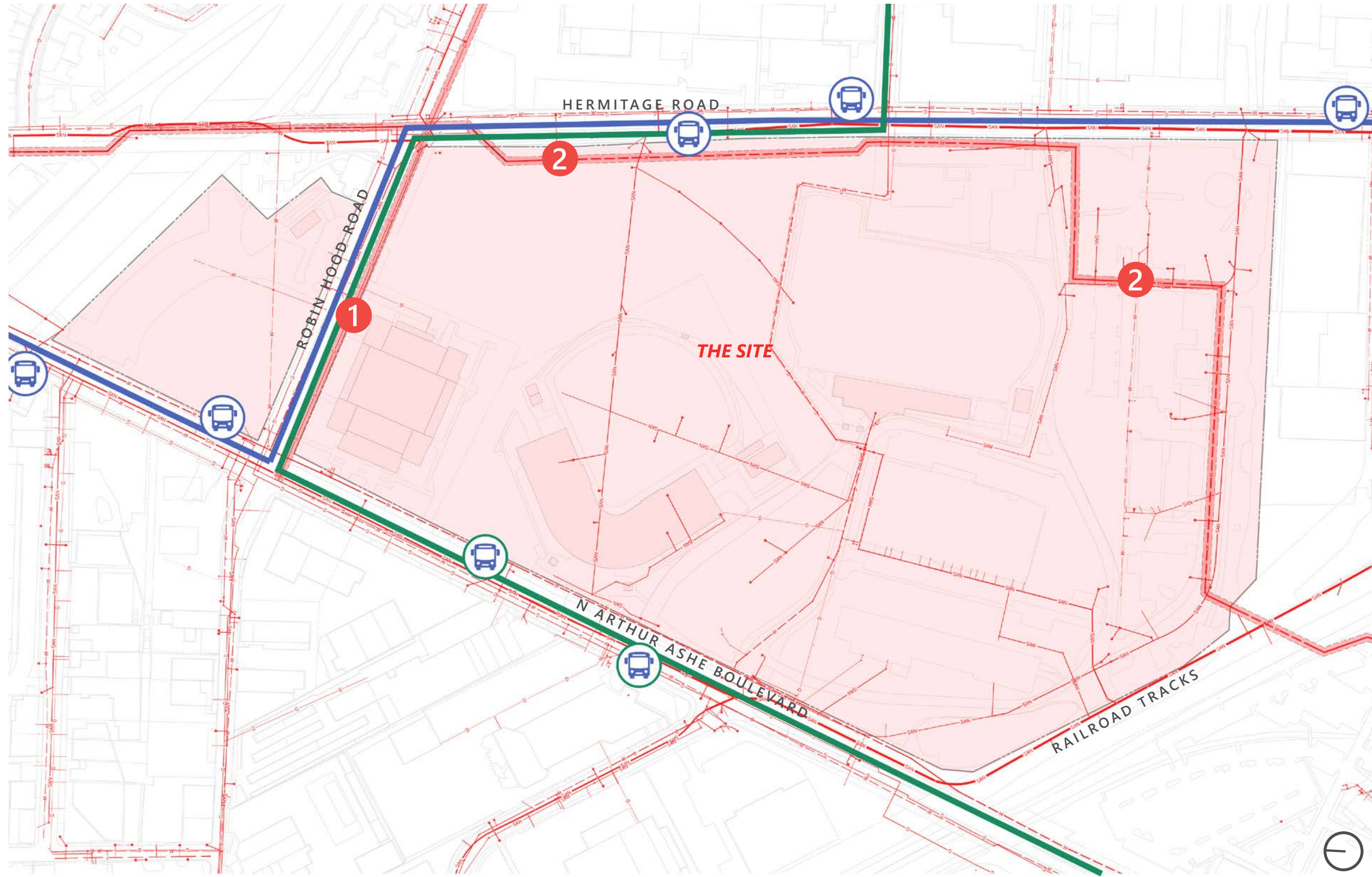
- I-95 / I-64
- Primary Vehicular Circulation
- Private Road
- Railroad

EXISTING SITE UTILITIES AND
BUS ROUTES

-  BUS STOPS ROUTE 14
-  BUS ROUTE 14
-  BUS STOP ROUTE 20
-  BUS ROUTE 20
-  UTILITY
-  UTILITY EASEMENT
-  20' HIGH PRESSURE GAS PIPELINE EASEMENT
-  20' WATERLINE EASEMENT

Bus Routes:
The two existing bus routes adjacent to the Diamond District Site, Routes 14 and 20, will likely experience an increase in patrons from the development of the Diamond District.

Utilities:
Multiple utilities are located within and adjacent to the site. Of note, an active high pressure gas pipeline within a 20' easement runs along the southside of Robin Hood road and cannot be encroached upon. A 36" water line within a 20' easement runs along Hermitage Road and through the site. This easement will be relocated off site.



2.6 VISION FOR THE DIAMOND DISTRICT PUBLIC REALM

DIAMOND DISTRICT CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN
SITE PLAN IS CONCEPTUAL IN NATURE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

- USE THIS SITE PLAN OR SOMETHING MORE CONCEPTUAL?



The Diamond District will be a vibrant, authentic Richmond neighborhood and one-of-a-kind ballpark experience that celebrates creative placemaking, sport, art, culture, and culinary excellence. The District will have a strong sense of place with a balance of well designed buildings interspersed with open space, walkable tree lined blocks, and sustainable features. Having a well designed public realm, including a thoughtfully planned system of streets and public spaces and a cohesive design language, is vital to creating a vibrant, thriving neighborhood imbued with a sense of place. The public realm should not only be safe and functional, but also a beautiful place to be in and move through; a place that attracts businesses, residents, and visitors to the Diamond District. It is envisioned that the Diamond District public realm will:

- Have an active street life with spaces, amenities, and land uses that encourage a variety of active and passive activities along the street year round including dining, shopping, strolling, exercising, and socializing.
- Consist of well designed multi-modal circulation networks that safely and efficiently moves pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular traffic. This system should effectively connect users to the baseball stadium, businesses, residential buildings, and open spaces within the Diamond District and to the surrounding neighborhoods beyond.
- Be accessible, safe, and comfortable for a wide variety of age groups, abilities, and users.
- Meet the various and differing needs of full time residents, business owners, employees, and visitors.
- Include landscaping, hardscape, and site furnishings that define and beautify the streets and gathering spaces.
- Advance the City of Richmond's stated goal to be the greenest city on the East Coast by incorporating sustainable design practices that improve the environment and health of the community.
- Consist of a design language that is both unique to the Diamond District yet rooted in the City of Richmond.
- Enhance the surrounding architecture and thoughtfully respond to the scale, character and nature of surrounding land uses.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle.

3 | STREET NETWORK & STREETScape STANDARDS



3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

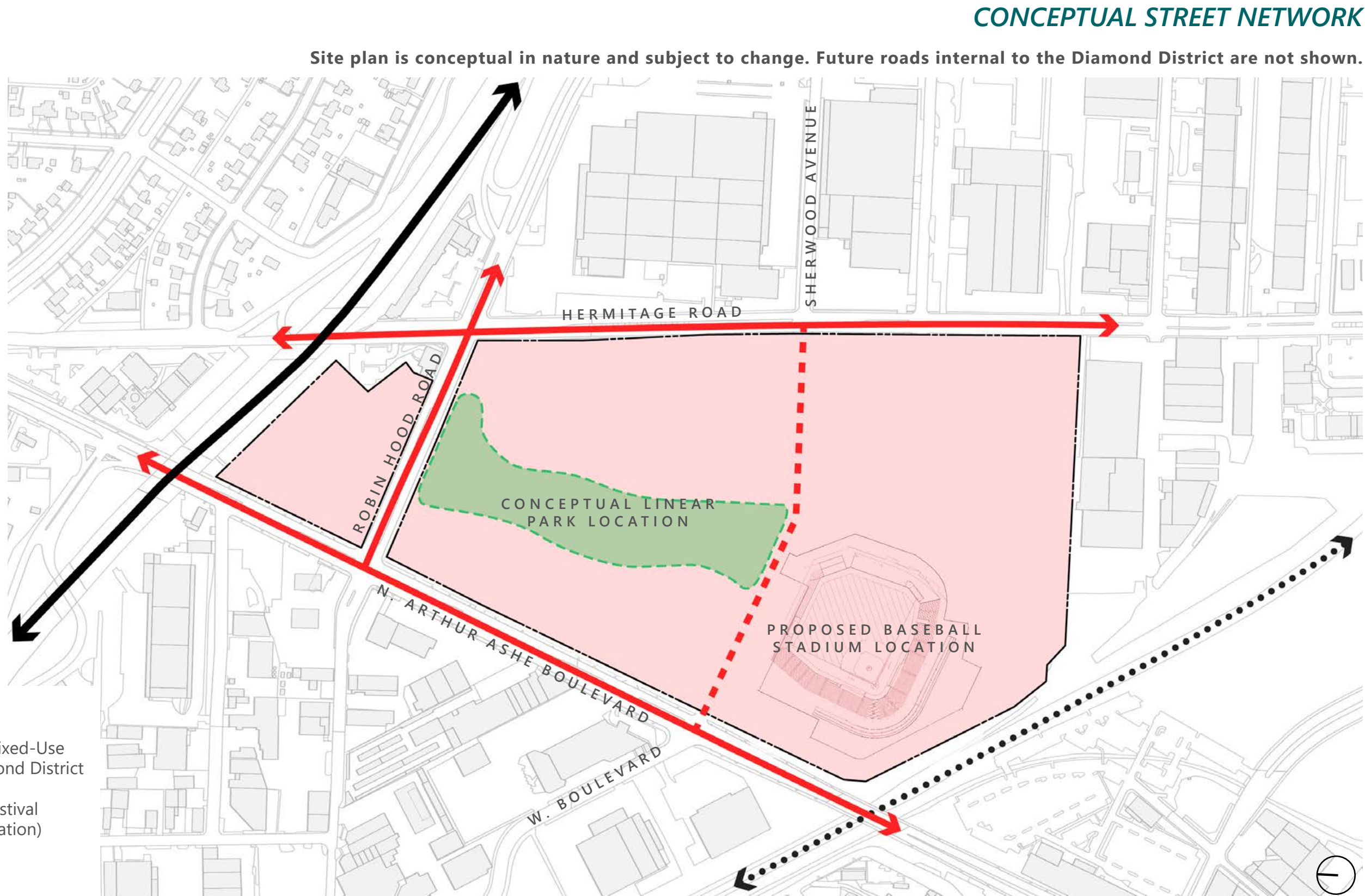
The City of Richmond's Complete Streets Initiative as expressed in the City's Better Streets Manual strives to ensure the creation of a comprehensive, integrated, connected, multimodal transportation network that balances the accessibility, mobility, health, and safety needs of all users, including persons with disabilities, seniors, children, and families. Streets are an essential component of livable, attractive neighborhoods. A well planned network of streets within the Diamond District will safely accommodate the varying needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit users, while providing connectivity and access to adjacent land uses, open spaces, and amenities. Special attention should be given to designing streets that are not only used for travel, but streets which are beautiful spaces that encourage a variety of activity on the street. Thoughtfully designed streetscapes can help define the character of this place, add economic value, and enhance the quality of life and health for residents, businesses, and visitors.

3.2 PROPOSED STREET NETWORK

The street network for the Diamond District shall establish a hierarchy of streets. N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard, Hermitage Road, Robin Hood Road shall function as Mixed-Use Streets* as described in the Better Streets Manual. A proposed Festival Street will extend through the site and provide access to the ballpark. The Festival Street will also be a Mixed-Use Street typology. A network of internal Neighborhood Residential Streets* and Linear Park Streets* will create walkable neighborhood blocks that support local pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation.

*For further information on street typologies referenced in these Design Standards, see the Better Streets Manual.

- Existing I-95 / I-64
- Existing Streets to be Mixed-Use Streets within the Diamond District
- Proposed Mixed-Use Festival Street (Approximate location)
- Existing Railroad

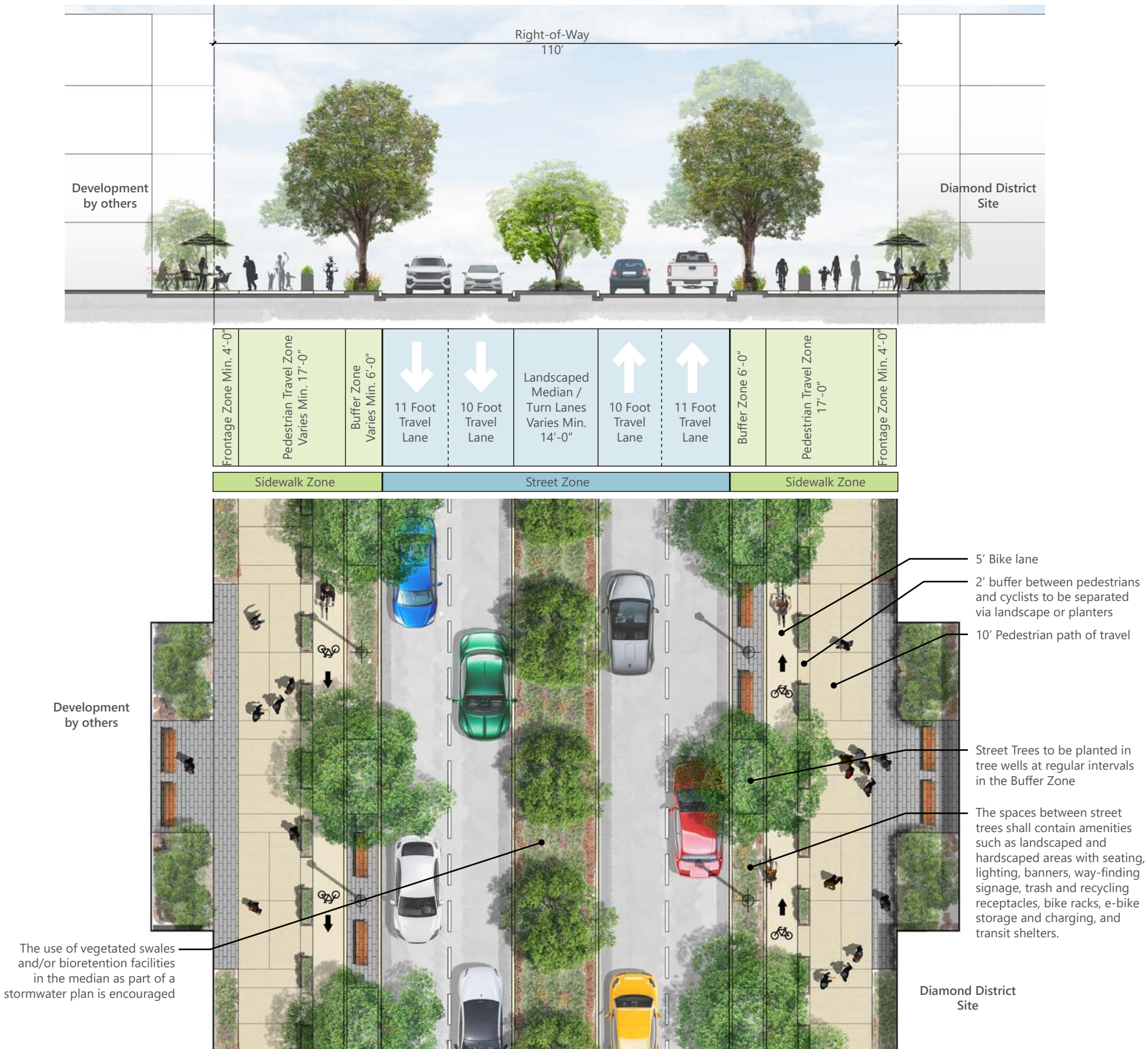


3.3 N. ARTHUR ASHE BOULEVARD

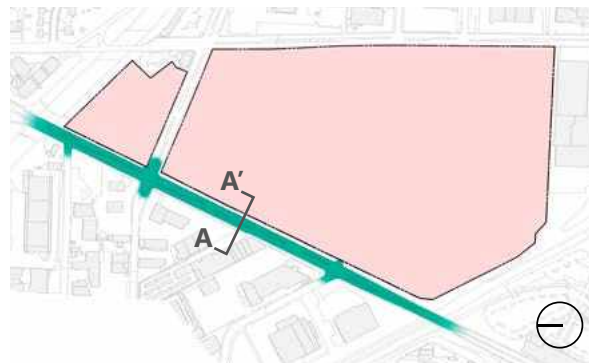
Over the last decade, redevelopment and new development close to the street has changed the character of N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard adjacent to the Diamond District, slowly transforming it into a true mixed use boulevard. Within the Diamond District, the new baseball stadium, as well as multi-family residential, a hotel, retail, and office land uses will be situated along this street. N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard, along with Hermitage Road, is one of the primary vehicular circulation routes to and around the Diamond District, connecting the District to other city neighborhoods. N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard provides access to and from Interstate 95 North / 64 West just north of the Diamond District. The Richmond 300 Plan calls for N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard to become a "Great Street" featuring buildings that address the street, underground utilities, street trees, lighting, enhanced transit, and other amenities. The Richmond 300 Plan calls for it to be a high frequency transit route with multiple stops. Additionally, plans are underway to replace the bridge over the railroad tracks just south of the Diamond District.

- Better Streets Manual Street Typology: Mixed-Use Street
- Existing Right-of-Way Width: Varies, but is predominately 110'-0"
- Proposed Right-of-Way Width: 110'-0"
- Speed Limit: 35 mph

N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard Conceptual Section & Plan



Street Location Map

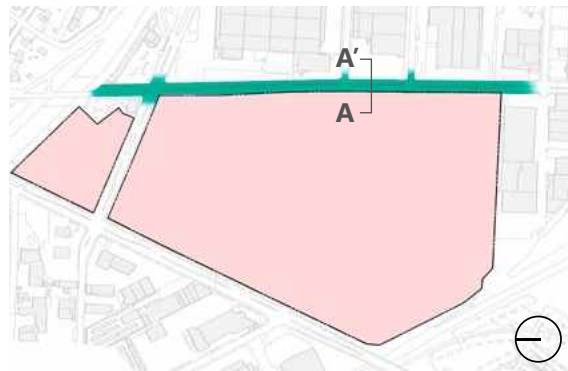


3.4 HERMITAGE ROAD

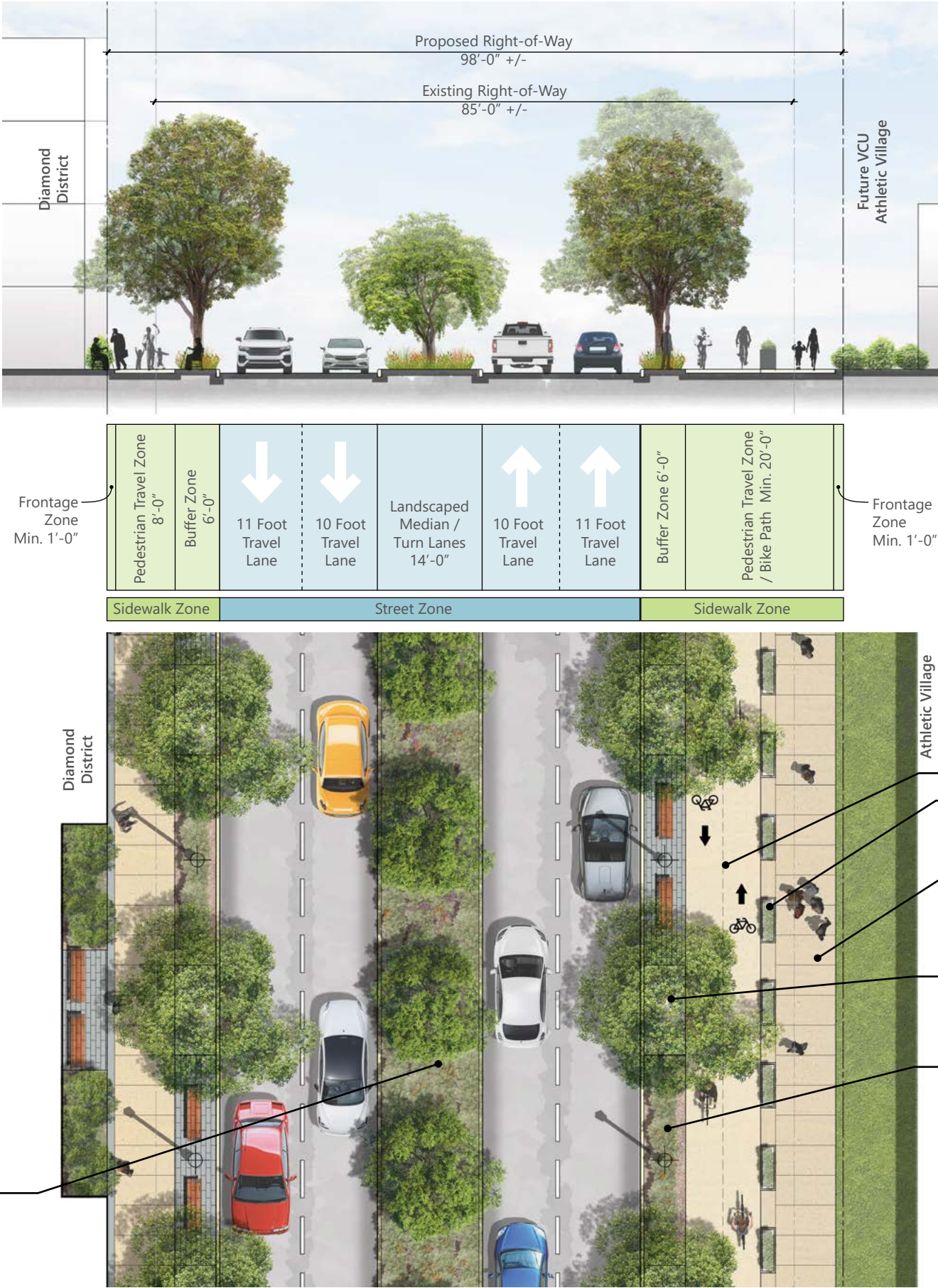
Hermitage Road, along with N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard, is one of the primary transportation circulation routes to and around the Diamond District. Hermitage Road near the Diamond District can be accessed from Interstate 95 South / 64 East. The Sauer Center commercial redevelopment at the intersection of Hermitage Road and W. Broad Street has started to transform and enliven the character of Hermitage Road south of the Diamond District. The proposed VCU Athletic Village as well as multi-family residential development within the Diamond District along Hermitage Road promises more transformation. The Richmond 300 Plan calls for Hermitage Road to be both a major mixed-use street and a “Great Street” featuring buildings that address the street, underground utilities, street trees, lighting, enhanced transit, and other amenities. The Richmond 300 also calls for it to be a high frequency transit route with multiple stops. An existing 20’ water line easement runs along Hermitage Road. Hermitage Road from the city line south to W. Broad Street, which encompasses the stretch of road through the Diamond District, was identified by the City and the Richmond Bicycle Master Plan project team as a key connection in need of bicycle infrastructure improvements.

- Better Streets Manual Street Typology: Mixed-Use Street
- Existing Right-of-Way Width: 84’-0” +/-
- Proposed Right-of-Way Width: 98’-0”
- Speed Limit: 35 mph

Street Location Map



Hermitage Road Conceptual Section & Plan

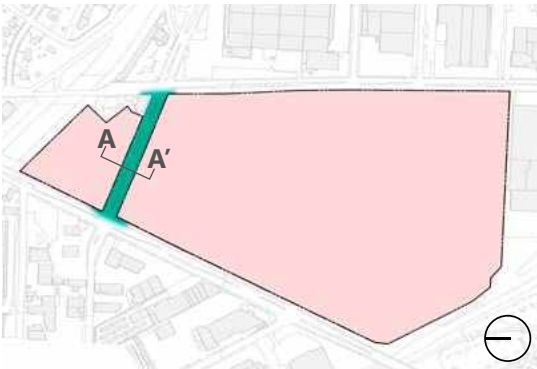


3.5 ROBIN HOOD ROAD

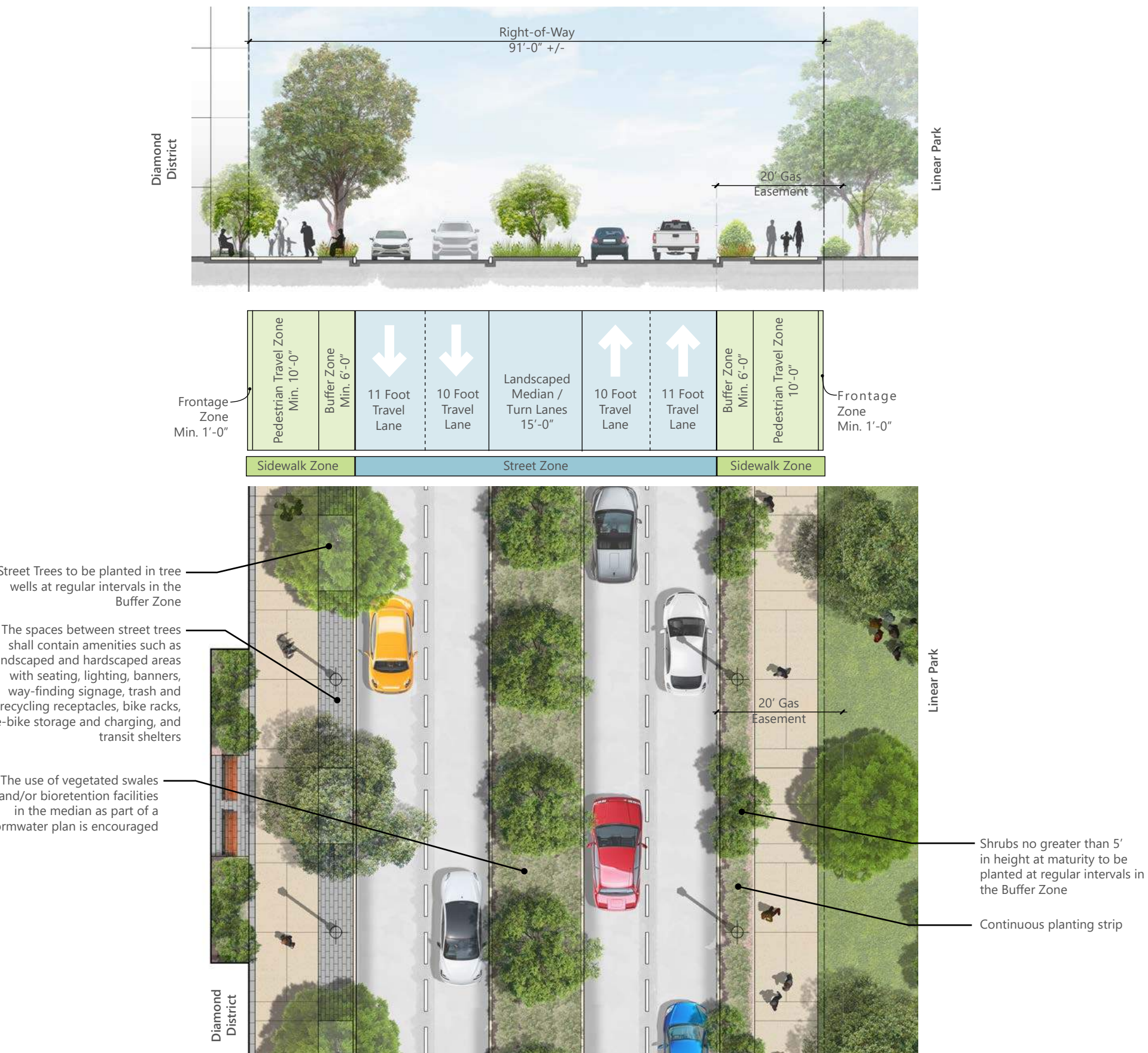
Robin Hood Road is one of the primary transportation circulation routes to and through the Diamond District, connecting the District to the rest of Greater Scott’s Addition and various Northside neighborhoods. Robin Hood Road provides direct access to Interstate 95 South / 64 East as well as the proposed VCU Athletics Village. Residential and commercial development along Robin Hood Road within the Diamond District will begin to transform this route from an underdeveloped street marked with vast asphalt parking lots into a mixed use corridor. The northern edge of the proposed linear park will border Robin Hood Road, making Robin Hood Road a gateway into the park. The Richmond 300 Plan designates Robin Hood Road as a future high frequency transit route. An active high pressure gas pipeline within a 20’ easement runs parallel to the south side of Robin Hood Road. **No plantings or shrubs greater than 5’ in height at maturity are permitted within the easement.**

- Better Streets Manual Street Typology: Mixed-Use Street
- Existing Right-of-Way Width: 91’-0” +/-
- Proposed Right-of-Way Width: 91’-0” +/-
- Speed Limit: 25 mph

Street Location Map



Robin Hood Road Conceptual Section & Plan

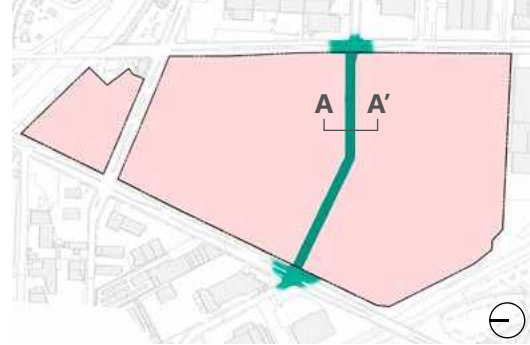


3.6 FESTIVAL STREET

The proposed Festival Street is expected to be a hub of activity in the Diamond District, with an increase in activity occurring on game days. The Festival street may be closed from time to time for special events, especially when there is an event at the ballpark. Pedestrian access to the ballpark will be from the Festival Street. Additionally, commercial development, including retail shops and a hotel, multi-family residential uses, and the linear park will front this street. Consideration must be given to using special design features that designate the Festival Street as a special space within the Diamond District. The inclusion of string lighting and a street mural or stamped asphalt in the Street Zone should be considered. at key locations in the Street Zone. A high visibility block-style crosswalk should be installed all intersections. Stamped asphalt may be used in the crosswalk at unsignalized intersections. The design shall include accommodations for food trucks during festivals and special events. A plan shall be developed to safely and efficiently manage vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation when the Festival Street is closed for events.

- Better Streets Manual Street Typology: Mixed-Use Street
- Proposed Right-of-Way Width: minimum 86'-0"
- Speed Limit: 25 mph

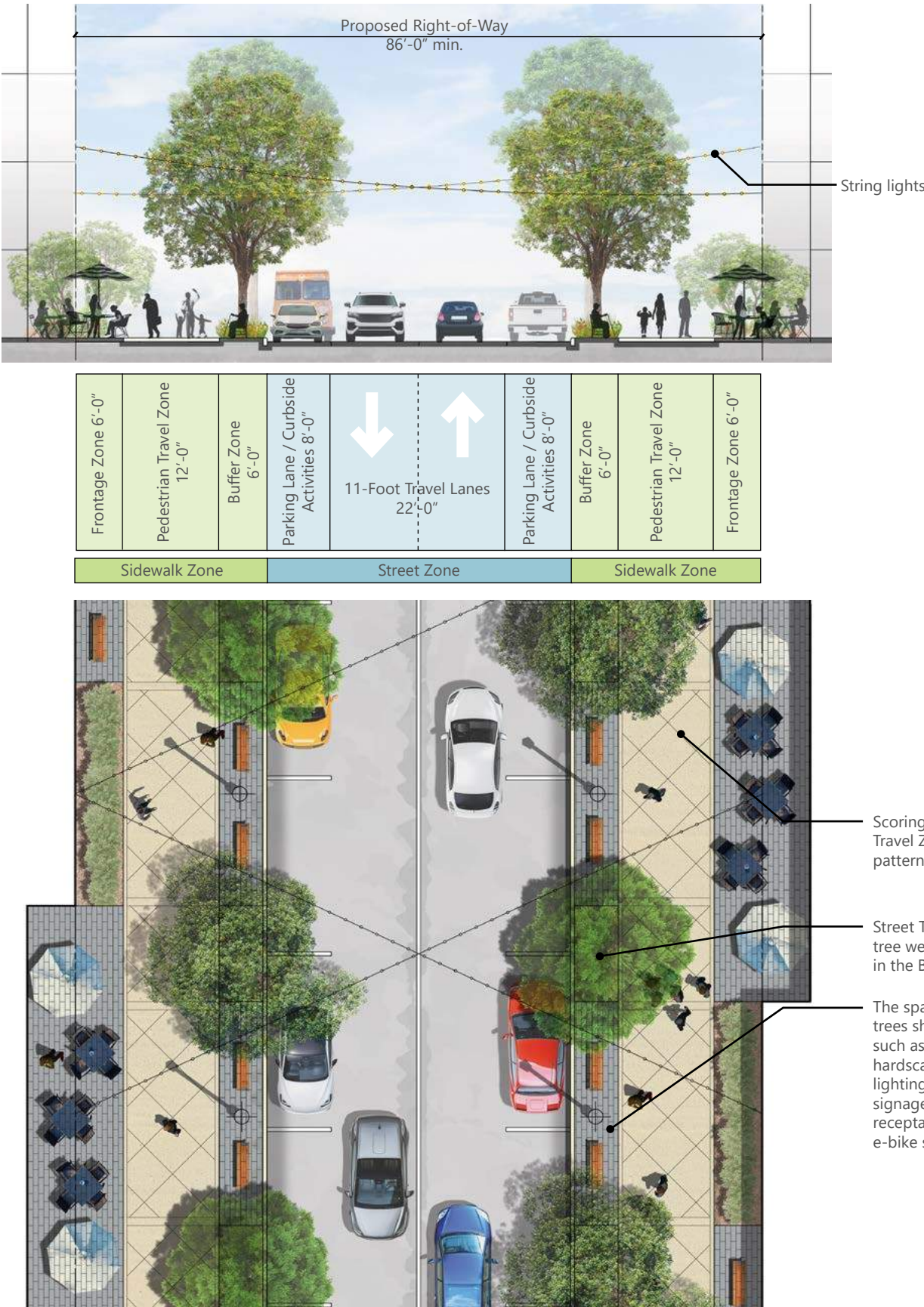
Festival Street Proposed Location



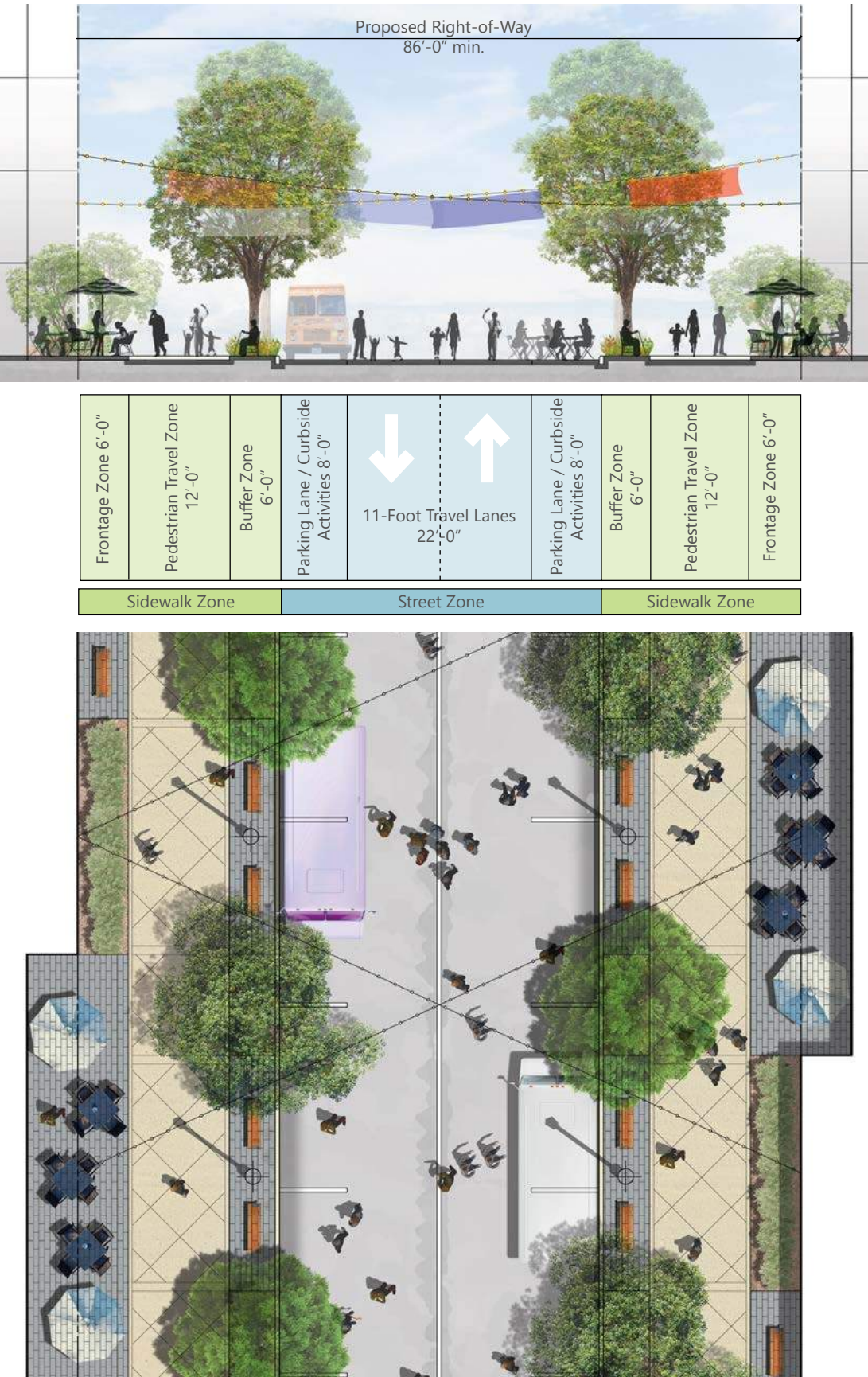
Festival Street Precedent Images



Festival Street Conceptual Section & Plan



Festival Street Conceptual Section & Plan when Closed for Events

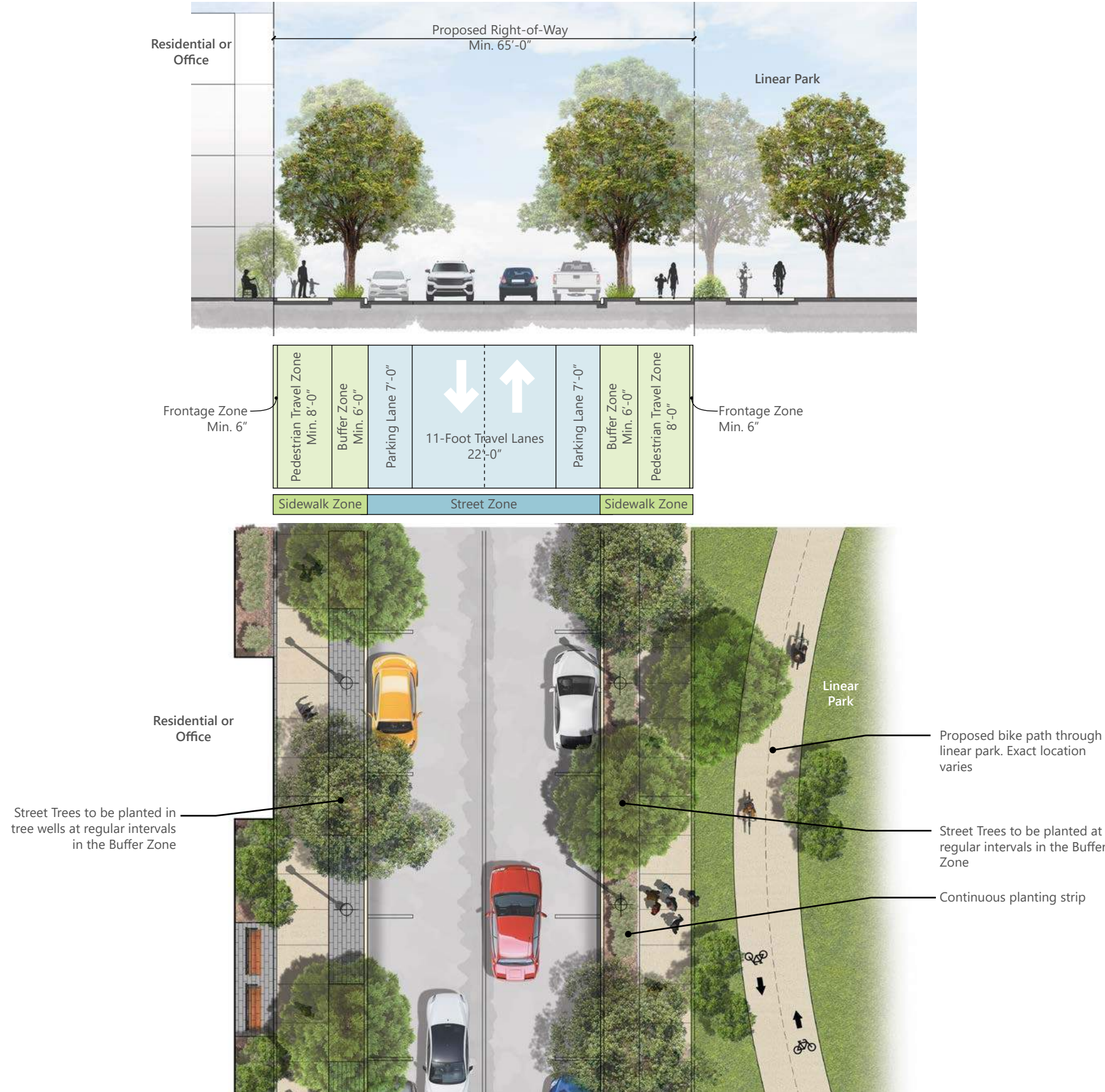


3.7 LINEAR PARK PERIMETER STREETS

The Linear Park Perimeter Streets will be internal to the Diamond District. They are unique in that on one side they will be bordered by the proposed linear park and on the opposite side, they will be bordered by multi-family residential or office land uses. They must accommodate the needs of residents as well as provide safe pedestrian access to this signature park.

- Better Streets Manual Street Typology: These streets contain elements of Neighborhood Residential Streets and Parkways
- Proposed Right-of-Way Width: minimum 65'-0"
- Speed Limit: 25 mph

Linear Park Perimeter Streets Conceptual Section & Plan

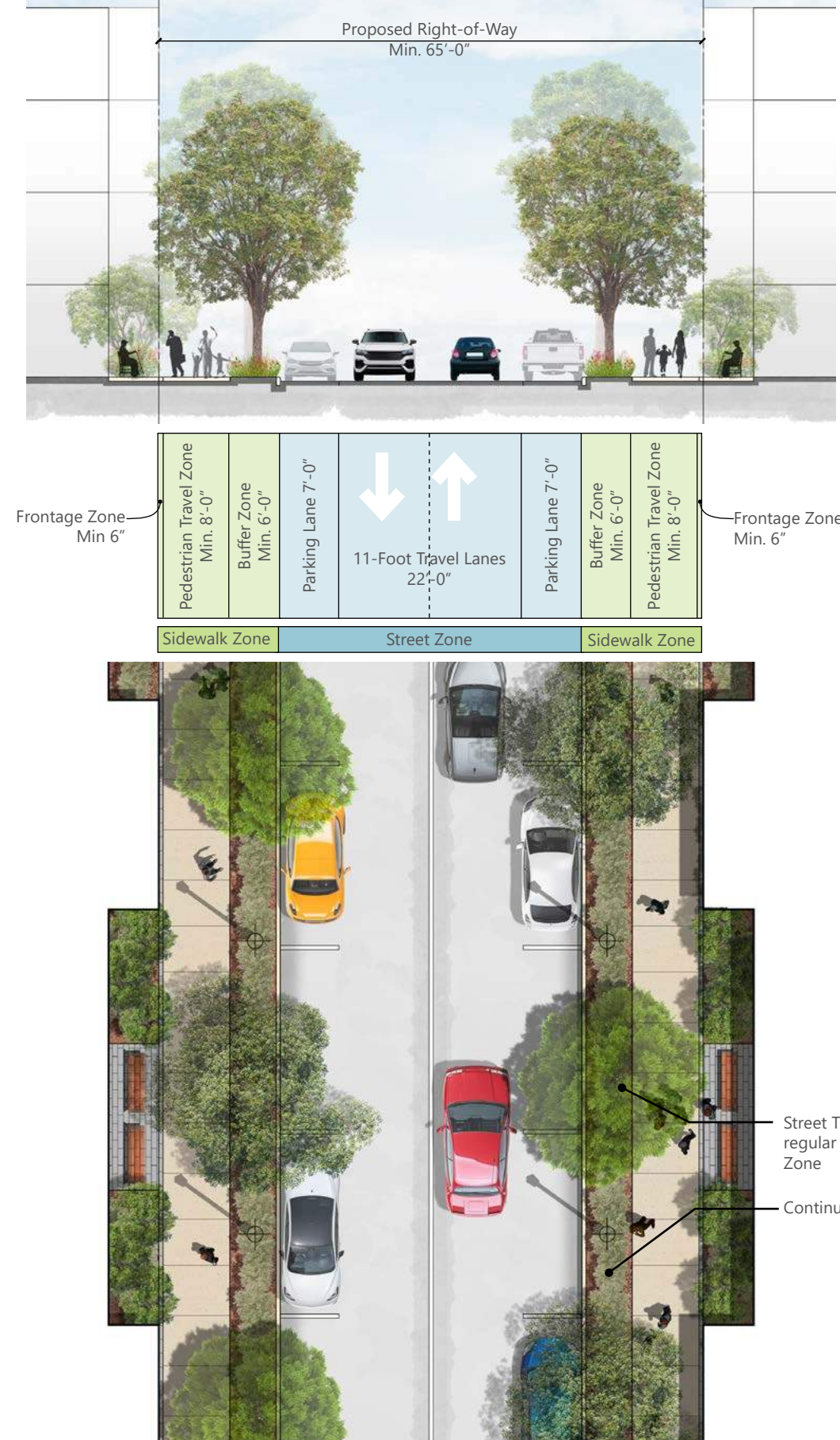


3.8 NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL STREETS

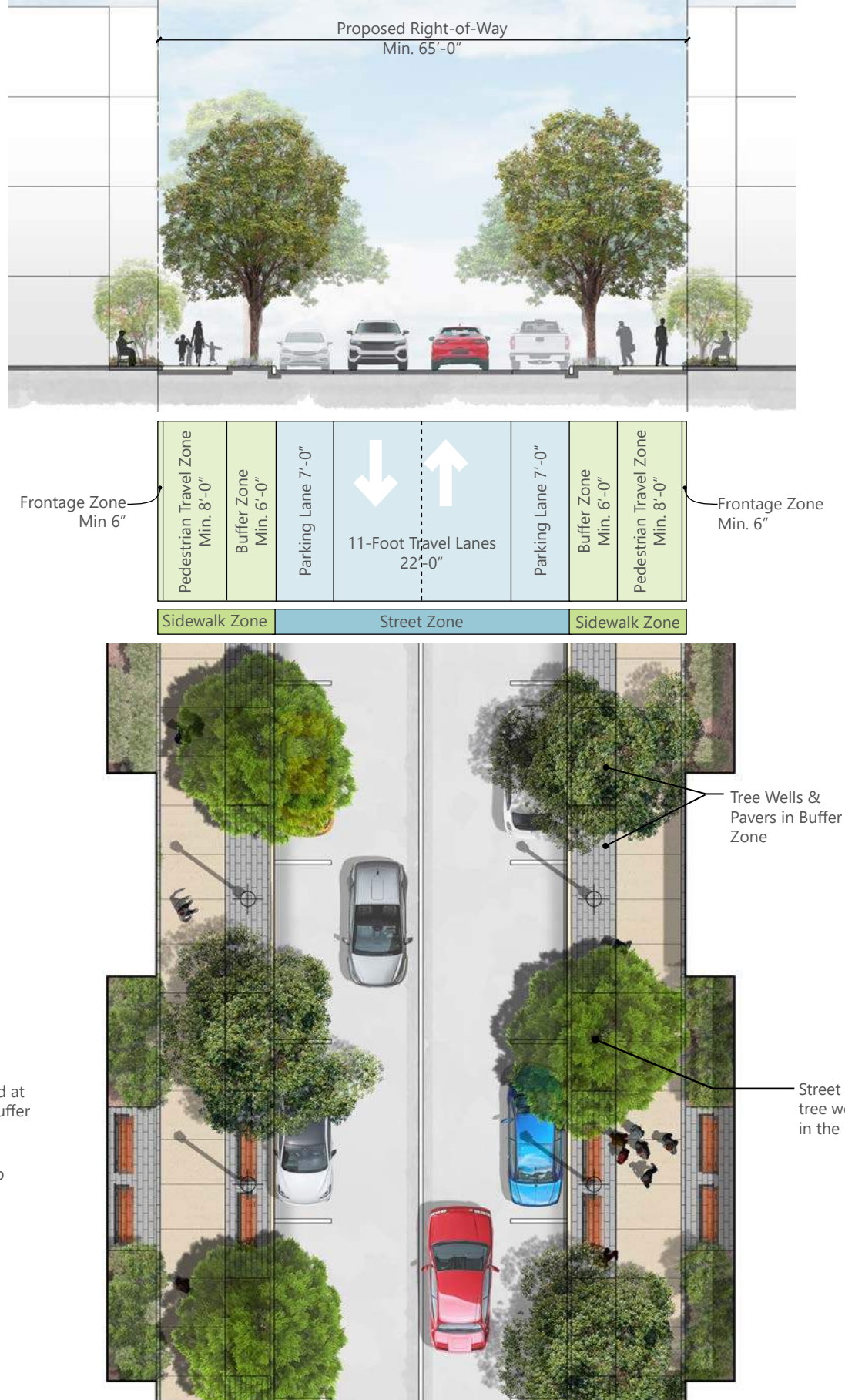
Neighborhood Residential Streets will be internal to the Diamond District. They will be bordered on both sides by multi-family residential land uses. These streets will typically have lower levels of vehicular traffic and are not intended for cut through traffic. These streets are often frequented by people that reside in the neighborhood. They may have a continuous planting strip in the Buffer Zone or street trees planted in tree wells.

- Better Streets Manual Street Typology: Neighborhood Residential Street
- Proposed Right-of-Way Width: 65'-0"
- Speed Limit: 25 mph

Neighborhood Residential Streets
Conceptual Sections & Plans with Continuous Planting Strip



Neighborhood Residential Streets
Conceptual Sections & Plans with Tree Wells



4 | PUBLIC REALM ELEMENTS



Credit: F11photo

4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a guide for addressing elements and situations that are common throughout the public realm and not specific to any one street or public space.