Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: June 6, 2019

PROJECT
Joint Base Andrews, Firing Range Facility Expansion
Joint Base Andrews
Camp Springs, Maryland

SUBMITTED BY
United States Department of Defense
Department of the Navy

REVIEW AUTHORITY
Federal Projects in the Environs
per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)

NCPC FILE NUMBER
8056

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER
3207.00(38.00)44897

APPLICANT'S REQUEST
Approve preliminary site and building plans

PROPOSED ACTION
Approve preliminary site and building plans with comments

ACTION ITEM TYPE
Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Navy has submitted a proposal to expand and improve the existing firing range facility at Joint Base Andrews. The project entails: construction of two new buildings (identified as Buildings A and B); refurbishment of an existing administrative building (identified as Building C); expansion of (and restriping of) the existing parking lot; and development of new on-site bio-retention areas, new sidewalks, new fire/emergency/service access roads, and additional chain-link perimeter fencing (to encompass the expanded facility area). The project will not increase on-site parking capacity, nor result in site employment. The new enclosed firing range building (Building A) will have an area of approximately 20,800 square feet and the new administrative building (Building B) is designed with an area of approximately 4,300 square feet.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Department of the Navy has submitted the project on behalf of the Air Force.
- The firing range expansion is included in the 2016 JBA Installation Development Plan, which was reviewed by NCPC in January 2018 as a draft. The Plan has not yet been resubmitted for final review by the Commission.
- The site design was selected from a set of three potential alternatives (through an Environmental Assessment) as most compatible with several project goals including: optimizing their training operations and range utilization; eliminating range scheduling conflicts; improving safety conditions for trainees and instructors; and having adequate facilities to support training and instruction.
- Expansion into nearby cleared land (to the southeast of the current facility) was considered as an EA alternative, but was not selected based on the area's use as a capped landfill and other safety considerations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for the Joint Base Andrews firing range facility in Camp Springs, Maryland.

Notes that the location and scope of the project is justified based on projected regional demand for firearm training and the need to bring the facility up to current Department of Defense requirements related to firing ranges, emergency access, anti-terrorism/force protection, and disabled personnel access.

Requests the following additional information in the final project submission:

- Justification for the proposed fire/emergency/service access driveway configuration, which fully encompasses the new firing range building (Building A) and eastern area of the expanded facility, as well as its design dimensions and paving materials;
- Documentation that demonstrates project compliance with Maryland and EISA Section 438 stormwater requirements related to runoff volume, peak flow, duration of discharge, pollutant loadings, and temperature;
- Consideration of whether the proposed development expansion footprint can be reduced by more efficiently integrating stormwater management into the project (i.e. using porous asphalt) and/or by modifying the proposed network of fire/emergency/service access drives; and
- Documentation with more detail on the tree removal mitigation related to new canopy area (compared to the total area of the trees to be removed), and why the identified reforestation areas were selected.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None
Remaining actions (anticipated)	Summer 2019 – Final site and building plan review

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

NCPC staff has reviewed the project and recognizes that the proposed expansion (to a specialized facility) is necessary to accommodate current Department of Defense safety standards and demand

for training at Joint Base Andrews and other military installations across the Region. The submission includes information that is helpful in justifying the proposed site layout and design, although NCPC staff remains unclear about the configuration of the fire/emergency/access driveways, proposed number and size of the stormwater management facilities on-site, and tree removal mitigation. NCPC requests additional information related to these topics in the final project submission. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **approve the preliminary site and building plans for the Joint Base Andrews firing range facility in Camp Springs, Maryland.**

Background

The proposed firing range facility expansion is necessary to accommodate current safety and other Department of Defense standards related to emergency access, anti-terrorism/force protection, disabled personnel access, in addition to increased demand for training space. The facility is currently used by on-base personnel and personnel from other installations across the region. The current facility, which consists of an "open air" firing range, storage building, administration building, and on-site surface parking (52 spaces) and circulation, was initially developed in 1991. The site is enclosed with an 8'-0" high chain-link fence for perimeter security, with forested land surrounding the site and wetlands adjacent to the south side of the site. A paved access drive is aligned along the west of the existing firing range area, and an unpaved access drive exists to the east.

The proposed expansion will construct a new 21,000 square foot indoor firing range building (identified as Building A), and new 4,300 square foot administration building (Building B); renovate the existing administration building (Building C); restripe and slightly expand the surface lot; add sidewalks with covering canopy, new bio-retention areas, and new fire/emergency access driveways; and realign the perimeter fence to enclose the additional land area. Joint Base Andrews will continue to use the existing "open air" range and storage shed. The project is included in the current 2016 Joint Base Andrews Installation Development Plan.

The new firing range building (Building A) is industrial in appearance, rectangular in shape, measuring roughly 120-0' x 160-0', with a standing seam metal roof, concrete walls, and ventilation equipment along the northeast side of the structure. The new administration building (Building B) is rectangular in shape, measuring 80' x 60', with a standing seam metal roof and concrete walls. Building B will be located along the eastside of the existing administration building (Building C), which will be renovated and remain in administrative use once the renovation is complete. The three buildings will be connected with new walkways that will be protected from the weather by a continuous linear canopy.

The facility's employee population and parking will remain the same after the planned expansion is complete. However, the lot will be re-striped (eliminating 10 spaces) and 10 new spaces will be added, with five new spaces along a new fire/emergency/service access road and five new spaces along the west-side of the lot. The project will remove 2.63 acres of trees to the north and east of the existing site to construct four new bioretention areas, a stormwater management pond, and new emergency/fire/service access driveways surrounding the new development. The submission notes

that the new vehicular access is mandated per current Department of Defense code (UFC 3-600-01 §9-1.1), which relates to all-weather ground access. The proposed tree removal will be mitigated in compliance with the Joint Base Andrews Arbor Plan, which requires new tree planted in designated reforestation areas. The reforestation sites are situated in the northwest part of the installation, near the Jones (HQ) Building.

Staff recommends that the Commission **note that the location and scope of the project is justified based on projected regional demand for firearm training and the need to bring the facility up to current Department of Defense requirements related to firing ranges, emergency access, anti-terrorism/force protection, and disabled personnel access.**

Analysis

Project Context

The expansion is consistent with the 2016 Installation Development Plan, which shows the site as appropriate for industrial uses. In addition, the proposed expansion is necessary to sustain mission readiness by maintaining installation training capabilities as expressed in the Environmental Assessment (EA) report. The EA also studied two other potential expansion configuration alternatives. The current submission reflects the Air Force's preferred alternative, which is to expand adjacent to the existing facility along the north and east sides. The Air Force identified their Preferred Alternative based on its capacity to satisfy several goals, which included: optimizing their training operations and range utilization; eliminating range scheduling conflicts; improving safety conditions for trainees and instructors; and having adequate facilities to support training and instruction.

Site Design

Based on the site location with adjacent forested land along all sides, any future expansion would require some tree removal. However, the project submission does not adequately convey the level of effort used to minimize the development area to preserve as many trees as possible. One notable feature is the proposed new fire/emergency/service driveways along the northside of the new firing range building and eastside of the expansion area. Staff is unclear to what extent, the Navy has considered other access configurations during design development, and if the new roadway widths are able to be reduced or able to be constructed with permeable materials. These modifications may allow reductions in required on-site stormwater management capacity, which in turn may enable the site footprint to be reduced, thereby preserving additional tree cover adjacent to the site.

The site plan shows four new sizable bio-retention areas and one new stormwater pond along the west, north, and east edges of the future facility. Without more detailed information, staff remains unclear about the performance of the preliminary design, and if all proposed new on-site capacity is necessary to satisfy minimum state and federal requirements. Should the preliminary design significantly exceed these requirements, then the scale of the stormwater areas may be able to be reduced and additional adjacent tree area preserved.

The preliminary submission indicates that the project's tree removal will be mitigated with new trees planted in designated reforestation areas in the northeastern part of the installation. The new trees will be planted in compliance with the 2011 Joint Base Arbor Plan, which serves as the guiding policy for tree removal mitigation. Typically, similar-sized projects are required to replace at least 60% of the total tree canopy area removed, with new tree canopy, although the submission does not provide enough information that would allow NCPC staff to make that determination. The selected reforestation areas are also curious with their distant proximity to the project site.

In light of the previous discussion, staff recommends that the Commission **request the following additional information in the final project submission:**

- **Justification for the proposed fire/emergency/service access driveway configuration, which fully encompasses the new firing range building (Building A) and eastern area of the expanded facility, as well as its design dimensions and paving materials;**
- **Documentation that demonstrates project compliance with Maryland and EISA Section 438 stormwater requirements related to runoff volume, peak flow, duration of discharge, pollutant loadings, and temperature;**
- **Consideration of whether the proposed development expansion footprint can be reduced by more efficiently integrating stormwater management into the project (i.e. using porous asphalt) and/or by modifying the proposed network of fire/emergency/service access drives; and**
- **Documentation with more detail on the tree removal mitigation related to new canopy area (compared to the total area of the trees to be removed), and why the identified reforestation areas were selected.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

NCPC staff has reviewed this proposal for compliance with relevant guidance and has determined that it is not inconsistent with the policies established in the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. In particular, the project is supported by policies in the Federal Environment.

National Historic Preservation Act

The submission includes documentation that the project was reviewed by the Maryland Historic Trust, which made the determination that there are no historic properties affected by this undertaking. For projects outside of the District of Columbia, NCPC does not have a formal Section 106 review responsibility.

National Environmental Policy Act

As previously mentioned, the Air Force undertook an EA to review the project under NEPA, concluding the study with a signed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI.) The EA analyzed

one "no build" alternative and three "build" alternatives consisting of different expansion development configurations. The Air Force's Preferred Alternative is reflected in the current project submission. For projects outside of the District of Columbia, NCPC does not have a formal review responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act.

CONSULTATION

NCPC transmitted the project to the Maryland Department of Planning's project referral clearinghouse, which transmitted the submission to the following agencies: Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Military Department, Prince George's County, Maryland Department of Planning, and the Maryland Historical Trust. There were no substantive comments transmitted back from any of the State agencies. In addition, NCPC also referred the project directly to the Prince George's division of the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), which provided comments to the applicant related to particulate matter, architectural elements, energy-saving building features, and on-site landscaping.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Project Narrative
- NCPC Project Summary Presentation
- Environmental Assessment Report
- Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Prepared by Michael Weil
05/30/2019

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

National Capital Planning Commission

Joint Base Andrews Firing Range Facility Expansion

Camp Springs, Maryland

Approval of Preliminary Site and Building Plans

United States Department of Defense

June 6, 2019 | File: 8056

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: June 6, 2019

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)

Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary Site and Building Plans

Session: Consent Calendar

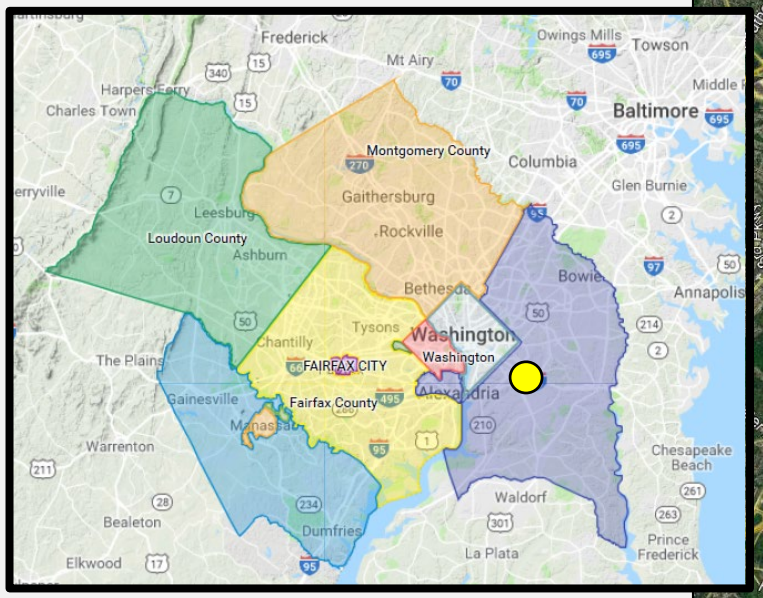
NCPC Review Officer: Michael Weil

NCPC File Number: 8056

Project Summary:

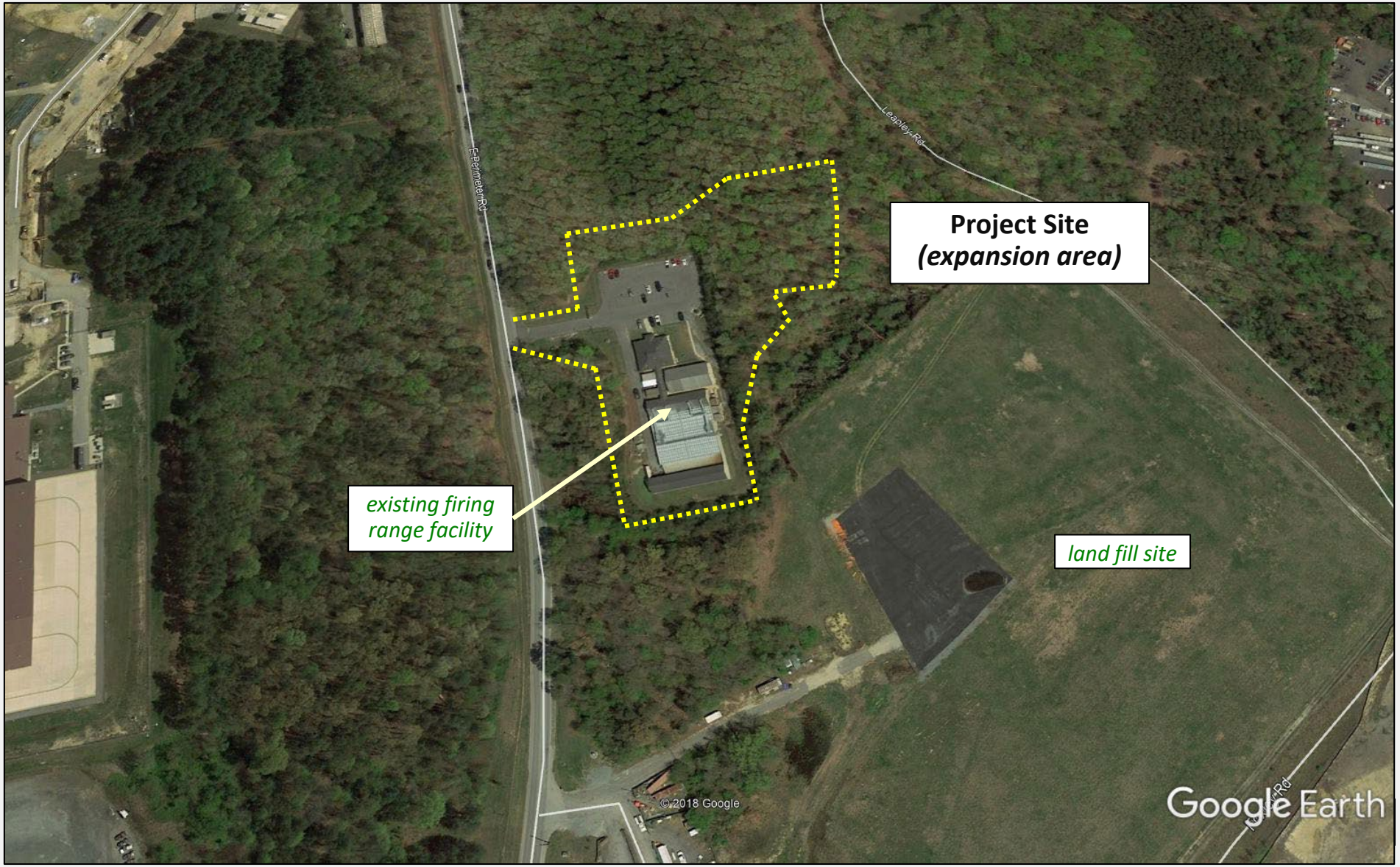
The Naval Facilities Division has submitted a proposal to expand the existing firing range facility at Joint Base Andrews with the construction of two new buildings (known as Buildings A and B); refurbishment of an existing administrative building (known as Building C); a small addition to (and restriping of) the existing parking lot; additional on-site bio-retention areas; new sidewalks; a new loading/service drive; and additional chain-link perimeter fencing (to encompass the new expanded facility.) The existing facility includes an outdoor firing range, with a single administrative building (Building C), storage shed, on-site pedestrian walkways, stormwater management areas, surface parking (52 spaces), and chain-link perimeter fencing. The project will not increase on-site parking capacity, nor result in any increase in the number of workers at the site. The new enclosed firing range (Building A) will have an area of approximately 20,800 square feet and the new administrative building (Building B) has an area of approximately 4,300 square feet. Building C, which serves as the current administrative building for the facility, has 650 square feet of interior space.

Site Location

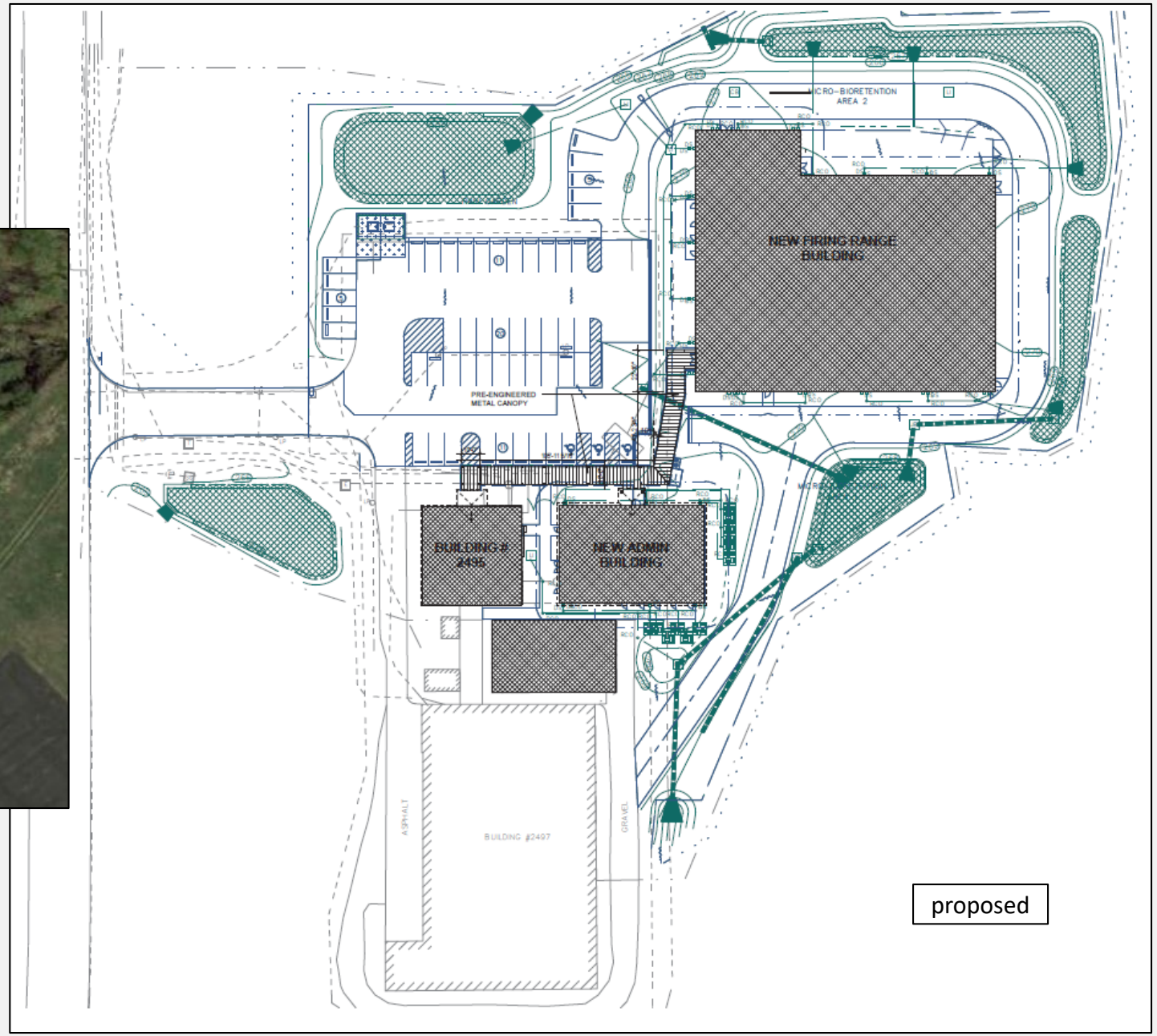


Location Map

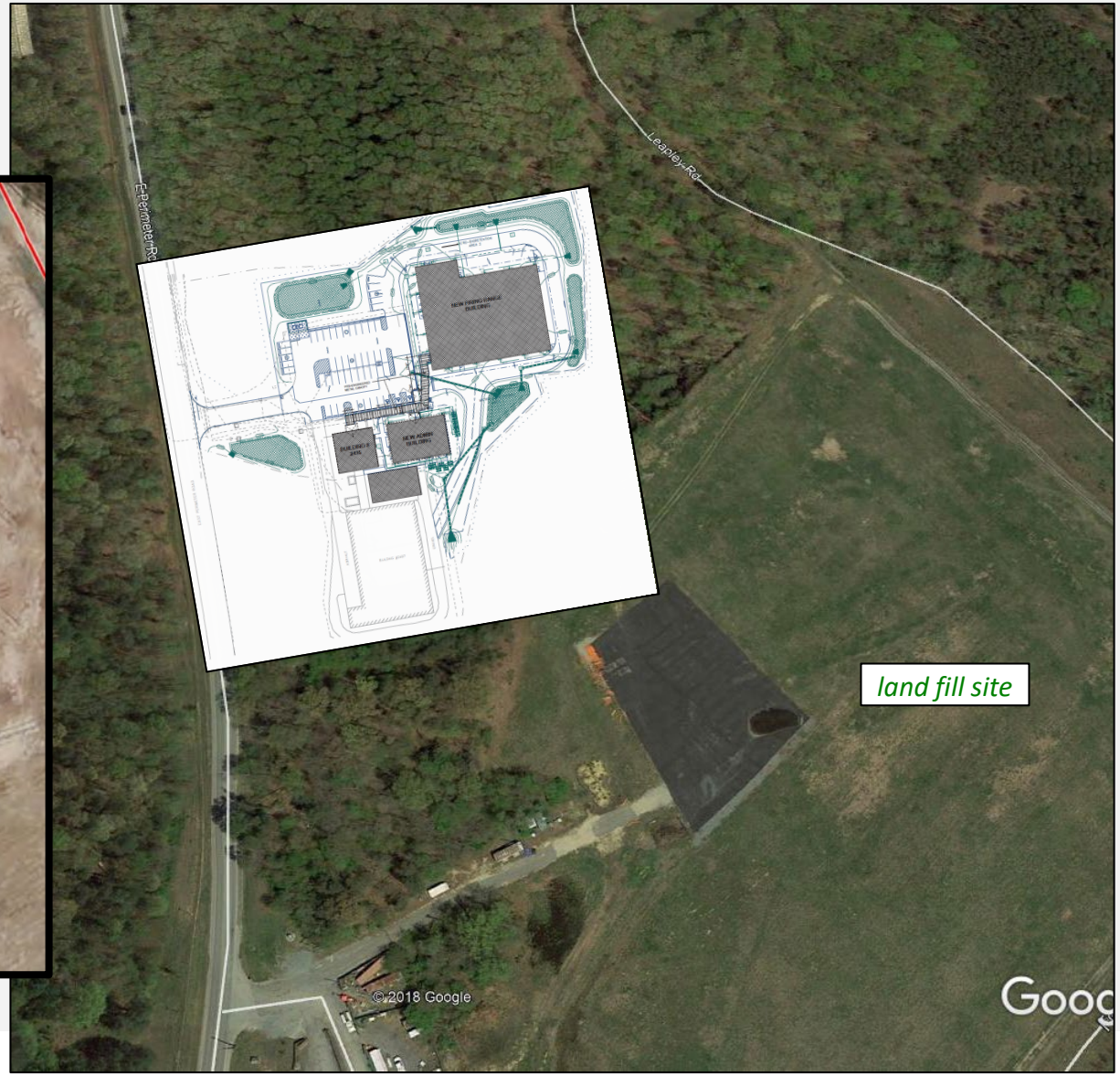
Site Location



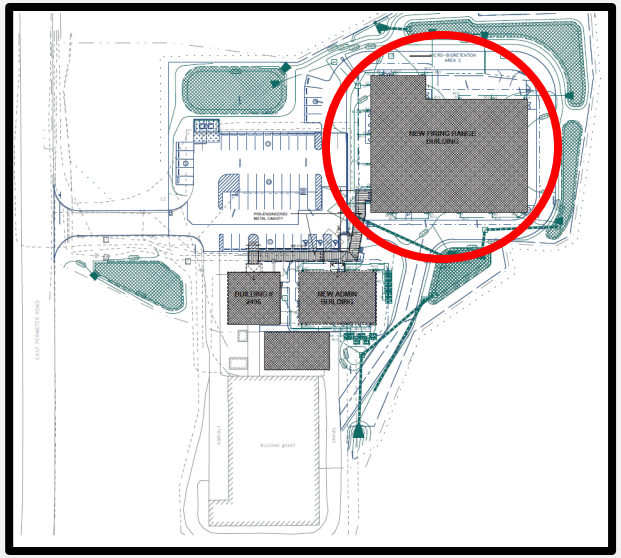
Proposed Site Plan

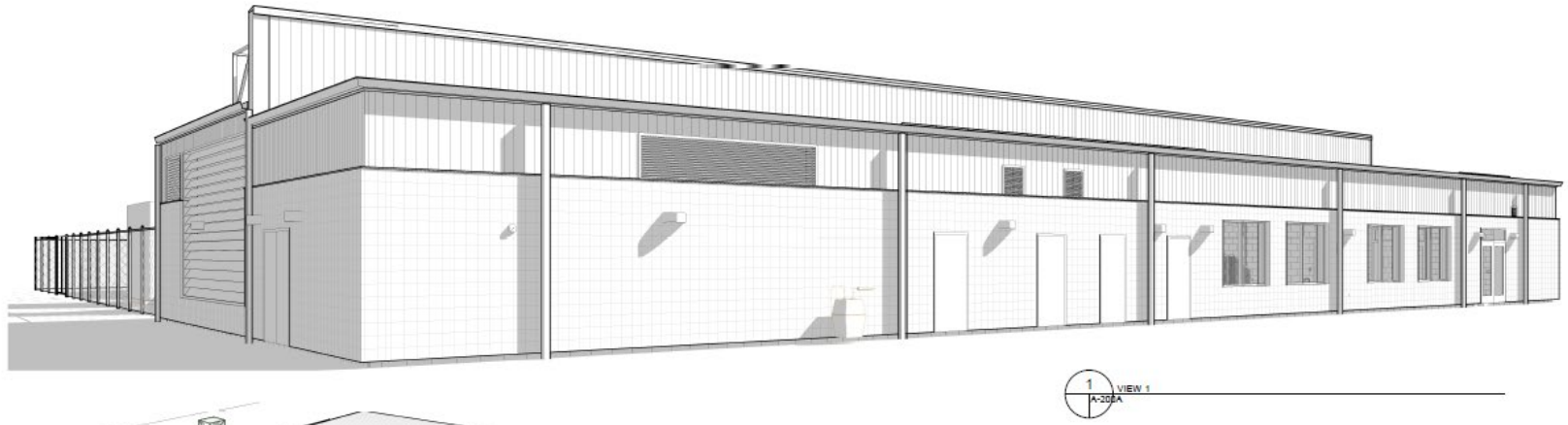


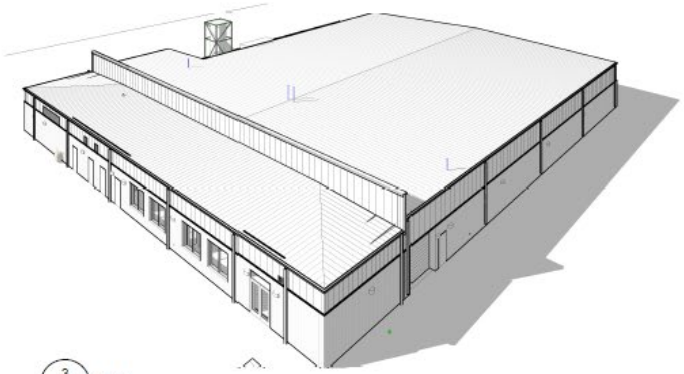
Site Context

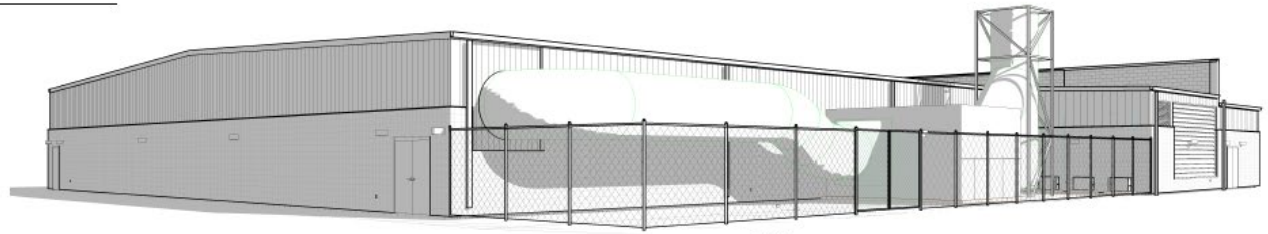


Building A Perspectives

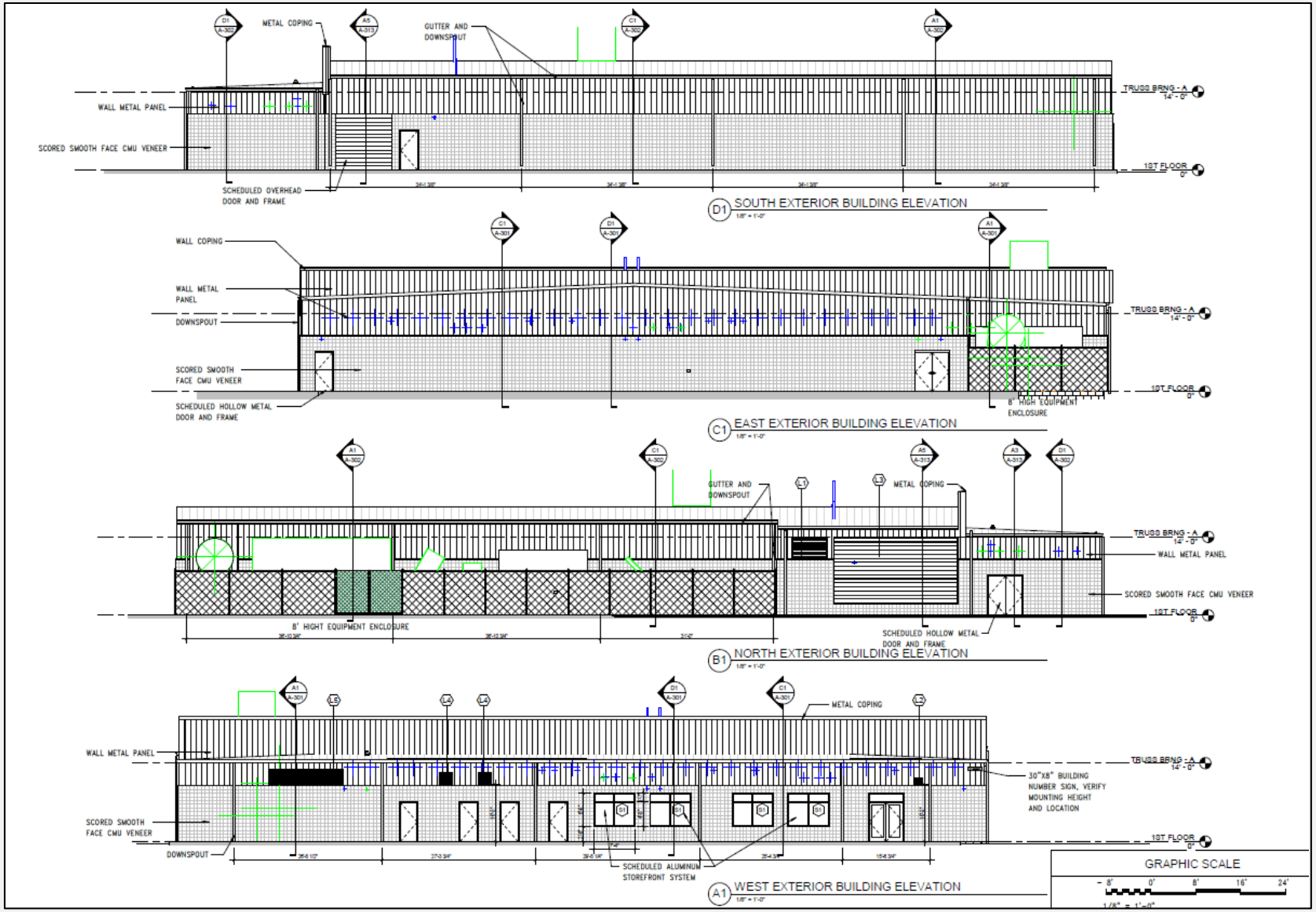




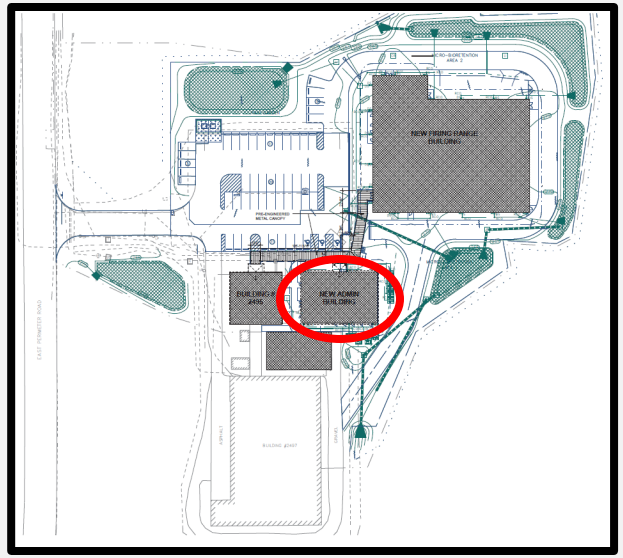




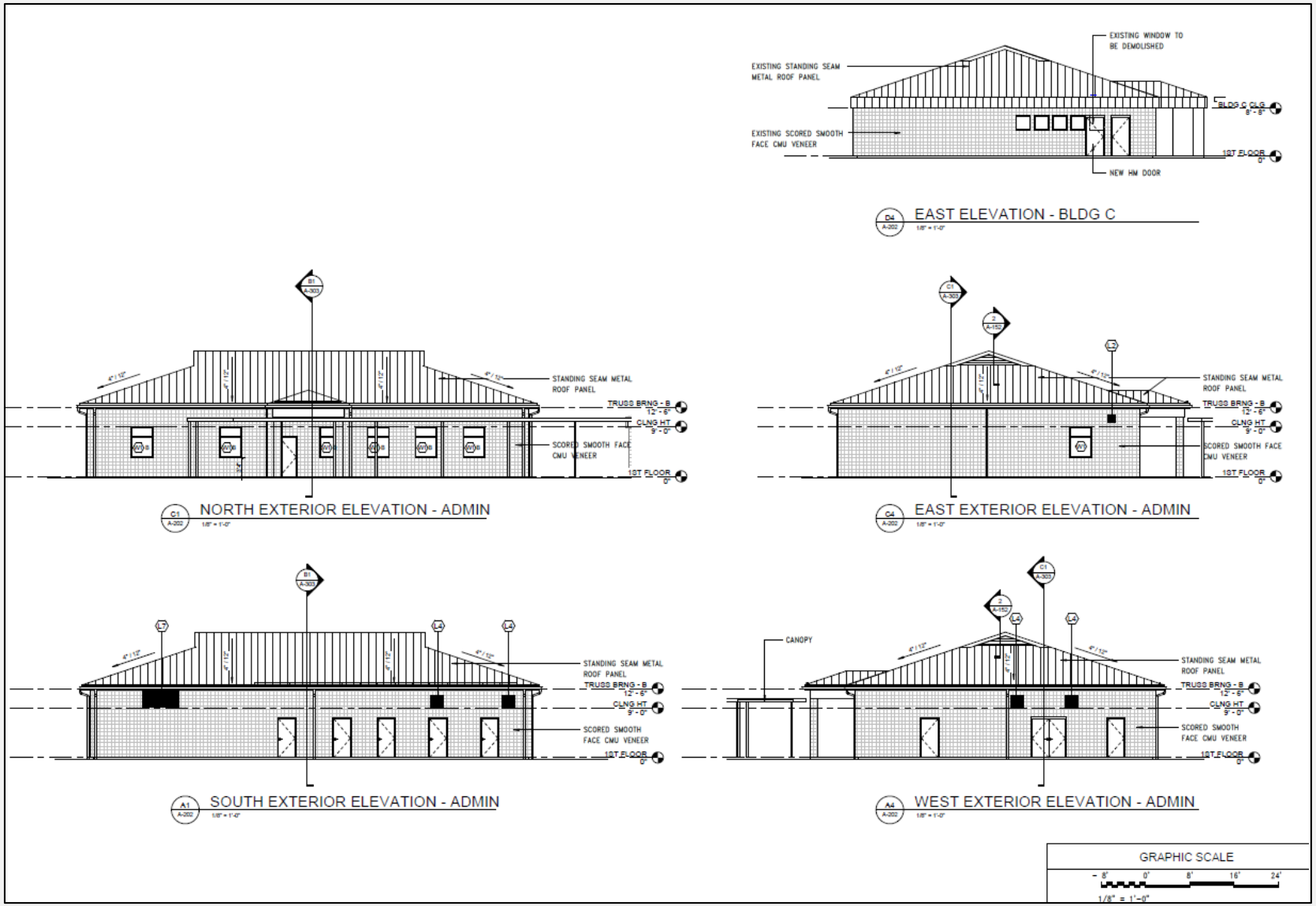
Building A Elevations



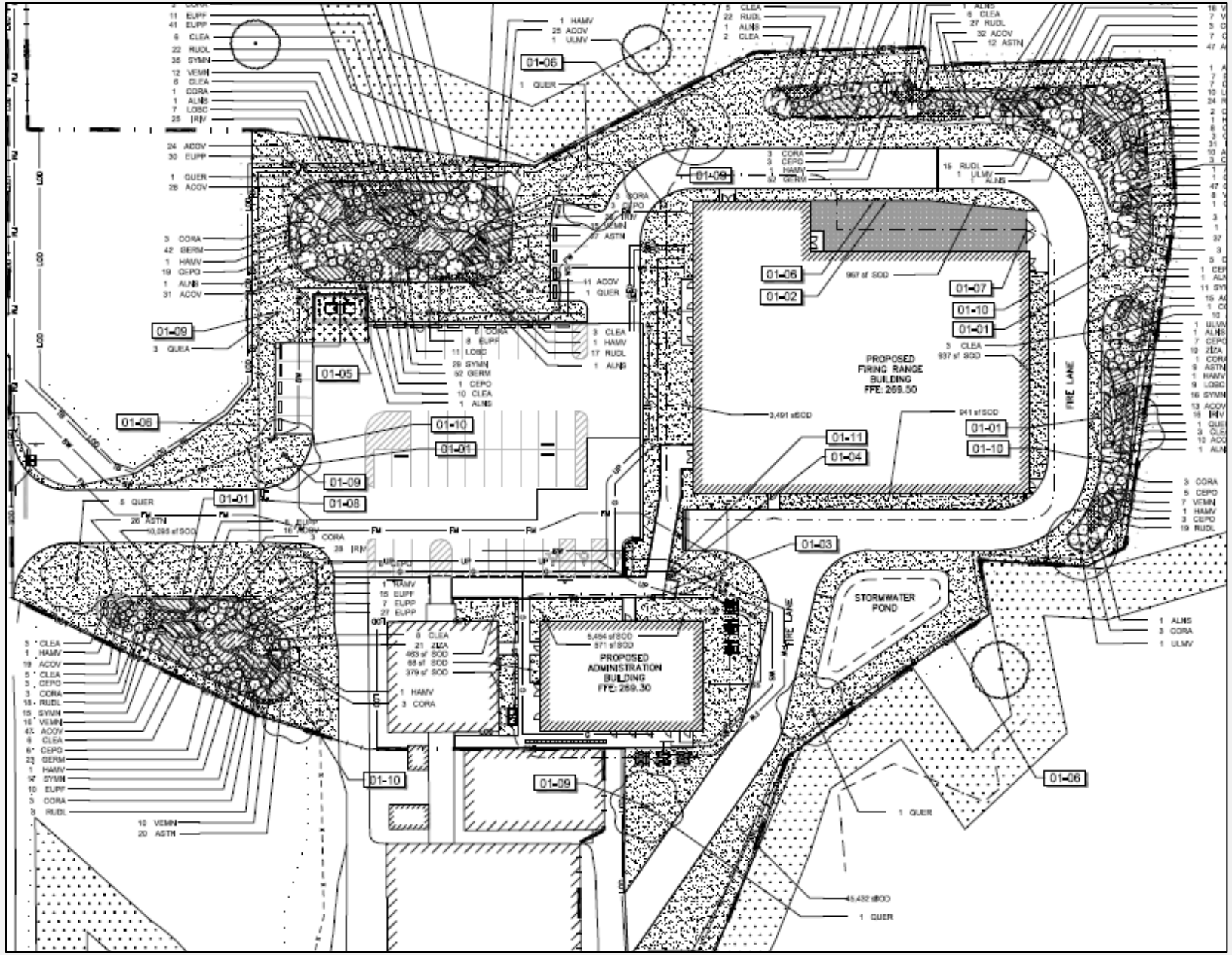
Building B Perspectives



Building B Elevations



Landscape Plan



Tree Removal Mitigation