



## Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: December 3, 2020

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>Data Storage Center Phase 3</b> Fort Belvoir, Virginia	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 8233
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> United States Department of Defense Department of the Army	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 2204.10(38.00)45234
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Federal Projects in the Environs per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans
	<b>PROPOSED ACTION</b> Approve comments on concept plans
	<b>ACTION ITEM TYPE</b> Consent Calendar

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

The Department of the Army has submitted site and building plans for a data center within the boundaries of Fort Belvoir for the purpose of providing computer processing and large-scale data storage capabilities. Amazon Web Services (AWS) will operate the facility. The data center is primarily equipment, along with mechanical and electrical systems. Some limited parking is provided on site for servicing the facility, and stormwater management is provided through bioretention and storage facilities located on the eastern portion of the site. The project is located within the secure perimeter of Fort Belvoir and will not be visible outside the campus.

The project is the third phase and is located adjacent to two other existing pads which also provide the same function. The five-acre site was selected because it is within 1000 feet of the existing facilities due to connectivity requirements. The property was previously forested, and the trees were felled in spring 2020. The Army has been working with AWS to identify the appropriate mitigation measures for the tree removal and replacement, and this remains the main outstanding issue. Although the applicant has requested final approval, staff recommends the tree mitigation plan be prepared and submitted prior to any final review by the Commission.

### KEY INFORMATION

- The project is the third phase of data centers which support Fort Belvoir activities. The facilities primarily include equipment with supporting mechanical and electrical systems.
- All the data centers are located in close proximity to each other and are within the secure perimeter of the base.
- Fort Belvoir is working with AWS, the data center operator, to determine the appropriate mitigation for tree removal on the site.

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

**Notes** the project site is located within Fort Belvoir and will not be visible from outside the base.

**Notes** the proposed use is not inconsistent with the Fort Belvoir Master Plan framework plan which identifies the area for professional or institutional uses, to include research and development.

**Notes** the proposed data center must be located near existing facilities for connectivity and network latency purposes.

**Notes** the size of the data center and associated site work requires significant tree removal of 4.6 acres.

**Notes** the applicant has been working with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to identify mitigation measures for tree removal associated with the project, including the potential restoration and replanting of an old road corridor.

**Finds** the restoration of the old road corridor is a preferable approach as it restores tree planting in the vicinity of the site, removes impervious area, and expands forested habitat.

**Requires** a mitigation plan consistent with NCPC's tree replacement policies to be included as part of the next submission.

## PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

<b>Previous actions</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Remaining actions</b> (anticipated)	– Approve preliminary and final site and building plans

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Executive Summary

The proposed project is the third phase of data center facilities for this portion of Fort Belvoir. The project is being developed by AWS. The applicant has been working with AWS to identify

mitigation measures for tree removal associated with the project, including the potential restoration and replanting of an old road corridor. Staff believes this approach holds merit, but additional information and commitments will be necessary prior to any final approval. As such, this remains the outstanding issue that must be addressed. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission requires a mitigation plan consistent with NCPC's tree replacement policies to be included as part of the next submission.**

### Analysis

The Department of the Army has submitted site and building plans for a data center within the boundaries of Fort Belvoir for the purpose of providing computer processing and large-scale data storage capabilities. Amazon Web Services (AWS) will operate the facility. The data center is primarily equipment, along with mechanical and electrical systems. Some limited parking is provided on site for servicing the facility, and stormwater management is provided through bioretention and storage facilities located on the eastern portion of the site. The project is located within the secure perimeter of Fort Belvoir and will not be visible outside the campus.

The project is the third phase of a larger data storage project. The two adjacent pads already include data centers. No additional phases are contemplated at this time. The five-acre site was selected because it is within 1000 feet of the existing facilities due to connectivity requirements. The property was previously forested, and the trees were felled in spring 2020. The Army has been working with AWS to identify the appropriate mitigation measures for the tree removal and replacement, and this remains the main outstanding issue. Additional information about the mitigation approach and how it will comply with NCPC tree replacement policies will be necessary before final approval. Therefore, the applicant should work with AWS to develop and submit the mitigation plans prior as part of the final submission to NCPC.

## **CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE**

### Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has reviewed the proposed project for consistency with policies set forth in the Federal Environment Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The comments provided above are intended to ensure the project complies with those policies, particularly those relevant to the removal and replacement of trees and forest stands.

### National Historic Preservation Act

In the region, NCPC has an advisory role and therefore does not have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

In the region, NCPC has an advisory role and therefore does not have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. The Army has determined the project qualifies for a categorical exclusion.

### **ONLINE REFERENCE**

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov):

- Project synopsis

Prepared by Matthew Flis  
11/25/2020

### **POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)**

# Data Storage Center Phase 3

Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Approval of Preliminary and Final Site and Building Plans

Department of the Army

# Site Location

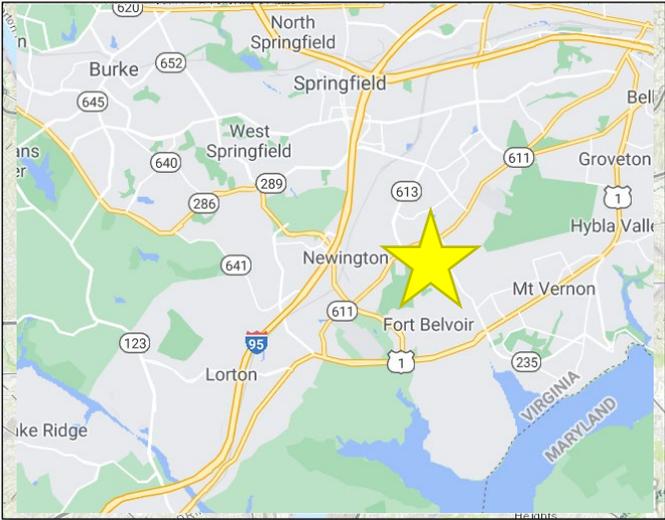
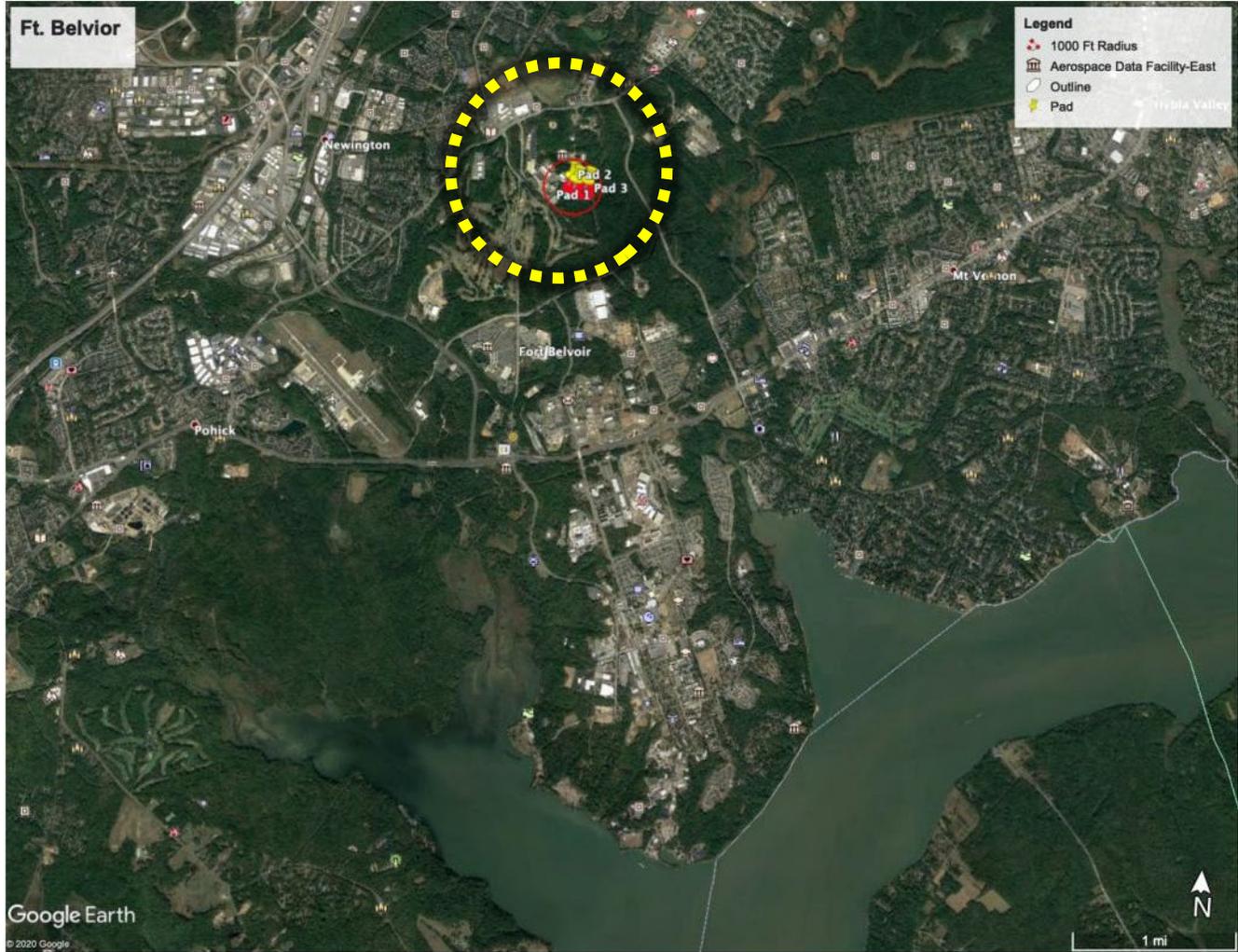


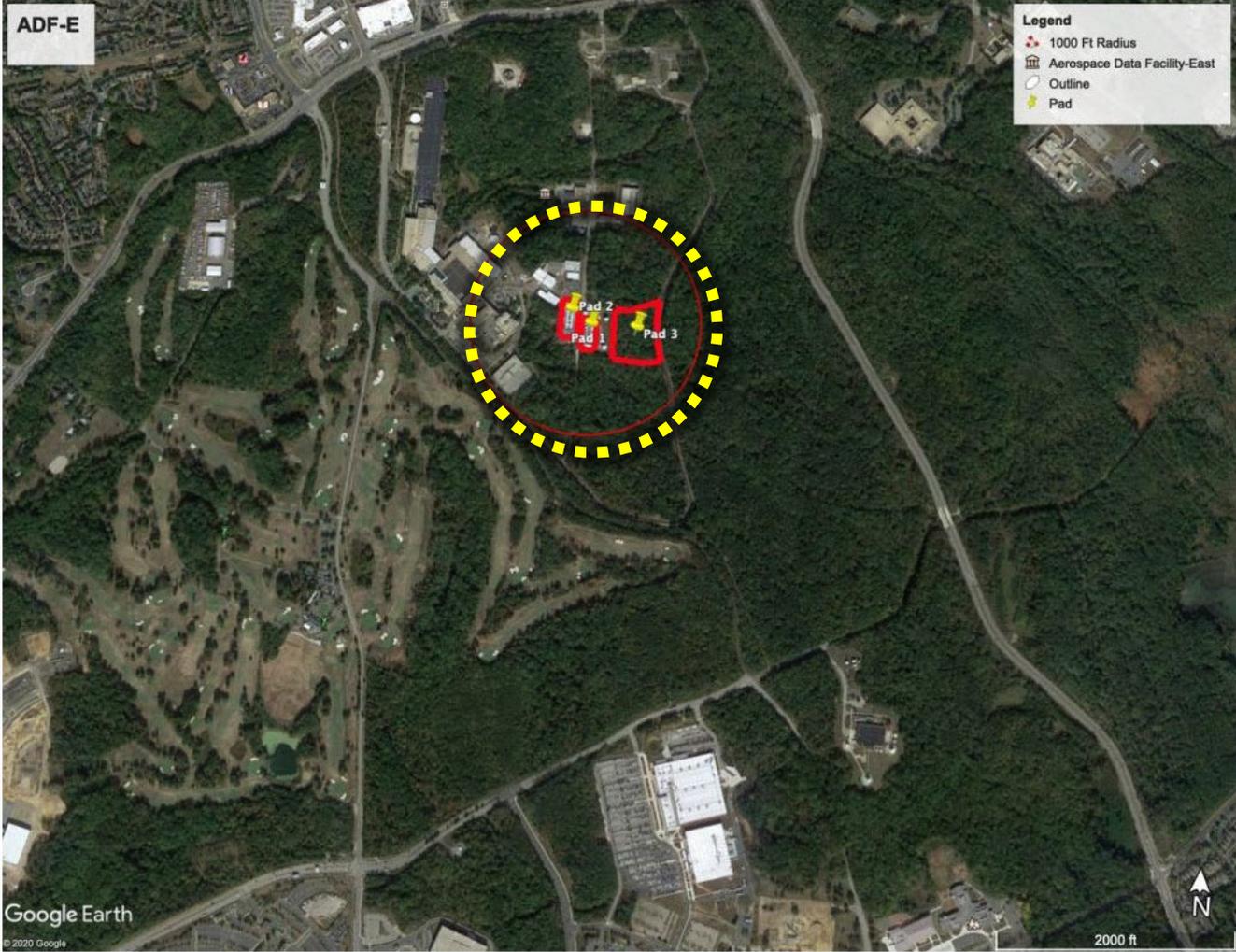
Figure A – Fort Belvoir with ADF-East Location Identified



Location Map

# Project Site

Figure B – C2S Location on ADF-East



# Project Site with Context – Future Pad 3

Figure C (Overview)



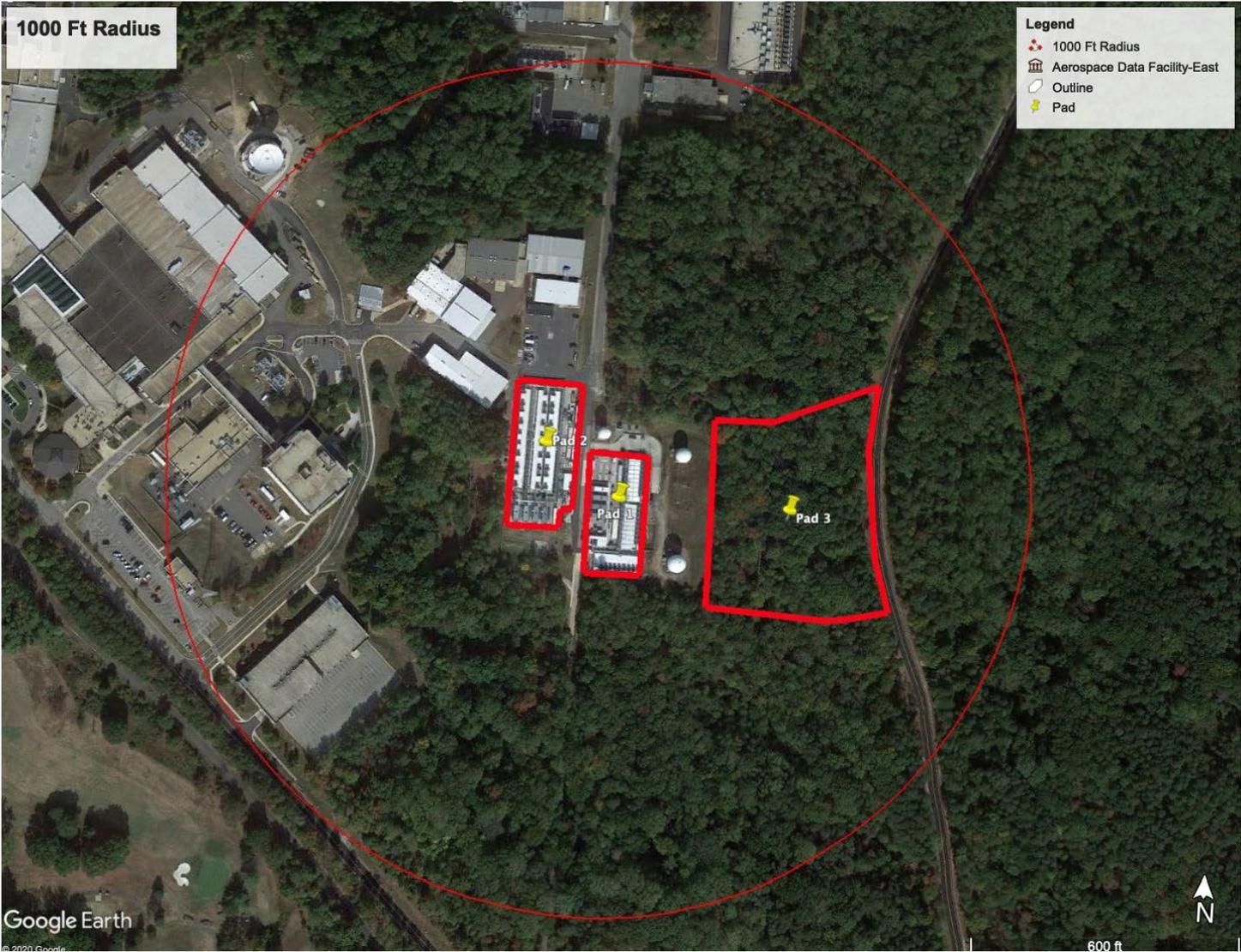
# Existing Pad 1



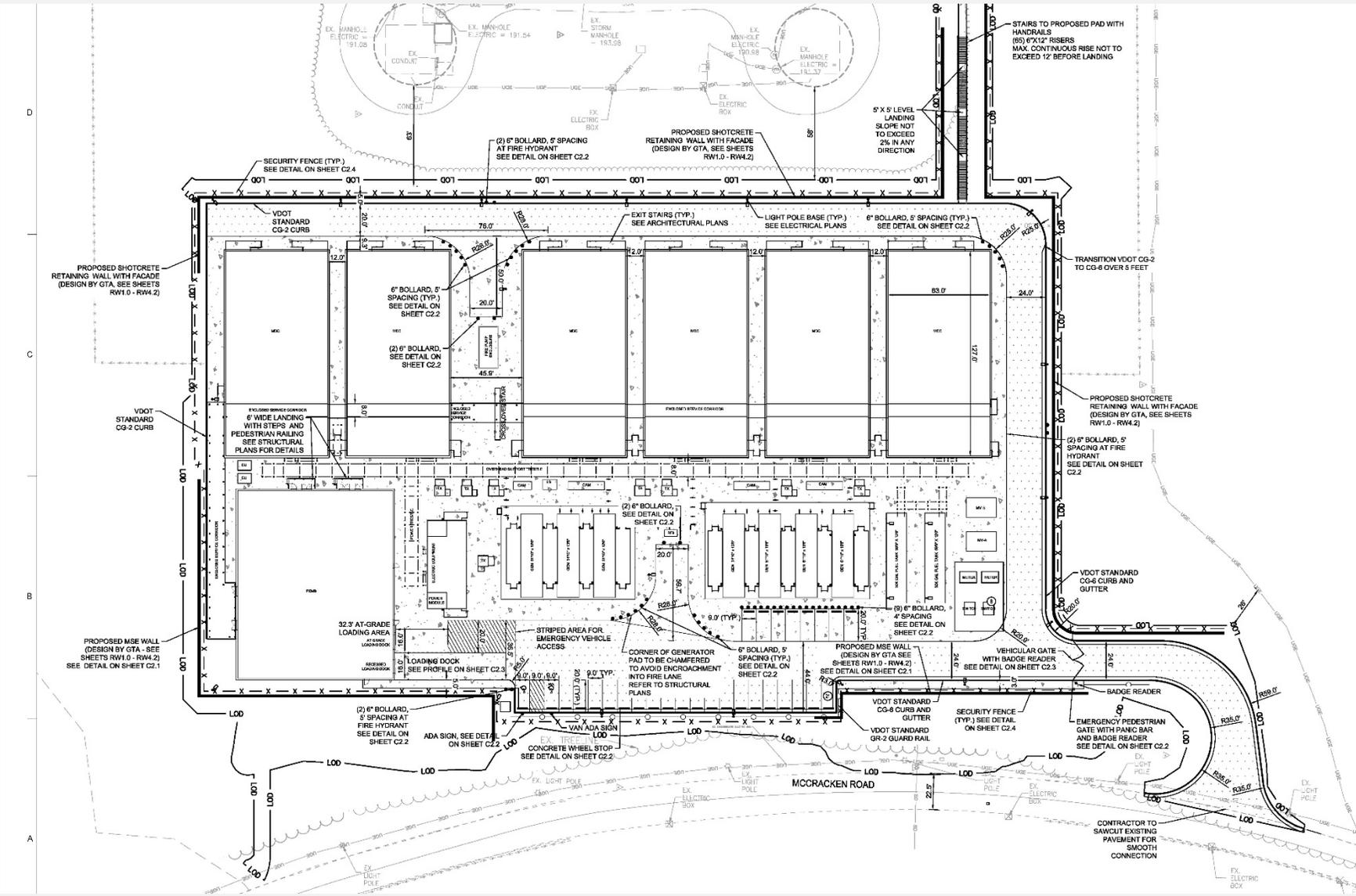
# Existing Pad 2



# 1000' Radius Evaluation



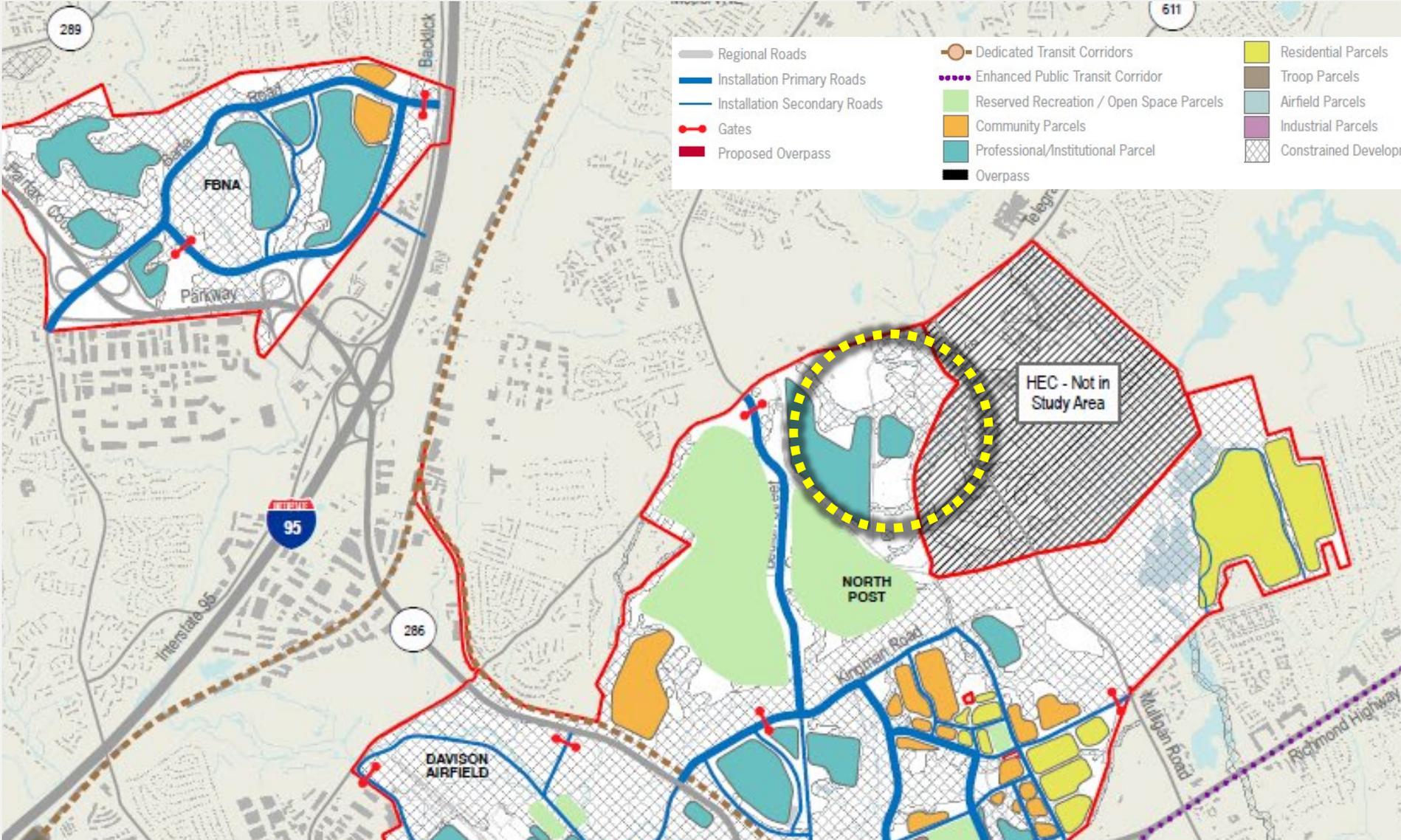
# Project Site Plan



# Example AWS Data Center



# Fort Belvoir Master Plan



# Potential Tree Mitigation Approach

Stretch of Woodlawn Rd Planned for Conversion to One-Lane

