

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
VIA: Tanisha Briley, City Manager
FROM: Dennis Enslinger, Deputy City Manager
Rob Robinson, Long Range Planning Manager
RE: Lakeforest Public Hearing – Follow-up Items
DATE: March 7, 2023

Background

During the Joint Public Hearing on the Lakeforest Rezoning and Sketch Plan, three items were brought up by the public: community facilities near Lakeforest; the potential of daylighting an 84-inch stormwater pipe; and the tree stand at the NE corner of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road. The Mayor and City Council requested staff provided more background before the policy discussion. Below is a brief discussion of each of the items that take into account the applicant’s responses, which can be found in more detail at the following link:

<https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/12073/638125882034100000>

Discussion

Community Facilities Near Lakeforest

The Applicant's response includes how the redevelopment can incorporate a civic use that serves the broader area and notes that the sketch plan designates civic and public amenity uses across multiple blocks, with future programming and design to be defined during SDP. In addition to minor clerical revisions, the Applicant has revised the sketch plan to call out the potential for a civic use with up to 30,000 square feet of gross floor area (a use that will provide recreational, educational, social, or cultural activities, support and programming) on blocks C, D, E, or F. The Applicant will explore opportunities to lease space to a nonprofit or through a public-private partnership for civic uses on blocks C, D, E, or F. Other stakeholders will need to participate in discussions on funding, operating, and programming for such a civic use.

Many of the comments at the public hearing were from residents of the Cider Mill development, so staff conducted a survey of community facilities near and around Cider Mill. Attachment A is a geographic representation of City and County facilities within one mile and beyond of the Cider Mill development.

The following recreational facilities are within one mile of Cider Mill:

- Centerway Local Park has a playground, softball field, picnic area/shelter, and soccer field
- Forest Oak Middle School has basketball courts, baseball fields, a soccer field, and tennis courts
- Lake Whetstone Park has picnicking, boating, fishing, volleyball, walking paths, and a nature study area

- South Valley Park has a music pavilion, lighted ballfields, a tot lot, creeks, ponds, picnic areas, gazebos, and walking paths
- South Lake Elementary School has a playground, basketball courts and a soccer field
- Strawberry Knoll Local Park has a playground, a cricket pitch, tennis courts, and a basketball court
- Watkins Mill Elementary School has baseball fields, a playground and an open field
- Whetstone Community Center has a community room, a swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball courts, and a tot lot

There are a number of other facilities outside of the one-mile radius as noted in Attachment A. The Upper County Recreational Center is a 20-35 minute transit ride or a 15 minute bike ride. The Activity Center at Bohrer Park is a 17 minute transit ride or a 15 minute bike ride.

The Potential of Daylighting the 84-inch Stormwater Pipe

In reaction to the numerous comments advocating for daylighting the private 84” (seven feet in diameter) storm drain pipe located on Odendhal Avenue north and running on a diagonal to Pond 1, the Applicant drafted a separate response and analysis. The response can be found at the following link starting on page 12:

<https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/12073/638125882034100000>

Attachment 2 (Exhibit 2 provided by developer) shows a scenario that reflects a more realistic daylighted stream based on existing conditions. Under the developer’s scenario to accomplish daylighting a pipe 30’ below grade, approximately 37 acres of the developable 75 will be needed to lower the site, provide appropriate side slopes, stream valley buffer, floodplain and floodplain building restriction lines, retaining walls, etc. to make this work. The developer further states that the ‘stream valley’ blocks B, E, F, G, H, I, and J will be eliminated. The east-west roads would not connect.

In reviewing the scenario presented by the developer, stormwater staff has noted that other alignments may provide less of an impact on the overall design. The example alignment increases the impact to the proposed development project and amplifies the depth issue. However, daylighting the stream would certainly impact the site and be a costly endeavor under the best-case scenario,.

While there may be ways to reduce the acreage required to daylight the stream, it is clear that the amount of acreage needed would significantly impact the ability of the developer and the community’s ability to realize the Master Plan and its recommendations. It is clear that daylighting the stream would require reductions in the overall density and potential uses on site due to the loss of developable land. Additionally, it would be difficult to achieve the connected roadway networks (as recommended in the plan) without significant long-term infrastructure maintenance costs, which would ultimately be the responsibility of the public at large.

Staff agrees that, while the possible daylighting of the 84-inch pipe could create a dramatic stream valley park, it would also render the project economically infeasible - not just from the cost side, but from the reduced development capacity perspective. Planning staff does not support daylighting the storm pipe and is concerned that any such requirement will curtail Master Plan envisioned redevelopment and result in continued C-2 Zoning and vested operations.

Tree Stand at the NE Corner of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road

The Applicant had a certified arborist assess the condition of the 1.67-acre tree save area in question. A memo summarizing the findings can be found on page 9 of the following document (Exhibits 106-108 Applicant Response Statements):

<https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/12069/63812588201580000>

The memo notes:

- This stand is of moderate health.
- It is dominated by oak species.
- It is in relative decline as seen in reduction of canopy growth and prevalence of herbaceous and deciduous invasives replacing natives within the stand's understory.
- Only about one third of the trees are in good health. (Of the approximately 28 specimen trees cataloged in this stand, only about 10 are in good health.) The remaining specimens are in fair or poor health.
- The presence of a large percentage of invasive species, coupled with the fact that three of the forests' edges are adjacent to roadways, suggests that the trees and overall habitat are going to continue to decline in health and overall quality. Forests adjacent to roadways have a higher likelihood of invasive species encroachment, disease and safety concerns.
- The death and decline of the largest contributors of canopy with the establishment of aggressive invasives in this stand signals that this stand may continue to degrade in health.
- The loss of this stand will be mitigated with a minimum of an estimated net 16 acres of new forest/tree cover planted within the new community in coordination with the minimum of 35% green area.

Staff notes the City and the Mid-Atlantic region have also seen a rapid decline in older oaks over the past five years. While the causes are still being studied, staff has submitted into the record a 2022 article from the University of Maryland Extension Service [2] titled "Browning and Defoliation of White Oaks."

<https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/12069/63812588201580000>

Staff notes that many of the symptomatic factors listed in the Extension Office report are reflected in the exhibit's photographs submitted, namely frass, trunk wounds and branch dieback. Staff believes that this stand will continue to decline and may lose 60% of its canopy trees in the near term. Its edge site and situation, coupled with proposed redevelopment, is not conducive to it being a sustainable environmental amenity. The mitigation proposed more than offsets this loss; namely a planned increase of approximately 16 acres of new tree canopy cover above what exists today.

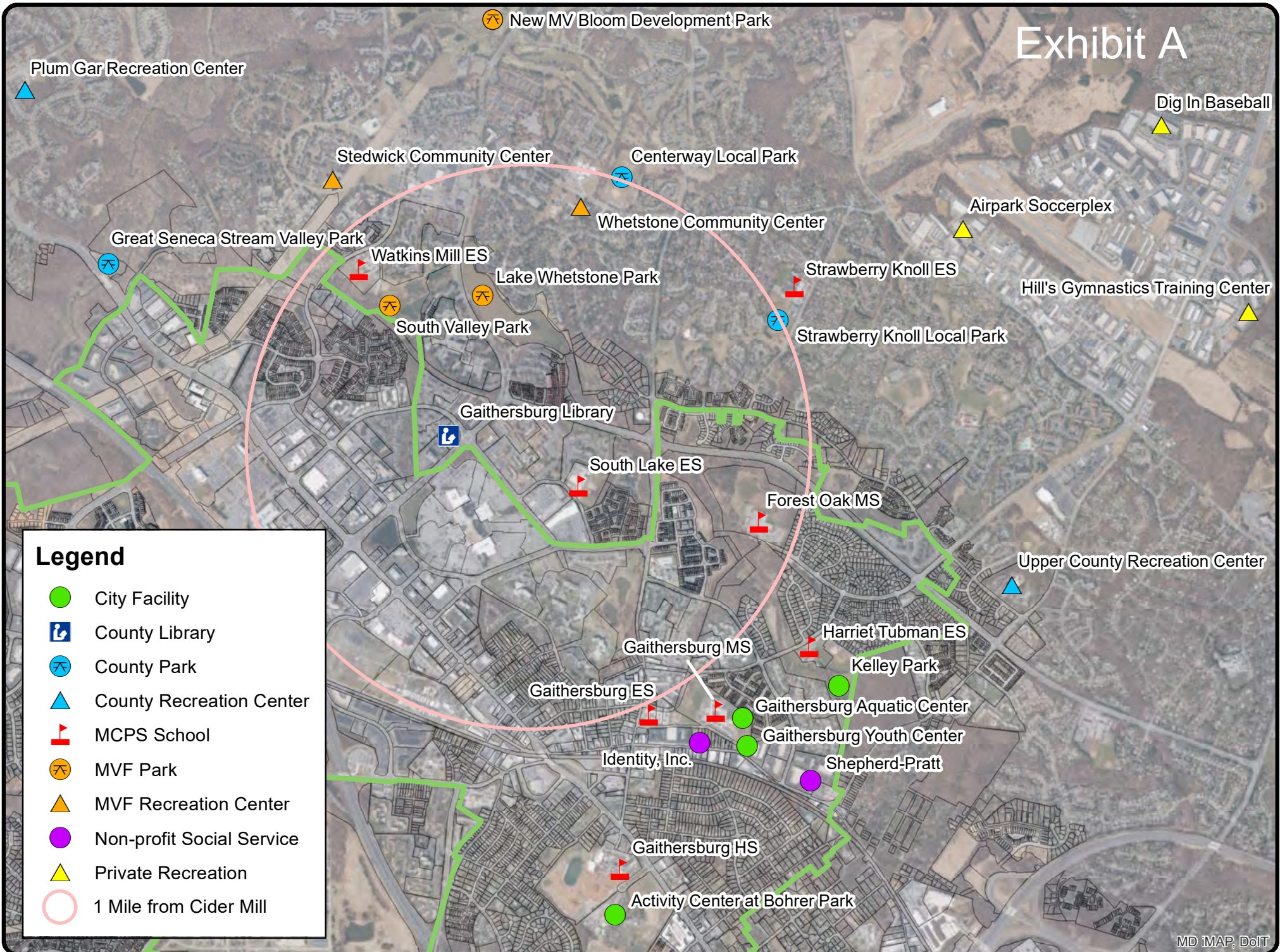
Cc:

Tanisha Briley, City Manager
Tom Lonergan-Seeger, Assistant City Manger
John Schlichting, Director Planning & Code Administration

Exhibit A

Ehibit B

Exhibit A

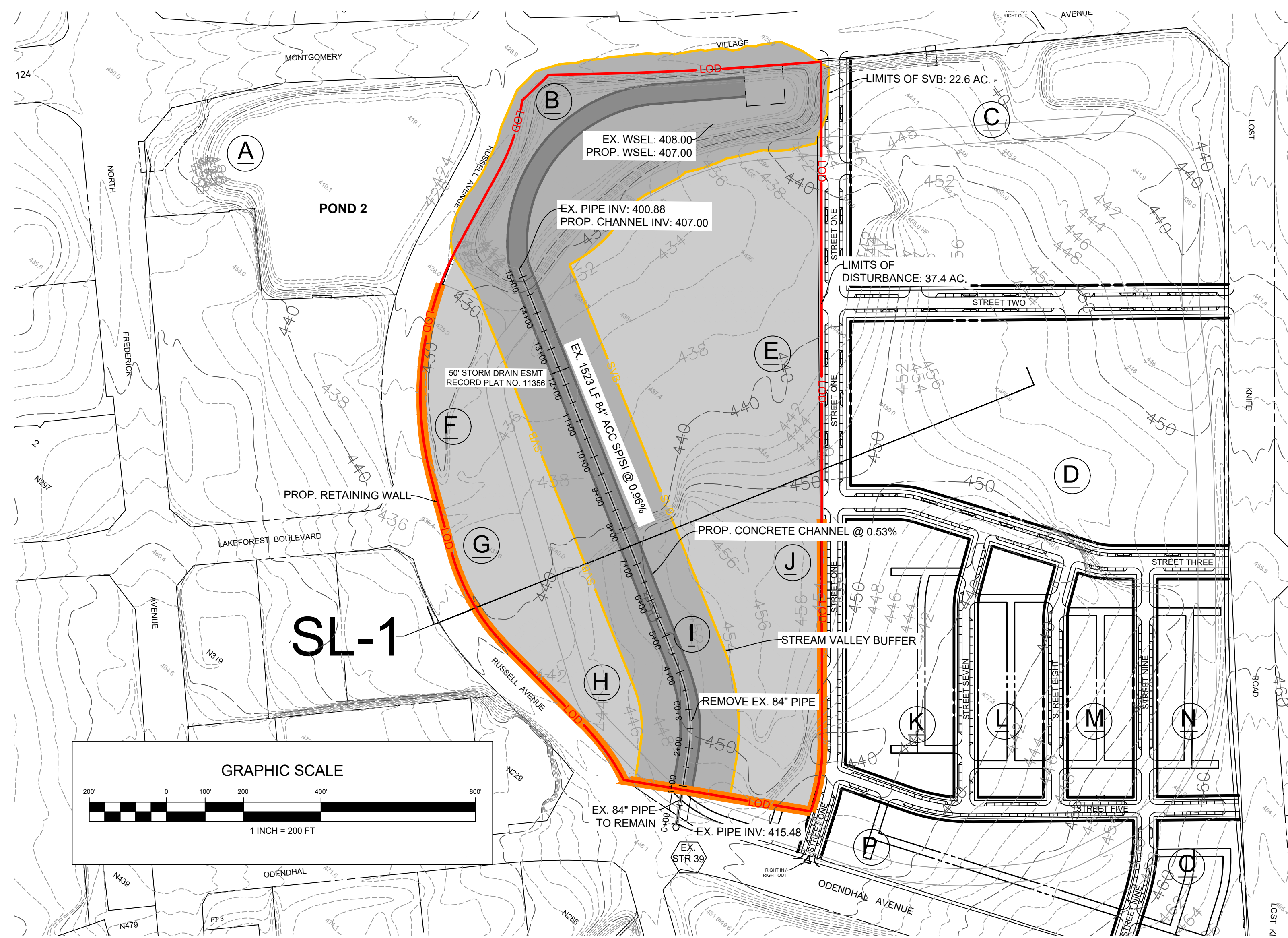


Lakeforest Mall Nearby Facilities

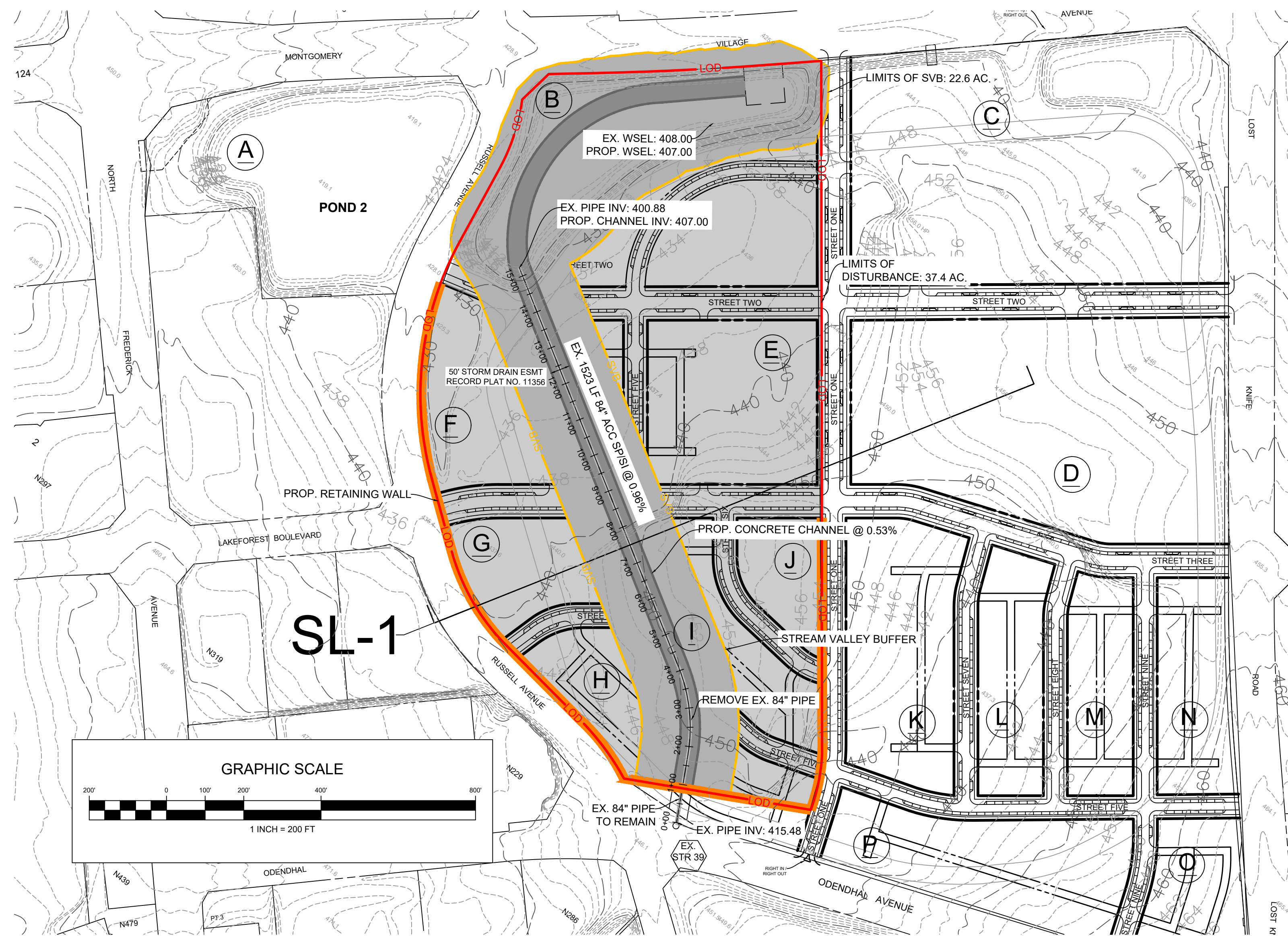


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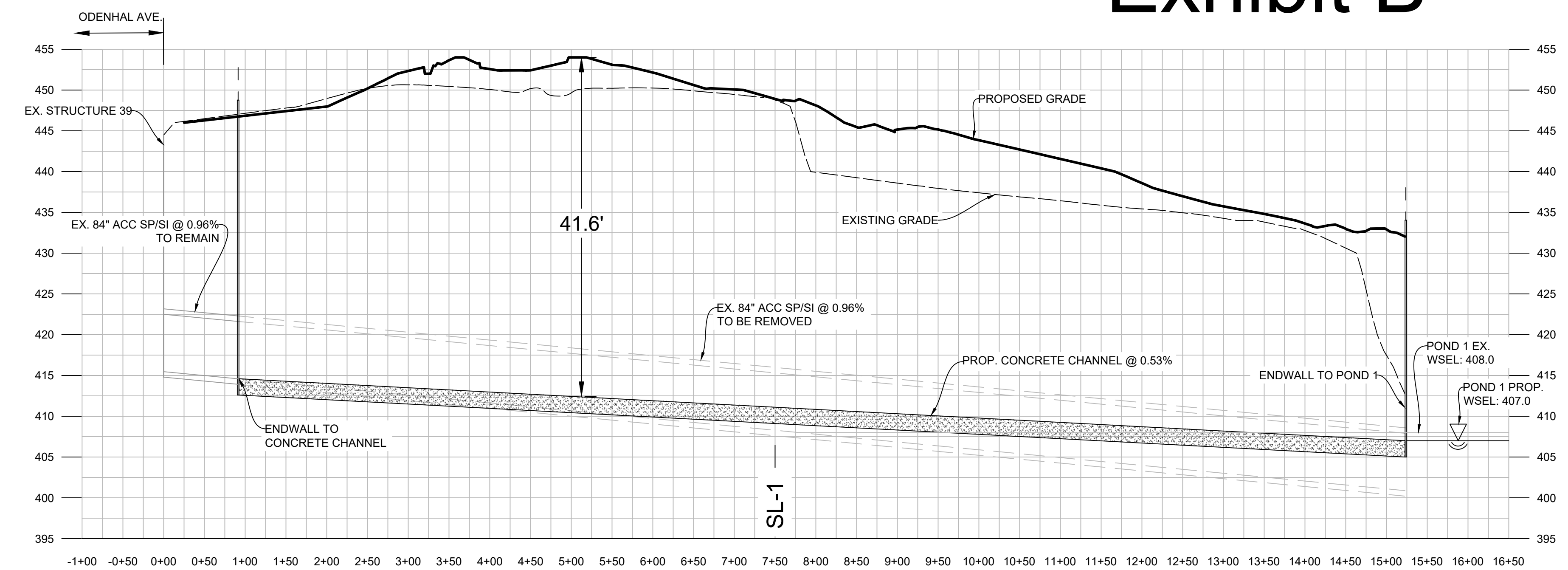
Exhibit B



VIEW 1



VIEW 2



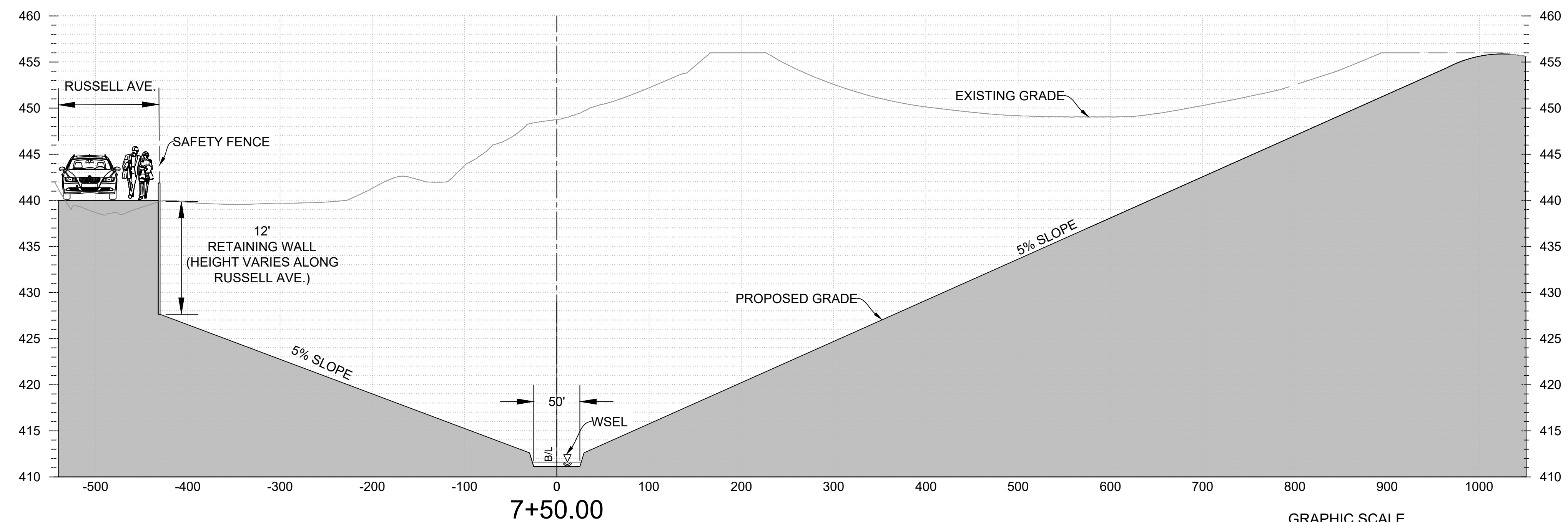
84 ACC Pipe Invert PROFILE
 VERTICAL SCALE: 1" = 10'
 HORIZONTAL SCALE 1" = 100'

LEGEND

	PUBLIC STREET RIGHT OF WAY
	PROPOSED CHANNEL
	STREAM VALLEY BUFFER
	EXISTING CONTOURS
	PROPOSED CONTOURS
	PROPOSED RETAINING WALLS
	LIMIT OF DISTURBANCE
	PROPOSED GRADING/SLOPE

GENERAL NOTES

1. LOCATION OF STORM DRAIN PIPES AND STRUCTURES ARE NOT FIELD VERIFIED.
 2. HORIZONTAL LOCATION OF 84" PIPE IS ASSUMED TO BE IN THE CENTER OF 50' STORM DRAIN EASEMENT RECORDED ON PLAT NO. 11356.
 3. VERTICAL ELEVATIONS OF 84" STORM DRAIN PIPE AND POND 1 WATER SURFACE ARE PER LAKEFOREST REGIONAL CENTER STORM DRAIN PLANS (SHEET 43-9) DATED AUGUST 1976.
 4. EXISTING CONTOURS AND GROUND ELEVATION SHOWN ON PLAN AND PROFILE PER GIS CONTOURS.
 5. CONCRETE CHANNEL DIMENSIONS SHOWN FOR GRAPHIC PURPOSES ONLY. STRUCTURAL ENGINEER TO PROVIDE FINAL DESIGN.
 6. PROPOSED SURFACE SHOWN ON PROFILES IS CONCEPTUAL ROUGH GRADING.
- ASSUMPTIONS:**
1. THE 50' CHANNEL IS SIZED TO CONVEY THE FULL FLOW OF THE EXISTING 84" PIPE (627 CFS) AT A FLOW DEPTH OF 6-INCHES.
 2. 6 INCH FLOW DEPTH IS CAPABLE OF KNOCKING A PERSON OFF OF THEIR FEET.
 3. 12 INCH FLOW DEPTH WILL FLOAT A CAR.
 4. IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE FLOW DEPTH REMAINS AT 1.5 TO 2', AN UNDERGROUND FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM WILL NEED TO BE DESIGNED FOR THE INFLOW AT ODENHAL AVE PRIOR TO DISCHARGING INTO THE CHANNEL.
 5. FUTURE ANALYSIS OF 100-YR STORM WILL BE REQUIRED TO DETERMINE LIMITS OF FLOODPLAIN.
 6. CHANNEL HAS 3:1 SIDE SLOPES FOR 18" DEPTH TO CONTAIN FULL FLOW.
 7. TIE BACK SLOPES ARE 5% TO PROVIDE USABLE SPACE.
 8. STREAM VALLEY BUFFER IS OFFSET 100 FEET FROM LIMITS OF CHANNEL.
 9. RETAINING WALL ALONG RUSSELL AVE. WILL VARY IN HEIGHT FROM APPROXIMATELY 12' TO 30'



VERTICAL SCALE: 1" = 8'
 HORIZONTAL SCALE 1" = 80'

REVISION	DATE	REVISION	DATE	REVISION	DATE



LAKEFOREST
 CITY OF GAITHERSBURG

BY	DATE
DESIGNED	
DRAWN	
REVIEWED	
RODGERS CONTACT:	
RELEASE FOR	
BY	DATE

PIPE DAYLIGHT EXHIBIT 2

2/16/2023

SCALE:	AS SHOWN
JOB No.	1315A2
DATE:	FEB 2023
SHEET No.	1 OF 1