



RUMSEY AQUATIC CENTER

BZA APPLICATION - 28 AUGUST 2026

TRANSFORMING AN OUTDATED, UNDERSIZED FACILITY INTO A STATE-OF-THE-ART AQUATIC CENTER

History

The William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center, located near Eastern Market, honors Dr. William H. Rumsey, a community leader who started his career maintaining the Dunbar pool and later served as an education adviser to Mayor Walter E. Washington. In 1974, he became Deputy Director of the District’s Recreation Department and co-founded the Black History Invitational Swim Meet in 1987, a landmark event in D.C.’s recreational history.

Designed by Eugene Delmar and constructed in 1972, the facility includes an eight-lane pool, a kiddie wading pool, and a community room. Over the years, it has faced repairs for structural and HVAC issues. Despite being a vital part of the Capitol Hill community, the center’s outdated design—marked by inadequate locker space, limited spectator accommodations, and underutilized grounds—has spurred calls for modernization and redevelopment.

Proposed Development

The proposed redevelopment of the Rumsey Aquatic Center will begin with the demolition of the current facility to make way for a state-of-the-art building. The new design will include two pools, expanded and improved locker rooms, and additional community amenities, such as a senior center and community room, to better serve the area’s diverse needs.

The surrounding plaza will also be revitalized to accommodate Eastern Market vendors, create a more welcoming environment for facility users, and enhance the neighborhood’s green spaces. This reimagined area will feature bio-retention systems for stormwater management, increased tree coverage, and additional greenery to promote environmental sustainability and community engagement.

HPRB Concept Approval:
19 March 2026

CFA Concept Approval:
26 March 2026



EXISTING AQUATIC CENTER (TO BE DEMO'ED)

ZONING ANALYSIS

ADDRESS:	635 North Carolina Avenue SE Washington, DC 20003
SQUARE:	0872
LOT:	0062
WARD:	6
ANC:	6B (SMD - 6B02)
ZONE:	MU-4, Mixed Use Zone Provides for mixed use developments that permit broad range of commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential development at varying densities.
OWNER:	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 200 14th Street NW, 8th Floor Washington, DC 20009
CURRENT USE:	Special Purpose - Misc
LAND AREA:	40,517 SF
GROSS FLOOR AREA:	20,584 SF Existing
ZONING STANDARDS	
LOT OCCUPANCY:	60% Maximum
FLOOR AREA RATIO:	1.5 Maximum
HEIGHT:	50 FT Maximum
PENTHOUSE HEIGHT:	12 FT Typ; 15 FT Mechanical
REAR YARD SETBACK:	15 FT Minimum
SIDE YARD SETBACK:	8 FT Minimum, if applicable
GREEN AREA RATIO:	0.3



Residential Flat Zone, RF-1	
Residential Apartment Zone, RA-1	
Mixed-Use Zone, MU-4/CHC	
Production, Distribution, and Repair, PDR-1	
Pedestrian Pathway	
Road Direction	
Site Outline	
Building Entry	
Site Entry	

EXISTING SITE

The William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center, located at 635 North Carolina Ave SE in southeast DC’s Capital Hill neighborhood, has been a staple for the community, serving as a hub for recreation and connection. With its 25-yard pool and a range of amenities including a community room and an outdoor plaza, the center caters to the diverse needs of its visitors.

Surrounded by the historic brick Eastern Market to the east, 2-story brick residential buildings to the north and west, and commercial buildings to the south, the center is seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood.

Its strategic location ensures easy access for residents and visitors alike, whether by car, bike, or public transportation. Nearby bus stops, situated within a one-block radius, link the center to key thoroughfares such as 8th St SE and Pennsylvania Ave SE. Additionally, the Eastern Market Metro Station, just a four-minute walk away, provides convenient rail access, emphasizing the center’s commitment to inclusivity and accessibility for all.

The existing facility is a brutalist style one story brick and concrete building. The tall pool building is set back from the lot line and separated from the sides + rear public space by a forbidding brick wall.



Interior Pool



Rumsey Aquatic Center Entrance



Private Alley between Rumsey & Eastern Market



South-East Corner of Rumsey



Parking lot



Heritage tree & Front Plaza



Art Wall

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



Eastern Market



Eastern Market - Interior Vendors



Private Alley - West



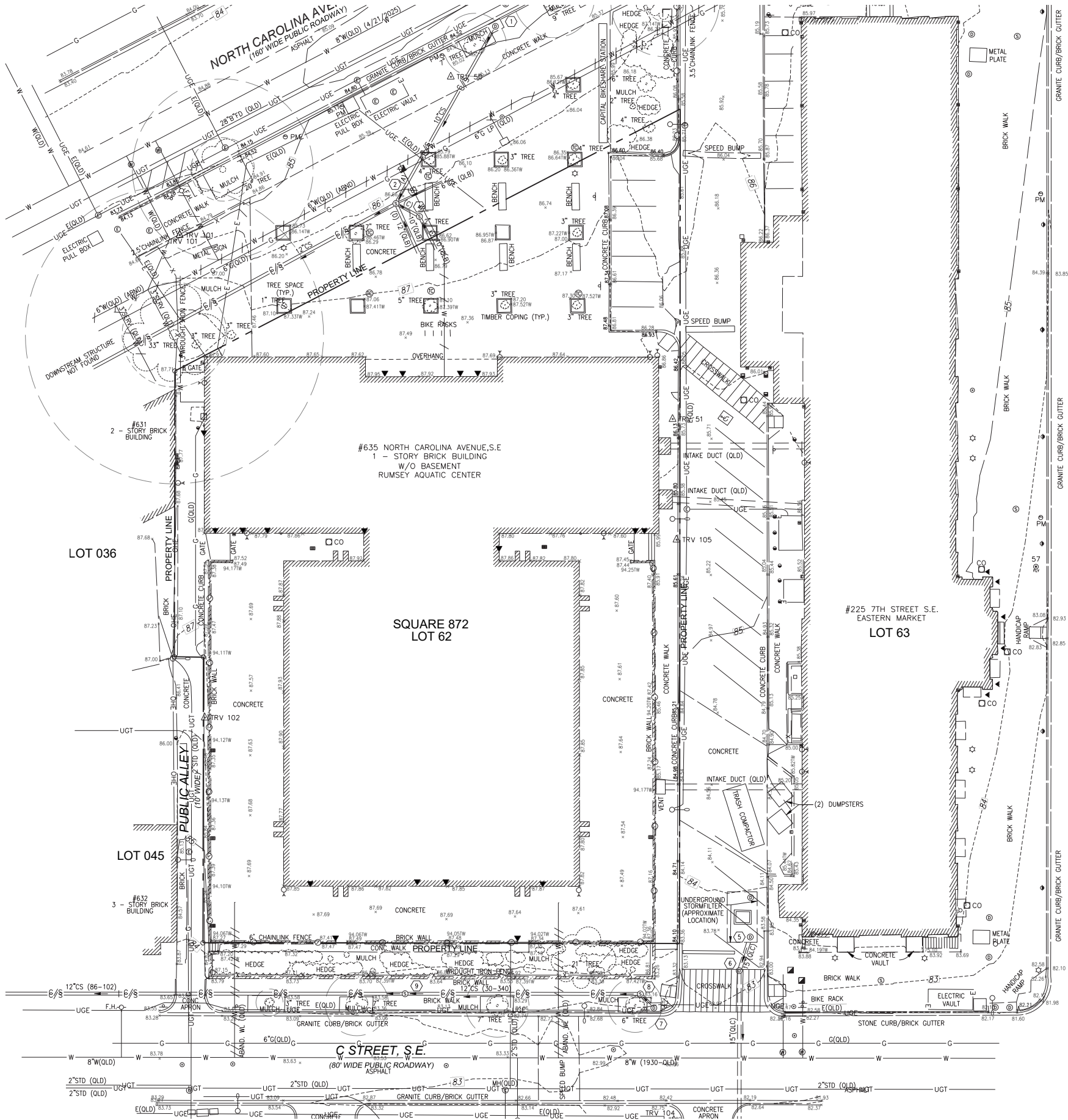
Pin Oak Heritage Tree + Brick Houses West of Rumsey



Single-Family Brick Rowhomes along North Carolina Ave.



Businesses along C Street



LEGEND

- SIGN
- PARKING METER
- COMMUNICATIONS MH
- SECURITY CAMERA
- TRASH CAN
- LAMP POST
- LIGHT POLE
- ELECTRIC MANHOLE
- ELEC. JUNC. BOX
- ELEC. OUTLET
- GRATE INLET
- STORM MANHOLE
- CLEAN OUT
- SAN. SEW. MH
- WATER METER
- WATER MANHOLE
- FIRE HYDRANT
- HOSE BIBB
- GAS VALVE
- GAS METER
- ADA PARKING SPACE
- BOLLARD
- POST
- BUSH
- TREE
- FENCE (CHAIN-LINK)
- FENCE
- OVERHANG
- WALL
- BUILDING
- WATER LINE
- COMMUNICATION LINE
- COMBINED SEWER LINE
- STORM DRAIN LINE
- MAJOR CONTOUR
- MINOR CONTOUR
- TREE CRITICAL ROOT ZONE
- TREE STRUCTURAL ROOT ZONE

UTILITY INFORMATION:

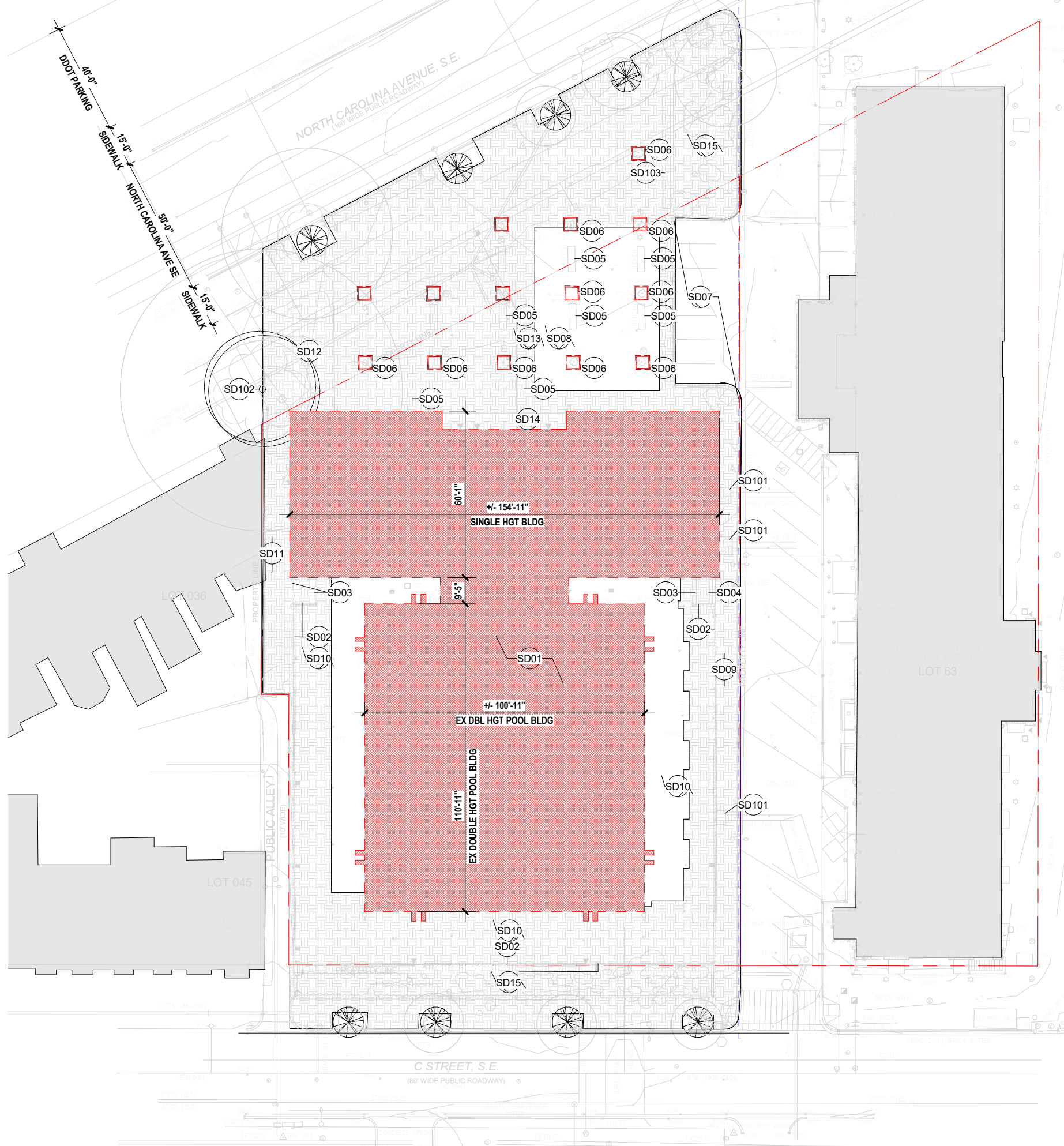
UTILITY COMPANY	STATUS
VERIZON 13101 Columbia Pike FDC-1 Silver Spring, MD 20904	SHOWN HEREON PER COUNTER: MAP SE-003, MAP SE-19 & MAP SE-137
PEPCO 701 Ninth St. N.W. Washington, DC 20068	TRANSMISSION: NO UNDERGROUND TRANSMISSION ASSETS PER EMAIL FROM PHI ON 12/4/2024. DISTRIBUTION: RECEIVED
WASHINGTON GAS 6801 Industrial Road Springfield, VA 22151	RECEIVED
DC WATER 5000 Overlook Avenue, S.W. Washington, DC 20032	SHOWN HEREON PER COUNTER MAPS: C-1-SE & C-2-SE

TRAVERSE DATA:

NO	NORTHING	EASTING	ELEV	DESCRIPTION
100	444446.8741	1313267.6178	85.67	TRV
101	444358.6829	1313099.4735	84.79	TRV
102	444194.0815	1313108.0296	86.89	TRV
103	444055.1698	1313105.5158	83.77	TRV
104	444056.7190	1313268.0768	82.86	TRV
105	444254.7731	1313268.9729	85.74	TRV

EXISTING CIVIL SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 40'-0"



NOTE	KEYNOTE
R1	EX INTAKE VENTS SERVING EASTERN MARKET SHALL REMAIN OPERATIONAL AND FULLY PROTECTED THROUGHOUT ALL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES TO MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS FACILITY OPERATION. TO BE DEMOLISHED IN FUTURE PHASE OF CONSTRUCTION.
R2	EX HERITAGE TREE TO REMAIN. EX HERITAGE TREE AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURAL AND CRITICAL ROOT ZONES EXTENDING BENEATH PORTIONS OF THE EX BLDG SHALL REMAIN PROTECTED THROUGHOUT ALL DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. CONTRACTOR SHALL IMPLEMENT ALL REQUIRED TREE PROTECTION MEASURES, AVOID DISTURBANCE WITHIN THE SRZ AND CRZ TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT FEASIBLE, AND COORDINATE ALL WORK IMPACTING THE CRZ WITH THE PROJECT ARBORIST AND APPLICABLE AUTHORITIES HAVING JURISDICTION. NO EXCAVATION, ROOT CUTTING, MATERIAL STORAGE, VEHICLE ACCESS, OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY SHALL OCCUR WITHIN PROTECTED AREAS UNLESS SPECIFICALLY APPROVED.
R02	DEMO EX MASONRY PERIMETER WALL, INCLUDING ALL FOOTINGS AND ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS.
R3	EX MULCHED AREA SURROUNDING HERITAGE TREE TO REMAIN. FOR FUTURE PHASE OF CONSTRUCTION.
R03	DEMO ALL EX SITE GATES AND FENCING, INCLUDING POSTS, HARDWARE AND RELATED COMPONENTS
R4	EX RUMSEY PARKING SPACES TO REMAIN
R04	DEMO ALL EX STEPS, INCLUDING HANDRAILS, GUARDRAILS AND ASSOCIATED COMPONENTS
R5	EX LIGHT POLE TO REMAIN; PROTECT DURING CONSTRUCTION; TO BE DEMOLISHED IN FUTURE PHASE OF CONSTRUCTION.
R05	DEMO ALL EX SITE FURNITURE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO BENCHES, BIKE RACKS, TRASH/RECYCLING RECEPTACLES AND RELATED ACCESSORIES
R07	EX PARKING AREA TO REMAIN; TO BE DEMOLISHED IN NEXT PHASE OF PROJECT
R10	DEMO EX SURFACE AREA ON SITE AND PREPARE AREA FOR PROPOSED SITE UPGRADES PER AS101
R11	DEMO EX CONC AND ASPHALT WITHIN PROP LINES AND PREPARE AREA FOR PROPOSED SITE UPGRADES; RE: AS101
R12	DEMO EX DPR SIGNAGE W/ CARE W/IN HERITAGE TREE CRZ
R14	DEMO EX SIGNAGE AND FLAG POLES AND ASSOCIATED COMPONENTS
R15	DEMO ALL EX LANDSCAPING AND FENCING AND PREPARE SURFACE FOR PROPOSED PLANS; RE: AS101
R16	REMOVE PLAZA TREES; MAINTAIN TREE BOXES
R17	EX CONC PLAZA TO REMAIN
R18	EX WATER METER. REMOVE AND RETURN TO DC WATER. ENSURE EX ABANDONED WATER LINE IS CUT AND CAPPED AT MAIN; RE: CIV DWGS
R19	ABANDON 10" SANITARY SEWER LATERAL; RE: CIV DWGS
R20	ABANDON 12" STORM SEWER LATERAL AFTER DISCONNECTION; RE: CIV DWGS
R21	DISCONNECT AND ABANDON GAS SERVICE PER UTILITY COMPANY PRIOR TO BUILDING RAZE; RE: CIV DWG
R22	DISCONNECT AND ABANDON UNDERGROUND ELECTRICAL SERVICE PER PEPCO REQUIREMENTS; RE: CIV DWGS
R23	EX CAPITOL BIKESHARE TO BE TEMPORARILY RELOCATED; RE: CIV DWGS
R104	EX 20" STREET TREE TO REMAIN. PROTECT DURING DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES.
R105	EX LIGHT POLE AT PRIVATE ALLEY TO REMAIN; PROTECT DURING CONSTRUCTION

EXISTING PLAN ANALYSIS + PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

PLAN

(6 LANE SWIMMING POOL) + (SMALLER WADING POOL)

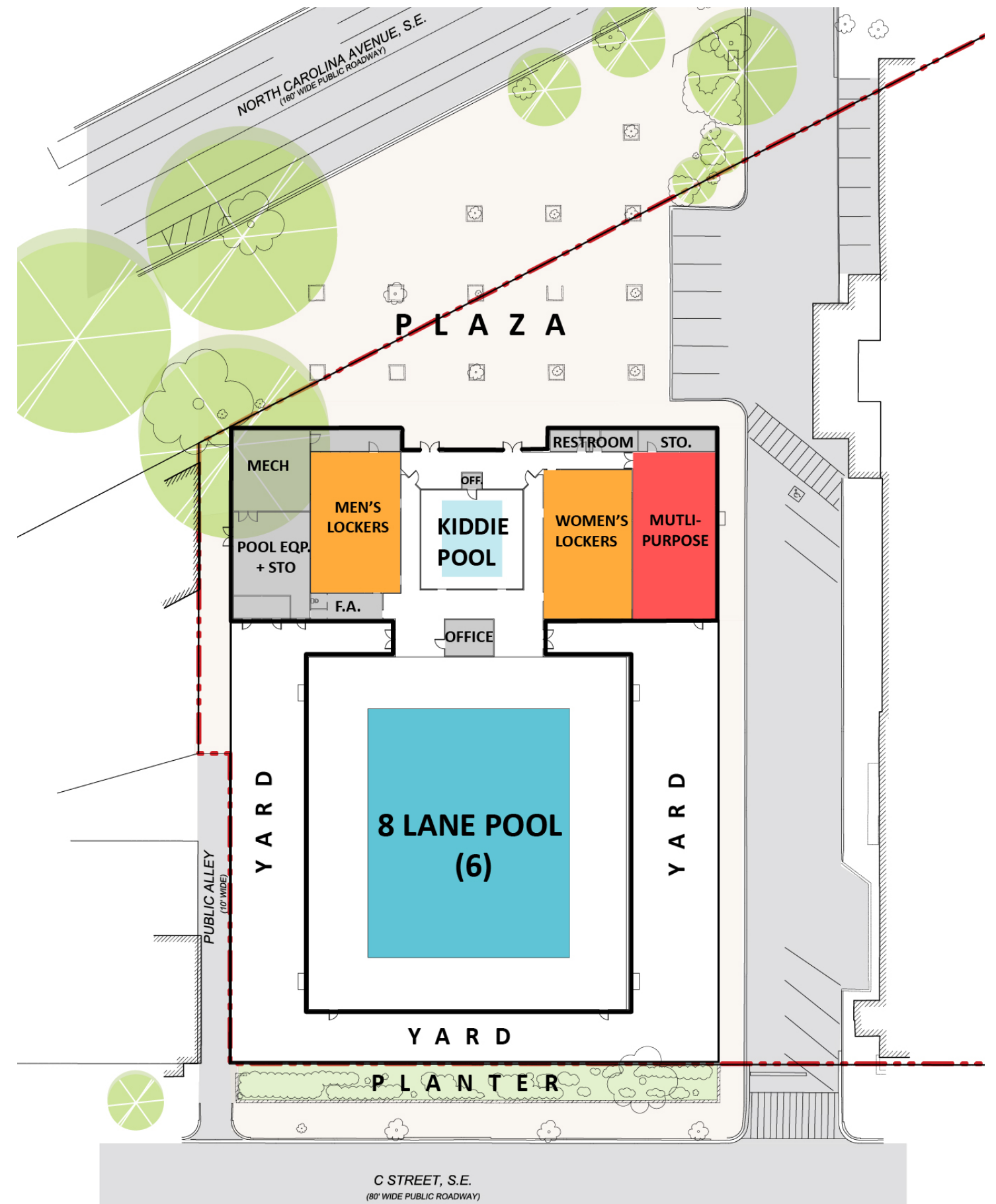
- DPR STAFF OFFICES
- LOCKER + SHOWER ROOMS
- UTILILITES
- POOL EQUIPMENT + CHEMICALS
- LOBBY + CIRCULATION
- 6-LANE SWIMMING POOL
- WADING POOL
- LARGE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
- STORAGE

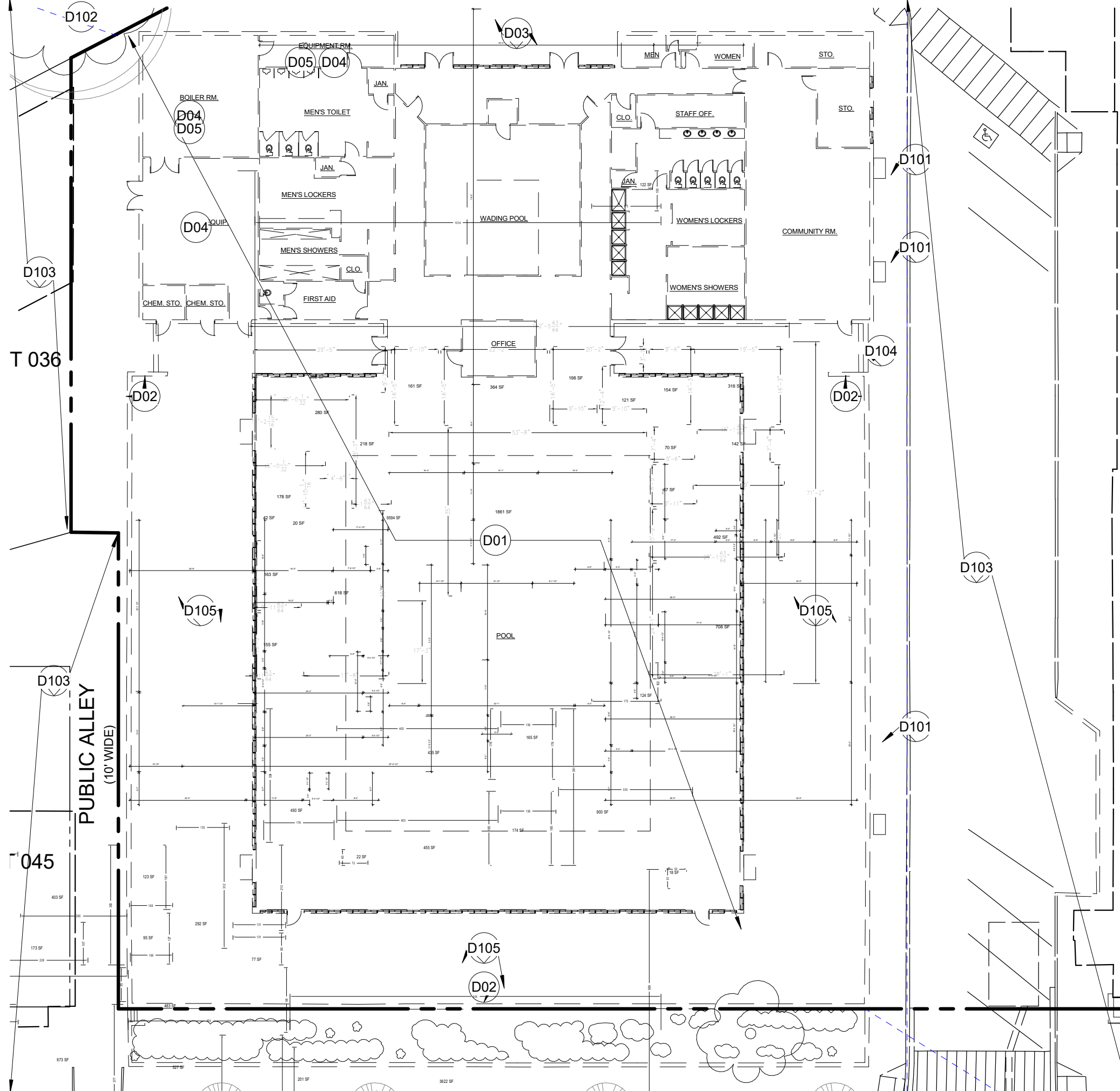
The current design features a one-story brick building set at the back of a large plaza, lacking a clear transition from the vibrant urban neighborhood and market to the aquatic center. It includes a small multipurpose room, wading pool, offices, restrooms, showers, lockers, and a mechanical room. Pool equipment and mechanical rooms are positioned to the west for easy access via the alley and interior.

The double-height entrance leads to a central six-lane pool, enclosed by three lattice brick corridors that provide privacy but limit visual connection to the exterior.

To enhance the design, the following improvements are proposed:

- Plaza Redesign – Enhance exterior amenities with landscaping, rain gardens, seating, and art to create a welcoming entry.
- Massing & Facade – Use either a minimal modern aesthetic with glass and steel or a contextual approach matching existing materials, forms, and scale.
- Connectivity – Increase transparency with more glass to improve natural light and strengthen visual ties to the exterior.
- Functionality – Optimize layout for efficient circulation, accessibility, and logical grouping of spaces.





NOTE

KEYNOTE

- D01 DEMO ENTIRE BLDG STRUCTURE, INCLUDING SUPERSTRUCTURE, ENCLOSURE, SLABS-ON-GRADE, FOUNDATIONS, FOOTINGS, WALLS, ROOF, AND ALL STAIRS, RAMPS AND RAILINGS. DEMO ALL INTERIOR PARTITIONS, CEILINGS, SOFFITS, AND NON STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS. DEMO ALL EXISTING INTERIOR FINISHES FIXTURES, CASEWORK AND ASSOCIATED COMPONENTS. DEMO ALL MECH EQUIPMENT, PLUMBING AND PIPING, ELEC EQUIPMENT, FIRE PROTECTION AND LOW VOLTAGE SYSTEMS, INCLUDING ASSOCIATED COMPONENTS AND APPURTENANCES.
- D02 DEMO EX MASONRY PERIMETER WALL, INCLUDING ALL FOOTINGS AND ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS.
- D04 DISCONNECT AND CAP ALL UTILITIES SERVING THE BUILDING; GC TO COORDINATE WITH UTILTY PROVIDERS AND PROTECT ALL UTILITIES TO REMAIN
- D05 DEMO ALL EX EQUIPMENT AND ASSOCIATED COMPONENTS, SUPPORTS, AND CONNECTIONS
- D101 EXISTING EASTERN MARKET EXHAUST SHALL REMAIN OPERATIONAL DURING DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION AND INTEGRATED INTO NEW CONSTRUCTION - RE: PLANS AND MECH DWGS
- D102 EX HERITAGE TREE TO REMAIN; PROTECT DURING ALL PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION; COORDINATE WITH UFD, CONC ARBORIST AND PERMITTED PLANS
- D103 PROTECT ADJACENT STRUCTURES, PAVEMENTS, AND SITE FEATURES TO REMAIN. REPAIR DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEMOLITION AT NO ADDITIONAL COST.
- D104 DEMO ALL EX STEPS, INCLUDING HANDRAILS, GUARDRAILS AND ASSOCIATED COMPONENTS
- D105 DEMO ADJACENT SITE IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING FLATWORK (WALKS AND PADS), FENCING, GATES, SITE LIGHTING ATTACHED TO STRUCTURE, SIGNAGE AND FURNISHINGS AT PERIMETER.