

Boston Preparatory Charter Public School Middle and High School



Application for Article 80 Small Project Review Boston Redevelopment Authority

875 River Street Hyde Park/Boston, Massachusetts, 02136

Date: April 6, 2015

Submitted By:

Boston Preparatory Charter Public School

April 7, 2015

BY HAND DELIVERY

Lance Campbell
Senior Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Boston Preparatory Charter Public Middle and High School – Application for Article 80 Small Project Review

Dear Lance,

On behalf of the Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, please find ten (10) copies of the Small Project review Application for the proposed project located at 875 River Street in Hyde Park/Boston. We submitted an electronic copy of this application on the Boston Redevelopment Authority's on-line document portal this morning.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions and we look forward to working with you on this project.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Borins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish above the 'i' in "Borins".

Larry Borins

Enclosures

Cc: Sharon Lisanckie (by email, w/encls)
Janelle Bosek (by email, w/encls)
Sylvia Mihich (by email, w/encls)

Table of Contents

Cover Letter	2
Table of Contents	3
1. Project Information	4
1.1. Project Identification	
1.2. Project Team	
2. Project Description	5
2.1. Introduction	
2.2. Project Design Description	
2.3. Sustainable Design Description	
2.4. Project Dimensional Information	
2.5. Zoning Information	
3. Transportation and Pedestrian Access	9
3.1. Project Description	
3.2. Existing Conditions	
3.3. BPCPS Operations	
3.4. Transportation Analyses	
4. Public Benefits	13
4.1. Job Creation and Increased Economic Activity	
4.2. Sustainable Development	
4.3. Enhancing the Property's Visual Characteristics	
4.4. Increased Community Participation	
5. Public Review and Approvals Required	13
5.1. Permits and Approvals Required	
5.2. Permits and Approvals Not Required	
5.3. Community Outreach	

Transportation Figures:

- Figure 1) Site Location
- Figure 2) Preliminary Site Layout
- Figure 3) MBTA Public Transportation

Exhibits:

- Exhibit A-1 Aerial Site Plan
- Exhibit B-1 Site Photographs
- Exhibit B-2 Context Photographs
- Exhibit B-3 Context Photographs
- Exhibit B-4 Context Photographs
- Exhibit B-5 Context Photographs
- Exhibit C-1 Existing Site Plan
- Exhibit C-2 Proposed Site Plan
- Exhibit D-1 South (River Street) Elevation & East Elevation
- Exhibit D-2 North & West Elevations
- Exhibit D-3 Perspective from River Street Looking West

Boston Preparatory Charter Public School
Application for Small Project Review

1.0 Project Information

1.1 Project Identification

Project Name: Boston Preparatory Charter Public School – Middle and High School Project

Address/Location: 875 River Street Hyde Park/Boston, Massachusetts, 02136

Proponent: Boston Preparatory Charter Public School.
1286 Hyde Park Avenue
Boston, MA 02130
Sharon Lisanckie, Executive Director

1.2 Project Team

The Project Team members and their contact information are set forth below:

Architect: Studio G Architects, Inc.
179 Boylston Street, Building P
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
(617) 524-5558
Sylvia Mihich

Real Estate Director Pacific Charter School Development.
811W. 7th Street]
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(718) 300-0482
Janelle Bosek

Owner's Project Manager: Pinck & Co Inc.
98 Magazine Street
Boston, MA 02119
(617) 445-3555
Larry Borins

Legal Counsel: Rackemann Sawyer & Brewster LLP
160 Federal Street
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 542-2300
Kurt James.

Civil Engineer: Nitsch Engineering
2 Center Plaza #430
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 338-0063
Chelsea Christenson

Transportation Engineer: MDM Transportation Consultants, Inc.
28 Lord Road, Suite 280
Marlborough, MA 01752
(508) 303-0371
Dan Mills

Structural Engineer: Foley Buhl Roberts & Assoc.
2150 Washington St # 150
Newton, MA 02462
(617) 926-9486
Lenny Weiss

MEP Engineer: SAR Engineering
10 Granite St.
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 328-9215
Mike Cotter

Landscape Architect: KMDG
214 Cambridge St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 227-2560
Kaki Martin

2.0 Project Description

2.1 Introduction

Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (BPCPS) is proposing to construct an approximately 48,800± square foot building (the “Building”) at 875 River Street in Hyde Park (the “Property”), and undertake related site improvements (landscaping, play courts, parking for 56 vehicles) in order to provide a new home for Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (BPCPS), which is currently located at leased space at the former Most Precious Blood parochial school at 1286 Hyde Park Avenue in Hyde Park (collectively, the “Project”).

BPCPS is a public charter school, accepting Boston students via a public lottery and serving them in grades six through twelve. BPCPS’s mission is to prepare students to succeed in four-year colleges and to embody, in thought and action, lifelong ethical growth by cultivating the virtues of compassion, courage, integrity, perseverance, and

respect. Opened in 2004, BPCPS is in its eleventh year of operation, with 400 students and 63 teachers and staff members. More than 40% of students come from our target neighborhoods in Boston, 75% are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, 19% receive special education services, and 7% are Limited English proficient. BPCPS is a school with a focus on rigorous, standards-based liberal arts curriculum, ethical development, an integrated alumni support program to drive college persistence, and the development of exceptional teachers. Over the past decade BPCPS has grown into one of the strongest schools in Boston and in the nation, helping students achieve at high levels, get into college, and succeed in college

Since its founding, BPCPS has operated out of leased space at the former Most Precious Blood parochial school at 1286 Hyde Park Avenue in Hyde Park. The current leased space does not suit the instructional needs of staff and students or meet the school's space and technology needs. The Project will create a comprehensive middle and high school facility that will enable the school to deliver on its ambitious program goals and longstanding charter promise to serve the neighborhoods of Hyde Park, Dorchester and Mattapan. The current owner of the Property is CAD Builders LLC. BPCPS has the Property under a binding purchase and sale agreement and the current owner has been notified that BPCPS is proceeding with this Small Project Review application.

2.2 Project Design Description

The Property is comprised of a single 94,500± square foot lot fronting onto River Street to the south, bounded by residential properties to the north and west and a commercial property, to the east. Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, aerial photographs, and city directories reviewed as part of the Phase 1 assessment indicate that the Property has largely been vacant and undeveloped. It is partially paved and partially covered with small scale vegetation with larger trees at the perimeter. The property is currently being used for storage of several vehicles and miscellaneous materials. Aerial site plan and photographs of the site and context are included in Exhibits A-1, B-1 to 5 attached to the application. The Proponent intends to construct a three-story, 48,800± square foot middle and high school building and build landscaped areas, outdoor recreational facilities, an internal drive with a bus loading zone and parking for 56 cars on the remaining site. An existing Site Plan is attached as Exhibit C-1, a proposed Site Plan is attached as Exhibit C-2, Elevations are attached as Exhibits D-1 through D-2 and a perspective is attached as Exhibit D-3.

New Middle/High School Building

The proposed new building will include instructional, support, and large common spaces in the three story structure with gym wing. The new building will provide many program areas and design features that BPCPS does not have in its' current leased facility including dedicated science labs, a library, small group instructional spaces, a gym, cafeteria, outdoor athletic space and seamless technology integration.

The current design calls for a steel frame structure on concrete slab-on-grade and footings. Exterior cladding is focused at this time on brick and high-density fiber cement board but an exterior insulation finish system may be considered for sections of the

building. The principal elevation along River Street and the east elevation facing the parking lot will feature generous areas of glass and metal panel to create inviting entrances and a “window” into school activities from the public street. The gym wing is a prefabricated steel frame structure with metal exterior cladding and windows in the current plans. The proposed project will include energy efficient heating and air conditioning systems throughout calibrated to work effectively with operable aluminum windows. The proposed technology infrastructure will be robust and designed to meet the needs of 21st century learning.

Site Improvements

BPCPS envisions highly functional and attractive school grounds that accommodate all of the school’s transportation needs on site, and provide the school community with outdoor areas for learning and recreation. A landscaped terrace with moveable chairs and picnic tables, a play area with sloped lawn and hard surface courts, and a paved entrance plaza off River Street are some of the highlights of the current landscape design. Arrival and departure activity will animate the public edge of the school along River Street, but all of the buses and cars will be accommodated along a parallel internal drive. The proposed site plan will provide more than the code required parking spaces for staff and visitors. The current landscape design calls for a wood fence, and planted buffer strip around the perimeter. Many of the large existing trees along property lines will be saved, and supplemented with new trees to create a buffer between the school and its’ residential neighbors. The parking lot will be screened with an appropriate fence and plantings.

2.3 Sustainable Design Description

Boston Preparatory Charter Public School supports sustainability as part of its educational mission. To the extent feasible and economically viable, the renovations and addition will include sustainable building design elements, compliant with the Stretch Energy Code (“Stretch Code”) adopted by the City of Boston. While still in the planning stages, the following sustainable design features are being investigated for the Project:

- Stormwater detention system to reduce the amount and rate of stormwater flow from the Property;
- Thermally efficient windows with shading devices to minimize heat gain during the warmer months;
- Roof and wall insulation to meet Stretch Code requirements;
- Use of an aesthetically compatible light colored roof to reduce heat island effect;
- Use of recycled and regional materials, including interior finishes containing low volatile organic compounds;
- Energy efficient HVAC system with heat recovery and energy management systems throughout, calibrated to work effectively with operable aluminum windows;

- Occupancy sensors, tandem switching and energy efficient light fixtures to meet Stretch Code requirements;
- Use of low flow plumbing fixtures and no or minimal irrigation;
- Sedimentation and erosion control measures during construction and recycling of construction waste;
- Bike racks and staff showers to encourage bicycle commuting

2.4 Project Dimensional Information

Lot Area:	94,500 (2.17 acres)
Building Area:	48,800 GSF
Floor Area Ratio	0.52 (below maximum 1.0 allowed by zoning)
Building Height:	35 Feet / 3 Floors (as required by zoning)
Off-Street Parking:	56 Spaces (22 more spaces then required by zoning)
Off-Street Loading Bay:	12' x 25' Space provided (as required by zoning)
Yard Setbacks:	10 foot setbacks at front, side and rear yard (as required by zoning)

2.5 Zoning Information

The Property is located within a Neighborhood Business sub-district (NS-1 Neighborhood Shopping) of the Hyde Park Neighborhood District, which is governed by Article 69 of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Zoning Code”). The Property is not located in any special districts or overlay districts established pursuant to the Zoning Code.

The proposed use is Education (K-12) which is use group E, an allowed use in a Neighborhood Shopping district. Landscaped planting strips and fences will be built along lot lines abutting residential sub-districts and around the parking lot as required by the zoning code. BPCPS intends to include an identification sign on the River Street elevation that meets the zoning code’s dimensional requirements. No zoning relief is required to build the Project as currently designed.

3.0 Transportation and Pedestrian Access

3.1 Project Description

The project site is an approximate 2.2-acre parcel of land located on the northern side of River Street in Boston, Massachusetts. The Site is mostly paved and does not contain any permanent structures. There are approximately 130 marked parking spaces on-site with additional unmarked paved parking areas. The Site is served by two curb cuts along River Street across from The Shops at Riverwood commercial plaza. The location of the site relative to adjacent roadways is shown in **Figure 1**.

The project involves relocating the BPCPS's existing middle and high school operation at 1286 Hyde Park Avenue in Hyde Park approximately 1-mile to the northeast along River Street. The existing school facility serves an enrollment of approximately 400 students and 63 employees. The existing Hyde Park Avenue site provides approximately 25 marked parking spaces.

The River Street Site will be re-developed to accommodate up to 400 students and 63 staff with approximately 56 marked parking spaces. The two curb cuts along River Street will be re-configured to complement the site layout and to accommodate the largest anticipated vehicle servicing the Site. A dedicated area for loading and unloading of school buses will be provided along the building front while parent drop-off/pick-up areas will be integrated with the main parking area. The preliminary site layout plan is shown in **Figure 2**.

3.2 Existing Conditions

An overview of River Street within the study area and public transportation opportunities serving the area are described below.

River Street

River Street is classified by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as an Urban Minor Arterial roadway under local (City) jurisdiction and carries approximately 11,000 vehicles per day within the study area. River Street is generally an east-west roadway in the project area and connects Washington Street in Mattapan to the east with Cedar Street in the Town of Dedham to the west. In the study area, River Street generally provides one lane of travel in each direction, with additional lanes at major intersections. There are approximately 6-foot wide sidewalks provided along both sides of the roadway and an approximate 36-foot curb to curb roadway width. On-street parking is permitted along the southern side of River Street and prohibited along the northerly side within the immediate study area. Land use along River Street consists of a mix of residential uses and commercial uses including The Shops at Riverwood located directly across from the site.

Pedestrian Access

Sidewalks are provided along both sides of River Street and are in very good condition. The traffic signals at the River Street/Wood Avenue intersection to the east of the site and

the River Street/Metropolitan Avenue intersection to the west of the site include an exclusive pedestrian phase with pedestrian activation buttons and countdown pedestrian signals at all four corners. Pedestrian ramps and crosswalks are in very good condition and exist at all four legs of both intersections. A marked crosswalk also exists at the River Street/Rosa Street unsignalized intersection to the west of the site.

Public Transportation

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) operates public transportation in the site vicinity with a bus stop located on River Street immediately west of the site. Specific local bus service and rapid transit service is described below and shown in **Figure 3**.

- **Bus Route 33:** This bus route provides service between the Dedham Town Line and Mattapan Station (Red Line) with connections to Readville Station (Commuter Rail) and Hyde Park Station (Commuter Rail). This bus service generally operates approximately every 30 to 35 minutes on weekdays.
- **Bus Route 24/27:** This bus route provides service between Wakefield Avenue and Ashmont Station (Red Line) with connections to Fairmont Station (Commuter Rail) and Mattapan Station (Redline). This bus service generally operates approximately every 20 to 30 minutes on weekdays.
- **Mattapan Station (Red Line):** This subway line provides service between Alewife Station in Cambridge and Mattapan Station. This subway service generally operates approximately every 5 to 15 minutes on weekdays. The MBTA operates approximately eight (8) bus lines out of the Mattapan Station with services dispersed in several different travel directions providing a comprehensive public transportation network. This station is an important hub for the Hyde Park area and is located approximately 1 mile from the Site which is a 20± minute walk or 5± minute bus ride.

3.3 BPCPS Operations

Arrival and Dismissal Periods

The Boston Public Schools (BPS) currently provides BPCPS with five public school buses (a combination of full size and compact school buses) with supplemental transportation provided through the MBTA public transportation system. Students also walk to school and are dropped off via passenger vehicles.

Similar to the school's existing operation at 1286 Hyde Park Avenue, students and staff at the proposed BPCPS middle-high school will generally arrive between 7:00 AM and 7:45 AM each day. Dismissal times will vary each weekday and range from 2:00 PM to 4:15 PM with student pick-up activity beginning approximately 30 minutes prior to school dismissal and generally lasting up to one hour. Students will generally be dismissed from after school activities prior to 5:30 PM at which time the majority of staff will leave. The remaining staff will typically leave the grounds by 7:30 PM. During the

year, the school plans to host 10 to 12 special events including new student receptions and athletic banquets.

Site Access and Circulation

Vehicular access to the facility is proposed via an entrance-only driveway and an exit-only driveway along River Street to improve safety and to limit conflict points. The parking field will be configured in a one-way counter-clockwise circulation pattern to facilitate drop-off/pick-up operations during the school arrival and dismissal periods. The preliminary site plan allows for approximately 56 on-site parking spaces with dedicated parent vehicle pick-up/drop-off and school bus pick-up/drop-off areas. The plan allows up to five standard size school buses to stack off-street in the loading/unloading along near the building's primary entrance.

Food and other supplies are typically delivered daily on standard sized delivery trucks which will be accommodated on-site. A dumpster will be located within the proposed parking area and will accommodate all of the waste/refuse requirements of the Project. Based on similar operations at BPCPS's current location, the dumpster will be serviced outside of arrival and dismissal periods.

Travel Mode Share

Field observations at the existing BPCPS middle-high school located at 1286 Hyde Park Avenue and projected site programming characteristics provided by BPCPS for the proposed middle-high school indicated the following:

- *Public Transportation.* Approximately 50 percent of the student population will utilize the local public transportation system (MBTA) which provides connections to major area transit stations, including the Mattapan MBTA Station.
- *City of Boston Public School Busing System.* As currently planned, the school will be provided with approximately five public school buses (a combination of full size and compact buses) through Boston Public Schools. The school buses will accommodate approximately 30 percent of the school population in a designated loading and unloading area along the school driveway.
- *Parent Pick-up/Drop Off.* Approximately 15 percent of students will arrive and depart from the school using the on-site parent drop-off/pick-up area along the eastern side of the proposed school building.
- *Bicycle and Walking Trips.* Approximately 5 percent of students will walk or travel by bicycle. A walkway connecting to the existing sidewalk system along River Street and secure on-site bicycle racks are included in the site development plan.

3.4 Transportation Analyses

As stated above, BPCPS will be served daily by up to five school buses in addition to parent pick-up/drop-off activity. These operations will take place on-site and will be

supervised by BPCPS staff. BPCPS serves a middle-high school population and does not offer lower grades which often require a more complex and lengthy parental pick-up/drop-off operations. Similar to the BPCPS's current location, the proposed property is directly served by the MBTA bus system and will locate the school one-mile closer to the MBTA Mattapan Station. The proposed 56 parking spaces exceed the school's current parking supply and are expected to meet the needs of the school's staff and visitors.

The proposed development will include several physical and operational improvements which are described below.

- A crosswalk, wheelchair ramps and Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons will be installed on River Street east of Reddy Avenue in consultation with the City of Boston Transportation Department.
- A School Zone will be established along River Street in consultation with the City of Boston Transportation Department.
- An internal driveway proximate to the primary building entrances will accommodate all projected school bus drop-off/pick-up activity.
- Parking spaces for 56 vehicles (equivalent to 1.1 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area) will be marked on-site to meet BPCPS staff and visitor parking demands. Proposed parking supply exceeds the Hyde Park Neighborhood District off-street parking requirements (0.7 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area).
- The Proponent will work with the MBTA and City of Boston to determine whether the Route 24/33 inbound bus stop on River Street should be relocated to a point more proximate to the Site.
- Bicycle racks, with a capacity to secure 14± bikes, and shower facilities will be provided on-site for staff and students to encourage bicycle commuting.
- The site driveways will be reconfigured to provide a one-way entrance and one-way exit driveway in order to improve safety and limit conflict points along River Street.
- Deliveries and waste service will occur on-site and will be managed by BPCPS so as not to interfere with arrival and dismissal of students. The driveways and loading areas will be designed to accommodate school buses and standard sized delivery vehicles.
- BPCPS staff will be available to direct students to/from the school building entrances and the drop-off/pick-up areas as required.
- BPCPS will continue to encourage the use of non-auto transportation for students and staff.
- Proposed landscaping and other physical features will be designed to limit the impact to sight lines to and from the proposed exit driveway.

4.0 Public Benefits

The Project is expected to provide a range of benefits to the Hyde Park neighborhood and the City of Boston as follows:

4.1 Job Creation and Increased Economic Activity

The construction of the proposed school building and site improvements will create approximately 100 construction jobs. Creating a new home for BPCPS will insure that the existing approximately 63 staff and faculty jobs remain in the neighborhood. The increased activity from BPCPS's students, parents and staff following the Project completion, will revitalize the currently vacant Property and benefit businesses in the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed installation of a new River Street crosswalk at Reddy Avenue will connect the Project to the Shops at Riverwood.

4.2 Sustainable Development

The Project will transform a poorly maintained, mostly paved site into an environmentally responsible development with an energy efficient building, expanded green space, and a school program that supports sustainability as part of its educational mission. The Project team is investigating use of many sustainable design elements in the building design and environmentally sound practices in construction. The new building will allow the School to augment current operational policies that encourage bicycle and walking commutes, reduce energy consumption and promote recycling.

4.3 Enhancing the Property's Visual Characteristics

The new school building, site improvements and landscaping will significantly improve the appearance and urban design impact of the Property. River Street will be defined by the long, three story, primary façade of the building, and animated by arrival and departure activity adjacent to the public sidewalk. The proposed planted buffer and fence at the sidewalk will add human scale and seasonal variety to the pedestrian experience along River Street. Proposed site improvements include a continuous green edge, with fence, plantings and trees, between the Project and neighbors to the north, east and west. Planted lawns and buffer zones with shade trees, new fencing and site furnishings will dramatically improve the aesthetics of the Property

4.4 Increased Community Participation

BPCPS intends to continue its' ongoing, active participation in the Hyde Park community

5.0 Public Review and Anticipated Permits

A preliminary list of anticipated permits and approvals required for this Project is included (Table 1) and discussed below.

5.1 Permits and Approvals Required

The Project is located in the City of Boston’s Hyde Park Neighborhood District. The Project involves the construction of a new approximately 48,800± square foot building and site improvements. The Project requires Small Project Review pursuant to Section 80E-2(1)(b)(5) of the Zoning Code.

The Building includes a cafeteria and kitchen that will, we anticipate, require assembly and food service permits from Inspectional Services Department. A NPDES permit from the Environmental Protection Agency will likely be required to manage construction activity. Property development includes widening two curb cuts, improvements along the sidewalk edge and new utility service from River Street. Public Improvement Commission review and approval of the relevant site design, and Public Works Department permits for street and sidewalk “occupation” are anticipated. Plan review and approval from the Boston Water & Sewer Commission will be required for new water and sewer service to the Project and for storm water management. The current design includes a School Zone on River Street which has to be authorized by the Boston Traffic Department.

5.2 Permits and Approvals Not Required

The Property is not listed on the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and is not in a designated historic district.

Site environmental analysis indicates that no special permits are required for the excavation or management of site soils. The Project will not require review under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (“MEPA”).

Table 1: Agency Permits and Approvals*

Federal and State Agency/Permit	
Environmental Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPDES Gen. Const. Stormwater Permit
City Agency/Permit	
Boston Redevelopment Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Project Review
Boston Transportation Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Zone Authorization • Site Plan Approval • Const. Traffic Management Plan Approval
Boston Water and Sewer Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Plan Approval
Boston Public Improvement Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Plan Approval
Boston Public Works Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb Cuts Permits • Street & Sidewalk Occupancy Permits • Const. Traffic Management Plan Approval
Boston Inspectional Services Department & Boston Fire Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Service Permit • Assembly Permit • Building Permit • Certificate of Occupancy

* This is a preliminary list based on project information currently available. It is possible that not all of these permits or actions will be required, or that additional permits and approvals may be needed.

5.3 Community Outreach

The Proponent and BPCPS have consulted with the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Boston City Councilor Timothy McCarthy, State Senator Linda Dorcea Fory and State Representative Angelo Scaccia to discuss the Project and will continue to update them throughout the permitting and construction phases. In addition, the Proponent and BPCPS will continue their outreach to neighborhood community groups to apprise them of the Project and its public review/approval process. A BRA-sponsored community meeting will be held in April 2015.

List of Transportation Figures

- Figure 1 Site Location
- Figure 2 Preliminary Site Layout
- Figure 3 MBTA Public Transportation

List of Exhibits

- Exhibit A-1 Aerial Site Plan
- Exhibit B-1 Site Photographs
- Exhibit B-2 Context Photographs
- Exhibit B-3 Context Photographs
- Exhibit B-4 Context Photographs
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- Exhibit D-3 Perspective from River Street Looking West

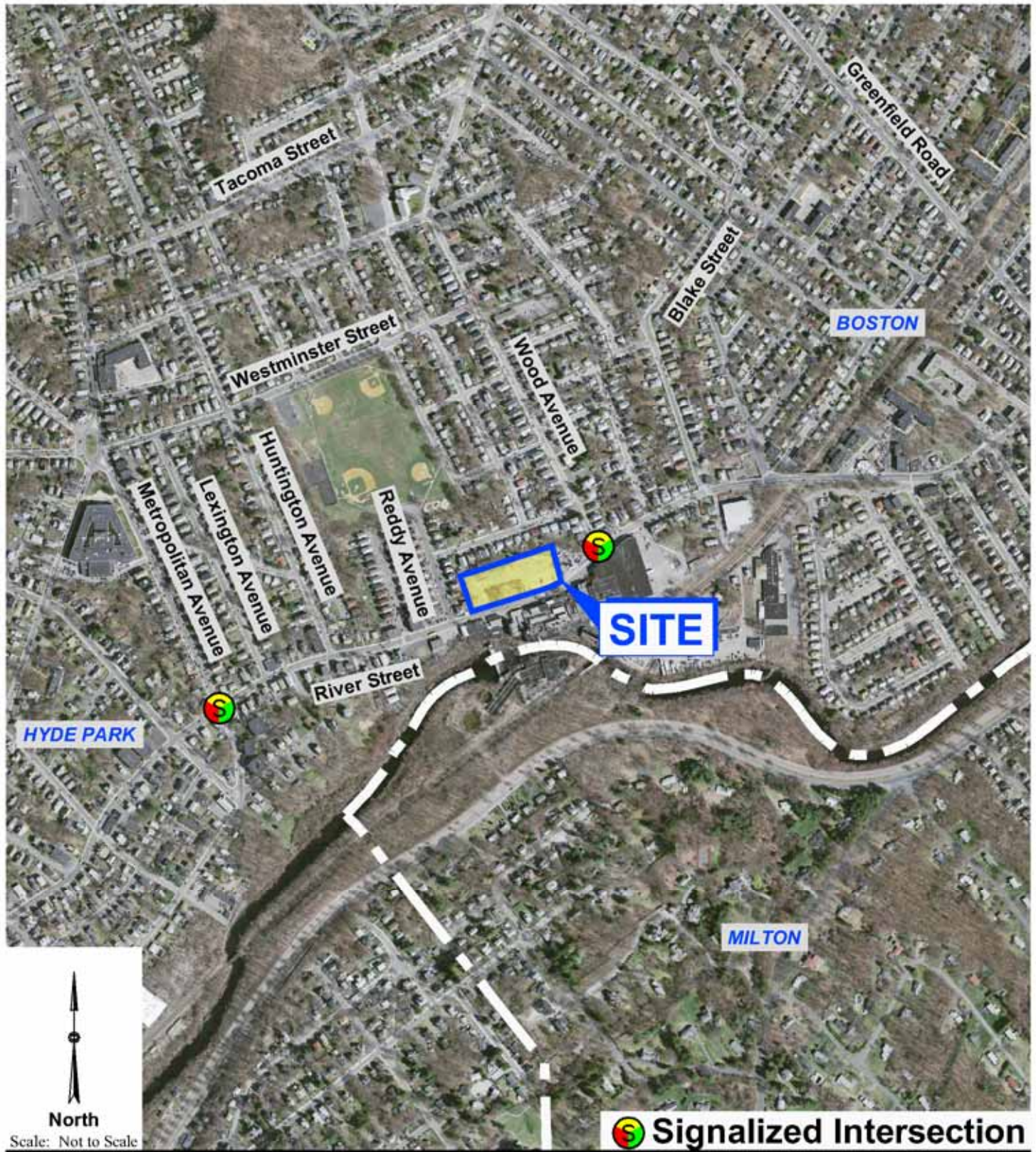
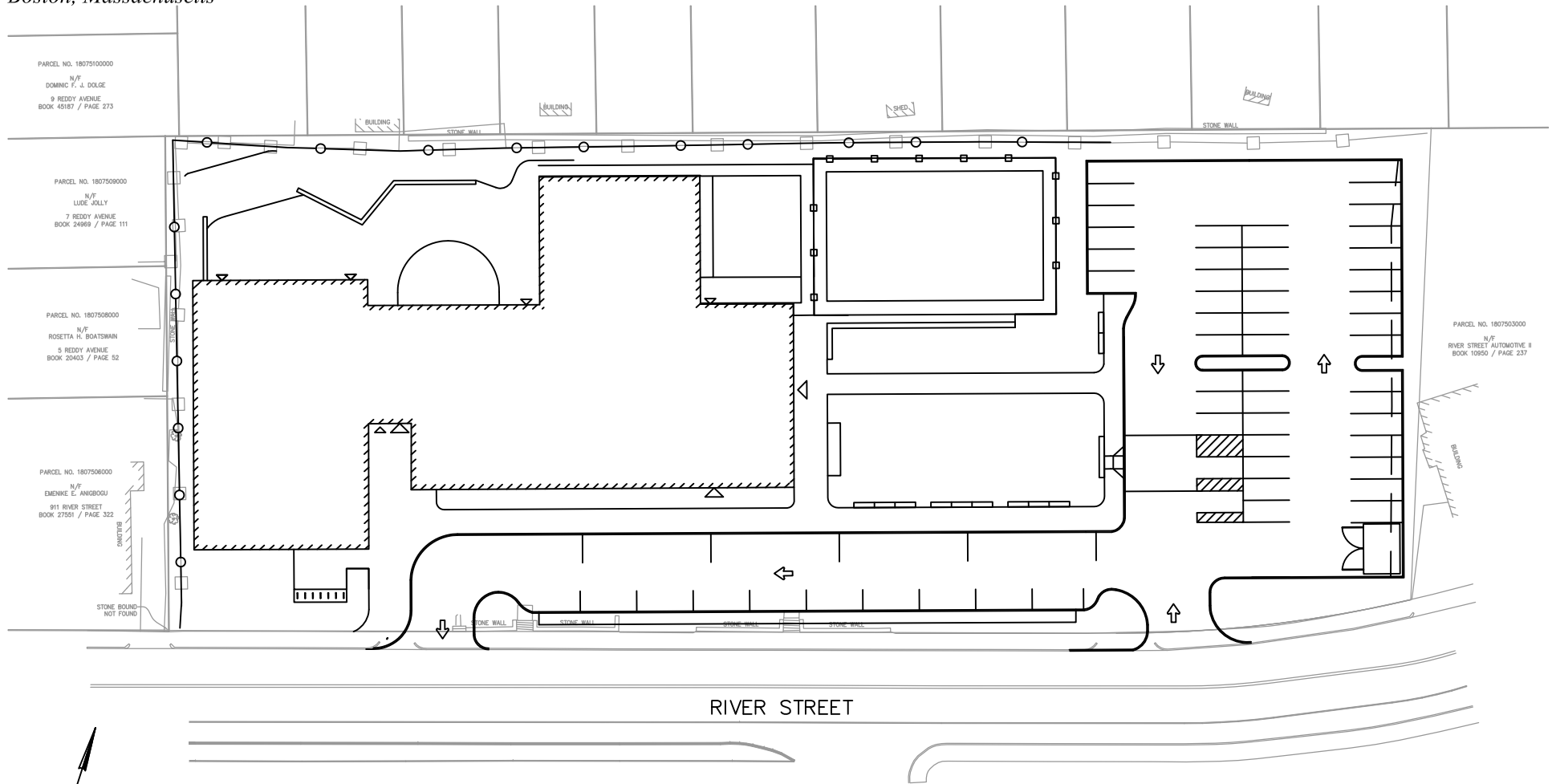


Figure 1

Site Location

Boston Preparatory Charter Public School
Boston, Massachusetts



Scale: Not to Scale

Site Plan Source: Studio G Architects/Nitsch Engineering

MDM TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS, INC.
Planners & Engineers

Figure 2

Preliminary Site Layout

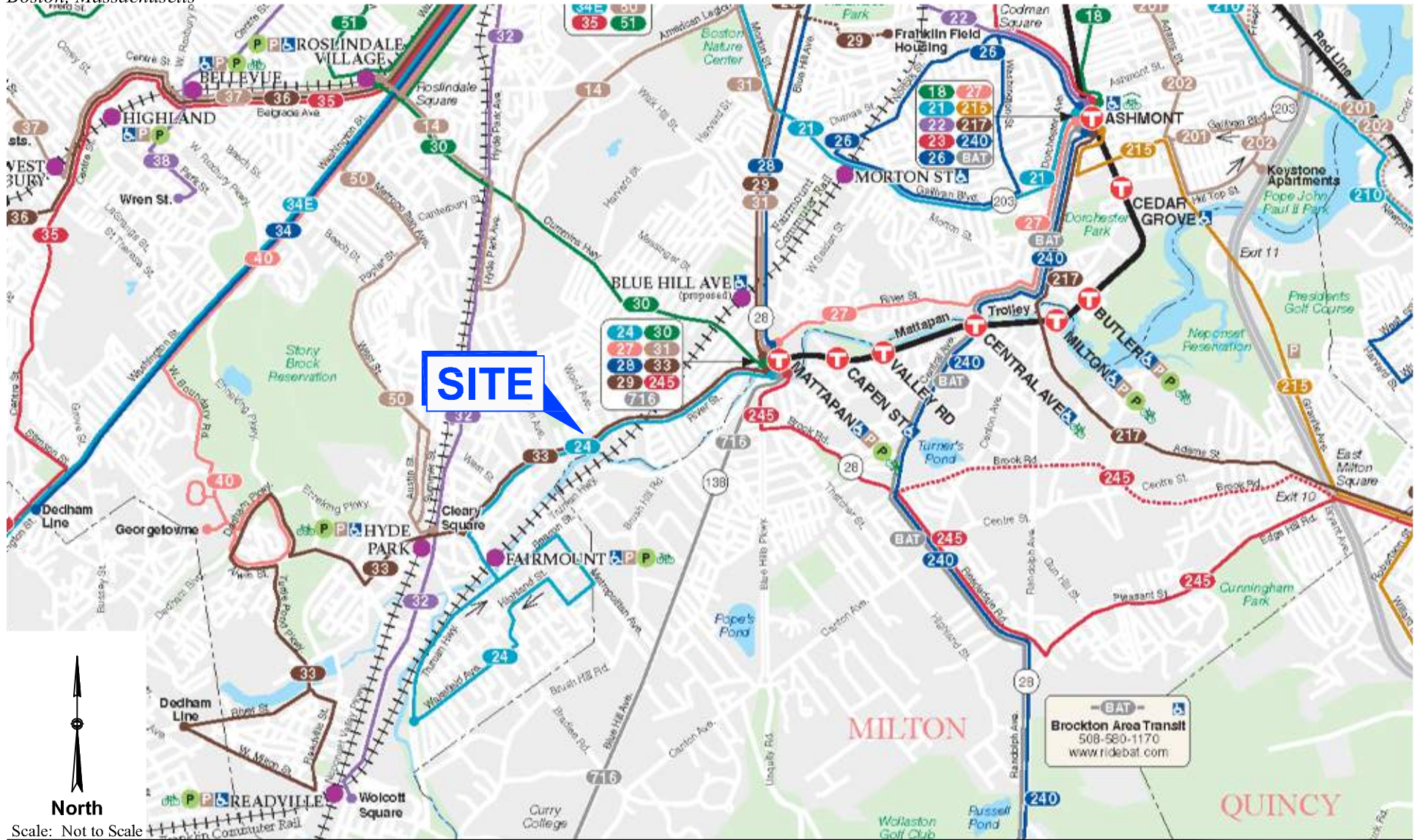


Figure 3

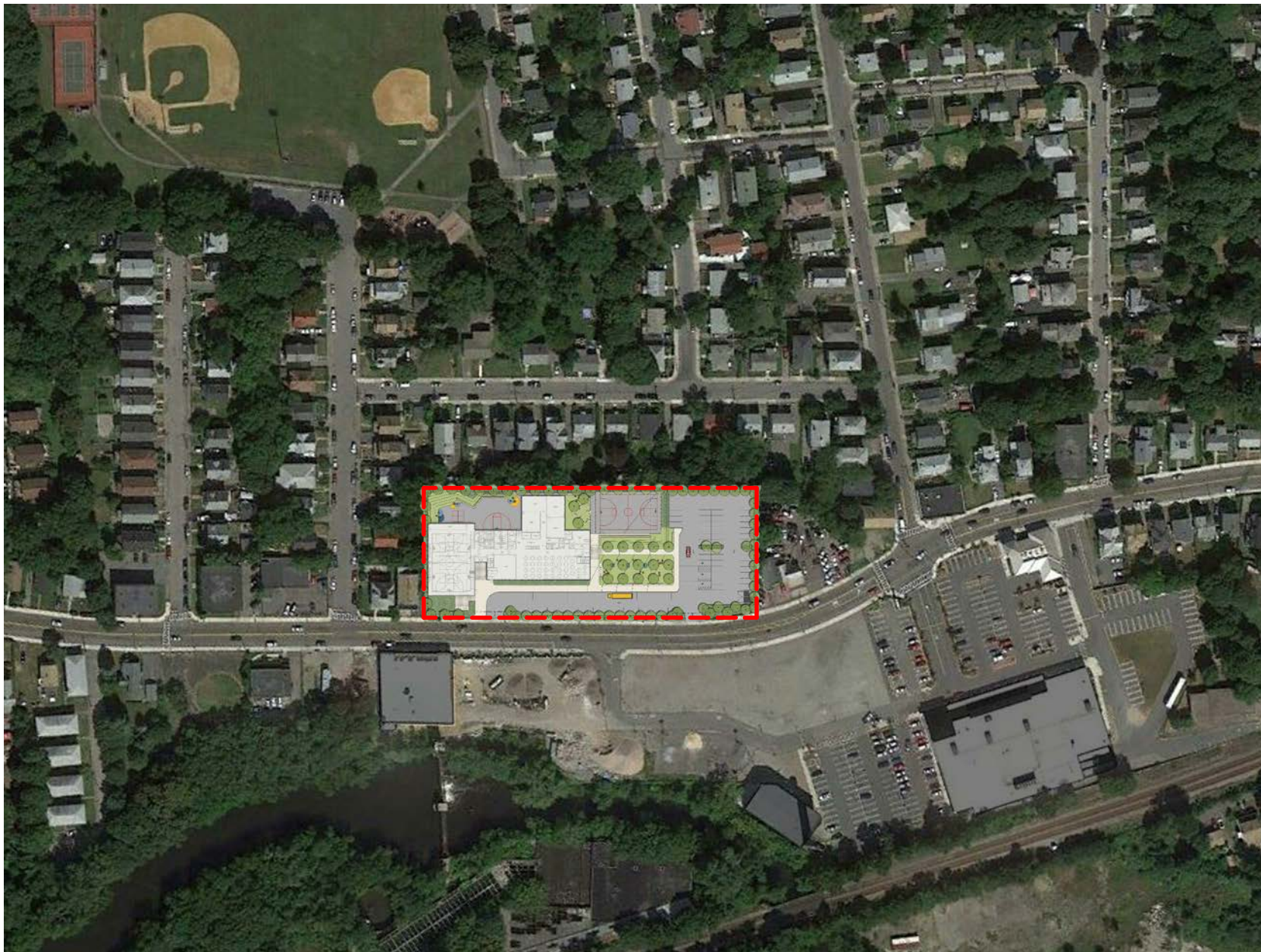


EXHIBIT A-1



VIEW FROM SITE LOOKING SOUTH-WEST



VIEW FROM SITE LOOKING WEST



VIEW FROM SITE LOOKING NORTH



VIEW OF SITE FROM RIVER ST. LOOKING NORTH-WEST

EXHIBIT B-1



DETAIL VIEW - AUTOBODY SHOP



VIEW FROM RIVER ST. LOOKING NORTH-WEST



VIEW OF SITE FROM AUTOBODY SHOP



VIEW OF AUTOBODY SHOP FROM RIVER ST.

EXHIBIT B-2



VIEW FROM RIVER ST. LOOKING EAST



DETAIL VIEW - DOLLAR TREE



VIEW FROM RIVER ST. LOOKING SOUTH-EAST



VIEW OF THE SHOPS AT RIVERWOOD LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

EXHIBIT B-3



VIEW OF REDDY AVE. RESIDENCES FROM SITE



SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF SITE FROM RIVER ST.



RESIDENCES AT THE CORNER OF RIVER ST. AND REDDY AVE.



VIEW OF ABANDONED HOUSE ON RIVER ST.

EXHIBIT B-4



VIEW OF FRAZER ST. RESIDENCES FROM SITE



VIEW OF FRAZER ST. RESIDENCES FROM RIVER ST.



DETAIL VIEW - FRAZER ST. RESIDENCES



FRAZER ST. RESIDENCES BACKING UP TO NORTH BORDER OF SITE

EXHIBIT B-5

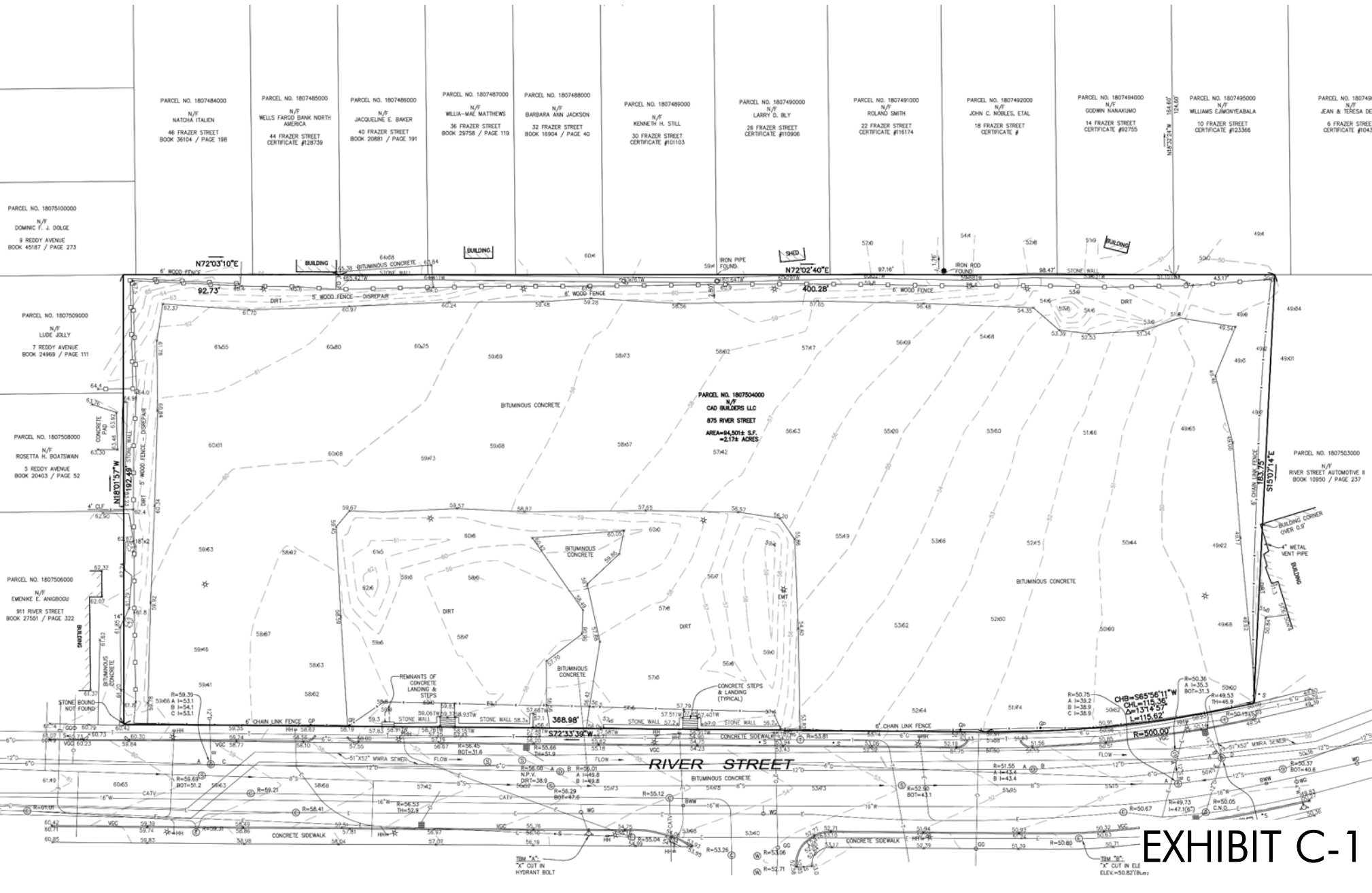


EXHIBIT C-1

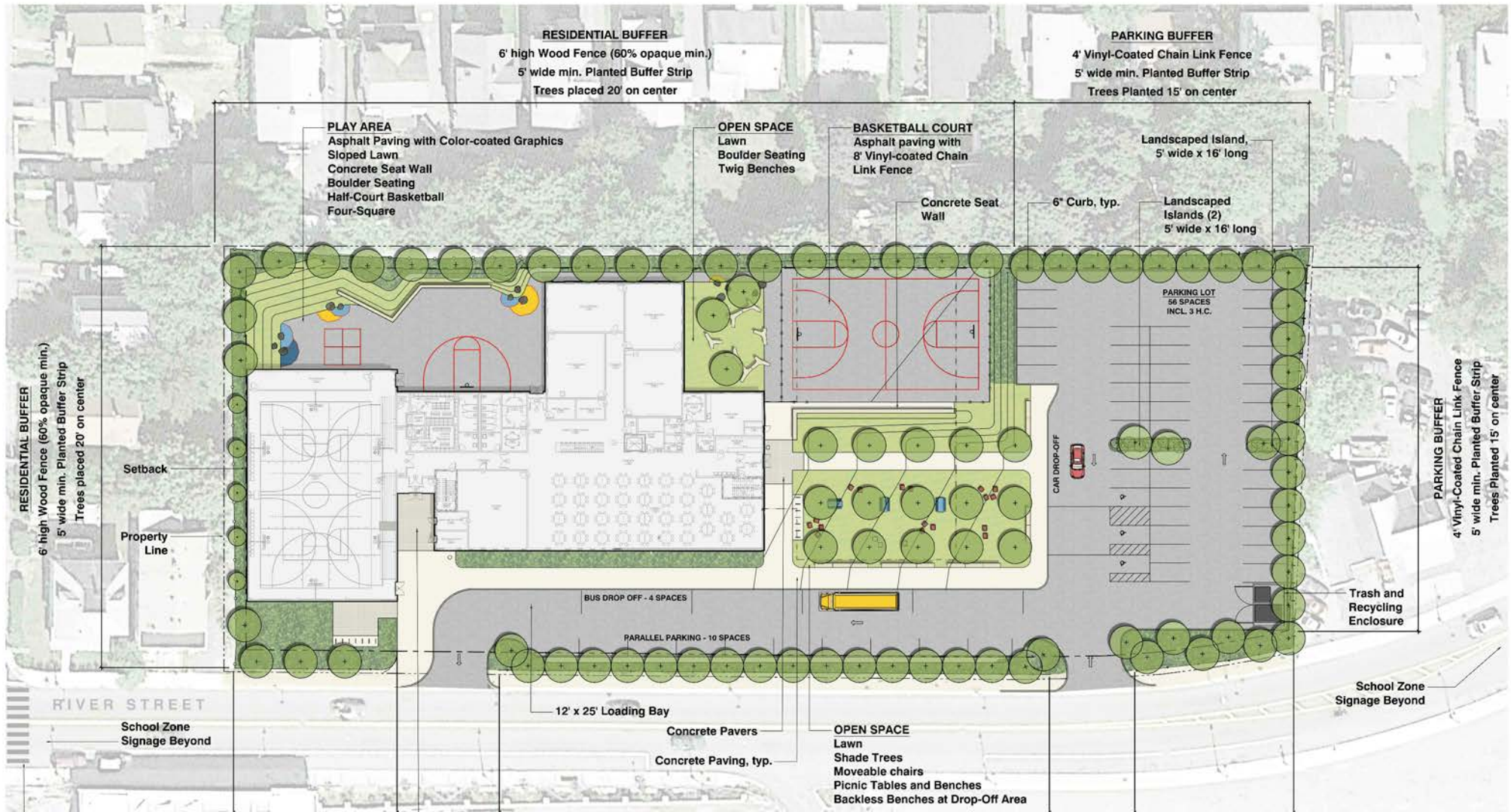


EXHIBIT C-2

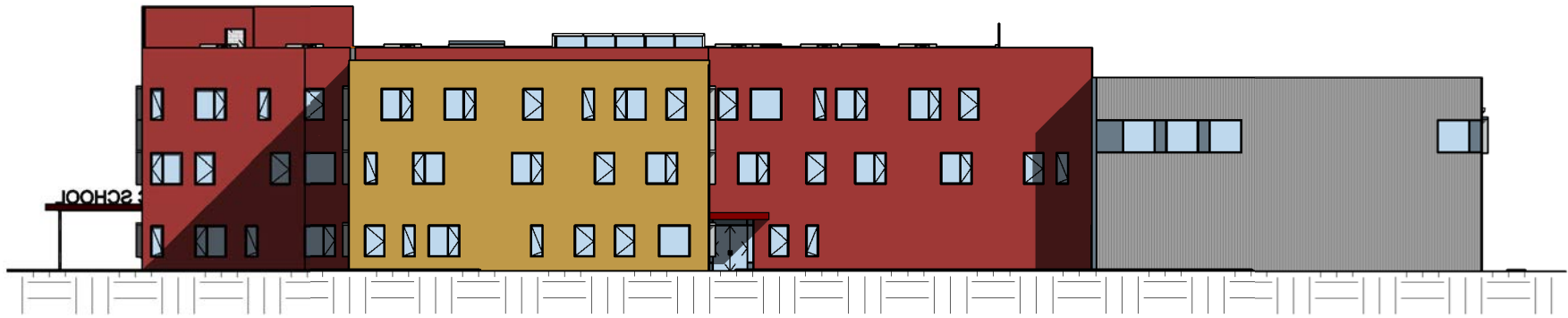


① SOUTH ELEVATION
1" = 30'-0"



② EAST ELEVATION
1" = 30'-0"

EXHIBIT D-1



① NORTH ELEVATION
1" = 30'-0"

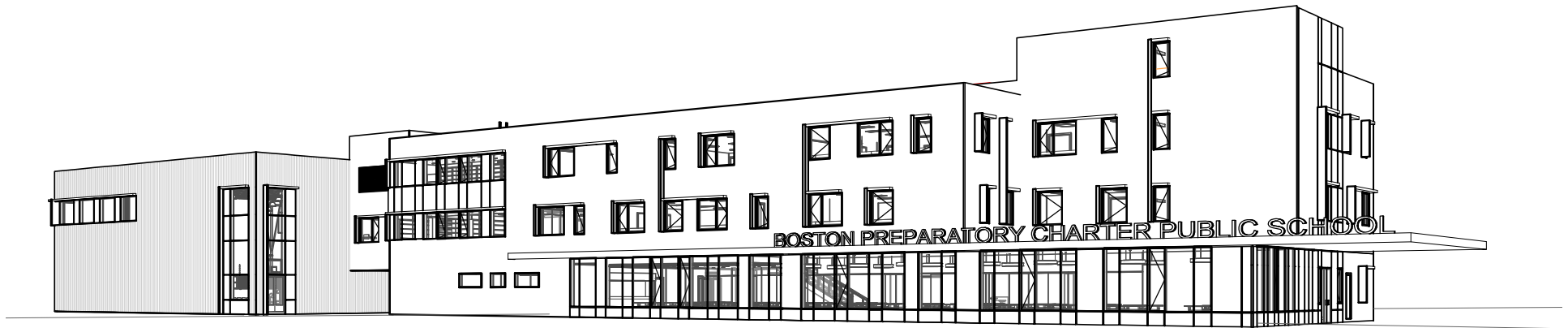


② WEST ELEVATION
1" = 30'-0"

EXHIBIT D-2



① WEST ELEVATION / SECTION
1" = 30'-0"



② PERSPECTIVE FROM SE

EXHIBIT D-3