



March 30, 2022

Re: Vare Recreation Center

Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch Street
13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Members of the Commission,

Please see the attached narrative and project update for Vare Recreation Center Project located in Grays Ferry at 2600 Morris Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145. We are seeking Final Approval from the Art Commission with this resubmission. Please direct all correspondence with regards to any questions about the project and the decision to:

N. Alizé Allison
Make the World Better Foundation
1400 Germantown Ave.
Suite 1A
Philadelphia, PA 19122
(650) 300-9868

alize.allison@mtwb.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Allison", is enclosed within a light blue rectangular border.

N. Alizé Allison
Make the World Better Foundation



Organization: Make the World Better (MTWB), in partnership with Rebuild and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR)
Project: Vare Recreation Center, Grays Ferry
Art Commission Cover Letter (Page 2)

Project Narrative

Among the first sites selected for Rebuild investment, Vare Recreation Center (2600 Morris St) is an active space at the heart of the Grays Ferry community. Vare Recreation Center sits on 3.6 acres, with a building that houses a basketball gym, gymnastic gym, teen center, art room, auditorium, computer lab, fitness center, and arcade room. In October 2017, Vare was forced to shut down due to serious concerns about the building's structural integrity. With temporary improvements and structural braces in place, the two story 100-year-old building was able to reopen the first floor, although the second floor remains closed. The site also hosts a baseball field, sports field, playground, basketball courts and swimming pool.

Planned renovations for the fully overhauled site include a new structure for indoor recreation programs, an artificial turf multipurpose field, new playground equipment, and outdoor basketball courts.

Rebuild selected Make the World Better (MTWB), as the Project User to completely renovate and modernize the Vare Recreation Center. Over the two years, MTWB and team have worked alongside the recreation center's staff, Advisory Council, program leaders, and nearby residents to identify site-specific improvements and design a complete scope of work to modernize and transform this beloved community space. This engagement has included dozens of meetings, workshops, and community events, and the participation of dozens of community members, as well as a multi-disciplinary team of artists, architects, landscape designers, civil & structural engineers, and design-build nonprofit partners. Community developed themes of unity, education, family, accessibility, safety, life skills, and intergenerational activity became key drivers of site design and planning.

MTWB will continue to coordinate with city agencies and partners to take advantage of best practice design opportunities on site. In partnership with the Philadelphia Water Department, site stormwater will be tied into newly planned PWD stormwater infrastructure leading to a subsurface basin at a nearby recreation site.

Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Rebuild have been integral in bringing this project to fruition. Rebuild is an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in neighborhood parks, recreation centers and libraries. Proposed in Mayor Jim Kenney's first budget as a part of his vision for a more equitable Philadelphia, Rebuild seeks to improve pivotal community spaces, empower and engage communities, and promote economic opportunity through diversity and inclusion. Rebuild is a public private partnership made possible by the Philadelphia Beverage Tax.



Organization: Make the World Better (MTWB), in partnership with Rebuild and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR)
Project: Vare Recreation Center, Grays Ferry
Art Commission Cover Letter (Page 3)

Changes from Prior Submittal to the Philadelphia Art Commission

MTWB presented before the Philadelphia Art Commission on December 2, 2020, January 26, 2021, and on February 2, 2022, and pursuant to the most recent Commission's Decision Form dated February 9, 2022, the Vere project received a continuance with conditions to be satisfied for receipt of final approval.

MTWB's response to review comments from the Commission and changes from the prior submission are as follows:

- Site Lighting – Additional details and drawings illustrating site lighting are enclosed within this resubmission.
- Tree Plantings - Additional details and drawings illustrating tree plantings and locations are enclosed within this resubmission.
- Scheme for Greening 27th Street – A proposed plan for additional tree planting along 27th Street as noted above is being incorporated into the project subject to final Rebuild/ PPR approval.
- Site Furniture - Additional details and specifications illustrating site furnishings are enclosed within this resubmission.
- Stormwater Management/ Grading Plan – Engineered drawings and specifications for stormwater management and site grading are enclosed within this resubmission.
- Percent for Art – MTWB and the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy have agreed on a singular art installation at the southern entrance of the property and enclosed within this submission is a support letter in favor of our project.
- Strategy for Existing Public Art – No existing art installations have been identified as part of MTWB's scope of work for this project.

VARE

R E C R E A T I O N C E N T E R

A R T C O M M I S S I O N P A C K A G E

APRIL 2022

Submitted by:
Make the World Better Foundation
with
Kramer Marks
Ian Smith Design Group
KDI

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

The guiding principle in designing the new Vare Recreation Center was to create a space that represents the heart and soul of the Vare community. The resulting schematic design encapsulates what the recreation center is to community members—a place to recreate and build skills, but more broadly a space to come together with their neighbors and celebrate the everyday heroes that make Vare what it is. This proposed site plan—known as “The Stoop”—was created in close partnership with community members in order to express these ideals and create a space that could serve residents for many years to come.

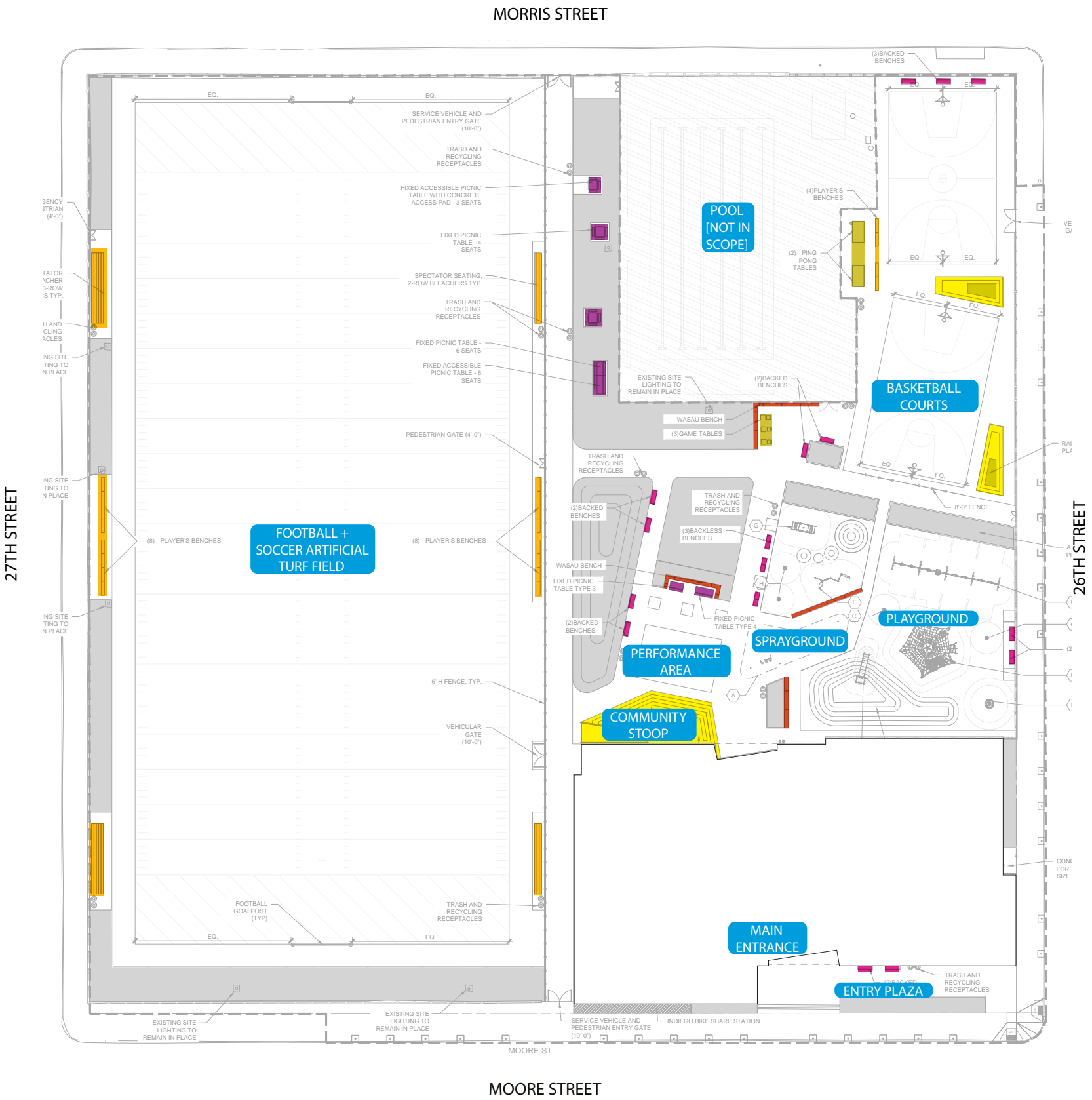
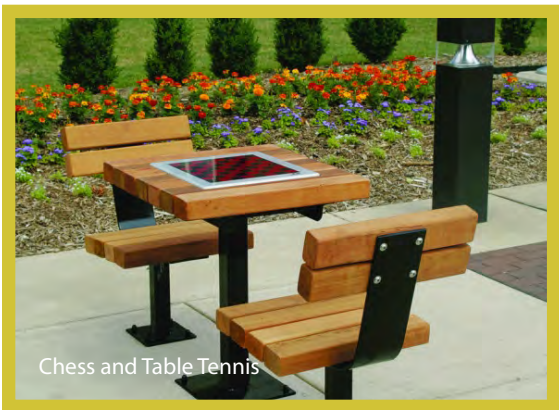
At the core of this concept is the typology of the stoop as a place that can accommodate gathering, community interaction, and social inclusion at different scales throughout the site. A common sight in Philadelphia and especially in Grays Ferry, the stoop or front porch of a house is a central socializing space for many people. This idea has been translated into the building and site furnishing design at Vare, and stitches together the different programmatic elements of the site.

Another key concept expressed as part of this site plan is the important of multi-functional spaces. It is important to the Vare community that the site not be partitioned into individual spaces for individual activities, but rather accommodate different programs within a flexible plan. Not only does this provide for more programming options now and in the future, but supports the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of many of the folks that use Vare. This flexibility, adaptability, and resiliency of space and program speaks directly to those same values within the community.

These elements thread together to create a site plan with a set of strong social spaces, flexible programming, active recreation opportunities, and a Vare that is representative of the community that it serves.



SITE FURNISHINGS



SITE FURNISHINGS

LEGEND

ITEM DESCRIPTION

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

- A WHIRLFLEX SPLASHPAD EQUIPMENT
- B TIPI CAROUSEL WITH TOP BRACE
- C SPICA
- D SENSORY DOME
- E SWING FRAME, 8 SEAT
- F TALK & TUMBLE WITH NET
- G GARDEN SEESAW
- H TODDLER SPICA
- I EMBANKMENT SLIDE




SITE FURNISHINGS

- BACKED BENCHES
- BACKLESS BENCHES
- TYPE 1 WAUSAU BENCH (8'-0" PIECE)
- TYPE 2 WAUSAU BENCH (4x4' CORNER PIECE)
- TYPE 3 WAUSAU BENCH (2-0' PIECE)
- PLAYER'S BENCH
- 2-ROW SPECTATOR BLEACHERS
- 3-ROW SPECTATOR BLEACHERS
- PINGPONG TABLE
- GAME TABLE
- FIXED PICNIC TABLE - TYPE 1
- FIXED PICNIC TABLE - TYPE 2
- FIXED PICNIC TABLE - TYPE 3
- FIXED PICNIC TABLE - TYPE 4
- FIXED PICNIC TABLE - TYPE 5
- FIXED PICNIC TABLE - TYPE 6
- TRASH RECEPTACLES
- RECYCLING RECEPTACLES
- DRINKING FOUNTAIN

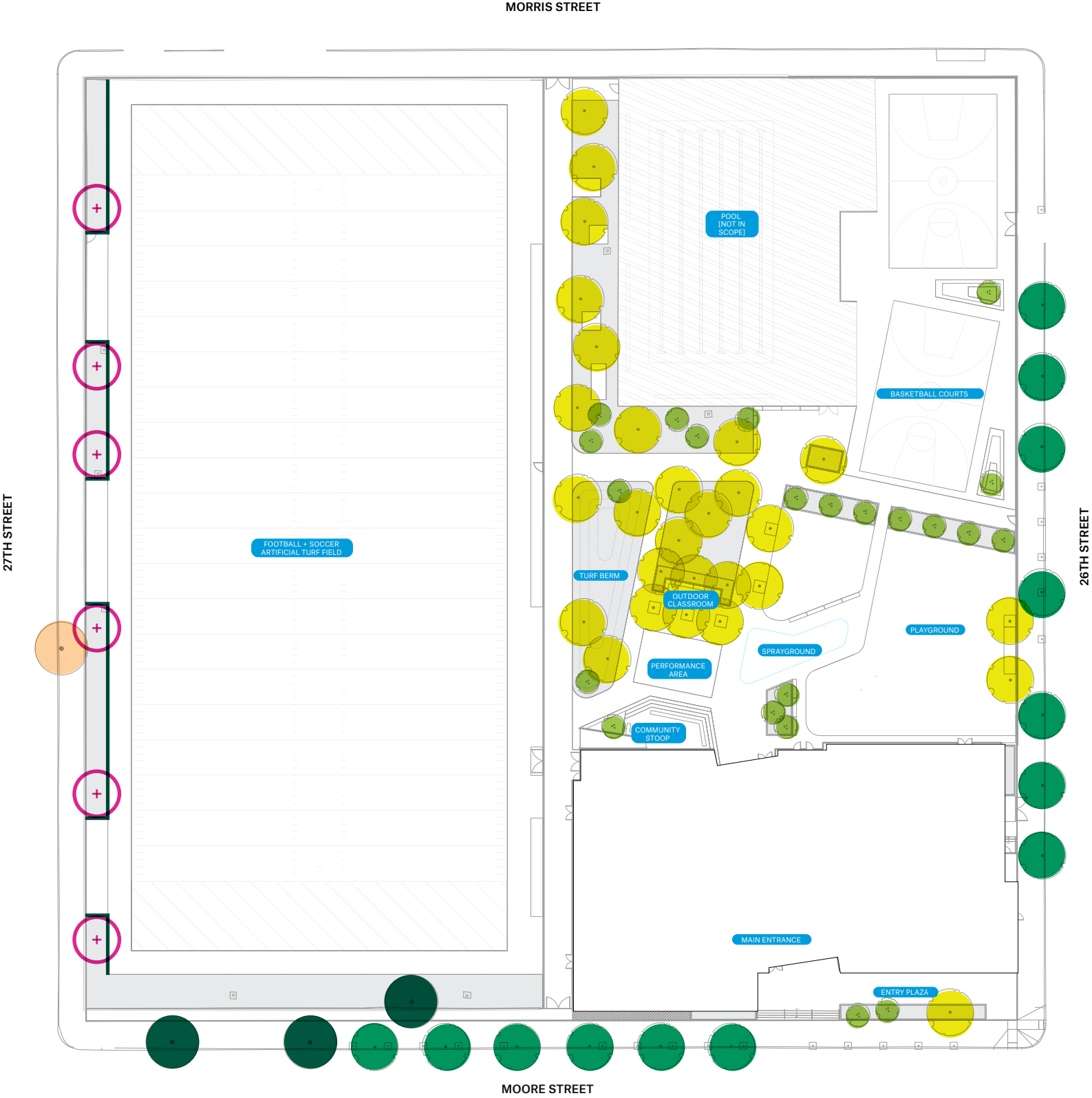
- PROJECT LIMITS
- PEDESTRIAN GATE (4'-0"W)
- VEHICULAR GATE (10'-0"W)
- EXISTING GATE (8'-0"W)
- EXISTING FIELD LIGHT
- FOOTBALL GOALPOST
- BASKETBALL GOAL



PLANTING: TREES

-  Existing Trees
Sycamore (large)
-  Existing Tree
Linden (medium)
-  Canopy Trees
Red Maple, Kentucky Coffeetree, Black Tupelo, Scarlet Oak, Swamp White Oak
-  ROW Trees
London Plane
-  Understory Trees
Eastern Redbud, Serviceberry, River Birch
-  Proposed Trees - in response to Arts Commission comments
To be located on either side of seating elements along 27th street side of the field to provide shade for spectators/players. Each tree will be planted in the strip of native grass planting (shown in gray) and will be planted a minimum of 6' from the edge of the artificial turf.

A root barrier will be installed between the turf and planting to prevent tree roots from affecting the artificial turf or concrete areas.



The team is exploring the possibility of adding trees adjacent to the artificial turf field, as depicted here. Placement of trees along 27th Street will need to be mindful to player safety, long term turf maintenance, and tree health.

PLANTING: TREES



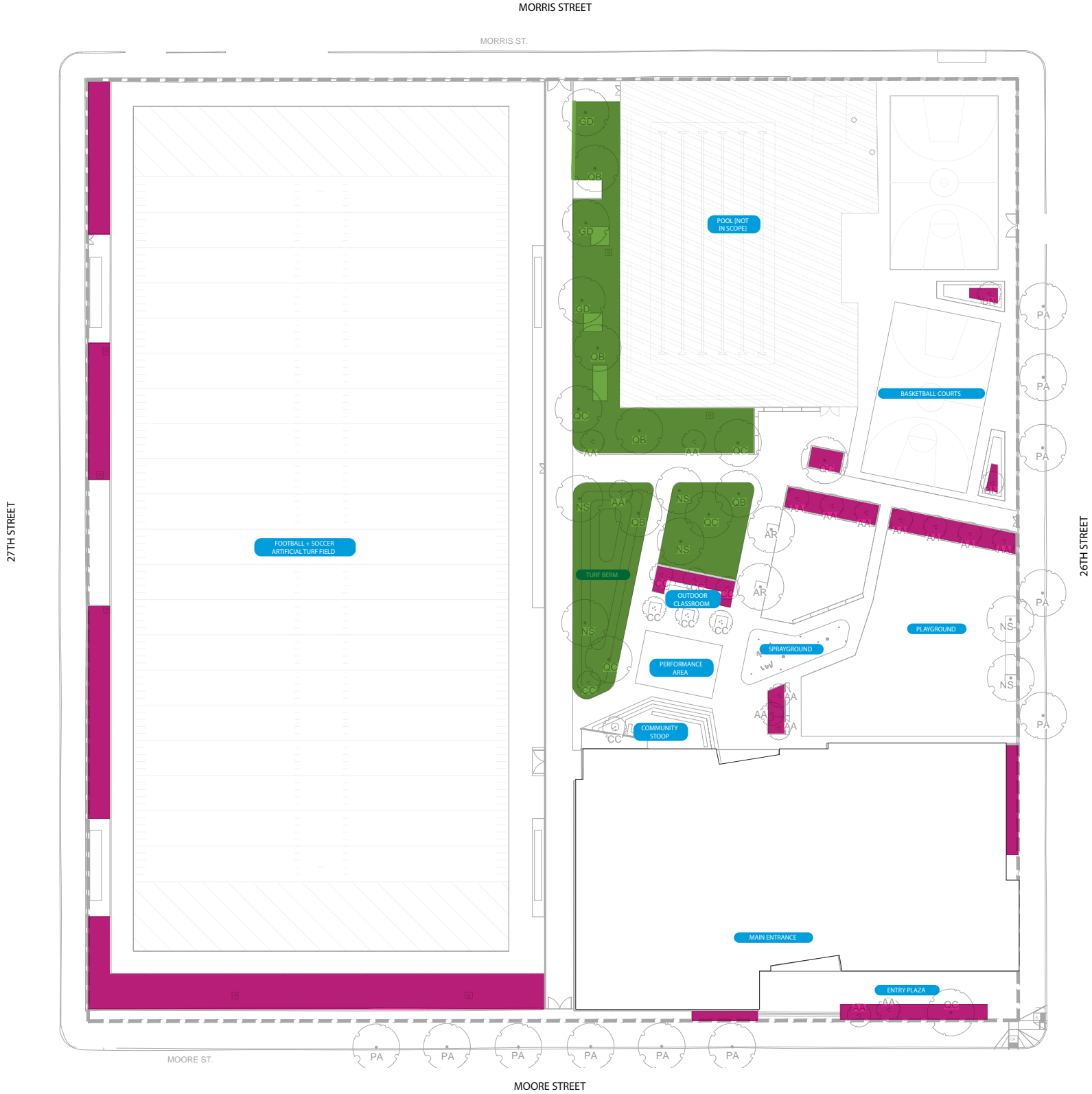
PLANTING: GROUNDCOVER



Groundcover / Native Grasses
Dwarf Chokeberry, Tiny Wine Ninebark,
Purple Coneflower, Aromatic Aster,
Blonde Ambition Blue Grama Grass,
Tufted Hairgrass, Little Bluestem
'Standing Ovation', Prairie Dropseed



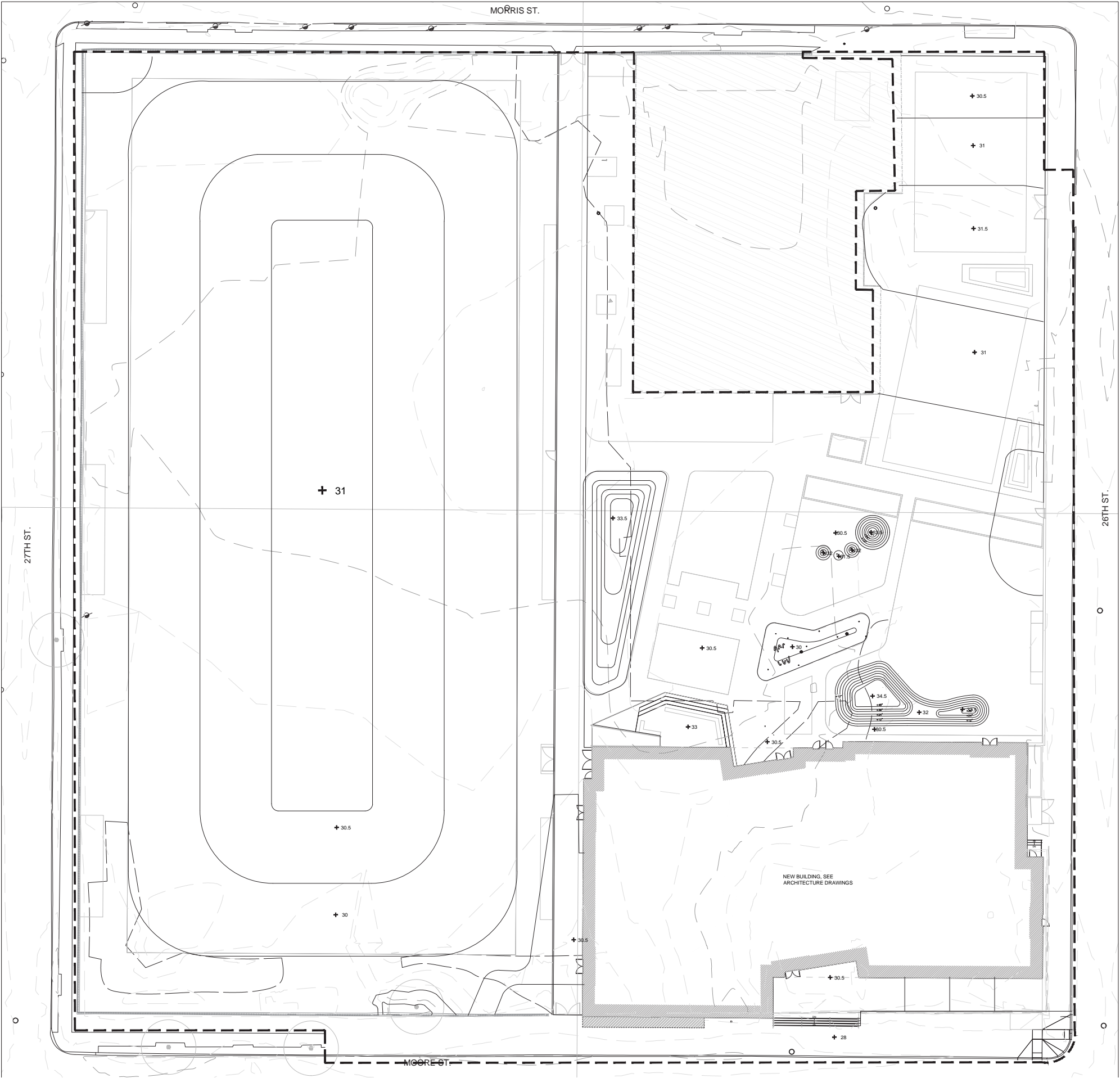
Turf Grass



STORMWATER PLAN

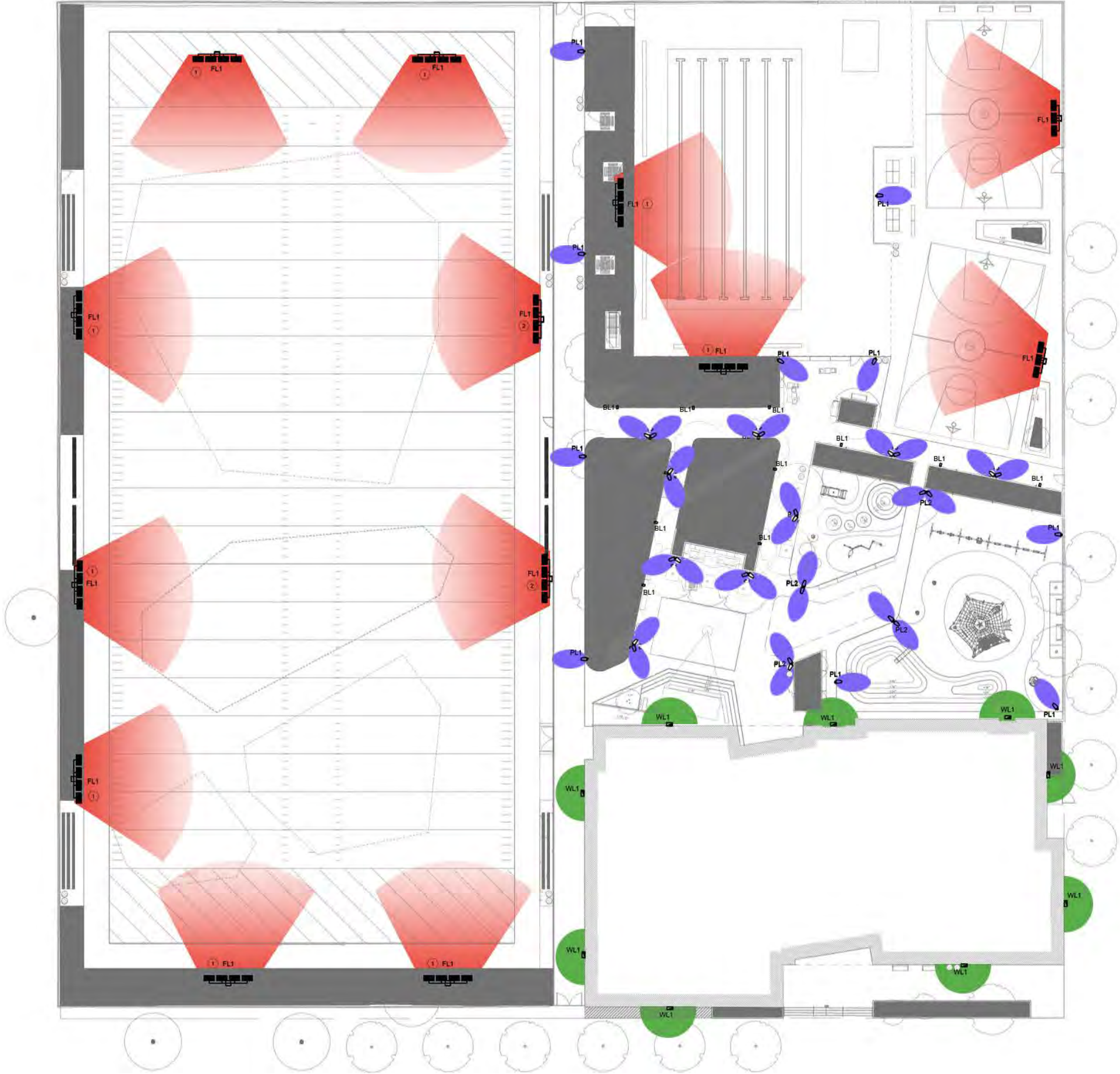
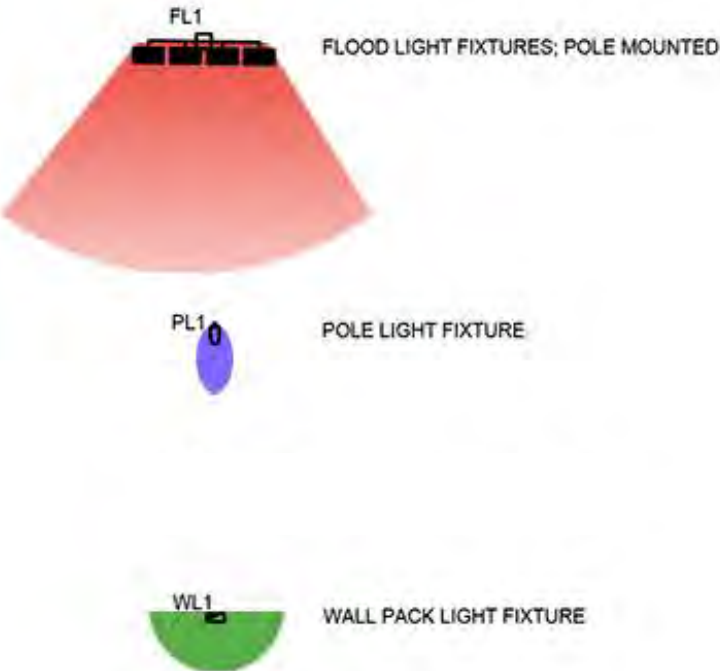


GRADING PLAN



SITE LIGHTING

LEGEND



PERCENT FOR ART LETTER

April 1, 2022

Beige Berryman
The Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Letter of Intent for Percent for Art at Vare Recreation Center

Dear Beige:

The Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (OACCE) would like to inform the Philadelphia Art Commission that we have initiated a Percent for Art opportunity for the Vare Recreation Center in collaboration with our partners at Rebuild, Make the World Better Foundation (MTWB) and the Vare Design team. The Vare Recreation Center and site is a Rebuild designated project located on the 2600 block of Morris Street in South Philadelphia, consisting of transformative site upgrades, such as a new recreation center, football field, playground and plaza.

OACCE has met with the Vare project team to review various options for incorporating public art on this site in response to the parameters of the project site design and the team's prior community engagement. Below is an overview of our understanding and anticipated approach for this public art project:

- The Vare Percent for Art opportunity will create a beautiful and enduring work of public art that is permanent, site-specific, and reflects the culture, values, and diversity of the Vare community. The Vare Percent for Art budget will be at least 1% of the total project budget in keeping with the City's Percent for Art guidelines.
- In collaboration with the project team, we have identified that an outdoor location and approach is best for this site and will be the most visible and engaging way to reflect the community's values. This public art project will be an outdoor work of art that is either interpreted on an exterior wall of the building, or a singular sculpture located near a main entrance to the recreation center. Artists will be required to use materials that are appropriate and durable for exterior application.
- A Vare Percent for Art Committee is being formed to advise the selection of the artist and the art proposal for this project and will include representatives from: MTWB, community members that utilize the recreation center; public art artists; staff members of Vare Recreation Center; residents of the Vare and South Philadelphia community; representatives from Office of Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, Rebuild, Parks and Recreation, and OACCE.
- The Artist for this project will be selected through a two-part community driven process, consisting of a Call for Artist phase where artists submit qualifications and a subsequent phase where 5 semi-finalists will be selected by the Committee to move forward with proposals.
- Community involvement will be a critical component of this project and artist teams will be encouraged to work with the public to align their proposal with the desires and feedback from the community. Community engagement will occur in virtual and/or in-person meetings, and through online surveys.



OACCE will provide oversight for this process from art concept to installation. We look forward to working with Rebuild, Make the World Better Foundation, the Vare Design team and all community stakeholders to realize a beautiful public artwork that will be an enduring contribution to the Vare community and the City's renowned collection of public art.

Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to call me at 215.686.4596.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Anglin, RA, NOMA
Public Art Director
Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy

APPENDIX

PERSPECTIVES



PERSPECTIVES



PERSPECTIVES



PERSPECTIVES

