

## Art Commission Review – Submittal Form

*(Applicant complete below section)*

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**Project Name:** Carousel House Recreation Center

**Project Address:** 4300 Avenue of the Republic      **On Public Property?**  Yes  No

**Total Budget:** \$44 million      **Utilizing City Funds?**  Yes (specify amount): \$7,297,193.59  No

**Project Type** (check all that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building – New Construction or Addition | <input type="checkbox"/> Encroachment in/over ROW    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building – Renovation or Repair         | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage (Reconsideration)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plaza/Park/Playground                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Streetery (Reconsideration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Art   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                |

**Project Team:**

Agency/Org.: City of Phila./CPO/PPR      Design Lead (firm): DIGSAU (Architect)  
Other: Ground Reconsidered (Landscape)

**Primary Contact for Project Communications:**

Name: Ryan Drummond, AIA  
Affiliation: DIGSAU (Architect)  
Email: [REDACTED]

*(Art Commission staff complete below section)*

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**Art Commission Meeting Date of Project Review:** 1/14/26

**Level of Review:**

- Concept Review     Final Review    If Final, specify date of preceding Concept Review: 12/10/25  
 Administrative Review (for projects with minimal visual impact on public realm)

**Staff Notes (Optional):**

Project is part of City's Rebuild initiative

JULES DINGLE FAIA  
JEFF GOLDSTEIN FAIA  
MARK SANDERSON AIA  
JAMIE UNKEFER AIA

December 30, 2025

Philadelphia Art Commission  
1515 Arch St., 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
Via Email to: [artcommission@phila.gov](mailto:artcommission@phila.gov)

**Re: Site & Building Improvements to the Carousel House Recreation Center**

Dear Art Commission Members,

The City of Philadelphia, Capital Program Office (CPO), Rebuild, and Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR), is coordinating the design and construction of improvements to the Carousel Recreation Center building and site, located at 4300 Avenue of the Republic in West Philadelphia. The Carousel House project was presented to the Art Commission on December 10, 2025, and subsequently received Concept approval. The project team is now seeking to present the project for final approval from the Art Commission at the January 14, 2026 Meeting.

As reviewed with the Art Commission during the 12/10/2025 meeting, the project team has proposed the following improvements:

- Renovation and alteration of the existing circular Recreation Center building from the 1980's, with inclusion of program spaces, multi-purpose rooms, administrative functions, and support spaces.
- Addition of a new double-court basketball Gymnasium.
- Addition of a new two-pool Natatorium.
- Comprehensive site improvements, including a new Playground, and pedestrian and vehicular pathways and connections.

As requested by the Art Commission, the project team will be presenting supplemental information for the project's final approval consideration:

- Parking design including vehicle and van accessibility and EV parking.
- Site furnishing design accessibility specific to game tables, picnic tables, and trash receptacles.
- Location of on-site bike racks.
- Architectural design intent at viewpoint from the intersection of Avenue of the Republic and Belmont Avenue.

We look forward to presenting this exciting project and seeking the Commission's final approval.

Respectfully,



Ryan Drummond, AIA, LEED AP  
*Associate, Project Manager, DIGSAU*  
(215) 627-0808  
[rdrummond@digsau.com](mailto:rdrummond@digsau.com)

Cc: Pedro Pinto (CPO), Angelina Castro (CPO), Francesco Cerrai (CPO), Jules Dingle (DIGSAU)



## CAROUSEL HOUSE



January 14th, 2026

Rebuild and Philadelphia Parks and Recreation  
ART COMMISSION SUBMISSION

## DESIGN TEAM

**DIGSAU**

ARCHITECT

**Reconsidered**  
**Ground**

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

**LANGAN**

CIVIL ENGINEER + GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER

**KEAST & HOOD**  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

**db|HMS**

MEPFP ENGINEER

the  lighting  
practice

LIGHTING DESIGN

 **Cousilman-Hunsaker**  
AQUATICS FOR LIFE

POOL CONSULTANT

**studiopacifica**

ACCESSIBILITY CONSULTANT

**DATA|BASED+**  
**db|HMS**

SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTANT

**EVAN MILLS ENVIRONMENTAL,LLC**

ENVIRONMENTAL(PUMP STATION) CONSULTANT

 **BrightFields, Inc.**  
Environmental Services

ENVIRONMENTAL + HAZMAT CONSULTANT

**DHARAM**

CONSULTING

COST ESTIMATING

 **Morris Arboretum**  
& Gardens

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

ARBORIST

 **Community Capacity Builders**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT

**RW**  
**DTI**

ENCLOSURE CONSULTANT

 **HARRISON**  
ACOUSTICS

ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT

**LONGGREENSPECS**

SPECIFICATIONS CONSULTANT

 **City of**  
**Philadelphia**

 **CAPITAL PROGRAM OFFICE**  
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

 **Rebuild**  
PHILADELPHIA

 **PHILADELPHIA**  
**PARKS & RECREATION**



Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet  
0 25 50 100

PROJECT SCOPE BOUNDARY

CAROUSEL HOUSE | ART COMMISSION SUBMISSION

EXISTING AERIAL PLAN



Dedication of the First Handicap Center, photograph by Don Camp, 1973.  
From the Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center.



Bird's Eye View of Centennial Buildings, 1876. Photo of poster by Carol M. Highsmith.  
From the Library of Congress, via West Philadelphia Collaborative History.



South West Philly, 1993, photograph by Ron Tarver.  
From The Long Ride Home: Black Cowboys in America (excerpt), The Philadelphia Citizen, 2024.



Carousel House Community Design Workshop, 2022.  
From the City of Philadelphia, Rebuild Philadelphia Initiative.



Carousel House, photograph by Tinney, 1978.  
From the Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center.

The Carousel House has long stood as a landmark of inclusion and community in Fairmount Park. Originally built to serve as an accessible recreation center for people with disabilities, it became a hub for adaptive sports, social gatherings, and cultural expression. Rooted in a legacy of public engagement and civic pride dating back to the Centennial Exhibition, the site reflects Philadelphia's evolving story of accessibility, equity, and community care. Today, its reimaging honors that history, continuing the spirit of belonging and empowerment that has defined it for generations.



Carousel House Gym, Date Unknown.  
From the City of Philadelphia, Rebuild Philadelphia Initiative.



Carousel House Pool, Date Unknown.  
From the City of Philadelphia, Rebuild Philadelphia Initiative.



Carousel House Wheelchair Basketball, Date Unknown.  
From the City of Philadelphia, Parks & Recreation Department.



Carousel House Playground, Date Unknown.  
From the City of Philadelphia, Rebuild Philadelphia Initiative.



1 View of lobby and gym entry looking towards Carousel Horse

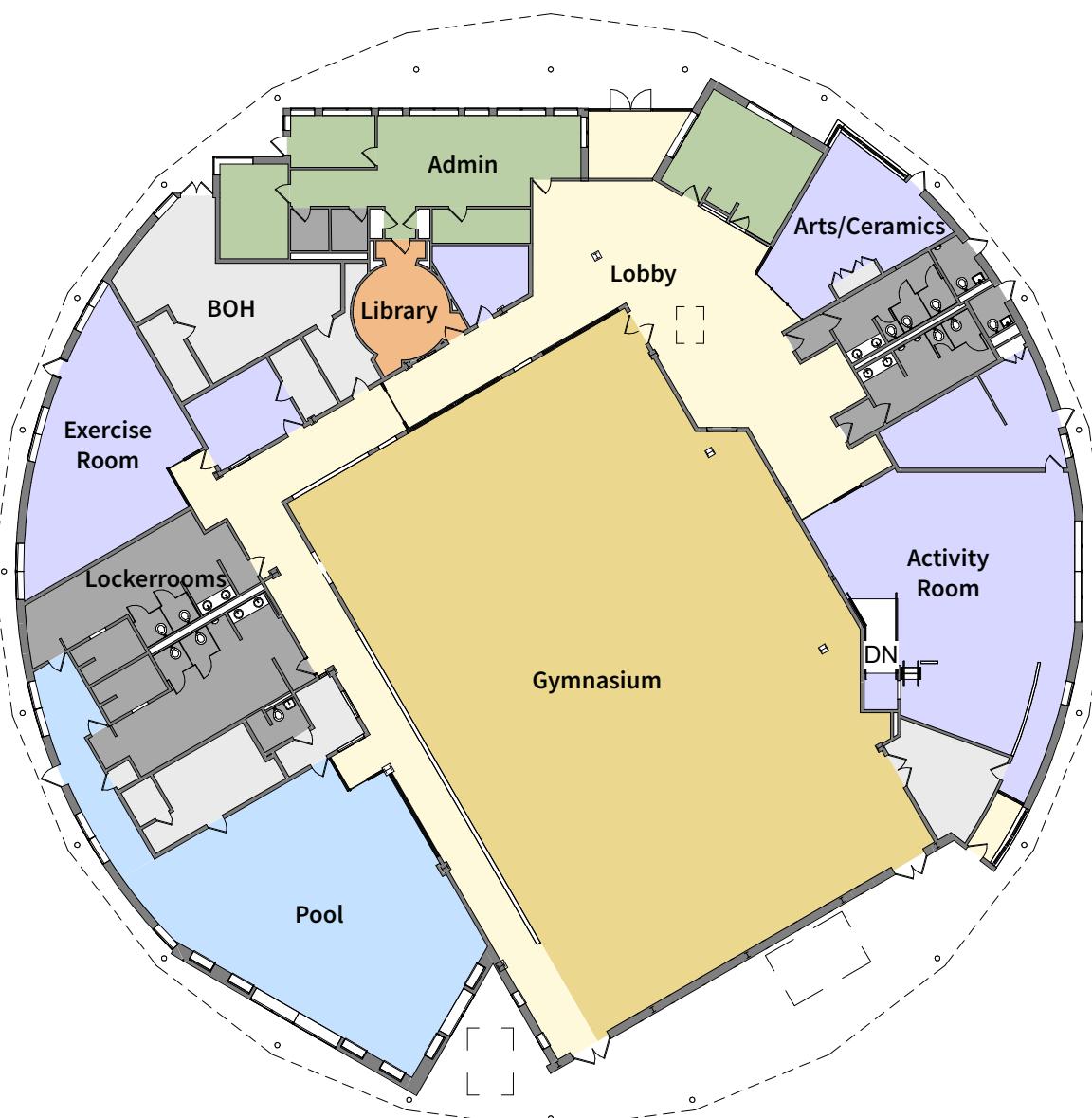


2 View of gymnasium looking south toward mural

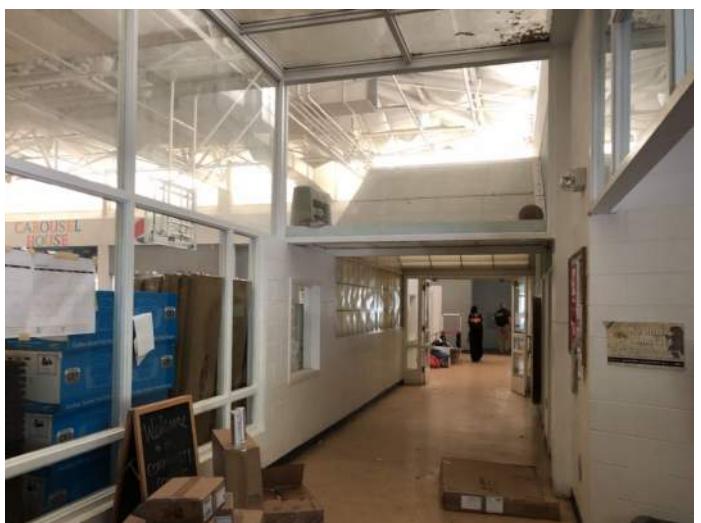


3 View of pool

Scale: 1 inch = 30 feet  
0 15 30



4 View of exercise room



5 View of circulation corridor



6 View of stage and activity room

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

October 2021, February 2022, June 2022,  
September 2022, March 2023, November 2023, February 2024, October 2025



## ATTENDEES

- Carousel House staff, Advisory Council, participants, and activity leaders
- Service providers and advocates
- Mayor's Commission for People with Disabilities
- Parkside organizations, businesses, institutions, and resident leaders
- Local political leaders
- PPR and others involved in the Centennial District Plan

## TAKEAWAYS

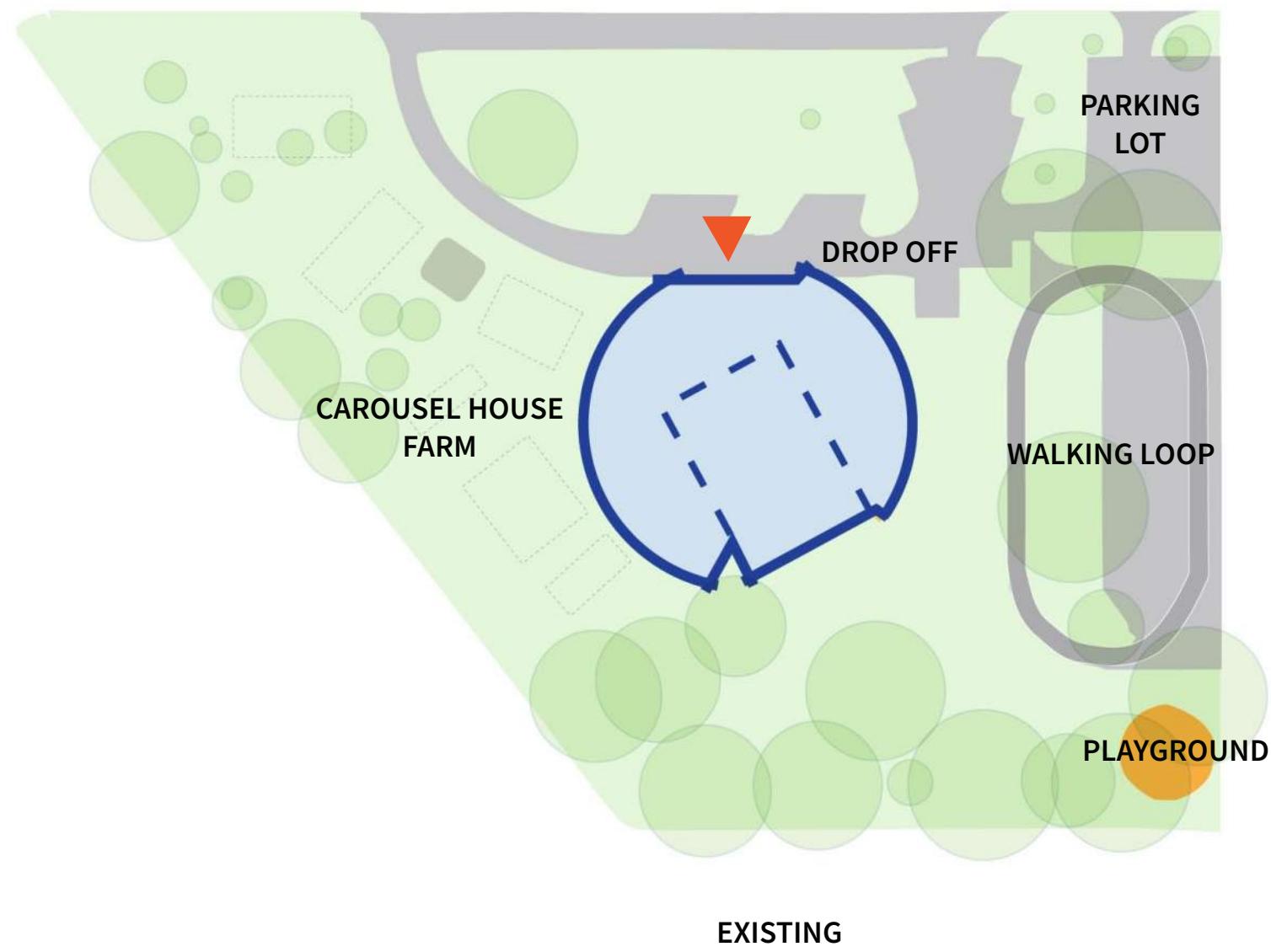
- Accessibility and inclusion should be considered in design decisions from parking to programming.
- Safety and wayfinding should be intuitive, well-lit, and welcoming.
- Design should be sensory-friendly, vibrant, and human-scaled, not institutional.
- Preserve and celebrate the culture and history of the Carousel House, including the carousel horse and murals.
- Outdoor areas should extend the sense of community.
- Program should support adaptive sports, arts, and intergenerational connection.
- The new design should feel like home, a joyful, restorative place built with the community, not just for it.

# EARLY FINDINGS

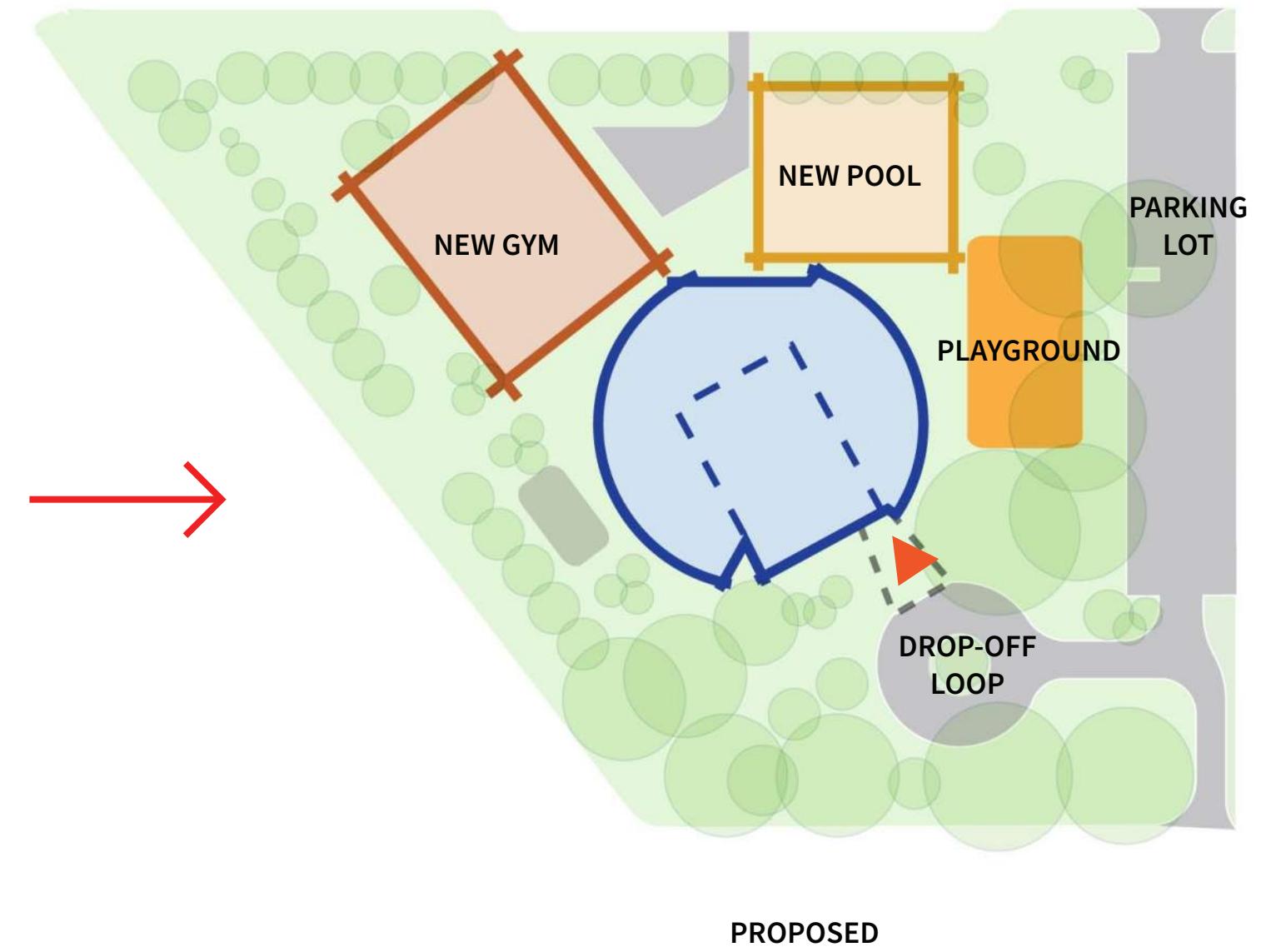
## Identified Needs & Issues



- Limited accessible parking and difficult site access (especially for CCT, buses, and wheelchairs).
- Outdated infrastructure and inconsistent accessibility across the site and building.
- Lack of safe pedestrian connections and clear signage.
- Desire for more inclusive and adaptive programming that reflects the disability community.
- Concern about maintaining the facility's legacy and sense of ownership.
- Need for updated restrooms, locker rooms, and sensory accommodations.
- Calls for improved safety, lighting, and secure boundaries.



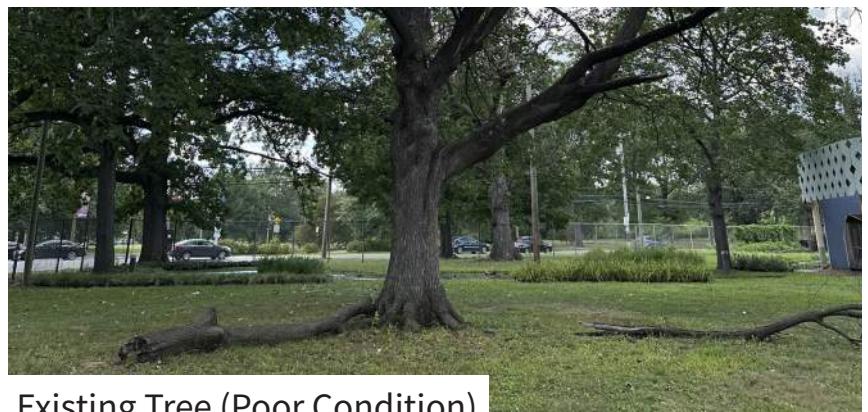
EXISTING



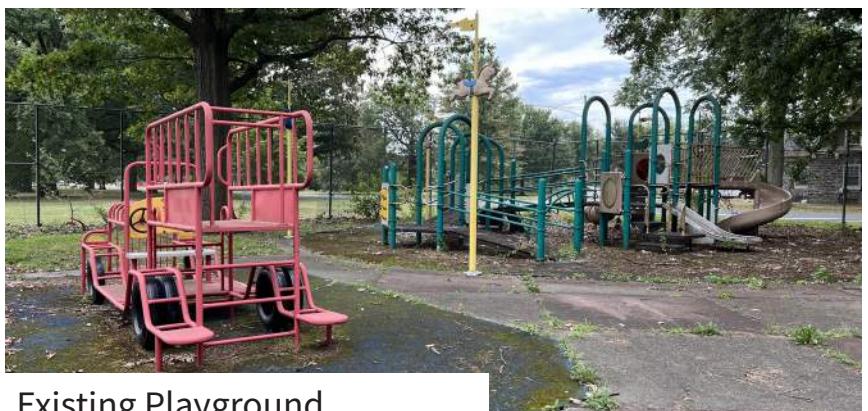
PROPOSED



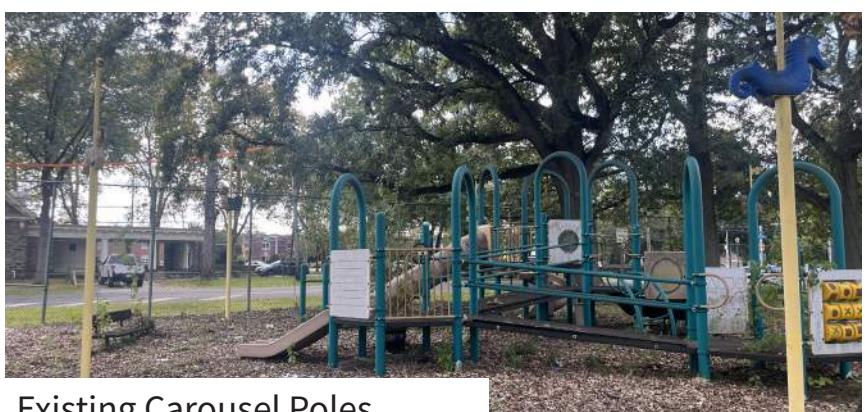
Existing Fence



Existing Tree (Poor Condition)



Existing Playground



Existing Carousel Poles

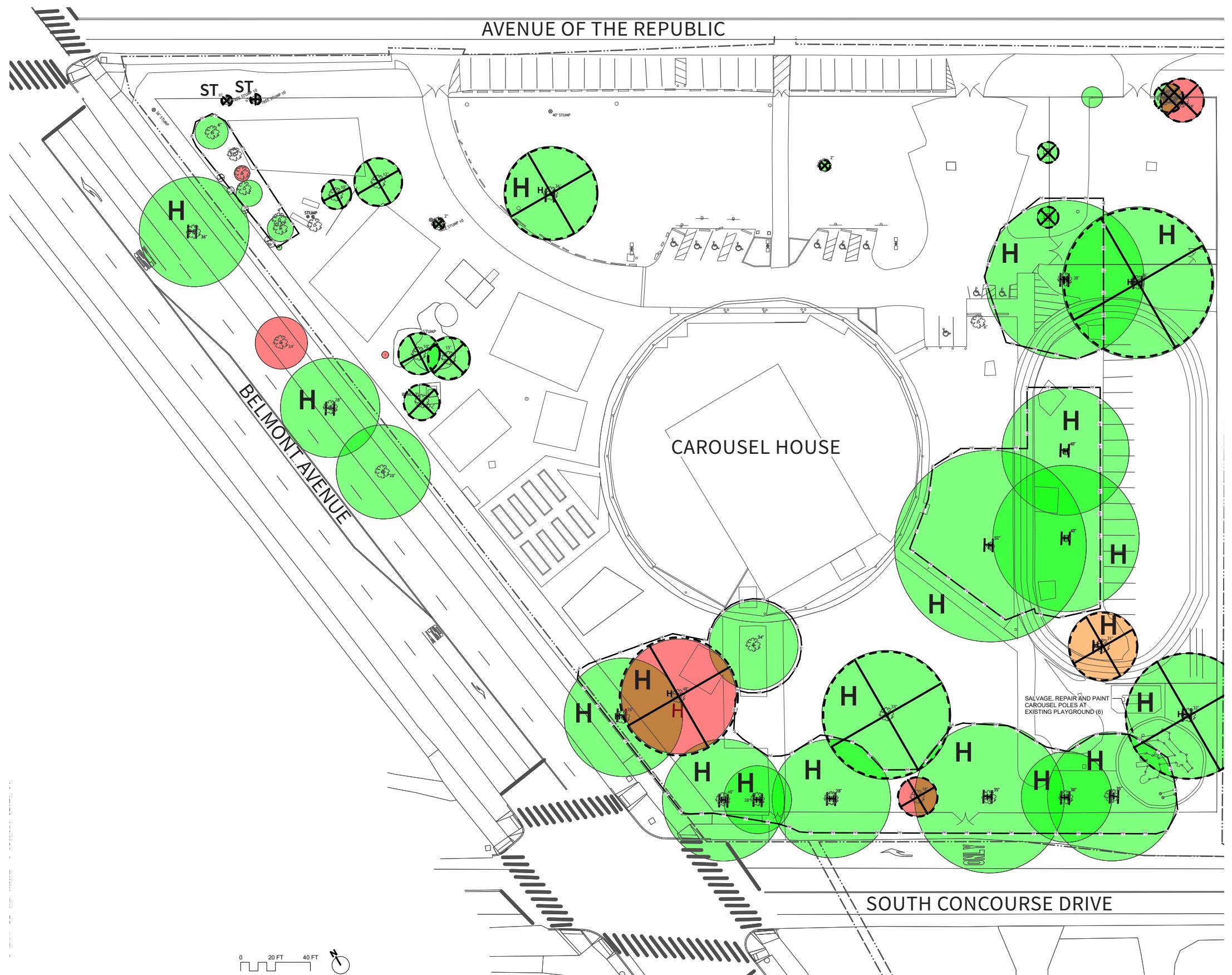


## Demolition Legend

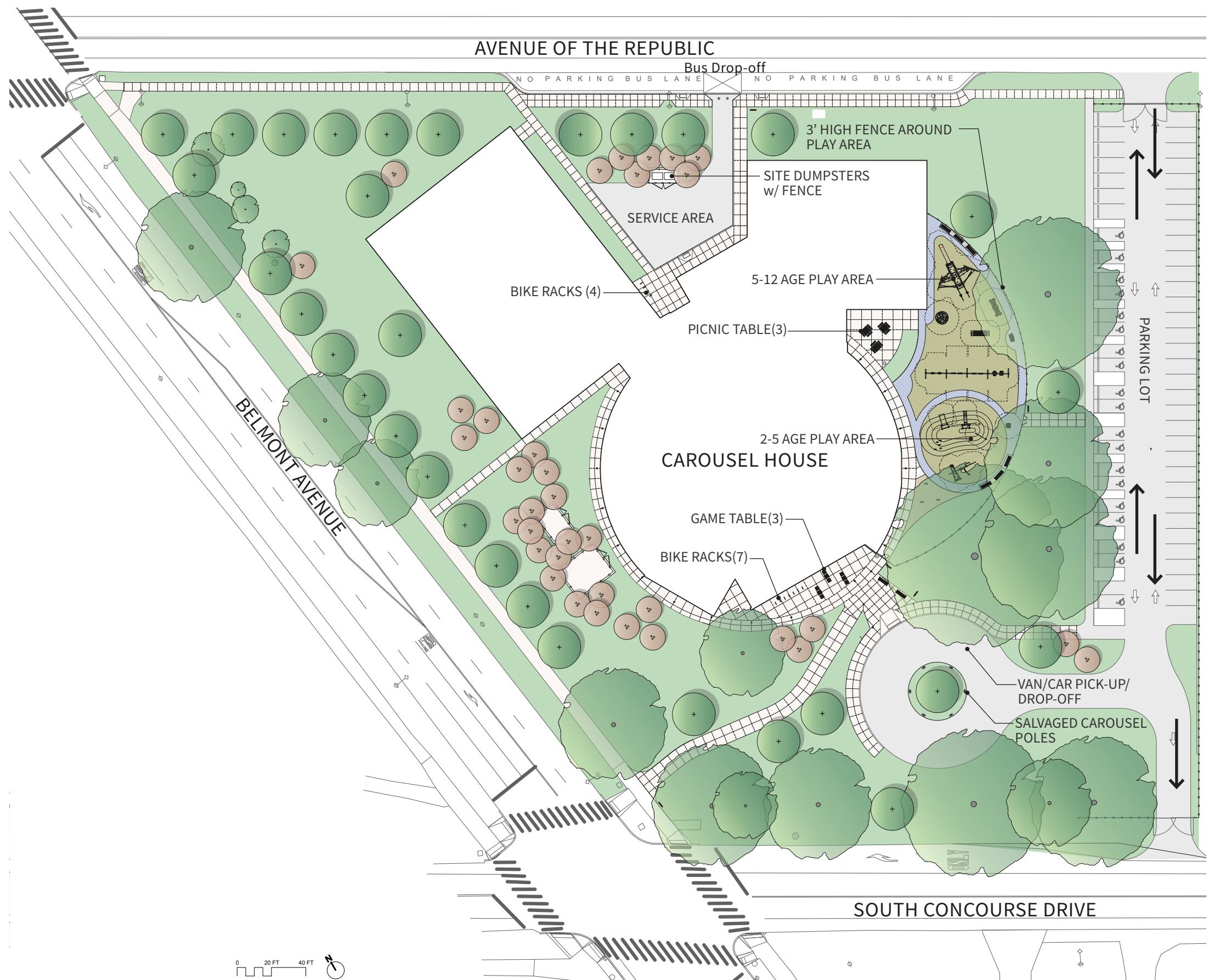
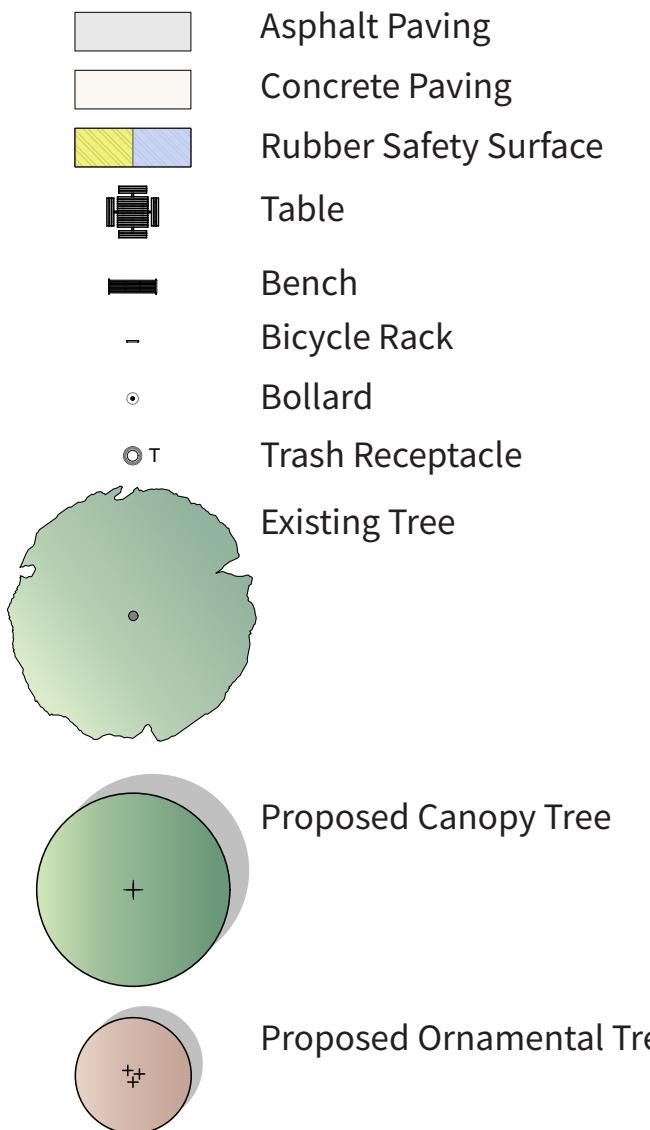
- Limit of Work
- PF Tree Protection Fence
- Tree to be Removed
- ST Stump to be Removed
- H Heritage Tree

## Tree Health Legend

- Dead or Diseased
- 5 Years or Less
- Greater than 15 Years



## Materials Legend

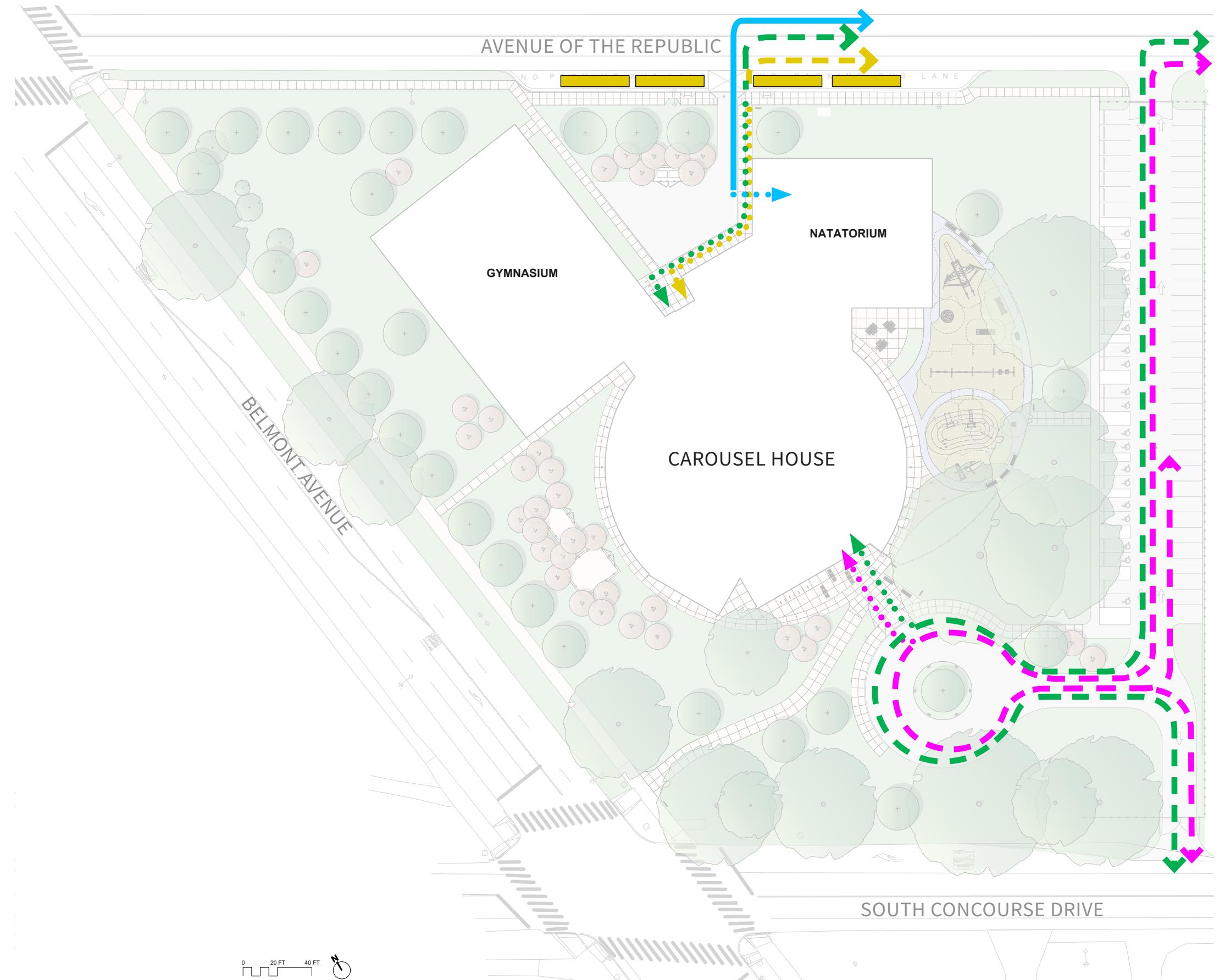


## Circulation Legend

- Bus (45')
- Bus Route (Vehicle)
- Bus Route (Pedestrian)
- Delivery Route (Vehicle)
- Delivery Route (Pedestrian)
- Pool Maintenance (Vehicle)
- Pool Maintenance (Pedestrian)
- Van Route (Vehicle)
- Van Route (Pedestrian)

## Parking Breakdown

- Accessible Car Spaces (11)
- Accessible Van Spaces (9)
- Non Accessible Spaces (40)
- Total Spaces (60)
- EV Charging Spaces (4)





Arch Swings: Belt swing (2), Freedom swing (1), Konnection swing (1), Toddler swing (2)



## Serenity Spot



## Communication Board



## Orb Rocker



## Nido Spinner



## Roller Table



Level X Extreme



Level X Launch



Musical Play | Congas



Double wide slide

Steel slide



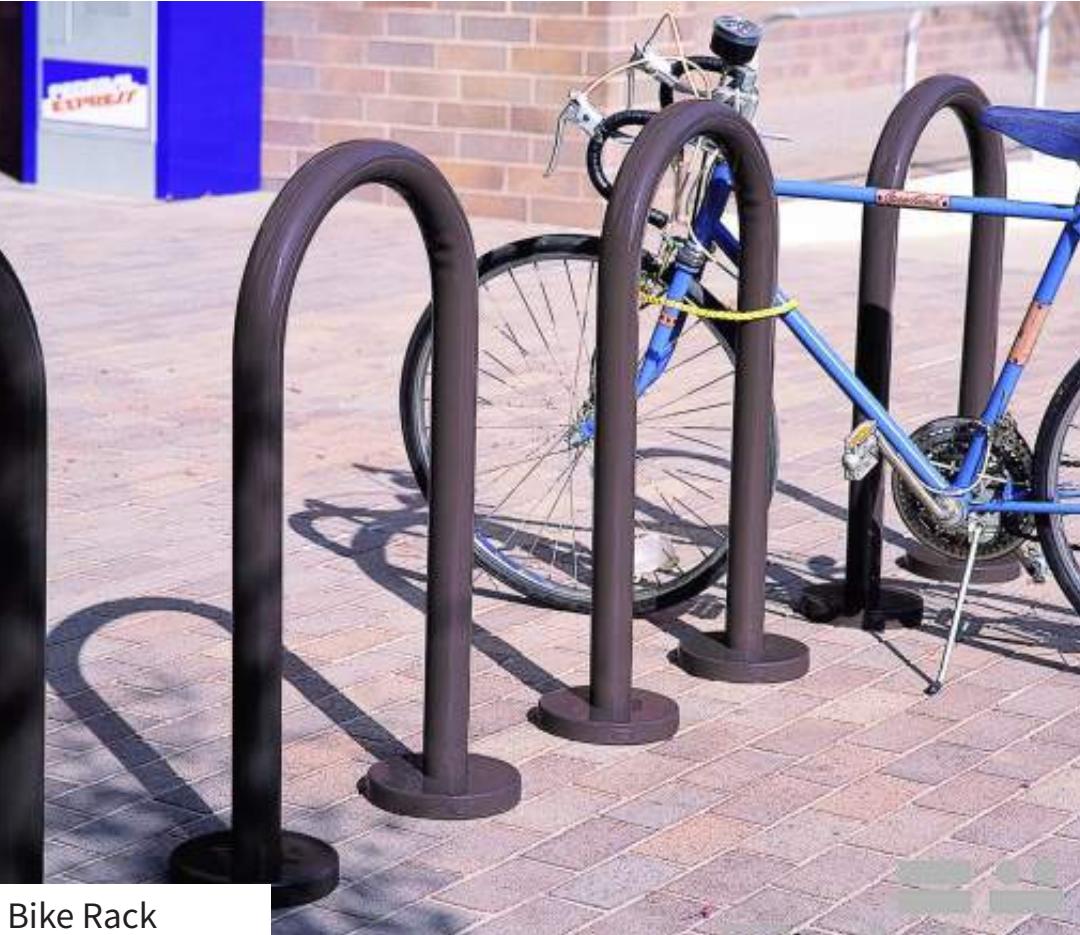
Mound Slide (Example)



Volta Spinner



6' Bench



Bike Rack



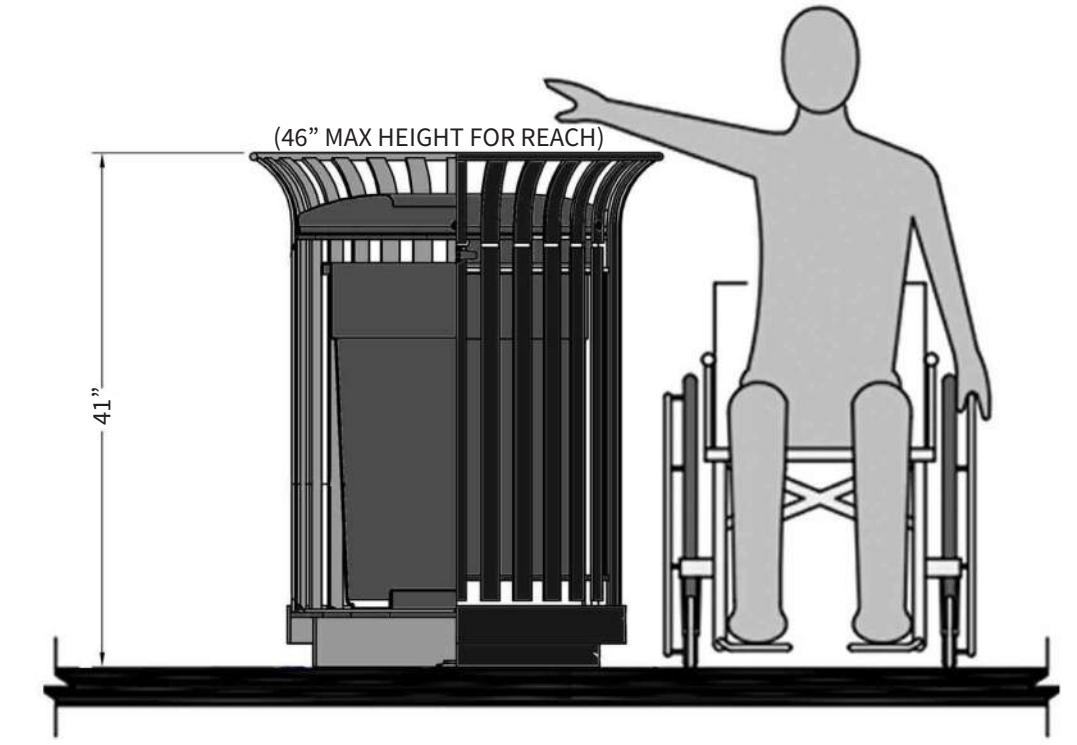
Bollard



Game Table



Picnic Table



Trash Receptacle

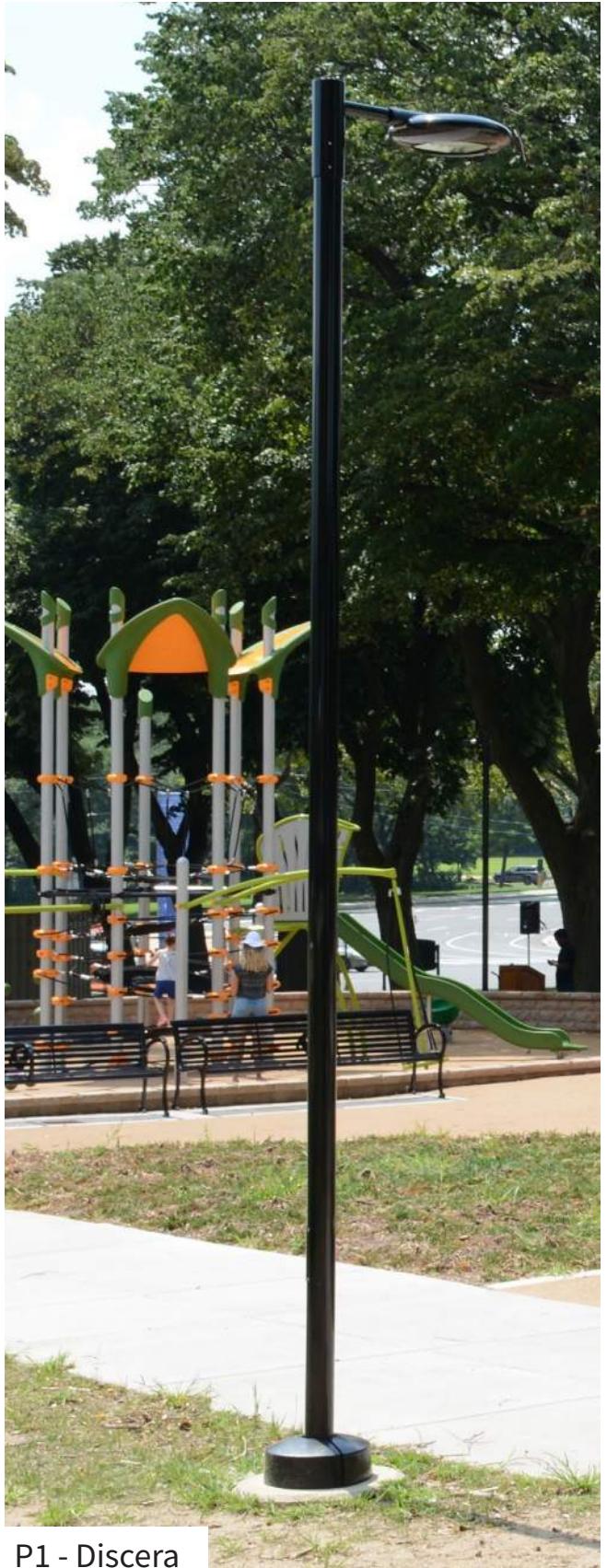


Steel Fence | Playground Fence

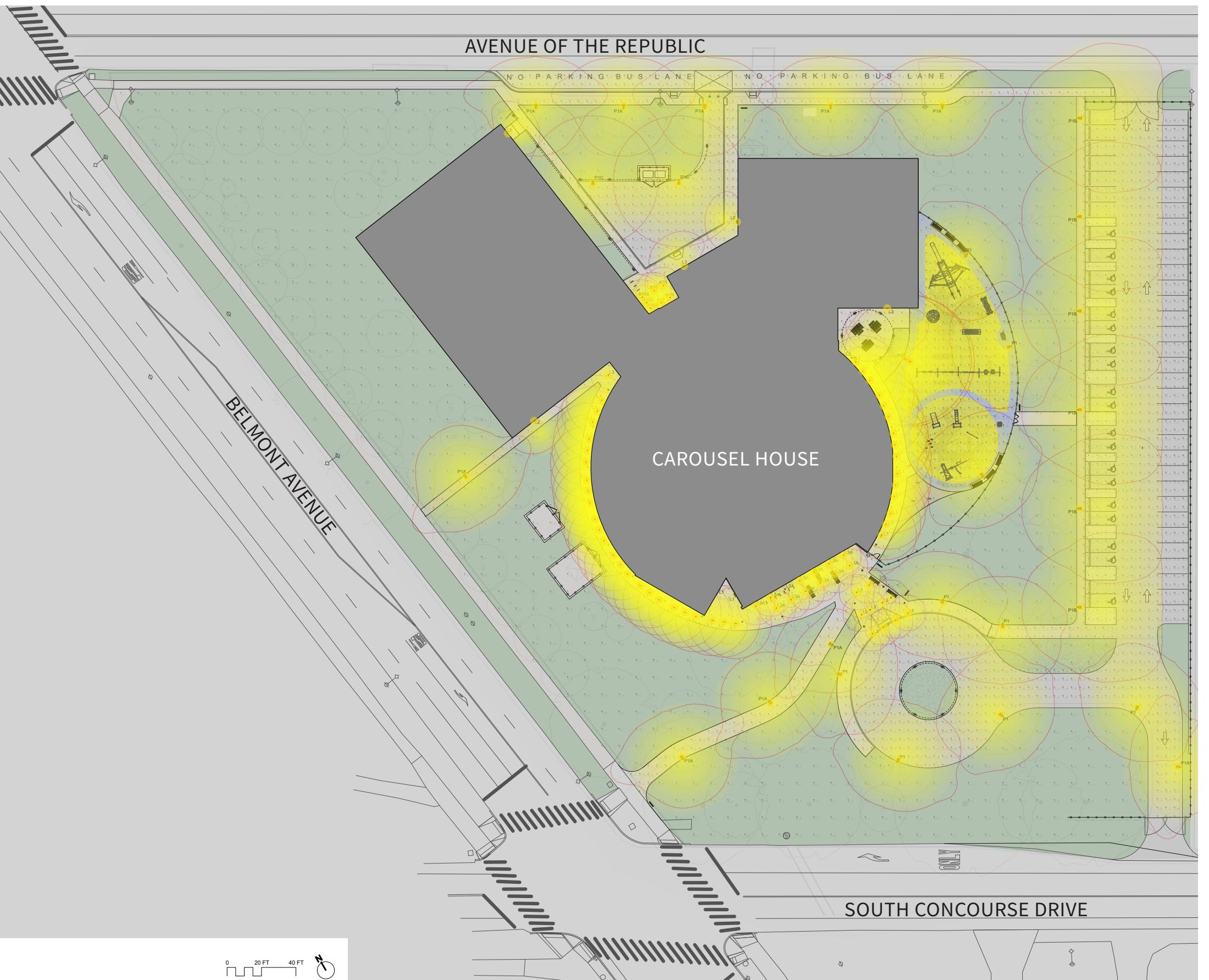


Welded Wire Fence | Utility Fence

# Site Pole Light



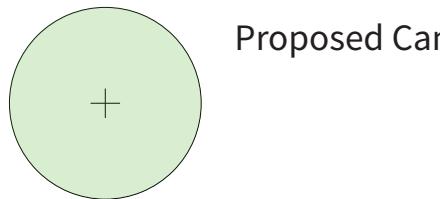
## P1 - Discera



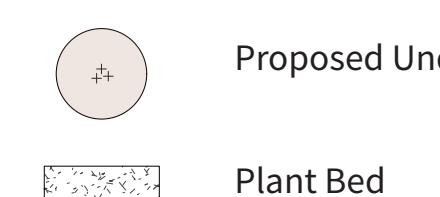
## Planting Legend



Existing Tree



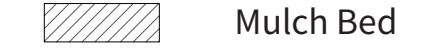
Proposed Canopy Tree



Proposed Understory Tree



Plant Bed



Mulch Bed

## PLANT SCHEDULE

### Canopy Trees

14	ARO	<i>Acer rubrum 'October Glory'</i>	October Glory Red Maple	3 1/2" cal.
9	ARR	<i>Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset'</i>	Red Sunset Red Maple	3 1/2" cal.
4	LT	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree	3 1/2" cal.
4	NS	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Blackgum	3 1/2" cal.

### Understory Trees

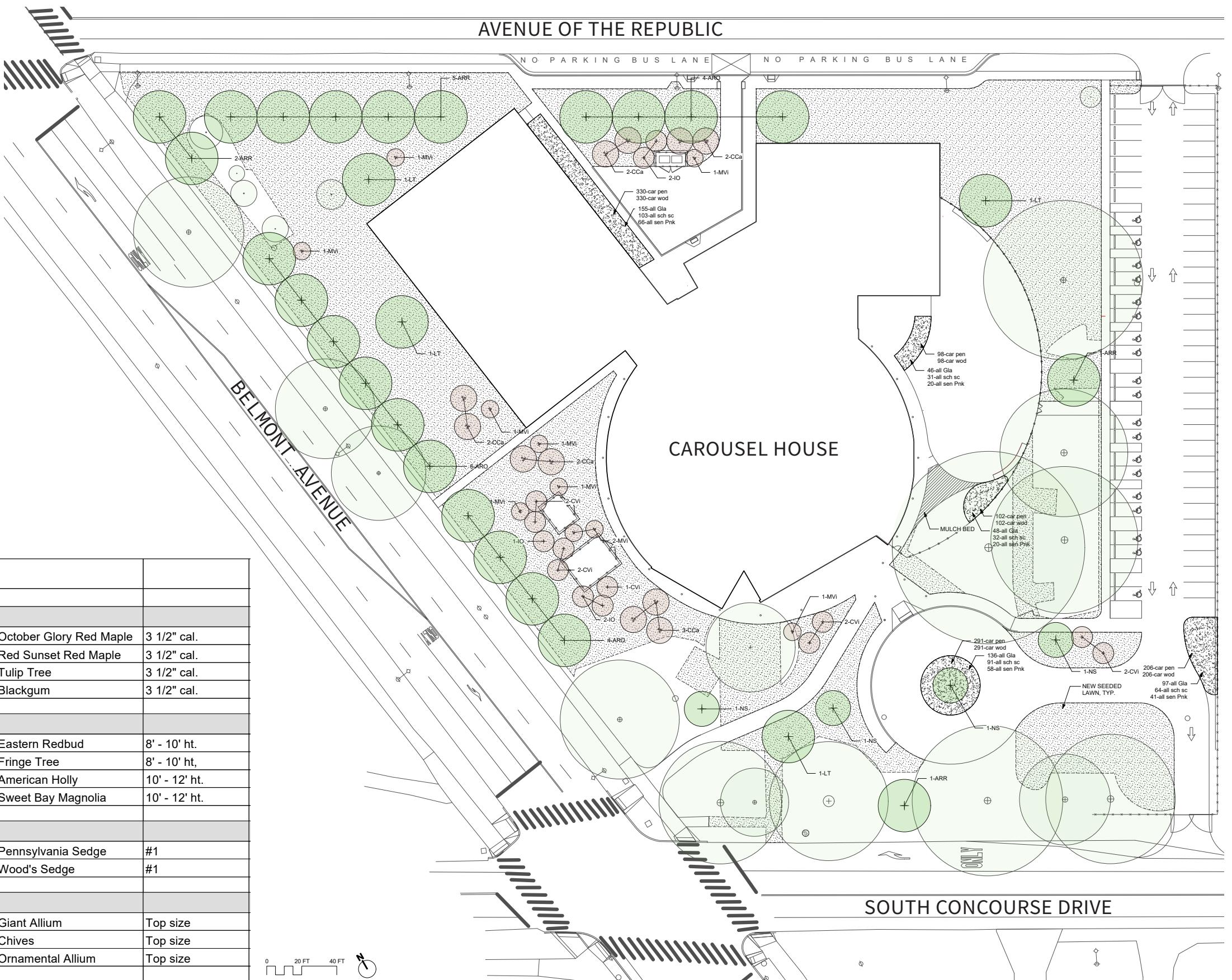
11	CCa	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	8' - 10' ht.
9	CVi	<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	Fringe Tree	8' - 10' ht.
5	IO	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American Holly	10' - 12' ht.
10	MVi	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Sweet Bay Magnolia	10' - 12' ht.

### Ornamental Grasses

1317	car pen	<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania Sedge	#1
1317	car wod	<i>Carex woodii</i>	Wood's Sedge	#1

### Bulbs

482	all Gla	<i>Allium 'Gladiator'</i>	Giant Allium	Top size
321	all sch sc	<i>Allium schoenoprasum 'Snowcap'</i>	Chives	Top size
205	all sen Pnk	<i>Allium senescens 'Pink Planet'</i>	Ornamental Allium	Top size



## Canopy



*Acer rubrum 'October Glory'*  
October Glory Red Maple



*Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset'*  
Red Sunset Red Maple



*Liriodendron tulipifera*  
Tulip Tree



*Nyssa sylvatica*  
Blackgum

## Understory



*Cercis canadensis*  
Eastern Redbud



*Chionanthus virginicus*  
Fringe Tree



*Ilex opaca*  
American Holly



*Magnolia virginiana*  
Sweet Bay Magnolia

## Perennials



*Allium 'Gladiator'*  
Giant Allium



*Allium x 'Pink Planet'*  
Ornamental Onion



*Allium schoenoprasum 'Snowcap'*  
Chives

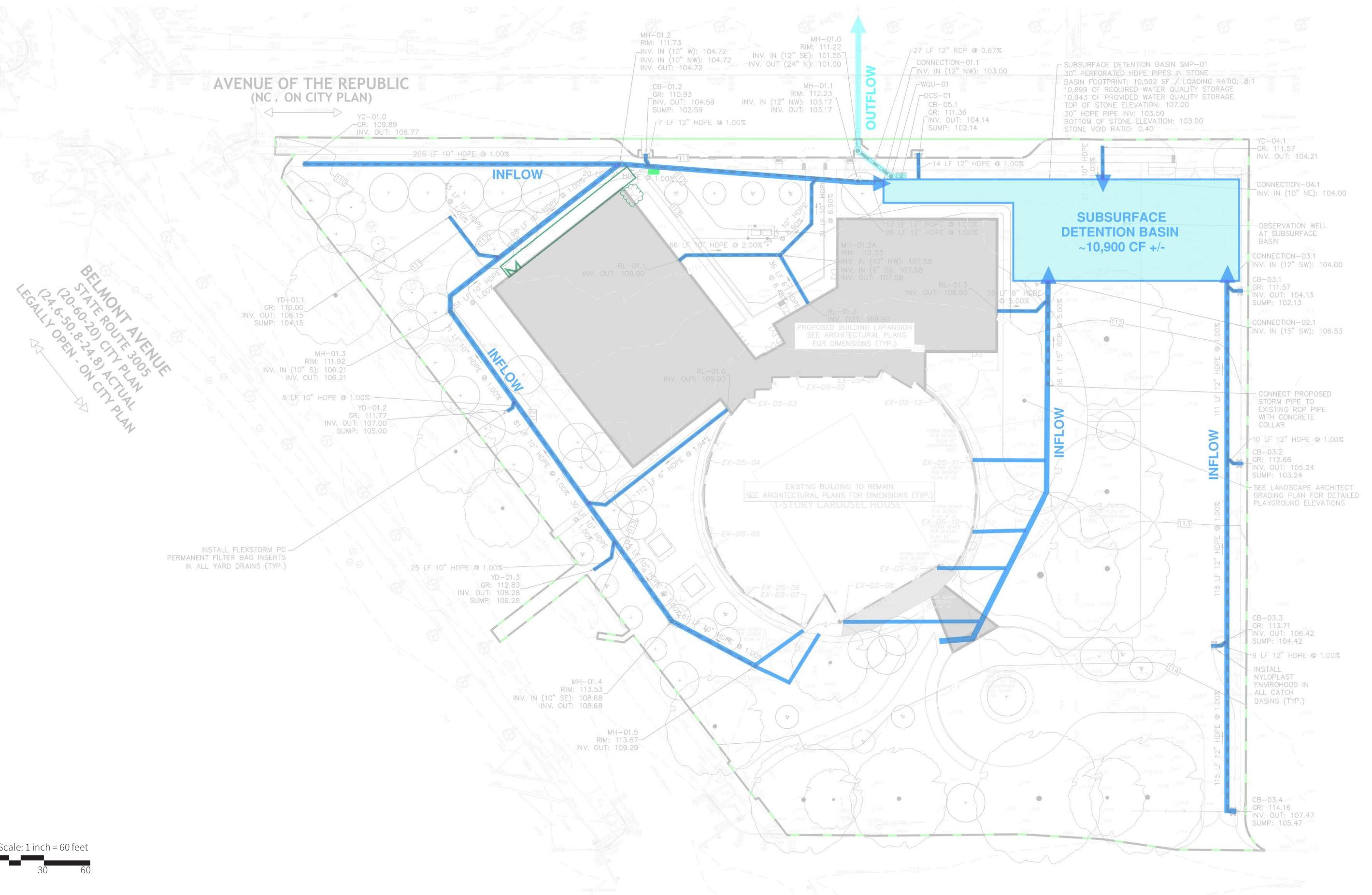
## Grasses



*Carex pensylvanica*  
Pennsylvania Sedge



*Carex woodii*  
Wood's Sedge



CAROUSEL HOUSE | ART COMMISSION SUBMISSION

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT



 CAPITAL PROGRAM OFFICE  
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



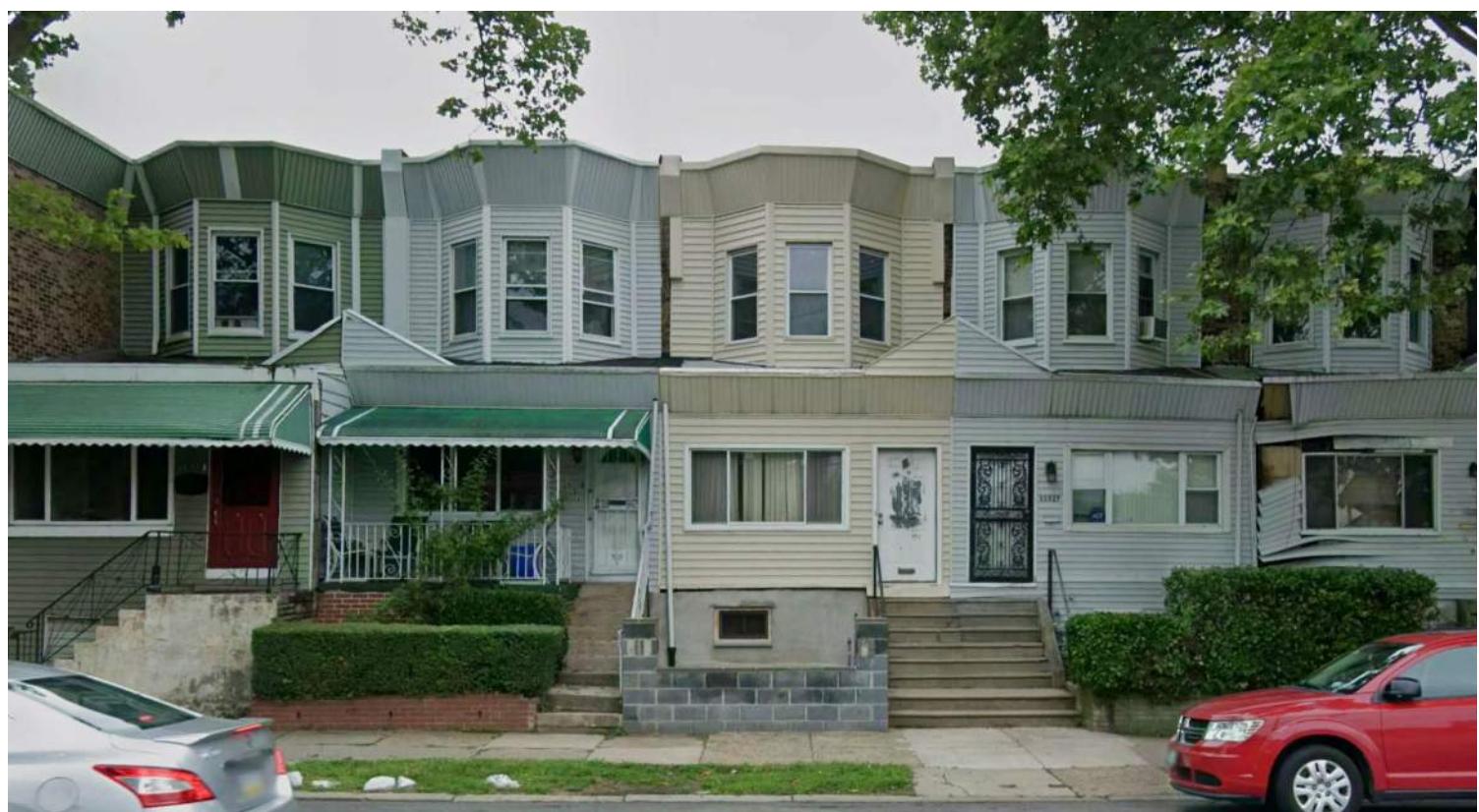
PHILADELPHIA PARKS & RECREATION | DIGSAU



Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center



Please Touch Museum



Neighborhood Row homes



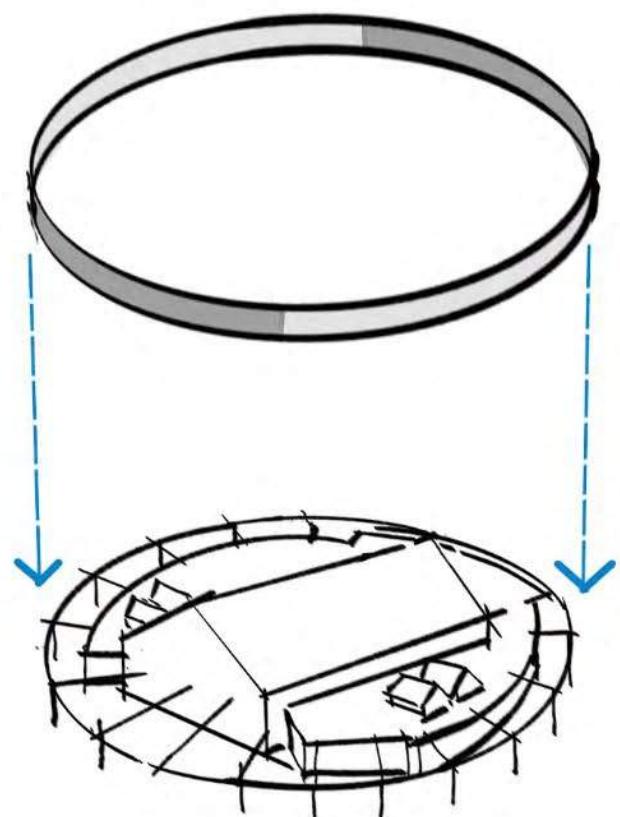
Neighborhood Homes on Parkside Avenue



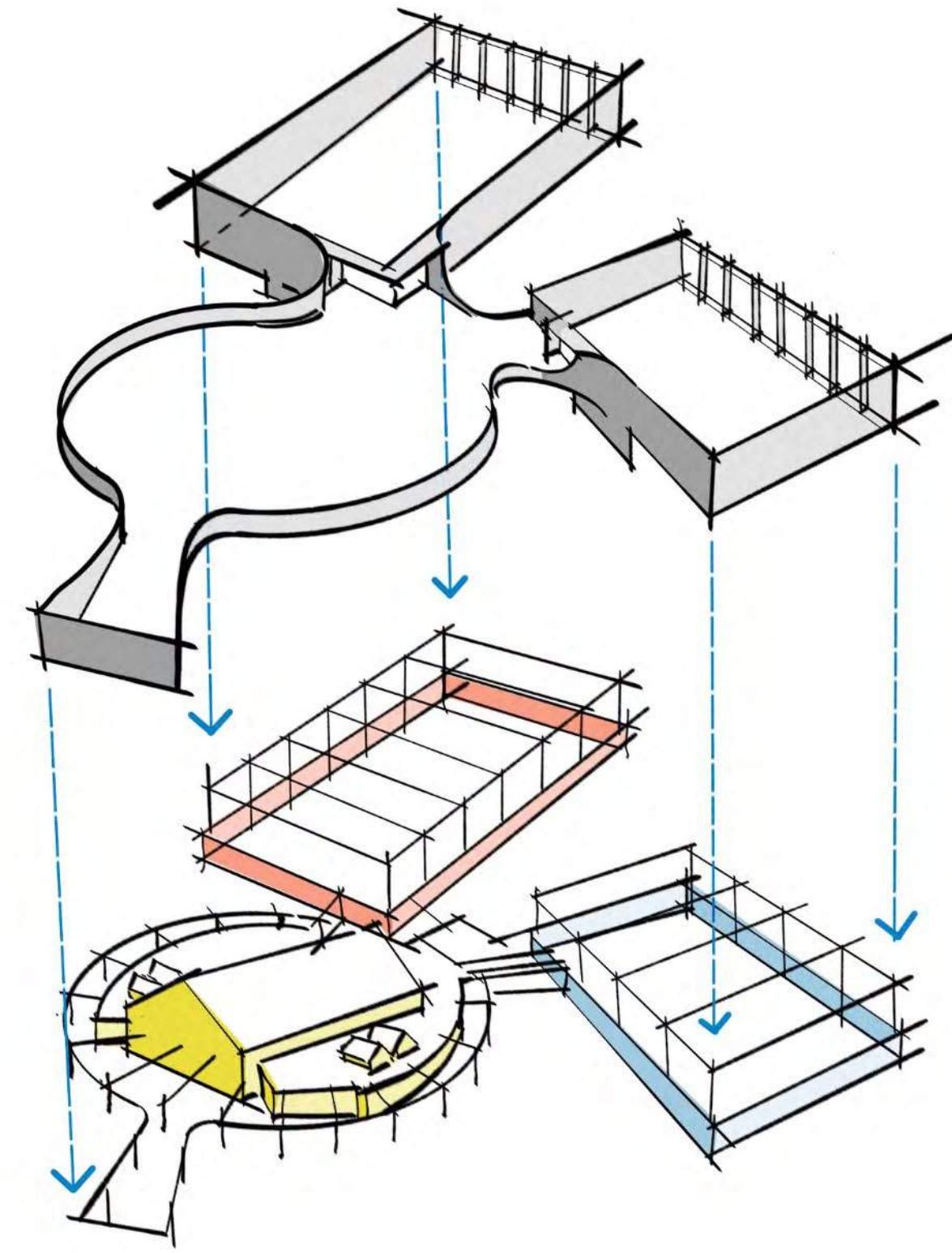
**1** View of Carousel House standing from the Southwest corner looking north near the South Concourse Drive and Belmont Avenue corner.



**2** Aerial drone view of North exterior of existing Carousel House



EXISTING



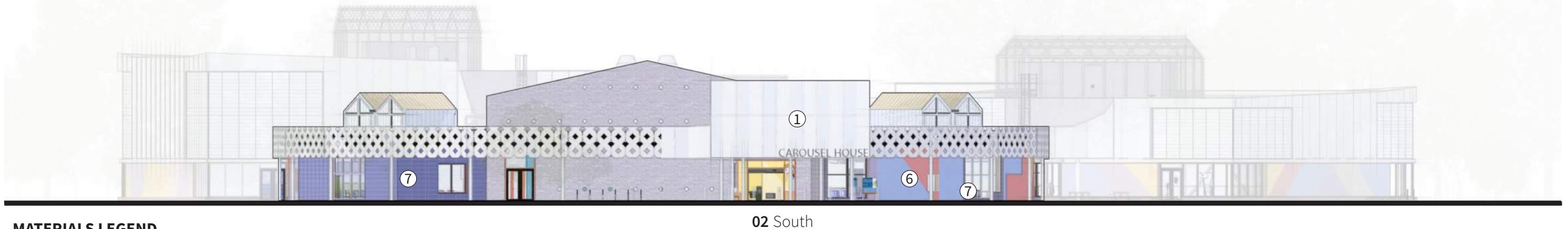
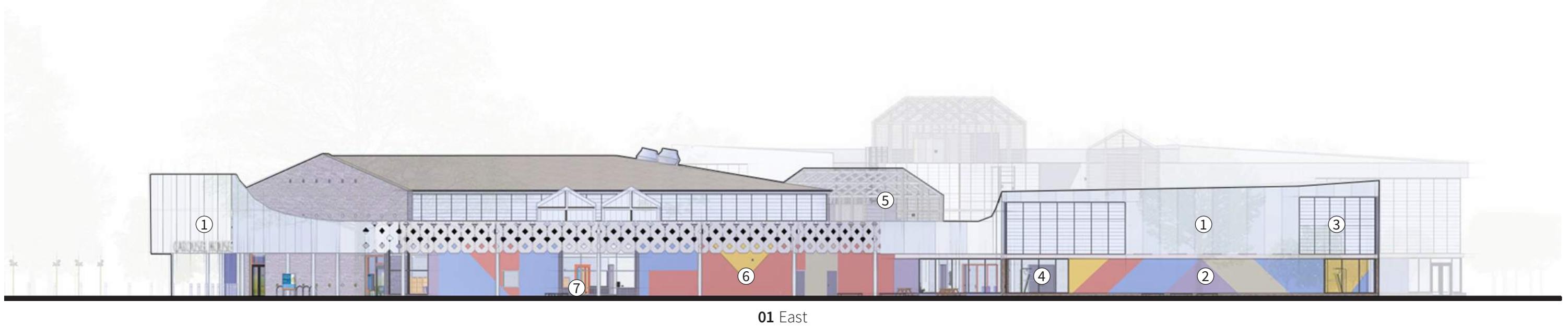
PROPOSED



**The blues, yellows, and reds in the existing building's features...**

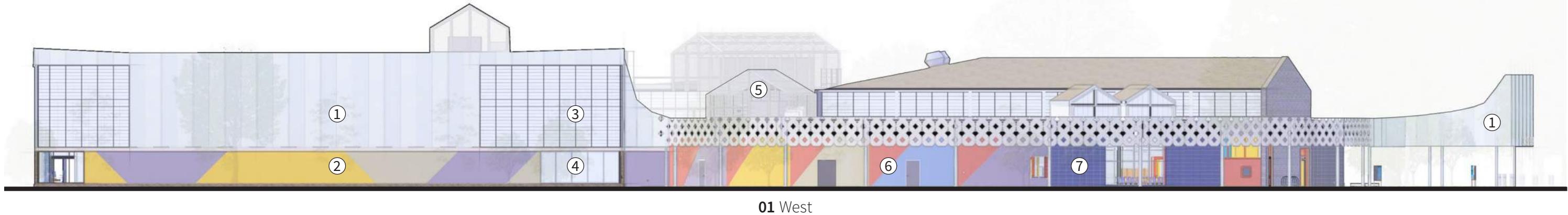


**inspired the color and pattern on the outside of the new building**

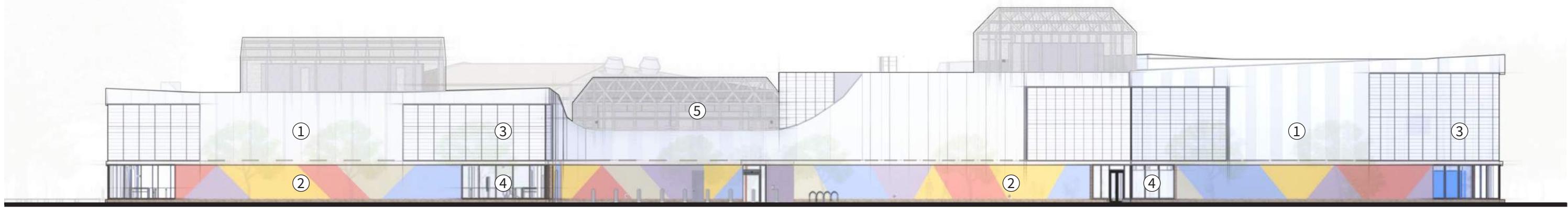


#### **MATERIALS LEGEND**

1. ULTRA HIGH PERFORMANCE CONCRETE PANELS
2. PAINTED CMU
3. TRANSLUCENT WALL SYSTEM
4. EXTERIOR STOREFRONT SYSTEM
5. ROOF MECHANICAL SCREEN
6. STUCCO
7. CERAMIC TILE



01 West



02 North

**MATERIALS LEGEND**

1. ULTRA HIGH PERFORMANCE CONCRETE PANELS
2. PAINTED CMU
3. TRANSLUCENT WALL SYSTEM
4. EXTERIOR STOREFRONT SYSTEM
5. ROOF MECHANICAL SCREEN
6. STUCCO
7. CERAMIC TILE





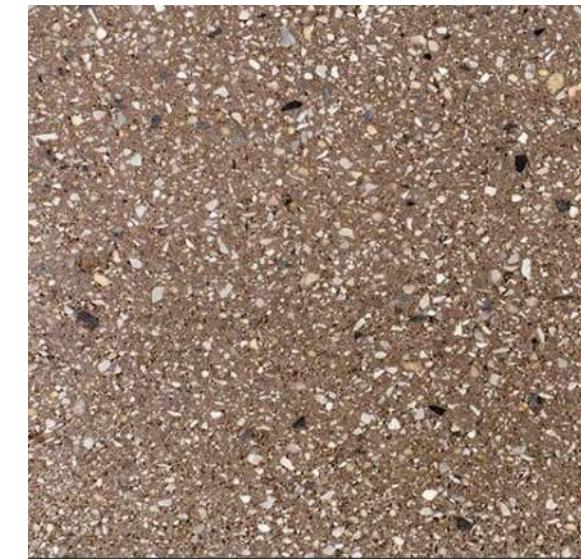
ULTRA HIGH PERFORMANCE CONCRETE PANELS



TRANSLUCENT WALL SYSTEM



PAINTED CMU BLOCK



CONCRETE MASONRY UNITS



STUCCO

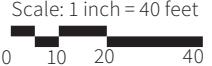






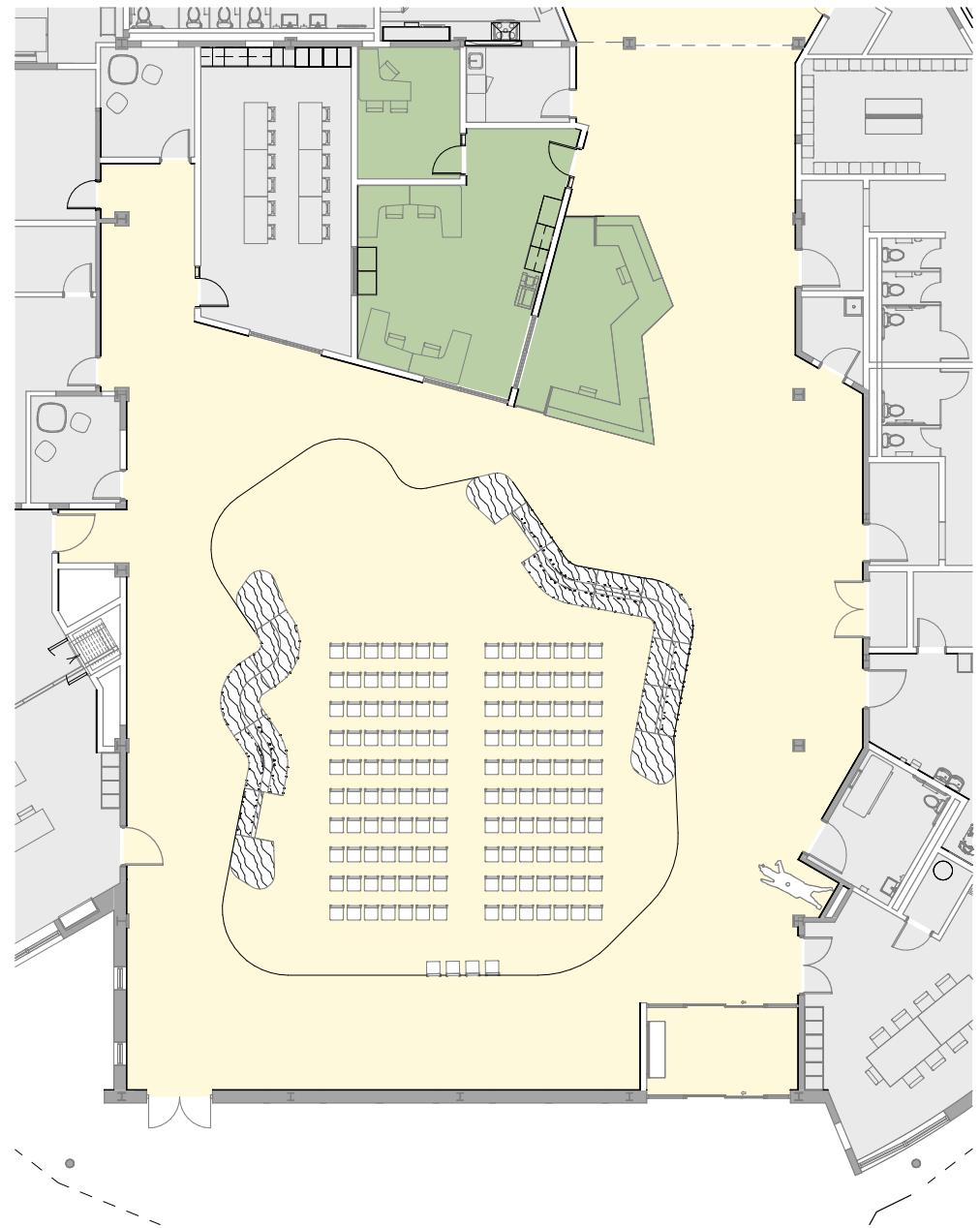


- LEGEND**
- Shared Space
  - Natatorium
  - Gymnasium
  - Recreation
  - Classrooms
  - Administrative Spaces
  - Restrooms + Locker Rooms
  - Support Space
  - Primary Entry
  - Secondary Entry
  - Service Access
  - Exit Only

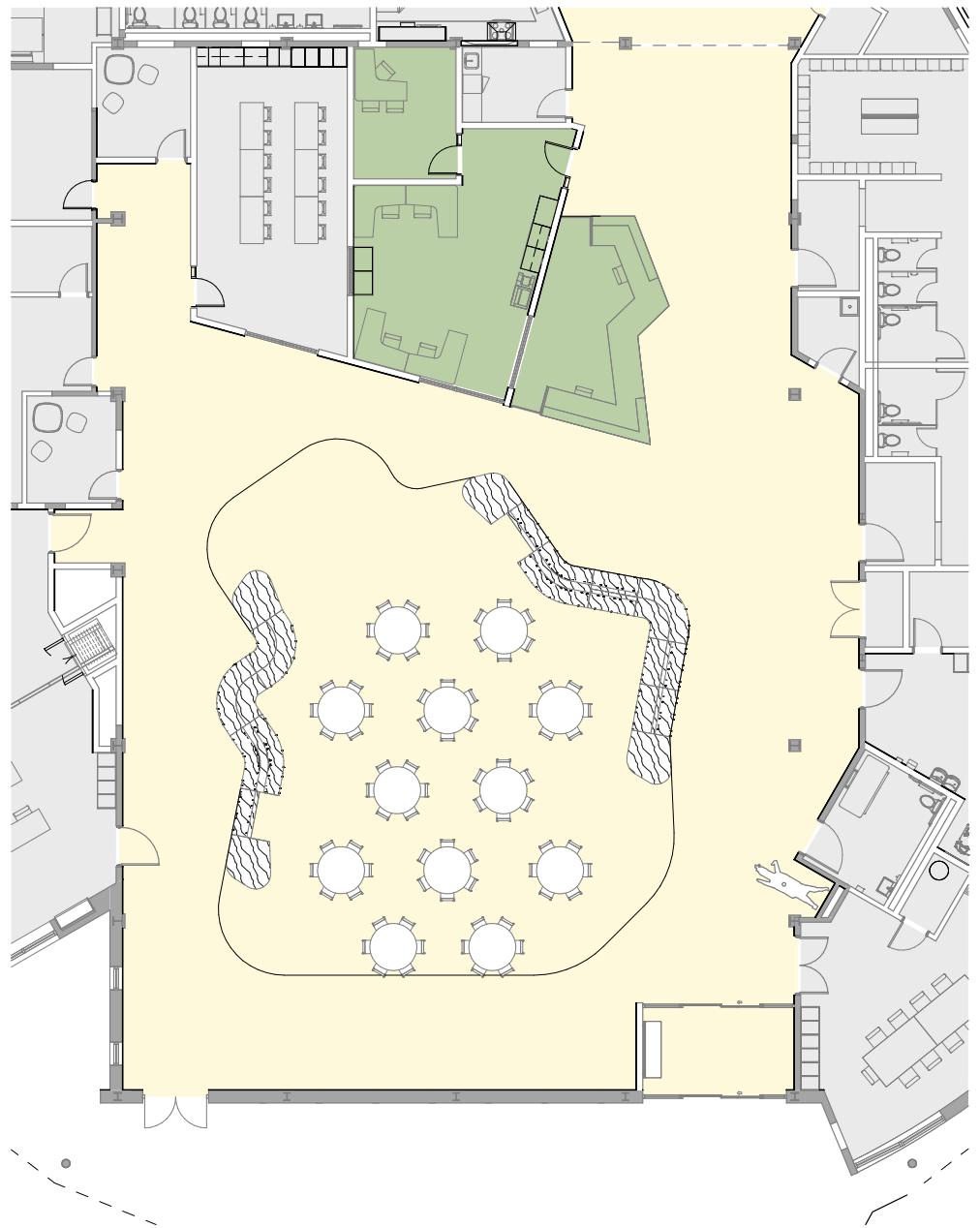
Scale: 1 inch = 40 feet  




1 Typical Day to Day Recreation



2 Lecture



3 Banquet











