

# NATIONAL MALL COMFORT STATIONS

## CONCEPTUAL DESIGN STUDY

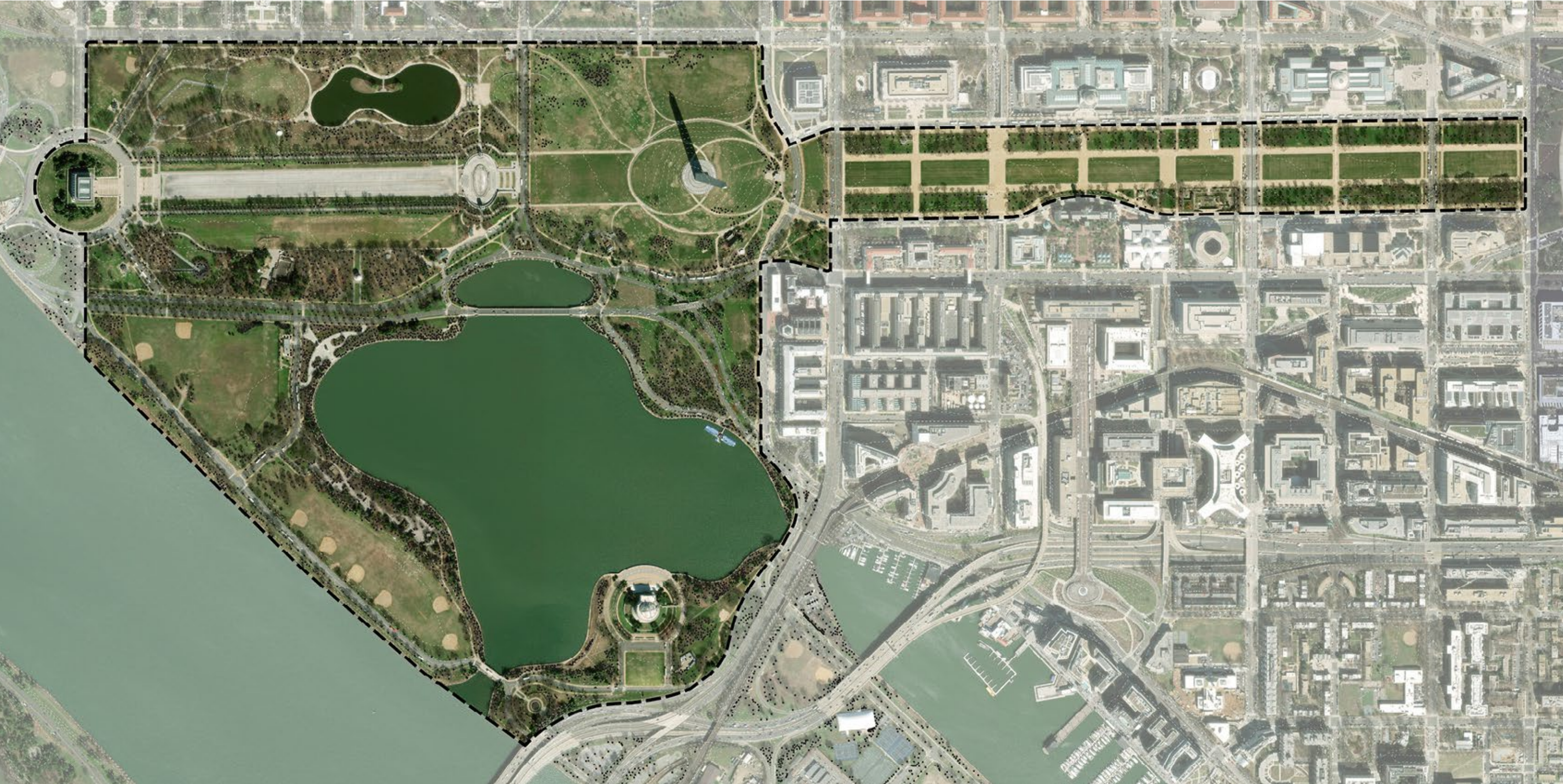
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024



Land

DAVID RUBIN

Collective



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# PROJECT BRIEF

## Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing Comfort Station Conceptual Designs (Conceptual Designs) based on an initial 2021 Comfort Stations Development Concept Plan (2021 DCP) to address the deficiency of available, accessible, clean, and safe comfort stations for all visitors to the National Mall. The proposed project would add twelve new structures and replace three existing comfort stations throughout the NPS National Mall and Memorials Parks; one comfort station, located in Ash Woods, would be demolished and replaced in a different location. The overall proposed plan would place new and replacement comfort stations in locations with existing structures and/or visual barriers that limit their visibility from the character-defining elements of historic properties to the extent practicable.

## Project Area

Spanning from the U.S. Capitol to the Potomac River and from the Thomas Jefferson Memorial to Constitution Avenue, the National Mall is an incredibly symbolic, physical space in the heart of Washington, D.C. While NPS National Mall and Memorial Parks administers over 1,000 acres of national parkland, the area of focus for this Plan includes approximately 309 acres and the specific areas and memorials including:

- The Mall (the area east of 14th Street Northwest, referred to in this Plan as the “East Mall” for clarity)
- Washington Monument
- Constitution Gardens
- District of Columbia War Memorial
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
- George Mason Memorial
- Korean War Veterans Memorial
- Lincoln Memorial
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial
- Thomas Jefferson Memorial
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- World War II Memorial

**Note:** East Potomac Park and the World War I Memorial (formerly Pershing Park) are not included in the study area for this Plan.



Project Area Map

## Background

The 2010 National Mall Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (National Mall Plan/EIS) set a 50-year vision for the design of new facilities, the implementation of programs and the retention of character for the iconic landscape of the National Mall. The 2010 National Mall Plan/EIS considered the exceedingly high level of use this area receives annually and identified comfort station locations to meet existing and future needs.

NPS furthered the implementation of the National Mall Plan/EIS with the development of the 2021 DCP. This most recent document outlines an approach and guidance for adding new comfort stations to the National Mall while respecting the sanctity, resources, and use as America’s preeminent civic space. Building on the conclusions of the 2021 DCP, the proposed Conceptual Designs illustrate the considerations given for locating and designing comfort stations on the National Mall and provide a design framework for advancement.



# PROJECT BRIEF CONT.

## Existing Comfort Stations

Within the National Mall, nine comfort stations with less than 100 fixtures are currently open to the public, of varying sizes, ages, and designs, dispersed throughout the park west of 15th Street NW. (For the purposes of this analysis, “comfort stations” are defined by the National Park Service as flush-toilet restroom facilities. “Fixtures” refer to the toilet fixtures within the comfort stations, either urinals or toilets.)

No comfort stations are present east of 15th Street NW along the National Mall; only food kiosks or other recreational facilities provide visitor services in this area. With ever-tightening security restrictions at the Smithsonian Institution museum facilities adjacent to the National Mall, visitors who previously relied on those restrooms find them more difficult to use due to ticketing restrictions and security screening lines.

## Purpose and Need

The purpose of the implementation of this portion of the 2010 National Mall Plan/EIS is to meet visitor needs by providing additional comfort stations, an equally important objective is to respect the sanctity of the National Mall as America’s preeminent civic space. The Conceptual Designs are intended to create the following:

- A framework that can adapt to each site’s unique constraints and program requirements
- An approach that is consistent and identifiable across all 15 proposed comfort station locations
- A functional design that is safe and accessible for all visitors
- A contextual design that respects the cultural landscape

These comfort stations are needed to address the following issues:

- Inadequate numbers of permanent facilities to serve the high visitation numbers on a daily and seasonal basis
- Lack of facilities that are accessible regardless of gender, age, or disability
- Large distances between existing comfort stations that are open to the public contributing to physical discomfort and frustration
- Inappropriate use of the landscape by visitors where comfort stations are not available creating unsanitary conditions
- Maintenance problems at existing comfort stations created by overuse

- Inadequate wayfinding and signage at existing comfort stations and circulation routes leading to confusion
- Disjointed or missing visitor amenities (e.g., food kiosks without hand-washing abilities)

## Description of the Proposed Development

The Conceptual Designs identify case study design approaches for adaptation at specific locations. It is anticipated that the buildings would be one-story in height. The exact size, layout, materials, and details for each comfort station location is to be determined.

The overall proposed project would add twelve new and three replacement comfort stations throughout the project site. The overall proposed plan would place new and replacement comfort stations in locations with existing structures and/or visual barriers that limit their visibility to the extent practicable.

Proposed Comfort Station	Existing Structure at this Location	Additional or Replacement Comfort Stations
East Basin Drive	Existing kiosk	Additional
Parking Lot A	None	Additional
West Potomac Park	None; DC Water facility planned for location	Additional
Lincoln Memorial South	Existing kiosk	Additional
Lincoln Memorial North	Existing kiosk	Additional
Constitution Gardens West	Existing restroom; would remove kiosk at southwest portion of lake	Replacement
Constitution Gardens East	None	Additional
Ash Woods	Relocates restroom to a nearby location	Replacement (Relocation)
Survey Lodge	None	Additional
Sylvan Theater	Existing restroom	Replacement
Tidal Basin	None	Additional
National Museum of American History (NMAH)	Existing kiosk	Additional
National Museum of Natural History (NMNH)	Existing kiosk	Additional
Smithsonian Castle	Existing kiosk	Additional
National Air and Space Museum (NASM)	Existing kiosk	Additional

# PROJECT BRIEF CONT.

## Conceptual Design Approach

The approach for the Conceptual Designs is to develop a consistent style that is recognizable by visitors as a comfort station but is adaptable enough to be sensitive to the individual contexts. The buildings would be one-story in height; the exact size, layout, materials, and details for each comfort station location have yet to be finalized. Design considerations for the Conceptual Designs include the following:

- Restroom arrangement
- Building organization
- Emphasis/hierarchy of co-located facilities
- Queuing accommodation
- Approach and access by visitors
- Primary views of visitors using facilities
- Materiality/Branding

The project uses case studies at four locations that represent a range of context located within the National Mall: Lincoln Memorial South, Constitution Gardens West, East Mall 4, and Ash Woods. These case studies could then be applied or adapted to other locations as needed. To advance the Conceptual Designs, three architectural case studies were initially used to explore design options at each of the four locations.

The initial design options offered a range of configurations and opportunities for application, depending on the site context of an individual comfort station. These initial explorations have been further refined to a single conceptual design option for each site context. The range of case studies were narrowed based on a series of decision factors, including the following:

- Impact to Cultural Landscape
- Visitor Experience
- Public Safety and security
- Flexibility
- Consistent and identifiable design
- Ease of maintenance and operations
- Appreciation of Cultural Resources
- Accessibility

## Conceptual Design Description

Each of the following locations has its own conceptual design features and considerations. All of the conceptual design case studies use a material palette that emphasizes the context and supporting role of comfort stations. The materials draw on the surrounding park services and visitor services buildings, utilizing an accent material inspired by the existing kiosks.

### Case Study: Lincoln Memorial South

The proposed comfort station at Lincoln Memorial South would replace an existing kiosk and feature detached restroom and food service facilities. The restroom includes an L-shaped breezeway to facilitate circulation and safety and avoid food service queuing conflicts. The distribution of the comfort station affords a low building profile and breaks up the massing.

### Case Study: Constitution Gardens West

The proposed comfort station at Constitution Gardens West replaces the existing comfort station and food kiosk and relocates these in order to use the site topography to minimize the vertical appearance of the site. The new comfort station would include attached food service and restroom facilities with a U-shaped breezeway that facilitates circulation and safety.

### Case Study: East Mall 4

The proposed comfort station at East Mall 4 would replace the existing food service kiosk with a proposed reoriented comfort station and food services facilities. The Conceptual Design features detached restroom and food service facilities, along with a gathering zone. The U-shaped breezeway that facilitates circulation and safety and avoids queuing conflicts with the food service.

The placement of the East Mall comfort station is intended to minimize the visual incursion of the comfort station while still offering an attractive, positive visitor experience, and connection to the landscape as it aligns with the grid of the Elm trees. The East Mall comfort station is oriented toward the National Mall and faces away from the adjacent National Museum of American History, focusing services for park visitors.

### Case Study: Ash Woods

The Conceptual Designs would remove the existing Ash Woods comfort station and move it West of the U.S. Park Police stables, which would better accommodate visitor circulation and distribution of comfort stations throughout the park. The comfort station would include only restroom facilities with a U-shaped breezeway.



# PROJECT BRIEF CONT.

## Regulatory Review and Public Coordination

### *National Historic Preservation Act*

NPS initiated the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) on August 5, 2024 for the development of conceptual designs for the National Mall comfort stations. This undertaking was called for in the 2010 National Mall Plan/EIS and is subject to the 2010 Programmatic Agreement Regarding the National Mall Plan (PA). As a result, the design concepts will “take into account character-defining elements and historic contexts identified with respect to sensitive design, appropriate scale, contextually compatible materials, colors and textures, even as the design program responds to the greatly differing needs of today and tomorrow and maximizes sustainable approaches...; views and vistas will be protected, as appropriate.”

The NPS is preparing a draft Assessment of Effects and intends to consult the public per the implementing regulations (36 CFR 800.3(e)) of the NHPA in public meetings and through its Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/>). At this time, the NPS has not made a determination of effect.

### *National Environmental Policy Act*

As noted previously, the National Mall comfort stations was considered as part of the 2010 National Mall Plan/EIS. The appropriate level of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for design and installation of comfort stations is anticipated to be an Environmental Assessment (EA) that is tiered from the 2010 National Mall Plan/EIS. The NEPA process will be initiated after the comfort station design advances beyond this initial Conceptual Design phase.

### *Agency Review*

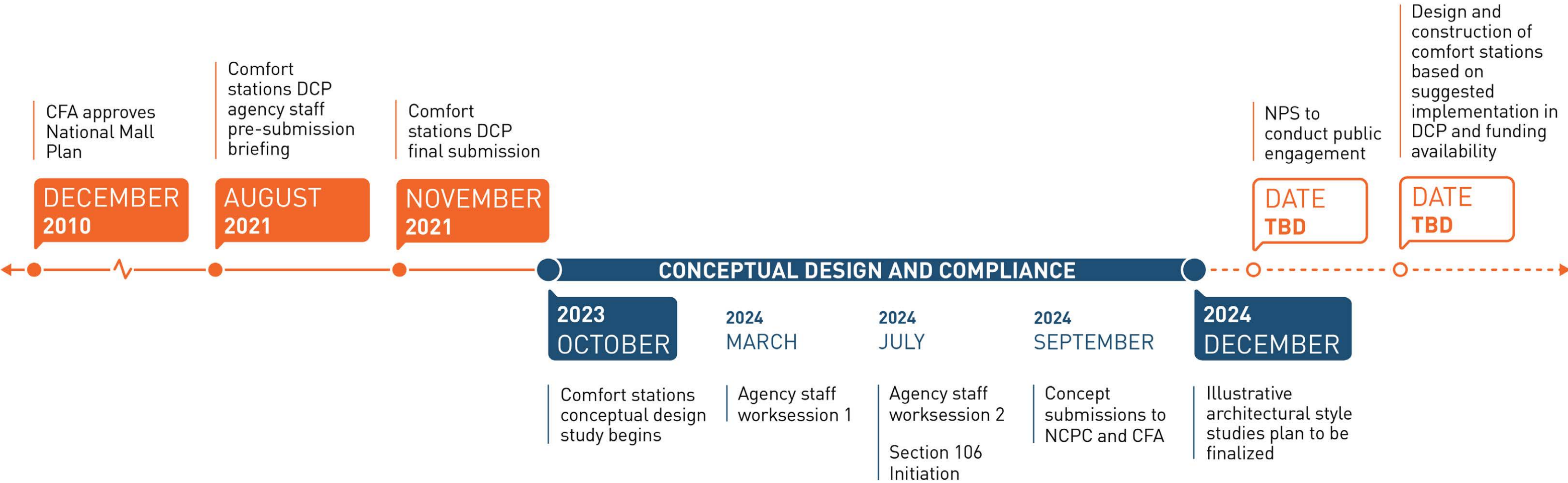
NPS anticipates agency review on the Conceptual Designs, including by the National Capital Planning Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, to occur in September and October 2024.

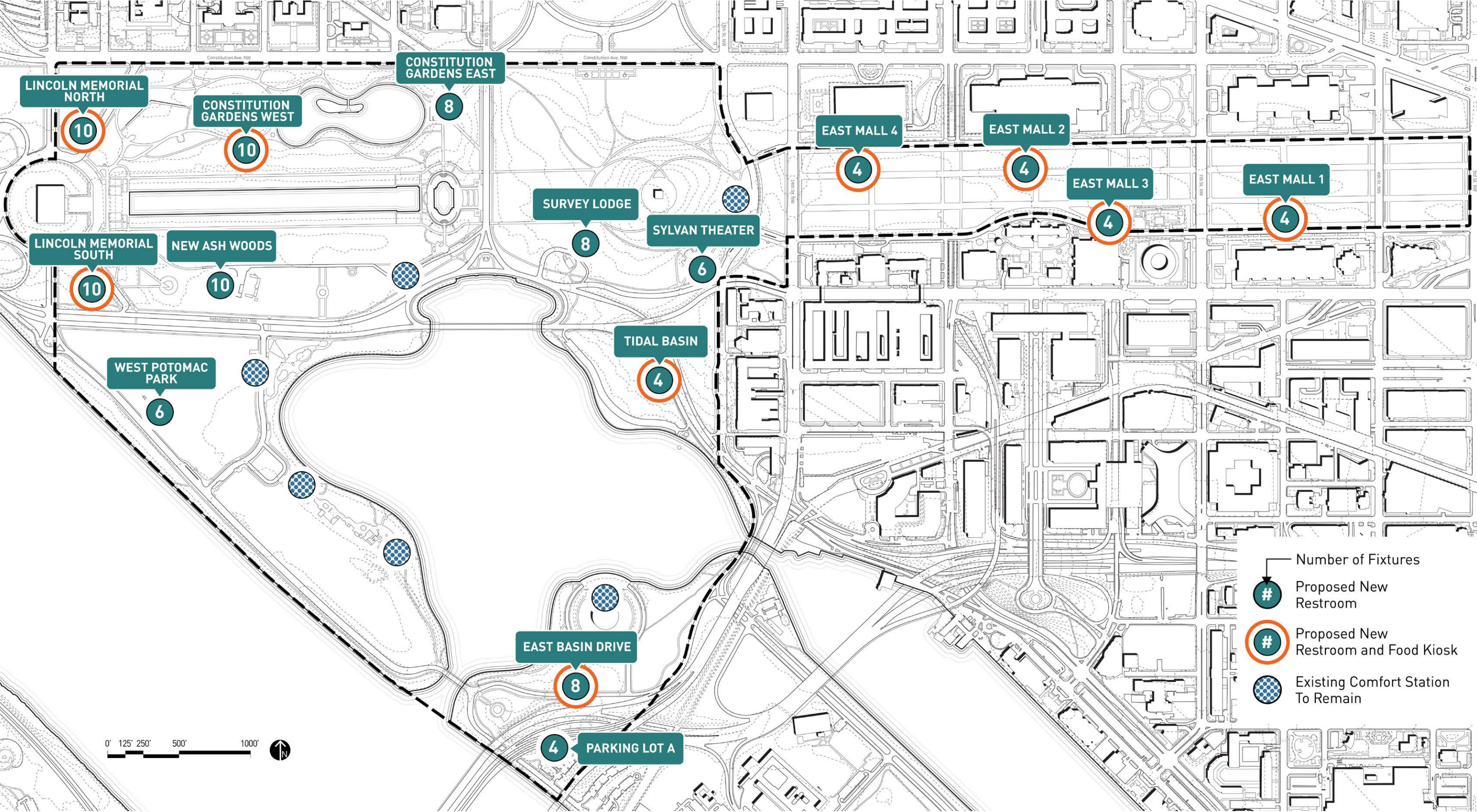
### *Public Engagement*

The 2010 National Mall Plan/EIS incorporated public comments as part of the NEPA review process. The 2021 DCP and current Conceptual Designs build on this foundation. At this conceptual level, the method for public engagement is to leverage the existing regulatory and review processes to receive input, including Section 106 consultation and public comment at the National Capital Planning Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. Once the project advances beyond the Conceptual Design phase, further public engagement will occur through the NEPA scoping process and EA public comment periods, in addition to continued Section 106 and agency review processes.



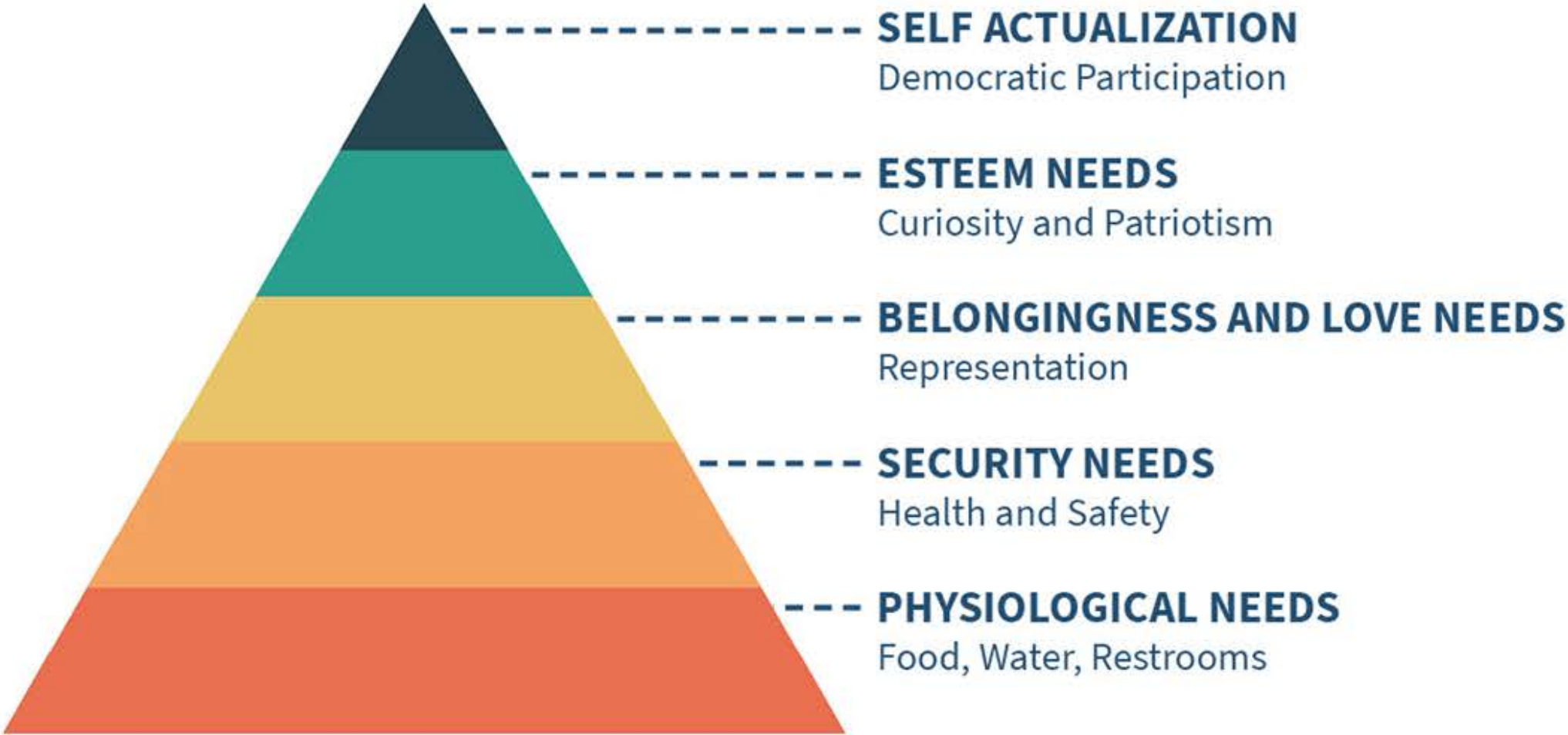
# PROJECT SCHEDULE





# INTRODUCTION

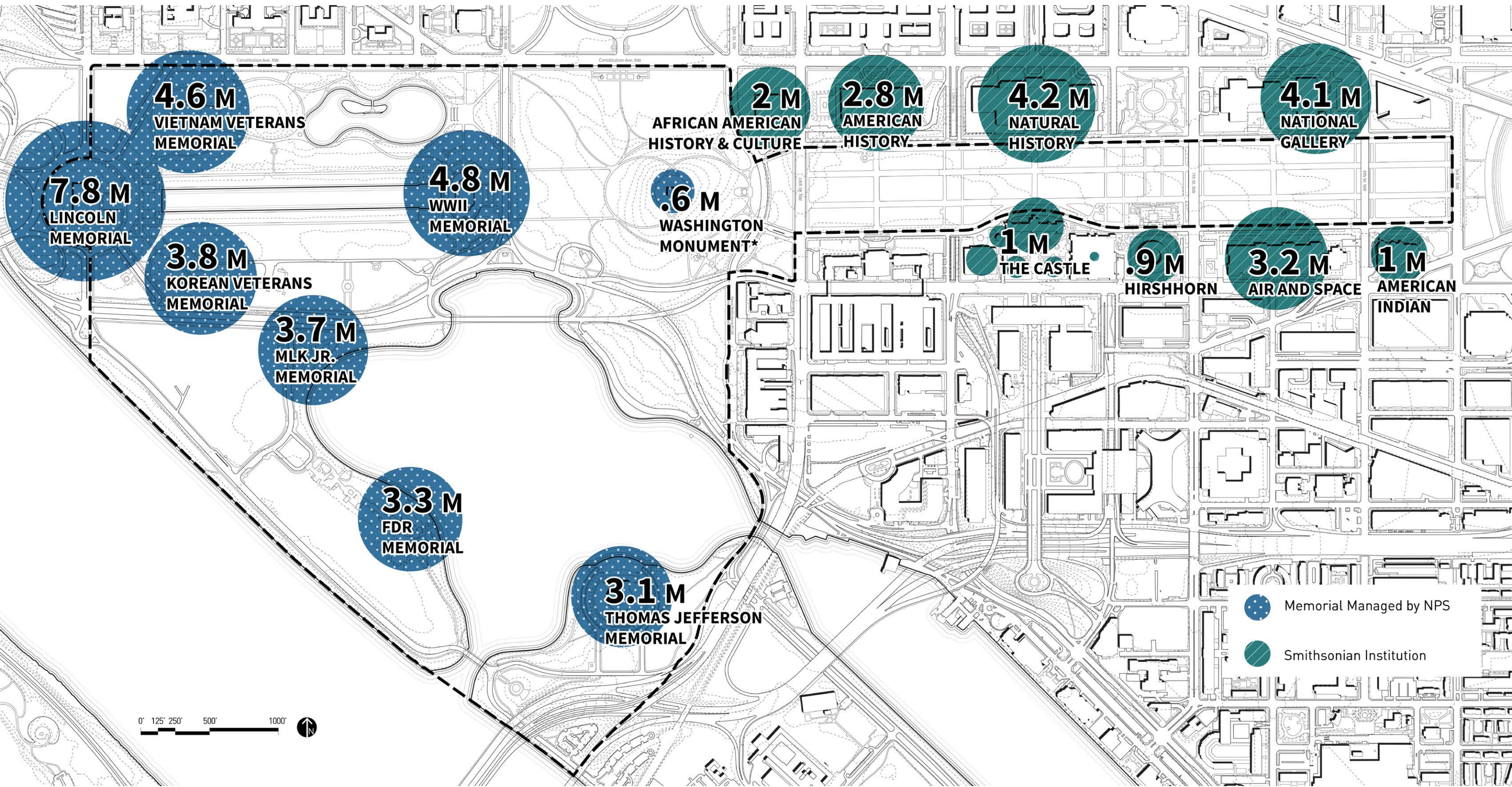
# INTRODUCTION: PROJECT’S PURPOSE



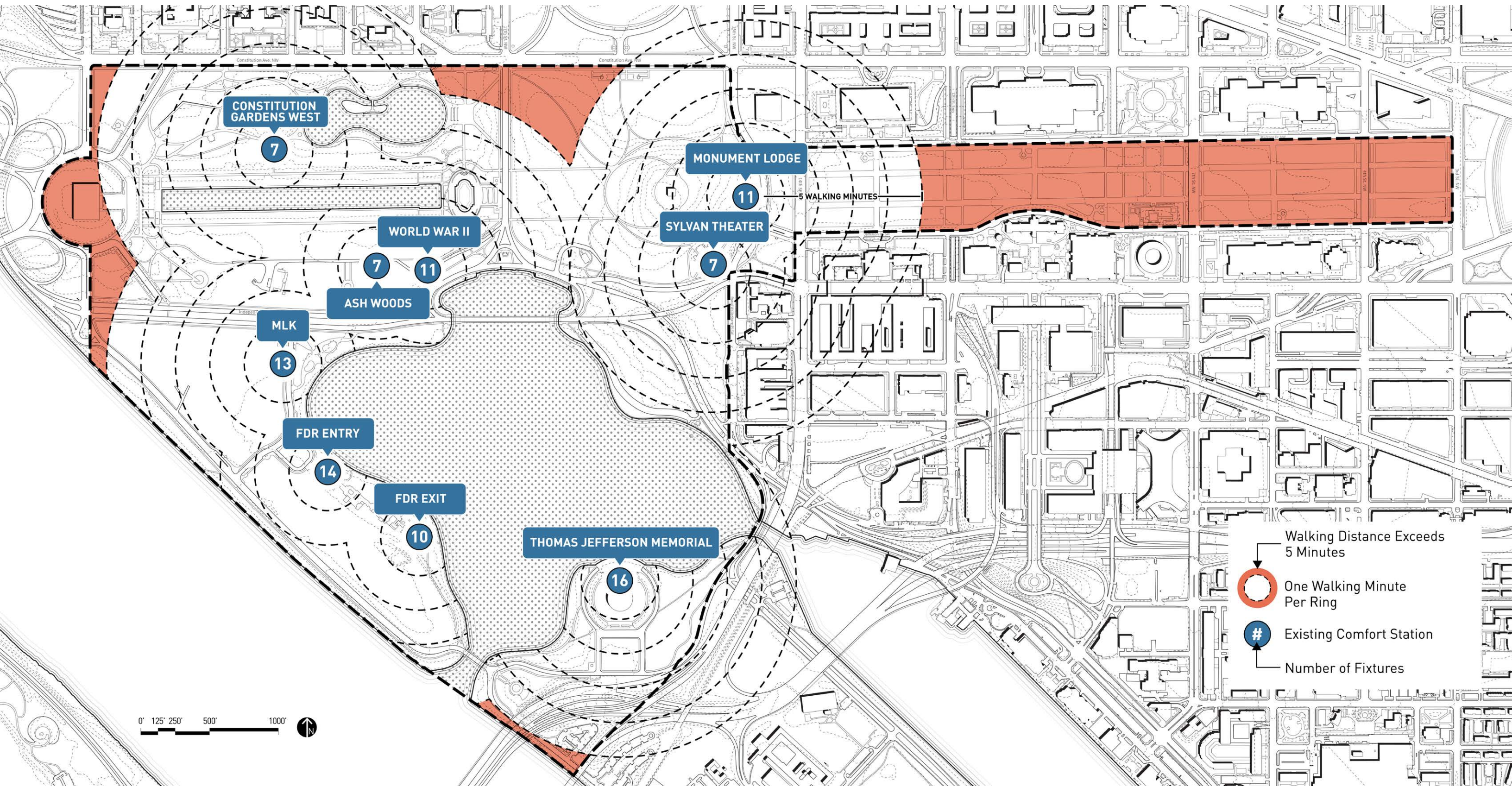
# THE GOALS OF THE NATIONAL MALL COMFORT STATION CONCEPTUAL DESIGN ARE TO PROVIDE...

1. A **framework** which can adapt to each site's unique constraints and program requirements.
2. An approach that is **consistent** and **identifiable** across all 15 proposed comfort station locations.
3. A **functional** design that is safe and accessible for all visitors.
4. A **contextual** design that respects the cultural landscape.

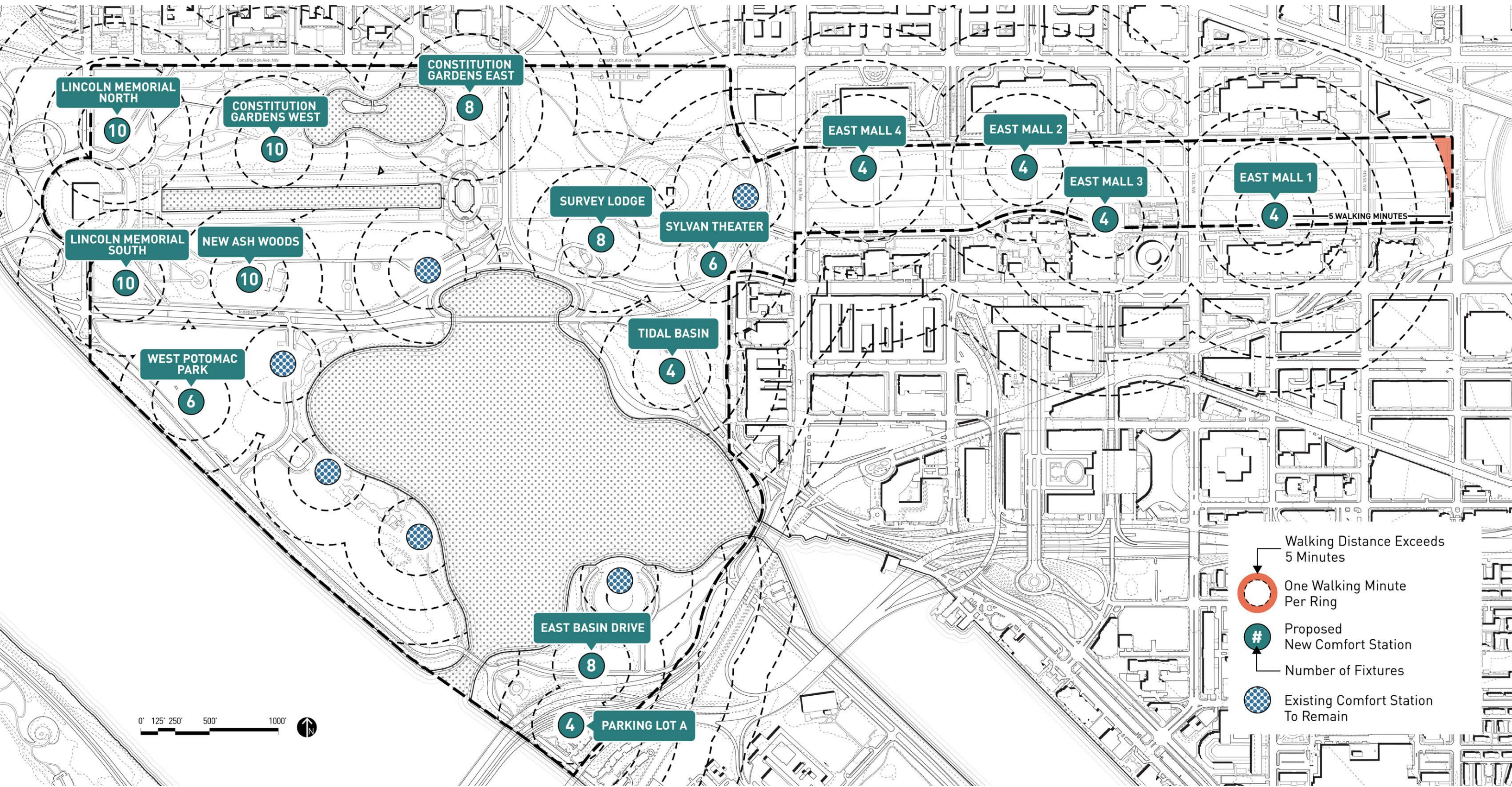
# INTRODUCTION: VISITATION ANALYSIS



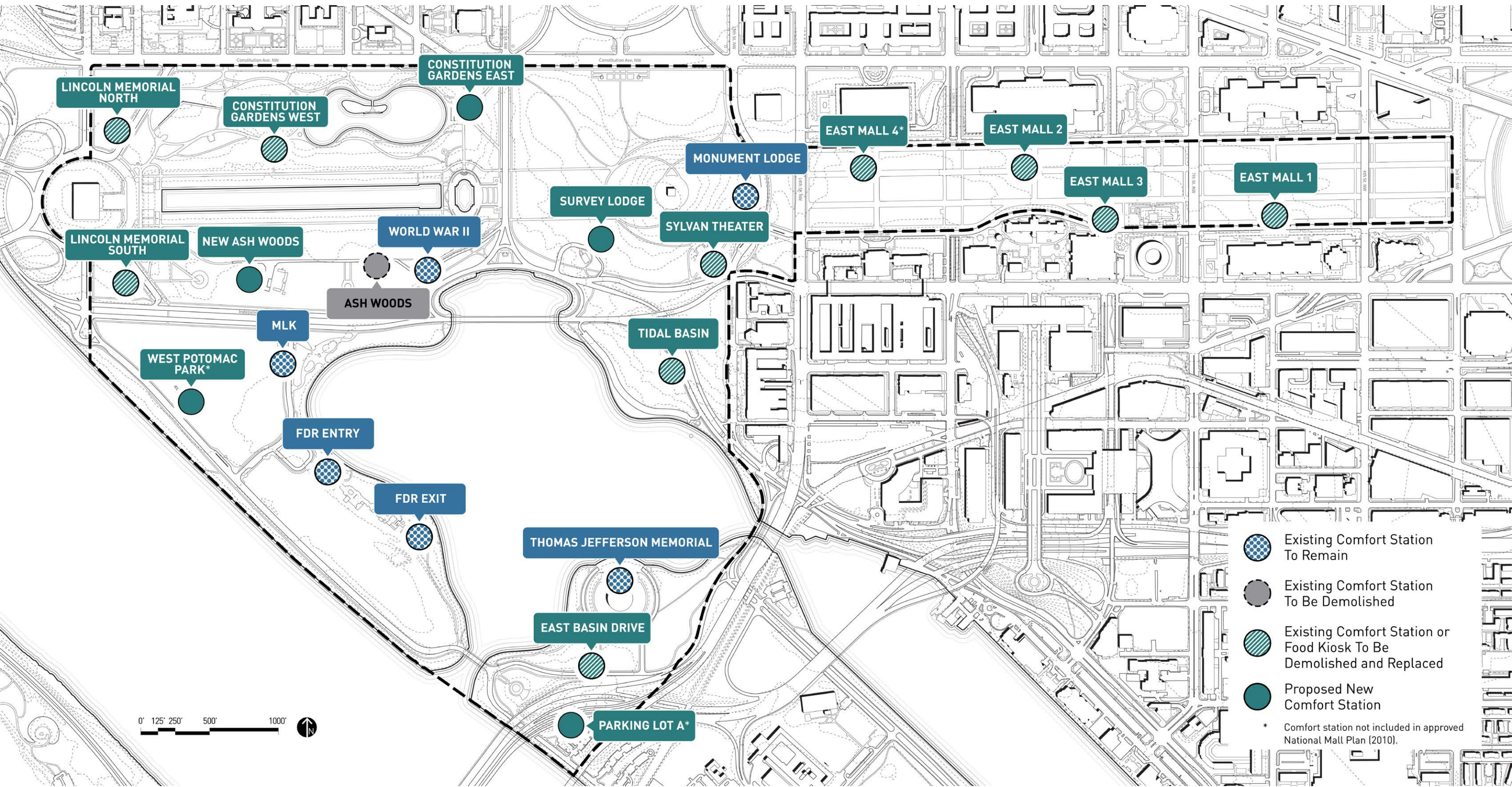
# INTRODUCTION: IDENTIFYING AREAS OF NEED



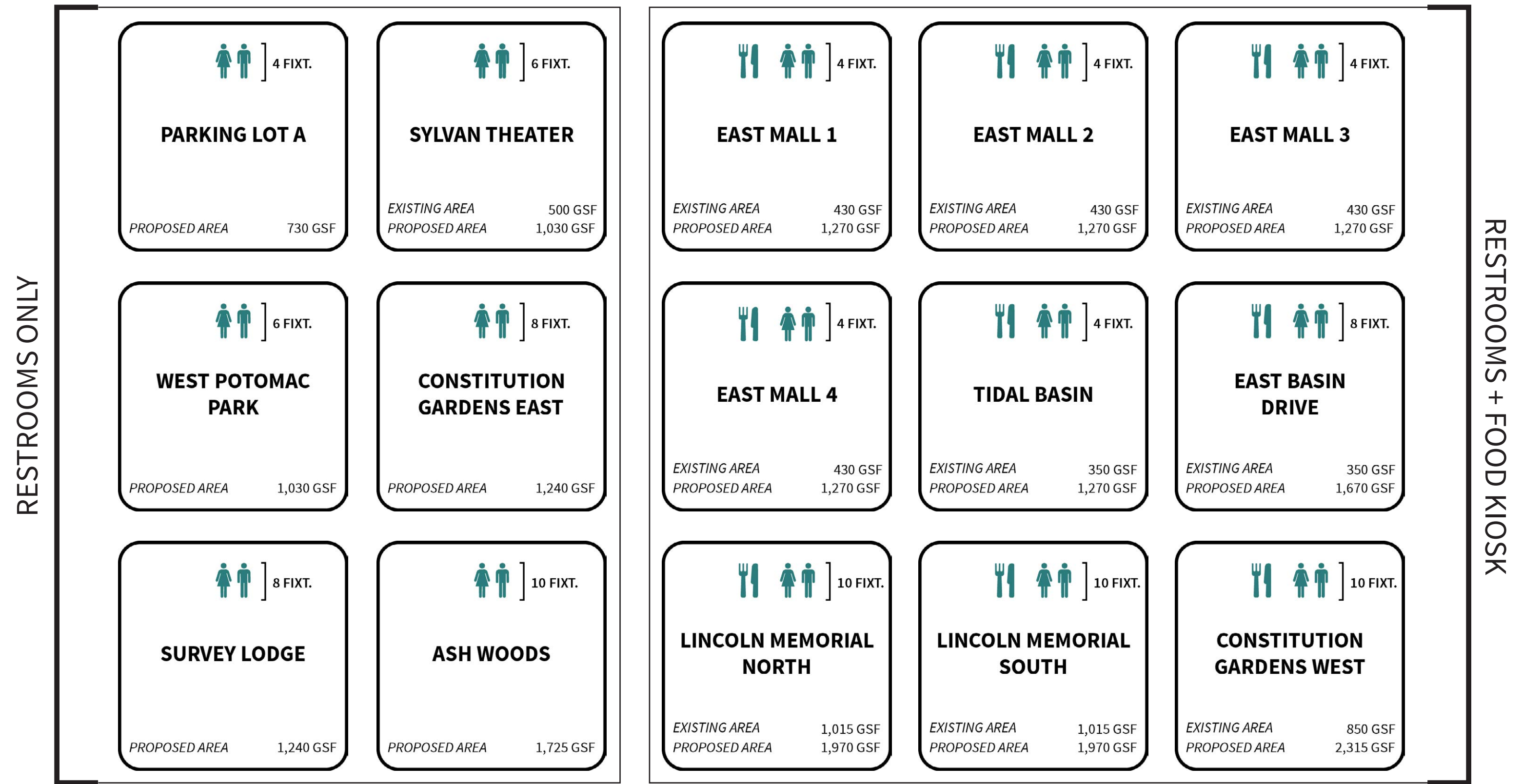
# INTRODUCTION: ADDRESSING AREAS OF NEED



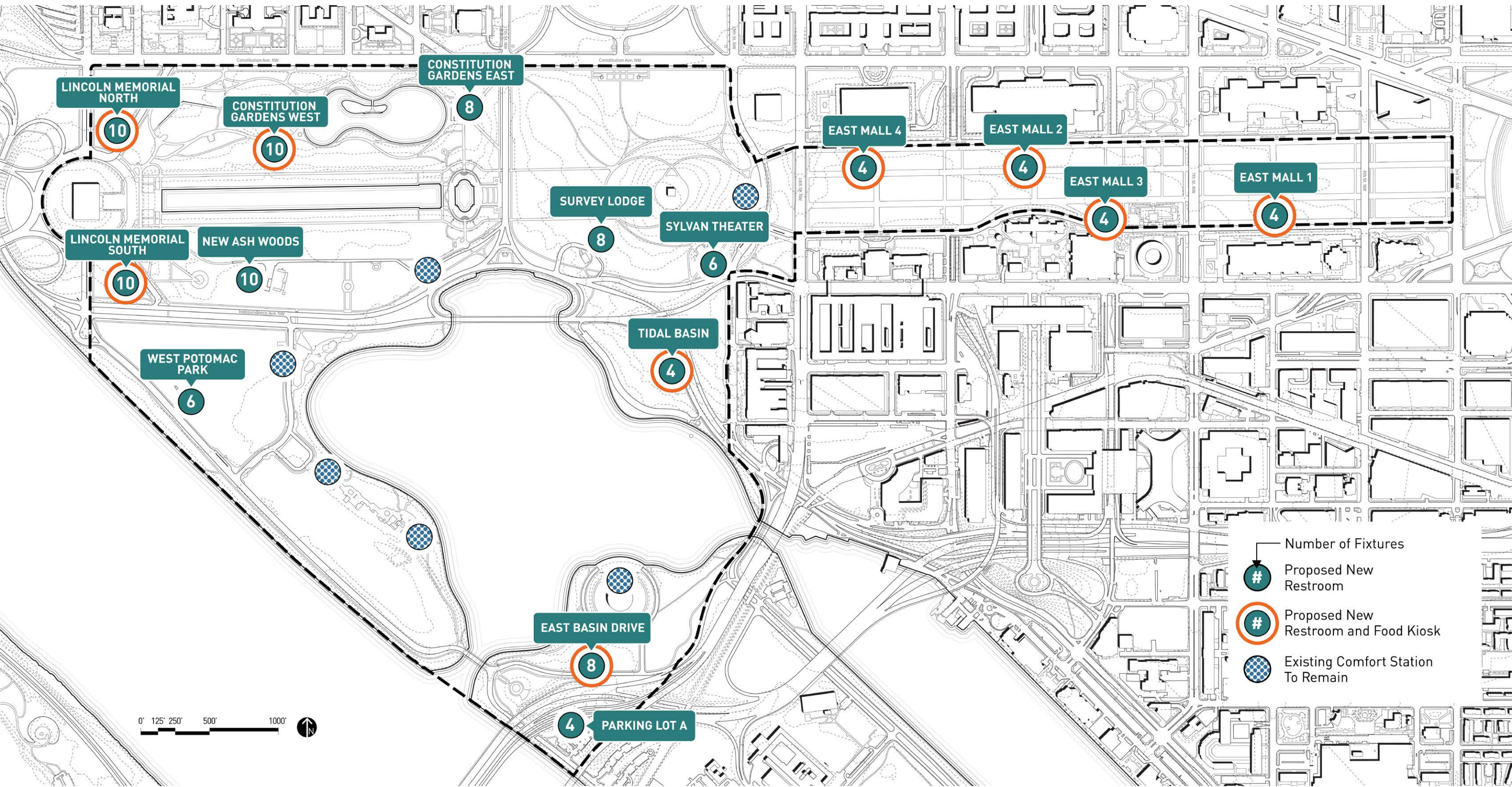
# INTRODUCTION: PROPOSED PLAN (DCP)



# INTRODUCTION: COMFORT STATION LOCATIONS



# INTRODUCTION: PROPOSED PLAN (DCP)



# INTRODUCTION: APPROACH



# DECISION-MAKING FACTORS

## Impact to Cultural Landscape

- Physical Impact - Disturbance Area (Buildings/Site/Trees)
- Visual Impact - Scale (Building Organization)
- Visual Impact - Architecture (Emphasis)

## Visitor Experience

- Clear and Intuitive Wayfinding
- Clear/Adequate Space for Queuing
- Defines Outdoor Space

## Public Safety and Security

- Restroom Arrangement
- Clear Visibility and Unobstructed Site Lines
- Provides Space for Crowds During Peak Season

## Flexibility

- Potential for Future Expansion
- Ability to Adapt to Various Site Locations

## Consistent and Identifiable Design

- Ability to Identify Comfort Stations at Different Building Scales
- Ability to Identify Amenities from a Distance
- Contextual to Cultural Landscape

## Ease of Maintenance and Operations

- Access to Lift for Loading (Food Kiosks)
- Ability to Support Partial Closure due to Maintenance (Restrooms)

## Appreciation for Cultural Resource

- Interpretive Opportunities
- Views to Surrounding Resource

## Accessibility

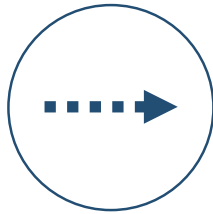
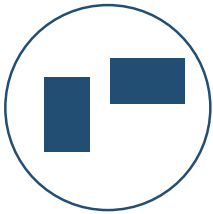
- Provide Access to Visitor Amenities
- Provide Universal Access to Restroom Facilities



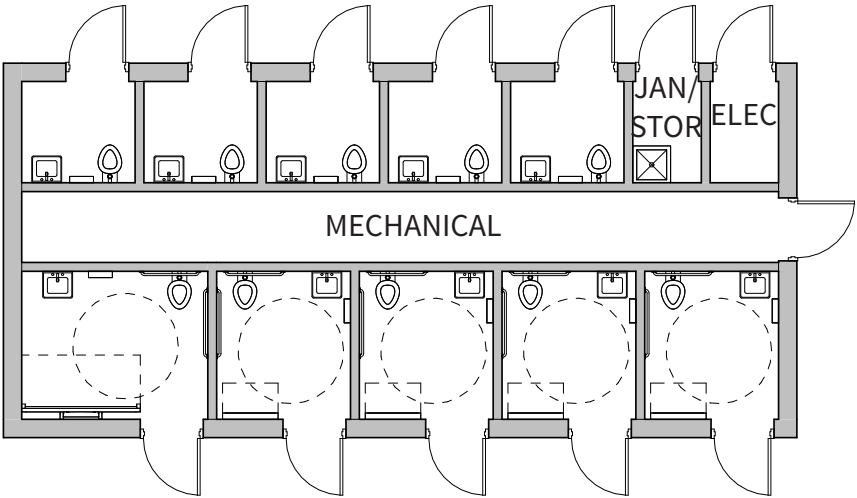
# DESIGN APPROACH



# DESIGN APPROACH: RESTROOM ARRANGEMENT

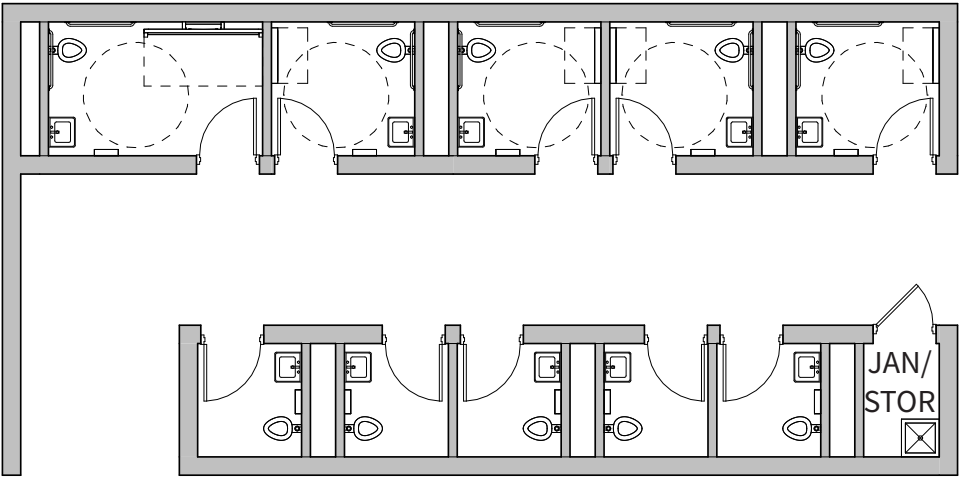


## EXTERIOR-FACING LAYOUT



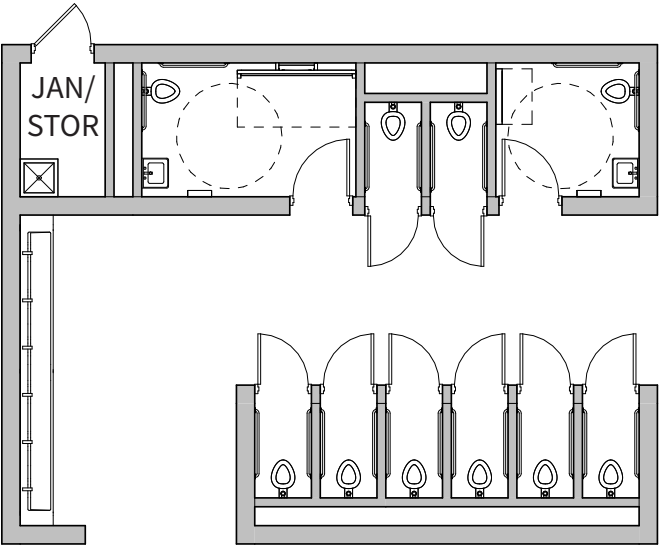
- + Maintenance and operations access
- Lacks user privacy

## INTERIOR-FACING BREEZEWAY LAYOUT *Individual Sinks*



- + User privacy, safety, and hygiene
- Least compact plan arrangement

## INTERIOR-FACING BREEZEWAY LAYOUT *Shared Sinks*

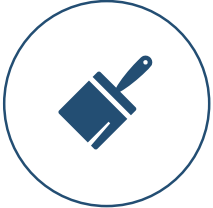
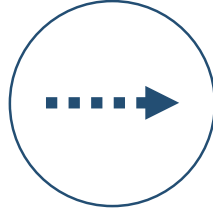
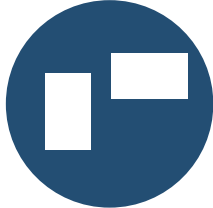


- + Most compact plan arrangement
- Fewer accessible/family restrooms

Selected Approach



# DESIGN APPROACH: BUILDING ORGANIZATION



## DETACHED



- ⊕ Greatest spatial separation between programs
- ⊖ Least compact, greatest site impact

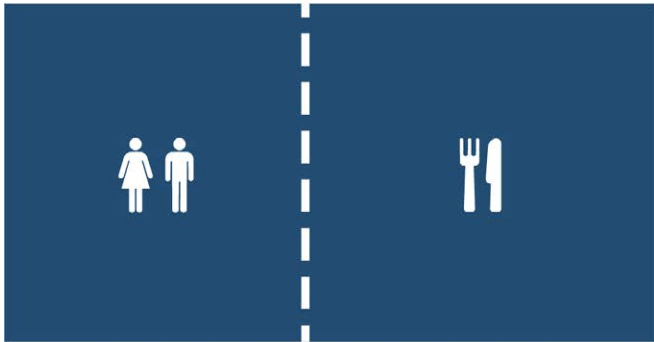
Selected Approach

## SEMI-ATTACHED



- ⊕ Visually breaks down scale of massing
- ⊖ Queuing overlap/overflow between programs

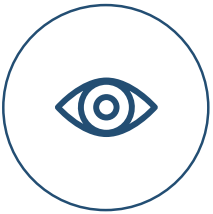
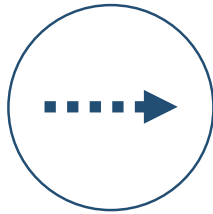
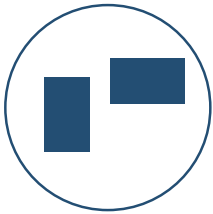
## ATTACHED



- ⊕ Most compact, least site impact
- ⊖ Least spatial separation between programs

Selected Approach

# DESIGN APPROACH: EMPHASIS

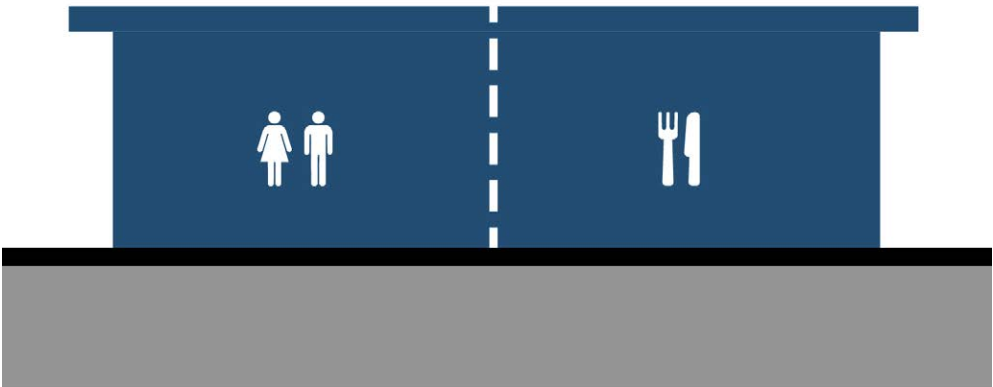


## SEPARATE/EQUAL



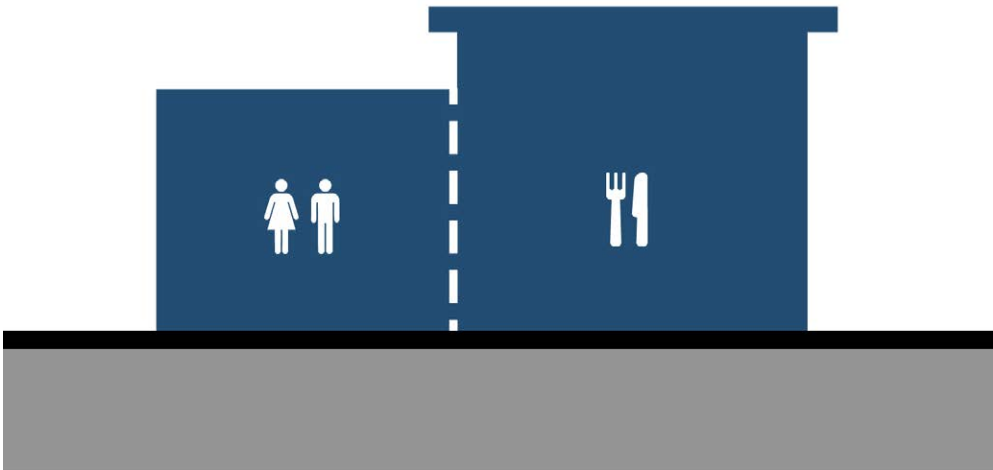
- ⊕ Distinction between programs
- ⊖ Larger appearance depending on viewing angle

## SINGULAR/EQUAL



- ⊕ Cohesive identity
- ⊖ Least distinction between program

## DIFFERENTIATED

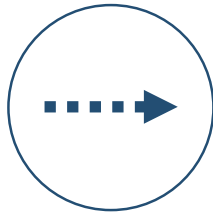
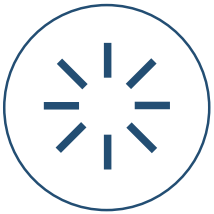
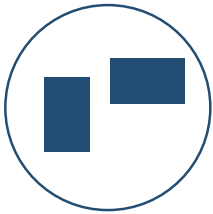


- ⊕ Creates a hierarchy through massing
- ⊖ Taller building height

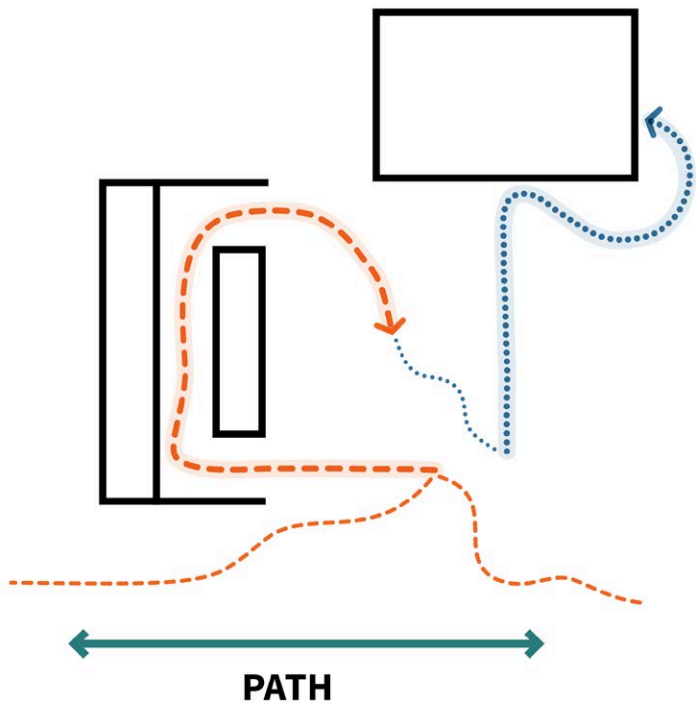
Selected Approach



# DESIGN APPROACH: QUEUING

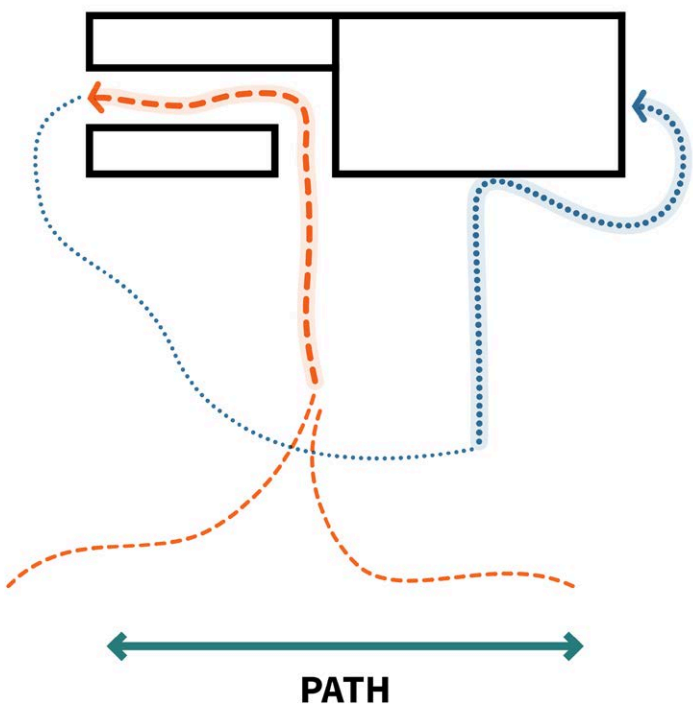


## DETACHED



- ⊕ Queuing is clearly separated by building
- ⊖ Queuing is perpendicular. There is potential for overlapping lines.

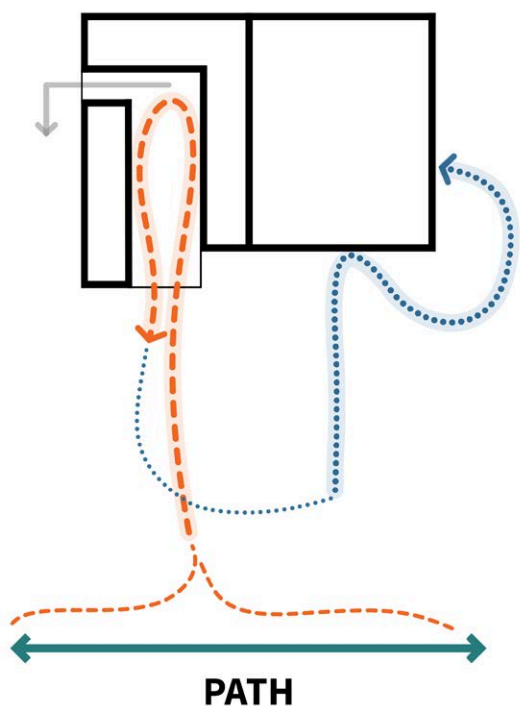
## ATTACHED W/ “L” BREEZEWAY



- ⊕ Queuing lines are separate and parallel
- ⊖ Confusion over entrance and exit of restroom is possible.

Selected Approach

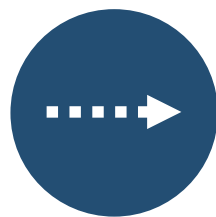
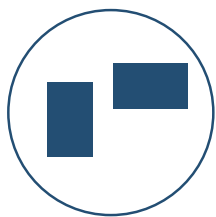
## ATTACHED W/ ENCLOSED RESTROOM



- ⊕ Single entrance/exit for restroom provides clear location for queuing.
- ⊖ Single entrance and exit with door could cause congestion.



# DESIGN APPROACH: APPROACH/ACCESS



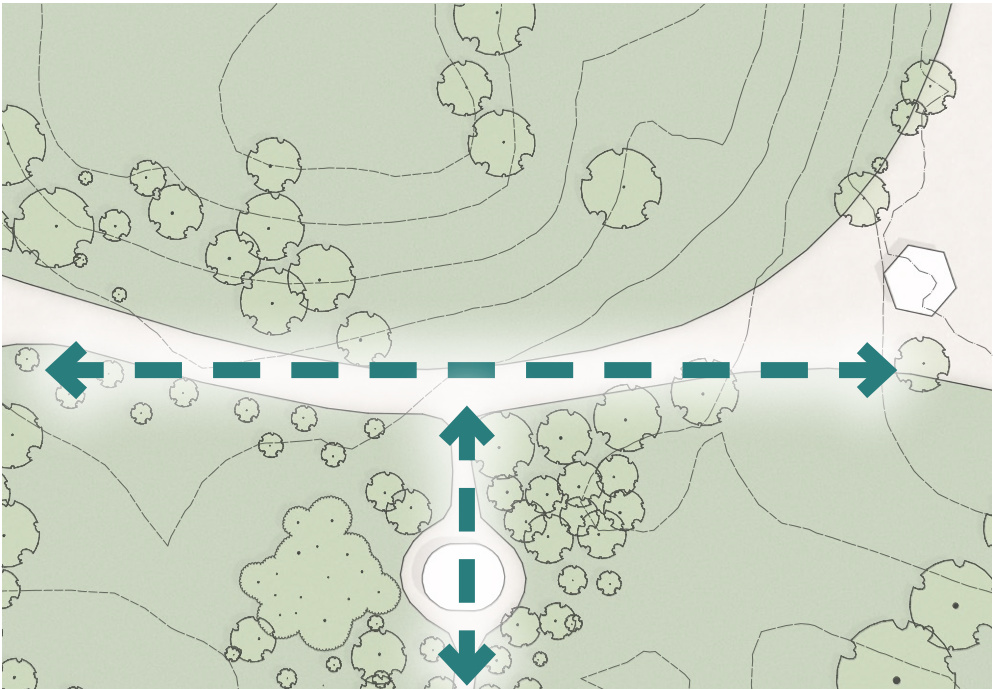
## ONE-SIDED ACCESS



Example: Lincoln South

- Primary pedestrian access is on one side of the site.
- Public and private separation is obvious.

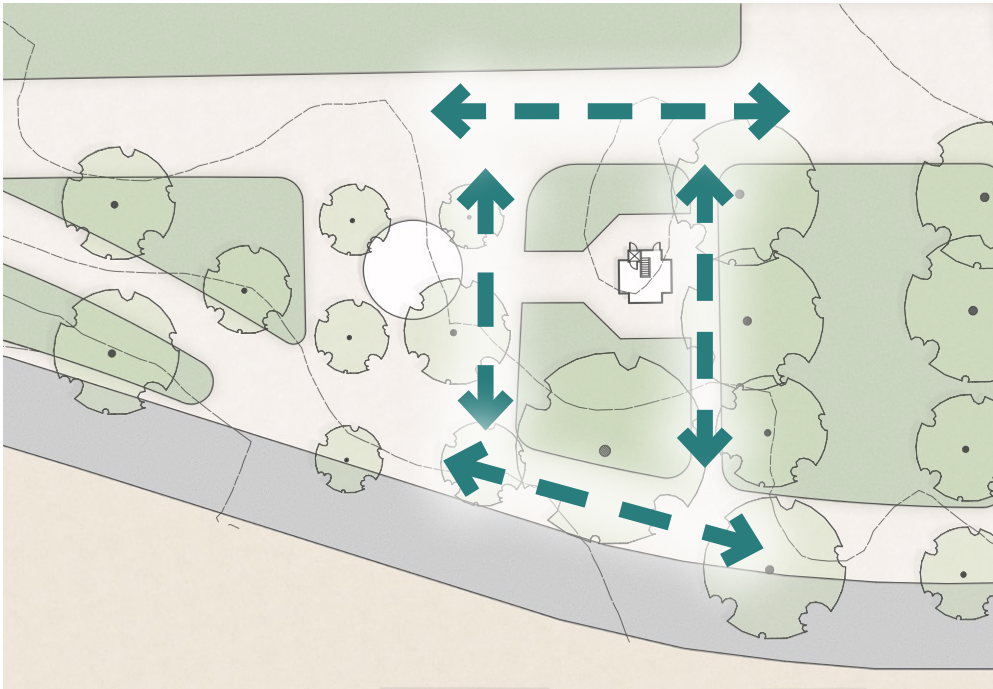
## PERPENDICULAR ACCESS



Example: Constitution Gardens West

- Pedestrian access in directions that are perpendicular to each other.
- Visual cues needed to direct visitors to entrances.

## MULTI-SIDED ACCESS

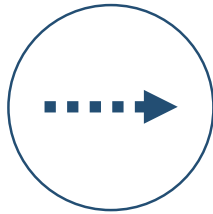
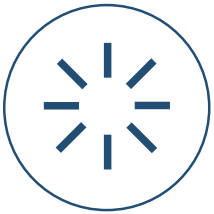
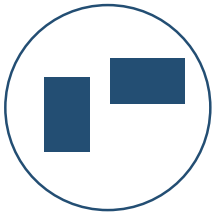


Example: East Mall #3

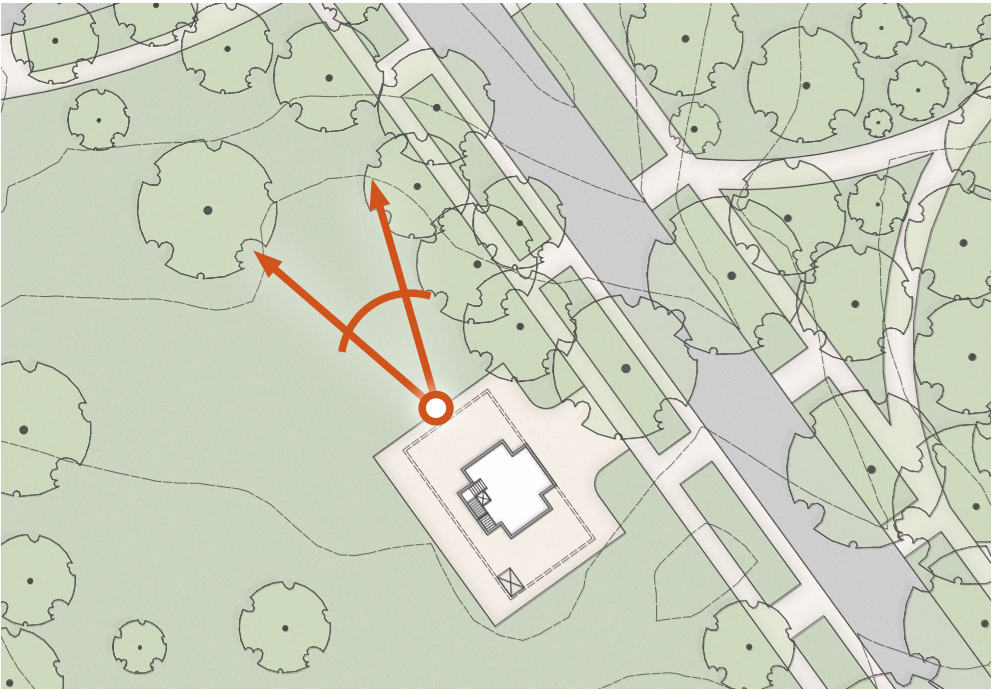
- Pedestrian access is multi-sided. Site must accommodate visitors arriving from multiple directions.
- Visual cues needed to direct visitors to entrances.
- Building viewed from all sides - no back.



DESIGN APPROACH: PRIMARY VIEWS



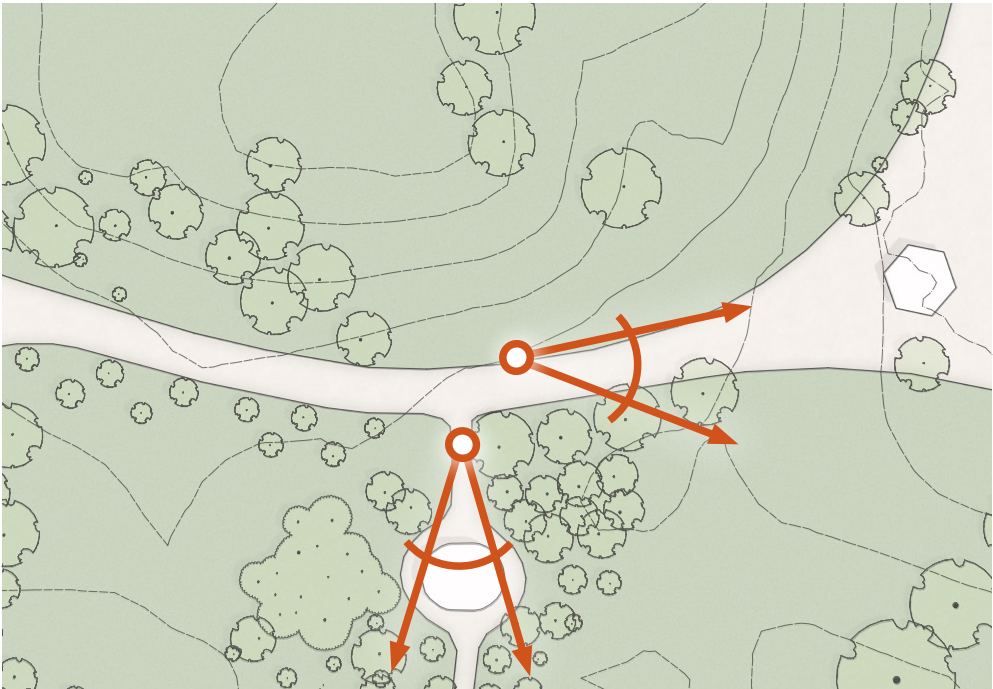
SINGLE VIEW



Example: Lincoln South

Gathering space located to take advantage of the viewshed.

MULTI-SIDED VIEW



Example: Constitution Gardens West

Gathering space located to capture both views when possible.

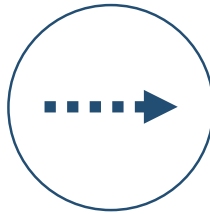
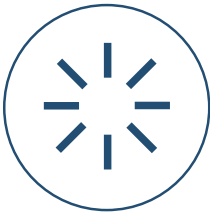
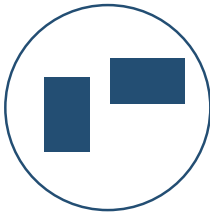
360 DEGREE VIEW



Example: East Mall #3

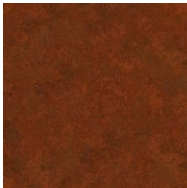
Gathering space location favors one or some of the views.

# DESIGN APPROACH: MATERIALITY/BRANDING



## CONTEXTUAL/MONUMENTAL

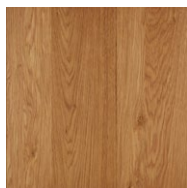
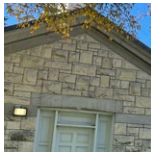
Referencing:



Drawing from the context of the Monuments, Memorials, and Museums.

## CONTEXTUAL/SECONDARY

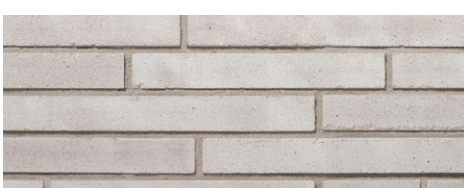
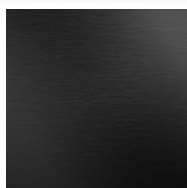
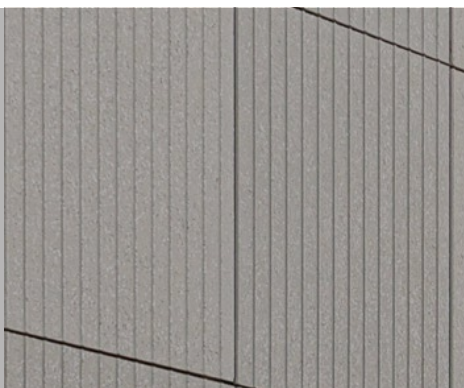
Referencing:



Drawing from the context of the park services and visitor services buildings, utilizing an accent material inspired by the existing kiosks.

## DIFFERENTIATED/COMPATIBLE

Referencing:



A darker palette to differentiate from the Monuments, Memorials, and Museums, while remaining compatible through texture and scale.

Selected Approach



# DESIGN APPROACH: MATERIALITY/BRANDING

## PRECEDENT

KIOSK		VISITOR SERVICE		PARK SERVICE
FOOD KIOSK	INFORMATION KIOSK	LOCKKEEPER'S HOUSE	MONUMENT LODGE	SURVEY LODGE
				
Patinated Copper	Patinated Copper	Bluestone	Marble	Marble, Granite

## PRIMARY (field):

Neutral and textured stone cladding to remain compatible with surrounding structures and reminiscent of existing secondary structures.



- Possible Materials:**
- Brick
  - Bluestone
  - Marble
- Possible Applications:**
- Brick/Stone Veneer
  - Adhered Brick/Stone
- Possible Format/Scale:**
- Narrow/Linear
  - Standard Brick
- Possible Finishes:**
- Polished
  - Sandblasted

## SECONDARY (accent):

Recognizable accent material relating to the existing kiosk palette.



- Possible Materials:**
- Glazed Brick
  - Pre-patinated Copper
  - Painted Aluminum

## TERTIARY (accent):

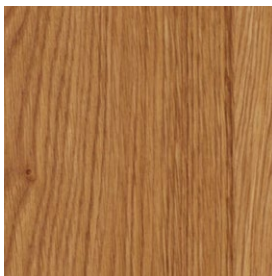
A balance of warm and light accent materials.



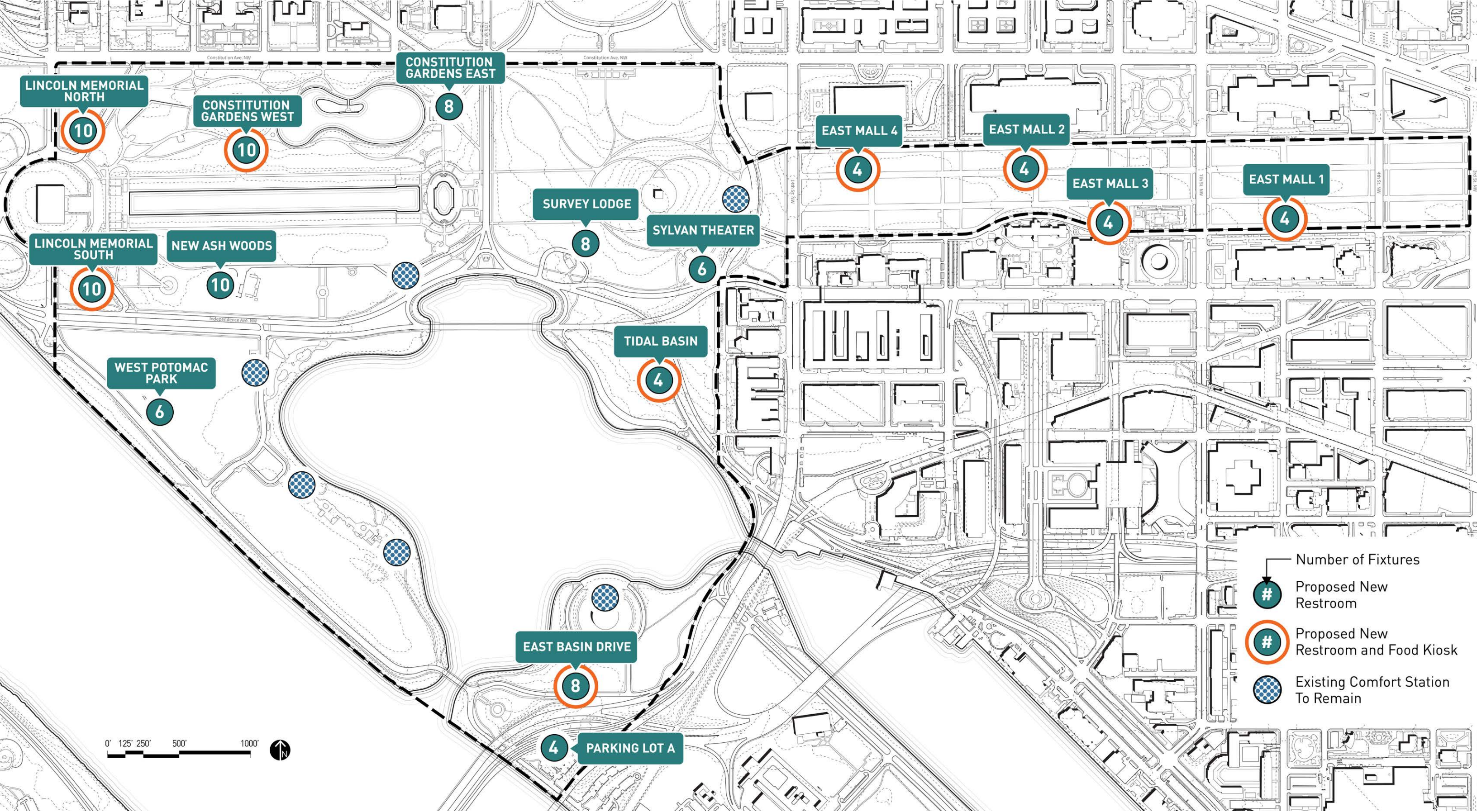
- Possible Materials:**
- Transparent Glass
  - Translucent Glass
  - Spandrel Glass



- Possible Materials:**
- Painted Aluminum
  - Anodized Aluminum



- Possible Materials:**
- Natural Wood Panel
  - Metal Panel with Wood Effect Finish

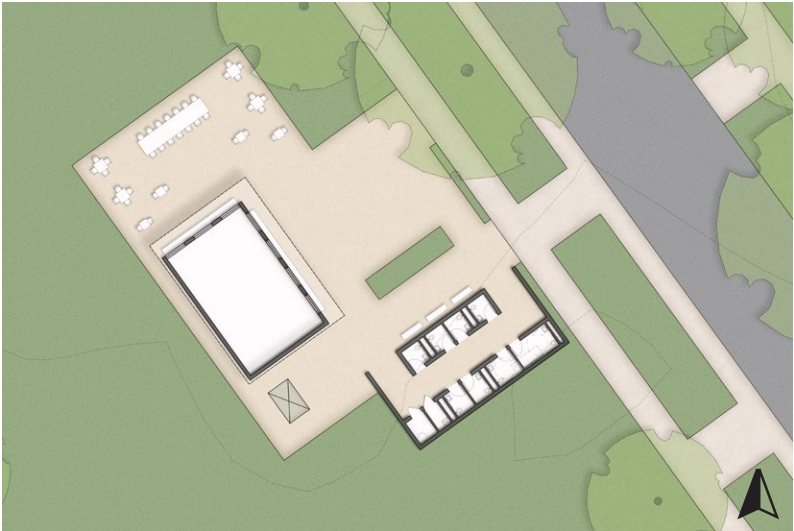


# ARCHITECTURAL CASE STUDY DESIGN CONCEPTS

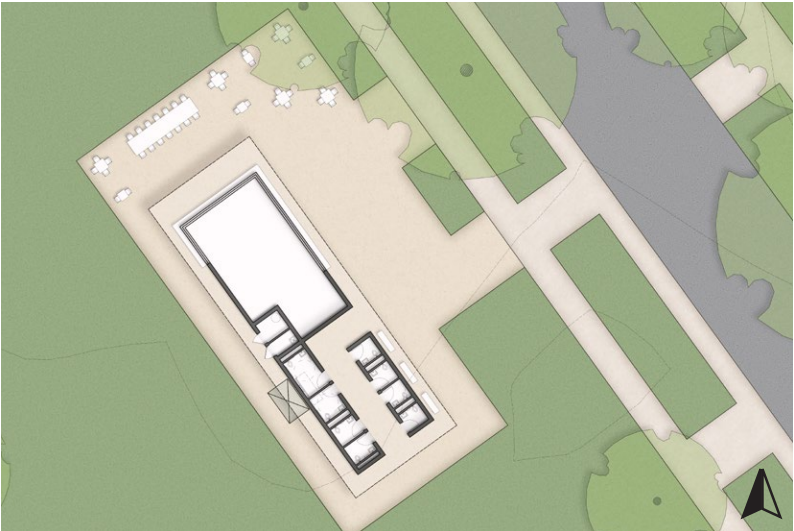
DESIGN CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

LINCOLN MEMORIAL S.

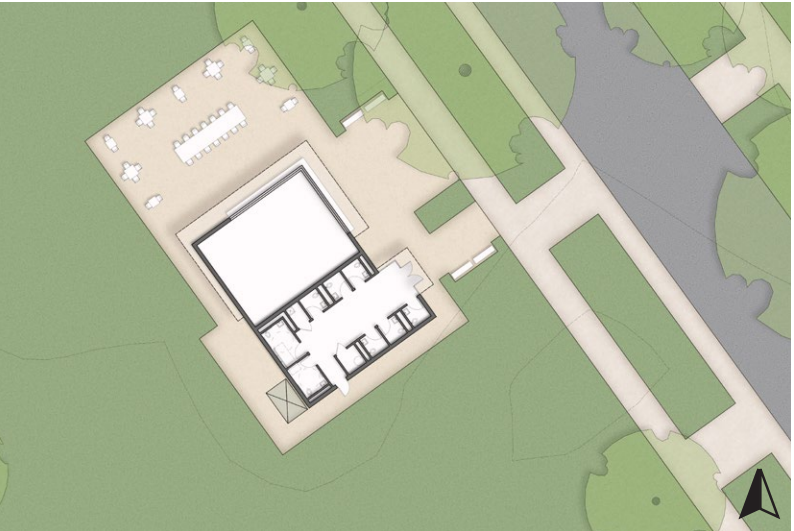
Concept A



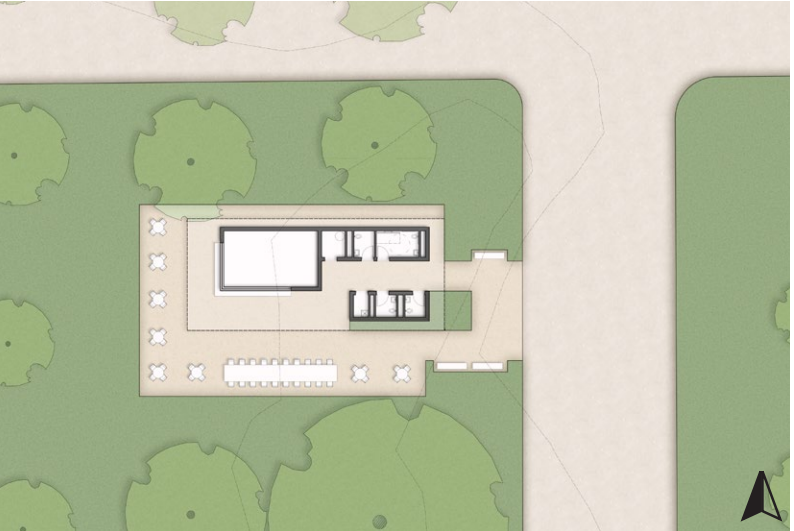
Concept B



Concept C



EAST MALL #4



ASH WOODS



# DESIGN CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

Concept A



Concept B



Concept C



LINCOLN MEMORIAL S.




EAST MALL #4



ASH WOODS

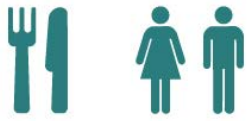
DESIGN CONCEPTS: CASE STUDY SITES

 10 FIXT.

**LINCOLN MEMORIAL  
SOUTH**

EXISTING AREA1,015 GSF

PROPOSED AREA1,970 GSF

 10 FIXT.

**CONSTITUTION  
GARDENS WEST**

EXISTING AREA850 GSF

PROPOSED AREA2,315 GSF

 4 FIXT.

**EAST MALL 4**

EXISTING AREA430 GSF

PROPOSED AREA1,270 GSF

 10 FIXT.

**ASH WOODS**

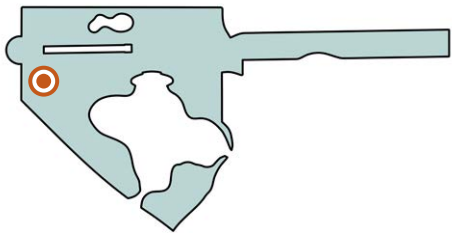
PROPOSED AREA1,725 GSF

# LINCOLN MEMORIAL SOUTH: SITE ANALYSIS

SIZE:



LOCATION:



EXISTING CONDITIONS:



SITE CONTEXT:



# LINCOLN MEMORIAL SOUTH: DETACHED MASSING, BREEZEWAY RESTROOM

SITE PLAN



VIEW A



VIEW B



VIEW C







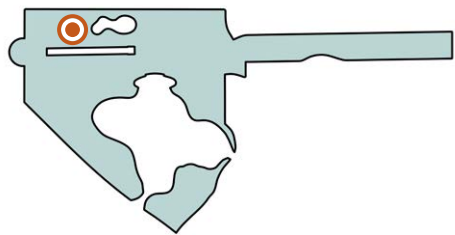


# CONSTITUTION GARDENS WEST: SITE ANALYSIS

SIZE:



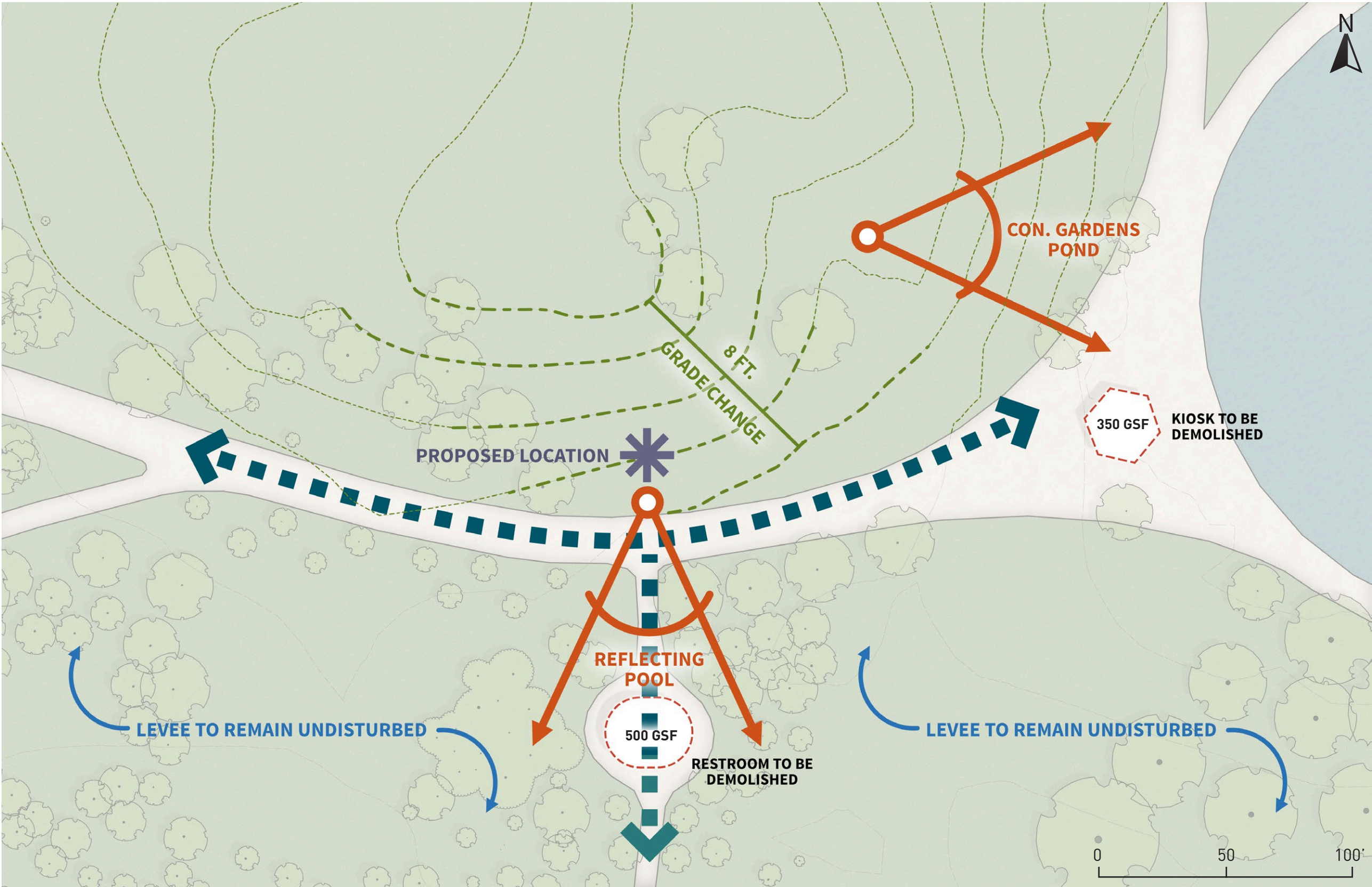
LOCATION:



EXISTING CONDITIONS:

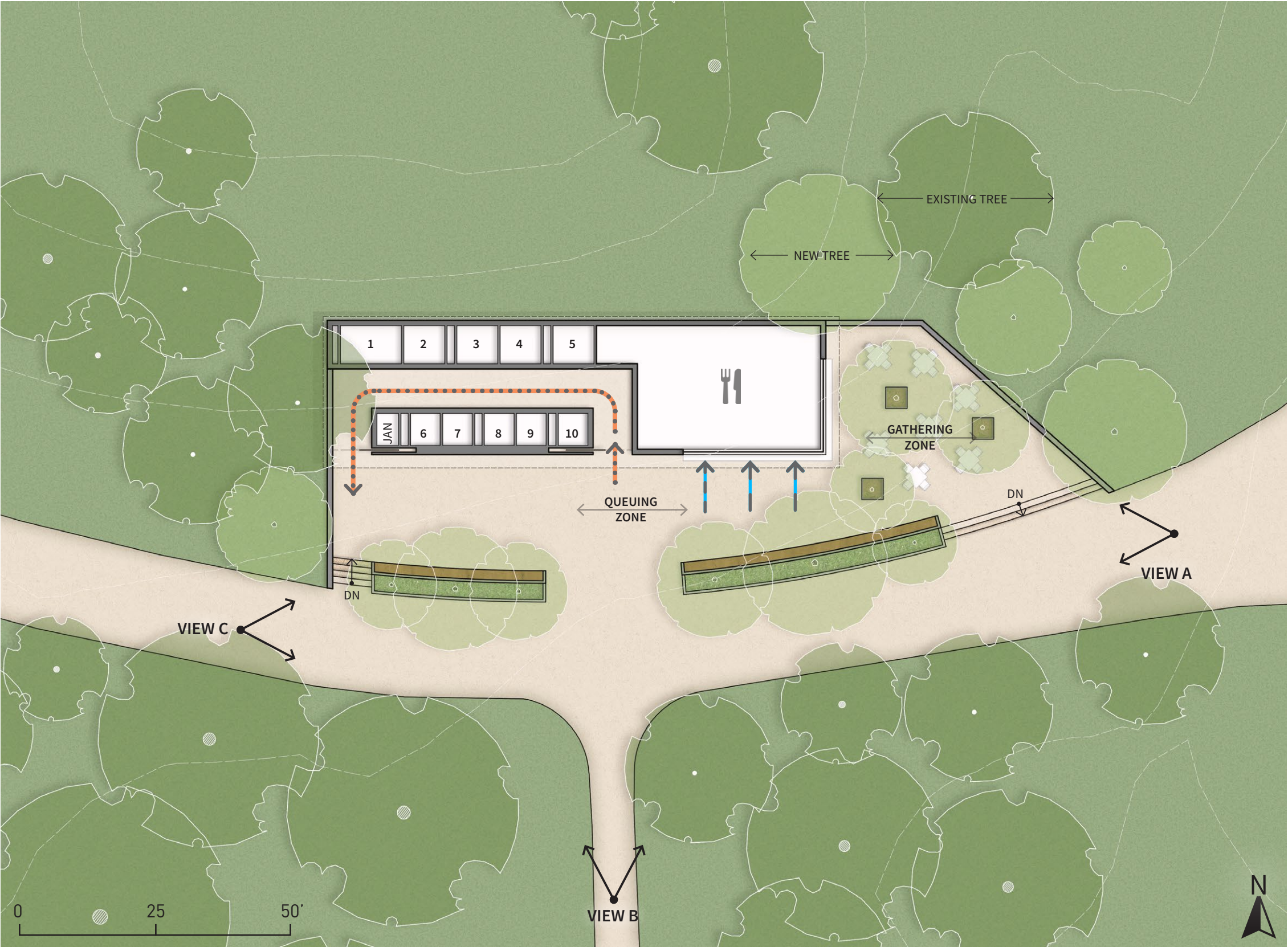


SITE CONTEXT:



# CONSTITUTION GARDENS WEST: ATTACHED MASSING, BREEZEWAY RESTROOM “U”

SITE PLAN



VIEW A



VIEW B



VIEW C







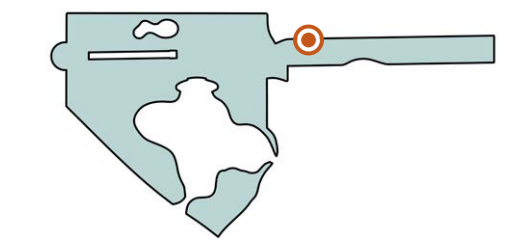


# EAST MALL #4: SITE ANALYSIS

SIZE:



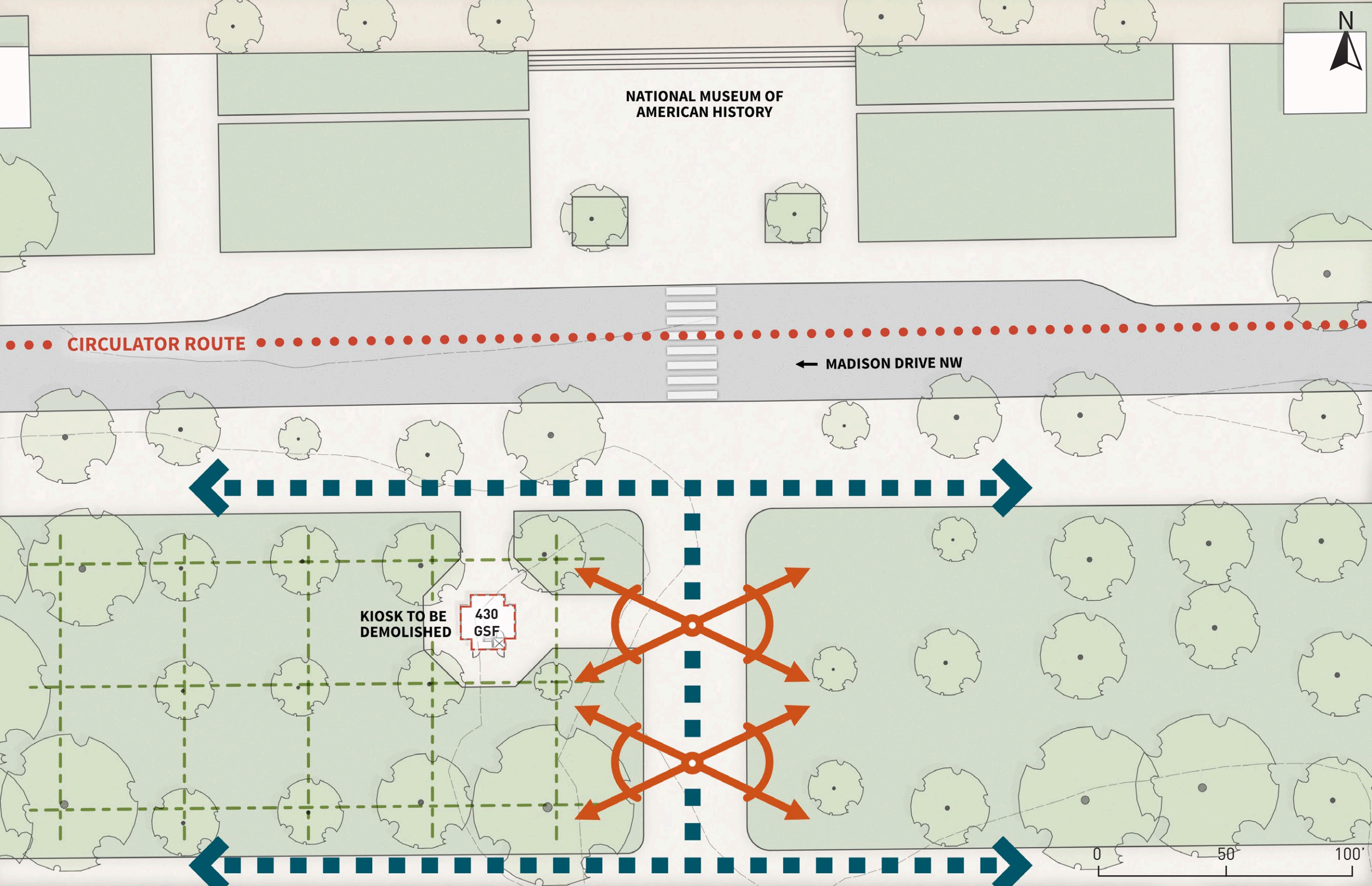
LOCATION:



EXISTING CONDITIONS:

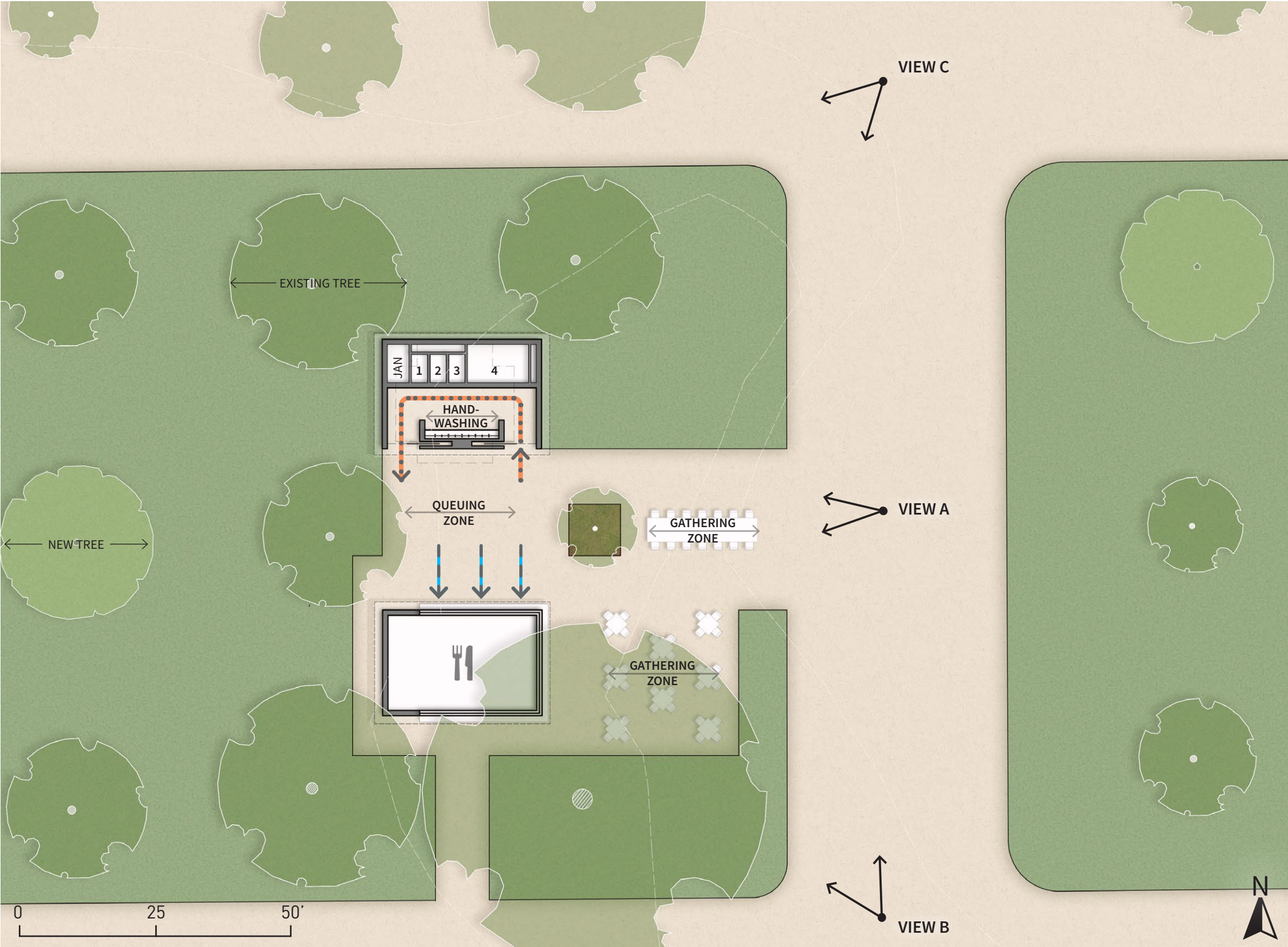


SITE CONTEXT:



# EAST MALL #4: DETACHED MASSING, BREEZEWAY RESTROOM “U”

SITE PLAN



VIEW A



VIEW B



VIEW C



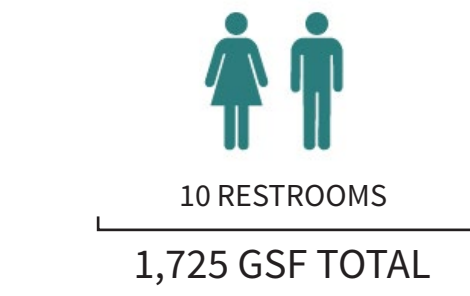




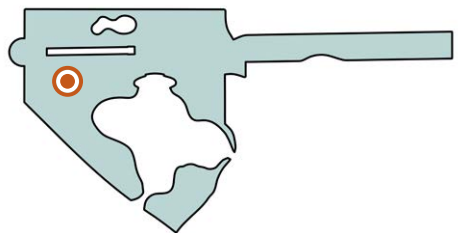


# ASH WOODS: SITE ANALYSIS

SIZE:



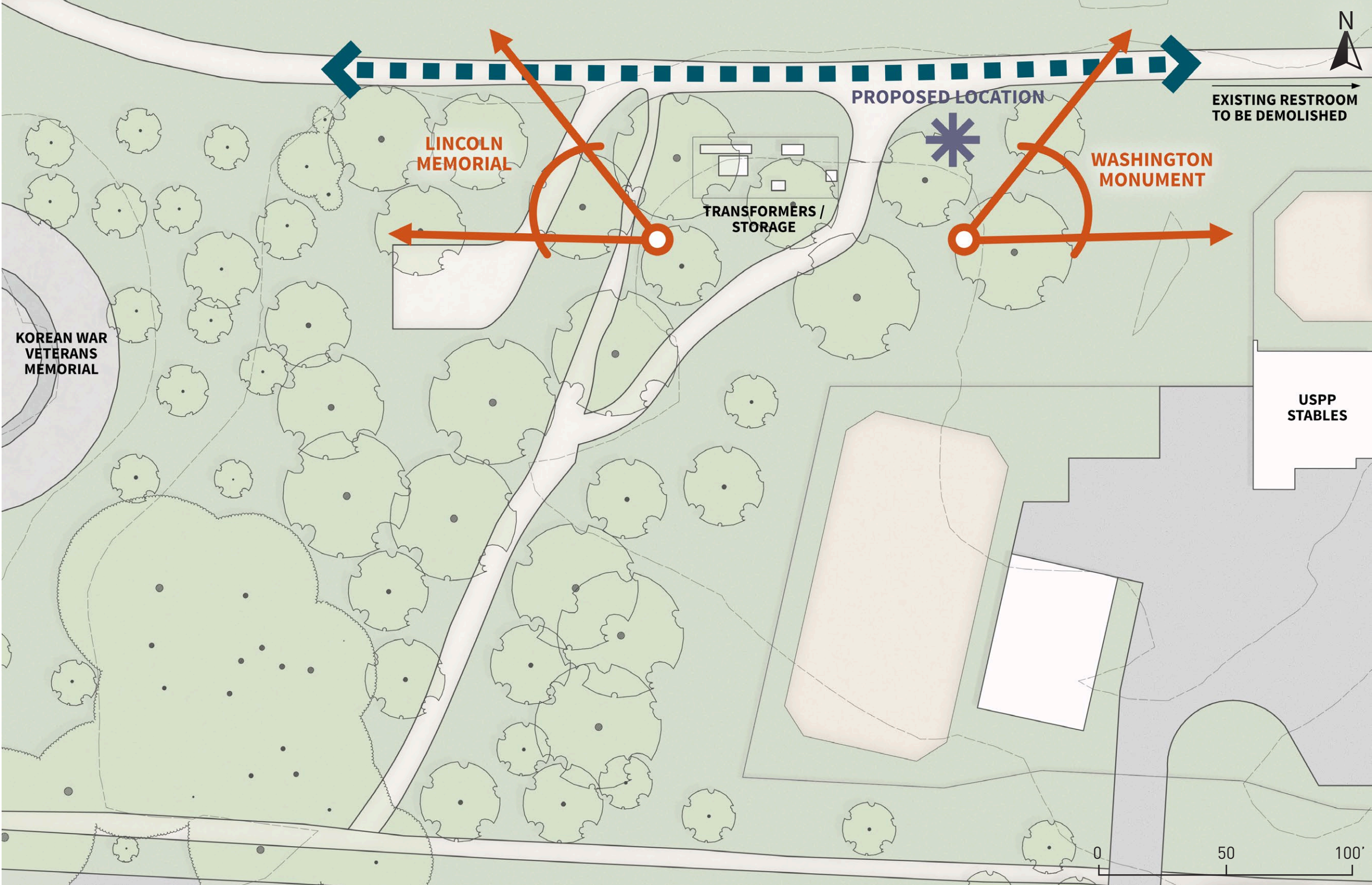
LOCATION:



EXISTING CONDITIONS:

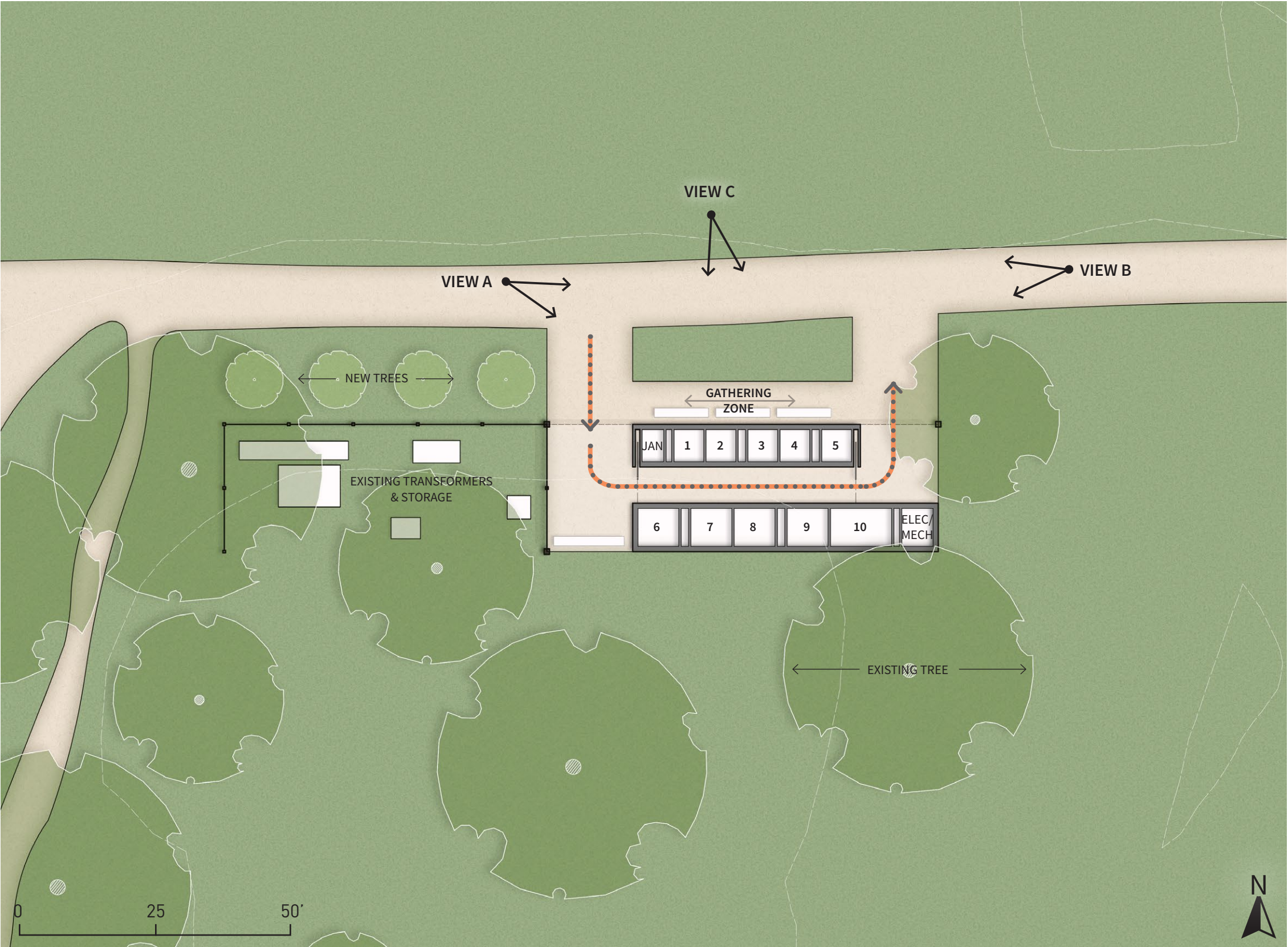


SITE CONTEXT:



# ASH WOODS: BREEZEWAY RESTROOM “U”

SITE PLAN



VIEW A



VIEW B



VIEW C

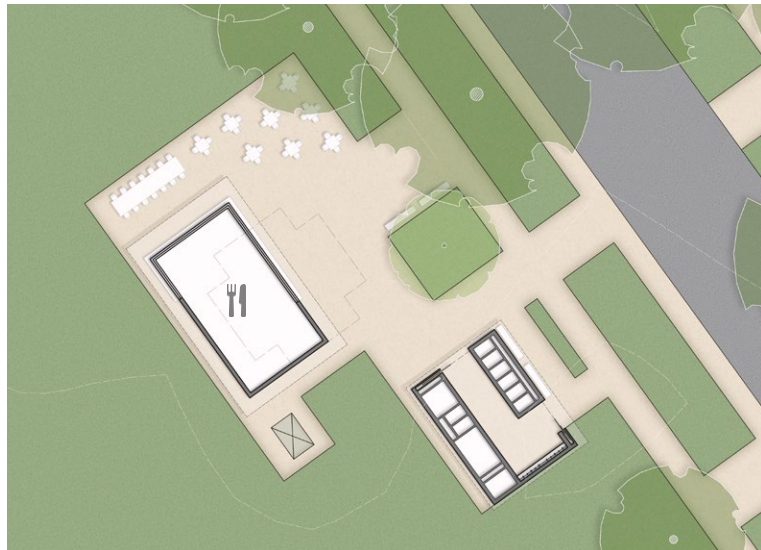




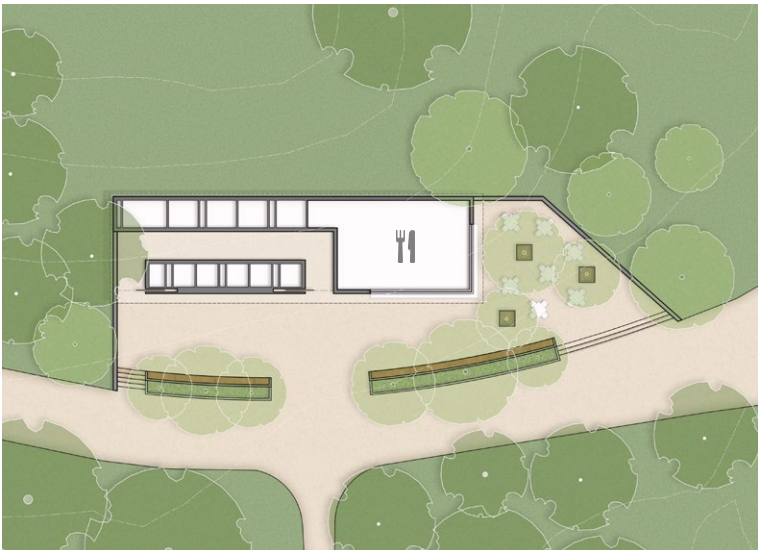




LINCOLN MEMORIAL SOUTH



CONSTITUTION GARDENS WEST



EAST MALL #4



ASH WOODS

