



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SAVANNAH DISTRICT  
4751 BEST ROAD, SUITE 140  
COLLEGE PARK, GEORGIA 30337-5600

January 18, 2023

Regulatory Division  
SAS-2022-00191

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Savannah District/State of Georgia**

The Savannah District has received an application for a Department of the Army Permit, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344), as follows:

The comment period for the Department of the Army Permit application will close 30 days from the date of this public notice. Written comments, including suggestions for modifications or objections to the proposed work, stating reasons thereof, are being solicited from anyone having interest in this permit, and must be submitted to be received on or before the last day of the comment period. Written comments concerning this Department of the Army Permit application must reference the Applicant's name and the Permit Application Number and be forwarded to the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) at the above address, or via the email listed at the end of this notice.

This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval.

Application Number: SAS-2022-00191

Applicant: Mr. Raymond Carrion  
Muscogee County School District  
2960 Macon Road  
Columbus, Georgia 31906

Agent: Ms. Ashley Taylor  
Moon Meeks & Associates Inc.  
100 Southern Way, Suite A  
Columbus, Georgia 31904

Location of Proposed Work: The project is proposed on a 38.4-acre site, located directly northeast of the intersection of Northstar Drive and Kennedy Street, and south of School Alley, within the City of Columbus, Muscogee County, Georgia (centered at approximately latitude 32.4439, longitude -84.9043). A reach of an un-named tributary to Tiger Creek flows generally west-to-east through the central portion of the site. The existing Dawson Elementary School building, playgrounds and soccer field are located within the northwestern portion of the project site.

Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the Corps: The project involves the proposed construction of a new elementary school (“Muscogee County School District Elementary School No. 8”), within an approximately 8.8-acre southern portion of the project site, to support the growing student population of south Columbus and to replace two smaller, aging elementary schools whose combined district area is approximately six square miles. Construction of proposed building pads, parking lots, recreation areas and other attendant features, including storm management facilities, would result in the cumulative loss of 0.76-acre of wetland. Installation of a sanitary sewer line would incur additional, temporary impacts to 0.01-acre of wetland and 19 linear feet (0.004 acre) of perennial stream.

A Pre-Construction Notification (PCN), requesting verification for use of Nationwide Permit (NWP) No. 39 ("Commercial and Institutional Developments"), submitted on January 26, 2021, proposed an earlier project design intended to limit proposed permanent project impacts to 0.33-acre of wetland through the use of a retaining wall. The Corps had preliminarily determined that the proposed project would result in minimal adverse environmental effects and the proposed compensatory mitigation plan was adequate to off-set the proposed impacts. As the Corps did not provide a written NWP verification, the activity was determined by the Applicant to be authorized within the required 45-day PCN review period. Consequently, the Applicant purchased 2.0 legacy wetland credits and 57 legacy stream credits from the Kolomoki Mitigation Bank on June 9, 2022, and proceeded with project construction based on this earlier plan in August 2022. We understand that while a portion of the original impacts were being conducted in reliance on the NWP, the Applicant's geotechnical testing indicated that the presence of unsuitable soils would render the proposed retaining wall infeasible. The Applicant subsequently ceased project construction within aquatic resources, developed a revised site plan, and then contacted the Corps in a pre-application capacity.

The Applicant's revised site plan would now incorporate an extended fill slope, resulting in additional proposed permanent adverse impacts to 0.44-acre of wetland. The proposed sanitary impacts remain the same as documented in the previously submitted PCN. In order to off-set the additional impacts, the Applicant has proposed to purchase 2.64 legacy wetland credits from an approved compensatory mitigation bank servicing the project site within its Primary Service Area.

## **STATE OF GEORGIA**

Water Quality Certification: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division will review the proposed project for Water Quality Certification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The applicant requested a Water Quality Certification from the State of Georgia on January 16, 2023. Prior to issuance of a Department of the Army Permit for a project located in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia, review for Water Quality Certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act is required. A reasonable period of time, which shall not exceed one year, is established under the Clean Water Act for the State to act on a request for Water Quality Certification, after which, issuance of such a Department of the Army Permit may proceed. This public notice serves as notification to the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) pursuant to section 401(a)(2) of the Clean Water Act for neighboring jurisdiction review and begins the 30-day clock for USEPA to notify affected states.

State-owned Property and Resources: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or another appropriate instrument.

## **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

The Savannah District must consider the purpose and the impacts of the applicant's proposed work, prior to a decision on issuance of a Department of the Army Permit.

Aquatic Resources Delineation: An aquatic resources delineation review (ARDR) for the proposed project site was submitted in conjunction with the previously submitted PCN. An ARDR is a written notification from the Corps concurring, not concurring, or commenting on the wetland boundaries delineated on a property. Under such a review, the Corps does not address the jurisdictional status of the wetlands on the property, solely the boundaries of the resources as delineated within the review area.

Cultural Resources Assessment: The Applicant contracted Phase I cultural resource survey of the proposed project site in December 2022, to assess if potential archaeological sites, historic structures, or cultural resources that may be present within the general vicinity of the proposed work area. The Corps is currently reviewing the reporting to assess the potential for adverse effects to historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, presently

unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistorical or historical data may also be located at the site and could be affected by the proposed work.

Endangered Species: Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), we request information from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; or, any other interested party, on whether any species listed or proposed for listing may be present in the area. The agent has submitted an *IPaC Trust Resource Report* for the project site. The *IPaC* identified the following potential Federally listed species may occur on the project site: Federally endangered relict trillium (*Trillium reliquum*), Federally endangered Michaux's Sumac (*Rhus michauxii*), Federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), and Federal candidate Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). *IPaC* did not identify any critical habitat within the vicinity of the proposed project site. The Applicant submitted project documentation to Georgia Ecological Services Field Office, West Georgia Sub Office, on December 12, 2022.

Public Interest Review: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

Consideration of Public Comments: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact

Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest in the proposed activity.

Application of Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: The proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States. The Savannah District's evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act, including an evaluation of practicable alternatives. In the Applicant's current proposal, one (1) off-site alternative, in addition to the applicant's preferred site, has been proposed within the six-mile proposed school district.

Public Hearing: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application for a Department of the Army permit. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for requesting a public hearing. The decision whether to hold a public hearing is at the discretion of the District Engineer, or his designated appointee, based on the need for additional substantive information necessary for evaluating the proposed project.

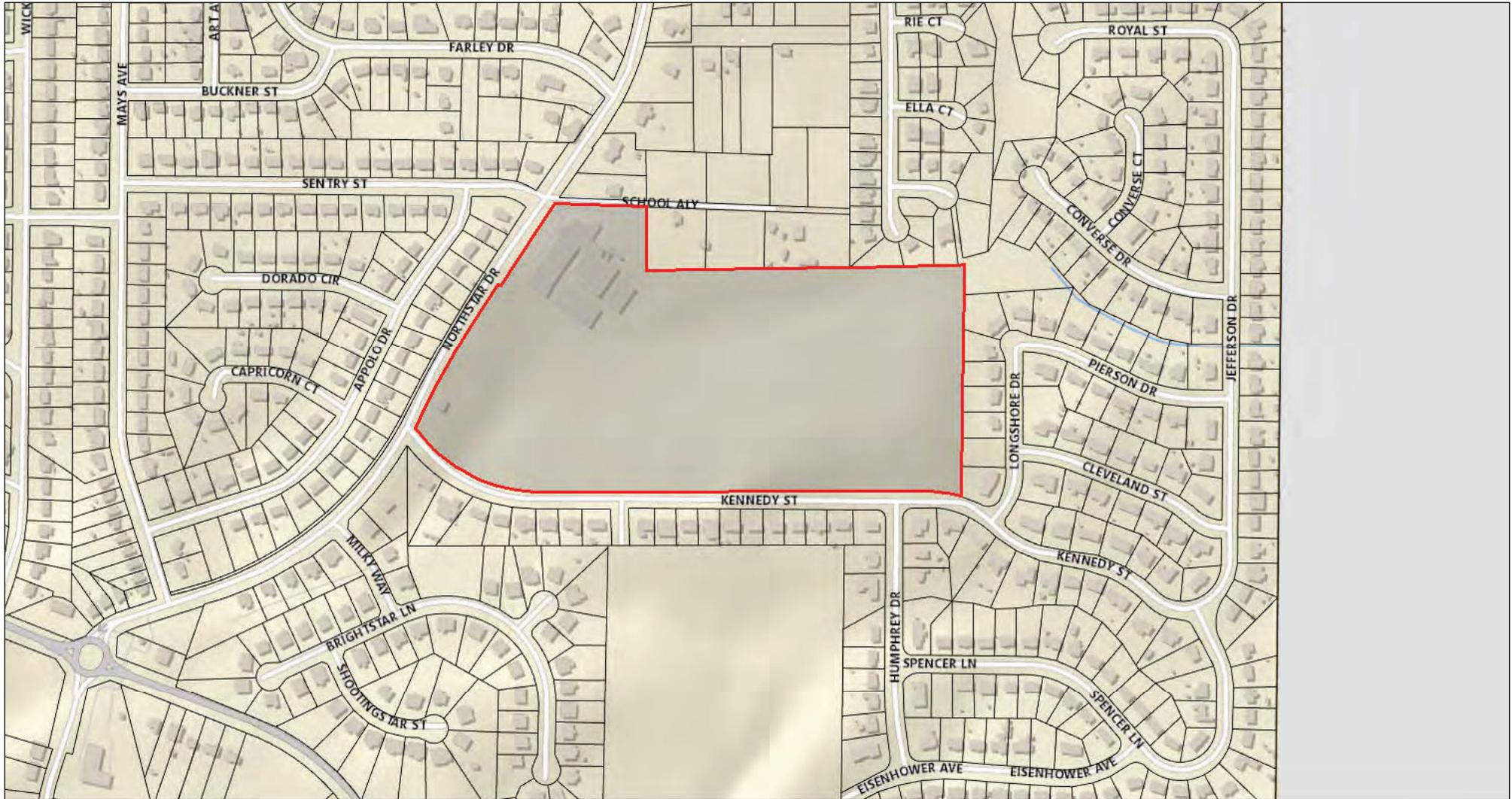
Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment on this application for a Department of the Army Permit should submit comments via email to [adam.f.white@usace.army.mil](mailto:adam.f.white@usace.army.mil) or in writing to: Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Adam White, 4751 Best Road, Suite 140, College Park, Georgia 30337-5600, no later than **30 days** from the date of this notice. Please refer to the Applicant's name (Muscogee County School District) and the assigned Regulatory file number (SAS-2022-00191) in your comments.

If you have any further questions concerning this public notice, please contact Adam F. White, Project Manager, Piedmont Branch at 678-422-2730, or [adam.f.white@usace.army.mil](mailto:adam.f.white@usace.army.mil).

Encls

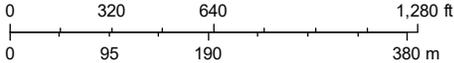
1. Project Parcel Map – 180 Northstar Drive (December 8, 2022)
2. Jurisdictional Waters Survey (April 22, 2021)
3. Site Plan Detail – MCSD – Elementary School No. 8 (revised November 15, 2022)
4. Geographic Area for Alternatives

093 003 004, 180 NORTHSTAR DR, GA

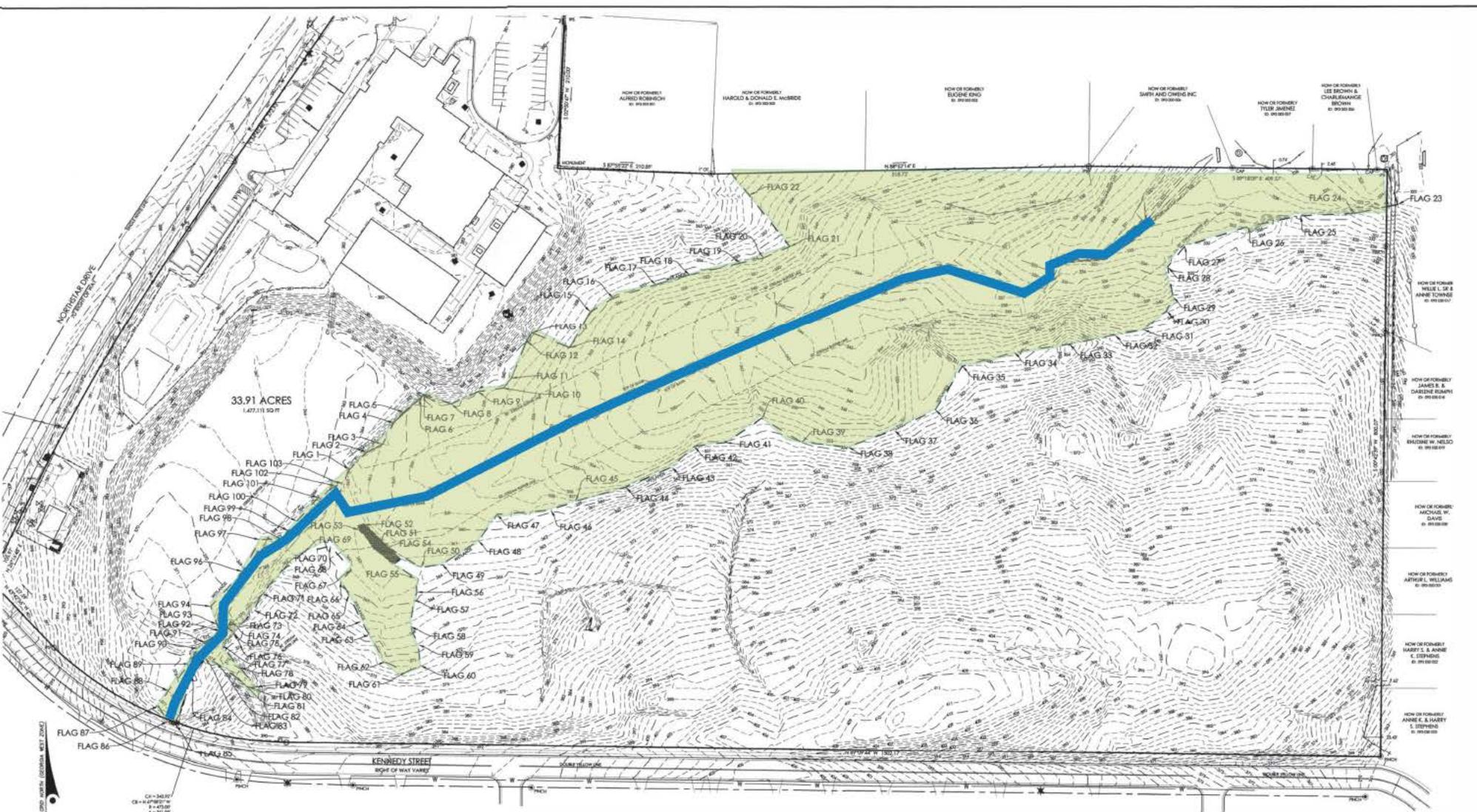


December 9, 2022

1:4,777



Columbus Consolidated Government



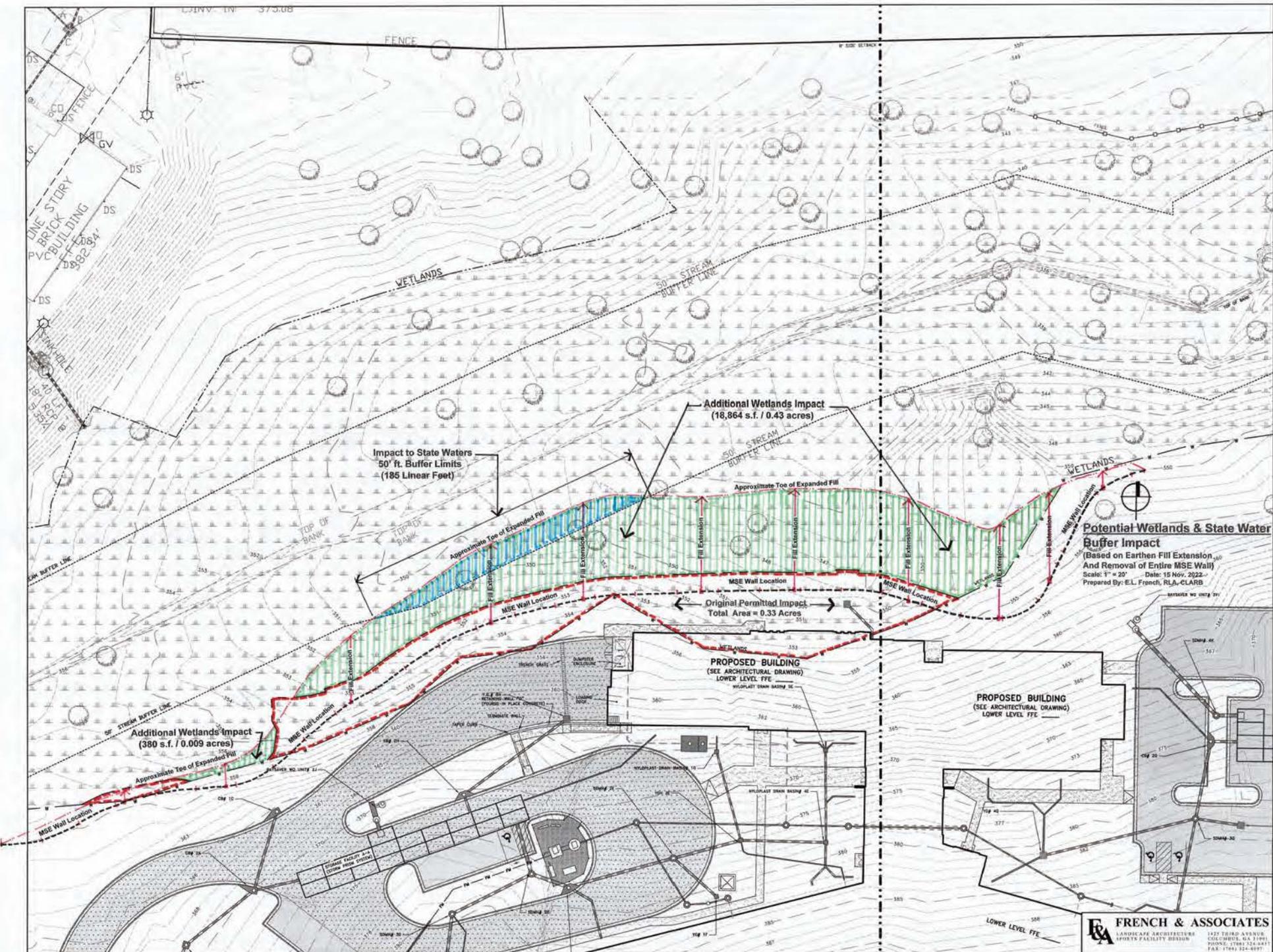
**Dawson Elementary/Elementary #8**  
**Columbus, Muscogee County, GA**  
**Jurisdictional Waters Survey**

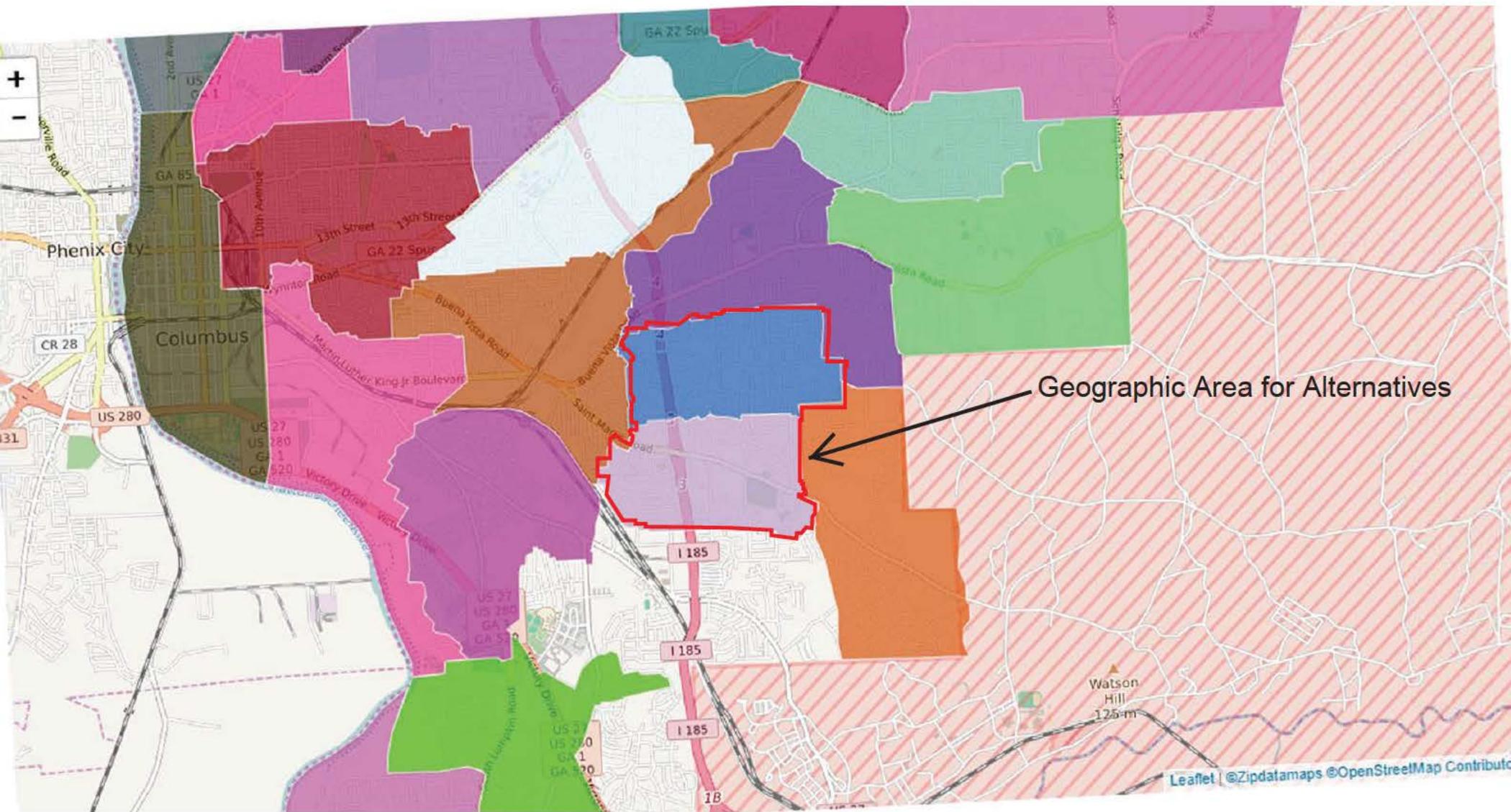
**NOT TO SCALE**  
 GRAPHIC SCALE  
 (IN FEET)  
 1 inch = 100'

WETLAND SURVEY OF DAWSON ELEMENTARY  
 PART OF LAND LOT 15, 9TH DISTRICT  
 COLUMBUS, MUSCOGEE COUNTY, GEORGIA  
 FOR  
 MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
 SCALE 1" = 100' APRIL 22ND, 2021



Beck's Address:  
 7333 Springs Court, Suite 7  
 Columbus, GA 31907  
 Office: 706-542-8714  
 Fax: 800-786-9978  
 C.O.A. - CA-1035-LS





Geographic Area for Alternatives