

St. Mark's Street Park Working Group (SMSPWG)

Meeting Minutes

May 16 2023

REMOTE ZOOM MEETING

Working Group Members Present: Andrew Dennington, Grant Farrington, Kevin Miller, Marguerite Landry, Bill Sines, & James Nichols-Worley.

Commenting: Sally Watters, Michael Kluchman & Greg Russell from VHB

Administrative

1. Meeting called to order at 7:01pm by Chair Marguerite Landry
2. Amend/Approve Minutes
 - a. May 5, 2023. Dennington moves, Sines seconds. Approved 6-0. Aye: Andrew Dennington, Grant Farrington, Kevin Miller, Marguerite Landry, Bill Sines, and James Nichols-Worley.

Discussion of VHB Park Design

3. Trees – At least 11 needed to replace former trees.
 - a. Michael Kluchman discusses a wide range of possibilities for new trees; only one living tree could be removed to have a properly-graded sidewalk and path. Sidewalk can possibly be moved to preserve tree.
 - b. Deciduous trees could be planted in Southwestern corner of the park instead of/with evergreens. Kluchman says tree placement can be more mixed/layered.
 - c. Sally Watters comments that wind-break is less of a concern than acidic-rain for Old Burial Ground.
4. Permeability of Pathways - Decomposed Granite/Stone Dust.
 - a. Greg Russell comments that site conditions are variable. Asphalt has a runoff coefficient (relating the amount of runoff to the amount of precipitation received) of about 97, compared to Decomposed Granite around 86-96.
5. Stone wall replacement – 100 feet of walls came down, at least 160 feet of walls will go back up outside of the park area.
 - a. Russell clarifies that stone walls be relocated onto the moved section of St. Mark's Street to make a continuous stone wall bordering Route 85 on the parking lot. There are no proposed walls in the park area.
 - b. Russell discusses walls, fences, and alternative boundaries around the park. Russell

argues trees will give a sense of enclosure in the space. A pipe-rail fence, like on the Town Common, could go in the area at a later date.

- c. Currently, landscaping of rain gardens creates a boundary between the road and the main park area.
 - d. Current contractor under contract to replace the wall on the other side of St. Mark's Street and Route 85, but not in the park area.
 - e. Group concerned about separation between the Park and the road for safety and aesthetic reasons. Very important, possibly put in alternate requests for additional walls in the Park where appropriate.
6. Memorial Medallion of Granite in center plaza – Delaying placement could disrupt park area with heavy equipment
- a. Miller adds that archeological artifacts were found in the area, the Town must look into best ways to store/display.
 - b. Memorial Medallion in the brick plaza to be removed from plans, instead to be filled in with brick.
 - c. Possibility to supplement park with historical markers going forward.
7. Group vote to send the current plan to the Select Board to put out to bid at their 5/23/23 meeting, or as soon as possible, with changes as noted in the minutes above (Moving path to save one tree, adding red maples in place of an oak tree, layering trees instead of all evergreen trees, modifying rain gardens and bushes, and removing the Granite Memorial Medallion). The Group further recommends looking into putting in new stone walls.
- a. Nichols-Worley moves, Dennington Seconds. Approved 6-0. Aye: Andrew Dennington, Grant Farrington, Kevin Miller, Marguerite Landry, Bill Sines, and James Nichols-Worley.
8. Group will ask the Select Board for guidance on decision-making for the park name.

Administrative

9. Amend/Approve Minutes
- a. May 16, 2023. Dennington moves, Sines seconds. Approved 6-0. Aye: Andrew Dennington, Grant Farrington, Kevin Miller, Marguerite Landry, Bill Sines, and James Nichols-Worley.
10. Dennington moves to adjourn, Nichols-Worley seconds. Approved 6-0. Aye: Andrew Dennington, Grant Farrington, Kevin Miller, Marguerite Landry, Bill Sines, and James Nichols-Worley.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39pm

Documents

VHB Park Design received May 2, 2023 ("PLAN AND DETAILS FOR SOUTHBOROUGH HISTORY WALK - ST.

MARK'S PARK")

May 15 Email from Freddie Gillespie to Chair Landry

Emails from VHB to Group

Submitted by James Nichols-Worley, Secretary, May, 2023

From: [Frederica Gillespie](#)
To: [Margarite Landry](#)
Subject: Re: VHB planting plans question
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 10:47:53 PM
Attachments: [VHB Plantings for Park 2023-05-07.png](#)

Hi Margarite

Congratulations on your success at the polls to gain a seat on the Select Board.

I imagine this has been a whirlwind week for you as it has been for me planning and preparing for our Concert, Garden Tour, and Plant Sale.

I reviewed the plan you sent, thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

I support Michael Weishan suggestion to use *Ilex opaca* (American holly) in the planting. It was in the plan I submitted last winter. You would need at least, 2 one male and one female to get the berries. This tree is on Dr. Gegear's list of plants for at-risk pollinators.

The Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) had been involved with this project from its inception to extend the benefit of the Pollination Preservation Garden at the library. So, we would be very supportive of the *Ilex opaca* being planted in the park.

I would not support the disease resistant elm as they are Hybrid Asian elms and therefore not native. I recommend a red maple if you want to diversify the 3 oak trees. It is a tree I recommended in the past, and it is also a Dr. Gegear researched and recommended plant to preserve biodiversity.

As part of our new directives from the Master Plan, the OSPC is embarking on a Tree Initiative to help preserve native trees throughout town. We expect programming to begin in the fall, so it occurred to me when reviewing this plan, that it was prudent to look at the health of the trees in the old burial ground that the SMSPWG is rightfully concerned about protecting. To that end I invited arborist Cliff Templeman to meet me there to walk through the old burial ground, the park area, and the woodland area of the OSPC Pollination Preservation Habitat phase II at the library. Cliff is a RI, MA & NH Certified Arborist, ISA Certified Arborist and an ISA Certified Arborist Utility Specialist.

We spent over two hours on site. One of the first things Cliff explained is that the prevailing winds come from the Northwest, that the line of evergreens intended to protect the old burial ground from wind damage won't accomplish what the committee is intending. In fact, he stated that the trees don't need protection from the wind. As we looked at each tree in the old burial ground, Cliff explained to me the problems each one was suffering from. There are a half dozen or more different issues, many of which are caused by landscaping practices that can be addressed. As part of our new initiative, the OSPC will continue our investigations and look for solutions, then follow up with the relevant town departments and boards to come up with a collaborative plan to address the issues.

As for the wind, yesterday was a windy day, the wind didn't stop blowing the entire 2 hours we were there. I could feel the direction the wind was coming from, but there was no doubt as it was also visible by the direction of the flags on the graves.

Just as Cliff said, the wind came from the northwest, across St. Mark's playing field (the historic mustering ground) from about the edge of the Flagg School property across St. Marks Road and across the gravesites to the southeast corner of the old Burial Ground. I imagine those fields have been open since it was the historic mustering ground and there has not been a wind buffer in all those years.

Therefore, the problem the line of evergreen trees is trying to solve, is a problem that doesn't exist. However, the solid wall of evergreens will debase the value of the park by blocking not only the scenic view as you drive into town, it negates the intention of the history walk; when you try to look at the Old Burial Ground or Pilgrim Church you will only see a wall of evergreen trees year round.

Instead of the evergreen blockade fence, in that area I suggest using shrubs of various heights that don't interfere with the view, and will create a thicket for birds for refuge, foraging for seeds and berries, and nesting habitat as well as pollen and nectar for pollinators. One of the best for this area would be *Rubus odoratus* (Purple Flowering Raspberry) which is wonderful for birds as well as pollinators. I previously provided a list which I can resend if you'd like. The *Diervilla lonicera* (native bush honeysuckle) is a wonderful small shrub with fantastic foliage. That could also be used in this area.

I would replace the shad tree and go with what I previously recommended as a better choice, change the flowering trees back to *Cercis canadensis* (Eastern redbud) as these trees are one of the first trees to bloom in the spring providing critically important nectar that our most at risk pollinators are dependent on. Redbuds are not only beautiful when in bloom, they have lovely heart shaped leaves, which turn a golden yellow in autumn, giving a nice pop of color. Songbirds eat the seeds.

The list for the rain gardens has great choices from Dr. Gegear's list, but I question including Baptisia tinctoria in the rain garden as it likes dry and sandy conditions, indigenous to oak barrens, it might do well to plant up in higher grounds around the base of the oak trees. I would replace it in the rain gardens with a plant that can handle getting its feet wet, there are a lot on Dr. Gegear's list, I'd suggest a combination of button bush for the wetter area lower in the rain garden (even one would be nice) and then Spiraea tomentosa (Steeple bush).

A most important plant if you could get it in the rain garden (or there are some for dry areas) is a male salix (willow) as the early flowers provide pollen that is critically important. There are many species on Dr. Gegear's list.

'Cape Breeze' Switch Grass is a cultivar, the straight species should be used.

Some of the grass area around the rain gardens could be turned to lawn alternatives as many attendees at the Public Forum requested reduced lawn areas. It seems unlikely that folks need lawns next to the wetter areas around the rain gardens.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments!

Freddie

From: Margarite Landry <margace@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 7, 2023 1:20 PM
To: Frederica Gillespie <fgillespie@southboroughma.com>
Subject: VHB planting plans question

[EXTERNAL]

Hi, Freddie,

Hope all is well.

Michael weishan has suggested using a disease resistant elm in place of one of the 3 white oak heritage trees. What are your thoughts on that?

In Addition, he has also suggested using a plant like American Holly in place of some of the white spruce in the line of evergreens mean to protect the Old burial ground from wind damage. He said it was too homogenous-looking to have all white spruce trees there.

What are your thoughts on these changes to the design?

Thank you,

Marguerite



PLAN AND DETAILS FOR

SOUTHBOROUGH HISTORY WALK - ST. MARK'S PARK

IN THE TOWN OF

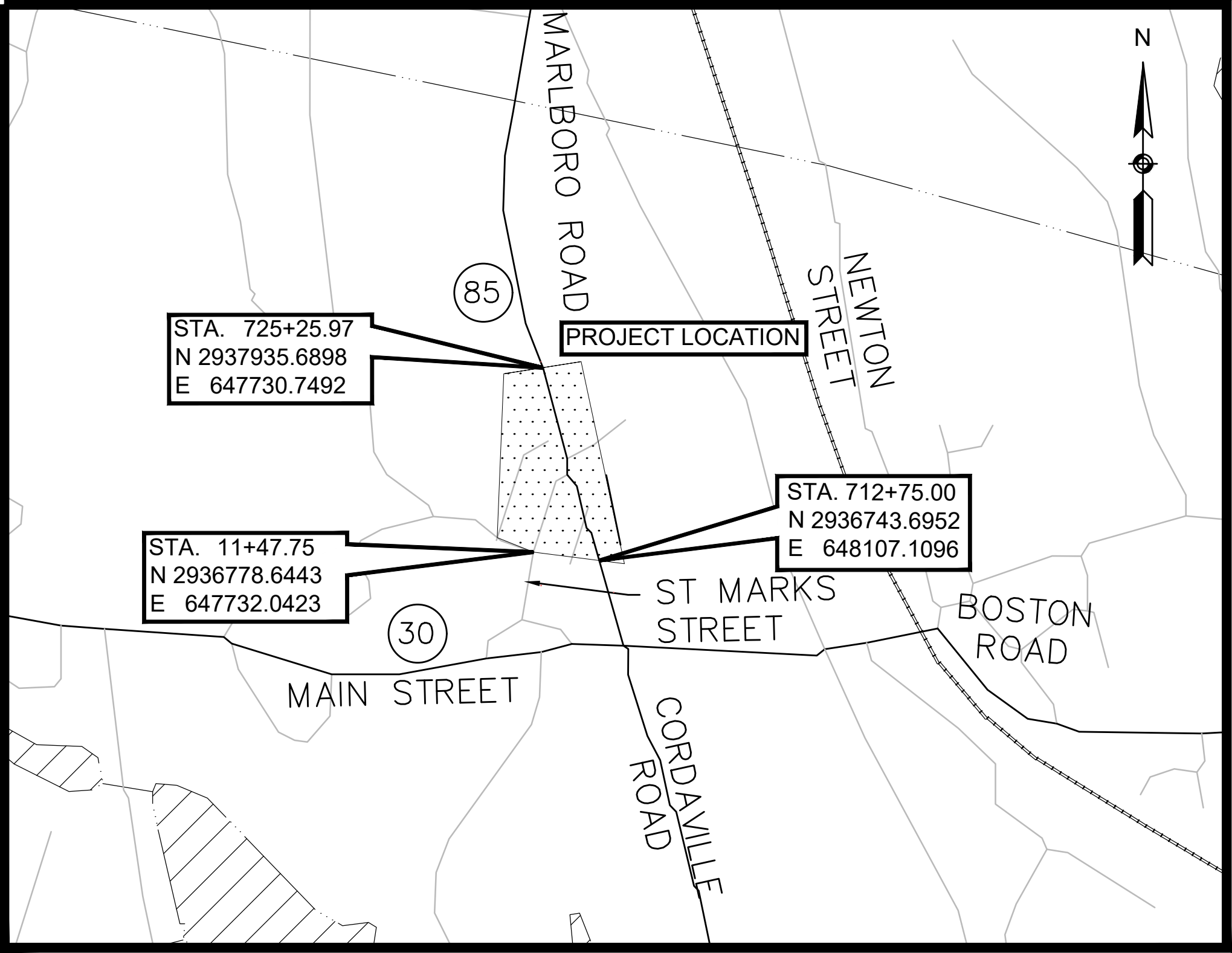
SOUTHBOROUGH

WORCESTER COUNTY

THESE PLANS ARE SUPPLEMENTED BY THE OCTOBER 2017 CONSTRUCTION STANDARD DETAILS, THE 2015 OVERHEAD SIGNAL STRUCTURE AND FOUNDATION STANDARD DRAWINGS, MASSDOT TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLANS AND DETAIL DRAWINGS, THE 1990 STANDARD DRAWINGS FOR SIGNS AND SUPPORTS, THE 1968 STANDARD DRAWINGS FOR TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND HIGHWAY LIGHTING, AND THE LATEST EDITION OF THE AMERICAN STANDARD FOR NURSERY STOCK.

INDEX

SHEET NO.	DESCRIPTION
1	TITLE SHEET & INDEX
2	LAYOUT & MATERIALS PLAN
3	GRADING PLAN
4	PLANTING PLAN
5	PATH PROFILES
6	SITE PROTECTION DETAILS
7	AMENITY DETAILS
8	PLANTING DETAILS



DATE	DESCRIPTION	REV #
<div>ENGINEER</div> <div>DATE</div> <div>Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. 101 Walnut St., PO Box 9151 Watertown, MA 02472 617.924.1770 FAX 617.924.2286</div>		
DESIGNED BY -	APPROVED BY -	SHEET 1 OF 7
DRAWN BY -	DFTG CHECKED BY -	VHB CAD FILE NAME 14931-HD(LA-COV).dwg
CHECKED BY -	DATE 5/1/23	JOB NO. 14931.00

14931-HD(I A) DWG Plotted on 2-May-2023 2:55 PM



14931-HD(I A) DWG Plotted on 2-May-2023 2:55 PM



PLANT SCHEDULE

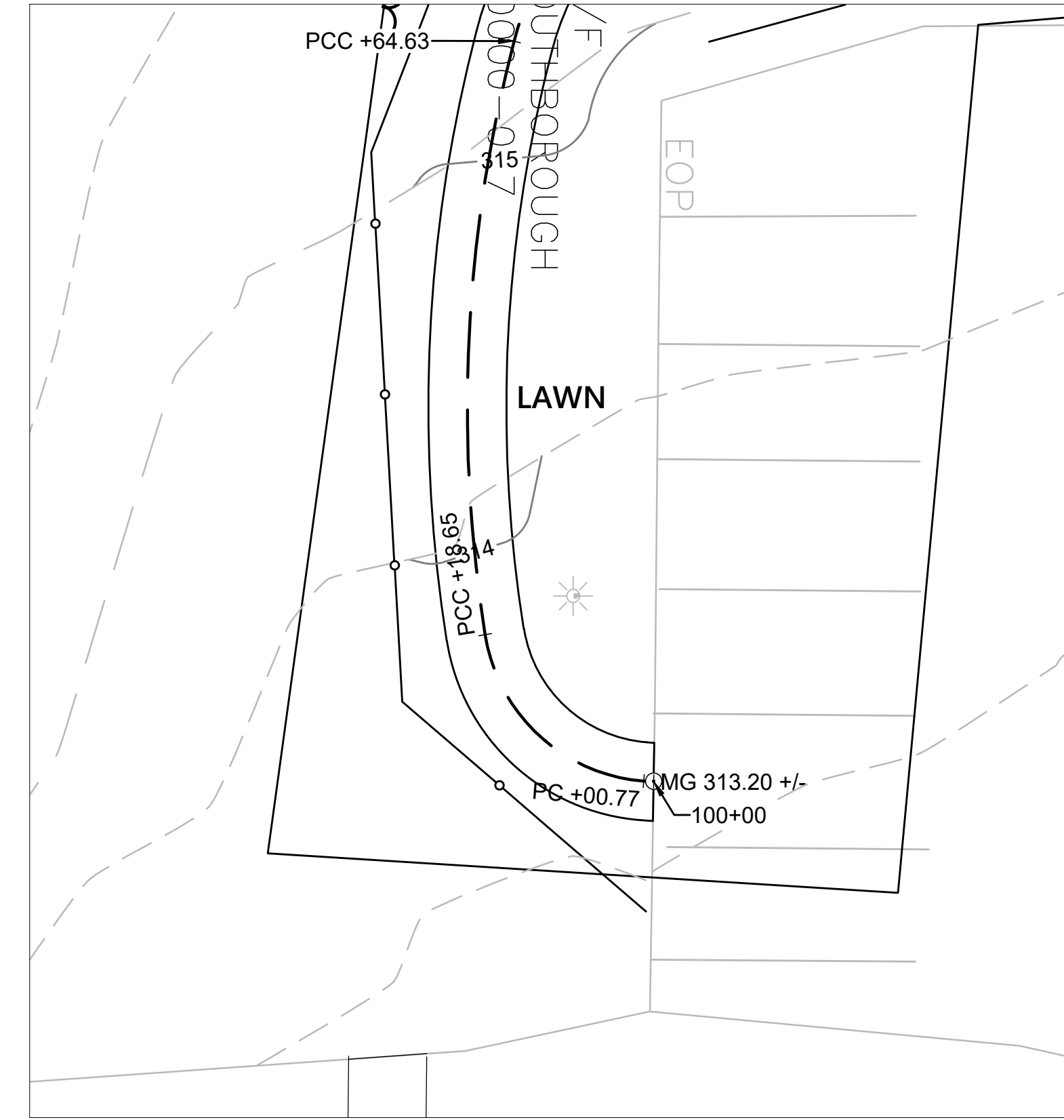
TREES				
QA	3	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE
		White Oak	Quercus alba	3 - 3 1/2" CAL.
EVERGREEN TREES				
PG	7	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE
		White Spruce	Picea glauca	7 - 8' HT.
ORNAMENTAL TREES				
AA	3	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE
		Shad Tree - Downy Clump	Amelanchier arborea	8 - 10' HT., CLUMP
BIORETENTION BASINS				
HP	26	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE
		Shrubby St. John's Wort	Hypericum prolificum	2 - 3' HT.
RP2	6	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE
		Carolina Rose	Rosa carolina	2 - 3' HT.
VH	9	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE
		Highbush Blueberry	Vaccinium corymbosum	2 - 3' HT.

BIORETENTION HERBACEOUS	CODE	QTY	BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME	SIZE	SPACING
-------------------------	------	-----	-------------------------	------	---------

	AP	112	Asclepias purpurascens Purple Milkweed	1 GAL.	18" o.c.
	BT	52	Baptisia tinctoria Yellow Wild Indigo	1 GAL.	24" o.c.
	CL	45	Chasmanthium latifolium Northern Sea Oats	1 GAL.	24" o.c.
	ES	111	Eragrostis spectabilis Purple Love Grass	1 GAL.	18" o.c.
	ED	64	Eutrochium dubium Joe Pye Weed	1 GAL.	24" o.c.
	MB	83	Monarda fistulosa Bergamot	1 GAL.	18" o.c.
	PC2	25	Panicum virgatum 'Cape Breeze' Cape Breeze Switch Grass	1 GAL.	24" o.c.
	PD2	108	Penstemon digitalis Beardtongue	1 GAL.	18" o.c.

SOUTHBOROUGH
SOUTHBOROUGH HISTORY WALK
PARK
PLANTING PLAN
SHEET 4 OF 8

MARLBORO ROAD (RTE 85)



10 0 10 20
SCALE IN FEET

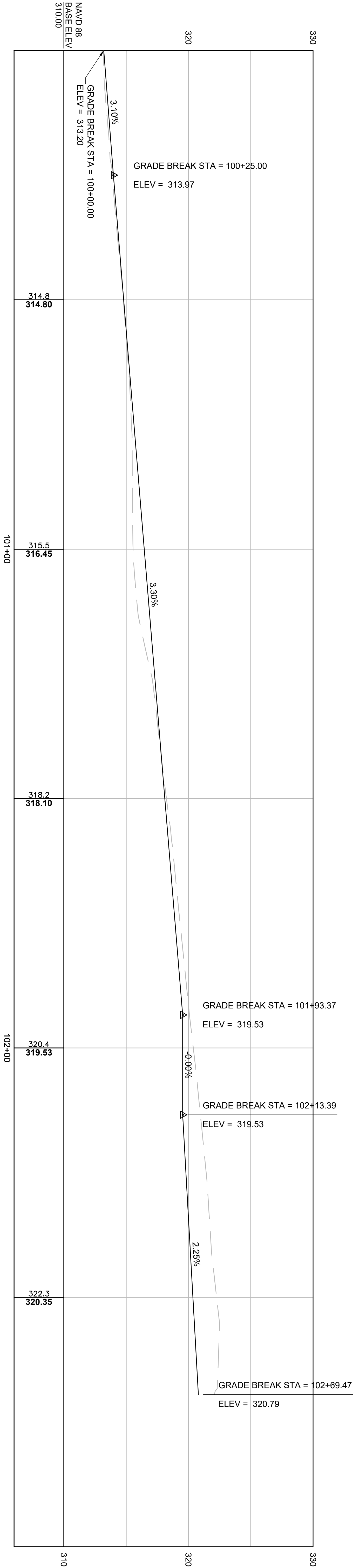
N

SET PROP TREE
PROTECTION FENCE 25'
FROM WALL - RETAIN UNTIL
PROJECT IS COMPLETE

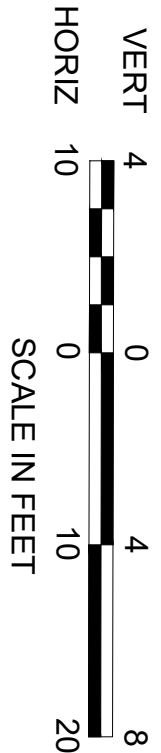
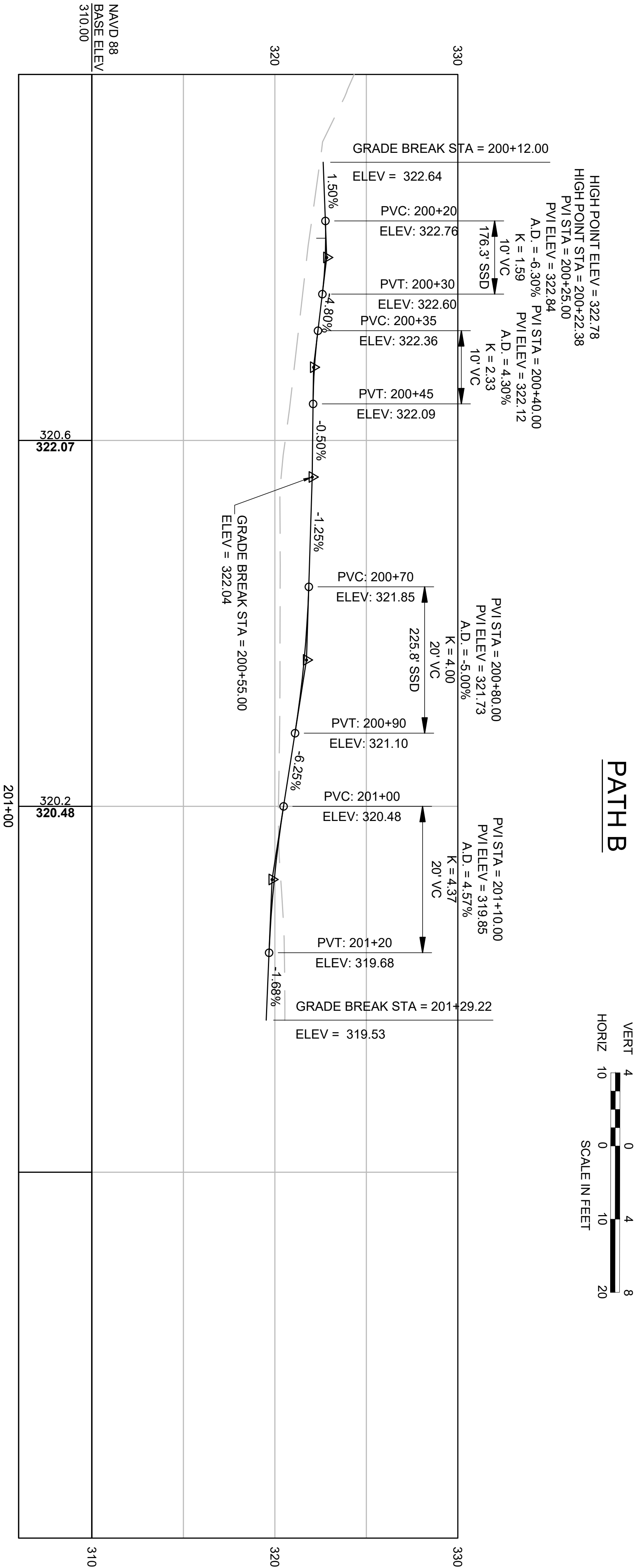
CONTINUED ON
SHEET NO. 103A

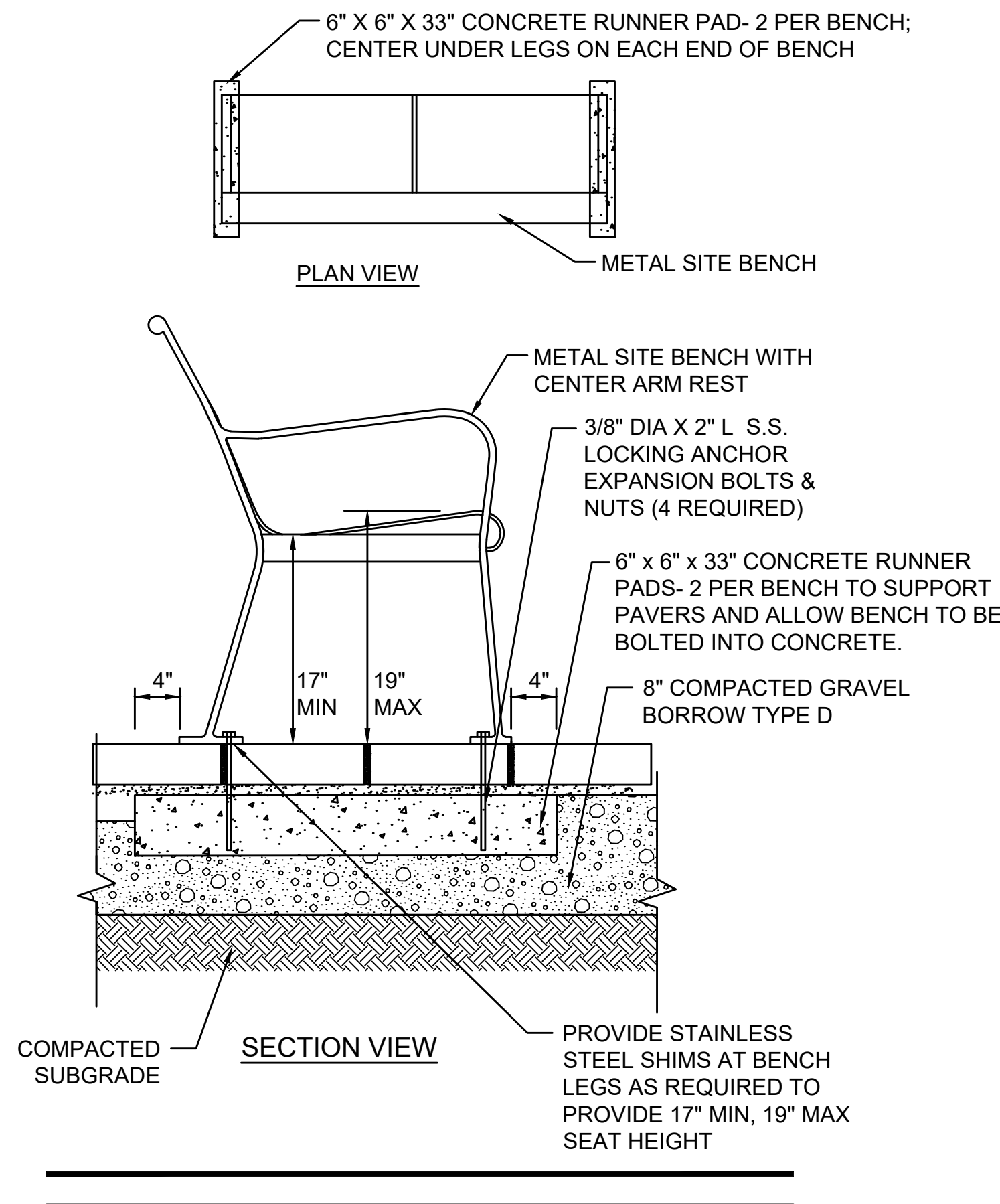
CONTINUED ON
INSET THIS SHEET

PATH A



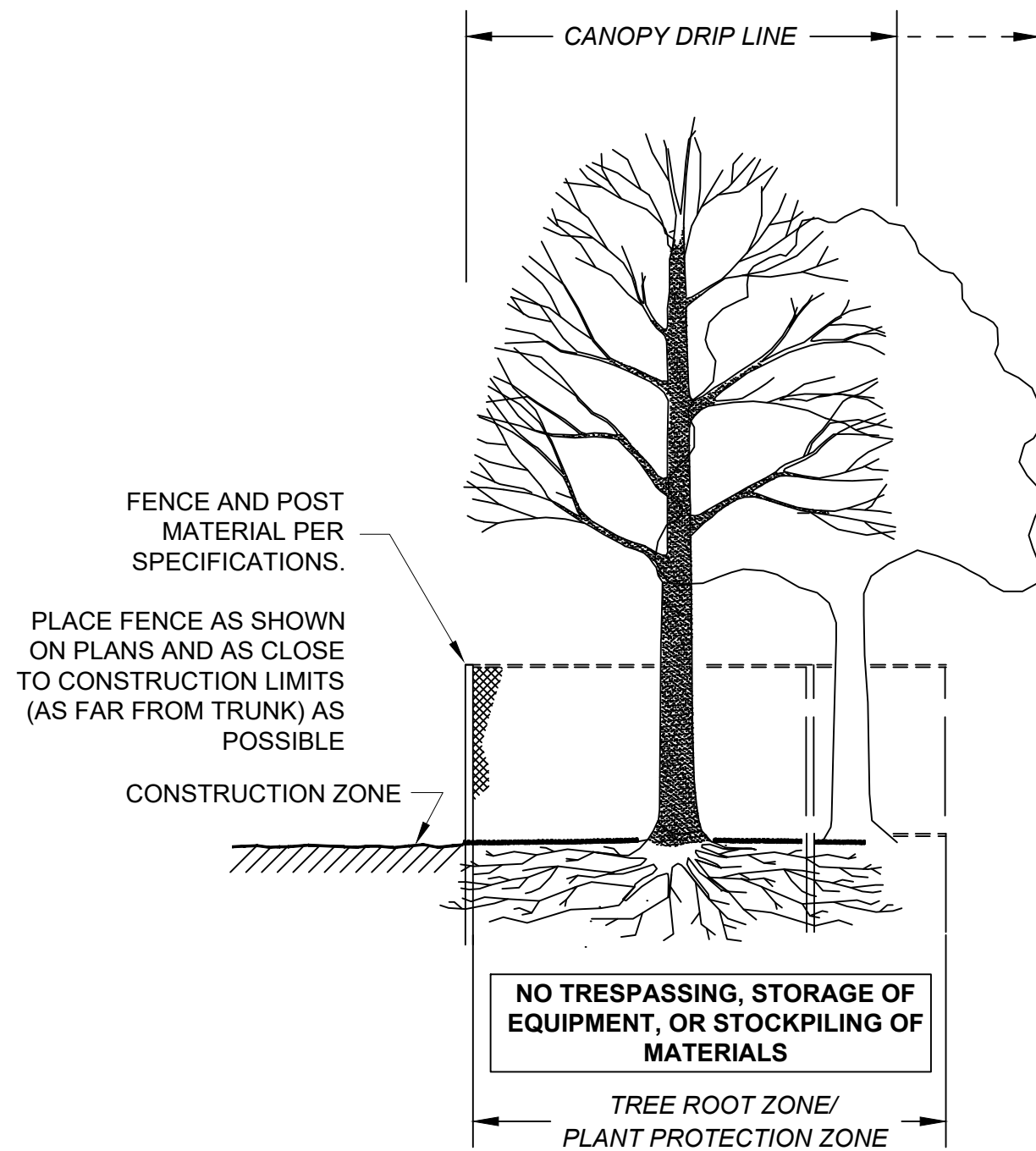
PATH B



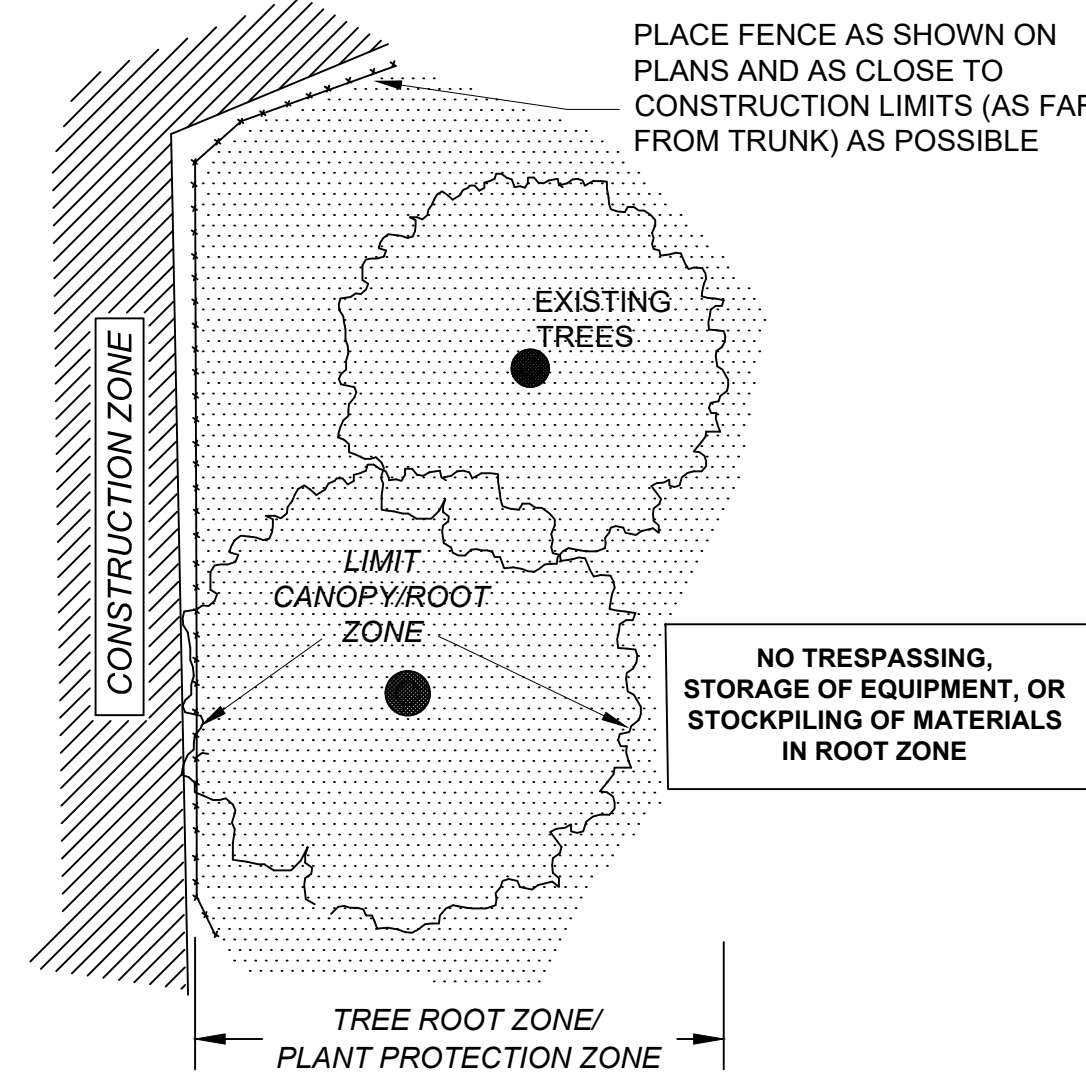


PARK BENCH

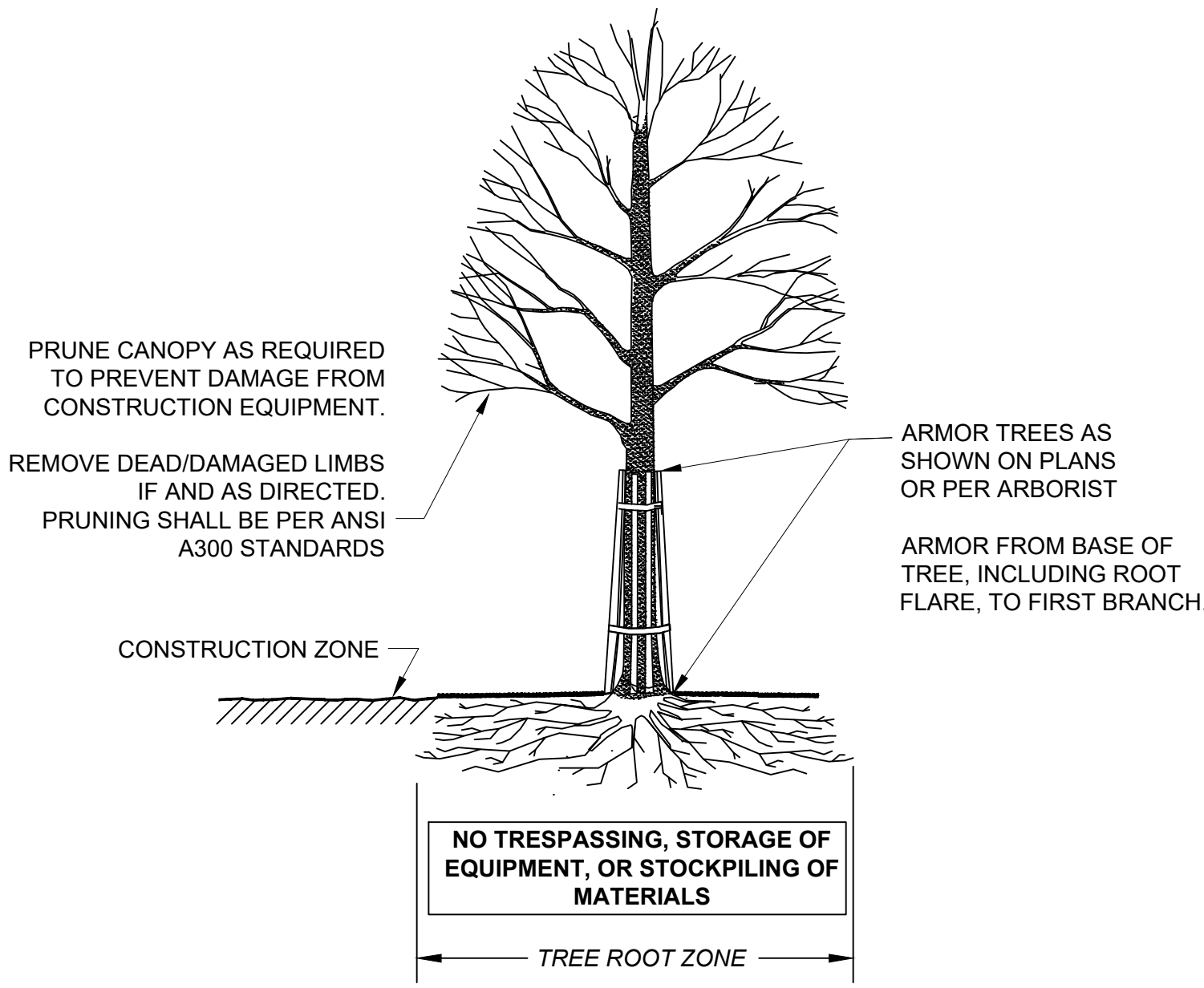
SCALE: N.T.S.



SECTION - FENCE PROTECTION OF ROOT ZONE



PLAN VIEW - FENCE PROTECTION OF ROOT ZONE

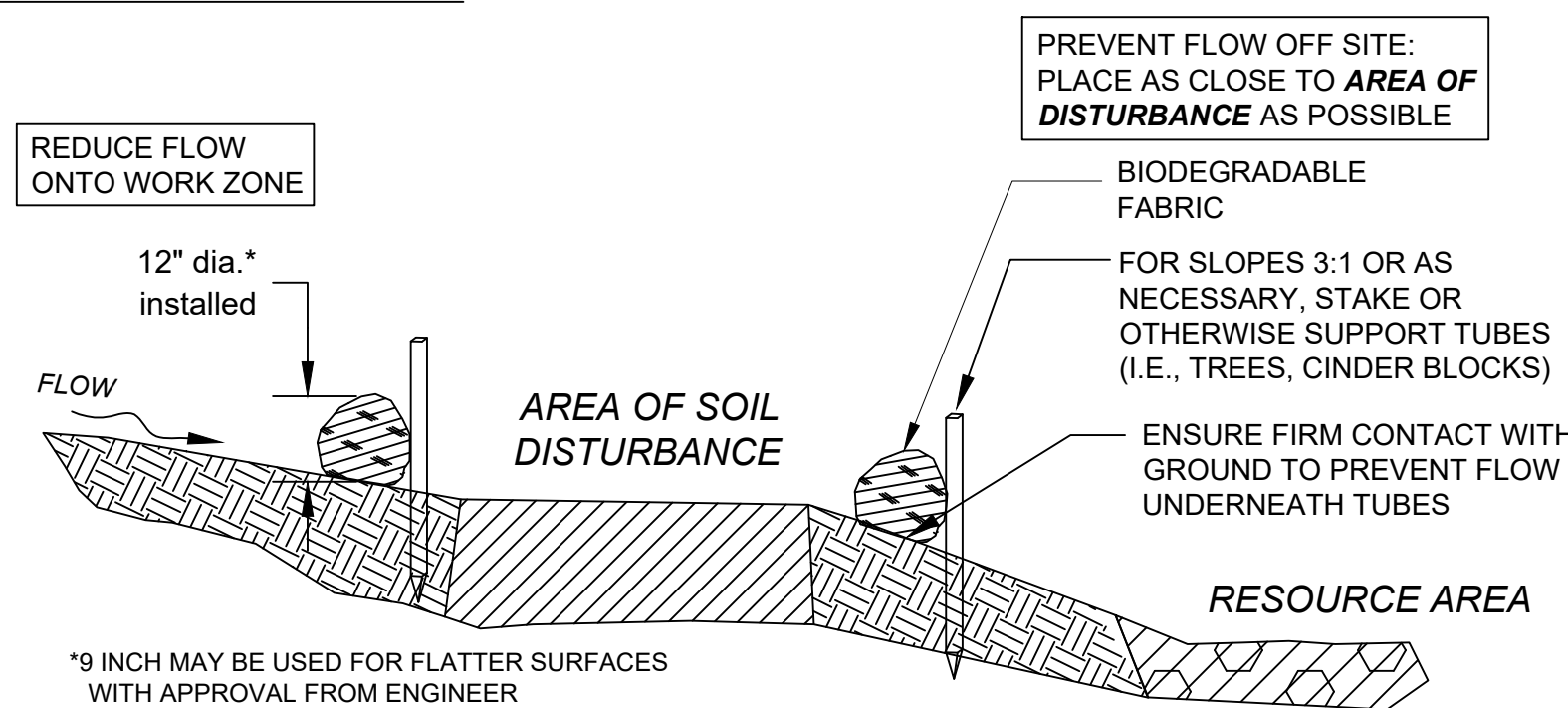


SECTION - TRUNK ARMORING & PRUNING

TREE PROTECTION DETAILS

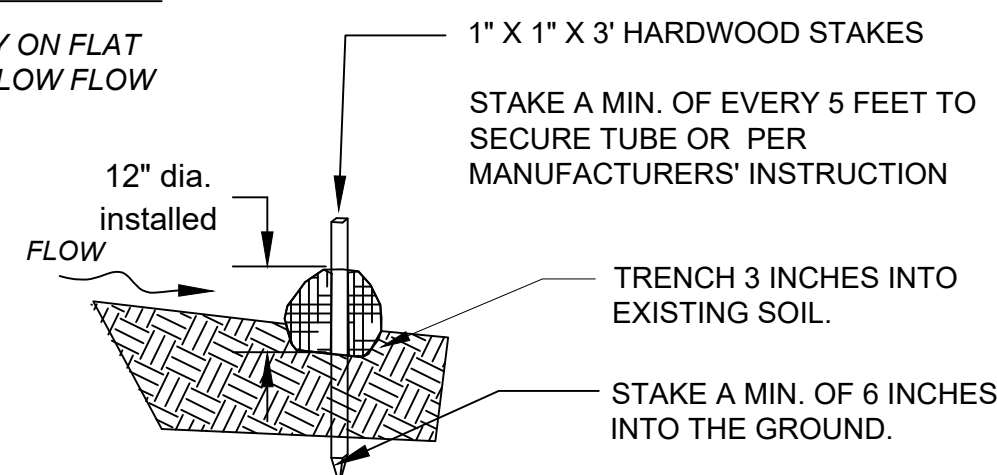
NOT TO SCALE

COMPOST FILTER TUBE

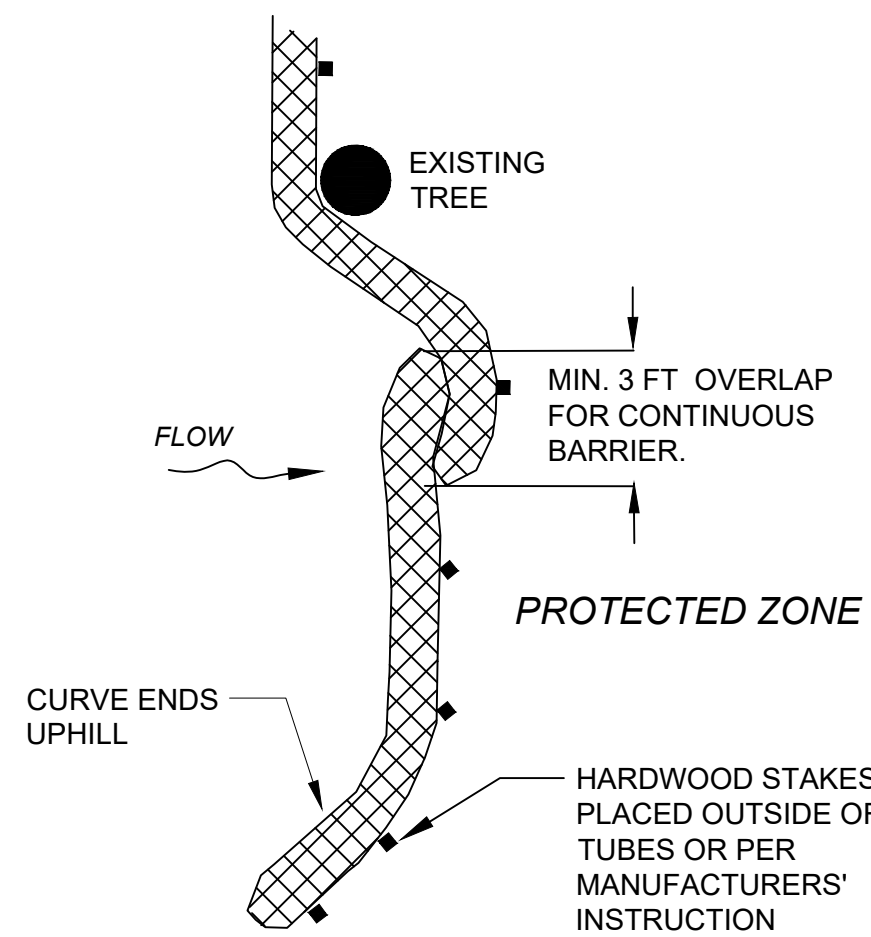


12 INCH STRAW WATTLE

TO BE USED ONLY ON FLAT
SURFACES WITH LOW FLOW



SECTION

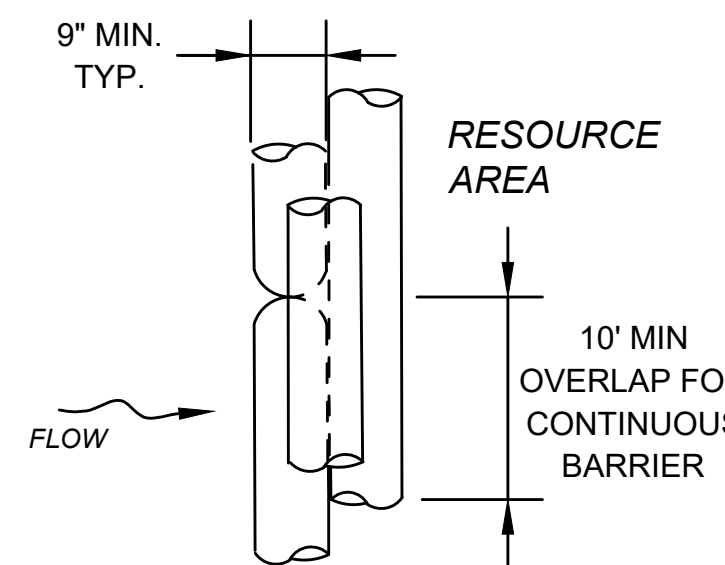


PLACE TUBE ALONG CONTOURS AND PERPENDICULAR
TO FLOW.

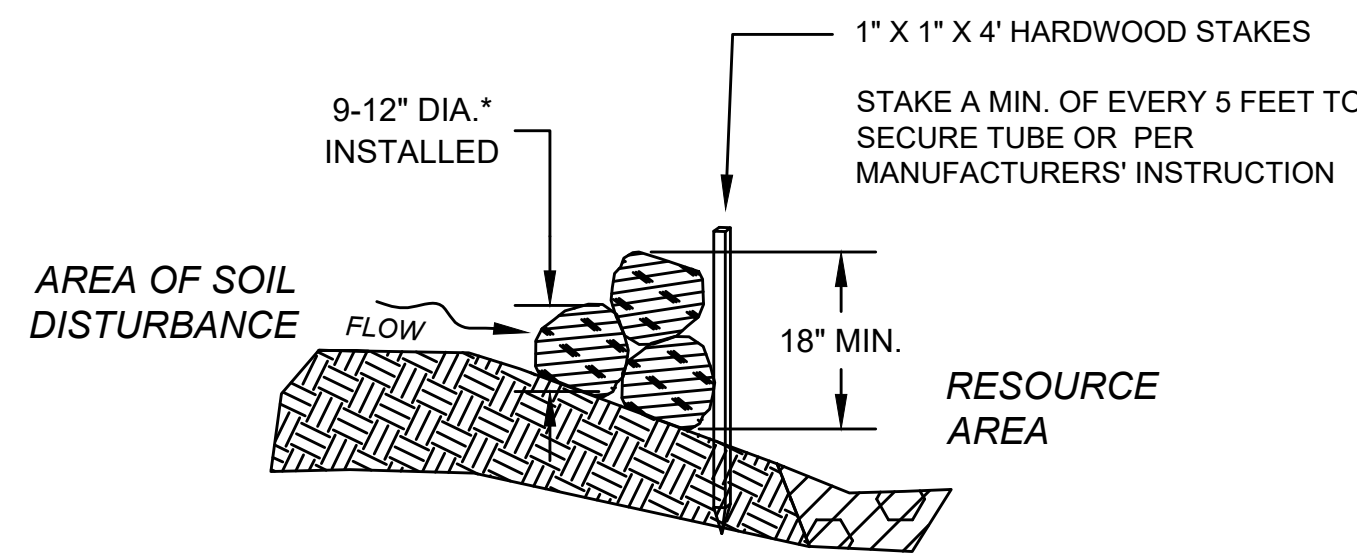
ADJUST LOCATION AS REQUIRED FOR OPTIMUM
EFFECTIVENESS. DO NOT INSTALL IN WATERWAYS.

PLACE STAKES AS NEEDED TO SECURE TUBES IN PLACE.

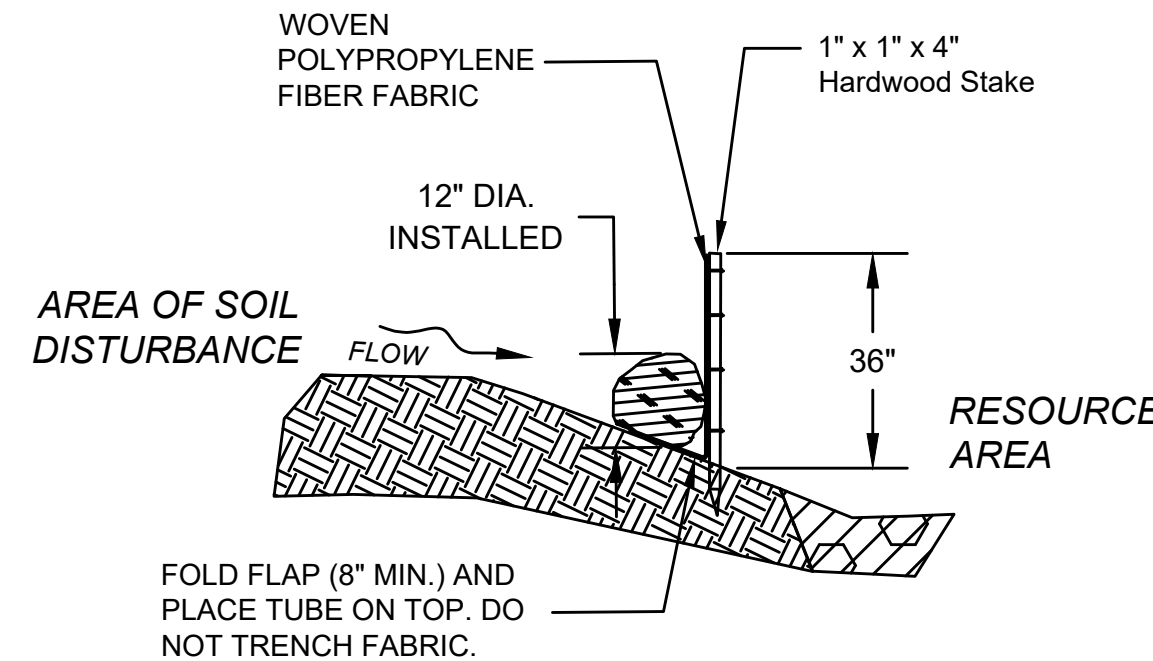
PLAN VIEW



PLAN VIEW



SECTION



SECTION

SEDIMENT BARRIERS - COMPOST FILTER TUBES & STRAW WATTLES

NOT TO SCALE

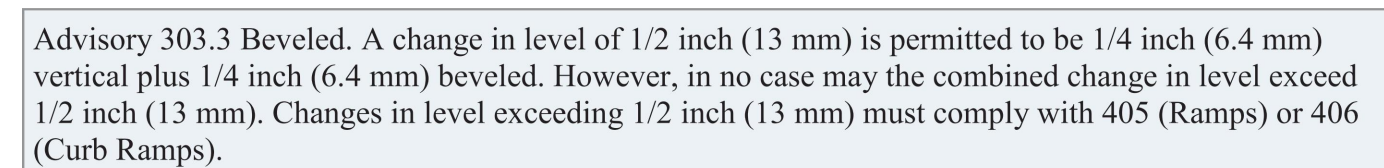
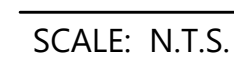
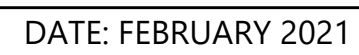
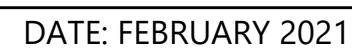
20181210_MassDOT

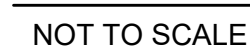
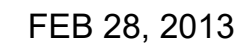
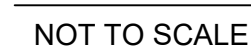
COMPOST FILTER TUBE BERM (SLOPES 2:1 OR STEEPER)

NOT TO SCALE

COMPOST FILTER TUBE & SILT FENCE

NOT TO SCALE





1. CONTRACTOR SHALL PROVIDE COMPLETE MAINTENANCE OF THE LAWNS AND PLANTINGS. NO IRRIGATION IS PROPOSED FOR THIS SITE. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL SUPPLY SUPPLEMENTAL WATERING FOR NEW LAWNS AND PLANTINGS DURING THE ONE YEAR PLANT GUARANTEE PERIOD.
2. CONTRACTOR SHALL PROVIDE ALL MATERIALS, LABOR, AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE COMPLETE LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE WORK. WATER SHALL BE PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTOR.
3. WATERING SHALL BE REQUIRED DURING THE GROWING SEASON, WHEN NATURAL RAINFALL IS BELOW ONE INCH PER WEEK.
4. WATER SHALL BE APPLIED IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY TO THOROUGHLY SATURATE THE SOIL IN THE ROOT ZONE OF EACH PLANT.
5. CONTRACTOR SHALL REPLACE DEAD OR DYING PLANTS AT THE END OF THE ONE YEAR GUARANTEE PERIOD. CONTRACTOR SHALL TURN OVER MAINTENANCE TO THE FACILITY MAINTENANCE STAFF AT THAT TIME.