



PUBLIC NOTICE

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program/§401 Certification
555 Cordova Street, Anchorage AK9501-2617
Phone: 907-269-6285 | Email: DEC-401Cert@alaska.gov

Notice of Application for State Water Quality Certification

Public Notice (PN) Date: February 2, 2024
PN Expiration Date: March 3, 2024

PN Reference Number: POA-2023-00519 v1.0
Waterway: Dry Creek

Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into waters of the United States, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), must also apply for and obtain certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the discharge will comply with the CWA and the Alaska Water Quality Standards (18 AAC 70). The scope of certification is limited to the water quality-related impacts from the activity subject to the Federal license or permit (40 CFR 121.3, 18 AAC 15.180).

Notice is hereby given that a request for a CWA §401 Water Quality Certification of a Department of the Army Permit application, Corps of Engineers' PN Reference Number indicated above has been received¹ for the discharge of dredged and/or fill materials into waters of the United States (WOTUS), including wetlands, as described below, and shown on the project figures/drawings. The public notice and related project figures/drawings are accessible from the DEC website at <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/wastewater/>.

To comment on the project or request for a public hearing with respect to water quality, submit comments electronically via the DEC public notice site at <https://water.alaskadec.commentinput.com?id=JVpu6fcWe> on or before the public notice expiration date listed above.

Applicant: Norton Sound, Matthew Emrick, PO Box 966, Nome, AK 99762, (907) 443-3370;
Memrick@NSHCorp.org

Agent: DOWL, Josh Grabel, 5051 Business Park Blvd., Suite 4000 Anchorage, AK 99508; (907) 865-1258;
jgrabel@dowl.com.

Project Name: Nome Staff Housing – POA-2023-00519 Dry Creek NSHC Nome Staff Housing

Location: The project site is located within Section 25, T. 11 S., R. 34 W., Kateel River Meridian; Latitude 64.501269° N., Longitude 165.380826° W.; off Greg Kruschek Avenue in Nome, Alaska.

Purpose: The project purpose is to construct additional 20-plex housing units and a storage facility to support the housing units on a parcel purchased adjacent to the hospital with an existing 20-plex housing unit. The proposed project would be within walking distance to the existing Norton Sound Regional Hospital with a pedestrian walkway.

Description of Proposed Work: The project would construct four 20-plex housing units on the southern pad under Phase 1 of fill placement and four 20-plex housing units on the northern pad under Phase 2. An additional pad would be constructed for a storage facility north of the existing 20-plex housing unit. The 17.75-acre property within which the proposed work would occur is adjacent to the hospital and includes an existing 20-plex housing unit, and a building pad and driveway connected to Greg Kruschek Avenue.

The proposed activity entails the discharge of approximately 72,607 cubic yards of fill into 8.8 acres of jurisdictional waters of the U.S., predominantly consisting of wetlands but also including a minor number of streams. The unnamed on-site streams are tributaries of Dry Creek, a tributary of Norton Sound. These streams would be

¹ Reference submission number: HPZ-ZSP4-AQY26; Received: 12/18/2023 9:16:12 AM

traversed by two access roads (linear sections of the proposed fill footprint connecting the southern and northern fill pads) that would each have two 36-inch diameter culverts. An additional 24-inch diameter culvert would be placed within the driveway connecting the property from Greg Kruschek Avenue, the nearest road.

Additional Information: In 2013, NSHC constructed the Norton Sound Hospital, located in the parcel immediately east of the parcel containing the proposed activity, with modifications for increased parking and utilities (POA-2002-00339). Although no housing quarters were included when the facility was constructed, the NSHC purchased the parcel immediately west of the hospital including the existing 20-plex housing unit. The proposed activity would facilitate construction of eight additional 20-plex housing units. Since 2013, the number of employees working at NSHC has grown by 44%, and recruitment challenges have resulted in hiring more intermittent employees who require housing during their rotation. These employees use a large portion of currently available housing and thereby have contributed to the significant housing shortage in Nome and the surrounding area, which impedes hiring a permanent local workforce. The proposed project would likely ease the housing shortage for both the hospital and the community.

The project would construct one storage building and eight, 20-plex 2-story buildings each with the following features: one, one-bedroom ADA unit, six one-bedroom units, eleven two-bedroom units, and two three-bedroom units. The storage facility would be used in support of the staff housing units to accommodate a variety of maintenance vehicles used for snow removal, storage for maintenance tools and equipment, and additional furniture and supplies for fully furnished units.

Infrastructure supporting features include two access roads to the Northern fill pad each with two 36" culverts to maintain hydrologic connectivity, one 24" culvert at the Southern fill pad access driveway from Greg Kruschek Avenue, and an access road between the Southern fill pad and the existing 20-plex housing unit with dual 36" culverts. A pile supported pedestrian walkway would be constructed from the existing 20-plex housing unit to the Norton Sound Regional Hospital parking lot.

The proposed project would construct utilities in fill material or using practices to avoid impacts to wetlands and permafrost. Electric and water main utilities would be constructed in the placed fill material and a sewer main would be constructed to the West of the proposed project on helical piles with no temporary or permanent wetland impacts.

The project would require placement of fill in wetlands to create a stable subsurface that can support the proposed infrastructure in the harsh subarctic climate with seasonal freeze and thaw cycles. The project would place 72,607 cubic yards of fill material in 8.81 acres of wetlands. Pad thickness of five feet of fill material is the minimum thickness needed to flatten the top surface with the existing undulating ground. The surface is set so that the minimum fill section would be at 5-feet thick, and the rest of the area would be thicker to fill in the low areas.

Fill material would be sourced from an existing material site to be selected by the contractor with no additional impacts to waters of the U.S. There are existing pits/quarries near Nome that would be a suitable borrow source.

Applicant Proposed Mitigation: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the United States from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

- a. **Avoidance:** Offsite and onsite alternatives that would avoid impacts to wetlands and waters of the U.S. were considered for this project. However, avoiding all impacts to wetlands and waters of the U.S. was not practicable because all undisturbed areas in and around the City of Nome with sufficient acreage, access, and availability to meet project objectives are almost entirely comprised of wetlands. Wetlands comprise the entirety of the selected property. Thus, the excavation and discharge of fill into the jurisdictional wetlands at the property is necessary to construct the project.

- b. Minimization: The applicant asserts that the proposed footprint is the minimum needed to provide enough area for the housing, parking, and storage needed to meet the project purpose and need. Construction activities would be mostly constrained to the designated fill footprint, which is 8.81 acres. The remaining 6.5 acres of wetland within the property would not be filled and would not be subject to heavy equipment activity except during winter when the ground is frozen and covered in snow. Construction of the proposed fill pads and access roads would occur in Spring 2024 during the April 1 to June 15 construction window when the active permafrost layer is still frozen. NSHC proposes to construct all fill pads in the first construction season or separate the fill placement into two phases based on contractor proposals with a southern pad and storage facility pad construction in Spring 2024 and northern pad construction in Spring 2025.

The on-site wetlands and streams that would be filled by the proposed activity do not support very high levels of functionality, exhibit seasonal and shallow flow, and are not considered unique or rare. Project design maintains existing natural drainage patterns by concentrating most of the fill footprint away from the on-site streams and associated wetland riparian areas and installing culverts where the fill pads would traverse streams. No impacts are proposed to any anadromous streams or open water.

All utilities except a sewer main would be constructed in the access roads and elevated fill to minimize disturbance to permafrost and additional impacts due to wider fill footprints to accommodate the utilities. The sewer main would be constructed on helical piles instead of additional fill to extend the pad for burying the sewer main. The helical piles would not result in a discharge of fill.

During construction, stormwater runoff would be controlled by best management practices including installation of silt fences and/or maintenance of native vegetation buffers to minimize sediment transport from the construction site until final stabilization has been achieved. An existing material site would be used to source the structural and non-frost susceptible fill material for the project with no additional impacts to waters of the U.S. Revegetation of all temporarily disturbed areas would occur within the same growing season or as soon as possible.

- c. Compensatory Mitigation: No compensatory mitigation is proposed for the unavoidable impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands due to the minimal effect it would have on aquatic resource functions and the limited opportunities for conducting permittee-responsible mitigation. The project would occur within a drainage area that has relatively low amount of development (less than 4.5 percent covered by impervious surfaces). Dry Creek is not listed as an impaired water by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. Further, the on-site wetlands and streams do not support anadromous fish, are not unique or rare, and do not appear to perform very high levels of aquatic resource function. There are no mitigation banks or in-lieu fee programs with service areas containing the proposed project and there are no aquatic resources in the vicinity that could be readily acquired, restored, established and/or enhanced.

After reviewing the application, the Department will evaluate whether the activity will comply with applicable water quality requirements (any limitation, standard, or other requirement under sections 301, 302, 306, and 307 of the CWA, any Federal and state laws or regulations implementing those sections, and any other water quality-related requirement of state law). The Department may certify (or certify with conditions) with reasonable assurance the activity and any discharge that might result will comply with water quality requirements. The Department also may deny or waive certification.

The permit application and associated documents are available for review. For inquires or to request copies of the documents, contact dec-401cert@alaska.gov, or call 907-269-6285.

Disability Reasonable Accommodation Notice

The State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you are a person with a disability who may need special accommodation in order to participate in this public process, please contact ADA Coordinator Megan Kohler at 907-269-4198 or TDD Relay Service 1-800-770-8973/TTY or dial 711 prior to the expiration date of this public notice to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

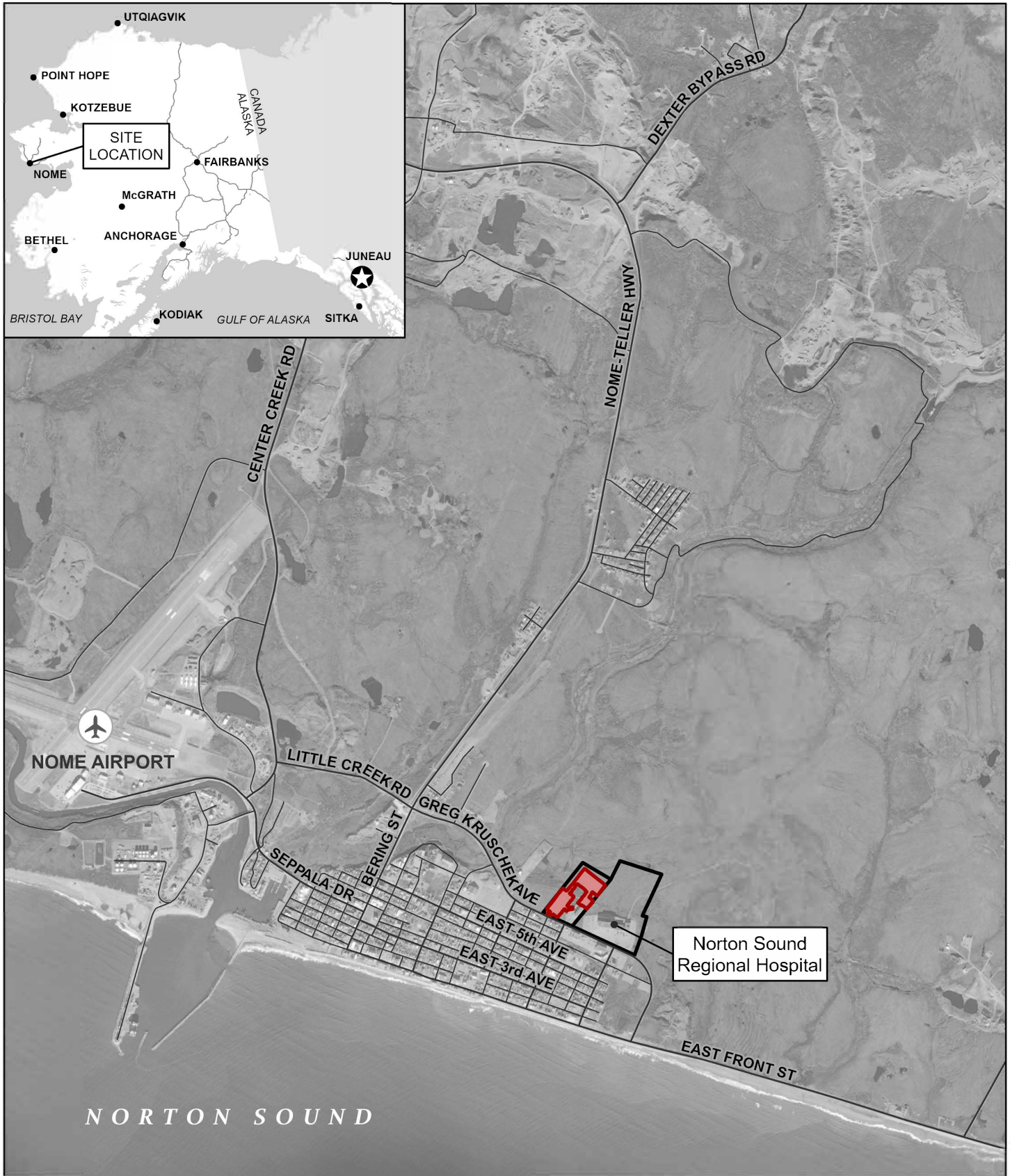
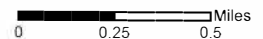


FIGURE 1: Vicinity Map

Applicant: Norton Sound Health Corporation
 File No.: POA-2023-00519
 Proposed Activity: Norton Sound Regional Hospital Staff Housing
 Section 25 T 11 S, R 34 W Kateel River Meridian USGS
 Lat.: 64.501269° N Long.: 165.380826° W

Date: 1/9/2024

- Project Footprint
- Parcel Boundary



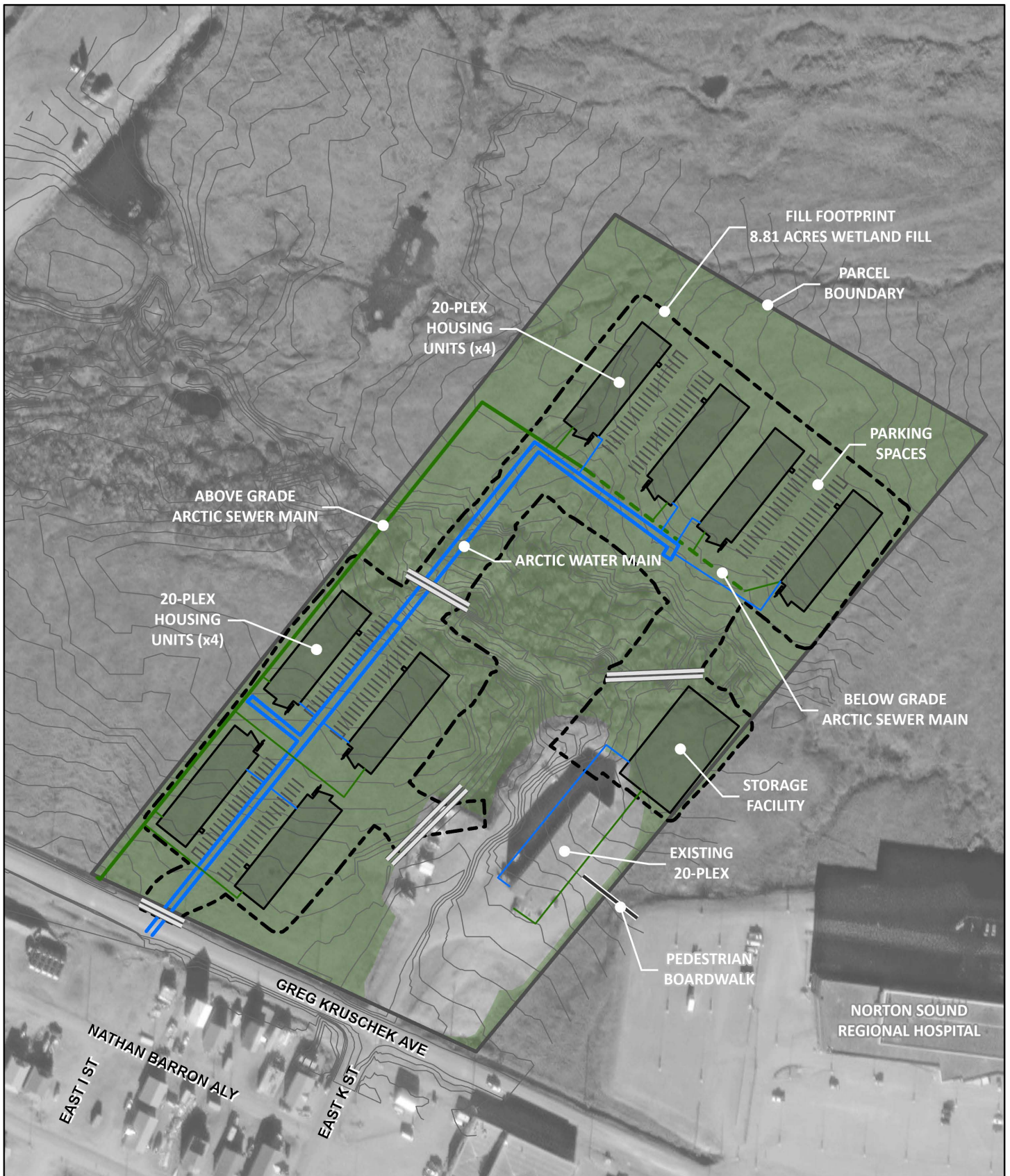





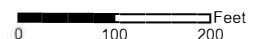


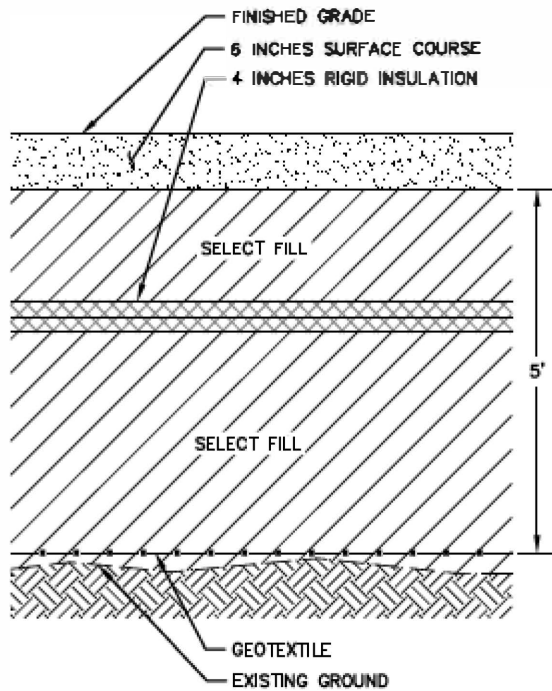
FIGURE 2: Plan View

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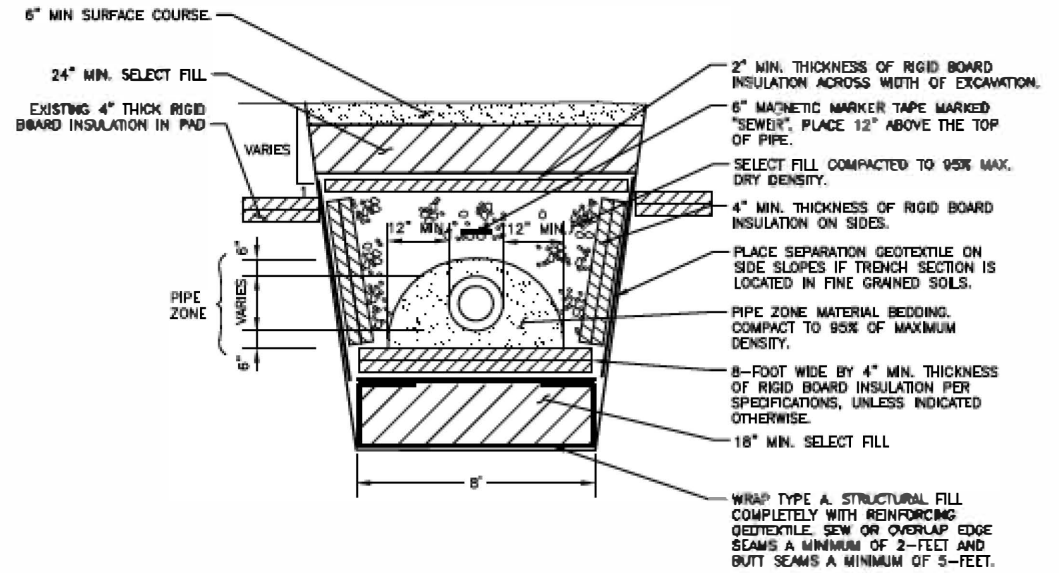
-  Subject Parcel Boundary
-  Project Footprint
-  Proposed Building Footprint
-  Proposed Culvert
-  Nome Wetlands





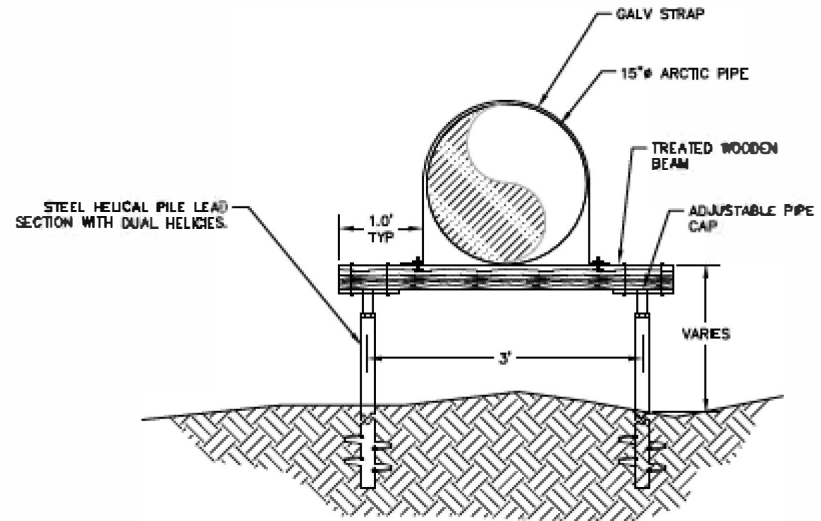
ANTICIPATED PAD SECTION

SCALE: NTS



BELOW GRADE TYPICAL UTILITY SECTION

SCALE: NTS



ABOVE GRADE TYPICAL UTILITY SECTION

SCALE: NTS

FIGURE 3: Elevation View

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