



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 072-0157

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes x No \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes x No \_\_\_\_\_

1. General Property Information

Property name: Pocahontas Landmark Center  
(formerly Pocahontas School/formerly Powhatan Middle School)

Property address: 4920 Anderson Highway  
City or Town: Powhatan  
Zip code: 23139

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located:  
Powhatan

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):  
Building X Site \_\_\_\_\_ Structure \_\_\_\_\_ Object \_\_\_\_\_

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: approximately 9 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):  
Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Village \_\_\_\_\_ Hamlet \_\_\_\_\_ **Rural X**

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:  
This property has a beautiful park-like setting in western Powhatan with surrounding ballfields, some old-growth trees and courtyard-like settings between the buildings. It sits adjacent to Powhatan Elementary School.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Craftsman-style

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

If the builder is known, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1937

#### **Narrative Description:**

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

#### **Architecture Summary:**

The original 1937 Pocahontas School is a 1-story, brick building with detailing associated with the Craftsman movement. The brick is laid in 5-course American bond with a soldier course demarcating the water table. The central bay projects slightly from the end bays. The entry is framed by 2 courses of soldier bonding with concrete blocks at the corners. A rectangular area of stack bond is located above the entry. This is surmounted by a concrete sign inscribed with "Pocahontas School." Concrete consoles are located at the top corners of the sign. The wall is topped by a concrete cap.

In 1993, the school was renovated. It was then serving as the county's middle school. It was renovated again in 2019, becoming school administration offices.

Additions/Alterations: several 1-story brick additions have been constructed over the years. The additions are located to the west of the original school.

The L-shaped one-story brick building was built in 1950 and served as the elementary for Black students within the county through 1969.

A most-western science wing was added post-1950 and added onto in the 1990s.

A building that sits between the original school and the L-shaped former elementary built in 1950 was built in the 1970s.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

There is a one-story brick contributing structure from circa 1940s that sits behind the original school that served as the home economics cottage for the segregated Pocahontas School. The building is boarded up because of vandalism and is not used.

#### 4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.) If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

*Sources for below materials came from original source documents from the Powhatan County NAACP and alumni at Pocahontas School; articles in the Richmond Times-Dispatch and Powhatan Today; and the book The Journey for Justice by Sandra Kemp:*

Prior to the school being built in 1937, many Black students who graduated from small, segregated community schools had to relocate to Richmond to live with relatives and attend Maggie Walker or Armstrong High School to further their secondary public education.

The brick Craftsman style building on the site under consideration was established as Pocahontas Colored High School in 1937.

Funding came from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, a New Deal agency, along with the Virginia Board of Education's Literary Fund and the Southern Education Foundation, which aided African-American schools in the South.

The local NAACP also donated land and \$3,000 in funding so the building would have heat, light and plumbing. (See attached source document.) The later additions included an elementary school for African American children in 1950. Family names on that letter included Dickerson, Hobson, Simms, Royall and Carpenter.

#### Timeline

1869 - Plessy v. Ferguson "Separate but Equal"

1869 - Virginia constitution provided for a segregated system of public education.

Late 1800s - "One Room Schools" in Powhatan County included Pine Hill, Mohemenco, Shiloh, Little Zion and others.

1931 - Segregated Powhatan Training Center at Rt. 13 and 60

1937 - Powhatan Colored High School

1941 - Renamed Pocahontas High School

1950 - Elementary wing added

1954 - Brown v. Board of Education ruling that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional

1960s - Science classroom wing added to far west

1962 - Class action lawsuit against Powhatan School Board

1969 - converted to Pocahontas Middle School (school system fully desegregated)

2015 - Historical marker goes up in front of school

“In August of 1962, the parents of 65 African-American children filed a suit against the county, after spending the better part of the spring and summer trying to get their children enrolled in the “white school.” Darrick Bell, who was 10 years old at the time and is a first cousin to Edward Alvin, remembers Pocahontas Elementary, “the black school,” as being, in a lot of ways, a pretty nice place. “The teachers were very nurturing,” remembers Bell, who now lives in Chesterfield County and is retired from the adult education and social work field. “They were very demanding. There was a pride in the community and the desire for kids to understand that you needed to produce. They used to say that you [being black] would have to do twice as much to get half as far. And so the teachers pushed us.” Still, Bell remembers the books as being secondhand, outdated, castoffs from the Powhatan School.”

“Jerretta Funn Hatcher was one of 24 students in the Class of 1969, which was the last class to graduate from a predominantly black school before the complete integration of the school system in Powhatan. The school prepared her for college and life, including a career with the state government for 33 years before she retired. “Pocahontas High School was a small school in stature and had few students overall, but we had caring and loving teachers who encouraged us to do the best with what we had and what we attempted to do,” she said.

More school history:

<https://casetext.com/case/bell-v-school-board-of-powhatan-county-vir>

[https://richmond.com/news/local/central-virginia/powhatan/powhatan-today/former-students-look-back-on-struggle-to-integrate-schools/article\\_c4efc4e2-805d-11e2-9ba4-001a4bcf6878.html](https://richmond.com/news/local/central-virginia/powhatan/powhatan-today/former-students-look-back-on-struggle-to-integrate-schools/article_c4efc4e2-805d-11e2-9ba4-001a4bcf6878.html)

[https://richmond.com/news/local/central-virginia/powhatan/powhatan-today/across-the-generations-honoring-school-s-history/article\\_9ee36a56-221a-11e8-a478-57819be68e01.html](https://richmond.com/news/local/central-virginia/powhatan/powhatan-today/across-the-generations-honoring-school-s-history/article_9ee36a56-221a-11e8-a478-57819be68e01.html)

**5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Local X Public\State \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Federal \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Superintendent Eric Jones, Powhatan County Public Schools

organization: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: 4290 Anderson Highway

city or town: Powhatan state: VA zip code: 23139

e-mail: eric.jones@powhatan.k12.va.us telephone: 804.598.5700

Legal Owner's Signature:  Date: Oct. 26, 2021

**•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••**

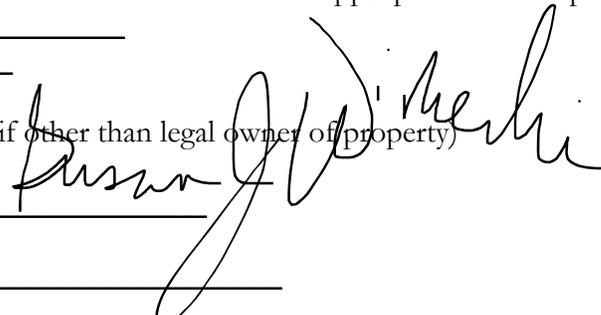
In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Susan Winiiecki, executive director



organization: Habitat for Humanity

Powhatan

street & number: 1922 Urbine Road

city or town: Powhatan state: Va. zip code: 23139

e-mail: executivedirector@habitatpowhatan.org telephone: 804-564-1055

**6. Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager

name/title: Ned Smither, county administrator

locality: Powhatan

street & number: 3834 Old Buckingham Road

city or town: Powhatan state: VA zip code: 23139

telephone: 804-598-5612



NAACP

*President - Gail Hairston  
Secretary - Danielle Lipscomb*

*Vice President - Margaret Harris-Manning  
Treasurer - Helen Hobson*

*Powhatan Branch NAACP  
P.O. Box 601  
Powhatan, VA 23139*

*November 4, 2016*

To: Dr. Eric Jones, Powhatan County School Superintendent  
Powhatan County School Board Members  
Powhatan County Board of Supervisors Members

History is an account of what has happened and Pocahontas High School has a rich history of the role that the African American Community played in the construction of Pocahontas High School.

The documented history states that in 1931 Powhatan County established Powhatan Training School. The School was to provide upper-level courses for the African American Students during the segregation era. The historical information also states that the county built a brick High School for the African Americans at the cost of \$40,000 dollars. Your documentation gives a list of donors. The donors were different government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

We are adding a documentation that provide proof that Powhatan County African American community provided land and \$3,000 dollars for the support of a quality School for the African American Community of Powhatan County. The money was turned over to the local School Board. The money was designated for light, heat, plumbing and dry toilets.

We can also provide you with oral history from students and senior citizens which will document the above story.

Our interest and concern is that any proposed usage of the building site respect the rich history of the African American Citizens of Powhatan County and the role they played in the success of Pocahontas High School. The African American Community is proud of what they have accomplished.

History is not history unless the true story is told.

Sincerely,  
Powhatan County NAACP

Powhatan, Va., Feb. 17, 1937

Virginia State Board of Education,  
Richmond, Va.

Dear Sirs:

You are aware of the construction of the high school for Negro children in Powhatan County.

Mr. P. C. Williams, superintendent of schools in Powhatan County, exhibited a set of plans of a modern school building to an organized body of colored parents and teachers of the county. He told us that the school which he intended to build would be entirely modern, having light, heat and plumbing facilities.

At that time Mr. Williams thought that such a structure would be too much of a burden on the county's treasury and he asked our organization to raise three thousand dollars to be applied to such a building and he would start the construction of it on a piece of land that we had already purchased, payed for and deeded to the county for this purpose.

We raised the \$3000.00 and turned it over to the local school board. Now the construction has started on a piece of land, not as desirable as the land we purchased.

Mr. Williams again met this organized body and informed it that the estimated price had exceeded his expectations, and now he says he is forced to eliminate light, heat, and plumbing facilities and to provide dry toilets in the rear of a thirty six thousand dollar building.

We are not registering a complaint on the location of the structure, but we would like to have as complete a fulfillment of the promise made to us regarding a building with modern facilities as our fulfillment has been of our promise to donate the money.

We donated the land for a High School Building, we donated \$3,000.00 on the strength of the promise of a modern building. Now, after having turned both money and

land to the county, we are told that we can not have it.

We are tax payers and have played our part in county and state. We place our cause in your hands.

The gentlemen who presents this petition in our behalf is Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, and as a gentleman is much interested in his County and State affairs. Please hear him and give us the consideration we deserve.

Thanking you for every effort made in our behalf, we are

Sincerely,

L H Dickerson

E V Hobson

Rev. Wm. Simms

R J Hobson

D D Royall

H L Carpenter

Virginia 23139



# Landmark Center - County Public Schools

Views

- Nearby
- Send to your phone
- Share

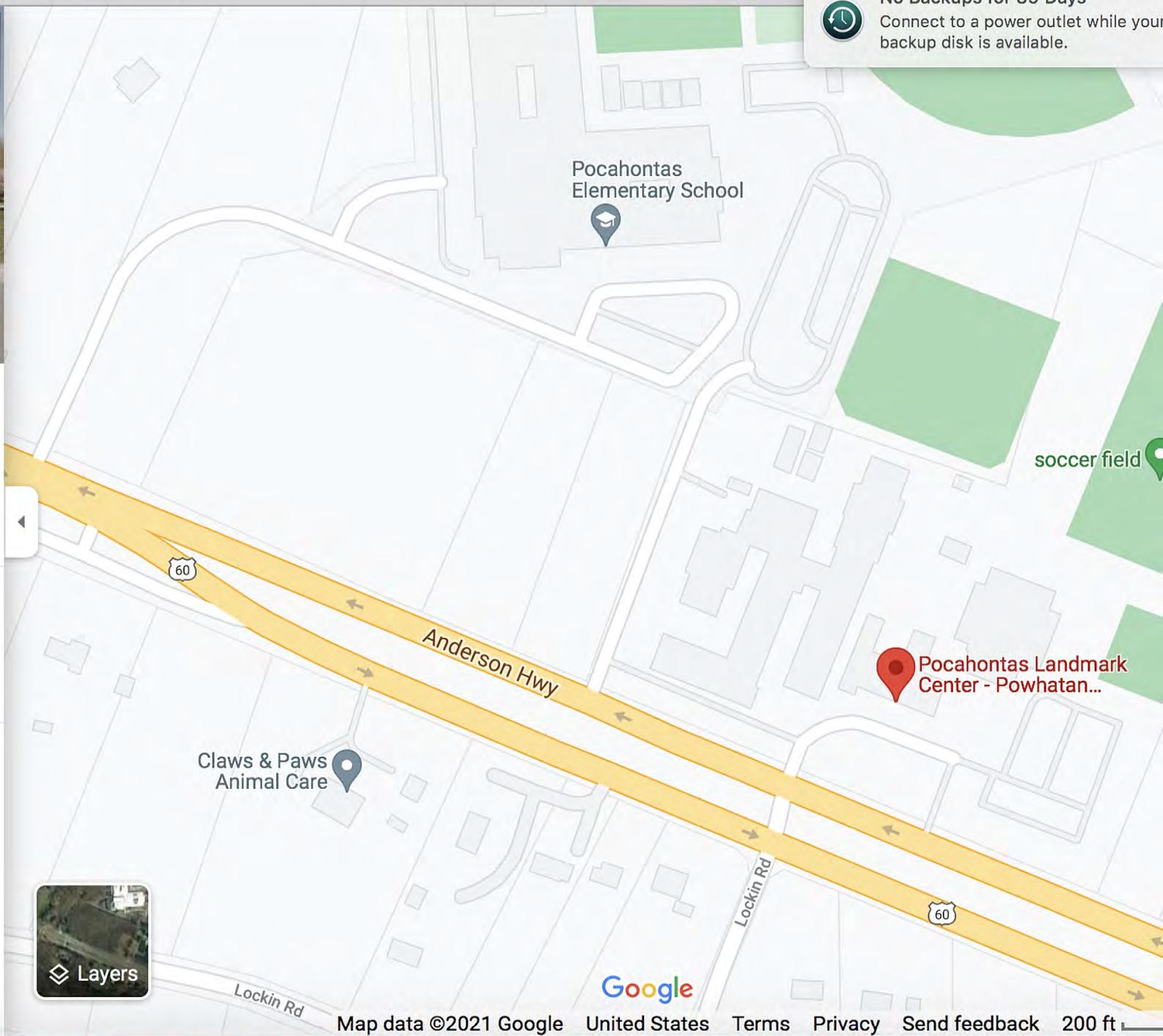
on Hwy, Powhatan, VA 23139

2.va.us

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whatan, Virginia

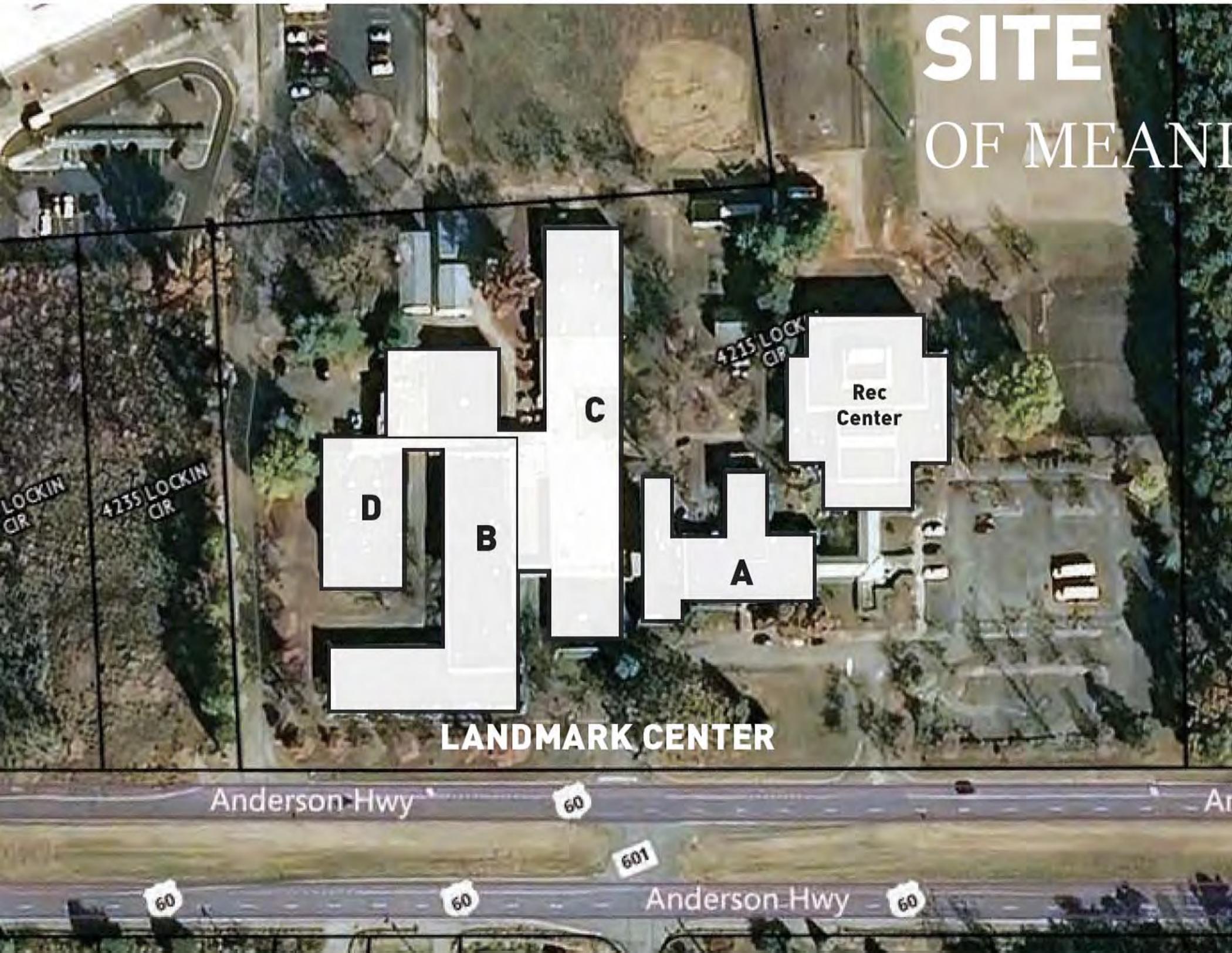
usiness



**No Backups for 39 Days**  
Connect to a power outlet while your backup disk is available.



# SITE OF MEANING



LOCKIN CR

4235 LOCKIN CR

4235 LOCKIN CR

D

B

C

A

Rec Center

LANDMARK CENTER

Anderson Hwy

60

601

60

60

Anderson Hwy

60

Ar