



Confluent Threads

January 11, 2021

Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library Public Artwork

Confluent:

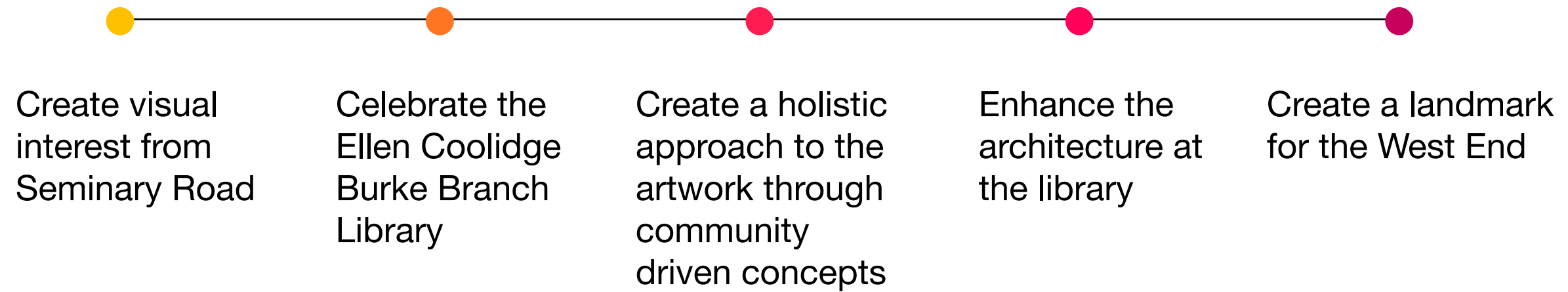
Flowing. Joining. Mingling. Coalescent.
Coming together. Concurrent
Connecting. Convergent.

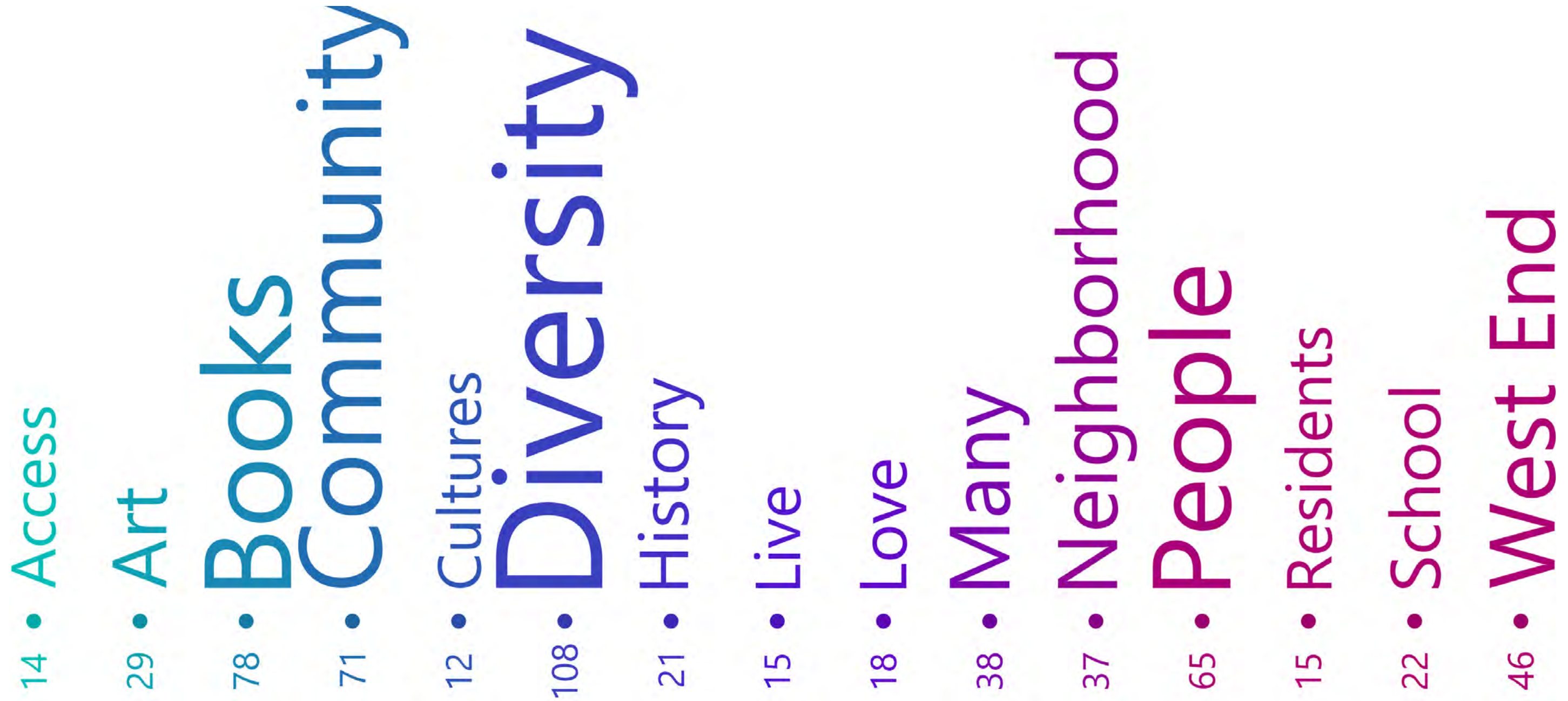
adjective

flowing or running together; blending into one:

-
- Project Goals
 - Community Engagement
 - Site Location
 - Concept Development
 - Project Imagery
 - Material Concept
 - Site Conditions
 - Budget
-

// Project Goals





Using a questionnaire, we were able to gather 133 responses about the West End community and cull data on the number of times specific words were used. This graphic displays the highest ranking impact words that can be used to build a concept.

// Community Engagement

“The West End is often dismissed as not “really” Alexandria by people who don’t live here. But it’s actually a tightly-knit community with a long history.”

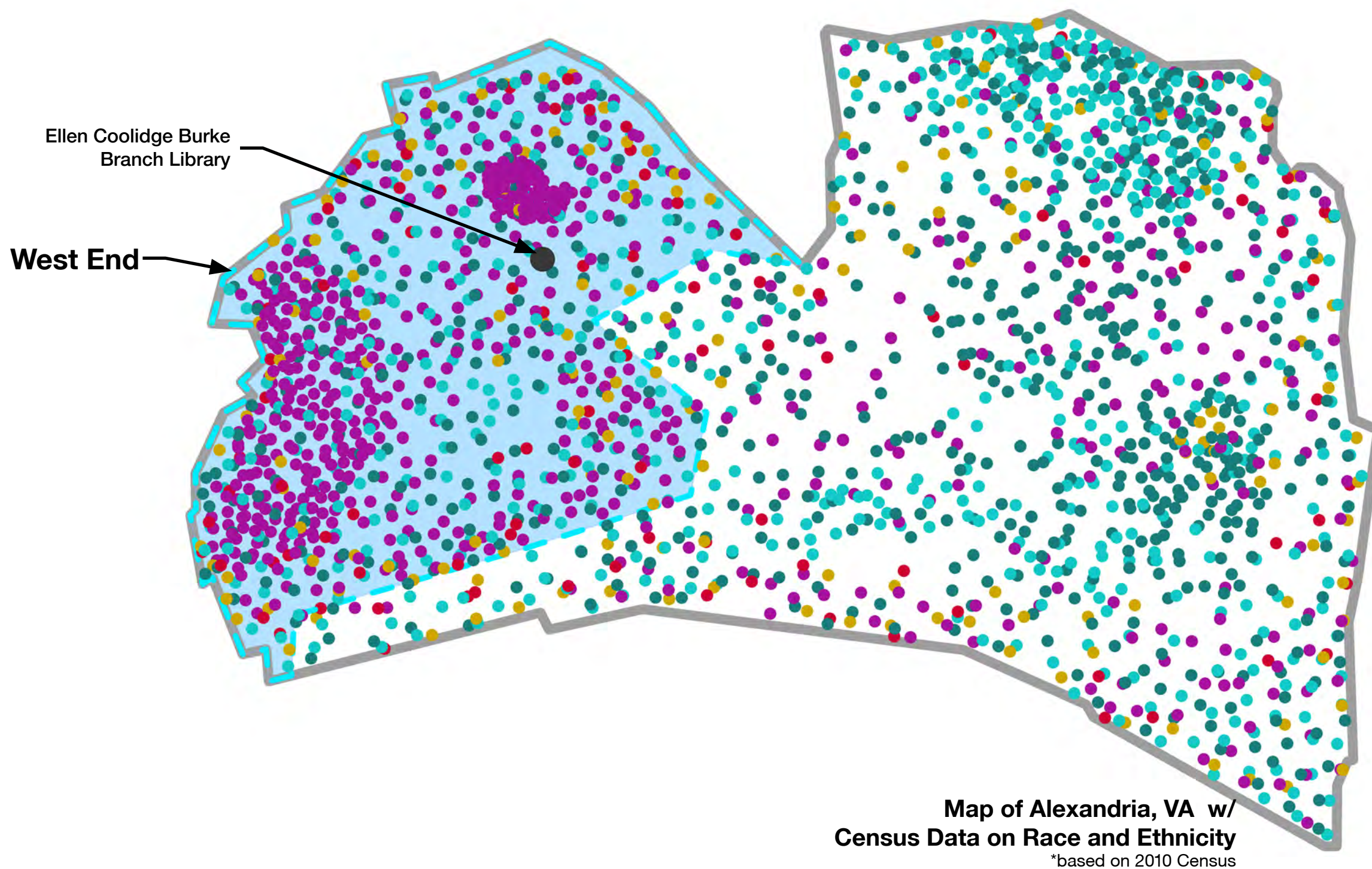


“Extremely diverse population within the West End of Alexandria. Very large immigrant population who are mostly located in the West End of Alexandria. Over 85 languages are spoken in the West End Elementary, Middle, and TC Williams High School.”

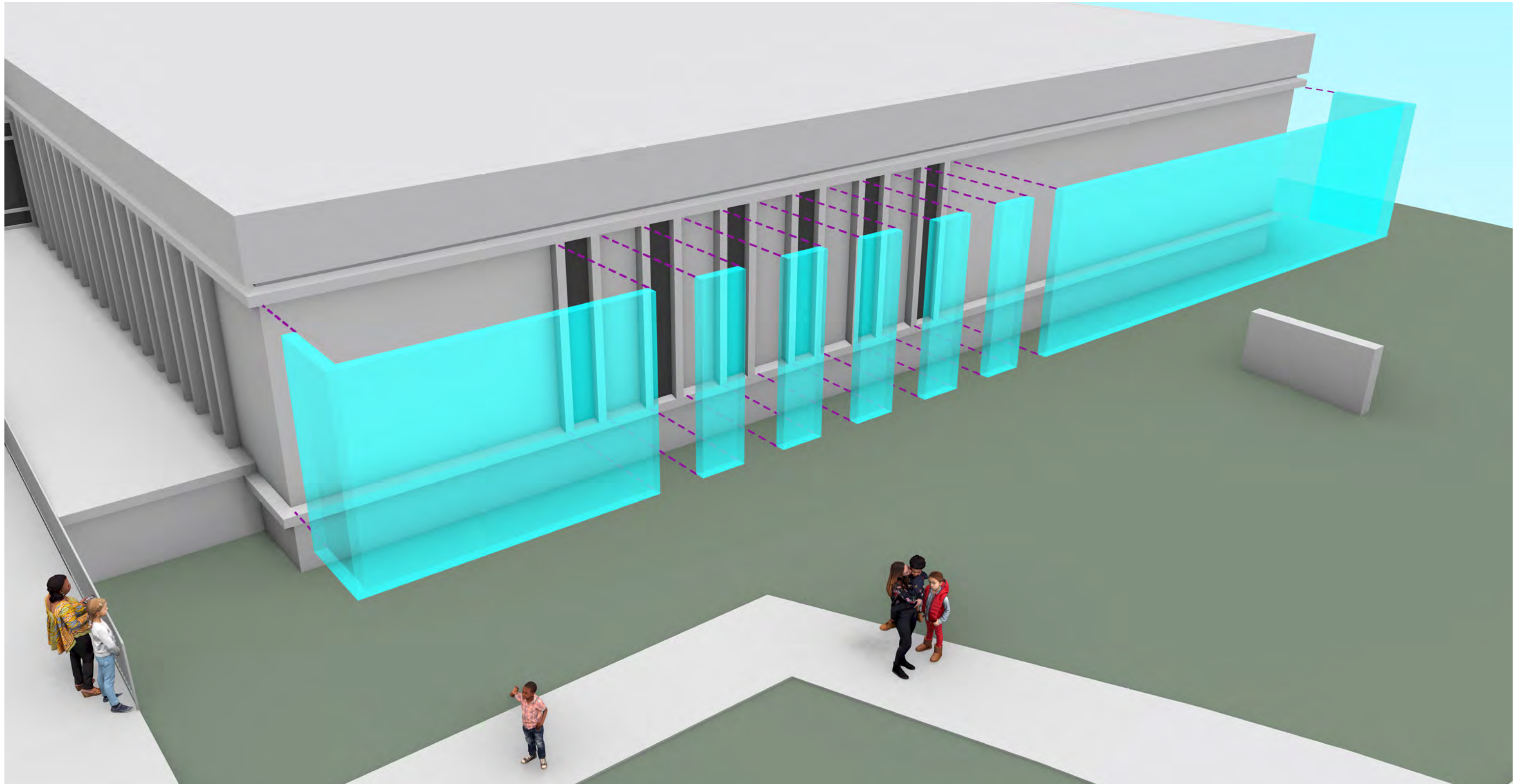


“Burke should be more welcoming to children, given its location across from a school and garden apartments with many children. The use of color in the projects featured on the website strikes just the right tone. The building, as it is, has a forbidding aspect.”





This abstracted race and ethnicity map of Alexandria clearly illustrates the wider diversity of the West End, echoing the comments from the community.



Site Location

The building's facade provides an exciting opportunity for installation of the project. This location is a blank canvas, ripe for artwork, and it allows us to enhance the minimal, brutal architecture.

By placing the artwork on the building, we minimize the need for structure and site prep. The budget that would have been spent in those areas can be utilized on the physical artwork itself, allowing for a project with increased surface area, more color, and higher impact.

While completing our initial site visit, it was apparent that some of the front "lawn" area was utilized by children of the middle school across the street. Placing the artwork on the building minimizes potential damage to the work and allows the green space to remain a small play area for the library and middle school.

// Concept Development



Crochet

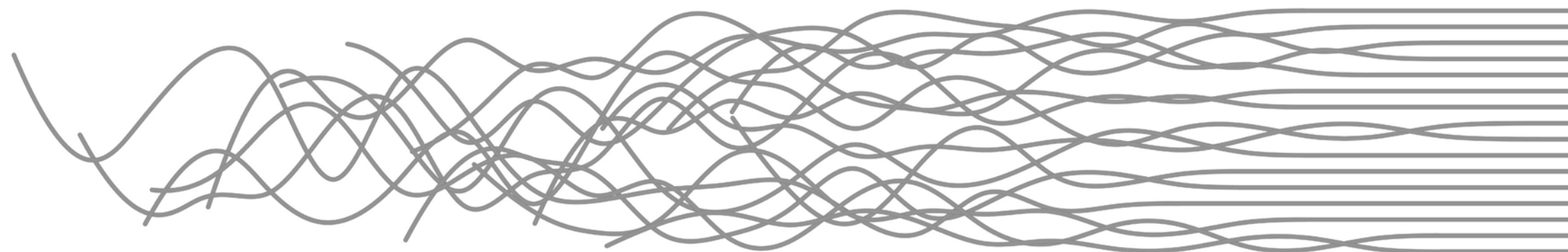
* Crochet starts with a single strand of yarn that loops around itself, eventually growing into a much more complex and beautiful textile. Similarly, through community and cultural engagement, a single human can grow into a more complex and interconnected citizen.



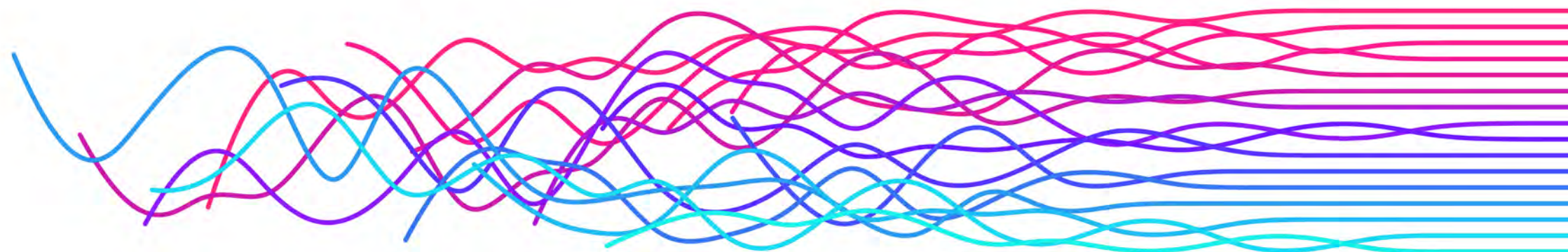
Loomed Carpet

* This technique starts with a variety of individual threads differing in color and thickness, then weaves them through a series of vertical strands that provide structure. In the end, this multi-strand process produces a colorful, cohesive textile. Just as the carpet is created, so is a community – individual and diverse people coming together to make something beyond what would be possible alone.

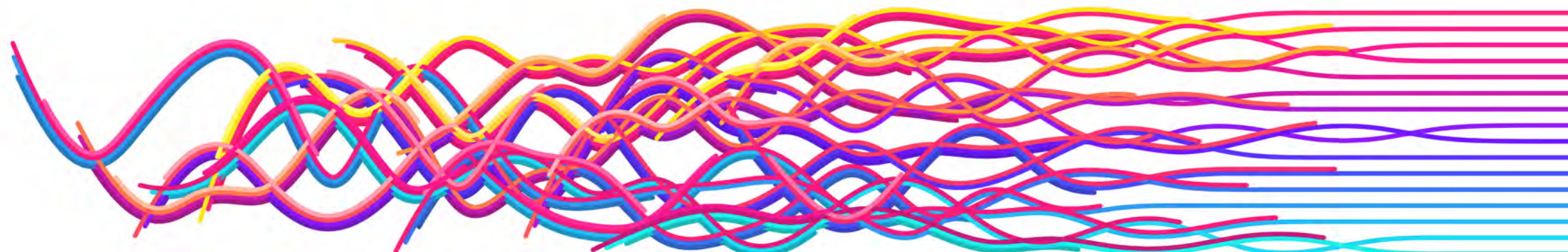
Concept Development



Linework;
Individuals converging
into a community



Color;
Each distinctly colored line grows and
intertwines with its neighbors, just as
people do. The diversity and connectivity
of the community increases.



Color Addition;
Each individual element becomes a
fuller, more colorful version of itself.
Similarly, as people grow together,
so does the exchange of ideas,
cultures, and knowledge.

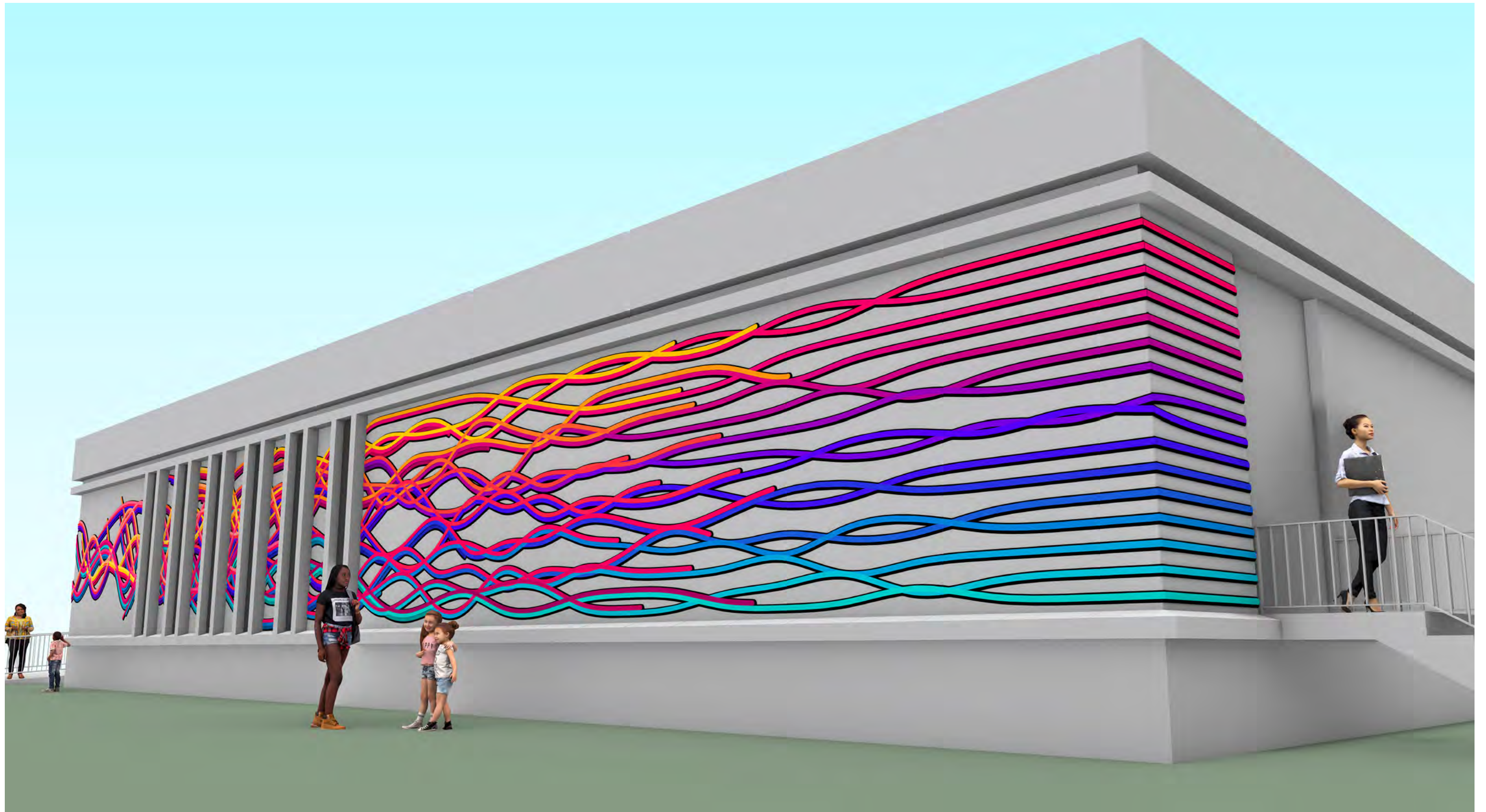


South Elevation

The large graphic will be highly visible and impactful from Seminary Road and Francis Hammond Middle School. Upon approach, viewers and library patrons along the sidewalks and front “lawn” will notice the detail and sophistication in the graphic layering and optical use of color.



View from Southwest



View from Southeast

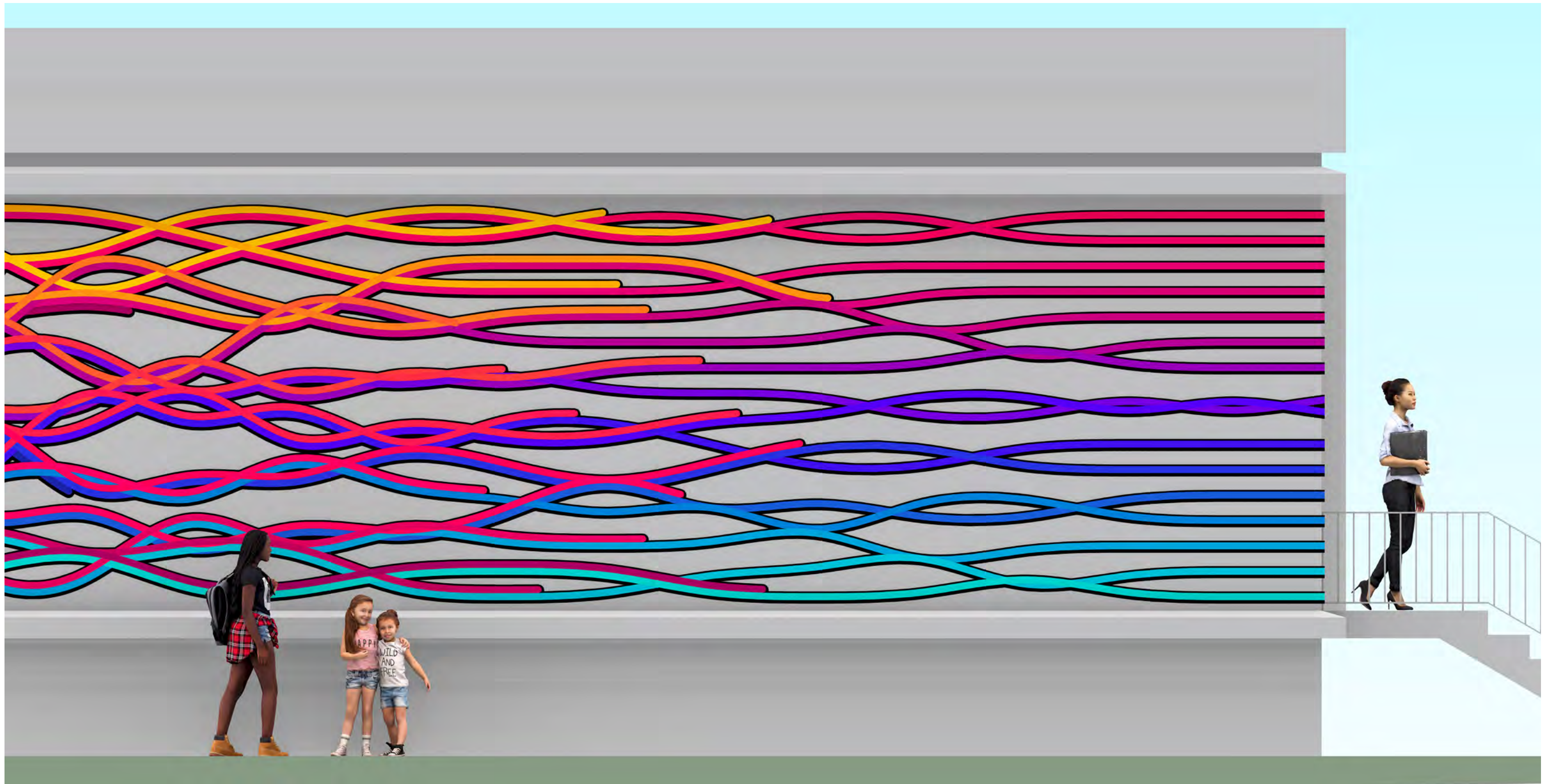
The addition of a black backer creates a springboard that allows the color to pop off the gray of the concrete. In combination, lighter tones tend to muddle visually and they often seem less vibrant. Black adds a critical contrasting element and preserves the clarity and impact of each color.





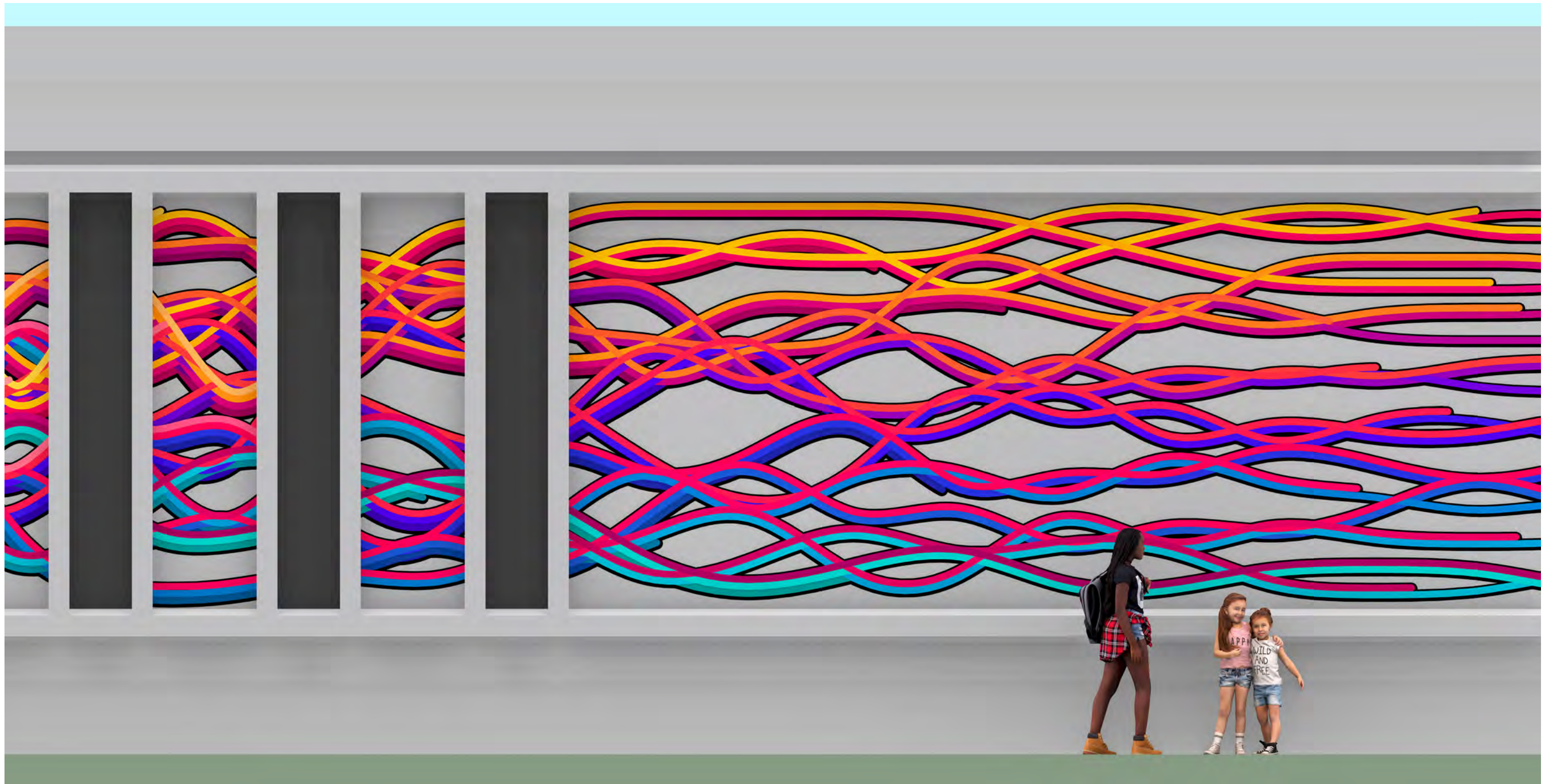
East Elevation

The project begins on the east elevation in a very organized and predictable way with several separate lines of color symbolic of individual people living their distinct lives.



South Elevation: 1

Along the south facade, the individual lines begin to meander unpredictably, bumping into one another and crossing paths along the way. As they meander, they pick up other threads of color, a representation of shared cultures and ideas as one learns more about the people in their community.



South Elevation: 2

We chose to have the project break at each window on the facade for multiple reasons. Long-term building maintenance will be easier. We also want to allow as much light as possible to enter the building through the six south-facing windows.

If the project crossed in front of the windows, it would appear dark and silhouetted from the inside. Because the artwork has a large continuous and linear gesture, the eye naturally connects the linework across the window breaks.



South Elevation: 3

As the project weaves its way toward the western elevation, the lines begin to dissipate and end. This gives the project the impression of being a single still frame of motion, that the lines continue to grow and expand beyond the visible field, just as people do through life.

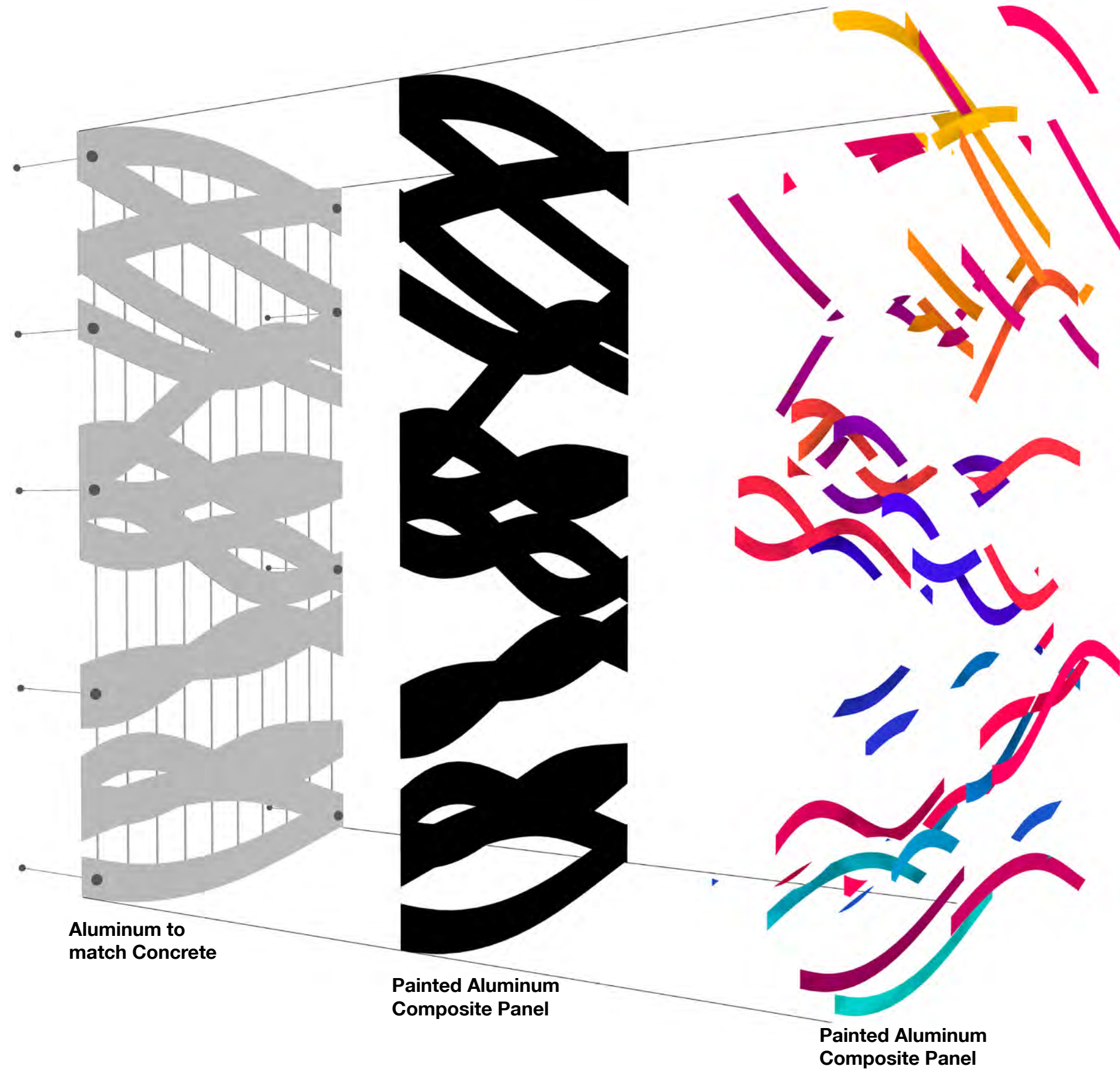


West Elevation

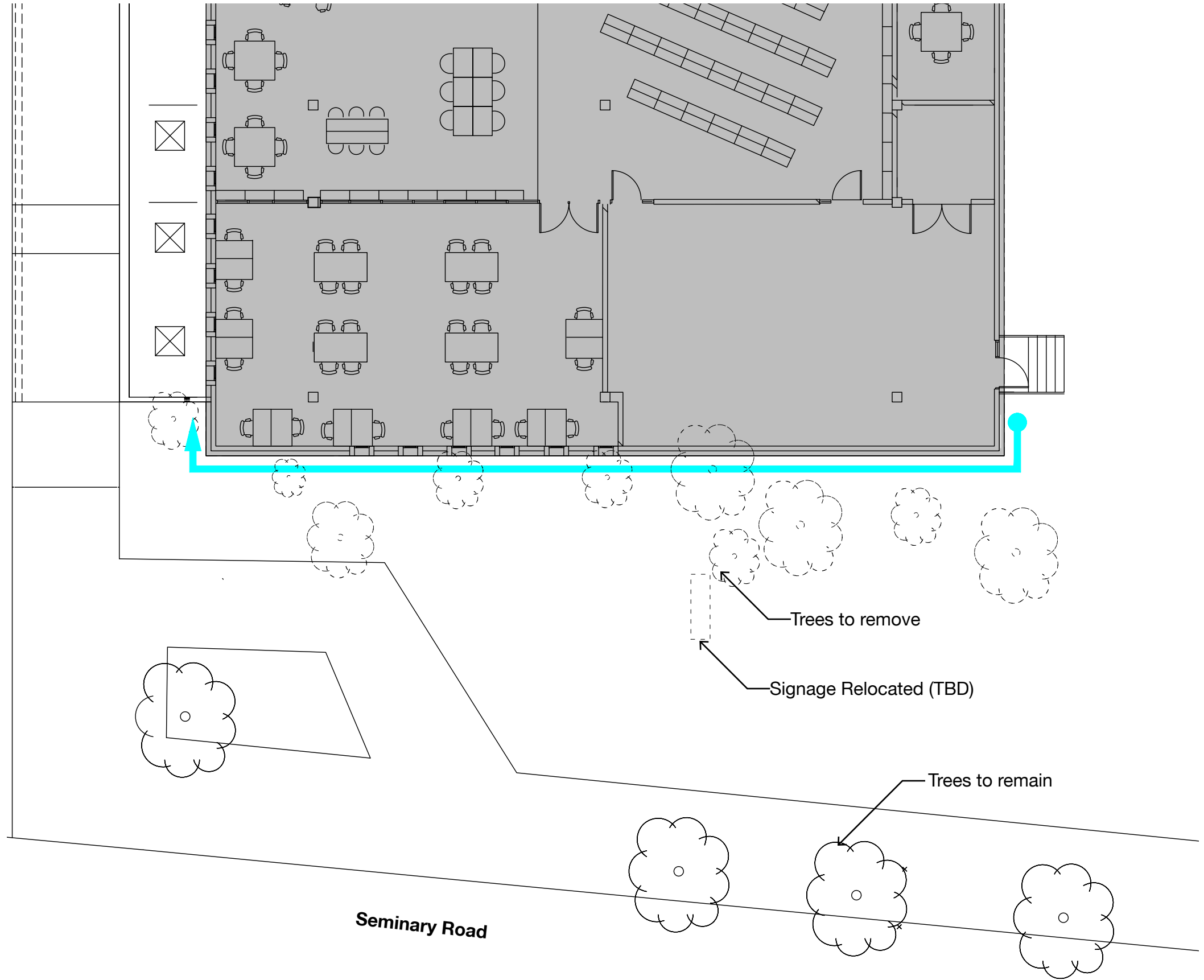
The project dissipates on the west elevation. Turning the corner with the tail end of the project leads the eye towards the main entrance while also providing a glimpse of the project from Library Lane and further West on Seminary Road.

Each of the brightly colored components would be individually fabricated and painted before mounted to a black backer. That assembly will be then adhered to the structural aluminum backer. This work will all be done off-site.

The structural aluminum backing will be color-matched to the concrete to blend in and disappear. The vertical structural lines connect multiple small parts into a single panel that can be easily anchored to the facade. The linework would only be added as/where needed.



Library Lane



While we do request the removal of the trees along the facade, we understand that the trees along the sidewalk are more cherished by the community. Because the canopy of those trees is higher, the facade of the library would still be seen from the middle school, by pedestrians on the sidewalk of both sides of the street, and from vehicular traffic.

There was previous discussion of Library signage being relocated, that would also allow for more visibility of the artwork if moved. We are open to your opinions on the relocation.

Maintenance

The project has been developed with minimal maintenance in mind. Typical periodic cleaning should be the only maintenance required.

The system was designed to be as flat as possible, though it looks 3-Dimensional. This will deter people from being able to use the artwork to climb on.

All components of the project are vertical surfaces to deter dirt from collecting on their faces.

Paints used will be UV stable and will not fade over time.

Installation

As much of the project will be prefabricated as possible to minimize on-site time.

The project will be created in a panelized system so that we can mount to the concrete building as minimally as possible. We will develop the anchoring system during the final design phase.

Timeline

Final Design: 1 Month
Fabrication: 6 Months
Installation: 1 Week

