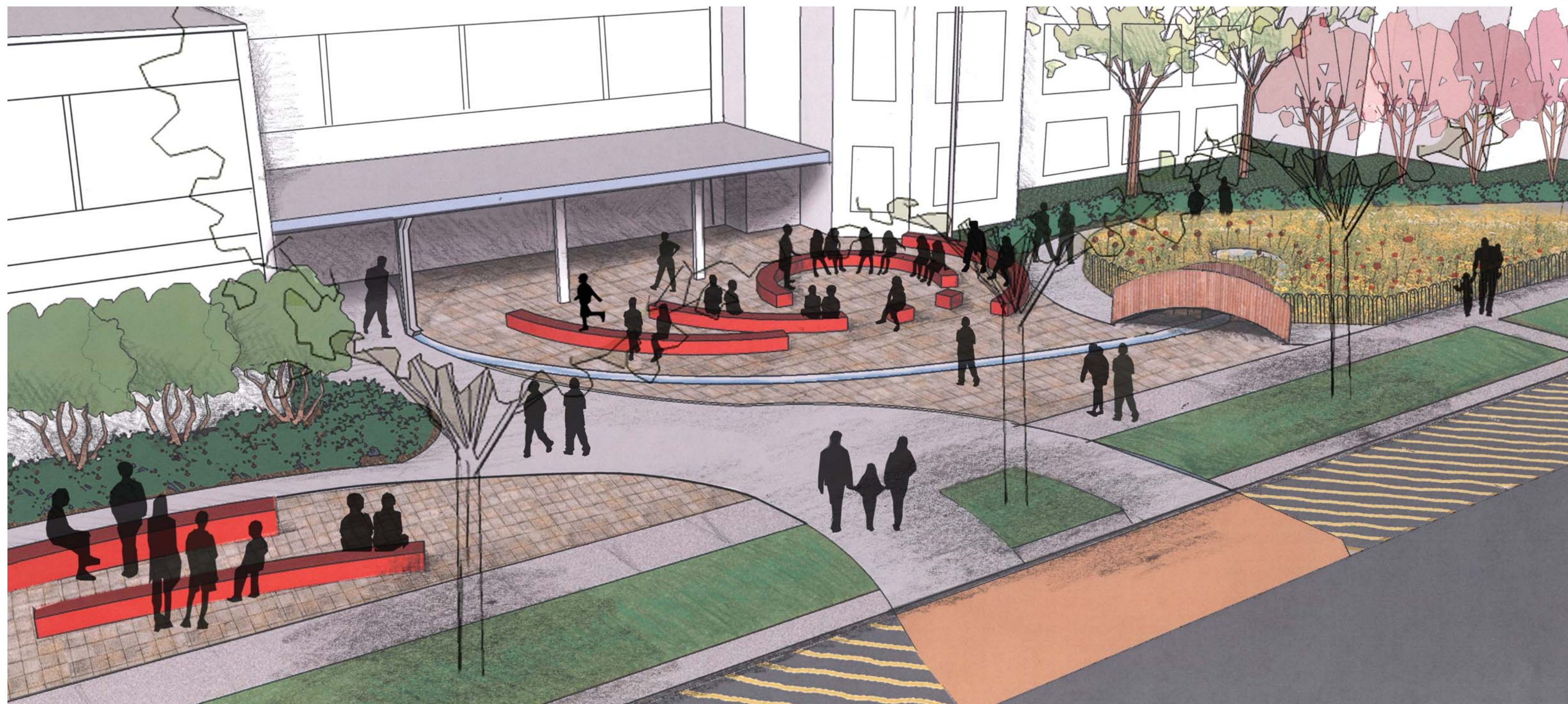


The design for Irving Elementary School takes its inspiration from the historical hydrology of the Village and the outlying region. Adjacent to the site is Ridgeland Avenue, which is named for the low and inconspicuous ridge that parallels the shores of Lake Michigan. This landform turns out to be more than a bump in the landscape; it is actually a continental divide that separates the St. Lawrence River and the Mississippi River watersheds. Layered on the site's waterways and landforms are the playful interpretation of the types of ecosystems found in the area—oak outcroppings, prairies, and wetlands.



The playground pays tribute to Oak Park's settlement story, while mimicking many of Illinois's geographic features. Ridges of rubber surfacing and artificial turf are reminiscent of the high and dry land Oak Park's first settler, Joseph Kettlestring, built his home on. The custom play equipment further recalls early 'Oak Ridge' settlements, and provides a rich and varied play experience for little explorers.



THE OXBOW RIVER

The oxbow river is one that winds and twists as the water erodes away the outer edges of its curves. Over time, and usually during times of flooding, the river pinches off its own bend and straightens out again. By using this metaphor, paths at the playground are soft, curving, and overlapping, providing a natural-looking landscape in which to run around and gather.



THE GLACIAL LAKE

A glacial lake was formed by retreating glaciers' deposits of ice. As the ice age ended, these deposits melted to create lakes, and the Great Lakes are the world's largest. This topographical feature is represented at the playground with a large blue rubber playground surface surrounded by crescent green mounds. The Glacial Lake provides a central area for equipment and defines the play area.



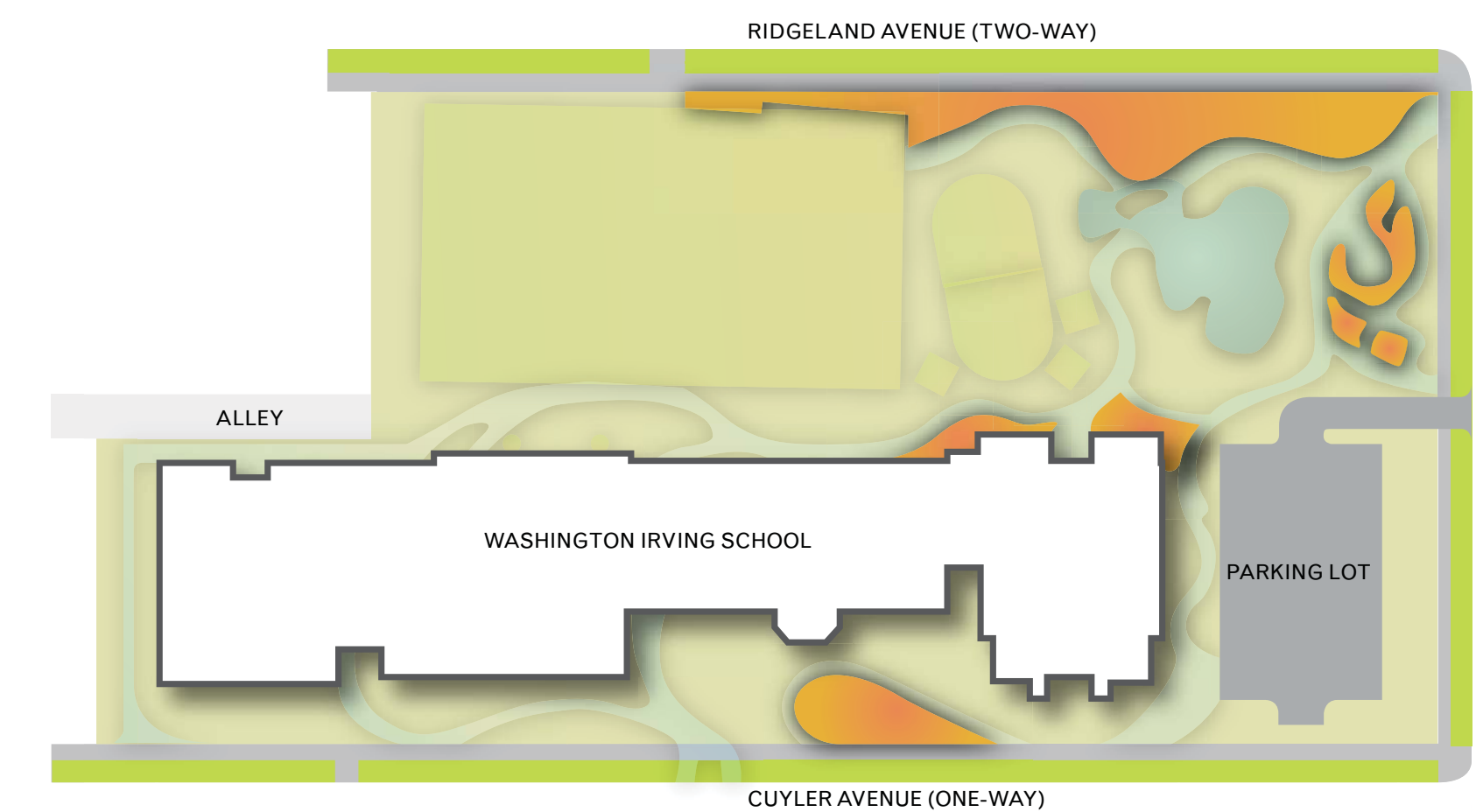
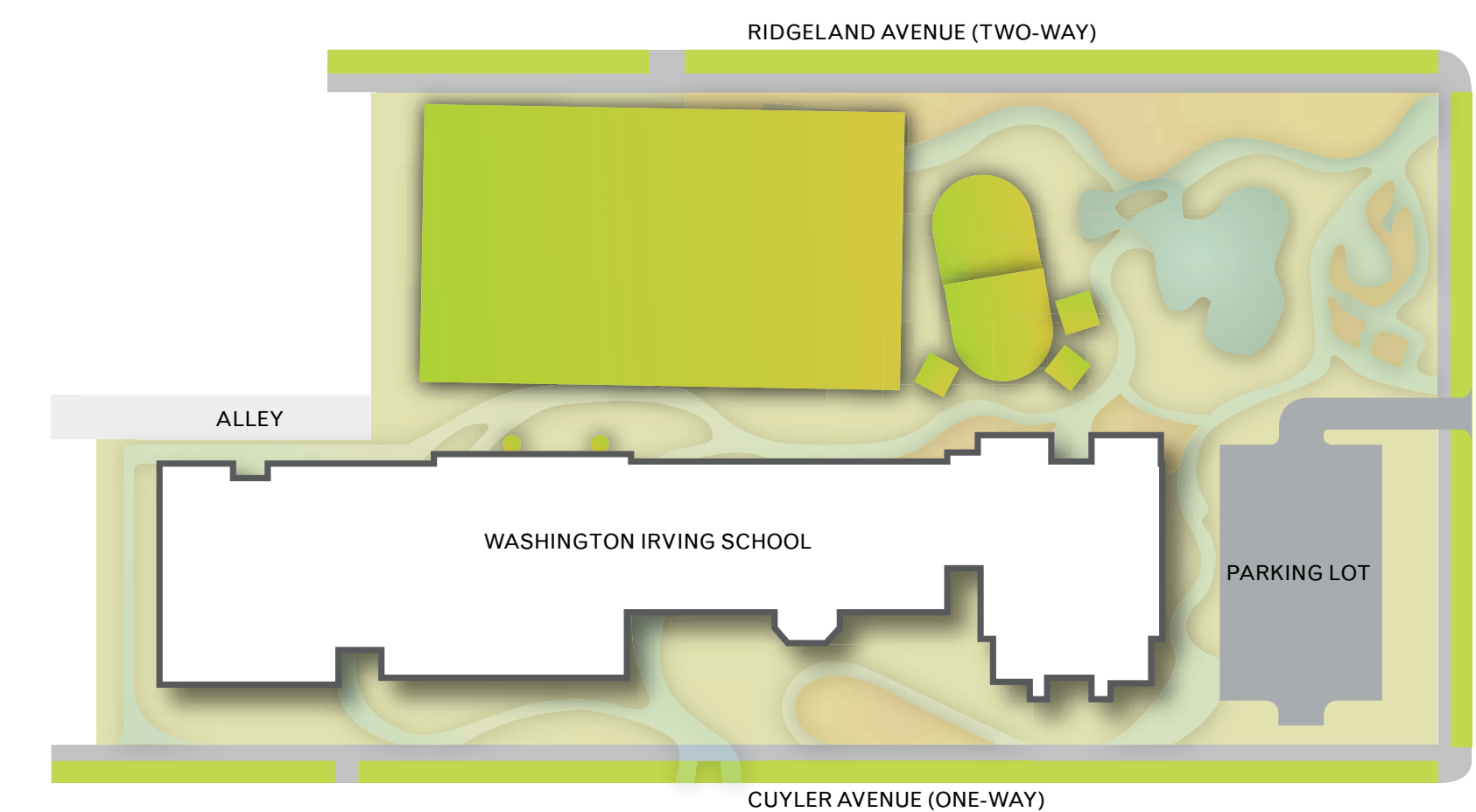
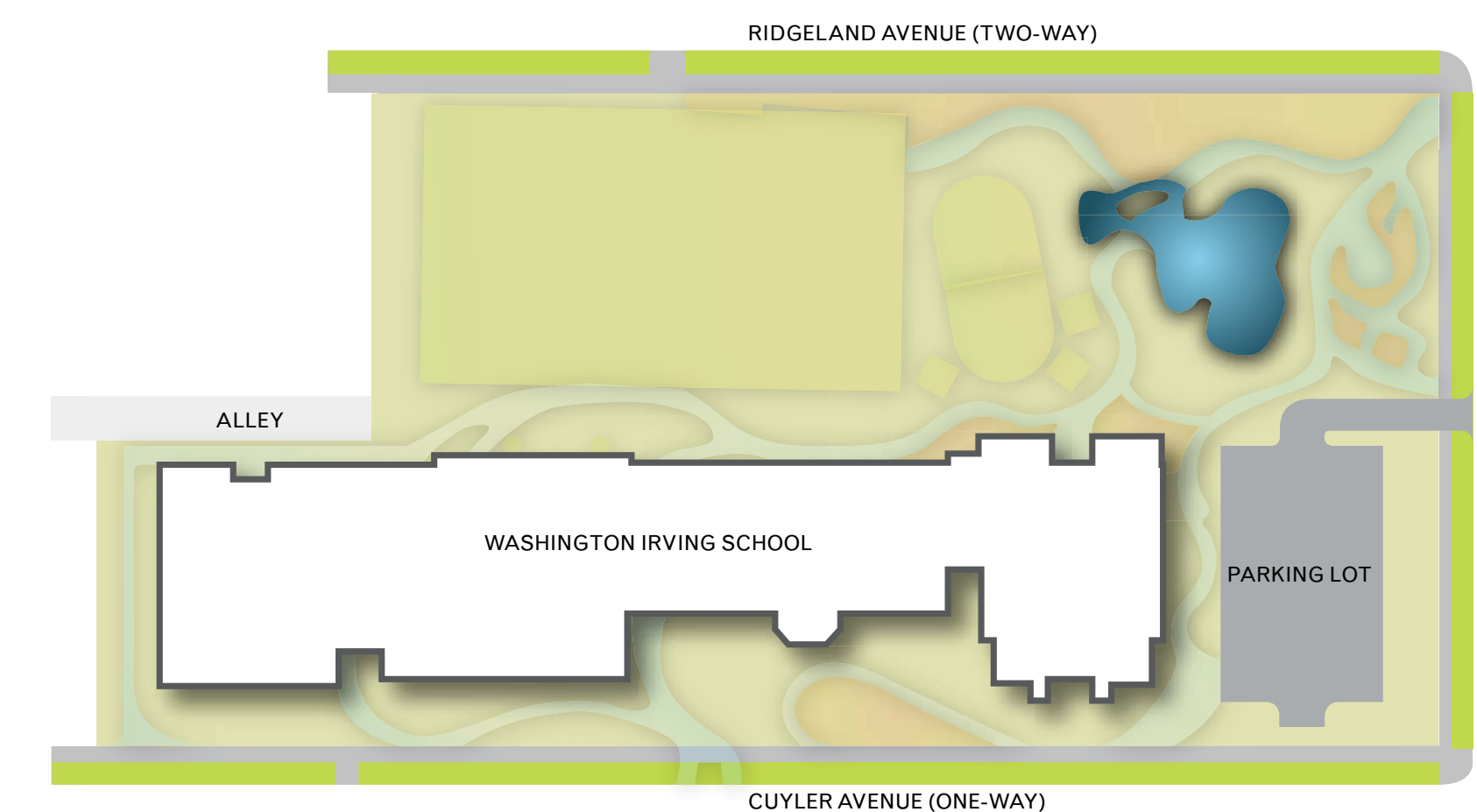
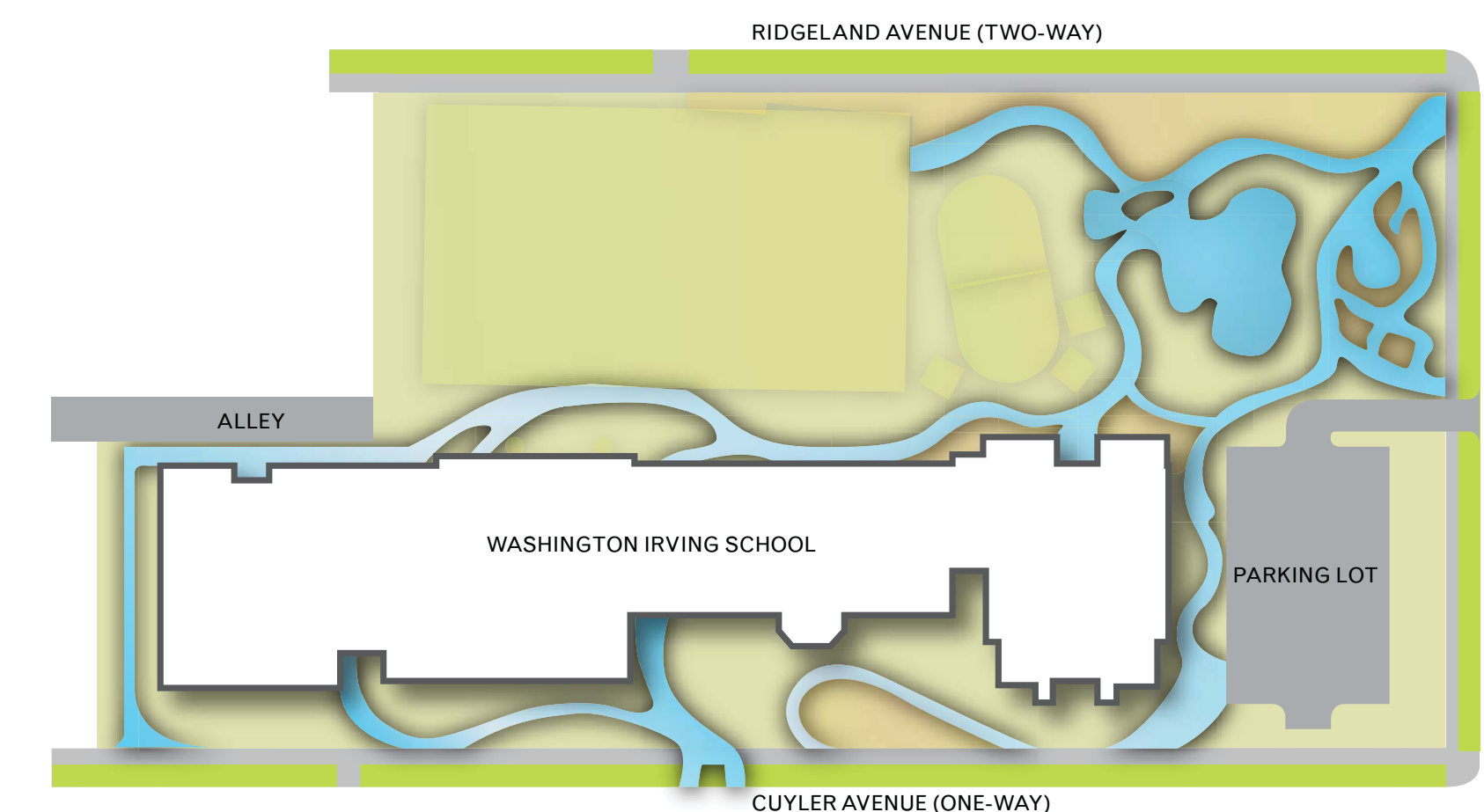
THE MEADOW

Illinois's terrain has been sculpted by the movement of the Glaciers. In a seeming point of contradiction, it formed the Ridgeland early residents settled on, and it formed the flat plains in which the Midwest is so well-known. The lack of topography is due to two differing, lake-bottom processes—one being the infill of low regions with clay and silt, and the other being the leveling of the lake's edge by waves. The areas closer to the building, as well as the basketball half courts and the open field, are thought of as a mix between a large lake plain and an open meadow.



THE SAVANNA AND PRAIRIE

Oak savannas and prairies are native ecosystem of Illinois and cover much of the state. Both are recreated and mimicked on the site—smaller pocket areas illustrate ecosystem types, such as a simplified prairie area or a mimicked wet prairies using the water from the building downspout. Rain gardens in the front and back of the school make a display of water harvesting efforts. Children can reflect on the connections between natural systems and built environments, and learn about plantings that are native to Illinois.





THE 'READING GARDEN':
EGG BENCHES
ARCHITECTURAL TREES
BRANDED 12'H 'LACE FENCE' BACKDROP WITH VINES
BIRDHOUSES
*SEE ELEVATION BELOW

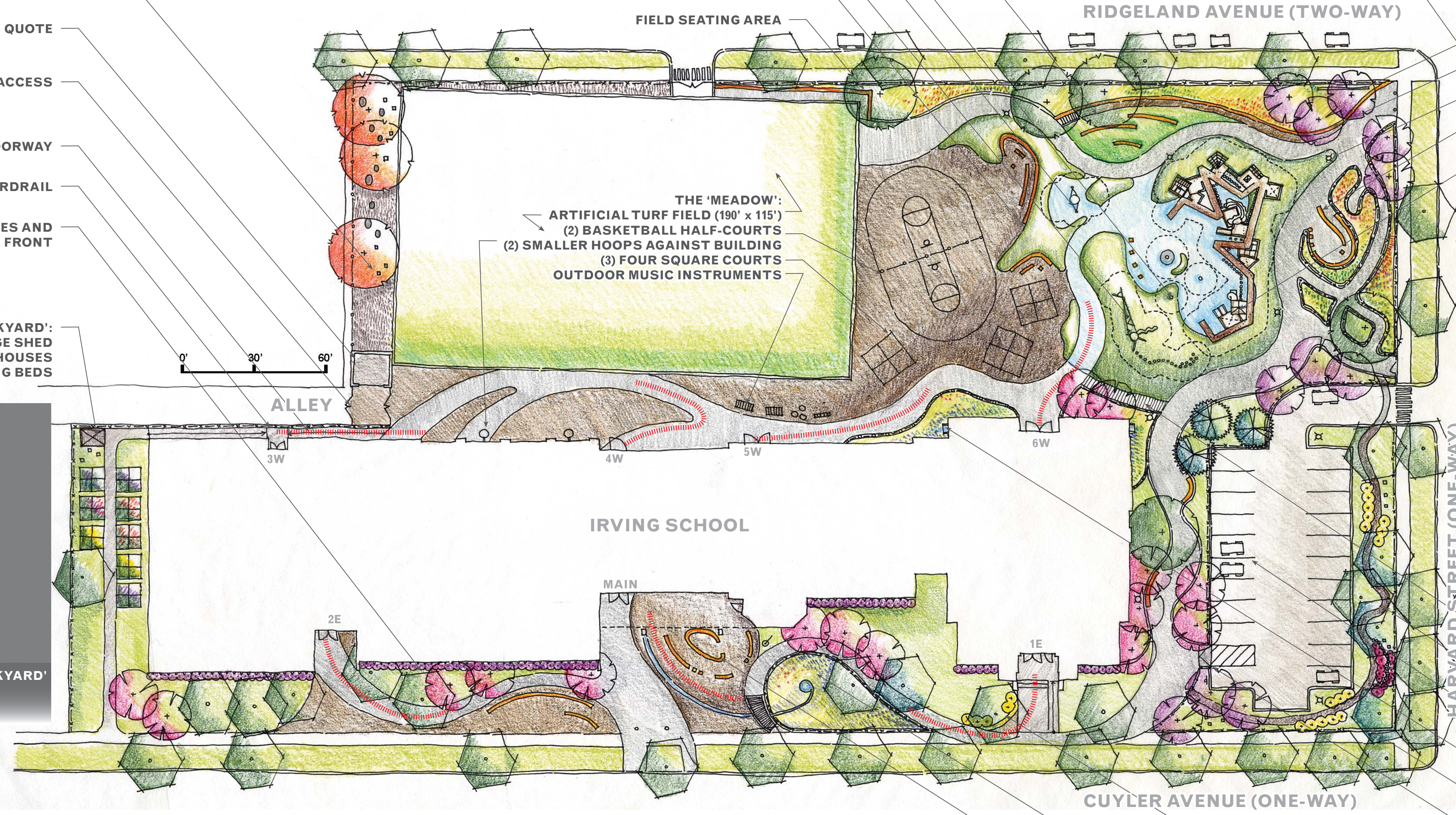
- TRASH ENCLOSURE WITH IRVING QUOTE
- NEW DOUBLE-SWING GATE FOR ALLEY ACCESS
- LINE-UP AREA AT EACH DOORWAY
- ACCESSIBLE RAMP AND GUARDRAIL
- MULTI-STEM ORNAMENTAL TREES AND LANDSCAPING IN FRONT
- THE 'BACKYARD':
CHILD-SIZED STORAGE SHED
BIRDHOUSES
EXTENDED RAISED PLANTING BEDS



- THE RIDGE: ARTIFICIAL TURF OVERLOOK (4'H) WITH TRELLIS
- MULTI-USER SPINNER, AND (2) INDIVIDUAL SPINNERS
- 'CLOUD 9' MULTI-USER SWING
- TRADITIONAL PLAY PIECE
- 'COURT-SIDE' SEATING AREAS



THE 'ENTRANCE'



- UNDULATING RETAINING WALL ALONG RIDGELAND
- ENTRY SIGN
- LINEAR SEATWALL IN ACCENT COLOR
- PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING
- OUTDOOR CLASSROOM WITHIN 'PRAIRIE' PLANTERS
- LAKE SETTLEMENT CUSTOM PLAY PIECE
ZIG-ZAGGING BOARDWALKS LEAD TO OVERLAPPING DECKS AND INTEGRATED PLAY PIECES



- COMPOSITE TIMBER 'BOARDWALK' PATH
- EXPLORATION PATH WITH PLANTINGS AND BIRDHOUSES
- PERMEABLE PAVER PARKING LOT (21 SPACES, 2 ADA)
- WATER FROM DOWNSPOUT USED IN RAIN GARDEN
- CORNER SIGNAGE
- ADA RAMP AND ACCESS TO BUILDING FROM LOT



- SEATWALL AROUND EXISTING MATURE TREE
- RAIN GARDEN WITH RUNNEL LEADING FROM DOWNSPOUT
- OUTDOOR CLASSROOM WITH SEATING AND FLAGPOLE



THE 'READING GARDEN'

