

Evergreen High, situated in the heart of North Bethesda, Maryland, emerges as a beacon of innovation in secondary education. It breaks the standard of traditional urban development, prioritizing sustainability and community unity. With its expansive campus spread across the former White Flint Mall site, Evergreen High aims to accommodate 1,800 to 2,000 students across its North and South campuses.

In envisioning Evergreen High, extensive planning and research was crucial. It was not possible to join a new group as my student partners dropped out halfway through the project, but I planned to replicate the collaborative approach by reaching out to various stakeholder groups for input. Students were consulted on their ideal learning environment, advocating for improvements in facilities, curriculum, and mental health support. Teachers provided insights into classroom dynamics, desired changes in school operations, and strategies to enhance student learning. Professional architects provided several feedback sessions to develop Evergreen into a finalized product. My professors guided me through architectural concepts and conflicts that I encountered. This method ensured that the school design aligned with the needs and aspirations of the community.

The site analysis revealed several environmental challenges, including the need to preserve existing forested areas to mitigate the impact of impervious surfaces and heat island effect typical to urban areas like White Flint. Evergreen High addressed these issues through innovative biophilic design solutions such as green roofs, underground parking, and sustainable landscaping which would reflect less radiation and absorb more stormwater. Therefore, by prioritizing green spaces over asphalt, the school not only reduced runoff, but also created a healthier, more inviting campus environment.

The conceptual design of Evergreen High focused on fostering collaboration and connection. The public outdoor commons and a central courtyard served as hubs for interaction, distancing the space between public and private spaces. Various bubble diagrams were used to explore several site orientations focusing on connecting the most visited areas of a school building, the gym, library, auditorium, and cafeteria. From the front door to the football field, the student navigates a straight pathway through the North Campus, courtyard, and CTE South Campus with several options to turn and discover a new community. The layout emphasized accessibility and fluidity, encouraging exploration and discovery. In addition, the integration of indoor biophilic design principles like natural lighting, nature-like patterns, and greenery at Evergreen ensured that students and staff remained connected to nature, promoting well-being and enhancing cognitive function. Evergreen High maximizes the site to provide a space for students, teachers, and the community to build bridges and connections with one another.

One of Evergreen High's distinguishing features is its emphasis on Career and Technical Education (CTE), exemplified by the South Campus. At Evergreen High, students gain hands-on

experience in various fields, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. Since North Bethesda was a site with several businesses in various industries from medicine to law, Evergreen sought to build CTE pathways reflective of those. For example, the automotive cluster is located close to the true north of the building, where several car dealerships are located, building an industry-classroom connection. The school's commitment to sustainability extends beyond its physical design to its curriculum and culture. Students engage in projects that address real-world challenges, applying their knowledge to benefit the community. Partnerships with local businesses and organizations provide valuable learning opportunities and resources. The integration of industry partnerships and community engagement opportunities enriches the educational experience, preparing students for success in their chosen pathways.

The learning environment at Evergreen High is designed to cater to diverse learning styles and needs. Flexible classroom layouts, advanced technology integration, and a focus on inclusivity ensure that every student feels valued and empowered. At Evergreen, every student is encouraged to share their concerns at townhalls and provided computers with assistive technology to avoid the fear of asking for accommodations. A typical day is characterized by dynamic interactions, hands-on learning experiences, and a supportive atmosphere. From collaborative projects in the courtyard to internships in the surrounding community, students are constantly engaged and challenged to excel. The school schedule allows for flexibility and autonomy, empowering students to pursue their passions and interests.

Safety is valued at Evergreen High, with measures in place to ensure a secure learning environment. From controlled entry points to advanced surveillance systems, every effort is made to safeguard students and staff. Safety goes beyond security, as the school was designed to prioritize mental health and well-being, offering resources and support services. Within North Bethesda's urban hub, art and culture is celebrated at Evergreen High. With community mural projects and theater shows showcasing the talents of students and faculty, every member entering Evergreen High feels welcomed. The school's vibrant and inclusive atmosphere fosters creativity and expression, enriching the overall learning experience.

Evergreen High was designed to remind society about the power of innovation and collaboration in education. By reimagining the traditional high school experience, it creates a nurturing and empowering environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and personally. As a model of sustainable design and community engagement, Evergreen High sets a new standard for secondary education in urban environments.