



DESIGN COMMISSION
03.19.2015 | BLOCK 89

DESIGN COMMISSION

FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the long term public benefits proposed for Block 89 in exchange for the City granting a subterranean alley vacation of 5,775sf. Pages four through fifteen provide a project and landscape overview, and pages sixteen to twenty-seven identify public benefit elements for the subterranean vacation.

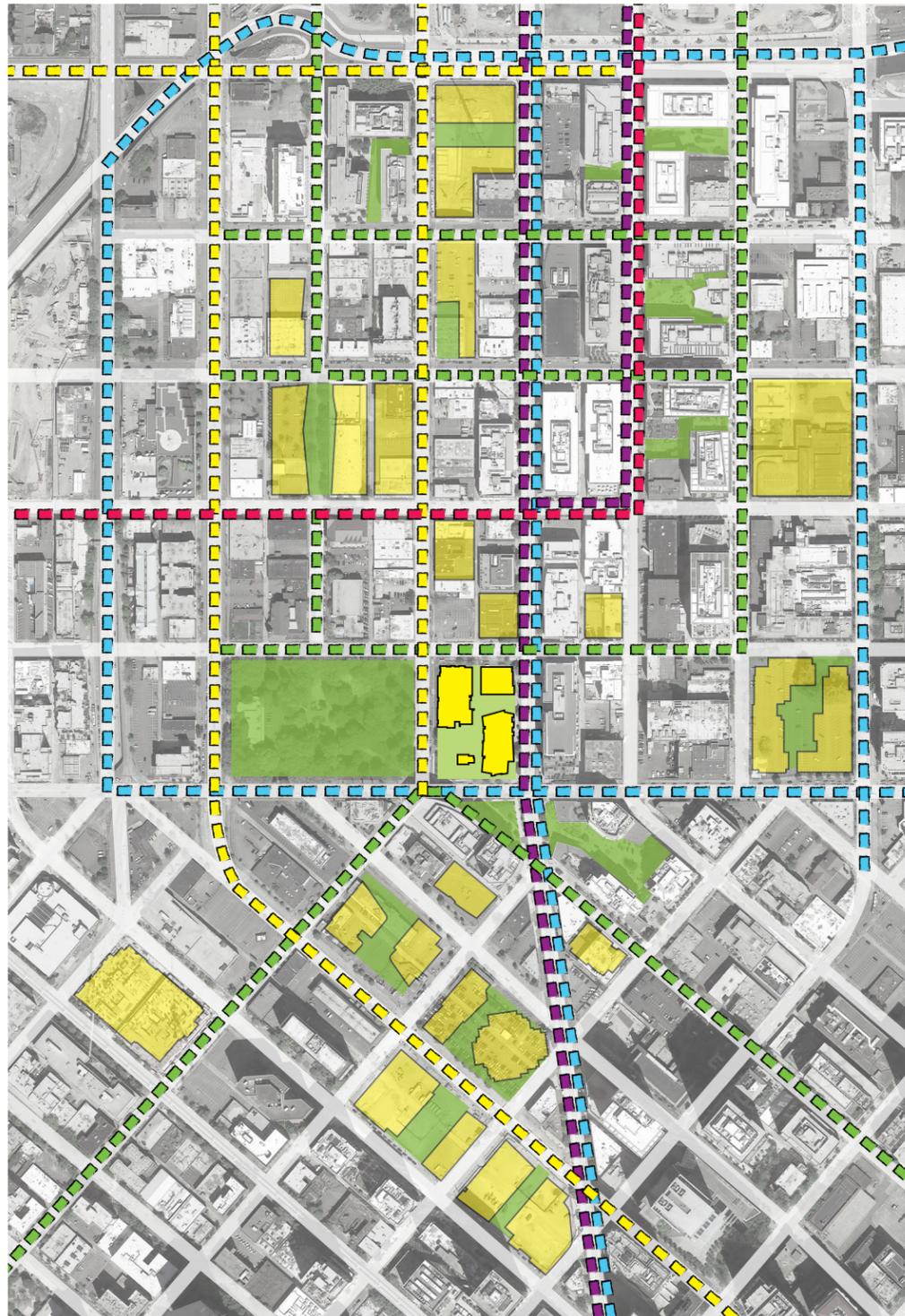
This presentation directly addresses the Commission's recommendations following the Design Commission Meeting of 20 November 2014. The following text is from the meeting minutes:

With a vote of 6 to 1, the Commission approved the urban design merit of the petition to vacate the subterranean portion of the 16-foot wide north/south alley between John Street and Denny Way with the following conditions:

- Work with SDOT and all utility stakeholders to determine the minimum necessary depth between the surface of the alley and the top of any below-grade structure to accommodate all planned or potential utility uses.
- Demonstrate how setbacks, sightlines and placement of landscape elements in the alley reinforce that the right-of-way is a public space and would allow it to perform as a fully serviced alley if it were to become necessary.

The Commission also made the following comments and recommendations for the project:

- Consider opportunities for green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) as encouraged in the South Lake Union Urban Design Framework – perhaps as part of the Public Benefits package.
- Refine the treatment of the northern portion of the alley surface, including paving materials, lighting, signage and street furniture, so that it feels as urban and as public as the rest of the proposed open space.
- Strengthen the civic nature of the proposed public spaces, especially the pavilion.
- Identify (and present in section) opportunities to bring people off the ground plane, as part of the public or private program.
- Consider various ways to differentiate the ground plane materials to distinguish the public and private realm. Whatever approach you choose, we would like to understand the logic of the decision.
- Present more detail about the lighting scheme for the entire site.
- We appreciate that the subterranean alley vacation scheme is a sensible alternative to a full vacation particularly because it preserves the existing platting rather than creating the potential for a superblock. We support the proposed massing.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIONS

Situated at the Gateway to South Lake Union, along the bustling Denny Way and Westlake Avenue North corridors, Block 89 is the hub of an interconnected network of open spaces, transit infrastructure, and future development.

-  BLOCK 89 BUILDINGS
-  PROPOSED / UNDER CONSTRUCTION
-  OPEN SPACE
-  LAKE / BAY TRAIL
-  ARTERIAL
-  GREEN STREET
-  BIKE
-  STREET CAR



PROJECT OVERVIEW

PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

Of all the downtown locations studied, Denny Way and Westlake Avenue North was the site with the most significant year-over-year increase in pedestrian traffic. Just in the time period between Summer 2012 and Summer 2013, this intersection experienced an 81% increase in pedestrian traffic. (DSA-MID Pedestrian Count Survey, 2013).

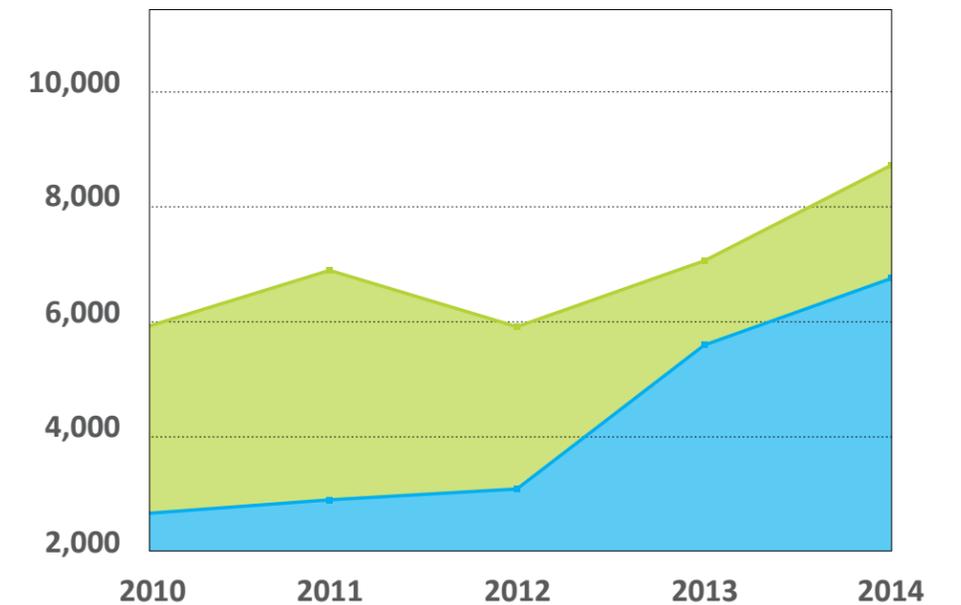
The permeable, pedestrian oriented design of the Block 89 site will relieve pressure on the Denny / Westlake intersection while increasing connectivity to the surrounding network of green streets and open spaces.

6,758 PEOPLE, 2014

5,596 PEOPLE, 2013

3,095 PEOPLE, 2012

DENNY AND WESTLAKE vs. 4TH AND PINE



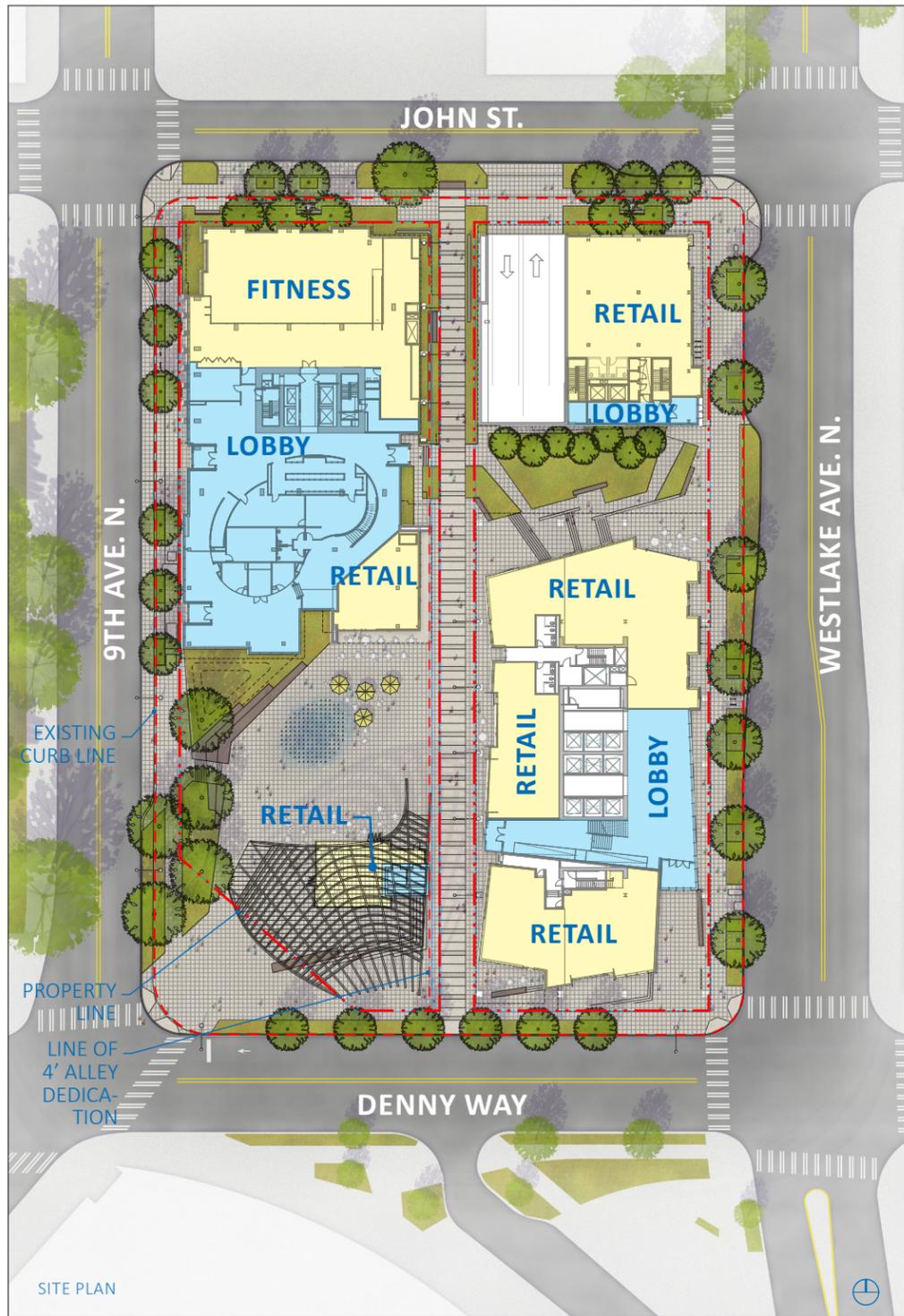
■ DENNY WAY AND WESTLAKE AVE. N.

■ 4TH AND PINE



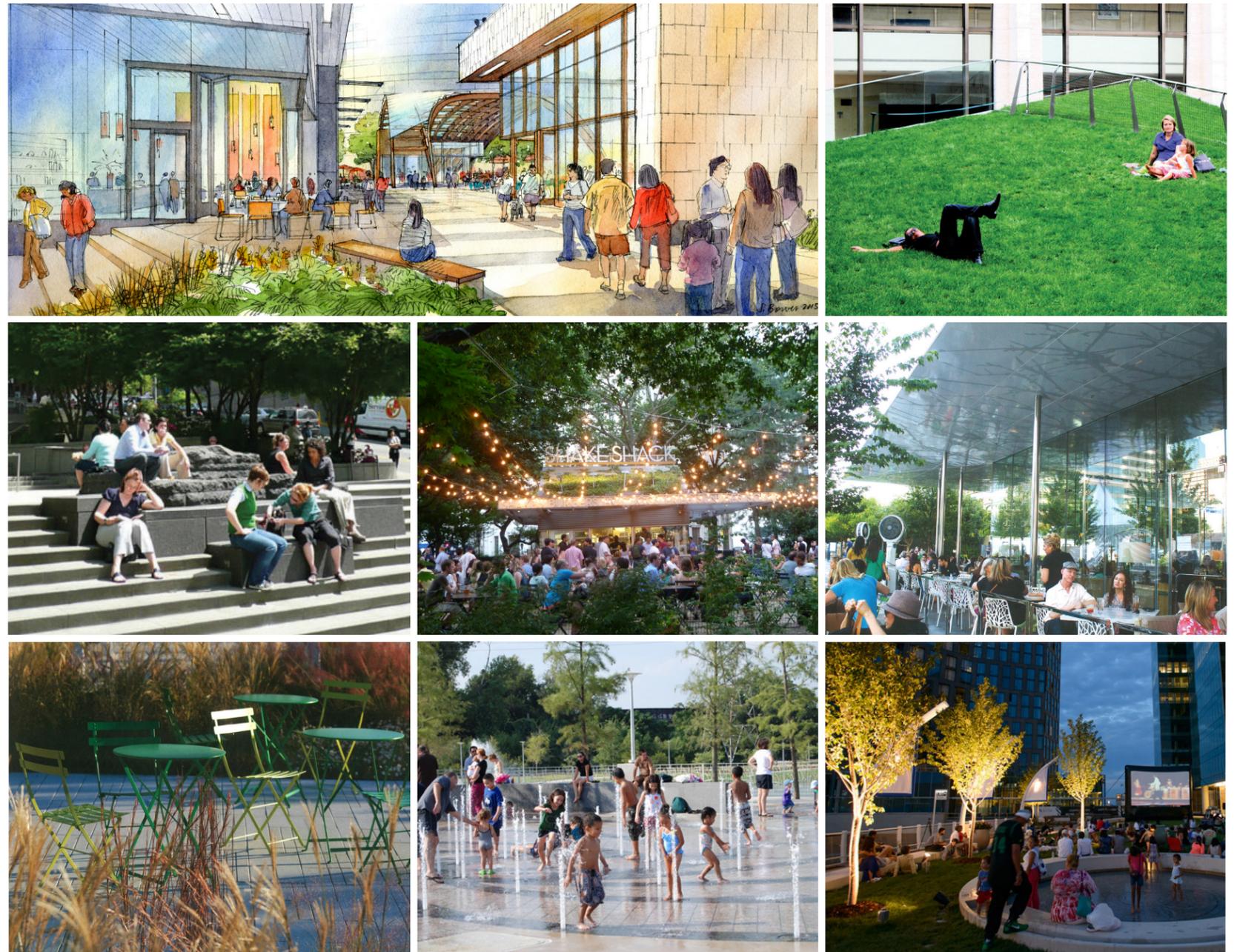
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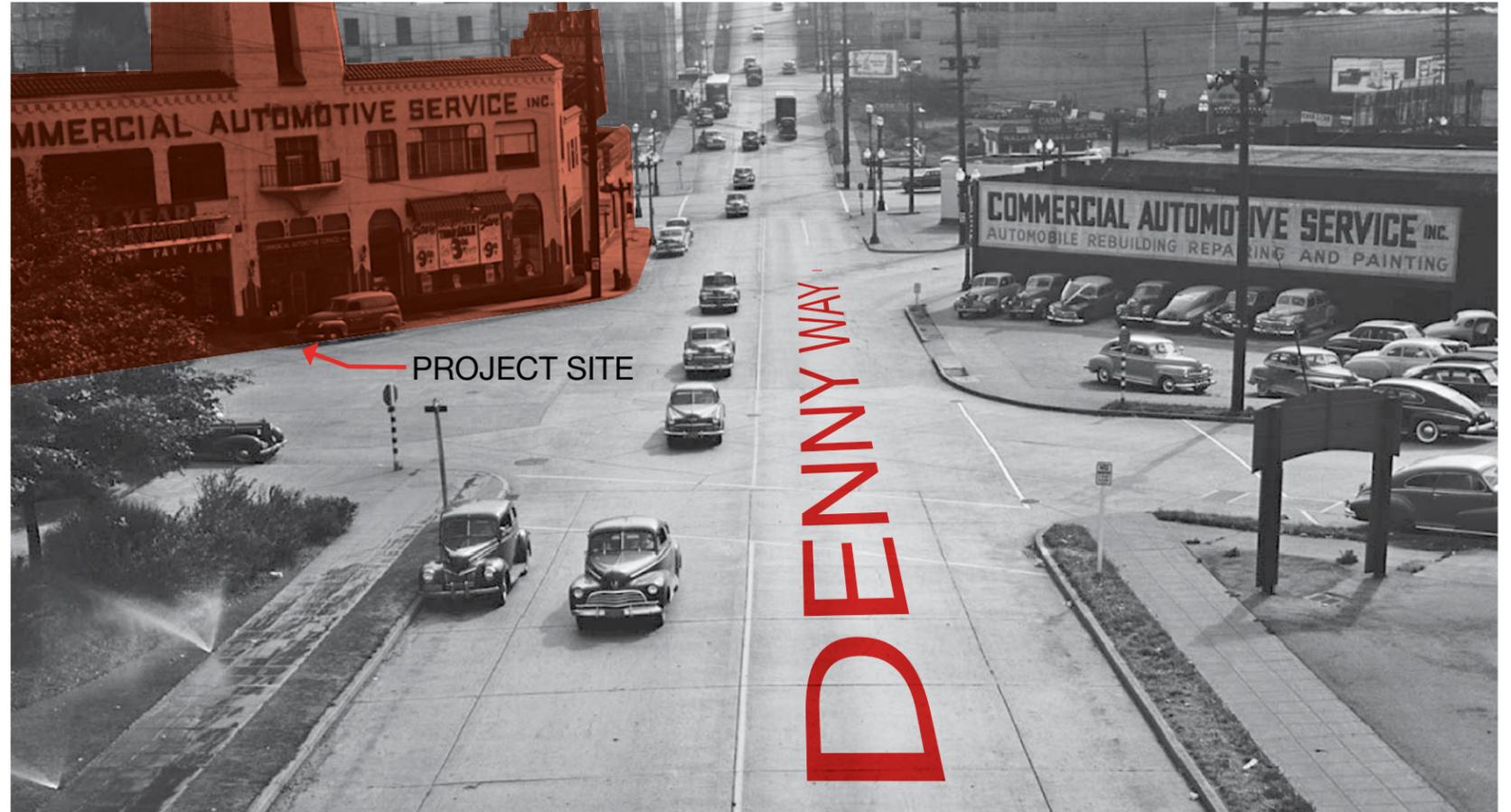
PROJECT OVERVIEW

OPEN SPACE, RETAIL, ACTIVATION AND EVENTS





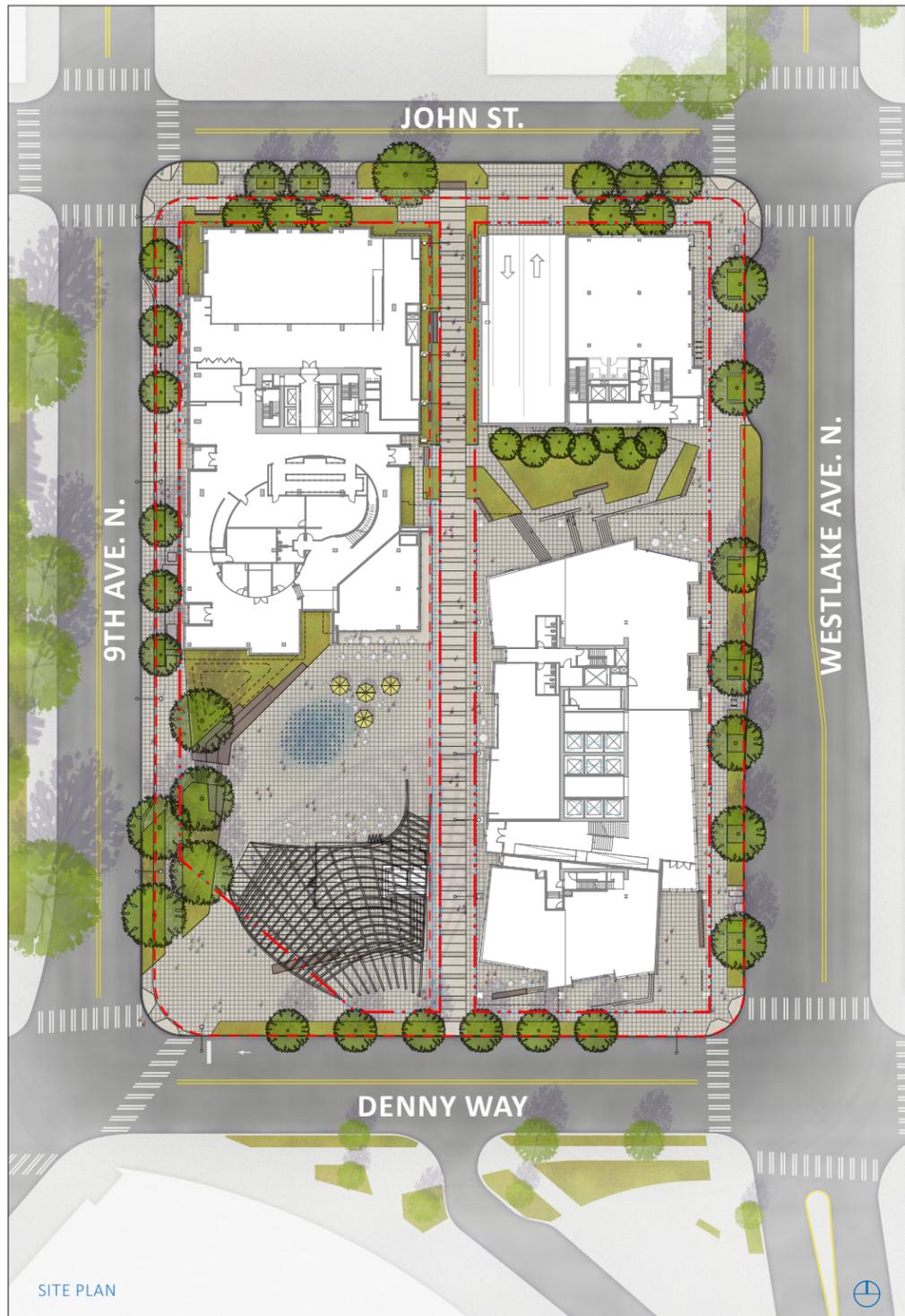
DENNY PARK, C. 1904



DENNY WAY, LOOKING EAST, C. 1949



VIEW OF BLOCK 89, LOOKING WEST, C. 1930



LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

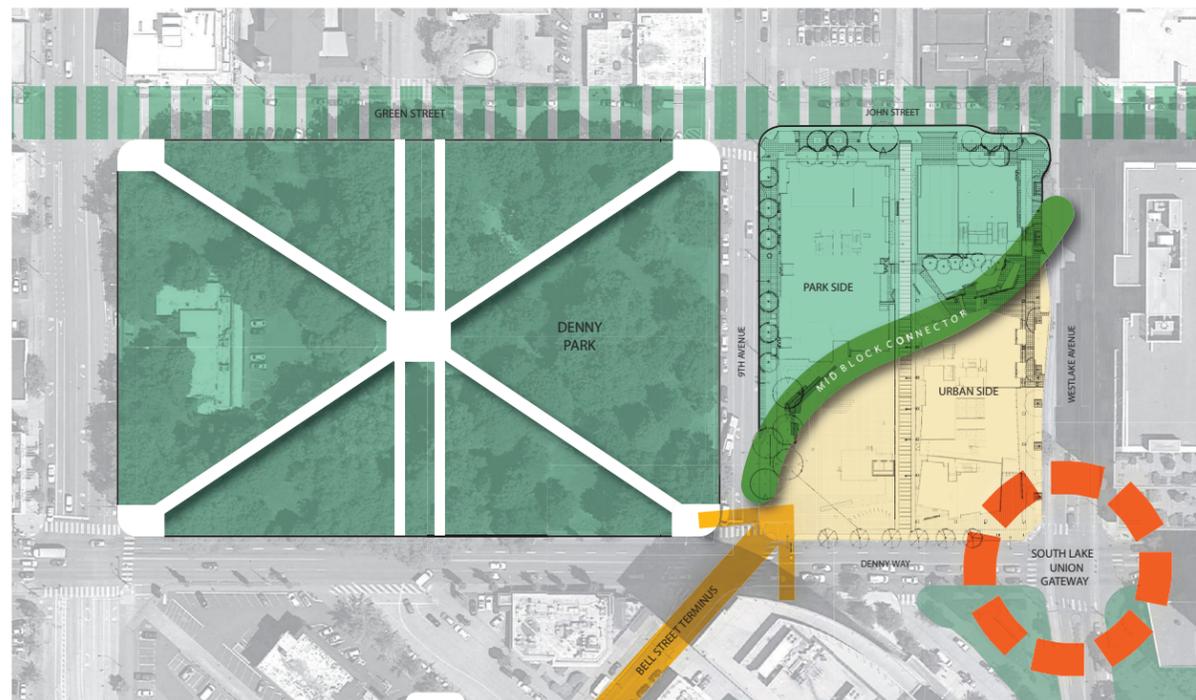
CONCEPT

The Block 89 landscape approach is influenced by its context of being situated at the convergence of the densely vegetated and historic Denny Park, the axial terminus of Bell Street, and the Southern gateway to South Lake Union at Westlake and Denny.

The northern and western portion of the site, including John Street Green Street and the alley/mews connection, extends the lush green character of Denny Park across 9th Avenue and into the project development. The broad widened sidewalk of John Street and the pedestrian focused open spaces are enriched with a robust northwest planting tapestry with high texture contrast and year round planting interest.

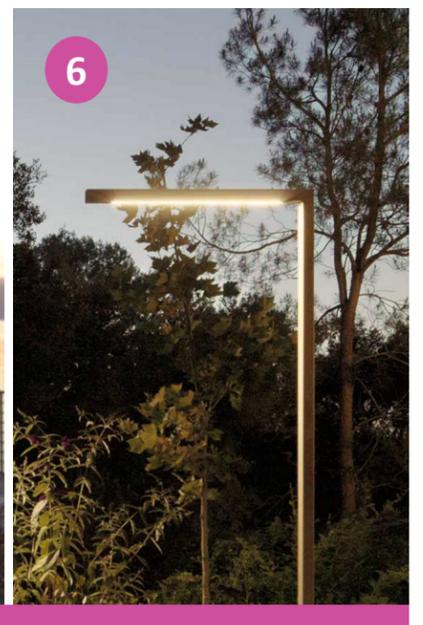
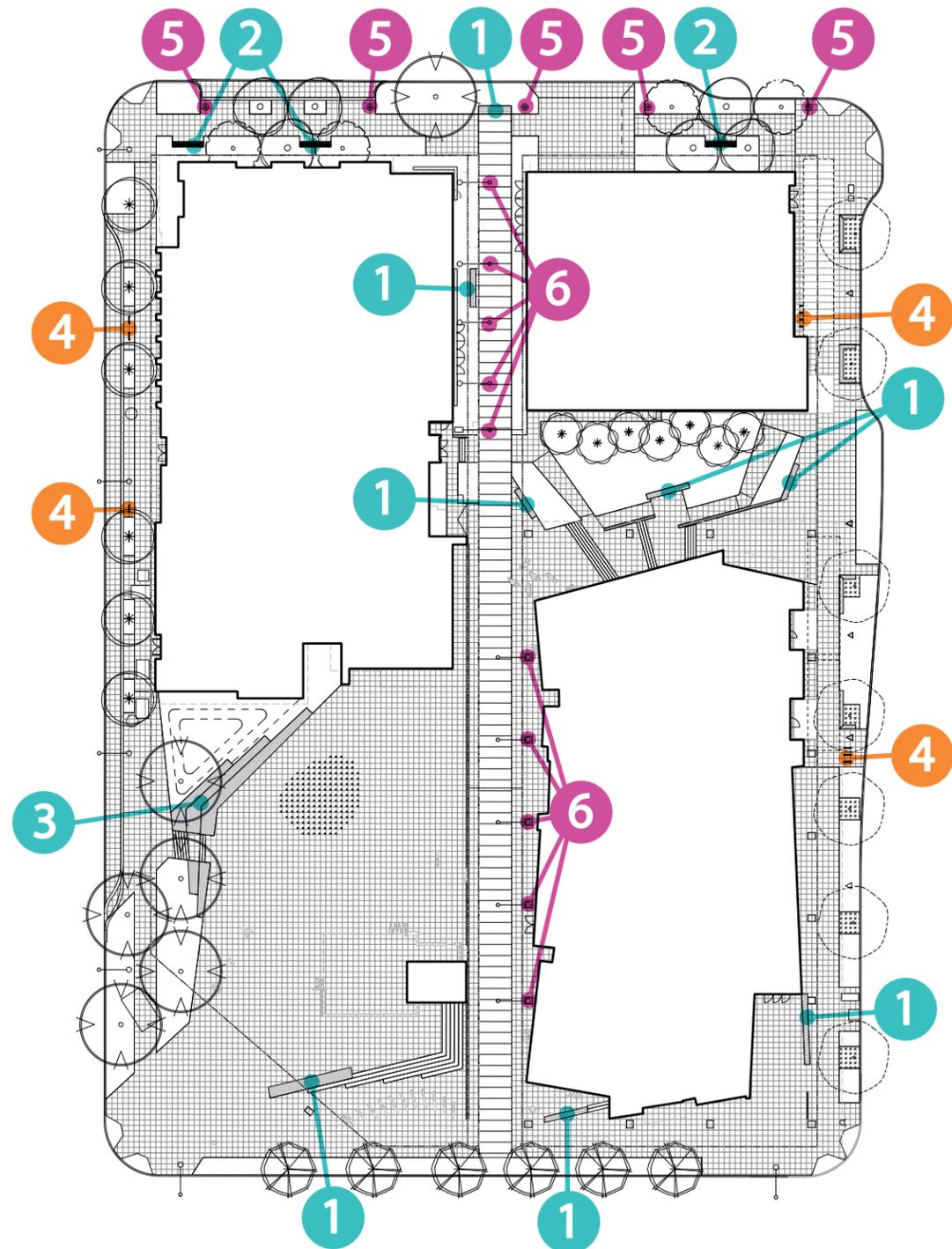
The central plaza and through-block connector landscape response includes rain gardens, specimen trees, and plantings that focus on a verdant evergreen/textural framework with seasonal interest. The landscape here serves both as a focal point and as traditional scale giving elements for the larger plaza and through-block open space.

The southern and eastern portion of the site responds to more traditional urban and civic oriented landscape cues and creates a continuous evergreen buffer along Denny Way and retains the stately Chestnut trees of Westlake Ave. while enriching and expanding the understory plantings.



LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

SITE MATERIALS: FURNISHINGS



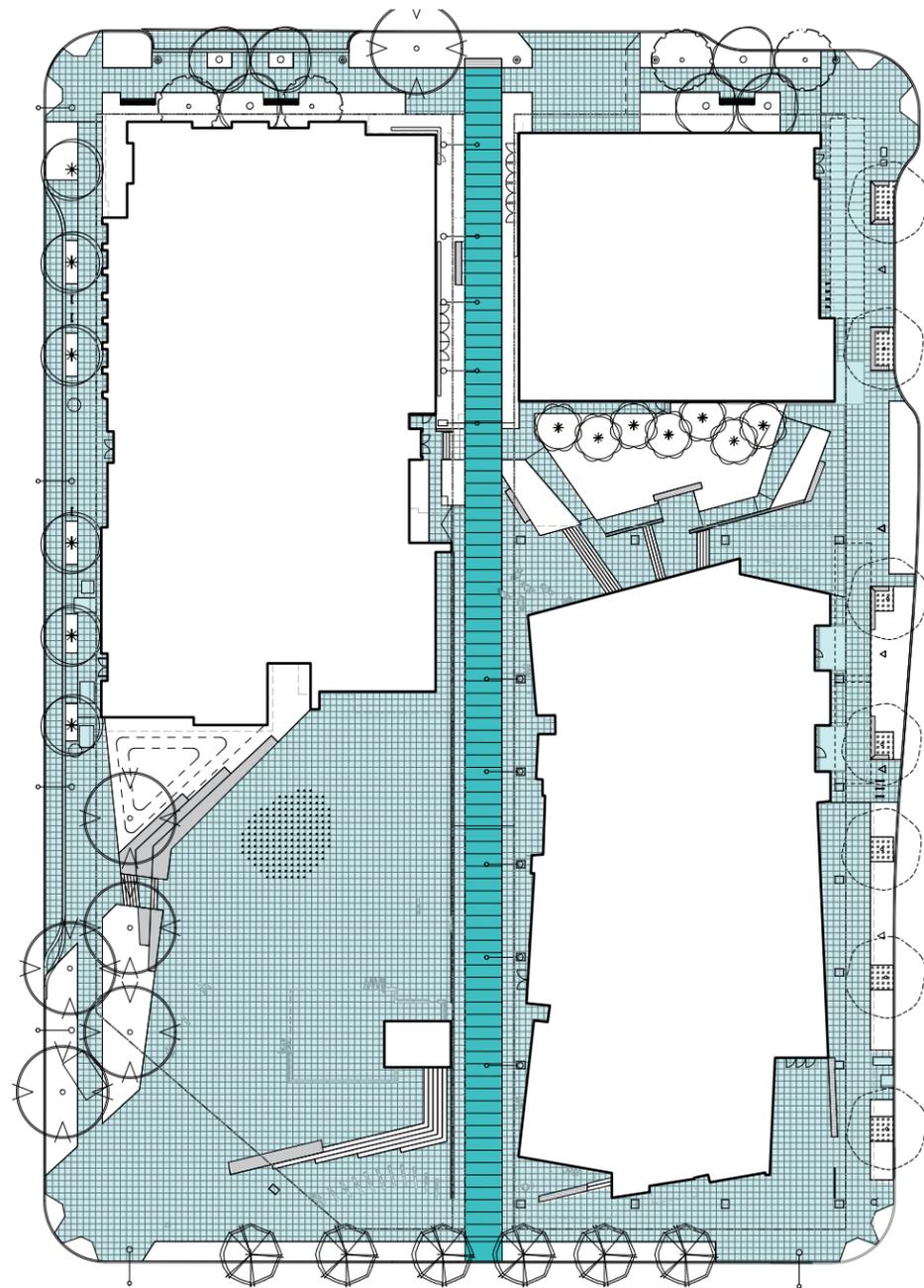
BENCHES

BIKE RACKS

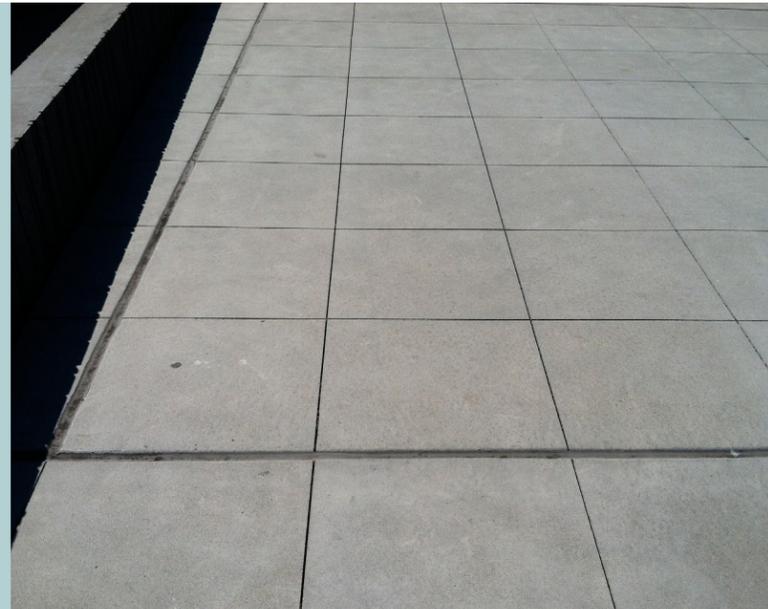
SITE LIGHTING

LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

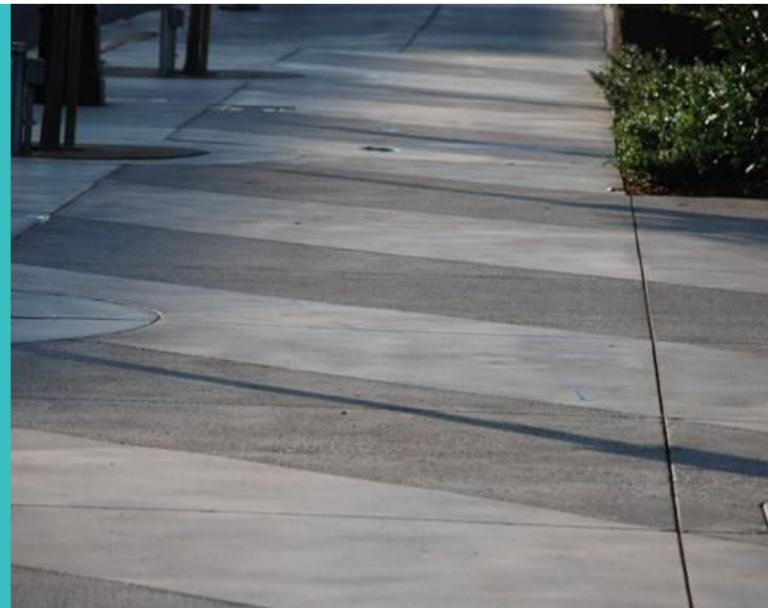
SITE MATERIALS: PAVING



CITY OF SEATTLE STANDARD 2'X2' CAST-IN-PLACE CONCRETE

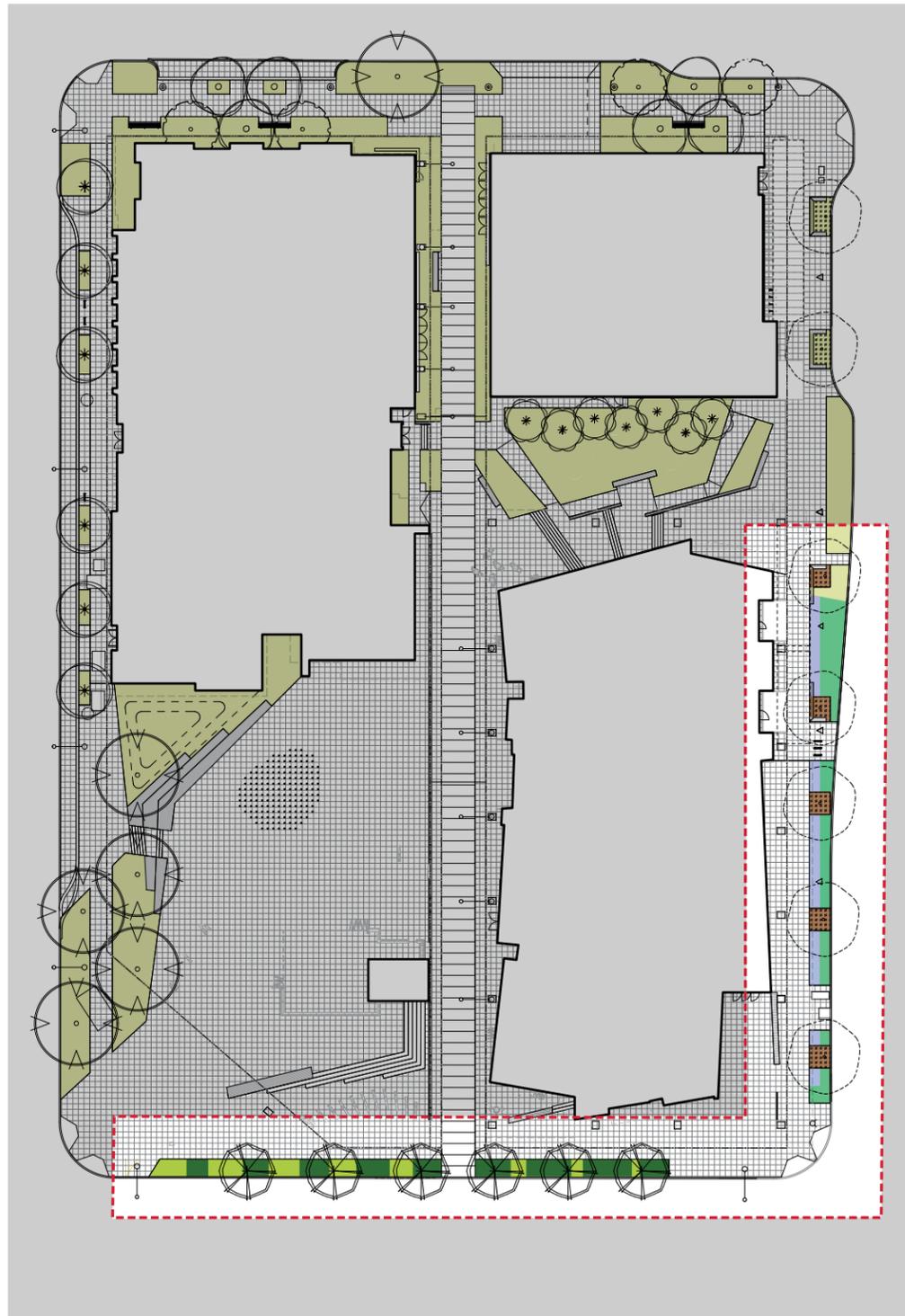


SPECIALTY CAST-IN-PLACE CONCRETE



LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

PLANTING CONCEPT: DENNY WAY AND WESTLAKE AVE. N.



DENNY WAY



Liriodendron tulipifera 'fastigiata'



Cistus salviifolius



Prunus laurocerasus 'Mount Ver-



Lonicera pileata

WESTLAKE AVE. N.



Aesculus x carnea (existing st. tree)



Buxus 'green gem'



Carex tumulicola



Pennisetum orientale



Muhlenbergia capillaris 'regal mist'



Iris tenax



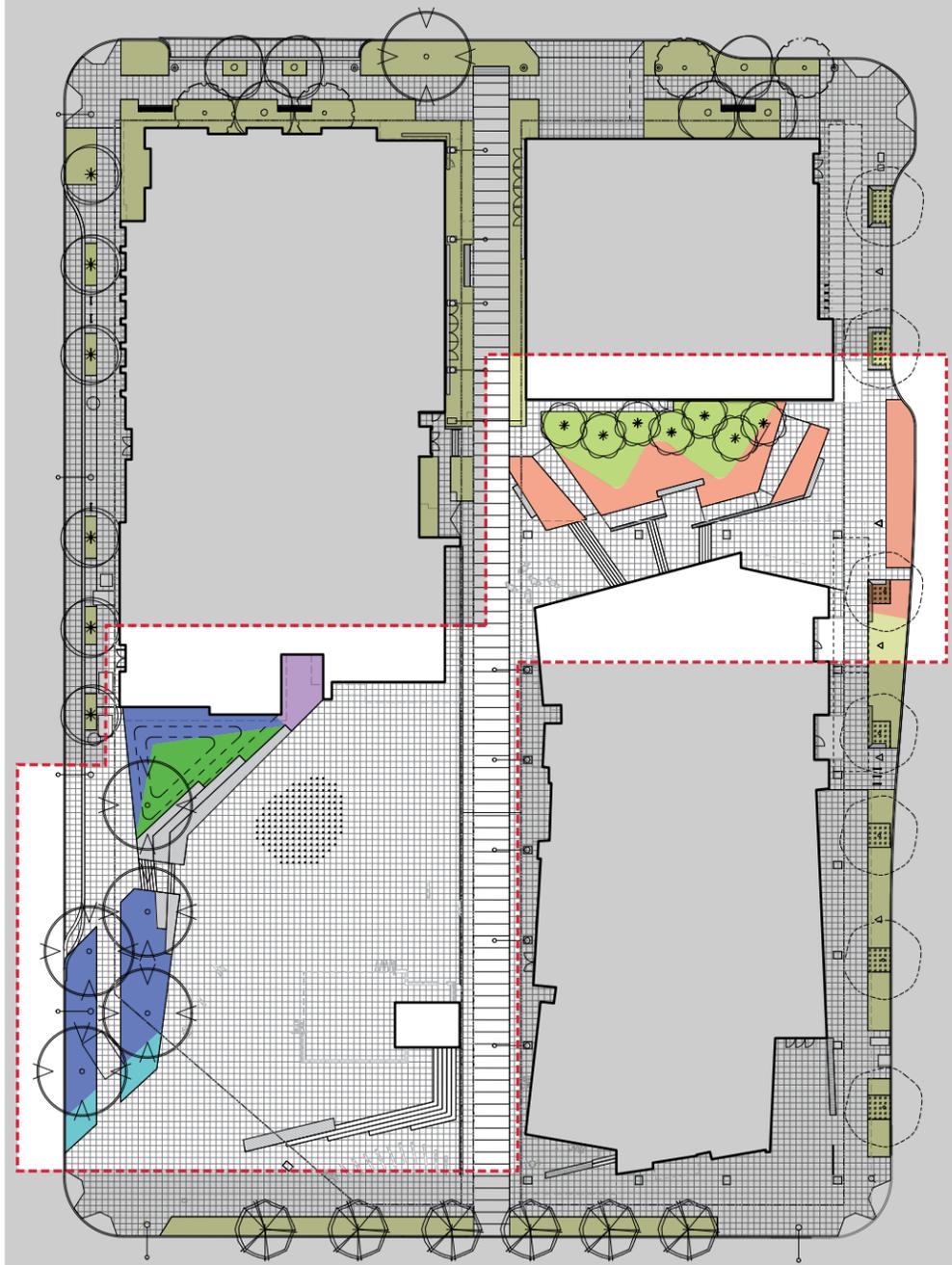
Astilbe arendsii 'gloria purpurea'



Agapanthus orientalis

LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

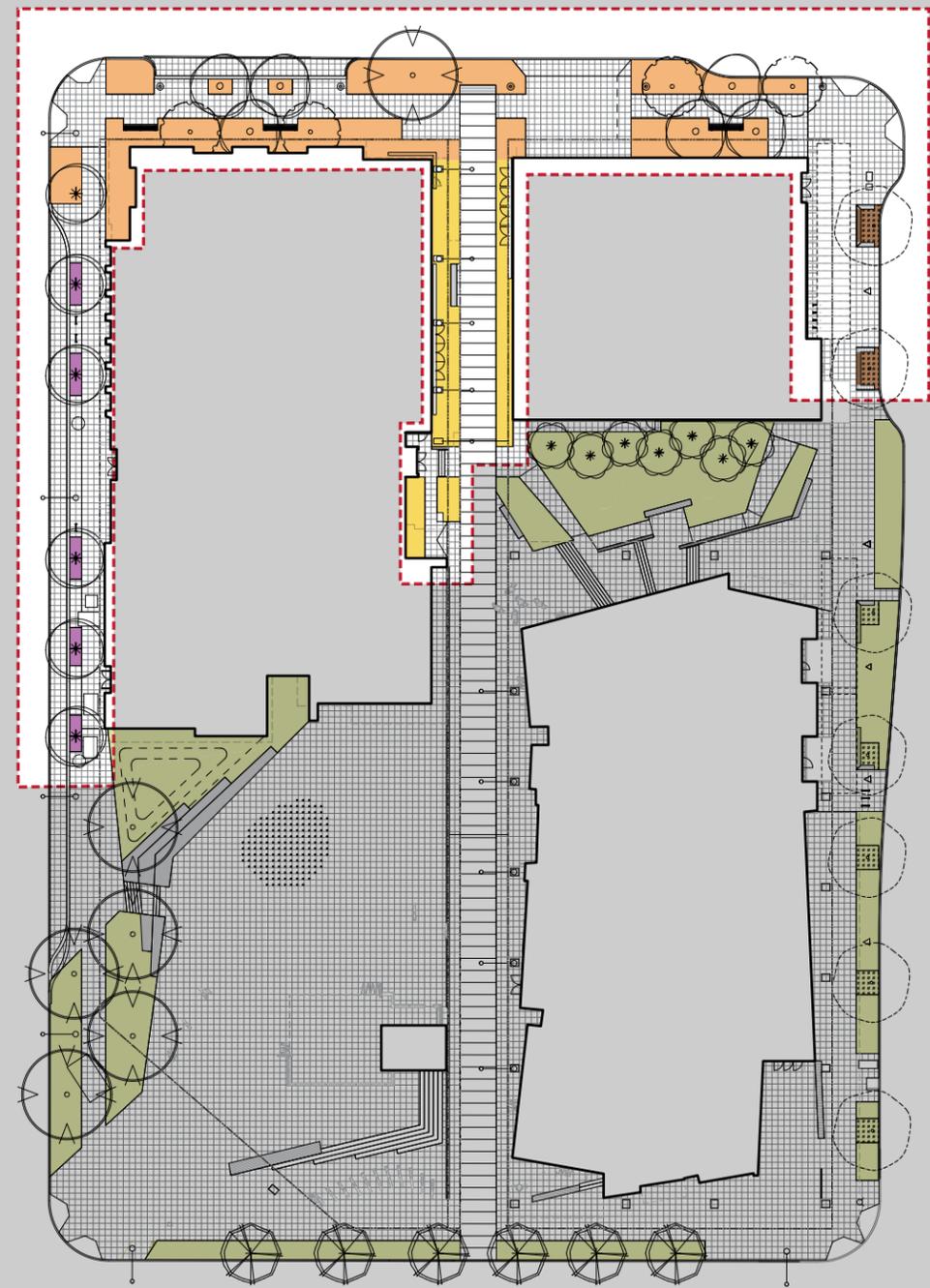
PLANTING CONCEPT: THROUGH-BLOCK AND PLAZA



THROUGH-BLOCK	 Acer circinatum	 Cornus sericea 'flaviramea'	 Sarcococca ruscifolia	 Blechnum spicant	 Dryopteris erythrosora
	 Ligularia 'Little Rocket'	 Camassia quamash	 Lobelia Cardinalis	 Blechnum spicant	 Dryopteris erythrosora
	 Polystichum munitum				
PLAZA	 Fagus sylvatica	 Turf	 Miscanthus 'Morning Light'	 Pennisetum orientale	 Helictotrichon sempervirens
	 Crocosmia 'Walbreyes'	 Gaura lindheimeri 'Whirling Butterflies'	 Echinacea 'Flame Thrower'	 Achillea millefolium 'Red Velvet'	 Prunus laurocerasus 'Mount Vernon'

LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

PLANTING PLAN: JOHN ST, ALLEY AND 9TH AVE N



JOHN ST.



Cercis canadensis



Fagus sylvatica



Stewartia pseudocamellia



Carex tumulicola



Carex oshimensis 'Evergold'



Rubus calycinoides



Clethra alnifolia 'Hummingbird'



Cornus alba 'Elegantissima'



Lobelia cardinalis

ALLEY



Blechnum spicant



Dryopteris erythrosora



Dryopteris wallichiana



Sarcococca ruscifolia



Cornus alba 'Elegantissima'

9TH AVE. N.



Magnolia 'Galaxy'

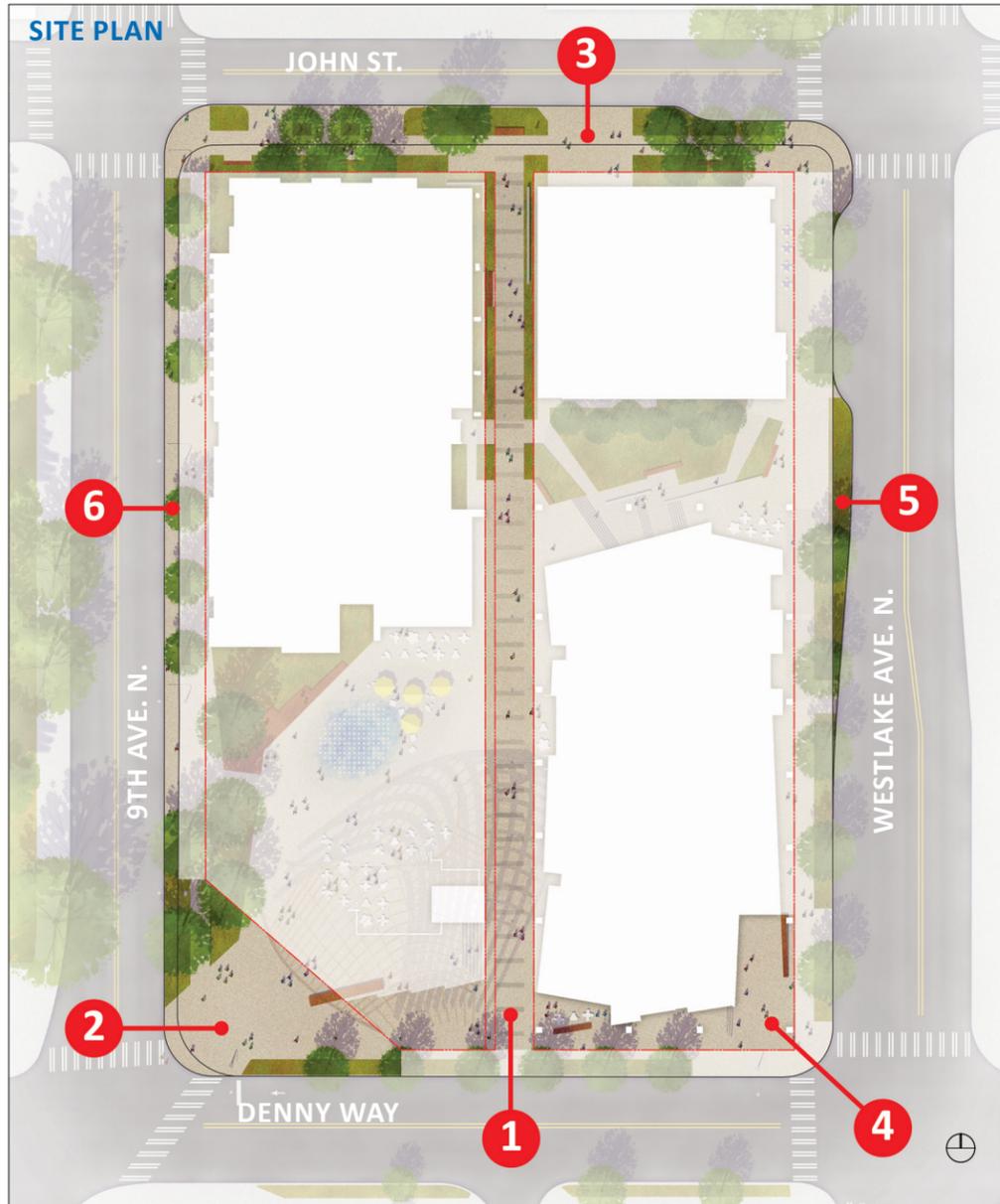


COS 3/8" minus gravel

Per City of Seattle Street Vacation Policies:

Public benefit proposal is to recognize loss of benefits to public of Right of Way (ROW) and gains to project from the vacation. What does the public lose, and what does the public and the project gain, by vacation? Public benefit is to be proportional to project gain and scale/impacts of the project. Public benefits must be in excess of code requirements and SEPA mitigation.

Description of Subterranean Alley Vacation Proposal	ROW Benefits (listed in Street Vacation Policies) Are Retained by Vacation	Project Gains from Vacation	Proportional Public Benefit
<p>Vacate subterranean area below unimproved alley (approx. 5,775 sf); public alley above ground to be retained and improved for public pedestrian and bicycle use</p> <p>Vacation allows all parking and loading to be below grade, instead of multiple loading areas off the alley, with a turnaround due to lack of vehicle access to Denny Way</p> <p>Separated surface drainage utilities to be provided as part of proposed development, to keep alley drainage separate from project drainage</p> <p>Petitioner to improve and maintain alley, with an indemnity for City liability</p>	<p>ALL ROW BENEFITS ARE RETAINED BY THE PUBLIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing street grid preserved; no change to building orientation or neighborhood scale Alley surface continues to provide “breathing space” between buildings, providing open space, views and pedestrian connectivity Public functions of pedestrian and bicycle use are significantly enhanced by the vacation, while preserving option of future vehicle use by City, if needed (landscaping and alley elements to be removed at Petitioner’s cost) Alley does not serve any current utility function; utilities have identified no future need for area under alley 	<p>PROJECT GAINS SOME EFFICIENCIES, BUT NO EXTRA FLOOR AREA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidated underground parking and loading reduces redundancy in parking ramps and increases efficiency for parking, loading and services Although there is reduced shoring and excavation costs with a single garage as opposed to one garage on each side of the alley, that cost savings is essentially neutralized by the additional costs of constructing all loading and parking below grade. 	<p>PUBLIC DOES NOT LOSE ANY ROW BENEFITS</p> <p>PUBLIC GAINS CONSIDERABLE BENEFITS OF AN IMPROVED VEHICLE-FREE ALLEY FOR PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE USE, and OPEN SPACE CONNECTIVITY</p> <p>PROJECT GAINS MODEST EFFICIENCIES and COST SAVINGS</p> <p>The public access to and experience of the alley is significantly enhanced, while the public gives up nothing due to the vacation.</p> <p>No change in project scale or impacts due to the vacation.</p> <p>Public Benefits (see following chart) exceed the proportional benefits called for in the Street Vacation Policies.</p>

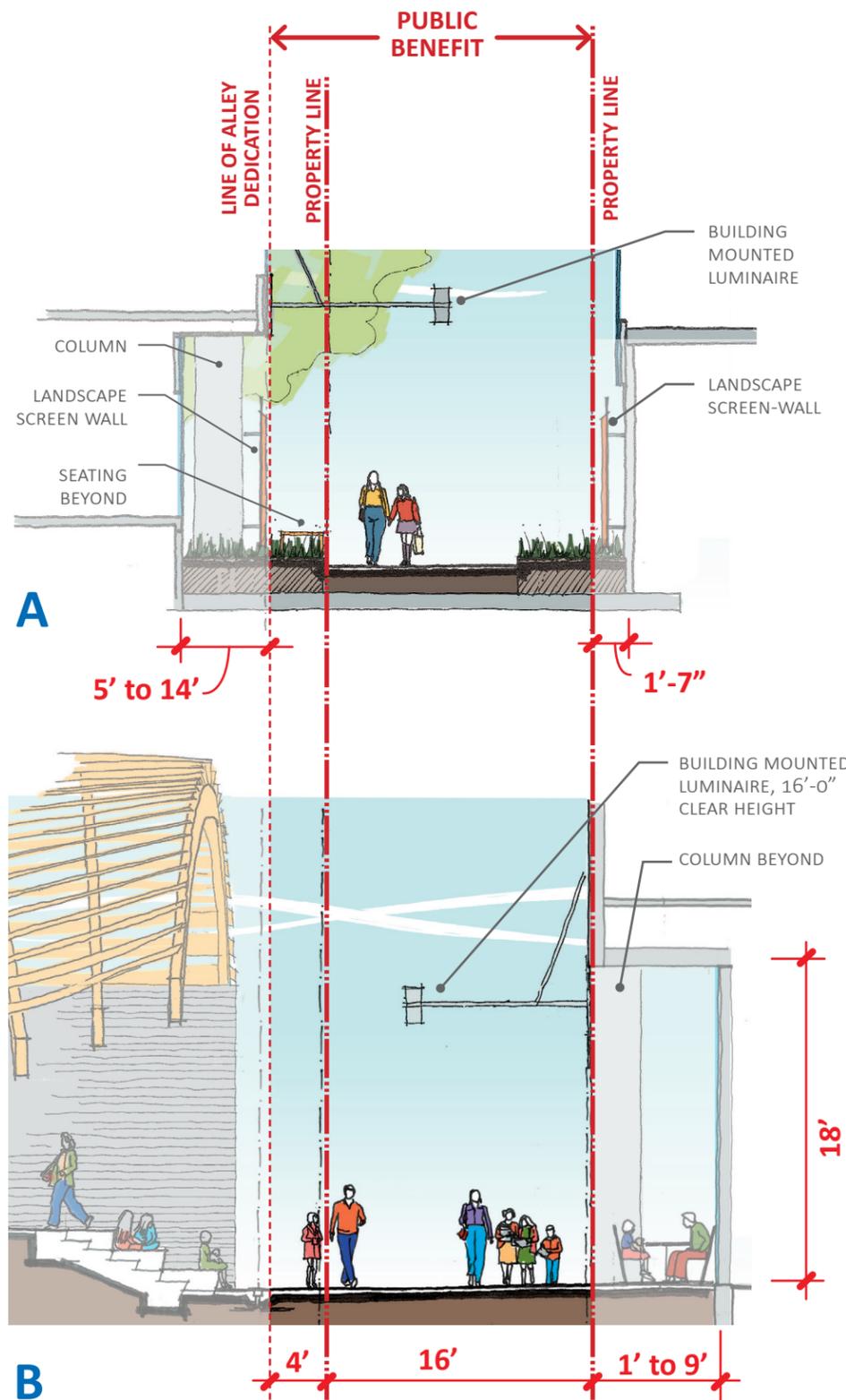


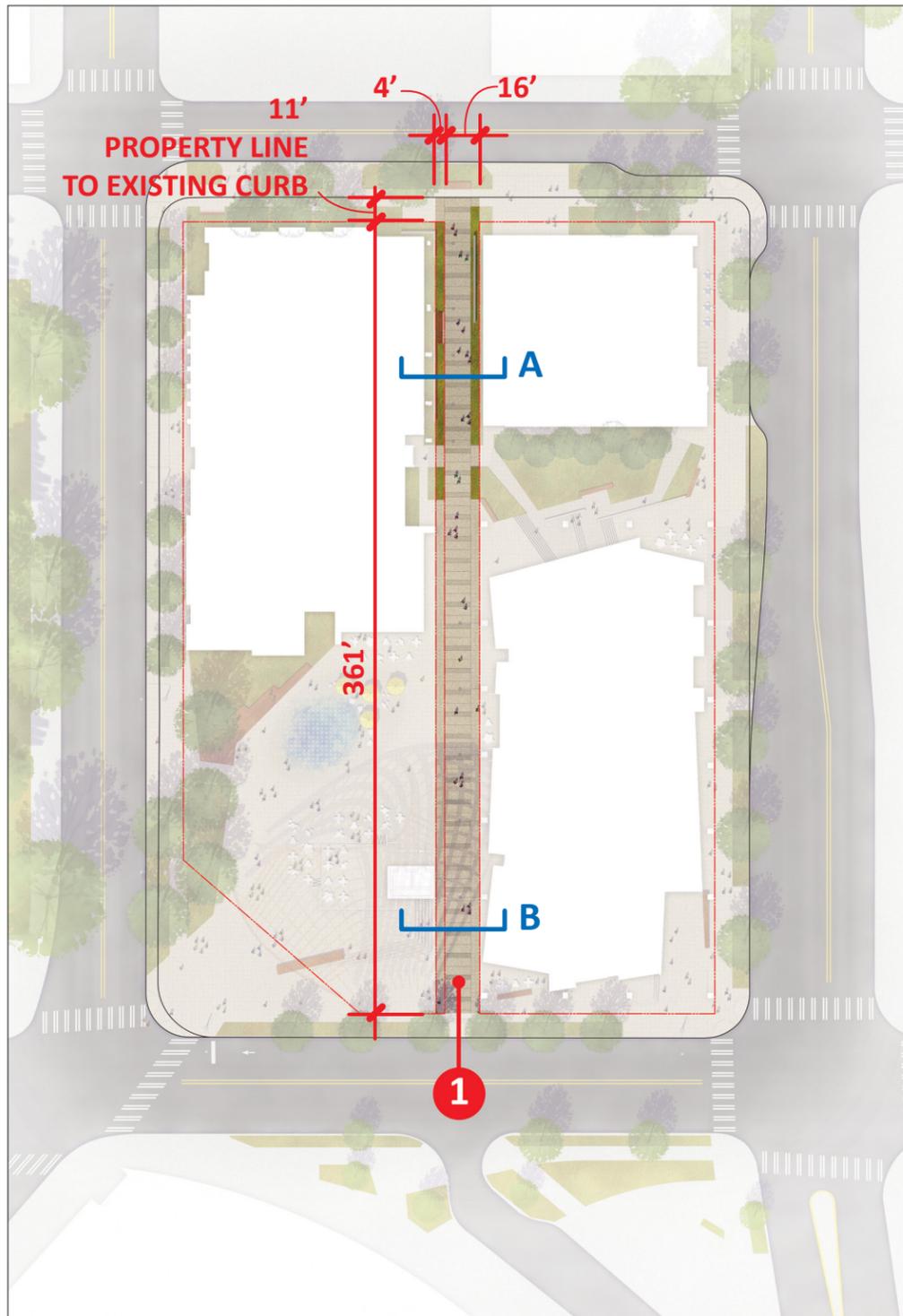
PUBLIC BENEFITS

SUMMARY

Public benefit elements stitch block 89 back into the surrounding city fabric. Street edges and alley are activated public zones.

Public Benefit Element	Description	City Requirements	Provided Beyond City Requirements	Quantities
1. Alley ROW Improvements	Provide pedestrian-scaled paving, landscaping, lighting, wayfinding, seating and furnishings, connecting John Street (Green Street) and Denny Way, with the through-block connection between Westlake Ave. N. and 9th Ave. N.	10' x 10' concrete paving sloped to drain to dedicated stormwater system per SDOT standards	See detail, page 19	Approx. 7,444 sf of alley improvements
2. Denny Way/ 9th Ave. N. Triangle ROW and sidewalk Improvements	Provide pedestrian-scaled paving, landscaping and lighting to complement new sidewalk ROW paving and landscaping in conformance with the recommendations of the Denny Way Streetscape Concept Plan (Voluntary)	None required	See detail, page 21	Approx. 4,506 sf of improvements
3. Green Street Improvements at John Street	Provide expanded pedestrian streetscape, landscaping, seating and lighting in conformance with the recommendations in the South Lake Union Street Concept Plans for John Street (Voluntary)	None required	See detail, page 23	Approx. 6,968 sf of improvements
4. Denny Way Streetscape Improvements	Provide expanded building street level building setbacks to accommodate outdoor seating and activities in accordance with recommendations in the Denny Way Streetscape Concept Plan (Voluntary)	None required	See detail, page 25	Approx. 3,933 sf of improvements
5. Westlake Ave. N. Sidewalk Widening, Streetscape Improvements	Provide curb bulb at corner of Westlake Ave. N. and John Street, and expand sidewalk/landscape zone along Westlake Ave. N.	None required	See detail, page 27	Approx. 906 sf of improvements
6. 9th Ave. N. Sidewalk Widening, Streetscape Improvements	Provide curb bulbs at the corners of Denny Way and 9th Ave. N. and John Street and 9th Ave. N., extending along 9th Ave. N. to expand sidewalk/landscaping zone along 9th Ave. N.	None required	See detail, page 27	Approx. 2,237 sf of improvements





PUBLIC BENEFIT

1: ALLEY ROW IMPROVEMENTS

Architectural paving based on 2' by 2' standard sidewalk module accentuated with variations in pattern and materiality, lighting, canopies, plantings, opening facades, landscape screen-walls, and furniture to create points of emphasis and identity. (Per recommendations in the *Seattle Integrated Alley Handbook: Activating Alleys for a Lively City*).

The landscape planters at the north end of the alley, and the lighting fixtures over the alley will require issuance of a Street Use Permit by SDOT. That permit establishes the terms and conditions for locating elements in the right of way that will be privately owned and maintained. The permit typically includes a duration, states the City's right to revoke the permit on a minimum of 30 days advance notice, and requires the applicant to remove the elements from the right of way if the permit expires or is revoked. Street Use Permits are common for planters, landscaping, street furniture, and similar items in the right of way.



VIEW FROM JOHN STREET OF ALLEY ROW IMPROVEMENTS

TOTAL PUBLIC BENEFIT

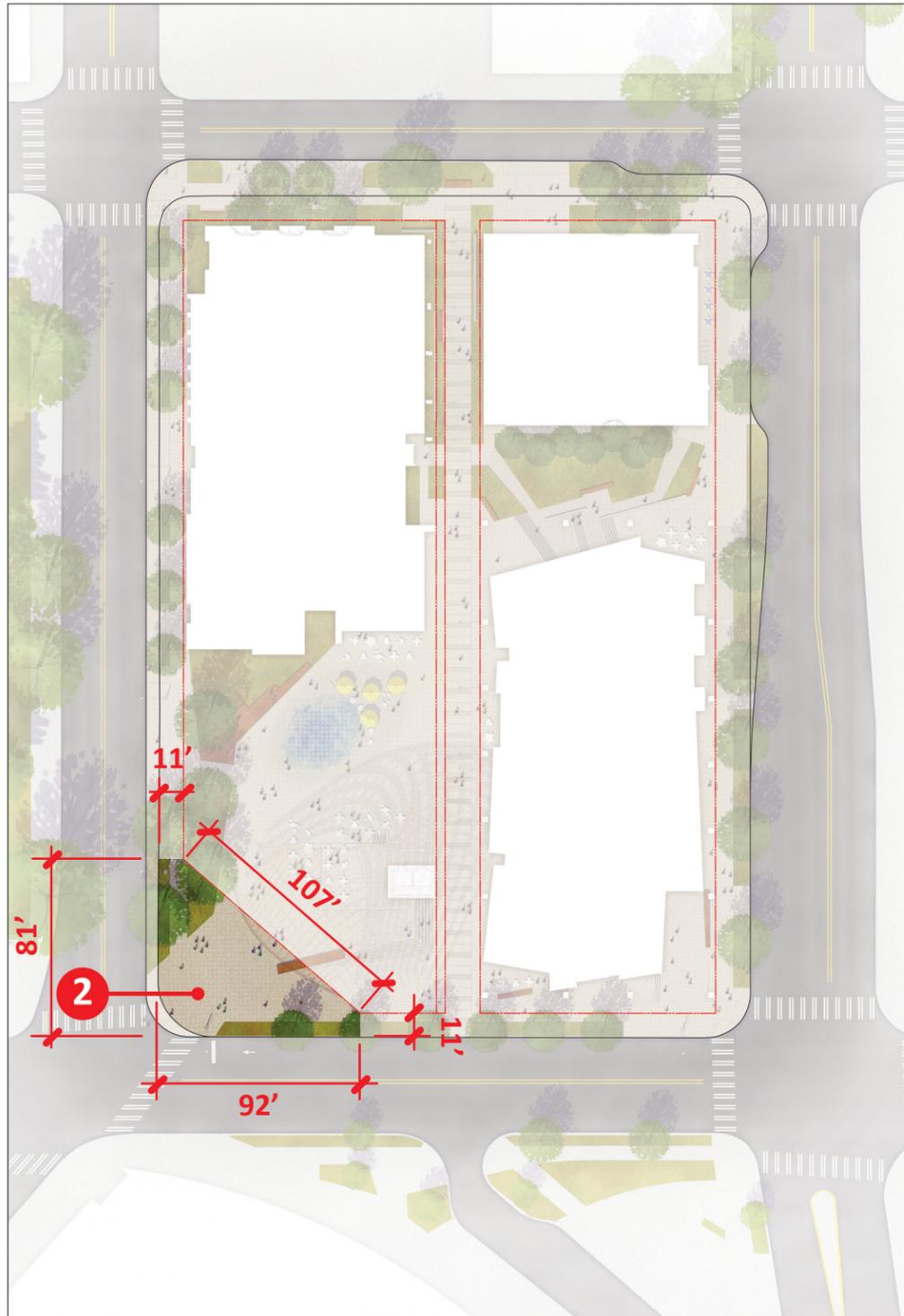
Approx. 7,444 SF



BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF PLAZA AND PAVILION FROM THE CORNER OF DENNY WAY AND 9TH AVE. N.



VIEW OF PLAZA AND PAVILION FROM DENNY PARK



PUBLIC BENEFIT

2: DENNY WAY / 9TH AVE. N. TRIANGLE ROW AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

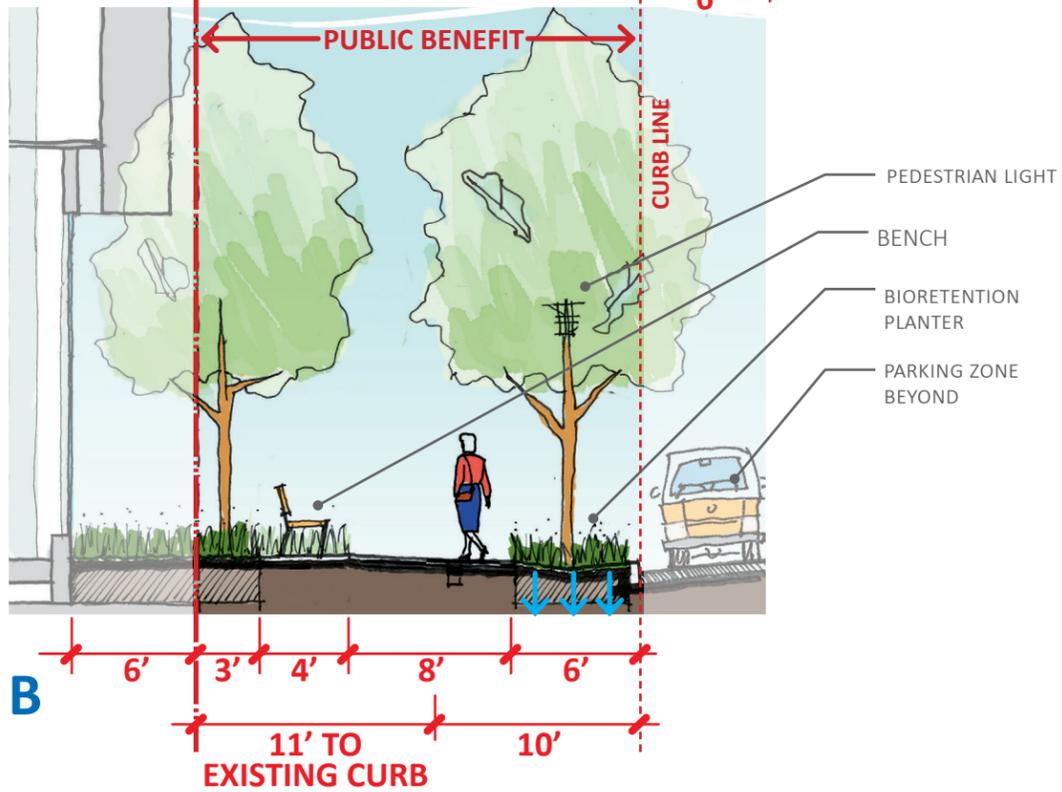
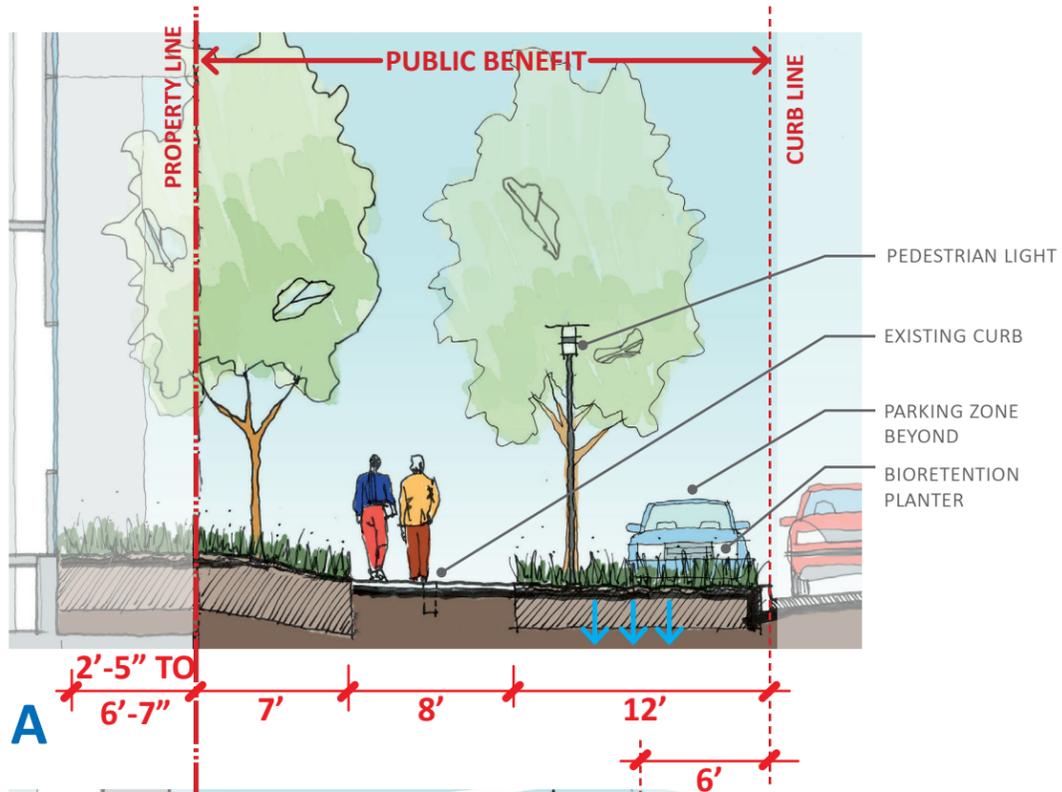
Architectural paving based on 2' x 2' standard sidewalk module, accentuated with variations in pattern and materiality, landscaping, lighting and seating, to seamlessly transition between the public and private realm; to provide appropriately scaled space at the important intersection of Denny Way and 9th Avenue N.; facilitating connections to Denny Park; responding to increased pedestrian flows; and to welcome the public into the site.

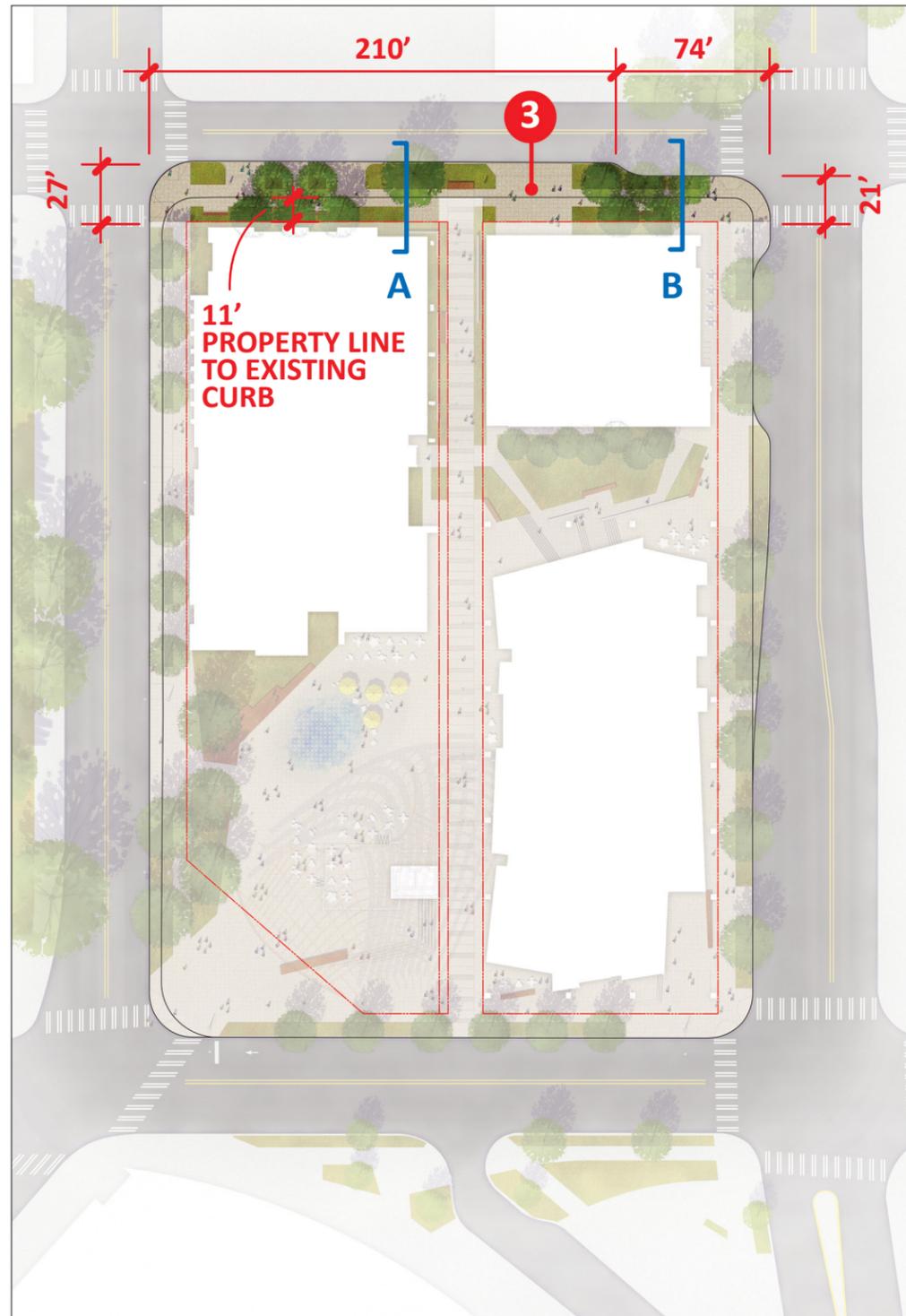


VIEW OF DENNY WAY / 9TH AVE. N. TRIANGLE ROW AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

TOTAL PUBLIC BENEFIT

Approx. 4,506 SF





PUBLIC BENEFIT

3: GREEN STREET IMPROVEMENTS AT JOHN STREET

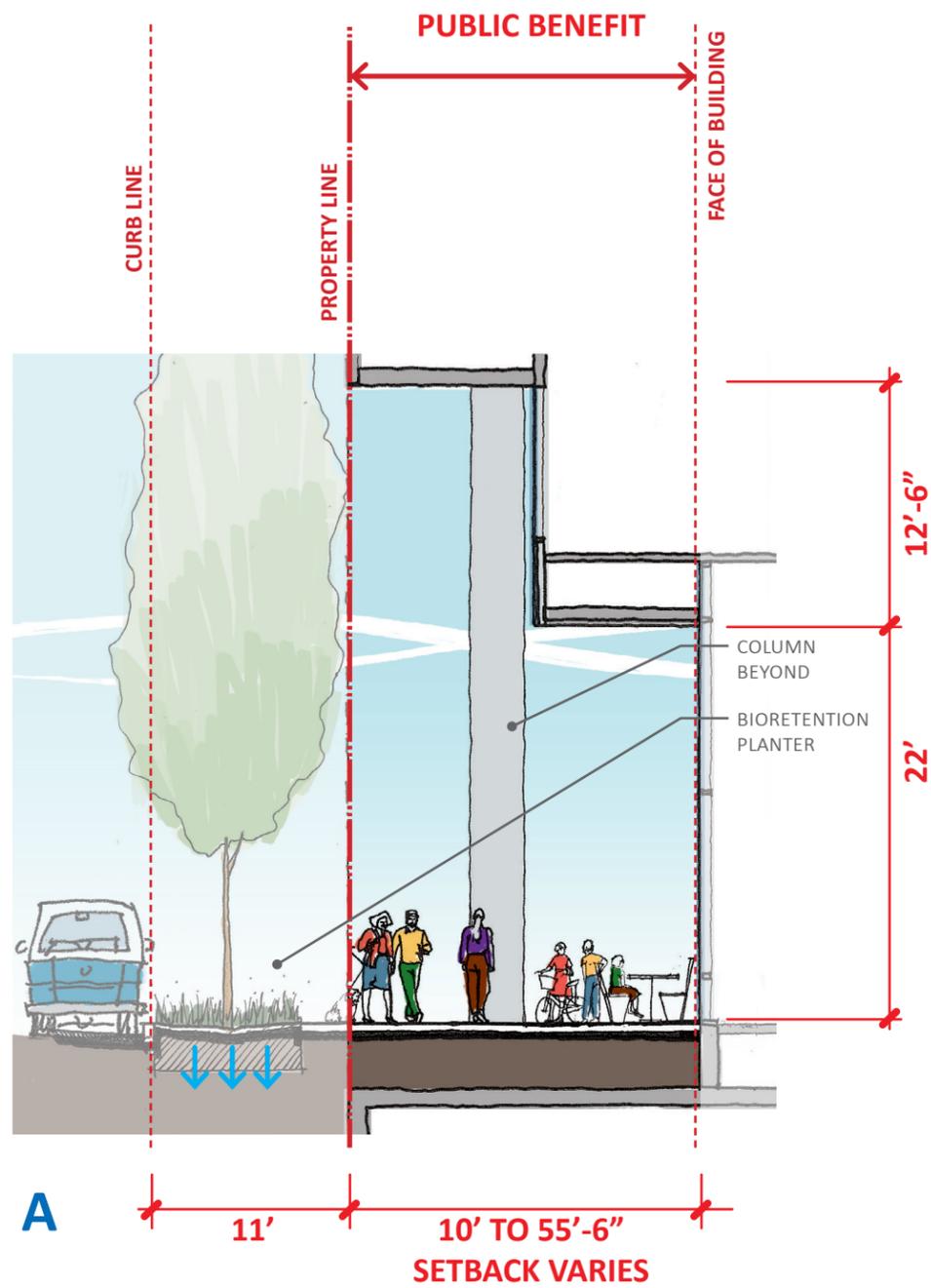
Relocate existing curb between 9' and 16' north to provide expanded pedestrian streetscape including new paving based on 2' x 2' standard sidewalk module accentuated with variations in pattern and materiality, landscaping, lighting and seating to encourage pedestrian traffic between Westlake Ave. N., 9th Ave. N. and Denny Park.

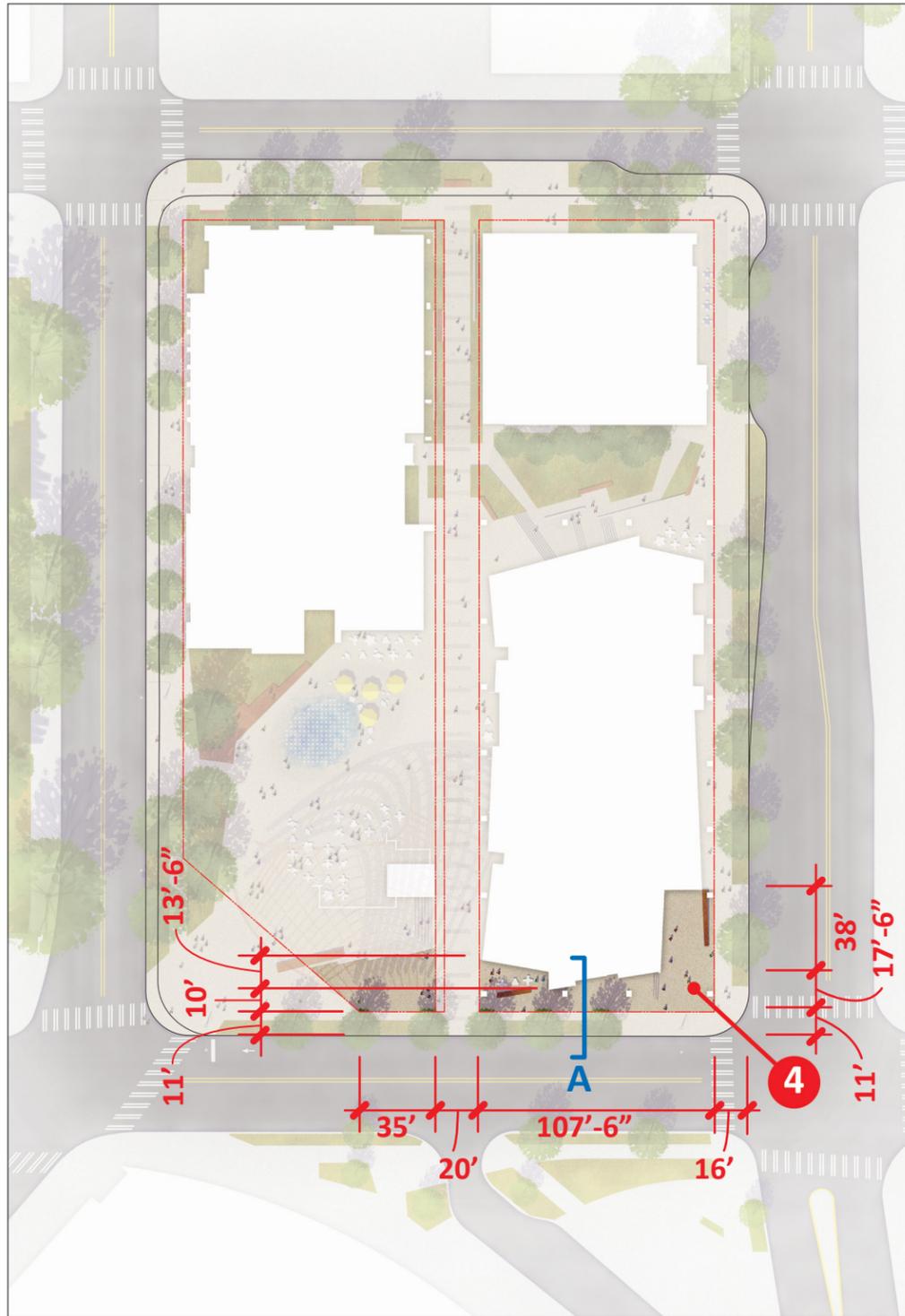


VIEW OF GREEN STREET IMPROVEMENTS AT JOHN STREET

TOTAL PUBLIC BENEFIT

Approx. 6,968 SF





PUBLIC BENEFIT

4: DENNY WAY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

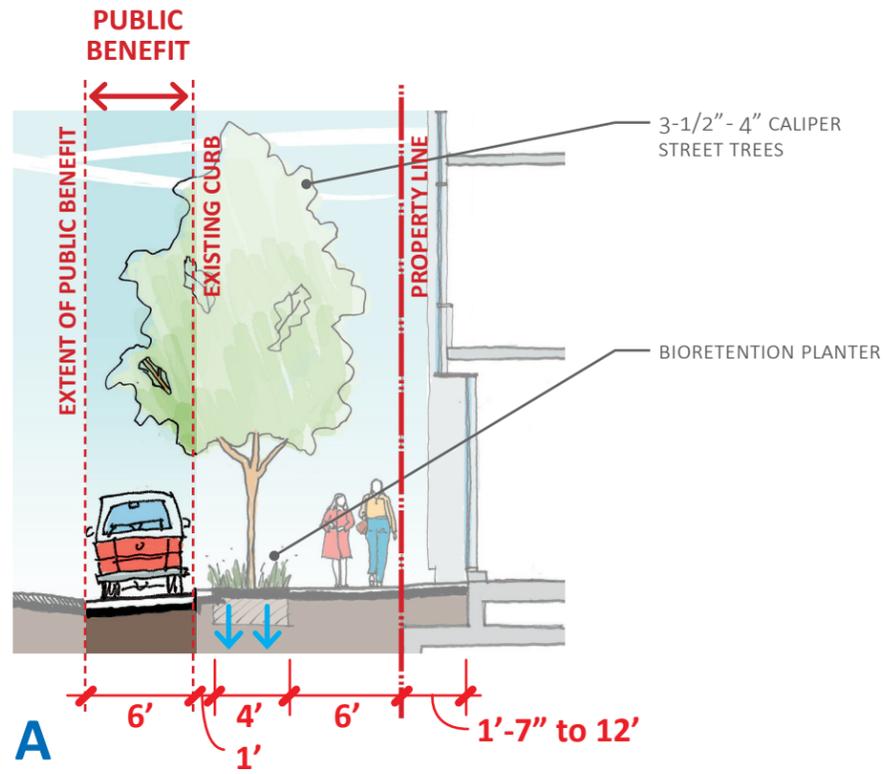
Expanded building street-level building setbacks with architectural paving based on 2' x 2' standard sidewalk module, accentuated with variations in pattern, materiality and elevation, landscaping, seating and lighting to accommodate recommendations in the Denny Way Streetscape Concept Plan to create terraced outdoor activity and dining spaces.



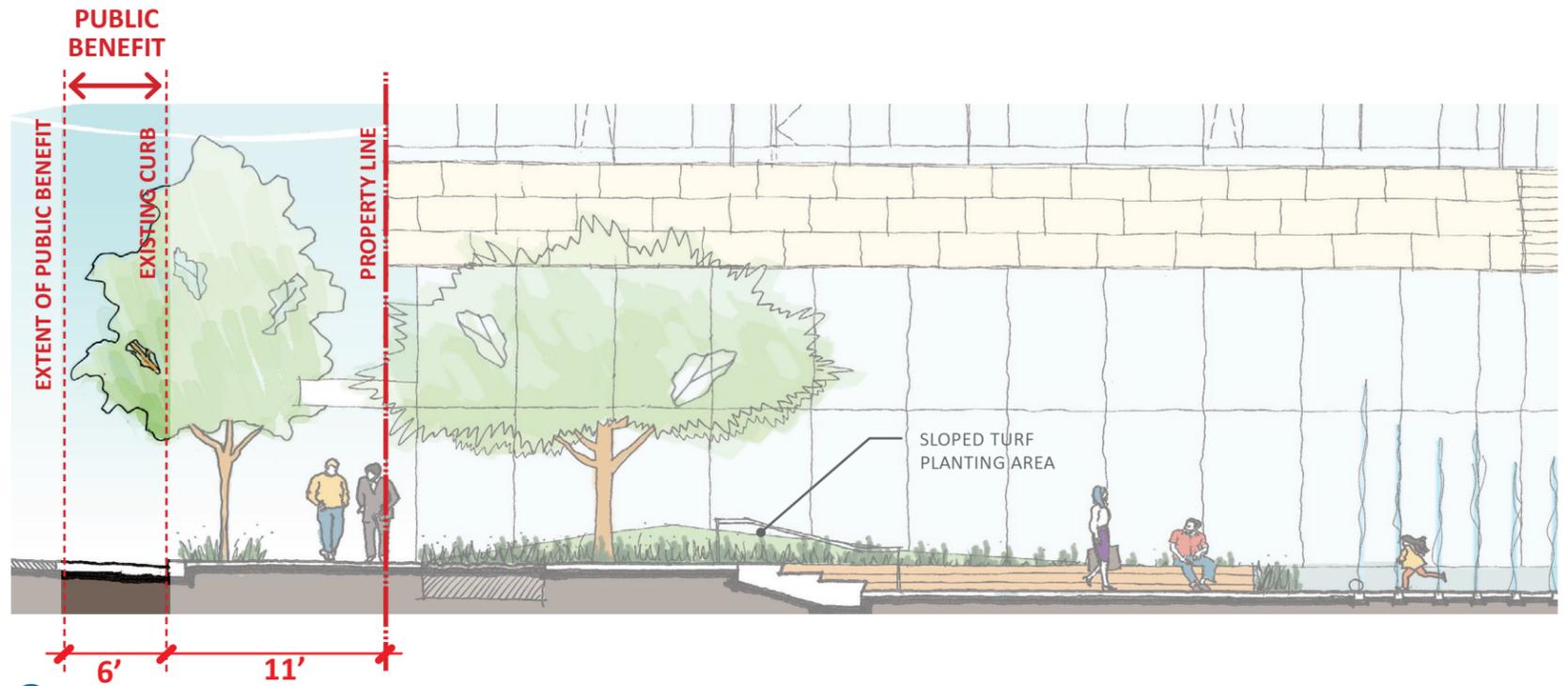
VIEW TOWARDS DENNY PARK FROM DENNY WAY

TOTAL PUBLIC BENEFIT

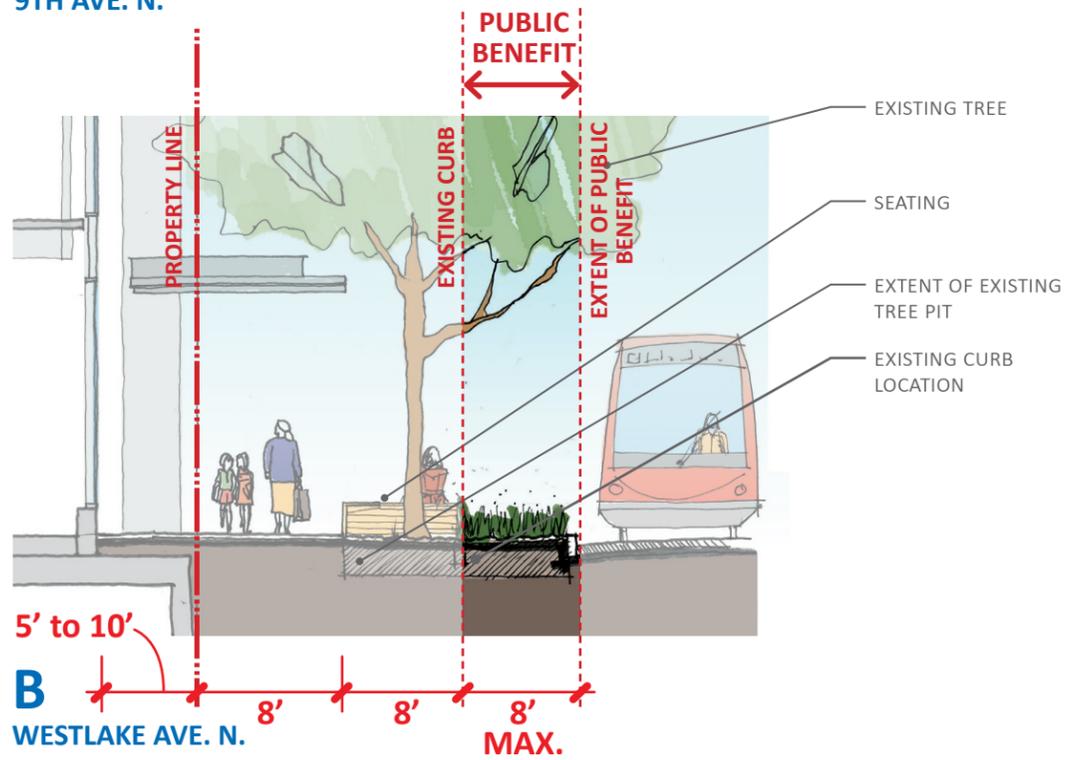
Approx. 3,933 SF



A
9TH AVE. N.



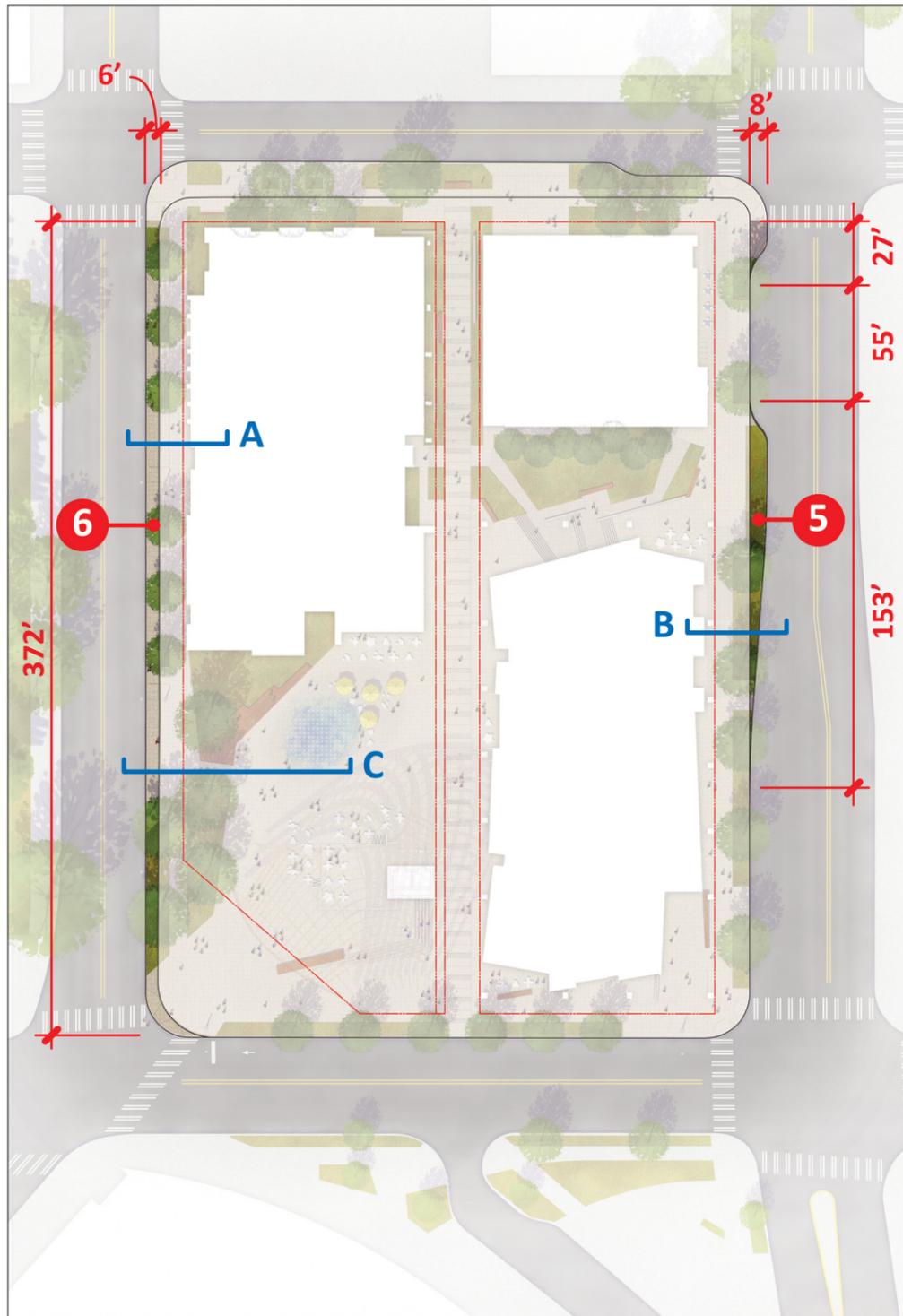
C
9TH AVE. N.



B
WESTLAKE AVE. N.



VIEW FROM DENNY PARK OF 9TH AVE. N. SIDEWALK WIDENING AND STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS



PUBLIC BENEFIT

5 + 6: WESTLAKE AVE. N. AND 9TH AVE. N. SIDEWALK WIDENING, STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

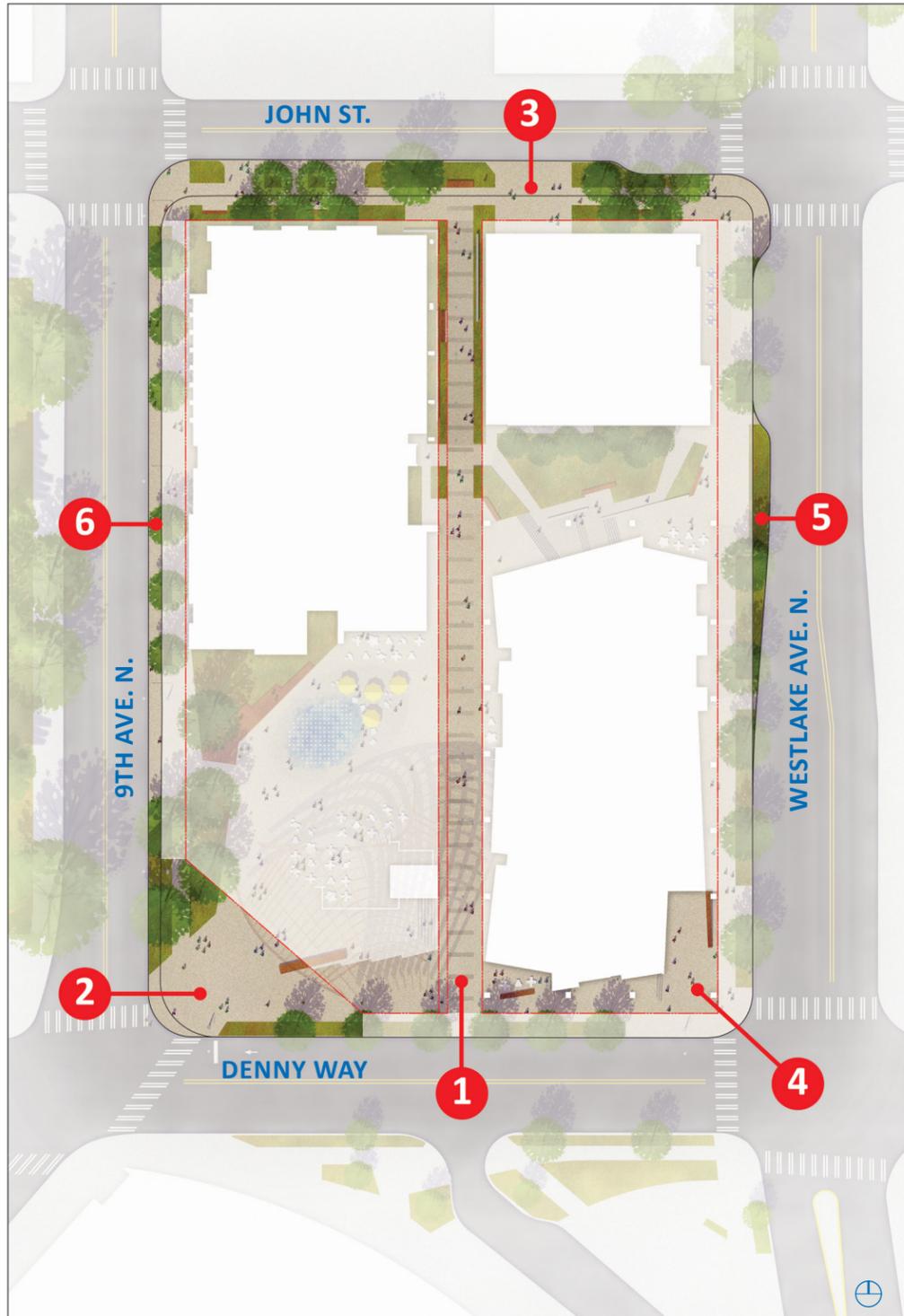
Relocate existing curb to provide expanded pedestrian streetscape including new paving and landscaping.



VIEW OF WESTLAKE AVE. N. SIDEWALK WIDENING AND STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

5. TOTAL PUBLIC BENEFIT **Approx. 906 SF**

6. TOTAL PUBLIC BENEFIT **Approx. 2,237 SF**



PUBLIC BENEFITS

AREA SUMMARY

- 1. ALLEY ROW IMPROVEMENTS = Approx. 7,444 SF
- 2. DENNY WAY/ 9TH AVE. N. TRIANGLE ROW AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS = Approx. 4,506 SF
- 3. GREEN STREET IMPROVEMENTS AT JOHN ST. = Approx. 6,968 SF
- 4. DENNY WAY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS = Approx. 3,933 SF
- 5. WESTLAKE AVE. N. SIDEWALK WIDENING, STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS = Approx. 906 SF
- 6. 9TH AVE. N. SIDEWALK WIDENING, STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS = Approx. 2,237 SF

TOTAL AREA OF ALL PUBLIC BENEFITS: = Approx. 25,994 SF

AREA OF SUBTERRANEAN ALLEY VACATION: = 5,775 SF