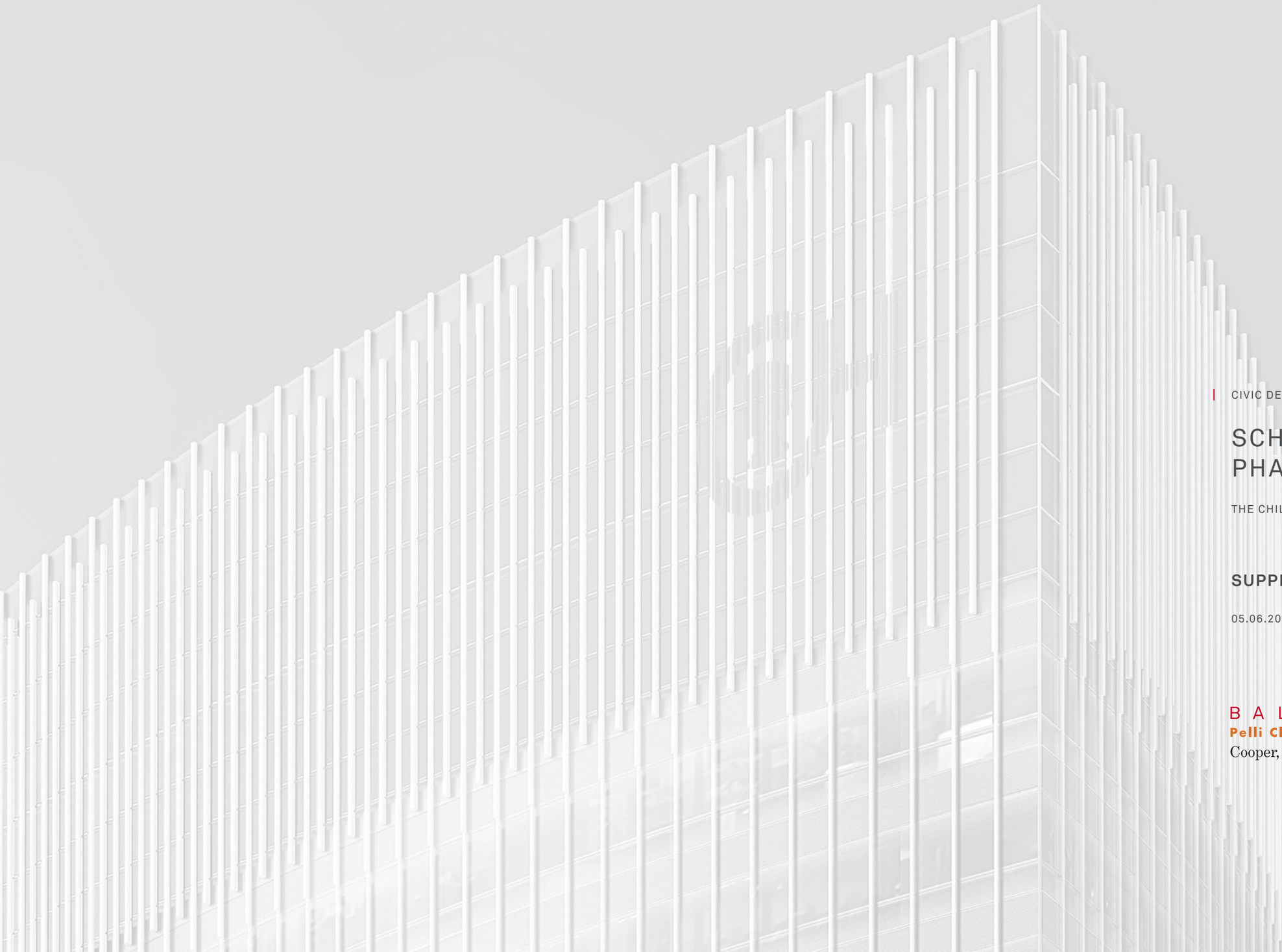

CIVIC DESIGN REVIEW

# SCHUYLKILL AVENUE PHASE 1

THE CHILDRENS HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA

## SUPPLEMENTAL SUBMISSION

05.06.2014

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# Introduction

## Civic Design Review - Supplemental Submission

This document is intended as a supplement and further advance on the design submission made to the Civic Design Review Committee on March 18, 2014, and reviewed with the Committee at their April 1, 2014 meeting. Subsequent to that meeting, the combined review of the Committee and the PCPC staff was summarized in Executive Director Gary Jastrzab's April 2, 2014 letter to CHOP Vice President Peter Grollman. This document addresses the items in that letter, and follows the three themes identified by Gary Jastrzab:

- City and neighborhood connections, with a focus on clear, strong connections to the surrounding urban fabric.
- River connections, in particular access to the river trail for pedestrians.
- Establishing a balance in accommodating traffic, transit, pedestrian and bike movement on the campus, and minimizing the design impact of accommodating automobile traffic.

Even as we submit this material, discussions with the RCOs and with Councilman Kenyatta Johnson are continuing, and we expect to address further developments in our meeting with the Committee on May 6, 2013.

# City and Neighborhood Connections

### OVERVIEW

The design of CHOP's Schuylkill  campus engages the city and the immediate neighborhood in many ways, reflecting the distinctive topography of the site and the urban character of the South Street and Schuylkill Avenue.

### URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Committee and staff have noted the strength of the two key concepts that establish the urban design framework for open spaces and building placement on the site:

- In response to the prominence of the site's address on South Street, the framework locates a plaza flush with of the South Street sidewalk, and from this plaza, routes lead along a promenade overlooking the river, and through the campus to Schuylkill Avenue. As South Street descends towards 27th Street, another opportunity for connection at one story below plaza level has been established and will permit an active commercial use to front on the South Street sidewalk.
- In response to the more neighborhood-focused site address on Schuylkill Avenue, the framework calls for a primary open space axis along the line of Bainbridge Street that connects the neighborhood through the campus to the river.  Where this axis intersects Schuylkill Avenue, a broad semi-circular open space adjacent to the sidewalk offers a place for informal gathering, community events, and children's play.

## City and Neighborhood Connections

### INTERIM DESIGN OF PHASE 2 SITE

In CHOP's engagement with the community, and in discussions with the Committee, with PCPC staff, and with Councilman Johnson, much attention has been focused on how best to design the Phase 2 site in the interim period before it is developed. Those discussions have led to a proposal, illustrated here, to create shell space for an interim commercial tenant at the level where the Phase 2 site aligns with the South Street sidewalk, and to provide removable façade panels so that interim tenants can readily create a storefront design suitable to their needs.

CHOP and the community recognize that such an independent commercial use is not entitled by right under the current zoning, and CHOP has committed to pursue a variance to permit such a use once the Phase 1 development is permitted and launched.

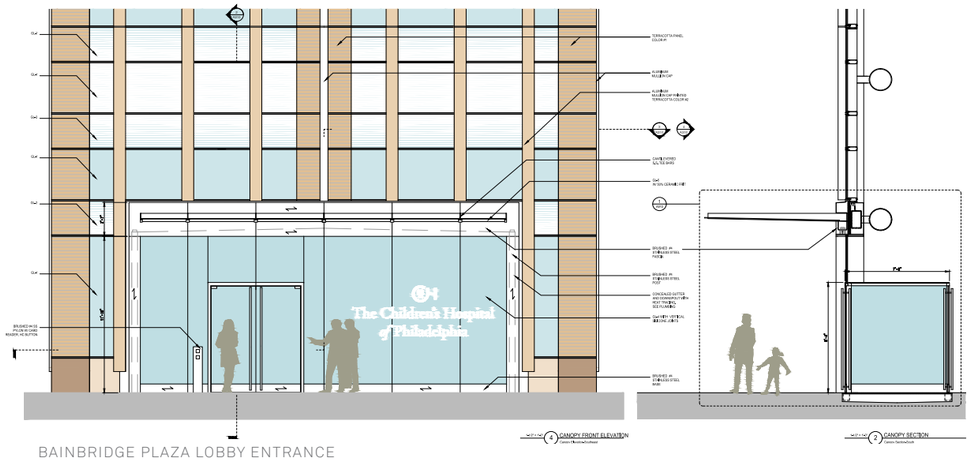
Committee and staff have also asked CHOP to consider activating uses on the Phase 2 site as it fronts Schuylkill Avenue, as well as up at the level of the South Street plaza. Both these locations are envisioned as active frontages for the ultimate Phase 2 development, with lobbies and other active uses in both locations, but the focus of CHOP's work with the community has been on what are viewed by both parties as the most critical and viable "activation" opportunities: the ambitious ground floor café in Phase 1 , and the provision for interim commercial use facing South Street at the Phase 2 site, both illustrated here.

# City and Neighborhood Connections

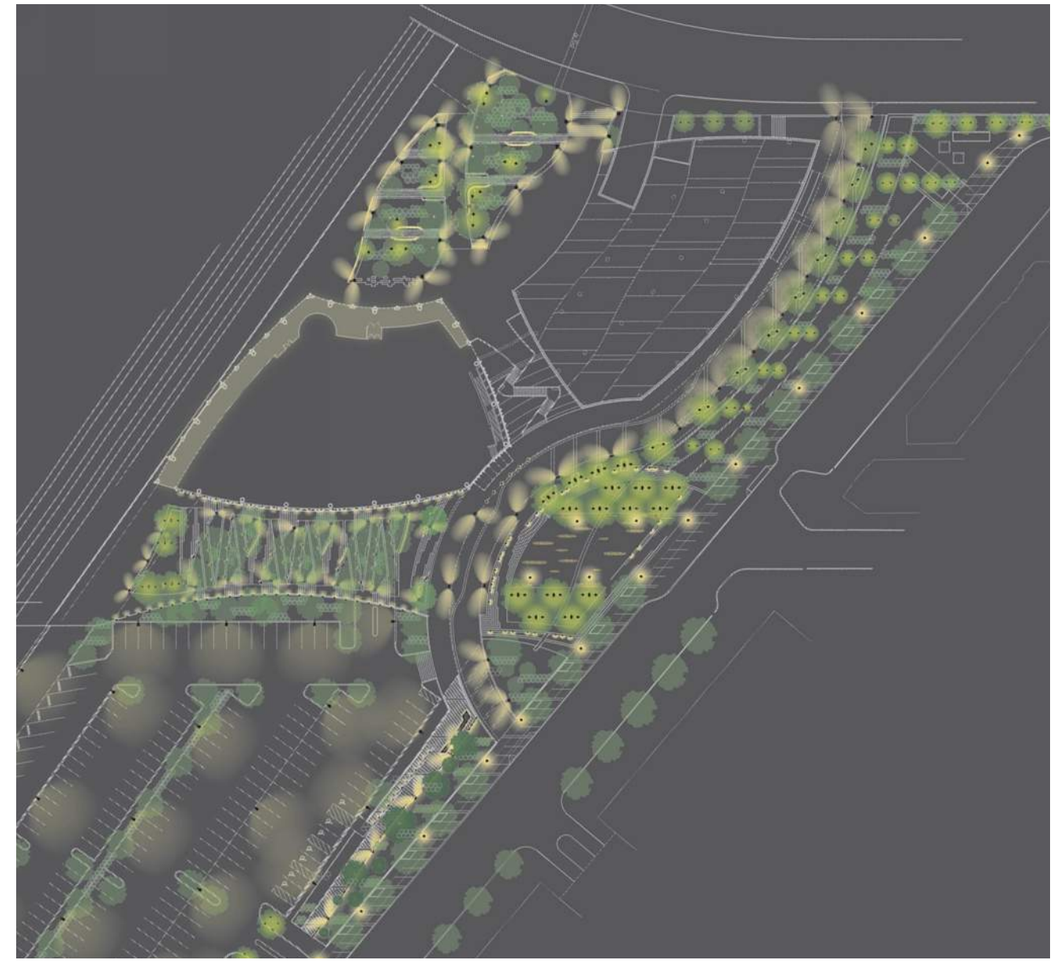
### NEIGHBORHOOD FRONTAGE ALONG SCHUYLKILL AVENUE

The character of the campus as it fronts on Schuylkill Avenue is shaped by the scale and character of the predominantly residential blocks which define this stretch of Schuylkill Avenue. Landscaped areas establish "breathing room" between the scale of the new development and the scale of the neighborhood. The Committee and staff have asked about the legibility of the Schuylkill Avenue entrance to the Phase 1 building; as can be seen in the views here, this entrance is envisioned is a quite modest pedestrian-scale entrance appropriate to this neighborhood-oriented portion of the project. Between the Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings, a garden-like path/stair winds up to the South Street. When Phase 2 is ultimately developed, it will have an entry and other active uses at the Schuylkill Avenue level, similar to those for Phase 1. In the interim, the Phase 2 frontage is clad in materials that relate to the Phase 1 building. The Bainbridge axis, with the gently inclined garden stairs leading up to the riverfront promenade, as one of the primary campus-defining open spaces on the site.

# City and Neighborhood Connections




BAINBRIDGE PLAZA LOBBY ENTRANCE



SITE LIGHTING PLAN

### EVENING AND WEEKEND ACCESS

PCPC staff has asked for information about accessibility of the public spaces on the site. CHOP envisions this as an open campus, with those who work here and members of the community able to enter and move through the campus, not only during the normal work day, but also in evening and on weekends. As illustrated below, a comprehensive lighting plan has been developed with lighting levels that will help guide and orient those moving through the campus at night, and at the same time be appropriate to the site's proximity to residential settings. Twenty-four hour security personnel will be present on site, supported by security camera installations that capture all of the site's open spaces.

# River Connections

### OVERVIEW

A number of questions have been raised by the Committee and by staff about the site's relationship to the Schuylkill River, the trail that is being developed along the river, and the CSX railroad tracks which act as a barrier to the river. This subject has also been the focus of much discussion with the community. CHOP regards the river frontage of the site as an important amenity for the campus, and has worked to take advantage of the river and overcome the constraints by the CSX presence.

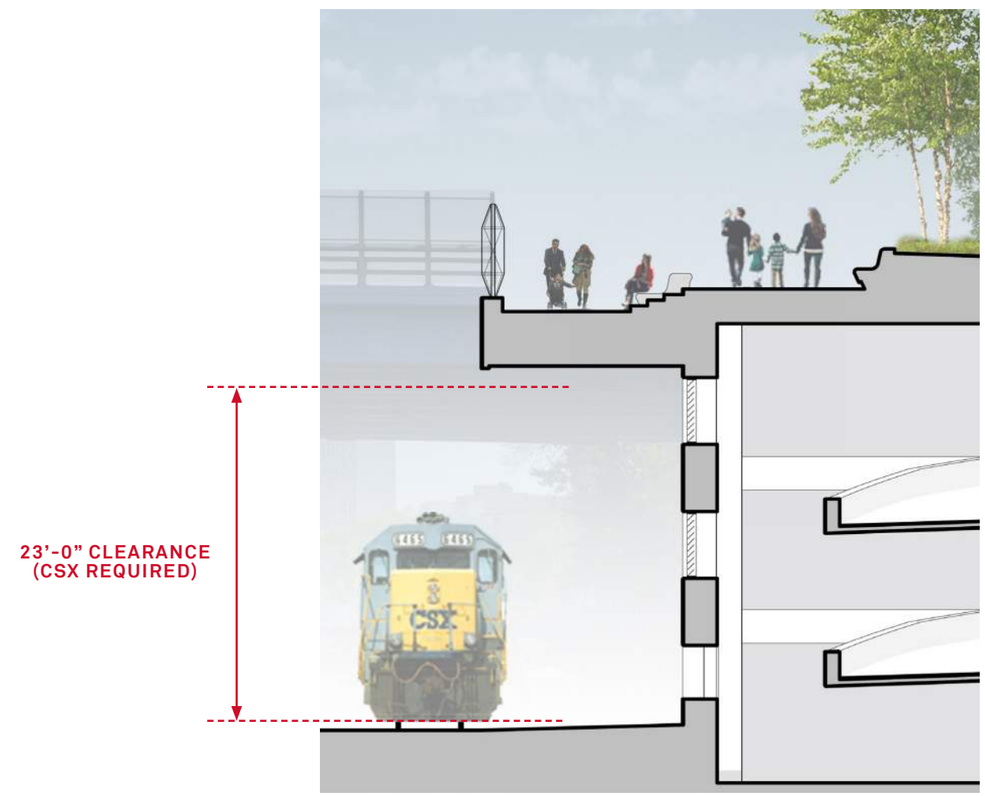
### BRIDGE CONNECTION TO THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL

CHOP has pledged to construct a bridge crossing the CSX tracks connecting to the Schuylkill River trail. They have worked with the Schuylkill River Trail Development Corporation to identify a landing site for the bridge along the trail, and have incorporated the bridge in their zoning application. Once this application has been approved by Licenses and Inspections and the Zoning Board of Adjustments, and Phase 1 is permitted and launched, CHOP will pursue necessary permits for the bridge (including from CSX). It is CHOP's intention, barring unforeseen economic challenges for the institution, to complete the bridge as part of the Phase 1 development.

### MINIMIZE THE PLAZA ELEVATION TOWARD THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER

The Committee, while recognizing the desirability of a campus connection to the elevated bridge crossing the CSX tracks, asks CHOP to minimize the extent and scale of raised plaza area wherever feasible. The design has been developed to do this to the maximum extent possible. The elevation of the South Street sidewalk establishes the maximum upper elevation of the plaza.

The plaza elevation is brought gently down to the Schuylkill Avenue level east of the Phase 2 site, in the space between Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites, and along the Bainbridge axis. In addition, where the South Street plaza faces the Schuylkill River, a promenade has been set at a lower elevation, the minimum needed to clear the CSX freight cars, as illustrated below. Permits are being sought for this cantilevered promenade as part of CHOP's negotiations with CSX. This lower plane, which is also the elevation of the proposed bridge across the tracks, is reached from the South Street sidewalk by a gentle slope down from the sidewalk, and from the plaza by broad steps which incorporate seating.



## River Connections

# River Connections

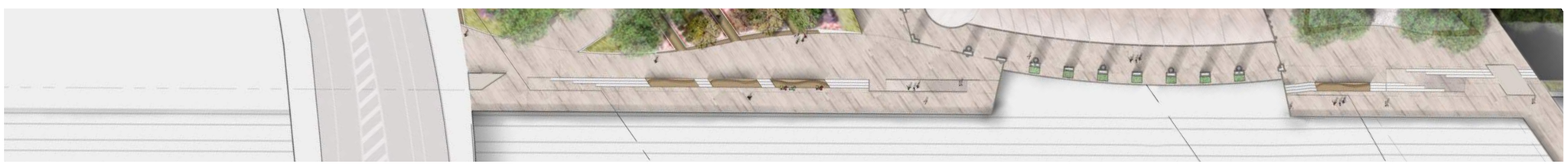
## PARKING PODIUM ELEVATION

The Committee and staff have asked CHOP to provide more information about the appearance of the parking podium as it faces the CSX tracks and the river. CSX mandates a crash wall along the frontage, which results in a predominantly opaque wall, and CHOP is developing design solutions for the wall, such as the architectural articulation strategies illustrated here.



KEYPLAN

WEST ELEVATION (SCHUYLKILL RIVER/ PROMENADE)



PLAN (PROMENADE)

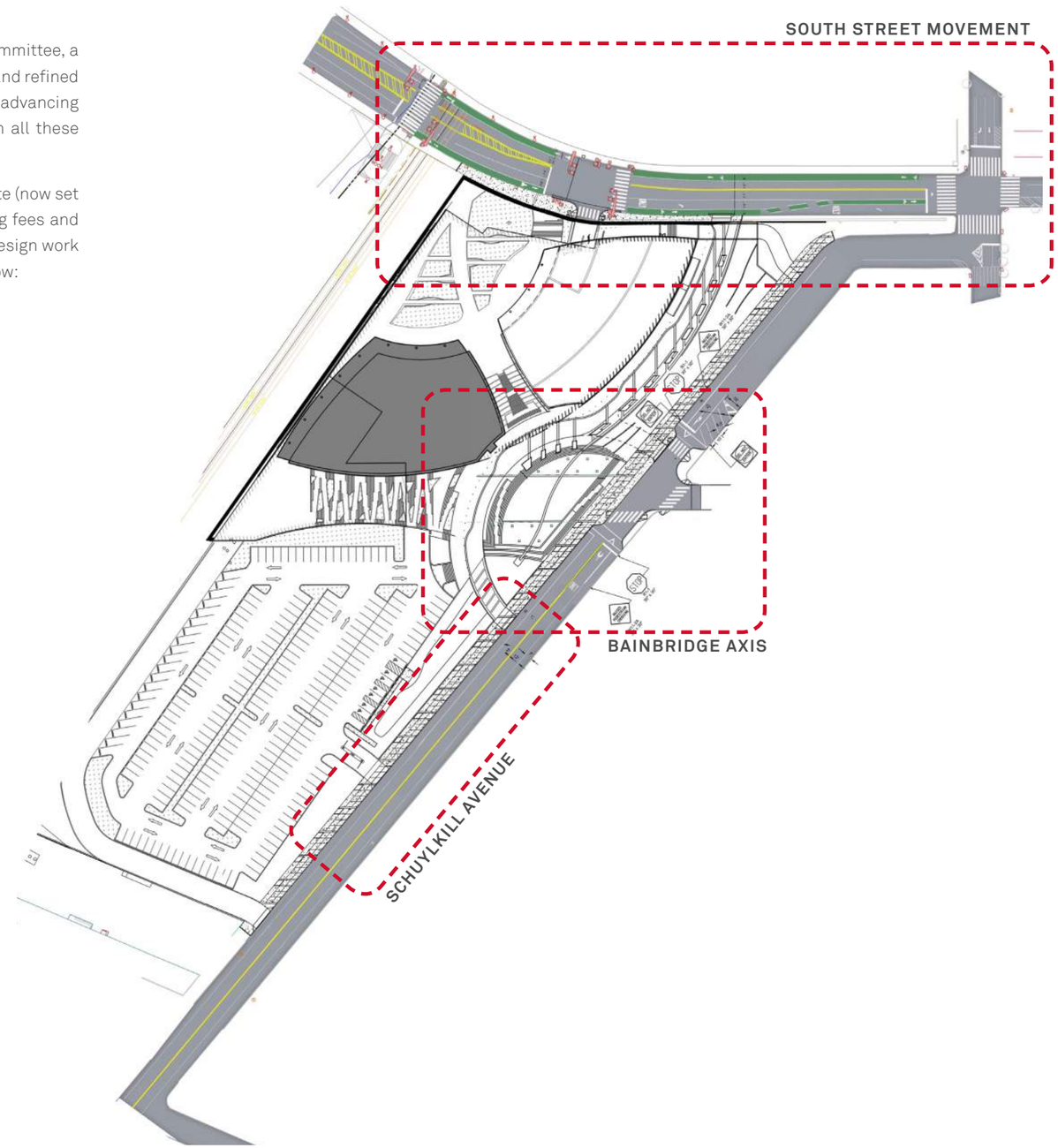
# Traffic, Transit, Pedestrian, Bike Design

## OVERVIEW

In discussions with the community, as well as with PCP staff and at the April 1, 2014 meeting with the Committee, a major focus has been how people move to, from and by the proposed development. The site plan proposed, and refined in further design work and in ongoing discussions those focused on traffic as well as those interested in advancing transit use, bicycle accommodation, and pedestrian movement, seeks to find the right balance between all these modes of movement.

A foundation of this approach has been CHOP's intent to minimize the amount of parking provided on the site (now set at the lowest amount permitted by zoning), and to encourage other modes of access both through parking fees and through the design integration of transit, bike and pedestrian movement. In developing these strategies, design work and CHOP's reviews with the Streets Department has been focused on three key areas, as diagrammed below:

- The South Street frontage of the site
- The Bainbridge axis, as it intersects with Schuylkill Avenue and continues through the site
- Schuylkill Avenue, as it approaches Bainbridge Street from the south

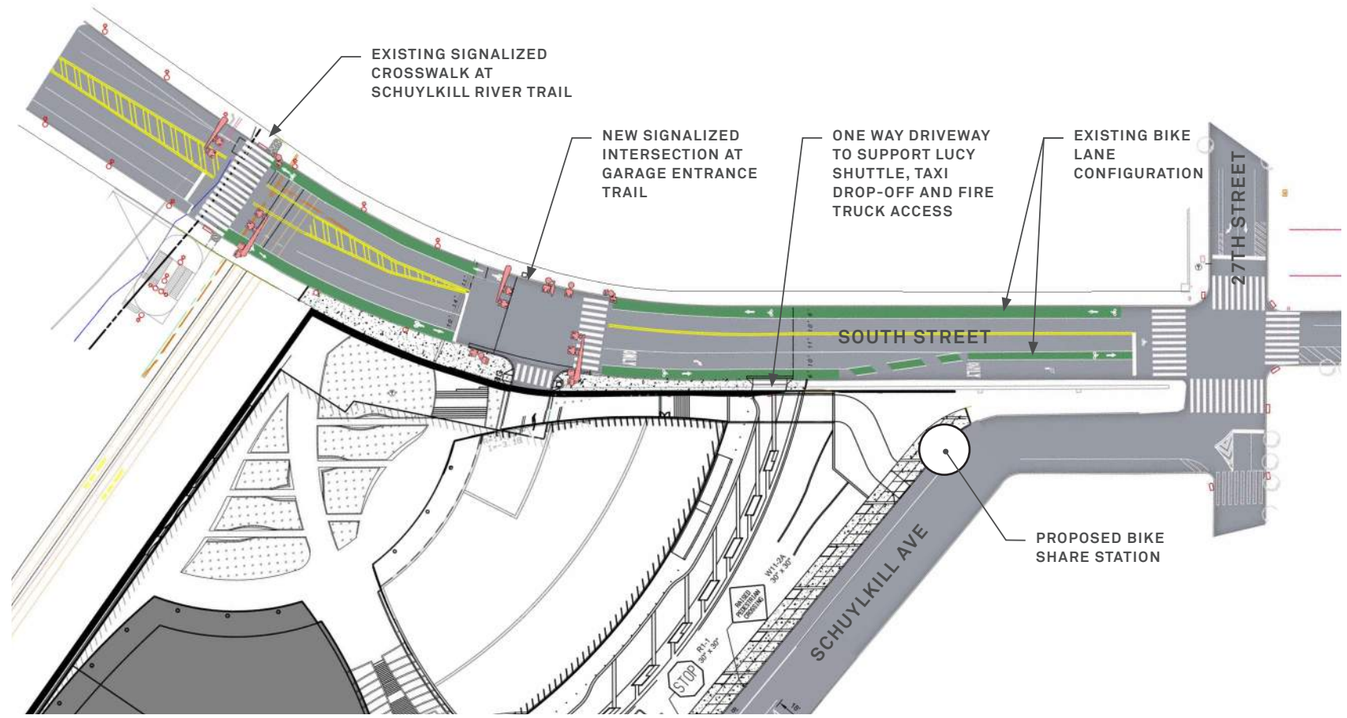


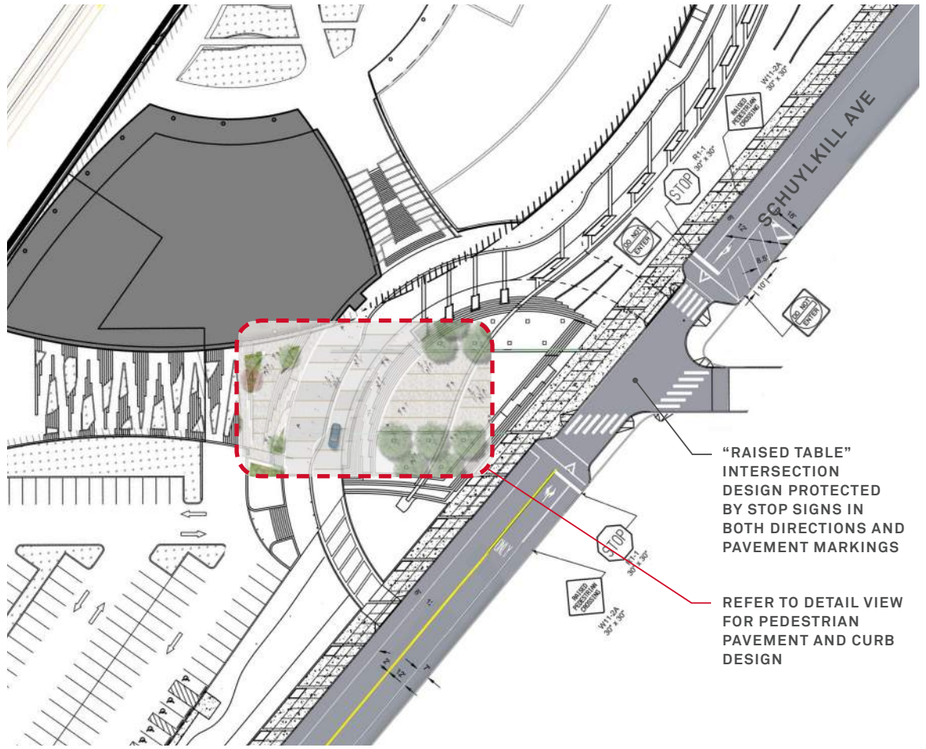
# Traffic, Transit, Pedestrian, Bike Design

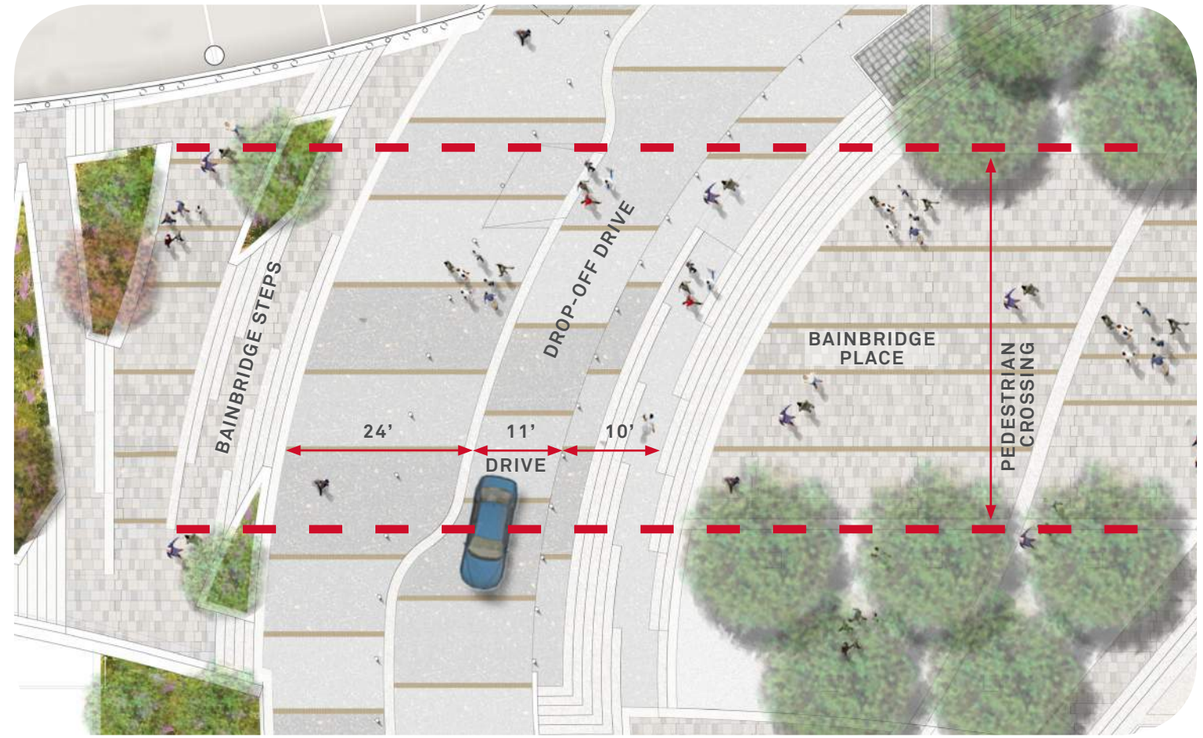
## SOUTH STREET MOVEMENT

South Street, as it crosses the Schuylkill River and descends to the urban neighborhoods east of the river, is both a prominent address for CHOP – as discussed earlier in this document – and the dominant street of arrival for those coming to the campus. CHOP's traffic studies have projected that half of car drivers coming to and leaving the site during peak hours will use the South Street bridge. South Street is also the location of the current #40 bus line, and an important bikeway. The design of this frontage seeks to balance and address all modes:

- In order to accommodate and give precedence to pedestrian movement arriving from or destined to the bridge, a plaza set flush with the sidewalk of South Street is located at the west edge of the site, immediately adjacent to the bridge.
- To minimize the impact on adjacent neighborhoods of cars arriving from or destined to the bridge, a fully signalized intersection takes cars directly off South Street and into a below-grade parking structure.
- In order to encourage transit use, CHOP has requested SEPTA locate a stop for the #40 bus at the site, and has discussed with Septa an extension of the LUCY transit shuttle to this site.
- CHOP has proposed a right-in-only one-way driveway east of the Site 2 building. This driveway will accommodate taxi and other drop-off traffic access and the LUCY shuttle. A driveway at this location, over 100 feet from the new signalized intersection, will meet the City's Complete Streets guidelines. In discussions with SEPTA, the awkward turn geometry for the LUCY bus at 27th Street led them to recommend the new driveway as a preferred route for LUCY. The design of the driveway itself: its paving, curbing and landscape treatment, all seek to lower speeds and constrain the movement of vehicles in favor of pedestrians. This design strategy is illustrated in the discussion of Bainbridge Street pedestrian access below.
- In support of bicycle movement on South Street, and in encouraging bicycle use by those coming to the site, CHOP has reviewed multiple options for the South Street bike lane with the Streets Department. These discussions are ongoing; CHOP expects the reviews with Streets will continue in the coming weeks. CHOP has also determined in its discussions with the Streets Department that the current signalized pedestrian crossing at the Schuylkill River trail can be retained and integrated into the design. That crossing has a bike-accessible ramp connection to the trail.
- CHOP also seeks to support the City's planned bike share program, and has proposed a bike station at the north end of Schuylkill Avenue, where it is convenient to the neighborhood, and to the South Street bike lanes. CHOP anticipates that when the bike share program ultimately extends to the area of the main CHOP campus on Civic Center Boulevard, a second bike share station within the CHOP parking garage may prove viable.
- Lastly, in seeking to mitigate the impact of additional car traffic created by the development, CHOP has analyzed signal timing and phasing adjustments across the entire length of South Street between Convention Avenue and 27th Street. Through signal coordination, travel times can be maintained at or close to current levels.






### BAINBRIDGE AXIS; SCHUYLKILL AVENUE

As noted at the beginning of this document, the point at which Bainbridge Street intersects with Schuylkill Avenue is a significant "front door" to the CHOP campus for the neighborhood. Pedestrians from the neighborhood will seek to cross Schuylkill Avenue at this location, both to reach the buildings and open spaces on site, and to walk through the campus and across the pedestrian bridge CHOP has proposed linking to the Schuylkill trail. This intersection is also used by traffic moving south on Schuylkill Avenue, and traffic moving north on Schuylkill Avenue and turning right onto Bainbridge. In order to balance all these needs, calm and manage vehicular traffic, and foster pedestrian safety, CHOP proposes to reconstruct this intersection with curb bump-outs and a "raised table" design, which raises the street bed closer to the sidewalk elevation, and is protected by pavement markings and by stop signs in both directions. CHOP is in close discussion with the Streets Department on the design details of the raised table configuration, and believes that its use here is consistent with the Complete Streets approach in balancing multiple modes of movement.

Once on the CHOP site, design details have been developed which give preference to pedestrian movement. The site detail below shows how pavement treatments and curb alignments are arranged so that car and LUCY traffic on the internal CHOP driveway is constrained and managed in order to create a pedestrian-focused environment.

### SCHUYLKILL AVENUE

In addition to the traffic-calming methods proposed for the intersection at Bainbridge, the community has expressed a desire for additional traffic calming south of Bainbridge. CHOP will install – with permission from the City – a second traffic intervention south of Bainbridge to slow traffic movements on this portion of Schuylkill Avenue.