



Memorandum

To: Alex Smith, Director, Art Commission
From: Nobuki Iijima, Project Coordinator, Capital Program Office
Date: June 25, 2025
Re: Request for Administrative Approval / Art Commission Review
Commerce Connector, 4th Street and Market Street, Philadelphia PA 19106

We respectfully request administrative approval for site improvements at Commerce Connector, 4th Street and Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

The brief description of the project as stated below and the enclosed drawings show the intended extent of work.

Commerce Connector is pedestrian walkway that links N. 4th Street north of Market Street to Market Street on the south and Wistar Alley to the north. The existing paving, site furnishings including lighting, and planting are in poor condition which necessitates the revitalization of this space. The proposed improvements include new paving, new site furnishing, new lighting and new planting. The project has the support of Old City Green, Old City District, Councilmember Squilla, and Independence Historical Trust. Project budget is \$2,700,000.

Thank you for your attention. Please inform me directly if you need more information.

cc: Aparna Palantino, Director, CPO
Pedro Pinto, Deputy Director, CPO
Francesco Cerrai, Project Director, CPO
Nobuki Iijima, Project Coordinator, CPO nobuki.iijima@phila.gov or (215) 683-4486

COMMERCE CONNECTOR

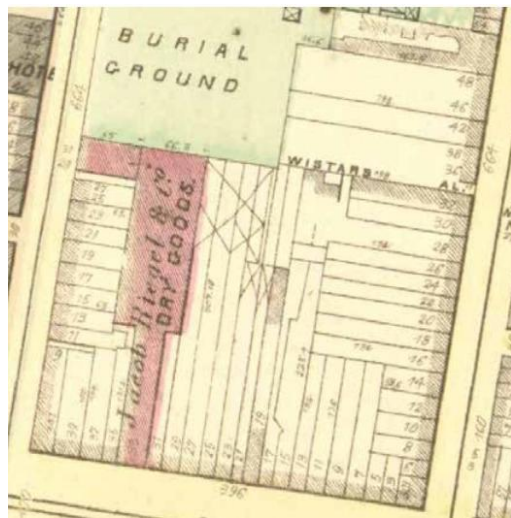


PHILADELPHIA
PARKS & RECREATION

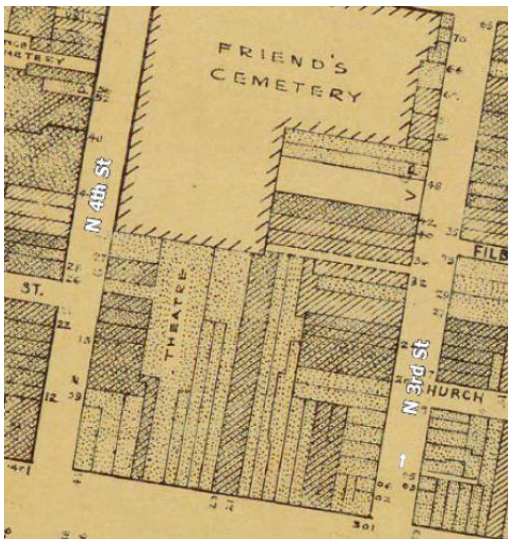


Ground Reconsidered

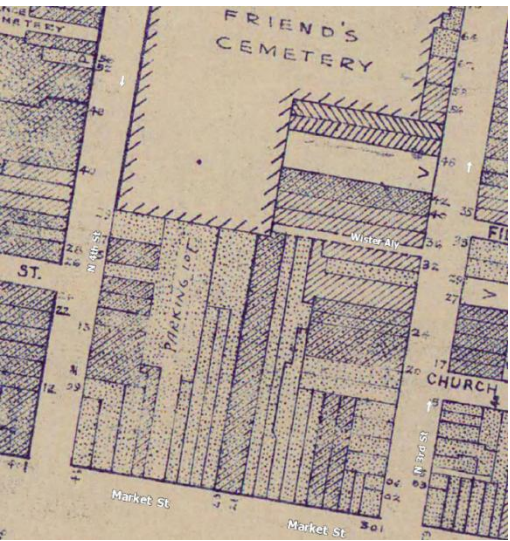




Philadelphia Atlas
1875
333 Market Street -
a dry good store



Philadelphia Atlas
1942
333 Market Street - a theater
that held up to 956 people



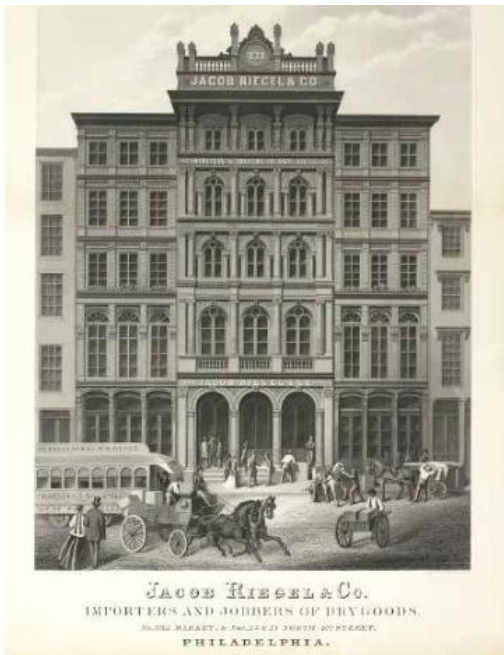
Philadelphia Atlas
1962
333 Market Street –
a parking lot



Philadelphia Atlas
1996



Philadelphia Atlas
2018



Jacob Riegel & Sons Co.
1867
Industrial and commercial buildings line N.4th &
Market Streets. The largest and most notable
building on the block was 333 Market Street



319 Market Street
1967- 1971
Colonial Penn Life building &
Presbyterian Apartments are
constructed



319 Market Street
1995
City retaining wall at Market
Street entrance to Commerce
Connector walk



319 Market Street
2018



CDC Workshop and Review Session with Task Force

Programming
Lighting
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Fixed Seating
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Flexible Seating
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Shade Trellis
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Historic / Wayfinding Elements
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Celebrated Stormwater
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Sculpture / Art
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Informal Performance
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Planting
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Screening
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Passive Program
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Tiered Seats / Small Amphitheater
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

● "Like"
● "Dislike"
■ Favorite in a Category

More Hardscape

Urban Character

Urban Character



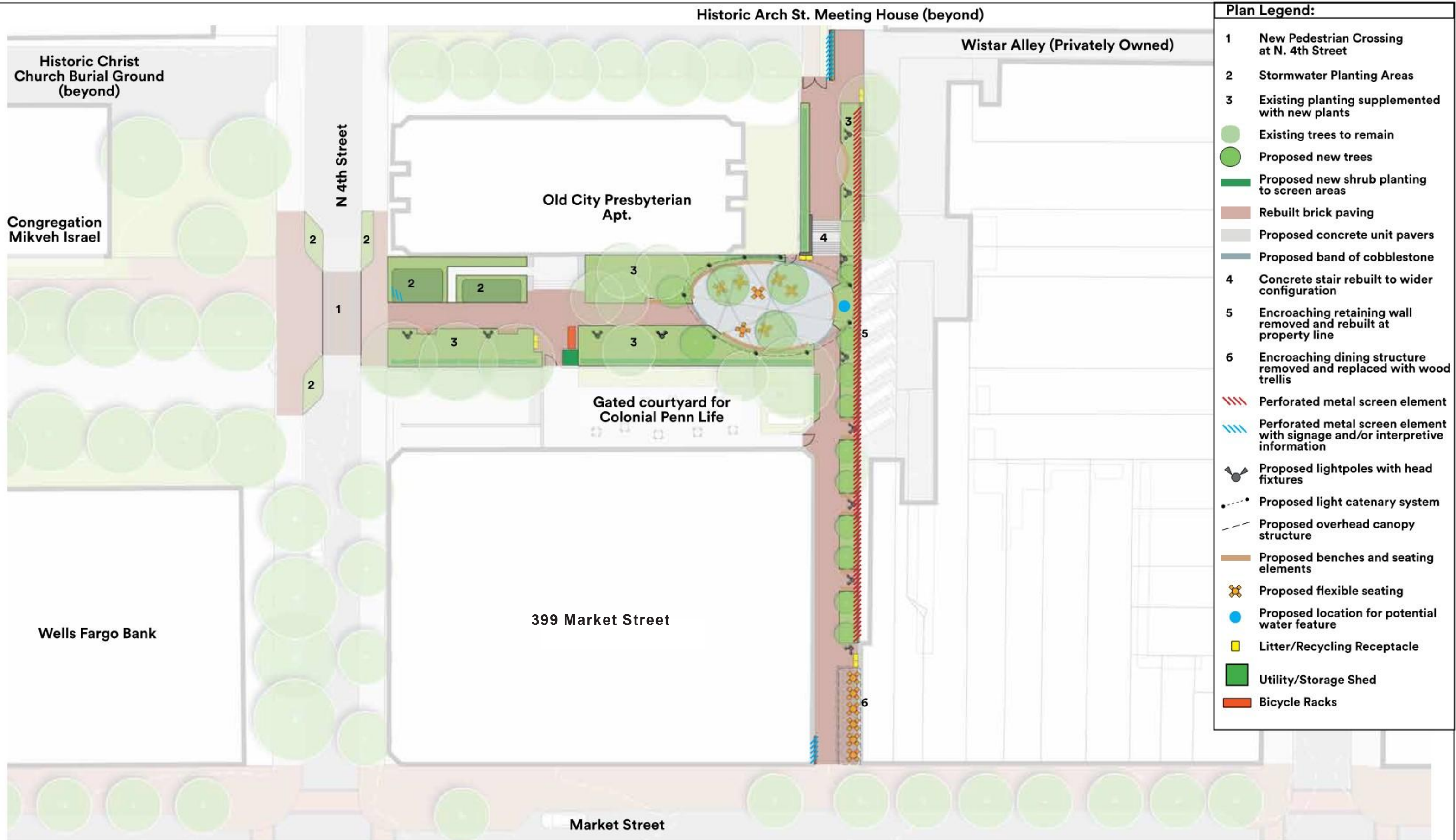
More Landscape

Park-like Character

Park-like Character



More Fixed Seating





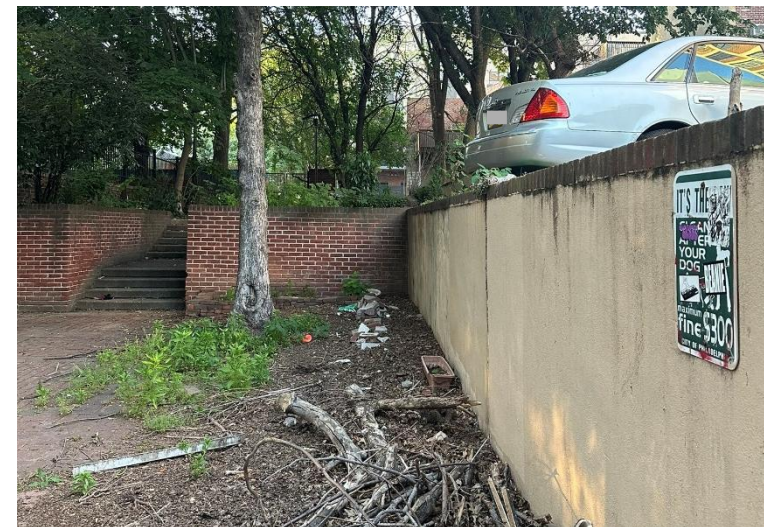
1 View from N 4th St. entrance



2 Trees and paving in poor condition



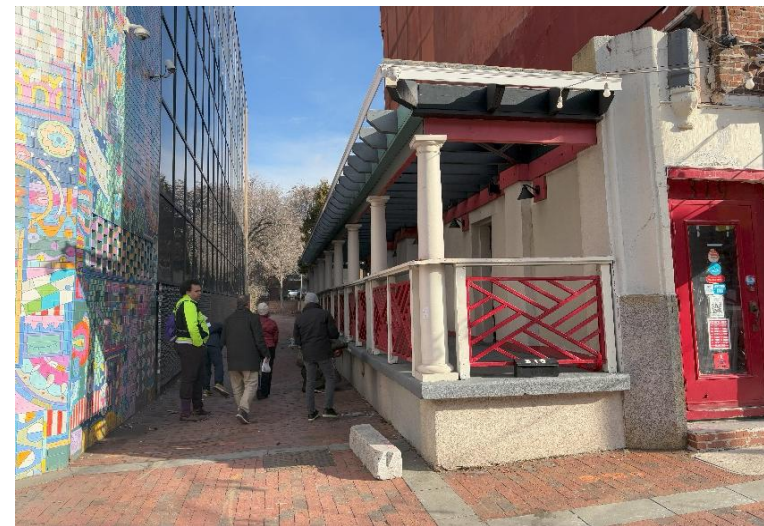
3 Site wall at raised site in poor condition



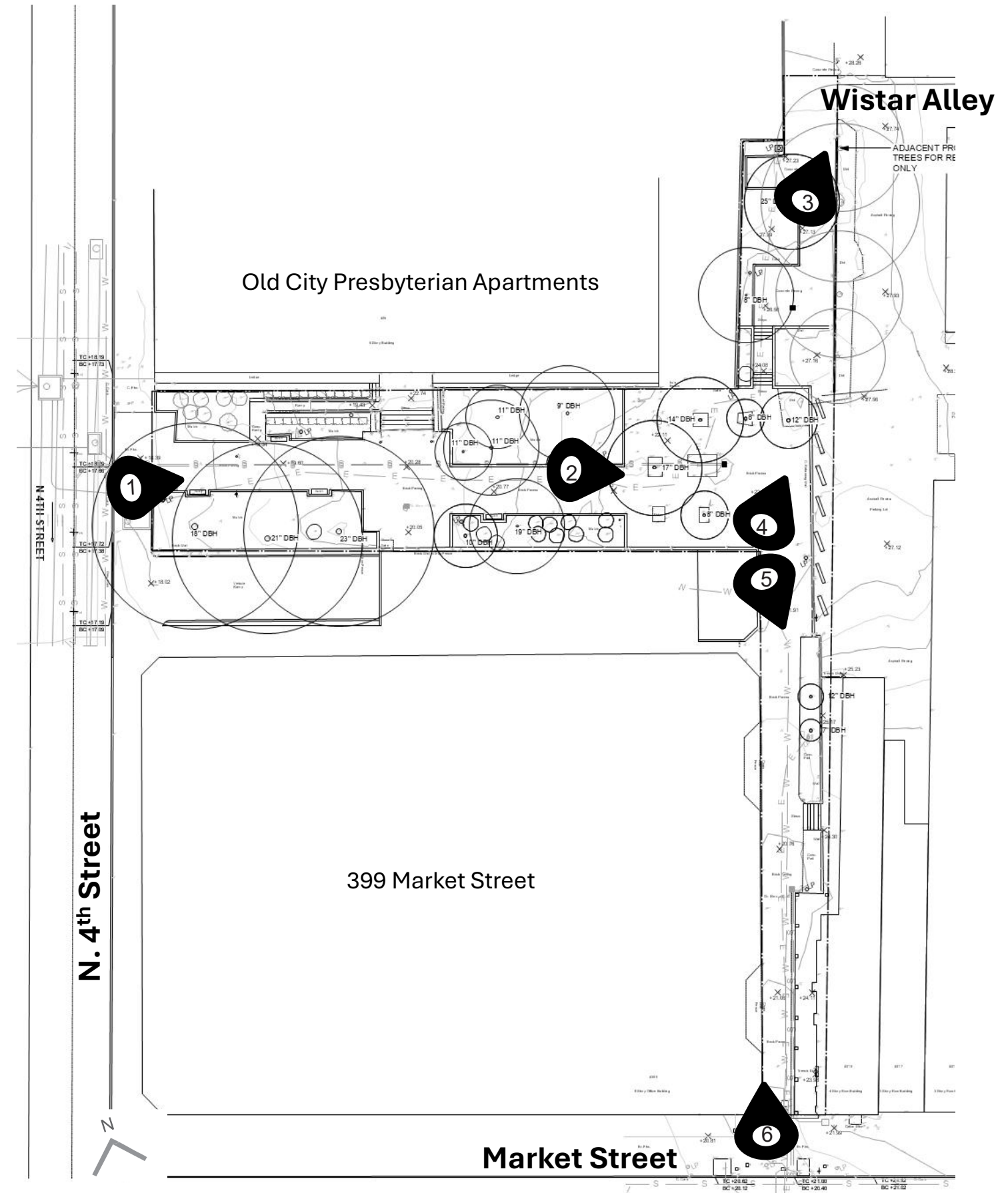
4 Cars parked over edge of site wall

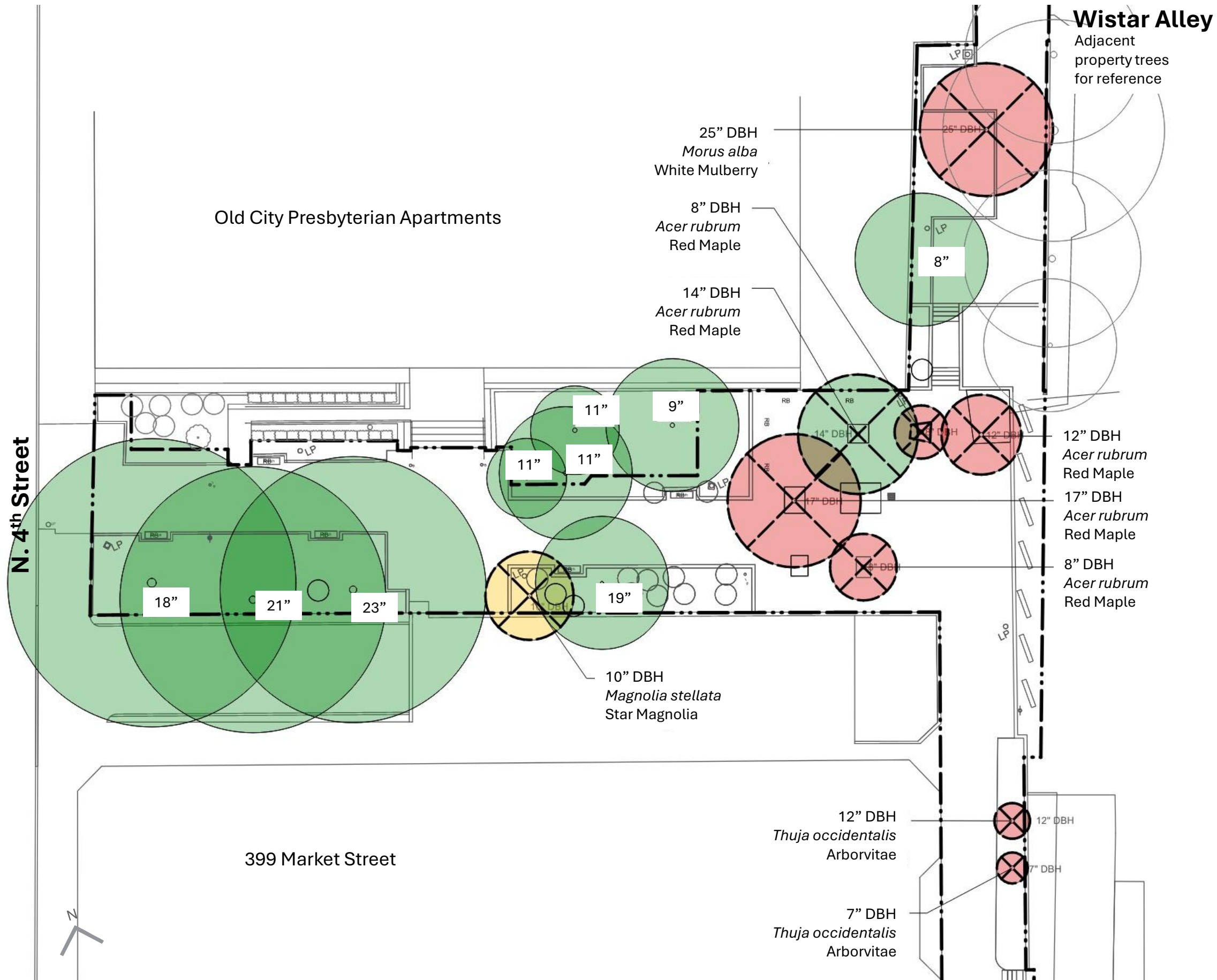


5 Trees and paving in poor condition








6 View from Market St. entrance





DEMOLITION LEGEND

-  LIMIT OF WORK
-  TREE TO BE REMOVED
-  EXISTING TREE IN GOOD HEALTH
-  EXISTING TREE IN FAIR HEALTH
-  EXISTING TREE IN POOR HEALTH



Public Stakeholder Meeting



COMMERCE CONNECTOR



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

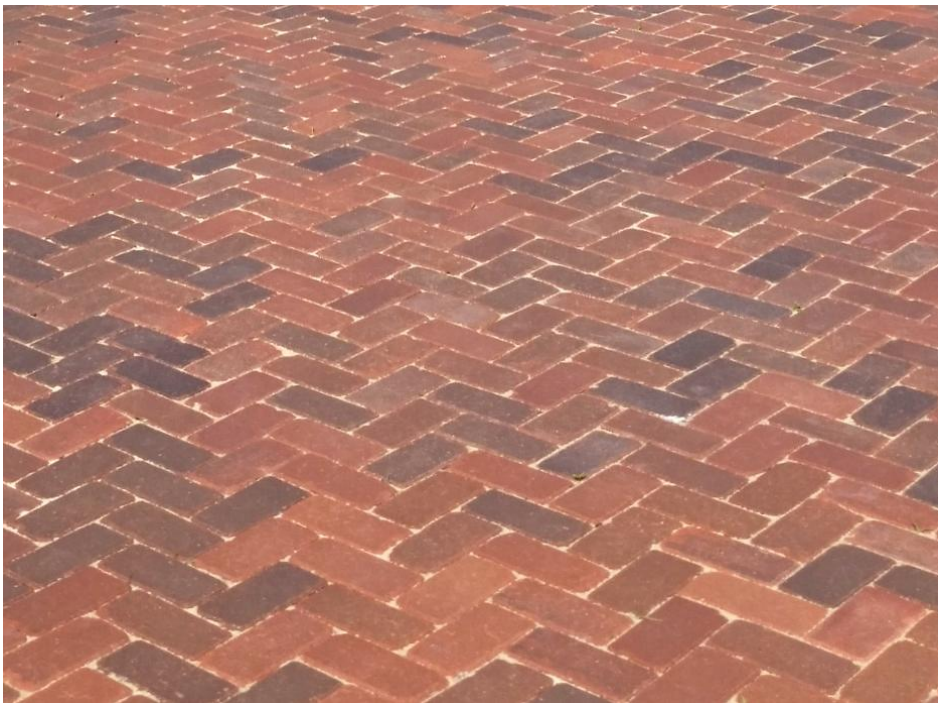


MATERIALS LEGEND

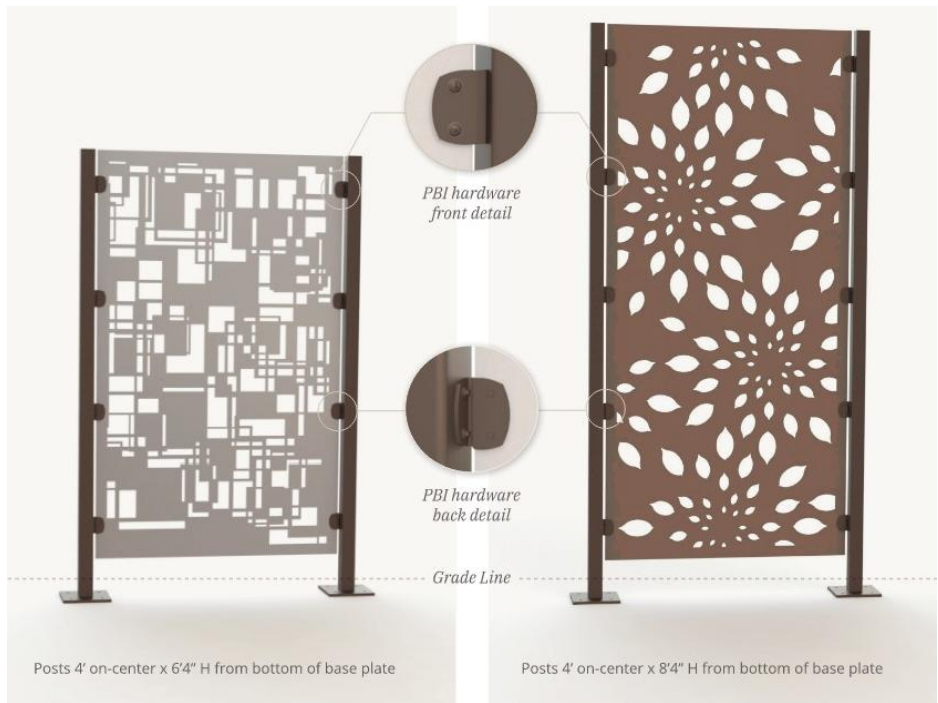
- CONCRETE PAVING
- TINTED CONCRETE PAVING
- BRICK PAVING
- WELDED WIRE FENCE
- PERFORATED METAL SCREEN
- STANDARD BENCH
- BISTRO TABLE AND CHAIRS
- TRASH RECEPTACLE
- BICYCLE RACK

PLANTING LEGEND

- EXISTING CANOPY TREE
- PROPOSED CANOPY TREE
- PROPOSED UNDERSTORY TREE
- PROPOSED SHRUBS



BRICK PAVING



PERFORATED METAL SCREEN



GRANITE CURBS



WELDED WIRE FENCE

COMMERCE CONNECTOR

SITE MATERIALS



COMMERCE CONNECTOR

SITE PLAN



EXISTING SCULPTURE TO BE
REPURPOSED AS A FOUNTAIN



PPR Standard Bench



Tables & Chairs



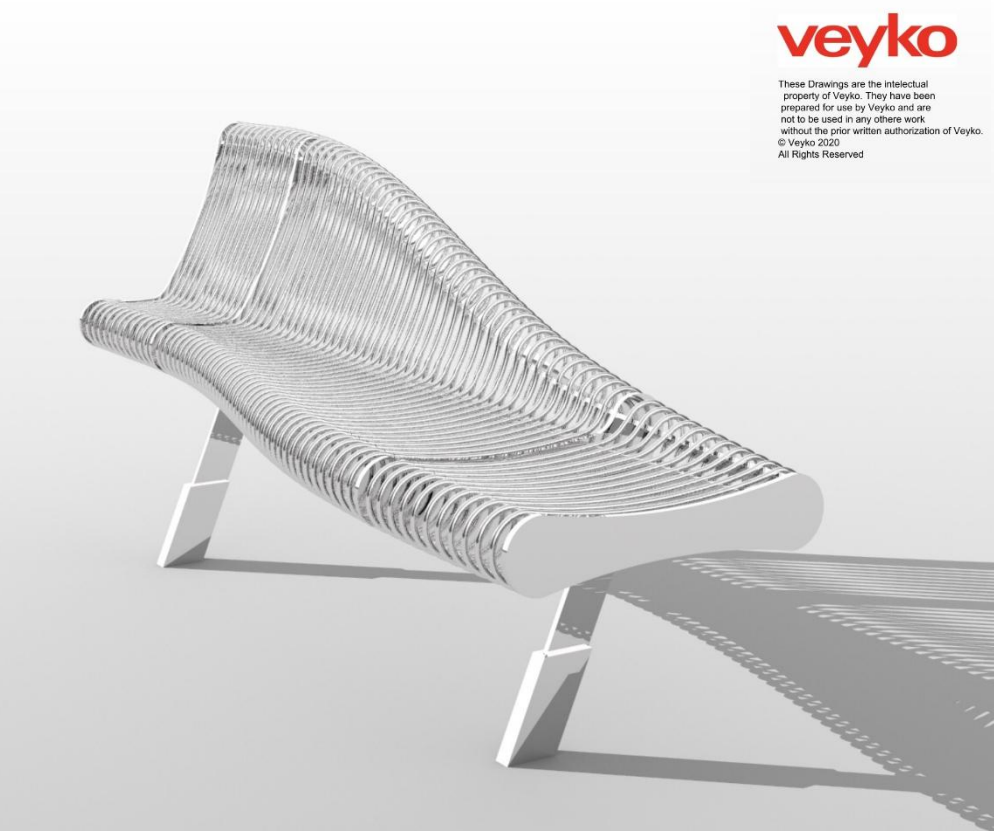
Precast Concrete Wall with Bench Topper



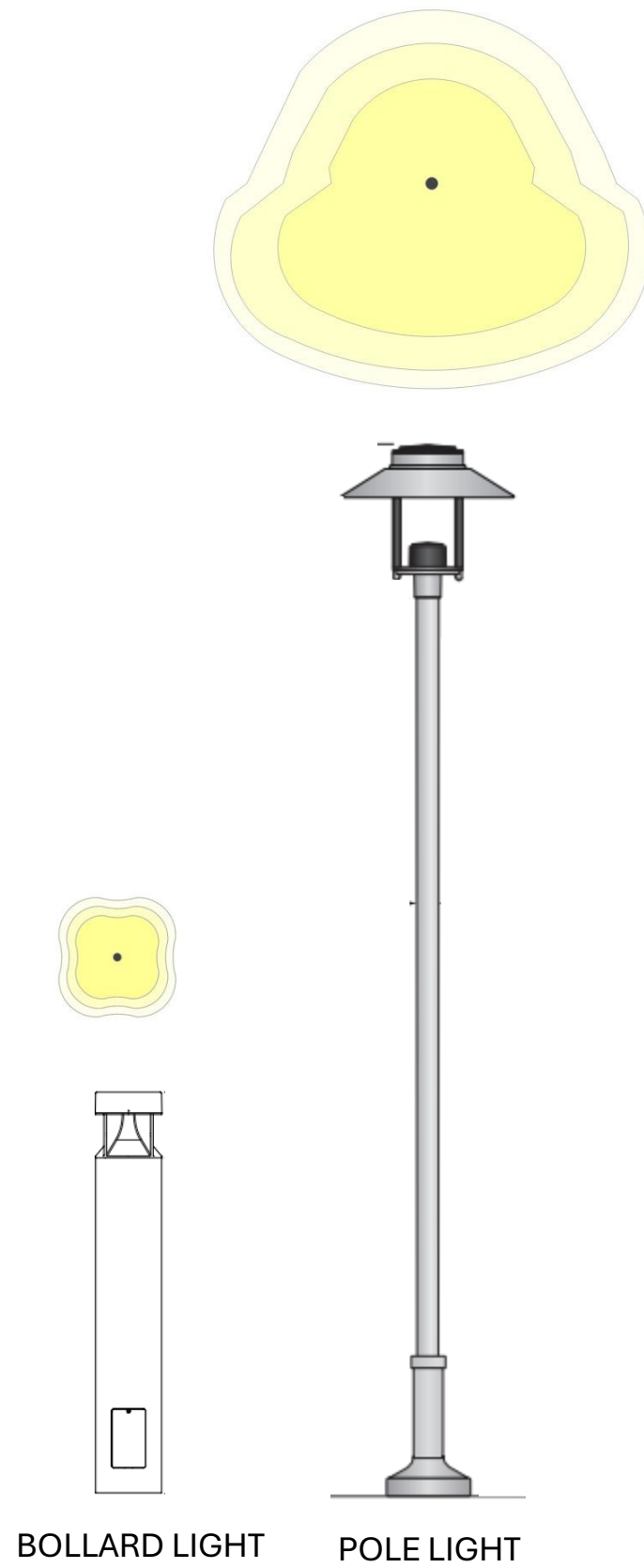
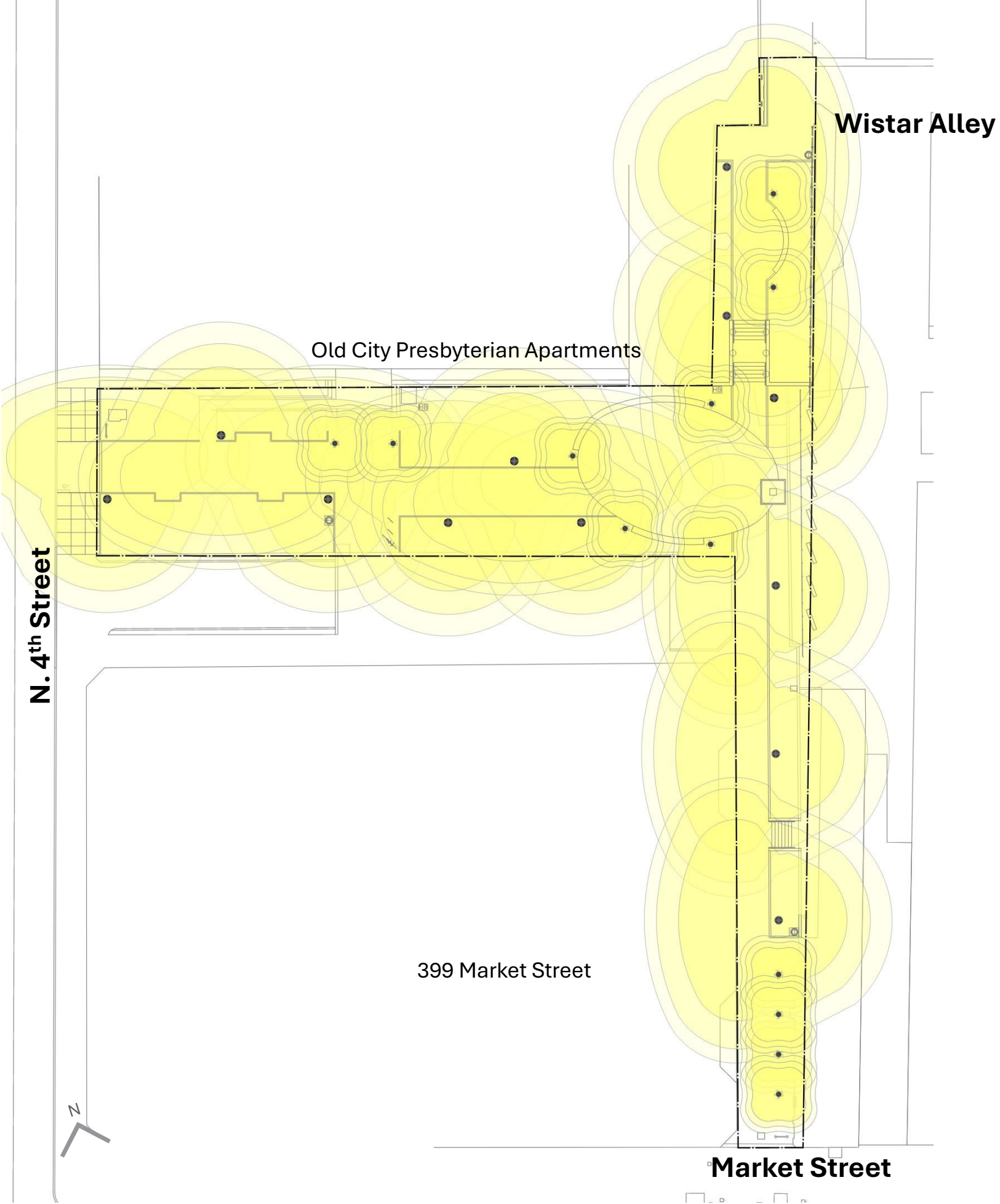
PPR Standard Trash Receptacle

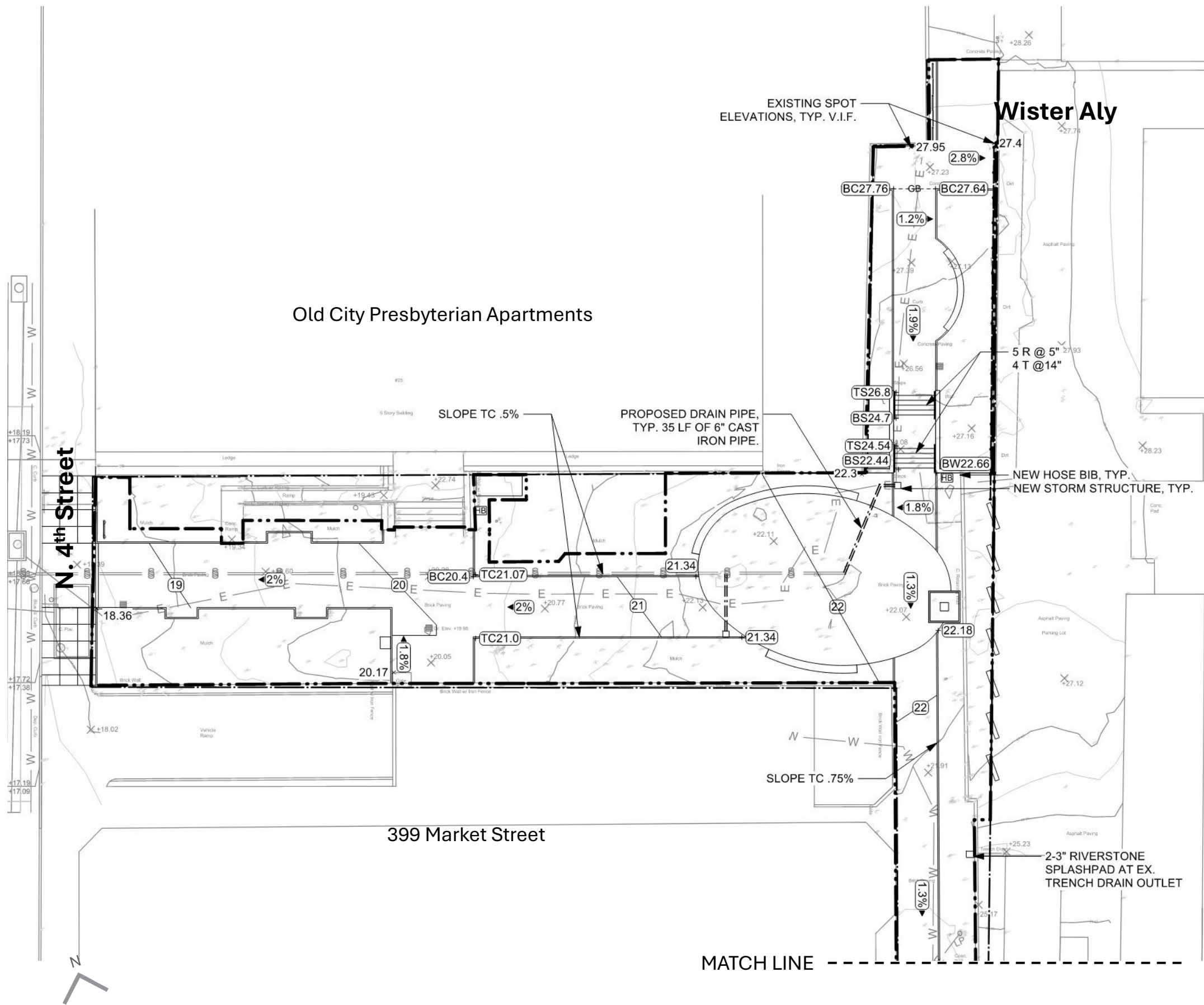


PPR Standard Bicycle Rack



Add Alternate Custom Bench Series to replace precast wall and bench toppers

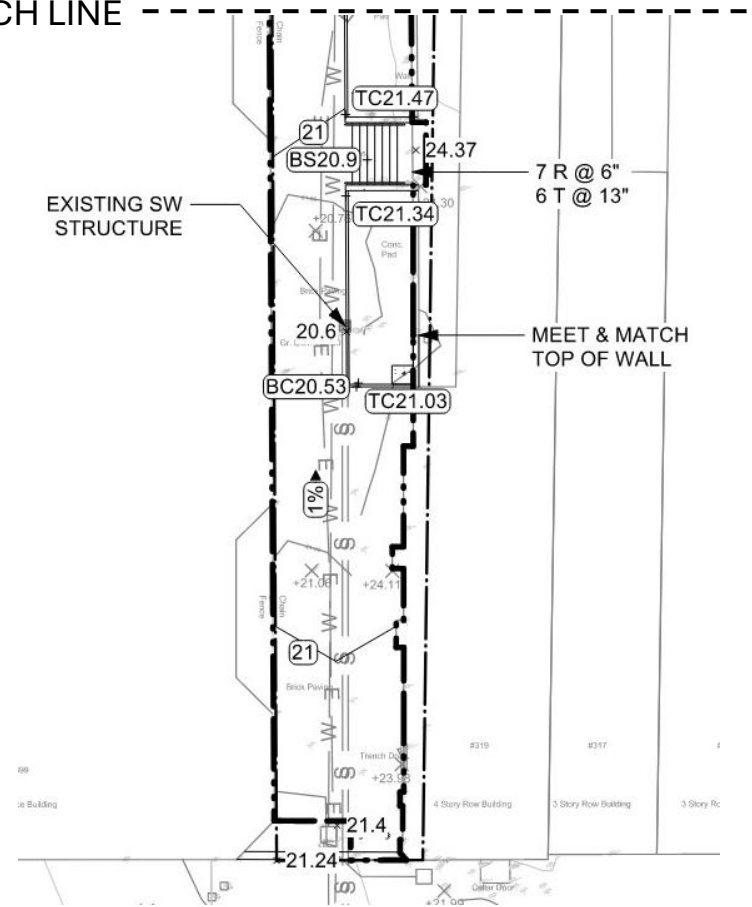




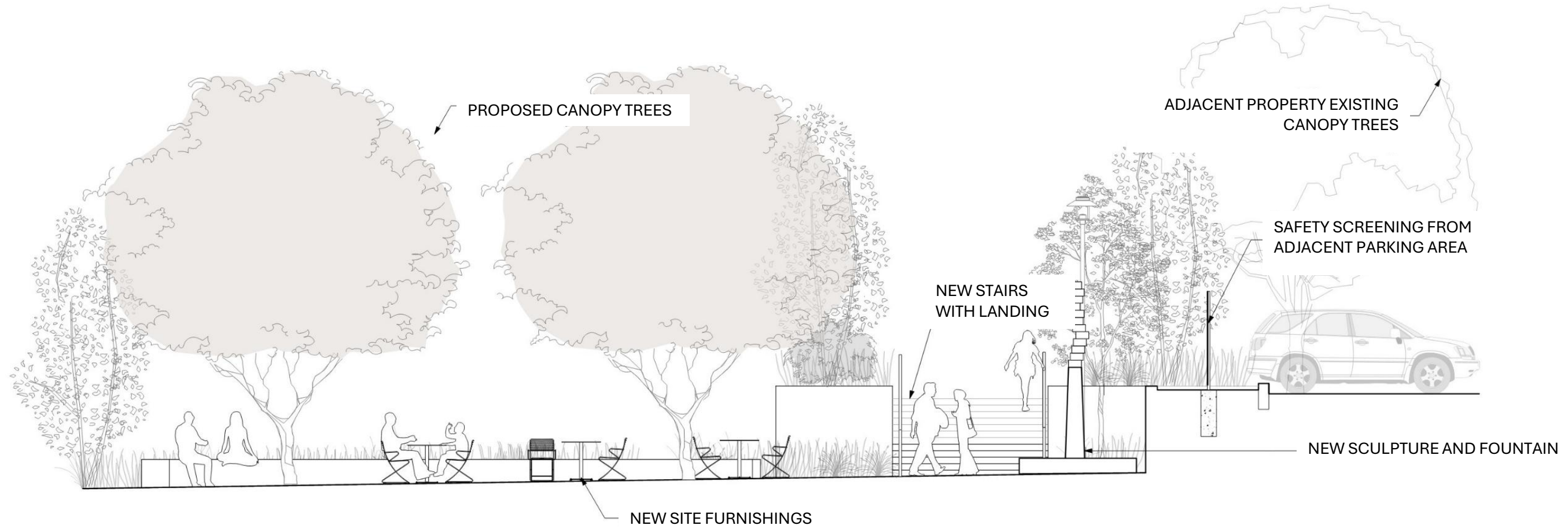
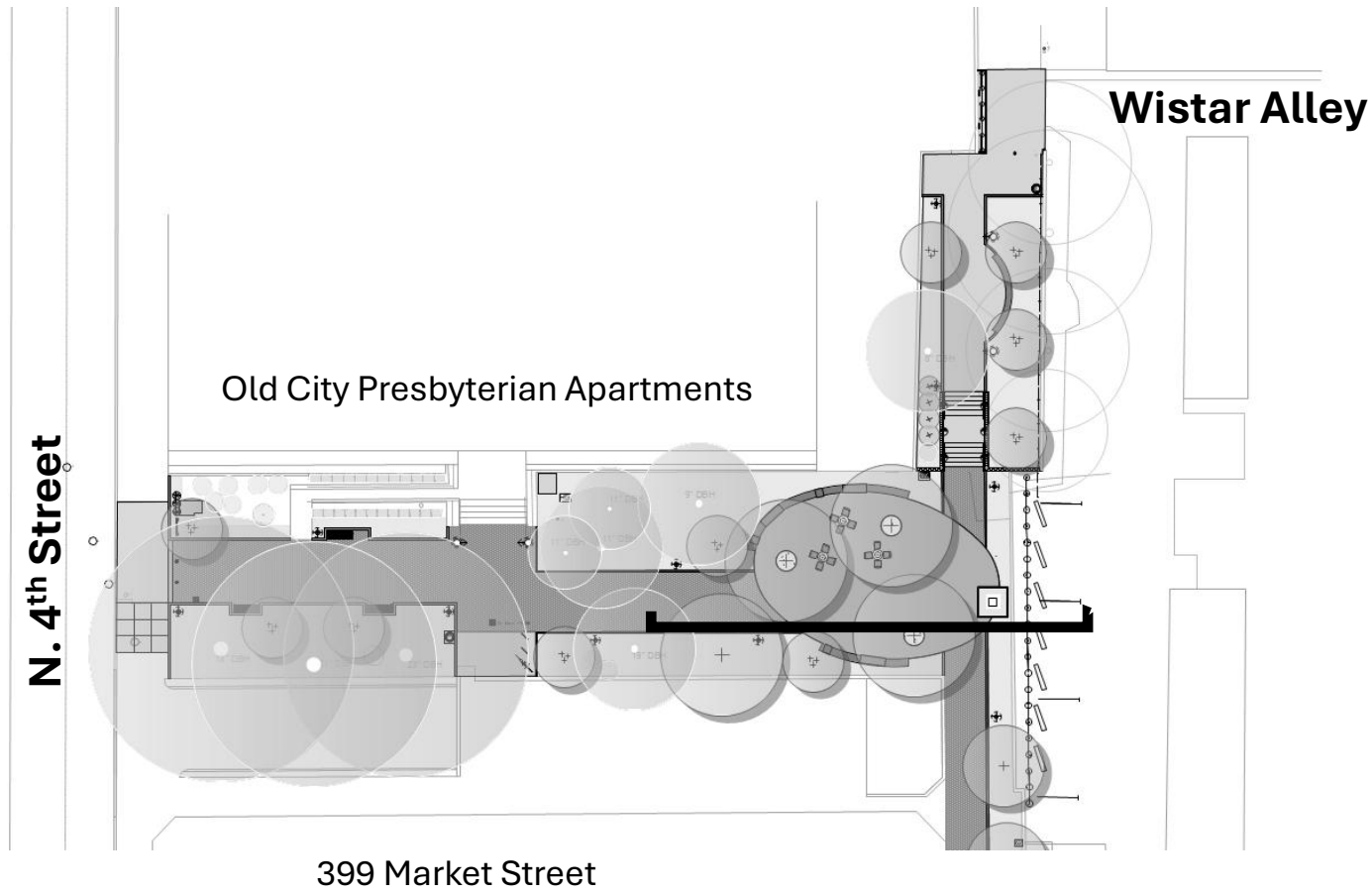
GRADING LEGEND

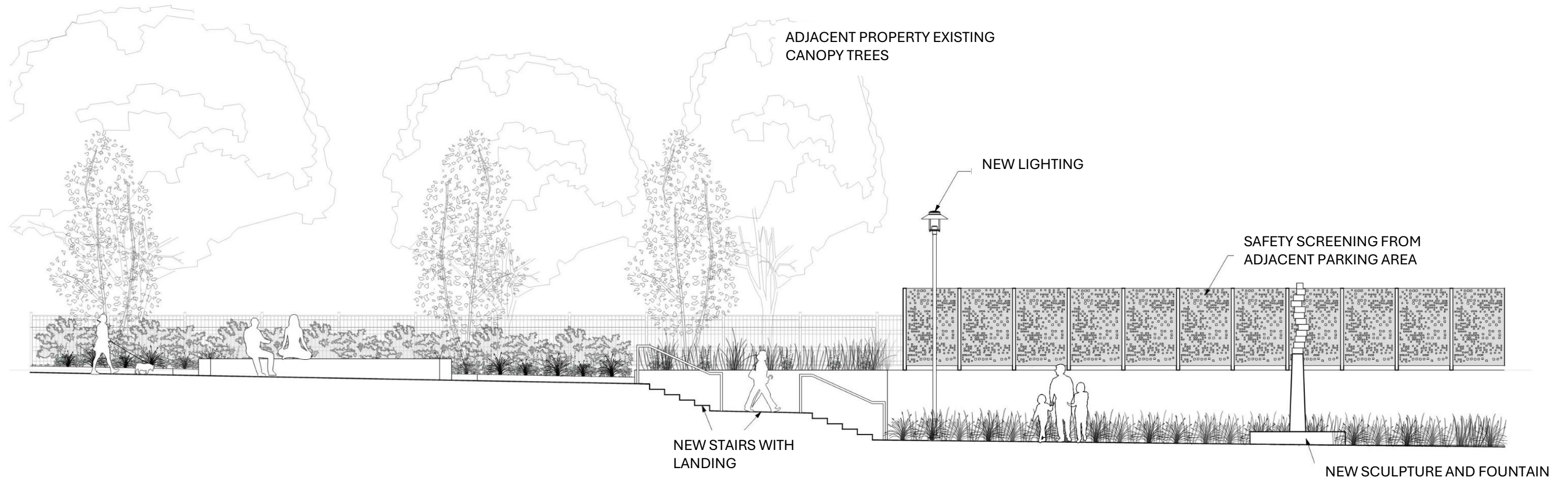
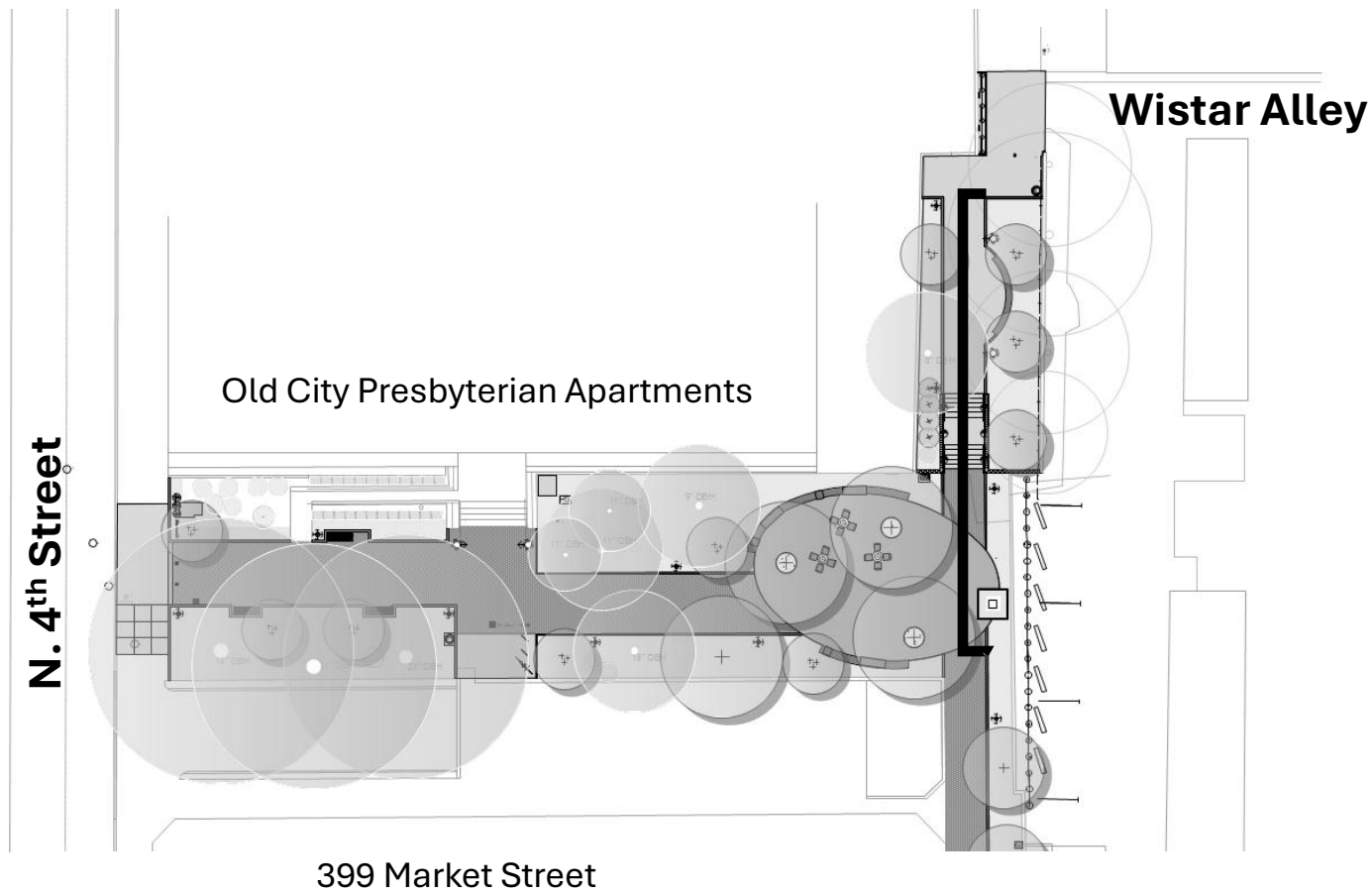
- PROERTY LINE
- LIMIT OF DISTURBANCE
- × 0.00 EXISTING SPOT ELEVATION
- +0.00 PROPOSED SPOT ELEVATION
- +TW0.00 TOP OF WALL
- +BW0.00 BOTTOM OF WALL
- +TW0.00 TOP OF STEP
- +BS0.00 BOTTOM OF STEP
- +HP0.00 HIGH POINT
- ◀0.0% PERCENT SLOPE
- CONTOUR
- V.I.F. VERIFY IN FIELD

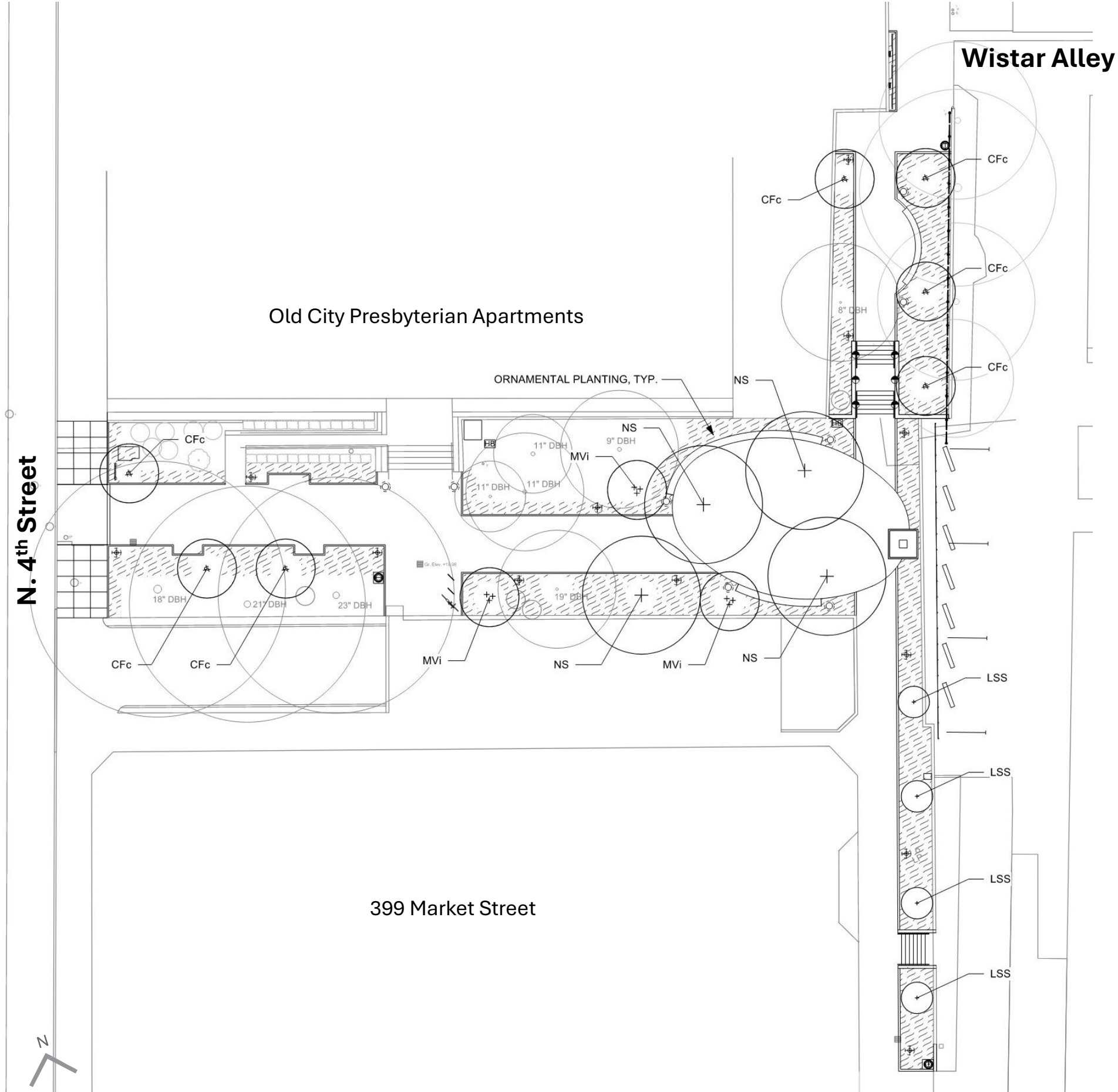
MATCH LINE



Market Street



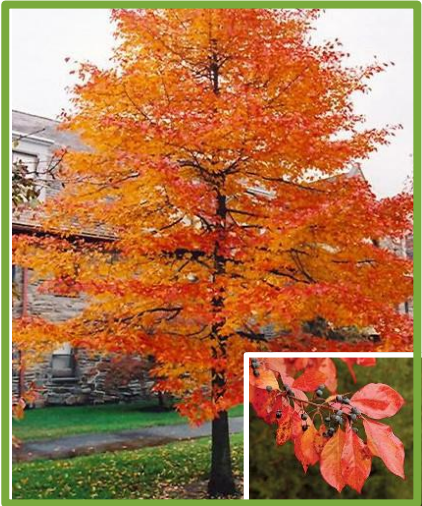




CANOPY TREES



'Slender Silhouette' Sweetgum
Liquidambar styraciflua 'Slender Silhouette'



Blackgum
Nyssa sylvatica

ORNAMENTAL TREES



'Cherokee Princess' Dogwood
Cornus florida 'Cherokee Princess'



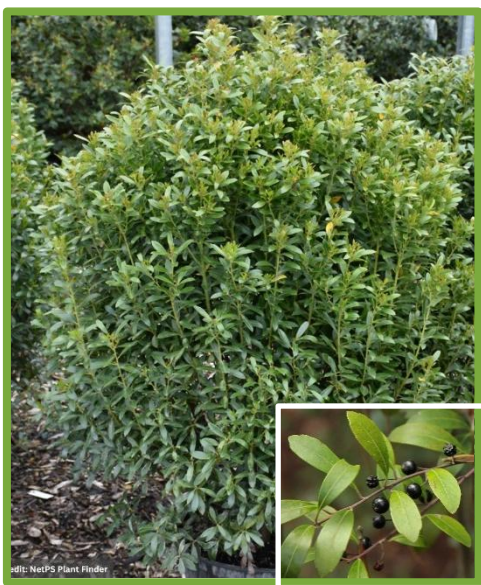
Sweetbay Magnolia
Magnolia virginiana

| PLANT SCHEDULE | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|
| ID | Qty | Botanical Name | Common Name | Size | Spacing |
| CANOPY TREES | | | | | |
| LSS | 4 | <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> 'Slender Silhouette' | Slender Silhouette Sweetgum | 3.5" CAL. | As Shown |
| NS | 4 | <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> | Blackgum | 3.5" CAL | As Shown |
| MULTI-STEMMED TREES | | | | | |
| CFc | 7 | <i>Cornus florida</i> 'Cherokee Princess' | Cherokee Princess Dogwood | 3" CAL. | As Shown |
| MVi | 3 | <i>Magnolia virginiana</i> | Sweet Bay Magnolia | 3" CAL. | As Shown |

SHRUBS



Rosebay Rhododendron
Rhododendron maximum



Inkberry Holly
Ilex glabra 'Densa'



Winterberry Holly
Ilex verticillata



Smoothleaf Hydrangea
Hydrangea arborescens

PERENNIALS & GROUNDCOVERS



American Royal Fern
Osmunda regalis var. spectabilis



Marginal Wood Fern
Dryopteris marginalis



Foamflower
Tiarella cordifolia



Dense Blazing Star
Liatris spicata



Wild Stonecrop
Sedum ternatum



Creeping Lilyturf
Liriope spicata





COMMERCE CONNECTOR

CENTRAL GATHERING SPACE





COMMERCE CONNECTOR

MARKET STREET ENTRANCE

COMMERCE CONNECTOR



PHILADELPHIA
PARKS & RECREATION



Ground Reconsidered



143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
215-861-4971
www.inht.org

Alex Smith
Director, Art Commission
1515 Arch St., 13th flr
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Commerce Connector Project

Dear Mr. Smith:

Please accept this letter of support from the Independence Historical Trust ("Trust") for the *Commerce Connector* project in Old City.

The Trust is the nonprofit partner to Independence National Historical Park (INHP). The Trust also supports projects that improve the resident and visitor experience in the gateway communities surrounding the INHP as Philadelphia prepares for the semiquincentennial. The Trust is working with the City of Philadelphia, the Old City District, and other arts and culture organizations on capital improvements that will revive the historic district's brand as a unique cultural destination with goals to increase visitation, economic development, pedestrian safety, and employment.

These improvements are centered on key activation points for culturally significant sites for local residents and businesses and for the millions of tourists who visit INHP every year. One critical element of this work to energize and reactivate the Historical District for citizens and tourists alike is the creation of a series of connective pathways anchored by cultural and historical assets. One of those pathways is the *Commerce Connector* initiative.

The *Commerce Connector* project originates at the doorstep of INHP and the Independence Visitor Center (IVC). Heading east, the pathway passes several historic and cultural institutions including the Christ Church Burial Ground and the Commodore Uriah Phillips Levy Park before crossing 4th Street and turning south towards Market Street. The pathway continues across Market Street, passing through Franklin court and terminates at Carpenters Hall within the INHP.

This pathway will offer a curated peaceful pedestrian route through the Historical District that will contrast with adjacent high volume vehicular corridors. Landscape and streetscape elements such as seating, planting, and lighting upgrades will provide legibility and visibility, and it is anticipated that the institutions along the *Commerce Connector* will provide inclusive programming, historical interpretation, and placemaking events to assure a consistent level of activation.

The Trust has worked closely with Old City Green and the Old City District to secure funds for the *Commerce Connector* project, and the Trust strongly supports the initiative.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Caramanico, Executive Director



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Historical Park*

**Ex-officio **Liaison*

Job Itzkowitz
Executive Director

Alex Smith
Director, Art Commission
1515 Arch St., 13th Flr
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Mr. Smith,

On behalf of the Old City District, I write to express our enthusiastic support for the Commerce Connector project — a transformative initiative that will link key historic and cultural assets across our vibrant neighborhood.

Old City District (OCD) is a Business Improvement District tasked with encouraging economic vitality in Old City through marketing, business attraction, streetscape improvement, cleaning, and safety programs.

Old City is proud to serve as the home of Independence National Historical Park and as the heart of Philadelphia's historic district. As we approach the nation's 250th anniversary, we are working closely with the City of Philadelphia, the Independence Historical Trust, and local arts and culture partners to strengthen our identity as a unique cultural destination. The Commerce Connector is central to this effort.

The Commerce Connector will offer a quiet, walkable experience for residents and the millions of annual visitors, contrasting with the busier vehicle corridors nearby. More than a physical connection, the Commerce Connector is a placemaking initiative. Streetscape and landscape enhancements — including lighting, seating, and greenery — will enhance visibility, accessibility, and comfort. Along the route, cultural institutions are expected to provide inclusive programming and interpretation that will bring this corridor to life.

Old City District has worked closely with Old City Green and the Independence Historical Trust to help secure funding and build momentum for this project. We are deeply committed to its success and excited for the many ways it will enrich our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/ Job Itzkowitz
Job Itzkowitz
Executive Director
Old City District



51 N. THIRD STREET, BOX 209 | PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106 | OLDCITYGREEN.ORG

June 18, 2025

Mr. Alex Smith, Director
City of Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch St., 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Commerce Street Connector – Public Space Improvement Project

Mr. Smith:

In 2017, under a Community Design Collaborative planning grant, Old City Green launched an initiative to improve this key connective walkway and public space amenity.

Today, in partnership with Old City District and Independence Historical Trust, along with the invaluable support by Councilman Squilla and various City Departments, we and our partners are now poised to realize our goal of revitalizing, enlivening, and reconnecting Commerce Street to the Old City community.

Influenced by multiple Old City business and residential stakeholders, the project design and elements intend a placemaking effect that feels uniquely *Old City*, and we are confident that our community, and city at large will welcome and embrace this revitalized green space, once completed.

We remain deeply committed to the completion and success of this community-improvement project and, in partnership with Old City District, intend to assume the long-term maintenance of the Commerce Street Connector, going forward.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter before you.

Sincerely,

Joe Schiavo
Vice President, Old City Green

OLD CITY GREEN IS A 501(C)(3) TAX-EXEMPT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

The official registration and financial information of Old City Civic Association d/b/a Old City Green may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.