Mill City Quarter – Woonerf
Project Overview

The project site for the Mill City Quarter development is bounded by 2nd Street to the south, 3rd Avenue to the west, 5th Avenue to the east and the River West high-rise complex and Mill Place building to the north. The site is currently occupied by a large surface parking lot. The proposed project is an infill, dense urban development that will include mostly residential units, plus a modest amount of commercial/retail space. This use is consistent with the C3A zoning of the site and with the adjacent residential and retail uses. It will be a transit-oriented mixed-use development that will occur in two phases and will greatly enhance the connectivity from the Mill District neighborhood to the Mississippi River.

Mill Place, Inc. owns the rail spur "swoop" which divides the two city parcels along a SE to NW axis, leading from Second Street to the Riverfront. Mill Place ownership has reached a Memorandum of Understanding with the developers of the MCQ housing projects, allowing for a unique pedestrian/bike/river connection through collaboration and easements. Cross easements between Mill Quarter and Mill Place's land permit creation of a Dutch 'Woonerf' where bikes/cars pedestrians and public spaces all co-exist, and speeds are reduced for cars.

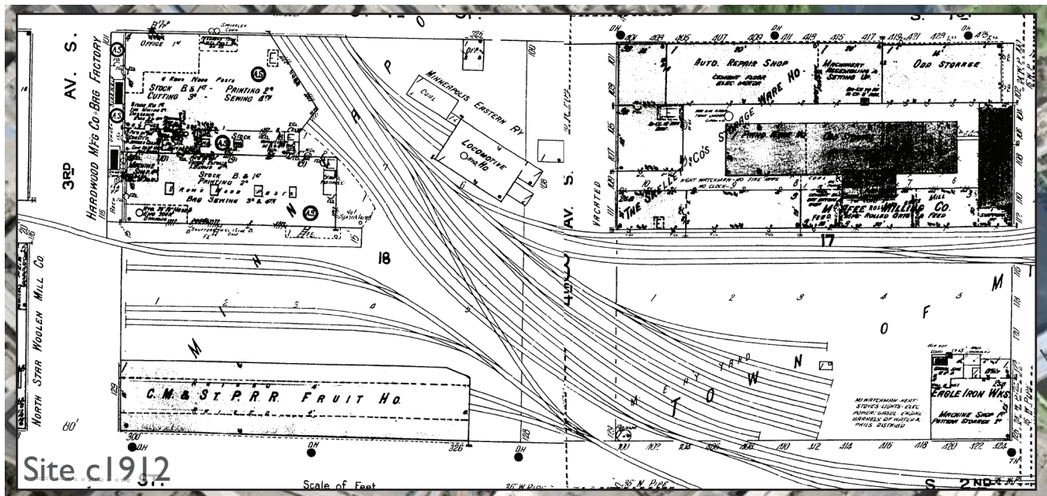
The site design will include approximately 80 parking stalls within the woonerf, with landscaped open spaces to foster gathering of people and to facilitate pedestrian traffic and enhance the pedestrian experience through the site.

Using historical site photos as inspiration, the design concept is based on the railroad corridor that once occupied the site, employing paving materials and potentially railroad artifacts to abstract the pattern of a rail yard. The woonerf concept will be a curbless environment, defining vehicular travel lanes via bollards and changes in paving surface type/color. Designed for very slow speeds, (<10 mph) similar to those typically found in parking lots, it allows the pedestrian to become the focus of the space and the vehicle is seen as the "visitor".

The design is also intended to provide a much-needed and very direct physical connection between the greater downtown area and the Mississippi River. Together with the proposed housing developments, this development will be a strong link between the future Water Works Park on West River Parkway and the Mill District Neighborhood along Second Street. The shared street and open space will enhance recreational and cultural opportunities for residents of the neighborhood and visitors to the park, providing an important link in the City's transportation network, joining the extensive off-street bike trails of the Parkway with multiple bus lines and nearby light rail transit.

A large landscaped plaza east of the "swoop" of the woonerf provides safe and inviting outdoor spaces for relaxing and socializing, for residents and visitors of the project as well as patrons at the small café space for Phase 2. Trees and native perennials and grasses line the woonerf, randomly spaced within a continuous band of pervious pavers. The band of pervious pavers will simultaneously provide natural irrigation for the plants while infiltrating stormwater and will allow for a subtle randomization of plantings that recalls the wild river banks nearby.

This project team is committed to demonstrating a number of best management practices (BMP) for stormwater management and Low-Impact Development (LID). Some of the concepts and techniques being proposed include rainwater harvesting, vegetated walls, pervious paving, pixilated parking, and underground detention.



Site Context

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Woonerf

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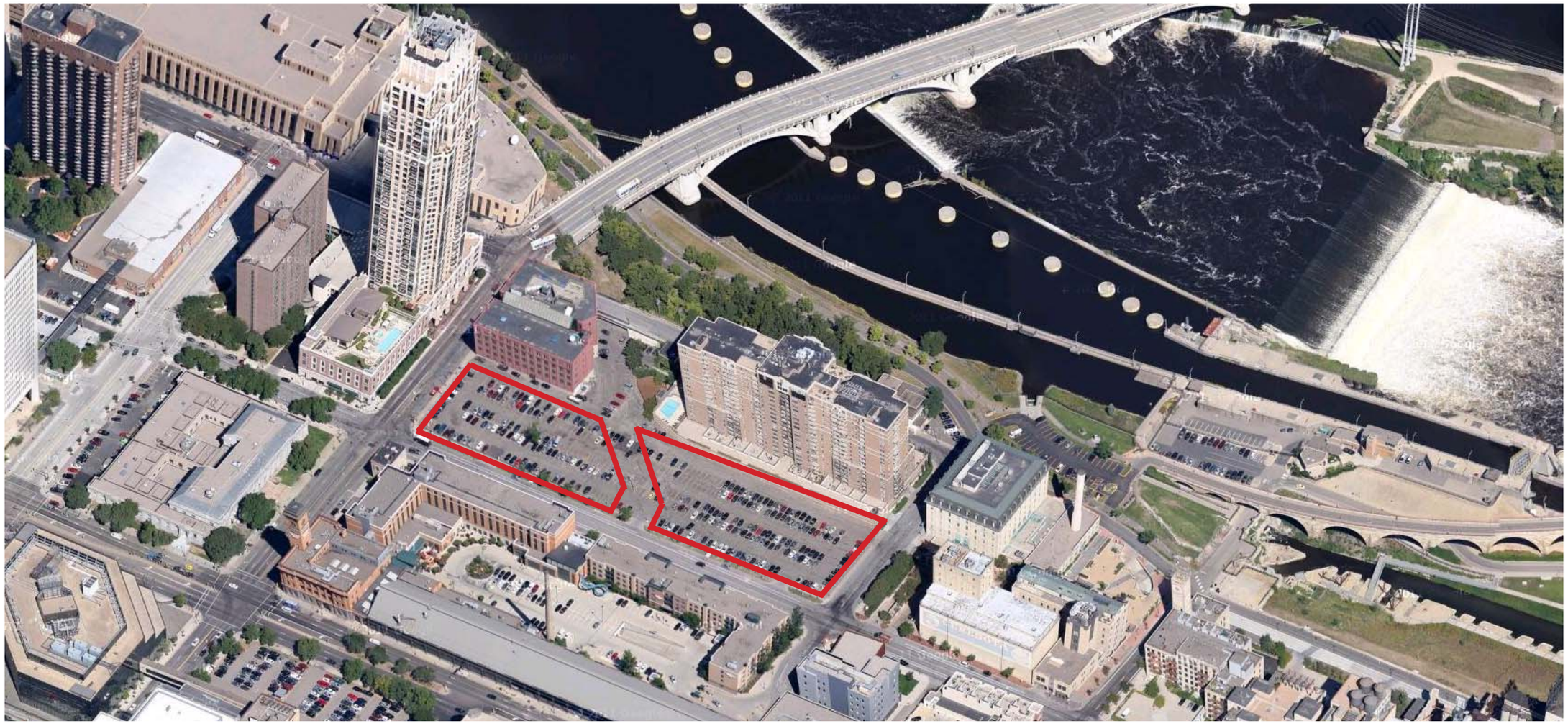
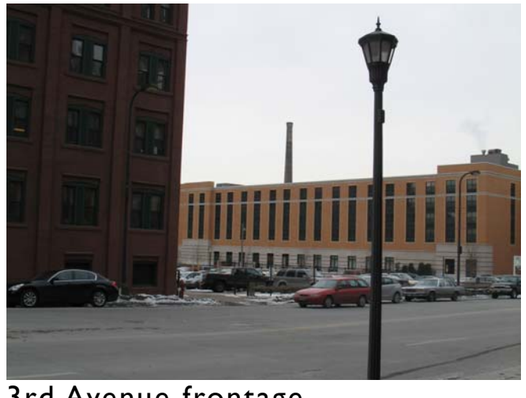


Aerial View - looking north

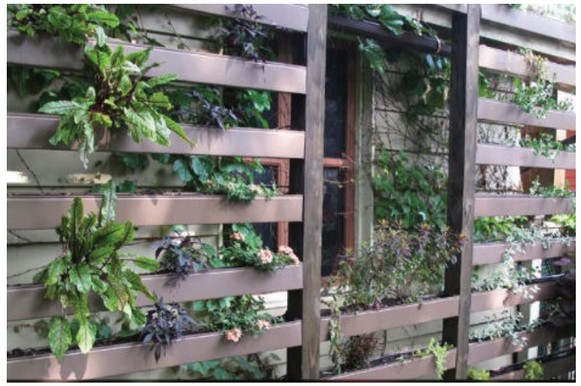
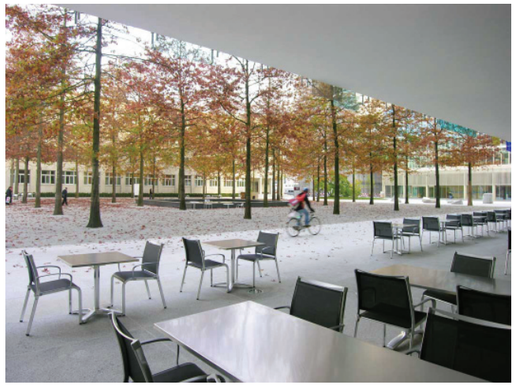


3rd Avenue frontage

2nd Street and 3rd Avenue

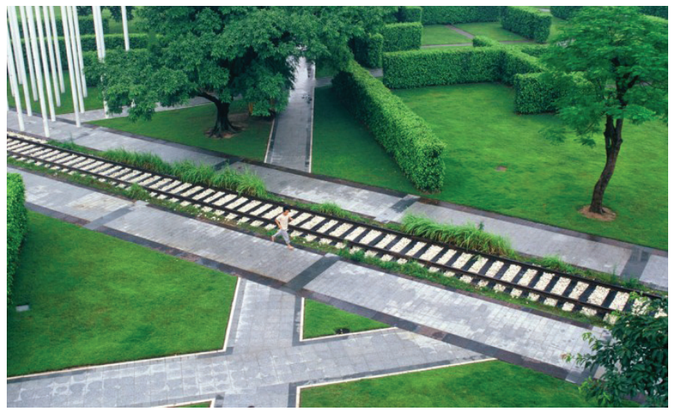
2nd Street and 5th Avenue

5th Avenue frontage








Landscape Visioning

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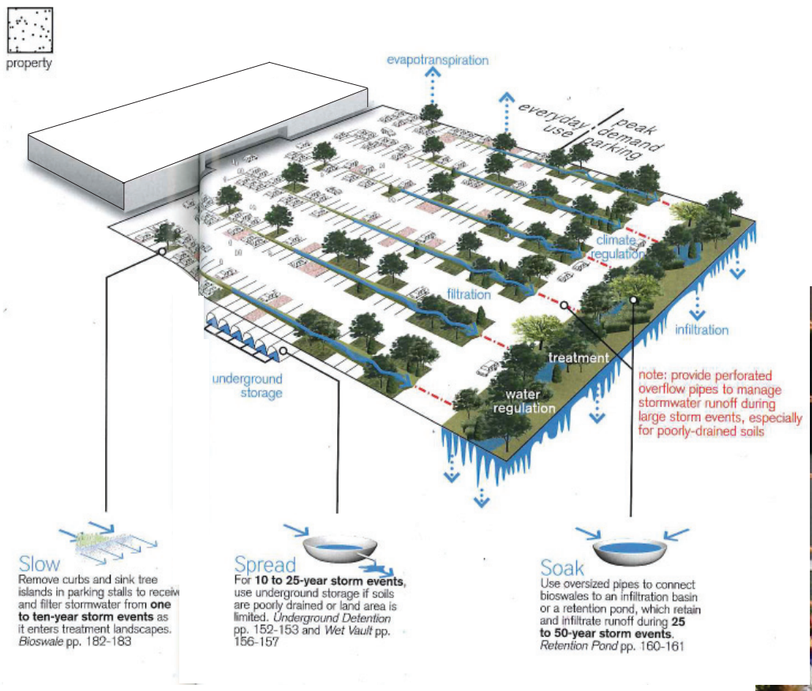
Pixelated Parking

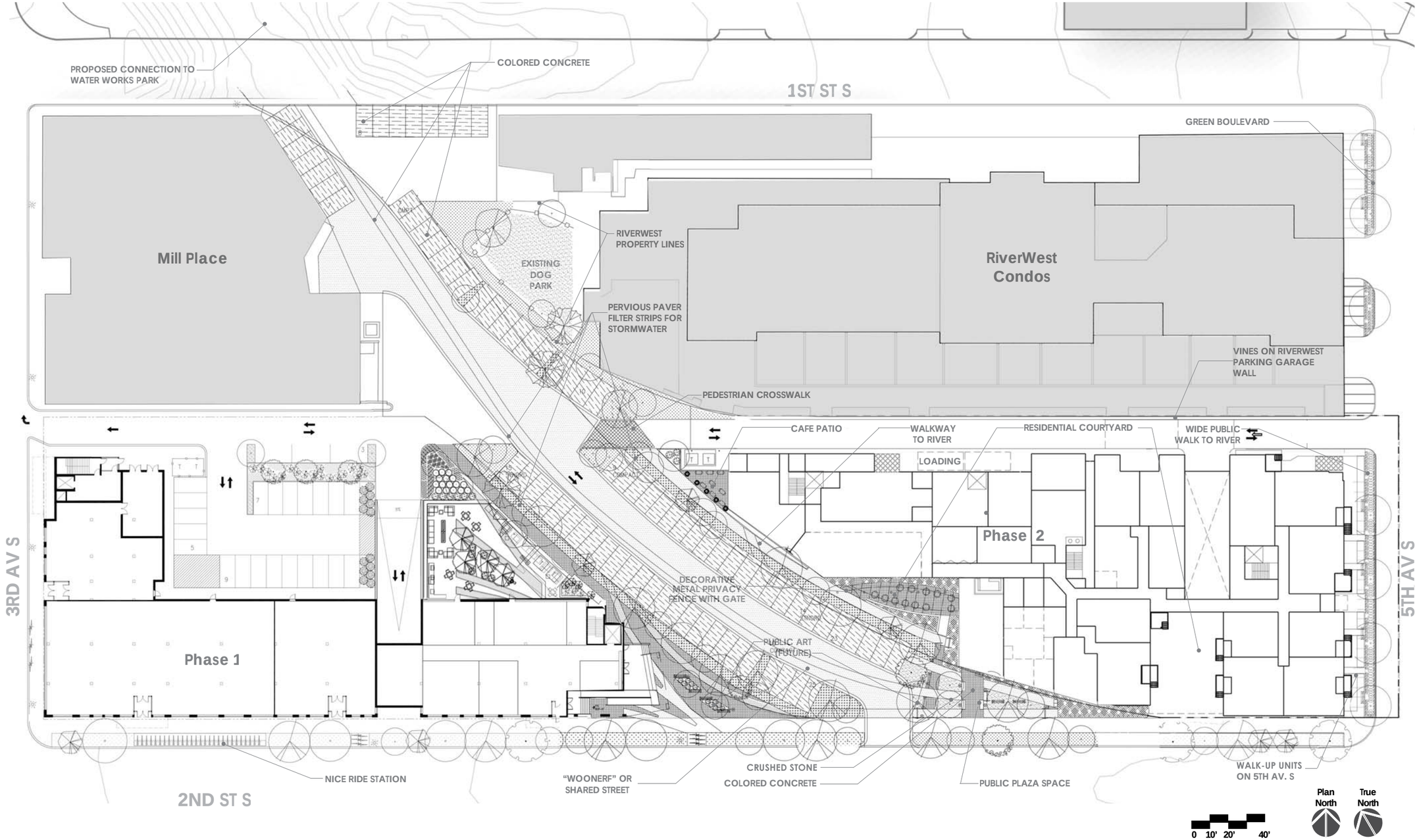
Reduce impervious surfaces by pixelating the parking surface with LID paving and landscapes.

An intrinsically adaptive solution, ideal for retrofits, pixel configurations propose localized replacement of impervious surfaces with absorbent landscape islands and pervious paving. Recognizing that the outer 40 percent of many commercial parking lots are only used during peak demand twice a year, the lot frontage offers an excellent public garden without sacrificing parking capacity. The pixelated parking solution reduces stormwater runoff through the addition of trees and pervious paving, eliminating the need for conventional pipe-and-pond solutions.

Water from impervious drive aisles flows to the pervious parking stalls, slowing and redistributing runoff. Through curb cuts (see "Curb Alternatives" pp. 96-97), or flush curbs, the water is directed to vegetated islands, which are connected by a bioswale or underground oversized pipe. Peak flows eventually end in an overflow infiltration basin for groundwater recharge. If space is unavailable for an infiltration basin or other detention facility, stormwater can be detained in an underground storage facility for slow release into the municipal stormwater system.



Woonerf Design Features



Overall Master Plan

Woonerf Plan

Existing Conditions

View of Proposed Trails Connection From 3rd Av. S Bridge

Phase 1

Phase 2

Stormwater System

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Woonerf Section

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