

PRATT STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES



A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Background

Pratt Street is arguably the preeminent boulevard in Baltimore City: a gateway entrance and centerpiece in the city's identity, as well as a major contributor to its economic engine. Pratt Street serves as the primary destination to the over 20 million people visiting Baltimore each year and includes such attractions as Little Italy, the Power Plant, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Harborplace & The Gallery, the Baltimore Convention Center, and several major hotels. It is also one of the most exclusive business addresses in the region, boasting signature office towers and Fortune 1,000 companies.

Over time, Pratt Street's original design became outdated and the premiere boulevard went decades without significant infrastructure improvements. Designed at a time when street level pedestrian activity was not encouraged, Pratt Street is marred by a network of skywalks which are difficult to maintain and underutilized. Ground-level pedestrians on the north side of the street walk alongside earthen berms. While intended to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic and provide a green amenity, in practice these berms force pedestrians onto narrow strips of sidewalk directly next to traffic. Six foot tall berms created large, empty sidewalks that fostered a sense of desolation and insecurity.

Recognizing these shortcomings, City leaders undertook a redesign effort in spring 2006 with the following goals:

- Provide a comprehensive plan for Pratt Street (between Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard on the west and President Street on the east) that improves its aesthetic and functional design, usage, activities, and attractions;
- Provide additional retail amenities;
- Better activate and create public spaces; and
- Provide an active and engaging pedestrian experience.

The redesign was spearheaded by Baltimore Development Corporation, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, and the Baltimore City Department of Planning, and prepared by a design team comprised of Ayers Saint Gross and Olin Partnership. Detailed input was collected from the City Departments of Transportation and Public Works, as well as from key stakeholders including private property owners, developers, community members, civic associations, and other interested parties. Mayor Sheila Dixon presented the final Pratt Street Concept Plan to the public in October 2008. While the Pratt Street Concept Plan has had strong support from City leaders and informal blessing from public review bodies such as the Planning Commission and the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel, it was never formally adopted.

One of the Plan's fundamental elements is to offer City-owned property on the north side of Pratt Street for additional infill development through additions to existing buildings. This set of design guidelines, based heavily on the original Pratt Street concept plan as well as lessons learned in the implementation of the Pratt Street Plan, is designed to guide infill development and set appropriate parameters to ensure a uniform and vibrant corridor. These guidelines will be enforced through consultation with the Planning Department, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, and the Baltimore Development Corporation and through individual Land Disposition Agreements or other agreements regarding use of city-owned land.

2. Statement of Purpose & Objectives

This document, the *Pratt Street Design Guidelines*, builds off of the Pratt Street Concept Plan to provide guidance in enhancing the quality of Pratt Street and creating a strong sense of place and a cohesive pedestrian-friendly streetscape environment.

The objectives and reasons for the various provisions of the *Design Guidelines* are:

- To facilitate the physical transformation of blocks where berms will be removed and replaced with boulevard streetscaping.
- To create a vibrant pedestrian-oriented environment along Pratt Street with active ground floor and outdoor spaces.
- To establish landscape guidelines that will create consistency and vibrancy between blocks.
- To establish a framework for new infill development that enhances the architectural character of existing buildings.
- To provide adequate controls for the size and massing of additions to buildings on Pratt Street while encouraging high quality design and construction.

3. Applicability

The *Design Guidelines* shall apply to the eleven City-owned parcels specifically listed below and as depicted on the Corridor Map in Appendix I.

1. Block 666, Lot 3 – 490 W. Pratt Street
2. Block 667, Lot 11 – 338 W. Pratt Street
3. Block 668, Lot 8A – no legal address
4. Block 669, Lot 2 – 100 W. Pratt Street
5. Block 670, Lot 2 – 111 S. Hanover Street
6. Block 671, Lot 2 – no legal address
7. Block 672, Lot 2 – no legal address
8. Block 673, Lot 2 – 298 East Pratt Street
9. Block 1381, Lot 1 – no legal address
10. Block 1381, Lot 3 – 150 South Gay Street
11. Block 683, Lot 1¹ – 200 Light Street

¹ Block 683, Lot 1 – 200 Light Street is the only southern block where infill development is possible and encouraged. Massing information contained herein shall apply to this block, but landscape standards will differ. The block's landscape design as approved by UDARP in October of 2009 shall stand as the precedent and standard for any future incarnations. Changes to the building and landscape will be considered on a case by case basis, and landscape should retain similar linear elements as the design approved by UDARP and as outlined in the Pratt Street concept plan.

B. DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Streetscape Guidelines

No right-of-way adjustments are proposed and existing curbs will be maintained. As berms are removed, they are to be replaced with boulevard streetscaping that adheres to the standards listed below. To achieve the desired sidewalk width, new buildings shall set back the necessary distance from the existing curb.

a. Sidewalk Width and Other Dimensions

Curb, sidewalk and landscape area dimensions are to be uniform with some limited variability. Sidewalk widths shall be a minimum of 15' and a maximum of 25'. Please refer to Appendix II for additional specifications.

b. Paving Materials

Refer to Figure 2 of the Appendix II for specifications regarding paver sizes, materials, and locations.

c. Landscape Zone

A landscape zone incorporating stormwater management facilities and street trees is mandated between the curb and sidewalk area, and shall be a minimum of 8' and a maximum of 14'. The landscape zone should be mostly contiguous along a single block, with no more than two cut-throughs to the curb. Zero cut-throughs are most desirable to discourage mid-block crossing. On-site stormwater treatment, using appropriate best management practices (BMPs) in the form of bio-retention cells, rain gardens, bioswales, etc., is required. The Department of Planning may consider a variance or waiver of this requirement in cases of hardship based on prohibitive expense (to be determined by comparing the estimated construction cost for a given block to expenses assumed at other blocks), the presence of utilities that render bio-retention infeasible, or major conflict with flood plain.

Within the landscape zone, street trees shall be planted every 25' to 35' on center within the zone. To the extent possible, consistent spacing should be maintained between trees in a given block. Also as feasible, trees should be planted in a manner that creates a continuous datum line with street trees in adjacent blocks. Where utilities are present, the Department of Planning may consider alternative tree spacing upon examination of the cost/benefit of utility relocation.

For a list of acceptable tree species, see Appendix III. Trees shall be a minimum of 3" caliper when planted. Where feasible, trees should be planted within continuous soil trenches to provide adequate growing room for tree roots. While the species of trees selected may vary from block to block, within any single block face there may only be one type of street tree within the 8' to 14' landscape zone. Large shade trees are highly encouraged. Final selected tree species should be well-adapted for Baltimore's climate and urban conditions, have a tall canopy, and have higher branches or ability for branches to be "limbed up" regularly for retail visibility.

Perennials, shrubs, and ornamental grasses are acceptable plantings in the landscape zone, with species chosen for their tolerance to urban conditions and appropriateness for stormwater treatment. A mixture of grasses and perennials is encouraged, and plant choices should offer year-round interest and color. Plantings should be grouped so that the

collective group makes sense visually and biologically. For a list of acceptable plants, see Appendix III. Landscape within this zone should be no higher than 24" from the level of the curb at full maturity or maintained height.

d. Street Furniture and Amenities

Street furniture, such as trash cans, bike racks, and pedestrian seating shall be provided along the sidewalk. Movable tables and chairs are preferred, however where stationary benches are most feasible, they should be located on the north side of planter boxes facing the sidewalk and directly under street trees (approximately every 28'). Benches shall have armrests and/or seat dividers at least 1' in height. Benches must also have dividers. Any and all exterior furniture shall be constructed to be weather resistant. See Appendix IV for acceptable street furniture models.

e. Lampposts and Lighting

Separate pedestrian-scaled lighting is required along Pratt Street to enhance pedestrian spaces. Existing "shoebox" Inner Harbor style lighting should be removed and replaced with new, decorative poles and fixtures on a per project basis. Lighting should be night sky friendly, minimize light pollution, and be concentrated toward lighting paved surfaces rather than building façades or toward the sky. Additionally, lighting should be shielded to prevent glare on traffic. New pedestrian and street lighting will need to follow the pole and fixture designs selected by the Department of Transportation for Pratt Street.

f. Public art or water features

Any installation of public art, fountains, or other water features must be vetted through the same formal review process as other streetscape items.

2. New Construction Massing & Bulk Controls

a. Height Limit

Building additions abutting into the public right of way shall be a minimum of 20' and a maximum of 50'.

b. Setbacks

Building walls must be set back from curb by a suitable distance to allow for appropriate sidewalk and landscape zone dimensions. See Section 1a above or Appendix II for minimum sidewalk and landscape dimensions.

3. New Construction Building Design Guidelines

a. Street Frontage

Where multiple street frontages are present, Pratt Street shall be considered the primary frontage, on which the public entrance must be located and emphasized. Street-level floors shall be occupied by "active uses", including retail, restaurants, cafes, service-type businesses, and building entries and lobbies.

b. Building Materials

Architectural details and building materials will vary, but should be compatible with the building to which the addition is proposed. Enclosed public spaces must have a glass frontage and visually connect to the outside area with easily accessible entrances. The ground floor of buildings fronting on Pratt Street must maintain a minimum transparency of 80%, and the upper stories of such buildings must maintain a transparency of no less than 60%. Glazing shall not cause undue glare for pedestrians and vehicles.

- c. Mechanical Equipment
Mechanical ventilation equipment, ducts, or grilles must be located and screened such that they are not visible from Pratt Street. Building utility and mechanical equipment may not be placed on roofline unless adequately and attractively screened.
- d. Curb Cuts and Servicing
Vehicular access points to loading, service areas, and parking structures are prohibited on Pratt Street. Valet service, taxi service, and passenger load/unload areas are also prohibited on Pratt Street. All loading, service and back-of-house areas must be fully enclosed within the building and screened by an architecturally compatible door.
- e. Accessibility Standards
All sidewalks and crossings shall be designed to accommodate pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles and shall meet applicable ADA requirements. ADA pathways to and from the building(s) shall be identified as well as the ADA ingress/egress of the building(s). Objects/installation shall not obstruct pathways and impair proper ADA movement. All new ramps within the immediate vicinity of the development shall meet City standards for ADA accessibility. Crossings and building access points shall be included in the site plan and reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC).
- f. Sign Guidelines
All signs must comply with the Zoning Code of Baltimore City. Those properties located within the Inner Harbor Project I Urban Renewal Area, the Market Center Urban Renewal Area, or the Central Business District Urban Renewal Area must also comply with additional requirements stipulated in the respective Urban Renewal Plans.
- g. Bicycle Guidelines
All new development shall comply with the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. Bike rack locations and detail shall be shown on the site plan and reviewed by SPRC.
- h. Floodplain Compliance
Certain blocks sit within the 100 or 500 year floodplain and will be impacted by floodplain regulations. These regulations may require alteration to the physical design of the block by requiring flood panels, physical elevation of the building base, or other floodproofing methods. These requirements may impact the ability to comply with all aspects of the *Design Guidelines*. In such a case, the Department of Planning will work with the site developer to consider alternatives and determine which aspects of the *Guidelines* can and should be altered.

C. TECHNIQUES USED TO ACHIEVE STATED OBJECTIVES

1. Review of Development

a. Department of Planning

All plans for permanent improvements are subject to design approval by the Department of Planning, and all new construction and streetscaping on the subject parcels shall be carried out in accordance with Section B of the *Design Guidelines*. The developer or property owner or his representative shall submit plans for proposed work to the Department of Planning prior to the issuance of building permits. It is anticipated that in some cases (such as landscape or lighting improvements), the Department of Transportation may be the public agency performing work on public property and shall be considered a developer. Plans shall be in sufficient detail to show site planning, architectural design and layout, materials, colors, building construction, landscape design, access, signs, lighting, servicing, streets, and sidewalks.

The Department will coordinate necessary agency review, including design compliance review in conjunction with the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore and the Baltimore Development Corporation. At the discretion of the Director of Planning, the Department may utilize its Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel (UDARP), or its successor, to work with developers in the achievement of high quality site, building, landscape, and urban design. Upon completion of project review by UDARP, the project will be referred to the Department of Planning for final design approval.

b. Department of Transportation

Any and all development proposal shall be reviewed by the Department of Transportation (DOT) for vehicular and non-vehicular circulation patterns and safety and in keeping with the objectives of the *Design Guidelines*. DOT is responsible for all work on Pratt Street between curb lines.

c. Baltimore Development Corporation

Land Disposition Agreements for any subdivision of, sale of, and construction on City owned parcels will be handled and executed by Baltimore Development Corporation, as laid out below. The Baltimore Development Corporation's review of and approval of site design may be required, and will be coordinated through the Planning Department process.

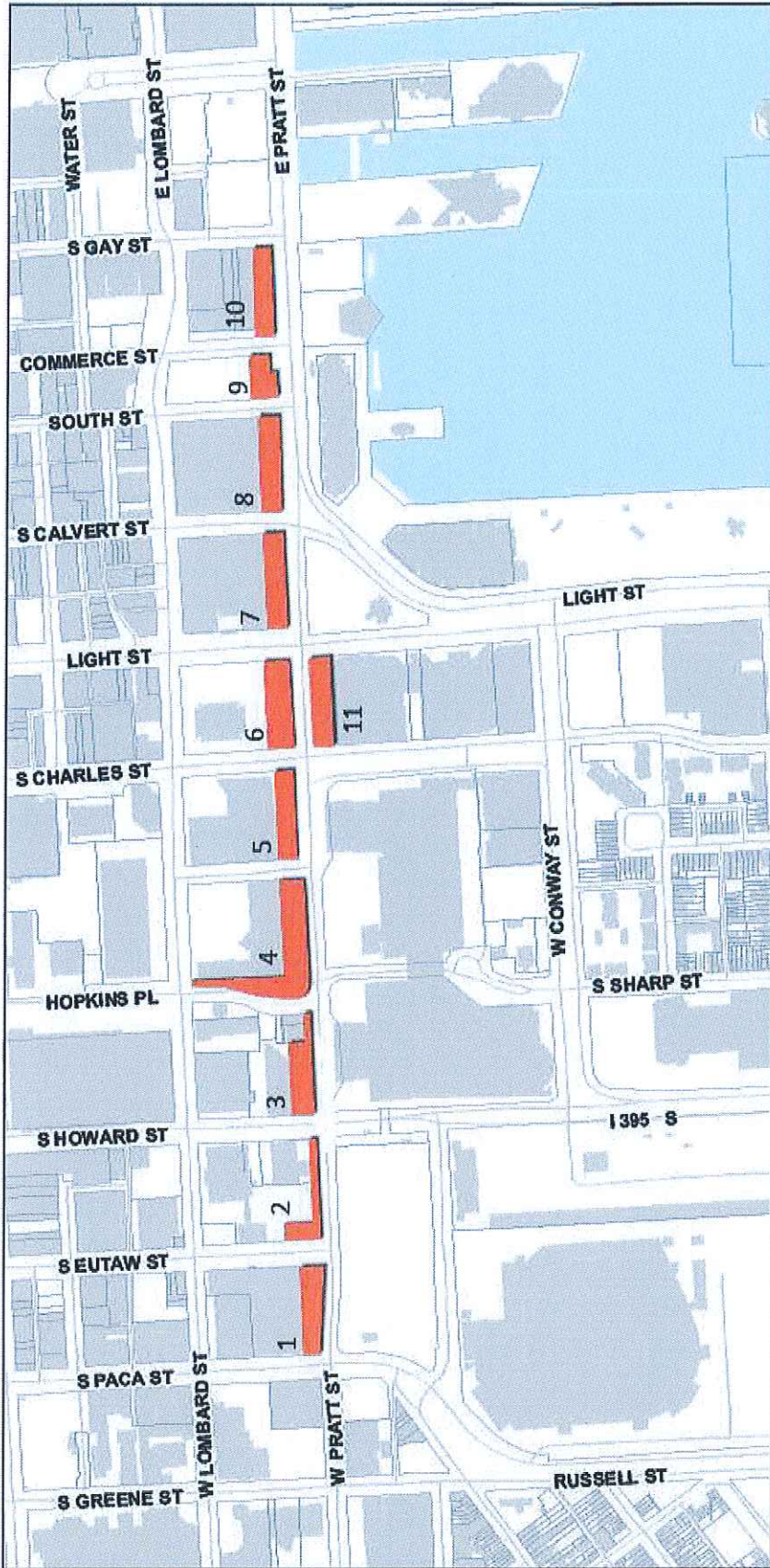
d. Critical Area Commission

Those properties within the Critical Area of the Chesapeake Bay will also be subject to review by the State's Critical Area Commission. The Department of Planning will coordinate submission of required materials for that purpose.

2. Land Disposition

Land and property interests now owned by the City may be disposed of by sale, lease, conveyance, transfer, or other means available to the City. The subject parcels depicted on the Corridor Map (Appendix I) are schematic and approximate, and the City (acting through the Baltimore Development Corporation) shall have the right, in its discretion, to fix their precise boundaries and size via subdivision and/or consolidation. Land disposition shall require separate Land Disposition Agreements (LDAs), which must be approved by the City's Board of Estimates.

APPENDIX I – CORRIDOR MAP



Parcels

1. Block 666, Lot 3 – 490 W. Pratt Street
2. Block 667, Lot 11 – 338 W. Pratt Street
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APPENDIX II – BLOCK PROTOTYPE

Note: Figures 1-3 show a prototype, which is intended to illustrate some of the key design elements of the Design Guidelines. All final designs are subject to agency review and approval as specified in Section C of this document.

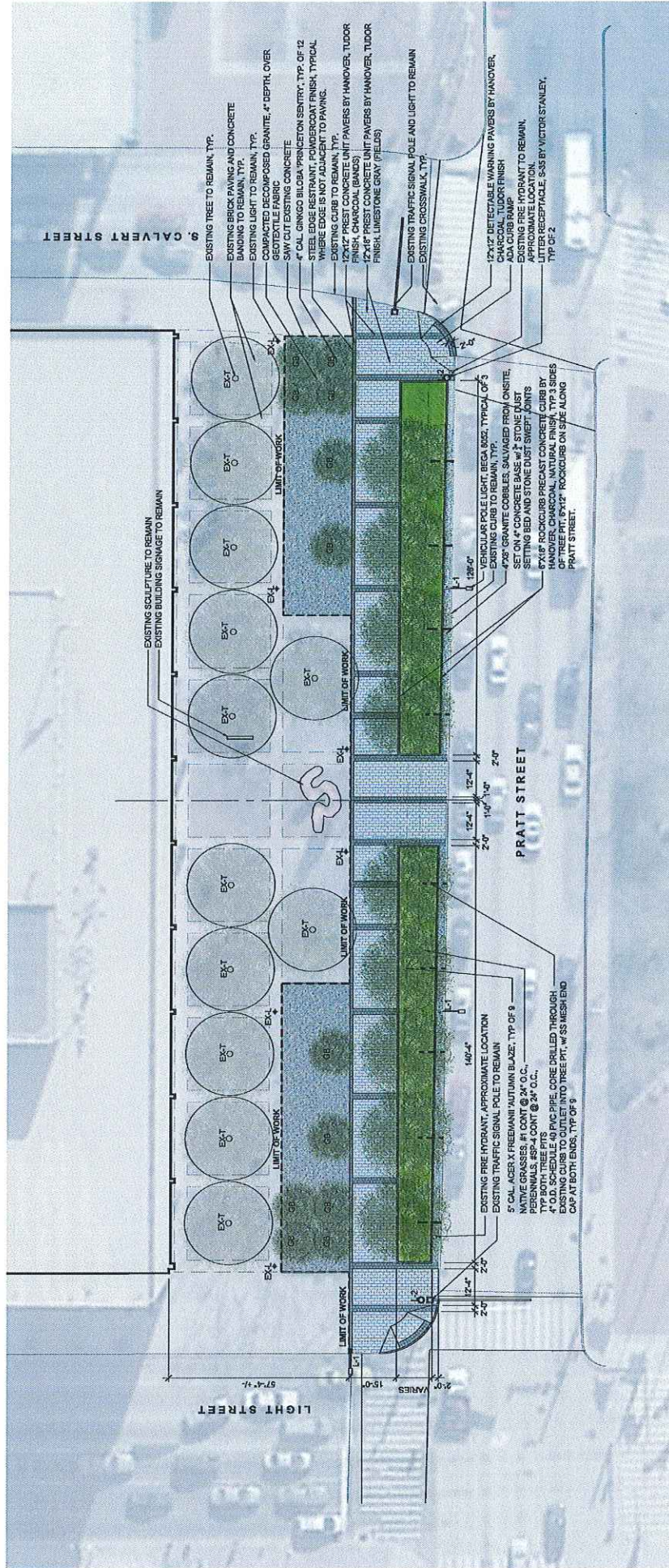


Figure 1 - Schematic Rendering of Prototype Block

APPENDIX II – BLOCK PROTOTYPE (Cont'd)

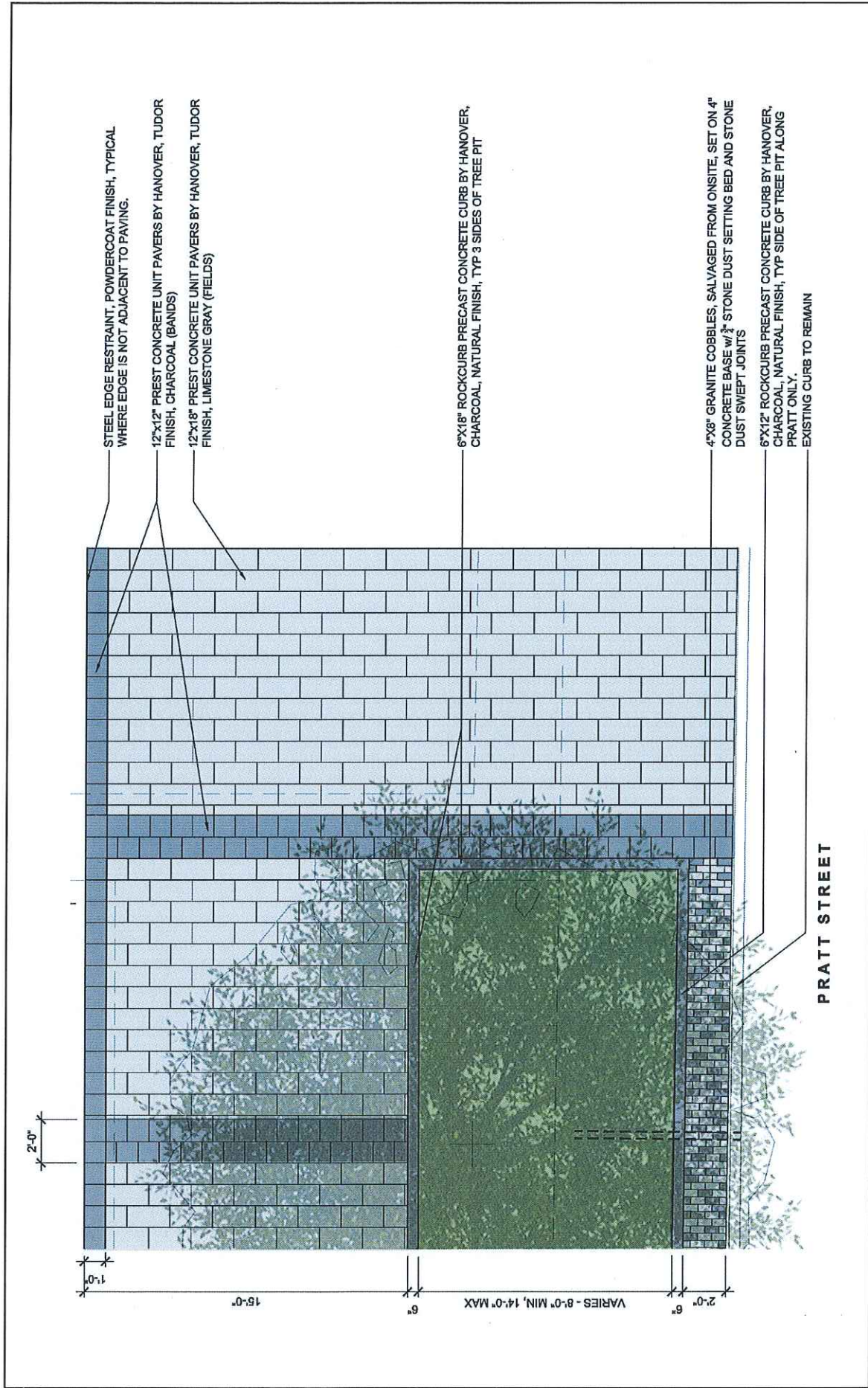


Figure 2 - Schematic Enlargement of Prototype Block

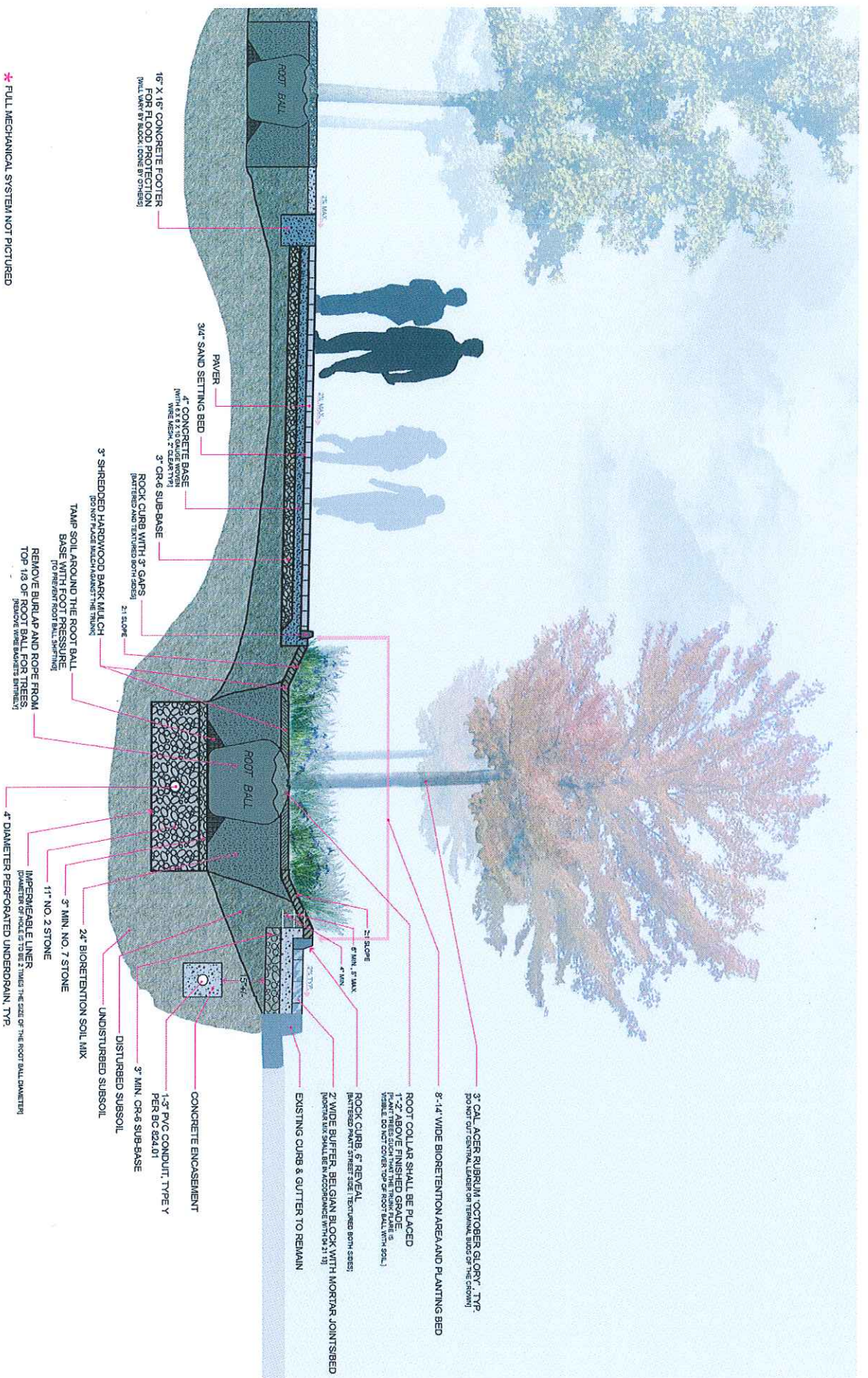


Figure 3 - Schematic Section of Prototype Block

APPENDIX III – PLANT SPECIES

The following plants are acceptable plant species for use within the landscape zone. Other plantings will be considered at the discretion of the Department of Planning. It is highly encouraged that any proposed alternative species be native, hardy, and compatible with onsite stormwater/bio-retention.

Tree species:

- Jefferson elm
- Liberty elm
- Bloodgood Planetree
- Willow Oak
- Red Maple “October Glory”
- Red Maple “Autumn Blaze”
- Honey Locust

Shrubs:

- “Stokes Dwarf” Yaupon Holly
- Viburnum shrubs
- Summersweet
- Virginia Sweetspire

Perennials and Grasses:

- Hameln Dwarf Fountain Grass
- Arkansas Blue Star
- “Carolina Moonlight” False Indigo
- Switch grass
- Becky Daisy
- Catmint
- Coneflower
- Stonecrops
- Russian sage
- Black-eyed Susans
- Common rush
- Prairie dropseed

Groundcovers:

- “Regular” liriopse
- Purple winter creeper
- Periwinkle
- Asiatic jasmine
- Creeping phlox
- Creeping lilly-turf (spicata)
- Thyme, red or red-flowering mother of thyme
- Fire Spinner Ice Plant
- Purple Robe

APPENDIX IV – FURNITURE

Tables & Chairs

Company: Landscapeforms

Series: Parc Centre



Company: Fermob

Series: Bistro Collection

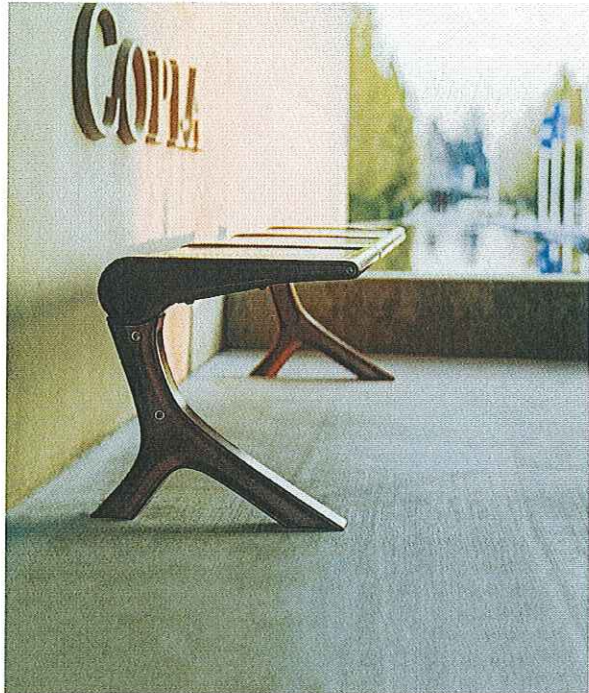


APPENDIX IV – FURNITURE (Cont'd)

Benches

Company: Landscapeforms

Series: 35: Mix



Company: Landscapeforms

Series: 35: Stay



APPENDIX IV – FURNITURE (Cont'd)

Trash Cans

Company: Victor Stanley

Series: Ironsites

