

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole

FROM: [Hilary Dvorak](#), Principal Planner, (612) 673-2639

DATE: August 20, 2015

SUBJECT: Downtown East Phase III – Downtown East Commons

Ryan Companies is redeveloping five blocks on the east side of Downtown. Three of the blocks are bounded by South 3rd Street, 5th Avenue South, South 4th Street, and Chicago Avenue South and the two additional blocks are bounded by South 4th Street, 5th Avenue South, South 5th Street, and Park Avenue.

The development is being reviewed as a multi-phased Planned Unit Development. The first phase of the development is currently under construction. The first phase includes two mixed-use buildings including ground level and skyway level commercial space, residential units, enclosed loading and parking areas and office space. The two buildings will be mirror images of one another and will be built between South 3rd Street, 5th Avenue South, South 4th Street and Park Avenue. This phase also includes an above ground parking garage located on the block between South 3rd Street, Park Avenue, South 4th Street and Chicago Avenue. There will be over 1,500 parking spaces in this garage. Skyways will connect the three new buildings to the existing Jerry Haaf parking garage, which connects to the extensive downtown skyway network, and the new Minnesota Multi-Purpose Stadium. The first phase also includes a residential development on the western one-third of the block bounded by South 4th Street, 5th Avenue South, South 5th Street and Portland Avenue South. This phase of the development was approved in 2013.

The second phase of the development includes the construction of a Radisson Red Hotel on the northern portion of the block bounded by 3rd Street South, Portland Avenue South, 4th Street South and Park Avenue. The hotel will be five-stories tall and will have 164 rooms. There will be a bar/restaurant and fitness space on the ground floor of the building that is affiliated with the hotel. There will be additional commercial space not associated with the hotel on the ground-floor. The applicant is proposing to have 13 parking spaces provided towards the south side of the building and would connect to the adjacent underground parking garage via a tunnel for access to an additional 19 parking spaces. This phase of the development was approved in 2015.

PROPOSAL

The third phase of the PUD involves the construction of a park on the eastern two-thirds of the block bounded by 3rd Street South, Portland Avenue South, 4th Street South and Park Avenue and the block bounded by South 4th Street, Portland Avenue South, 5th Avenue South, and Park Avenue. This is the park commonly referred to as The Downtown East Commons.

The western block of the park would contain a pavilion that would include a café with indoor and outdoor seating, restrooms and storage/mechanical space. The pavilion would have a large shade structure that projects out from all sides of the building. The pavilion would sit on the edge of an approximately 10,000 square foot water plaza. The plaza would have a thin layer of water on it and in

certain areas there would be interactive jets and bubblers. The water feature of the plaza can be turned off and the plaza can then be used as a multi-functional space during all seasons of the year. It is anticipated that in the winter the plaza could be converted into an ice skating rink. Also on this block of the park is natural play area for children and the good lawn; an approximately 6,500 square foot open space for events.

The eastern block of the park would contain the great lawn; an approximately 50,000 square foot open space for events. Along the eastern edge of the great lawn there would be a park support building that would include office space for staff, storage for park equipment and rentals and restrooms. The park support building would have a large shade structure that projects out from the building covering areas that could accommodate a temporary stage.

Along the north end of both blocks there would be flexible program zones. There would be eight different zones edged by landscaping. Pathways would connect each zone to one another. Throughout the park there would be a variety of seating options, bicycle racks, trash and recycling receptacles and dog waste stations. There would also be a variety of light fixtures throughout the park of different heights and styles.

ZONING and LAND USE

The western block is zoned B4S-2 Downtown Service District and the eastern block is zoned B4N Downtown Neighborhood District. Both blocks are located in the DP Downtown Parking Overlay District. In the B4S-2 and B4N zoning districts the minimum floor area ratio (FAR) is 2. In the B4S-2 zoning district the maximum FAR is 8 and there is no maximum FAR in the B4N zoning district. It has been determined by the Zoning Administrator that the principal use of the property is the park and that it would not be practical to subject this use to a minimum FAR. Given this, the minimum FAR does not apply. There is a 10-story height limitation in this zoning district. In addition, there is no minimum parking requirement for any use in the downtown zoning districts. There will be no parking provided on the site.

CPC APPLICATIONS

- Conditional use permit for Phase III of a Planned Unit Development.
- Site plan review.
- Plaza review.

August 10, 2015

Downtown East Commons- CPC CoW Submittal

Project Description

The Commons will be compelling, memorable, a destination for all, and an open space amenity for generations to come. It is a welcoming and inclusive civic landscape, balancing active programming and events with opportunities for respite. Key design features include a great lawn and good lawn; program and garden zones; native Minnesota prairie/woodlands; a natural landscape that encourages children to explore and play; an iconic water plaza and pavilion; a park support building; and vibrant, treed promenades. Together, these features provide a flexible framework, within which diverse program and uses can evolve.

A sweeping oval lawn is the central feature of the eastern block, accommodating both large events as well as everyday pick-up games and activities. Low berms with sculptural terraced seating wrap along the lawn edges, oriented with views towards a temporary stage plaza. Framing the edge of the plaza, the park support building and graceful canopy will be a key node for the robust programming that will activate the Commons through all seasons. Flexible program zones extend along the entire northern edge of the Commons, hosting a diversity of uses, and framed by vibrant urban gardens. During the summer, these spaces are activated by moveable tables and chairs; exercise classes; temporary play; bocce and ping pong. During the winter, these same spaces transform with winter markets; curling; winter playgrounds; food vendors and fire pits; and temporary art installations.

On the western block, the evocative water plaza and pavilion form the iconic heart of the Commons. The elliptical pavilion perches on the edge of the curvilinear stone plaza, appearing to levitate on a scrim of water that slides under the pavilion's broad canopy, uniquely integrating water, light, and people. This smooth sheet of water is enlivened with areas of interactive jets and bubblers, a cooling summer experience for users of all ages. When the water fountain is turned off, the plaza transforms into a multi-use space for seasonal events and activities, including a temporary ice rink in the winter. Benches and hedges run along the sinuous southern edge of the plaza, woven between rolling hills, encouraging active and creative children's play. The southwestern corner of the Commons is an oasis within the city, planted with diverse native Minnesota prairie and woodland species and offering opportunity for respite along winding pathways. The smaller good lawn is tucked within this rich vegetation, a more intimate open space for gatherings and events.

Strong urban connections are emphasized in all directions, reaching out to the city and to the river. Promenades with robust streetscape canopies extend along both 4th Street and 5th Street, and pedestrian flow along and across Portland Avenue and Park Avenue is enhanced. Interactive public art and lighting further animate the Commons, through both fixed features and temporary installations. Sustainable strategies, such as on-site stormwater management and innovative programming, are incorporated throughout the design, offering a vision for an enduring open space that provides the city with a dynamic, all-season destination.

The project will require the following land use applications:

- Site Plan Review for the proposed buildings within the Commons
- Amendment of the previously approved Downtown East Planned Unit Development (PUD)

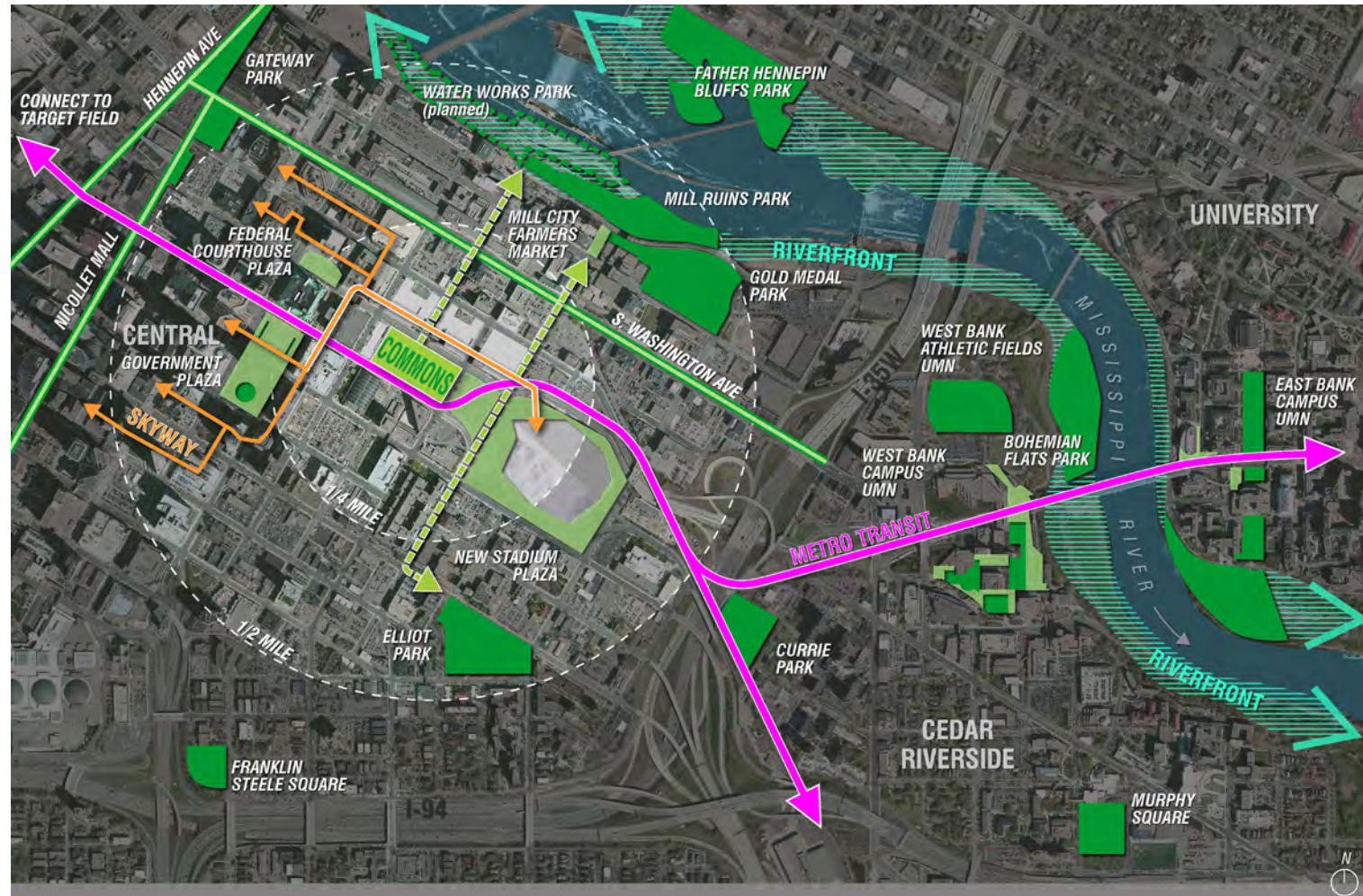
DOWNTOWN EAST COMMONS



1.1

MISSION + GOALS

INTRODUCTION



The Downtown East Commons is an enormous opportunity for the City of Minneapolis to create a place that will be both destination and retreat - a stage for the life of Minneapolitans and a beacon for visitors. In the midst of a rapidly changing part of the city, the Commons can help catalyze 24-hour urban life and vitality, hosting both daily life and special events.

The design vision for the Commons envisions a transformative downtown public open space, incorporating a broad range of stakeholder and public feedback. Hundreds of citizens attended 3 public meetings in the spring of 2015 to contribute valuable comments and ideas; and a concurrent series of related on-line surveys received over 3,000 responses. This process focused and refined the following essential goals for the design of the Commons:

INCLUSIVE

design process & built public open space

ACTIVE & RESPITE

finding synergies among needs of multiple users

HIGH PERFORMANCE

connected, diverse program, well-used 24-hour / 4-season landscape

SUSTAINABLE

enduring design, funding, and operations/maintenance

CATALYTIC & ADAPTABLE

spur change and evolve w/ the City

Iconic Destination

distinctly Minneapolis, compelling and beautiful, attracting both residents and visitors

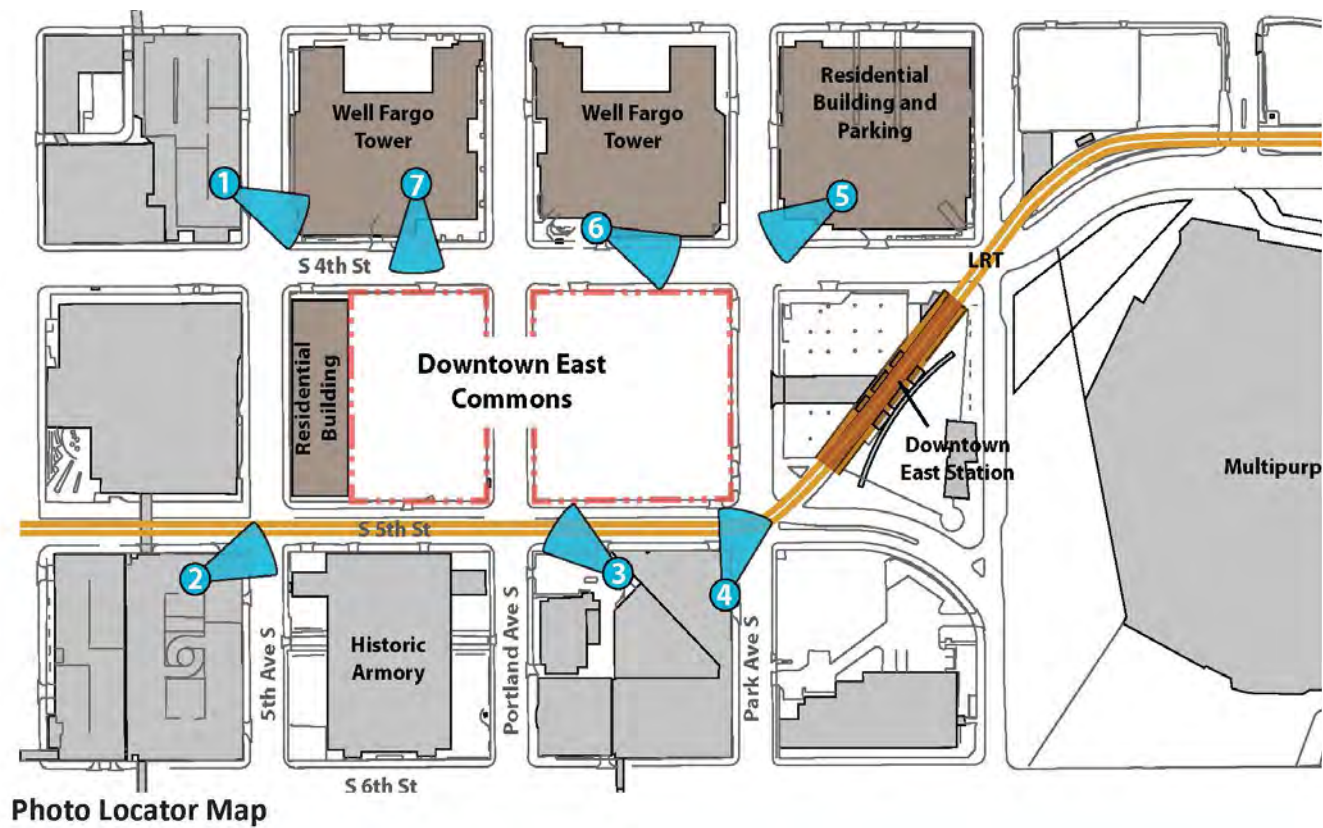


Photo taken from 5th Street South and 5th Avenue South, looking east down 5th Avenue South. Future Downtown East Commons in left of photo. Armory in right of photo.



Photo taken from 4th Street South and 5th Avenue South, looking east at future Downtown East Commons site. The Multi-Purpose Stadium under construction in background. Ryan/Wells Fargo development under construction in left of picture.



Photo taken from 5th Street South and Portland Avenue looking west down 5th Street South. Minneapolis City Hall clock tower in background. Future Downtown East Commons in center and right.

EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT PHOTOS



4 Photo taken from 5th Street South and Park Avenue, looking north along Park Avenue. Future Downtown East Commons site on left. Downtown East Station on far right. Center right, underground parking ramp and future plaza to be constructed by the MSFA.



6 Photo taken from 4th Street South and Park Avenue looking southeast toward Downtown East Station, with the Multi-Purpose Stadium being constructed in background. Future Downtown East Commons is on the right of the image.



5 Photo taken from 4th Street South and Park Avenue looking west down 4th Street South. Future Downtown East Commons in foreground.



7 Photo taken from 4th Street South, between Potland and 5th Avenues, looking south at the western 2/3 block of the Future Downtown East Commons. Minneapolis Armory is in the background.

EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT PHOTOS

1.2

DESIGN VISION

INTRODUCTION



The Commons will be compelling, memorable, a destination for all, and an open space amenity for generations to come. It is a welcoming and inclusive civic landscape, balancing active programming and events with opportunities for respite. Key design features include a great lawn and good lawn; program and garden zones; native Minnesota prairie/woodlands; a natural landscape that encourages children to explore and play; an iconic water plaza and pavilion; a park support building; and vibrant, treed promenades. Together, these features provide a flexible framework, within which diverse program and uses can evolve.

A sweeping oval lawn is the central feature of the eastern block, accommodating both large events as well as everyday pick-up games and activities. Low berms with sculptural terraced seating wrap along the lawn edges, oriented with views towards a temporary stage plaza. Framing the edge of the plaza, the park support building and graceful canopy will be a key node for the robust programming that will activate the Commons through all seasons. Flexible program zones extend along the entire northern edge of the Commons, hosting a diversity of uses, and framed by vibrant urban gardens. During the summer, these spaces are activated by moveable tables and chairs; exercise classes; temporary play; bocce and ping pong. During the winter, these same spaces transform with winter markets; curling; winter playgrounds; food vendors and fire pits; and temporary art installations.

On the western block, the evocative water plaza and pavilion form the iconic heart of the Commons. The elliptical pavilion perches on the edge of the curvilinear stone plaza, appearing to levitate on a scrim of water that slides under the pavilion's broad canopy, uniquely integrating water, light, and people. This smooth sheet of water is enlivened with a cloud-like fog effect, a cooling summer experience for users of all ages. When the water fountain is turned off, the plaza transforms into a multi-use space for seasonal events and activities, including a temporary ice rink in the winter. Benches and hedges run along the sinuous southern edge of the plaza, woven between rolling hills, encouraging active and creative children's play. The southwestern corner of the Commons is an oasis within the city, planted with diverse native Minnesota prairie and woodland species and offering opportunity for respite along winding pathways. The smaller good lawn is tucked within this rich vegetation, a more intimate open space for gatherings and events.

Strong urban connections are emphasized in all directions, reaching out to the city and to the river. Promenades with robust streetscape canopies extend along both 4th Street and 5th Street, and pedestrian flow along and across Portland Avenue and Park Avenue is enhanced. Interactive public art and lighting further animate the Commons, through both fixed features and temporary installations. Sustainable strategies, such as on-site stormwater management and innovative programming, are incorporated throughout the design, offering a vision for an enduring open space that provides the city with a dynamic, all-season destination.



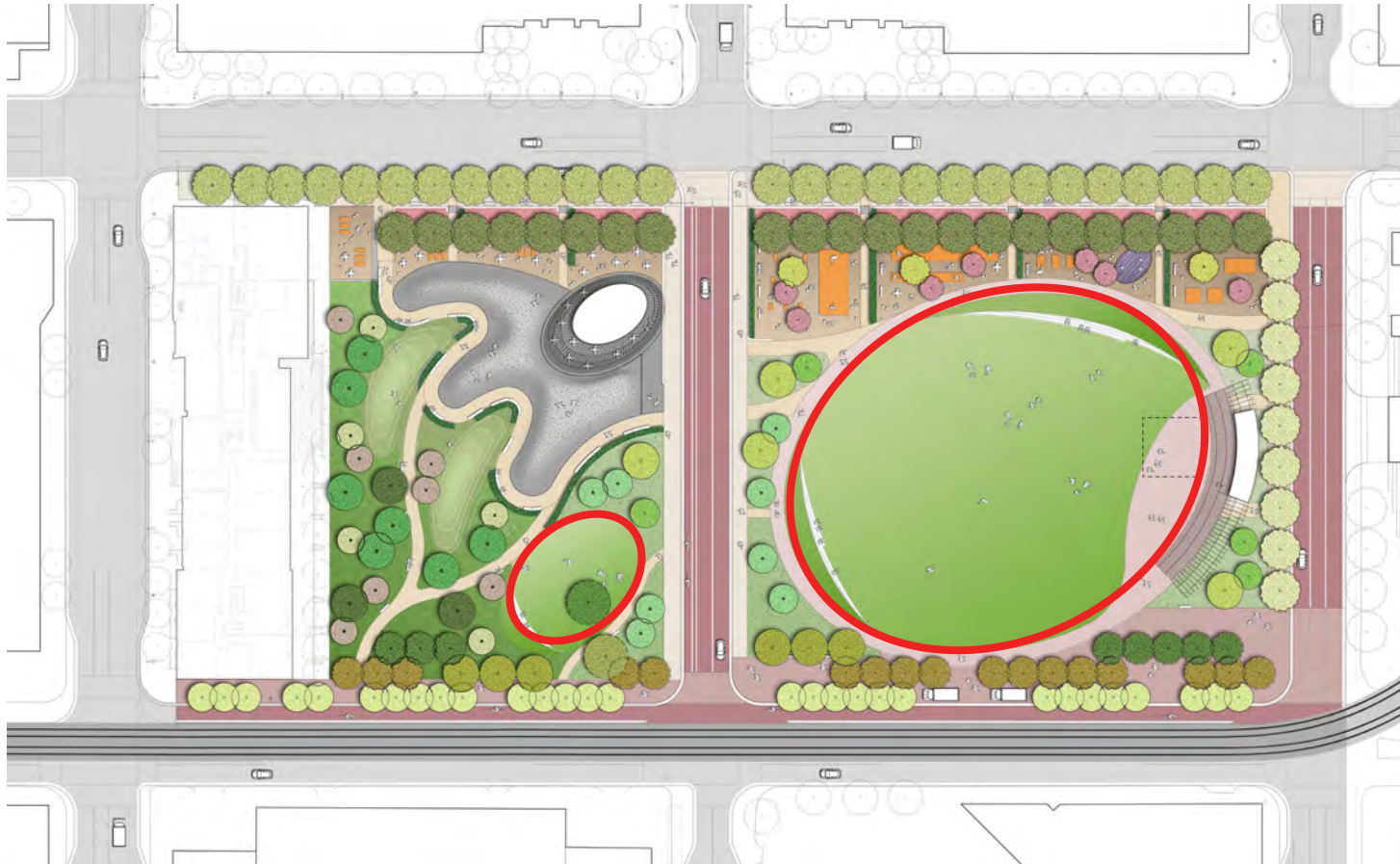
SITE PLAN



2.1

Great Lawn & Good Lawn





great lawn & good lawn

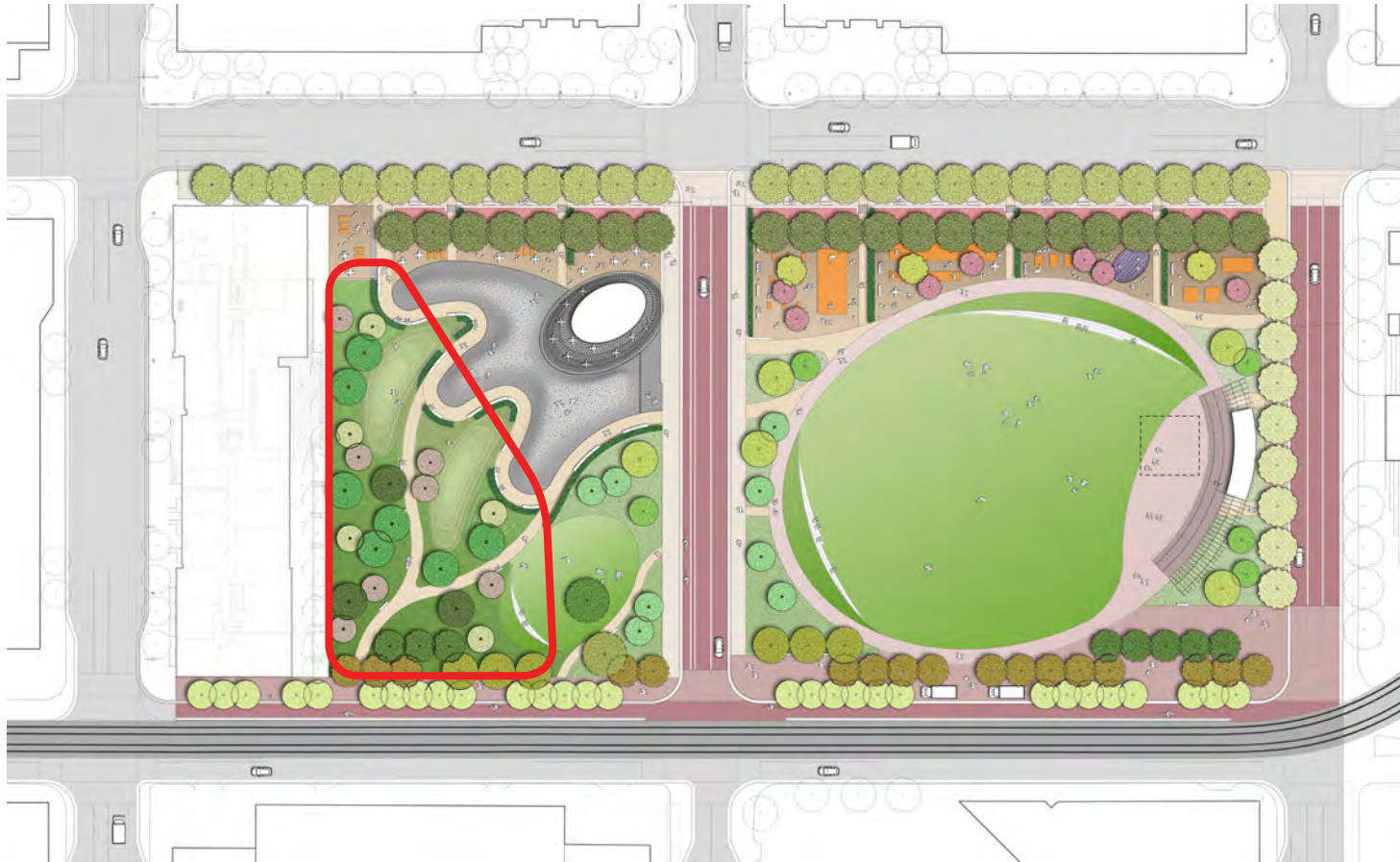
The great lawn is the central feature of the eastern block. Approximately 50,000 sf (1.15 acres), the great lawn is a core open space for the Commons that accommodates large events and tents; a temporary stage and audience; as well as everyday activities such as pick-up games and picnics. The reinforced-turf surface of the lawn allows for vehicles to access and traverse the lawn for events. Low berms wrap the great lawn on the southwest and the northeast edges, allowing views towards the temporary stage plaza and exposure to the sun in winter. The temporary stage plaza on the eastern edge of the lawn provides a preferred orientation for performance/audience, and engages with the park support building and canopy.

The good lawn is located across Portland Avenue from the great lawn, and offers a smaller open space for gathering and events. Approximately 6,500 sf (0.15 acres), the good lawn is framed on its western edge by a berm and seatwall. This space accommodates tents during events, smaller performances, and allows for a temporary ice rink (40'x85') during the winter. An existing mature red maple is preserved on the good lawn, and an existing mature ginkgo tree is preserved to the south.



2.2 Minnesota Prairie/Woodlands





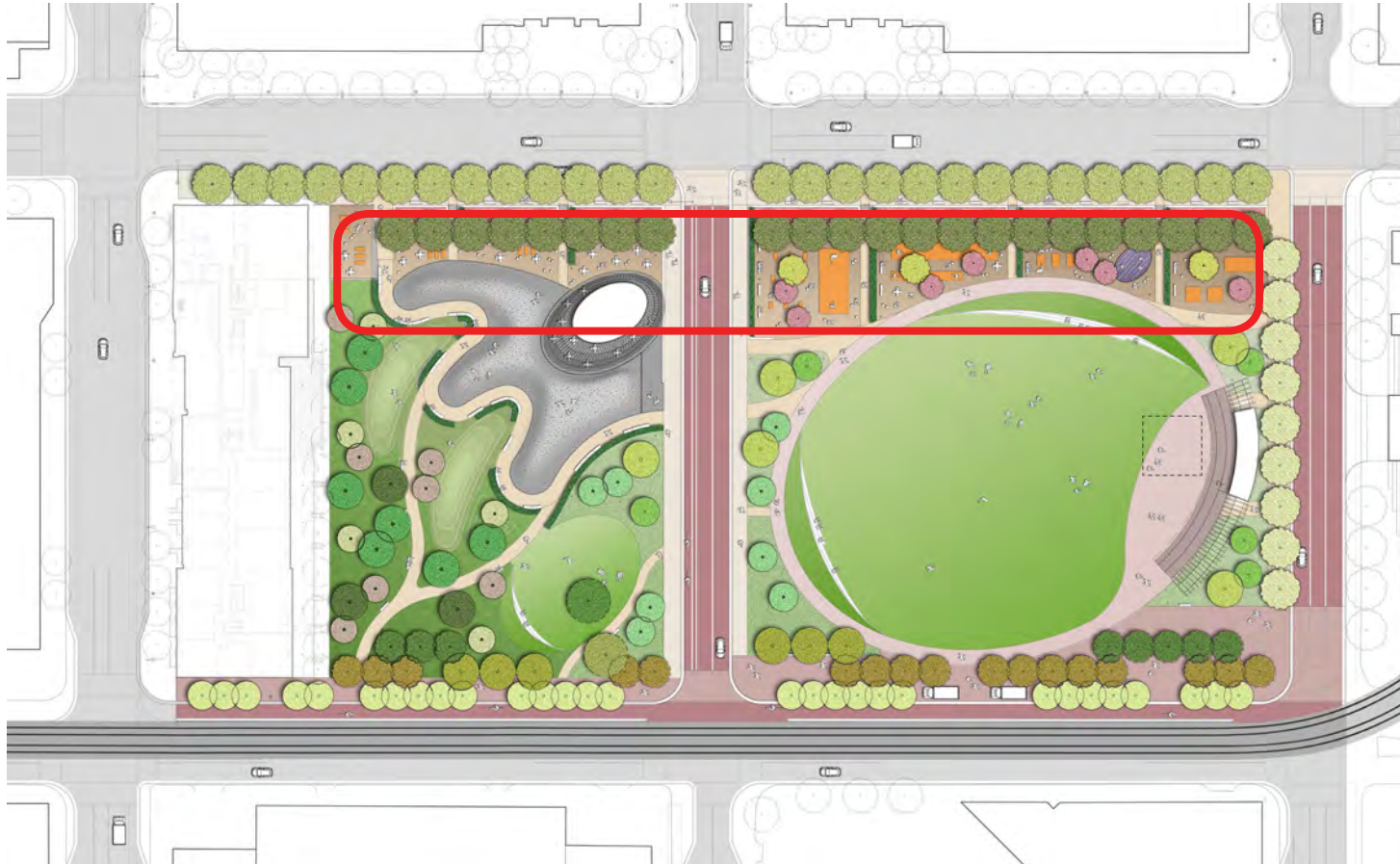
minnesota prairie / woodlands

While the eastern block is dominated by an open landscape, the western block includes a more diversely vegetated landscape, offering opportunities for respite. Winding paths with benches link visitors through this area, connecting from 5th Street to the good lawn, Portland Avenue, and the water plaza. Initially, sun-loving prairie species will dominate; as the canopy develops, these areas will transition to more shade-tolerate woodland species. Between this native landscape and the water plaza, rolling hills offer a landscape for active and creative children’s play.





2.3 Program + Garden Zones



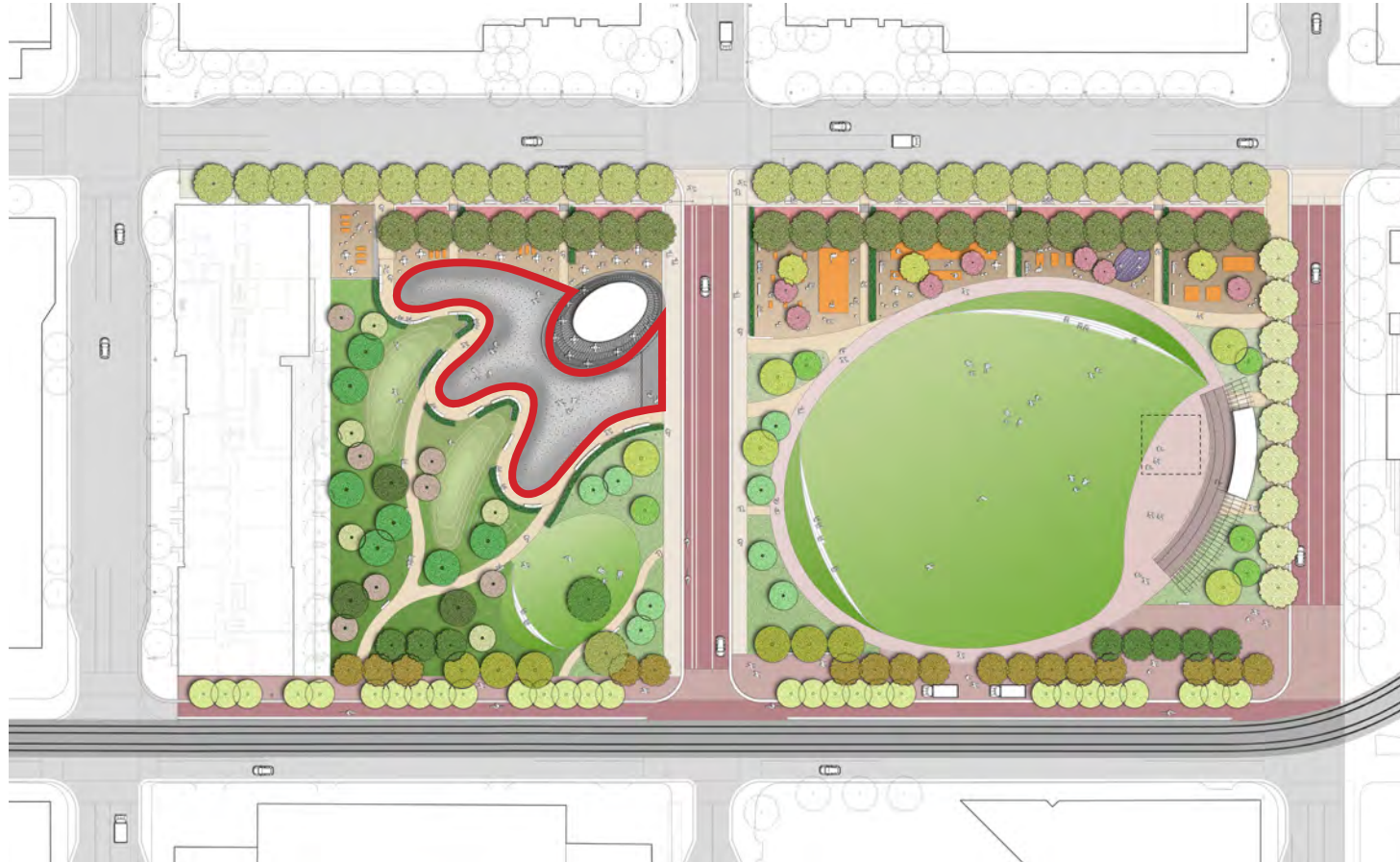
program + garden zones

Along the north edges of the Commons, the program and garden zones are distinctly flexible spaces, allowing for dynamic programming, and serving as a connective link through the Commons. During the summer, these spaces could include moveable tables and chairs; reading rooms; exercise classes; temporary play equipment; bocce or shuffleboard courts; ping pong; badminton; or temporary art installations. A spray fountain activates one of the eastern program zones, a location for children's play that turns into open plaza when turned off. During the winter, these same spaces can transform for winter markets; ice sculpting competitions; curling; winter playgrounds; food vendors and fire pits; or seasonal light displays. Pathways link the program zones through a band of urban gardens to 4th Street.



2.4 Water Plaza

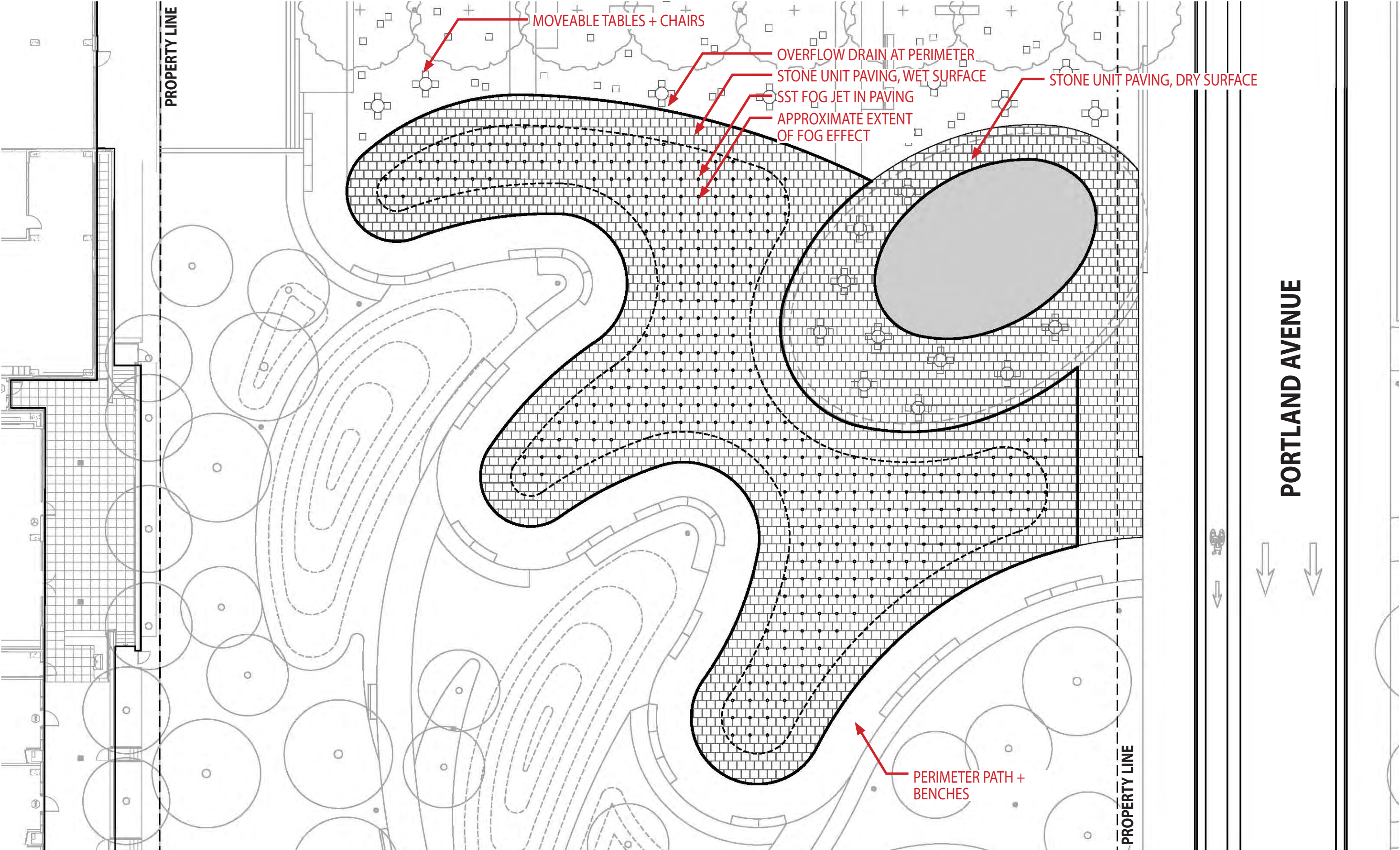




water plaza

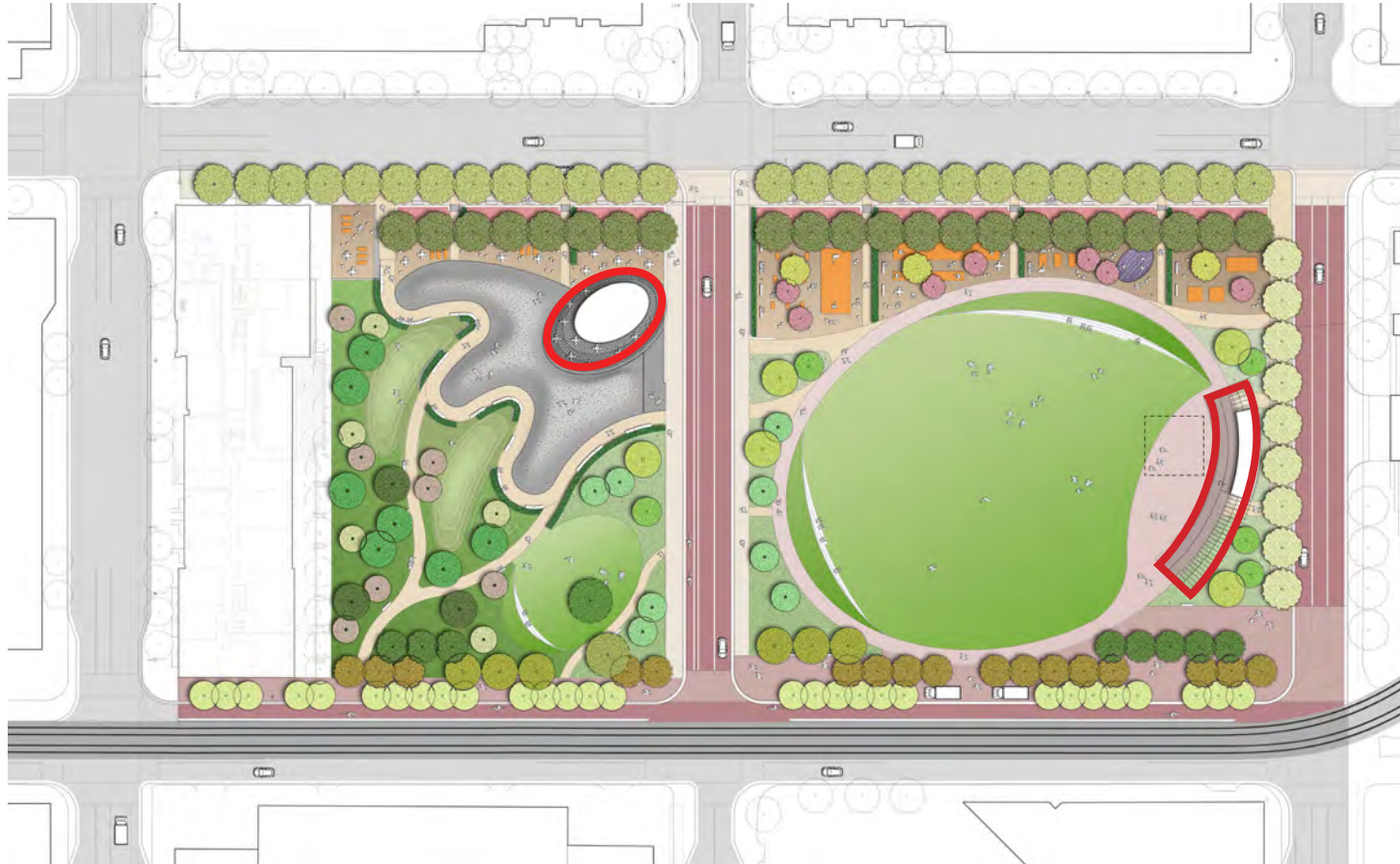
The water plaza and pavilion is an iconic feature of the Commons, a transformative space that uniquely integrates water, light, and people. The 10,000 sf (0.22 acres) water plaza holds a thin scrim of water during the summer, with a unique fog effect covering the plaza, inset from the edge. The stone pavers of the plaza are wrapped to the south by a curvilinear path, with benches and hedges, while on the north the pavilion and shade structure extend out over the plaza, achieving the sensation of a building on the water. When the water fountain is turned off, the plaza transforms into a multi-use space for events and activities, including a temporary ice rink in the winter, which may be linked by trail to a temporary rink on the good lawn.





2.5 Buildings



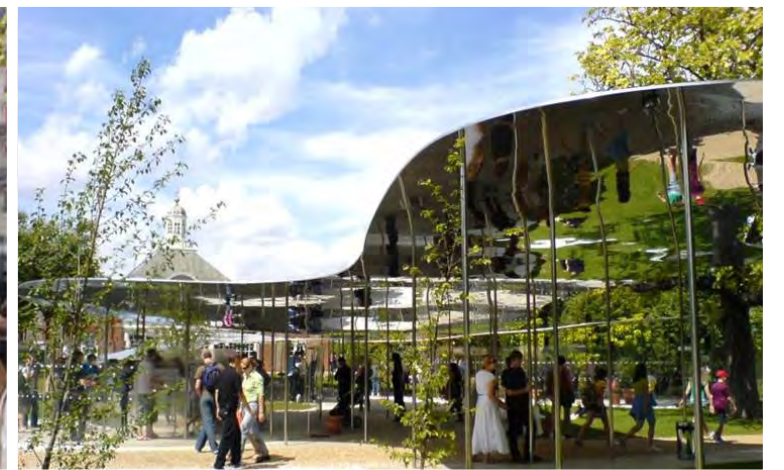


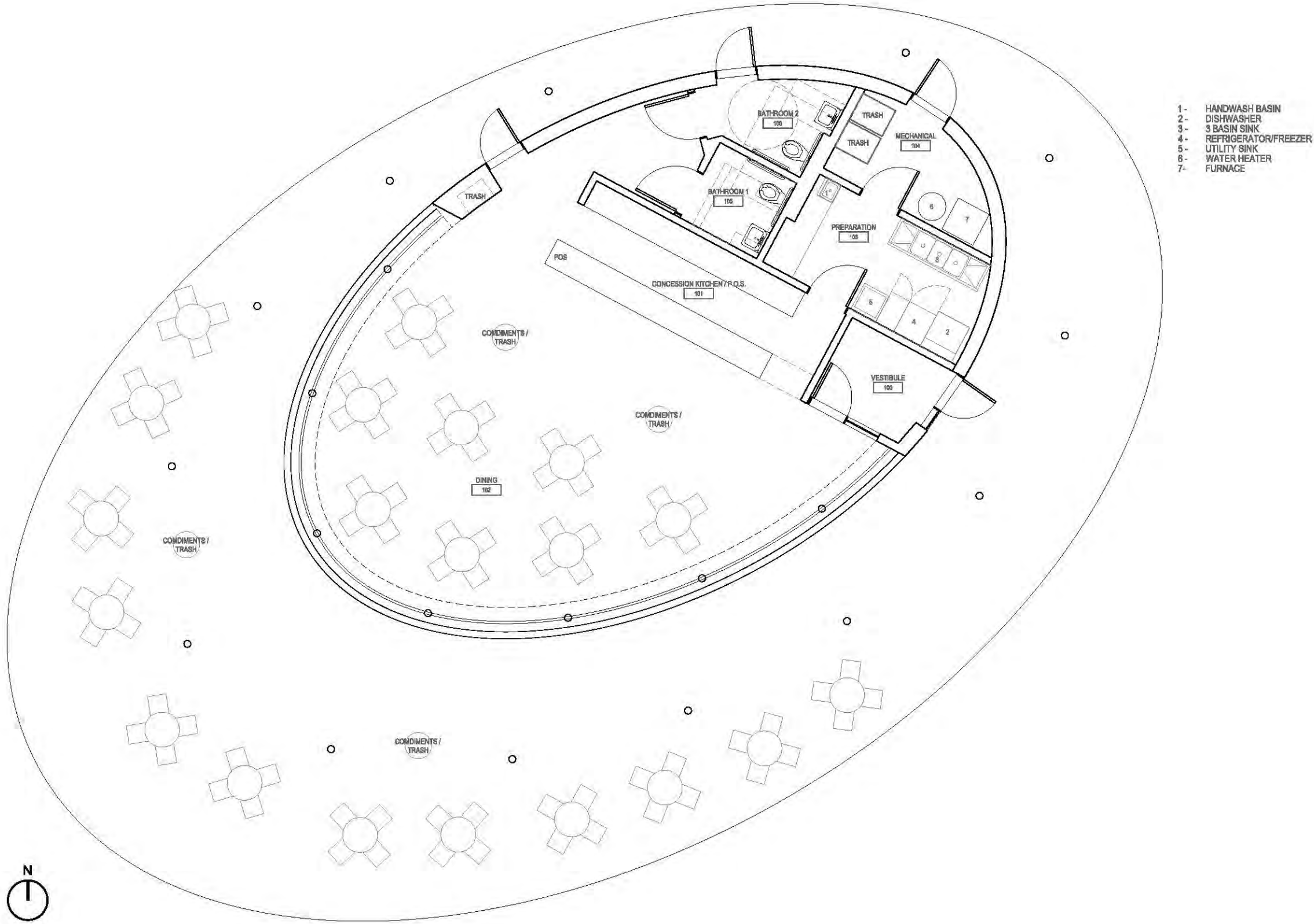
pavilion

The 2,300 sf pavilion is designed to address all directions, linking the water plaza to the program + garden zones along 4th Street as well as to Portland Avenue. The program includes food concession; indoor and outdoor seating; storage/mechanical space; and (2) public rest rooms. The extension of the shade structure out on all sides of the pavilion, and the distinct lighting of the building and canopy position the pavilion as a key focus point within the Commons.

park support

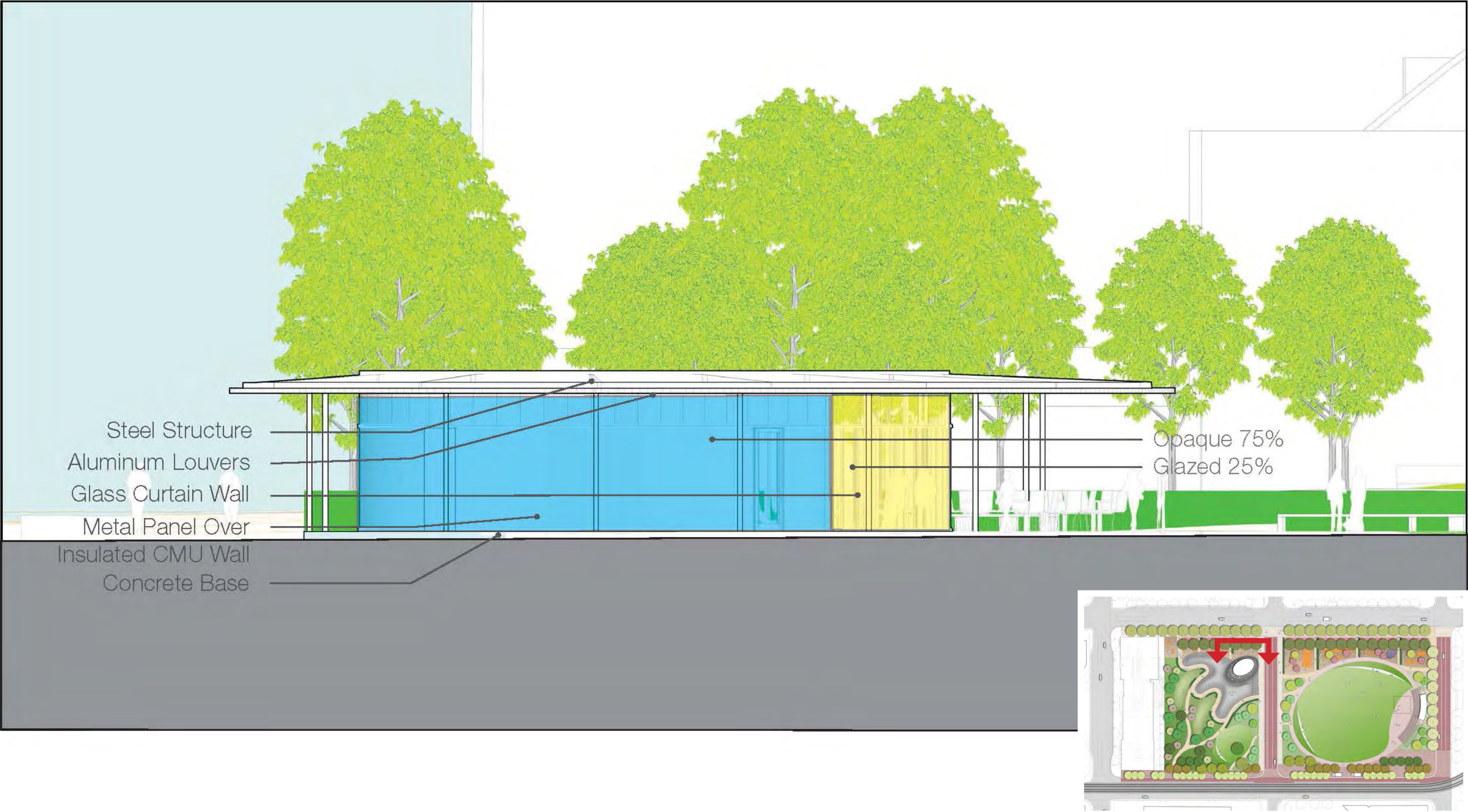
The 860 sf park support building is designed to support the dynamic programming of the park, including office space for park staff; storage for park equipment and rentals; and (2) public rest rooms. The building is designed to address both the eastern edge of the great lawn as well as Park Avenue. A shade structure extends from the building over the temporary stage plaza, allowing for informal performance or classes, and a shaded space for gathering.



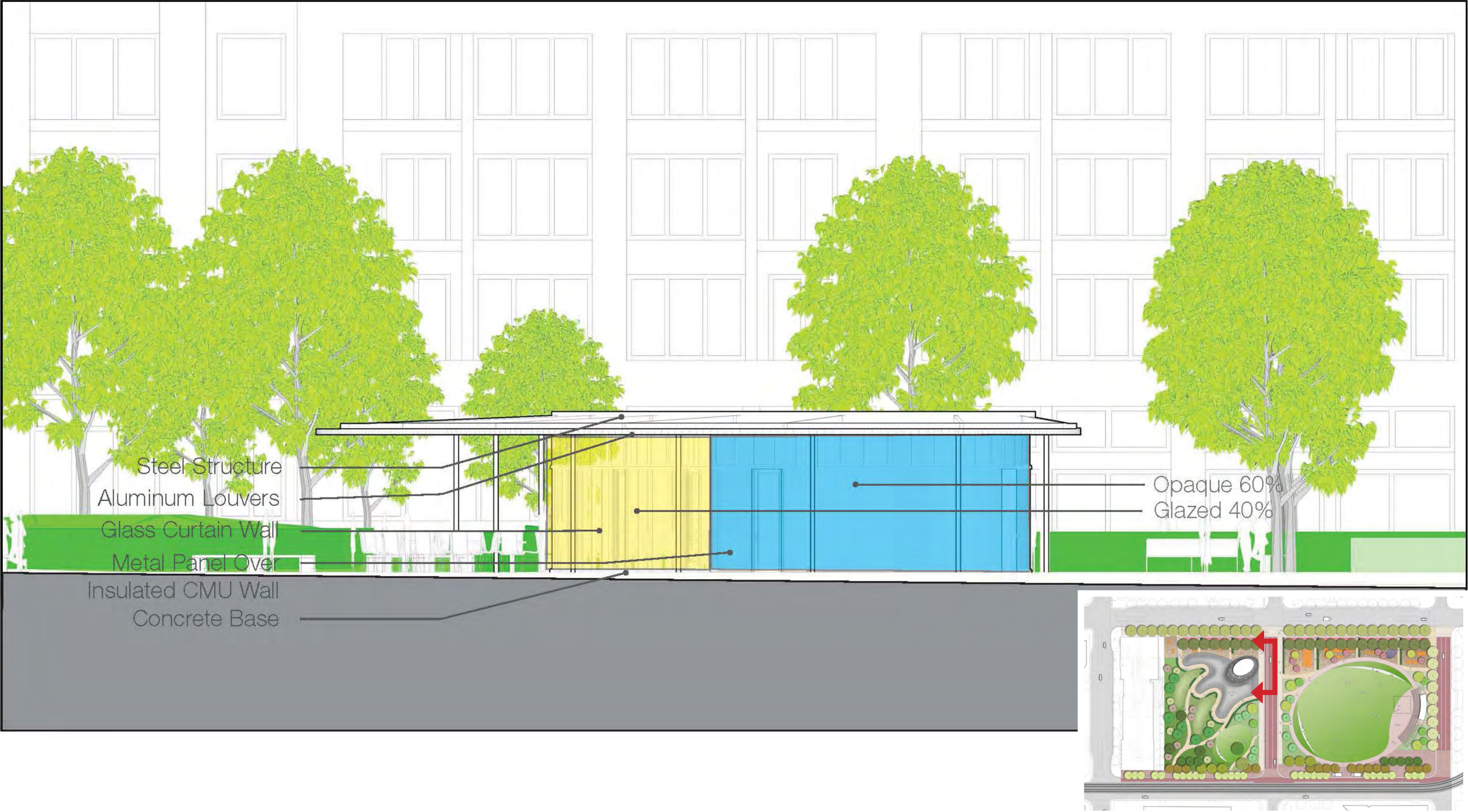


PAVILION - FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

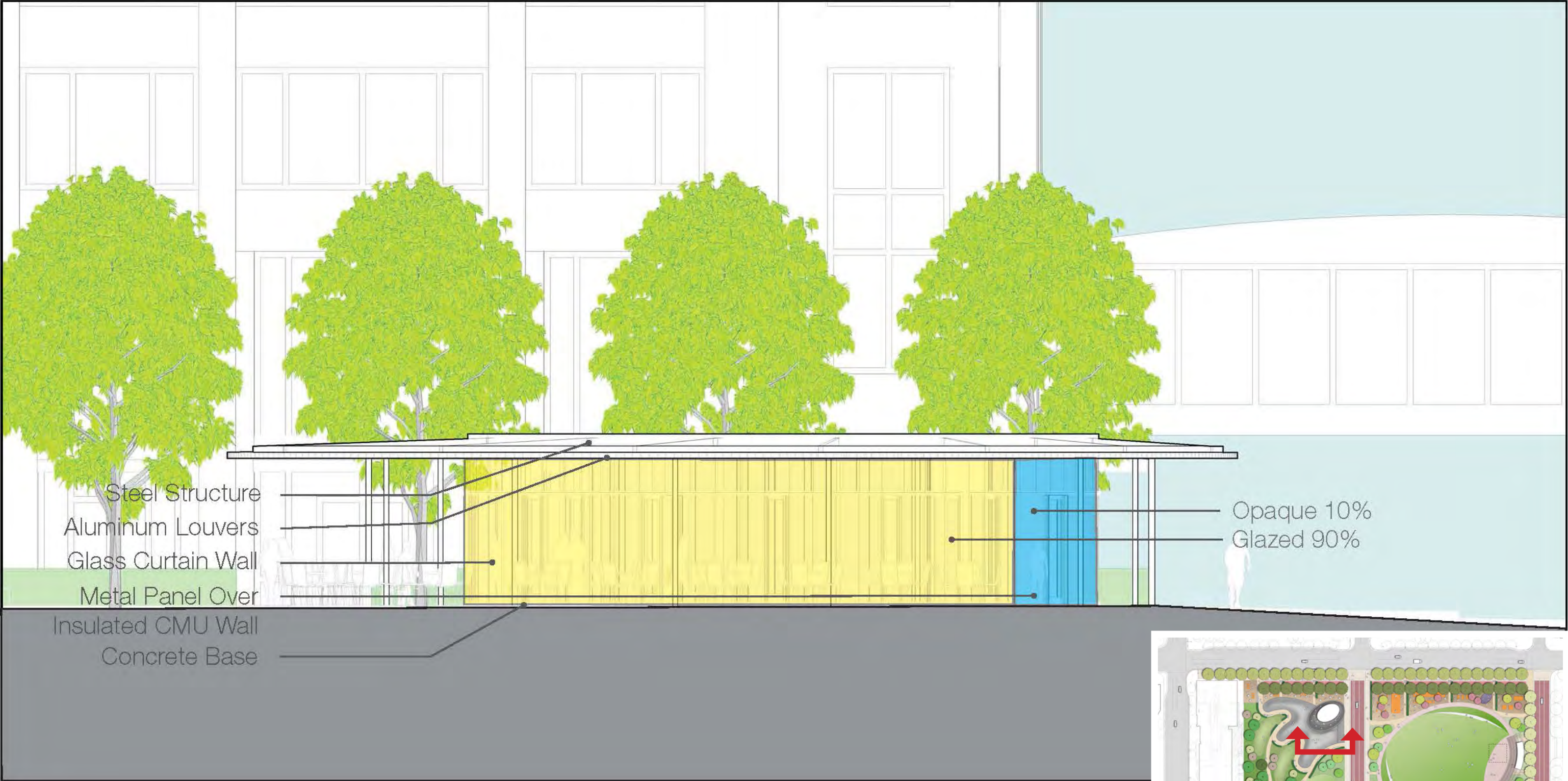


PAVILION - NORTHEAST ELEVATION



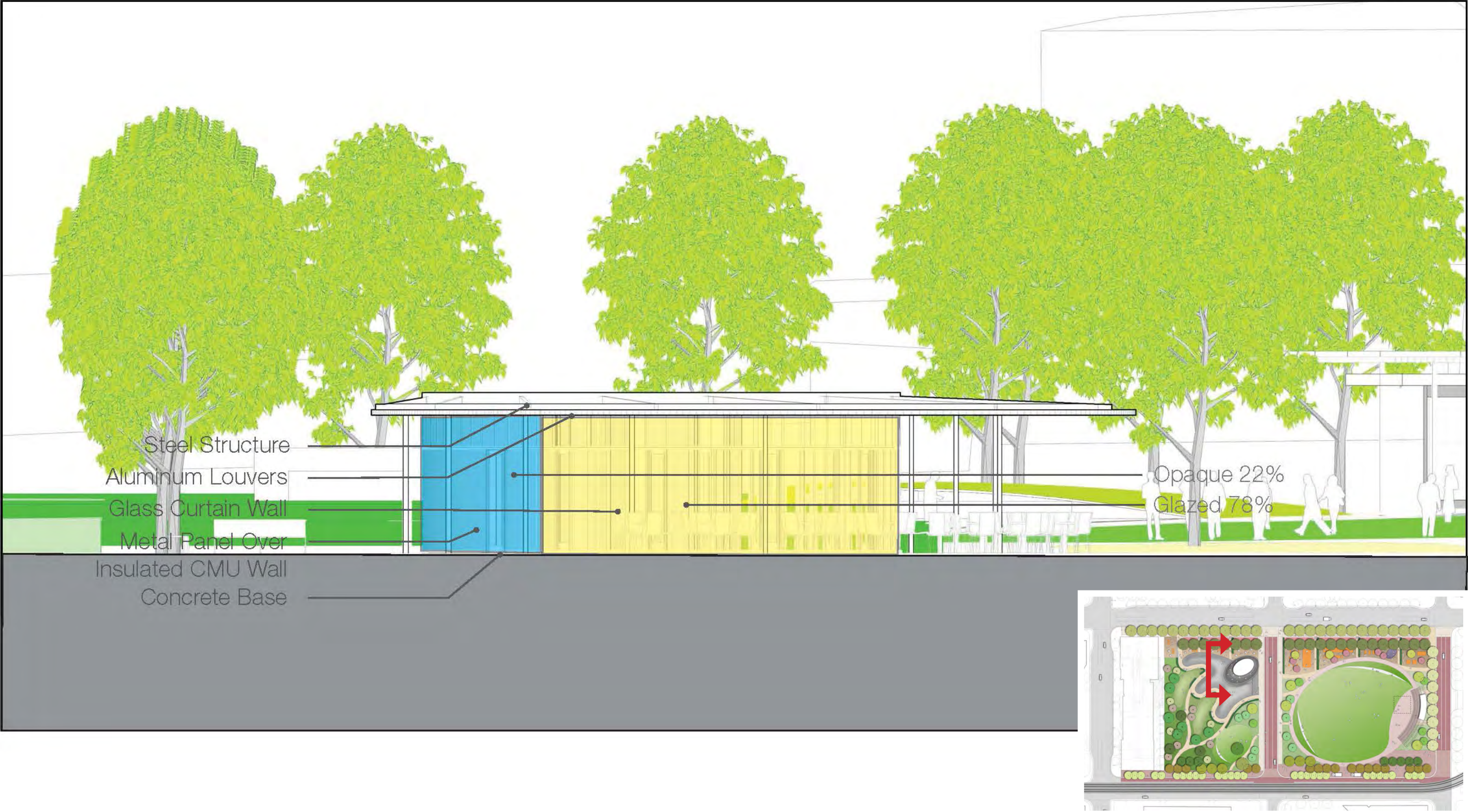
PAVILION - PORTLAND AVENUE ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

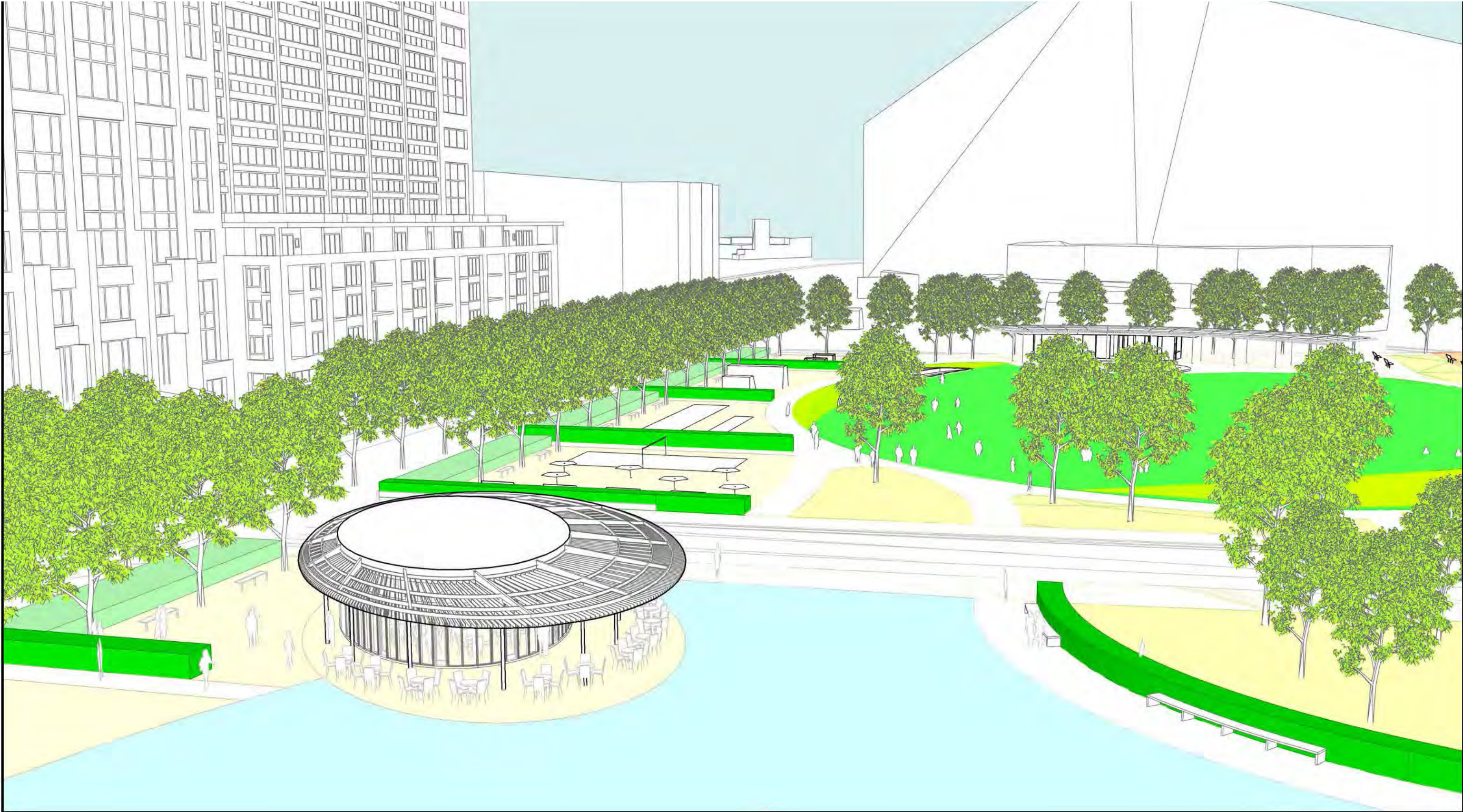


PAVILION - SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

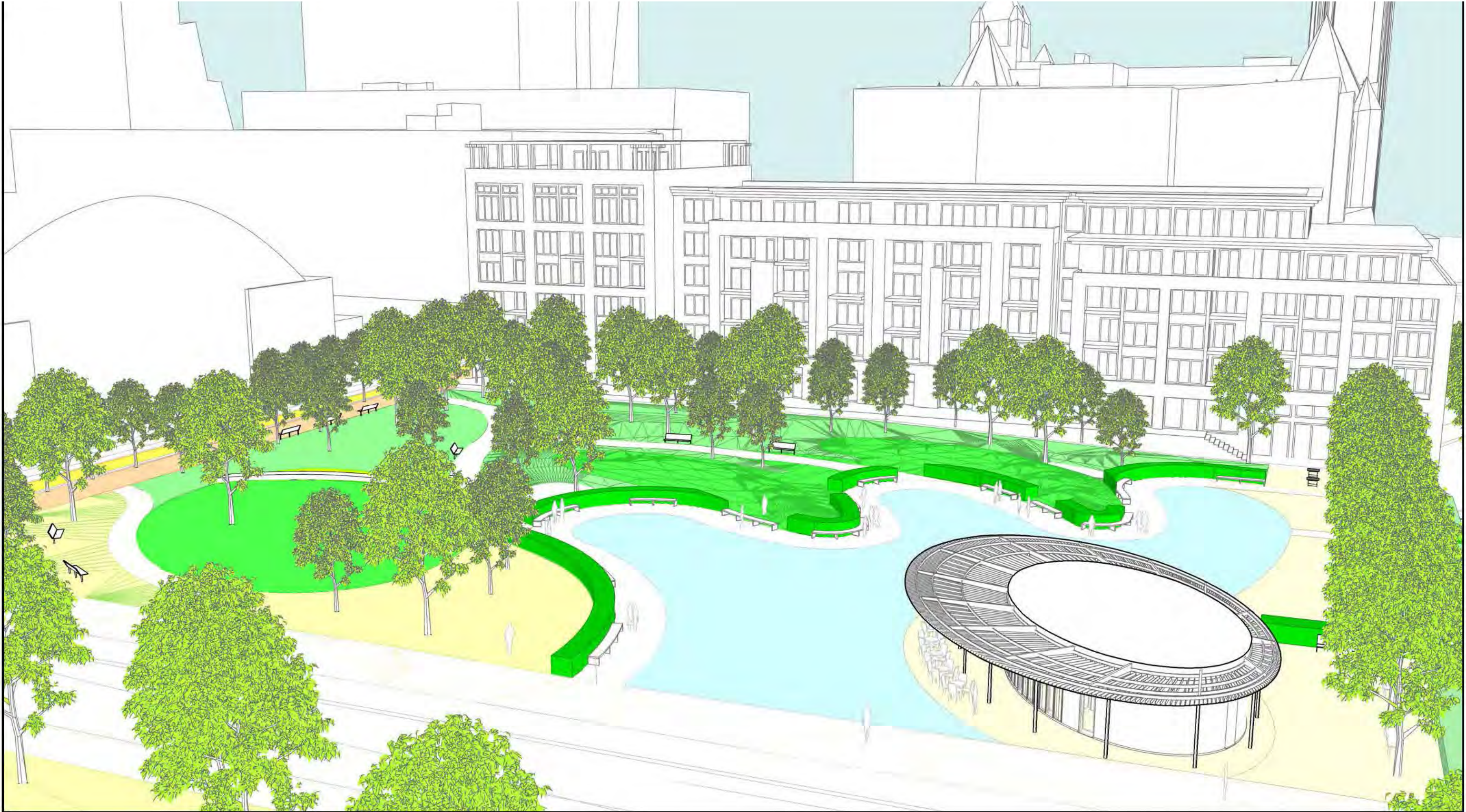
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PAVILION - NORTHWEST ELEVATION



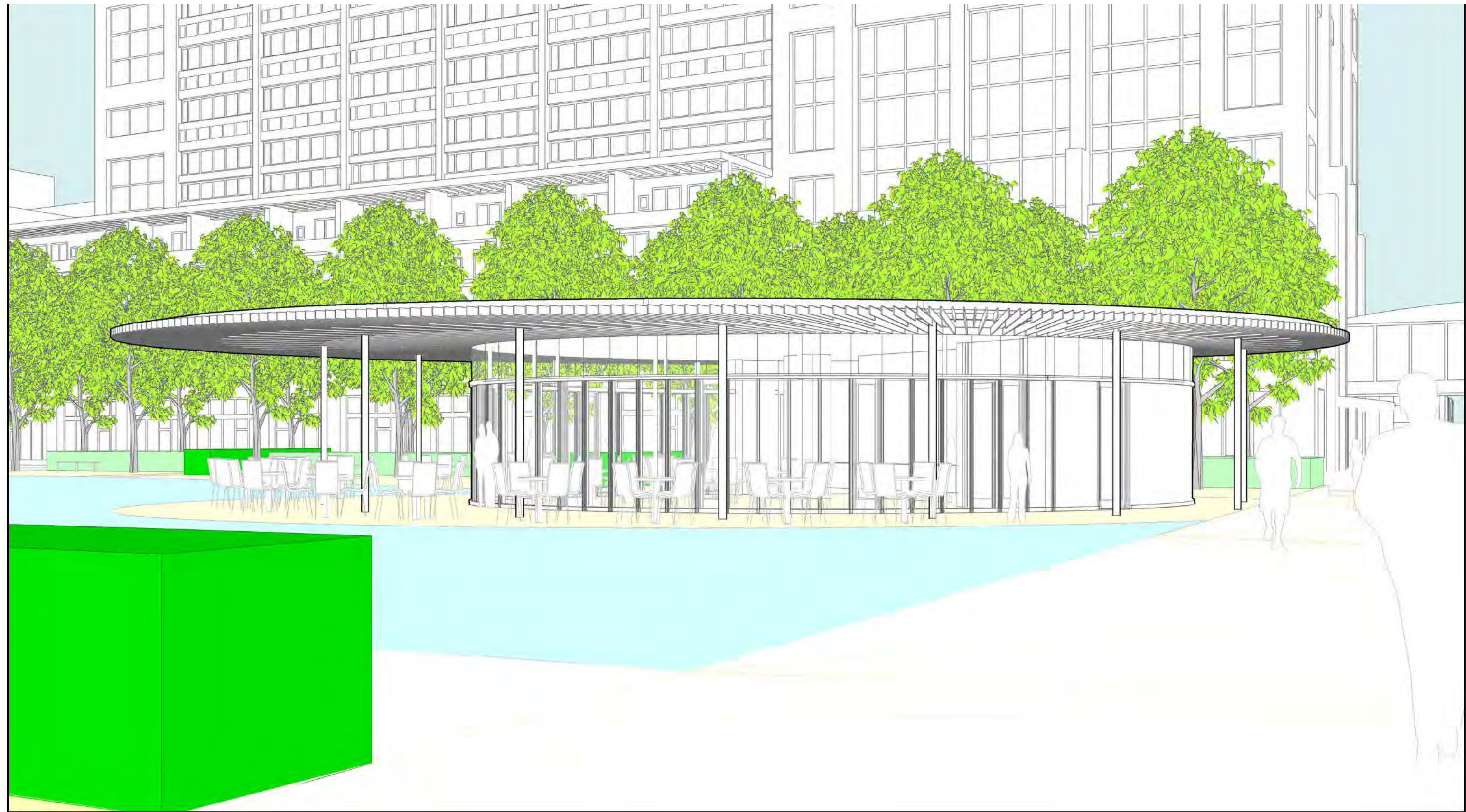
PAVILION - AERIAL VIEW TOWARDS STADIUM



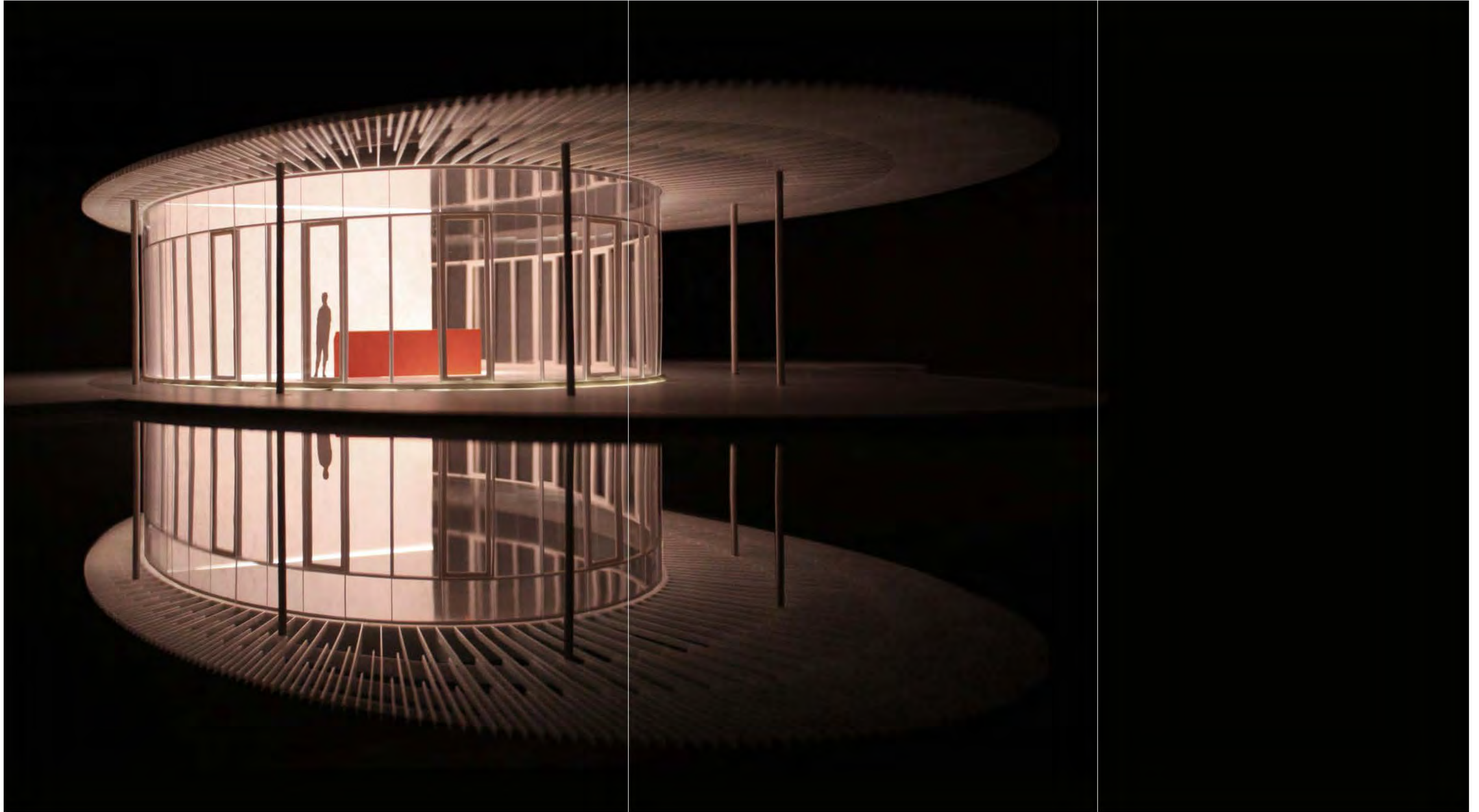
PAVILION - AERIAL VIEW TOWARDS DOWNTOWN



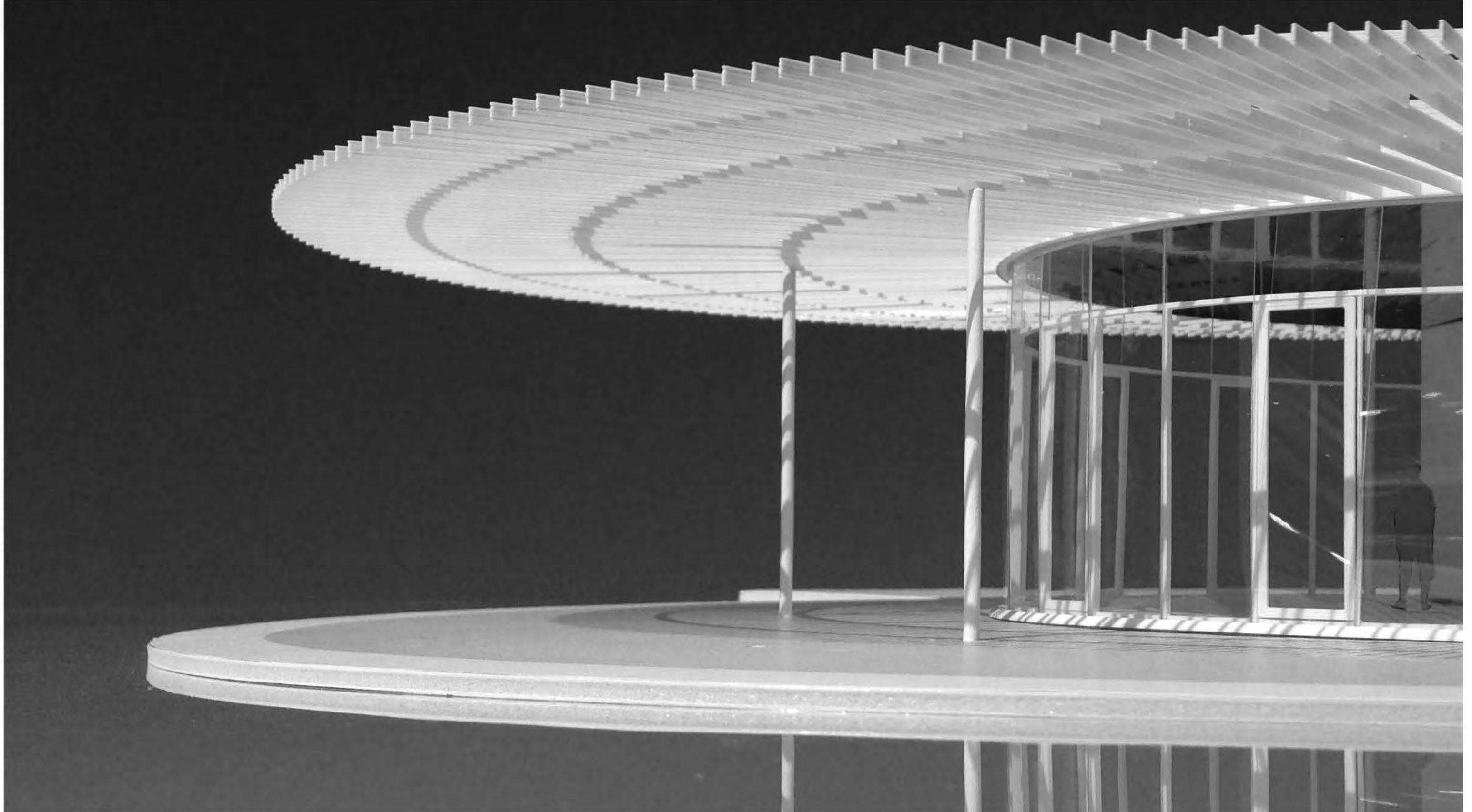
PAVILION - PERSPECTIVE FROM 4TH STREET PROMENADE



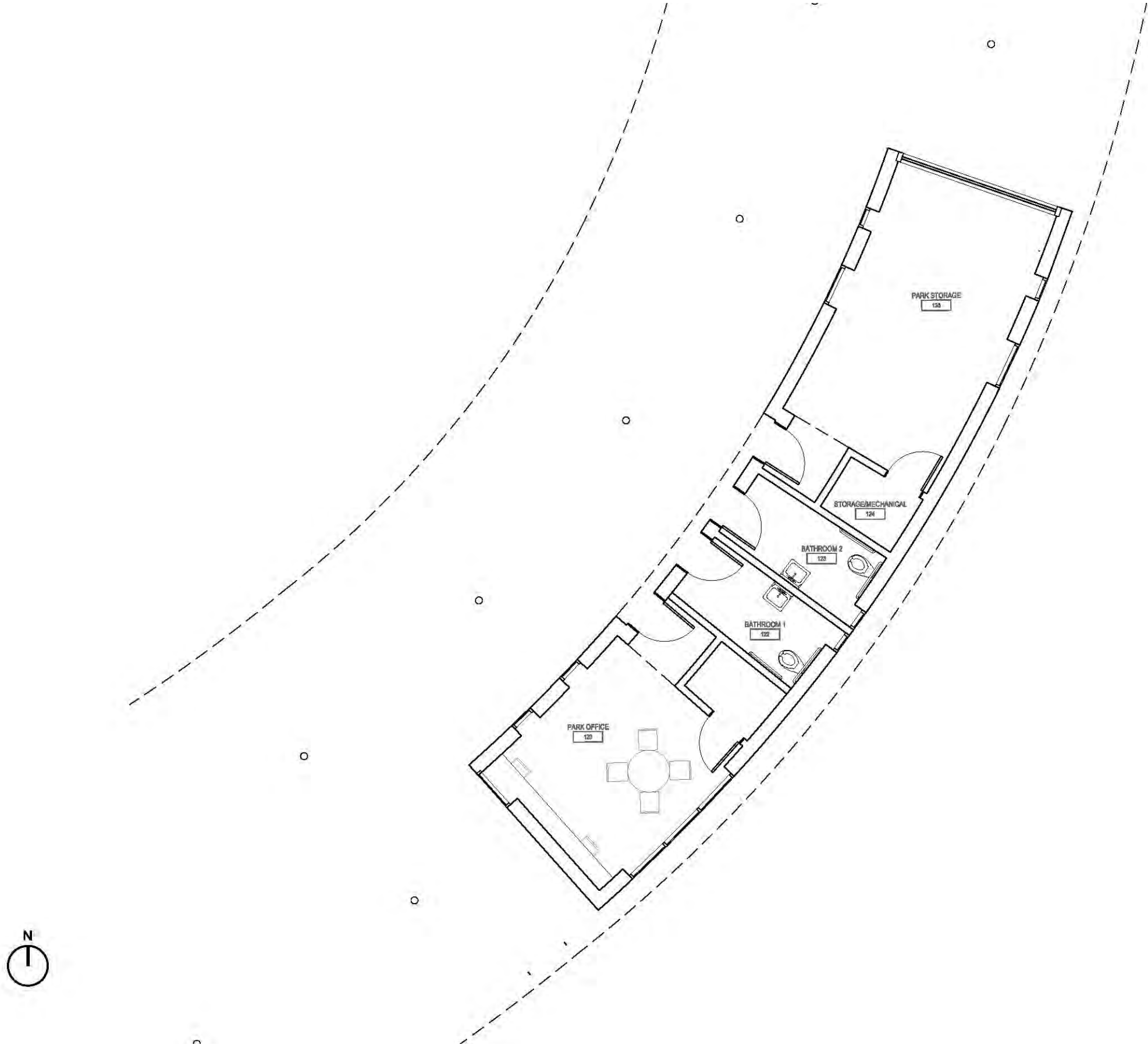
PAVILION - PERSPECTIVE FROM PORTLAND AVENUE



PAVILION - MODEL PHOTOGRAPHS

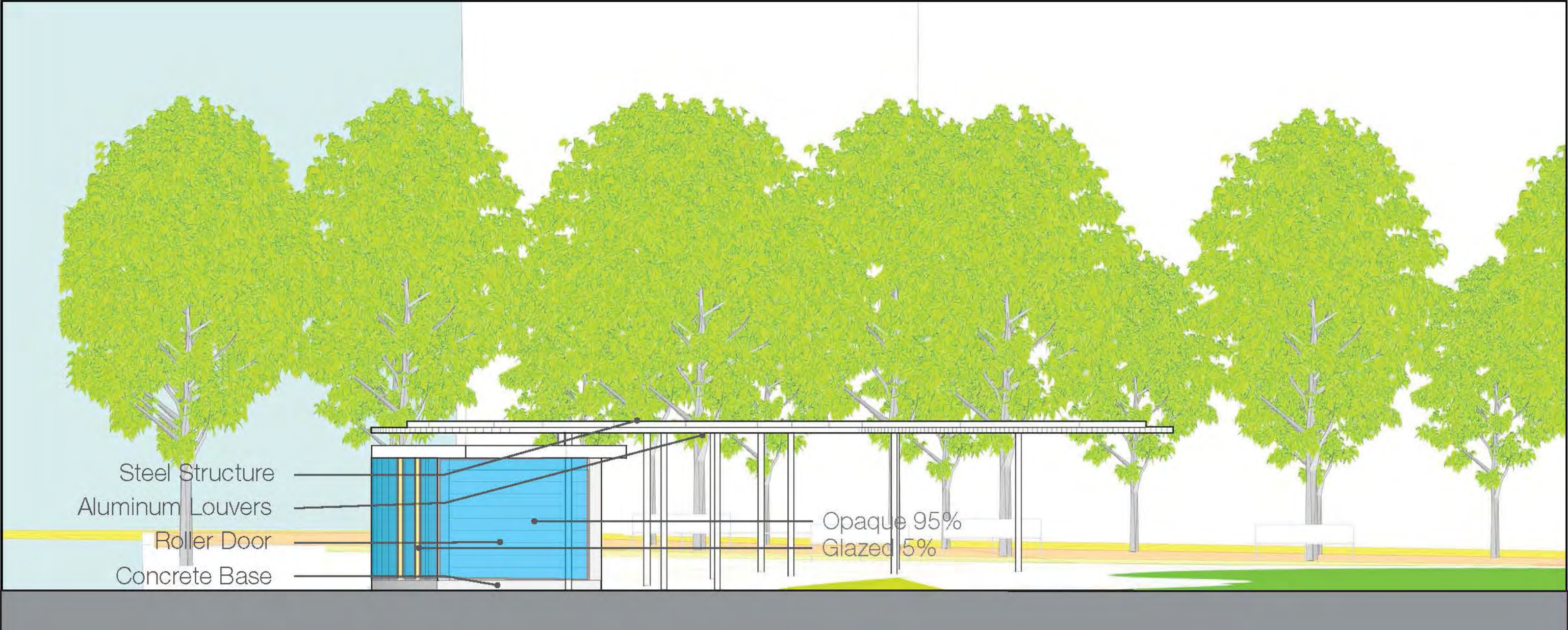


PAVILION - MODEL PHOTOGRAPHS



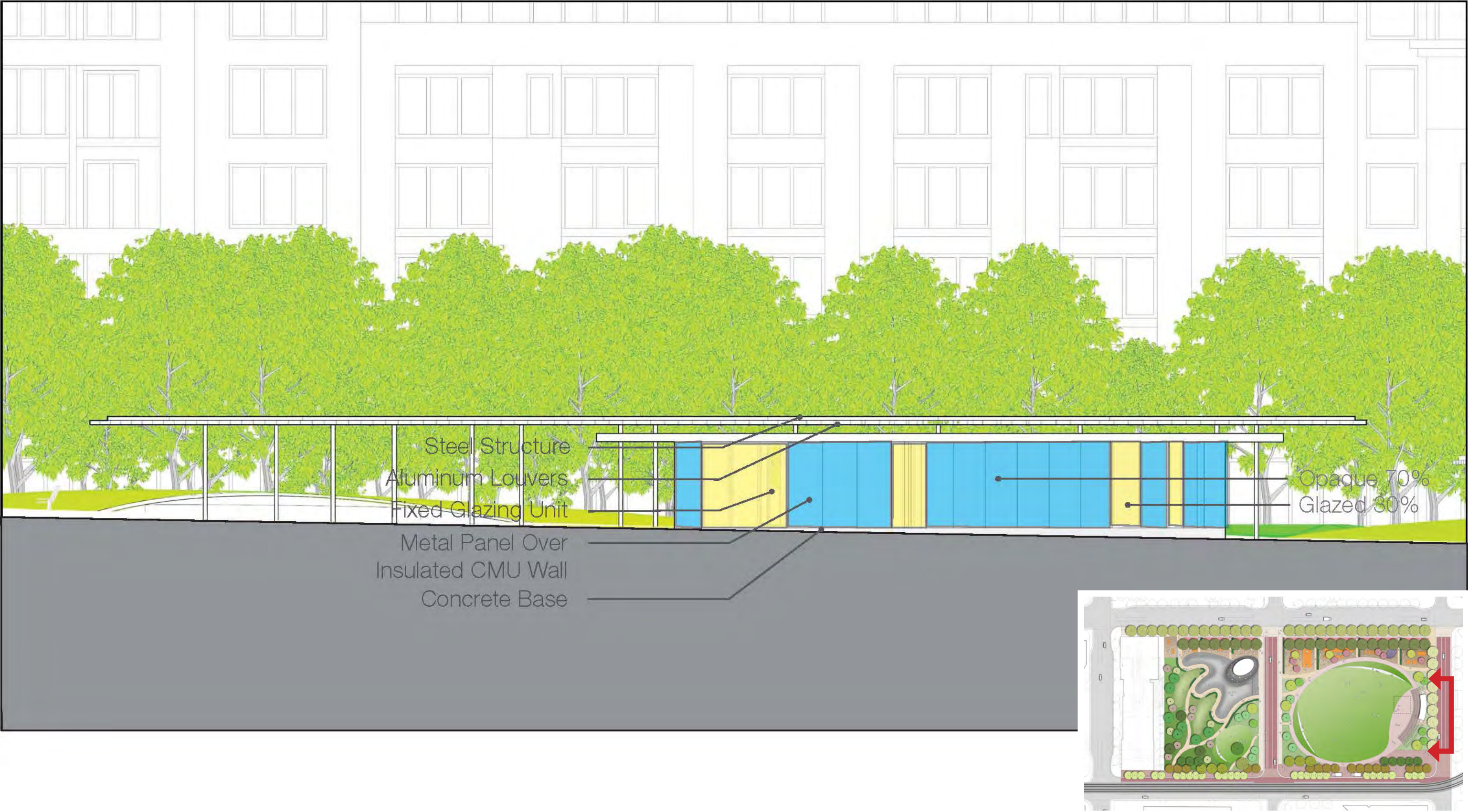
PARK SUPPORT - FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"



PARK SUPPORT - NORTHEAST ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

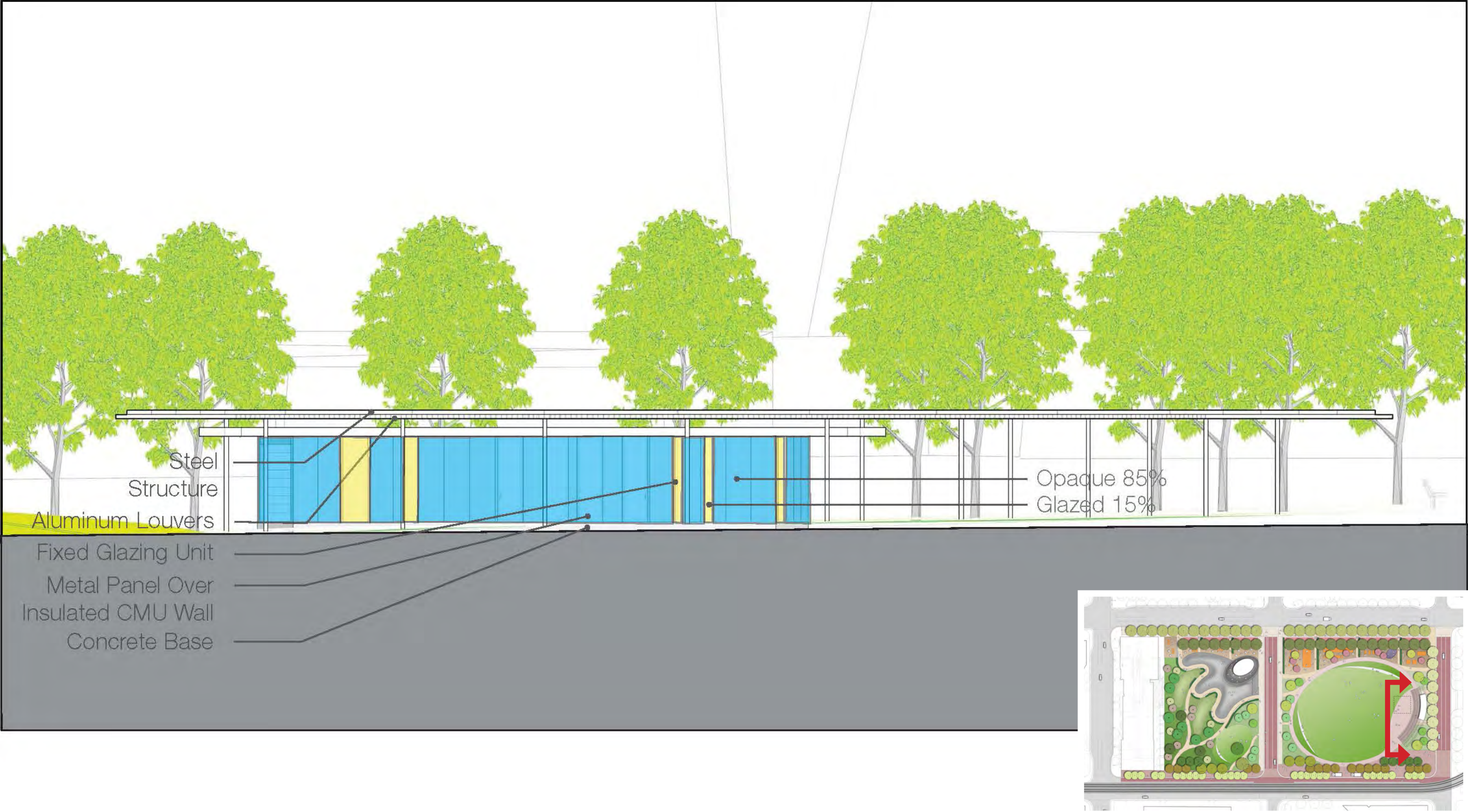


PARK SUPPORT - PARK AVENUE ELEVATION



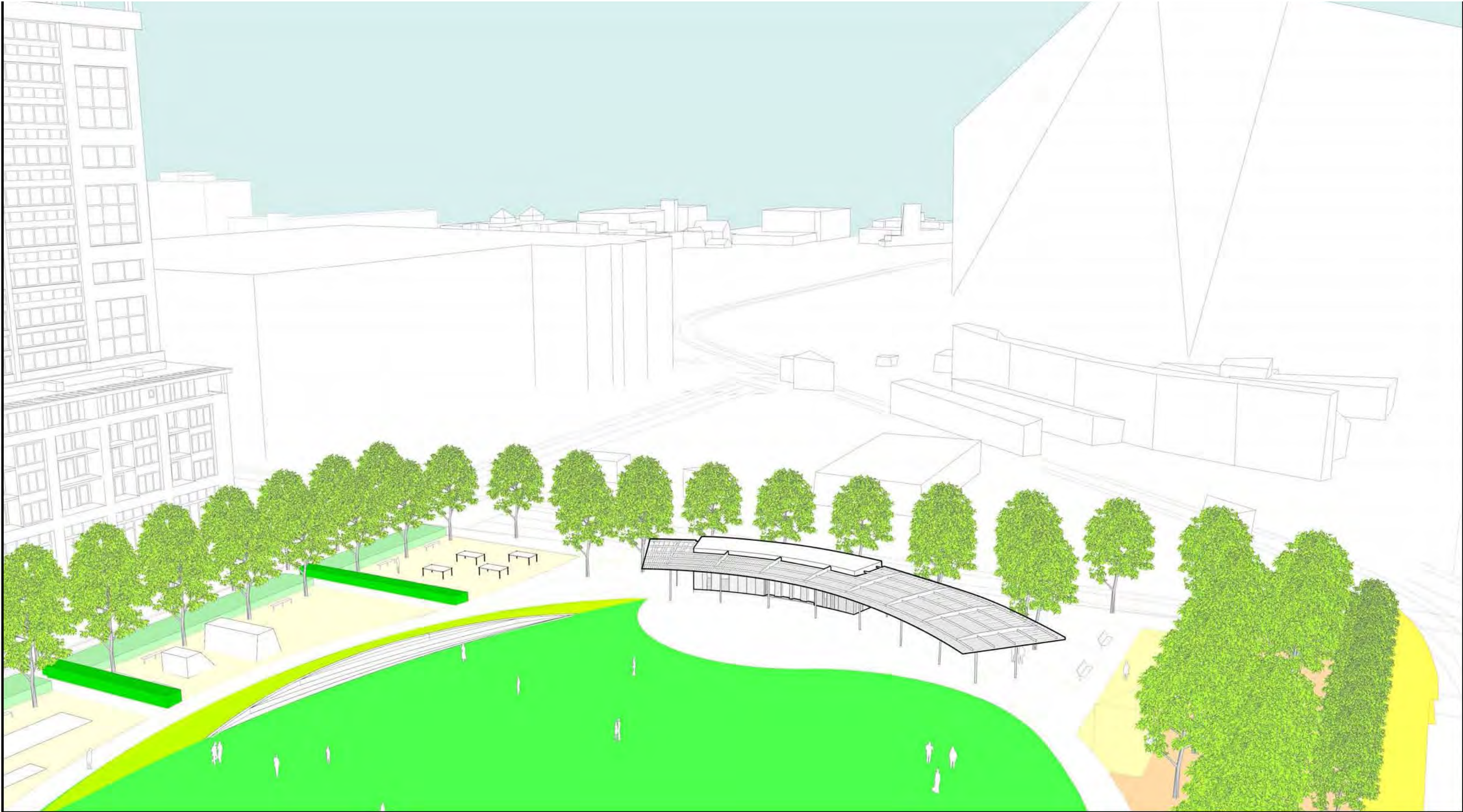
PARK SUPPORT - SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"



PARK SUPPORT - NORTHWEST ELEVATION

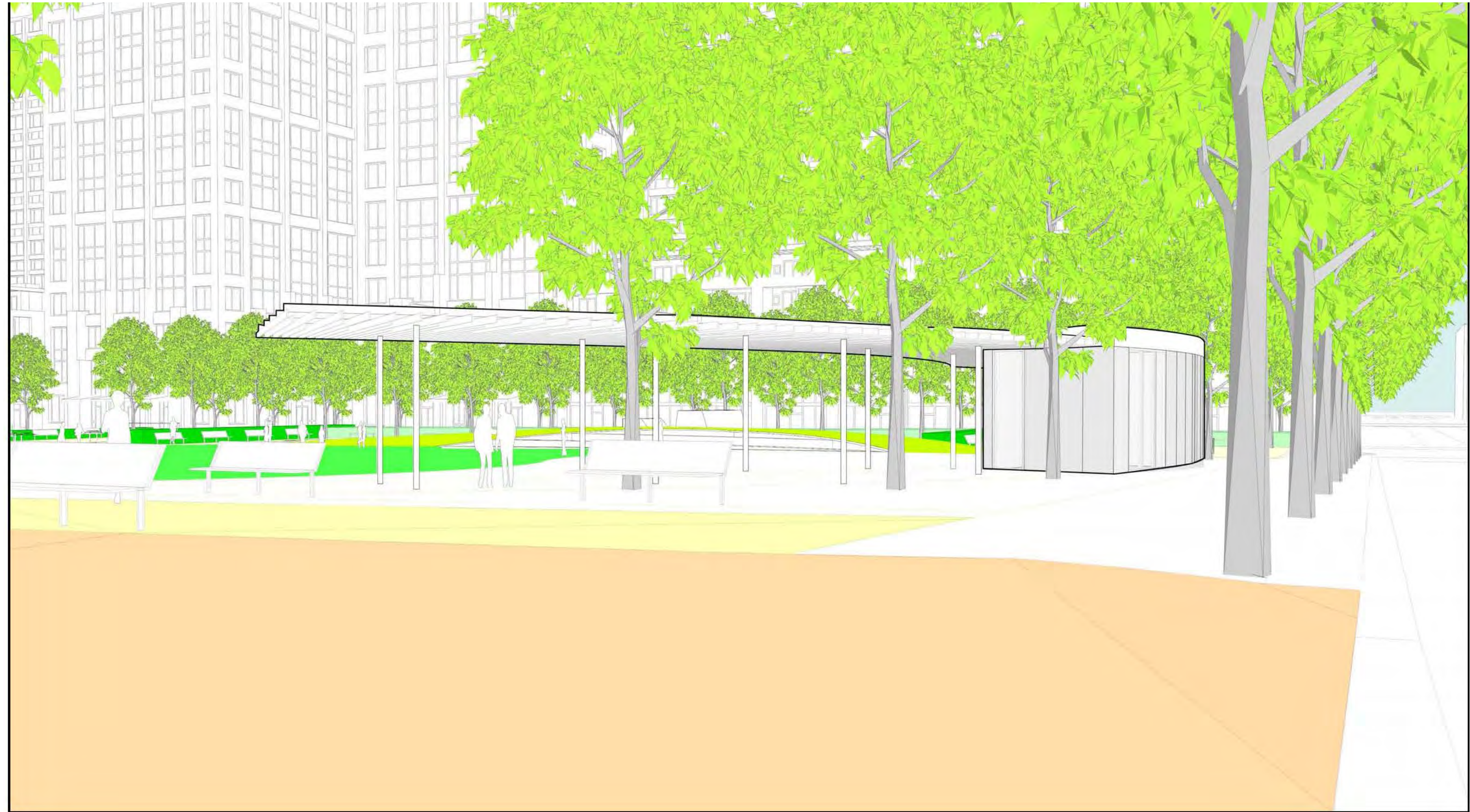
3/32" = 1'-0"



PARK SUPPORT - AERIAL VIEW TOWARDS STADIUM



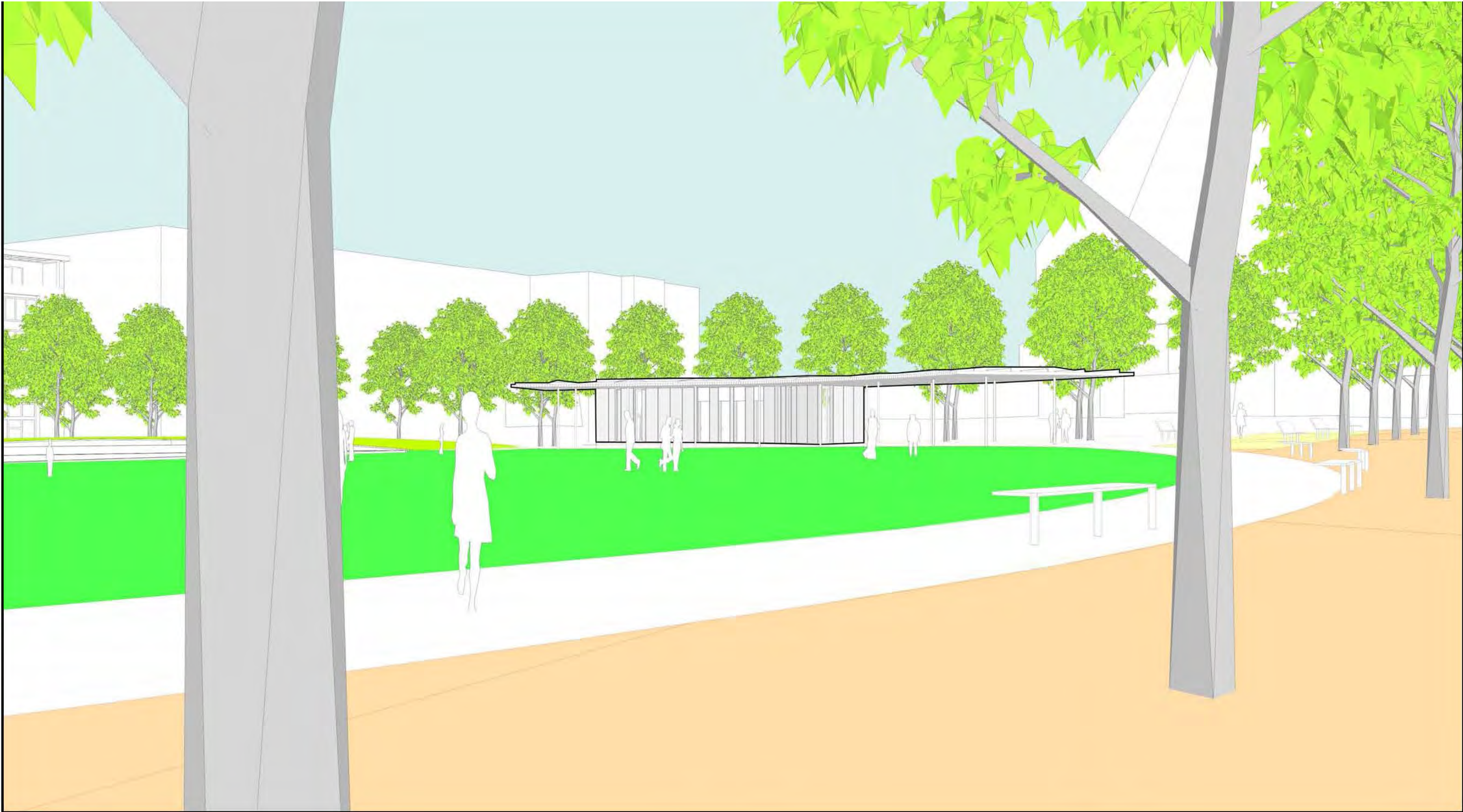
PARK SUPPORT - AERIAL VIEW TOWARDS DOWNTOWN



PARK SUPPORT - PERSPECTIVE FROM PARK AVENUE



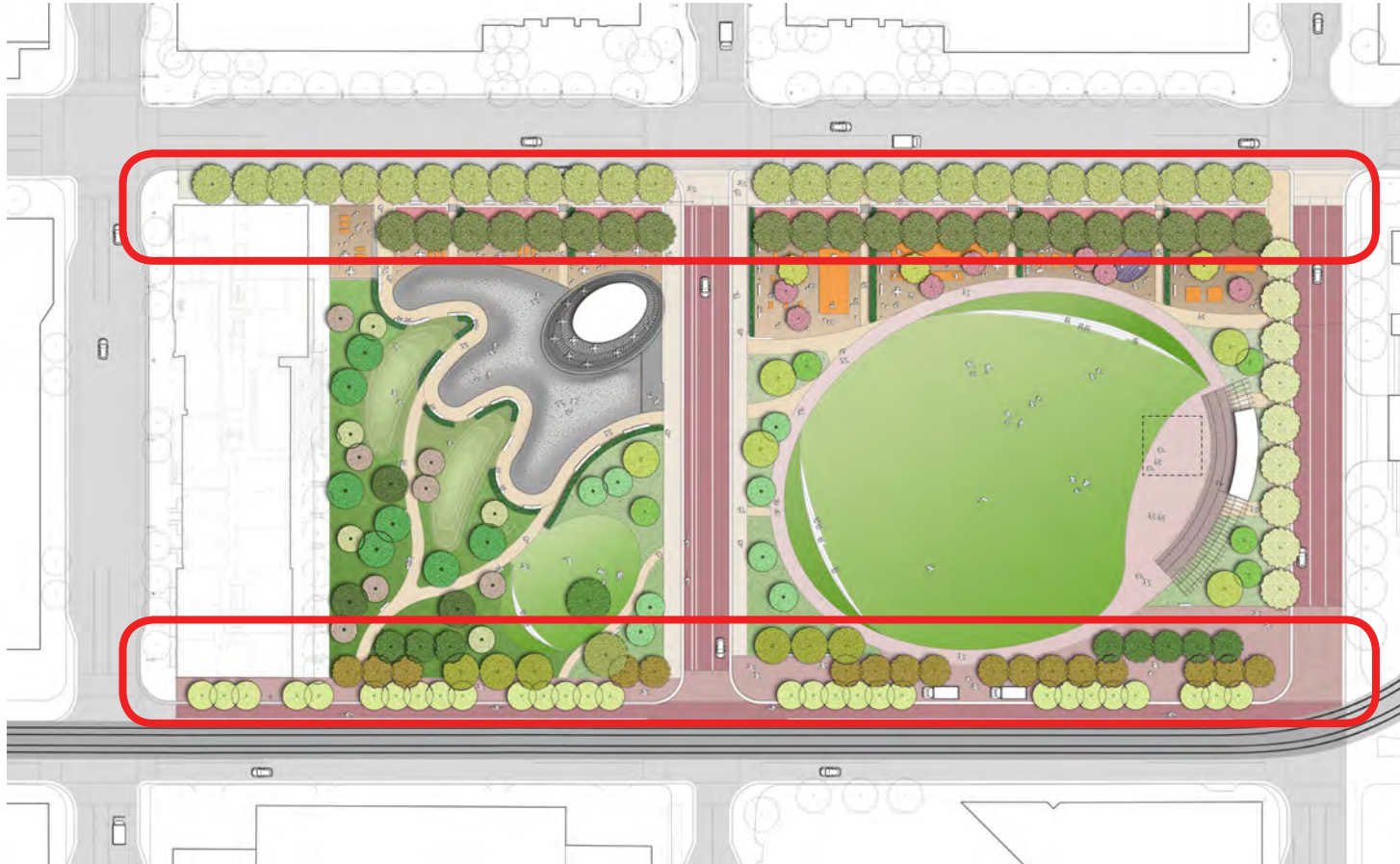
PARK SUPPORT - PERSPECTIVE FROM 4TH STREET PROMENADE



PARK SUPPORT - PERSPECTIVE FROM 5TH STREET



2.6 4th Street / 5th Street Promenades



4th street promenade

The 4th Street promenade is framed by a double-row of canopy trees, arching from the sidewalk into the program + garden zones. The open views through this row of trees connect the Commons to the active groundfloor uses on the north side of 4th Street. Distinct concrete or clay unit pavers run continuously from the Downtown East Station Block to 5th Avenue, emphasizing pedestrian connections across Park and Portland Avenues; and pathways link south into the Commons. On-street public parking is available on both the north and south sides of 4th Street.

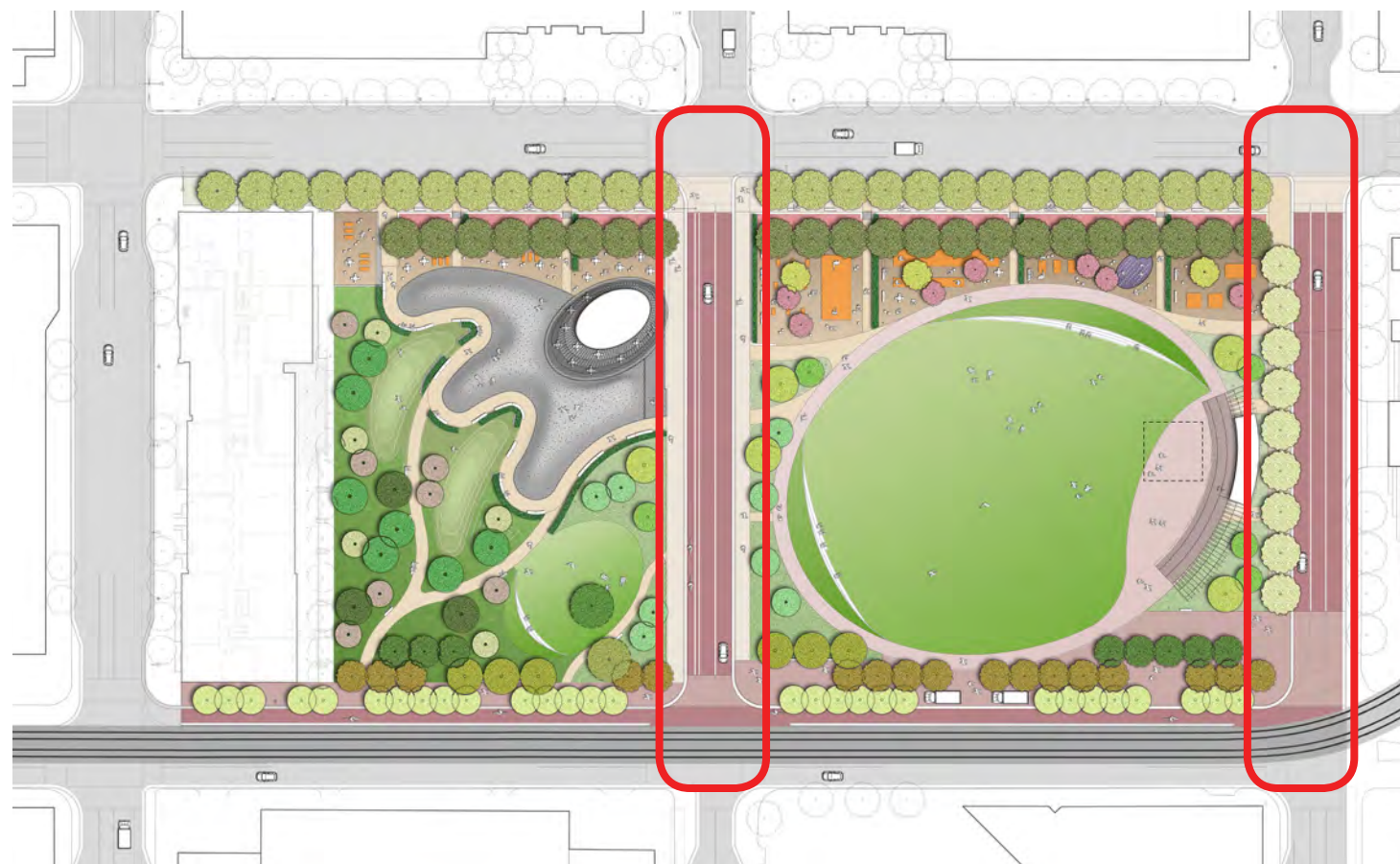
5th street promenade

The 5th Street promenade is designed to reflect the kinetic qualities of the LRT, which runs through the center of the street. A 2-way bike lane runs between the LRT track and the curb; trees with kinetic characteristics are located in shifting rows, moving/rustling, and allowing louvered views into the Commons; and bands of feature light columns shift down the promenade. Distinct concrete or clay unit pavers run continuously from the Downtown East Station Block to 5th Avenue, emphasizing pedestrian connections across Park and Portland Avenues.



Portland Avenue / Park Avenue





portland avenue / park avenue

Portland Avenue is a principal connection from the city to the river. The street will be narrowed from 3 travel lanes to 2 travel lanes, with a protected southbound bike lane at sidewalk level. A distinct asphalt surface treatment signals the pedestrian character of the area and continuity of the Commons across the Avenue, while curbs and dedicated crossings at 4th Street and 5th Street ensure safe interactions between people and vehicles. When Portland is closed for events, the Commons is design for an open flow between the east and west block. Park Avenue is also partially transformed with a distinct asphalt surface treatment, emphasizing safe crossings at 4th and 5th Streets.



