



Legislation Text

File #: 21-447, Version: 1

City Council Meeting Date: August 2, 2021

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: David Bennett, Public Works Director/City Engineer

West Riverwalk Entrance Improvement Discussion.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council discusses and provides input on the schematic and conceptual layout of improvements for the west Riverwalk Entrance.

Summary Report:

As part of the Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan, the City is continuing to look at improvements along the river to activate the riverfront. Earlier this year staff created both an online public engagement tool and mailed surveys to properties in the area to receive input on how to enhance the West Riverwalk Entrance.

A few of the key items/themes that we heard from the public are below:

- Improve seating/benches
- Improve landscaping/aesthetics of that space
- Gateway entrance to Riverwalk
- Public Art

After the input was received, staff worked with SEH to come up with a concept improvement plan and approximate cost estimate for the improvement. The plan builds off the downtown streetscape plan and arts corridor.

We would seek initial individual feedback from City Councilors related to the concept and whether there are any specific changes. The communications department will be sharing the information out on communications related to the project for the public.

Alternative Options:

Request other additions or clarifications to the project from City Councilors.

Financial Impacts:

See attached cost estimate summary. Once the concept is finalized, an updated cost estimate will be prepared and staff will work with Council on programming the improvement in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Tentative Timelines:

Individual feedback from council on the concept plan

Northfield Riverwalk West Side Entry



The City of Northfield wants your Input

The City of Northfield is looking to enhance and improve ADA access to the Riverwalk on the west side of the river. The City is guided by the recently adopted Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan, with goals of enhancing and activating the Riverfront along with promoting economic development and tourist destination.

Please draw or on concept on second page to share your ideas or select from the menu of options or provide feedback below. A final concept design will be developed from the input received.



Menu of Options

- Benches _____
- Picnic Tables _____
- Improved Landscaping _____
- Tables/Chairs _____
- Bike Racks _____
- Gateway Entrance _____
- Riverwalk Access Signage _____
- Other Describe Below _____

Comments: _____



Please mail this input form back with the enclosed envelope or email to Cindy.Stock@ci.northfield.mn.us. For Question Please call David Bennett Public Work Director/City Engineer 651-645-3006. 801 Washington Street Northfield, MN 55057



Northfield Riverwalk West Side Entry

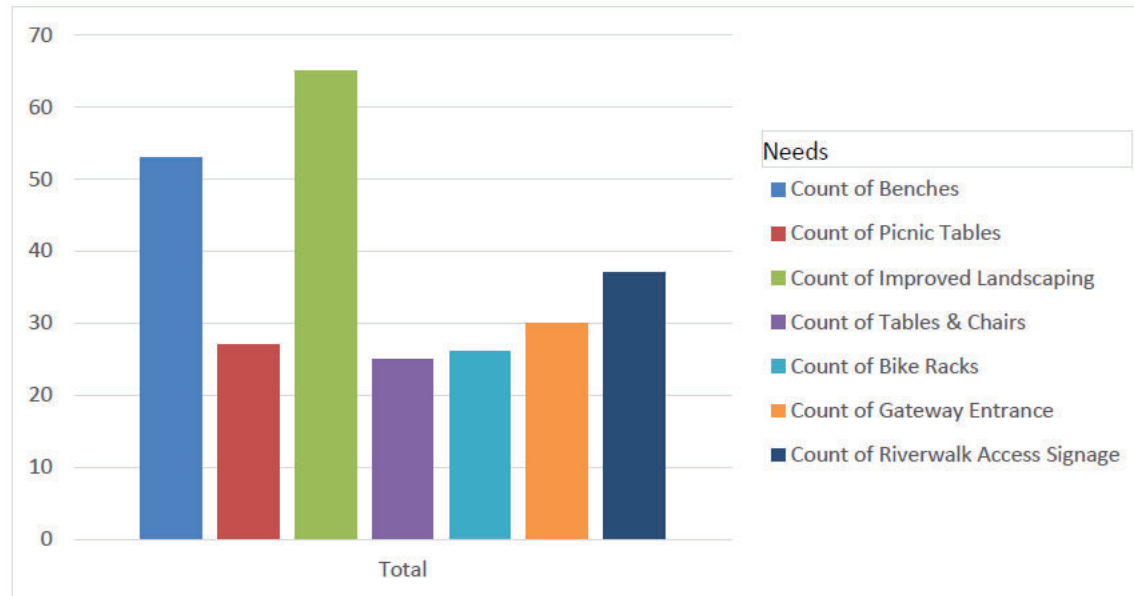


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West Riverwalk Entrance Feedback

Count of Benches	Count of Picnic Tables	Count of Improved Landscaping	Count of Tables & Chairs	Count of Bike Racks	Count of Gateway Entrance	Count of Riverwalk Access Signage
53	27	65	25	26	30	37



Benches	Picnic Tables	Improved Landscaping	Tables & Chairs	Bike Racks	Gateway Entrance	Riverwalk Access Signage	Other	Comments
							Public Restrooms!	
X							Skateboard storage	As a member of the NDDC design committee last year I have several suggestions for the westside entrance to the Cannon River Bridge. One is to screen the ugly adjacent blank building walls with a row of tall columnar arbor vitae on either side that would create a beautiful natural green border for all seasons and provide shelter for birds. A second is to provide benches with arms where visitors can sit but skateboarders cannot use. A third is to use planters made of sandstone that match those along the east side which will tie the design together, as [REDACTED] has suggested. Finally I would suggest an exposed aggregate walkway in the center with gentle curves like a snake rather than simply being straight. One of the central principles of Japanese gardens is that the walkways avoid the straight shape of most commercial roads and sidewalks to telegraph to the walker that they are entering a more peaceful and restful place. (The pathway could also have some larger flat rocks flush with the surface in it.) That would also complement the peaceful sound of the river water itself. Finally, I would endorse [REDACTED] request for bike and skateboard storage.
								I have owned property on the west bank since 1980. I watched the construction of the river walks and pedestrians bridges. The two big problems are the original design and the continuing lack of maintenance. The west river walk acts as a spillway to Froggy Bottoms and other businesses. It is first to flood, because the wall and walkway dip down to go under the pedestrian bridge. It has stayed flooded for weeks at a time, which cuts off handicapped accessibility to Froggy Bottoms. We do have plugs to put in the wall, but west river wall is about 3 feet lower than the east river wall. The west wall should be raised to the same height as the east wall to give the west side businesses defensible space. A step up, step down should be constructed near the north end of the walkway, above what was intended to be a canoe landing, to prevent the walkway from acting as a spillway, which happens at least once a year. The thoughtless design, which lowered the west river bank by at least four feet, created a persistent flooding problem for west bank property owners and businesses. The design interferes with the use and enjoyment of the property and is actionable under the state nuisance statute, M.S. 561.01. The city is very slow to clean up after floods. There is usually a big patch of mud under the pedestrian bridge which takes weeks to get cleaned up. The fisherman leave detritus, fish scales and blood all over the river walk, and the mess is left for the rains to clean up. The fisherman casting near Froggy Bottoms have snagged patrons, hit staff in the face with lures, and ripped up new screens. Fishing should be banned on both sides of the river between Second Street and Fourth Street to protect people and property from injury. The sculpture at the entrance is a sad piece of work. The plan showed a walkway attached to the base of my building, leading to stairs attached to the Ames Mill. I will never grant an easement to the city to attach anything to my building, since the city failed to honor a written promise to maintain the limestone façade along the river for over 30 years. I forgot to add that the city and I worked out a solution for the Froggy Bottoms Lily Padio by raising the inner wall above the 500 year flood mark and installing a flood gate. The same could be done all of the way to Blue Water's building, and it is considerably cheaper than raising the river wall. We had our welder design the flood gate and it has worked well for the annual floods. I would be happy to show the design to city staff. It does not resolve the problem of frequent flooding on the west river walk way, but it does protect the businesses along the river.
		X	X			X		
X		X						Add opportunities for outdoor dining near entryway or Riverwalk.
X		X				X		Gateway Entrance - isn't this the Swanson Ironwork Arch?? Rather than bigger picnic tables, I would like to see 2 concrete tables w/ benches, tops printed w/ chess board. I always thought those should be on Riverwalk also. [REDACTED]
		X				X	Art/Seating	I would love to see some seating in the entrance area, as well as landscaping, but I am also an artist and work for the Northfield Arts Guild, and think it would be spectacular to include some kind of permanent or transitioning (every few years a new piece?) public art in the space. I am also planning to propose a Riverwalk public art project to the city this season, as something that would potentially occur each year, and would love for a bit of informational signage to be able to be included at the west entrance, where it will increase visibility for more of Northfield's communities. I know this is highly specific, and maybe not what you're looking for, but the area is part of Northfield's "Art Corridor", and would make a great bridge (art is a connecting force) between the downtown and western Northfield neighborhoods, many of which include communities of color (Oh, did I mention some bilingual signage?) and low income communities, as well as the St Olaf student populations. Thank you for your time. [REDACTED]

Benches	Picnic Tables	Improved Landscaping	Tables & Chairs	Bike Racks	Gateway Entrance	Riverwalk Access Signage	Other	Comments
							Threshold location	<p>I would like to comment on only the location of Threshold, the sculpture currently in the area. I had heard that the committee was considering moving the sculpture. For the following reasons, I believe it should remain where it is.</p> <p>Aesthetics. I was familiar with and saw the Threshold sculpture when it was on the St. Olaf campus when it was over a sidewalk that essentially was out in the open. Of course, the sidewalk led to another building but it definitely looked so out of place - wasn't anchored aesthetically to anything - with a sense of "what is that doing out here in the open?".</p> <p>Invitation to Riverwalk. In its current place it sends an inviting signal that there is an entrance to the river walk and is a part of the walk, wall and surrounding trees. If it sits up by the sidewalk it will again look very much out of place, I think. Someone commented that it would signal there is something in the lot to be explored. I think that could be done much more easily and offer much more use flexibility of that space if other elements were there, I am assuming a new walk will be put in the middle leading down to the river, but something up by the sidewalk to frame that, e.g., two big pots like those in Bridge Square would be much more pleasing to mark the entrance to that area.</p> <p>Flexible space. If a flexible area is desired, the sculpture is best in its current location. The area west of the current location of Threshold is not that large, but if the sculpture were anywhere other than where it is, it would limit the flexibility of the other elements in the area.</p> <p>Safety of sculpture. If the sculpture were in the more open area, I think it would be of greater risk for damage from all sides. In addition, moving it at this point might be a risk, since the ends are anchored securely in concrete bases.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment. [REDACTED]</p>
								Basil's Pizza submitted Outdoor Seating Proposal - attached
X		X		X		X		
X		X	X					
X		X				X		
X					X			It would be nice to keep the landscaping natural by using native and pollinator plants. It would also be nice to keep trees in tact by not over pruning or removing them, as they provide shade, beauty, and clean the air for us. To keep it simple, if a gateway entrance is included in the final plans, the riverwalk access signage could just be added to that.
X					X			If a gateway entrance is included, it would be nice to keep it simple and blend it in with nature to flow nicely. Something big and chunky feels outdated and unattractive as well as seems like a waste of space.
X	X	X			X	X		
X		X					murals on the buildings celebrating Latinx/Hispanic community and water. a sculpture garden featuring art inspired by water and the river.	
	X	X		X		X		
	X	X						It would be nice to add garbages, a cool yet comfortable design for table and chairs that is family friendly. A nice hangout space to enjoy the river and to make it convenient for fishers to eat their lunch and also relax for a bit.
								Couldn't Northfield work on getting the streets in better shape for vehicle travel... and stop working on beautification and bike lanes for awhile.
X		X				X		
		X				X		<p>Possibilities:</p> <p>Murals on the building walls</p> <p>decorative lighting</p> <p>an interactive sculpture, attractive to kids, and a fun spot for a quick photo</p>
X		X	X					
X	X	X		X				
X			X	X	X			
		X		X		X		
X	X	X			X	X		Anything would be better than this out-of-the-way and not very inviting space! A nice spot to enjoy a pizza on the river would be excellent.
X	X	X						
X	X	X	X	X	X	X		Be more ppl friendly and have like grills and picnic tables so ppl can relax by the cannon River.
	X							
	X	X						
	X	X						

Benches	Picnic Tables	Improved Landscaping	Tables & Chairs	Bike Racks	Gateway Entrance	Riverwalk Access Signage	Other	Comments
X		X				X		
		X			X	X		
X	X	X	X	X				
X		X	X	X		X		Natural stepping stones, perhaps decorated by Northfield Youth or Teens (helping them to make a connection to nature in Northfield)
X		X		X	X	X		
X		X	X	X		X		It would be nice if the buildings on either side could be incorporated somehow: murals, or an outdoor patio area on the Basil's side, maybe a pergola to soften the transition.
X		X	X					Things to make it more inviting for people to enjoy the area and relax, even to enjoy food. (the river is a gem for Northfield). I think about Centinena Lakes how you can set (read), walk or ride bikes around the water. Visit with friends
X	X	X	X		X			How will any work affect flooding in the area? Entire area needs to be looked at for flood mitigation. Nothing has been done in this area since the 80's and the construction of the bridge. Wall elevation of this side of river is lower than opposite side. Original plan created a flood hazard more to one side than the other.
X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
X	X	X		X				
X	X		X					
	X	X	X			X		
X		X	X		X	X		
X		X						
X		X			X			I hope this has the cooperation of Basil's Pizza. I recall they were going to expand, but something prevented it.
X		X			X	X		
X	X	X			X			Please remove the dam! Being able to watch kayakers go down the river and listening to rushing rapids from this area would be a great way to spend a relaxing afternoon.
X	X	X	X		X	X		I would like to see a nicely landscaped park with access to the Riverwalk. It would be great if it included places people can stop to enjoy a picnic or takeout and a place to keep trash tidy from those activates.
		X		X	X			I would like to have the City move the rectangular planter from Spring Creek Park to the concrete slab near the sidewalk which is not shown on your pictures. I would then plant it in the Garden Club flower selections to match the City plantings. This would be at the entrance. \ Bike racks are always good and could be on the left of the picture. On the right a serpentine small landscaped areas with a mediam or small tree and plantings could be done. [REDACTED]
X		X						You should put a animal shelter there
	X	X	X	X	X	X		
X			X		X	X	handicap accessibility to the walk	sidewalk enhanced to move smoothly from street *& street light down between the buildings moving from a wide oval around the streetlight narrowing to a normal sidewalk (grassy sides), to ramp and stairs
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Trees that provide shade	
X		X	X			X		
X	X	X		X	X	X		
		X	X		X	X		Would love to see some public art in this area as well if either of the businesses would agree to a mural.
X		X			X			Couple of street lights could enhance the area
X		X						please consider costs and keep it to a minimum for taxpayers
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Handicapped access - hand rails (railings) on all inclines, wide paths, slopes not steps, etc.	Also, what about public restrooms? Perhaps no room here, but to be considered.
		X	X	X		X	Murals,on,side,buildings,	
		X		X		X	Artist,mural,or,"livewall",to,soften,the,buildings,on,the,sides,(see,attached),,incorporate,overhead,or,gro und,lighting,into,the,area,to,really,draw,attention,as,an,attractive,entrance,at,night,(see,attached),,,Dog, water,station	I would love to see Basil's add outdoor seating in the back that could connect to an improved access here. I have seen cars parked on the sidewalk in that area and don't think it is safe or attractive and dumps oils on the sidewalk too.

Benches	Picnic Tables	Improved Landscaping	Tables & Chairs	Bike Racks	Gateway Entrance	Riverwalk Access Signage	Other	Comments
X		X		X			livewall,or,murals,to,soften,buildings,(see,attached),,landscape,or,overhead,lighting,(see,attached),,dog,waterer,station	- would love to see basil's offer outdoor dining on their back patio area. would be beautiful overlooking the riverwalk. Thank you for allowing input! this is so cool.
X		X		X				Keep it simple.
X		X			X	X		If you have picnic tables there will be garbage left all over-keep it neat and clean
		X		X	X		sculpture,or,other,public,art	
X	X	X		X				Hopefully you will do something to the sides of the buildings. They look bad.
X		X				X		
X	X	X		X				
X	X	X	X				A,nice,patio,like,area,for,eating,,drinking,,relaxing,,reading,,etc.	If the City decides to make it into a hangout/eating area, they will need to provide more areas for garbage disposal and actually enforce littering along the river. I see lots of garbage especially left by people fishing along the river and no enforcement from the City. Thank you in advance for your time and attention!
		X		X				How about planting a whole lot of native plants like you did for the riverbank south of the falls? And it might be nice for the neighbor on the south to still be able to park their car under their deck and get out using the blacktop: maybe a little pavement there. I think benches and picnic tables are not appropriate for that area because the view of the river is not that great. But people will go down that way and enjoy the plantings. Bike racks are always helpful. Signage is not necessary... we can see that it goes to the river! The gateway entrance sculpture is beautiful. Why would you need anything else?
X		X			X	X		I would love to see the area becoming more integral in linking the river's east and west side businesses in a more beautiful and cohesive manner. Right now, the businesses are entirely separate from one side of the river to the next. Also, please work towards better development of the space immediately adjacent to and overlooking the river (the "riverwalk" area). We have a gorgeous natural feature that should be showcased with restaurant/bar deck seating, public gathering areas, landscaping, etc. and not overlooked as it currently is. Doing so will also do much to integrate the two sides of the river.
X		X			X	X		
X		X			X			This is a pretty narrow space so feels a bit limited/constrained for outdoor gathering. However, if there's no potential for a business to be built here, then perhaps one could consider the walls be used for a series of murals. The murals would be ephemeral in nature but would be up for at least one year before a new one would be painted by a different artist. Having murals being continually painted could be a real draw for visitors to the area ("Let's go check out what mural is being up now.") and could involve community members' participation in the process. Another idea might be to use this space to create a more elaborate all-round year light display since it faces highway 3. This could draw people to downtown Northfield from a different vantage point. It could be aesthetically pleasing while activating and brightening the area and surrounding buildings. I feel that benches are less bulky than picnic tables and are more suitable for this narrow space.
		X	X		X	X		
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Options,for,food,trucks,or,food,stands.	Archer House bricks, Limestone, Statuesque figures, Boardwalk, USA Flag(s) Make the walkway to the boardwalk using Archer House bricks, and incorporate limestone and gardens, trellis', gazebo, and finish it off with a few of our American flags 😊😊
X	X	X						

File submission from online survey





The NDDC is a proud member of:



3/18/21

Northfield Riverwalk West Side Entry enhancement

Submitted by: NDDC Design Committee

Members: Dan Bergeson (Carleton College-retired), Cliff Clark (Heritage Preservation Commission), Judy Code (Northfield Garden Club), Chris Ellison (Age-Friendly Northfield), Greg Siems (NDDC Executive Director)

The following is a list of recommendations developed and endorsed by our volunteer committee, which is guided by Main Street America's goals for community design: 1) Create an inviting, inclusive atmosphere; 2) Celebrate historic character; and 3) Foster accessible, people-centered public spaces.

Essential elements:

- Quality – improvements should be made with attractive, durable materials that do not require extensive ongoing maintenance or upkeep.
- Connectivity – improvements should emphasize accessibility for all ages and abilities, as well as highlighting the parcel's strategic location relative to the Riverwalk and pedestrian bridge, acting as a "gateway" to the rest of downtown Northfield.
- Consistency – improvements should maintain the same look and feel as other similar elements throughout downtown, paying special to the Streetscape Framework Plan and the HPC's Downtown Design Guidelines, among others.

Specific features to consider:

- Wayfinding – clear signage with directions to the Riverwalk and downtown via the pedestrian bridge to promote a welcoming and accessible environment.
- Walkway – should be ADA-compliant and utilize exposed aggregate cement or a related material to match the existing walkways along the river.
- Seating – no more than two (2) benches to promote a relaxing space, minimize crowding, and encourage flow of people to utilize existing tables and chairs along the Riverwalk itself.
- Landscaping – focus on low-maintenance plants, shrubs, and trees while ensuring plenty of opportunities for natural shade over seating areas. Utilize multiple planters or beds and avoid grass to eliminate the need for mowing.
 - May also consider trimming existing foliage on the east side of the property to improve sight lines of the river and draw people in from the street-side entrance. Existing landscaping beds should also be cleaned up to help the "Threshold" sculpture stand out.

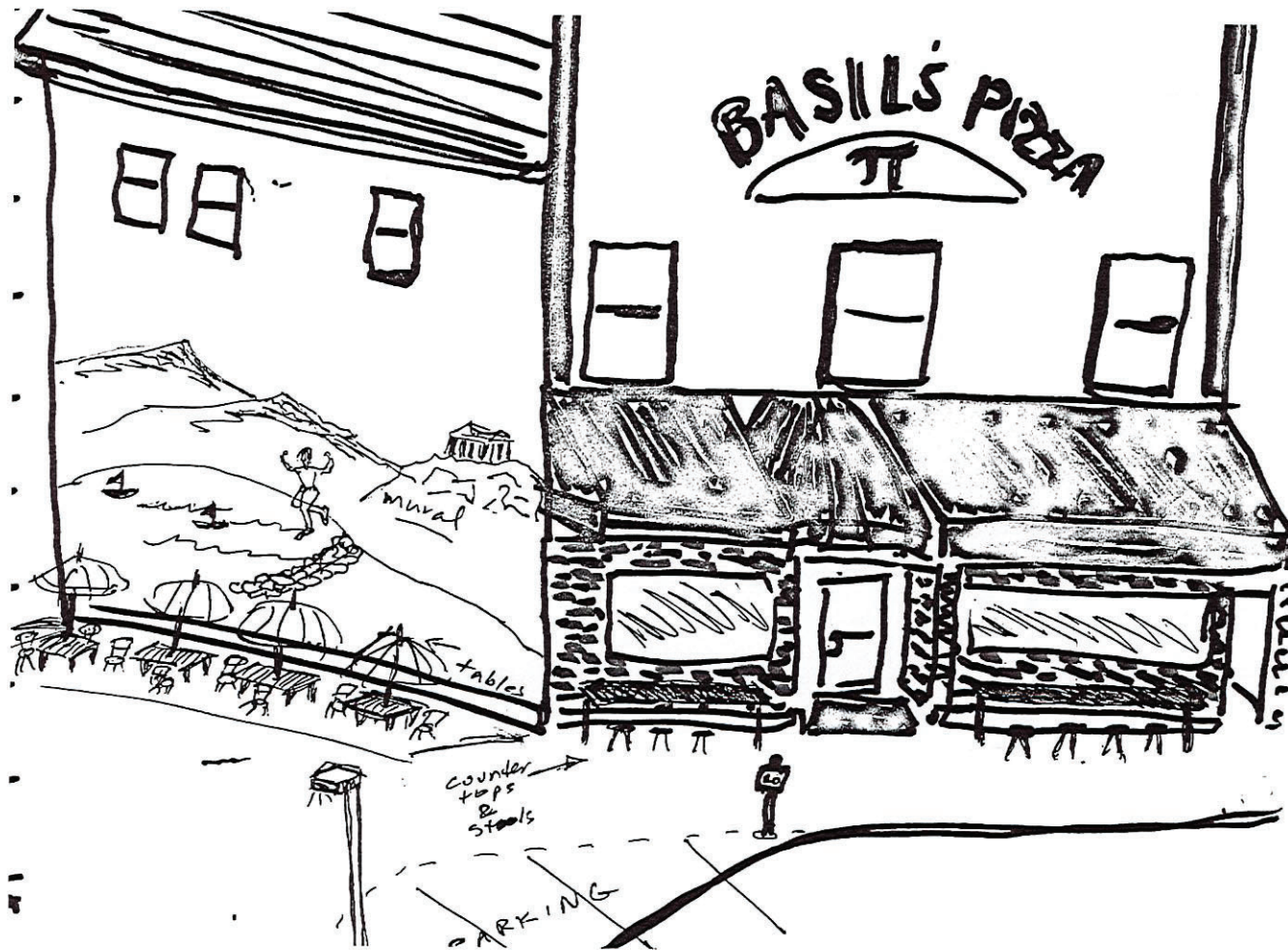
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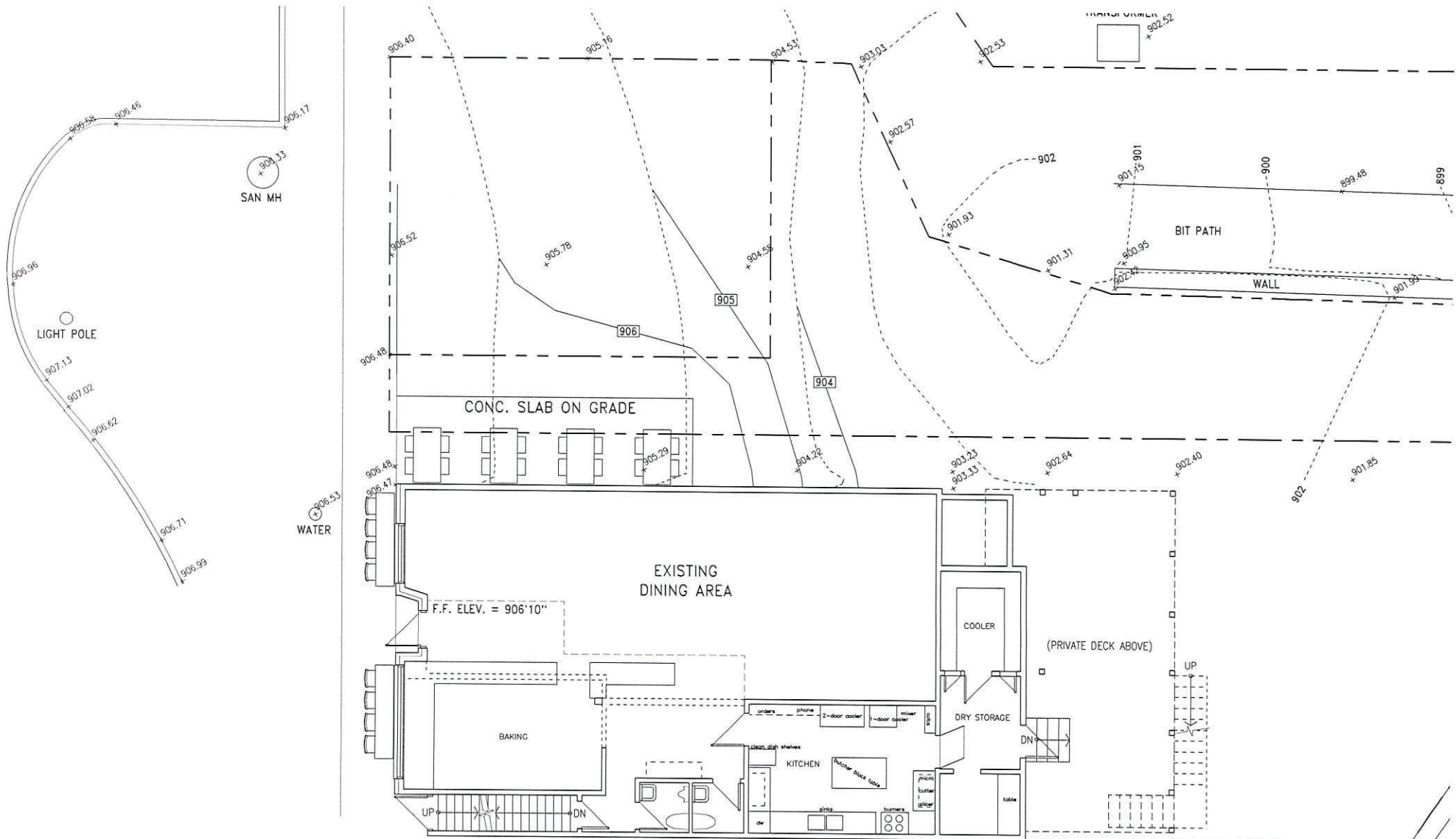
Specific features (cont.):

- Public art – to complement the recently installed “Threshold” sculpture and to further develop the “Arts Corridor” concept. Could perhaps utilize a couple of concrete pads for small sculptures or other installations.
- Lighting – to enhance the area’s aesthetics, promote safety, and improve usability beyond peak daylight hours. Street lamps similar to those on the walkway leading to the pedestrian bridge would be ideal.
- Attractive receptacles for garbage and recycling to discourage the littering that is unfortunately a common occurrence on this parcel as it stands today.
- A series of attractive bike racks within the semi-circular portion of sidewalk that juts into the parking lot to encourage non-motorized transport to access/visit downtown. If possible, repairing or replacing this portion of the sidewalk would also greatly improve the entrance’s look.
- Clearly establish and promote respect of boundaries with private property to the north and south – ideally with attractive green/natural elements and/or artwork.

We appreciate the City of Northfield’s effort to improve this neglected parcel of land as well as seeking community input to guide these improvements. We strongly recommend, however, that there should be an additional opportunity to provide feedback on a number of design options/sketches prior to a final plan being approved. If we can provide any further assistance throughout the design process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Greg Siems, NDDC Executive Director, can be reached at greg@nddc.org.





FLOOR PLAN - Outdoor Seating

S M S Q 17.004

2021.03.22

SCALE: Graphic

0 4' 8' 16'

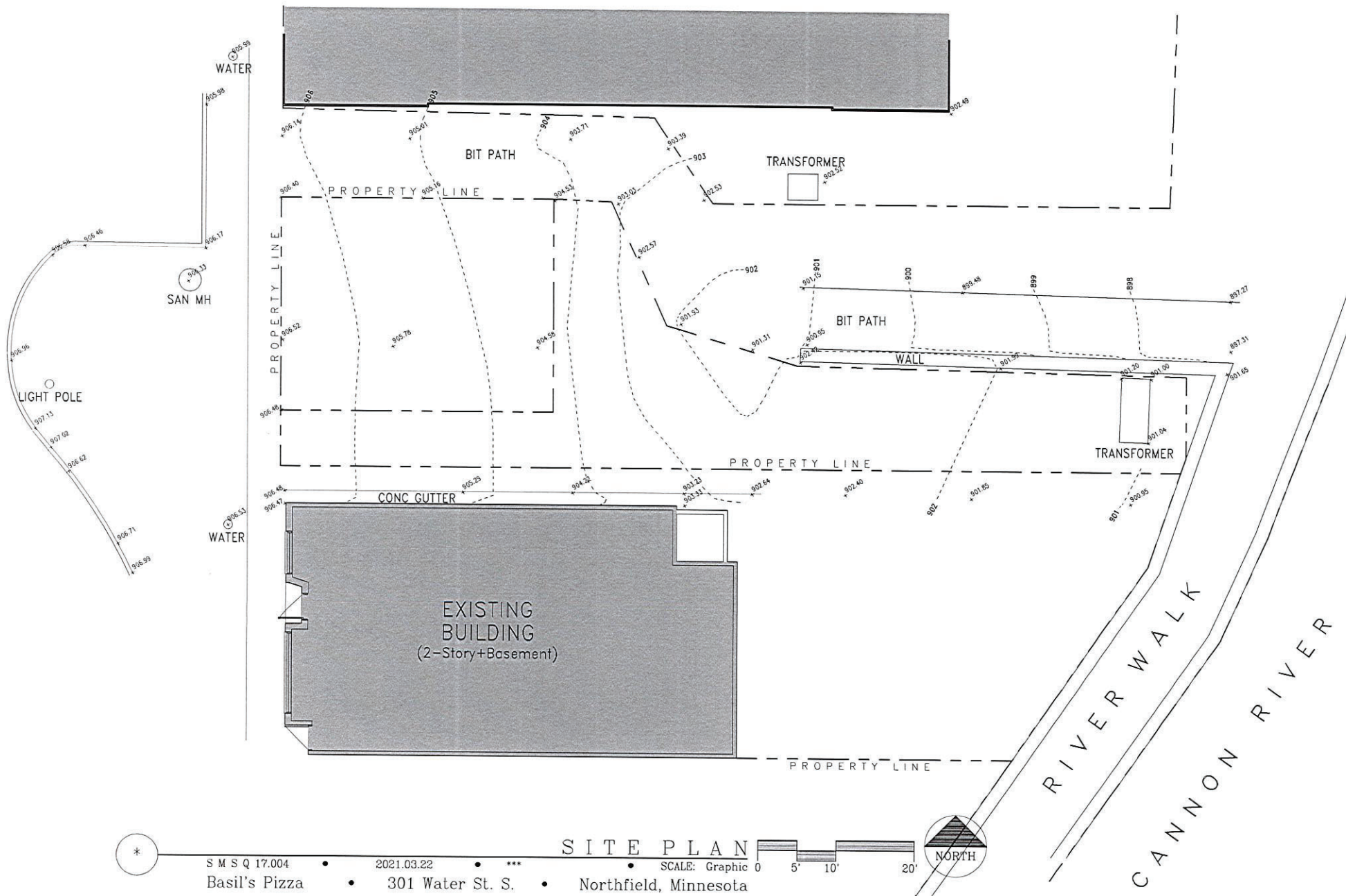


Basil's Pizza

301 Water St. S.

Northfield, Minnesota

SOUTH WATER STREET



Basil's Pizza

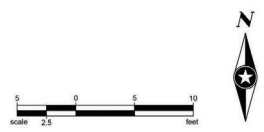
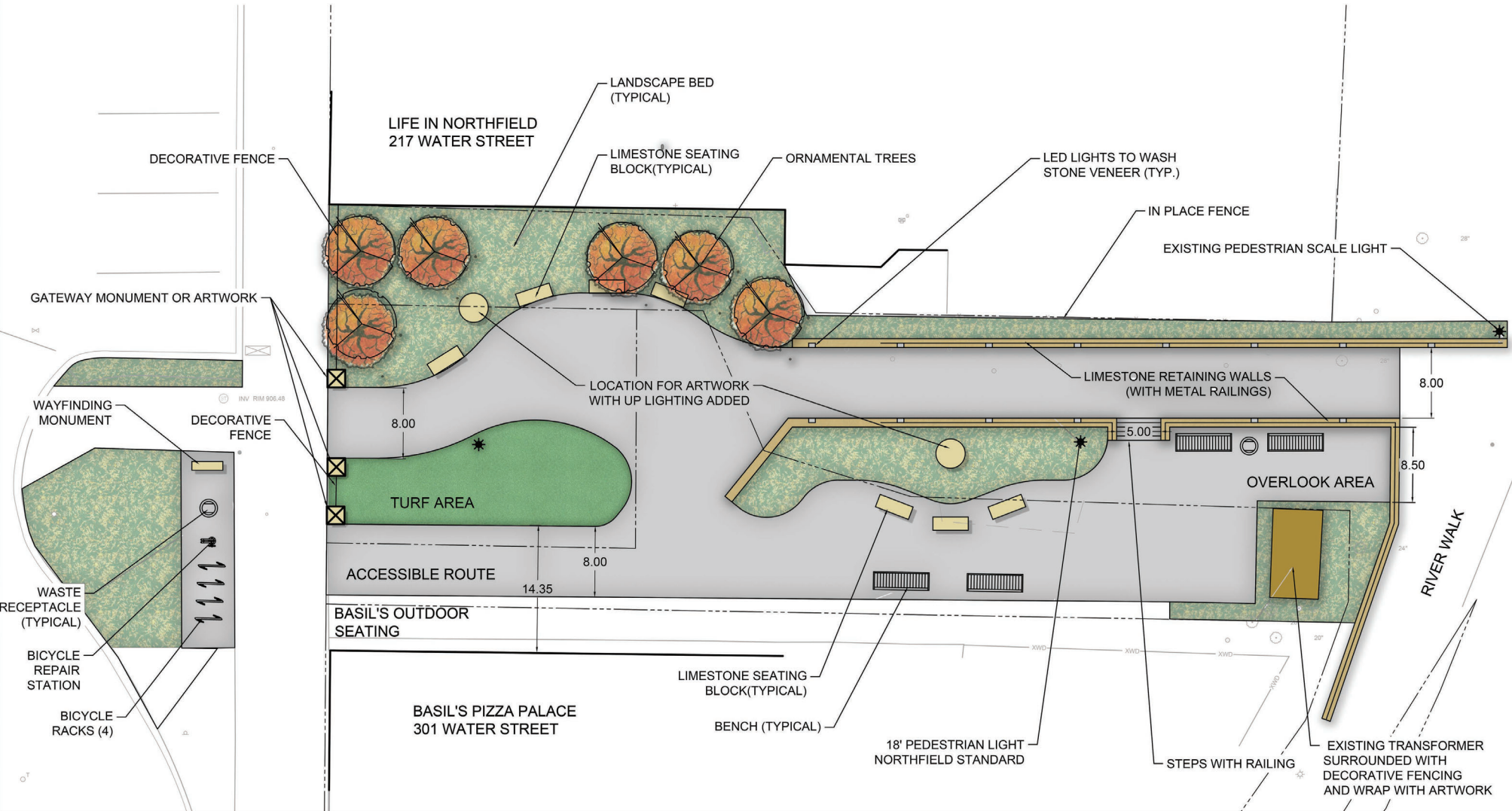
301 Water St. S.

Northfield, Minnesota

SITE PLAN

SCALE: Graphic 0 5' 10' 20'





RIVERWALK WEST SIDE ENTRY PLAZA
PRELIMINARY CONCEPT
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
8-2-2021





RIVERWALK WEST SIDE ENTRY PLAZA

PHOTO BOARDS





RIVERWALK WEST SIDE ENTRY PLAZA

PHOTO BOARDS





RIVERWALK WEST SIDE ENTRY PLAZA

PHOTO BOARDS



RIVERWALK WEST SIDE ENTRY PLAZA

PHOTO BOARDS

RIVERWALK WEST SIDE ENTRY PLAZA - ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE COSTS FOR PRELIMINARY CONCEPT - AUGUST 2, 2021

ITEM NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	NOTES
1	DESIGN & ENGINEERING	\$58,000	15%
2	DESIGN CONTINGENCY	\$58,000	15%
3	MOBILIZATION	\$18,000	~5% OF OVERALL COST
4	REMOVALS & SITE PREPARATION	\$8,000	
5	SITE GRADING	\$5,000	
6	UTILITIES	\$20,000	
7	SUBSURFACE DRAINAGE	\$15,000	DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY DEPLOYABLE FLOOD ACCOMMODATIONS
8	RETAINING WALLS & STRUCTURES	\$190,200	INCLUDES: CONCRETE FOR WALLS & STRUCTURES; EXCAVATION; AGGREGATE FOR FILL; REINFORCING BAR; CONCRETE CAPS FOR WALLS & GATEWAY STRUCTURES; 4" THICK STONE MASONRY VENEER; METAL RAILINGS FOR FALL PROTECTION FROM WALLS
9	PAVING & SURFACE TREATMENTS	\$20,800	INCLUDES: 4" CONCRETE SIDEWALK; CONCRETE STEPS AND RAILINGS
10	SITE AMENITIES & FURNISHINGS	\$62,000	INCLUDES: LIMESTONE SEATING BLOCKS; ART PADS; BIKE RACKS; BIKE REPAIR STATION; BOLLARDS; WASTE/RECYCLE RECEPTACLES; METAL BENCH; DECORATIVE METAL SCREEN; AND METAL FENCING.
11	LIGHTING	\$28,000	INCLUDES: LIGHTING UNITS; LED UP LIGHTING; LED WALL LIGHTING
12	LANDSCAPING	\$6,500	INCLUDES PLANT MATERIAL OF: TREES; SHRUBS; PERENNIALS
13	TURF ESTABLISHMENT & EROSION CONTROL	\$10,075	INCLUDES: SOIL AMENDMENT FOR LANDSCAPING' MULCH; EROSION CONTROL

ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST \$499,575