

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** DECEMBER 2, 2015

**TO:** CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE OLD AND HISTORIC  
ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

**FROM:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

**SUBJECT:** COMMON ELEMENTS PALETTE FOR THE ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT

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### **I. SUMMARY**

#### Concept Review

The material before the Board is part of a BAR Concept Review for a Common Elements palette for the Alexandria waterfront, as envisioned in the Waterfront Plan adopted by City Council in 2012. The City, working with the design team at OLIN, is preparing a foundation of Common Elements in accordance with the plan to provide a framework for the public parks, promenade and other publicly-accessed spaces in the Waterfront Plan area.

#### Process

At this time, the BAR is being asked to provide guidance on the draft Common Elements. As the Waterfront Plan area is an extensive area with several different contexts, from the marina at the Torpedo Factory to the future waterfront parks to the existing parks at Founders Park and Oronoco Bay to the future public piers at Robinson Terminal North and South, there is a clear need for unifying elements that convey the public nature and public access to the waterfront. As City Council and the BAR have approved redevelopment at four redevelopment sites that are now in the site plan review process, it is imperative to select certain Common Elements as quickly as possible. The Common Elements currently before the BAR at this time include:

- Paving (The Strand and the promenade)
- Lighting (replacement Gadsby light and promenade light)
- Art and History elements (shoreline demarcation banding, markers/medallions, inscriptions)

It should be noted that there will likely be additional Common Elements, such as lighting for the parks, piers and street-end gardens as well as handrails on the promenade, marina and piers, where determined by the building code and the City's Risk Manager. These additional Common Elements will be reviewed by the BAR at a later date, dependent on timing of the funding and construction for the related elements. For example, recognizing that flood mitigation is a top priority, the design and construction of the street-end gardens may be several years away and the associated Common Elements for those spaces may not be reviewed and approved until that time. Therefore, the broader Common Elements palette should be understood as a palette that may be amended from time to time.

## **II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

Staff strongly supports the concept of Common Elements palette that can unite the waterfront area and utilize site elements that are historically appropriate, while still allowing variety that can respond to the immediate location and context.

### **Paving**

The proposed paving for The Strand and the promenade are based on historic precedents found in Old Town, including yellow (tan) and red brick, as well as granite curbs. The proposed east-west streets in the unit blocks will be red brick with red brick sidewalks, a cobble gutter and a gray granite curb. The Strand, identified in the plan as a special street with a pedestrian emphasis adjacent to the future waterfront park will be a yellow brick similar to the brick in the 200 block of Prince Street and commonly used for historic gutter pans on King Street, etc. Gutters on The Strand are intended to be cobblestone, recalling the historic cobble gutters of the 100 block of Prince and portions of S. Lee Street, etc. Staff supports all of the proposed brick paving, cobble gutters, and granite curbs and banding, finding that they directly recall original elements of the historic district while delineating a unique character for the waterfront area.

The promenade will feature a range of materials depending on the location but will feature a continuous one or two-foot wide granite band on the edges. The granite banding, in conjunction with a special promenade light fixture, will convey the continuous and public nature of this path. The design team has proposed paving in the core that is a compilation of concrete plank pavers in a mottled, three color mix (gray-hued). The pavers are 16” by 4” by 4”. Staff supports the use of concrete plank pavers and the tonal color family proposed for both glare and long term maintenance reasons. Staff supports wider banding to enable more robust inscriptions in some designated areas but recognizes that design constraints may require the narrower banding where the promenade is narrower outside of the core area. The boardwalk adjacent to the promenade is proposed to be of a wood or wood composite. The BAR approved a change from treated lumber to composite planks at the City Marina was approximately 15 years ago because of ongoing maintenance reasons, and this is consistent with the BAR’s current Modern and Sustainable Materials policies, but staff recommends that durable and naturally occurring wood decking be used where feasible, perhaps only at designated feature areas.

### **Lighting**

Staff finds that the area that needs additional work at this time relates to lighting. Staff is currently studying the feasibility of a more historically appropriate Gadsby light for portions of the historic district that will be more energy efficient and more consistent with historic streetlights in Alexandria. The proposed Gadsby light prototype will be installed in the 300 block of Cameron Street within the coming months and will likely be an appropriate streetlight for both the street areas in the waterfront as well as the greater “Gadsby Light District” in Old Town. The design team has proposed four general lighting approaches for the promenade: period/historic, industrial/wharf, nautical/cable, and a combination design (modern pole and industrial pendant light fixture). Although the slightly nautical/cable fixture is included in the package as Alternative 3, it was not warmly received by the Parks and Recreation Commission or the Waterfront Commission, and as a result the “combination” design has been included in this iteration.

Selecting an appropriate promenade light fixture, one that will link both the industrial character of the marina in front of the Torpedo Factory with open park space with existing residential buildings is challenging. There is no one “character” that defines the entire waterfront and a stylized light fixture runs the risk of being incongruous with some of the various contexts in which it will exist. No doubt, the promenade is a unique and special zone, so the idea of a unique and special light fixture along its length is appropriate for the reasons previously described. Because the Gadsby streetlights will be on the streets of Old Town, it does not seem to be a unique fixture for the waterfront promenade. With the possible introduction of a new, more historically appropriate Gadsby streetlight, it seems odd to select a similar but different and decidedly historicist or period light on the promenade that may cause visitors and residents to wonder which is the true historic streetlight.

While an industrial or wharf-inspired light fixture may be appropriate on the historically commercial Alexandria waterfront, the example in the submission materials (Sheets 18 and 20) appears almost Art Deco and the Torpedo Factory is our only Art Deco building on the waterfront. Staff recommends that further examples in this direction be studied and could lead to a variation on either the industrial or combination schemes. Another option for a promenade light would be to utilize a variation of the George Washington Memorial Parkway light fixture which has been well-received in the community. Although the promenade would be a different context from the Parkway, it is a well-designed light that has its roots in Alexandria and having common parts for these two north-south corridors would make maintenance easier for the City.

The best option may be to select a contemporary but less stylized light that would function as a common and unifying *background* component, recognizing that the promenade itself and the Potomac River are the features, rather than a specific light fixture. Once the Waterfront Plan is realized, and portions of the area will be constructed as part of the approved redevelopment sites, there will be many engaging elements from historic interpretation to public art to ongoing activity, so that the promenade light itself will be less of a focus. Staff asks that the BAR provide design direction for the landscape consultants at this time to clarify what style and type of light are appropriate for the promenade.

#### Site Furnishings

The submission shows examples of site furnishings that may be appropriate in the parks, street-end gardens and promenade. Until the parks and gardens are fully designed, it is premature to contemplate what the benches and railings will be. However, it is recommended that these future elements relate to the other items that are approved as Common Elements. Additionally, while the locations and requirements for the railings will not be subject to the BAR’s approval, the design of the railing is and will be an important to define the public space along the water’s edge. The design team should ensure that these elements are fully integrated into the understanding of the promenade.

#### Art and History

Staff supports the proposed demarcation of the 1749 shoreline and 1845 pier line with the stone bandings. However it is recommended that as the park design and waterfront “rooms” evolve, that the banding be carefully integrated into the design so as to appropriately convey these

elements. For example, there must be consideration to how the pier line is depicted through the lawn area.

As the BAR enthusiastically supported the inclusion of a steel representation of the railroad tracks in the sidewalk at Robinson Terminal South, and staff recommends that this be included in the Common Elements as there may be other opportunities to interpret the rails in the other waterfront areas along Union Street and in Old Town North.

### **III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the BAR support the proposed design direction for paving on the streets, including The Strand, and the promenade, as well as Art and History elements. Staff recommends that the design team continue to study an appropriate promenade light and return with alternatives. When selecting this light, consideration should also be given to light fixtures within the public parks, street end gardens, public piers and the marina, etc. Future Common Element materials, not limited to bollards, marina power pedestals, railings, additional lighting and fixed furniture, should always relate to the adopted Common Elements palette and will be reviewed at a later date.

#### **Next Steps**

At this time, it is expected that the project team will incorporate feedback from the BAR, Parks and Recreation Commission and the Waterfront Commission. The team will then present a revised Common Elements palette to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Waterfront Commission before returning to the BAR with a formal application for a Certificate of Appropriateness this winter. The applicant should continue to work with staff as plans are refined to ensure continued conformance with BAR requirements and to make revisions based on the Board's comments at the work session.

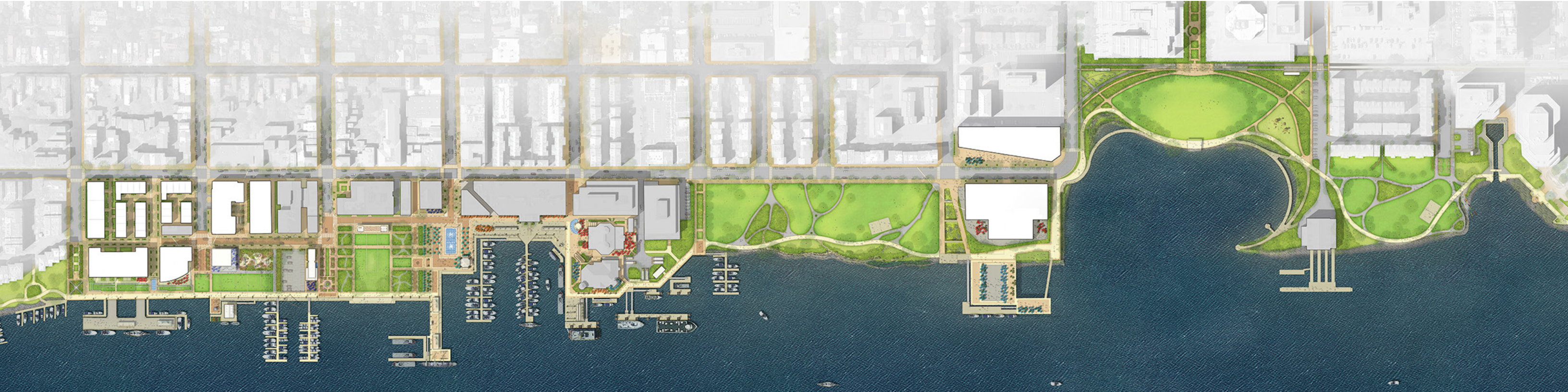
#### **STAFF**

Catherine K. Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1— Alexandria Waterfront Common Elements Presentation for December 2, 2015





**ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT  
COMMON ELEMENTS**

**BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
2 DECEMBER 2015**

# INTRODUCTION

1. Scope and Schedule
2. Waterfront Common Elements
3. Waterfront Implementation Schedule
4. Common Elements – Development Sites
  - Paving
  - Lighting
  - Art and History Elements
5. Common Elements – Future Development



# SCOPE and SCHEDULE

Task 1: Common Elements Palette	September 2015 to January 2016
Community Engagement	
• Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting	October 15, 2015
• Waterfront Commission Meeting	October 20, 2015
• Board of Architectural Review Work Session	December 2, 2015
• Open House and Public Display	December 3, 2015
• Waterfront Commission Meeting	December 15, 2015
• Board of Architectural Review	TBD

Task 2: Coordination with Private Development Sites      September 2015 to January 2016

\* Meeting dates are subject to change



# COMMON ELEMENTS

PAVING



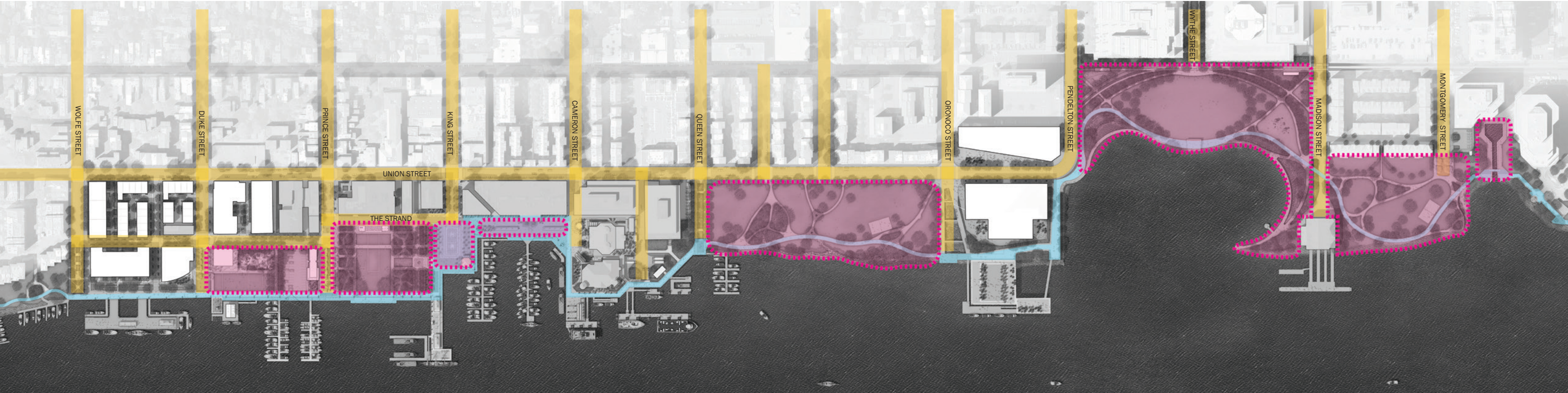
LIGHTING






SITE FURNISHINGS



ART AND HISTORY



## ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMON ELEMENTS

-  STREETS
-  PROMENADE
-  WATERFRONT ROOMS

## COMMON ELEMENTS

- PAVING
- LIGHTING
- SITE FURNISHINGS
- ART AND HISTORY



# COMMON ELEMENTS

## PAVING



### STREETS

- brick sidewalk/street
- granite curb
- cobble gutter
- raised table transition
- raised table field
- crosswalk

### PROMENADE

- granite band
- promenade paving (core only)
- unique paving (per development site or waterfront room)

### WATERFRONT ROOMS & STREET END GARDENS

- unique paving (per development site or waterfront room)

## LIGHTING



### STREETS

- City standard - Gadsby

### PROMENADE

- Waterfront light (single/double arm)

### WATERFRONT ROOMS & STREET END GARDENS

- catenary lighting

## SITE FURNISHINGS



### STREETS

- City standard bench
- City standard bicycle rack & bikeshare station
- City standard trash receptacle
- City standard bollard
- mounting blocks

### PROMENADE

- custom bench
- handrail
- marina tie-up
- fixed furniture

### WATERFRONT ROOMS & STREET END GARDENS

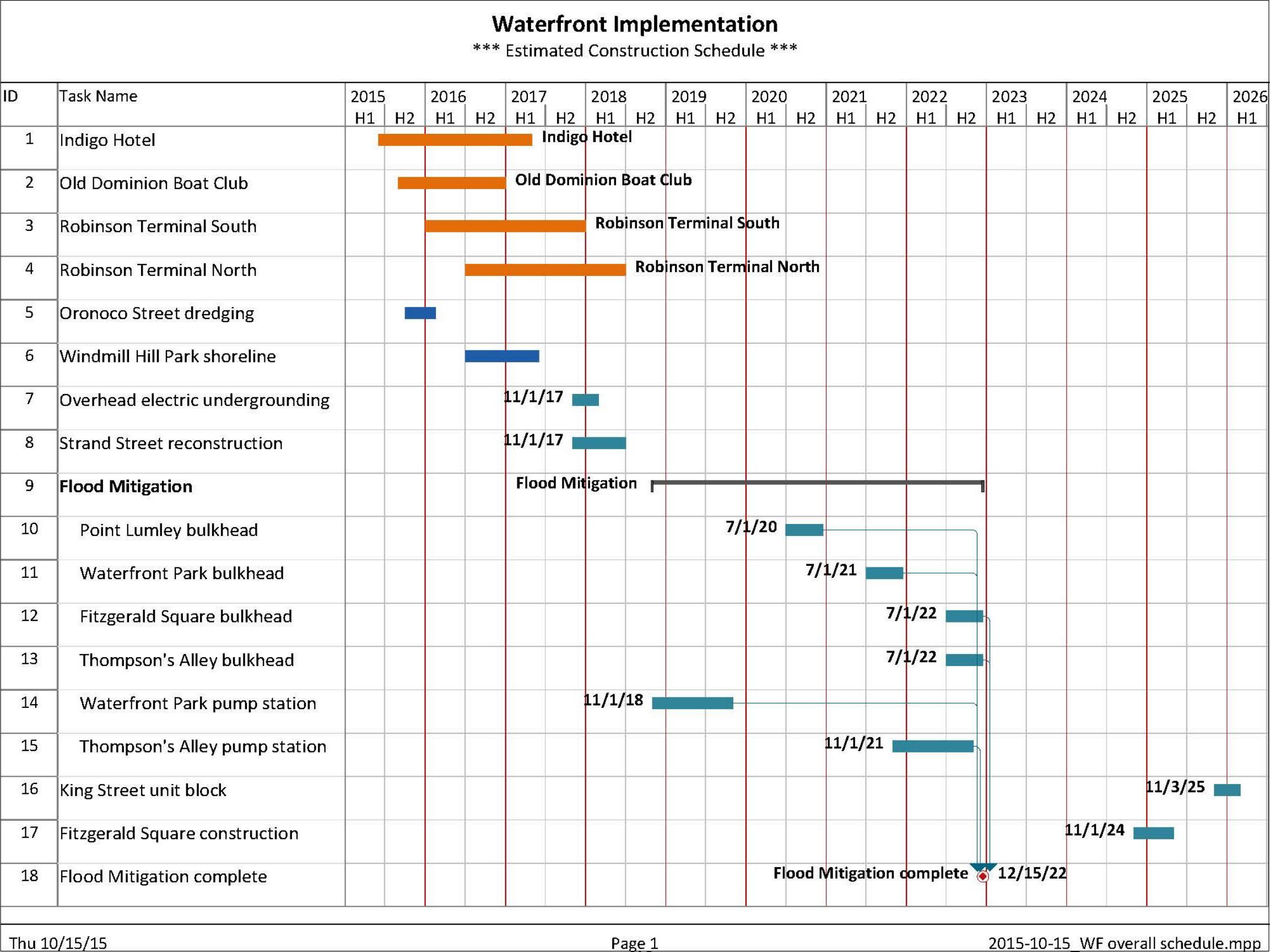
- Waterfront bench
- flexible/moveable furniture
- fixed furniture

## ART AND HISTORY



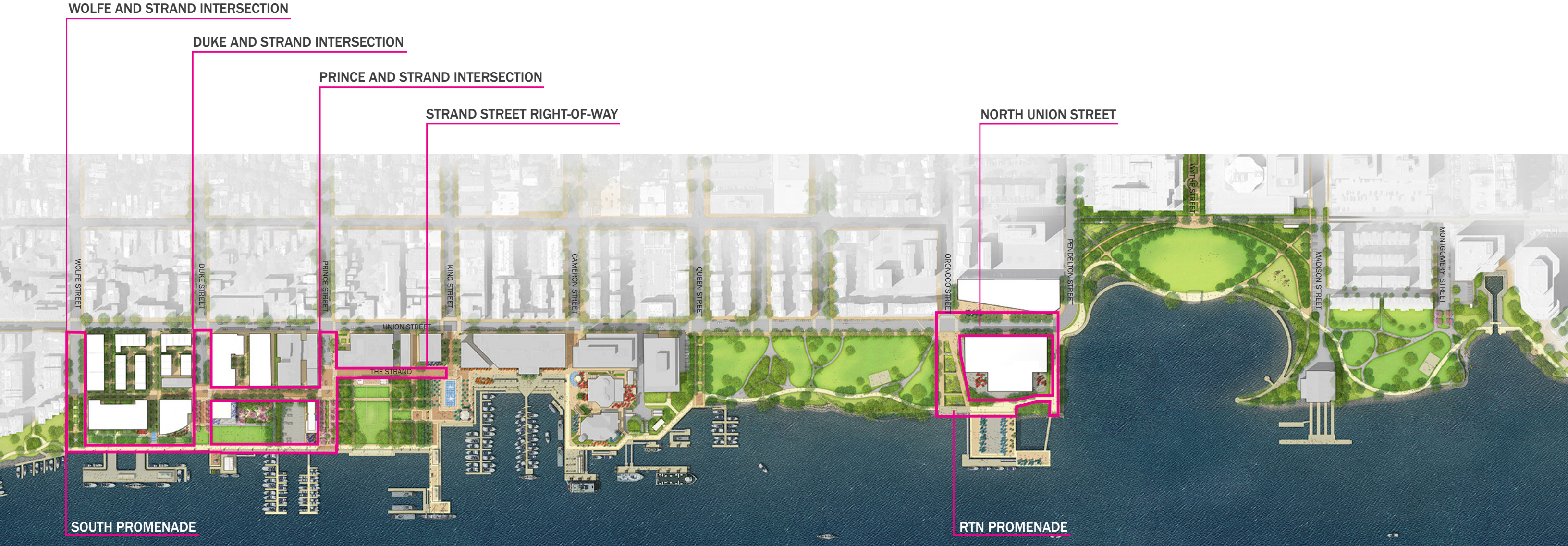
- historic shoreline banding
- historic markers/medallions
- inscriptions
- thematic walks & rooms

# WATERFRONT IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE



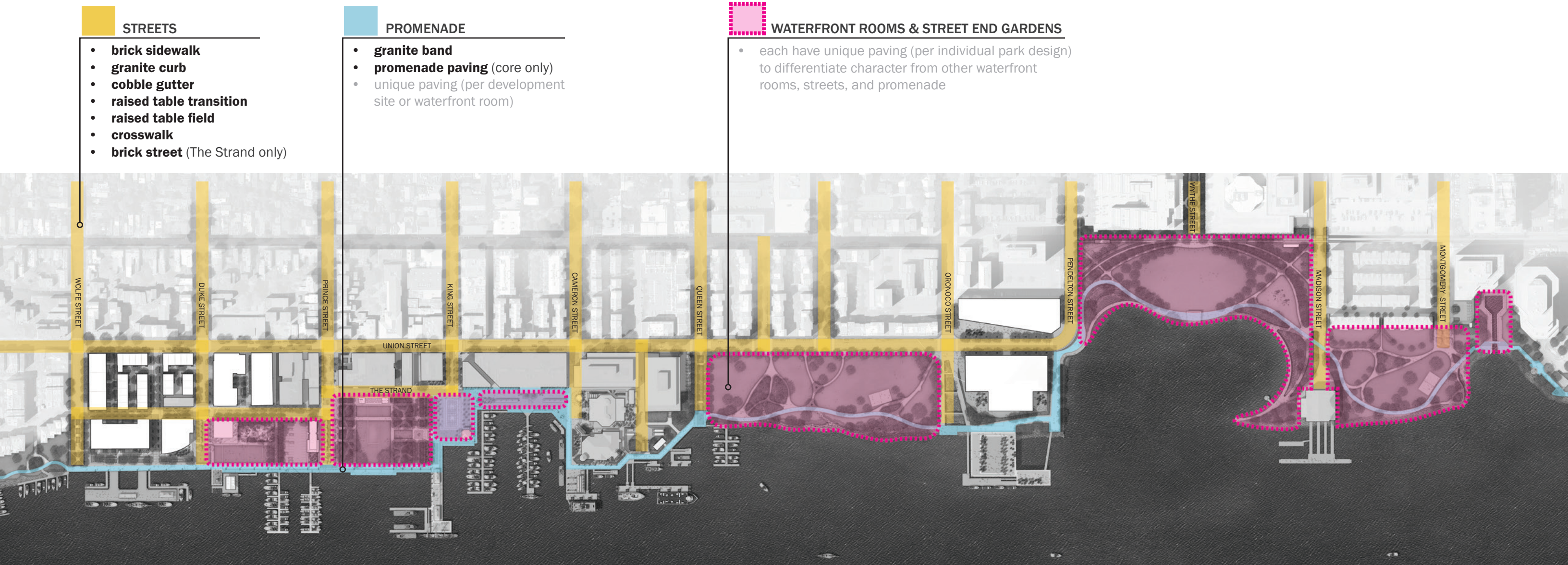


# COMMON ELEMENTS - DEVELOPMENT AREAS

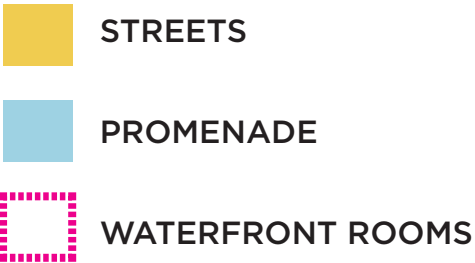




# PAVING COMMON ELEMENTS



## LAYERS OF THE COMMON ELEMENTS





# PAVING PRECEDENTS - OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA





# PAVING - STREETS



## BRICK SIDEWALK / RAISED TABLE FIELD

Alexandria City standard red brick pavers, full range. Dry-laid with sand swept joints. Dry-laid vehicular-rated pavers in areas of vehicular use. Vehicular pavers to match sidewalk pavers.



## GRANITE CURB

Neutral light gray granite, thermal finish.



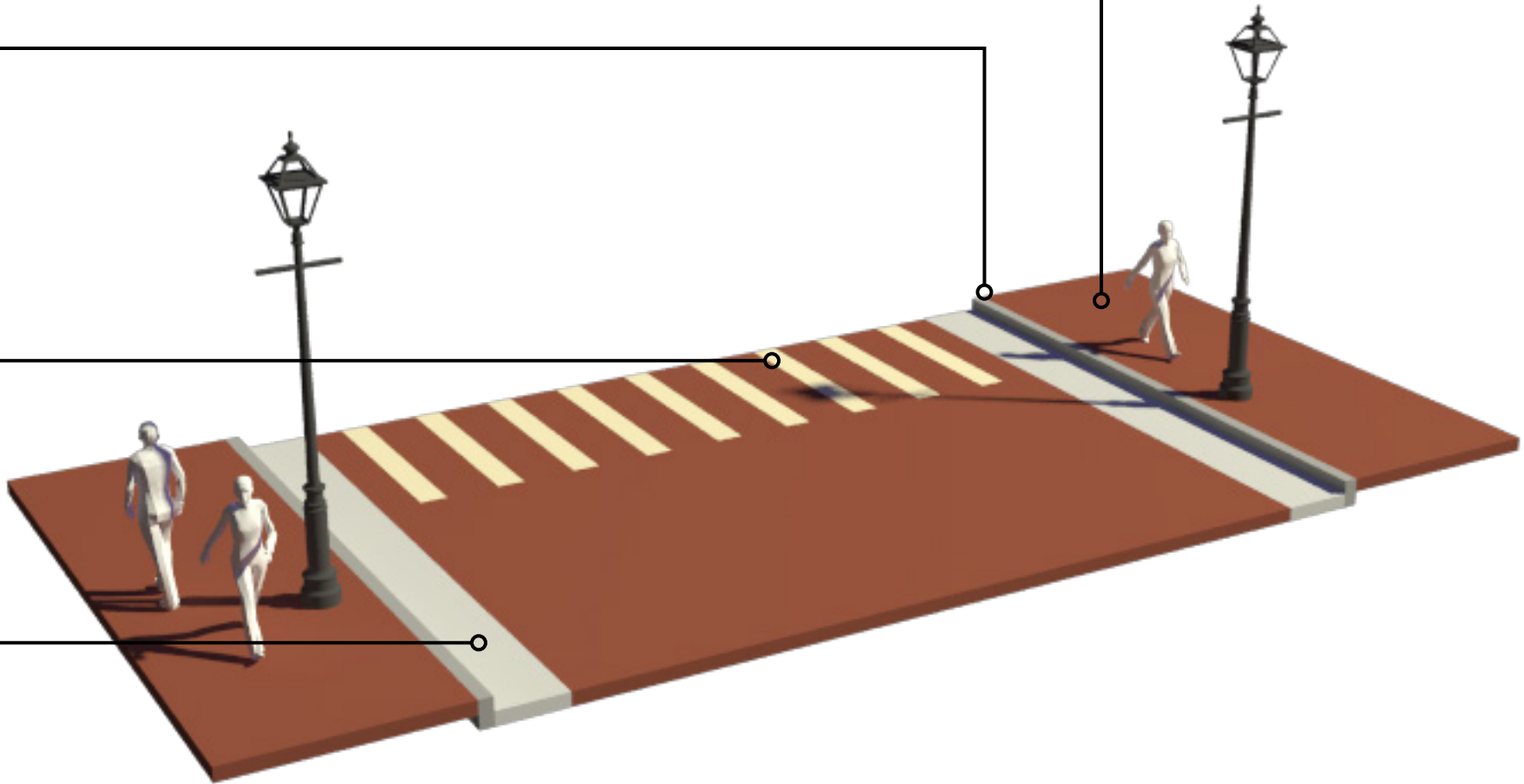
## CROSSWALK

Vehicular brick paver in light tan/beige/off-white color, single range to provide contrast striping with street brick.



## COBBLE GUTTER / RAISED TABLE TRANSITION

Neutral light gray granite cobbles in a tumbled or split-face finish that provides for a contrast in texture, but allows for accessible pedestrian circulation. Match color to granite curbs.





# PAVING - STREETS (THE STRAND)



## BRICK SIDEWALK / RAISED TABLE FIELD

Alexandria City standard red brick pavers, full range. Dry-laid with sand swept joints. Dry-laid vehicular-rated pavers in areas of vehicular use. Vehicular pavers to match sidewalk pavers.



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Neutral light gray granite, thermal finish.



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Vehicular brick paver in light tan/beige/off-white color, single range to provide contrast striping with street brick.



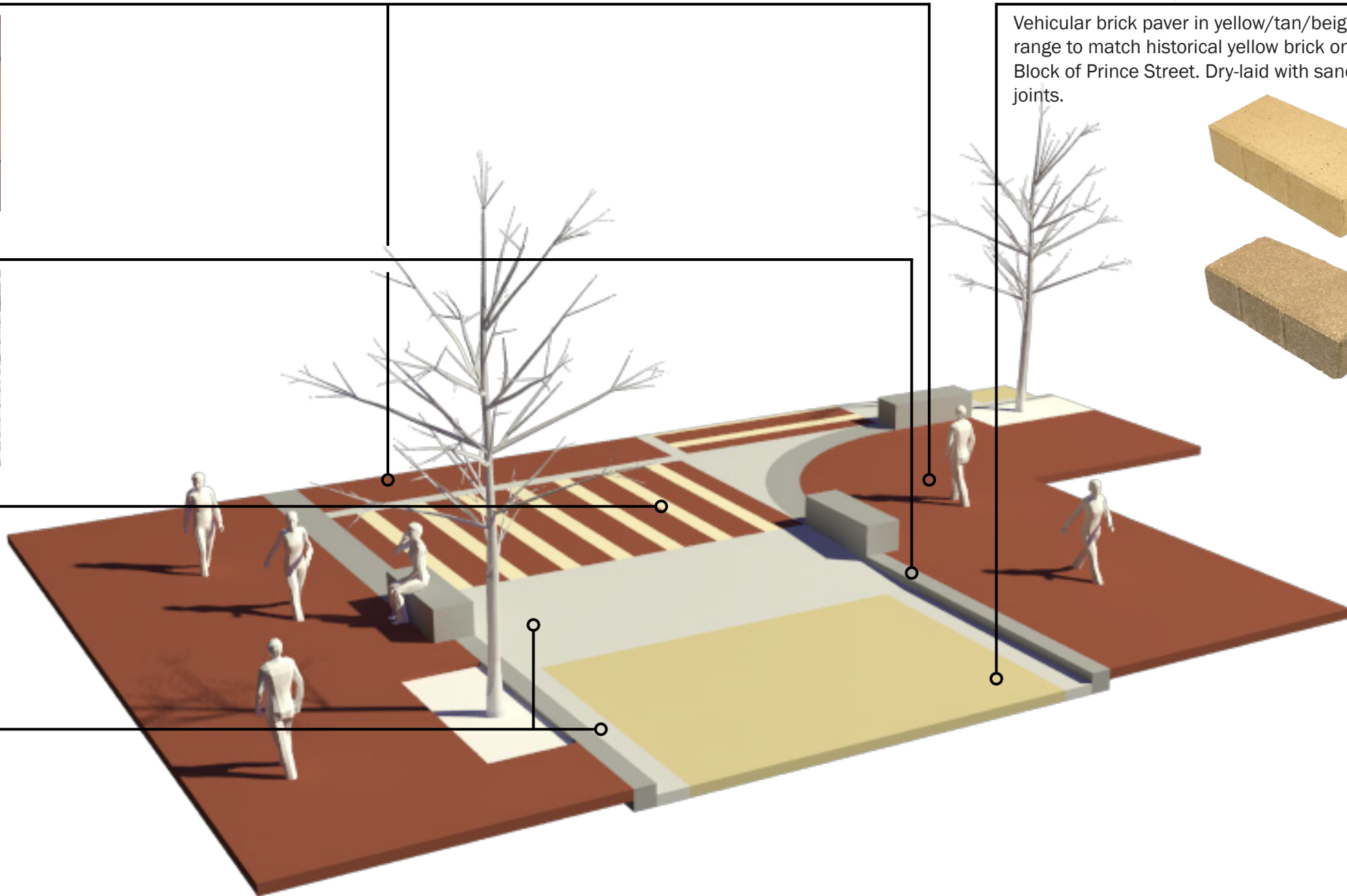
## COBBLE GUTTER / RAISED TABLE TRANSITION

Neutral light gray granite cobbles in a tumbled or split-face finish that provides for a contrast in texture, but allows for accessible pedestrian circulation. Match color to granite curbs.



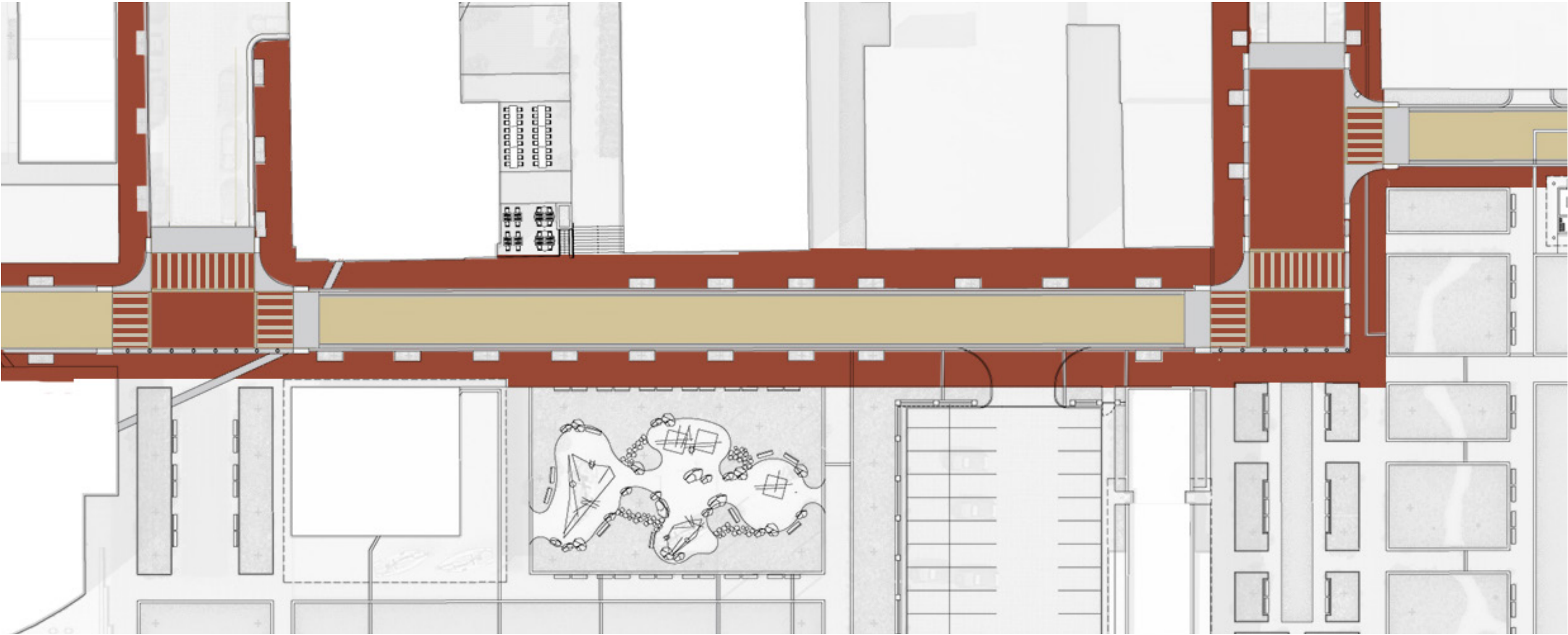
## BRICK STREET (THE STRAND ONLY)

Vehicular brick paver in yellow/tan/beige color range to match historical yellow brick on 200 Block of Prince Street. Dry-laid with sand swept joints.



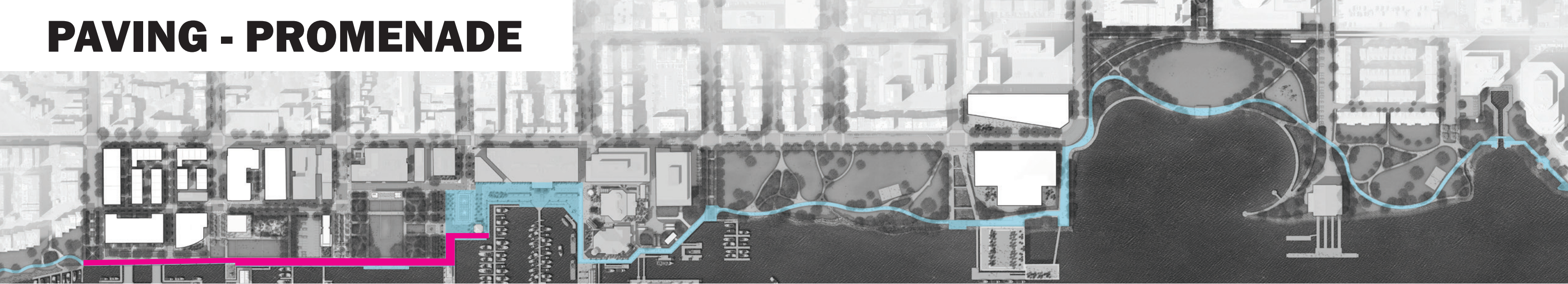


**PAVING - STREETS (THE STRAND)**





# PAVING - PROMENADE



## GRANITE BAND

24" x 12" x 3" neutral black granite band in a rough, high diamond finish.

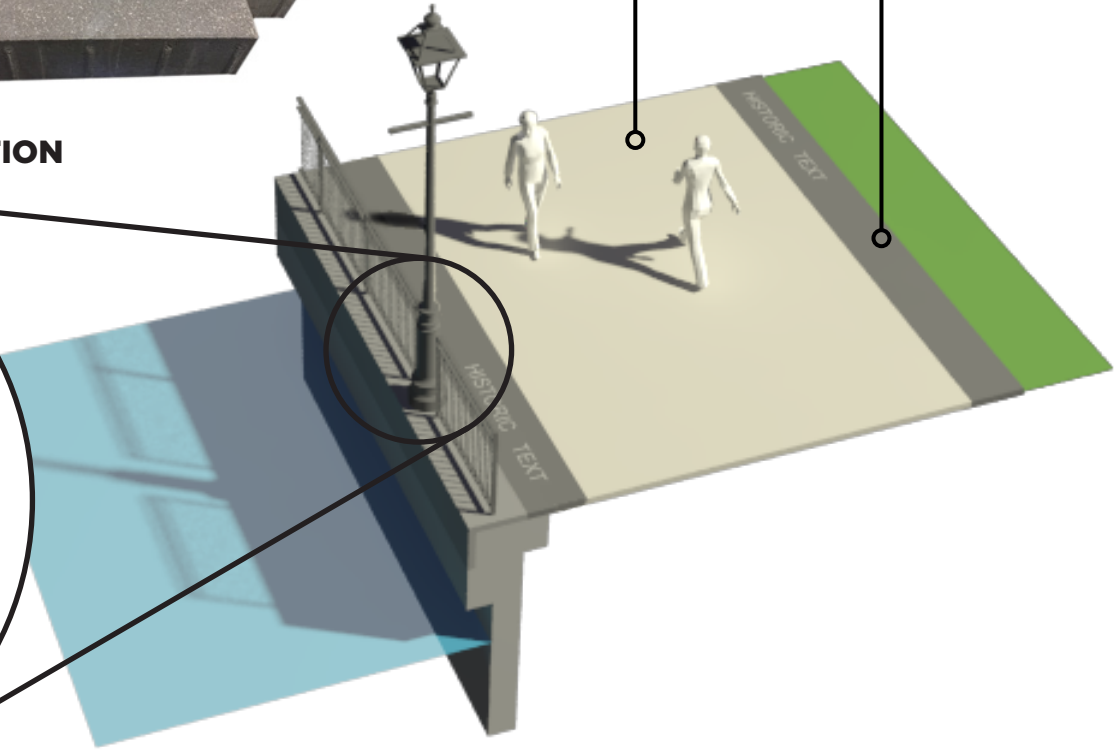
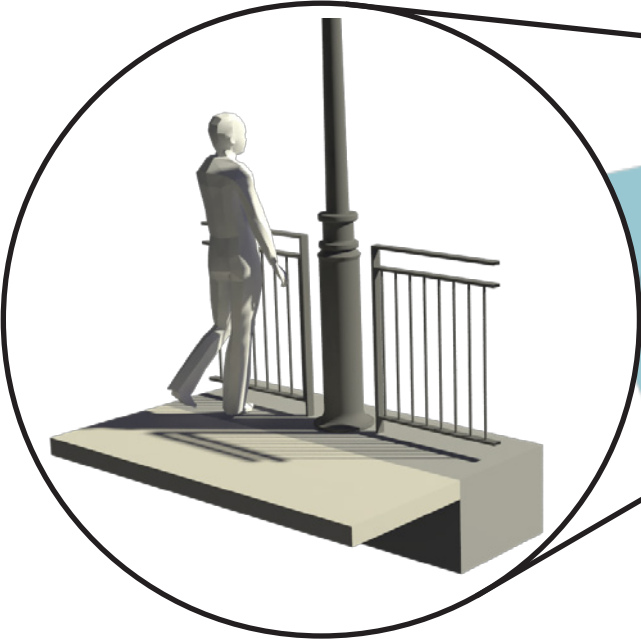


## PROMENADE PAVING (CORE ONLY)

16" x 4" x 4" concrete plank paver with gray/white color mix (3 colors) based on Unilock Umbriano finish ('granite-like appearance').



## LIGHT POST & RAILING CONFIGURATION



## WOOD DECKING

### ALT 1

Tropical Hardwood (Ipe)



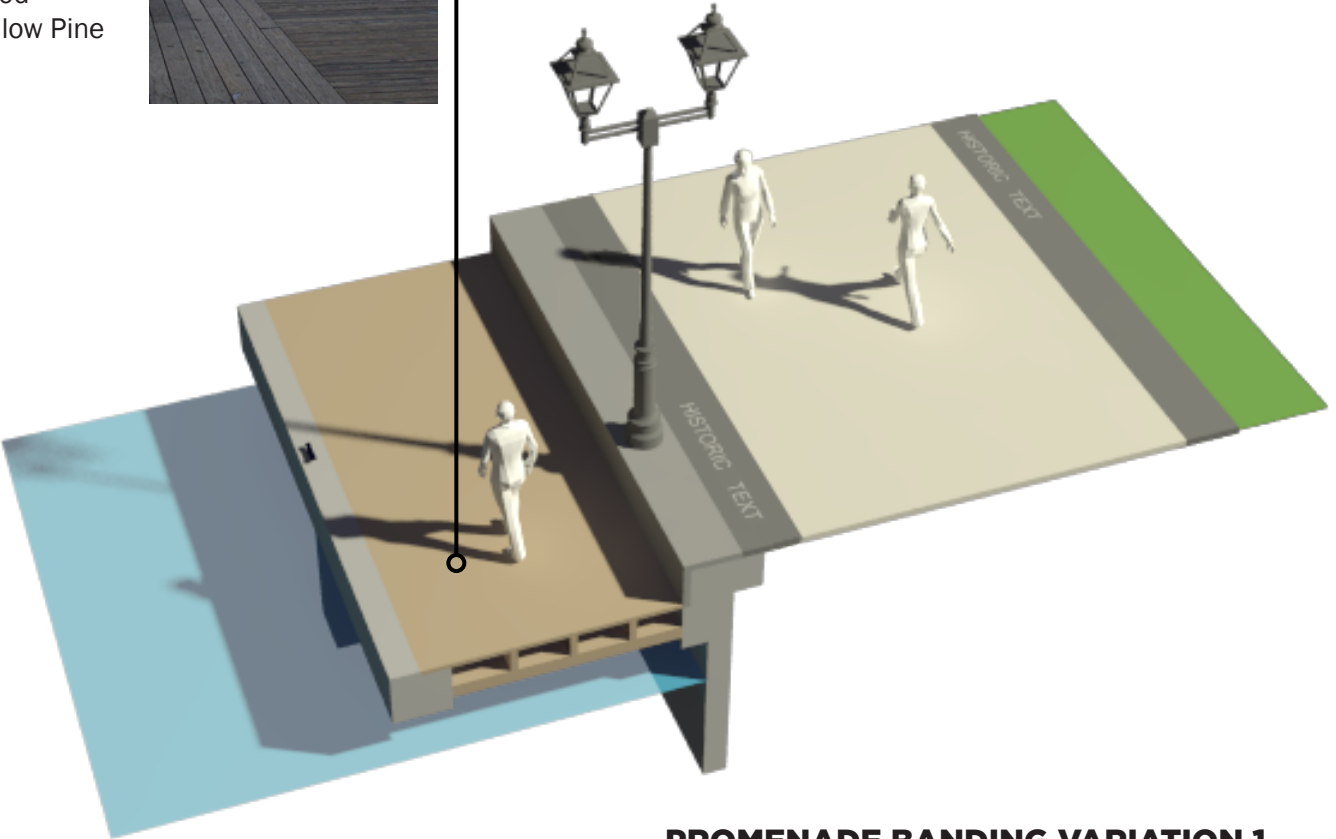
### ALT 2

Composite Wood



### ALT 3

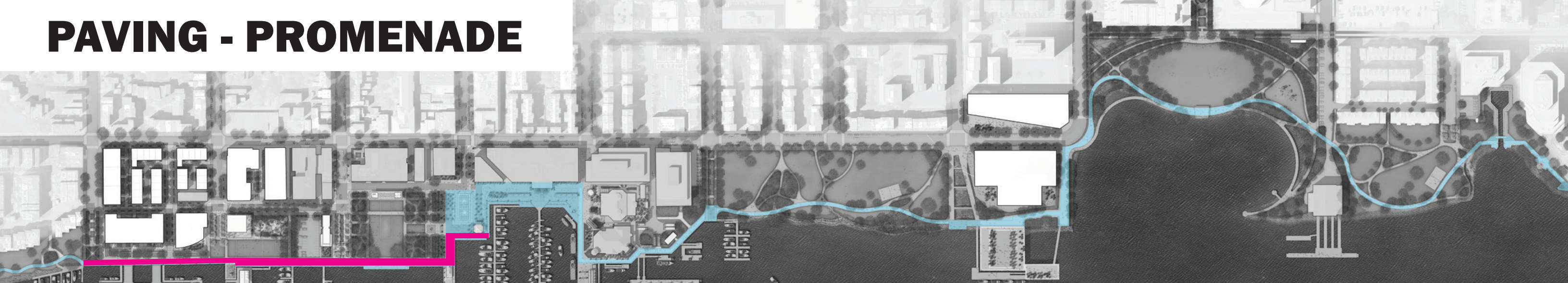
Modified Wood - Southern Yellow Pine



**PROMENADE BANDING VARIATION 1**  
2 FT. WIDE GRANITE BANDS  
LIGHT SET WITHIN 1.5 FT. EDGE BAND



# PAVING - PROMENADE



## GRANITE BAND

24" x 12" x 3" neutral black granite band in a rough, high diamond finish.

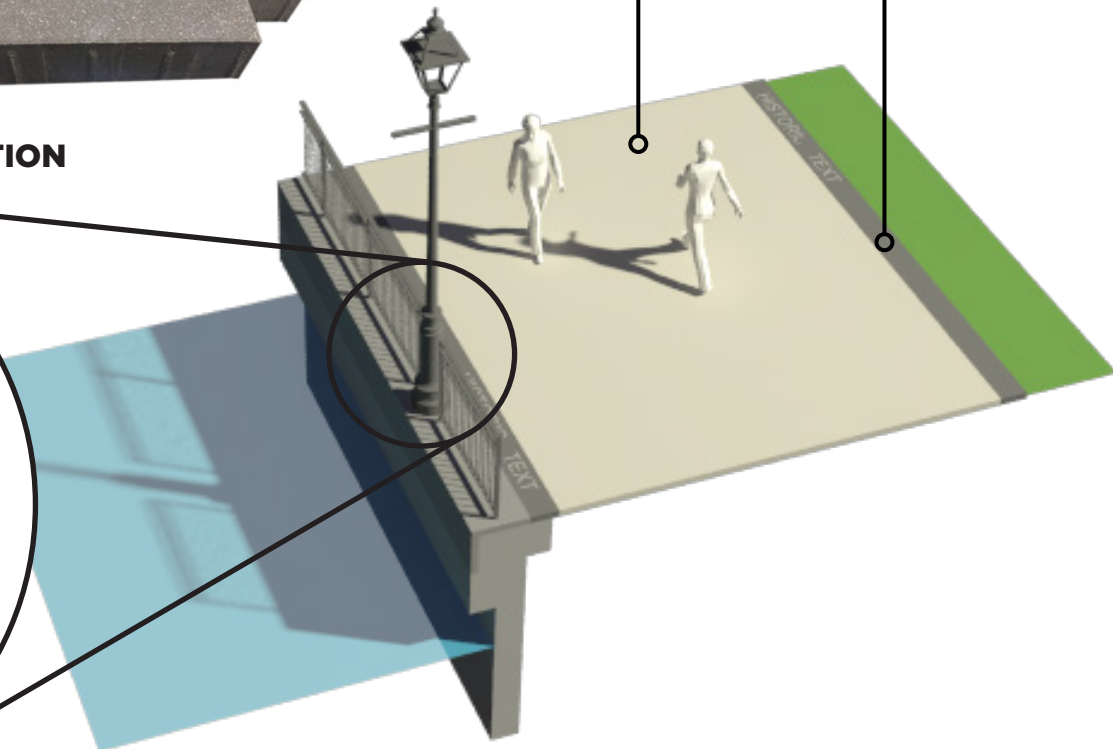
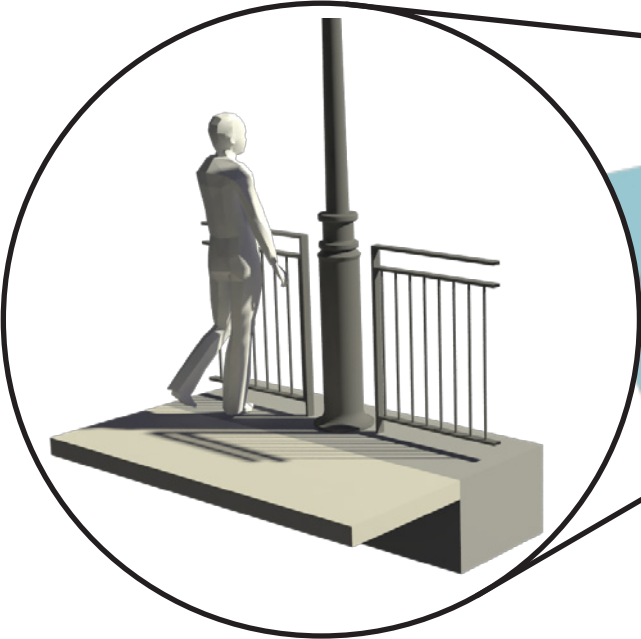


## PROMENADE PAVING (CORE ONLY)

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## LIGHT POST & RAILING CONFIGURATION



## WOOD DECKING

### ALT 1

Tropical Hardwood (Ipe)



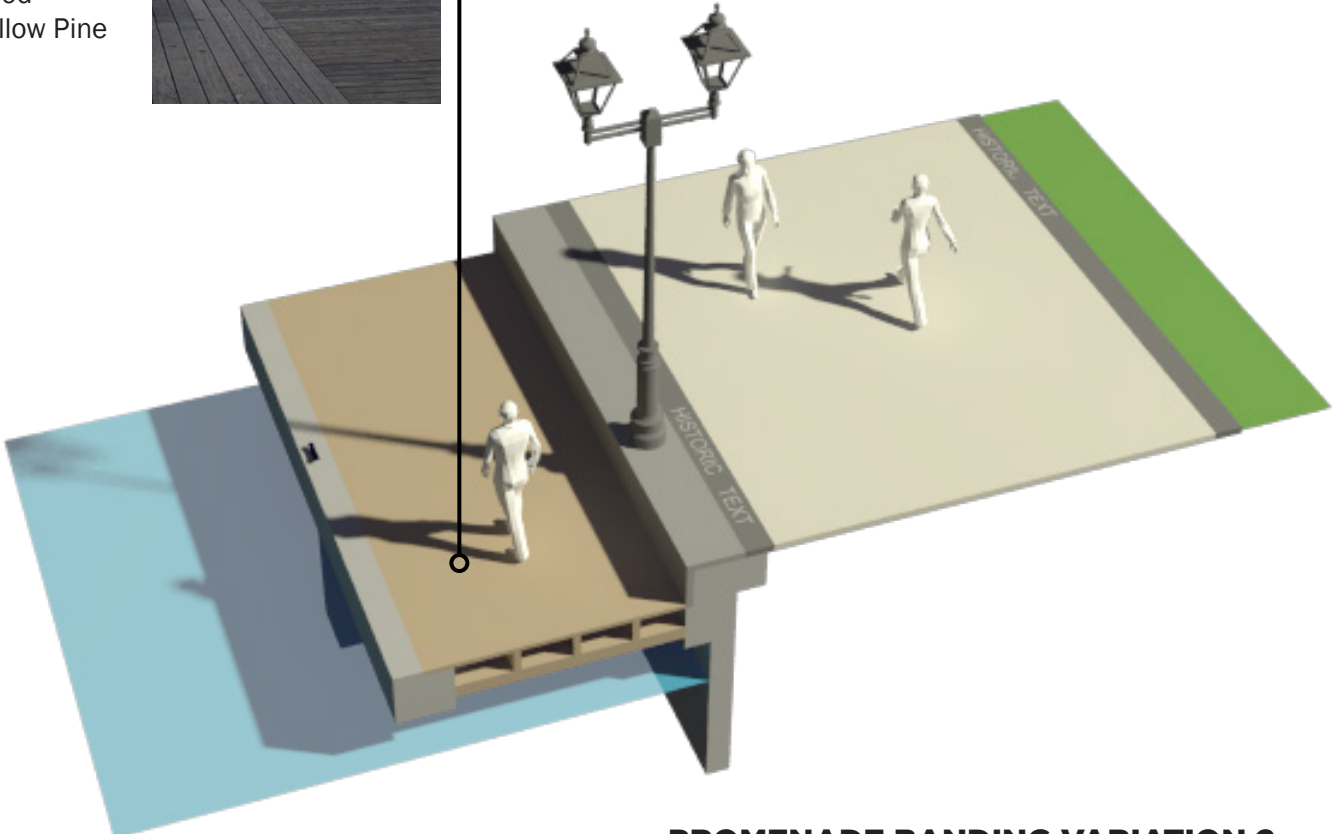
### ALT 2

Composite Wood



### ALT 3

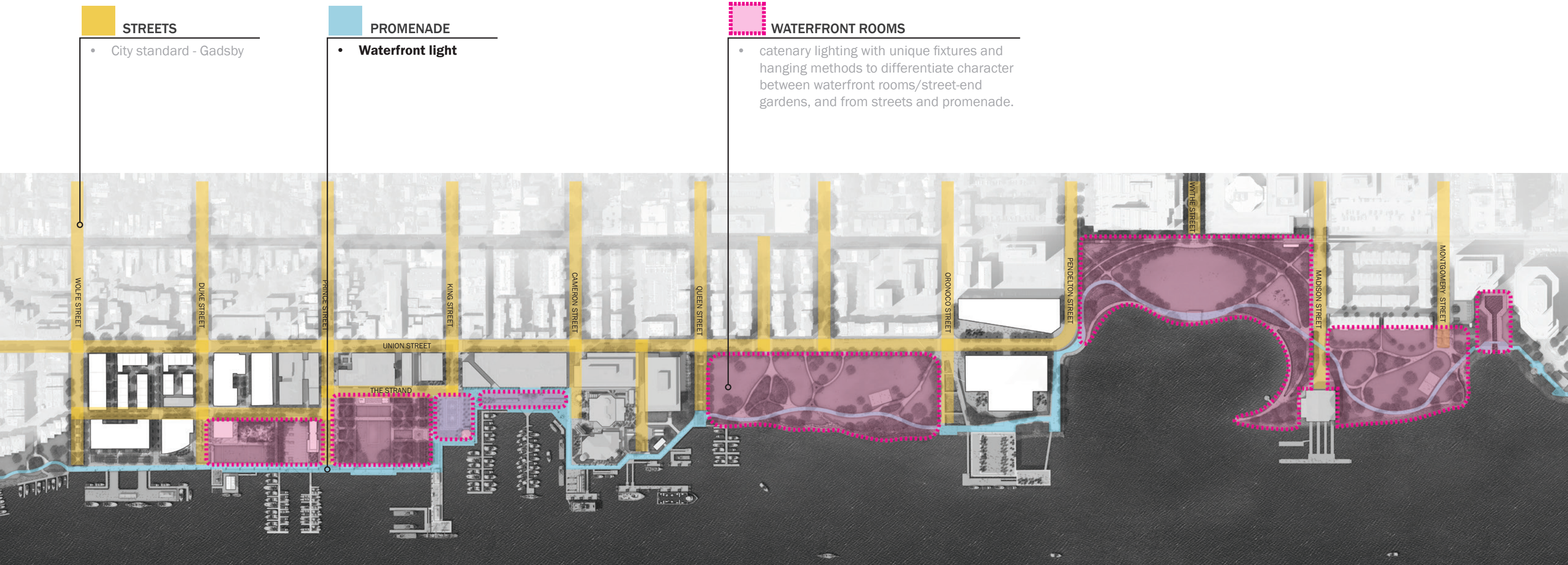
Modified Wood - Southern Yellow Pine



**PROMENADE BANDING VARIATION 2**  
1 FT. WIDE GRANITE BANDS  
LIGHT SET WITHIN 1.5 FT. EDGE BAND



# LIGHTING COMMON ELEMENTS

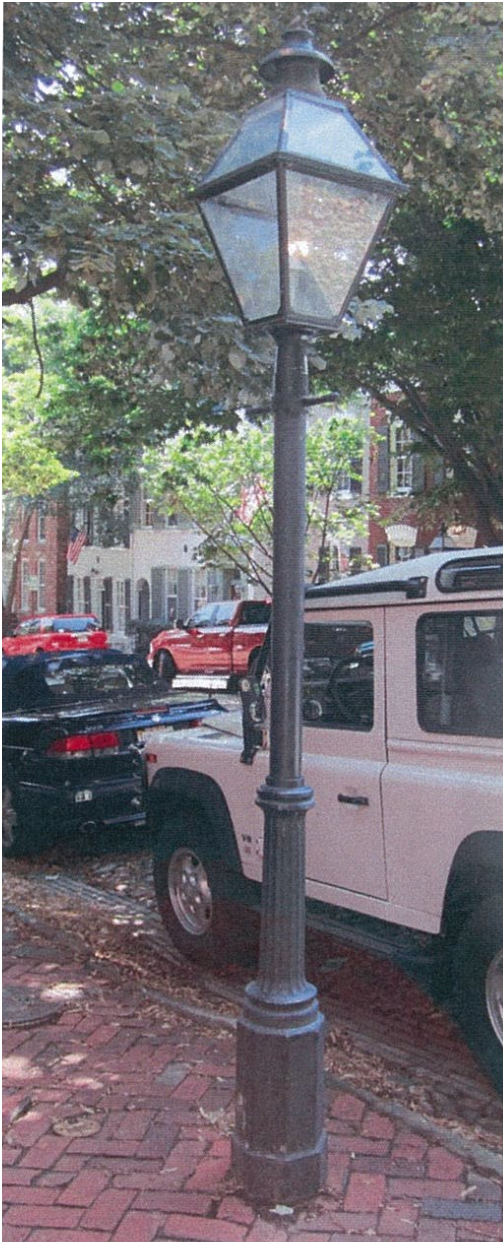




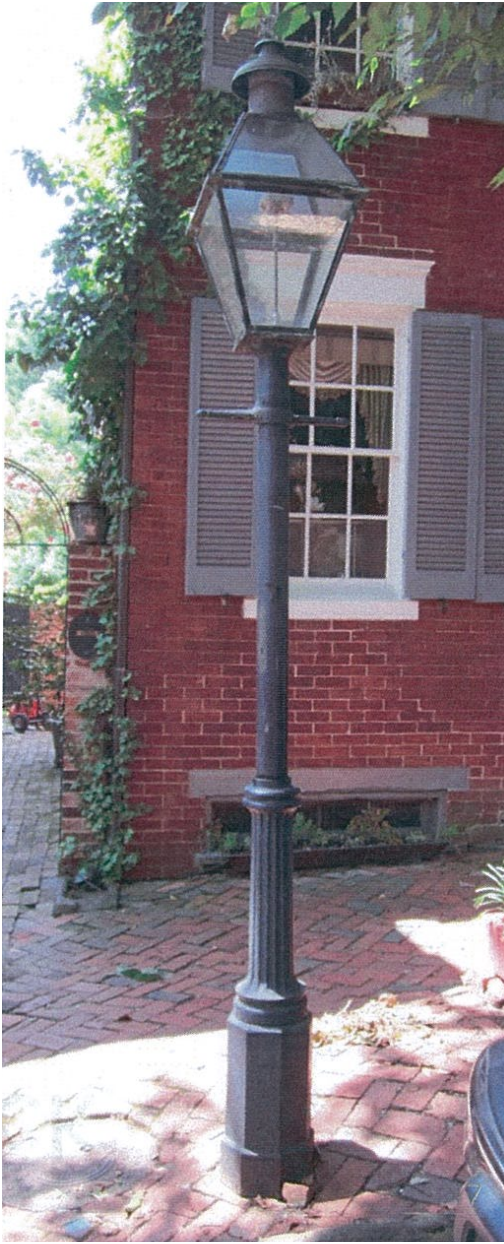
# LIGHTING - STREETS



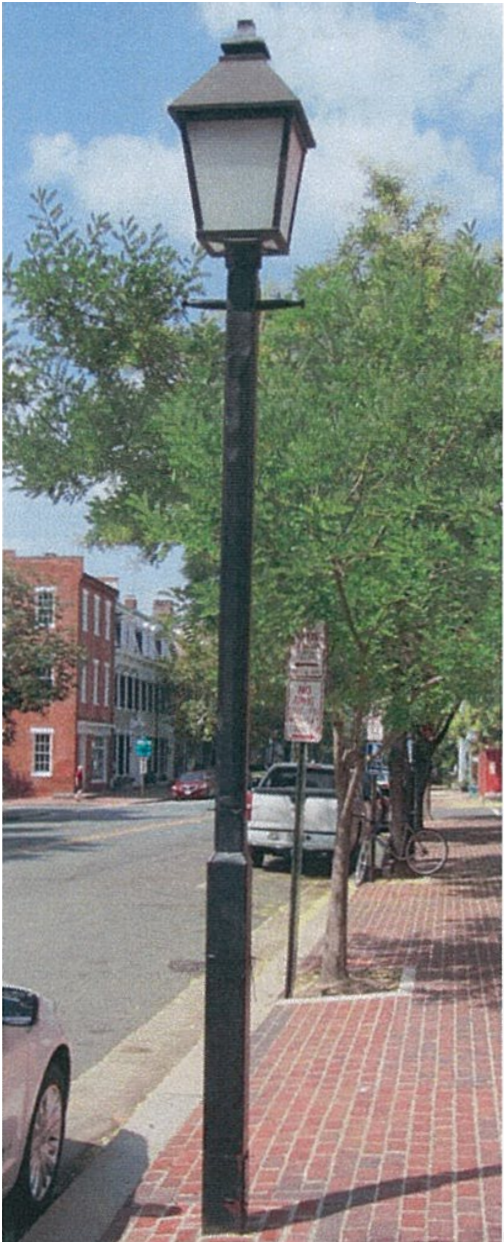
## CITY STANDARD ‘GADSBY’ AND REPLACEMENT FIXTURE



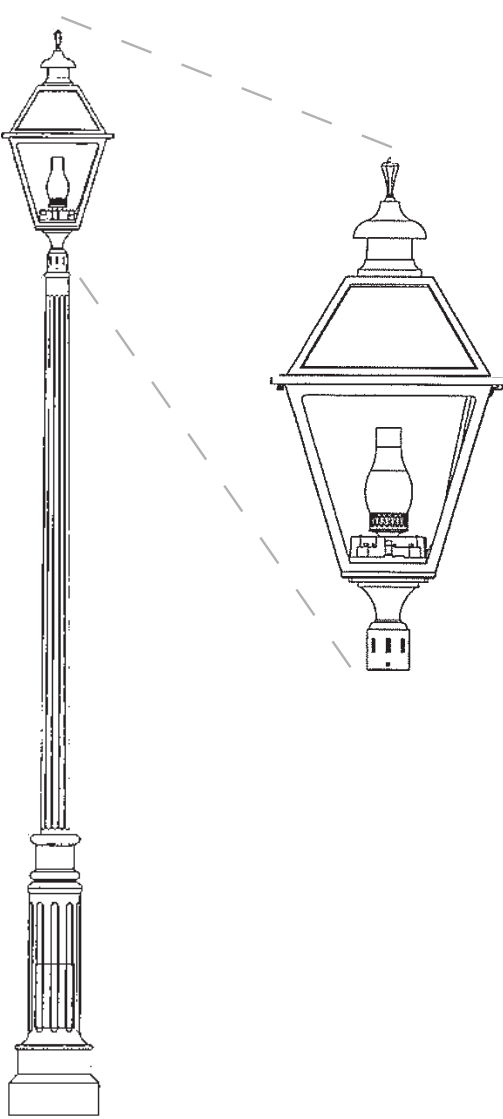
HISTORICAL EXAMPLES ON PRINCE STREET



A16

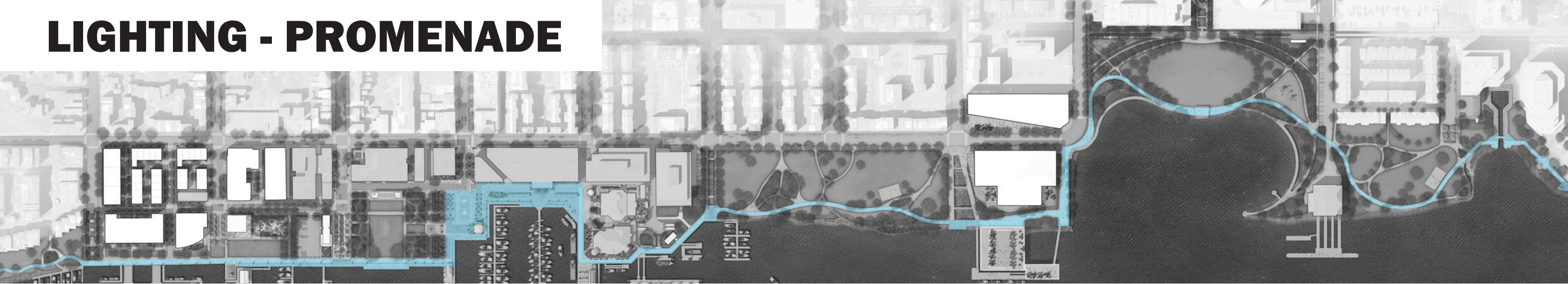


CURRENT CITY STANDARD





# LIGHTING - PROMENADE



## PRECEDENTS



FELL'S POINT, BALTIMORE, MD



NATCHEZ, MI



SAVANNAH, GA  
A17



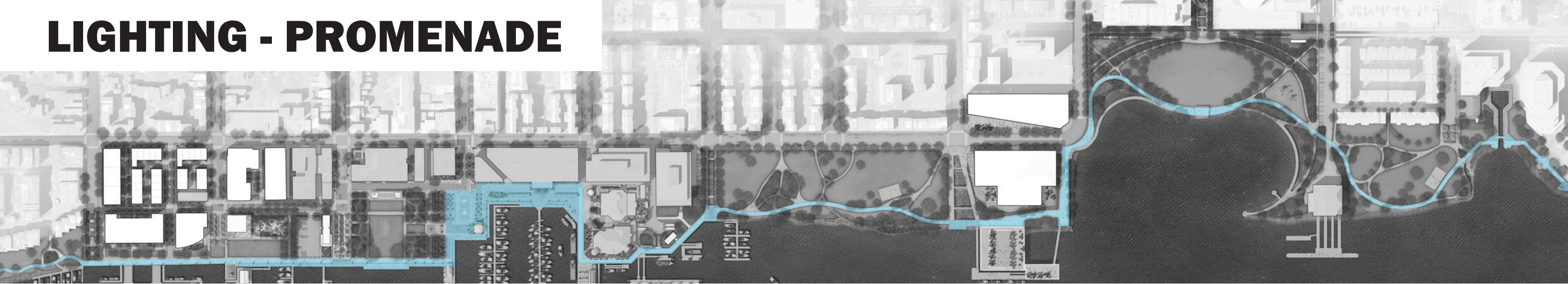
LIVERPOOL, UK



ALEXANDRIA, VA



# LIGHTING - PROMENADE



**ALT 1 - PERIOD/HISTORIC**



**ALT 2 - INDUSTRIAL/WHARF**

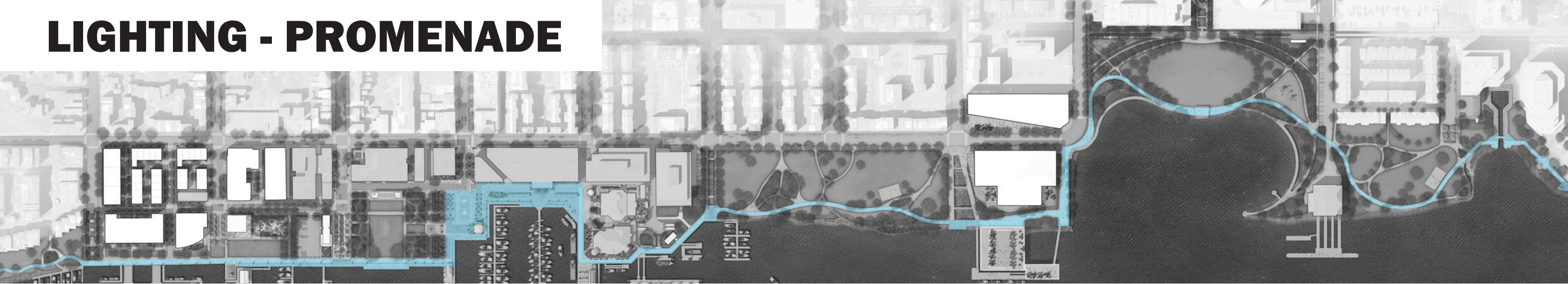


**ALT 3 - NAUTICAL/CABLE**





# LIGHTING - PROMENADE



## PERIOD/HISTORIC



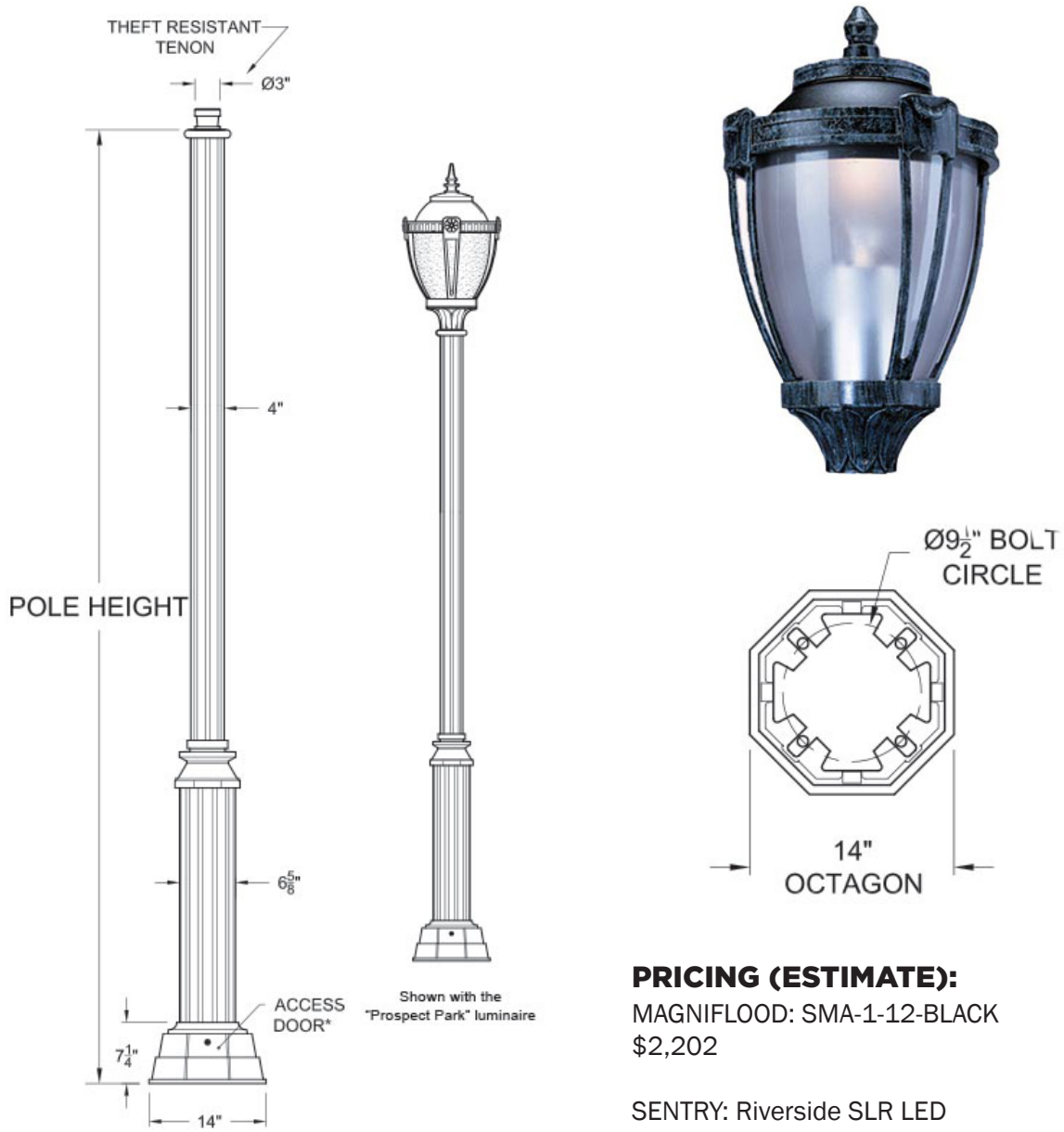
SEA CLIFF, NY



BERKELEY, CA

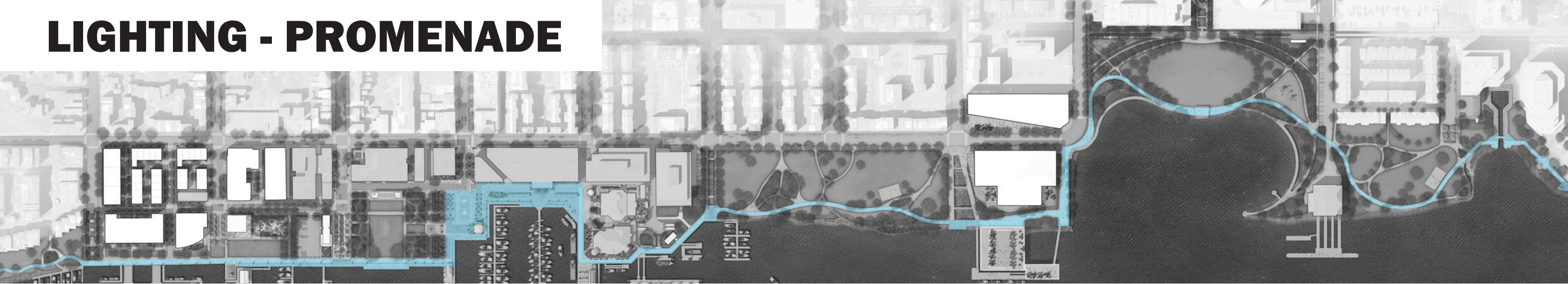


A19





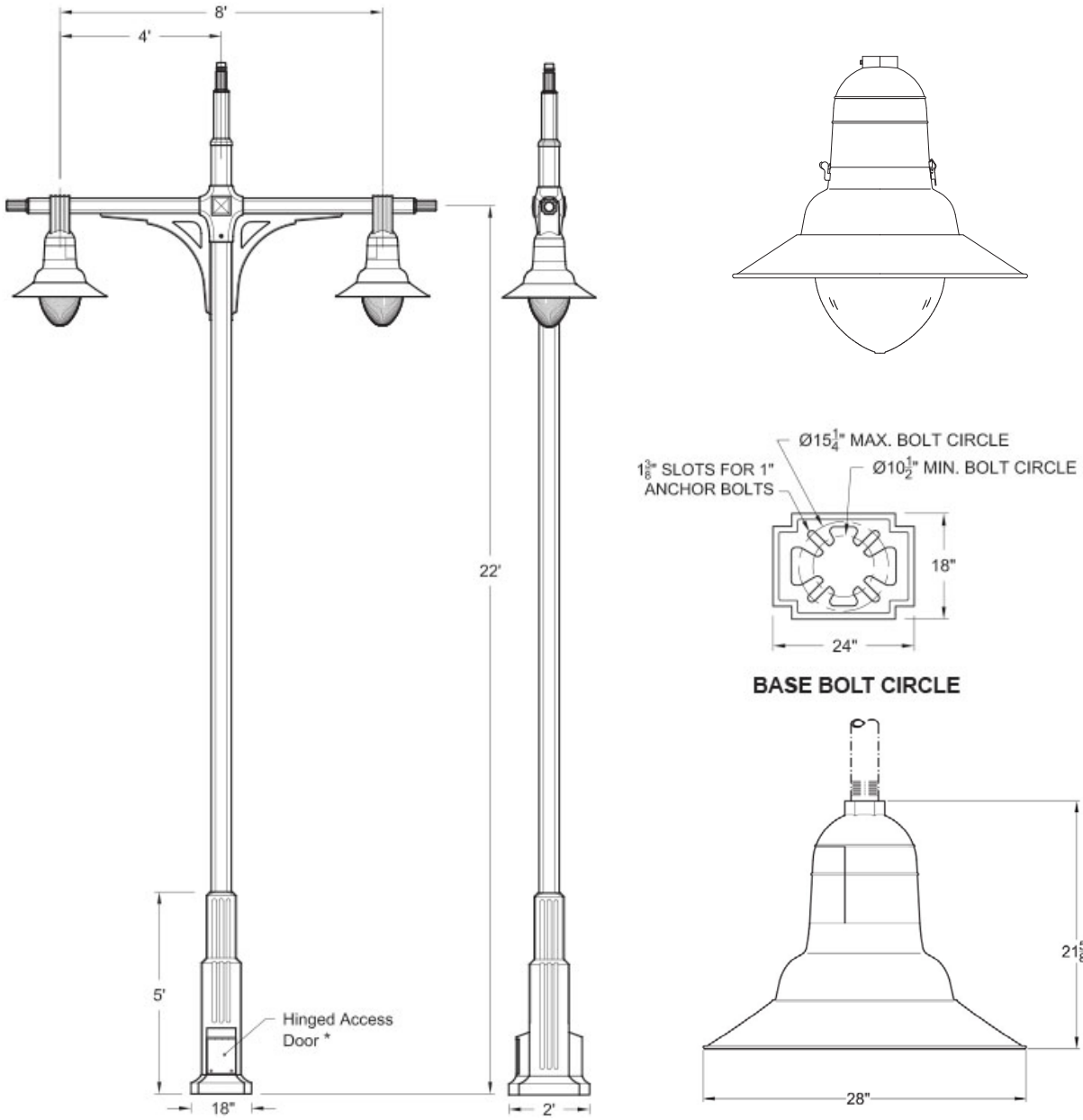
# LIGHTING - PROMENADE



## INDUSTRIAL/WHARF



HUDSON RIVER PARK, NEW YORK, NY



A20



### PRICING (ESTIMATE): MAGNIFLOOD PRODUCTS

TBTA-P-16-4 / TBTA-P-TWIN-16-4  
BLACK  
KNICKERBOCKER 3 LED FIXTURE

SINGLE = \$5,200  
TWIN = \$6,800

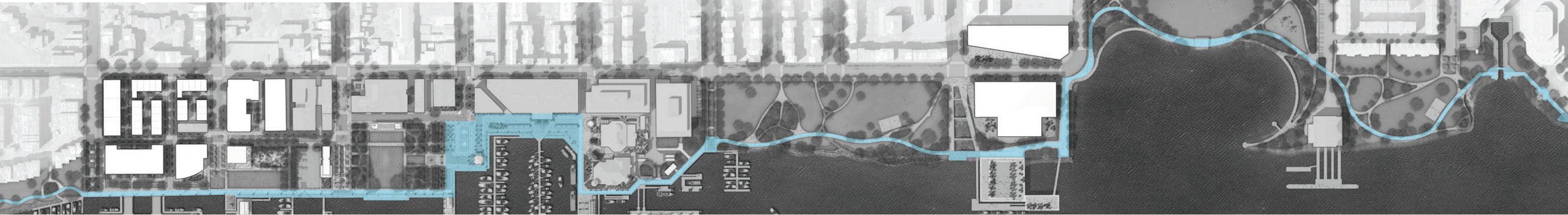
### SENTRY PRODUCTS (single-cast pole)

Bishops Crook (LED): SCS-  
TBTA-S-17'6"- 6'ARM-PLZCBK/  
SBCA6-(2)32LEDV18-1.05A-  
840-STLA-PLZH

\$13,401



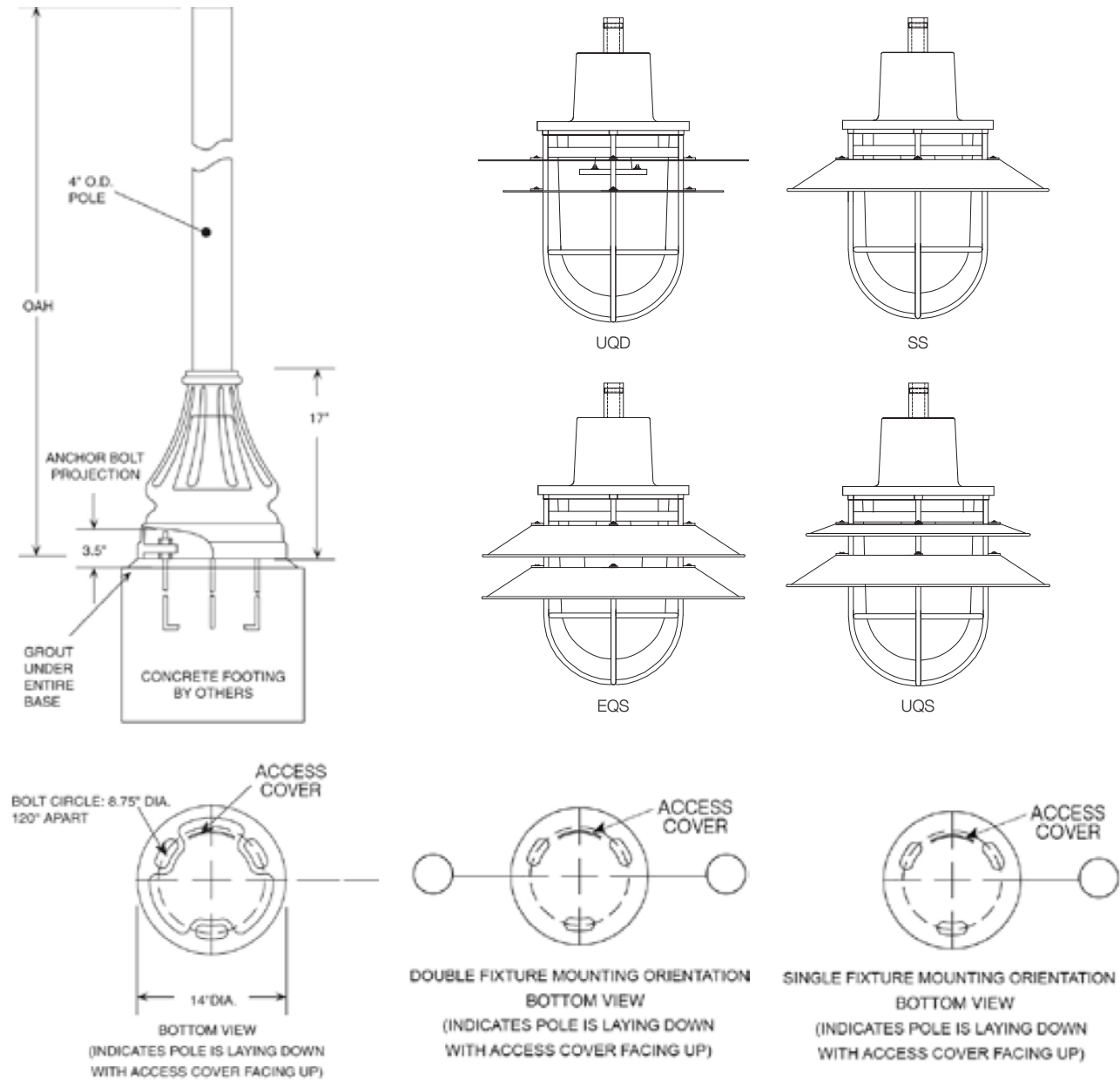
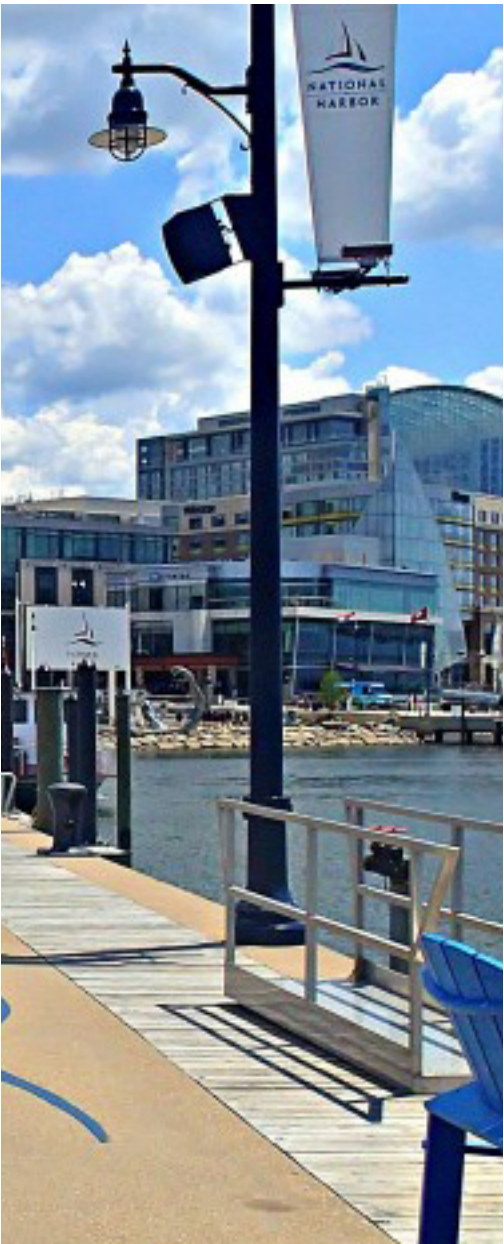
# LIGHTING - PROMENADE



## COMBINATION



NATIONAL HARBOR, DC



TORPEDO FACTORY

**PRICING (ESTIMATE):**  
BEACON PRODUCTS

PIERWALK (LED): PIE31/  
PC/24NB55/3K/UNV/DIR3/SS/  
PM/BBT

ARM: AA40/S/5/C/P/BBT

POLE: SH05/S/16/5Q/OT/BBT/  
FLCC

SINGLE = \$3,846  
TWIN = \$5,228

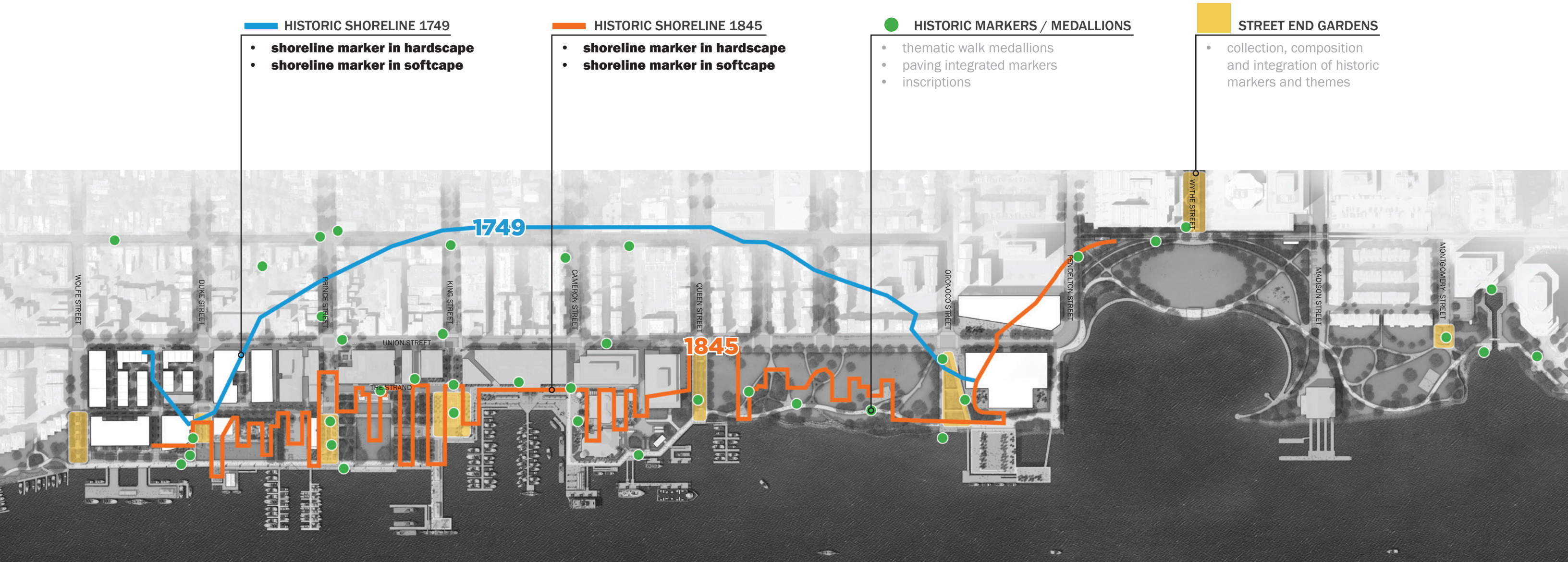


# ART AND HISTORY PLAN





# ART AND HISTORY COMMON ELEMENTS



## LAYERS OF ART AND HISTORY

 HISTORIC SHORELINE 1749

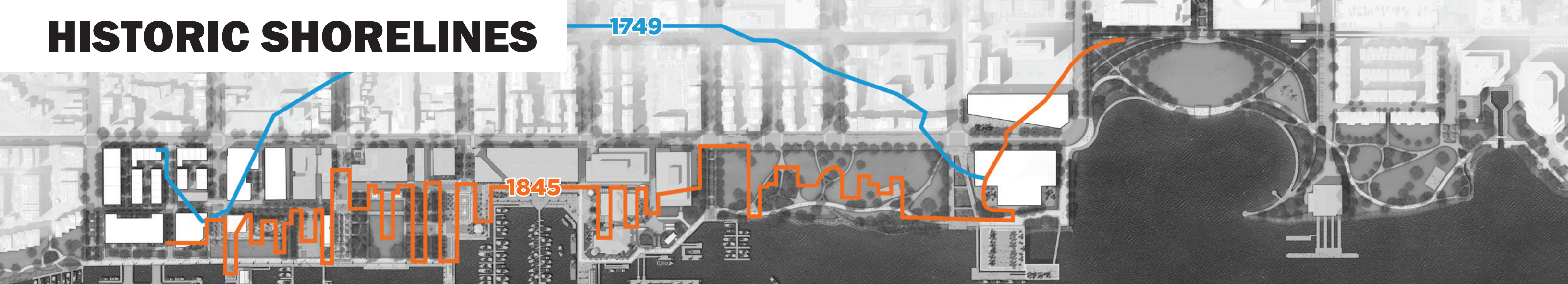
 HISTORIC SHORELINE 1845

 HISTORIC MARKERS / MEDALLIONS

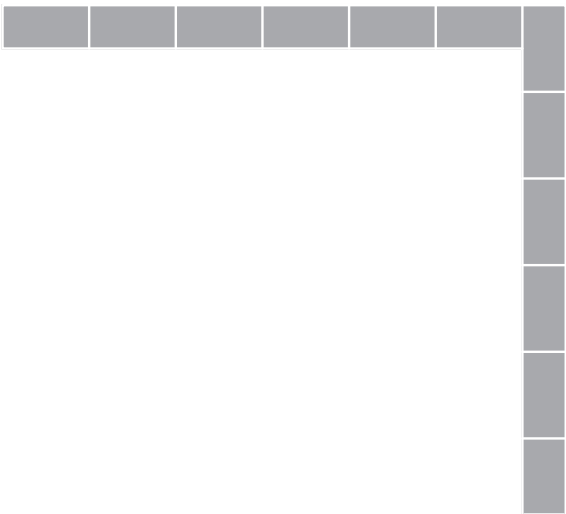
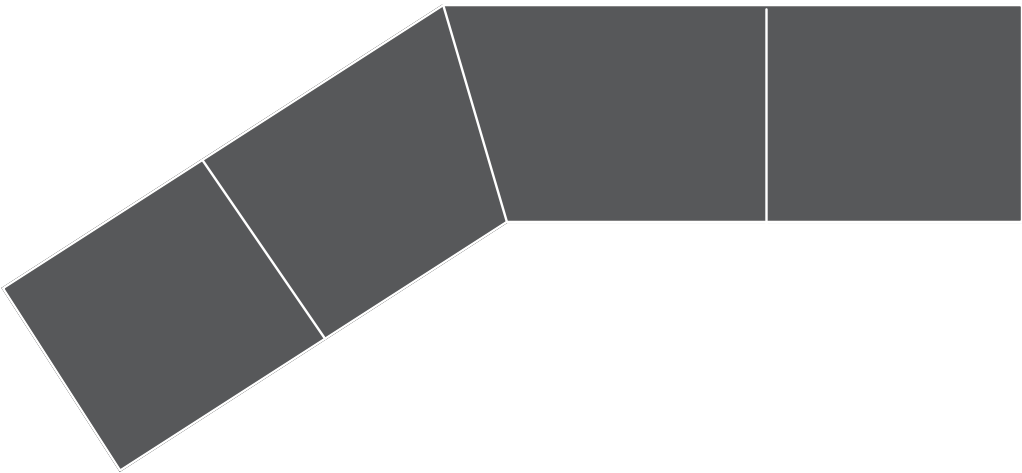
 STREET END GARDENS



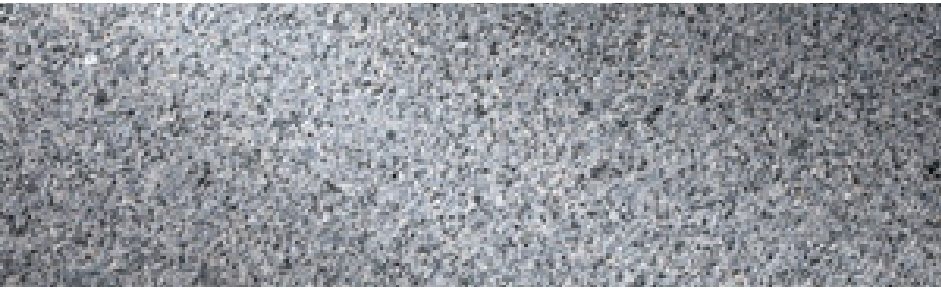
# HISTORIC SHORELINES



## SHORELINE BANDING - COLOR VARIATION



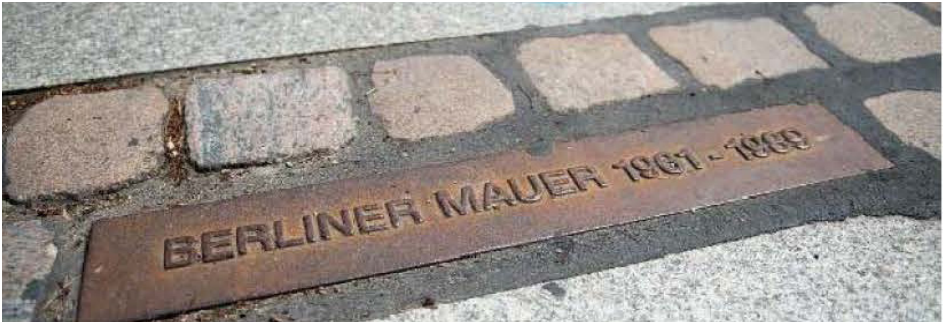
1749 HISTORIC SHORELINE (2 FT. - 4 FT. WIDE)  
DARK/BLACK GRANITE



1845 HISTORIC SHORELINE (6 IN. WIDE)  
MEDIUM GRAY GRANITE



PROMENADE BAND (1 FT. - 2 FT. WIDE)  
DARK GRAY/CHARCOAL GRANITE



INSET PANEL



INSCRIPTION



INLAY



# COMMON ELEMENTS - FUTURE

## PAVING



### STREETS

- brick sidewalk/street
- granite curb
- cobble gutter
- raised table transition
- raised table field
- crosswalk

### PROMENADE

- granite band
- promenade paving (core only)
- **unique paving** (per development site or waterfront room)

### WATERFRONT ROOMS & STREET END GARDENS

- **unique paving** (per development site or waterfront room)

## LIGHTING



### STREETS

- City standard - Gadsby

### PROMENADE

- Waterfront light (single/double arm)

### WATERFRONT ROOMS & STREET END GARDENS

- **catenary lighting**

## SITE FURNISHINGS



### STREETS

- City standard bench
- City standard bicycle rack & bikeshare station
- City standard trash receptacle
- City standard bollard
- mounting blocks

### PROMENADE

- **custom bench**
- **handrail**
- **marina tie-up**
- **fixed furniture**

### WATERFRONT ROOMS & STREET END GARDENS

- **Waterfront bench**
- **flexible/moveable furniture**
- **fixed furniture**

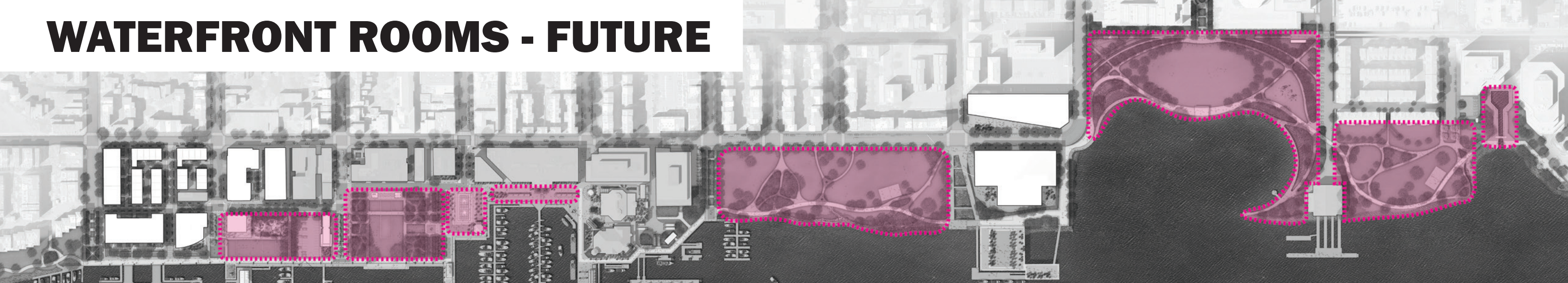
## ART AND HISTORY



- historic shoreline banding
- **historic markers/medallions**
- **inscriptions**
- **thematic walks & rooms**



# WATERFRONT ROOMS - FUTURE



Catenary lighting, site furnishings, paving, and thematic medallions/inscriptions to be selected during the design process of individual waterfront rooms or street end gardens that provide a unique character to each space and create variation along the length of the waterfront zone.





# NEXT STEPS

Task 1: Common Elements Palette	September 2015 to January 2016
Community Engagement	
• Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting	October 15, 2015
• Waterfront Commission Meeting	October 20, 2015
• Board of Architectural Review Work Session	December 2, 2015
• Open House and Public Display	December 3, 2015
• Waterfront Commission Meeting	December 15, 2015
• Board of Architectural Review - Certificate of Appropriateness	TBD

Task 2: Coordination with Private Development Sites      September 2015 to January 2016

\* Meeting dates are subject to change