



Bathhouse Row 1888

# Malvern Avenue Gateway Corridor and District Plan

for  
the City of Hot Springs, Arkansas  
September, 2017

University of Arkansas Community Design Center

## Table of Contents

II	Introduction
VII	Recommendations
1	Malvern Avenue Gateway Corridor and District Plan
2	Principles of the Plan
3	Building Development Opportunity in the Plan
4	Eight Street Cross-Sections that Re-Code the Malvern Avenue District
5	Street Bioswale Planting Schedule
6	Botanizing the Pavement: From Hardscapes to Softscapes
9	1 Convention Boulevard Circle
14	2 Restaurant Row Patio
19	3 and 4 Depot Water Garden and Riparian Loop
27	5 Broadway Promenade
33	6 Hotel Hot Springs Plaza
40	7 National Baptist Outdoor Museum
45	8 Malvern Avenue Gateway



# Introduction: Streets and Streams as Walkscape and Artscape

## Project Statement

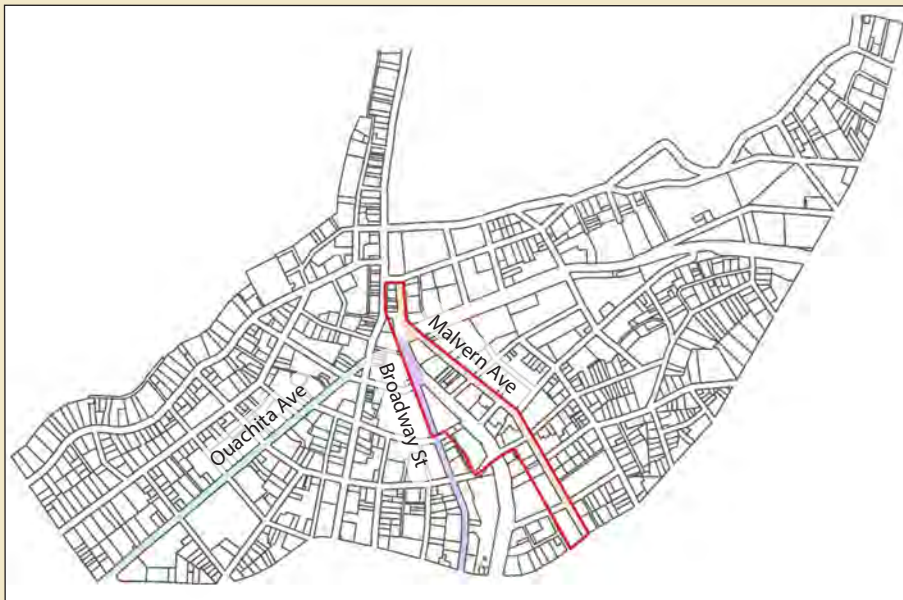
Streets and streams have always formed a magical combination in the development of Hot Springs, Arkansas. The City of Hot Springs is combining Complete Streets planning with a larger watershed development approach in its downtown Thermal Basin District. The Malvern Avenue Plan will constitute the first phase of a larger Low Impact Development Hot Springs Creek watershed project to alleviate downtown flooding. Street retrofits that increase walkability and bikeability are planned in tandem with improvements to the Hot Springs Creek riparian corridor—a self-styled “Complete Streams” approach. Street retrofits triangulate pedestrian connectivity among Malvern’s three primary geographies: the Gateway Neighborhood, the convention center area, and the train depot transit center as they connect to downtown.

The Malvern Avenue Corridor and District Plan is also a cultural project beyond Complete Streets planning, celebrating the history of this southern gateway to downtown and

Arkansas’ premier convention center. Malvern Avenue was once a lively African-American neighborhood with a business and entertainment district equal in vitality to Central Avenue’s famed Bathhouse Row. Among the new spaces planned for Malvern Avenue, an Outdoor Museum memorializes famous “Chitlin’ Circuit” blues and jazz performers like Count Basie and Ella Fitzgerald who played on Malvern during the era of racial segregation. The new Malvern Avenue introduces a walkscape and artscape complementary to the legendary urbanism of Central Avenue—recently voted one of the “Ten Great Streets” in America by the American Planning Association. The Plan therefore sponsors an innovative vocabulary of street cross-sections articulated as eight outdoor rooms—restaurant row patio, outdoor museum, boulevard circle, promenade, depot water garden, hotel plaza, riparian loop, and gateway. These street cross-sections recode the Malvern Corridor and District to solve for combined urban-ecology challenges in water management, mobility, and aesthetics.

## Goal and Principles of the Plan

The City of Hot Springs, led by its Complete Streets team, has undertaken a planning initiative to redefine three primary entry corridors into the downtown area, each as a Complete Street. Formulated as a trident entry system, the three corridors—Malvern and Ouachita Avenues, and Broadway Street—are part of a larger Green Infrastructure Plan within the city’s Thermal Basin District. The city aims to combine Complete Street planning with a larger watershed development approach in the Thermal Basin District. The Malvern Avenue Corridor and District Plan constitutes the first phase of a larger Low Impact Development Hot Springs Creek watershed project to alleviate downtown flooding.



Hot Springs' Trident Entry System

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hot Springs was America’s premier spa resort city, attracting worldwide acclaim for its natural hot springs. Downtown is home to the famed early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Bathhouse Row along Central Avenue, preserved as Hot Springs National Park—the oldest federal reserve in the US. Called the Valley of Vapors, the city’s current downtown urban and landscape fabric reflects both those halcyon days and its afterglow. Downtown’s historic Central Avenue at its Bathhouse Row was recently

designated one of the “Ten Great Streets” in America by the American Planning Association. Yet Malvern Avenue, the southern gateway into Central Avenue and Bathhouse Row, has suffered considerable disinvestment and blight from its mid-century peak. How do we extend those qualities of a great street so thoroughly expressed by Central Avenue to create destination experiences on Malvern Avenue?

The Malvern Avenue Corridor and District Plan encompasses an eight-block long segment (approximately 3,000 linear feet) between Grand Avenue and Spring Street, including surrounding blocks. The district includes the historic train depot and its park (now a regional transit center), Arkansas’ premier convention center, and the Gateway Neighborhood. The latter was once a thriving, culturally and socially vibrant African-American community. The district now exhibits a high rate of uneven development, marked by large interior-oriented hotels, office buildings, and a convention center bordered by vacant city blocks. Erosion in neighborhood character is compounded by Malvern Avenue’s auto-dominant environment; the corridor lacks good pedestrian facilities and dedicated bicycling lanes. A major shortcoming in connectivity—and a symptom of auto-dominance—is the lack of pedestrian traffic between the convention center and downtown. Malvern streetscapes simply do not encourage nor reward the decision to walk, an unnecessary loss in commerce and livability.

Unmanaged surface parking further signals auto-dominance and poses multiple challenges. The district has an oversupply of surface parking in relation to demand, most of it underutilized outside of special events. Excess parking negatively impacts community character. Higher and better uses of downtown’s surface area will increase livability and commerce. Underperforming asphalt lots are inefficient in their present organization and their impervious surfaces exacerbate flooding in the Hot Springs Creek watershed. Indeed, Hot Springs Creek, fed by the city’s 143-degree natural springs, is piped under downtown streets and daylighted south of the train depot. Excessive flow and sedimentation have led to a set of dysfunctions known as urban stream syndrome in Hot Springs Creek. This includes flooding and the potential undercutting of riparian banks supporting portions of the Broadway Terrace right-of-way above. Complete Streets planning, then, is accompanied by Complete Streams best practices that

restore ecological functioning and human connection to riparian corridors. Though ambitious, the Plan recommends *daylighting* (unearthing of streams to an above-ground channel) Hot Springs Creek at the train depot following its underground conveyance through downtown.

Besides enhancing livability, the Malvern Plan is a public-sector tool to improve infrastructure in preparation for private sector investment contemplating a return to downtown. With these twin objectives in mind, the three principles of the plan are to:

1. Create a coherent district by **enhancing visual connectivity and access** throughout the Gateway Neighborhood, Broadway Street/Train Depot, and the Convention Center.
2. **Structure an identity** for this gateway corridor to the Central Avenue Historic District and Bathhouse Row that also catalyzes and guides private sector investment.
3. Transform Malvern Avenue and Broadway Street into **Complete Streets** that reward walking and biking, while providing **ecologically-based stormwater management** and riparian corridor improvements—**Complete Streams**.

## Urban Design Approach

*“When street vistas are arranged to create a sequence of legible segments, marked by landmarks that help with wayfinding and orientation, walkers have a sense of how the street space is knitted into the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood.”*

Victor Dover and John Massengale, ***Street Design: The Secret to Great Cities and Towns***

The Plan is conceived as a series of eight urban rooms and landmark spaces that distinguish the Malvern Avenue Corridor and District. Urban rooms are connected by Malvern Avenue, Broadway Street, and Broadway Terrace retrofitted under Complete Streets planning, a concept to balance accommodations for walking, cycling, and public transit modes of travel with those of the automobile. Street modifications are combined with installation of Low Impact Development (LID) landscapes for ecologically-based management and treatment of urban stormwater runoff. These right-of-way modifications can be readily implemented through curb

extensions, alleviating the costs of reconfiguring underground utilities (though overhead electrical utilities may be buried as funding permits). New spaces for bicycle lanes, tree lawns, and LID landscapes are accommodated through reclamation of existing on-street parking and reduction of oversized vehicle travel lane widths to ten feet. Malvern Avenue is a local street in the downtown area and should be designed to neighborhood and livability standards rather than highway standards deployed to move automobile traffic at high speeds. Streets, on average, constitute nearly 30 percent of a city’s surface area and its largest classification of public space. There are higher and better uses of streets than the exclusive focus on maximizing traffic throughput. Indeed, great streets are place-based environments providing non-traffic social services related to gathering, dining, recreation, strolling, commerce, and aesthetics.

The Plan therefore sponsors an innovative vocabulary of street cross-sections articulated as eight outdoor rooms—restaurant row patio, outdoor museum, boulevard circle, promenade, depot water garden, hotel plaza, riparian loop, and gateway. These street cross-sections recode the Malvern Corridor and District to solve for combined urban-ecology challenges in water management, mobility, and aesthetics. The Plan is modulated such that each of the eight rooms could be implemented successively or simultaneously as funding and political will permit. Beyond restoring functionality through Complete Streets and Complete Streams, the rooms strengthen the district’s identity, so fundamental to a place’s security and prosperity. In his classic text on cities, *The Image of the City*, urbanist Kevin Lynch formulates five fundamental elements for structuring the *imageability* of successful places: **paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks**. These five functions in each of the eight rooms are described below.

**Convention Boulevard Circle** at the intersection of Broadway Street, Convention Boulevard, Malvern Avenue, and nearby Bridge Street reconfigures the Gordian Knot of auto-dominant traffic patterns, and opens an inviting pedestrian connection between the convention center and downtown. Circles clarify. The Circle houses two **landmarks** with differing functions. The reclaimed plaza space provides a circular lawn, shaded sitting areas, and a sculpture of Hernando de Soto to be commissioned from local sculptor, Longhua Xu. This pedestrian-oriented **landmark** celebrates

the transitions among Malvern Avenue and Restaurant Row or Central Avenue to the west. Overhead, a large-scale public art work functions as a motorist-oriented **landmark**, marking the terminus of Convention Boulevard and the interface of Malvern Avenue with the Central Avenue District. This landmark operates in the tradition of urban circles popularized during the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century City Beautiful planning era in cities large and small. Here, circles provide wayfinding and orientation, particularly useful in tourist economies for welcoming and guiding visitor traffic. The urban circle (this is not a traffic circle) marks neighborhood transitions across long distances, and as with the best of western urbanism, uses perspective (optics) to create coherent spatial sequences throughout the city. While the Circle is closed to through traffic, the plaza accommodates emergency vehicle access at its southern tip. Convention Boulevard Circle clarifies one of the more confusing junctures in downtown Hot Springs while improving its imageability through two scales of landmarks.

**Restaurant Row Patio** creates a new visitor and tourist experience from reclaimed vehicle travel lanes on Malvern Avenue between Bridge and Spring Streets. The downtown lacks premium outdoor dining options. An expanded sidewalk to encourage outdoor dining is appended to restaurant back-of-house space under a block-scaled colonnade. This creates a new and appropriate architectural street frontage for this segment of Malvern. The steel colonnade, itself a metal mesh sunshade with views to the sky, supports new signage, patio lighting, and fabric canopies sheltering buildings' rear entrances on Malvern Avenue. Patio fencing frames formal dining and drinking areas, while screening those utility areas allocated for basement access and waste management. On this expanded sidewalk, a row of Willow Oaks parallels the colonnade structure, creating a shared overhead canopy that shades sidewalk and dining space alike. Thus, a fitting **edge** condition for a signature street. The proposal recalls the asymmetry of Bathhouse Row where a tree-lined *allee* on Central Avenue's east side distinguishes the bathhouses' collective frontage. Restaurant Row Patio corrects the shortcoming of a shallow city block where only one layer of building unwittingly results in building rears fronting a primary street.

**Broadway Promenade** provides a formal tree-lined (Bald Cypress) pedestrian **path** between the train depot and the Convention Boulevard Circle,

paralleling Broadway Street. The Promenade re-establishes the historic pedestrian link between the train depot and the edge of the Central Avenue Historic District, presently disfigured by parking lots. Modeled after Frederick Law Olmsted's Mall in Central Park with its overhead tree canopy and continuous benches, the Promenade hosts a water runnel through the center of the path. Recalling the routing of Hot Springs Creek underground, the runnel channels water and emits steam from the 143-degree spring water piped below. At night, a continuous sub-surface blue light mixes with the steam, reminding us that this is the Valley of Vapors. The Promenade's manicured lawn and informal seating on its eastern edge is offset by a continuous stormwater treatment landscape screened by long benches on its western edge.

**Hotel Hot Springs Plaza** at the newly refurbished 14-story hotel creates a gardened **node** in the right-of-way, enriching the hotel's relation to the street while marking entry into the convention center area. The Plaza is an expanded pedestrian table calming motorists and bicyclists speeds, while favoring pedestrians since the latter do not step down into the space of the street from the sidewalk level. Both sides of the street are shaped by hedges and topiary appointed with lawn furniture (including inexpensive but voluminous Adirondack chairs) that invites relaxation and people watching—akin to an urban French garden. The west side houses a landscape of easy-to-maintain Boxwood Hedges that populate empty planters along the retaining wall at the edge of the right-of-way. If the hotel desires to be really ambitious about entry quality, it would build a *living wall* (vertical garden) in its marquis area as illustrated in the portfolio. More than a space for passing through, the Hotel Hot Springs Plaza shapes a dignified theater for arriving, waiting, departing, lingering, and socializing among conventioners and downtown visitors.

**National Baptist Outdoor Museum** in the Gateway Neighborhood memorializes the neighborhood's cultural legacy. Malvern Avenue was once a lively African-American business district and entertainment center anchored by the National Baptist Hotel and Sanitorium (now the National Baptist Building). The building hosted famous "Chitlin' Circuit" blues and jazz performers like Count Basie, Pegleg Bates, and Ella Fitzgerald during the era of racial segregation. Along with Pine Bluff and Little Rock, Hot

Springs was a major safe and inviting venue in Arkansas for African-American artists touring the South. At the National Baptist Building on Malvern Avenue—now a senior home—a proposed pedestrian table supports a musician sculpture garden celebrating those legends who performed and lodged in the Gateway Neighborhood. The northeast corner of the plaza at the National Baptist Building’s entrance houses a shaded sitting area, particularly accommodating to senior home residents. Here, the street as a corridor designed for movement is transformed into a **node** soliciting pause and meandering among pedestrians, as well as traffic calming among motorists. This is one of several public art nodes throughout the project that celebrates the city’s history and urban culture within a larger public art master plan.

**Malvern Avenue Gateway** at the intersection with Grand Avenue demarcates the downtown **district** and the Gateway Neighborhood through a formal entrance. Disinvestment leads to formlessness. Vital places with strong imageability—whether they are urban public rooms, streets, neighborhoods, or districts—have bounded and articulated **edges** with clear descriptions of inside/outside, public/private, core/periphery, intimate/vast, and prospect/refuge. The proposed gateway rescales the American picket fence to a civic scale. The fence sponsors individual electronic messaging disks akin to traditional city entry signs displaying emblems of their civic groups. Gateway construction could range from metal slats to more expensive resin slats lit from within to provide an accent illumination for the entrance space. An optional public sculpture may be placed in front of the gateway.

## Environmental Design Approach

Ecologically-based stormwater management and treatment—green infrastructure—is embedded in all aspects of the Corridor and District Plan. This includes over a mile of right-of-way bioswales that screen bicycle lanes from vehicle lanes—an important investment for a city assuming leadership in implementing green infrastructure. Similar to Complete Streets and its reclamation of social functions, self-styled Complete Streams (first coined here) planning restores robust ecological functioning to riparian corridors. Riparian corridor improvements to Hot Springs Creek

include daylighting of a stream segment at the train depot. Here, a novel Retrofit Water Garden employs structural meshes and facultative wetland plant communities in a remnant channel. Hot spring water emerging from the culvert will support a niche plant community not possible elsewhere in the city. Downstream from the train depot, Hot Springs Creek resumes the fluvial geomorphology of a first order stream with naturalized riparian banks. The western park edge will be planted with a wildflower meadow mix, while the eastern edge supporting Broadway Terrace above will be armored with gabion walls that support a levee as an extended floodplain terrace. The latter requires further civil engineering assessment.

**Depot Water Garden** daylights Hot Springs Creek through a sunken plaza as a stream walk on Market Street along the train depot’s east side. The Water Garden is an important **path** linking the park and transit center north to the Broadway Promenade and Market Street. The Water Garden is also an important **edge** framing and clarifying the public space around the train depot’s east side as walkers descend from Malvern Avenue. Akin to the famed San Antonio River Walk, the stream through this urban segment is accessible and hard engineered as it transitions toward a more naturalized riparian geomorphology (sinuous geometry, riffle-pool-glide section, vegetated banks, floodplain, etc.) beyond. The Water Garden features a unique soft infrastructure treatment system through terraced “wet container gardens”. Here, Channel Retrofit Water Gardens introduce biologically active zones into urban streams that have undergone hard-engineered drainage solutions. The gardens house submergent and emergent plant guilds whose growth is controlled through structural meshes akin to *espaliers*. These cellular meshworks provide flow attenuation and restoration of sinuosity in micro-flow patterns (eddying) important to water regulating services. They can withstand the inundation typical of this stream’s metabolism. Meshworks recalling traditional ceramic pots sit in larger channel terraces that contain flowering plant life like water lilies. Plant guilds support microbial communities in root zones for water treatment, and the return of nutrient cycling, refugia, food provisioning, and other ecosystem services found in healthy riparian zones. The Water Garden is another celebration of Hot Springs Creek, this time embodying both natural and artificial means common to gardens.

**Riparian Loop** constitutes a small **district** south of the Depot Water Garden as Hot Springs Creek settles into its natural morphology. The Loop is constituted by the park's soft riparian edge with a wildflower meadow on the west side, opposite Broadway Terrace's hard edge on the east side. The riparian banks are linked by the circular bridge at the Depot Water Garden terminating Church Street, and the Garden Street bridge to the south, hence the Loop. Broadway Terrace above the stream is restored as a one-way *shared street* meant for local through traffic only. Shared streets privilege pedestrian activity in the full right-of-way by eliminating travel mode separation, including sidewalks. Instead the street essentially functions like a plaza, compelling the few passing motorists to behave socially. The Riparian Loop presents an important opportunity to conceptualize planning of mixed-use building fabric, particularly housing, on the park and stream edge.

## Working Approach and Stakeholder Participation

This project is led by the city's visionary Complete Streets team, a committee of city administrators from engineering, planning, parks and trails, and public works, including the stormwater management manager. This cross-section of key departments heads have "unsiloed" their operations, meeting weekly to coordinate special infrastructure planning efforts not possible in any one department. The city is conducting the project with support and cooperation from the Gateway Neighborhood Association and its stakeholders, including several artists. Merchants, restaurateurs, and the hotel along Malvern Avenue represent another primary stakeholder bloc, some providing capital funding for plan implementation. The design team, consisting of landscape architects, urban designers, and architects held two public events to solicit input at the beginning of the project and at mid-point completion. Balancing public sector investments between the neighborhood's interest in livability and equity with those of merchants/tourists was a continual process informing the project approach. The design team worked closely with the Complete Streets team and is assisting the city with current and future grant applications to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) toward implementing aspects of the Plan. Modulation of the Plan into eight rooms positions the City of Hot Springs to capture the interest of multiple funding sources according to individual agency

and foundation award profiles (e.g., public art, transportation, infrastructure, watershed, economic development).

Since this Plan is detailed to the level of Schematic Design, implementation of project components will require further architecture and engineering development at the levels of Design Development, Construction Documents, and Construction Administration. The intention of this Plan is to outline the larger vision, scope, and vocabulary framing future development of the Malvern Corridor and District, and is certainly subject to modification as further project details become available. As a framework plan, the vision is not compromised if a component fails to materialize or is altered (though sympathetically) from original conceptions illustrated herein. However, the framework plan does suggest a *minimum operating segment* to affect a shift in perception of Malvern Avenue—the segment of Malvern Avenue between Grand Avenue and Convention Boulevard.

## Recommendations

- Paint the full bicycle network on streets as an immediate tactical urbanism project for further user evaluation. Permanent bicycle facilities may be installed in tandem with block retrofits as they are implemented incrementally.
- Initiate implementation of the road diet for the segment of Malvern Avenue between Grand Avenue and Convention Boulevard with attention to installation of LID landscapes, tree lawns, and bicycle lanes. This can be accomplished incrementally.
- Pursue grant funding from NEA's Our Town program for commissioning artists of national recognition (with a specialty in the human figure) to provide works for the Outdoor Museum at the National Baptist Building. Build the Outdoor Museum plaza first to receive art works, perhaps designating the plaza's construction costs as the matching funds required by NEA.
- Close Broadway Street where it intersects Malvern Avenue and develop the Convention Boulevard Circle. Commission the Hernando de Soto sculpture, and establish a procurement process to commission the large public art work in the Circle.



- Expand the western sidewalk at Restaurant Row Patio and install street trees. Assist restaurant owners in developing a business model to use the Patio for outdoor dining, otherwise plant a double row of trees.
- Collaborate with Hotel Hot Springs to develop the Plaza and its marquis area, including installation of the living wall.
- Acquire property to widen the existing pedestrian passage between Malvern Avenue and the train depot on Market Street. Aim for a width of 20 feet in development of this passage, and consider the option of commissioning a public art work for this space.
- Develop the Broadway Promenade from reclaimed parking spaces and reconfigure Broadway Street.
- Install Malvern Avenue Gateway with messaging system. The site plan accommodates optional large-scale public sculpture with a recommendation that the material be bronze to match sculpture planned for Convention Boulevard Circle.
- Pursue grant funding from EPA's 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution program and the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission to develop the Depot Water Garden and Riparian Loop as stream corridor improvements and restoration of Hot Springs Creek. Funding will support necessary engineering and design development fees, including hydrological modeling. Commission a civil engineer to assess the need for stream bank reinforcement at Broadway Terrace.

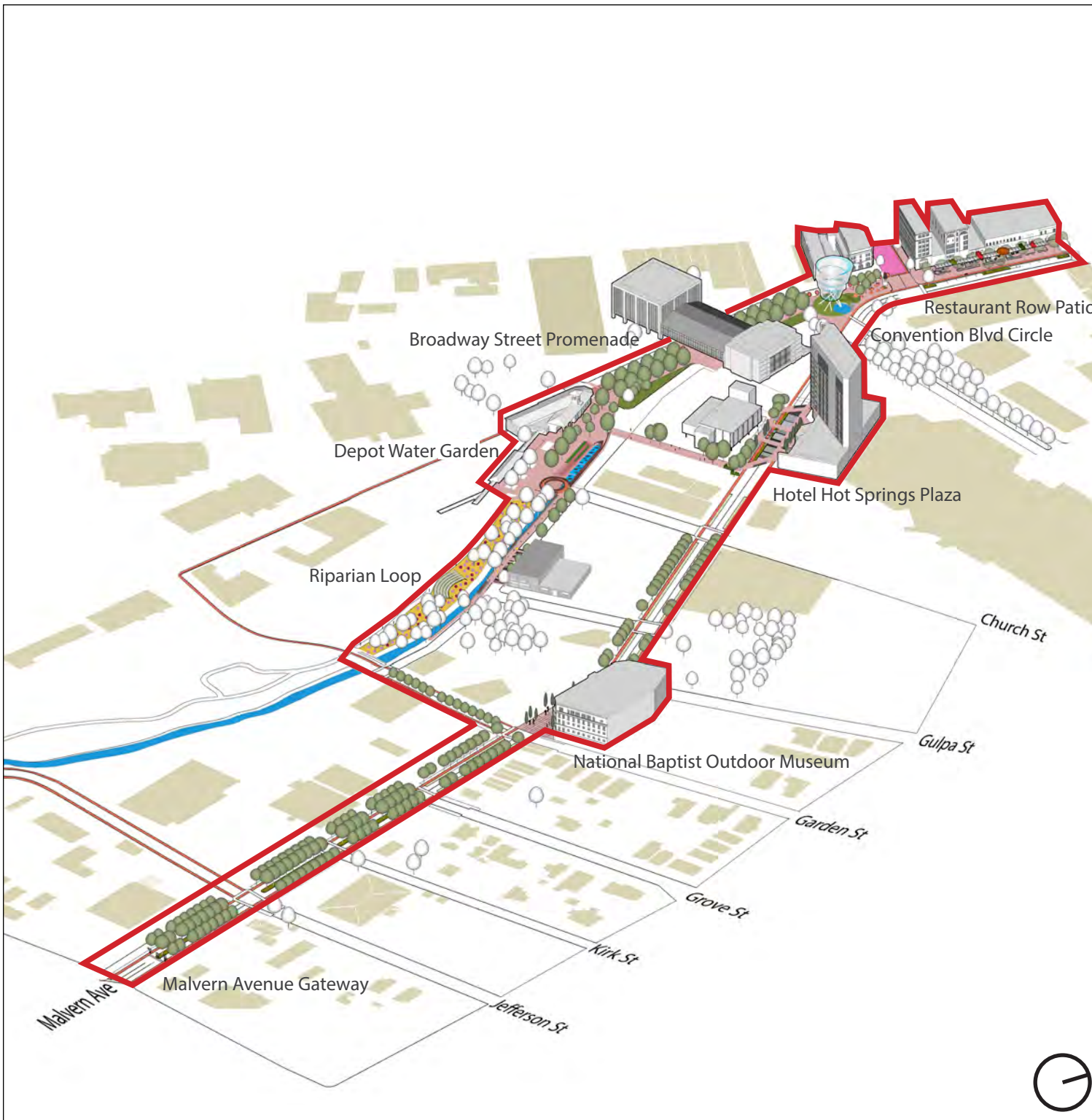
# Malvern Avenue Gateway Corridor and District Plan for the City of Hot Springs, Arkansas

In the first half of the 20th century, Hot Springs, Arkansas was America's premier spa resort city, attracting worldwide acclaim for its natural hot springs. Called the Valley of Vapors, the city's current fabric reflects both those halcyon days and its afterglow.



Central Avenue at the Bathhouse Row was designated one of the "Ten Great Streets" in America. How do we extend those qualities to Malvern Avenue, the gateway to Bathhouse Row?





## Principles of the Plan

- Create a coherent district by **enhancing visual connectivity and access** throughout the Gateway Neighborhood, Broadway Street/Train Depot, and the Convention Center.
- **Structure an identity** for this downtown gateway to the Central Avenue Historic District and Bathhouse Row that also catalyzes and guides private sector investment.
- Transform Malvern Avenue and Broadway Street into **Complete Streets** that reward walking and biking, while providing **ecologically-based stormwater management** and riparian corridor improvements—**Complete Streams**.



## Building Development Opportunity in the Plan

Besides enhancing livability, the Malvern Corridor and District Plan is a public-sector tool to improve infrastructure in preparation for future private sector investment contemplating a return to downtown. The Plan provides the necessary signals to the market and property owners that investments in downtown revitalization will be supported by public space offering a high level of livability. The Plan supports the equivalent of 14 city blocks of building development.

## Eight Street Cross-Sections that Re-Code the Malvern Avenue District

**1** Convention Blvd Circle  
landmarks the street network for wayfinding and orientation to the historic district



**5** Broadway Promenade  
formal tree-lined walk apart from street that marks the piped stream below

**2** Restaurant Row Patio  
sidewalk extension of back-of-house space for outdoor dining



**6** Hotel Hot Springs Plaza  
a pedestrian table that expands the arrival marquis into a street garden

**3** Depot Water Garden  
daylights stream through a sunken plaza as a stream walk



**7** National Baptist Outdoor Museum  
expanded street plaza housing sculpture memorializing African-American music greats who performed in the neighborhood

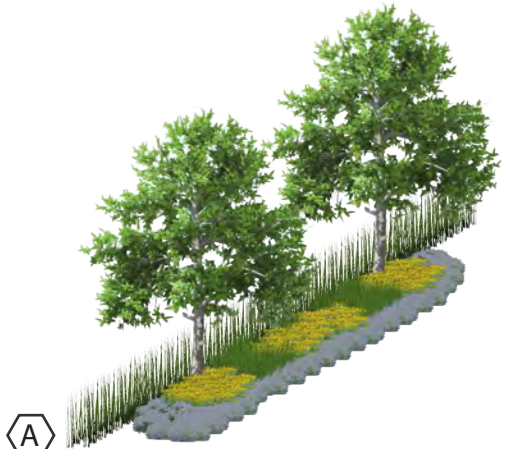
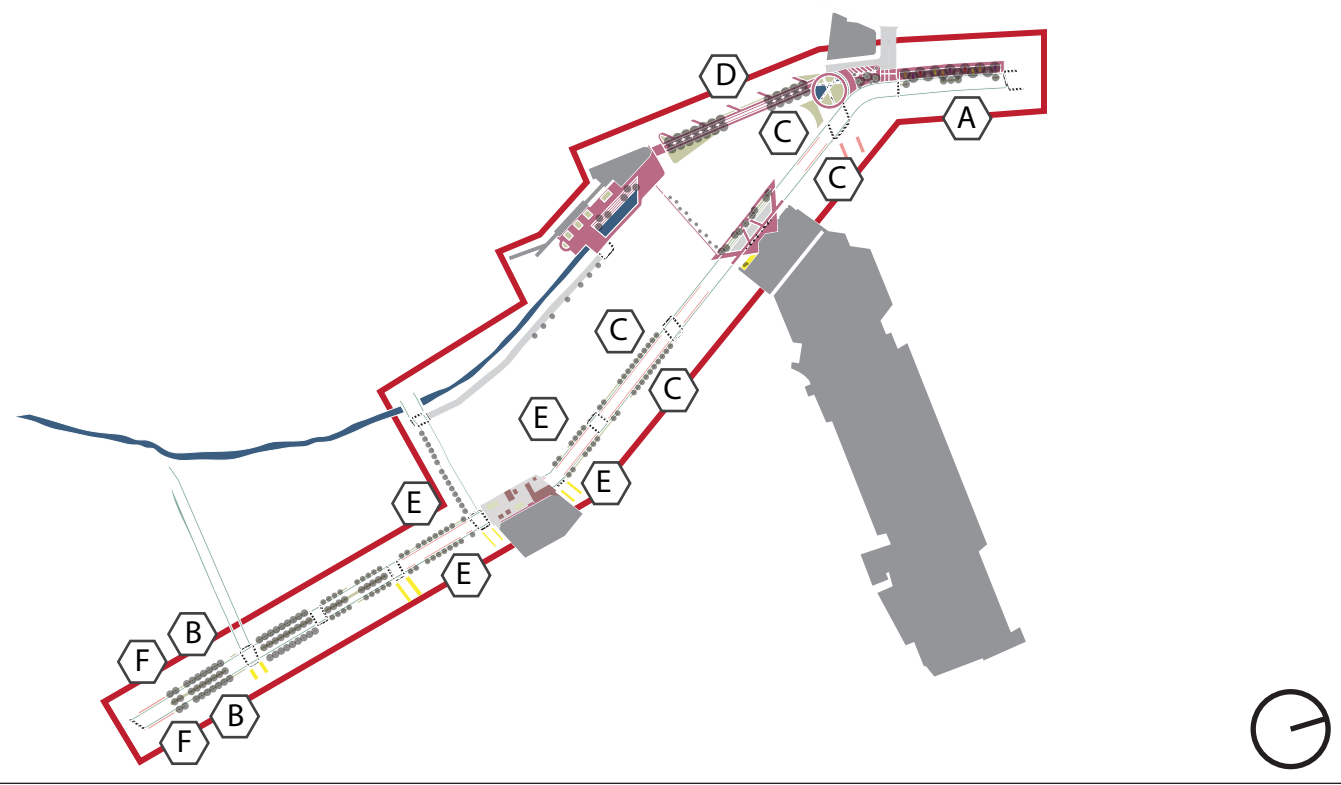
**4** Riparian Loop  
naturalized stream corridor ringed by a greenway (soft edge) opposite a shared street (hard edge), connected by bridges



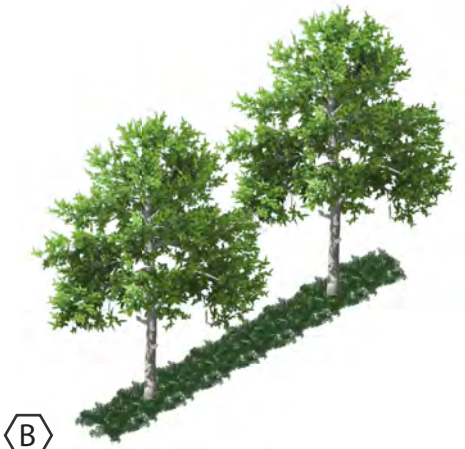
**8** Malvern Avenue Gateway  
marks arrival at the downtown district

## Street Bioswale Planting Schedule

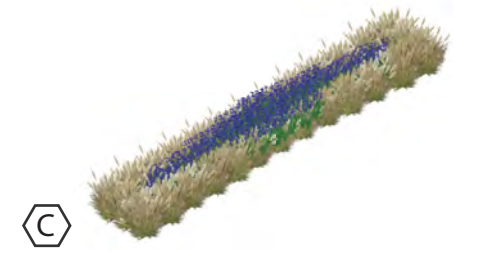
Hot Springs is dedicated to implementing Low Impact Development landscapes for urban stormwater management and treatment. More than a mile of bioswales will be installed on Malvern Avenue and Broadway Street, most between the vehicle lanes and bicycle lanes, providing additional protection for cyclists while creating a gardened edge to signature streets. Gardened edges support traffic calming. Bioswales are particularly effective at managing 10-year storm events and less—90 percent of our rain events.



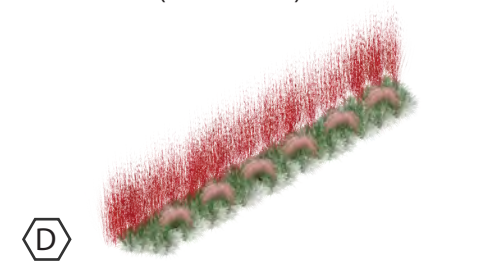
- A**
- *Nyssa sylvatica* (Black Gum)
  - *Equisetum arvense* (Horsetail)
  - *Sporobolus heterolepis* (Prairie Dropseed)
  - *Nepeta x faassenii* (Cat Mint)
  - *Rudbeckia hirta* (Black Eyed Susan)



- B**
- *Nyssa sylvatica* (Black Gum)
  - *Hypericum calycinum* (St. John's Wort)



- C**
- *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* (Karl Foerester)
  - *Iris Sibirica* (Siberian Iris)



- D**
- *Cornus sericea* (Red Twig Dogwood)
  - *Osmundastrum cinnamomeum* (Cinnamon Fern)
  - *Muhlenbergia capillaris* (Hairawn Muhly)



- E**
- *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* (Karl Foerester)
  - *Lobelia cardinalis* (Cardinal Flower)



- F**
- *Hypericum calycinum* (St. John's Wort)
  - *Sporobolus heterolepis* (Prairie Dropseed)
  - *Muhlenbergia capillaris* (Hairawn Muhly)



## Botanizing the Pavement: From Hardscapes to Softscapes

Road diets and realignment of automobile parking from lots to on-street strategies exemplify good town form making. Underperforming asphalt is reconfigured to implement Complete Streets and Complete Streets, adding bike lanes, tree lawns, LID stormwater management landscapes, plazas and lawns, and daylighted streams. Softscapes provide a high return on investment in the form of greater livability, commerce, and enhancement of ecological services. This is all part of achieving a public realm of greater articulation, yielding higher and better uses of downtown's urban surface.

Public parking decreases by 73 spaces in the core area of Malvern District under full implementation of the Plan. Parking can be shifted incrementally as the Plan is developed.

Green indicates bike lanes.



Triangulate Complete Street transformations on Malvern Avenue and Broadway Street with those on **Convention Circle Boulevard** to anchor the Malvern district.

Hotel Hot Springs Plaza

Convention Boulevard Circle

National Baptist Outdoor Museum

Broadway Promenade

Malvern Avenue Gateway

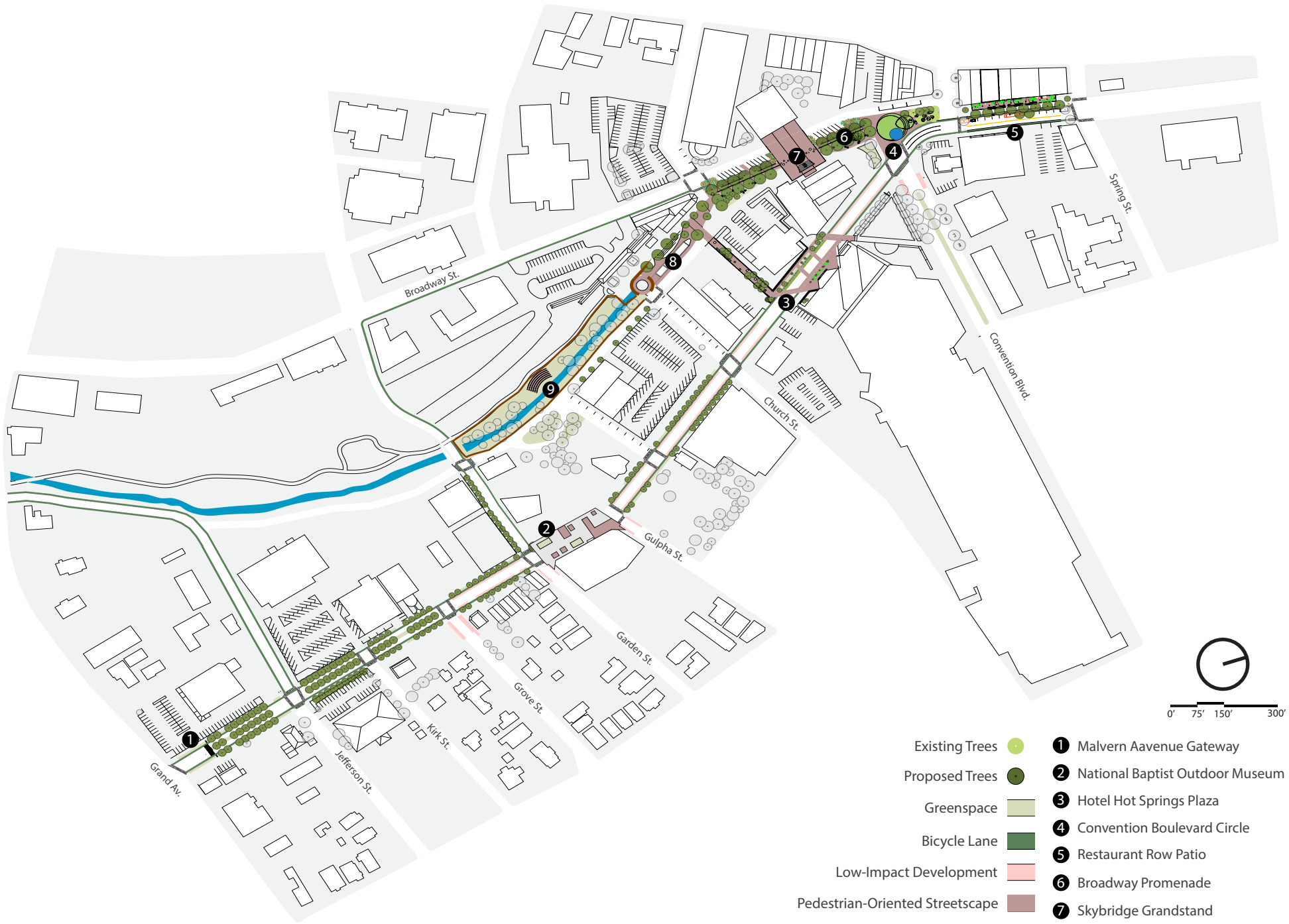
Riparian Loop

Depot Water Garden

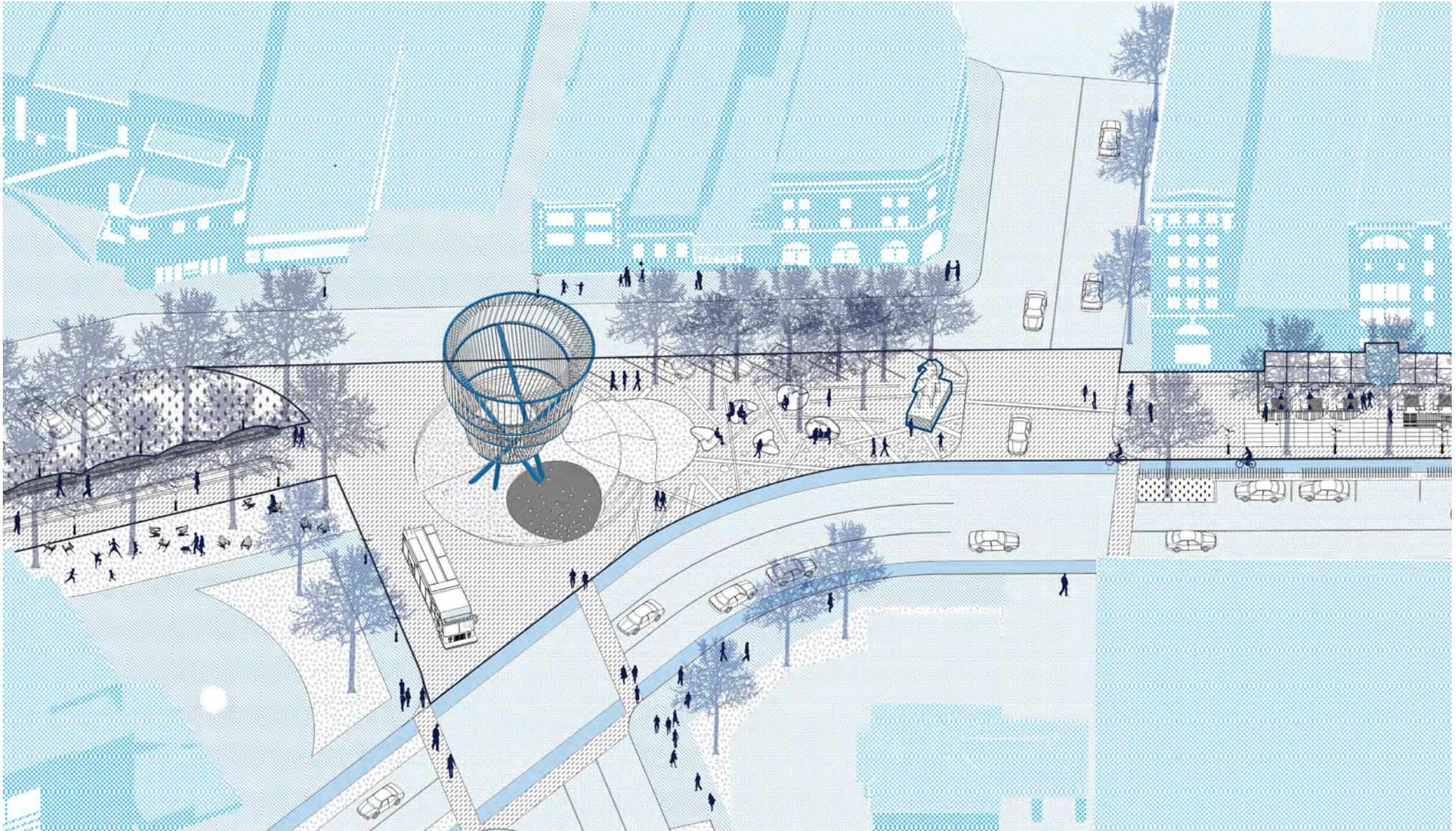


Restaurant Row Patio (behind)





- |                                 |  |                                          |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------|
| Existing Trees                  |  | <b>1</b> Malvern Avenue Gateway          |
| Proposed Trees                  |  | <b>2</b> National Baptist Outdoor Museum |
| Greenspace                      |  | <b>3</b> Hotel Hot Springs Plaza         |
| Bicycle Lane                    |  | <b>4</b> Convention Boulevard Circle     |
| Low-Impact Development          |  | <b>5</b> Restaurant Row Patio            |
| Pedestrian-Oriented Streetscape |  | <b>6</b> Broadway Promenade              |
| Crosswalk                       |  | <b>7</b> Skybridge Grandstand            |
| Existing Creek                  |  | <b>8</b> Depot Water Garden              |
|                                 |  | <b>9</b> Riparian Loop                   |



**1 Convention Boulevard Circle**

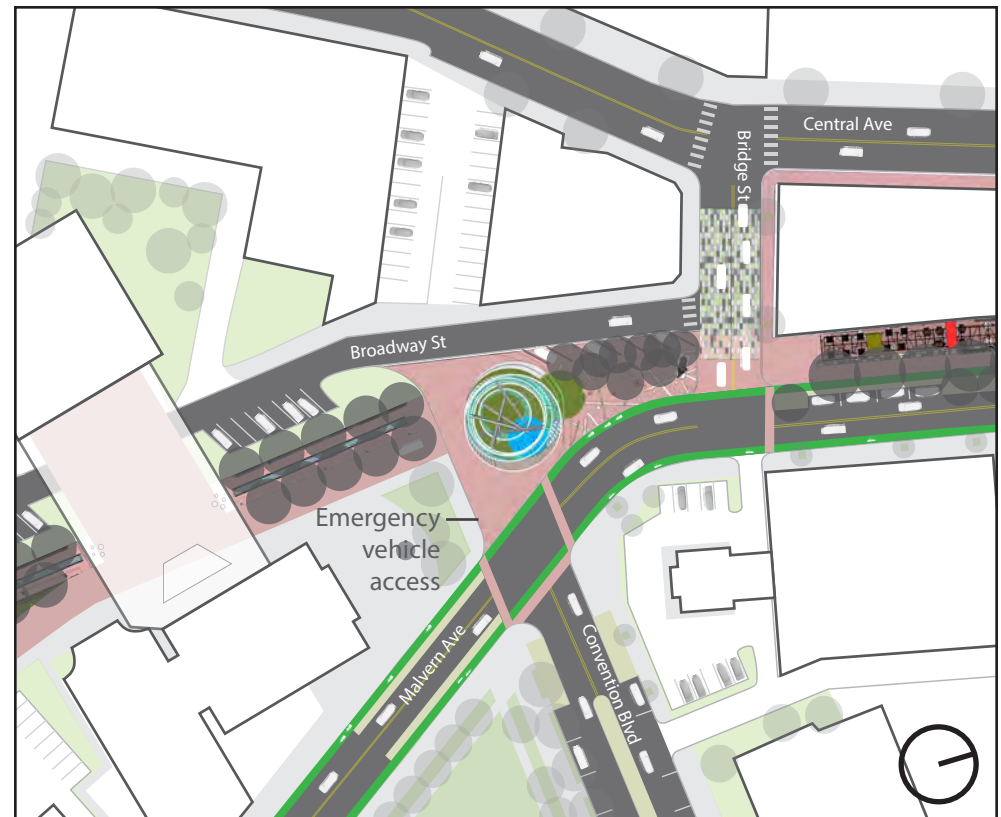
Close Broadway Street access (except for emergency vehicles) to Convention Boulevard and install circle, enhancing pedestrian connections between the convention center area and downtown.



Existing conditions at intersection of Convention Boulevard, Malvern Avenue, and Broadway Street



Before Traffic Plan



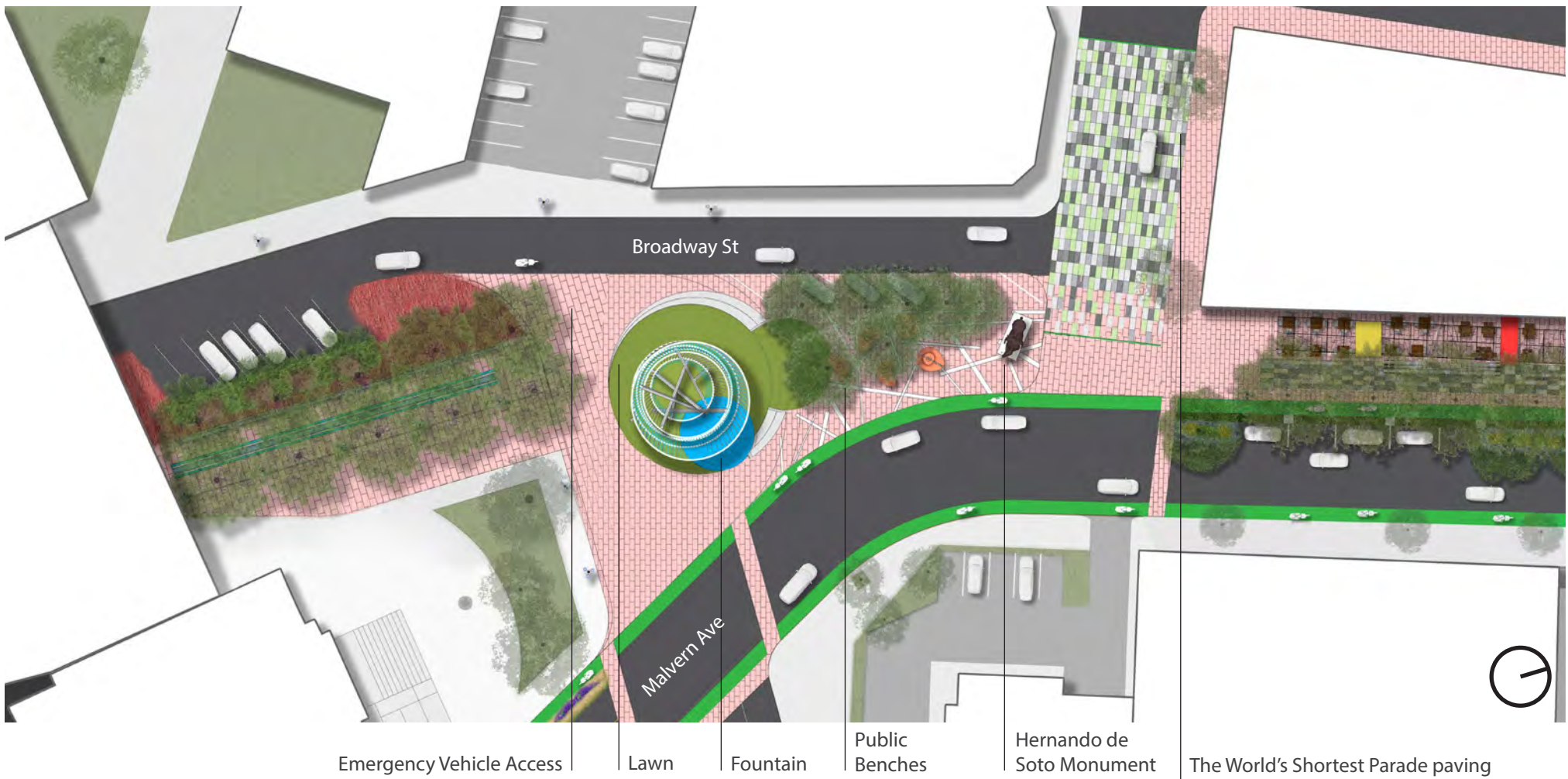
After Traffic Plan



Reconfigured traffic patterns will improve overall imageability and functioning

Resolution of an auto-dominant traffic intersection opens up pedestrian passages between **Convention Boulevard Circle** and **Restaurant Row Patio** along Malvern. New public art helps with wayfinding and memorializing local history.



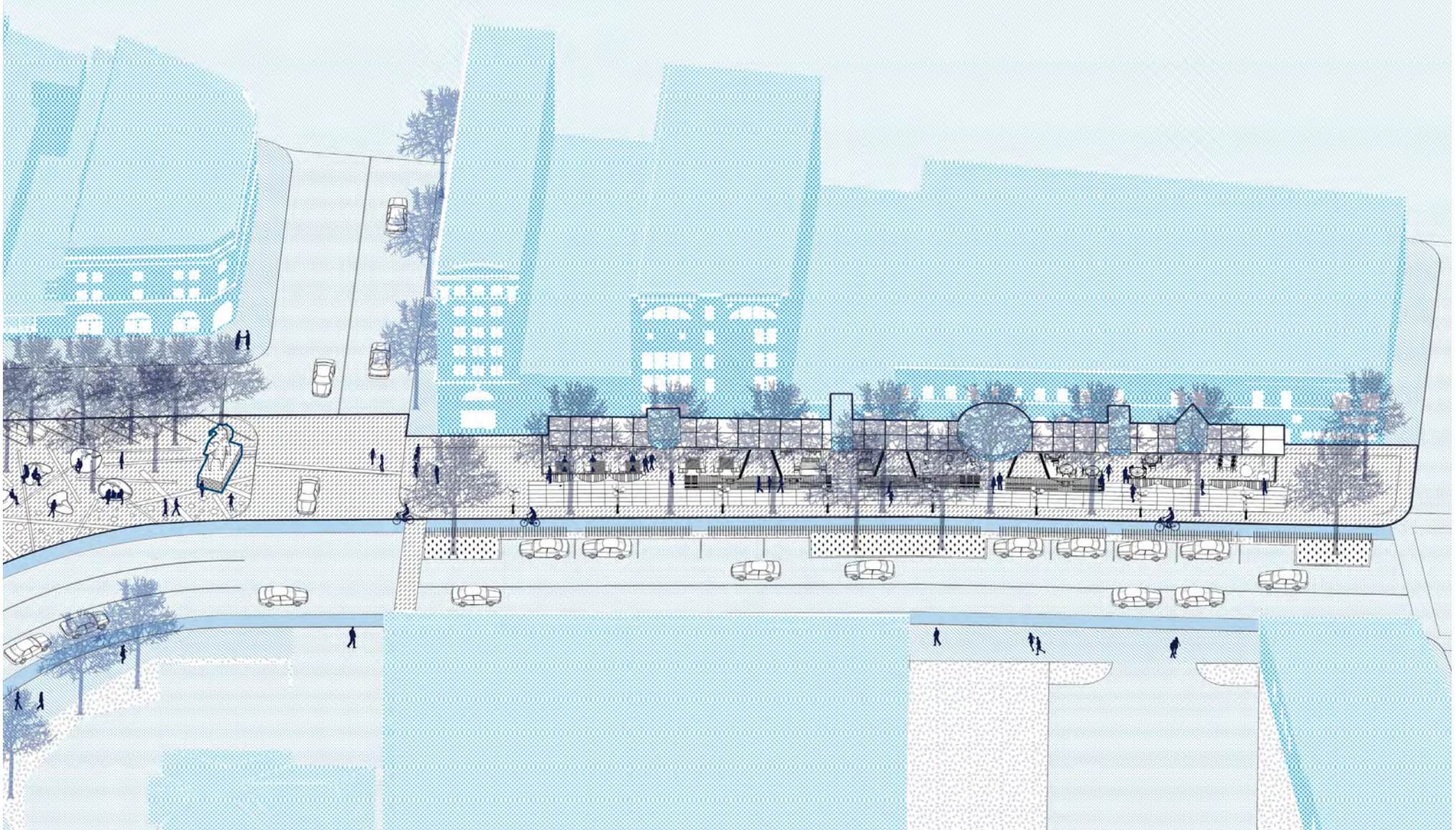


Elevation of Convention Boulevard Circle looking south



Convention Boulevard Circle during the Holiday Season





**2 Restaurant Row Patio**



Restaurant Row Patio looking south on Malvern Avenue

An expanded sidewalk with outdoor dining is appended to restaurant back-of-house space. New street frontage corrects the shortcoming of a shallow city block where only one layer of building unwittingly results in building rears fronting a primary street.



Existing back-of-house restaurant space



Sample wood bench

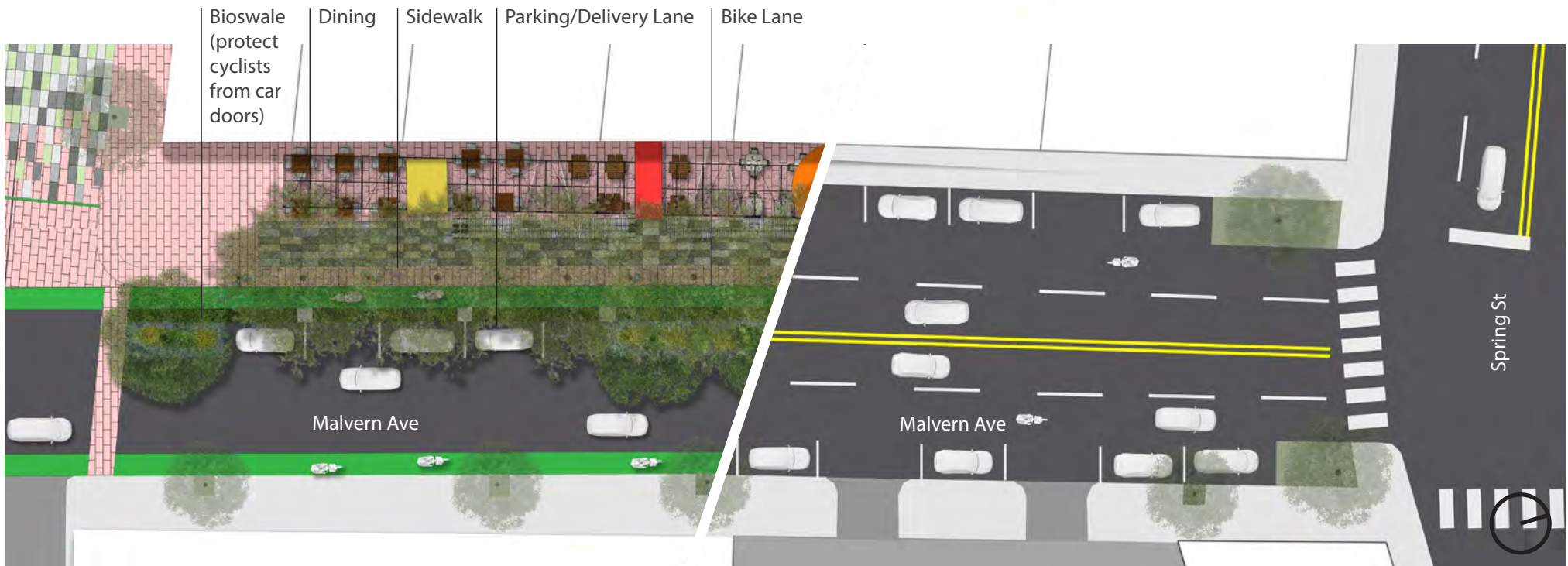




A six-lane Malvern Avenue looking north



A new three-lane Malvern Avenue looking north



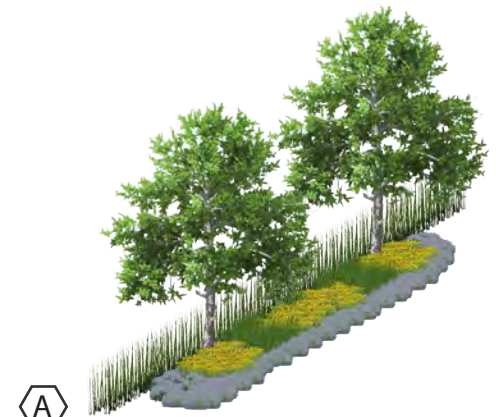
After / Before



The steel colonnade, itself a metal mesh sunshade with views to the sky, supports new signage, patio lighting, and fabric canopies sheltering buildings' rear entrances on Malvern Avenue. On this expanded sidewalk, a row of Willow Oaks parallels the colonnade structure, creating a shaded overhead canopy.



Restaurant Row Patio looking south toward Convention Boulevard Circle



(A)

- *Nyssa sylvatica* (Black Gum)
- *Equisetum arvense* (Horsetail)
- *Sporobolus heterolepis* (Prairie Dropseed)
- *Nepeta x faassenii* (Cat Mint)
- *Rudbeckia hirta* (Black Eyed Susan)

Complete Streets is accompanied by “Complete Streams” that restore ecological functioning to riparian corridors, here, daylighting Hot Springs Creek after its underground conveyance through downtown.

Riparian Loop

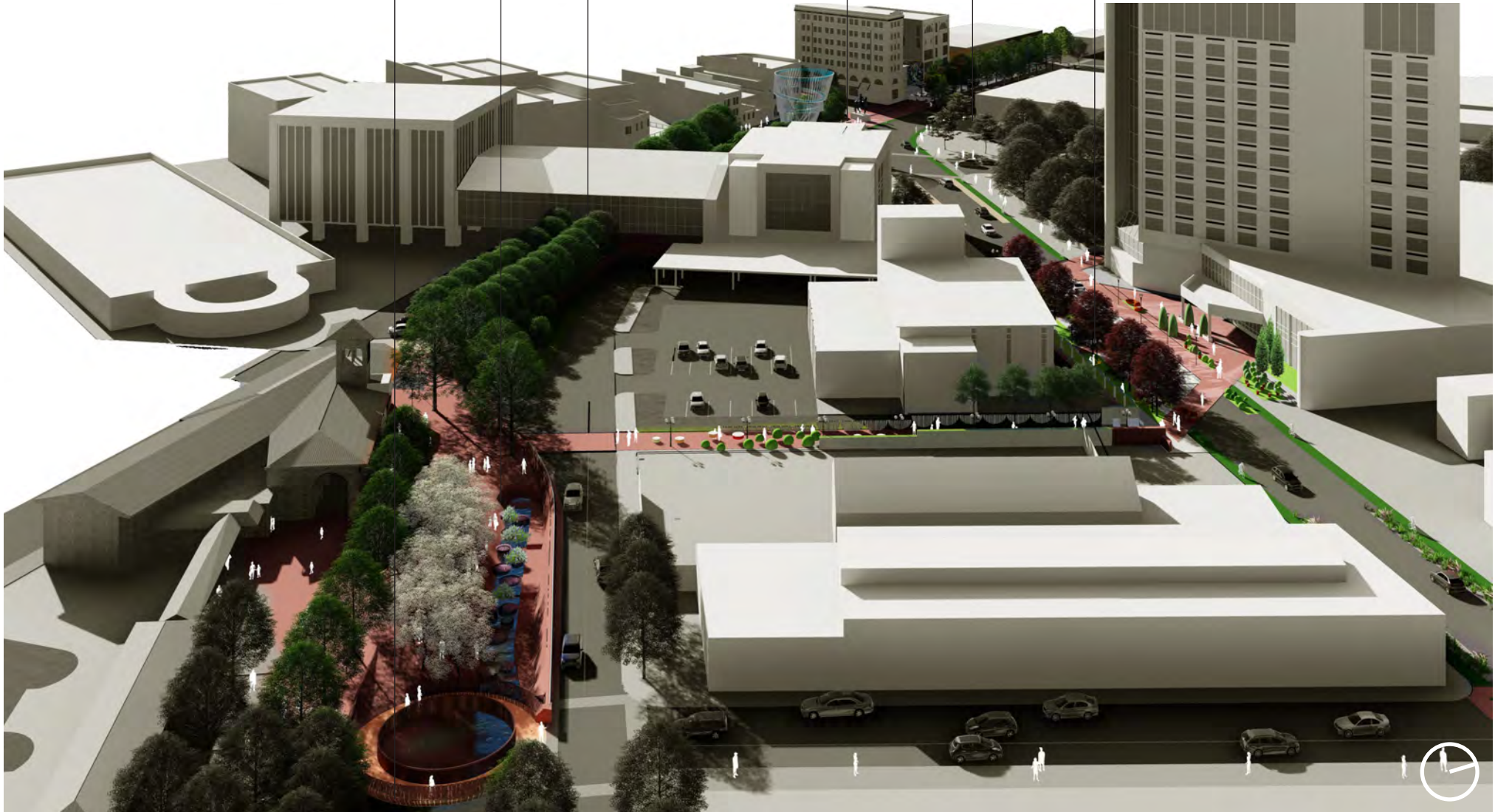
Depot Water Garden

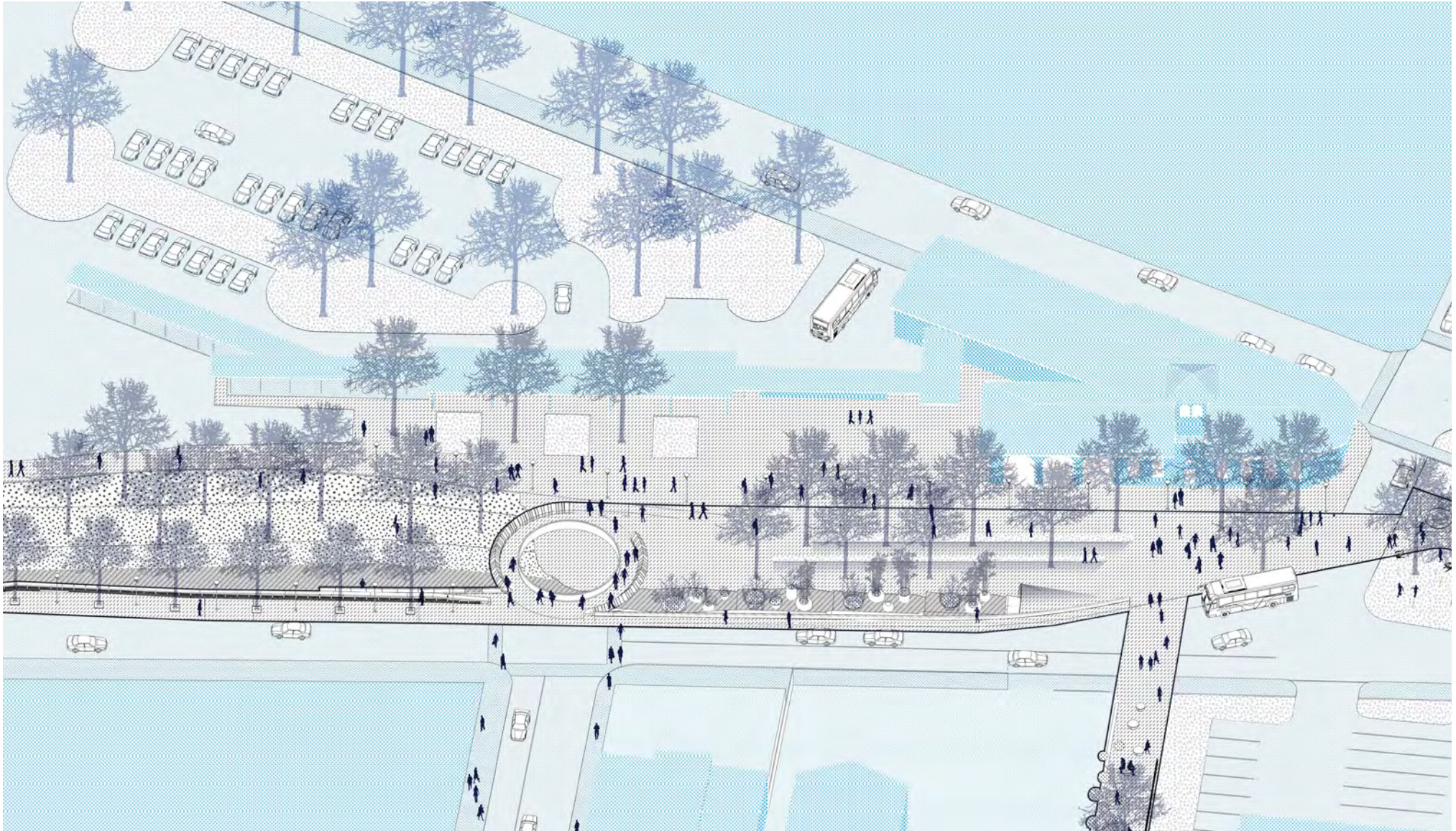
Broadway Promenade

Convention Boulevard Circle

Restaurant Row Patio

Hotel Hot Springs Plaza

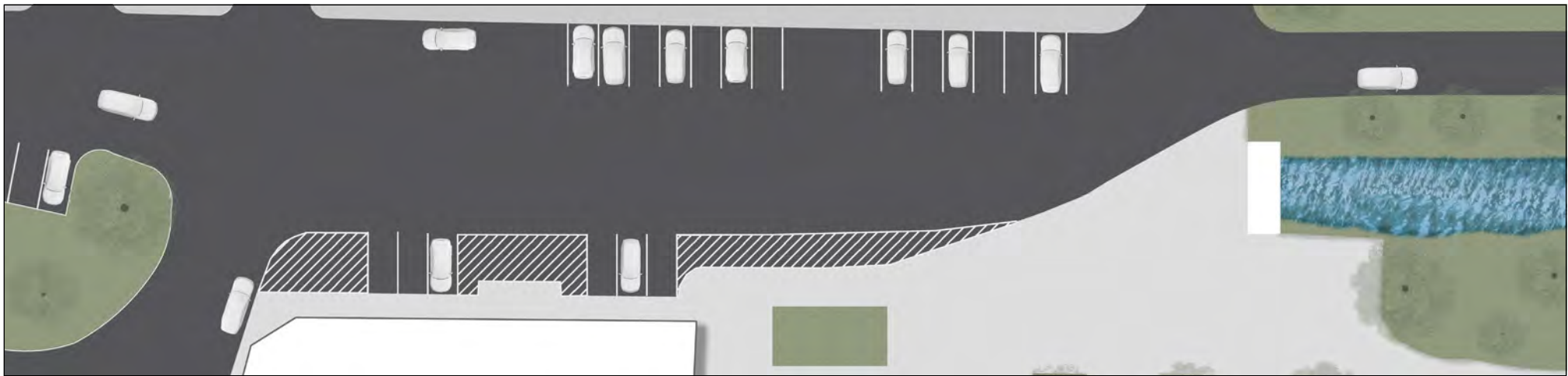




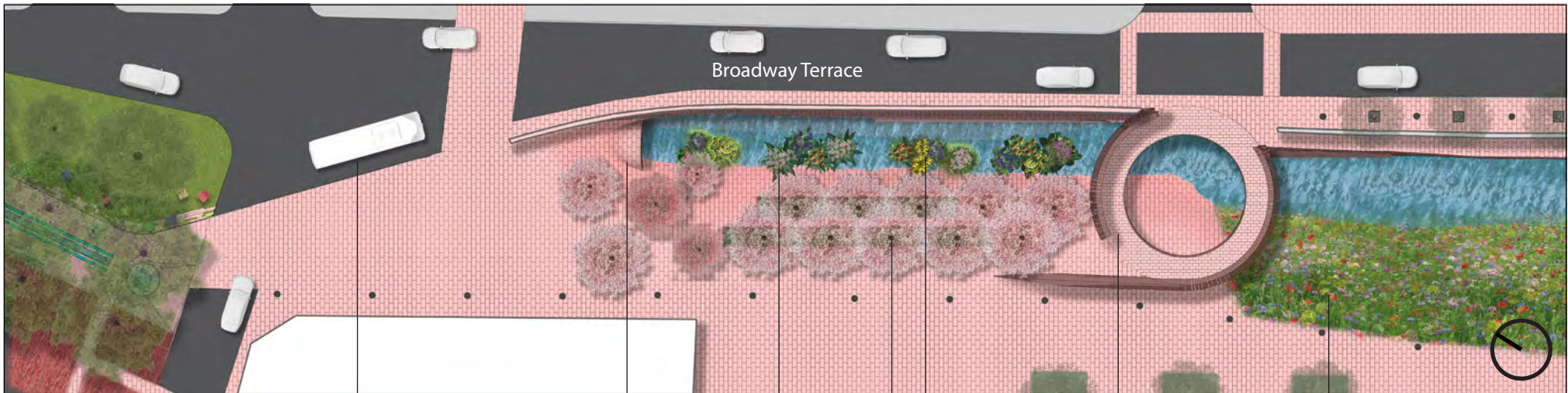
**3 and 4 Depot Water Garden and Riparian Loop**



Akin to the famed San Antonio River Walk, the daylighted stream is accessible and hard engineered as it transitions toward a more naturalized riparian geomorphology. The **Depot Water Garden** features a unique soft infrastructure treatment system through terraced “wet container gardens”.



Before



Regional Bus Stop

New Culvert

Cellular Meshworks for Plants

Seating Trays

Terraced Container Gardens

Circular Bridge at Church Street

Wildflower Meadow



Existing culvert and stream channel on Broadway Terrace

The **Channel Retrofit Water Gardens** at Hot Springs Creek introduce biologically active zones into hard-engineered urban streams. The gardens comprise submergent and emergent plant guilds whose growth is controlled through structural meshes akin to *espaliers*.

Cellular meshworks provide flow attenuation and restoration of sinuosity in flow patterns important to water regulating services. Plant guilds support microbial communities in root zones for water treatment, and the return of nutrient cycling, refugia, and food provisioning in riparian zones.



Depot Water Garden looking north toward Broadway Promenade



Depot Water Garden section looking west toward train depot



Stream walk at the Depot Water Garden, Market Street

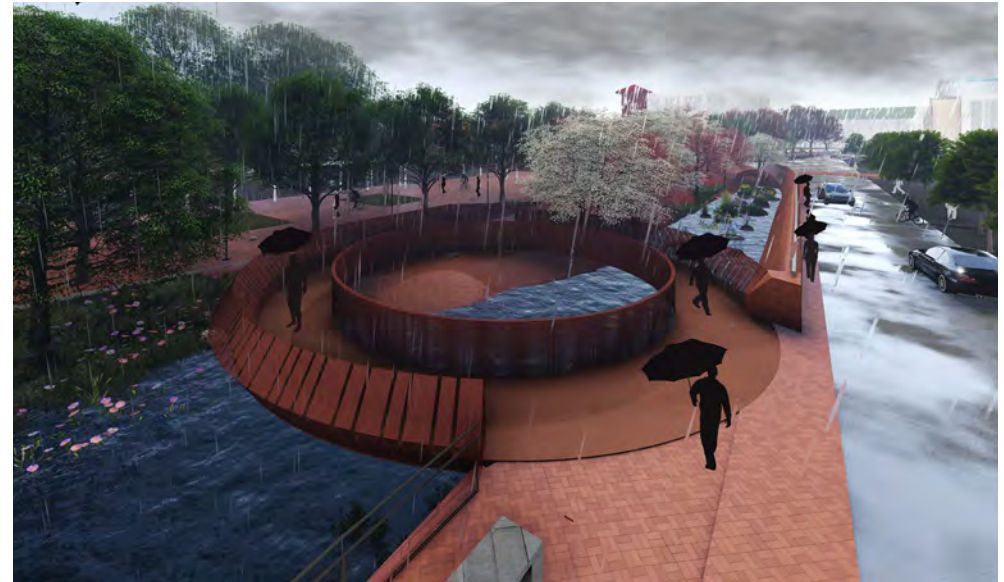


Water Garden plants list:

- Bougainvillea (Bougainvillea)
- Cornus sericea (Red Twig Dogwood)
- Syngonium podophyllum (Arrowhead)
- Pontederia cordata (Pickerel Flower)
- Canna (Canna Lily)
- Acalypha (Cat tail)
- Juncus effusus (Common Rush)



Circular Bridge connecting the Depot Water Garden and Riparian Loop - Dry



Circular Bridge connecting the Depot Water Garden and Riparian Loop - Wet

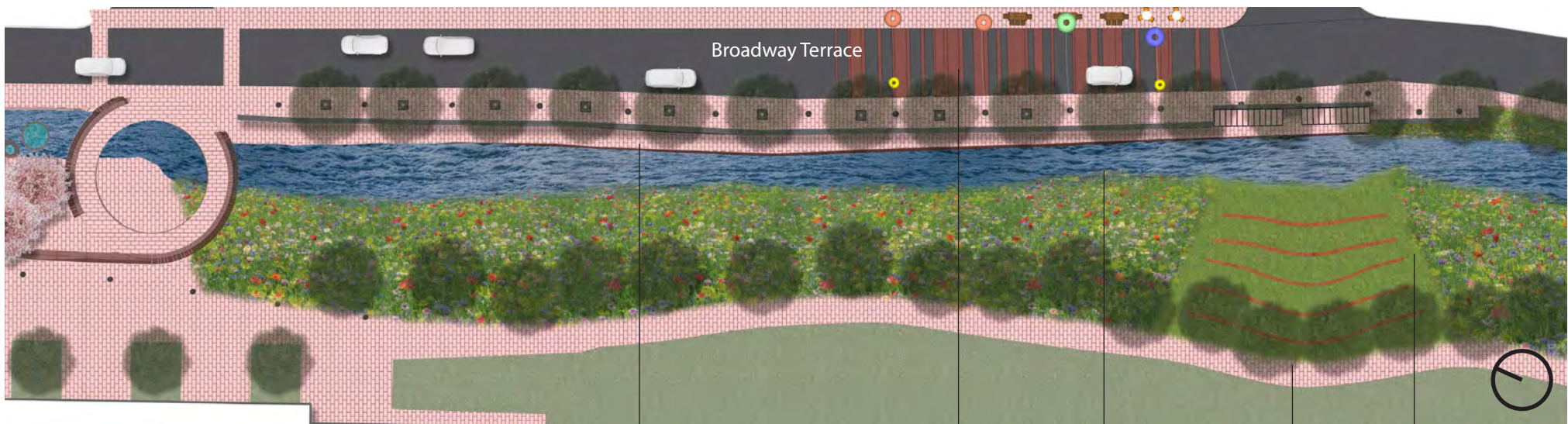




The circular bridge at the **Depot Water Garden** marks Hot Springs Creek's transition from a water garden to a naturalized riparian corridor. Its pure form is a fitting and dramatic visual terminus to Church Street as it connects back to Gateway Neighborhood's historic domed Visitors Chapel A.M.E Church.



Visitors Chapel A.M.E Church



Broadway Terrace Flood Shelf      Shared Street      Hot Springs Creek      Park Walk      Amphitheater



The **Riparian Loop** is constituted by the park's soft riparian edge with a wildflower meadow on the west side, opposite Broadway Terrace's floodplain shelf and shared street right-of-way on the east side.



Broadway Terrace at Creek Street looking north



Park amphitheater looking east toward Broadway Terrace Levee at Creek Street

The **Riparian Loop** presents an important opportunity to conceptualize the return of mixed-use building fabric, particularly housing, to the park and stream edge.





**5 Broadway Promenade**



The southern terminus at the train depot is marked by a fountain, one of many around the city

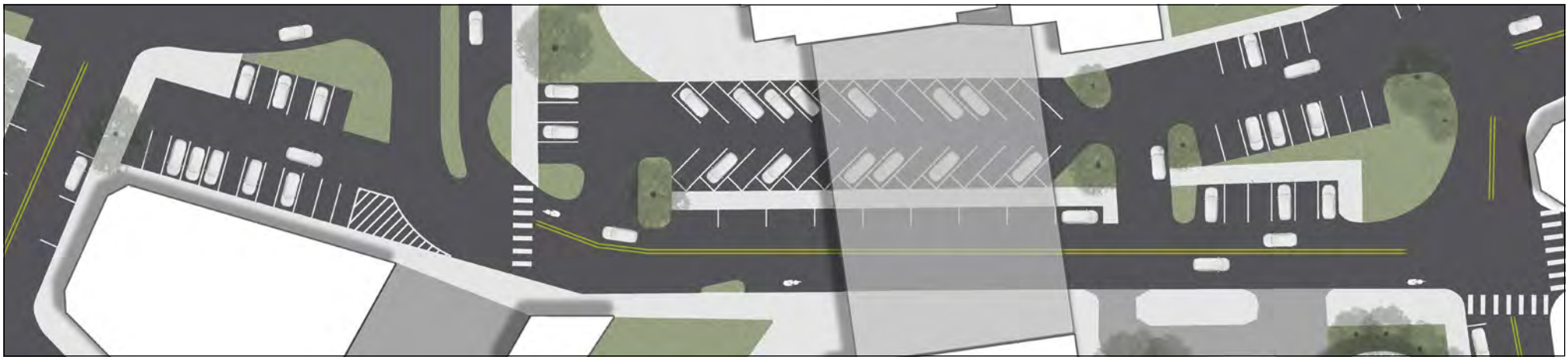


Currently underutilized parking lots



1930 view of Train Depot

Modeled after Frederick Law Olmsted's Mall in Central Park with its overhead tree canopy and continuous benches, the Promenade hosts a manicured lawn on its eastern edge opposite extensive LID landscape serving automobile parking on its western edge.



Before



Convention Boulevard Circle

Broadway Promenade

Seating stand under bridge

Bioswale Gardens

Promenade Lawn

Train Depot



Regions Bank Skybridge over Broadway Street



Broadway Promenade near Convention Boulevard Circle looking north

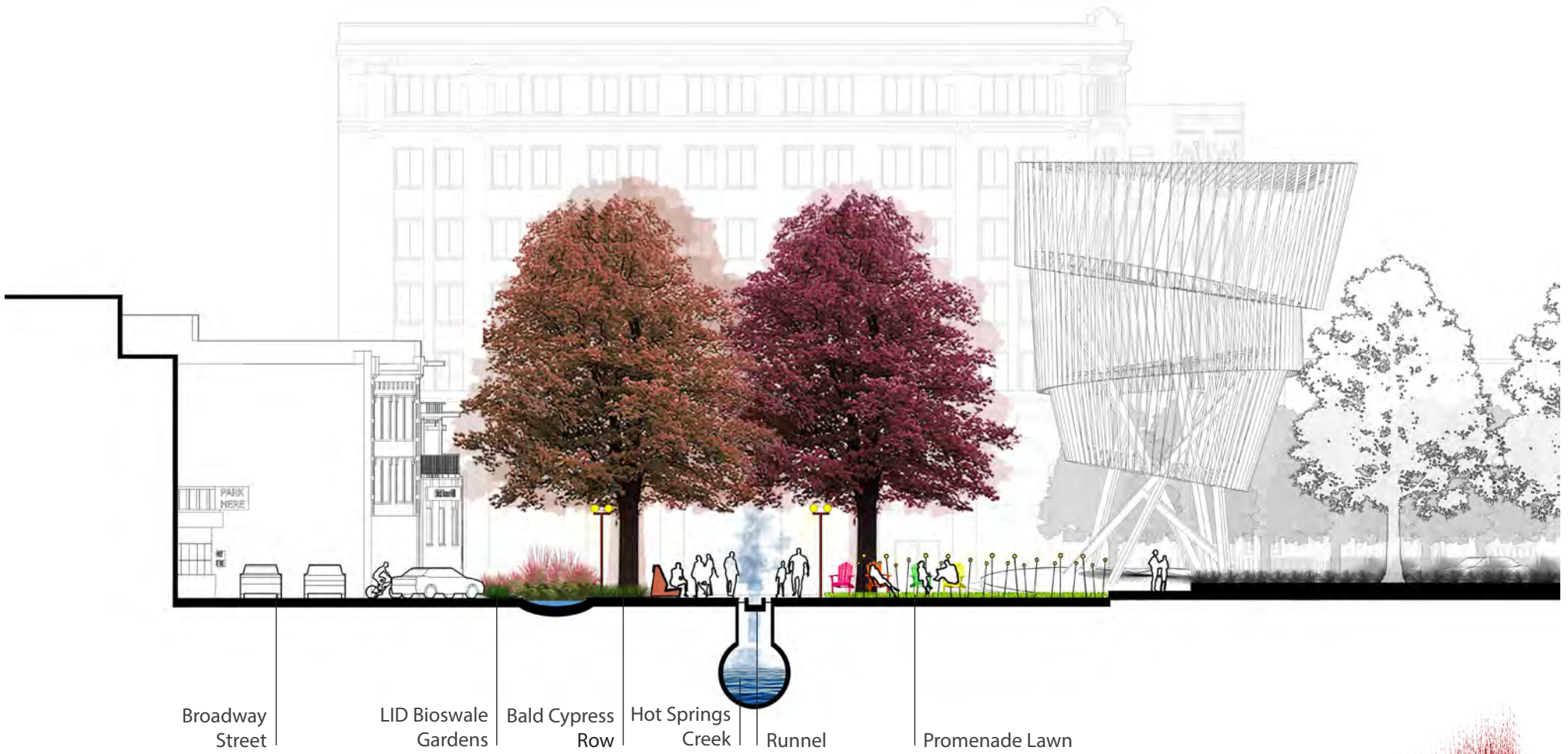
Recalling the routing of Hot Springs Creek underneath, the runnel channels water and emits steam from the 143-degree spring water piped below. A continuous sub-surface blue light mixes with the steam, recalling the city's moniker Valley of Vapors.



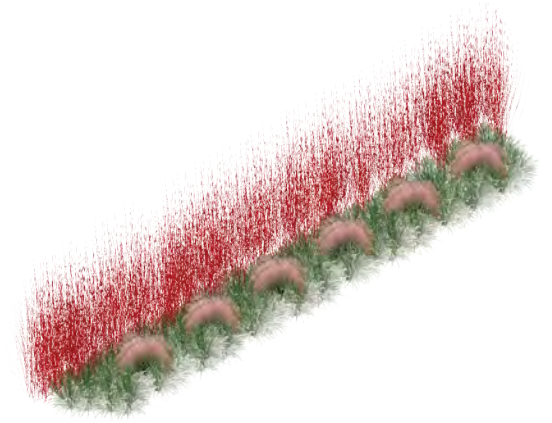
Existing Parking Lot on Broadway Street



Sample wood bench



Broadway Street parking lot looking north



- *Cornus sericea* (Red Twig Dogwood)
- *Osmundastrum cinnamomeum* (Cinnamon Fern)
- *Muhlenbergia capillaris* (Hairawn Muhly)





Broadway Street

Bioswales

Broadway Promenade

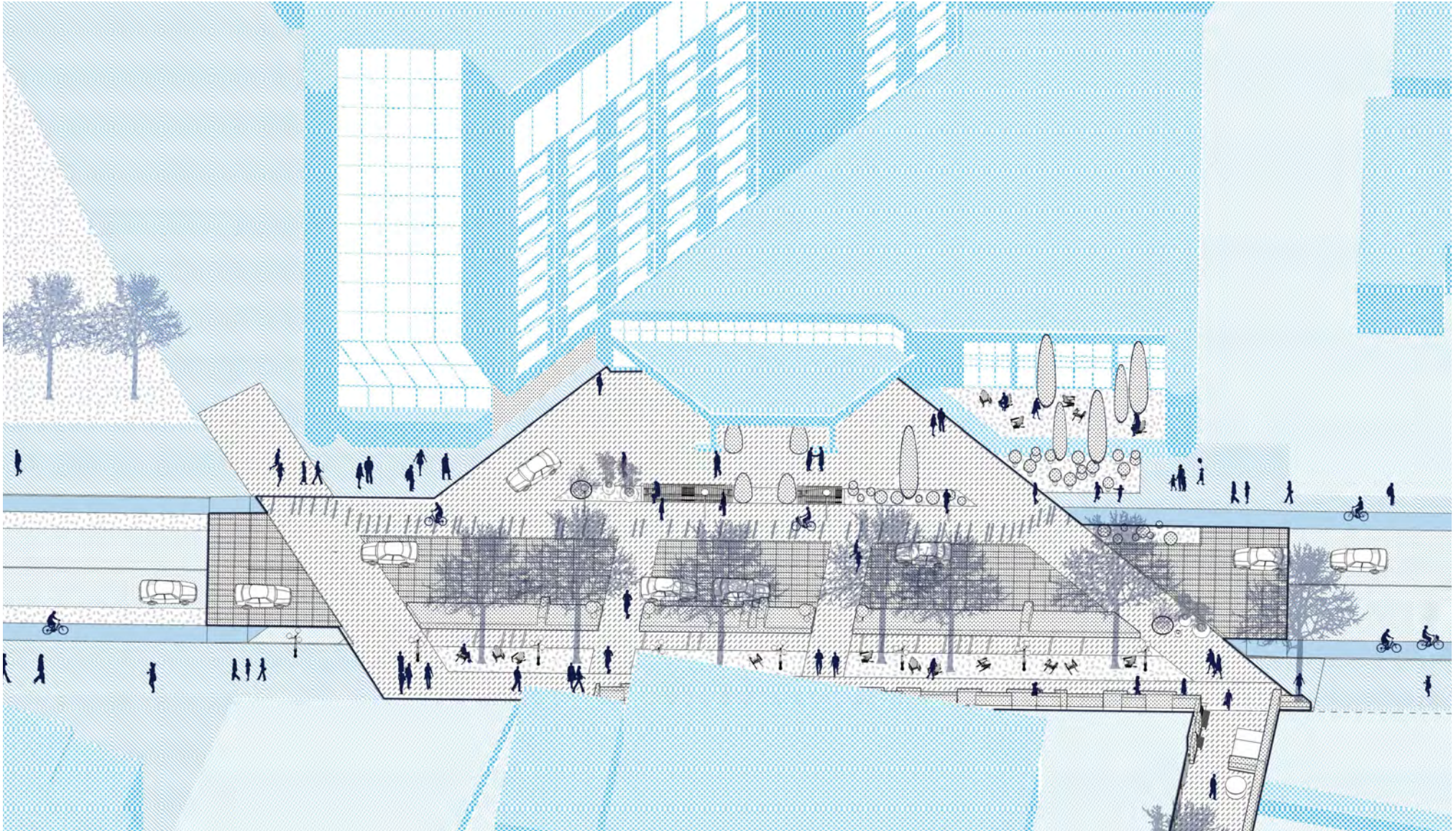
Seating for events on plaza under Skybridge



Regions Bank Skybridge over Broadway Street



Grandstand



**6 Hotel Hot Springs Plaza**



Malvern Avenue at Hotel Hot Springs Plaza looking north to Convention Boulevard Circle



Existing empty planters on west retaining wall (to left)

The Plaza is a pedestrian table calming motorists and bicyclists speeds while favoring pedestrians since the latter do not step down into the space of the street. More than a space for passing through, the Plaza shapes a dignified theater for arriving, waiting, departing, lingering, and socializing among conventioners and downtown visitors.



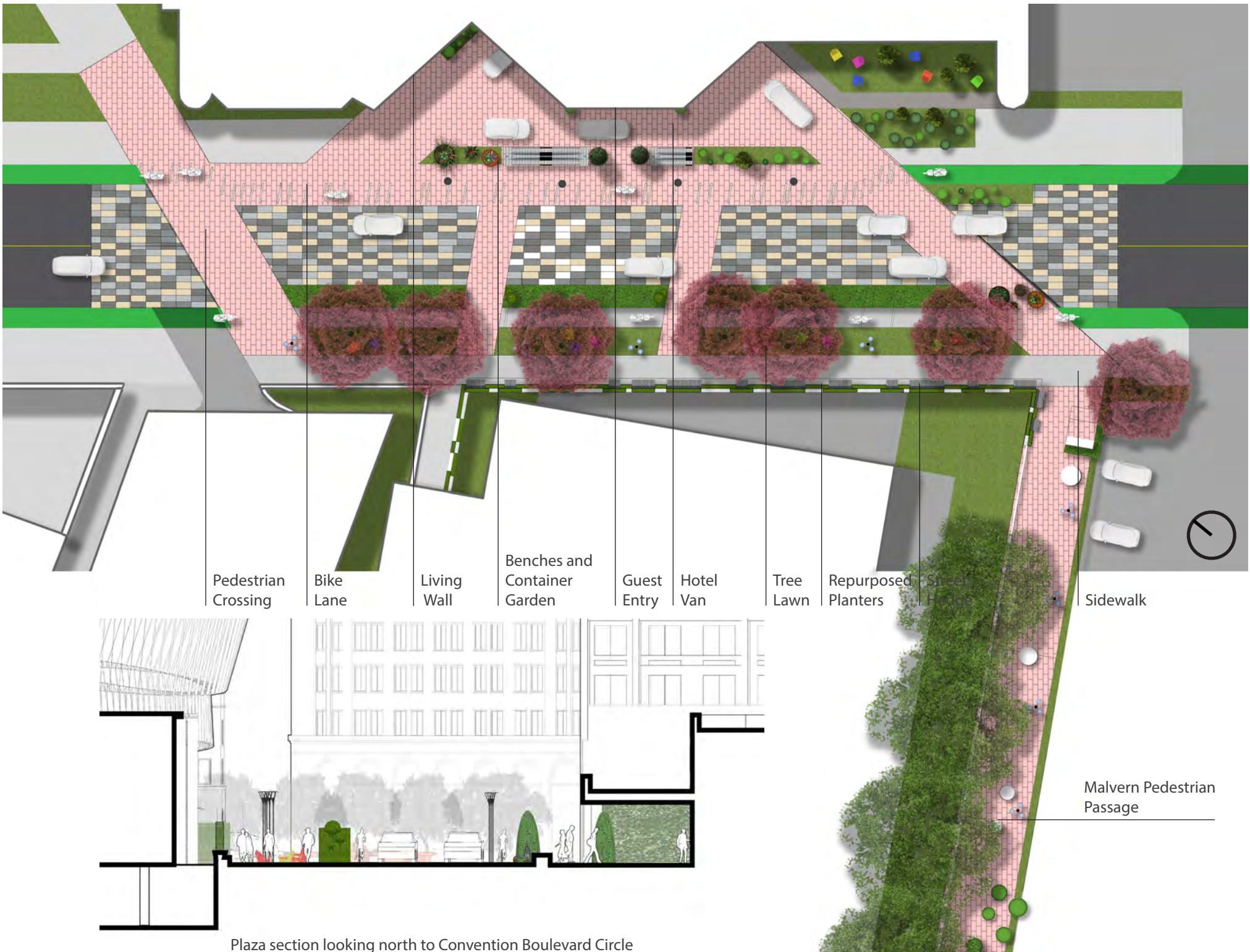
East elevation of Plaza with Hotel Hot Springs as backdrop



West elevation of Plaza with repurposed planters



Open walled terrace as sitting area/lawn facing street



Pedestrian Crossing

Bike Lane

Living Wall

Benches and Container Garden

Guest Entry

Hotel Van

Tree Lawn

Repurposed Planters

Street Hedge

Sidewalk

Malvern Pedestrian Passage

Plaza section looking north to Convention Boulevard Circle



Hedge Garden at Hotel Hot Springs looking north



Both sides of the street are shaped by hedges and topiary with lawn furniture (including inexpensive but voluminous Adirondack chairs), inviting relaxation and people watching. The west side houses a landscape of Boxwood Hedges that populate empty planters along the retaining wall at the edge of the right-of-way.



Widen the existing Malvern Pedestrian Passage to approximately 20 feet between Hotel Hot Springs and the train depot.



Cross-Section of Malvern Pedestrian Passage

Broadway Promenade

Depot Water Garden

Riparian Loop

Convention Boulevard Circle

Restaurant Row Patio

Hotel Hot Springs

National Baptist Outdoor Museum

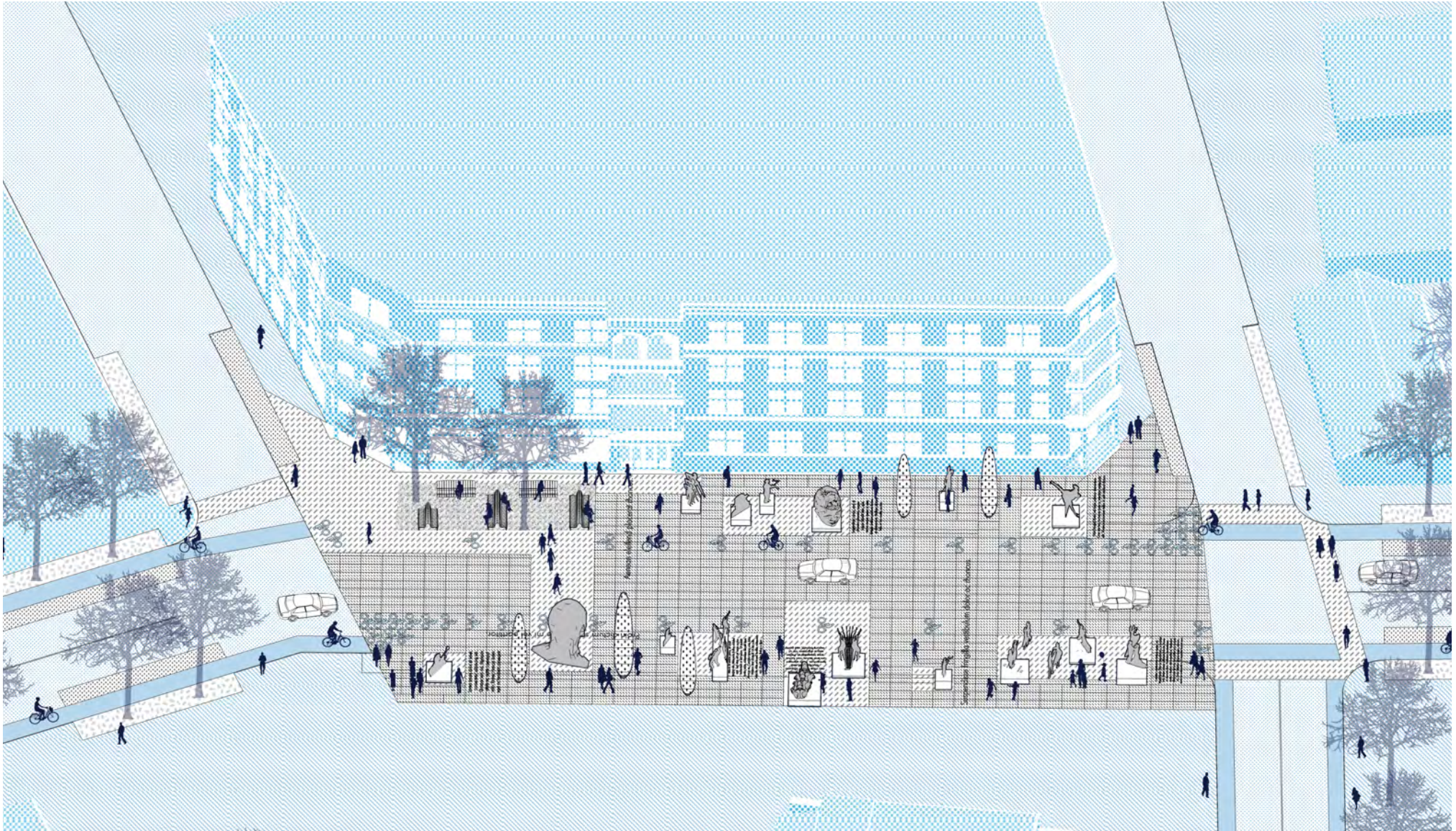
Malvern Avenue Gateway



While disinvestment leads to formlessness, vital places—whether they are urban public rooms, streets, neighborhoods, or districts—have bounded and articulated edges with clear descriptions of inside/outside and core/periphery.







## 7 National Baptist Outdoor Museum



c. 1950 Malvern Avenue was once a lively African-American business district and entertainment center anchored by the National Baptist Hotel and Sanitorium (now National Baptist Building)



2017 National Baptist Building surrounded by vacant city blocks

National Baptist Building hosted famous “Chitlin’ Circuit” blues and jazz performers like Count Basie, Pegleg Bates, and Ella Fitzgerald during the era of racial segregation. A proposed pedestrian table supports an **Outdoor Museum**—a musician sculpture garden celebrating those legends who performed and lodged in the Gateway Neighborhood.



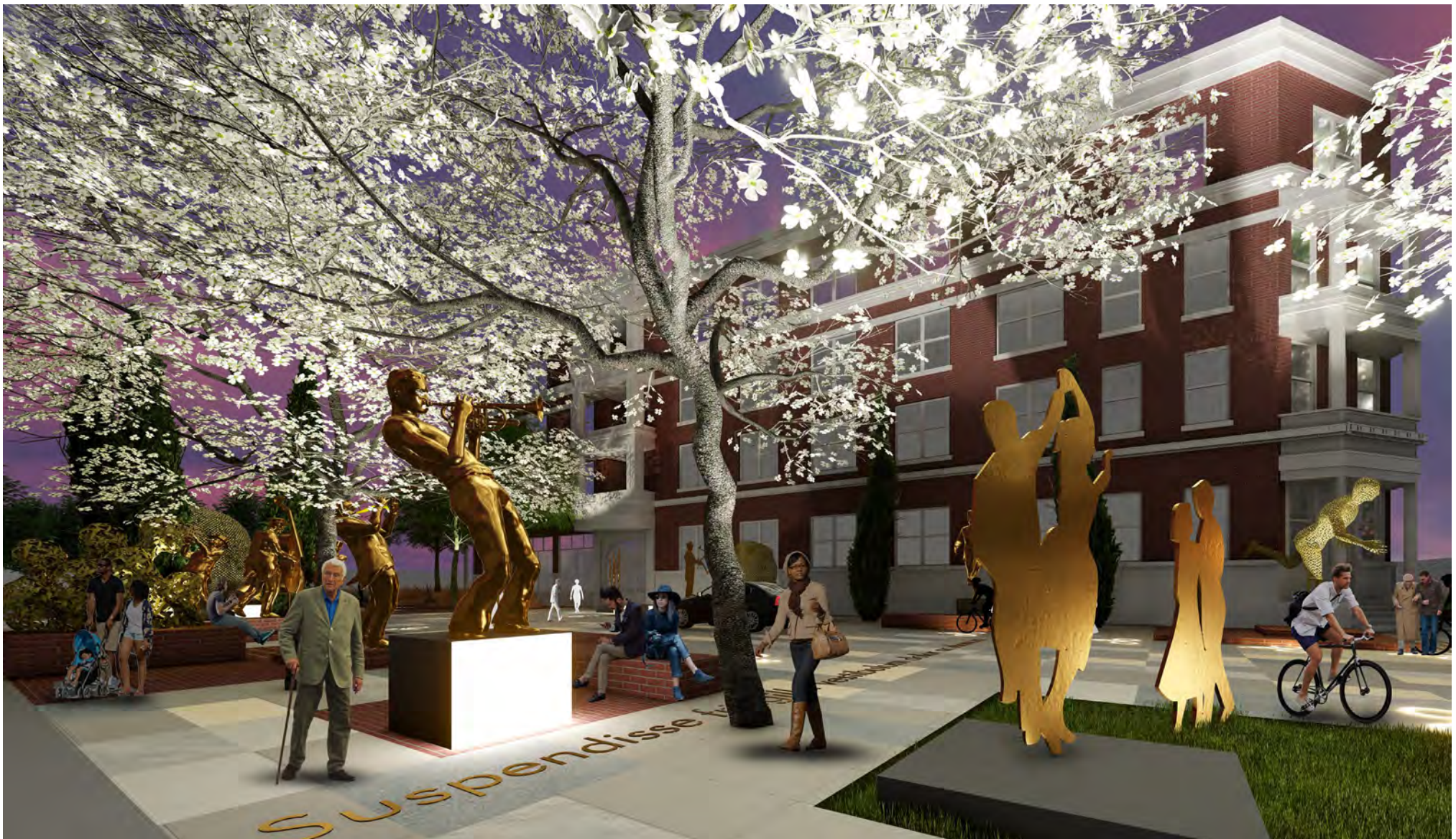
Outdoor Museum looking north on Malvern Avenue



Housing Entry      Residents Sitting Area      Vehicle Travel Lane      Bike Lane      Art Works (Typical of 10 min)



West elevation of Outdoor Museum with National Baptist Building as backdrop



West side of Malvern's Outdoor Museum looking at National Baptist Building

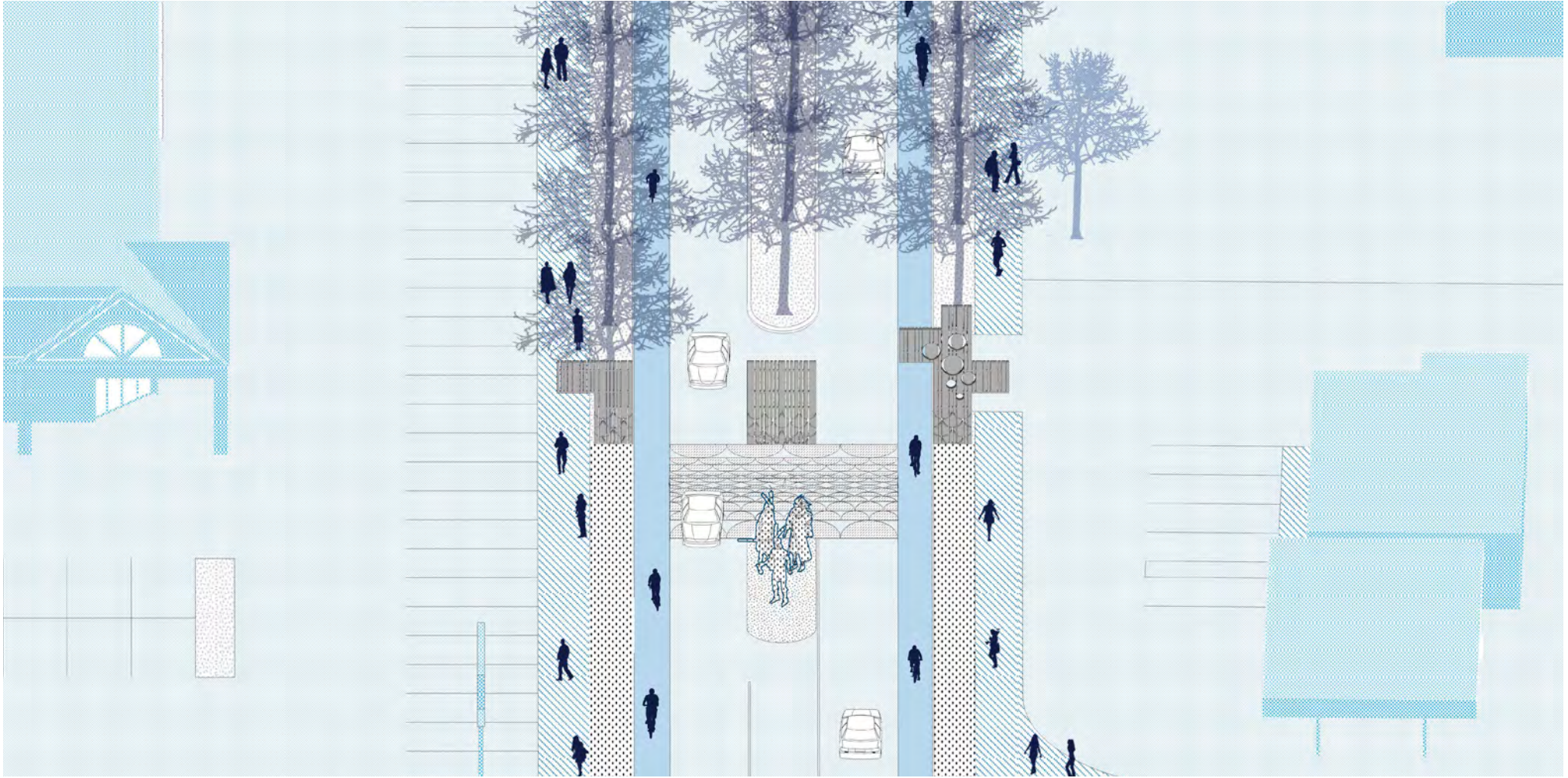


The street as a corridor designed for movement is transformed into a node soliciting pause and meandering among pedestrians, as well as traffic calming among motorists. This is one of several public art nodes celebrating the city's history and urban culture.



Residents Sitting Area at the Outdoor Museum on Malvern Avenue looking south



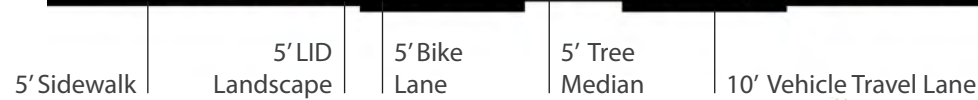


## 8 Malvern Avenue Gateway



Before / After

**Malvern Avenue Gateway**  
 at the intersection with Grand Avenue demarcates the downtown district and the Gateway Neighborhood through a formal entrance.



- F**
- *Hypericum calycinum* (St. John's Wort)
  - *Sporobolus heterolepis* (Prairie Dropseed)
  - *Muhlenbergia capillaris* (Hairawn Muhly)



- B**
- *Nyssa sylvatica* (Black Gum)
  - *Hypericum calycinum* (St. John's Wort)



Looking from Grand Avenue north toward Malvern Avenue



The proposed gateway rescales the American picket fence to a civic scale and sponsors individual electronic messaging disks akin to traditional city entry signs displaying emblems of their civic groups.





**University of Arkansas Community Design Center  
an outreach center of the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design**

Stephen Luoni, *Steven L. Anderson Chair in Architecture and Urban Studies*, Director  
Kay Curry, ASLA, Landscape Designer  
Michela Cupello, Assoc. AIA, Project Designer  
Raheel Ahmad, Assoc. AIA, Project Designer  
Jonathan Martinez, Assoc. AIA, Project Designer  
Shawna Hammon, AIA, Project Architect  
Kenneth C. Hiley, Project Designer  
Maranda Gerga, Intern  
Brian Hernandez-Dimas, Intern  
Linda Komlos, Administrative Analyst

**Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design**  
Peter MacKeith, Dean and Professor

**Architecture Students**

Ashlie Barnard  
Gabriella Bermea  
Erik Betancourt  
Holli Esmundo  
William Kitkoski  
Omar Martinez  
Brandon McKenzie  
Phoebe Norcross  
Tramaine Thompson  
Joseph Willems

**City of Hot Springs, Arkansas Board of Directors**

Pat McCabe, Mayor  
Suzanne Davidson, District 1  
Elaine Jones, District 2  
Becca Clark, District 3  
Larry Williams, District 4  
Karen Garcia, District 5  
Randy Fale, District 6

**City Management**

David Frasher, City Manager  
Bill Burrough, Deputy City Manager  
Lance Spicer, Assistant City Manager

**Complete Streets Team**

Gary Carnahan, City Engineer  
Dorethea Yates, Finance Director  
Denny McPhate, Public Works Director  
Ed Davis, Fire Chief  
Jean Wallace, Parks & Trails Director  
Kathy Sellman, Planning & Development Director  
Monty Ledbetter, Utilities Director  
Richard Grandon, Intracity Transit  
Robert Tucker, Tri-Lakes MPO  
Terry Payne, Public Information Director  
Danny Carder, Stormwater Manager  
Jennifer Roberts, Purchasing Manager  
Ken Freeman, Trails Coordinator  
Michelle Sestili, CDBG Coordinator