



Downtown Development Review Board

**Hybrid Virtual / In-Person Meeting
Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 1:30PM**

BOARD MEMBERS

Linzee Ott, Chair

Joana Berling, Vice Chair

Carl Dawson, Secretary

Matt Brockelman

Kevin Craig

Ennis Davis

Peter Deiuliis

Frederick Jones

Joe Loretta

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Pearl District Block N7 Deviation Request Single-Purpose Workshop

Applicant: Cyndy Trimmer

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that this will be a hybrid virtual in person meeting. Attendees may participate in person or virtually.

PHYSICAL LOCATION

Jacksonville Public Library-Main Library/Downtown

303 North Laura Street

Multipurpose Room (located in the Conference Center)

Jacksonville, Florida 32202

VIRTUAL LOCATION

Interested persons desiring to attend this meeting virtually can do so via Zoom (including by computer or telephone) using the following meeting access information:

By Computer

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87482961725?pwd=FE0kSX4gX3gUs4IjUukjTOcg8Z0fpe.1>

Webinar ID: 874 8296 1725

Passcode: 522318

One tap mobile

+1 (305) 224-1968 US

+1 (301) 715-8592 US (Washington DC)

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kehlYuWSql>

TAB II.A

UNDER SEPARATE COVER



One Independent Drive
Suite 1200
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

P (904) 301.1269
F (904) 301.1279
www.drivermcafee.com

September 15, 2025

Van Christiansen
Downtown Development Review Board
117 W. Duval Street, Suite 310
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

Re: DDRB 2025-005 – Gateway Jax – Pearl Square, Block N-7

Redevelopment Coordinator Christiansen:

Applicant seeks a deviation from Section 656.361.6.2.G.2 to provide relief from the transparency requirements for the Hogan and Union Street frontages of the N-7 project to facilitate development of the proposed Publix grocer space.

1. *Specific Criteria – The use of the ground floor space is unique and not commonly found throughout Downtown, the use must be protected from light, or visibility into the space would create bona fide security concerns, and the design of the exterior façade incorporates living walls, murals or other façade treatments that would engage the pedestrian in the space where transparency would be required.*

The need for a deviation arises solely from the unique challenges presented with incorporating a grocer into an urban environment. Unlike traditional commercial space, the construction methodology and floor plan for a full-service grocer must account for distinct food health and safety guidelines, strict temperature regulation requirements, and extensive operational needs. Recognizing the importance of providing a pleasant, rich and diverse experience for pedestrians, Applicant has exceeded the transparency requirements along Laura Street and Beaver Street, centralized loading and back of house operations along the FDOT Union Street frontage, and incorporated a pocket park along the Hogan Street frontage complimented with green walls and art on the building's façade.

2. *The effect of the proposed deviation is consistent with and furthers the objectives, policies, design and intentions of the BID Plan.*

Establishing a full-service grocer to serve the Urban Core is of paramount importance to satisfying the BID Plan. The BID Plan identifies the number of full-service grocers as an economic indicator and essential amenity to support mixed-use development with the stated goal of having four grocers by the year 2030. Moreover, the BID Plan recognizes

that none of the pharmacies preferred by Downtown residents are located within Downtown. The proposed Publix grocer with pharmacy will address an undersupply in the market in a location with ideal walkability from existing and planned residences as well as from Central Core office buildings.

3. *The request is not based exclusively upon a desire to reduce the cost of developing the site, but would accomplish a substantial public benefit.*

The BID Plan recognizes that grocers must support higher operating costs associated with energy, water, sanitation and safety, and as such are expected to operate within “razor thin” profit margins. The proposed deviation will not reduce the cost of developing and operating the site but will allow a grocer to be incorporated into the Pearl Square program. As explicitly stated in the BID Plan, the grocer use “will enhance walkability in conjunction with the growth in residential product.” Conversely, “without [grocery and pharmacy] Downtown amenities walkable from the Central Core, DIA’s efforts to continue the trend of increased Downtown residential development and to retain/attract new office tenants will be constrained by the lack of amenity base and specialty retailers.”

4. *The proposed Deviation will not diminish property values in the area surrounding the site and will not interfere with or injure the rights of adjacent properties.*

The economic impact of introducing a full-service grocer that is walkable from the Urban Core is addressed throughout the BID Plan. The transparency deficiency has been thoughtfully mitigated through site design and enhanced external programming such that there will be no negative impacts on the surrounding area.

5. *The request is not a self-imposed hardship.*

As detailed herein, the request is a direct result of a grocer’s manifest energy, regulatory and operational needs that are in no way a self-imposed hardship.

6. *The proposed reduction or deviation will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, result in additional public expense or the creation of nuisances.*

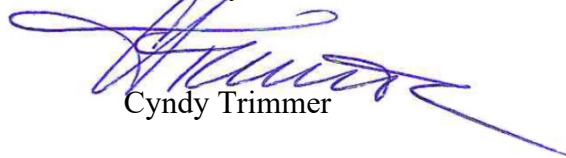
As shown in the images filed herewith and in the application for DDRB approval, the site’s overall design ensures that the proposed deviation will have no impact on public health, safety or welfare or result in public expense or nuisance.

7. *There are unique site characteristics such as parcel shape, location, existing utility easements, etc. that prevent development consistent with these regulations.*

The parcel encompasses a full city block that is bounded by three FDOT rights of way and one frontage bounded by the Emerald Trail and Skyway which presents unique challenges for ingress, egress and loading. Resident and commercial vehicular access and back of house loading have been carefully coordinated to limit traffic and pedestrian conflicts while affording an uninterrupted opportunity for activation beneath the Skyway along the Emerald Trail.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to addressing the deviation in conjunction with final review of the project on October 9.

Sincerely,



Cyndy Trimmer



October 1, 2025

Linzee Ott
DDRB Board Chair
Downtown Investment Authority
117 West Duval St. #310
Jacksonville, FL 32202

RE: Gateway Jax Pearl Square N7 Project

Dear Linzee:

I am writing in support of Gateway's deviation request on the transparency requirements for the Publix building. The change they made to open up the building on the southwest corner is a significant improvement. The treatment they propose on the rest of the building along Hogan Street with art and a green wall is an appropriate alternative and a delightful solution.

The parklet design with trees and plants, benches and tables, will offer an attractive space for Emerald Trail users to gather, relax and mingle, and partake in the various options the Gateway developments are bringing to downtown.

We greatly appreciate Gateway Jax's collaboration on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kay Ehas".

Kay Ehas
CEO
(904) 401-0453



Pearl Square | N7

Gateway Jax

09.18.2025



SW Corner
Previous



SW Corner
Update



SW Corner
Comparision

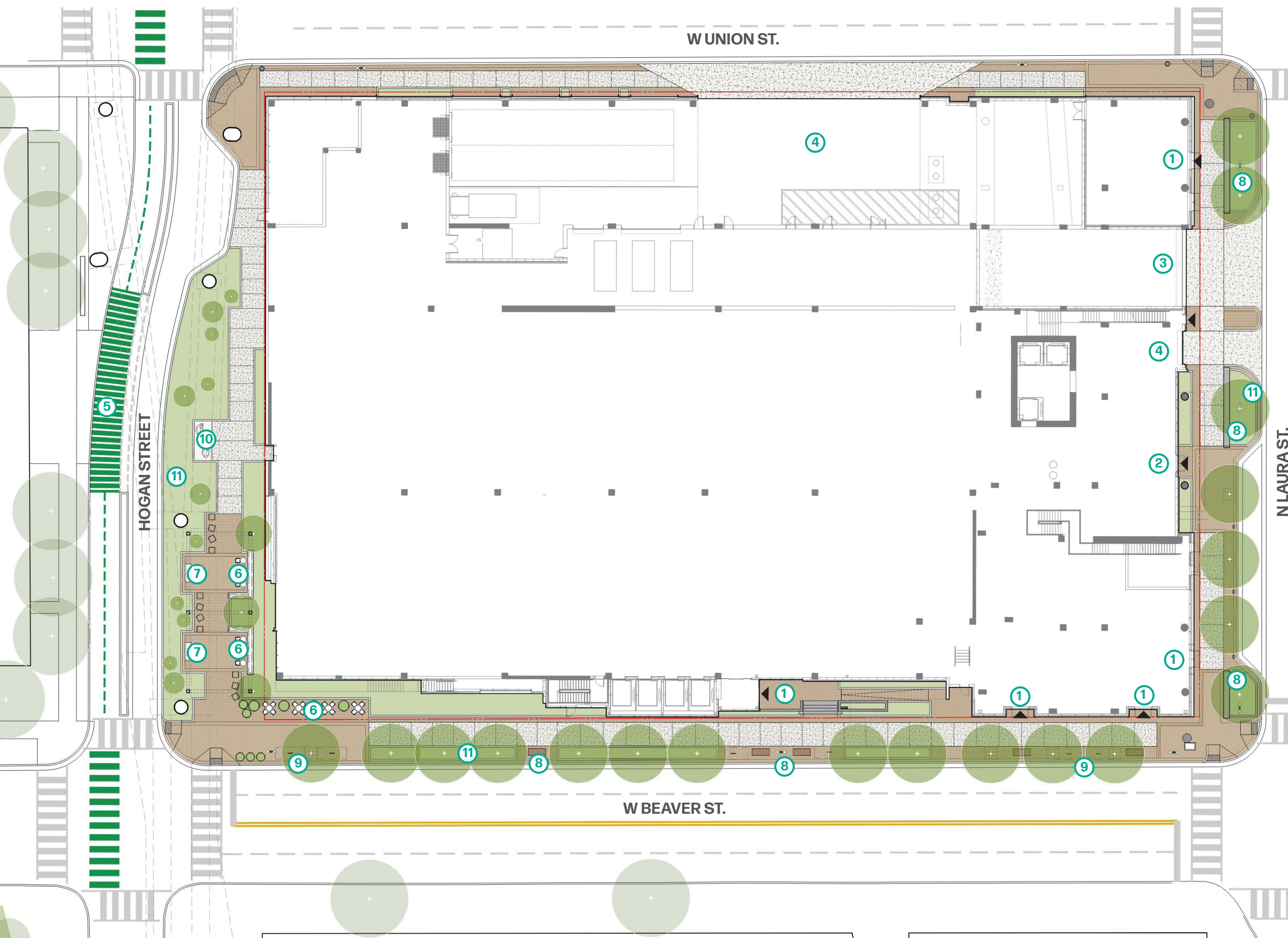


Previous



Update

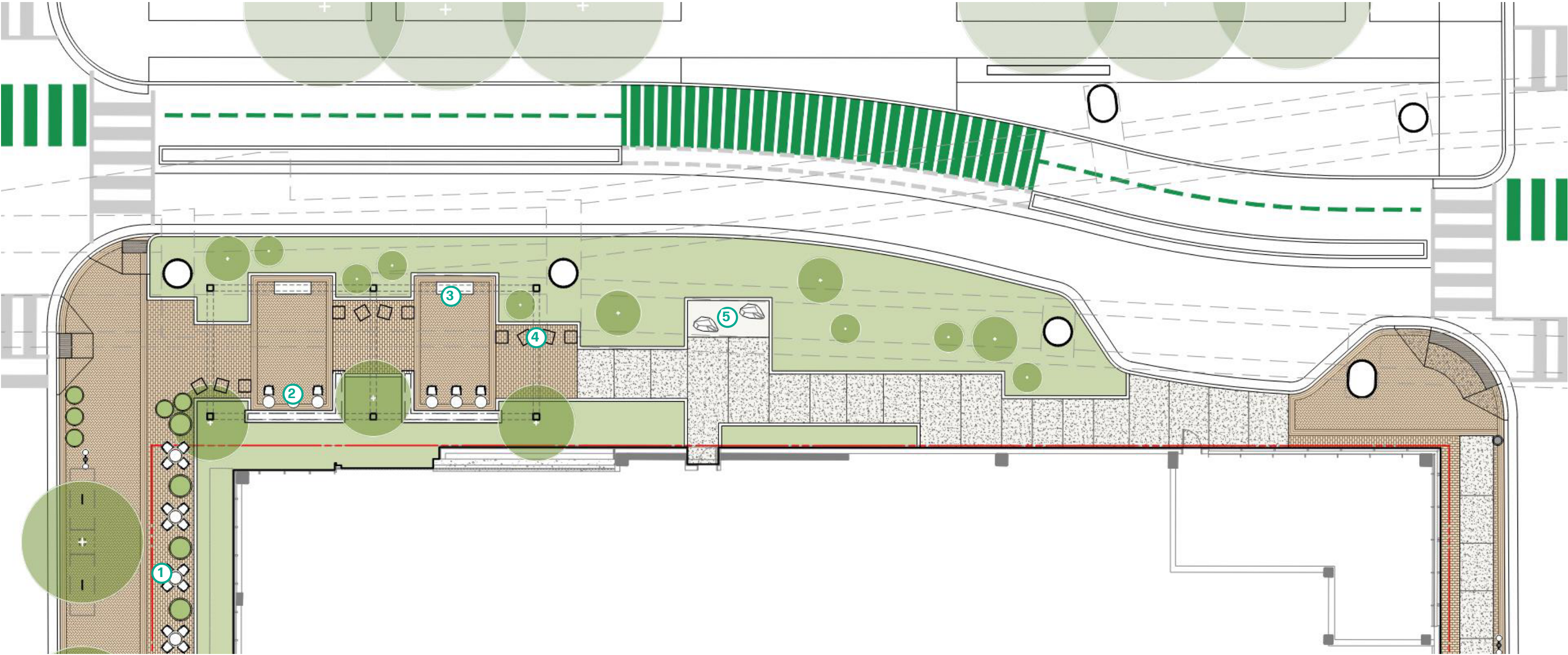
Streetscape Plan



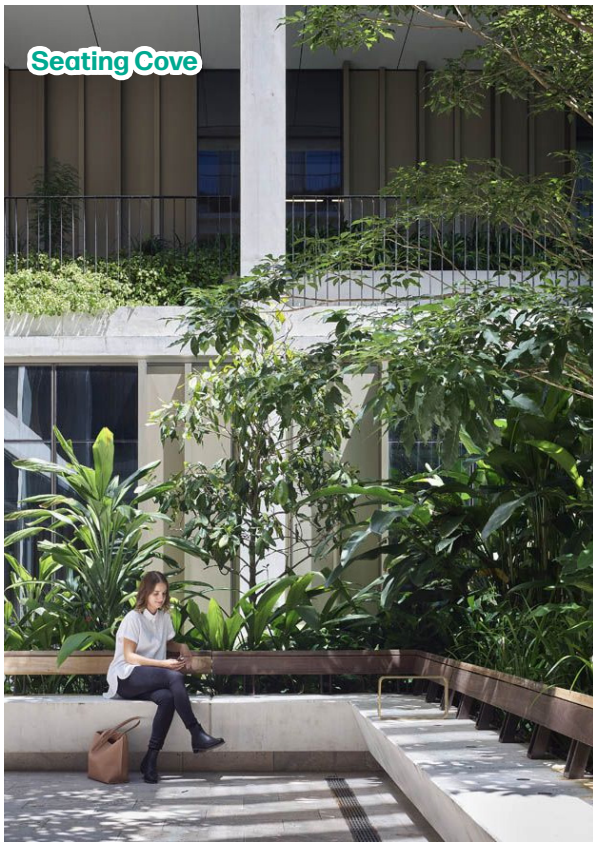
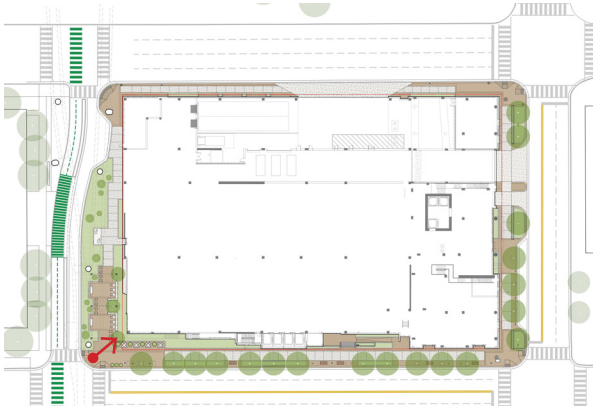
SITE ELEMENTS

- 1 Grocer / Retail Entry
- 2 Lobby Entry
- 3 Garage Entry
- 4 Loading Dock
- 5 Emerald Trail
- 6 Seating Cove
- 7 Swing Nook
- 8 Bench
- 9 Bike Parking
- 10 Pet Relief Area
- 11 Streetscape Planting

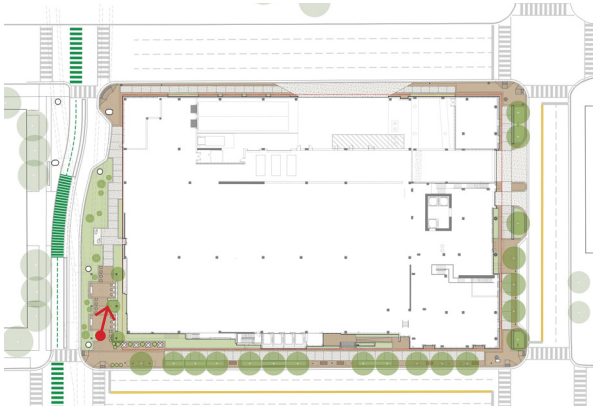
Hogan Street Updates



Hogan and Beaver Intersection



Hogan St Pocket Park



Hogan Mid-Block

