

3rd Preliminary Consultation
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7221 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park	Meeting Date:	10/23/2019
Resource:	Non-Contributing Resource Takoma Park Historic District	Report Date:	10/16/2019
Applicant:	City of Takoma Park (Jingjing Liu, Agent)	Public Notice:	10/9/2019
Review:	3 rd Preliminary Consultation	Tax Credit:	N/A
Case Number:	N/A	Staff:	Michael Kyne
PROPOSAL:	Demolition and new construction		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the applicant make any revisions based upon the HPC's comments and to work with Montgomery Planning staff to determine the appropriate next steps. Once details for other aspects of the proposal are developed, the applicant should return to the HPC for another preliminary consultation.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Non-Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District
STYLE: Modern (Commercial)
DATE: c. 1930s-1950s

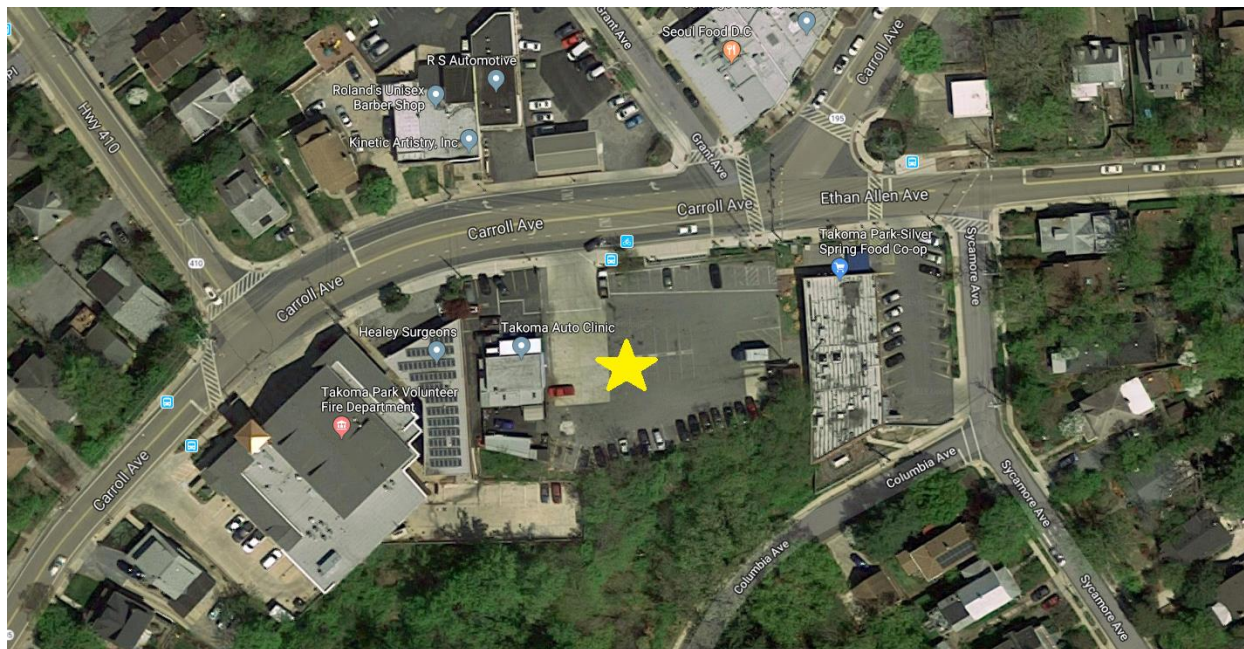


Fig. 1: Subject property.

BACKGROUND

The applicants previously appeared before the Commission for preliminary consultations at the May 21, 2019¹ and August 14, 2019² HPC meetings.

PROPOSAL

The applicants propose to demo the existing Non-Contributing commercial building at the subject property and construct a new two-story commercial building with underground parking.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the historic preservation review guidelines in the approved and adopted amendment for the *Takoma Park Historic District (Guidelines)*, *Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A)*, *Ordinance #1999-43*, *Takoma Park Commercial District Façade Ordinance (Ordinance #1999-43)*, and *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined in the previous staff reports for this item.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Introduction & Background

The proposal will affect the subject property, a c. 1930s-1950s Non-Contributing commercial structure (Takoma Auto Clinic), as well as the adjacent City-owned vacant lot to the east. The project location is within the Takoma Junction commercial area, which encompasses both sides of Carroll Avenue, bounded on the northeast by Lee Avenue, and on the southwest by Philadelphia Avenue, including the first blocks of Lee Avenue, Grant Avenue, and Sycamore Avenue. The applicants propose to demolish the Non-Contributing commercial structure and construct a new two-story commercial building with underground parking.

Per the *Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines*, the Historic Preservation Commission is to review projects within commercial areas of the Takoma Park Historic District (Takoma Old Town and Takoma Junction) using the design standards set forth in the *Takoma Park Commercial District Façade Ordinance (Ordinance#1999-43)*.³

The *Guidelines* state that demolition of Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should be permitted, and that any new building should be reviewed under the guidelines for new construction in the *Guidelines* and *Ordinance 1999-43*. The design standards for new buildings in *Ordinance 1999-43* state that façades must be compatible with and enhance the character of the adjacent areas and be approved by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

¹ Link to the audio/video transcript from the May 21, 2019 HPC meeting: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=b1ece58c-7caa-11e9-a084-0050569183fa

Link to the staff report from the May 21, 2019 HPC meeting: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/II.C-7221-Carroll-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf>

² Link to the audio/video transcript from the August 14, 2019 HPC meeting: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=9a9748eb-bf66-11e9-b703-0050569183fa

Link to the staff report from the May 21, 2019 HPC meeting: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/II.C-7221-Carroll-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf>

³ Ordinance 1999-34 repeals and supersedes previous ordinances #2592, #2701 and #1985-30.

The applicants previously appeared before the Commission for preliminary consultations at the May 21, 2019 and August 14, 2019 HPC meetings. At the August 14, 2019, the Commission expressed the following concerns regarding the applicants' proposal:

- Overall, the scale and massing of the proposed building is incompatible with historic district.
- The overall height and floor-to-floor heights should be lowered.
- The applicant should explore a mix of one- and two-story massing, with the one-story massing near the Co-op building and closer to the street, and the two-story massing pushed back.
- The applicant should explore a building that is broken up into two masses, with open space/courtyard between.
- The Commission was not supportive of the design changes, as presented in Option A and Option B, and found the building façade needs to be broken up.
- Ornamentation with the intention of expressing multiple volumes is not sufficient.
- The proposed amount of public open space is insufficient, given the overall size of the building.
- The Commission was unanimous in their concerns regarding the compatibility of the proposed layby with the surrounding streetscape.
- The Commission recommended alternative loading options be explored.
- Any additional information related to loading (i.e., previous studies, previously explored site plans with alternative loading options, etc.) should be provided for the next preliminary consultation.
- The Commission expressed concerns regarding tree removal and asked for a complete site plan, showing the locations, species, and size of trees to be removed.
- This site plan should include fire and rescue access, ensuring that additional tree removal will not be required.
- Rear elevations and perspectives from Columbia Avenue should be provided for the next preliminary consultation.

Current Proposal

The applicants have revised their proposal, attempting to address the concerns expressed by the Commission at the August 14, 2019 HPC meeting. While the Commission expressed concerns regarding public space, the proposed layby, and tree removal at the August 14, 2019 HPC meeting, staff and applicants are currently seeking the HPC's guidance regarding only the following aspects of the proposal: volume expression, scale and massing, and façade compatibility. The other items will be addressed in subsequent HPC reviews once Planning Department staff and other regulatory agencies have reviewed this case for the Planning Board hearing.



Fig. 2: Previous proposal (top) and current proposal (bottom).

Specific revisions include:

- Simplification of the building's façade, with a four-volume expression (including the proposed elevator tower at the west side) in place of the previously proposed five volume expression (as previously presented in Option A).
- Elimination of the east side stair tower (on the left side of the façade as shown above).
- Simplification of the parapet design, particularly at the central volume.
- Further articulation of the building's façade, introducing a 2' step back at the central volume, clearly delineating the three main volumes and breaking up the perceived length of the building.



Fig. 3: Current proposal perspective, showing articulation at the façade.

- The second floor of the easternmost volume has been pushed back, allowing this portion of the building to be perceived as one story, which is compatible with the height of the neighboring Co-op building to the east.

Staff finds that the applicants have responded to the Commission's August 14, 2019 comments regarding volume expression, scale and massing, and façade compatibility. These refinements have also reduced the apparent height of the building in key areas, while also creating interesting urban spaces that are compatible with the District. Staff asks the Commission to provide additional guidance regarding the overall appropriateness and compatibility of the proposal, as revised, in accordance with the *Guidelines* and *Standards* outlined above.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Staff recommends that the applicant make any revisions based upon the HPC's comments and to work with Montgomery Planning staff to determine the appropriate next steps. Once details for other aspects of the proposal are developed, the applicant should return to the HPC for another preliminary consultation.

Historic Features

The Property is located in the area known as Takoma Junction, which is part of the Takoma Park Historic District ("Historic District"). The Project complies with all applicable standards for new buildings located within the Historic District including the following: 1) Takoma Park Ordinance 1985-30 ("Ordinance 1985-30), 2) Chapter 8.40 of the Takoma Park City Code ("Chapter 8.40"), 3) the Design Guidelines for Commercial Buildings in the City of Takoma Park, Md. ("Design Guidelines"), 4) the Approved and Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County, MD Takoma Park Historic District & Carroll Manor/Douglas House ("Historic Preservation Master Plan").

Under the applicable ordinances, new buildings should have facades that are "compatible with and enhance the character of the adjacent areas" and "should respect the traditional quality of the surrounding commercial area and of the residential neighborhood"(Takoma Park Code 8.40.150.).According to the Design Guidelines: "Achieving compatibility does not mean duplicating [...]. A new building [...] should be seen as a product of its own time. However, by effectively relating to the neighborhood, a new building shows a district's evolution just as the existing buildings show its past" (Design Guidelines at 10). The Project's design blends with the historic properties in its vicinity, but also includes modern elements that distinguish it from those historic properties ¹.

Takoma Junction is to be an “extension of Takoma Old Town, providing unique stores and services.” The proposed project is a low-scale building that will contribute to the low-scale, small town quality along Carroll Avenue.

The building will have abroad yet rhythmic façade such that it feels like a series of attached buildings rather than a single long building. This breaks down the building’s scale and blends I in with its neighbors.

Rhythm of building volumes:

Based on feedback from the HPC Board, the elevation has been re-designed to simplify volume expression and balance the notions of separate buildings, the rhythm of the column spacing, and the opportunity to reflect a more human scale that is in keeping with the surrounding context of Carroll Avenue and the Junction. The options proposed demonstrate a 3-volume reading and a 5-volume reading with subtle markers that work to rationalize the façade rhythm with the use of the space within the building, and to make use of more intuitive “breaks” such as the building setback and the stair locations.

10-04-2019 Updates:

The major change has been to change the entire left side of the building to read as one story, based on comments from the HPC Board. The new elevation includes a volume more closely matching the proportion of the Turner Building (co-op), matching its height.

This has been achieved by pushing the upper story space back, revealing the opportunity for a rooftop deck – to be considered as occupiable, pending further study – above the

ground floor retail. This space is intended for use and is accessible by upper story tenants only, but provides more dynamic public realm and activity on Carroll Avenue.

The project is also “sensitive to the scale and historic character of the area.” The proposed building height (measured per M-NCPPC guidelines) is approximately 35 feet, which is compatible with the other one- and two-story commercial buildings in Takoma Junction and in the surrounding R-60 zone. The proposed canopy delineating the first and second stories of the Project will be roughly the same height as the Co-op and serves as a datum for the new building in relation to the context of the neighboring structure.

Building Height:

Feedback from the HPC Staff and Board had recommended lowering the building. The current design reflects a lower building design. The Design Team have worked to deliver a design that is lower, but still responds to market and use requirements of high-quality tenant spaces – for retail and for office uses. Other elements have been adjusted to produce a design that continues to “fit in” to the neighborhood and the Historic corridor of the Junction.

More specifically, the height has been reduced through the following adjustments:

- 1. The first floor has been reduced by 3 feet*
- 2. The parapet wall has been significantly lower – the roof is no longer occupiable (eliminating the high guardrail/parapet requirement)*
- 3. The stair/elevator tower no longer provides roof access and has been significantly reduced*

Other elements of the design have been refined to lower the overall composition. The canopy has been lowered to be reflective of other local canopy expressions.

The current design would result in a building height of 32 feet, using the Montgomery County method.

Other important elements of the building remain unchanged – a green roof element that seeks to achieve green building goals, the lesser degree of embellishment and architectural ornamentation are elements of the contextual syntax and elements that the building will continue to refine.

Height Comparison:

<i>DESIGN</i>	<i>1st Floor Height (FF to FF)</i>	<i>2nd Floor Height (FF to Roof)</i>	<i>Parapet (highest point above grade)</i>
<i>May 2019</i>	<i>21' (+/- 19 ft. clear)</i>	<i>14' (+/- 12' clear)</i>	<i>42' (at elevator tower 45')</i>
<i>July 2019</i>	<i>18' (+/- 16 ft. clear)</i>	<i>14' (+/- 12' clear)</i>	<i>37'</i>

October 2019		18' (+/- 16 ft. clear)	14' (+/- 12' clear)	37'
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10-04-2019 Updates:

No changes from the July 2019 submittal are shown. However, the first volume (shown in documents) has an overall height at the sidewalk of 20', reflecting the recommendations from HPC Board.

The proposed building continues the street setback established by the Co-op buildings. This consistent building setback is a character defining feature found in the surviving historic commercial development along Carroll Avenue. The calibration of the specific sidewalk zones has been carefully planned to accommodate the retail activity, clear pedestrian zones and the need for delivery and service to occur within the streetscape. Design Guidelines at 11. At street level, shopfronts are proposed to be pedestrian-oriented with “display windows immediately adjacent to the sidewalk” except for a single step back which will add interest to the façade.

Building setback line:

The principal building front continues to align with the existing co-op storefront, and the tower element has been pulled back, based on direct HPC Board comment. This results in additional space in the public realm. The space will be further detailed by the Project's Landscape Architect moving forward.

The building placement also provides for the opportunity to include several layers of public realm – sidewalk, seating areas, dedicated service area and public space are all included. The design meets the goals of an 8' clear sidewalk (across the entire project width); built-in pockets for casual seating, benches and other social furniture OR café tables – depending on tenants and need; and a public space that exceeds the 2700 SF requirement of the City of Takoma Park resolution.

10-04-2019 Updates:

Additionally, the central volume has been pushed back +/- 2 feet from the front façade of both volume 1 and the Turner building. In this way, the volumes step back from the curb sequentially, AND additional sidewalk and open space are gained for the community and the Corridor.

The building has been carefully designed to be respectful of the sobriety, timelessness, and sturdy materials that typify the neighborhood. Solid construction that includes brick and metal, punched windows, moderate decoration and human scaled fenestration have all been chosen to seamlessly integrate with the architectural heritage of Takoma Park.

Building storefront design:

Based on feedback from Staff and the HPC Board, storefronts have been adjusted to reflect a more compatible design to Takoma Park's catalog of ground floor, street-fronting retail space. Less bulky, the new design is in step with the storefront simplicity found on Laurel Avenue, Carroll Avenue and throughout Takoma Park. This design ethos of utility and simplicity also translates to doors, canopies, mullions, and the transoms over the canopy.

Opportunities to pull the doorway back inside the space have also been explored to introduce more modulation from storefront to storefront and are part of the Takoma Park vocabulary.

10-04-2019 Updates:

The design has continued to strive for simplicity, sobriety and permanence. The design would still accommodate modern function – including the use of operable windows, doors and even storefronts, to be determined based on opportunities provided by tenant types. The Design is intended to create an inviting, and vibrant streetscape that includes opportunities to engage the public with storefronts and with the tenants within the spaces.

The building is intended to fit comfortably on the site and provide a familiar architectural language. Some components are intentionally modern, including the tower element that houses the primary stair and elevator, while the basic language is a simple and sturdy gentle articulation within the context of a strong and lasting building.

Providing interior access to the new commercial space while affording access to parking to both users of the new building and to customers of established businesses in the area was accomplished through the inclusion of two stairs and elevators. This solution was identified during neighborhood outreach in Takoma Park. An agreement has been reached between property owners involved that will enable safe and convenient use by all parties. The two means of vertical circulation will provide users with a clear and “readable” circulation pattern for accessing the garage and for exiting the garage for different uses above ground.

The colors are also compatible with the Takoma Park palette. Clay brick with mixed dark and light tones are common in the neighborhood. Metal windows with divided lights respond to the age of the neighborhood. Articulated but simple window headers and sills provide shadow lines without being overly ornamental. Occasional brick details and fretwork are used in a reserved capacity to highlight the roof shape, but not be extravagant.

Ornamentation has been significantly reduced, and windows and doors have been re-considered to include fenestration comparable to those elements in Takoma Park.

10-04-2019 Updates:

The design has continued to project a simplicity of architectural detailing, in keeping with the context of the Corridor.

Elements of the streetscape will separate sidewalk users from the lay-by lane and travel lane. Trees will shade both the travel lane and sidewalk and provide a further barrier between the pedestrian zone and travel lanes. The streetscape along the Carroll A venue frontage is calibrated to provide safe passage along the pedestrian routes, shade, seating for both dining and simple passive socializing, and the necessary infrastructure for loading and service. The proposed streetscape will be a source of community pride and culture by incorporating opportunities for art in the public realm and public space for the community to gather.

Additional Public Space

No change to the streetscape from the previous design.

The new design of the building, does include an increase in the amount of open/public space required by the project and agreed to between all parties during the process of gaining the City of Takoma Park's approval that is part of the Resolution. This space will add quantity and our Landscape Architect will be working on an updated design – that respects all the other needs for the project outlined above by the Design Team, the Owners/Developers and the Stakeholders that participated in more than 2 years of active Community engagement.

10-04-2019 Updates:

Any space that has been pushed back from the street is being converted for public use.



TAKOMA JUNCTION

TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

UPDATED PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION SET
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

streetsense.

October 4, 2019

SITE AREA & LOCATION - JULY 2019



NEW SITE AREA & LOCATION



BUILDING HEIGHT COMPARISON

CURRENT ELEVATION A - JULY 2019

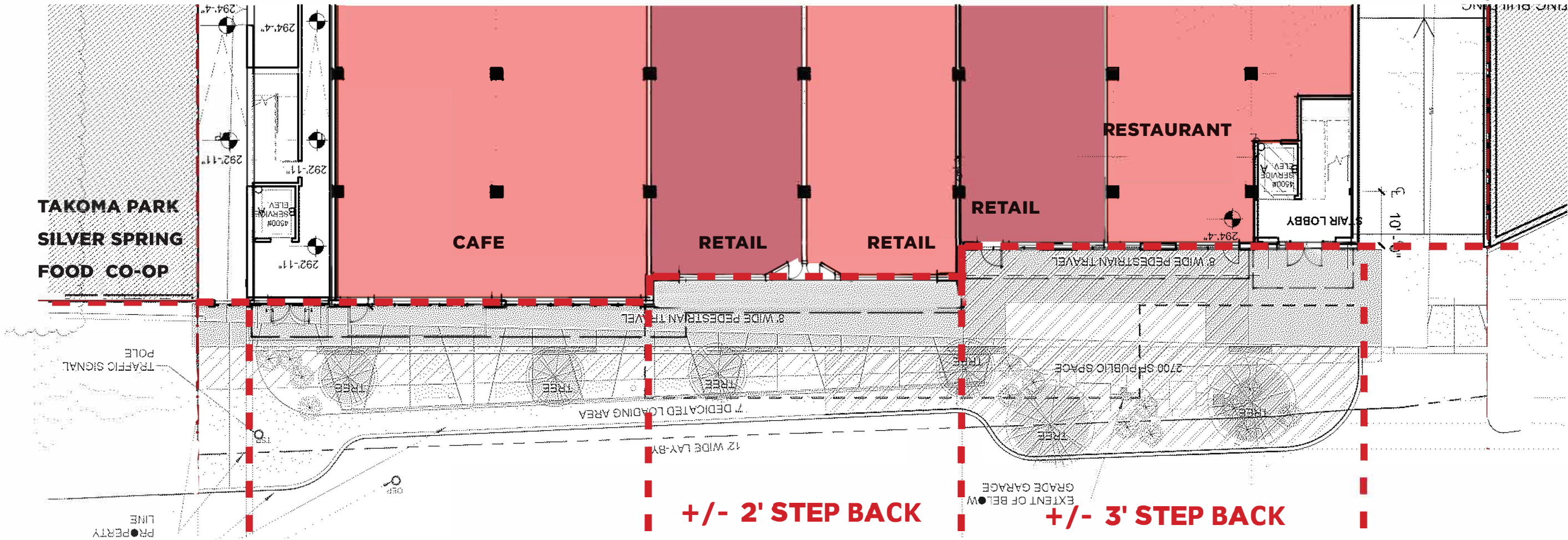
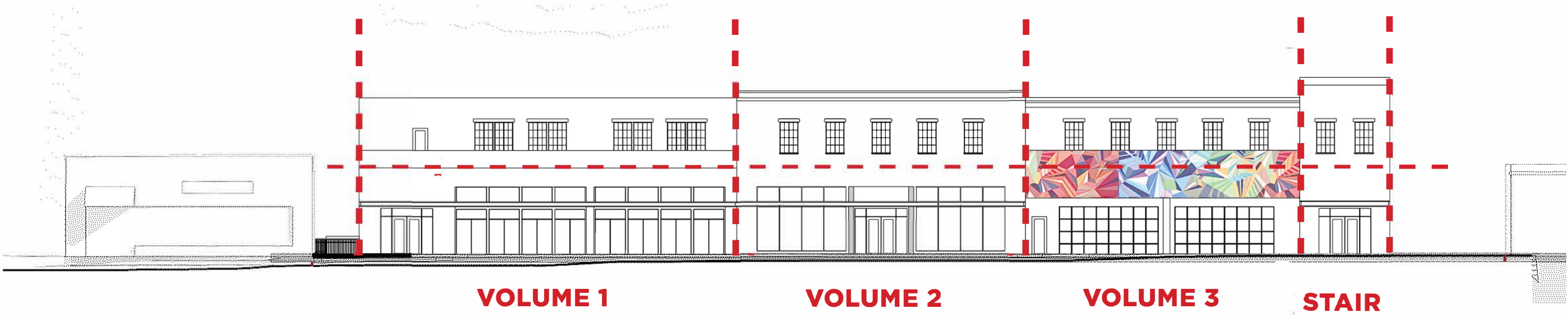


NEW ELEVATION

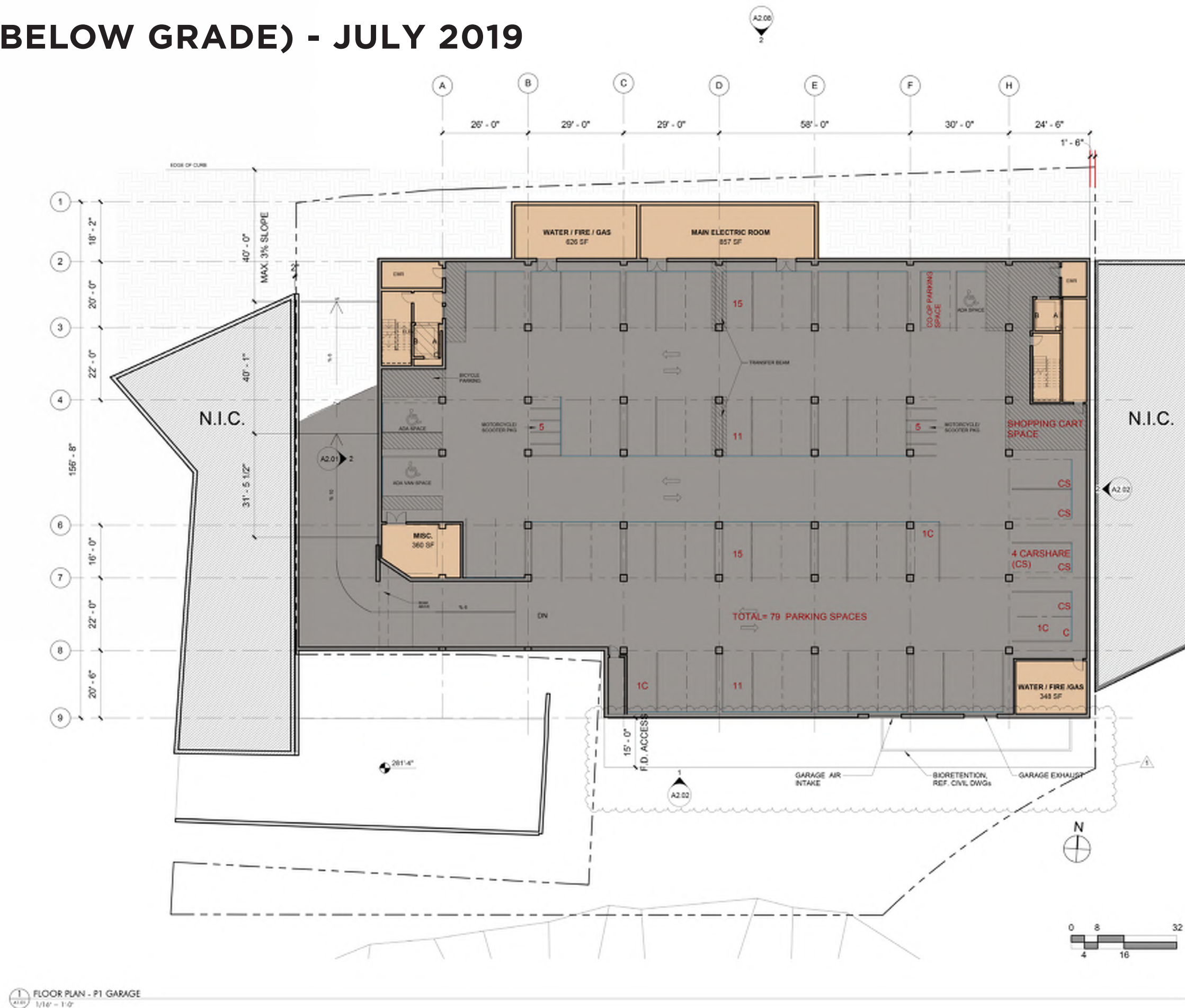


CARROLL AVENUE ELEVATION - OPTION A

STREET LEVEL - NEW



GARAGE LEVEL (BELOW GRADE) - JULY 2019

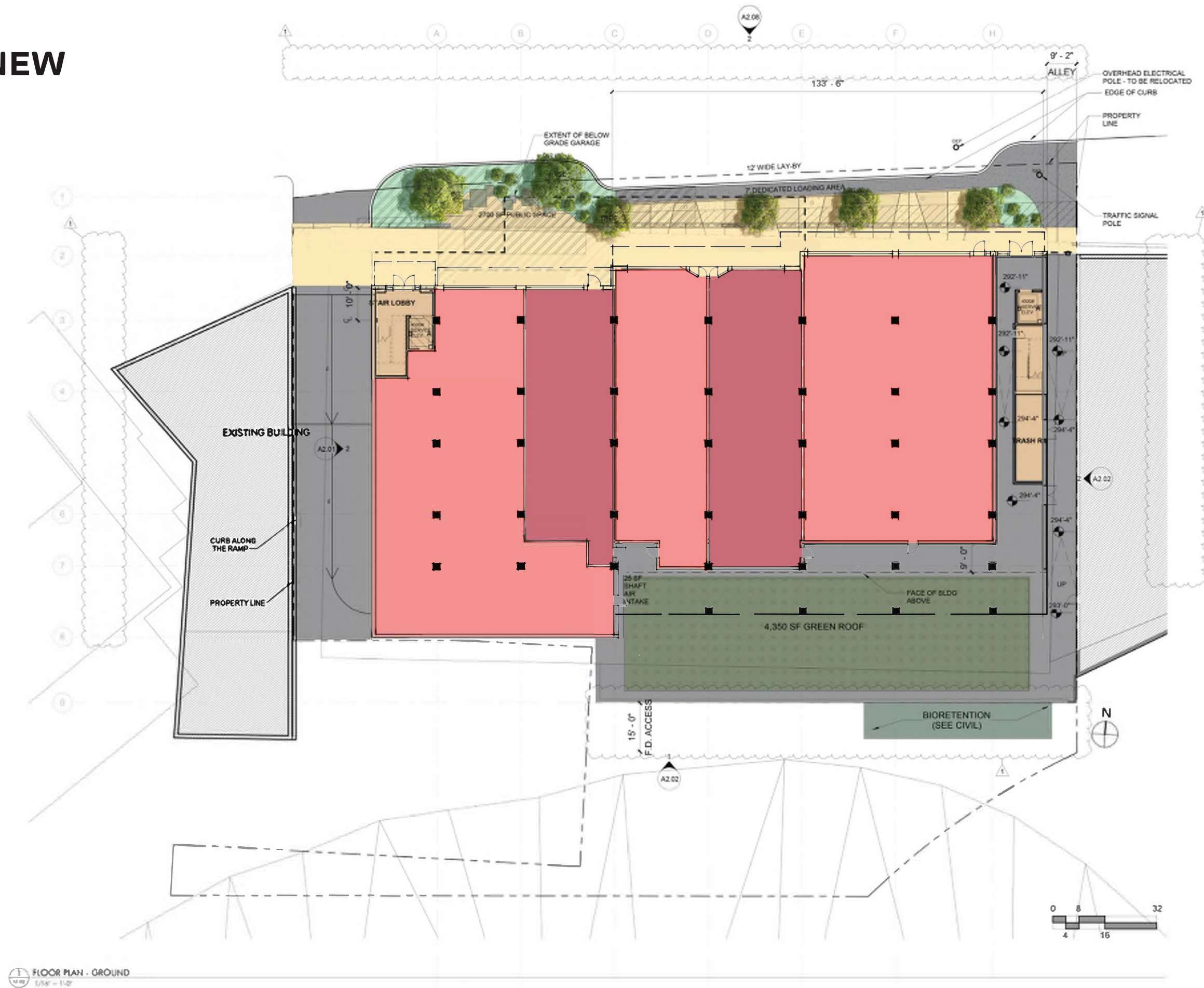


1 FLOOR PLAN - P1 GARAGE
1/16" = 1'-0"

STREET LEVEL - JULY 2019

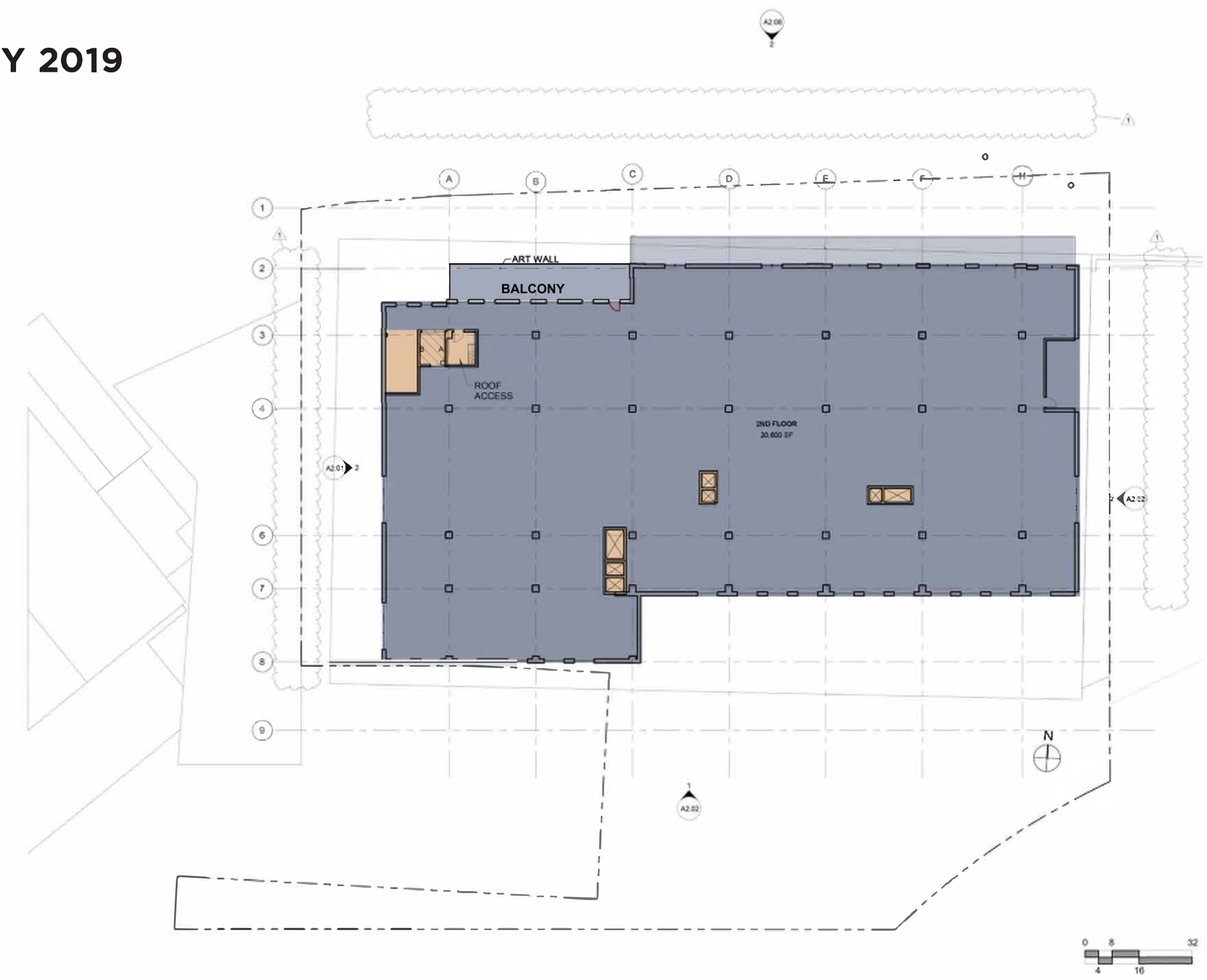


STREET LEVEL - NEW



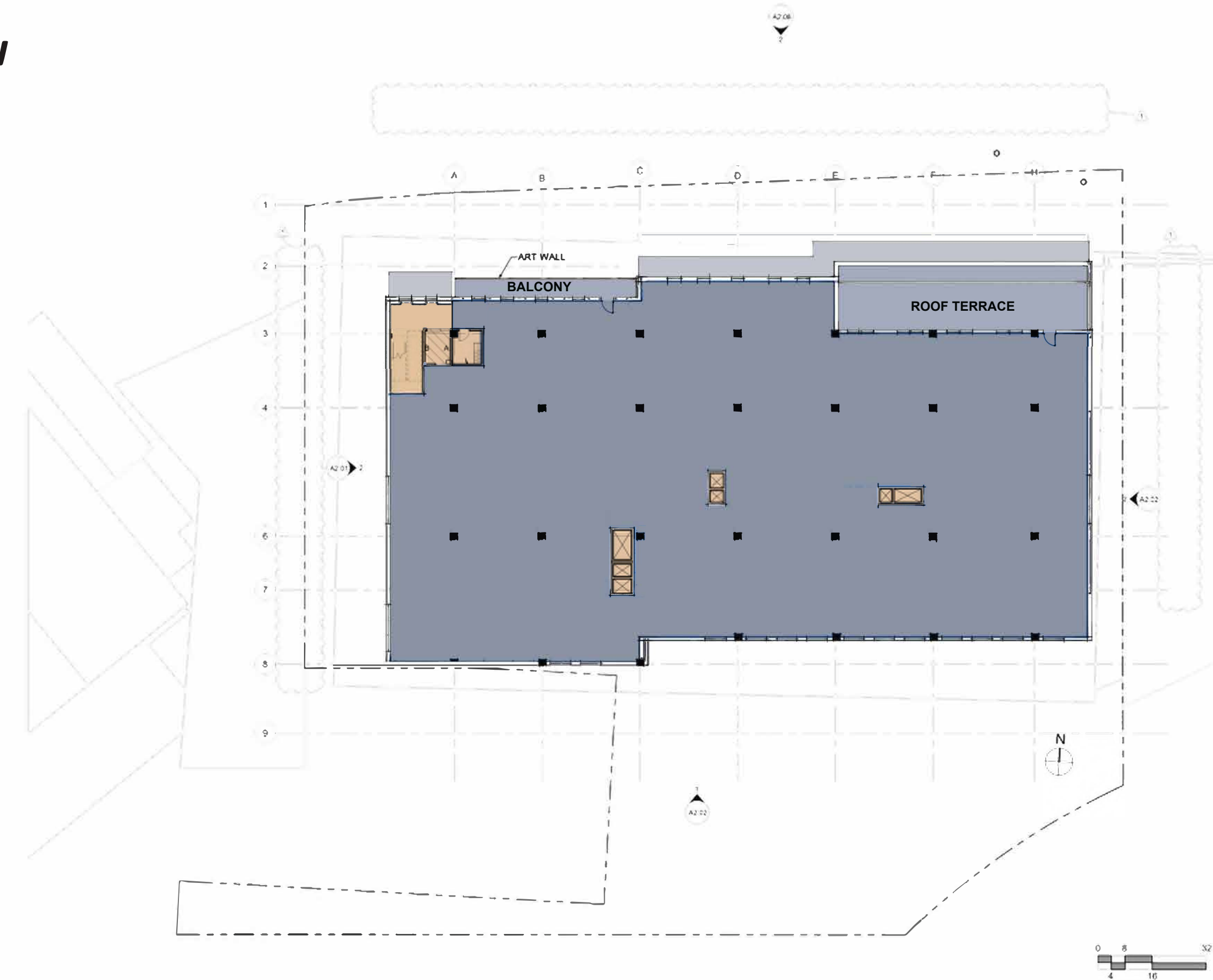
1 FLOOR PLAN - GROUND
1/16" = 1'-0"

UPPER LEVEL - JULY 2019

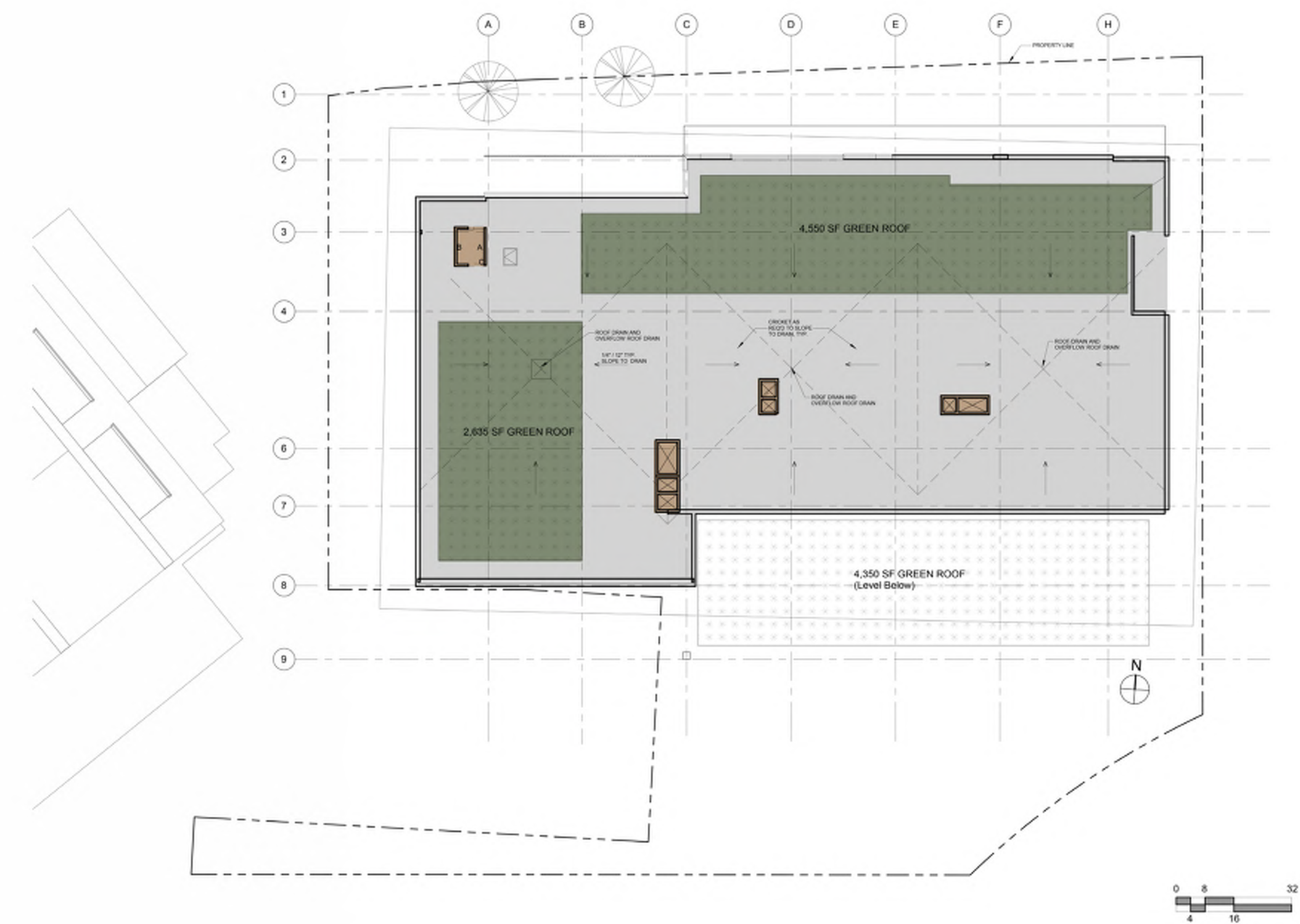


1 FLOOR PLAN - SECOND
1/16" = 1'-0"

UPPER LEVEL - NEW



ROOF - JULY 2019



1 FLOOR PLAN - ROOF
1/16" = 1'-0"

PERSPECTIVE 1 - OPTION A - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH WEST



PERSPECTIVE 1 - OPTION B - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH WEST



PERSPECTIVE 1 - NEW

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH WEST



PERSPECTIVE 2 - OPTION A - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH EAST



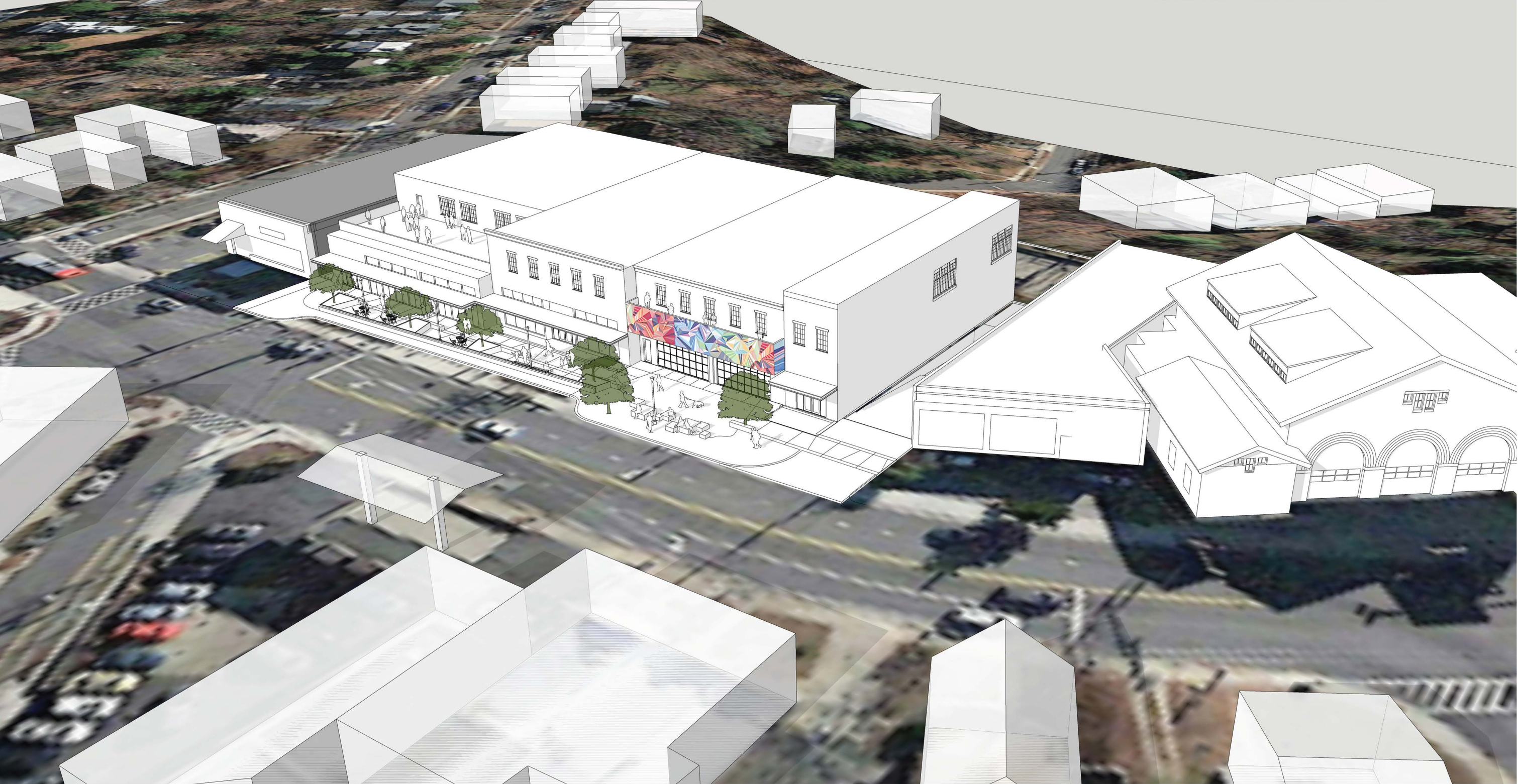
PERSPECTIVE 2 - OPTION B - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH EAST



PERSPECTIVE 2 - NEW

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH EAST



PERSPECTIVE 3 - OPTION A - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 3 - OPTION B - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 3 - NEW

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 4 - OPTION A - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING EAST FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 4 - OPTION B - JULY 2019

VIEW LOOKING EAST FROM CARROLL AVE



PERSPECTIVE 4 - NEW

VIEW LOOKING EAST FROM CARROLL AVE

