

2015

# Leveraging the Arena: Transforming Downtown with Development and Public Spaces

Carolyn Esswein

*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, cesswein@uwm.edu*

James Piwoni

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transforming downtown with development and public spaces

01 spring 2015

urban design community redevelopment studio  
instructors | carolyn esswein & james piwoni  
university of wisconsin-milwaukee | school of architecture and urban planning

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The work included in this book was produced in the spring of 2015 by graduate and undergraduate architecture and joint architecture and urban planning students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee enrolled in Urban Design Community Redevelopment, a design studio organized and instructed by Carolyn Esswein, AICP, CNU-A and Jim Piwoni, RA.

Text and Editing: Carolyn Esswein, Emily Newton  
Graphics: Carolyn Esswein, Emily Newton  
Front cover image: Andrew Carlson

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Sean Mroczkowski,  
final review



Andrew Carlson,  
final review



Keith Grabarczyk,  
final site model



**Synopsis** | How do we redevelop the city for the next generation? Vibrant public spaces, efficient buildings, alternative transportation, and mixed-use neighborhoods. The Urban Design, Community Redevelopment studio explored how to leverage the arena investment, create value for downtown, and transform the entertainment district.

Solutions envision great places to live, play, and work for all ages. Residential choices provide opportunities for people to live west of the river and activate the neighborhood 24/7. Entertainment venues, cafes, and restaurants attract residents, employees, and visitors. Offices allow residents to walk to work, as well as bring people to the area. Great public spaces create memorable images, engage people, embrace our culture, and develop the iconic downtown Milwaukee deserves. The future is about more than sports, it is about utilizing a mix of uses, architecture, and landscape to transform an area with blank walls and parking lots, into a vibrant, walkable district.

CarolynEsswein,AICP,CNU-A

**Site and Context** | The proposed arena district redevelopment fits within twelve blocks of Westtown in Milwaukee and expands in some student proposals to surrounding blocks. The site is defined as Juneau Avenue to the north, Kilbourn Avenue to the south, Milwaukee River on the east, and 6th Street on the west. There is easy access from both I-43 and I-794 and pedestrian access from the east side of the river via all of the east/west running roads: Juneau Avenue, Highland Avenue, State Street, and Kilbourn Avenue.

The BMO Harris Bradley Center currently occupies two city blocks, between 4th and 6th Streets and Juneau and Highland Avenues. The Arena is slated to be

demolished following the completion of a new arena one block north of the current location.

Four of the twelve blocks include housing, with the majority of current uses being entertainment venues, restaurants, and support uses. The site is diverse in the population served, as it holds both the BMO Harris Arena and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Panther Arena. Additionally, it services the Milwaukee Area Technical College with a large parking garage and is home to one of Milwaukee’s historical treasures, Turner Hall. Various restaurants and retail outlets line the historical and small-scale Old World 3rd Street. The scale and style of Old World 3rd Street contrasts new additions to the site, such as the sleek Moderne which towers over the site with more than thirty floors. The diversity of building types and businesses, and the unique programming that comes with an arena, were key factors for design consideration. The Milwaukee River provides an environmental amenity and is an extension of Pere Marquette Park, but is not easily visible from at ground level from other properties.

**Program** | The program was flexible, with priorities being well-designed public spaces, mixed-use developments, residential units, a walkable neighborhood, and response to the proposed arena design as shown in preliminary renderings by Populous. The goal was to propose a vibrant district where people will want to live, work, and socialize, and serve as a destination within downtown Milwaukee. Programming also extended into the streets, as designs were required to integrate and highlight the inclusion of the new Milwaukee streetcar, which is projected to run north/south along 4th Street, affecting future access to the site. The streetcar moved into its final design phase in spring 2015 and is expected to be under construction by spring 2016.



Denis Pohlman,  
preliminary site  
model



Katelyn Menuge,  
preliminary review



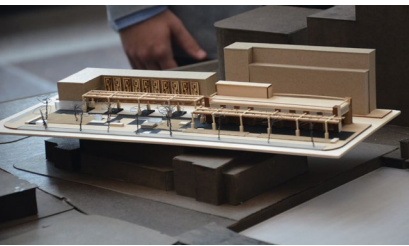
Nicholas Bruckner,  
preliminary site  
model



Matthew TeBeest,  
preliminary review



Emily Newton,  
final review



Matthew TeBeest,  
final detail model

**Process** | Students approached the redevelopment design in two phases. The first phase was at the master-plan level where emphasis was placed on massing, building footprint, and general programming for the full twelve block area. Students were encouraged to integrate design ideas and influences from Mary Miss, a New York-based artist who specializes in using cities as living laboratories and encourages small and large scale sustainable interventions to be incorporated in city design and education. Miss sat in on early design critiques to give preliminary advice. Following a larger review with professional architects, planners, and city staff planners, students moved into the second phase which focused on refining the master plan and designing a public space within their schemes.

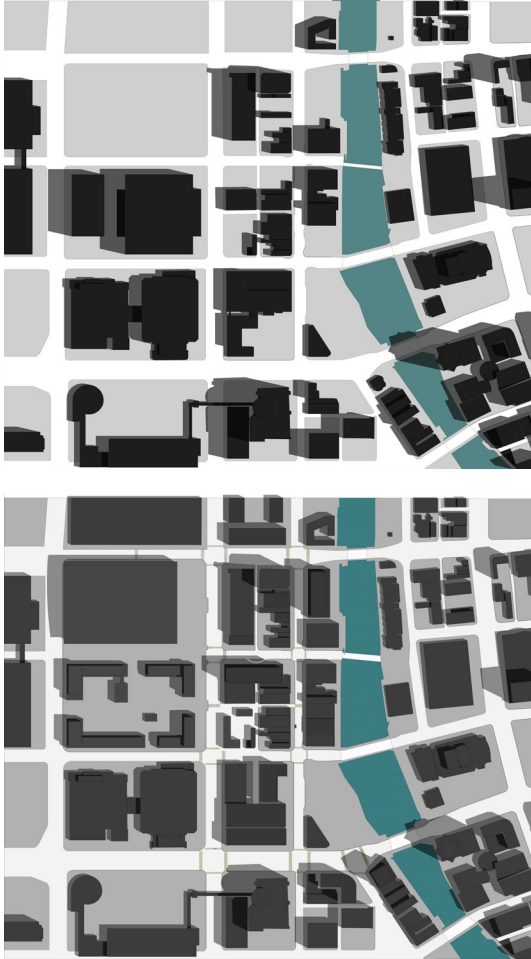
The design process was iterative, with reviews held approximately every two weeks. Precedent studies and pertinent design information was gathered and presented by urban planning graduate student, Julee Mitchell. Students were encouraged to use Mitchell’s research as well as their own explorations and include them as part of their presentations. Examples of building typologies, responsible water harvesting systems, and public art installations were commonly chosen.

The midterm presentations were held at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning building atrium on Tuesday, April 7, 2015. Final presentations were held in the atrium of the BMO Harris Bradley Center on Tuesday, May 12, 2015. Twelve students presented their projects to members of the city and other critics. Following the primary presentations, all fifteen students displayed their work during an Open House for local developers, property owners, design professionals, and stakeholders. Eight of the student proposals were exhibited at Gallery Night and Day, July 24-25, 2015 as part of a three-month exhibit at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee SARUP Mobile Design Box at the North End.



The new housing complex surrounds a large interior courtyard that has meandering paths and multiple monuments and statues depicting the Milwaukee Bucks history. The residential complex is the heart of the new development and houses students from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Marquette University, Milwaukee School of Engineering, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. While each school has their own, singular building, the courtyard serves as a public place to hold impromptu meetings or games of Frisbee.

The space is centrally located for students and the public alike, as it opens onto all four adjacent streets and has easy access to the streetcar running along 4th Street. The 1,750 units available in the complex would hold over 3,000 students, drastically increasing the density of the area and creating a stable market for amenities like bars, restaurants, and retail outlets. Both those who live in Westtown Commons and those visiting the district have easy access to transit via the new streetcar.

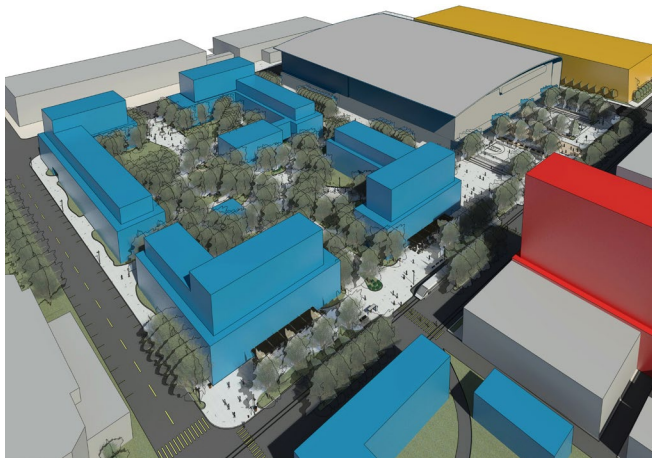
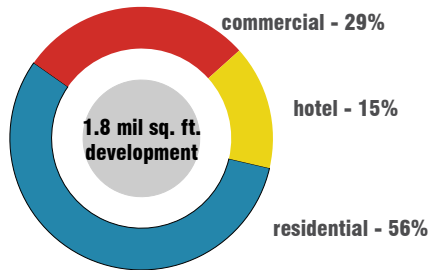
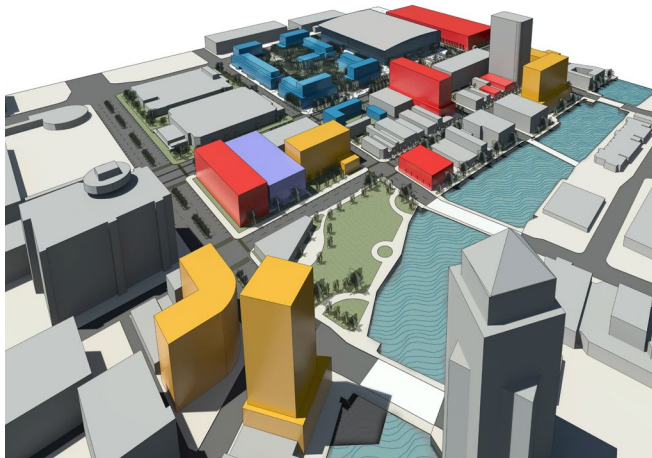


from top:  
existing figure ground  
proposed figure ground

opposite:  
standing on 4th Street  
facing north







from top:  
aerial view of all  
development from  
southeast

aerial view of new  
residence hall complex

opposite:  
site plan for new  
residence halls between  
4th and 6th Streets







from top:  
public basketball courts  
in front of new arena  
looking south down 4th  
Street

central patio in residence  
hall courtyard

opposite:  
history and achievement  
monument in courtyard  
off 4th Street

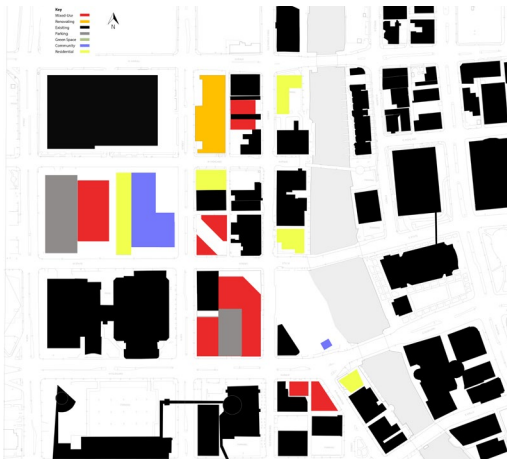
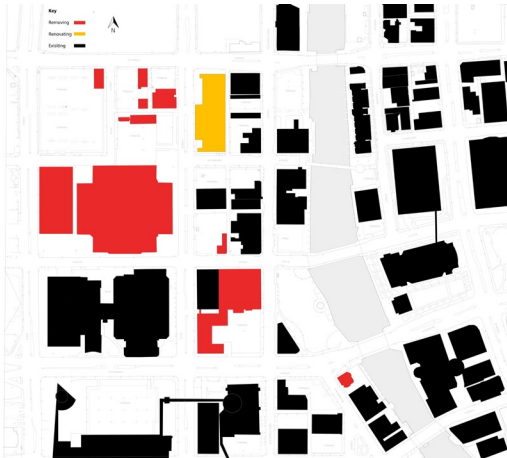




LIVE BLOCK ON 4TH | Keith Grabarczyk

A diagonal pathway starting at Pere Marquette Park and terminating at the new arena is the organizing scheme for new development. The path creates a visual connection to the river, and joins the river to the arena. The path leads pedestrians through a series of public spaces varying in scale, including a corner parkway and a new live block area on the corner of 4th and State Streets.

The live block is covered to allow use throughout the year. The large screen can be used to broadcast Bucks games or other sporting events, and in the summer could show any number of images, such as highlights of performances at the new arena or artists at Pere Marquette Park. After passing through the live block, pedestrians can also enjoy a hillside park via a new pedestrian bridge that spans the center of 4th Street. This scheme of covered and uncovered spaces combined with different light sources and scales of development is designed to be used year-round and enhance the currently lacking link between the Milwaukee River and the Bucks arena. In turn, this will help the new arena connect to the rest of downtown.



from top: existing figure ground

proposed figure ground with land use

opposite:  
live block during a night event







opposite:  
public park at the corner  
of Highland Ave. and 4th  
Street

right: site plan  
highlighting new  
diagonal path connection  
from Pere Marquette Park  
to the arena







opposite from top:  
site section of park off  
Highland Avenue

public plaza at State  
Street and Old World 3rd  
Street

new pedestrian bridge  
spanning 4th Street

right: street view of new  
pedestrian bridge



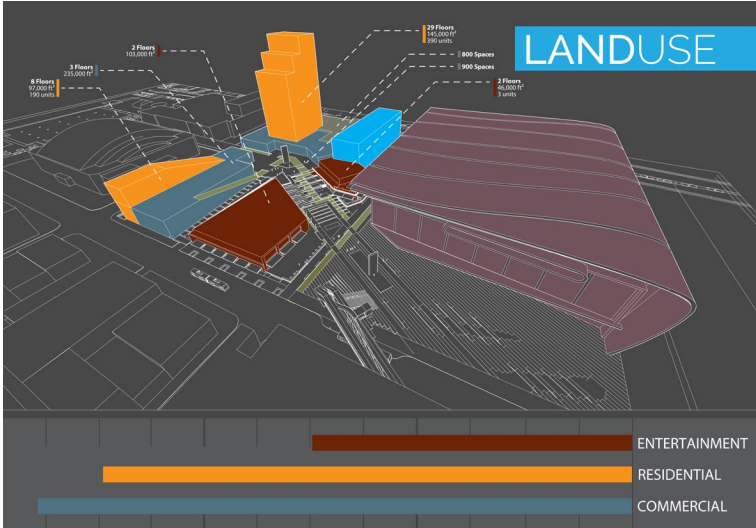


AquaUrban is developed around the premise that water is the lifeblood of Milwaukee. It is the driving component of the design in the form of a stormwater feature and water management strategies. The new system links rooftops to cisterns, which subsidize local water needs, before moving through the canals that support local ecological life. Water, along with the newly added pedestrian bridge linking the 4th Street parking garage to the new development south of Highland Avenue, are the primary wayfinding tools on site.

The elevation of the new bridge and its changing topography allow for a series of terraced urban spaces overlooking the arena and main gathering area for large events and Milwaukee Bucks games. Pedestrians can also enjoy a unique set of interactive light beacons. The beacons are visible throughout the site and serve as another wayfinding device. The lights can also be used to display functional information or be used purely for entertainment purposes. They anchor the new diagonal path crossing in front of the arena and can be seen from all locations on the site.

opposite: beer garden off diagonal terrace leading to new arena

below: land use aerial







site plan of new development linking residential and entertainment uses to the arena plaza

opposite from top:  
 site section highlighting light beacon and covered escalator

site section showing underground parking and new pedestrian bridge







from top: aerial view of  
area development

sormwater management  
diagram

opposite: new streetcar  
and bridge along 4th  
Street

# AREADEVELOPMENT

## URBANFEATURES

Primary development of the area is focused around the proposed arena. There are several key features of the development to help promote an active community.

- BEER GARDEN 1
- INTERACTIVE BEACON 2
- RETAIL SHOPPING 3
- OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE 4
- WATER FEATURE 5
- INTIMATE GATHERING 6

**KEY**

- ENTERTAINMENT
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- HOTEL
- STORMWATER FEATURE
- ARENA
- PARKING
- MIXED USE

## STORMWATER FEATURE

### REPLENISH

A key feature of this proposal is a networking of local structures into a connected system of cisterns and filtration before stormwater is allowed to enter the city sewage infrastructure. This will significantly reduce runoff load and pollution, improving water quality and urban quality of life. The system will also encourage the revitalization of local ecology.

Aside from these indirect benefits to users, the system also serves to create interactive water displays and features for a variety of urban spaces throughout the proposed site. The intention is to promote community interaction and understanding of a resource that has always been historically significant to Milwaukee.

The system also creates a connection between the new arena location and the River, a significant local feature. Although it appears to be one system, it is actually separated per block and networked to individual cisterns.

PERMEABLE PAVING

PERMEABLE PAVING

UV FILTER

WATER PUMP

CISTERN

GREEN ROOF PRE-FILTRATION

STORMWATER WATER FEATURE



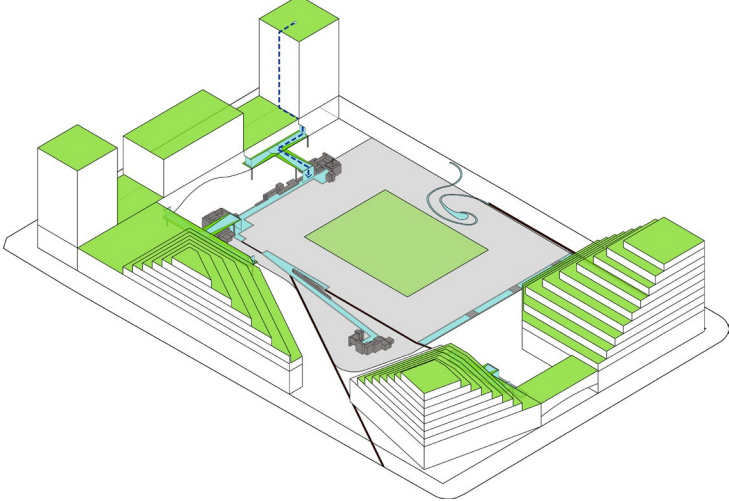
HIGHLAND HILL | Wei Pan

Highland Hill is a residential and commercial complex which provides a new, exciting destination for downtown Milwaukee. With a central park serving as the focal point of the site, Highland Hill strives to be both sustainable and educational by combining rainwater harvesting with a prominent water feature. The water flow can be seen and monitored by visitors to the park and will spark conversation about water management.

The buildings on site are formed like hills with prominent slopes that allow for specific sunlight penetration onto the park. The buildings help to create a sense of enclosure and privacy with the assistance of the new arena to the north. The ground floor of all of the new development is open to the public and flows into the park, creating dynamic gateways and vistas to the new arena.

The terraces allow for personal outdoor space with balconies on almost every unit overlooking the park. This visibility helps to encourage safety and a strong sense of community.

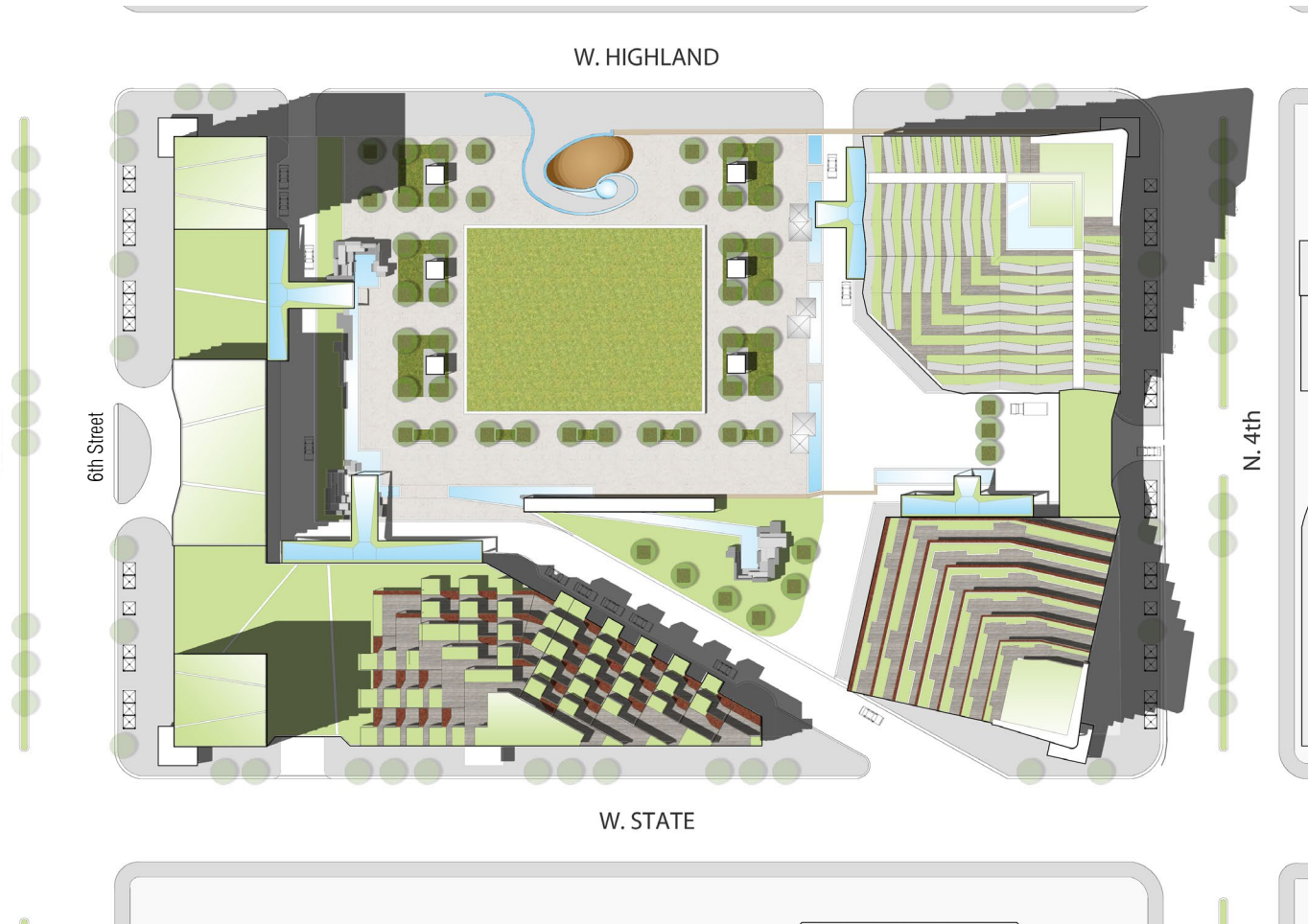
below: water flow diagram emphasizing sustainable site strategy



opposite: development south of Highland Avenue







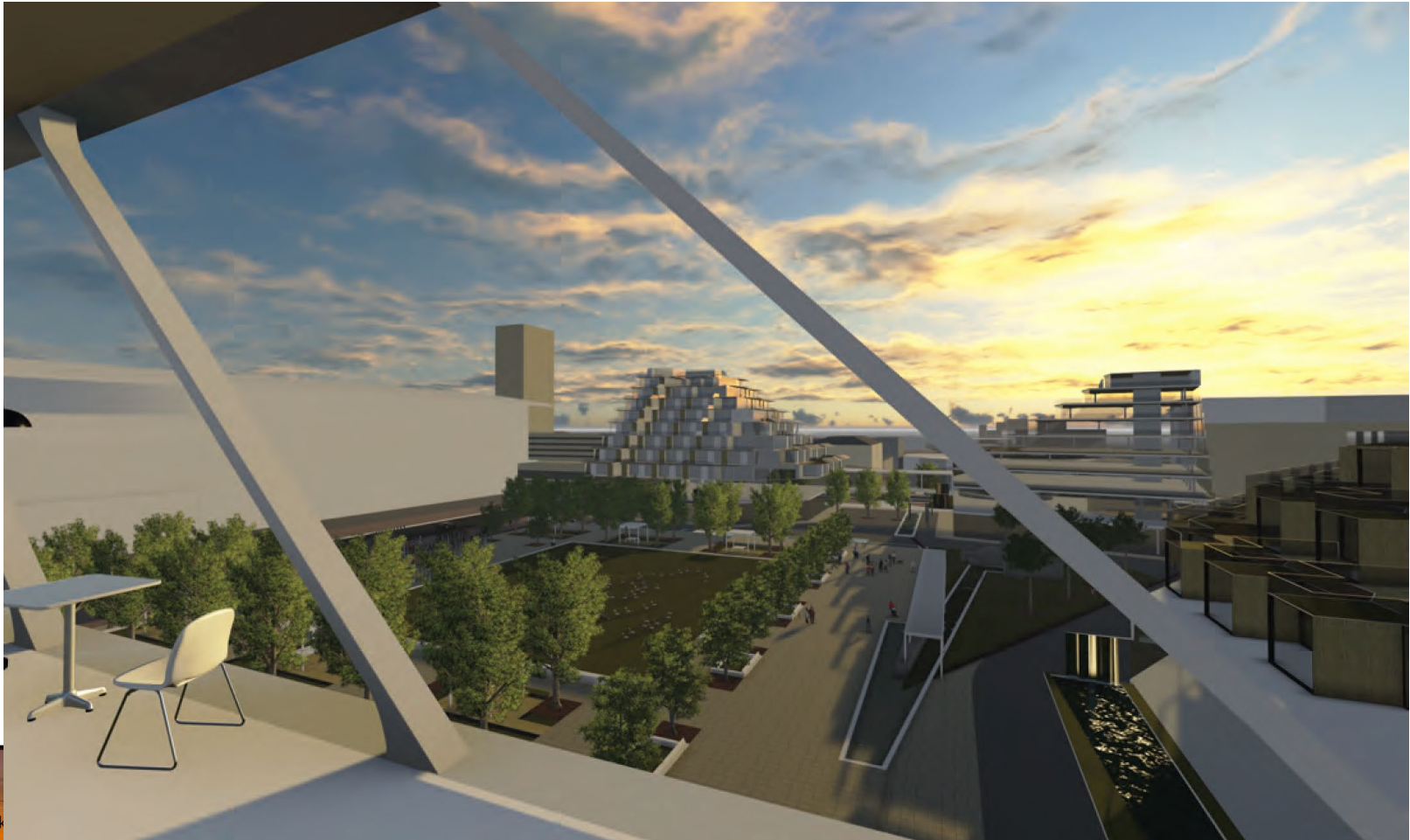
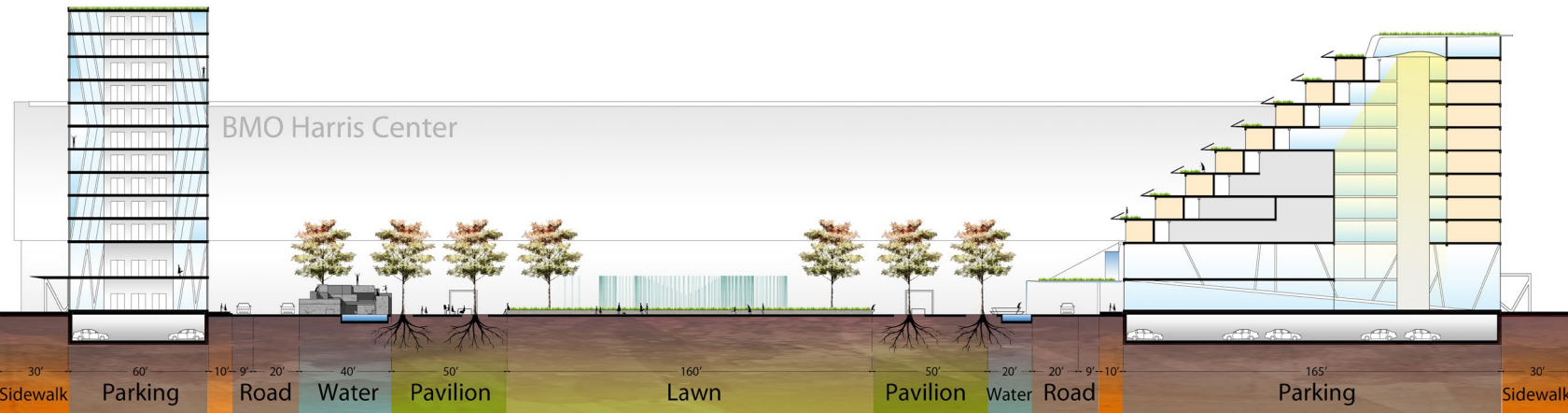
opposite: interior  
courtyard circulation

near: site plan



below: site section cutting through the public park

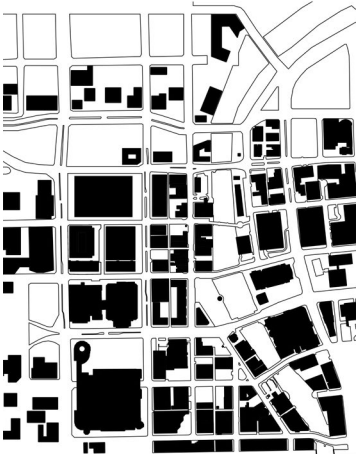
opposite: view of new plaza from upper-level window





The driving forces of this design were people, performance, and light. People are brought to the site with 825 new residential units varying from micro-apartments to spacious condos. Amenities like a grocery store, doctor's offices, and retail spaces were included to allow residents to live and stay within the community. Performance is introduced with a series of spaces of varying sizes and permanence. The venues start at Pere Marquette Park and move diagonally through the space toward the new arena. Light is present throughout all of the design, including strips in all new benches, a large LED screen that re-faces the existing 4th Street parking garage, and interactive light poles that line the sunken park adjacent to Turner Hall and those that face 4th Street in front of the new arena.

The light, performance spaces, and all ground materials are designed in a linear fashion that permeates into the building facades, both breaking down and linking the different scales of such an expansive space. The module, though, subtle, helps to link the smaller scale of Old World 3rd Street with the new, larger development.



from top: existing figure ground  
  
proposed figure ground  
  
opposite: pedestrian activity off 4th Street in front of new hotel and restaurants

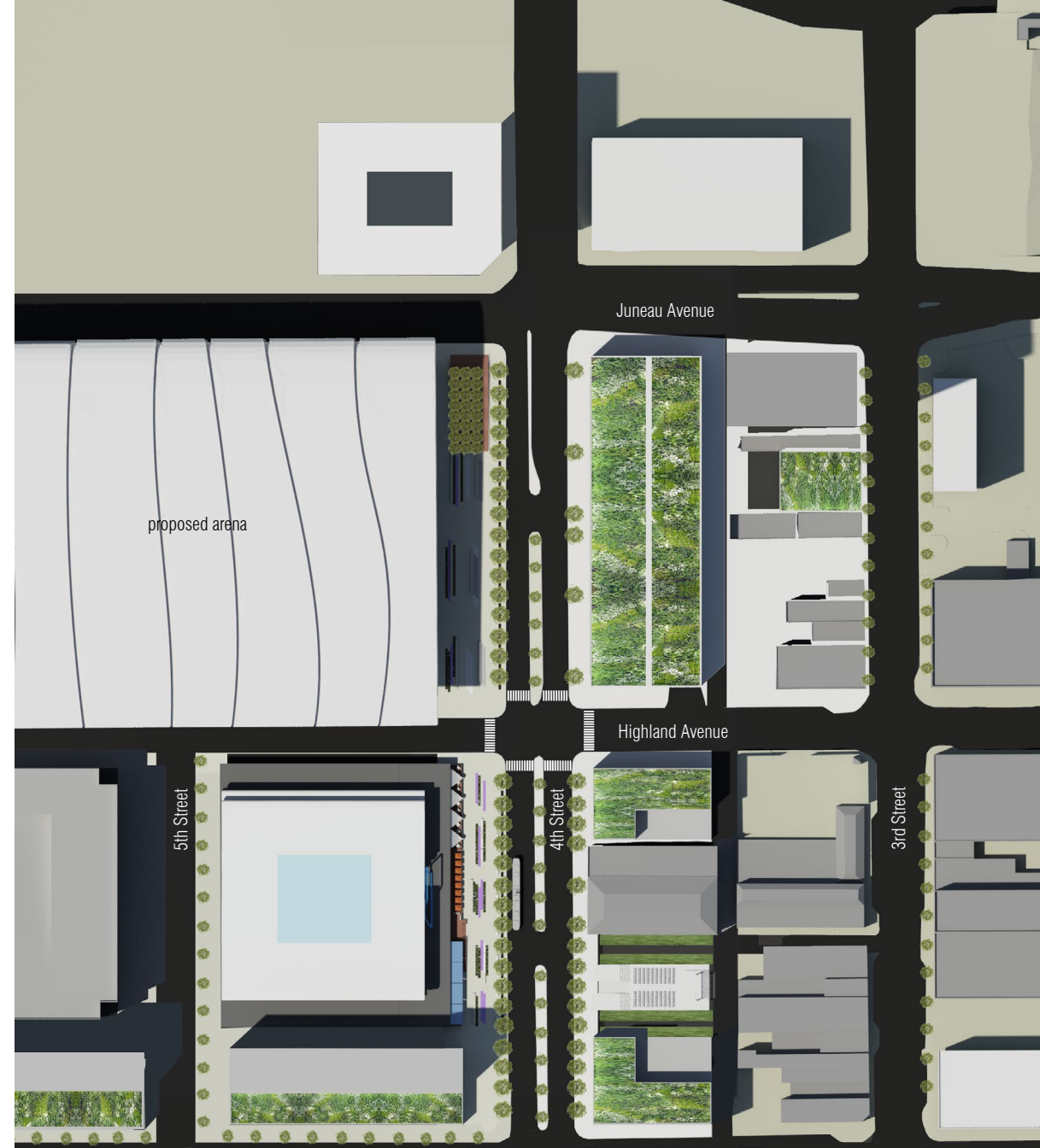






opposite: sunken park  
south of Turner Hall on  
4th Street

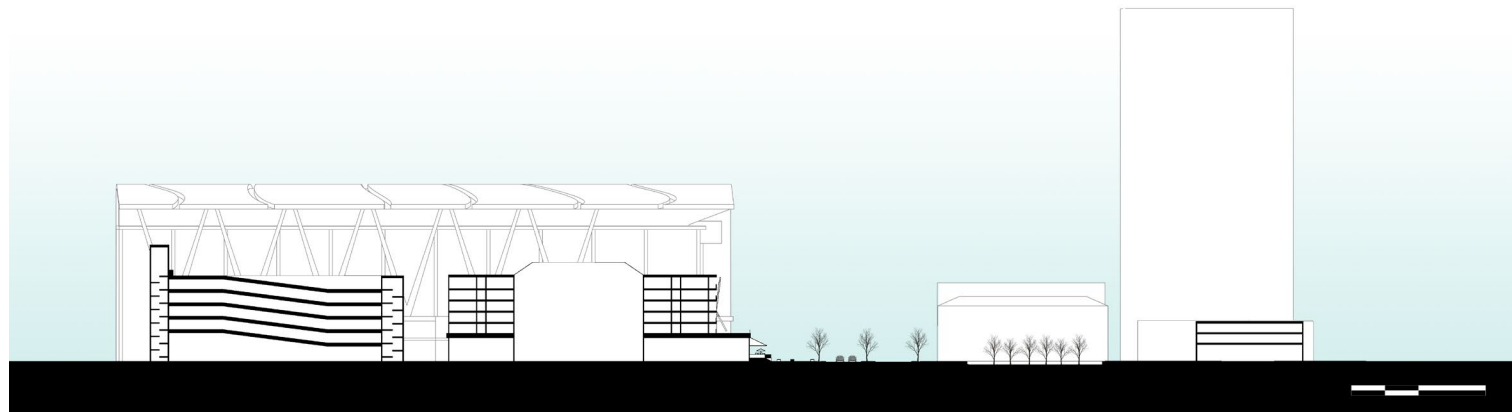
right: proposed site plan





below: site section  
through parking garage,  
hotel, 4th Street and  
sunken park

opposite: night activity in  
the plaza in front of the  
new arena



DEVELOPING DENSITY | Denis Pohlman

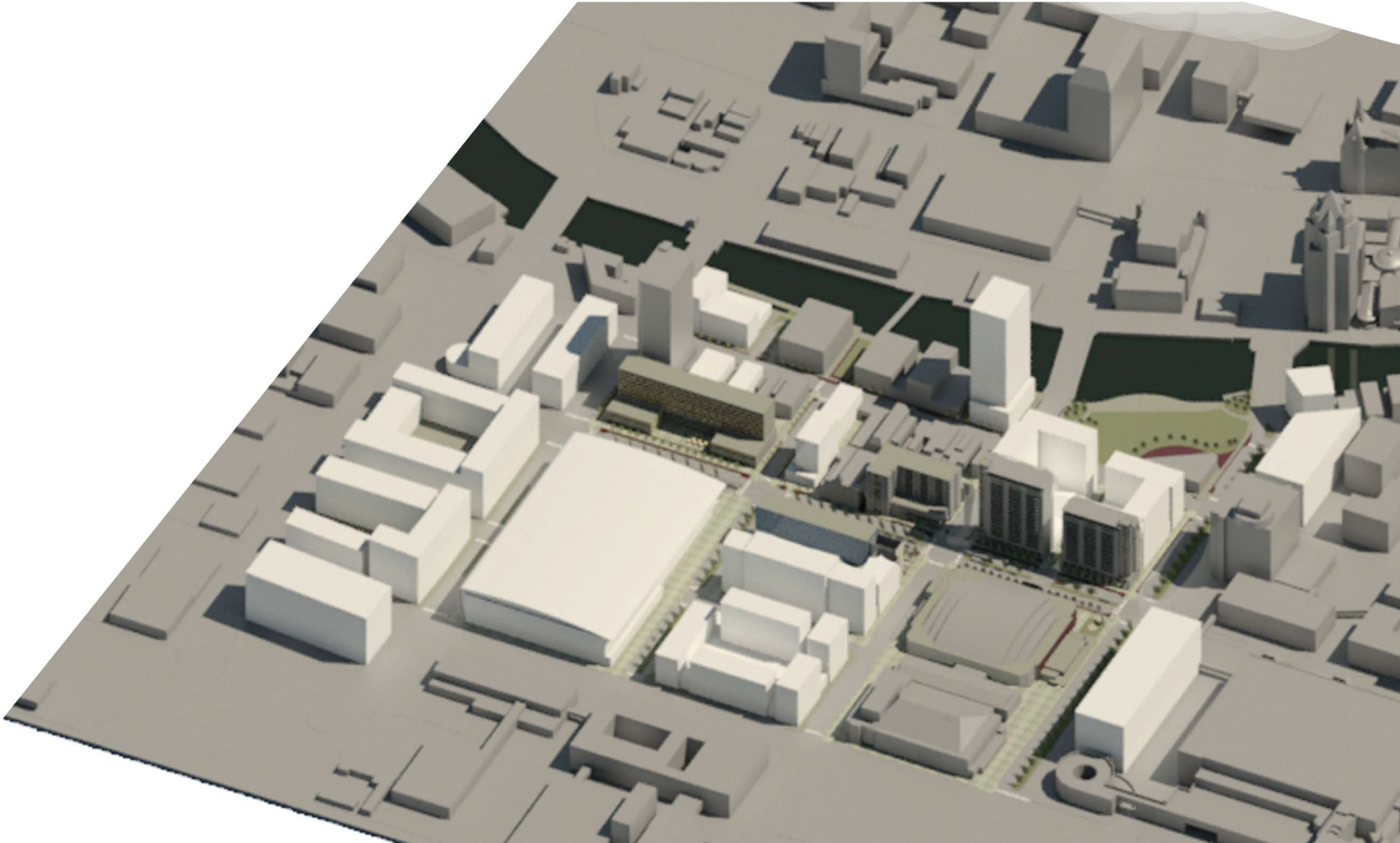
Bring more residents, bring more employees, bring more visitors....bring more investment to the Westown neighborhood. More than 1,400 new residential units are proposed to provide 24/7 activity and customers for the local businesses. More than 300,000 square feet of retail is proposed along 4th Street to create a vibrant street experience for residents and visitors to the area. With the influx of housing units, the retail will flourish in the neighborhood, particularly because there are options for every age and income level from a variety of bars and restaurants to inexpensive and boutique commercial spaces.

4th Street is enhanced with pedestrian plazas, street car stops, landscaping, and sustainable materials. Lighting provides an exciting night atmosphere on a quiet night, as well as game night. It also runs along the street to highlight new stops for the streetcar, which is protected by a series of trees. Seating is integrating throughout the improved corridor to invite people to rest, watch, or meet friends and enjoy the new entertainment options.



mixed-use building off  
4th Street south of State  
Street

opposite: aerial of site  
from northwest







opposite: site plan

right: mixed-use  
entertainment zone off  
4th St. north of Highland  
Ave.

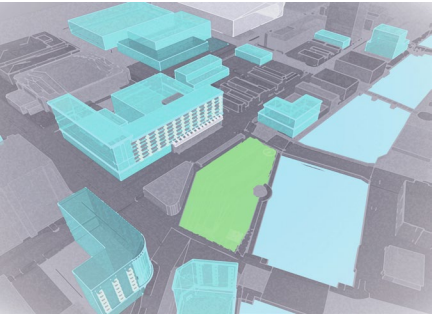




RENEW PERE MARQUETTE | Katelyn Menuge

Activating the streets and bringing a new life to Pere Marquette Park were the two primary goals in this design. All proposed new development has a lively, active ground floor. This rule was applied regardless of building size or height, which were both kept relatively low in order to respond to Old World 3rd Street while creating a comfortable sense of enclosure.

To increase activity around the park, commercial spaces and an art gallery fill the ground floors and have continuous cornice lines that wrap around the new mixed-use developments to create a more defined and cohesive edge around the park. Within Pere Marquette Park there are new programmed, yet flexible spaces to attract visitors. There is a new terrace with space for tables, farmer’s markets, and food trucks. There are also interactive areas, including an outdoor gym and a splash pad for younger visitors or families. Many of these activities highlight the production of kinetic energy, and can be used as catalysts for installations about sustainable energy forms, similar to those done by artist Mary Miss.



from top: site aerial from southeast

Pere Marquette during a music event

opposite from top: splash pad in Pere Marquette Park

outdoor gym along the Milwaukee River







food truck on 4th Street  
just off Pere Marquette  
Park opposite art gallery



Pere Marquette Park from  
east of the Milwaukee  
River, art gallery  
illuminated



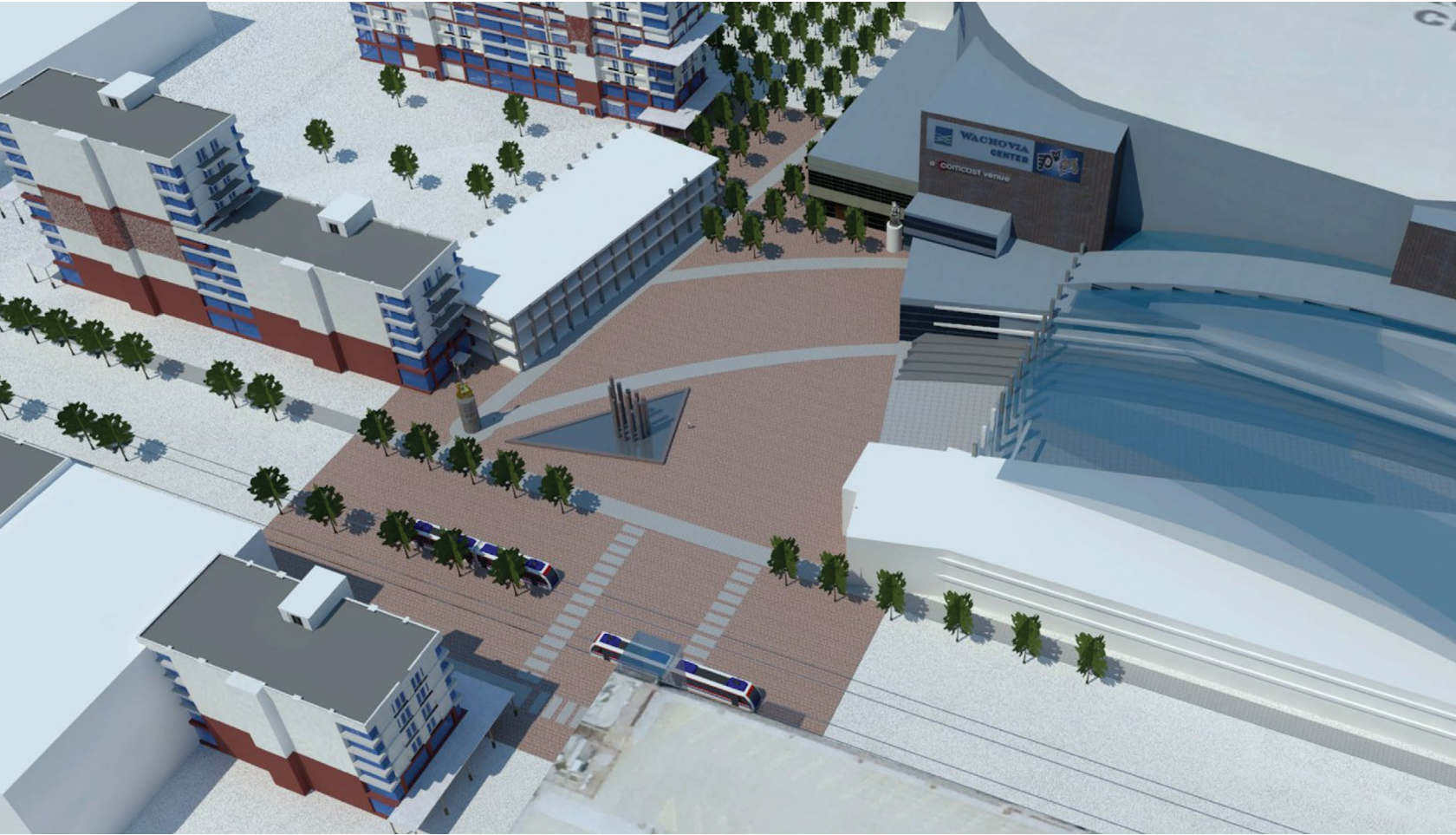
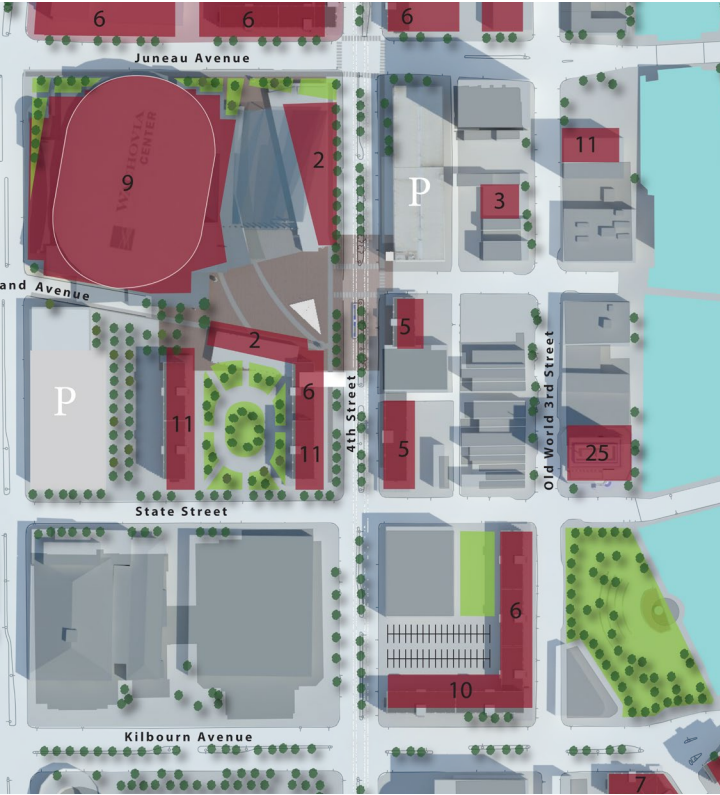
The proposed location and design of the new arena were slightly altered in this scheme to create a grand pedestrian plaza full of movement and year-round activity. The newly developed block between Juneau Avenue and State Street includes multi-story mixed-use buildings, a covered atrium area, and open space filled with public art installations.

The new plaza can be accessed off 4th Street and creates a gateway to the area from the Highland Avenue pedestrian bridge. Highland Avenue is closed between 4th and 5th Streets, with focus shifted to pedestrian traffic and the new streetcar running along 4th Street. Some vehicles, such as food trucks, have access to the site if they promote business and help to create a destination in the arena atrium space.

New development extends south toward Pere Marquette Park where a new 25-story tower and several residential units were added to highlight the park and its activities. The programming in that area is mixed-use to promote an influx of foot traffic.

proposed site plan

opposite: areal view of 4th Street and new arena plaza with streetcar







site aerial from the east



view of new pedestrian  
plaza outside arena taken  
from Highland Avenue

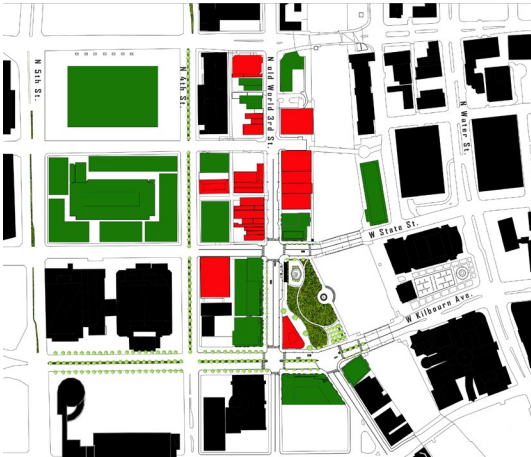
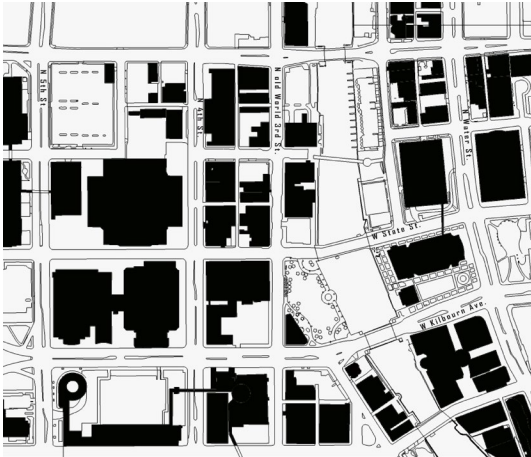


BRIDGEVIEW HEIGHTS | Nicholas Bruckner

Increasing housing was the main goal of Bridgeview Heights. With more than 1.8 million square feet of residential space, holding more than 2,000 units, the new development will bring the buying power needed to support a successful entertainment district. The housing is spread throughout the site, with a large portion located just to the south of the new arena.

Development was also carefully planned to surround Pere Marquette Park. The new mid-rise, mixed-use buildings create a lively backdrop for the park and their ground-floor commercial activities help to keep pedestrians moving throughout the site. The scale of the buildings are stepped back at upper levels to respect the lower scale of Old World 3rd Street while increasing the height in response to the adjacent newer construction.

The new arena will serve as an anchor on the north end of the site and help to make the change in scale feel more appropriate and comfortable for pedestrians. It is the primary catalyst for future development of Bridgeview Heights.



from top: existing figure ground

proposed figure ground

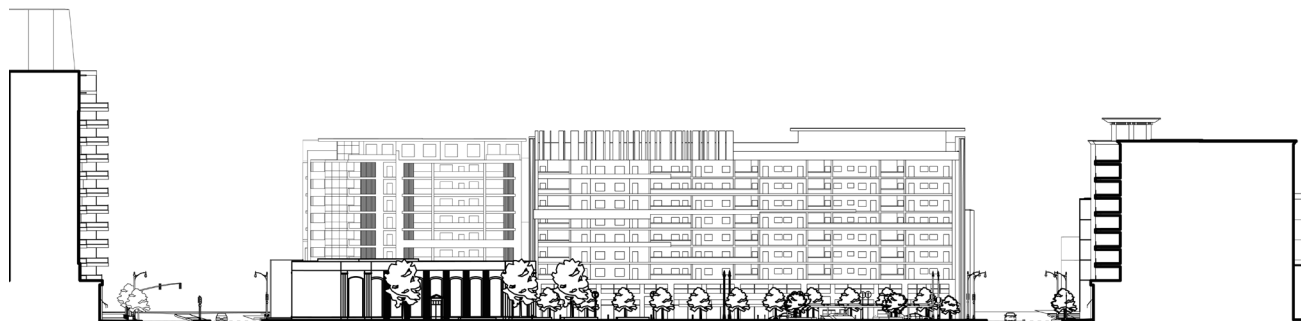
opposite: path leading to water feature and grassy seating area





site sections

opposite: view of Pere  
Marquette Park looking  
toward the Highland  
Avenue pedestrian  
bridge







crossing Kilbourn Ave.  
to access Pere Marquette  
Park

opposite: looking  
down 4th Street from  
pedestrian bridge



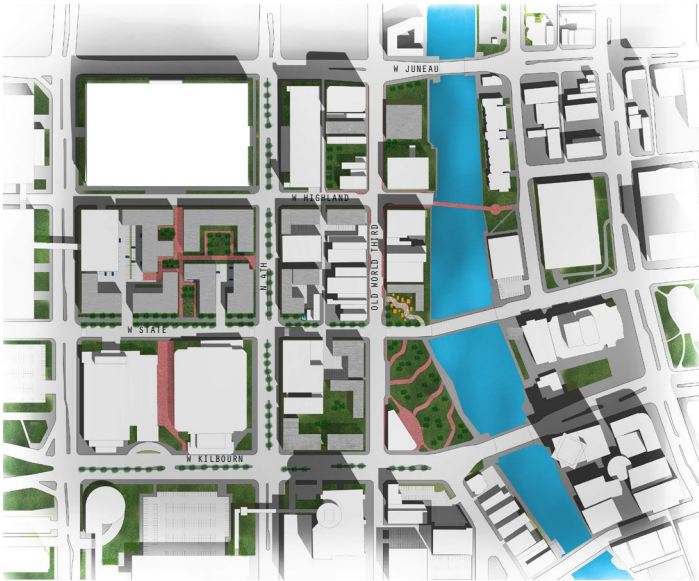


This project seeks to make connections through the expansive site between Pere Marquette Park and the new arena with a series of designed green spaces. The main focus is to create different types and scales of entertainment areas from Kilbourn Avenue all the way up to Juneau Avenue. By crossing the State Street bridge, pedestrians will see the first public space – a playground with orange abstract objects, where children can play while surrounded by trees.

Trees are also used abundantly along the north side of State Street, the sidewalks are double-loaded with trees, protecting pedestrians from the traffic and from the sun light, creating a strong sense of enclosure. The next open space is surrounded by a residential area, including public art which would hopefully be commissioned by a local artist. In the green space, people can sit and read a book or enjoy a cup of coffee from one of the new retail locations. A bike share station is located at the end of State Street. This project is an opportunity to activate this street, bring more pedestrian activity, and incorporate trees and colorful objects.

proposed site plan

opposite: residential courtyard in housing area off 4th Street







from top: playscape park  
along State Street

aerial perspective of  
courtyard off State Street

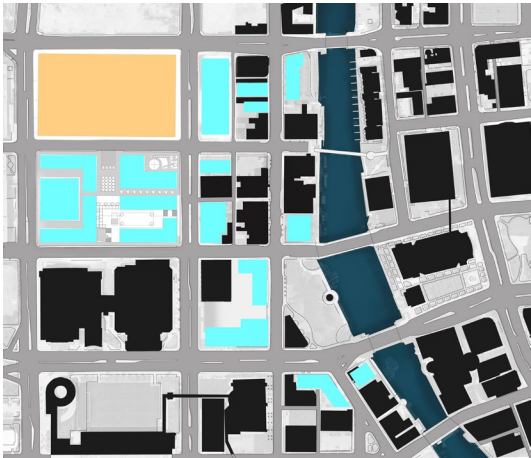
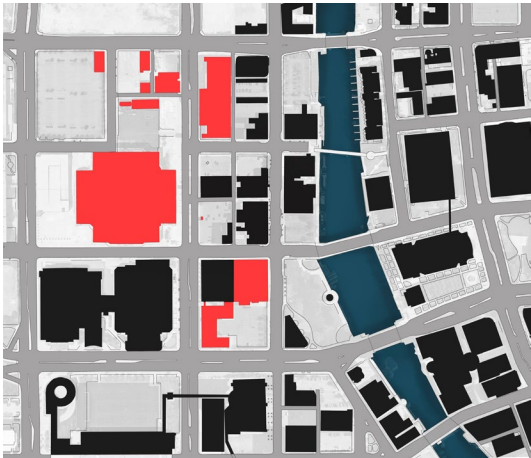
opposite: pedestrian  
walkway along State  
Street facing west





The design of the seven public spaces are focused on the five primary senses. The first park, located off Juneau Avenue and adjacent to the Milwaukee River, is based on sight with a series of glowing orbs meant to pull people from Water Street to the new development. The second park, located north of Kilbourn in a new housing area is based on sound with water features and interactive instruments. A new tree grove located off Kilbourn Ave. in the hotel courtyard houses a grove of trees and fragrant flowers meant to stimulate the sense of smell.

Visitors to the site can also enjoy a series of bars and restaurants located in the lower levels of the hotel and residential units near the new arena and explore different tastes. A series of courtyards are created with the new development and filled with objects carefully constructed to be tactile, including a large pergola at the entrance of the residential courtyard. With over one million square feet of new residential space comprised of varying sized units and interactive features, the growth and density of the Westown neighborhood will flourish.



from top: existing figure ground

proposed figure ground

opposite:  
entrance to residential courtyard north of State Street





proposed site plan

opposite from top: hotel  
grove in courtyard south  
of Highland Avenue

entertainment zone at  
the corner of Highland  
Avenue and 4th Street

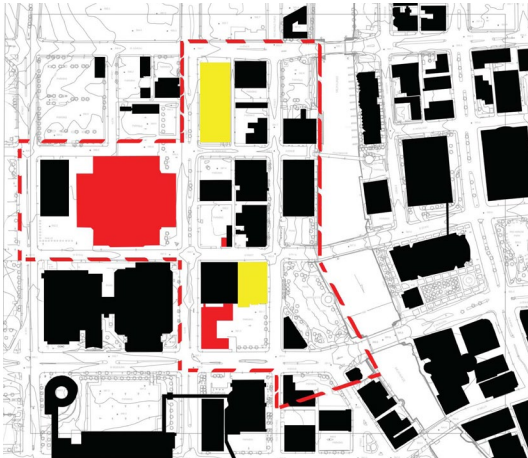




CITY LIGHT BOARDWALK | Benjamin Vorlob

Highland Avenue was the main focus of this scheme, which creates a boardwalk feeling along the street through the incorporation of trees, lights, and tactile materials. Concentrating on Highland was prioritized in an effort to promote more foot traffic from east of the Milwaukee River into the Westtown neighborhood. An influx of new housing and retail space along Highland and State Street help to increase the density of the area and ensure there will be ample numbers of pedestrians throughout the day, especially along the boardwalk.

The boardwalk, with its comfortable wooden seating, raised planters, and ample lights serves as the spine for the site from which multiple uses peel off, including new bars and restaurants, different shopping options, and access to the new arena for sports or other performances. The layout of the street is somewhat mirrored along 4th Street but is scaled back to allow room for the new streetcar and its necessary infrastructure. With these two streets serving as the axes, pedestrians can be comfortable as they move through the site.



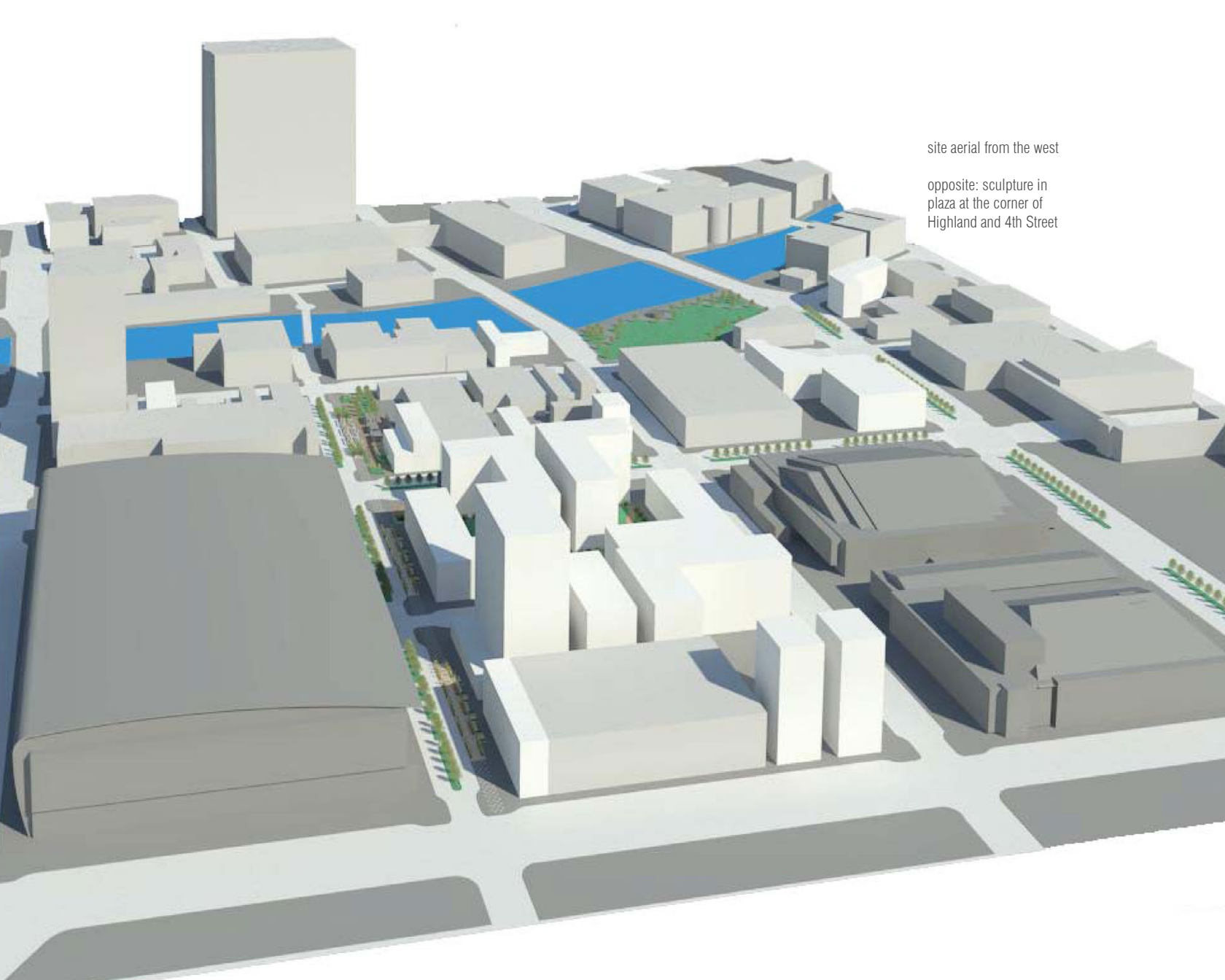
from top: existing figure ground

proposed figure ground

opposite: pedestrian walkway along Highland Avenue between 5th and 6th Streets







site aerial from the west

opposite: sculpture in  
plaza at the corner of  
Highland and 4th Street





The redesigned Highland pedestrian bridge with its torquing design becomes the central link in connecting the new arena development to property east of the Milwaukee River. The path becomes Highland Avenue, which is open for vehicular traffic but stays centered on pedestrian use. Along the new path there is ample seating and access to a new bike share. As pedestrians continue to move south along Highland, they will encounter a designated space between 3rd and 4th Street has been allotted for farmer’s markets, food trucks, and light features, all meant to be engaging and slow people down as they move through the area. This public space terminates with a new restaurant that sits adjacent to the new arena, providing abundant outdoor seating and a rooftop deck to encourage people-watching. By focusing on the streetscape rather than the individual buildings, the design enures ample care is given to the pedestrian in terms of scale, shade, light, and safety. As long as residents and visitors feel comfortable and active, they will continue to frequent the site, and the constant foot traffic will encourage a stronger neighborhood feeling.

site sections

opposite: benches and food truck access on Highland Avenue





proposed site plan  
opposite: outdoor  
seating for a new  
restaurant on Highland  
Avenue

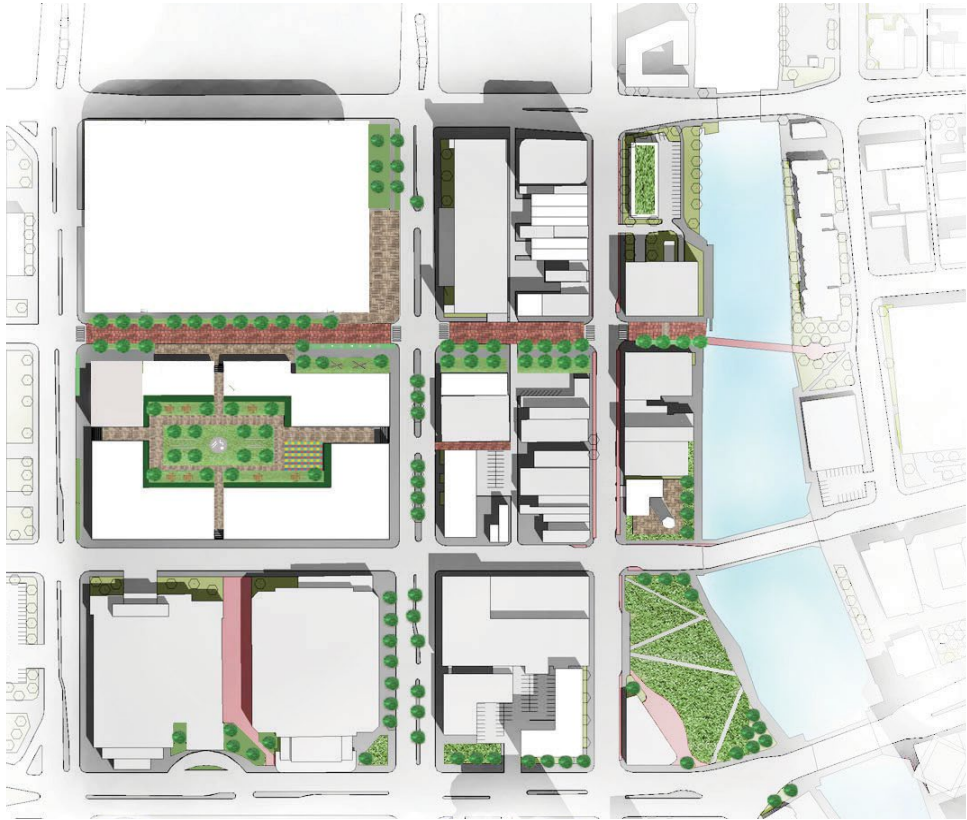




HIGHLIGHTING HIGHLAND | Jassim Fakhroo

Highland is the most important pedestrian avenue in the new Westtown development. With its connection over the Milwaukee River and the fact that it leads directly to the new arena, it has been highlighted in this scheme and broken down into various segments with different programmed uses. While all of Highland Avenue remains a roadway, portions of it, including the location directly south of the proposed arena, can be closed off when events are occurring to promote foot traffic and minimize the chance for vehicular interference.

New residential units have been placed along Highland and State Street to create an enclosed courtyard, which can be accessed off Highland Avenue or 4th Street. The ground surface of the courtyard and Highland both have pavers to differentiate them from the rest of the site and signify their use as pedestrian only, when desired. To close off the street during games or concerts, simple bollards would be used at the entrance to the street so people can enter and leave events safely and feel comfortable milling around the area.



opposite: proposed site plan

from top: central gathering space between 4th and 6th Streets facing east

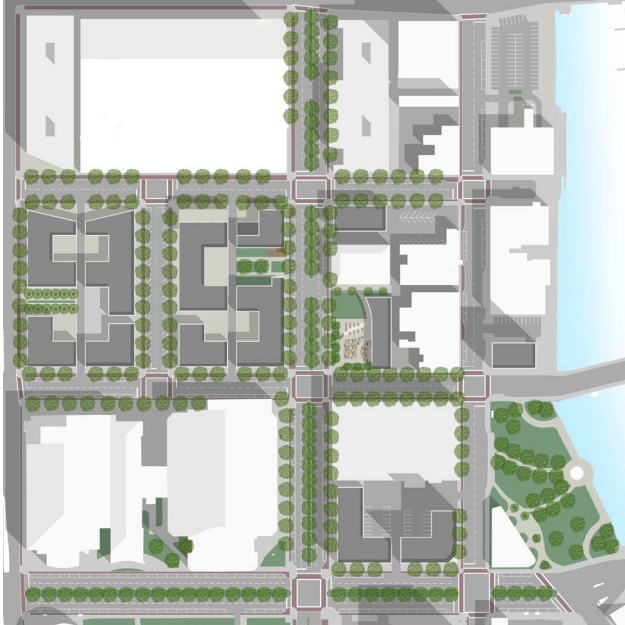
Highland Avenue closed for pedestrian traffic only





TURNER HALL PLAZA | Andrew Carlson

The driving forces of this design are density and programmed public spaces. With the addition of approximately 825 new residential units of varying sizes, residents of different ages and income levels can all live on the site and enjoy the addition of Turner Hall Plaza. Performance is brought to the new Turner Plaza by renovating a building along State Street to include a restaurant and lounge. Doors open to the plaza during warm months, or during summer months, one can watch bands or other entertainers play through the glass. Pre-game events can spill into the new plaza and street, which are overlooked by the various residential, and mixed-use buildings. Public spaces are woven throughout the development and vary in scale - gardens, pedestrian pathways, outdoor dining, green walls, entertainment plazas, and rain gardens are all included and are accessible to pedestrians and visible to residents, creating an increased sense of safety and community. The district will be a destination for residents and visitors who enjoy live performances or simply want to gather with friends in a lively space.



from top: proposed site plan  
site section through new Turner Hall Plaza  
opposite: aerial of new construction from the southeast





public plaza and gardens  
off 4th Street next to  
Turner Hall

opposite: performance  
space off 4th Street to  
the south of Turner Hall







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This studio was influenced by New York artist, Mary Miss.









Urban design community redevelopment studio work on display at Mobile Design Box, 1551 North Water Street, Milwaukee  
Friday, July 24, 2015