

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

April 16, 2025

HDRC CASE NO: 2025-089
ADDRESS: 849 E COMMERCE ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 151 LOT 3, A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,A6,7,8,60,61, 62,63,65,A66 & 64 EXC SW 32 FT (2.533 AC) & NCB 1010 BLK 2 LOT 26 (.99 AC), 28 (1.44 AC), 31 (.71 AC) & PT OF LOT 30 (5.11 AC)
ZONING: D, RIO-3
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
APPLICANT: Amanda Perez/Protection Development Inc.
OWNER: NEW RIVERCENTER MALL II LP
TYPE OF WORK: Construction of a covered patio and ADA ramp at the Rivercenter Mall Lagoon
APPLICATION RECEIVED: March 28, 2025
60-DAY REVIEW: May 27, 2025
CASE MANAGER: Edward Hall

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to construct a new ramp and covered patio within the lagoon at 849 E Commerce, Rivercenter Mall. The proposed new construction will include the removal of existing, non-ADA compliant elements.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

UDC Section 35-670. Criteria for Certificate of Appropriateness—Generally

(b)(4)C. Design Characteristics of "RIO-3" River Improvement Overlay District - 3.

- i. The historic work of Robert Hugman, CCC and WPA construction work, Ethel Harris tile work, and work of the National Youth Administration shall be respected and preserved in all construction efforts. Adherence to the intent and spirit of those plans is essential in all construction.
- ii. Traditional, formal street level design precedents shall be respected, but at the river level, the more informal, handcrafted style shall be maintained.
- iii. The integrity of historic properties shall be preserved as provided for in section 35-610. Historic differences between street level designs and river level designs shall be respected.
- iv. The traditional design context of the area shall be respected at two (2) levels: the broader downtown context and the immediate block as it faces the river.
- v. In new buildings that have more than one (1) facade, such as those that face the street and the river, the commission shall consider visual compatibility with respect to each important facade.
- vi. The microclimate of the River Walk level shall be maintained and, during construction, shall be given extra protection. Downtown operations staff will be consulted to provide specific instructions for construction procedures.
- vii. Over-crowding of plant life or altering levels of light and water along the river shall not be permitted.
- viii. Enhance the pedestrian experience with high-quality building designs that include balconies facing the river and the primary entrance facing the street.
- ix. Ensure adequate solar access on the River Walk.

Section 35-672. Neighborhood Wide Design Standards

(a) Pedestrian Circulation. Pedestrian access shall be provided among properties to integrate neighborhoods.

(2) Link the various functions and spaces on a site with sidewalks in a coordinated system.

Provide pedestrian sidewalks between buildings, parking areas and built features such as outdoor plazas and courtyards.

(5) Pedestrian Access Along the River Walk Pathway Shall Not Be Blocked.

A. Queuing is prohibited on the River Walk pathway.

B. Hostess stations shall be located away from the River Walk pathway so as to not inhibit pedestrian flow on the River Walk pathway. That is, the hostess station shall not be located in such a manner to cause a patron who has stopped at the hostess stand to be standing on the River Walk pathway. Pedestrian flow shall be considered "inhibited" if a pedestrian walking along the pathway has to swerve, dodge, change direction or come to a complete stop to avoid a patron engaged at the hostess stand.

C. Tables and chairs shall be located a sufficient distance from the River Walk pathway so that normal dining and service shall not inhibit the flow of pedestrian traffic. See inhibited definition in subsection B. above.

(c) Views. The river's course (both natural and manmade), and San Antonio's street pattern, creates unique views of certain properties from the public ROW. These properties often occur at prominent curves in the river or where a street changes direction and a property appears to be a terminus at the end of a street.

(1) Architectural Focal Point. When a property is situated in such a manner as to appear to be the terminus at the end of the street or at a prominent curve in the river, the building shall incorporate into its design an architectural feature that will provide a focal point at the end of the view. (see Figure 672-3) An architectural feature will be considered to be a focal point through any of the following methods, but not limited to:

A. Additional height.

B. Creation of a tower.

C. Variation in roof shape.

D. Change of color or materials.

E. Addition of a design enhancement feature such as:

i. Embellished entrance areas.

ii. Articulated corners, especially when entrance is at corner, rounded or chamfered corners ease the transitions from one street facade to the adjoining facade.

iii. Recessed or projecting balconies and entrances.

Section 35-673. Site Design Standards

(a) Solar Access. The intent of providing and maintaining solar access to the San Antonio River is to protect the river's specific ecoclimate. The river has a special microclimate of natural and planted vegetation that requires certain levels and balanced amounts of sunlight, space and water. Development must be designed to respect and protect those natural requirements, keeping them in balance and not crowding or altering them so that vegetation does not receive more or less space and water, but particularly sunlight, than is required for normal expected growth.

(1) Building Massing to Provide Solar Access to the River. Building massing shall be so designed as to provide direct sunlight to vegetation in the river channel as defined:

A. The area to be measured for solar access shall be a thirty-foot setback from the river's edge or from the river's edge to the building face, whichever is lesser, parallel to the river for the length of the property.

B. The solar calculations shall be measured exclusive to the applicant's property; that is, shades and shadows of other buildings shall not be included in the calculations. The solar calculations shall only measure the impact of new construction and additions. The shading impact of historic buildings on the site may be excluded from the calculations.

C. The defined area shall receive a minimum of 5.5 hours of direct sunlight, measured at the winter solstice, and 7.5 hours of direct sunlight, measured at the summer solstice.

D. Those properties located on the south side of the river (whose north face is adjacent to the river) shall only be required to measure the sunlight in the 30-foot setback on the opposite bank of the river.

E. Those properties within the river improvement overlay district not directly adjacent to the river are still subject to the provisions of this section. To determine the solar access effect of these buildings on the river the applicant must measure the nearest point to the river of an area defined by a thirty-foot setback from the river's edge, parallel to the river for the length of their property that would be affected by their building. For those buildings on the south side of the river, the 30-foot setback shall be measured only on the opposite bank.

F. However, in those cases where the above conditions cannot be met due to the natural configuration of the river, existing street patterns, or existing buildings, the HDRC may approve a buildings mass and height as allowed by table 674-2.

G. If there is a conflict with this section and another section of this chapter this section shall prevail.

(b) Building Orientation. Buildings should be sited to help define active spaces for area users, provide pedestrian

connections between sites, help animate the street scene and define street edges. Consideration to both the street and riverside should be given. The placement of a building on a site should therefore be considered within the context of the block, as well as how the structure will support the broader design goals for the area.

(2) Primary and Secondary Entrances.

A. Orient a building's primary entrance toward the street with subordinate entrances located on the riverside and/or the interior of the property. On a major thoroughfare street it is acceptable to provide the primary entrance through a common courtyard and then to a street.

B. The primary entrance shall be distinguished by architectural features such as, but not limited to: an entry portal; change in material or color; change in scale of other openings; addition of columns, lintels or canopies.

C. Secondary entrances shall have architectural features that are subordinate to the primary entrance in scale and detail. For purposes of this division subordinate means that the entrance is smaller in height and width, and has fewer or simpler architectural elements.

(f) Plant Materials. A number of soil conditions converge in the San Antonio area to create unique vegetation ecosystems. Along the route of the San Antonio River, the soil conditions vary greatly from the northern boundary near Hildebrand to the city limits near Mission San Francisco de la Espada (Mission Espada) and therefore native and indigenous plants will vary accordingly. Landscaping should reflect the unique soil characteristics of the specific site.

(3) Install Trees to Provide Shade and to Separate Pedestrians From Automobile Traffic. Install street trees along the property line or in the ROW abutting all streets according to minimum requirement standards established in subsection 35-512(b), except where this conflicts with existing downtown Tri-Party improvements in "RIO-3." In "RIO-3" the owner has the option of placing trees at the property line, or along the street edge.

(g) Paving Materials. An important San Antonio landscape tradition is the use of decorative surfaces for paving and other landscape structures. Paving materials and patterns should be carefully chosen to preserve and enhance the pedestrian experience.

(1) Vary Walkway, Patio and Courtyard Paving to Add Visual Interest on the Riverside of Properties Abutting the River. Pervious paving is encouraged where feasible and appropriate to the site.

(i) Street Furnishings. Street furnishings are exterior amenities, including but not limited to, tables, chairs, umbrellas, landscape pots, wait stations, valet stations, bicycle racks, planters, benches, bus shelters, kiosks, waste receptacles and similar items that help to define pedestrian use areas. Handcrafted street furnishings are particularly important in San Antonio, and therefore this tradition of craftsmanship and of providing street furniture is encouraged.

(2) Street Furnishing Materials.

A. Street furnishings shall be made of wood, metal, stone, terra cotta, cast stone, hand-sculpted concrete, or solid surfacing material, such as Corian or Surell.

(4) Street furnishings, such as tables and chairs may not be stored (other than overnight storage) in such a way as to be visible from the river pathway.

(j) Lighting. Site lighting should be considered an integral element of the landscape design of a property. It should help define activity areas and provide interest at night. At the same time, lighting should facilitate safe and convenient circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Overspill of light and light pollution should be avoided.

(1) Site Lighting. Site lighting shall be shielded by permanent attachments to light fixtures so that the light sources are not visible from a public way and any offsite glare is prevented.

A. Site lighting shall include illumination of parking areas, buildings, pedestrian routes, dining areas, design features and public ways.

B. Outdoor spaces adjoining and visible from the river right-of-way shall have average ambient light levels of between one (1) and three (3) foot-candles with a minimum of 0.5-foot candles and a maximum of six (6) footcandles at any point measured on the ground plane. Interior spaces visible from the river right-of-way on the river level and ground floor level shall use light sources with no more than the equivalent lumens of a one hundred-watt incandescent bulb. Exterior balconies, porches and canopies adjoining and visible from the river right-of-way shall use light sources with the equivalent lumens of a sixty-watt incandescent bulb with average ambient light levels no greater than the lumen output of a one hundred-watt incandescent light bulb as long as average foot candle standards are not exceeded. Accent lighting of landscape or building features including specimen plants, gates, entries, water features, art work, stairs, and ramps may exceed these standards by a multiple of 2.5. Recreational fields and activity areas that require higher light levels shall be screened from the river hike and bike pathways with a landscape buffer.

C. Exterior light fixtures that use the equivalent of more than one hundred-watt incandescent bulbs shall not emit a significant amount of the fixture's total output above a vertical cut-off angle of ninety (90) degrees.

Any structural part of the fixture providing this cut-off angle must be permanently affixed.

- D. Lighting spillover to the publicly owned areas of the river or across property lines shall not exceed one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of one (1) foot-candle measured at any point ten (10) feet beyond the property line.
- (2) Provide Lighting for Pedestrian Ways That is Low Scaled for Walking. The position of a lamp in a pedestrian-way light shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height above the ground.
- (3) Light Temperature and Color.
 - A. Light temperature and color shall be between 2500° K and 3500° K with a color rendition index (CRI) of eighty (80) or higher, respectively. This restriction is limited to all outdoor spaces adjoining and visible from the river right-of-way and from the interior spaces adjoining the river right-of-way on the river level and ground floor level. Levels shall be determined by product specifications.
- (4) Minimize the Visual Impacts of Exterior Building Lighting.
 - A. All security lighting shall be shielded so that the light sources are not visible from a public way.
 - B. Lighting (uplighting and downlighting) that is positioned to highlight a building or outdoor artwork shall be aimed at the object to be illuminated, not pointed into the sky.
 - C. Fixtures shall not distract from, or obscure important architectural features of the building. Lighting fixtures shall be a subordinate feature on the building unless they are incorporated into the over-all design scheme of the building.
- (5) Prohibited Lighting on the Riverside of Properties Abutting the River.
 - A. Flashing lights.
 - B. Rotating lights.
 - C. Chaser lights.
 - D. Exposed neon.
 - E. Seasonal decorating lights such as festoon, string or rope lights, except between November 20 and January 10.
 - F. Flood lamps.
- (6) Minimize the visual impacts of lighting in parking areas in order to enhance the perception of the nighttime sky and to prevent glare onto adjacent properties. Parking lot light poles are limited to thirty (30) feet in height, shall have a 90° cutoff angle so as to not emit light above the horizontal plane.
- (l) Access to Public Pathway Along the River. These requirements are specifically for those properties adjacent to the river to provide a connection to the publicly owned pathway along the river. The connections are to stimulate and enhance urban activity, provide path connections in an urban context, enliven street activity, and protect the ambiance and character of the river area.
 - (3) Clearly define a key pedestrian gateway into the site from the publicly owned pathway at the river with distinctive architectural or landscape elements.
 - A. The primary gateway from a development to the publicly owned pathway at the river shall be defined by an architectural or landscape element made of stone, brick, tile, metal, rough hewn cedar or hand-formed concrete or through the use of distinctive plantings or planting beds.
- (n) Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment. Service areas and mechanical equipment should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and building. Noise generated from mechanical equipment shall not exceed city noise regulations.
 - (1) Locate service entrances, waste disposal areas and other similar uses adjacent to service lanes and away from major streets and the river.
 - C. Air intake and exhaust systems, or other mechanical equipment that generates noise, smoke or odors, shall not be located at the pedestrian level.

Sec. 35-674. Building Design Principles

- (a) Architectural Character. A basic objective for architectural design in the river improvement overlay districts is to encourage the reuse of existing buildings and construction of new, innovative designs that enhance the area, and help to establish distinct identities for each of the zone districts. At the same time, these new buildings should reinforce established building traditions and respect the contexts of neighborhoods. When a new building is constructed, it shall be designed in a manner that reinforces the basic character-defining features of the area. Such features include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it faces the street and its orientation to the river. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally, visual compatibility results.

- (b) Mass and Scale. A building shall appear to have a "human scale." In general, this scale can be accomplished by using familiar forms and elements interpreted in human dimensions. Exterior wall designs shall help pedestrians establish a sense of scale with relation to each building. Articulating the number of floors in a building can help to establish a building's scale, for example, and prevent larger buildings from dwarfing the pedestrian.
- (1) Express facade components in ways that will help to establish building scale.
 - A. Treatment of architectural facades shall contain a discernible pattern of mass to void, or windows and doors to solid mass. Openings shall appear in a regular pattern, or be clustered to form a cohesive design. Architectural elements such as columns, lintels, sills, canopies, windows and doors should align with other architectural features on the adjacent facades.
 - (2) Align horizontal building elements with others in the blockface to establish building scale.
 - A. Align at least one (1) horizontal building element with another horizontal building element on the same block face. It will be considered to be within alignment if it is within three (3) feet, measured vertically, of the existing architectural element.
 - (3) Express the distinction between upper and lower floors.
 - A. Develop the first floor as primarily transparent. The building facade facing a major street shall have at least fifty (50) percent of the street level facade area devoted to display windows and/or windows affording some view into the interior areas. Multi-family residential buildings with no retail or office space are exempt from this requirement.
 - (4) Where a building facade faces the street or river and exceeds the maximum facade length allowed in Table 674-1 divide the facade of building into modules that express traditional dimensions.
 - A. The maximum length of an individual wall plane that faces a street or the river shall be as shown in Table 674-1.

Table 674-1

Description	RIO-1	RIO-2	RIO-3	RIO-4	RIO-5	RIO-6
Maximum Facade Length	50 ft.	50 ft.	30 ft.	75 ft.	75 ft.	50 ft.

- B. If a building wall plane facing the street or river and exceeds the length allowed in Table 674-1, employ at least two (2) of the following techniques to reduce the perceived mass:
 - Change materials with each building module to reduce its perceived mass; or
 - Change the height with each building module of a wall plane. The change in height shall be at least ten (10) percent of the vertical height; or
 - Change the roof form of each building module to help express the different modules of the building mass; or
 - Change the arrangement of windows and other facade articulation features, such as, columns, pilasters or strap work, which divides large planes into smaller components.
 - (5) Organize the Mass of a Building to Provide Solar Access to the River.
 - A. One (1) method of doing so is to step the building down toward the river to meet the solar access requirements of subsection 35-673(a).
 - B. Another method is to set the building back from the river a distance sufficient to meet the solar access requirements of subsection 35-673(a).
- (c) Height. Building heights vary along the river corridor, from one-story houses to high-rise hotels and apartments. This diversity of building heights is expected to continue. However, within each zone, a general similarity in building heights should be encouraged in order to help establish a sense of visual continuity. In addition, building heights shall be configured such that a comfortable human scale is established along the edges of properties and views to the river and other significant landmarks are provided while allowing the appropriate density for an area.
- (1) The maximum building height shall be as defined in Table 674-2.
 - A. Solar access standards subsection 35-673(a), and massing standards subsection 35-674(b) also will affect building heights.

Table 674-2

Description	RIO-1	RIO-2	RIO-3	RIO-4	RIO-5	RIO-6
Maximum # of Stories	5	10	None	7	5	4
Maximum Height in Feet	60 ft.	120 ft.	None	84 ft.	60 ft.	50 ft.

(3) On the street-side, the building facade shall appear similar in height to those of other buildings found traditionally in the area.

If fifty (50) percent of the building facades within a block face are predominantly lower than the maximum height allowed, the new building facade on the street-side shall align with the average height of those lower buildings within the block face, or with a particular building that falls within the fifty (50) percent range.

However, the remainder of the building may obtain its maximum height by stepping back fifteen (15) feet from the building face. (4) Designation of a development node provides for the ability to increase the building height by fifty (50) percent from the requirements set out in article VI.

(d) Materials and Finishes. Masonry materials are well established as primary features along the river corridor and their use should be continued. Stucco that is detailed to provide a texture and pattern, which conveys a human scale, is also part of the tradition. In general, materials and finishes that provide a sense of human scale, reduce the perceived mass of a building and appear to blend with the natural setting of the river shall be used, especially on major structures.

(1) Use indigenous materials and traditional building materials for primary wall surfaces. A minimum of seventy-five

(75) percent of walls (excluding window fenestrations) shall be composed of the following:

A. Modular masonry materials including brick, stone, and rusticated masonry block, tile, terra-cotta, structural clay tile and cast stone. Concrete masonry units (CMU) are not allowed.

B. Other new materials that convey the texture, scale, and finish similar to traditional building materials.

C. Stucco and painted concrete when detailed to express visual interest and convey a sense of scale.

D. Painted or stained wood in a lap or shingle pattern.

(2) The following materials are not permitted as primary building materials and may be used as a secondary material only:

A. Large expanses of high gloss or shiny metal panels.

B. Mirror glass panels. Glass curtain wall buildings are allowed in RIO-3 as long as the river and street levels comply with 35-674(d)(1) above.

(3) Paint or Finish Colors.

A. Use natural colors of indigenous building materials for properties that abut the River Walk area.

B. Use matte finishes instead of high glossy finishes on wall surfaces. Wood trim and metal trim may be painted with gloss enamel.

C. Bright colors may highlight entrances or architectural features.

(e) Facade Composition. Traditionally, many commercial and multi-family buildings in the core of San Antonio have had facade designs that are organized into three (3) distinct segments: First, a "base" exists, which establishes a scale at the street level; second a "mid-section," or shaft is used, which may include several floors. Finally a "cap" finishes the composition. The cap may take the form of an ornamental roof form or decorative molding and may also include the top floors of the building. This organization helps to give a sense of scale to a building and its use should be encouraged.

In order to maintain the sense of scale, buildings should have the same setback as surrounding buildings so as to maintain the street-wall pattern, if clearly established.

In contrast, the traditional treatment of facades along the riverside has been more modest. This treatment is largely a result of the fact that the riverside was a utilitarian edge and was not oriented to the public. Today, even though orienting buildings to the river is a high priority objective, it is appropriate that these river-oriented facades be simpler in character than those facing the street.

(1) Street Facade. Buildings that are taller than the street-wall (sixty (60) feet) shall be articulated at the stop of the street wall or stepped back in order to maintain the rhythm of the street wall. Buildings should be composed to include a base, a middle and a cap.

A. High rise buildings, more than one hundred (100) feet tall, shall terminate with a distinctive top or cap. This can be accomplished by:

i. Reducing the bulk of the top twenty (20) percent of the building by ten (10) percent.

ii. By stepping back the top twenty (20) percent of the building.

iii. Changing the material of the cap.

B. Roof forms shall be used to conceal all mechanical equipment and to add architectural interest to the structure.

C. Roof surfaces should include strategies to reduce heat island effects such as use of green roofs, photo voltaic panels, and/or the use of roof materials with high solar reflectivity.

(2) Fenestration. Windows help provide a human scale and so shall be proportioned accordingly.

D. Curtain wall systems shall be designed with modulating features such as projecting horizontal and/or vertical mullions.

(3) Entrances. Entrances shall be easy to find, be a special feature of the building, and be appropriately scaled.

A. Entrances shall be the most prominent on the street side and less prominent on the river side.

B. Entrances shall be placed so as to be highly visible.

C. The scale of the entrance is determined by the prominence of the function and or the amount of use.

D. Entrances shall have a change in material and/or wall plane.

E. Entrances should not use excessive storefront systems.

(4) Riverside facade. The riverside facade of a building shall have simpler detailing and composition than the street facade.

A. Architectural details such as cornices, sills, lintels, door surrounds, water tables and other similar details should use simple curves and handcrafted detailing.

B. Stone detailing shall be rough hewn, and chiseled faced. Smooth faced stone is not permitted as the primary building material, but can be used as accent pieces.

C. Facades on the riverside shall be asymmetrical, pedestrian scale, and give the appearance of the back of a building. That is, in traditional building along the river, the backs of building were designed with simpler details, and appear less formal than the street facades.

(g) Awnings, Canopies and Arcades. (See Figure 674-2) The tradition of sheltering sidewalks with awnings, canopies and arcades on commercial and multi-family buildings is well established in San Antonio and is a practice that should be continued. They offer shade from the hot summer sun and shelter from rainstorms, thereby facilitating pedestrian activity.

They also establish a sense of scale for a building, especially at the ground level. Awnings and canopies are appropriate locations for signage. Awnings with signage shall comply with any master signage plan on file with the historic preservation officer for the property. Awnings and canopies installed at street level within the public right-of-way require licensing with the city's capital improvements management services (CIMS) department. Canopies, balconies and awnings installed at river level within the public right-of-way require licensing with the city's downtown operations department.

(1) If awnings, arcades and canopies are to be used they should accentuate the character-defining features of a building.

A. The awning, arcade or canopy shall be located in relationship to the openings of a building. That is, if there are a series of awnings or canopies, they shall be located at the window or door openings. However awnings, canopies and arcades may extend the length of building to provide shade at the first floor for the pedestrian.

B. Awnings, arcades and canopies shall be mounted to highlight architectural features such as moldings that may be found above the storefront.

C. They should match the shape of the opening.

D. Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.

E. Odd shapes and bubble awnings are prohibited except where the shape of an opening requires a bubble awning, or historic precedent shows they have been previously used on the building.

F. Canopies, awnings and arcades shall not conflict with the building's proportions or with the shape of the openings that the awning or canopy covers.

G. Historic canopies shall be repaired or replaced with in-kind materials.

(2) Materials and Color.

A. Awnings and canopies may be constructed of metal, wood or fabric. Certain vinyl is allowed if it has the appearance of natural fiber as approved by the HDRC.

B. Awning color shall coordinate with the building. Natural and earth tone colors are encouraged. Fluorescent colors are not allowed. When used for signage it is appropriate to choose a dark color for the canopy and use light lettering for signage.

(3) Incorporating lighting into the design of a canopy is appropriate.

A. Lights that illuminate the pedestrian way beneath the awning are appropriate.

B. Lights that illuminate the storefront are appropriate.

C. Internally illuminated awnings that glow are prohibited.

When an HDRC application is submitted for commercial development projects within a river improvement overlay district the city archeologist shall review the project application to determine if there is potential of containing intact archaeological deposits utilizing the following documents/methods:

- (1)The Texas Sites Atlas for known/recorded sites, site data in the files of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and the Texas Historical Commission;
- (2)USGS maps;
- (3)Soil Survey maps;
- (4)Distance to water;
- (5)Topographical data;
- (6)Predictive settlement patterns;
- (7)Archival research and historic maps;
- (8)Data on file at the office of historic preservation.

If after review the city archeologist determines there is potential of containing intact archaeological deposits, an archaeological survey report shall be prepared and submitted. If, after review by the city archeologist, a determination is made that the site has little to no potential of containing intact archaeological deposits, the requirement for an archaeological survey report may be waived.

Upon completion of a survey, owners of property containing inventoried archaeological sites are encouraged to educate the public regarding archaeological components of the site and shall coordinate any efforts with the office of historic preservation.

FINDINGS:

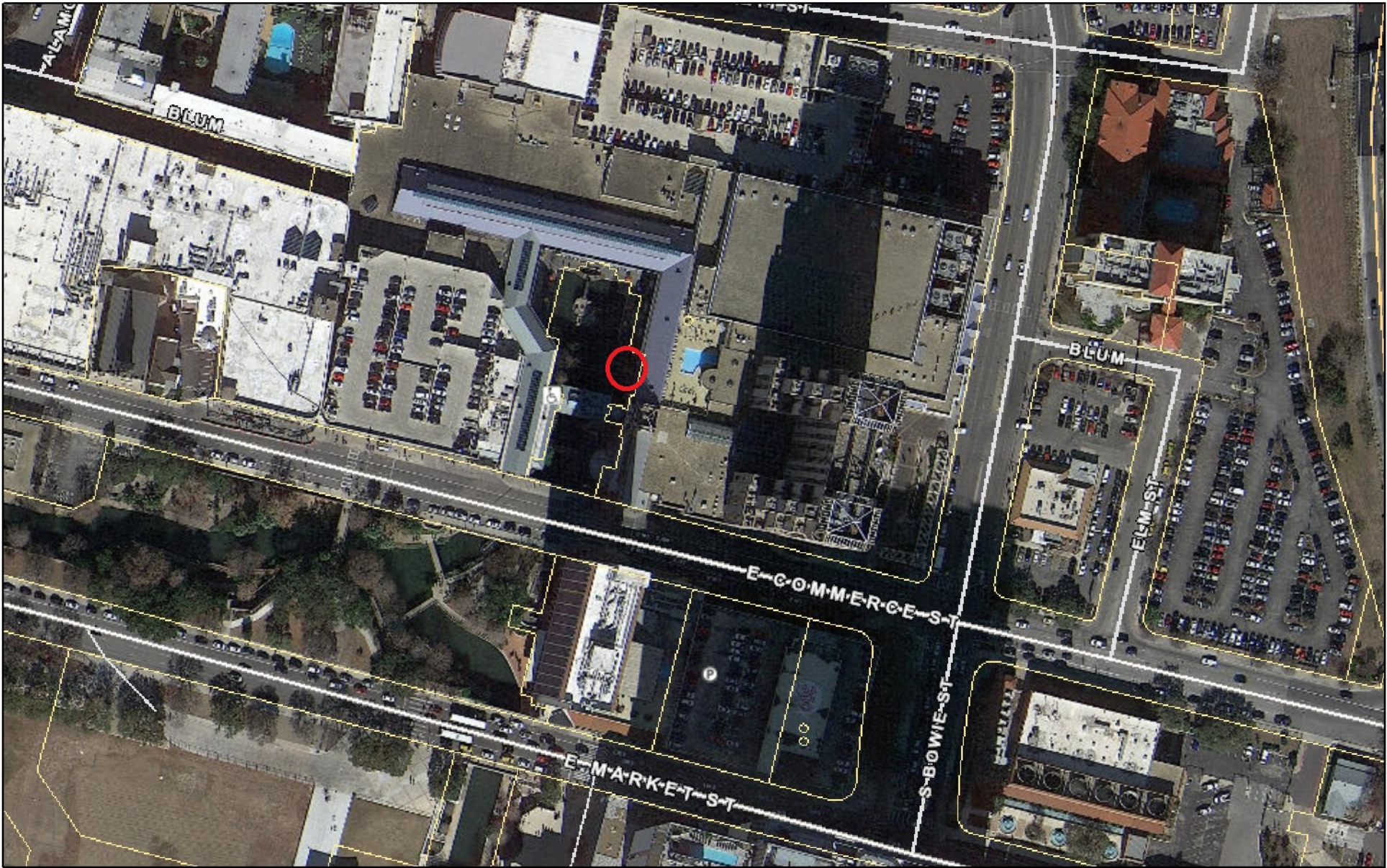
- a. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to construct a new ramp and covered patio within the lagoon at 849 E Commerce, Rivercenter Mall. The proposed new construction will include the removal of existing, non-ADA compliant elements.
- b. DESIGN & MATERIALS – The applicant has proposed to remove the curved ramp and install an ADA compliant ramp, as well as a new raised and covered patio. The applicant has proposed materials that include limestone clad walls to match the existing on site, metal railings to match the existing on site and a metal roof structure. The proposed ramp and covered patio element will also include the removal of existing planter walls. These walls are not historic in nature. Staff finds the proposed ramp and covered patio to be appropriate and consistent with the UDC.
- c. LANDSCAPING – The proposed ramp and covered patio construction will require the removal of two existing cedar elms trees. The applicant is responsible for coordinating all tree work with the City Arborist.
- d. LANDSCAPING – The applicant has noted the installation of plantings within the project level. Staff finds this to be appropriate and consistent with the UDC; however, staff finds that a details landscaping plan should be submitted to OHP staff for review and approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

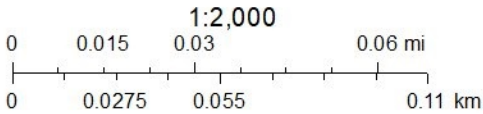
Staff recommends approval based on findings a through d with the following stipulations:

- i. That a detailed landscaping plan be submitted to OHP staff for review and approval.

City of San Antonio One Stop



April 11, 2025



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Project Background

The Rivercenter Lagoon Bar consists of an outdoor patio located at the Shops at Rivercenter at the River level.

The southeast area of the Rivercenter Lagoon currently consists of a ramped path with planters (pictured right) . This ramp is not compliant with ADA and TAS as the slopes exceed the maximum allowed requirement per code.

AAC Realty is proposing to remove this non-compliant ramp and construct a new covered patio, similar to the existing patio on the other side of the River (currently occupied by Margaritaville) as well as a new accessible ramp and landscaping.



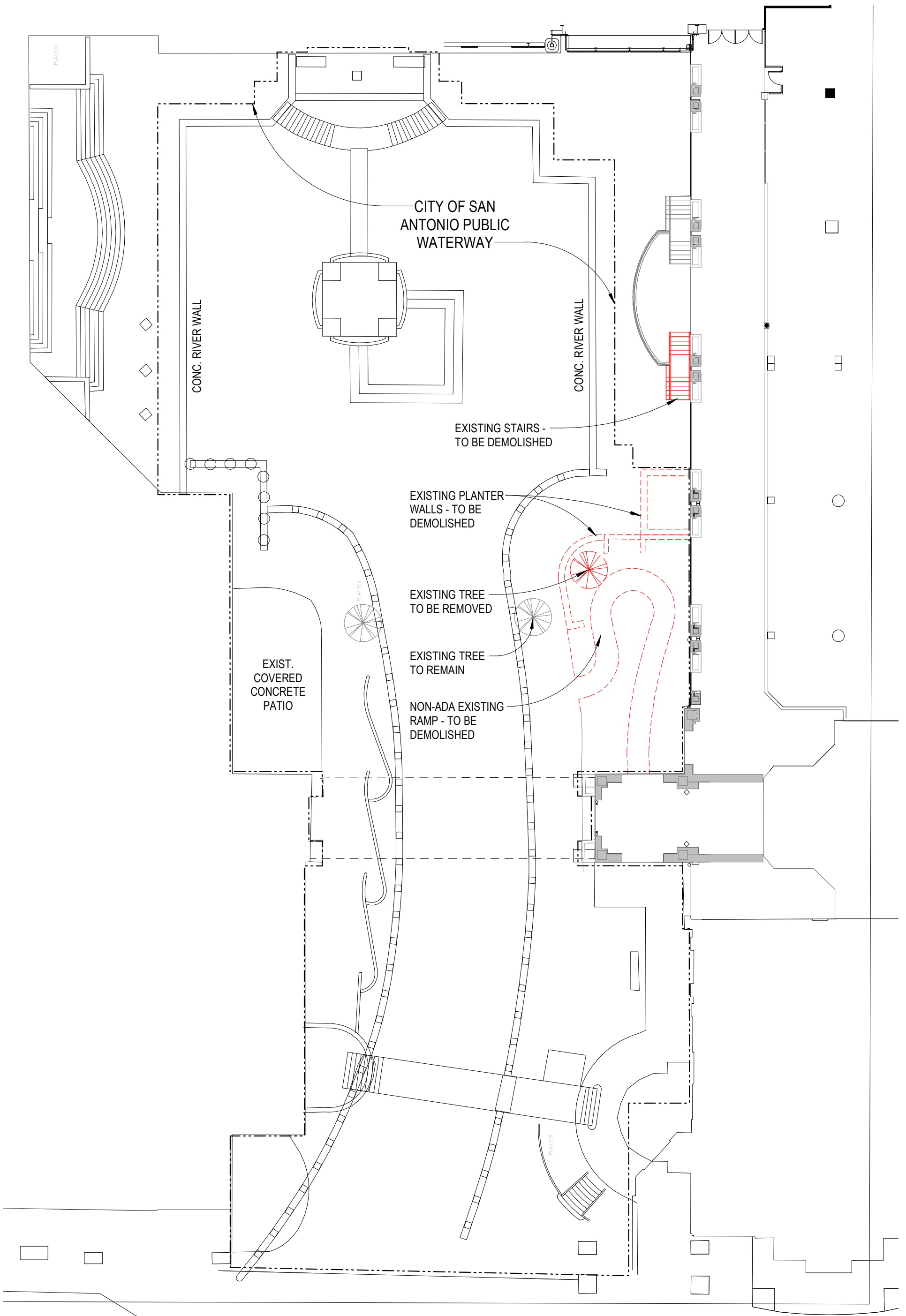
Landscaping

The project site is a small area along the River Walk at Rivercenter Mall, featuring an existing tree canopy composed of three (3) cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) trees and one (1) sabal palm (*Sabal mexicana*). While the design prioritizes tree preservation, the construction of a new patio and accessible ramp necessitates the removal of two (2) cedar elm trees. Additionally, the long-term viability of these trees is in question. The smaller of the two is planted too close to the building in a small planting island, which is not an ideal condition for its health. The larger tree has a significant lean—away from the building but extending over pedestrian areas and the river—with the majority of its weight over the water. Even without the upcoming construction, these trees may be candidates for removal due to safety concerns. The proposed removals will be documented in the Tree Preservation Plan and mitigated through either additional tree plantings or compensation into the Tree Mitigation Fund, as outlined in the Landscape Ordinance Plan. The design team will work closely with the city arborist and COSA review staff throughout the documentation and permitting process.

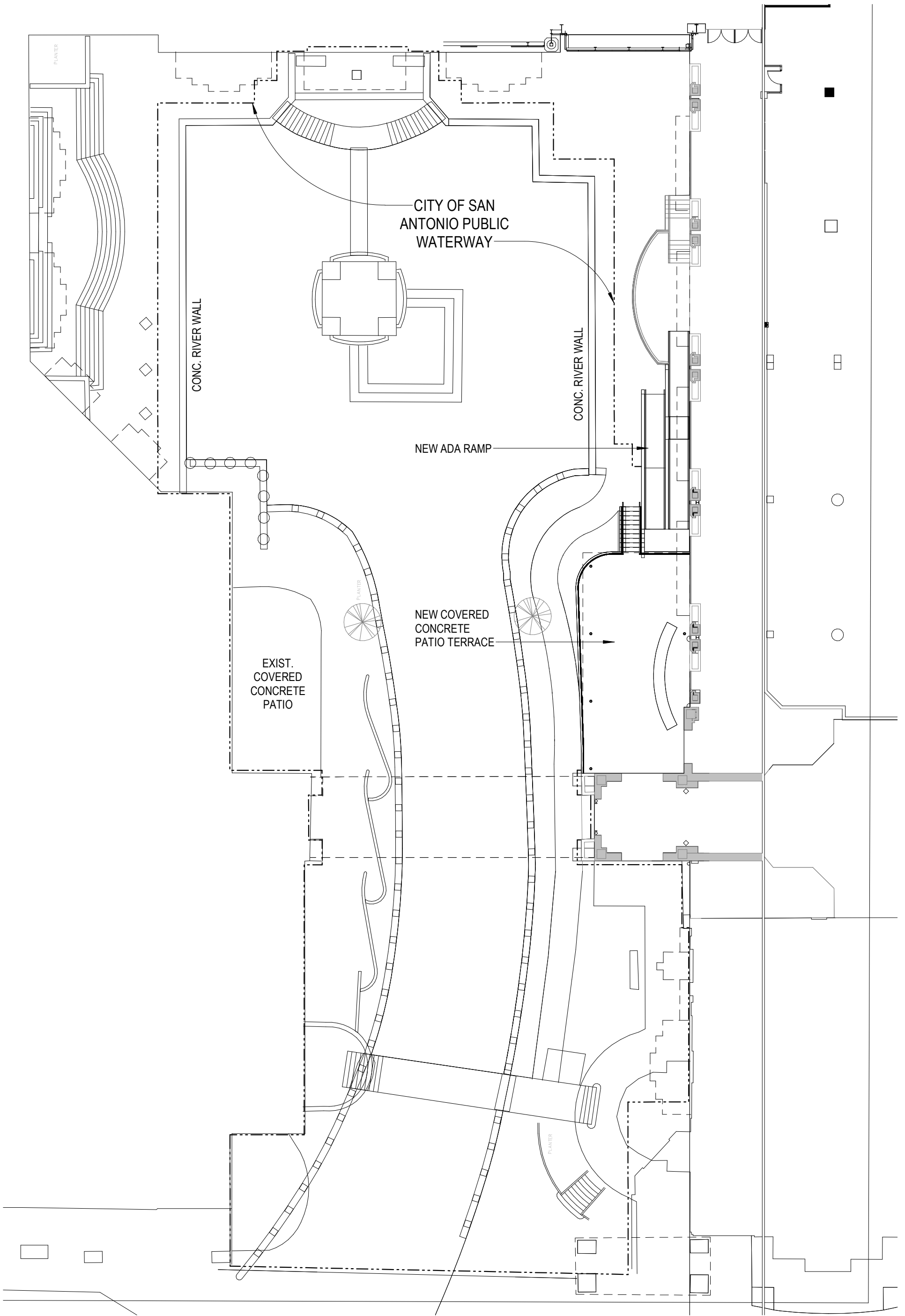
The planting design will be lush and vibrant, incorporating a diverse palette of evergreen shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and flowering plants that reflect the natural beauty of the River Walk landscape. All proposed plantings will align with the ecological and aesthetic character of the area. Additionally, the selection of plant species will be subject to review and approval by the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), ensuring compliance with local environmental guidelines. The design team will submit a detailed plant list to SARA as part of the project's regulatory review process.

Irrigation

The irrigation system will be a retrofit of the existing infrastructure, utilizing the San Antonio River Authority's recycled water system to support sustainable water use along the River Walk. Tree bubblers and drip irrigation will be utilized to distribute water to the new plants. Spray nozzles are not anticipated for the area. The irrigation plans will be submitted for review and approval by both SARA and the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) to ensure compliance with local water conservation policies and irrigation standards.



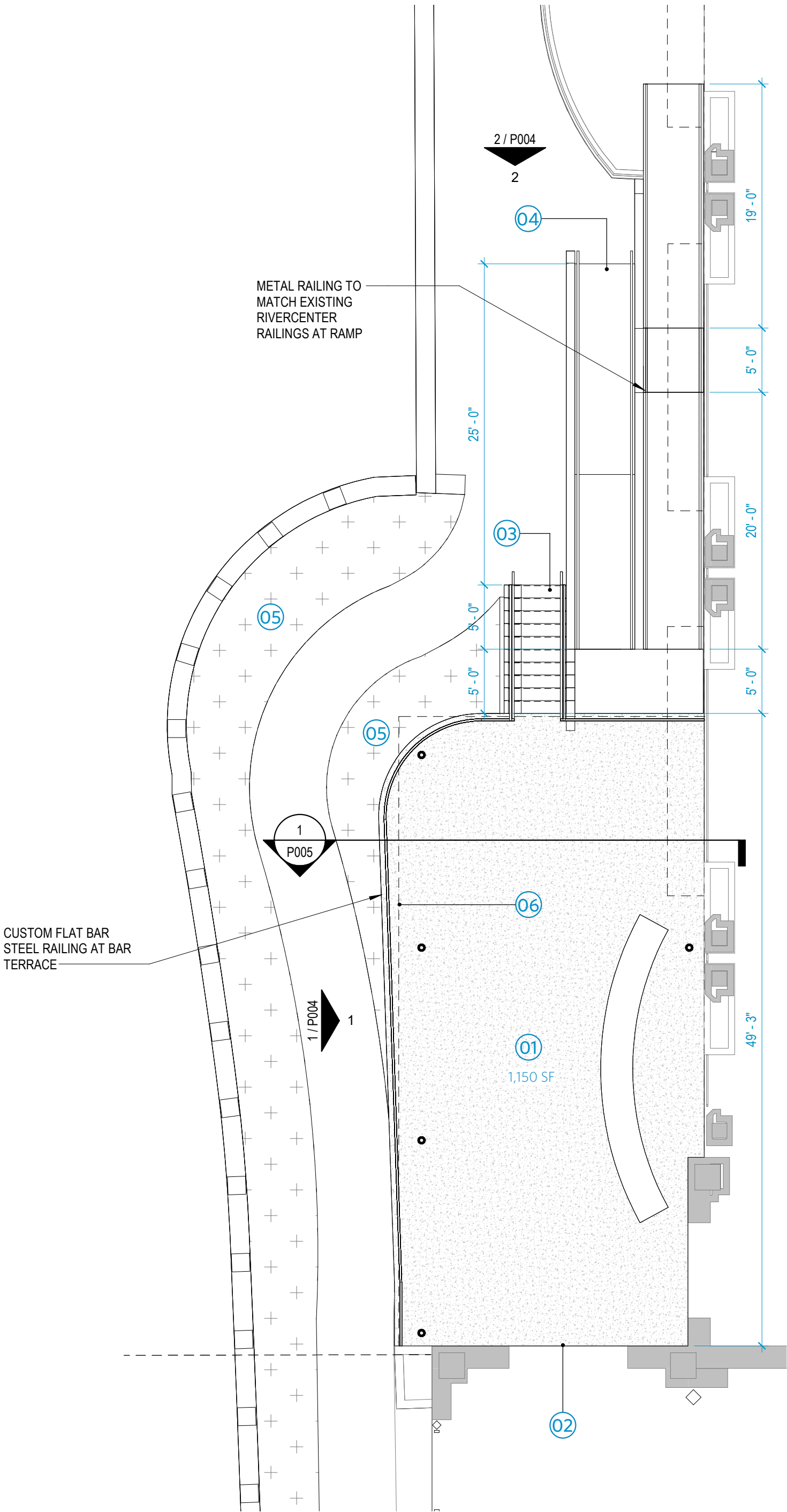


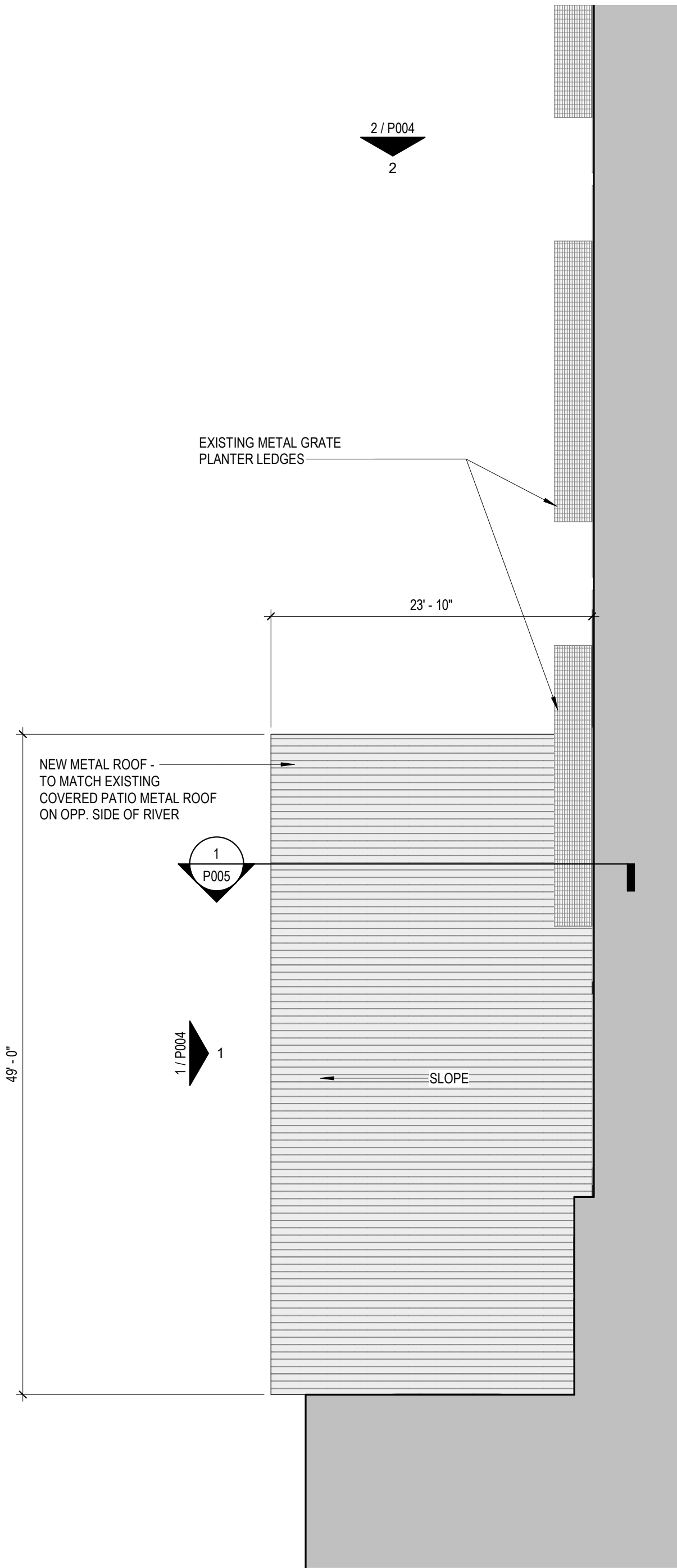


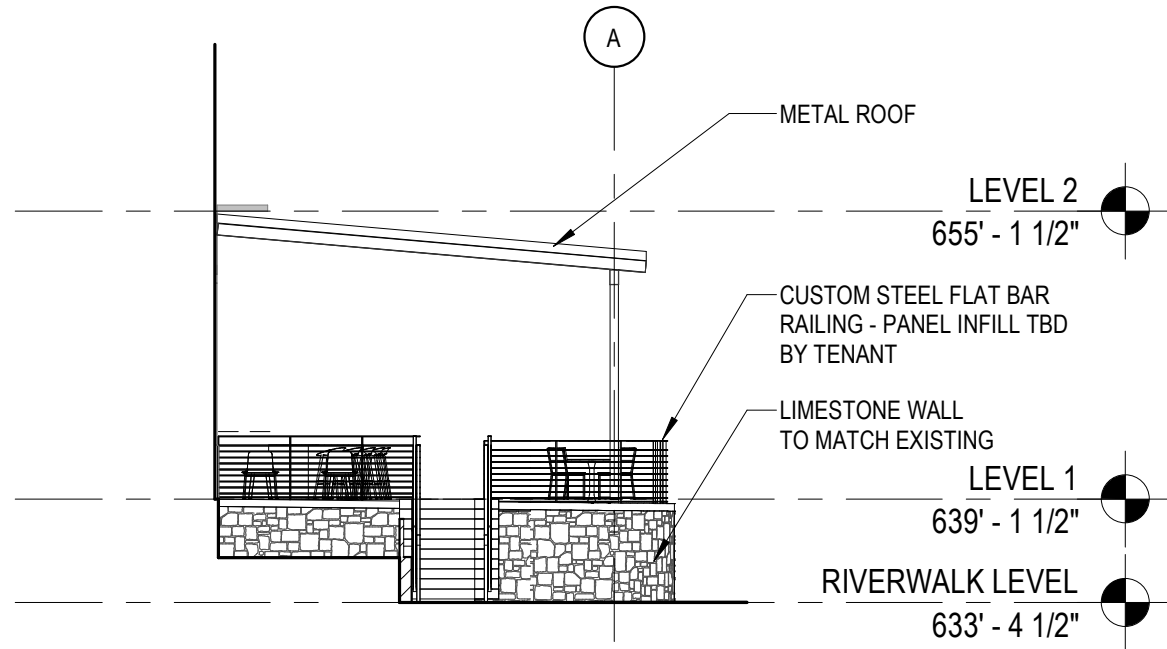
Lagoon Bar

Floor Plan Notes

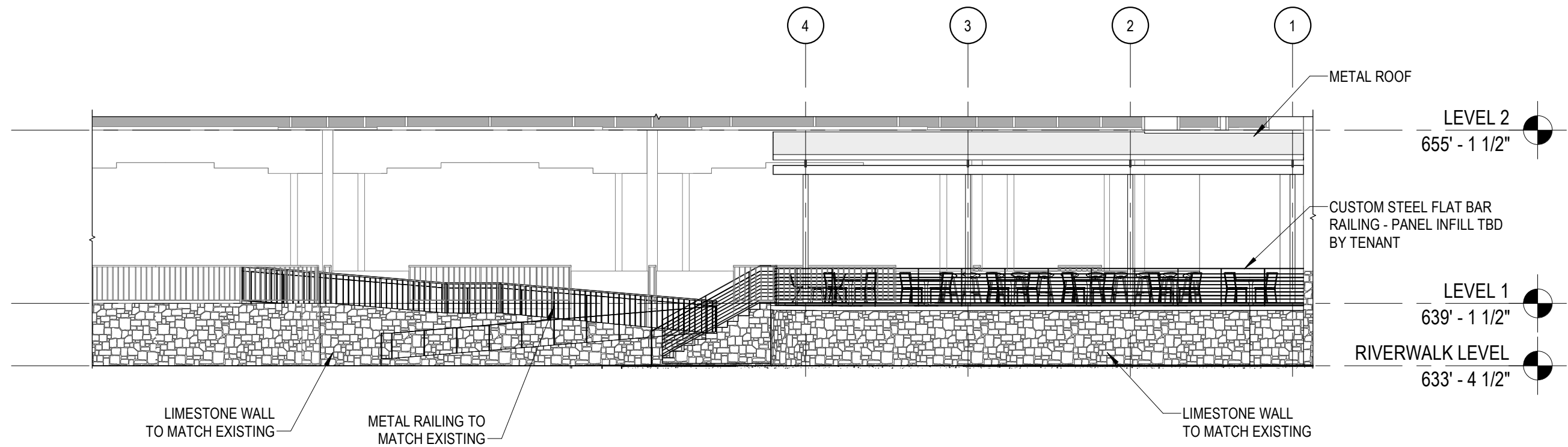
- 01 Bar
- 02 Storefront Level Entry
- 03 Stair Access
- 04 Ramp
- 05 Planting Area
- 06 Roof Overhead



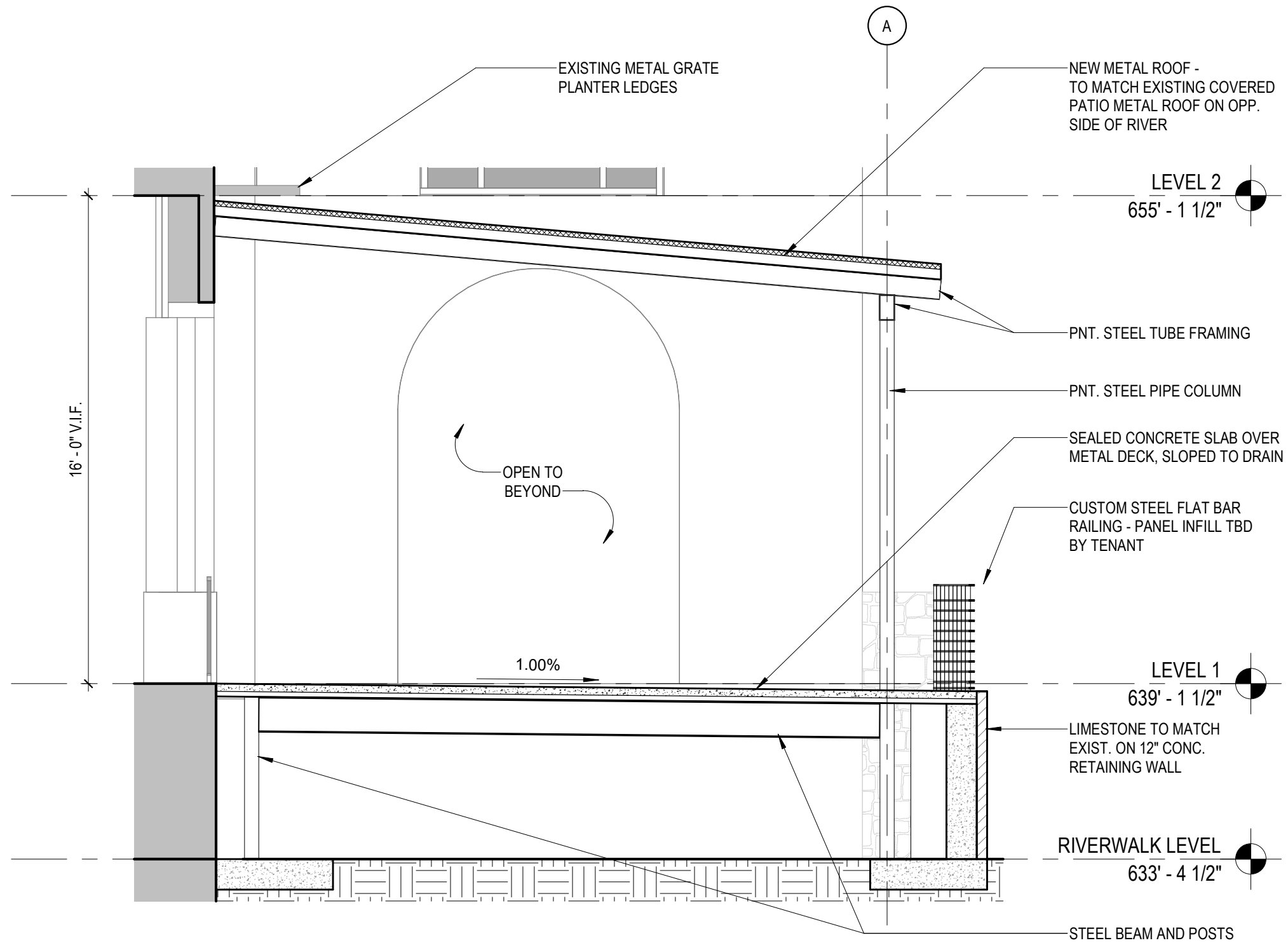




North



West





Thank you.
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