

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Why are we here today?

In June 2016, we held series of kick-off events to introduce the Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign Project.

Over the past 10 weeks, the consultant team has been working with various departments from the City incorporating feedback from questionnaires, open houses and consultation with stakeholders.

We now have two site design concepts and two case studies for solid waste management for you to review.



What are we doing today?

- Summarizing feedback to date
- Illustrating technical, engineering and design challenges
- Identifying goals and objectives that inform the design
- Introducing case studies to inform potential solid waste management strategies.



Make sure to provide your feedback by filling out a questionnaire either here or online at vancouver.ca/blood-alley-square.



What's next after today?

Input on the design concepts and case studies will help inform the detailed design and the solid waste management strategy. We will be hosting another open house in the new year to:

- Illustrate a refined design concept;
- Recommend strategies for improved solid waste management;
- Explore opportunities for stewardship and local economic development.

Contact the Project Manager and Neighbourhood Planner about the Redesign

Tom Warren, Project Manager, Streets and Electrical Design Branch
604.873.7757 | tom.warren@vancouver.ca

Helen Ma, Planner, Downtown Eastside Planning Group
604.873.7919 | helen.ma@vancouver.ca

For more information:

Phone 3-1-1
dtes@vancouver.ca

Fill out the questionnaire online:

vancouver.ca/blood-alley-square

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Background Information

The Downtown Eastside Plan (2014) provides a clear but flexible framework to guide positive change, development and public benefits in the Downtown Eastside over the next 30 years. The over-arching goal is to make the Downtown Eastside a more livable, safe and supportive place for all of its diverse residents.



East Van Roasters, a social enterprise on Carrall Street, provides training and employment to women, while creating 'bean-to-bar' chocolate and coffee roasted and prepared locally.

Applicable Plan Policies:

6.2.2 Retain the predominant retail and commercial character with tourist-oriented goods and services, destination shops, boutiques, restaurants, and offices, and support a vibrant street life by retaining the character of the existing public realm.

- Rehabilitate Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley, to improve the public realm, increase safety and introduce programming, with support for community stewardship as a shared space, including opportunities for the low-income community.
- Support the community in stewardship and programming of the Carrall Street Greenway and Blood Alley Square.
- Seek to improve walking and cycling connections to commercial areas and to other neighbourhood areas.

7.2 Ensure that all are welcomed in the programming of urban spaces—Identify important places and spaces and involve the local community in programming towards supporting the DTES identity.

- Reinforce and enhance the historic public realm—Recognizing the prevailing, and historically distinctive, public realm asset and strengthen through thoughtful improvements, programming and celebration.

12.2.2 Reinforce and recognize the distinct identity of historic areas through streetscape treatments, design elements, and street furniture.

12.3.2 Improve signage and enhance the distinct identity of the historic area's laneways as inviting pedestrian spaces.

12.3.3 Improve existing and explore new opportunities for community access and programming in plazas, squares, and gathering spaces.

12.3.4 Encourage community stewardship and programming of plazas and green spaces.

12.3.5 Ensure plazas and gathering spaces have infrastructure, (e.g. water, power, lighting, grey water disposal, and storage) to support community programming, and stewardship for all types of community events.

13.1.1 Identify, preserve and improve places with social and cultural meaning to the community.

15.4.1 Encourage stewardship of trees, green spaces and green storm water infrastructure, e.g. rain gardens, and bioswales. Plant shade trees where appropriate and species that are hardy to changing climate conditions.

16.1.1 Pursue opportunities for additional drinking fountains or bottle filling stations when opportunities arise.



Retail and commercial shops and restaurants on Carrall Street support street and alleyway vitality in Gastown. Trounce Alley (looking west) with Blood Alley Square to the left.



Wide sidewalks with mature street trees and lighting, and separate bike lane on the Carrall Street Greenway create a comfortable environment that encourages walking and cycling.

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Studies and Projects Informing the Redesign

Social Impact Objectives

The Social Impact Objectives guide and manage change and development in the neighbourhood. These objectives seek to:

- Ensure developments and businesses fit the DTES neighbourhood context, offer needed, locally-serving uses, and do not significantly exclude or negatively impact the low-income community.
- Encourage a wide range of housing options in the neighbourhood, with particular focus on new social and affordable housing for the homeless and other low- and moderate-income singles and families.
- Ensure diverse development that is respectful of heritage assets, surrounding scale, urban pattern, and social and community context.
- Improve the overall quality, accessibility and inclusiveness of the public realm in the DTES, recognizing the uniqueness of each sub-area.
- Retain, preserve and celebrate local heritage, arts and culture for all.
- Maintain the diversity of existing businesses and commercial uses and support affordable commercial spaces for social enterprises, micro enterprises and small businesses providing low-cost goods and services for residents.
- Encourage the use of local goods and services in the construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed development or business.
- Encourage local and inclusive hiring in the construction, operation and maintenance phases of the improvement and the strengthening of social and micro economies.
- Maintain adequate health and social services within the community, as well as community amenity and gathering spaces to serve the needs of the diverse local population.



An open-air performance of Handel's Messiah by the Vancouver's Bach Choir attracted 400 people from a diverse background to Blood Alley Square, November 2001

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Statement of Significance

(October 2010, commissioned by City of Vancouver)

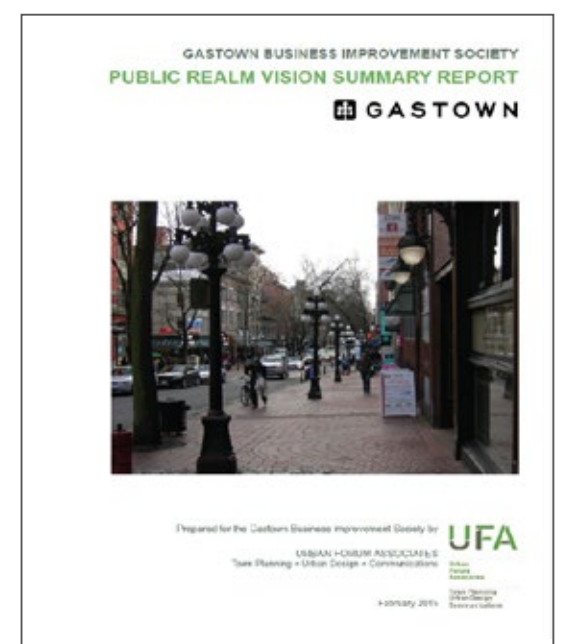
- A Statement of Significance (SOS) explains the historic importance of Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley, and identifies the critical elements that define the area
- This report includes recommendations for conservation work needed to maintain the character of Blood Alley Square / Trounce Alley



Public Realm Vision Summary

(February 2015, commissioned by the Gastown BIA)

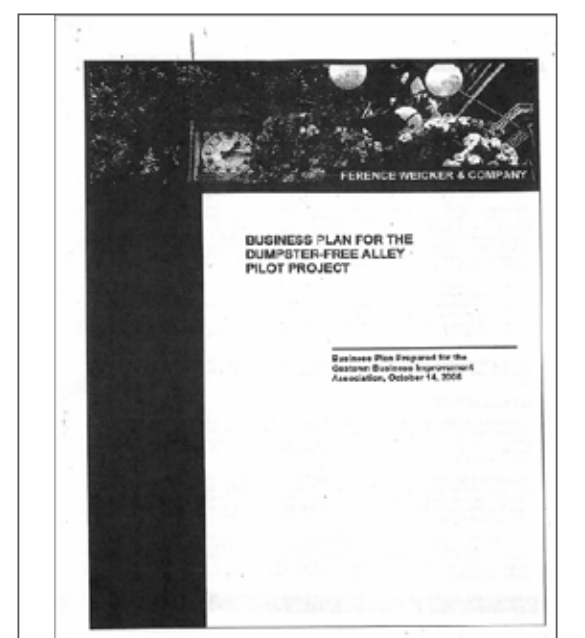
- The report envisions Blood Alley to be “a model project for creating a more sustainable, pedestrian-friendly public realm. This model could also incorporate innovative approaches to dealing with garbage / recycling.”



Business Plan for the Dumpster-Free Alley Pilot Project

(October 2005, commissioned by the Gastown BIA)

- Businesses and residents have long advocated for alternative ways to manage commercial waste and recycling in Gastown to activate alleyways as pedestrian spaces.
- This report proposed a plan to eliminate commercial waste containers (dumpsters) from the alley.



33 W Cordova Redevelopment (Stanley New Fountain Site)

(Development Application DE419722)

- The proposed redevelopment could present new opportunities to make the square even more vibrant and welcoming. For example, it could add new businesses fronting Blood Alley Square to further activate the space.
- To better manage the use of the square, any activities held by the businesses on City-owned property require permits, e.g. special events permits, patio permits, etc.



Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

History of Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley

As Vancouver's first neighbourhood, Gastown is a National Historic Site and has long been recognized for its historic value and rich architectural character. Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley are an important part of Gastown. Trounce Alley was established in 1870 when the Old Granville Townsite was surveyed and is one of the oldest original roadways in Vancouver. As the Townsite grew, Trounce Alley became an important access route to the buildings fronting Water and Cordova Streets in the 1920s and 1930s.



Trounce Alley (looking west) before Blood Alley Square was created



Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley construction, Aug/Sep 1973 (T. Sebastian)

Blood Alley Square is a significant open space abutting Trounce Alley, and the Stanley/New Fountain Hotels. In 1971, in an effort to create pedestrian spaces in the centre of Gastown, the City of Vancouver purchased the rear 40-foot portion of the Stanley/New Fountain Hotels lot. The existing garages were demolished and construction of the Square began in 1972. It was named Blood Alley Square that same year.

A heritage consultant has been engaged to confirm the historically significant elements and materials that should be retained or re-purposed such as the red brick and granite cobblestones, the iconic dragon head light standards, and the now mature trees.



Porte cochère (covered connection) and storefronts facing Blood Alley Square, 1975.



Granite herringbone paving, bollards and permanent tree planters after completion, 1975.

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Project Overview

Background

Blood Alley Square is a public space in the heart of Gastown, adjacent to Trounce Alley. The cobblestones, narrow lane, streetlights and brick buildings bring a sense of character unlike anywhere else in the city. The Square is cherished by residents, businesses and community groups alike.

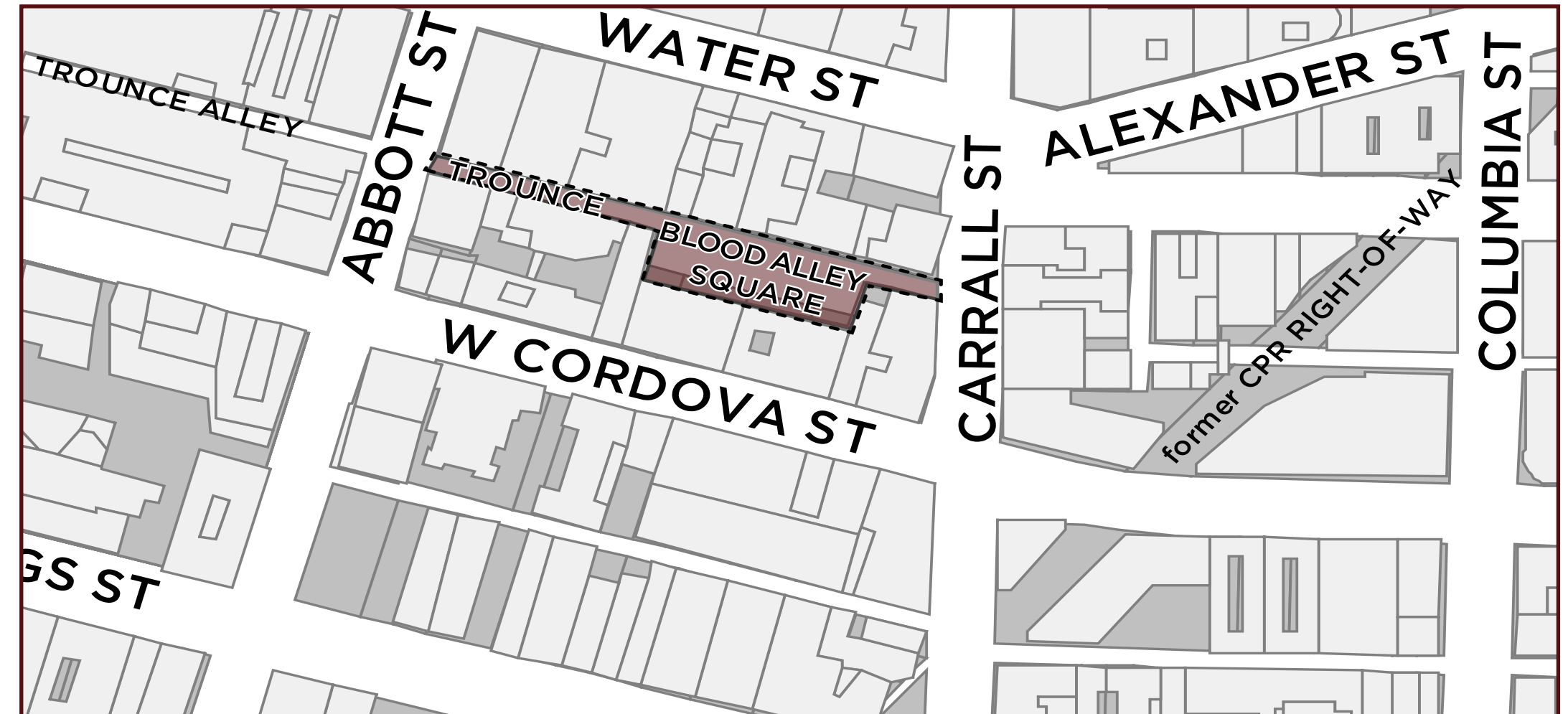
Project Design Goals and Objectives:

The redesign will be guided by the nine social impact objectives in the Downtown Eastside Plan to ensure it is inclusive and welcoming to all community members. With these objectives in mind, the consultant team has developed the following design goals:

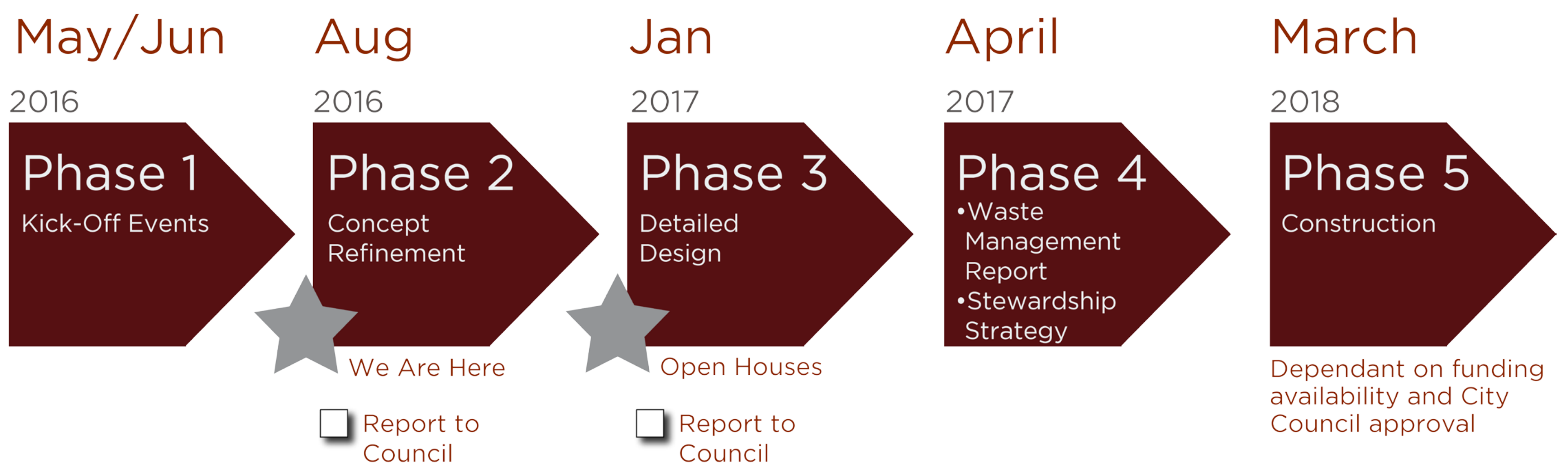
- Conservation and / or reinterpretation of important heritage characteristics
- Retention of mature existing trees where possible
- Creation of a stewardship plan that brings residents, businesses and community together to create economic opportunities for all
- Accommodation of shared loading for residents and businesses
- Opportunities for diverse activities and events within the Square
- Improved function of solid waste management for all residents and businesses
- Stronger connection between the Square and adjacent developments, including 33 W Cordova
- Creation of an urban space that is diverse, dynamic and welcoming

**Updated to take into account the feedback from Kick-off events in June.*

Project Area



Where are we now?



Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Your feedback

A total of 175 people attended the two kick-off events and 253 questionnaires were completed.



June 1, 2016- Kick off Event

“Make the space friendly, make it clear to all that they don’t need to purchase anything to enjoy space. Make it family friendly to animate space and make it safer for everyone”

What we heard in June...

“Blood Alley is a very important space to Vancouver. It has the potential to be a human-scale laneway. Cities all over the world have used alleys as spaces for people to live and interact”

Pedestrian activities:

Place to sit, socialize, and shop were identified as priorities for the site.

84% of respondents support a stronger connection between the square and the 33 W Cordova redevelopment.

92% thought the conservation of trees and planters on the site was important, though many respondents commented the planters are not important or should be updated.

68% support ensuring the redesign offered community amenity and gathering spaces for the diverse local population.

“Clean up and security are most needed. Space can look great but if people do not feel comfortable in it, they will continue to stay away.”

Seating

opportunities were the top amenity desired for the Square.

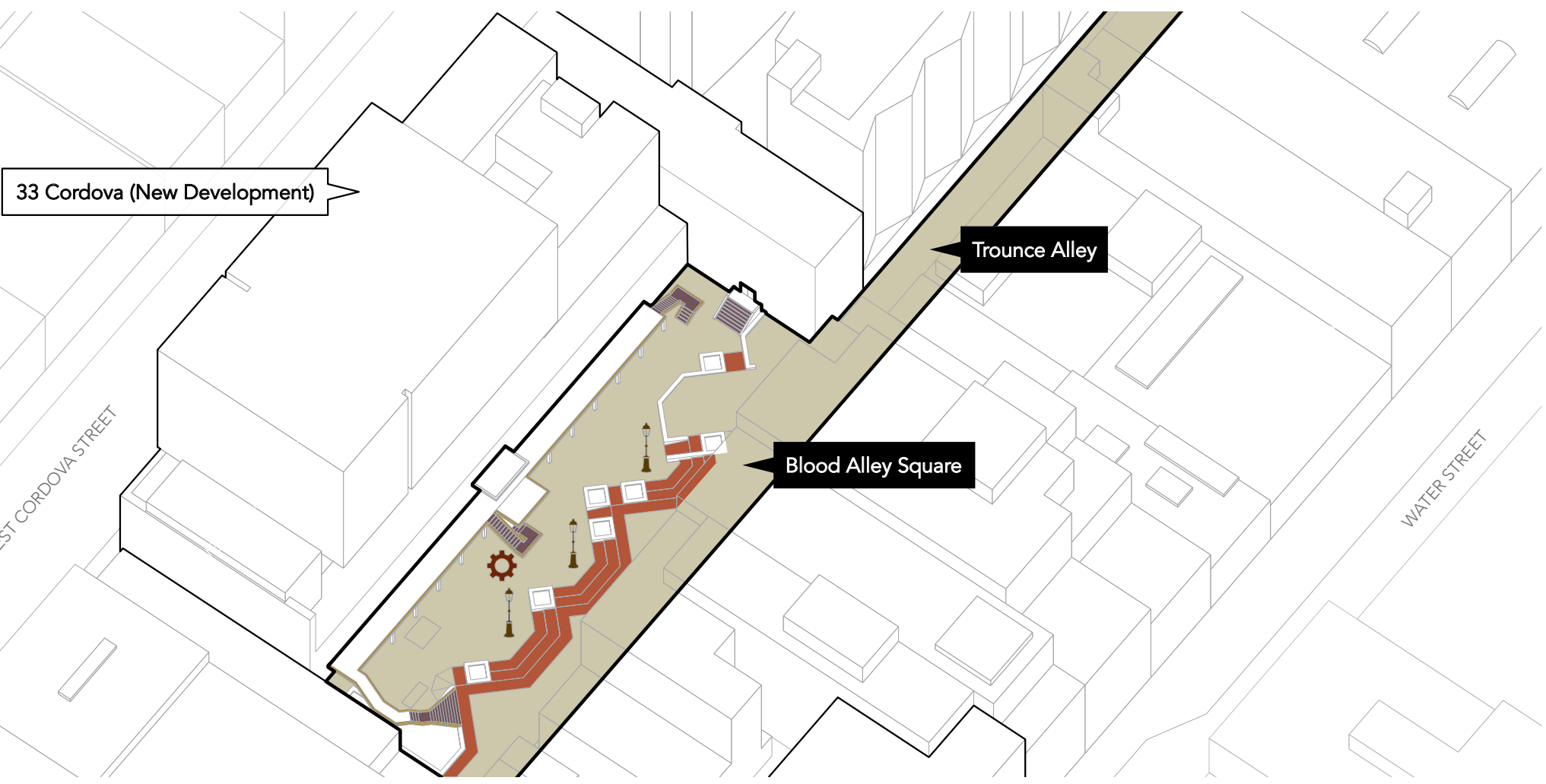
“As long as it is tasteful and of relevance to the neighbourhood - weaving historical and contemporary culture together.”

64% of respondents were dissatisfied with waste management in the Square and Alley.

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Site Analysis

The design process begins with a careful site analysis to understand the important elements - the “design drivers” which govern the process. The “design drivers” do not change; they are the elements that transcend the design .



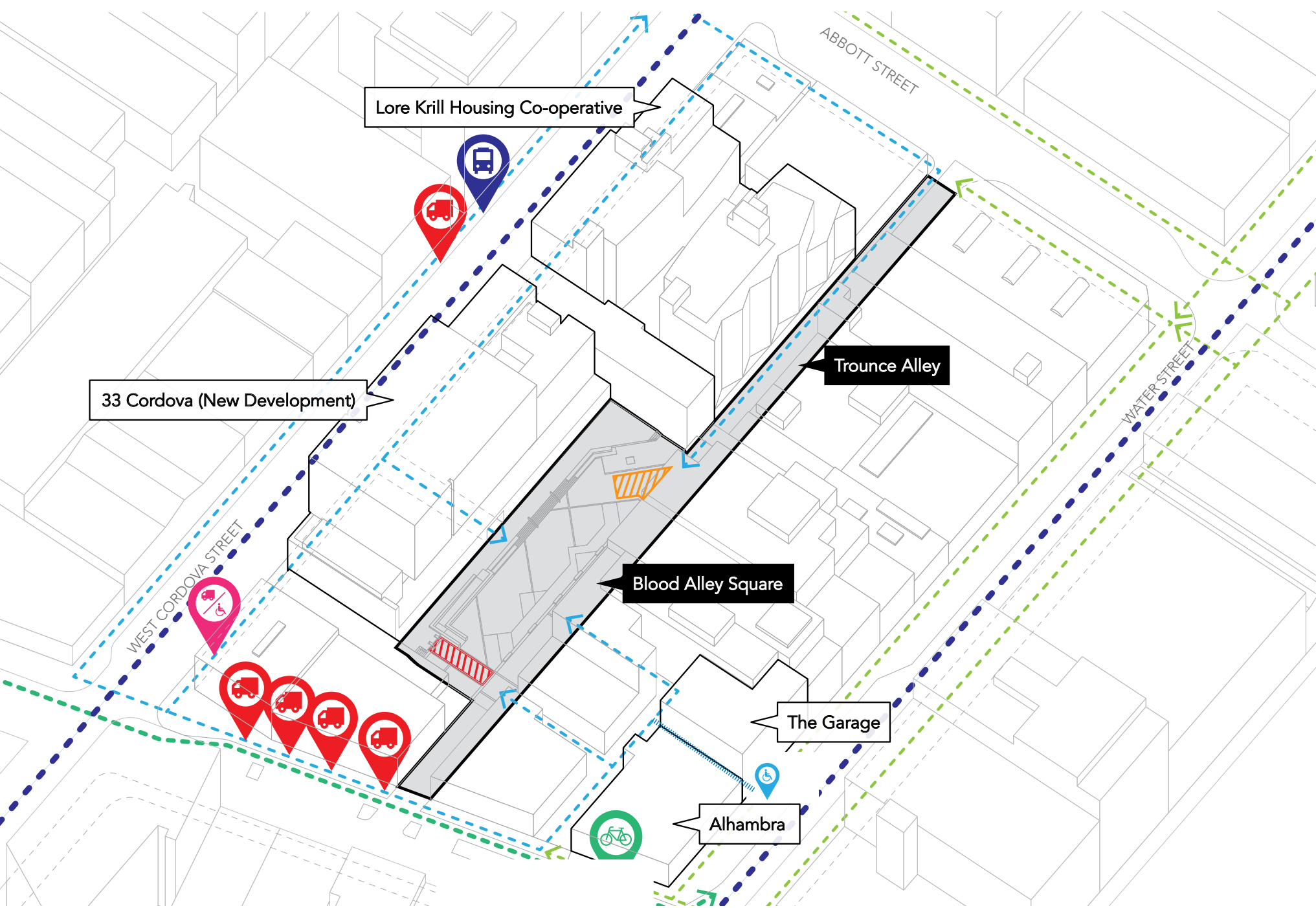
Heritage

Heritage elements have been identified and will be restored, or re-purposed to provide a new use or arrangement.



Tree retention

Trees are a vital component of the form and character of the square and will be retained where possible. Those that are affected by construction will be replaced with large specimen trees.

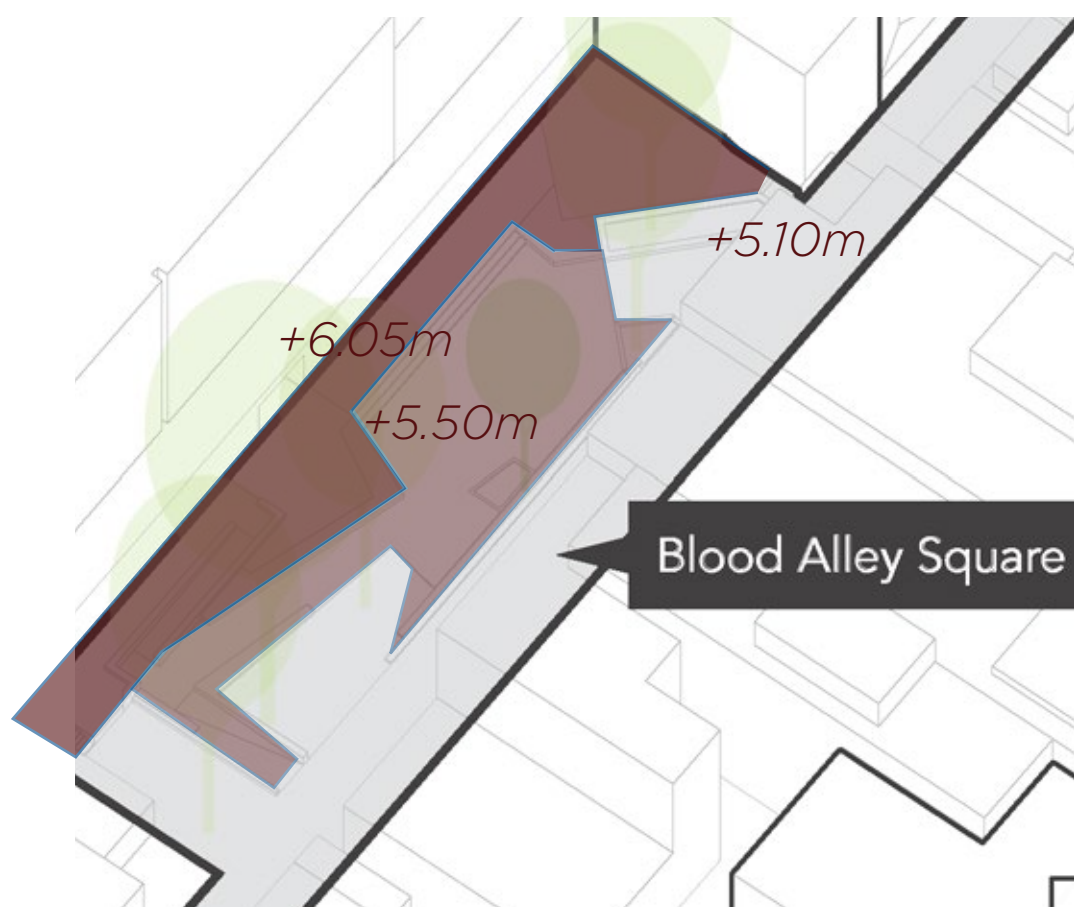


Circulation

Site circulation and connectivity has been carefully studied. The design will create safe connections between Blood Alley Square and adjacent developments.



Concept 1



Concept 2

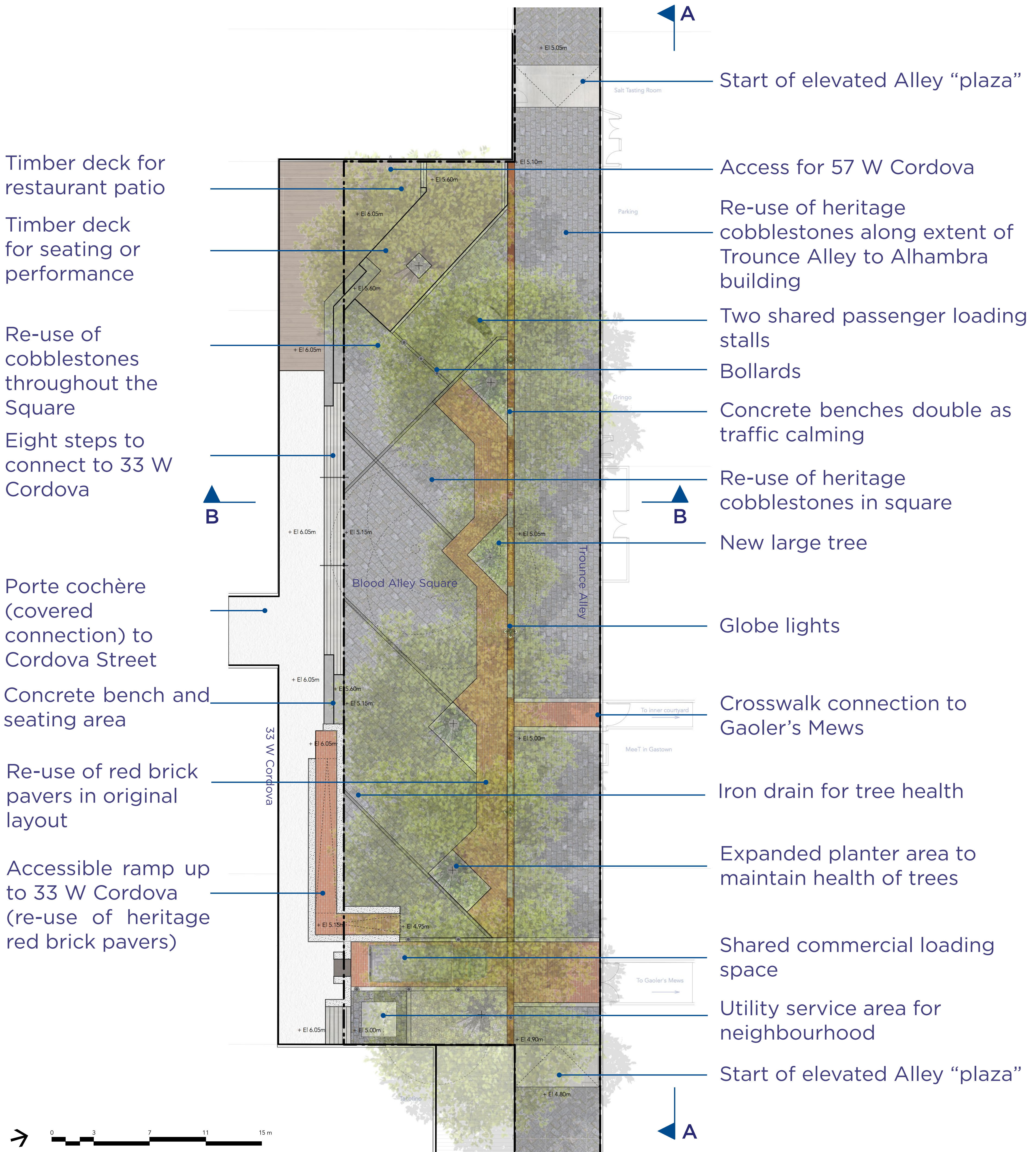
33 West Cordova

It will be important to resolve the differences in heights between the Cordova site and the Square that makes the space more comfortable, safe and inviting.

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Concept Design - #1 - Open Square

This concept emphasizes the heritage qualities of the space. The redesign of the square retains much of its original spatial arrangement. The original red brick paving has been maintained, most of the trees have been retained and the cobble has been re-set in a linear fashion.



Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

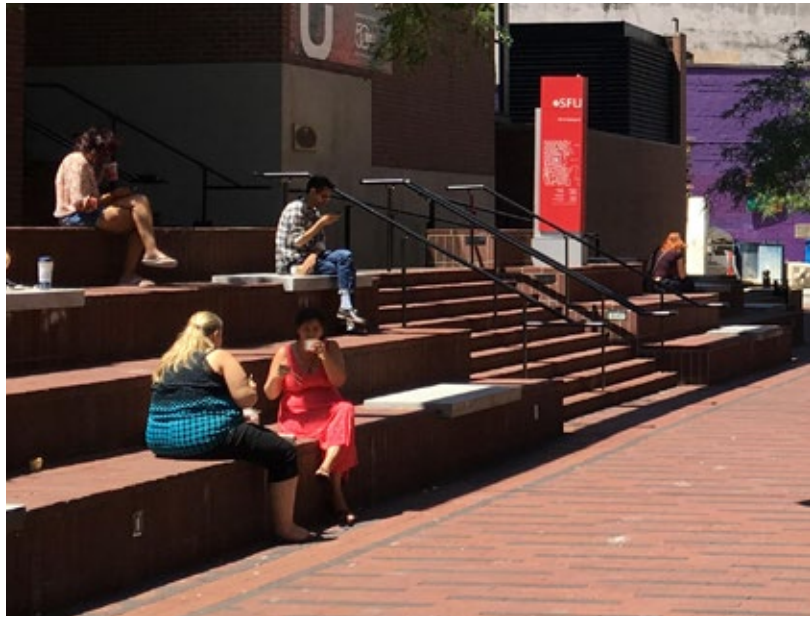
Perspective of Square looking West



Perspective of Square looking East

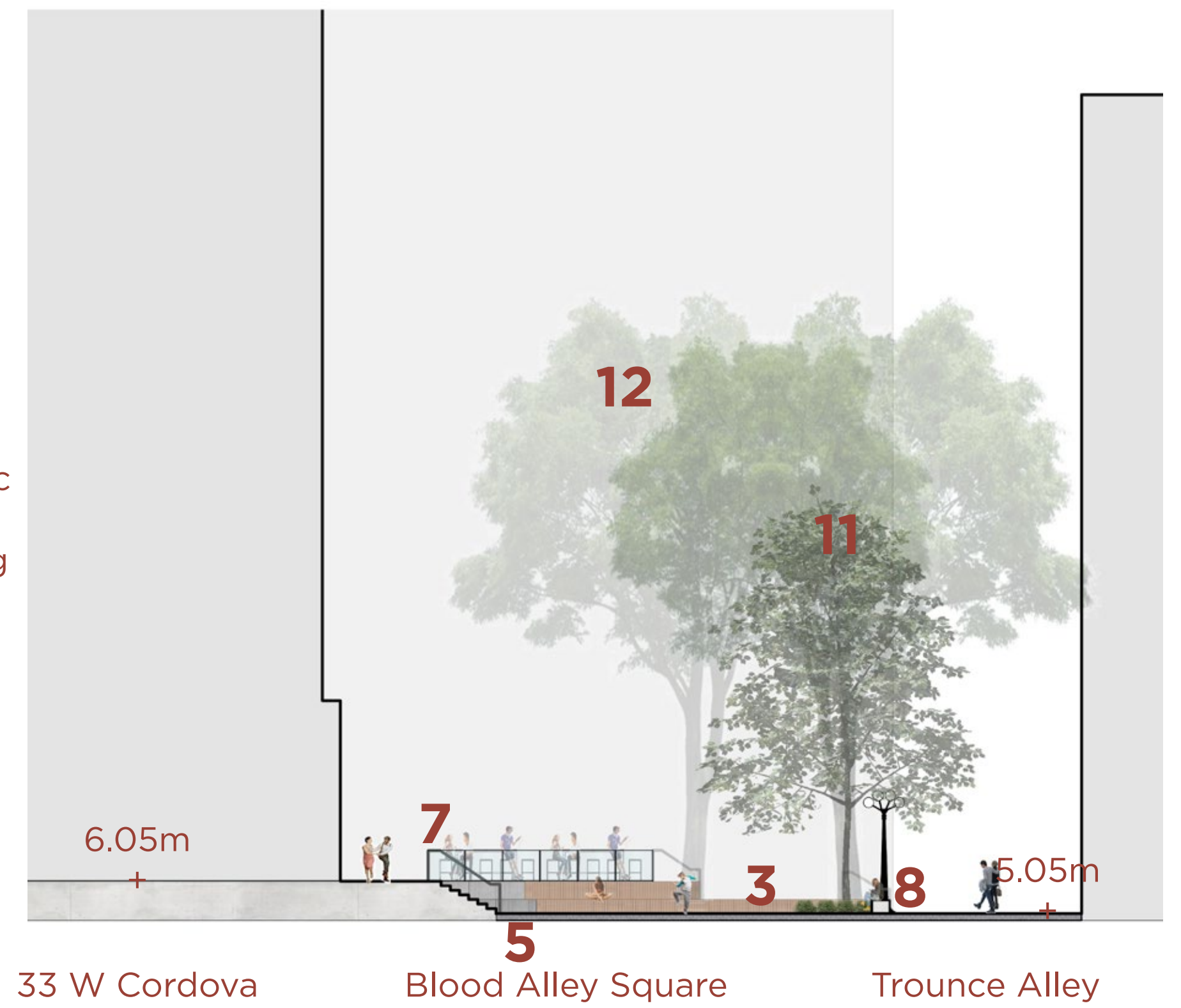


Precedents

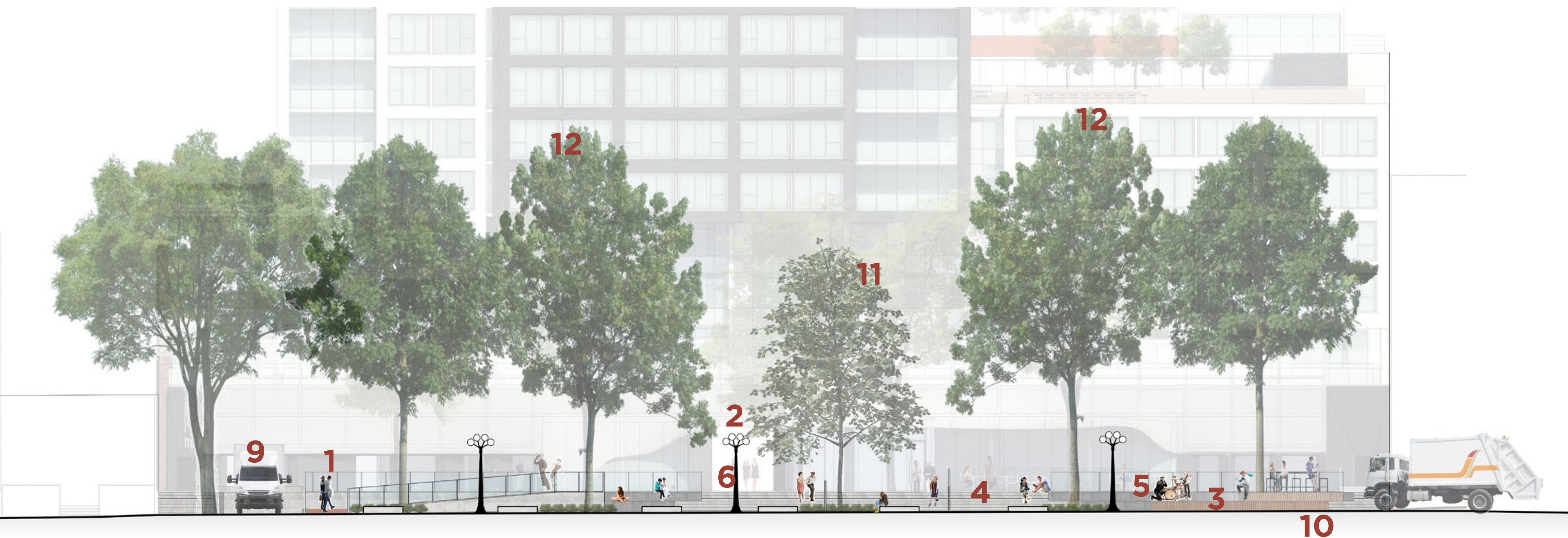


1. Accessible ramp
2. Porte cochère (covered connection) to Cordova St.
3. Timber deck / patio
4. Eight steps to connect to 33 W Cordova
5. Concrete seat walls
6. Refurbished heritage globe lights
7. Guardrail and handrail for fall protection
8. Concrete benches for traffic calming
9. Commercial Class B loading (1)
10. Passenger Class A loading (2)
11. New large tree
12. Existing tulip trees, to remain

Cross Section BB



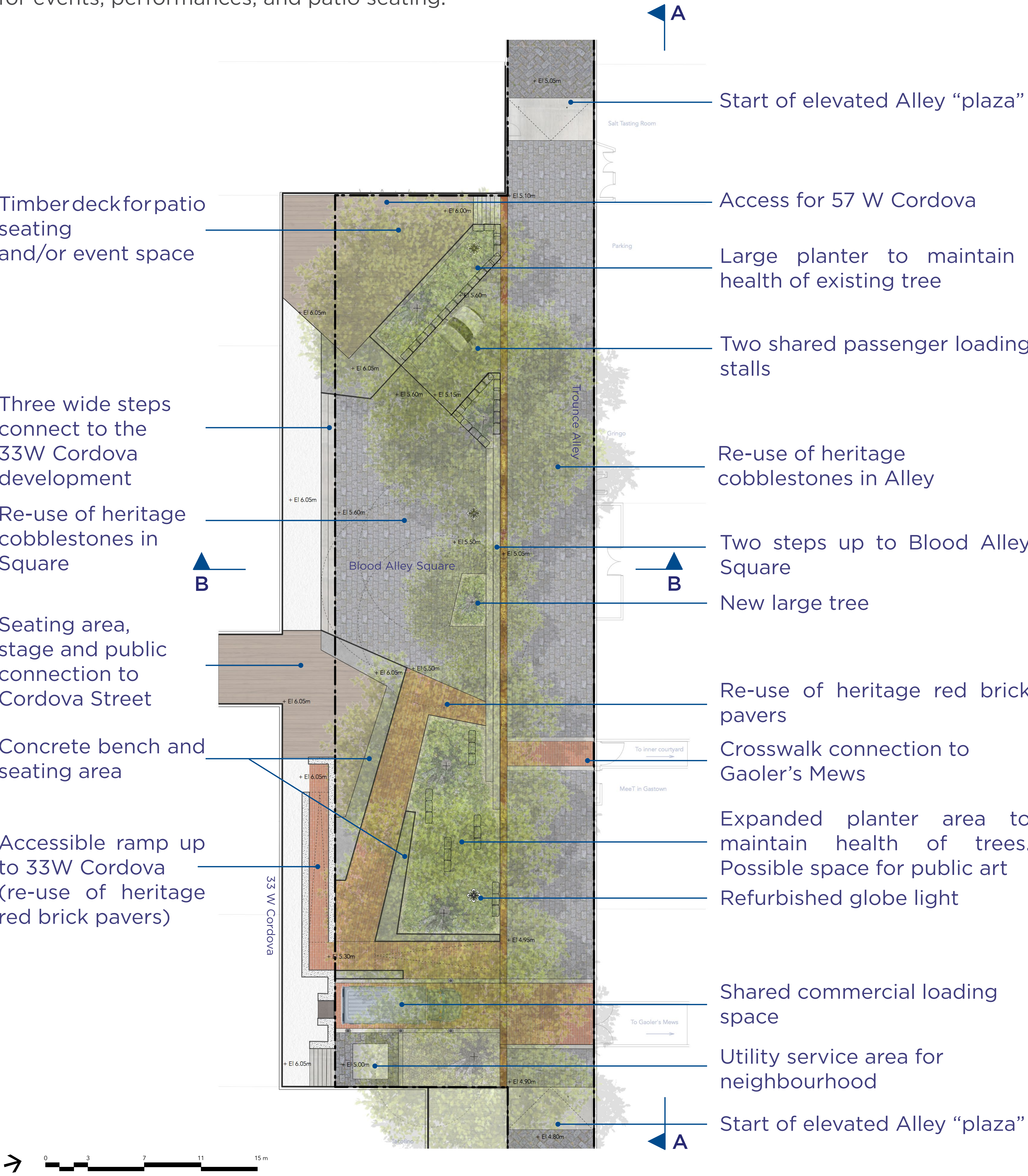
Elevation of Blood Alley Square Looking South (Section AA)



Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Concept Design - #2 - Multi-level Square

This concept emphasizes the long-term health of the existing trees by ensuring that the planters are expanded to provide adequate moisture and nutrients. These planters lead to a multi-level design for the space. The Square is divided into two zones: a smaller passive space for sitting and a larger space for events, performances, and patio seating.



Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

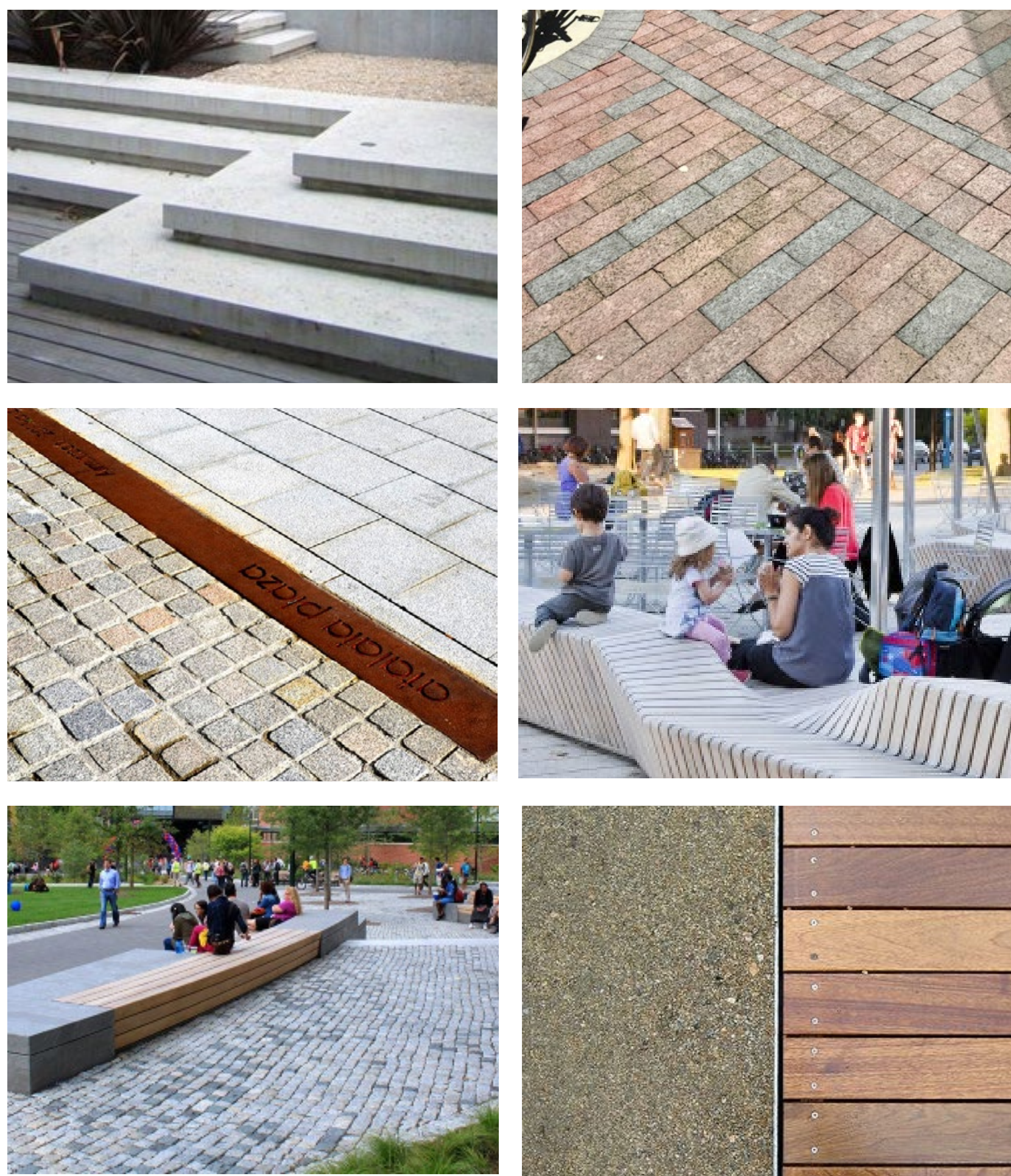
Perspective of Square looking West



Perspective of Square looking East



Precedents

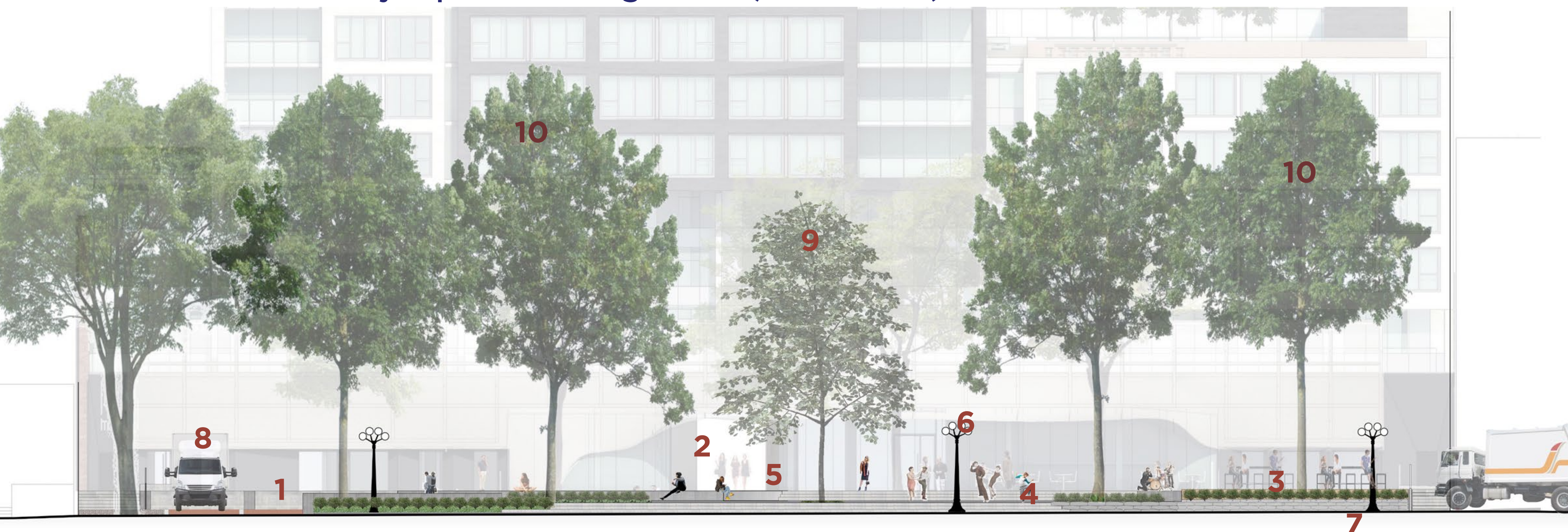


1. Accessible ramp
2. Porte cochère (covered connection) to Cordova St.
3. Timber deck / patio
4. 3 Steps to 33 W Cordova
5. Concrete seat walls
6. Refurbished heritage globe lights
7. Passenger Class A loading (1)
8. Commercial Class B loading (2)
9. New large tree
10. Existing tulip trees, to remain

Cross Section BB



Elevation of Blood Alley Square Looking South (Section AA)



Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Trees Management Strategy

The existing trees contribute to the character, beauty and enjoyment of Blood Alley Square. A careful assessment of the trees has been undertaken by a certified arborist with the goal to retain as many trees as possible. The table below illustrates the location and current condition of the trees.

Tree No.	Botanical Name	Height(m)	Minimum Tree Protection Zone (m)	Action/Comment
1	Pine (Pinus Nigra)	11	2.0	Poor Health
2	Tulip (Liriodendron Tulipifera)	19	2.5	Limited crown growth due to staircase construction
3	Tulip (Liriodendron Tulipifera)	19	3.2	Limited foliage growth due to disturbance of root zone
4	Tulip (Liriodendron Tulipifera)	20	3.0	Relative good growth
5	Locust (Robinia Pseudoacacia)	18	2.5	Number of dead lower branches, suffered from drought
6	Locust (Robinia Pseudoacacia)	17	2.5	Leans to the south, needs to be pruned for new building which would limit its future.
7	Locust (Robinia Pseudoacacia)	18	2.5	Lower limb dieback, relative good growth otherwise
8	Tulip (Liriodendron Tulipifera)	21	3.0	Healthy looking, with slight kink midstem
9	Tulip (Liriodendron Tulipifera)	19	3.0	Good growth with limited light

Table 1: Tree Inventory and Recommendations, Diamond Head Consulting Ltd.

Why are some trees struggling?

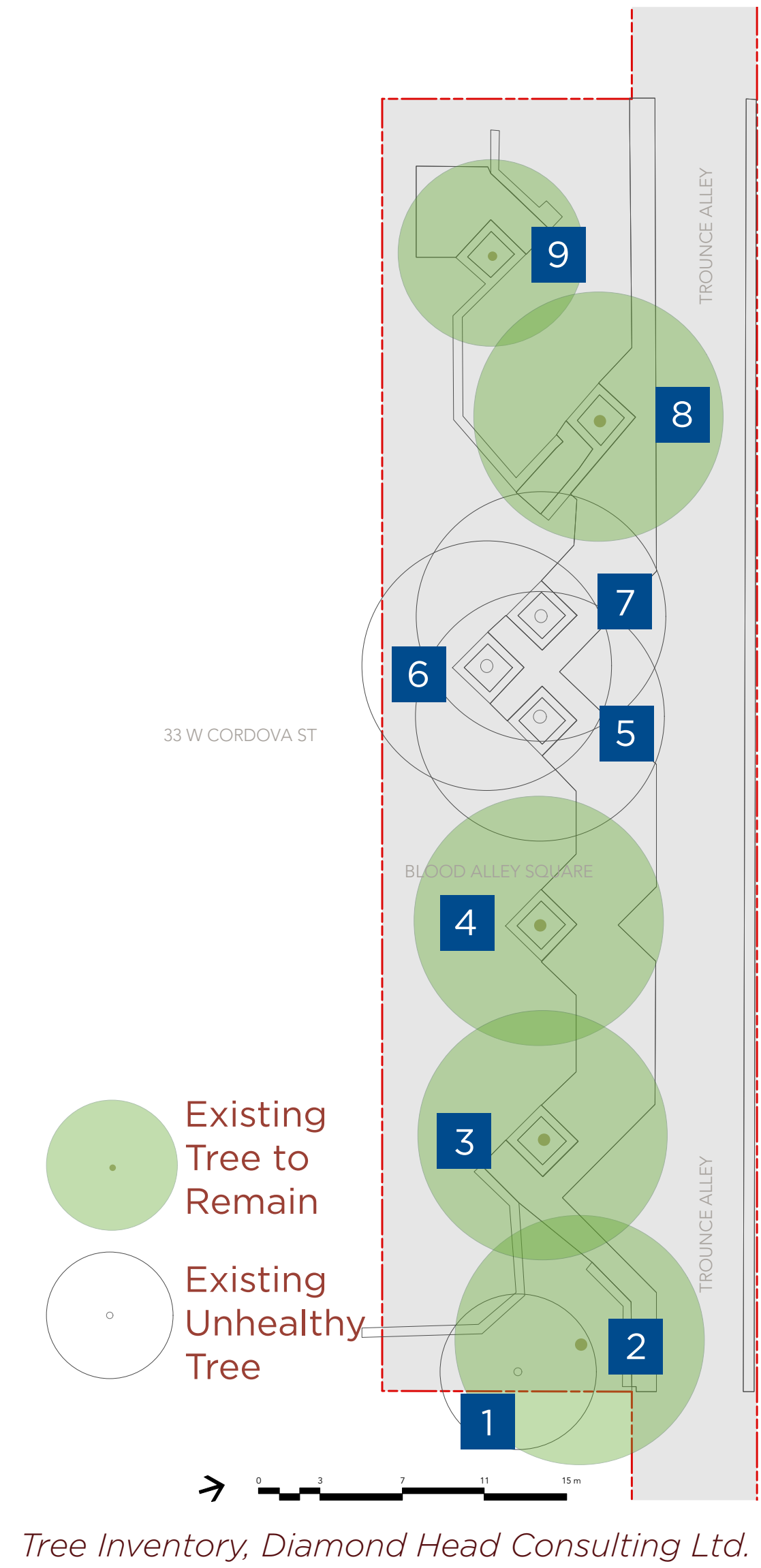
Trees in constrained urban environments typically have shorter life spans because paving prevents water and nutrients from reaching the roots, and surrounding buildings limit access to light.

- **Locust (Robinia) and Pine (Pinus) trees are unlikely to survive re-development and are proposed to be removed;**
- **Tulip (Liriodendron) trees are the largest trees and are in the best condition. Every effort will be made to protect and keep them.**

How could development impact tree health?

There are a number of factors, such as soil contamination, future utilities construction and future upgrades to Trounce Alley, which could impact the feasibility of retaining some trees.

The design options boards illustrate steps being taken to ensure the trees remain healthy and continue to provide the Square with its unique character. Examples of this include steel drainage troughs to provide nutrients and water to the roots (Concept Design 1) and expanded planters to preserve tree and root health (Concept Design 2).



The trees are an iconic and treasured feature of Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley.



Canopy foliage has suffered due to limited access to light and soil volumes.

92%

thought the conservation of trees in the Square was important

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Waste Management

With the input from residents, businesses and organizations and other levels of government, the city is working towards a comprehensive Zero Waste strategy.

Achieving Zero Waste in Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley would create a cleaner environment; reduce and ultimately eliminate dumpsters; and increase the amount of materials that can be diverted from landfills or incinerators. This would attract more users to the square and set a precedent for innovative waste management that can be replicated in other parts of the City.



Internal storage of waste into their various streams.

An effective waste management strategy must meet the following City policies:

- **The 2020 Greenest City goal of reducing the amount of solid waste from landfills and incinerators by 50% (from 2008 levels).**
- **The Zero Waste Strategy by 2040 Goals.**

Different Roles in Waste Management

City of Vancouver

- Provide collection to single-family and multi-family residential properties;
- Increase awareness and education of new policies and regulations;
- Enforce by-law infractions;
- Set policies and regulations that foster innovative waste management solutions;
- Connect businesses to vendors with innovative solutions;
- Review and provide comments to procurement documents related to new waste management system, if requested;

Businesses and stratas/property management companies

- Hire waste haulers to ensure proper disposal of all solid waste generated on-site;
- Provide the appropriate type and number of storage containers, preferably within each building's property line;
- Educate residents, workers and customers on how to properly dispose of solid waste.

Waste haulers

- Encourage and educate owners and tenants on how to properly dispose of solid waste;
- Act as liaison between the City and owners and tenants when new policies come into effect;
- Foster changes to the waste management system that align with new policies and regulations.

Gastown Business Improvement Association

- Educate members on how to properly dispose of solid waste;
- Act as liaison between the City and members when new policies come into effect;
- Update waste management practices within the BIA to align with new policies and regulations.

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Waste Management Consultation

The Gastown BIA, businesses and residents in the area would like to improve waste management in the area and ultimately see the removal of dumpsters from Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley. The City has hired a solid waste consultant to look at options.

Businesses and residents were surveyed on how waste is collected, the structure of service contracts and their opinions on the feasibility of different options. A total of 61 groups were contacted and 14 responses were received.

Key findings include:

- Public recycling and garbage bins would be beneficial;
- Illegal dumping is a challenge;
- More frequent pick-up of restaurant waste is necessary;
- Any new strategy must be convenient and user-friendly;
- Safety and sanitation (drug use, biohazard materials, rodents) must be addressed;
- Damage and misuse of bins is an issue.

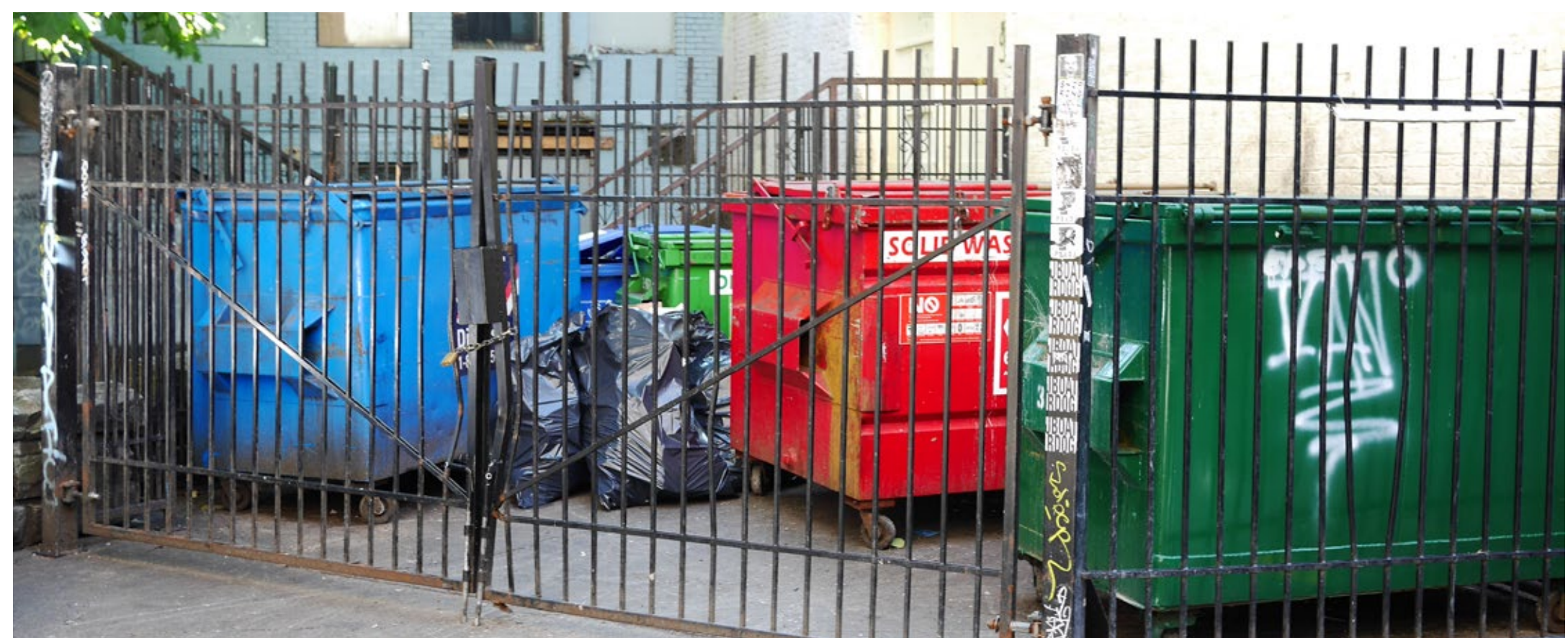
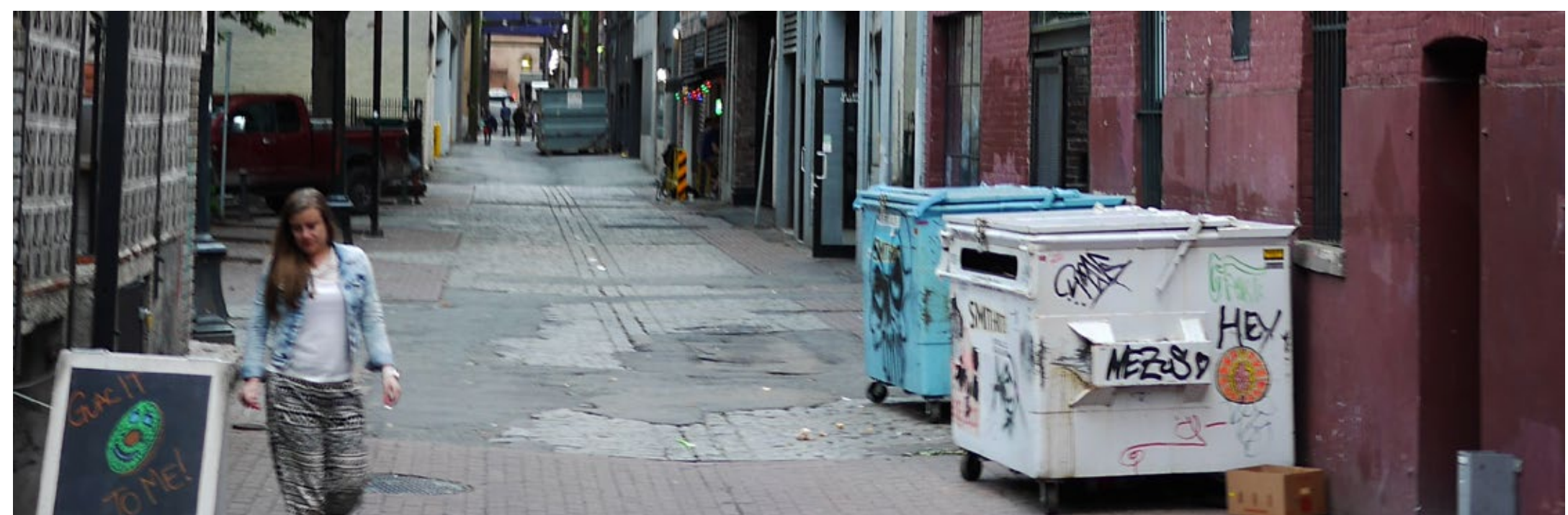
64% of respondents were dissatisfied with waste management in the Square and Alley.

Solid Waste Management (SWM) Principles

A successful strategy is dependent on buy-in from businesses and residents.

Principles guiding this process are listed below:

The majority of respondents would prefer to see the dumpster bins removed from the Alley.



Dumpsters in the alley along building wall and inside enclosed storage.

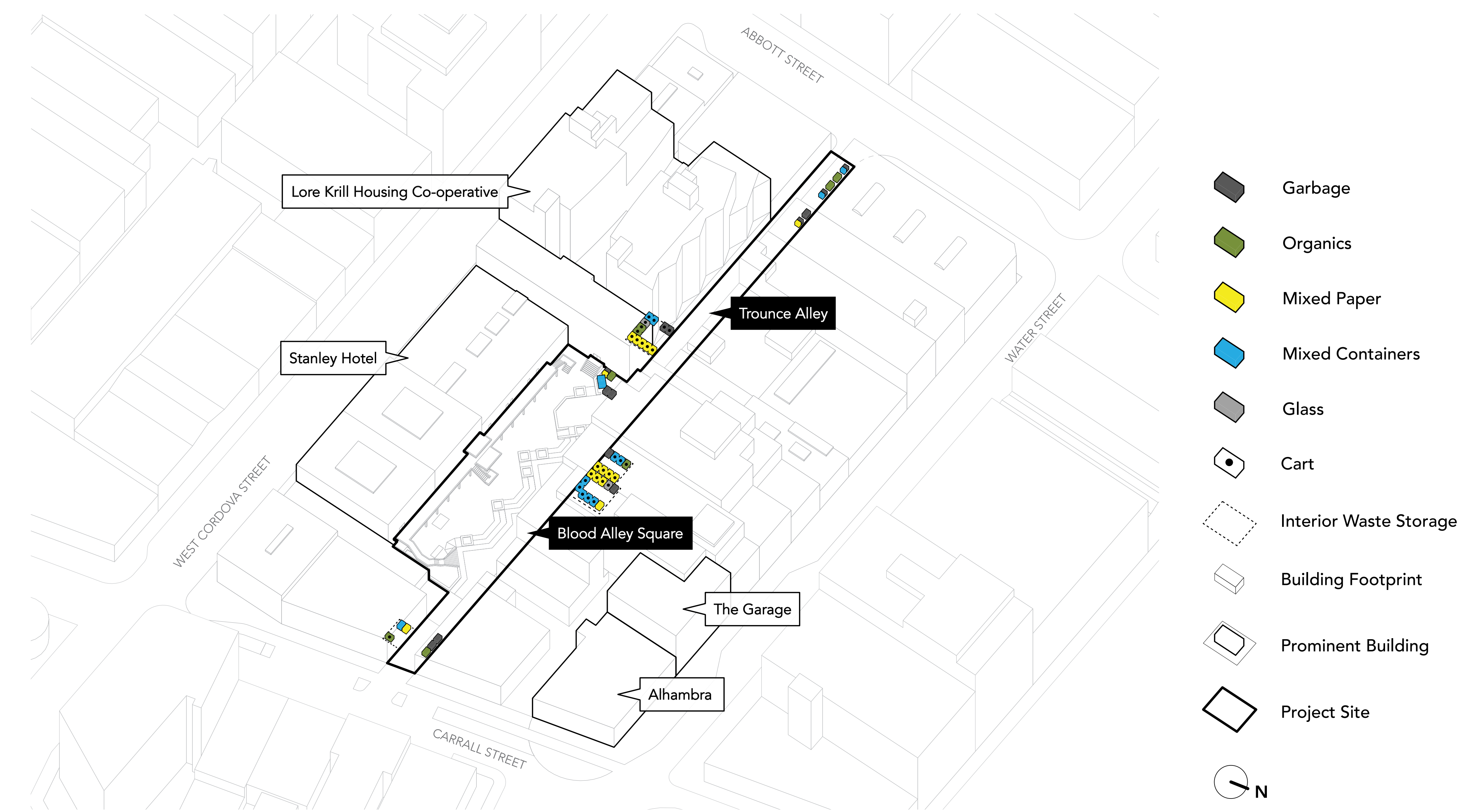
- Eliminate waste containers;
- Reduce collection truck traffic to prioritize pedestrians;
- Create a cleaner and safer waste disposal system;
- Provide shared spaces for loading;
- Apply a phased approach to convert from current to new system;
- Find a cost-effective and financially sustainable system for all users and providers;
- Align with DTES Plan for local employment opportunities.

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Waste Management

Current Waste Management Condition

The current waste management system is managed by a number of competing companies all with their own large dumpsters scattered throughout Trounce Alley and Blood Alley Square. Waste removal is a concern for businesses, property owners, and residents. There are now 16 commercial dumpsters in the alley collected by eight different waste haulers.



Total waste volumes for the area immediately adjacent to Trounce Alley and Blood Alley Square are estimated at between **194,600 - 222,238 litres per week**. The percentage of this waste can be broken down by the following streams:

- **Garbage:** 51%
- **Glass:** 1%
- **Organics:** 15%
- **Mixed Paper** 30%
- **Mixed Containers** 5%



A variety of factors must be considered when developing an effective waste management strategy. The consultant team has identified two possible case studies that address the issue in different ways. Public feedback will help develop strategies tailored for Trounce Alley and Blood Alley Square .

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Case Study 1: Flexible Just In Time

Users sort waste and place them into pre-purchased coloured bags, which are then stored in carts. A small vehicle or bike picks up the totes on a regular basis, several times per day.

Sorting Method: User sort waste into various streams (organic, plastic, paper, glass, garbage) and puts it into pre-purchased coloured bags which can be stored in carts inside building or in the alley.



Placement: Bags or carts wheeled out to lane at a scheduled pick-up time to local transfer station.



Pick-up: Daily. Bags or carts put out in the lane before scheduled pick up time to local transfer station by either small truck or bike.



Spatial Impact On Alley and Square: Minimal. Flexible approaches take up little physical space.



Cost to Users: Low. Users purchase bags to cover cost of collection.



Local Employment Opportunities: High. Opportunities for partnership with social enterprises that waste could provide collection, oversight and maintenance.



Office organic collection by bicycle, University of Vermont.

Case Study 2: On-site Facility

Users place sorted waste into large storage containers at a centralized location in Blood Alley Square where it is removed by specialized garbage trucks.

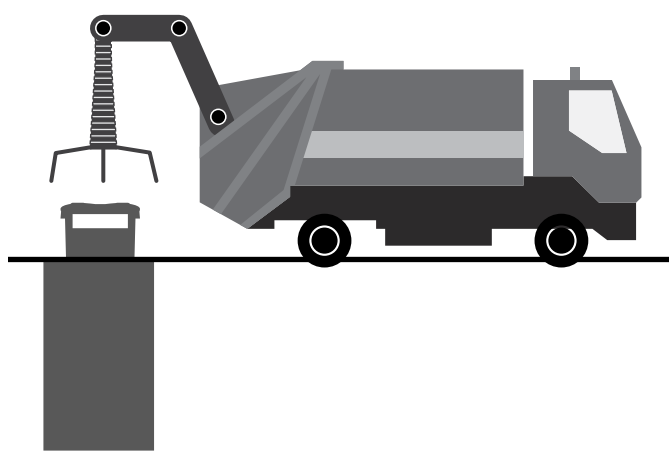
Sorting Method: Users sort waste, organics, and recycling.



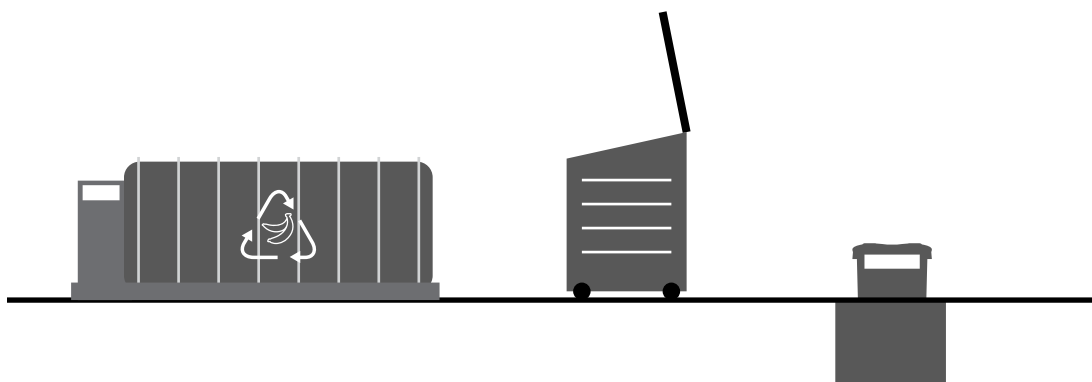
Placement: Sorted waste is deposited directly in a centralized on-site composters and storage that handle large volumes of waste.



Pick-up: Collection by a specialized truck that removes the waste from the storage.



Spatial Impact On Alley and Square: Significant. Underground storage require dedicated space and loading area in Blood Alley Square, reducing space available for other uses.



Cost to Users: High. Capital costs required to install the infrastructure resulting in higher hauling costs.



Local Employment Opportunities: Low. Waste is held in storage bins with limited access.



Underground storage of bin.



Cutaway showing underground storage.