



CHICAGO PLAN COMMISSION

Department of Planning and Development

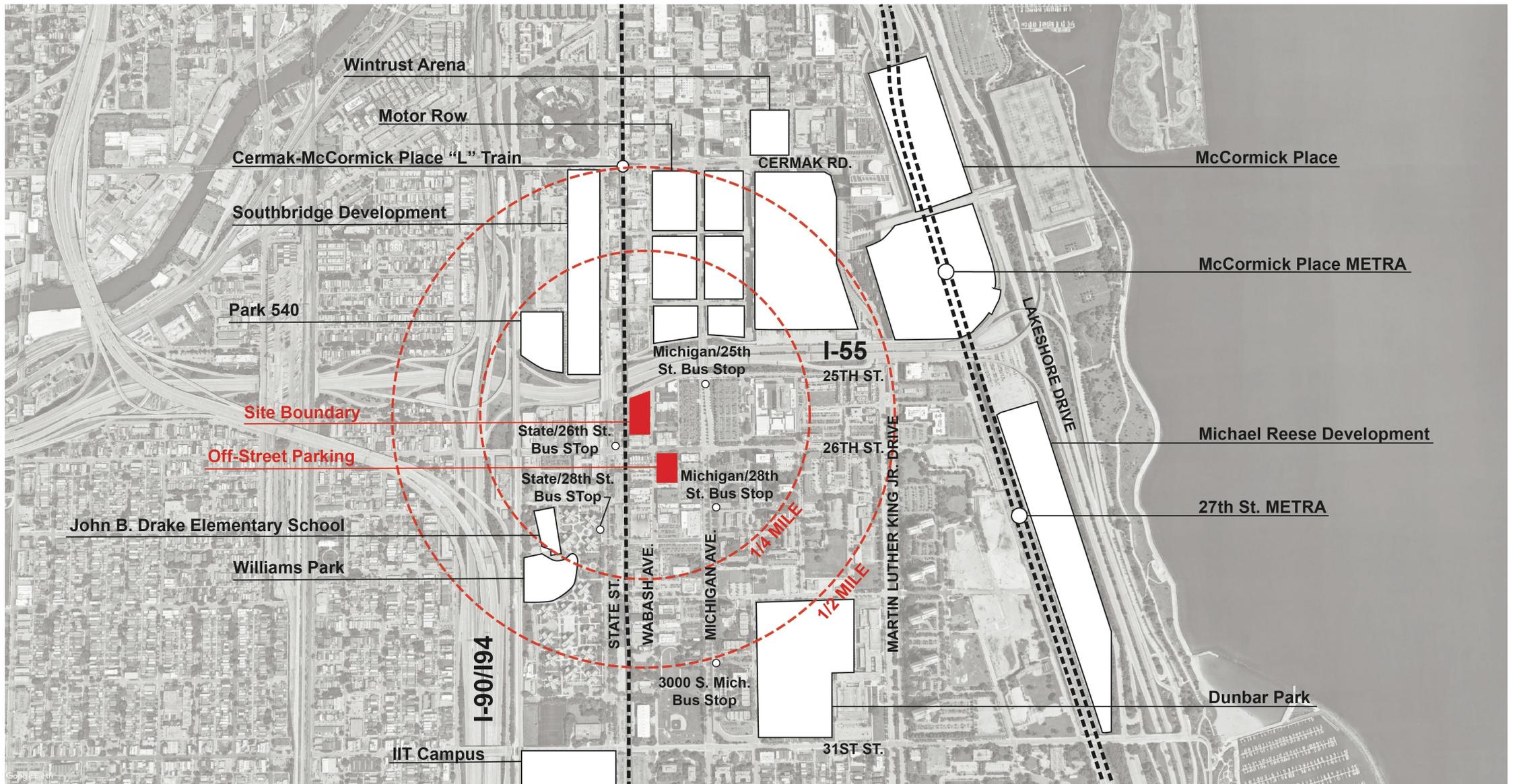
SURGE ESPORTS STADIUM

2500-48 SOUTH WABASH AVENUE (3rd Ward)

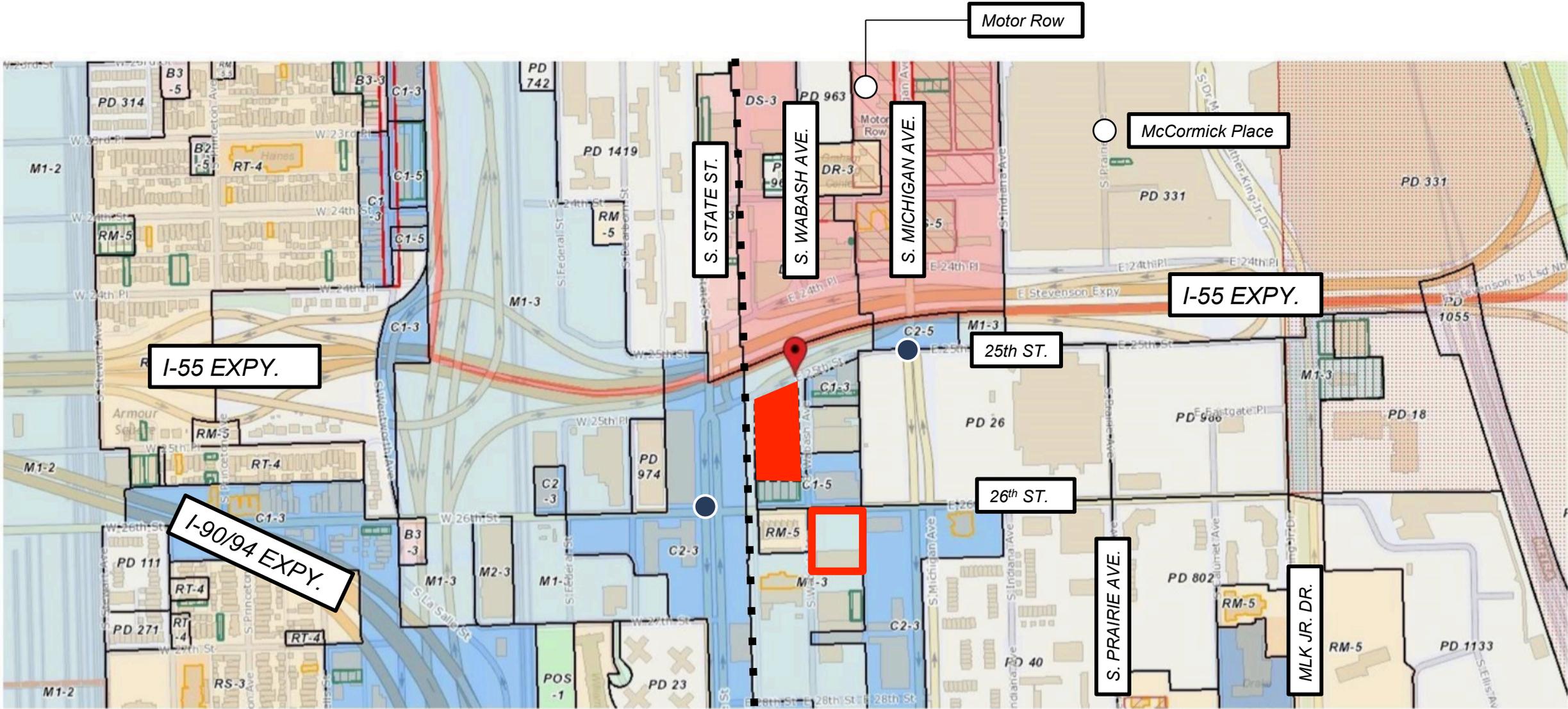
SMASH INTERACTIVE LLC

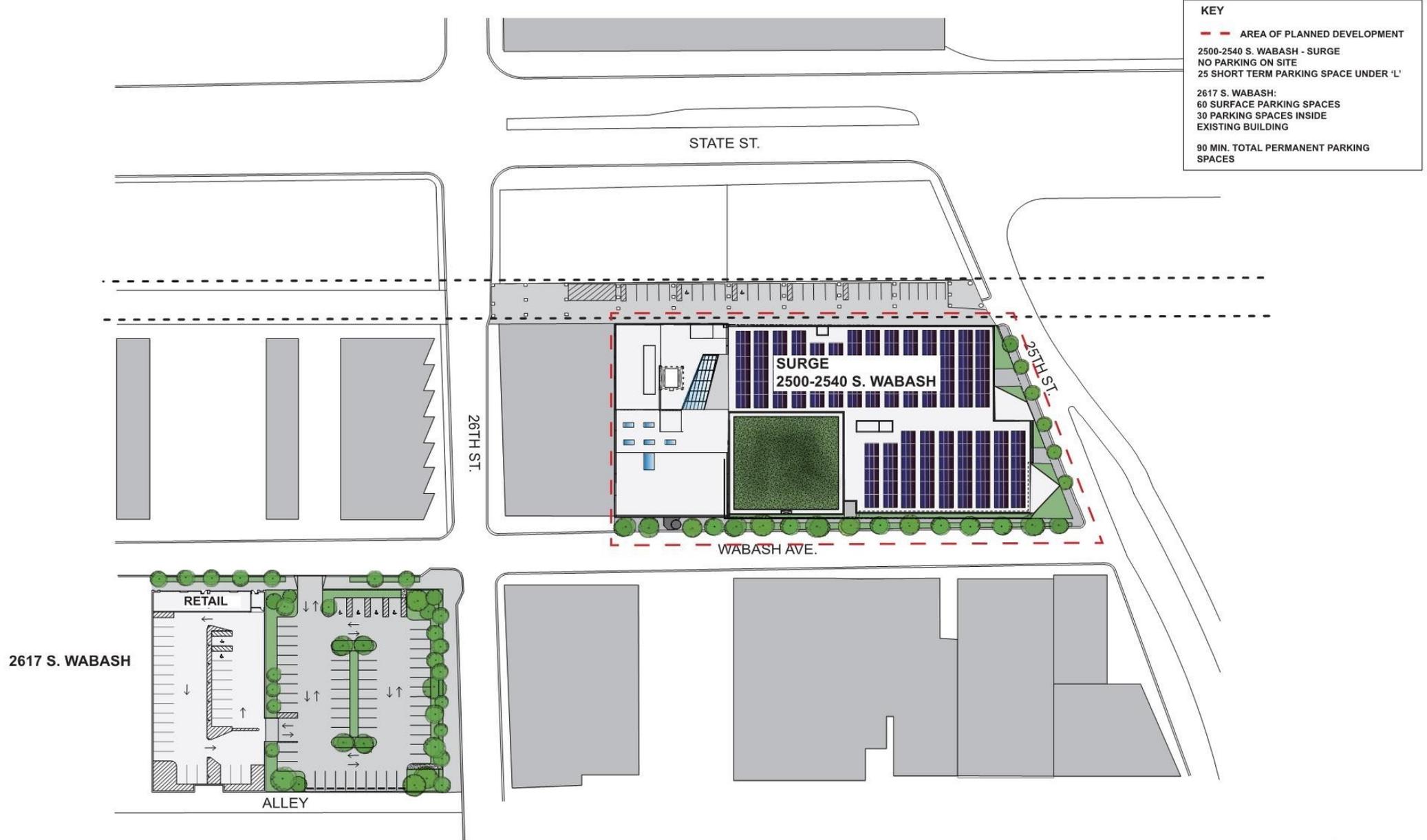
DRAFT

3/18/2021



NOT TO SCALE 





NOT TO SCALE ⊕ N



VIEW LOOKING NORTH



VIEW LOOKING SOUTH



VIEW LOOKING EAST



VIEW LOOKING NORTHWEST

2500 S. WABASH EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS



VIEW FROM WABASH LOOKING NORTH



ALLEY VIEW LOOKING SOUTH



WABASH VIEW LOOKING NORTH



25TH STREET VIEW LOOKING EAST

2500 S. WABASH EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS



AERIAL VIEW FROM 26TH ST., LOOKING SOUTH

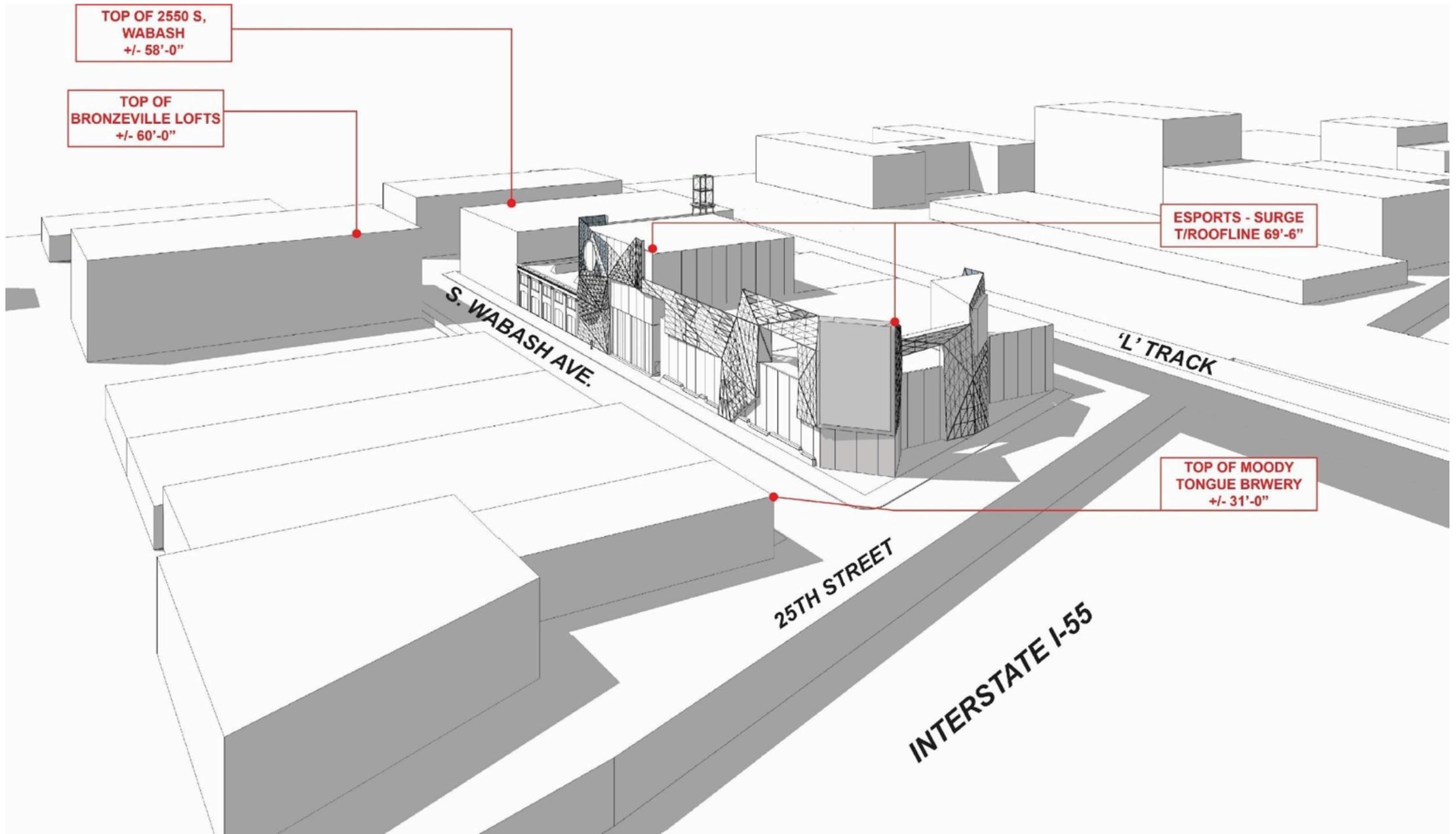


2617 VIEW FROM WABASH LOOKING SOUTH

2617 S. WABASH EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS



2500 S. WABASH AERIAL VIEW LOOKING NORTH



2500 S. WABASH AERIAL VIEW LOOKING SOUTH

Pedestrian Context

MAIN ENTRY – VIEW FROM WABASH



EXISTING VIEW FROM WABASH

Pedestrian Context

PEDESTRIAN VIEW FROM WABASH LOOKING SOUTH



EXISTING VIEW ON 25TH ST.

Pedestrian Context

PEDESTRIAN VIEW FROM ACROSS 25TH ST LOOKING SOUTH



EXISTING VIEW ON 25TH ST.

Project Timeline + Community Outreach

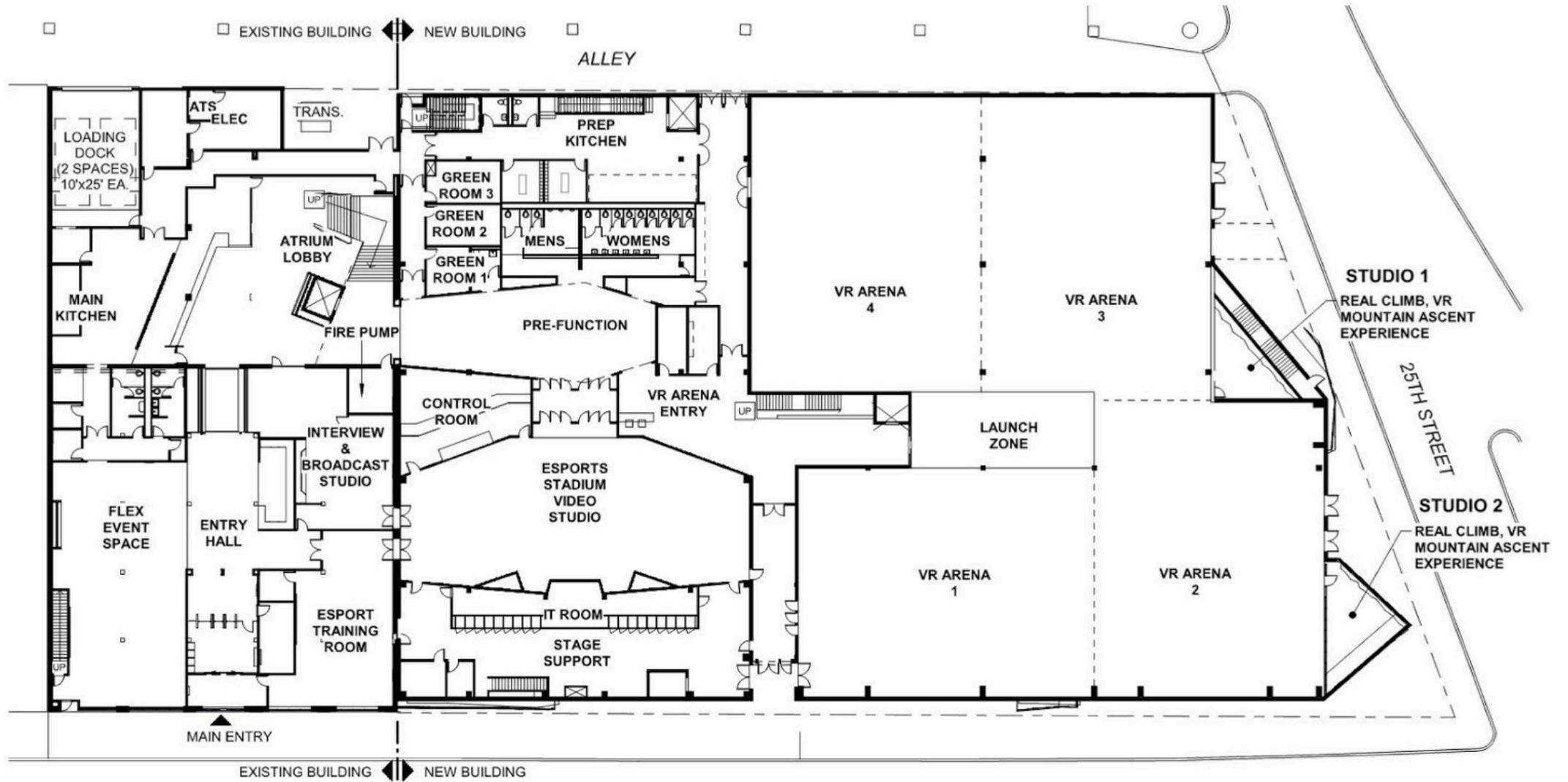
- **PD Application Filing Date: December 16, 2020**
- **Community Meetings:**
 - * Near South Planning Board: January 2020
 - * Bronzeville Loft Condominium (50 E. 26th St.): February 2020
 - * 3rd Ward Town Hall meeting: November 2020
- **Project Changes Based on Feedback:**
 - *Eliminated signage from water tower
 - *Modified digital signage to meet zoning compliance
 - *Removed large Parapet sign and replaced with smaller sign above entry
 - *Lowered height of exterior architectural metal screen system
 - *Modified exterior color palette on building
 - *Added contrasting pre-cast color to reference scale of existing building
 - *Canted sections of exterior architectural screen to create greater depth and visual relief from flat surface
 - *Relocated driveway/parking access from 26th St. to Wabash Ave. in response to Bronzeville Lofts residents concern of visual impact of cars accessing adjacent parking lot and to improve vehicular movement in the area
 - *Added retail space at 2617 S. Wabash to screen parking area



PREVIOUS DESIGN



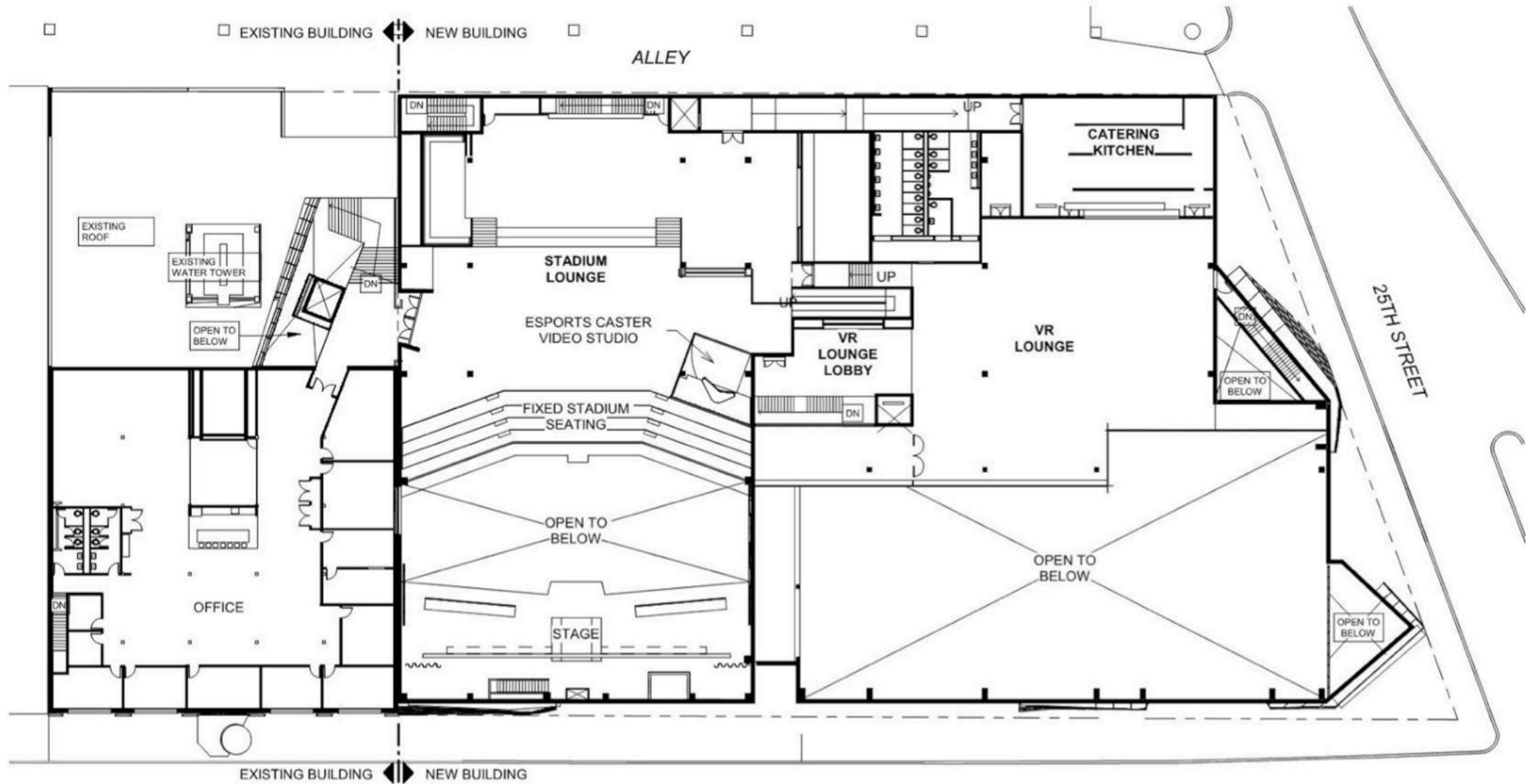
CURRENT PROPOSED DESIGN



NOTE: These Drawings are in progress and are not Permit-Construction Documents, however they accurately describe the design intent. The Permit-Construction Documents may differ from these Drawings.

SOUTH WABASH AVENUE

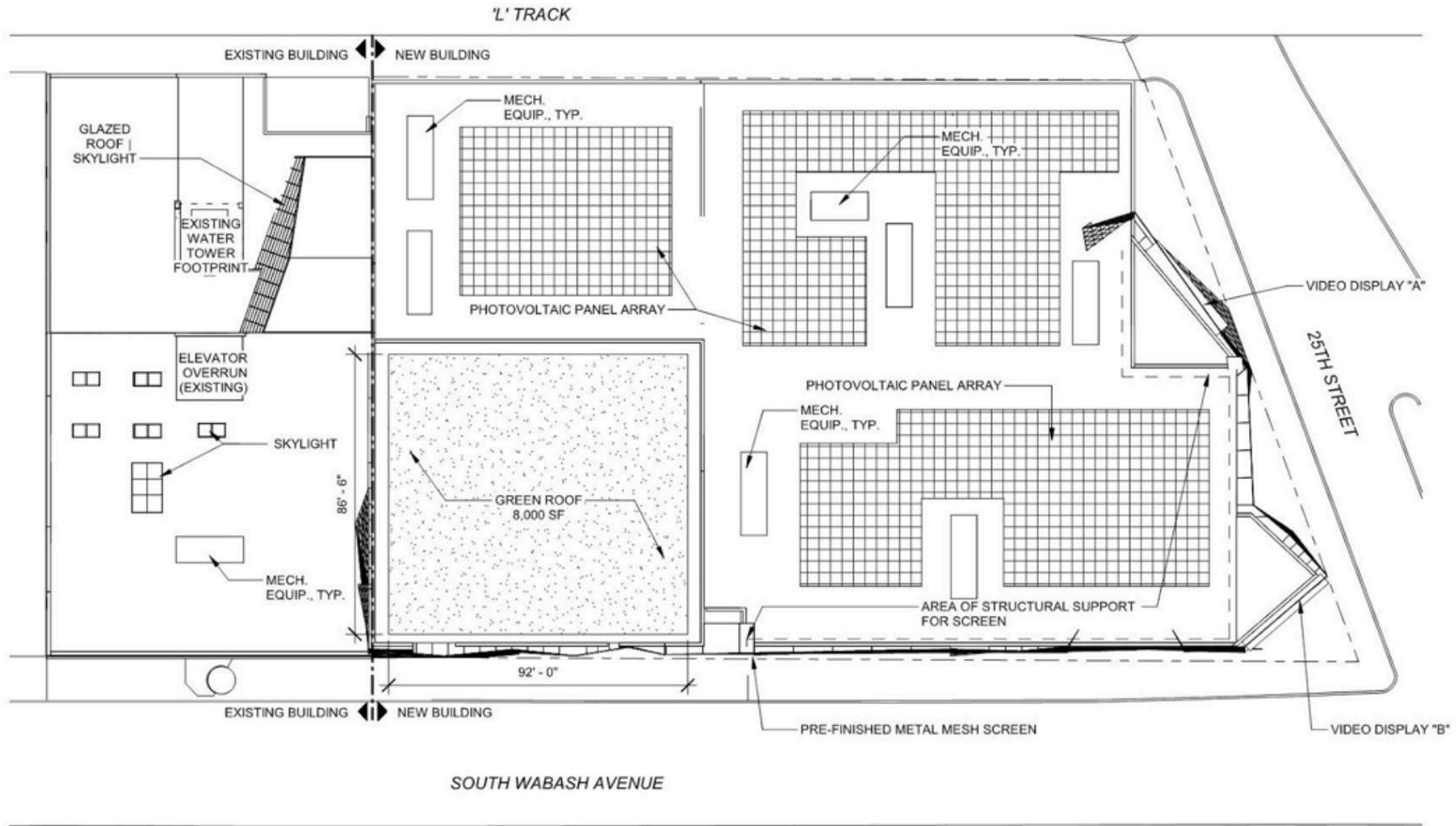




NOTE: These Drawings are in progress and are not Permit-Construction Documents, however they accurately describe the design intent. The Permit-Construction Documents may differ from these Drawings.

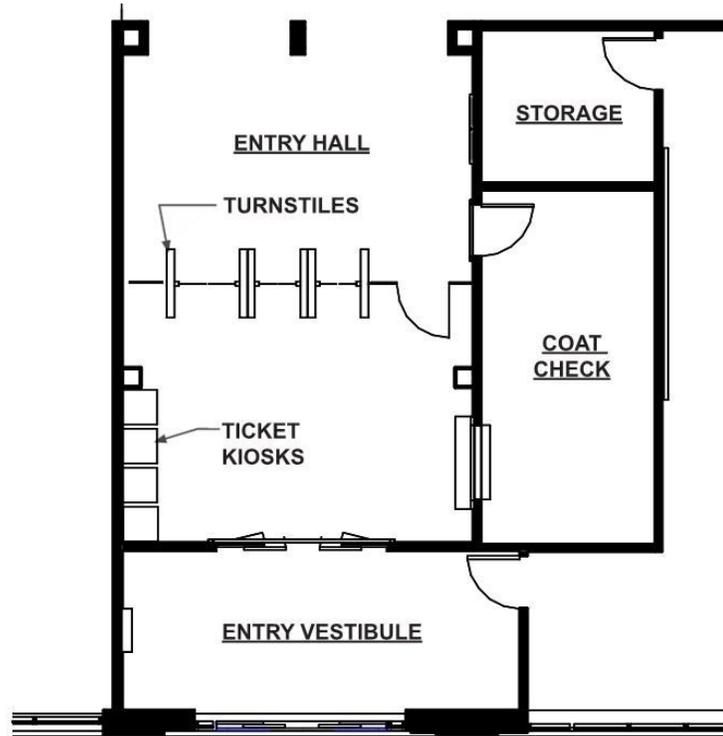
SOUTH WABASH AVENUE





TOTAL TICKETED CAPACITY: 1,040 PEOPLE

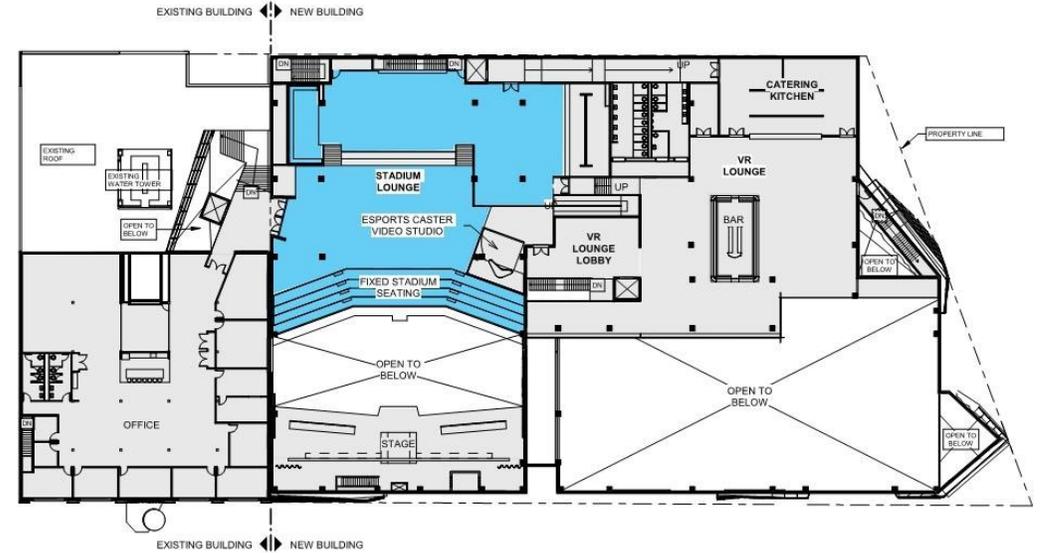
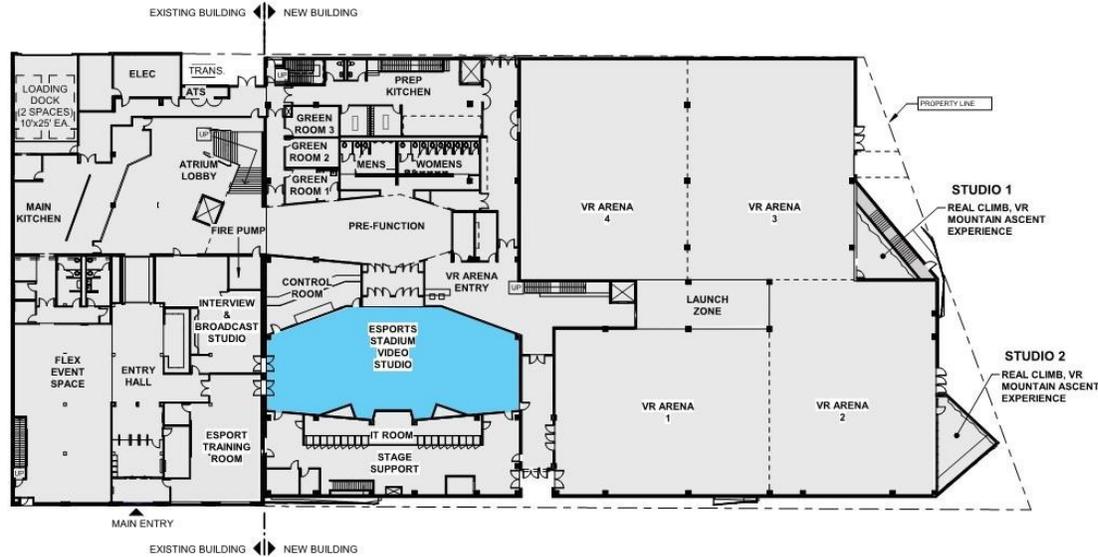
SURGE Esports stadium will operate with a ticketed spectator capacity of 1,040 people maximum. This is monitored by electronic turnstile entry. Access to the SURGE Esports stadium building will be limited to employees and ticketed spectators, similar to events at the United Center, Win-trust Arena and Wrigley Field. The VR Arenas and VR Lounge are included in 1,040 ticket count.



ENTRY PLAN
▲
MAIN ENTRY



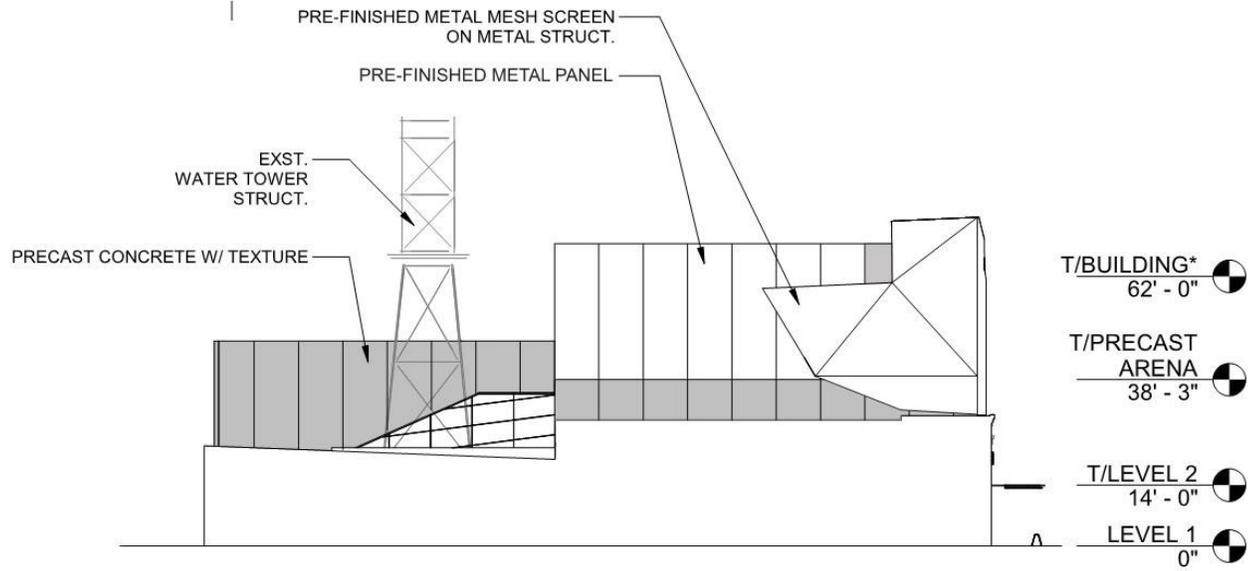
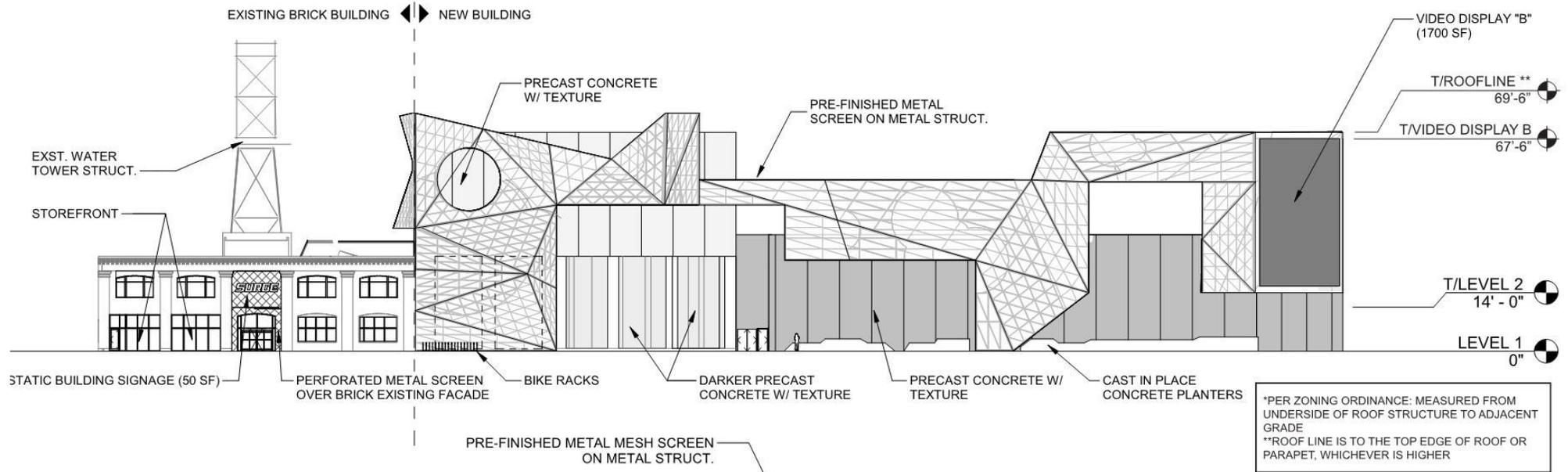
ENTRY RENDERING



SPECTATOR AREAS ONLY - CALCULATED OCCUPANCY PER CHICAGO BUILDING CODE						
FLOOR	TYPE	ROOM NAME	AREA S.F.	FLOOR AREA/PERSON	OCCUPANCY CONTENT	NOTES
1	SPECTATOR AREAS	ESPORTS STADIUM VIDEO STUDIO	3824	7	547	PER CODE SECTION 1004.5 - ASSEMBLY OCCUPANCY - CONCENTRATED CALCULATED AT 7 SF PER PERSON
2	SPECTATOR AREAS	FIXED STADIUM SEATING	N/A	N/A	216	PER CODE SECTION 1004.6, OCCUPANCY EQUALS NUMBER OF FIXED SEATS
		STADIUM LOUNGE	7346	15	490	PER CODE SECTION 1004.5, ASSEMBLY OCCUPANCY- UNCONCENTRATED - CALCULATED AT 15 SF PER PERSON
TOTAL					1253	

NOTE: These Drawings are in progress and are not Permit-Construction Documents, however they accurately describe the design intent. The Permit-Construction Documents may differ from these Drawings.





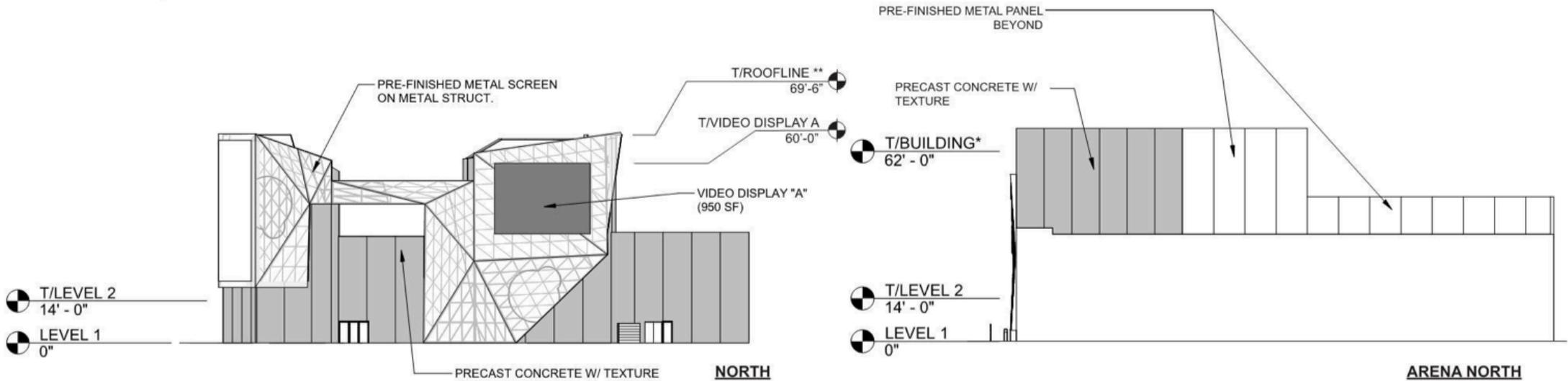
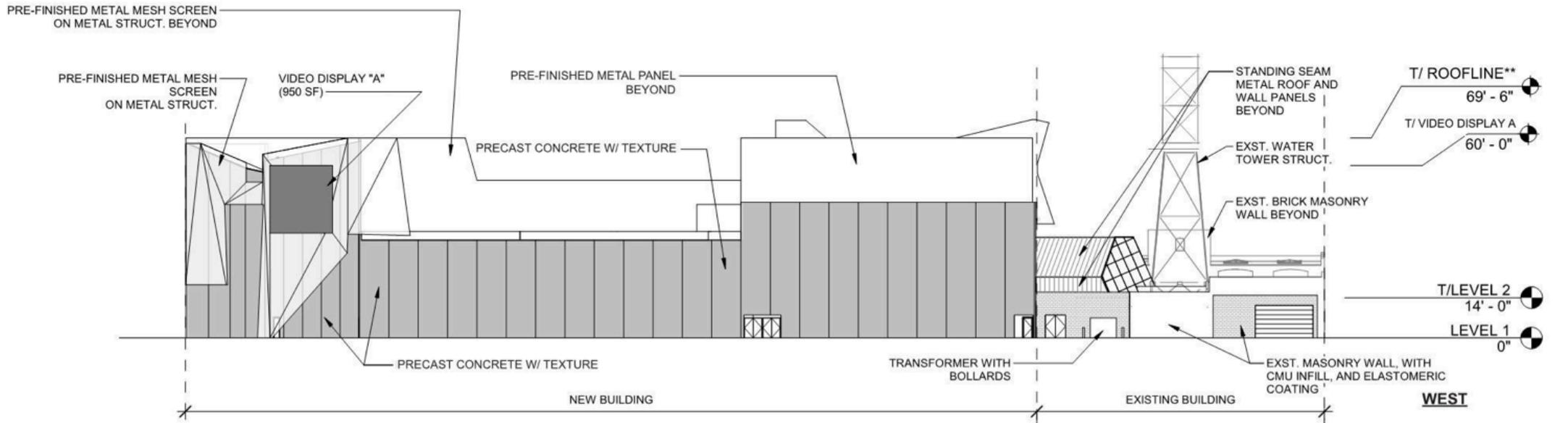
EAST

SOUTH



NOTE: Electronic Signage is limited to advertise venue events.

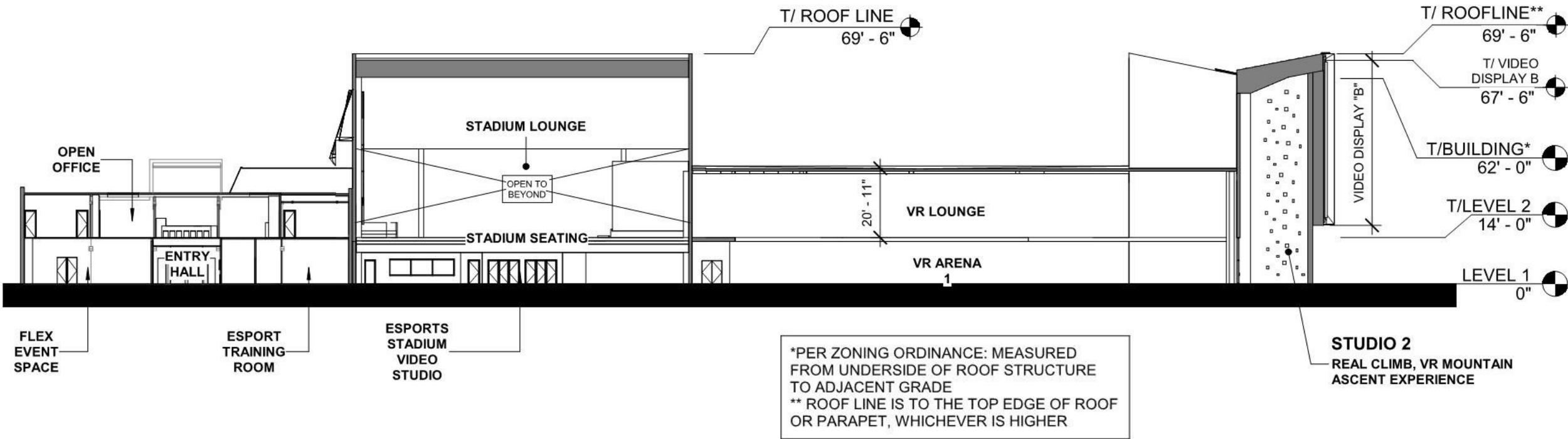
2500 S. WABASH BUILDING ELEVATION – EAST AND SOUTH

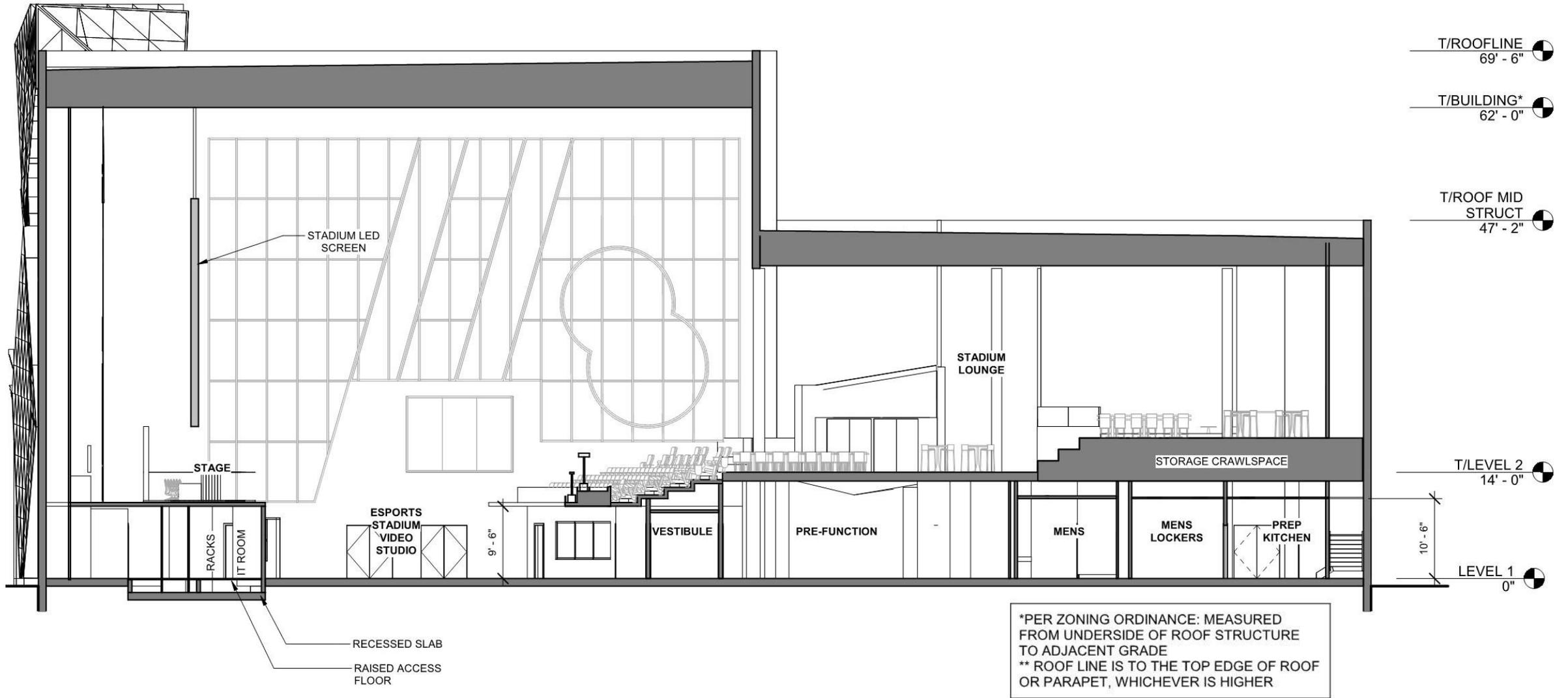


NOTE: Electronic Signage is limited to advertise venue events.

**ROOF LINE IS TO THE TOP EDGE OF ROOF OR PARAPET, WHICHEVER IS HIGHER







2617 MAIN ENTRY – VIEW FROM WABASH



2617 EXISTING VIEW FROM WABASH

2617 PARKING ENTRY – VIEW FROM WABASH



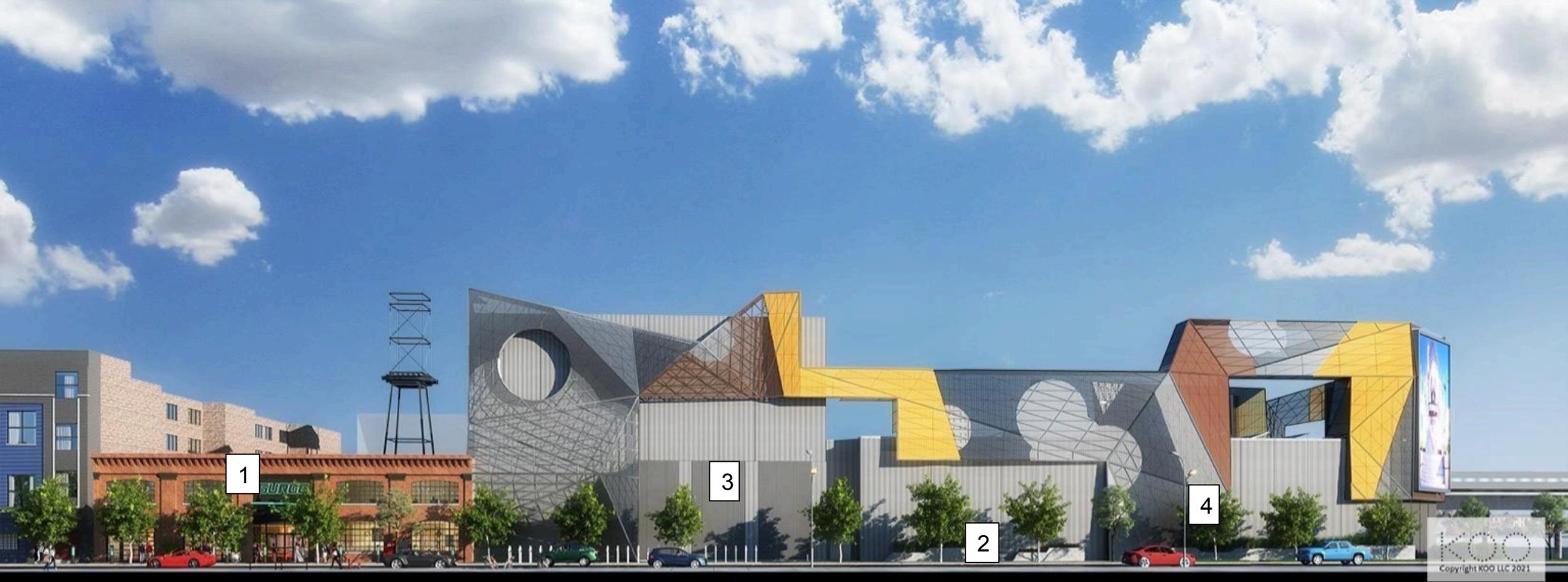
2617 S. WABASH BUILDING RENDERING



2617 EXISTING PARKING VIEW FROM WABASH



1. 90 Parking Spaces provided at 2617 S. Wabash.
2. 25 Short Term Parking Spaces provided under 'L' Tracks.
3. Accessible Path provided from 2617 S. Wabash to main entry at 2500 S. Wabash.
4. Parking for 18 Bicycles provided at 2500 S. Wabash.
5. Parking for 8 bicycles at 2617 S. Wabash.



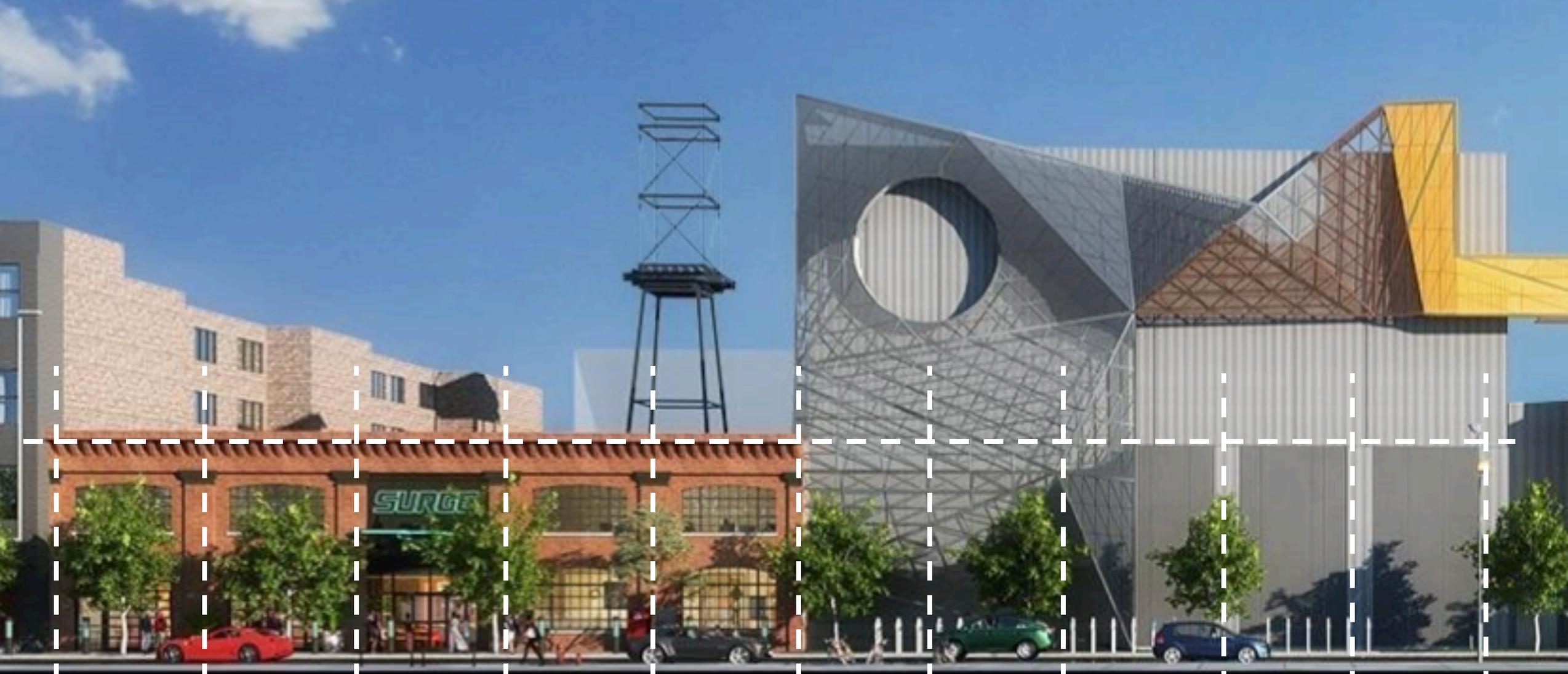
1. Main Entry highlighted by building signage and canopy on existing brick building.
2. Pedestrian street front enhanced with concrete planters within the property line at new building.
3. Façade Pattern of the existing brick Building extended onto new building with pre-cast concrete pattern.
4. Pre-finished metal mesh screen extends to ground plan, in order to break up mass of Stadium and VR Arena spaces. Due to the programmatic requirements of backstage and VR Arenas, the Stadium and VR volumes cannot have windows. The screen will create light, shadow and texture at the pedestrian level.



1. Main Entry highlighted by building signage and canopy on existing brick building



2. Pedestrian street front enhanced with concrete planters within the property line at new building

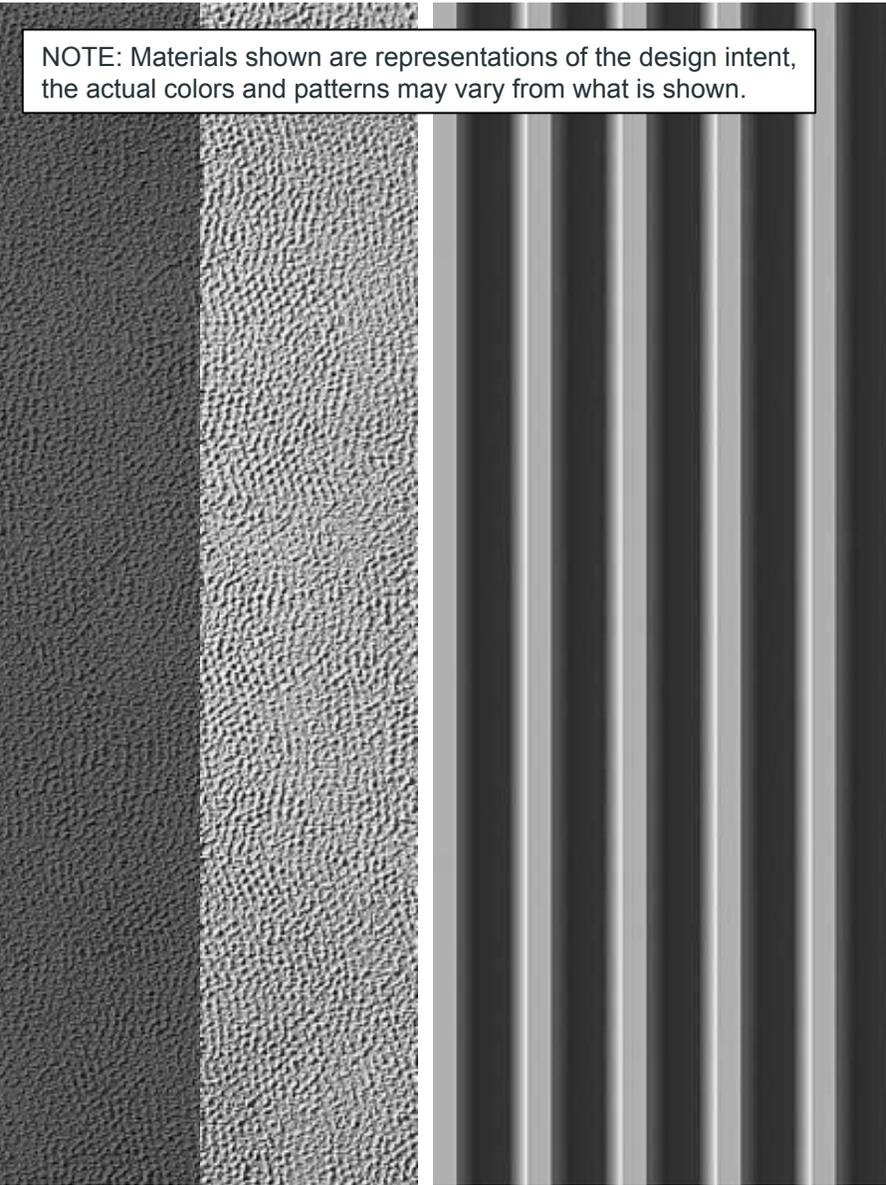


3. Façade Pattern of the existing brick building extended onto new building with pre-cast concrete pattern.

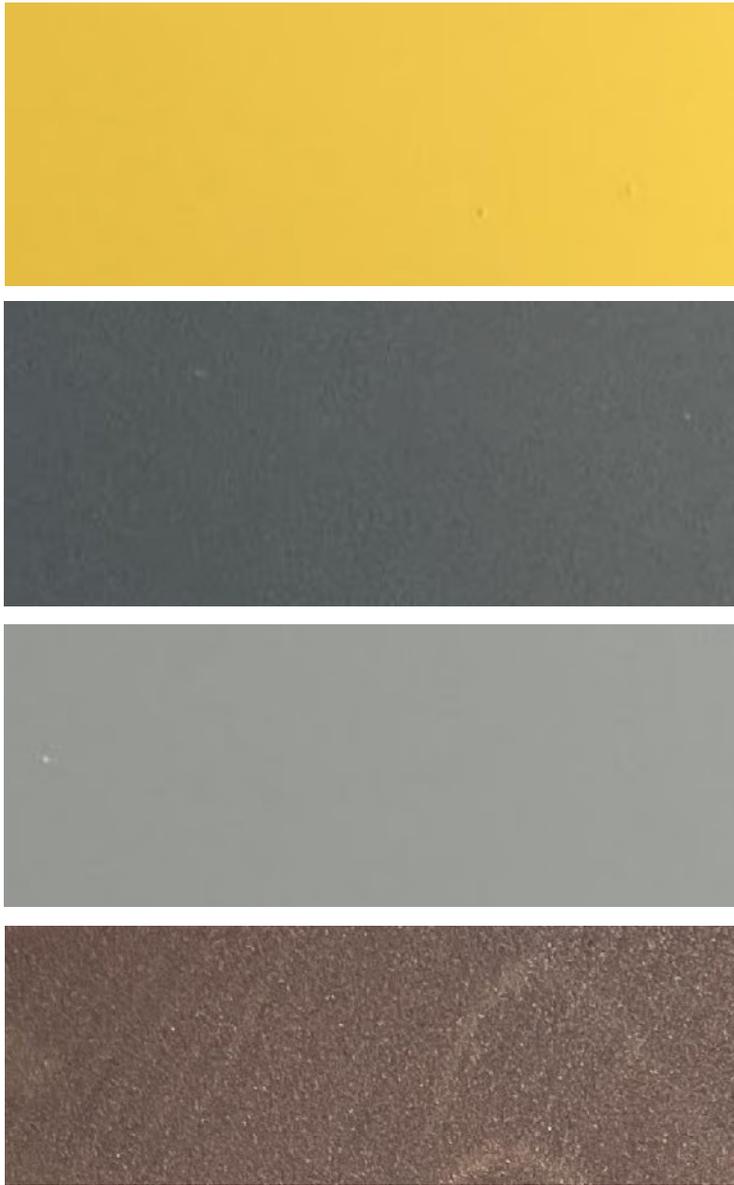


4. Pre-finished metal mesh screen extends to ground plan, in order to break up mass of Stadium and VR Arena spaces. Due to the programmatic requirements of backstage and VR Arenas, the Stadium and VR volumes cannot have windows. The screen will create light, shadow and texture at the pedestrian level.

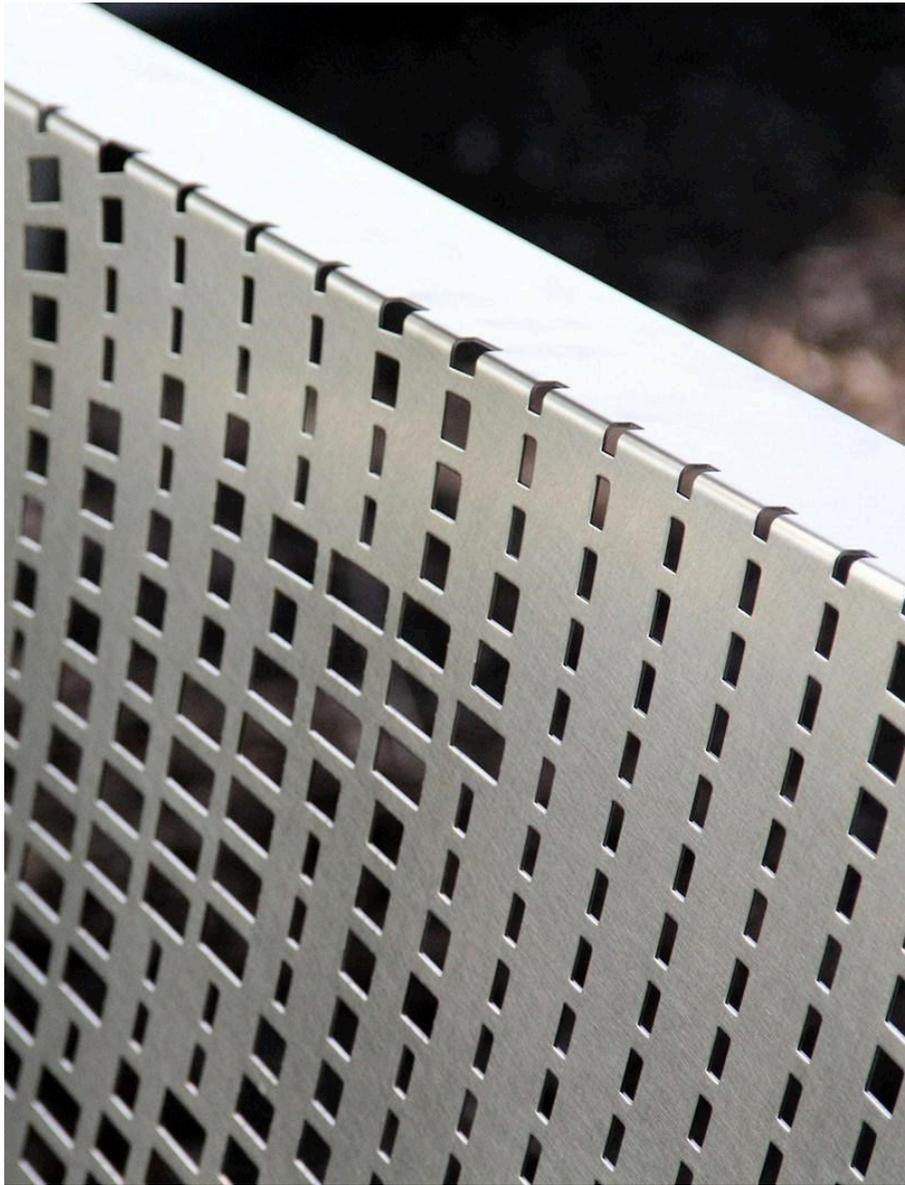
NOTE: Materials shown are representations of the design intent, the actual colors and patterns may vary from what is shown.



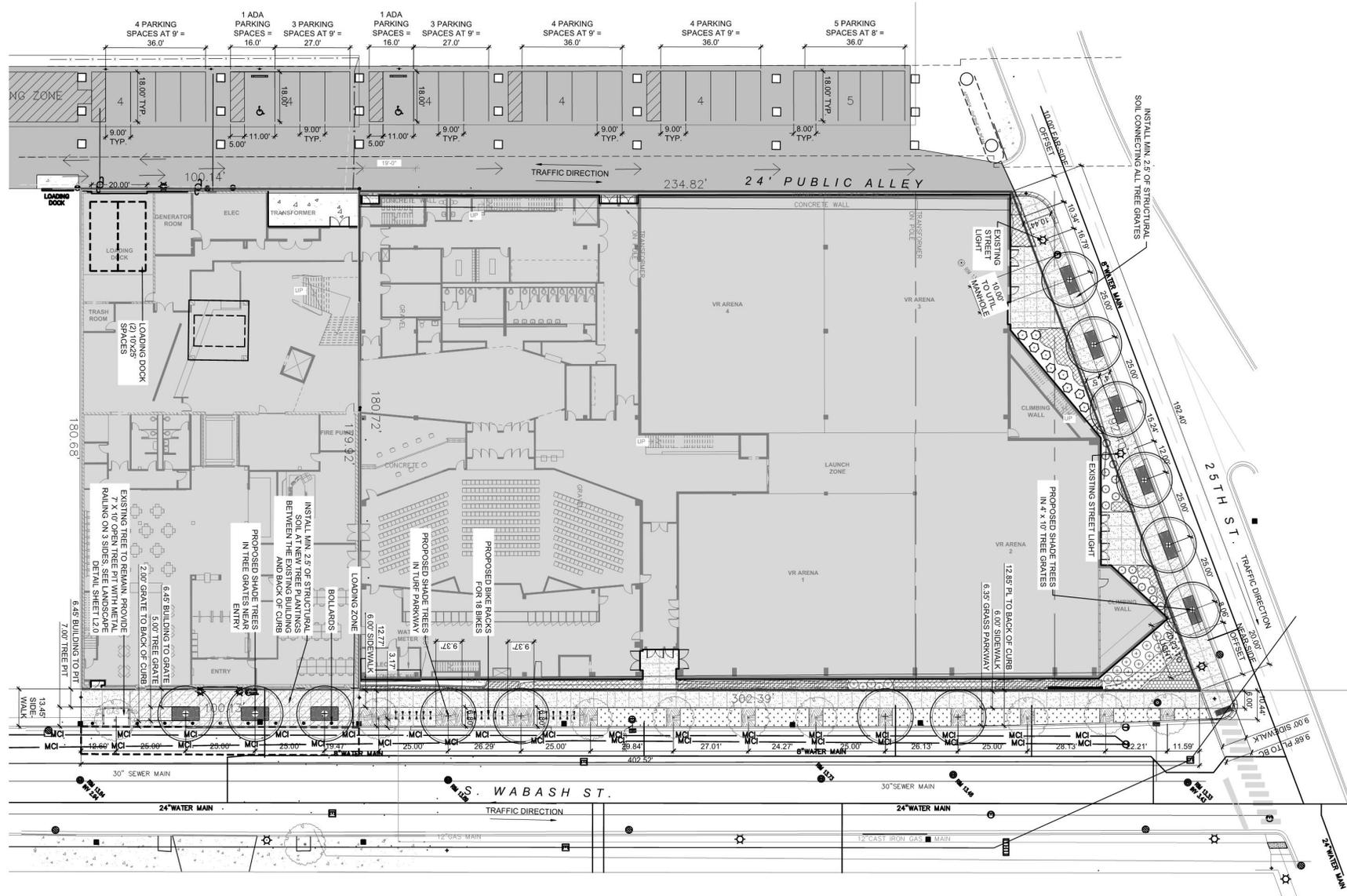
PRE-CAST CONCRETE TEXTURES



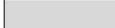
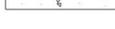
METAL PANEL FINISHES



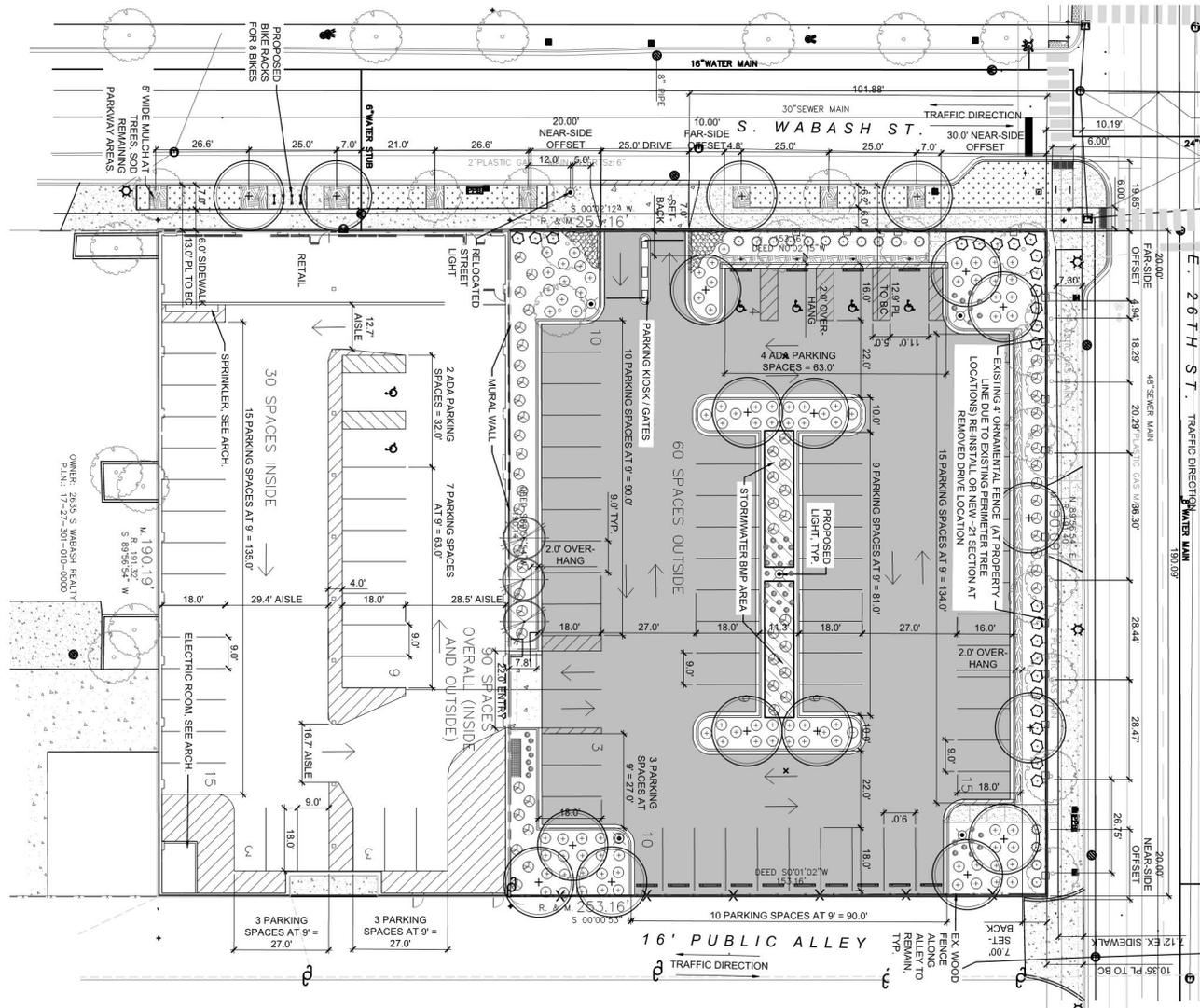
METAL PANEL PERFORATION AND PATTERNS



LEGEND:

-  BUILDING
-  CONCRETE WALK AND BASE
-  ASPHALT PAVEMENT AND BASE
-  CONCRETE PAVEMENT AND BASE
-  ORNAMENTAL FENCE
-  WOOD FENCE
-  BOLLARD
-  EXISTING TREE TO REMAIN
-  SHADE TREE
-  DECIDUOUS SHRUBS
-  EVERGREEN SHRUBS
-  ORNAMENTAL GRASSES
-  LAWN SOD
-  PERENNIAL / GROUNDCOVER AREAS
-  MULCH, 3" DEPTH
-  12' X 12' SIGHT TRIANGLE
-  TREE GRATE
-  STRUCTURAL SOIL

1. Proposed Landscaping at 2500 S. Wabash complies with Chicago Landscape Ordinance.
2. Proposed Landscaping at 2617 S. Wabash complies with Chicago Landscape Ordinance.



LEGEND:

	BUILDING
	CONCRETE WALK AND BASE
	SEALCOATING
	CONCRETE PAVEMENT AND BASE
	ORNAMENTAL FENCE
	WOOD FENCE
	BOLLARD
	SHADE TREE
	COLUMNAR TREE
	DECIDUOUS SHRUBS
	EVERGREEN SHRUBS
	ORNAMENTAL GRASSES
	LAWN SOD
	PERENNIAL / GROUNDCOVER AREAS
	MULCH, 3\"/>
	12' X 12' SIGHT TRIANGLE
	STRUCTURAL SOIL

1. Proposed Landscaping at 2500 S. Wabash complies with Chicago Landscape Ordinance.
2. Proposed Landscaping at 2617 S. Wabash complies with Chicago Landscape Ordinance.

2617 S. WABASH OPEN SPACE + LANDSCAPING



2500 S Wabash – 100 Points (New Construction)

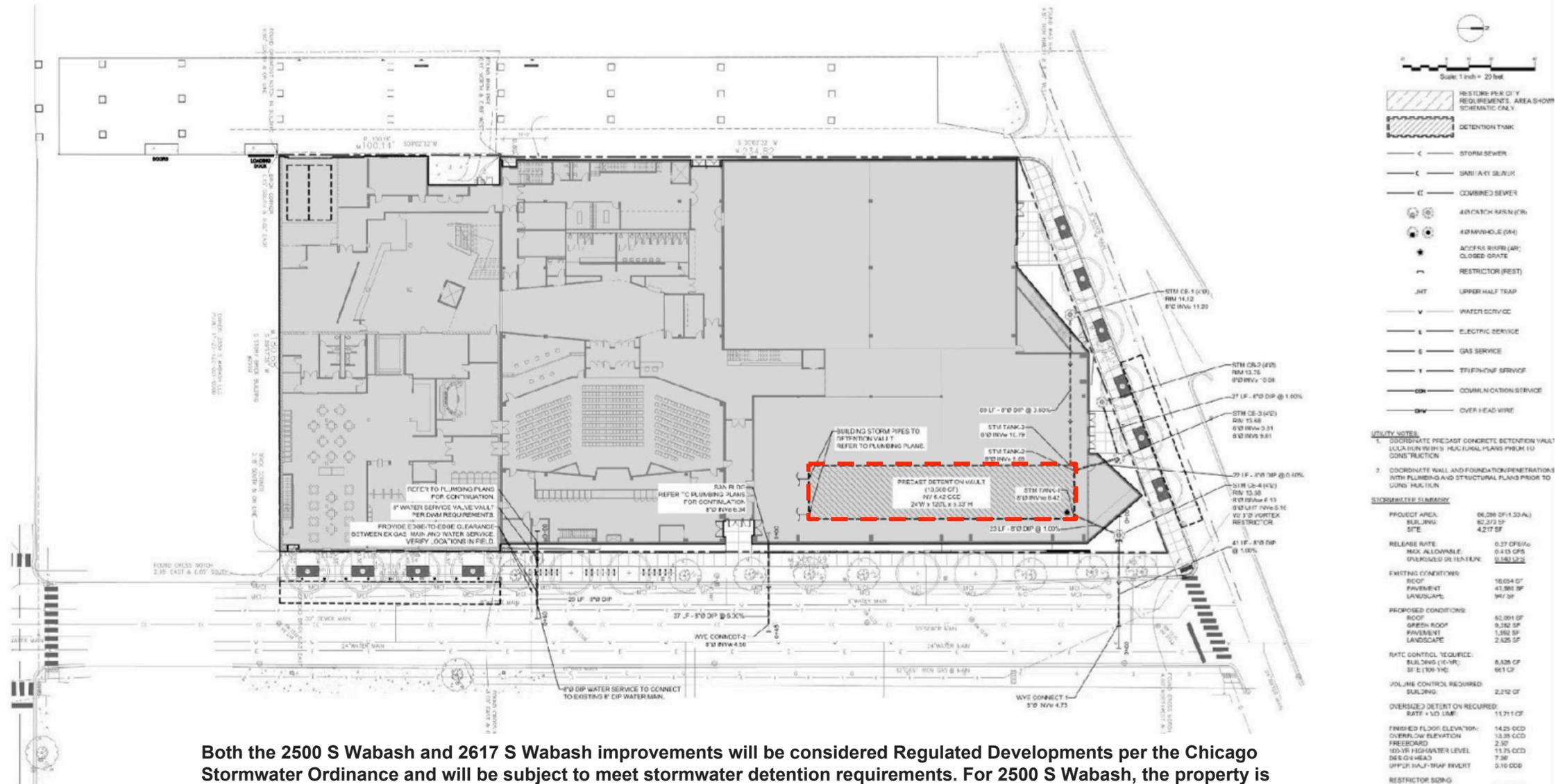
1. LEED Silver – 80 pts – Project will be designed to meet Silver certification under LEED BD+C v 4.0.
2. Onsite Renewable Energy (5%) – 20 pts - A project must provide onsite renewable energy capacity to meet at least 5% of the total modeled energy use for the project at full occupancy.



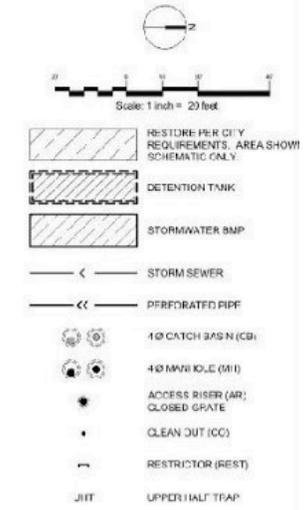
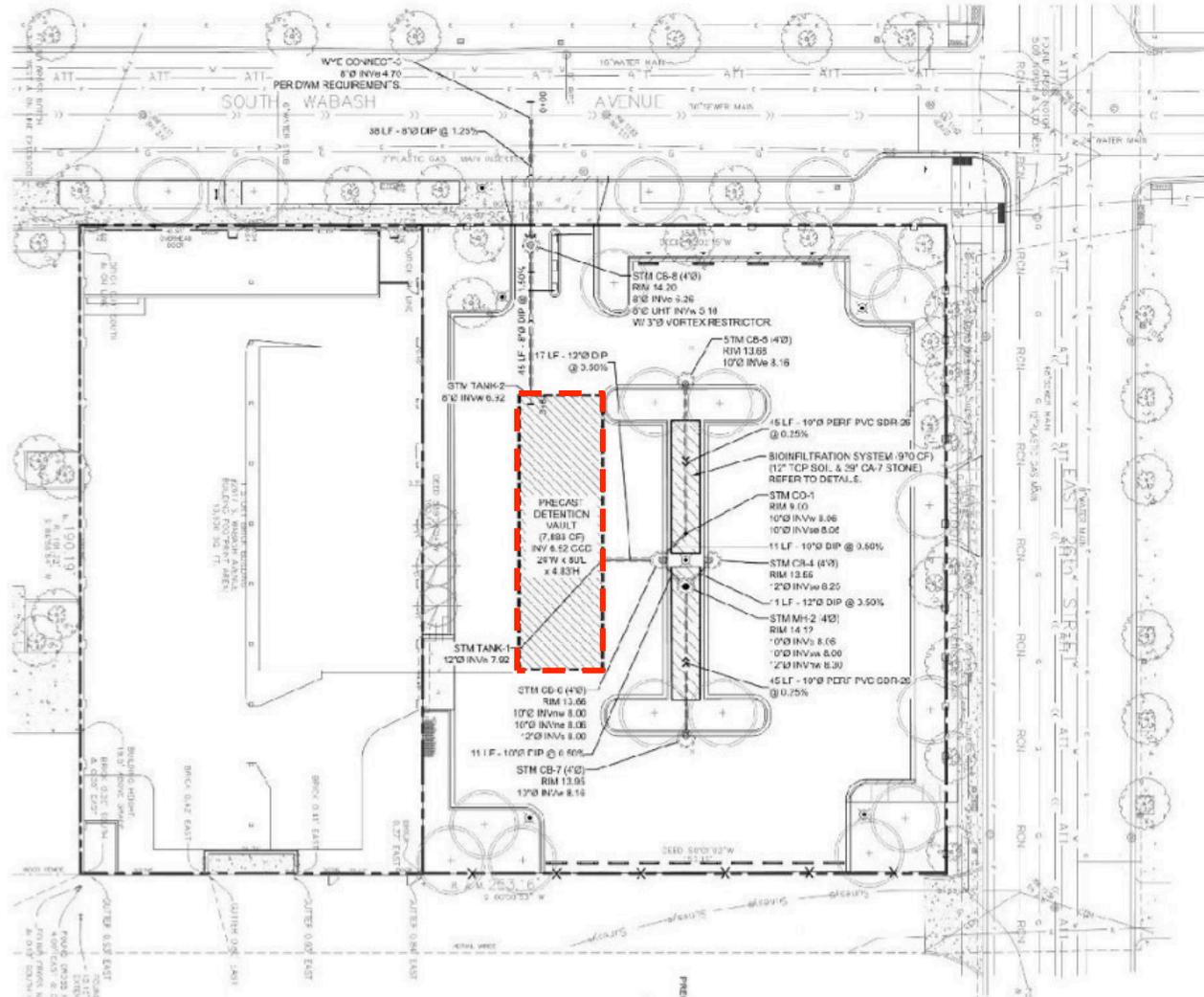
2617 S Wabash – 25 Points (Moderate Renovation)

1. Exceed Energy Code (5%) – 20 pts - This strategy involves exceeding the baseline model currently required in the Chicago Energy Conservation Code by a minimum of 5%.
2. Working Landscapes – 5 pts – The at-grade landscaped areas must meet the following two criteria for a minimum of 5 years.
 - a. 60% of the species types must be native (straight species or cultivars).
 - b. The landscape plan must provide at least 3 of the following plant structure types: trees, shrub, forbs or graminoids, excluding turf grass
3. EV Charging Stations – 10 pts - The project can earn 10 points if a dual Level 2 Electric Vehicle Charging Station is installed within the project's site area.





Both the 2500 S Wabash and 2617 S Wabash improvements will be considered Regulated Developments per the Chicago Stormwater Ordinance and will be subject to meet stormwater detention requirements. For 2500 S Wabash, the property is proposing an underground stormwater vault below the building which will accommodate the 10-year storm event per Lot-to-Lot building regulations. For the 2617 S Wabash parking lot, an underground stormwater vault is proposed with an at-grade rain garden to accommodate both rate and volume control requirements for the 100-year storm event.



- UTILITY NOTES:**
- COORDINATE PRECAST CONCRETE DETENTION VAULT LOCATION WITH STRUCTURAL PLANS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION
 - COORDINATE WALL AND FOUNDATION PENETRATION WITH PLUMBING AND STRUCTURAL PLANS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

STORMWATER SUMMARY

PROJECT AREA:	29,095 CF (0.57 Ac)
RELEASE RATE:	0.27 CFS/Ac
MAX. ALLOWABLE F:	0.180 CFS
EXISTING CONDITIONS:	
PAVEMENT:	23,910 SF
LANDSCAPE:	5,185 SF
PROPOSED CONDITIONS:	
PAVEMENT:	23,032 SF
LANDSCAPE:	5,410 SF
BIOINFILTRATION:	653 SF
RATE CONTROL REQUIRED:	7,736 CF
VOLUME CONTROL REQUIRED:	980 CF
OVERFLOW ELEVATION:	14.03 CTD
FREELBOARD:	2.08'
100-YR HIGHWATER LEVEL:	12.03 CCD
DESIGN HEAD:	0.54'
UPPER HALF-TRAP INVERT:	5.16 CCD
RESTRICTOR SIZING:	
RELEASE RATE:	0.100 CFS
RESTRICTOR:	3\"/>

Both the 2500 S Wabash and 2617 S Wabash improvements will be considered Regulated Developments per the Chicago Stormwater Ordinance and will be subject to meet stormwater detention requirements. For 2500 S Wabash, the property is proposing an underground stormwater vault below the building which will accommodate the 10-year storm event per Lot-to-Lot building regulations. For the 2617 S Wabash parking lot, an underground stormwater vault is proposed with an at-grade rain garden to accommodate both rate and volume control requirements for the 100-year storm event.

\$30,000,000 Direct Private Capital Investment into Bronzeville
No City or State Financial Incentives for the Project
Estimated 126 FTE's into Bronzeville

Future Public Financial Benefits

- **\$28 million of New Direct Municipal taxes**
 - **Direct Economic Impact of \$420 million**
- **Indirect Economic Impact of over \$900 million**

- **Collaboration with Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership to create Bronzeville job hiring opportunities**

26% Participation from Qualified Minority Business Enterprises
6% Participation from Qualified Women Business Enterprises
50% Participation from Chicago Residents



- Partnership with IIT to establish the Bronzeville Esports League to help educate and expose Esports to kids (6th grade through high school) on the south and west side of Chicago.
- Commitment to connect Surge, IIT and the Bronzeville community together and promote art, technology and Esports.
- Commitment to impact Drake Elementary, National Teachers Association and Phillips H.S. first.
- Commitment to continue working with CPS on the CPS Esports Framework.

COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT OF SURGE ESPORTS STADIUM

- **Bronzeville Lofts**
- **Business Leadership Council**
- **Columbia College**
- **DePaul University Esports**
- **Illinois High School Esports Association: State-wide venue discussion IIT**
- **Moody Tongue Brewery**
- **Near South Planning Board**
- **Project SYNCERE**
- **Robert Morris College**
- **Roosevelt University**
- **Ryan Banks Academy**
- **TMG Management (Developer of 2550 South Wabash)**
- **University of Illinois-Chicago**

COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT OF SURGE ESPORTS STADIUM



9012 S. Stony Island Ave
Chicago, IL 60617
773-982-8261
856-997-9294
www.projectsincere.org

September 18, 2019

Alderman Dowell
5046 South State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60609

RE: Project SYNCERE Support Letter for:
Proposed Chicago ESPORTS Stadium
2500 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago

Dear Alderman Dowell:

I am pleased to write to you on behalf of SMASH Interactive, SMASHotels and Mr. Scott Greenberg and his esports stadium Co-Founder Mr. Chris Lai, and their efforts to seek zoning approval to construct a Chicago ESPORTS Stadium, in your ward, at 2500 South Wabash.

I am the Co-Founder and President of Project SYNCERE (Supporting Youth's Needs with Core Engineering Research Experiments) and I live in your ward.

Over the past decade, PROJECT SYNCERE has created meaningful partnerships with the Chicago Public School community by delivering engineering focused programming and, in doing so, has touched underserved neighborhoods on the south and west sides and inspired nearly 20,000 youth to see themselves in engineering and STEM careers.

I founded Project SYNCERE with two other African American men who, in the prime of our engineering and finance careers, saw a need to create opportunities for youth of color to gain entry into STEM fields. Project SYNCERE gives practical "ENpowerment" that guides black and brown children to see themselves as necessary contributors to the world.

For over three years, Scott Greenberg, together with SMASHotels, has been an important engaged partner and sponsor for Project SYNCERE, ensuring the success of our Chicago-centric mission to benefit underserved Chicago youth. In addition, for the past three years, Scott Greenberg has been an active, authentically engaged board member for Project SYNCERE. He continues to drive thoughtful leadership through his involvement on the board in support of our community of students.

Chris Lai, the Co-founder of SMASH-Interactive, is a product of CPS. For Chris, the idea of giving back to the Chicago Schools is also very important to him. In 8th grade at CPS, Chris Lai benefited from CPS partnerships with local museums and universities by attending robotics camps that sparked his interest in engineering.



50 East 26th St. Chicago, IL 60616-6939

Mr. Scott Greenberg, Co-Founder
Smash INTERACTIVE

Sent via email to scott@smashinteractive.com

Dear Scott,

On behalf of the entire community of unit owners at Bronzeville Lofts, we enthusiastically support the concept you and Chris presented to us for SURGE.

We greatly appreciate that you and Chris met with our Association on two occasions to explain the concept and design of facilities; and modified aspects of the design to address concerns we expressed. Clearly, you and your organization are committed to this very significant investment in our community, and to do so with a philosophy of being a "good neighbor" to those of us who have chosen to live here.

As a very happy consequence of executing your plans, two of the most unattractive parcels in our community (an industrial truck parking lot and a poorly designed and maintained taxi storage facility) will disappear.

We appreciate specifically that the lighting scheme for both the SURGE buildings on Wabash and the parking facility on 26th incorporate by timing and design lighting that will provide eye pleasing "glow" off the building and parking lot lighting that avoids light pollution. Further, your commitment to turn down or turn off lighting after business hours will make for a continuing pleasant environment for our residents.

SURGE's operations will also contribute positively to the sense of "life" and positive activity on the walkways near our homes; adding to our sense of community and safety as we come and go. We also look forward to the enhanced street scape around the SURGE properties.

Finally, the cachet that SURGE's operations brings a wide range of professionals into our community during business hours, as well as enthusiastic e-gaming competitors to our corner of the world adds an exciting element to further connect us to a cutting edge technology that promises many possibilities for us.

Thanks for reaching out to Bronzeville Lofts. We wish you and Chris great success with this endeavor.

Sincerely,

John Alberts, President of the Board



(312) 628-7844 | info@BLCchicago.com
150 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2400 Chicago, IL 60601
Lead Responsibly www.blcchicago.com

March 1, 2021

The Honorable Patricia Dowell
Alderman, 3rd Ward
5046 S. State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60609
Via Email: Ward03@CityofChicago.org

Re: Support of Smash Interactive and the Proposed SURGE Development Project

Dear Alderman Dowell,

On behalf of the Business Leadership Council (BLC), please accept this letter of support for the proposed Smash Interactive Surge Development (Surge) to be constructed in your ward at 2500 and 2540 S. Wabash Avenue.

Surge is a premier technology and entertainment company seeking an open and innovative technology-enabled enterprise on the near South Side. The founding partners of Surge are proven entrepreneurs, dynamic corporate stewards and multi-ethnic bridge-builders who recognize how essential diversity is to enhance and optimize commercial potential in local communities.

We believe this unique development will have a transformative impact on students, thought leaders, businesses, and other constituents within your ward. It is precisely what we need in our community to ensure that our residents are conversant with technology for work and play from the earliest possible ages.

BLC recognizes and shares your enthusiasm for the project and fully support your efforts to bring this exciting and impactful project to the Bronzeville community. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important endeavor.

Very truly,

Avis LaVelle
Executive Director

COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT OF ESPORTS STADIUM

DocuSign Envelope ID: SE084E19-1A76-453E-A103-0A3A46E3243D



CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP
A proud partner of the American Job Center network
 www.chicocookworks.org
 69 WEST WASHINGTON | SUITE 2860 | CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602 | TEL 312 603-0200 | FAX 312 603-9939/9930
KARIN M. NORINGTON-REAVES, CEO

February 8, 2021

Scott Greenberg
 Smash INTERACTIVE
 250 Parkway Drive, Suite 120
 Lincolnshire, Ill 60069

RE: Chicago Esports Stadium, 2500 South Wabash

Dear Mr. Greenberg:

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is pleased to write to reaffirm our support of SMASH Interactive's proposal to construct a Chicago Esports Stadium to be located at 2500 South Wabash.

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is the designated workforce development administrative agency for the City of Chicago and all of Cook County. As such we manage federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds and regional programs including services for job seekers ranging from individualized career planning to occupational training and job placement. Our work is performed through universally accessible, information-driven network of American Job Centers, delegate agencies and training providers.

SMASHotels and its Human Resources team has participated in more than six of our hiring events to date, including the flagship "100,000 Opportunities" initiative a national effort designed to decrease the number of unemployed young adults (ages 18-24) in Chicago. As an employer partner for the past four years, SMASHotels has not only hired people through The Partnership but the company has participated in focus groups and help shape our knowledge of the hospitality industry, thus bolstering our ability to successfully identify, train and place candidates in this sector.

Given our positive experience with SMASH companies in growing employment opportunities for Chicago residents, we would gladly support additional hospitality and high-tech entertainment jobs created by this latest SMASH venture.

Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership acknowledges that it would be an ideal organization to partner with as means to hire staff within the Bronzeville community. We are pleased that Smash INTERACTIVE remains committed to a partnership with Chicago Cook Workforce to hiring Bronzeville residents for the SURGE venue.

Please feel free to contact me at 312-603-0228 with any questions about our engagement with this employer.

Sincerely,

Karin M. Norington-Reaves

Karin M. Norington-Reaves
 Chief Executive Officer



1/20/2020

Scott,

Thank you for sharing your new development with me. I'm thrilled to see such an innovative and exciting project on this stretch of Wabash. I feel that all neighboring buildings, especially mine will benefit immensely from the young tech crowd you will be appealing to.

Please let me know if I can help in any way moving forward.

Regards,

Stuart Miller
 TMIG Management



401 South State Street, Chicago IL, 60605, (815)-261-2298, <https://robertmorris.edu>

Dear City Council,

On behalf of Smash Interactive, as the Director of Esports at Robert Morris University in Chicago strongly express the development value of a Surge Esports facility would bring to the community. Over the course of Robert Morris University Esports' six-year run, our program ranks as a top 15 esports collegiate team according to ESPN, spoken about esports over the course of several interviews with BBC, WGN, and ABC news, and have talked with several educational institutions throughout the country about the benefits esports provides to an institution and the community. Robert Morris University Esports looks forward to the creation of the Surge Esports facility as it will allow us to host more significant community events for local high schools to further our recruitment and create student life events for our entire student body. Additionally, the creation of the Surge facility would be beneficial for our students as it would utilize our esports students who primarily are working on a STEM degree.

The Surge esports facility can be a center for esports programs and clubs throughout the nation to play by working with collegiate tournament organizers and esports conferences such as Collegiate Star League (CSL), American Video Game League (AVGL), and Midwest Esports Conference, Big Ten Network, National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE), GGLeagues, National Collegiate Esports (NCE), Illinois High School Esports Association (IHSEA), Wisconsin High School Esports Association (WIHSEA), Esports Trade Association (ESTA), Esports Awards, Collegiate Esports Federation, SixtySix Games, Riot Scholastic Association of America, and Blizzard's Collegiate Tespa tournaments to name a few. Supporting these tournament organizers and esports conferences provide a stage for industry leaders to want to come to Chicago to further expand the space and invest not only in Chicago but the Midwest as well. Outside of the collegiate aspect, the construction of the Surge Esports facility has a pull for professional organizations as well.

The construction of the facility will attract and establish relationships with professional teams in the industry, thus making Chicago a beacon in today's modern entertainment esports industry. Esports professional organizations such as NRG who have on their board of advisors: Shaquille O'Neal, Alex Rodriguez, Michael Strahan, Jennifer Lopez & Marshawn Lynch are those who would support and be interested in cities who recognize and support the creation of an esports facility. Furthermore, as supported by a 2018 Goldman Sachs report by "2022 esports will outnumber audiences of the NHL and MLB, with 79% of the demographic being under the age of 35", thus utilizing modern consumers within the Chicagoland area as traditional sports tend to have audiences on average of 56 years of age or older. Additionally, traditional team owners such as Robert Kraft of the New England Patriots purchased a franchise slot for the video game Overwatch for 20 million dollars. The application and expansion of the esports industry continue, and it is up to cities to adapt to the industry to engage and utilize the young workforce or lose out on recent college graduates and a booming industry. Local universities believe, the right decision will be made to help instill athletics, academics, and career development further in the Chicagoland area by recognizing esports as a boon of the utilization of an untapped workforce in our community by approving the establishment of the Surge Esports Facility.

2533 W. FULLERTON AVENUE | CHICAGO, IL 60647

Sincerely,
 Michael Wisnios
 Director of Esports
 Robert Morris University

COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT OF ESPORTS STADIUM



Office of the
Executive Vice President
1 East Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604-2287
312/362-6695
FAX: 312/362-6822

February 26, 2020

Maurice D. Cox
Commissioner, Planning and Development
City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle St.
10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Commissioner Cox:

On behalf of DePaul University, I would like to offer additional information regarding a proposal for a brick and mortar gaming facility in the Motor Row area of Chicago. DePaul has long-standing programs in gaming. The game design, game programming, and animation programs are nationally ranked. DePaul students have competed and recreationally gamed through gaming-focused student clubs for several years. The March 2018 inaugural BIG EAST esports tournament spurred the expansion from that foundation to a university-wide initiative to increase student engagement, career readiness, and academic research by embracing students' enthusiasm for gaming. The adoption of four pillars – academics, inclusion, leadership and entertainment – guided the expansion and directs the continuing growth of DePaul's esports initiatives.

In December 2019, the BIG EAST Rocket League Tournament was held at OS Studios, a brick and mortar gaming venue in Manhattan. That experience reinforced our expectation that a physical gaming venue is important for establishing Chicago as the Midwest gaming hub for two reasons.

First, we see the value to Chicago that the venue and technology of a facility. For the Rocket League Tournament, we traveled to New York to compete against nine other BIG EAST Conference institutions. Locally, we compete with other Midwest colleges, but often have to travel to other parts of the state or region for in-person competition. If such a facility existed in Chicago, it could easily become a hotbed of competition for the esports and gaming community. The turnkey nature of the space is much more appealing than the current option of scheduling and transforming an existing venue for an esports event. The current option is cost-prohibitive for an institution like DePaul to host a BIG EAST or Midwest collegiate tournament or a tournament for Chicago high school esports teams. A local gaming venue offers a straightforward and affordable approach to pursue such events.

★ DPD Recommendations

- The proposed development is in compliance with the Planned Development Standards and Guidelines (17-8-0900 & 17-13-0609-A);
- The proposed underlying zoning (C2-3) is consistent with other zoning districts, both adjacent to this site and in the immediate area;
- Promotes economically beneficial development patterns that are compatible with the character of existing neighborhoods (17-8-0103);
- The project promotes safe and efficient circulation of pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles (17-8-0904-A-1); and
- The proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding area in terms of uses, density, and building scale (17-13-0609-B).

