
ALTERNATIVE 7

ALTERNATIVE 7:
A COMMENTARY ON URBAN SEPERATION AND UNATURAL TOPOGRAPHY

William Stonehouse

Master of Architecture Thesis
University of Detroit Mercy
School of Architecture
Noah Resnick
4.24.2015

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings strive to separate themselves from one another. constructs, both material and immaterial act as facilitators of separation: walls, labels, borders and barriers all deny the irony of human existence. On an infinitesimal level human beings have a need to connect.

A synapse is a small gap at the end of a neuron that allows information to pass from one neuron to the next. An electrical impulse travels down the axon of a neuron, and triggers the release of neurotransmitters. These chemical messengers cross the synaptic cleft and connect with receptor sites in the next nerve cell.

Within the human brain trillions of these connections fire ever second. Sending signals into our nerves into our muscles and limbs all over the body to create the human being as we know ourselves. It is on this infinitesimal level that the human being has the need to connect. We are made of connections.

Humanity has articulated itself in order to create a connection with one another. What have we agree about ourselves? A man, woman, or child of the species Homo sapiens, distinguished from other animals by superior mental development, power of articulate speech, and upright stance. Within the basic definition of a human being exists a form of connection: speech. A relationship

in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else is the result of humanities need to understand and interact with each other.

How is human connection experienced?

In sprawling cities across vast stretches of space humans have cut and broken their once great answers to isolation and separation. Through this pathological need to bring more into a city, it has become inherently cut apart by vast freeways and unending deserts of asphalt and painted concrete.

Communication city wide and interpersonal has developed into immaterial relationships of isolation. Convenience has successfully replaced the need for congregation. What role can architecture have in the re-stimulation of human and urban interaction? Using the template of the mind to achieve this human reconnection, architecture can examine a sense of community and connection. A program aimed at identifying how humanity experiences this connection with each other and how a new architectural form can be born from this.

11 ANALYSIS OF A HIGHWAY

Once stated the idea is challenged by its fallibility and through the process of justification the idea is made concrete and complete. What is the realm of this mental connection? What is the purity of this experience? The mind is the template for the experience of human connection. If one was to define the undefinable architecture of the mind what might it look like? Synaptic architecture is the exploration of a human connection within the fluctuating architecture of the mind. The joining of two points as if a synapse is created, what would an explosion of synaptic architecture look like? How would it feel? The mind is the only human organ to name its self and through this exploration, a self-defining architecture may evolve.

To understand and illuminate the influence the mind has on architecture and the influence architecture has on human interactions. Through this an improvement upon the concept of architecture as a connecting stimulant and the creation of a program that defines itself can be achieved. So first an exploration of how architecture and connection have evolved together is necessary to further this line of thought.

How has humanity organized the built environment around it? The city has a basic principle built within its foundation this is perhaps a radius, grid or organic design intended to create a population and community. The city

street itself has been designed as an uninhibited means of mobility without true psychological barriers. In this way the street exists catering to all forms of transportation. Though traditional used for vehicles the street allows free movement from the dwellers this freedom of movement has shaped the city creating an organic urban sprawl. The street flanks respond directly to the activity in-between. As the street loses restrictive qualities the building flanking it become more similar as the city grows evolving in a similar manner in response to the needs of the osmosis of society.

An exploration into the augmentation of built infrastructure became the vehicle through which this study into architecture and connection could be brought fourth. The brining down of a freeway is no simple matter due to their inherent transportation and physical prominence they exist as a negative and positive issue. Investigating if a freeway should be taken down has built-in fallibility as most issues will generate an antithesis simple though its creation. However within North America a number of freeways have been repurposed or removed despite opposition. Those that have not exist in a state of political and economic limbo. Of those few have potential for repurposing and the location to create new economic improvement in major US cities.

The Gardiner freeway (fig.01) is an

eight lane elevated expressway that cuts a swath through the heart of down town Toronto separating the central business district from the vital water front. As a result the water front has become an unutilized landscape with a rapidly growing city being held back from expansion by the Gardiner. The Gardiner exists as a prime candidate for review in the Center for New Urbanisms studies on freeway removal. Built to carry only 70,000 vehicles daily the freeway now accommodates a number vastly over its maximum capacity, servicing nearly 200,000 vehicles in 2008. Further hindering the economic situation the Gardiner cannot efficiently keep the flow of traffic moving at double its capacity and due to this is costing upwards of ten million in repairs per year. Behind this push for removal are the City of Toronto and the WATERFRONT Toronto, an economic growth corporation interested in the utilization of the untapped area on the water front. An II million dollar environmental assessment helmed by the City of Toronto was conducted to seek information on the ramification of a possible demolition.

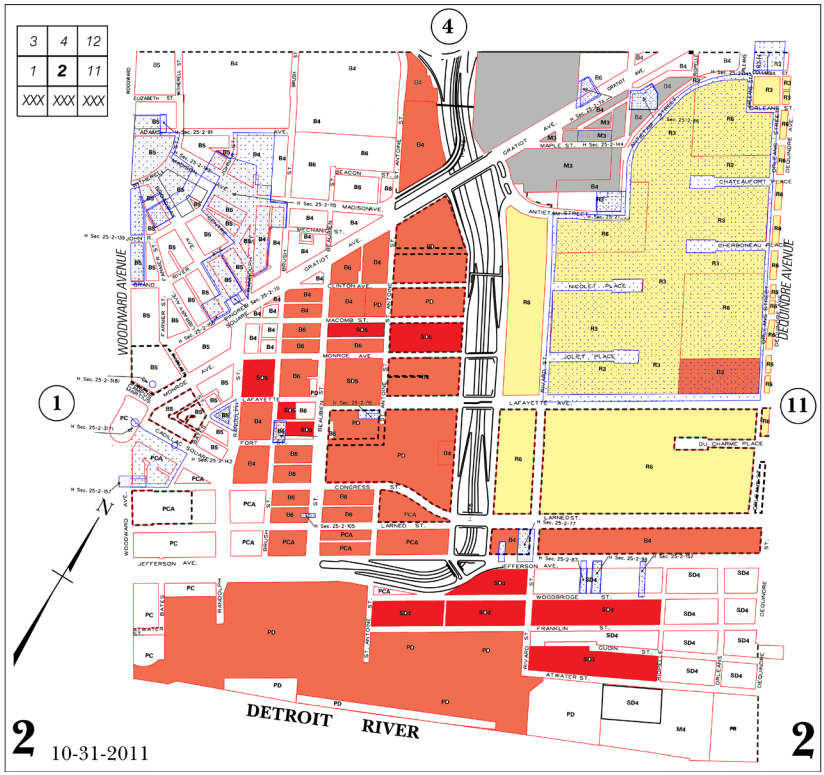
Like the Gardiner the Shoreway Highway (fig.02) exists in Cleveland Ohio and also constricts urban development though the separation of prime core land unreachable due to highway isolation. Unlike the Gardiner the Shoreway is underutilized only servicing 32,000 vehicles per day. The

(fig.01) Gardiner Expressway Toronto, Ontario

(fig.02) Cleveland Memorial Shoreway Clevland, Ohio

(fig.03) Interstate 375 Detroit, Michigan

freeway has a unique history being built in the post great depression era in 1938 using labor from the Works Progression Act. Over the course of the next decades the highway extended and expanded cutting of connection to neighborhoods in the Cleveland metro area. In 2003 a plan to convert 2.5 miles of the highway began negotiations but not progress was made until 2010. The eight lane highway, after public pressure was altered in 2010 in order to decrease the lanes to six. The project was intended to be completed in 2014, unfortunately inflation and unforeseen issues caused price projections to increase leading to a standstill. The City of Cleveland has petitioned the state of Ohio for the needed funds.



"Reimagining I-375: what's important what's not, in the debate," an article written by john Gallagher of the Detroit Free Press outlined a dialog between the powers of institution and the people of the state. The need for the American freeway was indeed a real need urban sprawl in the sixties warranted a mass transit system from the suburbs to the urban center and the freeway was the answer. However the question about whether building a superhighway that cuts through swaths of territory was a good idea has become more and more prevalent. But despite this there has been serious interest in the future of the freeway.

Gallagher writes several issues that need addressing in order to move forward with this process. To create a better connection to the Detroit river front which is currently separated from the city by GM parking lots and chain link fences. Improving this river area will promote better residential and commercial development. The final curve of the freeway intermingles with Jefferson Avenue and creates an amalgamated gridlock spilling 6 lanes of traffic from a surface street and a freeway into a one way delta. Currently the discussion on the future of the freeway continues to be one of isolation, a fitting metaphor for the district itself. Gallagher suggests integration into the cities greater public transportation issues in hopes that the project will integrate a large scale transportation solution. As the


(fig.04) I-375 North-East View from Jefferson Ave.


(fig.05) I-375 North-West View from Jefferson Ave.


(fig.06) I-375 West View from Chrysler Dr.

(fig.07) I-375 South-West View from Chrysler Dr.

(fig.08) Riverfront South View from Schweizer Pl.

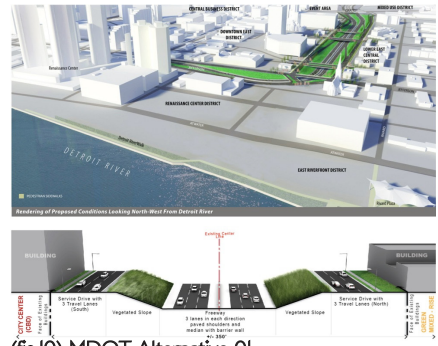
(fig.09) I-375 North View from Woodbridge st.

M-I gets underway the city hopes that it will be the first step in a new public transit system and integrating the 375 project only makes sense. Of course with any major infrastructure project the inherent opposition exists. Will the removal of the freeway create more benefits than problems? Commuter and business interest will fall on the side of retaining the freeway intact for the good of the transit faction. But is it better to promote a commuter lifestyle for major cities or rather promote an interest in walkability and residency. "In a city with a badly depleted tax base, should we rank new development that will bolster that tax base as more important than suburban commute times?" (Gallagher)

Asking the right question is the real truth to the argument for this project. Would travel times really be effected that much if the freeway was removed? Would noise reduction be a worthwhile reason for a major and expensive constriction project? "At the very least, we can improve I-375 by fixing its lower end, by recognizing that this concrete moat that defines downtown's eastern edge should be part of a larger system of transportation options, and that asking commuters to sacrifice a few extra minutes could lead to a greener, friendlier place for residents" (Gallagher)

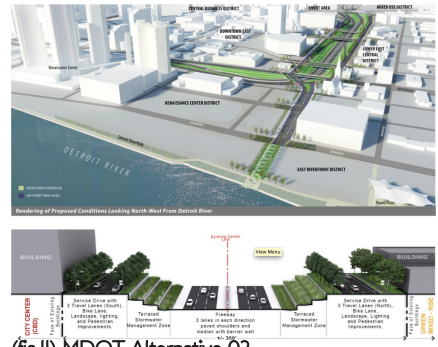
A collaboration between the Michigan Department of Transportation, The state of Michigan, the City of

Detroit, General motors corporation, the federal Highway administration and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation commissioned Parsons Brinkerhoff, a Detroit engineering form to produce six design alternatives for the augmentation of the I-375 freeway. This comes in the wake of recent public interest in the future of the freeway. Each of the six alternatives have different aspects that attempt to create a solution to the issue off I-375. The first alternative addresses one of the most glaring problems with the freeway and most roads in Michigan, its state of disrepair. For years now Michigan has had an issue with road maintenance and I-375 is no exception to the problem.



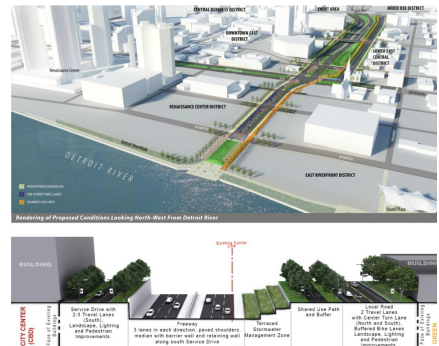
(fig.10) MDOT Alternative 01

The first alternative (fig.10) would seek to repair the decaying freeway and bring it back to a pristine state. The plan which is estimated to cost $60-70 million would reconstruct the mainline, services drives and bridges. As well as improve the southbound ramps at the Monroe/Lafayette streets and Larned/Jefferson streets. Though this alternative repairs the freeway it does little to nothing to fix the overarching urban design issue of freeway repurposing and only does a base design.

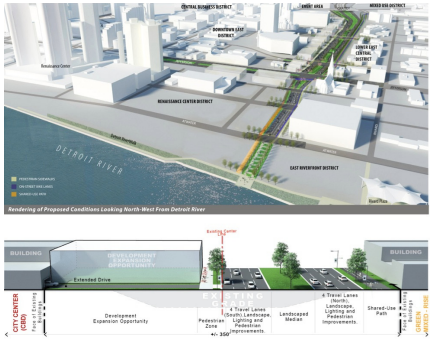


(fig.11) MDOT Alternative 02

The second alternative (fig.11) reconstructs the mainline, services drives and the bridges similar to alternative one. This alternative retains the aspects of the first alternative,



(fig.12) MDOT Alternative 03



(fig.I3) MDOT Alternative 04

(fig.I4) MDOT Alternative 05

(fig.I5) MDOT Alternative 06

including the improvements to the southbound ramps but improves other existing infrastructures at the Gratiot, Madison and St. Antoine intersections. Alternative two creates a connection to the river front by augmenting the Jefferson through fare by adding a spur that continues to Atwater. Adding bike lanes, alternative two creates a more pedestrian friendly experience. The bikes lanes continue along the north and southbound service drives. This alternative also improves landscaping and water management.

The third alternative (fig.I2) continues the trend of creating a direct connection to the river front district, but augments the existing structure in the extreme. The freeway is shifted to the west and a new retaining wall is to be built in order to narrow freeway width and lessen the distance between to districts. The Jefferson curve is eliminated and smooth connection from the depressed freeway is created. The river connection is further augmented with bike and pedestrian lanes. The northbound service drive is shrunk and a two lane bike path is created and used in tandem with storm water control. Along with pedestrian improvements along the services drives a new developable space, approximately 2 acres, will be created in the wake of the Jefferson curves removal.

Alternative four (fig.I3) creates a linear progression from the freeway into

the river connection surface street by raising the freeway to grade level. The alignment is shifted to east, closer to the residential district. The south bound service street is eliminated and new transitions to intersecting streets are created. The removal of the service drives allows for new developable area along the central business corridor creating 9.3 acres of buildable space. The shared use bike pedestrian path is moved toward the east side along the residential development.

Alternative five (fig.14) transitions the freeway into an at-grade green boulevard replacing the south and north bound services drives with the new boulevards. The northbound drive is converted into a two-way local street with bike lanes. The complete removal of the freeway gives way to a large green median and creates 8.3 acres of developable space along both the residential and commercial corridors.
The final alternative is by far the most ambitions of the redevelopment options.

Alternative six (fig.15) shifts the traffic onto newly widened services drives that integrate into the existing urban grid. The depression is retained and transformed into a temporary or permanent below grade space to be used as a multi-use trail. The most striking design aspect of alternative six is the potential; property reuse between the north and southbound

roadways and on the south of Jefferson avenue. This would create new buildable space above the depression yielding 11.6 buildable acres.

Four of the alternatives address only the surface issues with I-375 and don't engage the real issue. Merely repairing decaying infrastructure is not what the conversation is truly about but rather a dialog on thoughtful solutions to an issue that spans half a century and numerous political debacles.

Correcting the maintenance issues is not a lasting solution, regardless of the money required to repair the freeway a long-term road maintenance plan does not exist and repairing the freeway once would only act as a stop gap. Until the state of Michigan has actually legislature on state road repair the first alternative is moot. The second alternative starts a trend utilizing a connection to the Detroit river walk, as they seem to progress in an order leading to more aggressive and dynamic designs. The Second does little except for minor augmentation of the Jefferson curve and would only realistically cause more traffic issues since that curve already experiences serious traffic delays as is, adding another road connection would only exacerbate the issue. The first few alternatives seem to be base designs released as bare minimum options for the project to fall back on if a consensus is not reached on the more intuitive proposals.

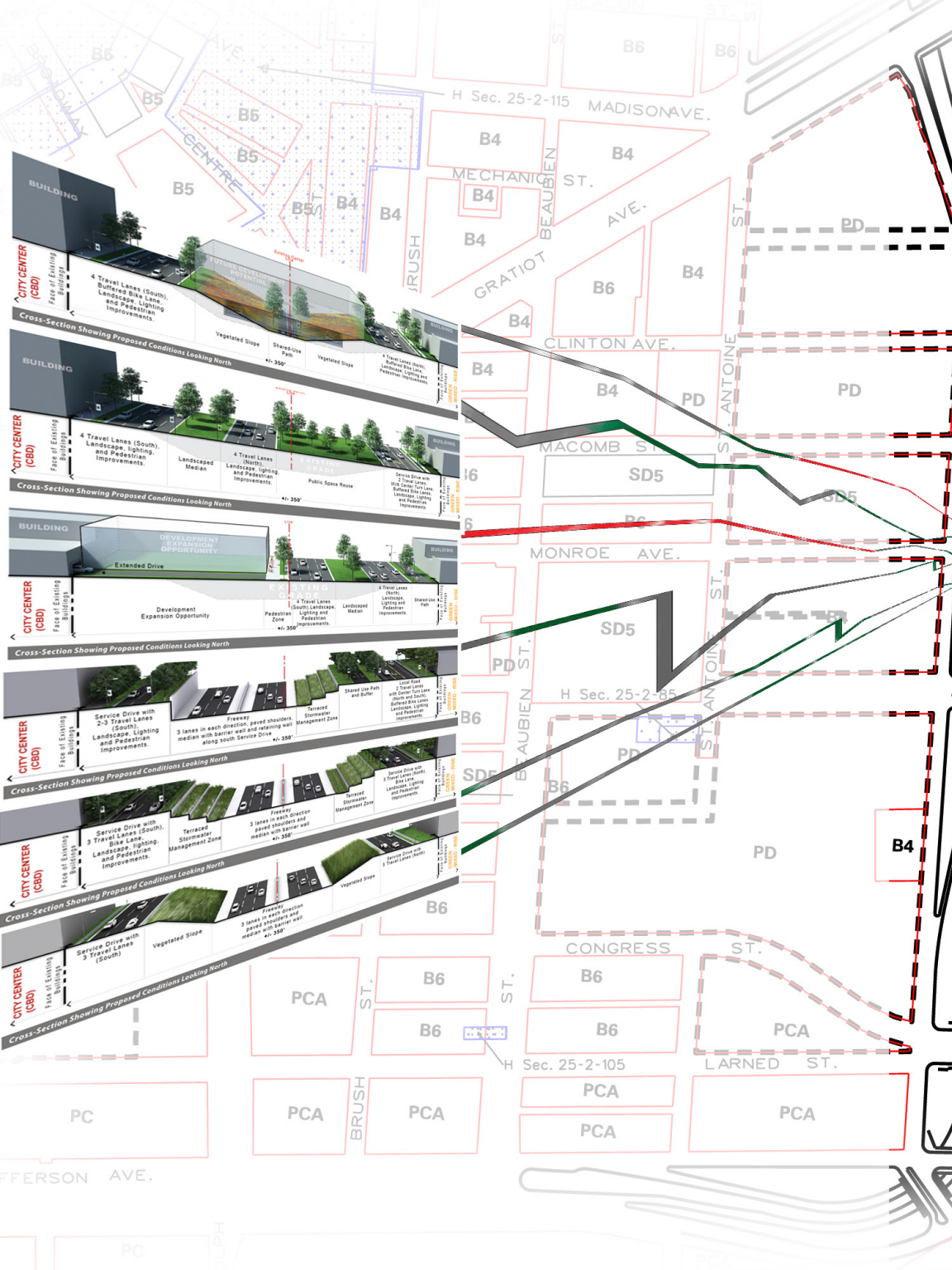
The third proposal is last to retain the freeway depression as a motor vehicle though fare. Instead lessening the width and creating a massive 90 degree retaining wall for water management. If the design intent of the project is to create a connection between the separated districts alternative three seems to initiate the exact antithesis. Creating a greater separation than what already exists. The creation of a literal wall will only reinforce the historical sigma on this site and promote a continued segregation.

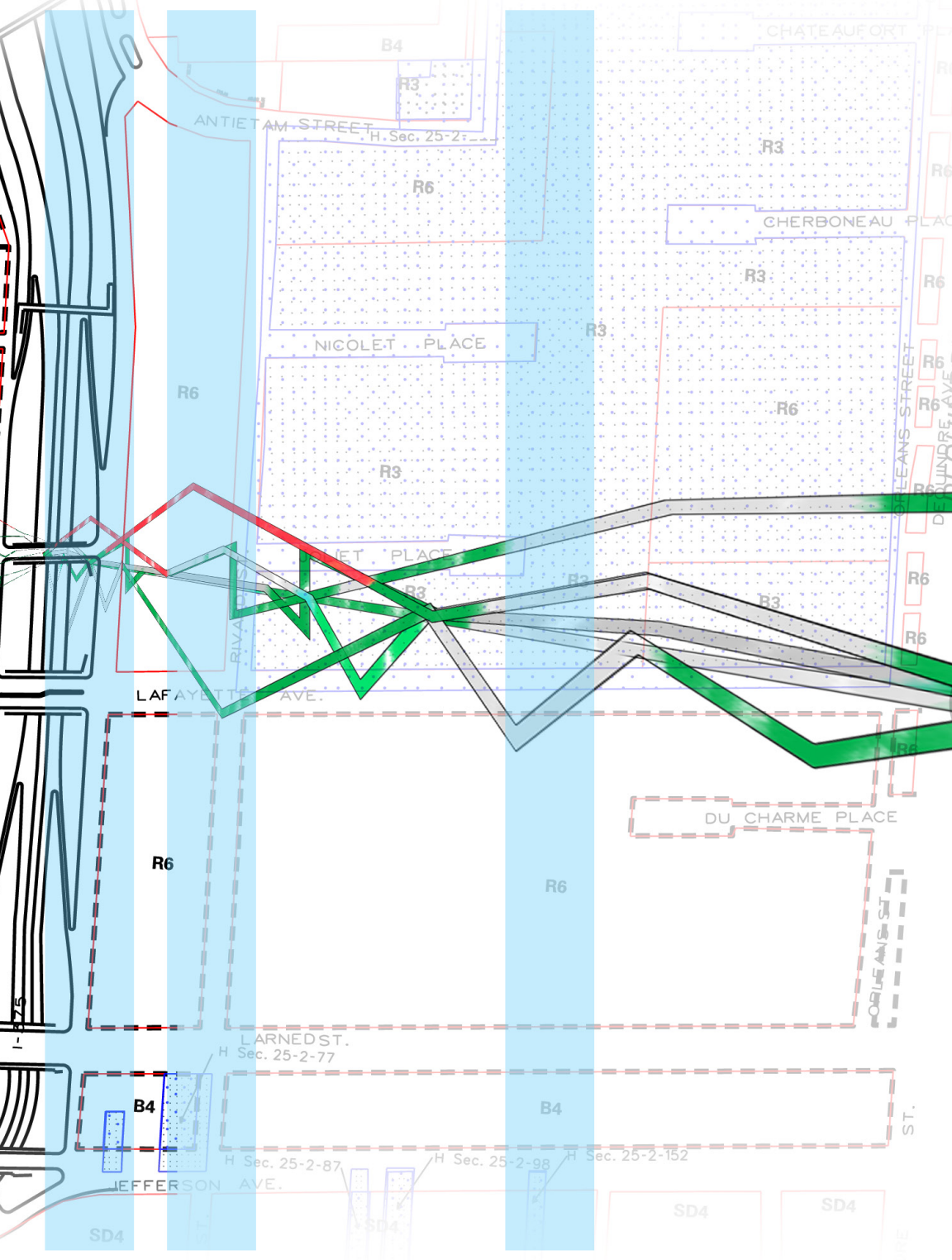
As to practically alternative four appears to create the most economically responsible design. Lessening the freeway and bringing it up to grade does have real potential for connection. The lost asphalt will be converted into developable space on the central business side of the street, an obvious choice given the existing conditions which include the Blue Cross blue Shield campus and the Greek Town casino. Both major institutions would be almost guaranteed to seize upon any new adjacent property.

Despite a clear spark of insight in alternative four the fifth alternative returns to a common trend in American urban design, the green scape. Though not inherently a negative option a green scape removes the opportunity for economic expansion in favor of usable space as three streets separate the districts and leave little freedom to

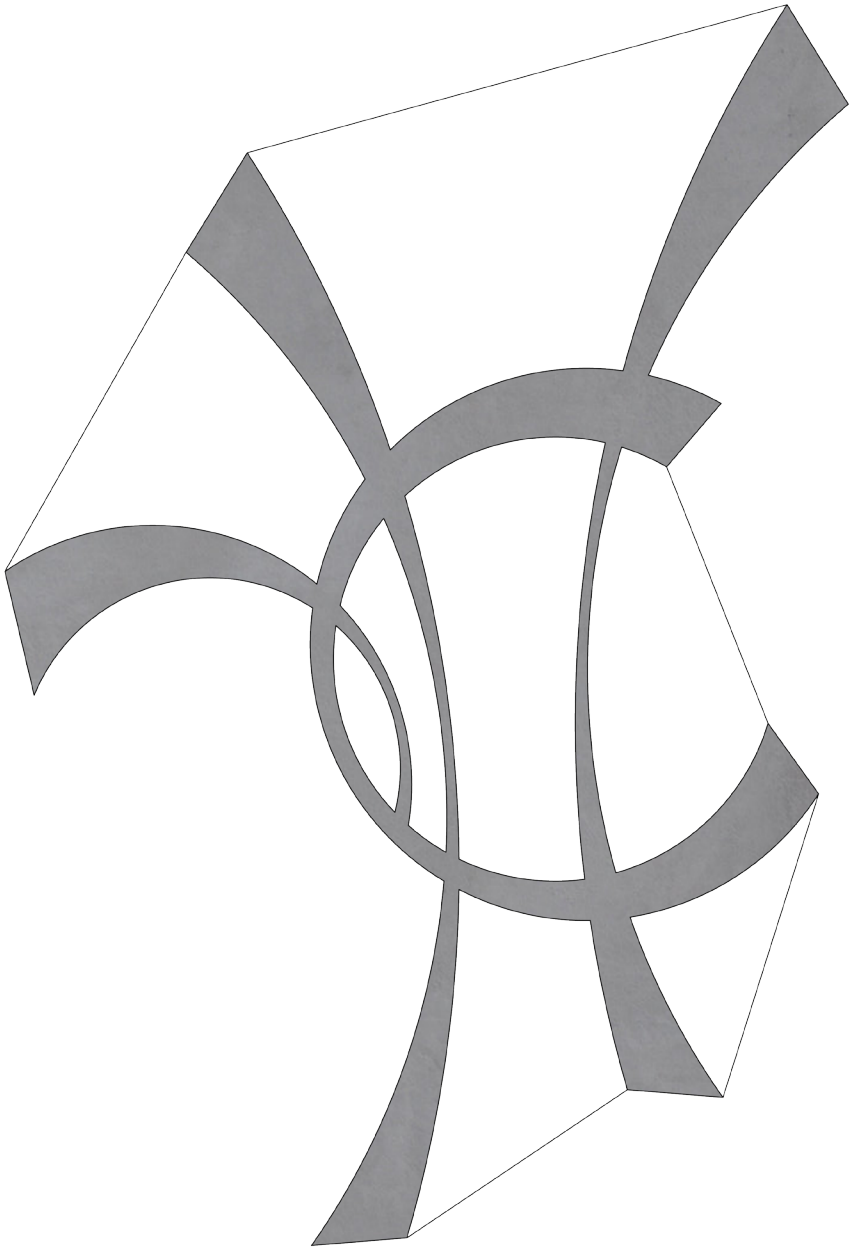
use the space recreationally.

By far the most inventive, the sixth alternative would retain the depression and change the service, the lower area would be converted into a pedestrian-bike lane below grade to avoid motor vehicle interaction. Above the depression new developable space would fill in the void between the districts and create a new strip of programmable area. This incorporates positive aspects from all previous alternatives and amalgamates them into a truly intriguing design. However this may be too underdeveloped, if the intent is to create a connection this would only remove all trace of history from the site and perpetuate a lack of understanding towards the past. Historical context and an allowance for natural economic growth allow for a more easily accepted intervention.


BUILDING
CITY CENTER (CBD)
Face of Existing Buildings
4 Travel Lanes (South), Buffered Bike Lane, Landscape, Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements.
Vegetated Slope
Shared-Use Path
+/- 350'
Cross-Section Showing Proposed Conditions Looking North
4 Travel Lanes (South), Landscape, lighting, and Pedestrian Improvements.
Landscaped Median
4 Travel Lanes (North), Landscape, lighting, and Pedestrian Improvements.
Public Space Reuse
Service Drive with 2-3 Travel Lanes (South), Landscape, Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements.
DEVELOPMENT EXPANSION OPPORTUNITY
Extended Drive
Development Expansion Opportunity
Pedestrian Zone
4 Travel Lanes (South), Landscape, Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements.
Landscaped Median
4 Travel Lanes (North), Landscape, Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements.
Shared-Use Path
Service Drive with 2-3 Travel Lanes (South), Landscape, Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements.
Freeway
3 lanes in each direction, paved shoulders and retaining wall and median with barrier wall along south Service Drive
+/- 350'
Shared Use Path and Buffer
Terraced Stormwater Management Zone
Local Road
2 Travel Lanes with Center Turn Lane (North and South), Buffered Bike Lanes, Landscape, Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements.
Service Drive with 3 Travel Lanes (South), Bike Lane, Landscape, lighting, and Pedestrian Improvements.
Terraced Stormwater Management Zone
3 lanes in each direction, paved shoulders and retaining wall and median with barrier wall
+/- 350'
Service Drive with 3 Travel Lanes (North)
Service Drive with 3 Travel Lanes (South)
Vegetated Slope
Freeway
3 lanes in each direction, paved shoulders and median with barrier wall
+/- 350'
H Sec. 25-2-115
MADISON AVE.
MECHANIC ST.
GRATIOT AVE.
BEAUBIEN ST.
BRUSH ST.
CLINTON AVE.
MACOMB ST.
MONROE AVE.
CONGRESS ST.
LARNED ST.
H Sec. 25-2-85
H Sec. 25-2-105
ST. ANTOINE ST.
CENTRE
B4
B5
B6
PD
SD5
PCA
PC



(fig.16) Alternative Analysis



SITE III

I-375 in Detroit has a unique connection not just in its separation of three regions, water front, central business district, and Lafayette Park but as its unique historical condition. Built in 1964 the freeway has a checkered history. The central business district and Lafayette Park have been separated by the freeway for over half a century. The history of this condition is one of political and prejudicial connotations. The site on which Lafayette Park exists was once Black Bottom, so named for its soil, a prominent African American neighborhood with a thriving retail district on Hastings Street, which makes up the foundation for I-375. Under prejudicial motives the need for a connecting highway from the city to the suburbs was built over Hastings Street and separated the lower income African American residential districts from downtown Detroit. The removal of the freeway would bring these to separate districts back together after 50 years. Due to the uniqueness of the site a thoughtful understanding intention is necessary to truly create a lasting connection between these regions.

What defines a connection?

The edge must exist to understand a separation a void space exists between two points and on some level a stasis must be interrupted. A connection. The edge is what defines all that exists. It creates order and imposes boundaries on a system

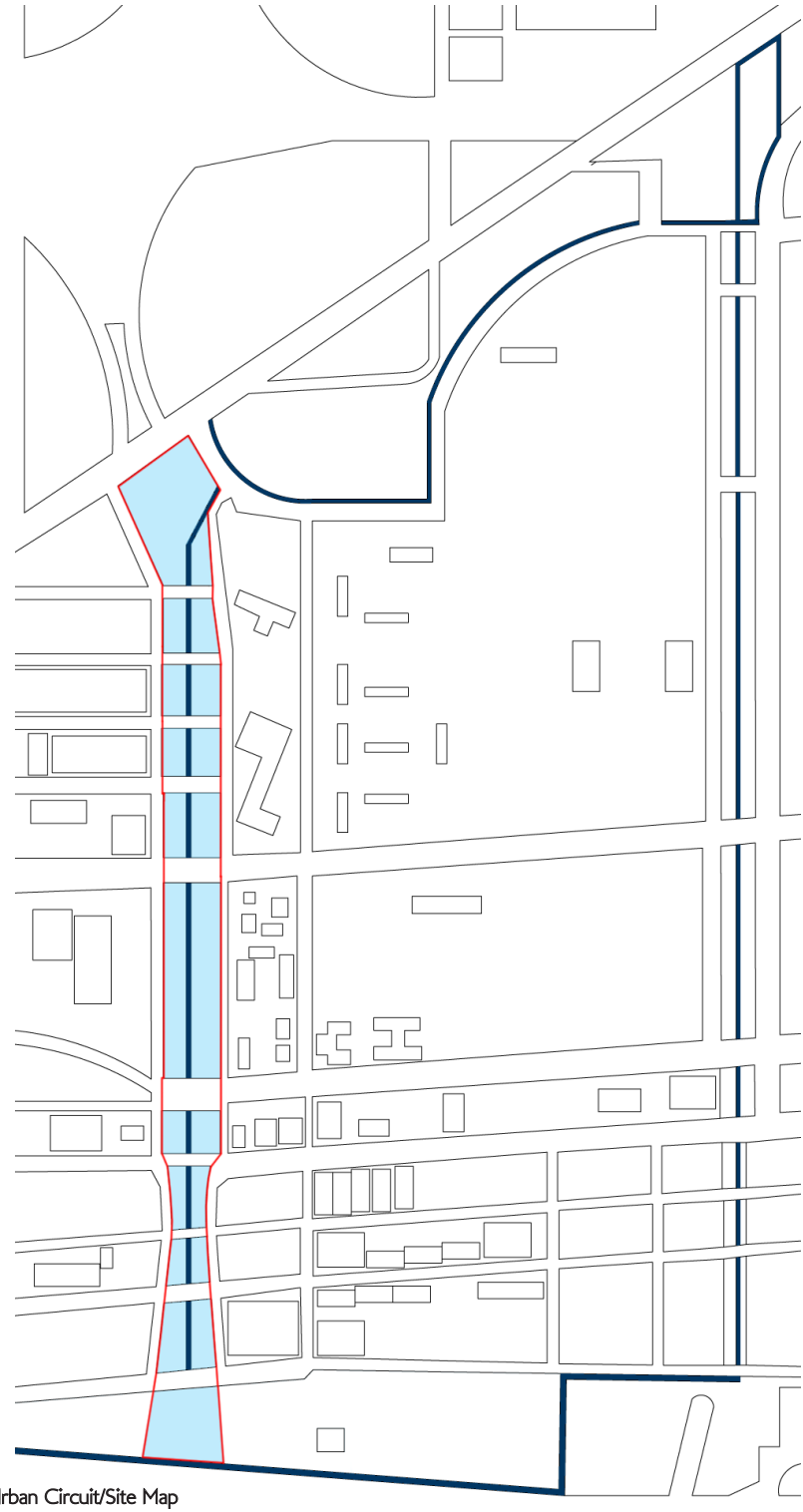
(fig.17) Dequindre Cut


(fig.18) Site Gratiot Ave. to Detroit River

MOLLY LN
NICOLET PL
JOLIET PL
CHRYSLER SD S
CHRYSLER SD N

to create order. It is in this void that the concept of connection must be explored. What makes up the edge? How should it be crossed? Or should it be crossed? In order to create an intervention that will understand and facility connectivity in an area of such history the edge must be treated with just as much study.

Though it defines borders and creates a separation the fence is perhaps the most well know system of control and separation in the urban realm. A device whose sole purpose is to separate, to keep out. Can the idea of edge or separation be redefined to a point where the edge exists but it does not appear as one? Or can the edge instill a sense of separation and definition but at the same time convey connection?

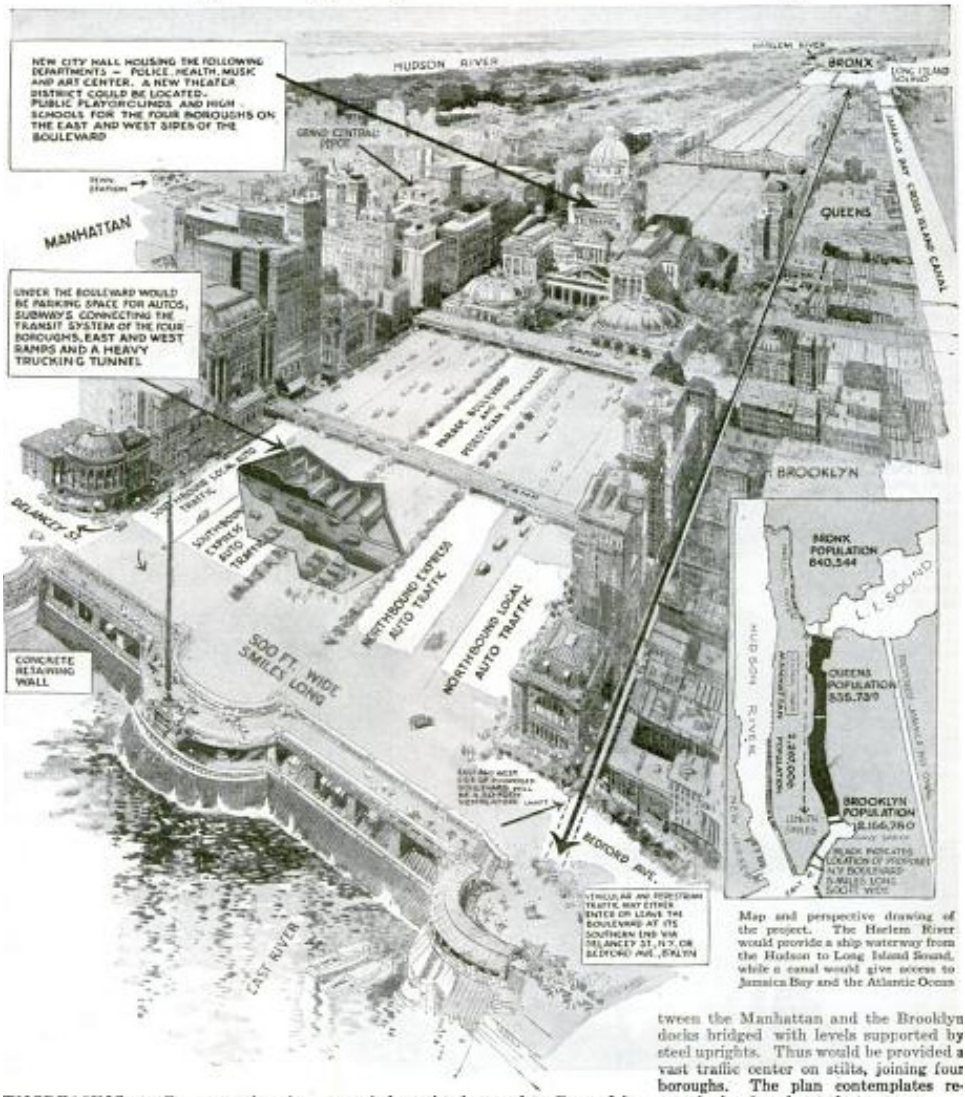


(fig.19) Urban Circuit/Site Map

IV PRECENDENTS

Plan to Drain a New York River

Vast Engineering Project to Relieve Traffic Congestion



Map and perspective drawing of the project. The Harlem River would provide a ship waterway from the Hudson to Long Island Sound, while a canal would give access to Jamaica Bay and the Atlantic Ocean

INCREASING traffic congestion in Greater New York City, which is causing a loss estimated at more than 1,500,000 every day, recently called orth this vast plan of draining the East liver and converting what now is a busy vaterway into a five-mile system of auto-obile and motor-truck highways, sub-ay lines, parking spaces, and city centers.

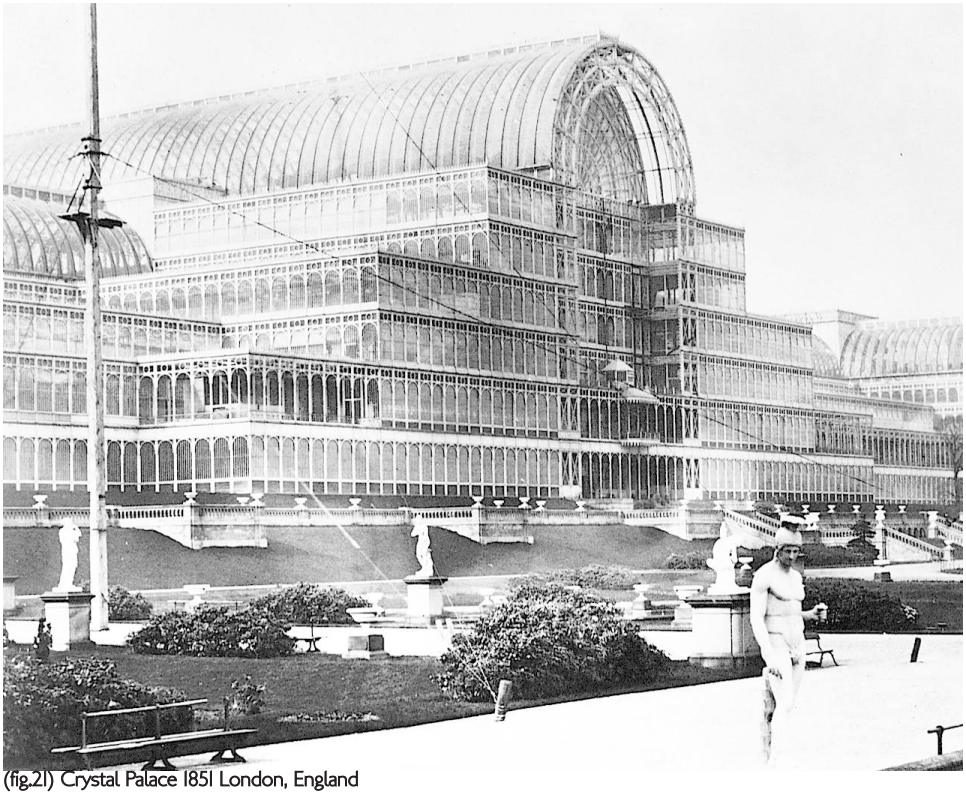
This particular idea comes from Dr. ohn A. Harriss, special deputy police commissioner in charge of traffic, and is under consideration by municipal authorities. If carried out, it undoubtedly will be one of the most tremendous engineering feats ever undertaken.

The project calls for erection of two concrete dams—one at lower Manhattan near the Williamsburg Bridge, the other where the Harlem River joins the East River near Hell Gate. The river then would be drained, and the 500 feet between the Manhattan and the Brooklyn docks bridged with levels supported by steel uprights. Thus would be provided a vast traffic center on stilts, joining four boroughs. The plan contemplates removal of noisy elevated structures.

From the river bed would be built subway lines, vehicular subway, taxi stands, conduits, city equipment departments, parking spaces, and private and municipal garages. On the top level would be five 100-foot boulevards for autos and pedestrians. Ramps would provide for cross traffic. And midway along the great thoroughfare would be erected an imposing city hall and community center.


(fig.20) Old London Bridge 1209

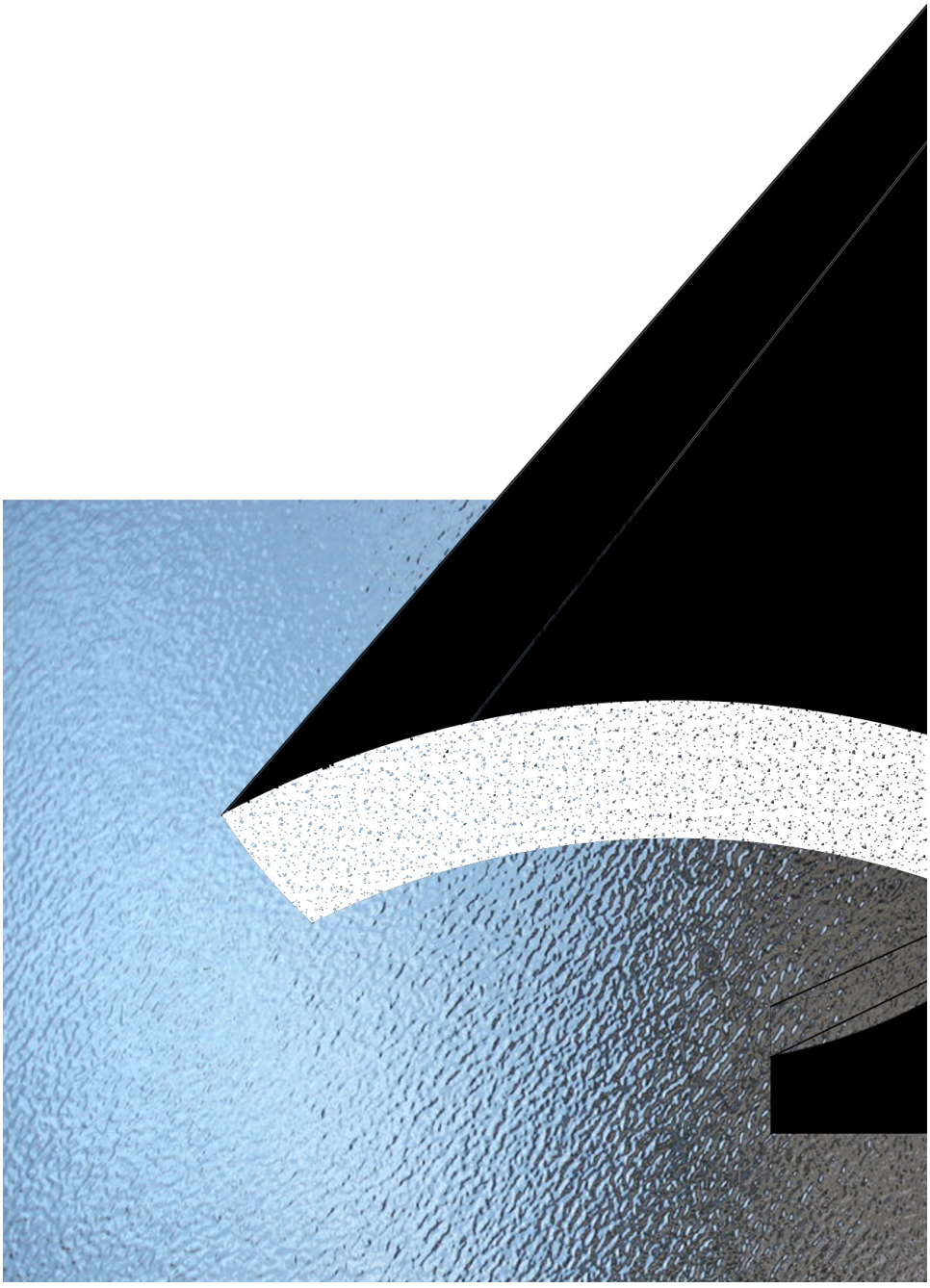
Architectural augmentation of infrastructure has deeps roots, one of note is the Old London Bridge built in 1209. Not to be confused with the other London Bridges as there were nearly half a dozen over the course of the millennia. The bridge of 1209 is by far the most augmented; the bridge began as a means of connection from one side of the Thymes to the other. At the time the Old London Bridge was London's sole crossing until the Westminster Bridge was completed in 1750. Commissioned after the existing bridge built by the romans began to deteriorate, it was designed to consist of 19 pointed arches with 24 foot spans to be spaced equally. However this was not to be and the spans greatly differed in reality. Though the bridge was only 46 feet wide it soon became not only a commercial crossing for the city of London but became a business and residential hub. The sides were augmented to accommodate shops with stories of residences above reducing the though fare to only 12 feet in a matter of years. Officially the 926 foot bridge had a total of 138 premises in 1358. By 1762 with the second bridge completed the urban growth on the bridge was again augmented. They buildings were removed and there bridge width was widened to its original 46 foot length.



(fig.21) Crystal Palace 1851 London, England

Joseph Paxton crystal Palace is an extraordinary example of contained program, a completely enclosed structure acting as a skin around an occupied interior space. The grand exhibition hall stretched 1,851 feet and encompassed nearly a million square feet. The space was used for exhibitions and the first World's Fair. The glass, steel and wooden structure spanned seventy-eight feet barrel vaulted roof and stretched one hundred and twenty-eight feet high at the peak of the arch. The entire glazing system and design was based upon the simple measurement of the glazing units, ten by forty-nine inches. The designs proportions and size are entirely extrapolated from this detail.

The intervention on I-375 will manifest solely within the confines of the freeway, ramps and the bridges of the infrastructure beyond that only a strip continuing the progression to the river walk will be augmented. The freeway structure and design will remain for the most part intact. The augmentation on a macro level will occur at the south river front connection where a series of parking lots and street intersections will need to be modified on order to facilitate a more fluid progression. While the northern streets: Mullet, Macomb, and Clinton will be extended to form new bridges that span the



V DESIGNED INFRASTRUCTURE

site. In order to act as a catalyst and encourage natural development and a totalitarian design will not be pursued. In lieu of raising the entire area to the ground and building up, a simple gesture designed to begin the process of healing will be instituted.

In an effort to augment the urban separation a new intervention will seek to reconnect humanity through the form of an Urban-motile catalyst and create a connection that will re-stiche and re- facilitate mobilities. The separation and isolation between districts can benefit g greatly from an intervention that seeks improve the quality of life, improve on infrastructure and create a potential for economic expansion.

The integration of an urban design element to allow for the ease of transition of the intervention will be instituted in the form of an urban circuit. Using the existing Dequindre Cut and the Detroit River walk a new "375 Cut" will be created below grade. The lower freeway will be converted into a bike pedestrian path mirroring the sunken rail-way path of the Dequindre Cut. The traffic will re-distributed onto the Chrysler service drives at grade. A new designated path will follow Arsenal Street from the terminus point of I-375 to the entrance to the Dequindre Cut. The 375 Cut will continue south and meet the Detroit River Walk perpendicularly, thus creating an urban circuit linking

both the residential eastern district and the western business district together on a macro scale and allow for a micro architectural invention to mingle within the I-375 site.

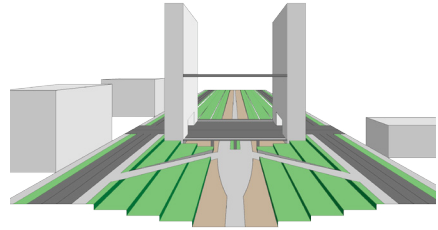
Initially the creation of green space at the north, south terminuses as well as in the central depression is intended to allow for an uninhibited osmosis effect. The southern park will act as an extension of the already existing park space just to the east of the intervention. This will allow for a seamless transition from park to urban space. The central park will act a as a community space for residents immediately east of I-375 as they do not have unlimited access to the Lafayette Park green spaces and will also facilitate use from the Blue Cross Blue Shield campus, who has made an effort to encourage employee use of outdoor spaces. The northern most parks will act as a second community space and serve as a focal point for interaction from its bordering parcels: Crain Communications office park, Greek Town entertainment district, and Eastern Market.

Striving to create a connection element that retains the concept and history of the edge a sketch problem evolved using the void space of the freeway-bridge. Intended to retain the physical qualities of the freeway the intervention would manifest as vertical mega-structures on the seven bridges of the freeway. Acting as programmable space that would draw residents and commercial interests the intention entered around physically bringing the districts together without

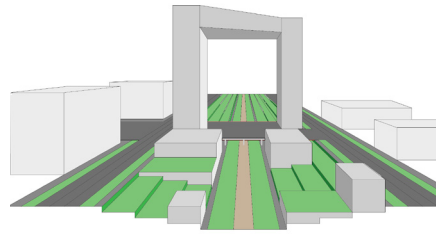
eliminating the separating elements that define them.

Is a connection truly the meaning full solution to the issue on I-375? Through the bridge sketch problem investigated a design that allowed the depression to remain and allow for pedestrian traffic at any point. The design favored using the existing and built bridge structures as programmable space. Bridge structures were to act as vertical circulation in and out of the cut but were unable to justify a need for this vertical circulation as the cut could be accessed at any point, therefore designated vertical circulators were irrelevant.

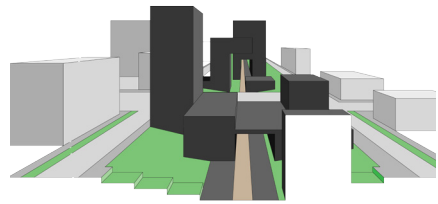
Can a wall be more connective than seven bridge structures? Can this structure expand to other freeways? Can it expand to encircle the entire city and promote a connection with the entire metro area?



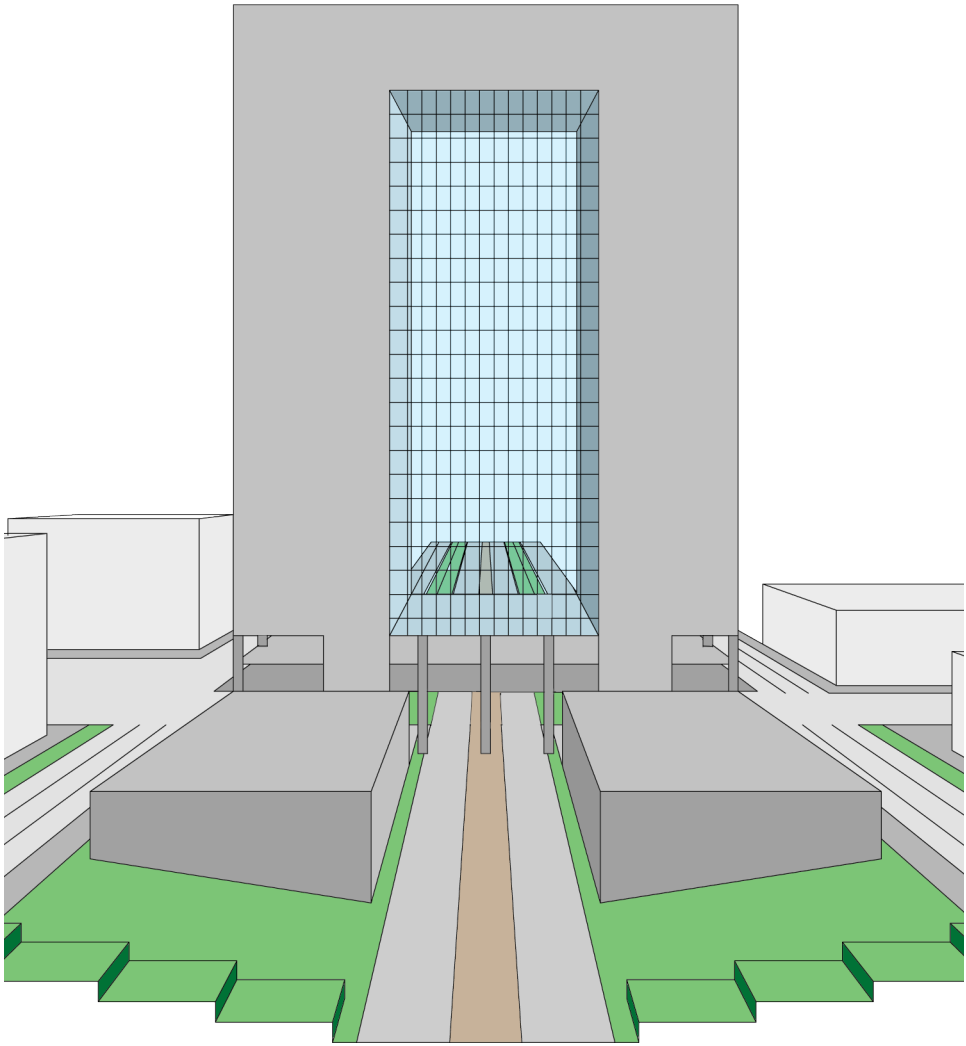
(fig.22) Bridge 01



(fig.23) Bridge 02

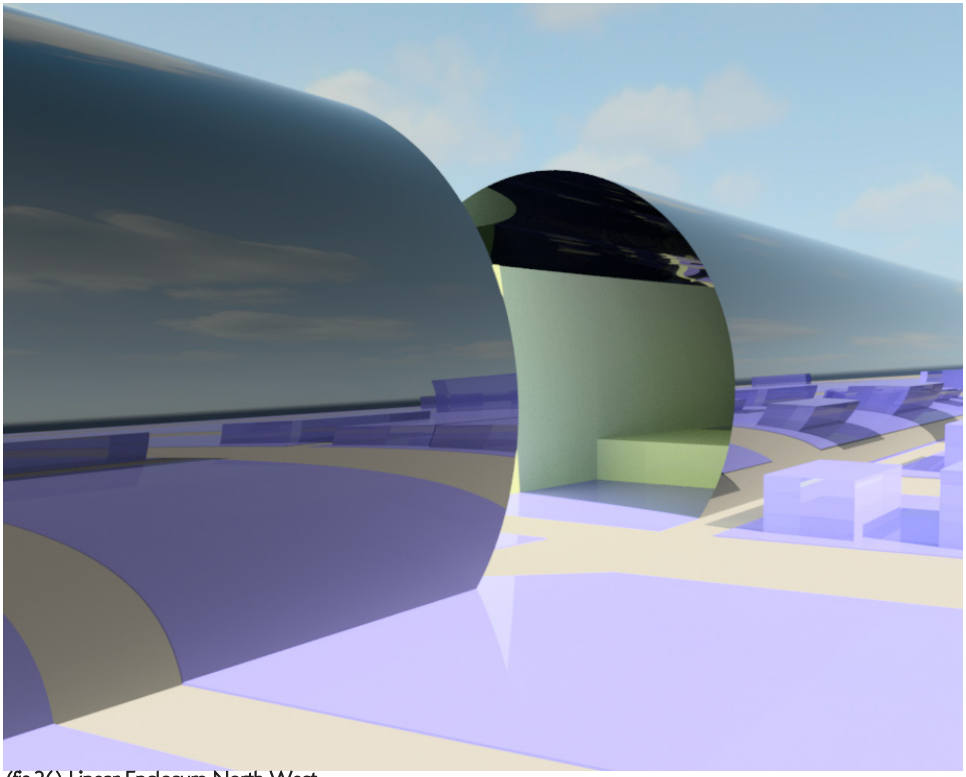


(fig.24) Bridge 04



(fig.25) Bridge 03

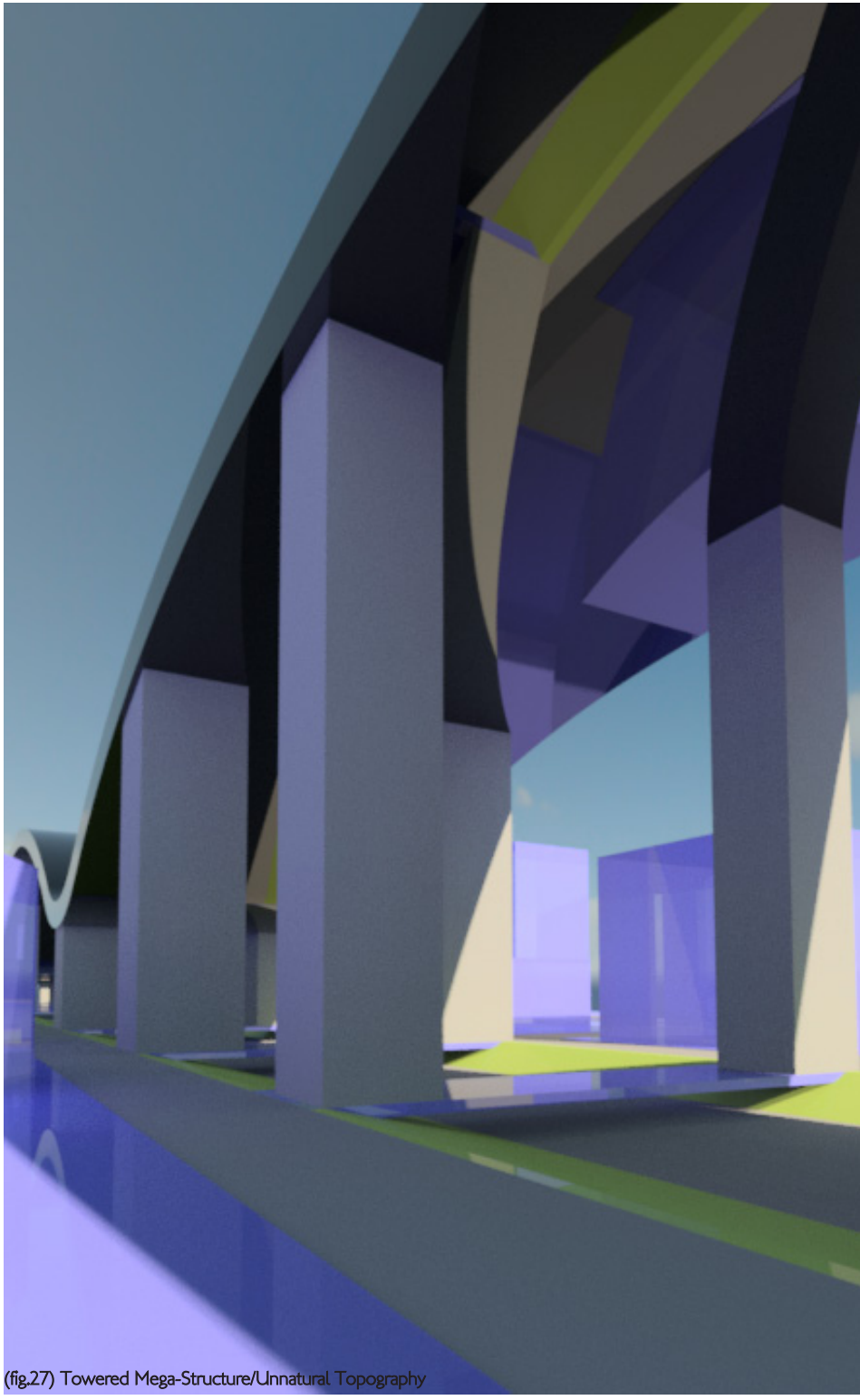
VI REFINED STRUCTURE



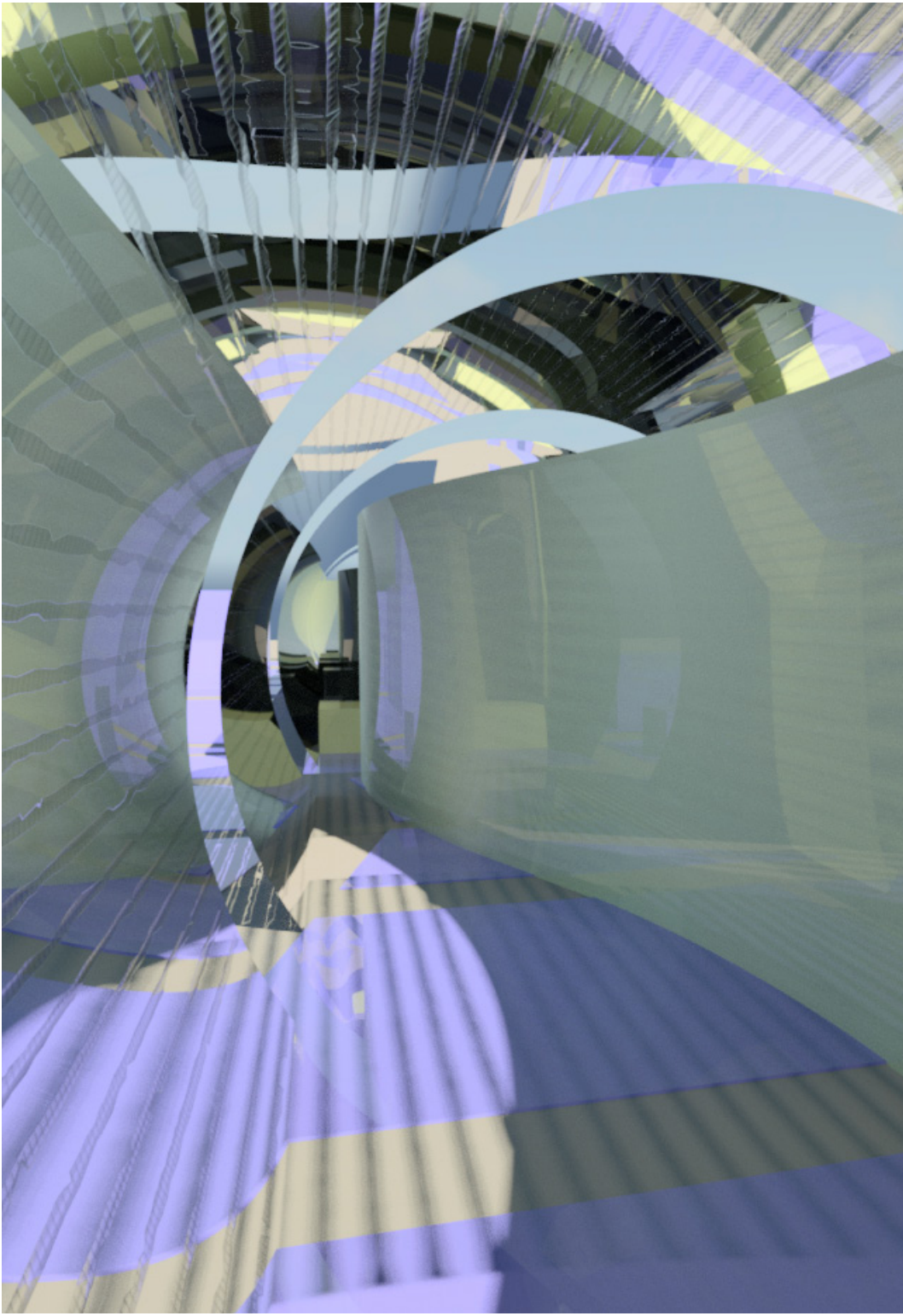
(fig.26) Linear Enclosure North West

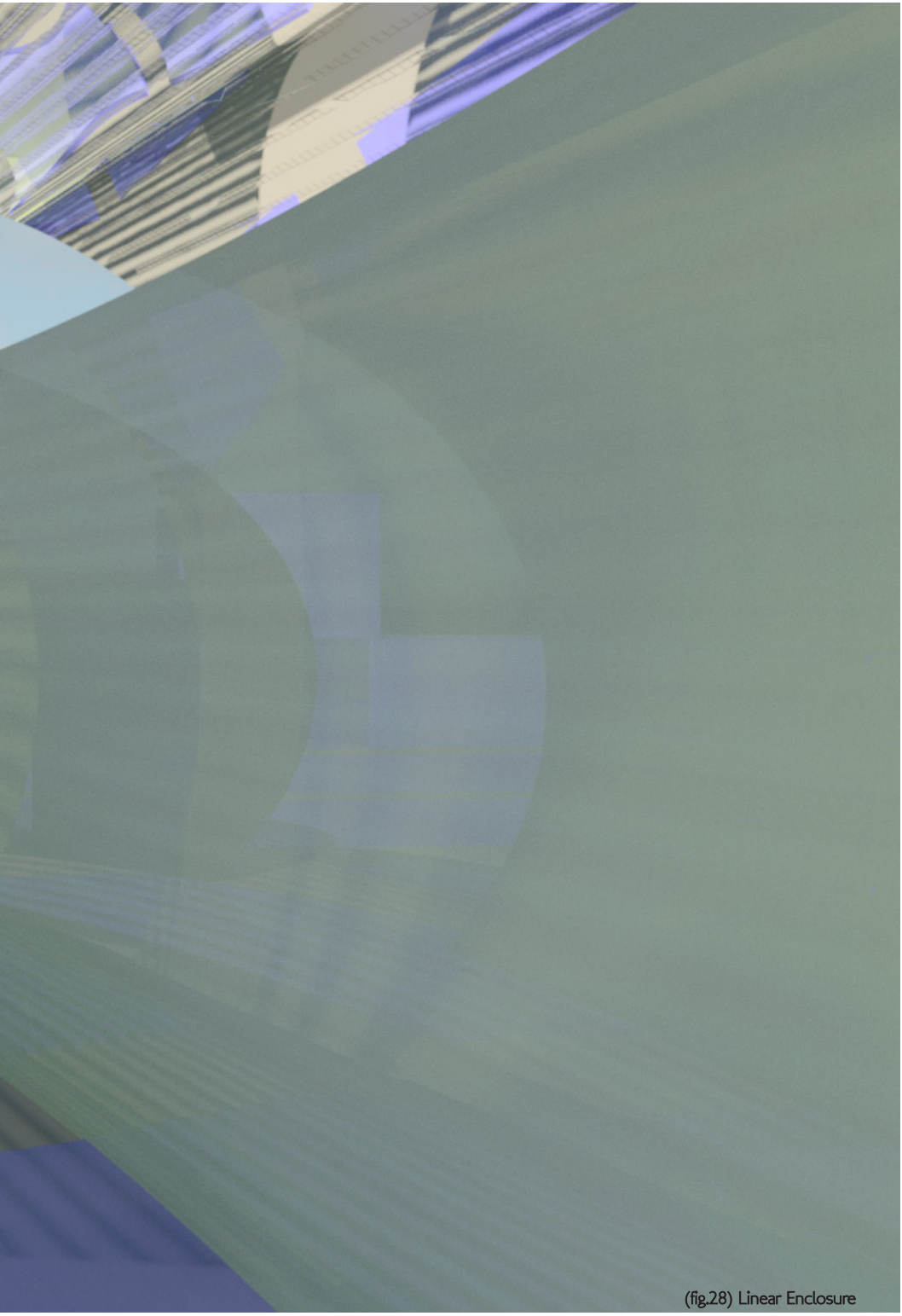
Monumentality is the channel through which the question on connectivity is conveyed. The MDOT alternatives were to a degree timid and did not seek to create a bold new design for the city of Detroit. No daring comprised the alternatives, a bold statement was needed a commentary on the architecture of infrastructure. The need for an outlandish design for I-375 would be needed, one that would spur conversation and higher involvement in a major development project in the city of Detroit, a design that would contrast the extreme modesty of the six alternatives.

A massive glass encapsulation, (fig.26) three hundred feet wide and three hundred feet tall, would contain a serpentine structure. The structure would snake from Gratiot Avenue to the river from creating a monumental connection the entire breadth of the I-375 site. The serpentine structure would rise one hundred feet and contain all the programming for the intervention. The glass enclosure would act as a massive greenhouse allowing for year round occupancy of the exterior/interior spaces with the intervention. In the summer time the glass skin could be retracted to a degree to allow for ventilation and addition unrestricted access.



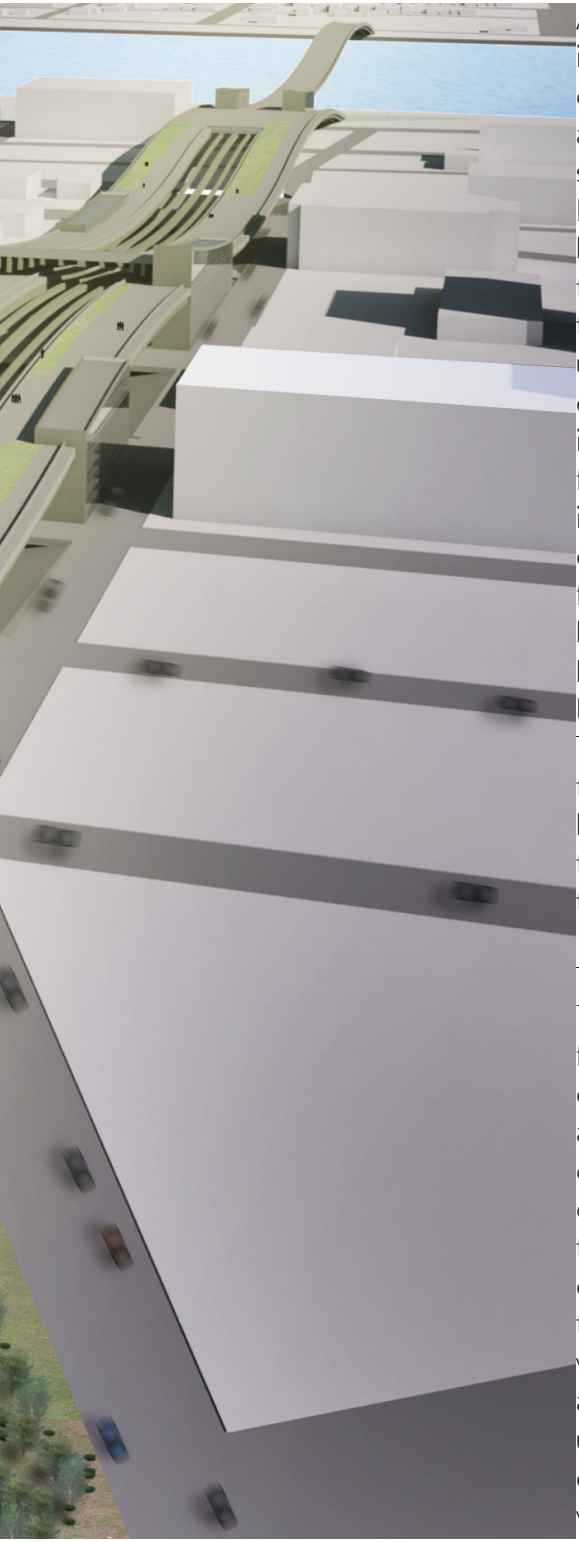
(fig.27) Towered Mega-Structure/Unnatural Topography





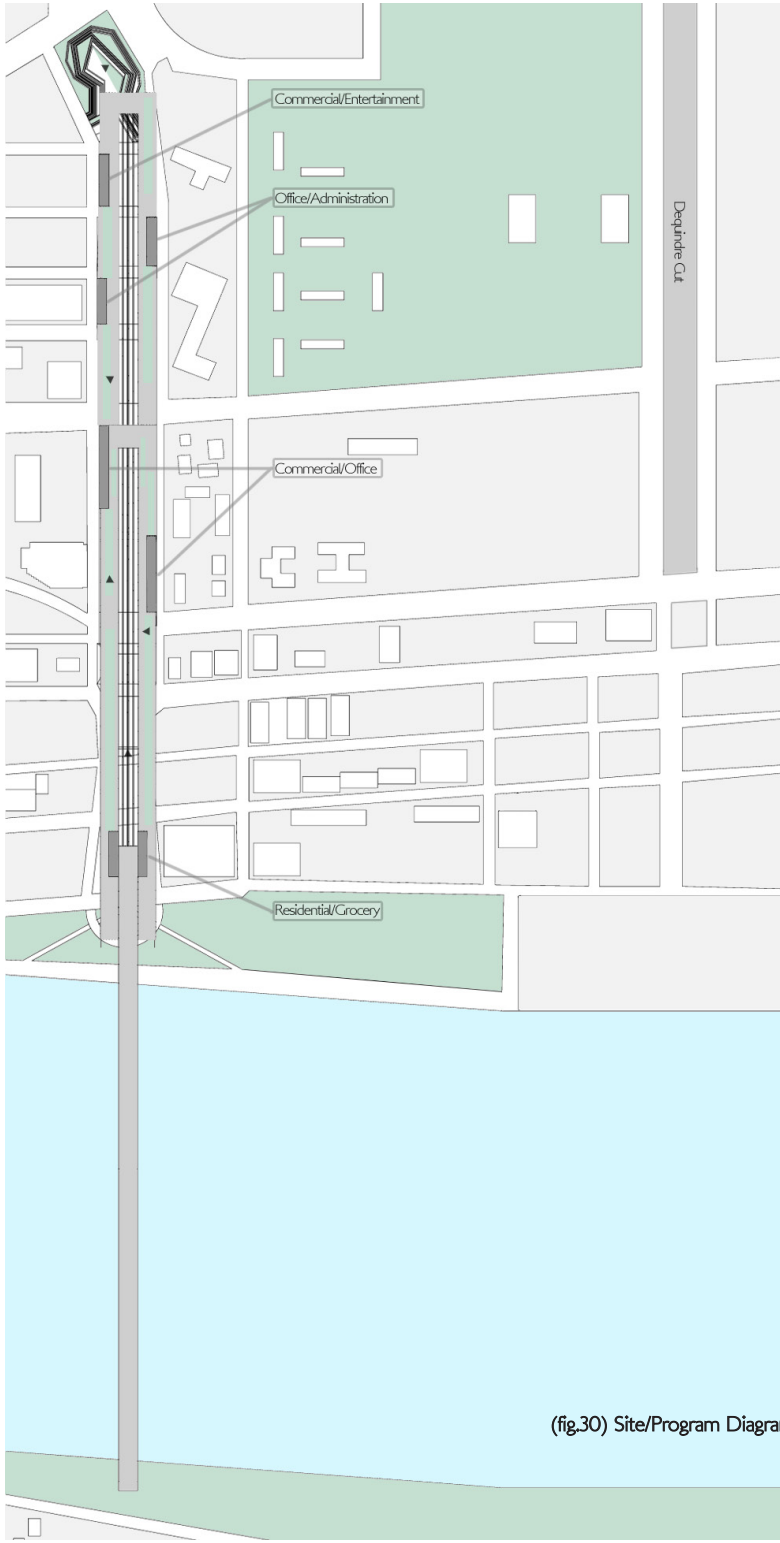
(fig.28) Linear Enclosure

(fig.29) Aerial South East



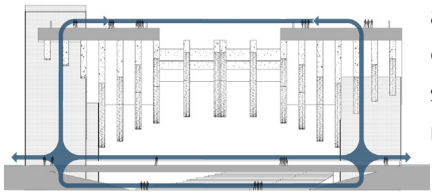
A second sketch (fig.27) problem dealt in its infancy on the concept of a ''wall'' design. In this way the entire site is activated and can act a programmable space built above the existing freeway. Essentially mega-structure would be built upon massive towers and span the entire site progressing down toward the river. The structure would undulate as it moved toward the river evoking the imagery of hills. Detroit in the twenty first century is relatively flat. Nearly three hundred years ago it was speculated that the area now called Detroit acted as a necropolis for Native American tribes. Massive burial mounds were constructed to honor the dead. Detroit in fact has a long history of Unnatural topography. The few moments of topography in the city exist in the form of sunken highway and railways. Both I-375 and the Dequindre Cut act as unnatural topography with Detroit.

The most recent iteration, Alternative 7, comprises the prominent elements from past endeavors in order to create an intervention that facilitates a connection of mobilities between districts and evokes a sense of definition through it's scale. A transparent enclosure in essence, 07 creates a sense of definition retaining the adjoining district's identities as well as creating an identity of its own as infrastructure refined. A new multi-use district made up of residential, commercial, office and entertainment while facilitating the re-introduction



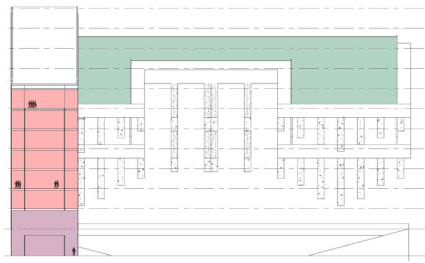
(fig.30) Site/Program Diagram

of mobilities into a long separated moment in Detroit. Detroit needs riverfront residential property, municipal administration expansion, entertainment district expansion and new commercial space as a means to begin a cascade of redevelopment.



(fig.31) Circulation Diagram

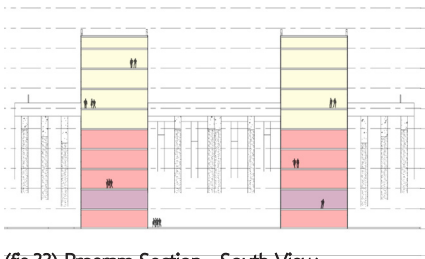
Access to the valley is possible from any point along the breadth of the intervention. The removal of the physical psychological border of the highway would evoke a new sense of movement. The skyway can be accessed form the upper floors of any tower. The structure meets the ground at two points: once at the river and once a Monroe street.



(fig.32) Program Section - North View

7 goes far beyond connecting Gratiot to the river front. The retaining of the depression allows for the creation of an urban circuit linking the Detroit River walk, Dequindre Cut and the Valley together by way of Arsenal Street into a grand pedestrian and bicycle circuit.

The skyway continues beyond the confines of Detroit and the United States, creating the first international pedestrian bridge from Detroit to Windsor at the terminus point. No such connection exists in Detroit and would allow for a new mobility never before experienced between the two cities separated by the Detroit River.



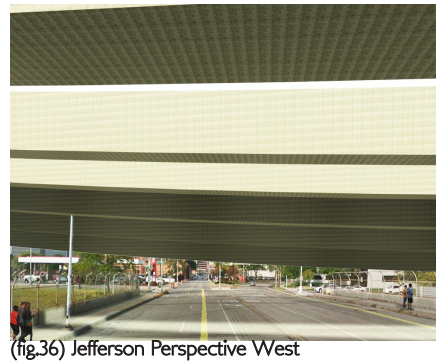
(fig.33) Program Section - South View

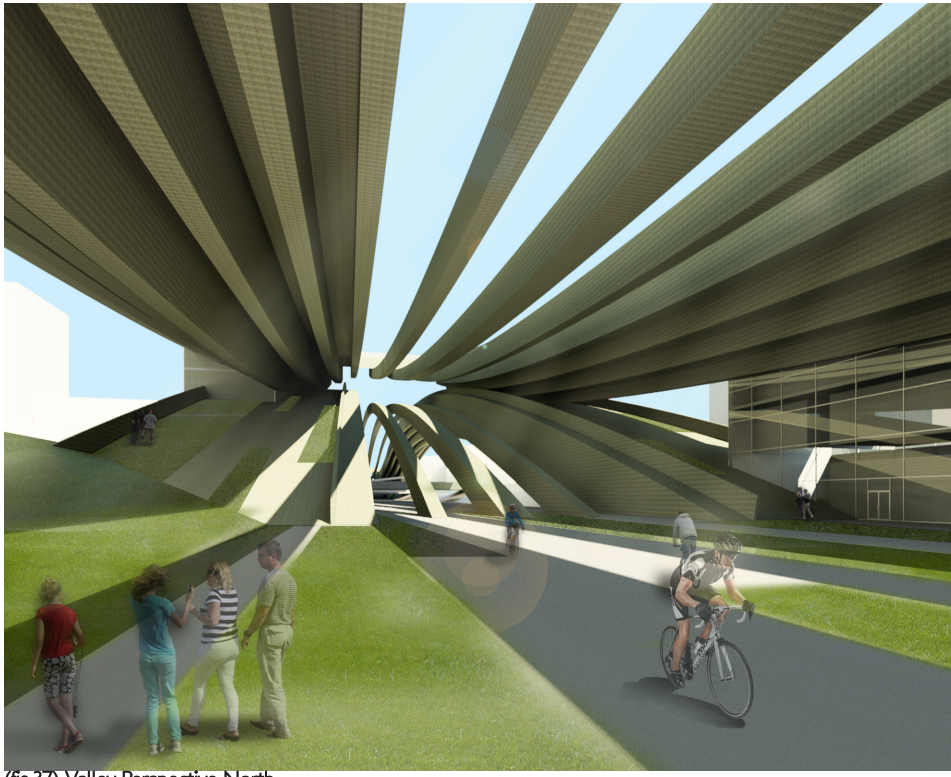
A one hundred foot wide highline rises one hundred feet in the air to grant a new perspective within the city pedestrian can walk amongst the buildings on downtown and venture into the valley of I-375. The

valley itself has been retained but repurposed into a multi-public space comprising of a park space, bike trail, and pedestrian promenade and has the room to comfortably house exhibitions and festivals such as Dlectricity and River Days. The undulation expresses the unnatural topography and the need for park space in Detroit, which has one of the lowest park space percentages at 9%.

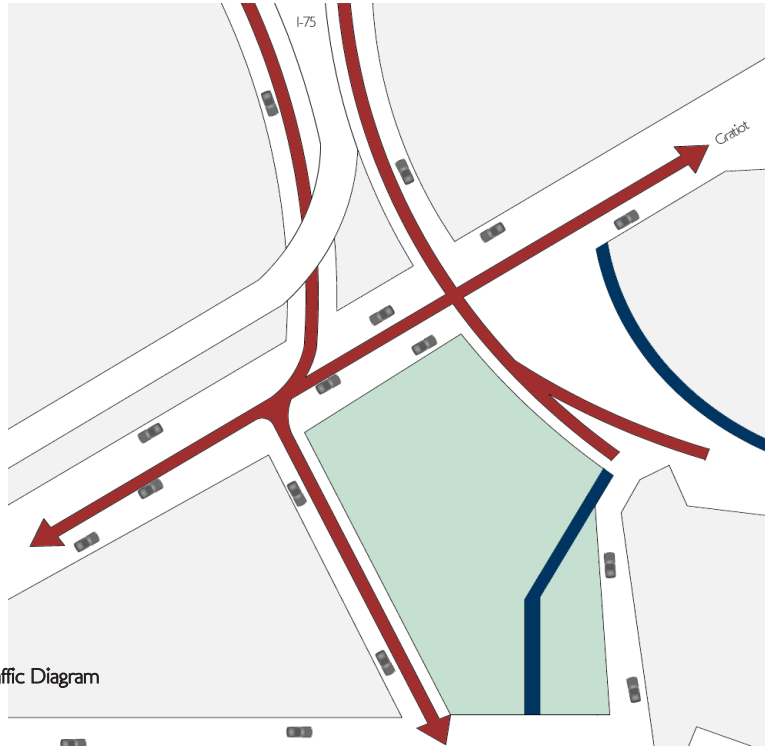

(fig.34) Valley Perspective North


(fig.35) Peak Perspective South


(fig.36) Jefferson Perspective West

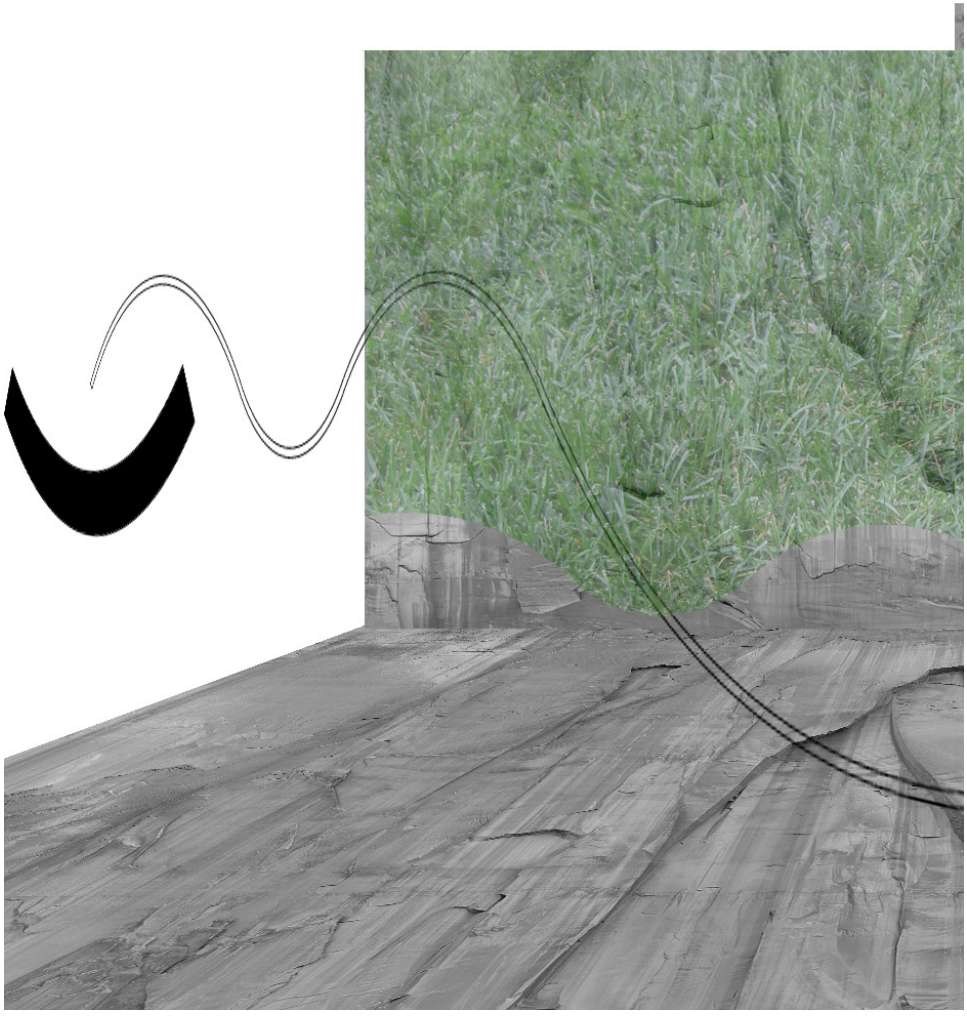


(fig.37) Valley Perspective North



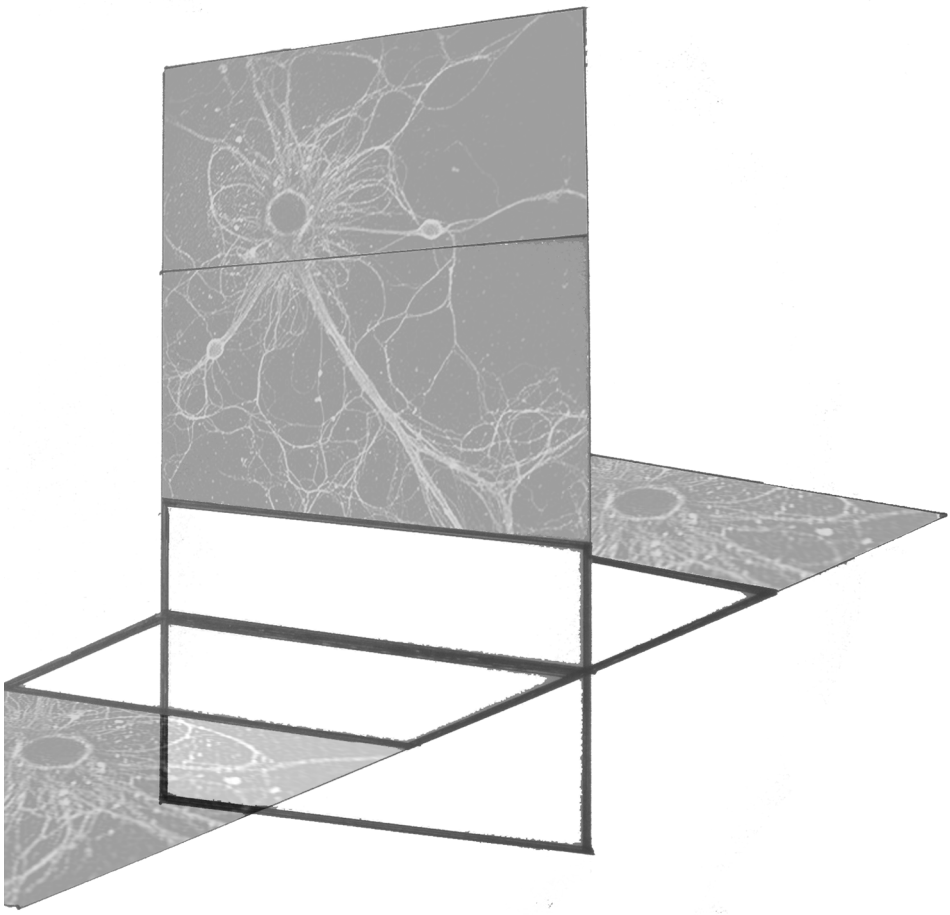
(fig.38) Traffic Diagram

VII SYSTHESIS OF A HIGHWAY



Through the augmentation of urban division, a new intervention will seek to instill reciprocity through an urban-motile synapse and create a re-facilitation of mobilities. Has Alternative 7 succeeded in creating a solution to the issue of I-375? Has this iteration been able to achieve reciprocity between three districts separated for nearly 70 years? Have the monumentality of the structure and the massiveness of the form shed light on possibility? Ambition and risk have shaped the civilization in which human beings thrive, humanity takes chances and sacrifices practically and reputation in order to achieve something real. Real alternatives are what Detroit needs, schemes that test the limits of real and imaginative. Progress is the attempt to attain the unattainable. Has Alternative 7 achieved this? Perhaps, Perhaps not, but it is not the answer that drives humanity it is the need to connect, the need to seek, the need to question what could be.

(fig.39) Plaza Perspective South



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(fig.11) "I-375 Corridor – Alternative 2." Future 375. MDOT. 2014. Web. 24 Apr 2015.

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(fig.14) "I-375 Corridor – Alternative 5." Future 375. MDOT. 2014. Web. 24 Apr 2015.

(fig.15) "I-375 Corridor – Alternative 6." Future 375. MDOT. 2014. Web. 24 Apr 2015.

(fig.17) "Dequindre Cut." Detroitriverfront.org. 2014 Web. 24 Apr 2015.

(fig.18) "Google Earth Image" Googleearth,com. 2014 Web. 24 Apr 2015.