

# PROVIDENCE PIER-ISCOPE

The Bascule Bridge is an icon of American industrialism—built in 1908, it spanned the Seekonk River, connecting the Fox Point neighborhood to East Providence. In 1976 its 125-foot clear span was raised for a final time to its current 64-degree upright position. For decades, the people of Providence have admired its raw beauty from Gano Park, Crook Point, and beyond. Graffiti artists love to tag here. Brave pedestrians traipse across its decaying wood slats. The more rebellious thrill-seekers scale the rusty bridge tower to take in the sweeping views of Providence (and have a story to tell). The cultural history of this industrial monument is well established—just ask the numerous Brown University students who have written about it. We are of the opinion that this bridge cannot be demolished. It is too much a part of Providence's cultural landscape.

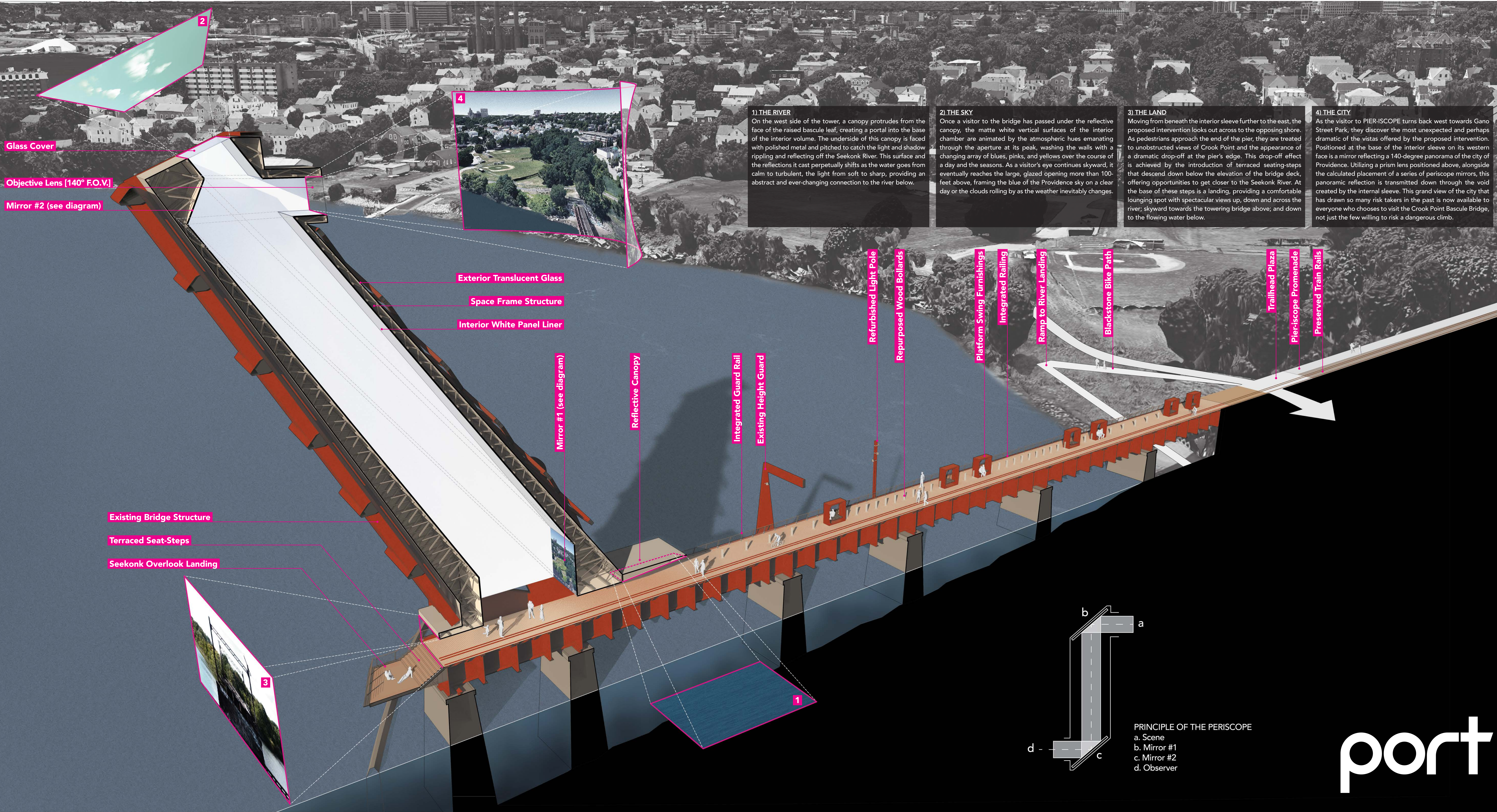
With this rich history in mind, we propose the **PIER-ISCOPE**—a design that conserves the raw, industrial beauty of the Crook Point Bascule Bridge as the centerpiece of a new public realm experience for Providence. Positioned between the Gano Street entrance on the west, and the revitalized entry to Crook Point from East Providence, the proposed intervention to the Bascule Bridge anchors a series of newly created public spaces that celebrate and provide access to artifacts of Providence's industrial past.

The primary intervention to achieve the **PIER-ISCOPE** entails the insertion of a sleeve-like wrapper that runs inside the full length of the raised bridge structure interior, from just above the rail deck up to the sky. This interior wrapper is formed out of a composite construction with an opaque interior volume, but whose exterior glows luminously in the evening hours, highlighting the handsome structure of the bridge. Constructed of steel and milky white frosted glass, the **PIER-ISCOPE** offers the viewer on the ground a vast panorama of the city to the west alongside framed views of the sky, the river, and immediately surrounding landscapes.

During daytime hours, the intervention showcases the bridge's unique features, providing a soft, gray-white backdrop for the structure's colorful, constantly changing graffiti and weathered steel. At night, the effect shifts with the intervention becoming a softly glowing lantern with the bridge's dark steel exoskeleton receding against it. Standing beneath the interior volume at the end of what is now a pier, pedestrians occupy a space where public realm meets public and environmental art, as a series of curated visual experiences unfold. Each encounter creates a dialogue between the Crook Point Bascule Bridge and its surrounding vistas: **the River, the Sky, the Land, and the City**. As pedestrians approach the elevated bridge structure and its new interior intervention from the west, these four vistas reveal themselves sequentially.

Proposal by: PORT  
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## PIER-ISCOPE PROMENADE

As pedestrians return towards the western riverbank, they once again pass across a boardwalk that appears to float upon the existing steel bridge structure, cut in and around the old train rails to maintain the artifact. Repurposed wood posts serve as bollards to provide a subtle delineation between the primary circulation on the north and areas of gathering on the south. Old steel light poles are refitted with new fixtures to illuminate the pier at night. Large, extruded steel frames containing platform swings dot the southern expanse, their sides intentionally left blank for tagging. A simple steel, wood, and cable railing runs along the length of the boardwalk defining safely accessible extents of the space.

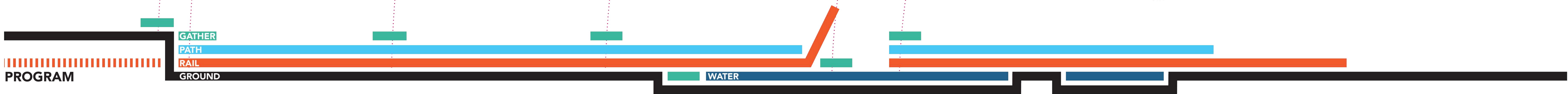
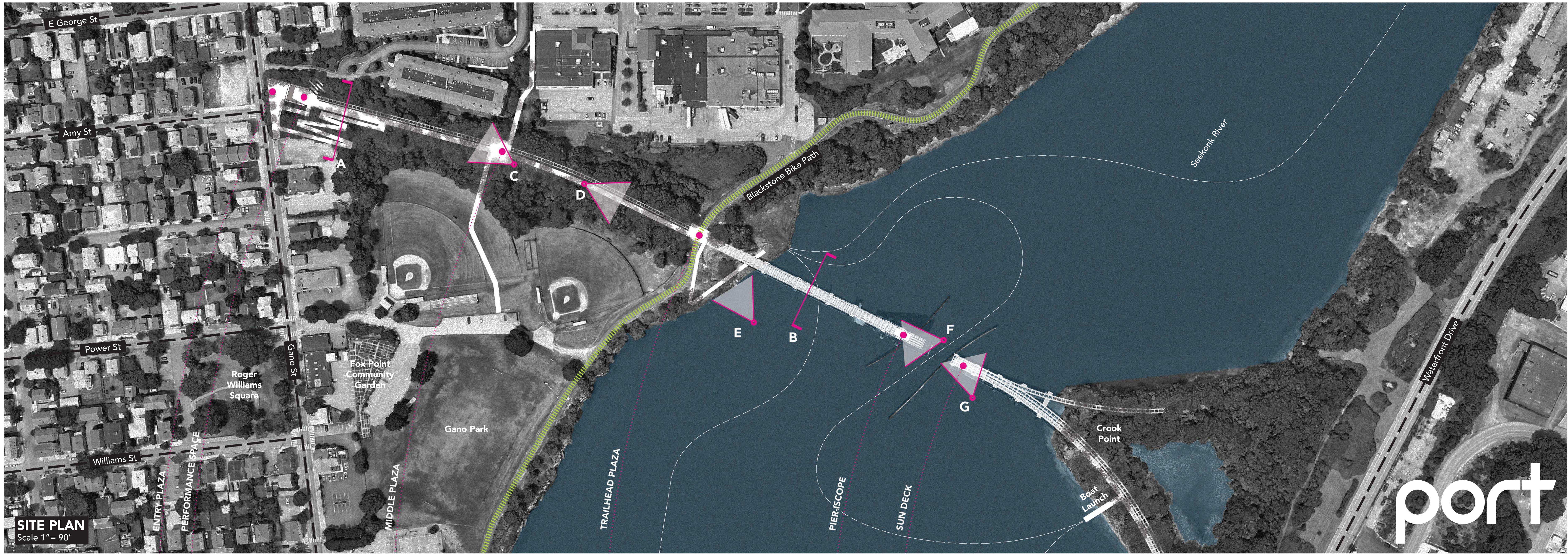
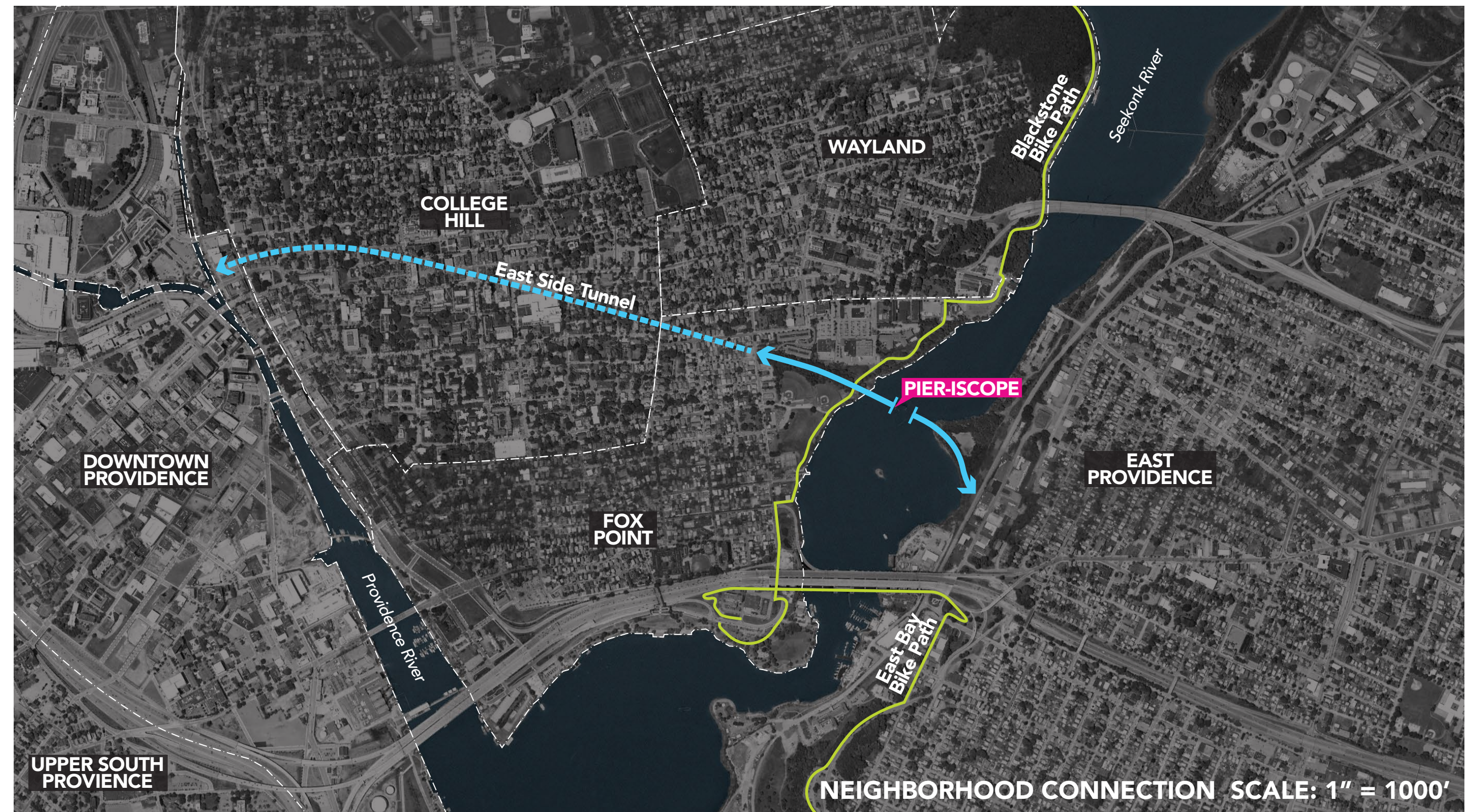
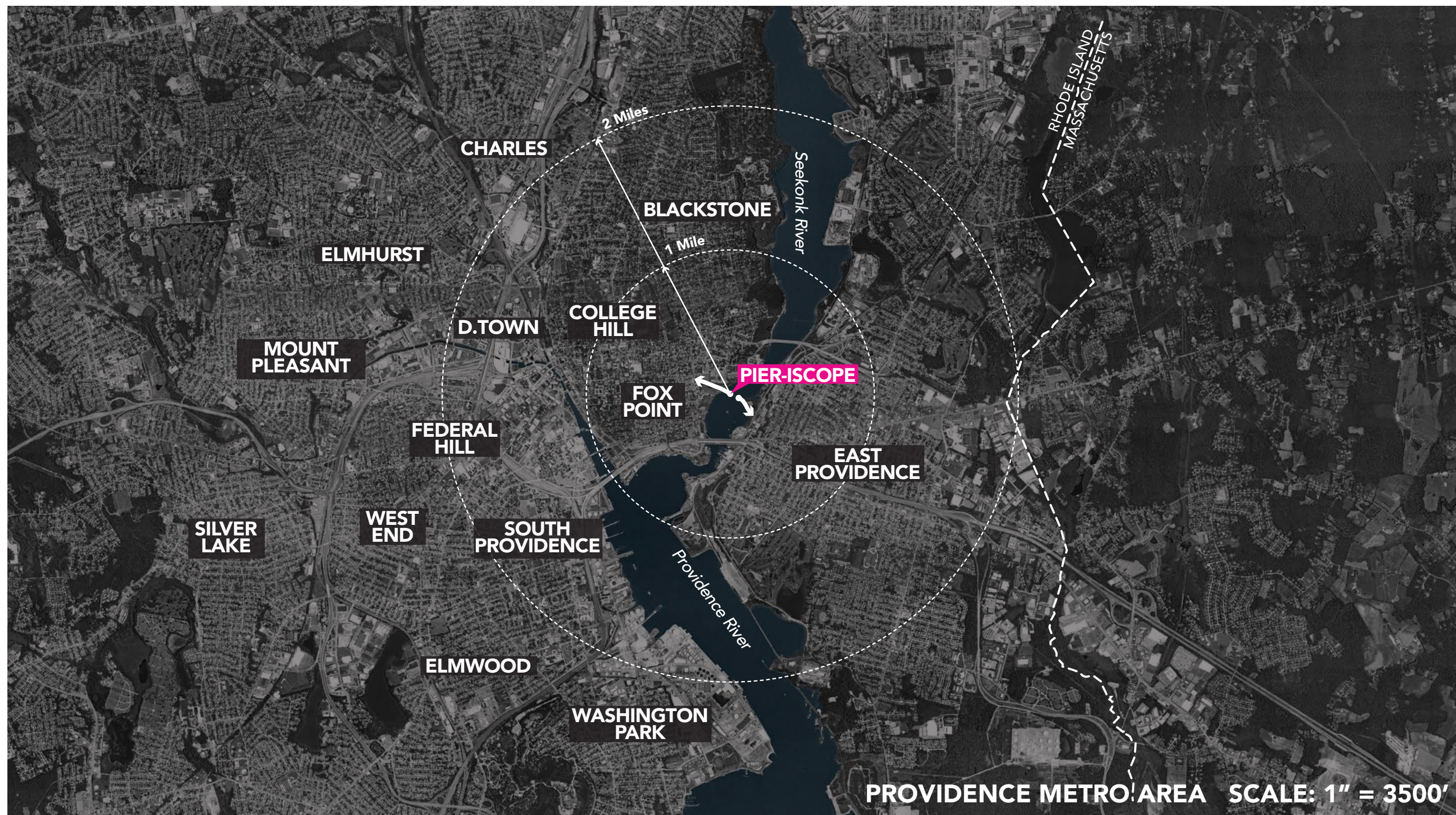
Once the boardwalk reaches land, a small plaza provides a meeting place where the PIER-ISCOPE PROMENADE connects to the Blackstone Bike Path. Continuing past this crossing, the illuminated promenade leads west towards Gano Street, carving space beneath the existing tree canopy and running alongside the preserved remnants of the former rail corridor. The procession through the minimally modified existing landscape provides an intentional sense of compression in contrast with the openness of the bridge structure.

Eventually, the PIER-ISCOPE PROMENADE arrives at the old tunnel opening at Amy and Gano Streets that used to carry trains underground to downtown Providence, now closed off by a large steel infill. This steel panel is framed by its flanking concrete abutments, forming a semi-enclosed space within the existing dense growth that we propose to open up as a space of collection for gatherings, performances, or a

moment of reflection. From here, a new ramp and stair climb up the adjacent slope—through a limbed-up canopy and new native understory planting—arriving at an arrival plaza and bike-share at Amy Street.

This newly revealed public promenade establishes a safe, welcoming direct connection between the Fox Point neighborhood and the Bascule Bridge while maintaining the sense of discovery and spatial delight that has characterized forbidden trips to the bridge over the last 45 years. We believe this newly created pedestrian access and set of public realm experiences will serve to draw people to Fox Point from its surrounding neighborhoods—including Wayland, East Providence, College Hill, Downtown, and beyond—to experience Providence's industrial heritage in a way like never before.

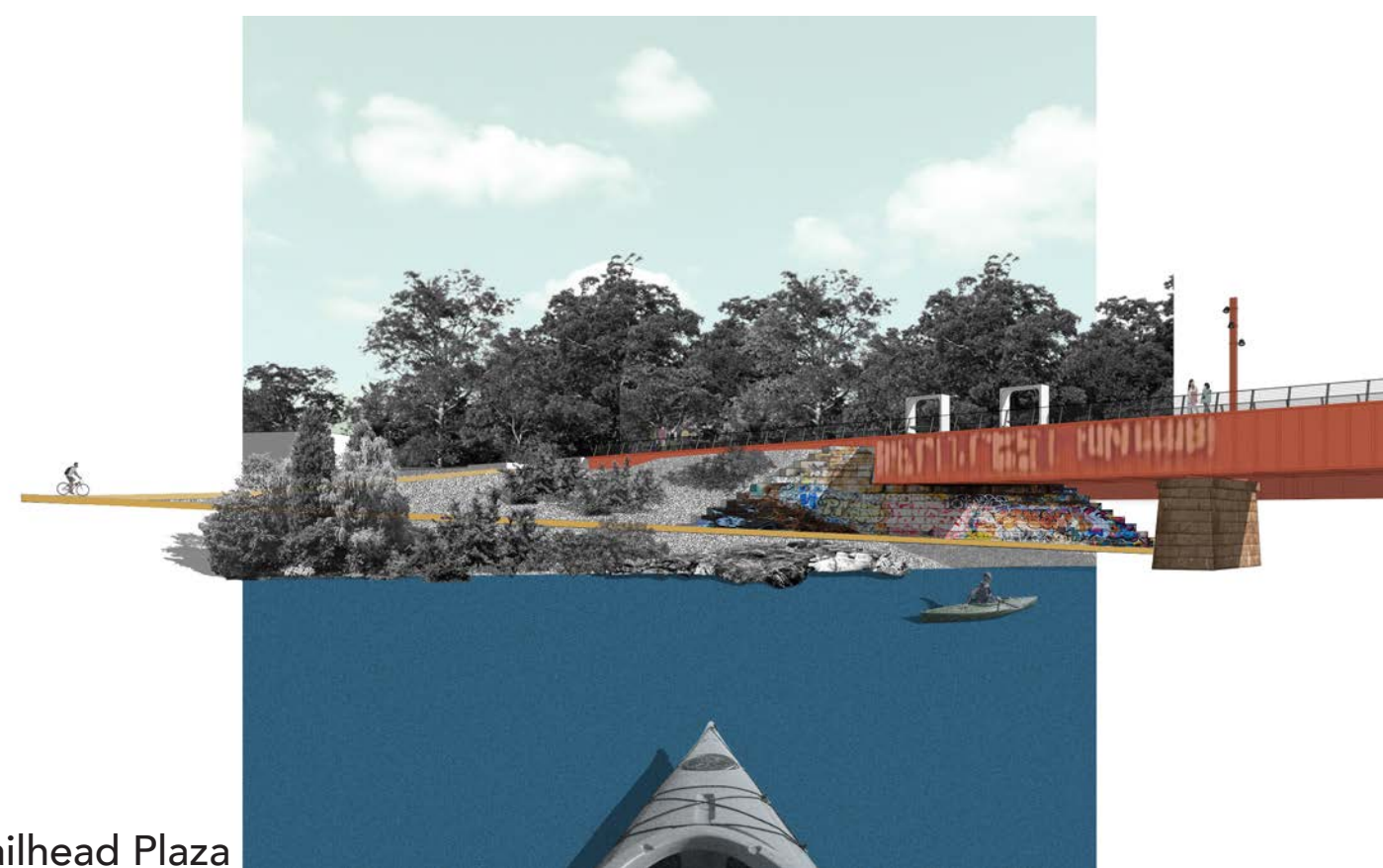
Ultimately, the proposed PIER-ISCOPE intervention retains the essential qualities of the Crook Point Bascule Bridge and the old rail corridor, intertwining public space and public art to transform a presently inaccessible corridor into a shared public experience available to all. The tunnel entrance, rail passage, bridge deck, and raised tower are preserved, but enhanced through a series of minimal and elegant interventions. But with these interventions, the rust remains, the graffiti is left intact and with it, a piece Providence's cultural heritage lives on, ready for new stories to be written upon its surface.



C Middle Plaza



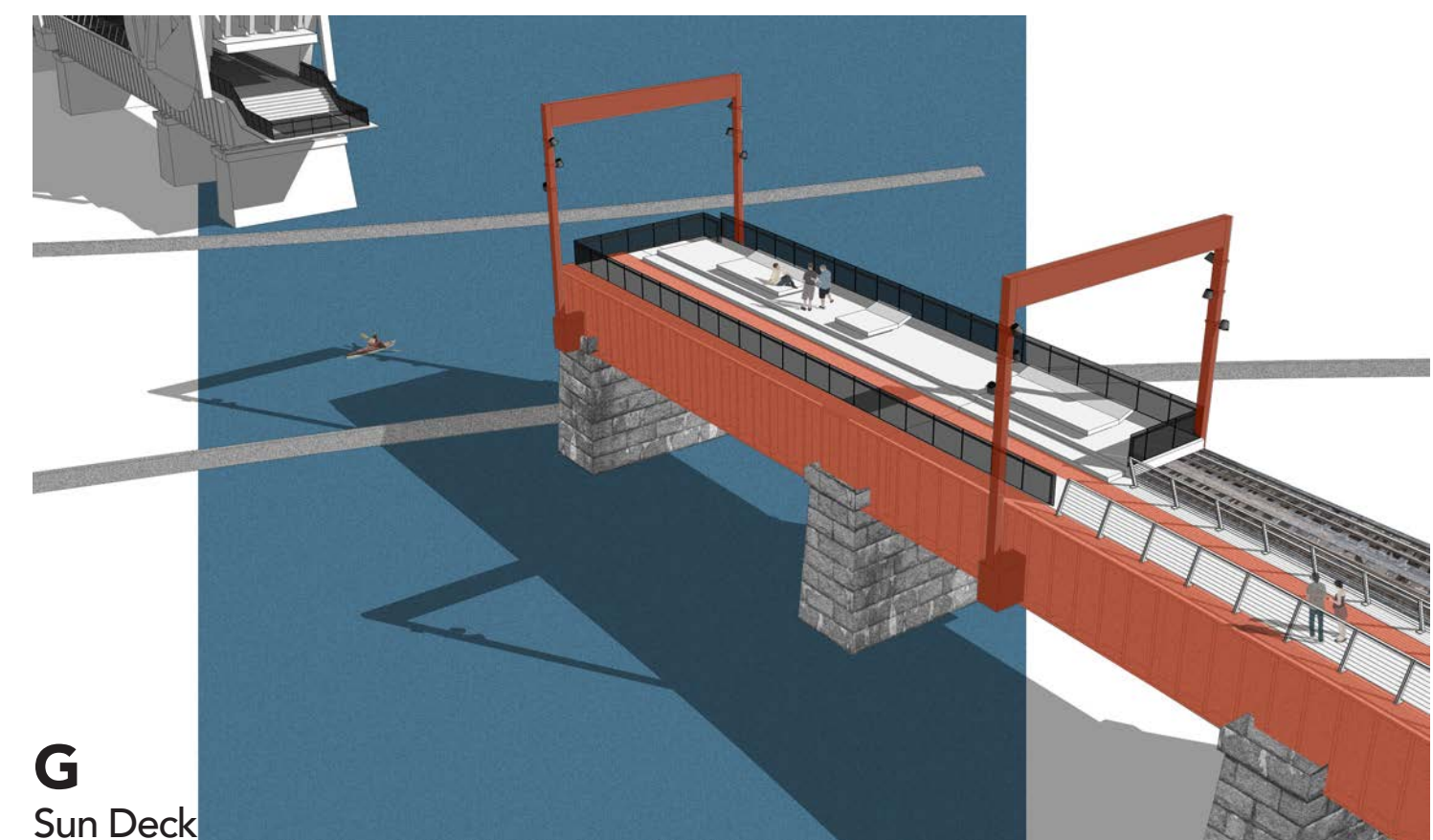
D Typical Path



E Trailhead Plaza



F Get-Down



G Sun Deck