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Downtown Master Plan

Oskaloosa, Iowa


Oskaloosa IOWA

Meet Our Team ...

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Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone whose input and assistance have been instrumental in shaping this presentation. Your dedication and knowledge have greatly enriched our work.



City of Oskaloosa

Partners:
Shawn Christ

The University of Iowa

The University of Iowa
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Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities

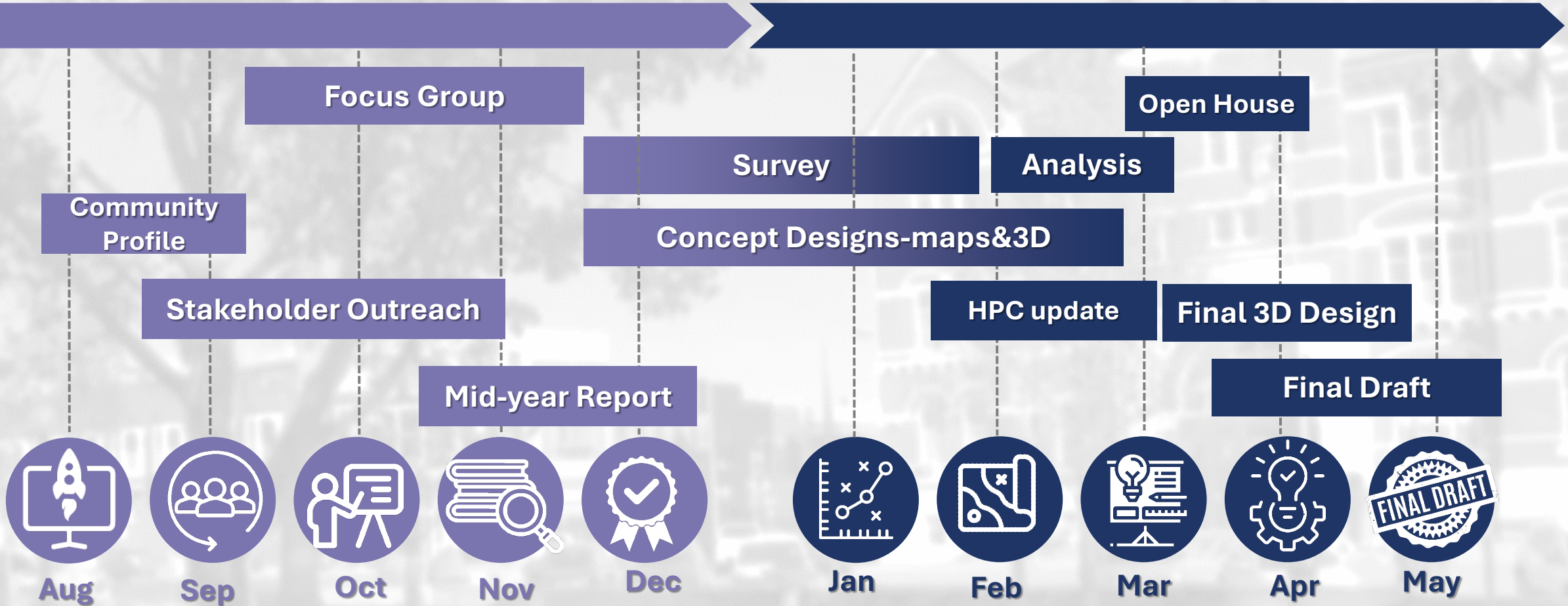
Travis Kraus, Director

Additional Collaborators



Fall 2024

Spring 2025



Setting the Stage



01



Study Area...

Limited Student Access to Downtown

Lack of Pedestrian Safety

Limited Bike Infrastructure

Truck Traffic & Highways

Missed Placemaking Opportunities

Car Dominated Infrastructure

Lack of Signage

Dominance of Surface Parking

Limited Streetscaping

This Plan Focuses On:

- **Placemaking** – Enhancing public spaces & downtown identity
- **Active Mobility** – Improving pedestrian & bike accessibility
- **Historic Preservation** – Updating design guidelines
- **Reinforcing Identity** – Strengthening Oskaloosa's unique character

We Analysed:

- **Physical obstacles in the project area**
- **Current policies & future transportation projects**
- **Community assets & how to strengthen them**
- **Economic & social trends**

Goal: To create a vibrant, functional, and connected downtown for all

Voice of the Community



2024 Meetings

1

Previous Meetings

- City Officials
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Musco Lighting
- Penn Central Mall

2

Previous Public Engagement

- In Person Interviews

3

Stakeholder Meetings

- Experience Oskaloosa
- William Penn University

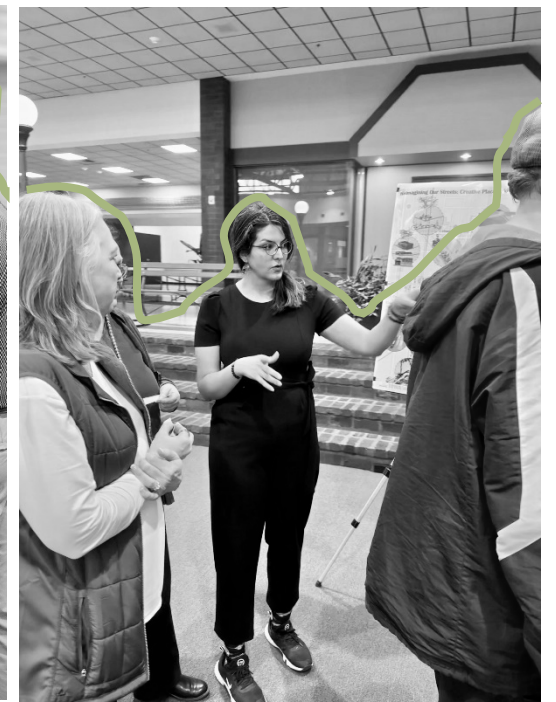


2025 Meetings

2

Community Open House

- Presentation of 6 Design Concepts
 - Penn Central Mall Ideas
 - Osky Food Truck Park
 - Active Mobility Initiatives
 - Placemaking and Wayfinding Initiatives
 - Pocket Parks
 - Redevelopment Opportunities
- Approximately 40 attendees



In-Depth Exploration



03

Walkability Analysis



Restaurant



Public Library



Office Space



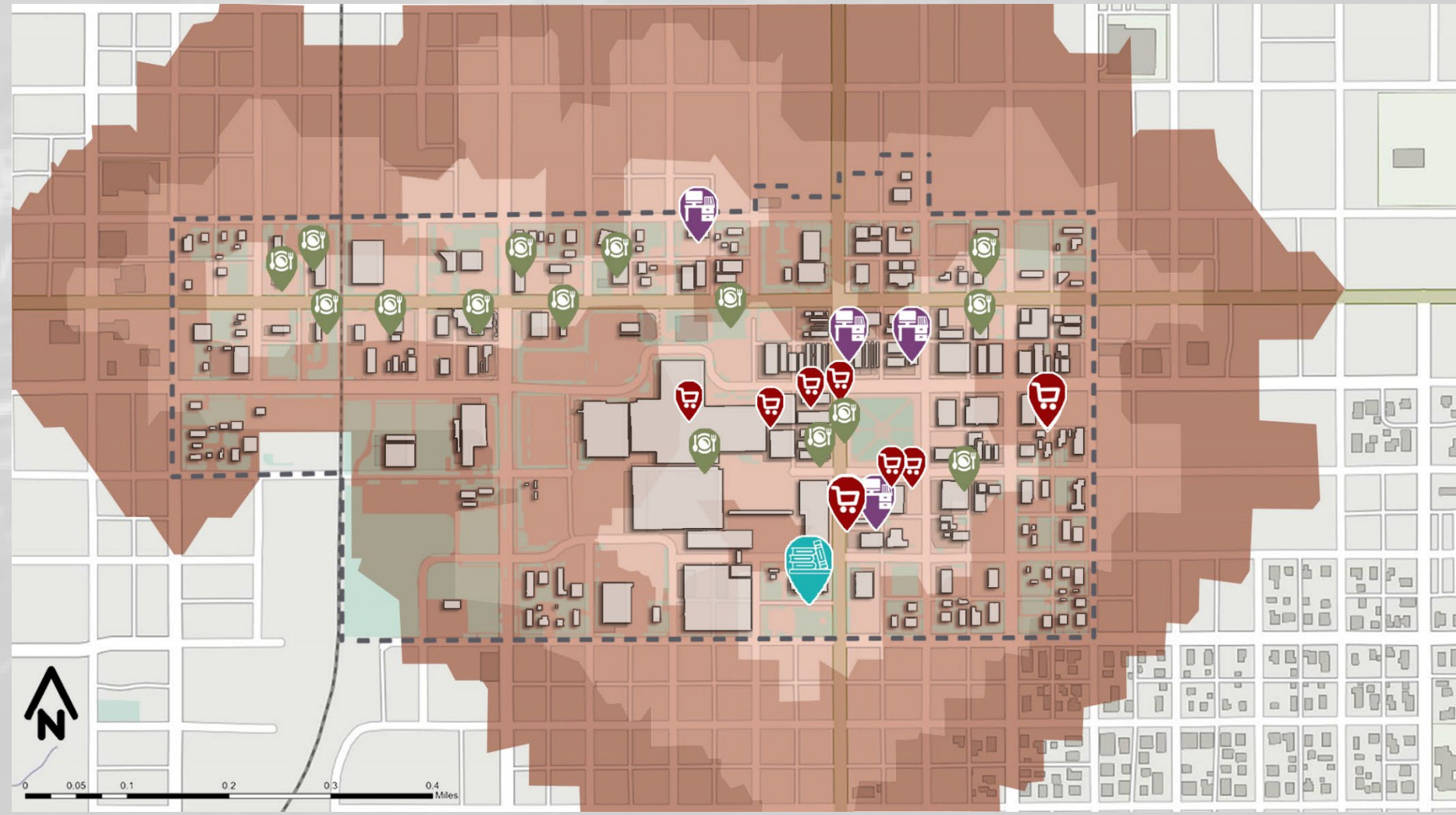
Retail Spaces

1 Min

3 Min

5 Min

Main Focus – Parking Lots Disrupt Connectivity



[illegible]

How long does it take to walk around the City Square Park?

The image is a satellite map of a city area, specifically focusing on City Square Park. Two walking routes are marked with red dotted lines and red location pins at the corners. Route 2 is a larger rectangle, and Route 3 is a smaller rectangle inside it. The map shows surrounding streets like High Ave W, High Ave E, and 1st Ave N, and various landmarks like the Cherokee Indian Statue and City Square Park.

Walk Around Comparisons

How long does it take to walk around Walmart?

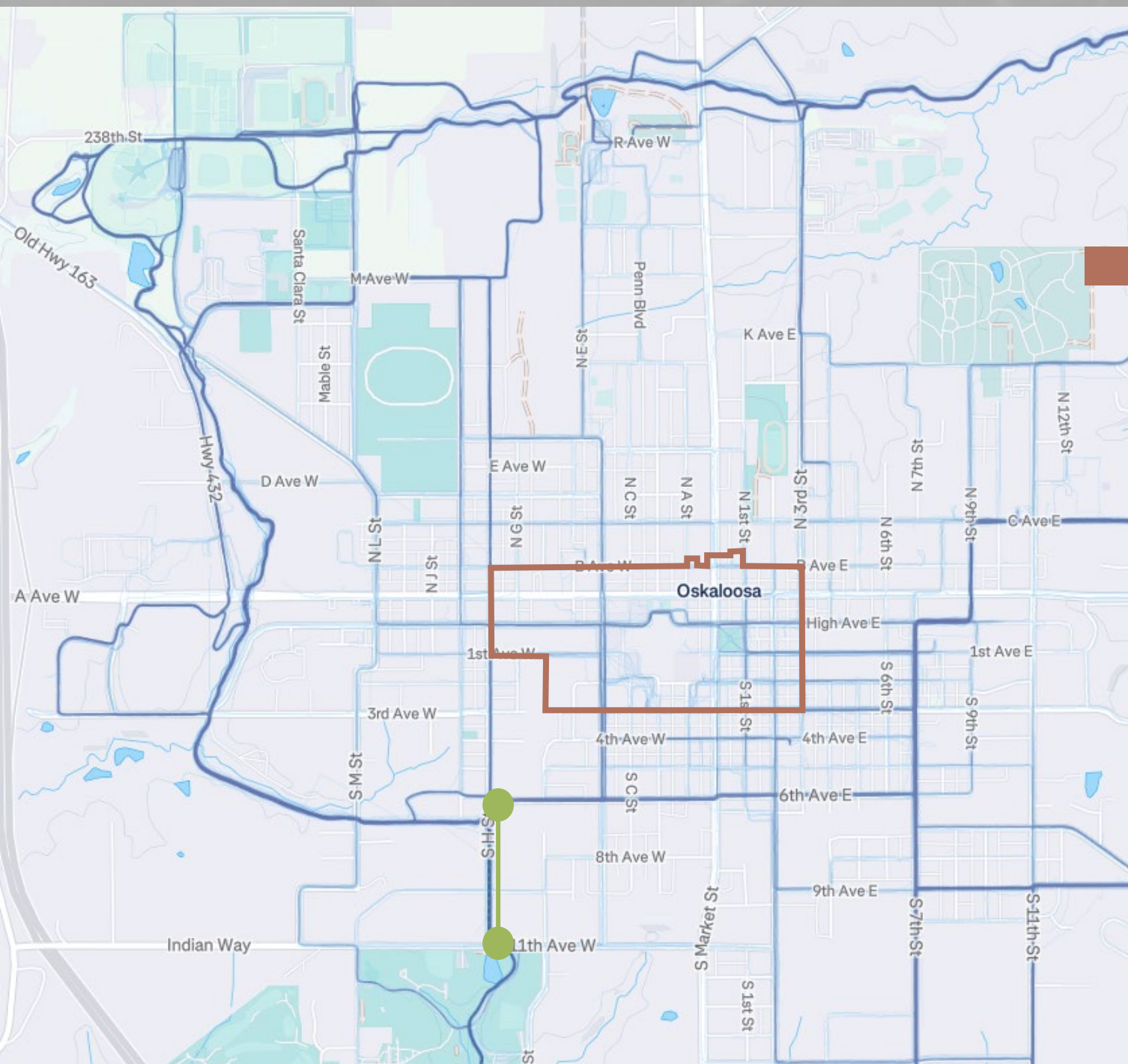


How long does it take to walk around the City Square Park?



Route 1	6 Minutes 45 Seconds	1783 ft
Route 2	6 Minutes 0 Seconds	1584 ft
Route 3	3 Minutes 35 Seconds	947 ft
Route 4	6 Minutes 6 Seconds	1609 ft
Route 5	2 Minutes 47 Seconds	734 ft
Route 6	3 Minutes 16 Seconds	864 ft

Strava Cycling Heat Map



Focus Areas

N/S – D/E Street

N/S – H Street

E/W – High Ave

E/W – 3rd Ave

Parking vs Open Space

On Street Parking = 472

Parking Lot = 1612

Musco Ramp = 400

Total = 2484

Main Focus – Large Quantity & Enforcement Issues



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

Parking vs Open Space

Green Spaces - Public
Owned

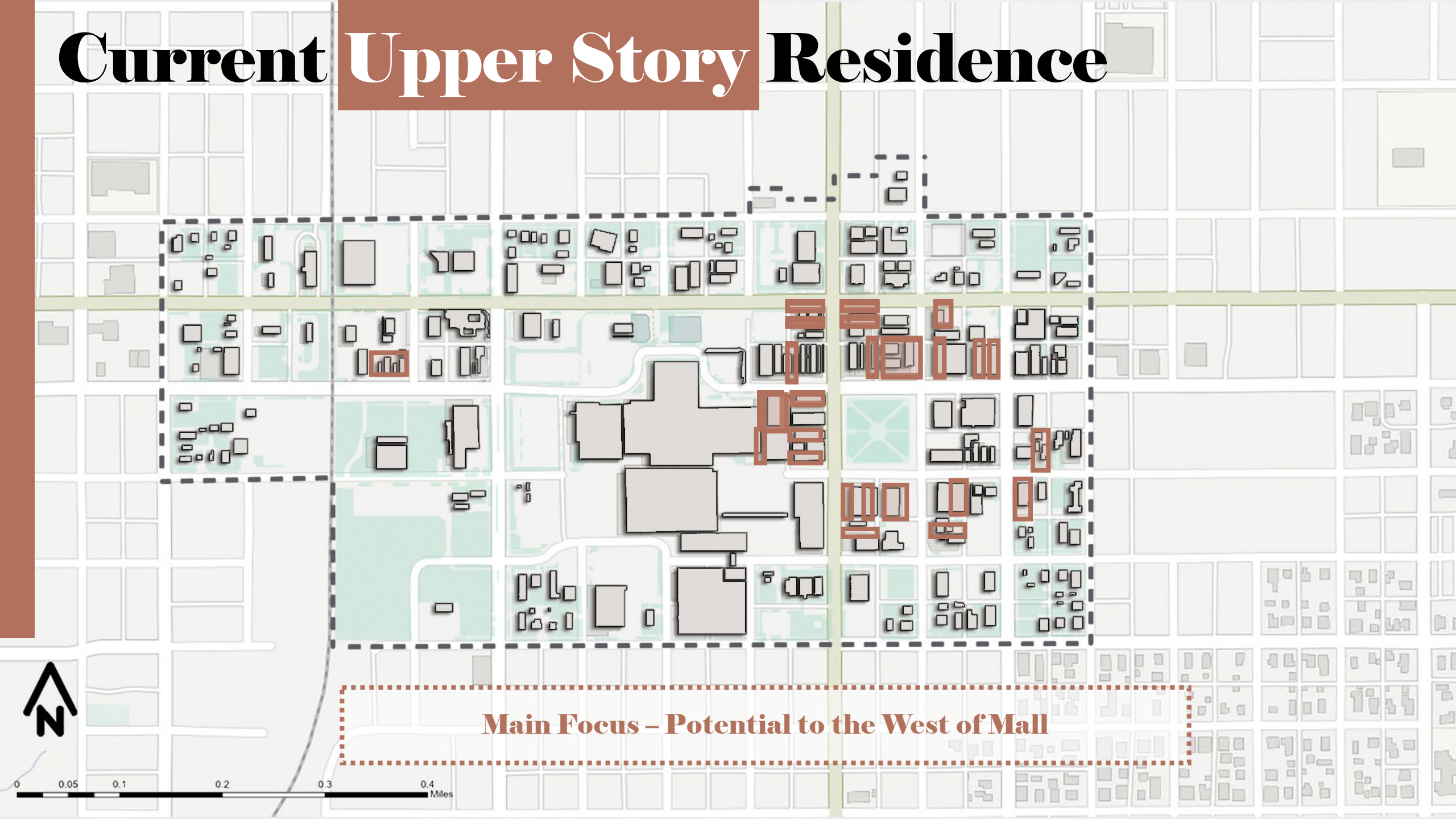
Open Spaces - Private
Owned

Main Focus – Alleys, Pocket Park, Shared Community Space



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

Current Upper Story Residence



Main Focus – Potential to the West of Mall

Comparable City Case Studies



- ★ Decorah, Iowa
- ★ Monmouth, Illinois
- ★ River Falls, Wisconsin
- ★ Burlington, Iowa
- ★ Galena, Illinois

Common Themes

- 1 Historical Preservation
- 2 Promoting the Arts
- 3 Economic Initiatives
- 4 Close ties with local organizations

SWOT Analysis



STRENGTHS

- Great local attractions
- Cultural Heritage
- Community Events
- Musco Community Involvement
- Smokey Row
- City Square Park
- Mainstreet/Experience Osky
- Historic Preservation
- Active Planning Culture



WEAKNESSES

- Disrupted Downtown Continuity
- Limited Public Transportation
- Excess Parking Lots
- Inefficient Space Utilization
- Limited Events for <18
- Limited Transportation options to William Penn
- Improper Crosswalk Signals



OPPORTUNITIES

- Secure Funding for Plan Implementation
- Attractive Tourist Attractions
- Community Pride and Engagement
- Further MUSCO Community Partnership
- Highway Jurisdiction Transfer
- New Parking Garage Usage
- Upper-story Development



THREATS

- Lack of Motivation for Active Transportation
- Crime/Safety Concerns
- Customer Preference Changes
- Political Feasibility of Scope
- Heat Island Effect
- State and Federal Policy Changes

Bright Ideas and Bold Moves



04





01

**Improve
Pedestrian
Environment**

02

**Foster Future
Economic
Development**

03

**Implement Cohesive
Placemaking &
Identity**

04

**Grow
Community
Partnerships**

GOAL 1
Pedestrian-Friendly
Atmosphere

01

02

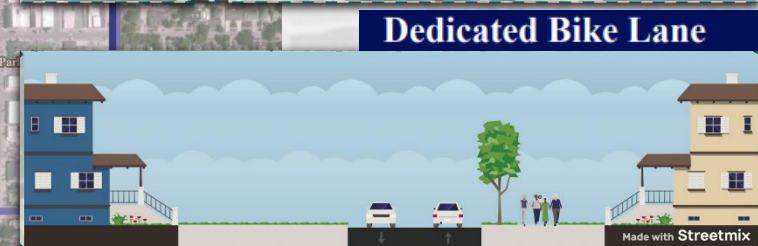
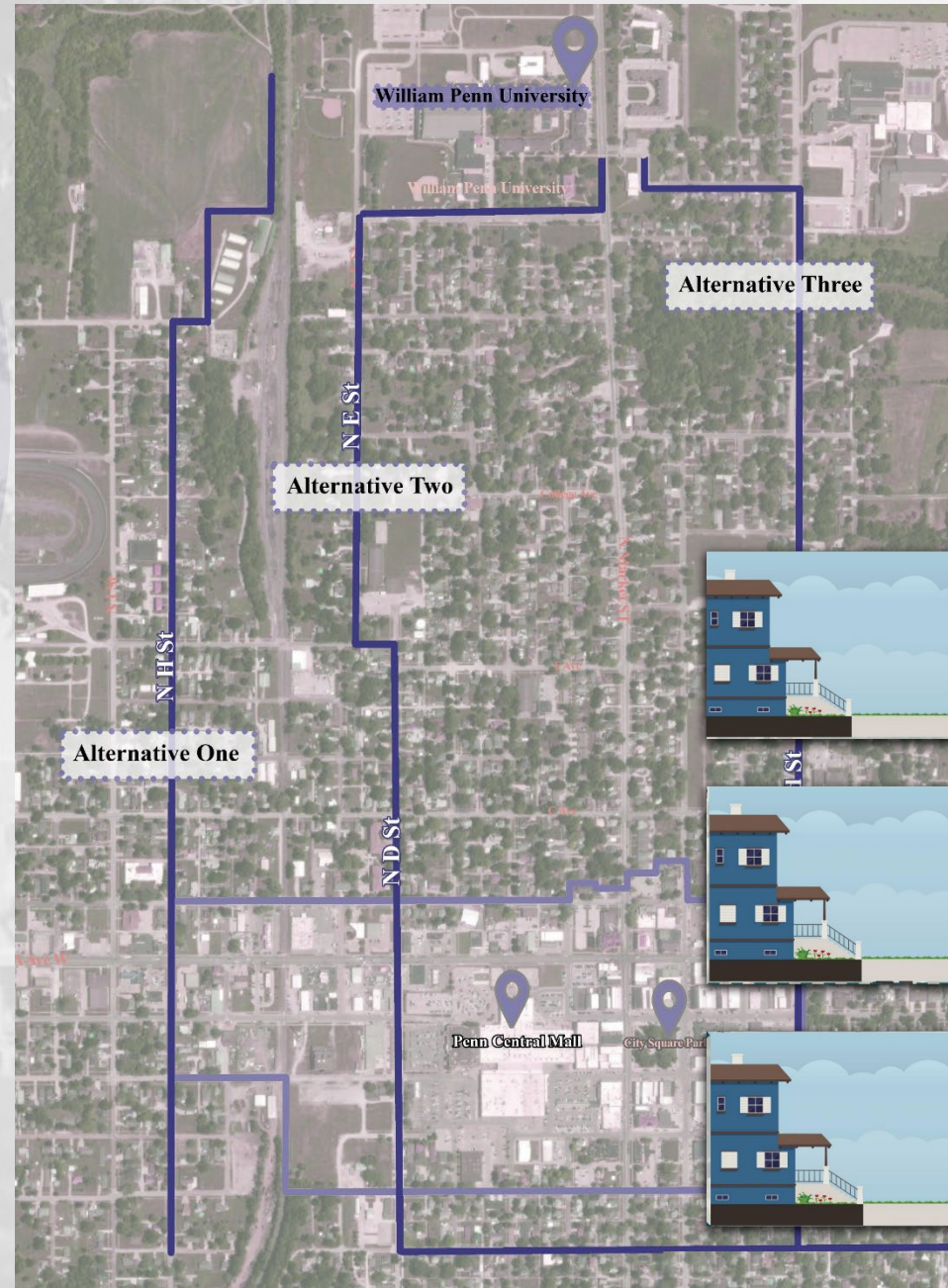
03

04

05

Action Steps

Develop a
comprehensive plan for
a dedicated bike lane
network



01

02

03

04

05

Action Steps

Redevelop
Streetscapes to
enhance design, safety,
and year-round
function.



01

02

03

04

05

Action Steps

Enhance pedestrian
infrastructure to
safely connection East
and West Side of the
Mall

01

02

03

04

05

Action Steps

Re-adjust **crosswalk**
and **signal timers** to
better reflect traffic
patterns.



01

02

03

04

05

Action Steps

Improve sidewalk
connectivity.

GOAL 3

Placemaking



1
**Penn Central
Mall**



2
**Food Truck
Park**



3
**Informative
Wayfinding
Signs**



4
**Urban
Seating**



5
**Pocket
Parks**



Penn Central Mall



**All Season Event
Center**

Penn Central Mall



**All Season Event
Center**



**Lights, Colors,
Decoration**



**Lights, Colors,
Decoration**



Penn Central Mall



**Season Event
Center**



**Lights, Colors,
Decoration**



**Community Murals
& Public Art**



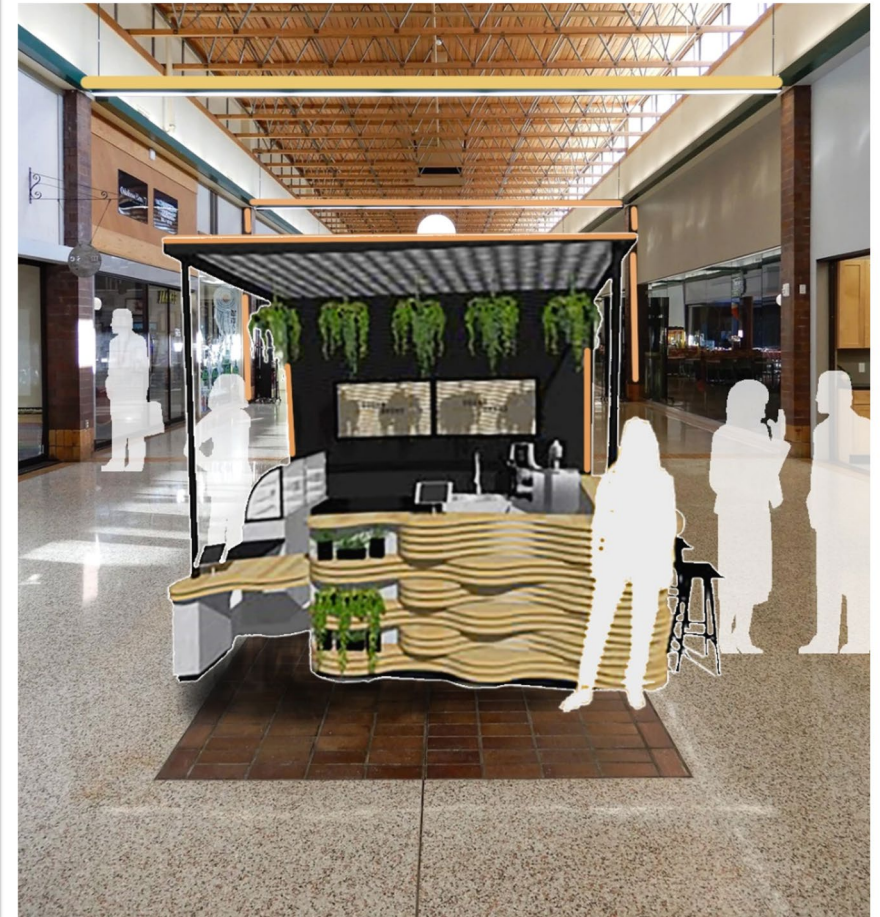
Penn Central Mall



**Lights, Colors,
Decoration**



**Community Murals
& Public Art**



**Pop-Up Kiosks &
Local Retail**

Penn Central Mall



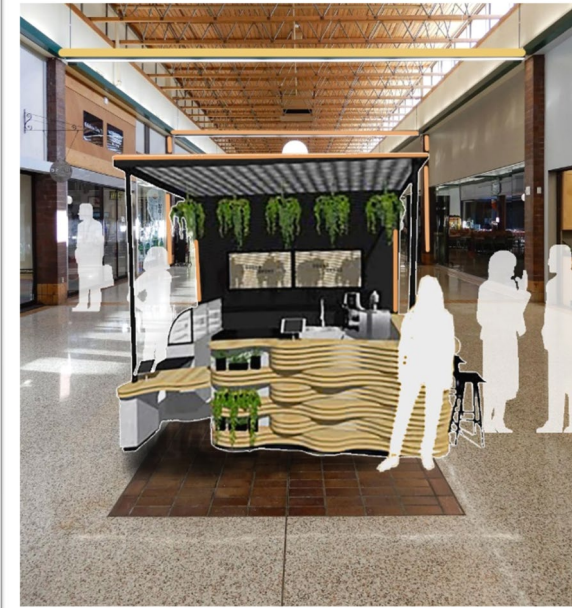
**All Season Event
Center**



**Lights, Colors,
Decoration**



**Community Murals
& Public Art**



**Pop-Up Kiosks &
Local Retail**

Food Truck Park

Food Truck Area

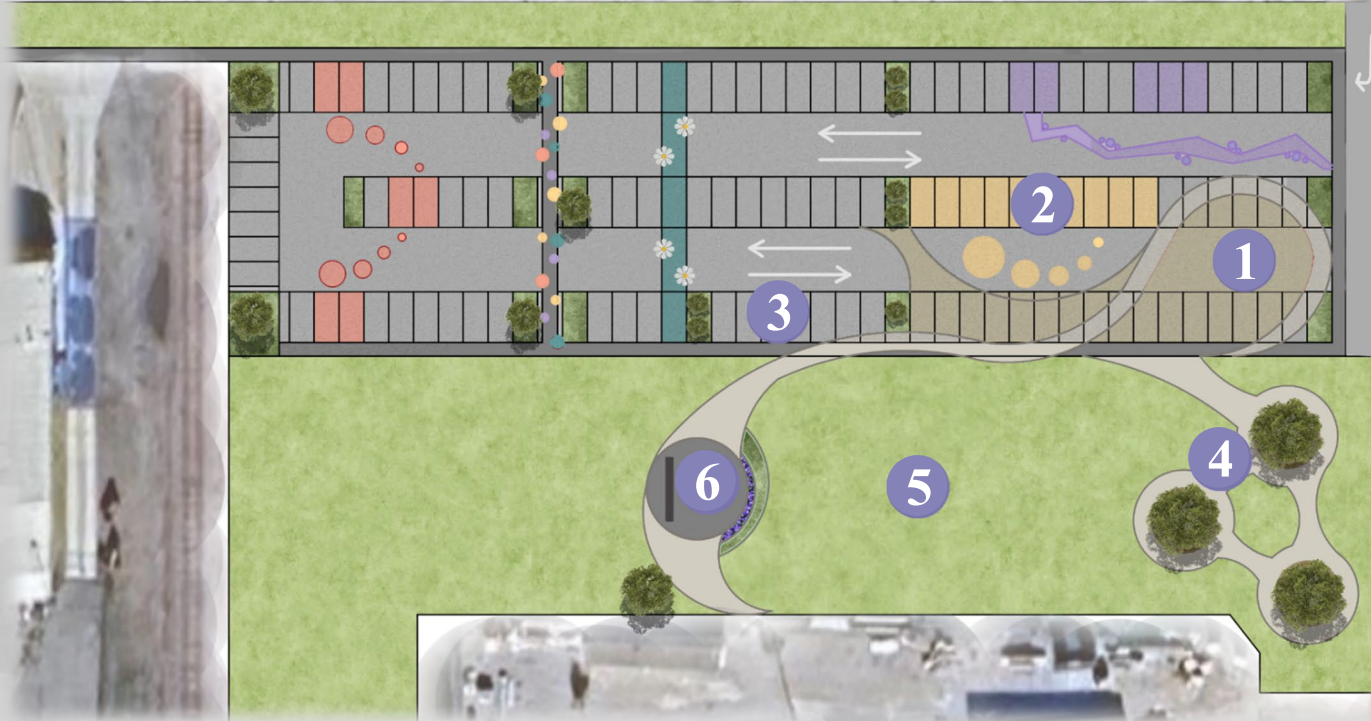
Pick-Up Zone

Mobile Toilets Area

Outdoor Eating Area

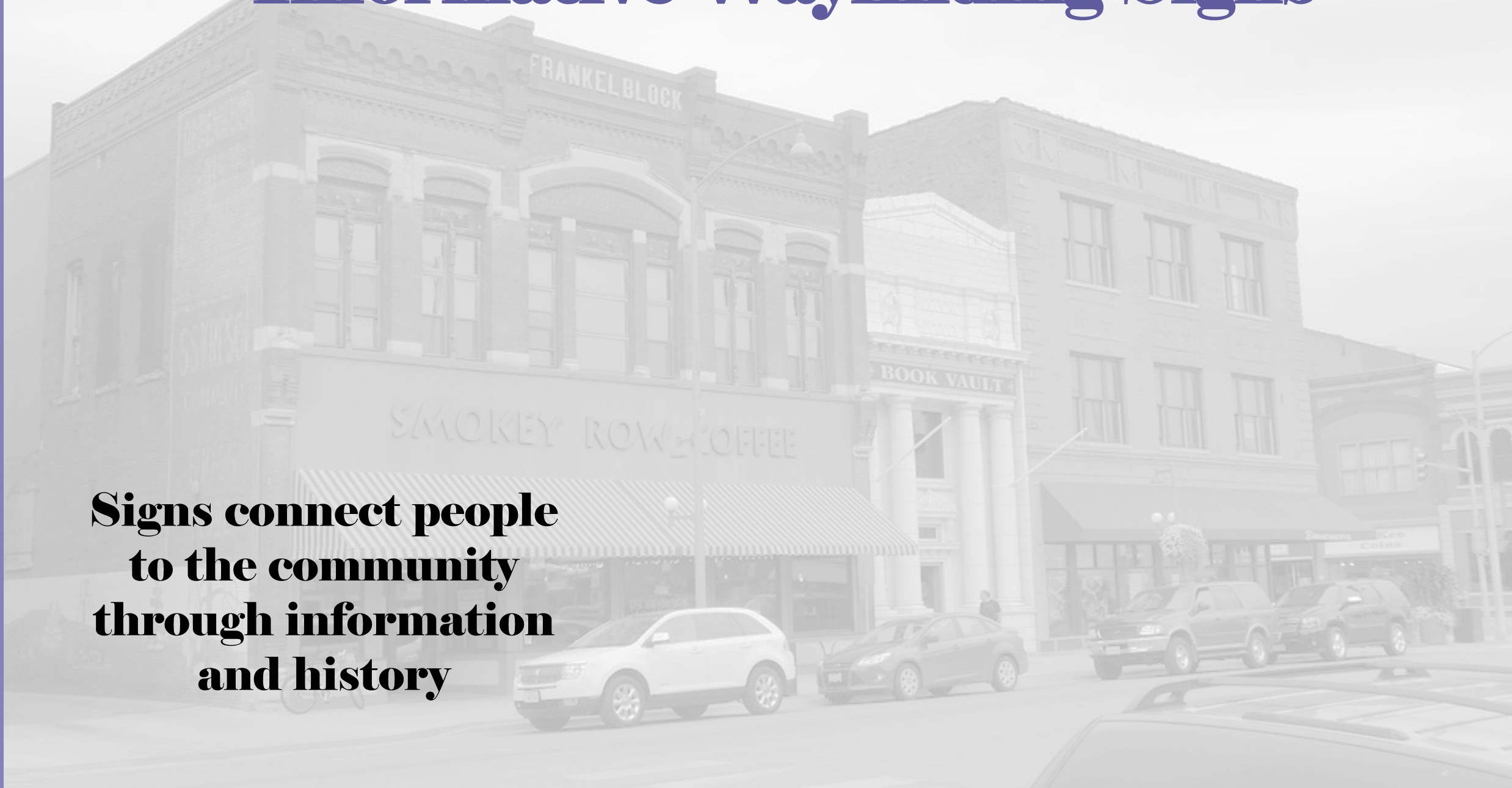
Lawn Chill Zone

**A Stage for Movie Nights or
Musical Performances**



Informative Wayfinding Signs

**Signs connect people
to the community
through information
and history**

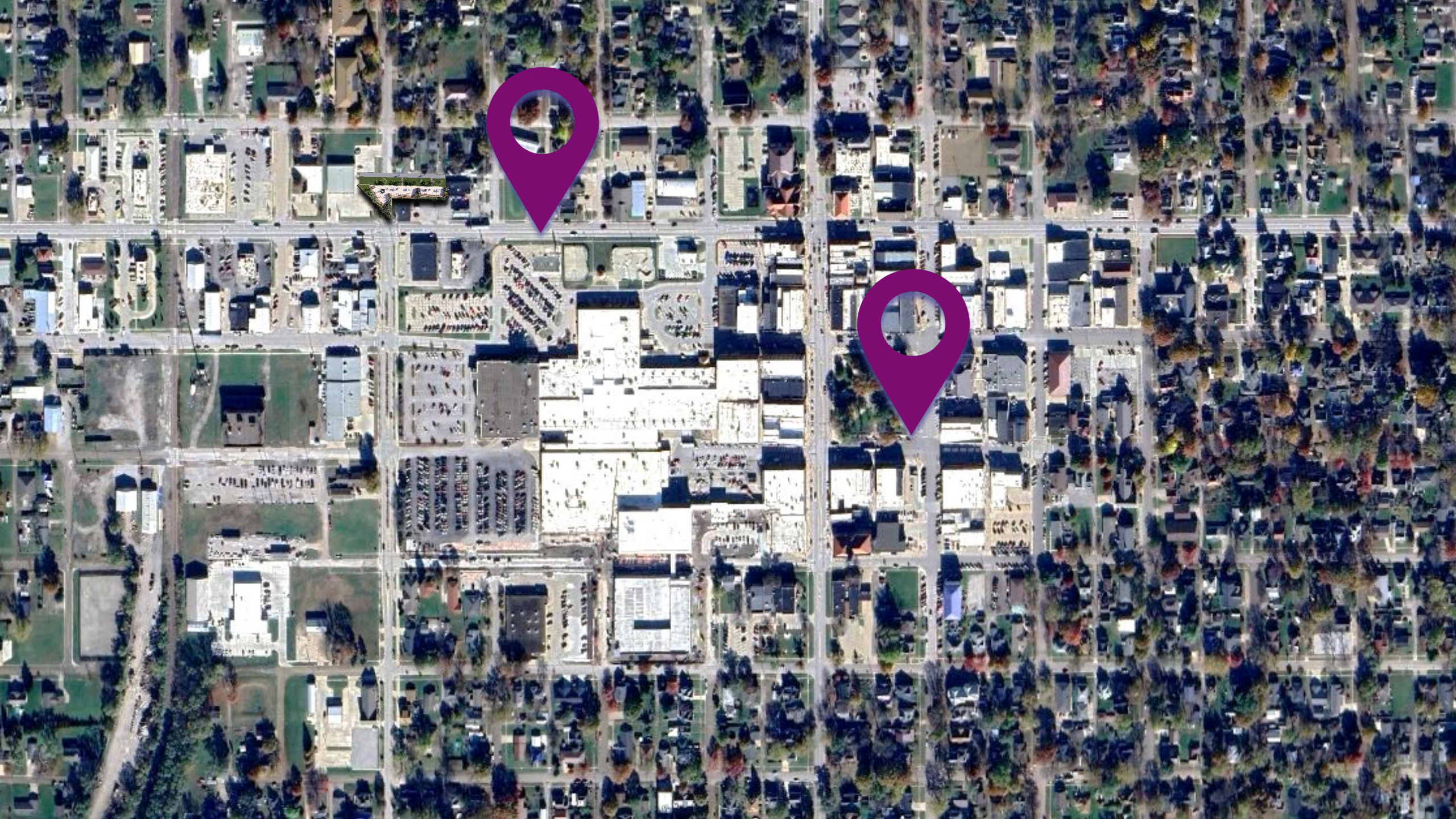


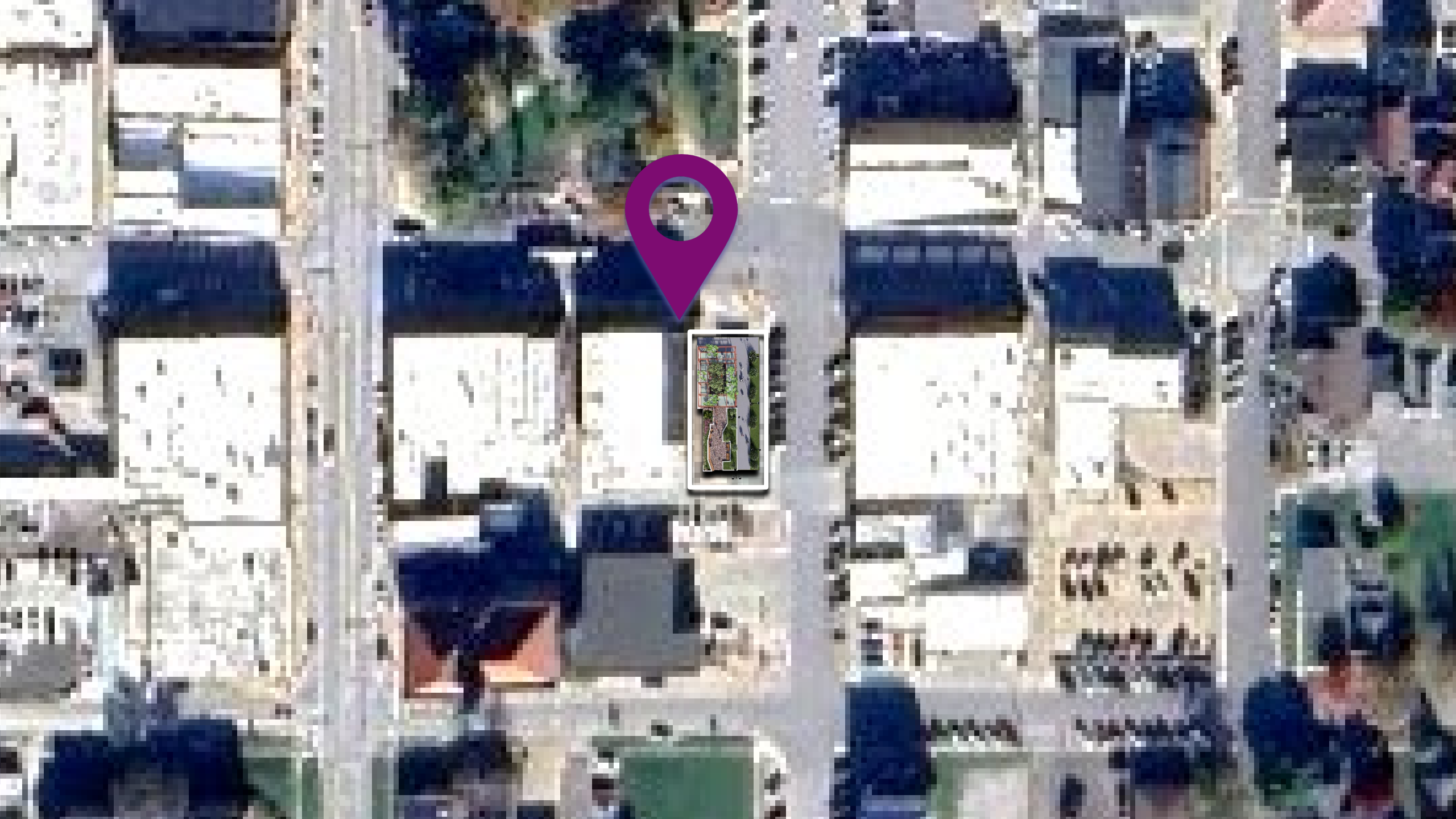
4. Urban Seating



An architectural rendering of a park structure at night. The central feature is a large, rectangular wooden frame with a flat roof, supported by several vertical posts. The roof is covered with green plants, and the sides are also covered with greenery. The interior of the structure has a wooden floor. Several people are walking around the structure, and a bicycle is parked near the bottom. To the left, there is a path with street lamps and tall grass. The background is dark, suggesting a night scene.

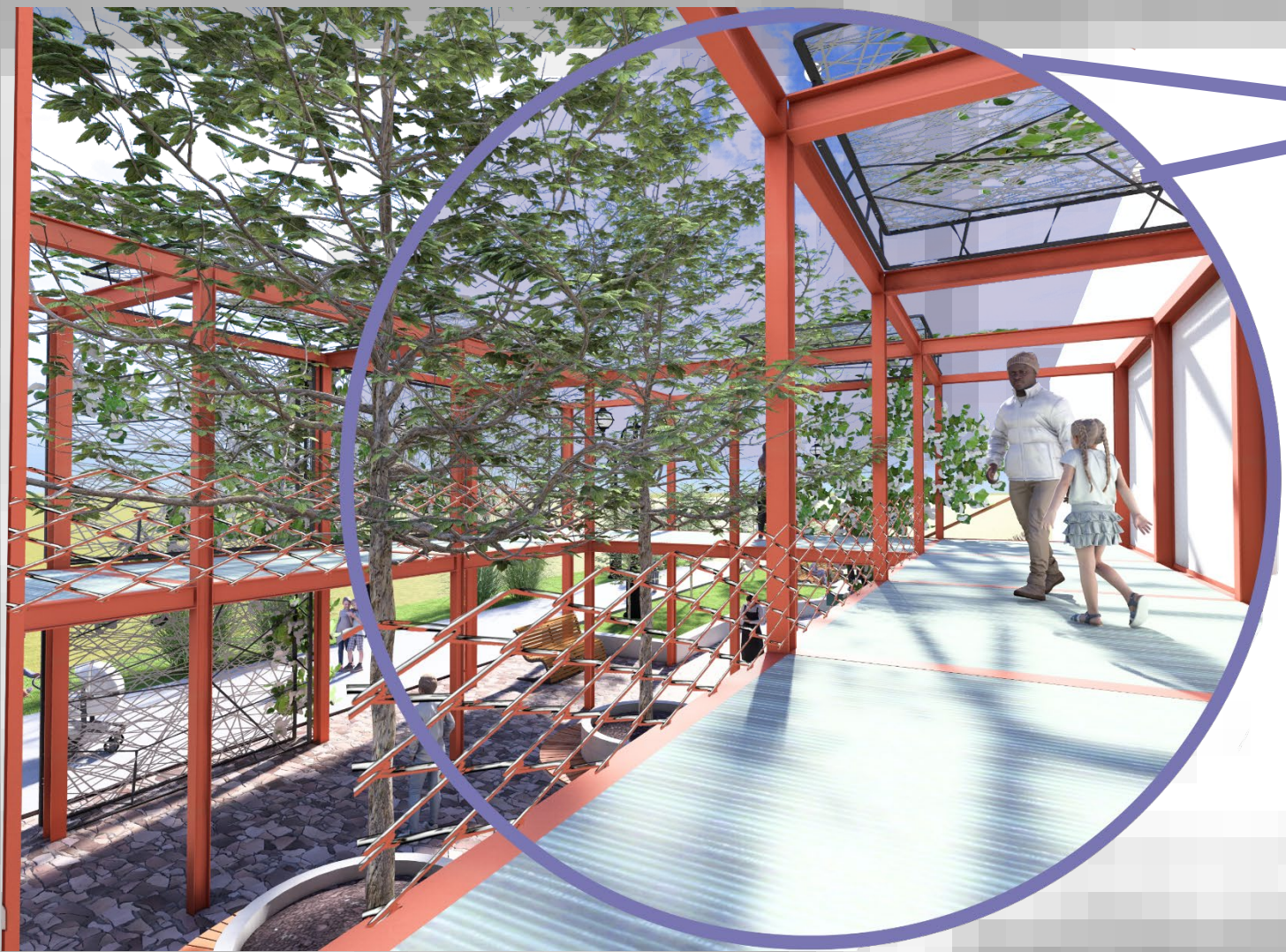
Pocket Park

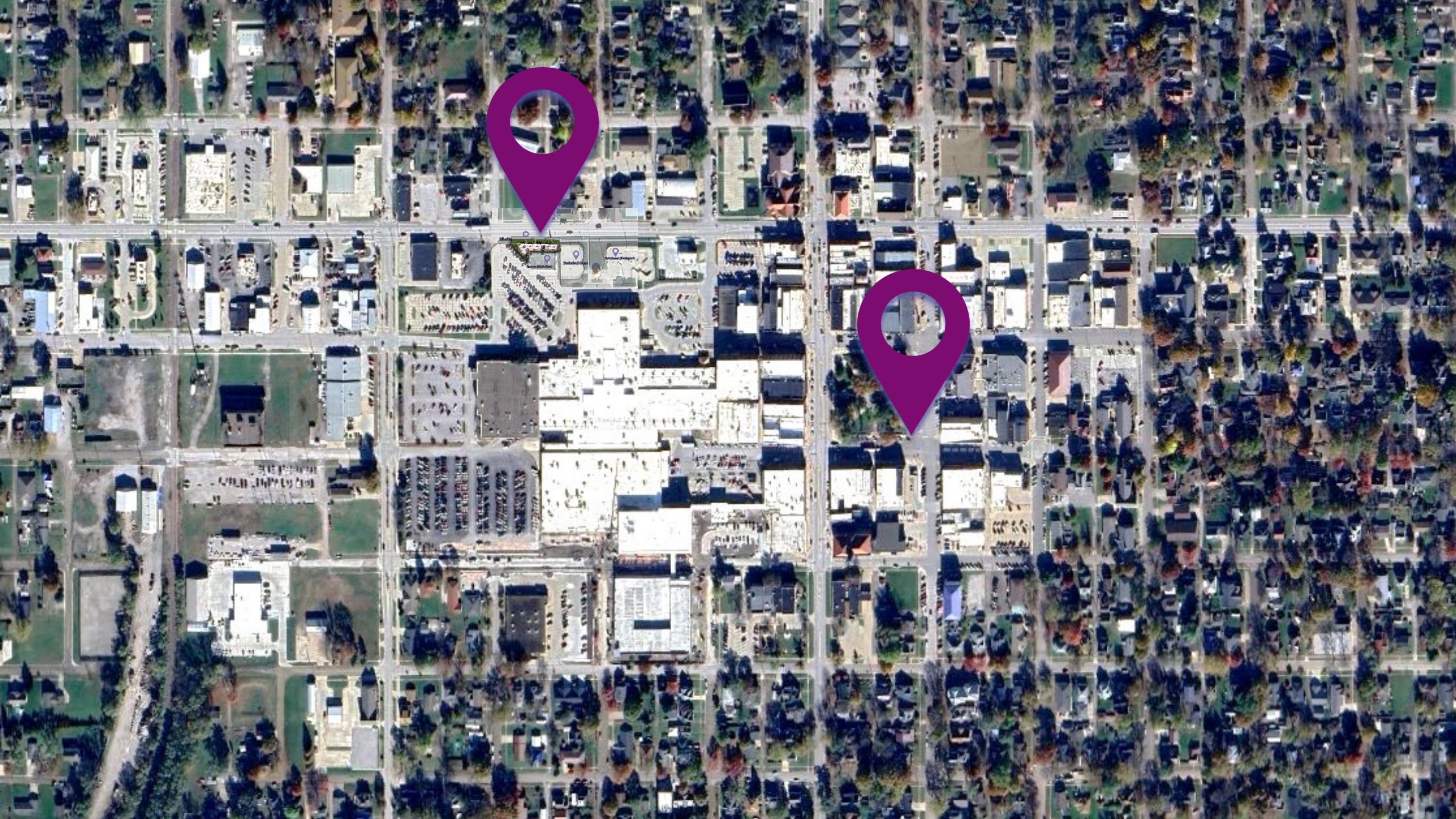












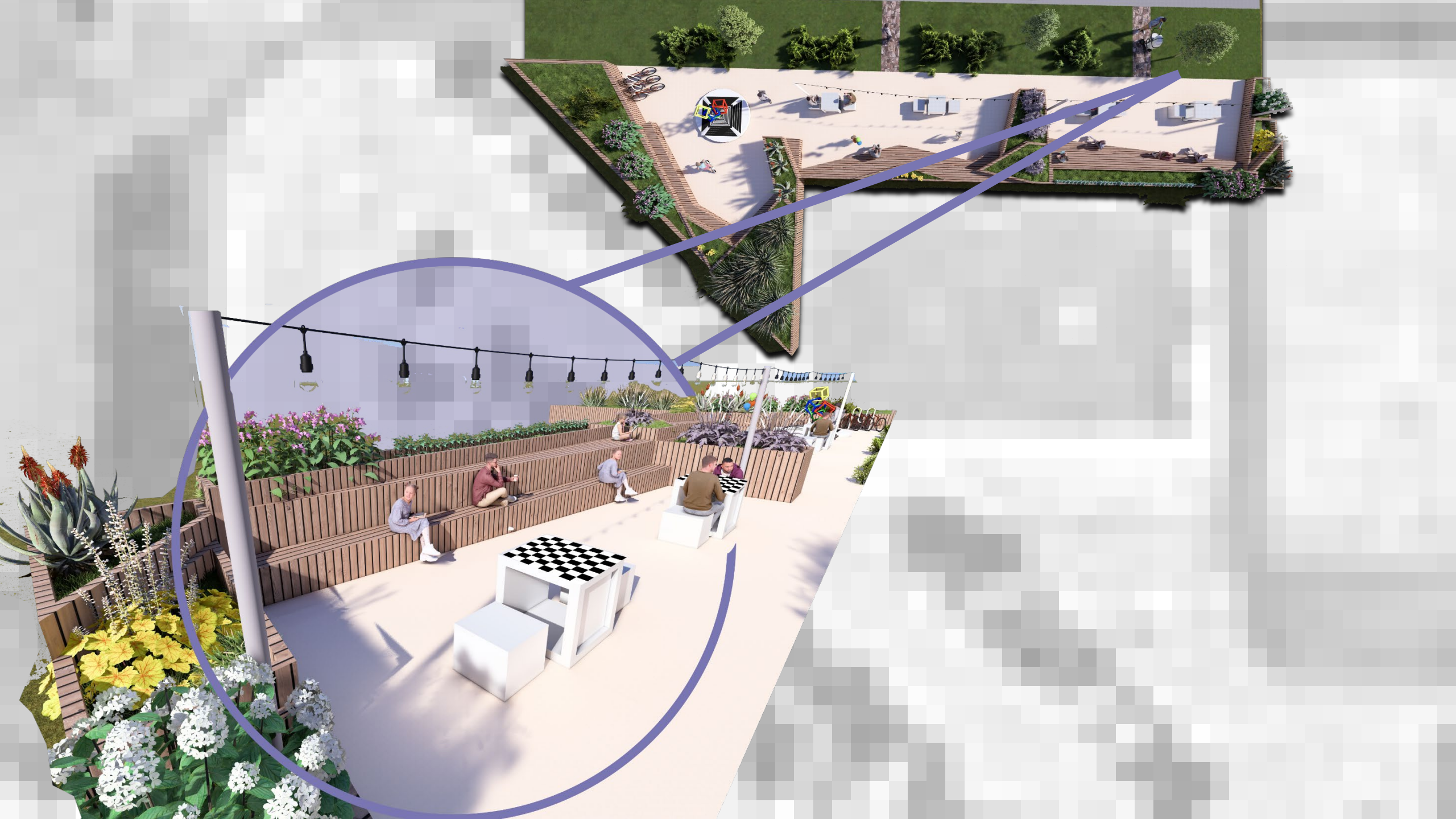
Mini Pitch Park

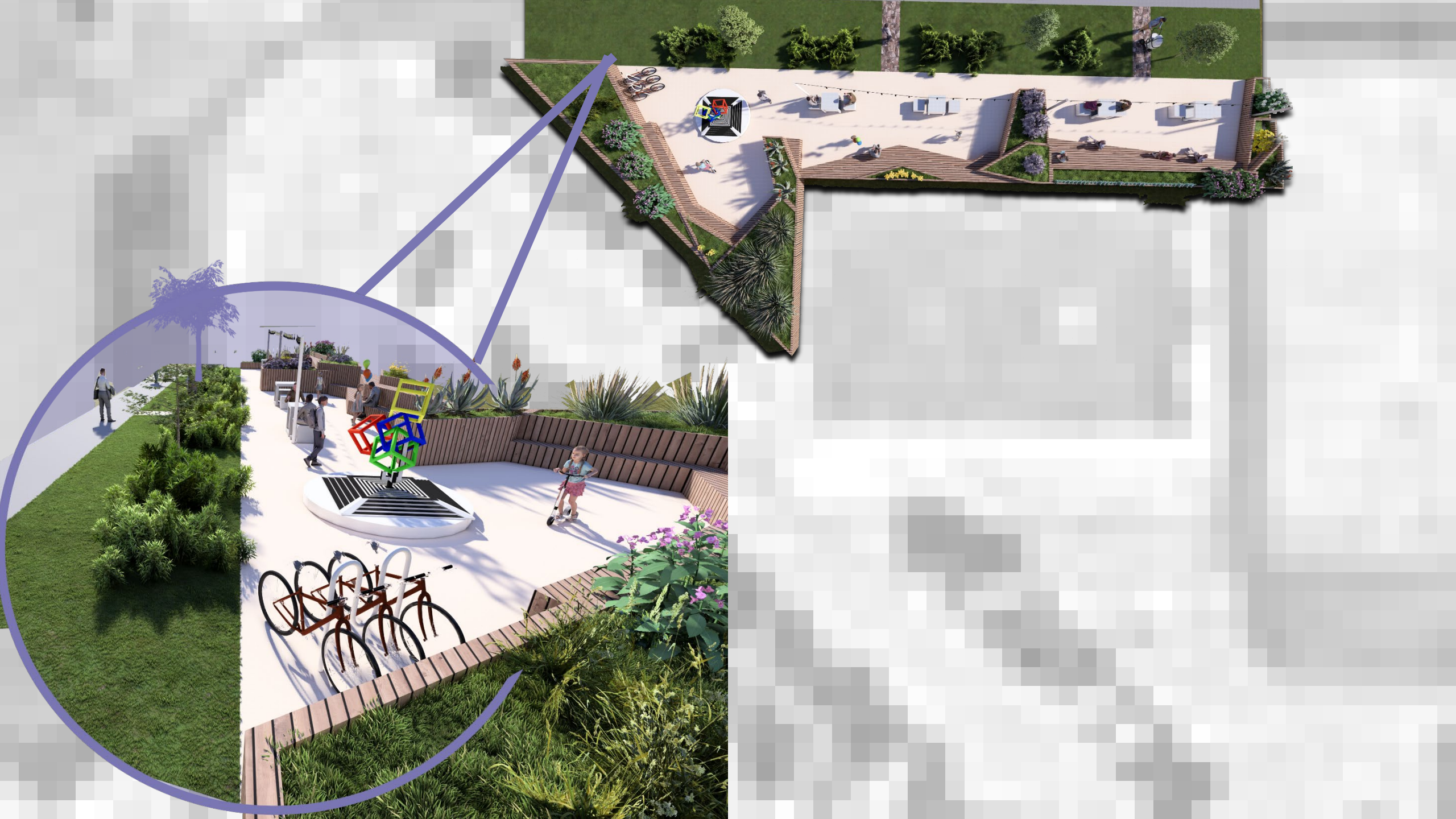
Soccer Mini-Pitch

Basketball Court

Oskaloosa Skatepark

Activity Zone







Funding Options

1



TIF

**Tax
Increment
Financing**

2



SSMID

**Self-
Supported
Municipal
Improvement
District**

3



**Revolving
Loan
Program**

4



Grants

Implementation Plan

I

Inputs

- ☐ Downtown Unique Features
- ☐ Historic Preservation Commission
- ☐ Main Stakeholders
- ☐ Residents of Oskaloosa
- ☐ Partnerships
- ☐ Downtown Businesses
- ☐ Bypass/ Connector projects
- ☐ Façade Update Project

Implementation Plan

1

Inputs

2

Actions

○ Stakeholder Meeting

○ Current Condition Analysis

Placemaking/ Second Story Assessment/ Property Value
Analysis /Traffic and Transportation study

○ Historic Guideline Revision

○ Finalizing Plan and Design

Implementation Plan

SHORT-TERM (0-3 YEARS)

1

Inputs

2

Actions

3

Outcomes

- ☐ Develop the *comprehensive bike-lane network plan*.
- ☐ **Re-adjust crosswalk & signal time**
- ☐ **Design a safe pedestrian link**
- ☐ **Catalog all upper-story spaces** and other redevelopment prospects.
- ☐ **Identify locations for wayfinding & information boards**
- ☐ **Place initial rounds of urban seating** and “tactical” plazas to test ideas.
- ☐ **Promote walk-and-shop events** that draw people through the mall.



Implementation Plan

1	2	3	SHORT-TERM (0-3 YEARS)
			MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS)
Inputs	Actions	Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize engineering & funding for post-bypass streetscapes.<input type="checkbox"/> Begin phased construction of high-priority bike lanes<input type="checkbox"/> Roll out unified downtown branding (gateway signs, banners, web assets).<input type="checkbox"/> Commission permanent public-art pieces in and around the mall.<input type="checkbox"/> Convert at least one under-utilized lot into a pocket park.<input type="checkbox"/> Launch an incentive fund or contest that helps start-ups add new attractions (indoor & outdoor).



Implementation Plan

1	2	3	SHORT-TERM (0-3 YEARS)
			MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS)
			LONG-TERM (5-10 YEARS)
Inputs	Actions	Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Finish of the dedicated bike-lane network and remaining streetscape.<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct post-implementation safety & economic-impact studies<input type="checkbox"/> Achieve high occupancy of upper-story residential inventory<input type="checkbox"/> Evolve the parking-permit program into a smart/dynamic-pricing system.<input type="checkbox"/> Expand pocket-park network into a continuous east–west public realm spine.<input type="checkbox"/> Refresh public art & branding elements<input type="checkbox"/> Host annual festivals that leverage the improved public space<input type="checkbox"/> Formalize a self-funded downtown management entity





Discussion