



LB 406 – Lower Niobrara/Northern Knox County Region Design Workshop

October 12, 2021

Public Presentation No. 1

Plan. Preserve. Play.

WELCOME

- Safety moment: emergency exits, 911, CPR
- Restrooms
- Refreshments
- Social distancing and available PPE

TODAY'S AGENDA

- LB 406 Study Overview
- Efforts to Date
- Initial Thoughts
- Discussion and Feedback (Survey and Comments)

MEET THE TEAM

- HDR

John Engel, Project Manager

- Doug Bisson

- Jen Cross

- Bill DeRoin

- Andy Gorham

Geoff Dickinson, SB Friedman

Elena Caminer, SB Friedman

- Calvin Hean

- Troy Henningson

- Alison Ingunza

- Alex Robinson

- Amanda Brandt



LB 406 - Statewide Tourism and Recreational Water Access and Resource Sustainability (STAR WARS)

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STAR WARS SPECIAL COMMITTEE



Sen. Mike Hilgers,
Speaker, District 21



Sen. Mike Flood,
District 19



Sen. John McCollister,
District 20



Sen. Dan Hughes,
District 44



Sen. Anna Wishart,
District 27



Sen. Rob Clements,
District 2



Sen. Bruce Bostelman,
District 23



Sen. Mike McDonnell,
District 5

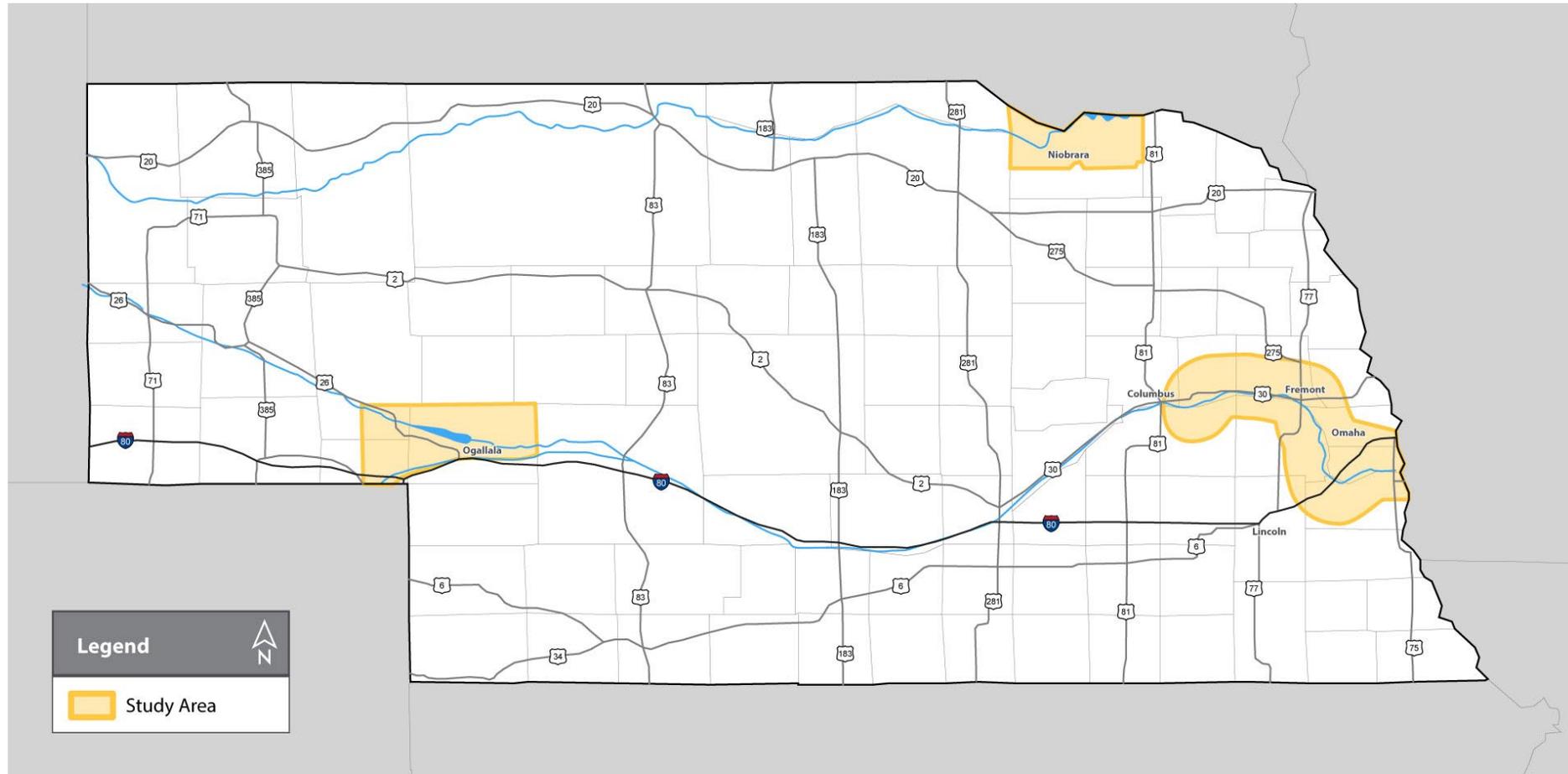


Sen. Tim Gragert,
District 40



Sen. Tom Brandt,
District 32

PROJECT OVERVIEW



LEGISLATIVE BILL 406

- Passed by One Hundred Seventh Legislature, signed by the governor May 25, 2021
- Established the Statewide Tourism and Recreational Water Access and Resource Sustainability (STAR WARS) Special Committee of the Legislature
- Authorized studies focusing on securing Nebraska's future **water supply** and strengthening Nebraska's **flood control infrastructure**, while also considering **economic and recreational opportunities**, including opportunities from increased tourism, in finding innovative solutions and winning opportunities for the State of Nebraska
- *Transformational projects that enhance economic development and catalyze private investment that benefits residents, the region, and the state.*



LOWER NIOBRARA/NORTHERN KNOX COUNTY REGION

Overview



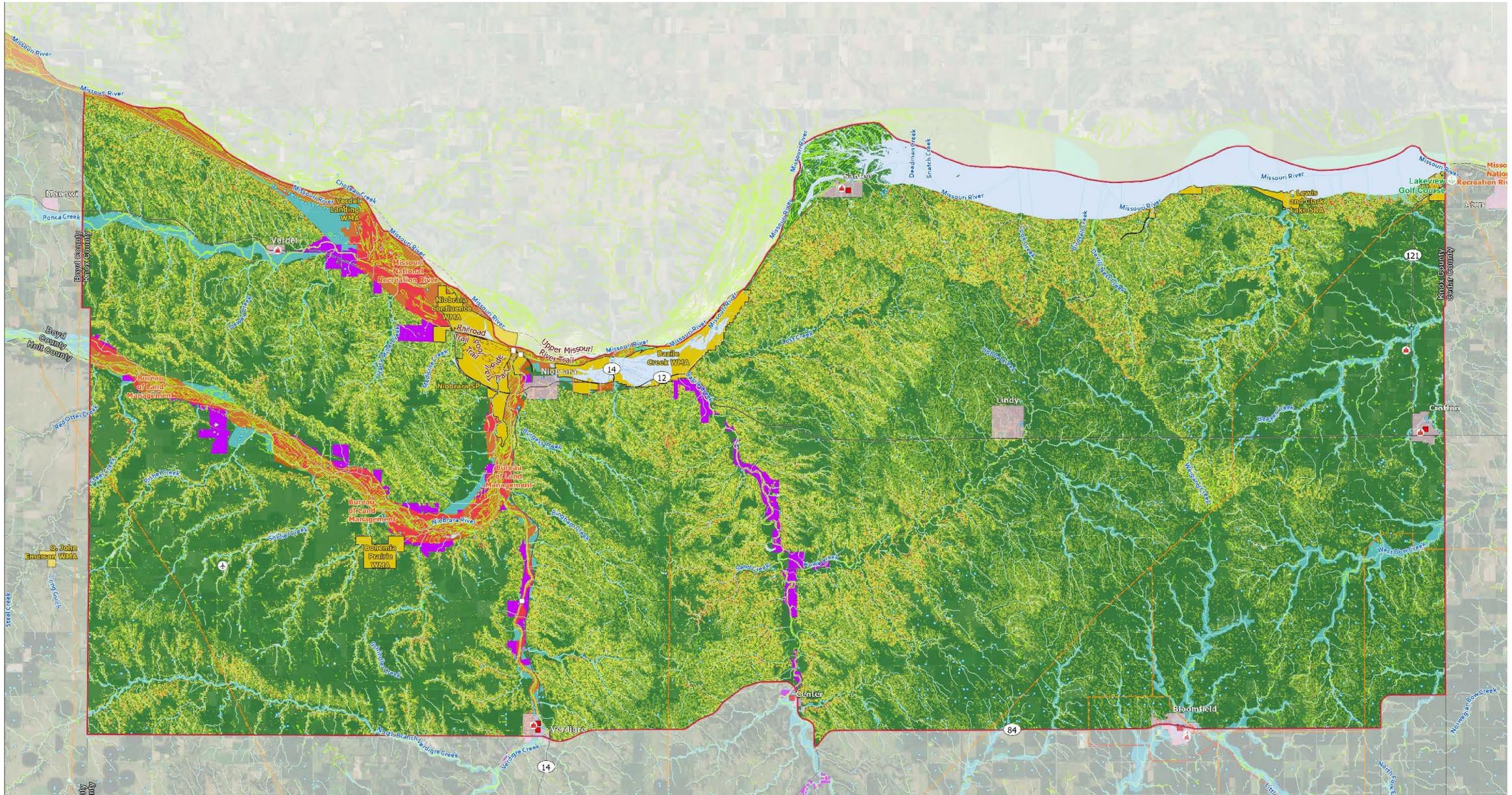
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LOWER NIOBRARA/NORTHERN KNOX COUNTY PROJECT REGION



FROM LB406:

- Section 2.3 (a): “Studies shall be conducted on...(iii) *The socioeconomic conditions, recreational and tourism opportunities, and public investment necessary to enhance economic development and to catalyze private investment in the region in Knox County, Nebraska...*”
- Section 2.3 (c): “The studies regarding...Lewis and Clark Lake and Niobrara State Park in Knox County shall *evaluate the outcomes and the economic benefits of proposed development and improvements* to residents, the local region, and state tourism.”



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EFFORTS TO DATE

- Context Assessment
- Public Hearing & Tour
- Survey
- Market Assessment



CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

- Held August 10, 2021 at Niobrara State Park Group Lodge
- Representatives from:
 - Village of Niobrara and other jurisdictions
 - National Park Service
 - Ponca Tribe
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Knox County Development Agency
 - Area NRDs
 - Groups such as MSAC, Friends of Knox County
 - Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
 - Local business owners
- Focused on opportunities; challenges; proposed/planned development; desired public realm conditions; utility, infrastructure and community facility needs; and precedents and best practices



PUBLIC HEARING & TOUR

- Tour of Northern Knox County region on August 25-26th, 2021.
- Public Hearing August 25, 2021 in Niobrara
- STAR WARS Committee received testimony regarding the region
- Transcript available on the project website





SURVEY RESULTS

LOCAL & REGIONAL INTEREST

- 143 Survey Responses
- Just over half from within the study area
- Approx. 70% from Knox County
- Rest: From the region, Nebraska and a handful of out of state (South Dakota, Iowa, Utah, Kansas)

MAIN THEMES

- Infrastructure (road improvements, water quality, utilities, sedimentation)
- Public water access to rivers and lake
- How do we compete with the South Dakota side for tourism/businesses, etc.?
- Desire to increase recreational opportunities on and off the water
- Wildlife management and natural landscape preservation
- Restaurants and “things to do”
- Hunting, fishing, camping, etc.
- There is a high demand for more housing and jobs
- “Update/modernize” existing amenities
- The natural beauty, the cultural diversity, and small-town community feelings are what bring people to this area. How do we continue this culture?



INITIAL MARKET FINDINGS

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PLAN, PRESERVE, PLAY

Knox County Study Area – Opportunity Assessment

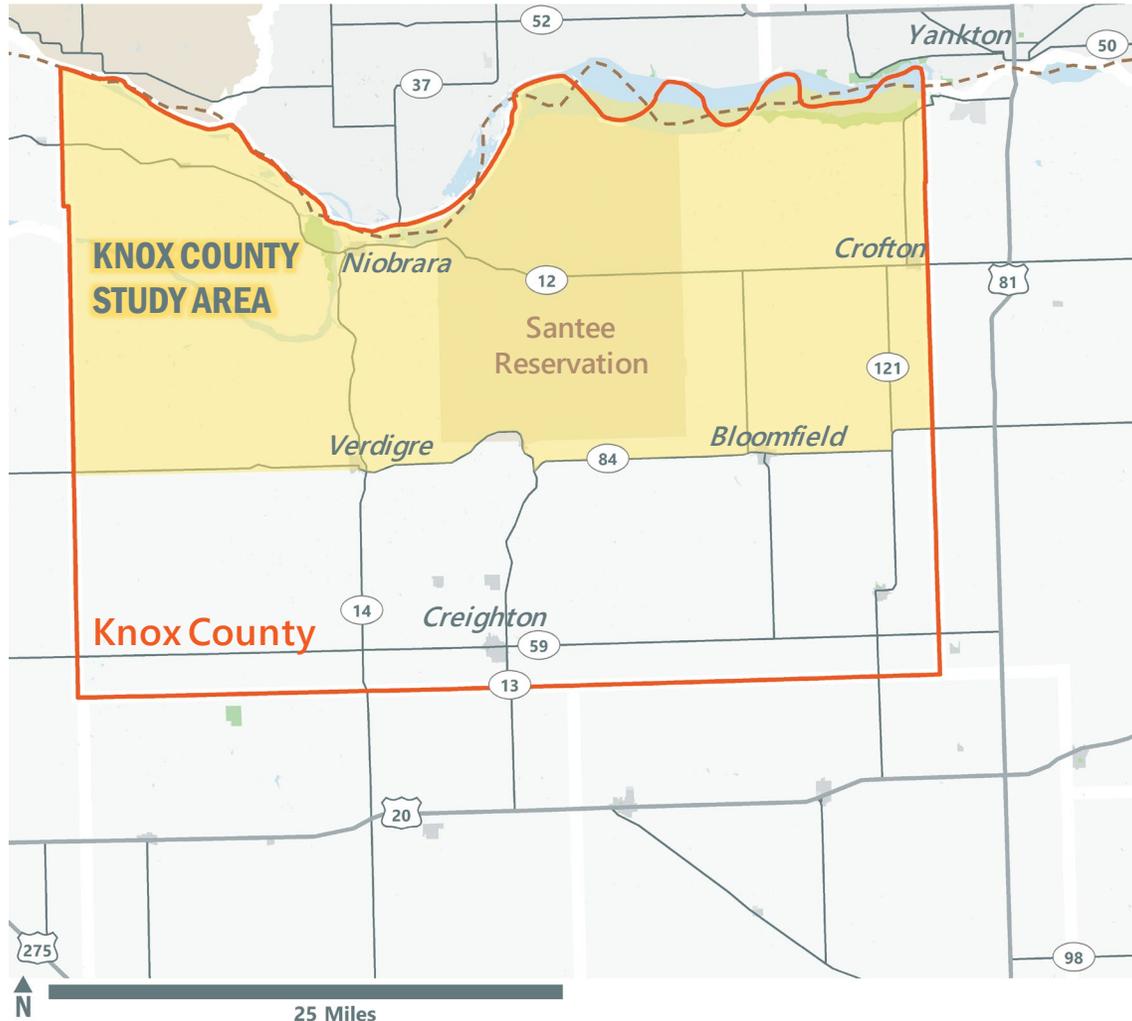
Charette – Week of October 11, 2021



VISION
ECONOMICS
STRATEGY
FINANCE
IMPLEMENTATION

KNOX COUNTY STUDY AREA

Knox County is a sub-regional destination, attracting most visitors from a relatively short drive time



- The Study Area has a strong recreation and leisure tourism base due to the sub-regional draw of Lewis and Clark Lake SRA, Niobrara State Park and other nearby recreation and leisure attractions within the smaller SRAs along the south shore of the lake.
- The Study Area offers a variety of other attractions catering to the Sports, Entertainment & Culture segments including:
 - Local museums, including tribal museums;
 - Historic, cultural and tribal sites, and
 - A casino.
- There are attractions within the Study Area, and there are **additional tourism assets and supporting services in Yankton, SD** which both complement and compete with the Study Area.



CHALLENGES TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

Knox County has constraints to consider when planning economic development projects



Sedimentation along the Rivers and Lake:

Sedimentation can degrade the habitat and water quality and contribute to flooding. There are other challenges along the waterfronts, such as subsidence and plasticity.



Flooding: The county is categorized as a national flood hazard according to FEMA and there has been recent flooding (March 2019). Flooding hazard is a high concern for any development in the Study Area.



Rural Water System: A portion of the Study Area is served by the Cedar/Knox Rural Water District. Many residents rely on individual septic systems and wells.



Broadband Availability: Many rural areas in Nebraska are struggling to provide adequate broadband.



Access to Recreation/Water: There are limited designated access points to recreation areas and the waterfront. Water recreation is anticipated to be a key driver of economic development.



Access/Visibility: Highway 12 is being raised 5-feet in order to avoid frequent flooding. However, this will limit visibility of the area to traveling cars. Further, there may be access challenges depending on road configuration.

BUILDING A TOURISM ECOSYSTEM

A vibrant tourism ecosystem consists of attractions, lodging and support services



- The tourism ecosystem is an inter-connected web of tourism assets including **attractions, support services, lodging** and places that provide opportunities for visitors to eat, sleep and play.
 - The Study Area's tourism ecosystem is integrated with tourism assets in the Yankton, SD area.
- Enhancing and encouraging development of tourism assets could extend the tourist season and establish the Study Area as a year-round destination.
- Some of the following opportunities are **likely most feasible only when one or more other tourism assets are present**.
 - For example, for an event space to be successful, there needs to be sufficient hotel rooms available nearby to accommodate event guests over night.
- **Co-locating assets** could help enhance viability of new tourism opportunities.
 - For example, in the near-term, coupling assets such as an event space within a resort could improve feasibility for both, rather than creating two assets that may compete for the same visitor base.

CASE STUDIES

Presence/absence research helps identify opportunities for the Study Area to add to its tourism assets



Name/Location	Lewis and Clark Lake Yankton, SD	West Okoboji Lake, IA
Description	Along the Missouri River at the Southern border of South Dakota;	Part of the Iowa Great Lakes; blue water lake
Distance to Nearest City	1 hour to Sioux City 1.25 hours to Sioux Falls	1.75 hours to Sioux Falls 2 hours to Sioux City
Size of lake	48.0 sq miles	6.0 sq miles
Number of Annual Visitors	1.5M	1.0M [1]
Population within 2-hour Driveshed	732,300	902,600

[1] Annual visitors to all of the Iowa Great Lakes

PRESENCE/ABSENCE FRAMEWORK

	Lewis and Clark Lake Yankton, SD	Lake Okoboji Okoboji, IA	Knox County Study Area
Marina	⊗	⊗	X
Event Space	⊗	⊗	X
Waterfront Dining	⊗	⊗	X
Resort	⊗	⊗	
Non-Traditional Camping			
RV Campgrounds	⊗	X	X
Workforce & Senior Housing Solutions	X [1]	X [1]	

X = Present; ⊗ = Comp

[1] Within the City or a 10-minute drive.

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TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

By expanding tourism assets, the Study Area can support economic development



ATTRACTIONS

Enhance and add attractions to increase the number of visitors to the Study Area



LODGING

Provide diverse lodging options at a variety of price points to support year-round tourism



HOUSING

Encourage new housing construction in a variety of formats and price points to support workforce and senior housing needs

OPPORTUNITY TO ADD MORE ATTRACTIONS

Key new attractions will complement existing activities and strengthen the tourism ecosystem



	Marina	Event Space	Waterfront Dining
Description	Lakeside; Concessionaire agreement with NGPC for private operations. Will need lease agreement from USACE	Within a new resort (privately-owned/operated) or existing State park or SRA (publicly-owned and potentially privately-operated via concessionaire agreement); Scenic lake or river views	Full service, open year-round; In near-term, co-locate with resort and/or marina to enhance viability
Size / Capacity	250-500 slips (expand or construct new marina)	100-200 guests	3,000-10,000 SF, <1 acre
Other Supportive Uses	Boat rentals, gas service, general store	--	May be co-located with marina or other resort
Other Considerations	Slip size: 20-40 feet	Space: Indoor/outdoor Events: A variety of events; Facilities: Tables/chairs and A/C onsite, kitchen and bar	Outdoor dining, boat docking, space for live events

OPPORTUNITY FOR ADDITIONAL LODGING

Additional lodging may extend the tourism season and attract new visitors to the Study Area



	RV & Traditional camping	Non-Traditional Camping	Resort/Lodge
Attraction	Lakeside; privately-owned and operated or could be leased via concessionaire agreement with NGPC within existing SRA/campground	Within existing State Park/SRA campgrounds; could be leased via concessionaire agreement with NGPC	Co-locate near other attractions; could have a variety of lodging options (including cabins) or a traditional hotel format
Rooms/Sites	50-100	10-75	50-75 rooms
Acreage	10-20	---	10-50
Price per Night	\$50	\$75-200	\$125-300
Amenities	Recreation activity (pool, fitness center)	Electricity, private bathrooms	Event space, recreation activities

OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW HOUSING

New housing can accommodate the workforce needed to support a tourism economy



Workforce Housing



Affordable Senior Housing

	Workforce Housing	Affordable Senior Housing
Location	Incorporated area or possibly near attractions	Incorporated area
Total Units	10-20	10-20
Acreage	1-2 based on 10 du/acre	1-2 based on 10 du/acre
Unit Breakdown	Mix of 2BR and 3BR	1BR

OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

Catalyze an increase in private investment into tourism, recreation and economic development



ATTRactions

Enhance existing and add new attractions to increase the number of visitors to the Study Area

Opportunities

- 250-500 slips (expand or construct new marina)
- 100-200 person capacity event space
- 3,000+ SF waterfront restaurant



LODGING

Provide diverse lodging options at a variety of price points to support year-round tourism

Opportunities

- 50-100 site RV park
- 10-75 non-traditional camping sites
- 50-75 key lodge/resort

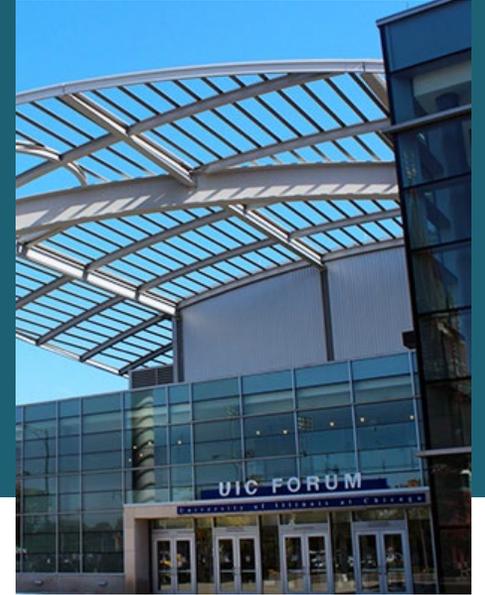


HOUSING

Encourage new housing construction in a variety of formats and price points to support workforce and senior housing needs

Opportunities

- 10-20 workforce housing units
- 10-20 affordable senior housing units



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VISION | ECONOMICS
MARKET ANALYSIS AND REAL ESTATE ECONOMICS

STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLANNING

FINANCE | IMPLEMENTATION
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

- Design workshop – Oct. 11th – 15th
 - Where: Group Lodge at Niobrara State Park and WebEx
 - What: Public Presentations and Discussion
 - When: 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, 2-4 p.m. Friday afternoon
 - Nightly presentations will be added to the website the next day



INITIAL THOUGHTS





OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVES

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NGPC POTENTIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Niobrara State Park Projects	
Group Lodge Facility	Campground Upgrades and Improvements
Outdoor Education Complex	Full-Service Campsites
New Office/Headquarters	Sewage Lagoon
Cabin Improvements	Playground Area
Missouri River Access	Trail Improvements and Overlooks
Fishing Access Trail	Swimming Pool Upgrades
Fishing Pond Improvements and Repairs	Historic Barn Renovation

NGPC POTENTIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Weigand/Burbach Area Priority Projects

Marina expansion with boat storage area	Electrical campsite upgrades
Replace park office and store	Additional cabins
Hike/Bike trail	Playground
Resurface roads, gravel to asphalt conversion	

Bloomfield, Miller Creek, South Shore and Adjacent Area Priority Projects

Kayak access with breakwater	Dredging bays to remove silt
Additional boat ramps with breakwater	Upgrading equestrian campgrounds
Additional electrical campsites	Add bike path via county road shoulder
Resurface roads, gravel to asphalt conversion	Improve infrastructure for rural water



MARINA & RESTAURANT

Plan. Preserve. Play.

RESTAURANT / MARINA

- Destination Restaurant
 - Patio Seating
- +/- 400 Slip Marina
 - 20' – 35' Length Slips
- Dual Boat Ramps
- Boat Trailer Parking
- Walking Trails
- Overlook
- Native Landscaping



WEIGAND

NATIVE
VEGETATION

PLAZA/
OVERLOOK

FUEL STATIONS

CAMPING

+/- 400 SLIP MARINA

MARINA SERVICES BLDG.

BOAT RAMP

BOAT RAMP

PARKING

SERVE

RESTAURANT

PATIO SEATING

PAVILION

PLAYGROUND

VOLLEYBALL

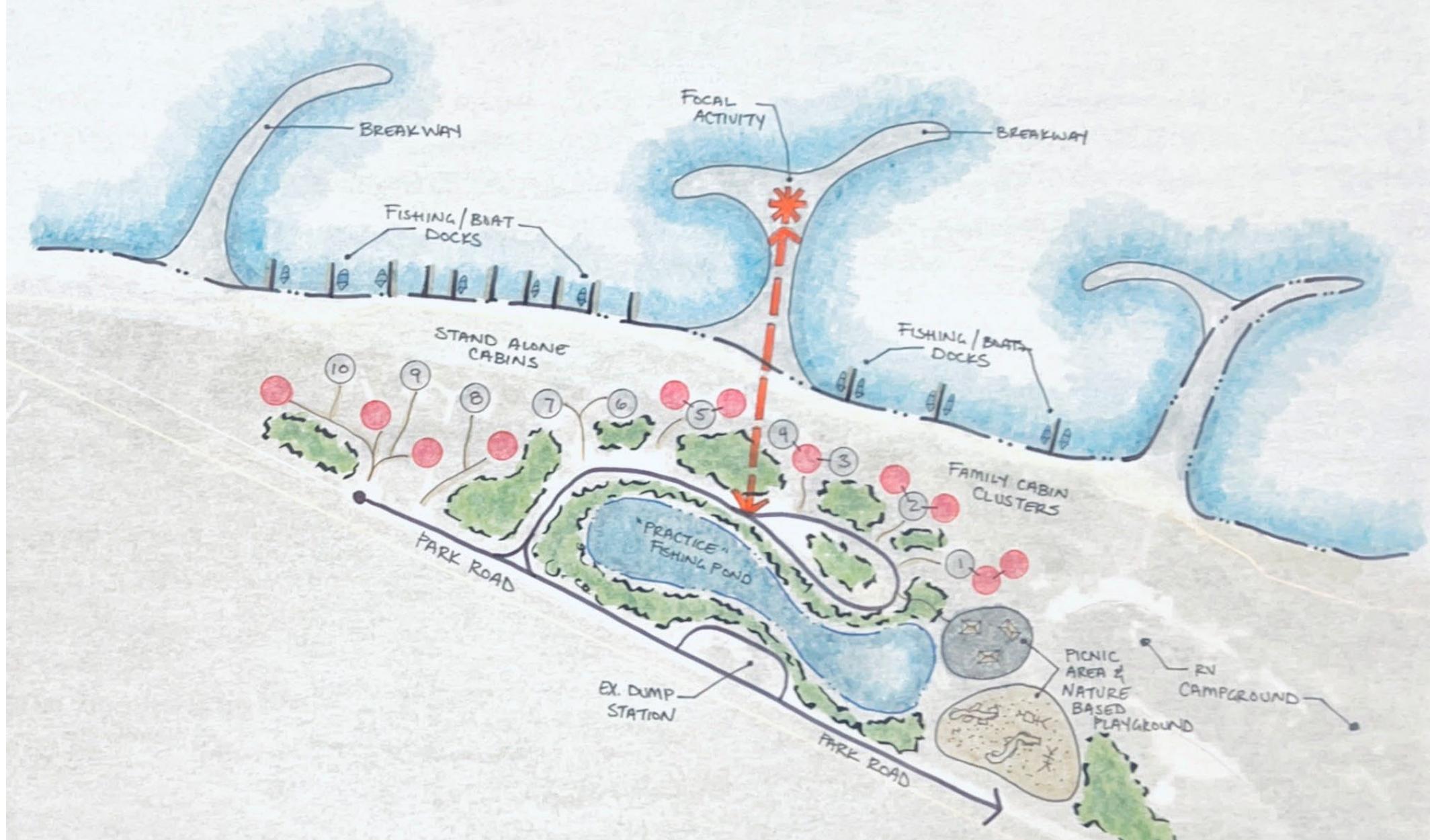




Fishing Village at Burbach Area

Plan. Preserve. Play.

BURBACH CABINS







BLOOMFIELD ACTIVATION

Plan. Preserve. Play.

Lewis and Clark Lake

BLUFF ADVENTURE ZONE

- OVERLOOK
- ZIPLINE
- TRAILHEAD
- PLAYGROUND
- BREAKWATER
- CLIMBING
- IMPROVED BOAT ACCESS



3D ARCHERY COURSE

CAMPGROUNDS
&
INTERPRETIVE TRAILS

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS





MILLER CREEK ACTIVATION

Plan. Preserve. Play.



- Day-Use Activities
 - Disc Golf
 - Water Playground
 - Interpretive Boardwalks
 - Trail Extension
 - Bird Watching
 - Fishing Amenities
 - Picnicking
 - Yard Games





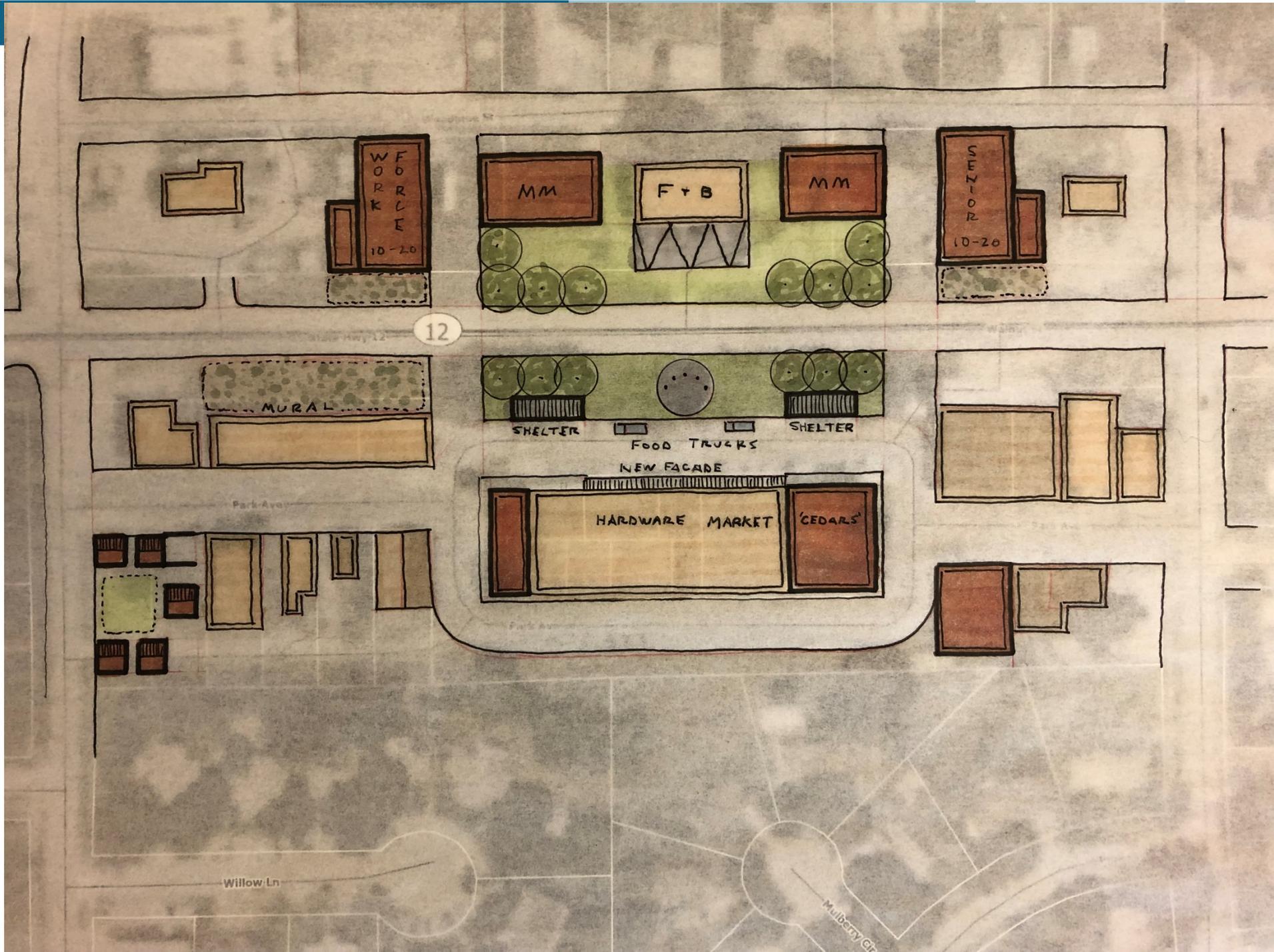
NIOBRARA TOWN CENTER

Plan. Preserve. Play.

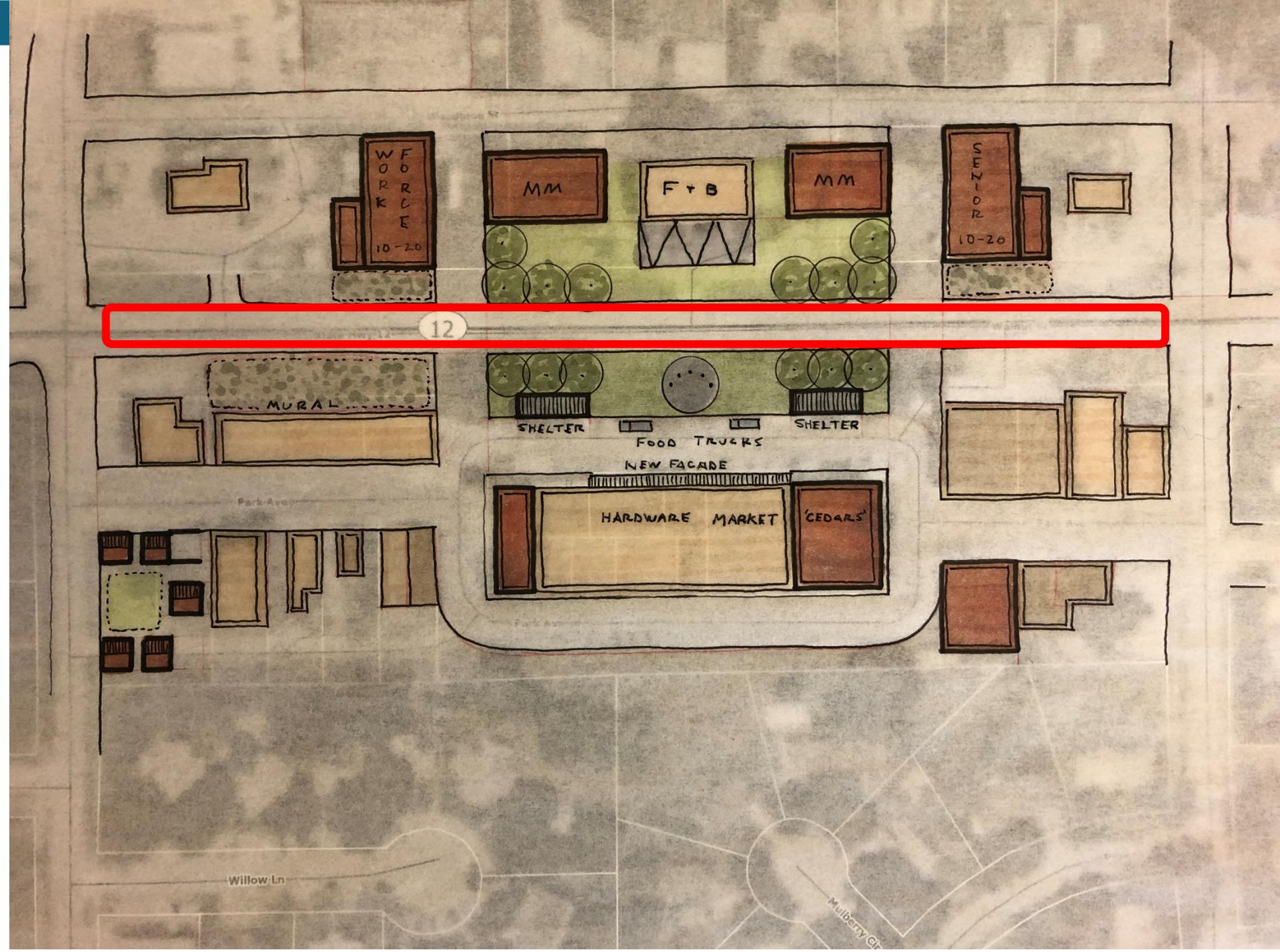
SPRAWL RETROFIT/PLACEMAKING



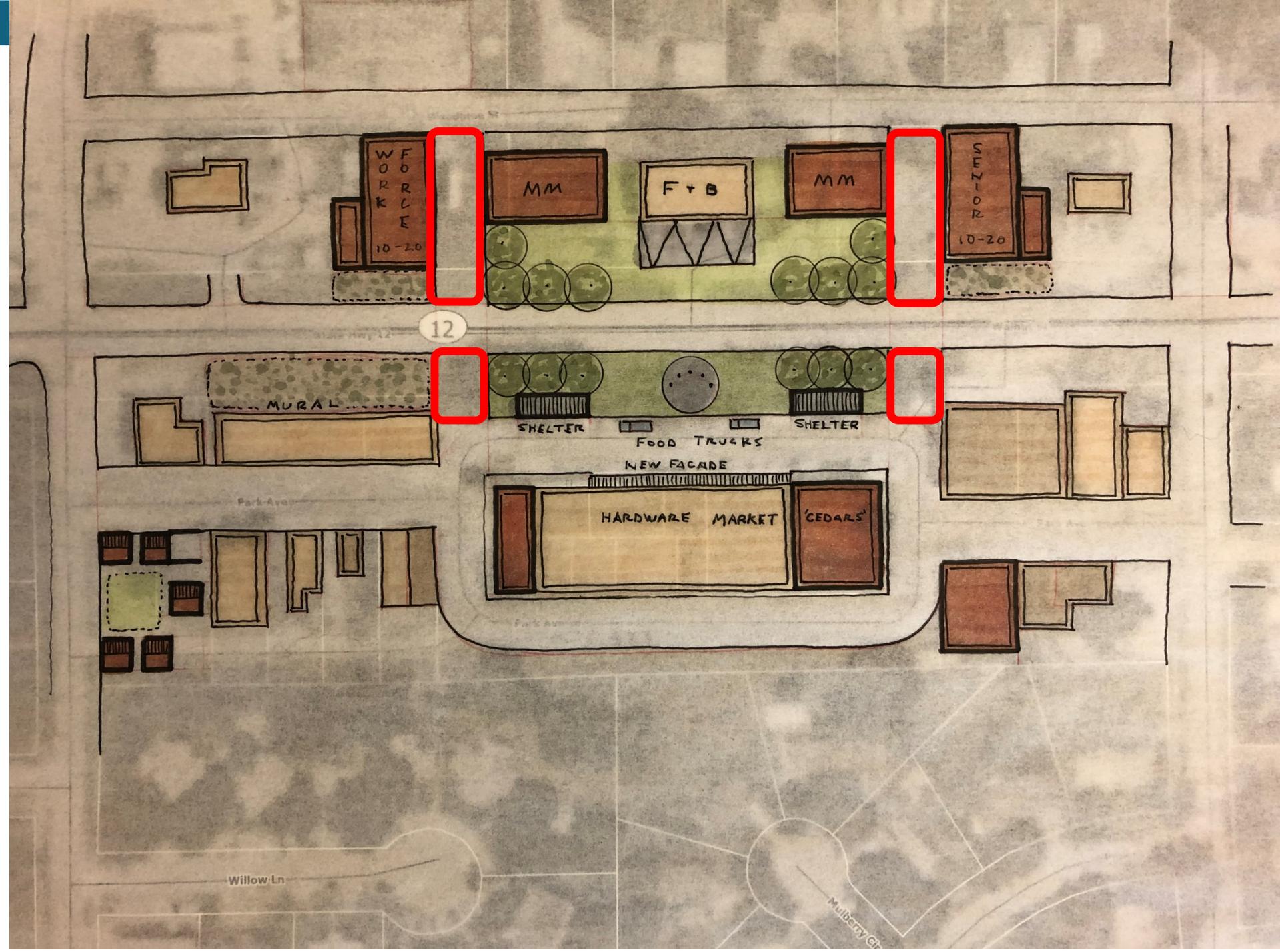
Plan. Preserve. Play.



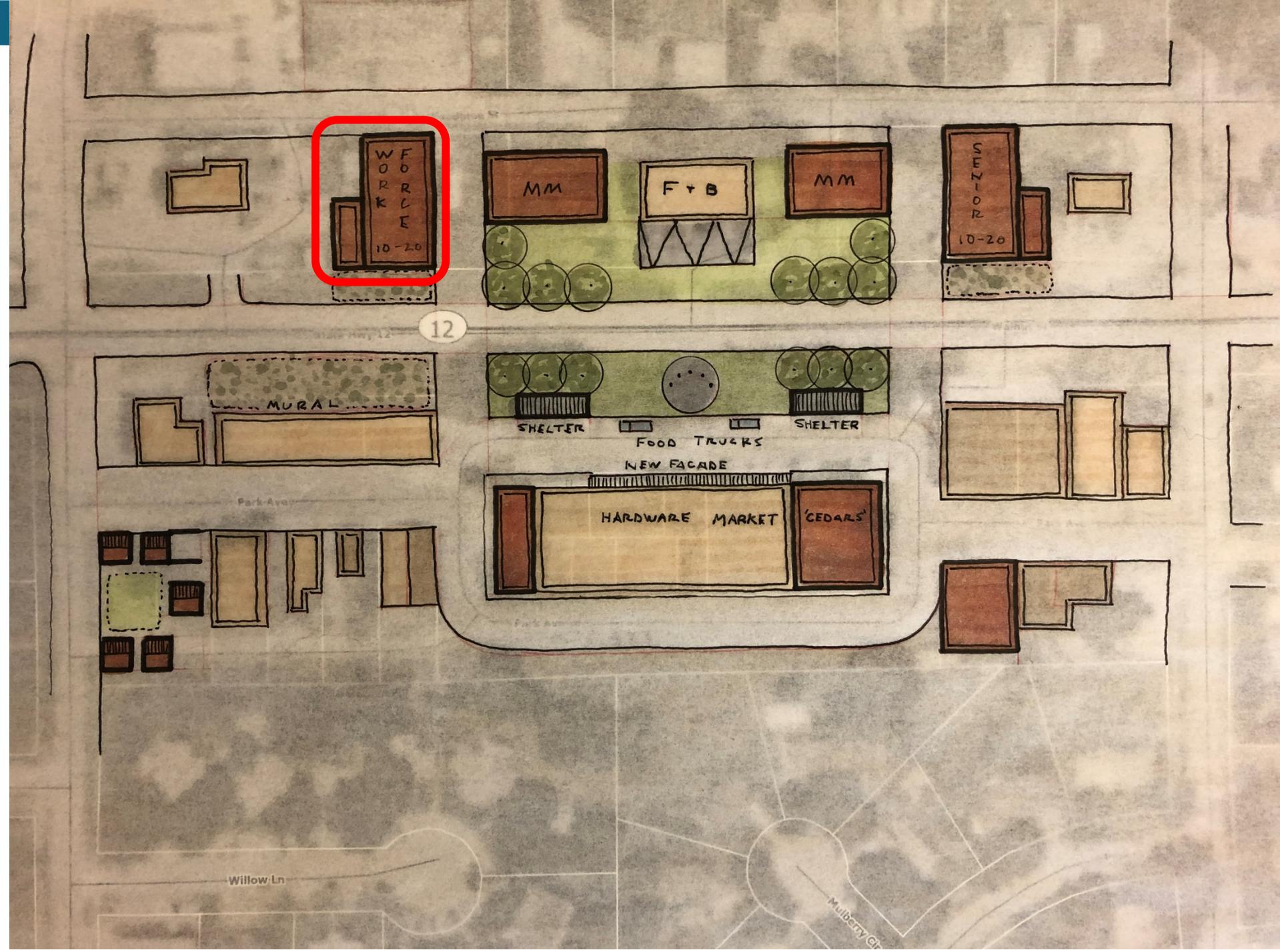
Traffic Calming



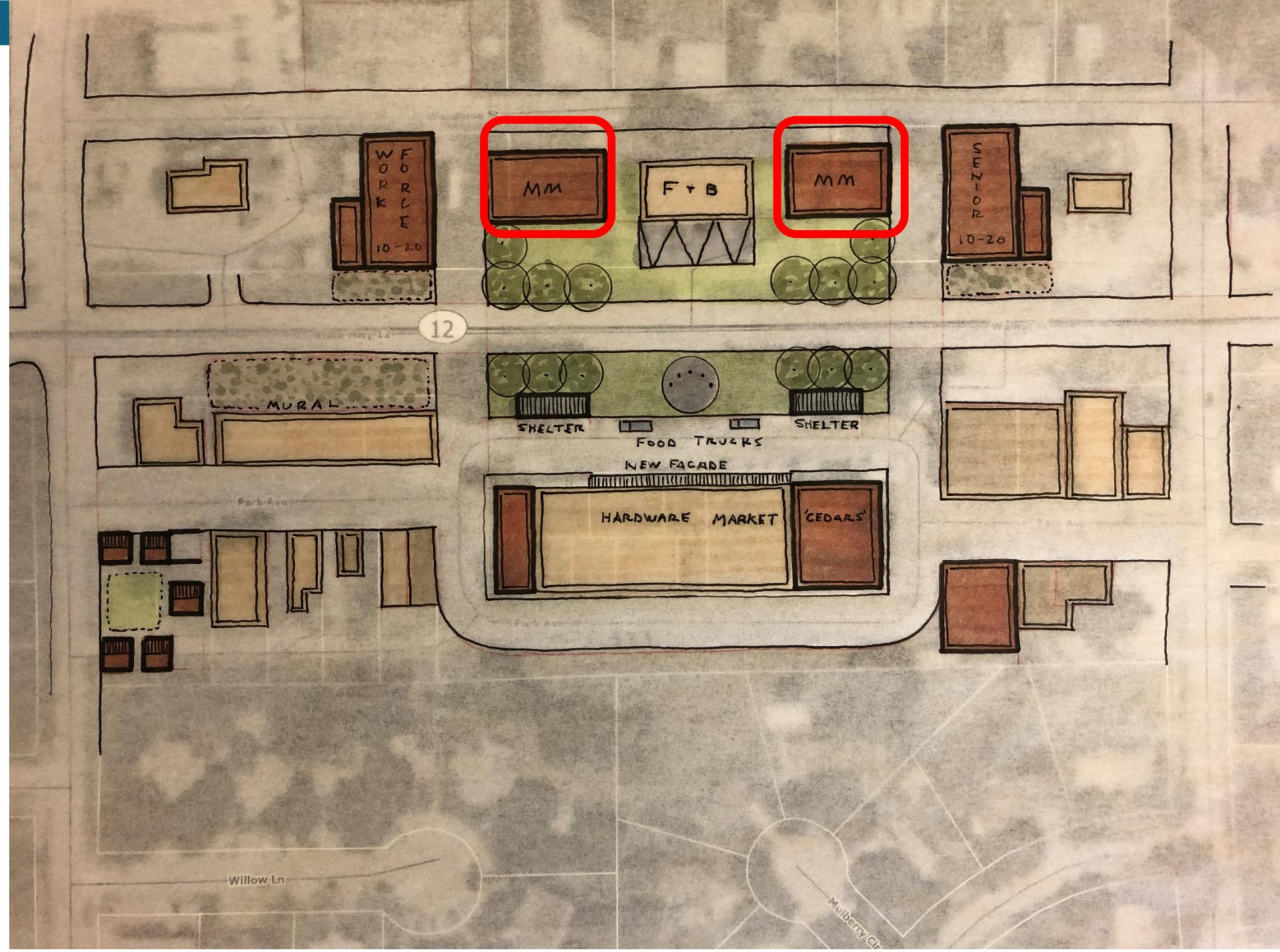
New Streets



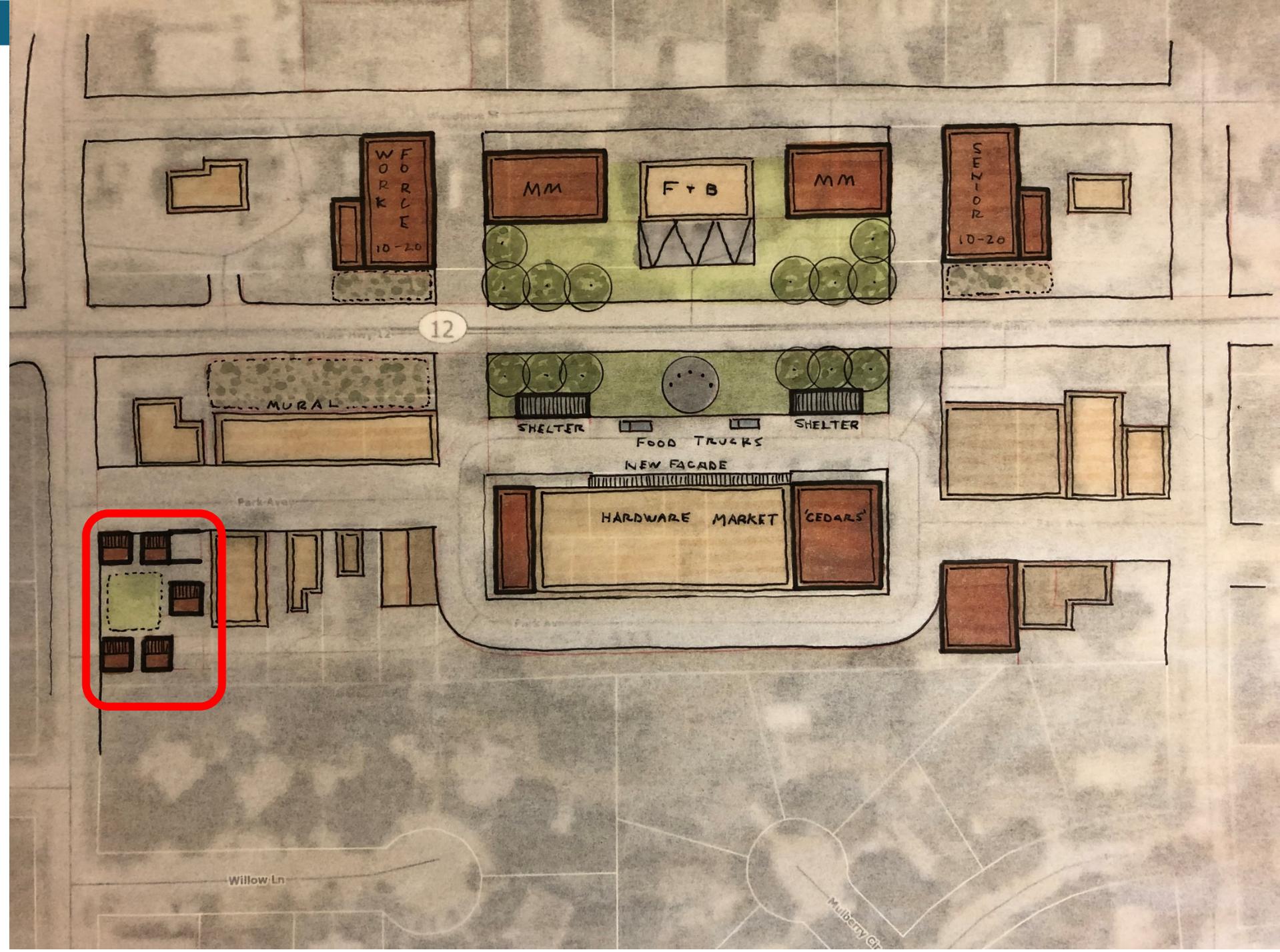
Infill Development: Work Force Housing



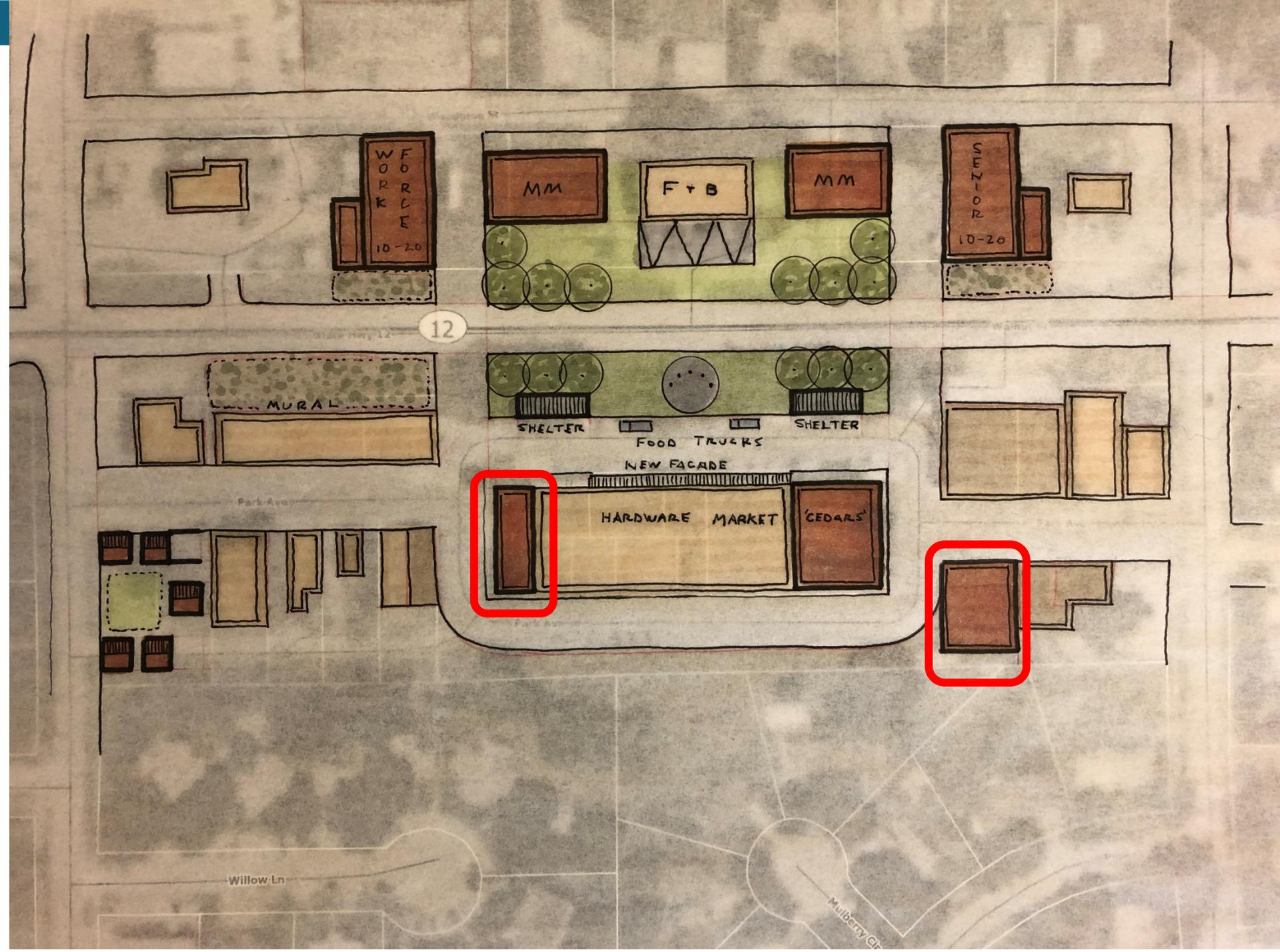
Infill Development: Missing Middle Housing



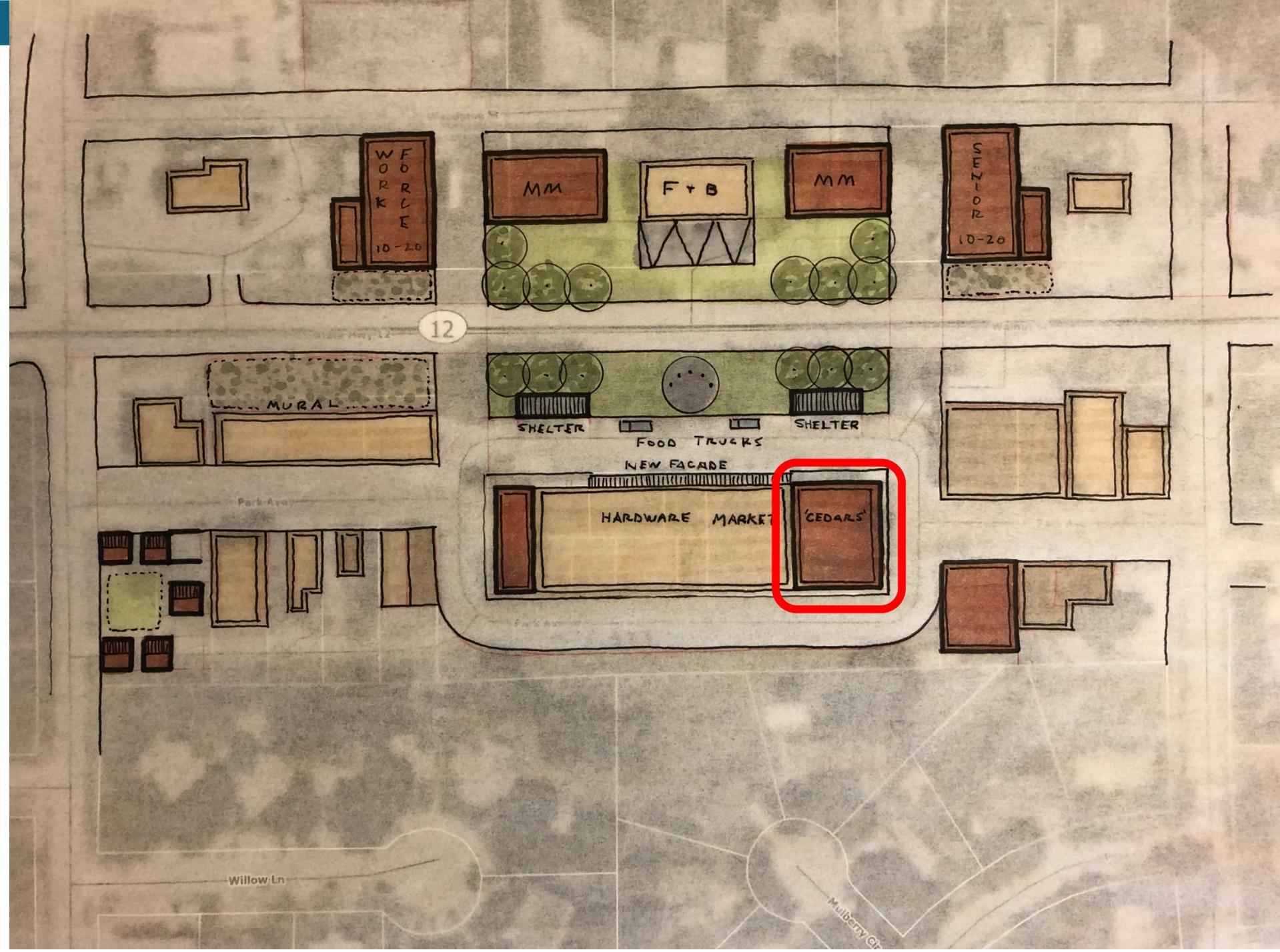
Infill Development: Seasonal Housing



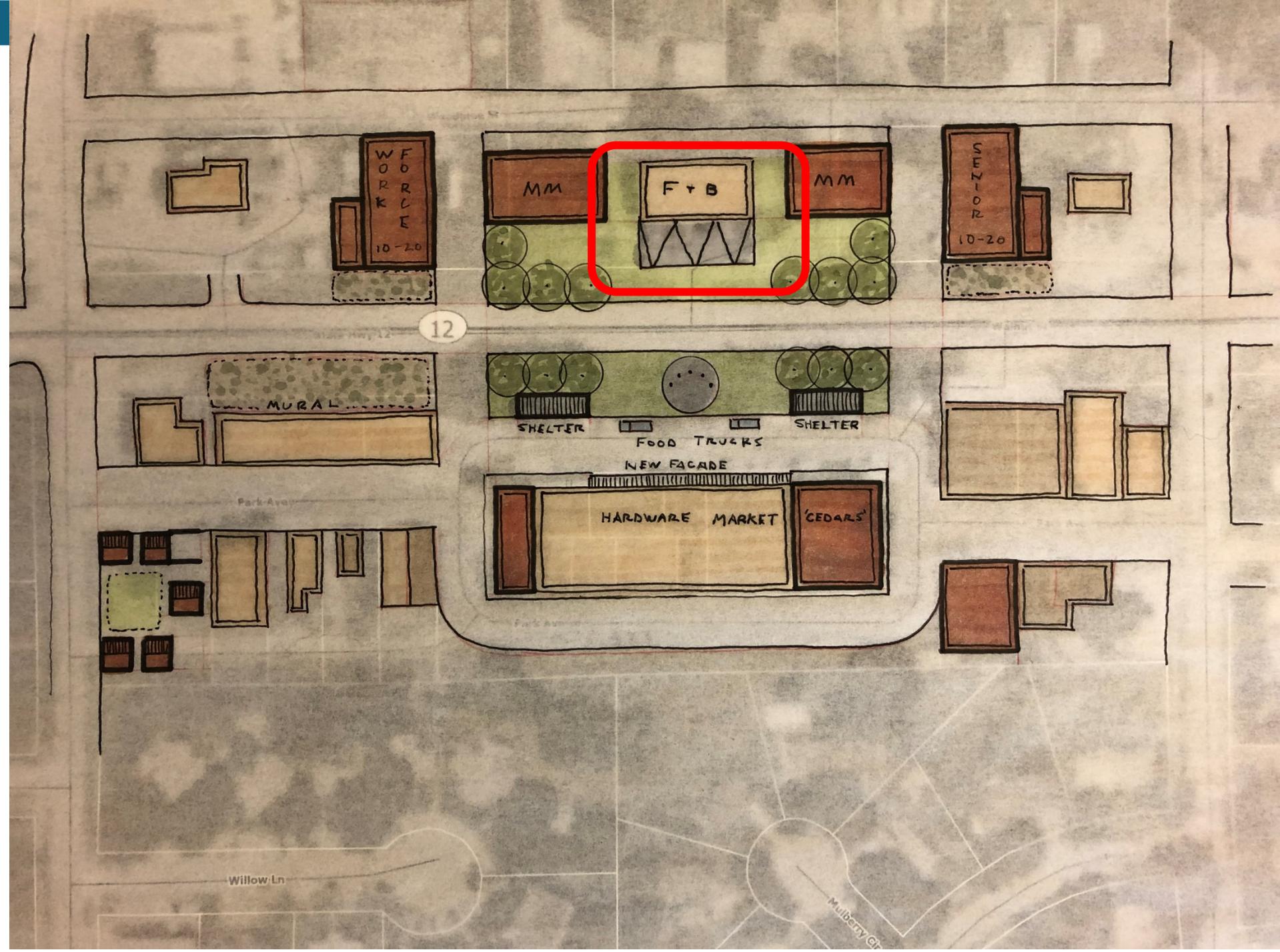
Infill Development: New Retail



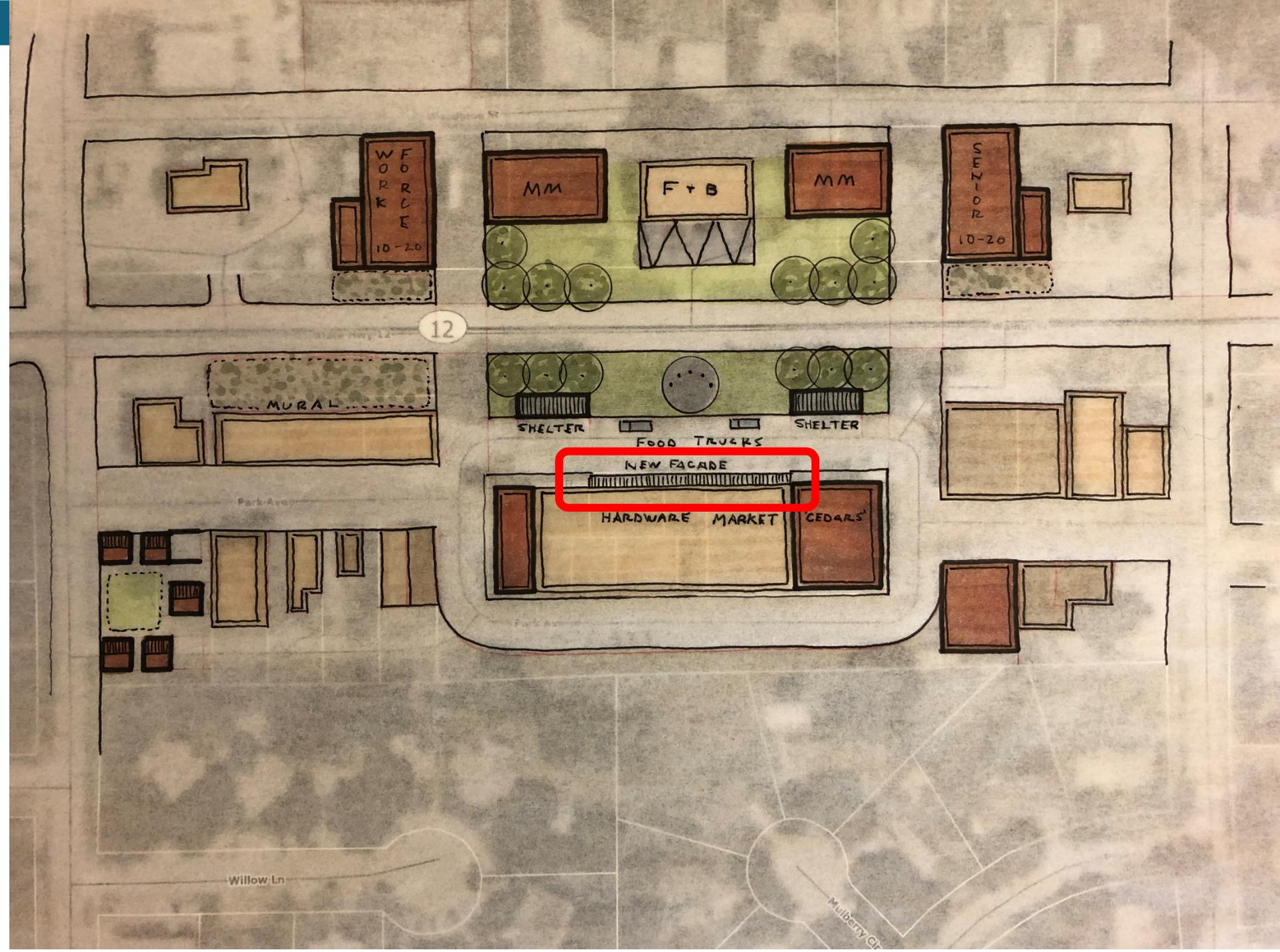
Infill
Development:
Business
Development—
The “Cedars”
(Patrick Birmingham)



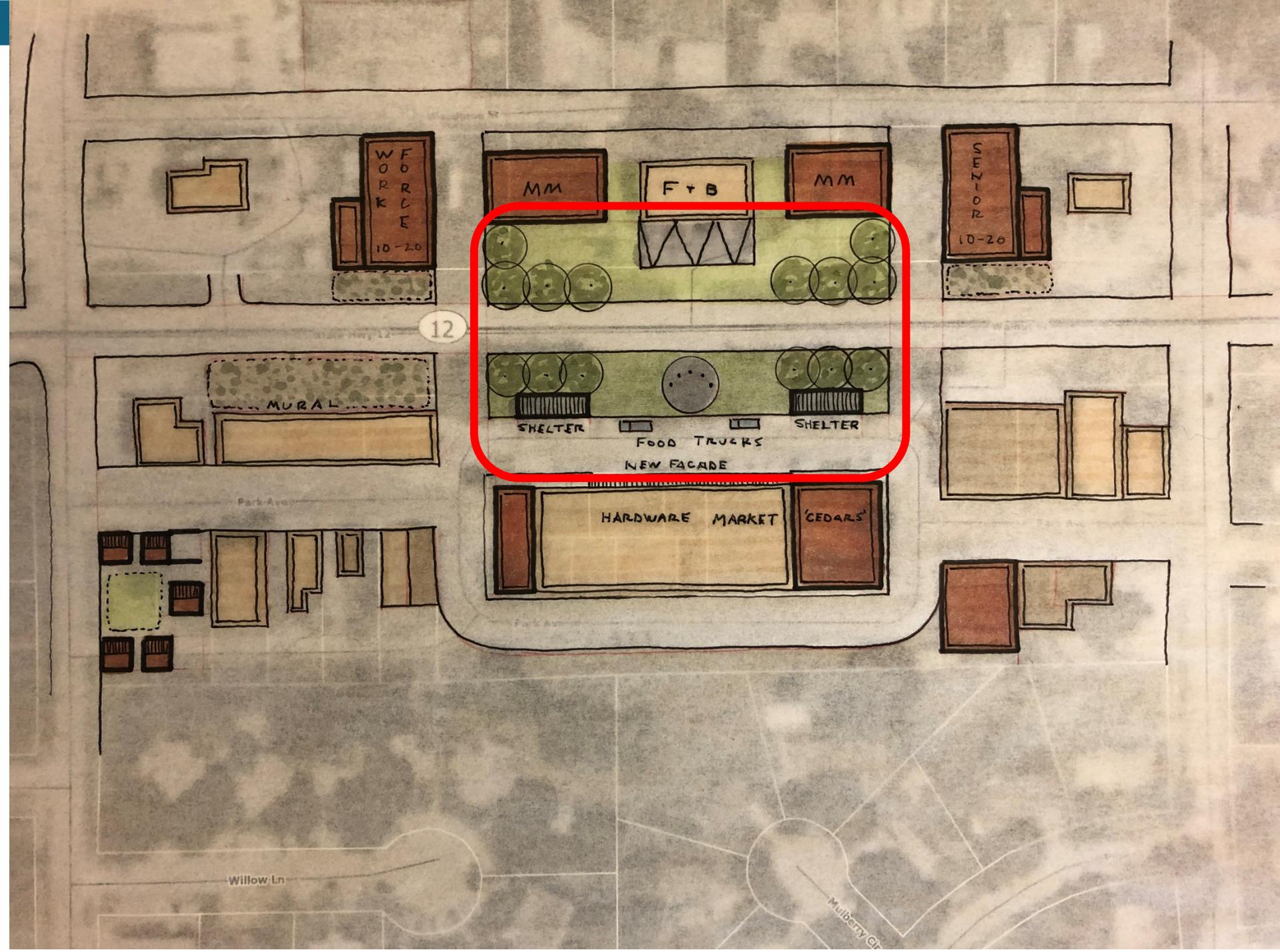
Retrofit: Food & Beverage and Outdoor Dining/Patio



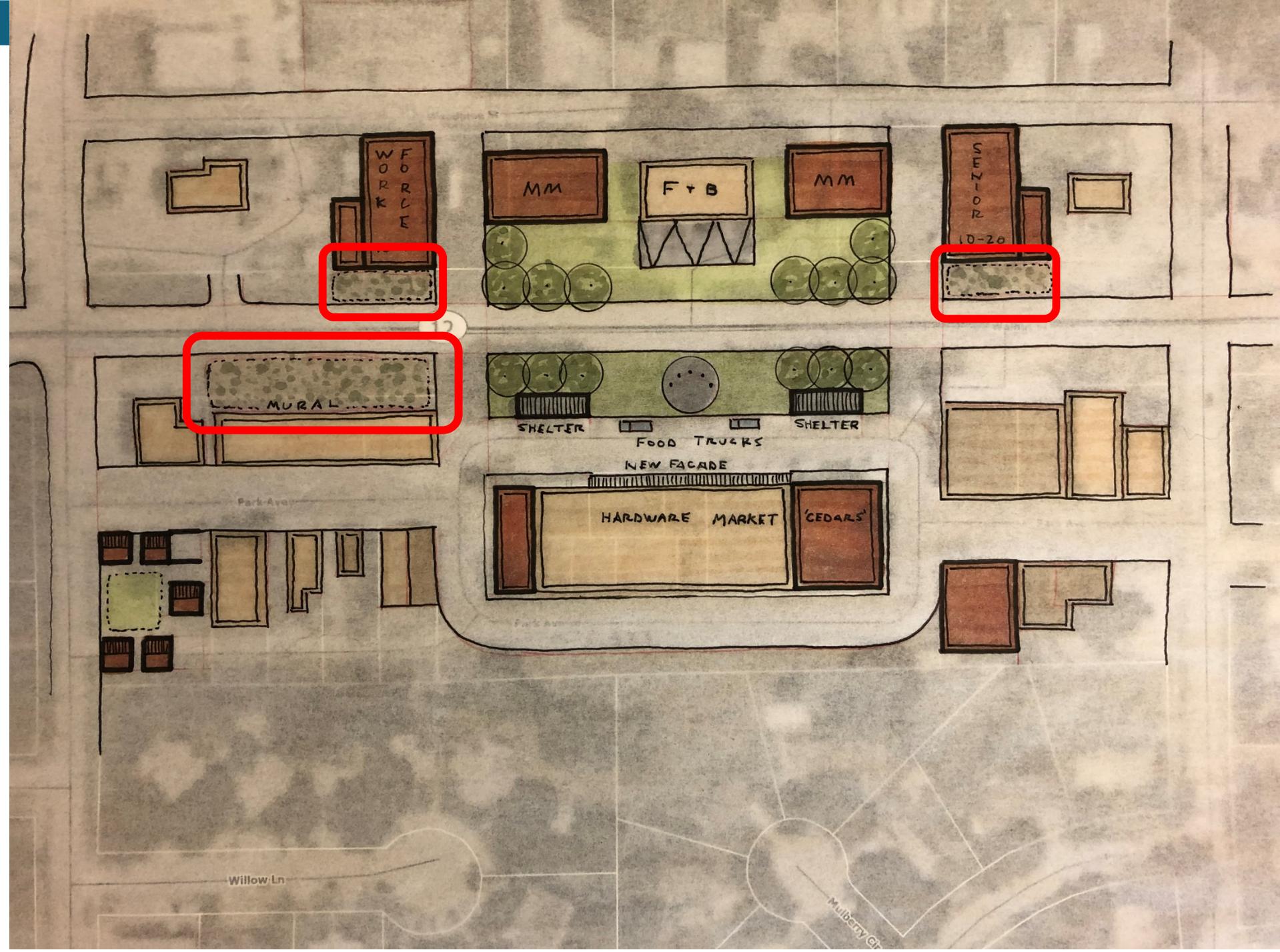
Retrofit: Façade Enhancement



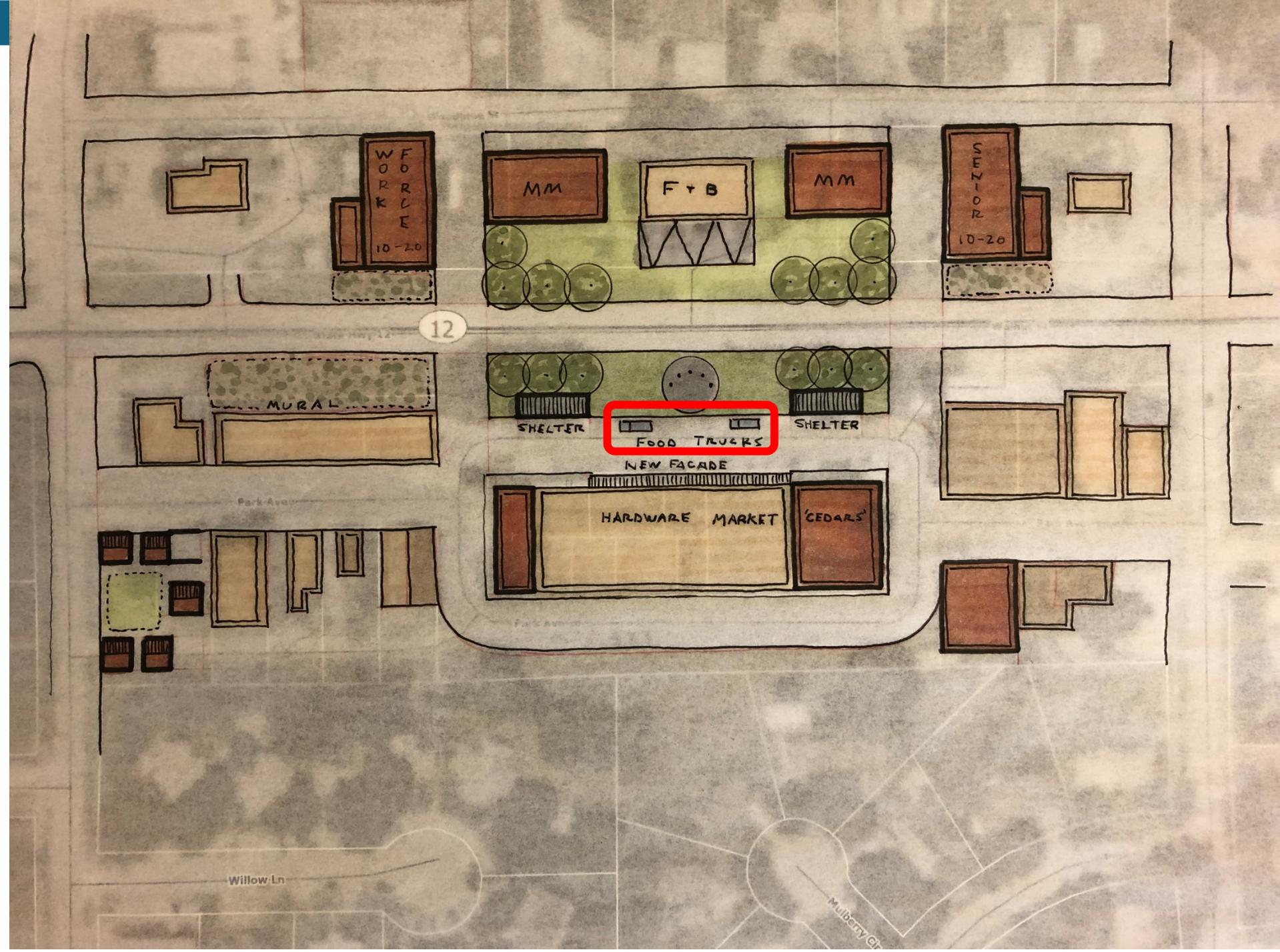
Park and Open Space: "Town Square"



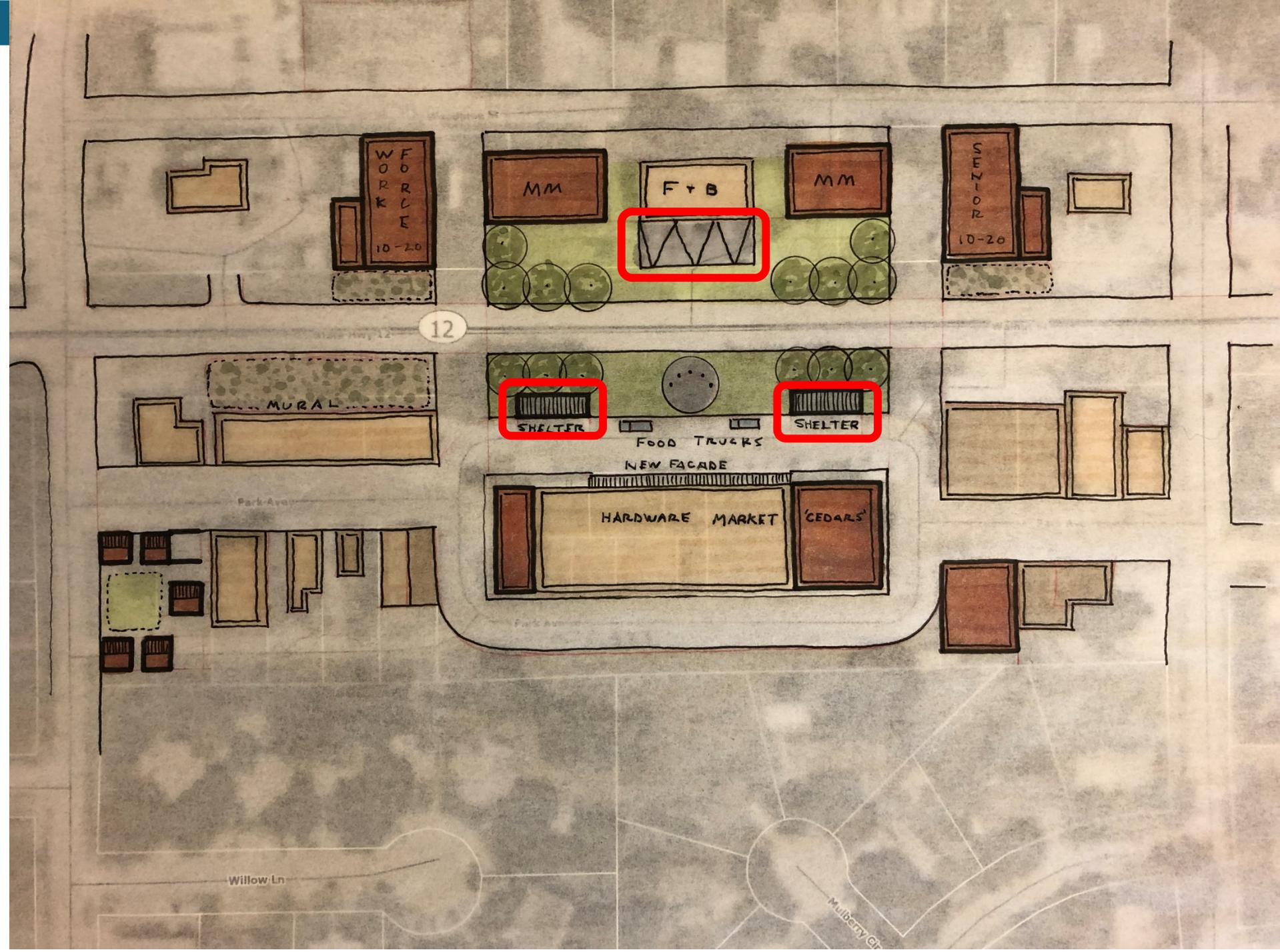
Park and Open Space: Natural Landscaping



Activation: Food Trucks



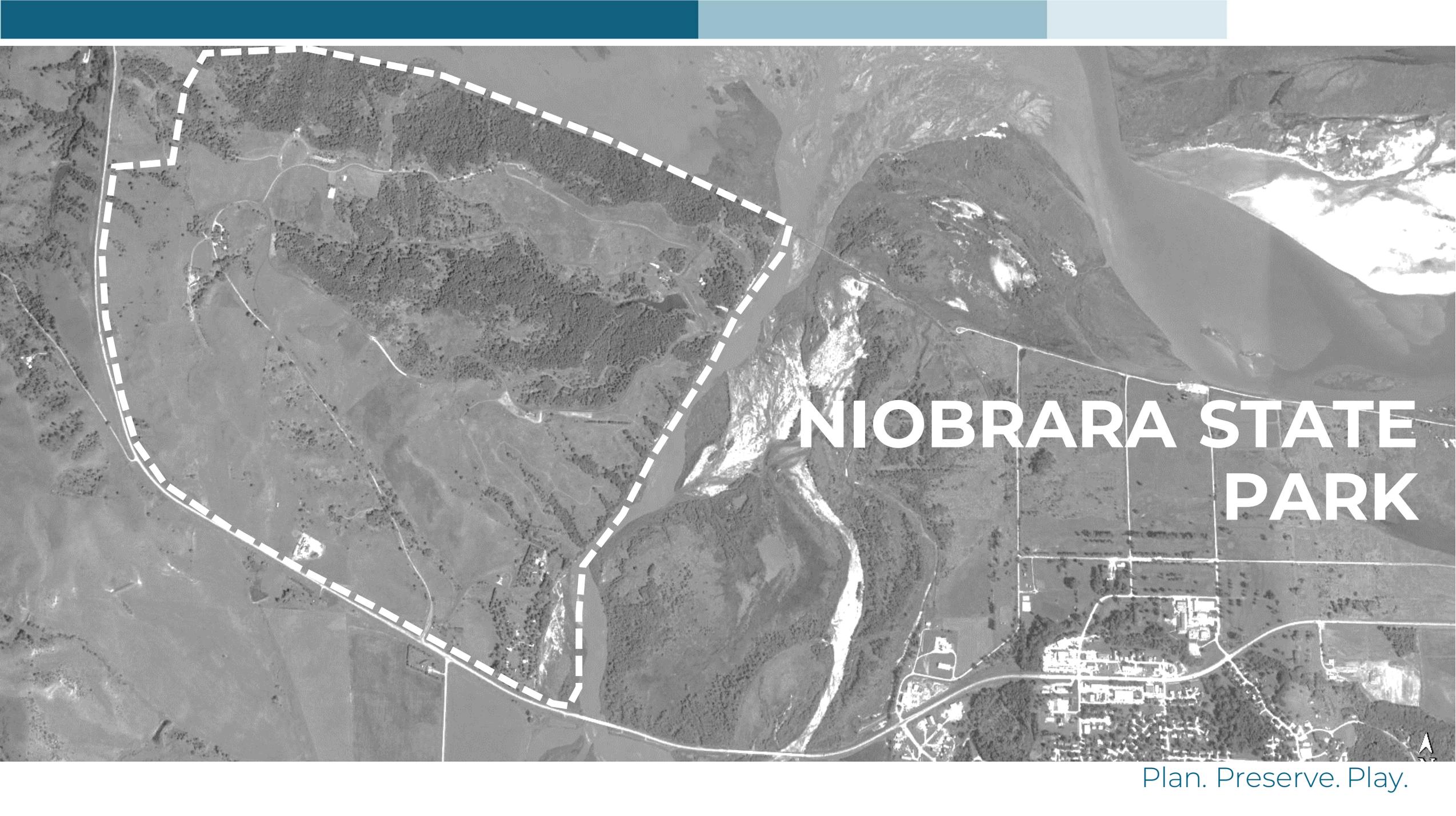
Activation: Pavilions for Farmers Markets, Outdoor Dining, and Festivals





NIOBRARA STATE PARK ACTIVATION

Plan. Preserve. Play.

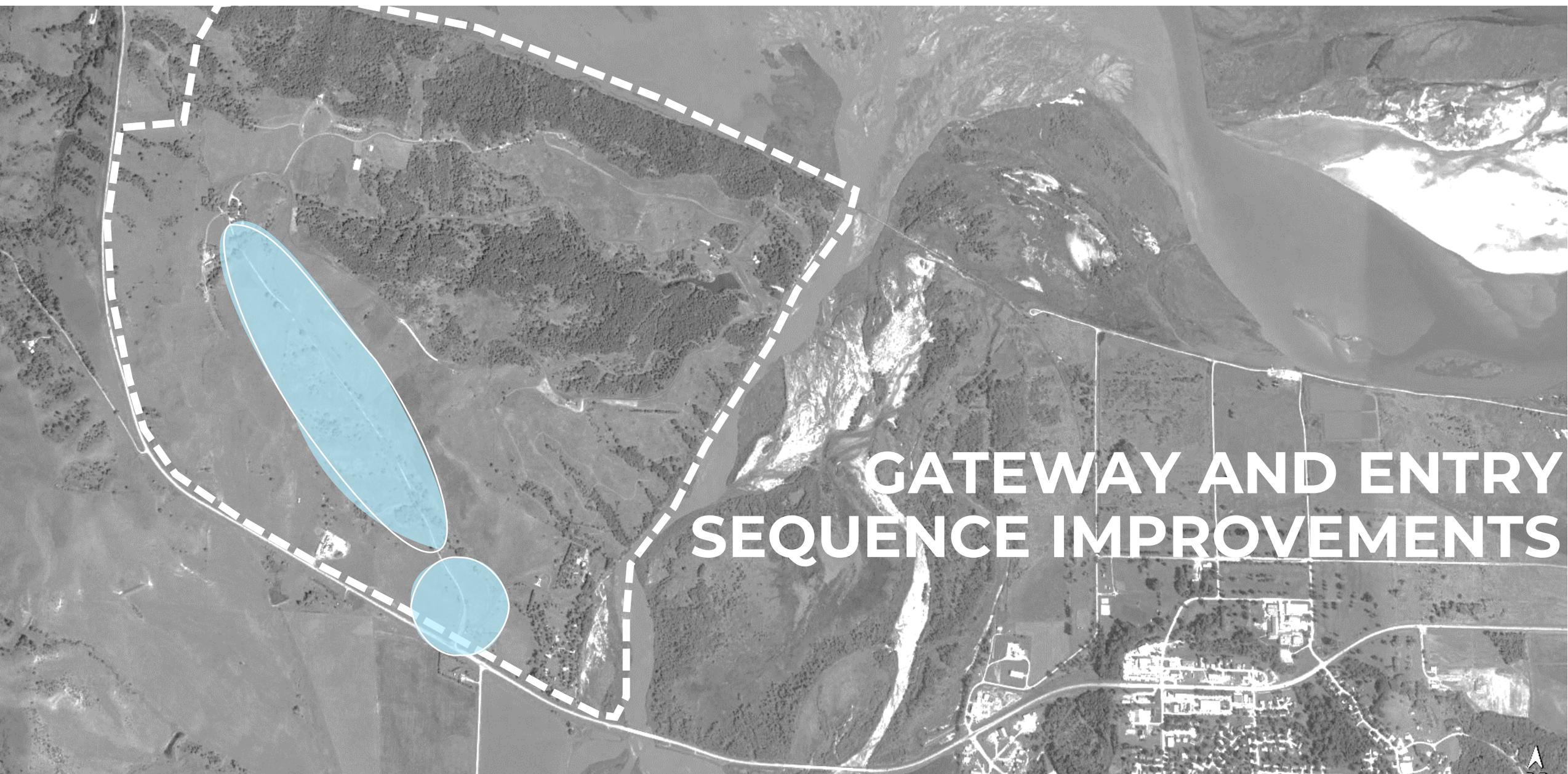


NIOBRARA STATE PARK

Plan. Preserve. Play.



- Gateway & Entry Experience
- Lodge & Events Center
- Park Amenities
- “The Tie”



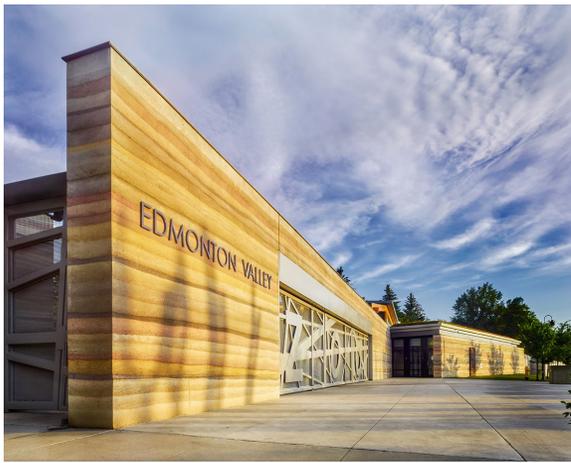
GATEWAY AND ENTRY SEQUENCE IMPROVEMENTS

GATEWAY & ENTRY EXPERIENCE



Plan. Preserve. Play.

PARK GATEWAY IMPROVEMENTS



- Provide an improved sense of arrival
- Rammed earth monuments inspired by cliff landscape

ENTRY SEQUENCE IMPROVEMENTS



- Increase excitement along entrance drive of park
- Increased variety in natural landscape
- Introduced bison herd?
- Added markers and visual features

LODGE + EVENTS CENTER



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LODGE + EVENTS CENTER ATTRACTION GOALS



- Offer alternative lodging to Cabins / Camping Sites.
- Support hosting larger events
 - (200-300 people)
- Weddings, Conferences, Retreats, Reunions
- Showcase and preserve site's natural beauty.
- Create a regional "must-see" destination.
- Opportunities for 3rd Party partners

LODGE + EVENTS CENTER PRECEDENT - LIED LODGE, NEBRASKA CITY



- 140 Guest Rooms and Suites
- 14,000 SF of Event Space
- Pool, Restaurant, Spa Amenities
- 1 Hour Drive from Omaha, Lincoln; 2 Hours from KC
- Ownership Structure | Partners

LODGE + EVENTS CENTER PRECEDENTS



Plan. Preserve. Play.

LODGE + EVENTS CENTER PRECEDENTS



Plan. Preserve. Play.

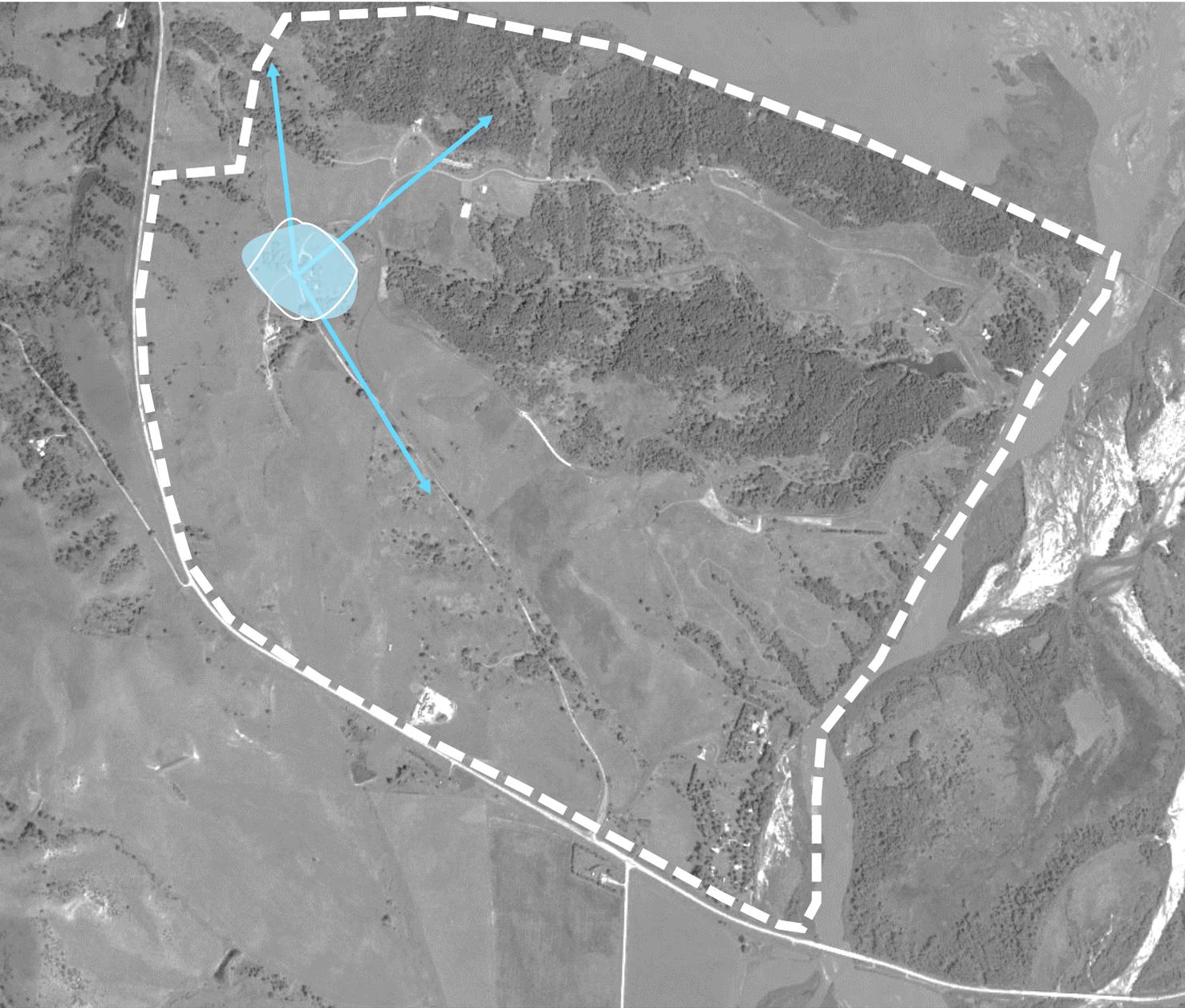


SITE OPPORTUNITIES LODGE + EVENT CENTER



SITE OPTION CHARACTERISTICS

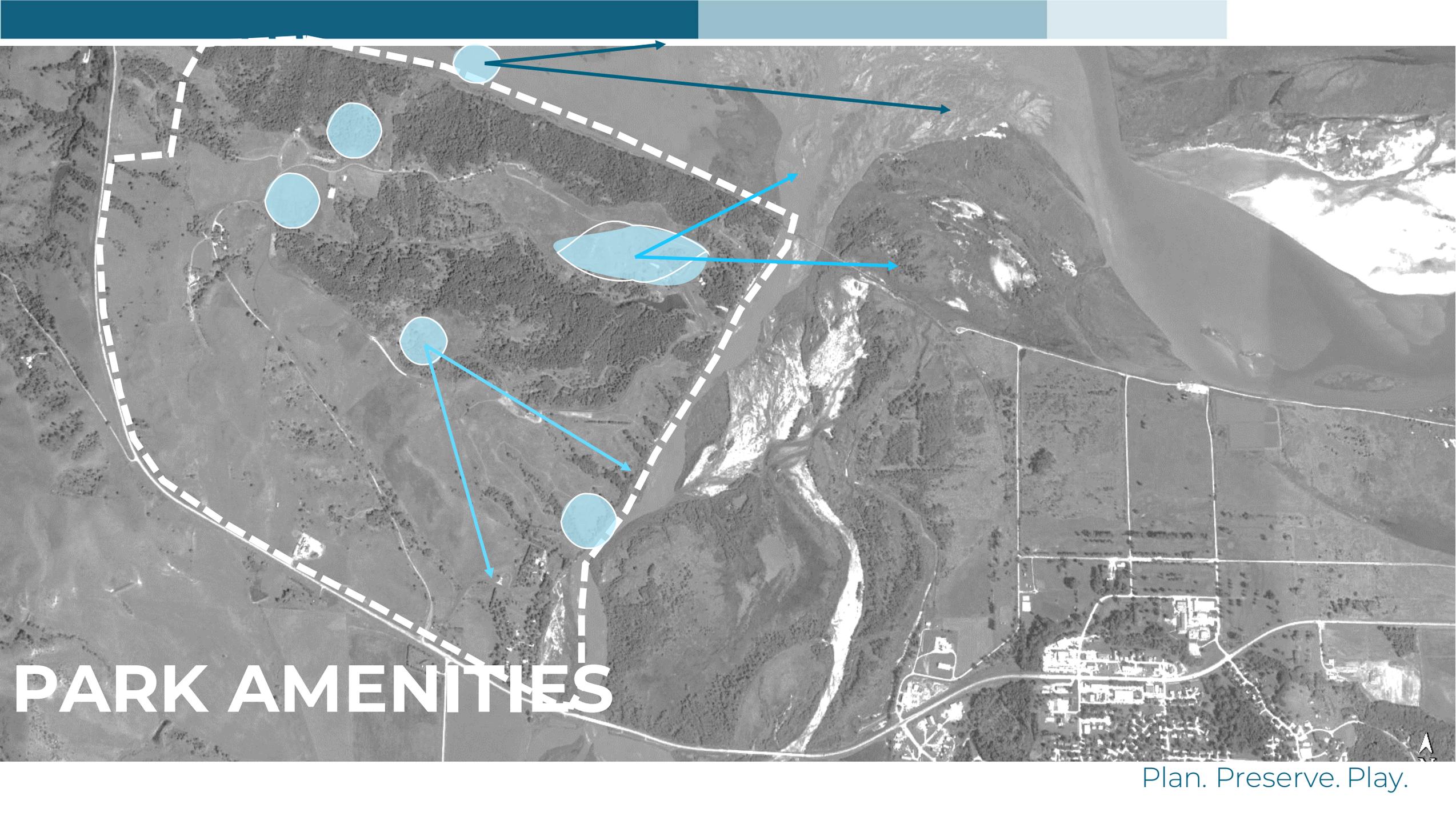
- Ridgeline highly visible from entry drive.
- One of the highest elevation points.
- More circuitous arrival route with existing roads.
- Central location on site.



SITE OPTION CHARACTERISTICS

- Existing Park Office Site
- Terminus of entry road.
- Gateway to other park amenities.
- Lower elevation limits views.

PARK AMENITIES



PARK AMENITIES



- Amphitheater
- Nature / Educational Center
- Interpretive landscape
- Trail Connections
- Water access
- Observation Platforms

DAY USE ACTIVITIES



- Nature Playgrounds
- Water Playgrounds
- "Crawdad Creek" youth fishing pond
- Modern Camping/ Glamping
- Additional cultural, historical, and ecological features
- Habitat and wildlife viewing areas
- Water trails and access



- Connect Niobrara State Park to Community
- Iconic Element
- Water Access
- Interpretive Opportunities
- Destination
- Habitat and wildlife viewing areas

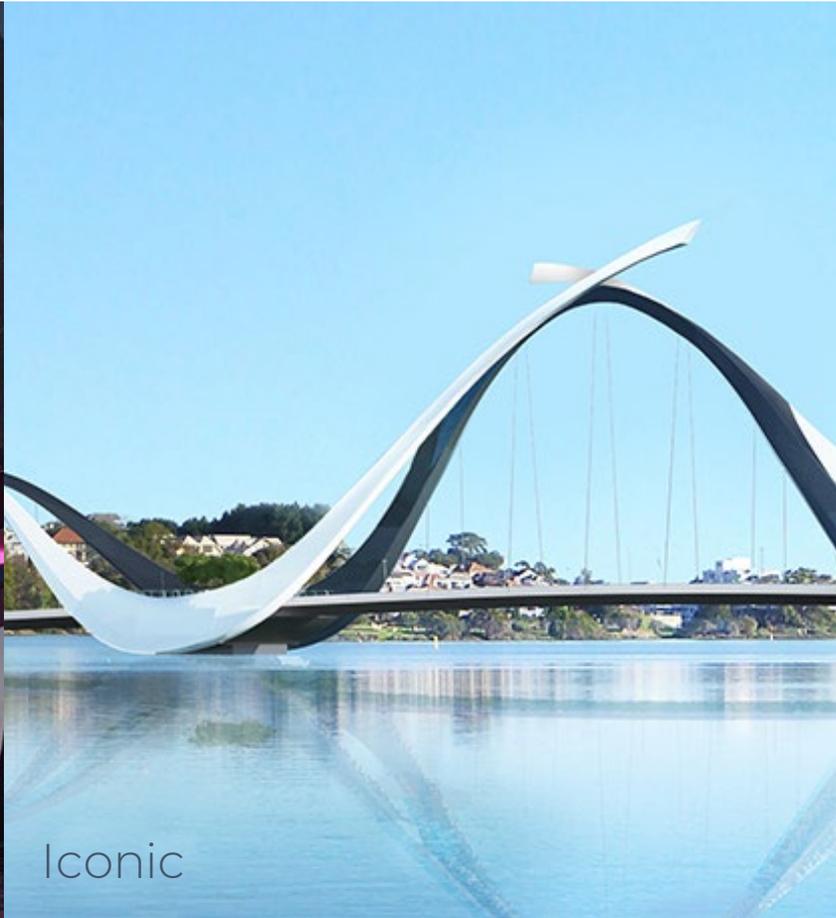
THE TIE – WATER ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS



Historical



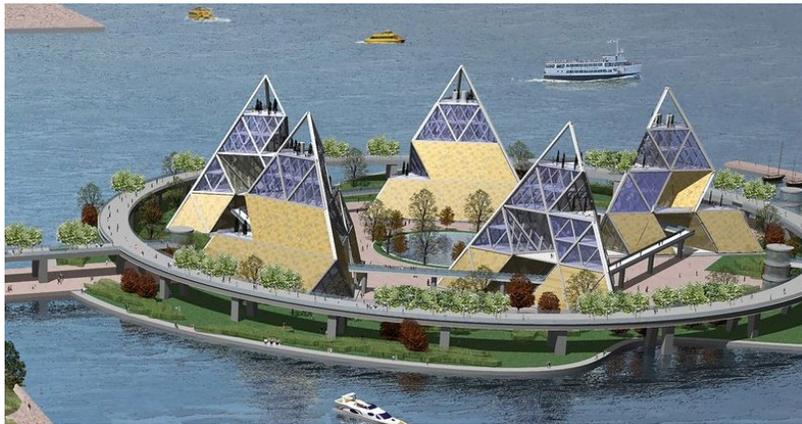
Interactive



Iconic

Plan. Preserve. Play.

THE TIE – WATER ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS



Plan. Preserve. Play.

THE TIE – WATER ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS



Plan. Preserve. Play.



PONCA | NIOBRARA COLLABORATIVE

Plan. Preserve. Play.

PONCA | NIOBRARA COLLABORATIVE

- Historic Preservation
 - Bluff Top Grave & Archeological Sites
 - Interpretive Elements
- Cultural Resources
 - Powwow Grounds Expansion
 - Event Amenities

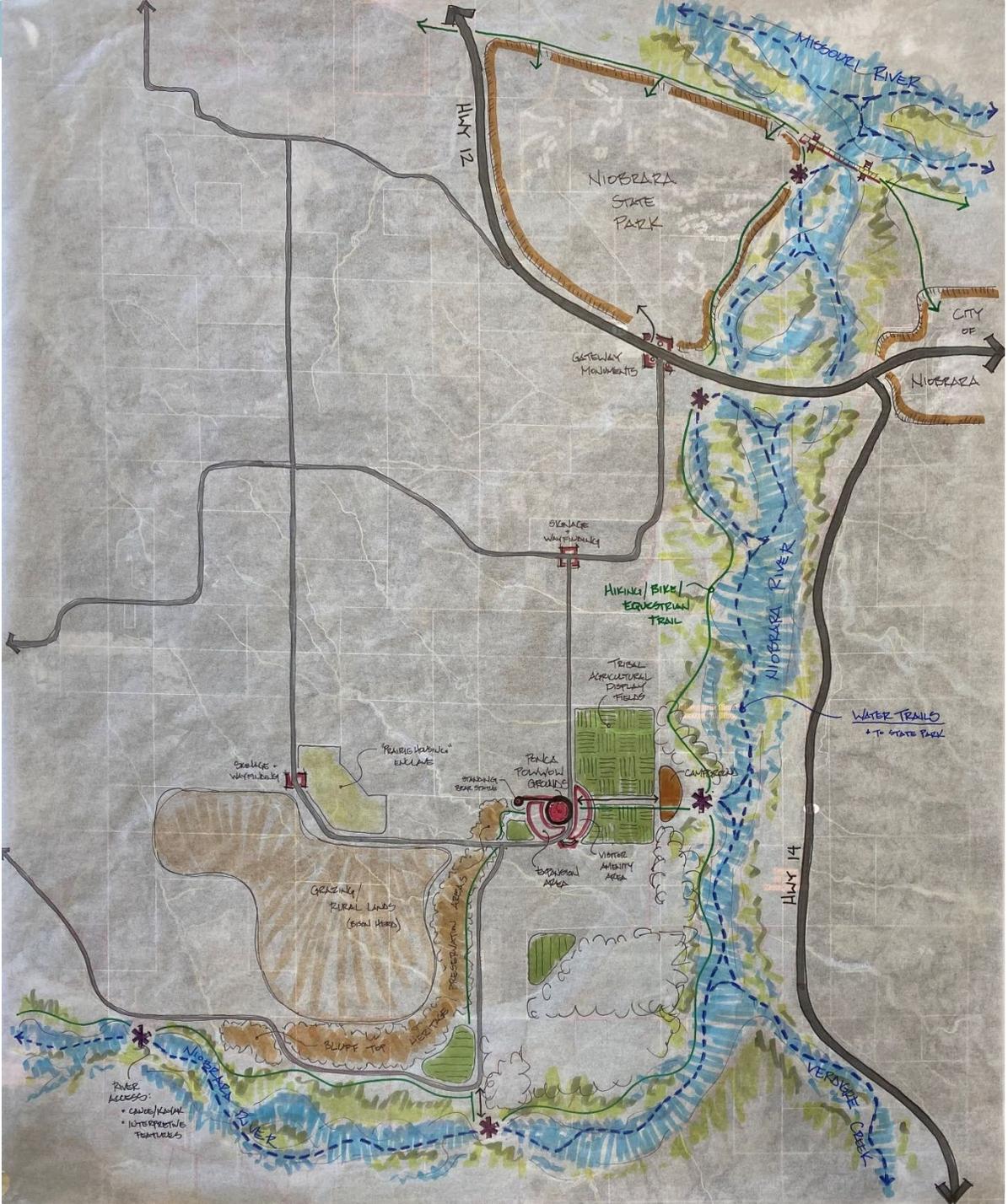


PONCA | NIOBRARA COLLABORATIVE

- Work with the Land
 - Tribal Agriculture
 - Grazing Land / Bison Herd
 - Environmental Stewardship
- Engage the River(s)
 - Trail (Hiking & Water)
 - Camping Opportunities



PONCA | NIOBRARA COLLABORATIVE

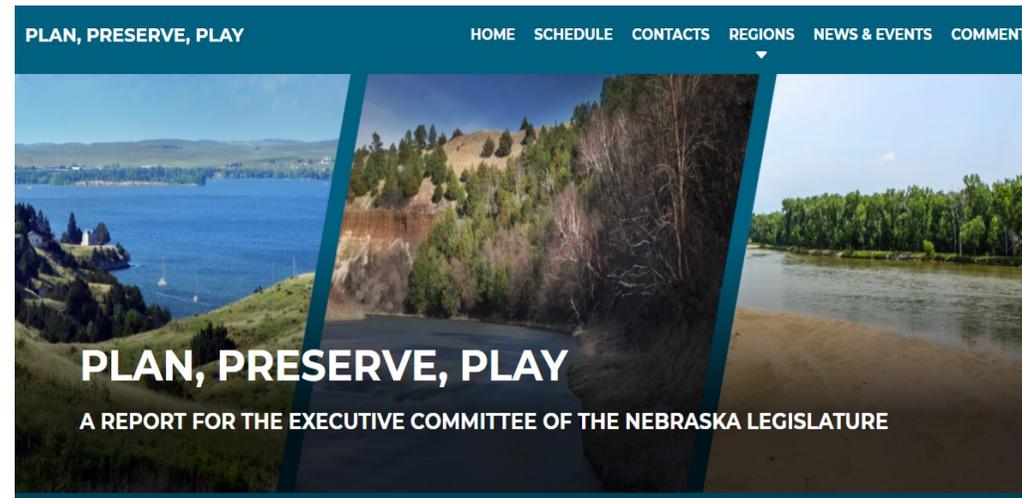


DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK

- In-person attendees
 - Sticky notes and pin-ups
 - Survey
- Online attendees
 - Questions/comments in the chat
 - Designers will answer
 - Online comment form at planpreserveplayNE.com

WEBSITE

- Information about the project, as well as a comment form, can be found at www.planpreserveplayNE.com.





THANK YOU!

www.planpreserveplayNE.com

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