



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

October 15, 2021

Public Presentation No. 4

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
- Design Workshop
- Preferred Initiatives
- Discussion

MEET THE TEAM

HDR

- John Engel, Project Manager
- Doug Bisson
- Jen Cross
- Bill DeRoin
- Andy Gorham
- Calvin Hean
- Troy Henningson
- Alison Ingunza
- Alex Robinson
- Amanda Brandt

SBFCo.

- Geoff Dickinson
- Elena Caminer



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

Plan. Preserve. Play.

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

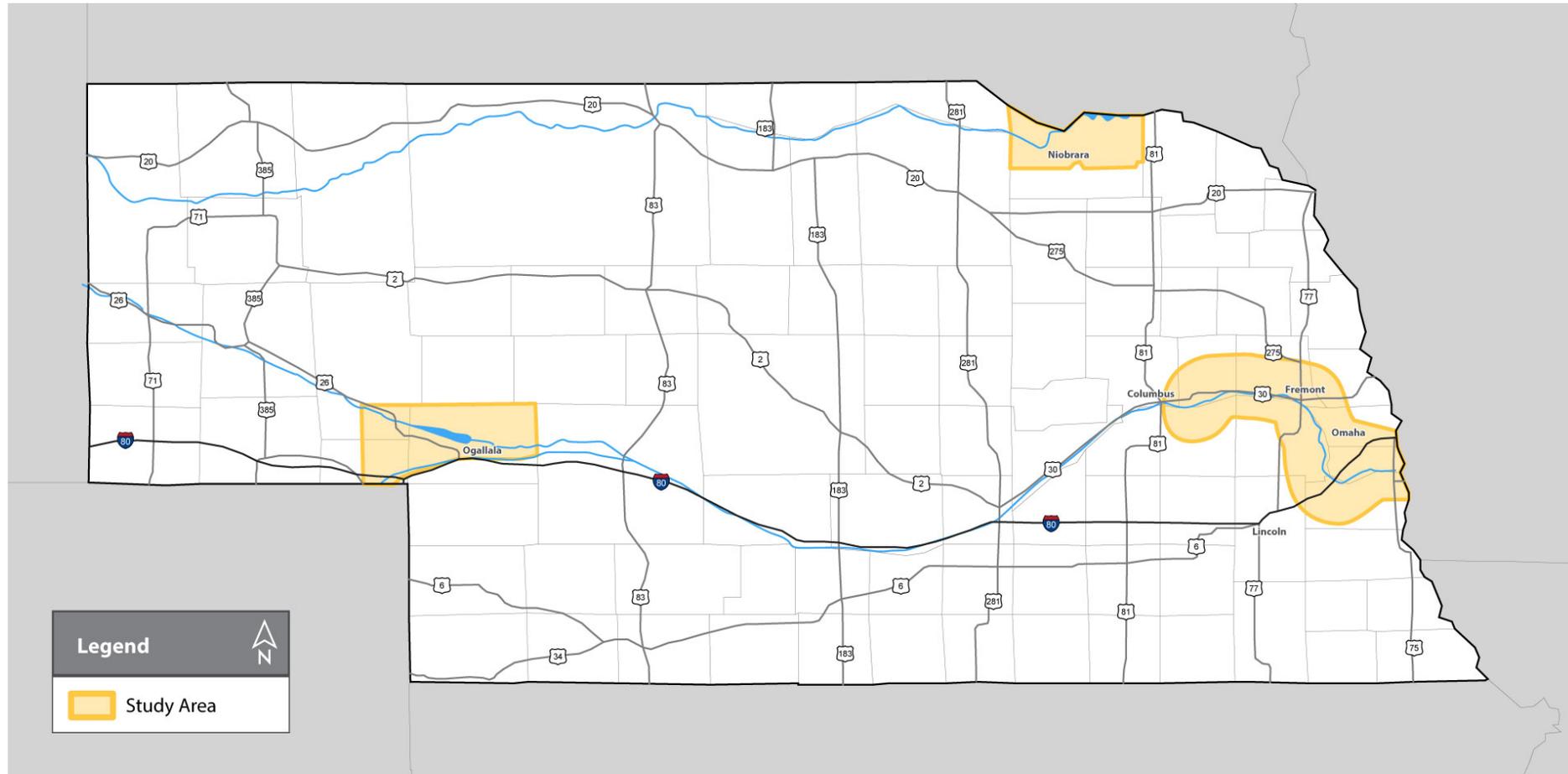


Sen. Tim Gragert,
District 40



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

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.”



Plan. Preserve. Play.

EFFORTS TO DATE

- Context Assessment
- Public Hearing & Tour
- Survey/ Results
- Initial Market Findings



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





COMMUNITY 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

SB Friedman Development Advisors

Plan. Preserve. Play.



PLAN, PRESERVE, PLAY

Knox County Study Area – Opportunity Assessment

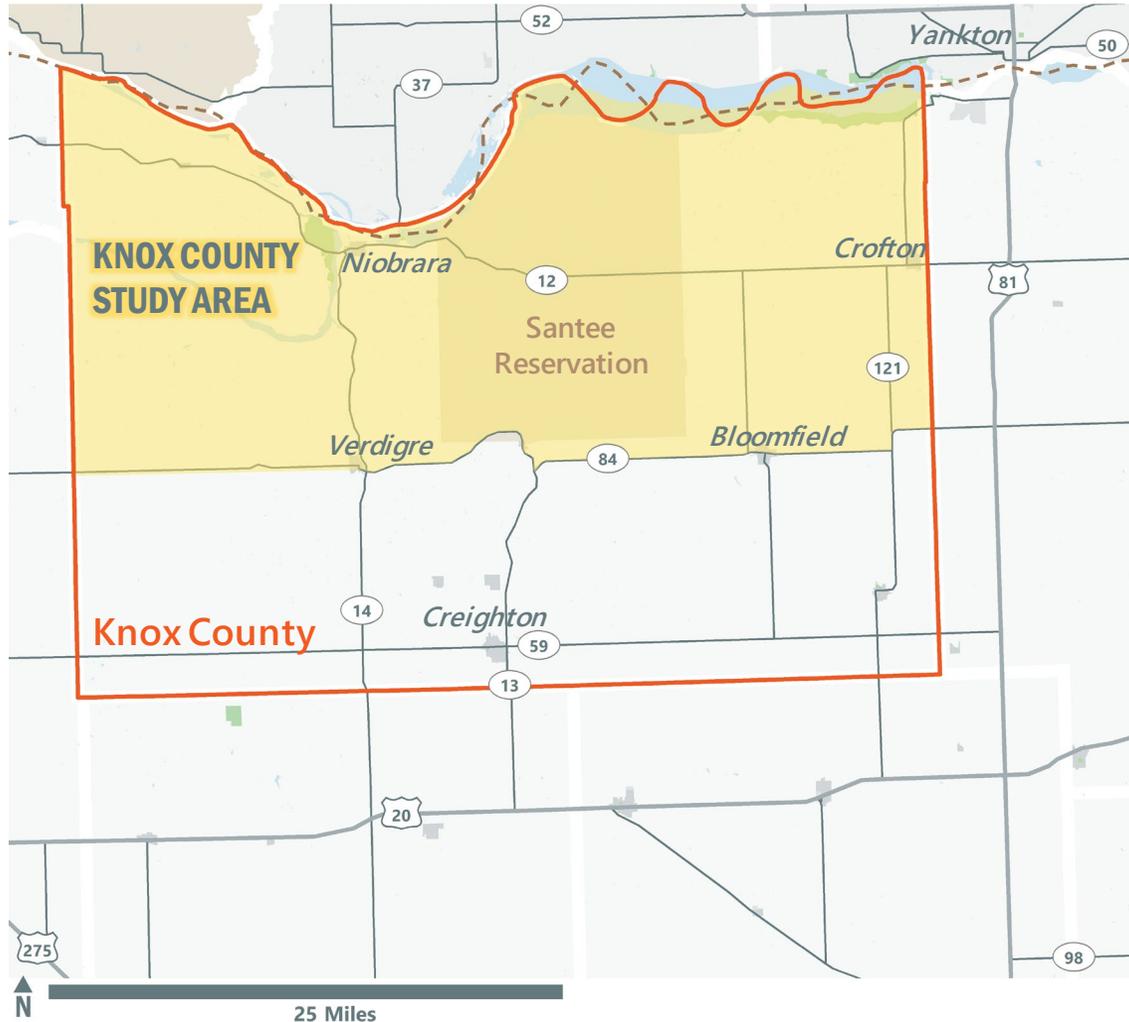
Charette – Week of October 11, 2021



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	X	X
Event Space	X	X	X
Waterfront Dining	X	X	X
Resort	X	X	
Non-Traditional Camping			
RV Campgrounds	X	X	X
Workforce & Senior Housing Solutions	X [1]	X [1]	

X = Present;  = Comp

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

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

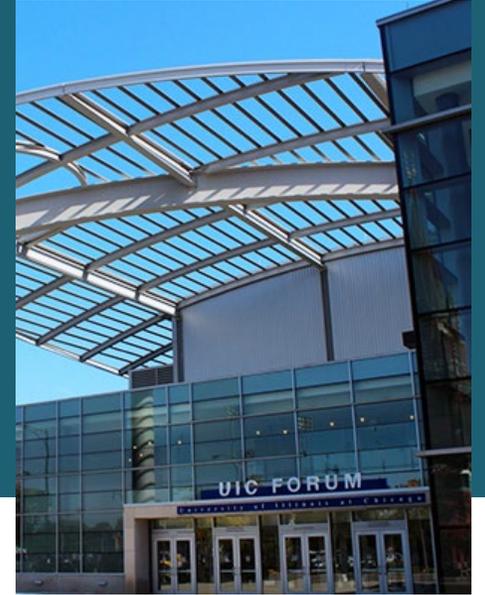


HOUSING

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
 - Study Area Tours: Monday / Tuesday
 - Iterative Design/Pin-Up Sessions: Tuesday - Friday
 - Preferred Initiatives / Final Presentation - Friday

STUDY AREA TOUR



Plan. Preserve. Play.

ITERATIVE DESIGN / PIN-UP SESSIONS



Tuesday Evening



Wednesday Evening



Thursday Evening



PREFERRED INITIATIVES

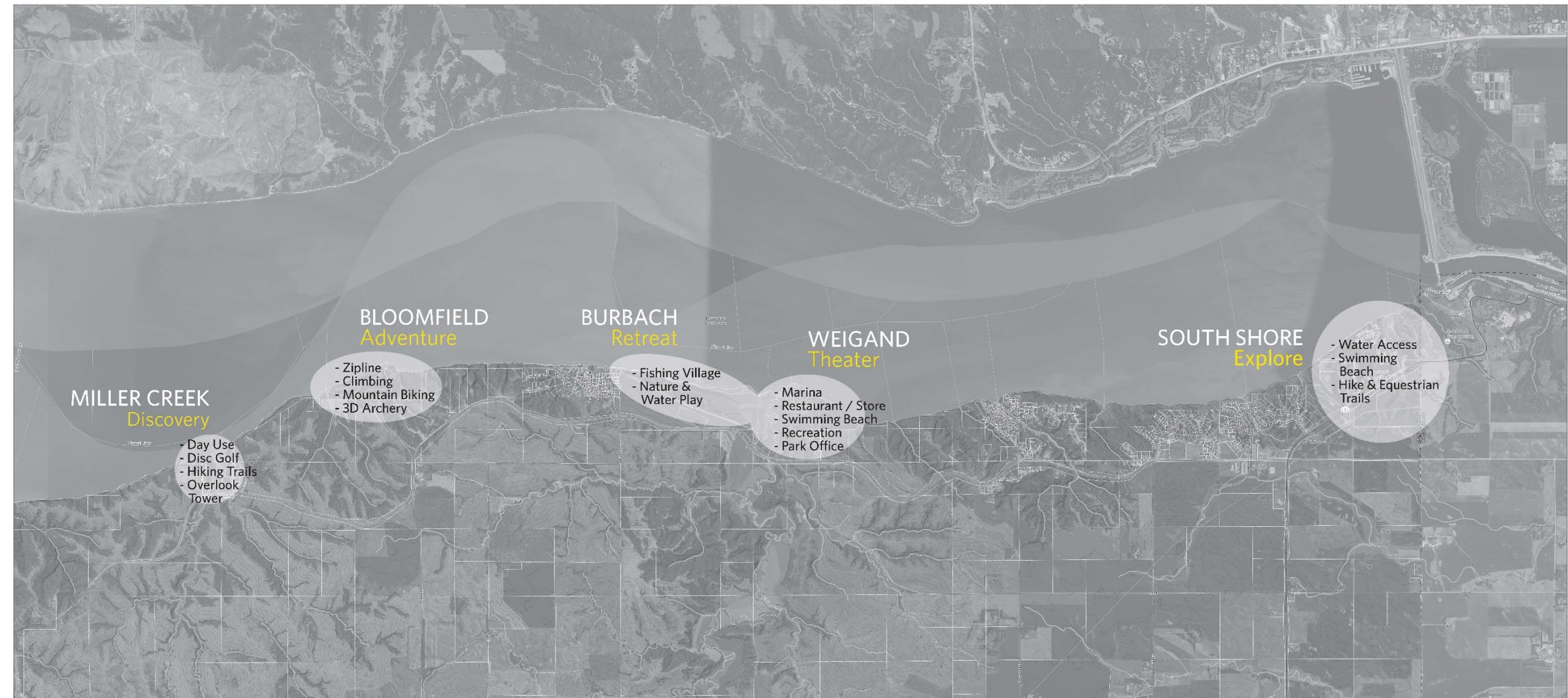
Plan. Preserve. Play.



LEWIS & CLARK LAKE AREA

PARK CONNECTIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Plan. Preserve. Play.



MILLER CREEK
Discovery

- Day Use
- Disc Golf
- Hiking Trails
- Overlook Tower

BLOOMFIELD
Adventure

- Zipling
- Climbing
- Mountain Biking
- 3D Archery

BURBACH
Retreat

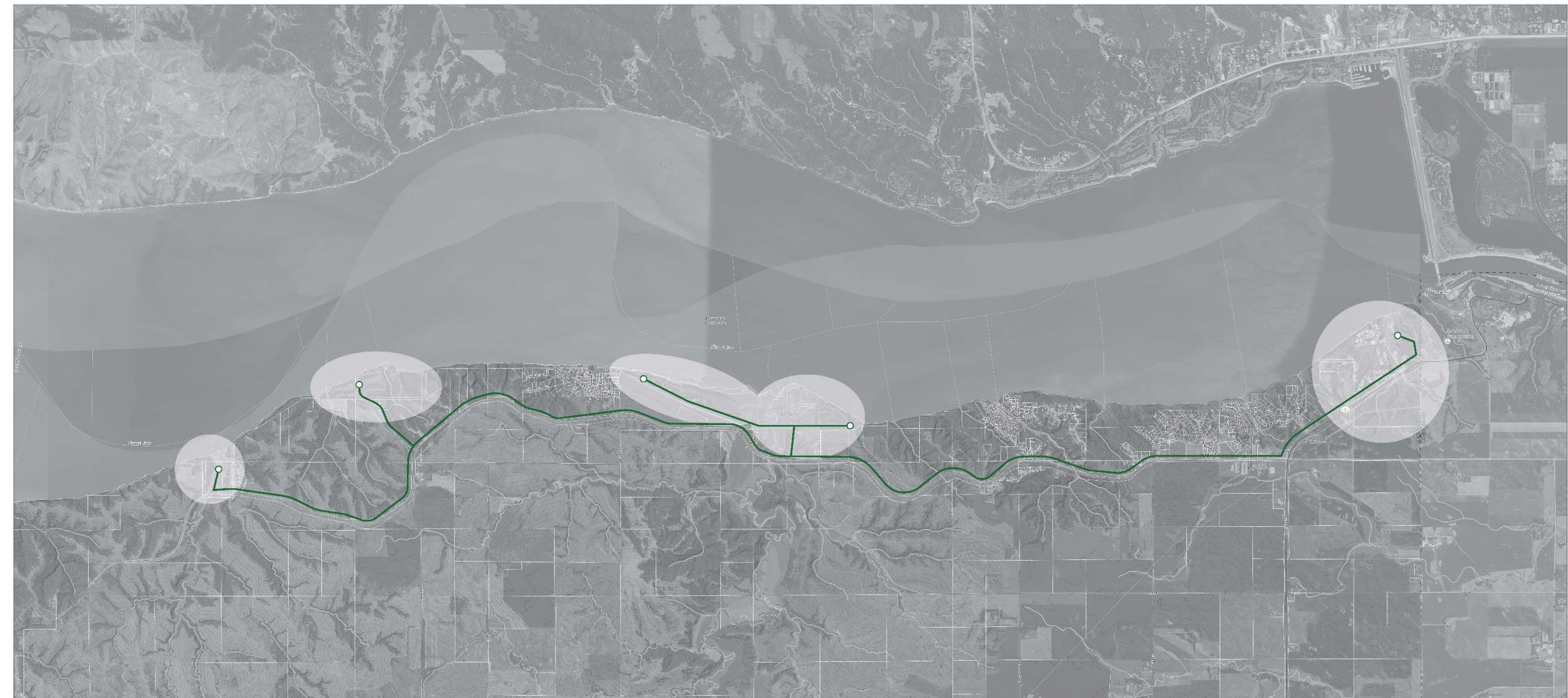
- Fishing Village
- Nature & Water Play

WEIGAND
Theater

- Marina
- Restaurant / Store
- Swimming Beach
- Recreation
- Park Office

SOUTH SHORE
Explore

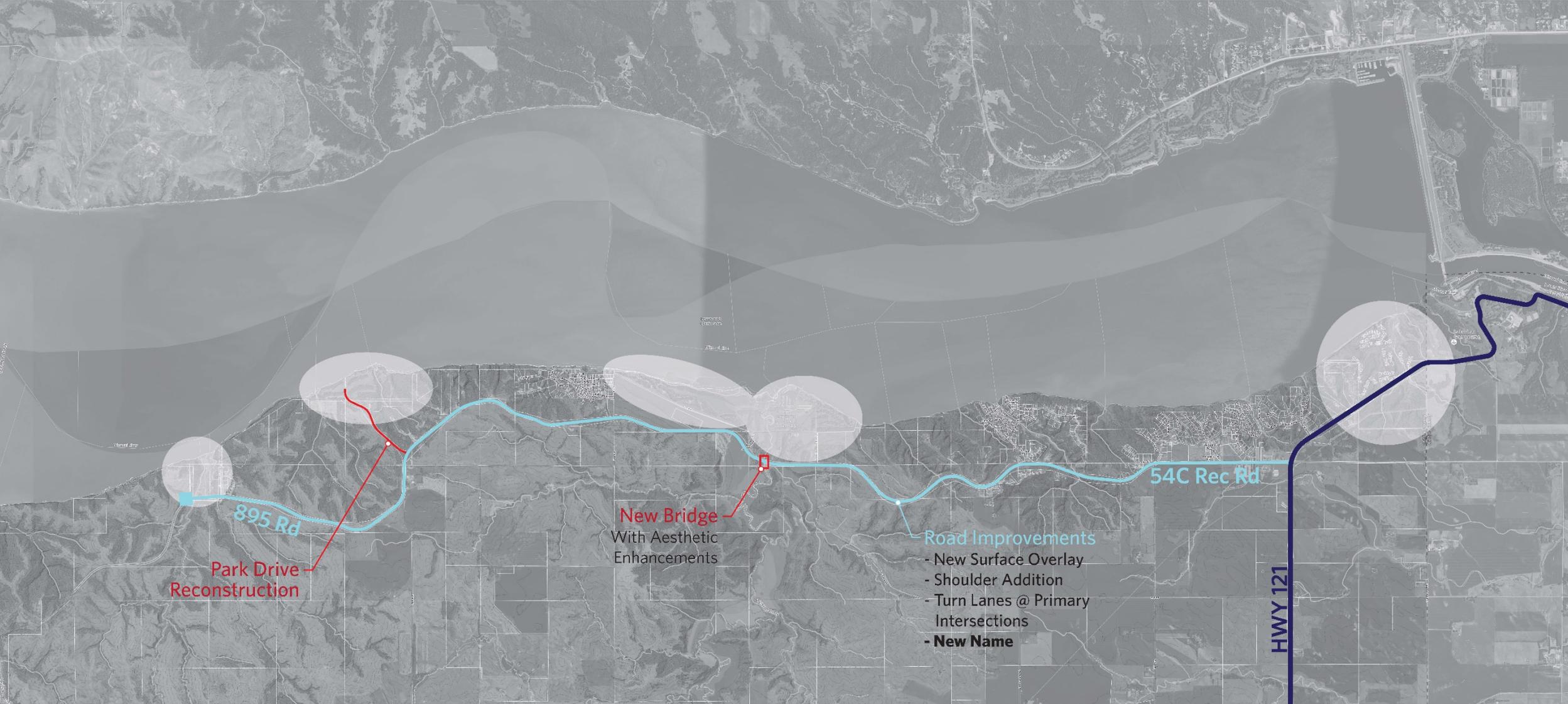
- Water Access
- Swimming Beach
- Hike & Equestrian Trails



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.





MARINA & RESTAURANT

Plan. Preserve. Play.

WEIGAND MARINA

- Destination Restaurant
- Admin / Rental Office
- 675 Slip Marina
- Dual Boat Ramps
- Boat Trailer Parking
- Fishing Pond
- Walking Trails
- Overlook
- Native Landscaping
- Playground



MARINA



Plan. Preserve. Play.

RESTAURANT / BAR





Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



FISHING VILLAGE AT BURBACH AREA

Plan. Preserve. Play.

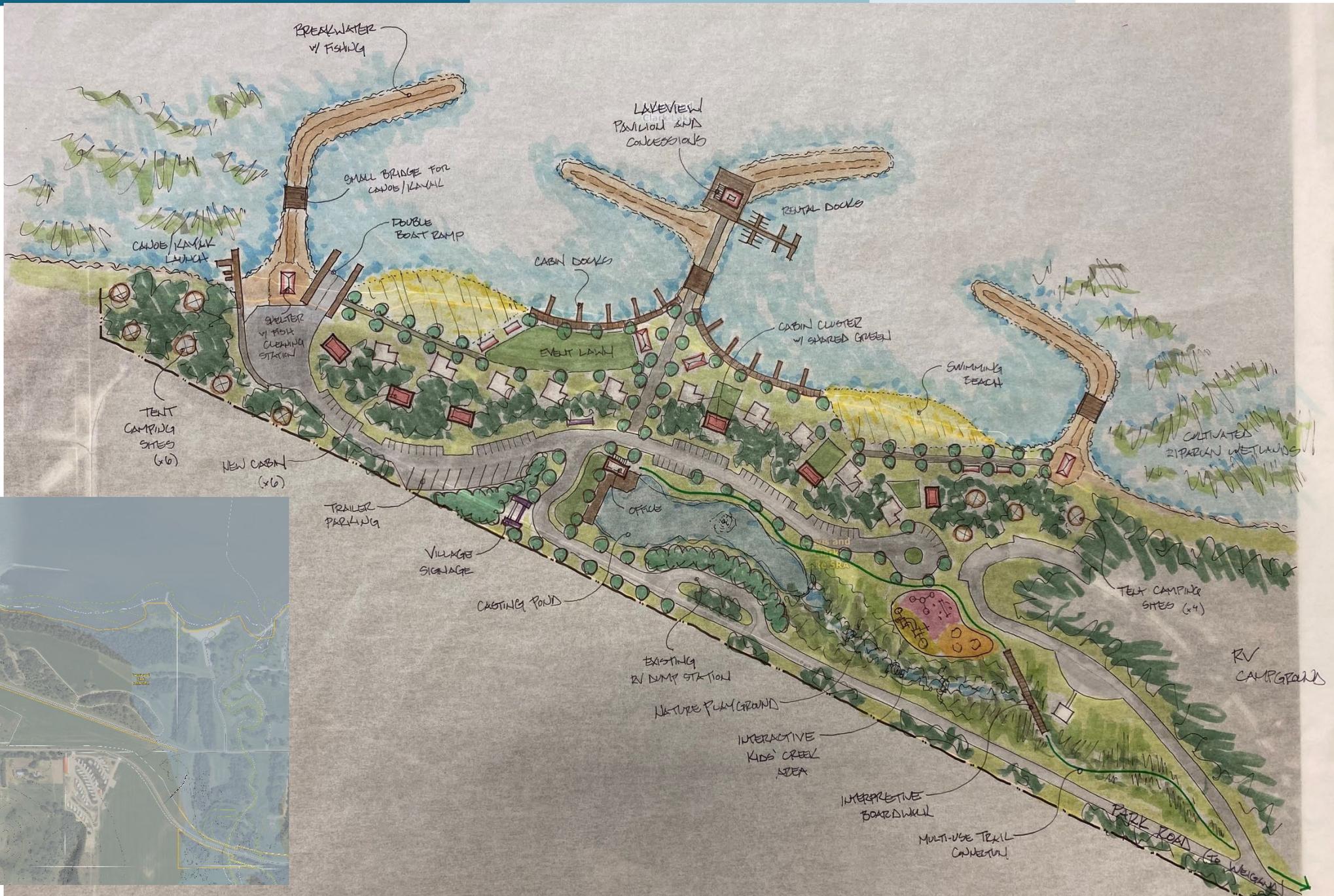
FISHING VILLAGE

- New Cabins (x6)
- Guest Boat Docks
- Swimming Beaches
- Lakeview Pavilion & Concessions
- Nature Playground
- Interactive Kids' Creek
- Casting Pond
- Interpretive Boardwalk
- Fish Cleaning Stations
- Dual Boat Ramp
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Watercraft Rentals
- Tent Camping Sites (x10)













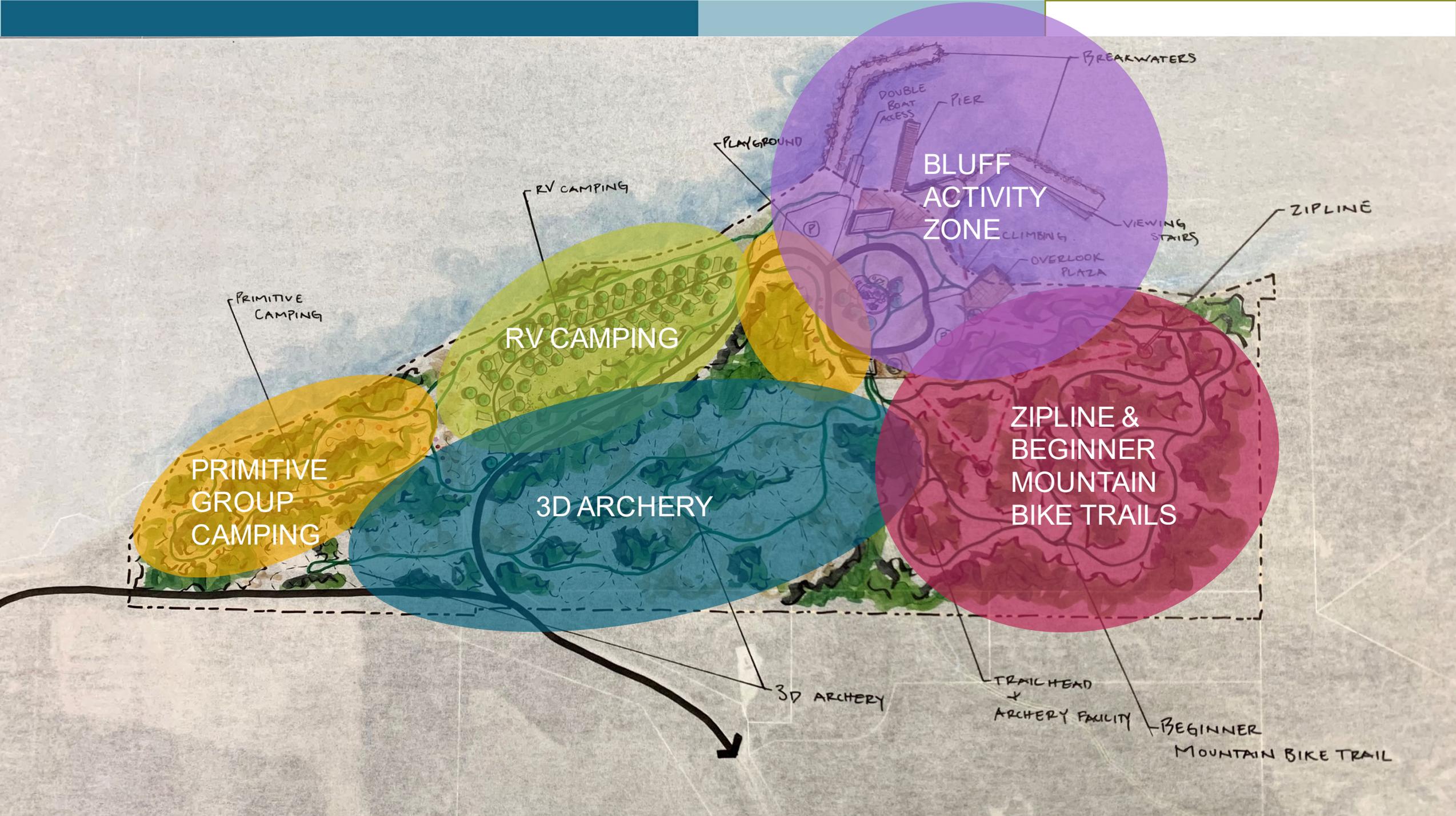
BLOOMFIELD AREA

Plan. Preserve. Play.

PROGRAM

- 3D Archery
- Climbing wall
- Overlook
- Zipline
- Double boat access
- Pier
- Beginner mountain bike trails
- Playground
- RV camping
- Primitive group camping sites





PRIMITIVE
GROUP
CAMPING

RV CAMPING

3D ARCHERY

BLUFF
ACTIVITY
ZONE

ZIPLINE &
BEGINNER
MOUNTAIN
BIKE TRAILS

PRIMITIVE
CAMPING

RV CAMPING

PLAYGROUND

DOUBLE
BOAT
ACCESS

PIER

BREAKWATERS

CLIMBING

VIEWING
STAIRS

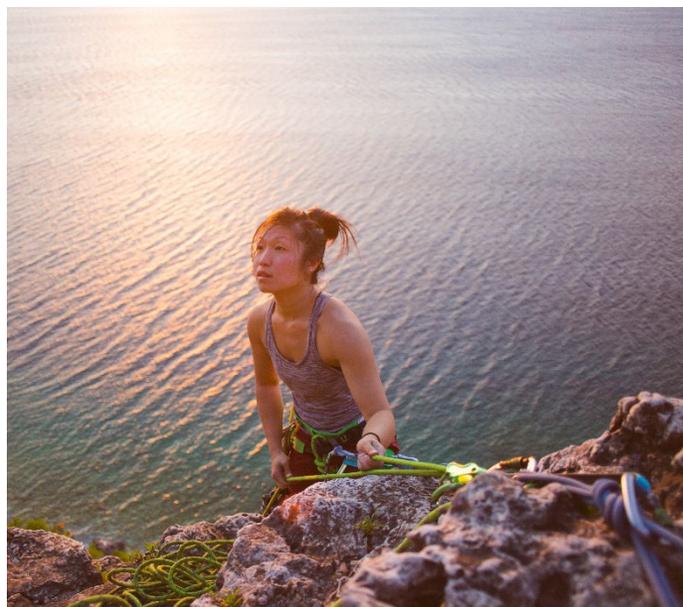
ZIPLINE

OVERLOOK
PLAZA

3D ARCHERY

TRAIL HEAD
+
ARCHERY FACILITY

BEGINNER
MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL







MILLER CREEK ACTIVATION

Plan. Preserve. Play.



Program Elements:

- RV Campsites
- Hike-in Campsites
- Dual Boat Launch
- All Seasons Fishing
 - Fish Cleaning Stations
- Wildlife Viewing
- Observation / Look-out Tower
- Disc Golf



Plan. Preserve. Play.





Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



NIOBRARA TOWN CENTER

Plan. Preserve. Play.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



COMMUNITY DESIGN

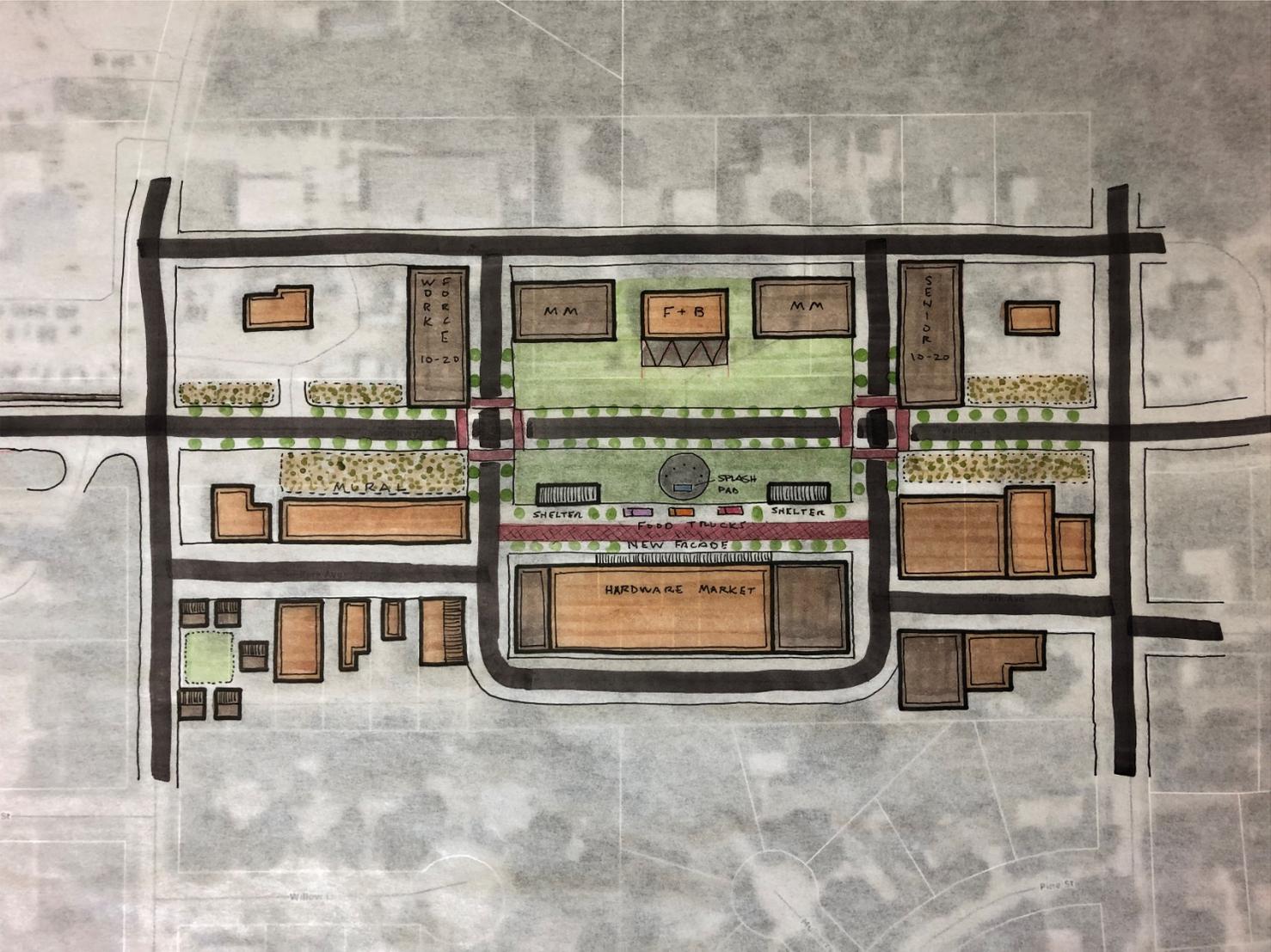


Plan. Preserve. Play.

ASPIRATIONAL PEER

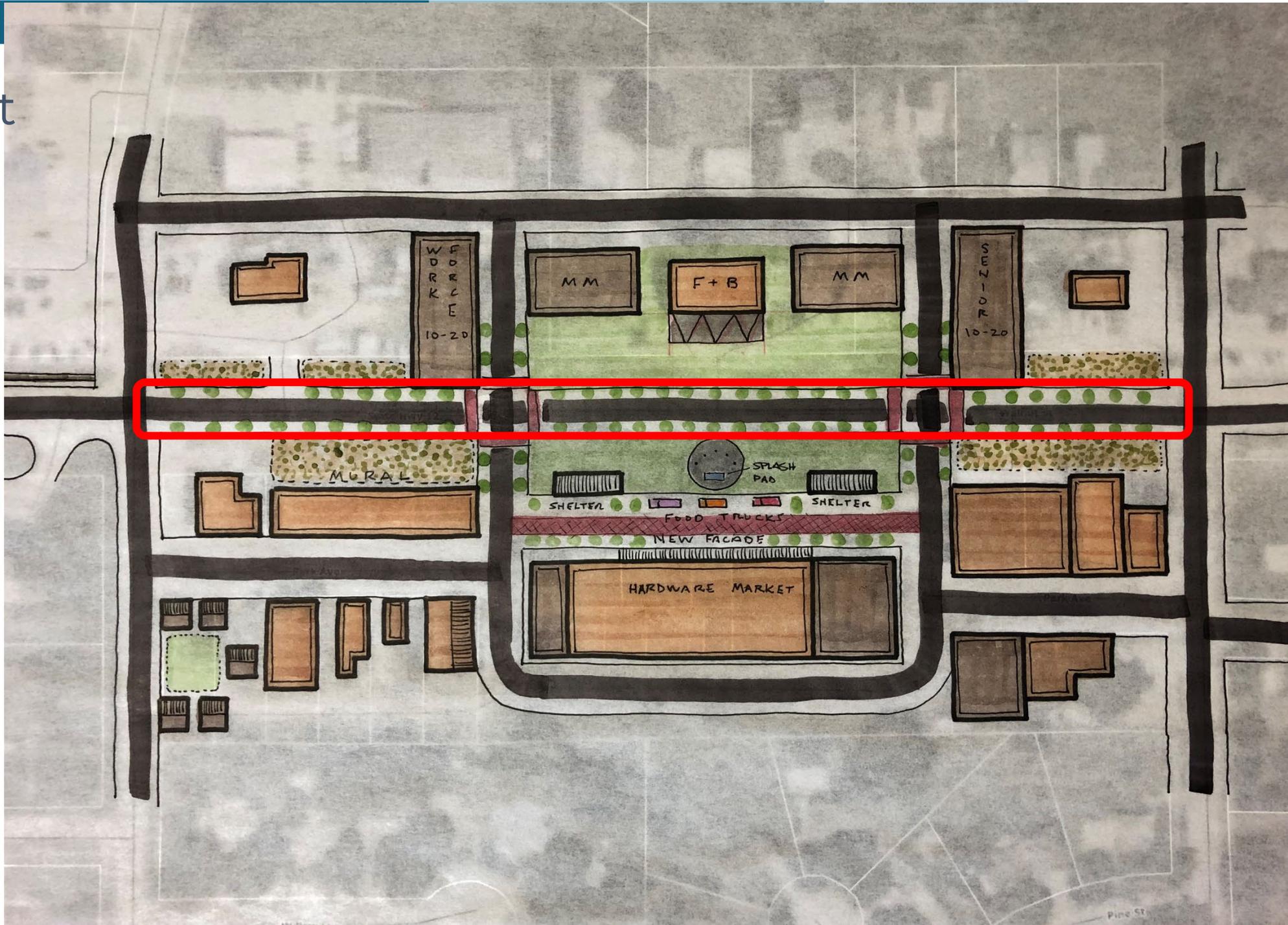


SPRAWL RETROFIT/PLACEMAKING

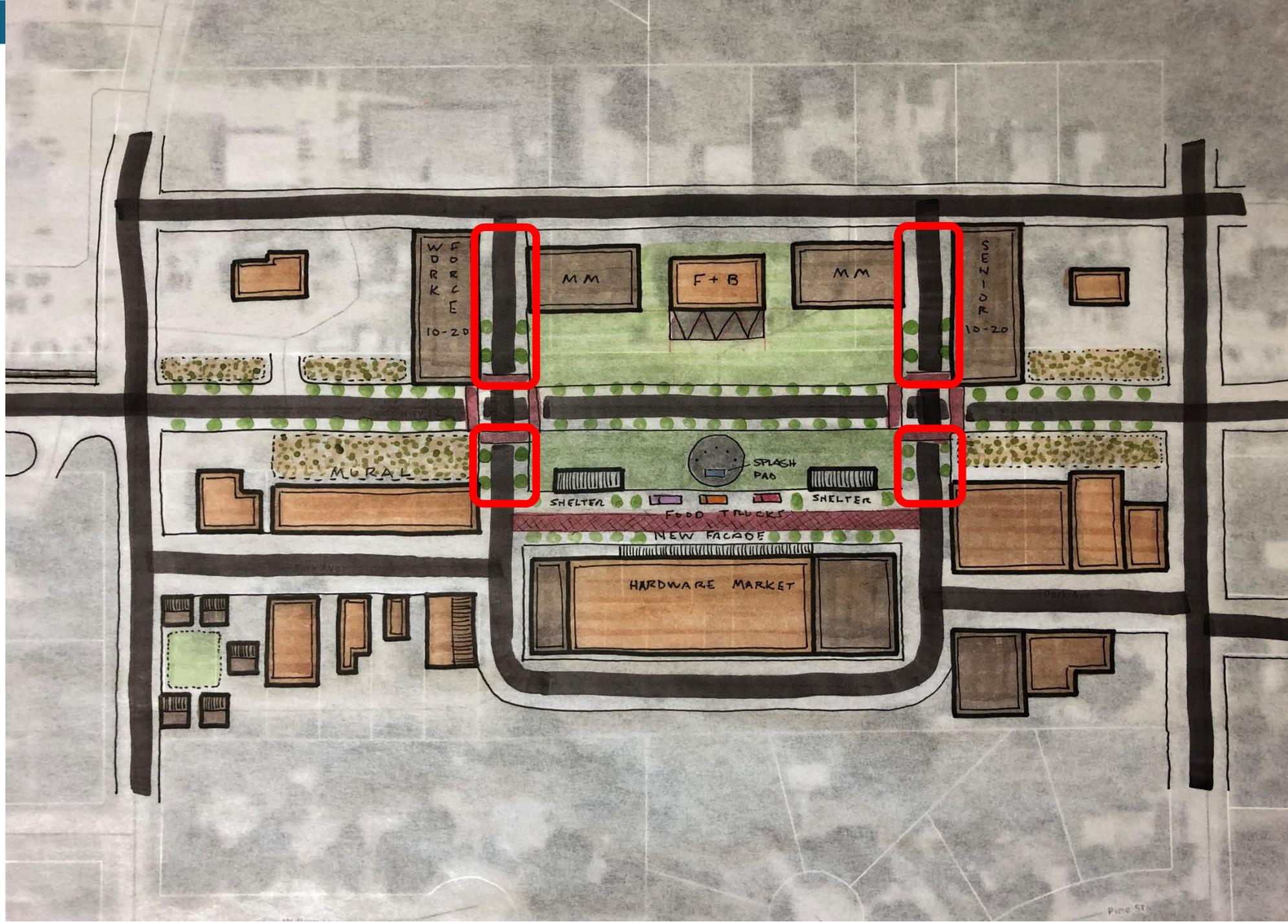
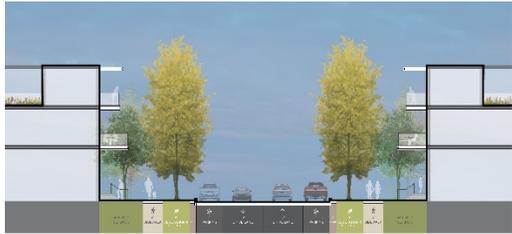


Plan. Preserve. Play.

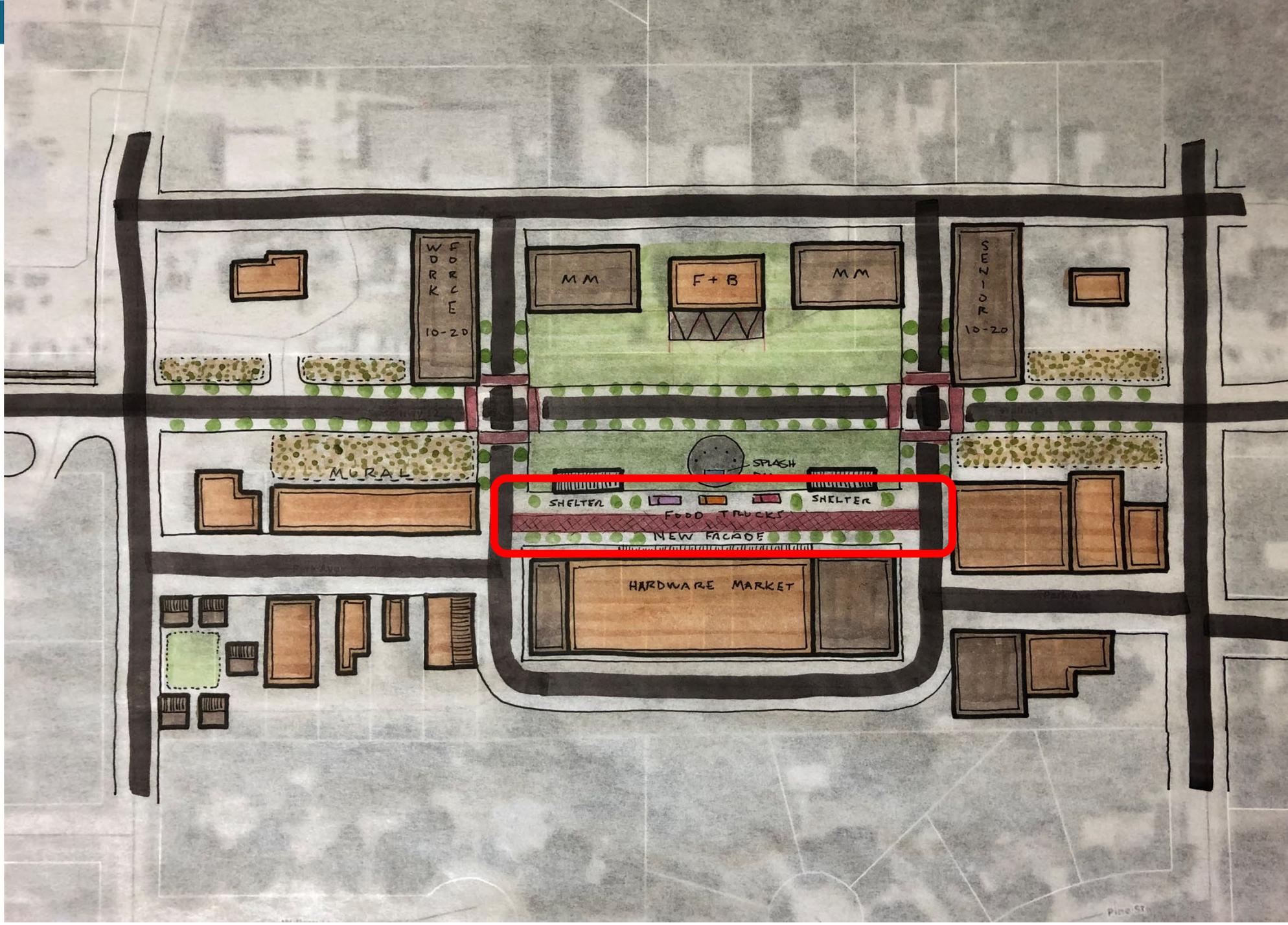
Hwy 12: Context Sensitive Traffic Calming



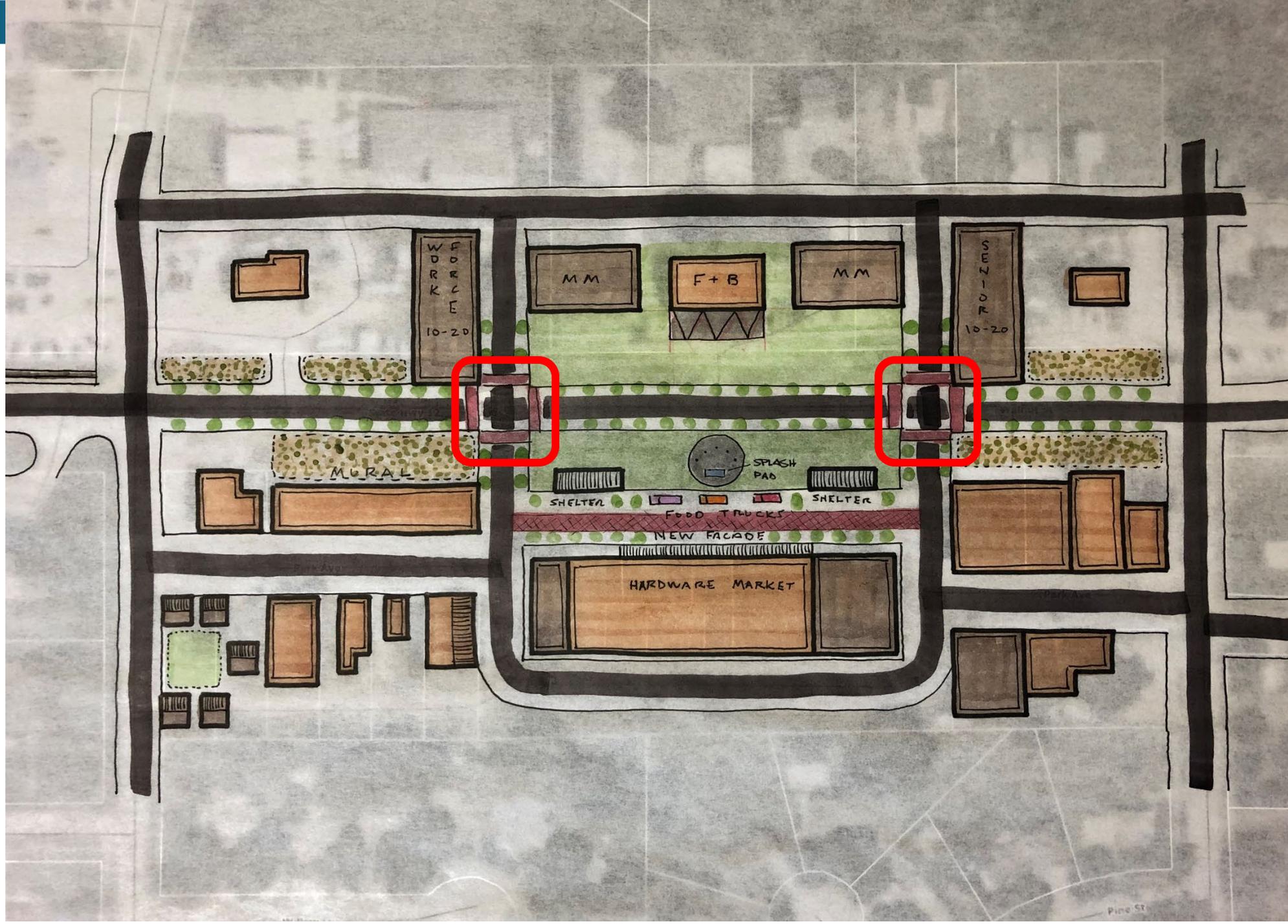
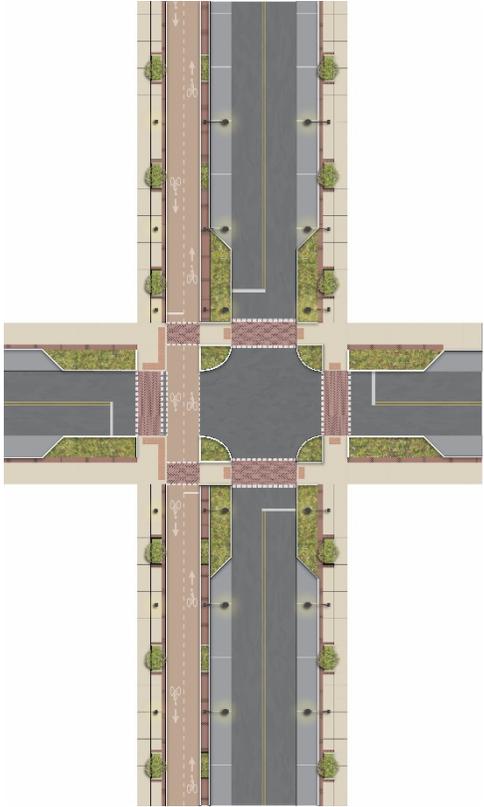
New Streets



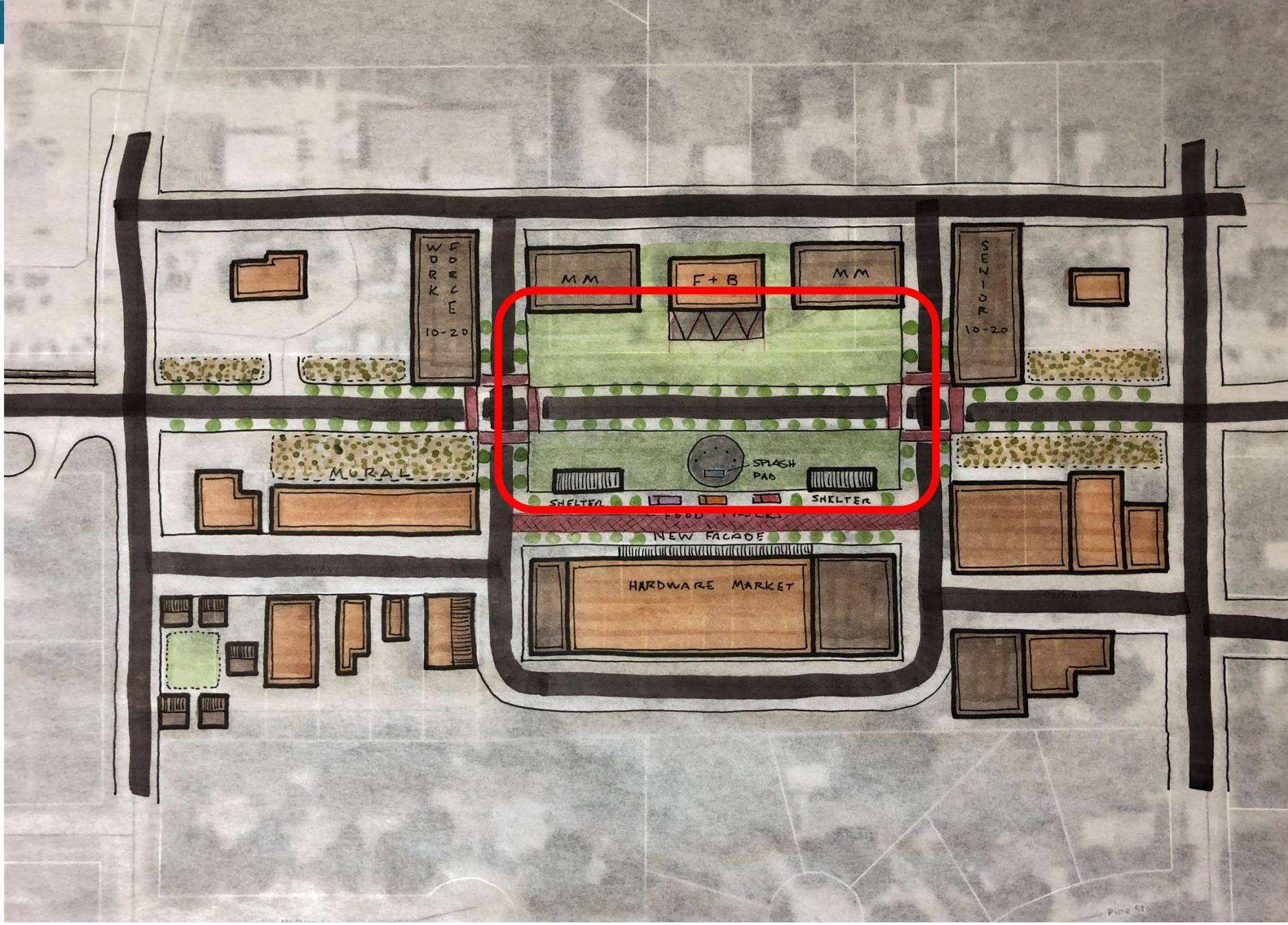
Shared-Space Street



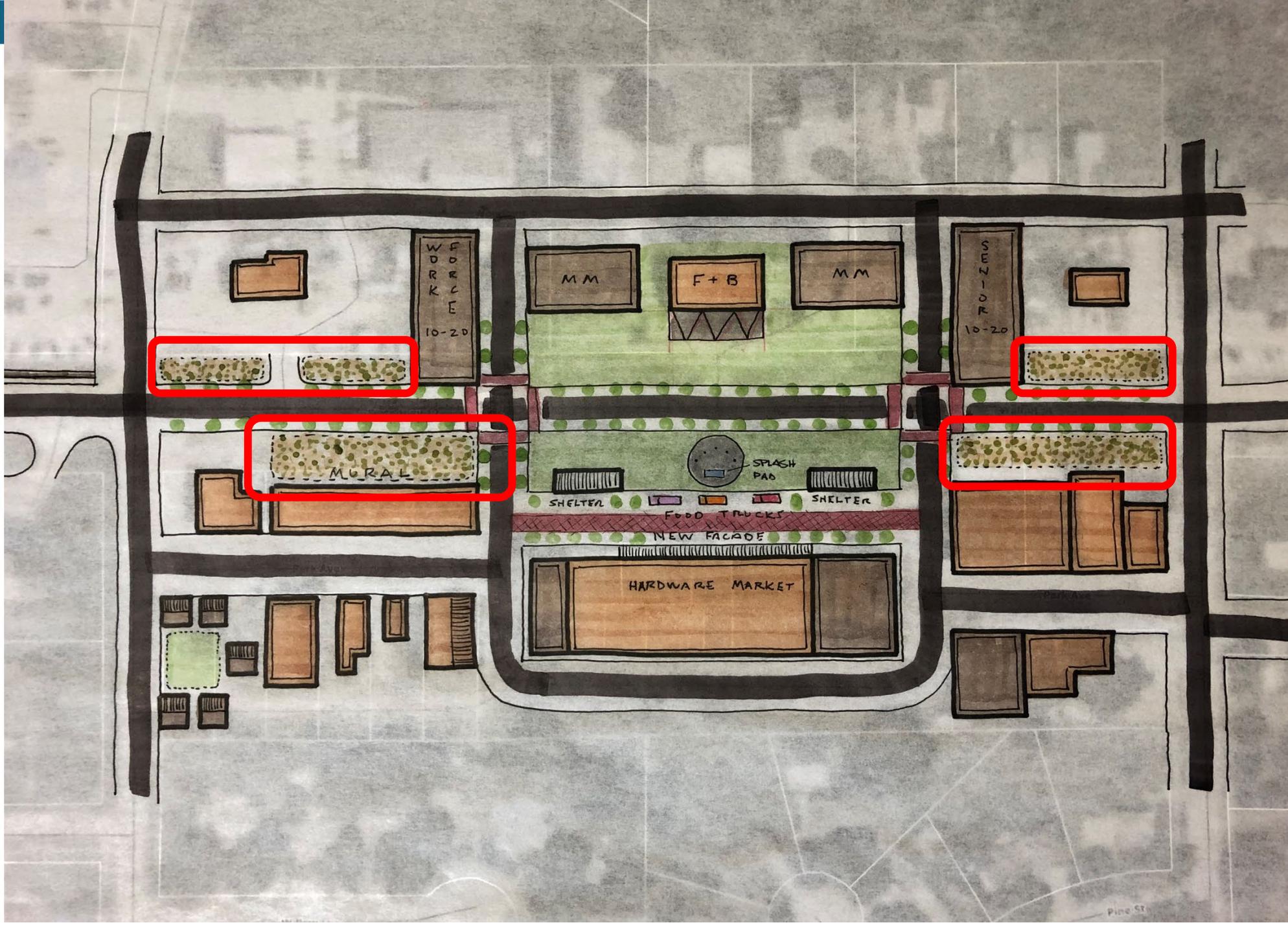
Crosswalks



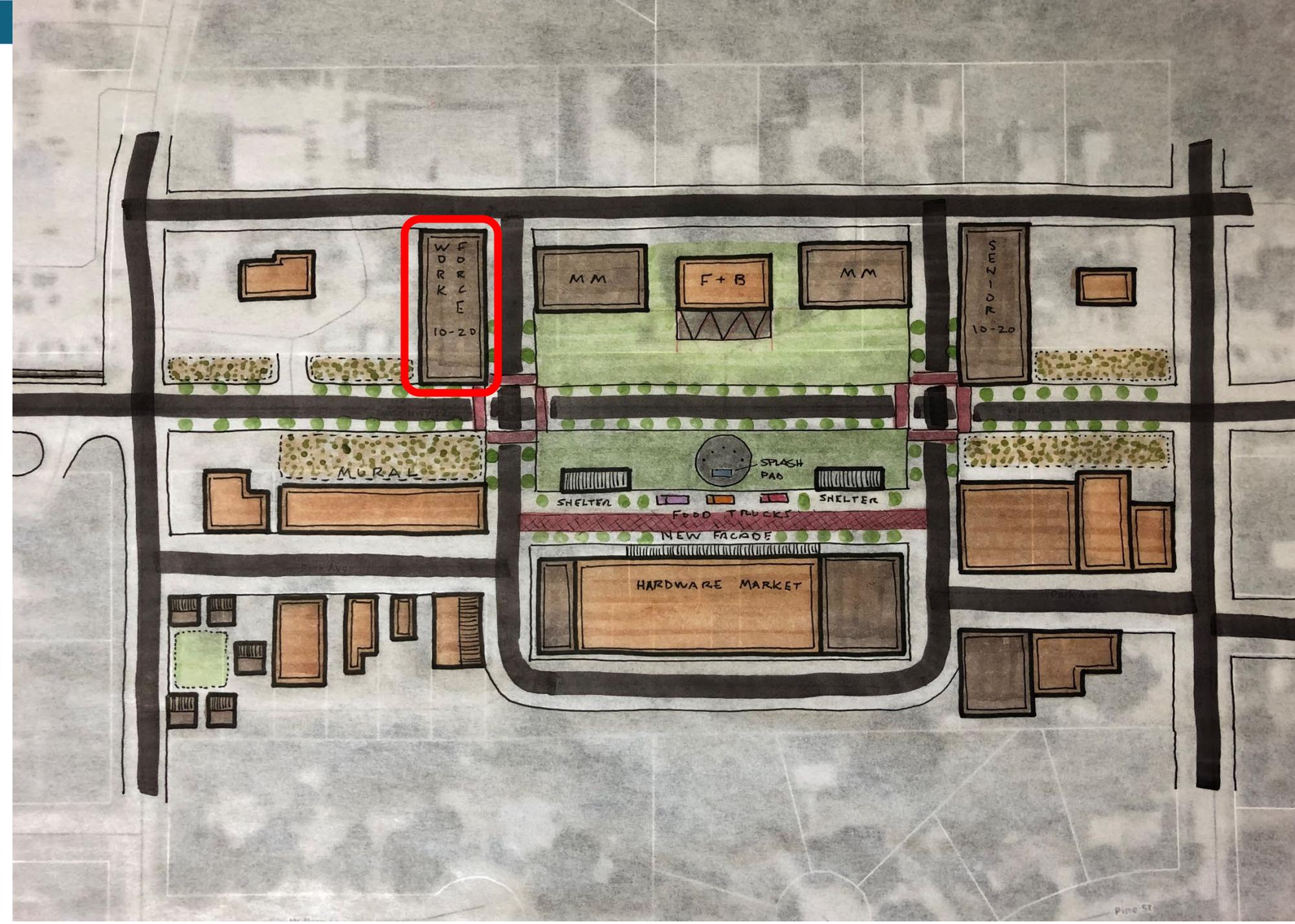
Parks & Open Space: Town Square



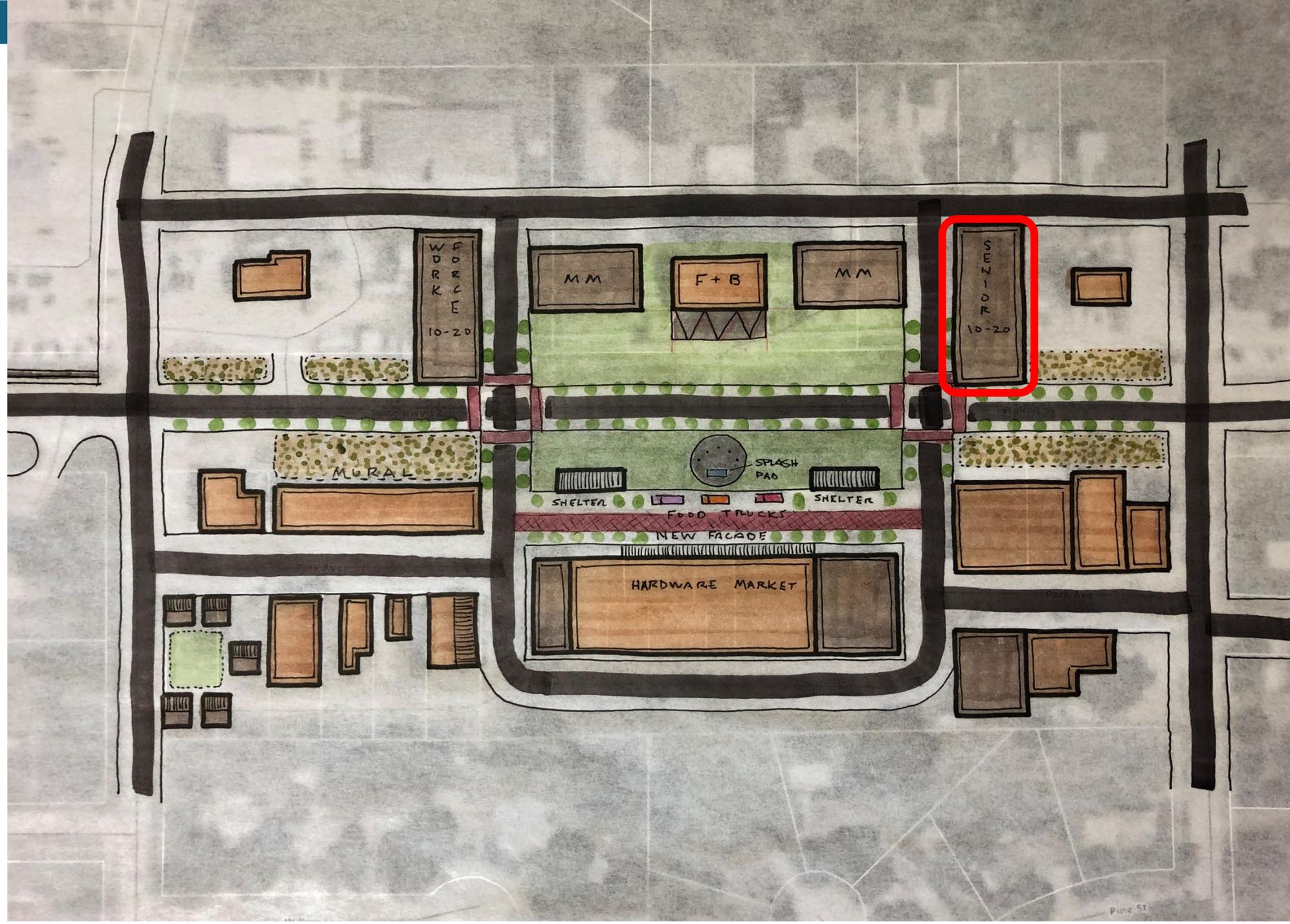
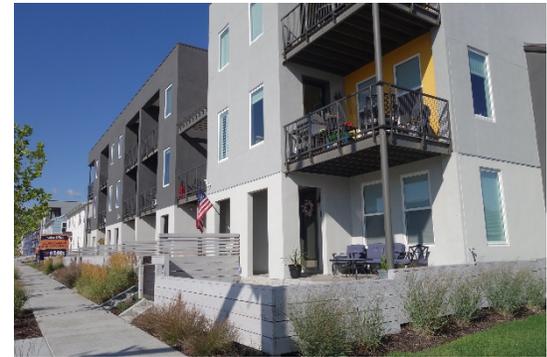
Parks & Open Space: Natural Landscaping



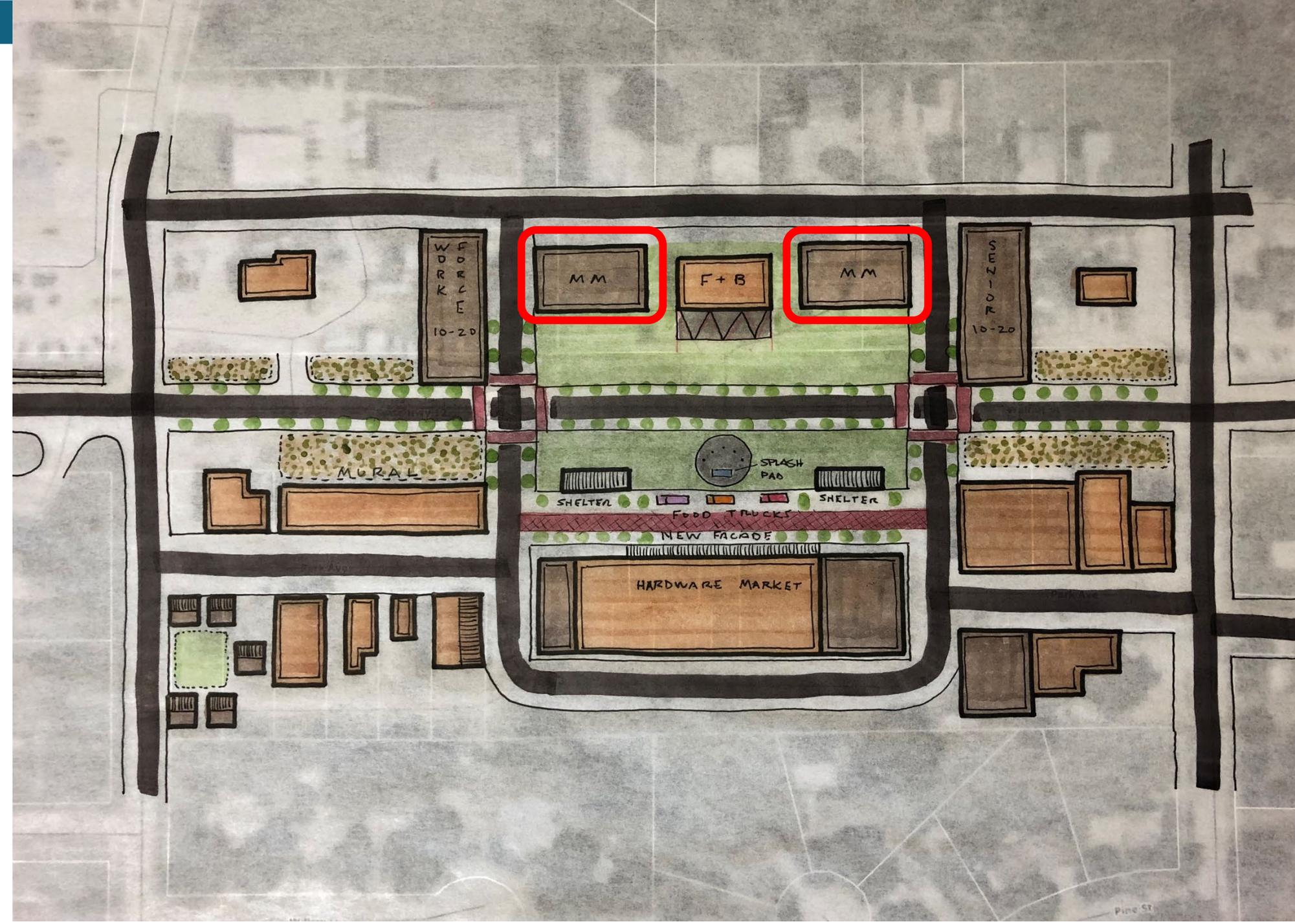
Infill Development: Workforce Housing



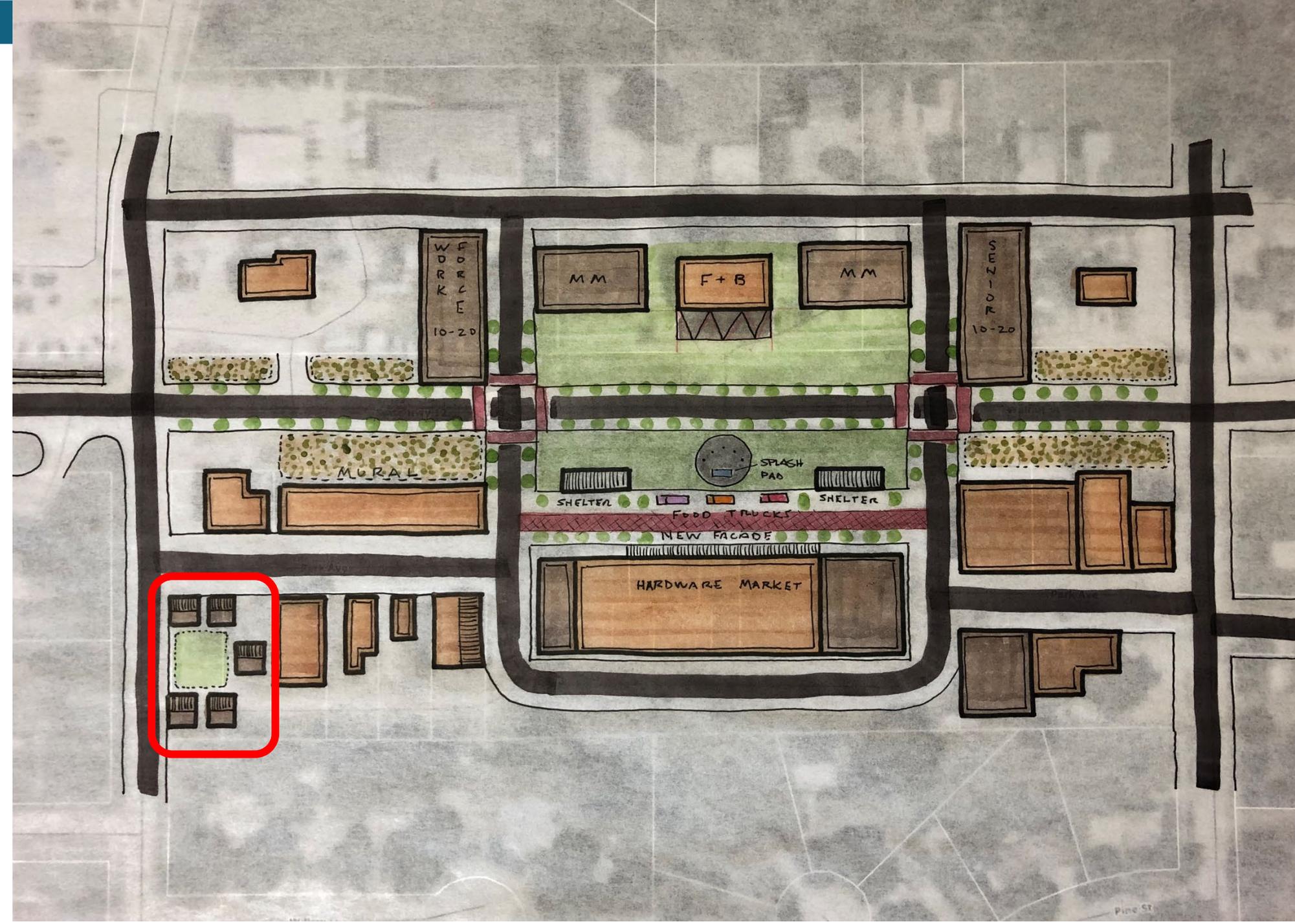
Infill Development: Senior Housing



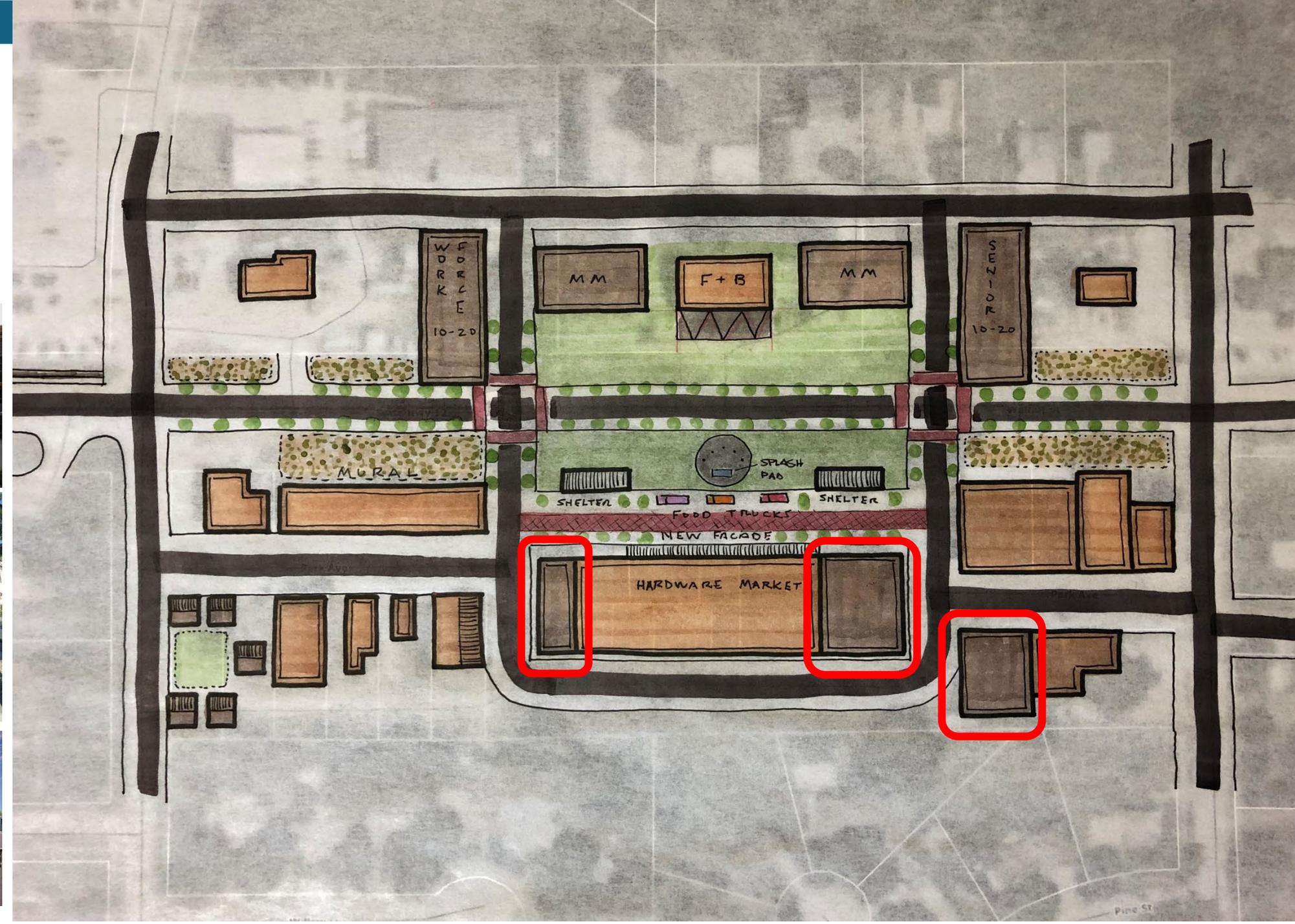
Infill Development: Missing Middle Housing



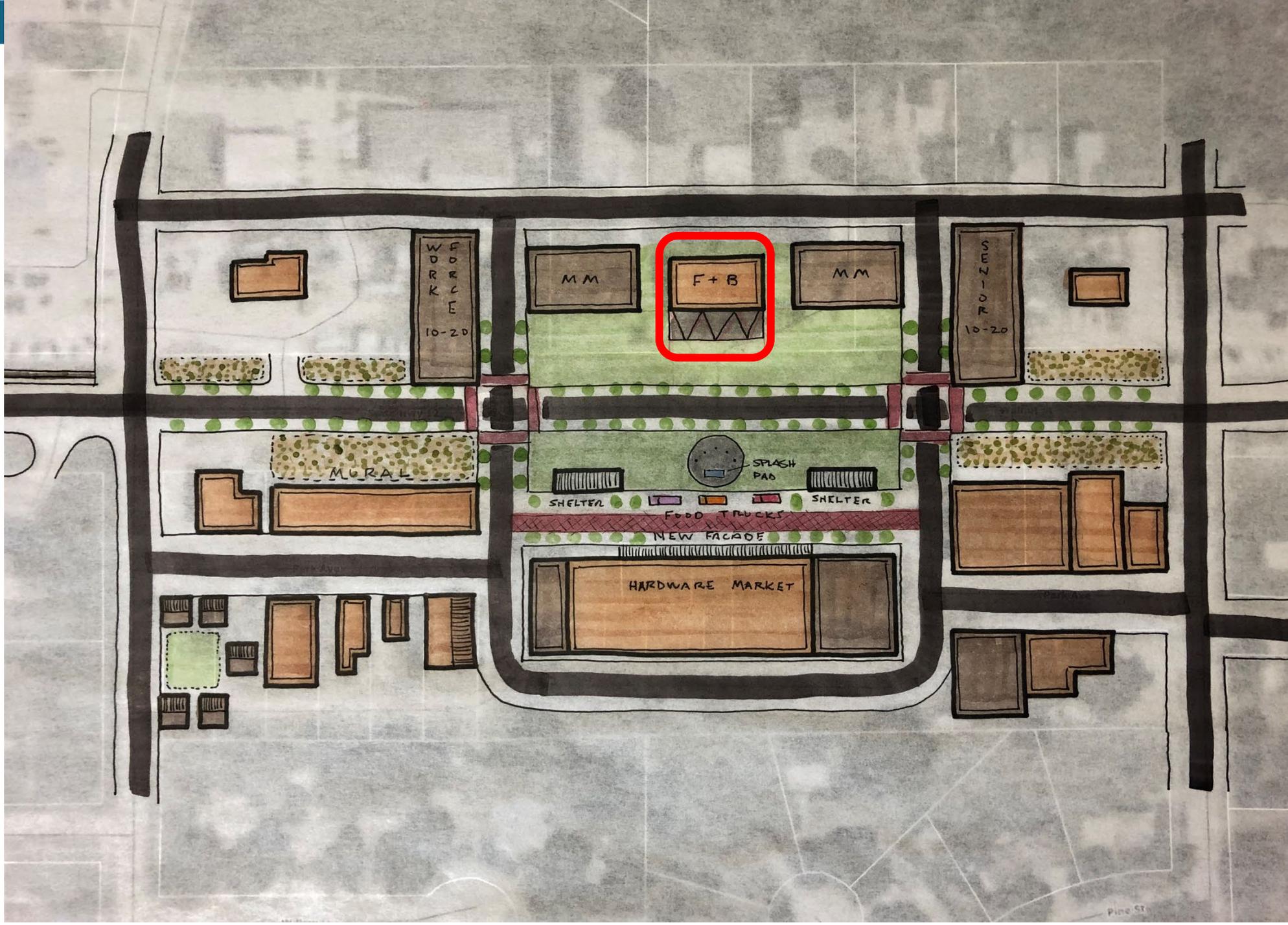
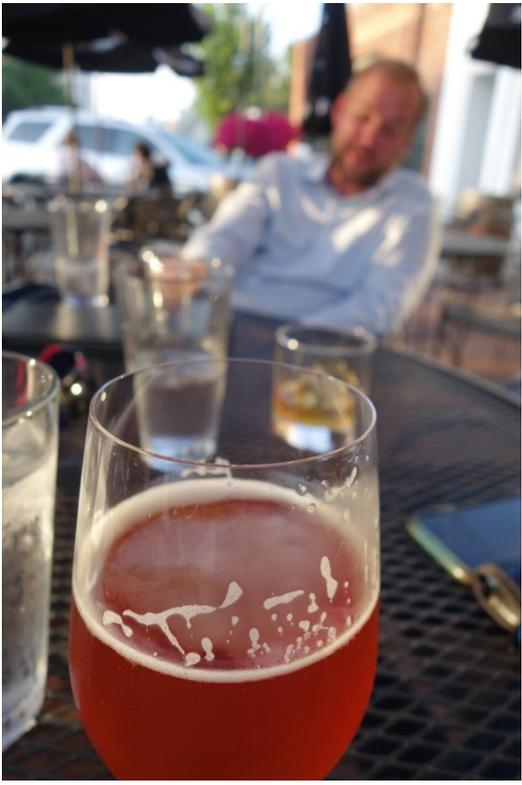
Infill Development: Tourist/ Seasonal Lodging



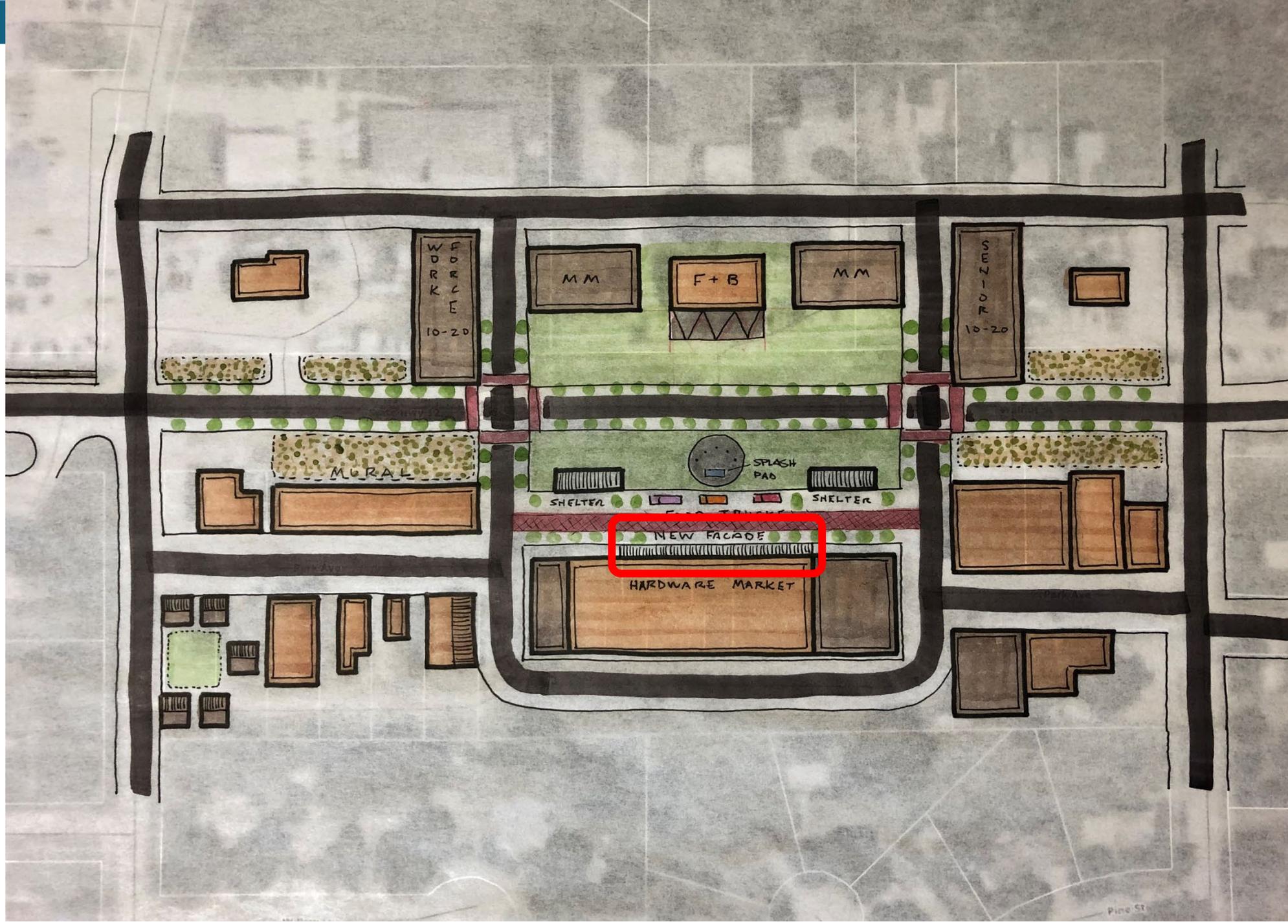
Infill Development: Retail/ Commercial



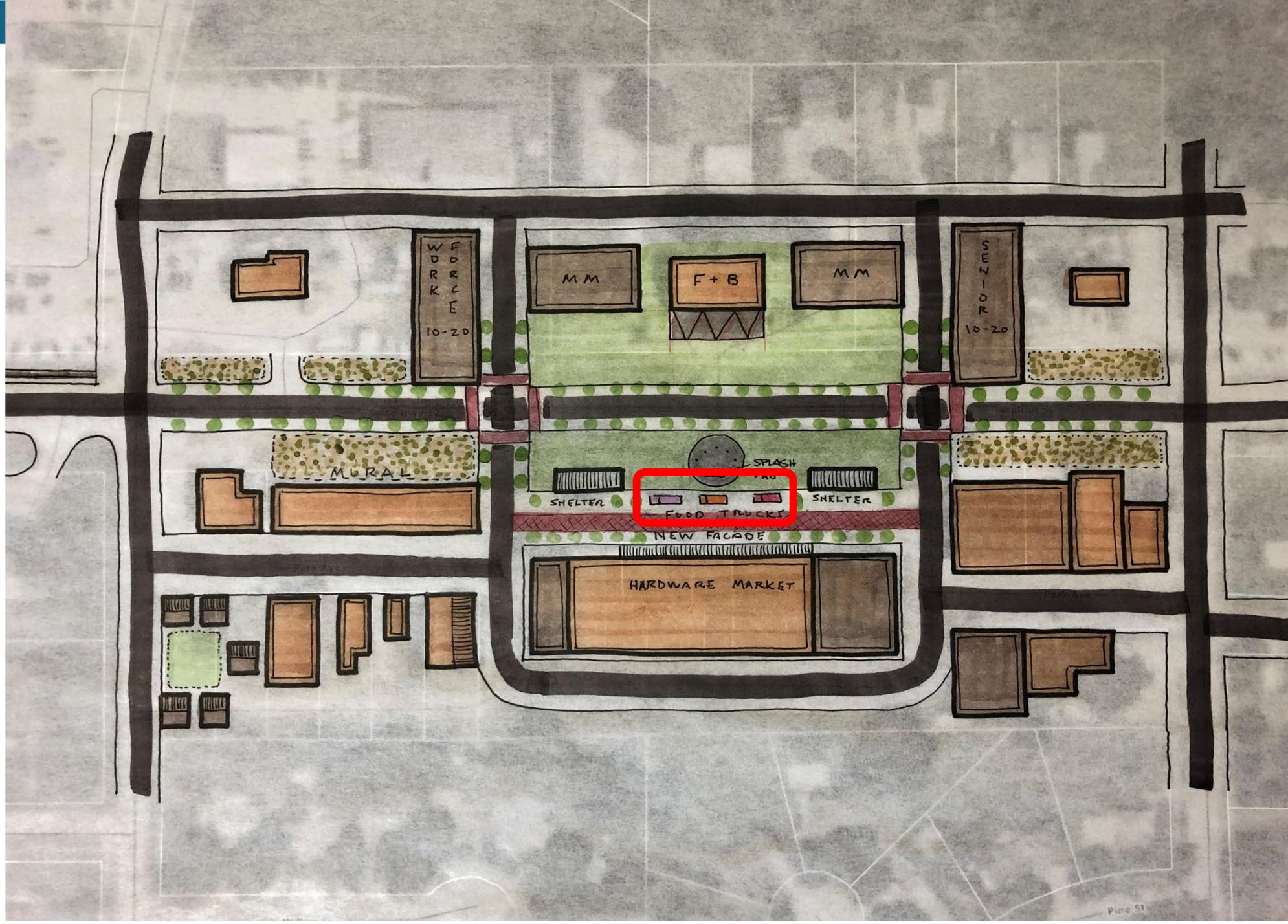
Retrofit: Food & Beverage and Outdoor Dining



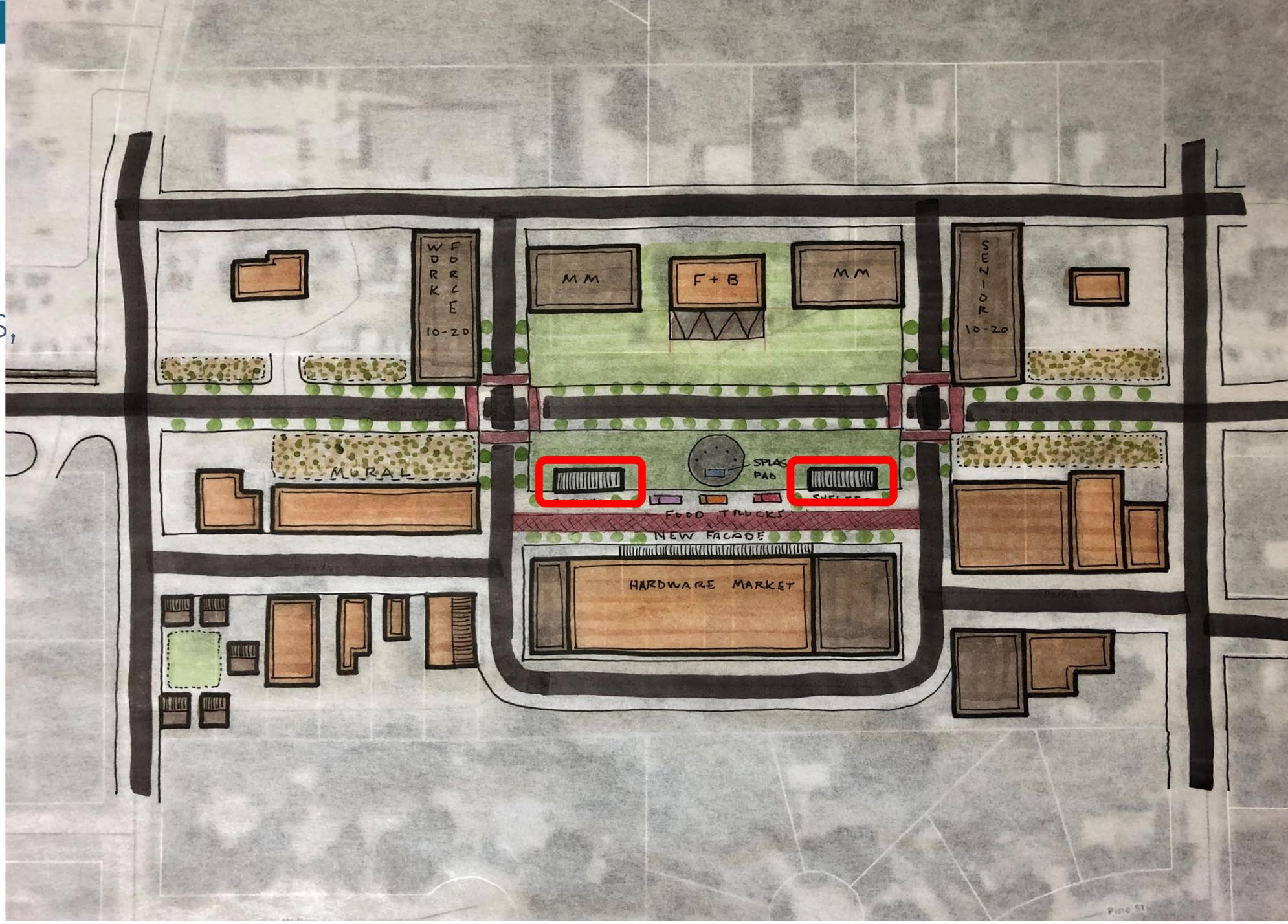
Retrofit: Façade Enhancements



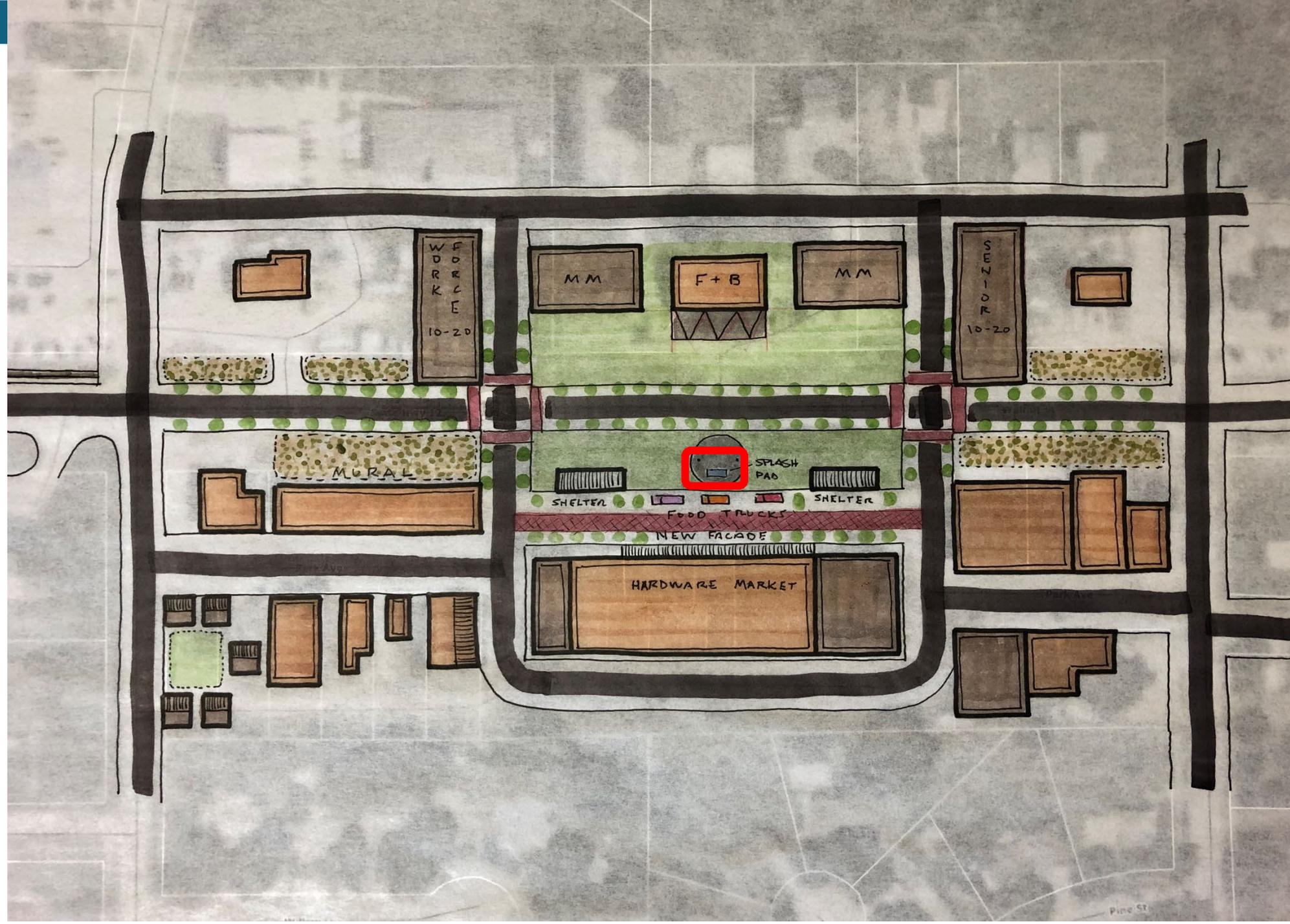
Activation: Food Trucks



Activation:
Pavilions for
Farmers
Markets, Food
Trucks, Festivals,
etc.



Activation: Splash Pad





Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



NIOBRARA LANDING

Plan. Preserve. Play.

PROGRAM

- Feasibility Study - Proximity to Niobrara
- Double Boat Launch / Dock
- Shelter and Picnic Area
- Fish Cleaning Station
- Paved Vehicle / Trailer Parking



Plan. Preserve. Play.

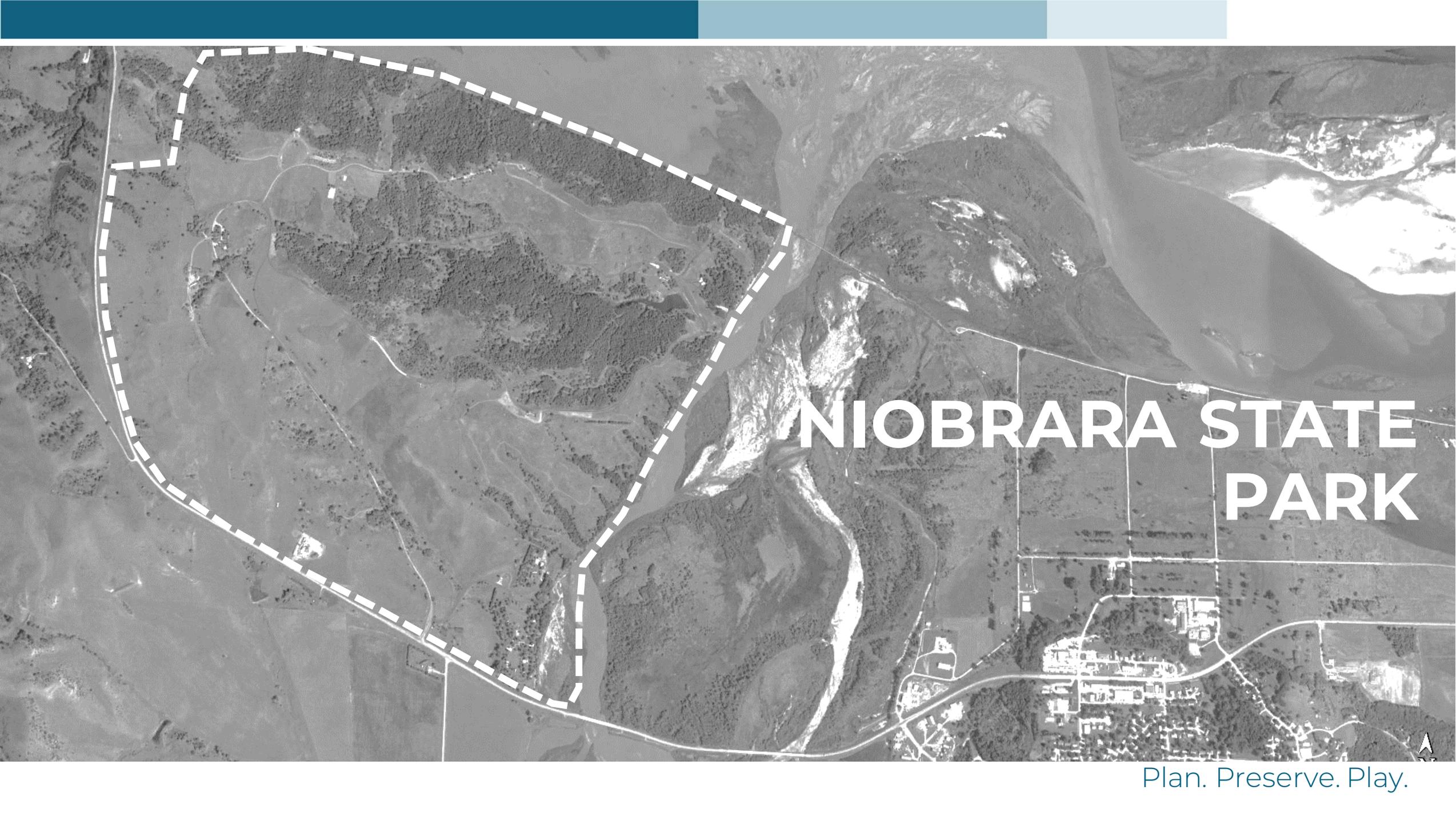
“FIRST CLASS” BOAT LAUNCH NEAR NIOBRARA





NIOBRARA STATE PARK

Plan. Preserve. Play.



NIOBRARA STATE PARK

Plan. Preserve. Play.



- “The Tie”
- Lodge & Events Center
- Park Activation



THE “TIE”

Restoration of the bond between Niobrara Town and Niobrara State Park.

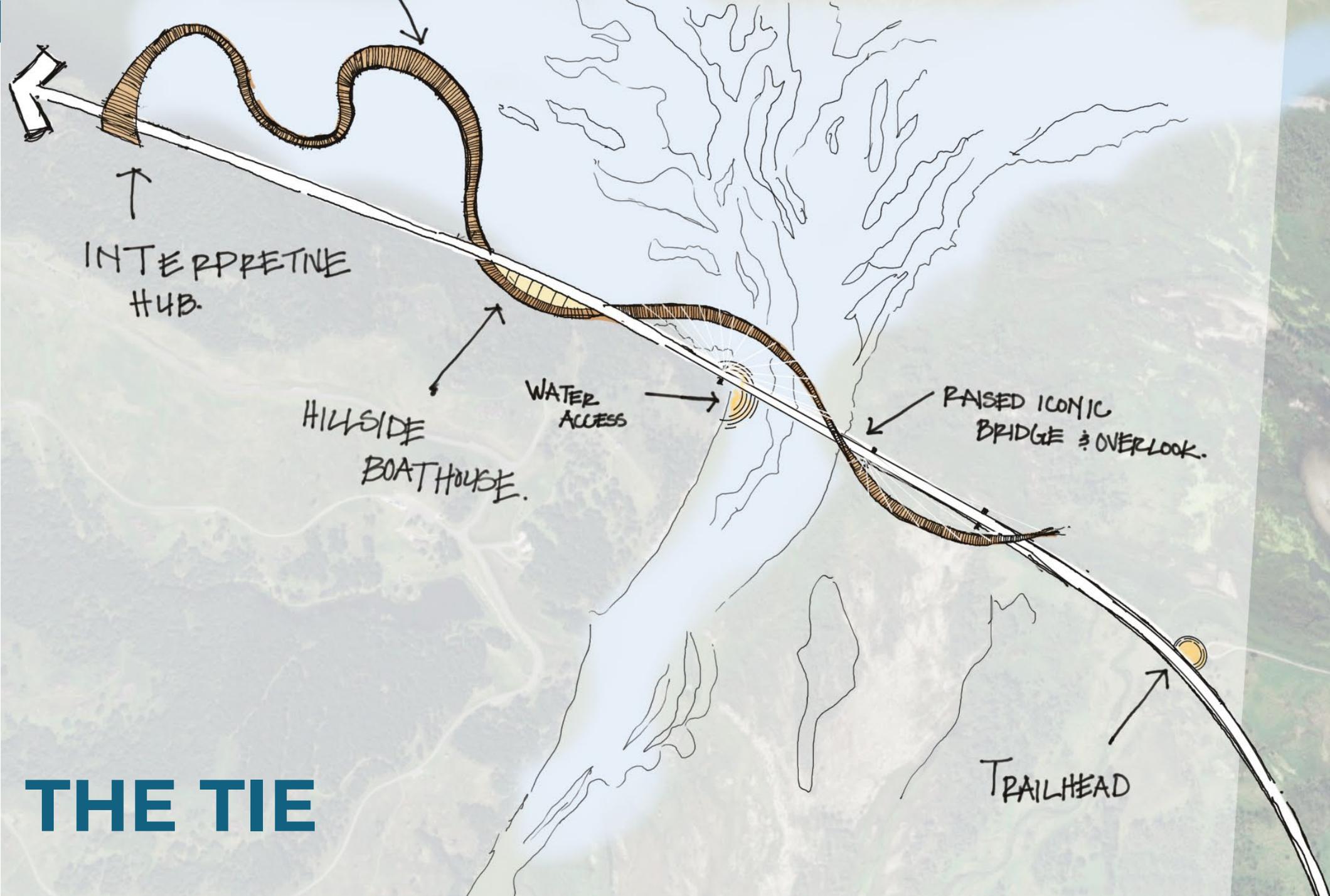
Celebrate joining (ties) of Town | Park, Cultures, River Confluence, History | Future

Iconic element visible from Highway, Niobrara, Park.

Terminus of Niobrara River activities, water access.

Connection of trails can alleviate some traffic congestion.

Designed | Engineered with sedimentation concerns.



THE TIE



Iconic Element – The “Tie”

Plan. Preserve. Play.



High Trestle Train Bridge Impacts



Timber Structure

Economic Development Potential

Plan. Preserve. Play.

THE TIE – WATER ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.

LODGE + EVENTS CENTER



Plan. Preserve. Play.



ATTRACTION GOALS

Create a regional destination point in Niobrara State Park. Local, Statewide, and Beyond

A resource for Niobrara Town and residents along Lewis and Clark Lake.

Start modestly with opportunity for expansion and growth planned.

Potential for 3rd Party ownership working with NE Game and Parks.

Weddings, Conferences, Retreats – an “All-in” Experience, with greater support for the community.

Brings Lodging and Amenities to Region.



SITE OPTION CHARACTERISTICS

- Eagle View Group Lodge Site
- Hillside offers views, protection, activities.
- Expansive views of river valley.
- Arrival sequence builds to moment.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Eagle View Lodge Site - Existing

Plan. Preserve. Play.



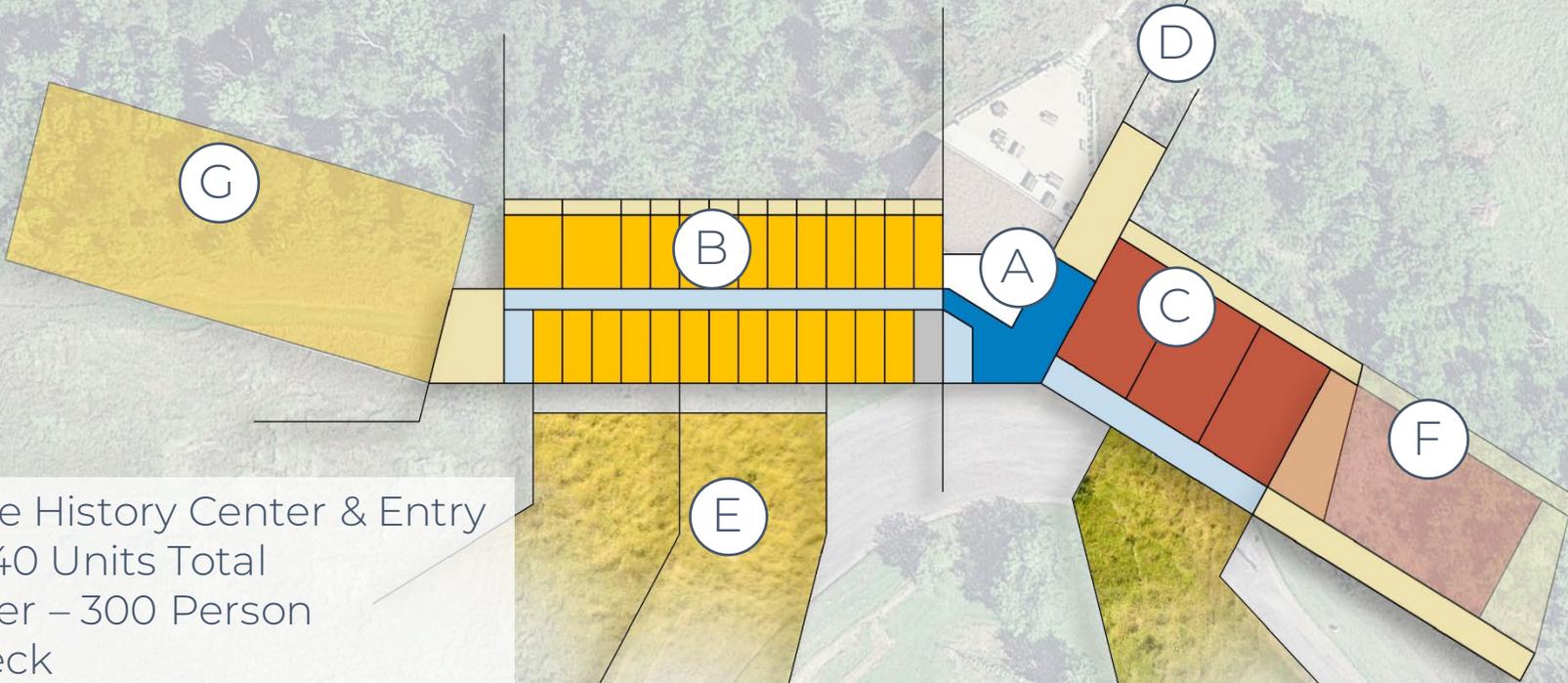
Eagle View Lodge Site – New Lodge

Plan. Preserve. Play.



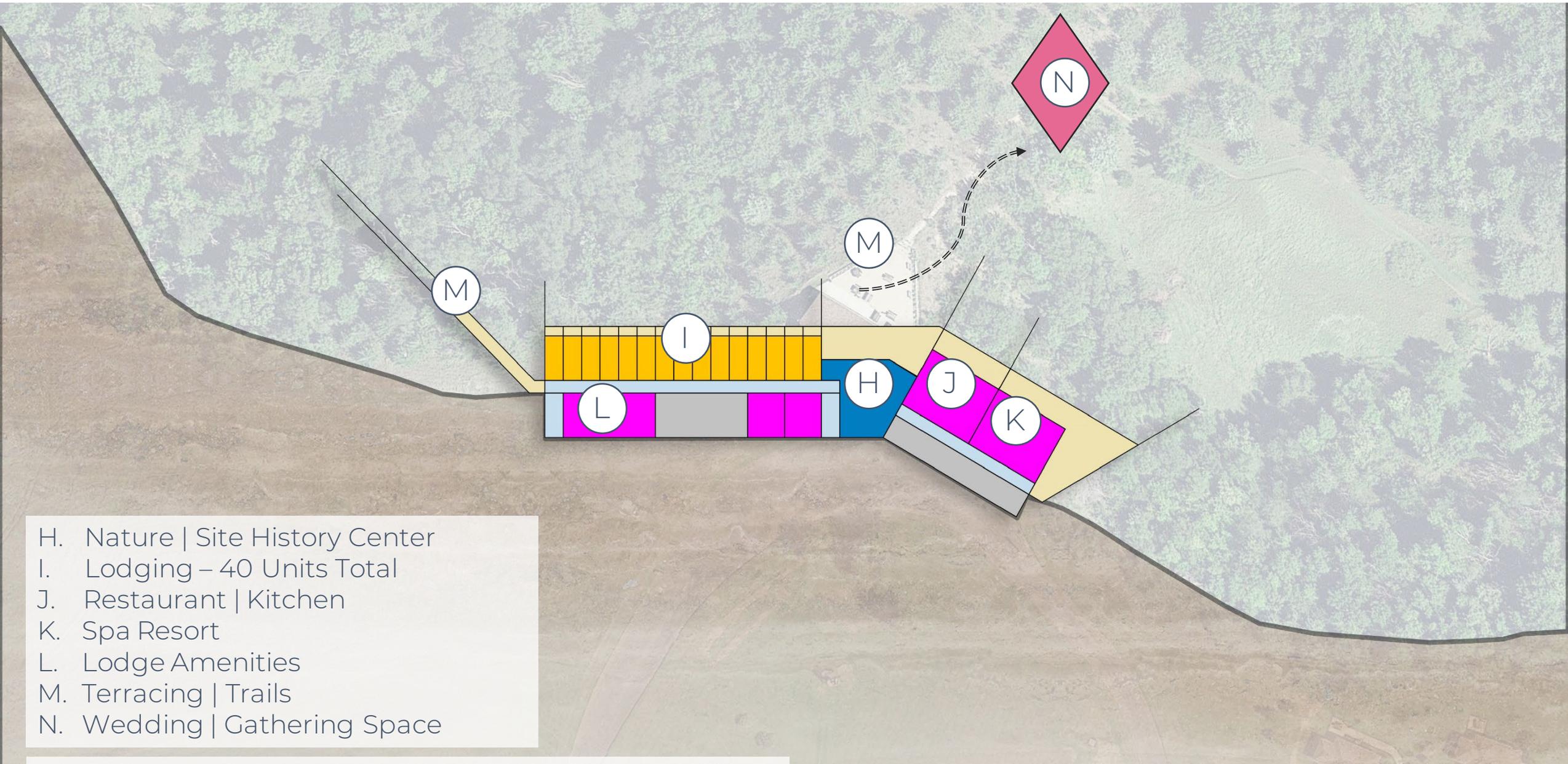
Eagle View Lodge Site – New Lodge

Plan. Preserve. Play.

- 
- The image shows a conceptual site plan overlaid on an aerial photograph of a wooded area. The plan is divided into seven color-coded zones labeled A through G. Zone A is a blue area at the center. Zone B is a yellow area with vertical lines, extending horizontally from zone A. Zone C is a red area extending diagonally from zone A. Zone D is a yellow area extending diagonally from zone A. Zone E is a yellow area extending vertically downwards from zone A. Zone F is a brown area extending diagonally from zone C. Zone G is a yellow area extending diagonally from zone B. A legend in the bottom left corner provides details for each zone.
- A. Nature | Site History Center & Entry
 - B. Lodging – 40 Units Total
 - C. Event Center – 300 Person
 - D. Viewing Deck
 - E. Native Landscaping Berms
 - F. Future Event Center Expansion
 - G. Future Lodging Expansion

Conceptual Lodge Plan – Upper Level

Plan. Preserve. Play.



Conceptual Lodge Plan – Lower Level



Plan. Preserve. Play.



A. Nature | Site History Center & Entry

Plan. Preserve. Play.



B. Lodging – 40 Units Total



Plan. Preserve. Play.



C. Event Center – 300 People



Plan. Preserve. Play.



D. Viewing Deck



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Prairie Sod House



Traditional Earth Lodge

E. Native Landscape Berms – Site History

Plan. Preserve. Play.



H. Nature | Site History Center



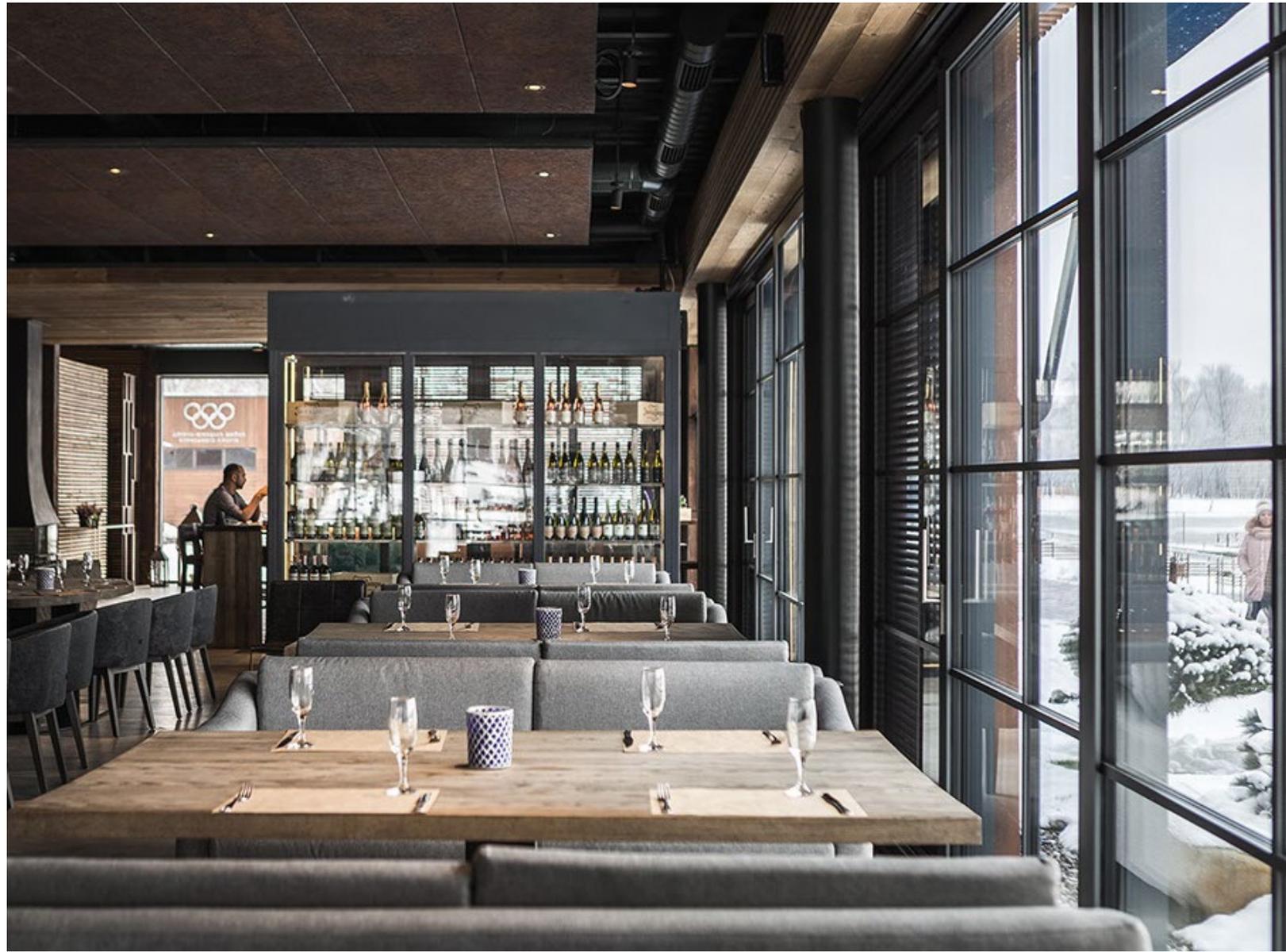
Plan. Preserve. Play.



I. Lodging – 40 Units Total



Plan. Preserve. Play.

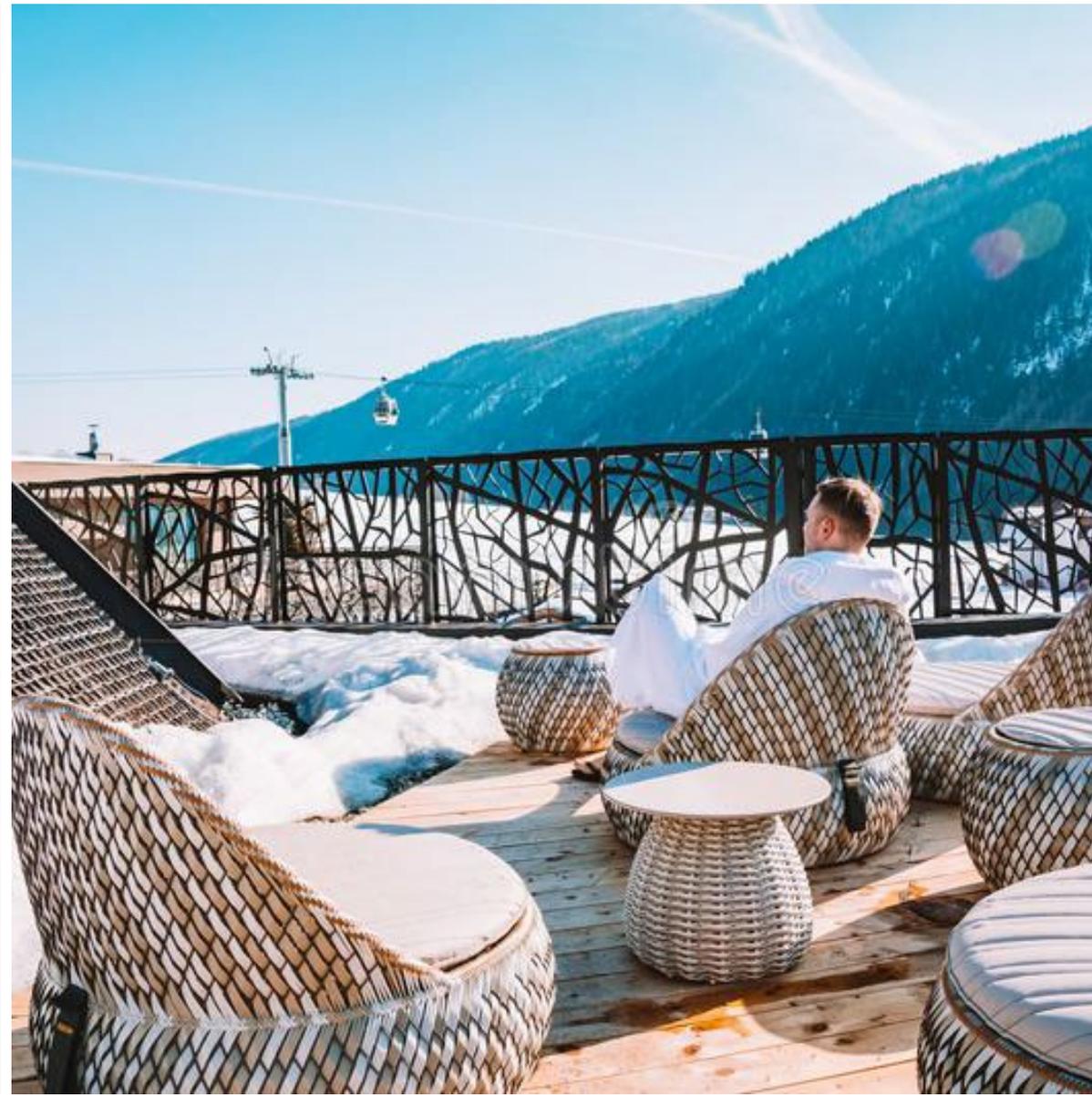


J. Restaurant and/or Catering Kitchen

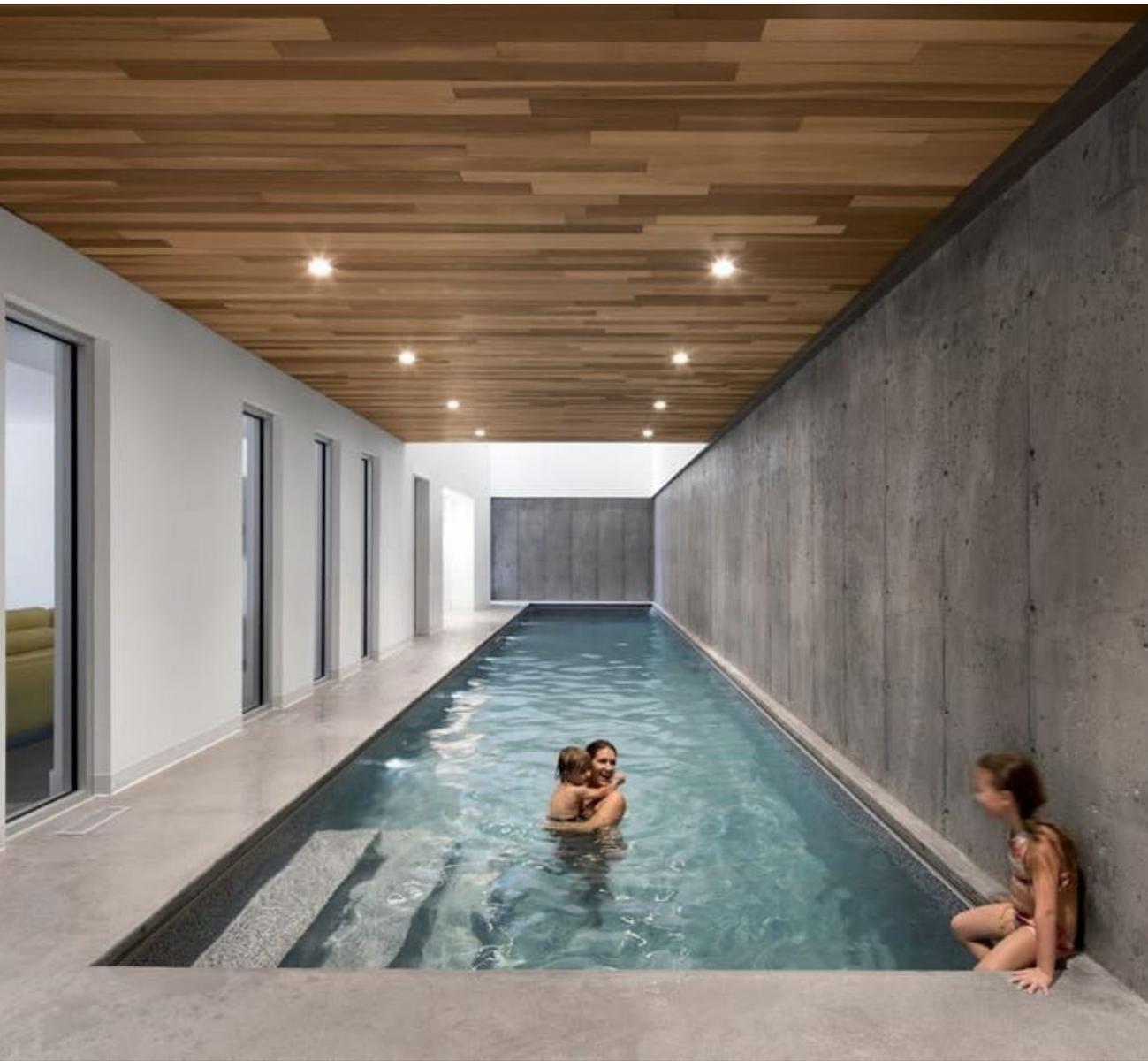
Plan. Preserve. Play.



K. Spa Resort



Plan. Preserve. Play.



L. Lodge Amenities



Plan. Preserve. Play.



M. Trail Connections and Hillside Terracing

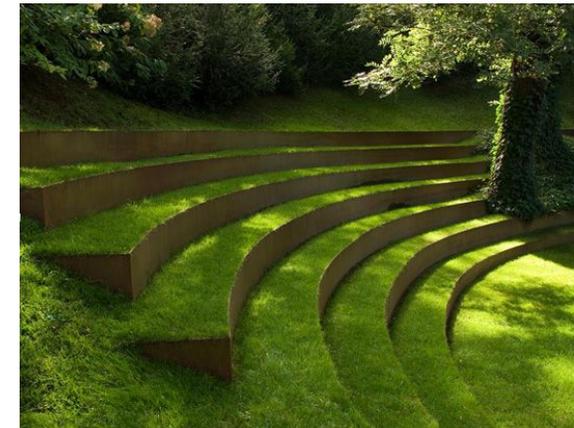
Plan. Preserve. Play.



N. Hillside Wedding | Gathering Space



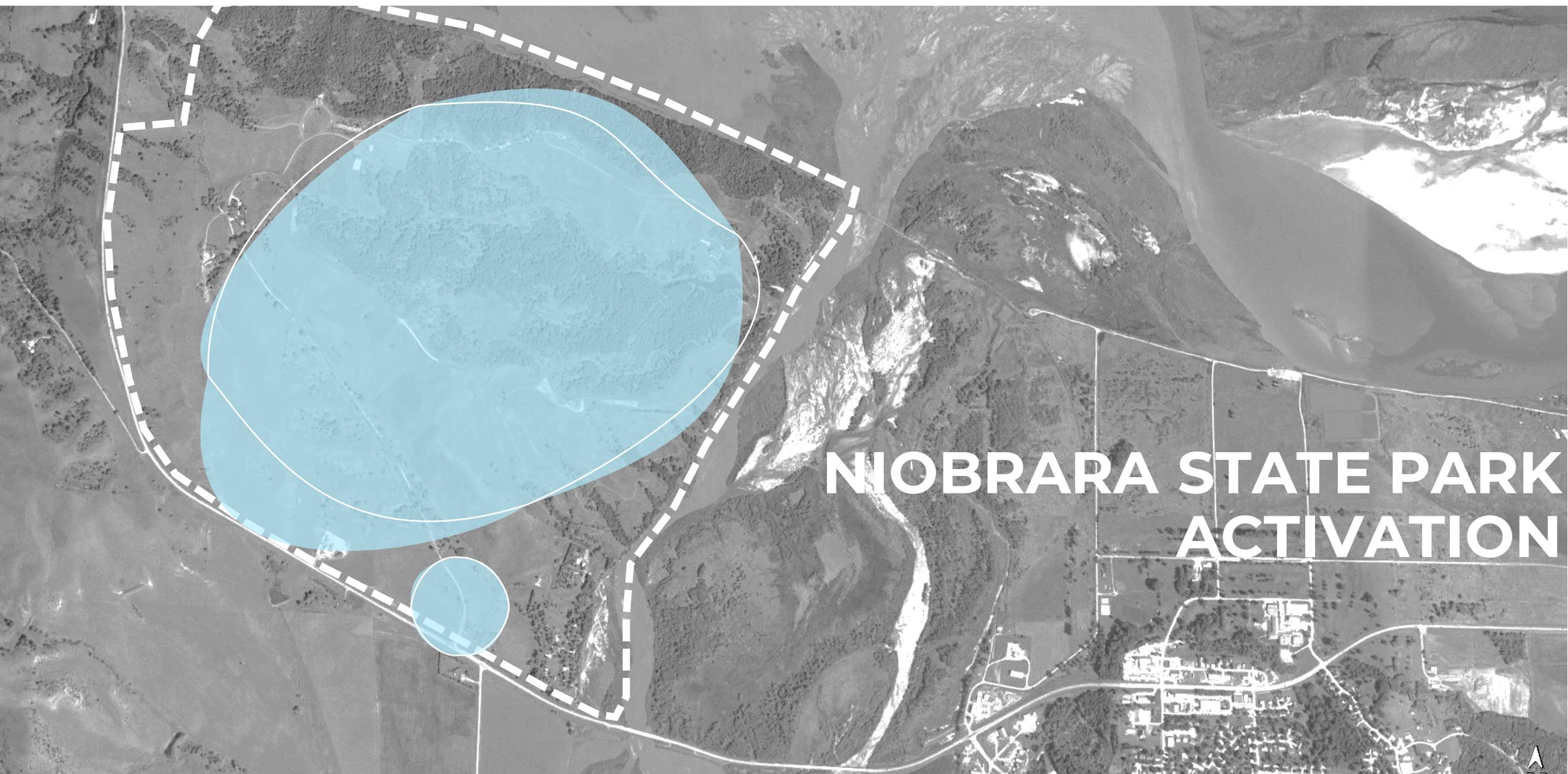
Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.



NIOBRARA STATE PARK ACTIVATION

Plan. Preserve. Play.



PARK GATEWAY IMPROVEMENTS



- Ⓐ NEW PARK OFFICE / VISITORS CENTER
- Ⓑ UPDATED KIOSK
- Ⓒ RAMMED EARTH FEATURE WALL
- Ⓓ RELOCATED HISTORICAL PARK SIGNAGE
- Ⓔ CULTURAL PAVILION
- Ⓕ NATURAL PLAYGROUND
- Ⓖ SHORT GRASS PRAIRIE
- Ⓗ VISITOR PARKING
- Ⓘ RV PARKING

GATEWAY & ENTRY EXPERIENCE



Plan. Preserve. Play.

PARK GATEWAY IMPROVEMENTS



Plan. Preserve. Play.

ENTRY SEQUENCE IMPROVEMENTS



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



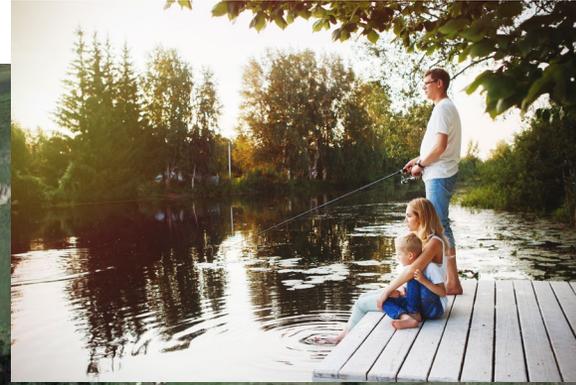


DAY USE ACTIVITIES



Plan. Preserve. Play.

DAY USE ACTIVITIES - WATER



Plan. Preserve. Play.



Plan. Preserve. Play.

DAY USE ACTIVITIES - WINTER



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

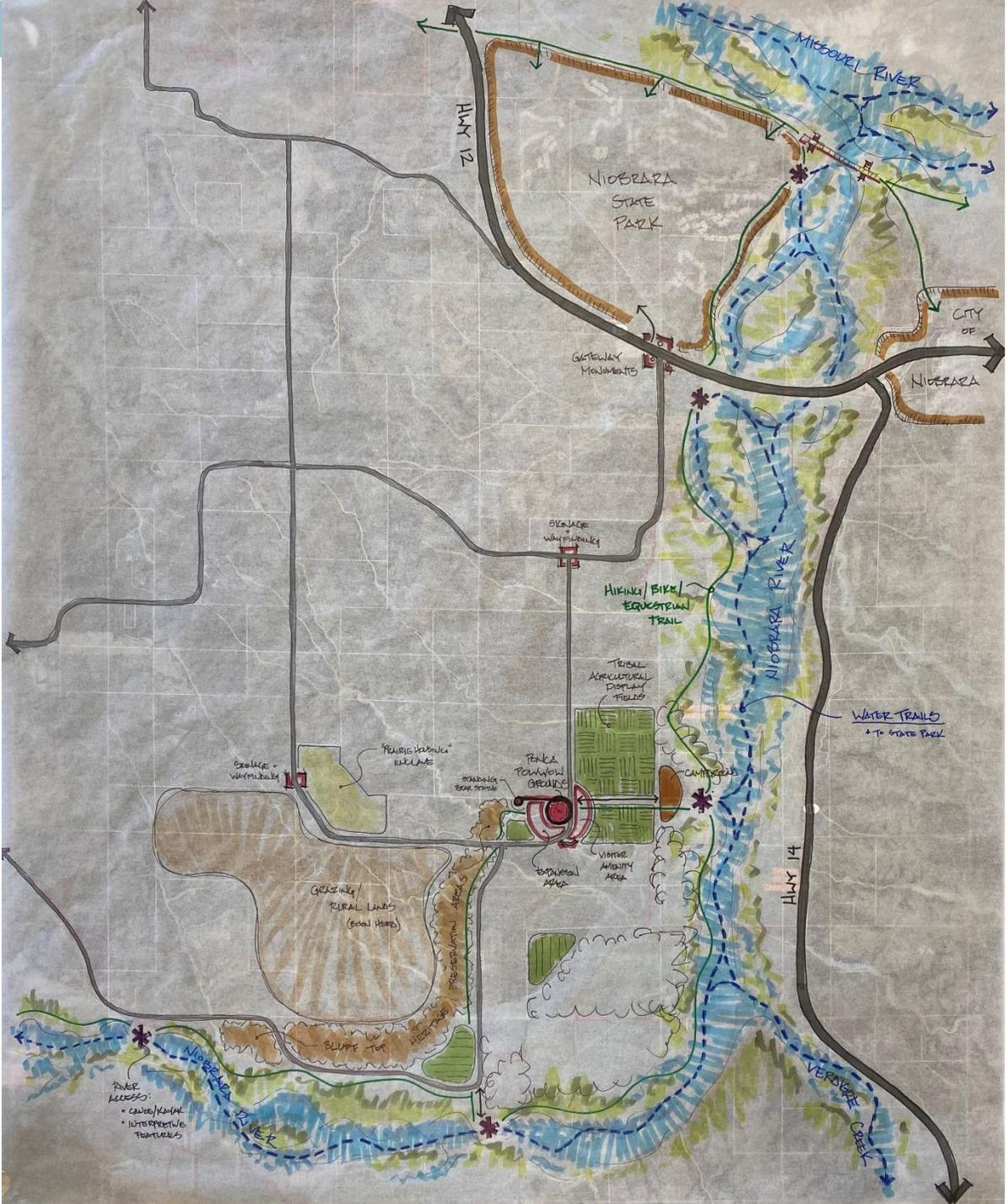


PONCA | NIOBRARA COLLABORATIVE

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

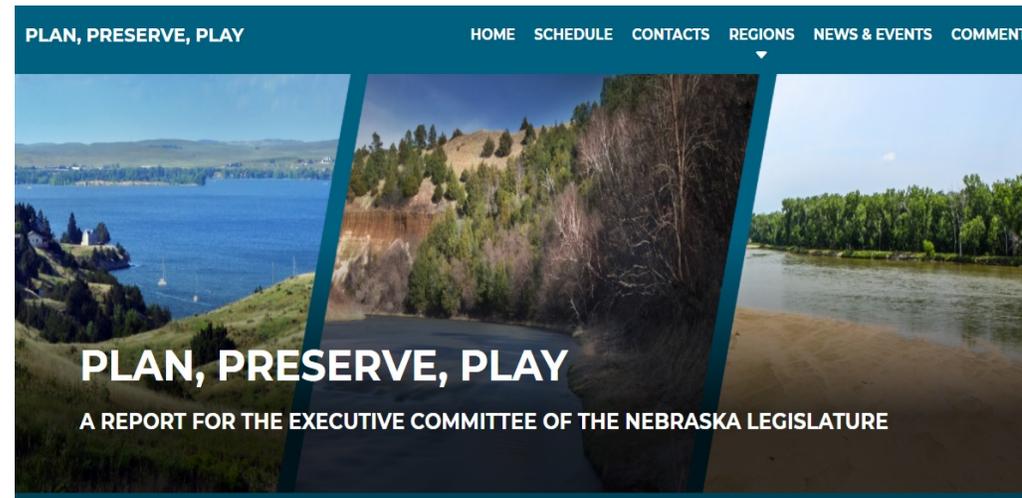


PONCA | NIOBRARA COLLABORATIVE



DISCUSSION & WEBSITE

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





THANK YOU!

www.planpreserveplayNE.com

Plan. Preserve. Play.