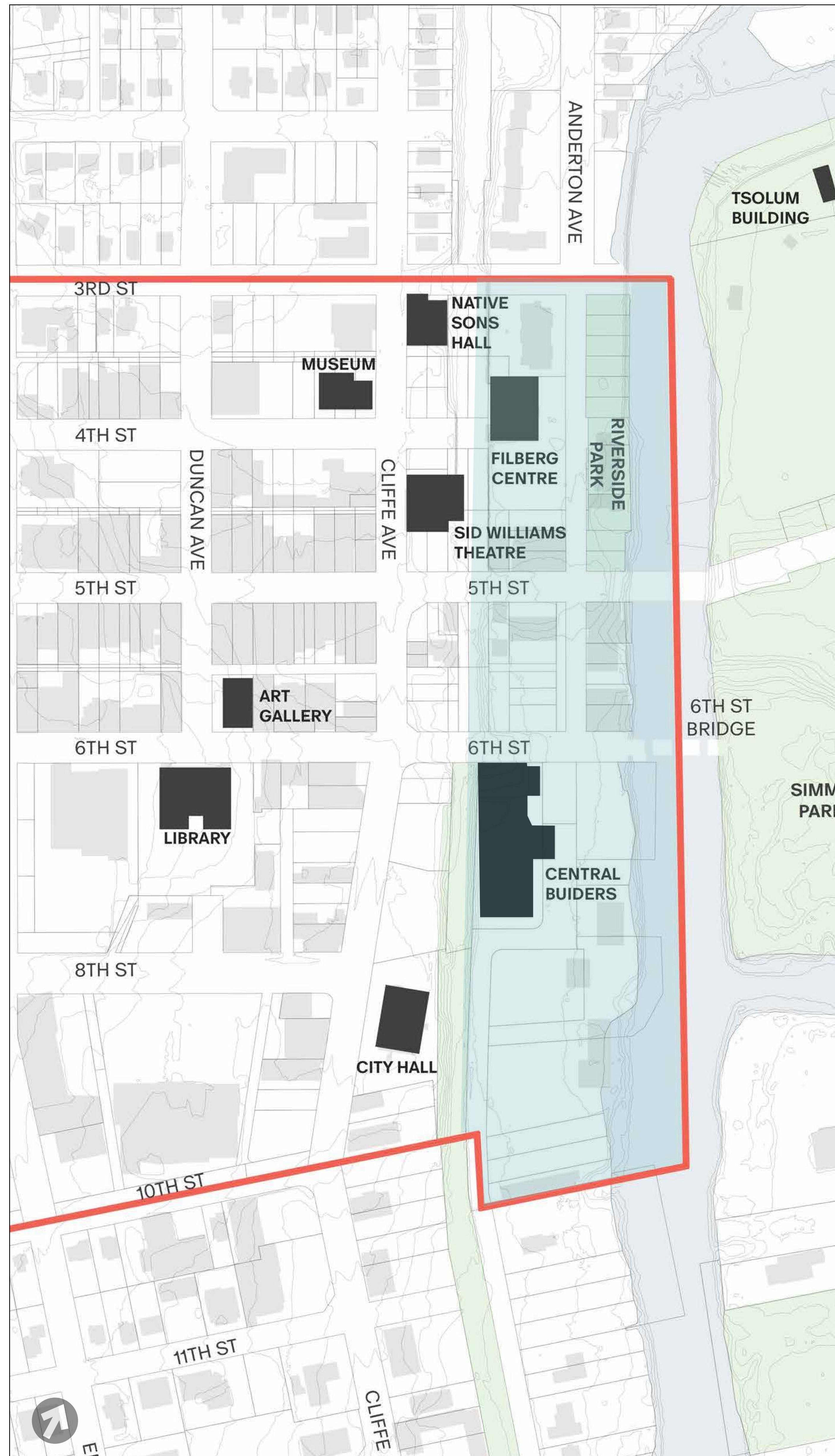
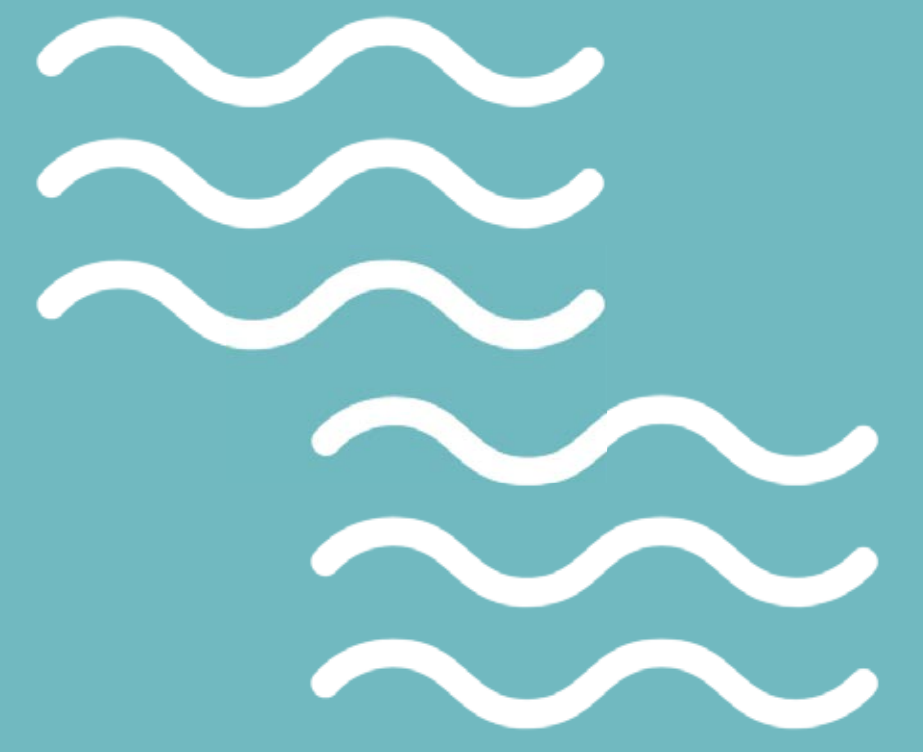


RIVERFRONT

Context and Opportunities



Big Move 1 Reimagine the Riverfront

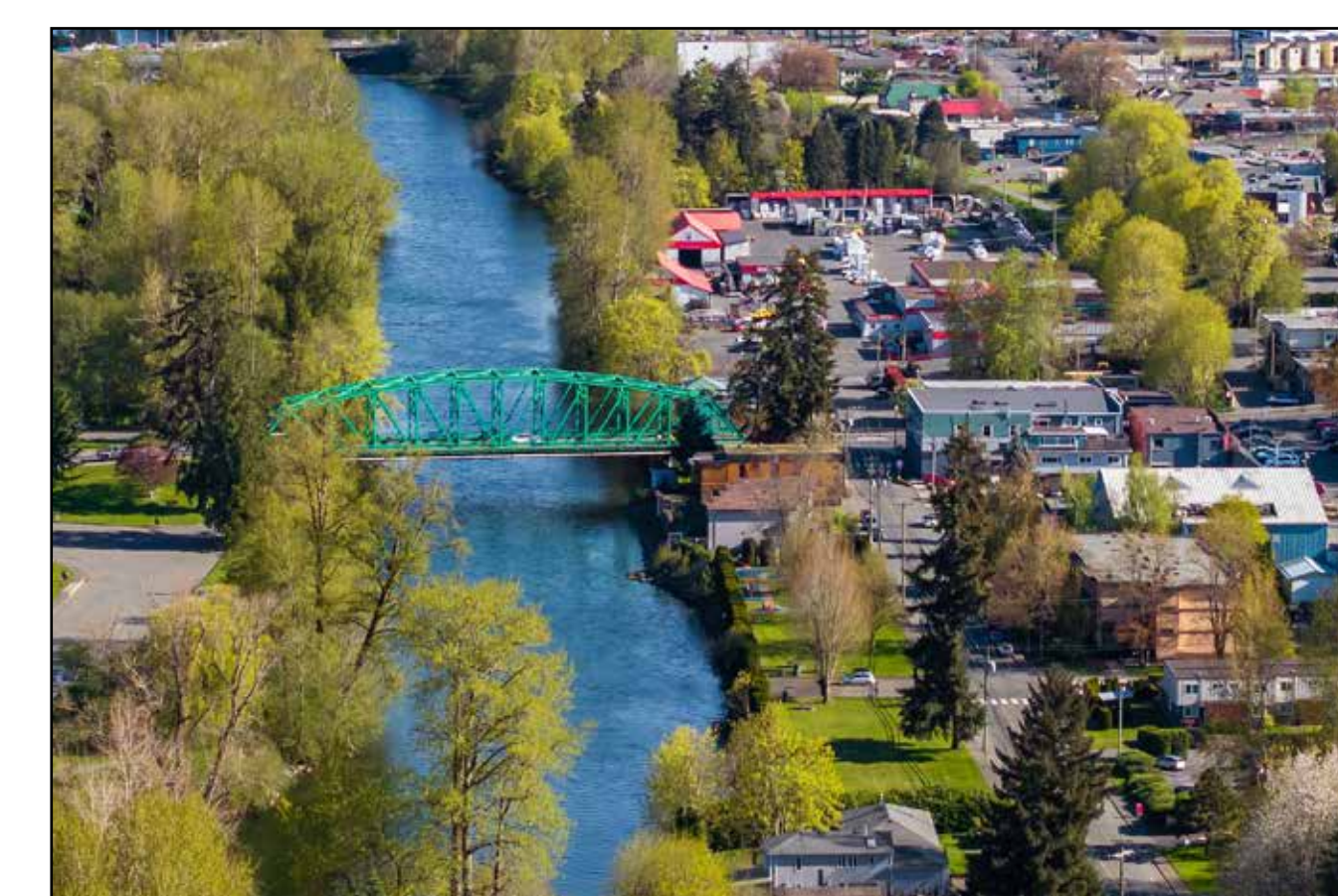
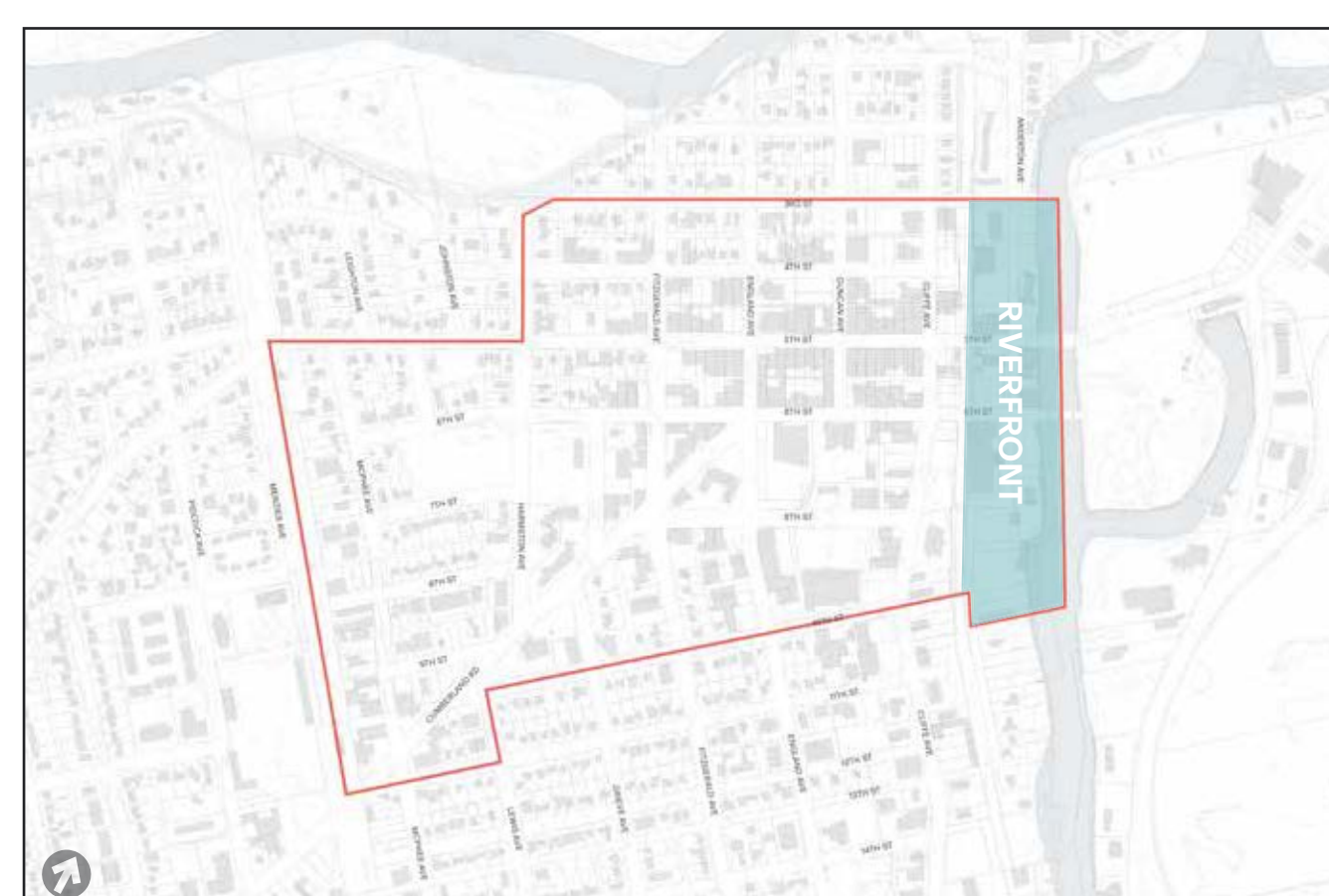
Transform the Riverfront into a vibrant, accessible destination by improving public access, enhancing recreational amenities, and fostering development that integrates natural and cultural assets. This includes activating underutilized spaces and implementing flood-resilient infrastructure.

Context

The Riverfront district contains properties along the Courtenay River's edge, with existing uses including parks, mixed-use development, apartments, and community facilities such as the Florence Filberg Centre. While scenic and well-connected via the Riverway Trail and 5th Street Bridge, the Riverfront faces challenges related to limited water access, steep grade changes, underutilized spaces, and ecological and archaeological sensitivities.

Existing OCP Policies

- Downtown Policy 6: Ensure more public and semi-public gathering spaces are incorporated into new developments.
- Downtown Policy 10: Improve physical and visual connections to, along, and across the rivers, integrating nature and recreation with the downtown.
- Downtown Policy 14: Seek opportunities to establish unique character districts such as riverfront, artisan, or live-work maker spaces for the lands between the Courtenay River and Cliffe Avenue.
- Develop a shoreline policy to conserve remaining natural shores, and restore armoured shorelines with green shore approaches to the maximum extent possible.



Opportunities North of the 5th Street Bridge

- Remove Anderton Dike Wall, naturalize the western bank of the Courtenay River, restore the riparian area, and accommodate recreational uses wherever possible.
- Provide pedestrian connections from Downtown to the River.
- Strengthen Indigenous visibility through arts and culture.

Opportunities South of the 5th Street Bridge

- Naturalize the western bank of the Courtenay River, restore the riparian area, and accommodate recreational uses wherever possible.
- Coordinate development potential across large land owners within the Riverfront district (Central Builders-owned lands and public lands).
- Activate underutilized commercial spaces along the waterfront.

Constraints

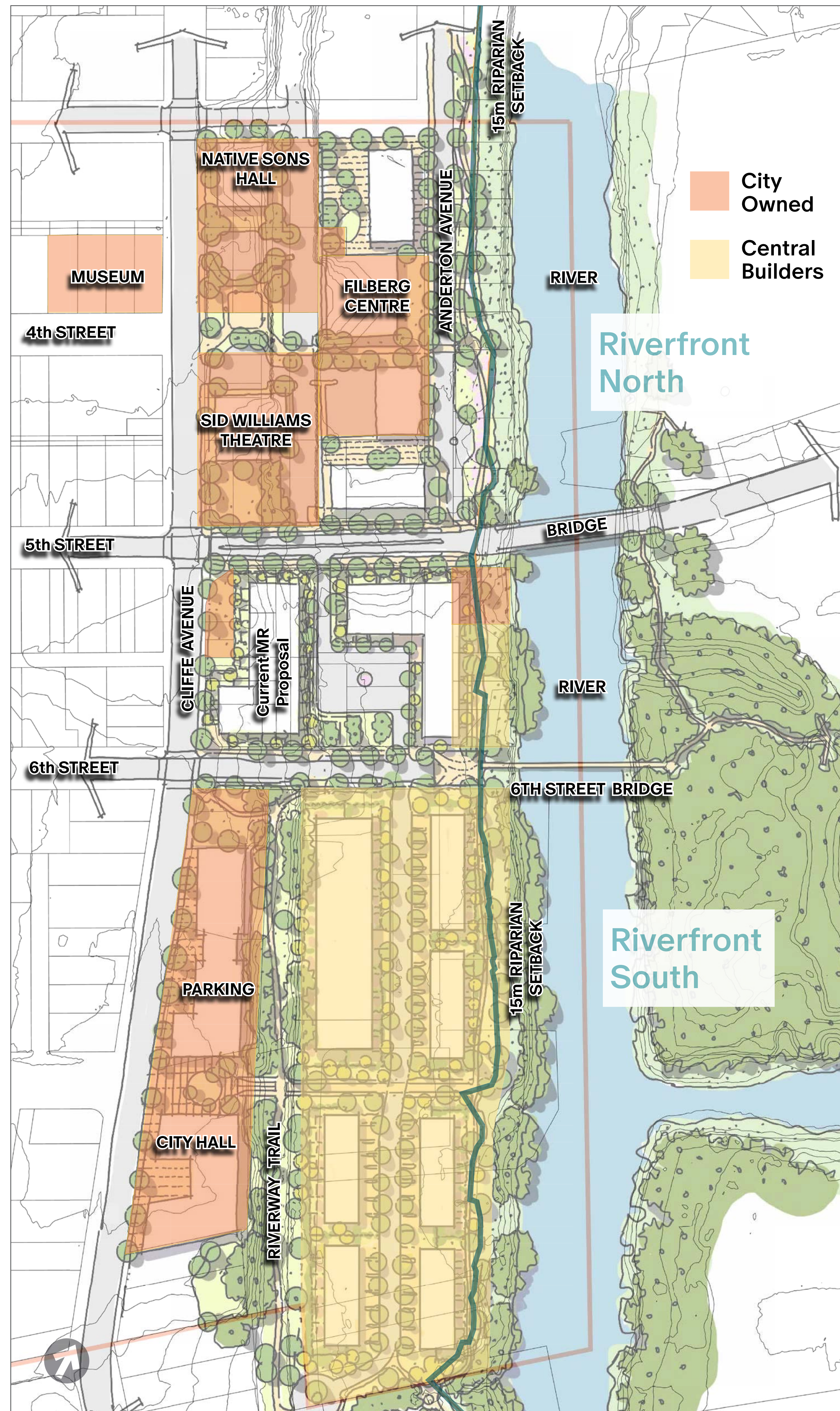
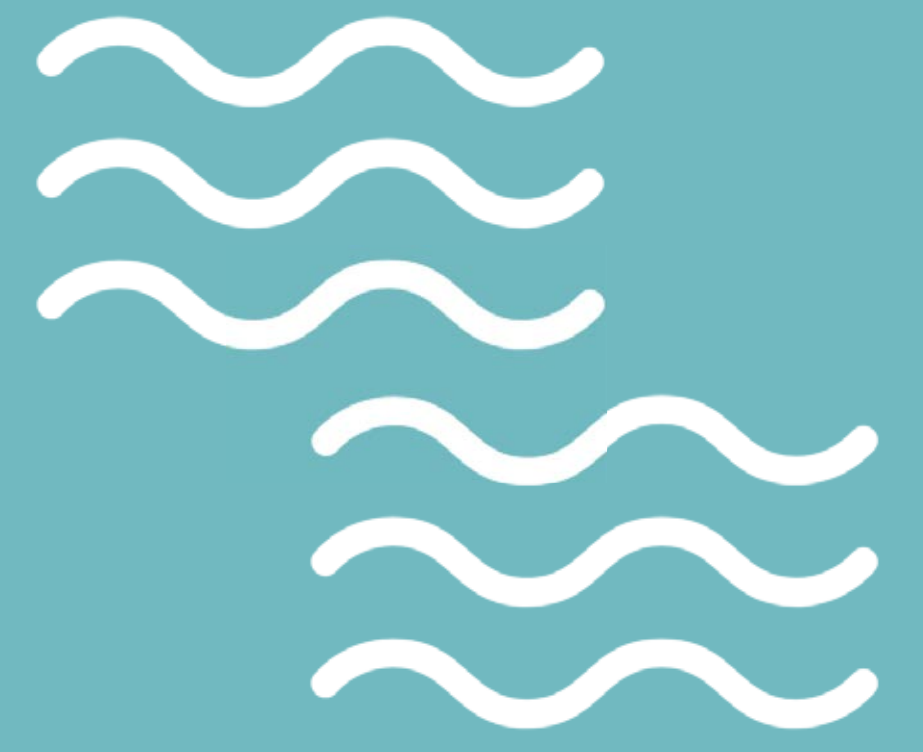
- Flood risk, land stability and current armoured condition of shoreline in a number of areas.
- High costs associated with infrastructure upgrades.
- Steep grade changes and soil conditions limiting direct river access.
- Busy traffic corridor (5th St & Cliffe Ave) acting as a barrier to Downtown connection.
- Existing infrastructure corridors may limit development layout and opportunity
- Area of high archaeological potential

Design Considerations

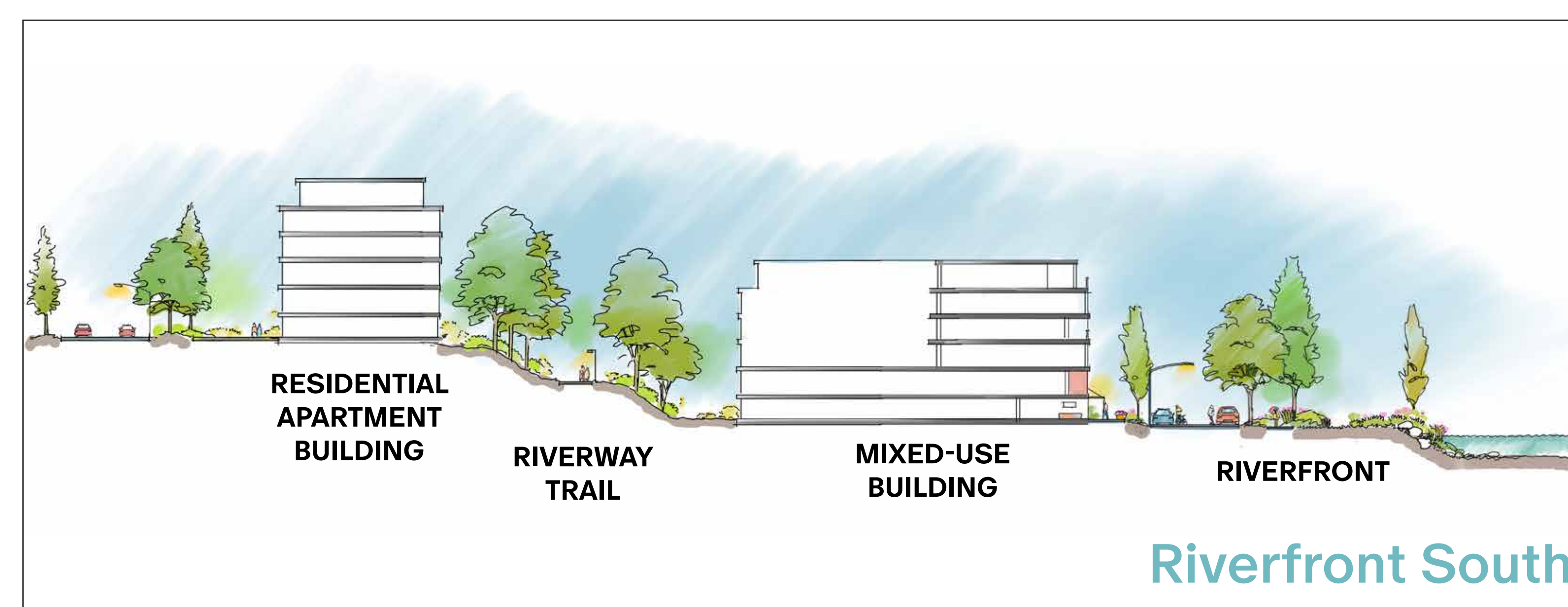
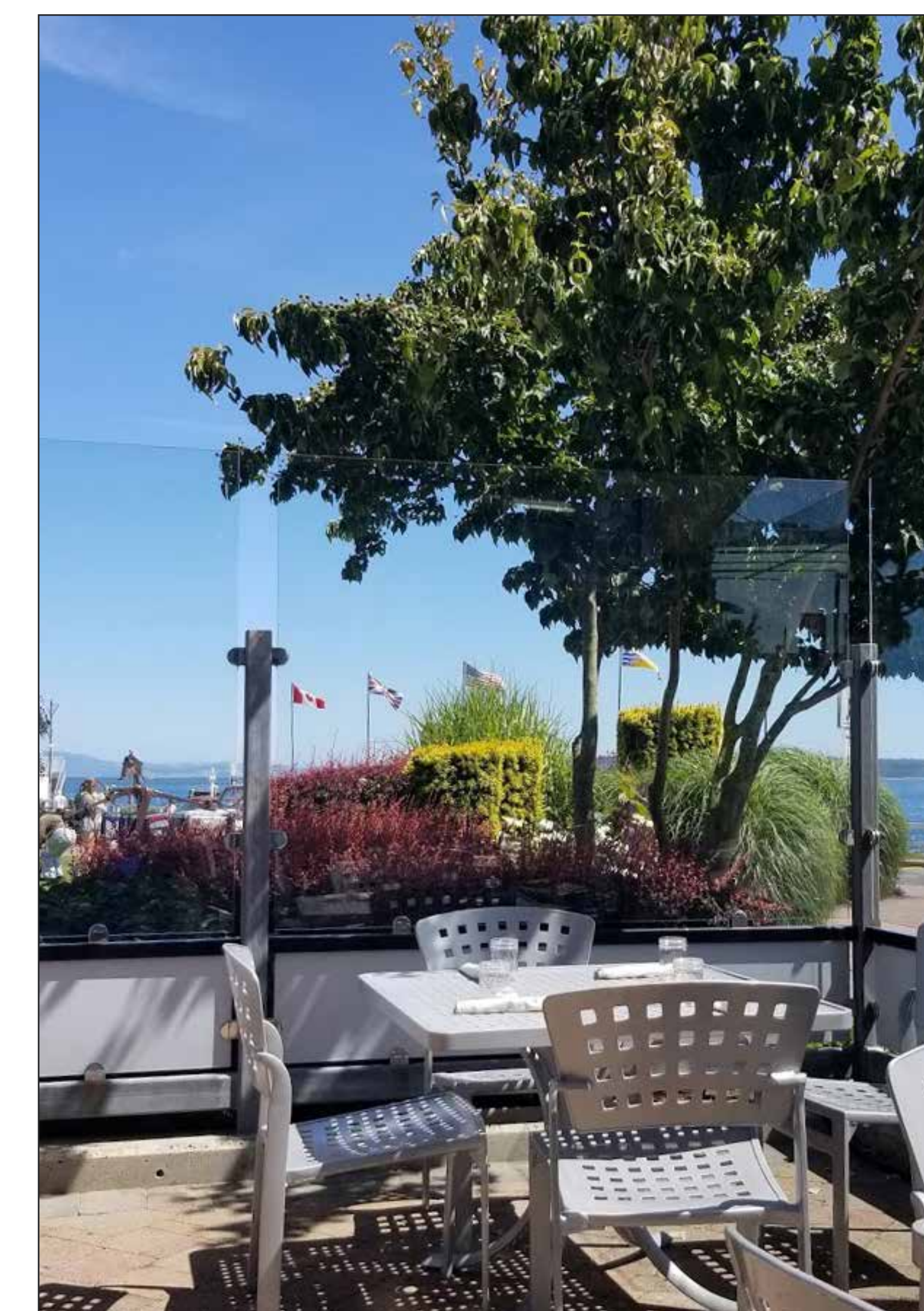
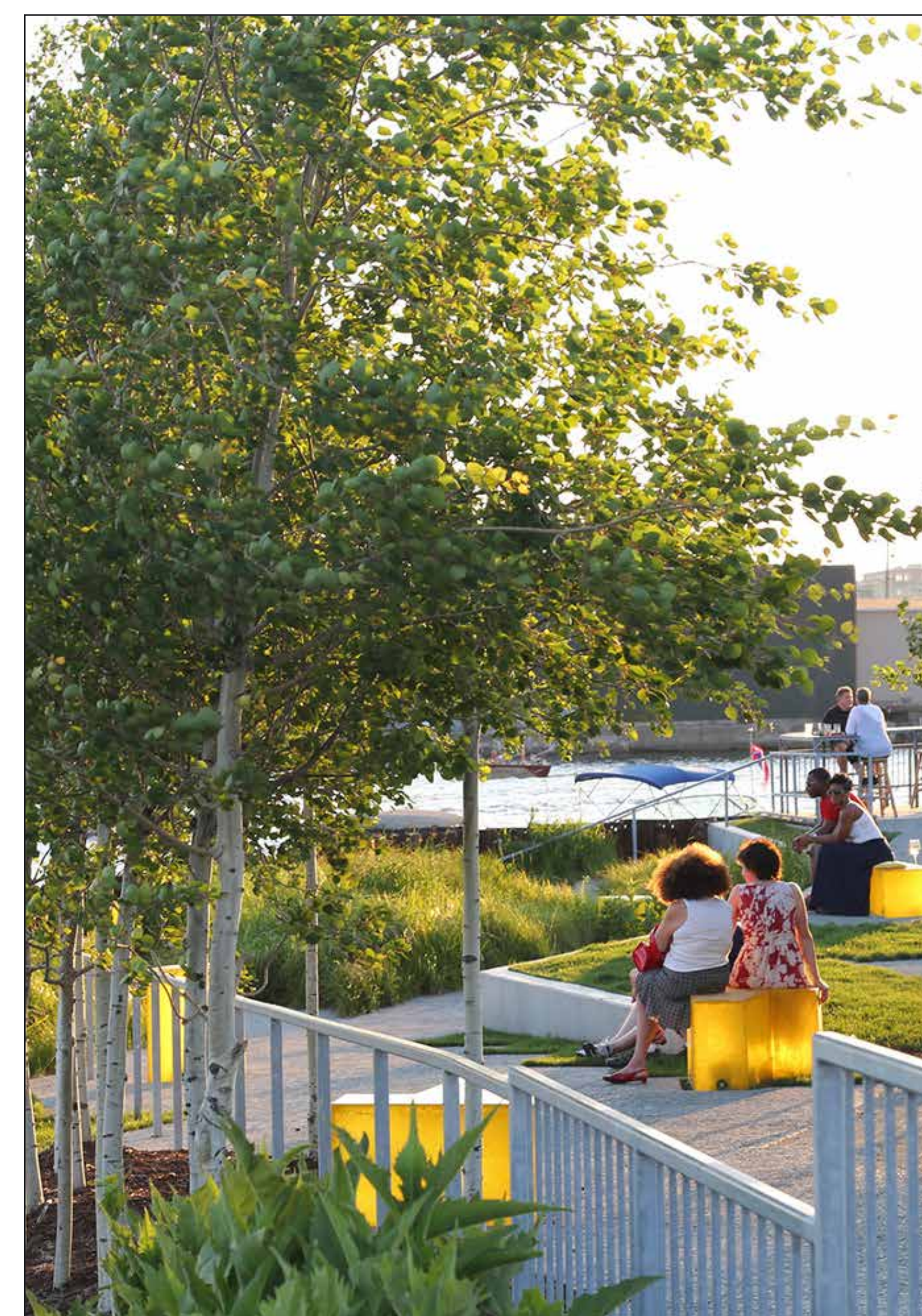
- From top of river bank to 15 metres: Protected or restored ecologically sensitive area. Limited public access.
- From top of river bank to 30 metres: Floodplain setback limiting fill and building development opportunities.
- Development within the floodplain: Must adhere to the Flood Construction Levels (FCL) to ensure development is designed with flooding in mind and to reduce risk to life and property.

RIVERFRONT

Reimagining Public Life Along the Water



For Illustrative Purposes Only



Placemaking is at the core of the riverfront vitalization—shaping the area not just as a corridor, but as a destination for community life, recreation, and cultural expression. The concepts shown here are early ideas to spark conversation. They explore how we might create meaningful spaces that connect people with the river and with each other. We want to hear your thoughts as we shape the vision together.

Riverfront North

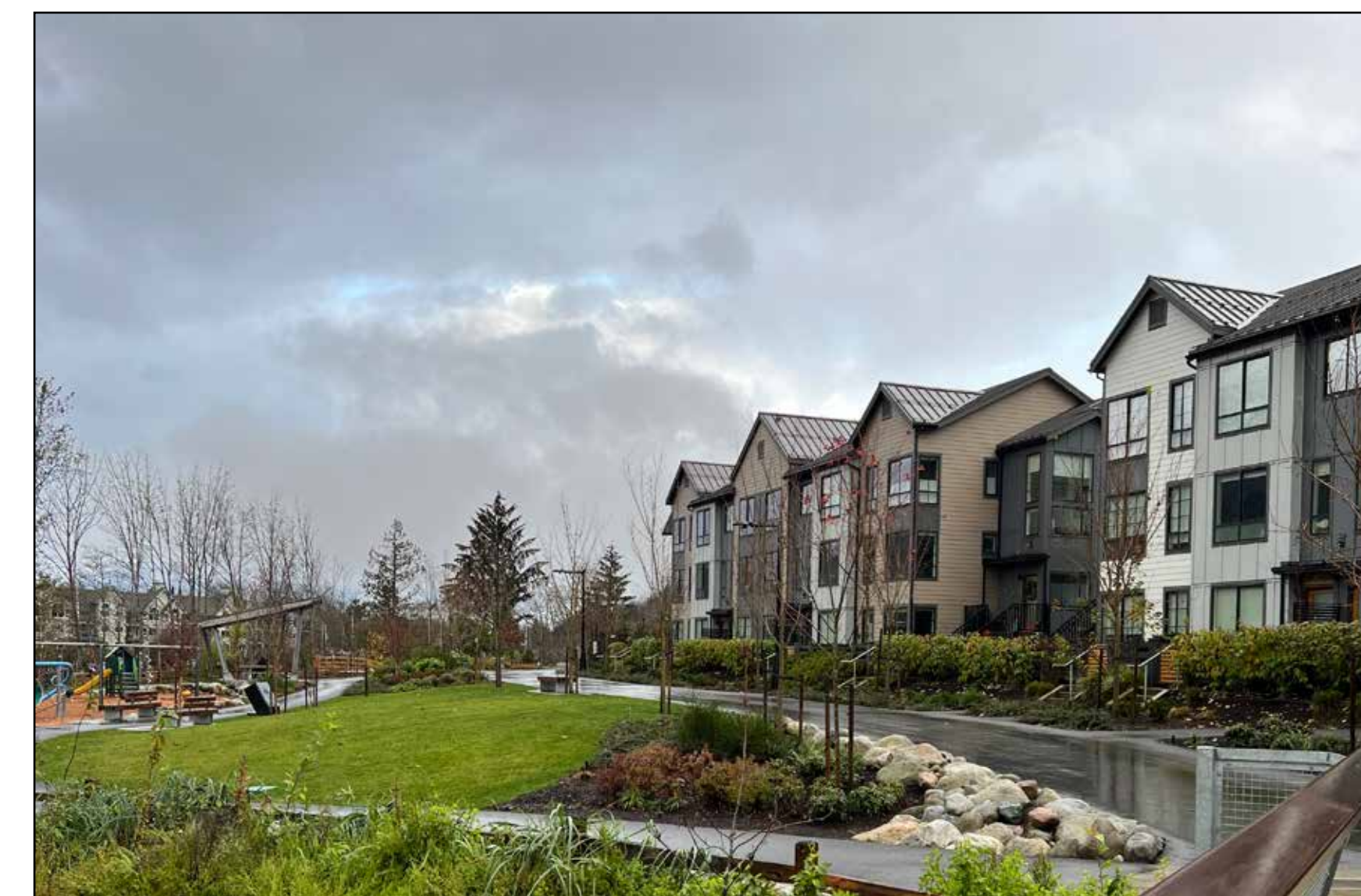
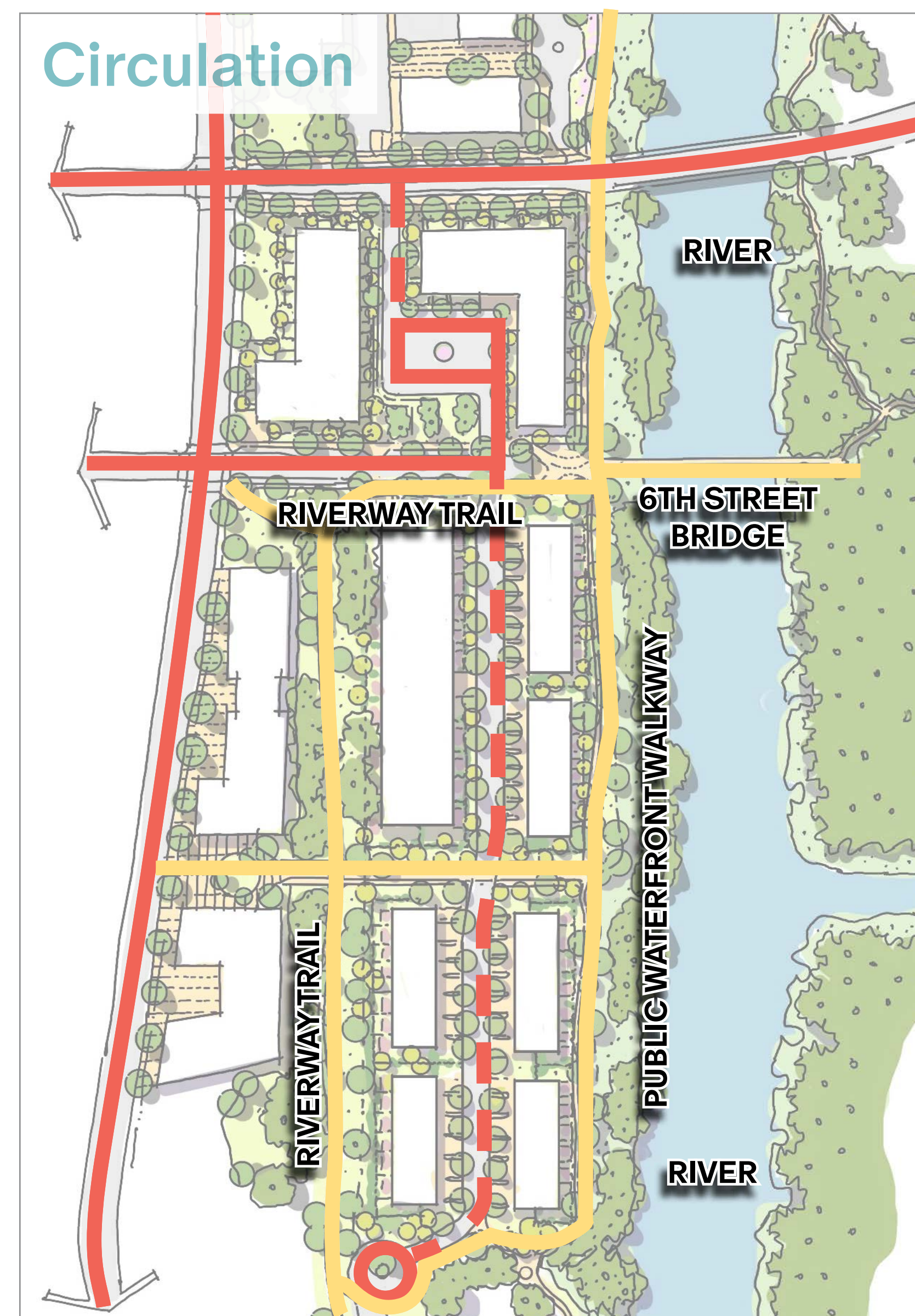
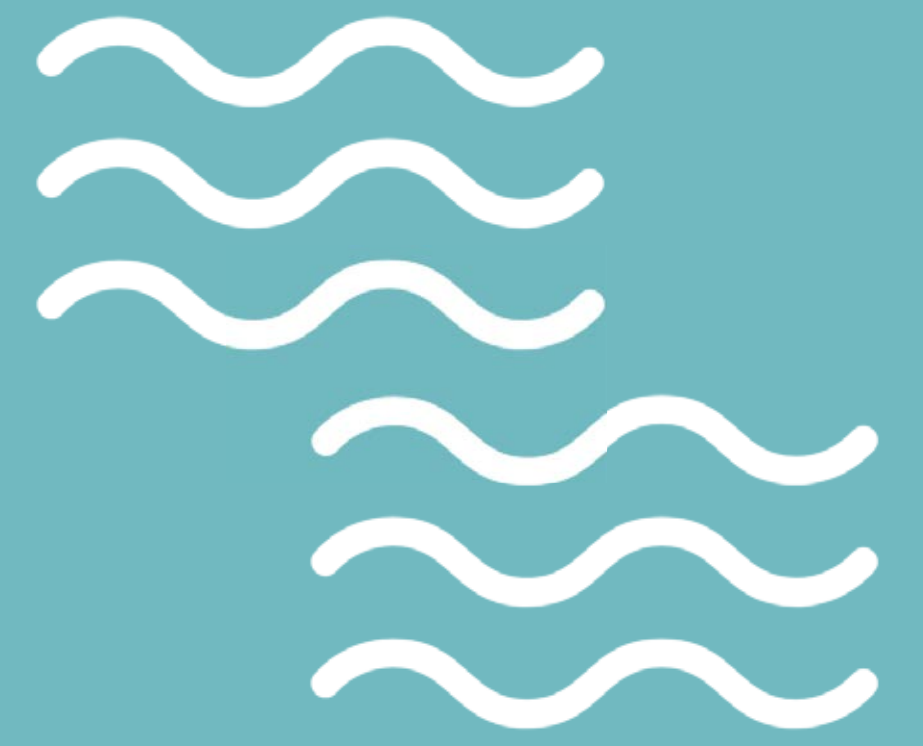
Flood protection and shoreline restoration activities are currently being explored along the north section of the Riverfront and will be presented in the future. With these priorities in mind, this area focuses on enhancing connectivity and recreation through pedestrian pathways, green spaces, and gathering areas. The concepts also aim to strengthen the relationship between the river and nearby neighbourhoods, offering spaces for both active and passive use.

Riverfront South

The south section includes land owned by Central Builders and the City, allowing for potential coordinated redevelopment. Accounting for flood risk and riverbank restoration, planning here focuses on development in less sensitive areas. Concepts include mixed-use development with retail, cultural, and recreational amenities or a more residential approach with public parks and gathering spaces. Both aim to create a vibrant, urban waterfront that complements the natural setting.

RIVERFRONT

Concepts for Riverfront South



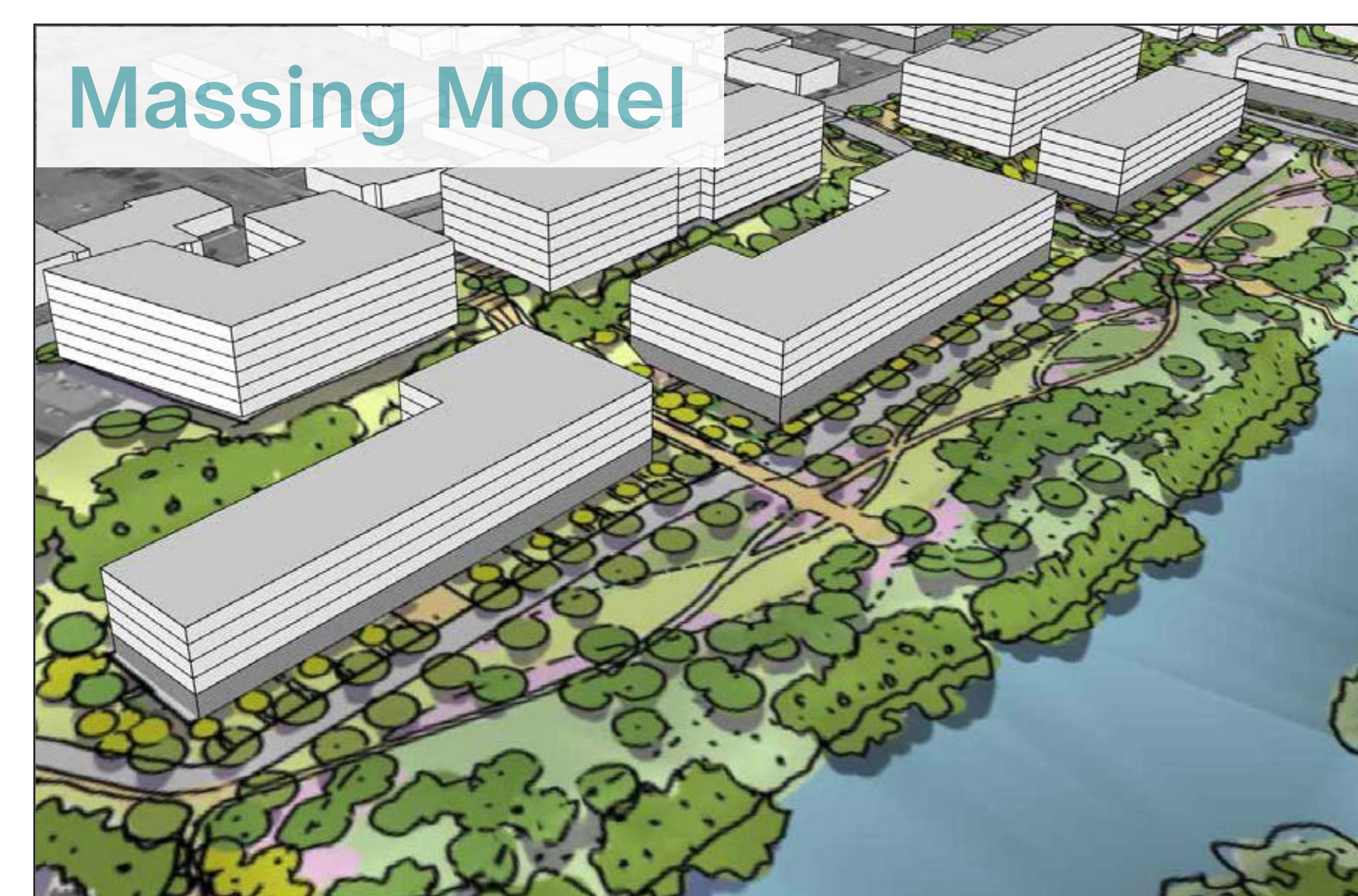
These two illustrations explore potential development concepts for the area south of the bridge, including the Central Builders site, the City Hall site, and adjacent parking lots.

Note: All concepts are restricted by a minimum 15m riparian waterfront setback.

Concept 1 - Passive Public Waterfront

A passive waterfront experience featuring public trails, boardwalks, and seating areas along the river's edge. Townhomes form the first row of buildings, with front doors oriented toward the public walkway and waterfront. Larger residential buildings are terraced up the slope behind, extending toward Cliffe Avenue, creating a unique riverfront neighbourhood.

The Courtenay Riverway Trail connects to the riverfront in two locations, integrating with the public waterfront experience. The trail and riparian corridor extend north to the 6th Street Bridge and continue under the 5th Street Bridge along Anderton Avenue.



Concept 2 - Active Urban Waterfront

An active public riverside street lined with retail, restaurants, a linear park, cultural spaces, and recreation opportunities.

The existing Courtenay Riverway Trail behind City Hall is realigned to make way for additional land along the river, creating a generous public zone that supports both community use and riparian protection.

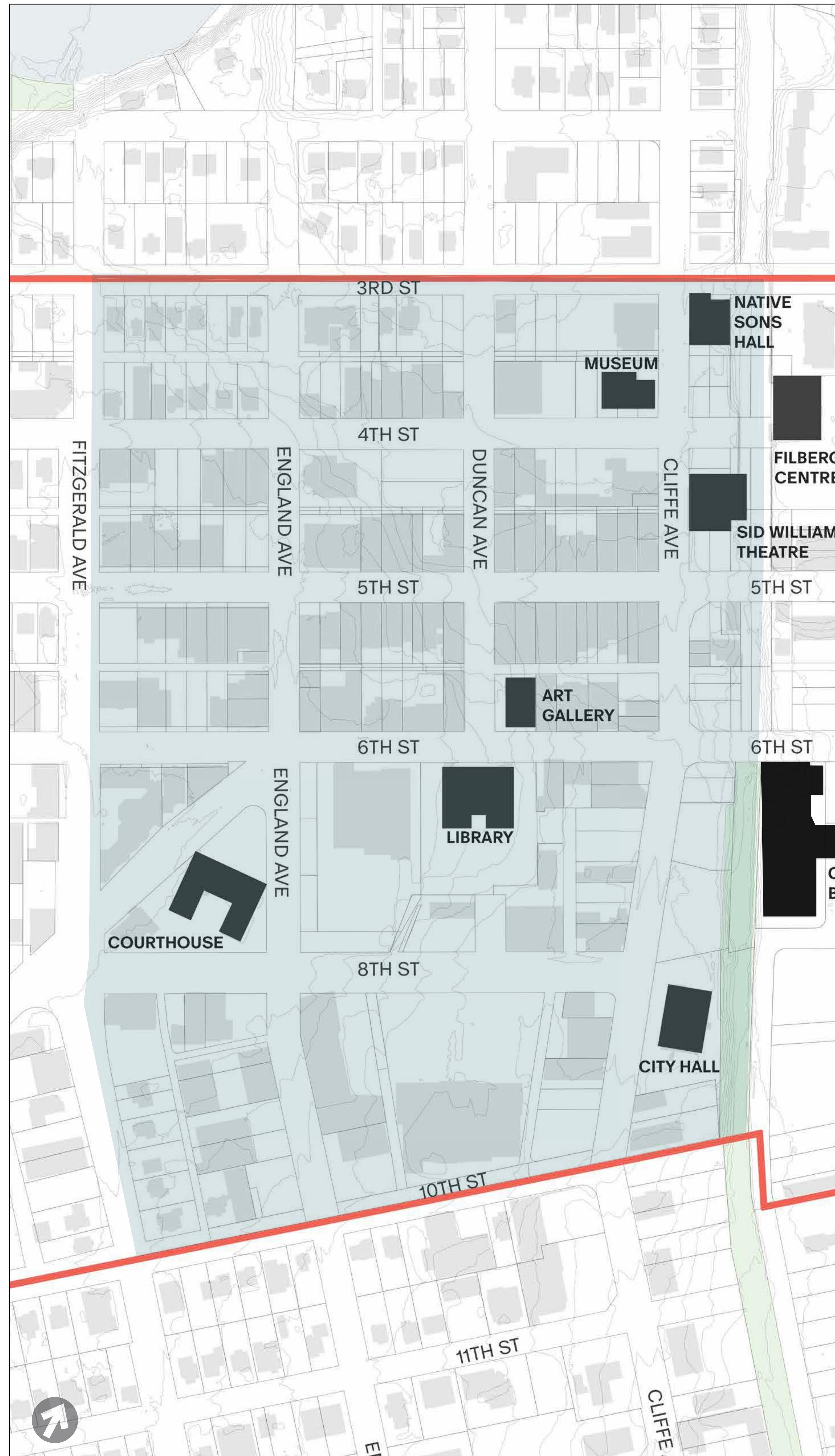
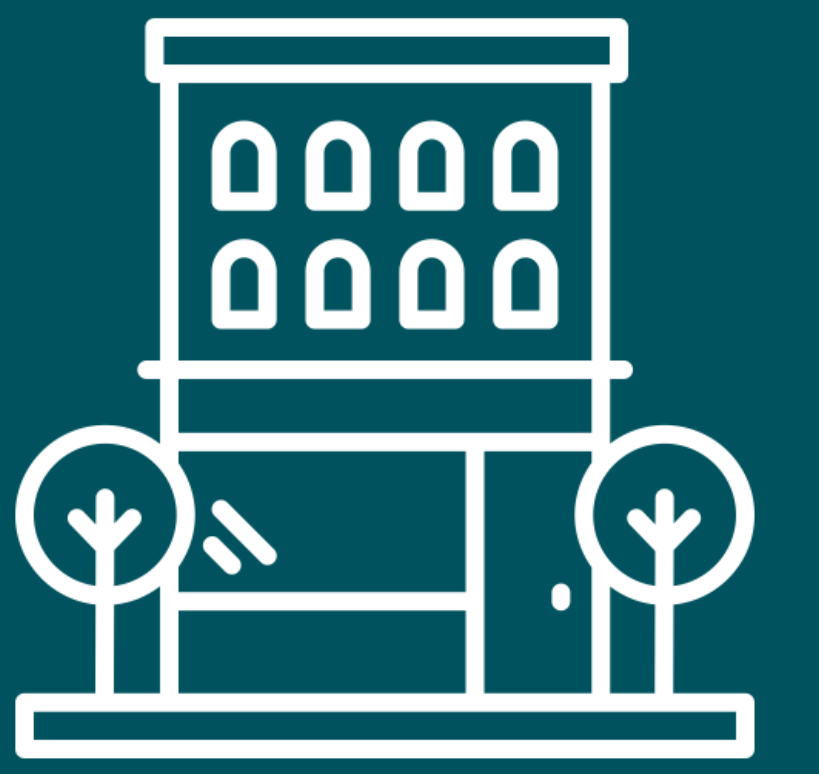
Taller mixed-use apartments help shape a vibrant urban waterfront that complements the adjacent park and natural landscape, supporting both local and destination-oriented activities year-round.

This concept positions Courtenay to create a prominent and accessible public waterfront destination.

For Illustrative Purposes Only

DOWNTOWN CORE

Context and Opportunities



Big Move 2 Strengthen the Downtown Core

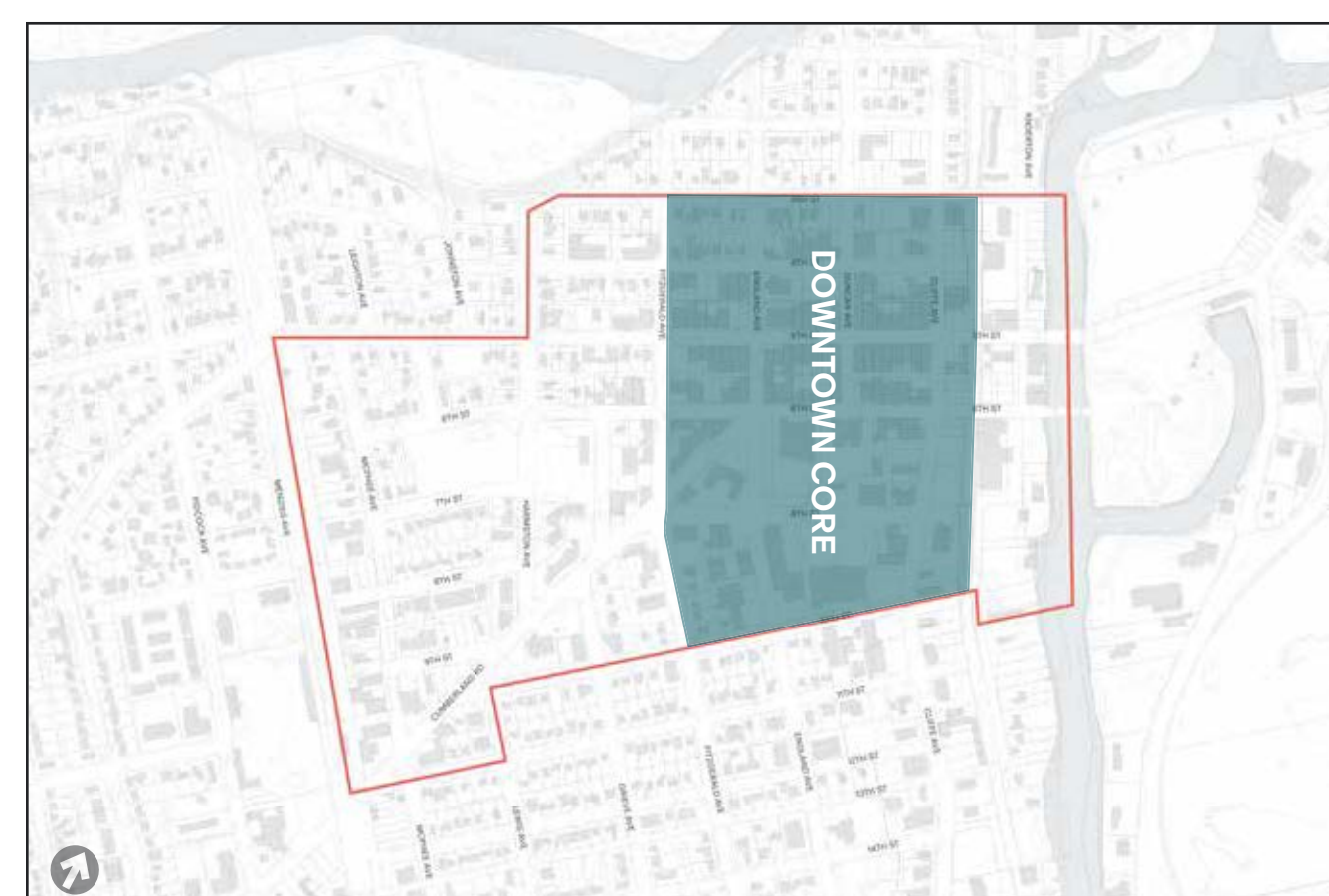
Vitalize the Downtown Core through public realm enhancements, green space creation, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Celebrate Downtown as the cultural heart of the Comox Valley by supporting gathering spaces, creative placemaking, and connections to arts, heritage, and Indigenous expression.

Context

The Downtown Core is the most established district, anchored by cultural and civic institutions, small-scale commercial uses, and a strong grid urban form. Streets like 4th, 5th, and 6th have distinct identities. However, a lack of green space, aging infrastructure, and fragmented public spaces constrain Downtown's vibrancy.

Existing OCP Policies

- Downtown Policy 1: Continue to support a diverse range of land uses within the downtown including diversity of multi-residential housing choices, and small scale commercial uses.
- Downtown Policy 4: Require commercial uses at grade along 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets.
- Downtown Policy 12: Protect views from public open spaces, including streets and sidewalks, of identified public realm view corridors: Comox Glacier, Courtenay, Puntledge, and Tsolum Rivers, K'ómoks Estuary, and the Salish Sea.
- Downtown Policy 13: Work towards the vision of a public plaza as the public heart of the downtown.



- Arts, Culture, and Heritage Policy 7: Continue to support Downtown as the region's arts, culture, and heritage hub.
- Food Systems Policy 2: Secure a permanent, year-round site for the Comox Valley Farmers Market.
- Parks and Recreation Policy 2: Provide parkland and greenways in OCP-designated growth, mixed-use, high-density, and intensification areas through new development and redevelopment.

Opportunities

- Strengthen 4th, 5th, and 6th Street identities.
- Enhance the pedestrian environment and reduce vehicle dominance.
- Develop greenways and multi-modal corridors.
- Revitalize aging infrastructure and public spaces.
- Incorporate arts and culture through public art, placemaking, and events to support Downtown as a cultural hub.
- Increase permeability and strengthen the urban forest canopy.
- Strengthen heritage preservation within Old Orchard.

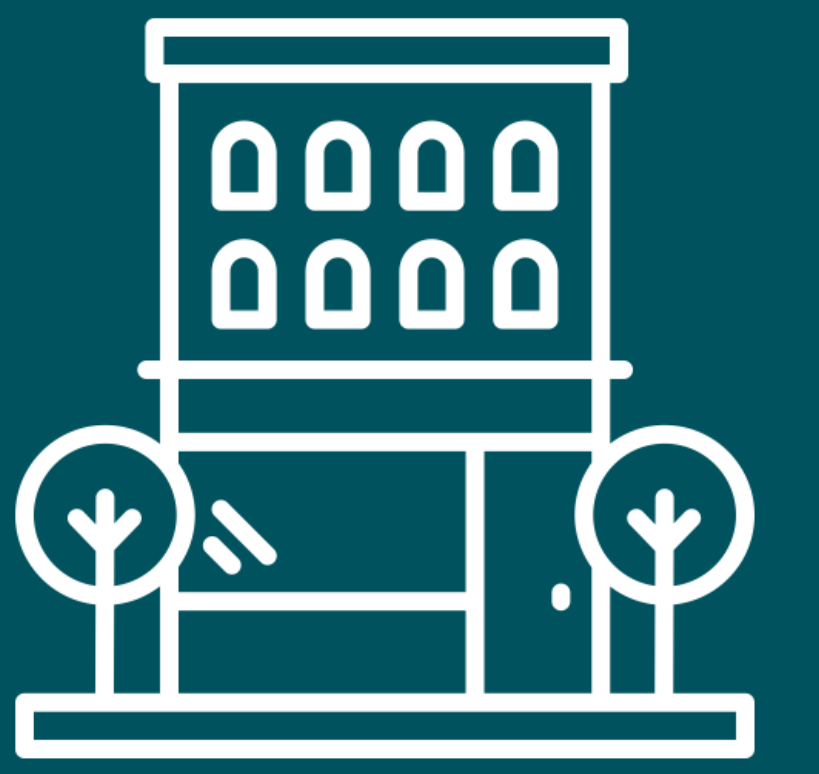
Constraints

- Limited green space, street trees and urban forest.
- Sloped topography limiting certain public space development (Duncan Commons area).
- Parking pressures and high vehicle presence along key streets.



DOWNTOWN CORE

5th Street | Placemaking, Character, and Scale



5th Street: The Heart of Downtown

5th Street is the centerpiece of the Downtown Courtenay experience — a key destination with a walkable, small-scale commercial character. Its charm and human scale are major assets that help define Downtown's identity. However, there are opportunities to strengthen 5th Street to ensure it remains a vibrant and sustainable core for years to come.

Current Zoning

Current Commercial One (C-1) zoning along the 5th Street corridor (between Anderton Avenue and Harmston Avenue) currently allows for the greatest mix of commercial, institutional, residential and community land uses within the City. Generally, the C-1 Zone:

- Permits building heights up to 13.5 m (~4 storeys),
- Requires no building setbacks (buildings may cover the full parcel),
- Requires one vehicle parking stall and 2.2 bike parking stalls per residential unit (to provide for residents and visitors).

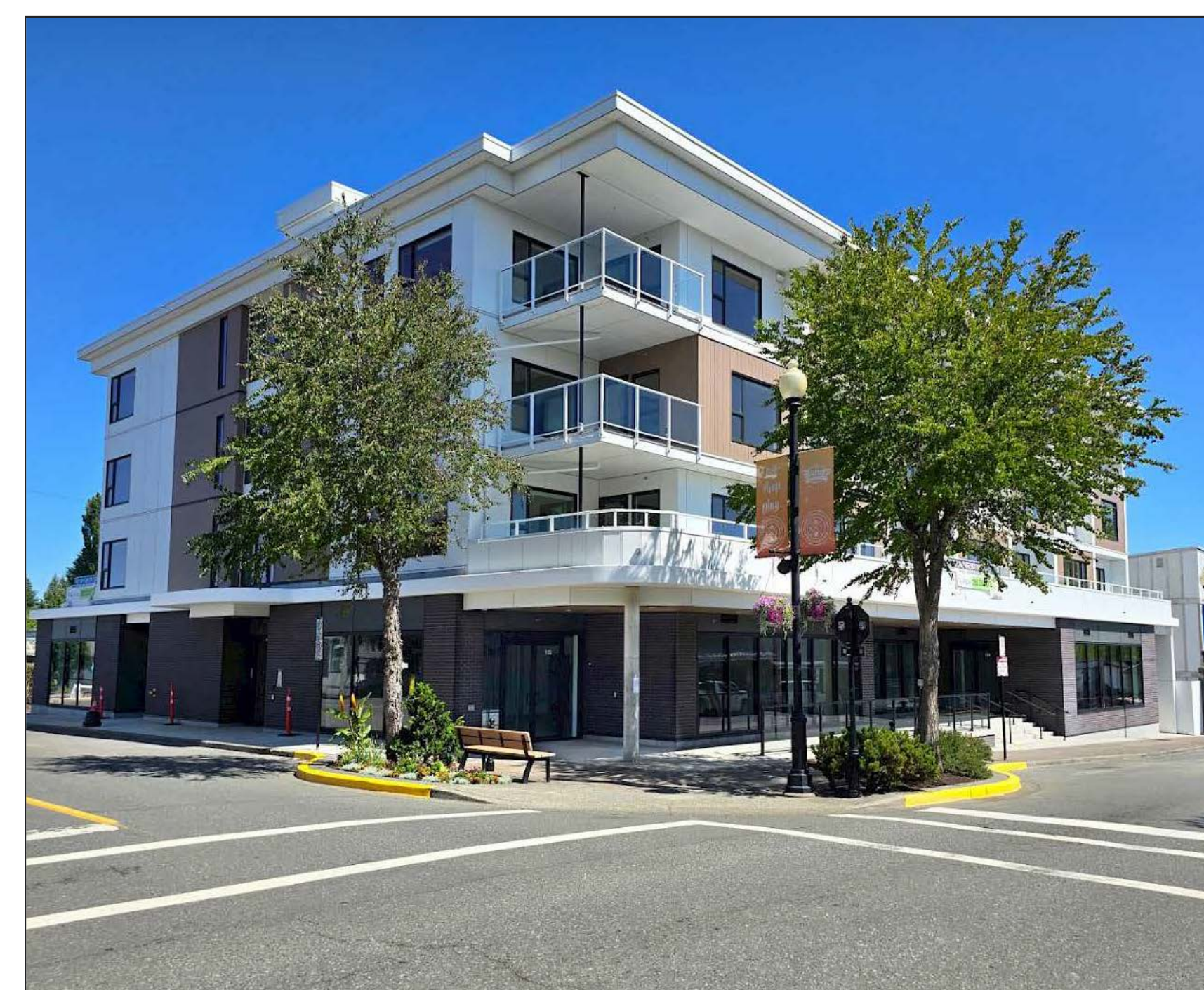
Form and Scale

Most buildings along 5th Street are currently two storeys in height. The OCP envisions 5th Street as a low-rise corridor, with buildings up to four storeys. The DVLAP presents an opportunity to revisit the appropriate massing and scale for this important street. Three potential approaches include:

- **Maintain existing conditions**, limiting most development to two storeys, with allowances for up to four storeys at key intersections (e.g., Palace Place at 5th Street and England Avenue). This would lower the maximum permitted height for most properties.
- **Permit up to four storeys** across all properties along 5th Street, allowing consistent redevelopment similar to Palace Place.
- **Allow up to six storeys**, with required stepbacks above the fourth storey to minimize the visual impact from the street.



5th St Existing Conditions



5th St Current Zoning (4 Storeys)



5th St Potential (6 Storeys)



For Illustrative Purposes Only

5th Street Market Opportunities

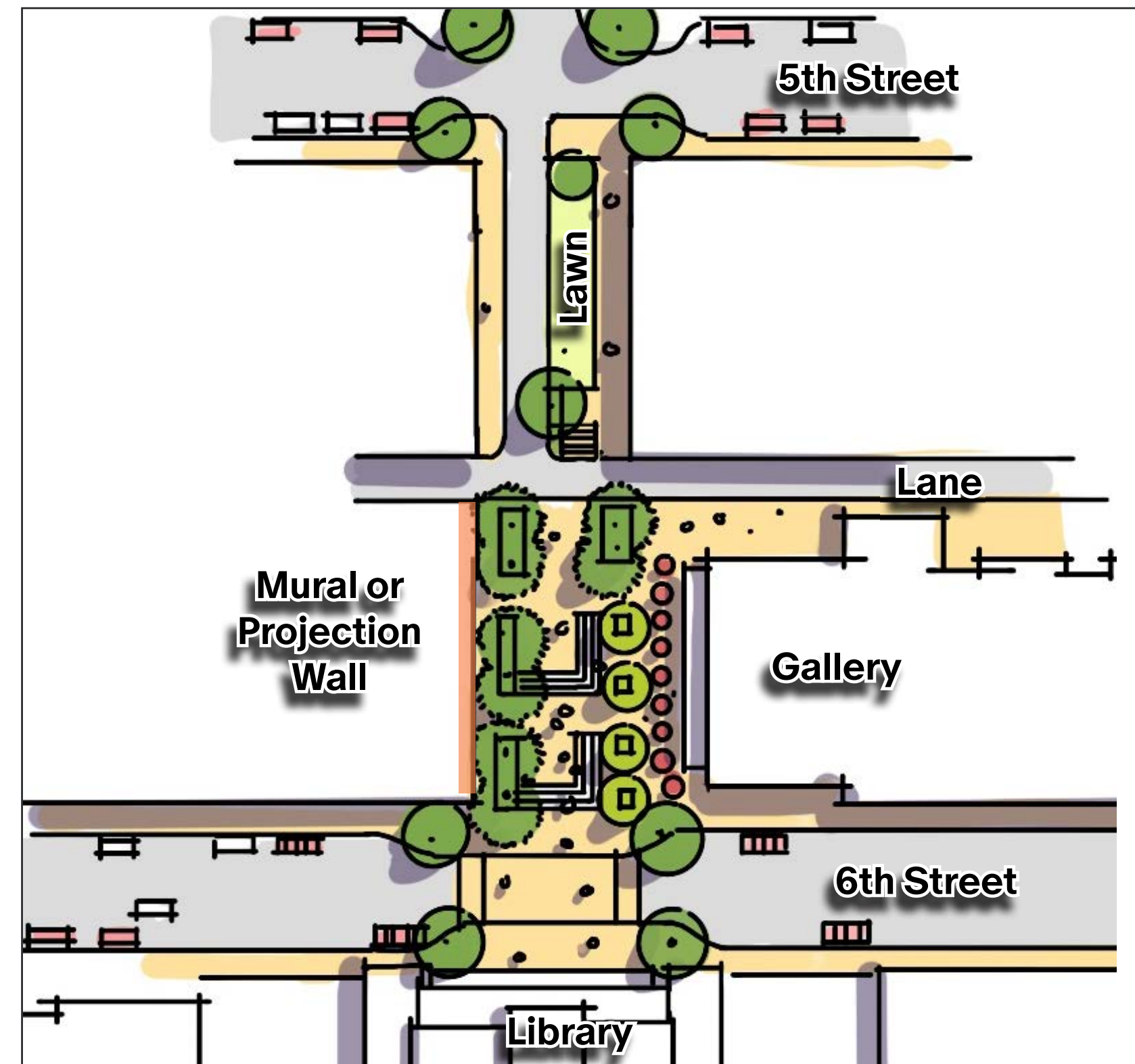
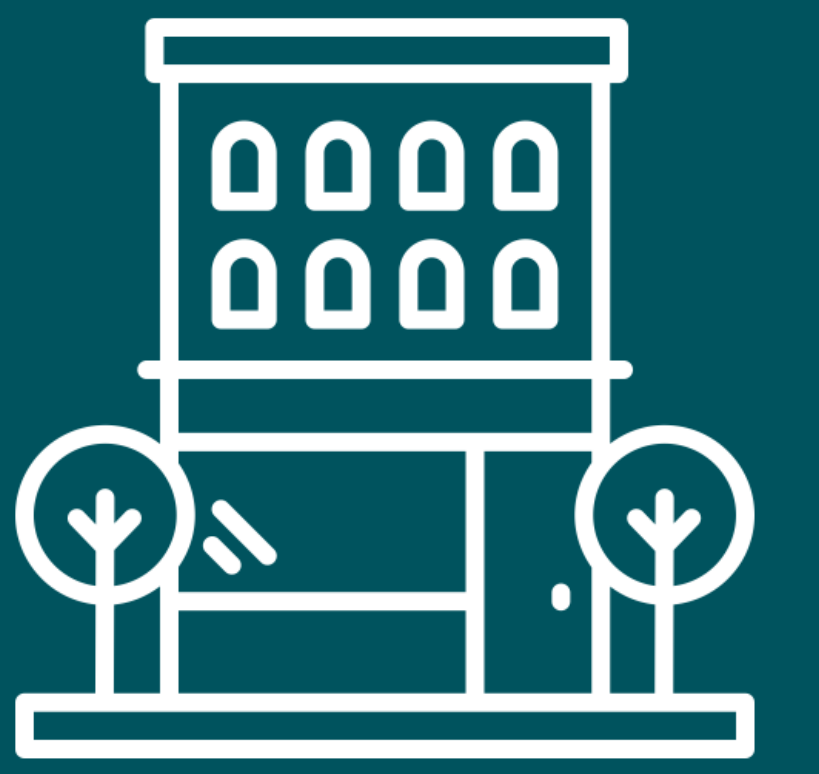
As the heart of downtown, 5th Street provides opportunity to accommodate special events and more regular markets such as the weekly farmers market. This image provides a concept of what this may look like.

While shown here to be temporary, 5th Street could also be closed permanently to vehicle traffic to create a dedicated pedestrian-oriented street within the Downtown Core, enhancing placemaking opportunities in a significant way. This could include all of 5th Street between Cliffe Ave and Fitzgerald Ave, or shorter segments of 5th Street such as Cliffe Ave to England Ave. All options will require further traffic study.



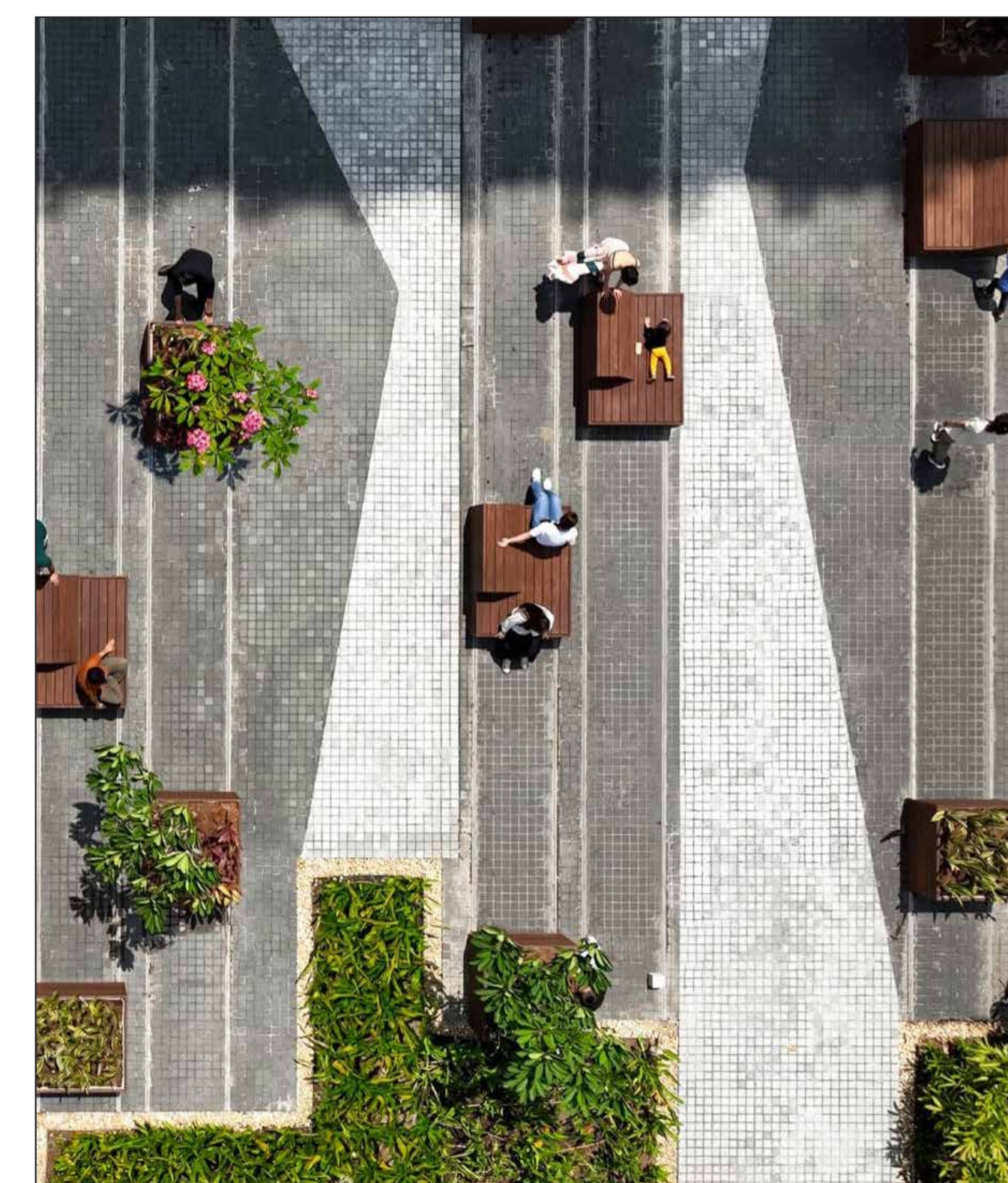
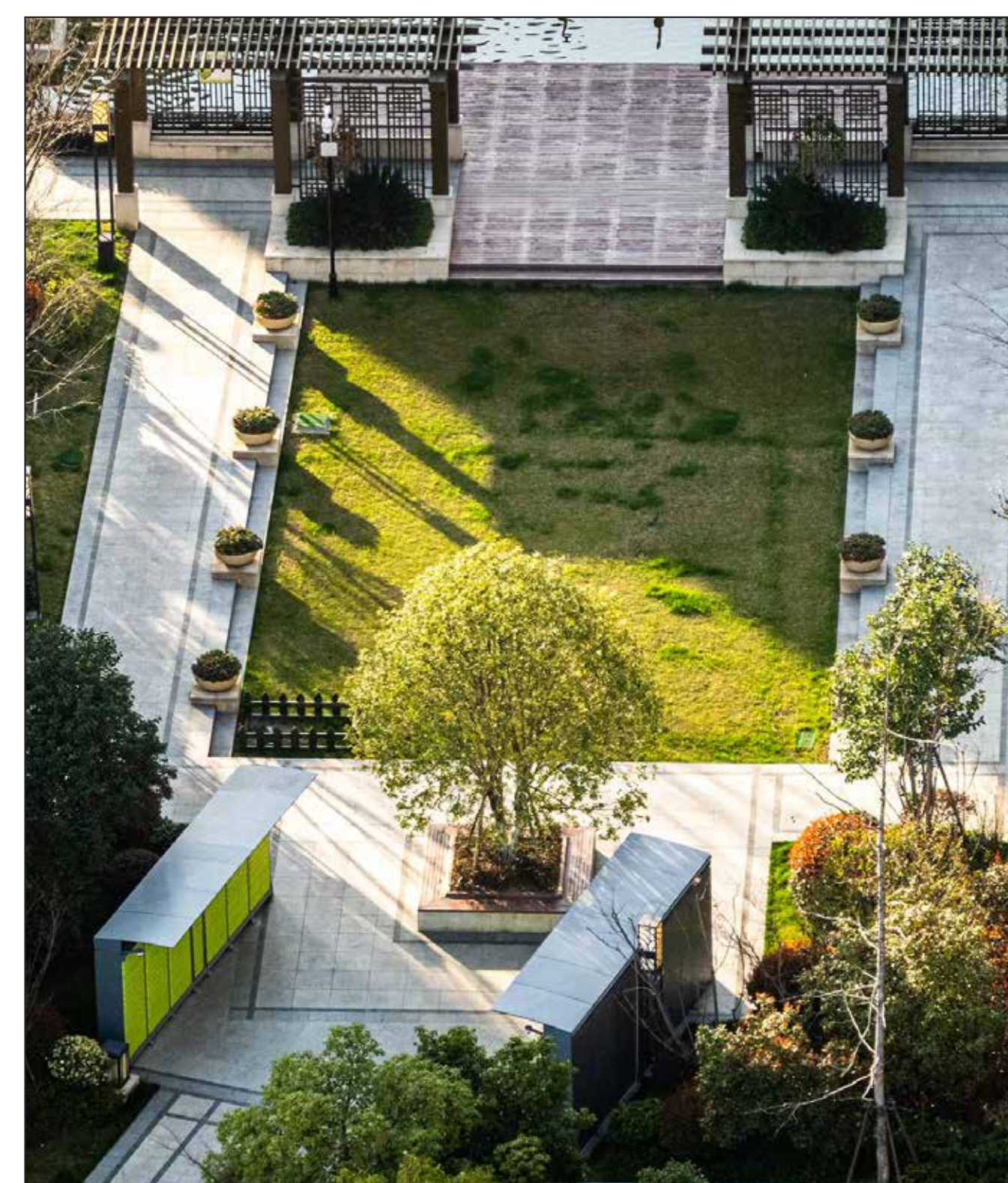
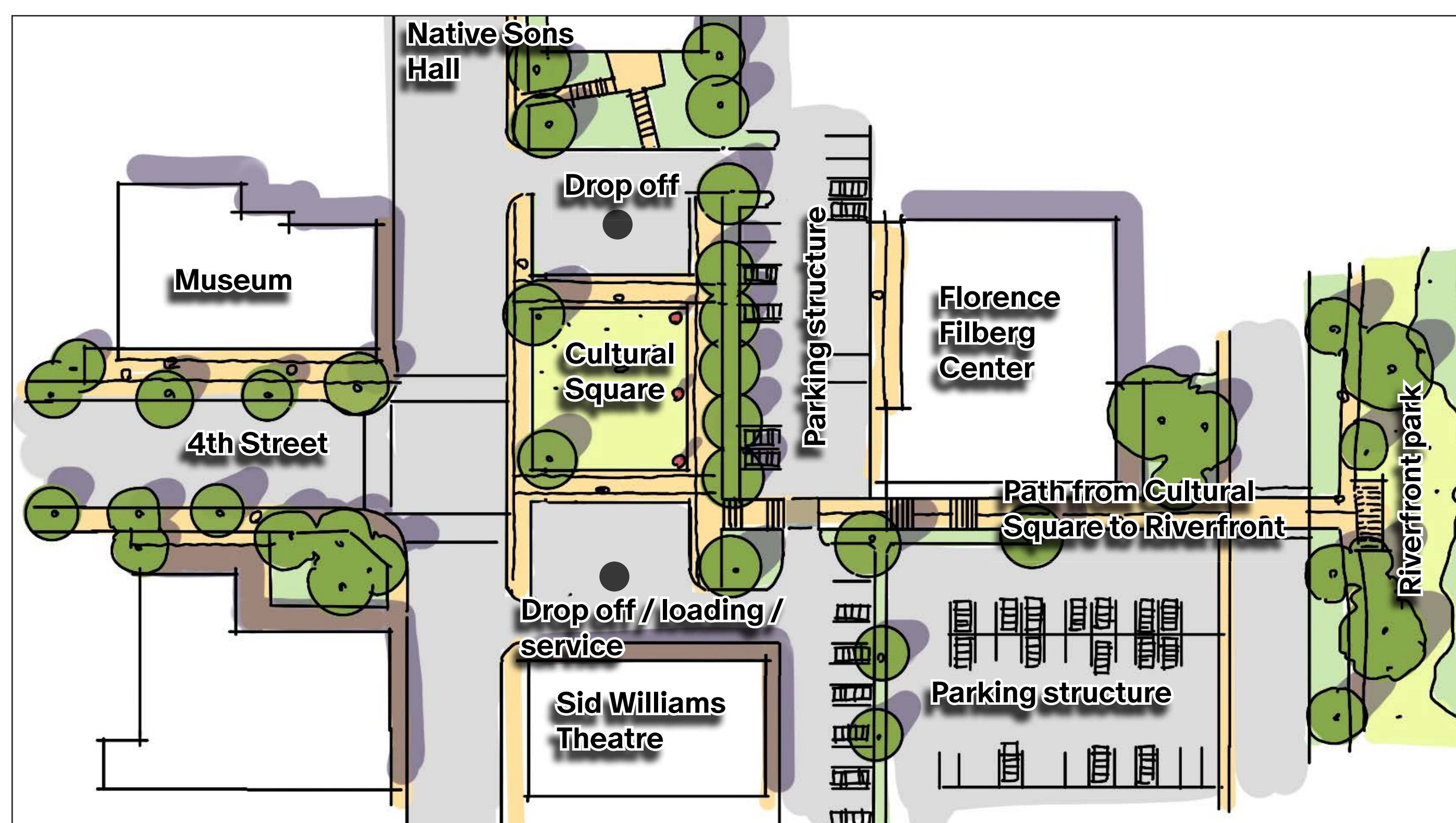
DOWNTOWN CORE

Public Spaces | Parks and Plazas



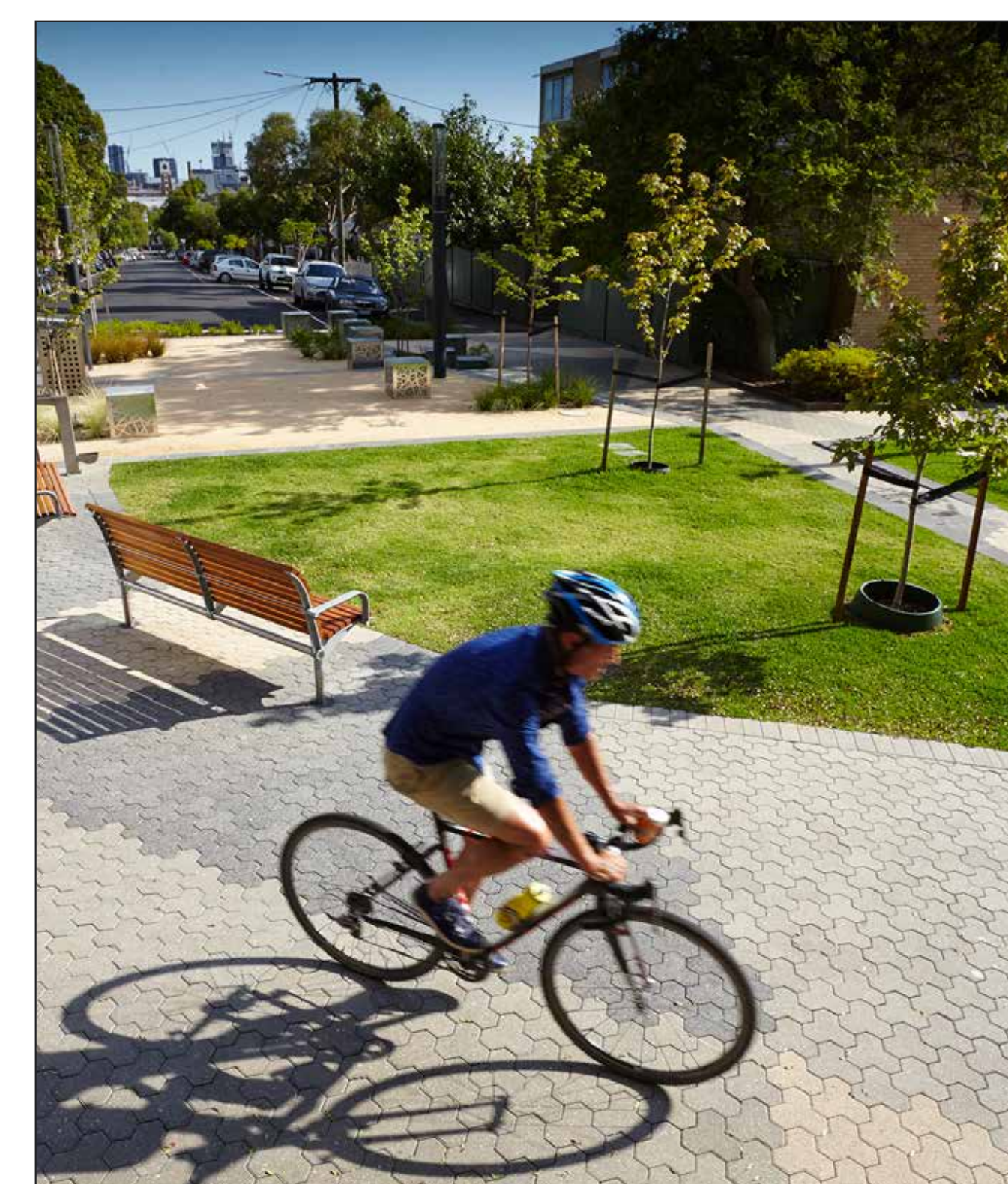
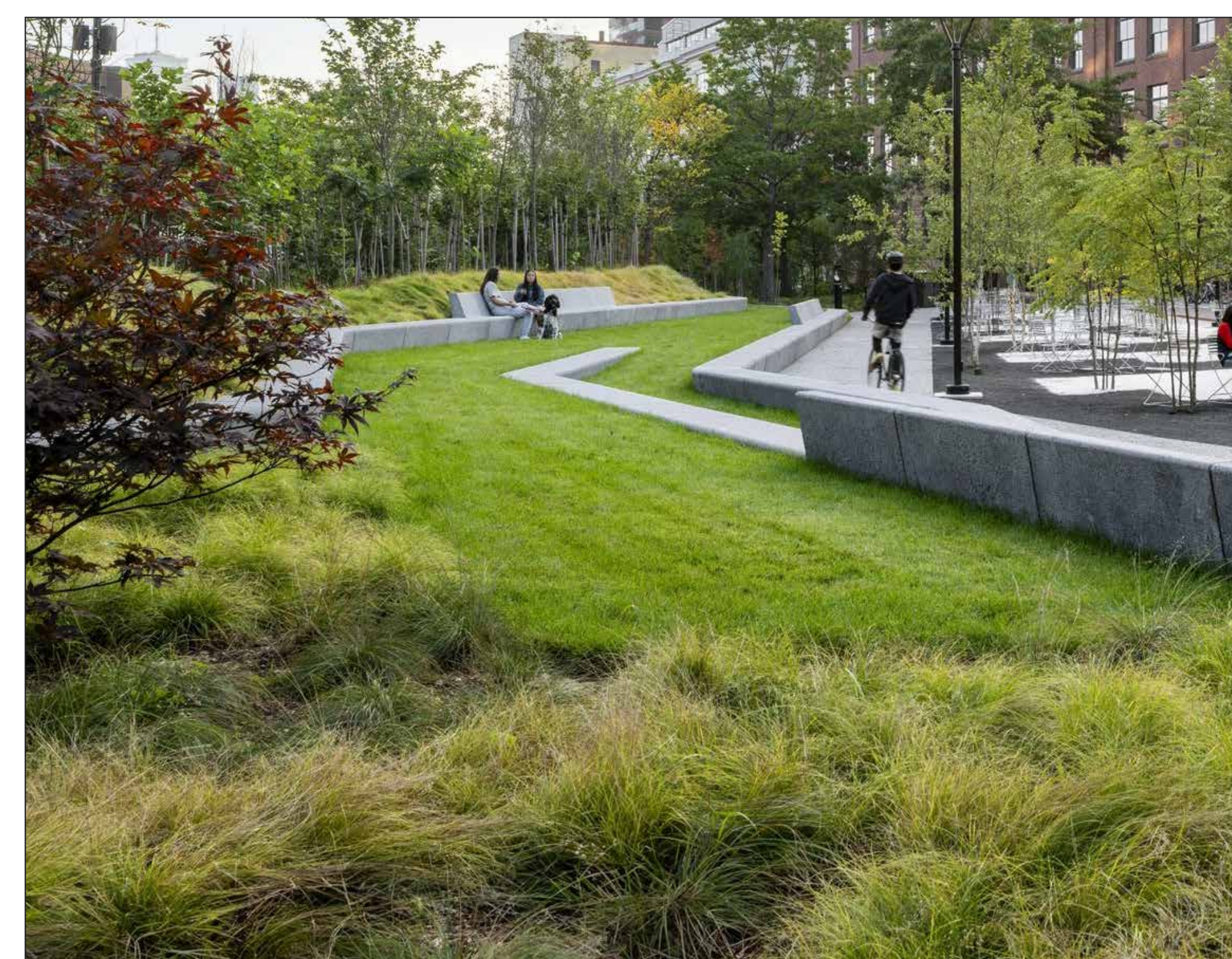
Duncan Commons and Mews

- Builds on the Playbook's vision for a public gathering space at 6th Street and Duncan Avenue.
- Sloped site requires a stepped or terraced design approach
- Creates a series of 'outdoor rooms' or terraces.
- Functions as an outdoor extension of the Gallery and Library.
- Focus on art installations, sculptures, murals, and quiet reading spaces.
- Includes permanent furniture for individuals and small groups to read or socialize in a green urban setting.



Cultural Square

- Establishes a meaningful eastern terminus to 4th Street.
- Serves as a focal gathering space in the cultural heart of Downtown.
- Highlights and celebrates local arts and culture.
- Acts as a key connection point between Downtown, the Cultural Square, and the new Riverfront experience.
- Potential for a new public parking structure between the Filberg Centre and the Square to support downtown parking needs, which could be delivered alongside the Square and Riverfront path improvements.



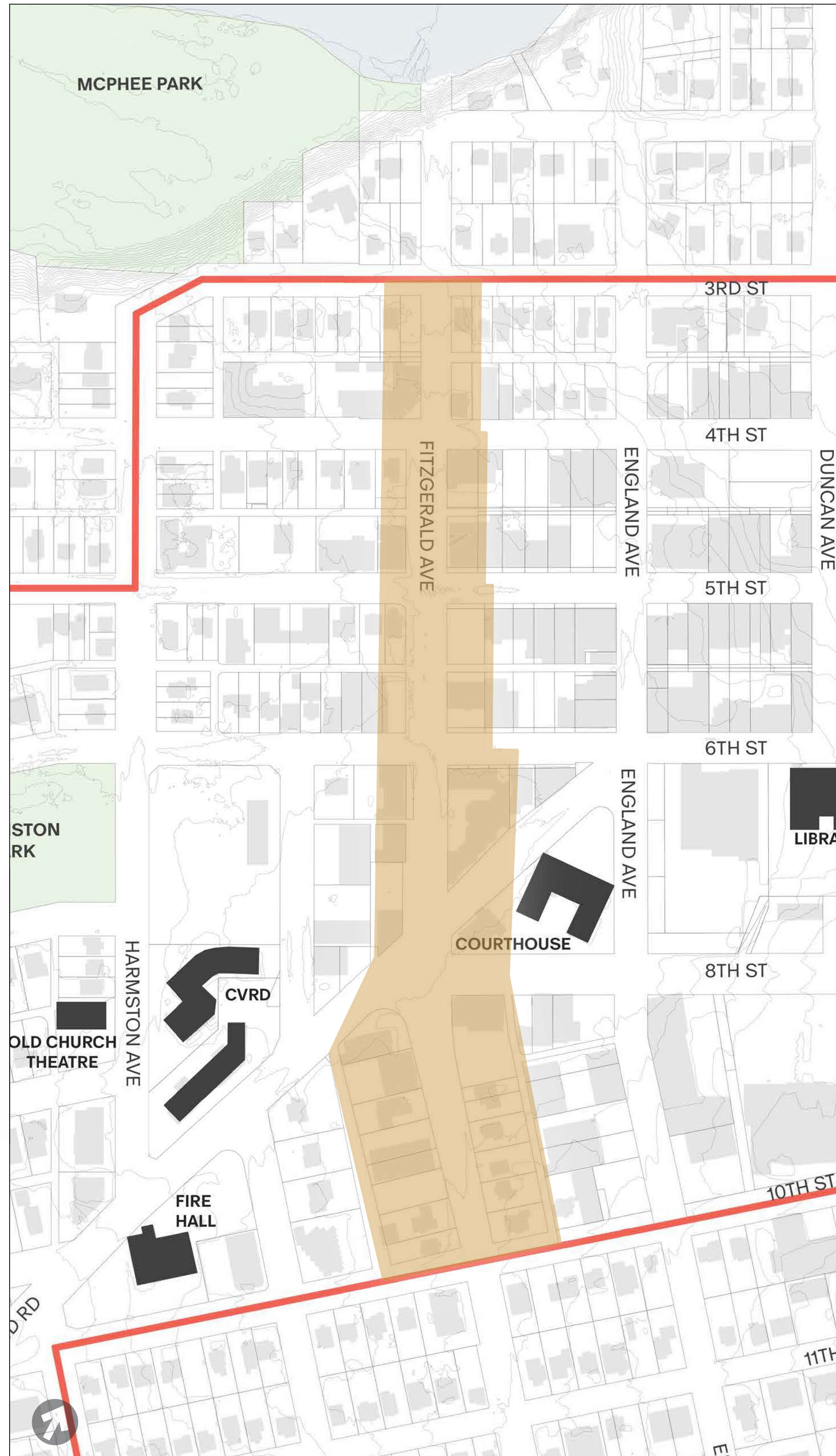
Courthouse Transit Plaza

- Creates a meaningful gathering space in front of the Courthouse at the key junction of Cumberland Road, 6th Street, and England Avenue.
- Extends the Cumberland corridor with a new bike and pedestrian pathway and enhanced green space along the diagonal street.
- Connects directly to the new plaza and Transit Loop.
- Requires coordination and engagement with the Province to improve the open space.

For Illustrative Purposes Only

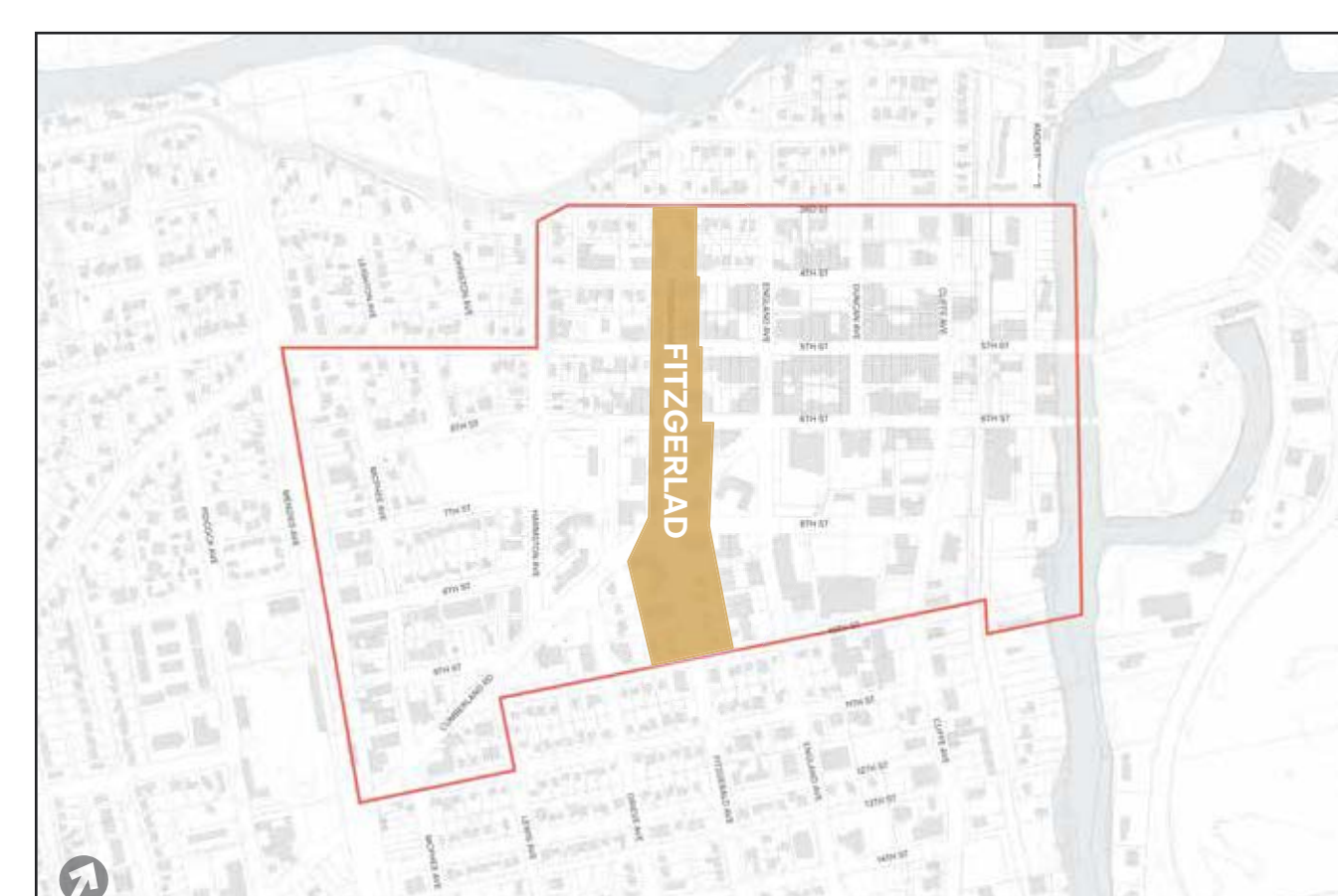
FITZGERALD

Context and Opportunities



Big Move 3 Fitzgerald as a Key Connector

Elevate Fitzgerald Avenue's role as a key connector between districts with further streetscape improvements, active transportation infrastructure, and the promotion of mixed-use development. Establishing Fitzgerald Avenue as a welcoming gateway to Downtown will ensure it supports the broader vision for the area.



Context

Fitzgerald Avenue acts as a key connector and a boundary between Downtown and Harmston Park. With a mix of commercial services, mixed-use buildings, and emerging active transportation upgrades, Fitzgerald has the potential to evolve as a more pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use corridor.

Existing OCP Policies

- Downtown Policy 15: Establish and promote distinctive character designations for Downtown's key streets.
- Streets and Transportation Objective 2: Transportation investments prioritize walking, cycling, and transit.
- Streets and Transportation Policy 10: Supplement public amenity spaces within road rights of way in Downtown, Town, and Neighbourhood Centres by providing more places for people to gather.

Opportunities

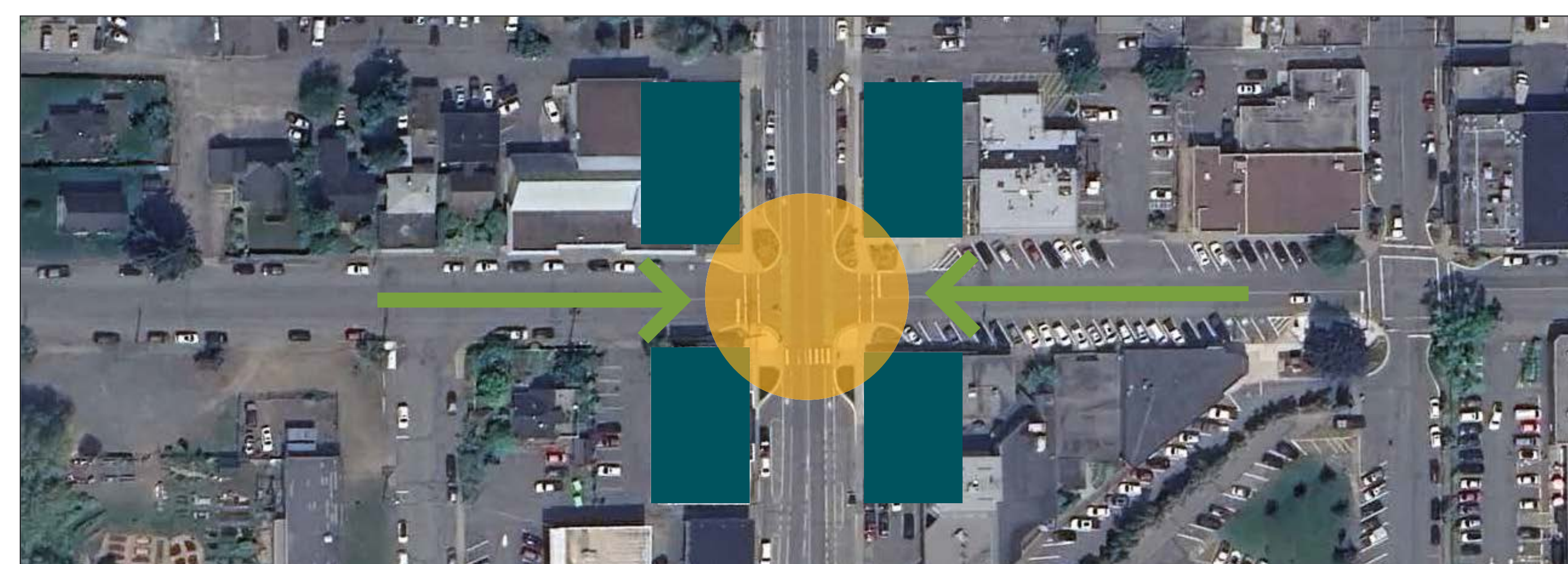
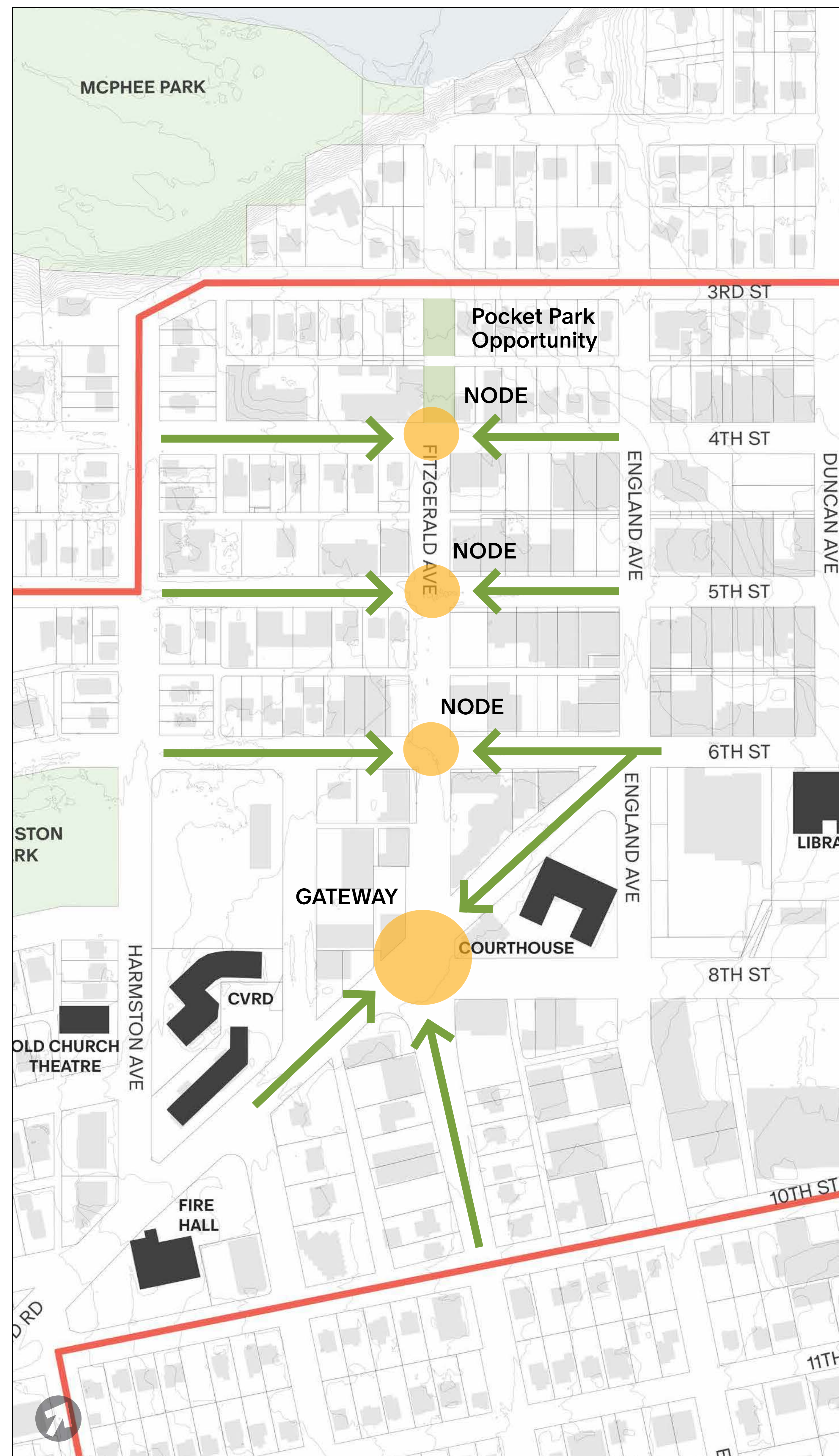
- Strengthen Fitzgerald as a 'gateway' to Downtown.
- Continue active transportation upgrades and streetscape improvements.
- Encourage additional commercial and mixed-use development.
- Build upon existing wayfinding programs to support navigation.
- Improve crossing opportunities to better connect Downtown with Harmston Park.
- Explore partial street closure between 3rd and 4th Streets to create a pocket park and public space.

Constraints

- Potential traffic congestion as the city grows.
- Limited municipal ownership along Fitzgerald limiting public space improvements.
- Infrastructure upgrades needed to support increased activity.

FITZGERALD

A Key Corridor



Fitzgerald Avenue: A Gateway and Gathering Corridor

Fitzgerald Avenue plays a vital role as a gateway and connector between Downtown and the Harmston Park District. While recent active transportation upgrades and defined bike lanes have improved mobility, the corridor's width and surrounding built form still give it the feel of a dividing line.

With its potential as a walkable, mixed-use corridor, Fitzgerald can evolve into a more welcoming, people-oriented space that supports movement and destination.

Key nodes or intersections, particularly at 4th, 5th, 6th Streets and Cumberland Road — present strong opportunities to unify adjacent districts as well as establish Fitzgerald's own unique identity.

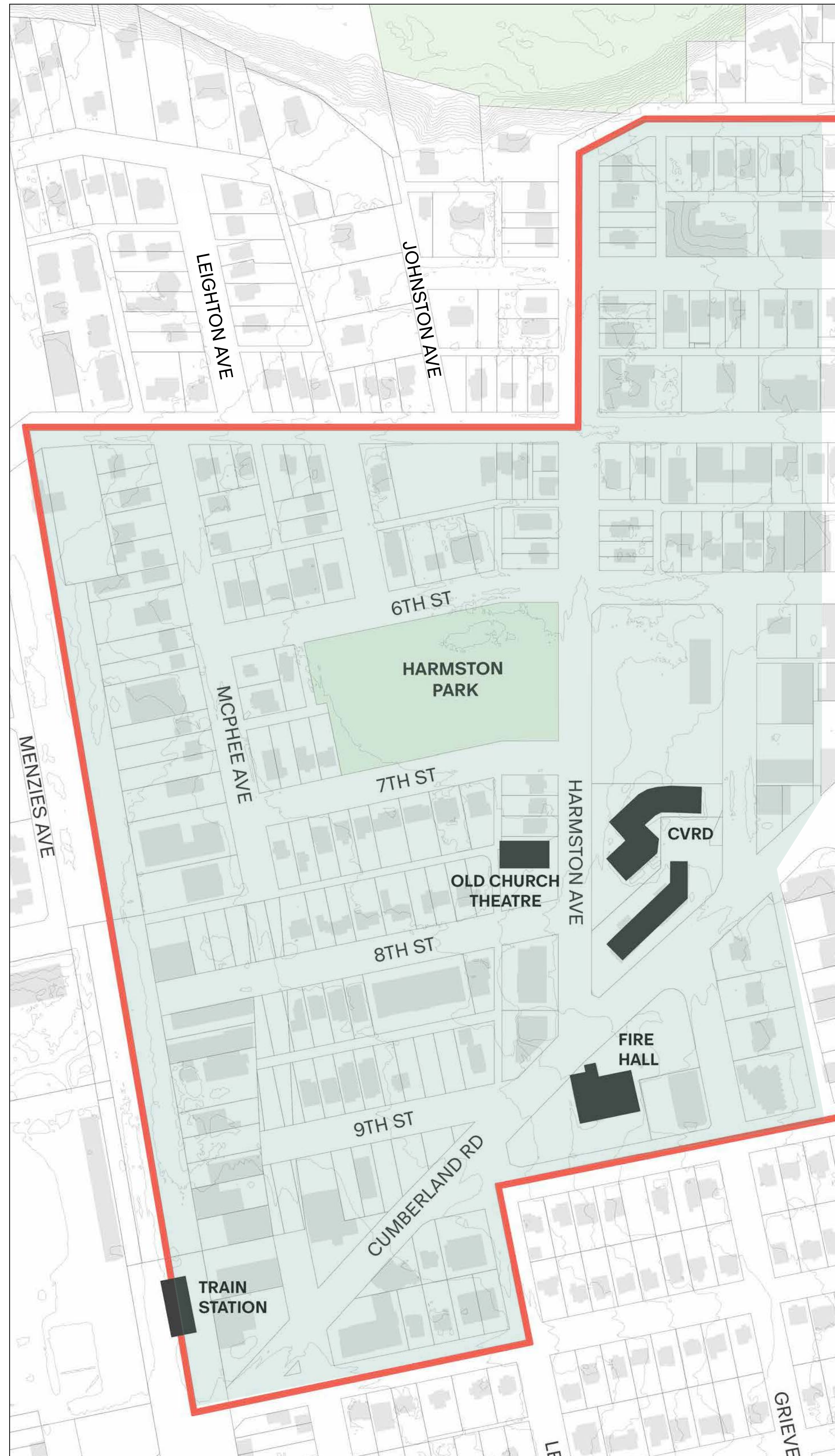
Emerging design and development ideas include:

- Reinforcing intersections as nodes of activity and density.
- Focusing elevated density on Fitzgerald Avenue to support the Frequent Transit Network and increased transit ridership.
- Encouraging ground-floor commercial on all four corners.
- Utilizing the flat character of Fitzgerald to support commercial uses.
- Using built form to frame intersections as 'outdoor rooms'.
- Supporting density and mixed-use development at key nodes.
- Enhancing landscaping and private realm improvements to draw people along the corridor and through each node.

Together, these strategies could transform Fitzgerald from a dividing edge into an active spine —linking Downtown and Harmston Park through movement, placemaking, and street-level vibrancy.

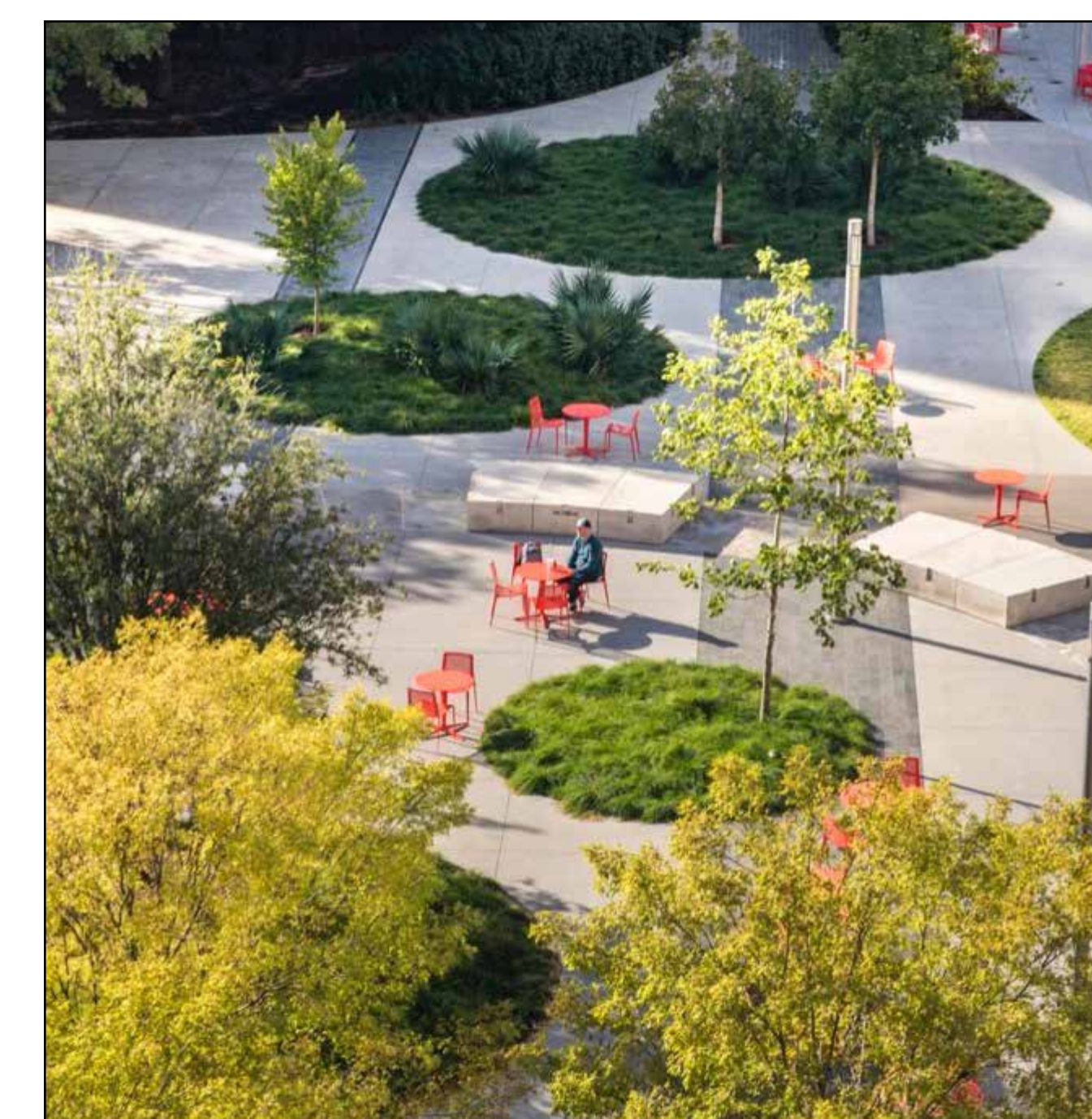
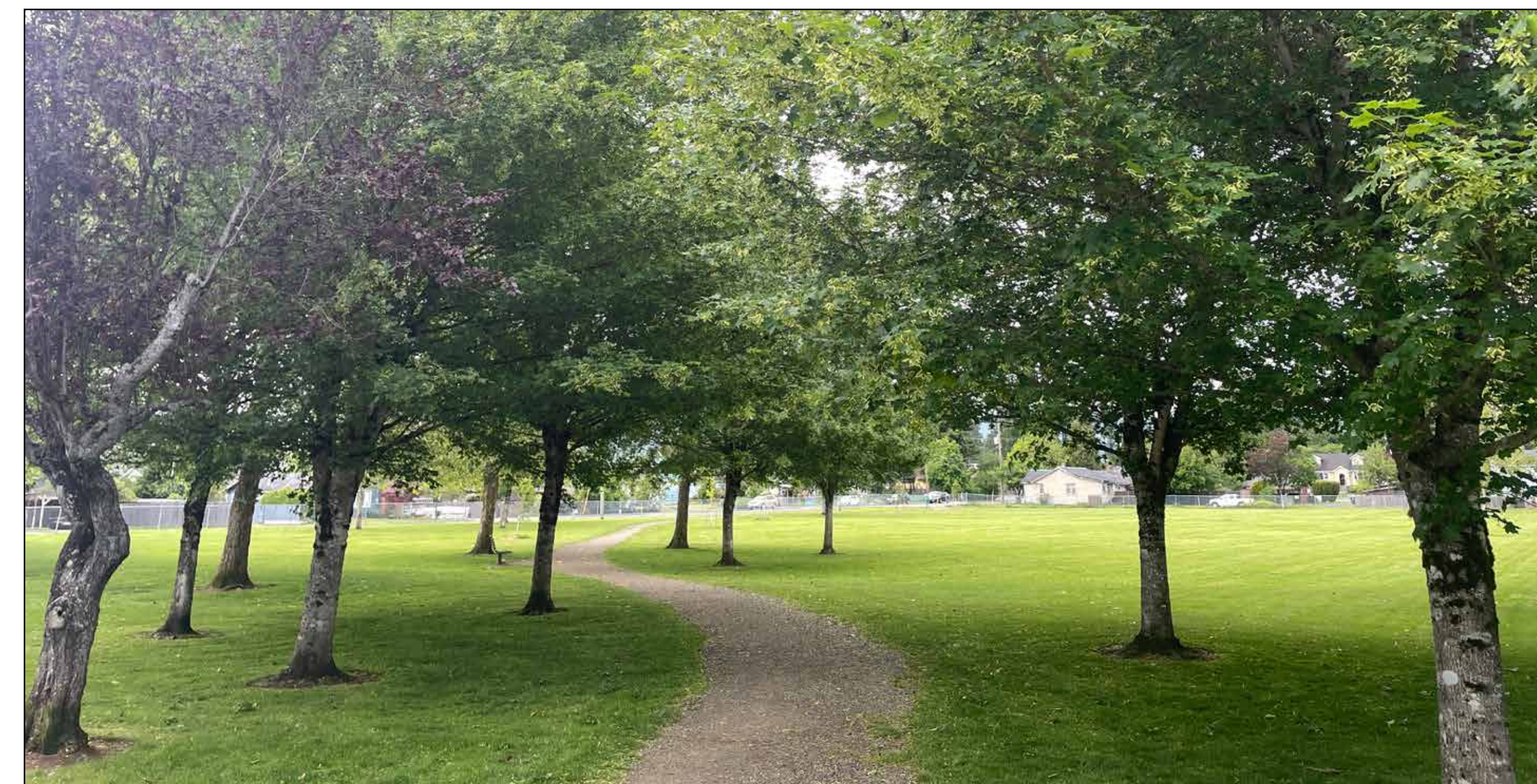
HARMSTON PARK

Context and Opportunities



Big Move 4 Activate Harmston Park

Design and develop Harmston Park as a dynamic community hub, supported by enhanced programming and infrastructure. Opportunities for higher-density housing and innovative uses for adjacent municipal lands, such as partial street closures, can further integrate the park into the community fabric.



Context

Harmston Park is a large green space surrounded by residential, institutional, and light industrial uses. While the area benefits from community assets like Share the Harvest Garden and regional government offices, it faces challenges such as underutilized industrial land and a park in need of activation.

Existing OCP Policies

- Downtown Policy 8: Ensure compatibility of land uses between the downtown and adjacent urban residential neighbourhoods by providing transitional form, character, and densities.
- Harmston Park Policy 1(d): Neighbourhood park function including ideas such as, but not limited to, community gardens, dog park, children's playground.
- Harmston Park Policy 1(e): Consideration to the temporary or permanent closure of Harmston Avenue between 6th and 7th Streets.
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan: Identify amenities desired by the surrounding neighbourhood as a basis for planning.
- Strategic Cultural Plan Objective 3.1: Increase availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture.

Opportunities

- Detailed design and activation of Harmston Park.
- Introduce regular programming and events in the park.
- Enable infill residential and mixed-use development around the park.
- Enhance trail connections, including strengthening access to Rotary Trail and McPhee Meadows.
- Historic Train Station provides a placemaking opportunity with economic potential.

Constraints

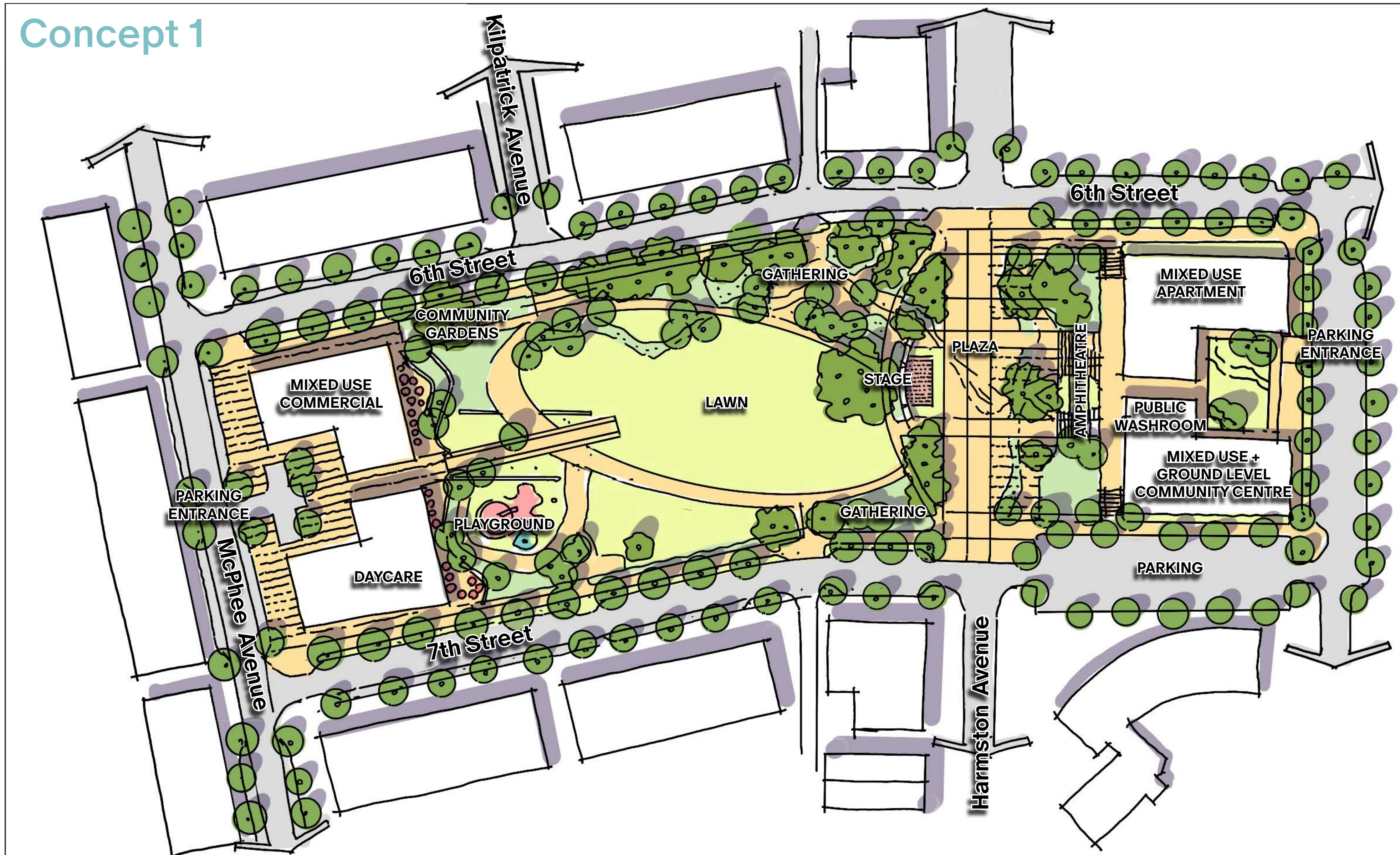
- Perception of public safety issues near industrial areas.
- Privately-owned parcels could limit cohesive redevelopment.

HARMSTON PARK

Exploring Concepts and Park Features



Concept 1

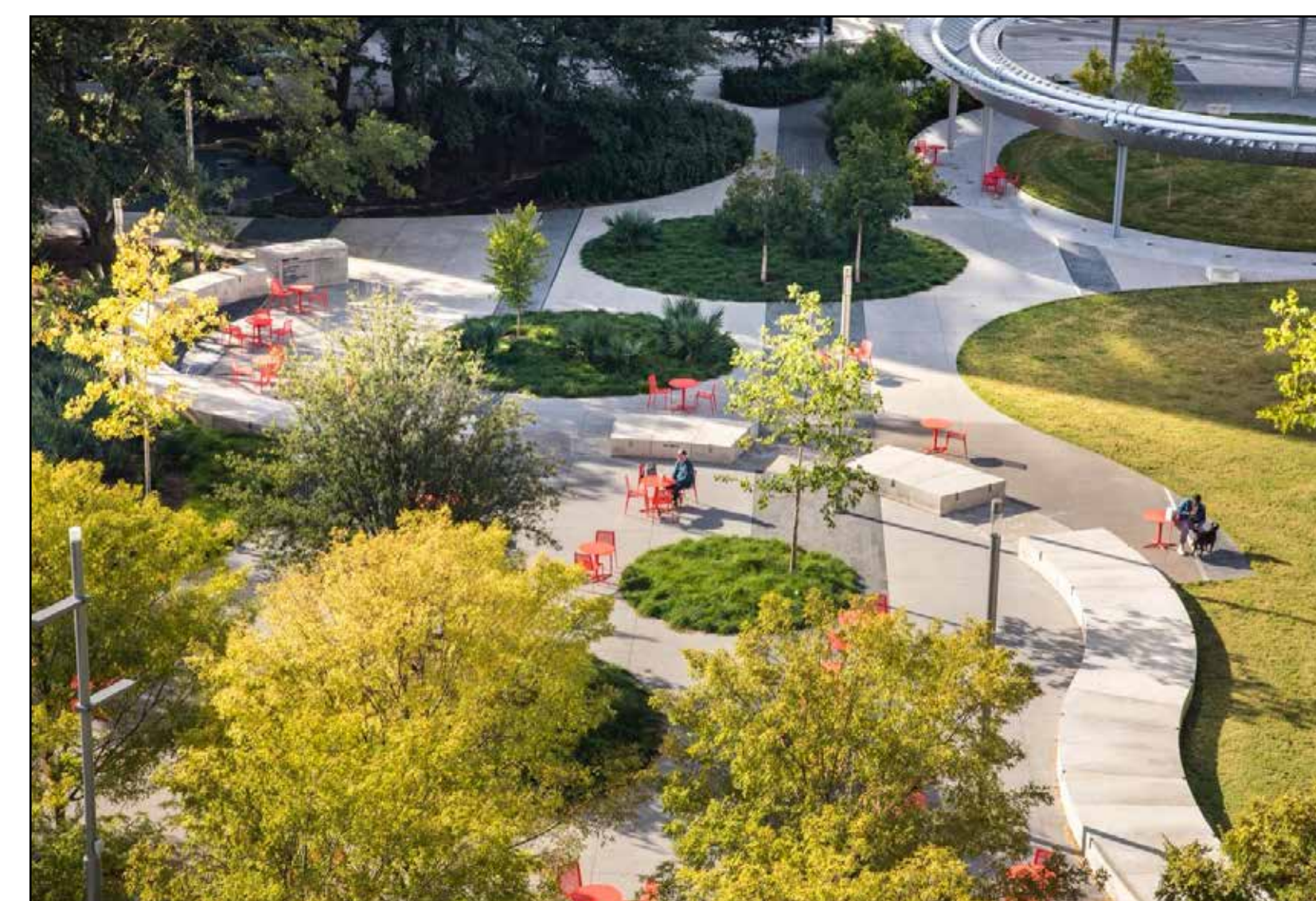


For Illustrative Purpose Only

Concept 2



For Illustrative Purpose Only



These two concept explore potential programming elements for Harmston Park.

Concept 1 - Community Park and Civic Plaza

This concept integrates Harmston Park with a new civic plaza by closing Harmston Avenue to vehicle traffic (except emergency access). The plaza would serve as a flexible public space for markets, concerts, and community events.

The park would include a playground, community gardens, and an open lawn for informal recreation. Ground-level commercial or community uses in adjacent buildings could help activate the space throughout the year.

Concept 2 - Community Park

This concept envisions a more passive park anchored by a smaller plaza at 6th Street and Harmston Avenue, serving as a main entry point.

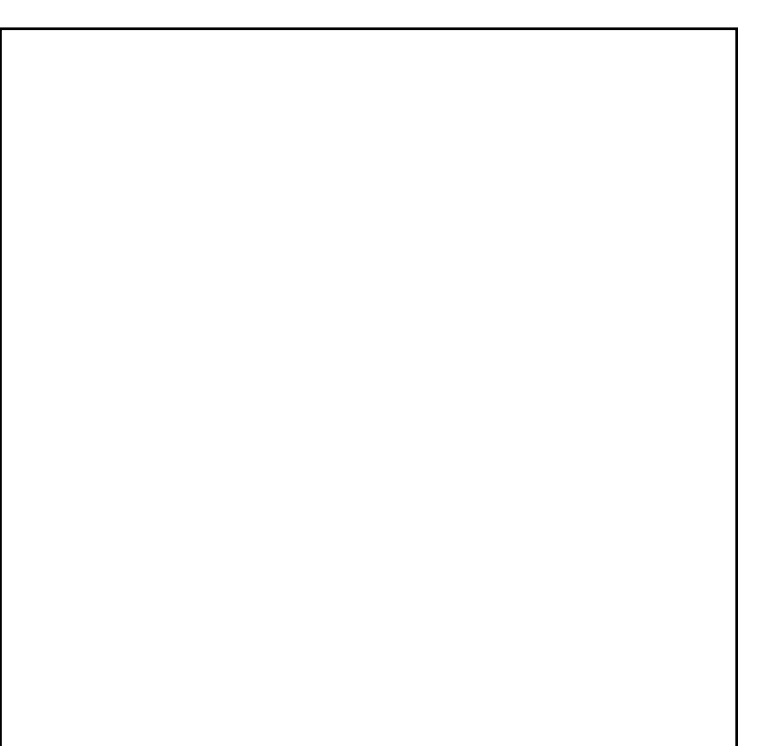
The park would feature a playground, community gardens, a dog park, and a large open lawn for informal use. Surrounding buildings would include more extensive commercial uses to help animate the area.

Parking

Expanded parking opportunities include:

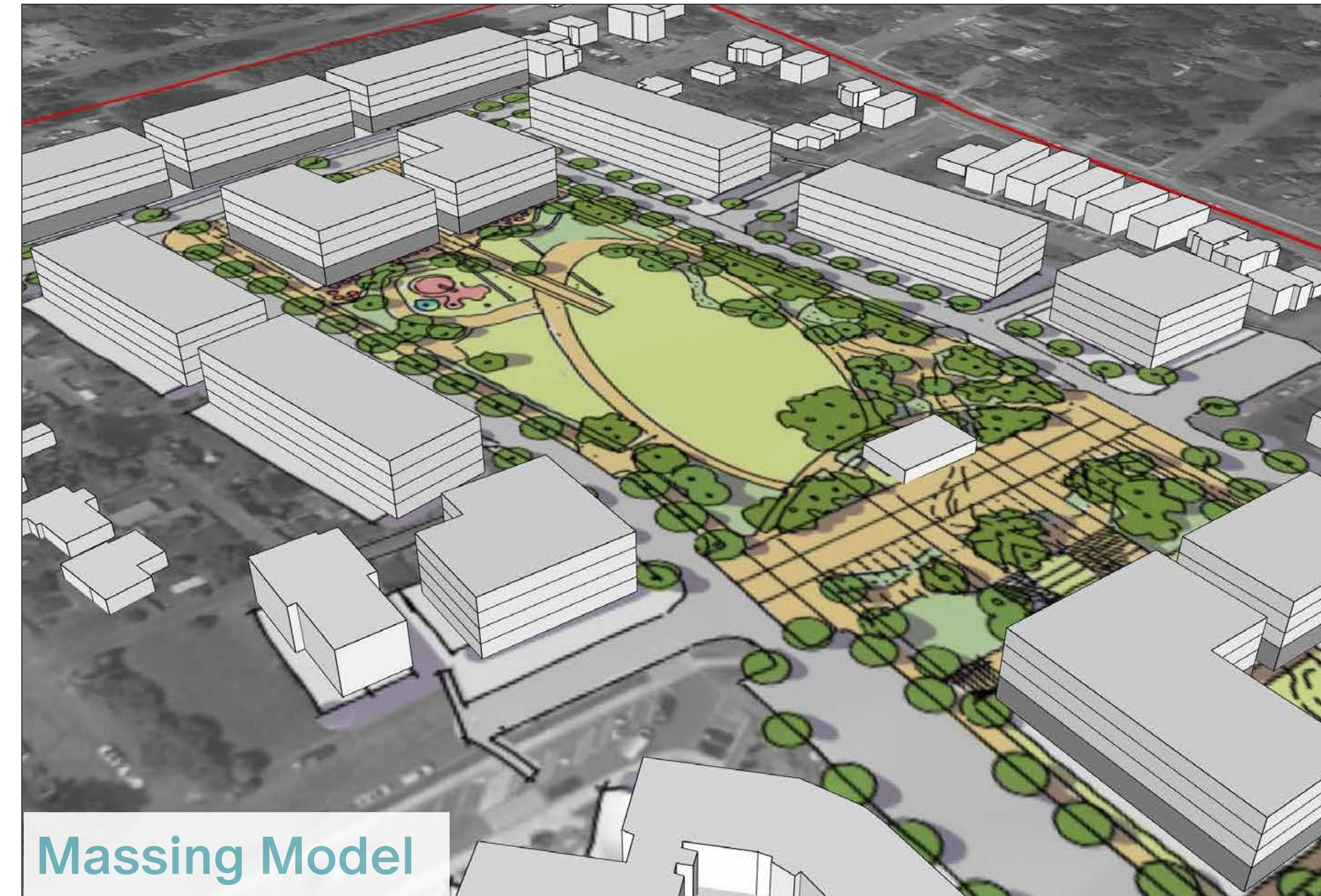
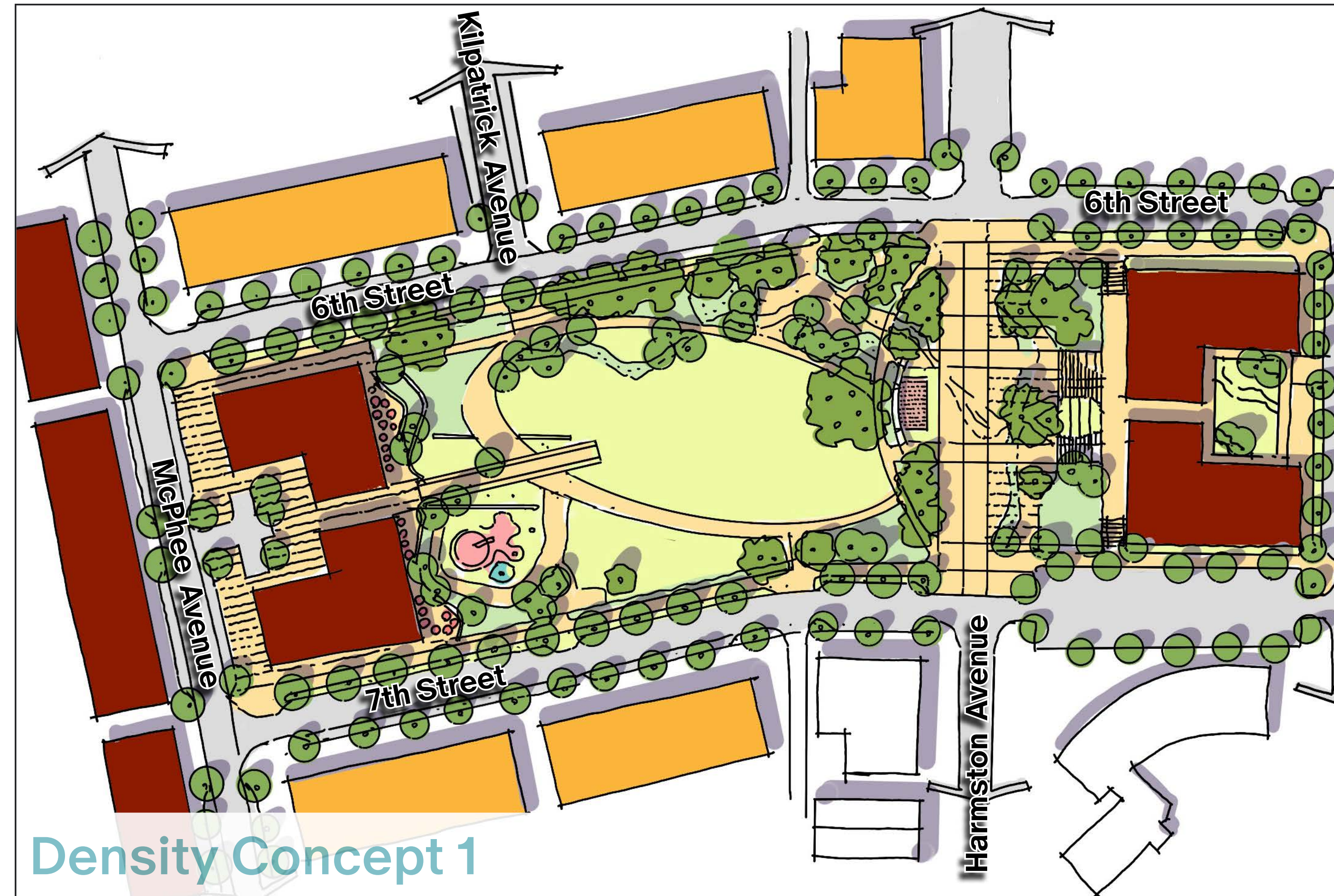
- Retaining public parking along 7th Street.
- Additional underground parking beneath new buildings between Harmston and Grant.
- New on-street parking surrounding Harmston Park.

Scan the QR code for further information and engagement opportunities specifically related to Harmston Park.



HARMSTON PARK

Form and Scale

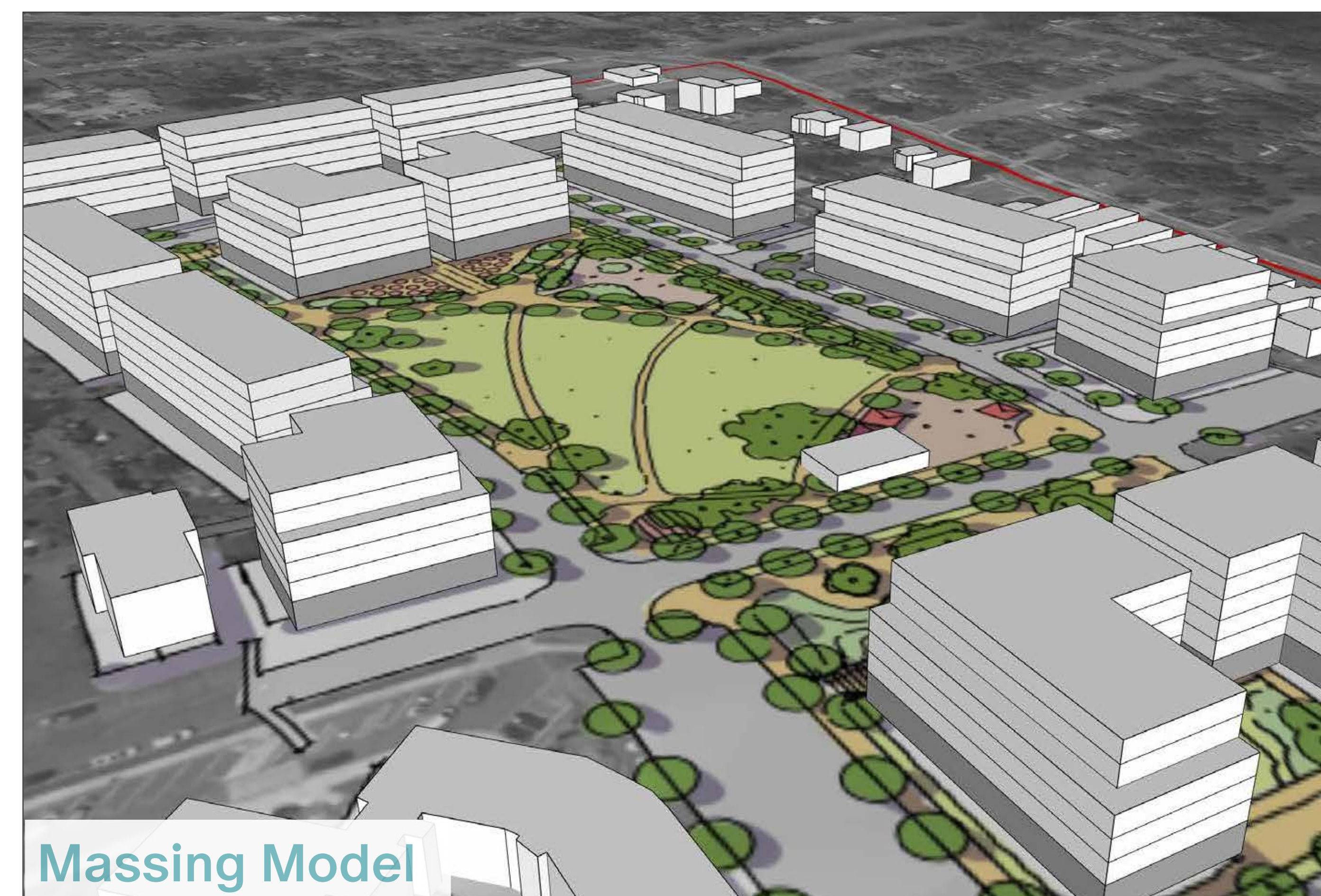
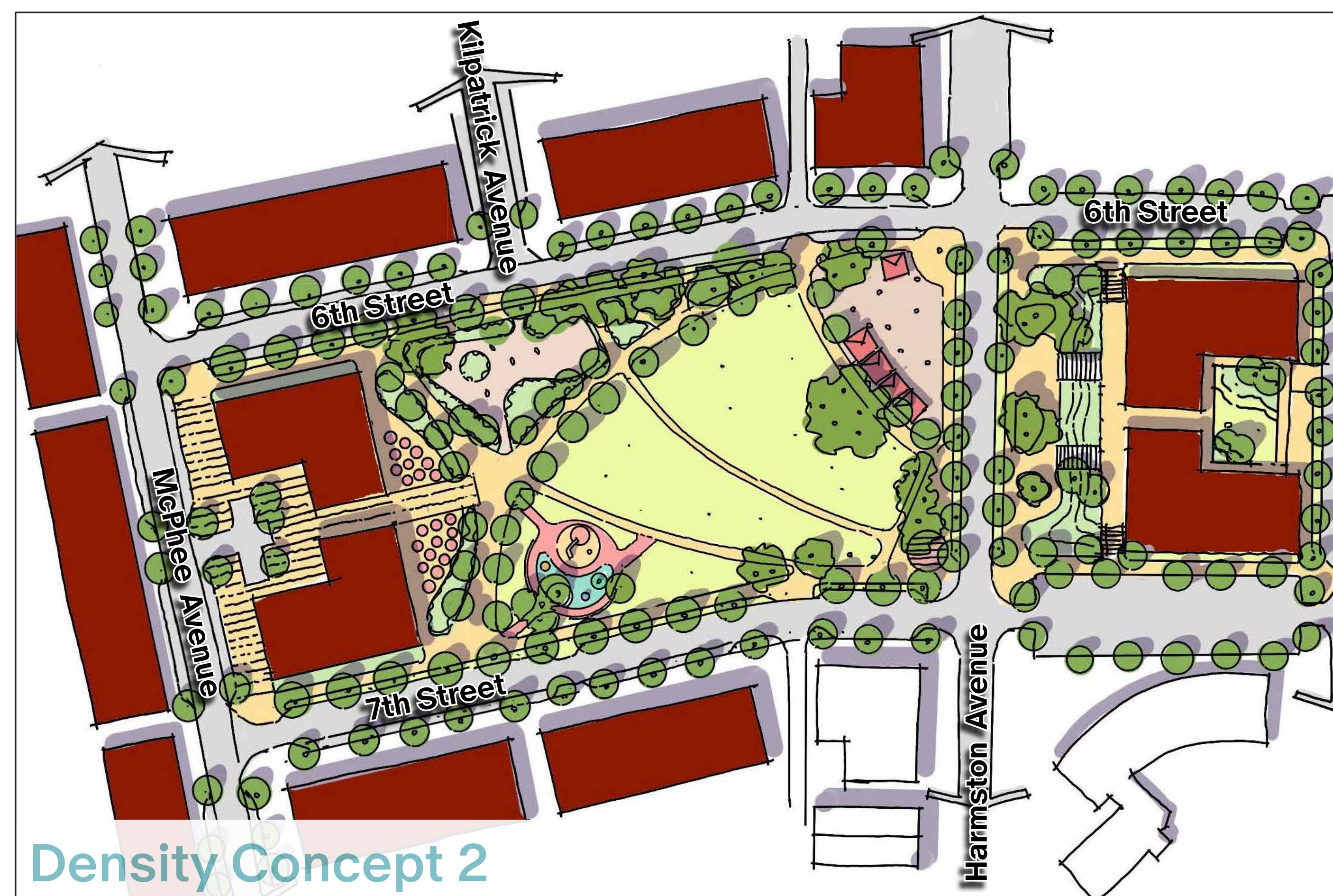


These two concepts explore potential density approaches surrounding Harmston Park.

Density Concept 1 - Four Storeys with Limited Commercial

This concept proposes a consistent four-storey building form around Harmston Park and along McPhee Avenue.

Commercial uses would be limited to buildings fronting the park and McPhee Avenue, encouraging casual activation without overwhelming the area. The added residential density would help animate the park and offer housing close to valuable community amenities.



Density Concept 2 - Six Storey Mixed Use

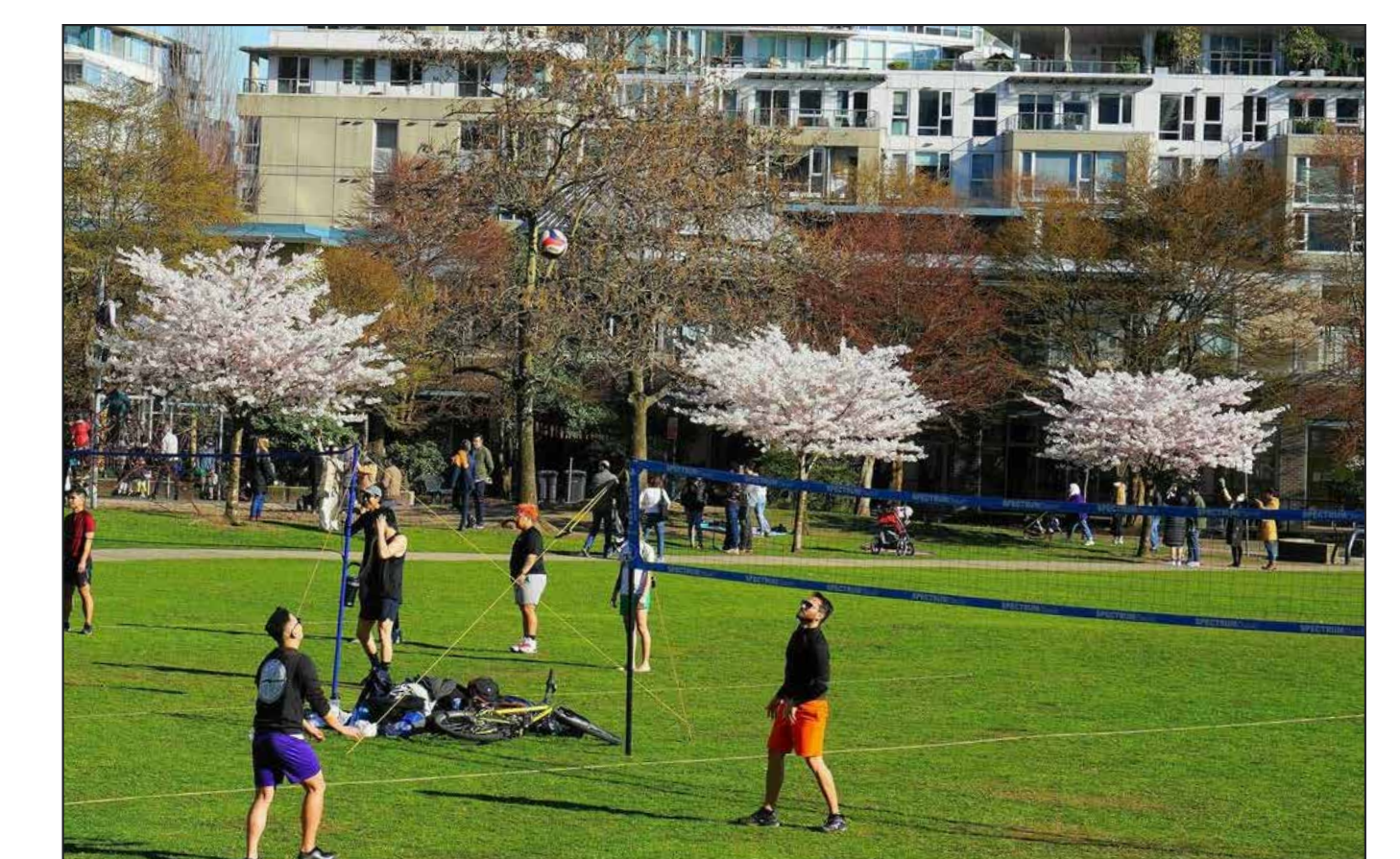
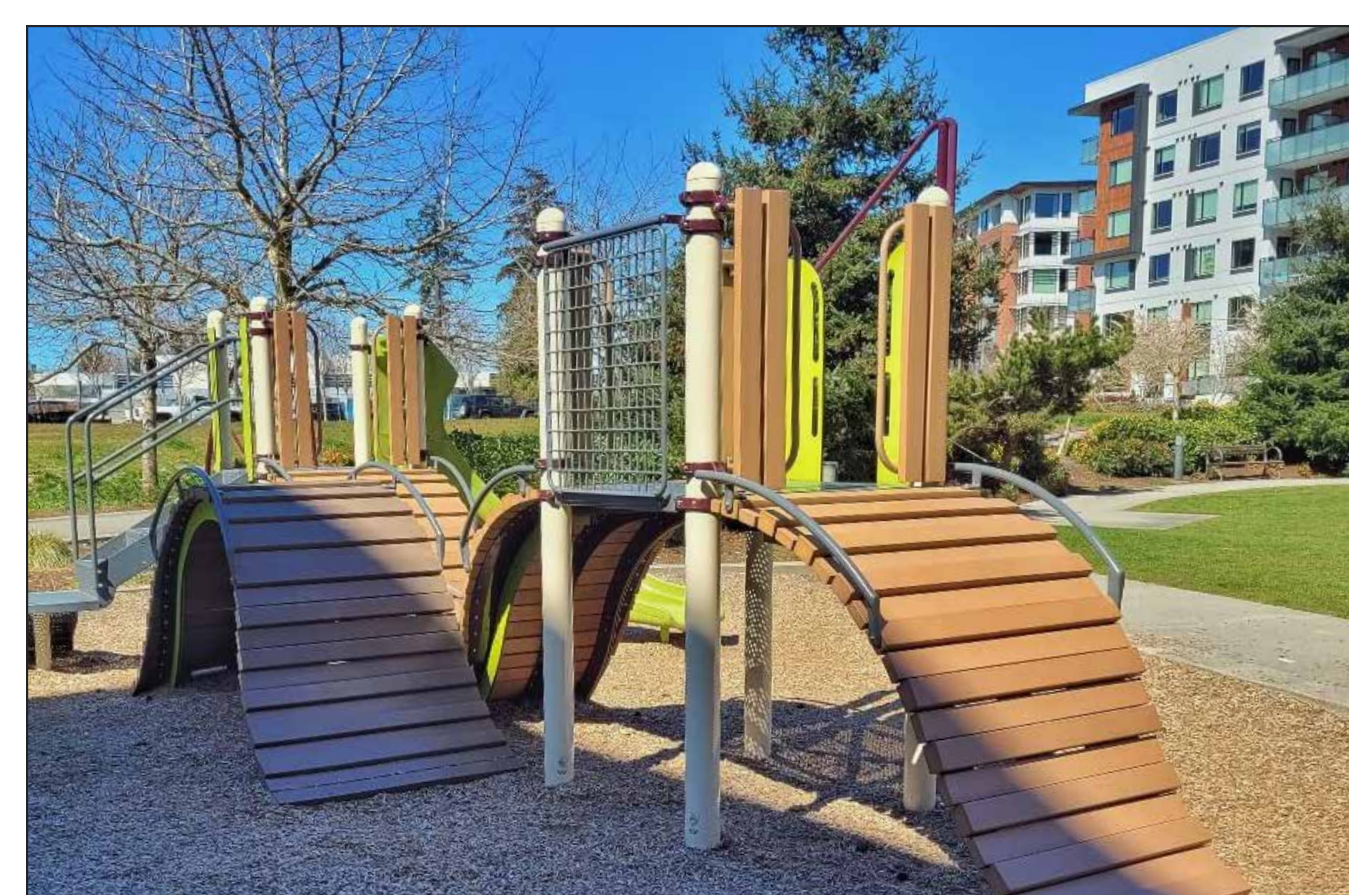
This concept introduces six-storey mixed-use buildings surrounding Harmston Park.

Ground floors would feature commercial uses throughout, activating the park edges and bringing shops and services closer to residents.

Higher density supports a wider range of amenities, helps build a stronger sense of community, and can reduce car-dependency when part of a mixed use complete neighbourhood

Please note: The massing model illustrations show where added height and density could be supported—they do not represent the final built form.

- Residential
- Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential



WHAT'S AHEAD

Next Steps for Downtown

We're still in the planning phase — and your input matters! Here's how to stay involved as we move forward with the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan (DVLAP):

How to Get Involved

- Scan the QR code to complete the survey online
- Visit: engagecomoxvalley.ca/courtenay-downtown-plan
- Follow us @city of courtenay



UPCOMING AND MAJOR PROJECTS WITHIN THE DVLAP AREA

Project	Start	Completion
Harmston Park Planning Process	Q2 2025	Q3 2025
Anderton Avenue Demolitions (Bridge Building, Cona Hostel, Anderton Arms)	Q2 2025	Q3 2025
Official Community Plan Update	Q2 2025	Q4 2025
McPhee Meadows Park	Ongoing	Q4 2025
BC Transit Exchange (8th St & England Ave)	Mid 2025	TBD
6th Street Active Transportation Bridge	Q3 2025	Q2 2026
Anderton Lift Station Replacement	Q3 2025	Q4 2026
Recent Development Approvals for Multi-Residential Homes at 11th St & Beckensell Ave and 4th St & England Ave	TBD	TBD

