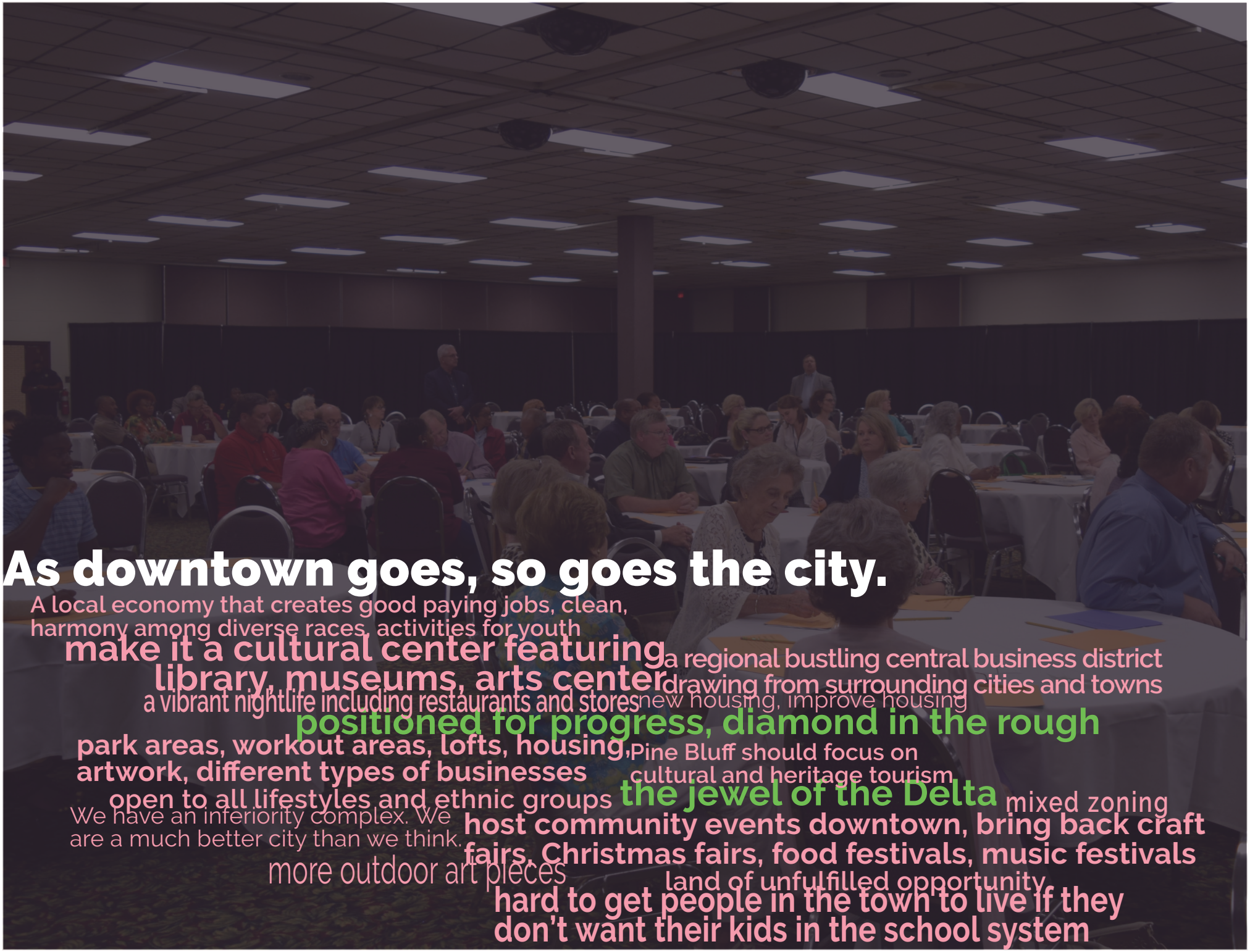
RE-LIVE DOWNTOWN PINE BLUFF

A Manual

The seven new neighborhoods comprising *Re-Live Downtown*

Re-Live begins with the development of downtown housing.

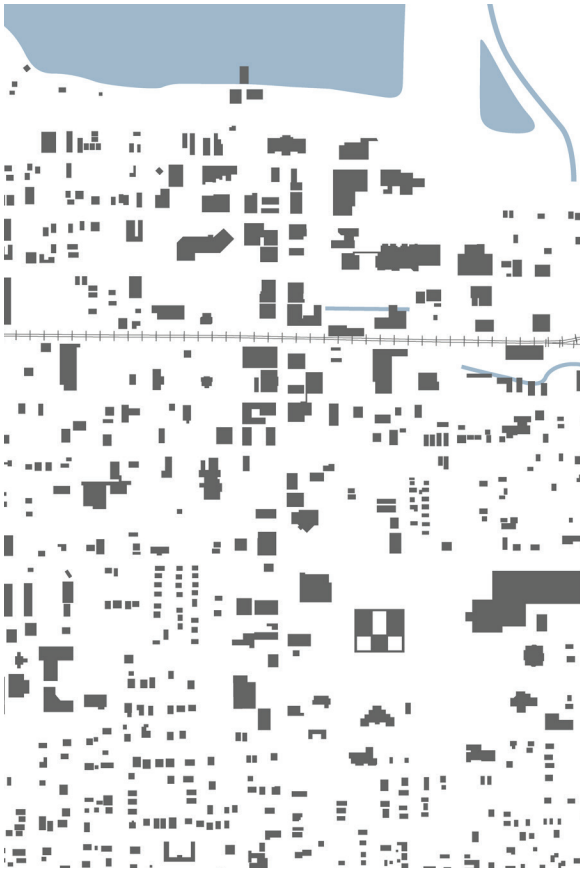
vibrant downtown with arts and entertainment
a vibrant downtown is mission critical for Pine Bluff
walkable and safe neighborhoods
bike trails and dedicated lanes, ways to use
bicycling as a valid form of transportation
be seen as a destination for residents as well as nonresidents
mixed-use downtown neighborhoods
public/private partnerships
vendors, food trucks, stage with lights
and music, and area for lawn chairs
revitalized downtown
thriving community with views and connections to lakefront
the downtown core is the soul of any city
active local businesses downtown—
keep money in Pine Bluff
new buildings built in between to fill the void
small business incubator
of remaining buildings
pedestrian friendly streets with good street lighting—sidewalks on all streets
better housing for people who want to lease
or rent, creating a good workforce
downtown is the
front porch of any town
be the hub of recreational
and leisure activities
clean neighborhoods, no decaying houses
be the epicenter of the arts
beautiful downtown with restored
buildings, more appealing storefronts
reinvestment
boardwalk and other enhancements at Saracen Landing
outdoor seating in clean downtown
rich history of arts and culture that creates an
parks and neighborhood playgrounds
environment of learning/education
We came together to pass GFPB. Downtown as a whole will change by coming together as we are tonight. This is the beginning.


As downtown goes, so goes the city.
A local economy that creates good paying jobs, clean,
harmony among diverse races, activities for youth
make it a cultural center featuring
library, museums, arts center
a regional bustling central business district
drawing from surrounding cities and towns
a vibrant nightlife including restaurants and stores
new housing, improve housing
positioned for progress, diamond in the rough
park areas, workout areas, lofts, housing,
artwork, different types of businesses
Pine Bluff should focus on
cultural and heritage tourism
open to all lifestyles and ethnic groups
the jewel of the Delta
mixed zoning
We have an inferiority complex. We
are a much better city than we think.
host community events downtown, bring back craft
fairs, Christmas fairs, food festivals, music festivals
more outdoor art pieces
land of unfulfilled opportunity
hard to get people in the town to live if they
don't want their kids in the school system

Patterns are symptomatic. The following sets of maps–comparing years 1918 and 2018–express Pine Bluff's shift from a strong market city to a weak market city over the 20th century. Weak market cities often have growing peripheries in contrast to downtowns with no growth accompanied by high levels of abandonment. Most U.S. cities over the last 60 years were shrinking cities, though many have come back. Strong market cities large and small share the same pattern languages leading to their success, beginning with people living downtown. The challenge is to re-establish patterns that invite re-investment in Pine Bluff, reclaiming a strong market city where people live and work downtown.

1918

Approximately 7 dwelling units per acre–minimum for streetcar



2018

Approximately 0.75 dwelling unit per acre–a rural density

BLOCKS AND BUILDINGS

Block integrity is defined by building types, density, and internal service spaces—alleys, parking, and yards.

•

Blocks with vacant parcels undermine downtown functioning and experience.

•

Downtowns abhor vacancy and its discontinuity; vacant lots are symptoms of decline.

•

Buildings create the edges of streets and parks to define public space; they should not be set back from the street (unless they are monuments, like City Hall).

1918

315 intersections per square mile–great connectivity (150 minimum for walkability)

2018

226 intersections per square mile–parking now downtown's largest land use

Shaded areas are streets and asphalt parking lots.

STREET AND PARKING NETWORK

Streets shape the identity of the city: great streets are places, not just transit corridors.

•

Building frontage and streetscapes determine street quality and downtown experience.

•

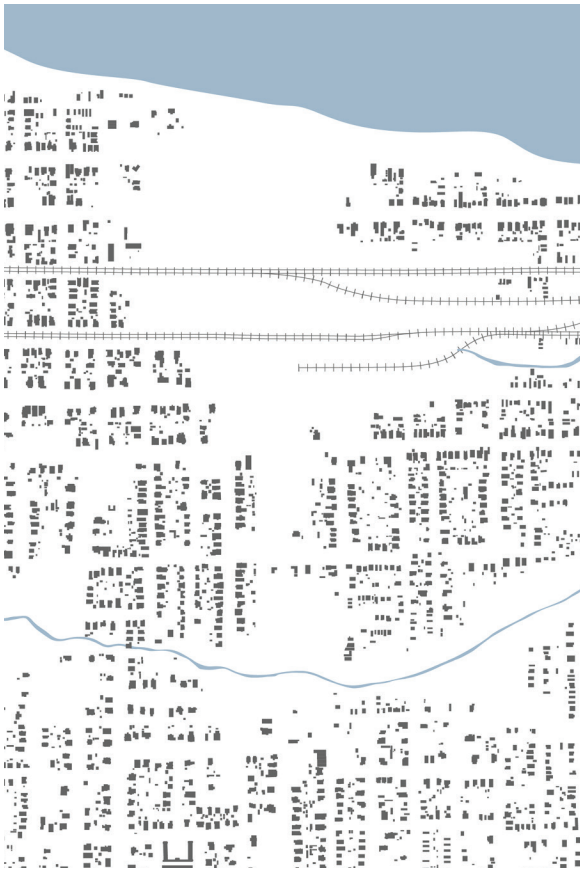
Design "complete streets" to service all modes and speeds of mobility: pedestrian, bicyclist, transit user, and motorist.

•

In addition to traffic movement, successful streets deliver non-traffic social services like gathering, strolling, dining, performing, and socializing–build "slow streets".

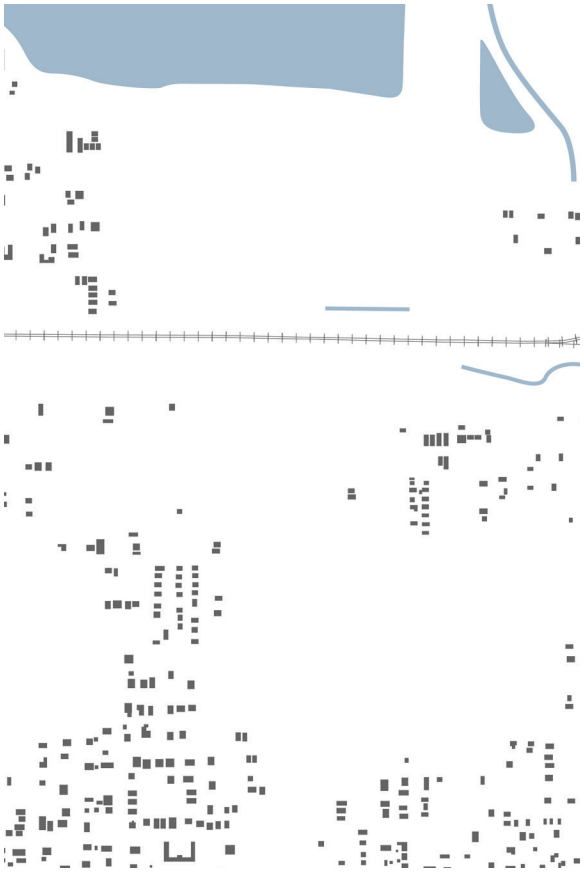
•

Parking lots are never an appropriate land use for creating street frontage (see asphalt expanse indicated in the 2018 map).



1918

Full housing build-out when population was 19,000



2018

Downtown lost 75% of its housing stock with population at 42,000

HOUSING FABRICS

Housing is the lifeblood of a vital downtown: "retail follows rooftops".

•

Diversity in multifamily housing types serves populations of all needs who may age in place.

•

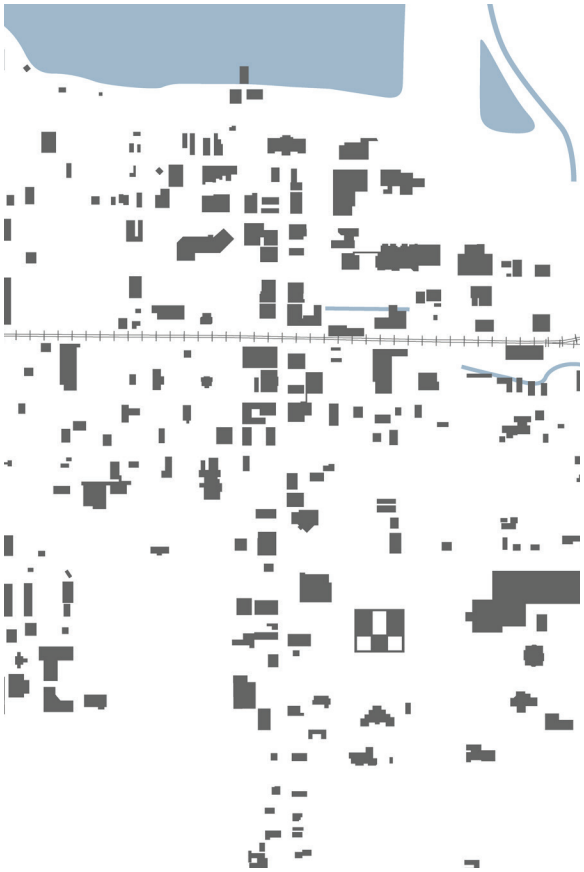
Emphasize walk-up units–housing where the front door is accessible and visible from the street.

•

Strong neighborhoods are walkable and have defined edges and centers.

1918

Retail was connected in one Main Street district



2018

Retail environment lost its necessary proximity and connectivity

COMMERCIAL FABRICS

Downtown retail likes to be adjacent to other retail to create vital walkable environments.

•

Successful retail is rooted in an “experience economy” that projects a sense of place.

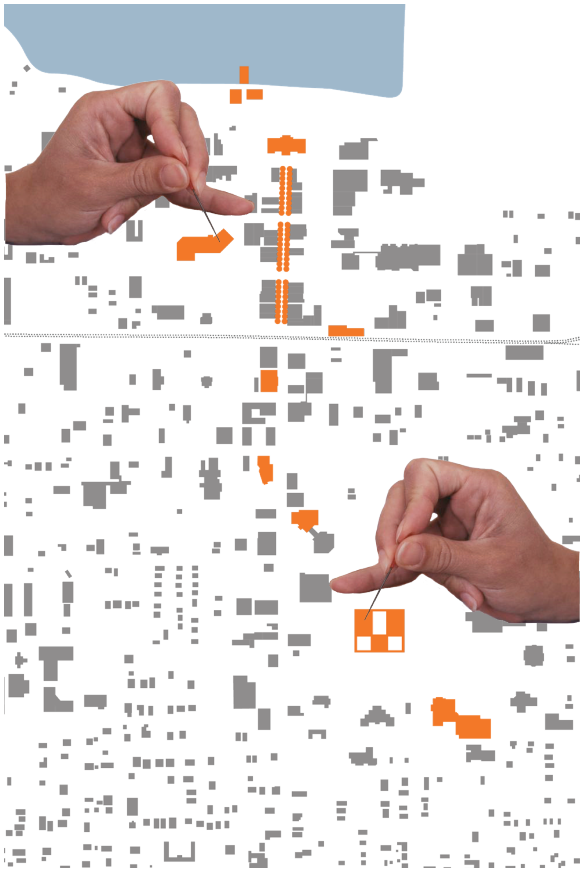
•

Most American downtowns are over-retailed, so do not hinge a downtown plan on new retail.

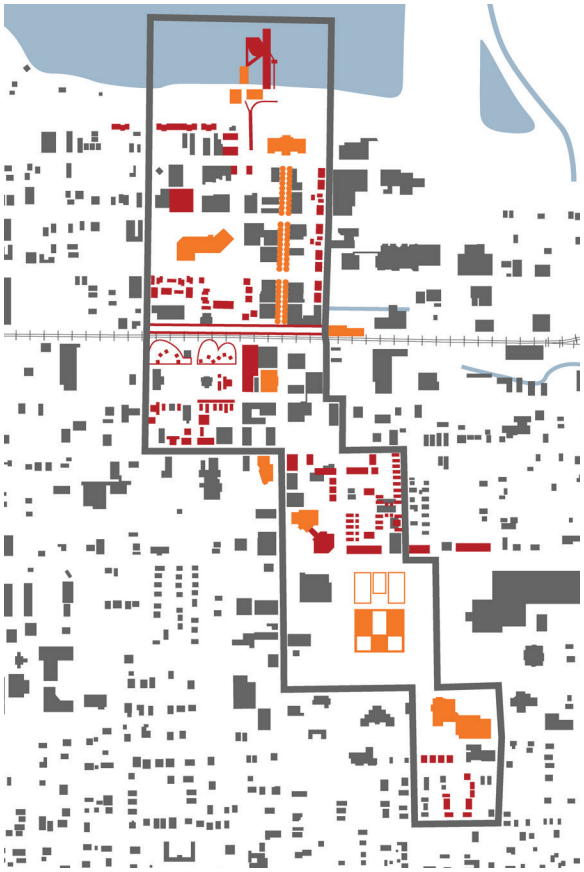
•

Commercial building frontage follows a pattern of high ceilings and transparent facades.

Like in acupuncture, intervention at centers of strength reorganizes energy flow and improves metabolism in the larger system. The greatest impacts occur through resourceful and strategic intervention.



2018



FUTURE

FRAMEWORK PLAN: INFILLING DOWNTOWN

Asset-based planning approach starts with identification of downtown "centers of strength".

•

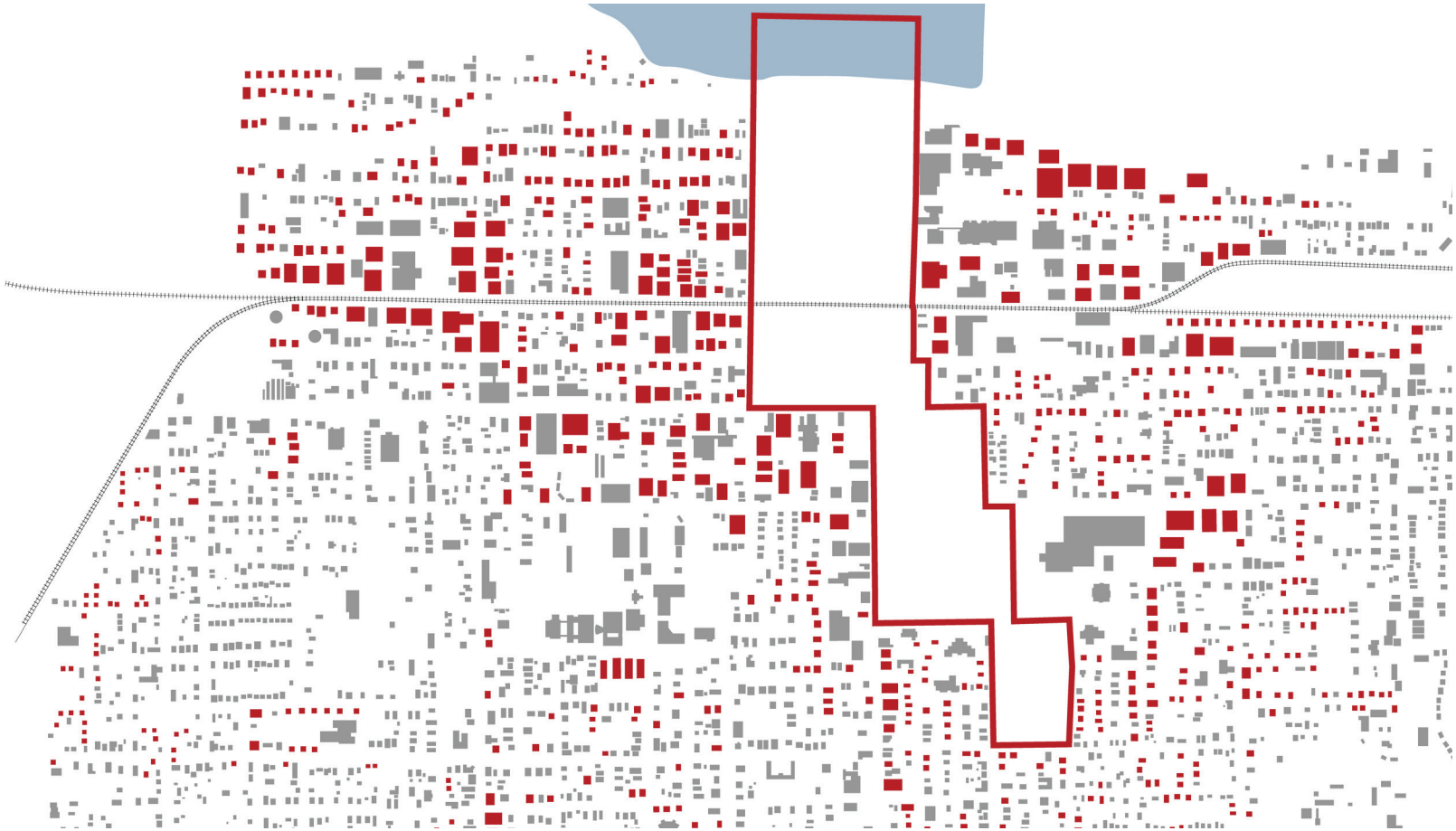
Develop each center with housing to create walkable neighborhoods–Re-Live Downtown!

•

Framework Plan is a system of centers that are then connected to revitalize downtown.

•

Strong market downtowns are walkable neighborhoods.



BEYOND THE FRAMEWORK PLAN

The Framework Plan is a seed plan: neighborhood nodes should jumpstart subsequent market investment among multiple actors throughout downtown.

•

Future development should be self-organizing, and respect adjacent city patterns while creating new centers of strength.

•

Successful revitalization preserves downtown structure while transforming it.

THE PINE BLUFF PROMISE

"There's a common sentiment, especially among people who remember the halcyon mid-century, that the middle class and middle America have been hollowed by globalization. That may be true. If so, it's great news for younger Americans—because thanks to those same forces of globalization, the hollowed-out communities in the middle of the country are now attractive places to build a life . . . Cheap land and labor. All of the distribution tools of the internet. A handful of residents to make their communities better. And hundreds and hundreds of incremental improvements. That's what will get small-town America back on track. . . ."

Conor Sen, "The Big Idea for Middle America: Think Small"

Design for Shrinking Cities

Imagine downtown Pine Bluff, the regional neighborhood of choice for mixed-income households seeking the option of an urban lifestyle where they can walk or bike safely to work, school, church, shops, and lakeside recreation . . . and it's affordable! Where livability and quality of life delivered at a big small-town scale constitute a market and an enduring form of economic development on their own. Arguably, the closest city that offers a residential option in a historic downtown is Conway, 73 miles away. Once one of Arkansas' great downtowns and regional economic centers, Pine Bluff's historic downtown can be retooled to sponsor new forms of urban vitality. Despite having the history and genetics of a legacy downtown, Pine Bluff is ranked the second fastest shrinking city among the nation's 381 metropolitan areas (Comen, et. al). The city's population has fallen from its peak of 57,400 residents in 1970 to an estimated low of 42,984 in 2017 and is still shrinking. Pine Bluff is in good company though. Almost every major U.S. city (barring a few Sunbelt cities) has been a shrinking city at some point

over the last 60 years. However, the term shrinking city is misleading as many metropolitan areas have not shrunk, but instead have grown at their peripheries while hollowing out their downtown cores, akin to a demographic donut. Regionwide this is the case as some counties within the Little Rock metropolitan area have experienced nearly 30 percent growth in population over the last decade. Many cities—or more accurately, downtowns—have come back and for good reasons. There is robust demand among young and old for the mixed use, walkable, and socially vital environments that downtowns uniquely generate. Downtown livability is now a market nationwide and an enduring form of economic development attracting young talent, even in troubled "flyover" cities like Cleveland and Detroit. Peculiarly, Pine Bluff began shrinking as other U.S. downtowns and enthusiasm for cities in general were experiencing a resurgence in popularity, suggesting that the withdrawal of industry and subsequent loss of jobs in Pine Bluff came late. Perhaps then revitalization is just around the corner with the right mix of policy, design, and market stimulants.

Re-Live Downtown Pine Bluff is premised on two notions. First, shrinking cities as much as growing cities need design to manage change and coordinate investment, preventing further disorder and erosion of opportunity within their physical environments. Second, downtown revitalization begins with the imperative that residents can live in

Main Street Terminating at Jefferson County Courthouse

Housing is the lifeforce of a downtown. The 1918 Sanborn Map of Pine Bluff clearly shows that downtown was fully built out with residential neighborhoods. Thus, *Re-Live Downtown* is a housing-first downtown revitalization program.

downtown Pine Bluff once again. Housing is the lifeforce of a downtown. The 1918 Sanborn Map of Pine Bluff clearly shows that downtown was fully built out with residential neighborhoods. Indeed, small cities developed in the 19th century rarely made distinctions between the commercial and residential sections of downtown. Only at the turn of the 20th century with the growth of business activity and the emergence of land-use segregation were residential uses pushed out of downtowns. But now, the blended commercial-residential downtown environment that Pine Bluff once had is in big demand again. **Thus, *Re-Live Downtown* is a housing-first downtown revitalization program.**

Shrinking cities require a different design approach than strong market cities. Planning in the latter is important for curbing development excesses and coordinating competing interests in the city's growth. Affordability and equitable access to the city are challenges in strong market cities, especially those dominated by concentrations of wealth from finance/investment, insurance, and real estate industries. *Weak market cities*, on the other hand, suffer from concentrated disadvantage and the absence of an investment climate necessary for maintaining a baseline functioning downtown. Weak market cities characteristically lack the capacity to recover from divestment and ultimately need coordinated interventions to overcome interconnected challenges intrinsic to social and economic abandonment. Besides abandoned buildings and vacant property in the built environment, weak market cities' *operating systems* are challenged by "lack of reliable information, inadequate policy tools, lack of financing, and an absence of land assembly mechanisms . . . just a few of the barriers to redevelopment" (Burnett: 2). Accordingly, municipal operating systems governing growth differ from those attending decline. Just as the markings of prosperity

can diffuse spatially through neighborhoods, so too can distress. The big question is whether intervention into an operating system presiding over decline, like that in Pine Bluff, is shaped by the market or the public sector via urban policy and planning. Considering that market feedback has been negative in Pine Bluff for decades, market-led intervention is improbable.

Two types of interventionist efforts commonly structure post-industrial downtown revitalization (Kromer: 10). One type is driven by *economic development* focused on generating new jobs, recruiting new corporate and industrial headquarters, and constructing signature public works and cultural projects (e.g., casinos, museums and art districts, stadiums, street beautifications, conference centers, aquariums, etc.). Betting on signature cultural projects to revitalize ailing downtowns recasts the city as an entertainment machine and almost never works. This project-centered approach to redevelopment has been the most common among American cities, yet one with a high failure rate, especially in weak market cities. Hinging downtown revitalization on securing a corporate relocation to one's city, or developing a signature entertainment project, has been roundly criticized as a "silver bullet" approach, given its dismal track record in catalyzing sustained economic development. Since cities are essentially "problems in organized complexity", according to acclaimed author on cities, Jane Jacobs, effective redevelopment approaches entail multifaceted portfolios of top down and grassroots solutions. Remember, the challenges in shrinkage are interconnected and multivariate. While entertainment projects can offer needed catalytic energy in support of downtown residential development, it is magical thinking to assume an individual project can replace the strategic role of planning. Successful downtown revitalization requires planning and policy to synchronize public-sector improvements with market investments and public-interest design projects to reverse blight.

The second type of intervention is driven by *human capital development* defined around the provision of affordable housing, neighborhood-based development, and expansion of education, health care, and other well-being services (e.g., youth development and eldercare) known as wraparound services. While the two types of intervention—economic development and human capital development—should not be mutually exclusive, the human capital approach privileges solving for livability needs first over the kind of investments demanded by tourists and corporations. Shrinking cities literature often cites Detroit as a revitalization case study in private sector led economic development (requiring big municipal giveaways to the private sector) dominated by billionaires and other highly capitalized pioneer investors. Detroit, the icon of shrinkage and abandonment, has even seen recent successes in midtown where there is now a housing shortage, mostly of high-market condominiums—the primary housing being developed. This in a city with over 100,000 vacant buildings, including 70,000 deeply discounted homes. Transit-oriented market rate housing is under construction around a privately developed light rail system in a public right-of-way is also under construction. All of this creates a privileged pocket though the privatization of public assets within an ailing city lacking basic services. Markets are certainly essential to any complex redevelopment effort but left to their own interests, markets can create perverse effects. Market dominant revitalization runs the risk of atrophying redevelopment initiatives and accelerating the concentrated disadvantage afflicting weak market cities. Accordingly, *Re-Live Downtown* is based on human capital development underscoring the role of neighborhood development, affordable housing, park space, and supportive signature projects in promoting distributed benefits among all residents through quality of life measures.

An example of downtown revitalization shaped through public sector social policy and planning is Philadelphia. There, redevelopment programs were initiated around affordable neighborhood development

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and provisioning of accompanying wraparound social services. In partnership with the city, Philadelphia's public housing agency and nonprofit housing providers operated as pioneer investors in stabilizing deteriorated neighborhoods and providing affordable housing. Their incremental transformations through neighborhood infill catalyzed much larger housing investments from the private sector, filling in swaths of vacant downtown blocks. The big takeaway: Philadelphia's public sector saw the city as an integrated housing market—a housing ladder—where solving for one type of housing need yielded solutions for the others (for comparisons between Philadelphia and Detroit see Ryan; Kromer). Mixed-income neighborhoods downtown were the result. Hence, interventionist strategies for weak market cities require strong *public-interest leadership*, not necessarily managed by local governments but by nongovernmental organizations effective in forging partnerships with local governments and market-based actors. *Re-Live Downtown* assumes collaborative leadership among Go Forward Pine Bluff, the City of Pine Bluff, Pine Bluff Rising, and perhaps a public-interest housing provider that may arise to support the implementation process for *Re-Live Downtown*.

In a time when many American cities—large and small alike—have become unaffordable to most residents, underutilized middle American downtowns like Pine Bluff offer high-value land and buildings for very low cost. Accordingly, Pine Bluff's reset is rooted in the economics of livability and human capital development coordinated by public sector investment with nonprofit and market development participation. Signature entertainment projects are contextualized in relationship to their surrounding neighborhoods, often anchoring them in support of everyday livability. *Re-Live Downtown* is focused on what public sector led urban design and policy can offer a downtown revitalization effort beyond organic market initiatives like the impressive Hotel Pines renovation. Foremost, *Re-Live Downtown* remakes the downtown into a collection of high-amenity neighborhoods for all—families, retirees, young couples, singles, and entrepreneurs—beginning with development of attainable workforce housing for those with incomes at 60-120% of Area Median Income (AMI). *Re-Live Downtown* begins by providing affordable and walkable neighborhoods for local government, school, hospital, and university staffs who may live where they work and reap the benefit of their service to place. This is the Pine Bluff promise.

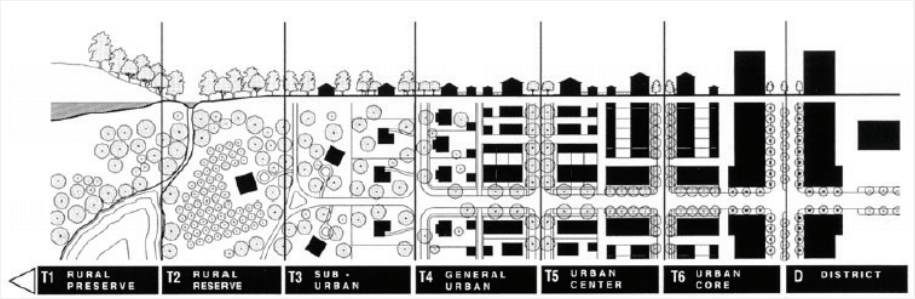
The Revitalization Assembly Kit: Urban Pattern Languages that Support Revitalization

How do we make downtown a viable residential option again for those who desire an urban lifestyle despite high levels of blight? The good news is that Pine Bluff's downtown fabric—its structure or patterns—exhibits an enduring and exemplary urbanism. Like all towns formed before the disruptions of single-use zoning and the emergence of the automobile as a dominant transportation mode in the 1920s, Pine Bluff grew from the evolutionary pattern languages of cities large and small (for a great primer on cities see *The Smart Growth Manual*, Duany, et. al). Traditional cities were built to accommodate human locomotion, and thus are walkable networks of hierarchical neighborhoods that grew in density toward the city's center or downtown. These universal patterns can be described through a tool that planners call the urban-to-rural transect. The *urban-to-rural* transect is simply a cross-section for describing typological density characteristics of common place-types from the symbolic city core to urban general, suburban, rural, and natural environments.

Highly evolved cities like Pine Bluff host memorable mixed-use downtown cores surrounded by self-similar neighborhood centers of decreasing density following the urban-to-rural transect. Street networks consisting of signature and local streets facilitate transitions from one city place-type to another, including good *wayfinding* for visitors and tourists. Streets traditionally accommodate multiple modalities

(pedestrian, bicyclist, transit user, motorist), and the best streets, like main streets, are symbolic places that invite social functions beyond the obligation to simply move traffic. Since most cities share common pattern languages, people can travel to cities, intuit the relationship between center and periphery, and readily know their place within the urban-to-rural transect. Since public policy favored development of auto-dominant suburbs—sprawl without pattern—to the detriment of downtowns, considerable urban design intelligence has been lost. Policy and design intended to restore healthy city functioning must begin with an understanding of the city's growth and decline narratives in its urban patterns.

Pine Bluff's continuous walkable block system—its *urban fabric*—connects downtown and suburban neighborhoods, and its block size averaging two acres is an enduring structural asset. Pine Bluff's 300-foot blocks (a walkable block is no more than five acres or 1,800 feet



Urban-to-rural transect

in perimeter) are favorable for compact mixed-use neighborhoods where essential services including schools, churches, shops, clubs, and professional offices are within walking distance. Downtown's pedestrian-scaled street network contains 226 intersections per square mile, a healthy indicator of connectivity and walkability where the accepted threshold for pedestrian-friendly environments is at least 150 intersections, according to the Congress for the New Urbanism. For comparison, a very walkable Manhattan possesses 182 intersections per square mile while the best intersection density among U.S. cities, Portland, has more than 500 intersections per square mile. Downtown Pine Bluff in 1918 had 315 intersections per square mile due to its

Re-Live Downtown begins by providing affordable and walkable neighborhoods for local government, school, hospital, and university staffs who may live where they work and reap the benefit of their service to place. This is the Pine Bluff promise.

extensive alley system, which has been mostly abandoned. Streets were populated with fine works of architecture, rewarding the decision to walk. Main Street buildings exemplified the best new commercial building prototypes of their day, especially in their public frontage, massing, and proportion. These historic properties, including the Hotel Pines, represent the city's cultural genetic material—its sense of place and history—and are irreplaceable. Their loss entirely undermines revitalization narratives based on history and the downtown experience.

Streetcars, which once added vitality and functionality to Pine Bluff's streets, extended the range of the pedestrian to outlying neighborhood and workplace centers without destroying human-scaled environments as highways have. Beyond the immediate downtown core, a gradient of neighborhood place-types from general urban to suburban describes a logic of growth and transition that has yielded identifiable neighborhood centers. Expressways did not compromise the integrity of the city fabric as has happened in many other downtowns like Little Rock, for example. Its lake and nearby riverfront are significant amenities favoring downtown revitalization. Unlike other towns of its size, Pine Bluff boasts legacy institutions, important for building the city's next generation of economic and cultural wealth, including its public university, community college, arts center, hospital, library, and outlying national science laboratories.

Remarkably, Pine Bluff's downtown supported considerable wealth in its early days. In 1899, the famous American sociologist, historian, and civil rights activist, W. E. B. Du Bois conducted a survey on black

wealth in America. Du Bois found that Pine Bluff had the fourth highest level of black wealth nationwide behind Charleston, SC, Richmond, VA, and New York City with the highest amount of capital owned by black businessmen (Bedford: 24).

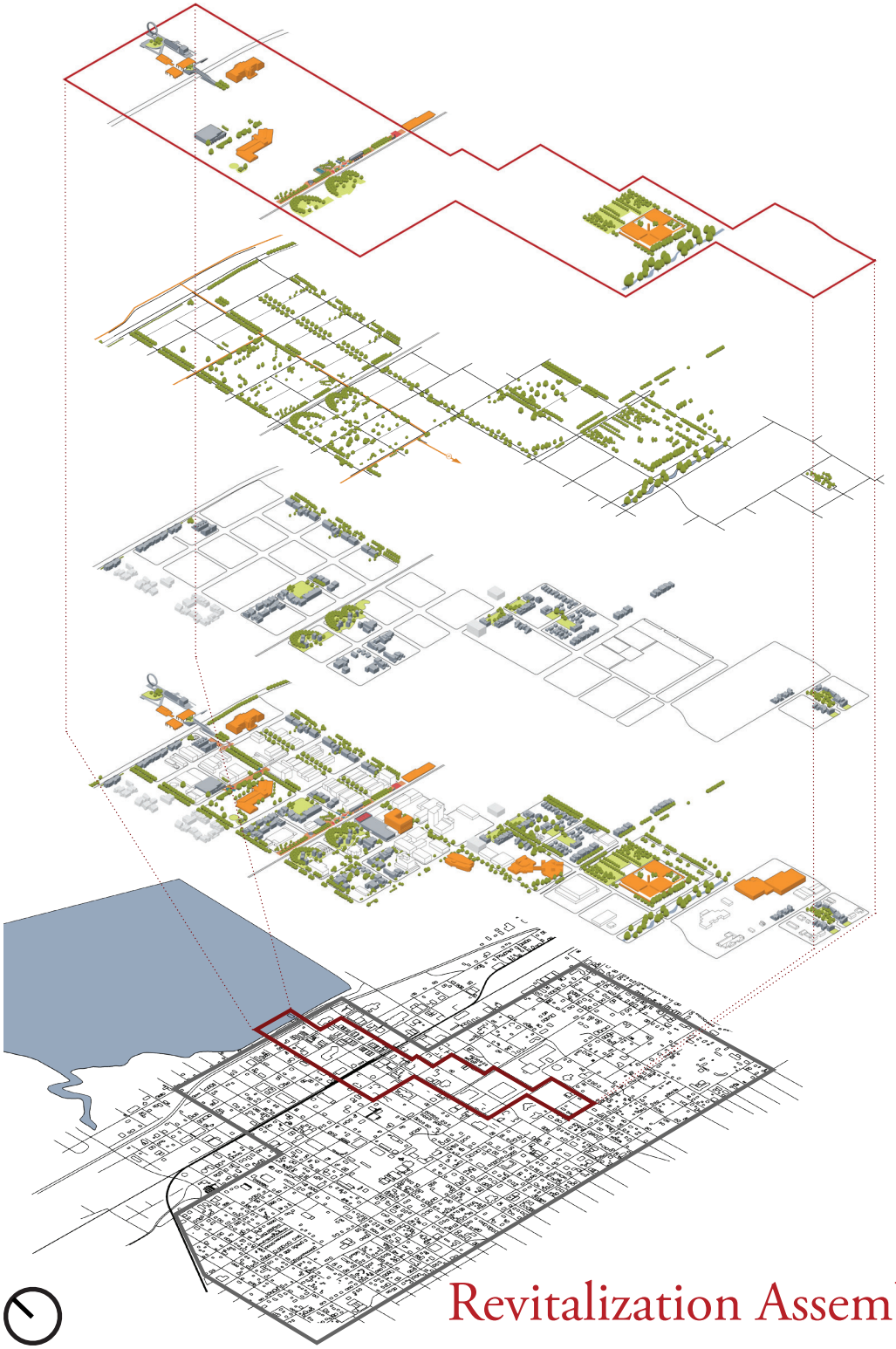
Yet contemporary quality of life indicators profiling downtown Pine Bluff have languished. Its average downtown Walk Score is 45 out of 100, "car-dependent", where most errands require a car–a dismal score for a downtown where scores in the 80s and 90s are expected https://www.walkscore.com/score/pine-bluff-ar-downtown. Close to 31 percent of its population is below the poverty level and its 2016 median household income of $36,538 (national average is $47,615) is the fourth lowest of all U.S. metro areas. Alas, Pine Bluff's violent crime rate is 191 percent higher than the Arkansas average, and 315 percent higher than the national average. "Pine Bluff is safer than 0% of the cities in the United States" https://www.areavibes.com/pine+bluff-ar/crime/. An on-the-ground-survey shows that combined parcel vacancy and building abandonment in the downtown core is close to 75 percent, though this should reverse itself soon with new downtown projects underway. A significant portion of the continuous building fabric that gives urban neighborhoods their vitality has been razed in downtown Pine Bluff, leaving numerous empty blocks—a symptom of deep dysfunction. Remember, healthy downtown fabrics abhor vacuums! Problems in weak market cities are interconnected and often cascade into compounding failures. Such structural failures require special re-investment partnerships to stabilize and revive a broken downtown market.

Nonetheless, Pine Bluff's legacy urban fabric—what some colloquially call "its good bones"—is well suited for *adaptive reuse* due to excellent structural qualities in its infrastructural patterns. These legacy qualities include a pedestrian-scaled block system with high connectivity, small-lot parceling that promotes diverse investment, a history of mixed-use planning to ensure street vitality and livability, and diversity in building type that make downtown an adaptable commercial center. In other words, its urban fabric is resilient and capable of sponsoring multiple transformations to meet contemporary needs; a process known as *urban succession*. Urban succession is the progressive transformation in scale, density, or building type towards higher order city development, akin to transitions from hamlet to village, town, city, and metropolis. Urban succession is a natural evolutionary process in strong market cities. *Re-Live Downtown* aims to promote strategic interventions around centers of strength, moving from abandonment to revitalization through start-up urban neighborhoods.

The revitalization plan for *Re-Live Downtown* outlines a stepwise development approach using a kit-of-parts, much like those in traditional American architectural pattern books. *Re-Live Downtown* consists of four systems: a **Framework Plan**, a **Housing Plan**, a **Street Plan**, and a **Signature Projects Plan**—what we call a Revitalization Assembly Kit. These four plans integrated constitute a complex system, keeping in mind that cities are "problems in organized complexity". However, the complexity can be understood and distilled down to simple patterns. In their book, *The Architectural Pattern Book: A Tool for Building Great Neighborhoods*, authors Ray Gindroz and Rob Robinson ask how did American towns built between 1880 and 1930—the height of the industrial building boom with its large urban expansions—achieve such

consistently grand urban results? How did hundreds of cities and towns like Pine Bluff manage to build great public spaces, beautiful streets, and diverse neighborhoods of similar quality and characteristics? The answer is the widespread 19th century architectural pattern book, a resource which endowed a high degree of harmony among an overall plan, a set of urban spaces, and numerous individual buildings that defined urban spaces like main streets (Urban Design Associates: 7-8, 47-48). The 19th century pattern book forged consensus through prototypes shared among multiple actors engaged in building cities, mostly a nonprofessional class of builders, developers, small property owners, and educated amateurs. Thus, main streets across America exhibit common features knowable by all. *Re-Live Downtown* recalls pattern book logic to revitalize downtown Pine Bluff, hopefully with a similar ease of implementation by multiple local actors. While each of the four plan systems are shaped by differing performance criteria, they work synergistically to create a safe, prosperous, and beautiful downtown environment.

Re-Live Downtown aims to promote strategic interventions around downtown, moving from abandonment to revitalization.



4 SIGNATURE PROJECTS PLAN
86-120

3 STREET PLAN
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2 HOUSING PLAN
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1 FRAMEWORK PLAN
21-30

Revitalization Assembly Kit re-urbanizes downtown patterns.

1 FRAMEWORK PLAN

In a resource-constrained downtown, triage investments by targeting, bundling, and sequencing neighborhood development around select centers of strength.

Given the extent of abandonment, the Framework Plan employs an asset-based planning approach that develops start-up neighborhoods around seven downtown centers of strength. Akin to the minimal invasiveness of acupuncture, the Framework Plan strategically targets nodes for design intervention, jumpstarting downtown investment. Acupuncture optimizes systemwide energy flow through moderate interventions at key pressure points. Similarly, the Framework Plan bundles public sector improvements, creating spillover opportunities attractive to private capital. Planning begins with a nimble investment structure to quickly build momentum rather than rely on the slowness of a downtown master plan.

The Framework Plan: Urban Acupuncture

". . . no city can hope to thrive unless it becomes an attractive, desirable place to live. Housing investment is central to the urban future of weak market cities. Better housing and neighborhoods of choice are not only intrinsically valuable, but bring major investment in job-generating retail trade, services, and entertainment in their wake. The decisions that local actors—including public officials, CDCs, foundations, corporations, and other institutions—make to secure and invest housing resources are crucially important."

Alan Mallach, "Building a Better Future: New Directions for Housing Policies in Weak Market Cities"

Neighborhoods need anchors. The Framework Plan for downtown employs an asset-based planning approach that develops *start-up neighborhoods* around seven existing downtown anchors. Given the large size of downtown and the extent of its abandonment, an asset-based plan strategically directs resources to energize underutilized "centers of strength" in the downtown core. Asset-based planning begins with an appreciation of local civic strengths—Saracen Landing, Main Street and the Jefferson County Courthouse, the Don D Reynolds Center combined with the Train Depot, Hotel Pines, the forthcoming Pine Bluff Public Library combined with the Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas, the Pine Bluff Civic Center, and the forthcoming Pine Bluff Aquatics Center + Multipurpose Center. Akin to the minimal invasiveness of acupuncture, the Framework Plan strategically targets these centers of strength for design intervention, jumpstarting investment throughout the downtown. Acupuncture optimizes systemwide energy flow through moderate interventions at key pressure points. Similarly, the Framework Plan aims to catalyze development around these seven combined centers of strength, creating spillover opportunities attractive to private market capital. Therefore, the Framework Plan begins with a nimble investment structure to quickly build momentum rather than rely on a normative downtown master plan.

Why begin with a Framework Plan appreciably circumscribed in scope, rather than a comprehensive master plan of the entire downtown? Master plans tend to overreach. Because weak market cities are resource-constrained environments lacking investor interest, allocation of limited resources should follow assigned degrees of urgency targeting the greatest effectiveness in a kind of planning triage. Here, design approaches are challenged to effectively *catalyze* investment within "patchy" incomplete urban environments marked by vacant blocks. Master plans simply *coordinate* known scheduled investments as if investor interest were no problem. The Framework Plan is an establishment-stage initiative to bundle pioneer investment mostly for housing. This typically requires development leadership from the public or nonprofit sector involving non-commercial financing without expectation for participation by the market sector in the establishment phase. As in any urban succession, establishment-stage success among a few pioneering actors incents larger scaled development in the second stage, the point where markets participate since they are typically not early adopters. The promise of scaled market investment is the geographic propagation of infill development that completely transforms downtown. The Framework Plan, therefore, is a critical triage tool for targeting, bundling, and sequencing catalytic development in an investment-starved environment.

Recommendations

The Framework Plan identifies seven strategic centers of strength to quickly implement downtown revitalization. We make the following recommendations:

Akin to the minimal invasiveness of acupuncture, the Framework Plan strategically targets centers of strength for design intervention, jumpstarting investment throughout the downtown. The Framework Plan aims to catalyze development, creating spillover opportunities attractive to the private market.

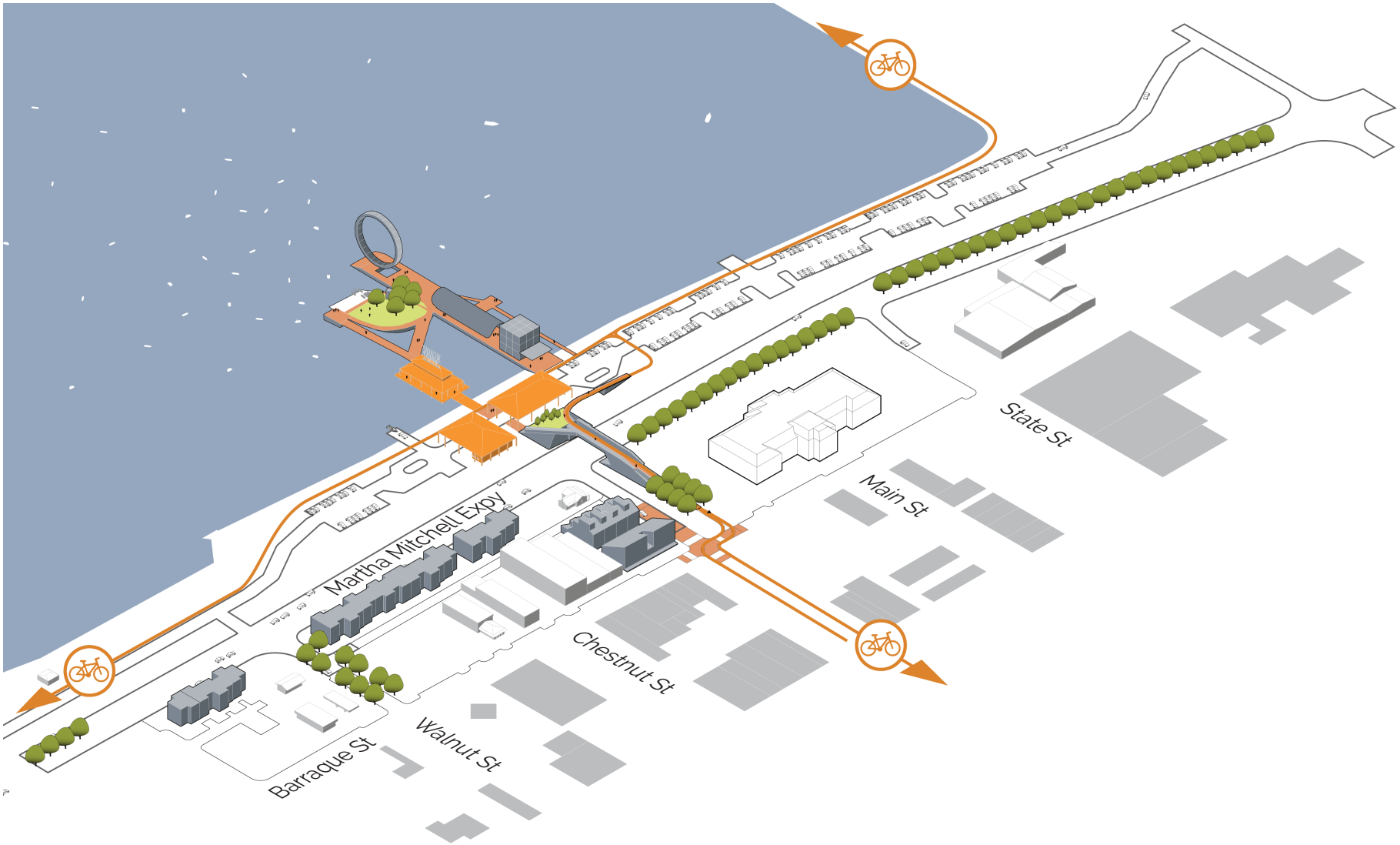
- **Begin with targeted investments in newly renamed downtown core areas that have undergone massive site clearance: the Delta Rhythm and Bayous Arts District, the Hillocks Neighborhood, and the Library & Arts Courts.**

We recommend that building fabrics consisting of historic structures be evaluated by a historic preservation architect to determine their candidacy for stabilization or demolition, the latter a last resort (remember it is irreplaceable genetic material). With the exception of a few buildings, the Framework Plan does not entail further building demolition. Because adaptive reuse of historic structures is costly and requires specialized development and design expertise, it is unfeasible for quick start-up revitalization advocated in the Framework Plan. However, adaptive reuse of Main Street and other downtown districts like Theater Row carry lower risk in the later phases of revitalization once start-up phases are successful. Therefore, initial investments should focus on cleared sites beginning with land assembly to develop housing.

- **Develop a form-based code to replace incumbent single-use zoning, the latter which perversely makes traditional downtowns illegal, non-conforming developments.**

Form-based codes are the DNA of walkable neighborhoods. Simultaneous with implementation of *Re-Live Downtown*, we recommend commissioning a code development consultant to implement a form-based code for either the entire downtown or at least the Framework Plan area as a test case. The Framework Plan will require a form-based code to replace single-use zoning. Form-base code is land use regulation based on definition of the intended physical form of public spaces (streets and parks) rather than the separation of uses. Urbanism is predicated on mixed-use development, counter to single-use zoning. Single-use zoning renders traditional downtowns like Pine Bluff illegal, making it impossible to build traditional downtowns under contemporary single-use zoning. Instead, form-based codes address the intended relationship between building facades and the street identical to the traditional building and urban patterns organizing downtown Pine Bluff. For further information on form-based codes, please refer to the Form-Base Codes Institute website at https://formbasedcodes.org/definition/.

Because weak market cities are resource-constrained environments lacking investor interest, allocation of limited resources should follow assigned degrees of urgency targeting the greatest effectiveness in a kind of planning triage. The Framework Plan, then, is a critical triage tool for targeting, bundling, and sequencing catalytic development in an investment-starved environment.

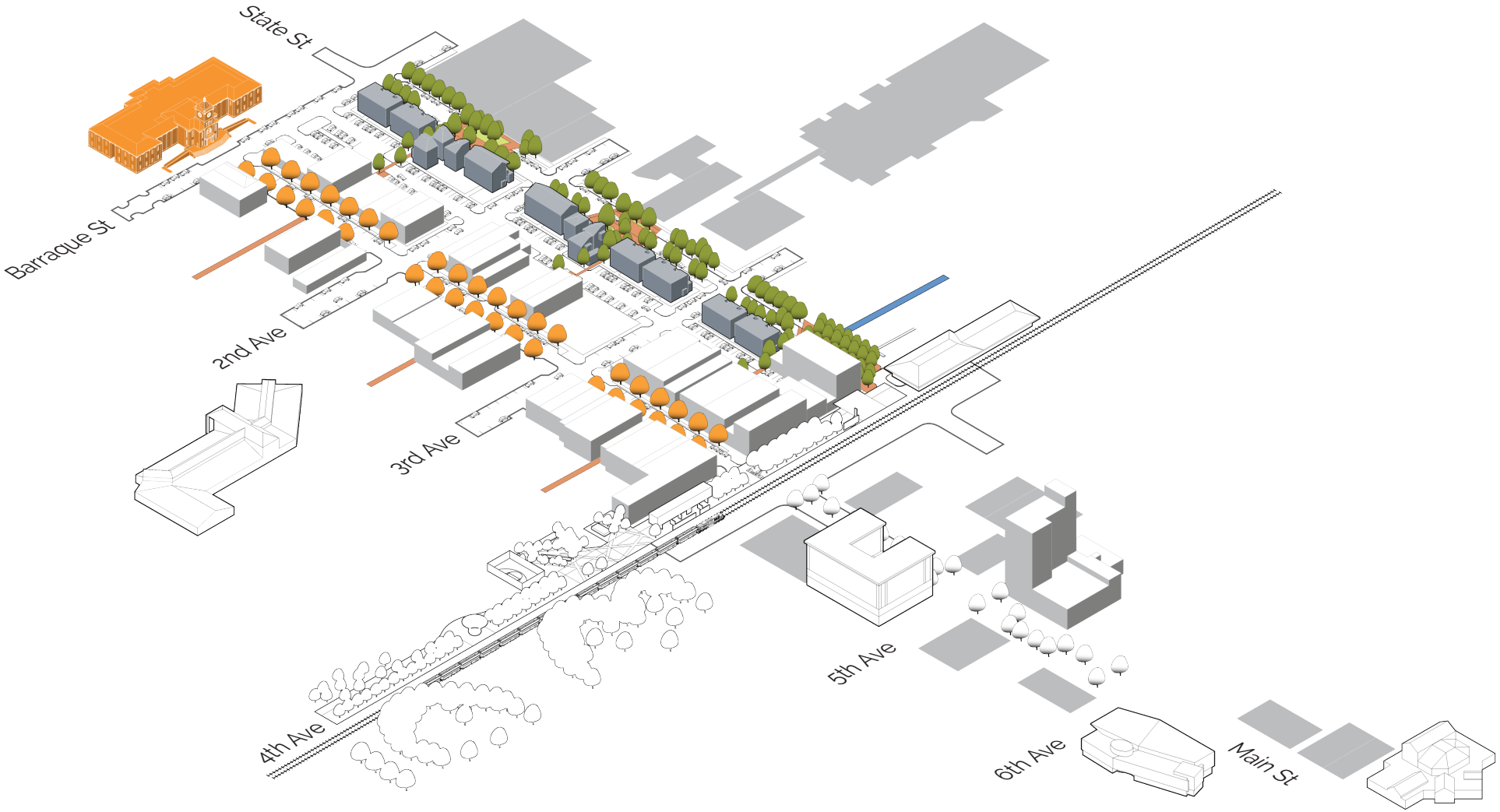


CENTER OF STRENGTH

LAKEFRONT AT SARACEN LANDING

Recalling the city's beginnings as a waterfront port, reconnect the downtown to its lakefront through a new neighborhood, bridge, and wharf complex.

The Plan proposes a plaza and pedestrian bridge along Pine Street connecting the Landing to Barraque Street, while functioning as a gateway to downtown. Develop the new Saracen Wharf absorbing the Landing and fishing pier into an interconnected loop for waterfront entertainment and recreation. New programming includes a "floating lawn", boathouse, beach with kayak and paddle boat launch, boardwalk, pavilions for retail and food vendors, and a Ferris wheel. On Barraque Street and Martha Mitchell Expressway infill with housing that features views to the lake. Turn the expressway into a boulevard to frame a gateway effect for downtown.

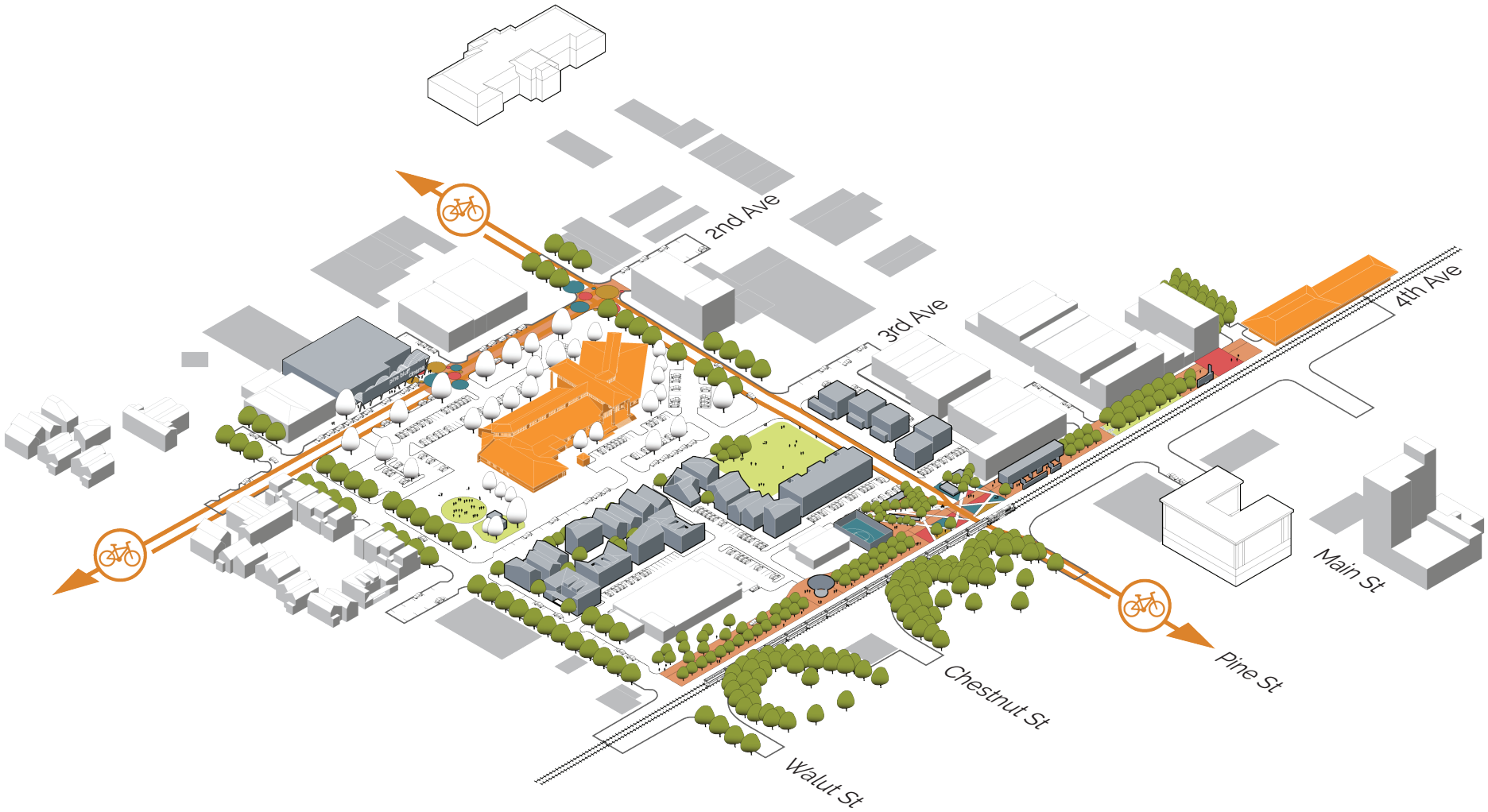


CENTER OF STRENGTH

HOUSING OFF MAIN

Retrofit State Street as a pedestrian-oriented *shared street* to support housing that extends its outdoor living space into the new park spaces of the street.

Accompanying the revitalization of Main Street, infill the eastern blocks of Main Street at State Street with housing connected by grand porches. Shared streets function as plazas or parks to privilege pedestrian activity through traffic calming approaches. A signature "slow street", State Street extends the living environment of housing through street-based seating areas, tree stands, playgrounds, and landscapes. The street becomes a park. Housing Off Main offers a tranquil downtown residential environment just around the corner from a bustling Main Street.

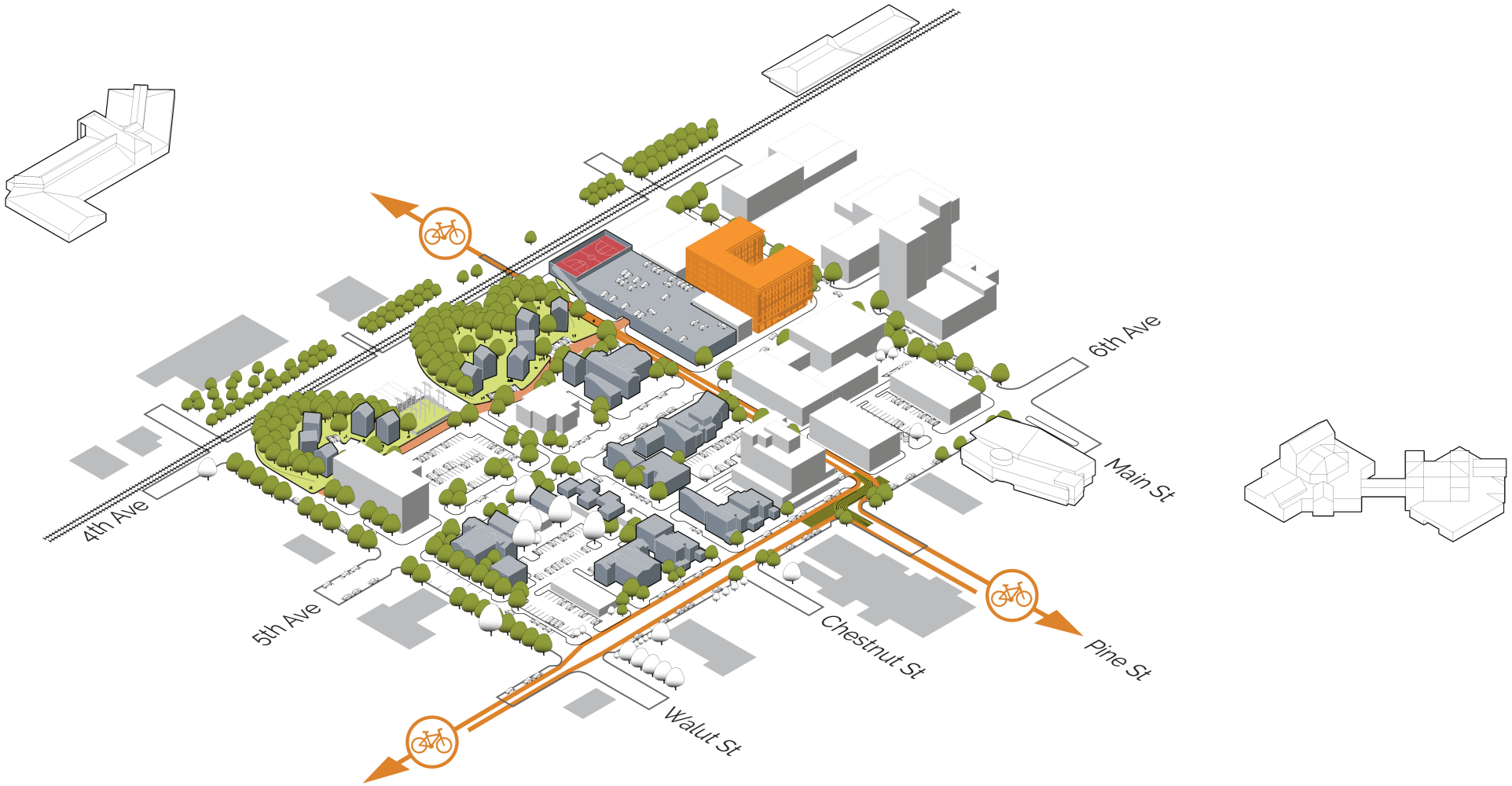


CENTER OF STRENGTH

DELTA RHYTHM AND BAYOUS ARTS DISTRICT

Develop a tree-lined ArtWalk as an acoustical buffer between the railroad and the new neighborhood to the north.

Celebrate Pine Bluff's and the Delta Lowlands' musical legacy through an ArtWalk that repurposes 4th Avenue from the Union Station Depot to Walnut Street. A major rail center, Pine Bluff was a popular stop on the now-famous Chitlin' Circuit for African-American performers touring the South during the era of segregation. Neighborhood recreation facilities and commemorative gardens anchor the west side of the park, while the depot and Masonic Temple anchor the park's east terminus. Simmons Plaza with shaded sitting areas anchors the ArtWalk crossing at Main Street.



CENTER OF STRENGTH HILLOCKS NEIGHBORHOOD

Deflect train noise through biomass by developing forested hillocks with tower housing on the downslope, bringing the country to the middle of downtown.

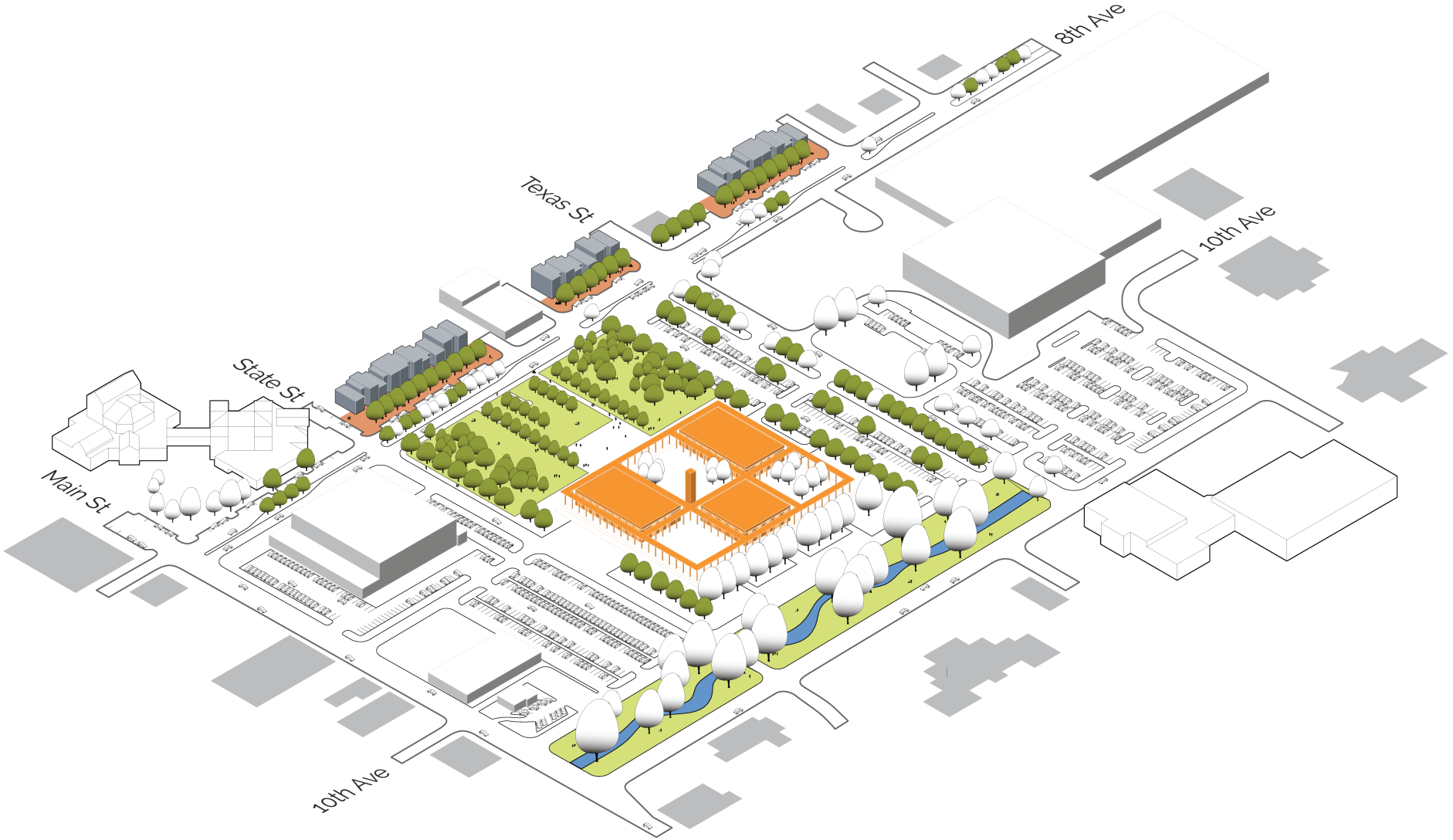
Since train noise is an intractable nuisance, develop forested *hillocks* (small hills or mounds) along the rail corridor to deflect sound away from new residential development. Tree stands also deter the visual impact of the existing electrical utility substation. A preferable alternative to unsightly sound walls, the hillocks are a unique urban landscape feature where residents enjoy a combination of country and city in the middle of a flat downtown. A future parking garage for the Hotel Pines floats above the easternmost hillocks.

CENTER OF STRENGTH

LIBRARY & ARTS COURTS

Develop pocket neighborhoods with residential greens for households with children, capitalizing on proximity to the future library and the arts center.

Residential squares east of Main Street capitalize on their proximity to the future library and the Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas. These educational institutions support new family-friendly neighborhoods organized around landscaped commons, making downtown a residential option once again for families. Known as *pocket neighborhoods*, residential greens fronted by housing provide secure play space for children and general gathering. Pocket neighborhoods have emerged in popularity for those residents seeking a more community-oriented lifestyle.



CENTER OF STRENGTH

CIVIC CENTER DISTRICT

Develop live-work housing and unrealized Civic Center Gardens as a starter commercial ecosystem to support re-emergence of the convention center and a visitor economy.

Construct the unrealized gardens for the Civic Center designed by acclaimed architect Edward Durell Stone. Line the north edge of 8th Avenue with live-work housing units. Live-work housing contains ground-floor swing space adaptable to neighborhood services like restaurants, shops, and professional businesses responsive to demand that may emerge at the hotel and convention center (otherwise, ground floors remain residential). Live-work development services a visitor experience economy necessary to the success of a contemporary convention center.

CENTER OF STRENGTH

AQUATICS CENTER SOUTH

Reconnect neighborhoods intentionally cut off from the southern edge of the Civic Center through development of a gateway pocket neighborhood as a connector.

Neighborhood edges should be seams, not dividers. Develop the block south of the Aquatics Center as a neighborhood anchor, reconnecting the Civic Center District with its neighborhood to the south. Develop the pocket neighborhood with a wide median in the right-of-way for park space and parking. This is a traditional neighborhood planning technique for transferring private yard space to a residential green shared by all buildings. Housing is arranged to create a gateway effect that celebrates connection rather than division.

2 HOUSING PLAN

In a resource-constrained downtown, triage investments by targeting, bundling, and sequencing neighborhood development around select centers of strength.

Multifamily housing is proposed around centers of strength as *start-up neighborhoods* to promote long-term downtown redevelopment goals. Housing should be constructed around amenitized public spaces to immediately build enduring value into housing investments. Use multifamily housing in the Framework Plan since single-family housing undercuts realization of downtown's full value and economic development potential. Public space and multifamily housing are two sides of the same coin, an investment in one is an investment in the other to ensure value-added and sustained placemaking in downtown.

The Housing Plan

"Well-designed, simple Missing Middle housing types achieve medium-density yields and provide high-quality, marketable options between the scales of single-family homes and mid-rise flats for walkable urban living. They are designed to meet the specific needs of shifting demographics and the new market demand, and are a key component to a diverse neighborhood. They are classified as "missing" because very few of these housing types have been built since the early 1940s due to regulatory constraints, the shift to auto-dependent patterns of development, and the incentivization of single-family home ownership."

Daniel Parolek, "Missing Middle Housing: Responding to the Demand for Walkable Urban Living"

Re-Live Downtown is a housing-first downtown revitalization program. Housing strategy in weak market cities should focus on building neighborhoods, not just houses. We recommend multifamily housing of moderate density be built around centers of strength as start-up neighborhoods to promote long-term downtown redevelopment goals. Housing should be constructed around amenitized public spaces to immediately build enduring value into housing investments. Densities in accord with downtown environments ensure population of public spaces with residents—or "eyes on the street"—another prevalent Jacobs axiom that speaks to neighborhood vitality and security. More than police and security officers, good neighbors promote safety. We recommend use of multifamily housing in almost all the Framework Plan since single-family housing undercuts realization of the downtown core's full value and economic development potential (refer to further discussion of this below in Urban Succession: The Next Pine Bluff Beyond Single-Family Detached Housing). Public space and multifamily housing are two sides of the same coin, an investment in one is an investment in the other to ensure sustained, value-added placemaking in downtown.

Re-Live Downtown is structured around the type of attainable and diverse housing stock common to early 20th century urban neighborhoods nationwide: "missing middle housing" (see Parolek, who coined the term). Missing middle housing types are moderate-density multifamily buildings like townhouses, bungalow courts, duplexes, mansion apartments, live-work units, triplexes, and multiplexes, including popular four-squares that have not been built since the 1940s. These are beloved housing scales with buildings ranging in size between 2-12 dwelling units. Banks stopped financing missing middle housing in favor of suburban single-family homes and large garden apartment flats, so markets stopped building them. But strong market cities are building missing middle housing once again, and it has been key to their recovery. In the most popular urban neighborhoods it is the only residential product getting financed and built. Some missing middle housing does not require costly commercial-grade construction, loans, or contractors, and thus can be built by small residential developers/contractors at affordable price points. Large housing projects typically cannot provide comparable affordability and product given their complexities, higher construction costs, and significant "soft costs" (developer fees, financing costs, architecture and engineering fees, permitting costs, etc.). Unlike the large-scale apartment flat and its opposite, the single-family home, missing middle housing provides diverse living arrangements for all income groups and multiple demographics, many who want to age in their neighborhoods. Since missing middle housing types use *walk-up* configurations (i.e., their individual or shared front doors are directly accessible from the street—

Missing Middle Housing Spectrum

Re-Live Downtown is a housing-first downtown revitalization program. Housing strategy in weak market cities should focus on building neighborhoods, not just houses.

Public space and multifamily housing are two sides of the same coin, an investment in one is an investment in the other to ensure sustained, value-added placemaking in downtown.

no corridors) they play a fundamental role in making the street a vital, safe, and convivial pedestrian-oriented space.

A **Matrix of 28 Walk-up Housing Prototypes** with floor plans in pattern book style (see Appendix) has been designed for *Re-Live Downtown*. Their designs are contemporary but compatible with Pine Bluff's historic downtown structures in their urban massing (height), simple volumes, fenestration (patterns made by windows and doors), use of brick, and unique ground floors that sponsor urban frontages like porches, patios, terraces, and storefronts. When grouped around landscaped neighborhood spaces, the 28 prototypes offer extensive variations for shaping neighborhood identity without losing the coherence that made historic downtown neighborhoods rich yet ordered residential settings. Unlike the sprawling suburban ranch house (long side to the street and inefficient use of street infrastructure that costs $450+ per linear foot), the multiple stories and slender widths of the 28 housing prototypes recall historic urban building massing, making them compatible with 3-4 story downtown development. Their open-plan loft interiors extend onto front porches or balconies reflecting current market demand for urban residential products.

Within the boundaries of the Framework Plan, we recommend that specific housing prototypes be assigned designated parcels and constructed as illustrated in the Housing Plan. The larger and more urban prototypes are located along significant streets toward the downtown center while smaller prototypes are reserved for low-scale pocket court neighborhoods outside of the core. The careful blending of housing density and building type is commensurate with evolutionary urban-to-rural transect patterns describing density gradient from the downtown core to peripheral neighborhoods. It is critically important to adhere to the designated massing profiles and spatial patterns shown in the Framework Plan to avoid chaotic spatial planning insensitive to downtown patterns. Randomness in redevelopment of the downtown core will undercut the market potential of revitalization efforts. Therefore, housing is not selected for its style, but rather for its density and massing because housing fabric shapes public spaces and important streets—the form-based code relationship. We encourage the liberal application of the housing prototypes as infill development throughout downtown and beyond the Framework Plan.

Recommendations

The Housing Plan is staged to generate startup neighborhoods linking construction of housing with public space, and shared parking facilities. We make the following recommendations:

- **Form a nonprofit or nongovernmental housing provider in partnership with the city to develop mixed-income housing combining attainable workforce, market-rate, and affordable housing.**

Weak market cities require special interventionist initiatives to reverse decline, including delivery of bundled housing services only available from public-interest housing providers focused on affordability. Not the same as public housing authorities subsidized under U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) financing, public-interest housing providers are primarily local independents. The most effective public-interest housing providers work closely with their host city administrations. In addition to funding, developing, and constructing housing, public-interest housing providers also offer wraparound services related to tenant selection, mortgage assistance, property management, and community land trust. Public-interest housing providers have access to development funding and tenant financing opportunities not available in market-oriented housing. Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) mortgage products, for instance, are typically part of blended low-cost financing packages offered in nonprofit housing to facilitate equity-building mortgages for households seeking home ownership. Moreover, a public-interest housing provider may provide *gap financing* for private development projects contributing to

downtown regeneration in the establishment phase.

Most importantly, a public-interest housing provider allows the community to capture the increase in real estate values from the public sector's investments. Known as *value capture*, public agencies—including nonprofit housing providers—are financing the development and operation of new projects through the recovery of increases in value and income generated from their new project investments. A public-interest housing provider can generate market value in its downtown location and subsequently monetize this value increase in the lease or sale of market-rate units. Income can be deployed toward operations, even underwriting development costs of attainable workforce units.

Currently, private landowners tend to capture the totality of value increases generated by public sector investments. The public sector, more accustomed to debt management (vs asset management), often fails to capitalize on the market value of its assets when it sells assets at book value or deeper discount to the private sector. Such transactions transfer latent wealth to private sector actors, who often earn windfalls on legacy investments originated by the public sector. In the case of Pine Bluff, the likely differential will be significant given increased market desire for downtown housing. Downtown revitalization would unlock further neighborhood value, a value differential which should be captured by a public-interest housing provider to self-finance operations. Accordingly, workforce households may experience both the benefits of new construction as well as the rare advantages of living in a centrally located blended-income neighborhood.

- **Assemble land parcels and develop housing in the downtown core at moderate densities—10 units per acre minimum, with higher downtown density, in the Framework Plan.**
To overcome the lack of market interest in downtown, we recommend assembly of contiguous land parcels to develop neighborhoods in tandem with public sector improvements of streets and parks. This gives the assembling agent (ideally in partnership with a public-interest housing provider) qualitative control over development outcomes as well as financial stability against land speculation. Economy of scale associated with both land assembly and density thresholds improves a housing provider's ability to deliver affordability which is difficult to achieve in new construction. Furthermore, density above 15 units per acre will yield greater walkability, eventually attract businesses downtown including a small grocer, and make future public transit feasible since bus systems are more cost effective at higher densities. Municipal bus systems require a minimum of seven units per acre to make 30-minute *headways* (time between buses) feasible.

- **Initiate first-stage housing development around neighborhood spaces using multifamily prototypes shown in the Housing Plan.**
To build immediate long-term value into housing and for early revitalization successes, develop housing around important neighborhood spaces—remember, an investment in one is an investment in the other. Commercial developers will patiently defer development around the best neighborhood spaces last using the most expensive housing. This leverges modest early-stage successes for greater return on investment later. The revitalization process in weak market cities, on the other hand, must show dramatic pioneer-stage successes in terms of livability, safety, and aesthetics.

Again, we recommend that specific housing prototypes be assigned to designated parcels and constructed as illustrated in the Housing Plan. The largest and more urban prototypes are located along significant streets in the downtown center while smaller prototypes are reserved for low-scale pocket court neighborhoods outside of the core. We recommend the city implement a by-right (one-stop) entitlement procedure if developers and housing providers agree to build the unit prototype designated for a parcel, saving time and money in the permitting process. And the floor plans and elevations for the 28 Walk-up Housing Prototypes designed by professional designers are free of charge!

- **Build multifamily walk-up housing (2-12 units) for workforce populations at 60-120% of AMI mixed with market-rate units.**
Implement the Pine Bluff promise—to provide affordable and walkable neighborhoods for local government, school, hospital, and university

staffs who may live where they work and reap the benefit of their service to place. Workforce households tend to have school-aged children who benefit from neighborhood development around shared neighborhood spaces and cultural/educational downtown amenities like the library, arts center, aquatic center, Main Street, ArtWalk, cinema, and lakefront wharf.

Affordable housing is defined by the U.S. government as housing costs that do not exceed 30 percent of household income. Typically, subsidized public housing is reserved for the most cost burdened households making less than 60 percent of AMI per HUD guidelines, which we are not advocating. Instead, workforce housing is commonly reserved for households making 60-120 percent of AMI who often suffer less housing choices than those public housing beneficiaries who receive vouchers or direct housing assistance. At $37,000, Pine Bluff's AMI stipulates that average monthly rents or mortgages should be $925. Housing prototypes range in area between 420 square feet and 1,300+ square feet to accommodate local housing affordability.

Walk-up multifamily housing under 12 units is less expensive than large apartments and often delivers superior residential environments. Large apartments require costly commercial grade construction and qualified commercial-level contractors. Missing middle housing can be built by small-scale residential builders with residential permits, keeping construction costs below that required for commercial apartment buildings and single-family houses. Missing middle housing has more advantageous leasing velocities and construction risk than large apartment buildings. Missing middle scale housing also heralds the return of the local developer-entrepreneur responsible for the construction of our nation's exemplary 19th century main street towns and innovation in housing prototypes.

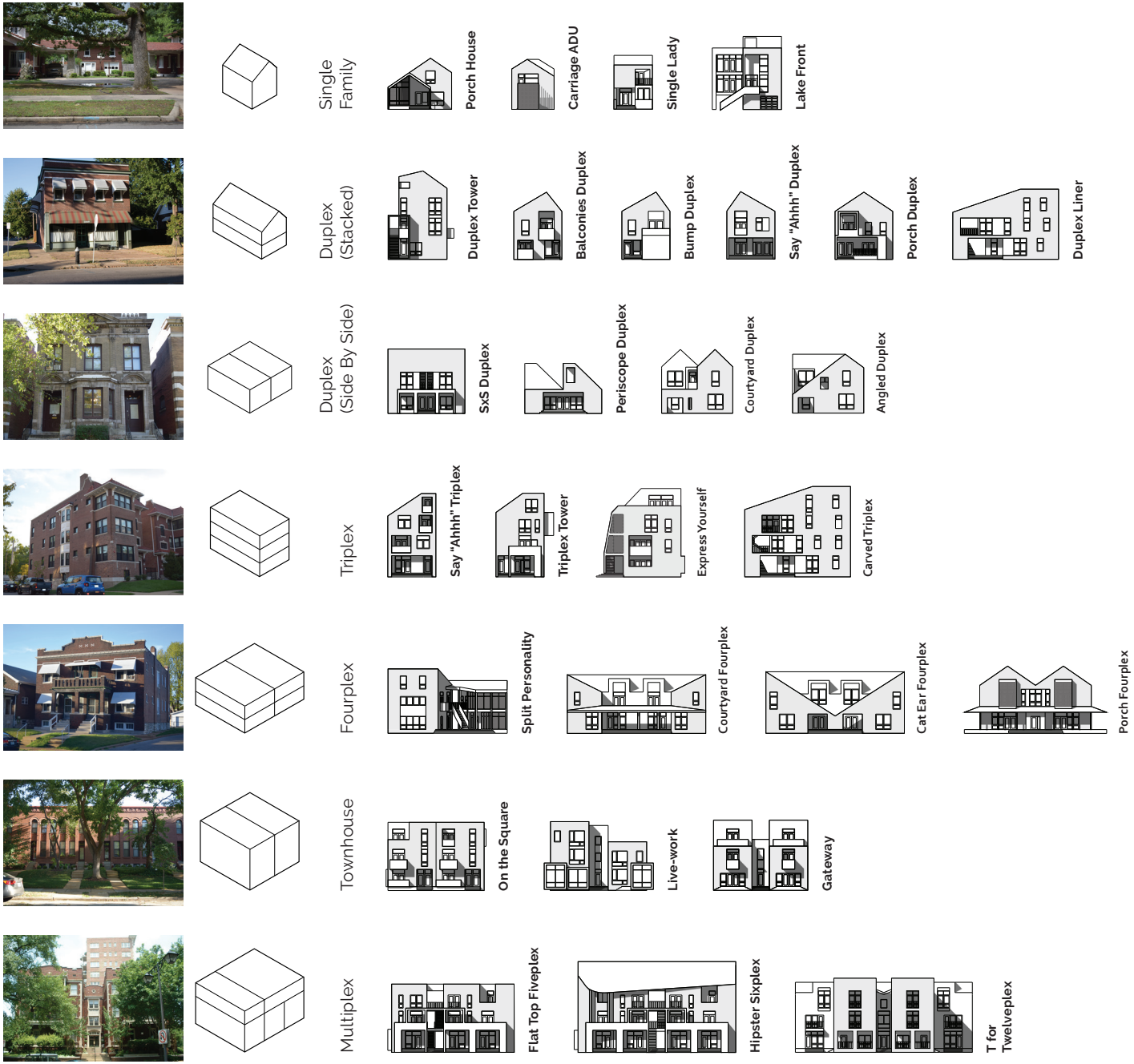
• **Finalize the Walk-up Housing Prototypes and their neighborhood groupings in book form.**
While a **Matrix of 28 Walk-up Housing Prototypes** with floor plans in pattern book style has been provided in *Re-Live Downtown*, it is preliminary and requires measured floor plans for application by others. Prototype mix in neighborhoods requires further refinement once property assembly has been completed and housing providers are available to provide input on final platting and land tenancies.

• **Decouple land from the sale of housing and hold in a land trust to maintain downtown housing affordability. Here, housing is not necessarily subsidized, just protected from the market.**
Land cost rather than construction cost is the primary culprit in rampant housing price increases that lead to market unaffordability and gentrification. Once a neighborhood becomes desirable, housing becomes subject to predatory profit-seeking resulting in the possible replacement of workforce households with a new residential investor class. In smaller cities like Pine Bluff, long-term speculation around anticipated growth can halt urban infill development processes, reversing revitalization successes. Alternative land tenancy involving models like a conservation land trust, co-operative housing, or nonprofit housing co-ownership socializes ownership, tempering speculation and gentrification in real estate markets. This is another reason we recommend incorporating a public-interest housing provider, at least in the establishment phase. The goal is to maintain downtown affordability in the establishment phase as well as in subsequent phases of downtown revitalization. A community land trust held by a public-interest housing provider is an excellent tool for building community wealth while helping workforce families build equity through home ownership (Ignaczak).

• **Use urban parking strategies like on-street parking and shared on-site parking in lieu of individual driveways to avoid turning sidewalks into driveways.**
Driveways crossing the sidewalk undermine the public realm in downtown cores. Higher densities appropriate to urban settings require different surface parking strategies for automobile storage. Low-density suburban homes accommodate parking in individual driveways on-site, which is not suitable for downtown sites. Individual driveways consume valuable land and undermine downtown's pedestrian realm by turning sidewalks into driveways (a 15-foot driveway crosses the sidewalk every thirty feet or so). Therefore, we recommend tucking shared

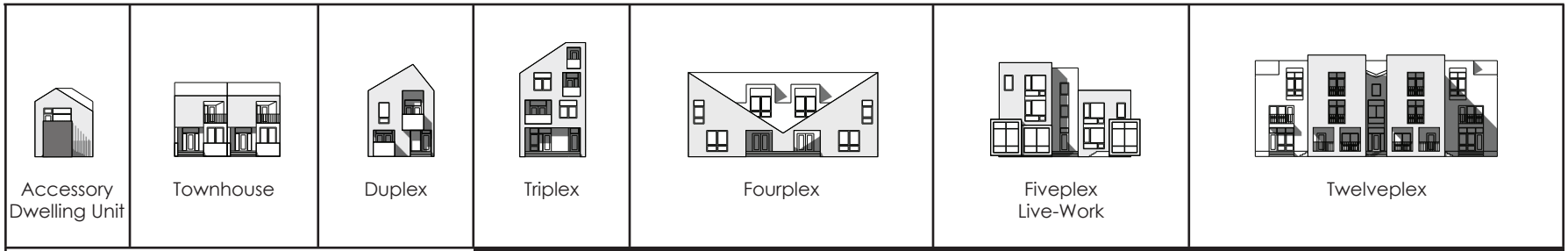
parking facilities on-site along alleys and in midblock locations behind buildings, ensuring a superior pedestrian experience along the sidewalk. Remember, parking lots never create good street frontage in cities, undermining higher and best uses of valuable street frontage. Excessive parking requirements including required parking minimums for each parcel, standard in older land use codes, add unnecessary costs to affordable housing.

We reiterate the importance of developing affordable, attainable, and market-rate multifamily dwelling units in each neighborhood with emphasis on attainable workforce housing. The easiest housing types for local developers to finance and build will be attached townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. Fiveplexes trigger commercial financing, which can be somewhat more complicated but no less profitable. For mixed-use buildings involving commercial uses Small Business Administration loans can be very favorable. Regardless of housing type mix, it is essential that a public-interest housing provider be formed to begin the process of building downtown neighborhoods crucial to the success of sustained downtown revitalization. Early successes will likely stimulate return of market and private capital investment. Make sure that the city entitlement process is streamlined in processing development permits to lessen developer cost burdens.



MATRIX OF 28 WALK-UP HOUSING PROTOTYPES FOR PINE BLUFF

"Missing middle housing" types including known urban types like duplexes, triplexes, attached townhouses, fourplexes, pocket courts, and other multiplexes are indispensable in regenerating downtown neighborhood densities.



Building Code

International Residential Code | **International Building Code**

IRC Codes: Most structures under the IRC do not require an architect's or engineer's stamp.

IBC Codes: Structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are typically required to be engineered.

Attached duplex townhouses trigger permitting under the IBC.

Triplex triggers permitting under the IBC, more prescriptive than the IRC, requiring sprinklers, additional fire prevention measures, and engineered HVAC systems.

Buildings with more than four units per landing require elevators and two means of egress, while all buildings more than four stories require elevators.

Financing

FF | **Federal Housing Administration/Conforming** | **Commercial**

FHA Financing: Owner-occupied residential mortgages allow down payments as low as 3.5% amortized over a 30-year period. Conforming loans require higher down payments for dwellings not owner-occupied.

Commercial Financing: Commercial mortgage amortization periods are 10-25 years with a 15-year average. Interest rates are at least 0.5% higher than the federal prime rate, with balloon payments required 3-10 years after origination date.

ADUs are often financed with personal loans from Friends and Family (FF) or so-called *hard money*, short-term private loans with higher interest rates.

Live-work more than 50% commercial qualifies for SBA financing with more favorable loan terms than conventional residential mortgages.

Fiveplex triggers commercial mortgages with more compressed amortization periods, higher interest rates than residential mortgages, and balloon payment terms.

Fire Code

International Fire Code Section D

Live-work structures may be permitted under the IRC when they are equipped with approved fire suppression systems.

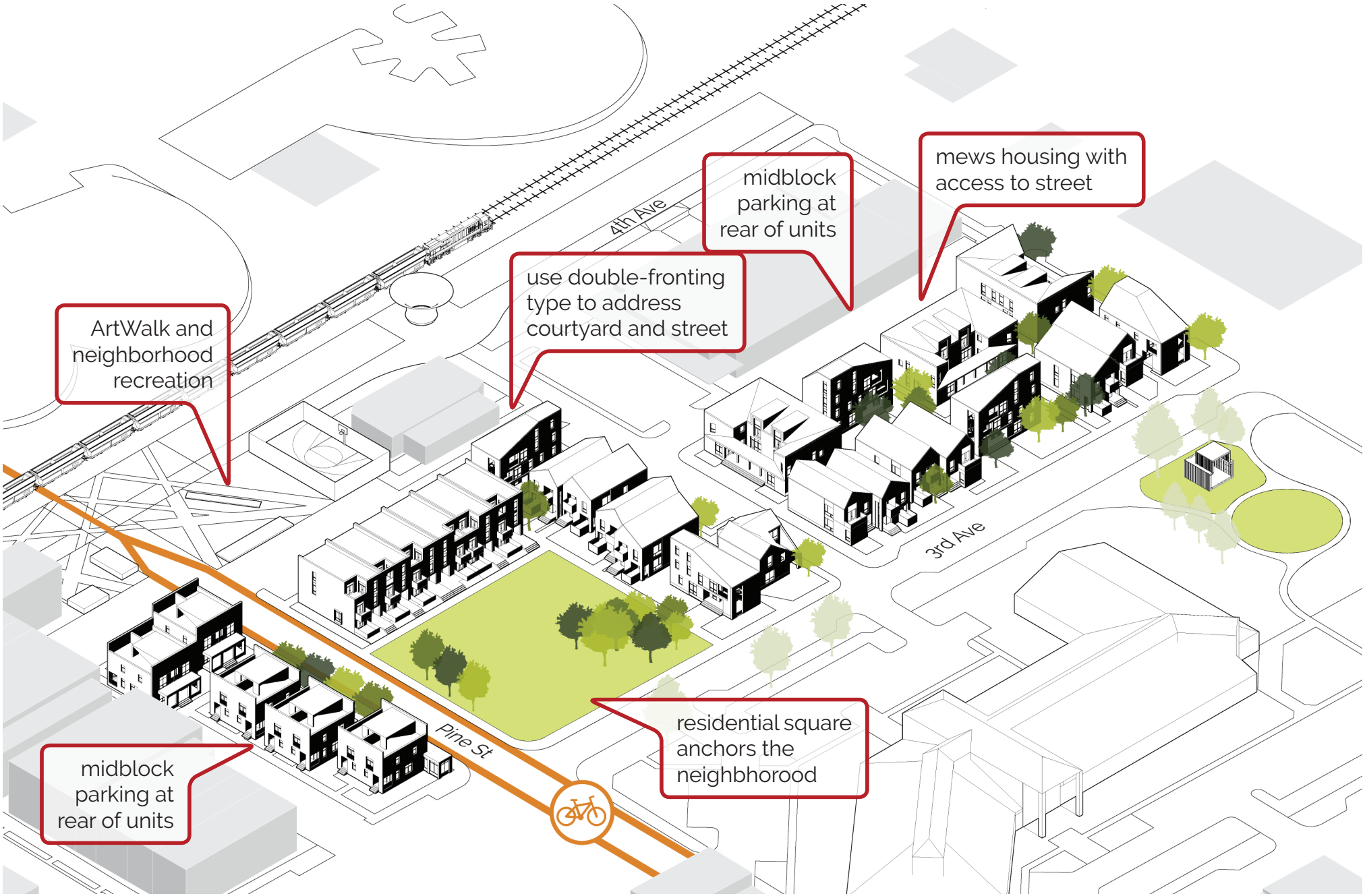
Buildings with the lowest roof line greater than 30 feet above ground trigger requirement for aerial apparatus (fire truck) lanes 26 feet wide along one side of building located between 15 and 30 feet from building.

Accessibility

Accessible-Adaptable Units

Fourplex triggers an accessible-adaptable unit on the first floor–or elevator access to floors above–compliant with American With Disabilities Act and Fair Housing Accessibility Laws governing handicapped accessibility.

Codes and Financial Thresholds for developing housing pro formas.



75 new units: 17 units / acre

Delta Rhythm and Bayous Arts District Neighborhood

In each neighborhood, include diverse housing types in formal groupings around a residential square or lawn, and informal groupings on standard blocks.

Residential square looking west at Pine Street and 3rd Avenue

Neighborhood Spaces

Residential squares or lawns in each neighborhood provides family-oriented recreation while adding value to housing.

East edge of residential square looking south toward ArtWalk

Housing Infill

Determine the center and edges for each neighborhood.

Midblock view looking south into courtyard mews housing on 3rd Avenue

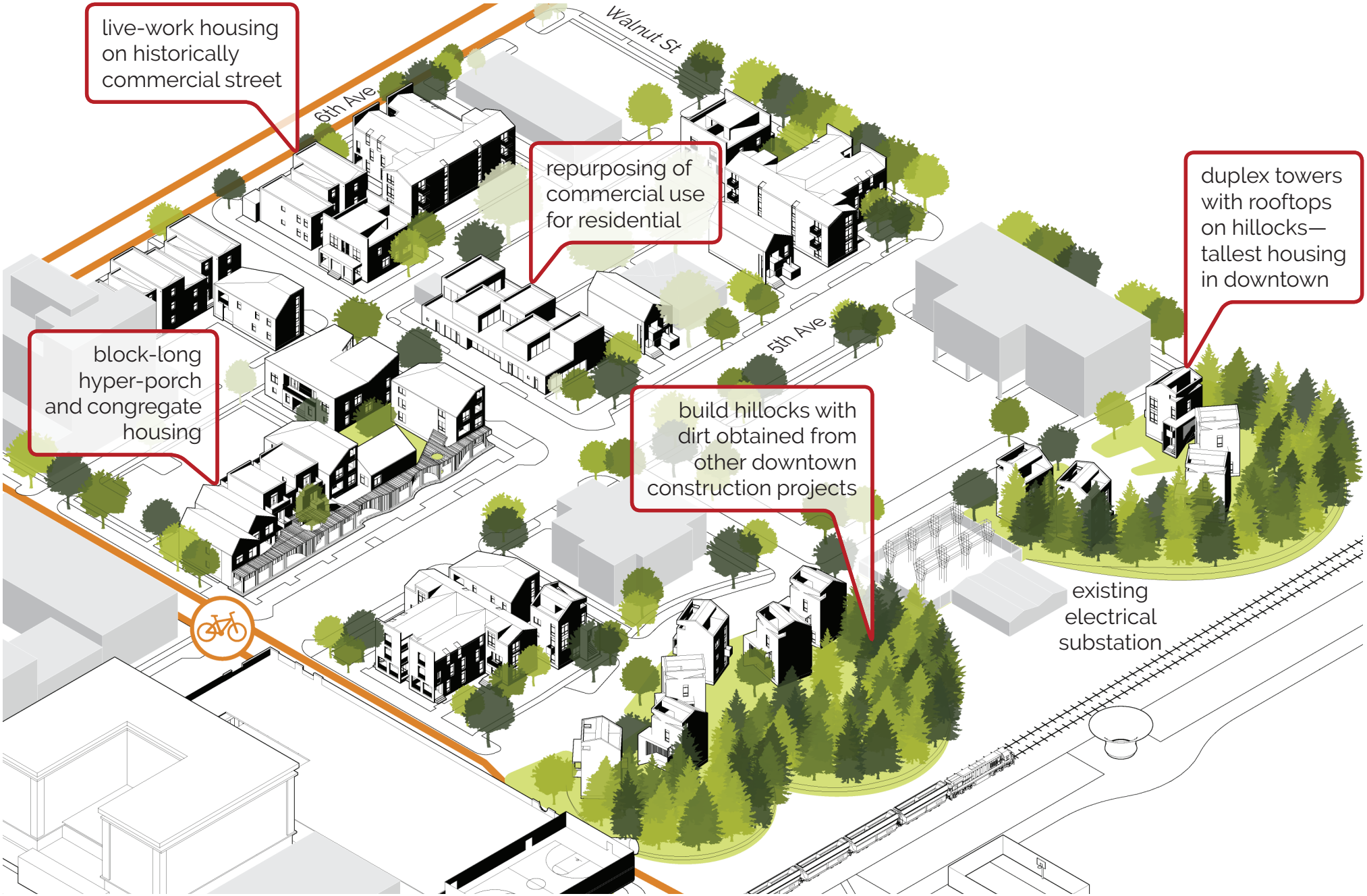
Shaping Block Edges

***Coving* strategies characterized by non-uniform house placement and use of different building frontages create variable block edges in the city grid.**

Arts District Neighborhood Site Plan

1. Bandstand
2. Neighborhood green
3. Neighborhood recreation
4. ArtWalk

0' 25' 50' 100'



113 new units: 17 units / acre

Hillocks Neighborhood

Forested hills as railroad noise mitigation infrastructure create a high-value neighborhood edge and a downtown icon.

Duplex tower housing on Hillocks at Walnut Street looking east

Duplex tower housing looking north at Hillocks

Hillocks Housing

Occasionally, let landscape features influence housing frontage, alignment, and curved street geometry as a departure from gridiron planning.

Hyper-porch housing looking south on 5th Avenue

Hyper-porch housing looking east

Congregate Housing Products

Why not create a block-long porch connecting units for special-interest communities like the elderly or co-housing residents looking for more cooperative lifestyles?

6th Avenue live-work housing looking north on Chestnut Street

Live-work Housing

On historically commercial streets, design residential groundfloors as swing spaces for transitioning to commercial uses when the need arises with downtown's comeback.

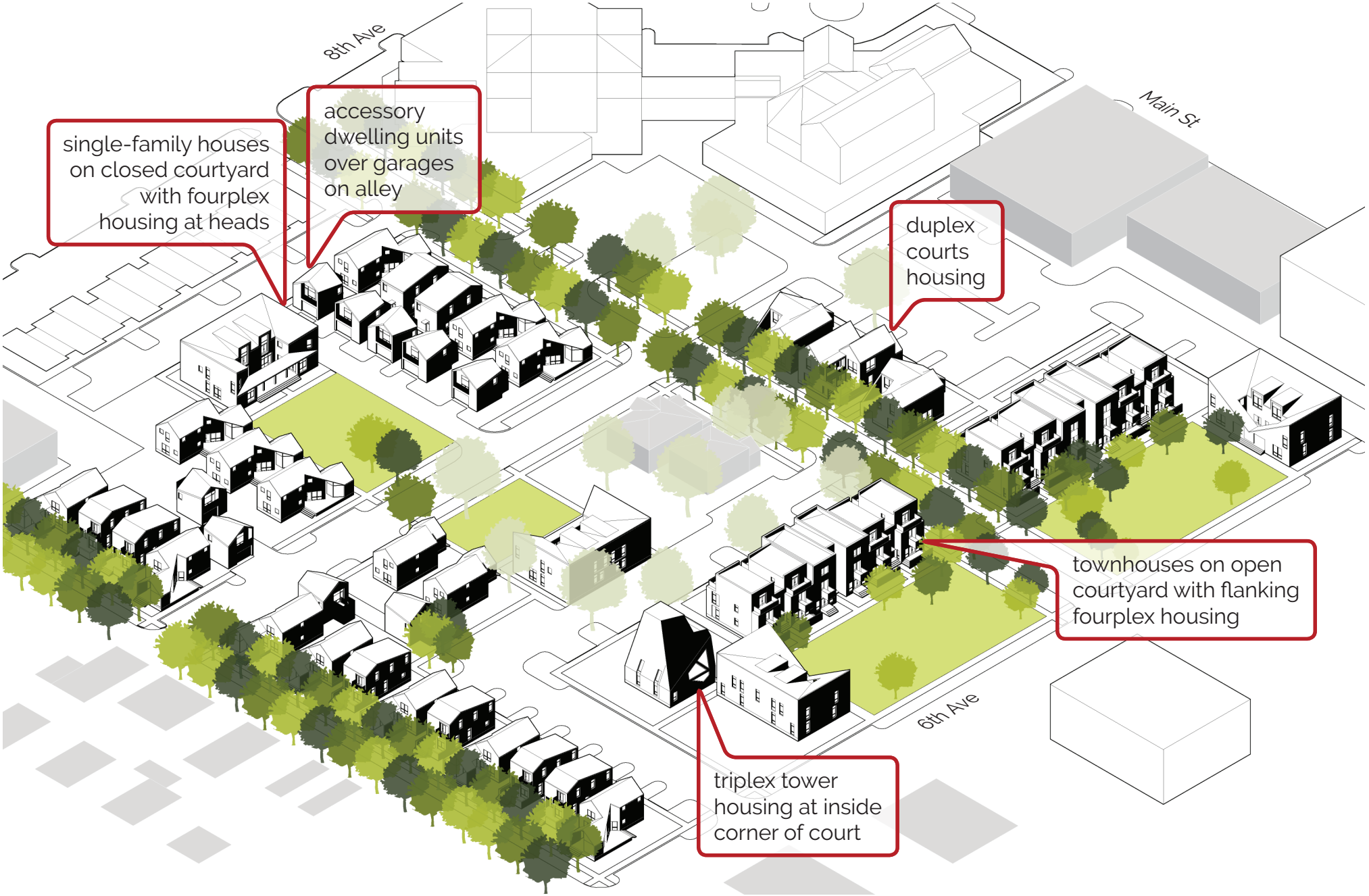
Hillocks housing from proposed Hotel Pines parking structure looking west

Neighborhood Amenities

Great downtowns thrive on hybrid infrastructure with neighborhood amenities; in this case a basketball court atop the Hotel Pines parking structure.

Hillocks Neighborhood Site Plan

1. Hillocks
2. Electrical substation
3. Hotel Pines Parking Structure (future)
4. Hotel Pines
5. Hyper-Porch housing



85 new units: 11 units / acre

Library & Arts Courts Neighborhood

Infill with moderate density *pocket neighborhoods*–housing which fronts shared residential greens that substitute for private lawns.

6th Avenue pocket court townhouses looking south on State Street

Open Courtyard Housing

Transitions in housing type throughout blocks can be accommodated along courtyard edges.

Open courtyard with townhouses on 6th Avenue looking southeast toward State Street

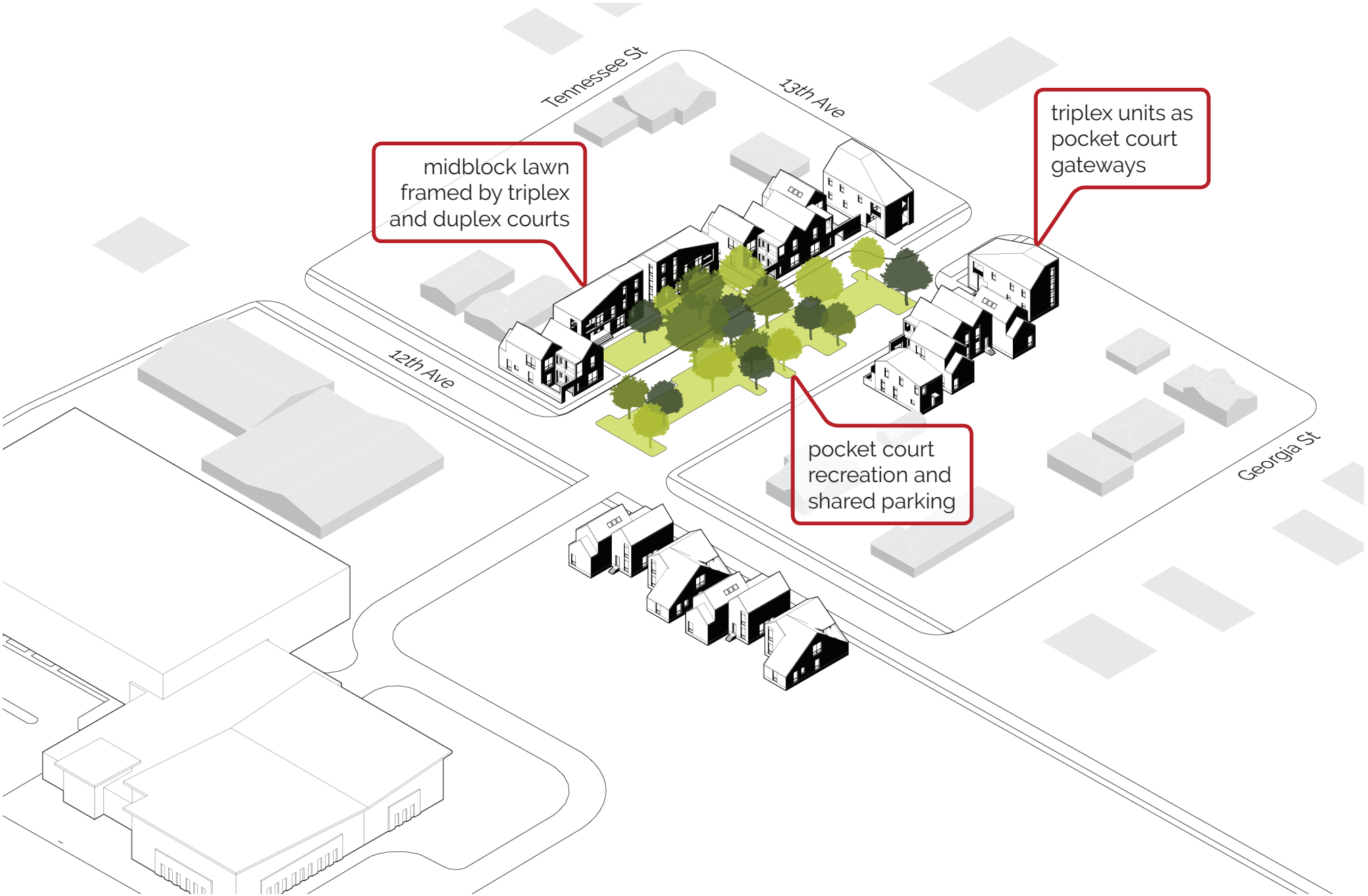
Closed courtyard housing at midblock looking east on re-opened 7th Avenue

Closed Courtyard Housing

Midblock courts appointed with low-density single-family housing create a quiet refuge in an otherwise dense urban context.

Library & Arts Courts Neighborhood Site Plan

1. Existing historic homes
2. Accessory dwelling units
3. Arts & Science Center Expansion



27 new units: 11 units / acre

Aquatics Center South Neighborhood

Pocket configurations have an inside and an outside: frontage on a shared interior common, and exterior frontage facing surrounding contexts.

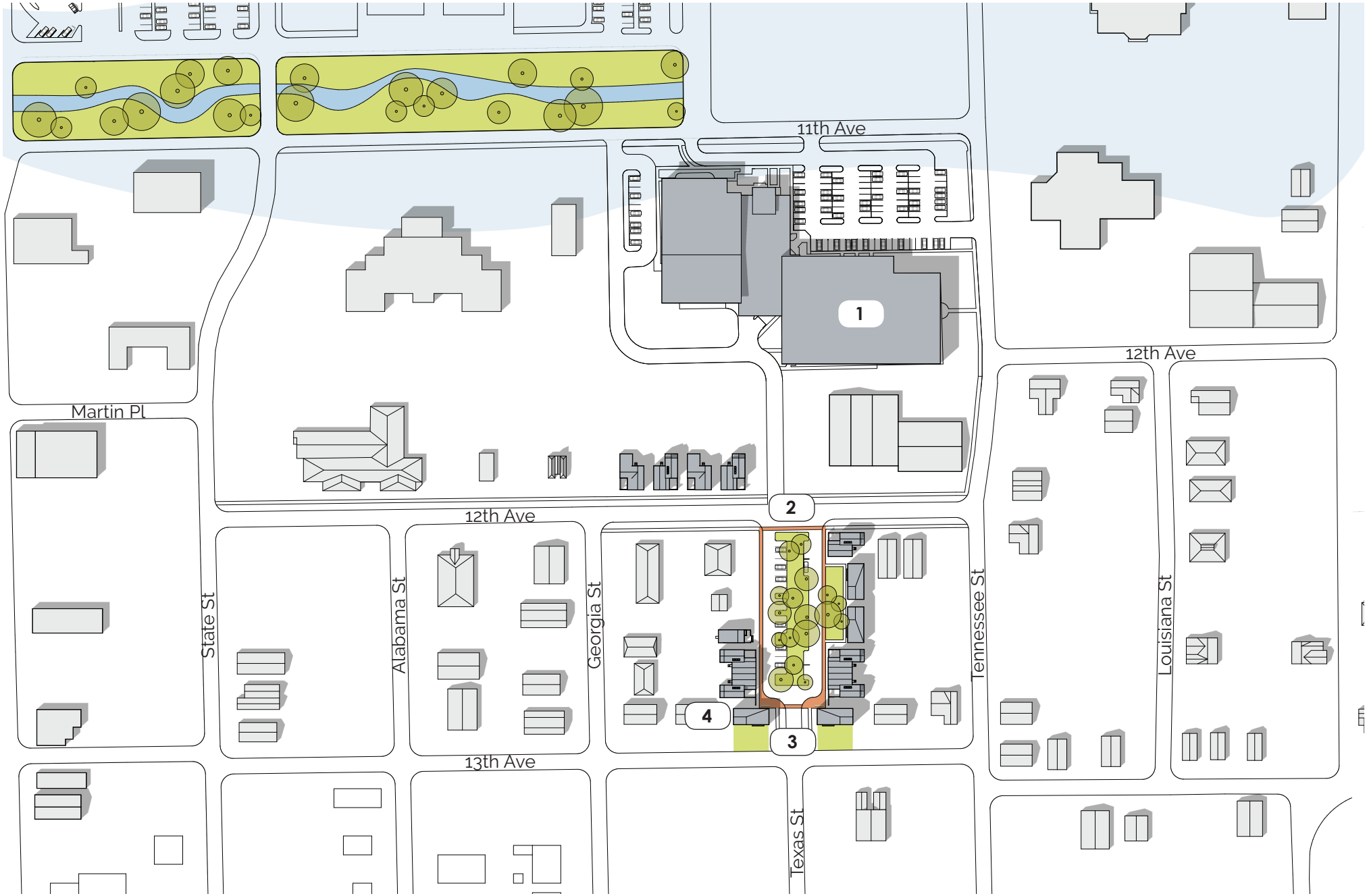
Gateway triplexes looking north toward pocket splitting Texas Street

Residential lawn inside the pocket looking south

Close-up view of gateway triplexes

Pocket Neighborhood Housing

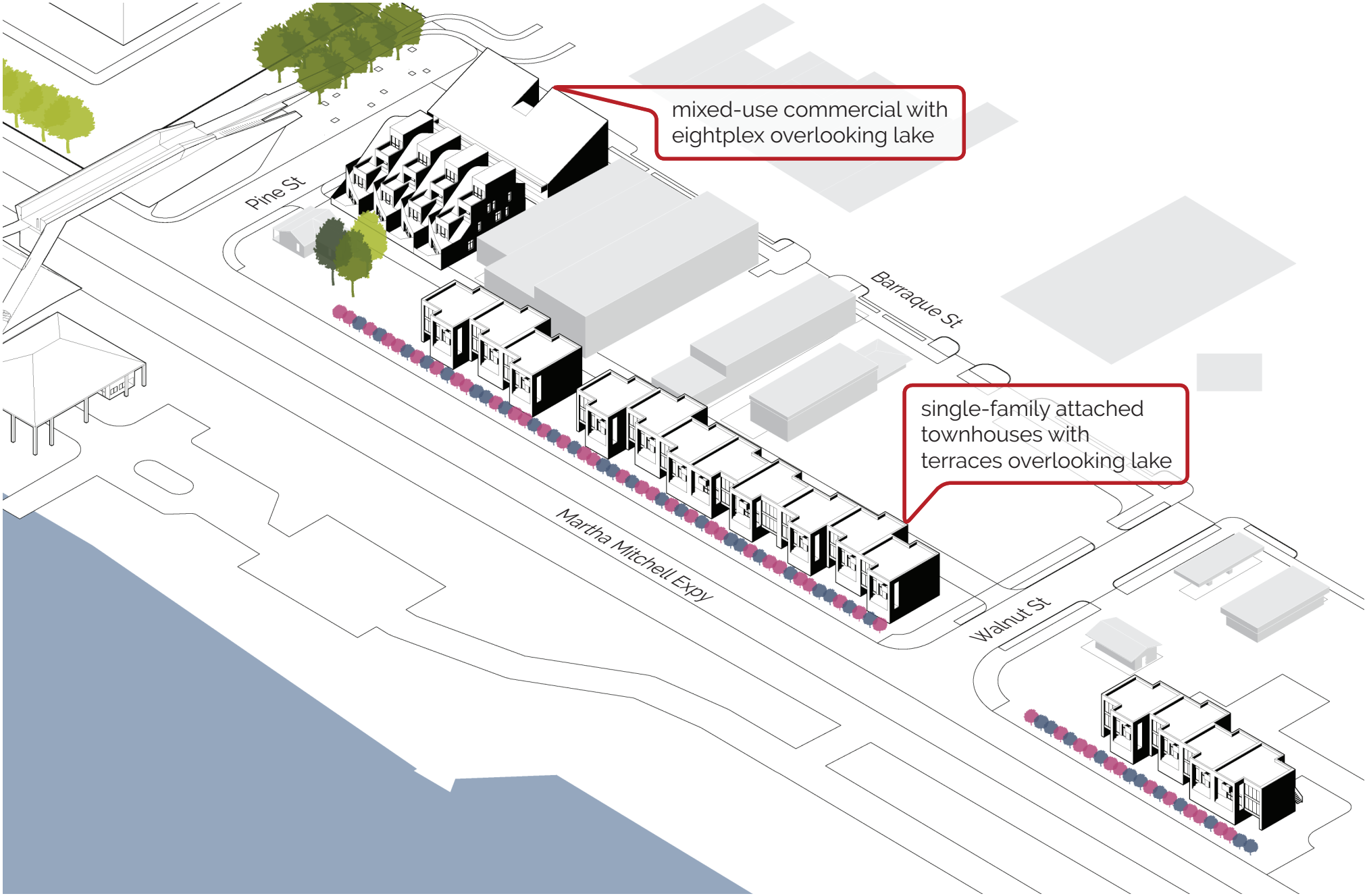
A seam between neighborhoods can be stitched with a memorable vista, whether a building or a landscape.



Aquatics Center South Neighborhood Plan

1. Aquatics Center
2. Residential green
3. Sitting plaza
4. Triplex gateway housing

0' 50' 100' 200'



15 new units: 10 units / acre

Lakefront Neighborhood

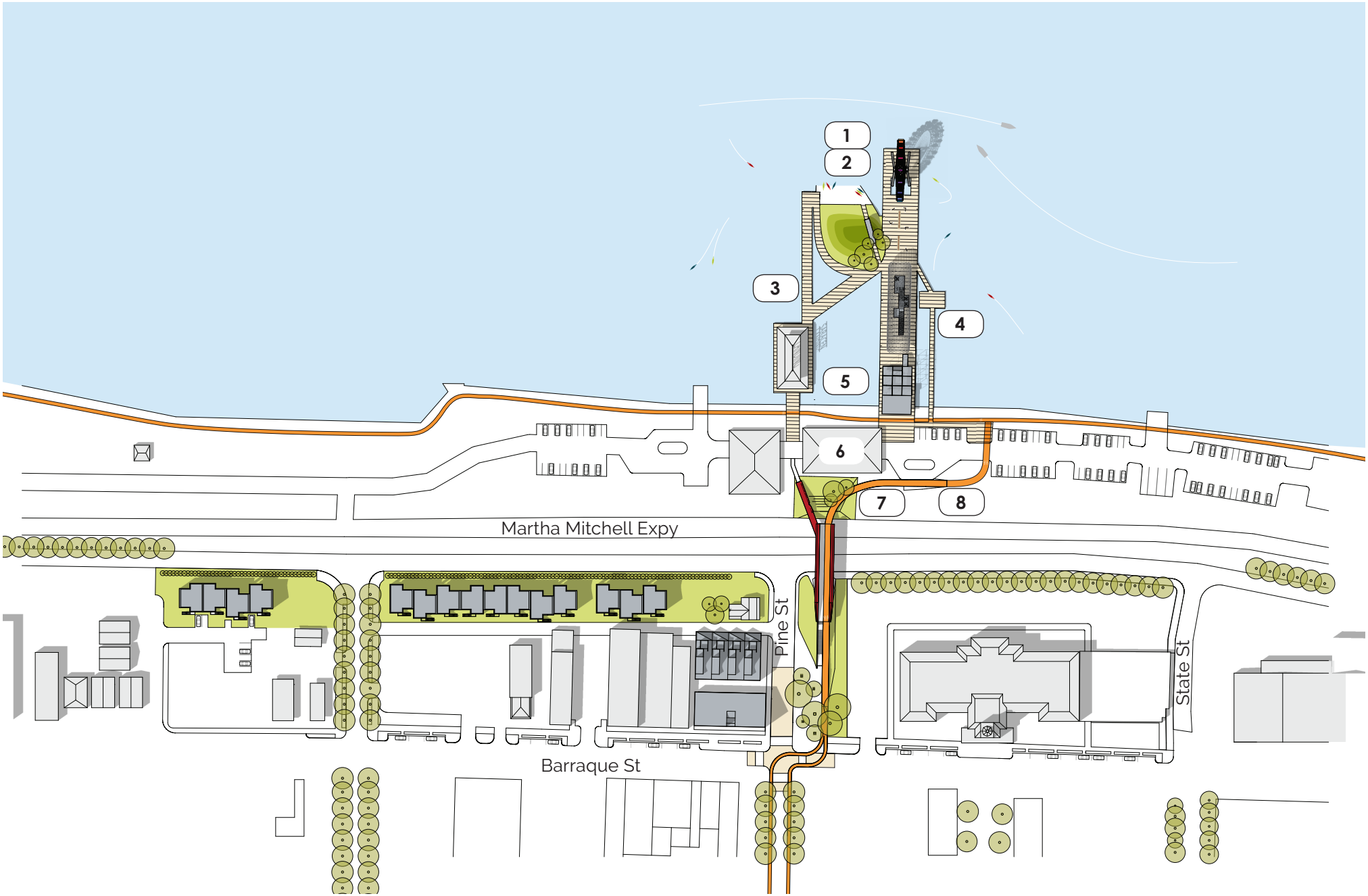
Housing singularly directed to lake views reverses downtown's abandonment of its waterfront offering a proper edge and gateway into downtown.

Lakefront townhouses looking south across Martha Mitchell Expressway

Close-up view of townhouse terraces

Townhouse Fabric

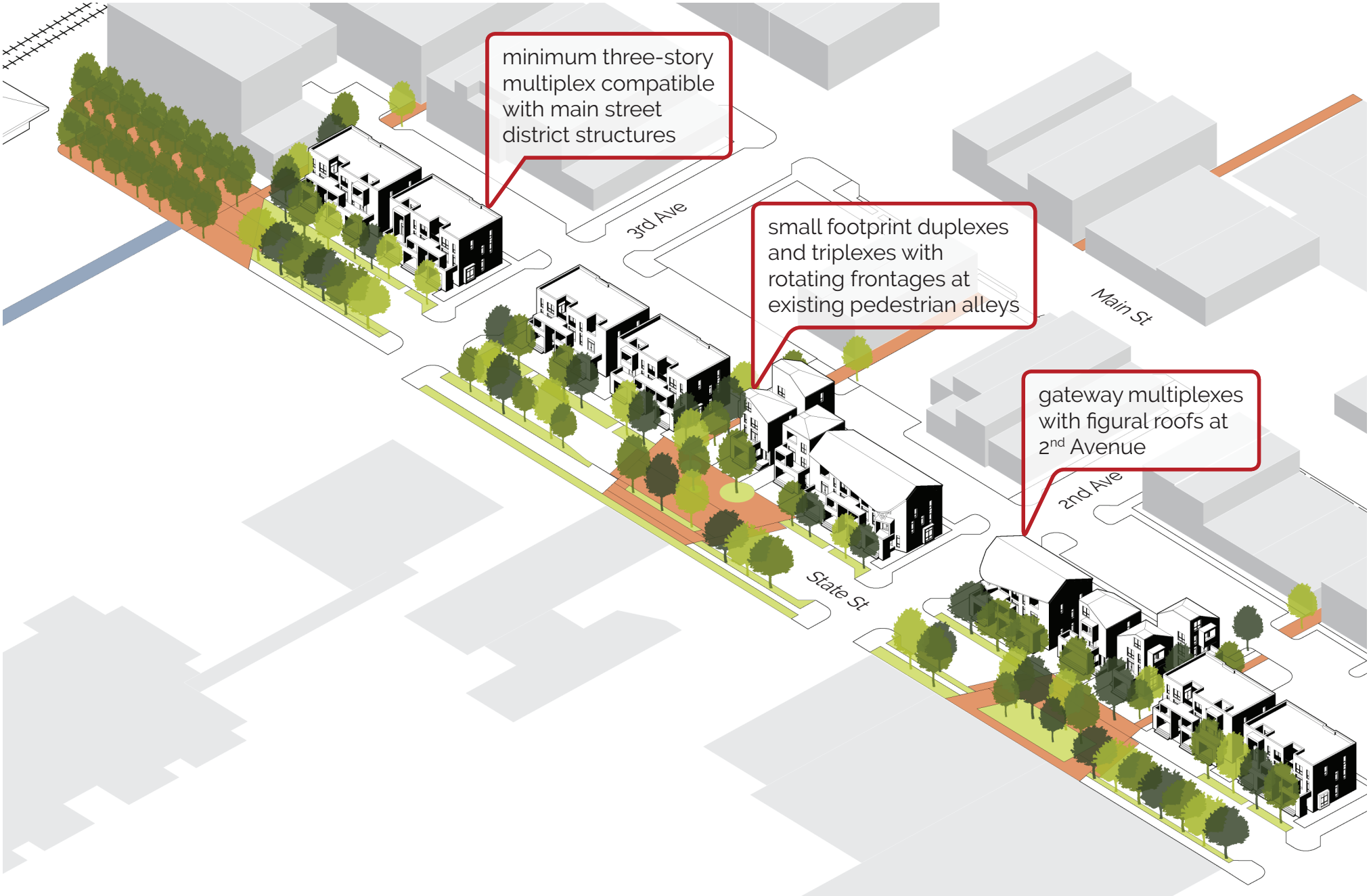
Thinking in terms of neighborhoods, not just houses, townhouse fabric remonetizes the seam between lake and downtown, capitalizing untapped value of the lake.



Lakefront Neighborhood Site Plan

1. Beach
2. Floating lawn
3. New boardwalks
4. Existing fishing pier
5. Saracen Wharf
6. Existing pavilions
7. Amphitheater
8. Bike trail

0′ 100′ 200′



59 new units: 19 units / acre

Housing Off Main Neighborhood

Housing is laminated to Main Street's eastern commercial building edge, infilling the Main Street block as a new horizontal mixed-use development.

Pedestrian alley to Main Street in foreground looking southwest

State Street housing looking north from 3rd Avenue

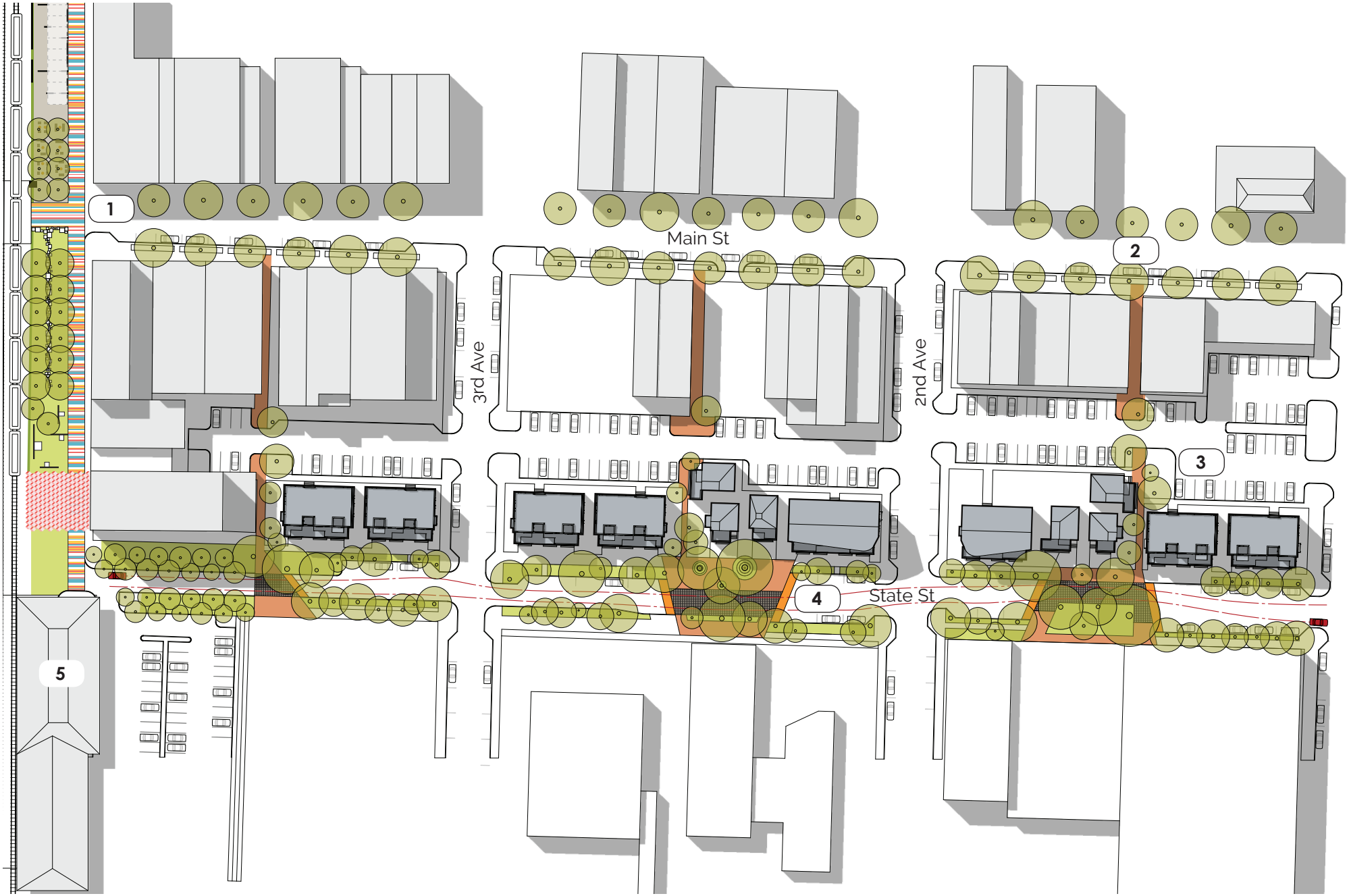
Residential Frontage as Living Rooms

Begin with building frontages–porches, terraces, balconies, etc.–that connect house and street.

Looking west on State Street toward pedestrian alley connecting to Main Street

Shared Street Urbanism

Underperforming asphalt is converted into soft streetscapes and integrated with porch rooms to create a pedestrian-oriented residential landscape.



Housing Off Main Neighborhood Plan

1. ArtWalk
2. Existing pedestrian alleys
3. Residential parking
4. Shared street lawns and plazas
5. Rail Depot

0' 25' 50' 100'

62 new units: 27 units / acre

Civic Center District Neighborhood

Develop live-work housing as a starter commercial edge to support a renewed visitor economy between the Arts & Science Center and the Convention Center.

Live-work neighborhood and the Arts & Science Center expansion looking north from 8th Avenue

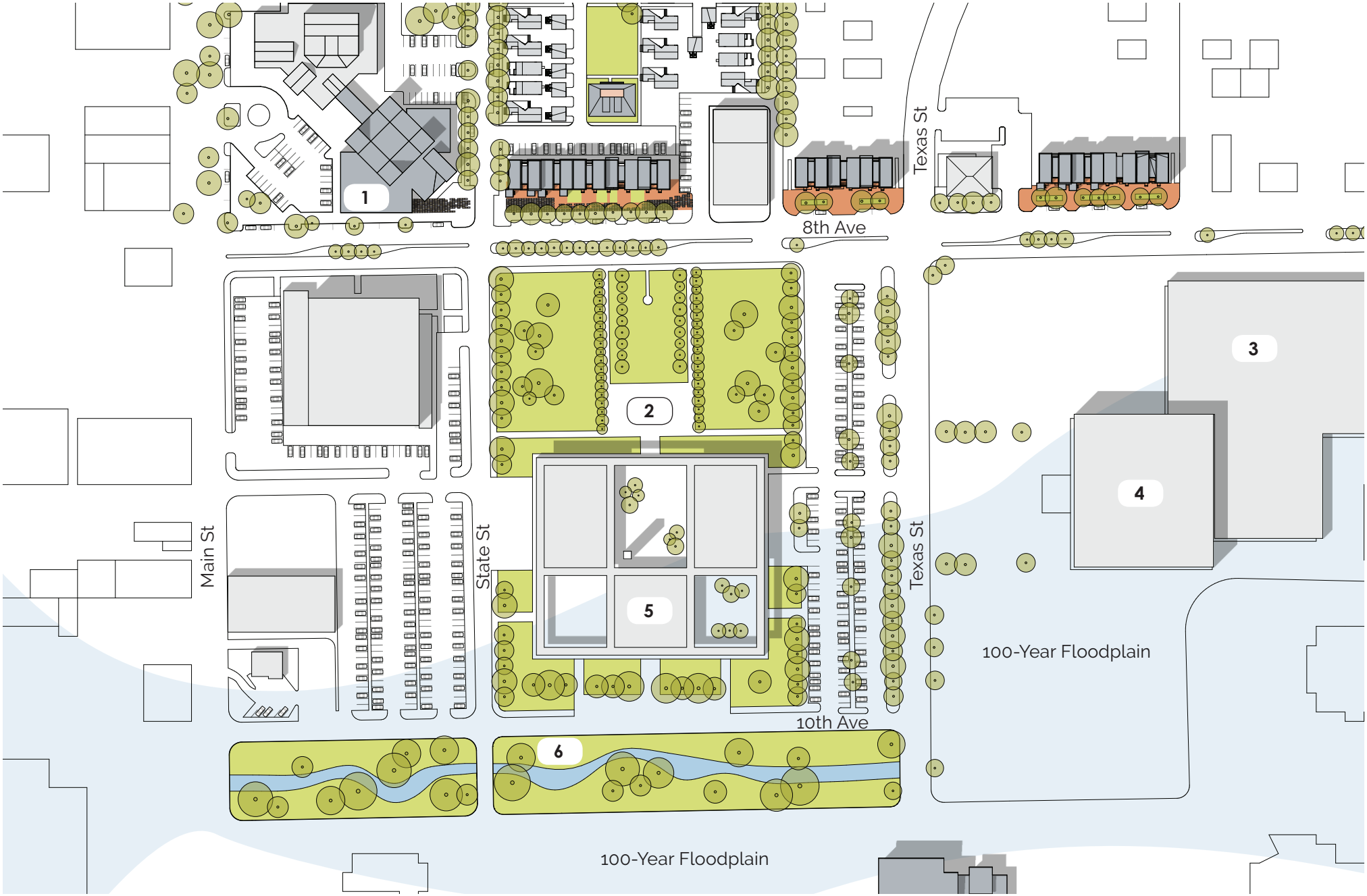
Swing Block Frontage

Building setback areas that front the boulevard can swing between plazas or front lawns responsive to public and commercial uses desired.

Arts & Science Center expansion anchors public space along 8th Avenue looking west

Wide Sidewalks

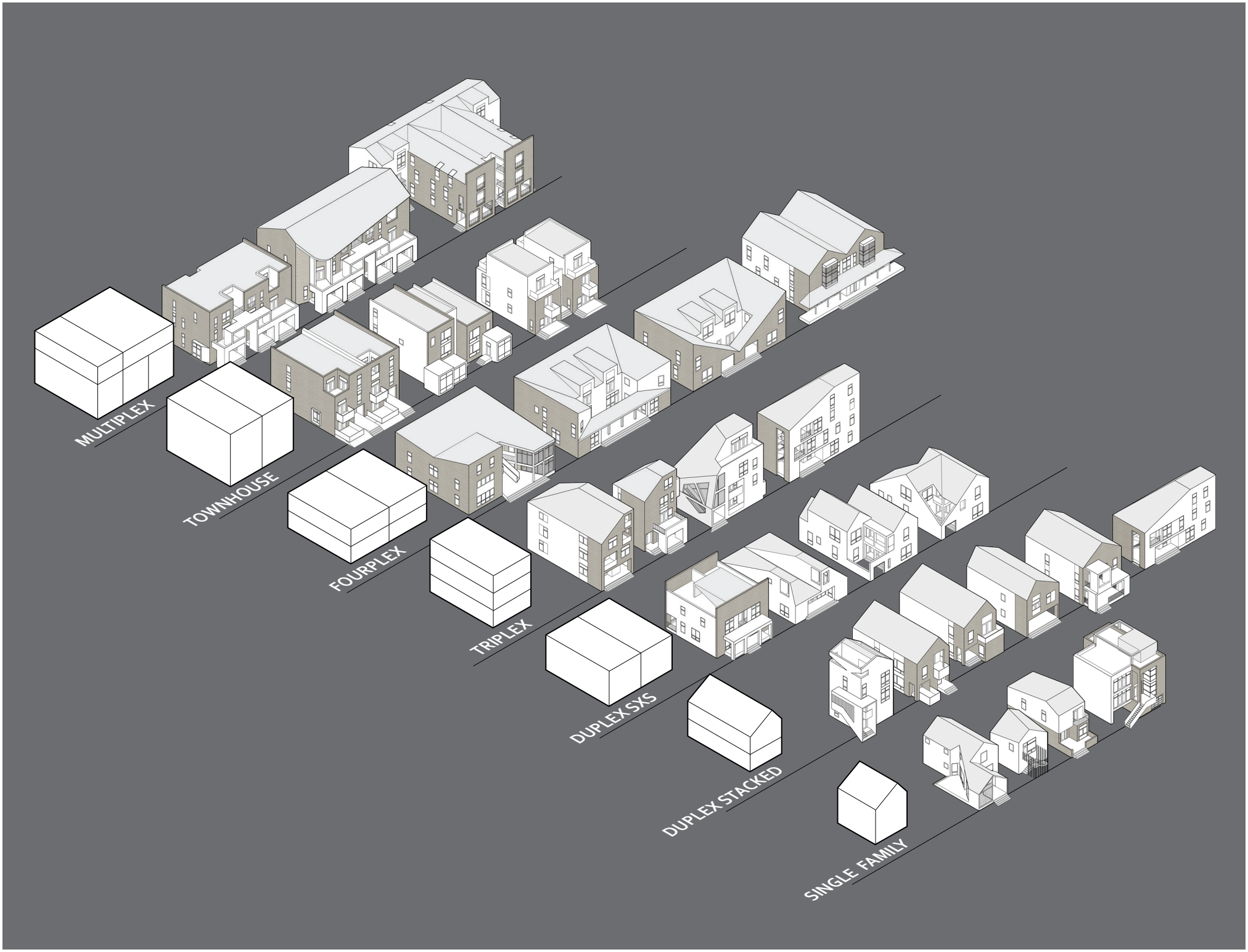
Not all sidewalks should be five feet; here building massing and landscape shape a 35-foot sidewalk space for dining and socializing along the 8th Avenue boulevard.

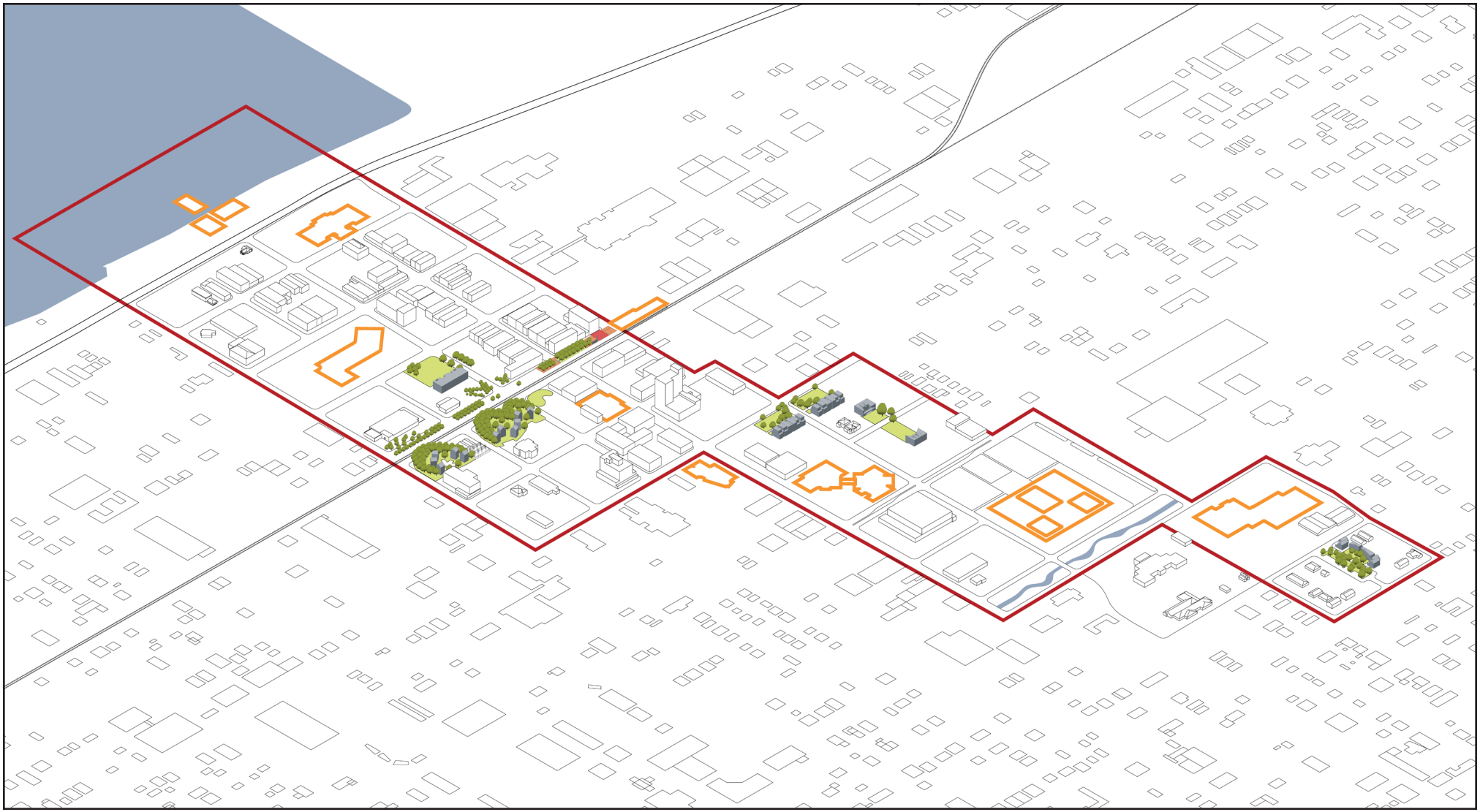


Civic Center District Neighborhood Plan

1. Arts & Science Center
2. Civic Center Garden
3. Convention Center
4. Hotel
5. Civic Center
6. Daylighted Harding Drain

0' 50' 100' 200'


MULTIPLEX
TOWNHOUSE
FOURPLEX
TRIPLEX
DUPLEX SXS
DUPLEX STACKED
SINGLE FAMILY

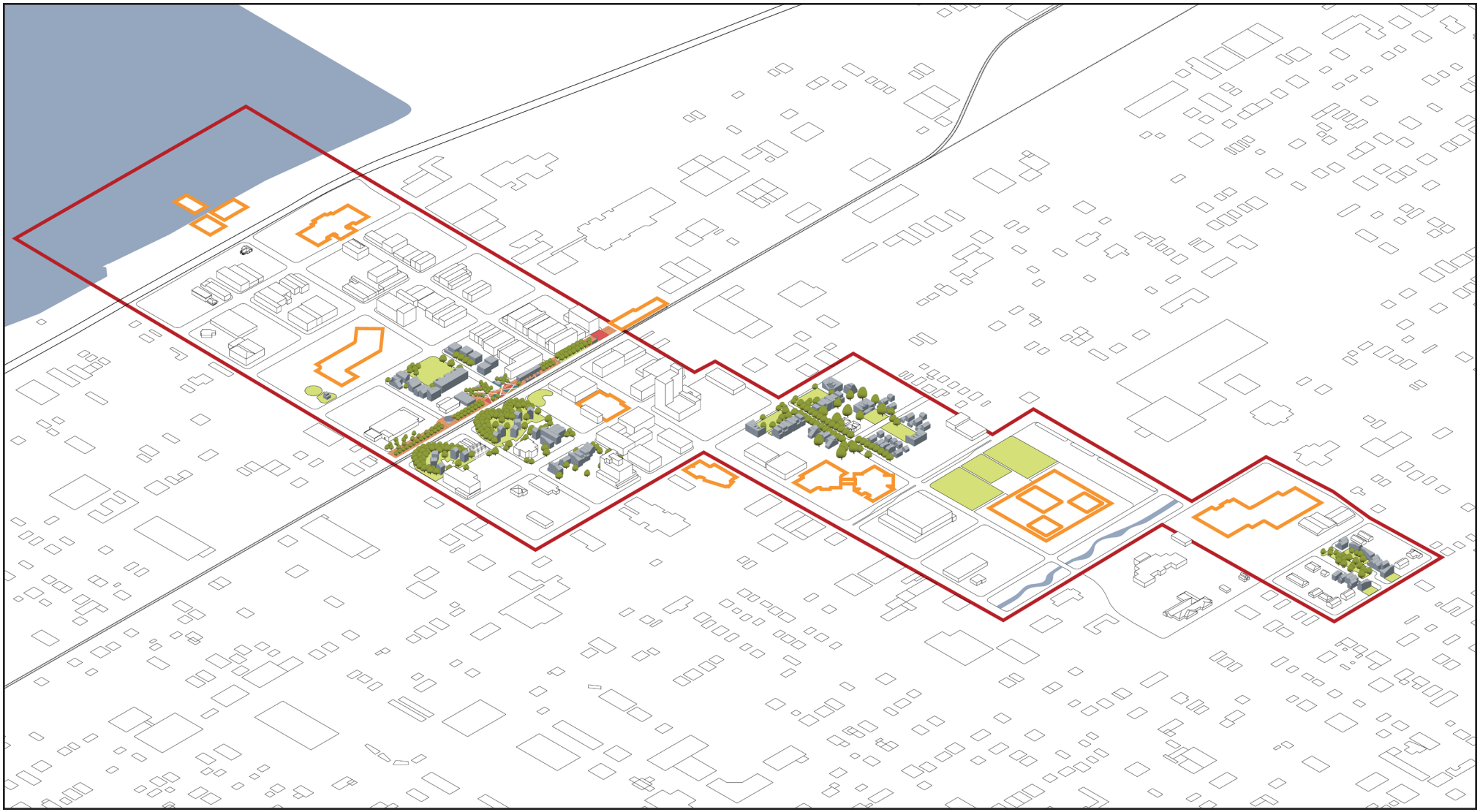


URBAN SUCCESSION

DEVELOP NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS: GREENS AND HILLOCKS

To build immediate long-term value into housing and for early revitalization successes, develop housing around the eight central neighborhood greens.

The first phase of housing development involves construction of units on the most prominent and formal edge of a neighborhood center, like the south edges of the 3rd Avenue green in the Arts District, and the 6th Avenue green in the Library & Arts Courts. In the Aquatics South Center neighborhood, develop the eastern edge of the central green. The housing to be implemented first in the Hillocks neighborhood would be duplex towers on the hillocks. Dirt to construct hillocks can be obtained from site excavation in other downtown construction projects like the new Aquatics Center and Library.



URBAN SUCCESSION COMPLETE HOUSING AROUND CENTERS AND BEYOND

Complete the definition of neighborhood centers and continue expansion of housing infill to adjacent blocks.

First, complete the definition of remaining edges of central greens, providing an iconic anchor distinguishing each neighborhood. Housing types vary between the primary edge(s) and lateral edges. Like all iconic urban green spaces, the densest housing in the neighborhood will occur centrally since demand is high for park frontage housing. Greens provide valuable recreation and social space, as well as opportunities for neighborhood services like childcare, coffee shop, and home-based offices. Second, expand housing to fill adjacent blocks eventually defining neighborhood edges.

URBAN SUCCESSION INFILL RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS AT NEIGHBORHOOD EDGES

Infill blocks extending from neighborhood centers to define neighborhood edges.

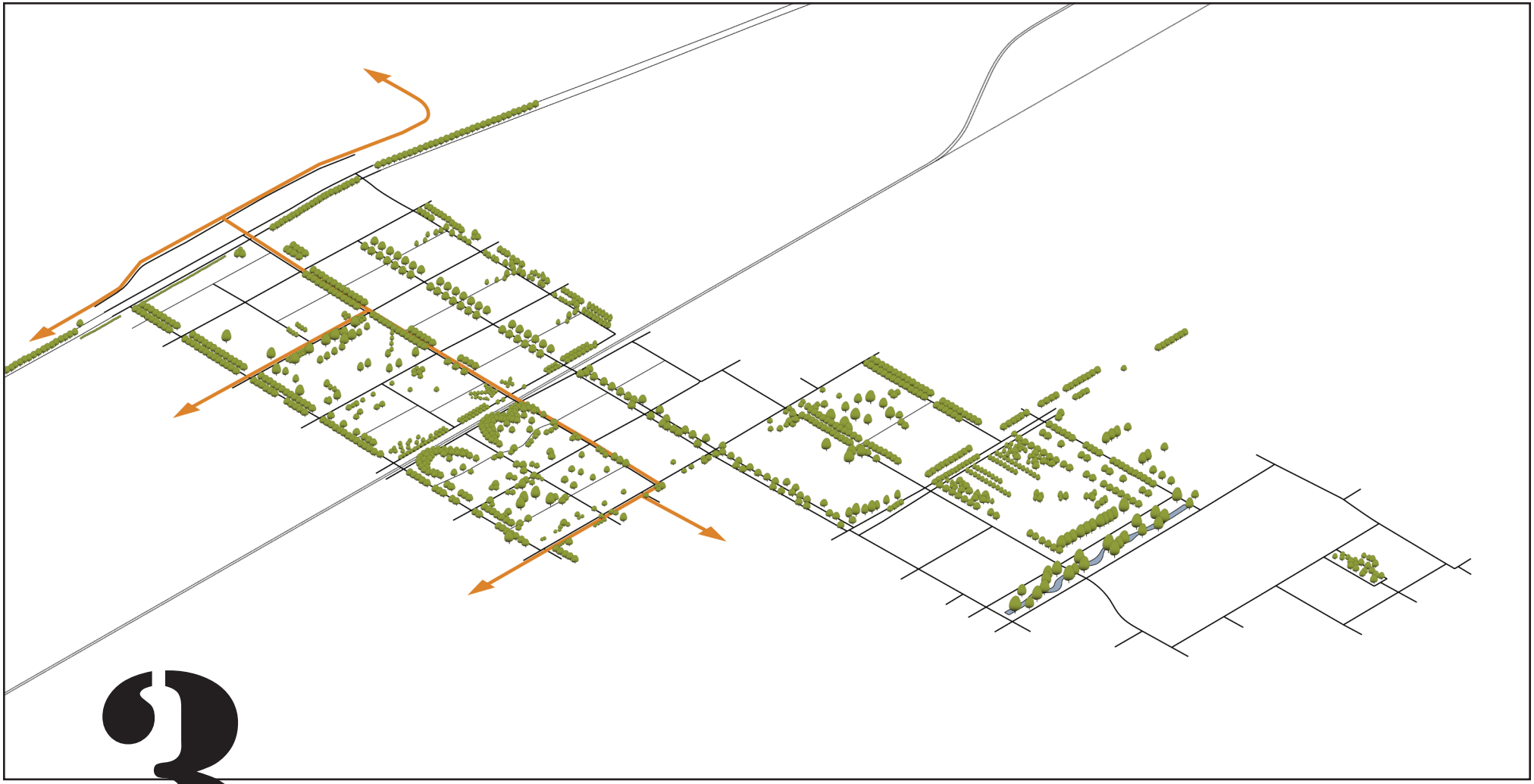
Housing development that completely builds-out centers and edges to define these small downtown neighborhoods is critical to revitalization success beyond the Framework Plan. As starter neighborhoods they set the standards for future infill development throughout downtown (see page 12: Beyond the Framework Plan), illustrating the promise of mix-use neighborhoods supported by amenities only found in downtown. Neighborhood edges frame blocks and a central green to create neighborhood identity.

URBAN SUCCESSION

DEVELOP EDGE-ORIENTED NEIGHBORHOODS

To complete the definition of three special districts, develop housing along important streets.

Later stage housing frames special districts as edge developments at the lakefront, adjacent to Main Street, and at the Civic Center. To complete the gateway effect at the lakefront district, townhouses along Martha Mitchell Expressway give the downtown a new front, while complementing signature projects like the Bridge and Wharf. State Street housing completes the mixed-use development within the Main Street district. Live-work housing on 8th Avenue frames the north edge of the Civic Center District in support of a renewed visitor and convention economy.



3 STREET PLAN

Design streets to deliver social functions beyond simply moving auto traffic–streetscapes for gathering, dining, and shopping; public art for commemoration; a bicycle network for pleasure; among others.

The plan begins with consideration of network functioning and the goal to increase connectivity for all modes of travel, an approach known as *Complete Streets*. This policy reallocates right-of-way space to equitably provide facilities for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and users of public transit. The downtown street network integrates dedicated bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, streetscapes, new parking configurations, and public art. This includes strategic street tree planting since streetscapes lend an immediate spatial quality to downtown's overall identity. The plan goes beyond Compete Streets to address placemaking and quality-of-life measures that support the residentialization of downtown.

The Street Plan

"We often think of buildings when we think of urban design—as we should. Great streets require great buildings. Good streets can get by with merely good buildings; great or merely good, the art of architecture is clearly indispensable. But streets are the spaces between buildings, and those are the art of placemaking. Placemaking makes the street spaces into settings where people want to be. A place is not a place until there are people in it."

Victor Dover and John Massengale, *Street Design: The Secret to Great Cities and Towns*

Streets deliver important social functions beyond simply moving traffic. Great streets are integrated environments for gathering, public assembly, parading, strolling, dining, performing, recreating, and socializing—all which shape the city's life and identity. The Street Plan within the Framework Plan begins with consideration of network functioning and the goal to increase interconnectivity for all modes of travel, understood industrywide as *Complete Streets* policy. The Complete Streets approach reallocates right-of-way space to equitably accommodate travel among motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and users of public transit. The Street Plan goes beyond Compete Streets to address placemaking and quality-of-life measures that support effective residentialization of downtown. The Street Plan integrates dedicated bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, streetscapes, new parking configurations, and public art reflective of a downtown street network. The Plan articulates *DNA Moments*—formative design concepts that will distinguish the street network in Pine Bluff. In the shift from single-use zoning to form-based coding, the Street Plan becomes an important regulating document in administering form-based codes since streets are designed as public spaces in tandem with delineation of building frontage standards.

Why is a Street Plan important? Well-designed streets express a sophisticated synthesis of principles from art, landscape architecture, engineering, and architecture. *Context-sensitive streets* function as powerful social attractors—places where people want to be—while facilitating commerce, wayfinding, and mobility. Pine Bluff's Main Street, for example, once was a social attractor and the city's principal icon and destination. However, since the dominance of the automobile, local streets have been designed and managed by traffic engineers according to highway standards, privileging traffic capacity in terms of vehicle flow per lane per hour. Streets are classified by traffic engineers corresponding to Level of Service (LOS) based on traffic flow performance—vehicle speed, density, and congestion. In the downtown core we recommend that Pine Bluff abandon LOS classification (except for Martha Mitchell Expressway) and cultivate streets as places once again. Automobile speeds should be set at what the pedestrian realm needs—20 mph—to realize downtown's potential as a pedestrian magnet. Design of the street network begins with placemaking and creation of a city for people rather than a city for cars.

Recommendations

The Street Plan addresses Complete Streets policy and placemaking by integrating dedicated bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, streetscapes, new parking configurations, and public art reflective of a downtown street plan. We make the following recommendations:

- **Convert existing one-way streets back to two-way streets to enhance downtown livability.**

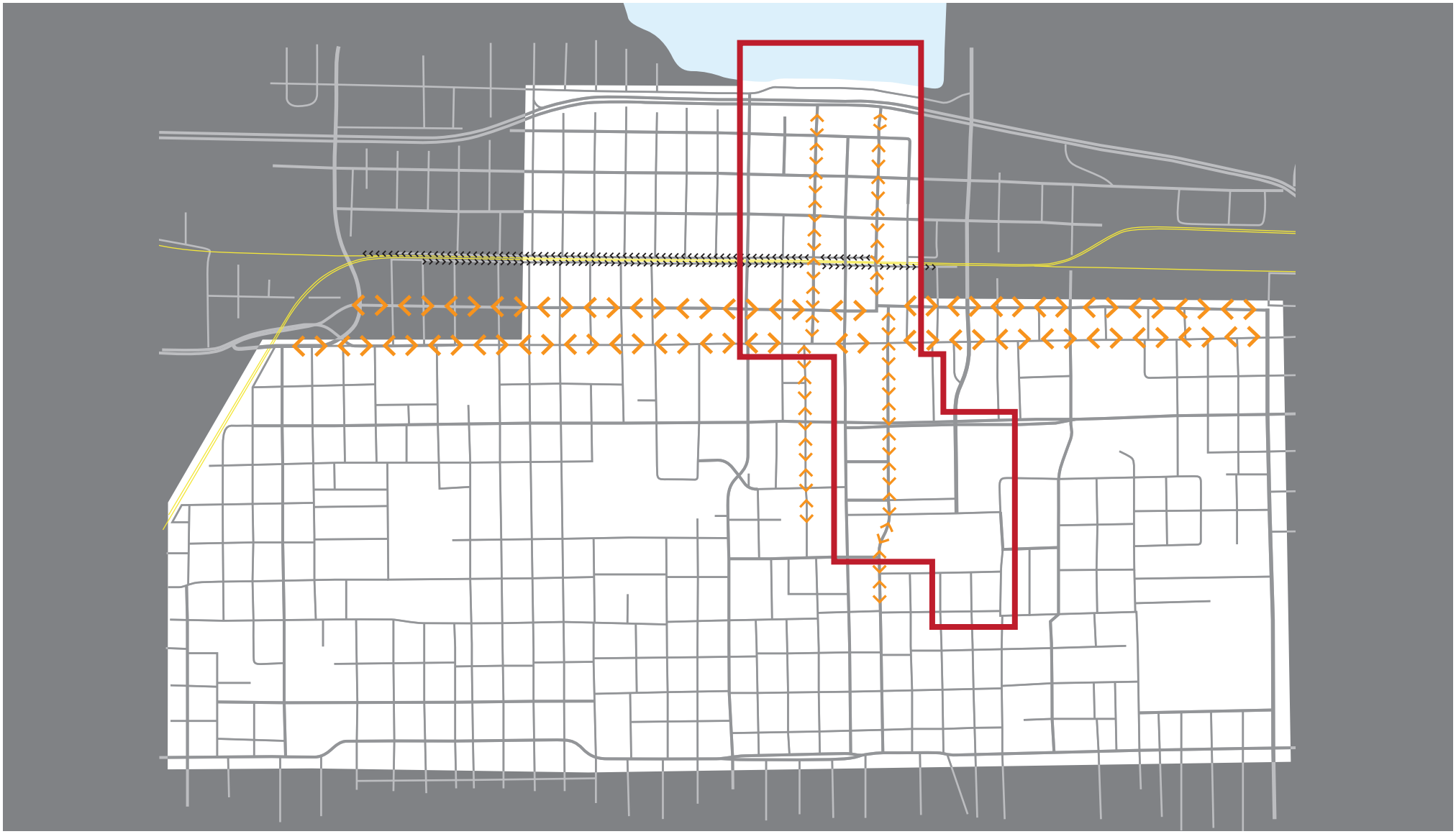
One-way streets reflect a midcentury car-first policy that prioritized speed to maximize traffic throughput into and out of downtown during rush hours. One-way streets undermine retail activity and other pedestrian-oriented activity (cars don't buy goods, people do). We recommend that current one-way streets including 5th Avenue, 6th Avenue, Pine Street, and State Street be returned to two-way traffic flow given their central location in new neighborhood development. Studies confirm that two-way streets "make traffic safer by reducing collisions for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians; reduce crime by decreasing auto theft and robberies; and bolster neighborhood commercial districts by raising property values and increasing visibility for businesses" (Florida and Boone). The exception is 4th Avenue on either side of the railroad right-of-way, which should accommodate one-way segments with a new but small two-way segment on the south side of the railroad next to Main Street as shown in the Street Plan.

• **Implement a street tree planting program since trees lend an immediate spatial quality to streets and downtown's overall identity.** Streets should be shaded to invite walking, sociability, and commerce, especially in hot Sunbelt states to protect pedestrians. Trees mitigate heat island effects and significantly improve neighborhood livability, not to mention real estate values. However, hard surfaces are not the best places to grow trees and street tree mortality rates reflect this. According to one current meta-analysis, the *population half-life* of an urban street tree or the time by which half of planted trees can be expected to die is 13-20 years (Roman: 4). Fairly low for select species with typical life spans exceeding 60 and 100 years, all which entails high replacement costs and loss of ecosystem services including mitigation of air and water pollution. We recommend that tree lawns and other permeable surfaces of enough area to admit water and nutrients be incorporated into right-of-way space to improve longevity rates of street trees. Please note the proposed transformation of the Martha Mitchell Expressway into a boulevard with trees to be planted in the median as shown in plan. Trees slow traffic and assist in creating a gateway district into downtown from Highway 65. To maintain views to the lake from downtown do not plant boulevard trees between Olive and State Streets.

• **Develop a bicycle network beginning with retrofit of downtown right-of-ways to include dedicated bicycle lanes.** Until recently, the economic development potential and livability yields from the provision of bicycle infrastructure has been ignored by municipalities. Bicycling is the fastest growing mode of transportation in the U.S. City dwellers have rediscovered the combined recreation and pragmatic transportation benefits in cycling between their neighborhoods and workplaces, schools, or parks. Municipalities privileging livability programs have integrated bicycle trails and protected lanes into their general transportation plans, while more than 120 U.S. cities have developed bike-share programs. Housing choices among some residents in these cities are based on proximity to bike trails: bike trails raise real estate values and enhance commerce as numerous studies have shown (McMahon).

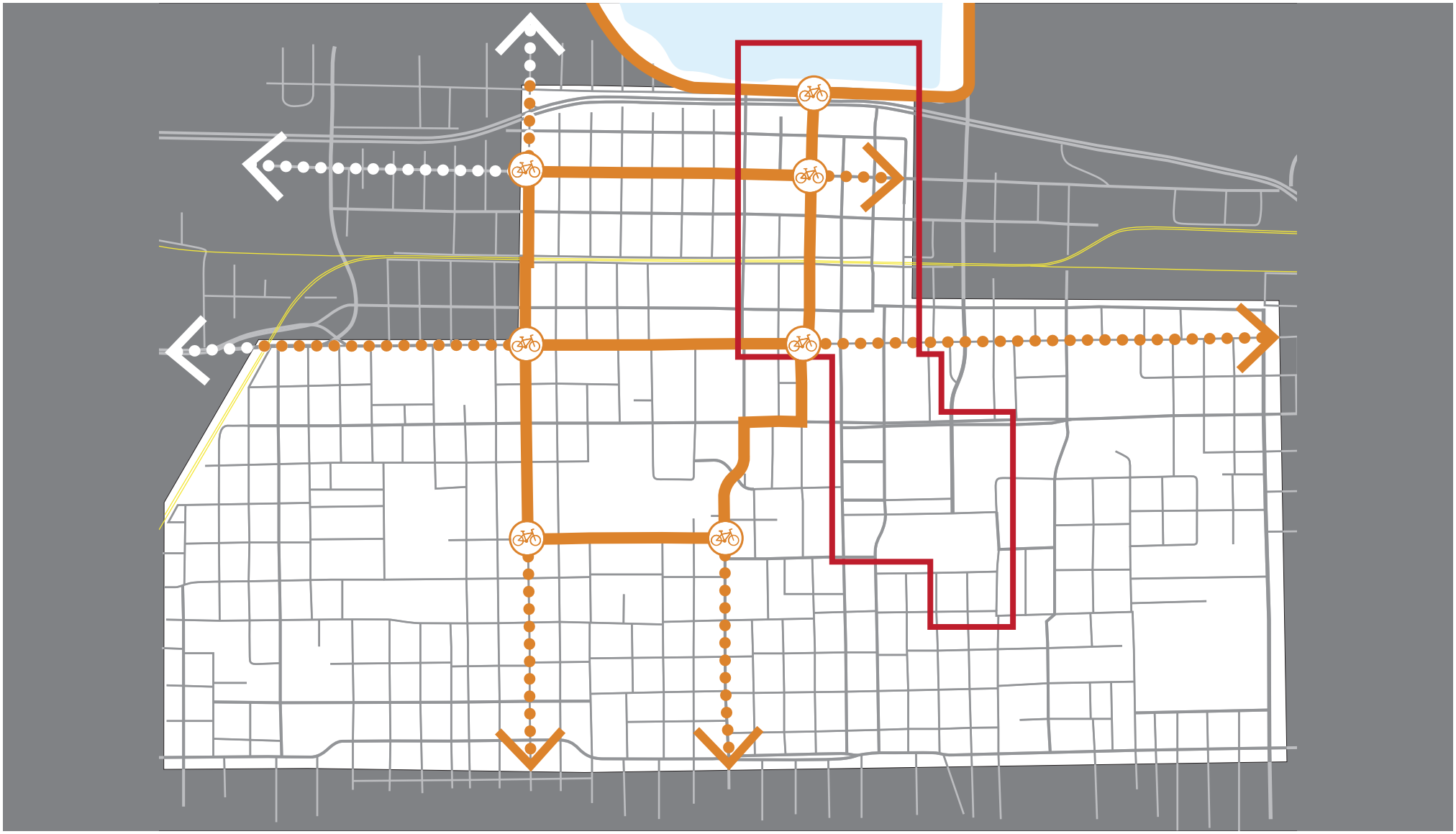
Therefore, we recommend that Pine Bluff implement a downtown bicycle network consisting of protected bike lanes on select streets with connections to the lakeside bike trail and the high school. Every downtown street readily accommodates bike travel since downtown streets should be classified as local streets requiring low speeds. But a network of dedicated bike lanes should constitute simple and easy to understand routing over a few loops covering downtown. Dedicated bike lanes are assigned to streets with significant right-of-way width and where conflicts with other competing interests like parking and street trees can be resolved. Phased expansions of the network can be implemented in all directions as downtown infills.

The Street Plan goes beyond Compete Streets to address placemaking and quality-of-life measures that support effective residentialization of downtown. The Street Plan integrates dedicated bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, streetscapes, new parking configurations, and public art reflective of a downtown street network.



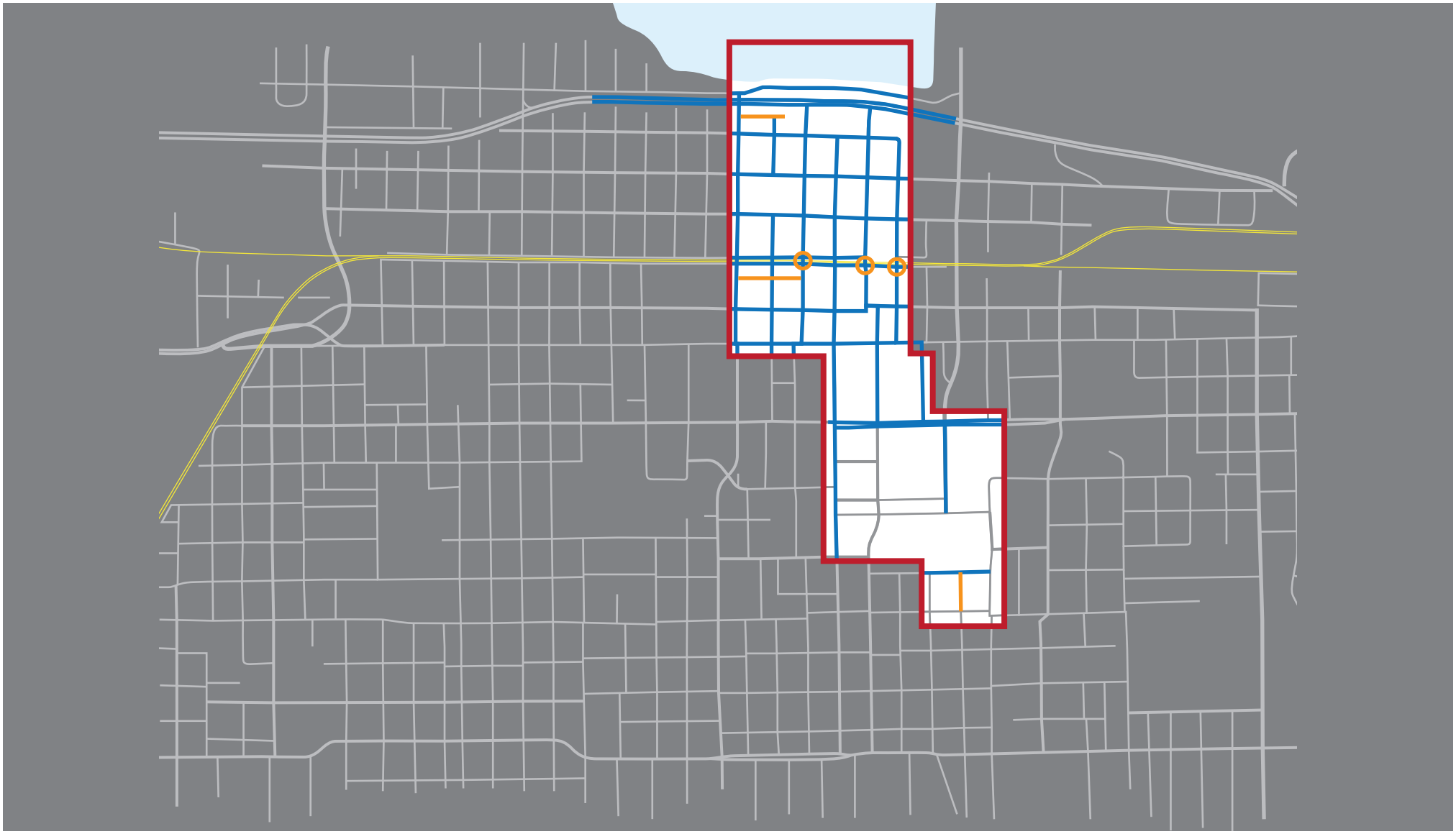
Convert One-way Streets Back to Two-way Travel

One-way streets reflect a midcentury car-first policy that prioritized speed to maximize suburban traffic throughput into and out of downtown during rush hours. We recommend that current one-way streets including 5th Avenue, 6th Avenue, Pine Street, and State Street be returned to two-way traffic flow given their central location in downtown neighborhood development. The exception is 4th Avenue on either side of the railroad right-of-way, which should accommodate one-way segments with a new but small two-way segment on the south side of the railroad next to Main Street as shown in the Street Plan. One-way streets are justifiable in high-density neighborhoods of 75 units per acre or greater, far beyond the goal of 10 units per acre in downtown. Two-way streets will enhance livability, the shopping experience, and the pedestrian-oriented environment of downtown.



Develop a Bicycle Network

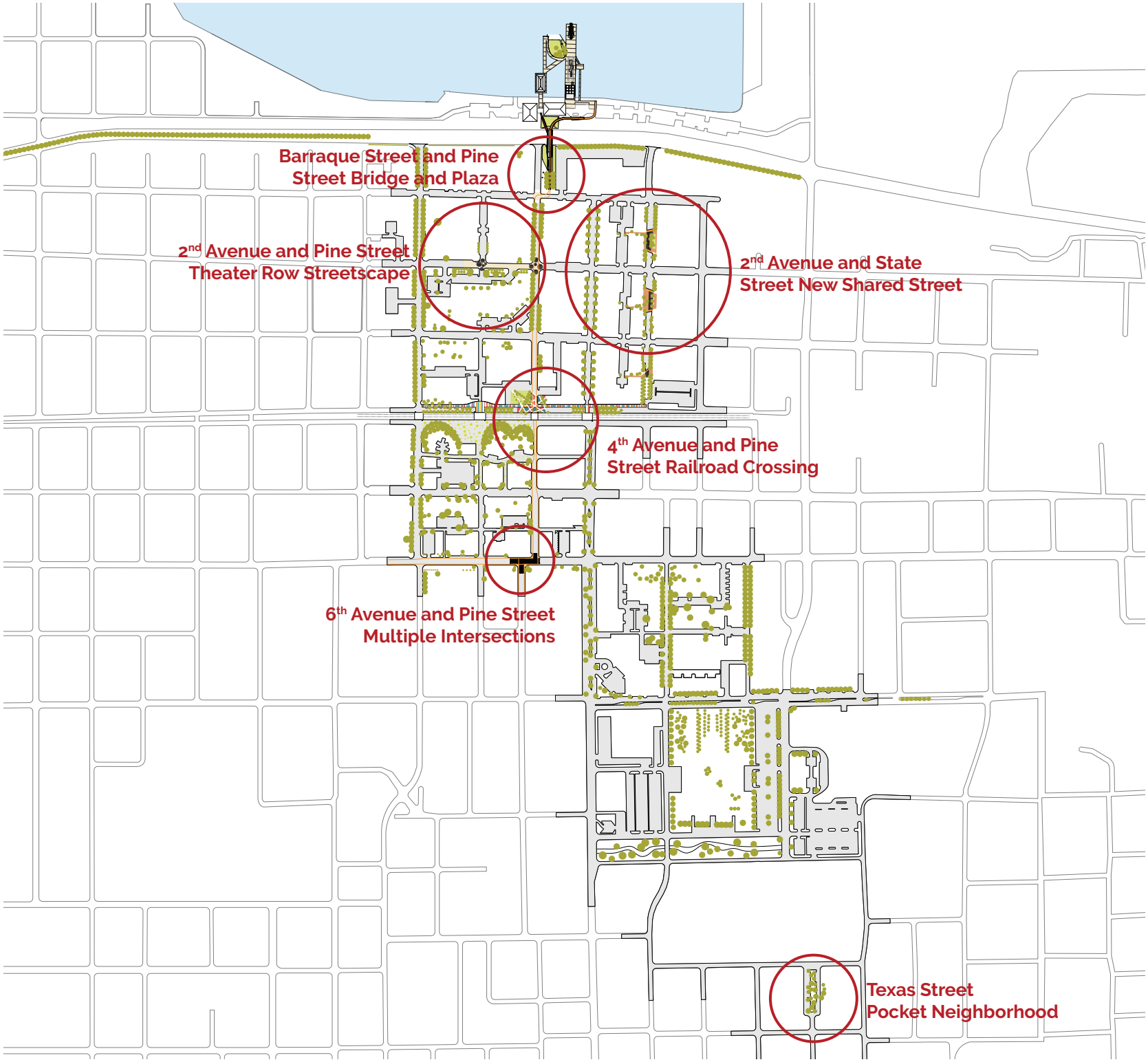
Bicycling is the fastest growing mode of transportation in the U.S. We recommend that Pine Bluff implement a downtown bicycle network consisting of protected bike lanes on select streets with connections to the lakeside bike trail and the high school. A network of dedicated bike lanes constitutes simple and easy to understand routing over a few loops covering downtown. Dedicated bike lanes are assigned to streets with significant right-of-way width and where conflicts with other competing interests like parking and street trees can be resolved. Phased expansions of the network can be implemented in all directions as downtown infills.

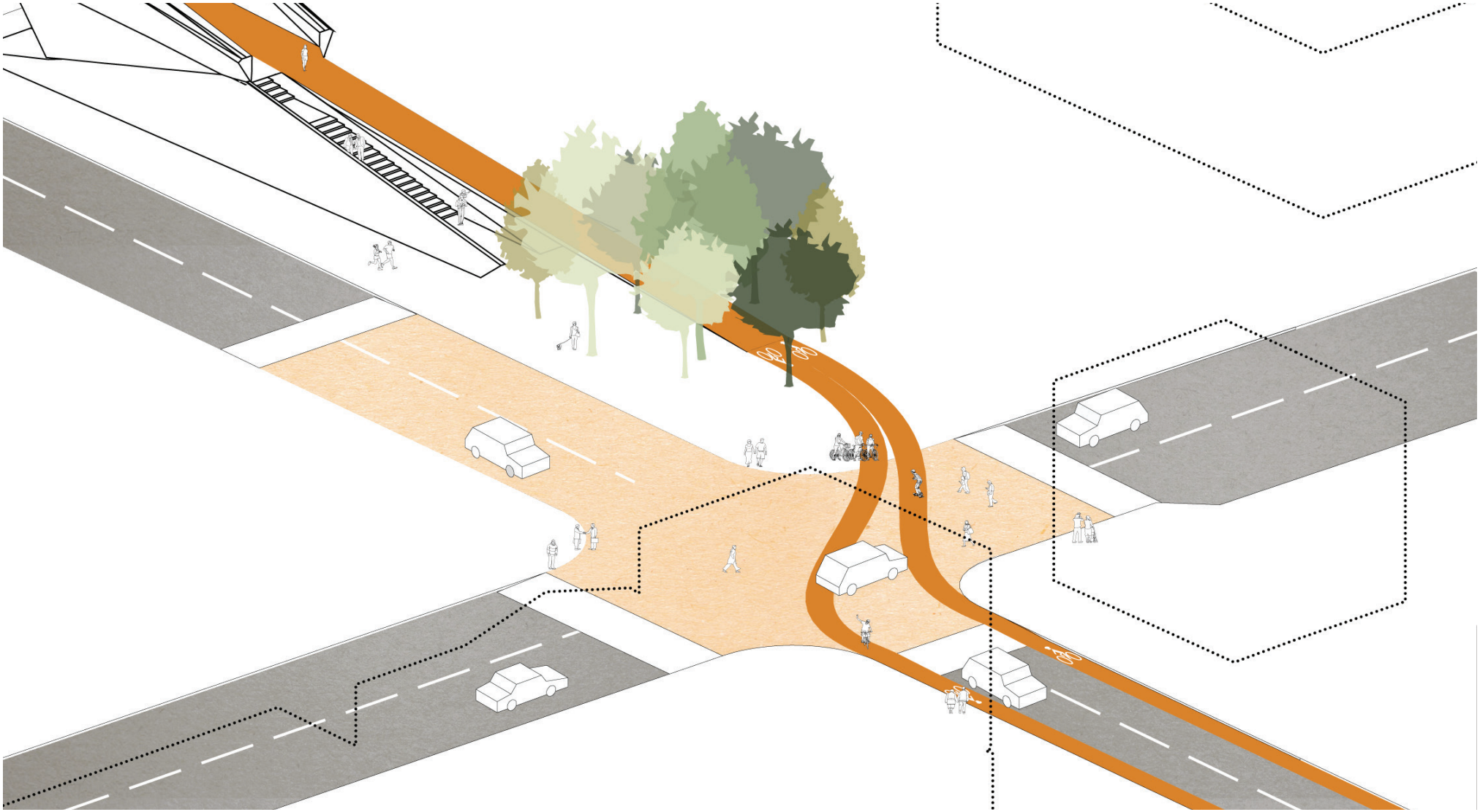


Modify Streets in Framework Plan

The Street Plan within the Framework Plan begins with consideration of network functioning and the goal to increase interconnectivity for all modes of travel. The Complete Streets approach reallocates right-of-way space to equitably accommodate travel among motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and users of public transit. The Street Plan integrates dedicated bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, streetscapes, new parking configurations, and public art reflective of a downtown street network. *DNA Moments*—formative design concepts distinguishing the street network—are indicated below.

- modified streets in Framework Plan
- new streets
- railroad closed to autos


Barraque Street and Pine
Street Bridge and Plaza
2nd Avenue and Pine Street
Theater Row Streetscape
2nd Avenue and State
Street New Shared Street
4th Avenue and Pine
Street Railroad Crossing
6th Avenue and Pine Street
Multiple Intersections
Texas Street
Pocket Neighborhood
0'
125'
250'
500'

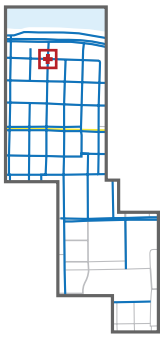


STREET DNA MOMENT

BARRAQUE STREET AND PINE STREET BRIDGE AND PLAZA

Pedestrian tables enhance safety at intersections with complex conflicts: they calm traffic, privilege diagonal pedestrian crossing, and accommodate a complex shift in dedicated bike lanes from split-way travel to combined lane travel.

Pedestrian tables or long, flat topped speed bumps are intersections raised to the level of sidewalks enhancing the pedestrian crossing environment. Tables encourage motorists to decrease speed, behave socially, and yield to pedestrians and cyclists as the latter queue up at Barraque Plaza to cross the bridge to Lake Saracen. Pedestrian tables reduce the need for curb ramps and facilitate safety as cyclists shift from conventional split-way travel bicycle lanes to contraflow travel at the Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge.

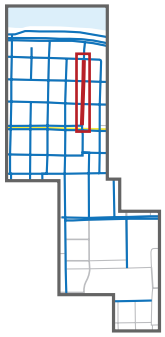


STREET DNA MOMENT

2ND AVENUE AND STATE STREET NEW SHARED STREET

Shared streets transform auto-oriented streets into pedestrian-oriented environments through *active* traffic calming focused on new street geometries and social landscapes within the right-of-way.

Shared streets are often road diets for oversized streets transforming underutilized asphalt into plazas and micro-park spaces for stormwater management or recreation. Right-of-ways are reconfigured to force slight meanders in auto travel paths, a traffic-calming technique that changes the optics of local streets for motorists. Streets evolve from simple mobility corridors to outdoor rooms privileging pedestrian life, particularly suitable for local streets serving multifamily housing environments. Spatial enclosures and social life within the space of the street naturally calms traffic.

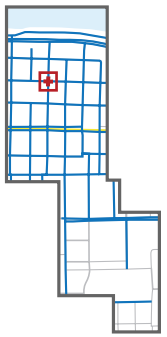


STREET DNA MOMENT

2ND AVENUE AND PINE STREET THEATER ROW STREETSCAPE

A new Theater Row streetscape focused on making place within the monotony of city grid employs *passive* retrofits like street surface graphics, trees, lighting, and furnishings.

To connect three theaters across two blocks as an identifiable district, the street is modified to celebrate heavy pedestrian activity in this zone. Street trees, lighting, outdoor seating, and special surface pavement create an atmosphere associated with the pageantry of theater attendance. Street lighting accented by path lighting, surface lighting embedded in sidewalks, and multiple marquees offer an illumination environment that distinguishes Theater Row. Lighting and special paving involving bold crosswalk graphics alerts motorists to environmental complexities including the presence of the downtown bicycle network in addition to event-driven crowds.

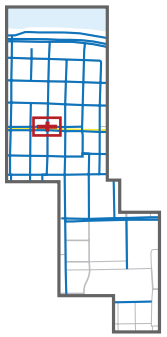


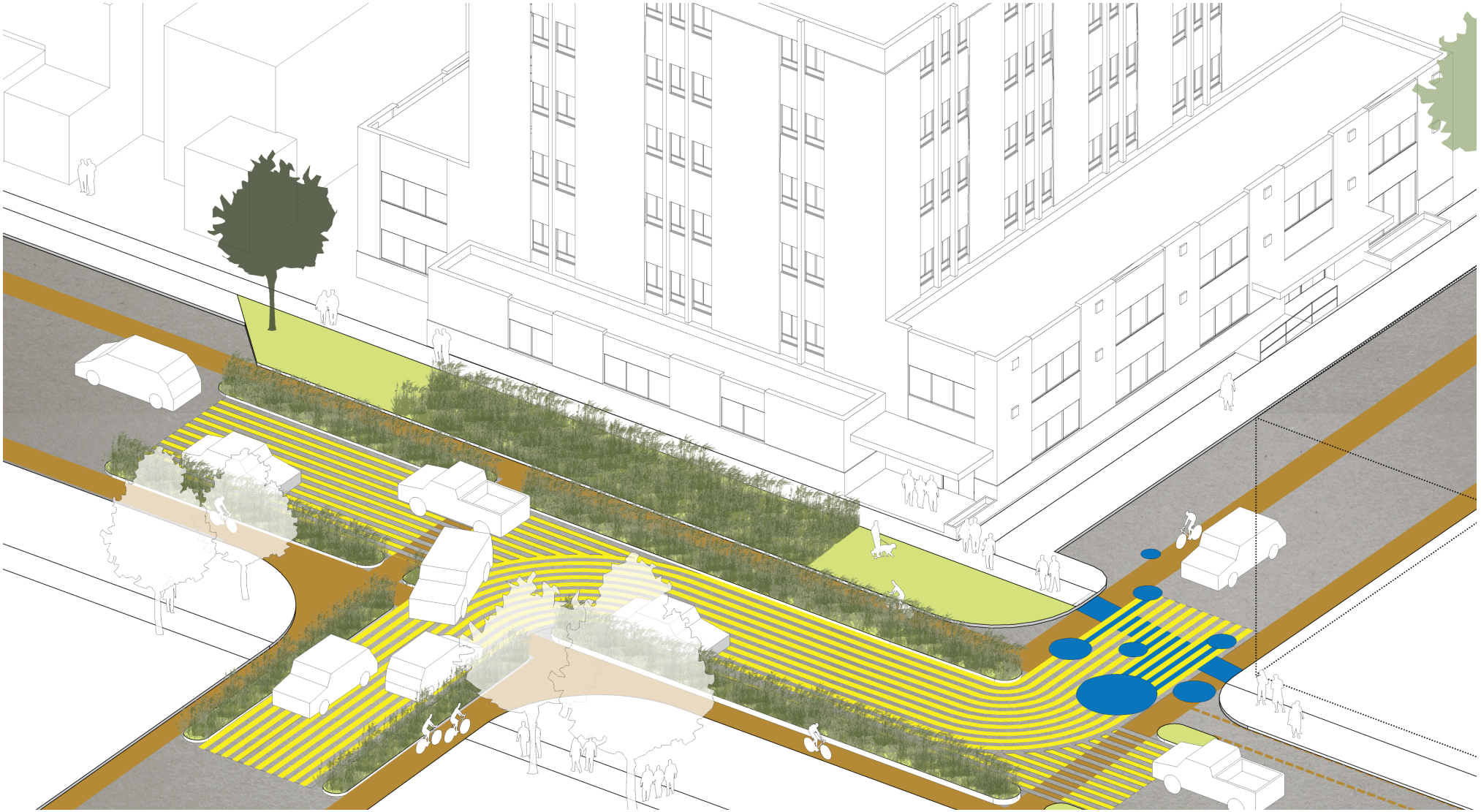
STREET DNA MOMENT

4TH AVENUE AND PINE STREET RAILROAD CROSSING

Change the level of service at the railroad crossing to serve pedestrian and bicycle traffic in support of a railroad Quiet Zone and the new ArtWalk.

To support a designated railroad Quiet Zone downtown, several auto crossings at the railroad in the core should be converted to pedestrian/bicycle crossings only, including those at State, Pine, and Chestnut Streets. Conversion of 4th Avenue to a single one-way lane maintains light traffic access including emergency vehicles, while the remaining right-of-way is dedicated to the ArtWalk. Reduction in 4th Avenue's LOS minimizes traffic-pedestrian conflicts in this new pedestrianized zone without creating dead-end configurations within the street network. Street surface graphics alert all travel modalities to the presence of the others, creating a seamless aesthetic transition between street and ArtWalk.



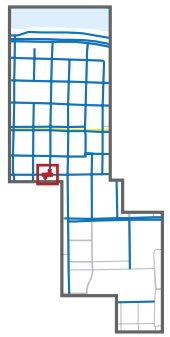


STREET DNA MOMENT

6TH AVENUE AND PINE STREET MULTIPLE INTERSECTIONS

Jogs in the street network require special intersection design focused on pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Jogs offer threshold opportunities to negotiate complex modality conflicts among motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians, while offering additional services like stormwater management. Here, midblock bicycle crossings are unavoidable. Stormwater bioswales with wetland plant communities are substituted for on-street parking, creating landscaped thresholds that naturally slow traffic through spatial enclosure. Street surface graphics and bioswales provide clear modal splits, shaping a unique street moment to raise alertness. The bioswale on the north side of 6th Avenue extends the symmetry of the administration building—a depression-era architectural gem and the only downtown building that terminates a street vista besides the courthouse.

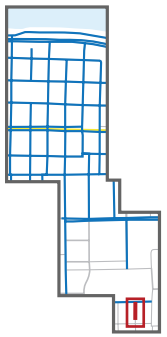


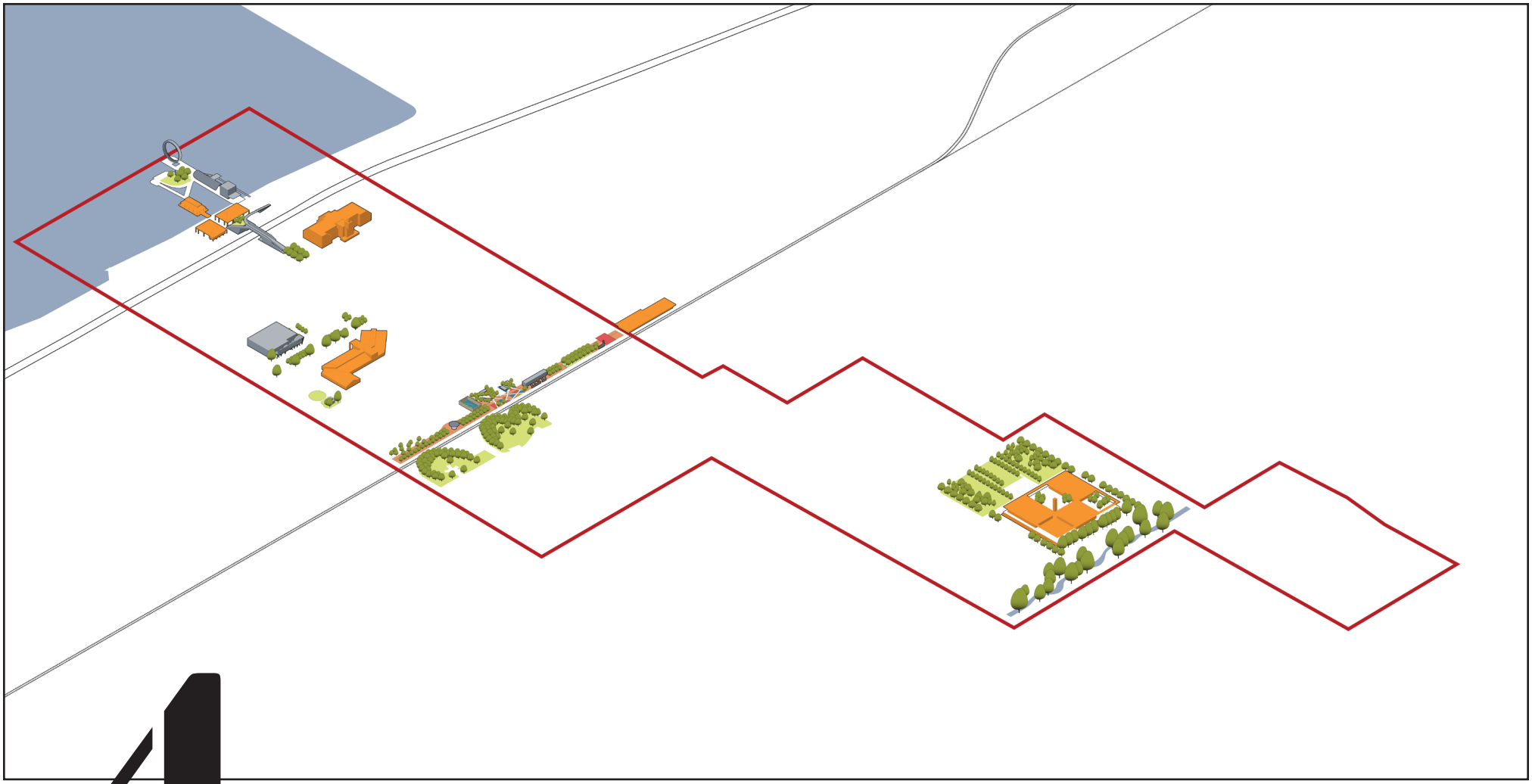
STREET DNA MOMENT

TEXAS STREET POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD

Substitute a shared residential green for front yards with split-way travel around the green to create a sense of community.

Expanding street medians to become parks was a traditional neighborhood-making technique used by early 20th century developers to establish a sense of place in market-driven housing. Pocket neighborhood planning poses an alternative to the generic subdivision of parcels, adding considerable value to property through good neighborhood design. Parking needs are accommodated on-street without the need for curb cuts every thirty feet. The shared residential green offers stormwater management as well as neighborhood-based recreation and gathering space. An ideal goal for downtown is to have a small park within a two-minute walk of every home.





4 SIGNATURE PROJECTS PLAN

Develop high profile public works projects that support the residentialization of downtown following the regeneration of neighborhoods.

While neighborhood development initiates a positive investment climate through commitments to reside downtown, high profile public works projects become feasible once residents are living there. Five signature projects landmark the Framework Plan, constructing an *experience economy* that makes downtown a unique destination in which to live, work, and play. All five projects define important public spaces in reclaiming a vital civic realm for downtown Pine Bluff. The plan proposes important second and third stage revitalization investments following downtown neighborhood regeneration initially focused on everyday quality-of-life improvements.

Signature Projects Plan

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*

"Retail follows rooftops" goes a well-regarded saying among planners. While neighborhood development initiates a positive investment climate through commitments to reside downtown, high profile public works projects become feasible once residents are living there. Five signature projects anchor the Framework Plan: the Saracen Wharf and Bridge, the Cinema on Theater Row, the Pine Bluff Band Stand, the Delta Rhythm and Bayous ArtWalk, and the Pine Bluff Civic Center Gardens. Signature projects construct an *experience economy* that makes cities unique destinations in which to live, work, and play, desirable to both residents and visitors alike. In speaking about the intangibles which mark the evolution of great urban public realms, acclaimed urbanist Jan Gehl observed: "First life, then spaces, then buildings—the other way around never works" (130). Thus, signature projects are important civic investments following downtown neighborhood regeneration focused on housing and everyday quality-of-life improvements.

Why not initiate downtown revitalization with signature projects since they drive the image of a place in ways that housing cannot? Cultural centers, convention centers, stadiums, museums, casinos, and shopping centers were once viewed as viable tools to jumpstart declining urban markets. But numerous studies show that such projects on their own fail to regenerate their downtowns. Moreover, profits from privately-held signature projects (including public-private partnerships) are often captured by outside investors remote to the local economy, despite consuming local public sector subsidies. Signature projects' historic returns on investment in the early stages of revitalization are poor.

Nonetheless, signature projects express local aspirations in futuring a new and emergent image of the city. Several of the proposed high-

"Retail follows rooftops" goes a well-regarded saying among planners. While neighborhood development initiates a positive investment climate through commitments to reside downtown, high profile public works projects become feasible once residents are living there.

profile projects are ambitious—even unreasonably so—which is essential in moving the civic imagination forward. Signature projects typically do not trigger revitalization activity; they have other roles to play in sequencing downtown investment. But once feasible, their supportive roles exert a booster effect on downtown revitalization. Signature projects become important signals to the market indicating a new healthy investment climate ready for the next plateau of investment.

Recommendations

The Signature Projects Plan involves a series of high profile public works projects which complement the regeneration of downtown neighborhoods. We make the following recommendations:

- **Implement the Pine Bluff Band Stand on the west side of the Don D Reynolds Center property.**

Because this is a relatively modest public works project, the Band Stand could be implemented concurrent with the development of the Arts District neighborhood on 3rd Avenue. The Band Stand is double-fronted with the south front functioning as an intimate park gazebo while the north front houses a stage to accommodate large musical performances on the lawn. This *pop-up park* is an inexpensive way to amenitize a new neighborhood while programmatically connecting the Don D Reynolds Center to its context.

- **Phase implementation of the Delta Rhythm and Bayous ArtWalk, including a Phase I to be developed immediately.**

Implementation of the ArtWalk is an important goal of the Delta Rhythm

and Bayous Alliance, which is working on heritage projects throughout the Arkansas and Mississippi deltas. The ArtWalk celebrates Chitlin' Circuit performers and the Delta Lowlands musicscape through visual and auditory outdoor installations, promising to be a unique memorialization project nationwide. While completion of the four-block linear park along the north side of the railroad right-of-way is in the long-term future, we recommend that a Phase I segment centered on the crossing at Main Street be implemented immediately as a downtown park. The Phase I Promenade and Simmons Plaza accommodates a downtown workforce in search of outdoor lunchtime settings. A well-appointed park shaped by a manicured landscape, seating, and special lighting will incent incubation of more Main Street businesses while assisting the ones that exist. In conjunction with development of the ArtWalk, the city should pursue Quiet Zone designation of the rail corridor through the downtown.

- **Develop a Cinema on Theater Row connecting two theaters, including the Saenger Theater.**

Complementing the new brewery and restaurant venues scheduled for Barraque Street and proposed neighborhood development downtown, a small five-screen cinema would be a compatible neighborhood service. The mixed-use cinema also houses a bar-café for street side service independent of moviegoing. The cinema caps a streetscape organized around the performing arts in anticipation of future revitalization of the Saenger Theater and the New Community Theater opposite on Barraque Street. The streetscape includes a tree grove with outdoor seating along the north edge of the Don D Reynolds Center. However, funding of this project should not compete with local public funding for pioneer-stage neighborhood development.

- **Construct the Pine Bluff Civic Center Gardens, an unrealized legacy project by renowned architect, Edward Durell Stone.**

A native of Fayetteville, and once the most renowned midcentury architect in America, Stone was highly regarded for his institutional work, including gardens. Among hundreds of buildings internationally, Stone is most noted for his design of Radio City Music Hall and the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., among others. The Pine Bluff Civic Center is a key work in Stone's *oeuvre*, but his superb gardens planned to accompany the Civic Center were never realized. Stone's work is not only important nationally but a statewide legacy that warrants preservation or realization.

The Civic Center Gardens would provide an essential urban park anchoring a renewed visitor economy around the Convention Center. We recommend construction of Stone's gardens, including daylighting of the stream on the south edge not indicated in Stone's plan. Given the renewed interest in Stone's work and his legacy within Arkansas, we recommend pursuit of planning grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Arkansas Arts Council to support project development. Along with Fayetteville, Pine Bluff is the only other Arkansas city in which an Edward Durell Stone building is located.

- **Develop the Saracen Wharf and Bridge as an addition to Saracen Landing.**

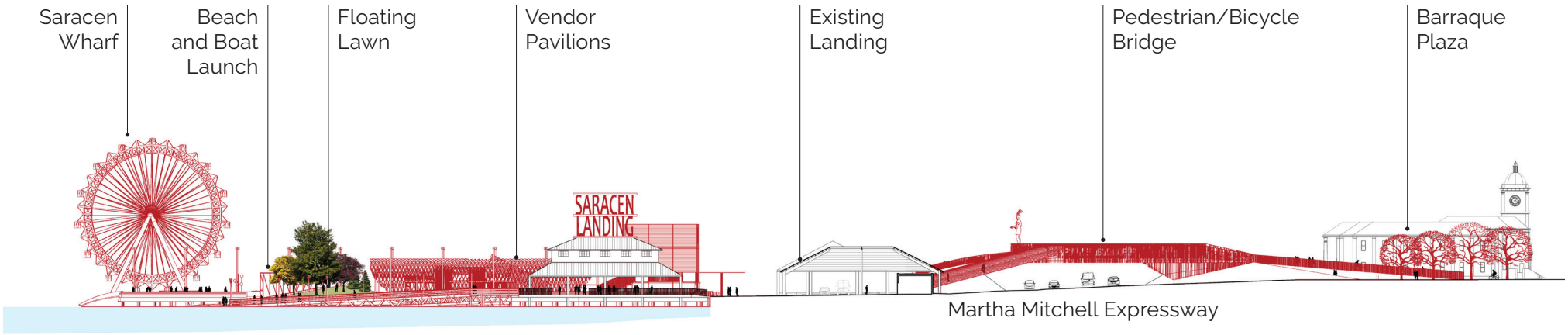
The most ambitious and iconic of the special projects, the Saracen Wharf and Bridge absorbs the pavilions and adjacent fishing pier into an interconnected loop for waterfront entertainment and recreation. The Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge provides a convenient connection between downtown and the lakefront with safe access to the Regional Park east of the lake. The new bicycle network makes lakeside attractions readily available to new households downtown. The Wharf configures new loops connecting land and water in a new *lakeside urbanism* that eliminates the conventional dead-end experience of piers like that in the current pavilion and fishing pier. New programming includes a "floating lawn", boathouse, beach with kayak and paddle boat launch, boardwalk, pavilions, repurposed shipping containers for retail and food vendors, and a Ferris wheel. Recalling the bustle of the city's riverfront days, the new Wharf encourages greater lakeside use, including passive recreation beyond scheduled events. Funding for this project should not compete with local public funding for pioneer-stage neighborhood development.

a new lakeside Wharf recalls Pine Bluff's days as a bustling waterfront town

Lakefront at Saracen Landing

Develop the Saracen Wharf as an addition to Saracen Landing. The Wharf absorbs Saracen Landing and adjacent fishing pier into an interconnected loop for waterfront entertainment and recreation. The Wharf configures new loops connecting land and water in a new *lakeside urbanism* that eliminates the conventional dead-end experience of piers manifested in the current pavilion and fishing pier. New programming includes a "floating lawn", boathouse, beach with kayak and paddle boat launch, boardwalk, pavilions, repurposed shipping containers for retail and food vendors, and a Ferris wheel. Recalling the bustle of the city's riverfront days, the new Wharf encourages greater lakeside use, including passive recreation beyond scheduled events.

New Saracen Wharf and Bridge looking east on Martha Mitchell Expressway



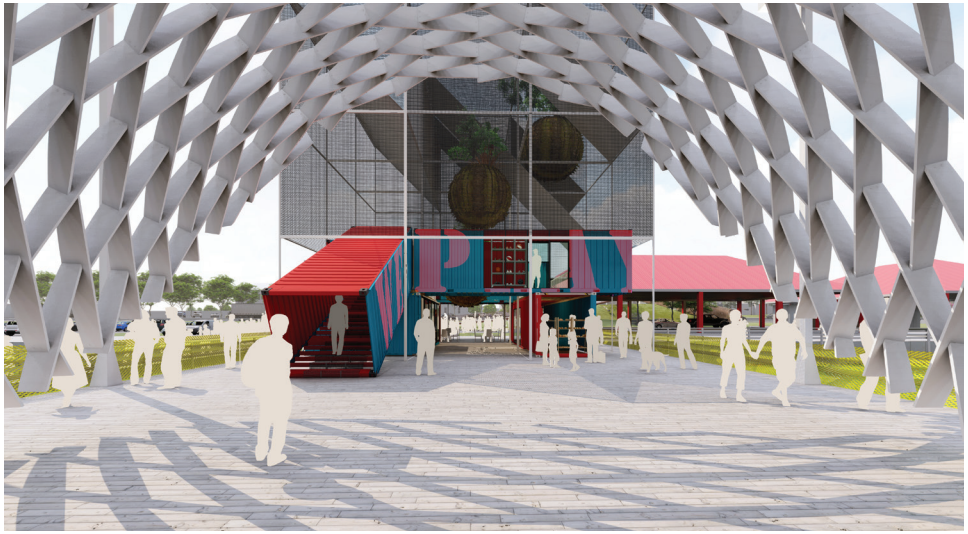
Section of Saracen Landing, Wharf, and Bridge looking east

Lakeside Urbanism

Transform dead-end piers into interconnected waterfront recreation and entertainment loops.

0′ 25′ 50′ 100′

Saracen Landing with new Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge and Wharf looking west



Wharf looking south at Entry Pavilion with retail

Beach and Floating Lawn looking east toward Wharf

Unexpected Nature

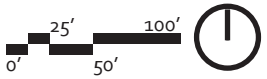
Insert landscapes where they are least expected–the best urbanism always involves the ludic.

Illumination of Urban Space

Lighting is the primary shaper of the urban experience after sunset and determinative of the city's success in developing an experience economy.

Saracen Landing Plan

1. Beach
2. Floating lawn
3. New boardwalks
4. Existing fishing pier
5. Saracen Wharf
6. Existing pavilions
7. Amphitheater
8. Bike trail



a new Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge as gateway and local icon signaling downtown

Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge

0′ 25′ 50′ 100′

The Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge provides a convenient connection between downtown and the lakefront with safe access to the Regional Park east of the lake. The new bicycle network makes lakeside attractions readily available to new downtown households. Bridge endpoints are developed as context-sensitive civic landscapes and their asymmetries recognize that lake and downtown are different kinds of public places. The downtown side includes a new Barraque Street Plaza while a lakeside amphitheater couples the Bridge with the Landing's existing pavilions. A statue of Chief Saracen facing the lake completes this gateway into downtown.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge and Saracen Landing looking west

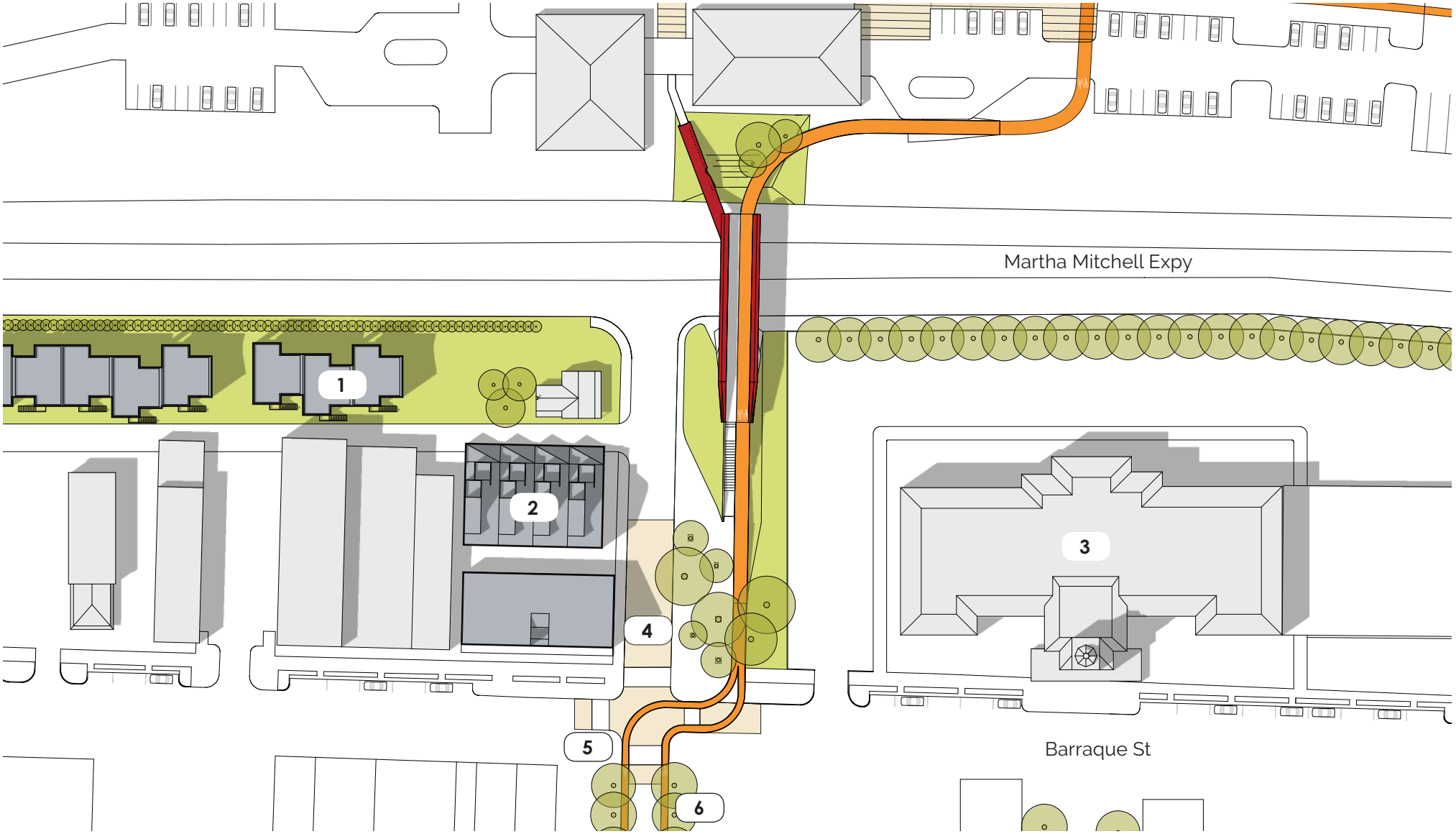
Amphitheater at north terminus of Bridge

Barraque Plaza at south terminus of Bridge

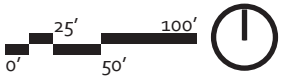
Bridge looking toward Barraque Plaza

Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge

The essence of a bridge is the two places created by its endpoints.

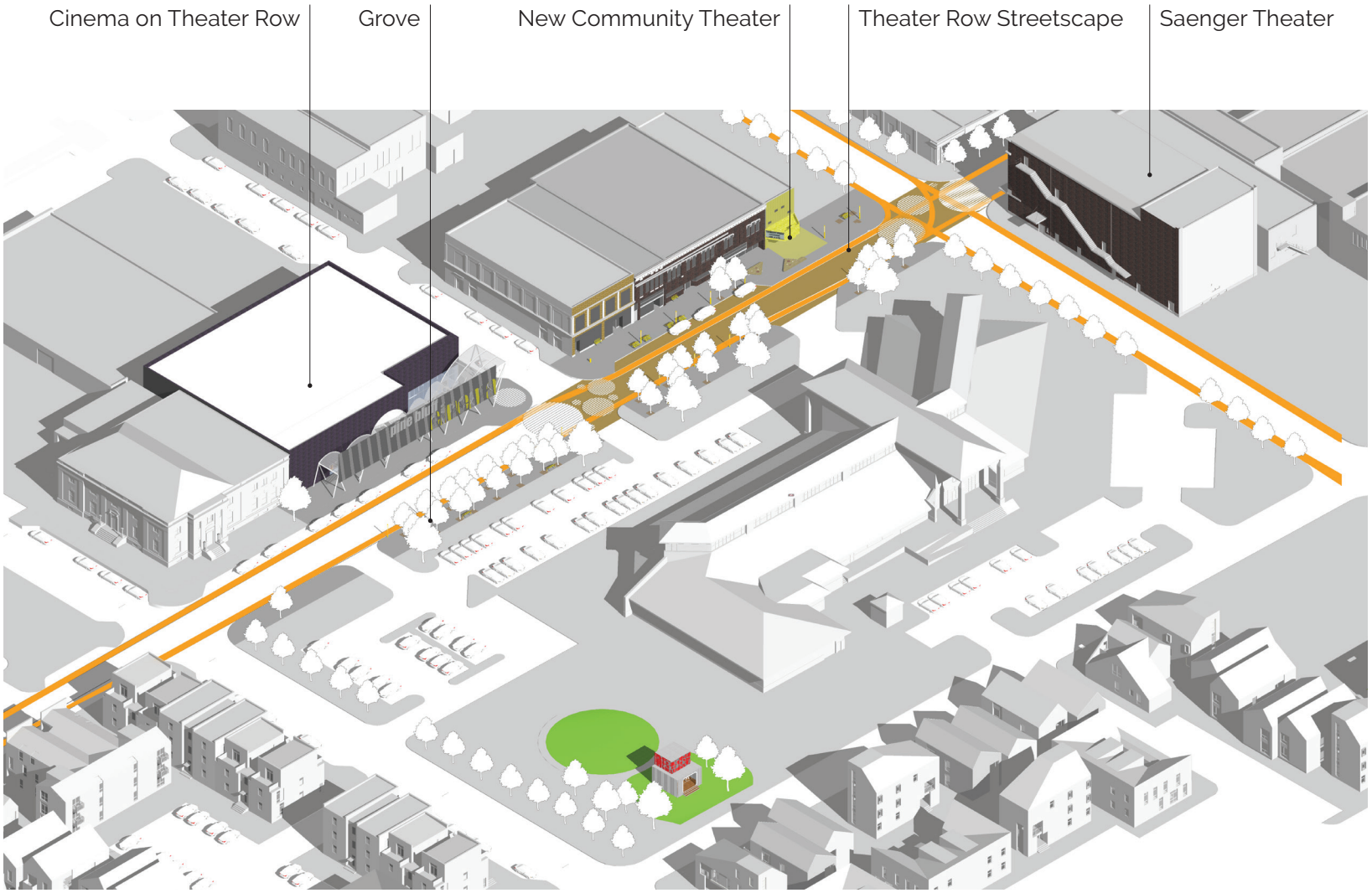


Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge Plan

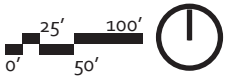


1. Townhouses
2. Mixed-use housing
3. Jefferson County Courthouse
4. Barraque Street Plaza
5. Pedestrian table
6. Dedicated bike lanes

a modest sized cinema, café, and a generous porch makes a great "third place". . .



Cinema on Theater Row

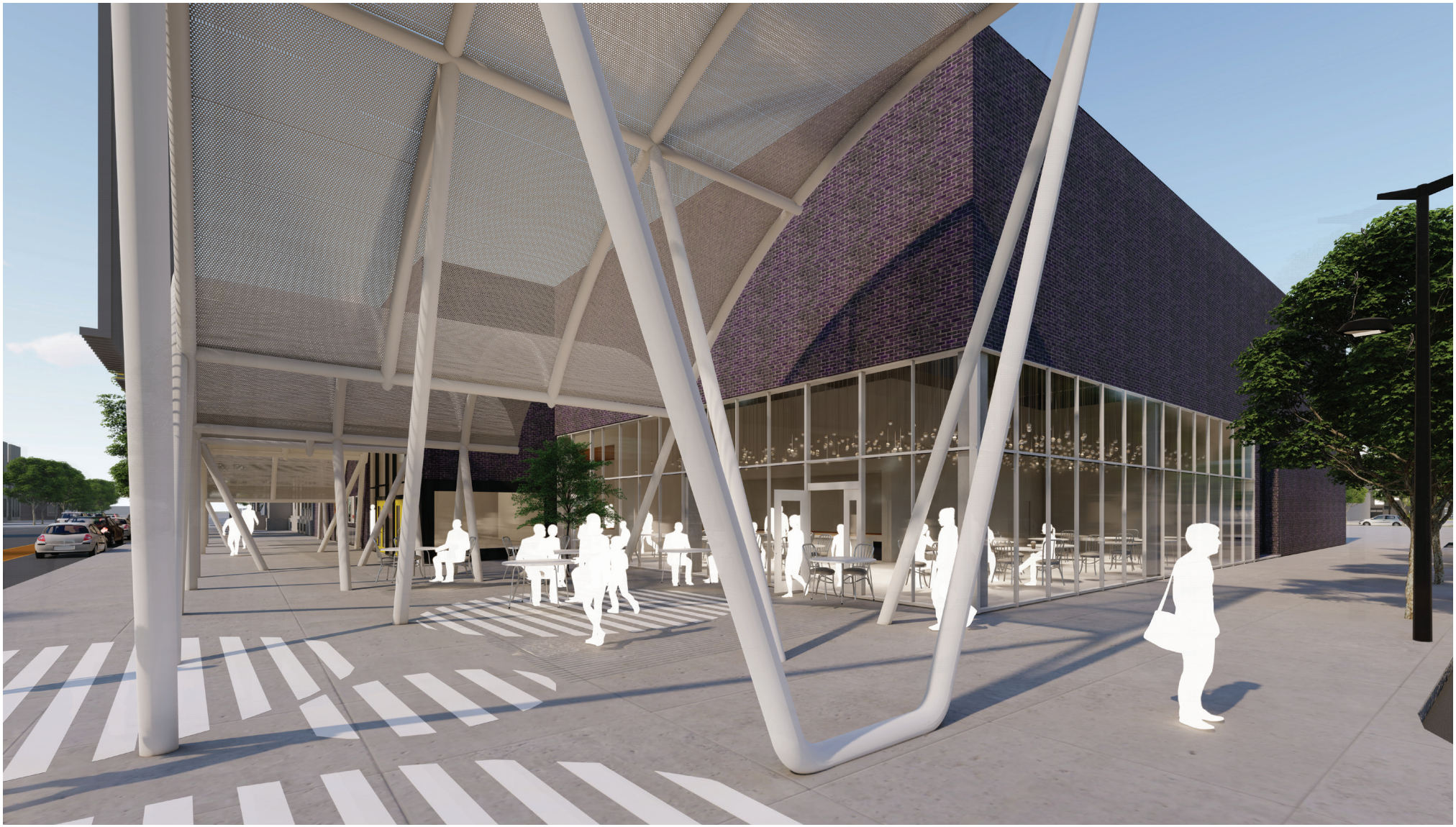


Develop a Cinema on 2nd Avenue as part of a new Theater Row streetscape connecting the New Community Theater and the historic Saenger Theater. The mixed-use cinema also houses a bar-café for street side service independent of moviegoing. The cinema's grand porch and outdoor seating caps a streetscape organized around the performing arts in anticipation of future revitalization of the Saenger Theater and the New Community Theater across the street. The streetscape includes special lighting and a tree grove with outdoor seating along the north edge of the Don D Reynolds Center.

Refurbishment of 2nd Avenue as Theater Row looking east toward Saenger Theater

Signature Streets

Iconic streetscapes with pedestrian amenities, building frontages, and paving can shape micro-districts within gridded street networks.



Cinema porch looking west on Theater Row

Public Building Frontage

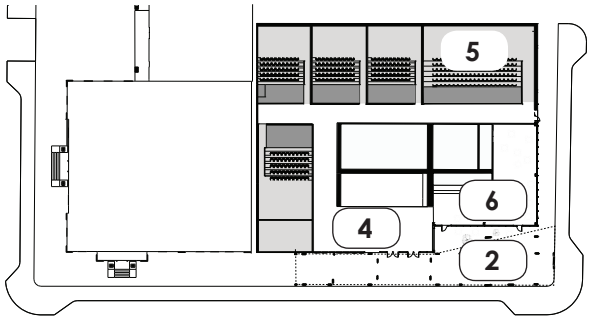
No matter the program, good building entrances will shelter users while great ones will celebrate their presence.

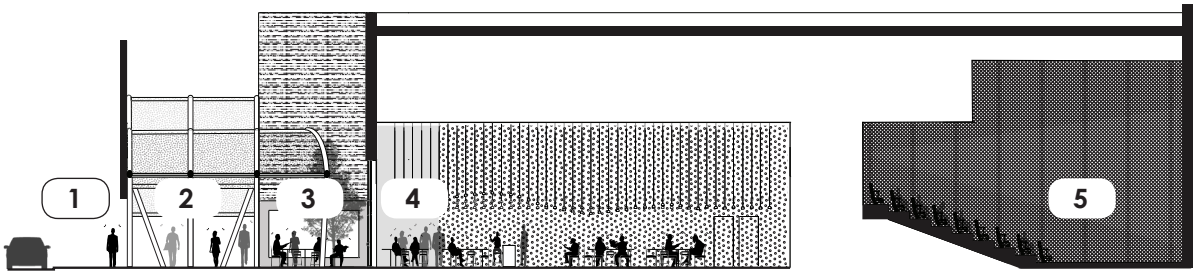
Café in the Cinema looking south to Theater Row

Cross-programming Downtown Buildings

Unexpected mixing of compatible uses enhances downtown vitality and creates multiplier economic effects.

Cinema on Theater Row looking west

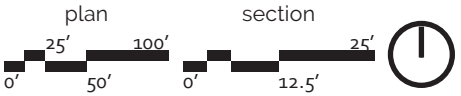




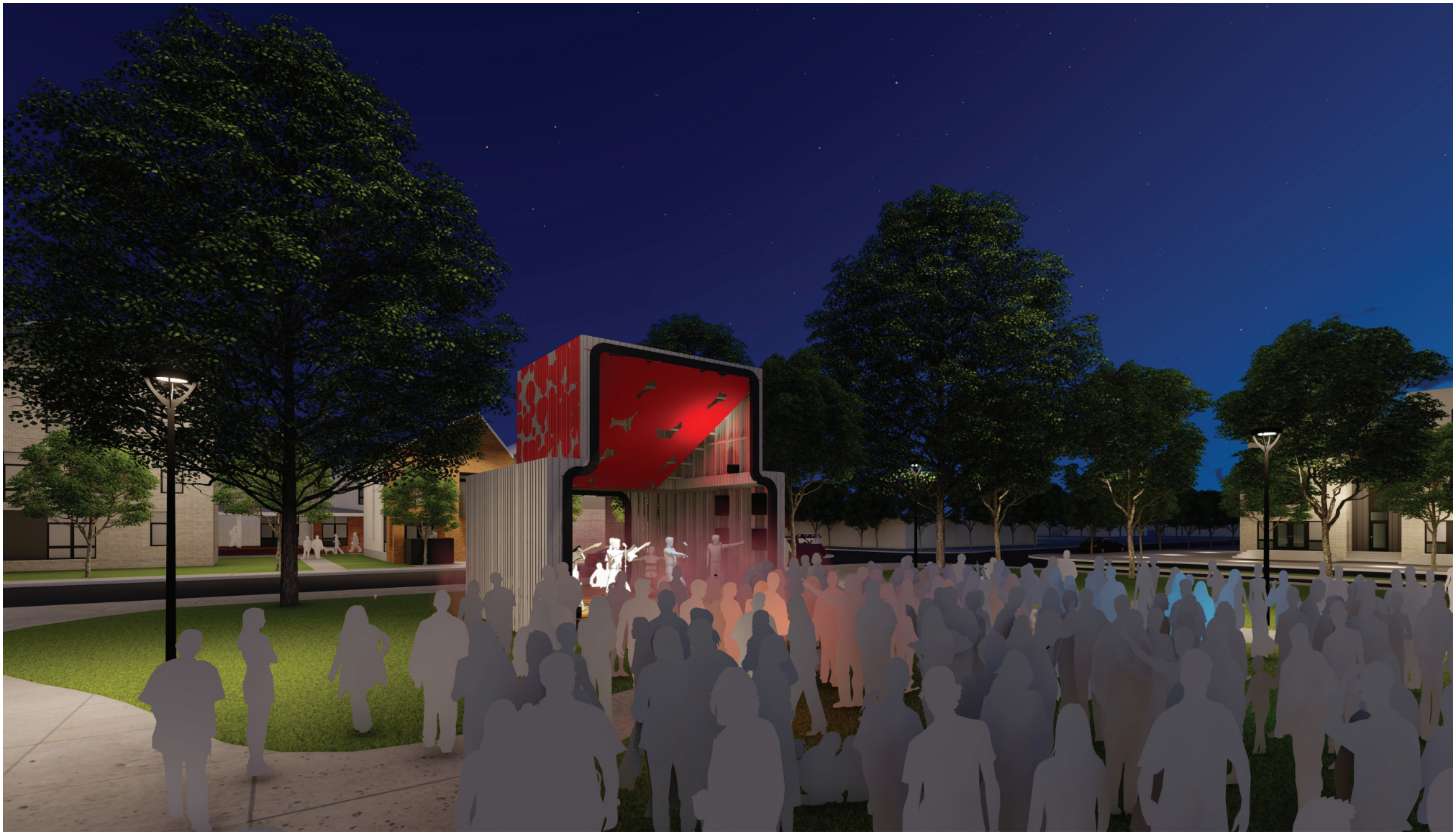
1 Entry **2** Porch **3** Patio **4** Cafe **5** Theater **6** Tickets/Concession

Blank Box Buildings

Traditionally windowless buildings are compatible with downtown streets when their building frontages create good urban space.



a park gazebo for intimate gathering on one edge. . .

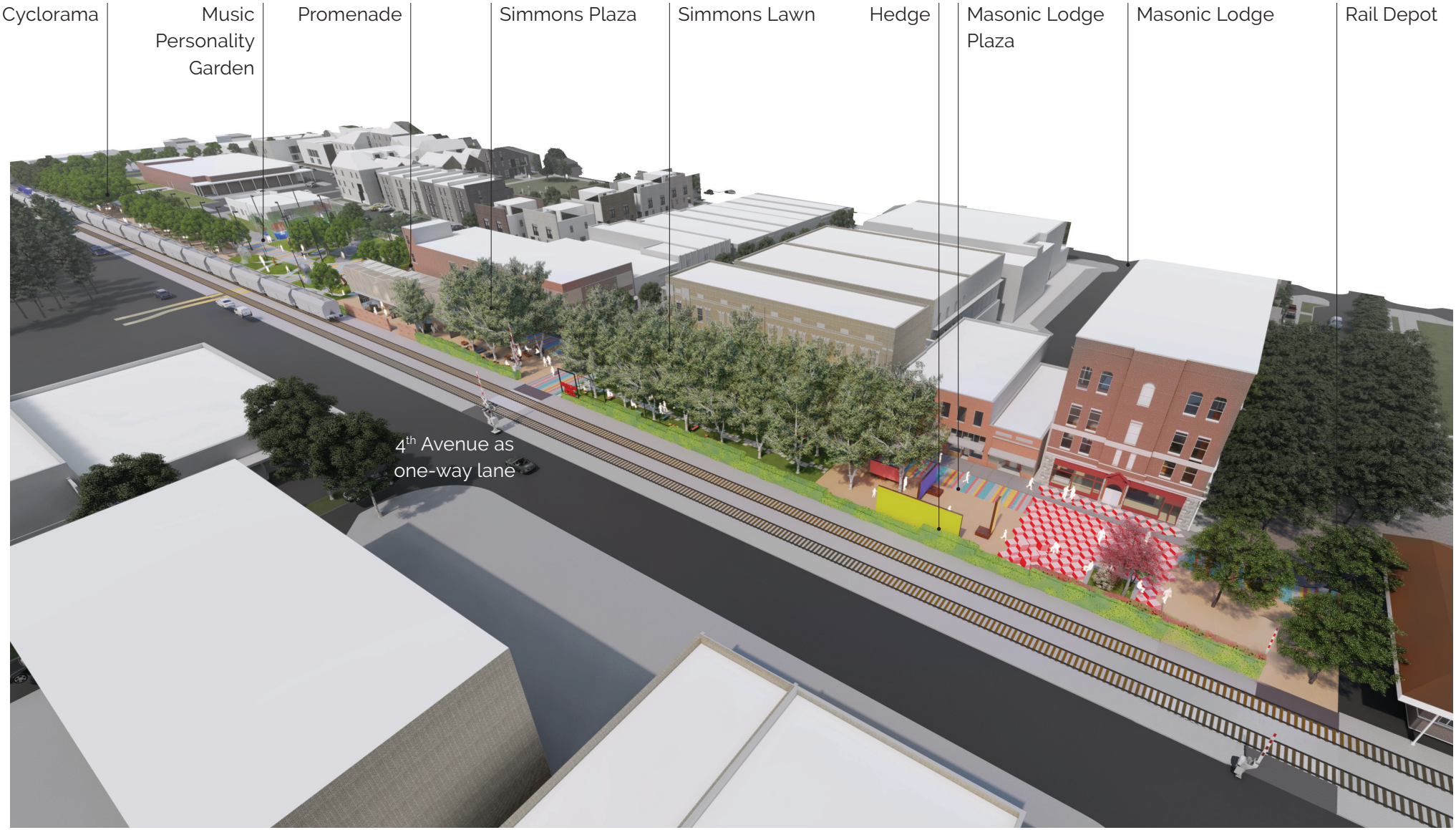


Stage-side of bandstand in Don D Reynolds Park looking southwest

Pine Bluff Gazebo/Bandstand

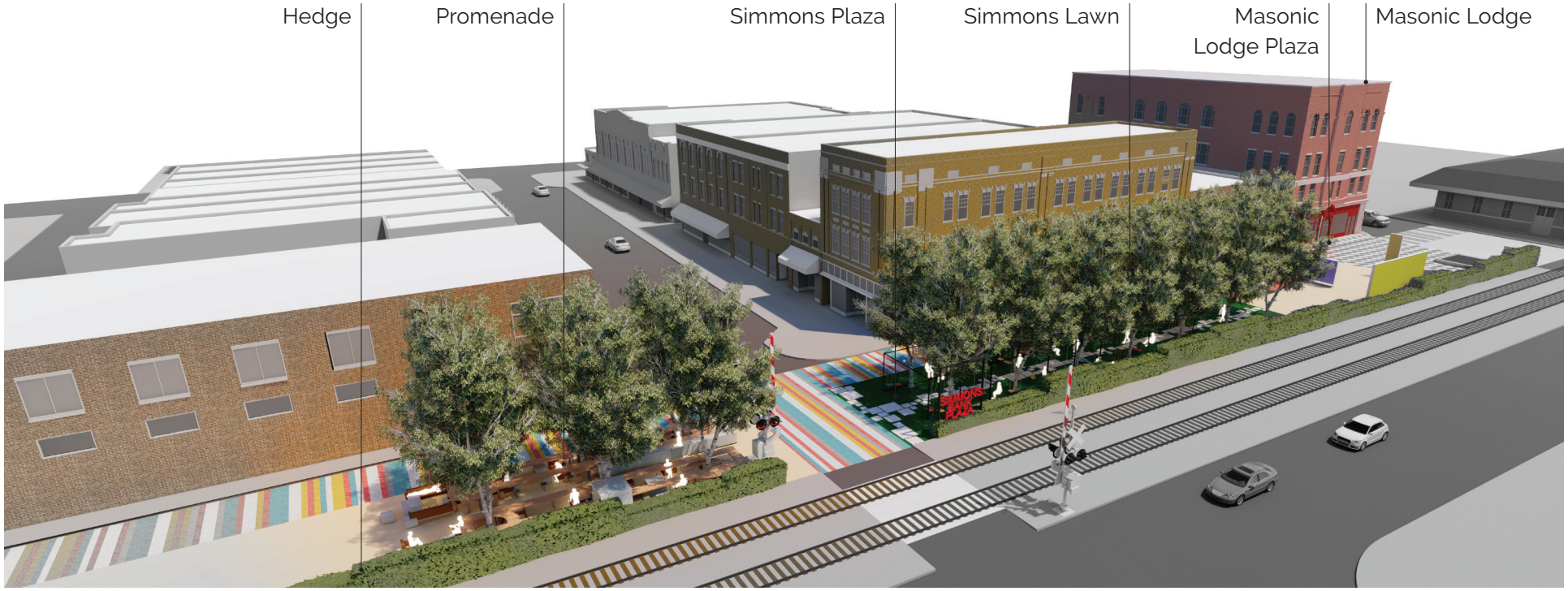
A small park pavilion may double as an intimate gazebo on one edge and a performance stage on the opposite face.

an ArtWalk to commemorate the region's rich musical tradition and its place in the national heritage

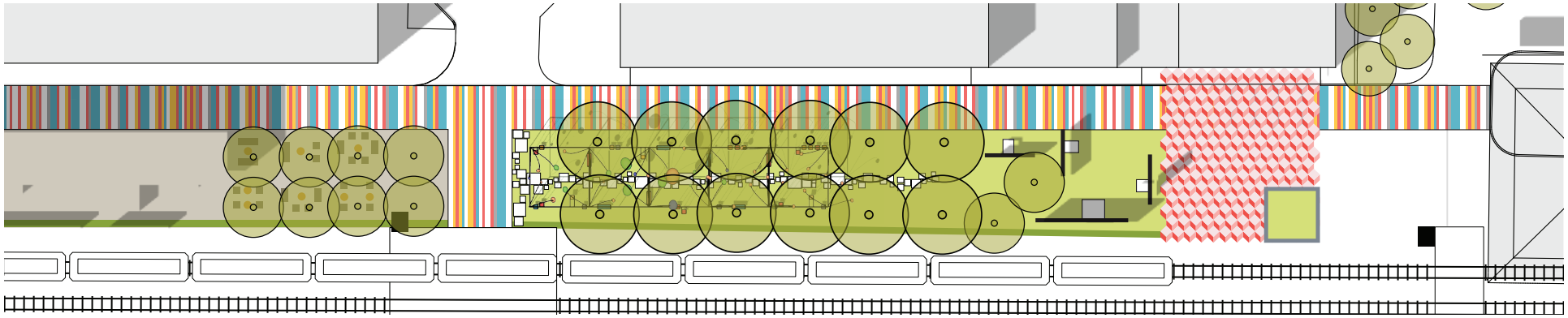


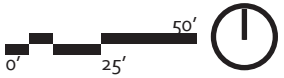
Delta Rhythm and Bayous ArtWalk

Once a rail staging area to service warehouses, redevelop 4th Avenue along the rail corridor as a Delta Rhythm and Bayous ArtWalk. The ArtWalk celebrates Chitlin' Circuit performers and the regional Delta Lowlands musicscape through visual and auditory outdoor installations, a unique memorialization project nationwide. The ArtWalk's east terminus includes the Train Depot and Masonic Lodge where black musicians lodged during the era of segregation. While the Phase I Simmons Plaza accommodates residents and a downtown workforce, a future Cyclorama, Photo Gallery, Music Garden, and museum will accommodate national tourists.



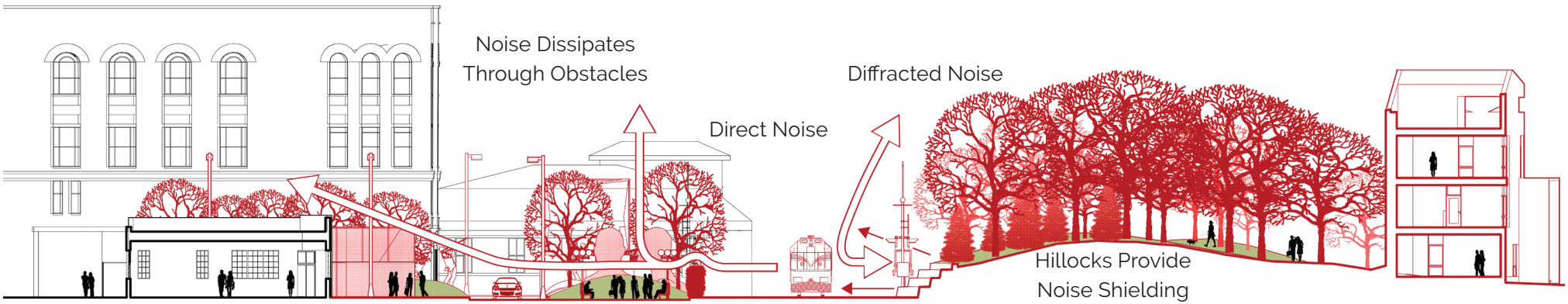
ArtWalk at Main Street looking north



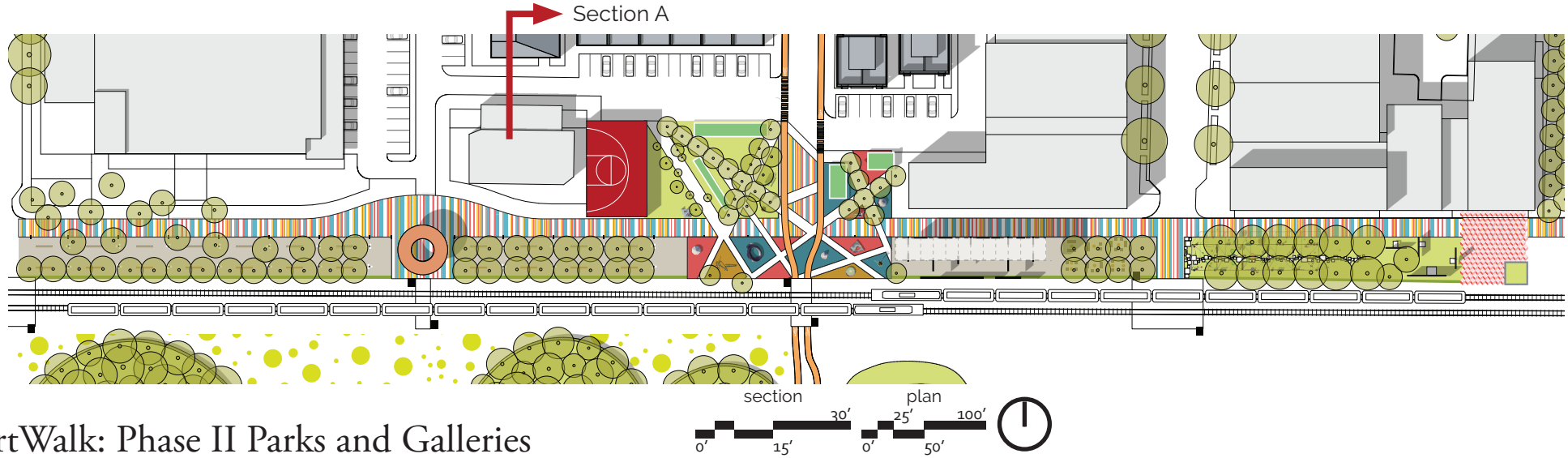


ArtWalk: Phase I Simmons Plaza

Despite the ArtWalk's memorial function, Phase I begins with a locally oriented landscape that serves a downtown workforce and residents in search of outdoor lunchtime settings and places for general relaxation. A well-appointed park shaped by a manicured landscape, seating, and special lighting will incent incubation of more lunchtime eateries and retail shops on Main Street while assisting current businesses. The Simmons Plaza overcomes the division of the railroad, creating a threshold and refuge connecting north and south main street.



Section A: Sound Mitigation at ArtWalk and Hillocks Neighborhood



ArtWalk: Phase II Parks and Galleries

The tree-and-hedge-lined Promenade functions as noise pollution mitigation infrastructure complementing a proposed Quiet Zone to be designated along the rail corridor through downtown. The groundfloor of the Open-Air Photo Gallery sponsors historic images of important places in Chitlin' Circuit history, while the canvas roof projects interchanging images of famous performers at night. The Music Personality Garden with soundscapes celebrates the musicians and promotors of the Chitlin' Circuit playing Delta blues, big band, and jazz. The Pine Bluff Cyclorama hosts the story of the Delta Lowlands' musical legacy, like the famous cycloramas commemorating the Civil War in Atlanta and Gettysburg, and the Behalt Cyclorama in Berlin, Ohio illustrating the Anabaptist origination story.

ArtWalk Promenade along railroad looking east

Pedestrian Promenade

Recalling tree-lined walks along waterfronts and shopping districts, the Promenade fulfills the duty of a park in providing landscaped rooms and structures for art and recreation.

Cyclorama at intersection of 4th Avenue and Chestnut Street looking east

Cyclorama/Public Art

Beloved public spaces were always adorned with art commemorating local history–a high form of civic expression.

Music Personality Garden looking east on 4th Avenue

Music Personality Garden

Public art may also celebrate causes larger than the local, in which case the space becomes regionally or nationally symbolic.

Photo Gallery made from a fabric shade structure looking west

Photo Gallery at night looking west

Open-Air Photo Gallery

A segment of the Promenade, the Photo Gallery substitutes an outdoor museum for a double row of trees.

Simmons Plaza looking east to Simmons Lawn across Main Street

Outdoor Seating

While the tree-lined Promenade may be consistent overhead, change the seating type to articulate rooms that sponsor diversity in use and social experience.

Simmons Lawn looking east to Masonic Lodge

Child or Adult Space?

Spaces for cross-generational intersection are as important as playgrounds and other spaces designed for specific age groups.

Masonic Lodge Plaza looking west toward Promenade

Pedestrian Plazas

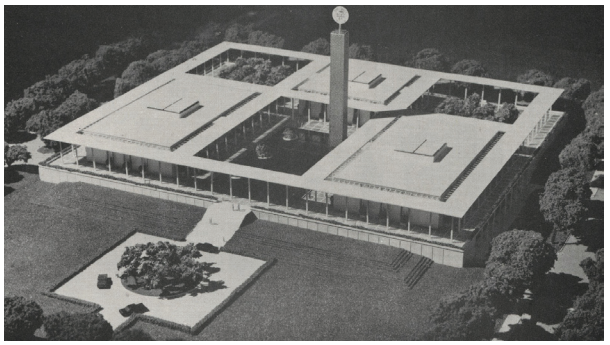
Neither street nor sidewalk, the plaza frames transitions between parks and transportation settings.

Masonic Lodge Plaza looking west toward Promenade

Plazas that Frame Buildings

The plaza blurs distinctions between pedestrian and motorist through a continuous but well-defined space that compels motorists to behave socially, while resituating a building's status in the city.

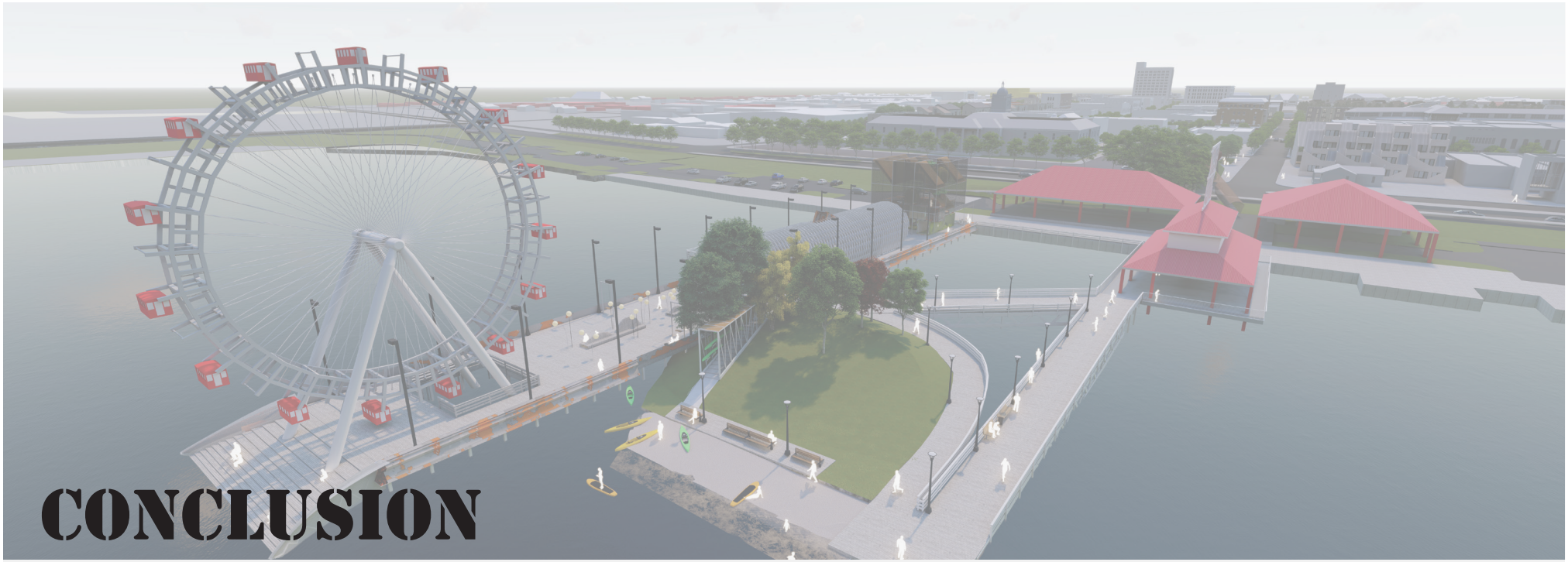
Civic Center Gardens looking south towards Civic Center



Gardens that Frame Buildings

Formal gardens planned for the Civic Center would provide an essential urban park anchoring renewal of a visitor economy around the Convention Center and expand architectural qualities in the Civic Center.

water, railroad, music. . . and housing in reinventing the downtown



CONCLUSION

Urban Succession: The Next Pine Bluff Beyond Single-Family Detached Housing

> *"In a city where housing is being abandoned, differences in housing types will influence rates of housing loss because certain housing types are more durable. A brick row house, for example, is less vulnerable to weathering, arson, and break-ins than a detached wooden house. In general, multifamily or attached structures are more durable than detached structures open to weathering and/or entry on all four sides."*
>
> **Brent Ryan**, *Design After Decline: How America Rebuilds Shrinking Cities*

Re-Live Downtown taps into powerful arguments highlighting the favorable economics of downtown land use. A calamitous mistake in the recent redevelopment of declining Rust Belt downtowns has been the replication of suburban development patterns featuring single-family housing, often with garages and yards, in downtown. Low density equals low wealth in downtowns. Downtown Pine Bluff experienced significant housing losses during its period of shrinkage since the 1970s, likely due to the predominance of single-family houses in a downtown lacking housing diversity. Research on shrinking cities shows that single-family detached housing not only lacks resiliency in an economic downturn, but it is the first real estate product to be razed resulting in large scale abandonment. A specialist on shrinking cities, Brent Ryan observes, "Philadelphia, Baltimore, and to some extent Washington D.C., were row-house cities, and as a result their housing losses were lower than Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Louis, which were lower-density cities with detached, often wooden, housing" (Ryan: 50). Thus, Detroit and St. Louis lost over one third of their housing, and empirical evidence shows that Pine Bluff's downtown housing loss was far greater.

Low density equals low wealth in downtowns.

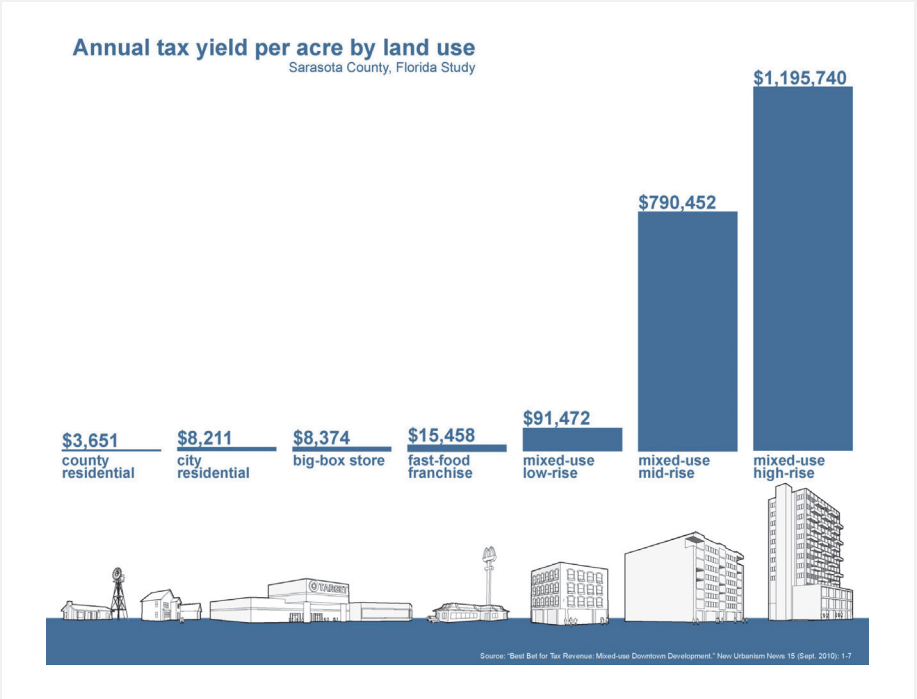
Construction of single-family houses in the downtown core represents

New studies on municipal tax bases show that when comparing tax yields per acre among different land uses (i.e., rural, suburban, urban mixed use), mixed-use downtown development at moderate density yields ten times the tax revenue per acre as comparable suburban development.

a poor return on investment and squanders the economic development potential of land that readily accommodates 3-4 story structures of higher density. Moreover, single-family housing tends to be a regulatory fix freezing the possibility for urban succession and the maturation of cities. Unlike mixed-use building fabric, single-family housing is an inelastic and fragile fabric rarely subject to changes in land use, especially during an economic downturn involving labor transitions. This is evidenced by its widespread demolition in cities where single-family housing was the primary housing product. Therefore, revitalization efforts for Pine Bluff should uphold best practices in resiliency through development of adaptable multifamily products that serve changing needs throughout urban succession.

Remember, complex systems like cities evolve to higher order mature energy states where they accomplish more work using less energy per unit of measure. Consider, for instance, that doubling population size increases wealth, innovation, and other human interaction indicators by 15 percent per capita in a phenomenon known as *superlinear scaling*. Yet doubling in size only requires an 85 percent increase in resources and infrastructure to service the city, according to Geoffrey West, a physicist studying cities and other complex systems (West). Cities become more efficient as they grow, and less so as they spread. Urban succession from low-density single-family housing to dense multifamily housing will exponentially elevate Pine Bluff's land-use economics to a higher order urbanism and wealth creation.

Consider the economics of land use simply from the city's interest in enhancing its tax base, not to mention infrastructural efficiencies associated with downtown development. New studies on municipal tax bases show that when comparing tax yields per acre among different land uses (i.e., rural, suburban, urban mixed use), mixed-use downtown development at moderate density yields ten times the tax revenue per acre as comparable suburban development (Badger). According to Joe Minicozzi, a national expert on municipal tax performance analytics, a Walmart supercenter sitting on 34 acres with a tax value of $20 million yields about $6,500 per acre in property tax revenue compared to a similar mixed-use commercial development downtown which yields more than $634,000 in tax revenue per acre. Even accounting for sales tax, mixed-use downtown property still yields six times as much as the Walmart, according to Minicozzi. Miniciozzi's comparison didn't even factor in the high costs of municipal public services consumed by a Walmart supercenter such as daily police and paramedic response, highway maintenance, and municipal utilities worsening the case for



Tax Yield per Acre by Land Use

suburban development. In terms of housing, moderate density housing like that called for in *Re-Live Downtown* will yield eight times the tax revenue per acre over that of suburban housing. Hence, fair-costing of planning decisions between suburban and urban investments logically leads to investment in downtown revitalization that exponentially rebuilds community wealth.

This brings us back to the centrality of livability in neighborhood development. In a time when everything, including public goods and life-affirming essential services like education and health, has become financialized by the market, cities are forced to make a choice about their orientation in governance. Governance philosophies directly impact cities' service delivery and the nature of their built environments. In their book, *Market Cities, People Cities: The Shape of Our Urban Future*, authors Michael Oluf Emerson and Kevin Smiley examine the compelling directions cities must elect: either privilege the market or privilege people. Either orientation carries its own paths to success and inherent risks. Cities that privilege the market focus their resources on economic development objectives like job production, subsidization of corporate relocations to their city, business incubation, and development of business-friendly practices. Public services are often privatized, leaving delivery of services to vendors with profit motives rather than the public sector that must manage multiple bottom lines, including social and environmental criterion. Market Cities tend to limit delivery of city services to essential services and those services that prime the pump, de-emphasizing planning, workforce development, and housing affordability. Houston exemplifies a Market City in its extraordinary wealth creation within a highly deregulated environment.

Cities that privilege people focus their resources on livability through attention to cultivating quality in the built environment, safety, equality, social contact, education, and health. People Cities allocate tax revenue to enhance public goods, especially those related to civic infrastructure, education, and well-being. Copenhagen, Denmark—once written off as a hopelessly shrinking city, now voted happiest city in the world—exemplifies a People City. Copenhagen's economy is now a world-leading economy, having built its economy, in major part, on livability. Regional examples of People Cities include Ashville, NC, Greenville, SC, and Bentonville and Conway, AR, all traditionally small commonplace cities now sought out by tourists and future residents for their exceptional downtown environments and high levels of social capital among diverse populations. While every city confronts the same structural forces including the issues outlined above, understanding a city's primary orientation will help communities of local decision-makers and stakeholders determine the most important act in governance—how to best allocate resources. Resource allocation entails smart triangulation of design thinking, value capture by the public sector, and wise application of public policy to balance market forces. **Neighborhood development** combining dense multifamily housing, adaptive reuse, imaginative cultural projects, and infrastructural improvements is arguably the only vector for delivering holistic downtown revitalization solutions. For a local decision-making community that has not operated this way in a long time, this is difficult. But formulation of a clear mission statement with three guiding principles is a *substantive* imperative. Development of partnerships is a *procedural* imperative. While Market Cities may enjoy higher levels of wealth creation (like Detroit and Pine Bluff once having been at the top of the food chain as prosperous cities), arguably People Cities are more resilient in the face of economic downturns and other shocks that visit cities. We recommend that Pine Bluff see itself as a People City and allocate resources and devise policy for downtown revitalization accordingly. Pine Bluff should commit to building an exemplary downtown attractive to populations looking for a big small-town urban lifestyle otherwise unavailable in the region—a promising next step for the City of Progress.

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Image Sources

14 *Pine Bluff Commercial Historic District*
By Roland Klose - Main Street, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, CC BY 2.0

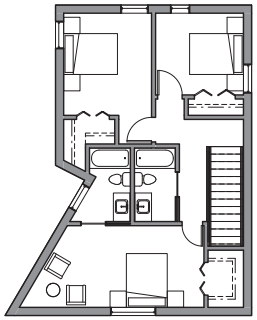
17 *Urban to Rural Transect*
https://www.cnu.org/resources/tools

18 *Main Street Looking South from Courthouse, Pine Bluff, Ark.*
https://www.marylmartin.com/product/pine-bluff-arkansas-main-street-looking-south-antique-postcard-j15175/

32 *Missing Middle Housing Spectrum*
http://missingmiddlehousing.com/

A 28 WALK-UP HOUSING PROTOTYPES FOR PINE BLUFF

In the proceeding pages are cut sheets detailing the housing prototypes for redeveloping Pine Bluff's downtown neighborhoods. Please note the prototypes have been developed to the level of Schematic Design and are insufficient for construction purposes.



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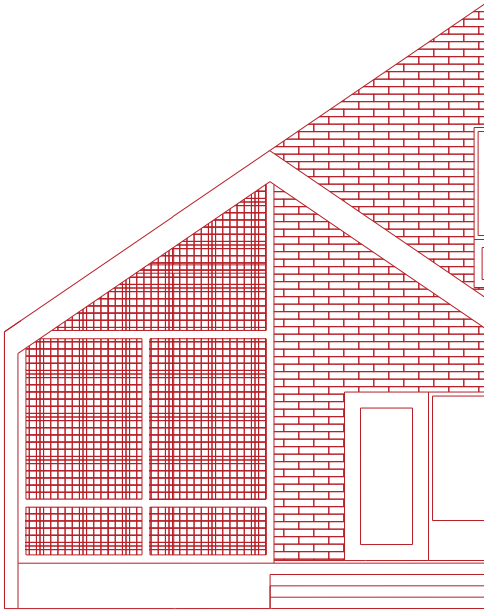

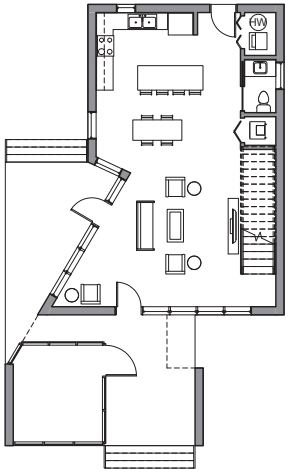

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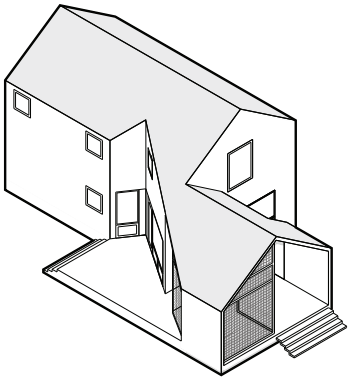

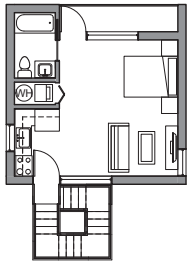

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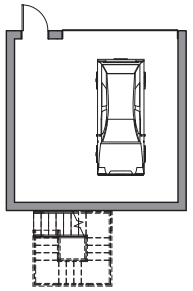
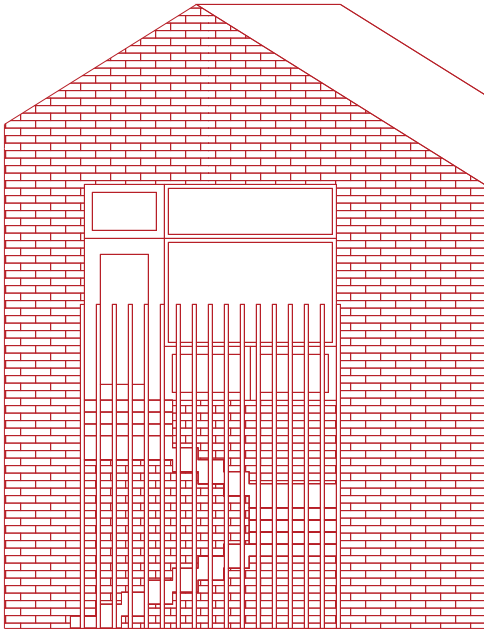
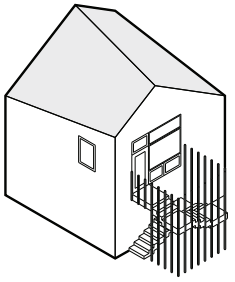


Garage



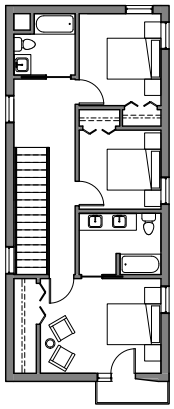


Porch House

1 unit @ 1580sf
IRC

Carriage ADU

1 unit @ 360sf
IRC



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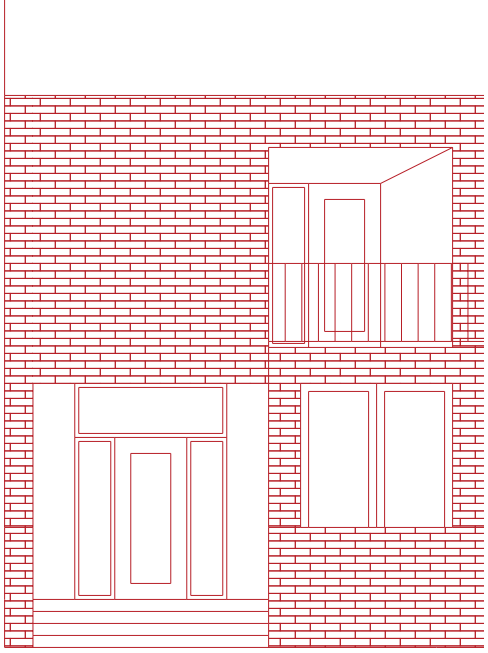

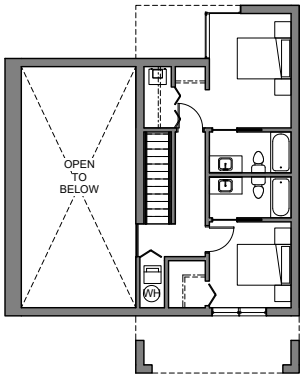

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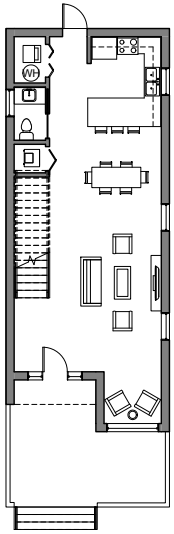

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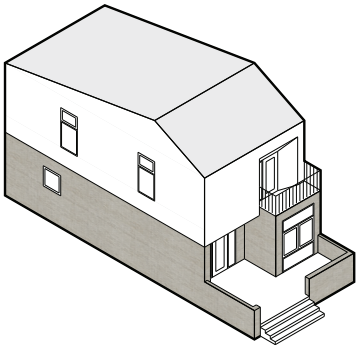

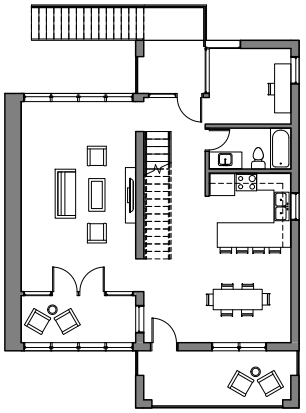

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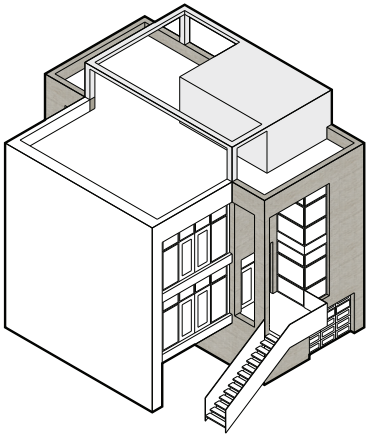
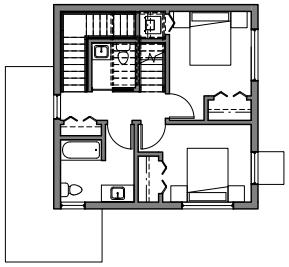


The Single Lady

1 unit @ 1520sf
IRC

Lake Front

1 unit @ 1550sf
IRC



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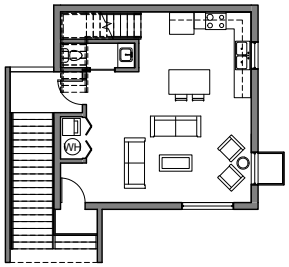

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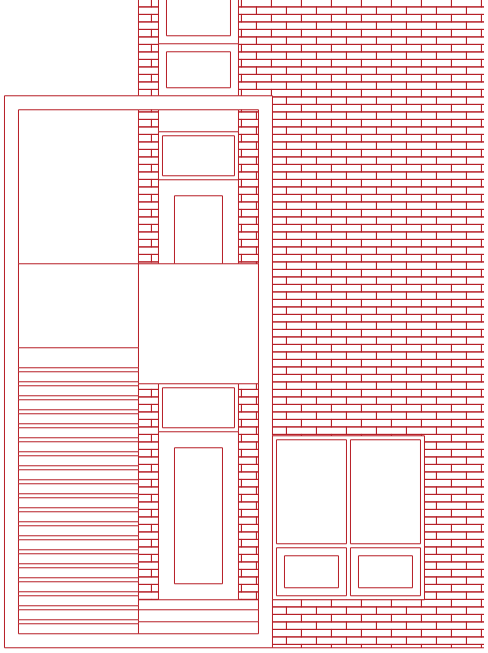

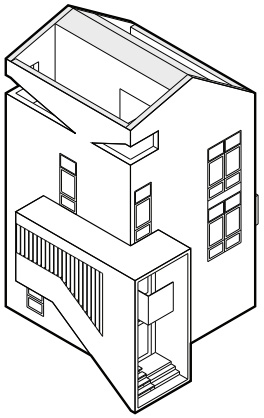

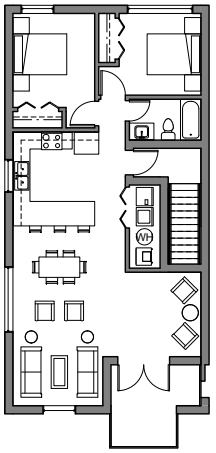

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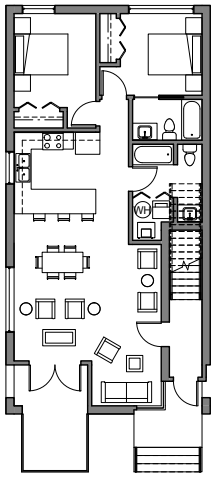

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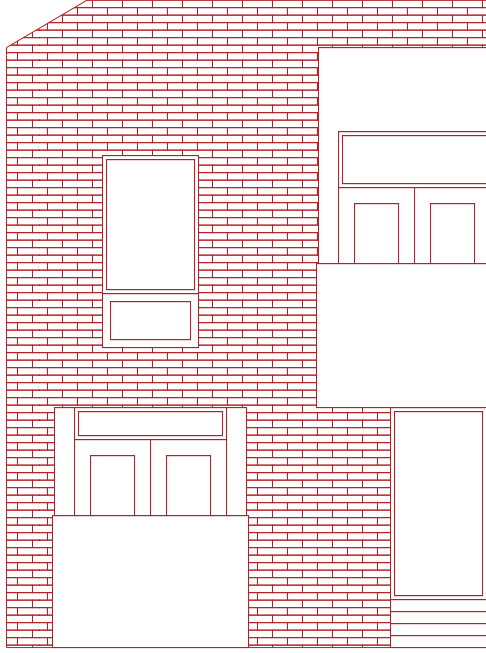
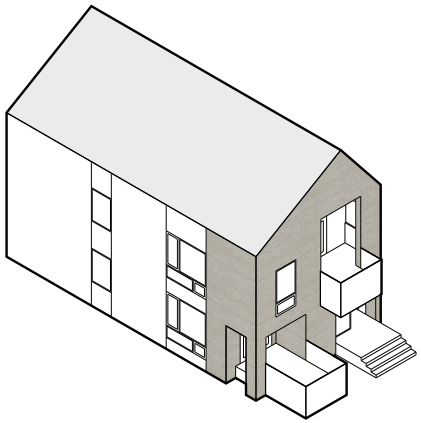


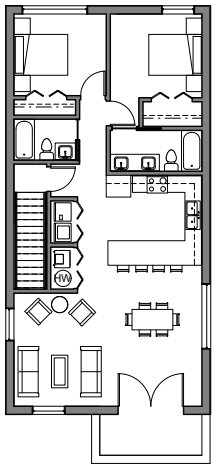


Duplex Tower

1 unit @ 540sf / 1 unit @ 1100sf
FHA / IFC-D / IRC

Balconies Duplex

2 units @ 940sf
FHA / IRC



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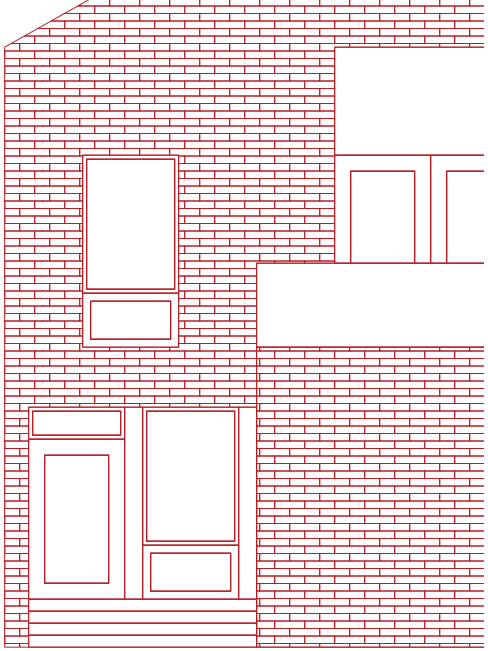

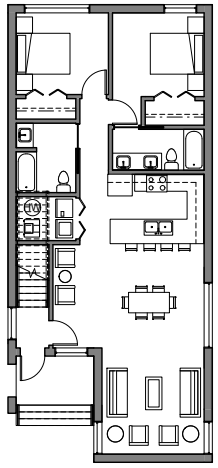

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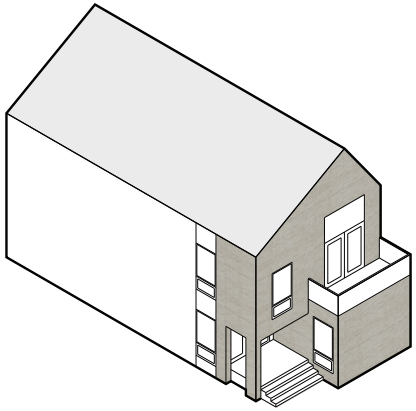
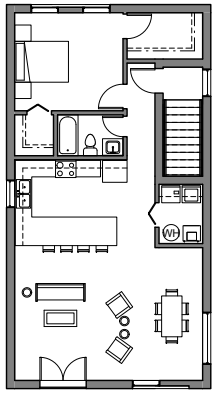


Bump Duplex

2 units @ 1050sf
FHA / IRC



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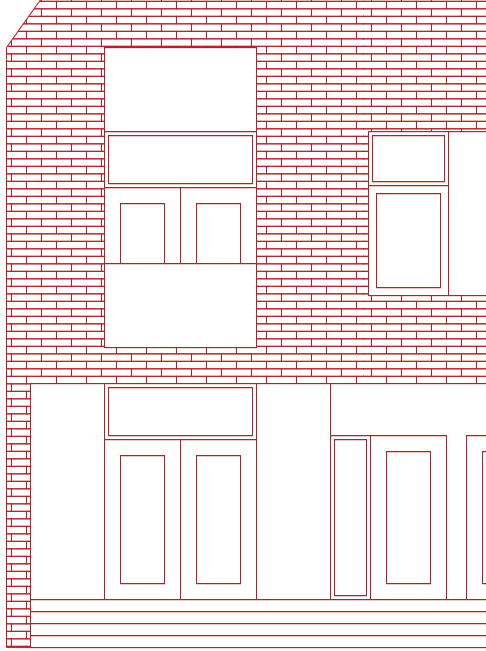

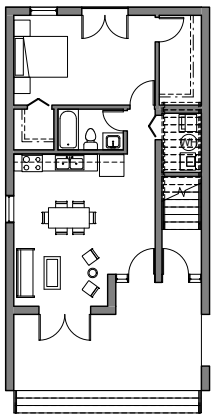

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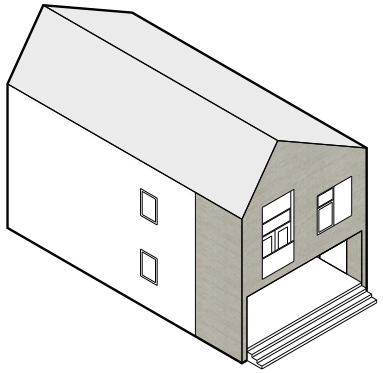
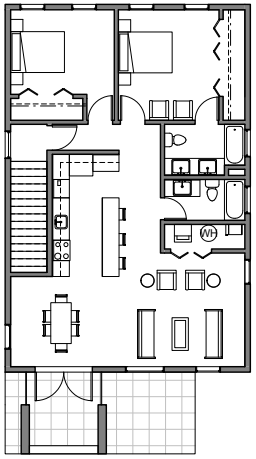


Say “Ahhh” Duplex

1 unit @ 710sf / 1 unit @ 1000sf
FHA / IRC



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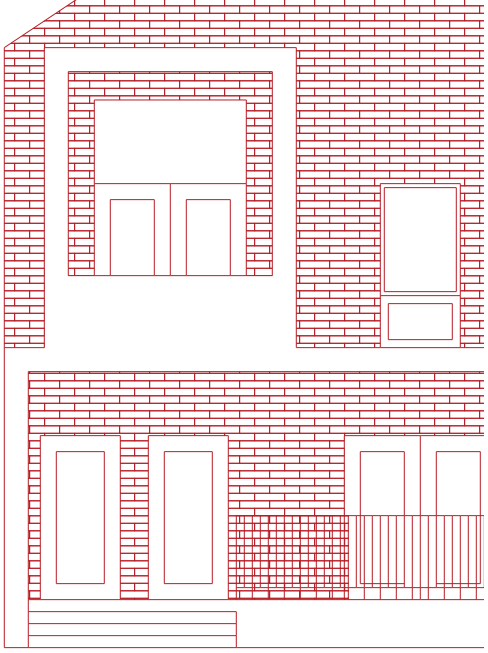

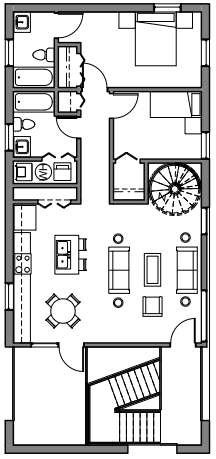

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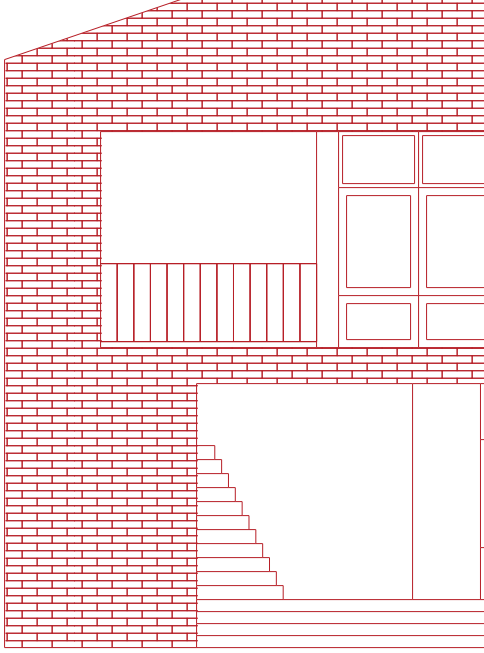

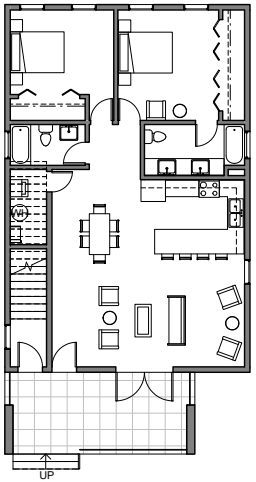

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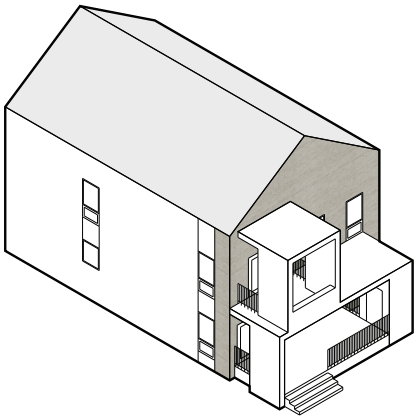

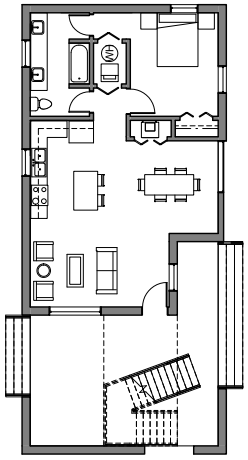

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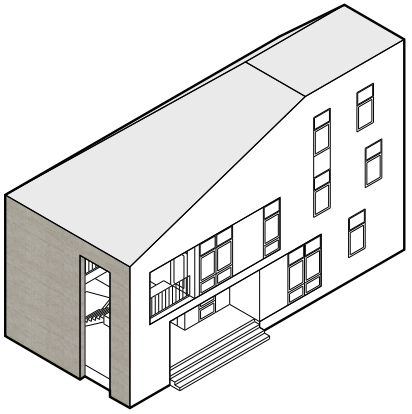
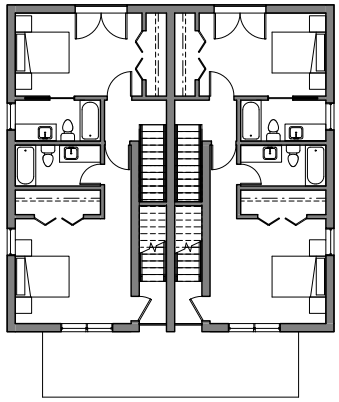


Porch Duplex

1 unit @ 1250sf / 1 unit @ 1175sf
FHA / IRC

Carved Duplex

1 unit @ 770sf / 1 unit @ 1380sf
FHA / IRC



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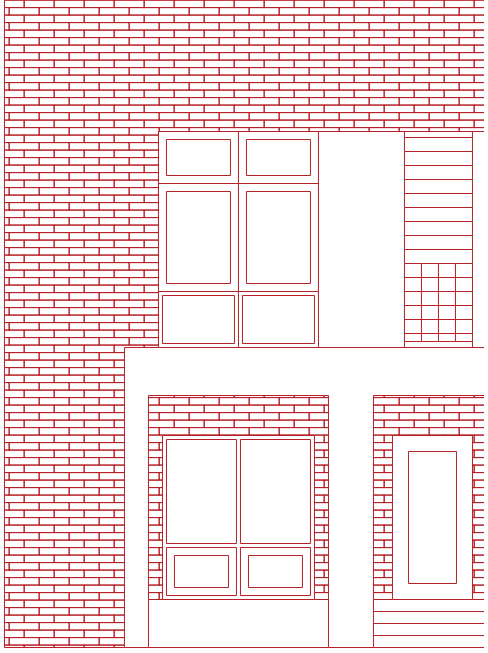
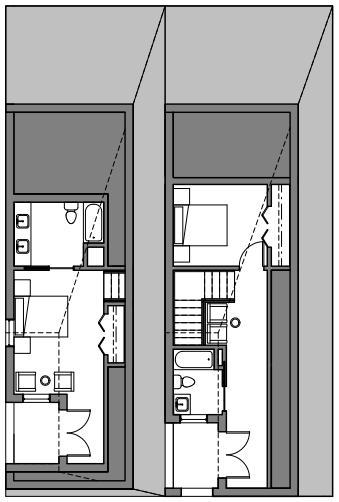
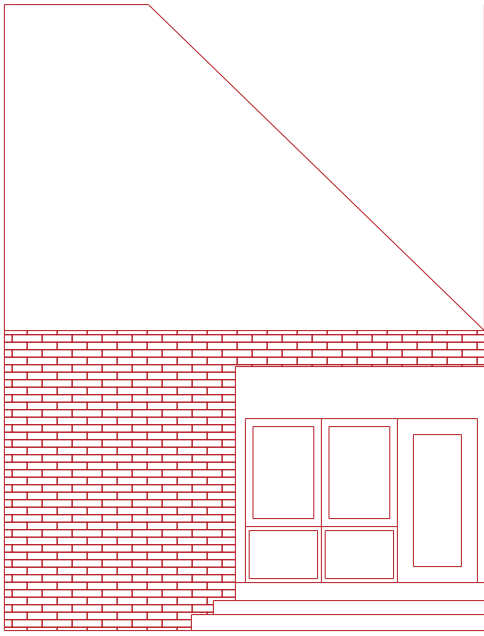
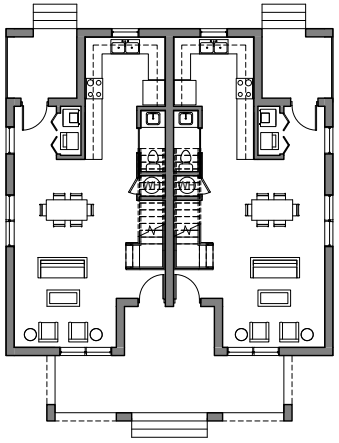


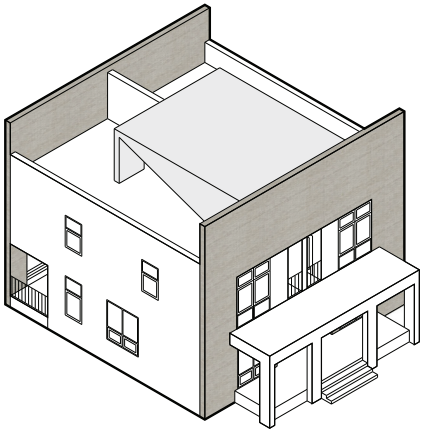


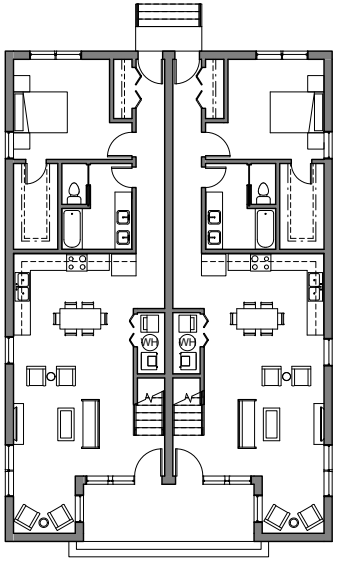
Second Floor



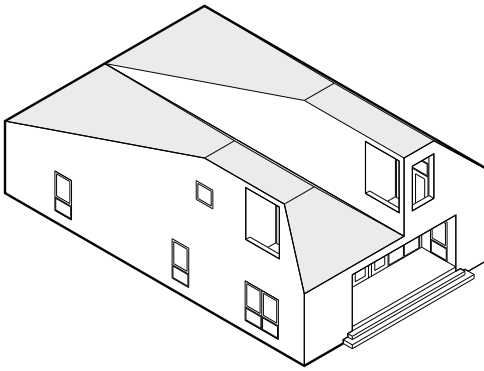


First Floor





First Floor

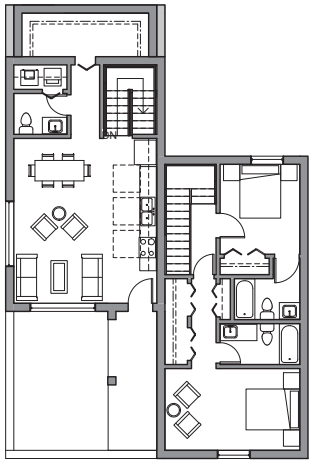


SxS Duplex

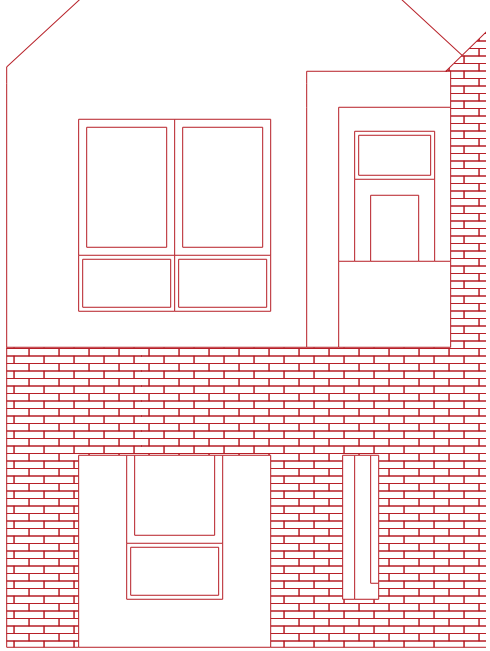
2 units @ 1200sf
FHA / IRC

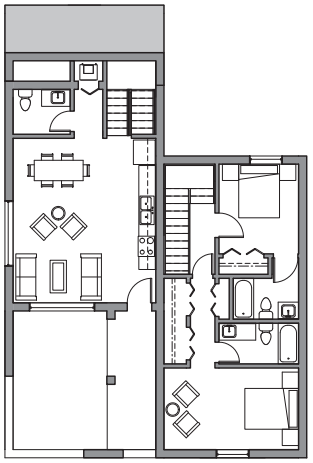
Periscope Duplex

1 unit @ 1360sf / 1 unit @ 1330sf
FHA / IRC



Second Floor





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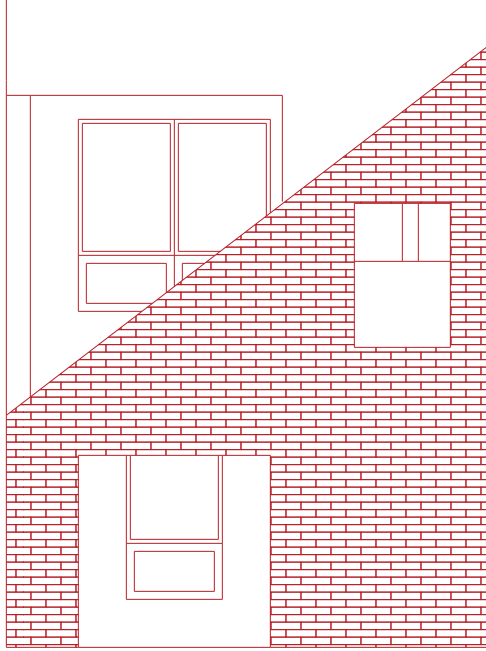
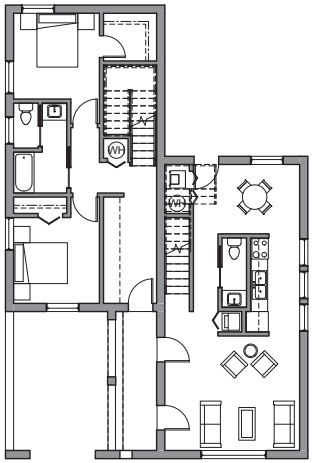
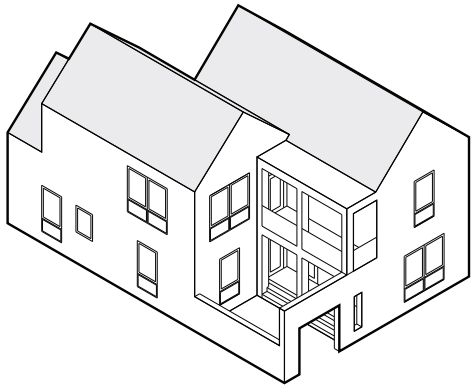
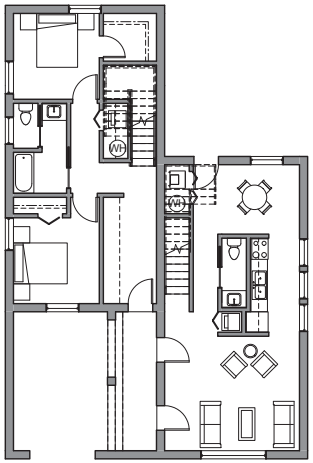


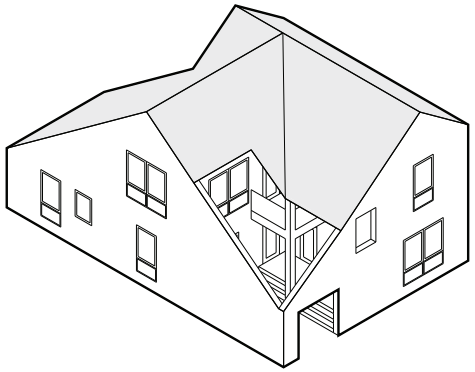


First Floor





First Floor

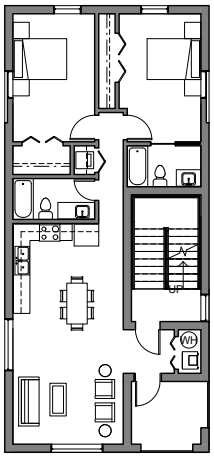


Courtyard Duplex

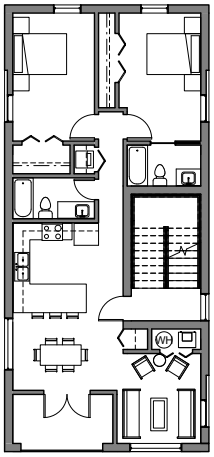
2 units @ 1100sf
FHA / IRC

Angled Duplex

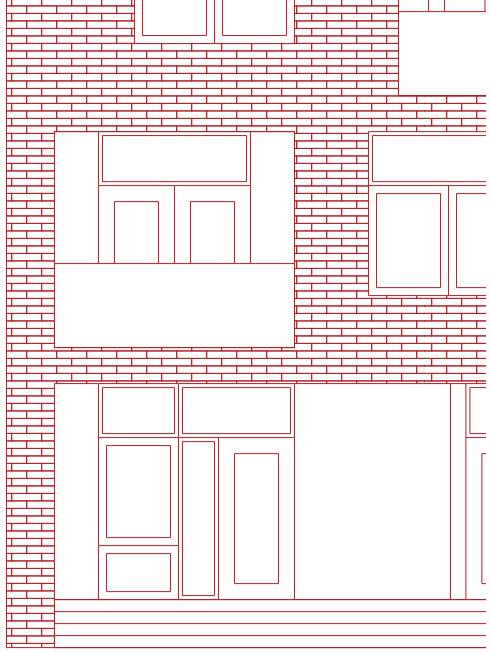
1 unit @ 1040sf / 1 unit @ 1100sf
FHA / IRC

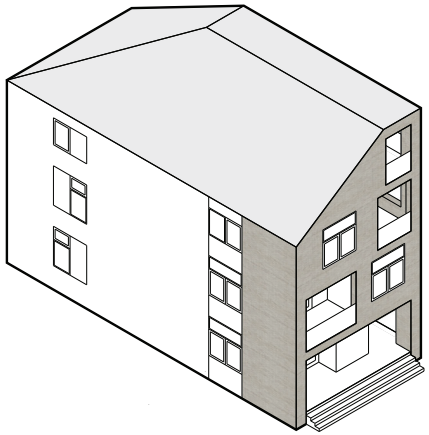


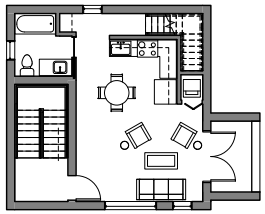
Third Floor



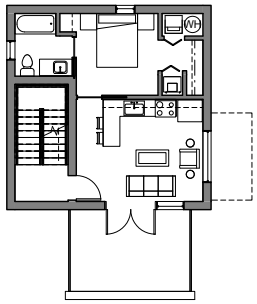
Second Floor



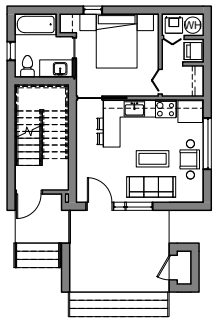




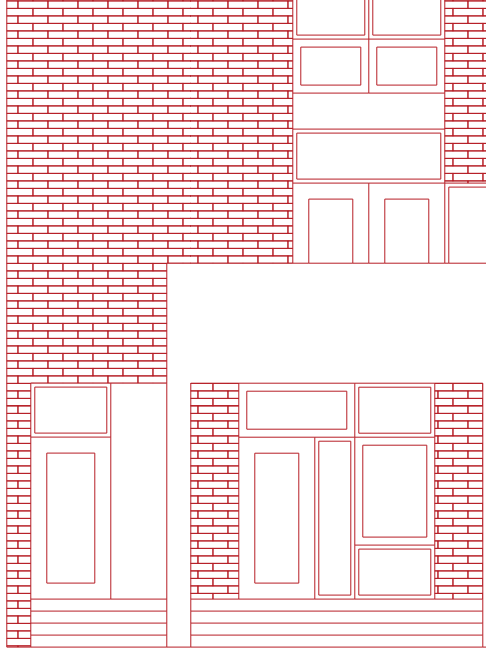
Third Floor

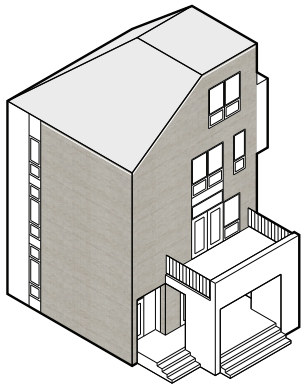


Second Floor



First Floor



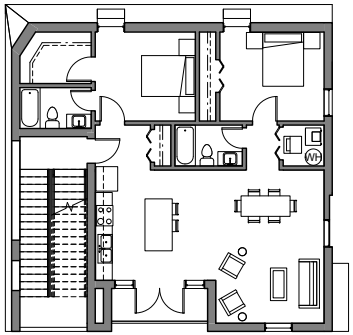


Say “Ahhh” Triplex

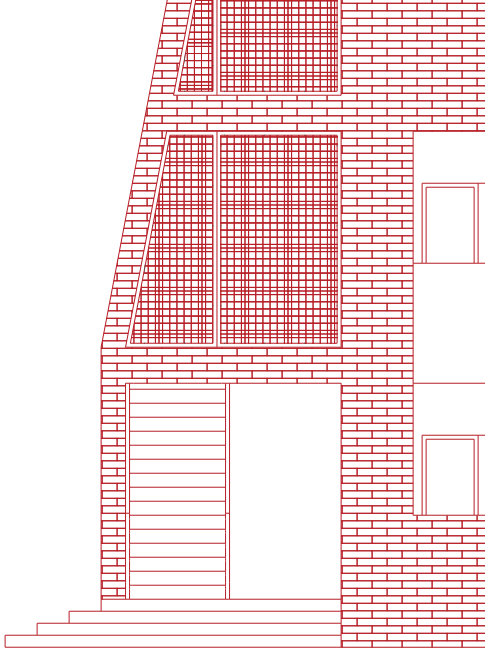
1 unit @ 860sf / 1 unit @ 1050sf / 1 unit @ 1170sf
FHA / IFC-D / IBC

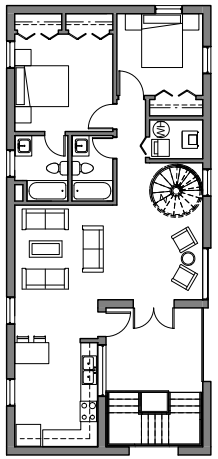
Triplex Tower

1 unit @ 640sf / 2 units @ 420sf
FHA / IFC-D / IBC

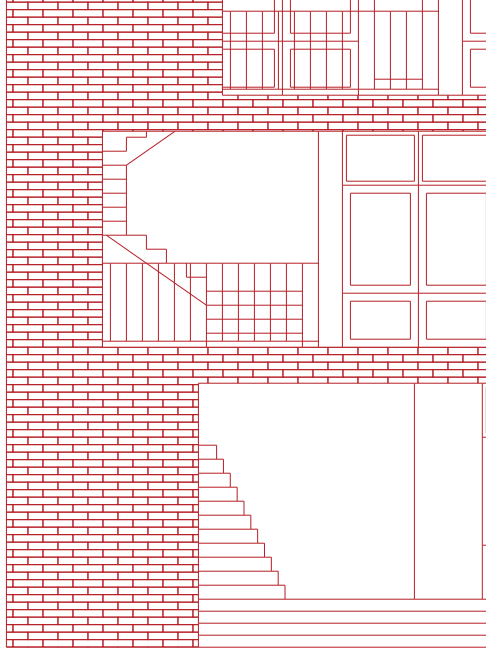


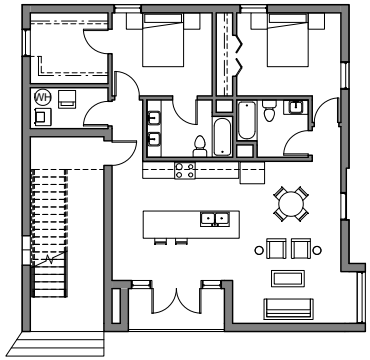
Second Floor



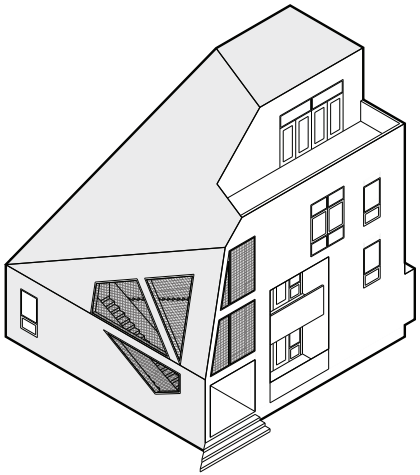


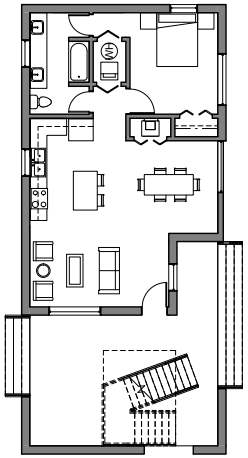
Third Floor



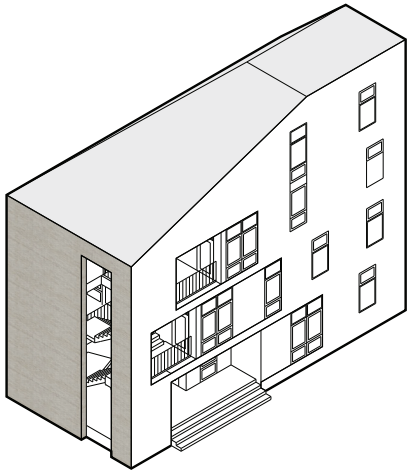


First Floor





First Floor

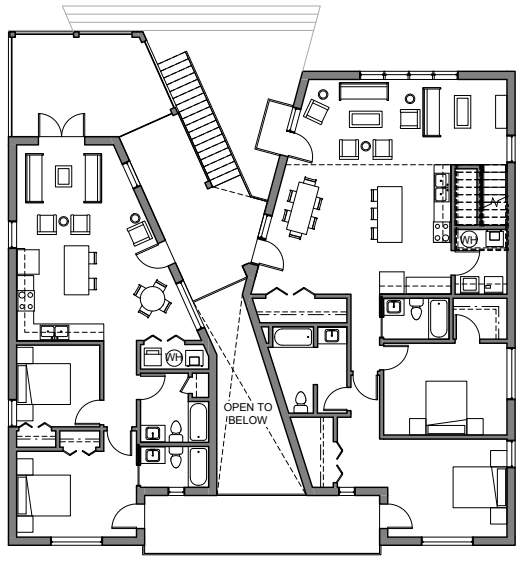


Express Yourself Triplex

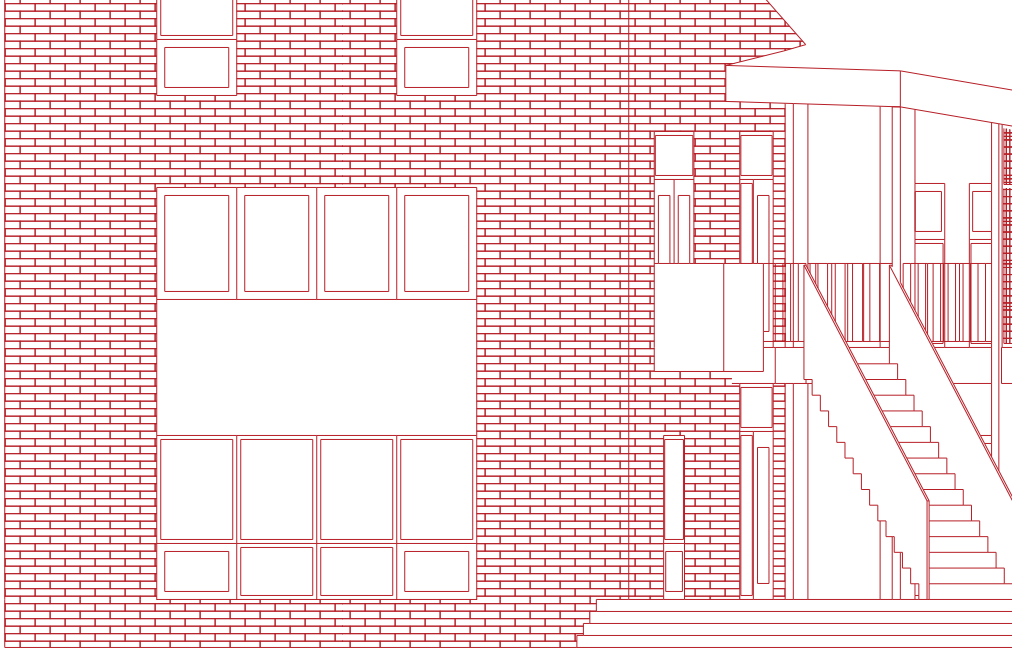
1 unit @ 1030sf / 1 unit @ 1150sf / 1 unit @ 1230sf
FHA / IFC-D / IBC

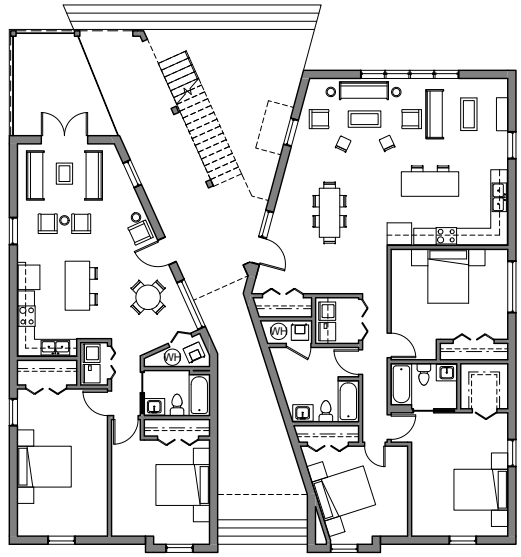
Carved Triplex

1 unit @ 790sf / 1 unit @ 930sf / 1 unit @ 1480sf
FHA / IFC-D / IBC

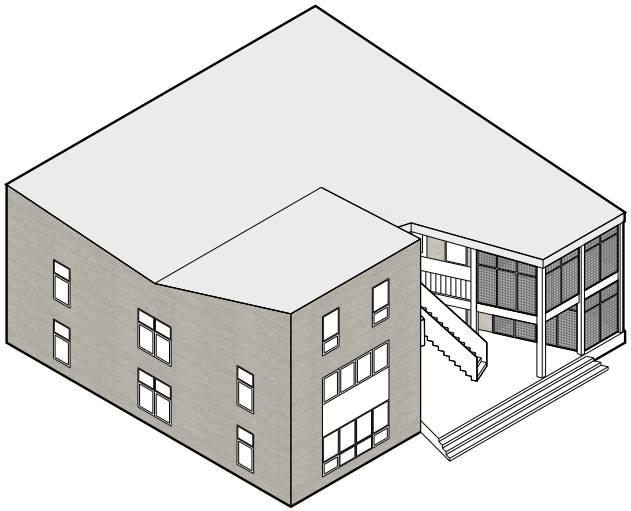


Second Floor



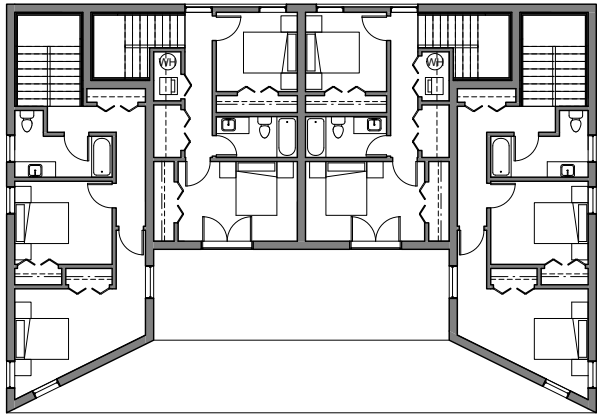


First Floor

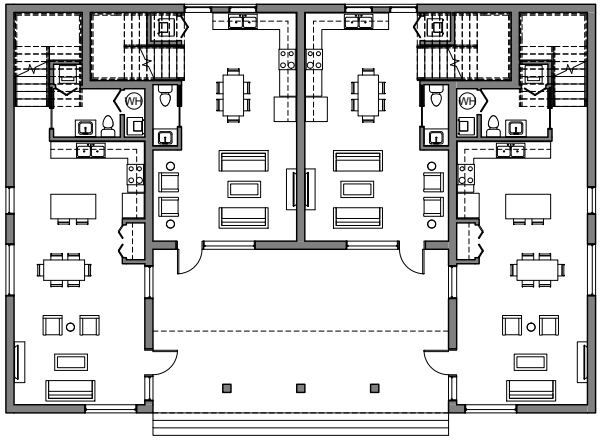


Split Personality Fourplex

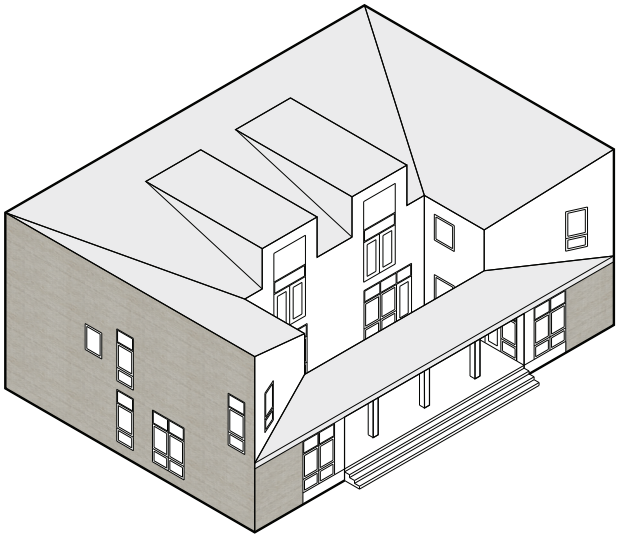
1 unit @ 990sf / 1 unit @ 1550sf / 1 unit @ 940sf / 1 unit @ 1500sf
FHA / Commercial / IBC



Second Floor

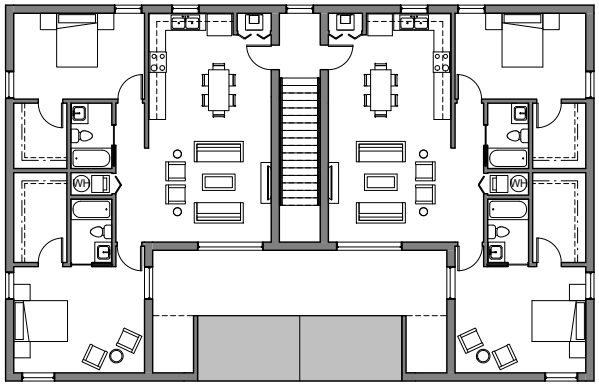


First Floor

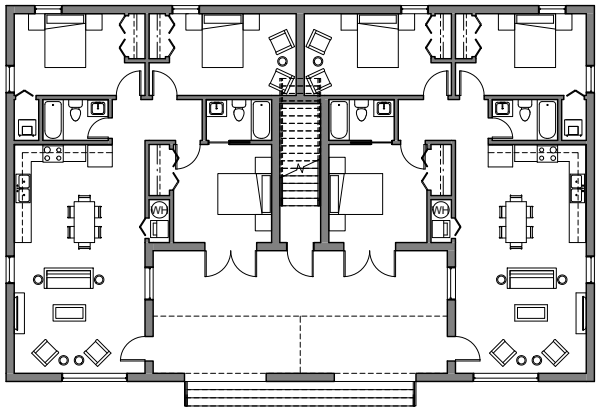


Courtyard Fourplex

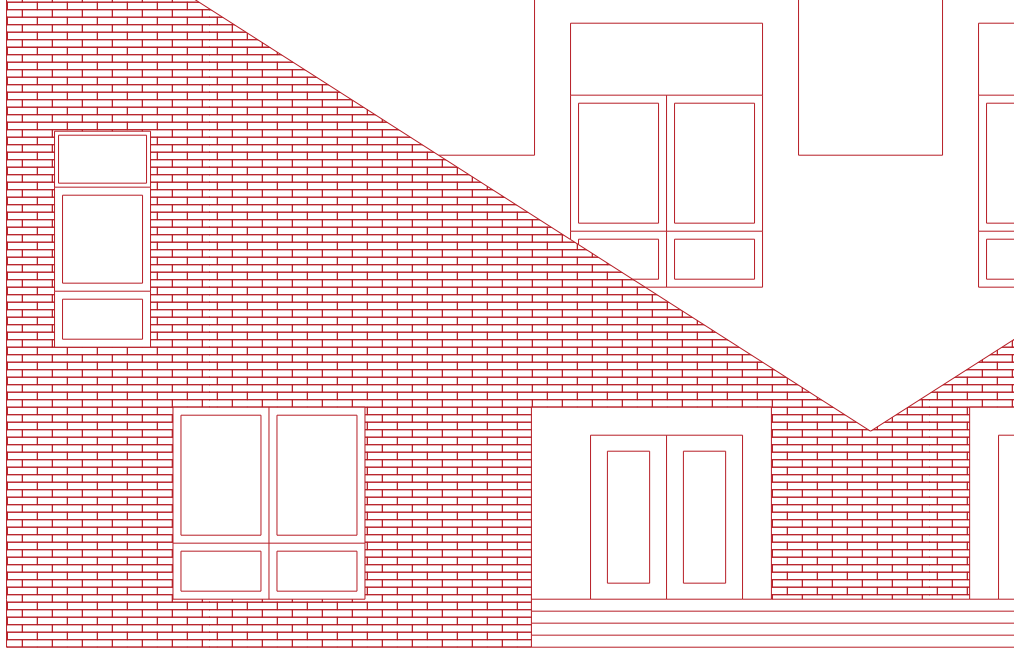
2 units @ 1250sf / 2 units @ 1130sf
FHA / Commercial / IBC

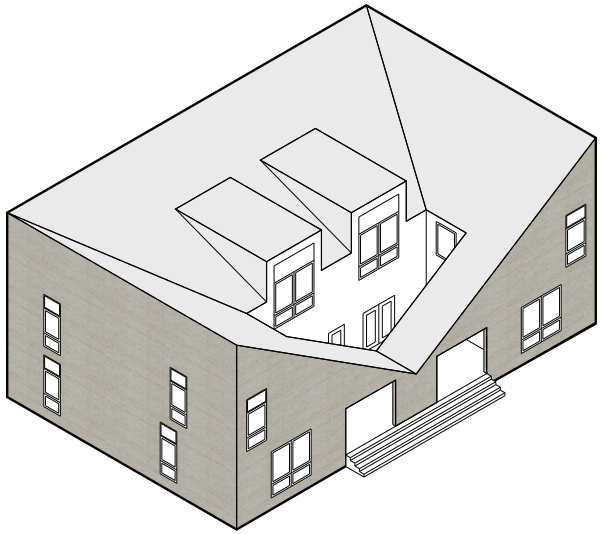


Second Floor



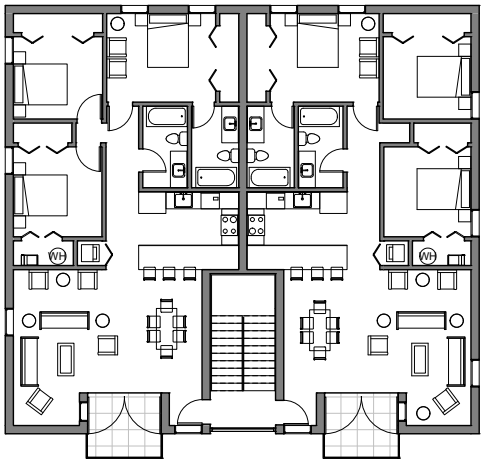
First Floor



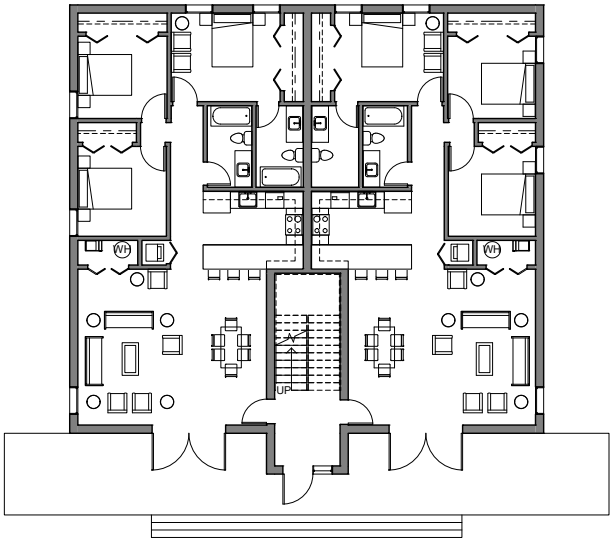


Cat Ear Fourplex

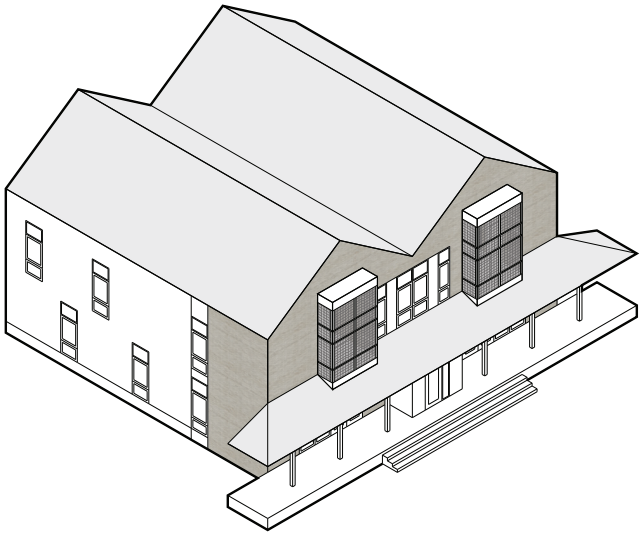
4 units @ 1150sf
FHA / IBC



Second Floor

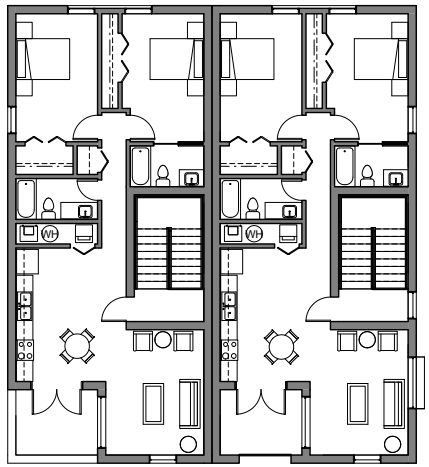


First Floor

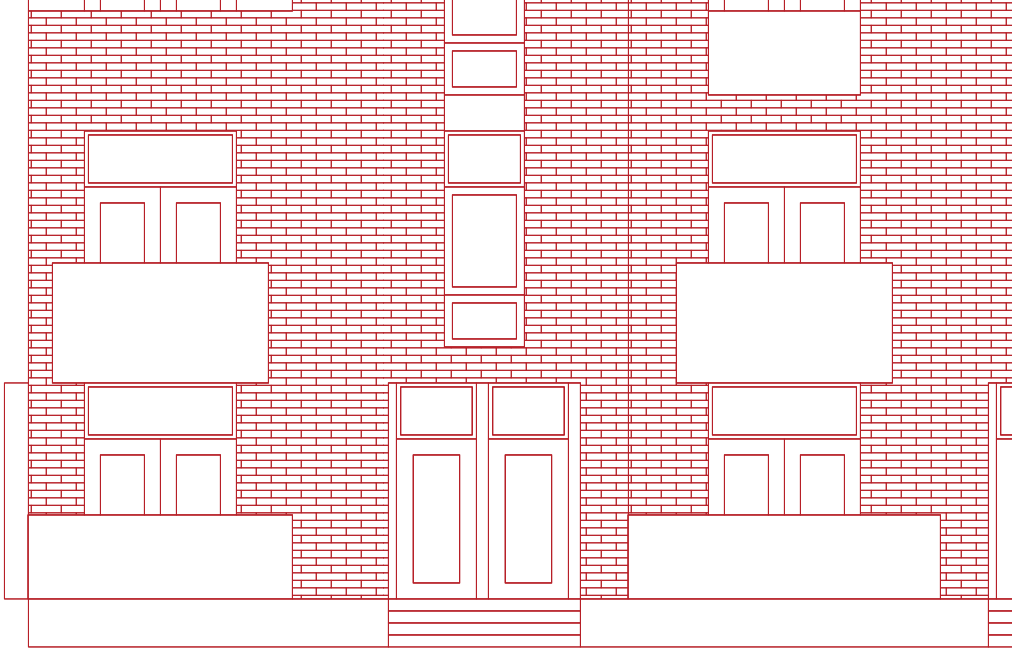


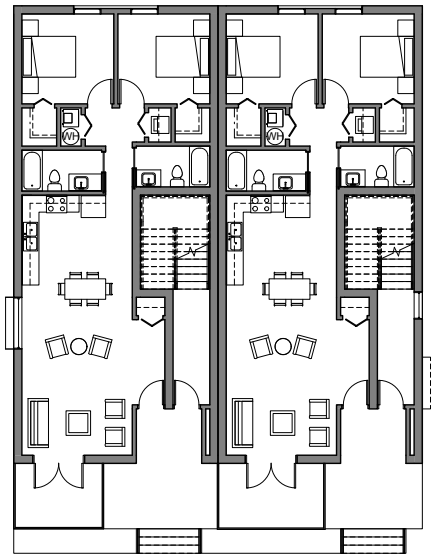
Porch Fourplex

1 unit @ 1320sf / 2 units @ 1260sf
FHA / Commercial / IBC

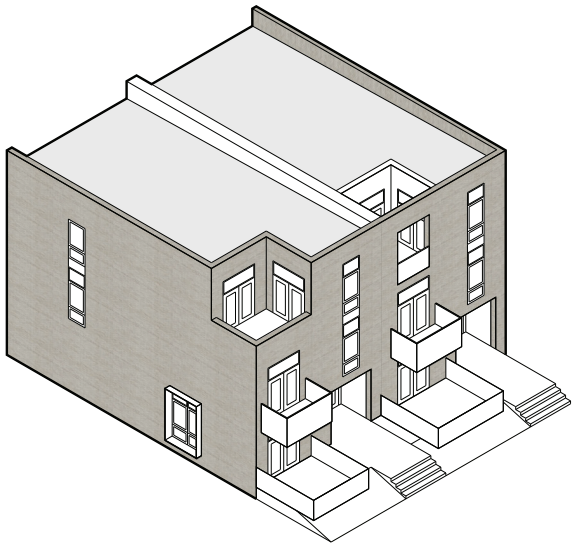


Third Floor



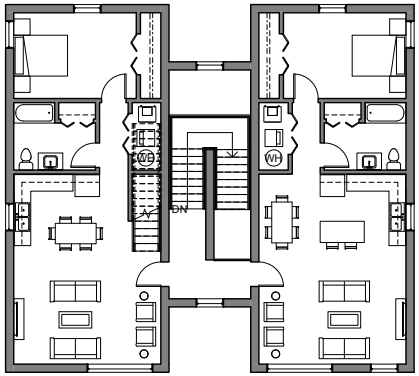


First Floor

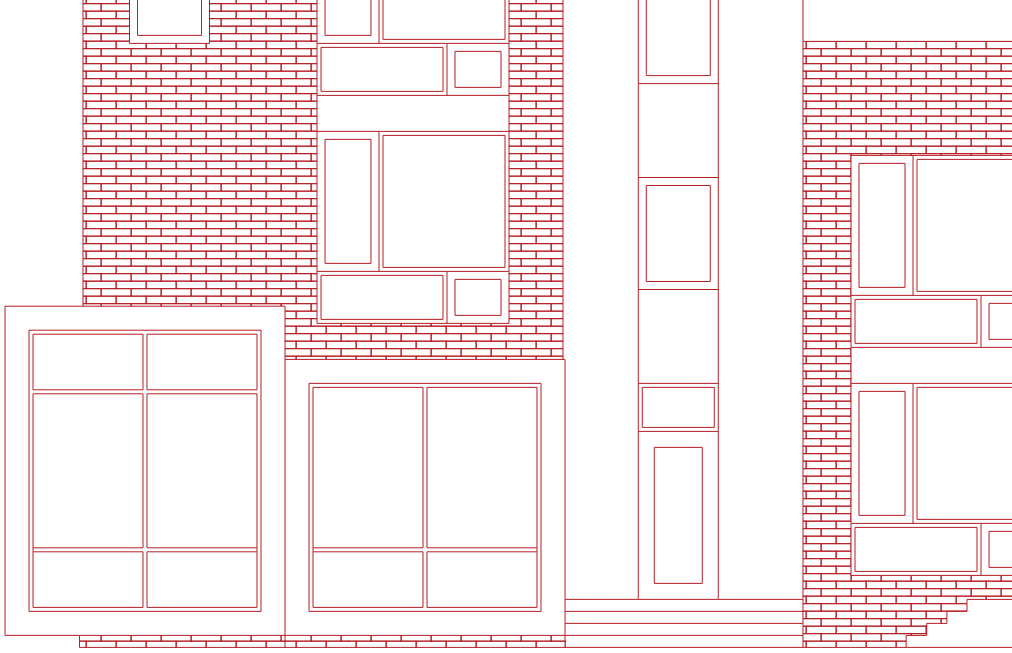


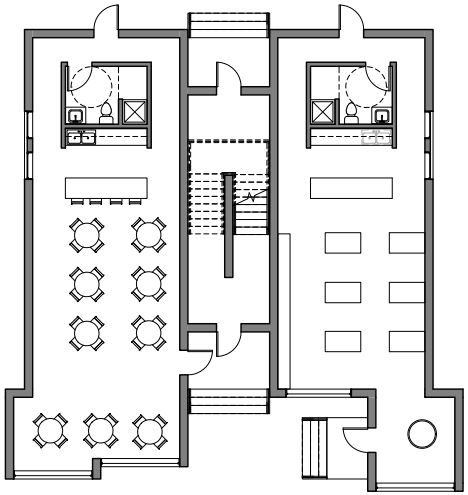
Townhouse on the Square

2 units @ 1080sf / 2 units @ 980sf / 2 units @ 970
FHA / IFC-D / IRC

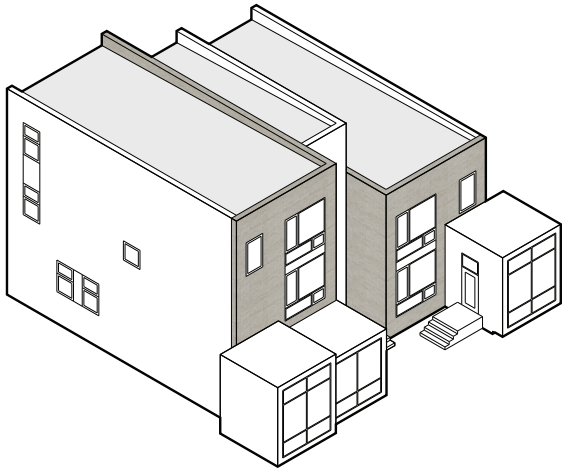


Third Floor



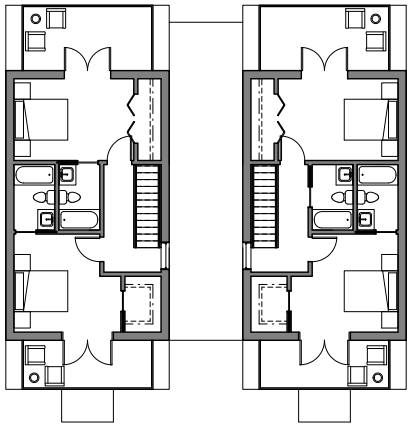


First Floor

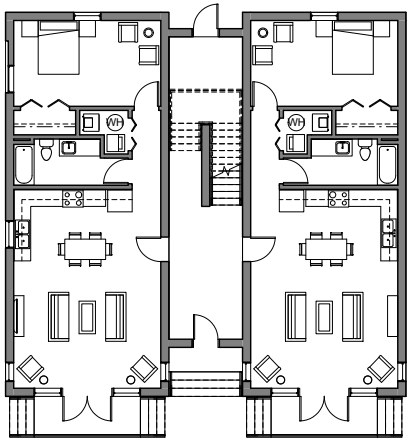


Live-Work Townhouse

1 unit @ 990sf / 1 unit @ 910sf / 1 unit @ 1560sf / 1 unit @ 780sf
FHA / IRC



Third Floor



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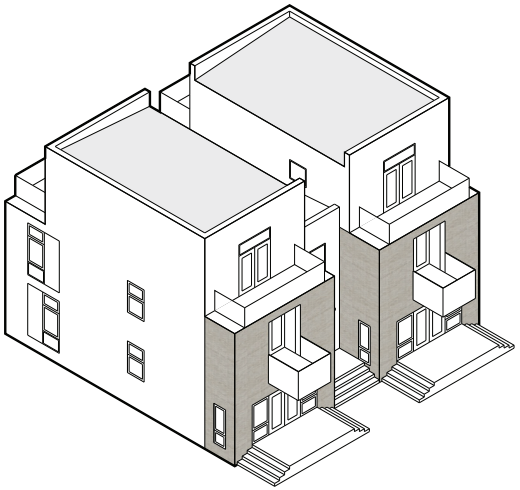
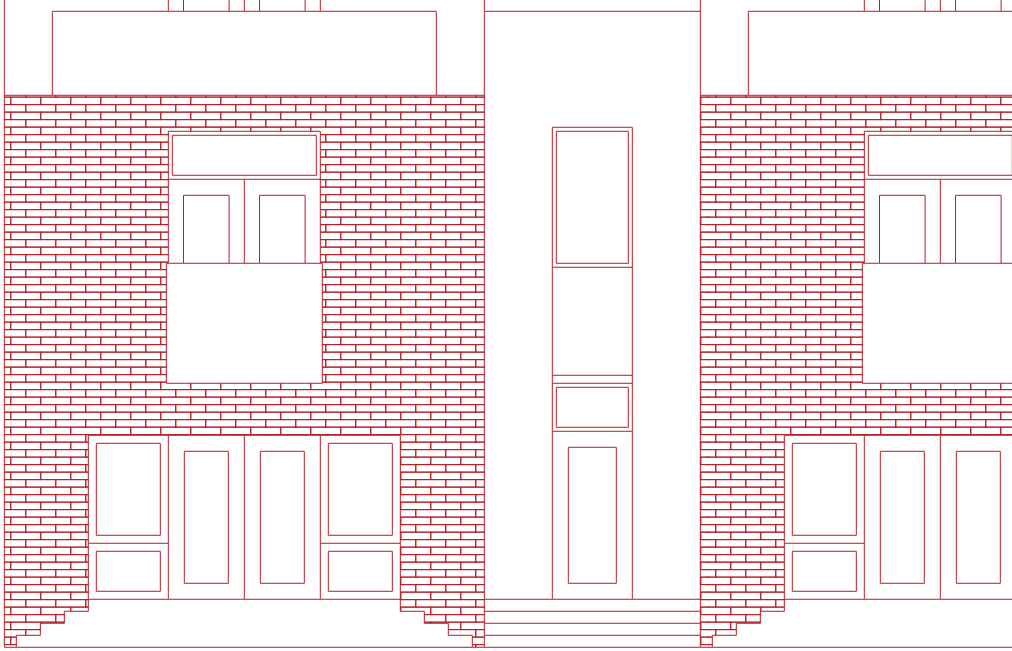
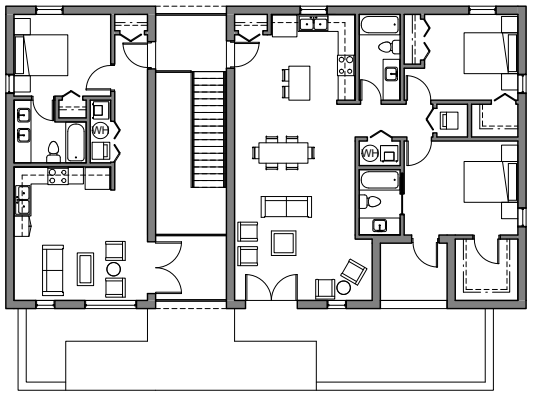




Gateway Townhouse

2 units @ 825sf / 2 units 1340sf
FHA / IFC-D / IRC



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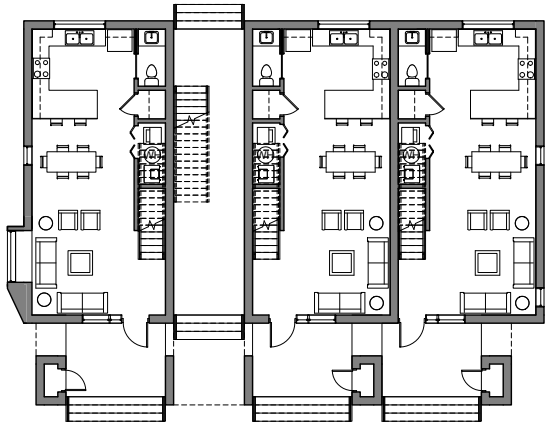
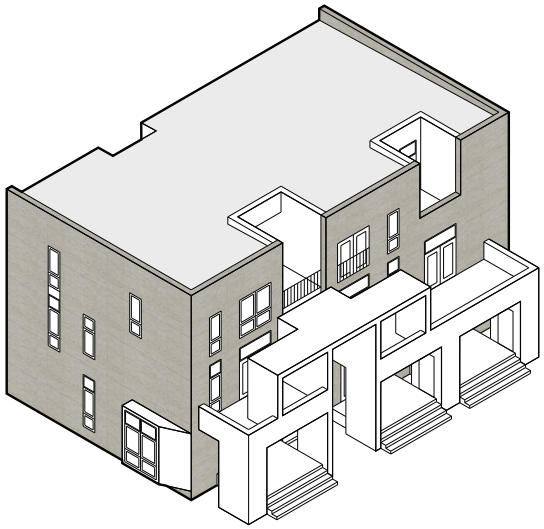
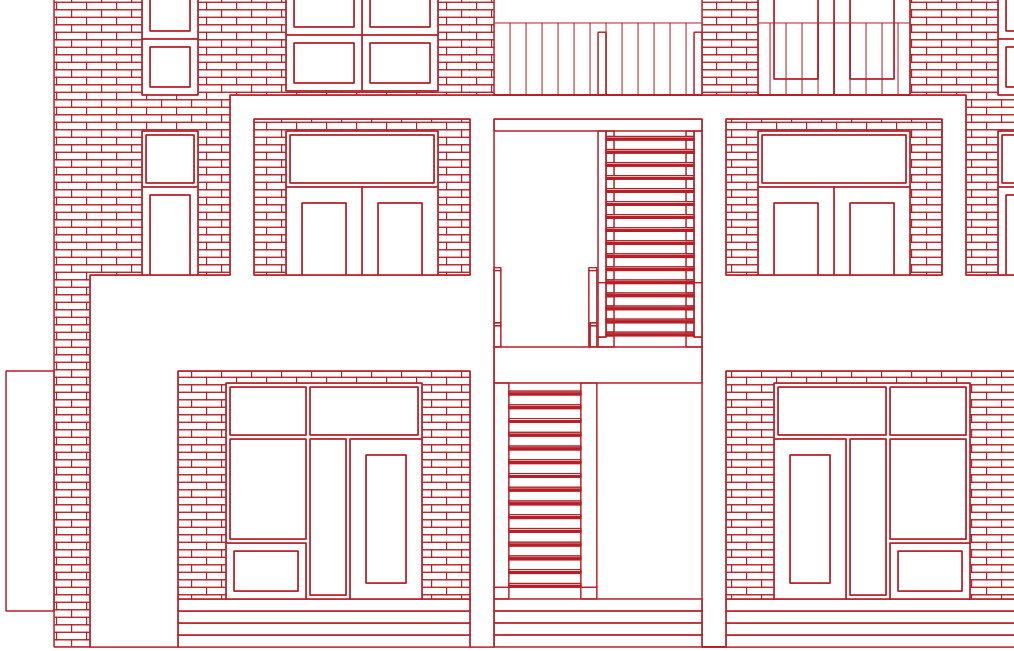


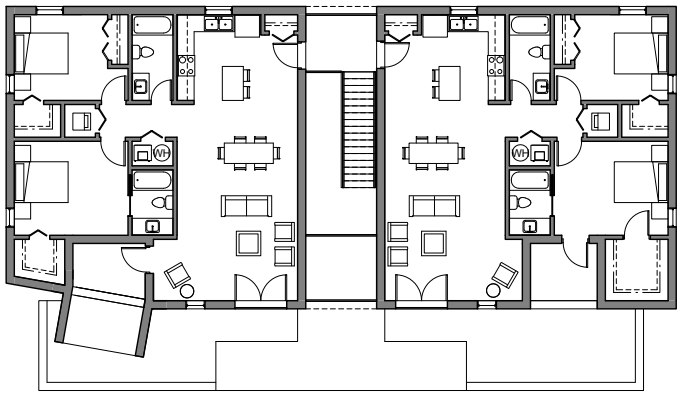
First Floor





Flat Top Fiveplex

1 unit @ 580sf / 3 units @ 1140sf / 1 unit @ 1200sf
Commercial / IFC-D / IBC



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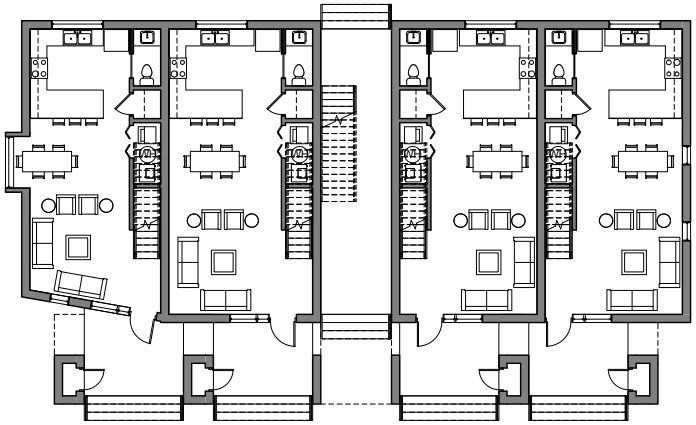

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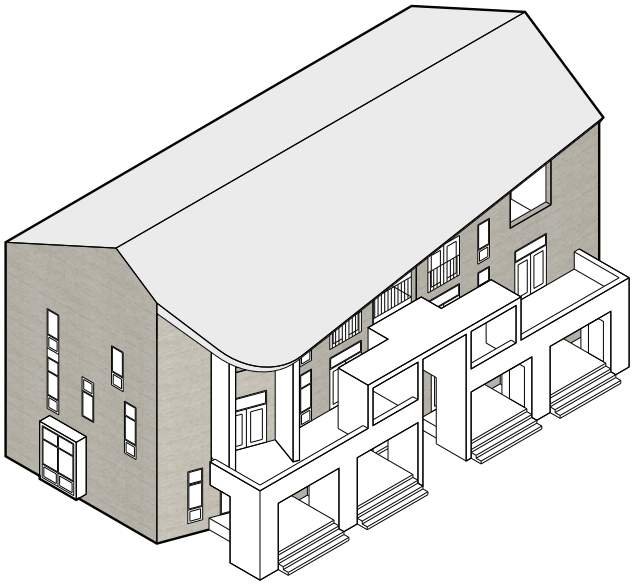
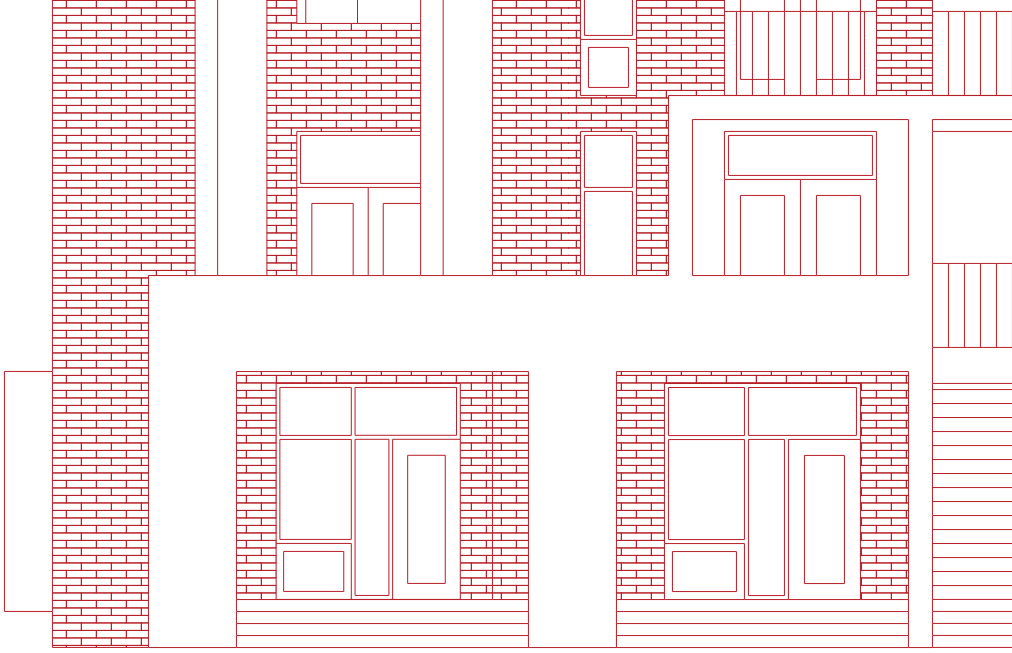
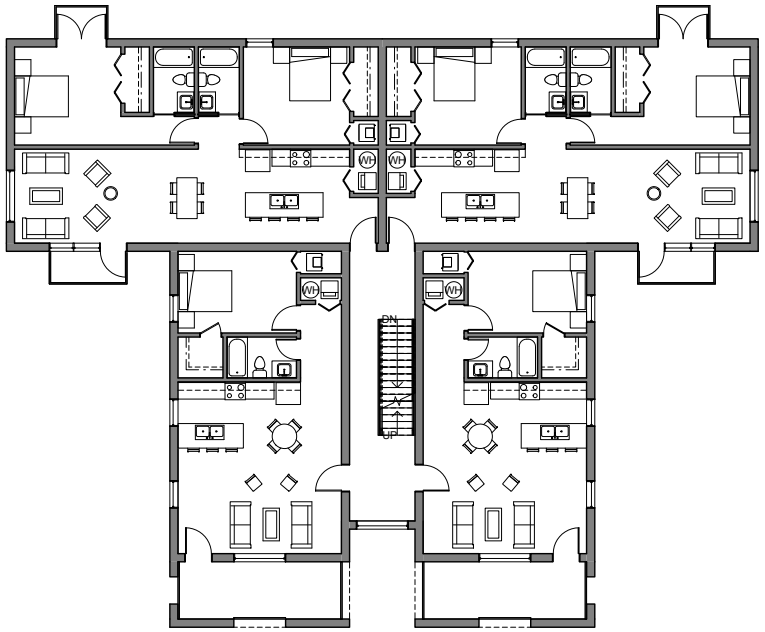




Hipster Sixplex

4 units @ 1200sf / 1 unit @ 1240sf / 1 unit @ 1130sf
Commercial / IFC-D / IBC



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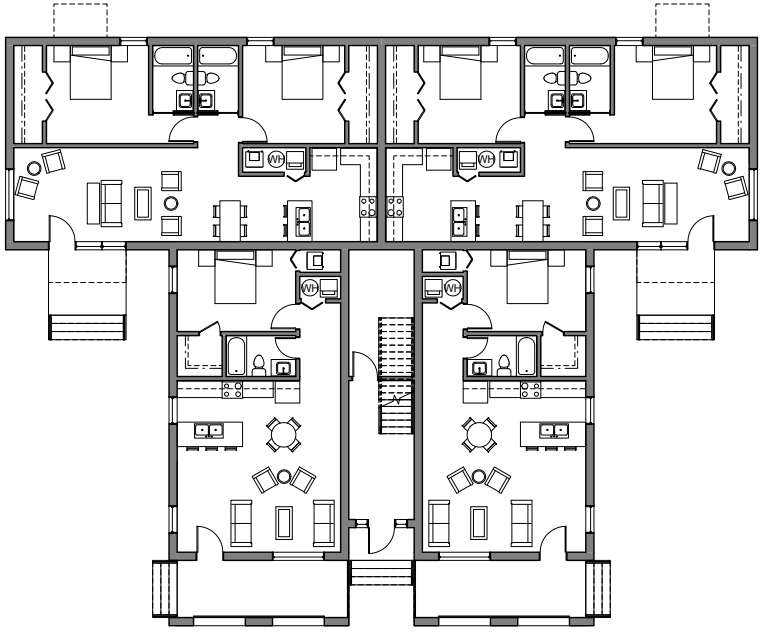

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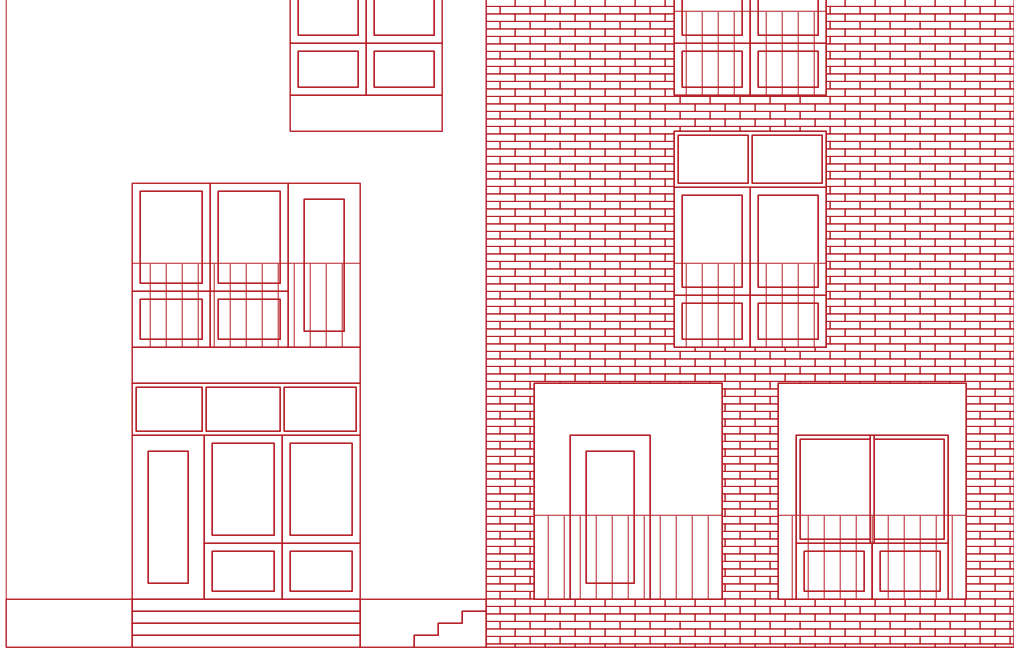

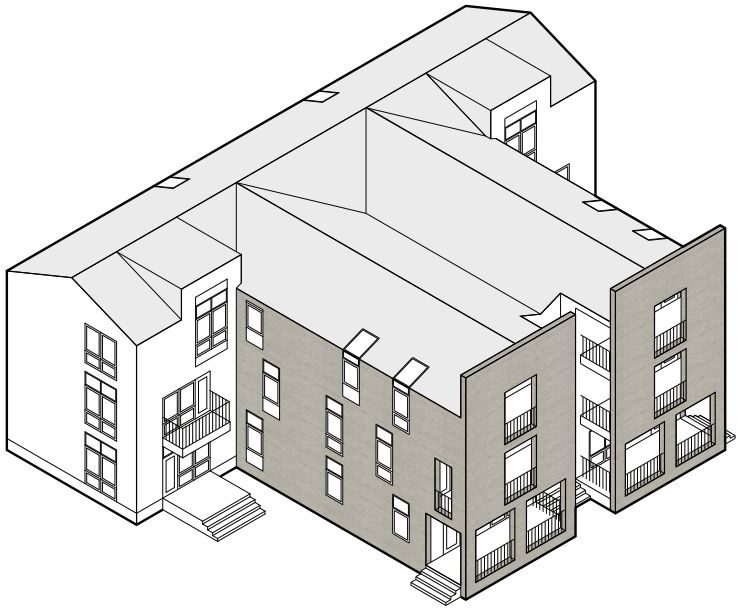

T for Twelveplex

6 units @ 760sf / 6 units @ 1100sf
Commercial / IFC-D / IBC

Glossary of Thresholds

Building Codes

AA

Prototypes tagged AA require an accessible-adaptable unit on the first residential floor of the building. In addition to strict interior architectural prescriptions, accessible-adaptable units must be located on an accessible route, a clear route from the exterior of the building to the interior of the unit which does not include stairs.

IRC

Prototypes tagged IRC may receive building permits under the International Residential Code. Most structures that can be permitted under the IRC do not require an architect's or engineer's stamp. Townhouses under IRC: Townhouses may be permitted under the IRC even when placed on the same foundation. Vertical assemblies rated for 2-hour fire protection must separate each unit from the foundation to the roof. Note each townhouse module is composed of individual single-family units. Townhouse modules composed of individual duplex units are not permitted under the IRC. Live-work structures under IRC: Live-work structures may be permitted under the IRC when they are equipped with an approved fire suppression system.

IBC

Prototypes tagged IBC must be permitted under the International Building Code. The IBC is more prescriptive than the IRC. In general, sprinklers and other fire prevention measures are required. Structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are typically required to be engineered.

The IBC contains several notable thresholds:

- Single-use commercial structures smaller than 5,000 square feet do require fire suppression systems.
- Mixed-use structures which have small commercial spaces with low occupancy may be protected by a residential fire suppression system. The exact threshold is open to interpretation. Note the cost of sprinkler systems can be substantially reduced by allowing a sprinkler system to be supplied from the same water main tap as the rest of the building's water system.

IFC-D

Prototypes tagged IFC-D may trigger the requirements of Appendix D of the International Fire Code. Appendix D controls the width of fire access lanes and varies the required width according to the height of the building. Buildings which have roof edges higher than 30 feet from the surrounding ground plane trigger a requirement for aerial apparatus lanes, which are a minimum of 26 feet wide and must run the complete length of at least one side of the building. The closest edge of an aerial apparatus lane must be at least 15 feet from the building and no farther than 30 feet.

Financing/Conforming

Prototypes tagged Conforming may be financed with conventional residential mortgages. Typical residential mortgages conform with guidelines put forward by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. They typically require a 20% down payment and offer a 30-year amortization period. Prototypes containing four residential units or fewer are eligible for conforming residential mortgages. A limited amount of nonresidential space is also permitted by regulators, but local banks may consider such a project unusual and refuse to originate a loan.

FHA

Prototypes tagged FHA may be financed with mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration. FHA mortgages have extraordinarily flexible down payment requirements—as low as 3.5% of the project's costs—but are only available for projects which will be owner-occupied. They typically offer a 30-year amortization period. Prototypes containing four residential units or fewer are eligible for conforming residential mortgages. A limited amount of nonresidential space is also permitted. The vast majority of FHA loans are single family homes. While the FHA will insure larger projects, local lenders may not be aware of the underwriting flexibility and may choose to only offer conventional commercial loans to larger projects. Developers or buyers of FHA-

eligible projects which contain nonresidential space or multiple units should ask local lenders to manually underwrite the project and refer them to Handbook 4000.1, FHA Single Family Housing Policy Handbook.

Prototypes tagged FHA are also eligible for Veteran Administration loans. VA loans are nearly identical to FHA loans, but require no down payment and are only available to veterans or their immediate family members.

Commercial

Prototypes tagged Commercial can only be financed by so-called commercial mortgages. While the banking industry refers to these loans as "commercial," any project with five or more residential units must be financed with this type of loan whether it contains nonresidential space or not.

Commercial loans are always negotiated and the terms vary widely. The credit of the applicant has a large effect on the terms a lender is willing to accept. The amortization period on commercial loans ranges from 10 years to 25 years, with 15- and 20-year amortization periods being common. Rates also vary widely, but in general are at least 0.5% or more higher than the federal prime rate. Commercial loans almost always include a balloon payment 3 to 10 years from the origination date.

FF

Prototypes tagged FF are often financed with personal loans from Friends and Family or by property owners themselves with a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC). These projects are also often financed with so-called hard money, short-term private loans with higher interest rates.

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Pine Bluff City Council

Simmons Foundation

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and **most importantly the Citizens of Pine Bluff, Arkansas**

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