

An aerial illustration of a city street grid. The left side is a faded, blue-tinted version of the illustration, while the right side is the full, vibrant version. The illustration shows a grid of streets with buildings, trees, and a bus. The buildings are drawn in a simple, blocky style. The trees are green and have a stylized, rounded shape. The bus is orange and is driving on one of the streets. The overall style is that of a hand-drawn urban planning diagram.

Connect & Fill: Patching a Torn Urban Fabric

Second Ward & Historic Brooklyn
Charlotte, NC

December 2, 2025

Gabby Pace, Ellie New, Erik Darden, Amanda Marais

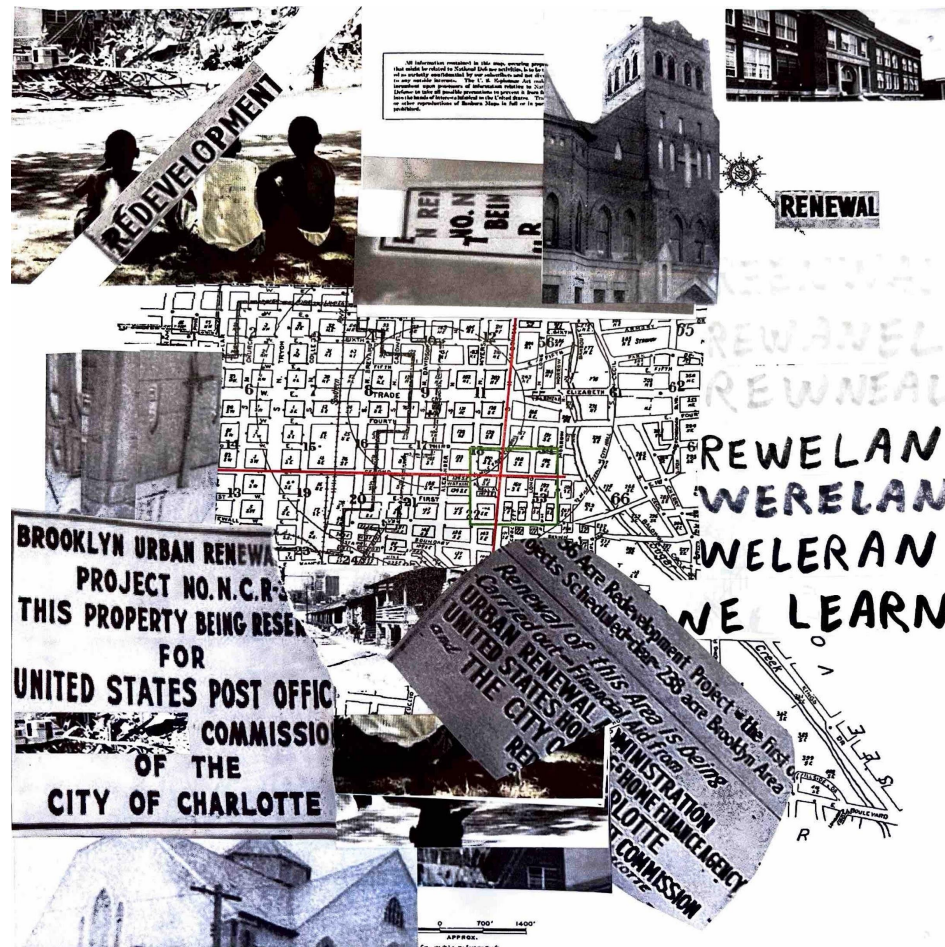
When asked about the neighborhood structure of Brooklyn Mrs. Holloway describes it as “a place of concern for neighbors, a close-knit family and a feeling of being safe and secure”.



Brooklyn was not only about the state of the streets and buildings but also about the invisible scaffolding of community.

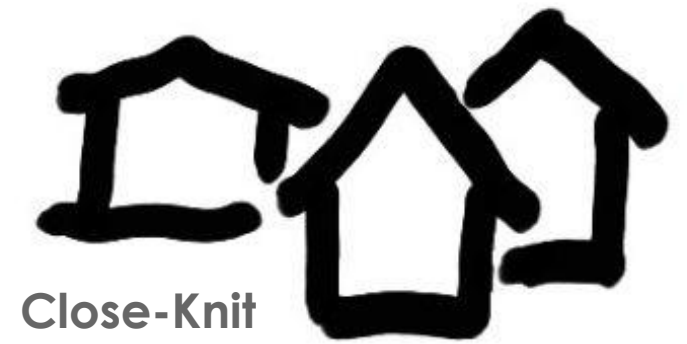
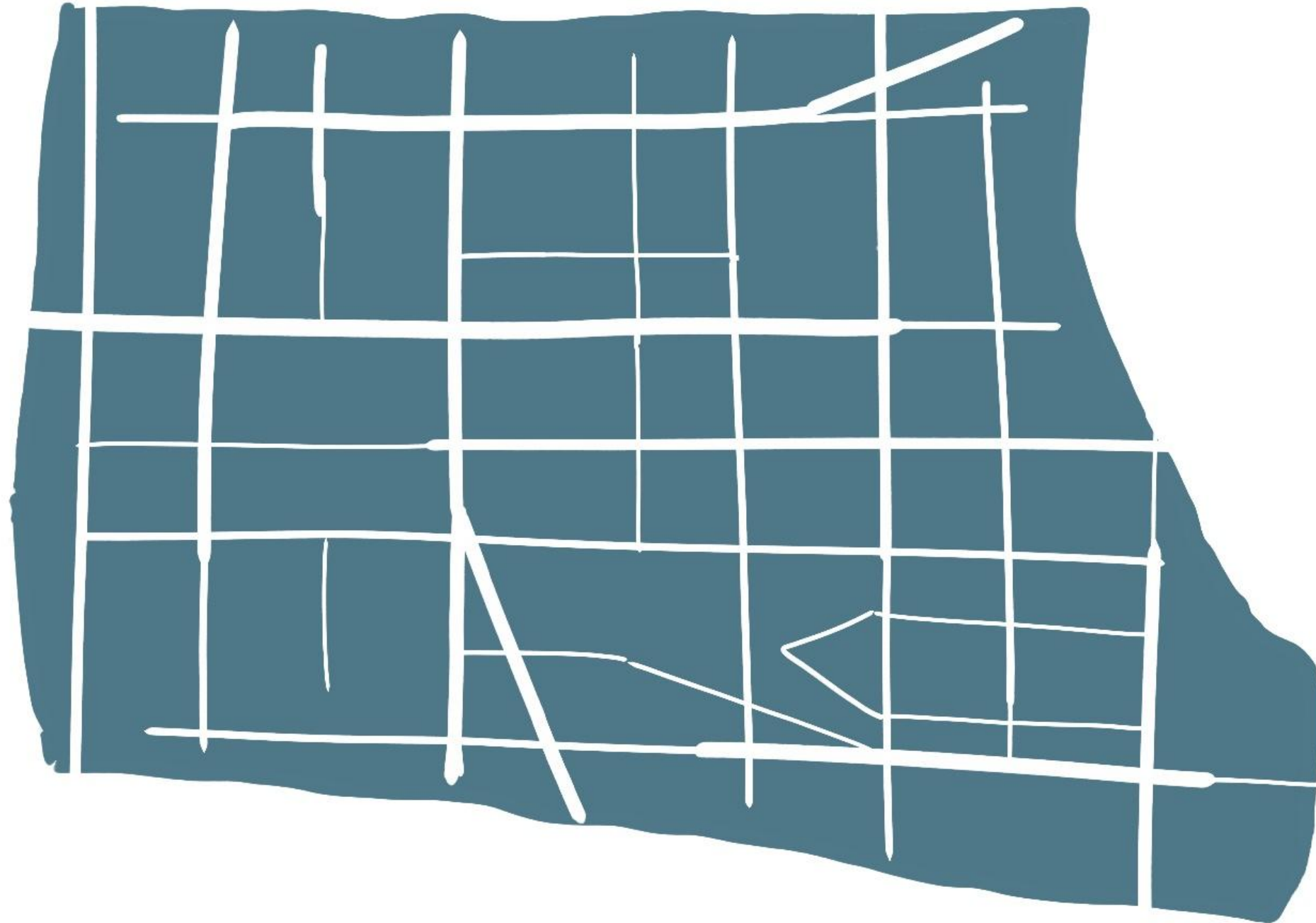
“In a sense, you can tear down buildings, but if people have a will to do something – to build, to maintain that web – just tearing down a building won’t stop ‘em.”

– Mr. Kelly Alexander Jr.

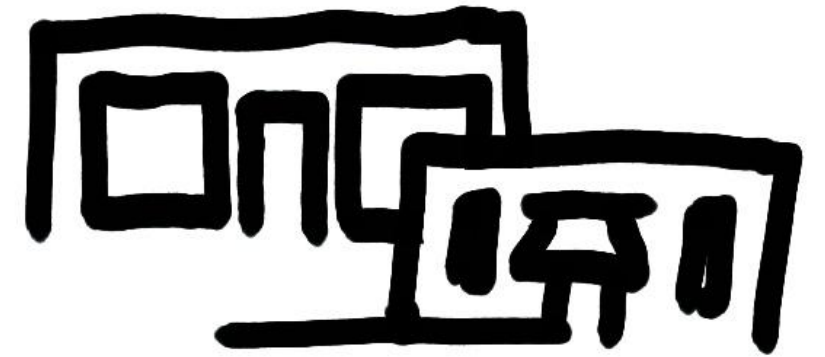


Redesigning Brooklyn is not nostalgia; it’s implementing the same qualities that made up a thriving neighborhood. The qualities that should have never been taken.

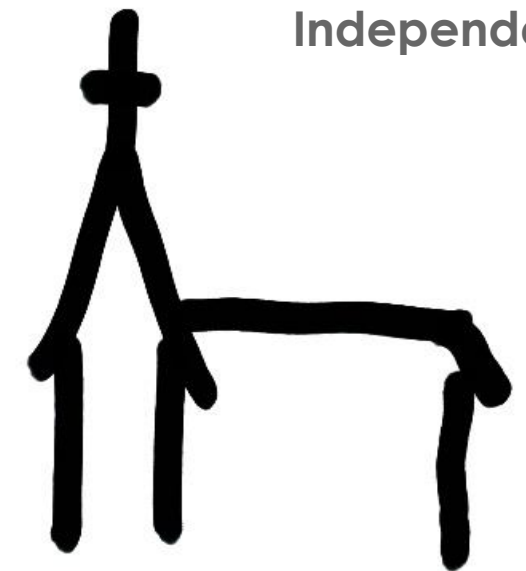
HISTORIC



Close-Knit
Community

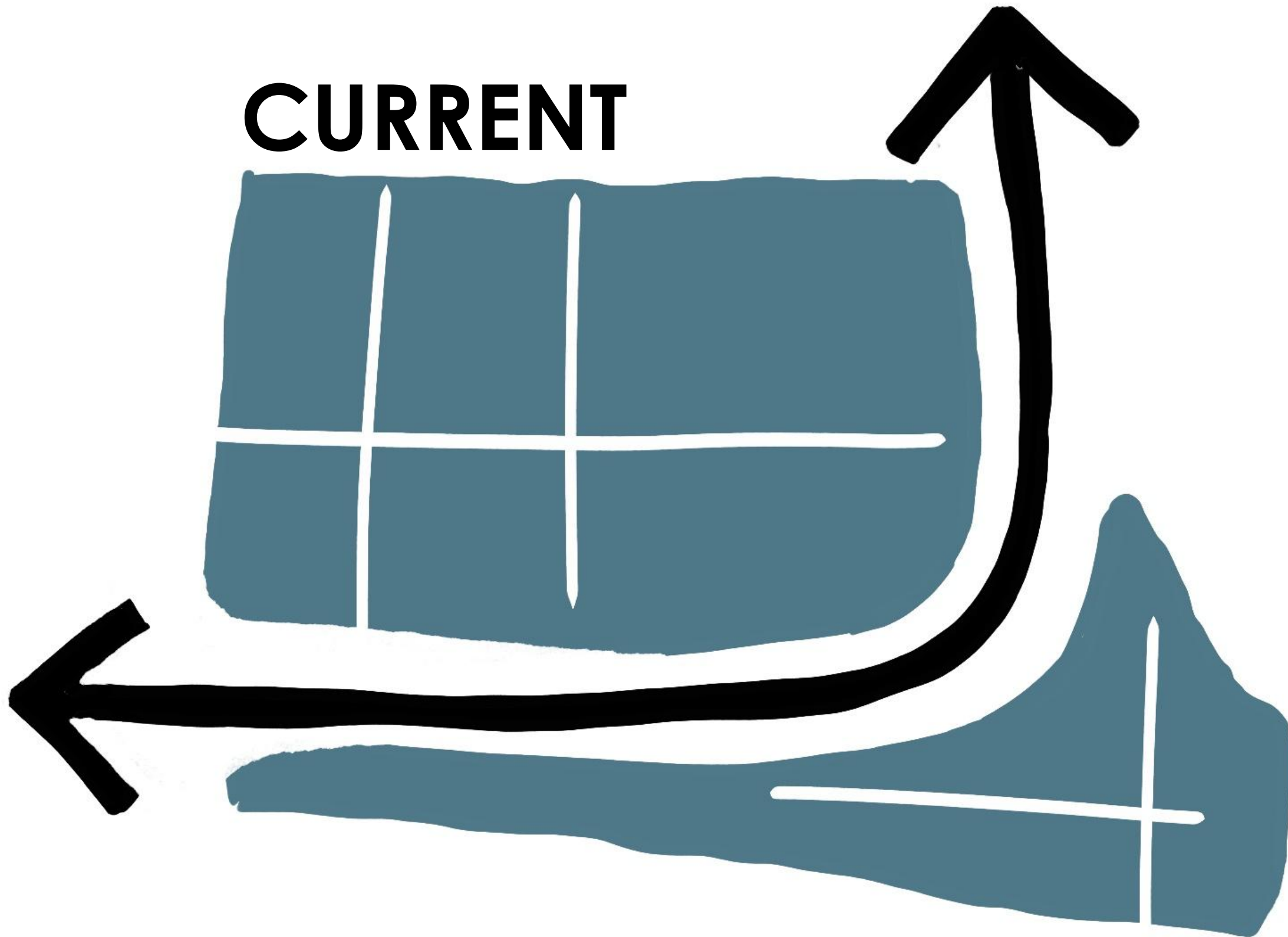


Economically
Independent



Culturally
Rich

CURRENT



Block-sized
Surface Lots



Unfriendly
Scale



Wide
Crosswalks

DISCONNECTED

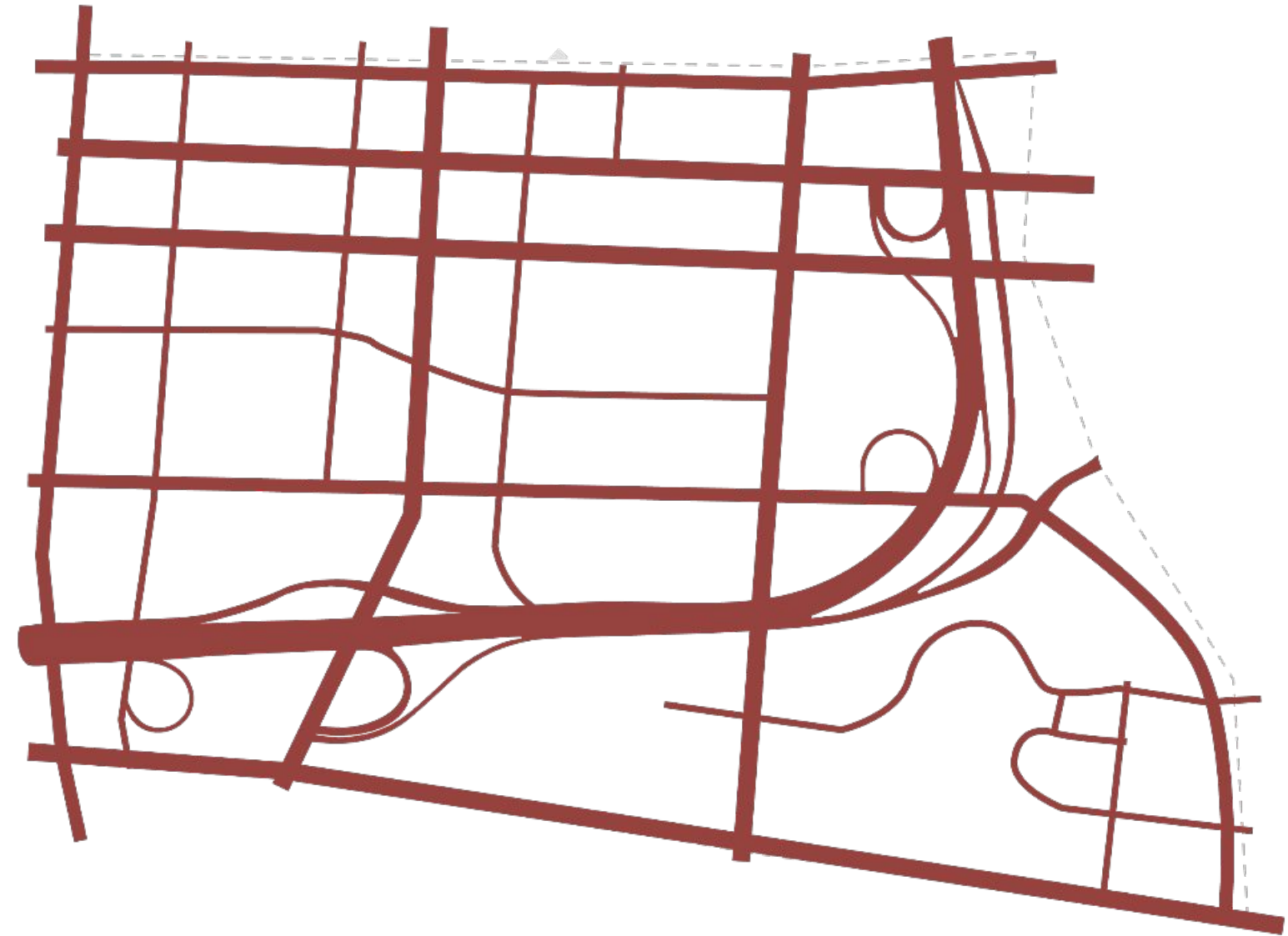




1953 BROOKLYN ROADS

Historic blocks and roads in Brooklyn, smaller and more consistently spaced, allow for density and calmed traffic.

- Primary Artery - to neighborhoods/towns
- Regular Grid - through Brooklyn
- Alley-ways - within Brooklyn



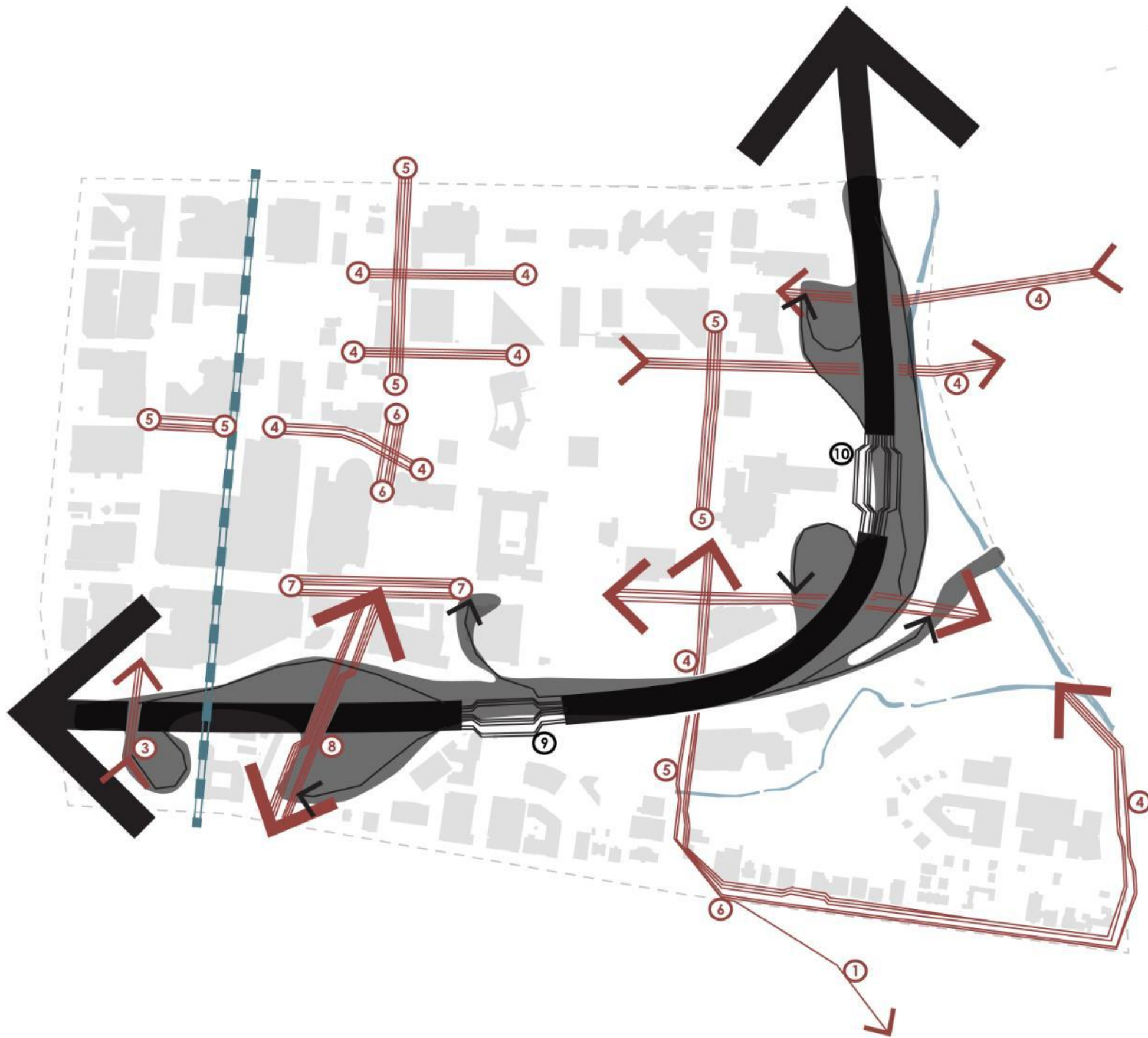
2025 2ND WARD ROADS

Sparse, irregular, non-human scale grid fragmented by I-277 with wide one and two-way roads alienate the pedestrian.

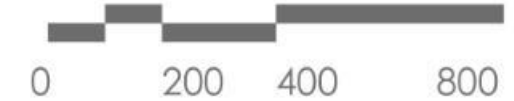
- Interstate - to interstates/towns
- Primary Artery - to neighborhoods
- Secondary Artery - through 2nd Ward
- Irregular Grid - within 2nd Ward

CURRENT EDGES

Large, multi-lane roads restrict pedestrian flow, creating edges within the neighborhood. S. Caldwell and S McDowell have a primary need for intervention

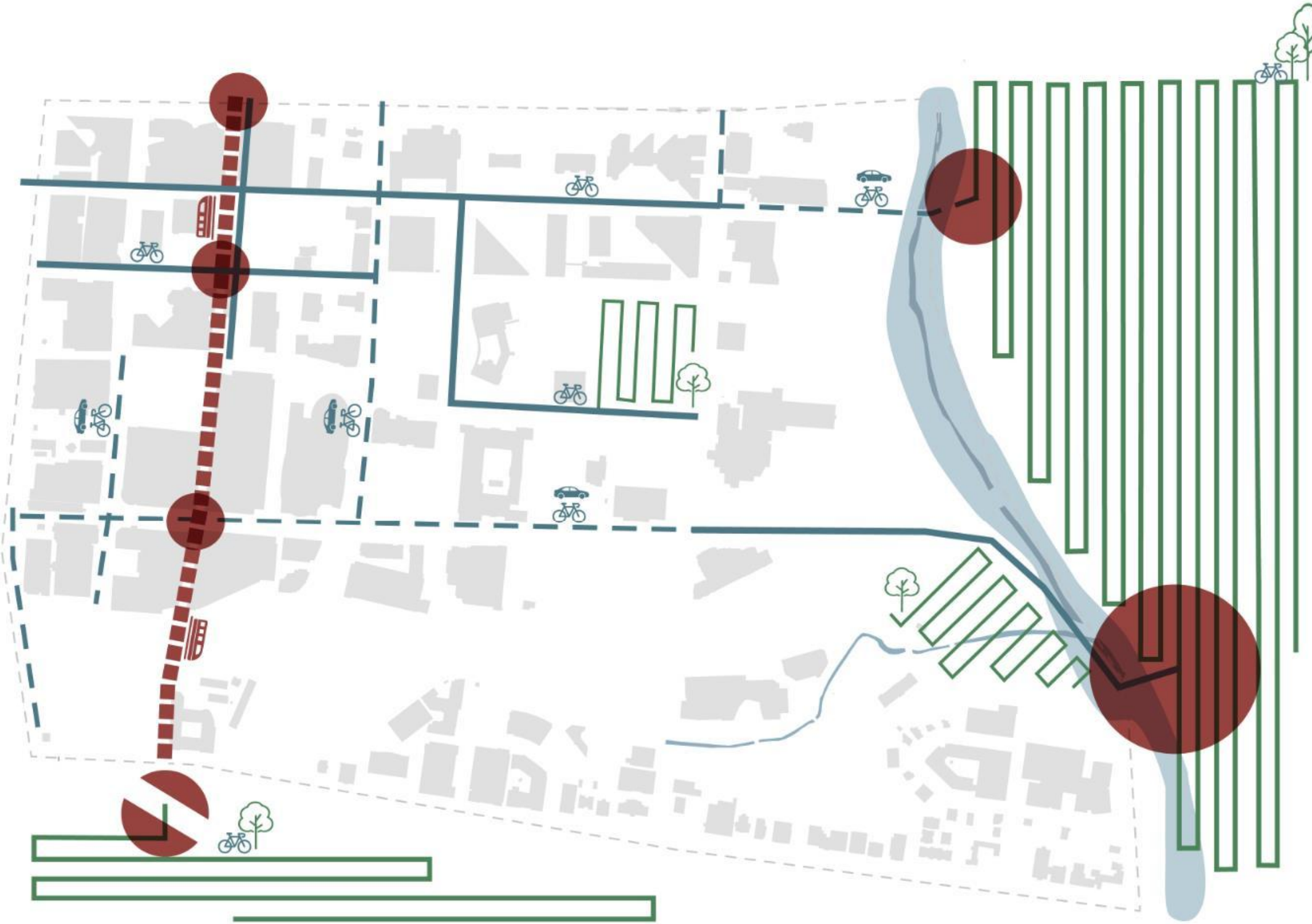


-  Little Sugar Creek
-  Interstate
-  Number of Lanes
-  Intersecting Road
-  Wide Intersection
-  Light Rail

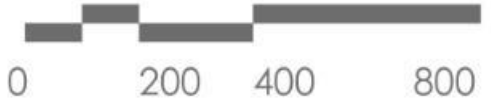


CORE TO CREEK

Robust pedestrian infrastructure exists in Brooklyn's periphery. Connections to the Sugar Creek Greenway and Rail Trail are essential.



-  Little Sugar Creek
 -  Gateway
 -  Lynx Blue Line
 -  Bike Zone
 -  Bike Lane
 -  Trail / Greenway
- 5 inches = 1 mile



EMPTY







1953 BUILDING FOOTPRINTS

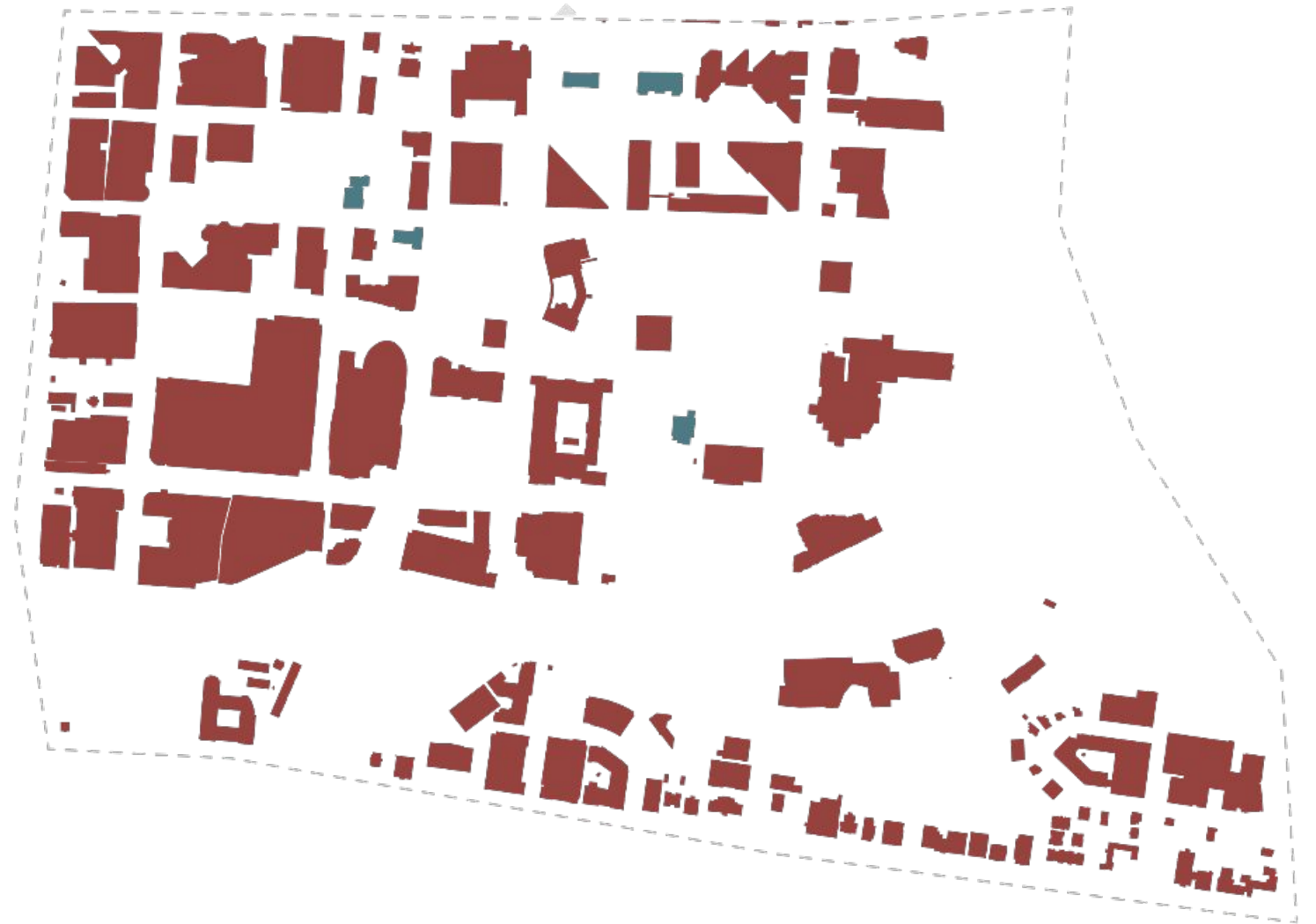
Numerous structure in each block with a variety of scales/uses.

 Residential - tight, largely shotgun-style housing.

 Education - 2nd Ward High school

 Church - Grace AME Zion

 Main Street - Brevard mixed-use




2025 BUILDING FOOTPRINTS

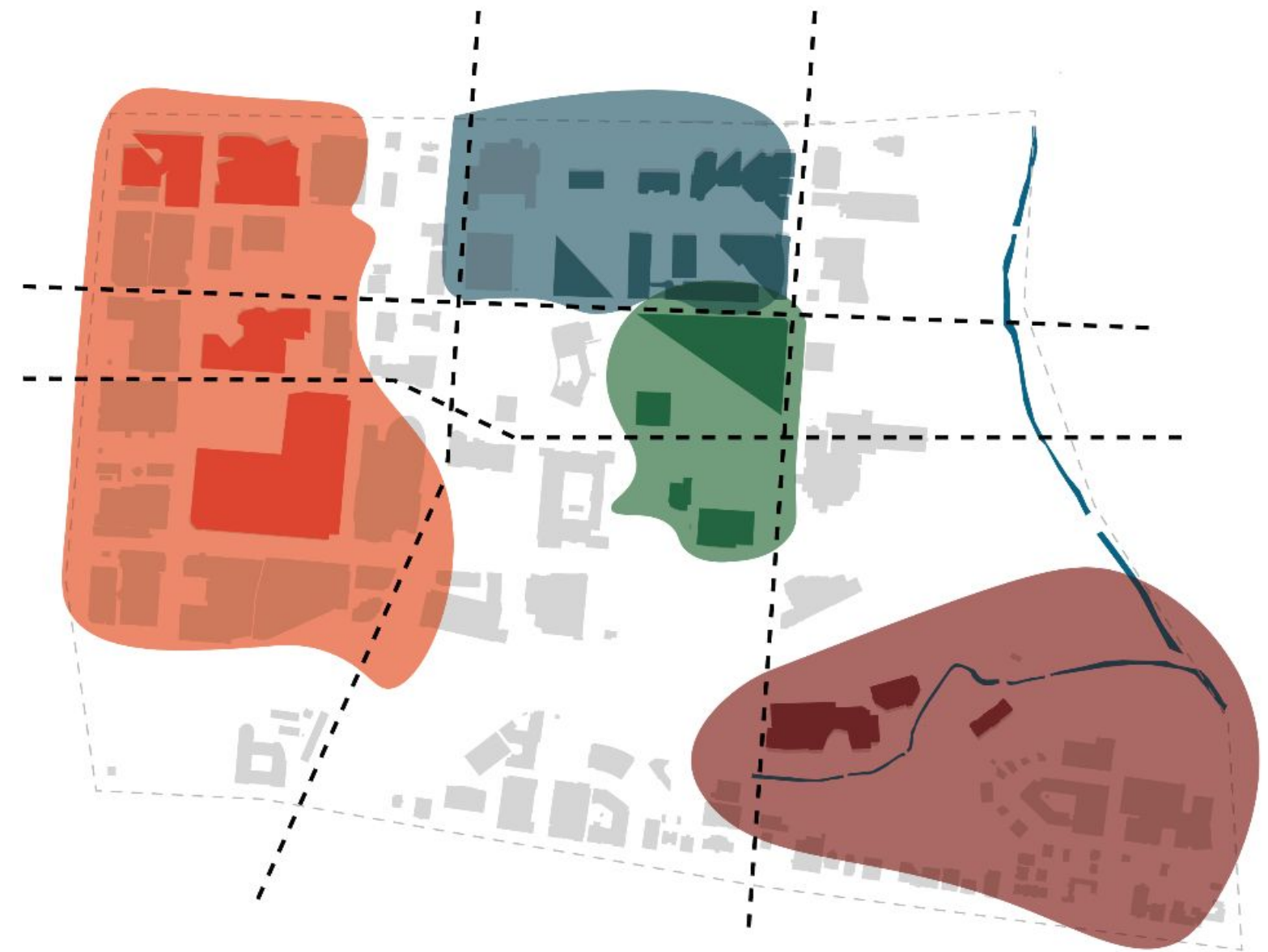
One structure in each block with large voids between them, either for parking or the interstate.

 Residential - 20+ story apartments

 Education - Carolina College of Health Sciences

 Church - First Baptist Charlotte

 Vertical Main Street - Epicenter



HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Districts often bleed into one another. Even though they can be categorized there is a large amount of mix use.

- Main Commerce Center
- Mixed Use
- Civic/Public
- Residential
- Education
- Connecting Paths
- Little Sugar Creek

CURRENT DISTRICTS

Districts are disconnected and rarely bleed into one another unlike the historical map.

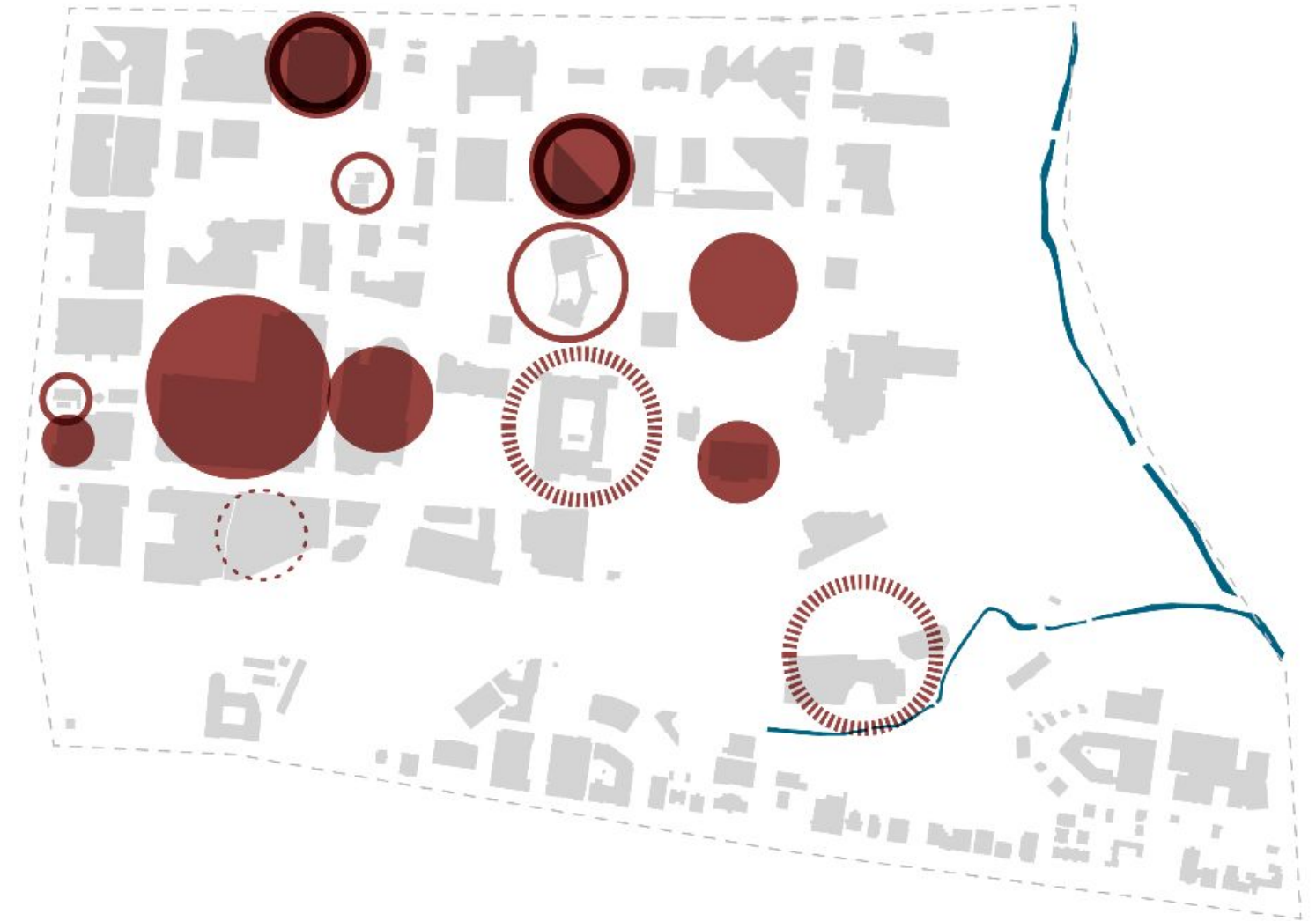
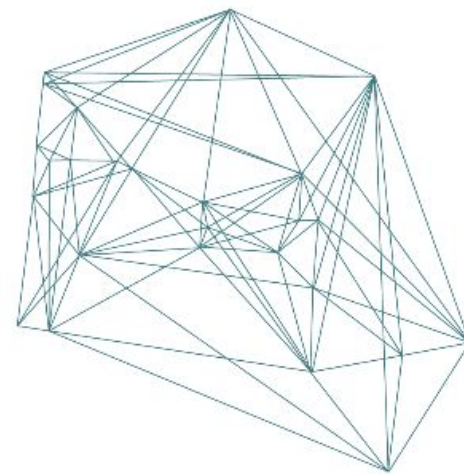
- Main Commerce Center
- Civic
- Parks & Rec
- Pearl District
- Connecting Paths
- Little Sugar Creek



HISTORIC ANCHORS

Historic anchors in Brooklyn were smaller-scale buildings spread throughout the neighborhood.

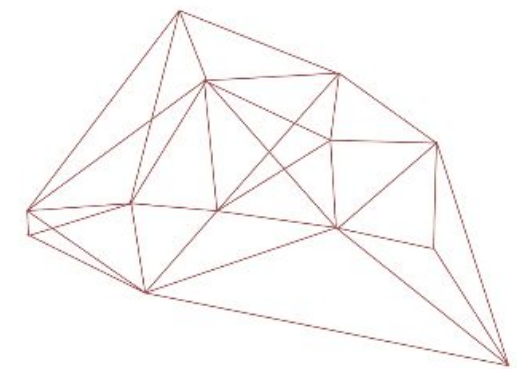
-  Churches
-  Key Businesses
-  Schools
-  Cultural Assets & Recreation
-  Civic Buildings
-  Little Sugar Creek



CURRENT ANCHORS

There are far fewer current anchors, but they have larger footprints.

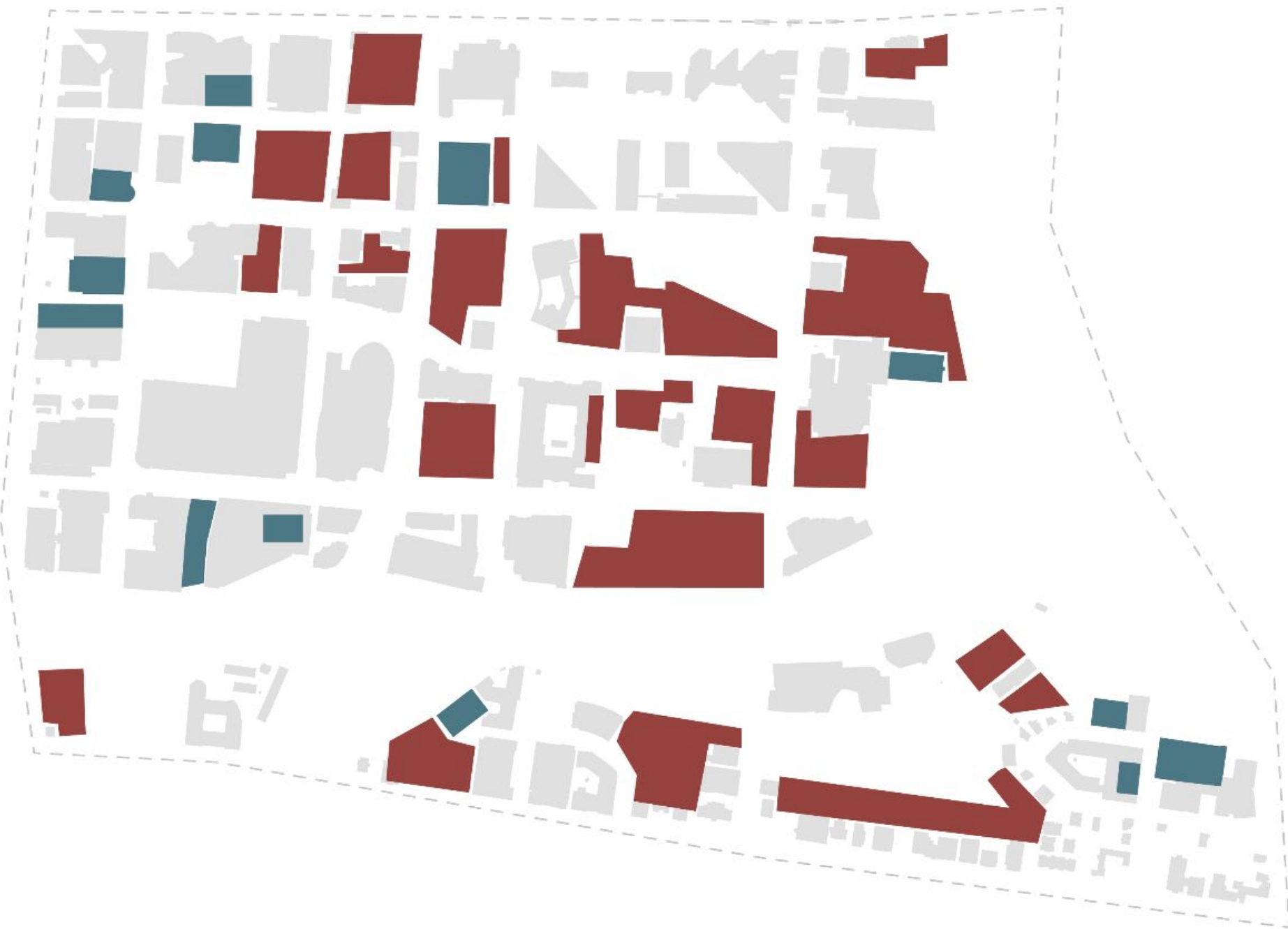
-  Churches
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PARKING DENSITY

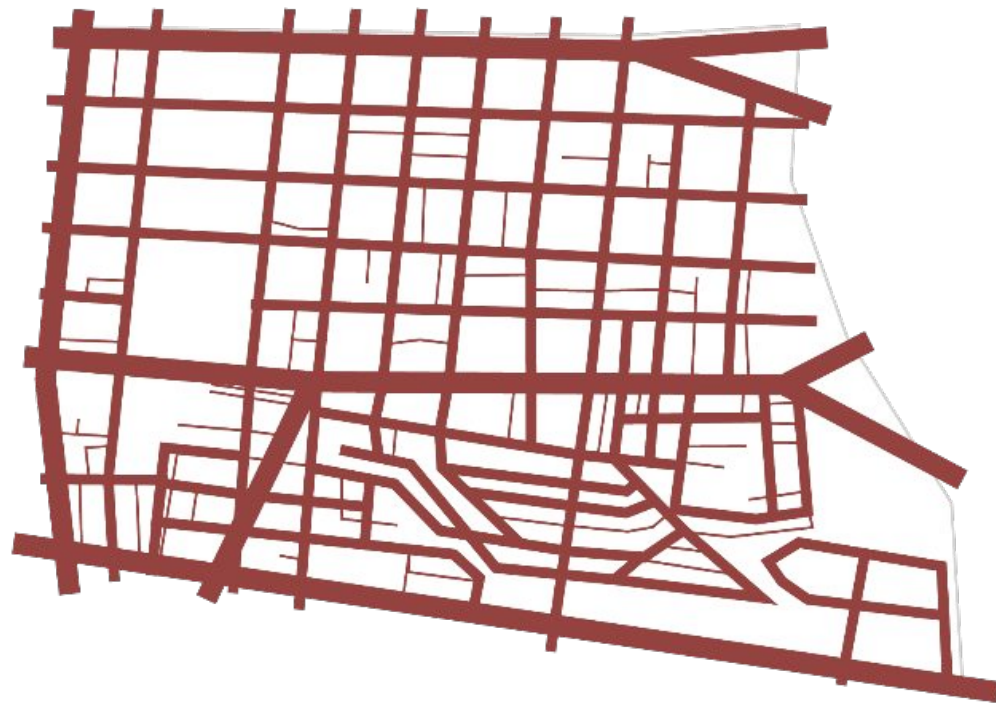
Type and amount of parking in 2nd Ward, as well as their proximity.

- Surface Lot
- Parking Deck



CONNECT





1953 BROOKLYN ROADS

- Dense and regular grid
- Alleyways for interblock connectivity
- Multiple primary circulatory roads through Brooklyn
- Multiple parcels and buildings per block with diverse ownership



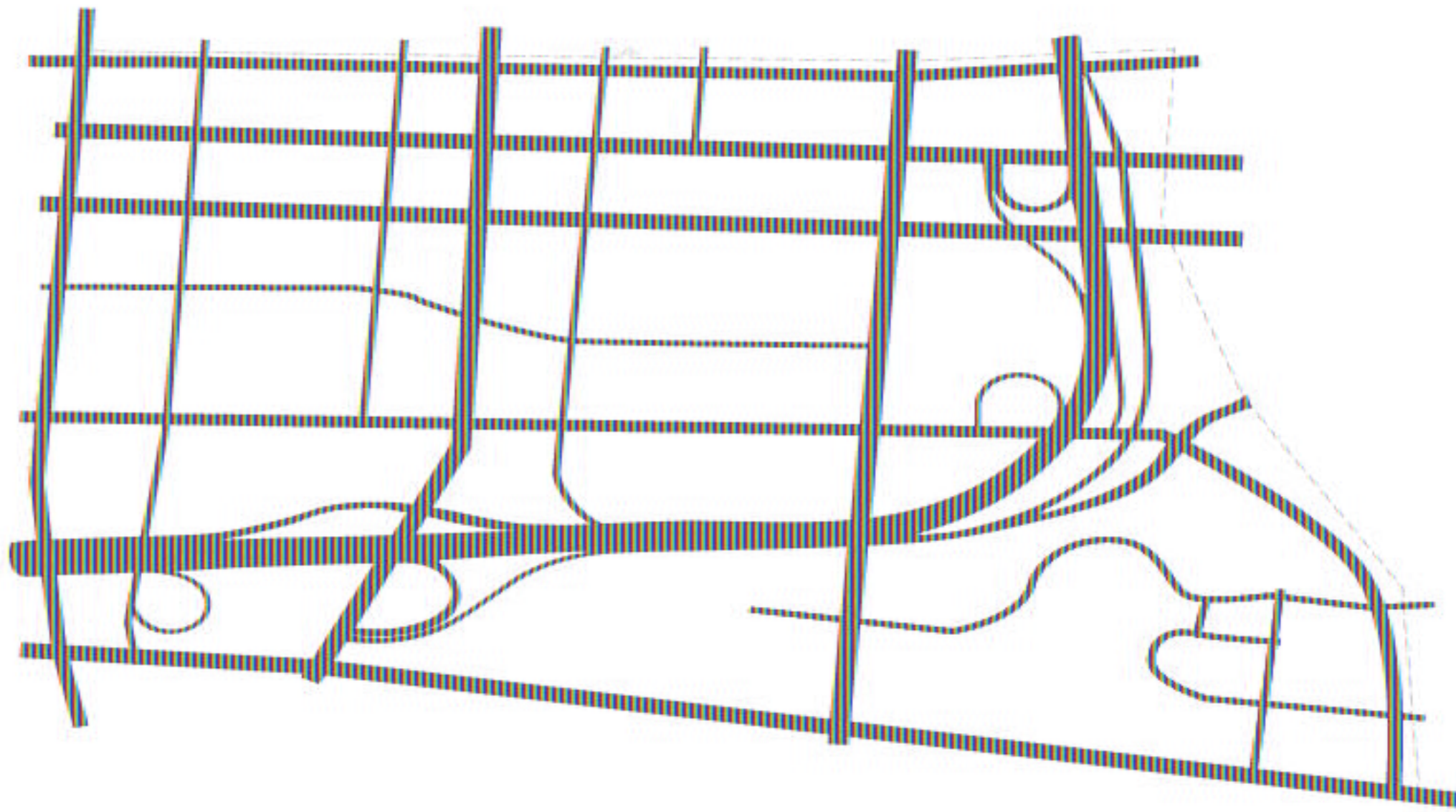
2025 2ND WARD ROADS

- Fragmented sparse grid
- No interblock connectivity
- I-277 eliminates needs for through traffic
- Largely one parcel and one building per block







PROPOSED ROADS

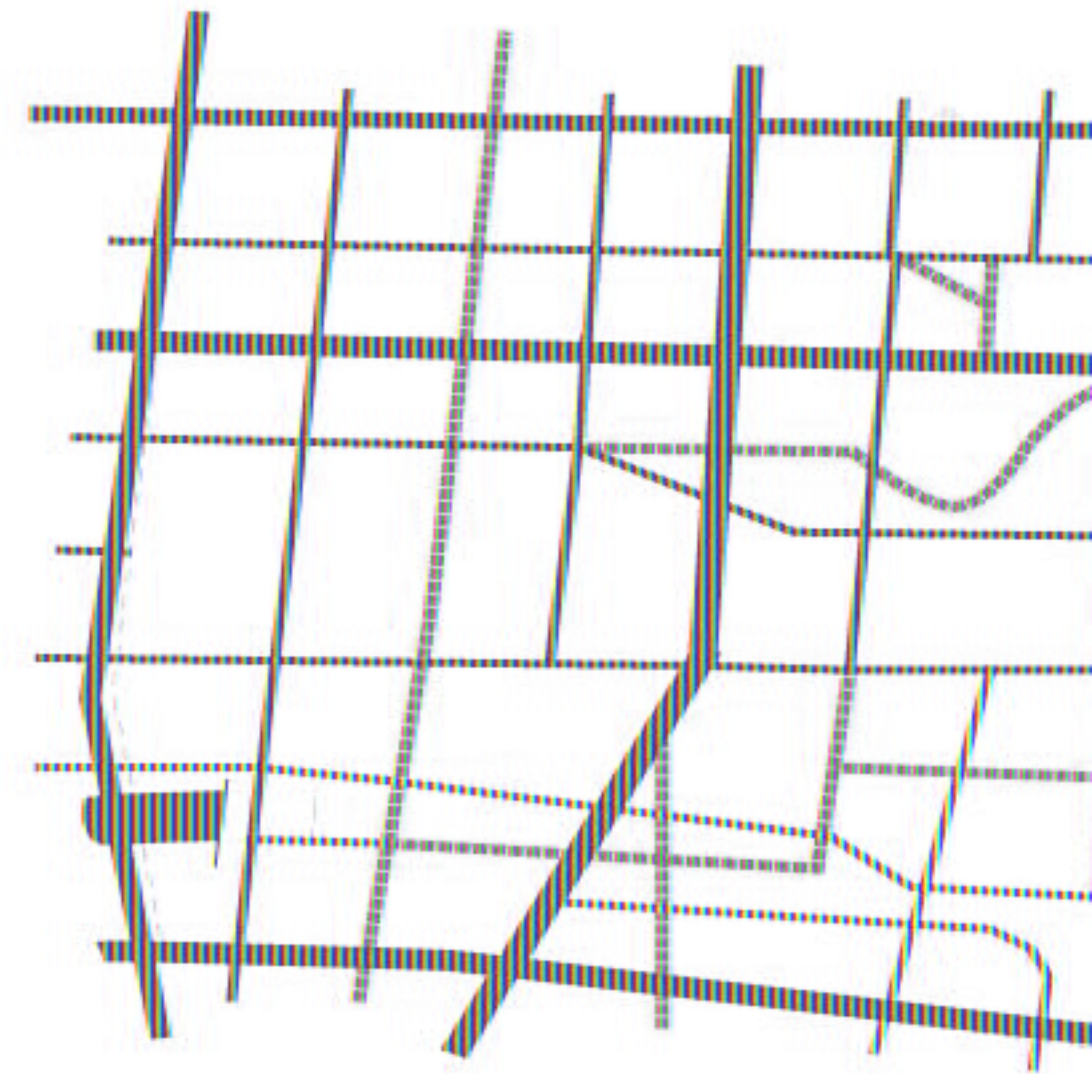
- Restored historic grid over buried I-277
- Pedestrian path for interblock connectivity
- Dense local retail districts



2025 BROOKLYN ROADS



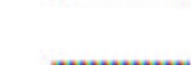

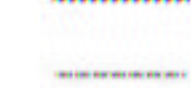
Sparse, irregular, non-human scale grid fragmented by I-277 with wide one and two-way roads alienate the pedestrian.

-  Interstate - to interstates/towns
-  Primary Artery - to neighborhoods
-  Secondary Artery - through 2nd Ward
-  Irregular Grid - within 2nd Ward

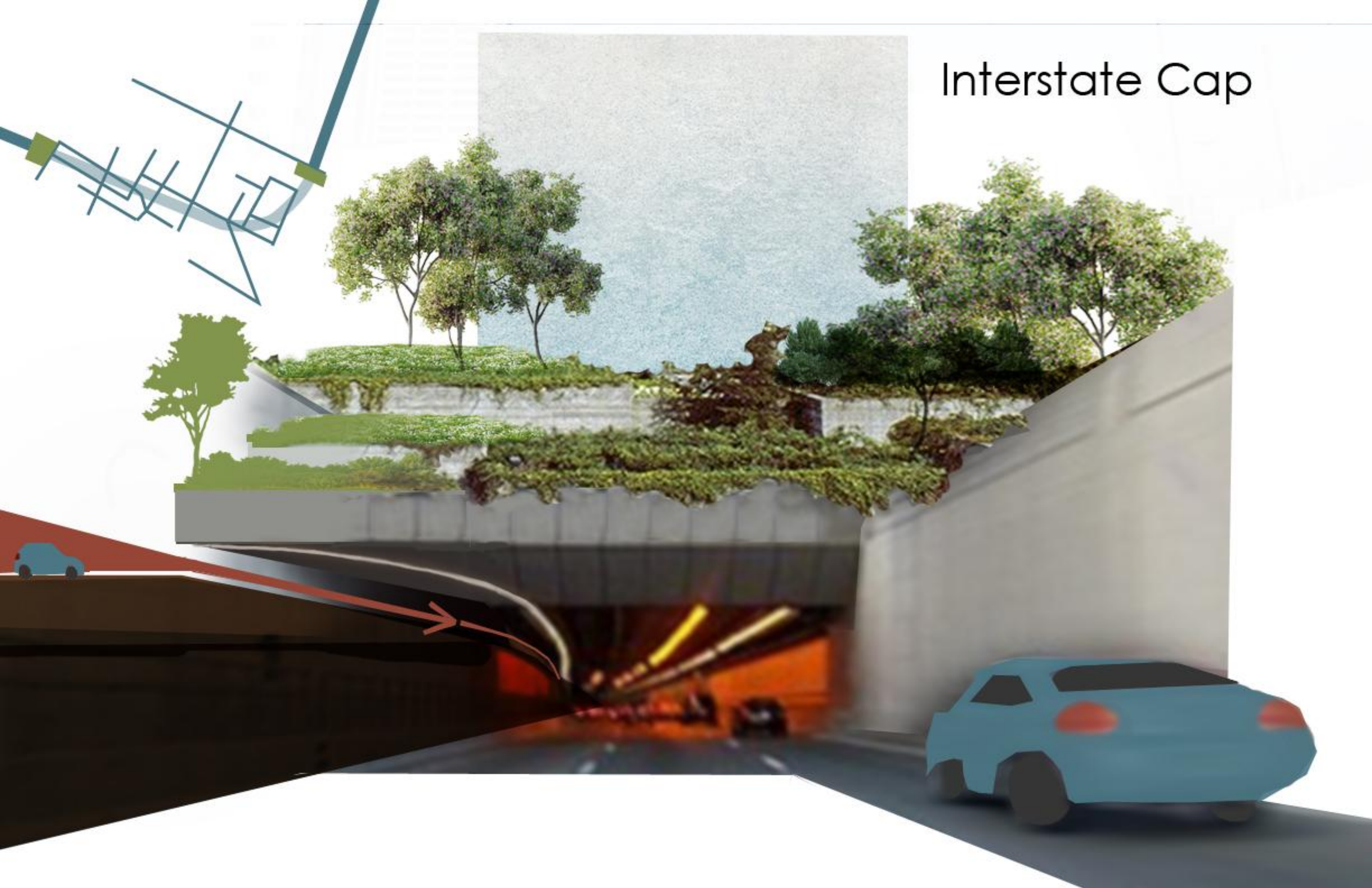


FUTURE 2ND WARD ROADS

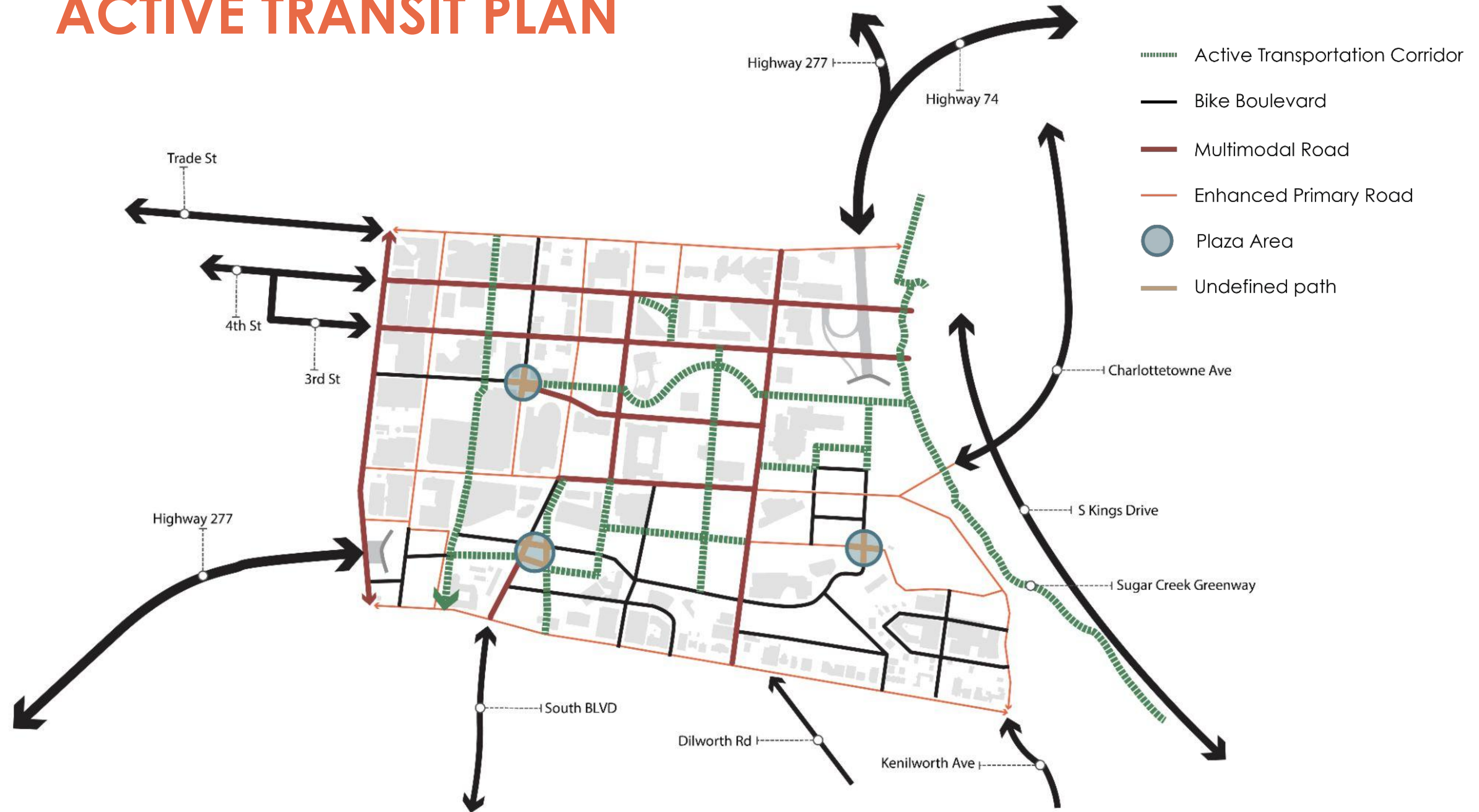
By burying the highway and using placement of new pedestrian paths, the grid can shift its emphasis away from cars.

-  Buried Interstate - to interstates/towns
-  Primary Artery - to neighborhoods
-  Irregular Grid - through 2nd Ward
-  Restored Historic - within 2nd Ward
-  Pedestrian Path - within 2nd Ward

Interstate Cap



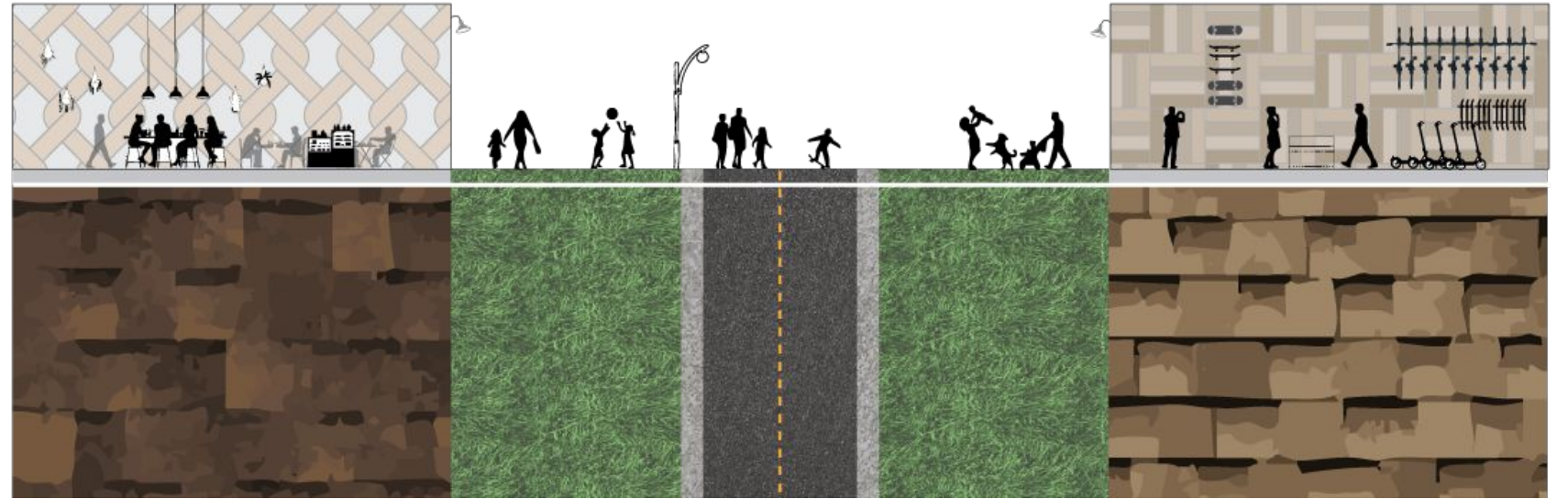
ACTIVE TRANSIT PLAN



ACTIVE TRANSIT CORRIDOR



Proposed 



PEDESTRIAN PATH

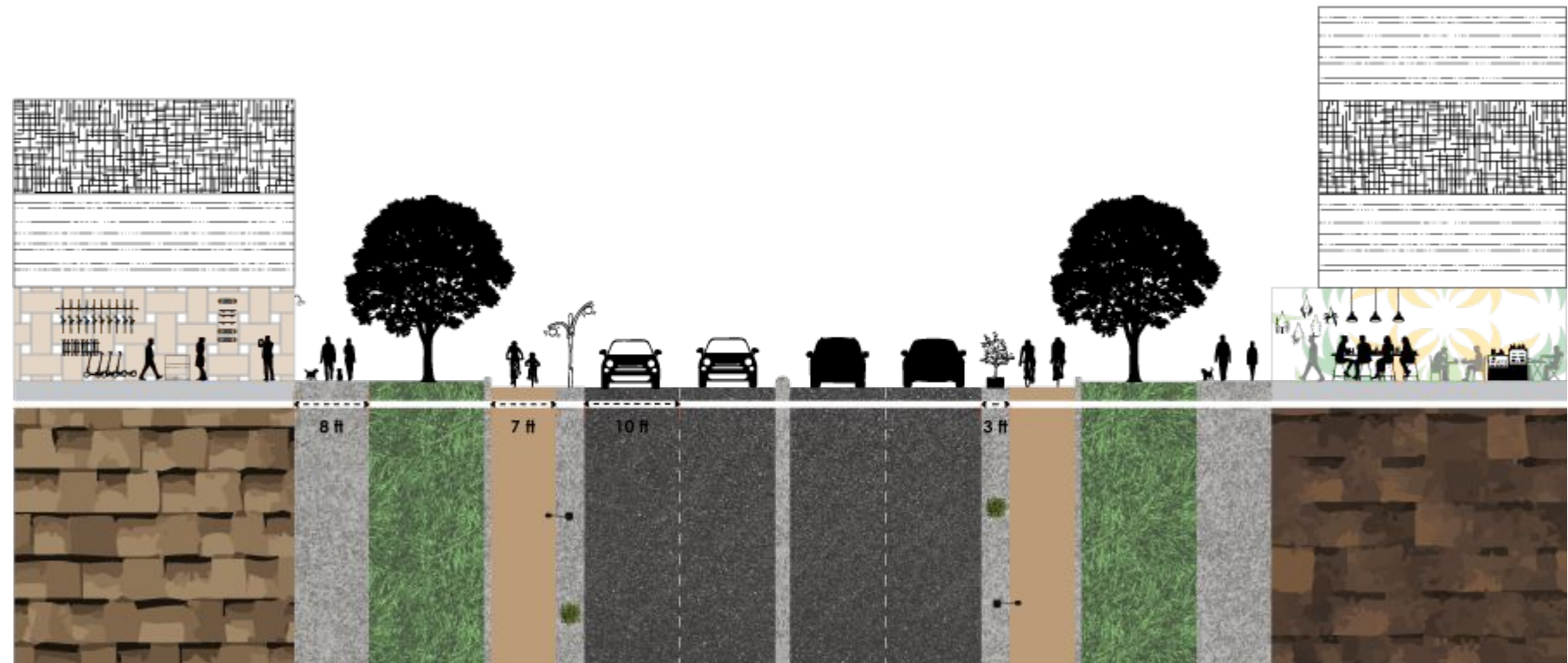


MULTIMODAL ROAD

Current 



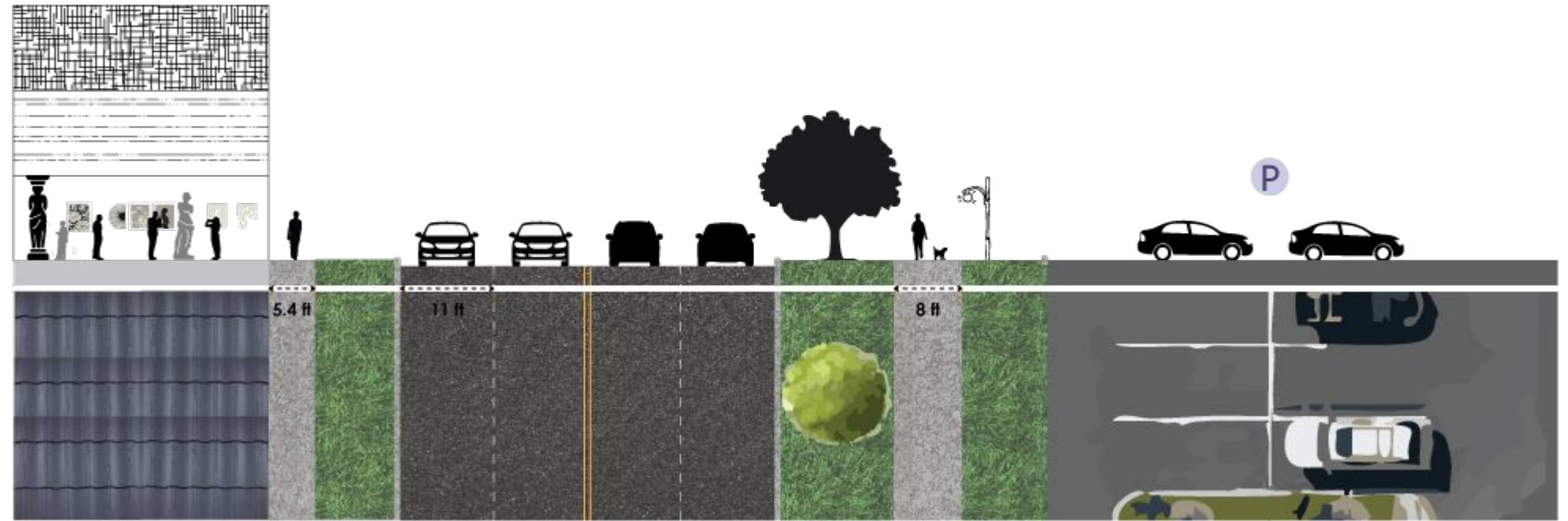
Proposed 



BICYCLE BOULEVARD



Current 



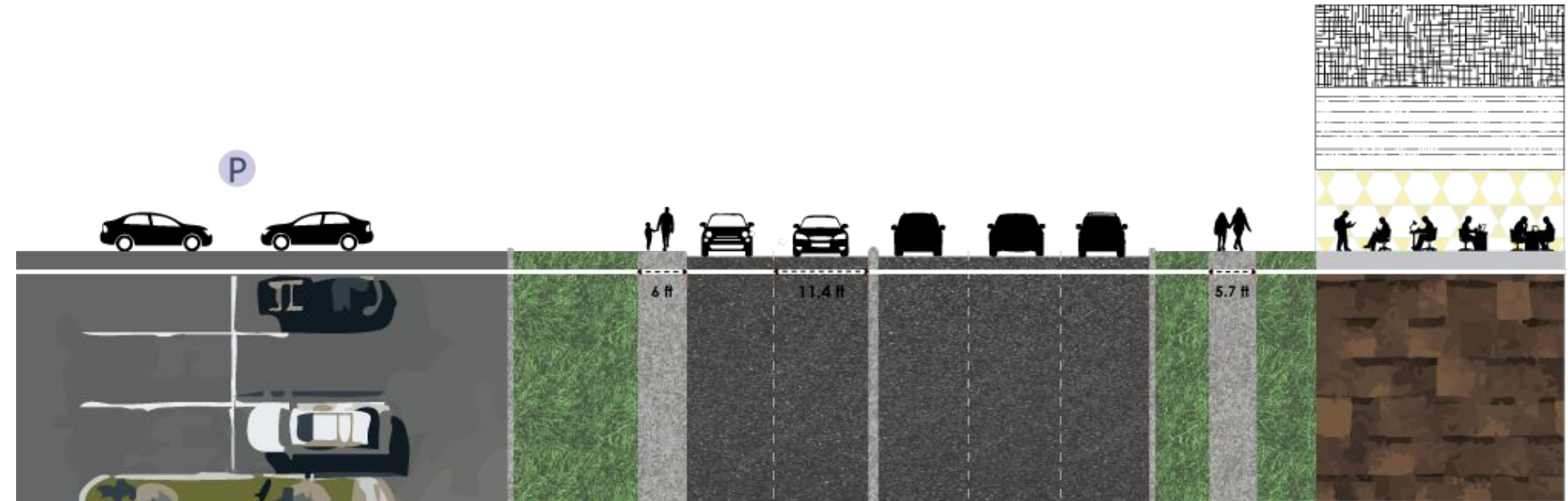
Proposed 



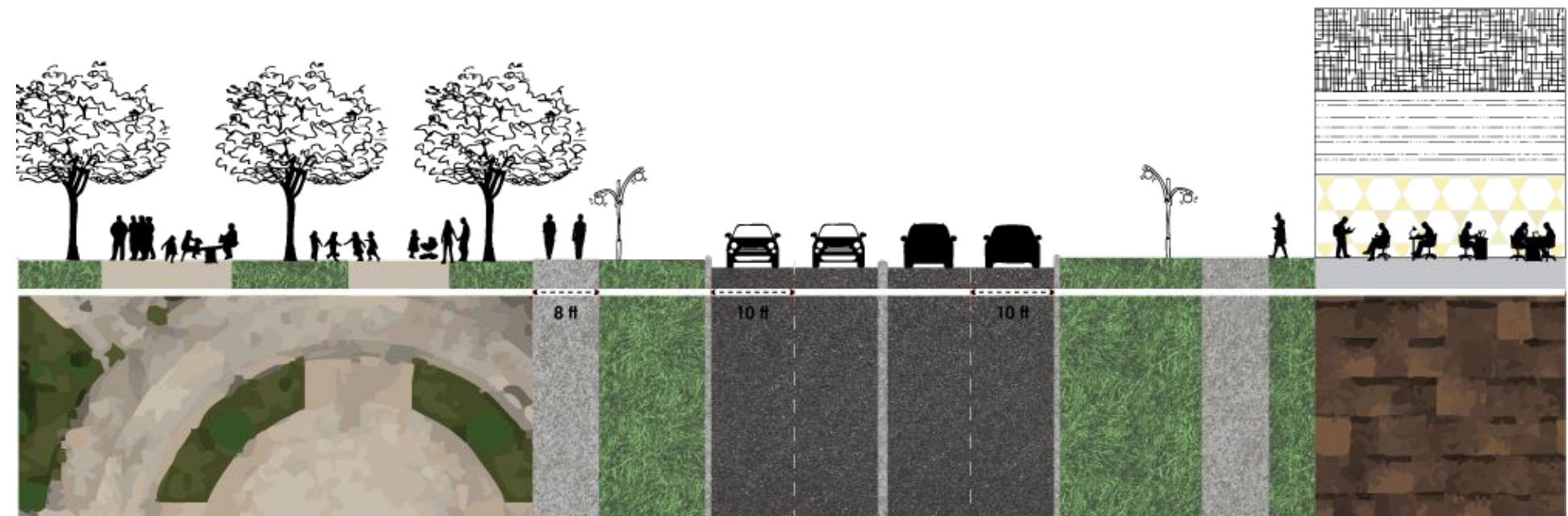
ENHANCED PRIMARY ROAD



Current 

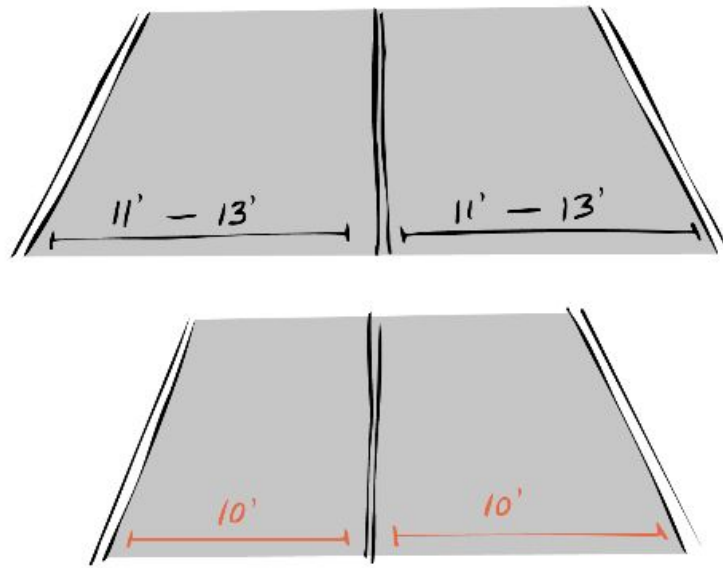


Proposed 



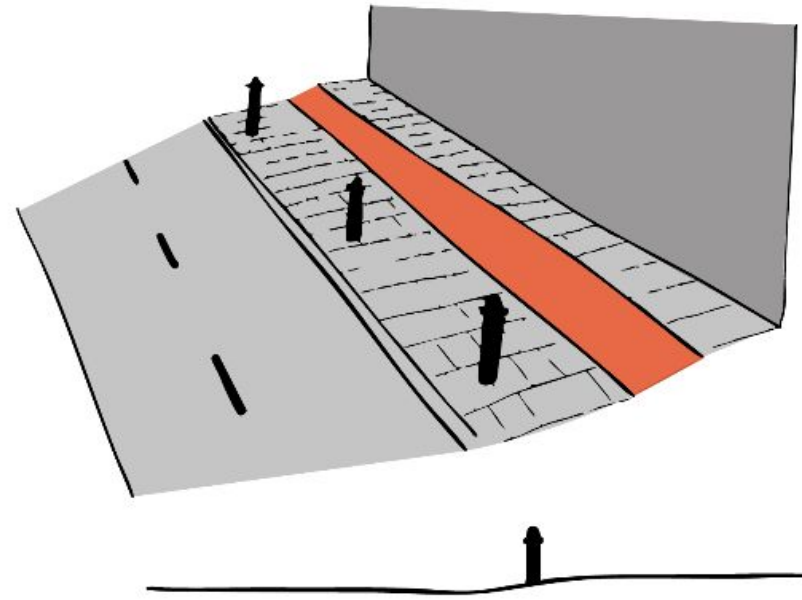
TRAFFIC CALMING

LANE NARROWING



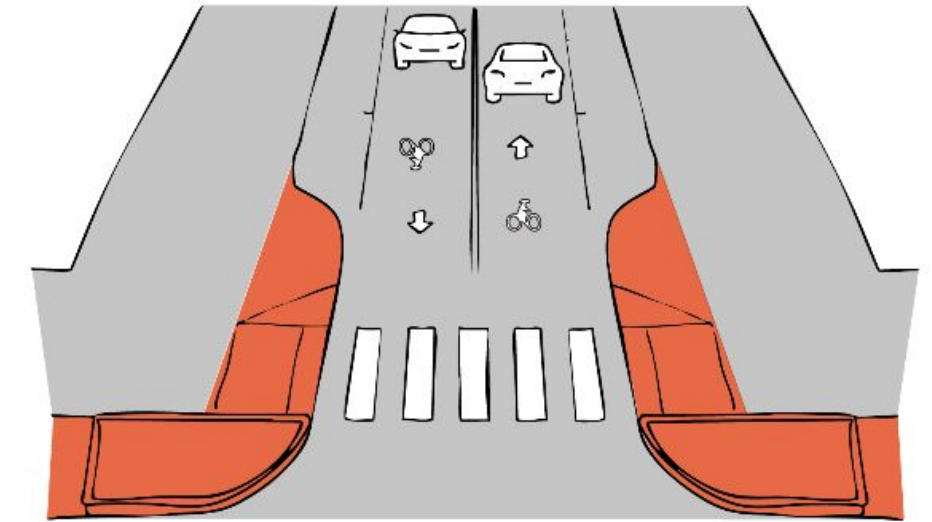
- All roads

CONTINUOUS SIDEWALKS



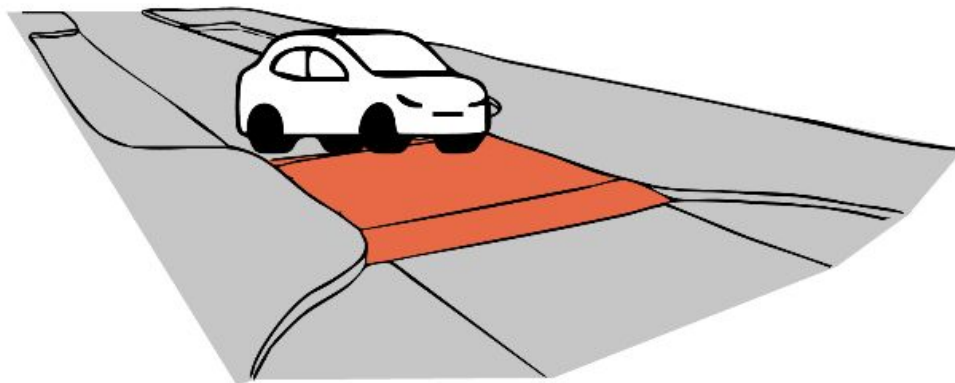
- Multi-modal roads

CURB EXTENSIONS



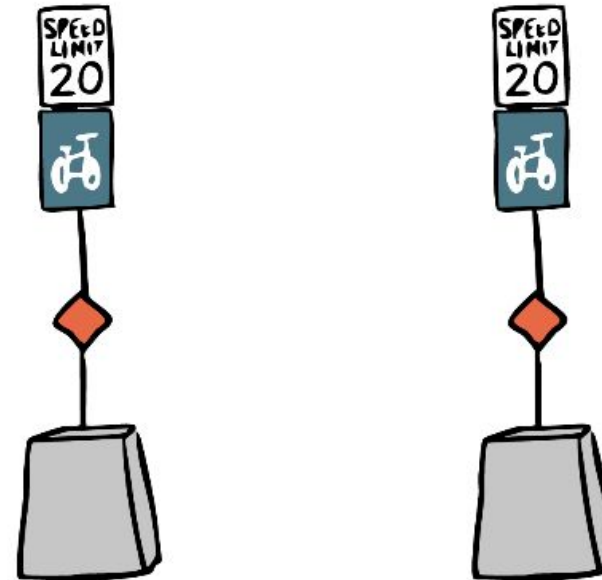
- Intersections of Bicycle Boulevards and larger multi-modal roads

RAISED CROSSWALK



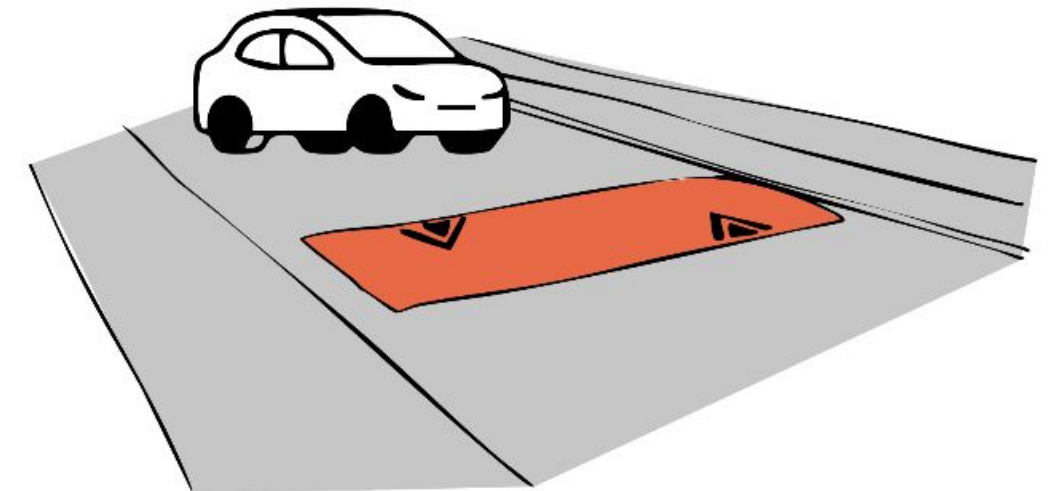
- Mid-block crossings on Bicycle Boulevards and at intersections between roads with different speeds

SIGNAGE



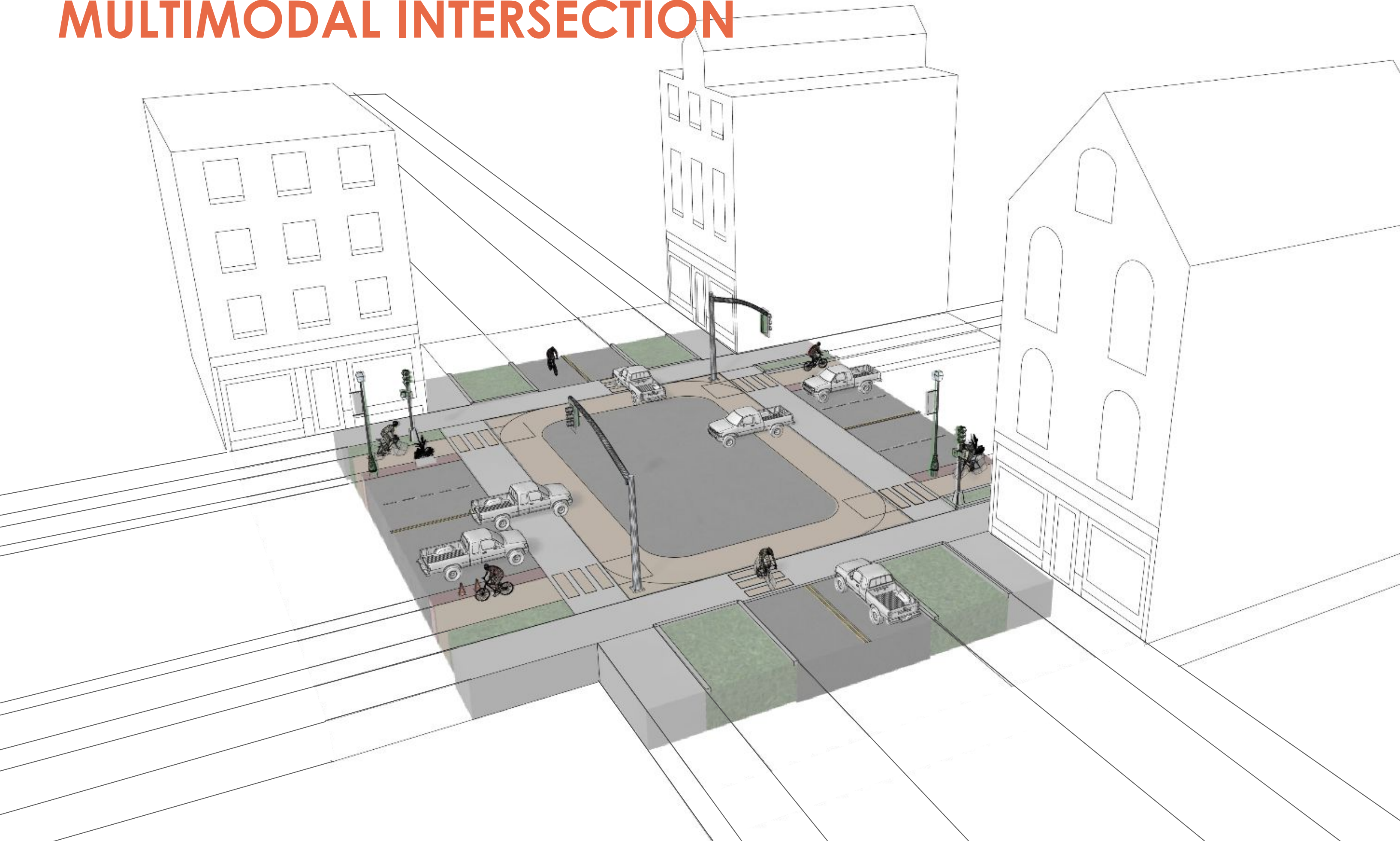
- Intersections of Bicycle Boulevards and larger multi-modal roads

SPEED HUMP

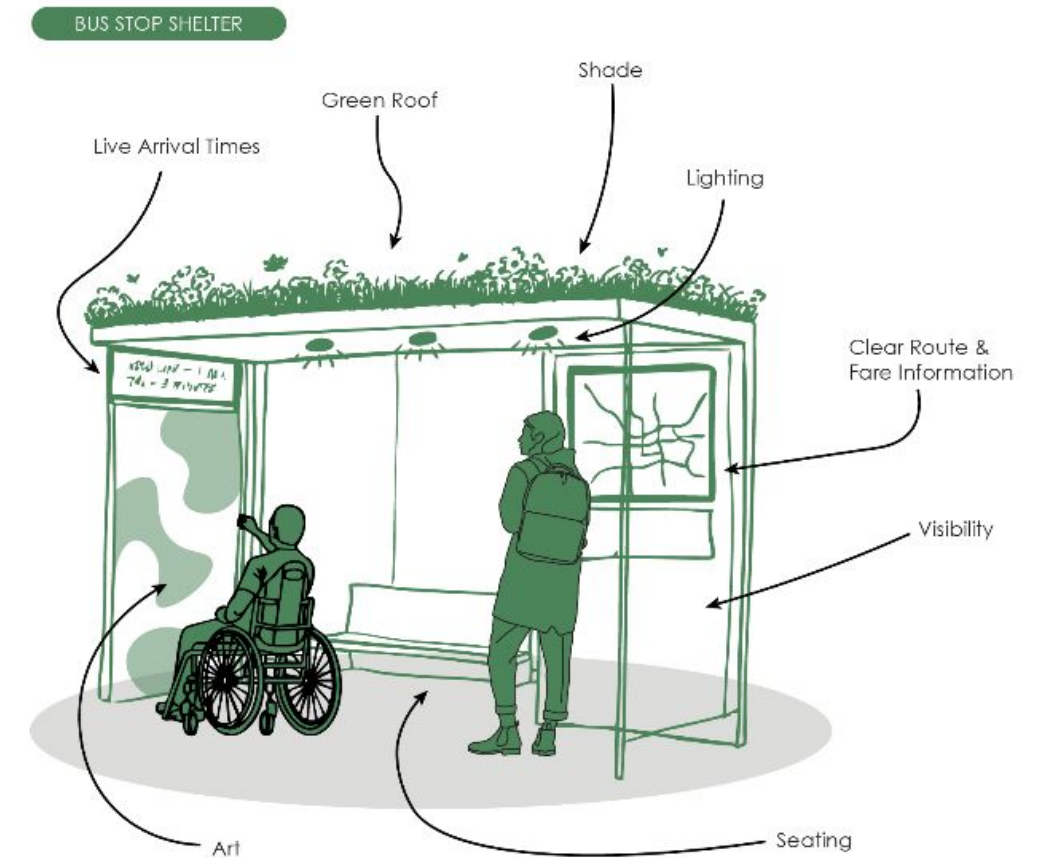
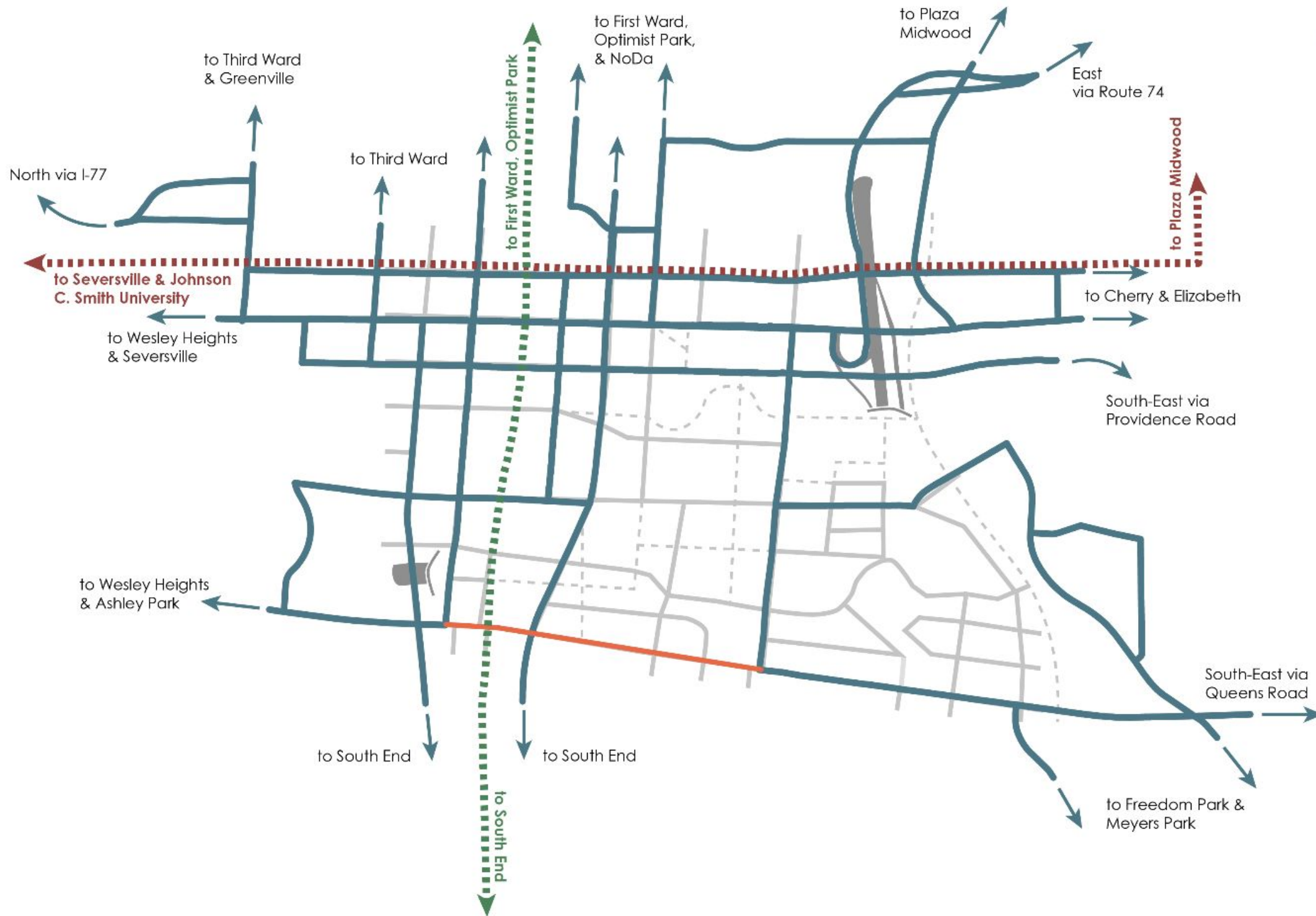


- Bicycle Boulevards

MULTIMODAL INTERSECTION



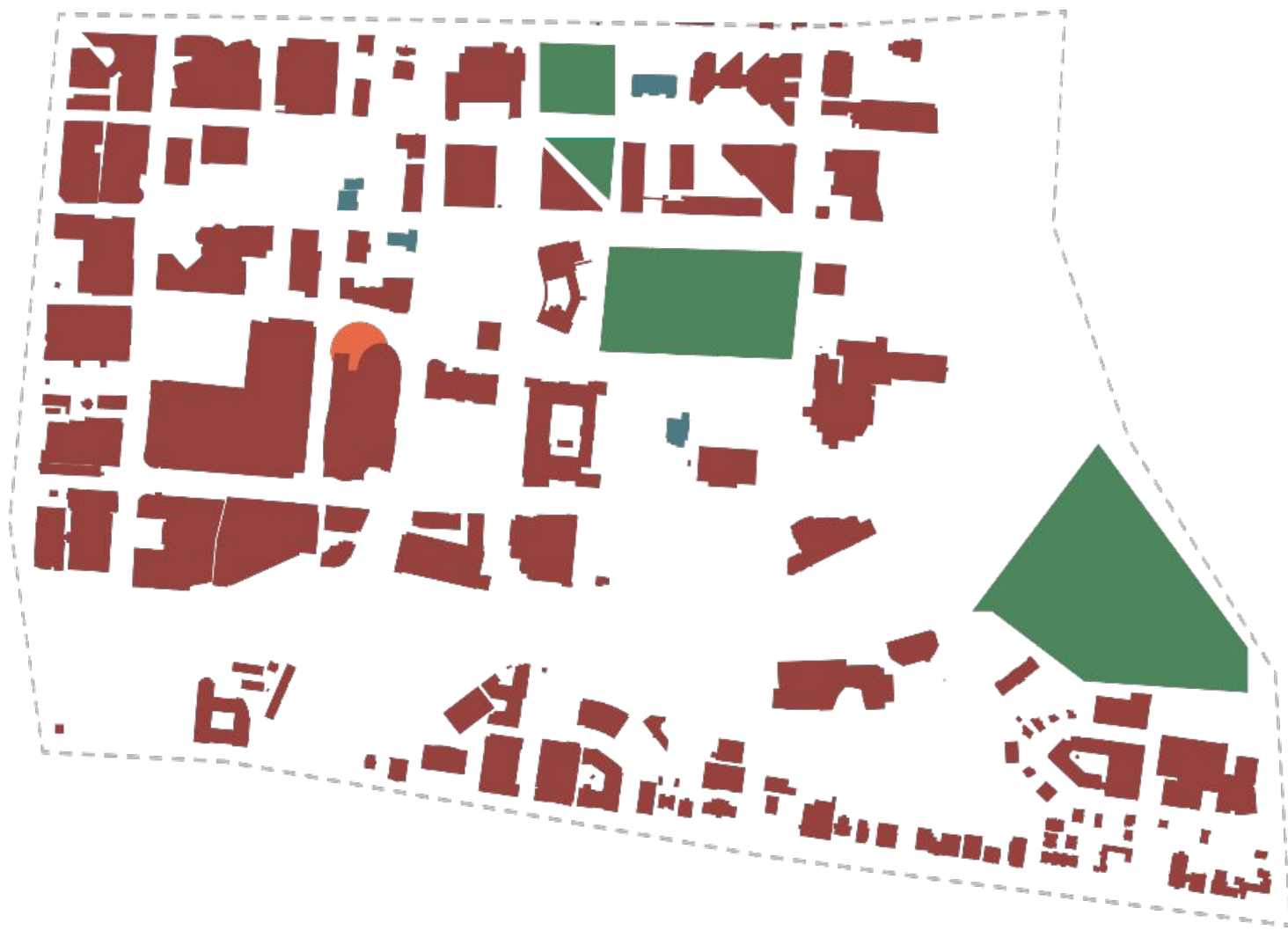
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



- Existing Bus Network
- Proposed Bus Network Addition
- - - Existing Light Rail
- - - Existing Streetcar

FILL

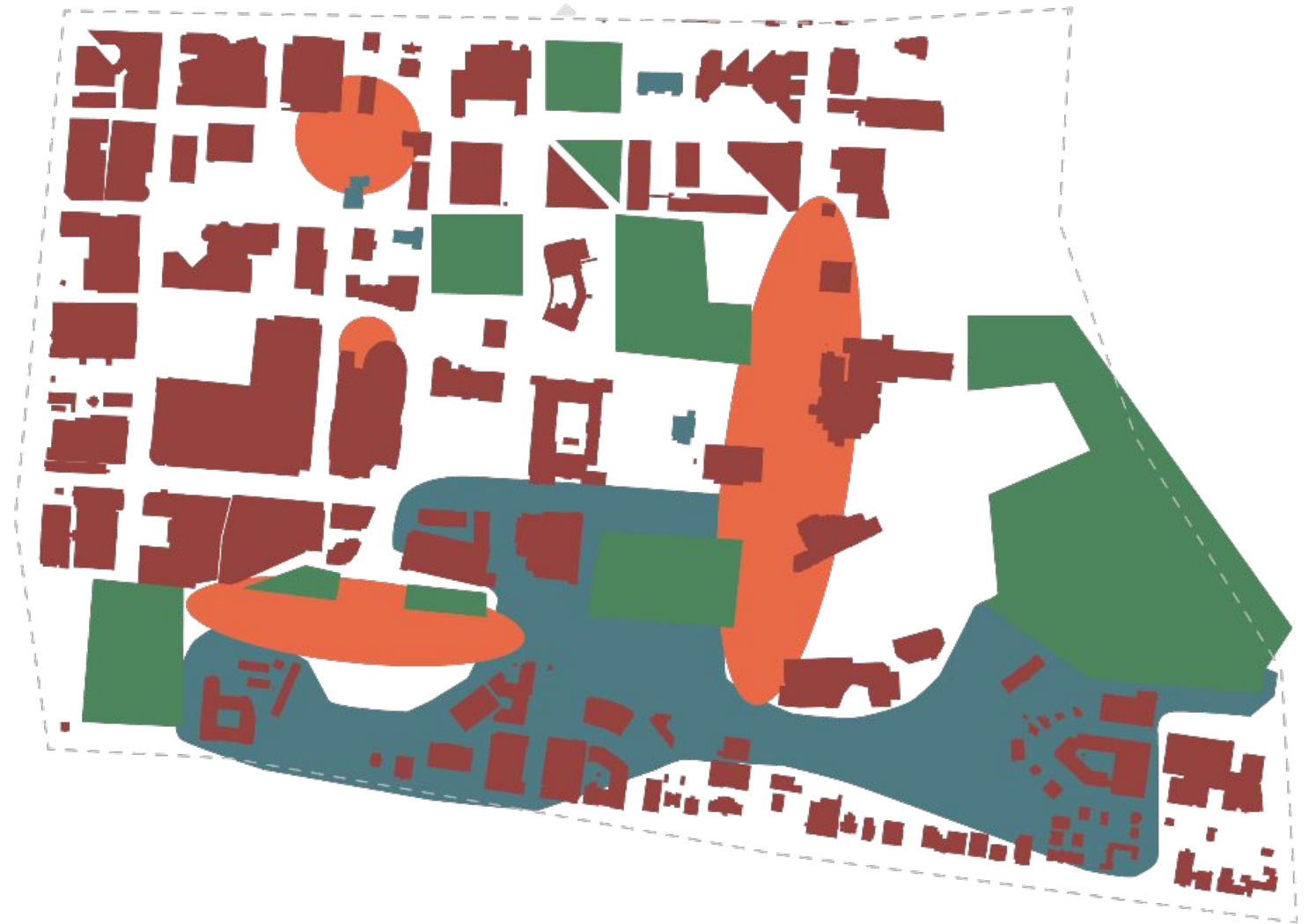




2025 BUILDING FOOTPRINTS

Voids of surface lots and Interstate make current day 2nd Ward a discontinuous experience

- Building Footprint
- Public Parks / Green Space
- Plaza / Outdoor Public Space

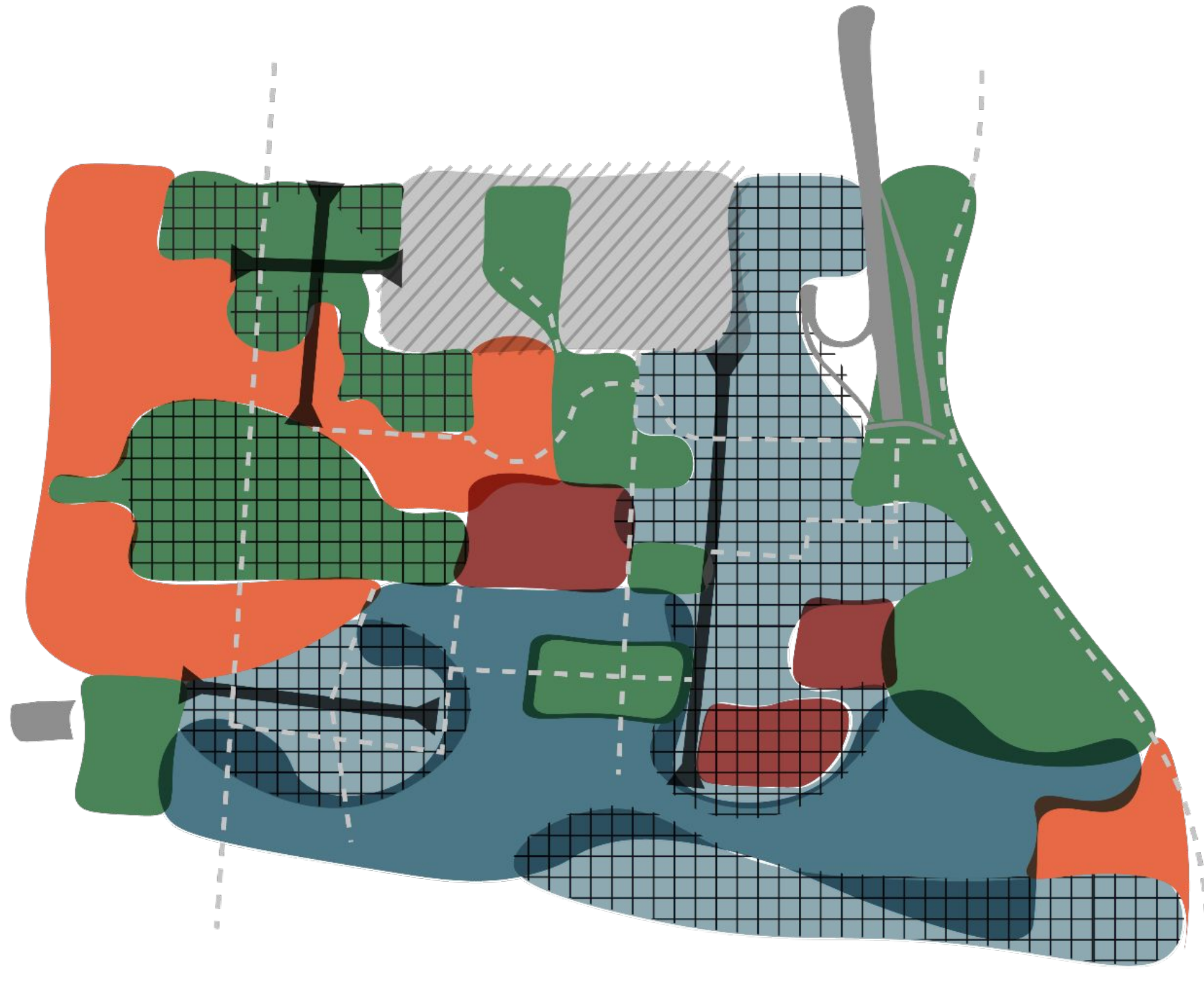


FUTURE BUILDING FOOTPRINTS

Restoring a residential core over the buried Interstate as well as building outdoor public infrastructure in surface lots and along primary corridors.

- Building Footprint
- Public Parks / Green Space
- Plaza / Outdoor Public Space
- Residential District

NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC



Public spaces, small businesses, and a residential core are restored to Brooklyn, creating a neighborhood of overlapping uses connected by pedestrian and bike paths.

-  Primary Corridors
-  Small & Local businesses
-  Public Space & Parks
-  Commercial
-  Mixed Use Residential
-  Residential Core
-  Education
-  Civic District
-  Pedestrian- & Bike-Only Paths

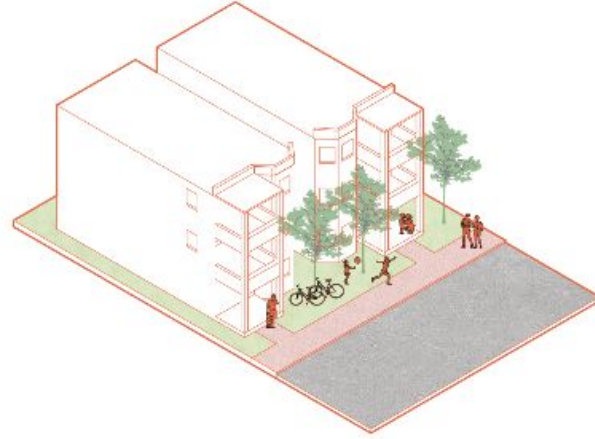
BUILDINGS

FLEXIDENTIAL



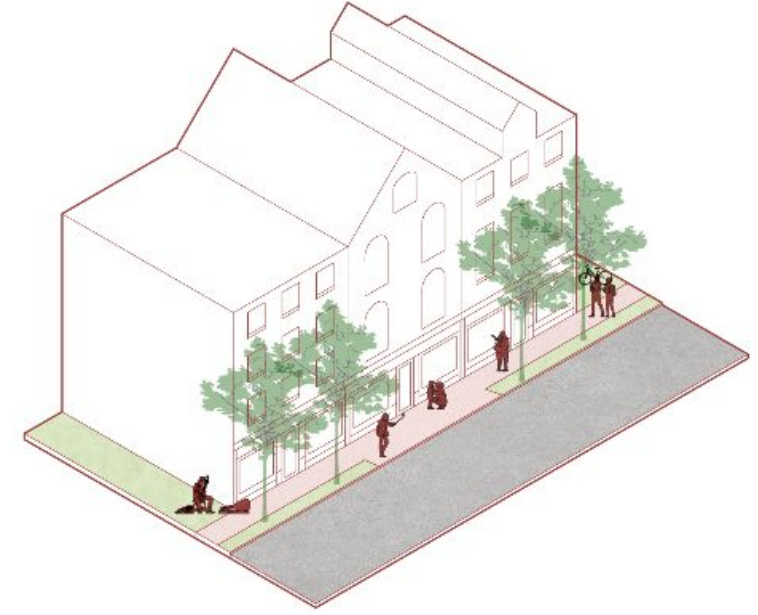
Live work/makers housing with storefronts
1 to 2 bedroom homes

TRIPLE DECKER



Residential housing smaller scale
2 to 3 bedrooms , 3 units per building

MAIN STREET



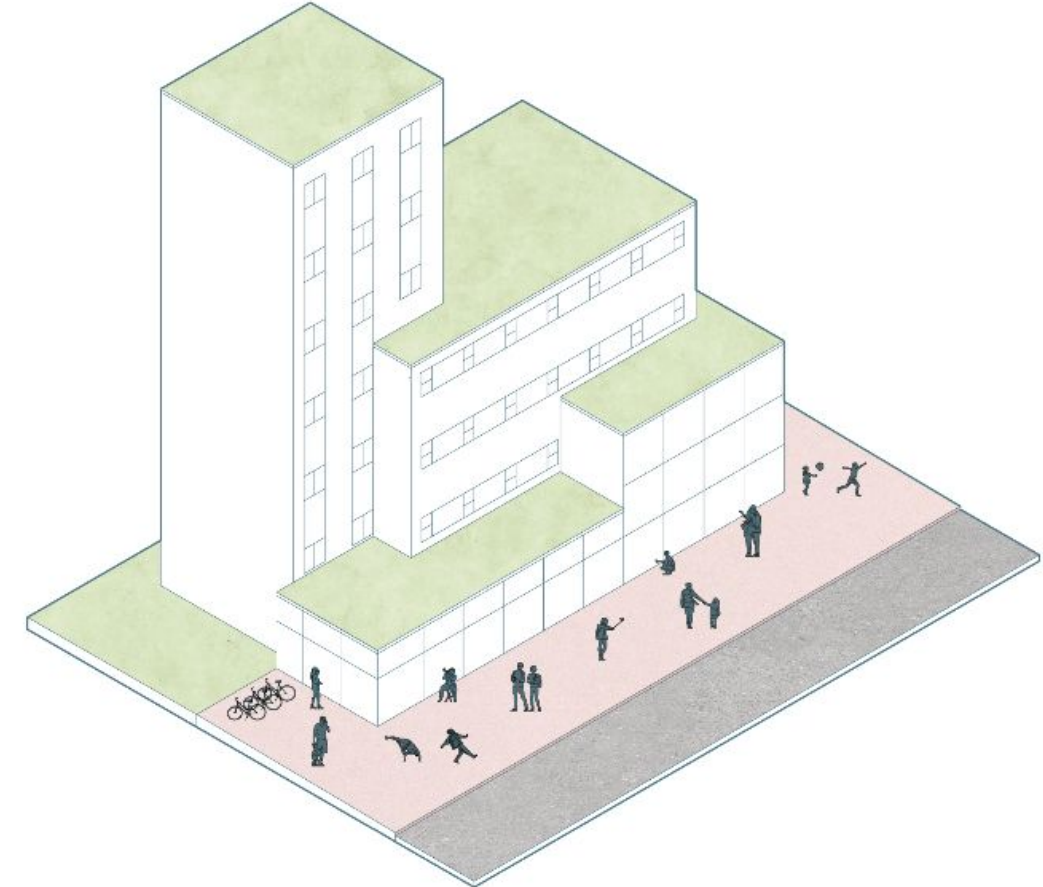
Smaller scale retail with limited residential
1 to 2 bedrooms , 3 units per building

BACKYARD BLOCK



Residential only with a central courtyard
1 to 2 bedrooms 6 units, 3-4 bedrooms 14 units

MIXED-USE

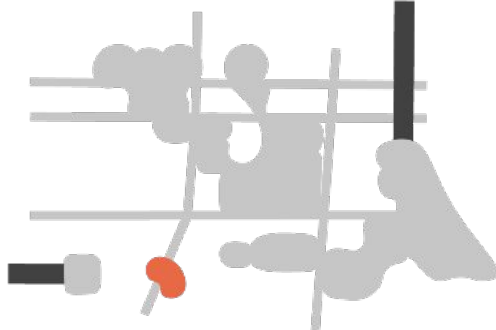


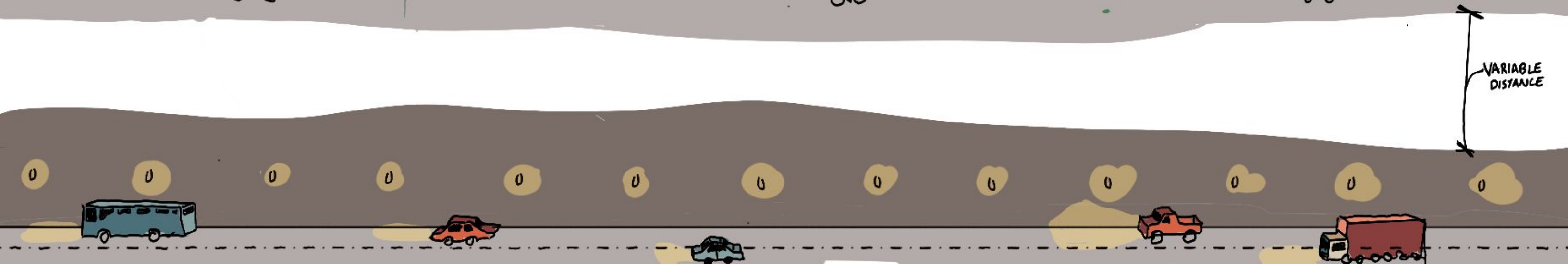
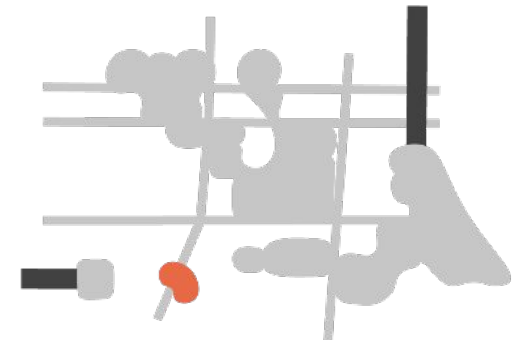
Large scale retail and residential
1 to 2 bedrooms 10 units, 3 to 4 bedrooms 20 units

BACKYARD BLOCK



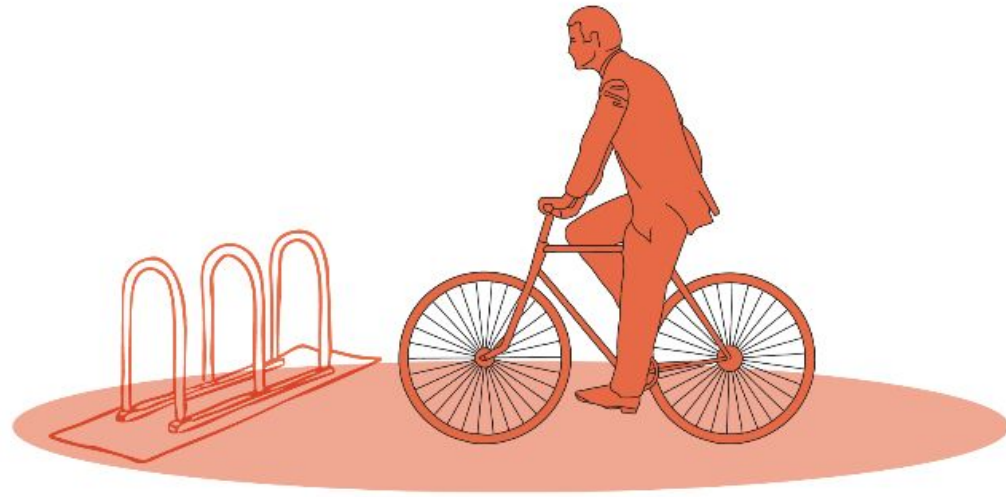
SOUTHERN GATEWAY





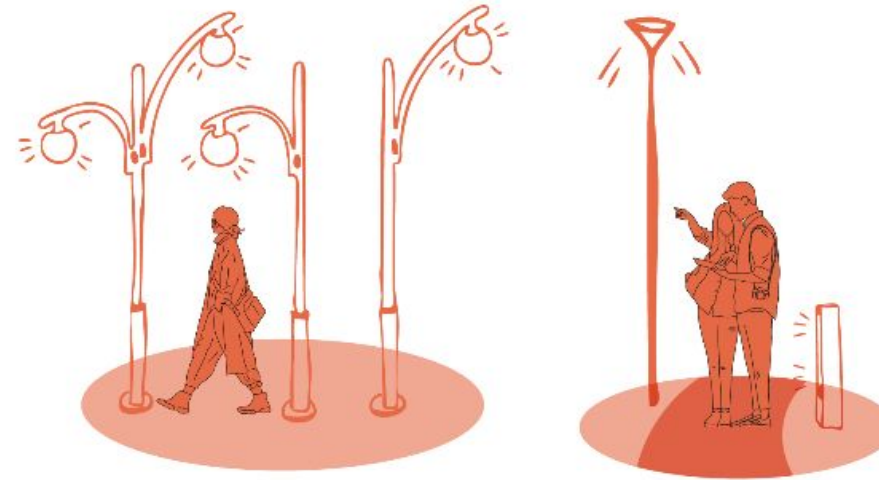
STREET FURNITURE

BIKE RACKS



- 📍 Sidewalks and plazas
- 📦 Painted metal

LIGHTING



- 📍 Sidewalks
- 📦 Metal, glass, & LED bulbs

- 📍 Pedestrian paths
- 📦 Metal, glass, & LED bulbs

PARKLET



- 📍 Street parking spaces
- 📦 Wood & plantings

SEATING



- 📍 Sidewalks & paths
- 📦 Painted metal



- 📍 Plazas & parks
- 📦 Painted metal, wooden seat & shade

DINING



- 📍 Plazas & parks
- 📦 Painted metal with wooden seats & green roof

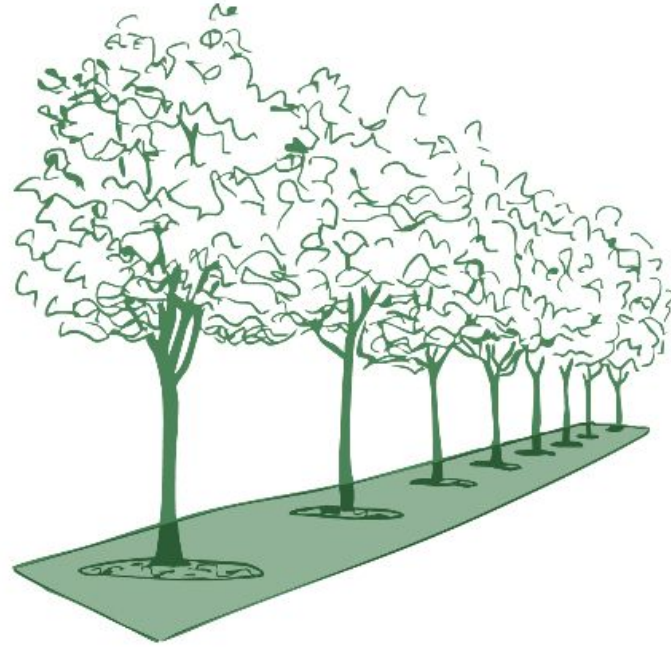
VENDING



- 📍 Plazas & parks
- 📦 Painted metal frame, wooden seats, & fabric shade

TREE INSTALLATION

CONTINUOUS TRENCH



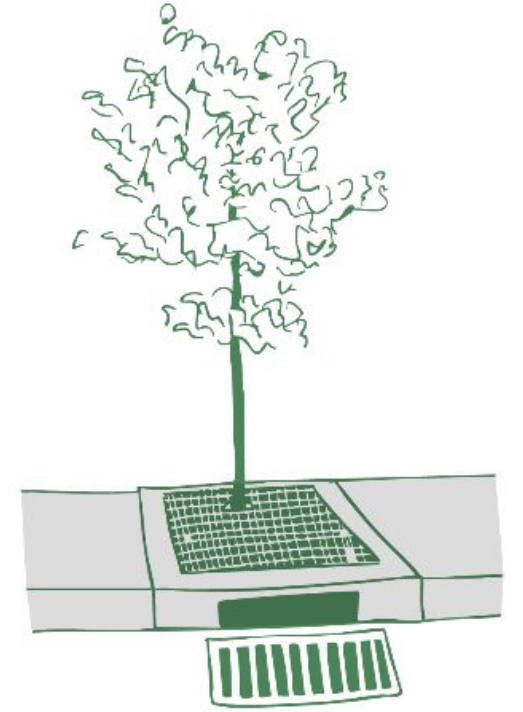
- Between streets and sidewalks & along paths

VEGETATED BEDS



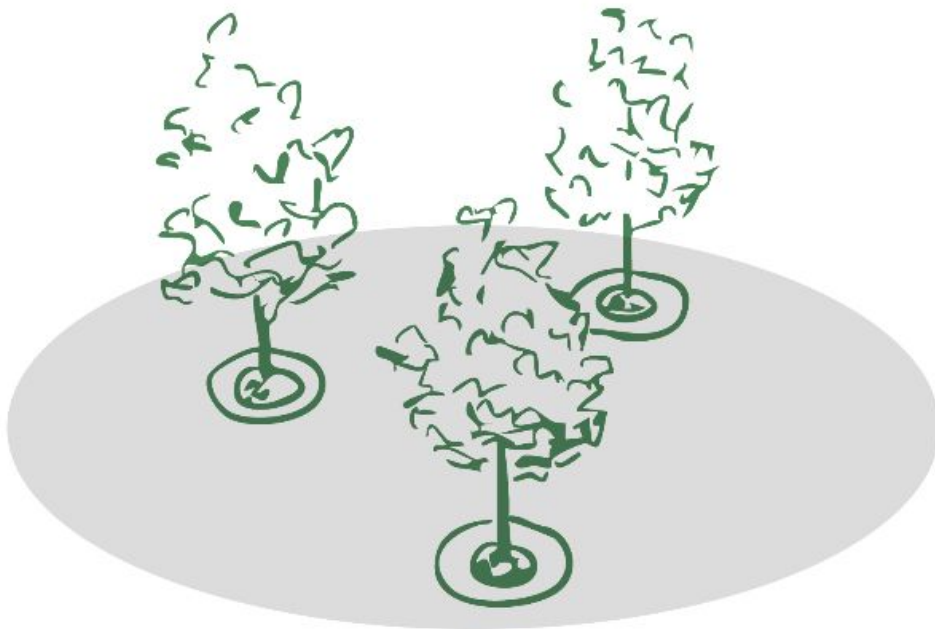
- Along sidewalks that cannot support a continuous trench

STORMWATER MITIGATION



- At strategic points along street edges

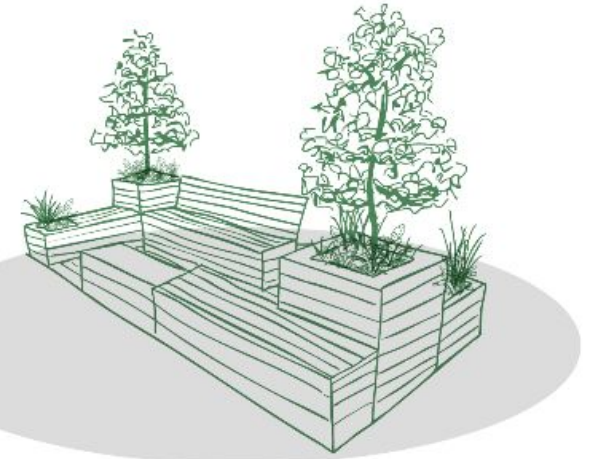
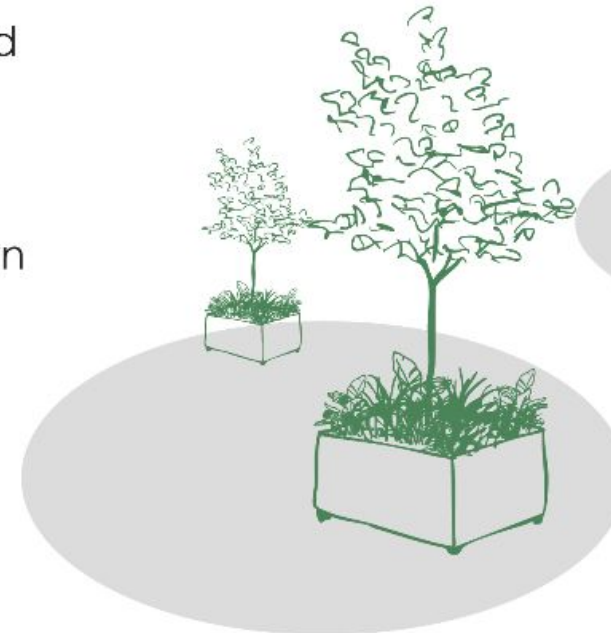
ROOT GUARDS



- Metal guard featuring historic Brooklyn map pattern

- In paved plazas or between building edges and sidewalk, where space permits

RAISED PLANTINGS

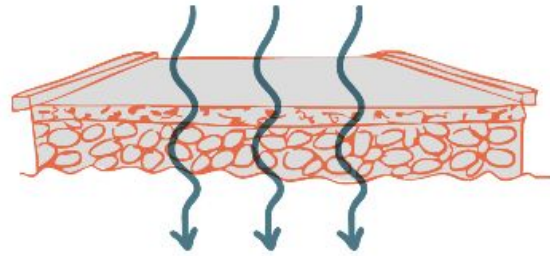
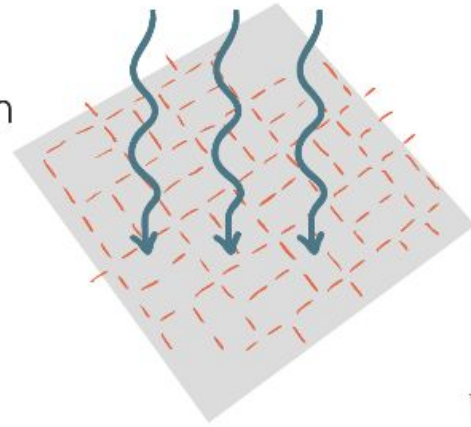


- Moveable installations in plazas or installed part of parklets
- Wood and metal planters

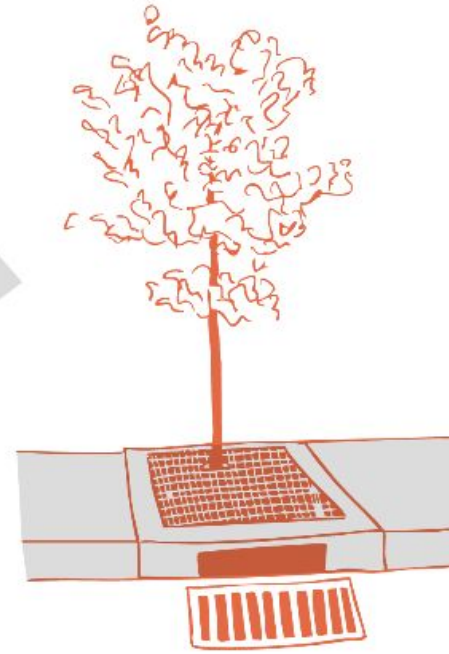
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- PERMEABLE PAVERS
- Low traffic pedestrian areas: sidewalks, plazas, & parks



- PERMEABLE PAVEMENT
- Low traffic areas: side streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, & parking lots

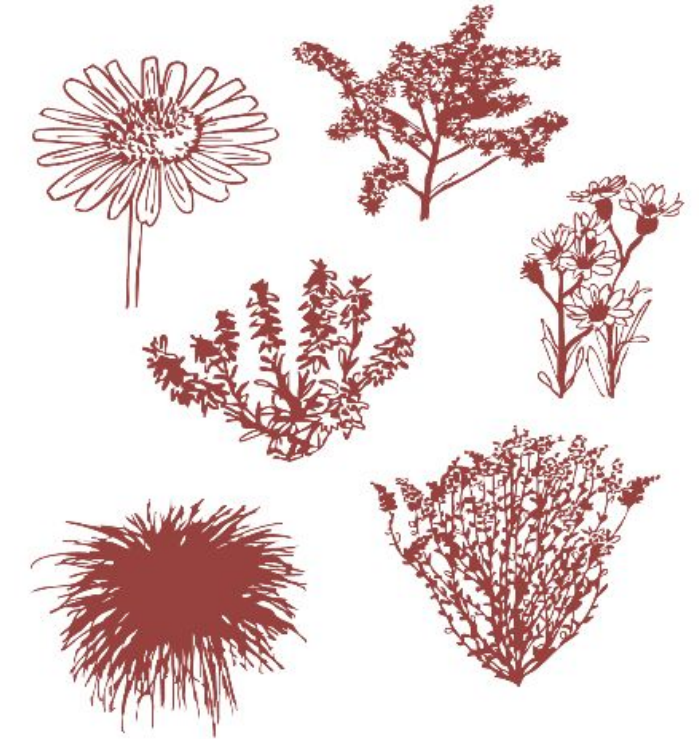


- TREE WELL FILTERS
- Sidewalks & road edges

- BIOSWALES
- Sidewalks, curb extensions, plazas, & parks



BIODIVERSITY

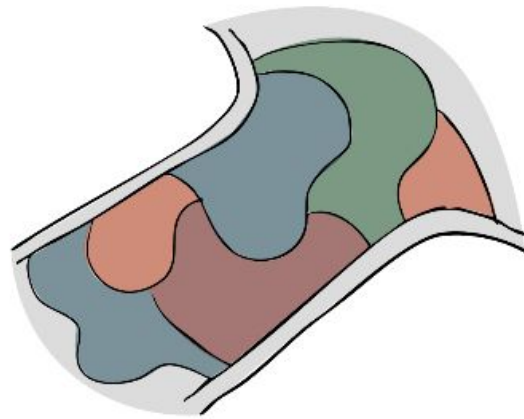


- NATIVE PLANTING
- All vegetated areas

HEAT REDUCTION



AIR QUALITY



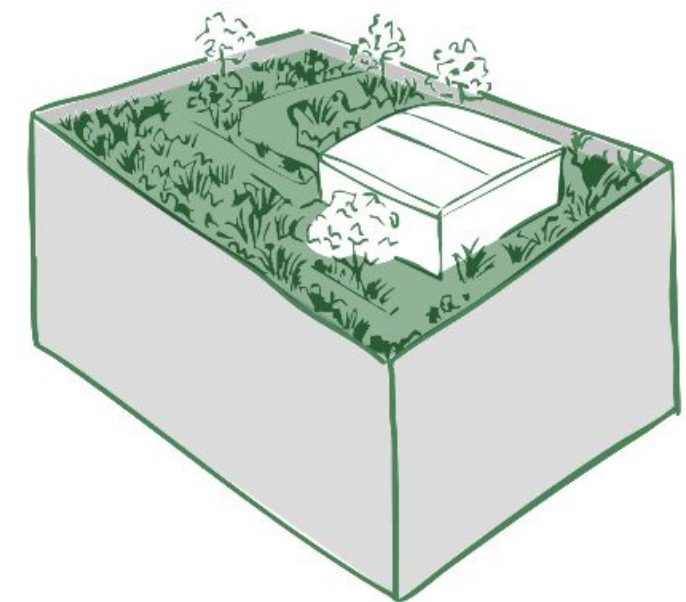
- COOLING PAVEMENT
- Roads, sidewalks, plazas, & parks



- SHADE: TREE PLANTING
- Sidewalks, plazas, & parks



- GREEN FACADES
- Buildings & parking structures

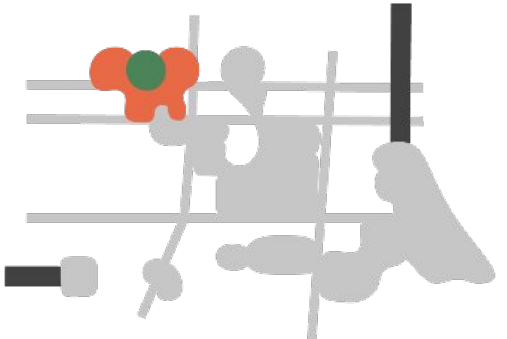


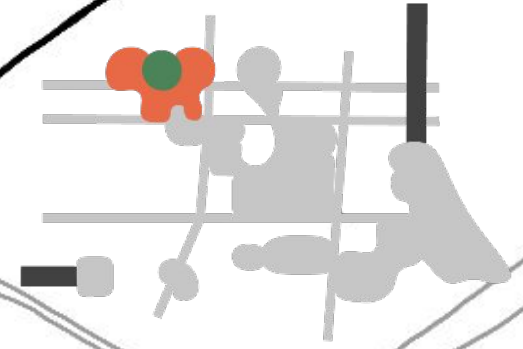
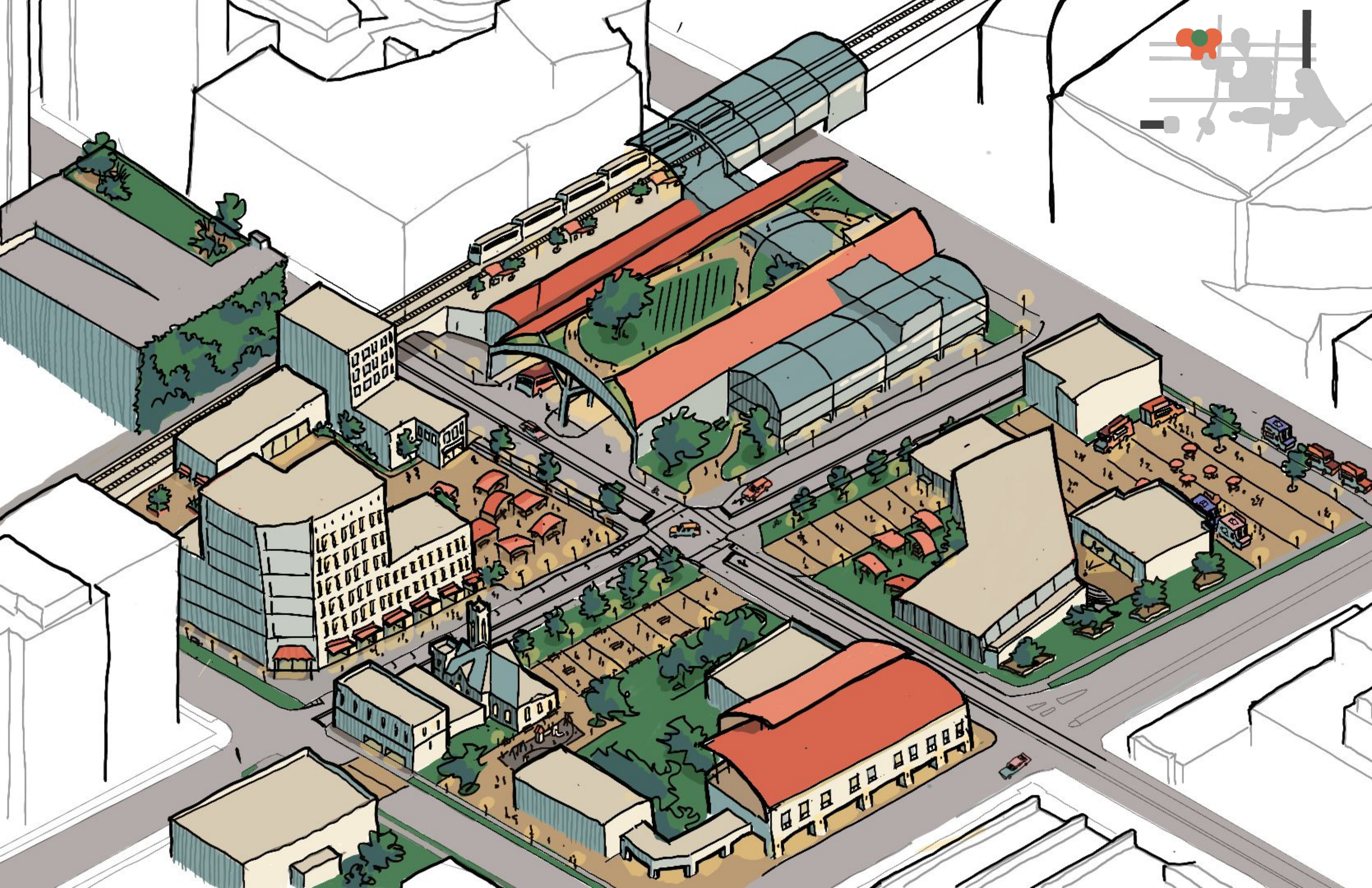
- GREEN ROOFS
- Buildings & parking structures

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS



NORTHERN GATEWAY





OLD COURTHOUSE PARK





Co-op Market & Greenhouse



Community Fridges



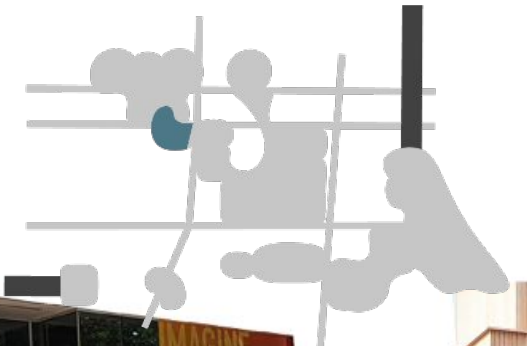
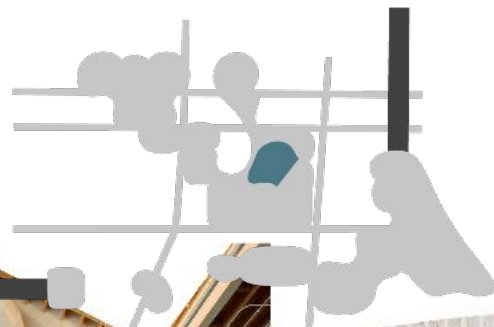
Playground & Splash Pads



Recreation Center & Clinic



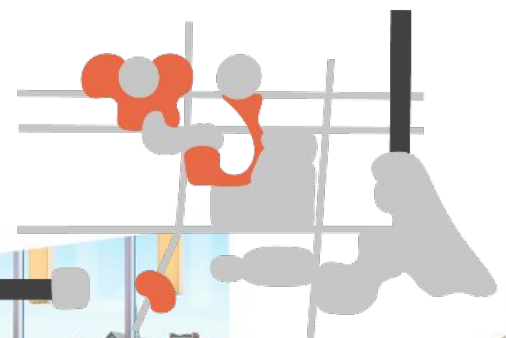
Community Center & Tech Hub



Library



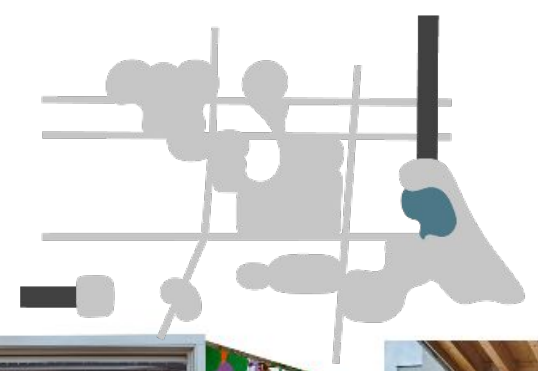
Levine Museum of the New South



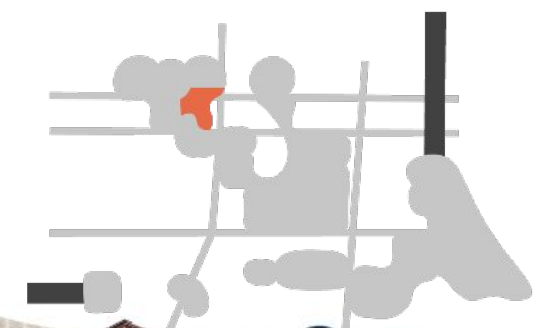
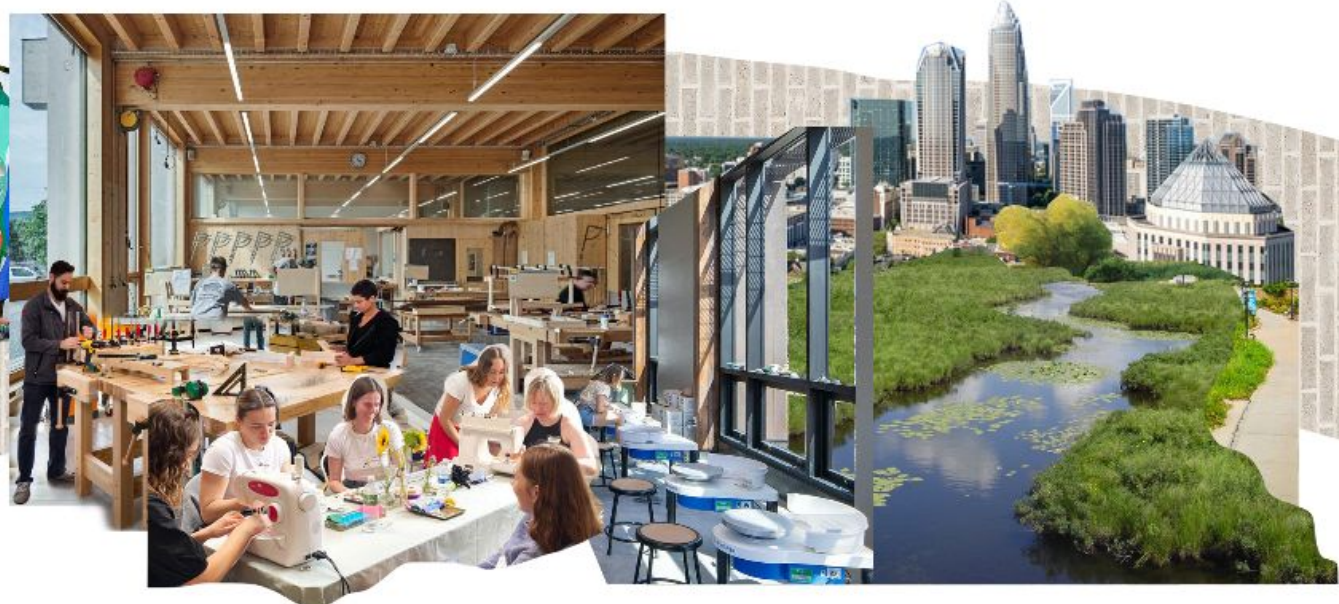
Community Business Support & Financial Coaching



The Nest: Local Business Hub

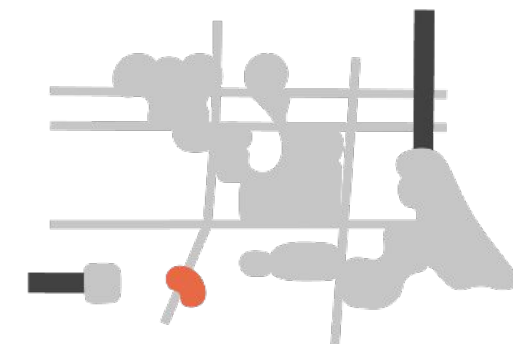


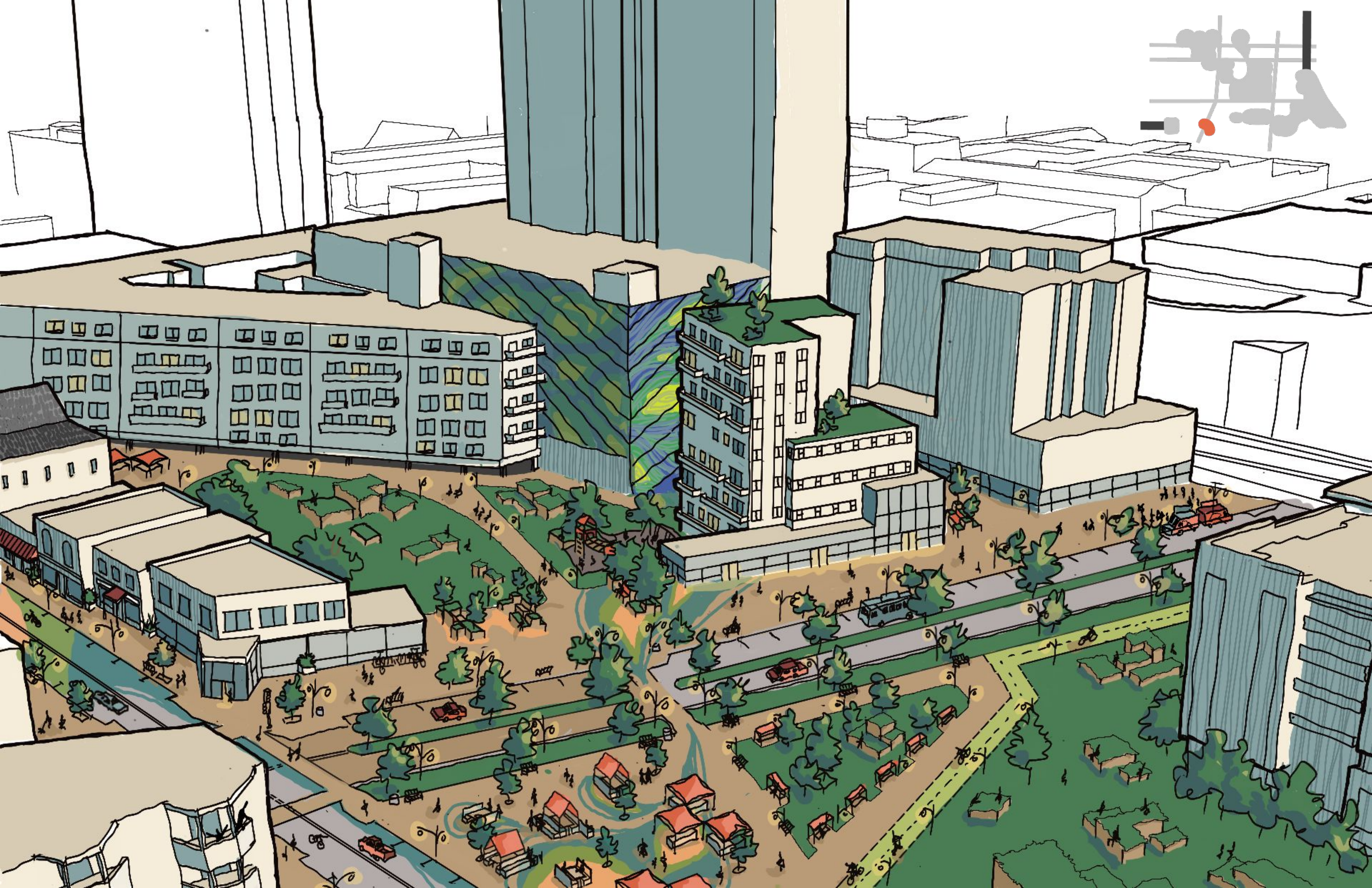
Little Sugar Creek Makerspace & Gallery



The Brooklyn Collective

SOUTHERN GATEWAY





Thank You

