

Reconsidering Poplar Yards



MACON, GA. Poplar Street. Looking South.



College of
Environment + Design
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Center for Community Design and Preservation
Macon, Georgia, August 2016

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The Macon Downtown Challenge was created to implement the Macon Action Plan Through a series of grants awarded to local businesses, nonprofits, individuals and government entities with the best ideas to transform downtown Macon



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF CENTRAL GEORGIA, INC.

Local Coordination: WT Design and Wimberly Treadwell, PLA

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Introduction:

The paradox of aging contemporary landscape design in historic settings

How to use this document:

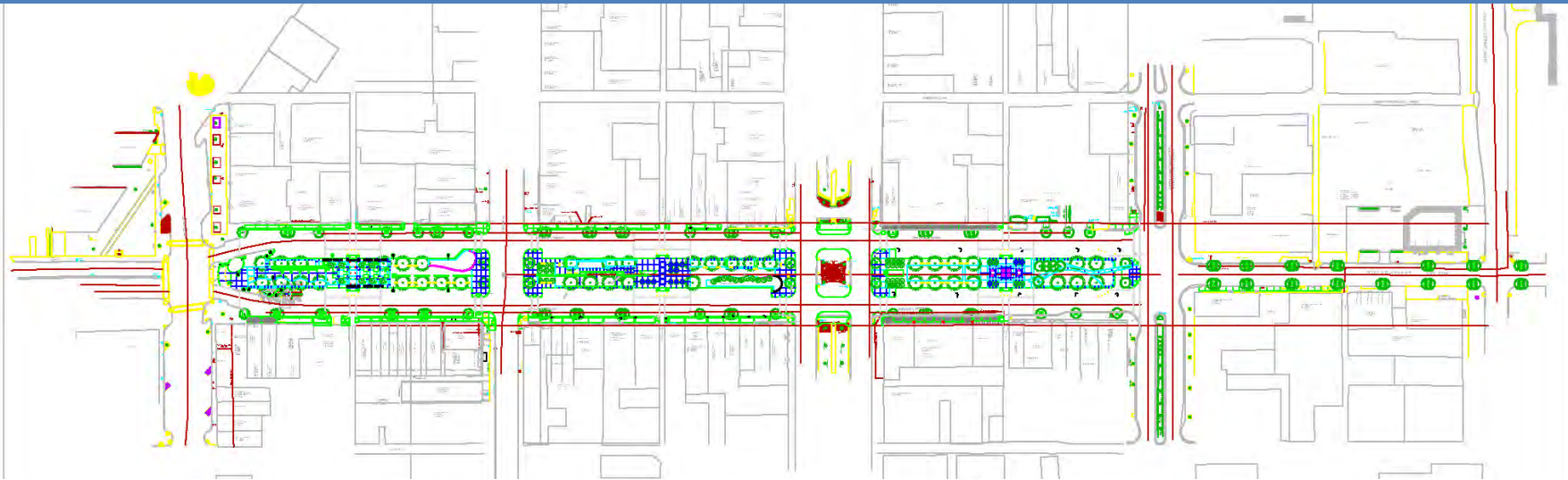
- * Catalyst for appropriate action
- * Catalogue of ideas for change
- * Documentation of the street's evolving character
- * Discussion starter
- * Outside Perspective on a VERY LOCAL situation

On one hand the cover photo illustrates a functional and prosperous urban street; its visual character is unintentional and organic outgrowth of convenience. It demonstrates little coherent “readability” as a designed space.

On the other hand the Poplar Yards winning concept submitted by Walter Hood for the redevelopment of this space exhibits very intentional design decisions and a strong desire to create a pleasing and beautiful homage to that heritage.

However it did not accommodate many desirable functions of the street as it has evolved today and due to ever-increasing maintenances costs has become a problem.

What is the next Step?



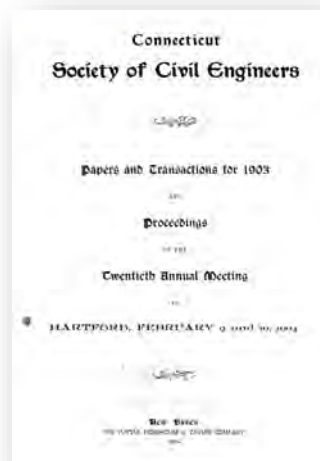
Assessment

This work is based on the premise that the landscape designed, implemented and matured as a result of Walter Hood's competition-winning Poplar Yards is not working well. The results intended by the original concept have not been realized through maintenance, social and revitalization anomalies. Chiefly, the climatic response of the material selection and surface treatments coupled with water feature maintenance costs make this public space ripe for improvements.

Changing demographics in downtown have caused user group conflicts, economic development priority shifts and a change in aesthetic tastes, preferences and desires. The original design solution is one that demands careful interpretation to understand the symbolism and purpose in Hood's selected landscape treatments. Those messages and inferences are now obscured by physical problems with the public space. Careful consideration has gone into the decision to soften and more seamlessly integrate the space into the existing and proposed Poplar Street context and downtown revitalization efforts.

This historic context demands sensitive intervention. In rethinking Poplar Street, this project used principles of sustainability (Economic, Ecologic, and Social) and principles of compatibility (material continuity, surface changes, height alignment, block width respect and interpretive value) as guide posts for recommending options for change. Hood's design concept did address many of these issues. However, it was not implemented or managed in such a way that the imbued meaning transferred very well from the turn of the 20th century to now.

Trees



Beautiful cities without trees are impossible. While the trees in their native forests receive no care from human hands, yet in the environments of a city they must either have human care or become sickly and, long before their time, die. Under such unnatural conditions they must either have care to succeed, and care requires labor, and labor costs money. Nothing can be placed along the side of a street, not even a hitching post, but requires care, and ever so much more is that care demanded for a living tree.

Report of the Special Committee Appointed by the Hartford Florist Club, February 1903

First and foremost in this assessment is a concern for the substrate and soil conditions. A fact of modern development is that most trees planted in U.S. cities in the last 70 years that are not planted in parks, botanic gardens, arboreta, or private gardens have died prematurely.¹

The current range of plant health and vigor on Poplar is disturbing. Poor soil structure, uneven substrate composition and unpredictable access to water and nutrients may be the root cause of some of the plant morbidity and sluggish growth. Soil structure refers to the shape, size, strength and arrangement of soil particles in to aggregates A soil's structure is what creates macropores (where water is held) and micropores (where air is held), both of which are essential for root growth. Urban soils are often heavily compacted. Soil with high bulk density usually does not have sufficient macropore or micropore space to allow for air and water circulation that is critical for root growth.

Tree species vary considerably in their minimum requirements for rooting volume, soil pH, drainage, etc. A professional site evaluation allows Macon to select the very best trees for a given location. Without a site evaluation, communities often choose a tree species that will handle the worst possible site conditions as a safeguard against tree failure. The result of this practice is the overuse of a few highly tolerant "bread and butter" species (like crape myrtles, Bradford pears and lacebark maples or elms.) These few species are not only monotonous, but can create catastrophic problems when a new pest arrives, or when problems, such as poor branching structure, are identified. It is good practice to always seek to diversify the tree species composition of a community.

¹ Skiera, B.; Moll, G. (1992). The Sad State of City Trees. Am. Forests. March/April, 61-64.

Growing space, pollutants and engineering requirements are all major factors that affect the growing conditions for urban trees. Other than species selection for the appropriate conditions and one that is climate-appropriate, soil availability is one of the biggest reasons for tree success or failure. One thing that isn't well-understood, especially on a policy level, is just how much soil it takes to actually grow a big tree in the built environment. Urban arborists can help you assess the available growing conditions and select appropriate trees.

Plants cannot absorb nutrients without adequate hydration, so sites that have poor drainage — a common problem with heavily compacted soils and areas where there is a lot of paving — can limit nutrient uptake and create difficult growing conditions.²

However, some of the plants on Poplar Street are thriving (such as Yucca and many of *Illex* varieties) which may be the result of micro-conditions and/or the plant's inherent hardiness and its suitability to harsh conditions. An urban forestry professional³ can help with the determinations of soil suitability before more investment is made in streetscape improvements along Poplar.

"Much more significant is the impact of the pavement on fine tree roots and mycorrhizae associated with the tree. If the pavement above the tree rooting zone compacts the soil to root limiting bulk densities or greater, root growth will be very limited under the pavement. One would therefore expect very limited renewal of soil organic matter under pavement if the soil under the pavement is overly compacted."⁴

A dead or declining tree is not the only outcome of a poorly designed or constructed planting area. The effects of a lack of mature, healthy trees ripple throughout an entire community, impacting local watersheds, water and air quality, property values, street life, vehicle and pedestrian safety, even mortality and public health. An investment in healthy trees supports every element of a highly-functioning, vibrant

² <http://www.deeproot.com/blog/blog-entries/whats-the-difference-between-urban-soil-and-forest-soil>

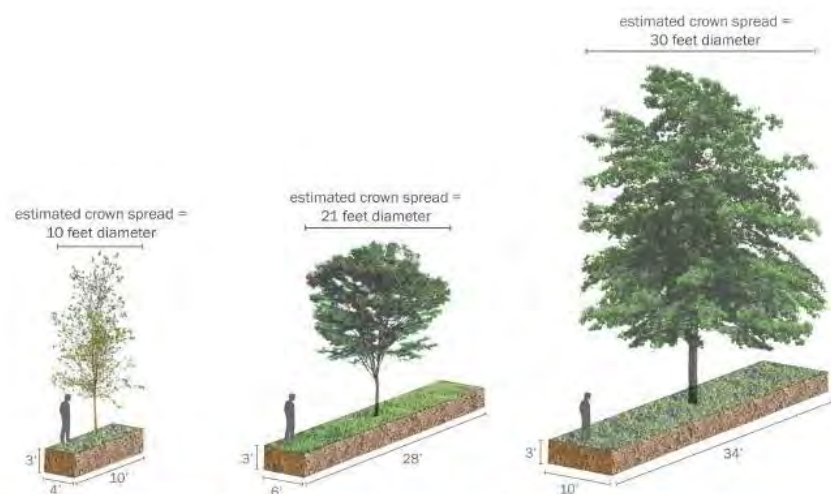
³ <http://www.gufc.org/programs/community-forestry-assistance>. Community Forestry Assistance Program with Georgia Forestry Commission

The Georgia Urban Forest Council is working in partnership with the Georgia Forestry Commission's Community Foresters to connect communities with a qualified urban forestry consultant that will help effectively manage urban forestry projects and provide additional thorough, hands-on assistance from start to finish. *Priority projects include:*

- Certifying as a new Tree City USA, Tree Campus USA or Tree Line USA.
- Conducting tree inventories and writing urban forest management plans for communities or urban greenspaces.
- Developing or revising tree ordinances.
- Understanding tree risk and developing local and regional community forest storm mitigation plans.
- Receiving tree care training for municipal tree workers and tree boards on pruning, tree selection, tree planting, trees and construction and becoming a certified arborist.
- Green stormwater infrastructure planning, tree canopy studies and iTree analyses.

⁴ *GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY*: <http://www.deeproot.com/blog/blog-entries/effects-of-pavement-on-tree-soil-organic-matter>

city, and no street design guidelines will be truly complete without addressing the provision of soil—and creating adequate planting conditions—for them.⁵

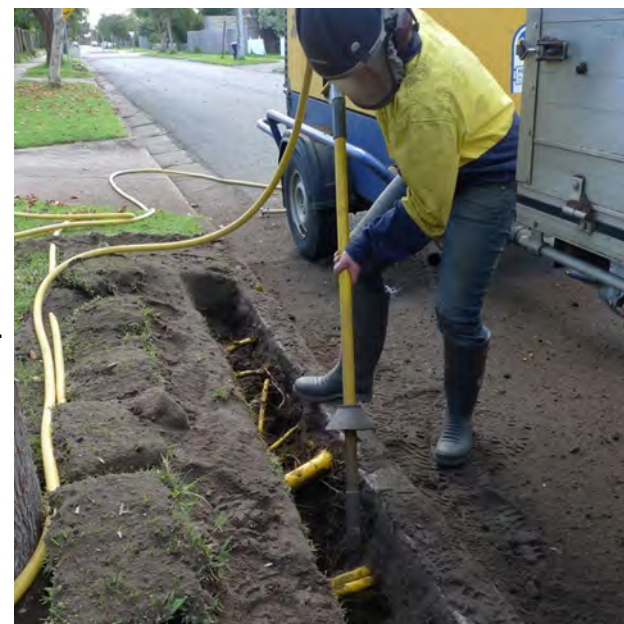


<http://streets.mn/2014/04/03/soil-and-water-in-the-life-of-a-street-tree/>

For existing trees, there are techniques that protect the established root mass and create pathways for new roots to grow in healthy directions. Due to the need to fix failing sidewalks and repair gas or water lines, street trees experience ongoing soil disturbance well after establishment. Air Spades are an interesting tool that uses compressed air to blast the soil away from root structures without doing significant harm. They minimize damage during construction and can be used to allow for retrofit soil amendments. Another application is using them to dig trenches under sidewalks or other obstructions to allow tree roots to colonize untapped soil areas outside the right of way.⁶

Existing plant and soil analysis is addressed in some of the suggestions made in this report. Key to working with the plants and systems that are currently thriving, or at least surviving without difficulty, is retention and minimal ground disturbance of the plants and their root

Urban trees are now understood to be a central part of green infrastructure systems and provide a range of benefits. They reduce the urban heat island effect, manage storm water, and provide shade that lengthens the life of materials. In the summer, shadier streets also mean lower neighborhood temperatures, which can reduce air pollution that increases asthma rates. All of these benefits are laudable, but they won't happen if we keep planting like we have in the past. It will be a mirage. Larger, older trees are far more valuable than younger ones, so work needs to be done to preserve these and use plant-friendly techniques to enable younger trees to stay in place longer.



⁵ <https://ladybugarborists.com/2013/12/jim-urban-speaks-out-on-urban-street-trees/>

⁶ <http://streets.mn/2014/04/03/soil-and-water-in-the-life-of-a-street-tree/>

structures. **The final design solution for Poplar Street will most likely involve reusing design elements that are in place and retaining trees with significant canopy and active growth indicators.**

New plant materials and hardscape should complement the retained elements and attempt to avoid the mistakes encountered with pervious paving surfaces and material choices. Ultimately reducing the heat island effect and not exacerbating plant demands during drought conditions should be the goal.

Additional assessment will begin with Dr. Brian Orland's "Applied Landscape Ecology" class this fall. They will conduct an initial assessment of bio-systems and social systems at work along Poplar Street and in other parts of Macon. The class' work is a perfect launch for a more intense environmental assessment that should happen before any plans are finalized or infrastructure changes are made.

People

A significant dilemma exists with the uncomfortable collision of two distinct user groups of the street. There are the incoming residential urban dwellers, visitors and downtown workers who demand a level of perceived safety and comfort. This class and group of users is seen as the invading enemy by the current users of the street – people on public assistance, community-based monitoring Day Center users, and the chronically unemployed by day and at night many groups use the space for open air parties that spill onto the street from bars and cars. African Americans have used the street for many years as a place to meet and share resources. The space as currently configured cannot sustain the desired improvements, services and conditions that each group has expressed. The question becomes, "for whom do we design the space?" The answer to that query is difficult and will require community leaders to make a significant policy shift. The space has at least three options before it:

1. To design and accommodate the future population expected to be downtown.
2. To accommodate the current users of the street and welcome the building uses that serve disadvantaged populations.
3. To have an adaptive management or hybrid approach where users of all sorts are accommodated, special safeguards and targeted programming is developed for a diverse group of users.

Clearly the third option is the most difficult, however it may allow for the gradual evolution of the space to a more preferred use that reflects the population as it shifts and changes. This approach may be the most cost effective as well since it can provide modification in phases through staged changes based on specific and evolving demands from the users.

Urban public spaces offer opportunities for interactions with unfamiliar people and unexpected experiences. For many, they seem to teem with danger, deviance, and vice. Responses to these concerns result in better definitions of appropriate behavior and acceptable people, a more realistic identification of those who fit in and those who do not, and clean justification of sanctioned controls. People feel fear or cause anxiety as they go about their daily business. A homeless person on the sidewalk may cause discomfort. Older teenagers meeting in groups appear confrontational to some. People of color walking in a white neighborhood may invoke fear. Unaccompanied children are seen to be at risk, and women are warned of possible gender-based crimes.⁷



Is perception reality? Can these competing user values occur simultaneously? Should they? These questions lie at the heart of solving the dilemma and being proactive in creating programming for the space to allow for “spatial justice” and inclusiveness without the deleterious effects of negative urban activities. A “sweet spot” must be found for creating a flexible diverse space with well-managed and agreed upon goals and rules. All solutions should be based on resident and visitor needs being balanced with local government capabilities.

Openness in communities has always been limited, and the struggle over public spaces is about constraints and acceptable activities and users. This negotiation over appropriate uses reconfigures local attitudes about activities (in what context does standing become loitering?), spaces (where does standing become loitering?), and the guidelines for what is permissible. Defining who can participate and how they can do so is fundamental. Municipalities enact ordinances and regulations to define acceptable uses of sidewalks, and cities and corporate actors employ design and policy strategies to achieve a particular effect.⁸

⁷ Loukaitou-Sideris, A., & Ehrenfeucht, R. (2009). [IV Introduction]. In *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space* (pp. 123-126). MIT Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hhh27.12>

⁸ Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Renia Ehrenfeucht, *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space*, MIT Press, 2009.

Seven attributes of sustainable communities that are particularly relevant to crime prevention:

Access and movement: places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security

Structure: places that are structured so that different uses do not cause conflict

Surveillance: places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked

Ownership: places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and Community

Physical protection: places that include necessary, well-designed security features

Activity: places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times

Management and maintenance: places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future

In Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity (University of Texas Press 2005) the authors note that: “in this new century, we are facing a different kind of threat to public space — not one of disuse, but of patterns of design and management that exclude some people and reduce social and cultural diversity. In some cases this exclusion is the result of a deliberate program to reduce the number of undesirables, and in others, it is a byproduct of privatization, commercialization, historic preservation, and specific strategies of design and planning. Nonetheless, these practices can reduce the vitality and vibrancy of the space or re-organize it in such a way that only one kind of person — often a tourist or middle-class visitor — feels welcomed”.

Former Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, Enrique Peñalosa, in his keynote address at the Urban Parks Institute’s “Great Parks/Great Cities” Conference, July 30, 2001, noted that “parks and public space are also important to a democratic society because they are the only places where people meet as equals.” Furthermore a groundbreaking study of social interactions in public spaces demonstrated that “*contact theory posits that...interracial interactions that occur in leisure settings [e.g. parks and public spaces] have the potential to be more genuine and sincere compared with the more obligatory interactions that take place in formal settings.*”⁹

So where does this leave Macon and Poplar Street? All future work to help solve the problems on Poplar cannot exclude advocates for the well-being of current users. Most prominently among issues to address is the appropriateness of the Department of Corrections community monitoring “day center” on 2nd Street. Reconsidering its location has many implications but it, along with the future of the nightclub life and after hour/open air drinking, is one that is a sensitive fulcrum on which the future management of Poplar Street rests. Macon civic leaders would benefit from an open and frank discussion of how Poplar Street should grow and change in terms of the current and future users. This discussion and a resolution should occur before future design decisions are made. It is our hope this report begins that process.

⁹ Shinew, K. J., Glover, T. D., & Parry, D. C. (2004). Leisure spaces as potential sites for interracial interaction: Community gardens in a segregated urban area. *Journal of Leisure Research*, Vol. 36 No.3. pp. 336-355

Visions for Change

Methodology

A process of condensed design thinking, rapid prototyping, choosing alternatives, graphic output, garnering public feedback and refining ideas¹⁰ produced a series of divergent observations and surprising consensus. The ideas presented here are the results of that process.

The Friday event in Macon structured discussion around four themes or “lens” through which to view changes along Poplar. Teams made up of UGA students and Macon stakeholders produced concepts to generate public response in an open house and reception format at the end of the day. The public voiced its opinion through one-on-one discussion and a simple voting method of green and red “sticky dots” to indicate positive (green) and negative (red) reactions to ideas. On the following pages you will see the results of that process. Interpretation on the viewer’s part is needed to gather the best ideas and note trends in the way that the public reacted.

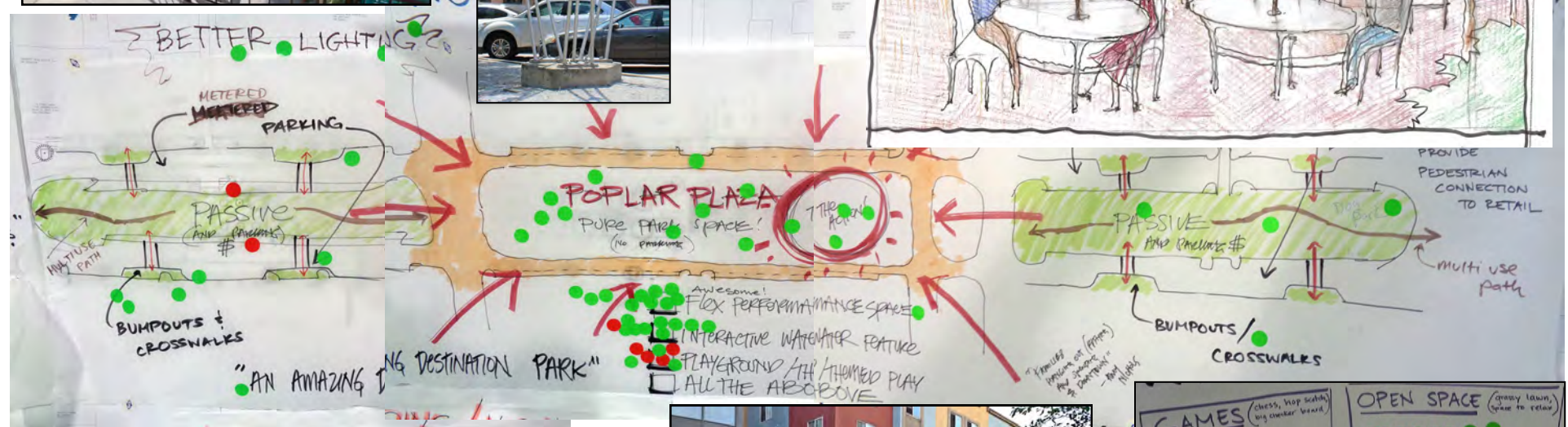
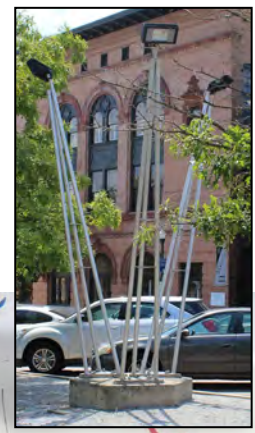


Top: The students are brainstorming as part of the design process.

Bottom: Community members give feedback to the student groups.

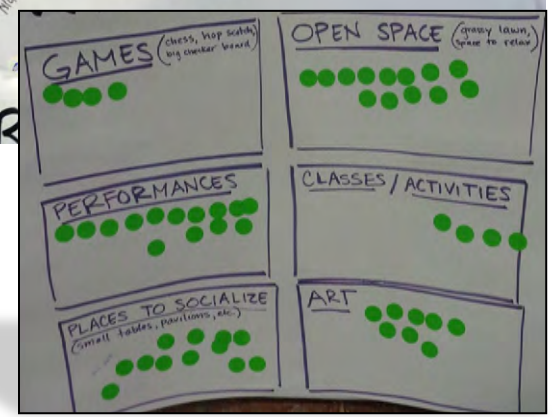
¹⁰ <http://dschool.stanford.edu/dgift/>

Economic

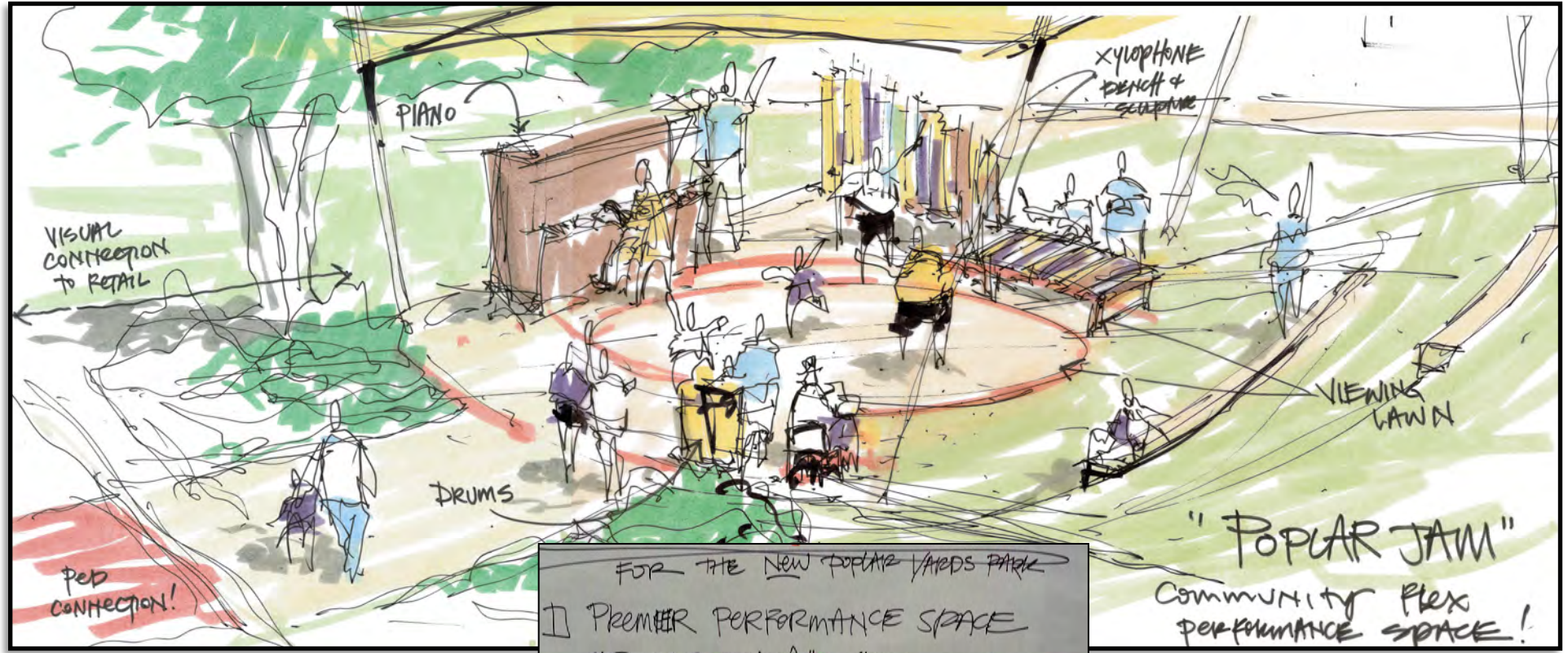


Big Ideas

- # Flexible Performance Space
- # Interactive water features
- # "Bump Outs" on sidewalks to accommodate sidewalk improvements
- # Improved Lighting to accentuate the buildings and features
- # Focus the "action" to the center of the street

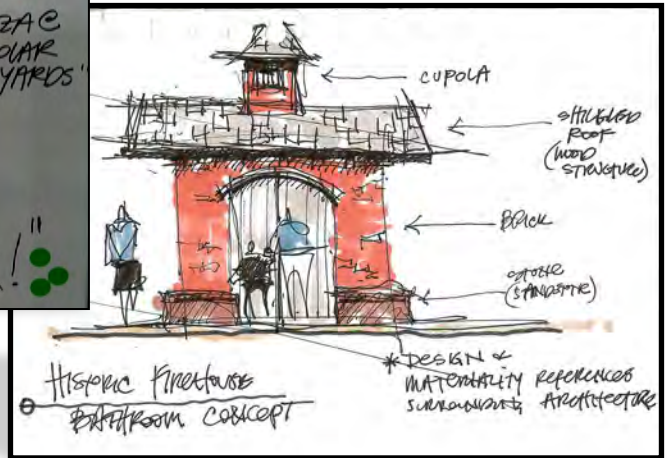


Economic



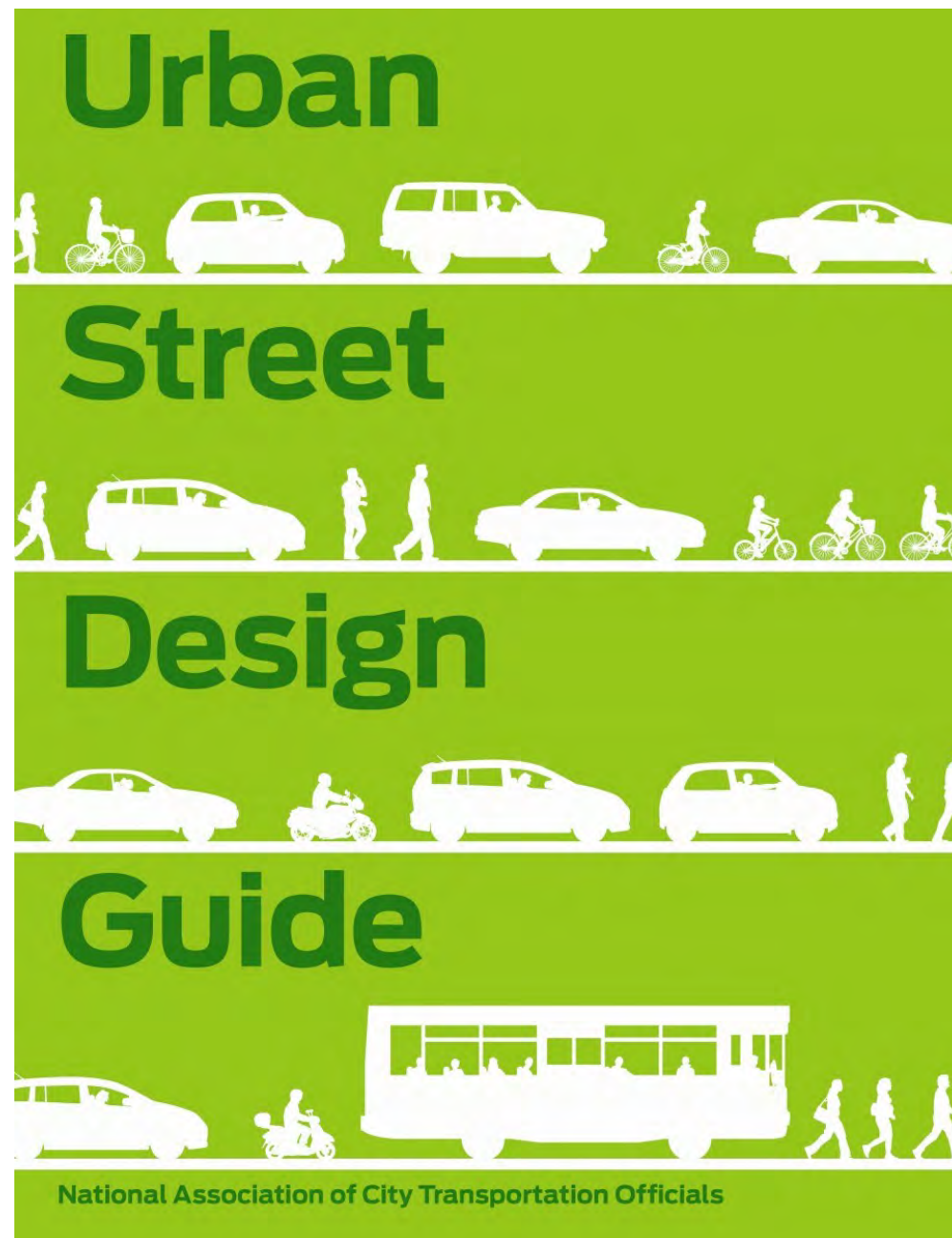
FOR THE NEW POPULAR YARDS PARK

- I PREMIER PERFORMANCE SPACE
 - "POPULAR PLAZA" • "POPULAR YARDS PREMIER"
 - "POPULAR PREMIER" • "PLAZA POPULAR YARDS"
 - "CICADA SUMMER BUZZ" FESTIVAL
 - "CICADA FEST!!! THE BUZZ IS REAL!!!"
 - "U MAKE POPULAR POPULAR!!!"

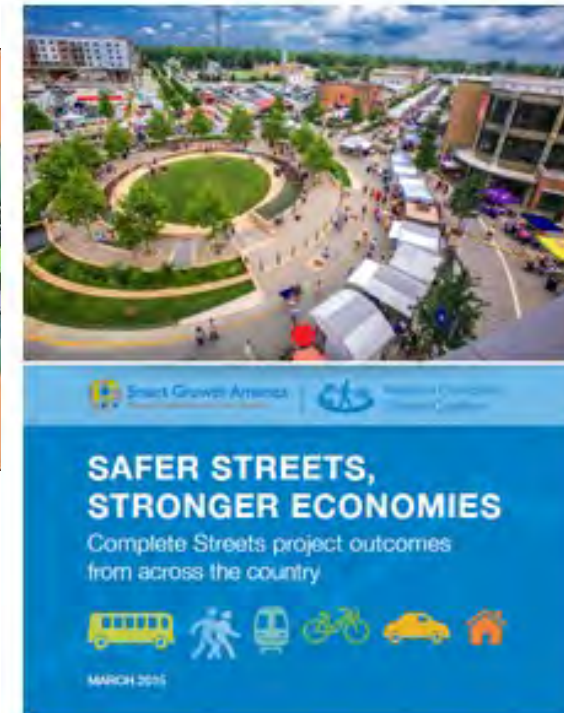


Economic

- ⊕ Better visual and walking connections to retail stores to make it easier for shoppers to find stores, window shop and enjoy median as a continuation of the retail experience on the block
- ⊕ Dog parks got brought up a lot in conversation. People are wanting an easy space for new residents to be able to take pets out for a quick and easy walk after work. However pet needs (water, fencing, disposal systems, and surface treatments) might not be most appropriate use for such a visually important downtown feature like Poplar Yards. How many pets are downtown and how much would it be used to justify the investment?
- ⊕ Participants were all in agreement that being able to restrict vehicular access for special events was a good thing.
- ⊕ BRANDING would help this effort a great deal: this may help in getting more businesses in empty storefronts - and more people interested in the street - before major changes are made to the median.
- ⊕ The central feature (whether its performance space, fountain, sculptural elements or a plaza...) needs to be something that can generate income and can be used by retailers for pop-up events.



Economic



<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/safer-streets-stronger-economies.pdf>

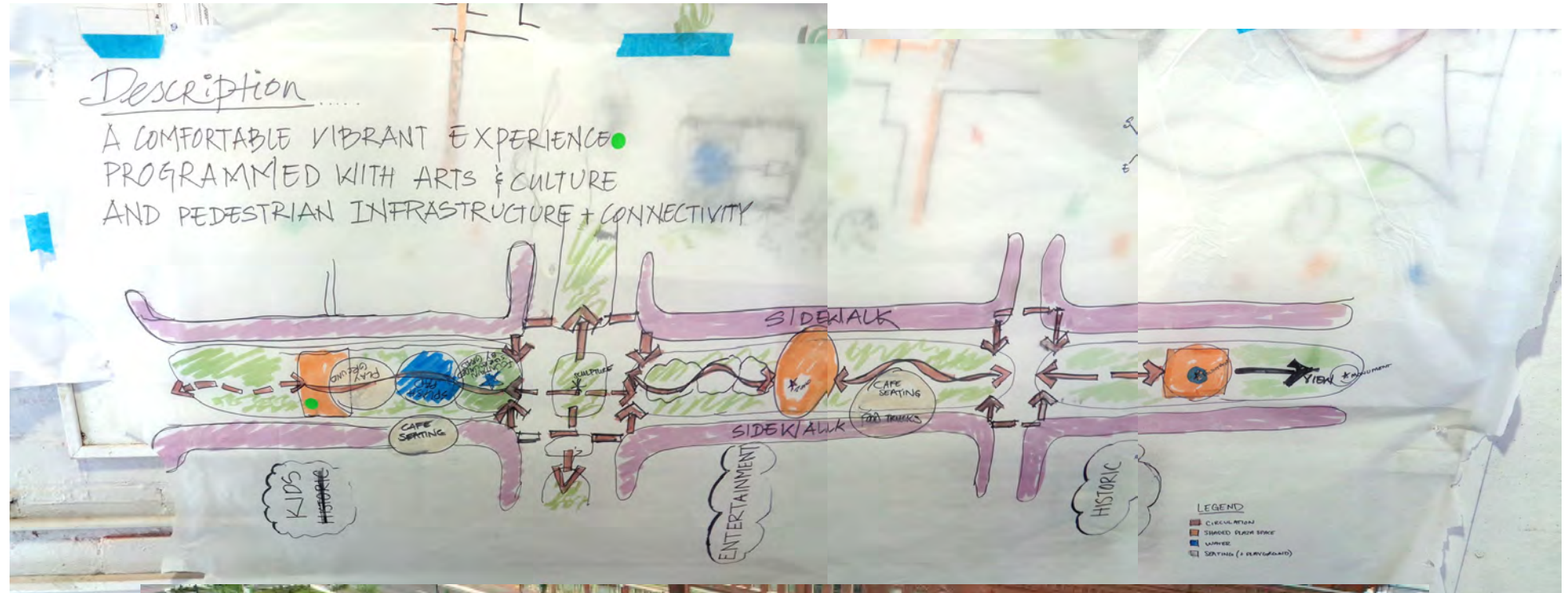
Safer Streets, Strong Economies

- **Streets were usually safer:** Automobile collisions declined in 70 percent of projects, and injuries declines in 56 percent of project.
- **This safety has financial value:** Looking only within the sample, Complete Streets improvements collectively averted 18.1 million in total collision costs in just one year
- **The projects encouraged multimodal travel:** Complete Streets projects nearly always resulted in more biking, walking, and transit strips.
- **Complete Streets projects are cheap:** The average cost of a Complete Streets project was just 2.1 million—far less than the 9 million average cost of projects in state transportation improvement plans.
- **They can be an important part of economic development:** The findings suggest that Complete Streets projects were supportive of increased employment, net new businesses, higher property values, and new private investment.



Chicago Public Awareness for Tree Canopy

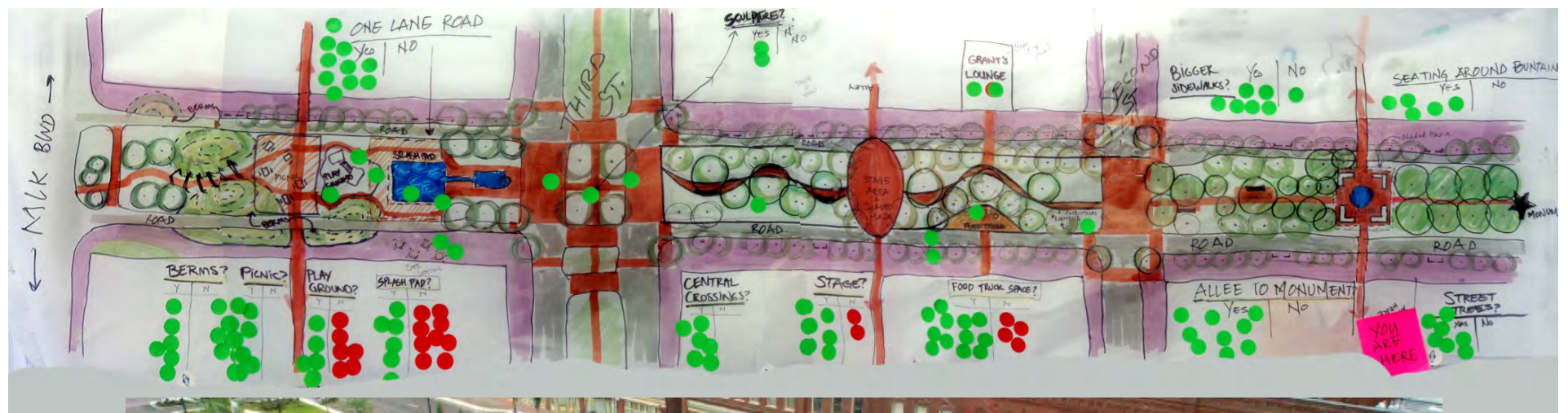
Environment



Environment

POPLAR OVERARCHING CONCEPTS:

- # **Districts:** give Poplar street three distinct attitudes for each segment
- # **Peripheral Movement:** maximize and retain direct access to sidewalks and storefronts; discourage isolated linear spaces within the yards
- # **Utilitarian:** avoid making Poplar street an urban park in a recreational sense, the appropriate concept should be a 'greenway'

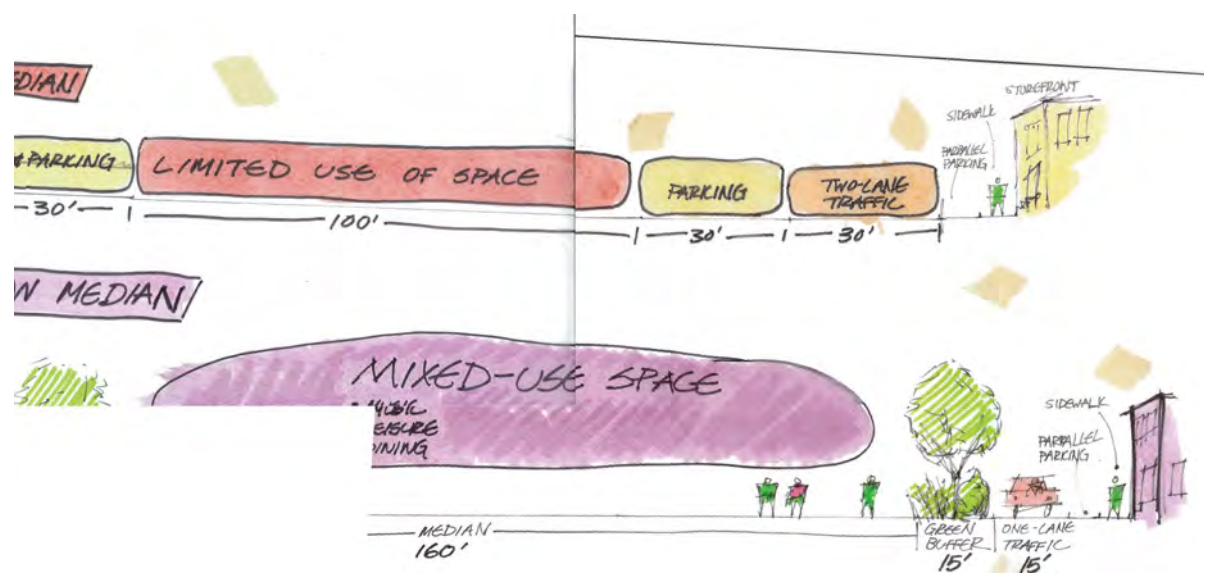


Environment

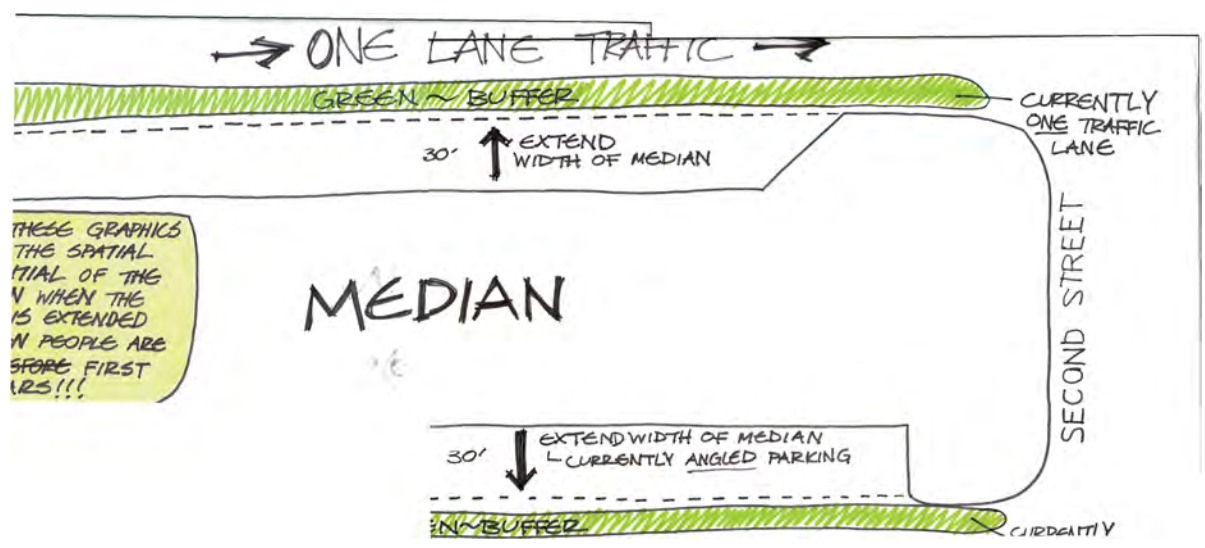
Reuse parts of the Hood landscape design to lessen environmental impact of changes



Environment



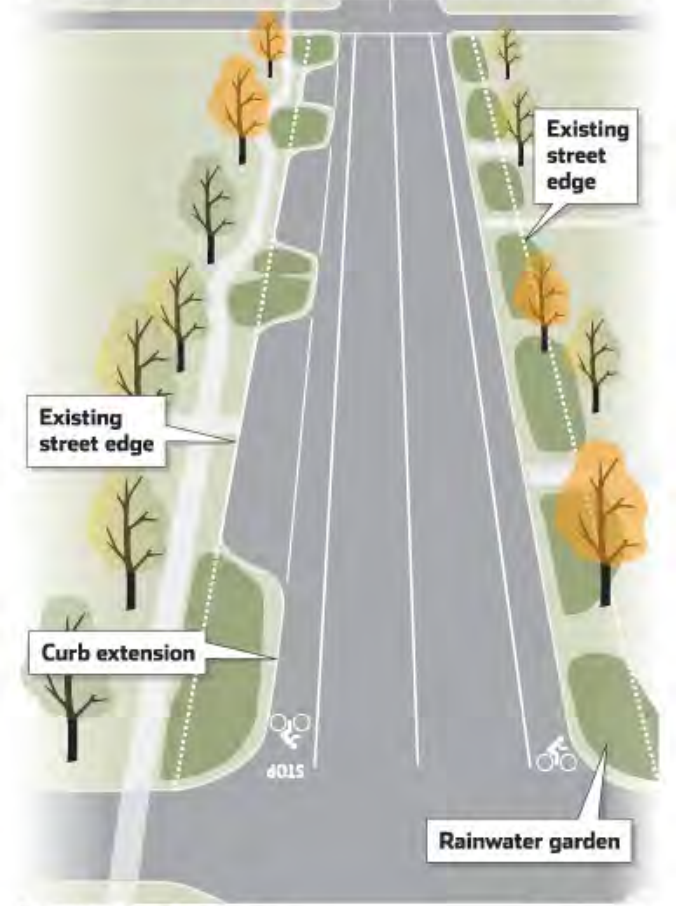
Street Narrowing (Cross-section)



Street Narrowing (plan view)

Narrower, but better

A growing number of cities, and the state, are adopting policies changing the way streets are designed. Often the Complete Streets policies mean narrower lanes to slow traffic, plus walking and biking lanes, landscaping and more limited on-street parking.



Source: Complete Streets Coalition

PIONEER PRESS

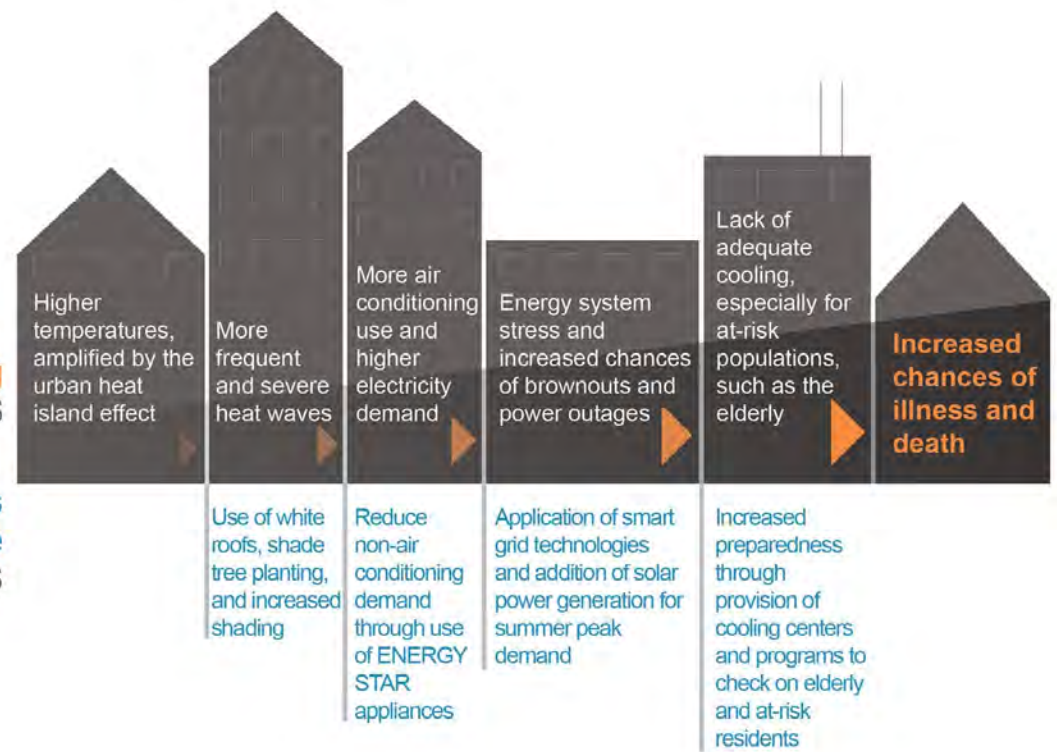
Environment



Escalating EFFECTS

Preparedness & Response OPTIONS

Urban Heat and Public Health



The Benefits of Street Trees

Aesthetic:

- community character
- increased property values

Economic:

- reduced energy costs
- increased property values
- increased business income
- protection of street pavement

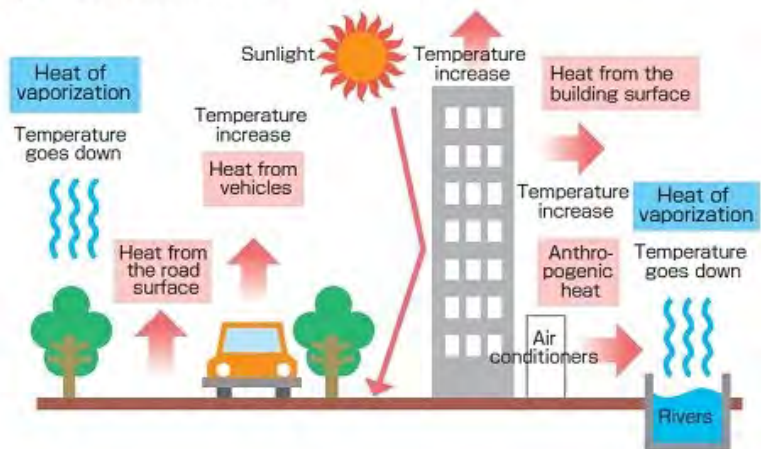
Environmental:

- reduced flooding, stormwater runoff and erosion problems
- improved air quality
- habitat and food for birds and animals
- reduction of carbon

Societal/Health:

- improved mental and physical health
- noise reduction
- safer communities
- traffic calming (reduction in traffic speed)

● How the Heat Island Phenomenon occurs



Environment

TREES

- American Holly
- Red Maple
- Willow Oak
- American Hornbeam
- Eastern Red Cedar
- Hophornbeam
- Shumard Oak
- Yaupon Holly
- Laurel Oak
- Pin Oak
- Overcup Oak



SHRUBS

- Winterberry
- Spirea
- American Beautyberry
- Glossy Abelia
- Wax Myrtle
- Dwarf Yaupon Holly



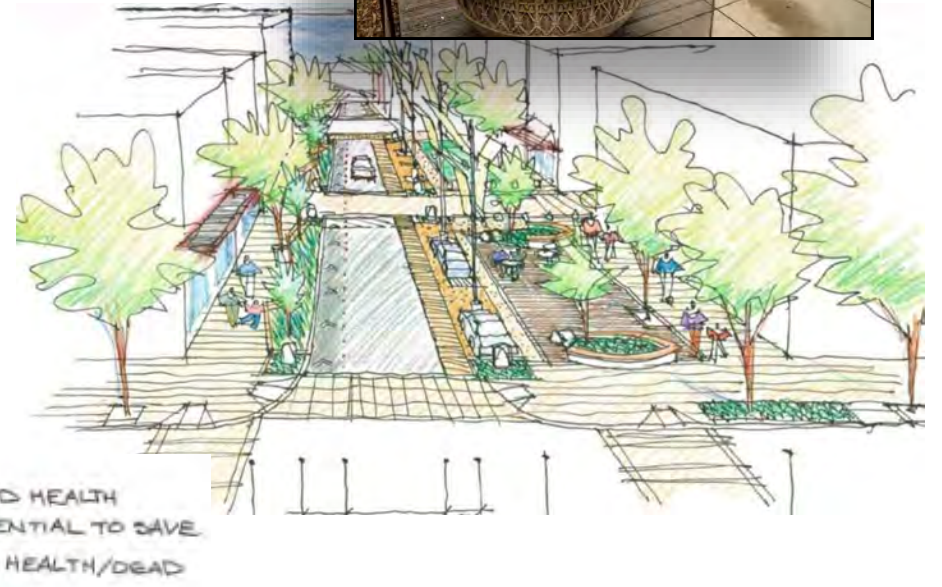
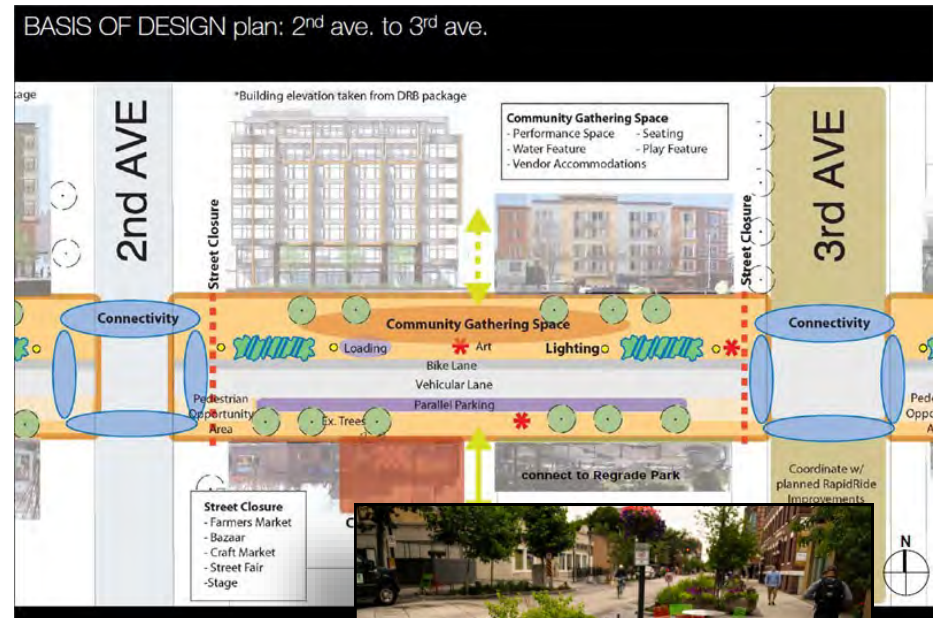
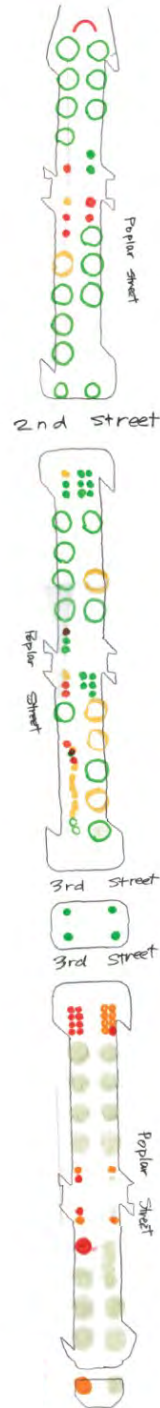
HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS/GRASSES

- Daylily
- Orange Coneflower
- Little Bluestem
- Purple Coneflower
- Blue Mistflower
- Star and Downy Tickseed
- Woodland Sunflower
- Lantana
- Mexican Daisy



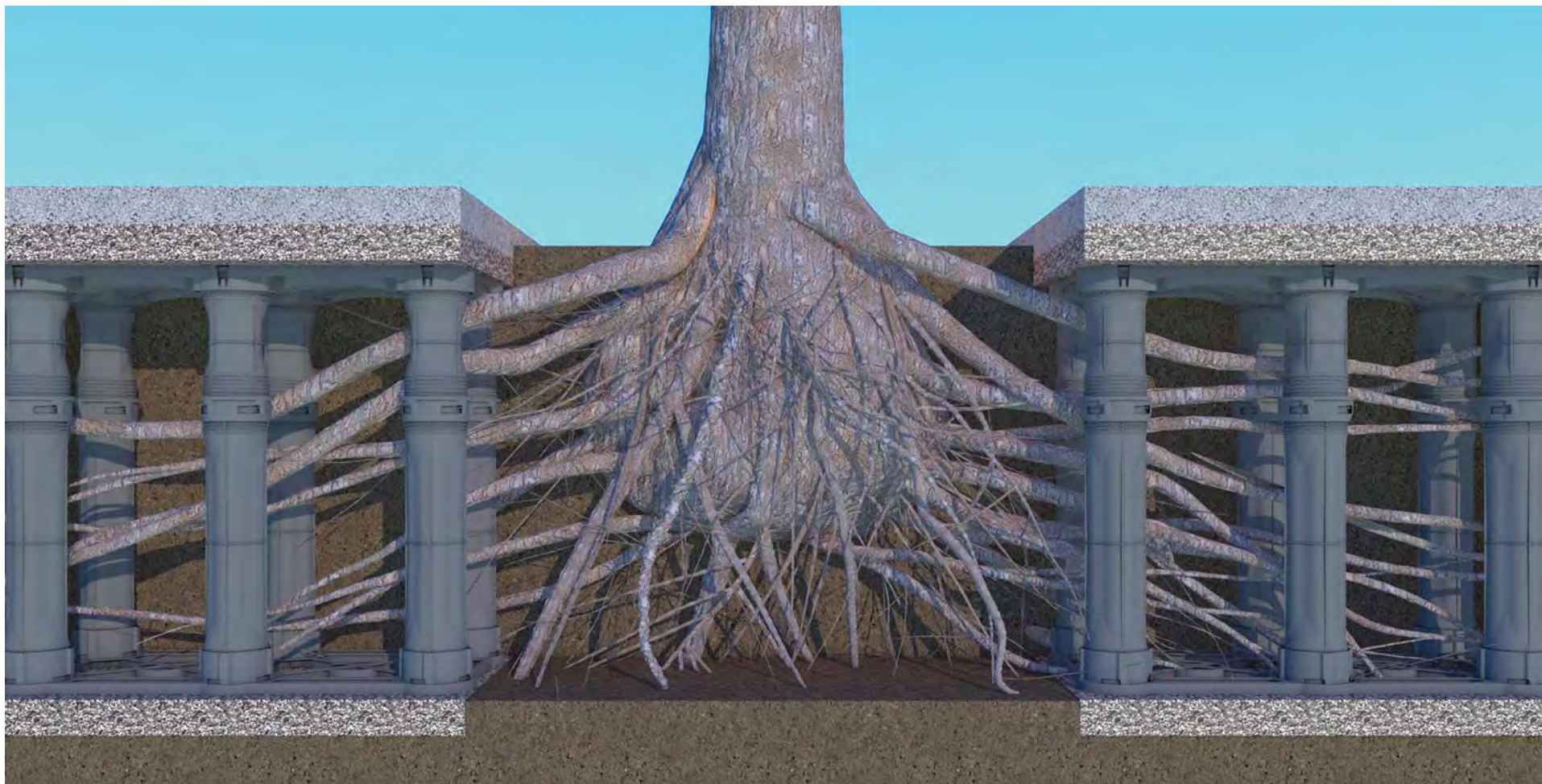
GROUND COVER/VINES

- Winter Jasmine
- Common Rock Rose
- Stonecrop
- Carolina Yellow Jessamine
- Horizontal Junipers (Blue Rug)
- Aaron's Beard



■ GOOD HEALTH
■ POTENTIAL TO SAVE
■ BAD HEALTH/DEAD

Environment

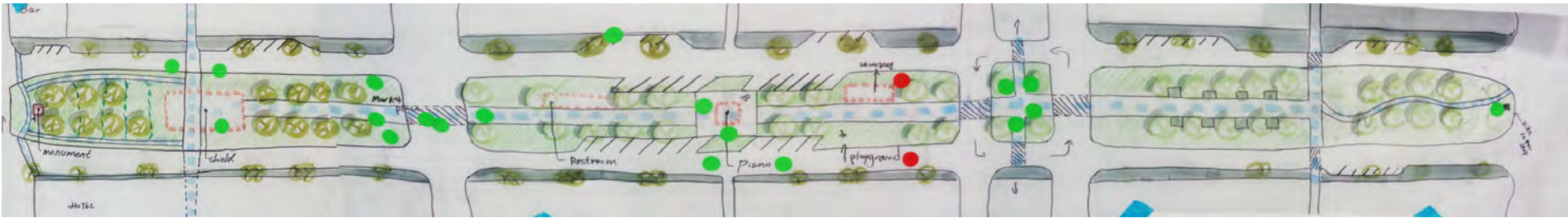


Suspended pavement system illustrated above.

Today landscape architects are using highly specified soils for planting that need to perform in intensive urban environments. Yet there is no settled science in this field. This is especially true when Landscape Architects approaching the question are faced with competing approaches to soils design for planting in pavements. The questions abound: How are we to know which approaches work best for our specific applications? How are we to make choices between approaches? And how are we to present these choices intelligently to clients, regulators, and design review panels? What is a sustainable soil? With the Sustainable Sites Initiative having selected pilot projects, the issue is front and center. Pending guidelines have the potential to direct landscape architects toward one approach or remain open to multiple systems. What are the next steps in this developing science?

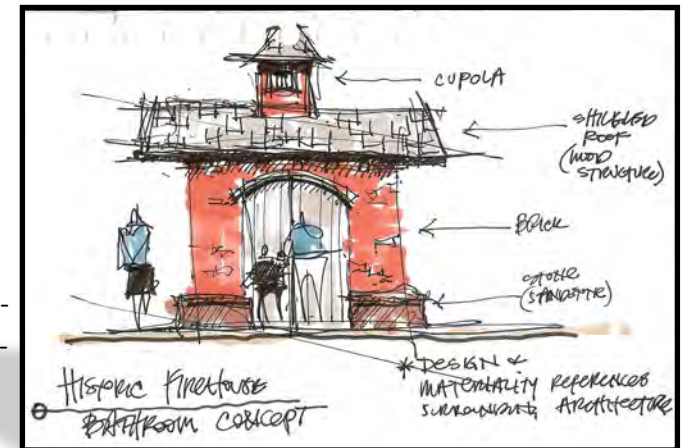
The Great Soil Debate Part II: Structural soils under pavement, ASLA Annual Meeting Handout, 11 September 2010,

History



Big Ideas

- ⊕ Sight lines are important, view from the steps of 1st Baptist Church offers clues to a good history-based solution
- ⊕ Allees and framed views can accentuate the street positive linear aspects
- ⊕ Historic precedents also offer clues to good median designs
- ⊕ Both the street medians and sidewalks (street trees or awnings) should be addressed to help solve shade issues
- ⊕ Macon's material palette is pre-determined and should be adhered to for surfaces and finishes
- ⊕ Some photo documented themes can be revisited small structures in the medians (like Macon's early firehouses) can easily be adapted to restroom facilities,



- ⊕ Street activity should always reinforce Macon's music roots, especially the African American contributions to Poplar and Macon
- ⊕ Simple design and less complex urban infrastructure is lasting, chiefly due to low maintenance costs
- ⊕ Why reinvent the wheel?

History

Take Cues from historic images



History

Simple solutions offer the most bang for the buck!



History

Precedent Median Parks:

Ringstrasse, Vienna, Austria

1850s-70s

- 90-180' wide streetscape
- Green space, bike lanes, sidewalks, automobiles, trams
- Rows of trees separate and buffer lanes
- Urban setting with heavy traffic flow
- Sections of the Ring vary depending on the width of the street



History

Precedent Median Parks:

W Oglethorpe Ave,
Savannah, Georgia

- 90-100' wide streetscape
- 35-40' median
- Green space, bike lanes, sidewalks, automobiles
- One lane on either side of median with parallel parking
- Fantastic canopy covering the entire street

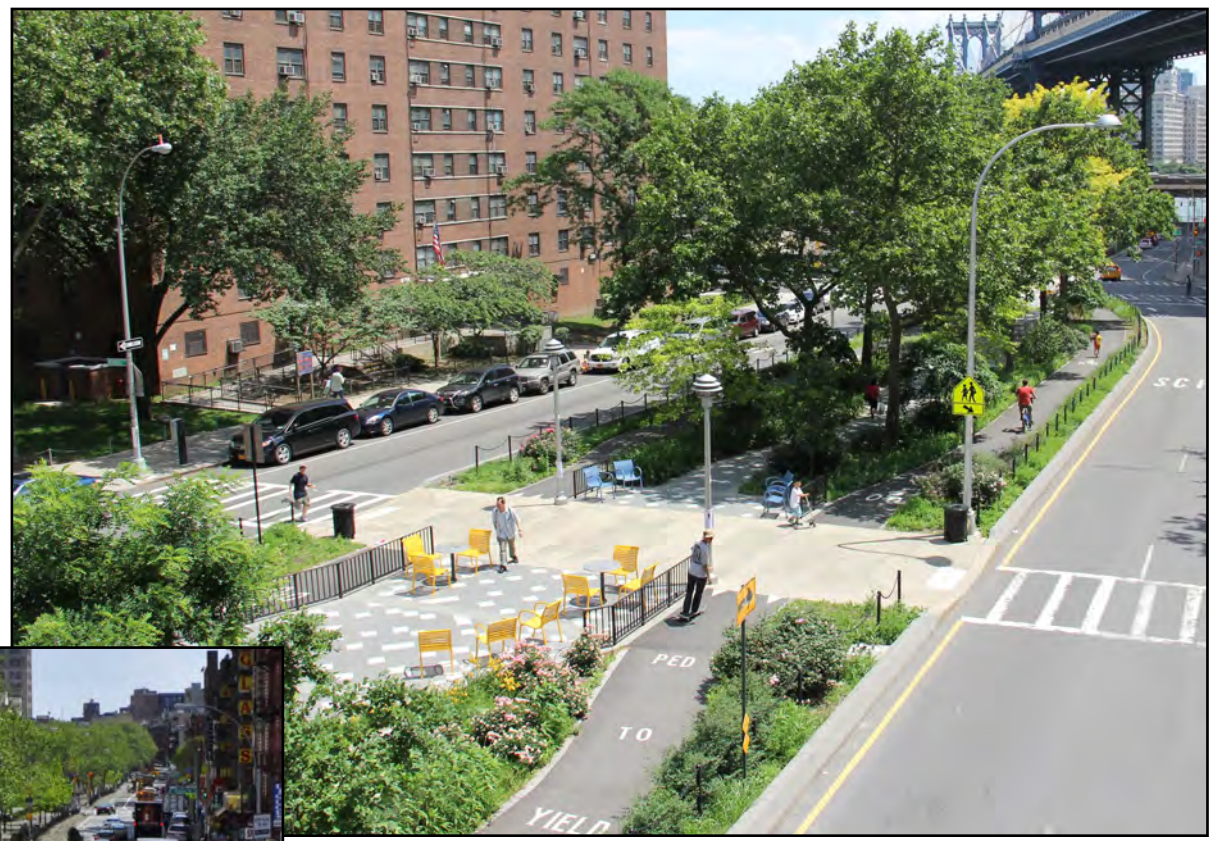


History

Precedent Median Parks:

Allen and Pike Street median park—NYC

- 110' wide streetscape
- 2 bike lanes
- Pedestrian walk and plaza spaces
- Urban setting with heavy traffic flow
- Bollards and tree lawn strip provide minimal buffer from road



History

Precedent Median Parks:

Avenida Álvaro Obregón

Mexico City Median Park

- Wide central pedestrian space (mostly paved)
- Pedestrian walk and plaza spaces
- Urban setting with heavy traffic flow
- Trees, low fencing and planting provide buffers from road



History

Existing Materials:

- BRICK (some terracotta)
- Architectural metals
- Wood
- Stone



Poplar Street, Looking North, showing St. Joseph's Catholic Church and First Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.



History

Suggested Materials and How to Use Them

- BRICK
 - Use as pavers to denote bike lane from pedestrian walkway
 - On any structures built like the public restrooms
 - Water features

- Stone
 - As benches
 - As interpretative markers
 - Water features

- Concrete
 - As paving where other surface materials are not used



Denoting bike lane from pedestrian path



Granite water feature



Incised granite marker

Social

MISSION

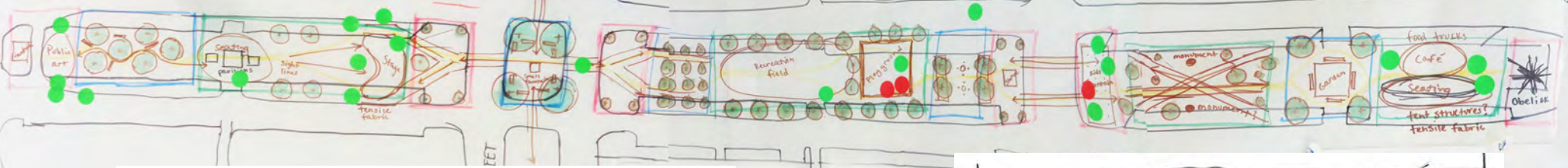
To create a comfortable, vibrant experience (including shade, color, texture, wildlife, and visual interest), programmed with arts and culture (music, dance, artwork, public sculpture), with full pedestrian friendly infrastructure and connectivity through the entire median (raised crosswalks, benches, tables, chairs, pavilions, grills and arbors).



Social



This is an example of a splash pad in Oviedo On the Park Project in Florida done by Dix.Hite and Partners. The design uses anti-skid tiles and is functional at night due to proper lighting. It takes safety into consideration using handrails as well. The design received the ASLA merit award in 2016.



Big Ideas

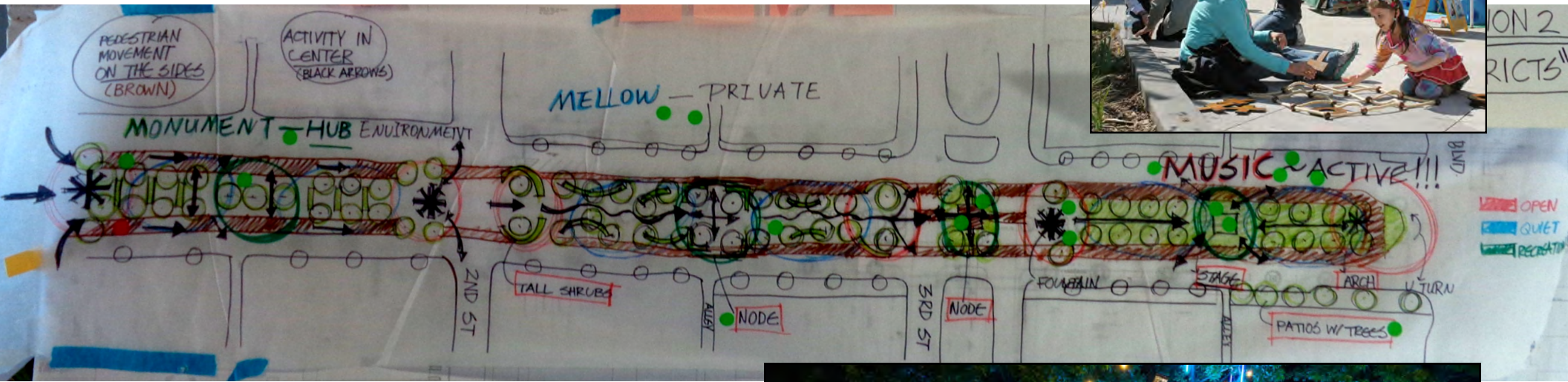
- ⊕ Linear Progression encouraged through center of park by making it easier to cross streets
- ⊕ Designated “rooms” or “districts” to isolate different kinds of activities that would appeal to a broad cross-section of users
- ⊕ Range of activities can change but should appeal to those who use the park; passive use seems to be preferred to active use
- ⊕ Ideas like playgrounds and dog parks come with inflexibility and safety concerns, better spaces may be nearby.
- ⊕ Inventory what is working currently, keep it, perpetuate it and enhance it



Social

Big Ideas

- ⊕ Progression through park varies from center to edge
- ⊕ Concentrate an intense outdoor music zone at one end of park
- ⊕ Flexible space to program for different events some may be temporary and some seasonal



Social

Safety Features Around Play Areas

Two parks in New York use unconventional methods to keep children safe and parents active while using play spaces. These ideas may be incorporated into Poplar Street to create visually pleasing buffers between play areas and the road. This is important because the public mentioned the need for play space but worried about the surrounding vehicular traffic.



110th Street Playground uses benches and seat walls to border the play area which keeps parents engaged and creates a nice physical barrier to the outside.



Teardrop Park uses vegetation and rocks to create a border around play spaces

Social

Universal Design

Community members stressed the need for a safe-feeling, easily accessible, busy public space. In designing the most socially equitable, inclusive space that can be enjoyed by many diverse user groups, one should strive for amenities and design that can be used by the most people in varied ways. The Macon-Bibb, Georgia Age Friendly Action Plan (2013) also stresses the need for more benches and amenities for the elderly in all park locations. Universal design can factor in to age appropriate design along Poplar.

The most common definition of universal design comes from Ron Mace (1985): "The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." The focus is on good design that allows for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality for all who might come to the park without need for adaptation or specialized design. This takes some dialogue with individuals of varying abilities to be sure that designs meet the needs of all who would use the park, its facilities, and programs.

<http://www.playgroundprofessionals.com/magazine/issues/2015/06/universal-design-and-social-equity-our-parks-playgrounds106>

<http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/>

<http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2014/Macon-Bibb,%20Georgia,%20Age-Friendly%20Action%20Plan-AARP.pdf>



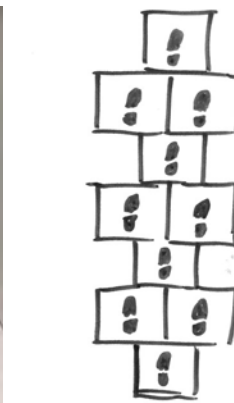
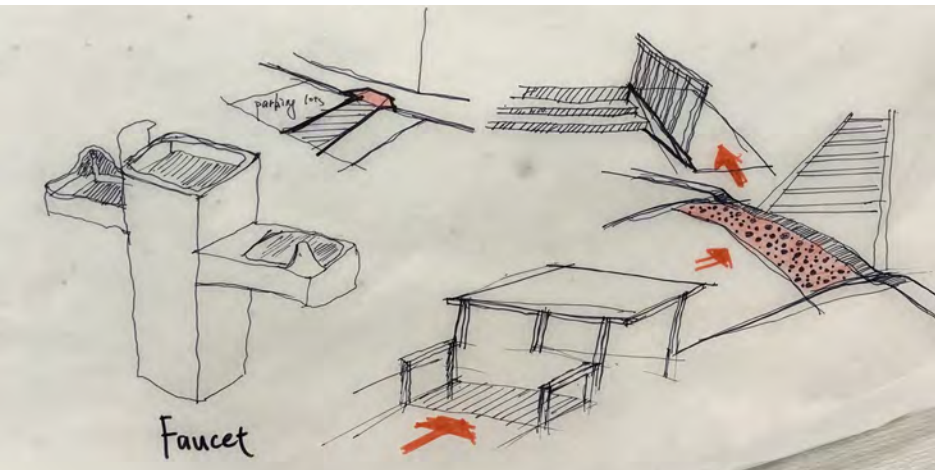
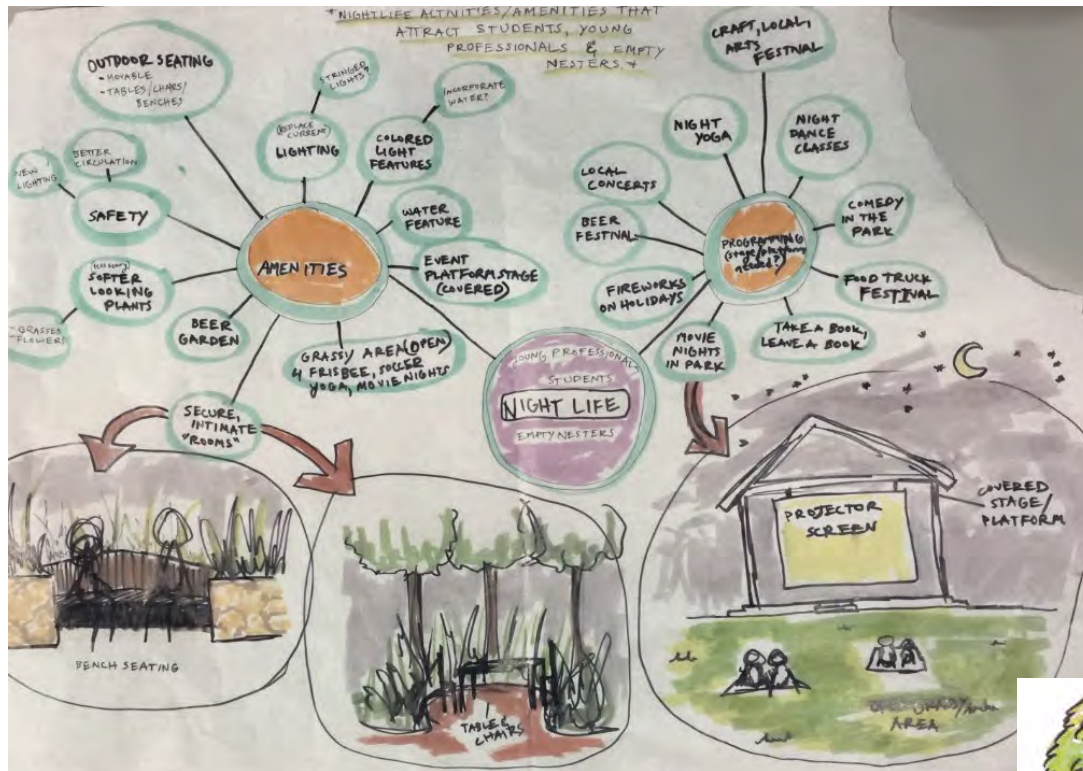
Amenities:

Innovative table and chair designs can be used in various ways throughout the day: for socializing, eating, working, etc.

Paving and Pathways:

We recommend that hardscape materials be easy for wheelchairs to roll over and that transitions in materials be smooth and easily managed by wheelchairs and by children. All new crosswalks should either be raised or have a gently sloping curb cuts with tactile material to signal switch in grade.

Social



INTERACTIVE PAVING IN KID'S AREA?
 * PROVIDES ACTIVITY W/O CREATING STRUCTURES

THEMED CROSSWALKS?



ADD "CHRISTMAS LIGHTS" FOR A HUMAN-LEVEL CEILING
 - CREATES A SAFE FEELING AT NIGHT-TIME

WATER FEATURES WITH COLOR CHANGING LIGHTS FOR NIGHT LIFE





College of Environment + Design
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA