



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
Plaza of the Americas

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING FOR PLAZA OF THE AMERICAS

A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of
MASTER OF URBAN DESIGN

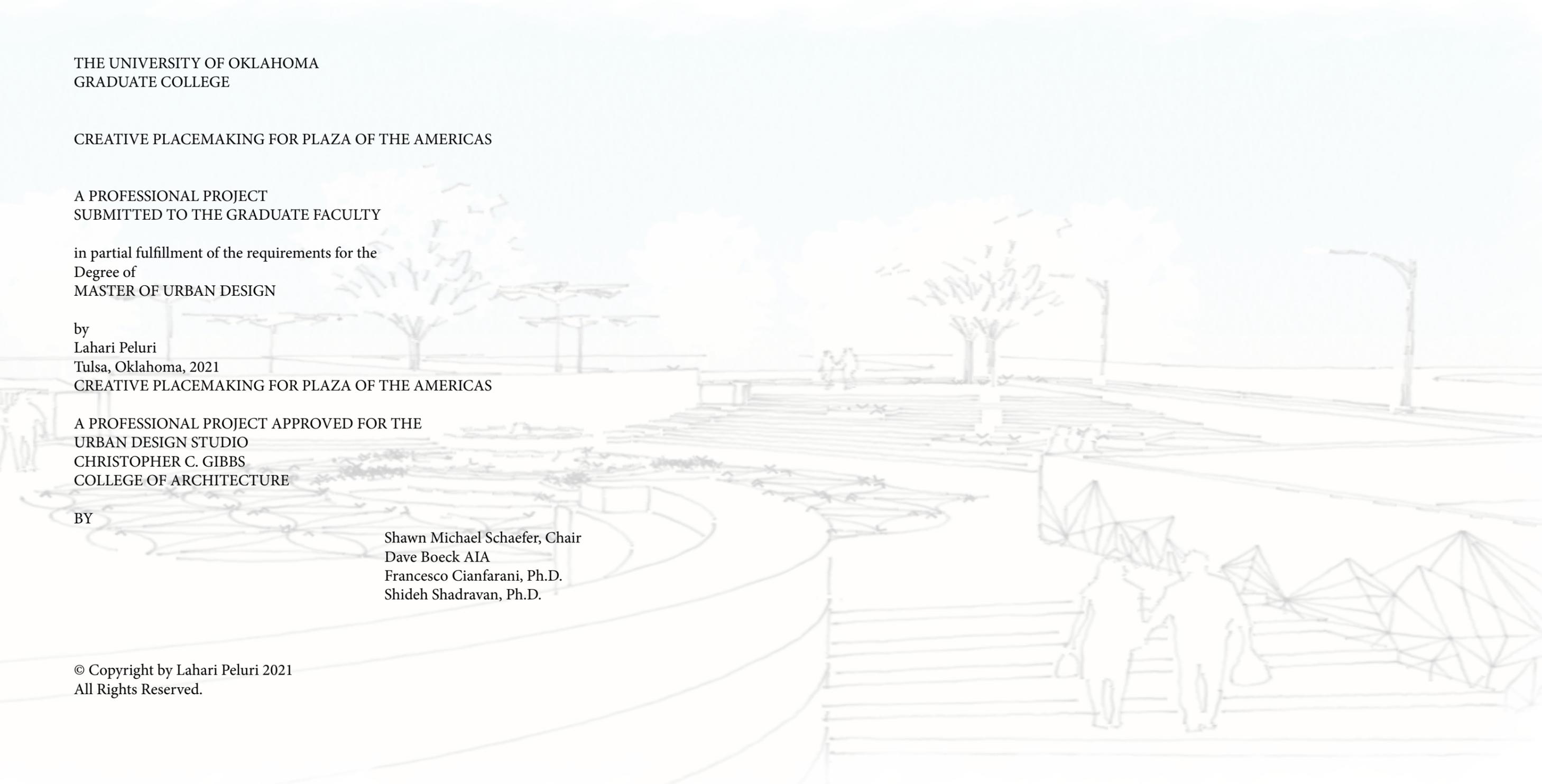
by
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CREATIVE PLACEMAKING FOR PLAZA OF THE AMERICAS

A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT APPROVED FOR THE
URBAN DESIGN STUDIO
CHRISTOPHER C. GIBBS
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE

BY

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Introduction

What is Creative Placemaking?

Creative placemaking aims to boost vibrancy, improve economic conditions, and empower people to take ownership of their neighborhoods. Measuring outcomes has been noted as a challenge by innovative placemaking practitioners. In some cases, the ability to compare the impact of creative placemaking strategies on a large scale is required.

What is Tactical Urbanism?

Tactical urbanism is all about solving problems. This process, also known as DIY Urbanism, Preparing, Urban Experimentation, or Urban Prototype testing, is a city-led, organizational-led, and/or citizen-led approach to community building that employs short-term, low-cost, and adaptive strategies to catalyze long-term change.



Site Selection and Site Context - 1

Example for Tactical Urbanism Project- JC Walks Pedestrian Enhancement Plan

Abstract

People are attracted to areas that pique their curiosity and have an incentive for them to visit and linger. Temporary art, parklets, urban voids, pop-up avenues, and parks are among the improvements. Residents also collaborate on “do-it-yourself” programs to bring attention to underutilized spaces and address neighborhood problems.

Methodology

For the project, I focused on all underutilized areas of Downtown, Tulsa. Following the careful study, I chose one location that corresponds to the creative placemaking idea. Primarily because of its neighborhood background. Following the selection of the site, the next step is to engage with the group. After engaging with the people, stakeholders, and neighbors, I was able to see what the community needed to see in this piece of property. The next phase is to make their dreams a reality. The very next phase is to plan. Design explorations aided by citizen surveys. Then they offered recommendations.

Steps followed:

- Select a location
- Engage the community
- Plan/ Design
- Recommendation/ Conduct an event & make it permanent

Goals for the Project

The project’s primary goal is transforming these underutilized spaces into lively public, To re-start the public activity, low-cost, low-risk urban experimentation.

The main objective of this project is to raise people’s interest in coming to this place and to increase the space’s use for public activity. Another critical goal is to consider neighborhood problems and propose solutions to them. Tactical urbanism encourages designers to bring people together while still testing and exploring their ideas.



Rearside view of the Plaza

Location

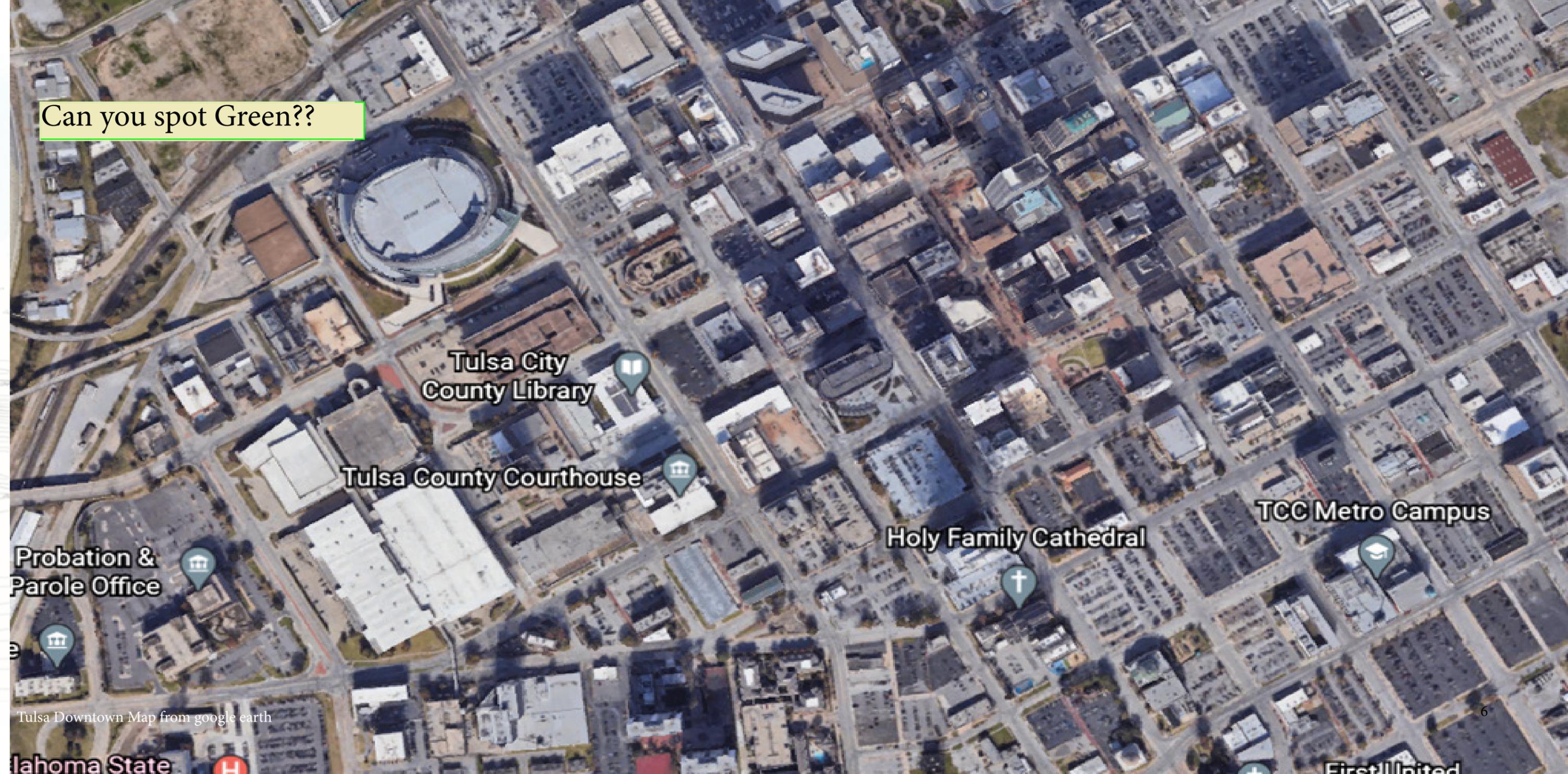
Plaza of the Americas West 7th Street and Denver Avenue, Tulsa ,Oklahoma.



Problem

The Plaza of the America's state is not appealing to the neighborhood. However, the residents in the neighborhood mentioned that they need a place to spend leisure time away from their homes and would like to see this plaza work substantially. Residents have identified the following concerns: a dull bland concrete paved area look, homeless issues, no good scenery, no landscaping or good seating, no interesting things or events occurring in the area, low lighting makes them feel uncomfortable, and a poor view of the park from their balconies. Residents and stakeholders expressed a need for this space to be vibrant and lively.

Can you spot Green??



Tulsa Downtown Map from google earth

Site Observations

After visiting the site, I concluded that the traffic was not as bad as expected because of the road construction around the site, there are few sounds audible while I am in the location. The next thought about my observations is that having three different levels of spaces creates separation of spaces, which is a weakness; the residential community is an added advantage to design or recommend activities in the Plaza; and the only threat observed is homeless people using the space inappropriately.



Site Visit on	- September 10th, 2020.
Time	- 4pm – 5:30 pm.
Temperature	- 64F.
Area	- 0.6 Ac.
History	- There is no evidence regarding the history or significance of the Plaza of the Americas.
Traffic	- Light/ moderate.
Users	- Visited 3 times found only Homeless.
Usage built for	- Plaza.
Sound	- Sound was high on the left side of the site; (roads are under construction). Sound from traffic was minimal.
Weakness	- Contours/ level differences.
Strengths	- Opportunity to create a space for all.
Threats	- Homeless, lack of safety.



Parking lot to the north-west side



Renaissance Uptown Apartments to the south



Bike Point in the lower plaza



South-east entrance to the site



Blair Apartments to the north-west side



View looking east side



Water clogging in the middle plaza



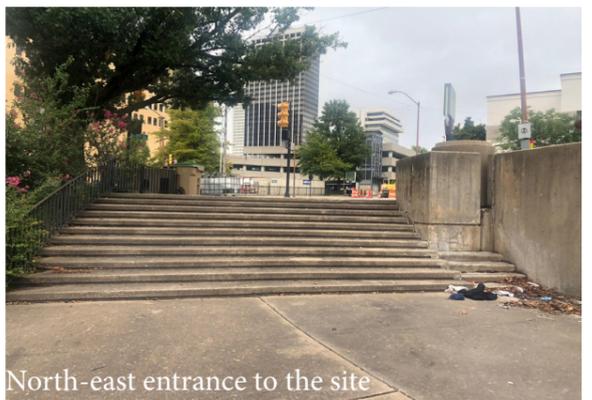
View of the lower plaza



Central Park Apartments to the south-west side



Entrance from the east side

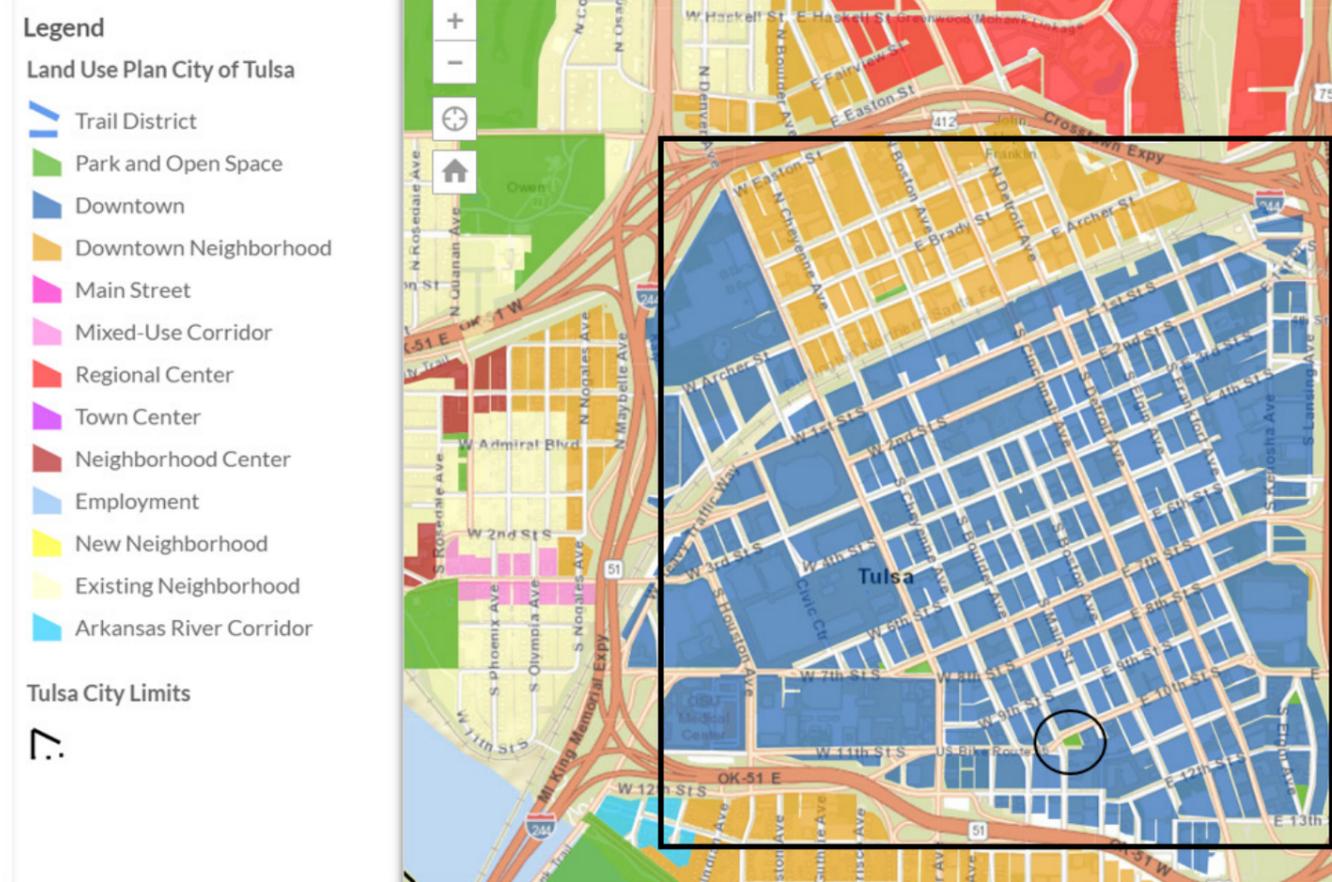


North-east entrance to the site



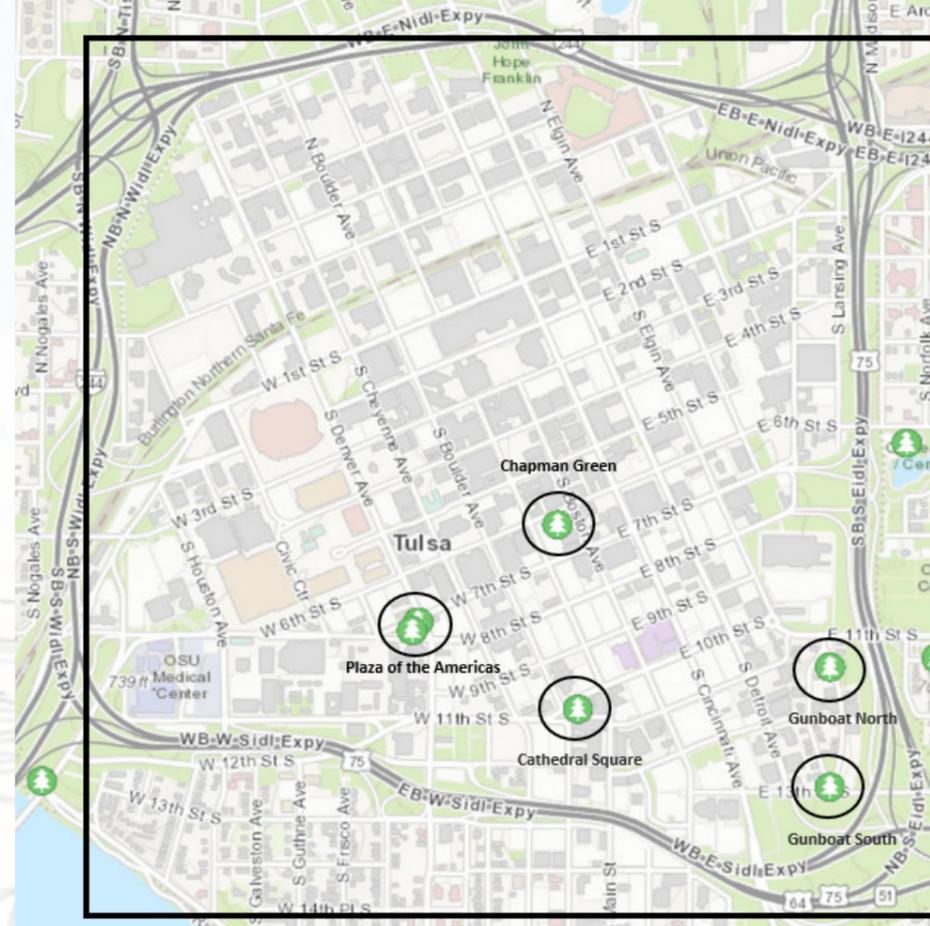
Inside seating at the middle plaza

Site Context



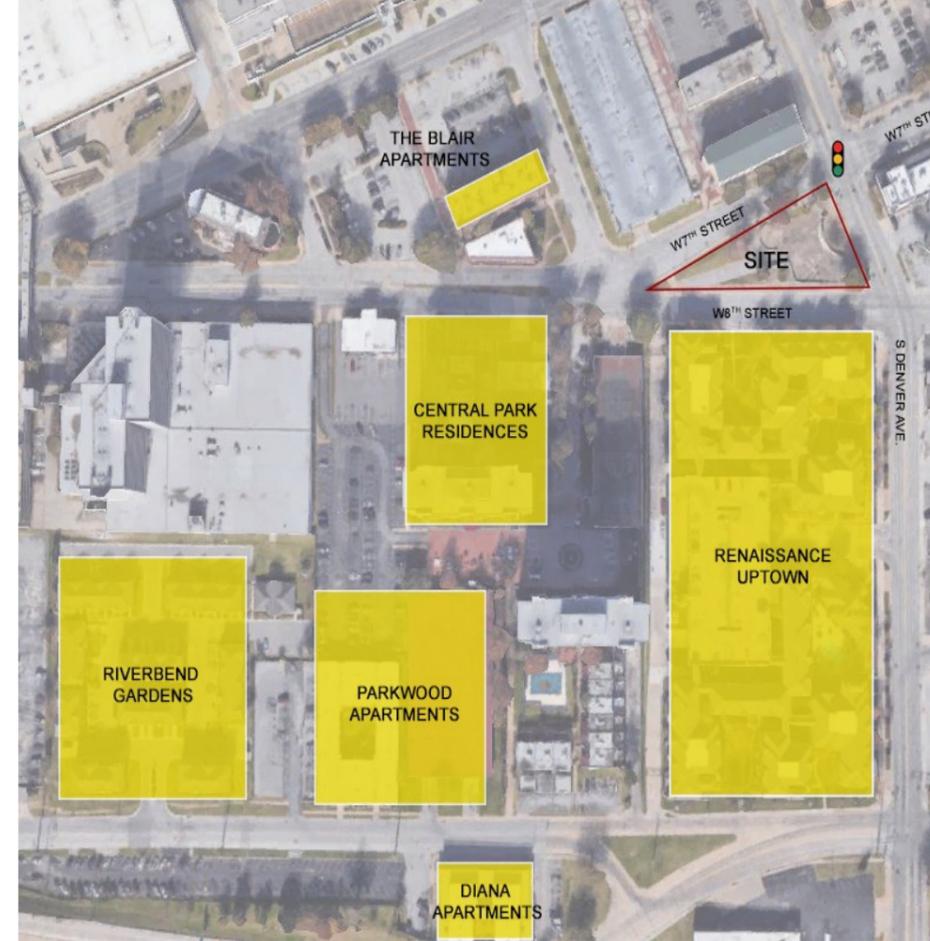
Land Use Plan City of Tulsa. Site Zone - Central Business District.

The Central Business District's primary function is to include a centrally situated location within the City for general retail shopping, personal and technical facilities, educational institutions, entertainment centers, restaurants, and the other business uses specified.



City of Tulsa - Downtown Parks

These are the five parks in Downtown Tulsa, and they are all limited in size. There are unused lands that have been turned into parks. Another distinguishing characteristic of these parks is their lack of greenery. I would like to create a program in which the practice can be repeated in all five parks, maybe by rotating the days in collaboration with food truck vendors and management.



Highlight the neighborhood around the site

They are all within walking distance of the site and can help predict foot traffic to the Plaza. Since there are no green spaces or parks in the neighborhood, this park could be beneficial to the users around the site.

Placemaking Process

The process I chose for my project is to find a location and make it active and accessible to the public. Following the selection of a location and stakeholders, the next step is to determine the location, such as site observations and surroundings, and then, after learning about the site context, the next thing to consider is the place of vision, which is the planning phase following the discovery of requirements from the neighborhood/ stakeholders. The last move is to make recommendations.

What does the Community require?

After looking at the results of the design requirement surveys. My simple thought is that the community needs the space to be more vibrant and lively. The community said that they would like to see more landscaping, basic utilities, shade, and seating space with scenic views in the park after the enhancements.

To bring in changes?

The biggest improvements I would like to make are to make this space more active for public use; the community can no longer think of it as a hollow concrete floor. Through my design and recommendations, I should be able to affect social change. Using underutilized space to provide useful public and outdoor places.



Virtual view of site from the northeast.

Community Engagement



Picture from 19th floor balcony. The thing that jumps out to me, is the amount of concrete and the absence of vegetation (turf, plant materials, sitting spaces and trees) by a resident from Central Park.

Central Park - A community of 400 residential units and approximately 600 residents maintain a Facebook Group page. It has about 250 members. I posted the following message and photo to get some feedback and ideas on potential park uses and amenities:

Plaza of the Americas

The main goal of the community engagement is to collect feedback from nearby residents, stakeholders, and potential park visitors on what they would like to see in the way of programming and amenities for the park. Please share your ideas and thoughts that will help to improve this long-neglected space.



Pictures posted in the Survey - Water fountain, gathering place, and sitting areas.

Below are the comments added to the post.

Residents quotes from the Survey

A contemplative place with a water feature would be great. However, I think a dog friendly park is more practical if maintenance of poop pickup is included. Wish that it is a larger space to be able to incorporate both ideas !

I would like to see a place where it is usable - it's likely one of the few uses for the space that would not end up becoming a designation for the homeless.

Right now it is a toilet for the street people... so about anything would be better I can see it from my window very clearly. Incorporating it into the street would even be better. Good view and outdoor sitting space.

I believe ...'s concern has validity, and CPR is developing it's own Lovely Landscape. The DT Park at 6th and Main has become a Homeless Haven I am not Personally a Pet Owner, but imagine it would be welcome addition to our Neighborhood,. With so many Hotels becoming Pet Friendly, an Attraction to Visitors

Think major problem on current Plaza is Sunken Feature allowing clandestine activities. More colour and light can help.

Appears Current Plaza could easily adopt this design...plus Vined Arbors over Lower Benches like at Guthrie Green.....make sure they remember to include drinking water sources as current Parks sorely lacking

I love the climbing vines, brick walls and trees in this soothing atmosphere. Something like this would be very welcome. More Landscape and sitting space.

I am in favor of a park, sitting space and more trees. The space should be an inviting and walkable space with perhaps a bench or two at most.

The waterfall fountain was lovely years ago. I believe it was originally channeled river water. Anyway this pic looks great. Maybe the dog park could be at the west end of the park.



Pictures posted in the Survey - Street Art on the concrete walls.

Community Engagement - 2

Case Study - The Woodland Green Pedestrian Plaza

The Woodland Green Pedestrian Plaza was created to replace the asphalt expanse of a traffic triangle, which had little environmental or social benefits to the city. Handcrafted wooden planters constructed from large recycled trees, white oak, and locally salvaged joists adorn the plaza. These planters protect the plaza from city traffic and add a touch of nature to space. Furthermore, they significantly minimize the volume of stormwater runoff that would otherwise enter the city's combined stormwater and sewage lines. Due to their resistance to urban environmental stresses, tough, drought-tolerant plants such as Switch Grass, Sedum, and Purple Coneflower were chosen.

- Project Type - Pedestrian Plaza
- Key Materials - Barrier Element, Landscaping elements, Street Furniture and Surface Treatment.



The Woodland Green Pedestrian Plaza - Philadelphia, PA

Case Study - Bayfront Parkway Project

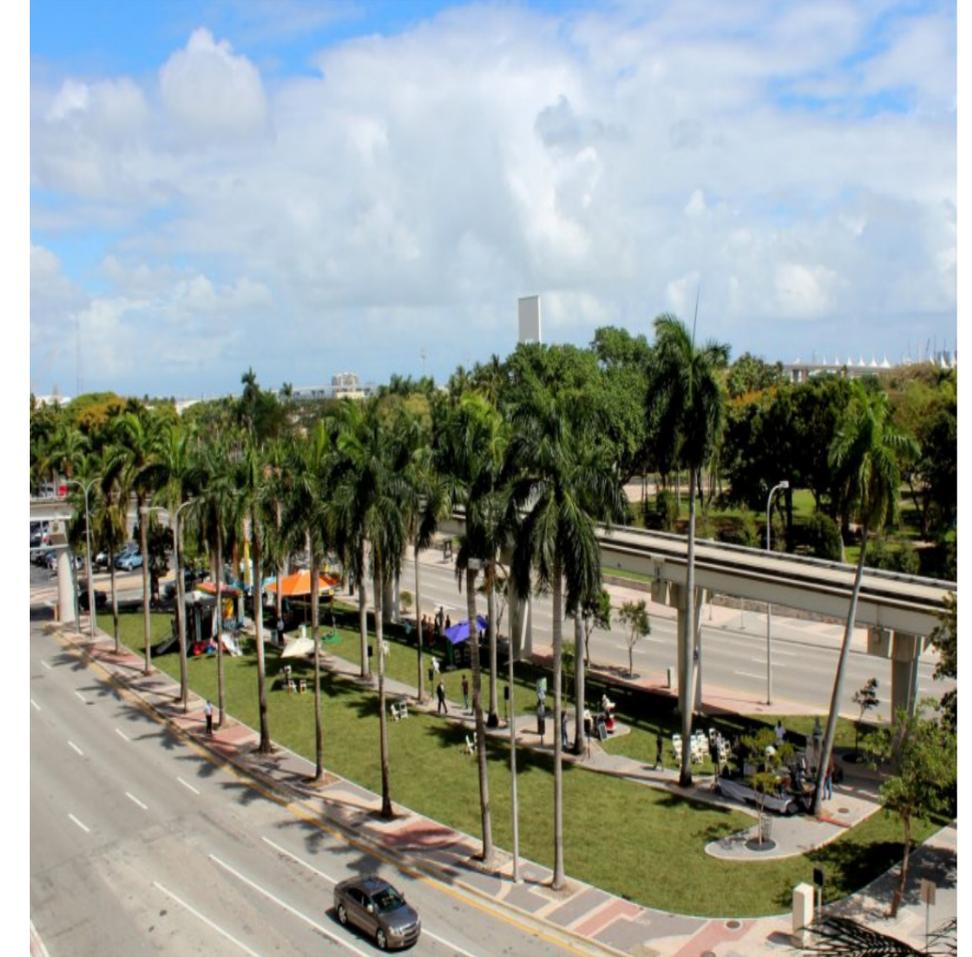
For several years, it has been proposed and debated to turn Biscayne Boulevard's six median parking lots into a green gateway to downtown Miami. However, no action had been taken until recently.

Bayfront Parkway was a one-week "living rendering" created and arranged by Street Plans to assuage concerns regarding parking loss and show how underutilized parking lots could be turned into a functional public space. Street Plans used a small grant to bring together almost 30 downtown partners to fund and donate to the 3/4-acre initiative, which took less than a day to complete.

The pop-up park not only contributed to Bayfront Park's natural growth, but it also helped to calm traffic on Biscayne Boulevard's 8-lane boulevard, which functions as a buffer between the park and the increasing number of residents and businesses.

Thousands of visitors visited the room as a result of this Tactical Urbanism effort, which was triggered by scheduled and unplanned events during the week, including live music, yoga, food vans, fitness facilities, and public seating. The initiative assuaged neighborhood concerns over the lack of parking spaces while simultaneously galvanizing support for the park's permanent introduction.

- Project Type - Park/Plaza
- Key Materials - Landscaping elements, Street Furniture and Surface Treatment.



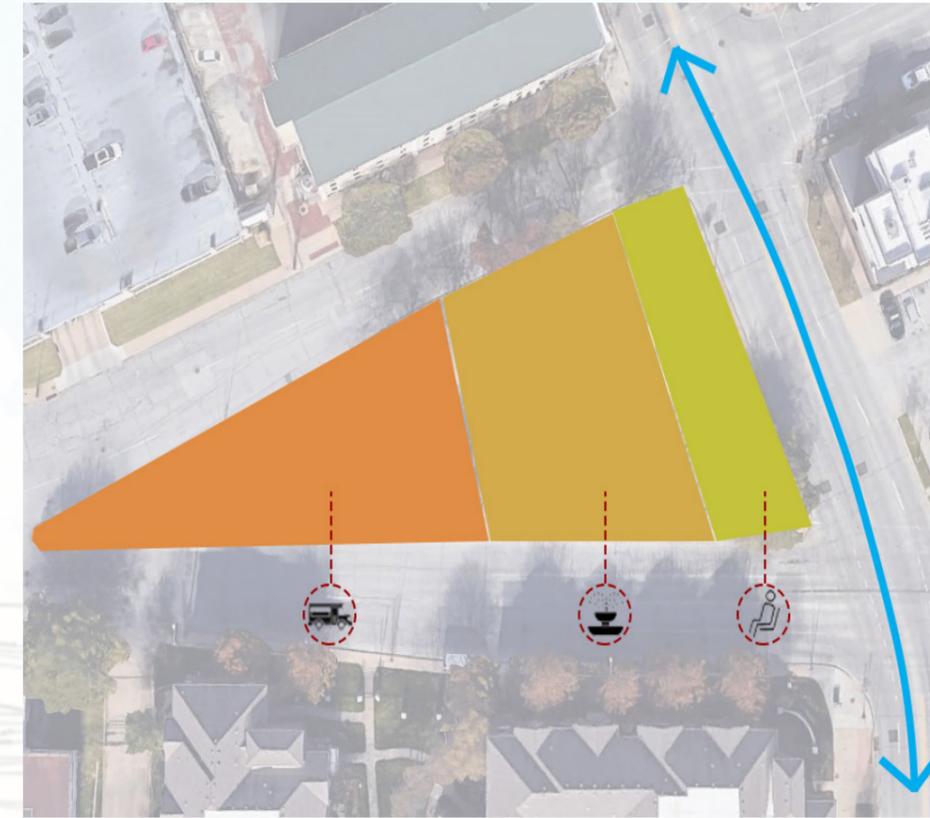
Bayfront Parkway Project - Miami, Fl.

Concept Development

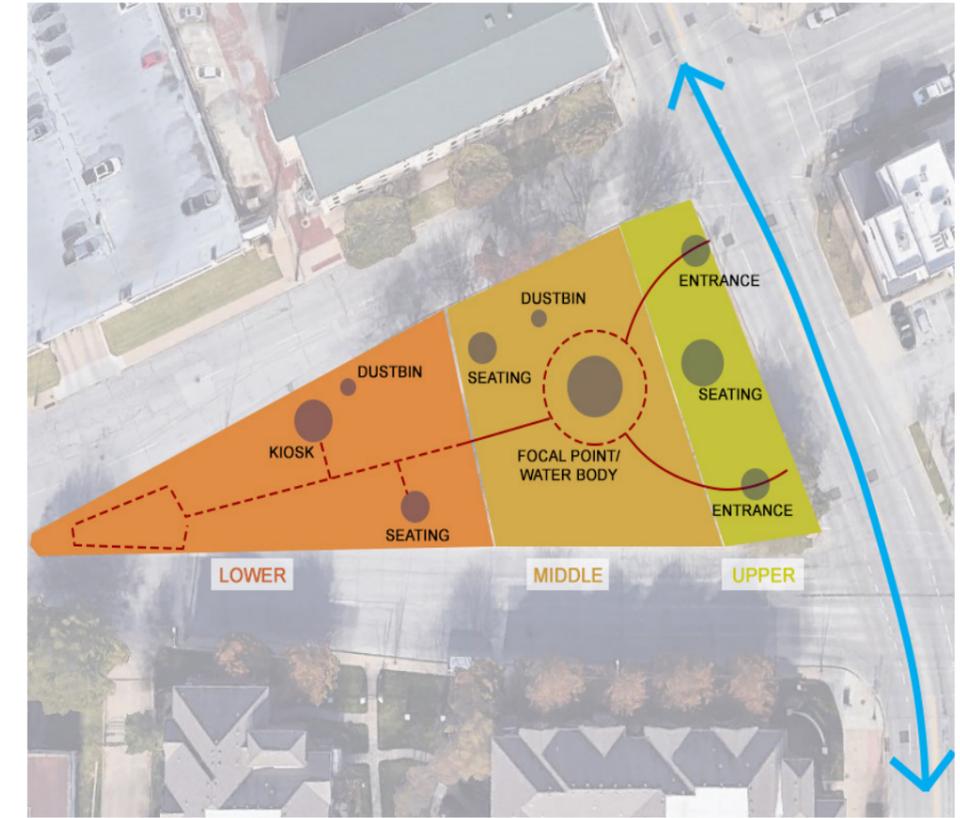
I have created a concept for my creative placemaking project. The idea was inspired by the site's existing features. My first impression is that it is a tiny park. As a result, I decided to split the plan into three segments that correspond to the site's current conditions, such as the front seating area, within the plaza, and the green lawn at the rear. For the following spaces entry seating, focal point, and food truck region, I have called the three broken areas of the park upper, middle, and lower. I have labeled the three divisions as infilled.



One Park



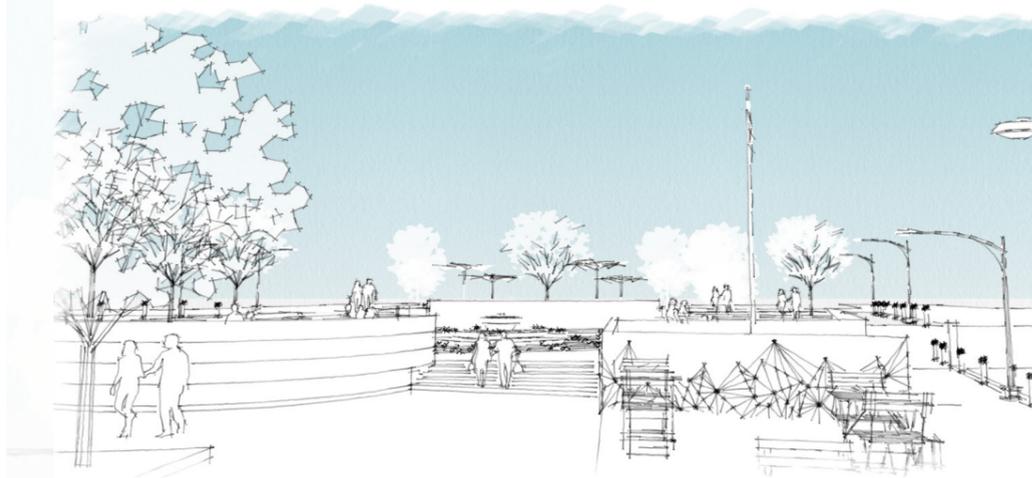
Fragmented



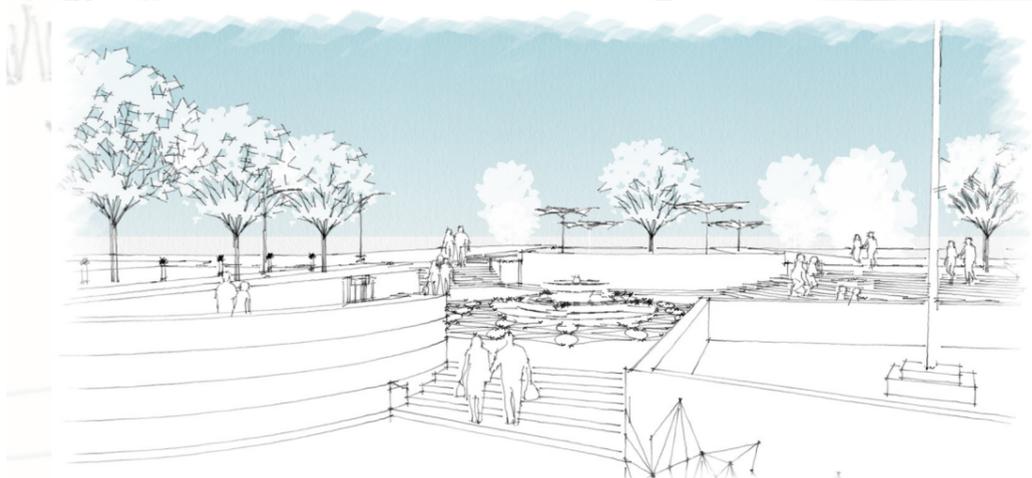
Infilled

Design - 3

Schemes

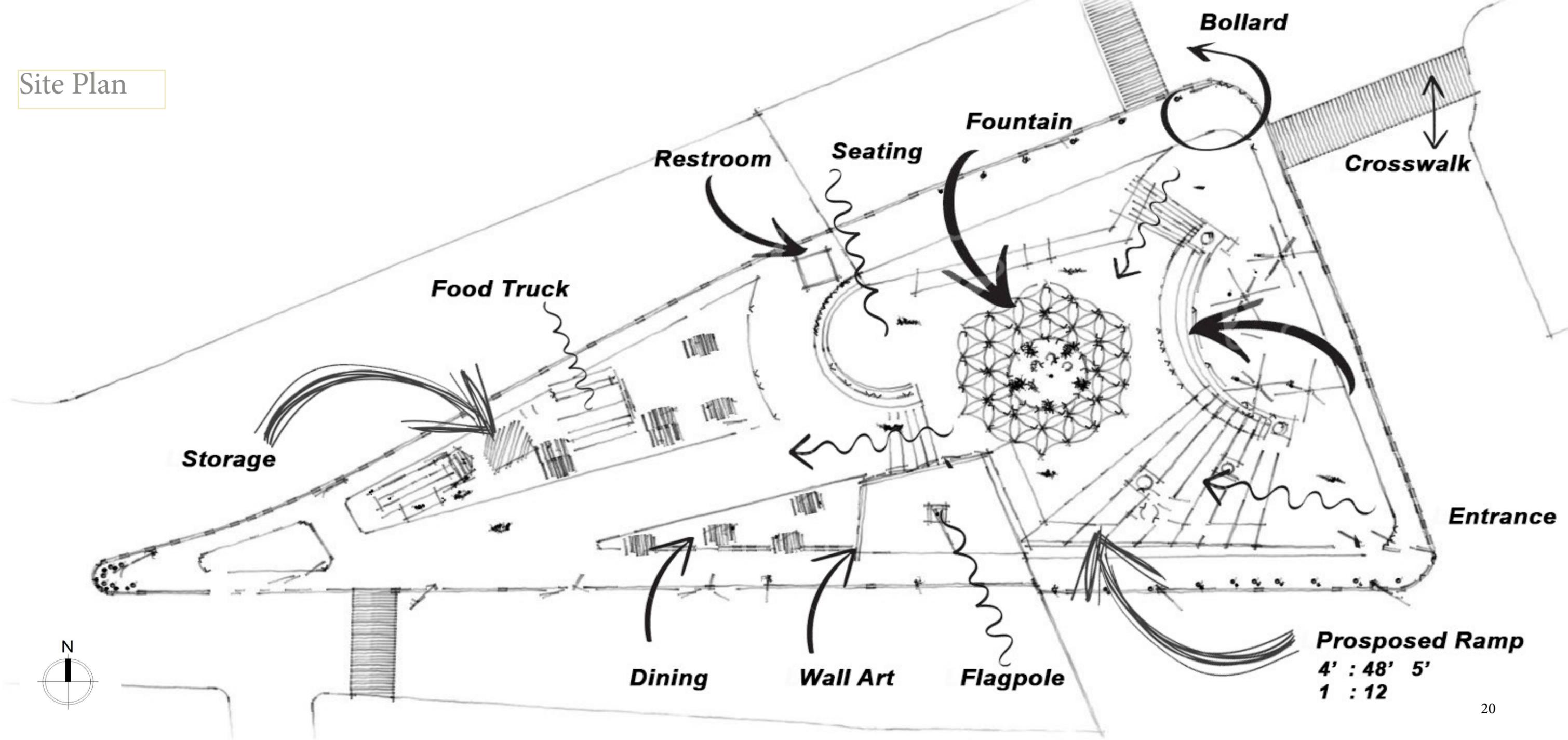


Seating area opposite of the food truck



Plaza entrance from the rear side

Site Plan



Proposed Ramp
4' : 48' 5"
1 : 12

Design Schemes



Food Truck view



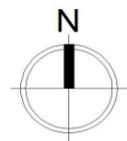
Rear side view of the Plaza



Front view of the Plaza

Site Plan

- 1 Entrance Plaza
- 2 Greenwall
- 3 Fountain
- 4 Seating and Restroom
- 5 Flagpole
- 6 Seating for the dining
- 7 Food truck
- 8 Bollards
- 9 Rainbow crosswalks



Lower Plaza

Middle Plaza

Upper Plaza

Upper Plaza

This is the main view of the upper plaza, and you can see that there are two entrances to the middle plaza. The concrete bench serves as a seating area for both general visitors and those waiting for transit. I split the large semicircular concrete seating into segments so that people could sit comfortably. To achieve this look, I added planter boxes. Finally, another enhancement to the current plaza is the installation of shade systems in the seating area.



Existing view of the front plaza



Proposed upper plaza

Street light

Bollard

Entrance

Shading Structure

Planter Boxes

Seating

Trash Cans

Entrance

Middle Plaza

This is a view of the middle plaza, which has been improved by introducing a fountain with a vibrant floor design as a focal point. The fountain is one of the plaza's main attractions; visitors can enjoy a beautiful view when they are there. Another modification will be to propose a green wall to replace the dead concrete wall. Seating looking east has the best view of the fountain, floor plan, and green wall. These three elements add vibrancy and life to space.



Existing view of the middle plaza

Proposed middle plaza



Wall Art

Seating

Floor Pattern

Fountain

Entrance

Greenwall²⁸

Lower Plaza

Moving on to the lower plaza, the majority of this space is taken up by food trucks and dining establishments. This area appeals to those who like to eat their meals outside. Planter boxes, wall art on the way into the lower plaza, and simple amenities such as restrooms and storage are among the new additions to the lower plaza.



Existing view of the lower plaza



Crosswalk

Signage

Food Truck

Sidewalk

Seating

Planter Boxes

Restroom

Proposed lower plaza

Lower Plaza

Another view of the lower plaza, where one can dine in the shade while admiring the wall art and green wall.



Existing view of the lower plaza

Proposed lower plaza



Wall Art

Seating

Food Truck

Design Features



Main Entrance



Greenwall



Fountain - Middle Plaza



Shading Structures- Upper Plaza



Wall Art- Middle Plaza



Food Truck- Lower Plaza

Implementation

Tulsa Colour Code for Crosswalks

There is a code or set of guidelines for Tulsa, OK, and I do believe rainbow crosswalks might not be permitted. As part of my design, I suggested a rainbow-colored crosswalk to make it more bright and colorful.

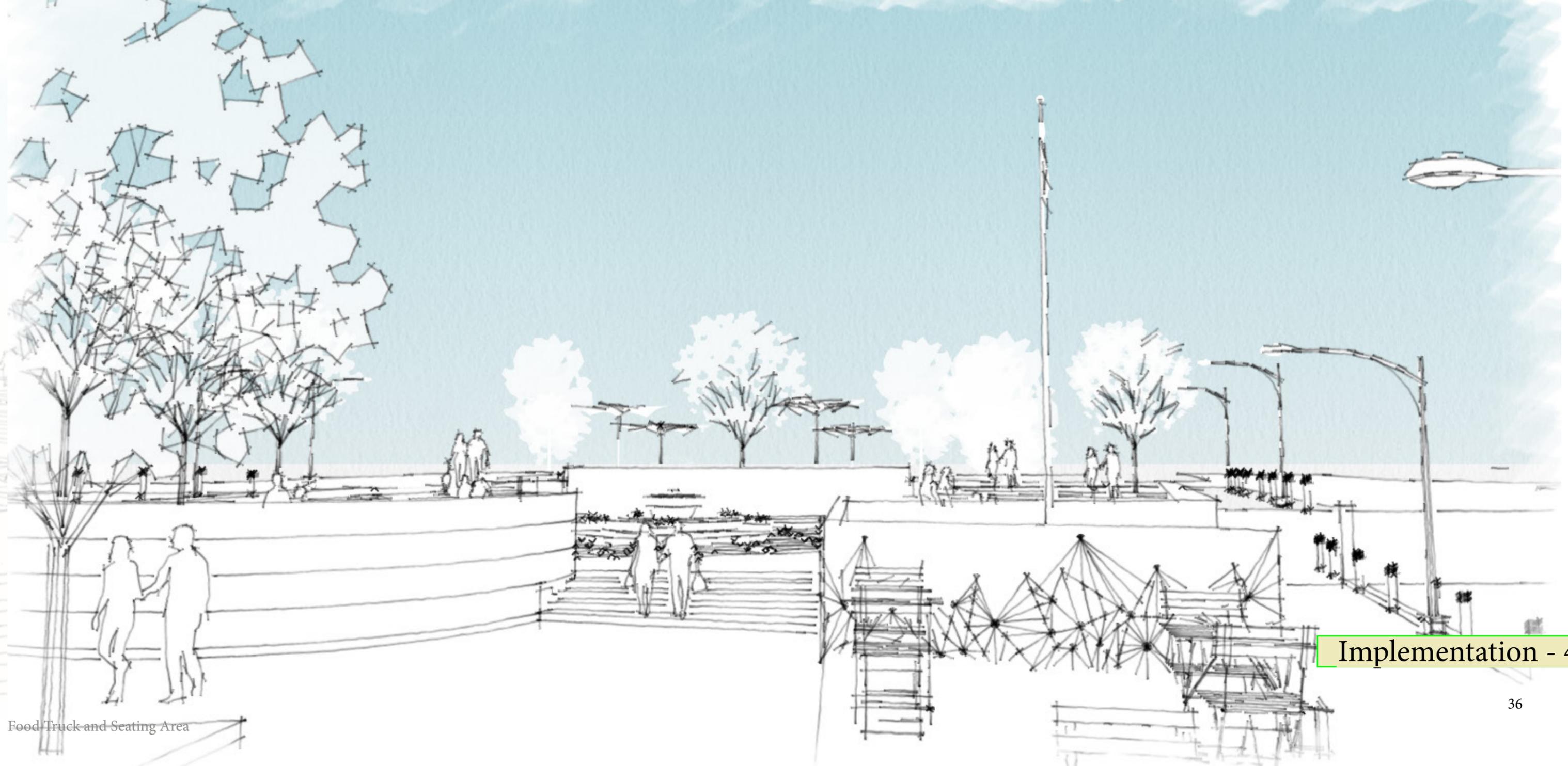
Maintenance

I kept low-maintenance materials in mind while designing.

The best solutions to recommend are low-maintenance plans that can be incorporated into the leases that food trucks or coffee shops sign. If the city parks department is not willing to maintain parks there is another option the neighborhood can sponsor for cleaning and maintenance on a biweekly or weekly

Mitigation of Vandalism

There are few recommendations to control vandalism in parks or public places. We should educate them, use vandalism deterrent cameras, by cleaning the surfaces immediately, and have good lighting so that taggers will be cautious.



Food Truck and Seating Area

Implementation - 4

Programming

KITCHEN 66

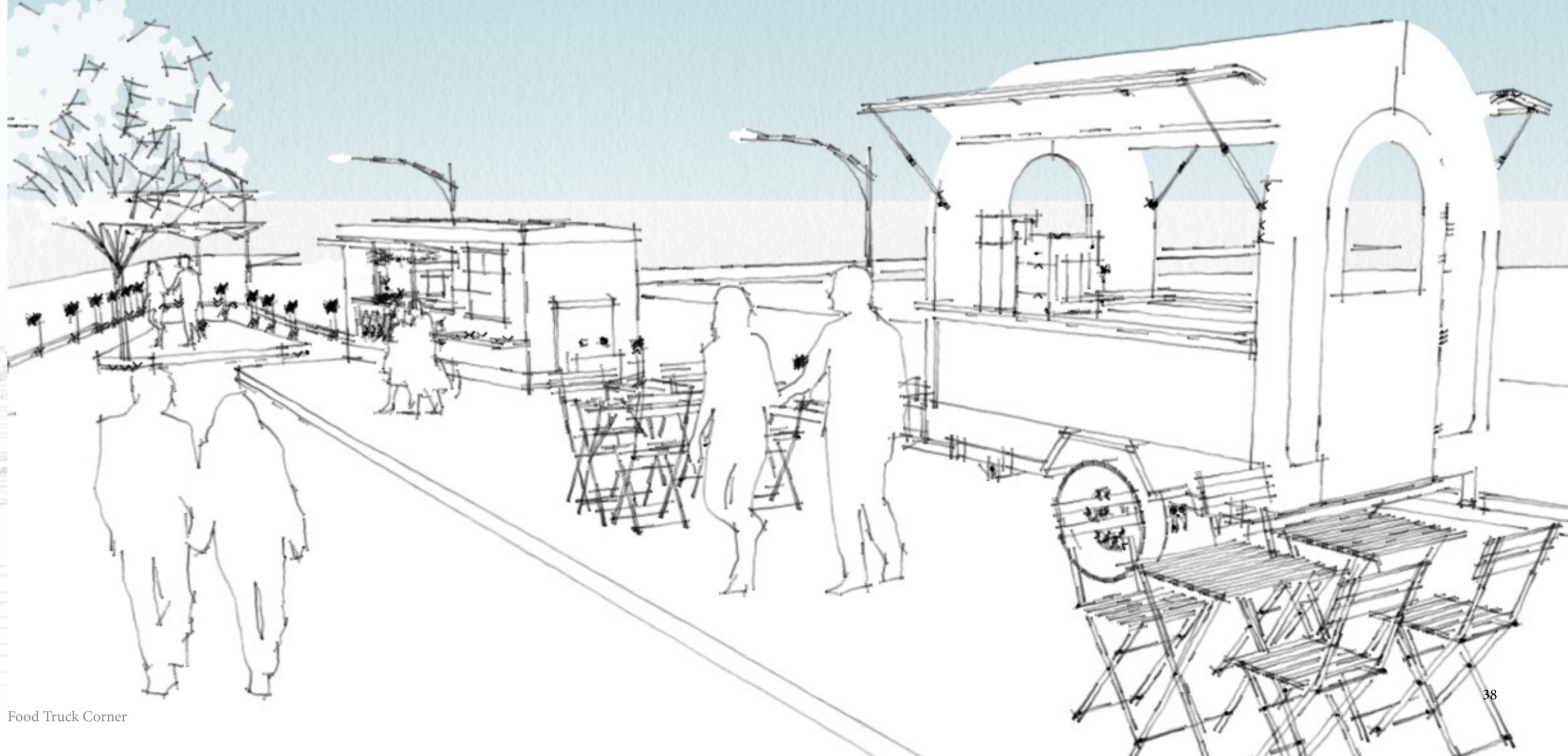
at MOTHER ROAD MARKET



Tulsa Food Business and Incubation - Kitchen66, Tulsa, Oklahoma
In conversation with Rachael Reagan

Programming for the project's food trucks I spoke with Rachael Reagan, the Vice President of Tulsa Food Company and Incubation at Kitchen 66. The first element Racheal found interesting was the location and the surroundings of the site, and she then proposed different ways to proceed. She has concluded that potential customers include apartments, a neighborhood community, Tulsa County, a courthouse, a convention center, and hotels. She came up with the concept of holding weekly or biweekly lunches after measuring average footfall. We may also have food and cultural festivals in the park. With the addition of food trucks, we can revitalize the region, which we can also refer to as a food truck park.

Promotions are the responsibility of the food vendor. Few ideas to distribute the post are, we can use flyers, apartment blogs, neighborhood organizations, or social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram.



Food Truck Corner

Conclusions

- Tactical urbanism and innovative placemaking are two new words I have learned after starting this project.
- I have learned how to collaborate with stakeholders and neighborhood groups.
- I have discovered what a group wants to see in an empty/underutilized space.
- Cities should look after this underutilized space.

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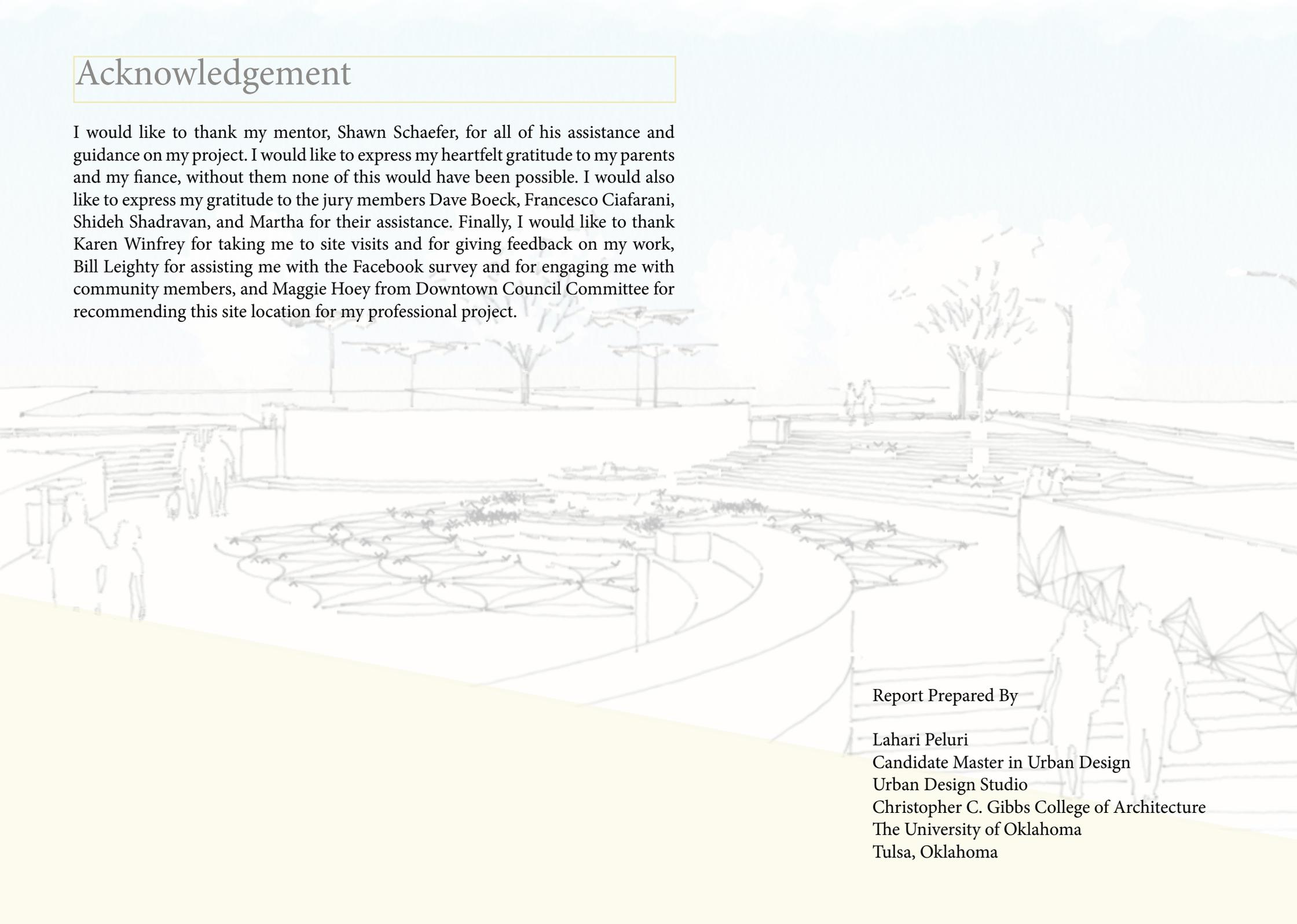
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