

# Walkscapes: From Sidewalks to Rooms

A Complete Street for School Avenue





NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation  
deserves great art.

Project funding made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts under their Our Town Grant Program.

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**Walkscapes is designed to be staged starting with inexpensive and provisional “makeovers” that allow the City to assess out-of-the-box solutions before implementing permanent and more costly retrofits. There is no established chronology. The City may implement both tactical and permanent episodes as opportunities arise.**

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## Executive Summary

UACDC with environmental artist Stacy Levy prepared a streetscape plan for a four-block section of School Avenue between Dickson and Mountain Streets. This is in partial fulfillment of a 2013 Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to the City of Fayetteville. The goal of the project is to retrofit a four-block segment of a commonplace downtown street to complement over \$80 million in scheduled building investments by the City of Fayetteville and key cultural institutions. An emerging corridor of importance within the downtown arts district, the proposed School Avenue streetscape frames new development between the Walton Arts Center (WAC) and the Fayetteville Public Library (FPL) with arts-based civic infrastructure—or infrastructure as art. School Avenue holds the potential to become a destination street commensurate in quality with future building investments underway by the library and the arts center, the City’s signature institutions.

The streetscape plan shows incremental strategies for retrofitting School Avenue to function as a pedestrian-oriented Complete Street. School Avenue is currently an “incomplete street” privileging the automobile in both policy and design. Complete

Streets is a planning and policy approach that requires streets to accommodate all modes of travel accessible to users of all ages and abilities. While Complete Streets facilitate safe and convenient travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users, this holistic approach also provides other non-traffic services related to aesthetics, economic development, health, and the environment.

### **Project Approach: Sidewalks as an Independent Urban Art-Form**

Walkscapes pilots Complete Streets principles to rebalance space allocations between pedestrians and motorists, but goes beyond Complete Streets to explore the sidewalk as an independent art-form. Since School Avenue’s right-of-way width is modest, the project approach is directed toward strategic interventions within sidewalks and the shared property borders of select quasi-public entities like WAC, FPL, and Hillcrest Towers Senior Center. Four contextually-responsive pedestrian geographies, or landscapes, function like “drifts” to thicken the typically underdeveloped space of the sidewalk. Each walkscape sponsors unique configurations made from ordinary landscapes, lighting, street furniture, surface materials, and architectural structures for

particular segments of School Avenue. These four walkscapes can be implemented incrementally, successively, or all at once depending upon available resources and stakeholder interest.

Akin to acupuncture, the design approach is lean, optimizing change within a system through a few strategic interventions that redirect energy flow to create efficiencies. This lean approach differs from the conventional master plan, typically based upon capital-intensive buildouts and a totalizing influence that almost never works outside of top-down decision making. Master plans only work in the climax condition of development. Walkscapes, on the other hand, is designed to offer rewarding walking experiences between WAC and FPL even if abutting vacant properties remain underdeveloped. Despite the current vacancies, Walkscapes will likely catalyze property development as well.

#### **Project Challenge: Delivering Non-Traffic Services in Auto-Oriented Environments**

School Avenue lacks adequate pedestrian facilities to support safe use of the right-of-way. Oversized travel lanes sponsor inappropriate speeds, while blocks fronted by parking lots lack sidewalks, adequate drainage, and sufficient lighting. The street's topography has led to an inferior pedestrian experience, especially for zero-car households residing in the senior housing tower who already experience mobility challenges. Walkscapes expands pedestrian facilities beyond the sidewalks to form "shared street" configurations and green stormwater infrastructure. The design solution creates unique pedestrian landscapes that intensify social and cultural programming along the street without compromising vehicular throughput or major reductions in on-street parking.

The project is particularly challenged by the introduction of a structured parking facility for WAC, the 1200-person regional performance arts facility that is doubling its programming with expectations for over 200 performances annually. The municipal garage reroutes patrons along the rear of the WAC facilities at School Avenue to the front entrance on West Avenue. The street, rather than the building, will have to establish a welcoming environment commensurate with the formal events staged at WAC.

#### **Implementation Approach: Tactical Urbanism to Get to Complete Streets**

School Avenue is a hill street; an asymmetrical type that develops episodically counter to the symmetry of a commercial main street like Dickson Street or College Avenue. The four walkscapes manage hillside transitions. Since full buildout of streetscape components represent unfamiliar types to the city—shared streets and green street infrastructure using low impact development technologies—the implementation approach is phased beginning with tactical interventions to model new corridor functions. Growing in popularity, shared streets are right-of-way configurations ideal for pedestrian-heavy streets that also accommodate traffic. Shared streets are tactics and subsets of Complete Streets. Fayetteville's versatile town square functions like a shared street, giving priority to the pedestrian while forcing motorists to behave in a social manner. Proposed street improvements combine safety objectives in traffic calming with delivery of additional ecological services in ecologically-based

stormwater management, and placemaking criteria in the enhancement of pedestrian facilities to make a safer, greener, and more memorable street.

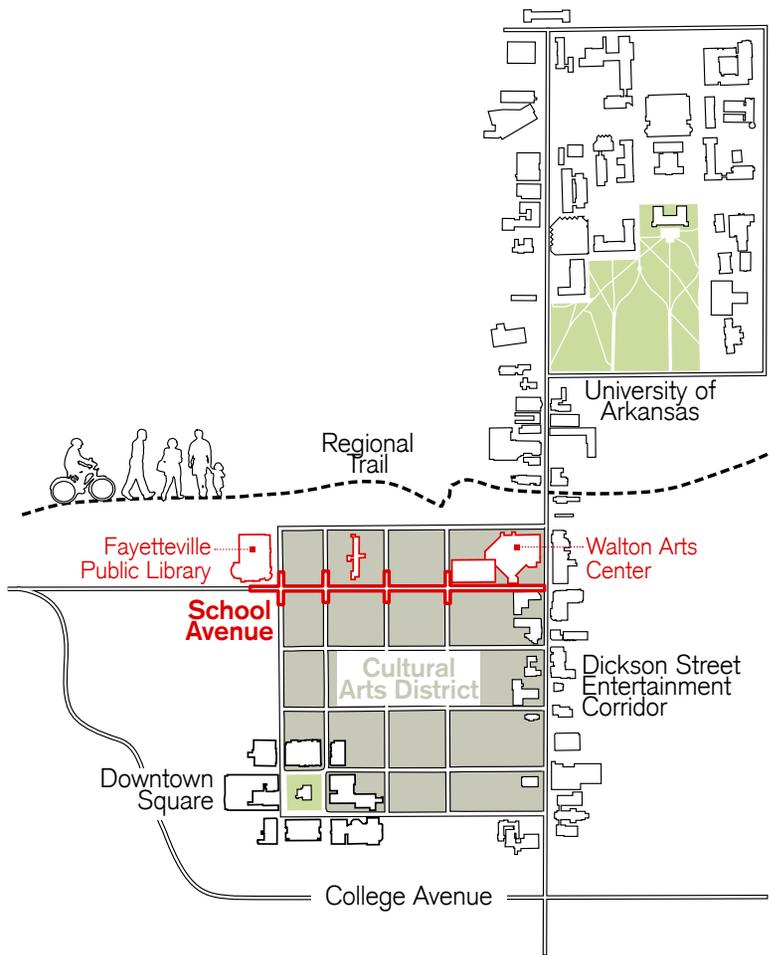
Walkscapes is designed to be staged starting with inexpensive and provisional "makeovers" that allow the City to assess out-of-the-box solutions before implementing permanent and more costly retrofits. There is no established chronology. The City may implement both tactical and permanent episodes as opportunities arise. Since streets are composed of layers, the following schedule of stepped improvements constitutes a lower risk decision-making environment toward the full buildout of Walkscapes, i.e., things do not have to happen all at once and can be changed once tried.

**Step 1. Tactical Urbanism: Install "Living Topography"** by artist Stacy Levy, an integral, temporary street art infrastructure that celebrates urban hydrological flows through representation of water management processes crest-to-crest between Dickson and Center Streets. Tactical interventions model enhanced livability through transitional and lean strategies, using elements like paint, tape, container gardens, lawn furniture, and roll-up surfaces. Implementation is scheduled to occur in 2016 and will be funded by WAC per conditions outlined in the Our Town grant made to the City.

**Step 2. Soft Infrastructure: Stitch the Pedestrian Realm** through installation of pedestrian tables at intersections while completing the sidewalk network with accompanying furnishings and other townscape elements. Surface investments like pavement, lighting, furnishings, signage, and landscape—townscaping elements—define the aesthetic quality and serial experience in streetscapes. Shared space configurations at both ends of Walkscapes give priority to pedestrians as they share right-of-way space with motorists—much like plazas.

**Step 3. Hard Infrastructure: Develop Urban Rooms** through installation of low impact stormwater management infrastructure and street geometry realignments that reallocate right-of-way space. Install pedestrian amenities related to fixed architectural structures—walls, lighting, canopies, and art boxes. The design approach outlines incremental tactical-to-permanent investments by different actors as their funds, political wills, and schedules permit.

*Walkscapes* employs provisional strategies in *tactical urbanism* to test emergent national best practices in street design that are still considered to be nonconforming within the City's codes. Proposed street improvements reallocate space designated for vehicular travel to pedestrian facilities—a road diet which will dampen traffic speed. Tactical strategies begin with painting the street for traffic calming by an environmental artist known for her work on infrastructural projects. Subsequent improvements harness right-of-way, sidewalk, and quasi-public space to create unique pedestrian geographies that also solve for local infrastructure problems (drainage, aesthetics, auto-dominance, lack of pedestrian facilities, lighting, and handicapped accessibility). Per NEA funding conditions, the project demonstrates how the arts, including urban design, may drive economic development and civic improvement.

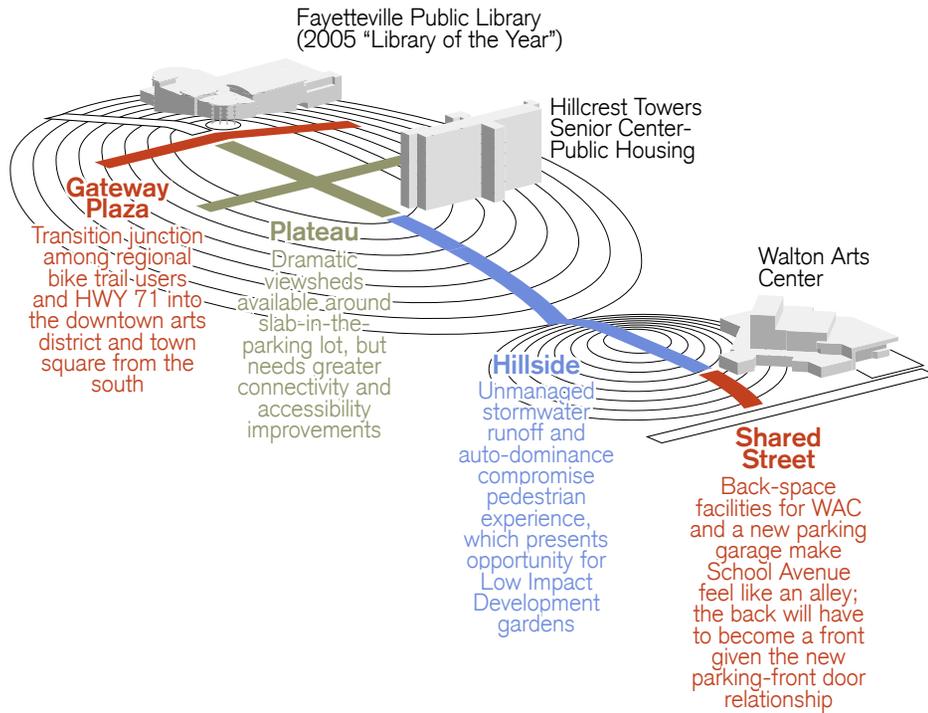


Downtown Fayetteville, Arkansas (Population 75,000)



*"The city is the realization of the ancient human dream of the labyrinth. Without knowing it, the flaneur is devoted to this reality....Landscape, this is what the city becomes for the flaneur. Or more precisely: for him the city splits into its dialectical poles. It opens to him like a landscape and encloses him like a room."*

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*



## Walkscapes

Four contextually-responsive pedestrian geographies functioning like "drifts" emerge to thicken commonplace sidewalk spaces. *Walkscapes* pilots Complete Streets principles to rebalance space allocations between pedestrians and motorists, but goes beyond Complete Streets to explore the sidewalk as an independent art-form.





**4** Gateway Plaza Walkscape

Plateau Walkscape **3**

**2** Hillside Walkscape

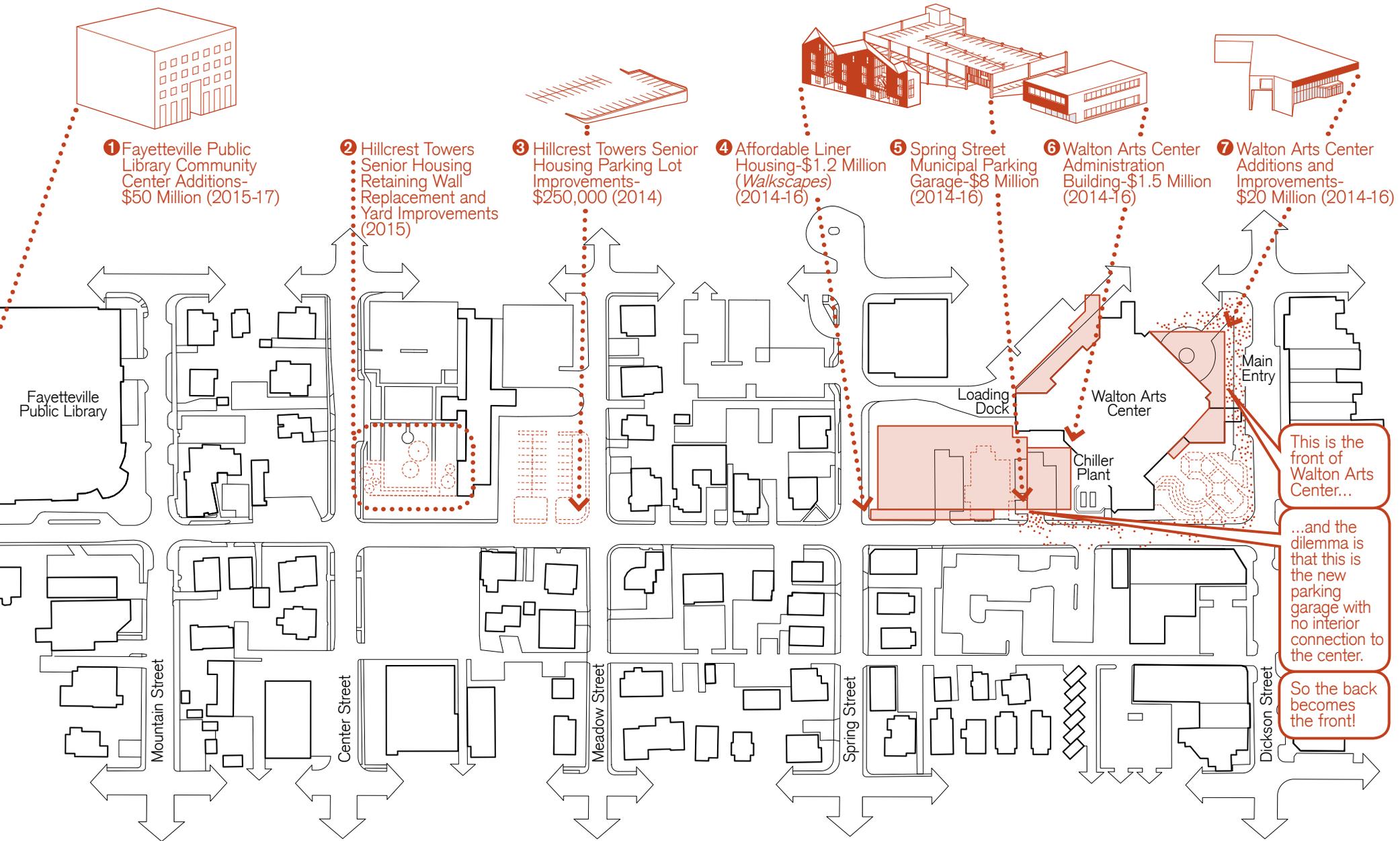
**1** Shared Street Walkscape

*"Walking is useful for architecture as a cognitive and design tool, as a means of recognizing a geography in the chaos of the peripheries, and as a means through which to invent new ways to intervene in public metropolitan spaces, to investigate them and make them visible."*

Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*

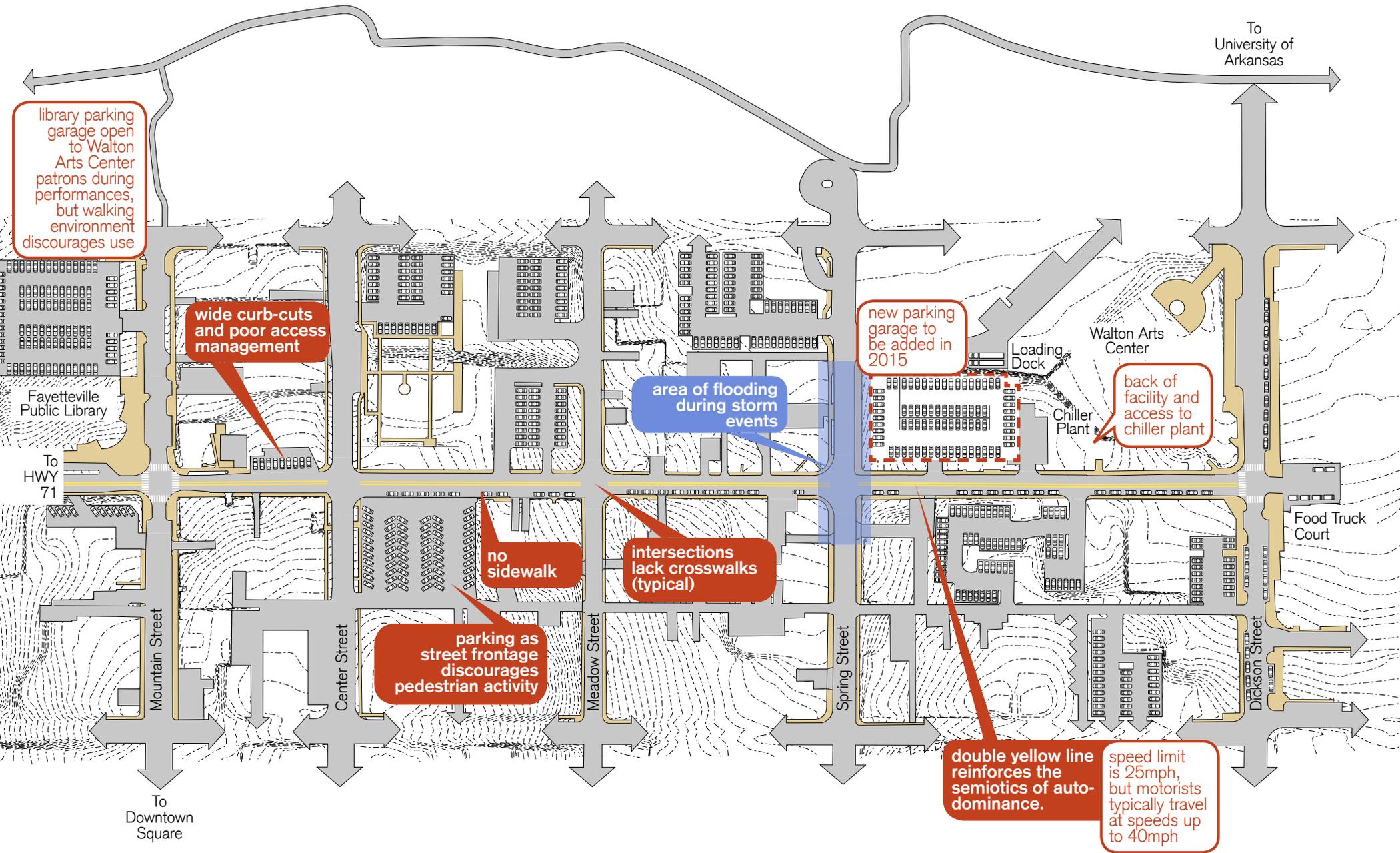
# Walkscapes: From Sidewalks to Rooms

...we are exploring the sidewalk as an independent art-form



## Immediate Community Investments by Others

The challenge to the public sector involves framing a burgeoning arts economy from a commonplace and narrow right-of-way. The objective is to structure a new image to the downtown arts district commensurate with significant investments underway by the private sector.



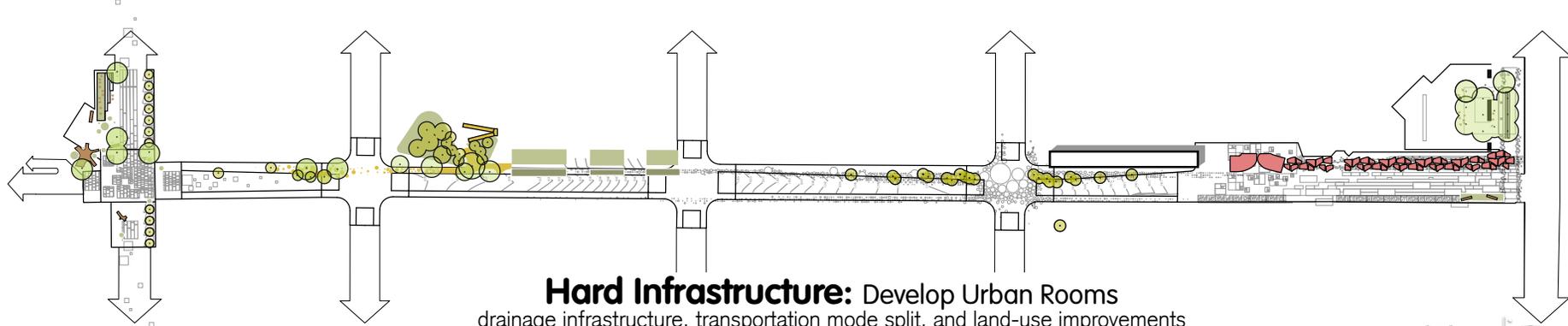
## Transportation Context

School Avenue is an “incomplete street” privileging the automobile. Complete Streets is a planning approach that requires streets to accommodate all modes of travel accessible for users of all ages and abilities. While Complete Streets facilitates safe and convenient travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users, they also provide other non-traffic services related to aesthetics, economic development, health, and the environment.

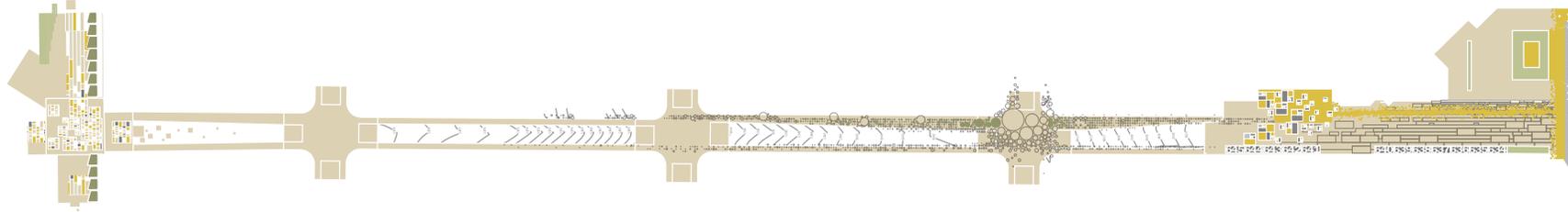


## Land Use Context ■ color indicates non-residential land uses

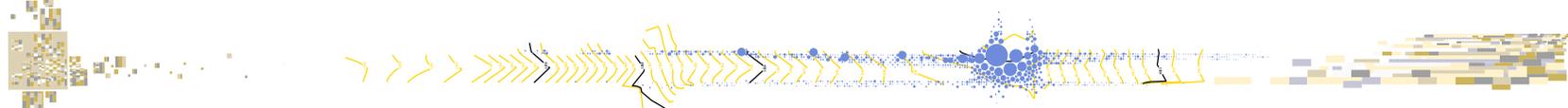
Despite its downtown location, mixed uses, and gateway function, School Avenue's surprisingly low Walkscore (80-88) is likely due to inadequate pedestrian facilities and gaps in the building fabric. Though once an important commercial and institutional arterial, the street has suffered from inferior development and a lack of vision.



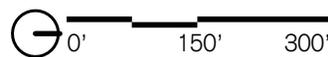
**Hard Infrastructure:** Develop Urban Rooms  
 drainage infrastructure, transportation mode split, and land-use improvements



**Soft Infrastructure:** Stitch the Pedestrian Realm  
 serial and townscaping surface investments



**Tactical Urbanism:** Install "Living Topography" and Shared Plazas  
 immediate and transitional installations



## Successional Urbanism

Complete Streets are ecologies that evolve complex spatial relationships over time, from establishment conditions to mature climax states. Due to disconnects among **policies, systems** (process used to plan and build streets) and **environments** (the street), *Walkscapes* employs successional development techniques to enhance livability with each new layer of investment. Here, design pushes alignment among policy, system, and environment.

Fayetteville Public Library

Remove retaining wall and connect housing lawn to the Walkscapes.

# Existing Conditions

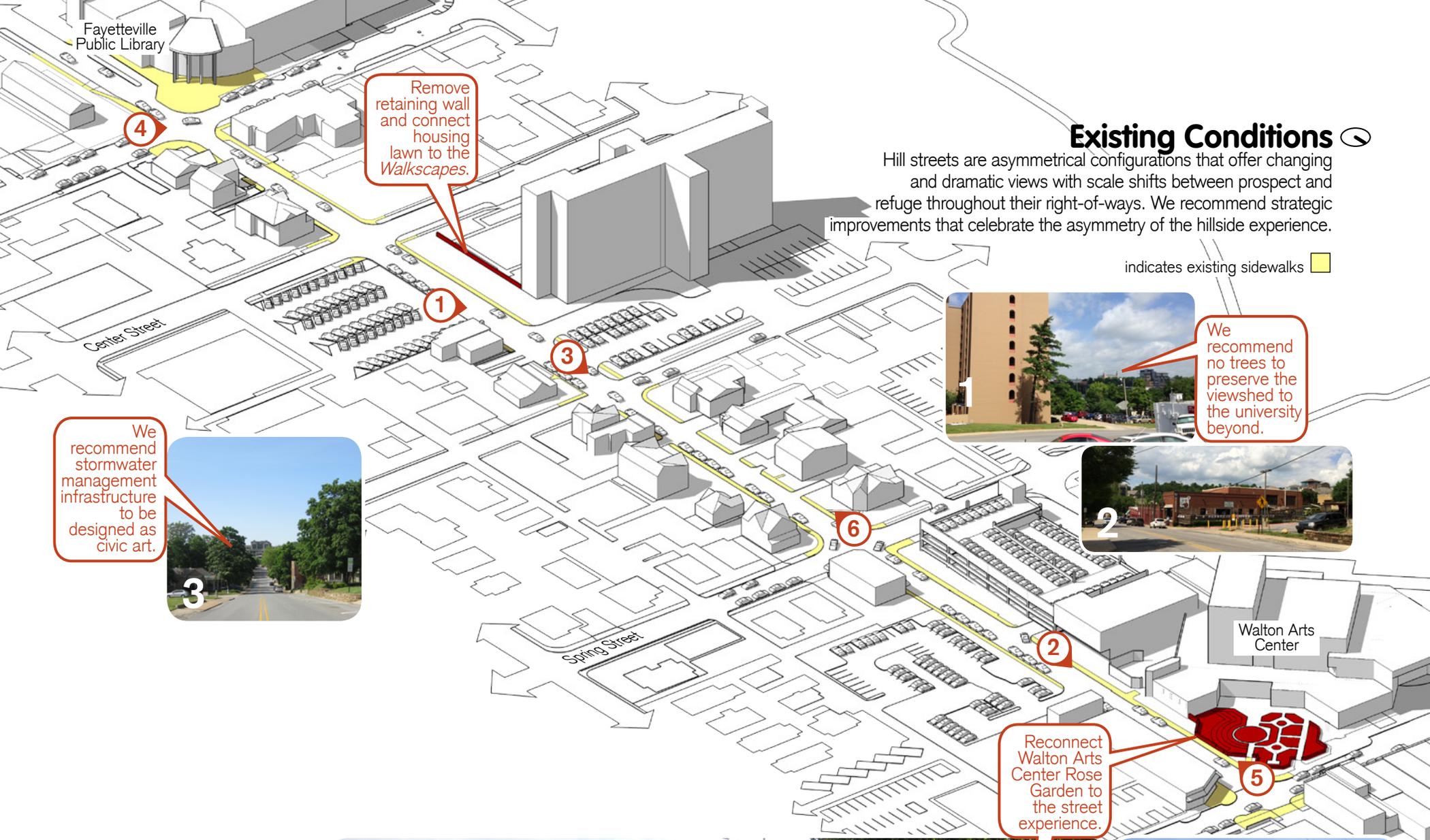
Hill streets are asymmetrical configurations that offer changing and dramatic views with scale shifts between prospect and refuge throughout their right-of-ways. We recommend strategic improvements that celebrate the asymmetry of the hillside experience.

indicates existing sidewalks

We recommend stormwater management infrastructure to be designed as civic art.

We recommend no trees to preserve the viewshed to the university beyond.

Reconnect Walton Arts Center Rose Garden to the street experience.



Fayetteville  
Public Library

## Tactical Urbanism: Install “Living Topography” and Shared Plazas

Tactical interventions model enhanced livability through transitional strategies often outside of official development culture. Paint, tape, portable furniture, and container gardens are standard materials used to immediately model new spatial arrangements and travel behavior toward more supportive policy and investment.

“Living Topography” is a thermoplastic paint installation proposed from hillcrest to hillcrest.

Paint asphalt at proposed gateways to provide a sense of arrival.

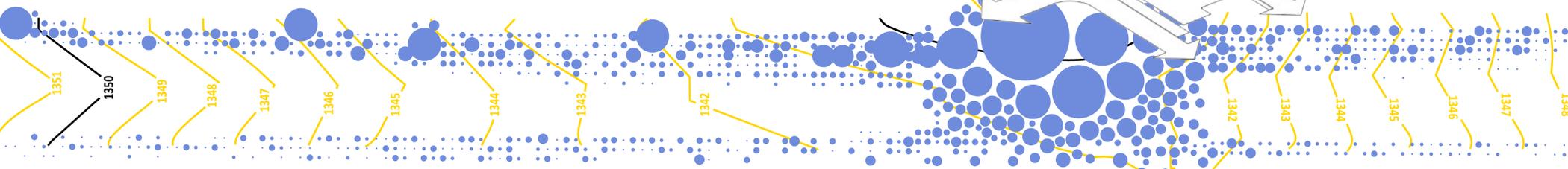
Walton Arts Center

Dickson Street

Center Street

Meadow Street

Spring Street



Fayetteville Public Library

# Soft Infrastructure: Stitch the Pedestrian Realm

Surface investments like pavement, lights, furnishings, signage, and landscape—townscaping elements—define the aesthetic quality and serial experience in streetscapes. These components influence the range of non-traffic social functions and ecological services possible within the street. Like retail, they can be rotated out periodically as tastes change.

indicates new pedestrian tables

indicates new pedestrian sidewalks

Pedestrian tables are level with the sidewalk so that pedestrians do not step down into traffic, but rather vehicles move up to the pedestrian level.

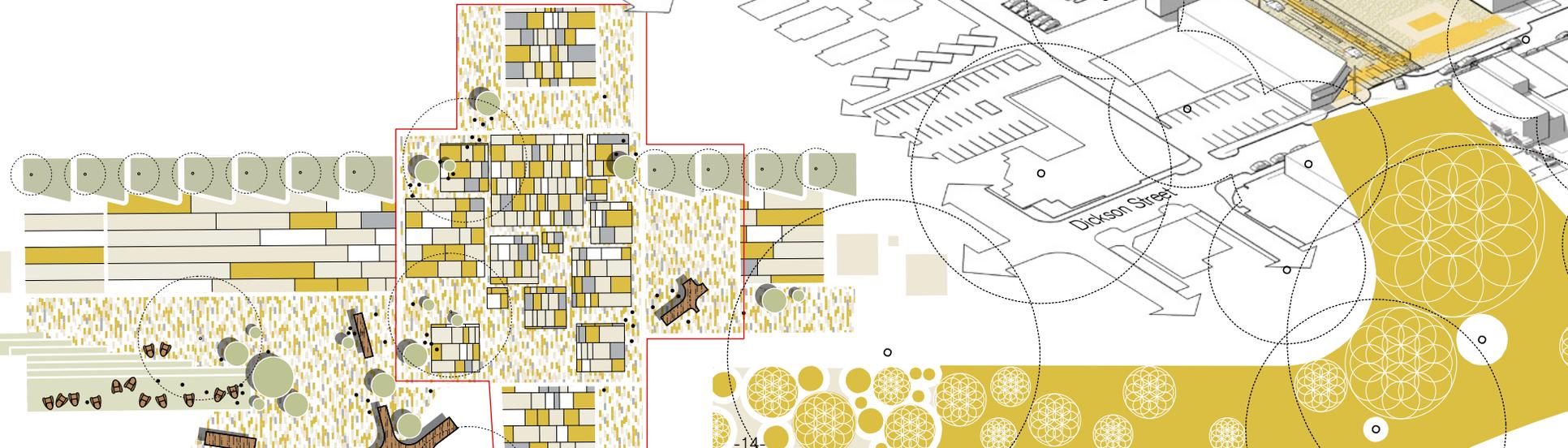
Thermoplastic paint will be replaced by permanent Low Impact Development infrastructure.

Meadow Street

Spring Street

Walton Arts Center

Dickson Street



Fayetteville  
Public Library

### 4 Gateway Plaza Walkscape see page x

### 3 Plateau Walkscape see page x

### 2 Hillside Walkscape see page x

### 1 Shared Street Walkscape see page x

## Hard Infrastructure: Develop Urban Rooms

Core street functioning is determined by drainage infrastructure and fixed geometries allocating mode splits among pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users. Geometry shapes traffic behavior and speeds (levels of service) ultimately influencing land-use patterns and livability. Land-use improvements through frontages, architectural structures, and rooms complete the street as a public space.

outline indicates infill potential

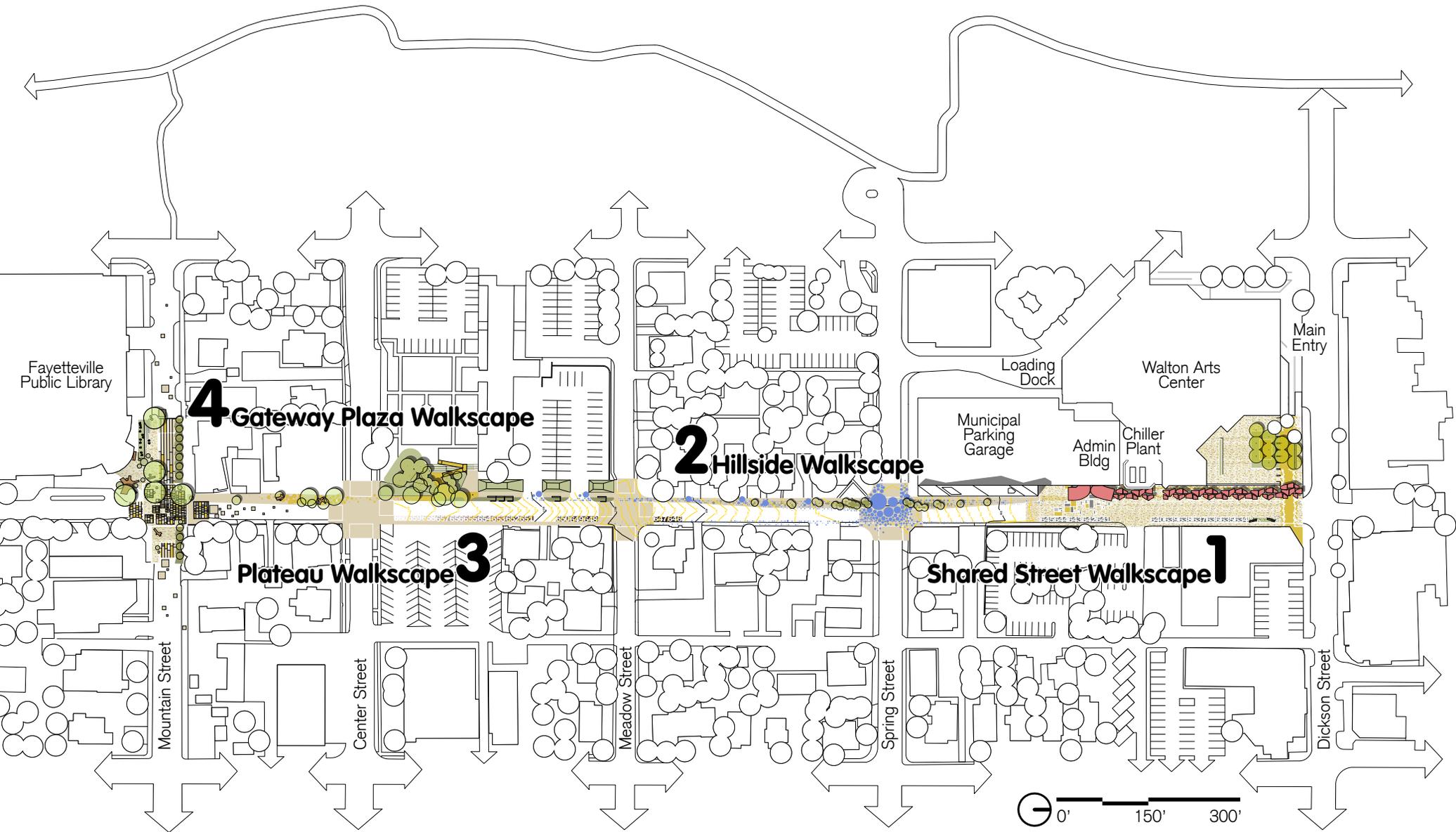
Shade canopy creates continuous walk from parking garage to the Walton Arts Center's main entrance.

Rose Garden is extended into right-of-way to provide better connections to the street.

Walton Arts Center

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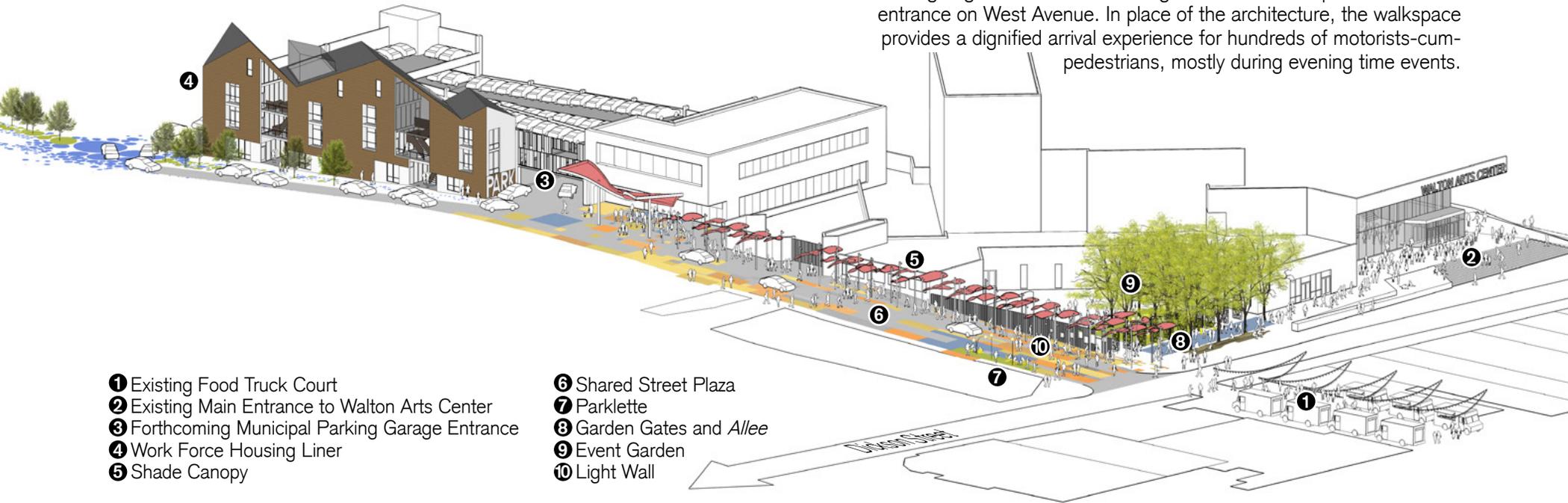


## Walkscapes Plan

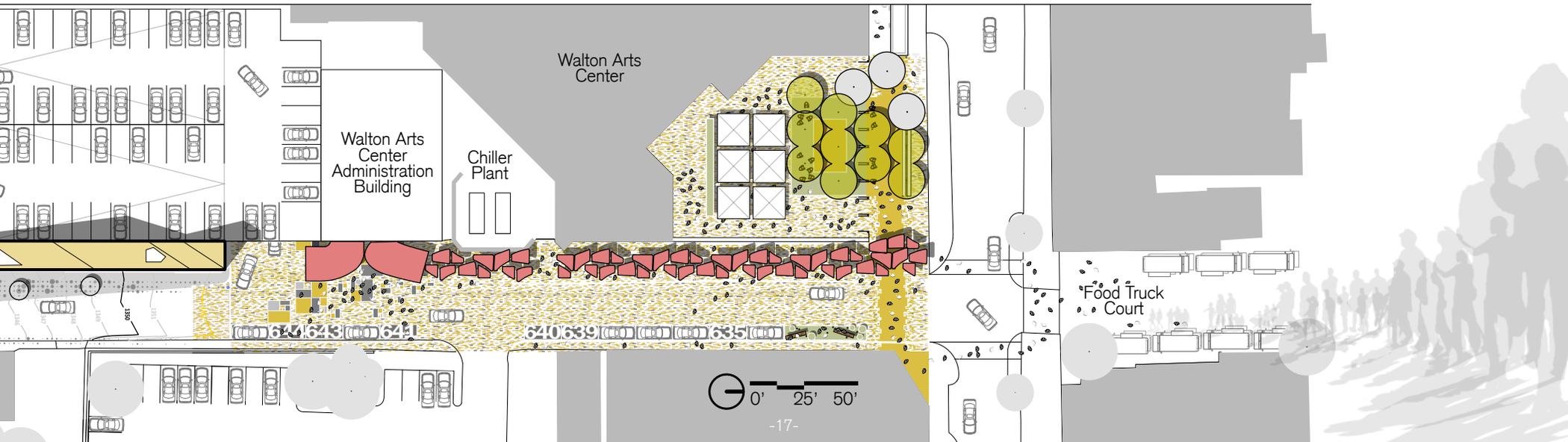
School Avenue is a hill street; an asymmetrical type that develops episodically, counter to the symmetry of the commercial main street into which it dead ends. Four pedestrian geographies manage hillside transitions through hyper-development of the sidewalk as an independent art-form, sometimes taking over the street. *Walkscapes* offers a model of urban coherence tailored to underdeveloped middle-American landscapes where buildings are weak space definers.

# 1 Shared Street Walkscape

This walkscape reclaims School Avenue's gateway function to downtown through a shared street configuration despite WAC's treatment of School Avenue as an alley. WAC patrons parking in the new garage will be rerouted along the WAC's backspace to the front entrance on West Avenue. In place of the architecture, the walkspace provides a dignified arrival experience for hundreds of motorists-cum-pedestrians, mostly during evening time events.



- 1 Existing Food Truck Court
- 2 Existing Main Entrance to Walton Arts Center
- 3 Forthcoming Municipal Parking Garage Entrance
- 4 Work Force Housing Liner
- 5 Shade Canopy
- 6 Shared Street Plaza
- 7 Parklette
- 8 Garden Gates and Allée
- 9 Event Garden
- 10 Light Wall



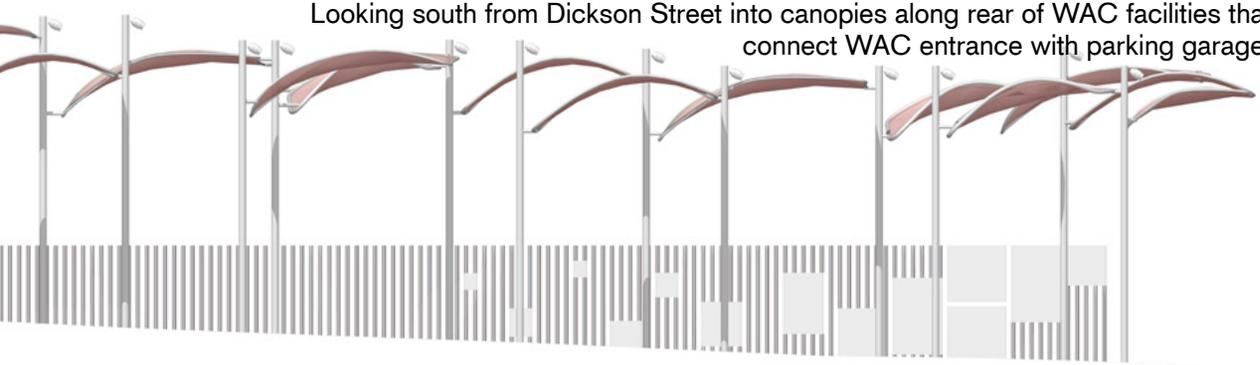


Looking south from Dickson Street onto new shared street segment of School Avenue, establishing a new entrance to the main commercial street.



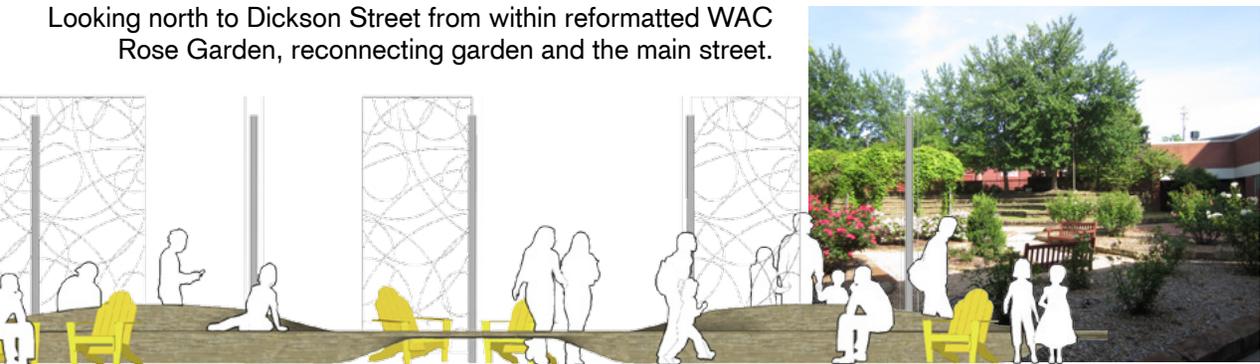


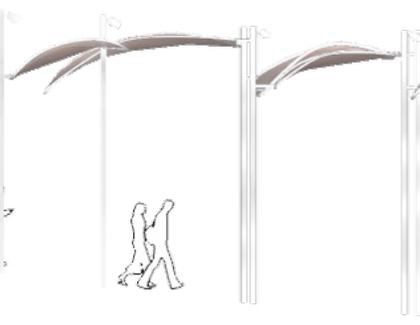
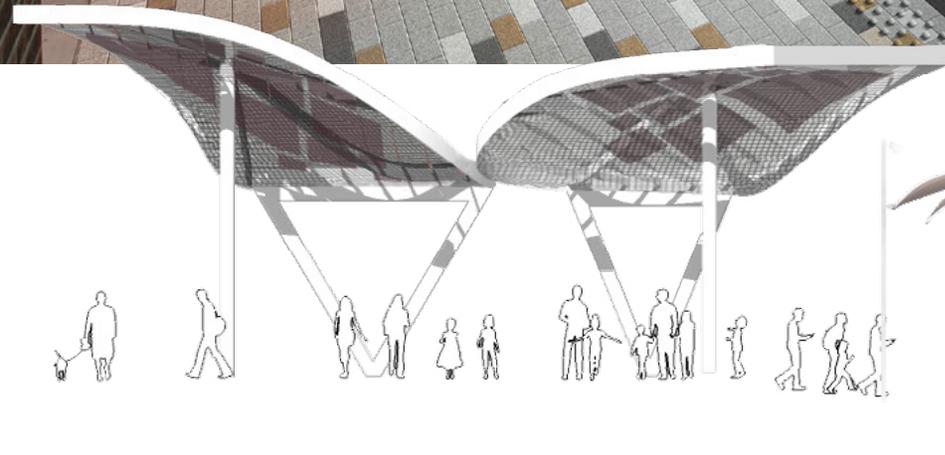
Looking south from Dickson Street into canopies along rear of WAC facilities that connect WAC entrance with parking garage.





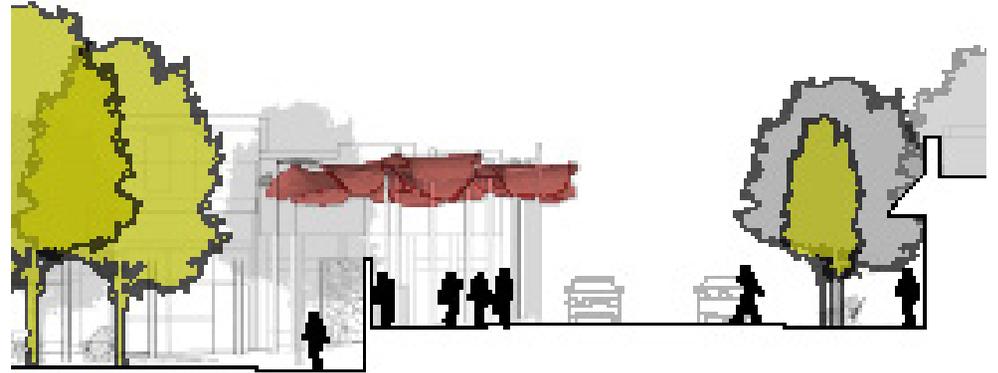
Looking north to Dickson Street from within reformatted WAC Rose Garden, reconnecting garden and the main street.





## Recommendations: Shared Street Walkscape

- Coordinate improvements to Dickson Street, School Avenue, and WAC Rose Garden with WAC as they undertake construction over the next two years. The critical issue is striking the right balance between improving public access to the Rose Garden and providing capability to secure garden for closed functions.
- Coordinate construction of canopies lining School Avenue between new municipal parking structure and Dickson Street with WAC as they undertake construction over the next two years.
- Expand sidewalk width on south side of Dickson Street at WAC Rose Garden.



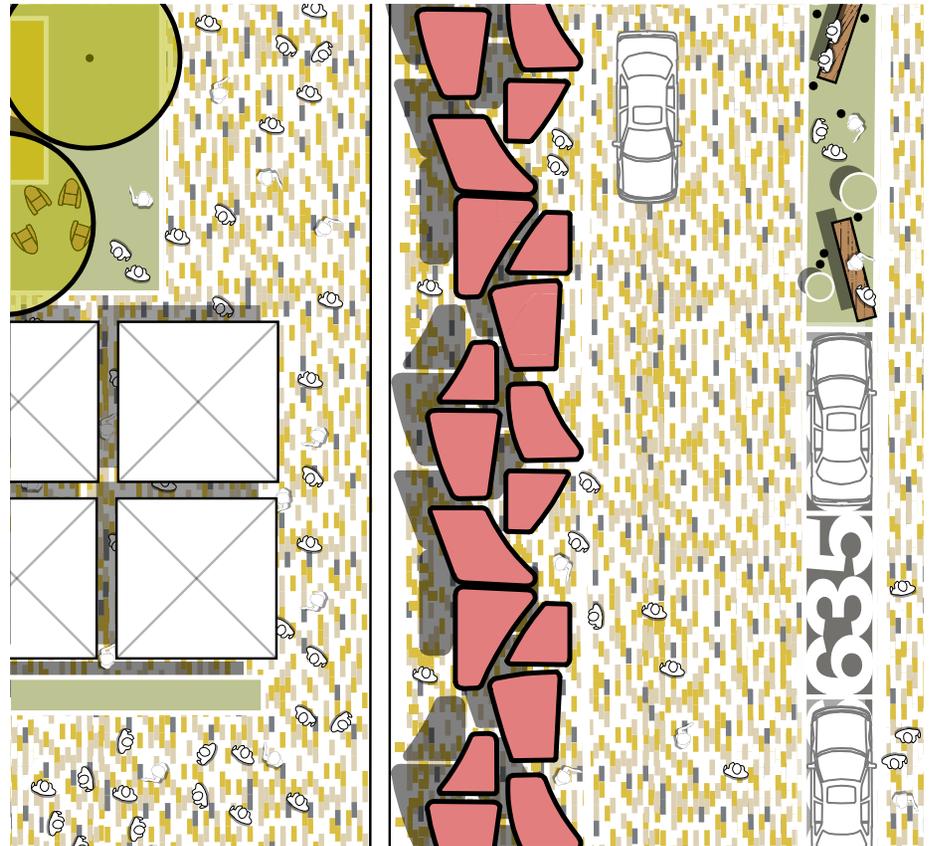
EXAMPLES



**Mifflin Street Woonerf**  
Madison, Wisconsin

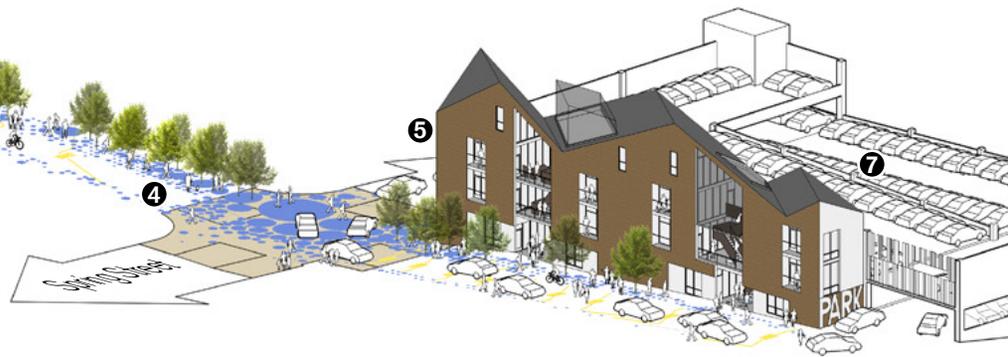
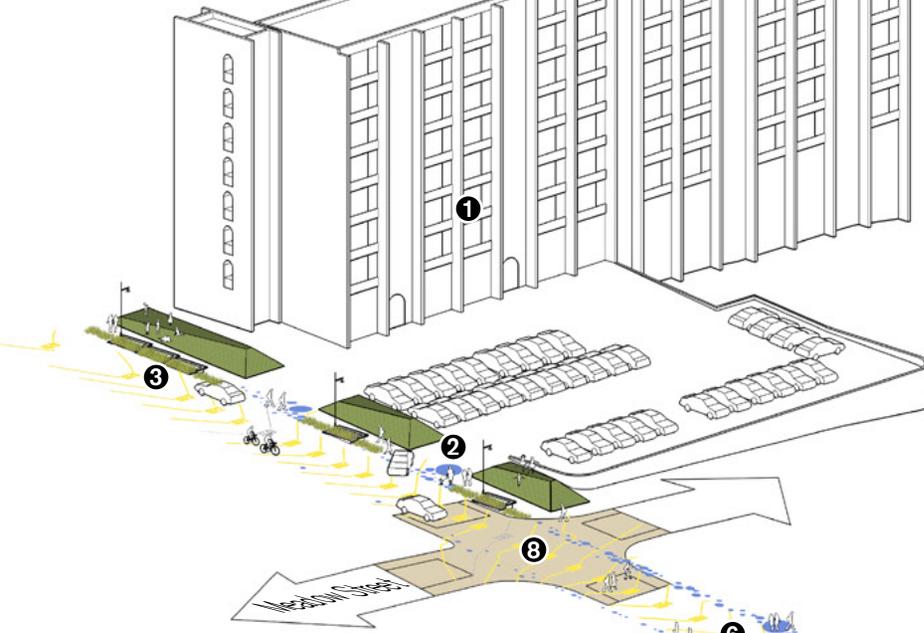


**Willamette Street**  
Eugene, Oregon

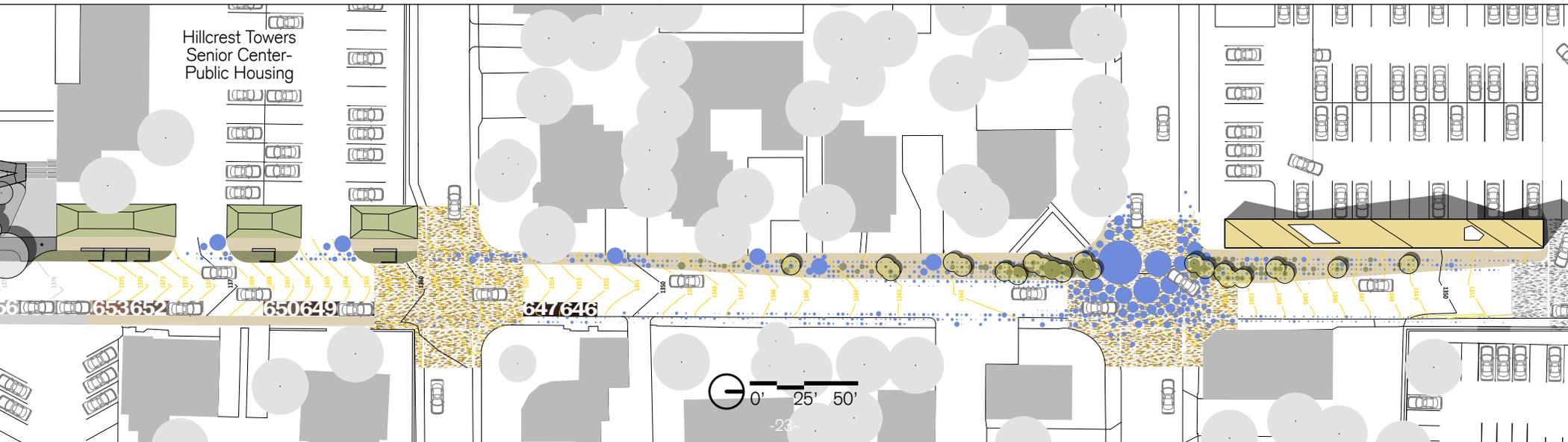


# 2 Hillside Walkscape

This walkscape celebrates moving between high and low points. Due to flooding from the absence of stormwater management, this walkscape provides most of the project's Low Impact Development infrastructure through terraced street gardens. At the low point, the Crepe Myrtle glacia, or jumbo flush curb functions like a giant eco-sponge managing urban stormwater runoff. Additional LID facilities include weirs for flow control, filtration strips for sedimentation, bioswales and tree box filters.



- 1 Existing Senior Public Housing
- 2 Mounded Earthwork
- 3 Terraced LID Gardens
- 4 LID Glacia Garden
- 5 Work Force Housing Liner
- 6 "Living Topography" Installation
- 7 Forthcoming Municipal Parking Garage
- 8 Pedestrian Table



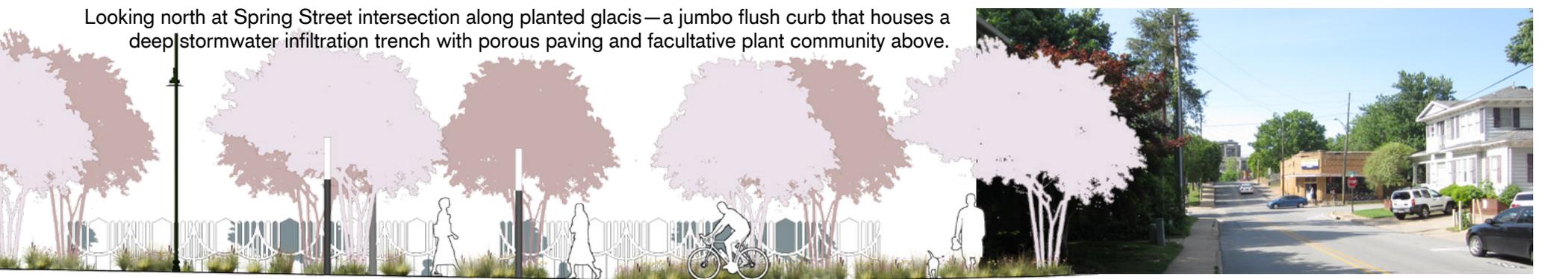


Looking south at School Avenue and Spring Street intersection along 16-foot wide liner housing with affordable and market rate units.





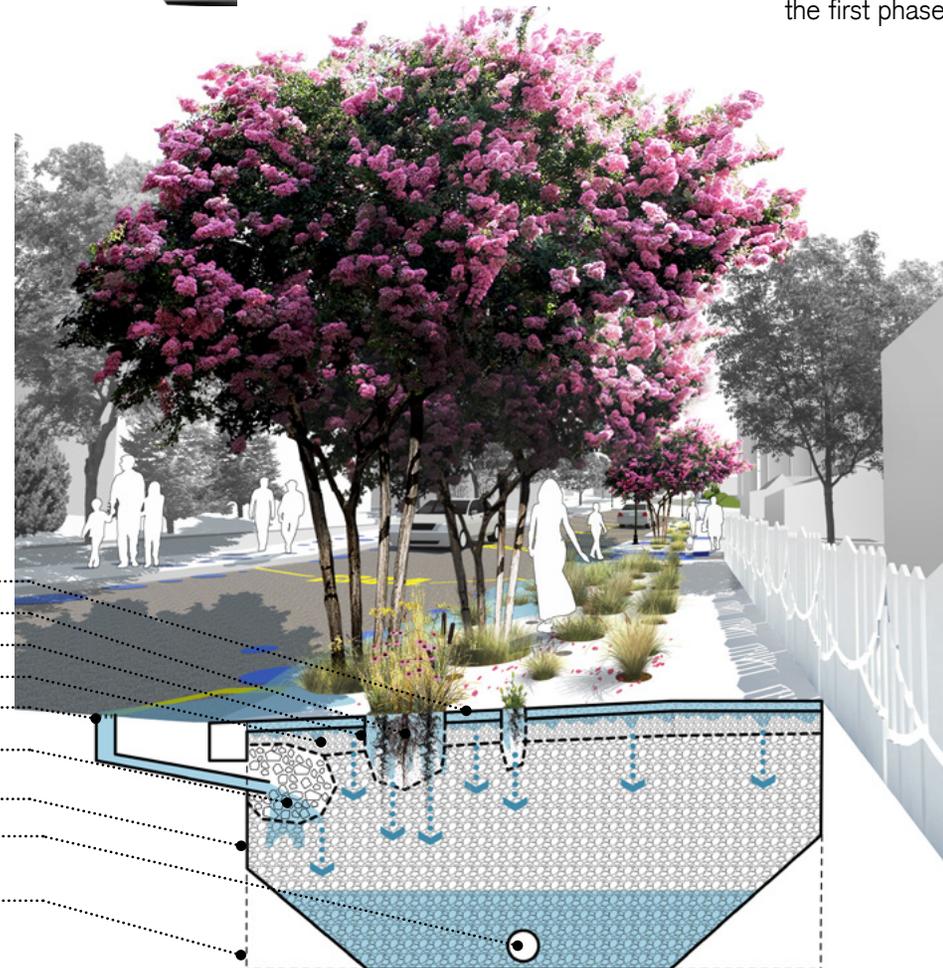
Looking north at Spring Street intersection along planted glaci— a jumbo flush curb that houses a deep stormwater infiltration trench with porous paving and facultative plant community above.





Terraced Bioswale: Looking south from within terraced rain gardens and hillside berms that shield the housing authority's parking lot.

Infiltration Trench: Looking south on School Avenue along planted glazis, the successional stage from the painted "Living Topography" in the first phase.



- .....Utility Conduit
- .....Notched Weir
- .....6" Maximum Depth
- .....18" Minimum Topsoil
- .....1/4" Gravel
- .....Raised Dome Curb Inlet (Energy Dissipation)
- .....3/4" Gravel
- .....6" slotted and corrugated HDPE Under Drain Pipe
- .....Impermeable Woven Liner

- Porous Concrete .....
- Topsoil .....
- Filter Fabric .....
- 1/4" Gravel .....
- Cast Iron Bridge Drain .....
- 6" Angled Stone (Energy Dissipation) .....
- Impermeable Liner .....
- 6" slotted and corrugated HDPE Under Drain Pipe .....
- Concrete Partition Wall Every 2' of Vertical Fall .....

## Hillside Low Impact Development Technologies

## Recommendations: Hillside Walkscape

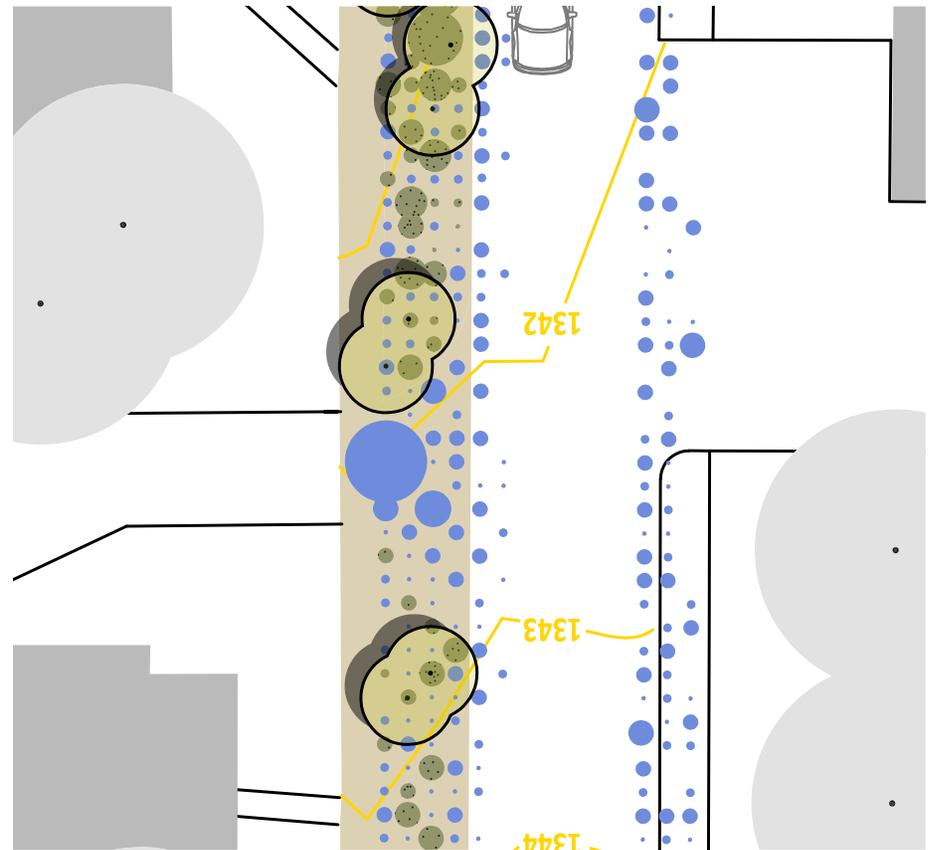
- Installation of Low Impact Development strategies should be considered, particularly on hill streets that lack water management and experience chronic flooding like that at the Spring Street intersection. See Seattle’s SEA Streets program for precedents on hillside water management techniques.
- Keeping in mind the substance of the cultural investments underway, ensure that the liner housing attached to the municipal parking structure creates desirable frontage through design of adequate porosity (i.e., window proportions), pedestrian amenities (e.g., balconies, stoops, porches), and material considerations.



**Maynard Street**  
Seattle, Washington

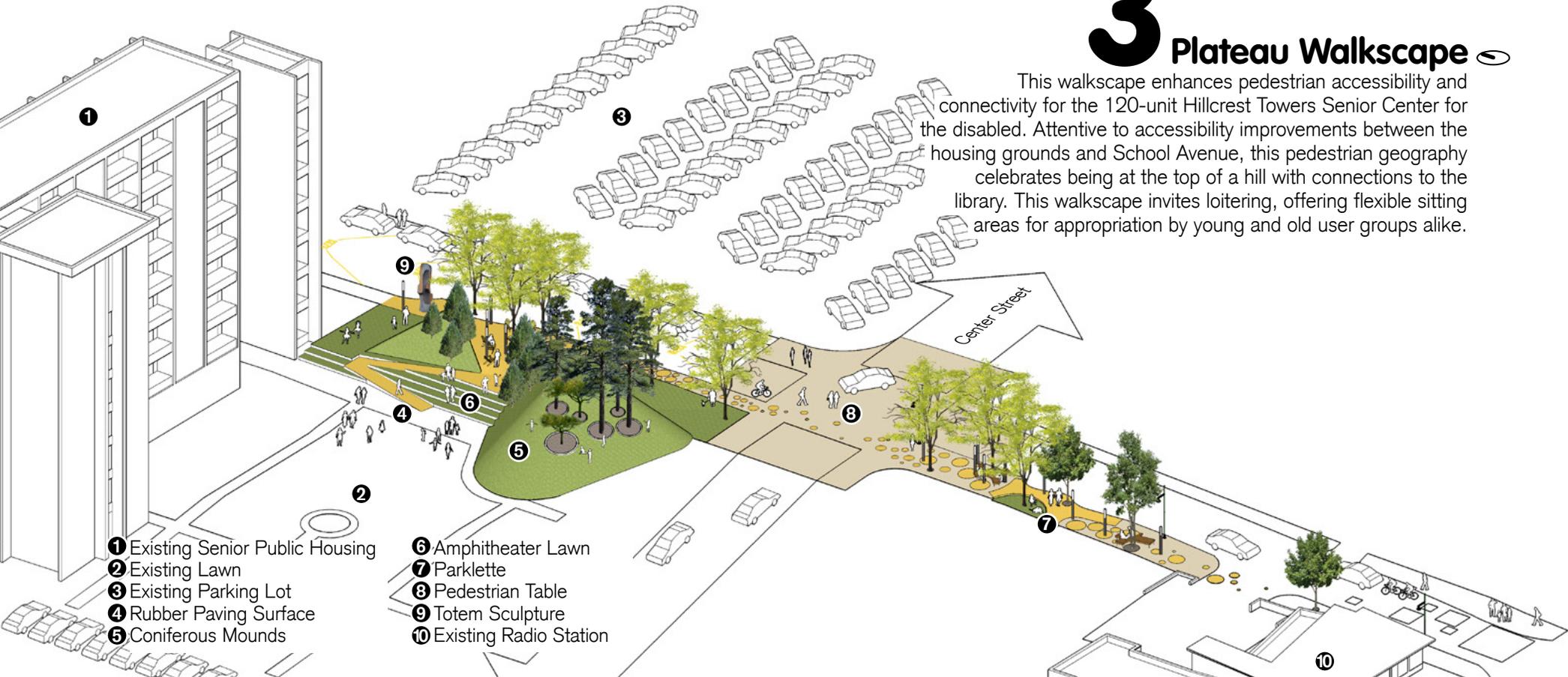


**Growing Vine Street**  
Seattle, Washington



# 3 Plateau Walkscape

This walkscape enhances pedestrian accessibility and connectivity for the 120-unit Hillcrest Towers Senior Center for the disabled. Attentive to accessibility improvements between the housing grounds and School Avenue, this pedestrian geography celebrates being at the top of a hill with connections to the library. This walkscape invites loitering, offering flexible sitting areas for appropriation by young and old user groups alike.

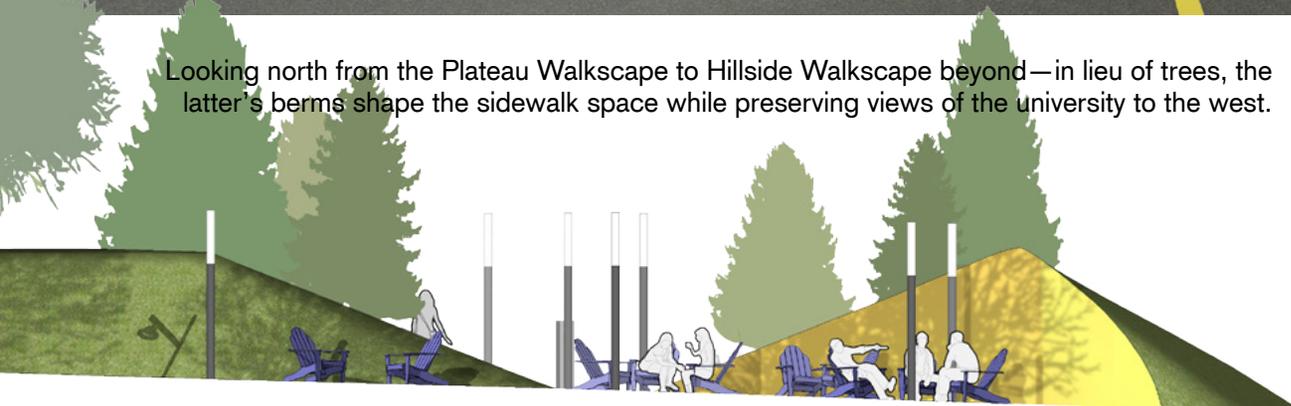


- 1 Existing Senior Public Housing
- 2 Existing Lawn
- 3 Existing Parking Lot
- 4 Rubber Paving Surface
- 5 Coniferous Mounds
- 6 Amphitheater Lawn
- 7 Parklette
- 8 Pedestrian Table
- 9 Totem Sculpture
- 10 Existing Radio Station



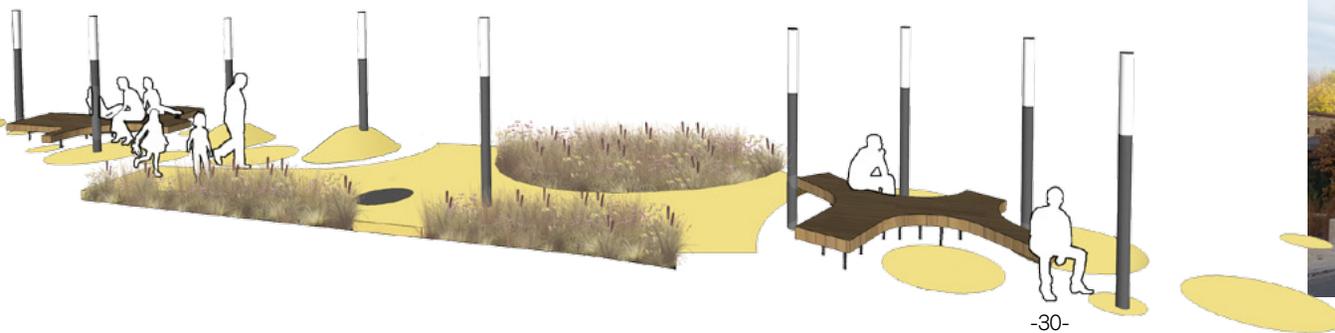


Looking north from the Plateau Walkscape to Hillside Walkscape beyond—in lieu of trees, the latter's berms shape the sidewalk space while preserving views of the university to the west.





Looking north along the Plateau Walkscape with new commercial/residential infill.



## Recommendations: Plateau Walkscape

- Since the housing authority needs to replace its existing retaining wall facing School Avenue, coordinate improved connections to School Avenue using landscaped terraces in lieu of a wall.
- Maximize sidewalk width on west side between Center and Mountain Streets to create a parklette.



EXAMPLES

creative application of rubber surfaces



### Safe Zone

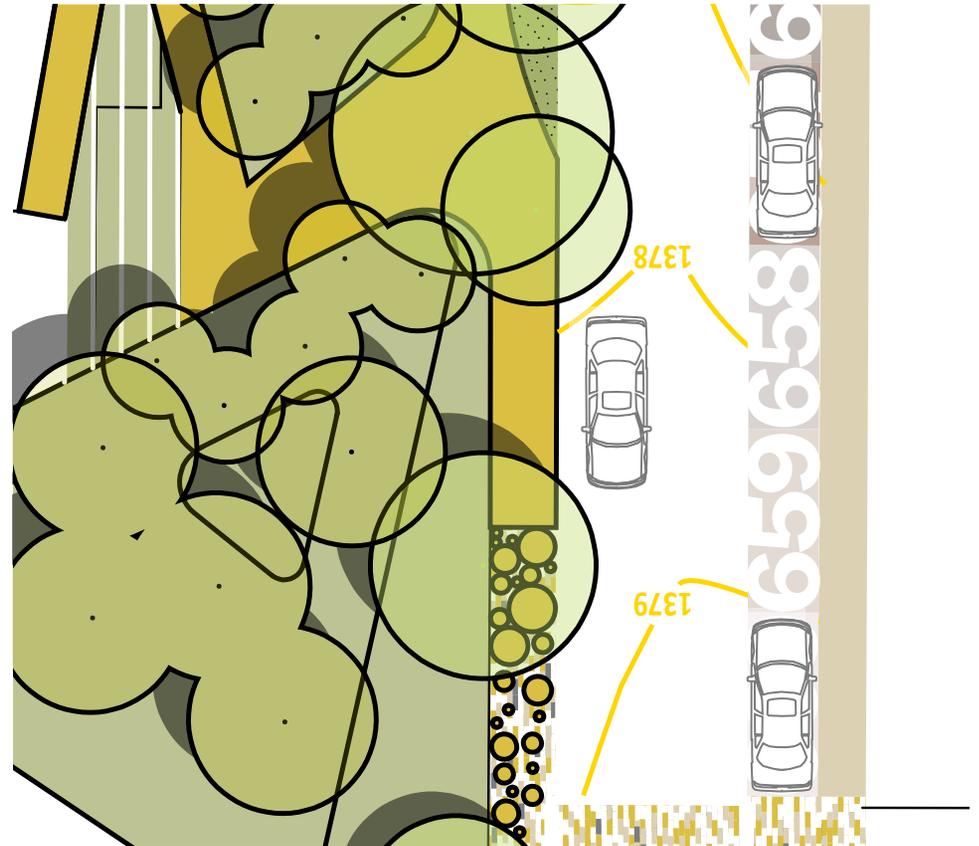
Stoss Landscape Urbanism:  
7th International Garden Festival,  
Reford Gardens Quebec,  
Canada

inexpensive lawnchairs



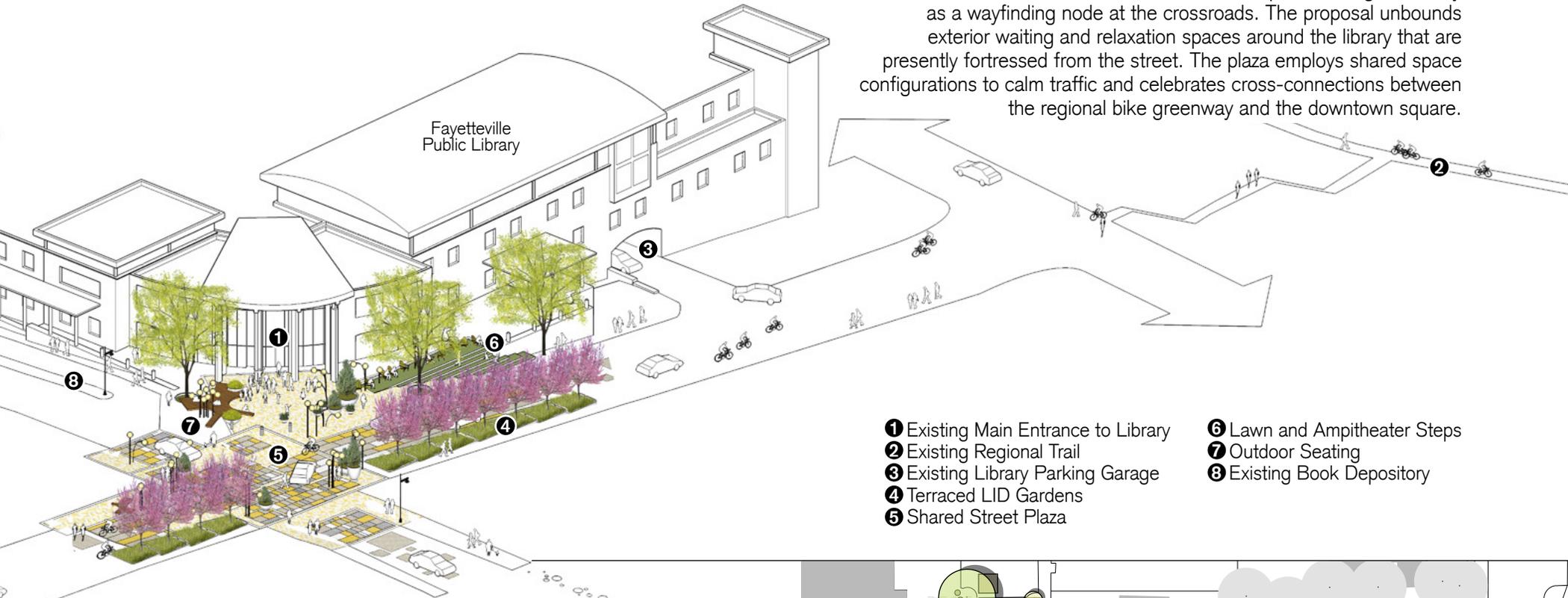
### Buffalo Waterfront Park

Buffalo, New York



# 4 Gateway Plaza Walkscape

As one of the four corners to the downtown district, this walkscape clarifies inside/outside urban relationships, featuring the library as a wayfinding node at the crossroads. The proposal unbounds exterior waiting and relaxation spaces around the library that are presently fortressd from the street. The plaza employs shared space configurations to calm traffic and celebrates cross-connections between the regional bike greenway and the downtown square.

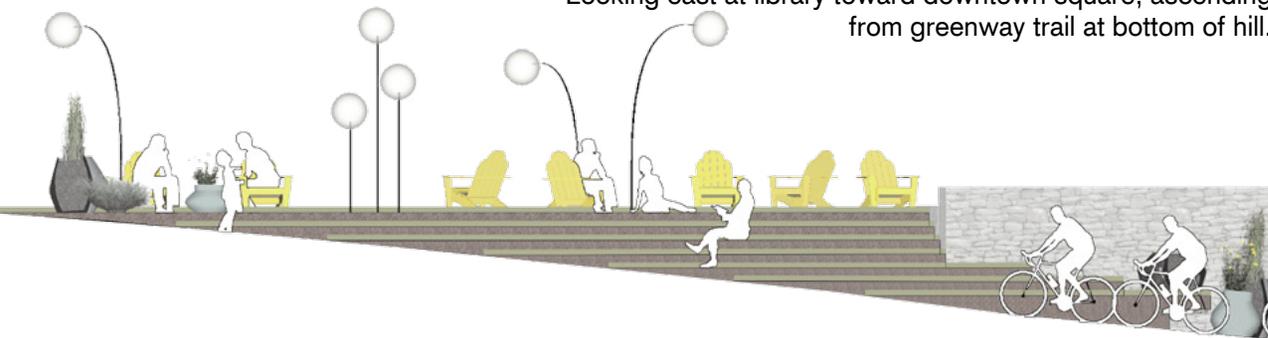


- 1 Existing Main Entrance to Library
- 2 Existing Regional Trail
- 3 Existing Library Parking Garage
- 4 Terraced LID Gardens
- 5 Shared Street Plaza
- 6 Lawn and Ampitheater Steps
- 7 Outdoor Seating
- 8 Existing Book Depository





Looking east at library toward downtown square, ascending from greenway trail at bottom of hill.

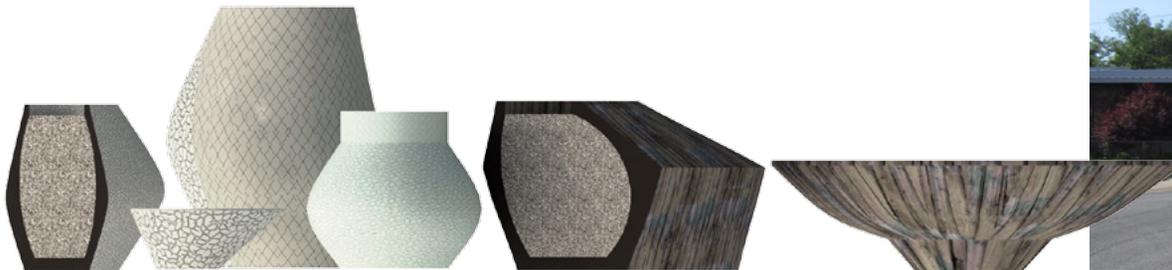


*"We found that if you make more road space, you get more cars. If you make more bike lanes, you get more bikes. If you make more space for people, you get more people and of course then you get public life."*

Jan Gehl

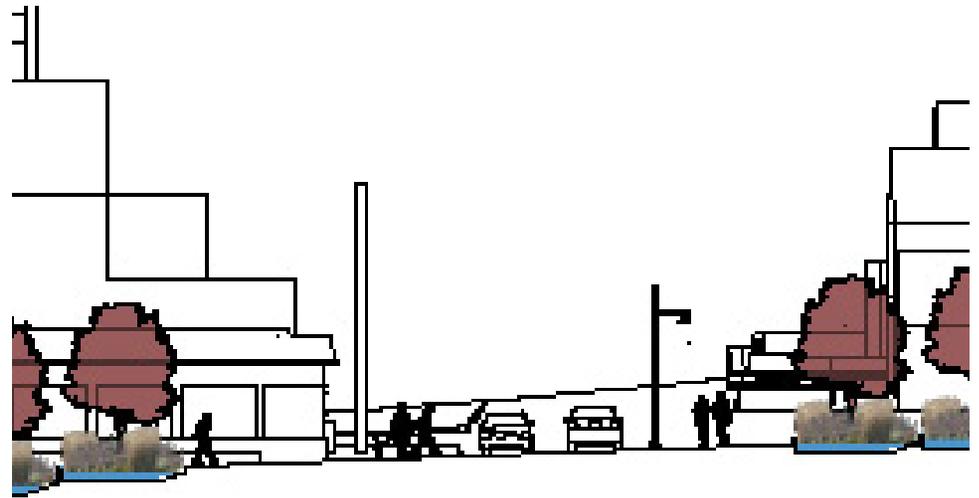


Looking north at library on the Mountain Street shared plaza—a gateway to the downtown arts district and town square to the east.



## Recommendations: Gateway Plaza Walkscape

- Coordinate street edge improvements with the library to enhance the library's visual connection to Mountain Street and KUAF radio Station across the street.
- Install accent lighting as a permanent art installation to create a gateway effect at the intersection.



EXAMPLES



**Maynard Street**  
Seattle, Washington

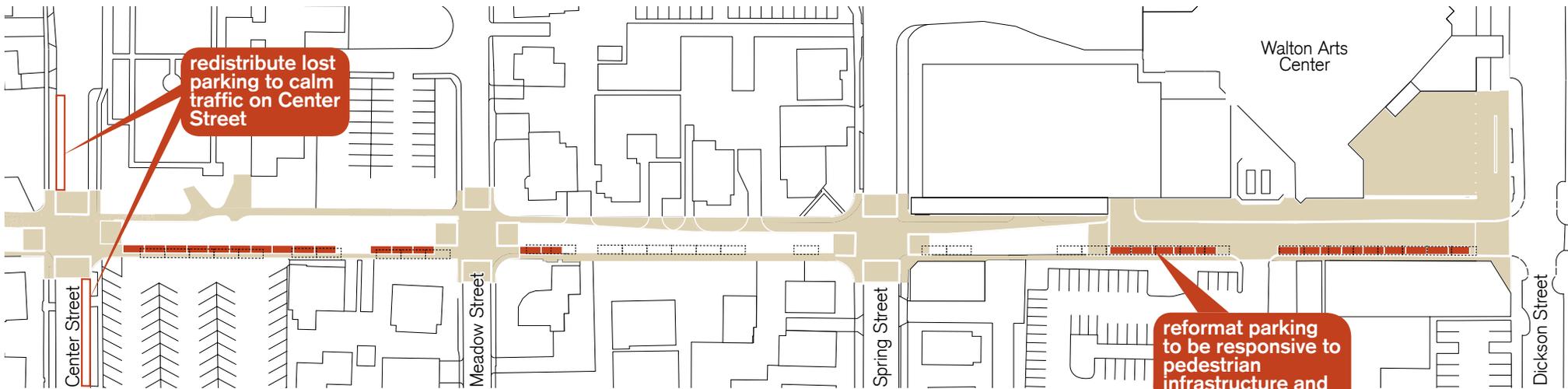


**Growing Vine Street**  
Seattle, Washington





**Existing Street Parking (36 spaces)**



**Proposed Street Parking (29 spaces)**



- indicates new on-street parking
- indicates existing on-street parking
- indicates new street geometry

## Funding Recommendations

- Pursue an EPA Clean Water Act nonpoint Source Grant (Section 319 Grant for the Low Impact Development strategies in the Hillside and Plateau Walkscapes. Distributed through the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Section 319 grants target demonstration water quality protection projects for stormwater management and nonpoint source pollution control. Urban projects are particularly competitive.
- Submit a letter of inquiry to ArtPlace America for detail design, construction documents, and/or construction itself for pavement treatments, canopies, street furniture, and lighting in the Gateway Plaza and Shared Street. ArtPlace America is a collaboration of 12 private foundations and several federal agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts which funded this design project.
- Utilize the Street Fund and the recently passed statewide street sales tax to provide matching funds for grants and to implement the tactical and soft infrastructure phases of the walkscapes. Documentation of these phases supports grant applications for construction of hard infrastructure.