

Introduction to CPLN7200

Urban Design Studio



Sensing



Sensing



Sensing



Synthesizing



Analyzing

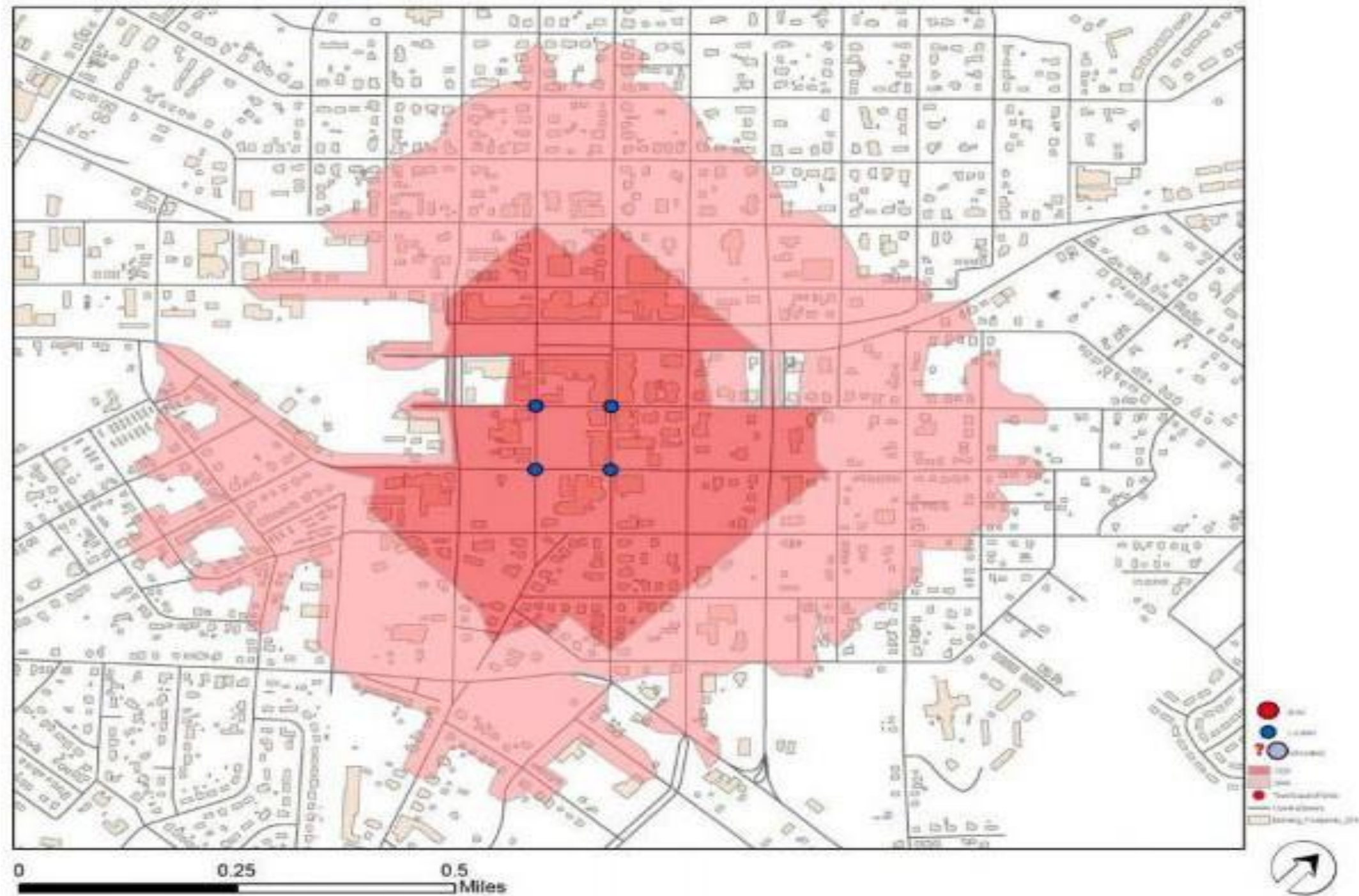


Theorizing

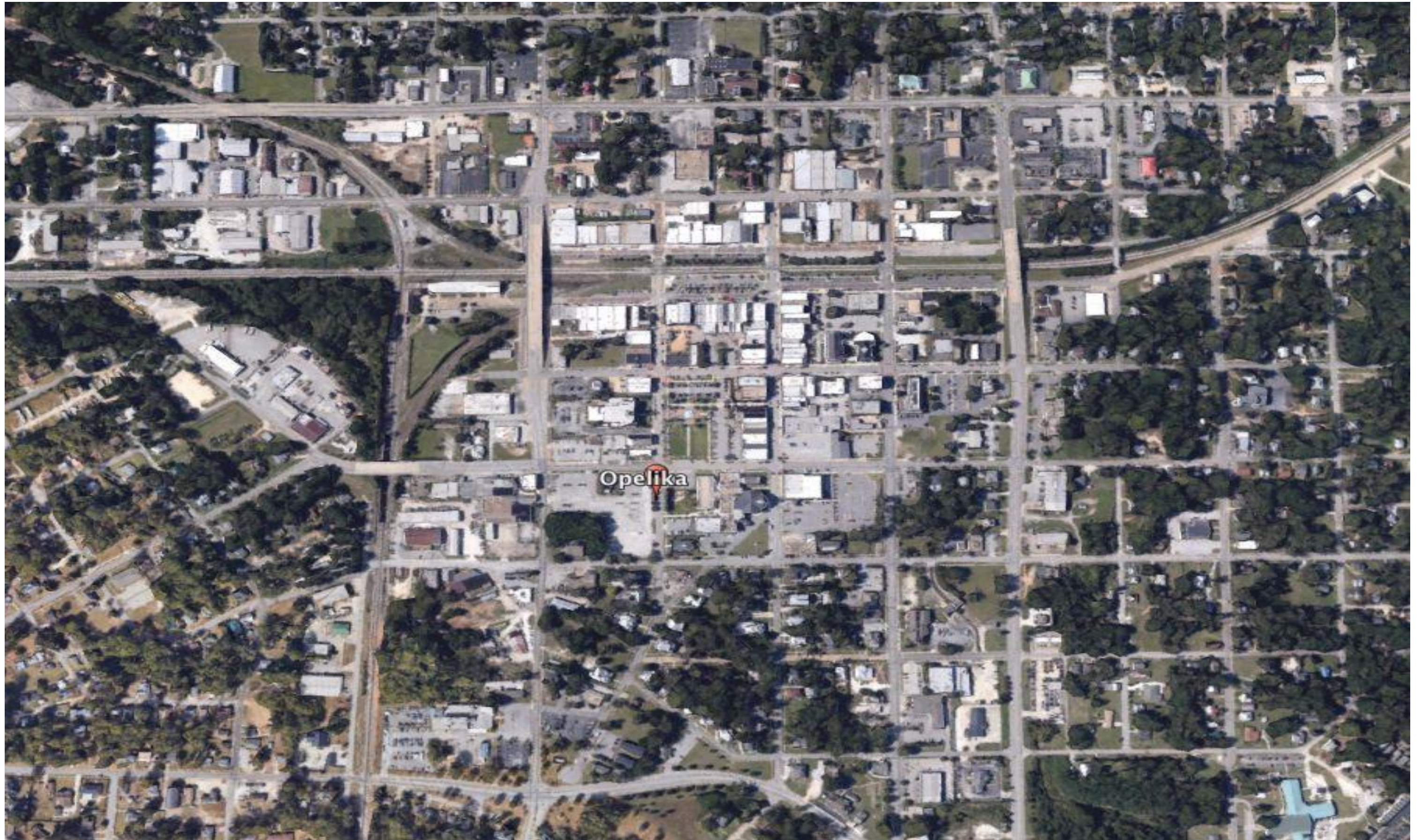


Making

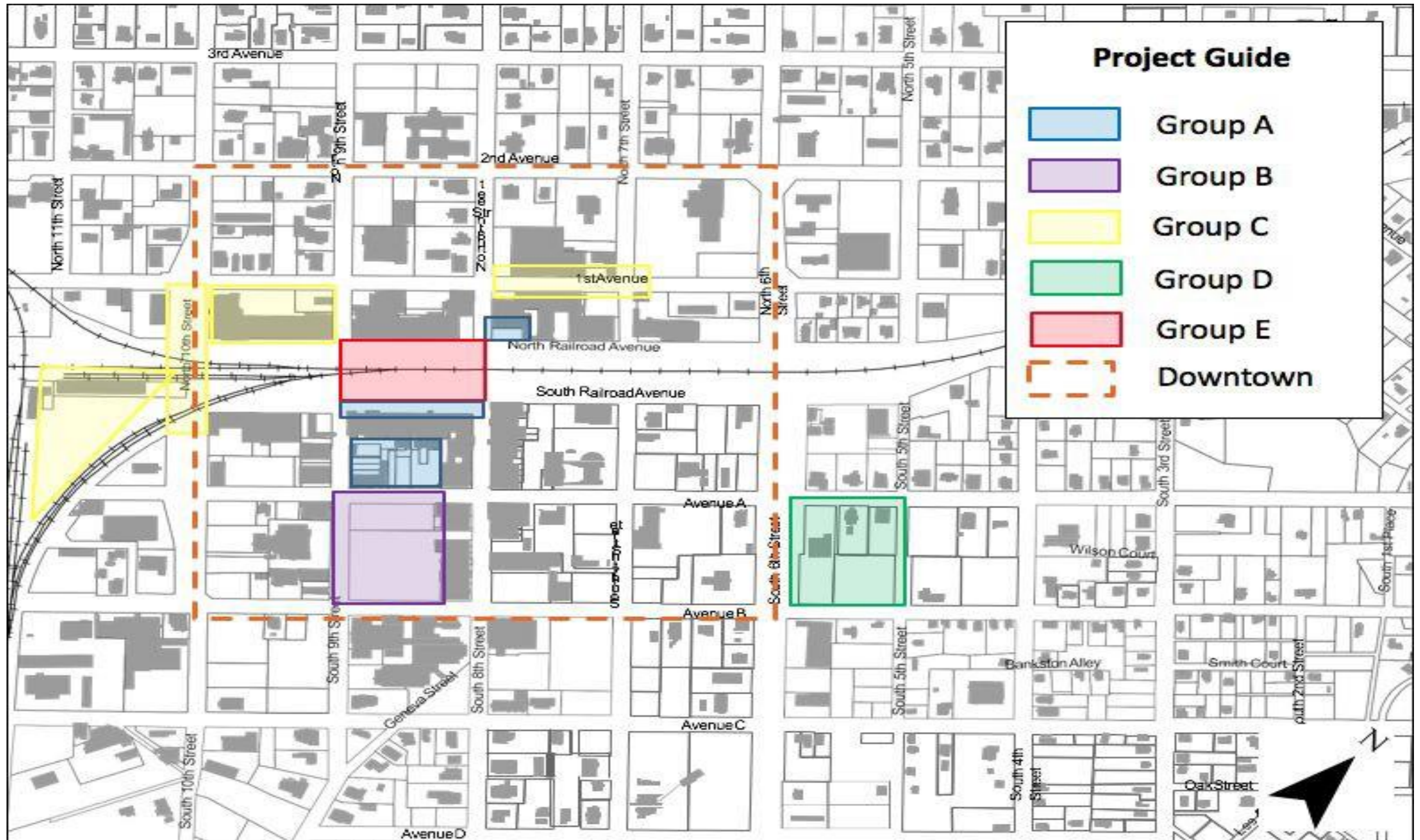
Opelika, AL Network Analysis



Communicating



Communicating



Communicating



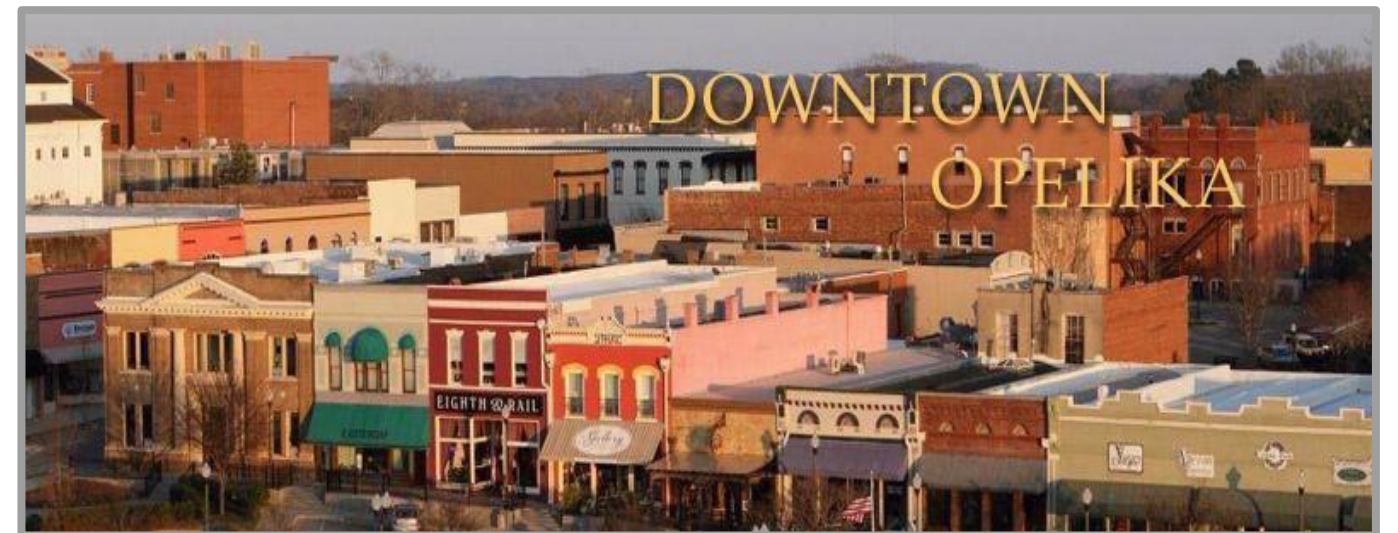
Opelika's Lewis Cooper Jr. Memorial Library



Lauren Benson, Scott Berson,
Aaron Carpenter, Garrett Wates, Nan Zhou

LCJ Memorial Library: A Part of Opelika's Heart

- Within walking distance of vibrant downtown
- The area is an attraction for students, families, and community
- Libraries are a gathering/workplace and a place for resources or programs
- Library program participation has tripled in last year



STRENGTHS

- ~2 acres of land
- High traffic highway
- Adjacent to downtown

WEAKNESSES

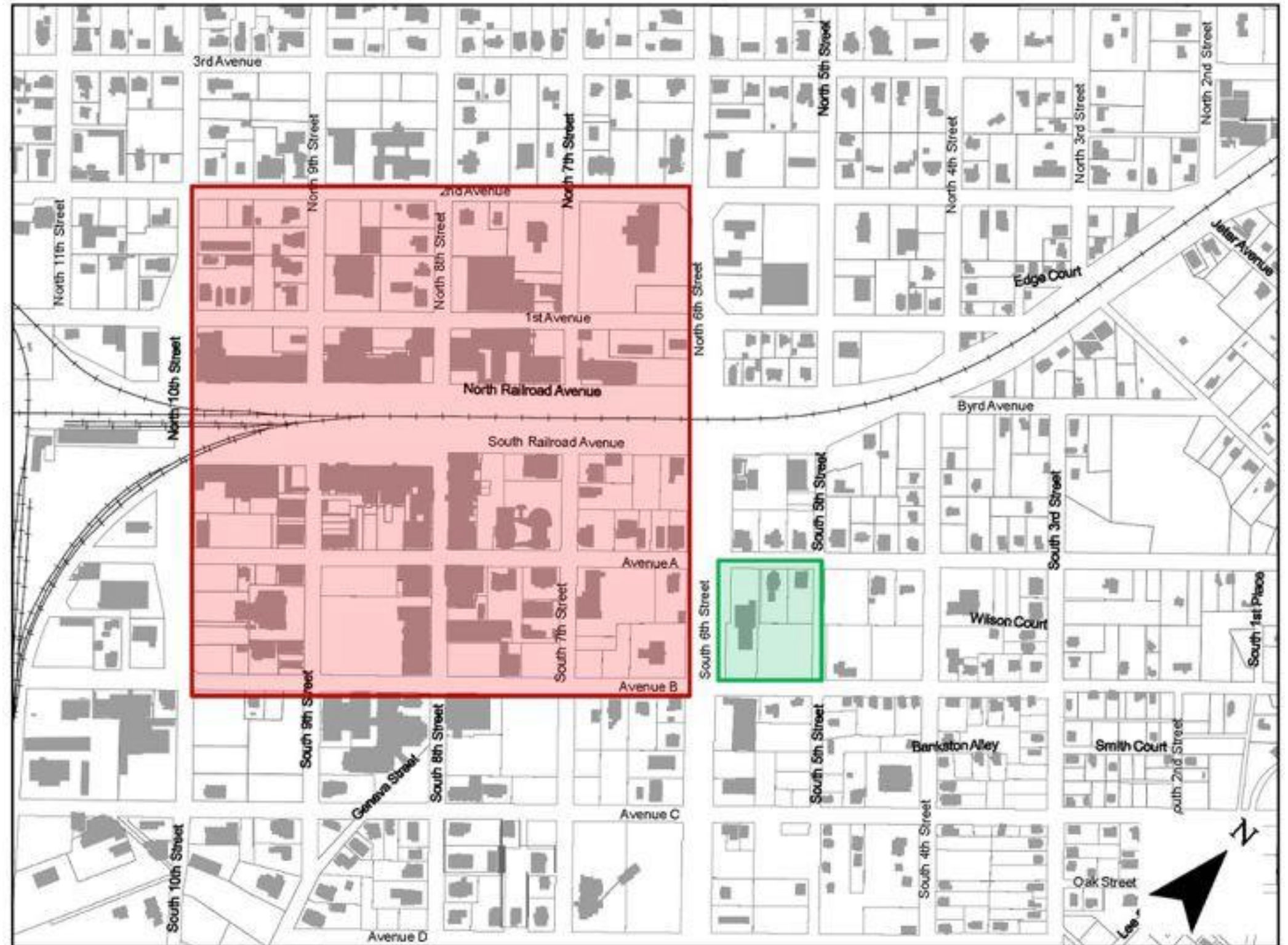
- Limited pedestrian & cyclist access
- Building is too small

OPPORTUNITIES

- Political climate
- Space for sidewalks & bike lanes
- Empty one acre lot

THREATS

- Lack of funding
- Size of library





Mission

Generate working alternatives to increase community connectedness in Downtown Opelika.

Vision

Boost Opelika's civic engagement, sense of community, and use of the public resources and programs through developing the library into an accessible urban space.

Strategies to Achieve Goals

Goal: Enhance connectedness to downtown

- Implement road diet
- Design attractive pedestrian crosswalks to draw attention and slow traffic

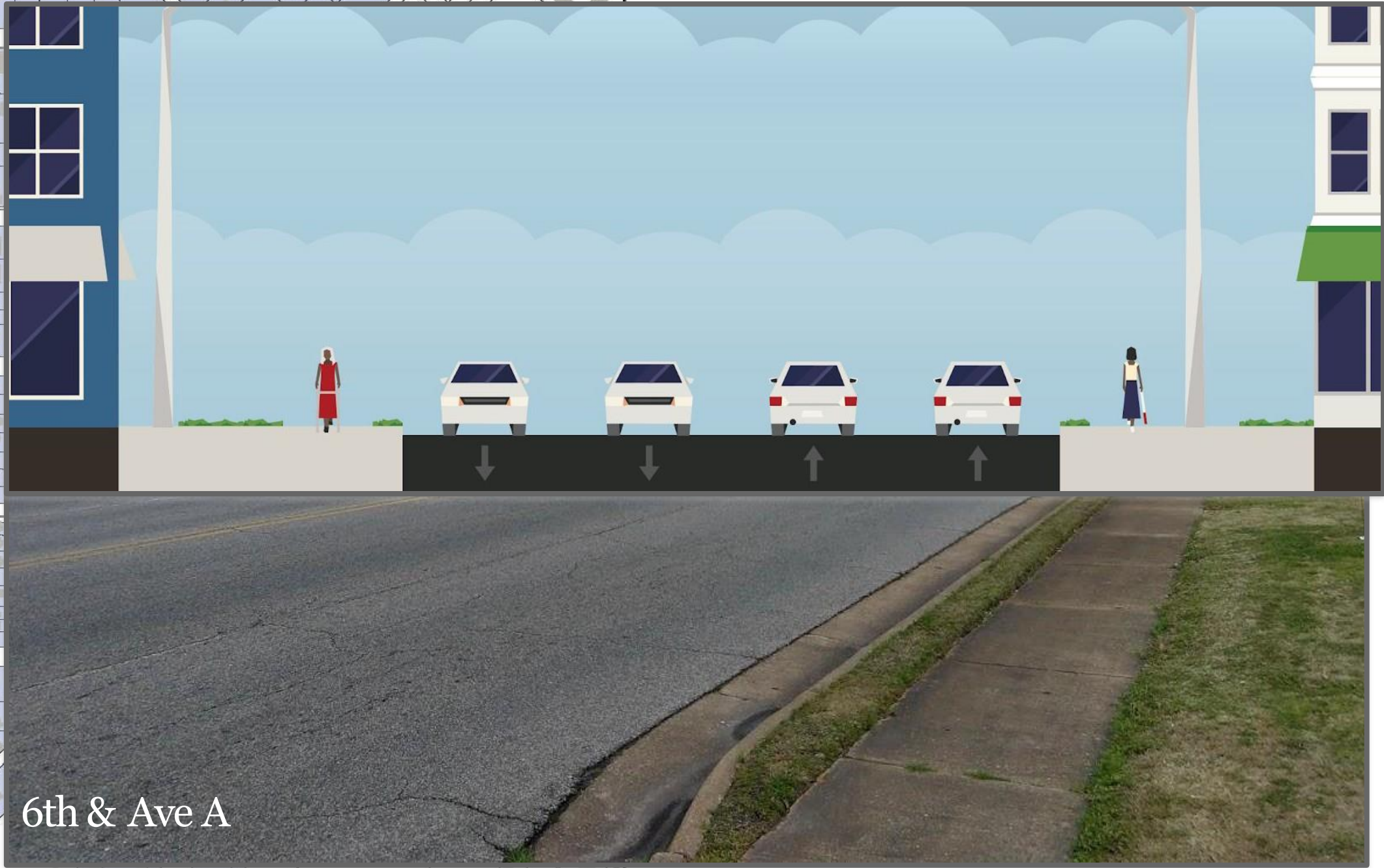
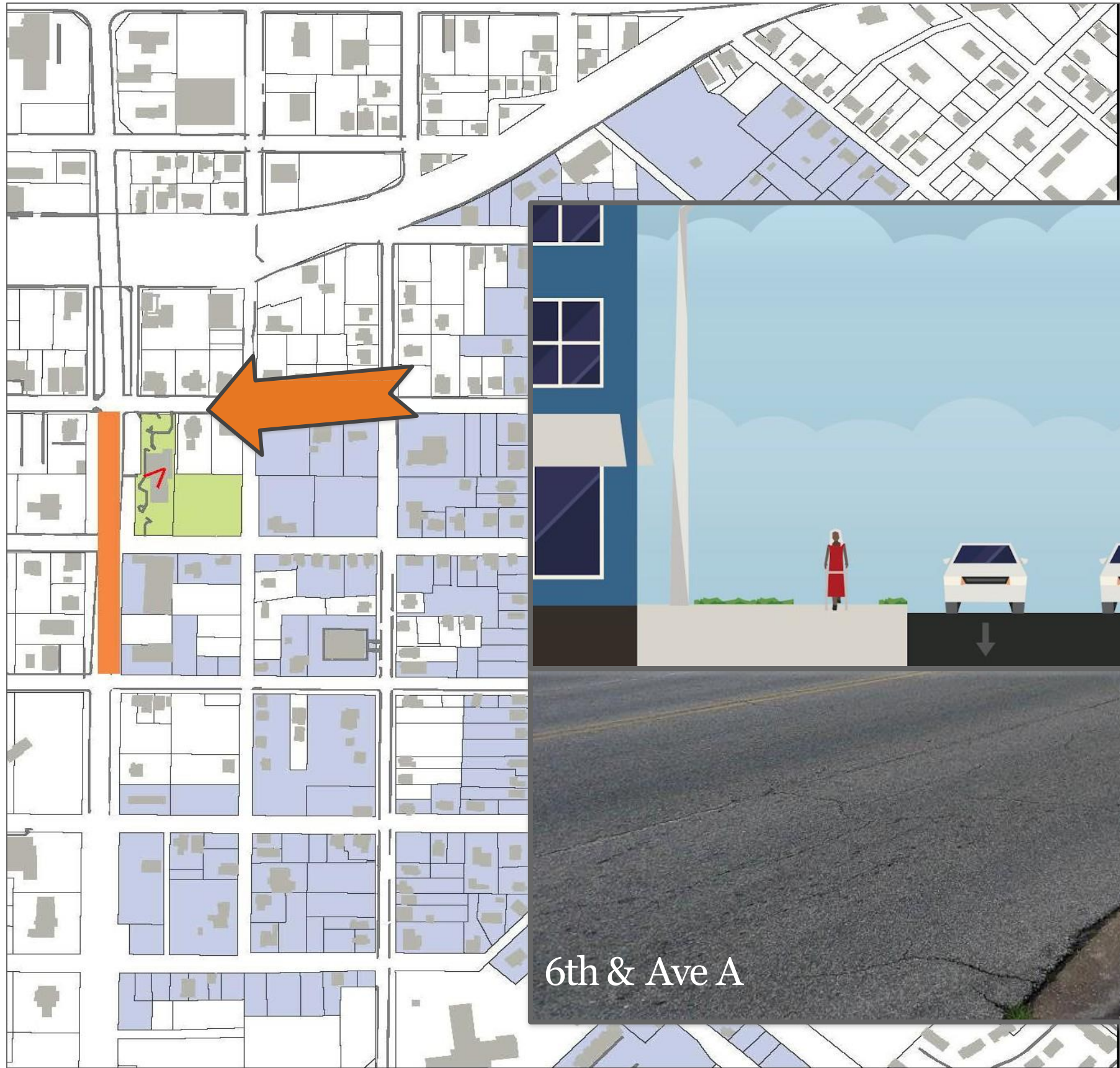
Goal: Improve walkability

- Outline a 10 year plan for sidewalk installation for nearby residential community
- Enhance library accessibility

Goal: Transform green space to a usable public park

- Create central rain garden for water runoff
- Plant shade trees and provide seating for casual reading
- Consider earthwork amphitheatre for library programs

Walkability: Today's Crosswalk



6th & Ave A

Walkability: The Problem

Issues for walkability: Pedestrians travelling from downtown to the library face major barriers:

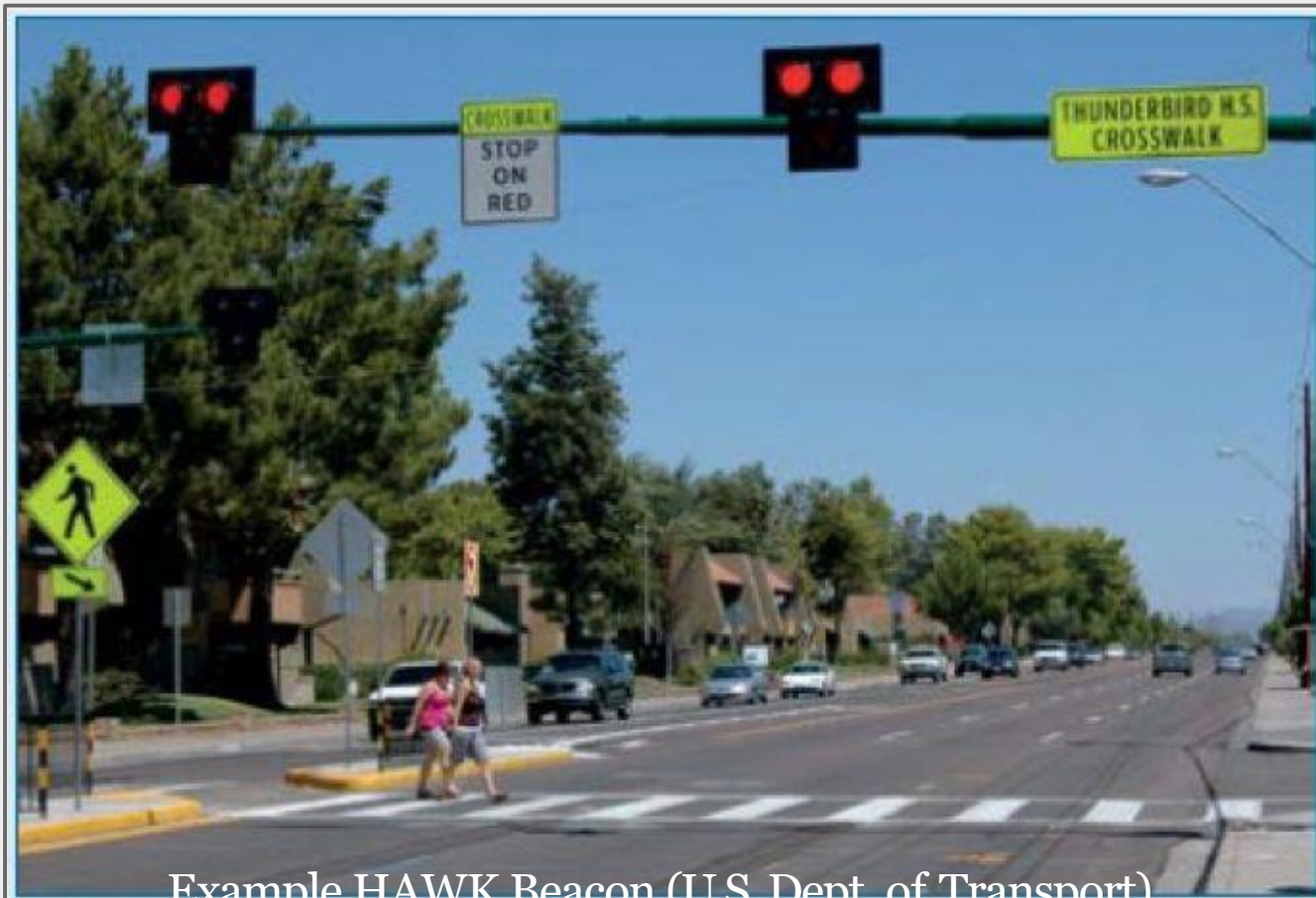
1. 4 lanes of relatively-heavy traffic between curbs
2. No functioning crosswalks
3. Lane widths are too wide and encourage speeding
4. Feelings of pedestrian vulnerability
5. Connection points are weak



Connectivity: The Possibilities of Crosswalks

Recommendation: Installation of HAWK Beacon Crosswalk at intersection of 6th & Ave A

- Remains green until pedestrian hits the button
- Minimal disruption to vehicular traffic
- Cheaper than traditional stoplight
- Using alternative striping materials, like brick, will signal drivers to slow



Example HAWK Beacon (U.S. Dept. of Transport)



Example brick crosswalk (FHWA):

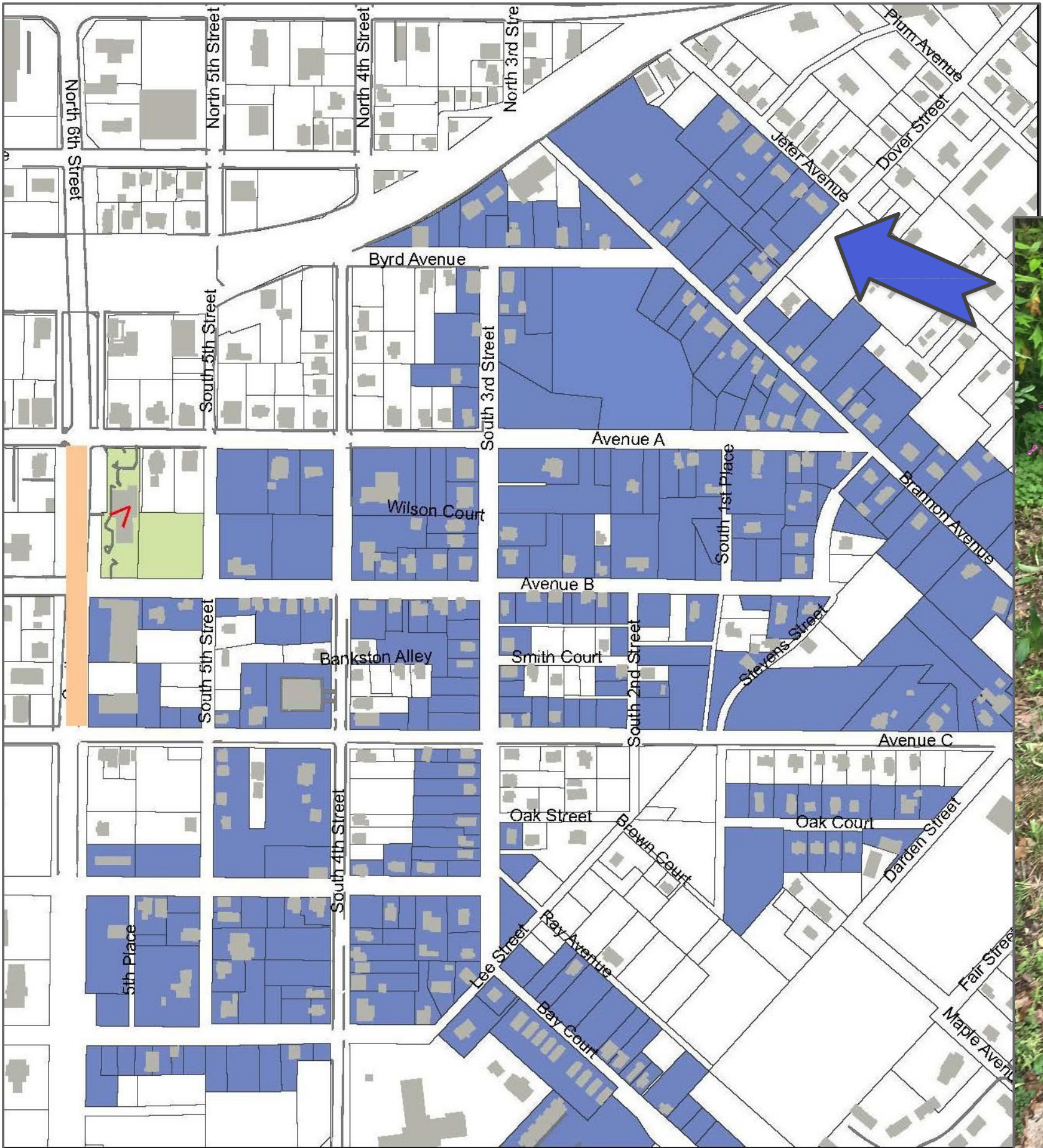
Connectivity: The Road Diet and Streetscapes

Recommendation: Implementation of a road diet on S. 6th Street

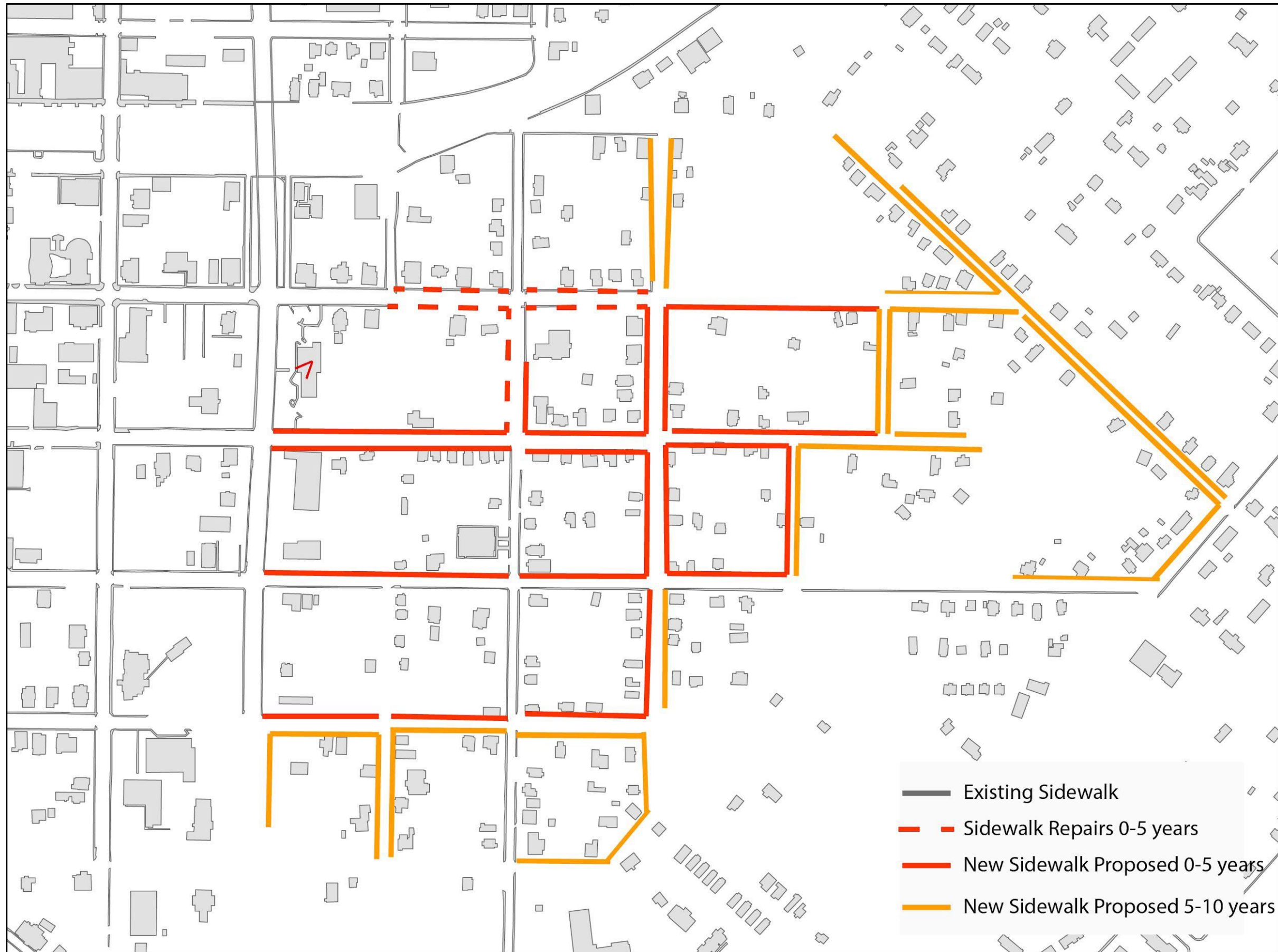
- Road diets have been successful, cost-effective traffic calming tools
- Slowing vehicular traffic creates a more welcoming atmosphere for pedestrians
- Road Diets are encouraged by AOMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- It is possible to be tested through traffic cones and temporary striping
- All dimensions conserve the city's pavement and right-of-way standards



Walkability: Today's Sidewalks

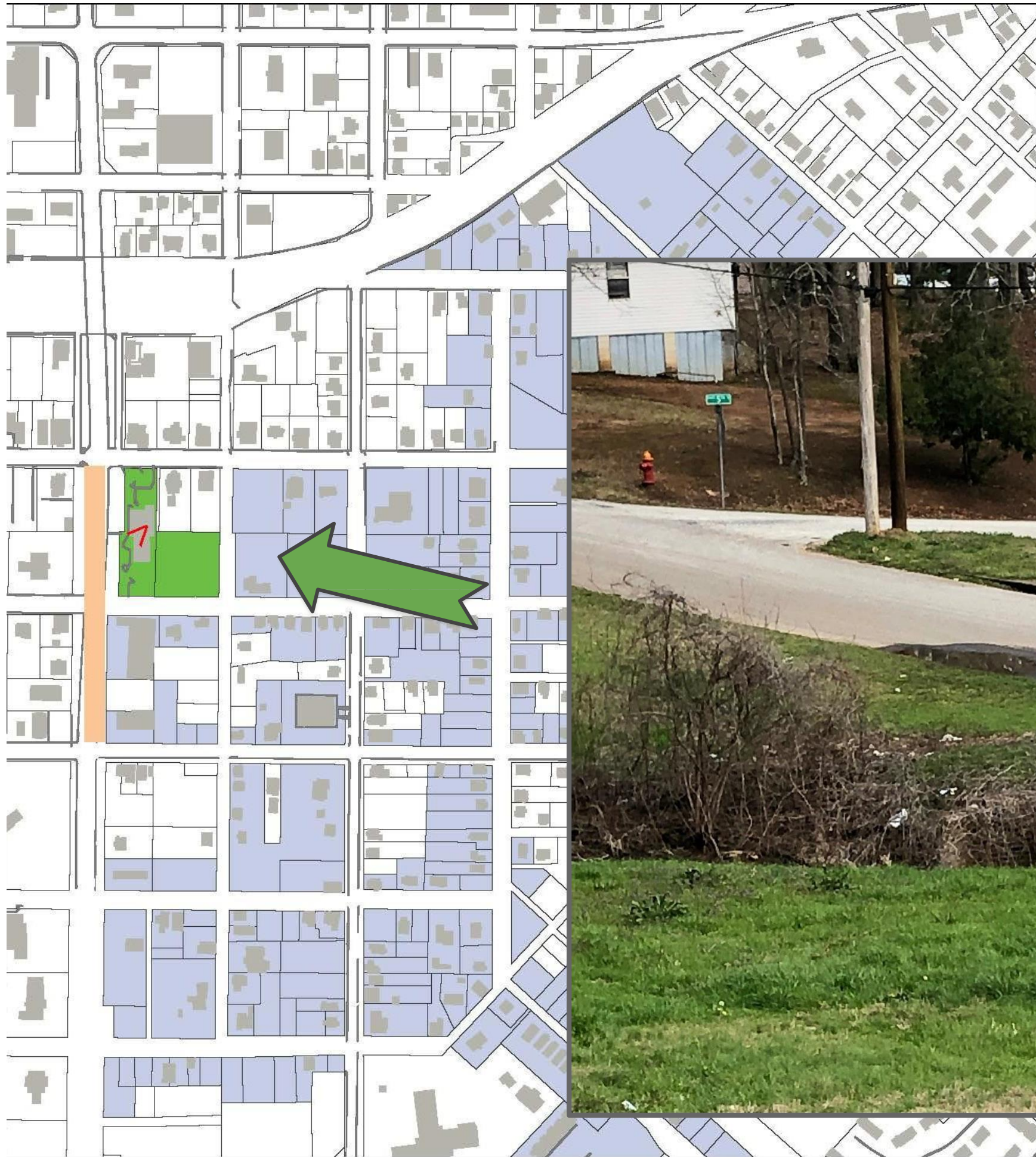


Walkability: Improving Sidewalk Infrastructure



Recommendation:
Repairing community
sidewalks and adding
additional sidewalks

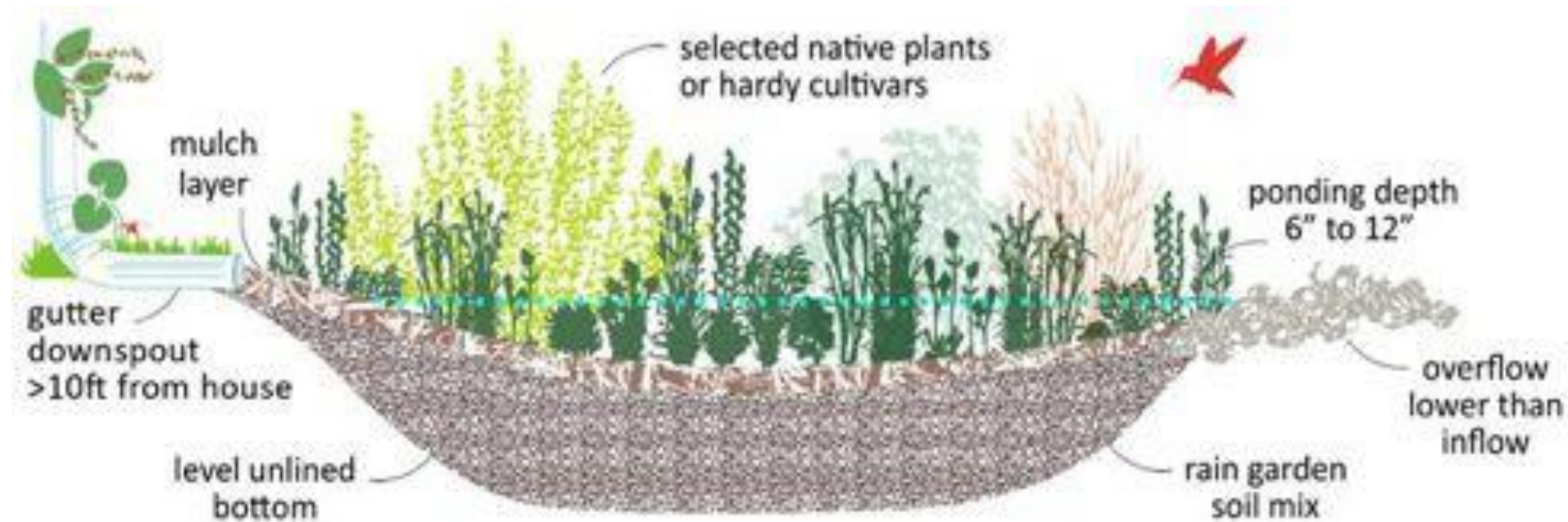
Today's Green Space is Tomorrow's Rain Garden



Rain Garden and Landscaping

Recommendation: Design a park area that connects users from surrounding residential neighborhoods to the library and downtown

- Design appealing public space with utility in mind: children's areas, storytelling spaces
- Remediating the green space behind library, turn it into an asset
- Utilizing open space instead of ignoring and neglecting it
- Mediate rainwater drain-off by installing rain garden or other active learning site



Rain Garden and Landscaping



Conclusions



Goal: Enhance connectedness to downtown

Recommendation 1: Installation of HAWK Beacon Crosswalk at intersection of 6th & Ave A

Recommendation 2: Implementation of a road diet on S. 6th Street

Goal: Improve walkability

Recommendation: Repairing community sidewalks and adding additional sidewalks

Goal: Transform green space to a usable public park

Recommendation: Design environmentally beneficial park area that draws and connects users from surrounding residential neighborhoods, the library, and downtown

Public Art Master Plan



Michaela Bostick, Cong Li, Aaron Norris,
Tabb Sanford, Brad Wylam, Wei Wei Zhao

Introduction

Introduction

- Opelika has a strong sense of community
- Capitalize and improve upon that community by establishing a plan for public art downtown
- Large amount of potential for art downtown
- Public Art Master Plan developed by many other cities
- Gives guidelines to city and developers on how to address public art

Goals and Objectives

Our Vision

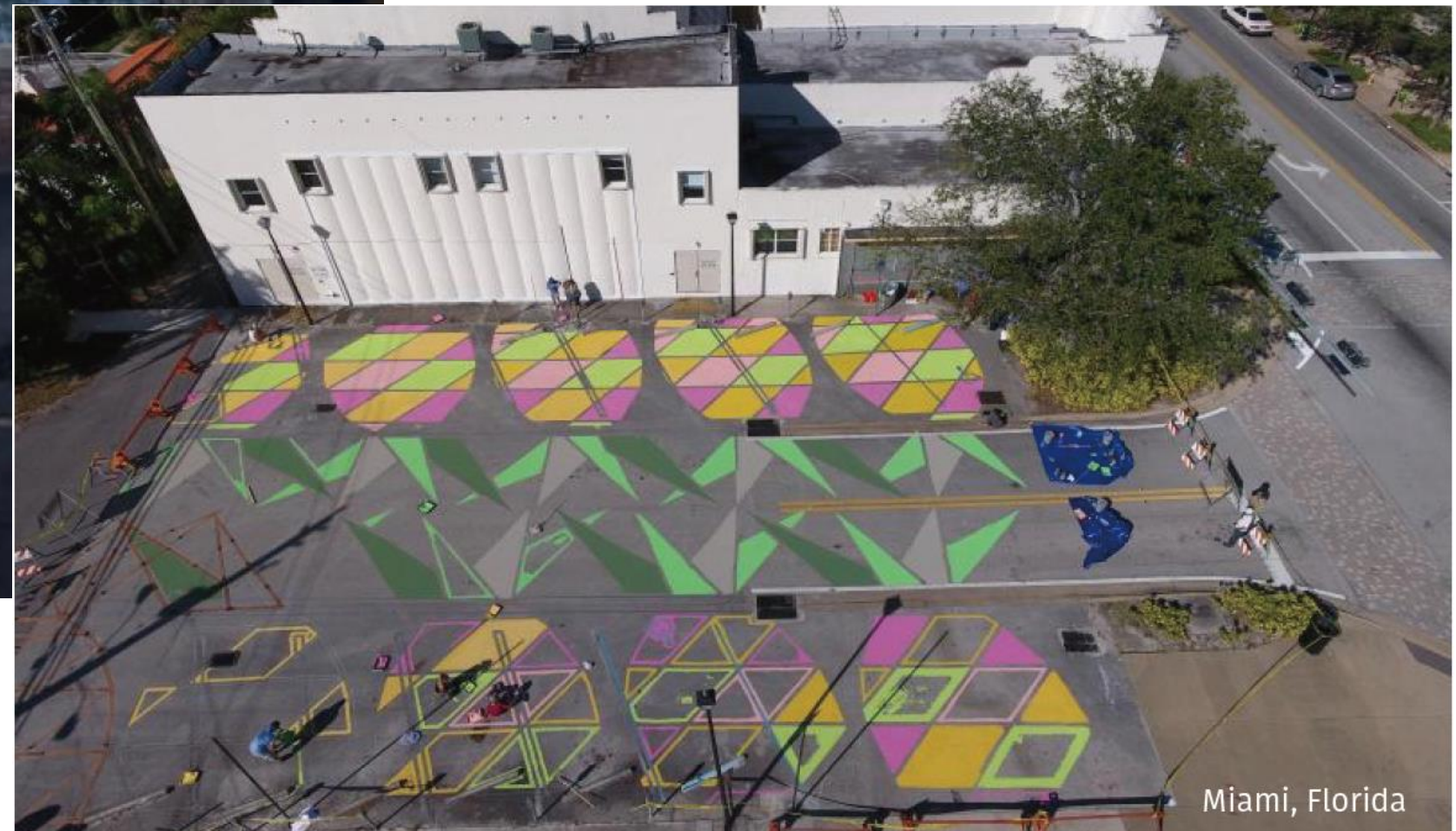
Art+Entertainment

- Art should be entertaining and interactive for all ages
- Art should incorporate all senses (sound, touch, sight)
- Distance between art and pedestrians is important

Art+Function

- Art can provide function and be practical
- Used on essential things (streets, benches, fire hydrants)

Entertainment



Function

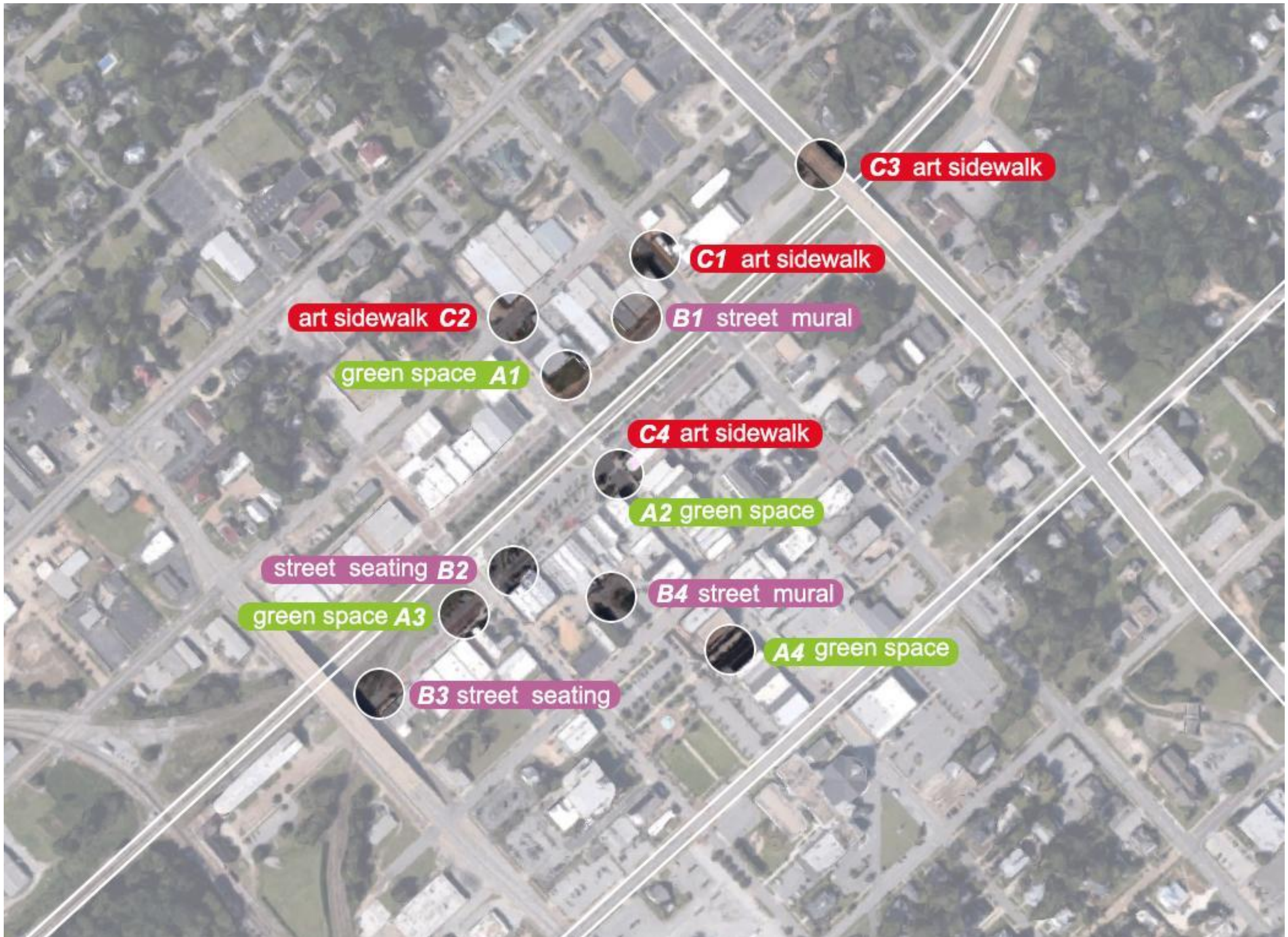


Justification/ Case Studies

Other Public Art Master Plans

- Master Plans are a growing trend when it comes to public art and urban design as a whole
- Examples:
 - Suwanee, GA
 - Huntsville, AL
 - Cincinnati, OH

Design Suggestions



C3 art sidewalk

C1 art sidewalk

art sidewalk C2

B1 street mural

green space A1

C4 art sidewalk

A2 green space

street seating B2

B4 street mural

green space A3

A4 green space

B3 street seating





Painting from [theblondesalad.com](https://www.theblondesalad.com)

(<https://www.theblondesalad.com/en-MD/all-mag/best-places-photographed-nyc>)



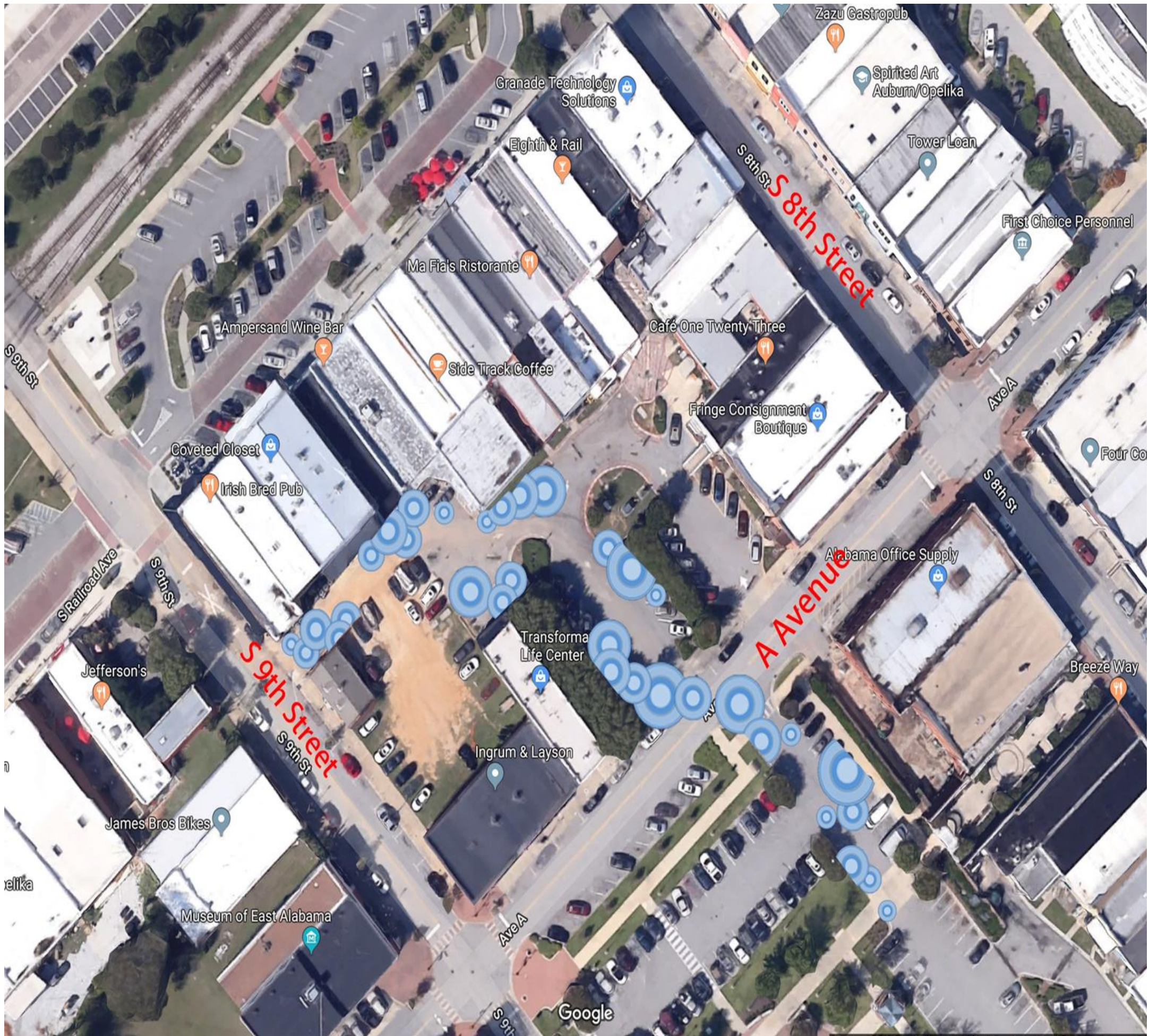




CARDBOARD ONLY
PLASTER, M. BRICK
DRINK. ALL CARBONATED
NO TRASH
GARBAGE, ALLOWED







Stakeholders

Partners

- City of Opelika
- Opelika Chamber of Commerce
- Opelika City Board of Education
- East Alabama Arts
- Opelika Arts Association
- The Arts Association of East Alabama
- Southern Union State Community College
- Auburn University
- Other interested local businesses and organizations

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Opelika could use a plan to establish more of an art scene downtown
- Many locations around downtown could benefit from art
- Similar Public Art Master Plans developed by many other cities
- Art should incorporate functionality and entertainment for all

Courthouse Square

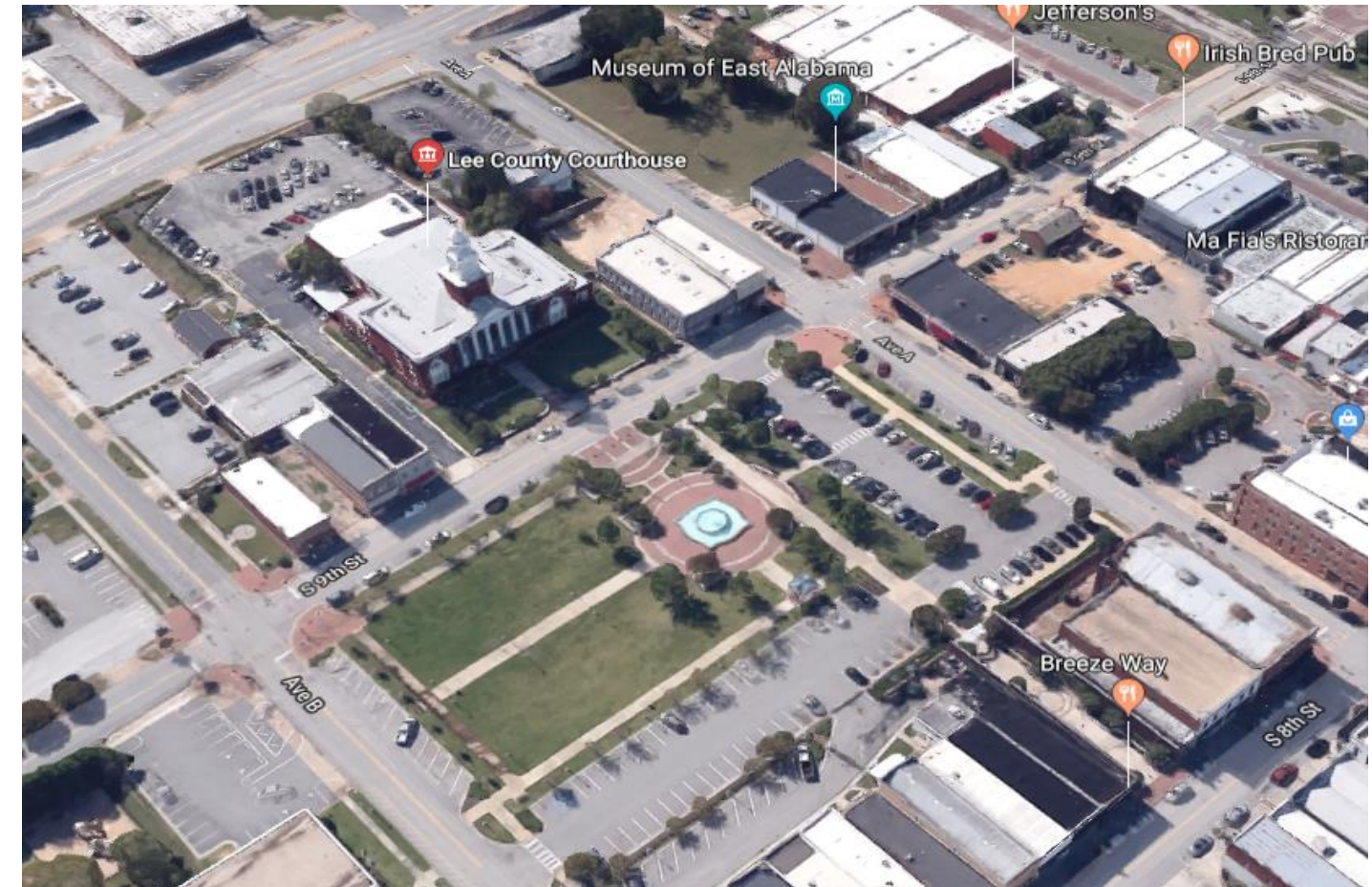


Maria Almonacid. Joshua Copeland. Nishigandha Deokar.
Donnicha London. Nianda Royani.

Courthouse Square



The Courthouse Square Park, located at South 9th Street, between Ave A and B, is the square park right in front of the Lee County Courthouse, in Opelika, Alabama. It is located in the historical downtown of Opelika, offering citizens open, green and public space to enjoy their free time, and family time.



The location of the Courthouse Square is key to the economic, social, and sustainable development of the city downtown. This space has a potential to offer citizens free activities all year long, attract stakeholders and investors, provide people a place to exercise, enjoy outdoors activities, and revitalize the city of Opelika. Today, the Courthouse Square is underutilized and its only used to its fullest potential on special events. The Courthouse Square could be a great, democratic, accessible, enjoyable public space for everyone.

Goals and Objectives

Goals

- ## Objectives
- **Increase pedestrian** traffic through the courthouse square as much as possible in order to build awareness of the space, contributing to the **quality of life** of the community through **social revitalization**.
 - **Reduce automobile** dependency in the area surrounding the town square.
 - **Foster sustainability** through the implementation of **green infrastructure** in the town square.
 - **Increase the amount of usable space** by providing amplified event venue offerings, as well as shaded areas with seating.
 - **Revitalize** the town square to increase citizen utilization.
 - **Add infrastructure** that is able to be utilized for both public and private events to formally establish the area as a center on which the community can gather.
 - **Improve landscape** elements and
 - Structures to be **functional** during each of the **four seasons**- so that events can be held in this space during Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter, without major impediments to gathering.
 - **Reform and redesign open spaces** around the primary structures of the square to encourage more physical activities, provide a number of significant benefits, and various important functions in order to improve the quality of life in the area
 - **Provide energy neutral features** (fountains, lights, and other aesthetic design features) which are cost neutral on account of green energy designs implemented throughout the remainder of



Site
Visit







March
1st

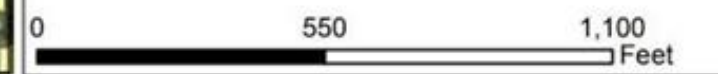
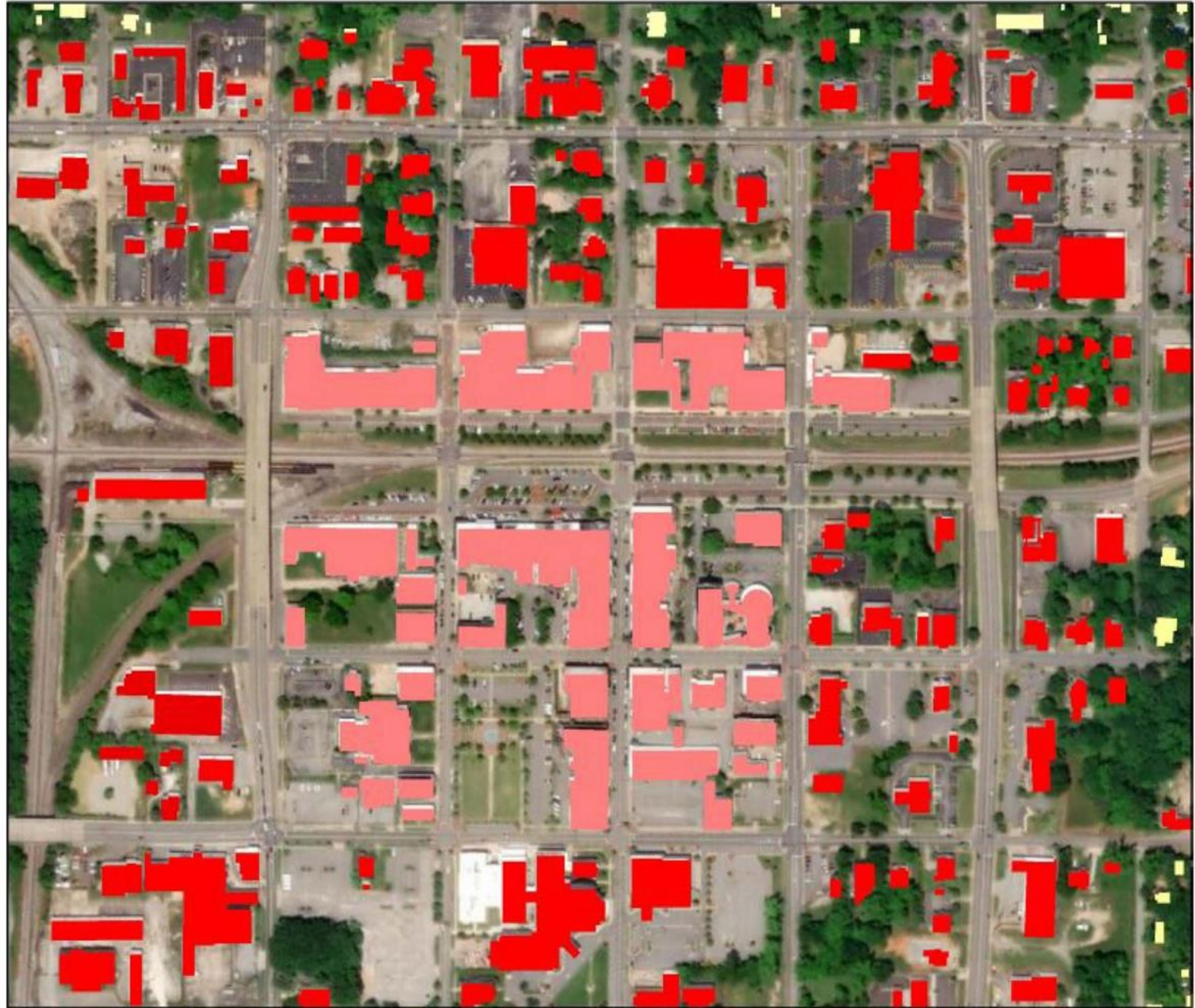


Analysis

The map of downtown is oriented at 43 degrees.

Building Typology

-  Neighborhood Commercial
-  Office and Retail Commercial
-  General Commercial
-  Medium Density Residential



Strength

- **Fountain:** is a symbol of the downtown's square, and attracts people of all ages.
- **Location:** Surrounded by beautiful old buildings which is good to attract more visitors.
- Good restaurants and pubs around the city square and people can take nice walks
- Good amount of **parking spots** for visitors.
- Small shops (cheese store, bakeries, birthday supply stores, and boutiques) in the downtown area
- Good amount of **green space** for outdoor activities.

Weakness

- Lack of **Attractions/Amenities**
- Uninviting to all **Demographics**.
- Safety: parking is hazardous to pedestrians, bikers, and children
- Lack of **events** to draw traffic to the center of downtown or attract more people.
- Lack of Accessibility
- Buildings underutilized
- Abandoned infrastructure
- Lack of **Aesthetics**

S.W.O.T Analysis

Opportunity

- A space that offers people of **all ages entertainment** through subtle elements, that do not opaque the historic character of the Square
- An Open space- area that provides **picnic and seating areas, shade through gazebos and nature, to improve four-seasons use.**
- A place that offers safe and constrained areas for young children to **play**, within the confines of the **green space**.
- A place that provides space for events and increase utility of space to **intensify local economy** and **quality of life**.
- A space surrounded by commerce, gastronomic offer, and opportunity for **healthy activities**

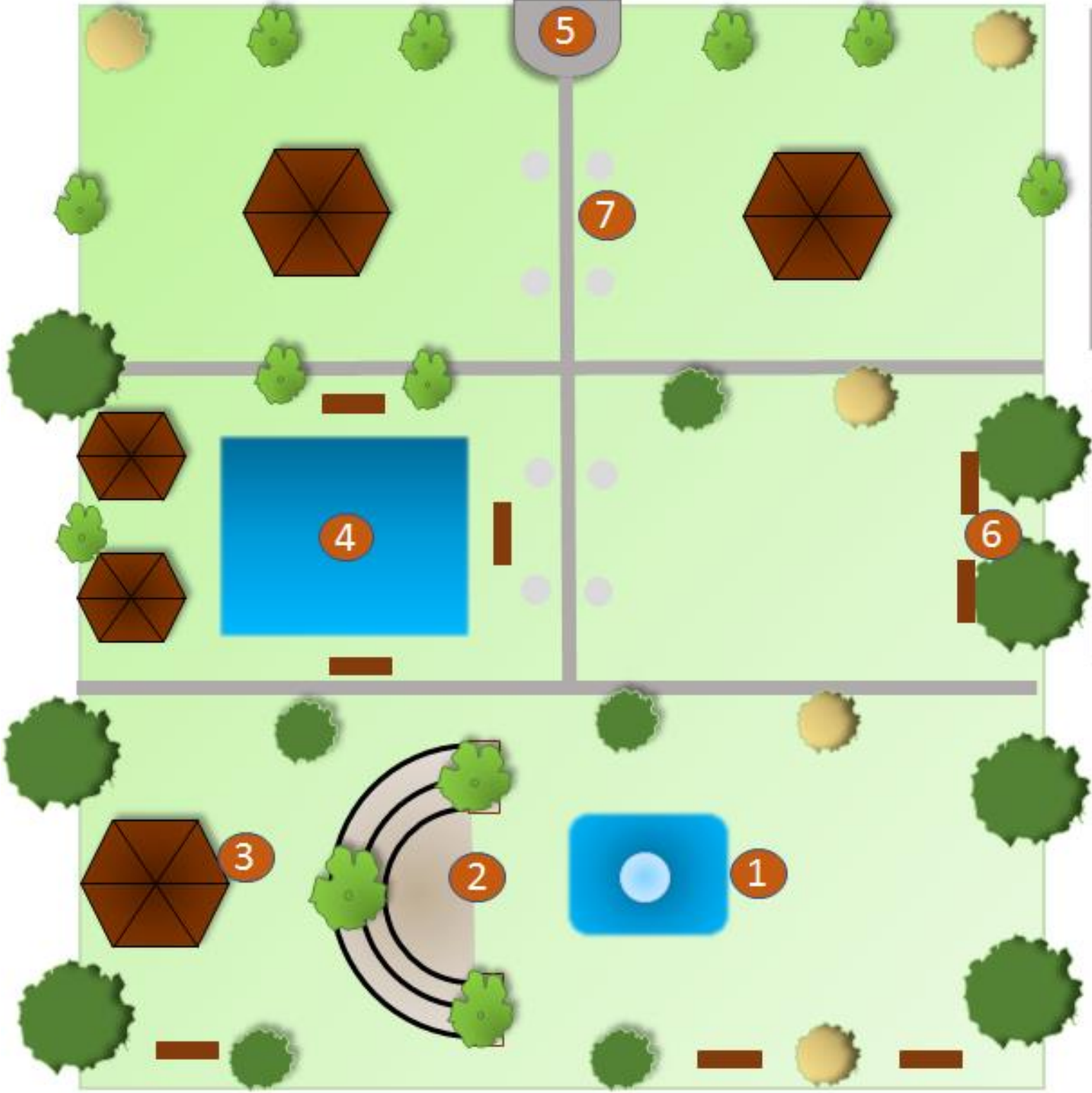
Threat

- **Reducing parking spaces** according to plan may be unpopular with those using the courthouse.
- Insufficient parking for future use cases of the area.
- **Rejection of individuals** towards the new element because of **historical preservation** matters.



Design Suggestions

Draft 1



Parking



Courthouse Square Opelika, AL

- 1. Fountain
- 2. Amphitheater
- 3. Gazebos
- 4. Splash Pad
- 5. Stage for event
- 6. Semi enclosed Seating
- 7. Light poles with solar panels
- 8. Bike parkings

Draft 2



Courthouse Square Opelika, AL

- 1. Fountain
- 2. Amphitheater
- 3. Gazebos
- 4. Splash Pad
- 5. Stage for event
- 6. Semi enclosed Seating
- 7. Light poles with solar panels
- 8. Bike parkings

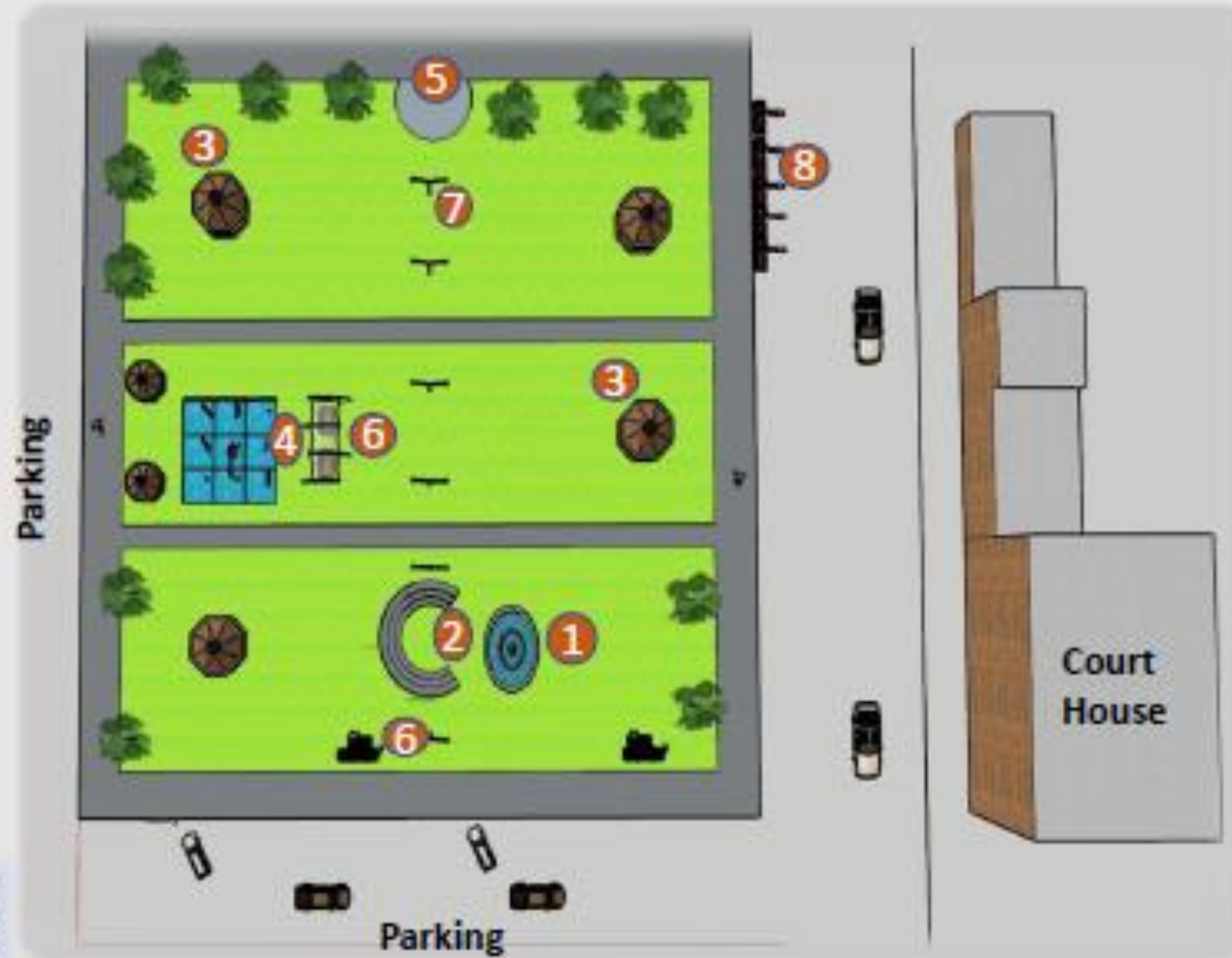
Master Plan Designs

Master Plan Design

CPLN 7200- Urban Design Studio

Opelika Al, City Square

- 1 Fountain
- 2 Amphitheatre
- 3 Gazebos
- 4 Splash pad
- 5 Stage for events
- 6 Semi-enclosed seating
- 7 Light poles with solar panels
- 8 Bike parking



Master Plan: Option 1



Master Plan: Option 2



Master Plan: Option 3



Master Plan

Park Elements:

Courthouse Square
Opelika, AL

1. Fountain
2. Amphitheater
3. Gazebos
4. Splash Pad
5. Stage for event
6. Semi enclosed Seating
7. Light poles with solar panels
8. Bike Share Program/Bike parkings
9. Raised Planters/Adopt-a-Garden

Master Plan: Option 2 Details



Master Plan: Elements



Master Plan: Elements



Case Studies

Case Studies: Park Elements



Discovery Green, Houston



Audubon Park, New Orleans

Case Studies: Park Elements



Greenwood Community Park, Baton Rouge



Dr. P. Phillips Community Park,

Case Studies: Park Elements



Clark Park, Philadelphia



Discovery Green, Houston



Case Studies: Park Elements



Dayton, Ohio Courthouse Square



San Diego County Park

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Revitalize the courthouse square by improving the general usability of the area on a daily basis.
- Maximize the capacity of the square to accommodate frequent community gatherings.
- Aestheticize the square by improving the green space, introducing colors, and implementing green technologies to add more value.
- Monumentalize the importance of this central space providing a focal point for the community..
- Incentivize economic, social and environmental development in downtown Opelika.

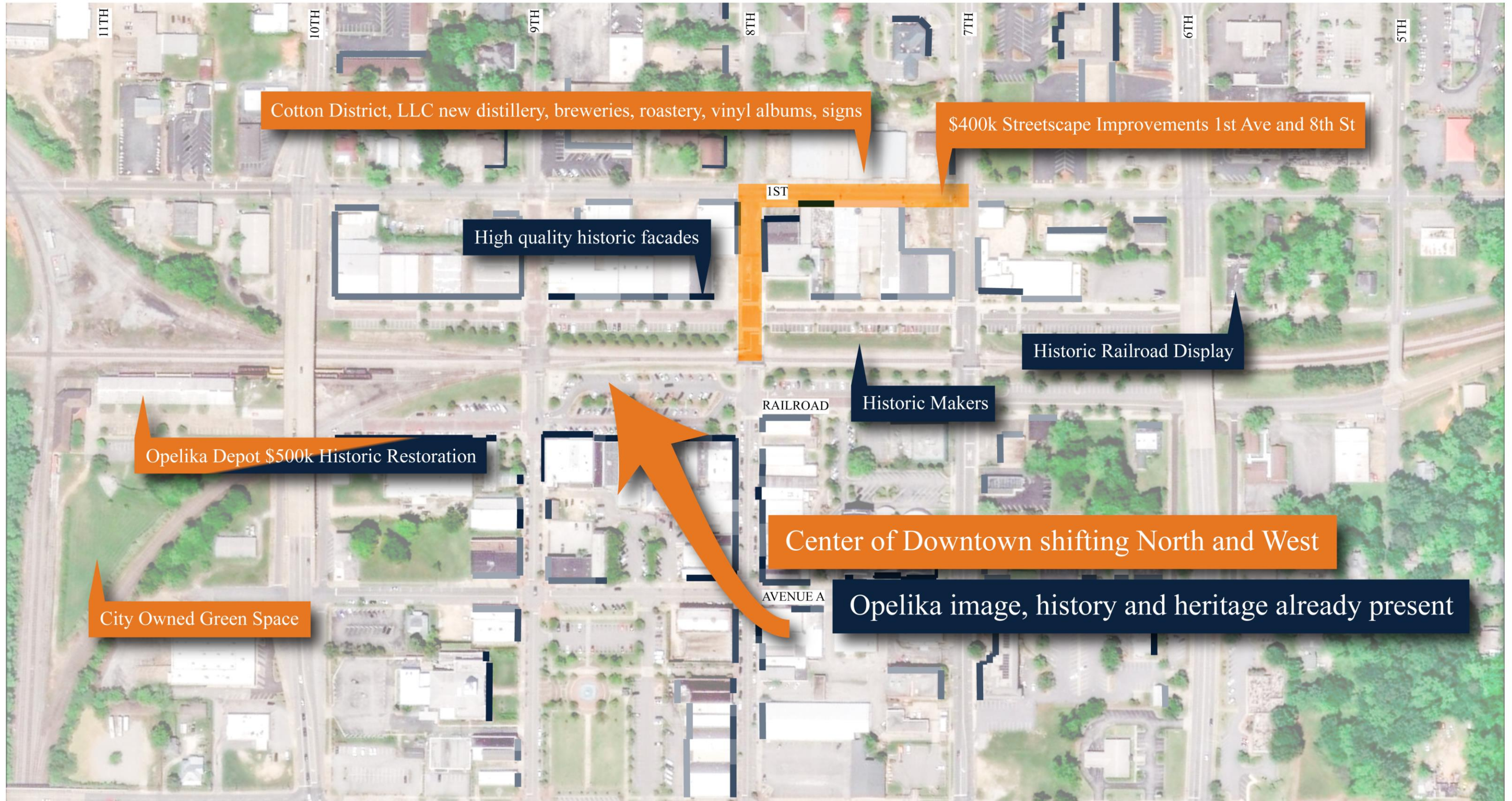
Introduction to CPLN 7200

Dust off downtown



Joe Nisbett, Shuhao Ma, Linggong Kong, Gabrielle Modesti,
Po Ruey Chen

Existing Conditions



Cotton District, LLC new distillery, breweries, roastery, vinyl albums, signs

\$400k Streetscape Improvements 1st Ave and 8th St

High quality historic facades

Historic Railroad Display

Opelika Depot \$500k Historic Restoration

Historic Makers

Center of Downtown shifting North and West

City Owned Green Space

Opelika image, history and heritage already present

Analysis

Strengths



- Church traffic. (Sunday)
- Office traffic. (Lunch)
- Elderly people. (Mornings)
- Parking Areas

- Southern Union College Campus
- Railroad Attraction
- History and Culture
- Facade Quality

Weaknesses



- Zoning
- Maybe residential is limited to down
- Too many offices
- Not well connected to residence, located too far
- Too many cars
- Patrons side equality



- Lack of interesting building layouts
- Shapes of buildings
- Color of the area
- Light Quality
- Streetlights
- Old buildings/Infrastructure
- Control of Railroad
- A lot of Lawn/Walking Qualities

Opportunities



- Residential.
- Adding a farmers market on the weekend to attract more traffic, to increase revenue Needs venue space
- Murals along open walls (Pedestrian Directory).

- Way finding Signage
- Bank lawn
- Coors building
- Under the bridges
- Depot
- Green space/Food Truck Platform

Threats



- WalMart
- Tigertown
- Auburn Mall plus Opelika Road
- Winn Dixie
- Movie theatre/Tiger 13

- Citizen buying in
- Community buying in
- Community Involvement
- Money Costs
- Business Climate Change
- Competition w/Auburn • Demographics

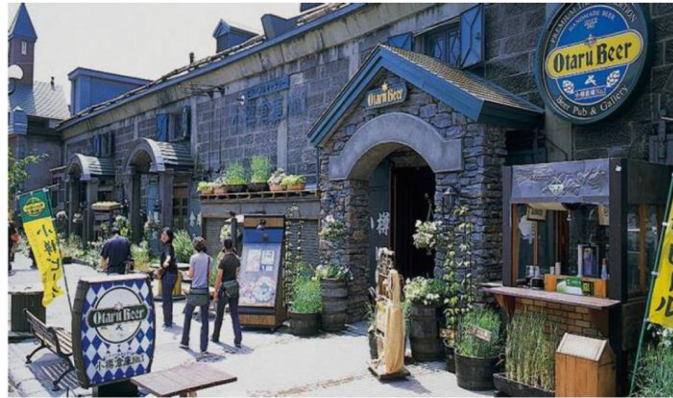
Interview Results



CPLN-7200 Urban Design Studio
Citizen's Options

What People Most like to Be Built in Downtown, Opelika

1. Farmer's Markets
2. Depot Park
3. Outdoor Music Venue/
Shopping Mall
4. Food Trucks
5. Train Museum



Goals and Objectives

Dust Off Downtown

- **Vision**

- Make an attractive downtown by improving vibrance, perceived safety, aesthetics and cultural identity

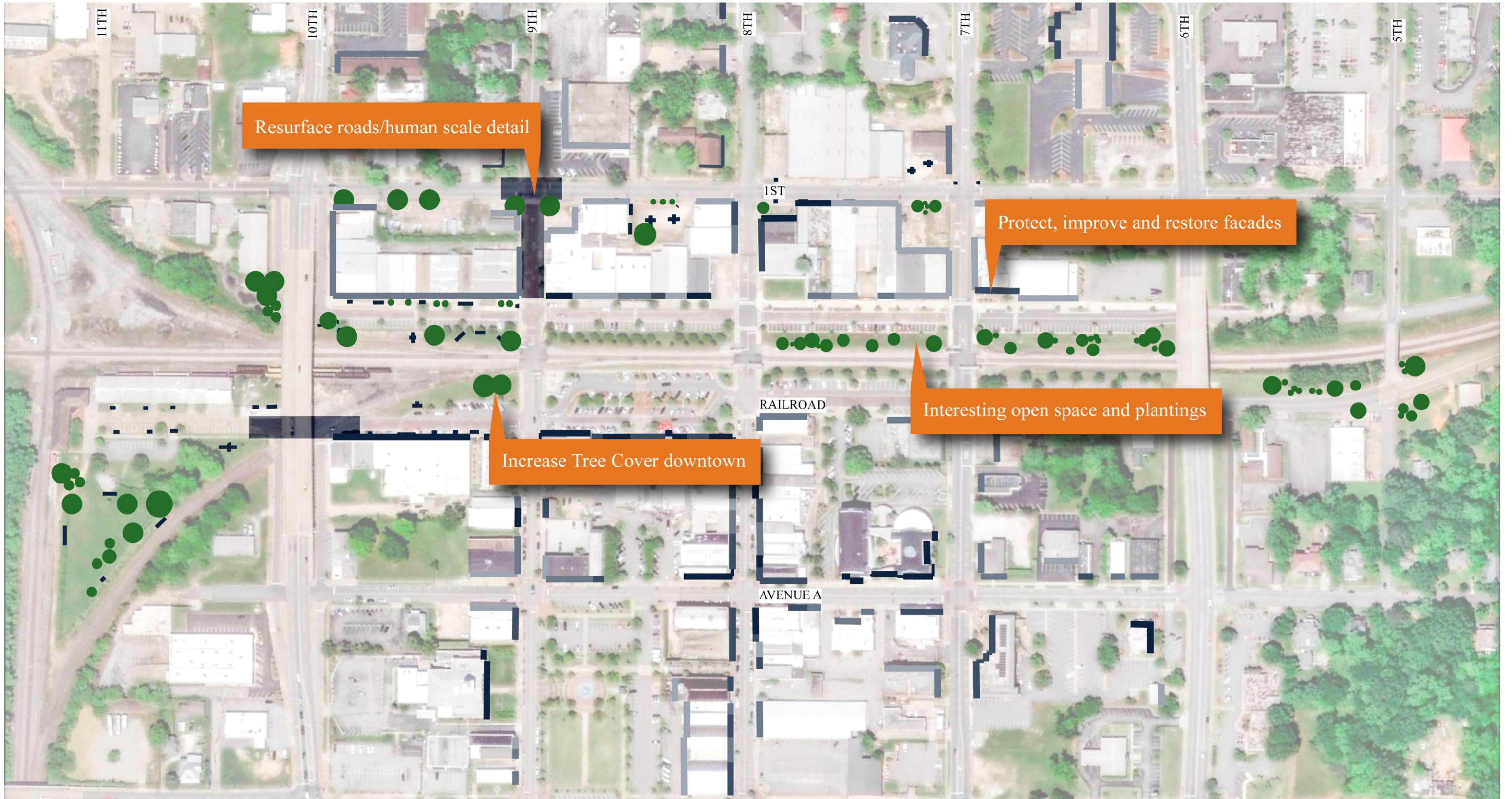
- **Mission**

- Be the best Opelika we can be, using what Opelika already has

Aesthetics Case Study



Aesthetics



Resurface roads/human scale detail

Protect, improve and restore facades

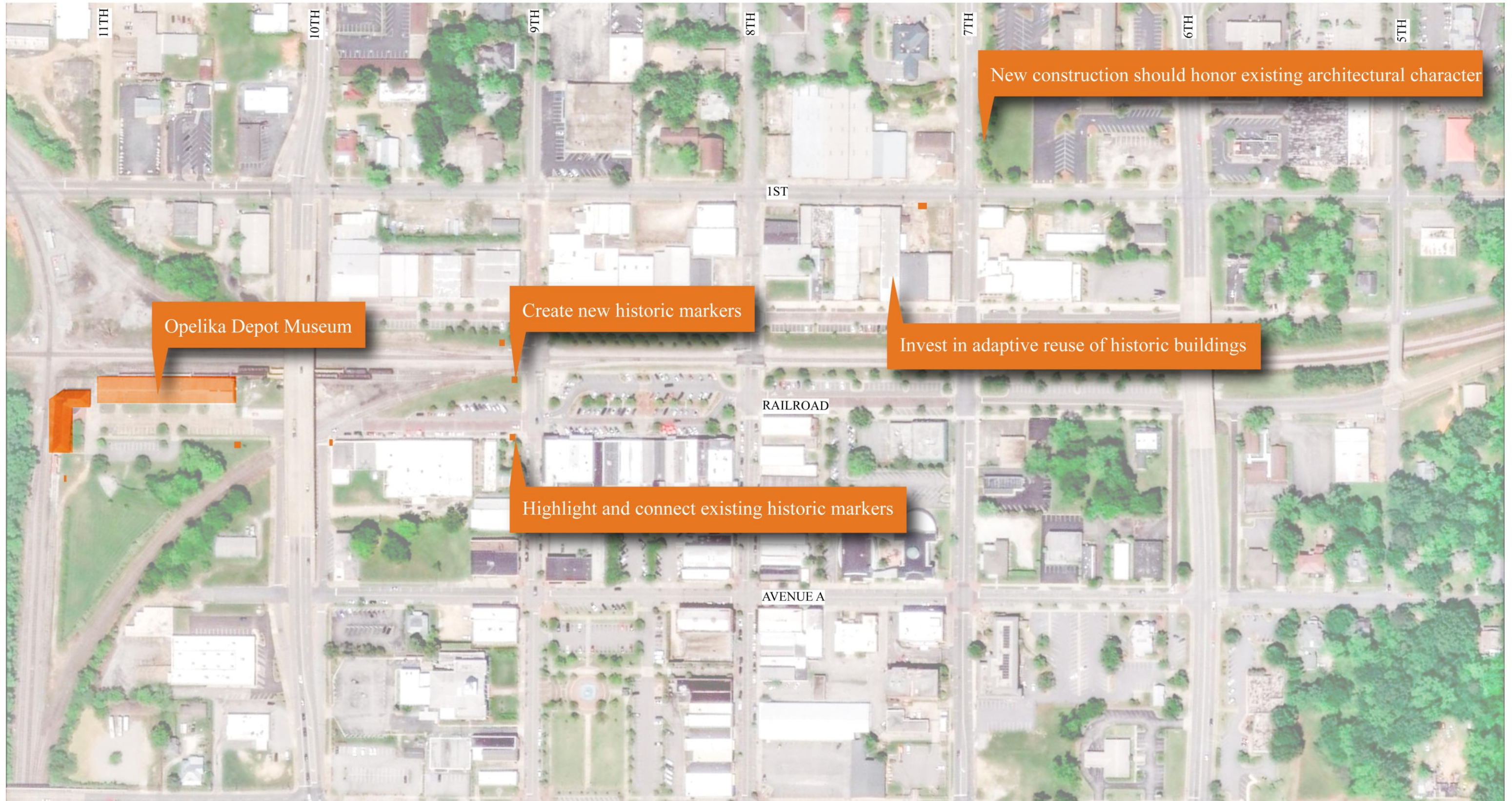
Interesting open space and plantings

Increase Tree Cover downtown

Cultural Case Study



Culture



Opelika Depot Museum

Create new historic markers

Highlight and connect existing historic markers

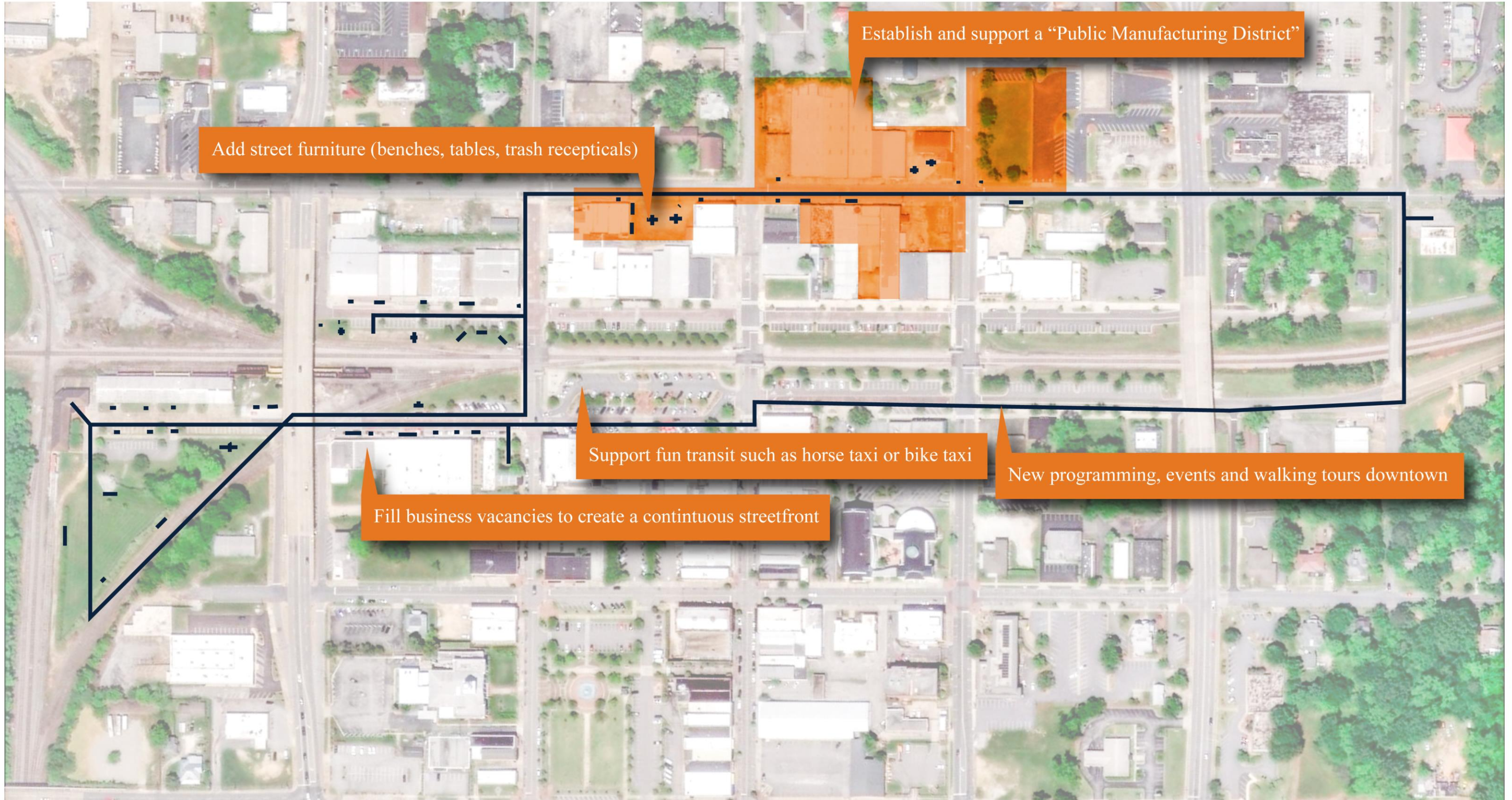
Invest in adaptive reuse of historic buildings

New construction should honor existing architectural character

Vibrance Case Study



Vibrance



Establish and support a "Public Manufacturing District"

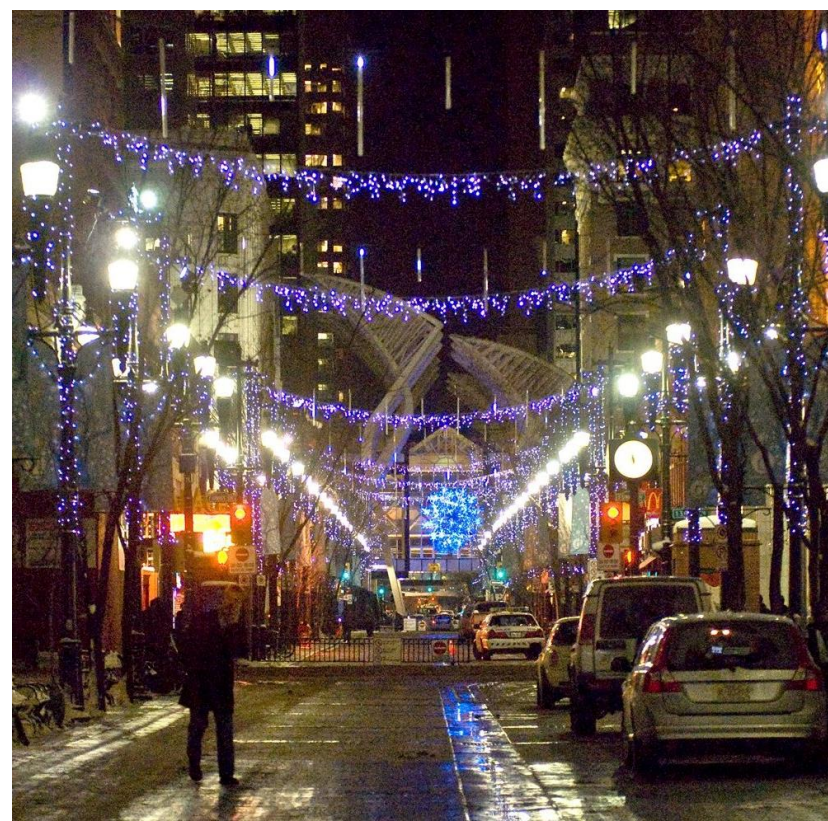
Add street furniture (benches, tables, trash recepticals)

Support fun transit such as horse taxi or bike taxi

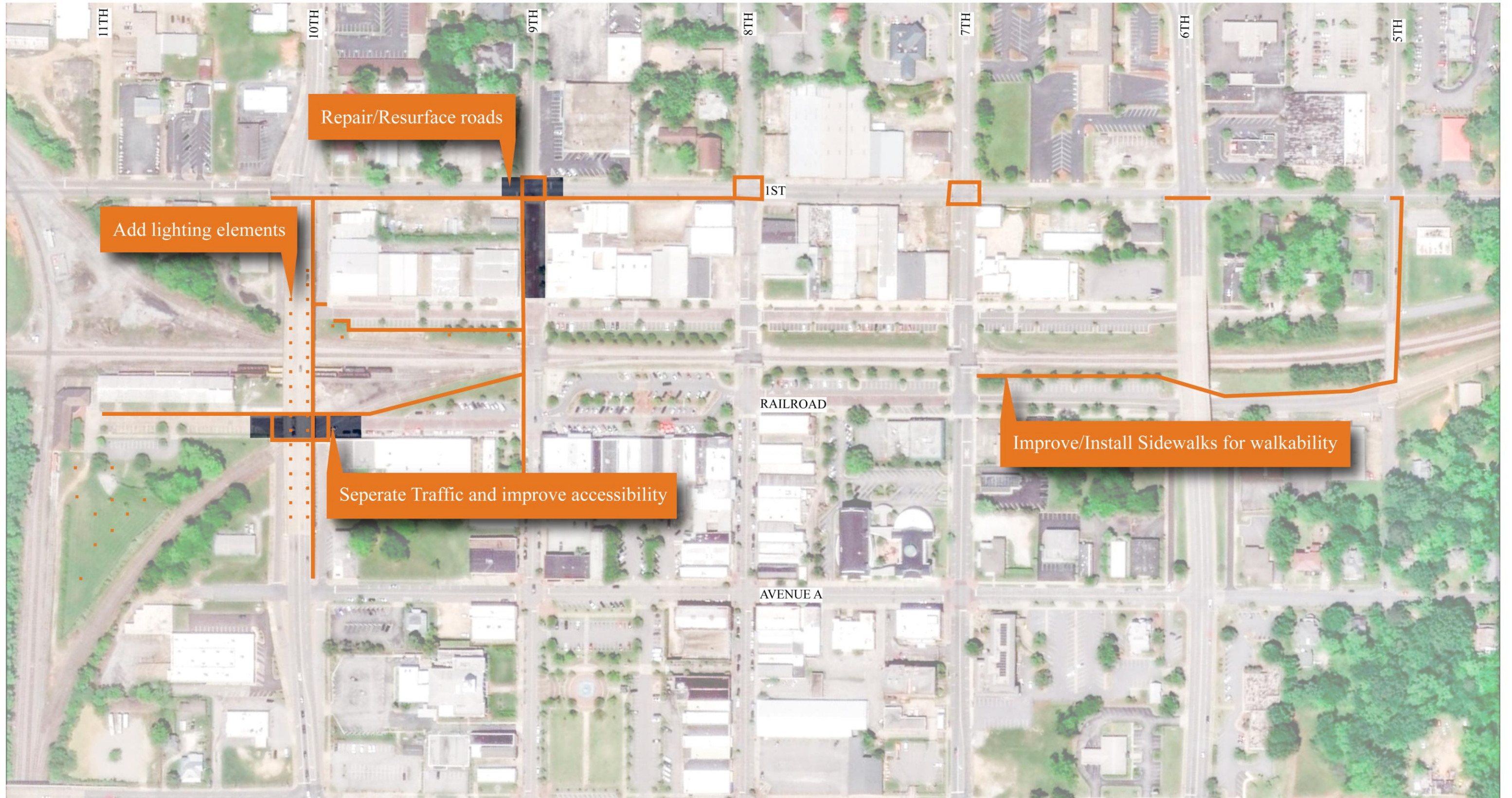
New programming, events and walking tours downtown

Fill business vacancies to create a continuous streetfront

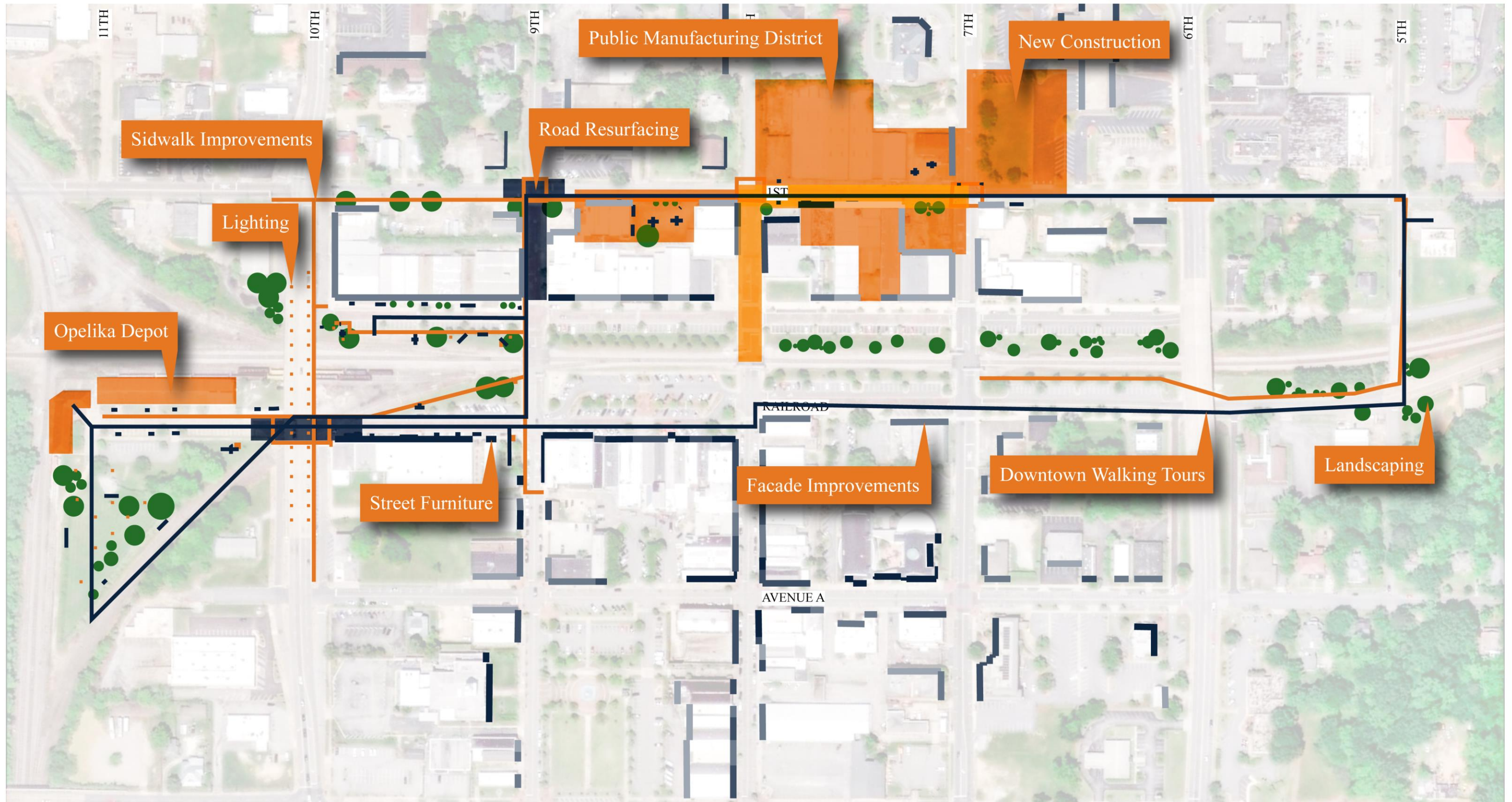
Safety Case Study



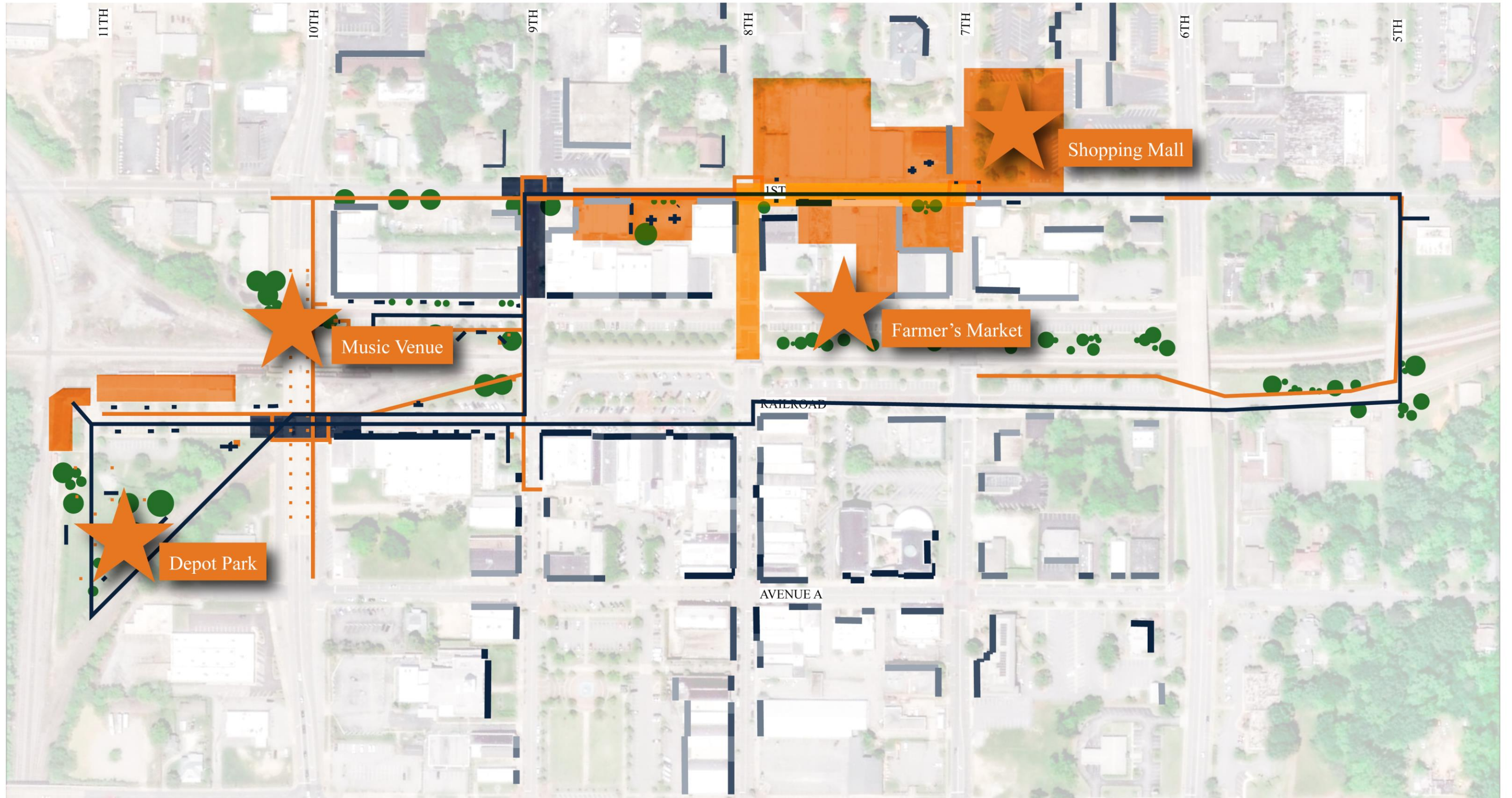
Perceived Safety



Project Strategies



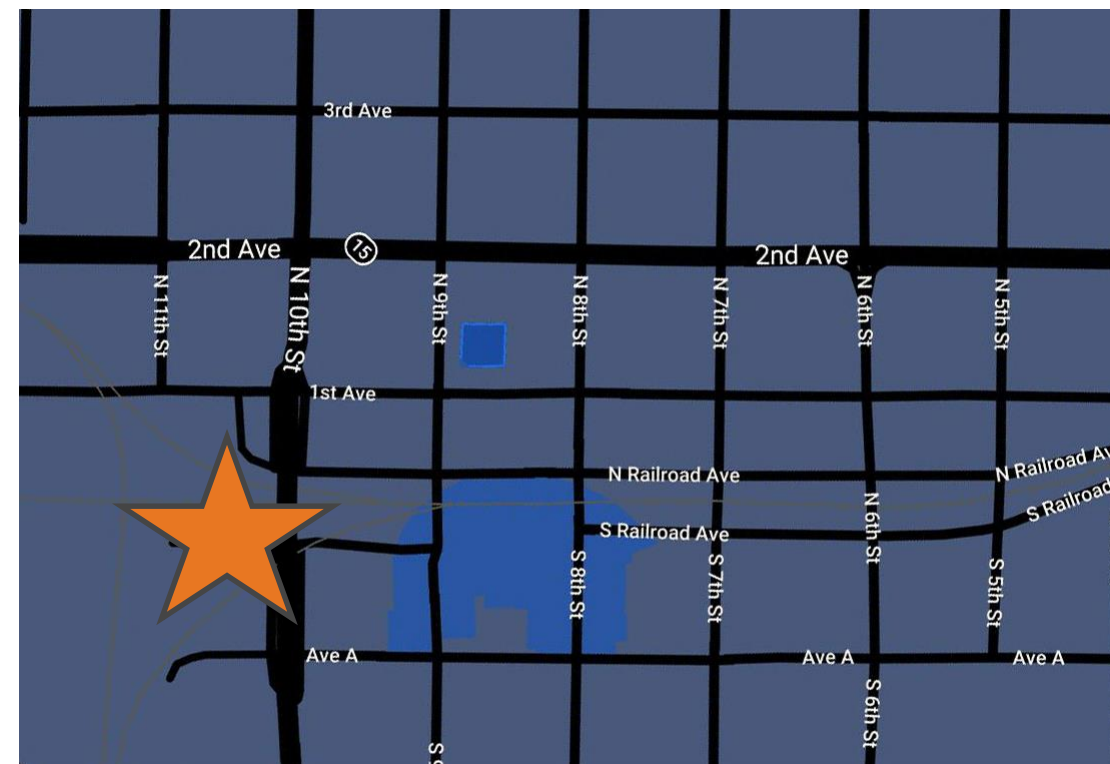
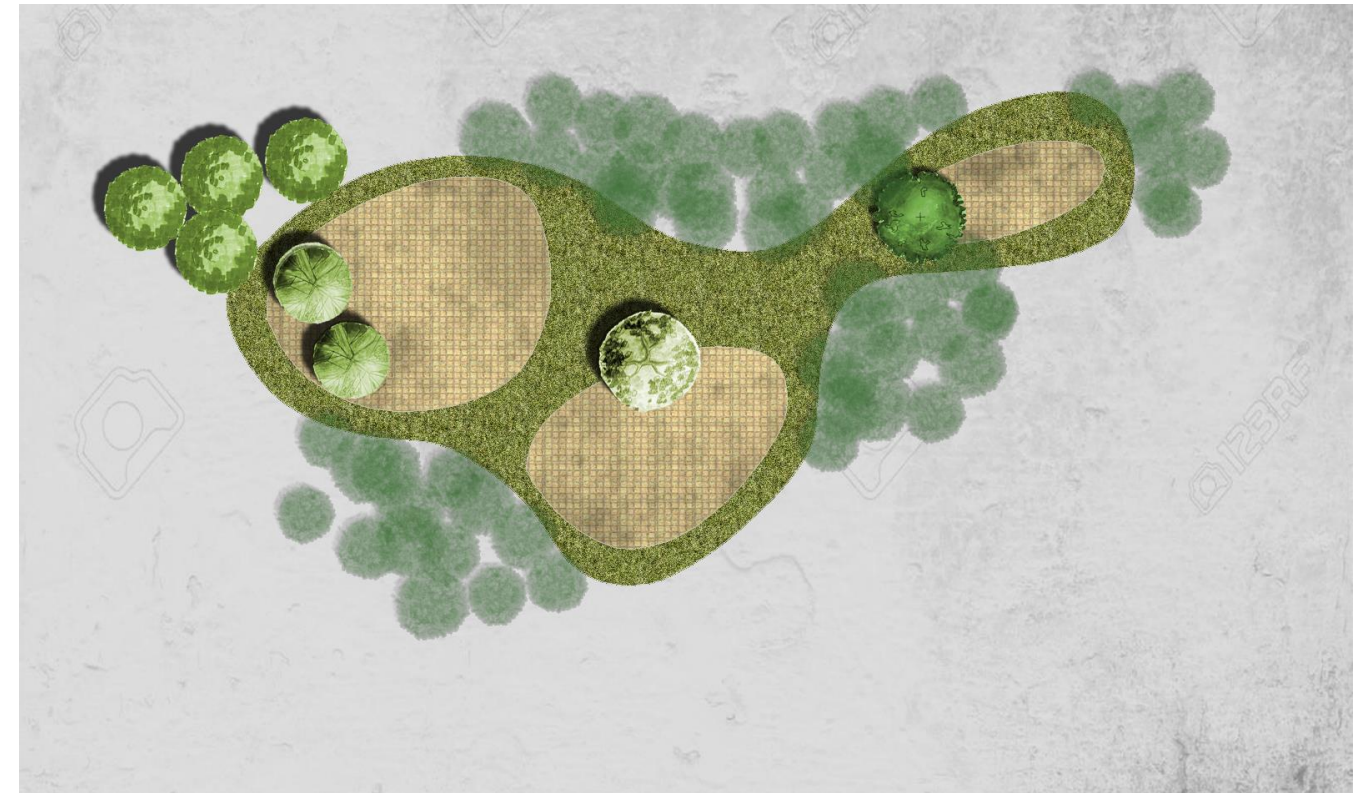
Project Strategies



Farmer's Market



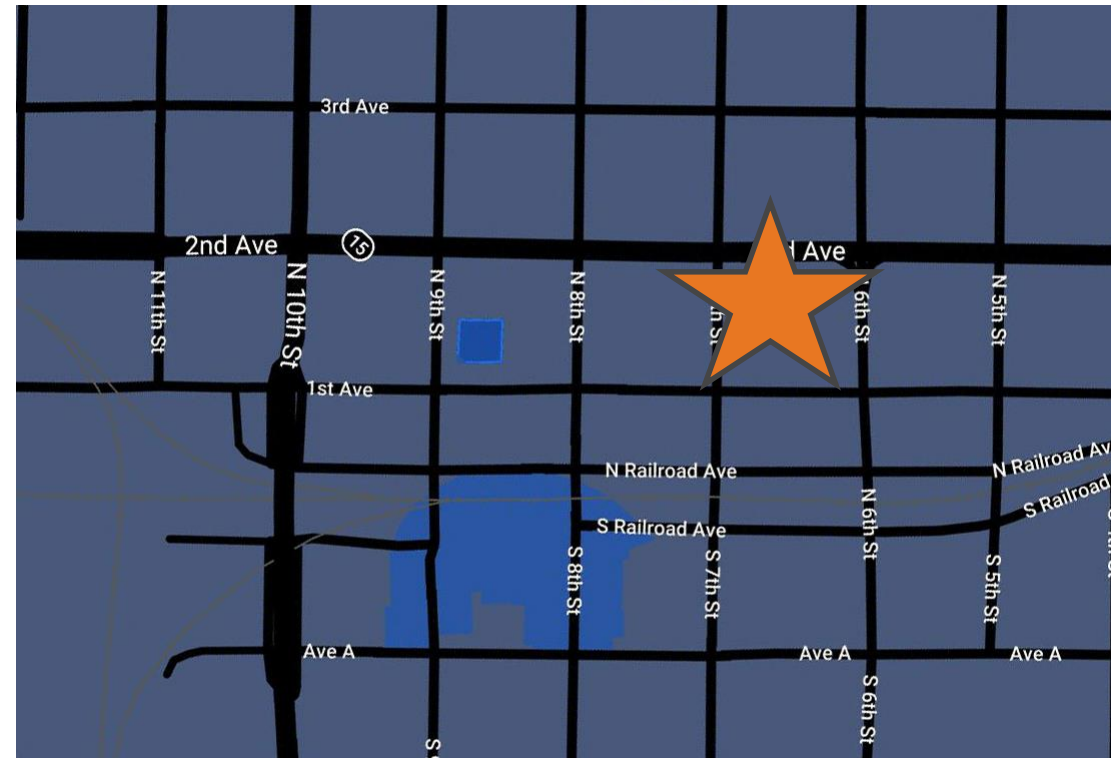
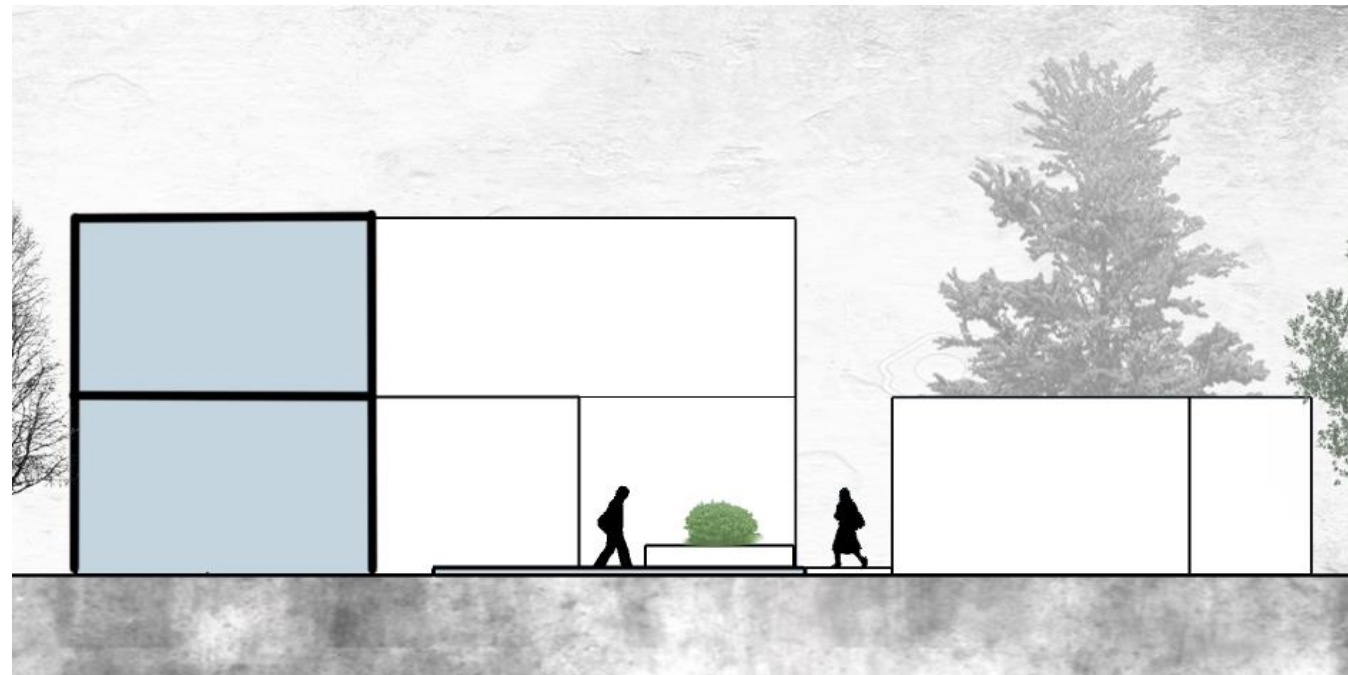
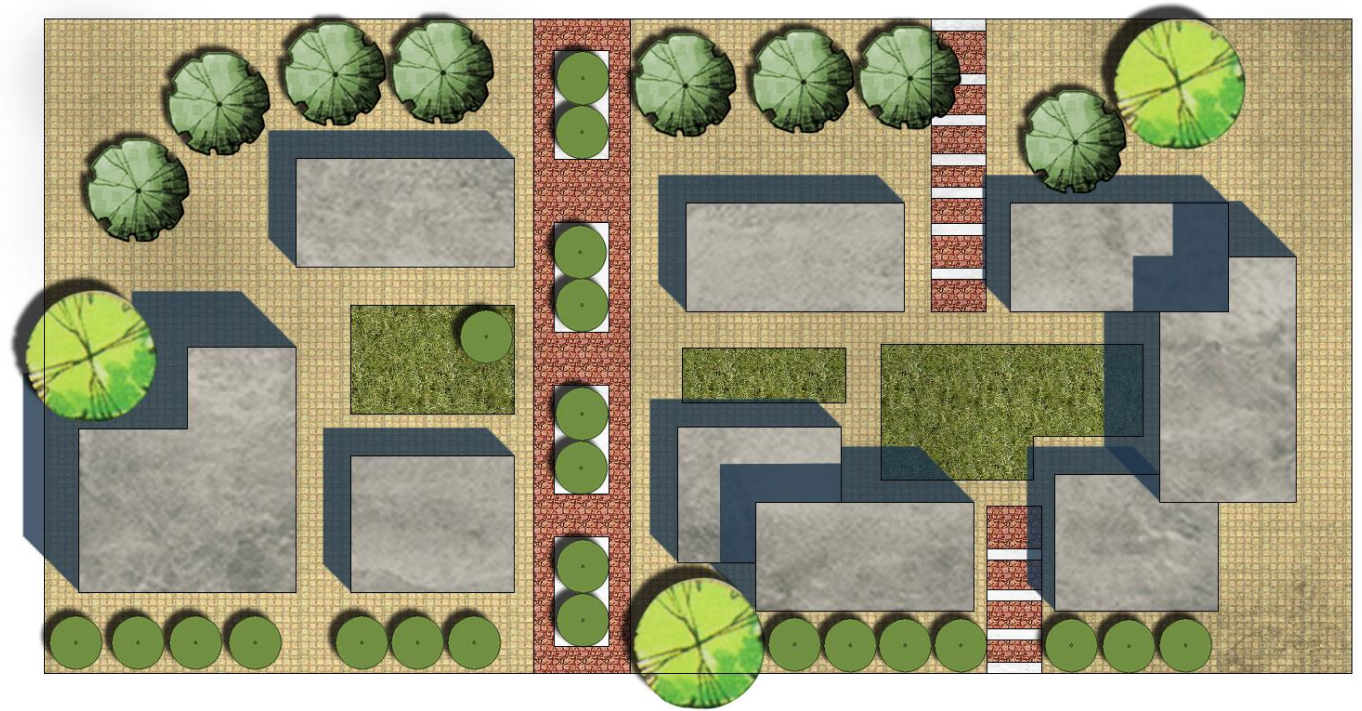
Train Depot Park



Music Venue



Shopping Mall



Implementation

Stakeholders

- Citizen Interest Groups
- City of Opelika
- Railroad Ave Historic District
- East Alabama Arts
- Opelika Main Street
- Cotton District LLC
- Coors
- PNC Bank
- Railroad Companies

Strategies

- Downsize PNC bank
 - Approach the bank with a profitable plan to redevelop their property
 - Reduce the land used by the bank, maintain or increase sq ft
 - Create more leasable space for our shopping mall plan, or alternatively they can sell part of their land for the shopping mall
 - Amend the zoning and comp plan if needed to allow the new uses,
 - possibly add city investment of infrastructure, etc. to negotiations

Strategies

- Citizen Participation Groups
 - Form different groups for streetscape, open space, historic district improvements
 - Get community input on the priorities and character for downtown improvements
 - Hire a firm to create concept drawings of different alternatives
 - Get community feedback on the proposals
 - Devote city money or find grants, and change comp plan/zoning as necessary to accomplish proposals

Strategies

- Move Coors Building
 - Use city money to prioritize façade improvements if the warehouse moves
 - Identify new locations for the coors building
 - Use some land value capture financing on nearby improvements for the food trucks, under the bridge venue, streetscape improvements, and road resurfacing – make it too expensive for the warehouse to stay a warehouse

Budget and Timeline

Project Name	Cost Estimate	Estimated Completion Date
Depot Park	\$300,000 - \$500,000	3-5 Years
Farmer's Markets	Private Capital	2-3 Years
Shopping Mall	Private Capital	3-5 Years
Outdoor Music Venue	Private Capital	1 Year
Food Trucks	Private Capital	1 Year
Train Museum	\$1 million - \$2 million	3-5 Years

Railroad Avenue Re-connecting Downtown



Shristi Bajracharya, Andre Westbrook,
Austin Chen, Tamara Brooks, Deonta Brooks

Introduction

The historical importance of the railroad to downtown Opelika makes Reconnecting Downtown a fitting endeavor to further revitalize the downtown area, specifically the area along North Railroad Avenue



Source: www.oanow.com



RAILROAD AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT OPELIKA, ALABAMA

The Railroad Avenue Historic District was the downtown nucleus of Opelika when the city was incorporated as part of Russell County, Alabama in February, 1854. The city limits extended a mile in every direction from the Montgomery and West Point Railway Station. In 1864 another railroad was built from Opelika to Columbus, thus establishing the city as a transportation center. During 1864 and 1865, Opelika's government supply warehouses, its depot, rolling stock and railroad were a target of Federal raiders Rousseau and Wilson. Train service from Atlanta to Montgomery was re-established in 1865.

185 - 07/2000 - 01/2001

History of the Opelika Railroad



- The single most important industry which served Opelika's growth in the 19th century was the coming of the railroads.
- The original town boundaries, stipulated by the legislature, were described as "being one mile in every direction from the railroad station", which was thought to be the center of town.
- The Montgomery and West Point Railroad Company completed an extension of the railroad from Montgomery to Opelika on March 1, 1848.
- The railroad from Opelika to Birmingham was opened all the way in 1888.
- Present day Opelika still has trains which run through the city; however, the last

Project Location



Mission

Create an inviting and safe walkable space for pedestrians along North Railroad Avenue, specifically 8th and 9th street, while also increasing the quality of experience for both local community members and visitors .

Vision

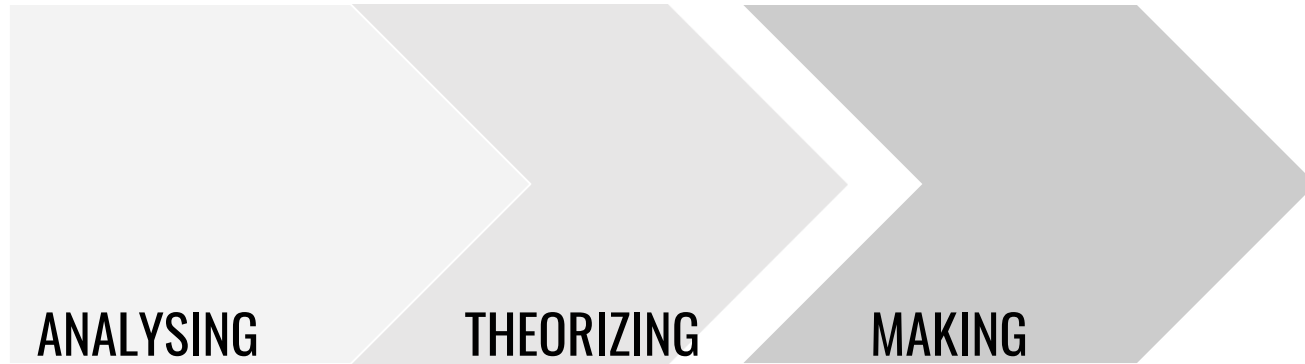
Envision a pedestrian footbridge that contributes to a thriving, Vibrant community built for residents and visitors alike.

Mission

Vision



Project Development



Project Development



ANALYSING

SWOT Analysis



SWOT Analysis



Strengths

- Strong Sense of Community
- Proximity to Auburn University
- Proximity to Interstate Accessibility
- Gig City
- Established Businesses

SWOT Analysis



Strengths

Strong Sense of Community
Proximity to Auburn University
Proximity to Interstate Accessibility
Gig City
Established Businesses



Weaknesses

Age Demographics
Limited Walkability
Limited Bikeability
Pedestrian Railroad Crossing
Questionable Safety at Railroad
Crossing

SWOT Analysis



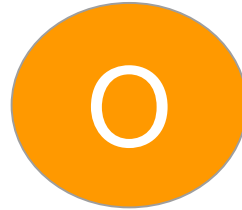
Strengths

Strong Sense of Community
Proximity to Auburn University
Proximity to Interstate Accessibility
Gig City
Established Businesses



Weaknesses

Age Demographics
Limited Walkability
Limited Bikeability
Pedestrian Railroad Crossing
Questionable Safety at Railroad
Crossing



Opportunities

Green Opportunities
Potential Growth
Available Land
Redevelopment Opportunities
Establish Culture to Attract Businesses
Economic Development

SWOT Analysis



S

Strengths

Strong Sense of Community
Proximity to Auburn University
Proximity to Interstate Accessibility
Gig City
Established Businesses



O

Opportunities

Green Opportunities
Potential Growth
Available Land
Redevelopment Opportunities
Establish Culture to Attract Businesses
Economic Development



W

Weaknesses

Age Demographics
Limited Walkability
Limited Bikeability
Pedestrian Railroad Crossing
Questionable Safety at Railroad
Crossing



T

Threats

Regional Competition
Neighboring Community
Competition
Energy Costs
Environmental Regulations

Project Development



Goals & Objectives



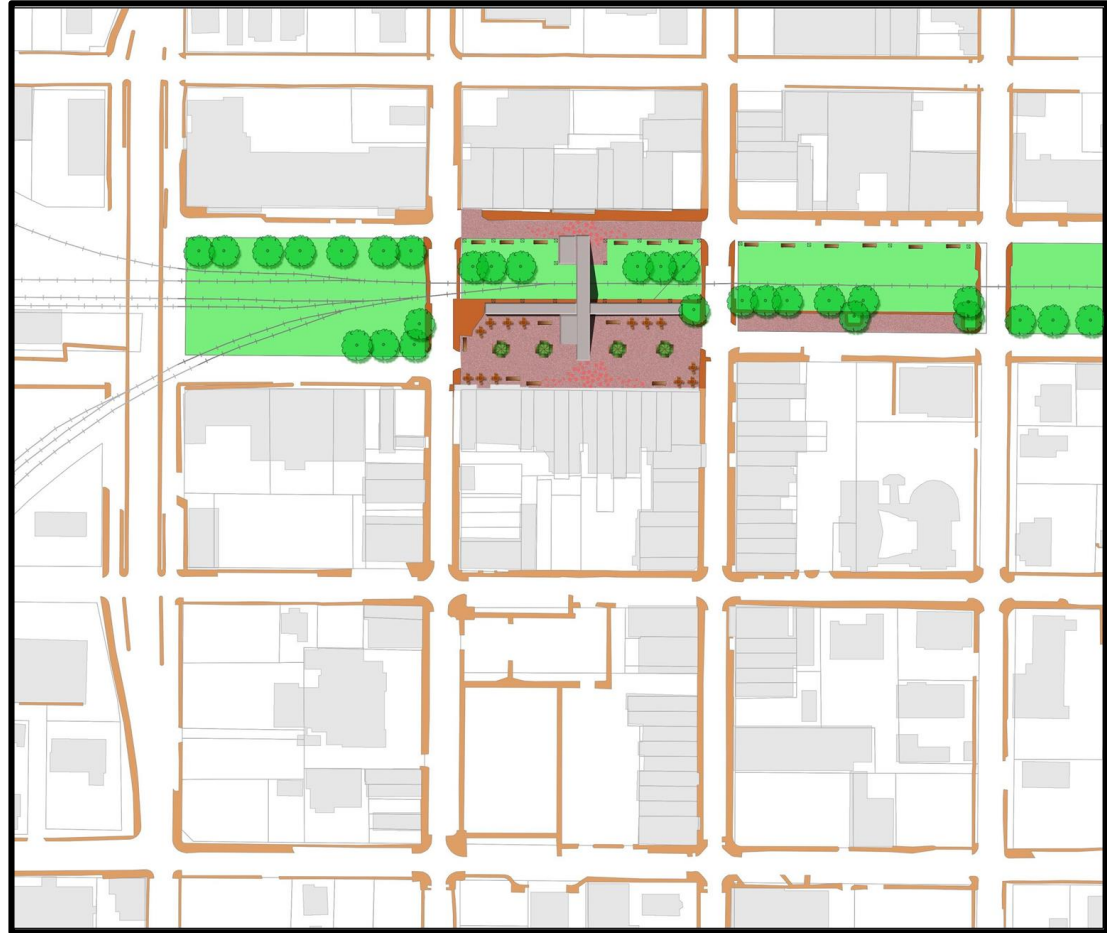
Project Development



Master Plan



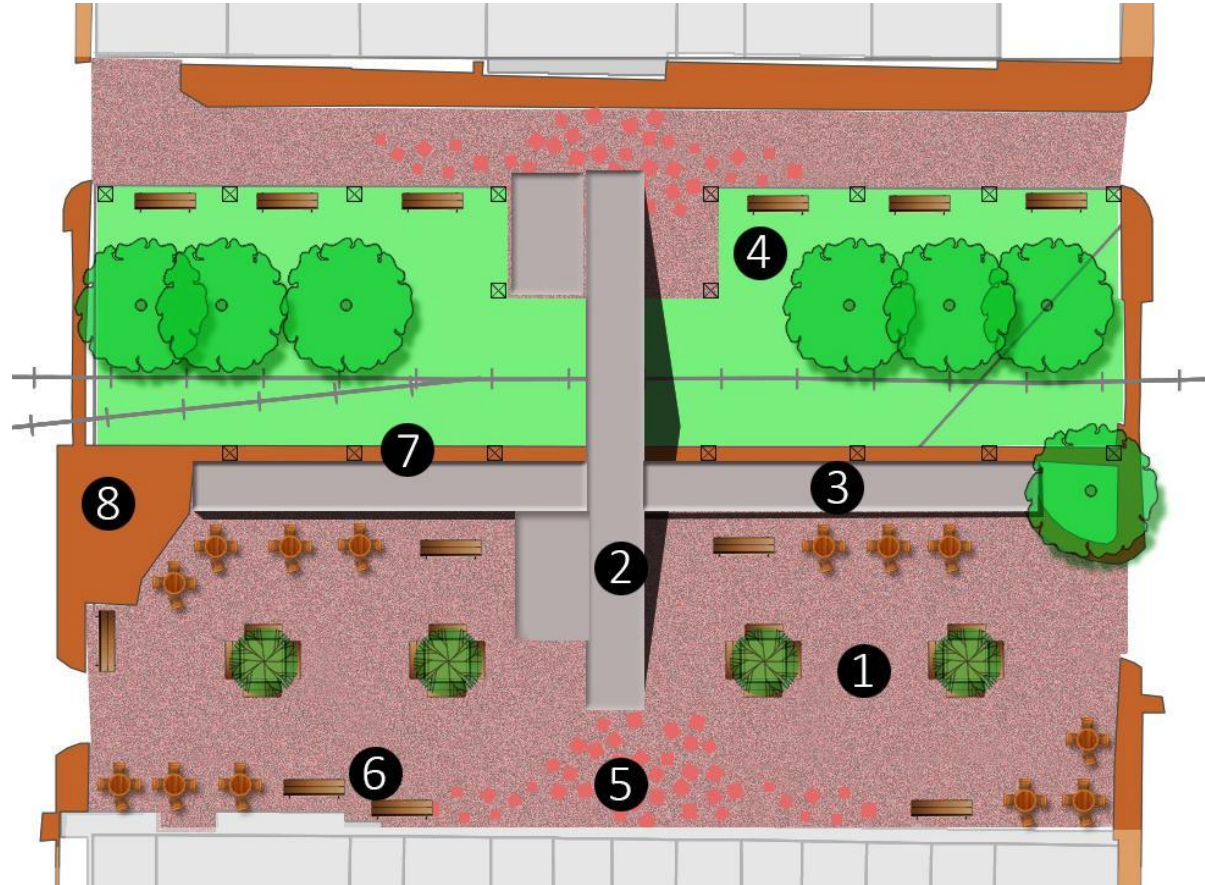
Master Plan



LEGEND

- 01. Pedestrian Plaza
- 02. Pedestrian Bridge
- 03. Train Viewing Platform
- 04. Green Space
- 05. Entry Foyer for Bridge
- 06. Outdoor setting for restaurant/dining
- 07. Street lighting
- 08. Sidewalks

Master Plan



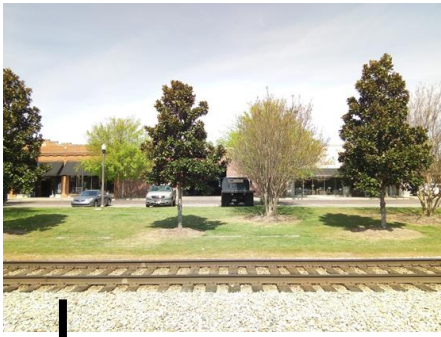
LEGEND

- 01. Pedestrian Plaza
- 02. Pedestrian Bridge
- 03. Train Viewing Platform
- 04. Green Space
- 05. Entry Foyer for Bridge
- 06. Outdoor setting for restaurant/dining
- 07. Street lighting
- 08. Sidewalks

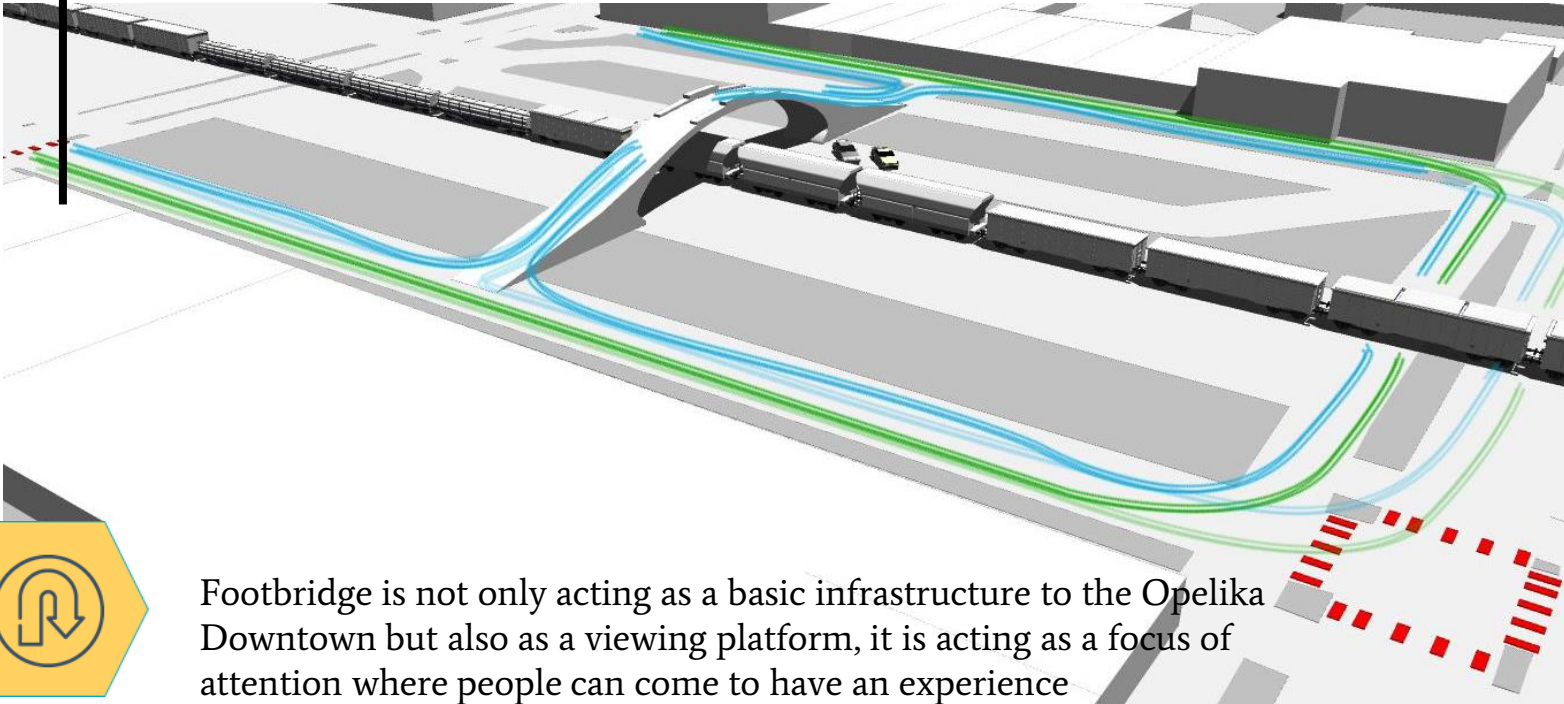


Footbridge
+
Viewing
Platform





Connect North Railroad Avenue and South Railroad Avenue

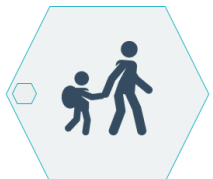


Footbridge is not only acting as a basic infrastructure to the Opelika Downtown but also as a viewing platform, it is acting as a focus of attention where people can come to have an experience





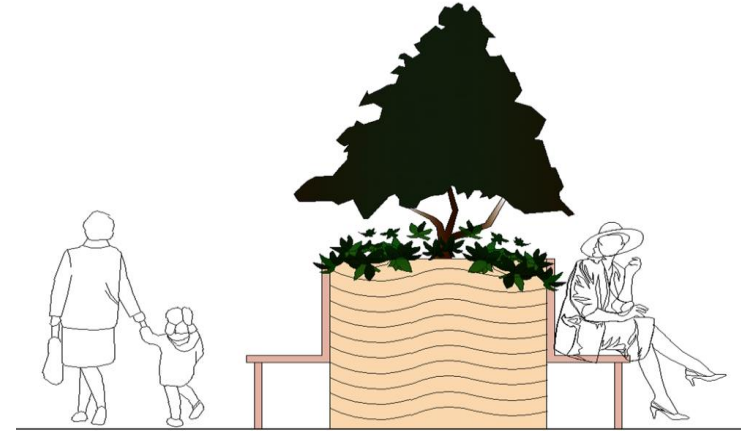
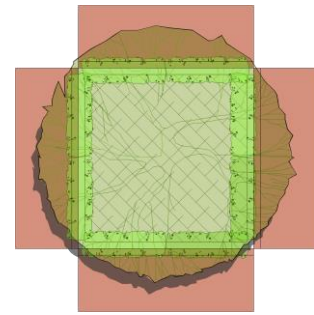
Sidewalks
+
RailRoad Plaza



Connect North Railroad Avenue and South Railroad Avenue

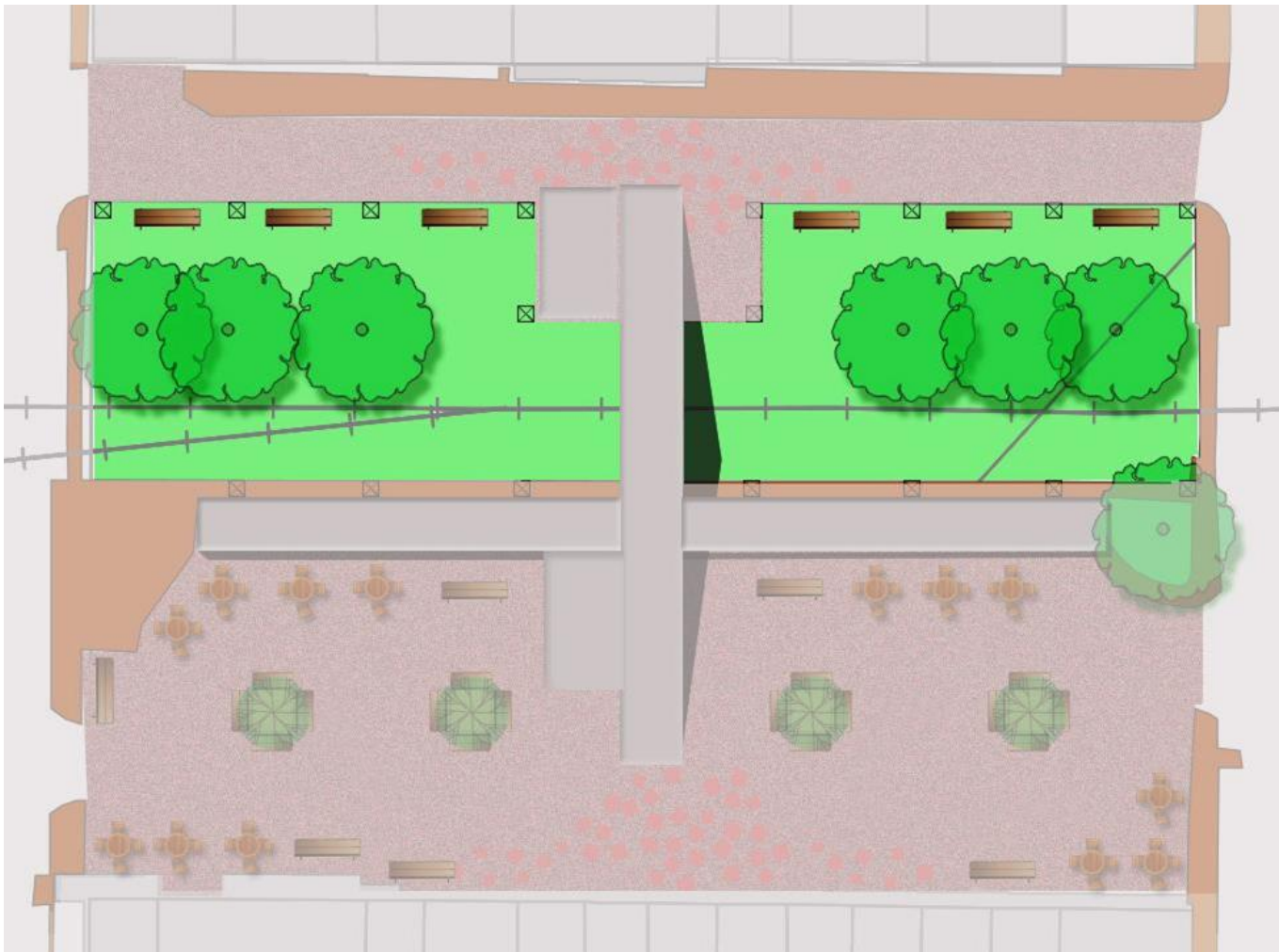


Improve sidewalks to provide better accessibility to the proposed public Railroad plaza



RailRoad Plaza will add a more open social focus to the downtown where the outdoor settings suitable for restaurant/fine dining will encourage more vibrancy and the outdoor seatings and landscape features encourage more hours of visits to the area.





Green Space





Retaining the green space on one side of the railroad track and creating a paved railroad plaza on the other side retains the existing feel of the area. The provision of seatings as landscape elements will improve the amount of time people prefer to stay.







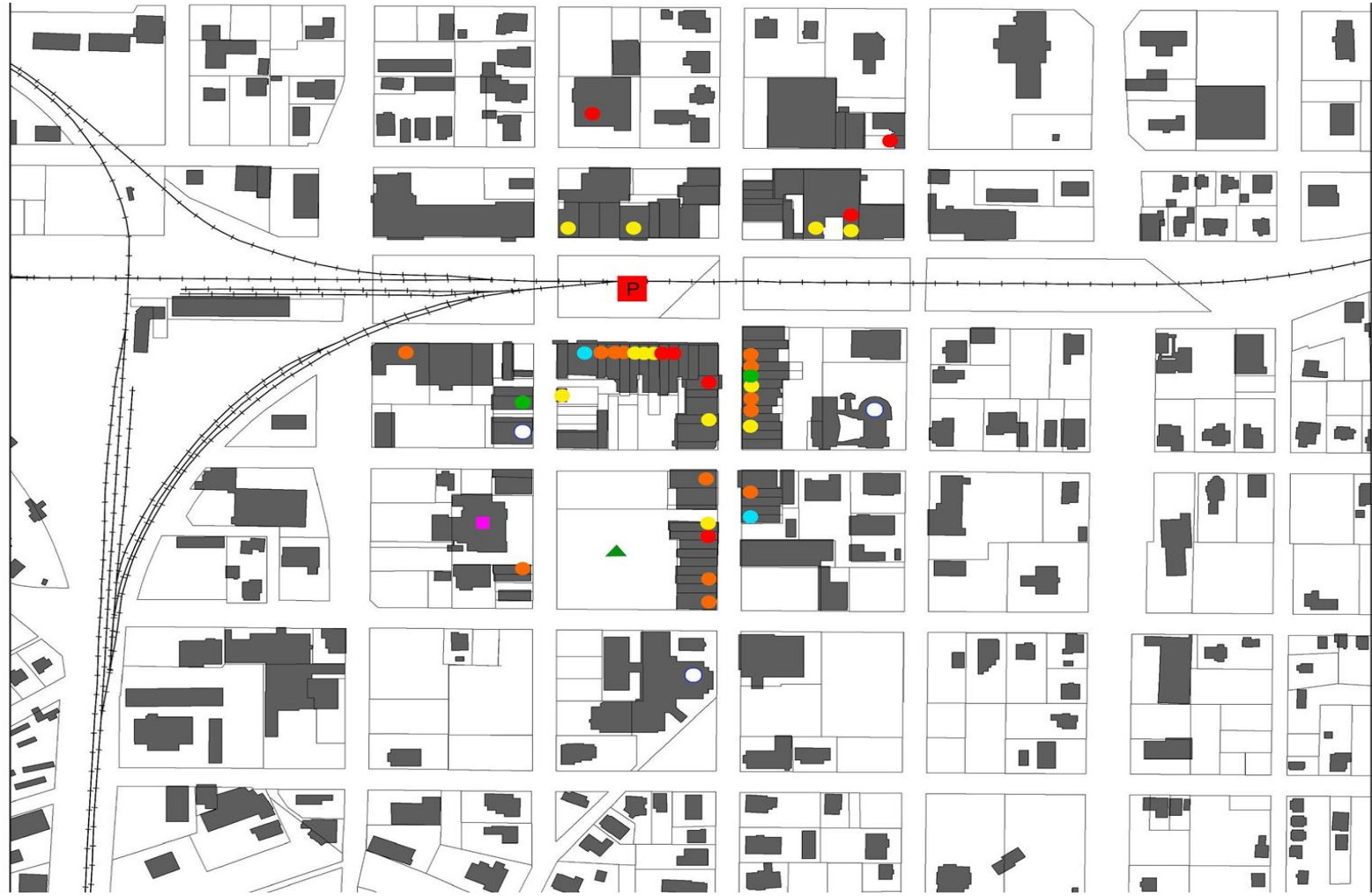
StreetScape



Existing Downtown Businesses

-  Retail Stores
-  Eateries
-  Entertainment
-  Salon
-  Services
-  Museum
-  Official Building
-  Open Space
-  Project Site

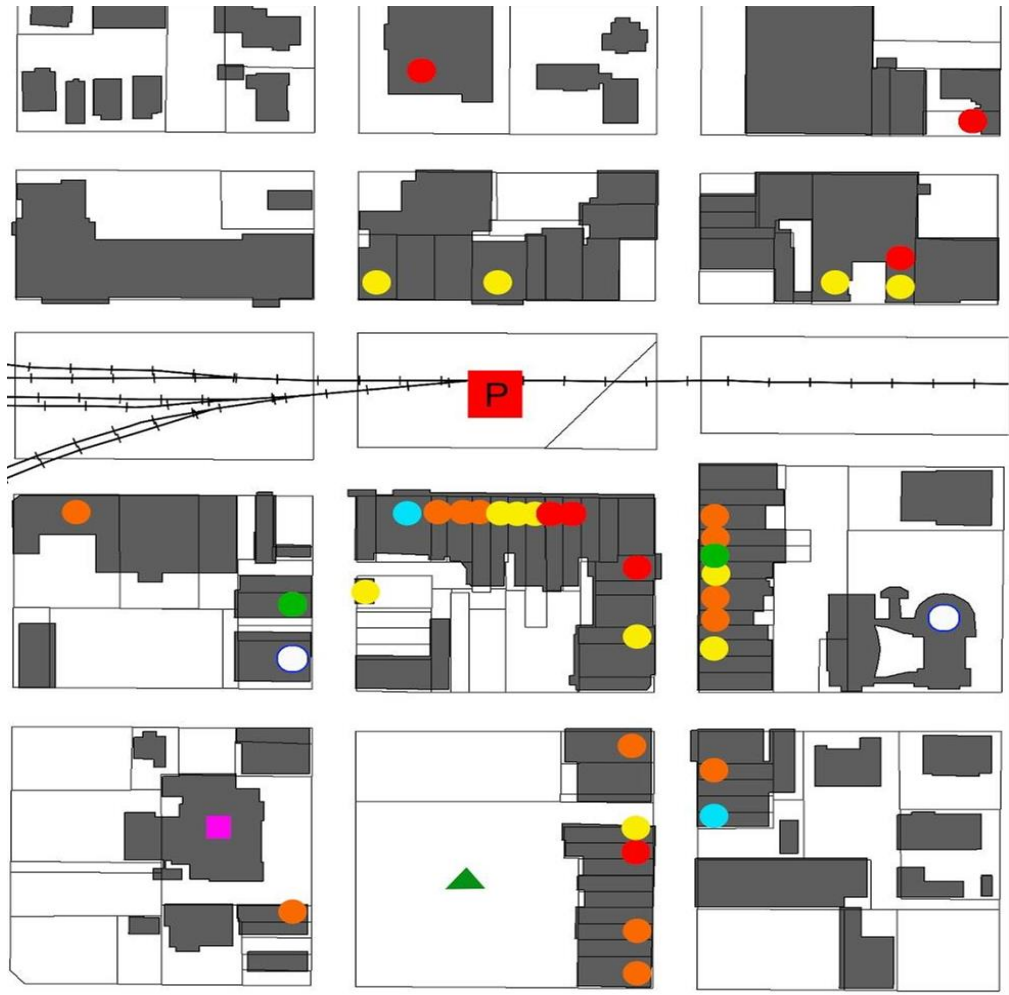
-  Railroads
-  Building Footprints (2014)
-  Parcels



Existing Downtown Businesses

-  Retail Stores
-  Eateries
-  Entertainment
-  Salon
-  Services
-  Museum
-  Official Building
-  Open Space
-  Project Site

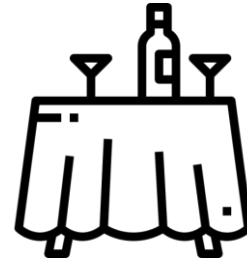
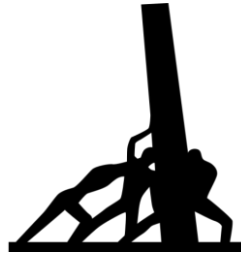
-  Railroads
-  Building Footprints (2014)
-  Parcels



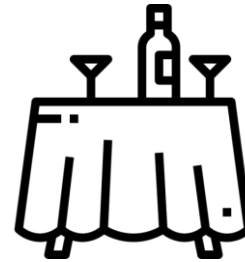
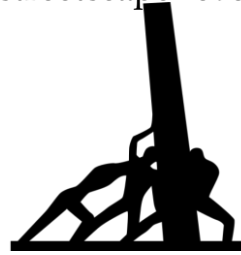


Improving Streetscape

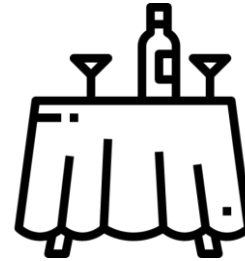
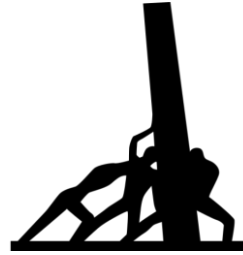
Prioritizing incentives
for business owners
for new developments

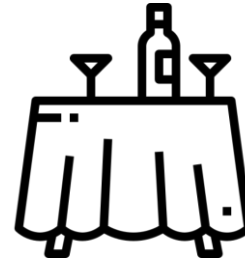
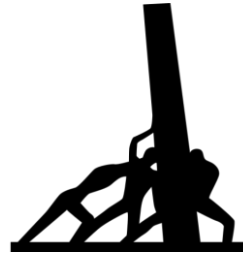


Civic Engagement
(organizing “Paint the
streetscape” events)



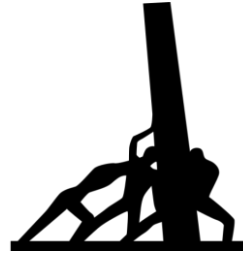
Prioritizing
maintenance and
repair for Downtown
Opelika



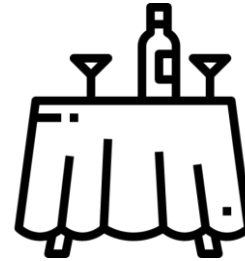


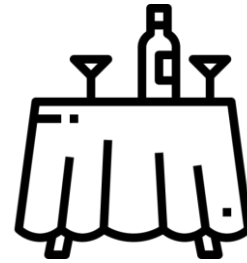
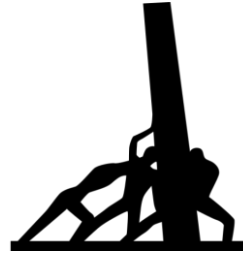
Encourage compatibility
of new development with
the feel of existing
Downtown so as to retain
the historic architecture.





Encourage outdoor activities with improvement in landscape features.

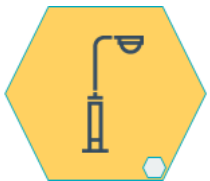




Encourage more entertainment options viz. fine dining, family restaurants, bars to achieve diverse cultural mix in one location.



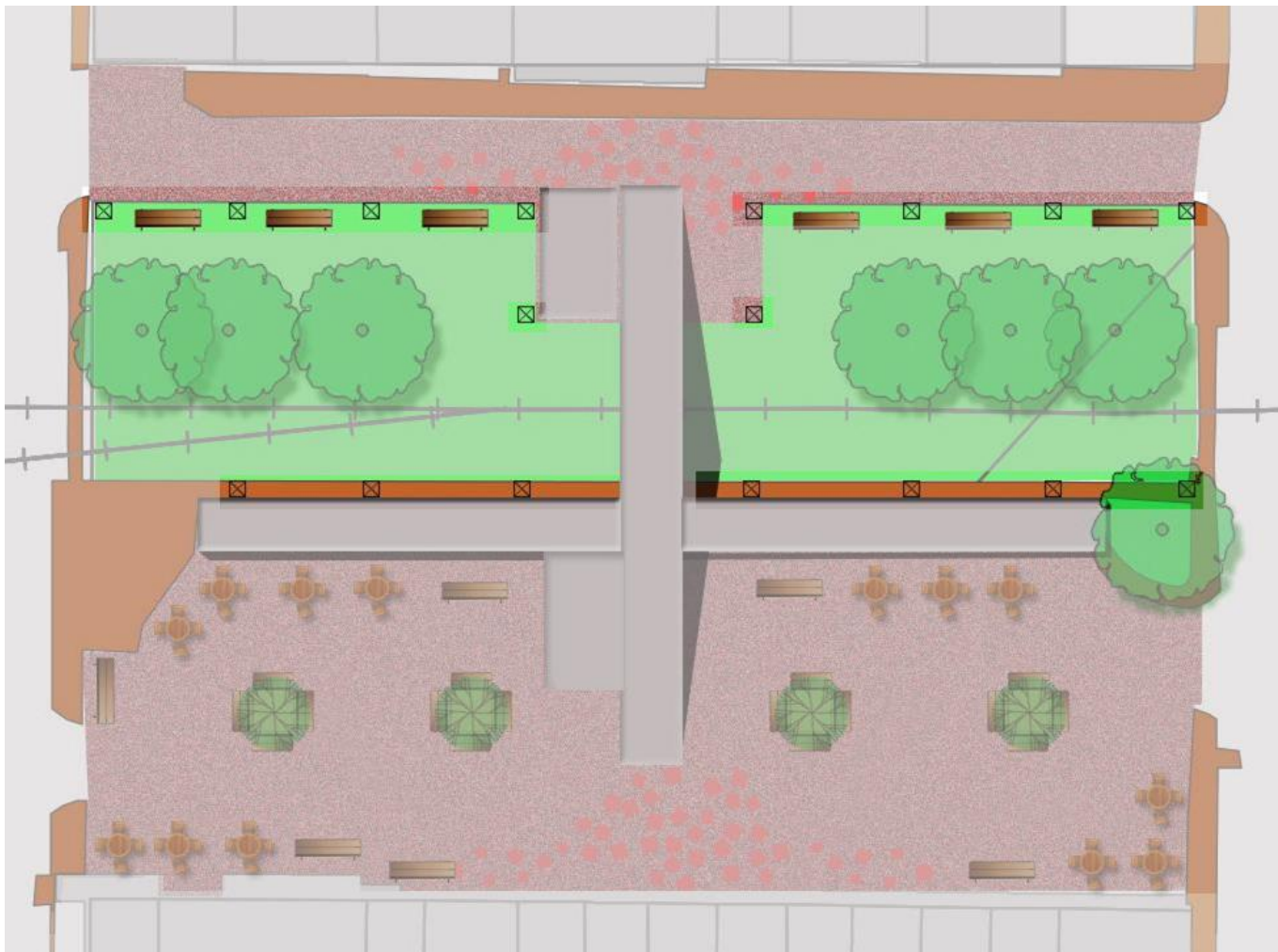
Street
Lighting



More street lights
+ Solar Street
lamps

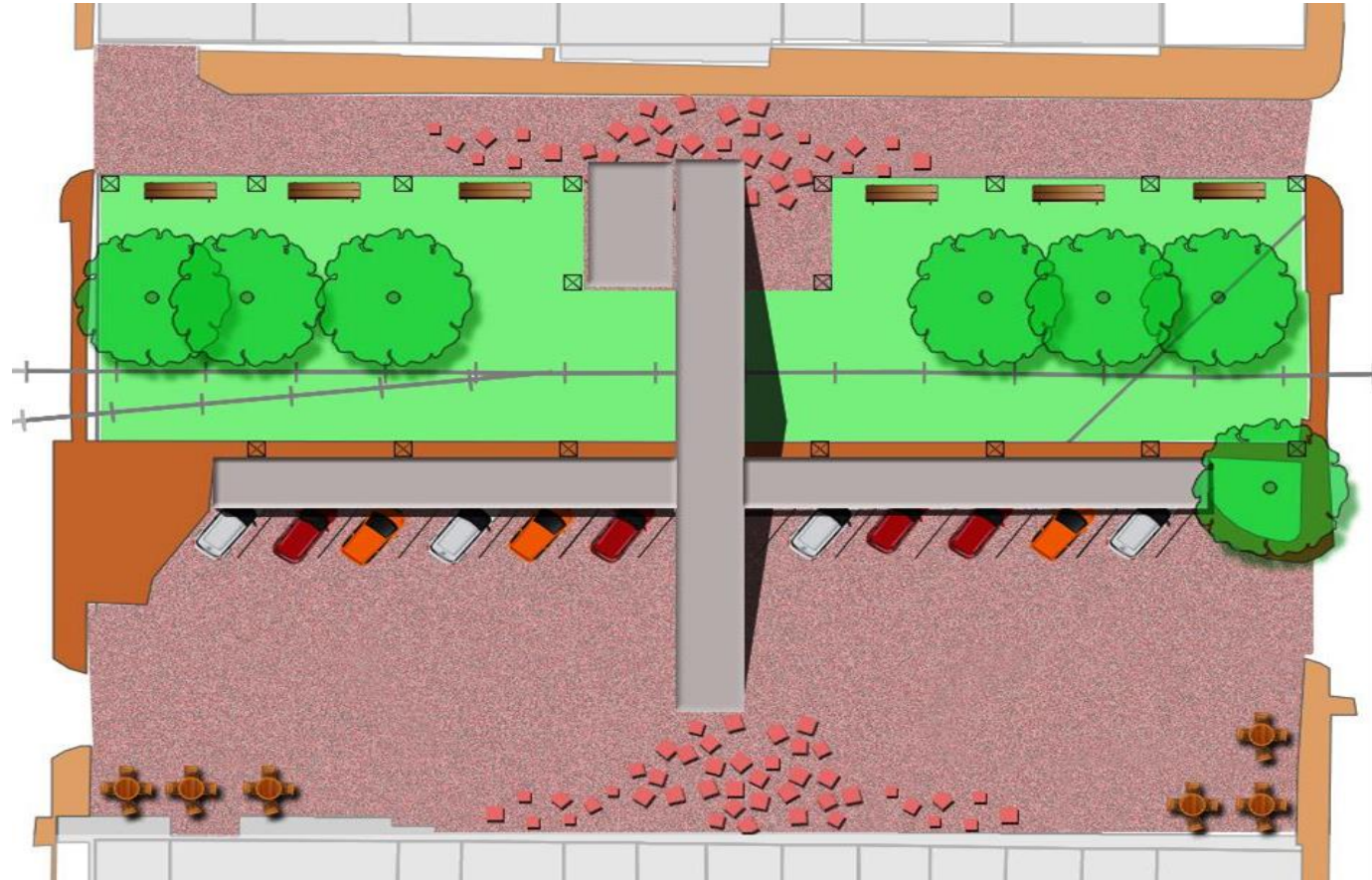


Street
Lighting



Master Plan

Design Option
with Parking



Case Study

Santa Rosa

- A Californian city in Sonoma County
- Known for its wineries
- Estimated population (2016) : 175,155

California



Case Study

Santa Rosa

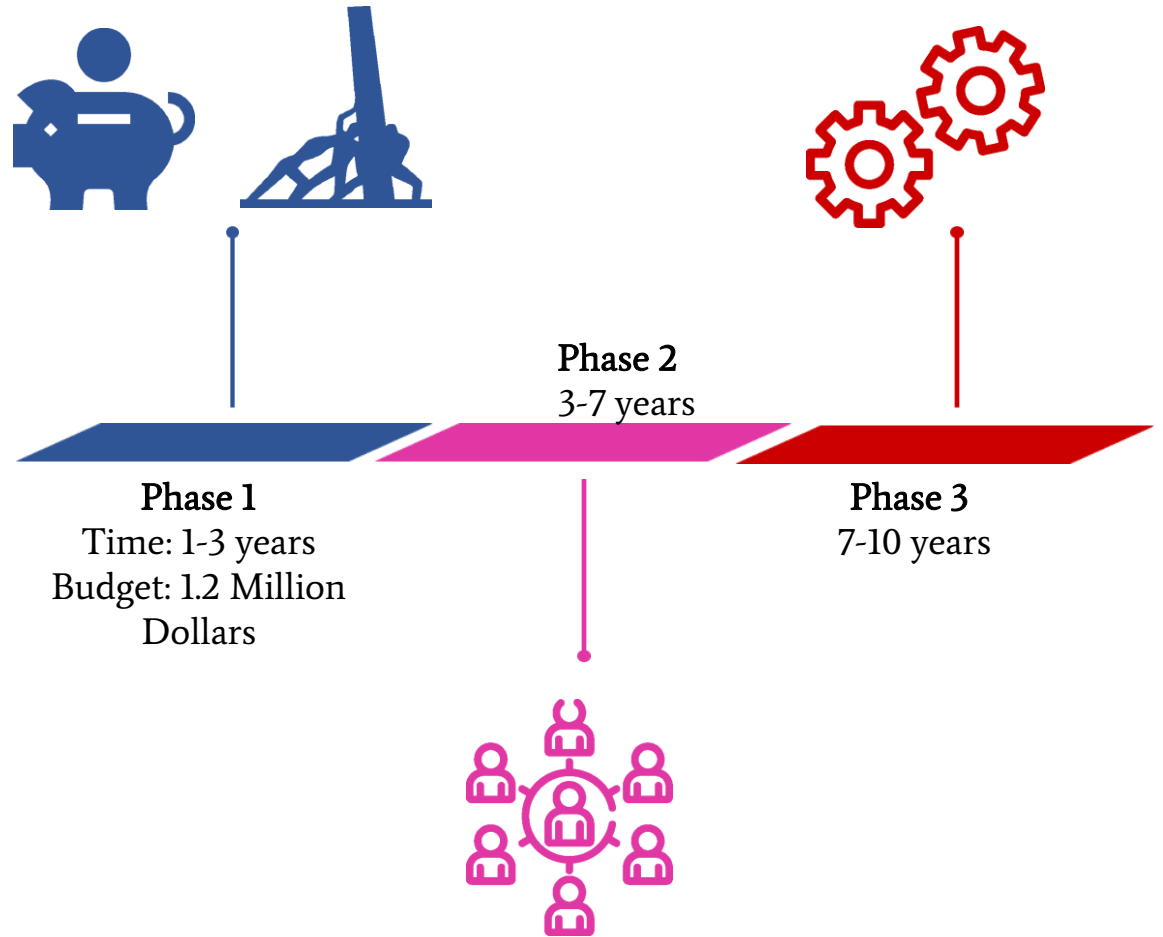
California



- In line to receive an \$8.2 million grant for the construction of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks just south of Coddington Mall.
- The city applied for a federal transportation grant learned recently that staff of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission were recommending the Jennings Avenue project as part of \$30 million in 2014 funding for regional transportation projects.
- Funding allows the city leaders to build the bridge.
- Funding expected to cover 90% of the bridge's \$9 million total construction cost.
- Includes supporting the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit service, encouraging bicycle and pedestrian connections



Strategies



Conclusion

The Reconnecting Downtown Project is important to Opelika for several reasons, including:

- Downtown Opelika needs improved connectivity
- Improved connectivity will enhance the experience of patrons and business owners alike along Railroad Avenue
- A pedestrian footbridge will improve connectivity in addition to creating a landmark that will attract tourist and locals to the area, thus improving the local economy