

THOUSAND OAKS CIVICS ARTS PLAZA

Landscape Design Master Plan

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Landscape Design 3 • Francisco Behr • Spring 2020



CIVICS ARTS PLAZA

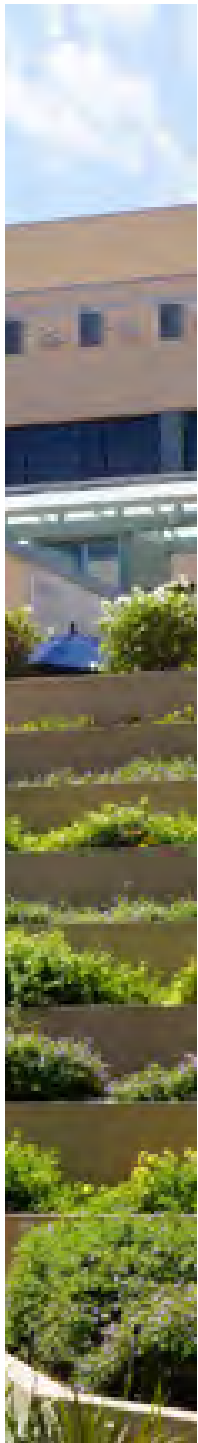


“ A downtown is about more than just the physical environment or the range of businesses that operate there. It is about the interaction of building design, public spaces, transportation, and mix of uses that brings people together and provides reasons to return over and over again. ”

Thousand Oaks Downtown Master Plan, 2018, p.20



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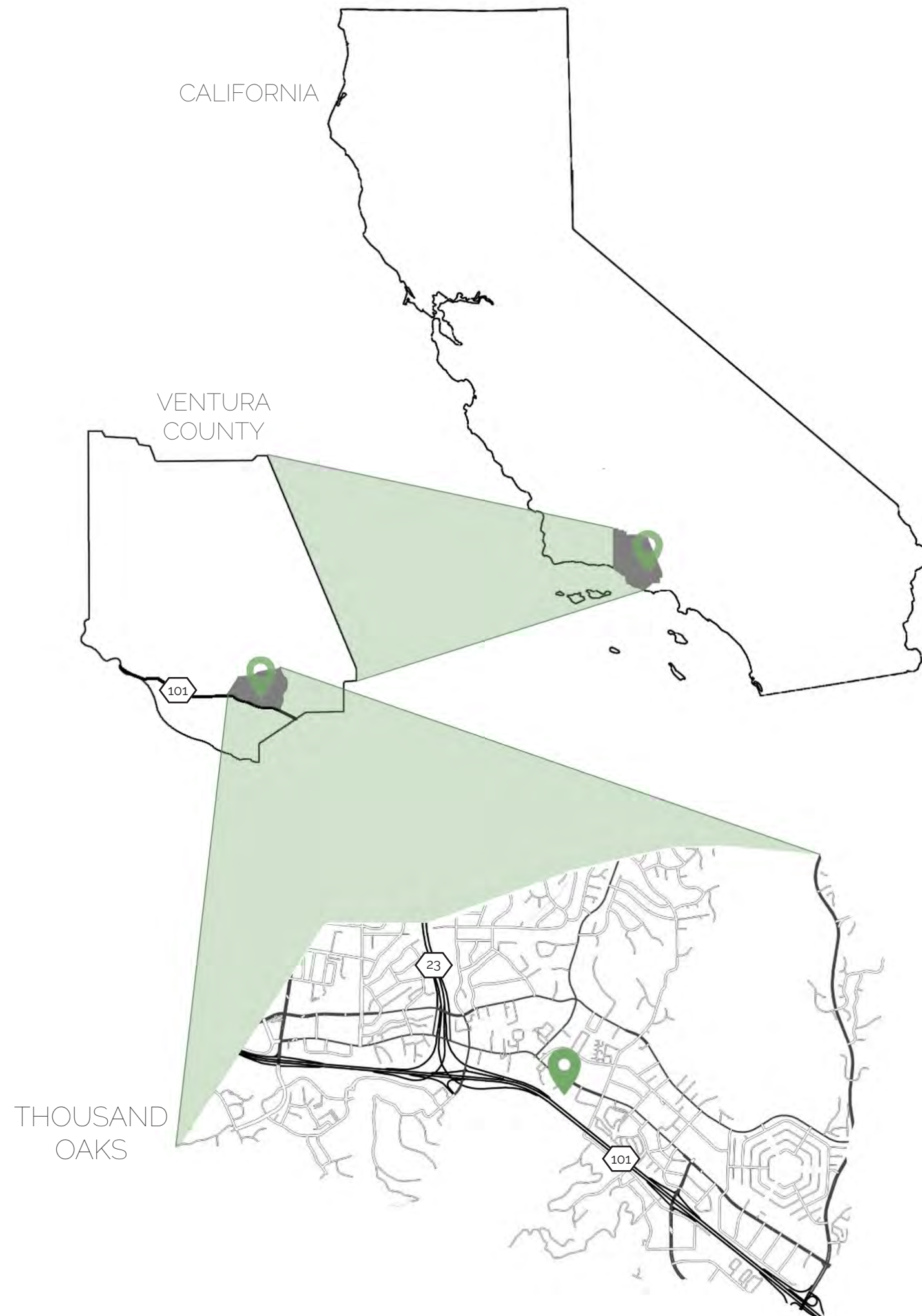
Civics Arts Plaza Thousand Oaks

CALIFORNIA

The City of Thousand Oaks is planning to revitalize its 'Downtown Core', and have worked with consultants to develop a comprehensive vision that identifies initiatives the City should pursue to create a successful downtown. The 'Downtown Core' has been defined as a 68-acre planning area, with about 56-acres of real property located on Thousand Oaks Blvd, bounded by Highway 101, South Conejo School Road, and Erbes Road.

Almost half of the properties in the planning area are owned by the City. The main "civic anchor" is the Civics Arts Plaza on Thousand Oaks Boulevard, and is surrounded by the two additional anchor points - The Lakes shopping center (to its East) and Gardens of the World botanical garden (to the North).

The primary goal of this Landscape Design Master Plan is to present a viable solution for the redesign of the Civics Arts Plaza that will provide a more connected, pedestrian friendly Town Square for the Downtown of Thousand Oaks.



HISTORY

Thousand Oaks was originally inhabited by the Chumans Native Americans during the 18th century. Archaeologists have found cultural remains on the site, leading them to believe it was used as a seasonal camp.

Later on, in 1926, Jungleland USA was built on the site to be used as Hollywood's private zoo and animal theme park. The park's trained animals were used in many films and TV shows at the time, like *Tarzan* and *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. As the city of Thousand Oaks gradually became more of an urban environment, the park no longer blended in and was closed in 1969.

The land was eventually sold to the city and in 1994 the Civics Arts Plaza came into being. Built by architect Antoine Predock, the 210,000 sq. ft. postmodern building would encompass the City Hall buildings as well as two performing arts theatres. The location has been designated as Ventura County Historical Landmark No. 63 due to colorful past.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The purpose of this project is to provide a Landscape Design Master Plan for the Civics Arts Plaza that will improve connection to its surroundings, create a pedestrian friendly environment, and **ultimately expand its potential as a community gathering space and Town Square.**

The campus has been broken down into four main zones.

- **Zone 1** is the parking area to the West of the site, which will be removed and replaced with a gathering space.
- **Zone 2** includes the space that lies directly in front (to the North) of the Civics Arts Plaza, and lines up against Thousand Oaks Boulevard. This area will include the entrance to the Plaza, and will function as the main connection to Thousand Oaks Boulevard.
- **Zone 3** is the landscaped space to the east of the building, which is adjacent to The Lakes shopping center. There is potential to improve the connection between these two buildings in this third space. And lastly,
- **Zone 4** encompasses Thousand Oaks Boulevard itself, and the pedestrian crosswalks that connect the Plaza to adjacent properties, such as Gardens of the World and The Lakes. Currently, the width and layout of the boulevard allows for high speed traffic, making it less friendly for pedestrians. This plan will identify areas for improving pedestrian access within that zone.





GOALS & OBJECTIVES

goals

1. **Develop Town Square** in front of Civic Arts Plaza with new entrance and passive green areas with the ability to expand into Thousand Oaks Boulevard for major community events
2. **Improve pedestrian environment** with wider sidewalks, shade trees, a café (kiosk), outdoor seating integrated, with a focus on events related to music and arts
4. **Generate visual interest and enhance downtown's image** by adding art and interactive installments that will create focal points, meeting places, and definers
5. **Add more convenient parking**, "park once" parking for entire downtown

objectives

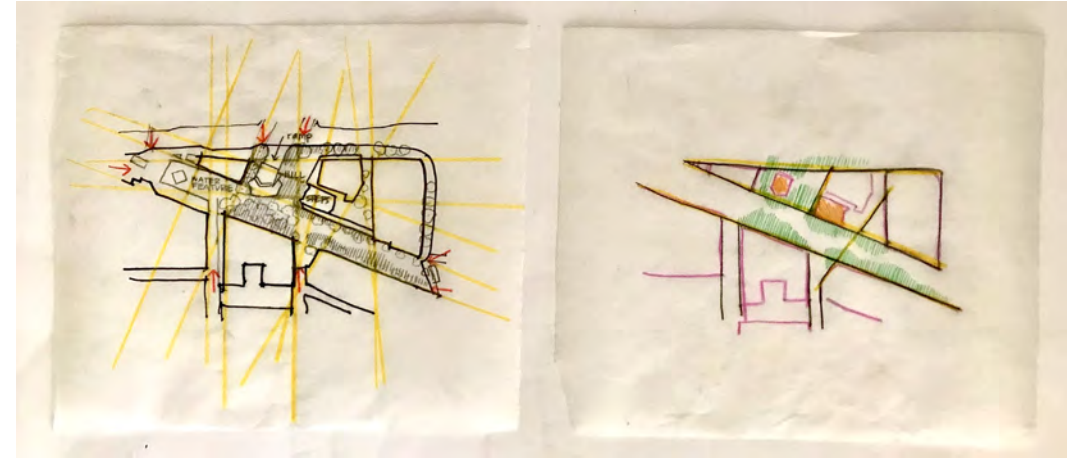
1. **Enhance campus as civic and cultural center** for community
2. **Connect pedestrian circulation** from Town Square to upper-level plazas
3. **Improve pedestrian circulation** within the Civics Arts Plaza campus and to neighboring properties (The Lakes shopping center and Gardens of the World)
4. **Improve exterior façade** of CAP (highly visible façade of Kavit Theatre particularly)
5. **Provide diversity of uses/public spaces** for people of all ages to enjoy

CASE STUDIES

#1

The Culver Steps

LOS ANGELES, CA



Located in the heart of downtown Culver City in LA, The Culver Steps are a relatively new addition to the historic area. The site is strategically situated between famous landmarks, Culver Studios and the Culver Hotel, as well as the new Amazon Studios. This modern mixed-use site is a central gathering spot for visitors to come for a multitude of occasions. Customers can come to

shop and dine, or to enjoy community events like outdoor movies, concerts, and farmers markets. The pedestrian-friendly area is landscaped with open greenspaces, lounging terraces, and a grassy knoll for picnicking and people-watching.

The site's inviting central plaza, unique design elements, and grand steps made it a great

contender to study. The design fit like a puzzle piece within the pre-existing built environment, which rings similar to the historic Civic Arts Plaza environment. The multi-use steps and terraces that function as amphitheater like seating served as a sourced of inspiration for the final Civics Arts Plaza master plan design.



#2

Boston City Hall Plaza

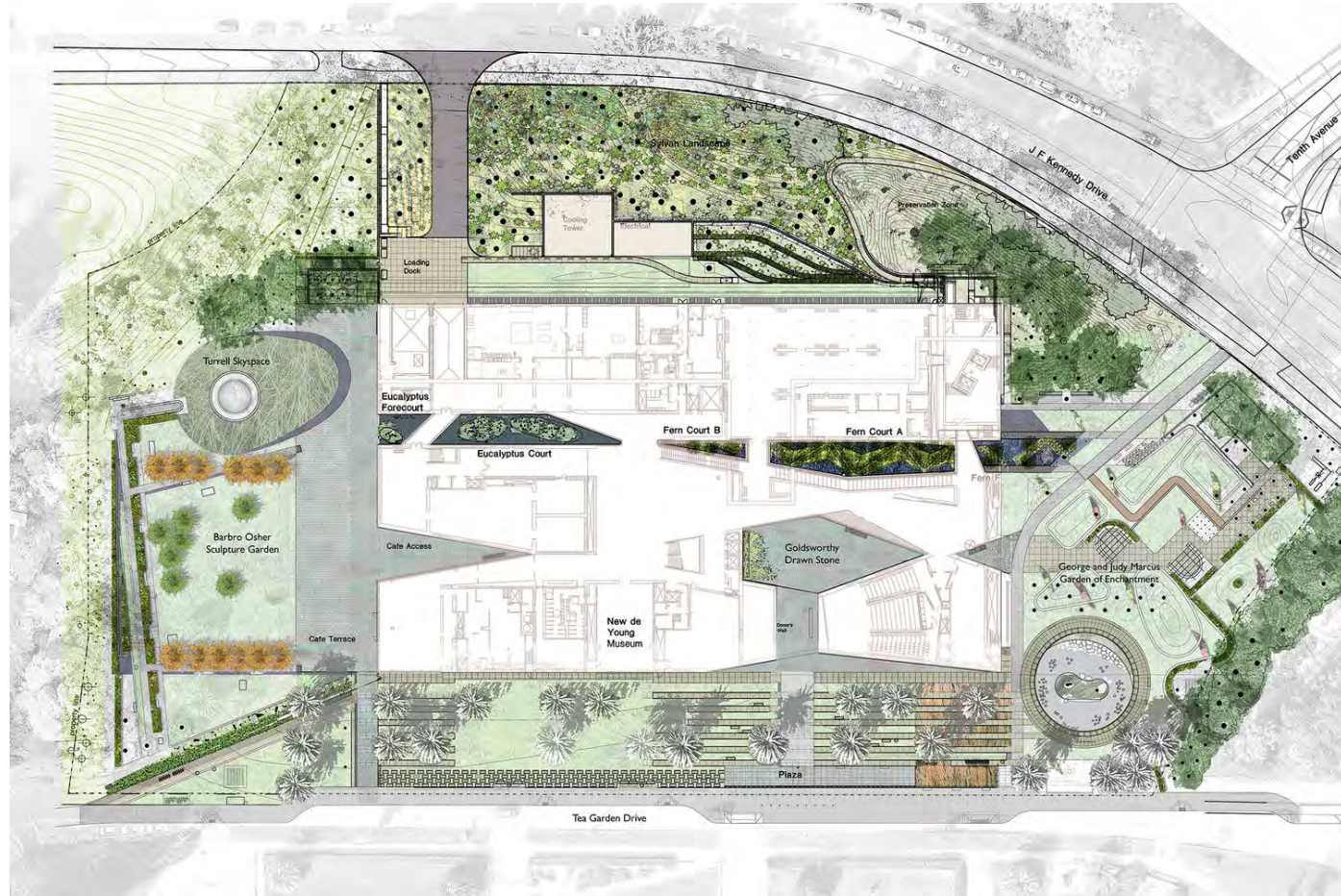
BOSTON, MA

This seven-acre open plaza accompanies the Boston City Hall building in the Government Center area of the city. The plaza is one of the city's largest civic spaces, and hosts a range of cultural, political, and community events. However, the multi-level, irregularly shaped space has been controversial among city residents due to its harsh brick and concrete aesthetic and inaccessibility.

In response to widespread criticism, landscape architecture firm Sasaki has partnered with the City of Boston to renovate the site to update the programming capabilities, improve and add landscaped spaces, and ultimately make it a more accessible and inviting space,

This renovation master plan provides great examples of sustainably landscaped community spaces to relax, play, and gather at the edges of the built environment.





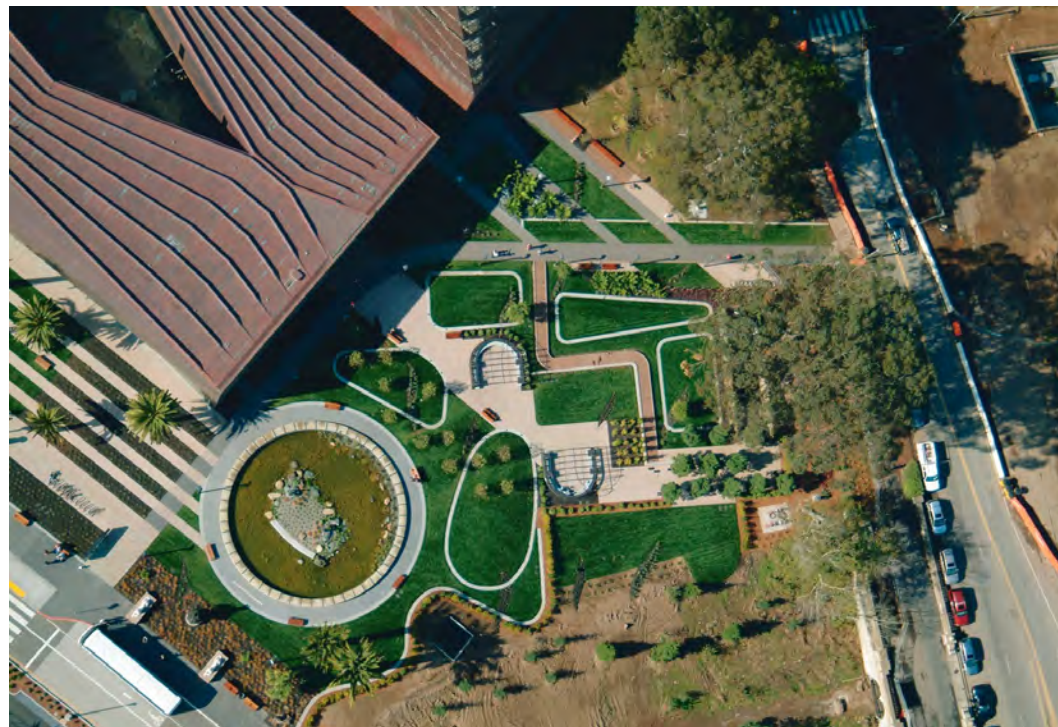
#3

de Young Museum Gardens

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

This newly renovated, five acre outdoor space is woven seamlessly into the contemporary yet eclectic fabric of the famous de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park. The site succeeds in emphasizing the entry to the museum by using strong axes, while also incorporating unique individual spaces the lie off the beaten path for visitors wanting to explore the gardens.

Particularly inspiring to me was the compelling use of form and material to provide contrast in this design. The use of symmetry and asymmetry allows for reinforcement of spaces while maintaining elements of intrigue. I have incorporated several of these concepts in my redesign of the Civic Arts Plaza.



An aerial photograph of a city grid, tilted at an angle. A specific building complex is highlighted in a darker shade of gray, indicating the site of interest. The surrounding area shows a dense pattern of streets and buildings.

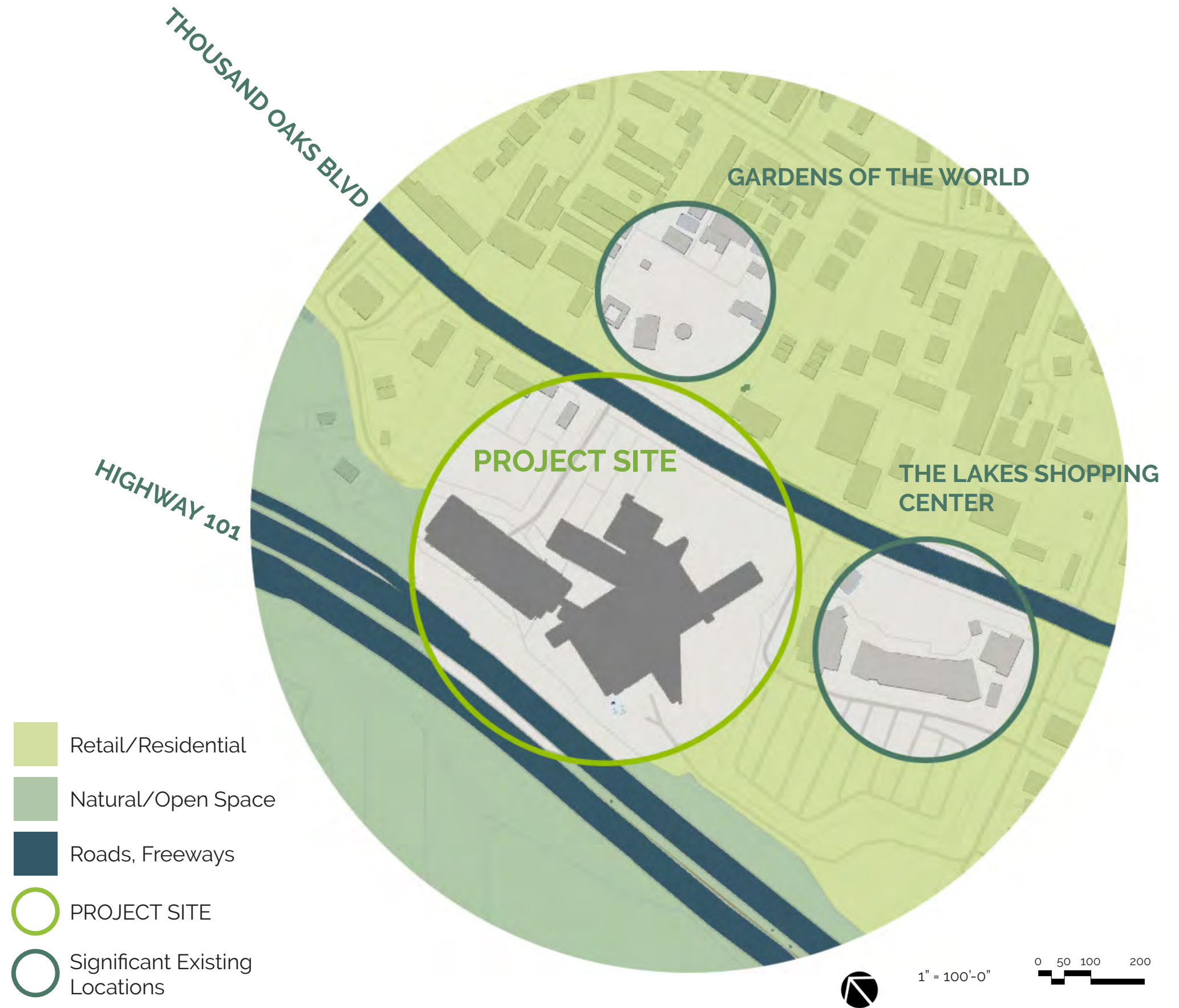
SITE ANALYSIS

PROJECT CONTEXT

The project site is located in the heart of Downtown Thousand Oaks. It falls on **Thousand Oaks Blvd**, a 4-lane high-traffic road that stretches from Thousand Oaks through Westlake Village to Agoura Hills. It is the city's major east-west thoroughfare and runs parallel to Highway 101.

Directly across Thousand Oaks Blvd from the site lies **Gardens of the World**, a public botanical garden where visitors can tour, picnic, or hike. The two sites are connected by a crosswalk.

The Lakes Shopping Center is located to the right of the site, which mainly consists of grocery markets & restaurants. The sites are connected by a crosswalk that crosses sidestreet The Lakes Drive. Directly behind the shopping center is a large surface public parking lot.



CURRENT STATE

Standing across Thousand Oaks Boulevard, near the entrance of Gardens of the World, you would see this view.



The Dallas Drive parking lot shown here is directly in front of the current entrance to the building, which can be seen at the top of the lot. This area will be replaced with a new plaza space that compliments the entryway.



Continuing up Dallas Drive, you will see a large concrete parking structure. This will be used as a “park-once” area for the new Town Square and downtown sites.





This view shows the front of the building, with terraced planters and a dry creek running along the face of the building. This area will function as the new main entrance to the building, with the terraced planters replaced by grand steps, and the main entrance directly to the right of the new steps.



As you enter the site from the east (The Lakes Drive/Thousand Oaks Blvd entrance), you are greeted with a mature oak tree followed by this view of the Carpenter Plaza Park sign. The park mainly consists of turf and mature oaks. The oaks currently do not provide a lot of shade.



On the southeast side of the building, a trail leads you to a sloping picnic area. The topography is steep and uneven, with a 17 foot elevation change from top to bottom. The dry creek that runs throughout the property comes to an end in this area.



TREE CANOPY

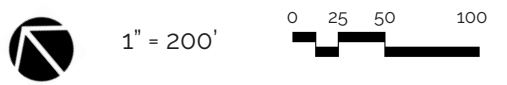
The site is predominately populated with mature oak trees, the majority of which will be preserved in the master plan. Several oaks lie in the path of the future main entrance to the building, and will need to be removed.

The plaza currently has limited protection from Thousand Oaks Boulevard traffic. Additionally, the current tree canopy does not provide ample shade to the site. These problems have been addressed in the master plan.



TOPOGRAPHY

As you approach the site from Thousand Oaks Boulevard, which has a gradual 8' climb from left to right, the topography slopes toward the front of the building, which sits at 0'. As you continue To the right of the building is a steeper sloping, more natural area. To the left of the building is a parking lot that slopes slightly upward as you approach the parking structure.





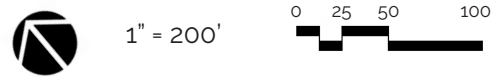
CIRCULATION + ACCESS

Thousand Oaks Boulevard is a high-traffic street that generates a decent amount of sound from traffic.

There are currently narrow pedestrian sidewalks that run along the sides of Thousand Oaks Boulevard, that enter into the park at east and west access points, where the main crosswalks are also located.

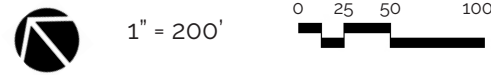
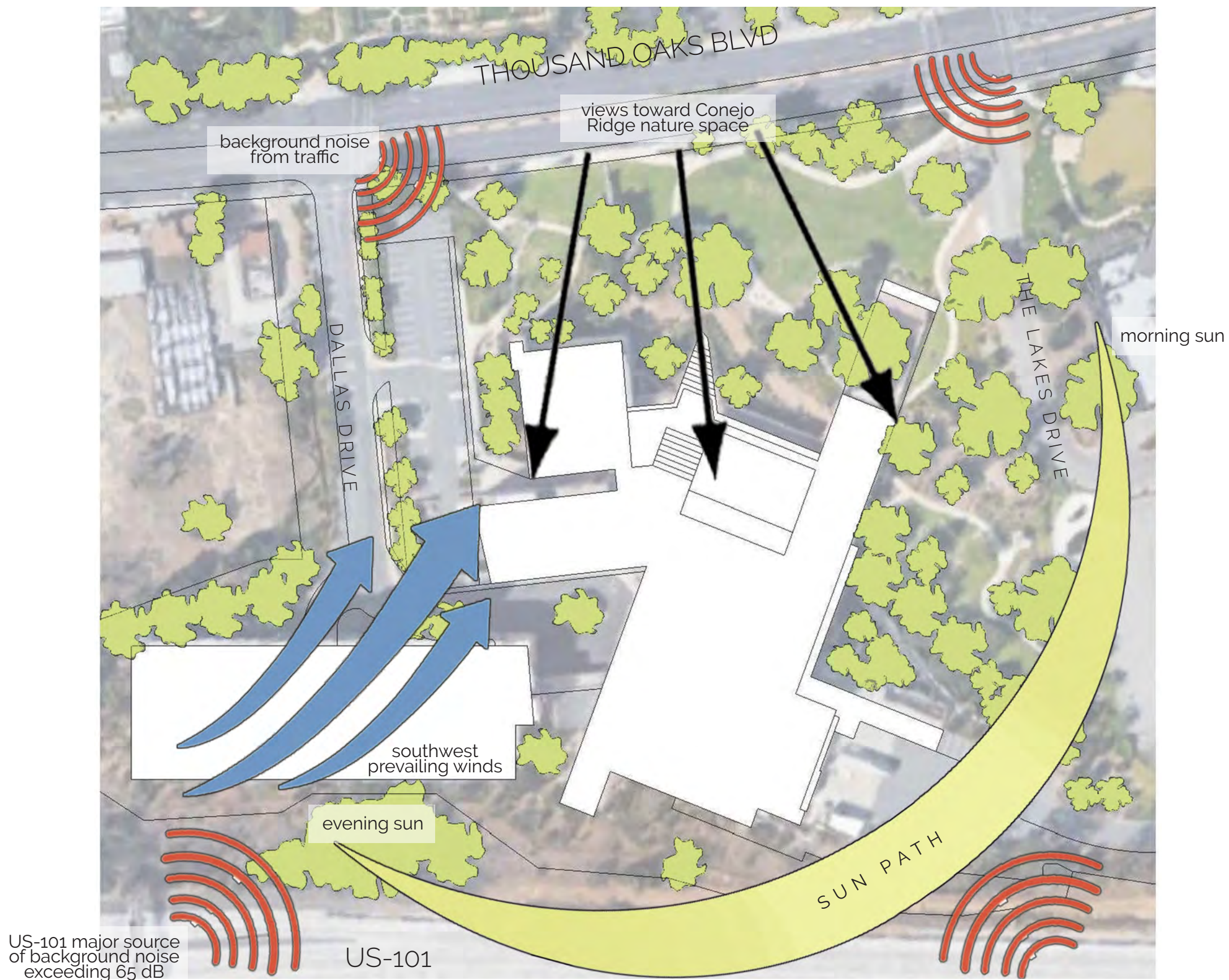
The primary building entrance is currently located on the west side of the building. However, the new master plan will transfer the main entrance to the front of the building.

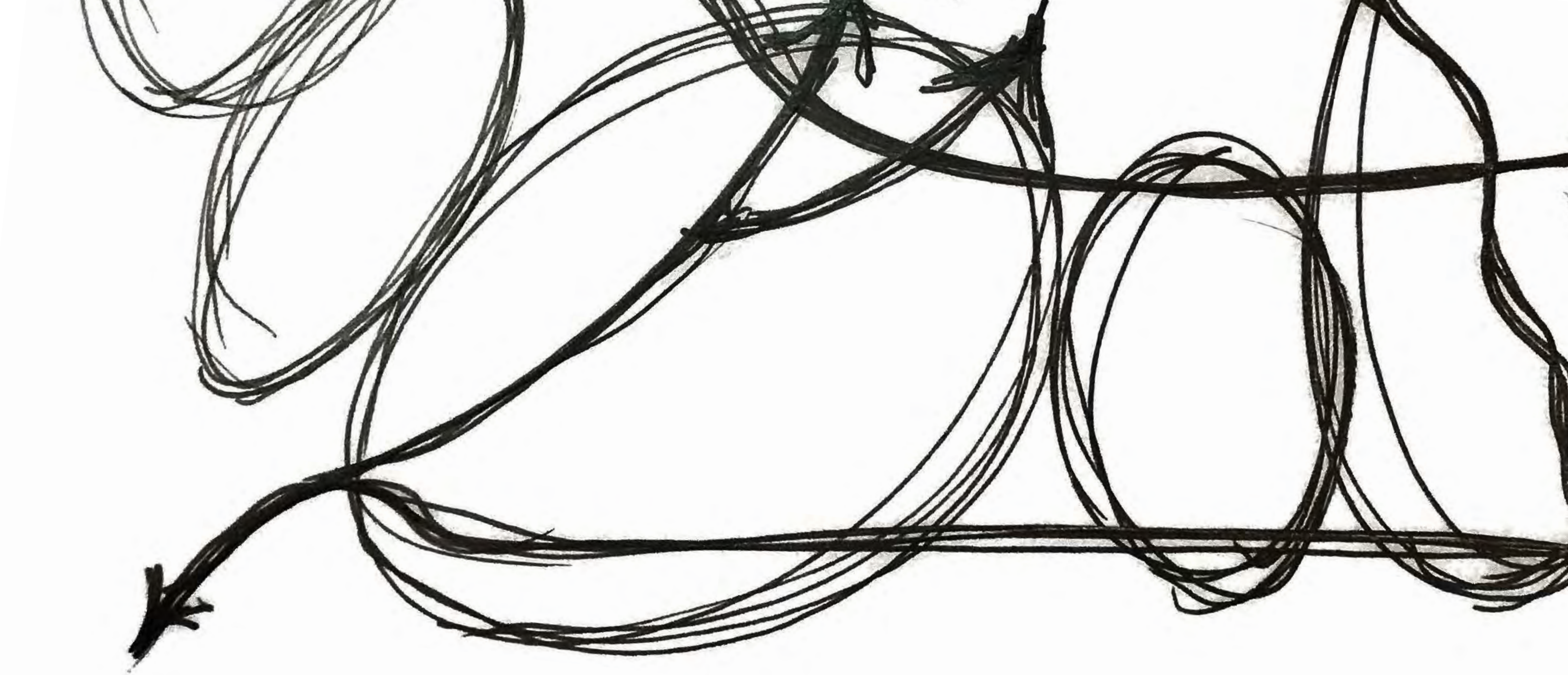
- Primary Vehicular Circulation
- Primary Pedestrian Circulation
- Secondary Pedestrian Circulation
- Primary Access Point
- Secondary Access Point
- Future State Primary Building Entrance
- Future State Secondary Building Entrance



SOLAR, WIND, SOUND + VIEWS

While the building and oaks provide some shade on the side, more than 50% of the site remains exposed to the sun during the daytime. Noise from 101 traffic can be heard at the north of the site, and is slightly protected by the topography towards southern areas of the site. There is little to no existing barrier between Thousand Oaks Blvd traffic and the site. The building partially protects the site from strong southwest prevailing winds. The Conejo Ridge open space can be seen from certain areas on the site.





CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

DESIGN ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS

REGULATING LINES / GRID ANALYSIS



SPACE / USAGE ANALYSIS



Using the the existing built environment to analyze regulating lines and angles allows a deeper understanding of the organization elements of the site. There are several strong angles that the building projects outward, providing a sense of structure for future design concepts.

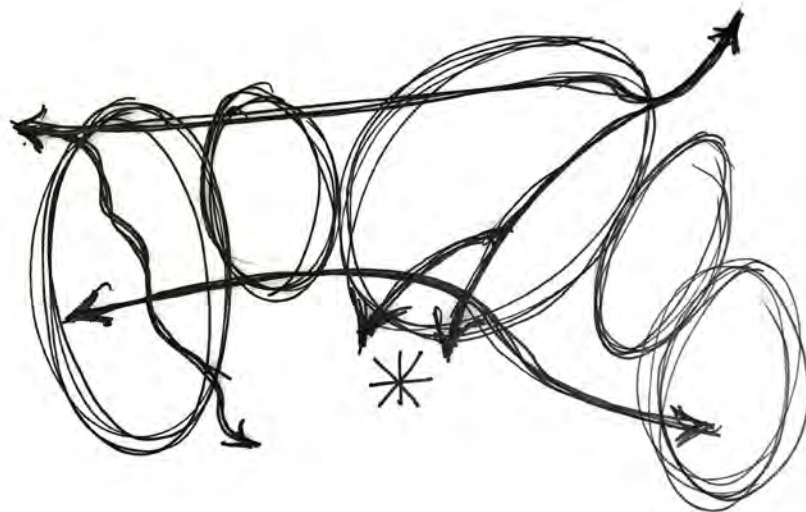


1" = 100'

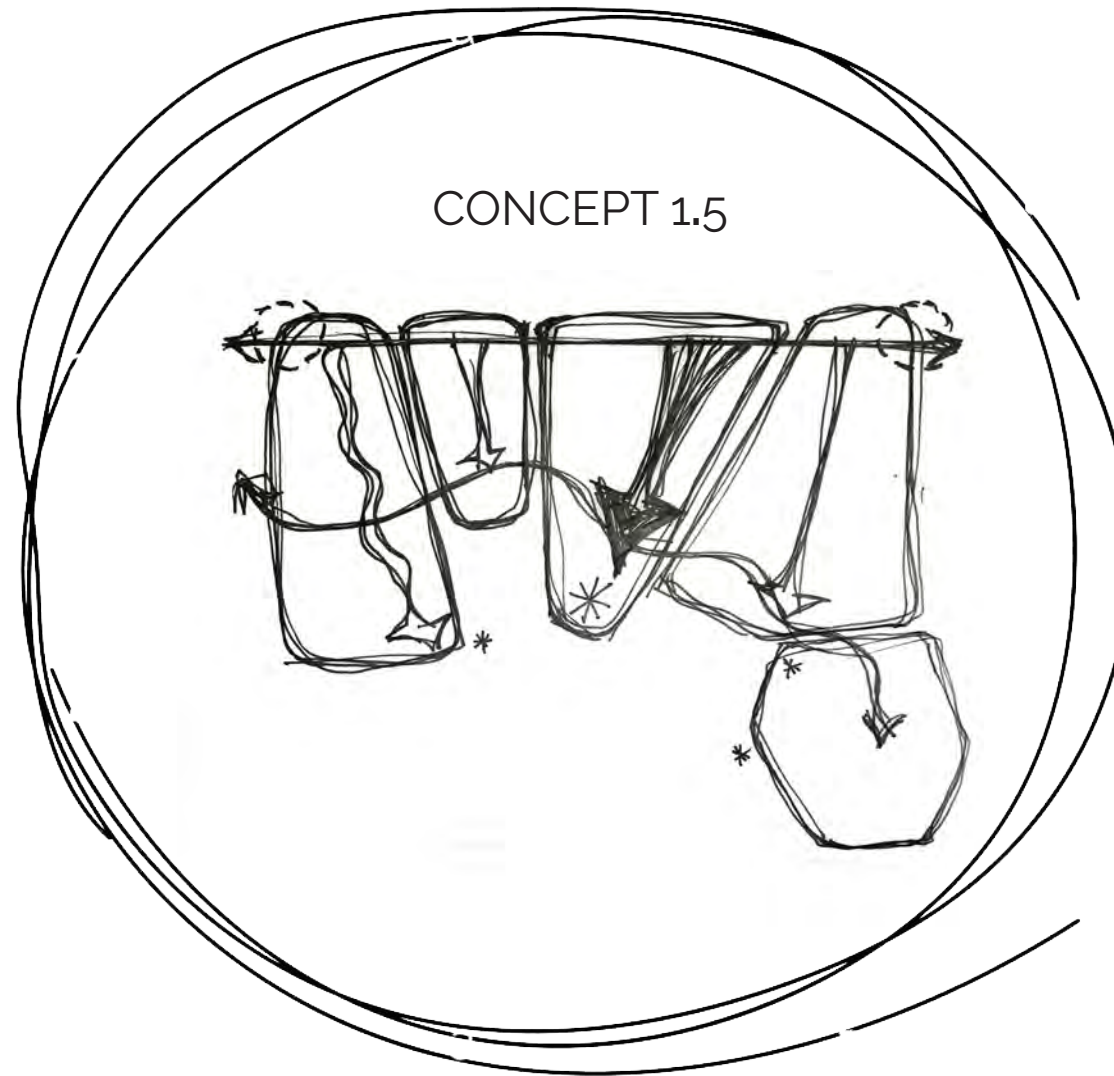
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CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS

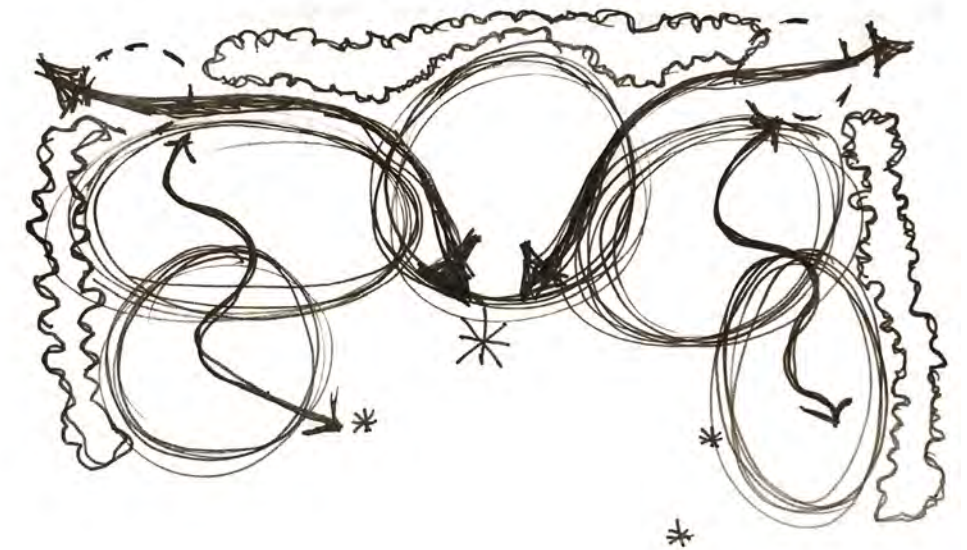
CONCEPT 1



CONCEPT 1.5



CONCEPT 2

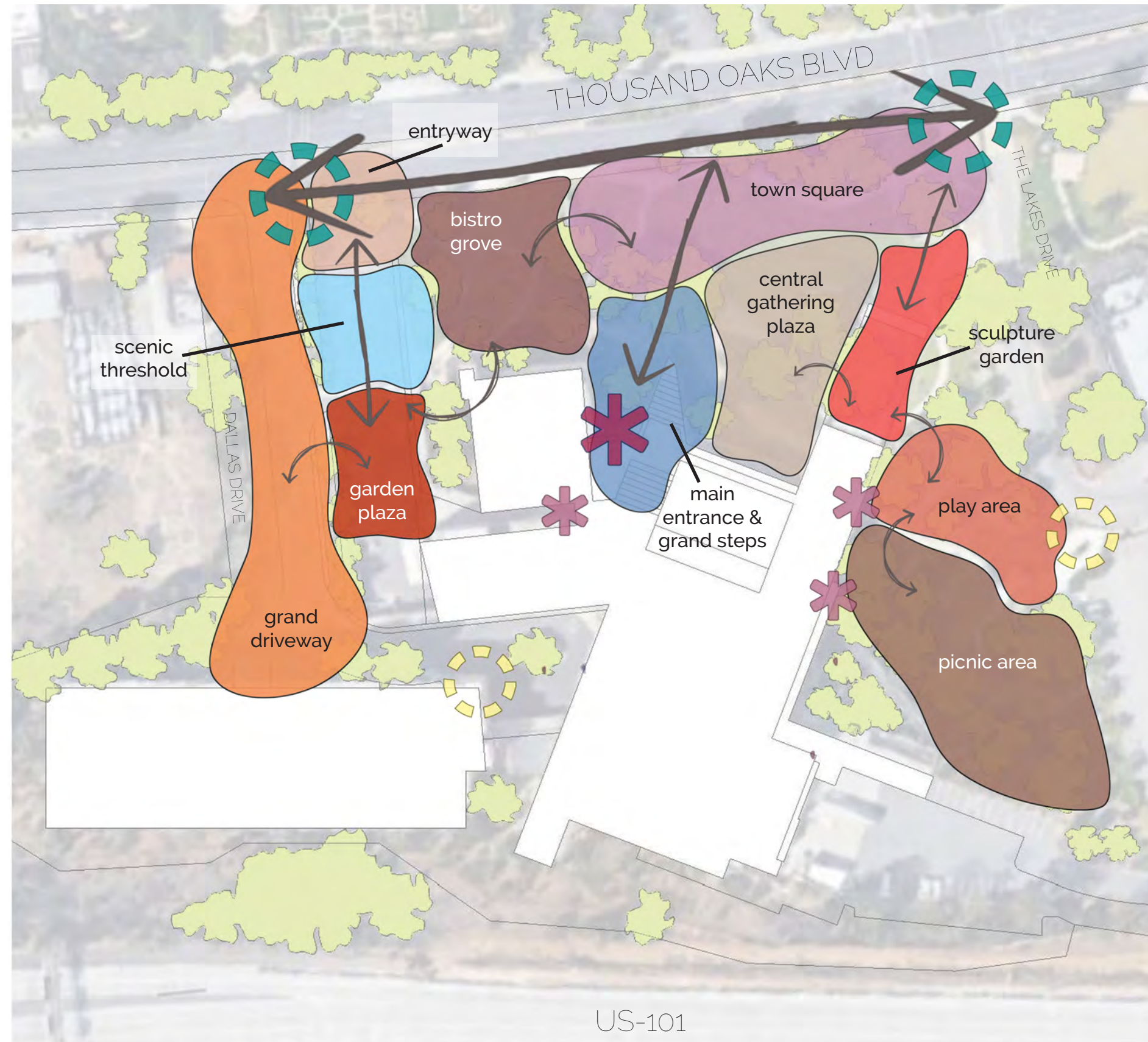


Concept 1 divides the site into five unique spaces that are connected by a strong axis at the top and a winding path at the bottom. **Concept 1.5** is a more developed version of the first, playing off of the angles of the Civic Arts Building, and emphasizing connection between the primary axes within each of the spaces, each in its own unique way. The final design is based on Concept 1.5

Concept 2 focuses on strengthening the connection between the main access points to the site, and the main entrance to the building. Each of the individual spaces overlap to form smaller, more intimate areas. While the primary secondary paths are relatively direct, the secondary are more leisurely and scenic. The entire site is insulated from traffic with a dense vegetative border.

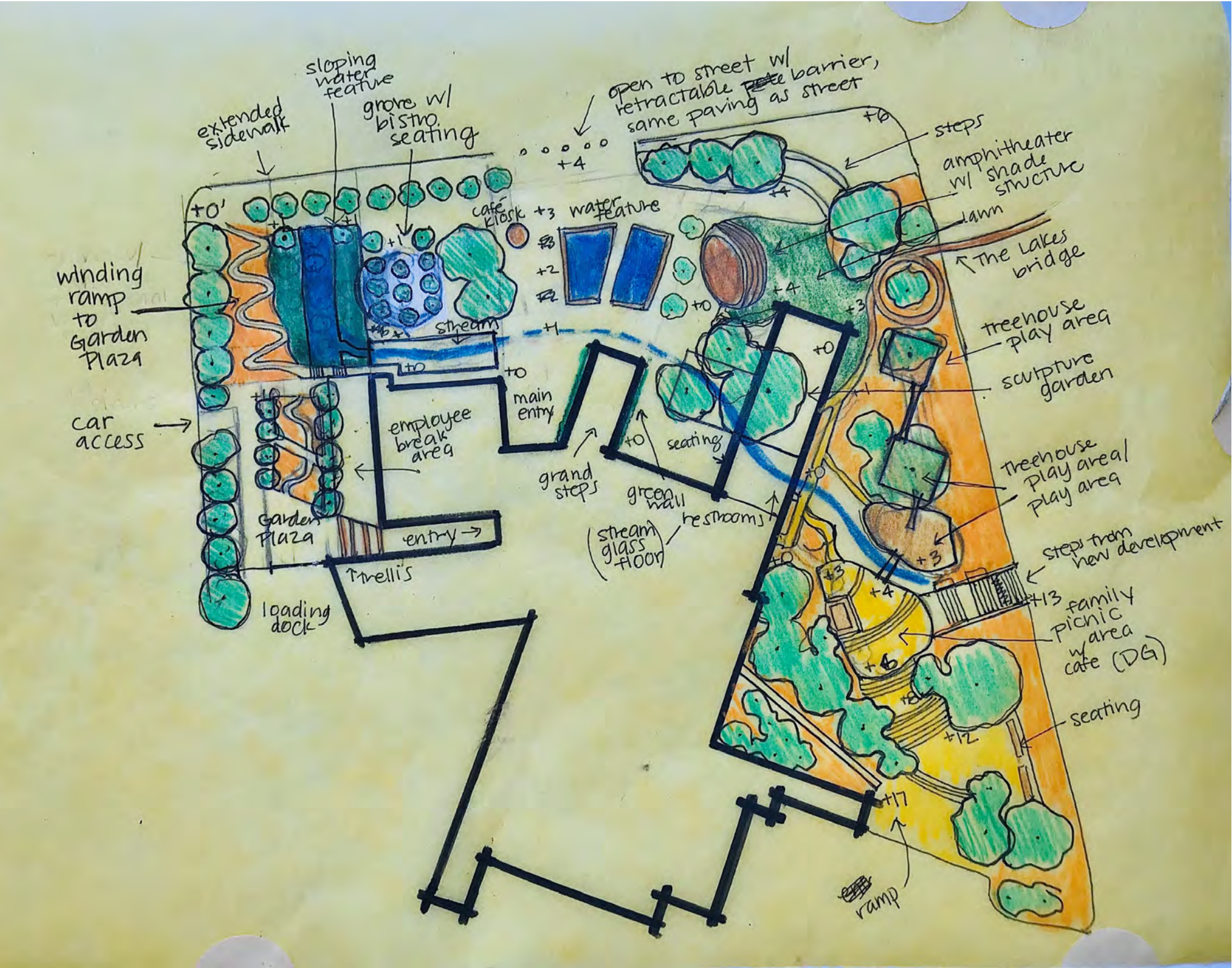
BUBBLE DIAGRAM

The preliminary bubble diagram illustrates the underlying program organization that help guide the final master plan design.



1" = 200'

0 25 50 100



CONCEPTUAL PLAN

This was an initial draft of the site plan, which was further refined and modified in several ways to optimize the design.

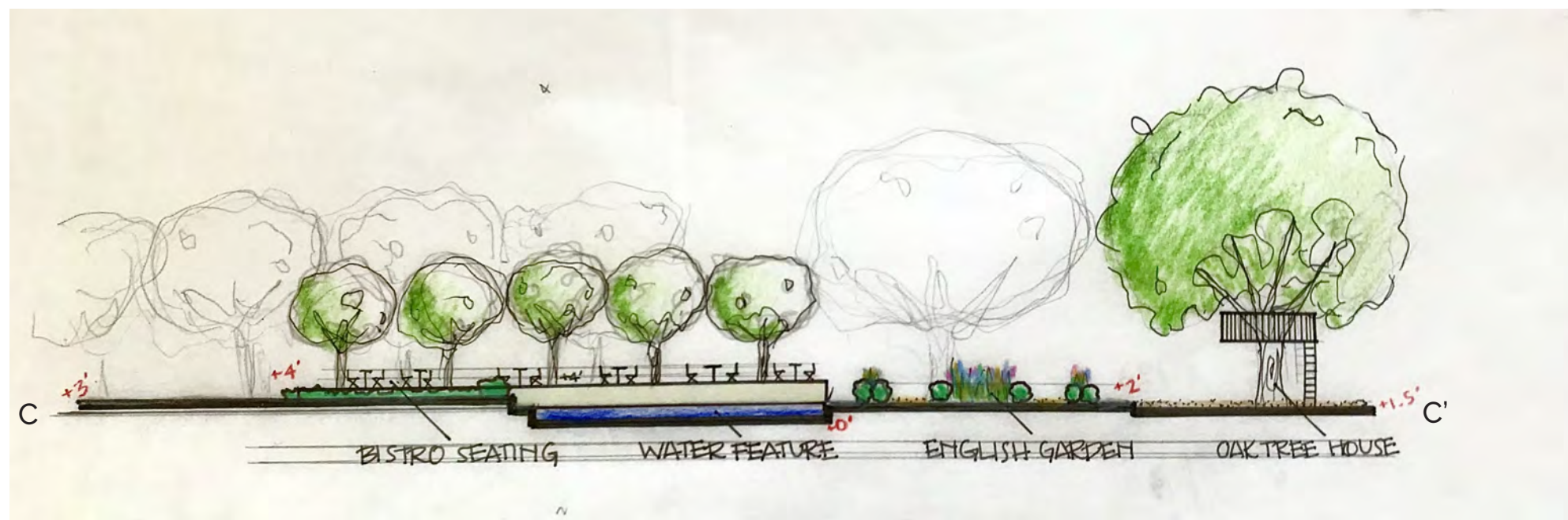
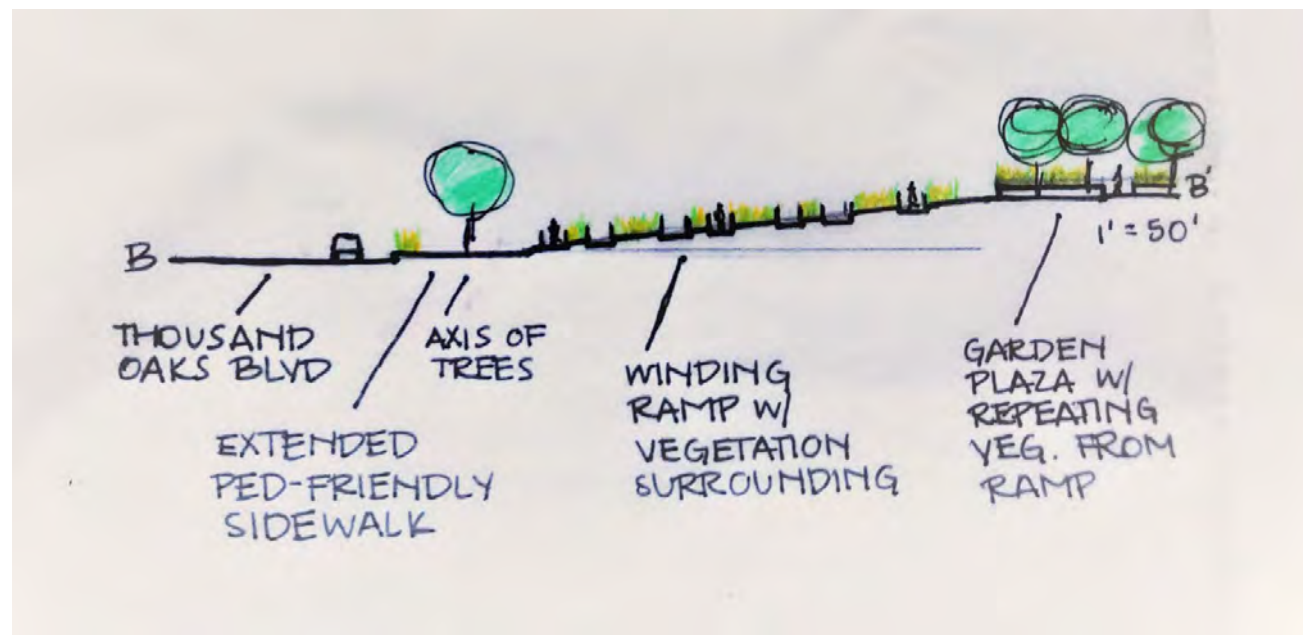


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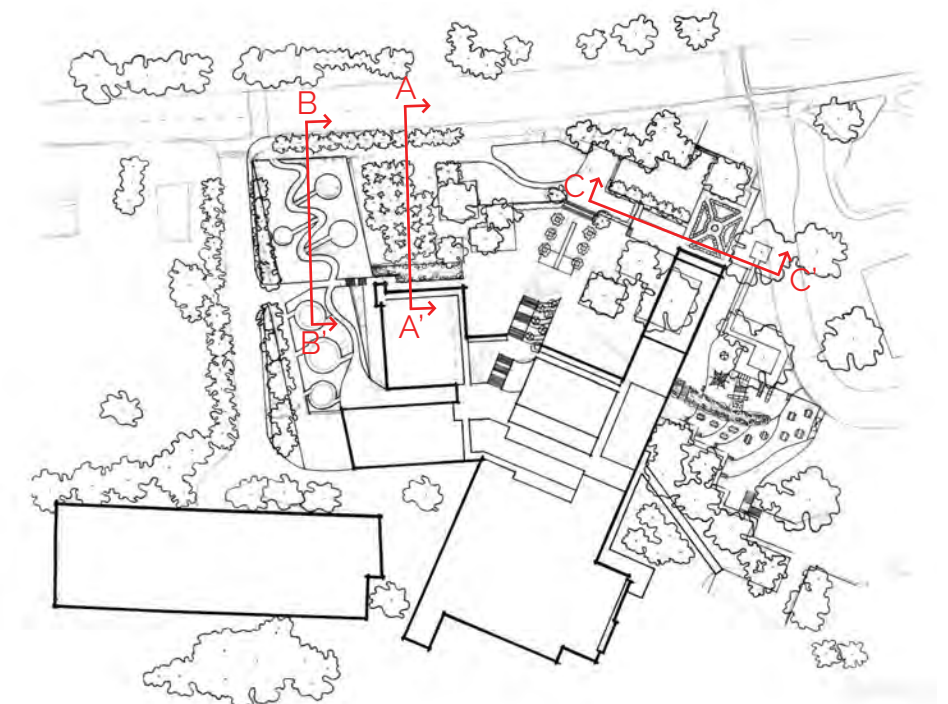


STUDY SECTIONS

Study sections were used to further understand scale and proportions as they related to the site and the existing built environment.



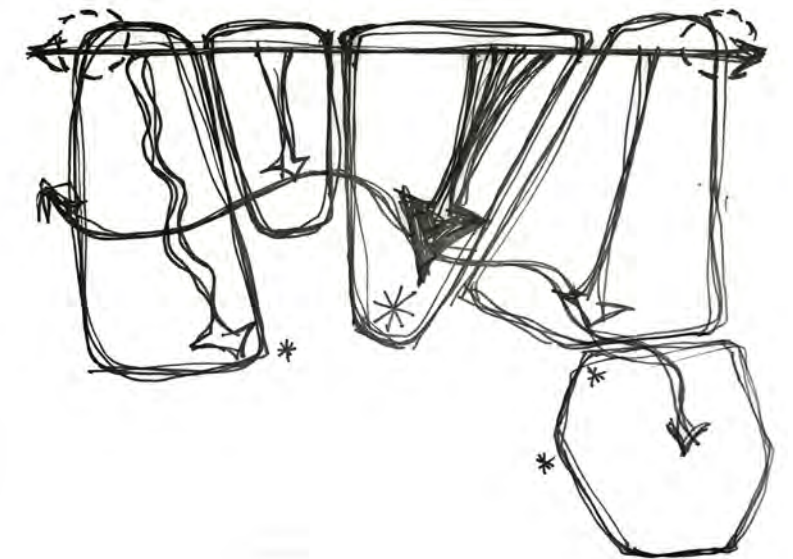
KEY MAP



CONCEPTUAL PLAN 2.0

This drawing shows a more refined version that is much more similar to the final master plan. When compared to the initial concept below, it is easy to see how the building's regulating lines played a role in organizing the spaces.

CONCEPT

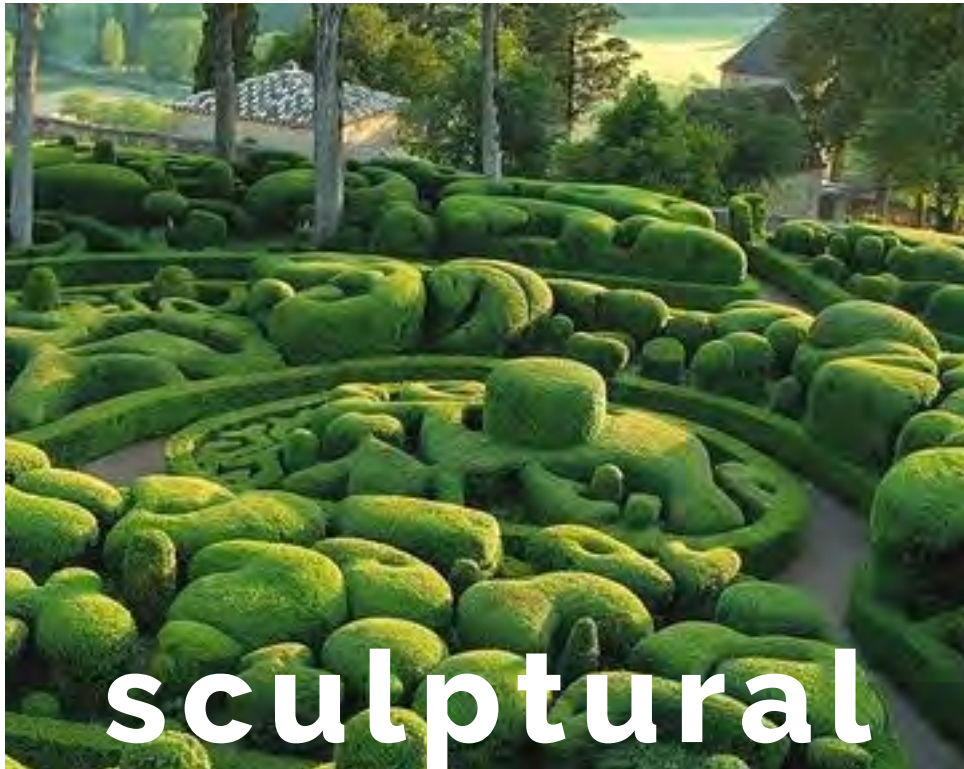
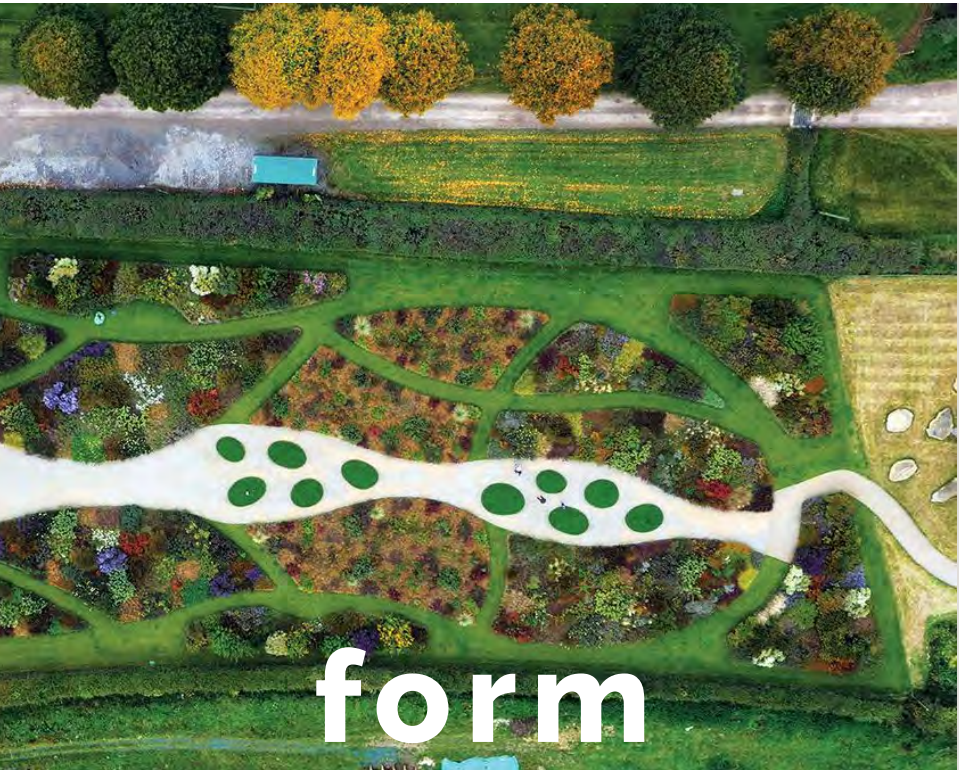


1" = 200'

0 25 50 100



INSPIRATION IMAGES





MASTER PLAN



MASTER PLAN

The new site plan for Civics Arts Plaza consists of a variety of spaces designed for a diverse range of visitors. By replacing turf with multi-use spaces and programming, the site can provide a central gathering space for residents and visitors and ultimately enhance the downtown environment.

- 1. Artistic pedestrian-friendly crosswalk
- 2. Main park entrances
- 3. Scenic ramp to Garden Plaza; datum with intimate lounging spaces
- 4. Garden plaza
- 5. Multi-use paving
- 6. Secondary building entrance
- 7. Shady grove with bistro seating & cafe
- 8. Water feature
- 9. Main building entrance
- 10. Grand steps & ampitheater terraces
- 11. Thousand Oaks Blvd-Town Square open connection
- 12. Town Square with turf, sculptural elements, play water feature, and shaded moveable seating
- 13. Sculpture garden
- 14. Topographic play area with tree house feature
- 15. Picnic area with cafe

BUBBLE DIAGRAM



1. multi-use boulevard

Thousand Oaks Boulevard will have decorative, multi-use paving that allows for community-wide events such as farmers markets, art shows, food + wine festivals, etc.

2. garden plaza

The Garden Plaza greets visitors as they enter from the Dallas Drive northwest entrance. The winding ramp leads to the upper portion of the Garden Plaza, which leads to the theater entrance.

3. the grove

The Grove provides a pleasant opportunity for visitors to enjoy a coffee with a friend or read a book under the beautiful cumulative canopy of a London Plane trees.

4. town square

The Town Square functions as a large gathering space for community events such as concerts, art shows, town meetings, etc.

5. main entrance + grand steps

The new main entrance is located conveniently at the front of the building, adjacent to the newly added grand steps.

6. sculpture garden

The sculpture garden has both an “indoor” and an outdoor element to it, with a sculptural water feature and garden in front, and a sculpture art gallery inside the internal courtyard.

7. topographic play + picnic

The southeast area of the the hilliest and more naturous on the site. The play features and picnic area both take advantage of this landscape to create a nature-like environment for children, families, and individuals.

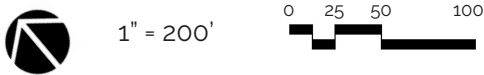


PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Exiting from the Dallas Drive Parking structure, visitors can walk down the sidewalk on the grand driveway on Dallas Drive, towards the northeast entrance. Upon entering, they can decide whether to walk a more direct path through the northern portion of the site, or a more leisurely path up the winding ramp and through the various programming the site has to offer.



- ● ● Primary
- ● ● ● Secondary
- Primary Access Point
- Secondary Access Point
- * Primary Building Entrance
- * Secondary Building Entrance





NEW CONTOURS

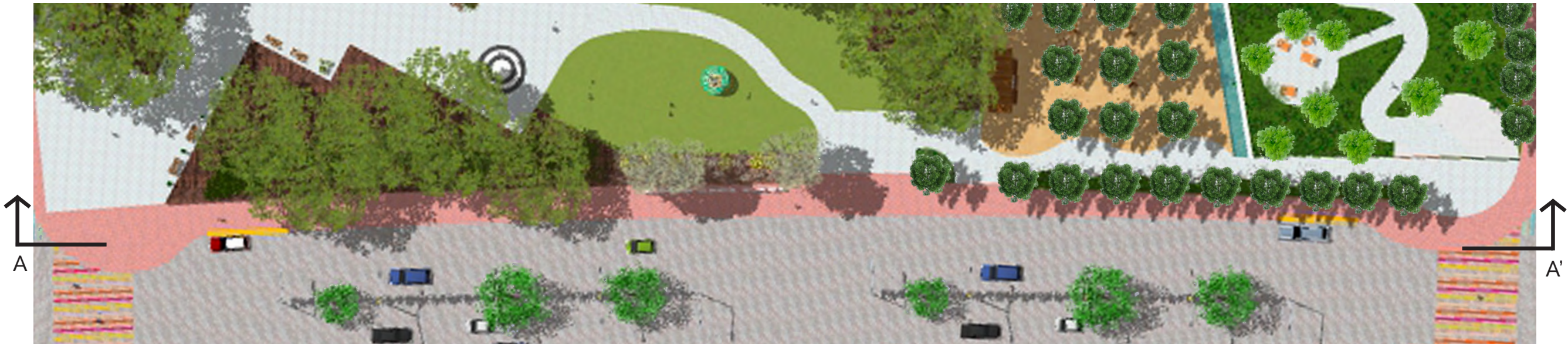
The renovated topography accounts for the addition of elevated terraces and plaza space, as well as ramps and retaining walls. As the building is at a lower elevation than the street, the new topography will ensure that water drains more effectively.





KEY MAP

MULTI-USE BOULEVARD



MULTI-USE BOULEVARD

Thousand Oaks Boulevard will have decorative, multi-use paving that allows for community-wide events such as farmers markets, art shows, food + wine festivals, etc. The Civic Artz Plaza space has several inviting points of entry from the boulevard that can be used as additional space when events are being held on the boulevard.



KEY MAP



GARDEN PLAZA

The Garden Plaza draws people in to the site, with it's rich composition and it's enchanting atmosphere. It provides a natural and intimate environment for people to come and leisurely stroll, observe, and relax. The painterly landscape full of perennials and ornamental grasses will attract visitors as well as bees and other pollinators. The curved sculptural forms throughout this area are unexpected and add an element of intrigue to the space. The juxtaposition of natural growing vegetation with sleek curvations forms, the combination of nature and order, creates an interesting element of contrast throughout the area.





KEY MAP

GARDEN PLAZA (TOP)



Upon entering the park from the west entrance, the visitor is greeted with a winding path filled with colorful vegetation. The shaded lounge areas allow for individuals to escape the hustle and bustle of downtown and sit down to relax for a moment.

2

The elevated portion of the Garden Plaza continues on to a building entrance, and is decorated with bright planting within sculptural curved metal planters.



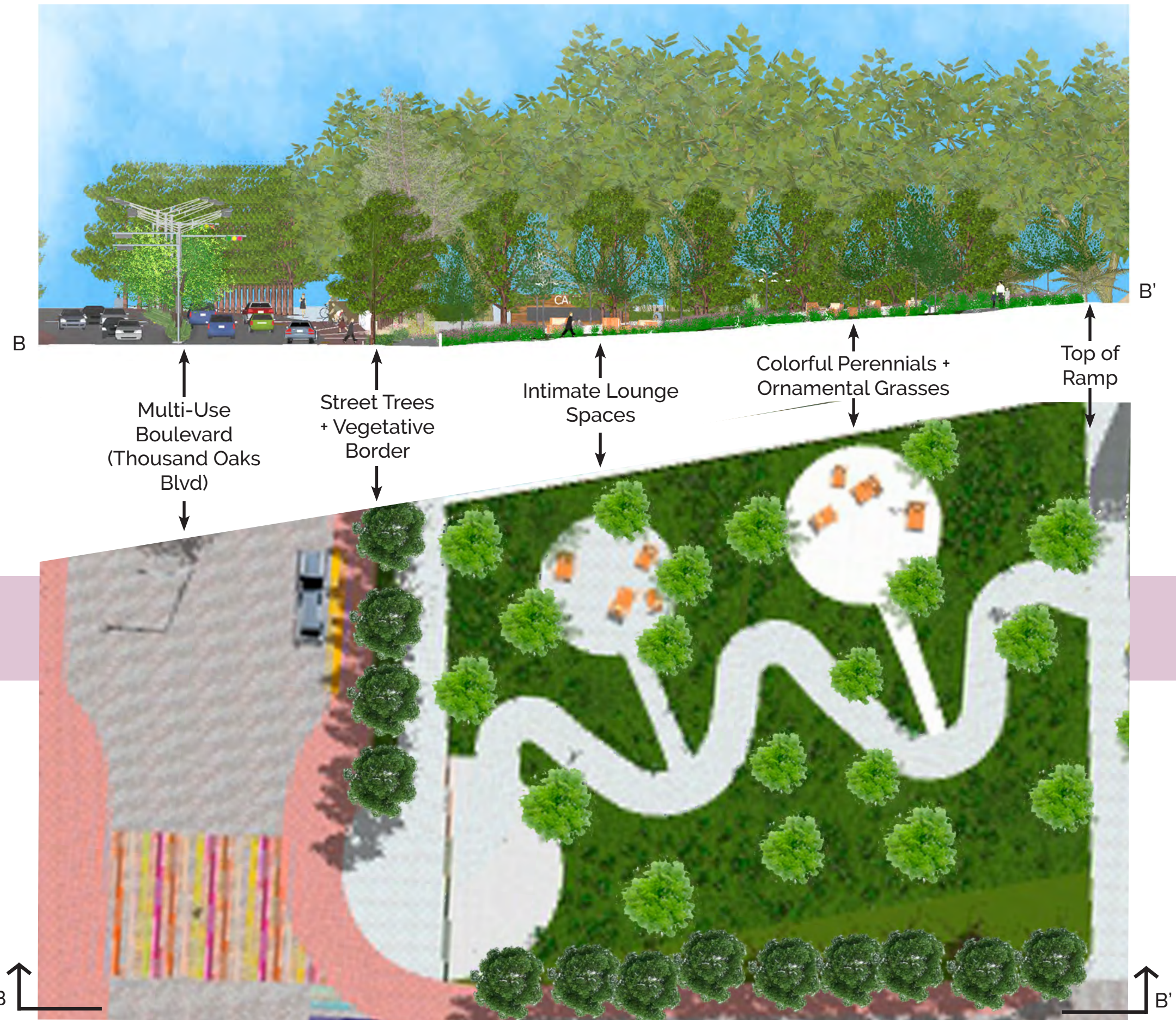
3

Visitors can stroll in and out of the garden rooms, or can choose to stop and sit for a moment to take in the natural beauty.





KEY MAP



GARDEN PLAZA (BOTTOM)

The Garden Plaza greets visitors as they enter from the Dallas Drive northwest entrance. The winding ramp acts as a datum with multiple lounging “rooms” that connect to the central path. The ramp leads to the upper portion of the Garden Plaza, which leads to the theater entrance. The upper portion repeats similar form and material patterns as the ramp, creating a unified experience for the visitor.

THE GROVE

The Grove is a shady oasis where visitors can come kick up their feed and take a break from the hustle and bustle of the downtown environment. Friends may catch up with a coffee or a family might grab a seat to enjoy their farmer's market lunch together. The calming sounds from the retaining wall fountain echo throughout the site and are sure to draw passerbys in during a hot summer day.



ambiance



energy

THE GROVE

1



The Grove invites visitors to grab a coffee sit beneath the billowing canopy of the London Plane trees. With the tranquil sound of falling water from the nearby retaining wall water feature, this space is the ideal spot to read a book, enjoy lunch, or catch up with a friend.

2



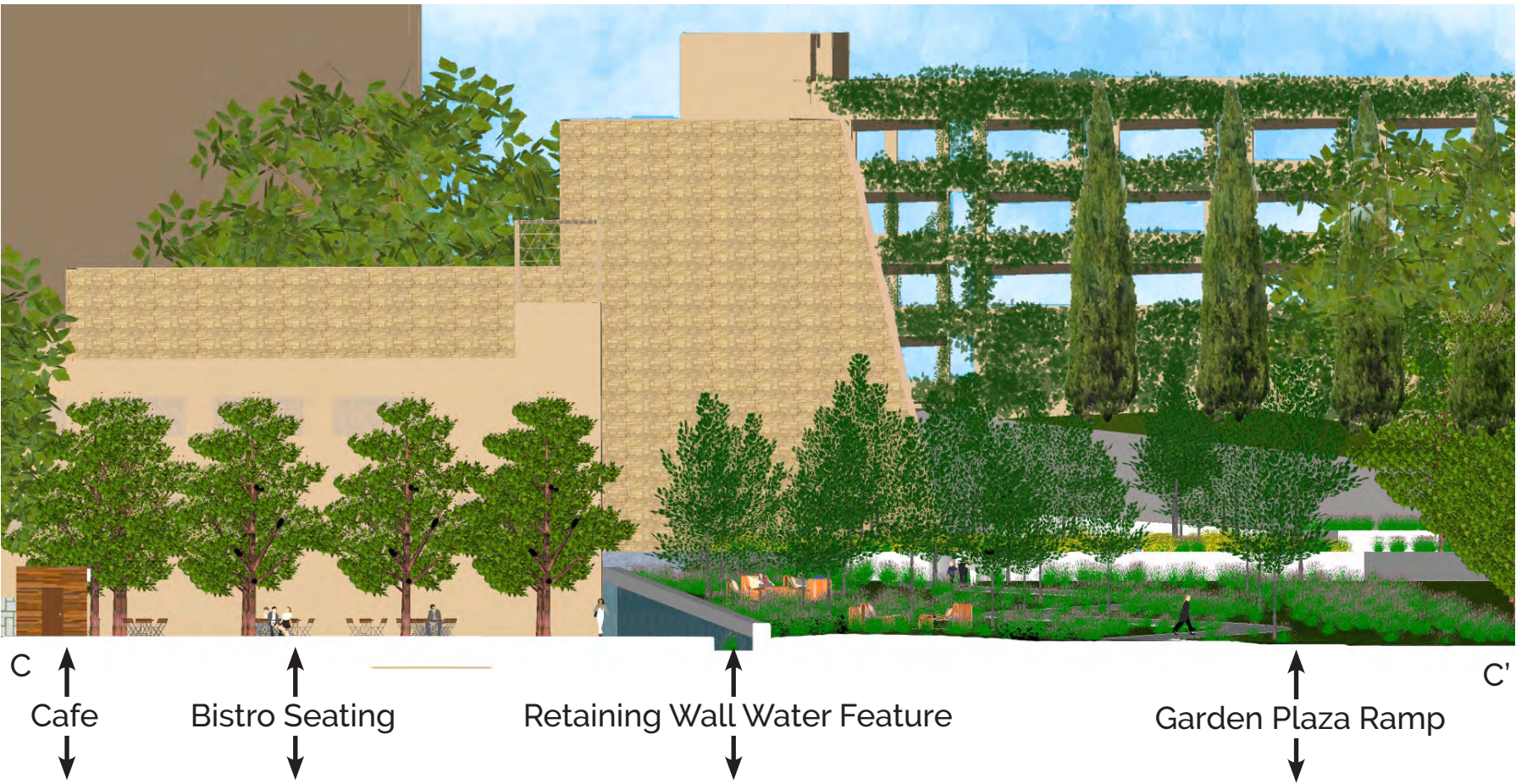
People are welcome to head towards the back of The Grove, where they can sit on the descending steps and dip their toes in the fountain to stay cool on a hot day.



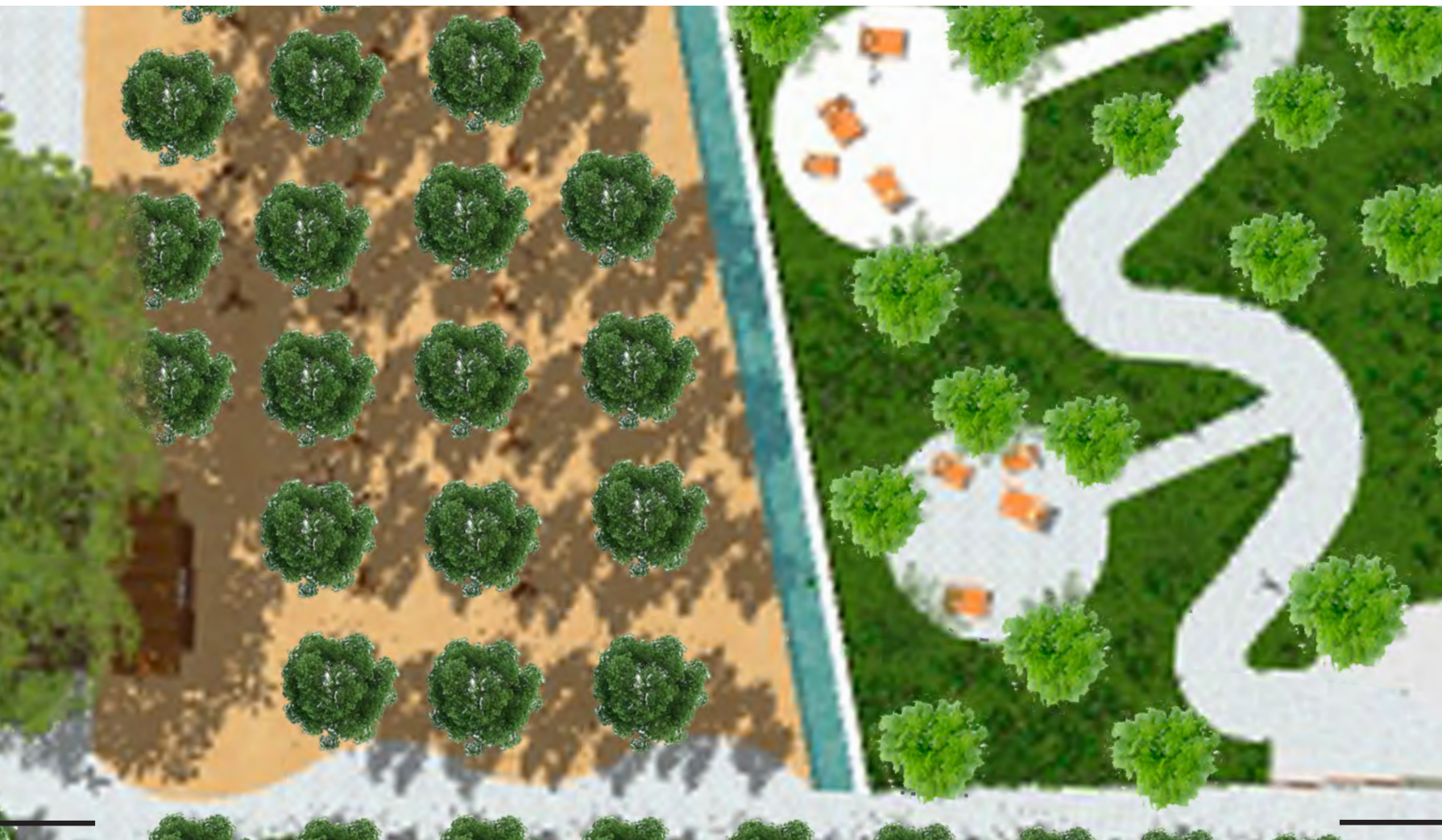
KEY MAP



KEY MAP



THE GROVE



This section shows the scale of The Grove and the retaining wall water feature as they relate to the neighboring Garden Plaza ramp. The fountain slopes upward with the wall, and adds a sculptural element to The Grove that can be enjoyed by cafe dwellers.

TOWN SQUARE + GRAND STEPS

The lively Town Square + Grand Steps lie not only in the heart of the site, but the heart of Downtown Thousand Oaks. This grandiose yet inviting entrance provides a community gathering space where people can come and mingle amid concerts, cultural events, art shows, and town meetings. Food trucks and local artists can come set up shop to advertise to the crowds, and families can enjoy a picnic on the grand central lawn.



community



decorative



multi-purpose

1



TOWN SQUARE + THE GRAND STEPS

The Town Square functions as a large gathering space for community events such as concerts, art shows, town meetings, etc. Visitors can picnic on the lawn, or play in the interactive water feature to cool off on a hot day.

The new main entrance is located conveniently at the front of the building, adjacent to the newly added grand steps. These two strong points of entry will allow visitors to enter the building with ease, while providing them the opportunity to enjoy the outdoor plaza on the way.

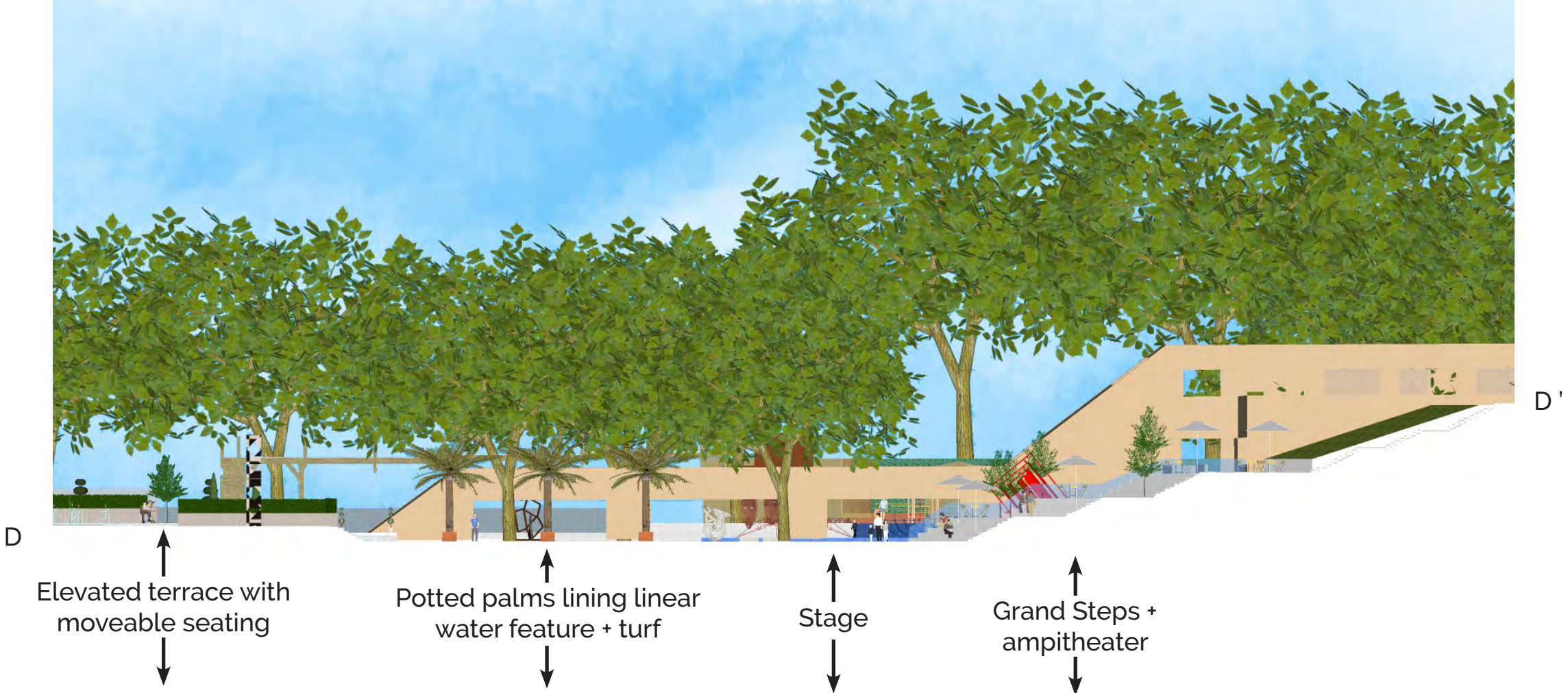
2



KEY MAP



KEY MAP



TOWN SQUARE + THE GRAND STEPS

This section illustrates the scale of the grand steps as they relate to the central plaza spaces, as well as the elevated terraces that lie at the entrance to the site.



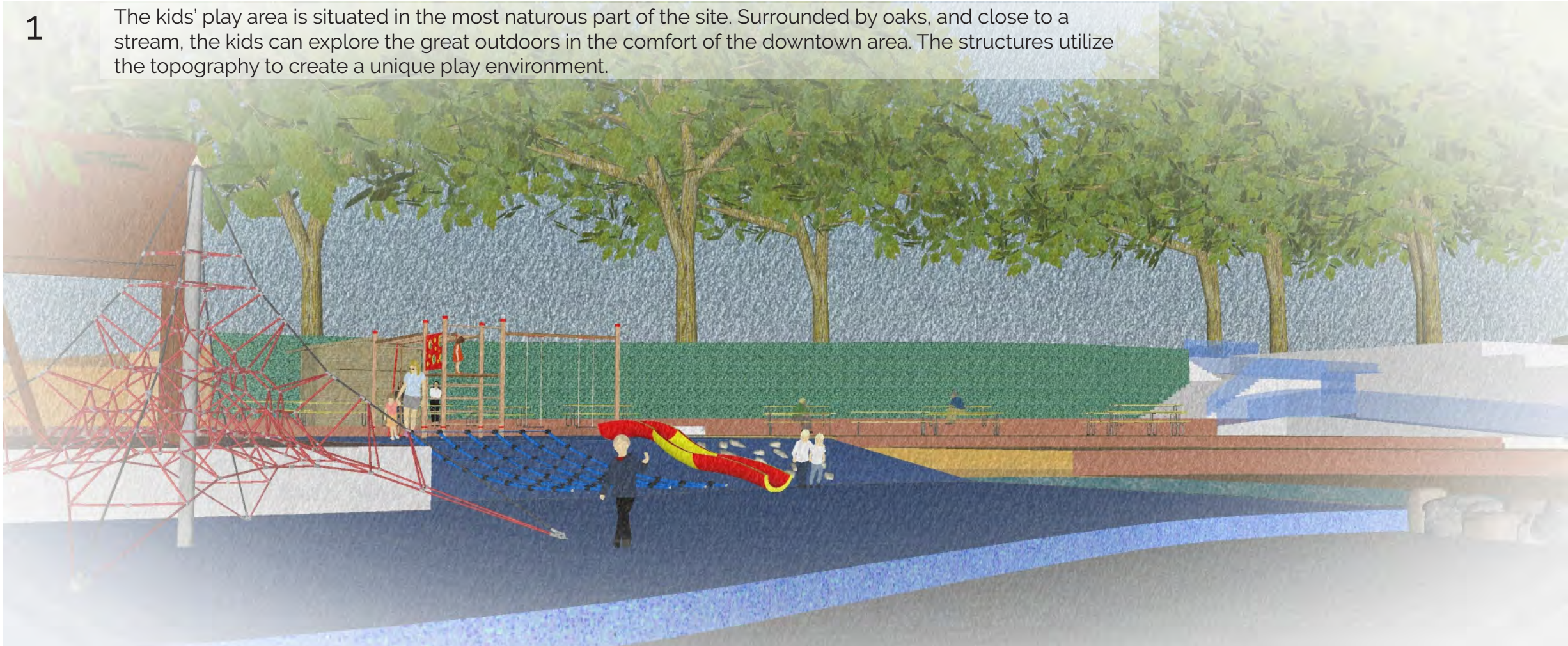


KEY MAP

TOPOGRAPHIC PLAY-
GROUND + PICNIC AREA

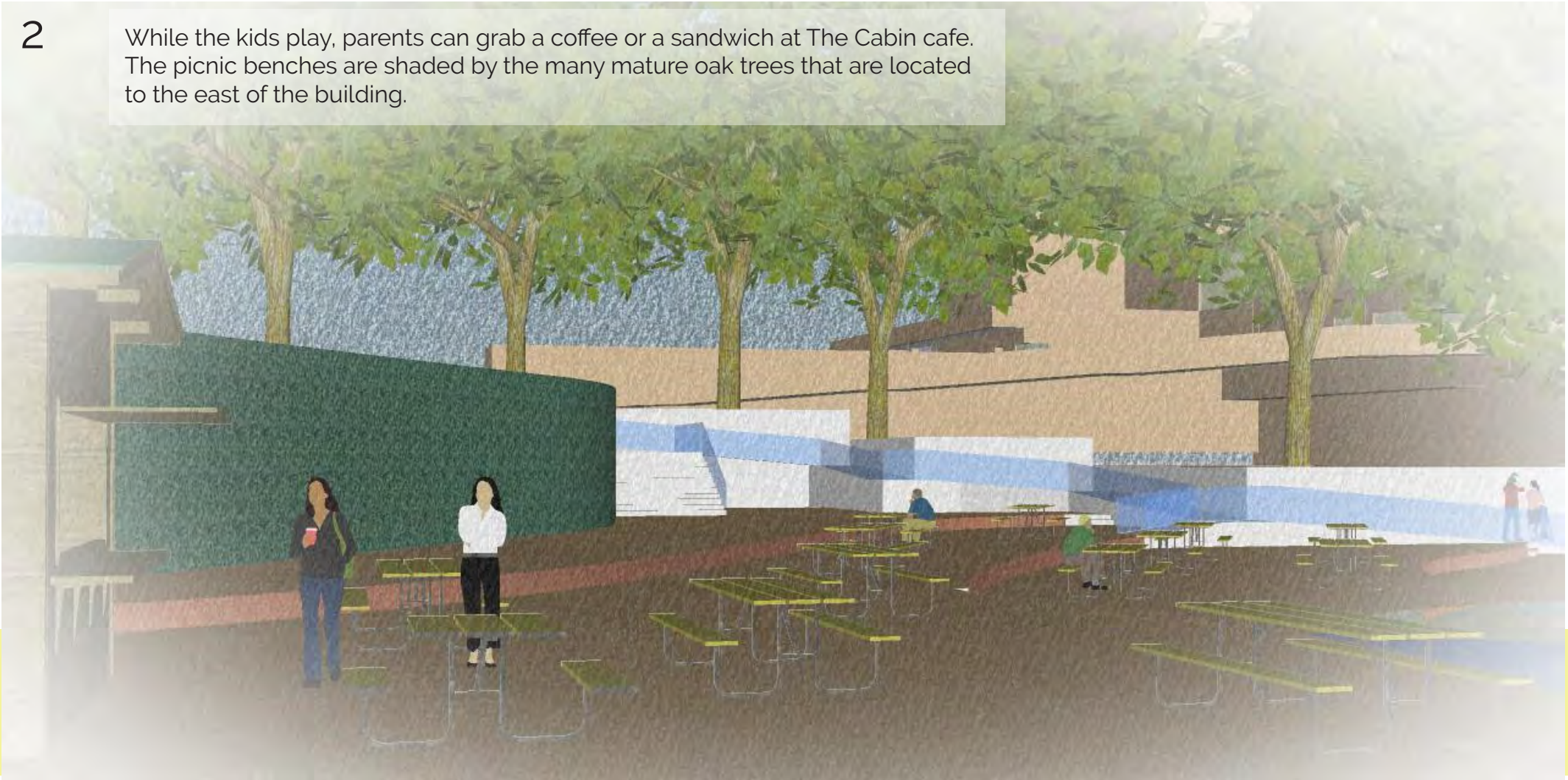
1

The kids' play area is situated in the most naturous part of the site. Surrounded by oaks, and close to a stream, the kids can explore the great outdoors in the comfort of the downtown area. The structures utilize the topography to create a unique play environment.



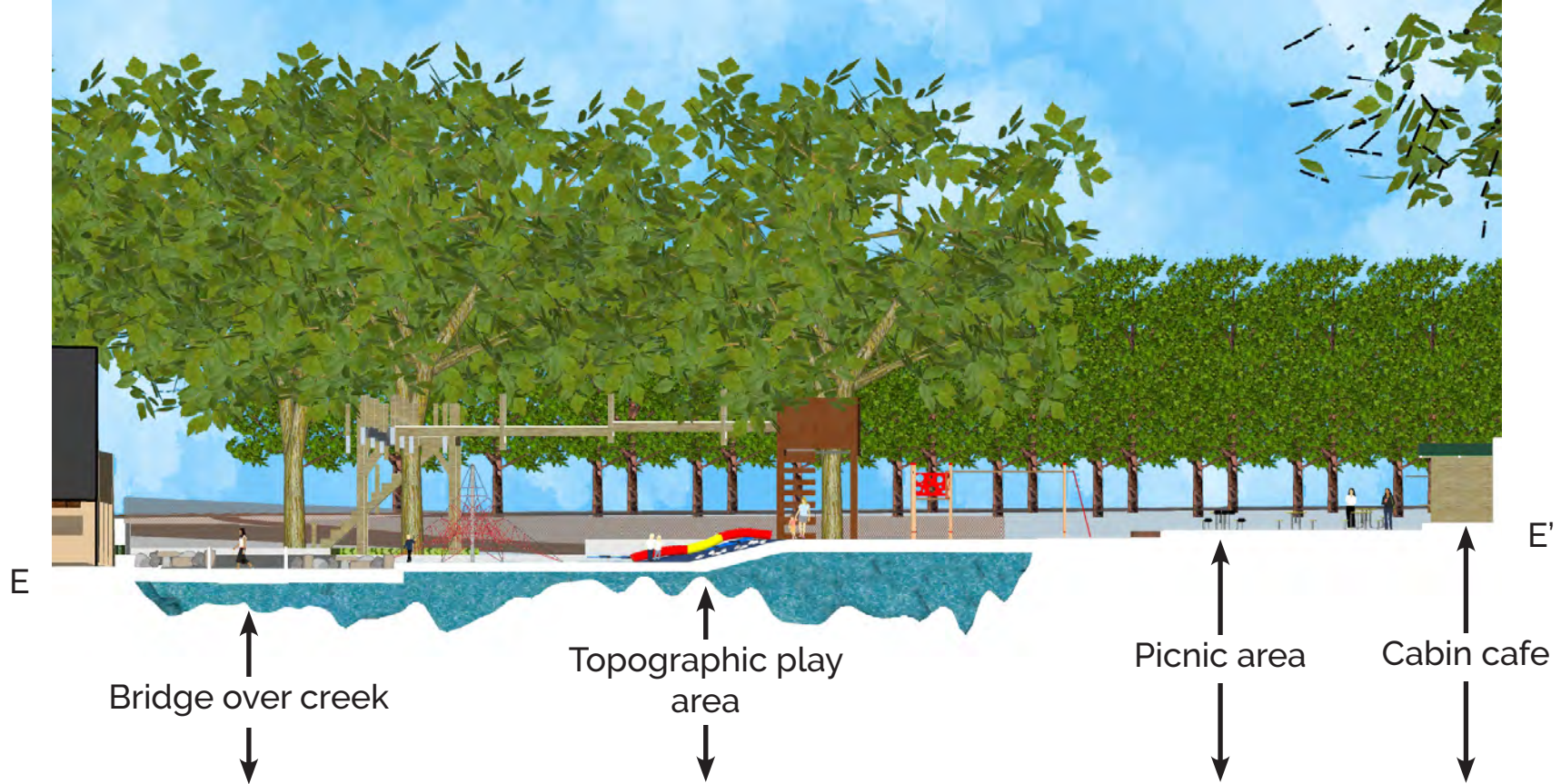
2

While the kids play, parents can grab a coffee or a sandwich at The Cabin cafe. The picnic benches are shaded by the many mature oak trees that are located to the east of the building.





KEY MAP



Bridge over creek

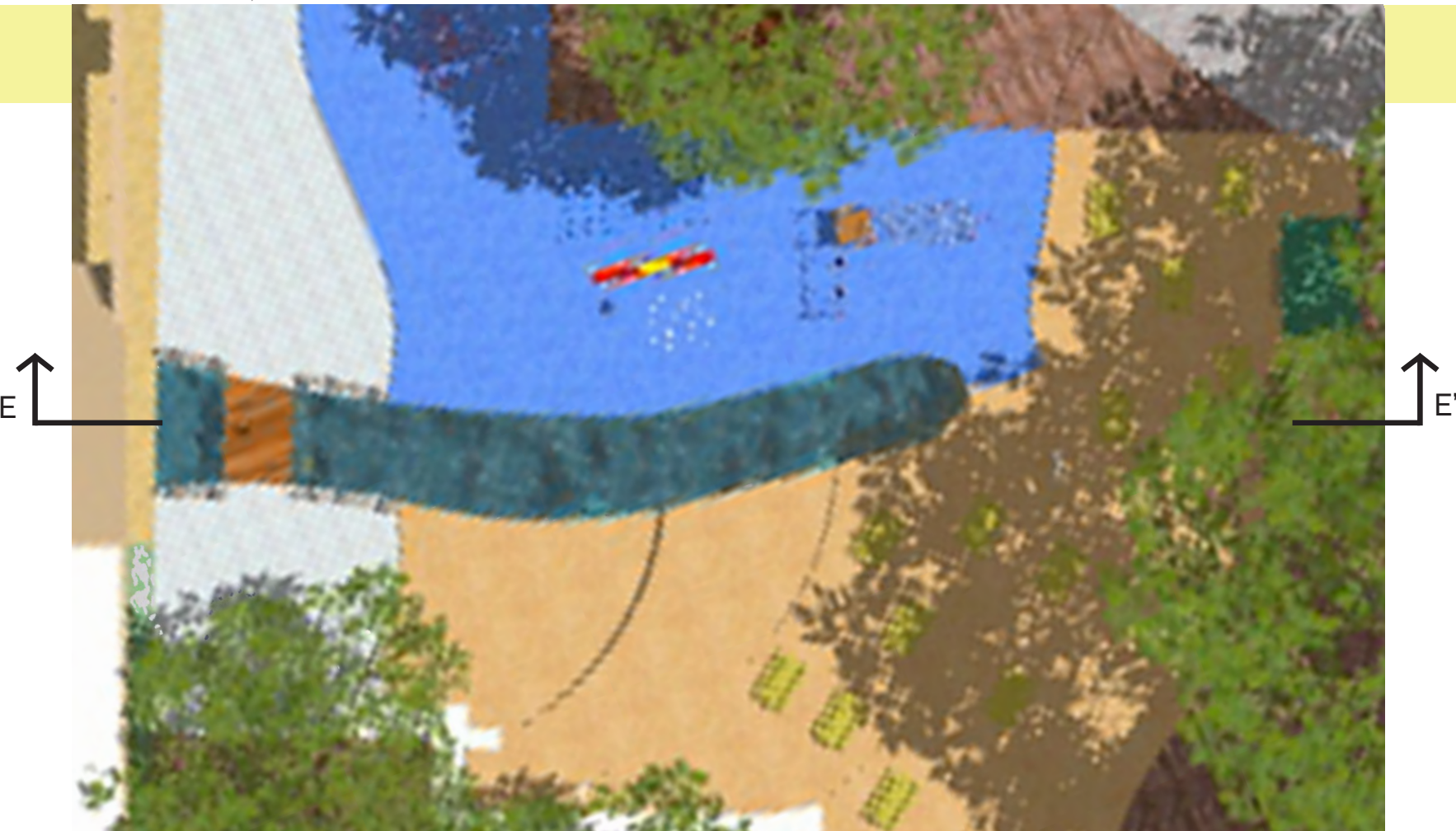
Topographic play area

Picnic area

Cabin cafe

TOPOGRAPHIC PLAY AREA

The southeast area of the the hilliest and more naturous on the site. The play features and picnic area both take advantage of this landscape to create a nature-like environment for children, families, and individuals.





KEY MAP

SCULPTURE GARDEN

The sculpture garden has both an “indoor” and an outdoor element to it, with a sculptural water feature and garden in front, and a sculpture art gallery inside the internal courtyard.

Bathrooms have been added for convenience behind the sculpture garden and the play area.



IN CONCLUSION,

This redesign adds a number of elements to the downtown area that will ultimately expand it's potential as a community gathering space and Town Square. The new grand entrances, additional shade trees, outdoor integrated seating, and diverse program elements will make it a more pleasant, pedestrian-friendly environment for visitors to come enjoy. The added artistic elements, vegetation, and interactive installments will create focal points, meeting places, and definers on the site. With a range of things to offer, the new Civic Arts Plaza will be an essential part of the new Thousand Oaks Downtown Core.



I'd like to thank our professor Francisco Behr for a challenging yet fulfilling semester full of learning & growth! Thank you for sharing your wealth of knowledge with us this quarter.

