

Project Information

Background

The Park Plaza project began in 2012 with an initial idea to create a sense of place in downtown Stevenson. Since that initial idea, the Stevenson Downtown Association, City of Stevenson, and Skamania County have been working together to lead a community design process and create a concept design for the new Park Plaza.

The timeline below summarizes the work completed to date.

Funding

The design of the Park Plaza is being funded through grants received from the State Legislature Office. The construction of the plaza is contingent upon receiving funding from a Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) State Grant and fundraising for private investments. Prior RCO grant applications submitted in 2018 and 2020 were unsuccessful. A 'shovel ready' Park Plaza design and a City Parks System Plan are required for a strong RCO grant application. The design of the Park Plaza is underway, and the City Parks Plan was completed in 2024.

Maintenance of the Plaza

The City of Stevenson and Skamania County entered into an interlocal agreement in 2022. Per the terms of the agreement, once the Park Plaza is constructed, the City of Stevenson will take on the maintenance of the new Park Plaza as well as any portion of the existing courthouse lawn that is undeveloped.

Prior Public Engagement

Community outreach for the Park Plaza project began in 2015 and will continue through 2024.

2015 Community Survey

The purpose of the first survey was to gauge community interest in developing a central plaza in downtown Stevenson.

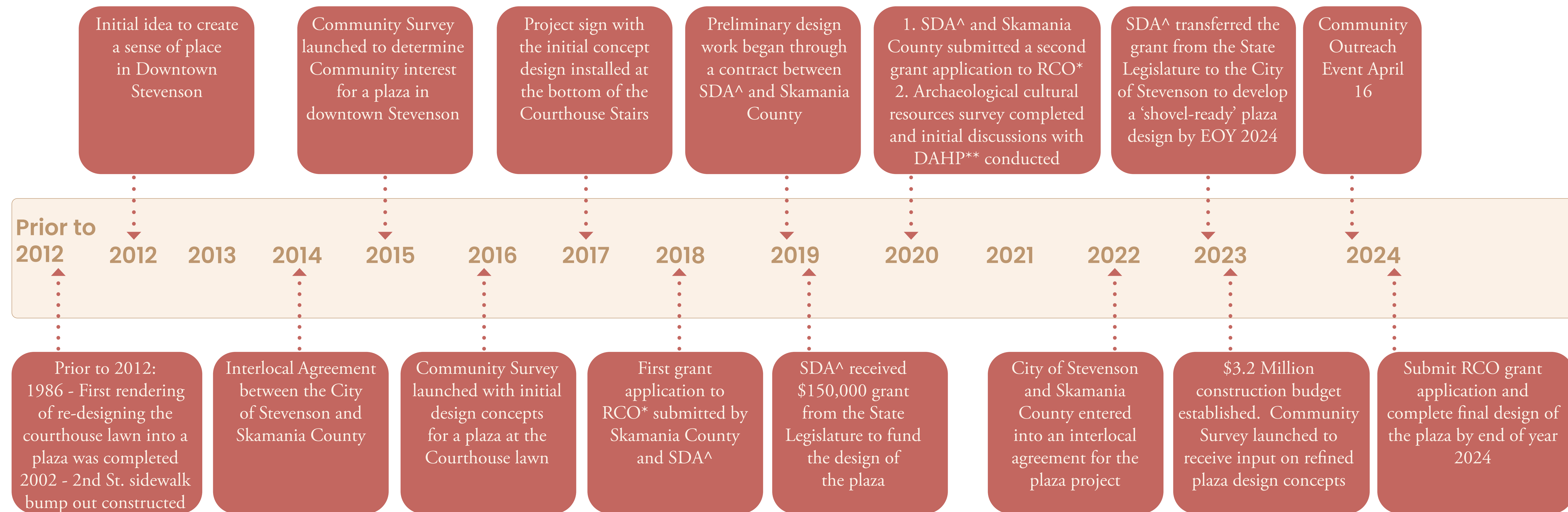
71% of survey respondents indicated they would frequent small community events in an expanded central plaza.

2016 Community Survey

In 2016 initial design concepts were developed to create a plaza on the Skamania Courthouse lawn.

91% of survey respondents were in favor of reinventing the space in front of the Courthouse.

Timeline



* State of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
 ** State of Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
 ^ Stevenson Downtown Association



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Courthouse Park Plaza



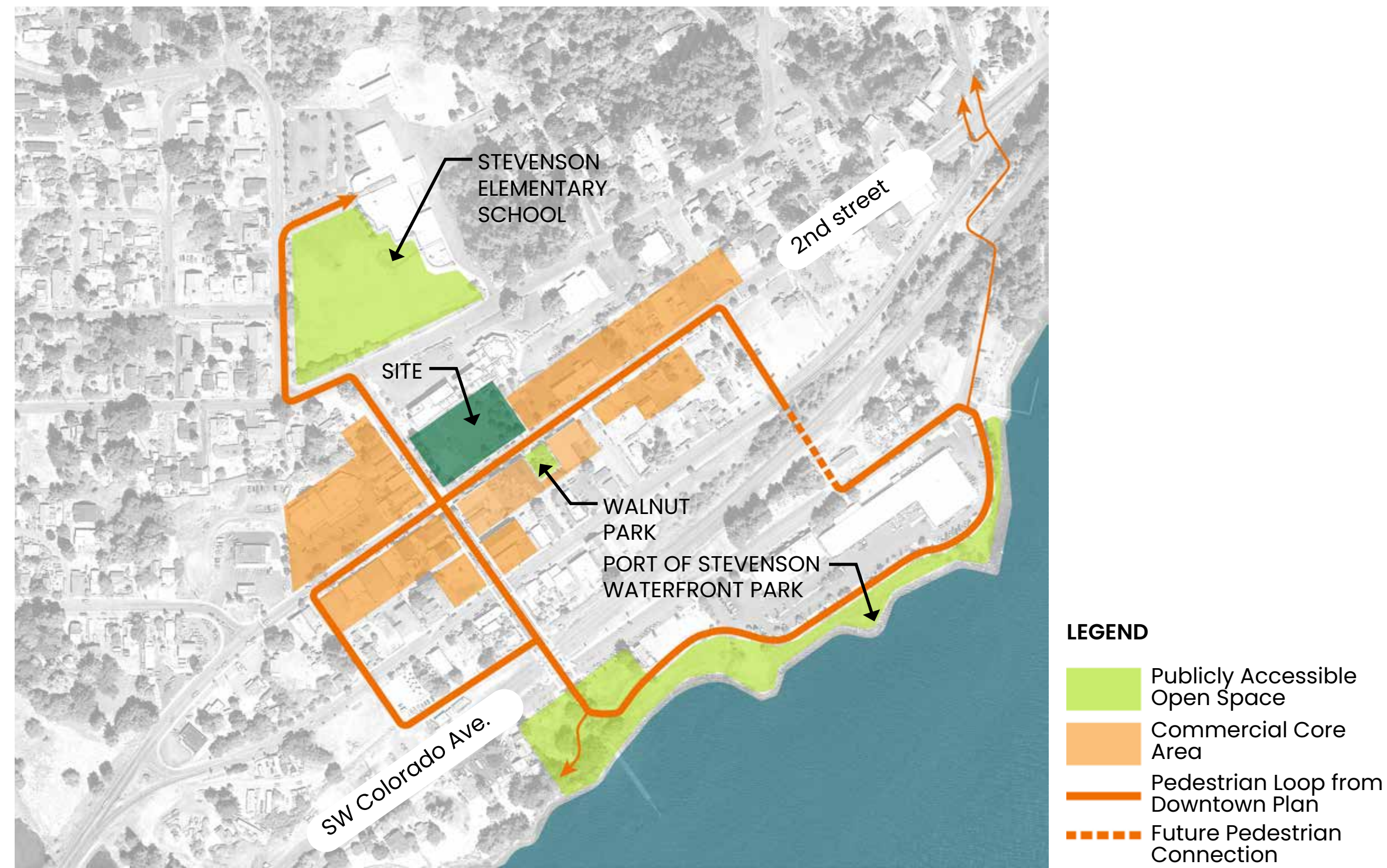
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Existing Site Conditions

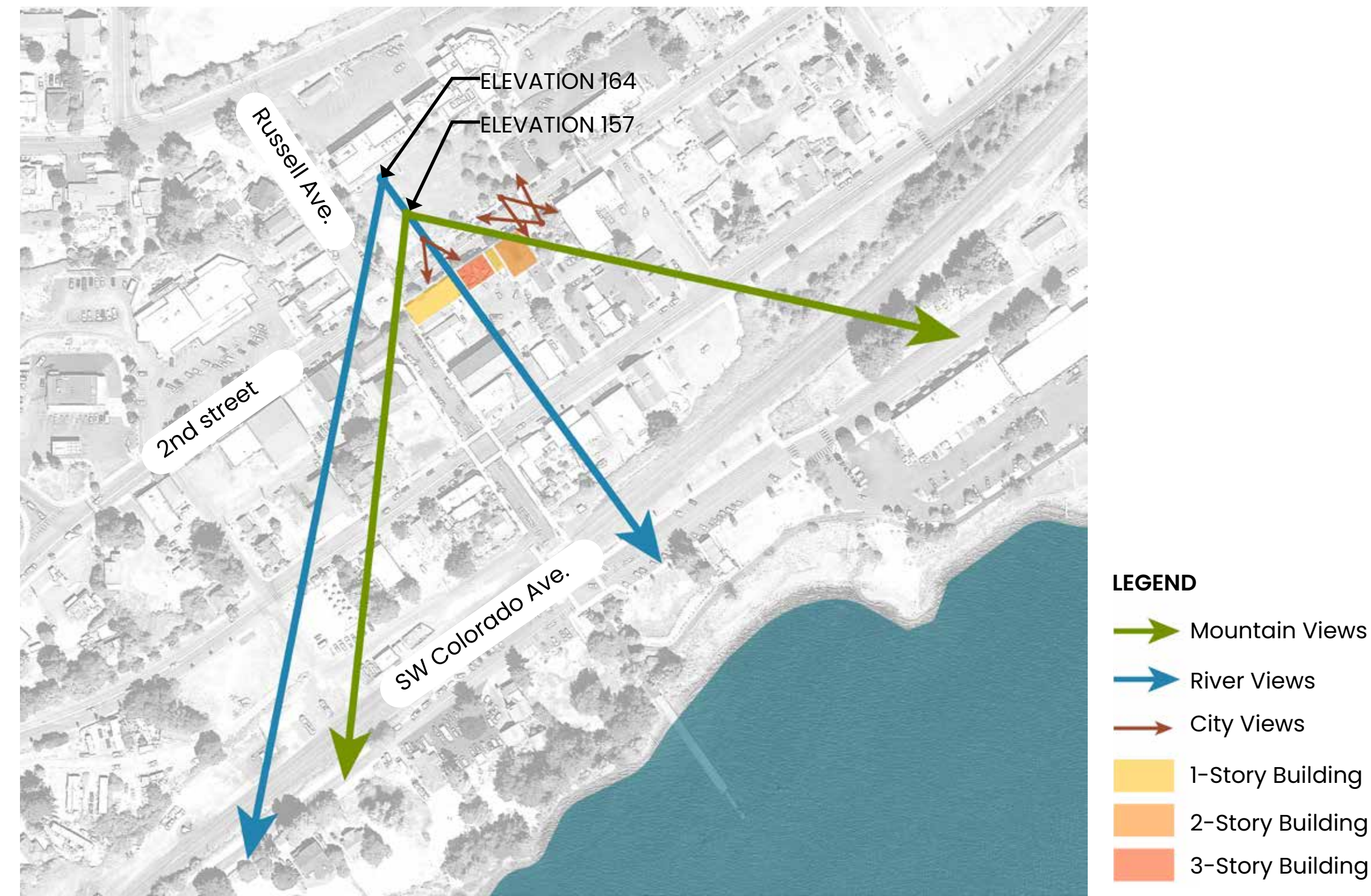
The diagrams below show existing conditions of the site and immediate surroundings. The site features, circulation to and through the courthouse lawn, and nearby parking were considered when locating the plaza within the Courthouse lawn. An analysis of the site topography and where there are views of the Columbia River and Gorge informed the location of the middle and upper terraces in the design.



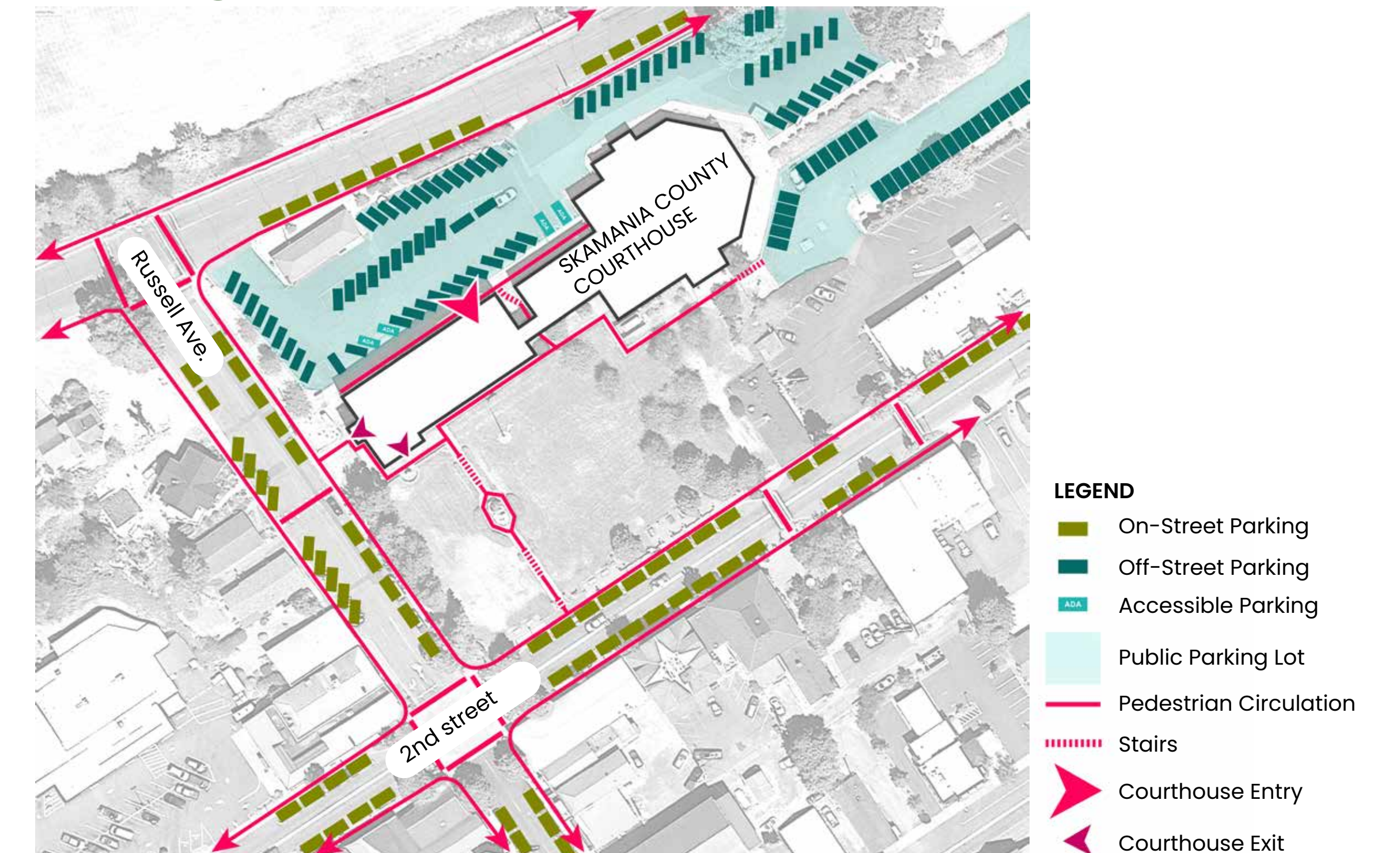
Downtown Connections



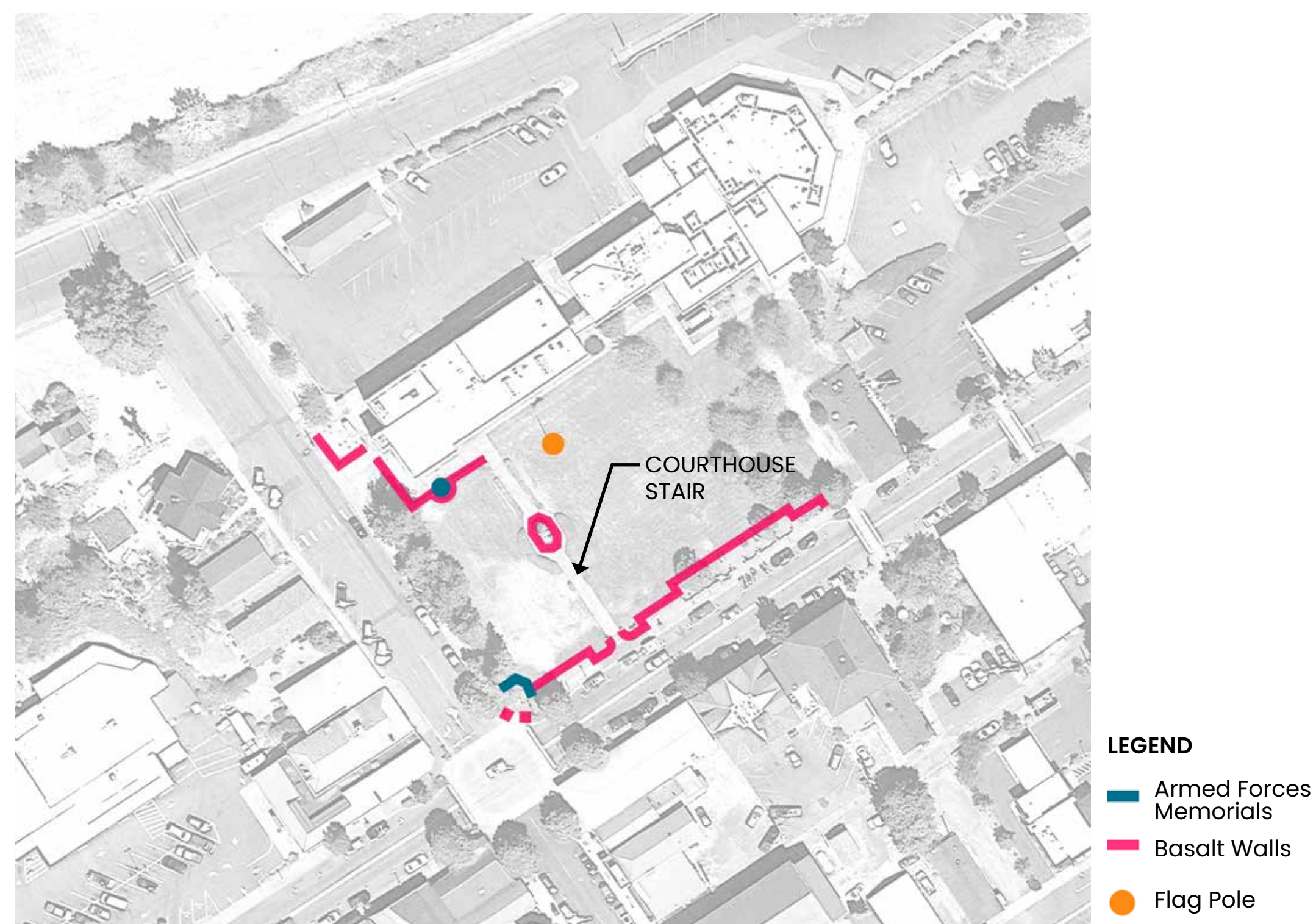
Views



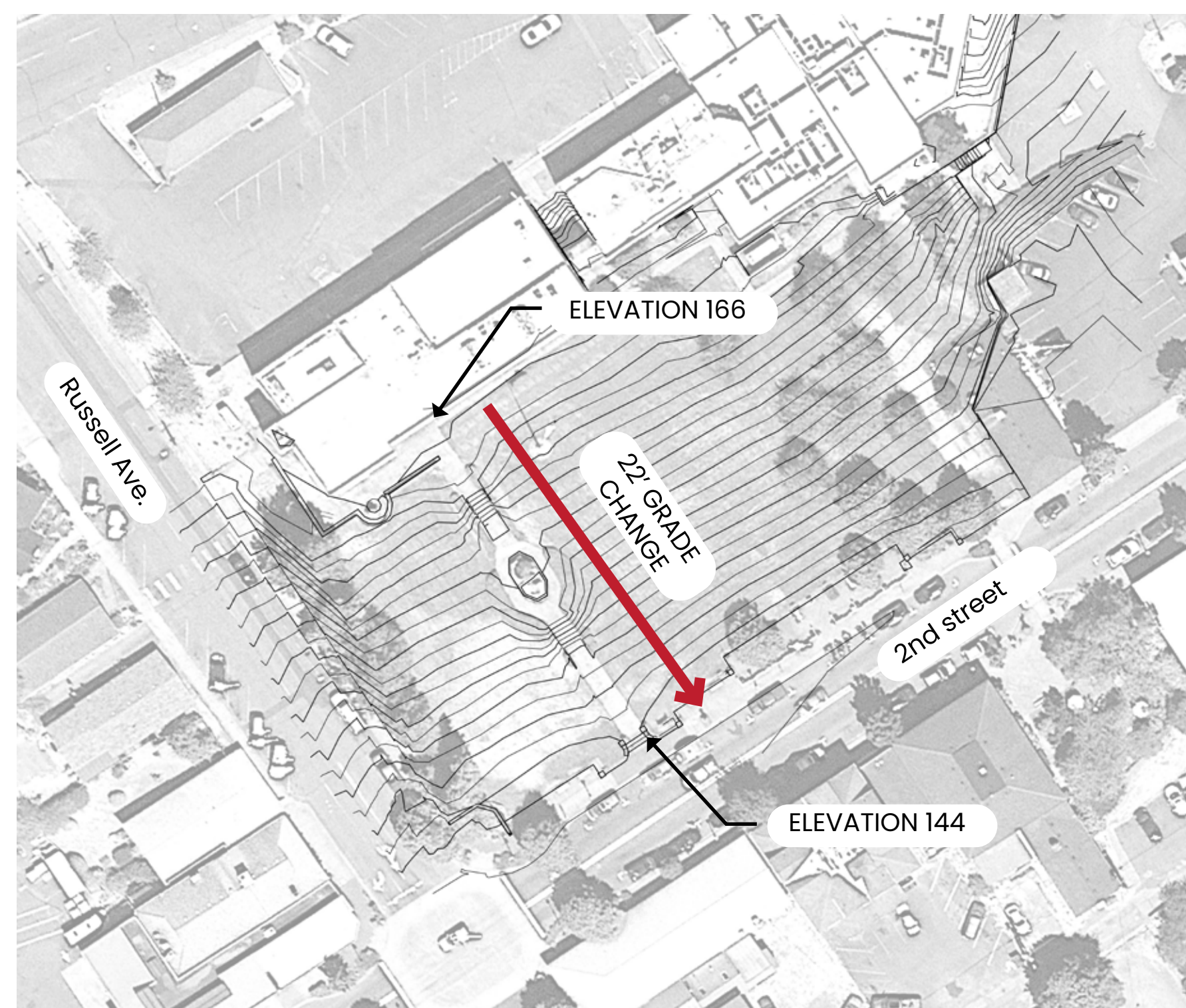
Parking



Existing Site Features



Topography



Vegetation



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What We Heard: Responses to the 2023 Survey

December 2023 Design Concepts



The three design concepts above were sent out for public feedback in December 2023. The design team had a table at Christmas in the Gorge for in-person feedback, the design concepts and survey were posted to the City of Stevenson website, and a flyer with a link to the survey was mailed to County residents. Two concepts kept the existing stair and had a small footprint east of the stair. One concept was larger and re-built the stair.

395 Survey Responses

71% of survey respondents are in favor of the project

84% of downtown stakeholders (i.e. people who work, live, or own downtown) are in favor of the project



Based on the 2016 concept, the Plaza is envisioned to celebrate the natural history of the Gorge and the history of Stevenson.

63% of the respondents support the theme of the project

Preferred Concept:

51% of survey respondents prefer a large plaza that rebuilds and integrates the plaza with new stairs to the courthouse

49% of respondents prefer a smaller plaza that preserves the existing stair and locates the plaza to the northeast side of the stair

Top Elements that will make people feel welcome:



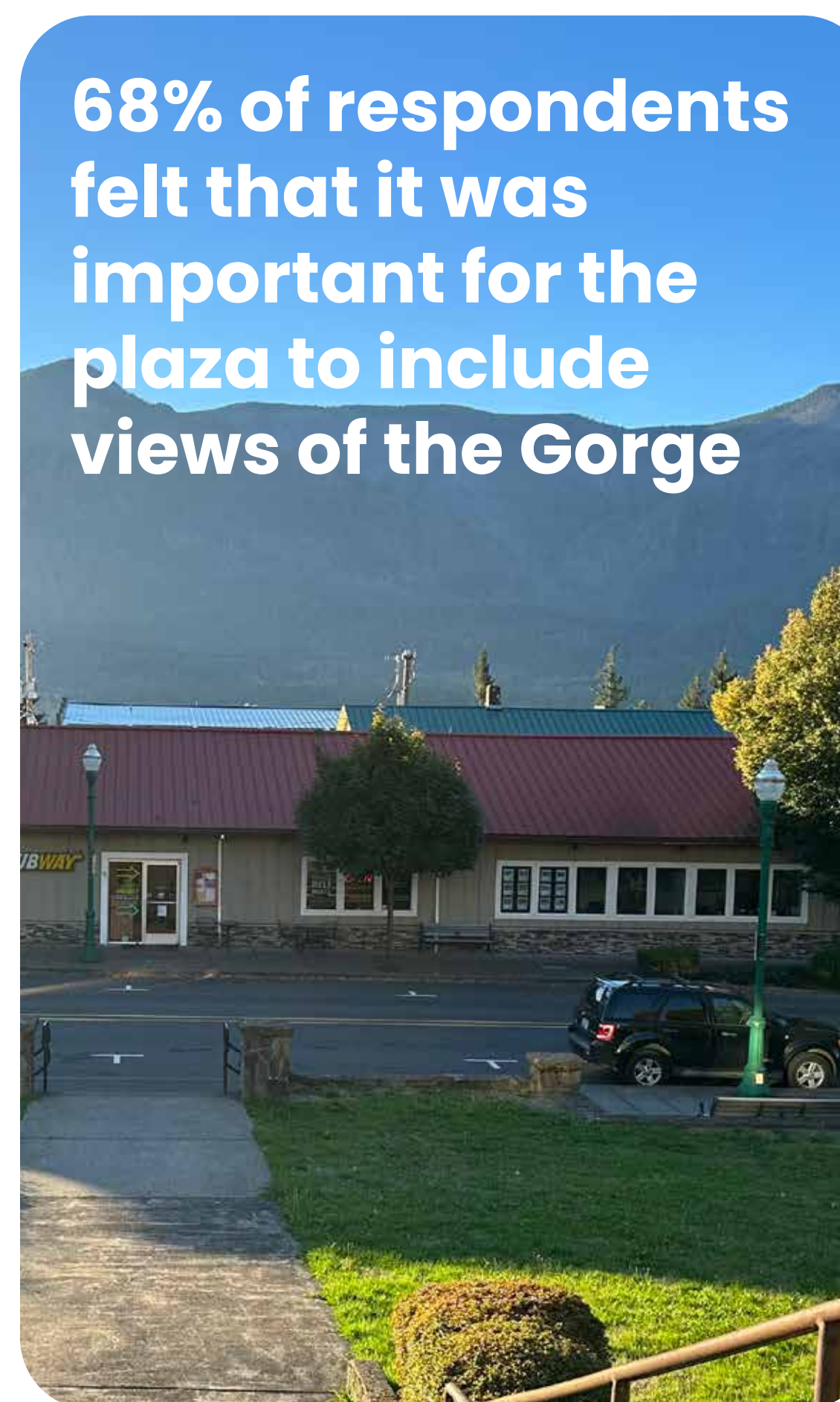
★ **Community Porches** is the preferred design based on Skamania County, City of Stevenson, and Stevenson Downtown Association goals, and input from the Community

Direction for Design Refinement:

- County preference for smaller plaza design
- Keep the existing stair
- Create multiple spaces for everyday gathering
- Incorporate restaurant seating that could be leased to El Rio
- Provide a variety of different types of seating
- Add a buffer between 2nd Avenue and the plaza
- Keep as much existing lawn as possible

Top Four Amenities:

1. Variety of Seating
2. Restroom
3. Amphitheater Seating
4. Native Planting



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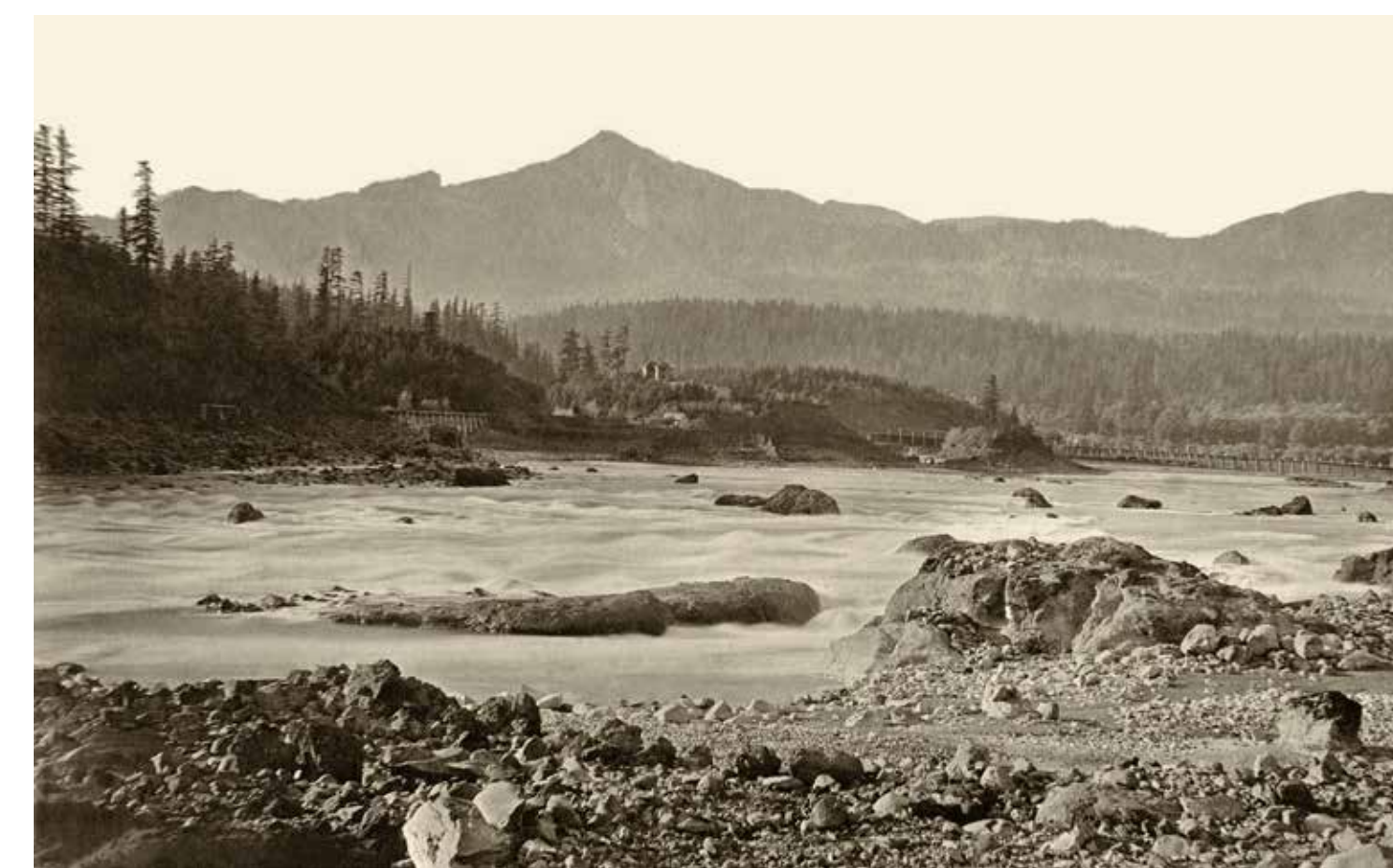
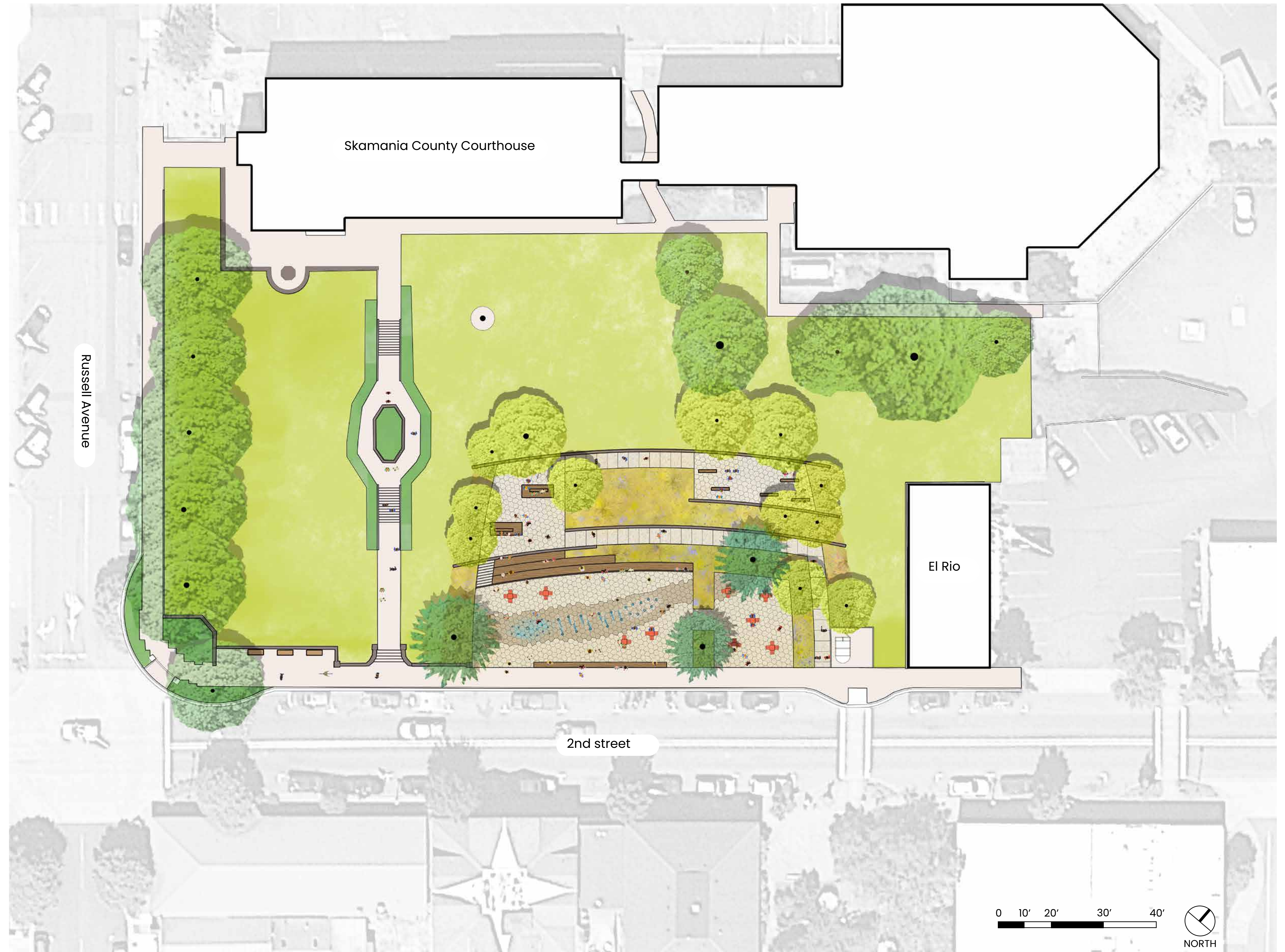
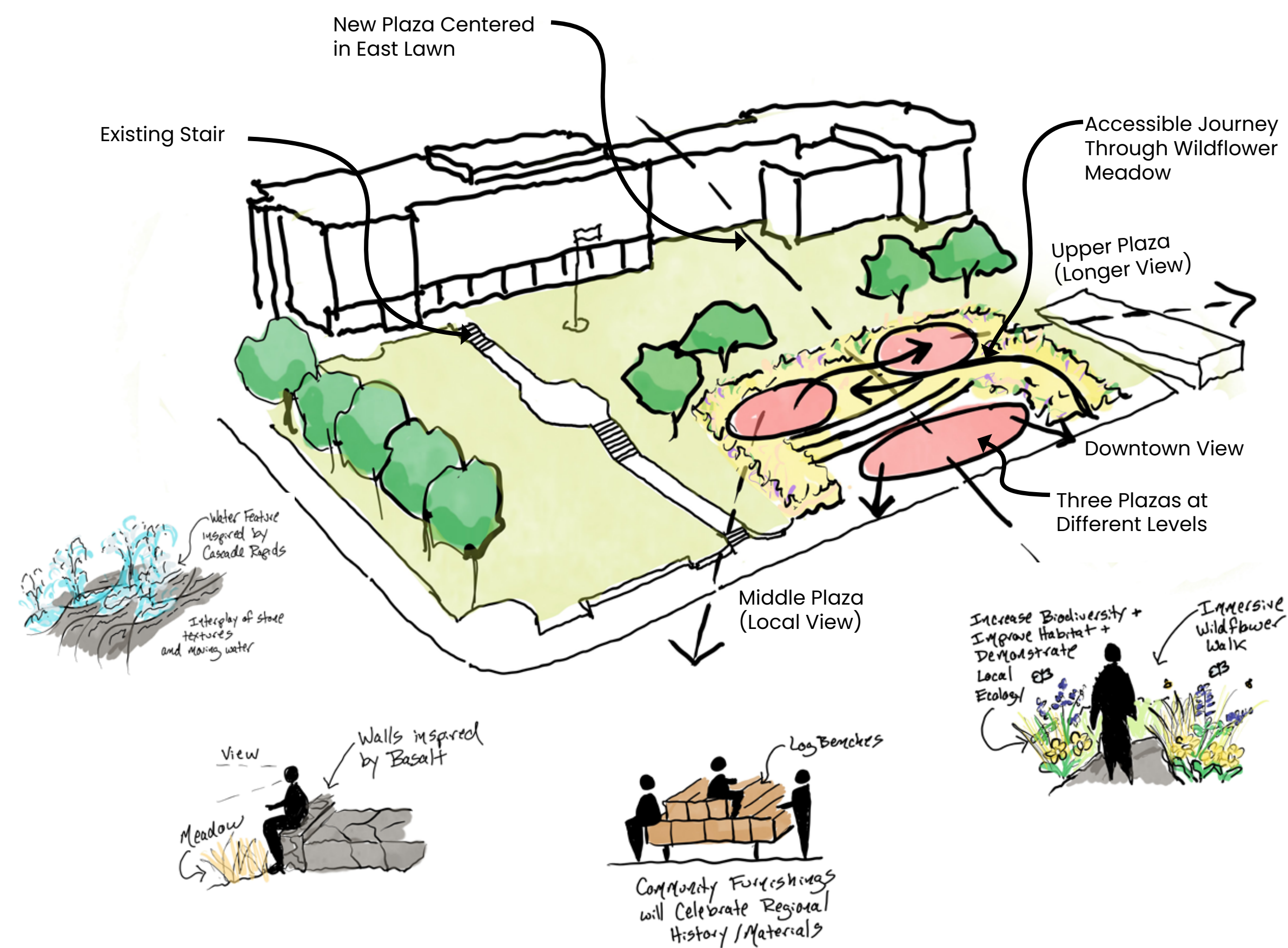
Plaza Design Concept

The plaza is designed to connect people to the natural beauty of the Gorge and celebrate the history of the region. It is designed to be both comfortable and inviting for everyday use and have the ability to host community events that currently happen on 2nd Street and the Courthouse lawn. The existing courthouse stair remains and the new plaza is centered on the east lawn.

Overall Size of New Plaza: 12,040 sf
 Paving: 8,040 sf
 Native Planting: 4,000 sf

Size of Lawn Remaining: 30,890 sf

The target construction budget is \$3.2 million. The cost estimate for the proposed design, including contingencies and escalation, is \$4.2 million. Based on Community input, we will evaluate options to refine the design to meet the construction budget. Refinements will focus on materials and detailing. We are not anticipating significant changes to the overall design of the Plaza.



Courtesy of Willamette Falls & Landings Heritage Area Coalition and Old Oregon Photos

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Plaza: Amenities and Circulation

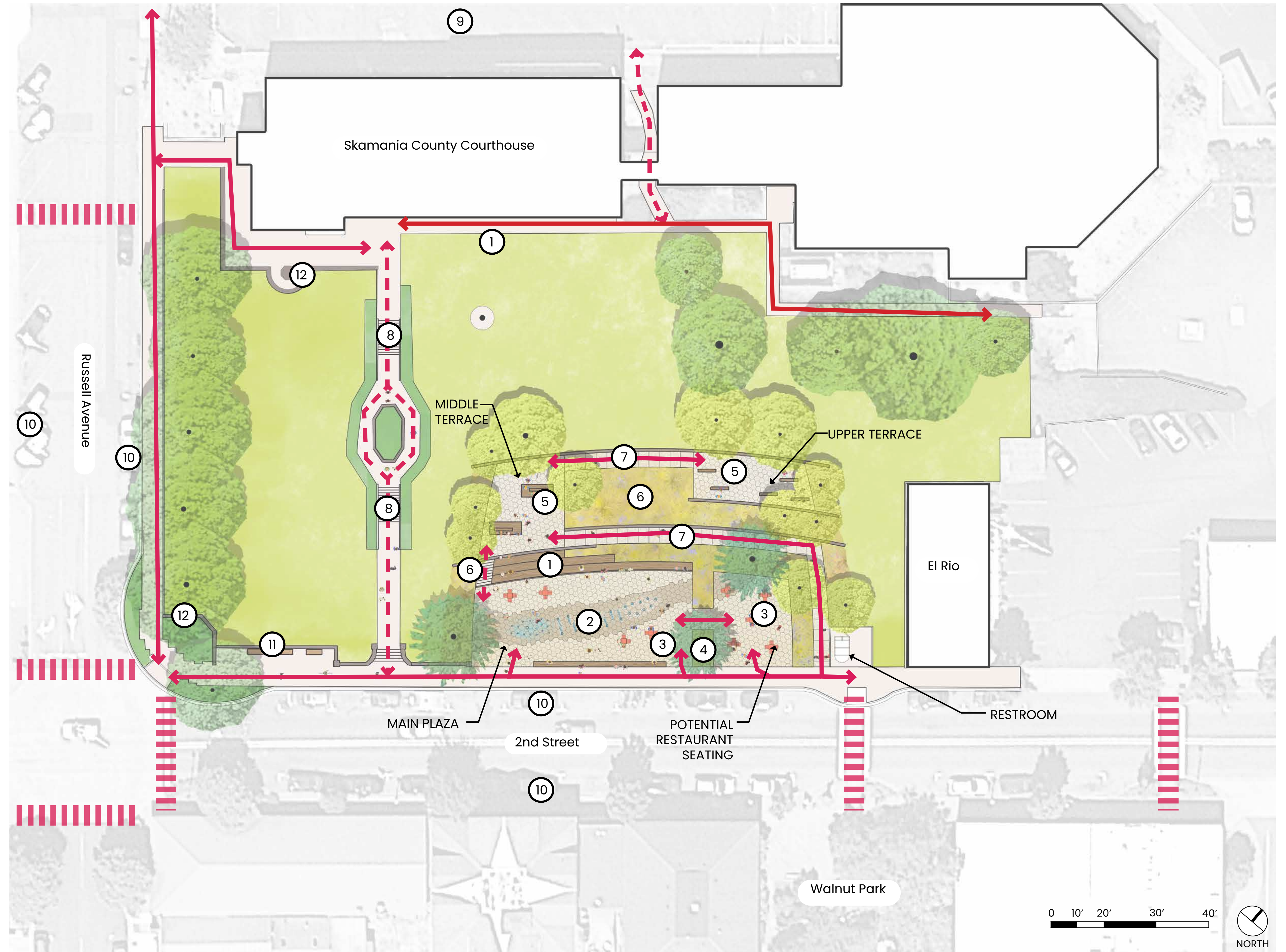
The plaza has three gathering areas at different levels to offer expanding views as people move up the hill. The main plaza at street level has downtown views and the upper terraces have longer views of the Gorge. There is an accessible walkway that winds through native planting, inspired by the wildflower meadows in the Gorge, to connect all three gathering areas. Amphitheater seating, with plaques to honor local veterans, is built into the sloped meadow adjacent to the main plaza. There is an interactive water feature in the main plaza that can be turned off for community events.



Legend

- ① Amphitheater Seating and Veterans Memorial
- ② Interactive Spray Water Feature
- ③ Movable Tables and Chairs
- ④ Christmas Tree
- ⑤ Built-In Seating
- ⑥ Stair to Middle Plaza
- ⑦ Sloped Walkway
- ⑧ Existing Stair
- ⑨ Courthouse Parking Lot
- ⑩ On Street Parking
- ⑪ Existing Benches and Site Wall
- ⑫ Existing Memorial

- Existing Crosswalk
- Accessible Path
- Stair Connection



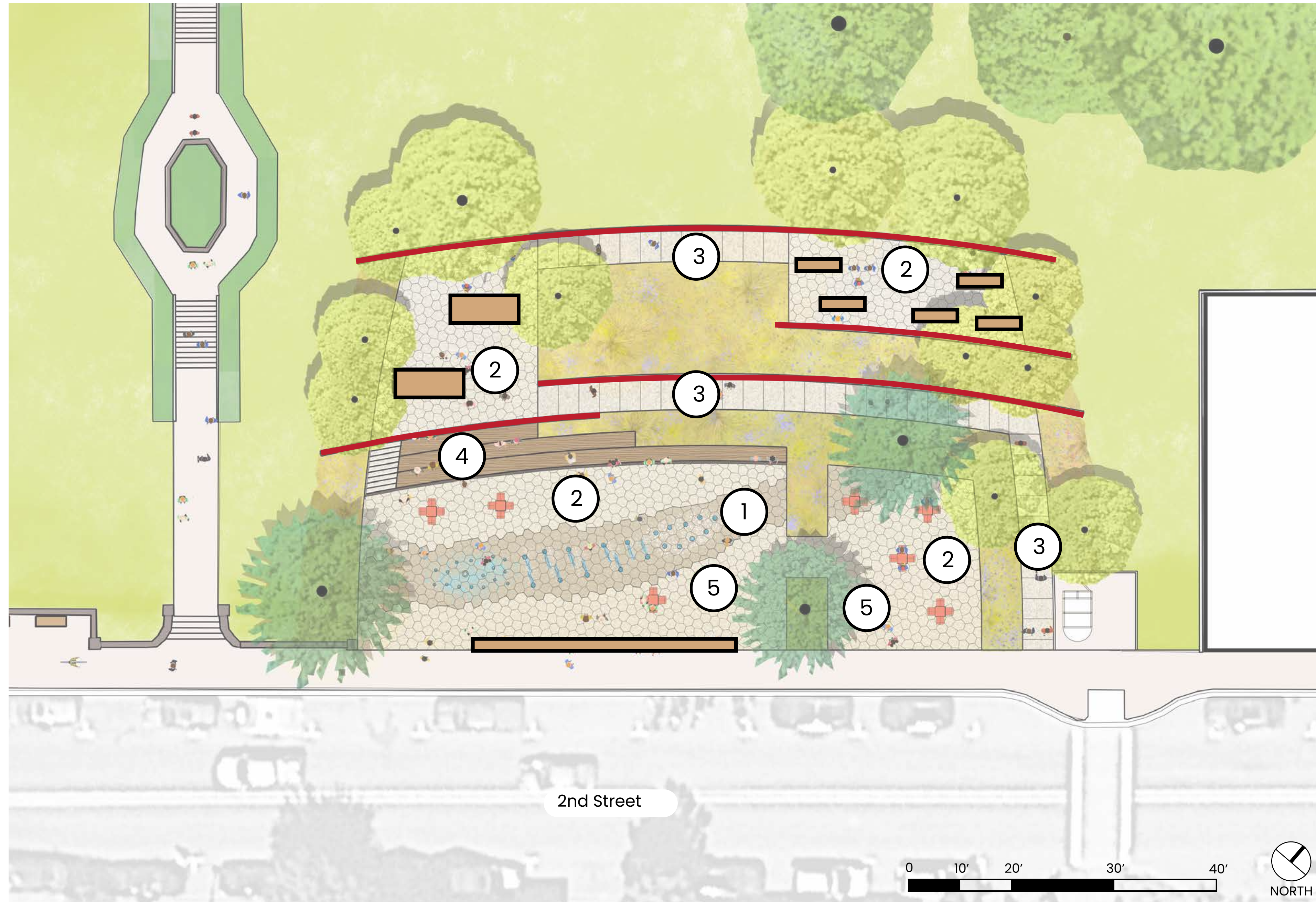
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Plaza: Materials and Planting

The design of the plaza is inspired by the natural beauty of the Gorge and history of Stevenson. The materials selected include basalt, wood, textured concrete, native plants, and colorful furnishings.



Paving



1 Basalt Flagstone



2 Concrete Hexagonal Pavers



3 Concrete Paving with Exposed Aggregate Finish

Seating



4 Wood Amphitheater Steps



5 Wood Benches



Movable Tables and Chairs

Walls



Basalt Ledge Stone Retaining Walls

Images are examples intended to show the design intent and do not represent the exact design

Native Planting: Trees, Grasses, and Perennials



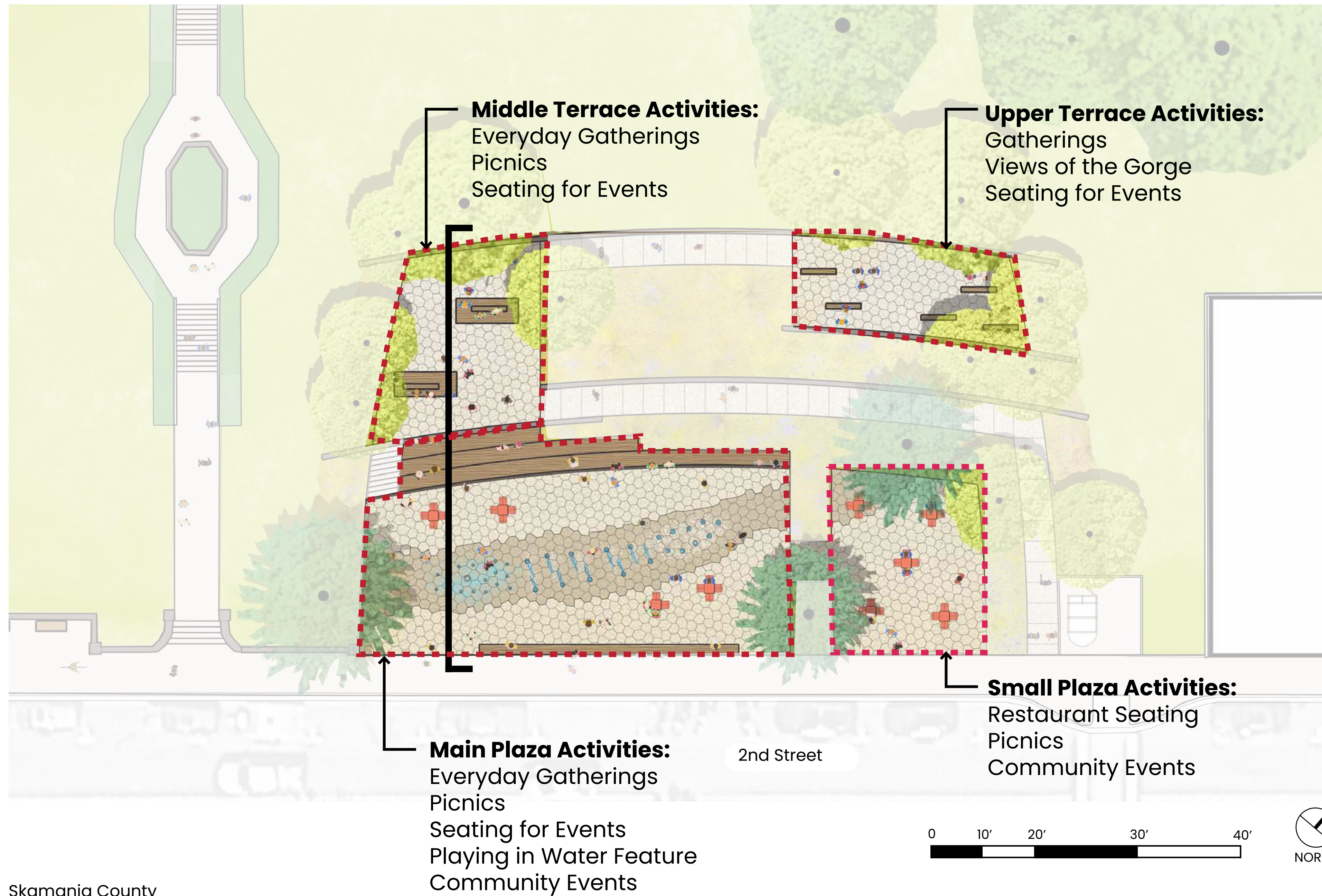
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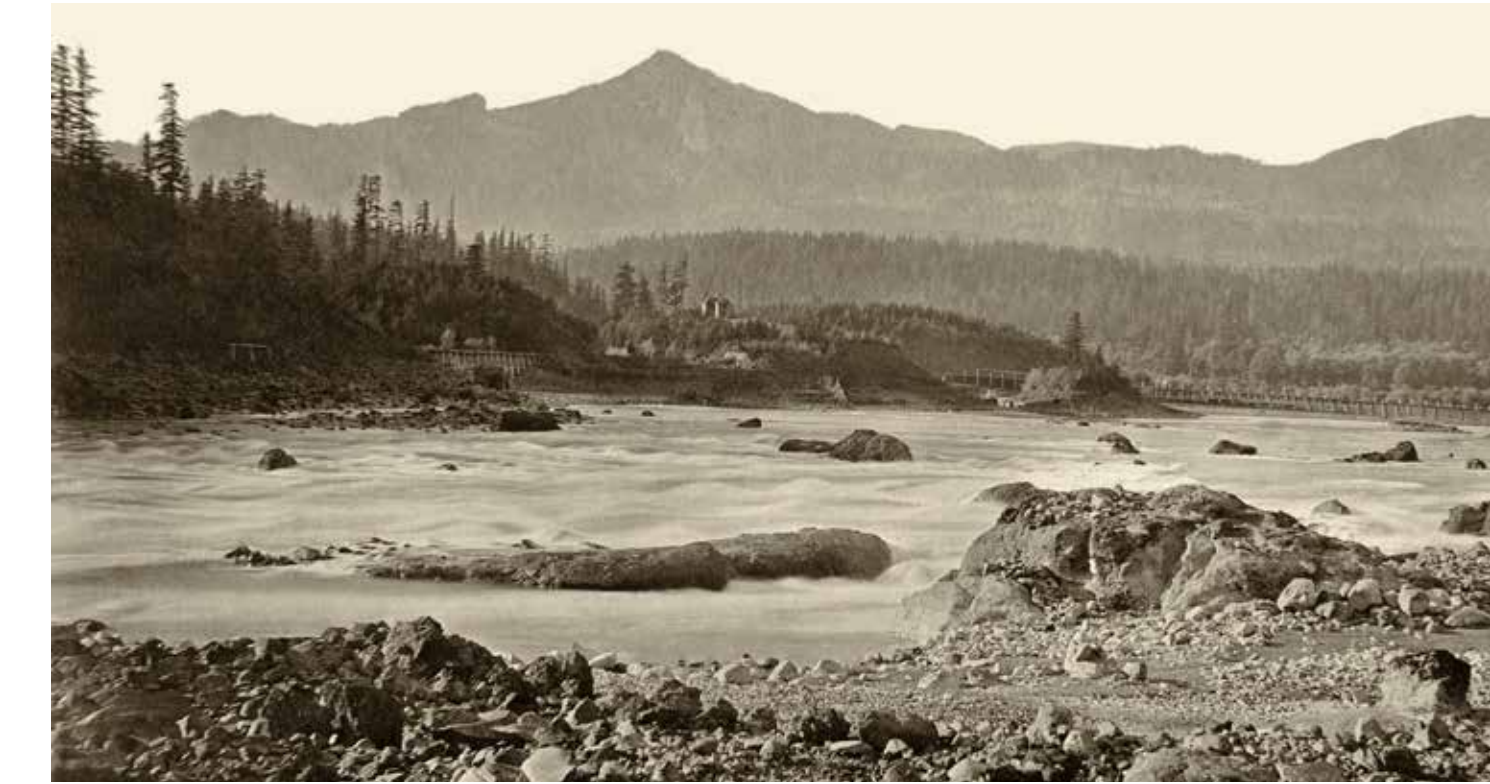


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Plaza: Gathering Spaces & Activities

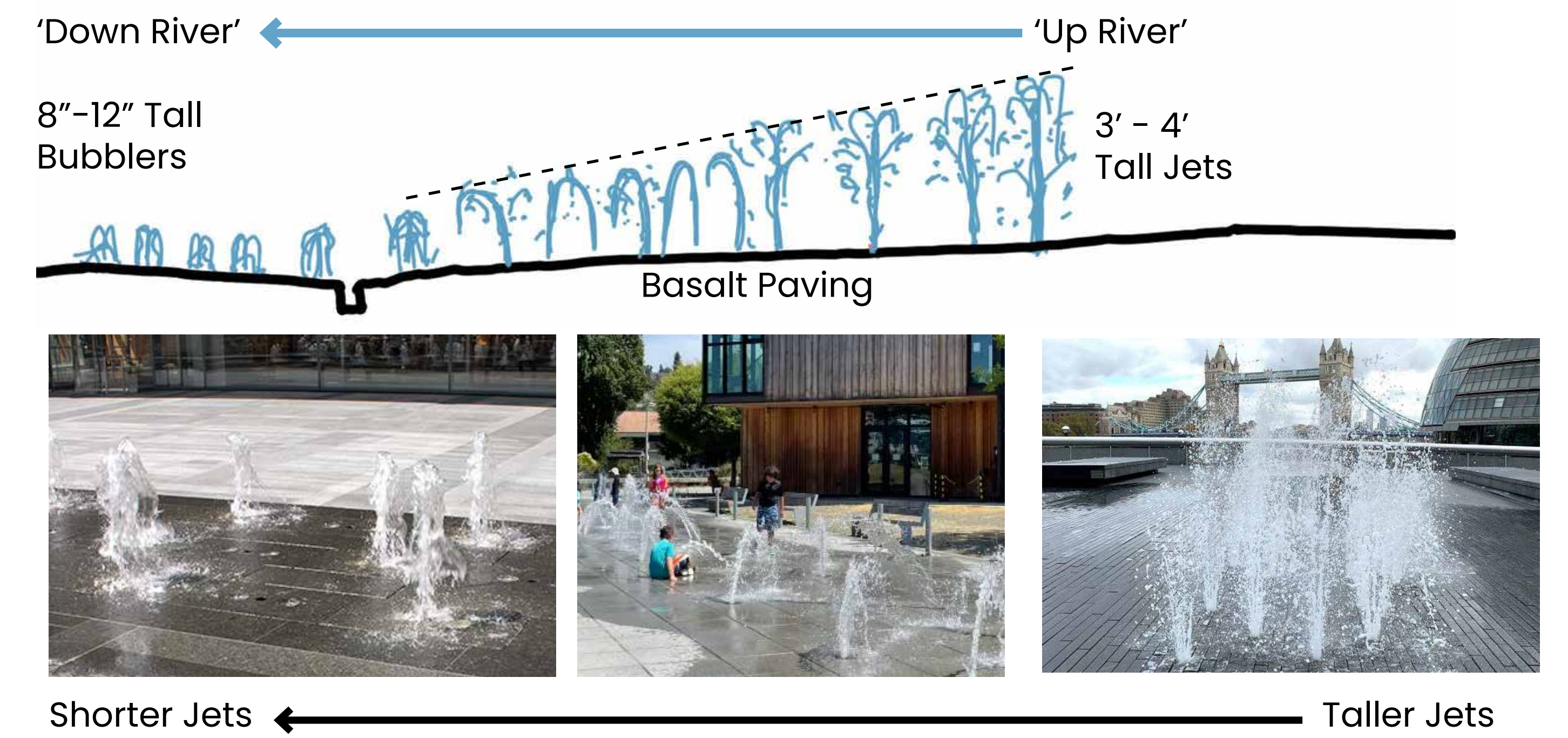


Interactive Water Feature

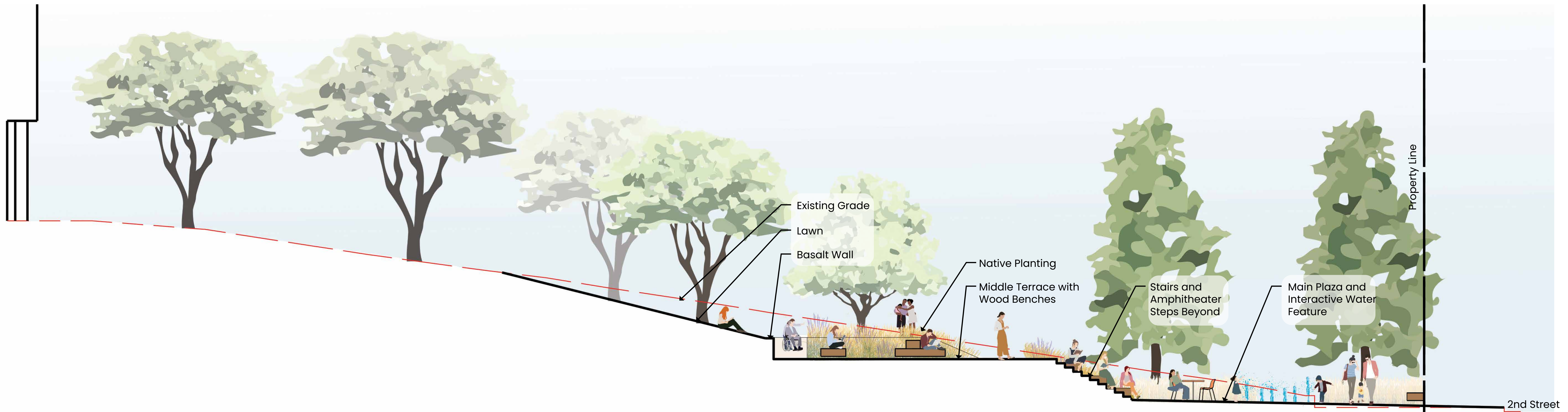


Design Inspired by the Cascade Rapids that are now underwater after construction of Bonneville Dam

Courtesy of Willamette Falls & Landings Heritage Area Coalition and Old Oregon Photos



Skamania County Courthouse



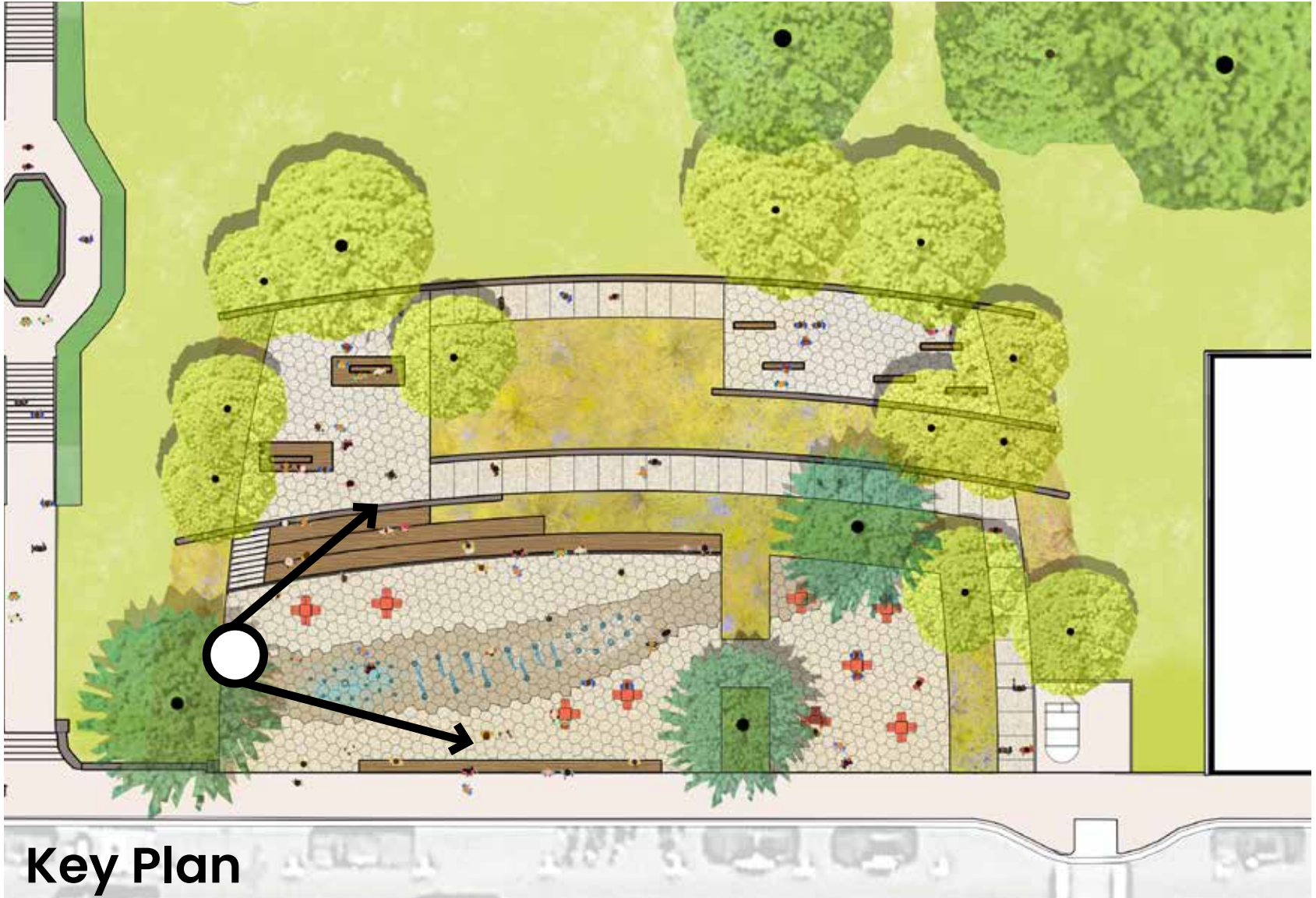
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View of Main Plaza

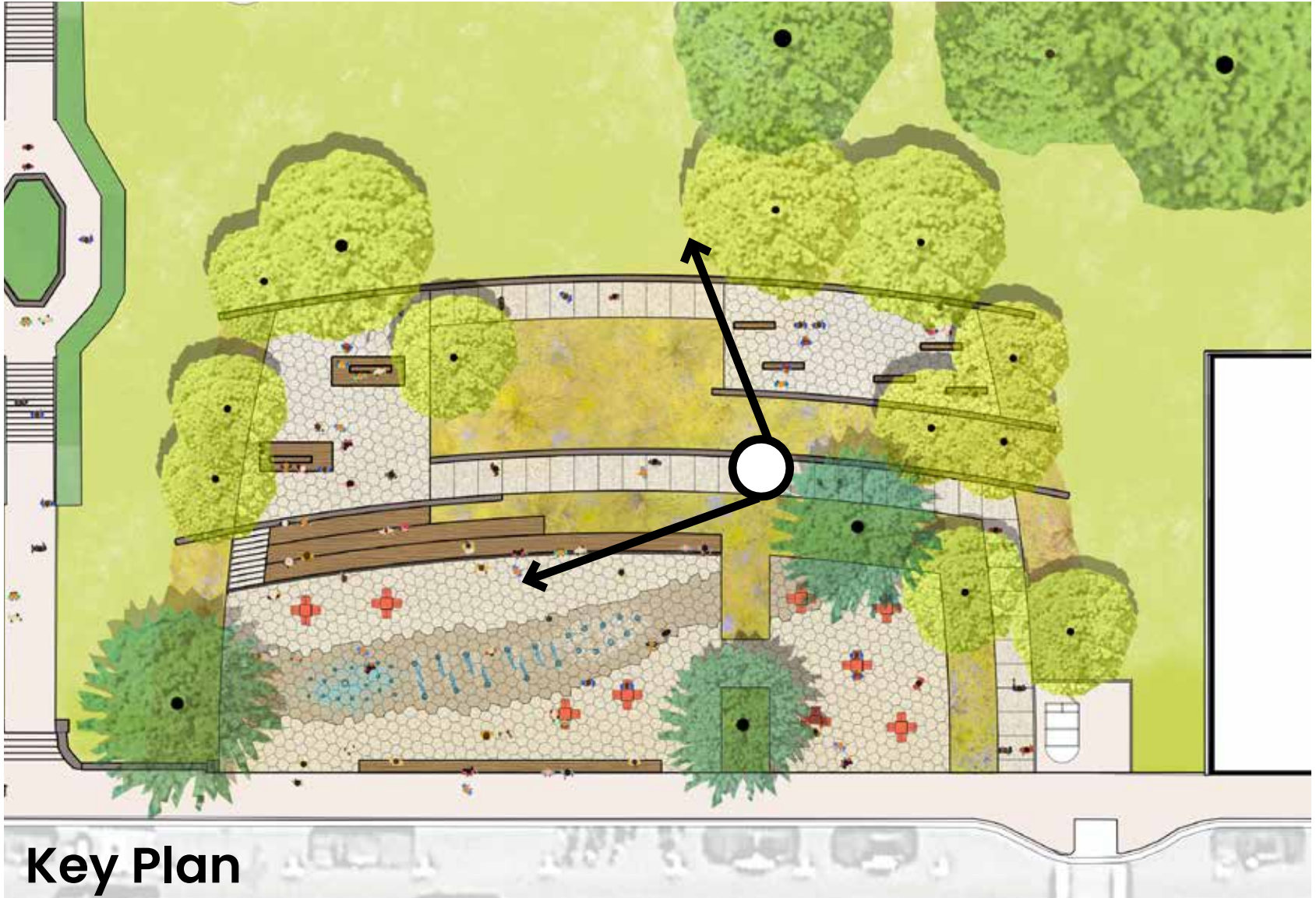


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View from Path to Middle Terrace



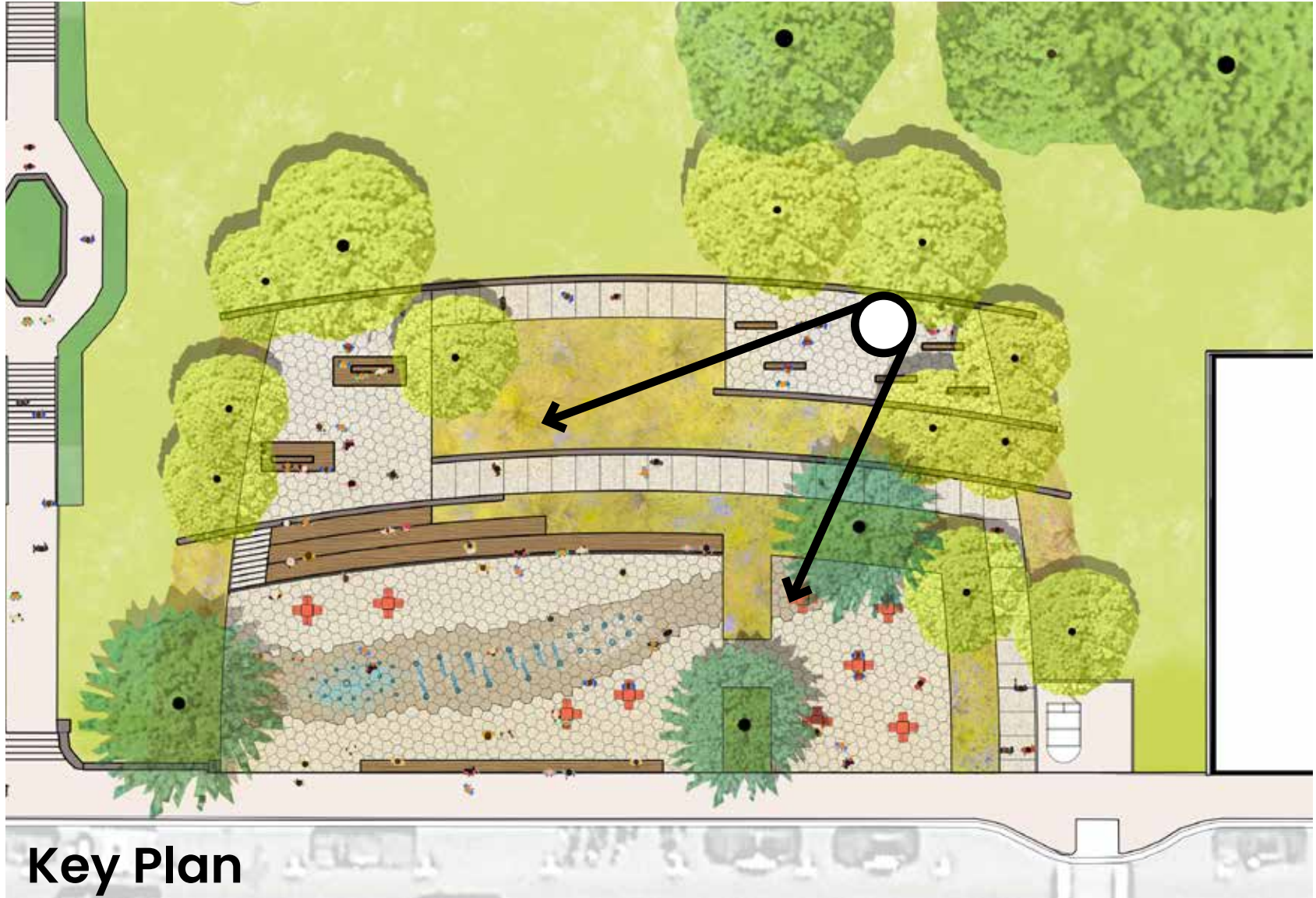
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Concert Performance: View from Upper Terrace



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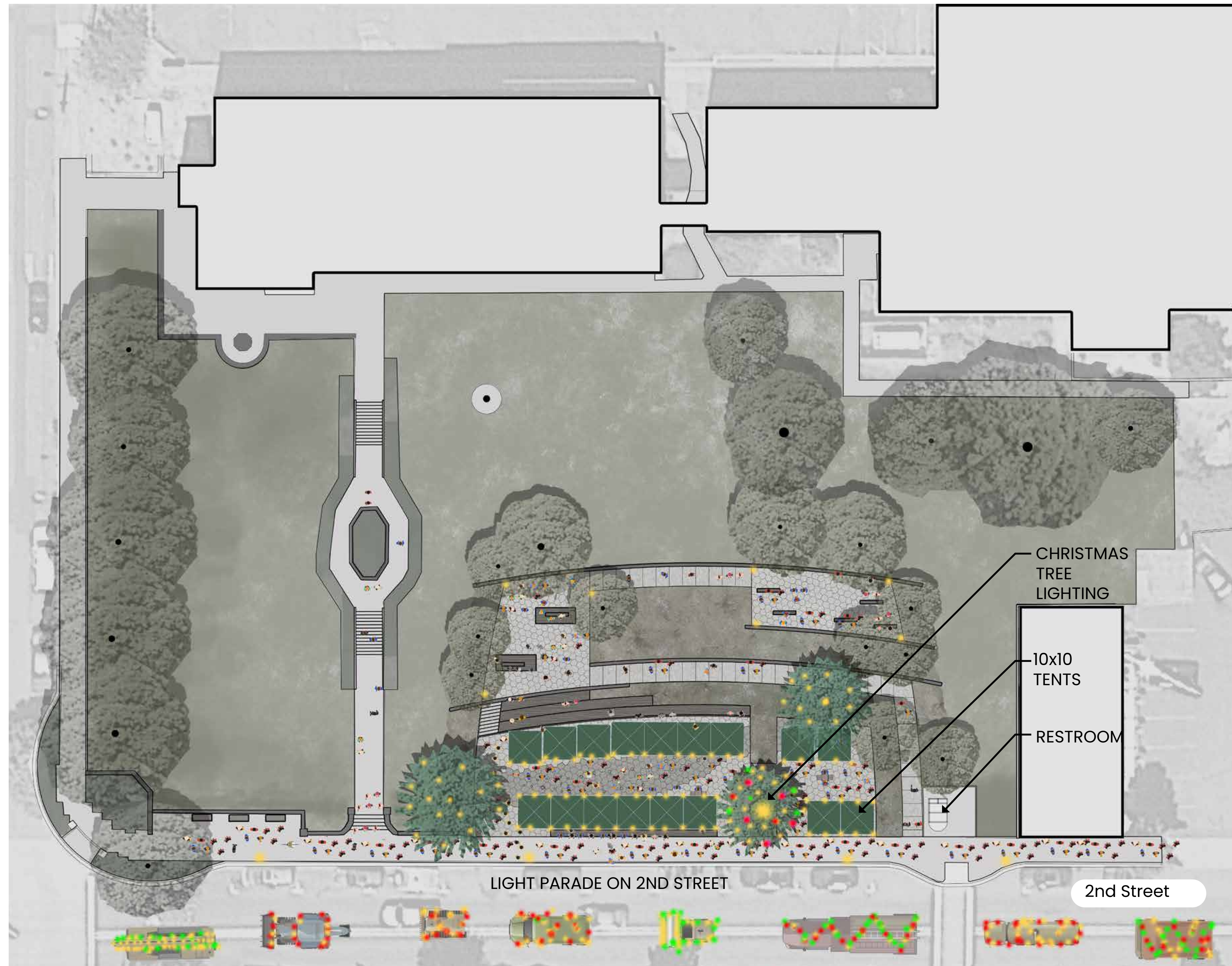
Plaza: Community Events

The plaza is designed to be a comfortable and welcoming place for everyday gathering and provide flexibility to host larger community events that currently take place along 2nd Street.

The water feature in the main plaza can be turned off during events to accommodate a stage or tents. There will be a variety of places to sit in the plaza including on site walls, the amphitheater steps, benches on the middle and upper terraces, and on the sloped lawn above the plaza.



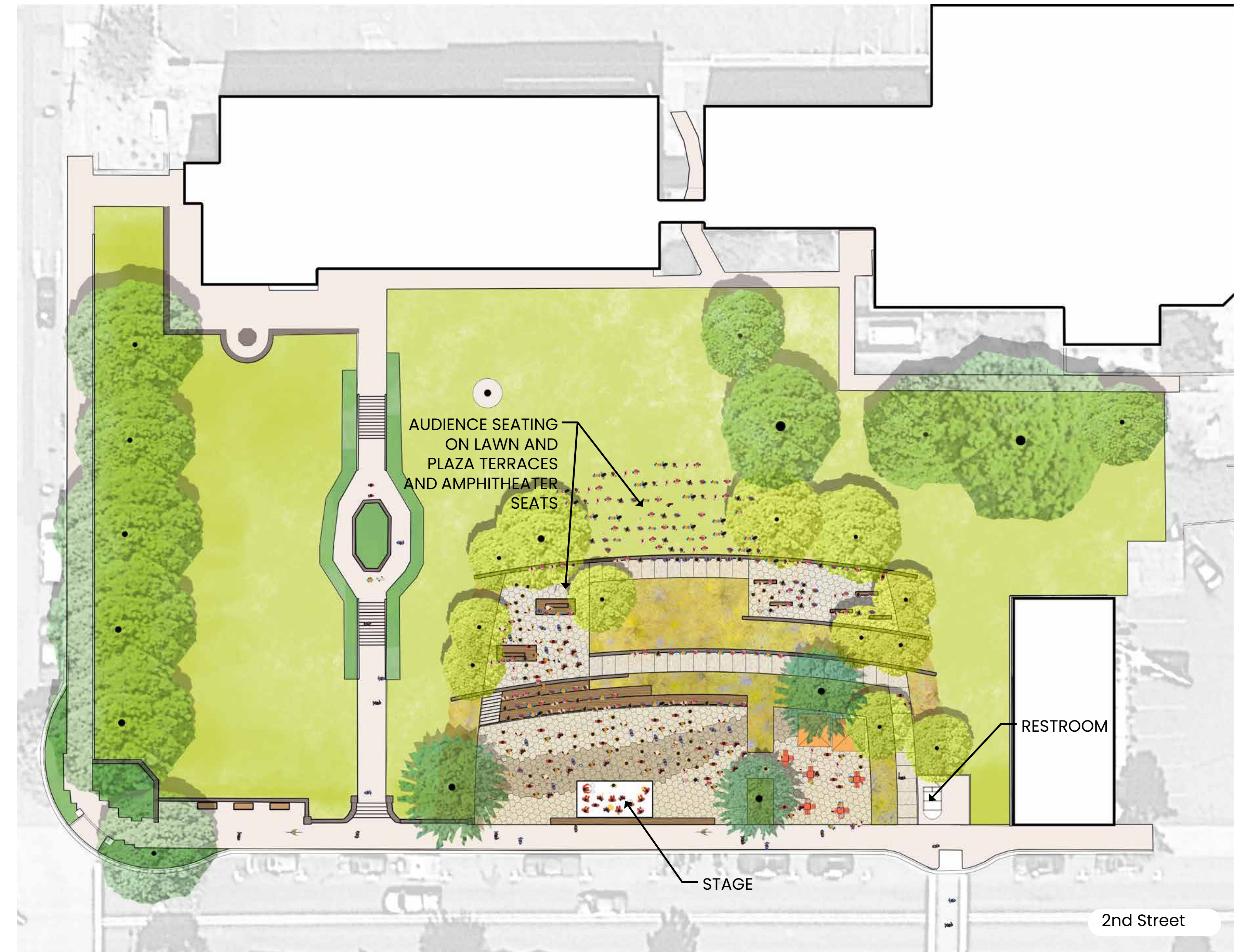
Example Event: Christmas in the Gorge



The street level plaza will accommodate (17) 10x10 tents

Current tent Capacity at Christmas in the Gorge: (6) 10x10 tents

Example Event: Concert on the Highway



The plaza and lawn will accommodate 250 to 325 people for a concert

Current Capacity: 150–200 people for Concert on the Highway



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