

DOWNTOWN
FOR EVERYONE

A REIMAGINED DOWNTOWN BLOOMINGTON EXPERIENCE

STREETSCAPE PROGRAM REPORT
VOLUME 1

Adopted April 8th, 2024

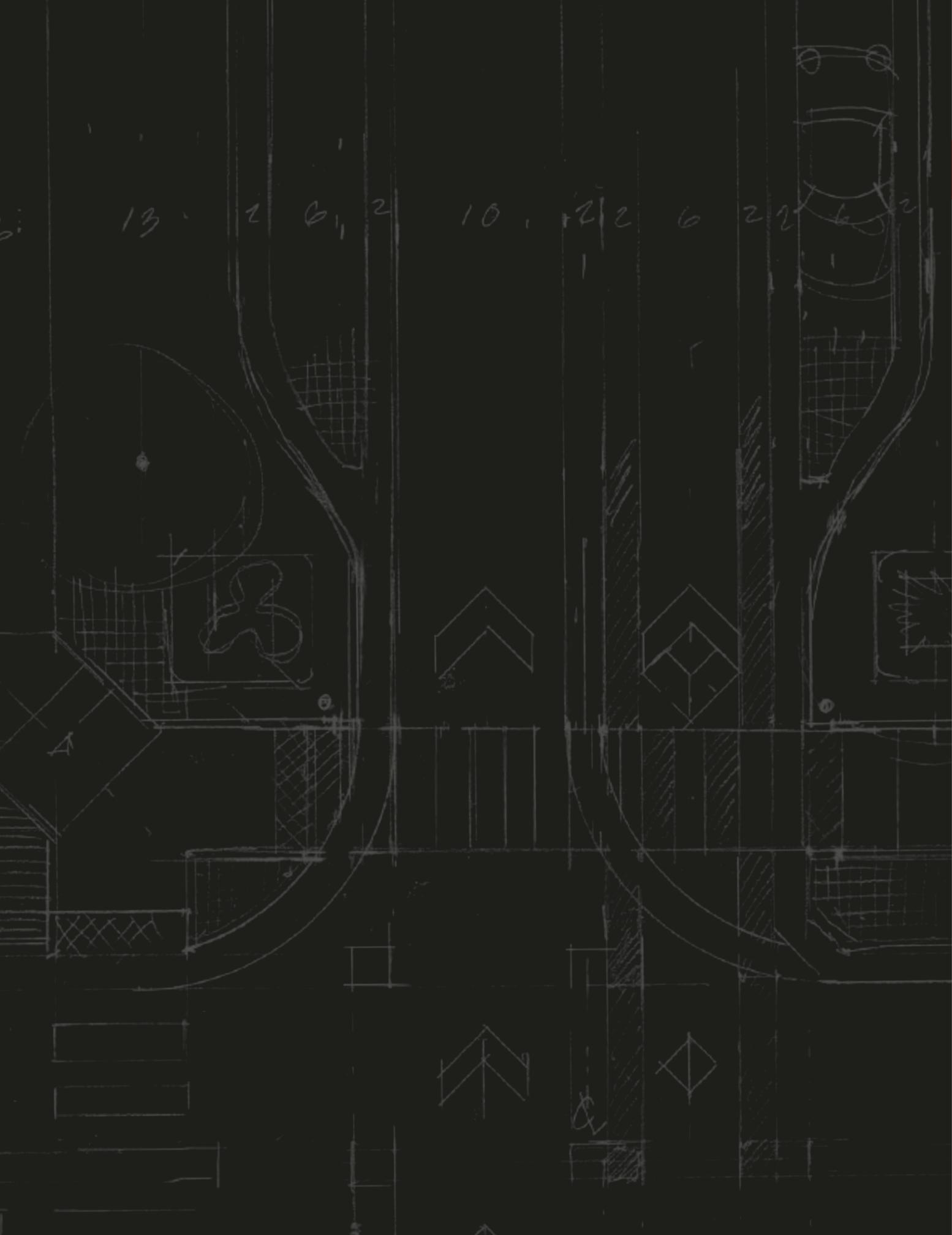


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SPECIAL THANKS

Many individuals and volunteers contributed to the development of the Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program, including scores of public participants. Special thanks is owed to the following individuals who provided exceptional support throughout the design process.

City Leadership

It is only because of the strong commitments made by the Mayor, the City Manager, and the Councilmembers that the long-awaited revitalization of Downtown Bloomington has a viable future.

- Mboka Mwilambwe (Mayor)
- Tim Gleason (City Manager)
- Jenna Kearns (Ward 1 Council Member)
- Donna Boelen (Ward 2 Council Member)
- Sheila Montney (Ward 3 Council Member)
- John Danenberger (Ward 4 Council Member)
- Nick Becker (Ward 5 Council Member)
- Cody Hendricks (Ward 6 Council Member)
- Mollie Ward (Ward 7 Council Member)
- Kent Lee (Ward 8 Council Member)
- Tom Crumpler (Ward 9 Council Member)

City Core Team

The preparation of the Streetscape Plan would not have been possible without the attentive oversight of the City Core Team. This group of City Department representatives dedicated many hours above and beyond their normal duties to provide the Design Team with invaluable insight and guidance.

- Billy Tyus (Deputy City Manager)
- Philip Allyn, PE, PTOE (Traffic Engineer)
- Katherine Murphy (Communications & External Affairs Manager)
- Kelly Pfeifer (Assistant Director of Economic & Community Development)
- Craig Shonkwiler, PE (Assistant Public Works Director)*
- Kimberly Smith (Assistant Director of Economic & Community Development)*

*No longer employed at the City of Bloomington

Steering Committee

The members of the Steering Committee graciously volunteered their time to share their unique perspectives on Downtown Bloomington and were instrumental in setting direction for many of the design concepts included in the Plan.

- David Braun (General Manager, Connect Transit)
- Elmo Dowd (Production Systems Development Manager, Ferrero)
- Pamala Eaton (Owner, Eaton Studio and Gallery)
- Anthony Grant (Assistant County Administrator, McLean County)
- Doug Johnson (Executive Director, McLean County Arts Center)
- Jan Lancaster (Owner, The Bistro)
- Jamie Mathy (Owner, Red Raccoon Games)
- Andy Shirk (Co-Founder, CEO Council)
- Vicki Tilton (Owner, Fox & Hound Spa)
- Andi Whalen (Branch Manager, Inland Northwest Bank)

McLean County

Representatives of the McLean County Administration and McLean County Museum of History might have considered it presumptuous when the City first began considering improvements on the Museum Square. Instead, the individuals listed below were very supportive of the program, and they collaborated with the Design Team to develop the best solutions for this area of Downtown.

- Cassie Taylor (County Administrator, McLean County)
- Anthony Grant (Assistant County Administrator, McLean County)
- Cathy Dreyer (Assistant County Administrator, McLean County)
- Val Laymon (Chair, McLean County Property Committee)
- Julie Emig (Executive Director, McLean County Museum of History)
- Norris Porter (Director of Development, McLean County Museum of History)

Illinois Department of Transportation

Even though IDOT was already well into the preliminary design for the resurfacing of US Route 51, staff still dedicated time to make several visits to Bloomington to entertain discussions with the City. Staff also provided reviews and comments on technical submittals prepared by the Design Team.

- Scott Neihart, PE (District 5 Engineer)
- Jeffrey Allen, PE (District 5 Land Acquisition and Geometrics Engineer)
- Jason Stults, PE (District 5 Studies & Plans Engineer)

Utility Companies

Representatives from utility companies attended meetings with the Design Team and provided the City with critical information about existing conditions, and shared their companies' future construction plans. The Team is appreciative for their cooperation and responsiveness.

- Bernie Anderson (Regional Manager Community Affairs, Nicor Gas)
- Adam Gangloff (Network Engineer, Frontier Communications)
- Dean Thompson (Supervisor of Distribution Design, Ameren)

Connect Transit

The staff at Connect Transit were eager to assist with coordination efforts for the Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program and the future Transit Center. Staff from Connect Transit reviewed compatibility of future routes with the Design Team's street designs, helped provide staffing for the First Community Open House, and answered technical questions related to the Transit Center throughout the design process.

- David Braun (General Manager)
- Jacob Smith (Transportation Planner)
- Aubrey Staton (Marketing Manager)

Advocacy Groups

Advocacy Groups played a critical role in sharing their expertise with the Design Team so that solutions accommodating all users of Downtown might be incorporated into the plan.

- Conan Calhoun (Advocacy & Advancement Director, LIFE CIL)
- Patrick Dullard (Treasurer, Bike BloNo)
- Doug Johnson (Executive Director, McLean County Arts Center)**
- Dan Steadman (Manager, West Bloomington Revitalization Project Bike Co-op)

**Also contributed content for the "Public Art" section in Chapter 6 of the Report

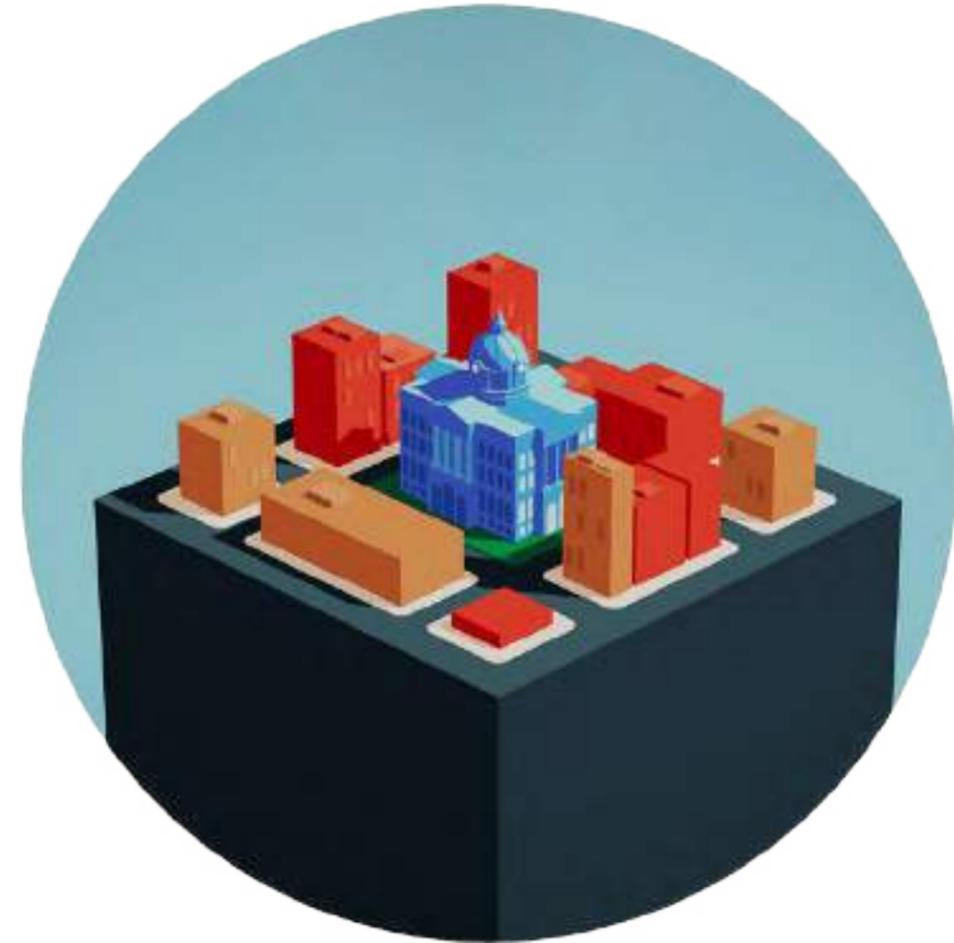
Design Team

This Report makes many references to the "Design Team" which is comprised of a tight-knit partnership of design firms who have worked on many successful projects together and have a strong passion for Community Development.

- Crawford, Murphy, & Tilly, Inc. (Project Lead)
- Massie Massie + Associates
- Hewn Studio, PLLC
- Clear Design Group, LLC

Photography

Select photography by Randall von Liski ([flickr.com/photos/myoldpostcards](https://www.flickr.com/photos/myoldpostcards/)).



Executive Summary

The Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program represents a generational investment in Downtown Bloomington with tremendous potential to transform the way people experience the "heart of the City." From vibrant pedestrian corridors to new public spaces for concerts to new opportunities for outdoor dining, the implementation of this program will provide immediate quality of life improvements to visitors and residents alike. But the streetscaping improvements should also provide the engine for major economic development both Downtown and community wide.

The choice by City leaders to prioritize the Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program is one of the most impactful and forward-thinking in Bloomington's long, proud history.

A streetscaping program the breadth and depth of Bloomington's has many different elements, but all are unified by four key principles:



1 The Streetscape is **DEFINING**

The aesthetic of Downtown's streetscape will provide Bloomington with its own unique identity – quite different from the streetscapes of other Midwest cities – while still honoring and reflecting Downtown's exceptional historic architecture. The Streetscape Style (made up of various colors, materials, and furnishings throughout Downtown Bloomington) will unify all of the improvements by establishing a consistent Sense of Place. This Style, together with the many new amenities, will create a defining Downtown experience.



2 The Streetscape is **INCLUSIVE**

The proposed streetscape design truly will result in a “Downtown for Everyone” because the improvements promote inclusivity for all members of the community: overhauled access throughout Downtown for persons with disabilities, new accommodations for bicyclists, safer connections to the Downtown Core from surrounding neighborhoods, and amenities and attractions designed to provide something for all ages. Something “for everyone”.

3 The Streetscape is **RESPONSIBLE**

The Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program implements a wide variety of socially responsible improvements. This includes sustainable initiatives such as the use of energy efficient lighting and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. It also includes designs that promote public health by making Downtown a more walkable and bikeable environment and by improving air quality by adding many more street trees.

The streetscape design is not limited just to amenities or to aesthetics; the design also integrates major infrastructure improvements such as the replacement of aged utility mains, stormwater detention to reduce flooding throughout the West Side of Bloomington as well as Downtown, improved safety for vehicle traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians, and provisions for separating the combined sewer system that is prevalent Downtown.

Finally, the Streetscape Program was developed using fiscally responsible design choices, including the selection of materials and fixtures that are both durable and easily replaceable, minimizing long-term maintenance costs.



4 The Streetscape is **above all FUN**

The Design Team and City Leaders have unabashedly put forward a plan that provides places for people to come together and have fun! The Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program establishes many new opportunities for memorable experiences – from spectacular video projection shows to food festivals hosted in new plazas to games of giant, musical chess at the Museum Square. The Program also strongly promotes the incorporation of engaging public art Downtown with many placeholders for sculptures and building murals included throughout the design.

The impact of the Streetscape Program implementation should be the transformation of Downtown Bloomington into a vibrant destination – for regional visitors as well as locals, as the buzz about what Downtown has to offer spreads. Similarly, the improvements should greatly increase the potential to attract residents who find Downtown an exciting place to put down roots.



This Report for the Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program provides City decision makers with a clear road map for the complete revitalization of Downtown Bloomington. Its design philosophies and streetscape plans have all been vetted past City Departments, endorsed by the Steering Committee, and, on the whole, received very positively by the general public. It is with great expectation for the future success of Downtown Bloomington that the Design Team and City Core Team present this document as a major step forward in realizing Downtown's full potential. The narrative structure of the Report mirrors the journey that the Design Team and the City Core Team undertook when developing the Streetscape Program.

2

The Design Team and Core Team then participated in many discussions with stakeholders, City Departments, and the broader public – all of which were necessary to ensure informed design decisions. These collaborations are detailed in *Chapter 2*.

4

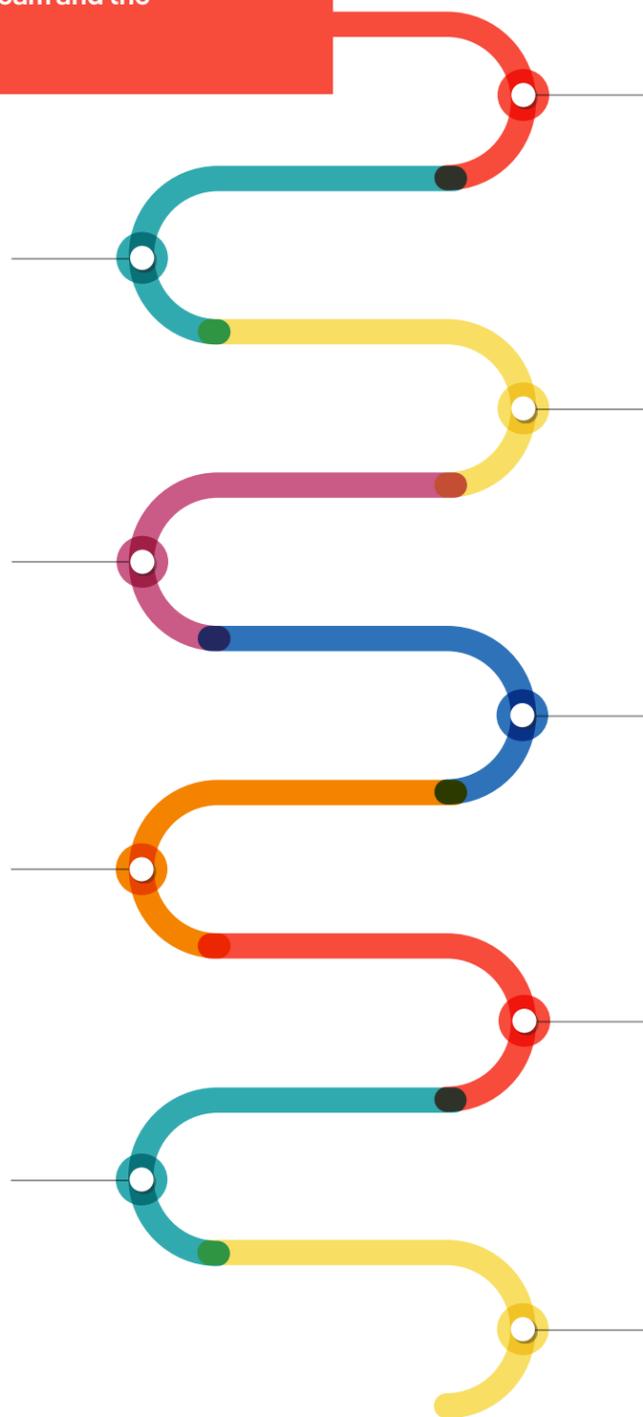
Chapter 4 provides details on the Streetscape Style: the “look and feel” of the Program that is incorporated across all of the improvements in order to provide a consistent visual identity for Downtown Bloomington.

6

The remaining streetscape elements needed for the successful implementation of the Streetscape Plan are described in *Chapter 6*. These include strategies for the effective use of lighting and public art throughout Downtown Bloomington as well as plans for addressing logistical concerns, such as garbage management and ADA access to buildings.

8

Chapter 8 explores the costs associated with each of the projects. Although these costs are significant, the City need not exclusively bear all of these costs. The Streetscaping Program is a great candidate for grants and other funding sources, due to its alignment with Federal and State priorities such as inclusivity, sustainability, and safety. The Chapter includes suggestions on what specific grants should be considered by the City.



Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the specific goals for the Program established by the Core Team at the outset and includes an evaluation of the current state of Downtown Bloomington by the Design Team.

1

Having collected the relevant data and public input, the Team subsequently refined the design approach to be used for the development of the Streetscape Program. *Chapter 3* explores the various aspects of this design approach, including considerations for maintenance, flexibility, accessibility, and sustainability..

3

Chapter 5 presents the final Streetscape design arrived at by the Design Team and approved by the Core Team, organized by Downtown locations. This design includes the activation of dormant public spaces (the Museum Square, for example) into vibrant zones of activity. It also includes details on the redesigned streets within the Downtown Core – made safer and more walkable, and able to accommodate exciting new outdoor attractions. The Chapter also presents an elegant solution for the US Route 51 “barrier” that currently isolates Downtown Bloomington from the surrounding community.

5

Following the completion of the Streetscape Concept, the Design team went on to organize the improvements into logical construction projects and then sequenced those projects based on several considerations. This plan for the phasing of the Program can be found in *Chapter 7*.

7

Finally, *Chapter 9* illustrates exactly what streetscape improvements are proposed where, with detailed drawings for every block in the Downtown Bloomington study area.

9

01

**Introduction
& Existing
Conditions**

01

Introduction & Existing Conditions

INTRODUCTION

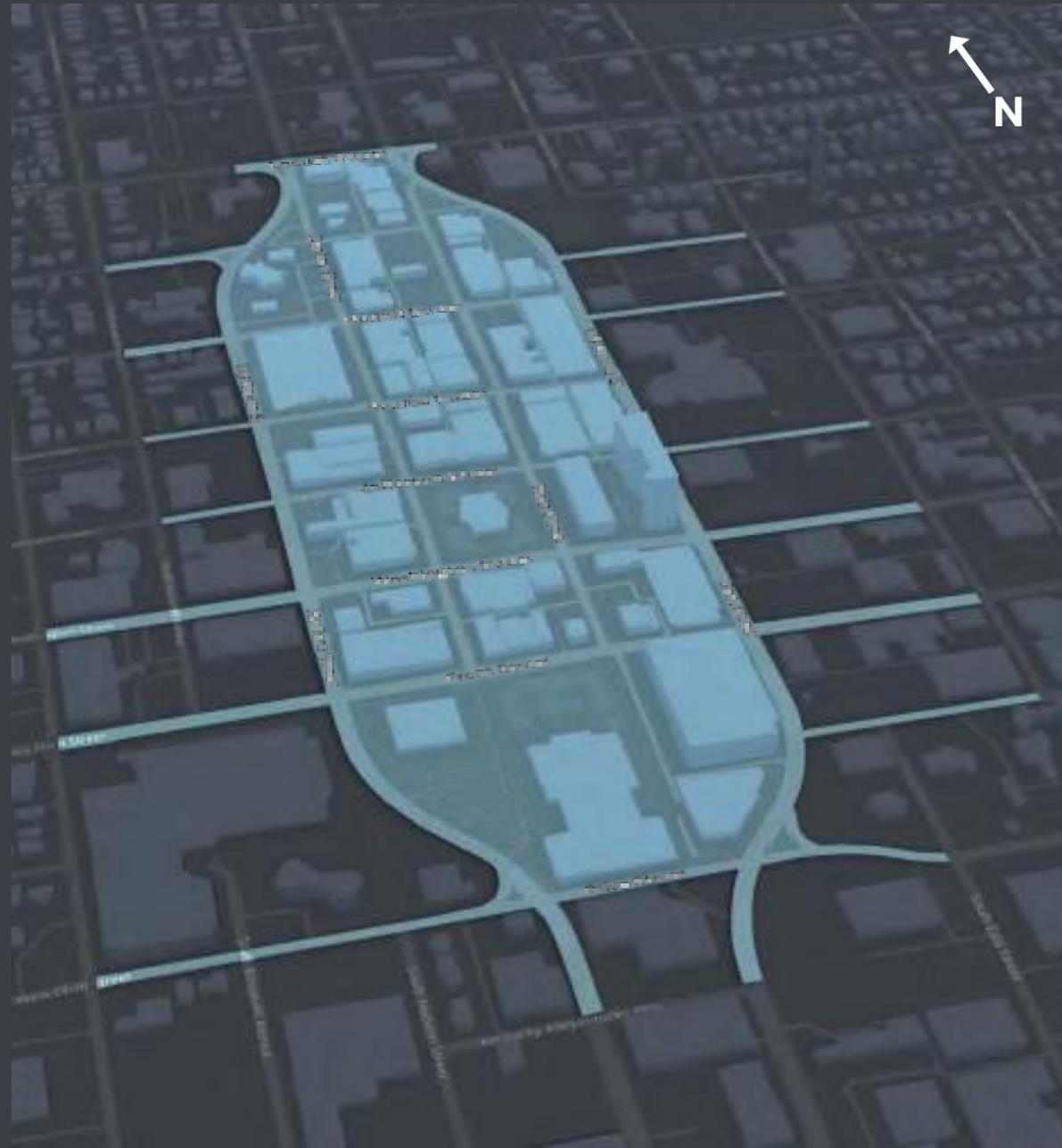
Program Background

In August 2022, the City of Bloomington authorized Crawford, Murphy, & Tilly, Inc. to begin development of a plan for the “Downtown Streetscape Project – Concept Design.” The City’s intent for this high-level plan was to develop a multi-year program that implements recommendations for Downtown Bloomington from the “City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035” as well as from the City’s adopted “Downtown Bloomington Task Force Report” and “Downtown Bloomington Strategy” planning documents.

Because the previously adopted planning documents had already established the vision and the big-picture strategies for Downtown Bloomington, the purpose of this Concept Design was not so much to answer the question “Should we invest in developing Downtown Bloomington” as to answer the question “What exactly should that investment look like.”

The mandate from City Staff to the Design Team was that this program should not merely result in a “fresh coat of paint” for Downtown. The Team was therefore encouraged to consider streetscaping improvements that accomplish more than simply improving the aesthetic – they instead evaluated improvements that might transform Downtown Bloomington into a regional destination. When considering potential solutions for Downtown, the Design Team often asked the question, “Will these improvements merely make things more enjoyable for people who already visit Downtown, or will these improvements move the needle enough to attract new visitors to Downtown?”

It should be noted that the scope of this study is limited to public streets and open public spaces. With very few exceptions, the study does not include Downtown buildings (for example, suggestions for façade improvements) or land uses (such as rezoning or business mix recommendations).



Project Limits

The City determined that the study limits for this plan should encompass the Downtown “Core” (bounded to the north by Locust Street, to the south by Olive Street, and by US Route 51 to the east and west) as well as approximately one block east and west of the Core.

What is a Streetscape?

Perhaps not all readers of this Report are familiar with what is meant by the term “streetscape”. A streetscape is the collective appearance of all buildings, footpaths, landscaping, and amenities along a street. A streetscape provides the visual identity of a neighborhood.

Some of the more traditional elements of a streetscape are shown in the below graphic. All of these elements are incorporated into the new design, but the planning efforts of the Design Team also extended beyond just decorative improvements. The Team investigated significant changes to Bloomington’s transportation infrastructure (traffic lane reductions, e.g.) in order to promote a more “walkable” Downtown. They also reviewed opportunities for activating under-utilized open spaces in order to create new Points of Interest that might attract more foot-traffic. City staff were encouraging of these efforts and reminded the Design Team that “everything is on the table”.



EATING
COFFEE
BIKING
HISTORY
THRIFTING
PAINTING
DRINKS
TATTOOS
MUSIC
BOUTIQUES
SHOPPING
BOOKS
ART
GAMING
PRODUCE
CONCERTS
FLOWERS
YOU, ME
EVERYONE

What is the Purpose of this Program?

A forward-looking, intentional plan to improve Downtown Bloomington provides many benefits to the broader community. The primary benefits of the streetscape improvements proposed by this Plan concern economic development and quality of life gains:

Economic Development

There is strong potential for a good Return on Investment (ROI) due to additional economic activity generated from both the private and public sector. Well-designed, well-maintained, and well-programmed downtowns can see increased foot-traffic, leading to increased business investment and consumer spending. Moreover, strong downtowns can improve their community's desirability, leading to bolstered real estate property values across the board as well as increased population – resulting in greater tax income for the City which can then be re-invested elsewhere.

Quality of Life

By investing in Downtown improvements, the City can improve the quality of life for future generations and can enhance community pride. Building pride in a community is a virtuous circle: when people feel that their environment is appealing and well cared for, they are more likely to take pride in their community and to work together to maintain it.

Program Goals

The specific goals for the City of Bloomington's streetscape program are enumerated below. These goals were informed by the aforementioned City-adopted planning documents as well as feedback from City staff and community stakeholders.

Improve walkability and accessibility.



Create/enhance/activate public spaces.



Facilitate greater use of public Right of Way by Downtown businesses.



Enhance the streetscape aesthetic.



Bridge the Downtown Core to the surrounding neighborhoods.



Integrate McLean County history into the Downtown experience.



Integrate public art into Downtown improvements.



Integrate sustainability where appropriate.





Photo by: Randall von Liski

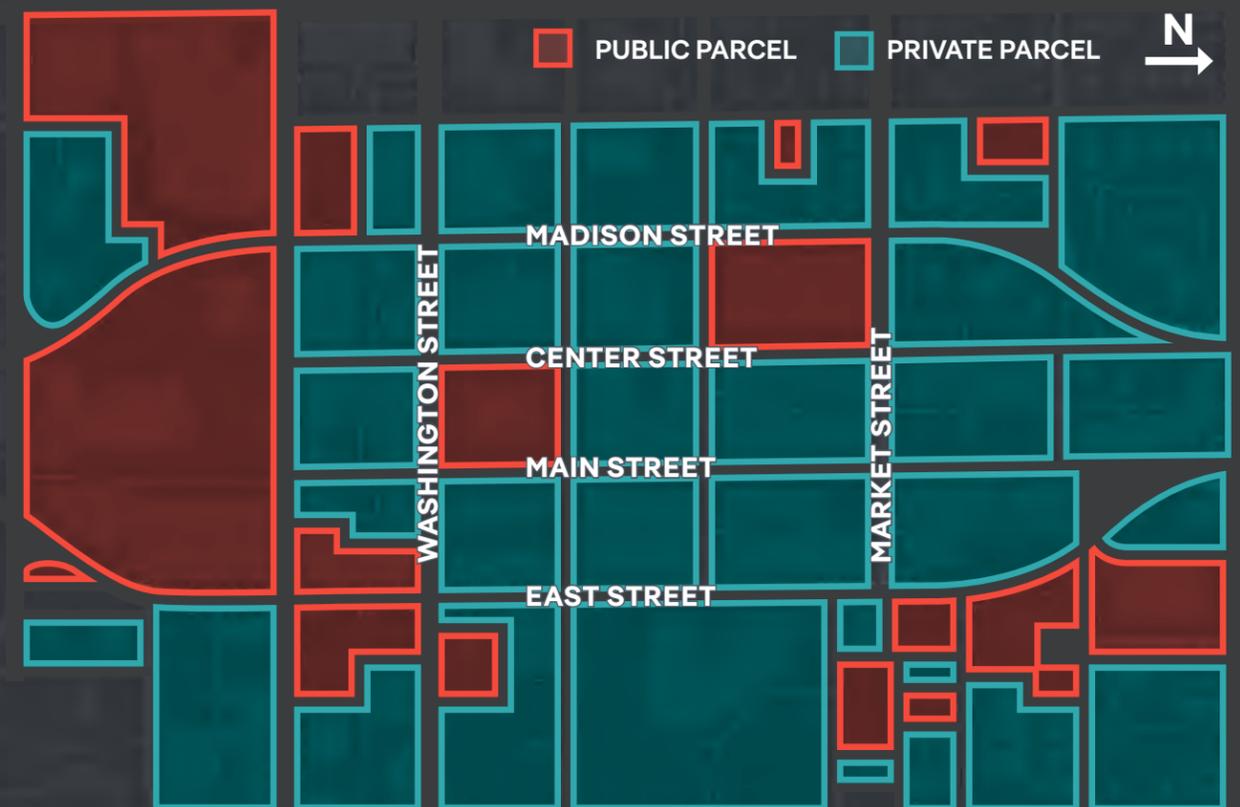
EXISTING DOWNTOWN ENVIRONMENT

Overview

In many ways, Downtown Bloomington does not need “rescued.” Downtown has popular dining and entertainment options, hosts an arts community, and does not have excessive building vacancies. Also, Bloomington benefits from the charm of its predominance of well-preserved historic architecture.

However, the public infrastructure of Downtown Bloomington shows many signs of neglect: pavements in poor condition, cramped sidewalks, confusing parking options, and generally lacking streetscape qualities consistent with more vibrant downtowns. Moreover, Downtown is heavily vehicle-centric: the space between buildings is dominated by driving lanes and parking spaces with minimal room allocated for pedestrians and bicyclists.

It is precisely this combination of existing assets and opportunities for improvement that positions Downtown Bloomington as an excellent candidate for investment in streetscaping. The ceiling is very high for what Downtown could be elevated to with thoughtful implementation of the program goals (see previous “Program Goals” section).



Composition of Downtown Ownership

The Downtown Bloomington study area is comprised of roughly one-third public ownership and two-thirds private ownership. This distribution provides a stable base for Downtown (public-sector institutions are generally more “recession-proof” than private-sector), while still allowing plenty of opportunity for economic development (which is more pronounced in the private-sector).

As can be seen in the above figure, most of the publicly owned property is concentrated in the south end of Downtown – creating a government district of sorts within Downtown Bloomington.

Within the privately owned property, venues for entertainment, restaurants, and housing are distributed widely across the study area. Retail is more concentrated within the 300 through 600 blocks of Main Street, and bars are mostly located within the 500 block of Main. The wide distribution of entertainment venues, restaurants, and housing suggest that streetscaping improvements are likely to be effective at promoting economic growth throughout Downtown and not just along certain blocks of Main Street.

Roadway Network & Traffic

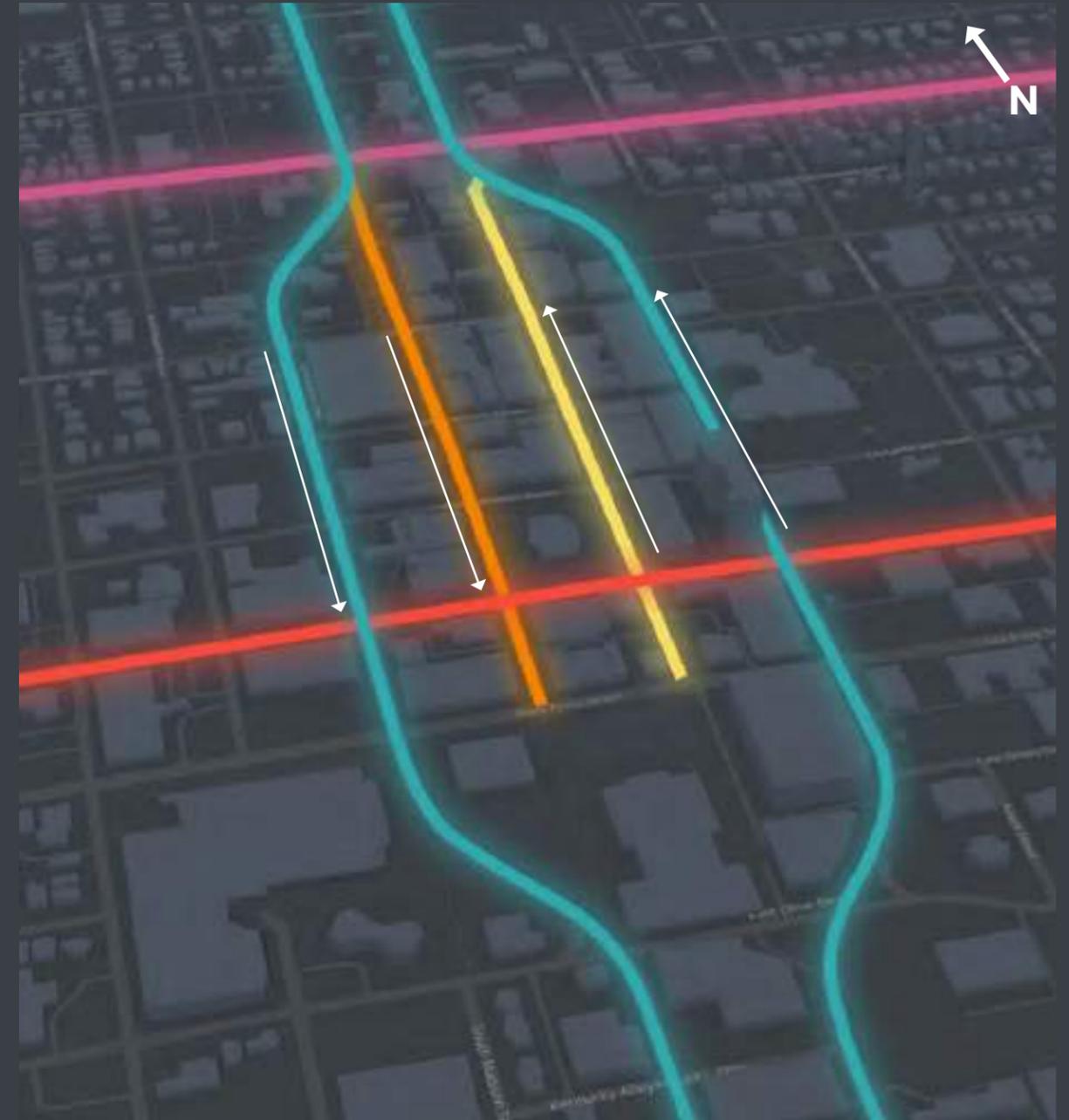
The most dominant feature of the Downtown Bloomington's transportation network is US Route 51 (named East Street on the east side of Downtown and Madison Street on the west). Although this four-lane highway functions well in conveying vehicles past Downtown, it effectively severs the Downtown Core from surrounding neighborhoods as well as from assets outside of the "beltloop" such as the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts, Castle Theatre, and Grossinger Motors Arena. There are both real and perceived dangers associated with crossing this highway, resulting in a barrier to accessibility. Furthermore, as a consequence of this highway being constructed through Downtown, most of the businesses have turned their store fronts away from the highway. And with very few trees or greenery along the corridor, US Route 51 now appears as a "concrete jungle" – lacking the attraction and sense of arrival that would be helpful to Downtown's success.



Looking north down East Street: A view of the US Route 51 "concrete jungle."

Beyond **US Route 51**, Downtown is defined by two one-way streets (**Main Street** heading northbound and **Center Street** heading southbound) as well as the east-west **Washington Street**. The latter serves as an arterial roadway and emergency vehicle route.

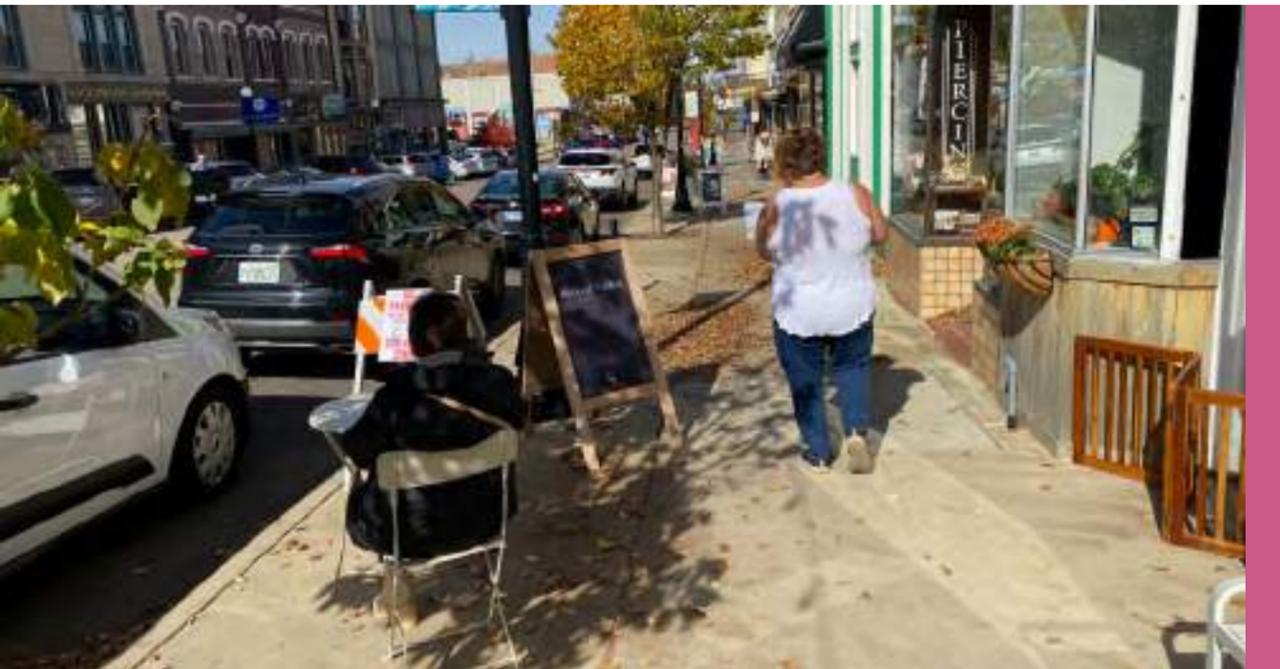
Finally, the north end of Downtown is bounded by **Illinois State Route 9** (currently a three-lane, east-bound highway).



Walkability

A “walkable” downtown is one which is easily traversable, aesthetically enticing, and safe for pedestrians. As mentioned previously in this Report, the layout of Downtown Bloomington is heavily prioritized for vehicular traffic currently and lacks sufficient space to accommodate those on foot. Crowded sidewalks like the one shown below are not uncommon. Also, much of Downtown is dark and poorly lit in the evening, resulting in less safety (or perceived safety in some instances) for those on foot.

The consequences of a downtown that is not walkable usually include the following: less foot-traffic, less business patronage, shorter business hours, less appeal to potential residents, and an overall lack of urban energy.



A view of a cramped pedestrian corridor Downtown.

Bikeability

Similarly, a “bikeable” downtown is one which is easily traversable, aesthetically enticing, and safe for bicyclists. Only one block of the entire Downtown study area has accommodations for bicyclists (Front Street east of East Street). This location does provide a bicycle lane, but it is located immediately adjacent to parallel parking spaces. This can result in a less safe scenario when parked drivers open their doors into oncoming bike traffic.

Certainly, Downtown Bloomington could benefit from better bicycle facilities. A more bikeable Downtown could lead to improved traffic safety, improved public health, and a more inviting environment to attract visitors to local businesses.

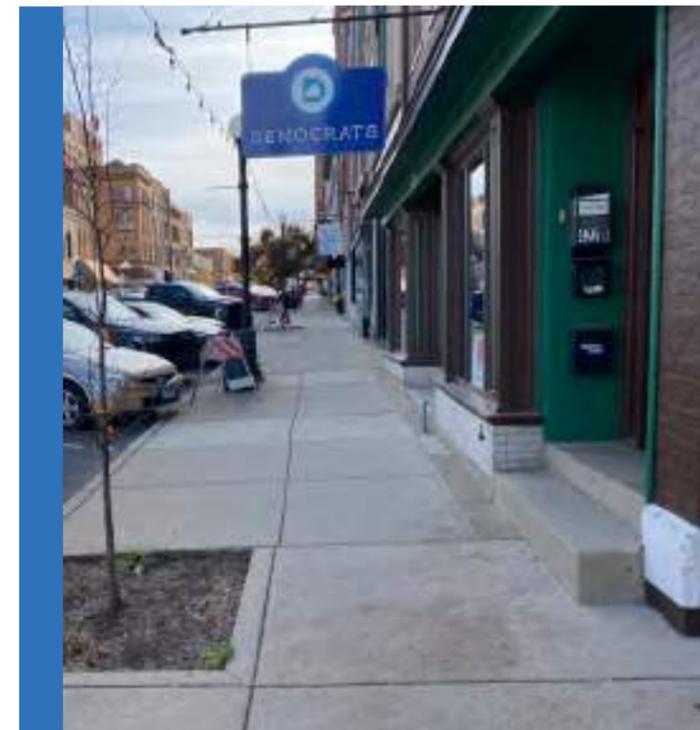


A bicycle lane on Front Street, adjacent to parking.

ADA Accessibility

Much of Downtown Bloomington is not ADA compliant. That is, it does not conform with Title II of the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design. Building entrances similar to that shown in the image to the right are not uncommon. Steep running slopes, inadequate handrails, settled sidewalk slabs with large lips: these ADA deficiencies are regrettably commonplace Downtown.

The consequence of an environment that is not ADA-friendly is that certain people are completely excluded from visiting Downtown.



A row of inaccessible building entrances.

02

**Stakeholder
Involvement
Process**

02

Stakeholder Involvement Process

Considering the incredible scale of a streetscaping program that encompasses the entire Downtown, a wide range of users are certain to be impacted. These stakeholders include property owners, business owners, residents, and visitors – all of whom collectively offer valuable insight into what might make the streetscape successful. It was therefore determined early on that the Design Team would be best served not by working in a vacuum, but by collaborating with these stakeholders throughout the life of the design.





KEY STAKEHOLDERS

City Core Team

The “Core Team” was composed of key individuals from various City departments (Billy Tyus and Katherine Murphy from City Administration, Philip Allyn and Craig Shonkwiler from City Engineering, and Kelly Pfeifer and Kimberly Smith from City Economic and Community Development) who met frequently with key members of the Design Team. The Core Team was instrumental in vetting various design ideas and providing helpful guidance to the Design Team at decision points.

As warranted, additional members of the Design Team were invited to join the Core Team meetings to discuss specific topics. Examples of this included inviting the Team’s Government Affairs Lead to discuss state and federal grant opportunities, and inviting the Team’s in-house advisor on IDOT (the former Director of Planning and Programming) to discuss IDOT policies and procedures. See Volume 3 for all Core Team Meeting Minutes.

Steering Committee

The Downtown Bloomington Streetscape Steering Committee was an advisory group comprised of members that represented a cross-section of Downtown’s business owners, residents, and community leaders. The group also included representatives from Connect Transit, McLean

County, the Chamber of Commerce’s CEO Council, and the McLean County Arts Center. The Downtown Bloomington Streetscape Steering Committee understood the “pulse of Downtown” and were therefore able to provide the Design Team with highly relevant feedback related to design choices.

The Steering Committee met five times during the design and discussed such topics as parking, outdoor dining, garbage management, and the design aesthetic. See Volume 3 for all Steering Committee Meeting Minutes.

McLean County

The Museum Square, located at the center of Downtown, is one of the few areas of open space in Downtown Bloomington. For this reason, and because the former courthouse building is an iconic fixture in Downtown, the Design Team developed various concepts for the Square intended to activate this space and attract large groups of visitors. But because the Square is owned by McLean County and not the City of Bloomington, it was necessary to coordinate directly with the County on any proposed improvements.

The old courthouse building is currently occupied by the McLean County Museum of History. Because the Museum operates as an independent body from the County, the Design Team met multiple times with Museum staff in order to better understand operational logistics and to ensure that any proposed concepts were compatible with the Museum’s vision for that space.

Additionally, the Design Team met with staff from the McLean County’s Administration Department as well as with the McLean County’s Property Committee. See Volume 3 for meeting minutes from the Property Committee.

At each of these meetings, personnel from the McLean County Museum of History, the McLean County’s Administration Department, and the McLean County’s Property Committee all asked thoughtful questions regarding the logistics of the concepts introduced – particularly with regards to how responsibilities for maintenance and operation of the improvements would be shared between the City and the County. But in the end, it was the impression of the Design Team that all three groups were enthusiastic about the design concepts and eager to work with the City to see these implemented. Refer to Chapter 5 to see the specific improvements proposed.





DOWNTOWN BLOOMINGTON

PUBLIC OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

It was deemed important to engage the broader public at various times throughout the design process in order to accomplish the following:



Provide Updates

These updates included general information for the public, drawings showing design progress, and overall schedule updates.



Solicit Feedback

In addition to general program feedback, the Core Team sought feedback on critical design choices and therefore posed specific questions to the public. For example, the City wished to better understand whether the public valued a walkable Downtown more than a vehicle-centric Downtown.



Create Excitement

The Design Team and Core Team sought to generate excitement and momentum for the streetscaping campaign for two reasons: (1) the streetscaping program was recognized to be a generational project worth celebrating, and (2) the more engaged the public was, the more likely they would be to provide helpful feedback.

Campaign Branding

Understanding that the public is made up of many individuals, all of whom have values different from each other, the Design Team sought to connect with as broad an audience as possible by appealing to both the head (“What is the purpose of this project?” “What is our Return on Investment?”) and the heart (“How will my Downtown experience change?” “What makes these improvements meaningful?”). Both objectives were accomplished by developing the “Downtown for Everyone” campaign brand.



The premise of the brand is that Downtown Bloomington is diverse in its offerings, experiences, and its peoples; that there is something for everyone Downtown. The “Downtown for Everyone” brand is in keeping with the City’s previous efforts to foster diversity and inclusion. But it is also reflective of the future made possible by the streetscaping program: that is, a Downtown with better connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods, greater accessibility for all peoples, activated public spaces that serve to connect people from different walks of life. In short, a true Downtown for Everyone experience might be realized by taking what already makes Downtown Bloomington great and enhancing through a comprehensive streetscaping program.

Project Website

The two primary vehicles for the public outreach campaign were public meetings and a project website. For the latter, the domain “DowntownforEveryone.com” was secured by the Design Team. Content on the project website included the design vision, details for each of the concepts proposed by the Design Team, an estimated program timeline, and upcoming events. For those interested, the website also included a number of “deep dives” on complex issues such as anticipated economic outcomes and walking “Level of Service” conditions.

The project website was intended not just to inform but also to inspire interest. The website therefore included a gallery of renderings that were given subtle animations while playing ambient sound, so that visitors could better understand the concepts. Additionally, the Design Team developed a short movie that could be shared outside of the website on social media platforms. This movie sought to generate engagement in the program and encouraged the audience to visit the website to share their feedback and ideas.



Website users as well as visitors at various events were all encouraged to sign up to be notified of any updates to the website. These updates included various evolutions of the design, as well as “stories” deemed of interest to those keeping up with the project.

Community Open Houses

In order to capture as much feedback as possible, the Design Team also provided two in-person Community Open Houses, one on October 11th, 2023 and a second on February 13th, 2024. The Team provided experiences at the Open Houses that were not possible on the website. For example, at the first Open House, a physical mock-up of three different street sections was set up, and visitors were encouraged to walk through each space to better understand the trade-offs between pedestrian space and parking for each alternative. At the second open house, a virtual reality experience was provided that allowed users to experience the scale of proposed attractions first-hand.

In addition to these special exhibits, the Open Houses included various “stations” manned by a member of the Design Team or City Core Team for the purpose of discussing a specific topic with the community. This “come and go as you please” open house format provided excellent opportunities for direct interaction with the public.

Public Input

Both at the community open houses and on the project website the public were invited to provide general feedback, but they were also asked to weigh in on specific design choices. These choices were focused on both aesthetic and functional components of the Downtown Streetscape. The results of these surveys can be found in Volume 3. It should be noted that once the votes were compiled, there was a clear consensus with the public’s preference for each of the design choices. The City decided to move forward with the same choices, not only to align the project with popular opinion but because these choices also aligned with the Design Team’s prior recommendations.



UTILITY COMPANIES

The Design Team understood that to the extent possible any utilities that need replacing should be identified before the streetscaping is installed, not after. (Utility projects that follow streetscaping projects have the potential to “scar” recently installed beautification improvements – due to utility trench patching in pavements, for example.) To that end, the Design Team held a series of meetings with local utility companies as well as with City staff to collect data and coordinate future construction projects. Detailed meeting minutes for each of these meetings can be found in Volume 3. Noteworthy discoveries are listed below.

Ameren Illinois

- Ameren stated that there is plenty of electrical capacity in Downtown to accommodate further development.
- However, Ameren is not well-equipped to facilitate solar installations Downtown, because most customer services are linked to a network with protectors that prevent reverse flow.
- Depending on the exact location of any future Level 3 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS), a higher voltage service may need to be extended – the cost of which is not covered by the City’s franchise agreement with Ameren. Lower level EVCS may be installed throughout Downtown on the more predominant lower voltage service.

Nicor Gas

- Nicor stated that there is plenty of natural gas capacity in Downtown to accommodate further development.
- Most of Nicor’s mains in Downtown have been replaced recently. Those that remain are anticipated to last “indefinitely”, Nicor stated.

Frontier Communications

- Frontier’s plans to provide Fiber to the Home (FTTH) throughout Bloomington include multi-family residential in Downtown. However, that schedule is currently on hold.
- Frontier stated that most adjustments to Frontier infrastructure due to City construction projects are relatively cheap and easy to implement.

City Utilities

- The Design Team collected information from the City Engineering and Public Works Departments related to “critical” water and sewer lines. In this instance, “critical” was defined as utility lines that City staff deem need to be replaced in twenty years or less.
- Any identified “critical” water and sewer lines that underly a future streetscaping project will be replaced as part of that project, if not before as part of a separate City utility project.

ADVOCACY GROUPS

It is important to both the Design Team and the City that the Downtown improvements be accessible to all people. The Design Team therefore met with advocacy groups that might provide additional insight into unmet needs.

LIFE Center for Independent Living

Downtown Bloomington is currently viewed as unfriendly to many persons with disabilities, according to a representative from the LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL), due to the wide-ranging accessibility deficiencies. Discussions with the Design Team, then, revolved around viewing the Downtown Streetscape program as an opportunity to bring all of Downtown Bloomington into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

It is the intent of both the City and the Design Team that all streetscape projects constructed will indeed conform to the “2018 ADA Standards for Accessible Design,” as well as the “Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)”. However, it was noted by LIFE CIL that the barriers to accessibility extend beyond the planned exterior improvements and into the buildings themselves. While interior building improvements are not part of the Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program’s scope, City leaders expressed a commitment to working with business owners and the disabled community to work towards solutions to these barriers through other initiatives. See Volume 3 for meeting minutes.



Bicycle Groups and Constitution Trail

The Design Team also met with representatives of Bike BloNo, Friends of the Constitution Trail, West Bloomington Revitalization Project Bike Co-op, and McLean County Wheelers. The Team presented concepts for bringing bicycle traffic more safely into the Downtown Core and for providing new bike amenities for users, all of which were generally well received by the groups.

Significantly, the Design Team proposed a different bike route than that shown on the City’s approved “2017 Bicycle Master Plan”. The latter proposes shared lane markings on US Route 51. However, the Design Team views bike lanes alongside the highway vehicular lanes, without a physical barrier, as potentially less safe or, at the least, as uncomfortable for casual bicyclists. The Team instead suggested that a preferable route would be to direct cyclists to bicycle lanes that could be established inside the Downtown Core. (See “Bike Route/Constitution Trail” section in Chapter 6.) All organizations provided the City with letters of support for this change, emphasizing that this new route has several benefits over the original proposal including (1) improved safety and (2) access to bike amenities and points of interest in Downtown for bicyclists. See Volume 3 for these letters of support.



Crosswalks on US Route 51 exceed forty feet long in Downtown Bloomington.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

One of the major goals of the Streetscape Plan is to improve connectivity of Downtown Bloomington to the surrounding neighborhoods. As referenced in Chapter 1, the greatest barrier to that connectivity is US Route 51. The Design Team met with Engineers from District 5 of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to discuss potential solutions. IDOT explained that they are actively working with a consultant to progress design plans for converting one of the four existing traffic lanes into an on-street buffered bicycle lane (in accordance with the aforementioned “2017 Bicycle Master Plan”). While this vehicular lane reduction may help some pedestrians and bicyclist feel less intimidated to cross the highway, the Design Team and City Core Team were somewhat skeptical that this measure would go far enough to meaningfully remove the connectivity barrier – especially since this plan did nothing to reduce the actual crossing distance at intersections.



The Design Team instead recommended reducing the four vehicular lanes down to two vehicular lanes as well as redirecting the bike route off US Route 51 into the Downtown Core onto parallel bicycle accommodations along Main Street and Center Street. (See “US Route 51” section in Chapter 5 and “Bike Route/Constitution Trail” section in Chapter 6). This two-lane reduction would dramatically decrease the crossing distance at intersections and would also provide significant opportunities for trees and other landscaping that might soften the highway corridor.

Anecdotally, it appeared this solution should work. US Route 51 is already narrowed to two lanes to enter Downtown on Main Street, and Center Street is two lanes both north and south of Downtown. Neither have any apparent bottlenecks. However, the Design Team sought to evaluate the proposed scenario using a

generally accepted engineering process: first, to collect traffic counts by using cameras mounted at the intersections shown in the image below; second, to use those traffic counts to model the existing roadway network using traffic modeling software; and third, to simulate various roadway alternatives using the same traffic modeling software in order to understand the probable effects. (See Volume 3 for traffic modeling results.)

The Design Team worked closely with IDOT Engineers to ensure that the modeling parameters chosen were deemed appropriate. In the end, the Design Team verified that a two-lane highway section with turn lanes at critical intersections should function adequately. However, IDOT District 5 is currently resolved to not move forward with any plans that involve reducing the vehicular lanes down to two. City leadership has debated next steps, but they will likely defer future action until some of the Downtown Core streetscaping projects have first been completed. For the purpose of this report, proposed drawings illustrate a two-lane section – reflecting the confidence of the Design Team and City Core Team in this solution.



Locations of intersections where traffic counts were gathered.

03

**Design
Approach**

03

Design Approach

The following chapter is intended to provide insight into the Design Team's thought process as well as the motivations of the City Core Team in approving design choices.

“MOVE THE NEEDLE”

As mentioned earlier in this Report, a guiding principle of the Downtown Streetscape Concept is that the improvements need to make a substantial impact – one that results in tangible benefits for Downtown Bloomington and that positions it well for the future. To truly “move the needle” for Downtown, the Design Team centered the entire streetscape design around two key features : (1) making Downtown “walkable” and (2) activating dormant public open spaces.



Walkability

Establishing a more “walkable” Downtown means promoting a more pedestrian-centric environment, rather than the vehicular-centric environment that currently exists. Walkable downtowns typically result in enhanced enjoyment and more safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, with wider walking paths established as well as additional space for amenities like outdoor dining and sidewalk sales.

Developing a more “walkable” Downtown requires exploration of streetscaping treatments that are more substantial than simple aesthetic improvements. The City’s encouragement to the Design Team was that “everything is on the table”. Consequently, substantial treatments were indeed developed. This included traffic lane reductions as well as reconfiguring Right-of-Ways such that pedestrian space was prioritized over vehicular space.

See Chapter 5: “Streetscape Improvements” to see specific ways in which walkability was emphasized in the design.

Activating Public Spaces

The single greatest opportunity for social connectedness, community pride, and shared experiences in Bloomington lies in active, public open spaces. Well-programmed events and activities in these locations can result in the greatest injection of “life” into a city, making them more desirable for residents and business owners. Moreover, visitors’ impressions of cities are often tied directly to the quality of public spaces, making investments in these spaces crucial to realizing tourism potential.

One of Downtown Bloomington’s more glaring deficiencies is the lack of consistently active public spaces, and so the Design Team uncovered opportunities for repurposing existing open areas of Downtown for events and activities that would draw in additional visitors. In order to maximize the attraction of these spaces, the Team considered the wide range of interests that are associated with different demographics.

See Chapter 5: “Streetscape Improvements” to see how active public spaces were incorporated into the design.



FLEXIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

To the extent possible, the Design Team sought to envision corridors and spaces that could accommodate a diversity of uses, such as the ability to convert the street for the occasional use of parades, festivals, or bicycle races. This important priority affected the approach of curb “bump outs” on intersections, a typical feature of streetscapes that is used to calm traffic and shorten pedestrian crossings for more safety. These bump outs might normally be extended further into the intersection in order to divert oncoming traffic away from parked cars. However, to provide greater flexibility, the Design Team instead chose to use planters for this purpose – planters that might easily be removed to provide additional street width for events.



Flexible design is also accomplished along streets by using a curbless-street section where possible. And in public spaces, design that minimizes the amount of “clutter” placed in open areas can serve to preserve the flexibility of the space. There are many other instances of flexible design implemented by the Design Team that can be found in Chapters 5 and 6 of this Report.

MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Just as it was important for the Design Team to make “timeless” style choices that would not soon become out of fashion, it was perhaps just as important that the Team selected materials that would not show signs of wear prematurely. This required making selections that were both durable and easily replaceable. For example, the Design Team elected to use clay pavers of a standard 4-inch by 8-inch size. Clay pavers are very durable (with a compressive strength several times higher than conventional concrete pavement) and frost resistant, and they are able to hold the color throughout their life (compared to similar concrete products where the pigments start to fade after a few years). And because the Team selected pavers of a standardized size, the likelihood that similar pavers will be available in the future is much higher, should replacement be necessary.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Accessibility is a driving force in the design approach. The Downtown for Everyone Program is focused on improving the access between the Downtown Core and the surrounding neighborhoods as well as improving general accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities in the public spaces.

The Program also includes improving the accessibility between the public sidewalk and entry doors to existing buildings. However, even when exterior pathways are made accessible, there are still buildings throughout Downtown that are not accessible inside the doorway. Because of the City’s vision for seamless and safe movement throughout the entire Downtown area, the City is committed to assisting with funding ADA improvements within private property.



SUSTAINABILITY/PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the concept development process, the Design Team was always on the lookout for opportunities to integrate sustainable practices into the streetscape as well as opportunities for promoting public health. The Design Team and the City Core Team enthusiastically include the following features in the program:



Improved Walkability/ Bikeability

The more pedestrian and bike-friendly Downtown becomes, the less vehicles there will be on the streets – resulting in less vehicle pollutants and air pollution. Community health is further improved as visitors become more physically active.



Storm Water Detention

By using permeable pavers throughout most streets and by installing underground detention facilities in select areas, such as beneath the North Main Plaza (see below “Downtown Areas of Focus” section), storage for storm water will be created and the release rate of storm water downstream can then be decreased. This will result in reduced soil erosion and less instances of combined sewer overflows.



Increased Greenery

The streetscape design includes significantly more tree canopies, shrubs, and other plantings than currently exists. This will improve stormwater quality, reduce urban heat islands (when the City becomes much warmer than surrounding rural areas), and improve air quality.

Implementing EV Charging Stations

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) promote the use of electric vehicles, which produce far less tailpipe emissions than gas powered vehicles, reducing air pollution. The streetscape design will include installation of EVCS at strategic locations throughout Downtown.



Energy Efficient Lighting

All new light fixtures proposed for the streetscape will include LED light sources that are more energy efficient than traditional light fixtures. This can be accomplished while still improving the overall Downtown lighting level.



Reduced Light Pollution

All new light fixtures will include better light cut-offs, resulting in less light pollution. Light pollution disrupts the natural patterns of wildlife, and the increased energy spent uplighting contributes to the increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Sustainable Materials

Wherever possible, the Downtown for Everyone Program will incorporate sustainable building materials that are either recyclable or renewable. The clay pavers used extensively throughout the Downtown improvements are an example of this - a long lasting product that is created from renewable raw material.



04

**Streetscaping
Style**



04

Streetscaping Style

The style of the Downtown streetscape is comprised of a number of elements: the colors and materials used, the aesthetic of furnishings such as benches and light fixtures, and especially the surrounding architecture. Regarding the latter, Downtown Bloomington is very fortunate when compared to many downtowns in that much of the historic architecture has been preserved. One of the charges to the Design Team, then, was that the streetscape aesthetic should be respectful to and compatible with that historic architecture.

There are many different styles that could potentially be incorporated in the Downtown streetscape. The Design Team distilled these down to three broad categories for consideration by the City: “Classic/Traditional”, “Modern/Contemporary”, and “Hybrid Blend”.



Classic/Traditional

Examples of these three Downtown style options were presented to the Steering Committee, to the general public, and to the City with the following prompt: "How do each of these styles make you feel? And what sense of place do you believe is most appropriate for our Downtown?" Responses differed, of course, but there seemed to be a few common threads with public opinion:

Traditional

The Traditional aesthetic utilizes styles and materials similar to those of the surrounding buildings constructed in the 1800s, often ornately decorated but rather limited in color variation. Many respondents suggested that the Traditional style treatment creates an environment that may not be attractive to younger demographics. Moreover, the Traditional style appears too similar to streetscapes found in many other Central Illinois towns.

Modern

The modern style is an aesthetic defined by simple lines, sleek materials, and minimalistic details, often combined with bold colors. Many of the public comments reflected a concern that the Modern style treatment might result in a jarring contrast with Downtown's historic architecture. Also, of the three style options, the Modern style is the most likely to become outdated in the near future.

Hybrid

The Hybrid aesthetic carefully mixes styles and materials from the Traditional and Modern styles in order to honor the historic character of Downtown while introducing a new vibrance. Comments from respondents suggested that the Hybrid style may be the "Goldilocks" just-right-treatment that provides a bold look for Downtown while still being compatible with the surrounding buildings. The Hybrid style presents an opportunity to provide Downtown Bloomington with its own unique identity.

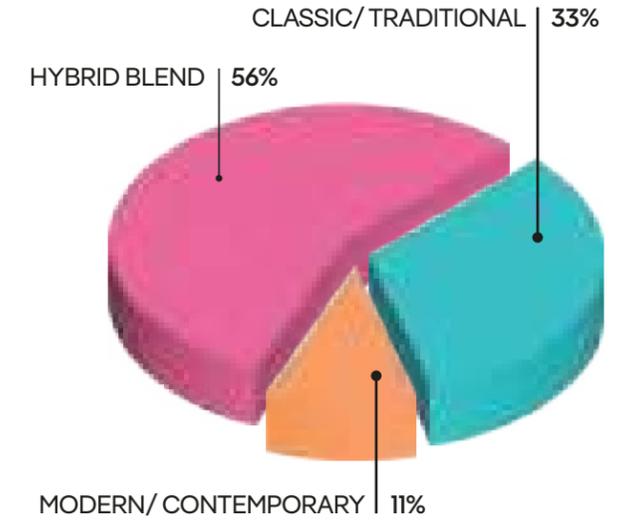


Modern/Contemporary



Hybrid Blend

City leaders directed the Design Team to incorporate the Hybrid style into the streetscaping design. However, even within the Hybrid style there is a wide spectrum of potential aesthetics. The Design Team therefore worked closely with both the City Core Team and the Steering Committee to narrow down the style options, ultimately selecting the Streetscape Style that is shown throughout the remainder of this report. The features that were chosen to define the style are explored on the following pages.



Results of the public survey on street style.





**HYBRID STREETSCAPING
STYLE FEATURES**

- 1 Bold Street Graphics**
- 2 Distinct Color Palette**
- 3 Blended Lighting**
- 4 Repetitive Use of Architectural Shapes**
- 5 Concrete Scoring**
- 6 Zero-Height Curb**

1 Bold Street Graphics

The Design Team adopted a template for street graphics that focuses on dominant geometric shapes. Pavement markings such as parking stripes and lane markings are much wider than typical. The “one-way” pavement marking is a chevron arrow, reinforcing the City of Bloomington’s city logo. Similar chevron geometry is incorporated into the pavement markings for turn lanes and for the “flex lane” (see “Flex Lane” section in Chapter 5 for more information).

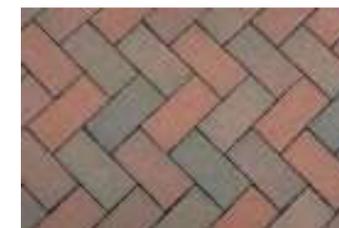


2 Distinct Color Palette

The City Core Team encouraged the Design Team to consider the use of colors that differ from the red bricks that are commonplace with regional streetscaping. The Design Team explored various options, prioritizing color choices that were likely to be considered “timeless” and paying close attention to the spectrum of colors across the existing Downtown building facades. The result was the selection of a distinct color palette that satisfies these considerations and fits within the Hybrid style.

Besides the standard gray concrete adjacent to buildings and the standard black asphalt provided for vehicular and flex lanes, the following colors will be integrated into the streetscape:

- Amenity Strip – An “amenity strip” is located alongside the gray sidewalk which designates space for things like sidewalk sales or outdoor dining. Colors for this space include a rich blend of reds, tans, and grayish blues which reflect the similar coloring of Downtown’s buildings.
- Border – A sixteen-inch wide border in a bold charcoal color provides a clear boundary between the Amenity Strip and the Parking Area.
- Parking Area – Light-gray, a color not often found in streetscapes, is used to compose the Parking Area.



Amenity Strip



Border



Parking Area

3 Blended Lighting

Globe-style light fixtures have been prevalent in Downtown Bloomington since the early 1900s. These light fixtures project light in all directions, resulting in an inefficient light distribution that contributes significantly to Downtown's light pollution. Stylistically, the globe fixtures trend heavily towards the "Traditional" style. So, the Design Team elected to incorporate a fixture that mimics the globe style, but with a more modern take. These fixtures include an energy-efficient LED light source in a housing that resembles a "pancaked" globe; and the fixture's pole base matches the geometry of the existing globe-style pole bases, though less ornate.

The Design Team also reincorporated the use of the globe-style light fixtures periodically throughout Downtown, but less as a functional light structure and more as an "art piece" that is interspersed sparingly amongst the new light fixtures. The scrollwork on the arms supporting the globes will be removed to make the fixture appear more contemporary. Moreover, the globe fixtures will be retrofitted with a color-changing LED light source that can be easily changed seasonally or for certain events (green and orange for Halloween, for example). The blend of the two light fixtures, existing and new, will serve to anchor the streetscape aesthetic to its historic past while also leaning towards a more modern feel.



Existing globe light fixture.



Proposed "flattened globe" light fixture.



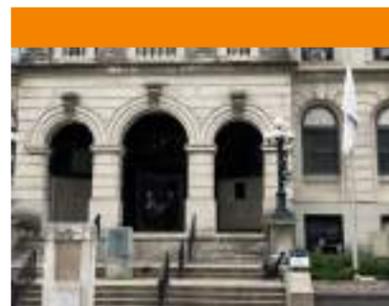
An example of color-changing LED lighting.

4 Repetitive Use of Architectural Shapes

The Design Team's repetitive use of certain architectural shapes helps to link the various streetscaping improvements together throughout Downtown Bloomington. One such instance is the repeated use of arches and circles. A complete semi-circle arch (a "Roman arch") can be found on many of the window openings on the buildings in Downtown Bloomington, including on the old courthouse building. An example of the integration of the semi-circle arch into the Hybrid design is the circular bicycle rack shown below. The repetitive use of architectural shapes will be explored in greater detail throughout Chapter 5: "Streetscape Improvements."



The Roman Arch architectural element is located throughout Downtown.

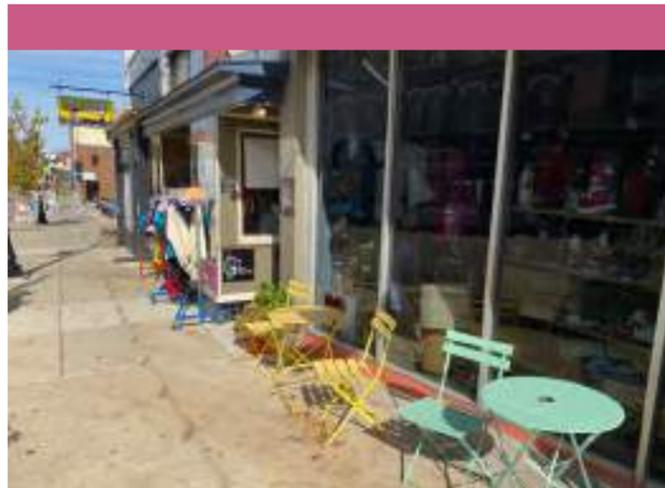


5 Concrete Scoring

The Hybrid style will incorporate scoring into the concrete sidewalk that is in addition to conventional jointing. The scoring (a shallow cut into the concrete to create a pattern) adds visual interest to the streetscape, but also serves a functional role: Downtown businesses often make use of the space immediately in front of their buildings for small tables, signs, planters, etc. which often drifts into the pedestrian walking space. The proposed scoring, set approximately 36 inches off the face of the building, establishes a zone where placement of these items will be permitted.



Proposed sidewalk scoring.



Examples of "unzoned" business furniture.



Examples of a curbless street in Huntingburg, IN.

6 Zero-Height Curb

Whenever possible, a "zero-height curb" street section will be implemented. There may be instances where storm water management or ADA compliance behind the curb requires the use of conventional six-inch-high curbs, but elsewhere storm water will be directed to easily traversable "V-gutters". The advantages of a zero-height curb street section are two-fold: (1) as mentioned previously in this report, eliminating the curb keeps streets flexible for a number of uses, such as parades or street festivals; and (2) a curb-less section helps establish a space where streets are more accessible and pedestrian friendly.

05 Streetscape Improvements

05

Streetscape Improvements

Downtown Bloomington is geographically expansive compared to many other Central Illinois downtowns, with nearly seventy blocks included in the Study Area. Given this size, it is unsurprising that the various areas (or districts) of Downtown often function differently and exhibit individual dynamics. The unique characteristics of these areas present different challenges and opportunities, and, as a result, require individualized design treatments to realize their full potential. And while these design treatments vary by location, the Design Team was cognizant of the need to blanket every area with the same visual aesthetic (see “Streetscaping Style” section in Chapter 4) to ensure that all of Downtown has a consistent visual identity.

In general, Downtown Bloomington shows numerous signs of neglect: deteriorating pavements, cramped sidewalks, inconsistent parking options, and sparse decorative streetscape elements. This fifth Chapter explores the final streetscaping improvements developed to remedy those issues in order to revitalize Downtown. This Chapter focuses on individual locations Downtown and explains the treatments that were specifically applied.



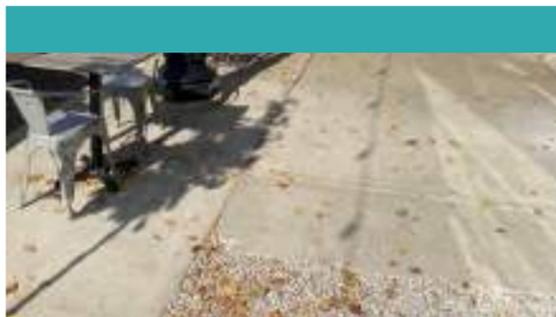


Photo by: Randall von Liski

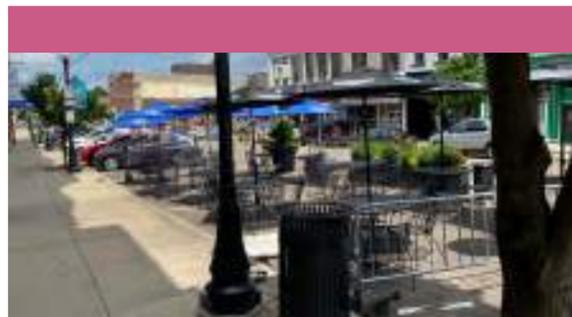
MAIN STREET

Main Street represents the heart of Downtown, steeped in history and exhibiting some of the most pronounced and vibrant architecture in Downtown Bloomington. Once the primary north-south road in the early days of Bloomington's history, it eventually became part of the Route 66 highway in the mid-1920s, connecting Chicago to Los Angeles. Today, it is along this corridor where entertainment and shopping most thrive and where vacancies are currently the lowest.

But Main Street suffers from a lack of consistency and uniformity, and the streetscape elements that are present are dated and well worn. The street shows a strong need for reimagining and updating.

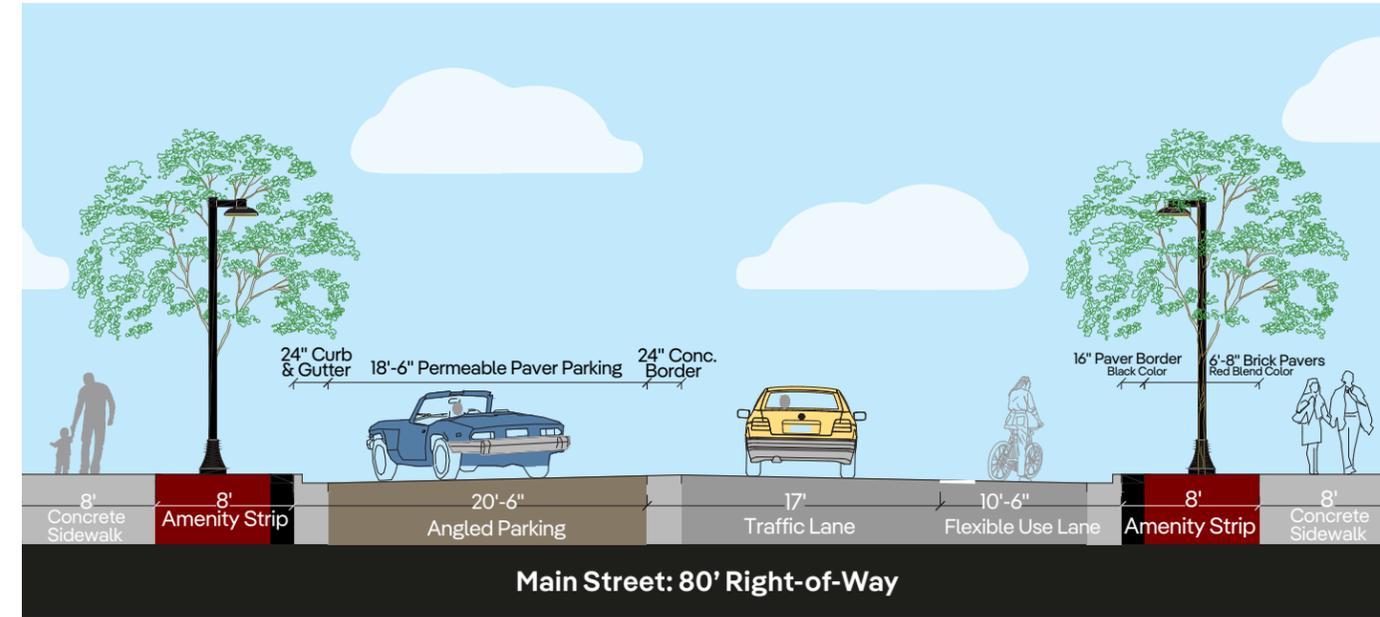


Deteriorating sidewalk pavement



Space for outdoor dining is typically only available in "parklets"

In order to maximize the impact Main Street can have in attracting residents and visitors to Downtown, the Design Team developed alternatives that leverage what works well on Main Street while correcting what does not. The streetscaping treatments proposed below have tremendous potential to elevate Main Street to a ceiling that is much higher than it has yet reached.



Vehicular Traffic Lane

Because there is a finite distance between buildings on a street, an early exercise for the City and Design Team was to evaluate the space and prioritize it based on use. Users include pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles (including deliveries), business use (such as outdoor dining and sidewalk sales), and public art and other amenities. Based on a review of traffic counts (see "Illinois Department of Transportation" section in Chapter 2), it was determined that Main Street's two lanes of traffic were in excess of the single lane that is more than adequate to accommodate traffic. The proposed cross-section for Main Street eliminates this extra lane, providing additional room for other uses.

Pedestrian Space

Main Street currently contains both angled and parallel parking, on opposite sides of the road from each other. The Design Team proposed a relocation of the parallel parking to other parts of Downtown in order to free up additional space for pedestrian use on Main Street. (See also "Parking Accommodations" section in Chapter 6.) Increased pedestrian space, in turn, will increase walkability and create new opportunities for outdoor activities - critical for unlocking the full potential of Downtown Bloomington (see previous "Move the Needle" section in Chapter 3). Additionally, the increased amenity space will in most cases allow for outdoor dining to be moved from parking spaces onto the adjacent sidewalk, freeing up those spaces for parking.

It was important to both the Design Team and the City that the prioritization of pedestrian space over vehicular space first be validated as a shared value by the Downtown community. To begin with, the Steering Committee was directly asked "Would you rather have more parking in front of your business or more pedestrian space?", to which the answer given was a resounding "More pedestrian space." (See Volume 3.) The question was also posed to the broader public by providing them with a choice between three different alternatives for the Main Street cross-section, each of which represented a different prioritization of parking and walkability. The results from both the first Community Open House and the online survey were definitive: the majority of the public favored the pedestrian-friendly alternative that is represented here in the Streetscape Design. Subsequently, the Steering Committee unanimously voted in favor of recommending this section be adopted by the City. (See Volume 3.)



Flex Lane

The Design Team developed the concept of a “Flex Lane” to be incorporated into the street section, primarily for bicycle use. Bloomington-Normal is a very active cycling community, but Downtown currently provides very little in the way of bicycle accommodations. Just one street in all of Downtown has a bike lane, and bicycle parking racks are sparse. Creating the Flex Lane, a 10-1/2 foot wide dedicated path that runs through Downtown Bloomington, will be a welcome addition to both the biking community and the Downtown businesses that will benefit from increased traffic. The Flex Lane will be incorporated into the wider community bike route network (see “Bike Route/Constitution Trail Connectivity” section in Chapter 6.)

The Flex Lane is also meant to accommodate delivery trucks. Currently, these trucks will stop in the middle of a vehicular lane during deliveries, stopping traffic and creating less safe conditions for drivers and delivery personnel alike. The addition of the Flex Lane provides a location outside of the dedicated vehicular lane for these trucks to conduct their deliveries, while avoiding traffic jams. The Flex Lane will similarly be used by garbage trucks (see “Garbage Management” section in Chapter 6.)

Of course, the more vehicles that are sharing the Flex Lane with bicyclists, the less of a functional bike lane it will be. Therefore, a critical follow-up to the construction of these improvements will be the implementation of policies and regulations by the City that limit the operational hours of delivery vehicles and garbage trucks in Downtown to days of the week and times of day that are less likely to be in conflict with recreational and commuter bicycle traffic.



Intersections

A unique feature of both the Main Street and Center Street designs is the use of an “offset” crosswalk in tandem with curb bump-outs at intersections. Crosswalks are traditionally in-line with the walking path along streets, but the proposed design introduces a slight jog which has several effects on users:

- When walking down the sidewalk, pedestrians’ line of sight is now intercepted by attractive features such as public art, trees, or colored ornamental lights (see “Streetscaping Style” section in Chapter 4), offering visual interest.
- Because a continuous line of sight is impeded when walking down sidewalks, pedestrians experience Downtown “block by block” in a cozier, more intimate manner that would not be possible without the off-set crosswalks. Decision points for pedestrians arriving at intersections now becomes more intentional, due to the jog in travel path.
- The curb bump-outs protrude into the intersection, reducing the crossing distance and resulting in a safer experience for pedestrians. The extent to which these bump-outs could protrude into the intersection is truncated, however, in order to maintain flexibility for the street so that it can be used for parades and other events (see “Flexibility Considerations” section in Chapter 3).

The offset crosswalks, as well as the other Main Street design elements, are illustrated in the above image.

NORTH MAIN PLAZA



The north end of Main Street currently terminates into an area that is geometrically awkward. Without much warning, northbound drivers suddenly find themselves in a two-pronged one-way parking lot. The only exit leads directly onto US Route 51 with no opportunity to navigate to other areas of Downtown without first driving two blocks north to Chestnut Street and circling back.

The proposed plan for this area is the construction of what has been generically named “North Main Plaza.” Features include the following:



- A simplified parking lot layout .
- Conversion of the parking lot from one-way to two-way, providing drivers the opportunity to avoid a lengthy detour when returning to Downtown.
- A decorative four-foot tall concrete wall with lighting under the wall’s stone cap. The wall helps to insulate the plaza area from the busy highway.



- A one-hundred foot diameter “ring” decorative structure encompassing another smaller ring, both suspended above the plaza by a system of cables and steel support poles. The rings, likely composed of steel or aluminum, will include color changing LED lighting. The rings are another example of the circular shapes predominate in the Streetscape Style (see “Repetitive Use of Architectural Shapes” section in Chapter 4), serving to tie all of the Downtown streetscaping improvements together with a consistent Sense of Place.
- String lights, along the “spokes” of the ring but also concentrated around an area east of the plaza that is dedicated for bicycle parking.



- Retractable bollards located at the interface of the plaza and Main Street. Bollards will be lowered into the pavement the majority of the time to allow continuous access to the parking, but they will be raised during events to keep out vehicles. (Bollards will still be operable by emergency providers.)



- Amphitheater seating to accommodate audiences for small concerts and events. The elevated seating will also buffer much of the plaza from the busy highway nearby.
- Use of colored pavers throughout the plaza that serve to create an inviting setting for events, while still delineating individual parking spaces.
- A wide, multi-use path flows through the area, connecting the bicycle accommodations on Main Street to the US Route 51 corridor to the north.

Another significant feature of the North Main Plaza is the inclusion of underground detention. There are periodic issues with flooding on the west side of the City downstream from the Downtown area, currently. Storm water detention is the primary means of reducing flooding, but it can be difficult to find flat enough areas where there is sufficient space to support the footprint of a detention system in the vicinity of the sewers. The area around North Main Plaza does satisfy these criteria, however. An underground detention system similar to the one pictured below can result in a significant reduction in the maximum storm water release rate and, as a result, reduce flooding in this area of Downtown.



When designing North Main Plaza, the Design Team had in mind that the City might program events in this space for a more mature demographic – reflective of the types of businesses surrounding this location. While family-friendly events could certainly be supported by this space, it was assumed that the Museum Square might be a more likely location and that North Main Plaza could benefit from a different dynamic. (See “Museum Square” section below.) This is in keeping with a directive from the City Core Team that improvements be designed to attract as many different demographics as possible.



Photo by: Randall von Liski

CENTER STREET

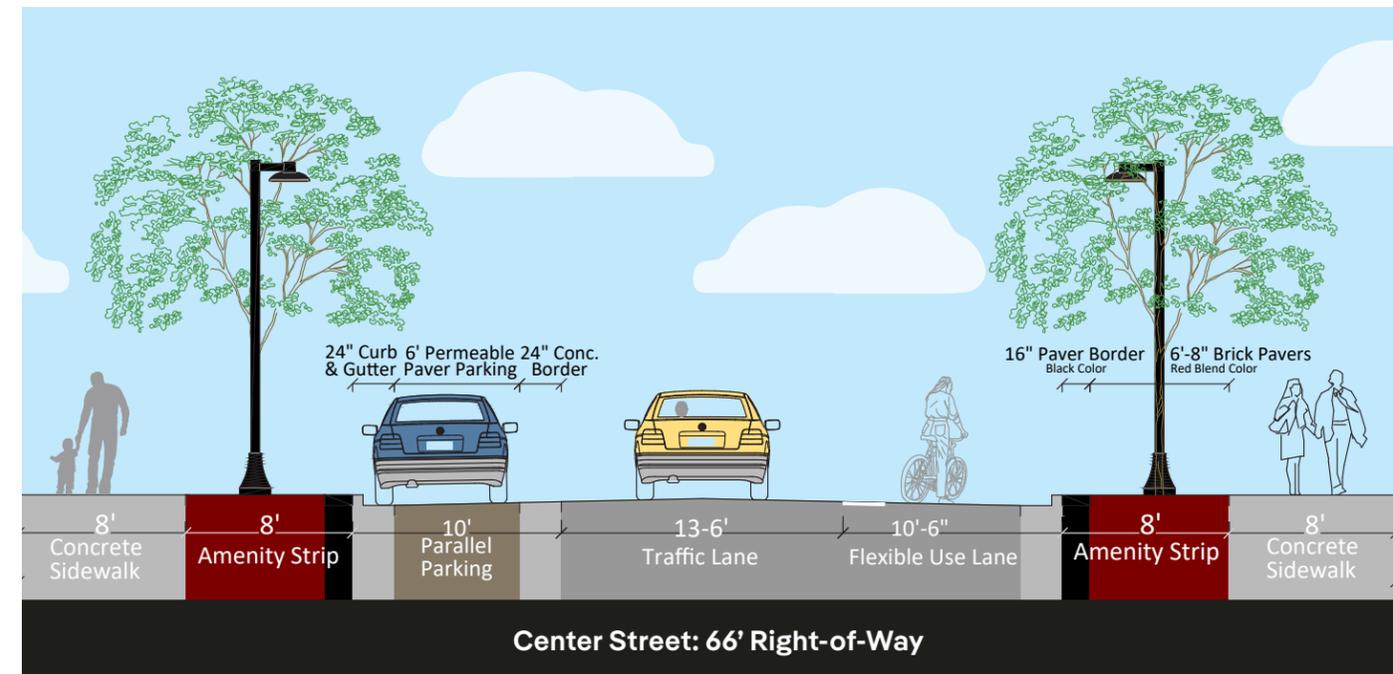
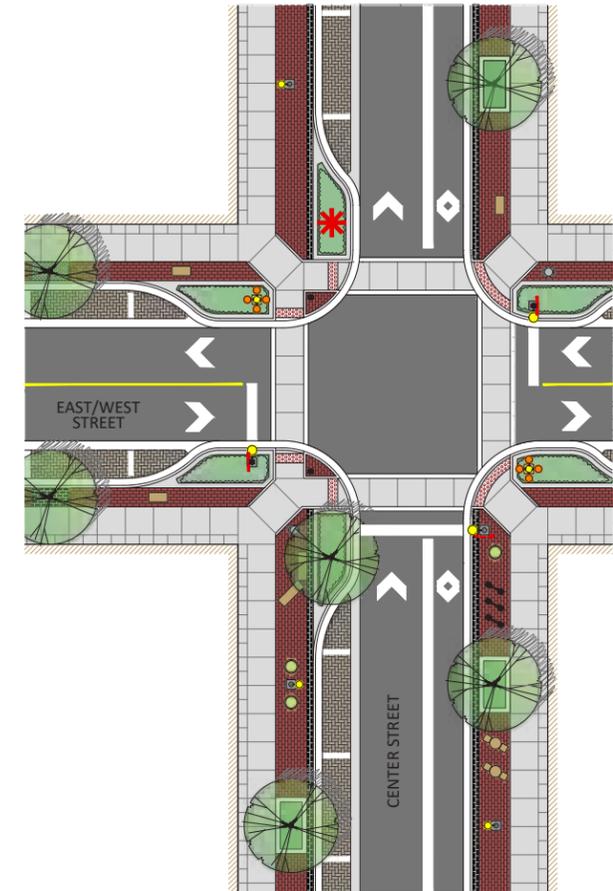
Center Street parallels Main Street inside the Downtown core, the latter being one-way northbound and the former being one-way southbound. While both function similarly in the Downtown network, there is considerable difference between the activity of the two streets: Center has far less shops, restaurants, and foot traffic than Main Street.

However, the streetscaping improvements proposed for Center Street are nearly identical to those on Main Street, as the Design Team believes that this is the best treatment for this corridor. This includes the relocation of the parallel parking on one side of the street to other parts of Downtown, similar to Main Street.

The only major difference between the two designs is that Main Street will preserve angled parking on one side of the street, whereas Center will preserve one side of parallel parking. Although parallel parking provides less parking per block than angled parking, it also takes up less space. And because the Right-of-Way for Center Street is more narrow than that of Main, it was necessary to incorporate parallel parking in order to provide the same amount of pedestrian space as was provided on Main Street.

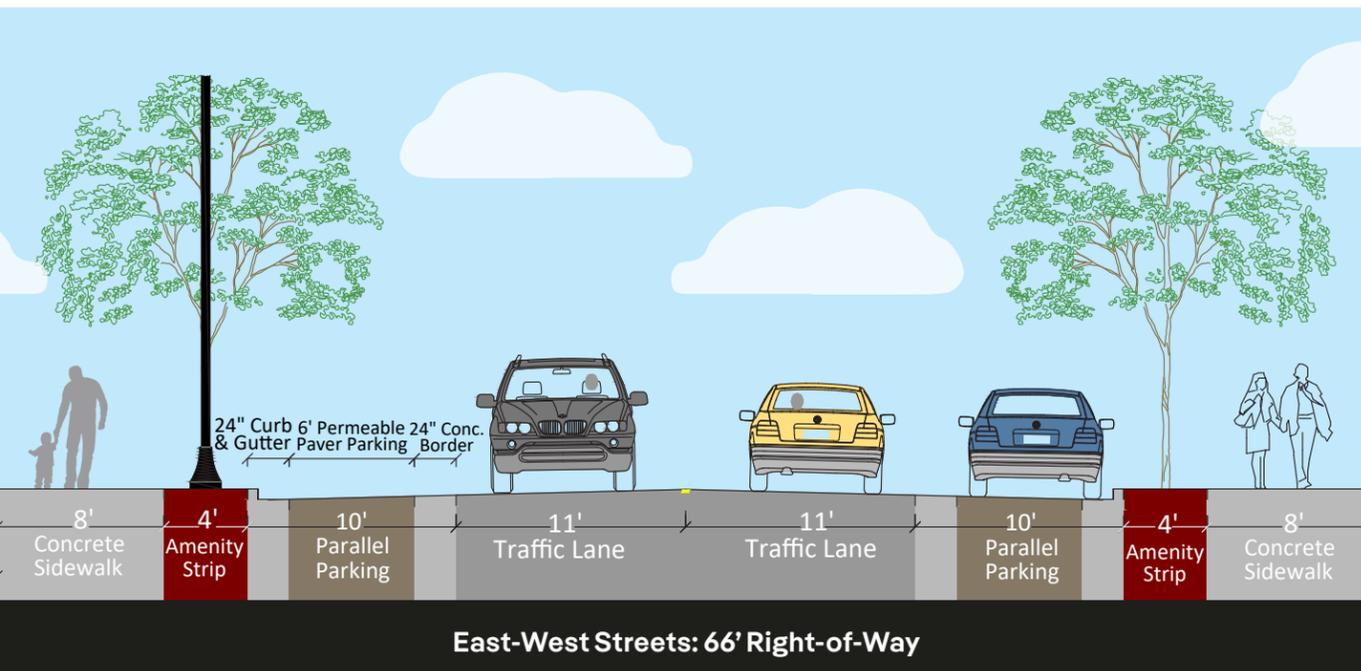
It is anticipated that the positive outcomes of these streetscaping improvements will likely be experienced at different paces for each street. If Main Street represents low-hanging fruit where the impact of the treatment will be felt right away, then Center Street represents a slower “build it and they will come” scenario. That said, Center Street provides perhaps the greater relative growth potential and opportunity for Return on Investment, when constructed in the proper sequence. (See “Program Phasing” in Chapter 7.)

It should also be noted that a major development project is scheduled for Fall 2024 construction at the 400 Block of Center Street: demolition of the existing Market Street garage and erection of a new Transit Center (see “Transit Center” section below).



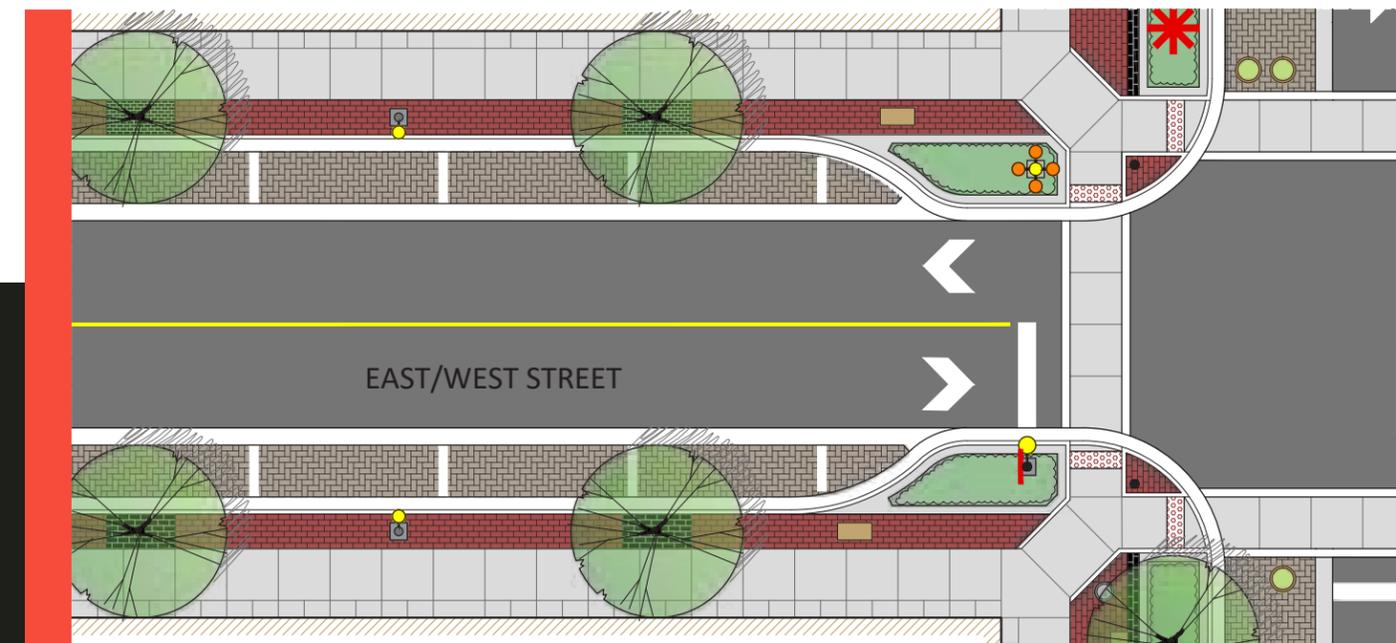
EAST-WEST STREETS

Functionally, the Design Team proposes no major changes to the East-West streets. The two-way traffic and parallel parking on both sides of the street will be preserved, and the curb lines will stay in their existing location – rather than moved inwards as is the case with Main Street, Center Street, and US Route 51 (see “Main Street,” “Center Street,” and “US Route 51” sections in this chapter). Maintaining two-way traffic on these streets makes it easy for drivers traversing the one-way streets to circle back when they have bypassed their destination. Additionally, the East-West streets provide a valuable location for overflow parking, when the more popular spots on Main Street and Center Street are taken. The Design Team was able to reconfigure space in a more efficient manner and increase the parking on these East-West streets by nearly fifty spaces. (See also “Parking Capacity” section in Chapter 6.)



The streetscaping treatment for the East-West streets will maintain the same aesthetic applied to other streets in Downtown (see “Streetscaping Style” in Chapter 4) with some exceptions:

- As discussed previously, the Streetscaping Style includes a blend of reds, tans, and grayish blues for the Amenity Strip and a charcoal-colored border separating the Amenity Strip from the Parking Area. However, because the East-West walks are not as wide as those on Main and Center, it was deemed that the Amenity Strip along with the border would look too “stripey”. The Design Team, then, chose not to apply a border but instead apply the charcoal color to four-foot by eight-foot areas surrounding tree plantings. See below image.
- Outside of the Downtown Core (defined as the region between Madison Street and East Street), the Parking Areas will not be comprised of pavers but instead use conventional paving, such as asphalt. The bold street graphics and amenity strip pavers will still be used. This will help to transition from the Downtown Streetscaping Style to that of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Outside of the Downtown Core, when the walk is not abutted by businesses with storefronts, the area between the concrete sidewalk and the street will not be filled with the amenity strip pavers but instead with grass. Again, this helps transition the street aesthetic between Downtown Bloomington and the surrounding neighborhoods.





MUSEUM SQUARE

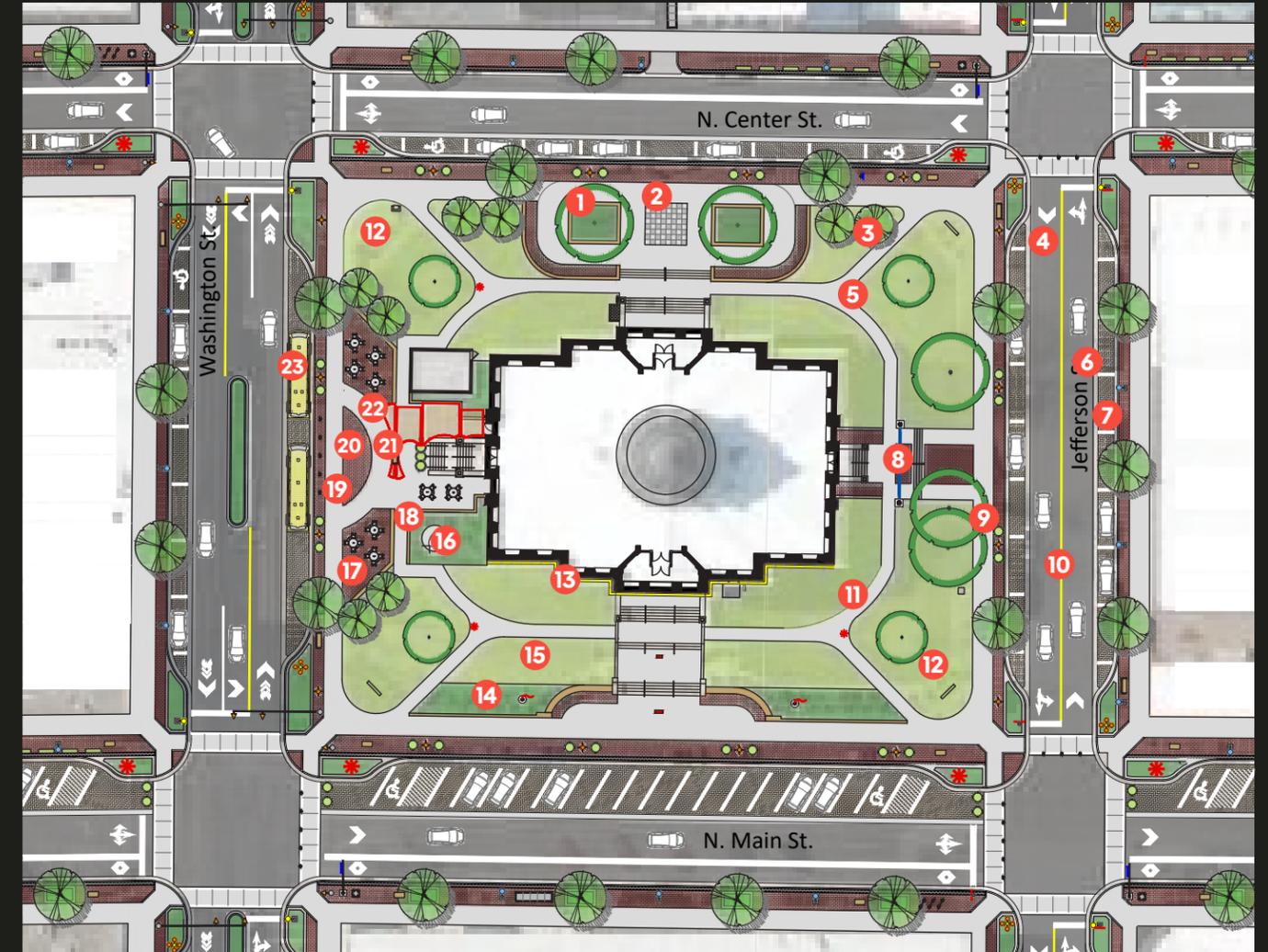
The Museum Square, particularly the old County courthouse at the center, is considered by many to be the “Crown Jewel” of Downtown Bloomington. Constructed in 1903 after a fire destroyed the original building, the courthouse standing today is an inspiring example of the American Renaissance architectural style.

The surrounding square was once open and inviting – with a ringed walk encircling the building and “spokes” extending in all directions. (See above historical image.) Today’s square is quite different, with public entrances on just one side of the building and with high curb walls and landscaping beds around the entire perimeter that discourage pedestrians from entering the lawn.

The proposed design for the Museum Square involves restoring this area to its historic, welcoming character by returning the ringed walk and connecting spokes and by removing the physical barriers around the lawn perimeter. A notable exception to the removal of barriers is the “Freedom Walls” on the east side of the Square. These walls will remain in place in order to respect the fallen Veterans honored by the memorial.

Activating dormant open public spaces is one of the major priorities of the overall streetscaping program (see “Move the Needle” section in Chapter 3), but attracting meaningful activity into the Museum Square will require more than just the addition of the ringed walk. The Design Team therefore evaluated various alternatives that target as wide a demographic range as possible, ultimately landing on a separate recommendation for each of the four sides of the Square. Each of these concepts are explored in detail below.

PROPOSED MUSEUM SQUARE IMPROVEMENTS



- 1 Seat Walls 2 “Game Board” Pavement Insert (Chess/Checkers); “Board” to incorporate musical component
- 3 Sloped Sidewalk Connection 4 Bold Pavement Markings 5 Featured Elements (4)
- 6 Permeable Paver Parking Area 7 Paver Amenity Strip (4’ wide) 8 Stage Terrace with Bandshell Arch Structures
- 9 Reinstalled Globe Lights, Single Fixture 10 Street Pavement 11 Sidewalk Loop
- 12 Reinstalled Corner Signs/Monuments 13 Illuminated Facade 14 Flagpoles (2) 15 Ceremonial Lawn
- 16 Sculpture Pad (Refurbished Santa, Seasonal Artwork complimentary to Canopy, etc.)
- 17 Seasonal Display Plaza (Christmas Tree/Holiday Display)
- 18 Native Planting (Seeds of History Educational Garden) 19 Bollards
- 20 Entry Plaza with Tables and Chairs 21 Lincoln Bench 22 Sculptural Canopy 23 Bus Drop-off Lane

North Side

Outdoor concerts are periodically held in the Downtown Core on temporary stages, usually located within the intersection of Jefferson Street and Main Street. The Design Team instead proposed a stage terrace on the north lawn that uses the courthouse building as a dramatic backdrop for performances and with “plug and play” audio/video hookups located in nearby underground vaults that make setup for concerts easier. The stage has the advantage of “disappearing” during the day when no one is performing, because the stage terrace is a natural section of the ring walk and because there is no intention of installing permanent loudspeakers or riggings.



The stage will be framed with two bandshell structures in the shape of a “Roman Arch”, mimicking the architecture of the adjacent courthouse building and other buildings throughout Downtown (see “Repetitive Use of Architectural Shapes” section in Chapter 4). The bandshells will likely be composed of steel or aluminum and will include color changing LED lighting – very similar to the ring structures in North Main Plaza (see above section). The bandshell structures can also be used to support a screen for “Movies in the Square” events.

Along with a plaza that is comprised of pavers of the same color as those utilized in North Main Plaza, this stage terrace functions as a sister venue to the North Main Plaza. Additionally, retractable bollards, similar to those in North Main Plaza, will be installed so that Jefferson Street can be shut down for exclusive use by pedestrians.



East Side

The east side of the courthouse is historically the front entrance of the building and is architecturally the more prominent façade. The Design Team proposed installing equipment that would allow for video shows to be projected directly onto this impressive backdrop. “Video projection mapping” is a technology that can create breathtaking, memorable experiences and has the potential to make Downtown Bloomington a regional destination, not just merely an amenity for the local population.

Video projection mapping installations often utilize a climate-controlled media room with servers, projectors, and other equipment housed in them. The Design Team instead recommended use of an all-in-one external projector technology that can be mounted to light poles, is all-weather resistant, and contains all necessary equipment (such as hard drives) necessary for the video shows. These projectors include the capability to perform a 3-D scan of the courthouse building. This scan is necessary so that customized video shows can be developed that leverage the specific architectural geometry of the building to create sensational 3-D effects. Beneficially, the white coloring of the building provides a highly reflective surface that will result in increased projection brightness – contributing directly to the vibrancy of shows.

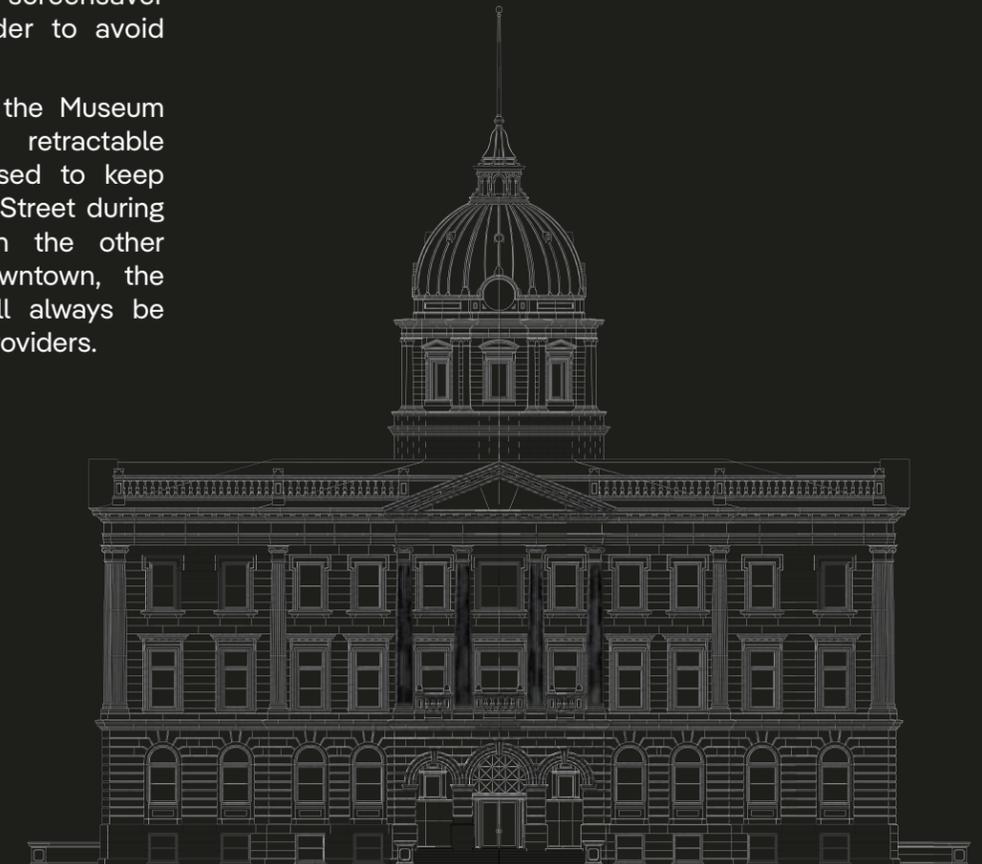


Along with the projection equipment, the Design Team recommends an initial investment in a program of shows that will provide entertainment for the first two to three years, before needing to be refreshed. The inaugural program could consist of approximately five shows with content ranging from seasonal shows (e.g. “Christmas/Holiday” and/or “Fall/Harvest” show) to local interest shows (“History of McLean County” and/or “Route 66” show). In addition to the 3-D video, these shows should contain audio that includes music, sound effects, and possible narration by voice-over talent. The program should also include approximately ten “Screensaver Loops” that consist of subtle, looped animations played in between the main shows. This program should be refreshed over the years, with new shows and screensaver loops introduced in order to avoid waning interest.

Lastly, the east side of the Museum Square should include retractable bollards that can be used to keep vehicular traffic off Main Street during certain events. As with the other retractable bollards Downtown, the Main Street bollards will always be operable by emergency providers.



Pole mounted projectors



South Side

The old courthouse is home to the McLean County Museum of History, where the visitor entrance is rather inconspicuously located on the south side of the building. The Design Team was encouraged by the Museum's leadership to develop a concept for this side of the Square that might make the visitor entrance both more remarkable and more welcoming.



Prior to the initiation of this “Downtown Streetscape Project – Concept Design” study, a member of the Design Team had developed a design for a dynamic art feature that has now been incorporated into the proposed design solution. This feature consists of a brass canopy that extends in a sectioned tapestry from the visitors entrance out towards Washington Street. This canopy would be covered with perforations in the shape of icons highlighting McLean County's heritage. For example, these perforations might tell our community's story in agriculture through images of abstracted corn leaves, or tell our story in history through images of streetcars, Lincoln's stovepipe hat, or the Route 66 emblem. On sunny days, the canopy will project shadows that outline these shapes on the below pavement, further recalling that heritage in light and shadow. This art feature will accentuate the visitors entrance and attract attention in a way that is currently lacking.

Other streetscaping treatments for the south side of the Square include an entry plaza with tables and chairs meant to entice outdoor diners. The design also includes a garden to the east of the stairs that could serve as an extension of the Museum's “Seeds of History”, an initiative intended to educate the community about the history of ecology and the land of McLean County. Native plants that have recently been planted around the Square could be relocated into this area along with informational signage. At other times, the garden could simply be purposed as a flower bed in order to soften and further beautify the visitors entrance. A large pedestal will be located in the middle of this bed, meant to support sculptures (see “Public Art” section in Chapter 6).

The proposed design maintains the bus drop-off lane as well as the center turn lane on Washington Street. The Streetscape Style will be applied to Washington Street, just as with the other streets on the Museum Square, but with the addition of a landscaped median.

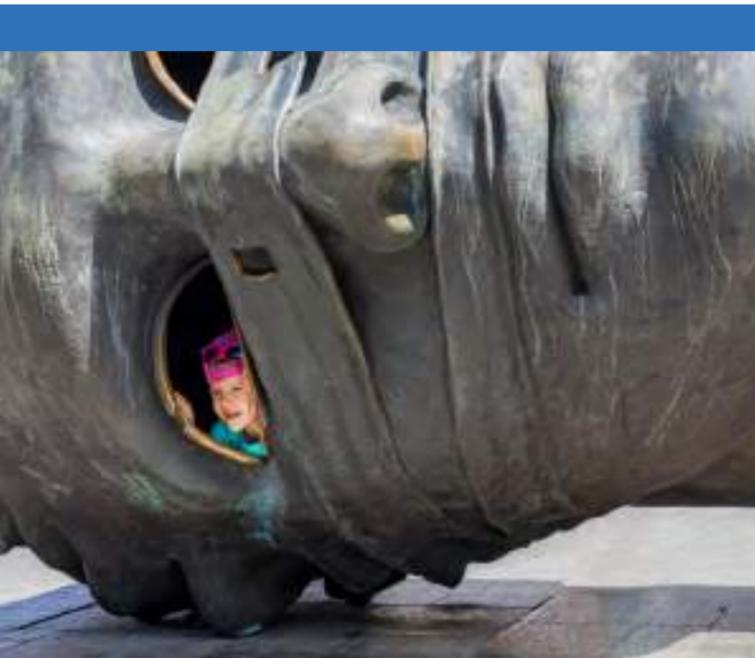


West Side

With the goal of providing attractions for a younger, more active demographic, the Design Team suggested providing placeholders on the West Side of the Square for interactable sculptures, similar to those shown below. When consulted, the Museum staff were supportive of ideas like this that might make the Square playful and inviting. Unlike sculptures exhibited elsewhere in Downtown Bloomington, the sculptures on the West lawn should be permanent and not part of the rotation (see "Public Art" section in Chapter 6).

The proposed design also includes a life-size chess board integrated into the pavement at the bottom of the stairs along with giant chess pieces that can be illuminated at night. Additionally, the chess board will sound musical notes when each of the squares is stepped on.

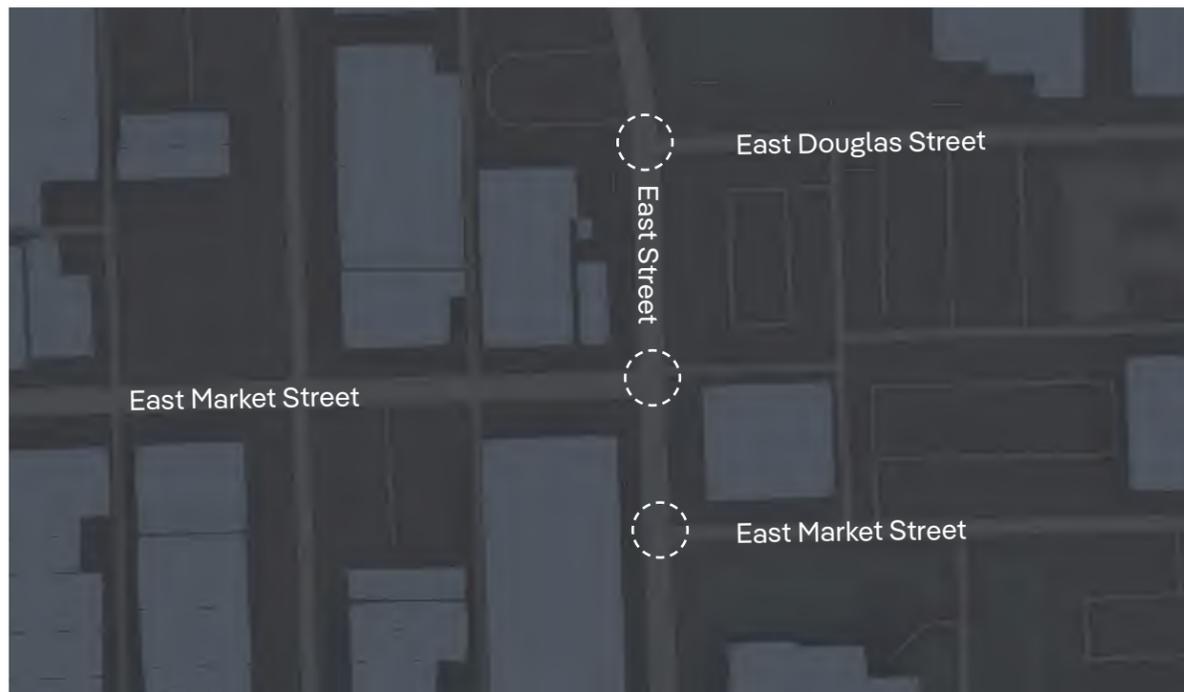
Similar to the North Side and the East Side, the West Side will also include retractable bollards that can be raised during events to prevent traffic from entering Center Street.



BCPA / DOUGLAS STREET LOTS

To address the area around the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts (BCPA) and the Douglas Street parking lots, the Design Team developed a concept intended to solve two issues at once.

The first issue to tackle was the problematic layout of three intersections, slightly offset from each other, where East Street (US Route 51) intersects with two segments of Market Street and Douglas Street. (See below image.) The problem with these offset intersections is that (1) traffic efficiency is reduced (traveling from east to west takes longer and vice versa), (2) traffic safety is reduced (two of the intersections are unsignalized), and (3) the efficient use of valuable real estate is also reduced (multiple Right-of-Ways unnecessarily clustered together take up a large amount of space).

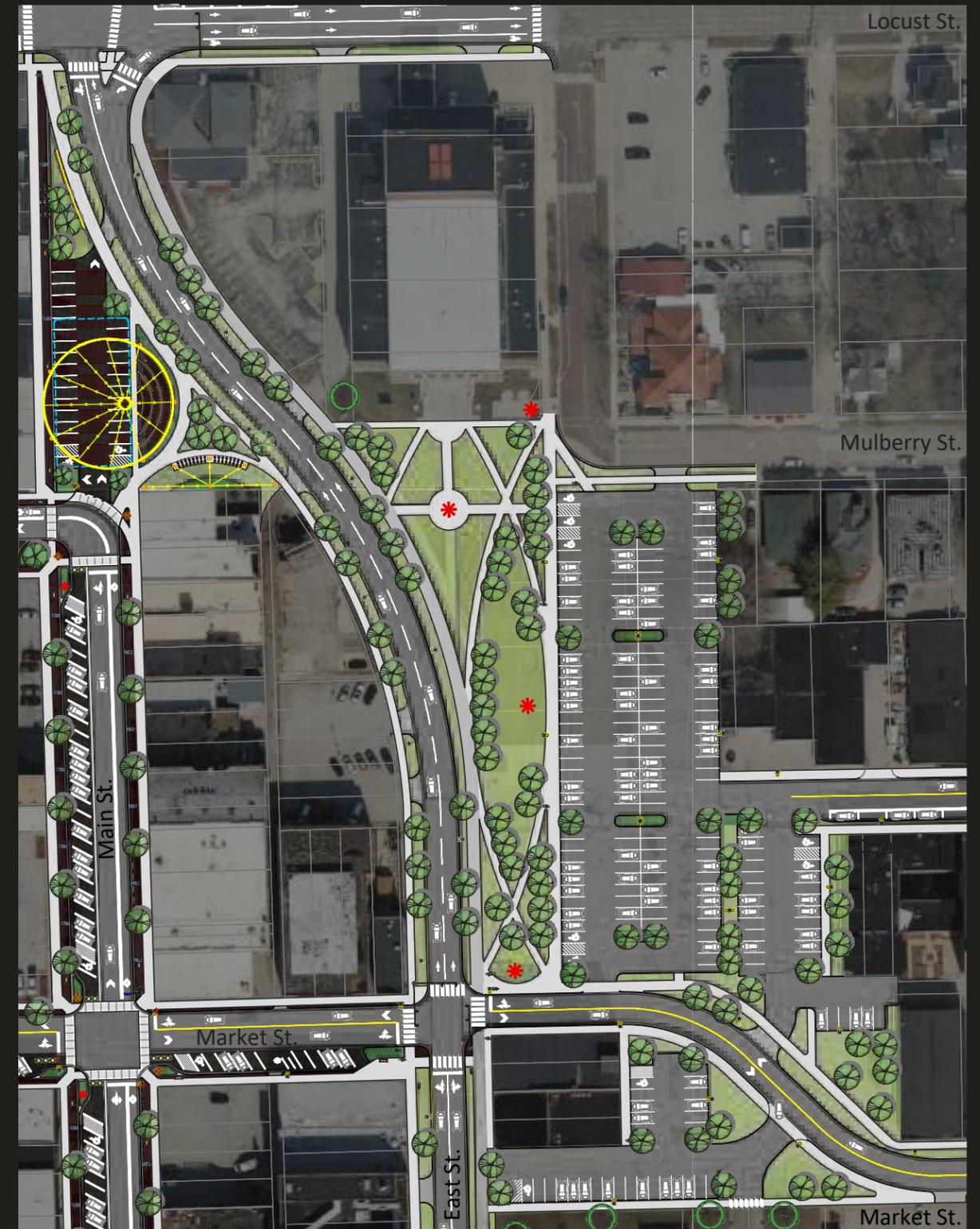


A solution was developed that consolidates the three intersections into a single signalized intersection. This was accomplished as follows:

- By realigning the east section of Market Street so that it now passes north of the 503 N East Street building and intersects the highway directly across from the west section of Market Street,
- By adjusting the west section of Market Street such that the roadway centerline is now more closely in line with that of the east section, and
- By terminating Douglas Street at the new parking lots, rather than continuing west to intersect US Route 51.

These improvements are illustrated on the following page. Note that, as with other improvements in US Route 51 Right-of Way, the Illinois Department of Transportation will need to approve these changes.

PROPOSED BCPA/DOUGLAS LOT IMPROVEMENTS





Existing, deteriorated Douglas Street Lots

The second issue to be addressed was replacement of the dilapidated and underused Douglas Street parking lots. Anecdotally, the Design Team often heard that few of the general public are even aware that public parking is available at this location – perhaps because of a lack of prominent signage and because the aesthetics of the lot give the impression of abandoned property.

The solution to this issue involved providing more attractive parking, along with additional parking capacity. Regarding the latter, thirty-four additional parking spaces were made possible by the space created with the consolidation of the three intersections, as

well as from a more efficient parking layout. These new spaces, along with new parking that was designed on the East-West streets, serve to address the relocation of parking in the Downtown Core (see “Parking Capacity” section in Chapter 6).

Landscaping, both on the interior and perimeter of these new lots, as well as a new, more park-like development of Lincoln Park south of the BCPA (see following page), will greatly increase attraction to the new parking lots. Additionally, more overt signage will be installed that alerts drivers to the parking opportunities. Finally, these parking lot improvements also provide much better access to the BCPA for visitors than currently exists.



Lincoln Park currently consists of a sparse open lawn, with a few sidewalks and the “Convergence of Purpose” statue (depicting Lincoln in the 1850s with David Davis and Jesse Fell, two of his close colleagues and prominent Bloomington-Normal community leaders). The new design involves both an extension of the park’s size and enhancement with landscaping. Arching, circuitous paths, mimicking the geometric shapes used throughout the streetscape design (see “Repetitive Use of Architectural Shapes” section in Chapter 4), are introduced, as well as the opportunity for additional public art. The “Convergence of Purpose” statue is integrated into the design, preserved in its existing location. The orientation of improvements provides yet another opportunity for a concert venue: The parking lot immediately east of Lincoln Park can be shut down and a stage placed on the pavement adjacent to the lawn, so that concert attendees can sit with their backs to the setting sun.



Together, all of these improvements proposed for the BCPA/Douglas Lots area serve to improve connectivity and safety across the highway, enhance an existing asset (Lincoln Park), and establish more attractive parking areas that have increased capacity.

US ROUTE 51

The “Illinois Department of Transportation” section in Chapter 2 includes a discussion regarding how many vehicular lanes are actually necessary to more safely and efficiently convey traffic along US Route 51. That section references both anecdotal and engineering evidence that demonstrates that a two-lane section is adequate and that it greatly improves connectivity to the Downtown Core. Because both the Design Team and City Core Team are confident in a two-lane section, it has been represented in the drawings throughout this Report.

This section of the Report will explore how streetscaping applied to the areas around US Route 51 will establish a sense of arrival and how landscaping will be included that will soften the harsh “concrete jungle” of the highway corridor. (See “Roadway Network & Traffic” section in Chapter 1.)

Approaching Downtown

Yet another anecdote the Design Team heard from the Steering Committee is that visitors to Bloomington often zip by on US Route 51 without having even realized they had driven past Downtown Bloomington. There is, however, an opportunity for remedying this: As drivers approach Downtown, heading North on East Street or heading south on Madison Street, the otherwise-narrow corridor opens up considerably – providing the opportunity for “gateway” structures, landscaping, and other streetscaping features that together convey a sense of arrival in Downtown Bloomington.

On East Street, near Olive Street, the gateway structure shown in the below image reflects Bloomington’s Route 66 heritage, though other designs could certainly be entertained. The bike path shown in the image follows an arching path and introduces visitors to the Downtown aesthetic. Additionally, a curving, four-foot-tall decorative wall with lighting under the wall’s stone cap (identical to the curved wall shown abutting the North Main Plaza) provides visual interest and directs attention towards placeholders for public art.

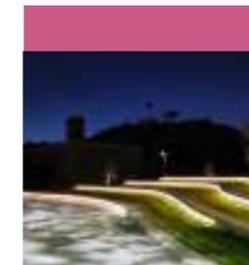
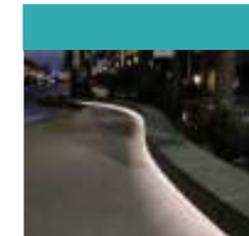


Approaching Downtown Bloomington from the south - looking north along East Street

On Madison Street, near Mulberry Street, a similar treatment is possible with the same arching bicycle path, lighted walls, and public art – again, indicating to drivers that they have “arrived” in Downtown Bloomington. At this location, however, the Design Team does not recommend introducing a new gateway feature like the one on East Street. To begin with, a gateway is already located nearby where Center Street meets Mulberry Street. But there is also an opportunity to transform an existing landmark into what could become the most iconic gateway feature in Downtown: The Tower Center (affectionately called the City’s “Eiffel Tower” by locals) could be rigged with lighting that illuminates the Downtown Bloomington skyline.

As with other proposed light sources in the Downtown streetscape, (such as the bandshell structure on the north lawn of the Square, the “ring” feature suspended above the North Main Plaza, and the retrofitted old, globe lights), the Tower Center lights could change color for certain occasions (green and red for Christmas, for example). It is important to note that the Tower Center is under private ownership, and agreements for this use would need to be negotiated.

Finally, it should be noted that most of the above mentioned streetscaping improvements located at the “Downtown Approaches” can be implemented even before US Route 51 is reduced to a two-lane highway.



Examples of lighted walls



Tower Center



Existing Gateway on Center Street and Mulberry Street



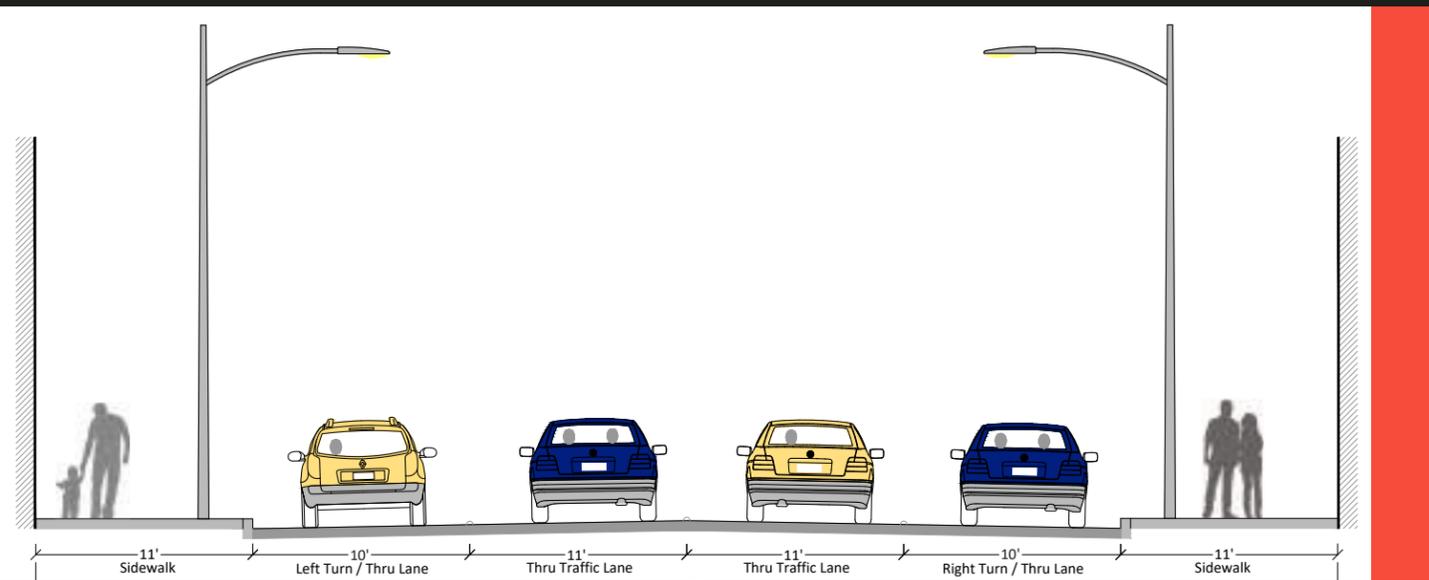
Approaching Downtown Bloomington from the north - looking south along Madison Street

Transition Plan for US Route 51

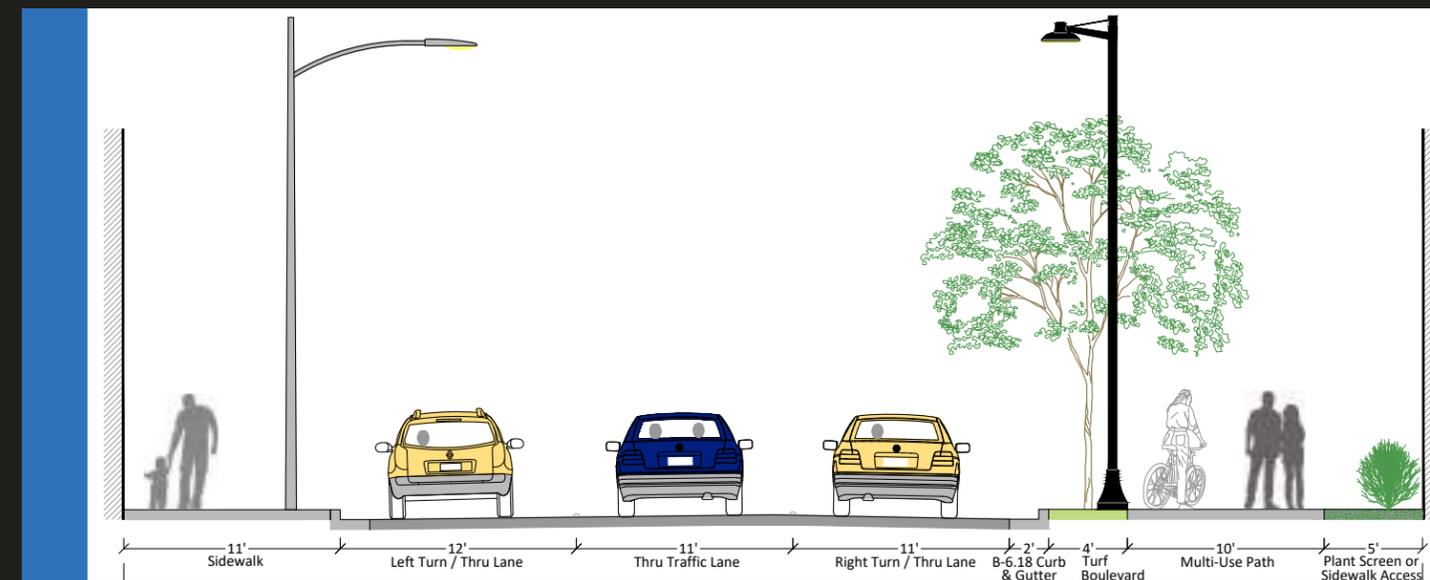
As noted earlier in the Report, the Illinois Department of Transportation intends on converting one of the existing four vehicular lanes on US Route 51 into a buffered bicycle lane, while the City plans on ultimately reducing the highway down to a two-lane section with that bicycle lane moved off-street (see "Illinois Department of Transportation" section in Chapter 2). Although all drawings in this Report depict the Highway in its ultimate two-lane state, there is a transitional section that might serve as an interim compromise between the sections proposed by IDOT and by the Design Team.

This transitional section maintains the three lanes of vehicular traffic desired by IDOT while moving the bicycle lane to a multi-use path off the street. (Many of the stakeholders, including representatives from bicycle advocacy groups, suggested that placing a bike lane adjacent to three lanes of vehicular traffic without a physical barrier feels less safe. See Volume 3.) Notably, the improvements associated with the off-street, multi-use path could stay in place when moving from the transitional section to the ultimate section. Furthermore, as illustrated on the following page, the entire succession of improvements, starting with today's section and moving through IDOT's proposed improvements to the ultimate section, requires minimal construction "re-work" when moving from one stage to the next. This results in good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

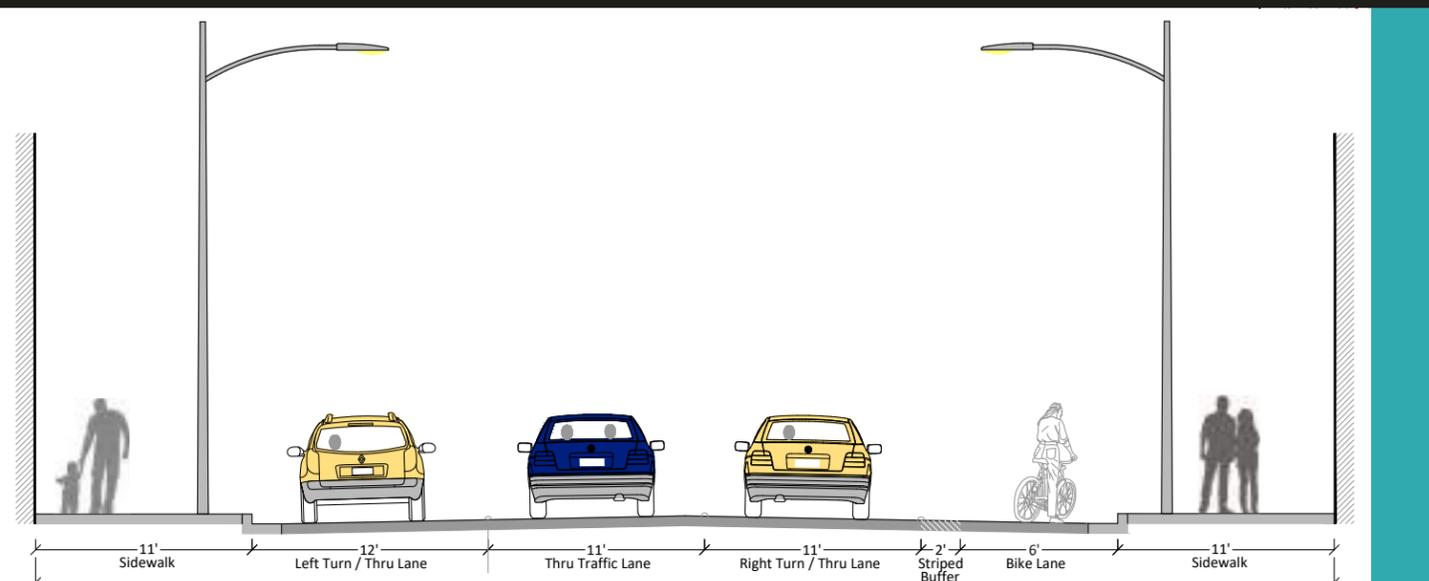
EXISTING SECTION



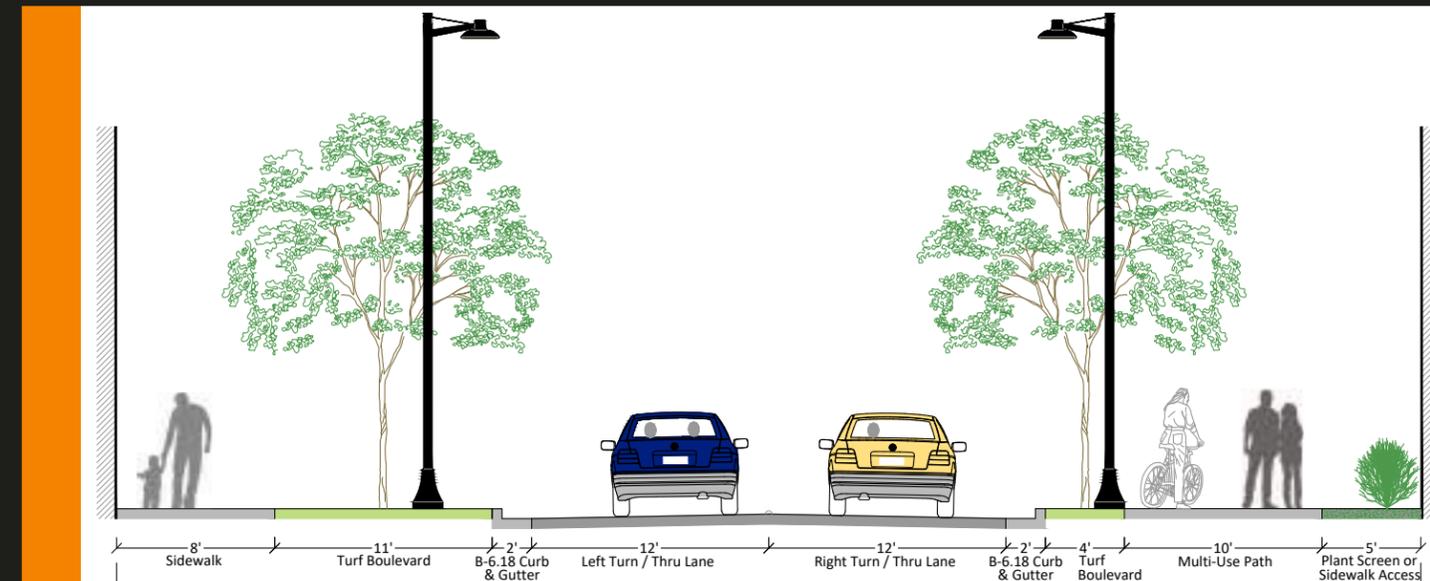
STAGE 2 - TRANSITIONAL SECTION



STAGE 1 - IDOT PROPOSED SECTION



STAGE 3 - ULTIMATE SECTION





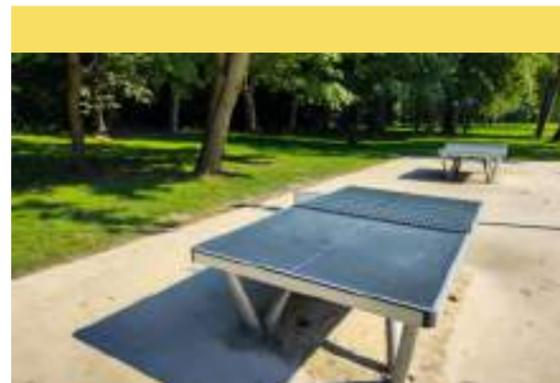
WITHERS PARK

Similar streetscaping improvements as those recommended for the “Downtown Approaches” can be implemented within a revamped version of “Withers Park” – located at the Northeast intersection of US Route 51 and Washington Street. Trotter Fountain, one of the more important historic works of public art in Bloomington, will of course be preserved in its existing location; but the same arching, circuitous paths and lighted walls proposed elsewhere on US Route 51 can be used here to highlight this monument, while connecting this park with the overall Downtown identity.

Withers Park also provides a suitable location to be used as an outdoor activity area. Semi-permanent game furniture can be installed, such as outdoor foosball, table tennis, and chess.



Trotter Fountain



Example of outdoor game furniture

PROPOSED WITHERS PARK IMPROVEMENTS



- 1 Existing Trotter Fountain 2 Seat Wall 3 Game Tables (chess, checkers, foosball)
- 4 Butterfly/Pollinator Flower Beds 5 Existing Trees, typ. 6 Proposed Trees 7 Urban Swings
- 8 Low Berm 9 Temporary Stage Area 10 Lawn Game Area (Bags, ping pong, etc.)
- 11 Entry Plaza and Seat Wall 12 Plant Bed 13 Existing Flagpole
- 14 Park Sign 15 Existing Wayfinding Sign



TRANSIT CENTER

A major development proposed for Downtown Bloomington involves the demolition of the existing Market Street Parking Deck and construction of a new Transit Center for Connect Transit. Design of the Transit Center is not within the scope of this project, but the Director of Connect Transit served as a member of the Steering Committee and provided information on anticipated features for the new facility:

- Accommodation of ten buses,
- Well-lit and secure public parking,
- A climate-controlled visitor lobby,
- Leased commercial space, and
- A solar canopy to sustainability power the building.

The Design Team coordinated with Connect Transit on a number of issues to ensure that this major project will be compatible with the proposed streetscape improvements. For example, the Team coordinated with the Director to ensure that bus routes would stay clear of Main Street and Center Street. Additionally, the anticipated construction schedule for the facility (Fall of 2024 through 2026) was taken into account when developing the plan for phasing the various streetscaping projects (see Chapter 7 “Program Phasing”).



MUSEUM SQUARE-SOUTH SIDE



MUSEUM SQUARE-WEST SIDE



TRANSIT CENTER



MADISON STREET GATEWAY

PROPOSED ROUTE 9 IMPROVEMENTS
Concept shown for reference (State of IL Project)



NORTH MAIN PLAZA



EAST STREET GATEWAY



MUSEUM SQUARE-EAST SIDE



WITHERS PARK



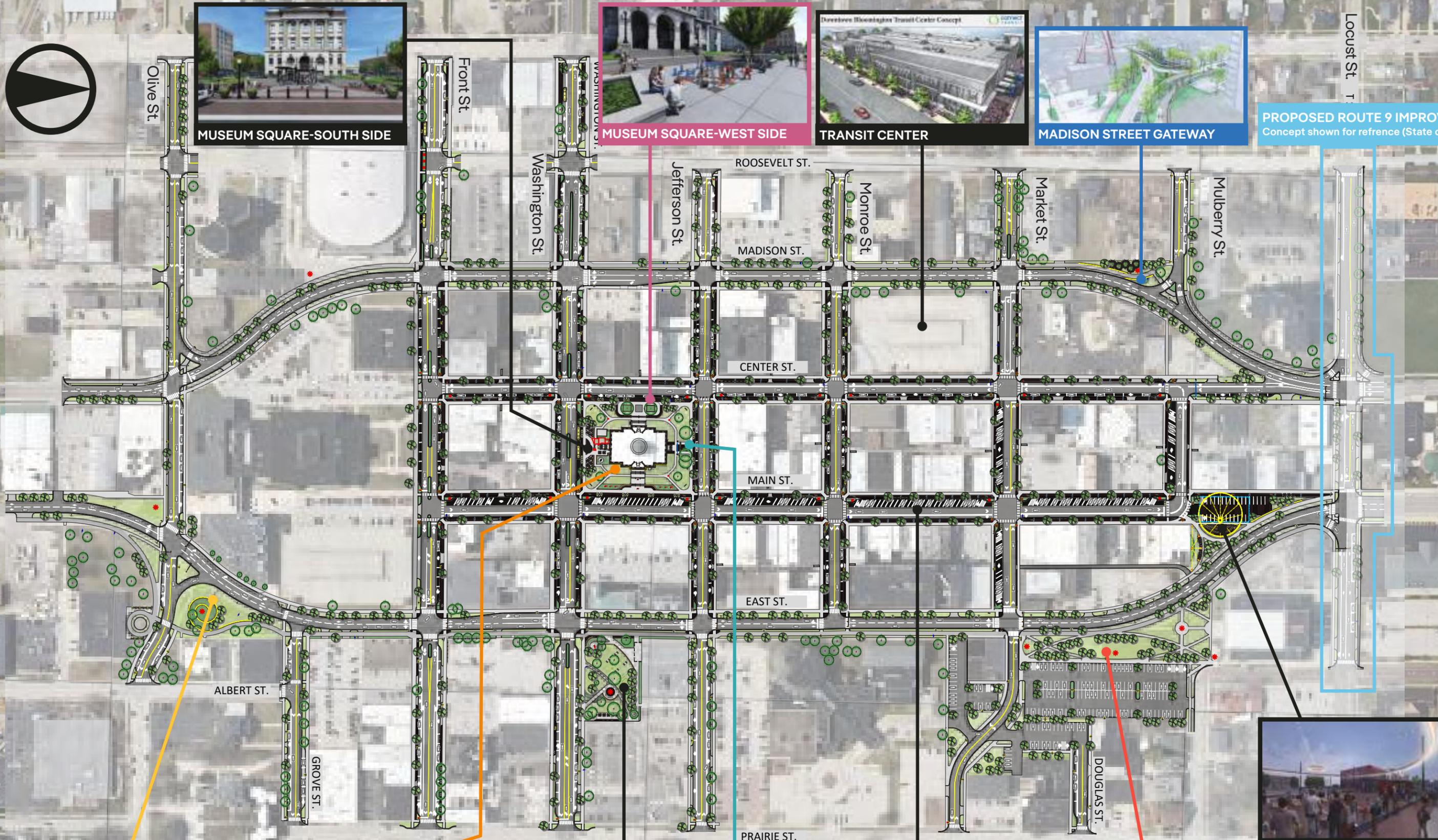
MUSEUM SQUARE-NORTH SIDE



MAIN STREET



BCPA/ DOUGLAS STREET LOTS



06

**Additional Design
Elements**

06

Additional Design Elements

The previous Chapter detailed the streetscaping treatments that will be applied to a specific geographic location (improvements near the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts, for example.) This sixth Chapter explores miscellaneous design elements that are planned throughout all or most of Downtown Bloomington.





Bloomington Public Arts Commission

Acknowledging that the quality of art can be subjective, it is nevertheless appropriate for a qualified body to be appointed in order to provide direction on all of the major art pieces that are curated for public areas. This body's purpose would be to ensure that the art is of proper quality and suitable thematically for the Downtown environment. The intent is not that all of the public art should be uniform, rather that the art pieces should be complimentary to each other and to the intended atmosphere of Downtown Bloomington.

The formation of a "Public Arts Commission" was approved by the City Council. This group might be used to provide the necessary organization and guidance to successfully implement this component of the Streetscaping plan. It is recommended that members of this commission be comprised of active members of Bloomington-Normal's arts community as well as those with experience participating in similar commissions.



PUBLIC ART

The integration of art into the Streetscape Program, although not yet explored in this Report, is nonetheless vital for enhancing Downtown Bloomington and for making it more attractive for visitors and residents. When used effectively, art is able to capture the imagination of the public and inject life into Downtown Bloomington in ways that other elements of the Streetscaping Program cannot.

The notion of public art may conjure images of statues of historical figures, perhaps cast in bronze. However, a great variety of art forms are in fact possible (painted, cast, sculpted, welded...) as well as a vast range of subject matter (abstract, ethnic, social justice, symbolic, landscapes...), all of which have the potential of uplifting the urban energy of Downtown Bloomington and invigorating public spaces.

The purpose of this Report is not to specify the exact art that should be installed Downtown, but rather to provide guidance on effective themes and potential locations, as well as the process by which art should be curated. Note that this section of the Report does not pertain to non-physical art forms (for example, music performed at outdoor concerts or video projection shows, both mentioned previously in this Report).



Murals

Not all art mediums are suitable for outdoor exhibition, given the weather in Central Illinois. Public art proposed for the Downtown Streetscape falls into the category of either murals or sculptures. The former will be the first to be explored.



APPLICATION STANDARDS

There are locations throughout Downtown Bloomington where high-quality murals were painted, but protective sealants were not applied to keep the vibrant colors from fading and the paint from chipping away. In order to combat this from occurring in the future, the City should adopt standards from "Mural Arts Philadelphia" - an organization that supports the creation of public murals and has established recommendations for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the art. The more important application standards include the following: (1) proper cleaning and priming of the wall surface, (2) use of a polytab vinyl fabric adhered to the wall as the "canvas", (3) use of specialized mural quality paints, and (4) periodic application of topcoat protection to reduce the effect of sun damage.

THEMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The subject matter of Downtown murals should, on the whole, speak to a future for Bloomington that honors the dignity and potential of all people. It should be inclusive and inspiring. In a word, the murals should bring "beauty" to Downtown Bloomington.

The actual styles of the murals can and should be diverse. Several examples are explored below:



Murals can consist of paint applied directly to the wall combined with elements painted off-site to simplify the installation.



Ground level elements can create destination opportunities for photos.



Having a mural extend its picture plane beyond one side of the building can create a dynamic visual.



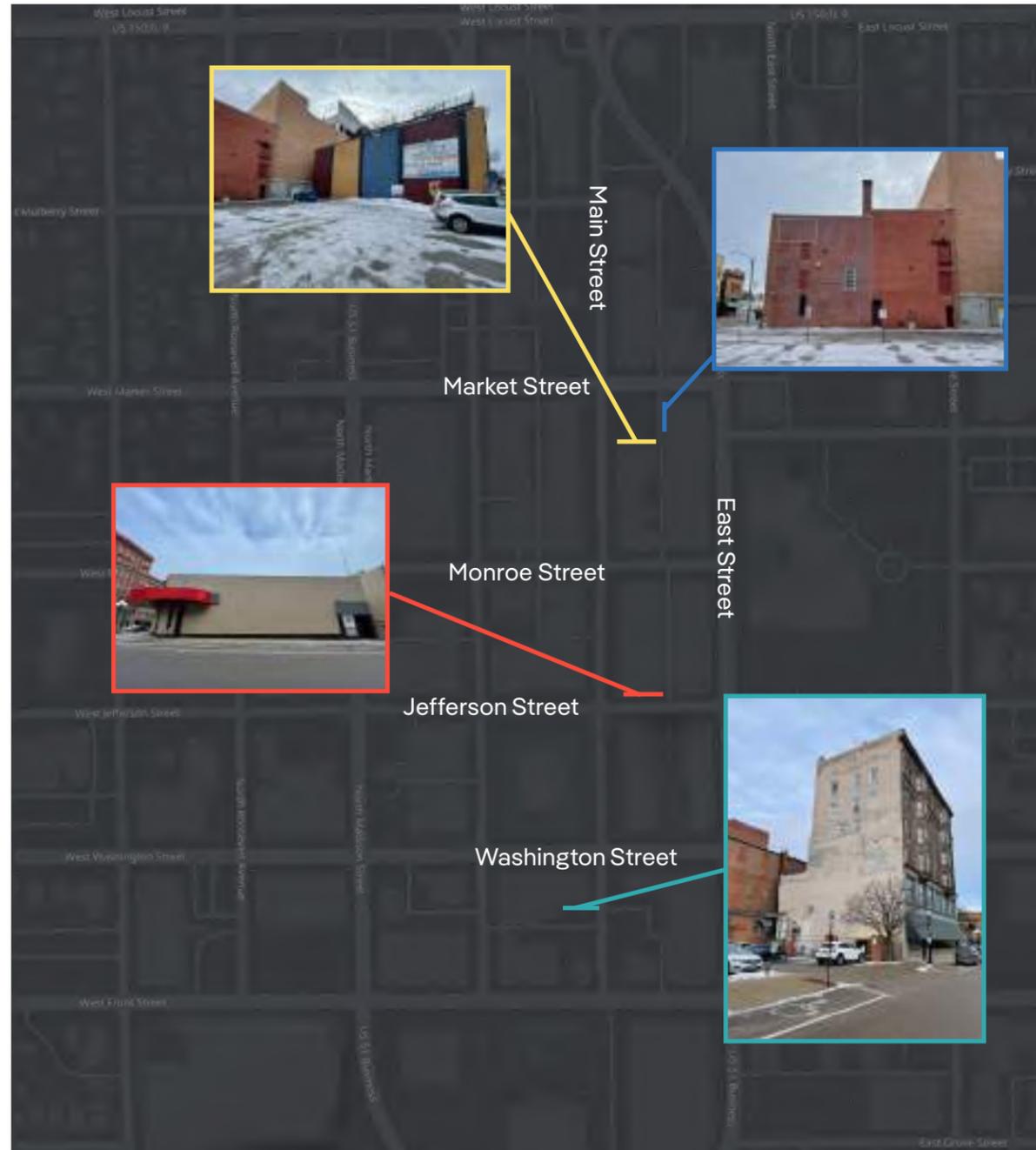
Murals can invoke the sensation of depth by using painted 3-D graphics or by using actual, physical elements.



Strong graphic images translate well at a large scale and make a powerful visual impression.

RECOMMENDED LOCATIONS

There are many potential locations for murals in Downtown Bloomington. A few of the more prominent spots along Main Street are depicted below as an example of what might be possible elsewhere in Downtown. Note that many of the buildings shown are privately owned, and none of the owners have yet been contacted to negotiate access.

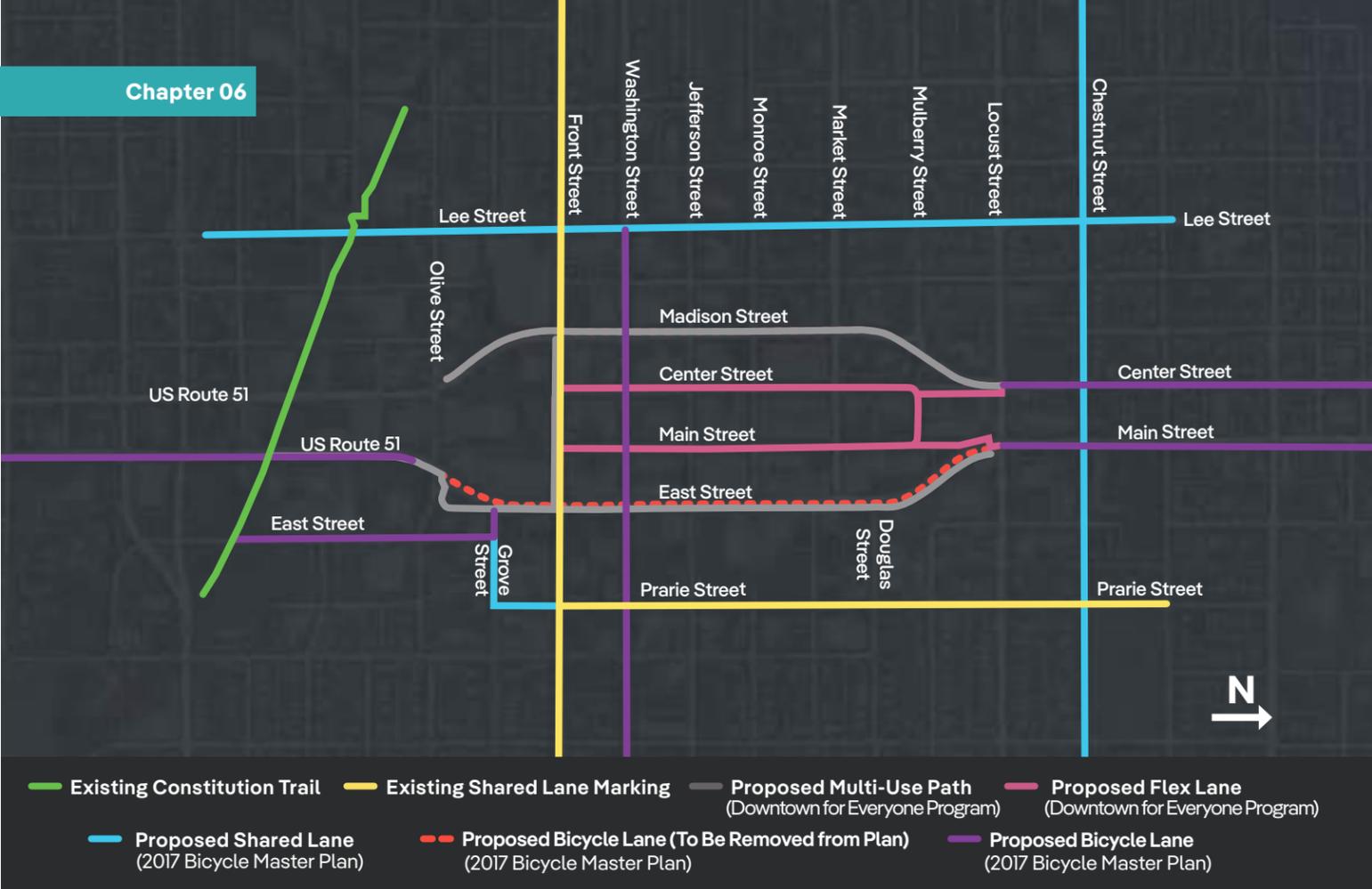


Potential mural locations along Main Street.

Sculptures

The proposed Streetscape Concept provides numerous placeholders for public art sculptures. (For example, see “Intersections” and “Museum Square” sections in Chapter 5). The Design Team recommends the development of a Rotating Sculpture Program, likely administrated by the Bloomington Public Arts Commission. The Program would involve various three-dimensional art structures exhibited at the aforementioned placeholders on a rotating basis, vetted in advance by the Public Arts Commission. A two-year loan period is recommended for the displays, with staggered schedules so that Downtown is constantly exhibiting new pieces. The Program should allow for purchase of the sculptures by the City to add to their public arts collection or to be purchased privately.





BIKE ROUTE/CONSTITUTION TRAIL

The “Bikeability” section in Chapter 1 addresses the absence of adequate bicycle facilities in Downtown Bloomington, with few bike parking racks provided and with bicycle lane striping on just one street block. The Design Team developed plans to dramatically improve these accommodations for bicyclists as well as to establish a connection between these improvements and the broader community bike network.

Chapter 5 details how a Flex Lane will be established on Main Street and Center Street, providing bicyclists the means of easily traversing the Downtown Core. However, if left isolated and without connection to bike routes outside the Core, the Flex Lane is not a meaningful improvement for users. Of particular importance to members of the bicycling community, the Downtown bike route must be connected to Constitution Trail. A popular multi-use path with over 45 miles of trail, Constitution Trail has access to various amenities throughout Bloomington-Normal including restrooms, water fountains, and park shelters with picnic tables. The bike route design depicted on the below map indicates how the connection to Constitution Trail might be made. Even though this design suggests improvements that extend beyond the Study Limits, the Design Team felt it was important to show how a direct connection between Constitution Trail and Downtown Bloomington could eventually be established.

Note also that when bikers approach Downtown, the proposed bicycle route directs users off of US Route 51 and into the Downtown Core. As explained in the “Bicycle Groups” section in Chapter 2, the Design Team recommended that the bike route not be located on US Route 51, as recommended in the City’s “2017 Bicycle Master Plan”, but instead be moved into the City Core for reasons of increased safety and to direct bicyclists to amenities and points of interest Downtown. This change was supported by the community’s bicycle advocacy groups.

DOWNTOWN LIGHTING

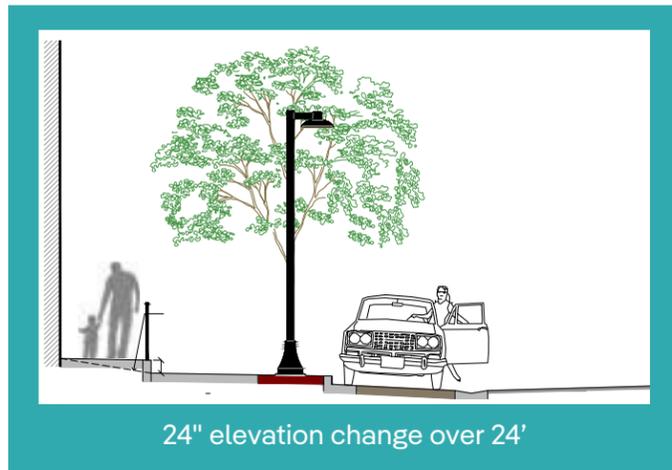
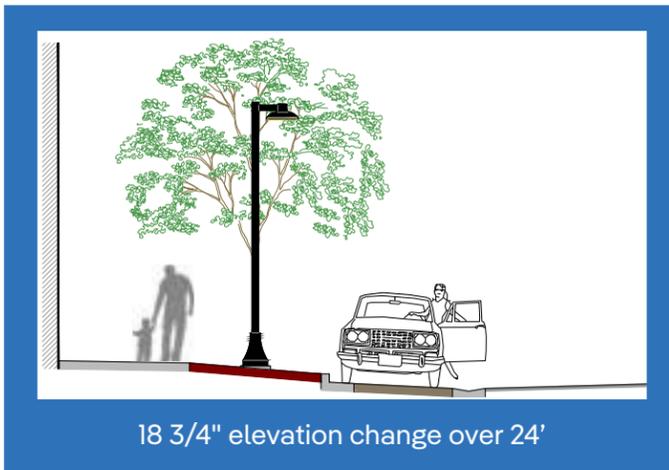
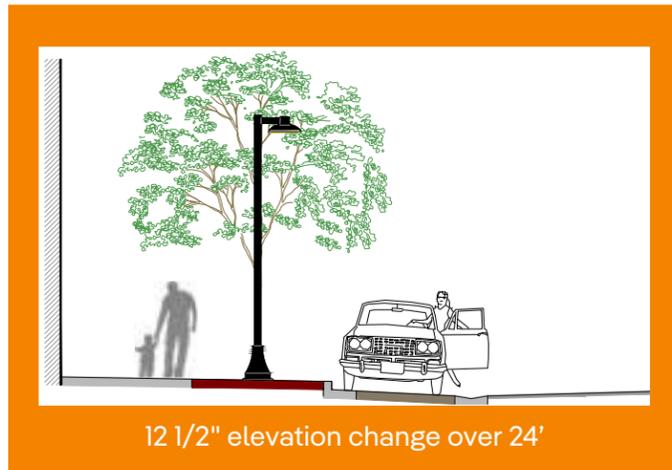
Lighting will be a major contributor to the new look and feel of Downtown Bloomington. From a functional standpoint, lighting must provide the required level of illumination to improve driver and pedestrian safety (see “Accessibility” section in Chapter 1). From an environmental standpoint, upward lighting must be minimized to reduce light pollution (see “Sustainability/Public Health Considerations” section in Chapter 3). Beyond that, lighting presents an opportunity to bring Downtown to life in the evening with dramatic accents and ambient mood lighting.

Several uses of lighting to sensational effect are already described in Chapter 4 of this Report: the ring over the North Main Plaza, the LED bandshell structures on the north side of the old courthouse, the video projection show on the east side of the courthouse, the retrofitted globe light fixtures along Main Street and Center Street, and the arching, lit concrete walls along US Route 51. The Design Team promotes the exploration of additional mood lighting opportunities during the detailed design of individual streetscaping projects. To the extent possible, the lighting schemes should be synchronized across all of Downtown Bloomington so that visitors are provided a uniform Downtown experience, no matter where they happen to be.



ADA ACCESSIBILITY

Far too much of Downtown Bloomington is inaccessible to persons with disabilities (see “ADA Accessibility” section in Chapter 1). Some of these ADA deficiencies are relatively easy to correct: replacing settled sidewalk slabs in order to remove lips between panels, for example. Others are much more challenging. In particular, it can be difficult to provide an accessible sidewalk connection to building entrances from the street, when that entrance is substantially higher than the roadway elevation. In such cases, the cross-slope in the sidewalk between the building entrance and the roadway might normally exceed the maximum allowed by code (resulting in difficult or impossible access for some persons with disabilities), if special accommodations are not made. The Design Team developed a number of solutions to address this all-too-common situation. Several of these solutions are depicted below and are meant to serve as generalized approaches that can later be refined based on the specific requirements of each building entrance.



An example of ADA-compliant access when the building entrance is significantly higher than the adjacent street

In addition to providing ADA-compliant building approaches, the Design Team will incorporate additional accessibility elements into the design such as proper curb ramp geometry, improved running slopes and cross-slopes in sidewalks, and handicapped parking stalls with adequate loading zone space. Regarding the latter, the streetscaping design will include more handicapped parking stalls than the amount required by code (see following “Parking Accommodations” section).

Finally, all of the traffic signals on US Route 51 will be replaced with Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) as part of IDOT’s planned work (see “Illinois Department of Transportation” section in Chapter 2). APS is designed to help pedestrians cross the road who are blind or have poor vision. APS can include various features but at a minimum includes a low locator tone that is played to direct pedestrians to a button with a raised arrow in the direction of the crosswalk. Once pressed, a voice message directs the pedestrian to either wait or to cross the road.



An accessible pedestrian signal

PARKING ACCOMMODATIONS

The concept of “walkability” has been explored at length previously in this Report: the current limitations for walkability Downtown (see “Accessibility” section in Chapter 1), the transformative effect of improving walkability (see “Move the Needle” section in Chapter 3), and the proposed relocation of parking off Main Street and Center Street to establish more pedestrian space (see “Pedestrian Space” section in Chapter 5).

Although the Steering Committee and broader public supported the relocation of parking off Main and Center, the Design Team sought to ensure that the overall Streetscape Design maintained adequate parking accommodations, both in terms of capacity and reasonable access. To do so, the Design Team leveraged two solutions.

CENTRALIZED/CONSOLIDATED PARKING

The first solution sought to emphasize public parking facilities as centralized locations where parking can be consolidated within a reasonable walking distance from businesses, shops, and restaurants that visitors wish to visit. The Design Team acknowledged, however, that what is considered a reasonable walking distance can be highly subjective and varies greatly based on the abilities and disposition of each individual. Walker Consultants, a parking consultant with offices throughout the U.S., developed an industry-accepted means of quantifying the “Level of Service” for walking distance*. For outdoor walking (taking into account the climate of Central Illinois) the following Level of Service Conditions for Walking were determined:

	Walking Distance	Walking Time**	Description
Level of Service A	Up to 400 feet	1 minute 30 seconds	“Best/Ideal”
Level of Service B	Up to 800 feet	3 minutes	“Good”
Level of Service C	Up to 1,200 feet	4 minutes 30 seconds	“Average”
Level of Service D	Up to 1,600 feet	6 minutes	“Below Average”

*Smith M. & Butcher T. (2008, May). *How Far Should Parkers Have to Walk?* National Parking Association PARKING.

**Average walking speed is 3.1 mph (4.6 ft/s)

The below graphic depicts the location of the primary public parking decks and surface parking lots throughout Downtown Bloomington. Notably, every point of Downtown is within 800 feet of one of these public parking facilities (Level of Service B) and a large portion of Downtown is within 400 feet (Level of Service A). A few sample walking distances are illustrated on the graphic to demonstrate this concept.

It is understood that a not-insignificant segment of Downtown visitors is disabled. For these visitors, the above Level of Service Conditions for Walking is not an accurate representation of what is tolerable. The Design Team therefore designed the roadways in Downtown with more accessible on-street parking spaces than the minimum required by code.

LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR WALKING CONDITIONS

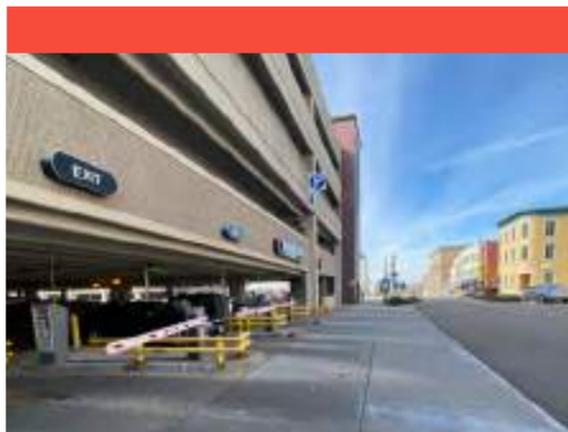


Examples of various walking routes with associated Level of Service for Walking Conditions

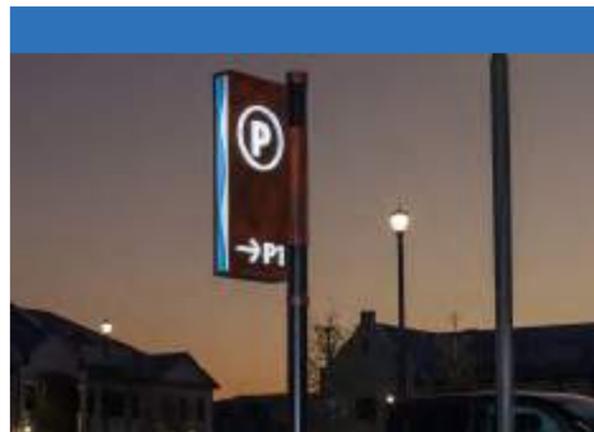


Intentional landscaping can beautify parking lots in order to attract more use.

The extent to which these parking facilities will become viable parking alternatives is dependent not just on walking distance but also on (1) how attractive these areas are and (2) how easily they are for visitors to identify. Regarding the former, thoughtful landscaping and beautification of the parking lots (see “North Main Plaza” and “BCPA/Douglas Street Lots” sections in Chapter 5) as well as greatly improved lighting (see “Downtown Lighting” earlier in this chapter) all serve to make them more attractive to users. Regarding the latter, implementing more overt parking signage will allow drivers to more easily identify parking opportunities. Although the City currently utilizes signage showing the universal parking symbol (“P”), many of these signs are relatively small and not easily visible. Larger, backlit parking signage like the image shown below is more likely to be effective.



Existing parking signage is difficult to see.



Example of more prominent signage

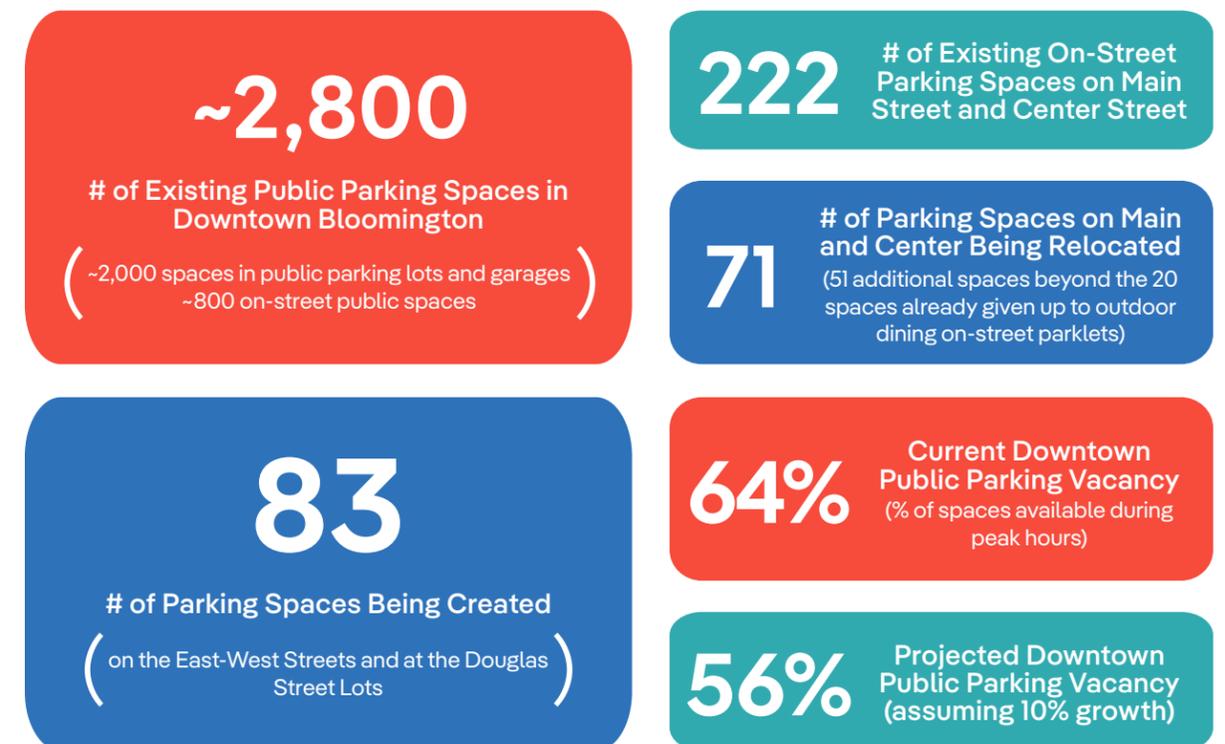
INTERMEDIATE PARKING

The second parking solution to be leveraged is the on-street parking that is located on the East-West streets, useful as an intermediate option located between the public parking facilities and the more popular on-street parking on Main Street and Center Street. As discussed previously, the Design Team was able to reconfigure the space on these streets in a more efficient manner, resulting in the creation of nearly 50 additional parking spaces (see “East-West Streets” section in Chapter 5). Even without accounting for these additional spaces, Walker Consultants, in a recent parking study performed for the City of Bloomington*, indicates that there is abundant on-street parking vacancy (the percentage of spaces available during peak times) on the East-West streets, providing additional parking opportunities.

*Walker Consultants. (2021). Memorandum: Downtown Bloomington Parking Planning - Existing Conditions (Project No. 31-009248).

BY THE NUMBERS

The below statistics help to quantify the concepts that have thus far been discussed. The statistics demonstrate that (1) there will be approximately the same number of parking spaces created as part of the Streetscaping Program than those that are displaced on Main Street and Center Street and (2) there is adequate Downtown parking vacancy (the percentage of spaces available) today and long into the future (taking into account a 10% growth rate). Note: These statistics assume that the 210 parking spaces that are utilized at peak times in the Market Street Garage will be replaced following the demolition of the garage and construction of the new Transit Center (see “Transit Center” section in Chapter 5).

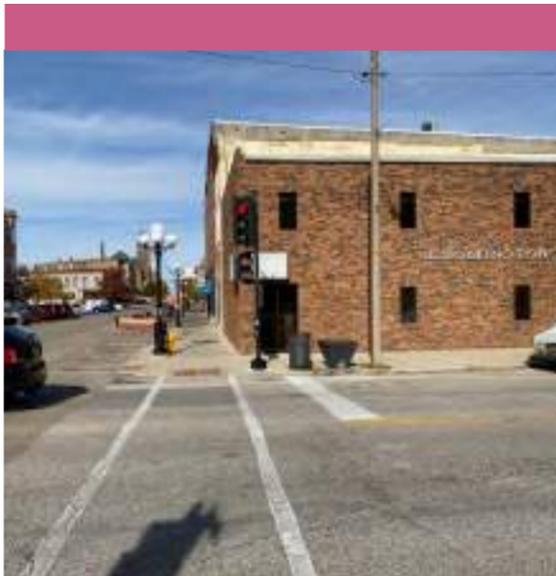


INTERSECTION TRAFFIC CONTROL

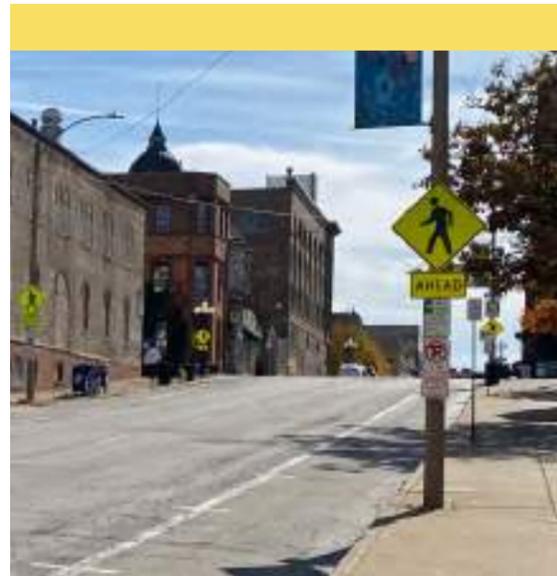
In the spirit of promoting a more pedestrian-friendly Downtown, the Design Team evaluated various intersections to determine if changes might be made to the traffic control devices that currently give priority to vehicular traffic.

On Market Street, the intersections with Main Street and Center Street are currently signalized. Both Main and Center are major pedestrian corridors and would benefit from replacing these traffic signals with stop signs. Using traffic modeling software, the Design Team input traffic counts to model existing conditions and then simulated an all-way stop scenario to determine the impact of designalizing the intersection. For both Main Street and Center Street, the Team determined that designalization would result in smoother vehicular traffic flow, with less delays for drivers and shorter queuing distances (see Volume 3). Because designalization will also result in easier, safer pedestrian movements, all-way stops have been incorporated into the design of both intersections.

The intersection of Monroe Street and Center Street has through traffic for Center with stop signs on Monroe. Similar to the intersections on Market Street, it would be ideal from a pedestrian perspective to add a stop sign to Center Street to make the intersection an all-way stop. However, the road grade on Center leading up to the intersection is excessively steep. Placing a stop sign on Center might result in vehicles having difficulty advancing through the intersection during slick weather conditions, potentially even sliding backwards into the vehicles behind them. The Design Team therefore elected to leave this intersection as-is, so that vehicles can continue forward momentum.



Existing signalized intersection at Market and Main



Steep grade approaching the intersection of Monroe and Center



DOWNTOWN GEOCACHING

Geocaching is a popular outdoor recreational activity where participants use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology (usually on a smartphone) to locate points of local interest. A customized geocaching experience for Downtown visitors can be provided with the development of a customized mobile app and purchase of “beacons”. Beacons are small, wireless devices that transmit Bluetooth signals to nearby smartphones. Beacons are already used by many of the top retailers in the United States (including Macy’s, Target, and CVS) who have found that the use of beacons provide a unique customer experience that has been helpful in invigorating brick-and-mortar stores.

In the context of Downtown Bloomington, beacons would be placed around historical landmarks (the location of Lincoln’s Lost Speech, for example) and public art (where audio of the artist explaining their inspiration for the piece might play) as well as other points of interest and curiosity. The content for the geocaching program might be curated with assistance from the McLean County Museum of History and the Bloomington Public Arts Commission.

The majority of the City’s investment in this program will be in the development and ongoing maintenance of the mobile app. The beacons are relatively inexpensive and can be easily installed at many locations Downtown.



DIGITAL DIRECTORY KIOSKS

The Streetscape Design includes digital directory kiosks, interspersed throughout Downtown. These interactive touch-display signs will be updated with the latest business directories so that visitors to Downtown have easy access to information pertaining to dining and shopping options, as well as upcoming community events. These kiosks will be all-weather resistant and feature bright outdoor displays. Approximately eight to ten of these digital directory kiosks will be installed, predominately in high foot-traffic areas.



GARBAGE MANAGEMENT

One of the more persistent complaints the Design Team received about Downtown Bloomington was that there is excessive garbage in public view. The complaint from one online respondent was typical: “Garbage now is terrible. All the ‘new’ won’t help if the garbage isn’t fixed.” (See Volume 3.)

After further exploration with various stakeholders and City departments, the Team learned that the challenges are contributed by all sources: pedestrians, businesses, and residents.

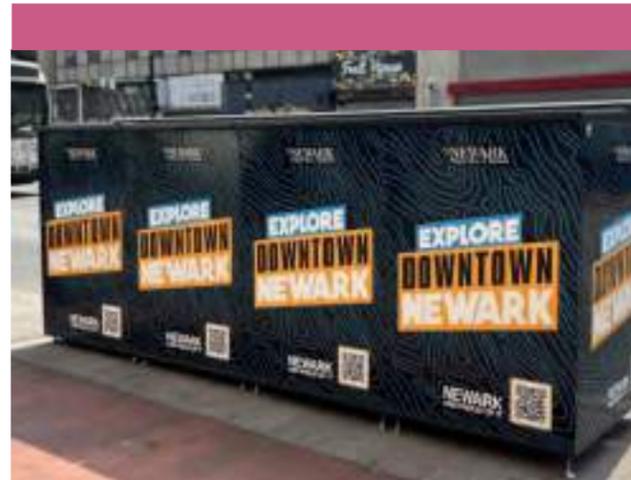
- Residents are instructed to bring out their garbage after 6 p.m. on Tuesdays and place it adjacent to City-owned trash cans on the street that will be picked up at 6 a.m. on Wednesdays. Unfortunately, trash is often set out too early, or too late, or the garbage is comprised of loose material not contained in tied, plastic bags. Because of inadequate trash facilities, residents also sometimes place their trash in dumpsters of private businesses.
- Businesses that don’t have access to a dumpster often place their garbage in the City-owned trash cans on the street. These trash cans (typically 35-gallon canisters) do not have the capacity to support both the business garbage and everyday pedestrian garbage and tend to overflow.
- Pedestrians, often finding no room in the City-owned trash cans, instead put their garbage alongside the cans, exasperating the all-too-common sight (and smell) of trash spilling over onto the street and sidewalk.

The Downtown for Everyone Program’s solution for keeping garbage out of public view involves high-capacity containers located in the “Amenity Strip” that are compatible with the proposed style selected for the Downtown improvements (see “Streetscaping Style” section in Chapter 4). These containers are to be used by both residents and small businesses. Where relatively small amounts of trash generation are anticipated, smaller, decorative containers with matching planters will be utilized. Where larger amounts of trash are anticipated, a larger container will be used which will receive a “wrap” that promotes the Downtown Bloomington brand (see “Campaign Branding” section in Chapter 2). Businesses generating very large amounts of garbage, such as restaurants and bars, should continue to use their dumpsters.

Containers for recycling will be included with the standard garbage containers, both for the smaller decorative containers and for the larger wrapped containers. Both container solutions are modular, meaning the number of containers can easily be increased or decreased if the amount of garbage storage needed is different than initially anticipated.



Standard containers with decorative planters



XL containers with branded graphic wrap

The proposed garbage management solution will require some changes to how collections occur Downtown. In order to ensure that these changes can be supported logistically by the City’s Public Works Department, the Design Team consulted closely with representatives of that Department along with suppliers of the proposed containers.



UTILITIES

During streetscape designs, underground utilities sometimes do not get the same level of attention as the more glamorous improvements aboveground. However, it was a priority of both the City Core Team and the Design Team to ensure that basic utility access to buildings Downtown was not overlooked. Several of the more notable elements of the Team’s utility design are explored below.

Critical Utilities

The “Utility Companies” section in Chapter 2 acknowledges the risk to new streetscaping improvements when the underlying utilities are not first addressed. Any situation where recently constructed improvements are torn out to perform repairs or replacement of aged utilities should be avoided to the extent possible.

To that end, the Design Team coordinated with private utility companies and took into account each company’s capital improvement plans during the development of the design. For public utilities, the Design Team worked with the Water Department and the Department of Operations & Engineering to identify “critical” utilities with an expected useful life of less than twenty years. Replacement of all public utilities matching this description are included in the Opinions of Probable Construction Cost (see Chapter 8: “Program Costs”).

Storm Water Detention

The sustainability benefits of providing storm water detention are described in Chapter 3 (see “Sustainability / Public Health Considerations” section). The advantages of providing detention also include decreased frequency of storm water flooding in Downtown Bloomington and on the west side of Bloomington as well as reduced combined sewer overflows (see below section).

The Design Team included an underground storm water detention system with the design of the North Main Plaza (see “North Main Plaza” section in Chapter 4). There are opportunities to likewise store storm water beneath the Major Butler Lot (located directly north of the Grossinger Motors Arena) and beneath the Douglas Street Lots (see “BCPA / Douglas Street Lots” section in Chapter 5). These locations are good candidates for detention because their footprints are large enough to accommodate an underground system and because they are located on the downstream end of watersheds.

There are also opportunities to store storm water inside the voids of rock that is placed underneath permeable pavers on the Downtown streets. However, just as an inclined bathtub cannot hold much water, so too will the on-street detention only be effective when the running slope of the street is not excessively steep. This limits the application to certain blocks of Downtown.

Combined Sewer Separation

The majority of the streets in Downtown Bloomington include “combined sewers” – that is, pipes that combine discharge from both sanitary sewers and storm sewers. During heavy rainfalls, combined sewers can result in excessively high volumes of sewage to be treated at the downstream Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District treatment plant. But more critically, it can result in serious water pollution events when the sewer system overflows. Additionally, the stench of combined sewers can adversely affect the experience of visitors to Downtown, especially when dining outdoors.

The City of Bloomington has a permit from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to operate these combined sewers but is still under federal mandate to eventually eliminate them. The City has adopted a “Long-Term Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Plan,” but the Streetscaping Program can serve to expedite this process.

Each block in the Downtown Streetscape includes a new storm sewer trunk line connected with new laterals to all storm sewer inlets. This design effectively isolates the combined sewer line and transitions it into a dedicated sanitary sewer line. This is illustrated in the below image.



Existing conditions: storm water and sewage converge into a single combined sewer pipe

Proposed conditions: installing new storm sewer allows for the separation of sewage and storm water

Preparing for Downtown Fiber Optic Installation

During the construction of the Streetscape Improvements, empty pipe conduit and handholes will be installed along the corridors in order to accommodate future fiber optic installation throughout Downtown. The primary benefits to providing fast and reliable internet connections Downtown are as follows:

- Fiber plays a key role in stimulating economic growth. High speed internet attracts businesses (especially those that are high-tech) and enables the digital economy to thrive.
- High speed connections for residential uses are increasingly in demand. Devices such as those that stream video at high resolutions (such as 4k) rely on fast, uninterrupted internet.
- The Bloomington Police Department relies on low network latency to effectively use security cameras. Currently, there are very few locations Downtown where direct connectivity to broadband or fiber installations is possible.

In urban environments such as Downtown Bloomington, it is normally very expensive and disruptive to install fiber optic service. It is therefore essential that conduit and handholes be installed as part of every project when the streets are already torn up, in order to ease fiber installation in the future.





LANDSCAPING DESIGN

Landscaping is an essential component of the Streetscaping Design. The use of street trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, and perennial flowers provides a means to soften the “concrete jungles” of Downtown (see “Roadway Network & Traffic” section in Chapter 1) and to enhance sustainability and public health initiatives (see “Increased Greenery” section in Chapter 3). In effect, a green Downtown Bloomington keeps people cooler, allows them to breathe easier, and reduces their stress – all allowing greater enjoyment of Downtown’s offerings.

Plantings should reinforce the aesthetic of the Streetscape Style (see “Streetscaping Style” section in Chapter 3) and provide structure to Downtown’s open spaces. In general, Downtown plant material should be simple and restrained. The variety of species should be limited, yet not create monocultures. A broad-stroke use of plants in large rows and masses is generally preferred to fussy, intricate plantings to maintain a proper scale relationship with the large Downtown buildings. More intricate and small-scale plantings are appropriate only in select locations for seasonal display.



Care should be taken when establishing Downtown plantings to avoid inadvertently creating less safe visibility issues. Plants should be selected and positioned to avoid obstructing the visibility of pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists. A minimum 25-foot by 25-foot visibility triangle free from obstructions should be maintained at every street intersection. Strategies established using “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)” guidelines including surveillance, access control, and territorial reinforcement should be considered during the design process.

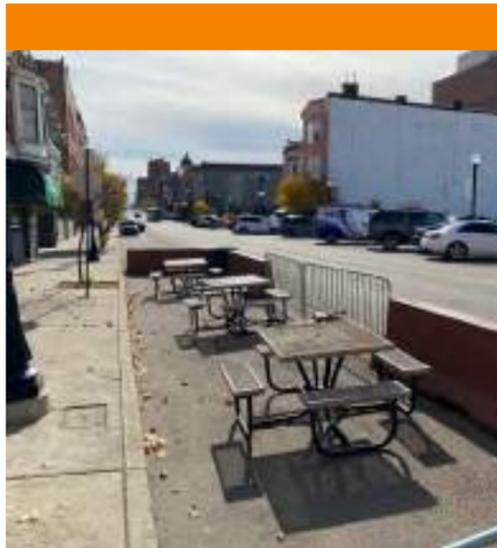
Plant material should be selected that is appropriate and tolerant of urban environments. Trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, and perennial flowers should also be selected for aesthetic qualities and to screen unattractive elements. A list of recommended tree species is included in the Design Standards section (see Volume 2).



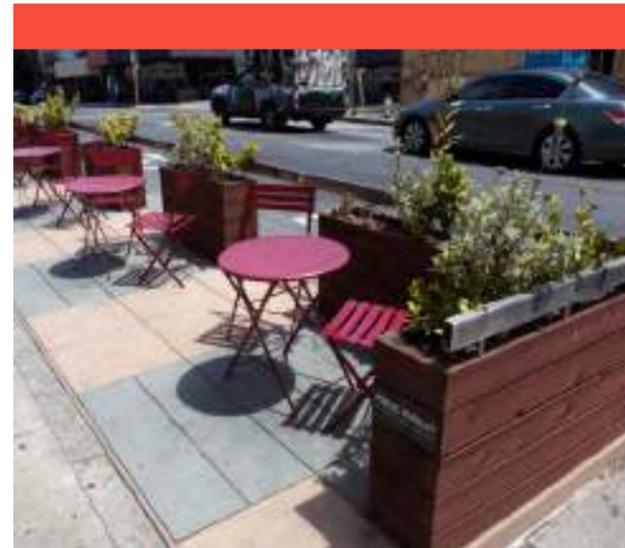
DESIGN STANDARDS

To ensure that the future Streetscaping improvements meet the design intent expressed throughout this Report and that they are consistent from project to project, a “Design Standards” document is provided at the beginning of Volume 2 for future reference. This document includes product information sheets and specifications for such improvements as benches, paver selections, colors, light fixtures, and tree species.

The document also provides guidelines for “parklets” – temporary platforms used primarily for outdoor dining that are situated within parking lanes adjacent to sidewalks. Although the new Streetscape Design accommodates nearly all outdoor dining within the wider sidewalk space, there may still be a few locations Downtown (primarily on East-West streets) where parklets become necessary. These new standards will result in parklet installations that have better accessibility and are much more attractive.



An existing parklet Downtown.

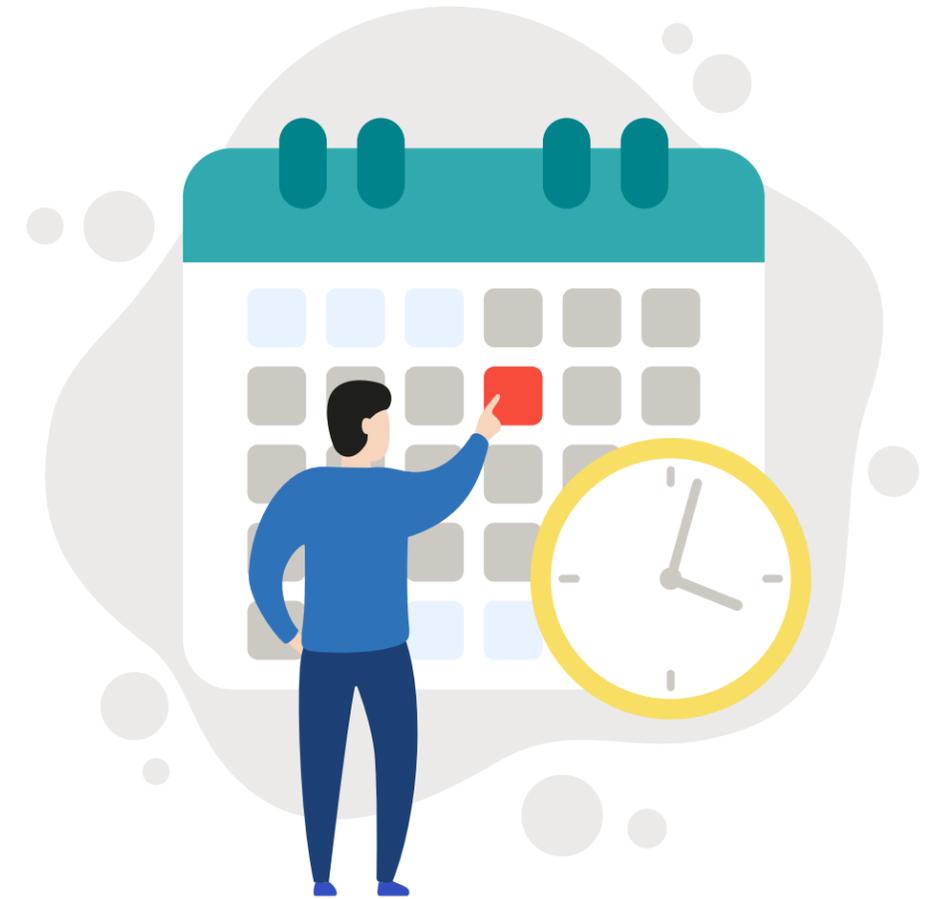


An example of an accessible, attractive parklet

07

Program Phasing

07



Program Phasing

The next step in the development of the Streetscaping Plan involves the grouping of the individual street blocks into logical construction projects and then sequencing those projects based on pre-determined criteria, resulting in a program phasing plan.

PHASING CONSIDERATIONS

When determining the order in which a project will be constructed, there are a great many considerations for prioritizing one project over another. The Design Team discussed these criteria extensively with the City Core Team and the Steering Committee, as well as encouraging feedback from the general public. The following considerations were prioritized as a result of these conversations.



Construction Disruptions

Construction will inevitably be disruptive to businesses in the short term. In order to minimize the impact of construction on the welfare of these businesses, the Design Team developed a sequencing plan that involves a pattern of alternating streets (see Phasing Plan on page 116). The purpose of this pattern is to ensure that drivers never need to detour more than one block away from any business they intend to frequent. Likewise, this approach minimizes inconveniences for Downtown residents.



Parking Availability

The Streetscaping Plan involves some re-shuffling of parking, from Main and Center over to some other locations (see “Parking Accommodations” section in Chapter 6). As a result, projects that establish additional parking capacity (such as the BCPA/Douglas Lots Project) were moved earlier in the program.

US Route 51

The streetscaping improvements proposed for the highway are extensive and will require significant coordination efforts between the City and the Illinois Department of Transportation, including performing detailed Intersection Design Studies for all sixteen highway intersections in Downtown Bloomington. IDOT also has plans for short-term improvements to the highway (see “Illinois Department of Transportation” section in Chapter 2), tentatively scheduled to begin in Summer, 2025. For these reasons, and because there are many more “low-hanging fruit” opportunities elsewhere, other projects in the program were prioritized, particularly those inside the Downtown Core.

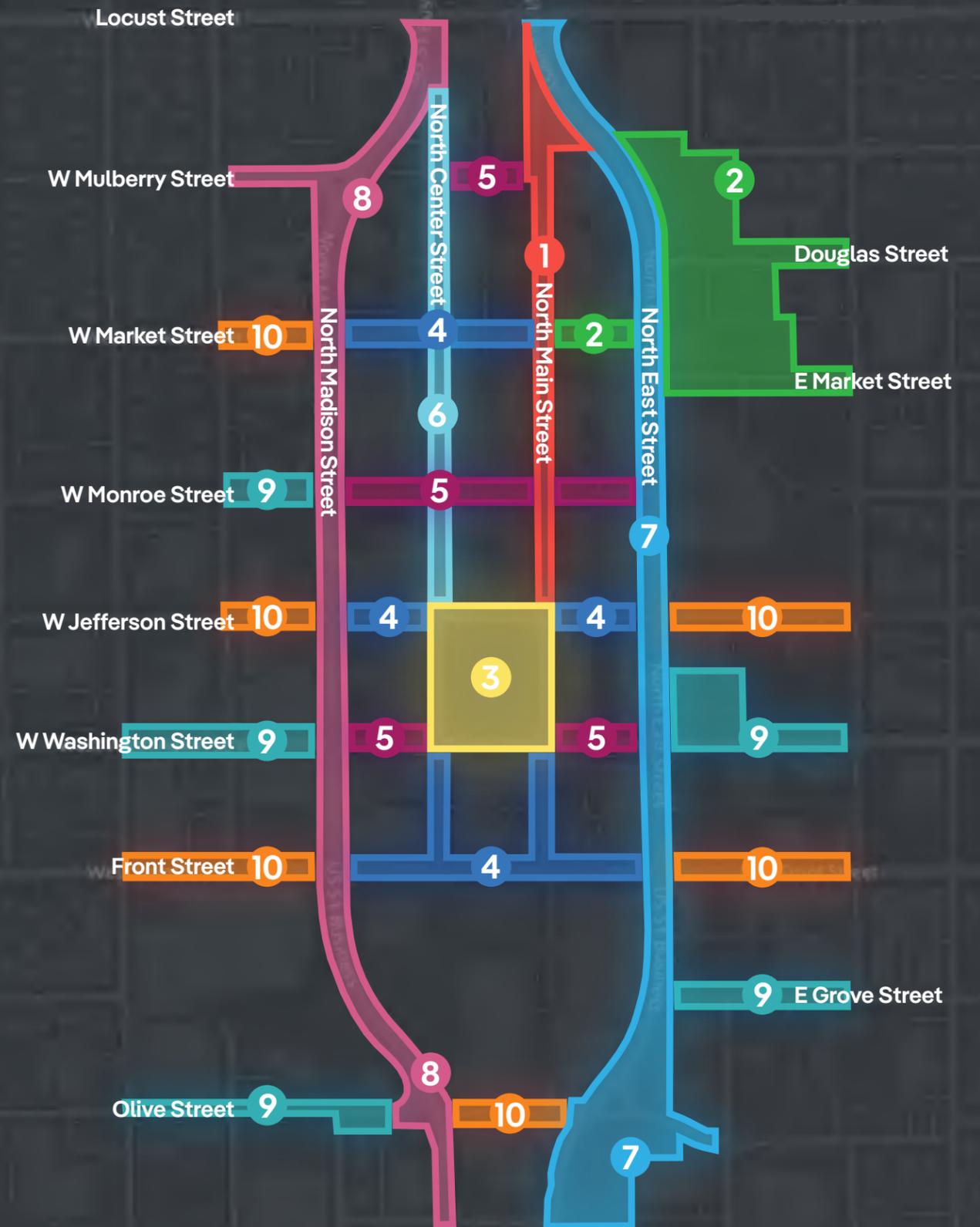


Transit Center

Construction for the Transit Center is tentatively scheduled for Fall of 2024 through 2026 (see “Transit Center” section in Chapter 5). This is a major project and will involve extensive construction activities. As a result, the Center Street Project was moved later in the phasing so that construction activities between the two projects would not conflict.



- 1** **Project #1** – 300, 400, 500, & 600 Blocks of North Main Street (see “Main Street” section, Chapter 4) and North Main Plaza
- 2** **Project #2** – Bloomington Center for Performing Arts / Douglas Street Parking Lots and 100 Block of East Market Street
- 3** **Project #3** – Museum Square and surrounding streets
- 4** **Project #4** – 100 & 200 Blocks of West Market Street, 200 Block of West Jefferson Street, 100 Block of East Jefferson Street, 100 & 200 Block of West Front Street, 100 Block of East Front Street, 100 Block of North Center Street, and 100 Block of North Main Street
- 5** **Project #5** – 100 Block of West Mulberry Street, 100 & 200 Blocks of West Monroe Street, 100 Block of East Monroe Street, 200 Block of West Washington Street, and 100 Block of East Washington Street
- 6** **Project #6** – 300, 400, 500, & 600 Blocks of North Center Street
- 7** **Project #7** – 300 Block of South Main Street, 100 and 200 Block of South East Street, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, & 600 Blocks of North East Street
- 8** **Project #8** – 300 Block of South Center Street, 100 and 200 Block of South Madison Street, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, & 600 Blocks of North Madison Street, 300 Block of West Mulberry Street
- 9** **Project #9** – 300 Block of West Monroe Street, 300 and 400 Blocks of West Washington Street, 200 Block of East Washington Street, 200 Block of East Grove Street, and 200, 300, & 400 Blocks of West Olive Street
- 10** **Project #10** – 300 Block of West Market Street, 200 Block of East Jefferson Street, 300 Block of West Jefferson Street, 300 & 400 Blocks of West Front Street, 200 Block of East Front Street, and 100 Block of West Olive Street



PHASING FLEXIBILITY

It is unlikely that the actual order in which projects are undertaken will exactly match the proposed phasing plan. There are many unforeseen future circumstances that might force the City to reevaluate the priorities of the individual projects. For example, a private development might expedite investment in a certain area of town. Or a new funding source may become available that is tied to a certain application (improvement of state routes, for example). Understanding that some shakeup of the phasing plan is probable, the real value in developing this phasing plan is that criteria for prioritizing projects have now been established which can later be utilized to prepare future phasing plans.

Another benefit of this exercise is that the first streetscaping project to be implemented under the adopted plan was identified: the 300, 400, and 500 blocks of North Main Street as well as the North Main Plaza (see Chapter 4: “Streetscape Improvements”). This first project was selected because it is likely to make an immediate “splash”: There are already many popular restaurants and shops on Main Street which provides the project with a terrific “jump start” towards inciting increased economic activity and urban vibrancy. In addition, the implementation of this particular project is made easier because the project limits are under complete ownership by the City - resulting in minimal coordination required with outside agencies.

08

Program Costs

08

Program Costs

One of the key requisites for successfully managing a long-term plan like the Streetscape Concept is first having a reasonably approximate estimation of construction costs for each of the identified projects. This allows City decision makers to develop both annual and long-term budget strategies and, in conjunction with the phasing plan (see Chapter 7: “Program Phasing”), determine when to pursue specific funding opportunities.



COST ESTIMATION APPROACH

In order to develop an Opinion of Probable Costs that is reasonably accurate, the Design Team included the following steps in the estimation process.



High-Level Quantity Take-Off

Although the high-level nature of this Streetscape Concept does not allow for detailed surveys for identifying construction quantities, the Design Team nevertheless performed an extensive estimation of the quantities for probable Downtown improvements (a “quantity take-off”) to the level of detail that is possible at this stage of the program. The future design of each of the individual projects will include a physical topographic and boundary survey that identifies the details of existing conditions, such as exact pavement grades, sizes and locations of utility services, etc. This survey, along with the detailed technical design of the improvements, will yield the quantities of construction work (cubic yards of earthwork, linear feet of storm sewer, etc.) anticipated for the project at much greater precision.

Determination of Unit Costs

Applying unit costs to the quantity take-off yields the estimated construction costs for the project. However, there are a number of factors which make determination of unit costs a challenge. These include (1) fluctuation in material and labor prices, (2) varying magnitudes of contract quantities (large quantities can result in economies of scale, small quantities often result in higher pricing), and (3) contractor availability (saturated markets lead to higher pricing while unsaturated markets lead to more aggressive contractor pricing).

The most appropriate method for determining unit costs is to analyze historic costs where data is available and to secure quotes directly from suppliers and vendors. Regarding the former, the Design Team extensively researched recent bid tabs from Illinois Department of Transportation projects that were constructed in McLean County as well as information from CMT’s own bid databases. Regarding the latter, the Design Team had many conversations with suppliers of specialty items such as video projection equipment, garbage compactors, and digital directory signs in order to determine the most current pricing.

Inclusion of Design Contingencies

In order to minimize future construction cost overruns, the Design Team also included a design contingency in the estimates. Design contingency is understood to represent costs added to the estimate to allow for items, conditions, or events for which the future state or occurrence is uncertain, but that experience shows will likely result in additional costs. This can account for “known unknowns” (for example, the Design Team is aware that there are unmapped vaults located on North Main Street) and “unknown unknowns” (for example, excavation of the roadway may reveal utilities or underground storage tanks that were not disclosed on any available record documents).

The amount of contingency to include in the cost opinions is a matter of judgment and can range from 5% to as high as 30%. An overly conservative contingency can render the program unfeasible, while an inadequate contingency can put the program at risk for exceeding the allotted budget. The Design Team together with the City Core Team determined that a contingency of 15% is reasonable, based on the level of design and considering the extent to which existing conditions have been evaluated.

COST OPINIONS

This section of the Report now provides the Opinion of Probable Costs for each of the individual projects. (Note that the below figures represent “total project costs” - that is, not just construction costs but also “soft costs” such as professional design fees.) But first, a brief exploration of exclusions is necessary. In general, all construction activities and items that are anticipated to be part of the projects are included in the cost estimate. However, there are several elements that are appropriate to exclude at this time.

- Any purchasing or leasing of public art.
- Encountering any unforeseen buried historical artifacts.
- Any extension of 480-volt electrical service to facilitate installation of Level 3 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. (The estimates assume Level 2 EVCS will be installed).
- Any escalation of costs due to future inflation.
- Any increase or decrease in construction costs due to undertaking very large or very small construction projects. (The estimates assume that projects will be undertaken in their entirety, one at a time.)
- Any property acquisition costs.

Downtown Core Program

1	\$12,900,000
2	\$8,390,000
3	\$14,550,000
4	\$11,200,000
5	\$5,940,000
6	\$6,030,000
	<hr/>
	\$59,010,000

Highway Program*

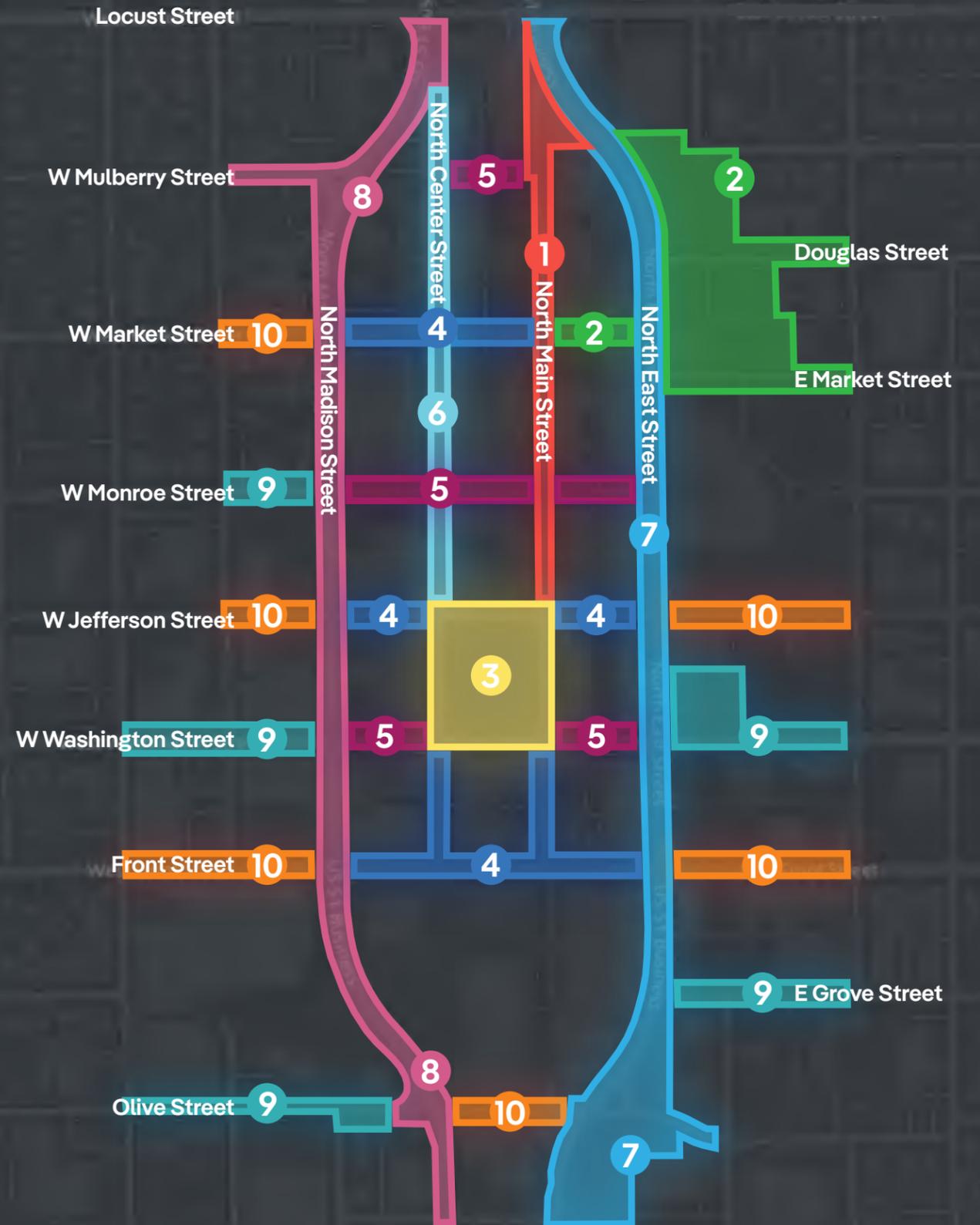
7	\$3,378,000
8	\$3,344,000
	<hr/>
	\$6,722,000

Downtown Fringe Program**

9	\$6,379,500
10	\$5,025,000
	<hr/>
	\$11,422,500

* Estimate for Highway Program assumes that local funds (\$6,722,000) will be supplemented with State/Federal grants & earmarks (\$26,888,000) to make up the total program cost (\$33,610,000).

** Estimate for Downtown Fringe Program assumes that local funds (\$11,422,500) will be supplemented with private development cost sharing (\$3,807,500) to make up the total program cost (\$15,230,000).



OUTSIDE FUNDING SOURCES

Although the costs associated with the Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Program are significant, there are outside funding sources that could supplement local funding. Different state and Federal grants have requirements satisfied by different project elements. The funding sources identified by the Design Team are as follows:



Federal Programs

US DOT RAISE Grants

RAISE grants are competitively awarded to projects with a significant local or regional impact. For Bloomington, the minimum grant award would be \$1 million, with a \$25 million maximum award for projects ending in construction. Additional “planning grant” funds are available for advanced planning and design of projects, with no minimum award. The RAISE grant program is highly competitive and, while program priorities may change based on presidential priorities, generally focuses on projects that support safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility, and economic development. A 20% non-federal cost share is required.

US DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grants

SS4A is a discretionary program to fund regional and local initiatives to improve roadway safety. In general, implementation grants from the program – which are the only grants that can be used for permanent construction – are geared toward areas with a history of crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries. McLean County Regional Planning Commission’s ongoing update of the Go:Safe McLean County Action Plan may help identify projects that would be suited for an implementation grant in the future, if persistent roadway safety problems exist. Implementation grant awards are typically between \$2.5 million to \$25 million per project. A 20% non-federal cost share is required.

US DOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grants

This program focuses on eliminating or mitigating transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, access, or economic development. Eligible facilities include, among others, roads and highways. Capital grants can be used to improve access across a dividing facility or to build or improve Complete Streets. There is no minimum or maximum award, but a 20% local match may be required.

US HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The City’s existing CDBG entitlement funds could be used for public facilities improvements, provided they primarily benefit or create jobs for low- and moderate-income residents. Eligible improvements include recreational facilities and parks, including “architectural design features and other treatments aimed at improving aesthetic quality (e.g., sculptures, fountains).” Maintenance and operating costs for public facilities are not eligible.

Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding

- **US DOT Local Transportation Priorities Funding** – Federal funding that can be earmarked by members of Congress for capital projects or project-specific planning and design on surface transportation projects. A 20% match is required.
- **US HUD Economic Development Initiative Projects** – Federal account that can be “earmarked” by members of Congress for uses similar to CDBG.
- **American Rescue Plan Local Government Funds** – The COVID-19 relief funds directed to states and local governments under the American Rescue Plan can be used for road, water, and sewer infrastructure improvements. These funds must be obligated or under contract by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026.



State Programs

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

ITEP is a bi-annual surface transportation grant program that can be used for a broad range of infrastructure improvements. These improvements include roadway upgrades, streetscapes, historic preservation of historic transportation facilities, and bike/ped infrastructure, among others. The ITEP carries a maximum award of \$2 million per project.

Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grant (OSLAD)

This state program provides funding for local governments for acquisition or development of land of public parks and open space. Eligible projects include the development of things such as playground facilities, park roads or paths, amphitheaters, band shells, and other park developments. The program awards up to \$1.725 million for land acquisition projects and \$600,000 for development & renovation projects.

State Line Items

Funding can be “earmarked” by state legislators for economic development projects or other uses as part of the capital appropriations process. Funds are typically flexible but must be identified by a legislator as a priority in their district. These line items are typically under \$3 million in years when a larger, multi-year capital bill passes and smaller in other years.

Rebuild Downtowns & Main Streets Capital Program

This state-funded infrastructure program supports improvements and encourages investment in downtowns that have experienced disinvestment, particularly in communities hardest hit by COVID-19. The program funds capital projects including the new construction or rehabilitation of roads, parking, sidewalks, bike paths, or other public spaces including parks and mixed-use or transit-oriented developments. The only round of grants from this program to date was awarded in 2023. However, if additional funding is made available, Bloomington would likely compete well. Awards in the 2023 round were between \$250,000 and \$3 million per project.



Private Funding Options

Corporate Sponsorships

There are several locations in the Downtown for Everyone Streetscape Concept that may be attractive to corporate sponsors. Naming rights (for the “North Main Plaza” for example) may be exchanged for partial or complete funding from the corporate entity.

Private Development

As major private developments are attracted to Downtown Bloomington (a new hotel for example), the resulting construction disturbance of the adjacent streets will provide an opportunity for the developer to share in the costs of the streetscaping improvements or perhaps fully bear them, depending on the nature of any development agreements.

Public Private Partnerships

Public Private Partnerships (or PPPs) make large-scale government projects possible. PPPs involve a collaboration between a private entity and, in this case, the City of Bloomington, to finance Streetscaping projects. Typically, private capital financing of the project is provided in exchange for future taxpayer revenue to cover the private entity’s profit requirements. Many significant infrastructure projects around the country have been constructed that would not have been possible without the involvement of a PPP.

This is not an exhaustive list of potential funding sources, as other funding options may become available in the future.

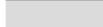
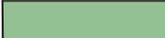
09 Drawings

09 Drawings

The final Chapter of the Report provides drawings for every block in the Downtown Bloomington study area. The drawings are the culmination of the many design iterations, discussions with key stakeholders, and feedback from the public-discussed at length in the prior Chapters of the Report.

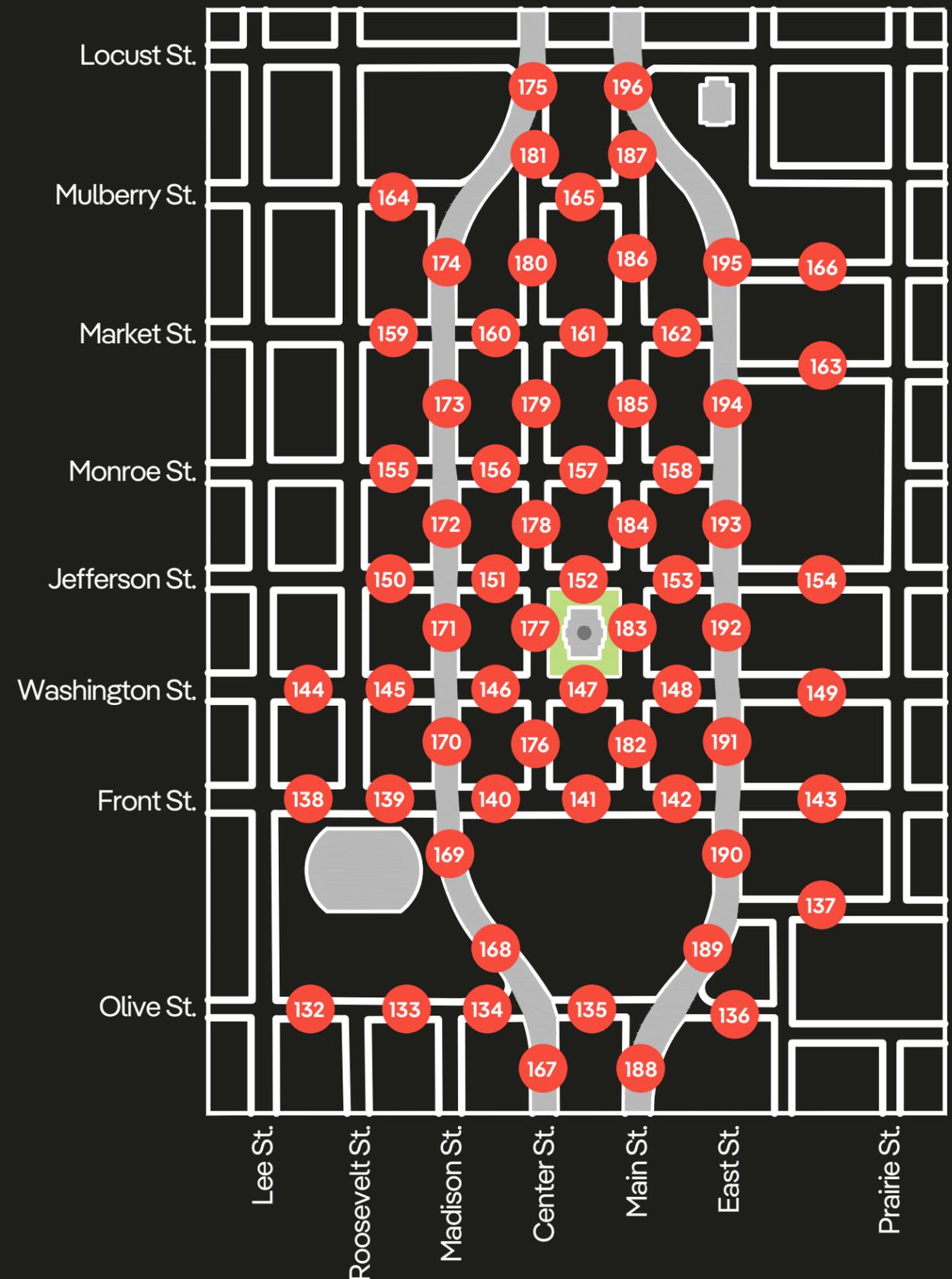
The drawings are representative of a high level of planning, not of a detailed design – as such, the location of individual benches, trash containers, etc. shown on the drawings is approximate only and will be refined during future stages of the Program.

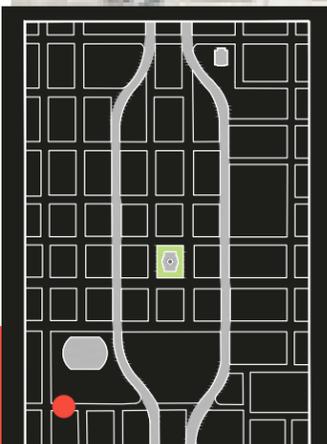
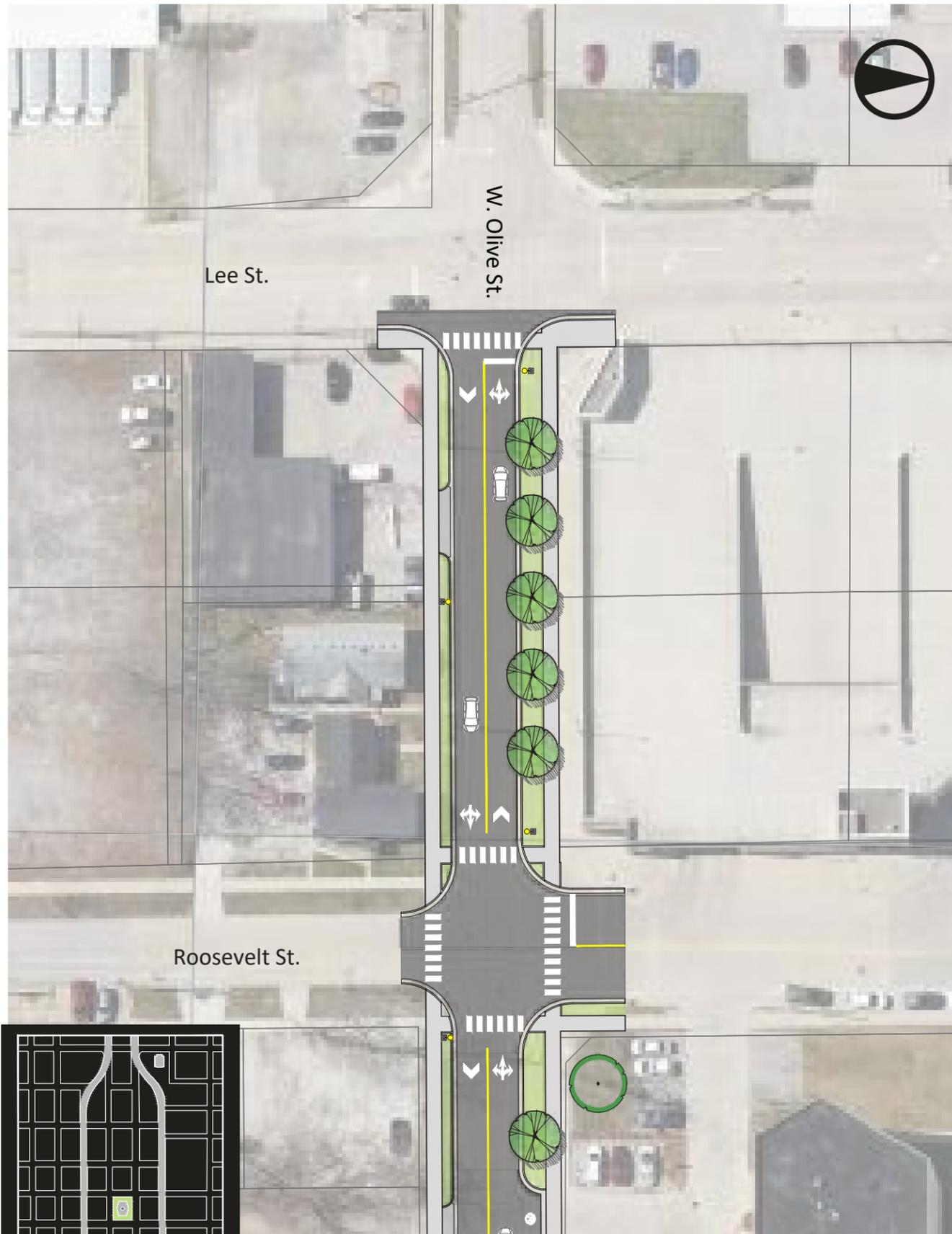
LEGEND

	5-Globe Light - Modernized		Concrete Sidewalk
	1-Globe Light - Relocated		Concrete Crosswalk
	Pedestrian Light - 15' fixture mounting ht.		Brick Pavers (Pedestrian Areas), Running Bond Pattern
	Area Light - 25' mounting ht.		Permeable Pavers (Parking Areas), Herringbone Pattern
	Existing Traffic Signals		Asphalt Pavement
	Sculpture / Interpretive Element		Conc. Driveway Pavement
	Bollard (Removable or Retractable)		Invisible Sub-grate for Tree
	Bench - Relocated		Existing Tree
	Bench - New		Shade Tree
	Trash Receptacle - Relocated		Evergreen Tree
	Trash Receptacle - New		Plant Bed
	Trash Containers		Turf Grass
	Planter - Circular		Existing Overhead Gateway Sign
	Planter - Rectangular		Existing Wayfinding Sign
	Table and Chairs		
	Flex Lane Overhead Sign		
	Flagpole		
	Bicycle Rack		
	Stop Sign		
	Bags Board		
	Site Wall		
	Site Wall with Lights		

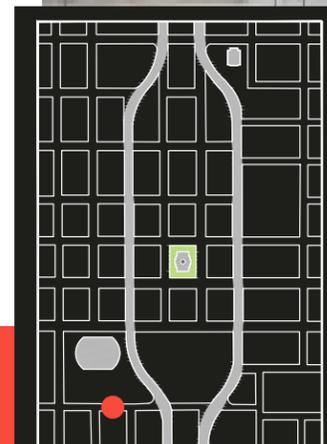
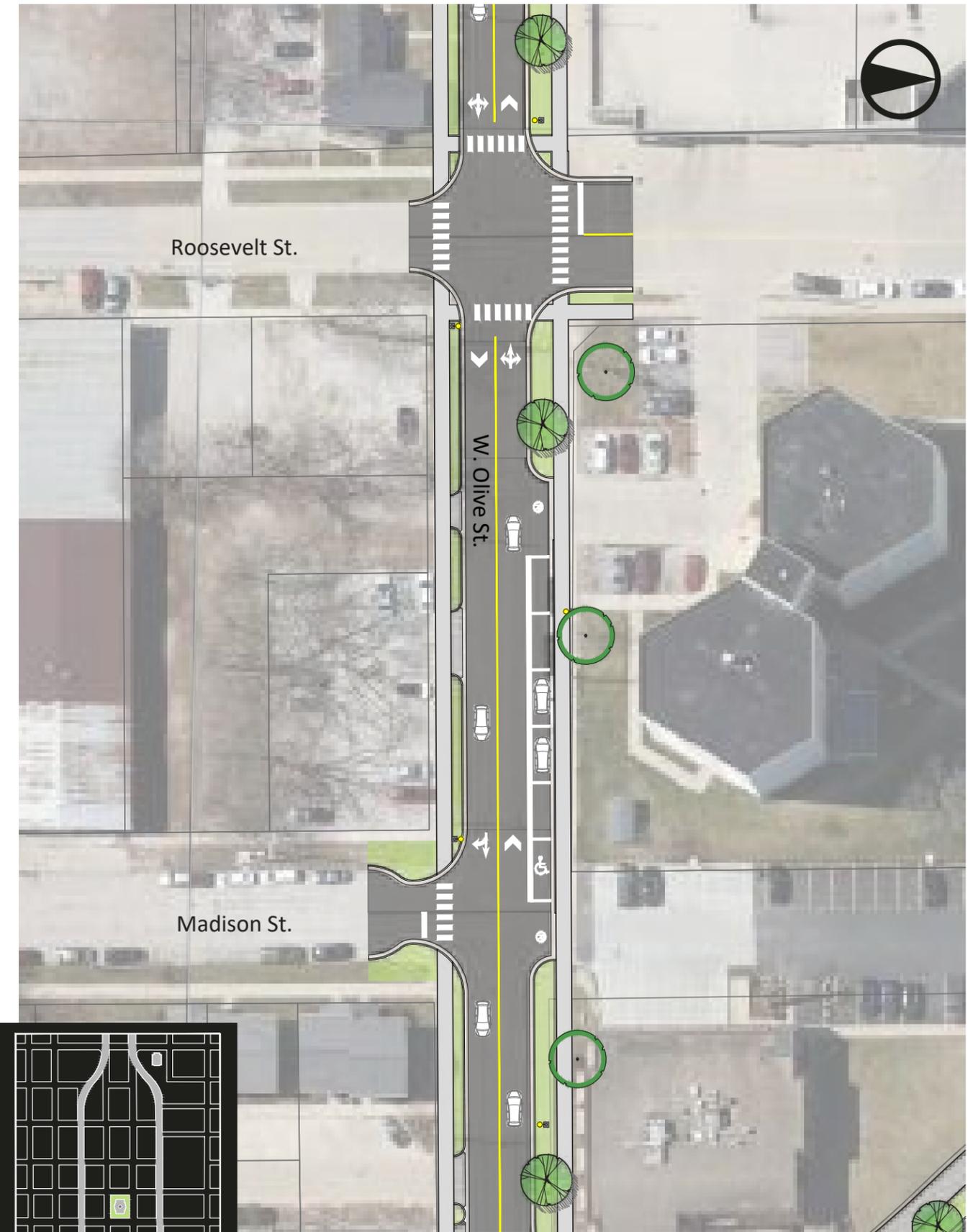
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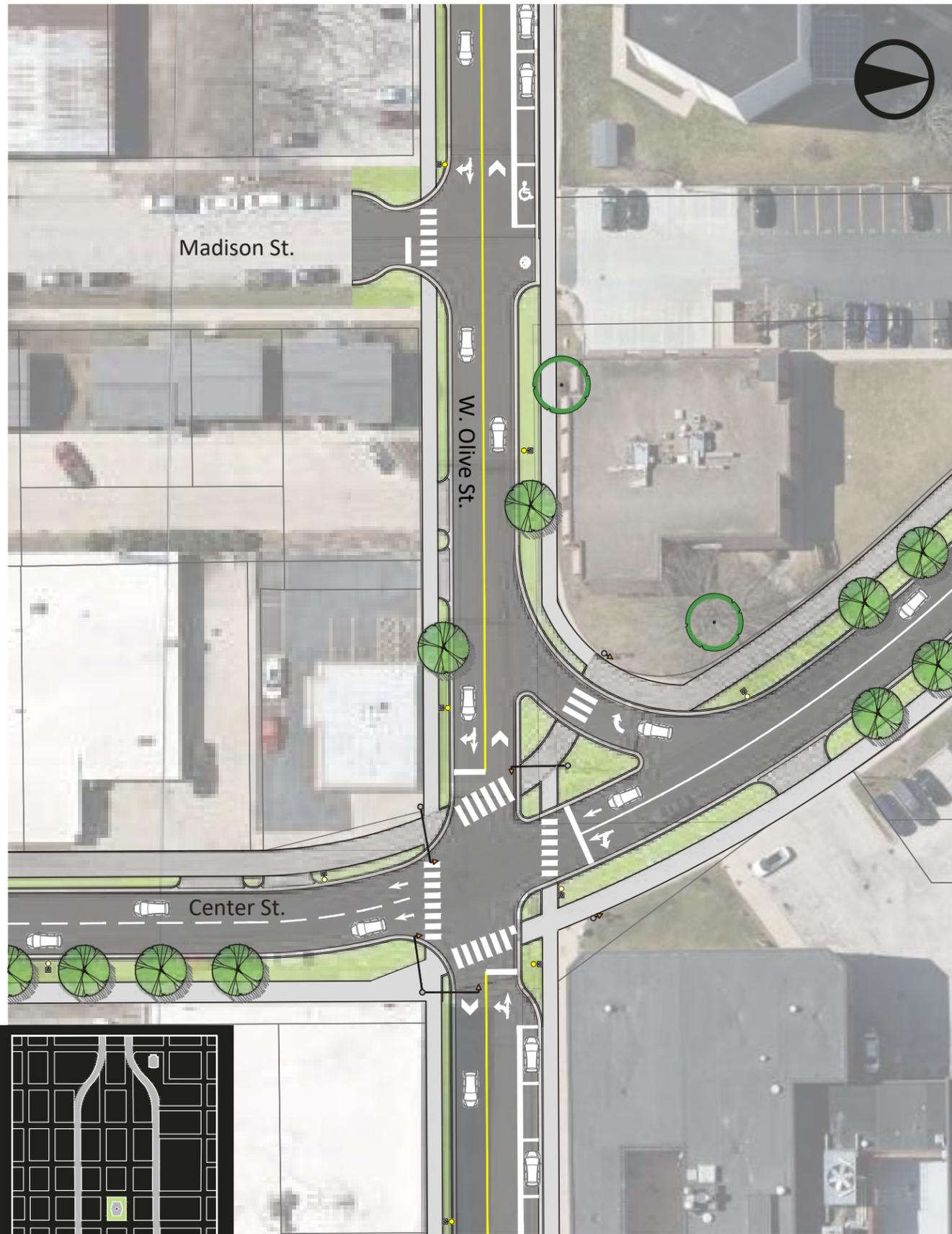




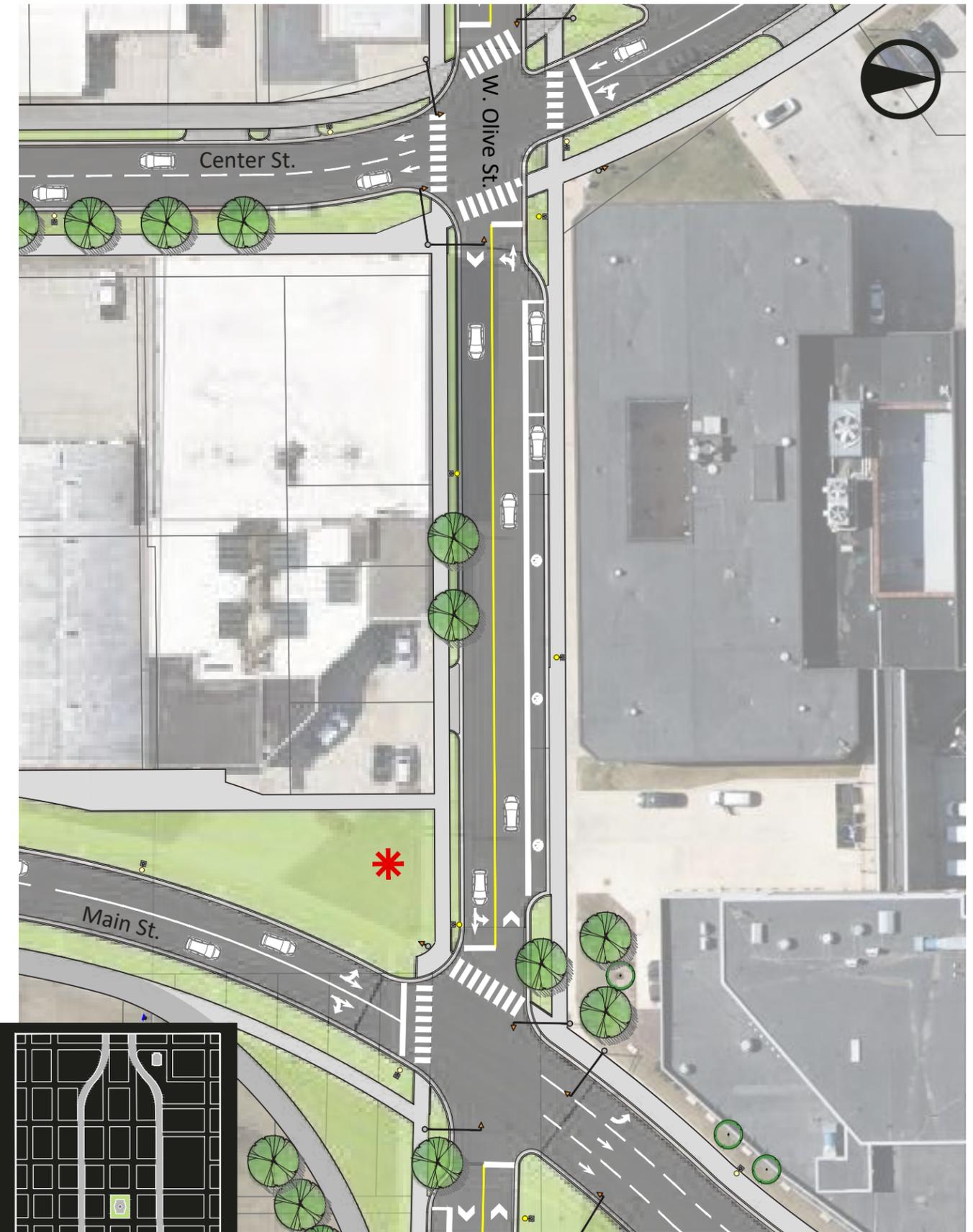
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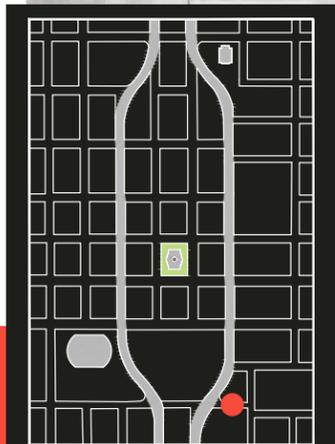
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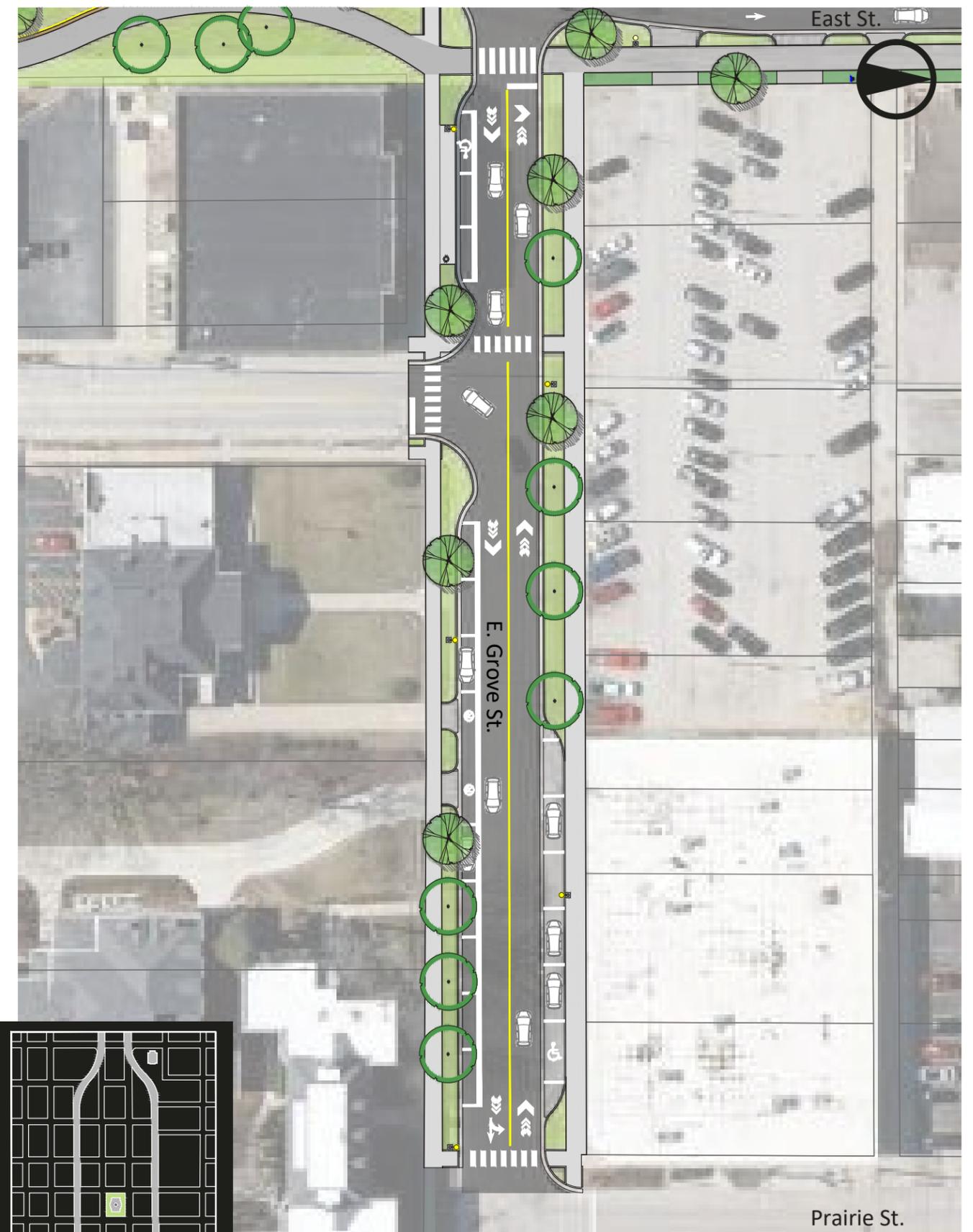
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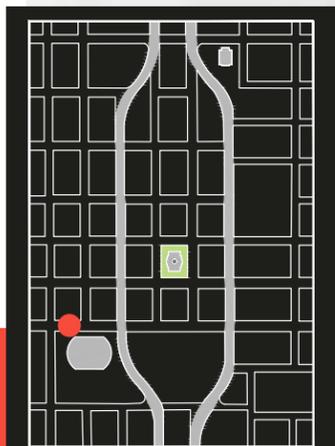
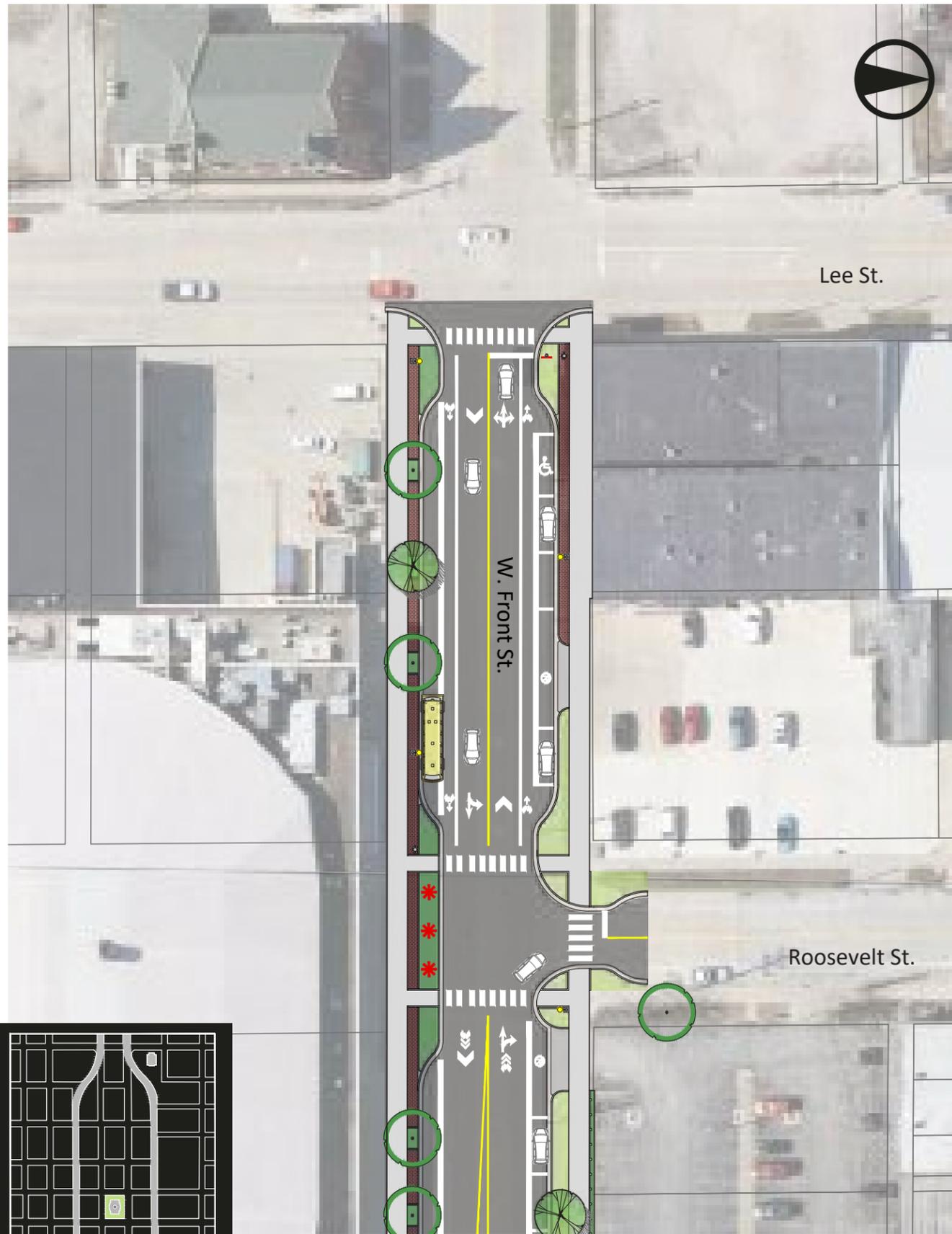
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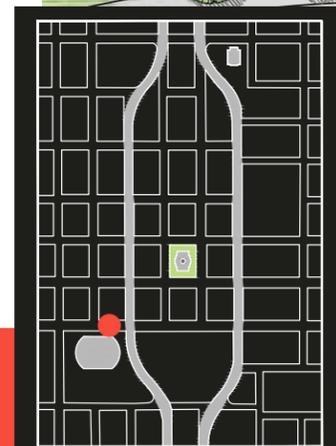
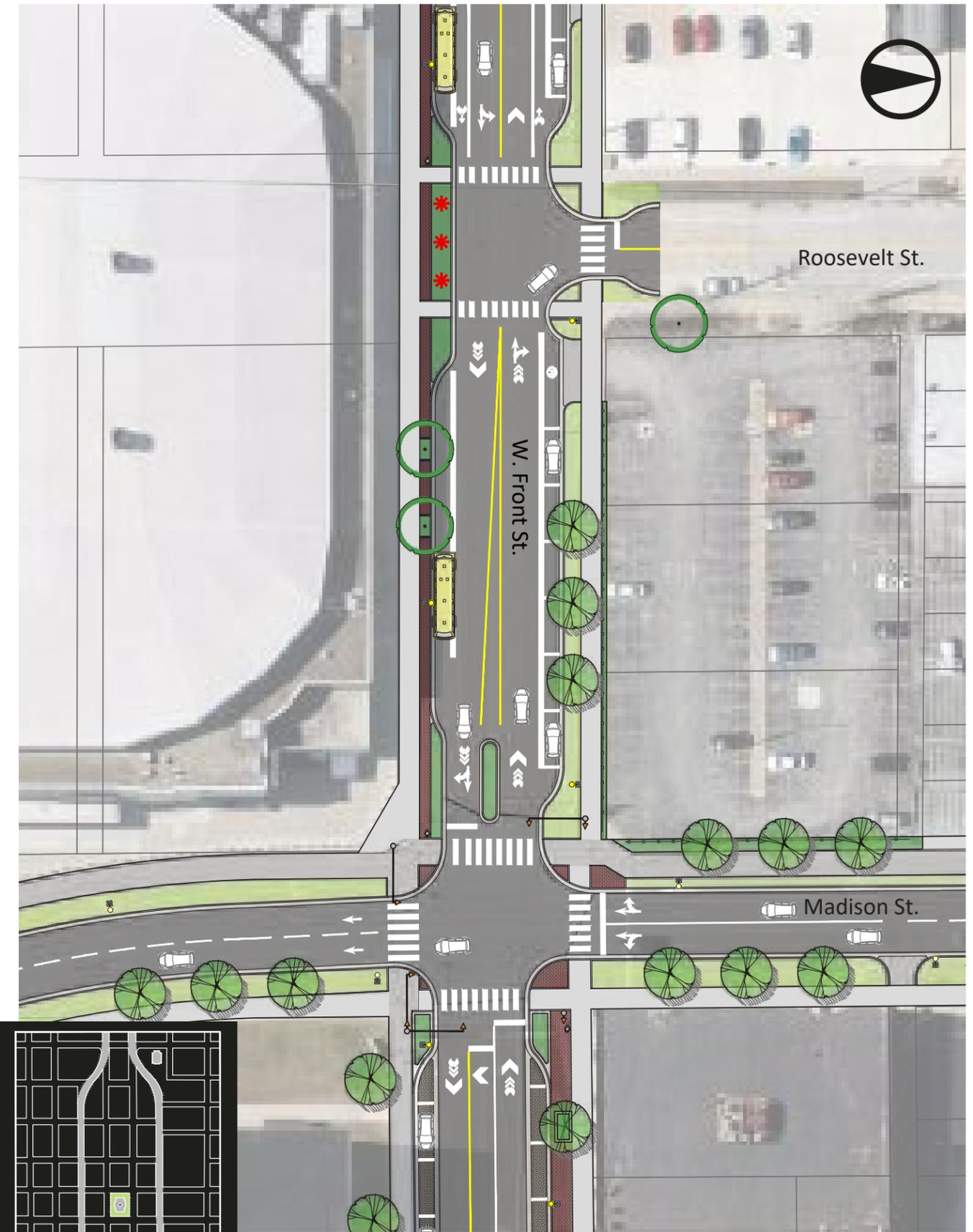
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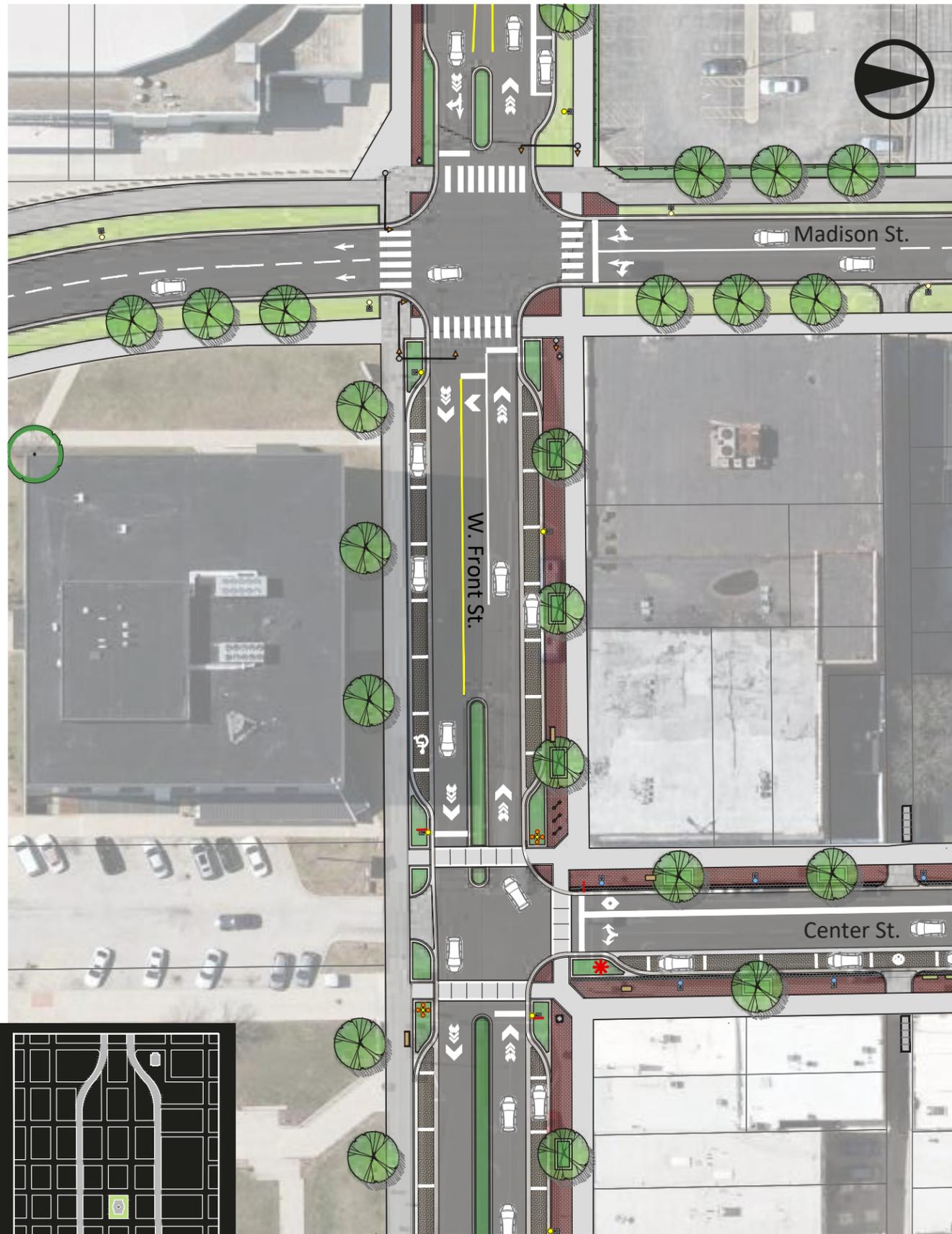
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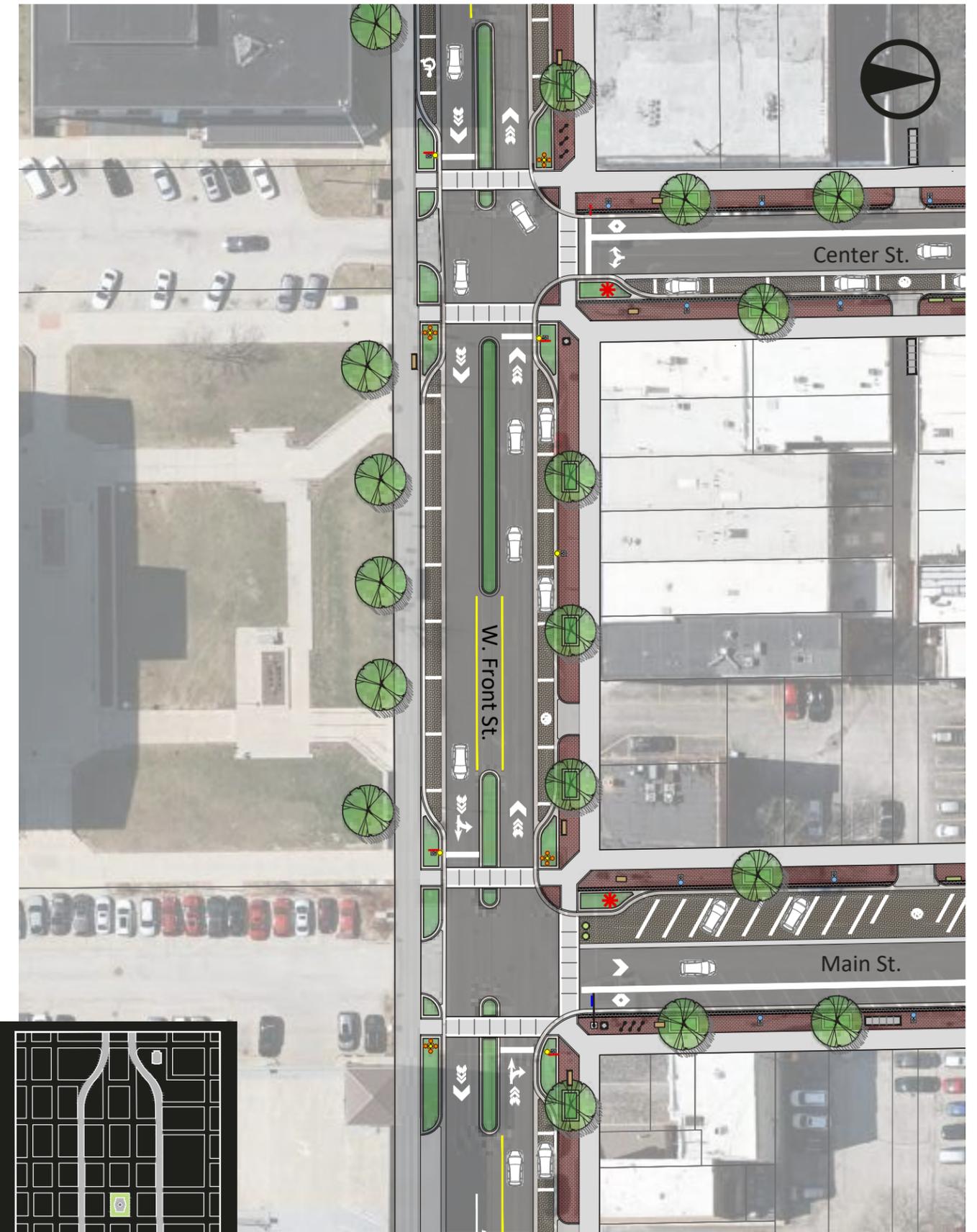
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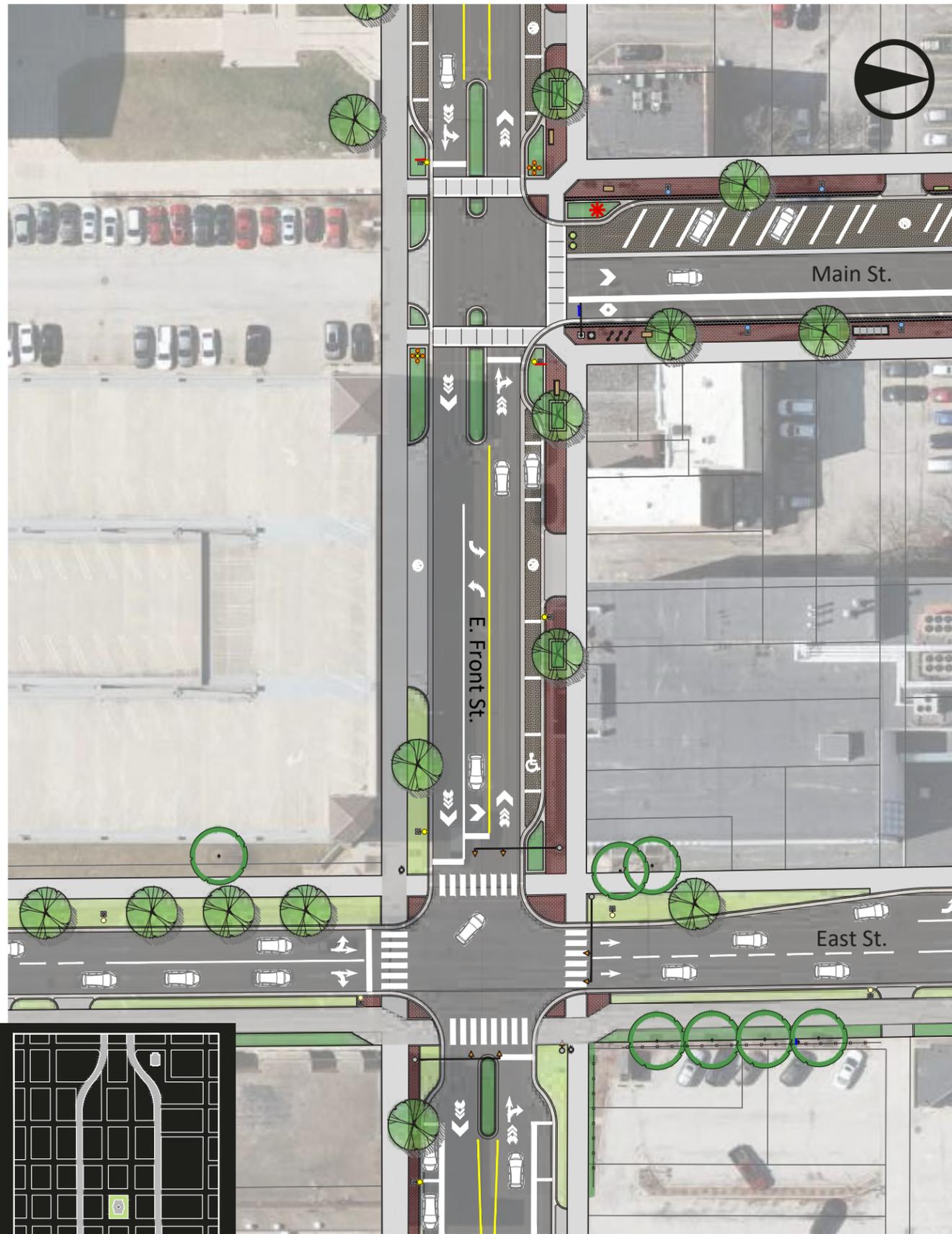
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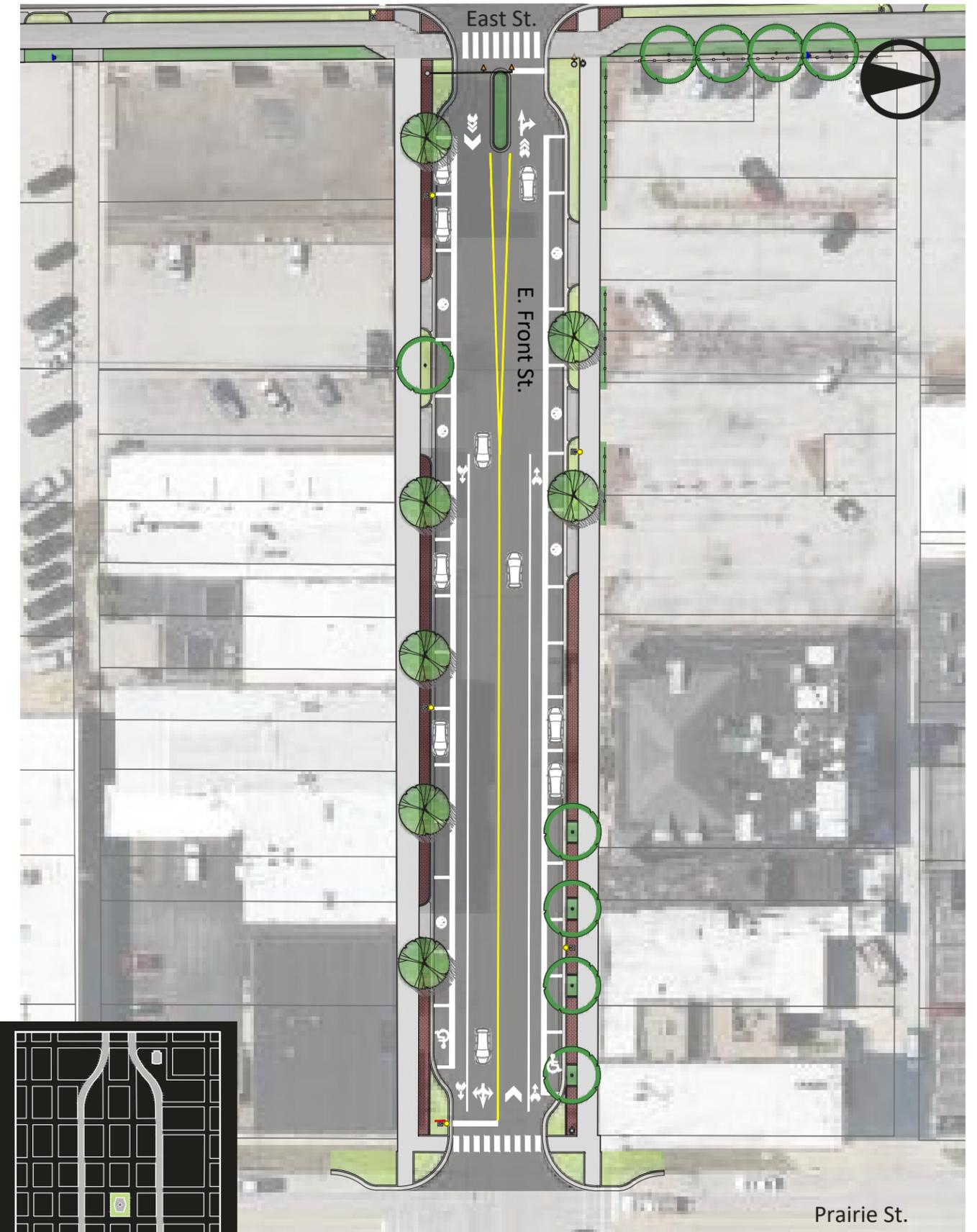
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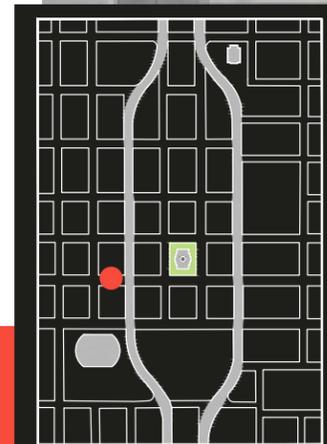
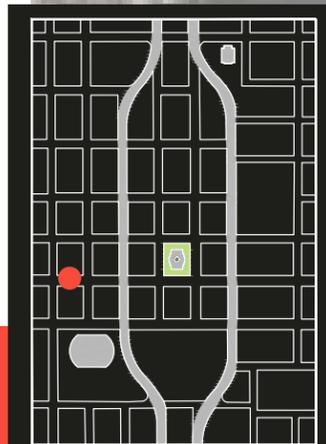
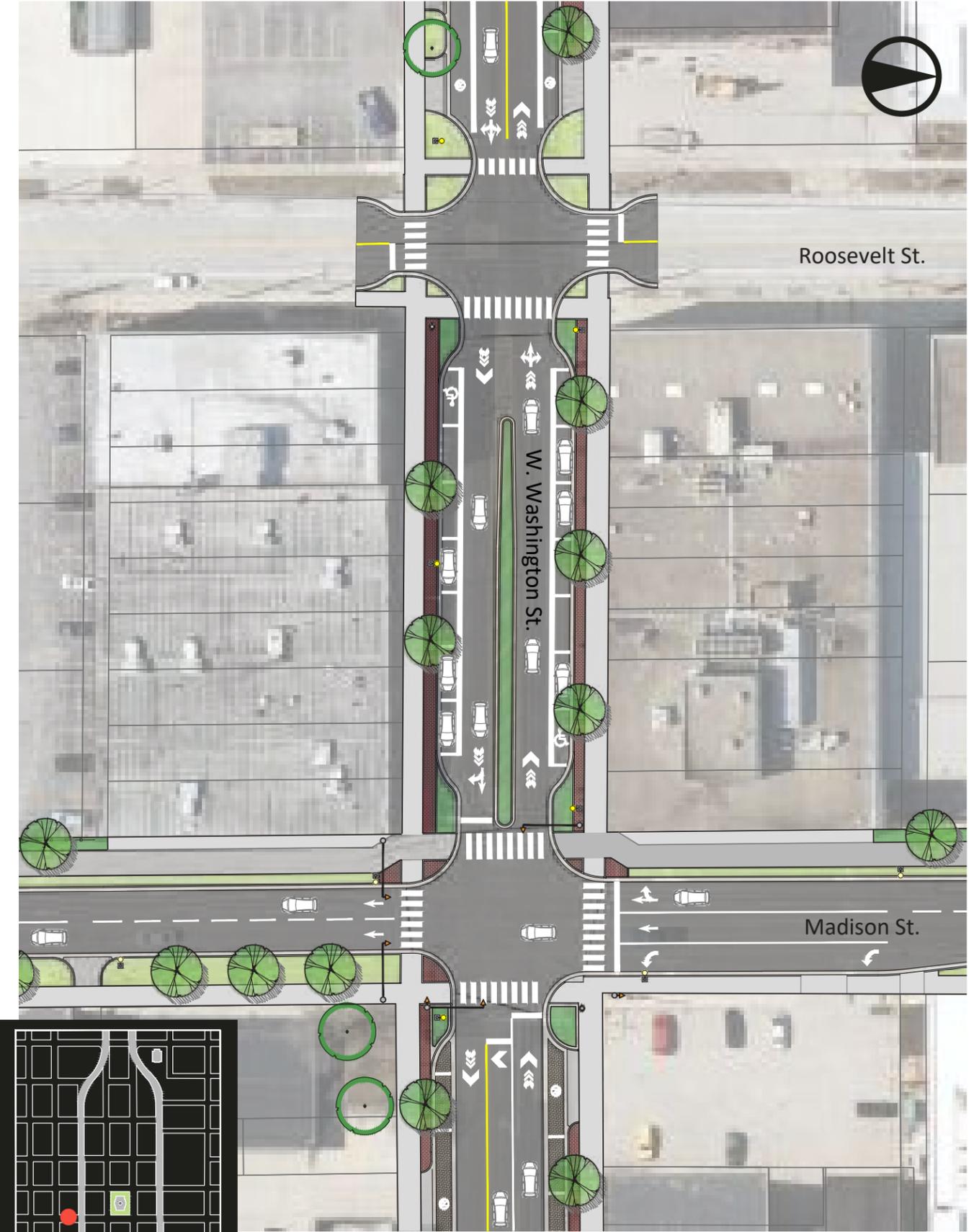
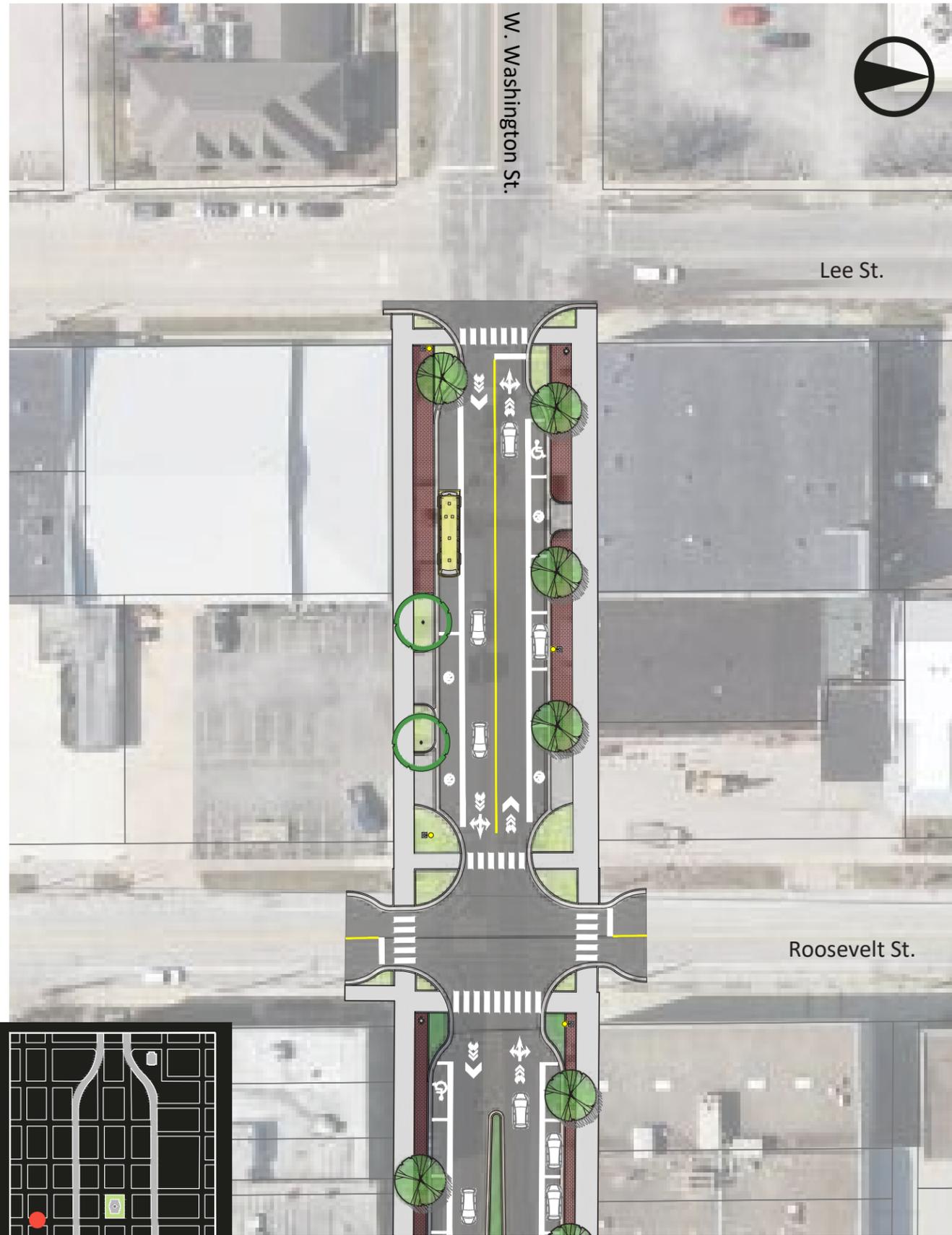
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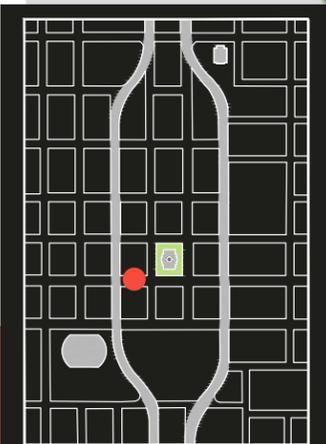
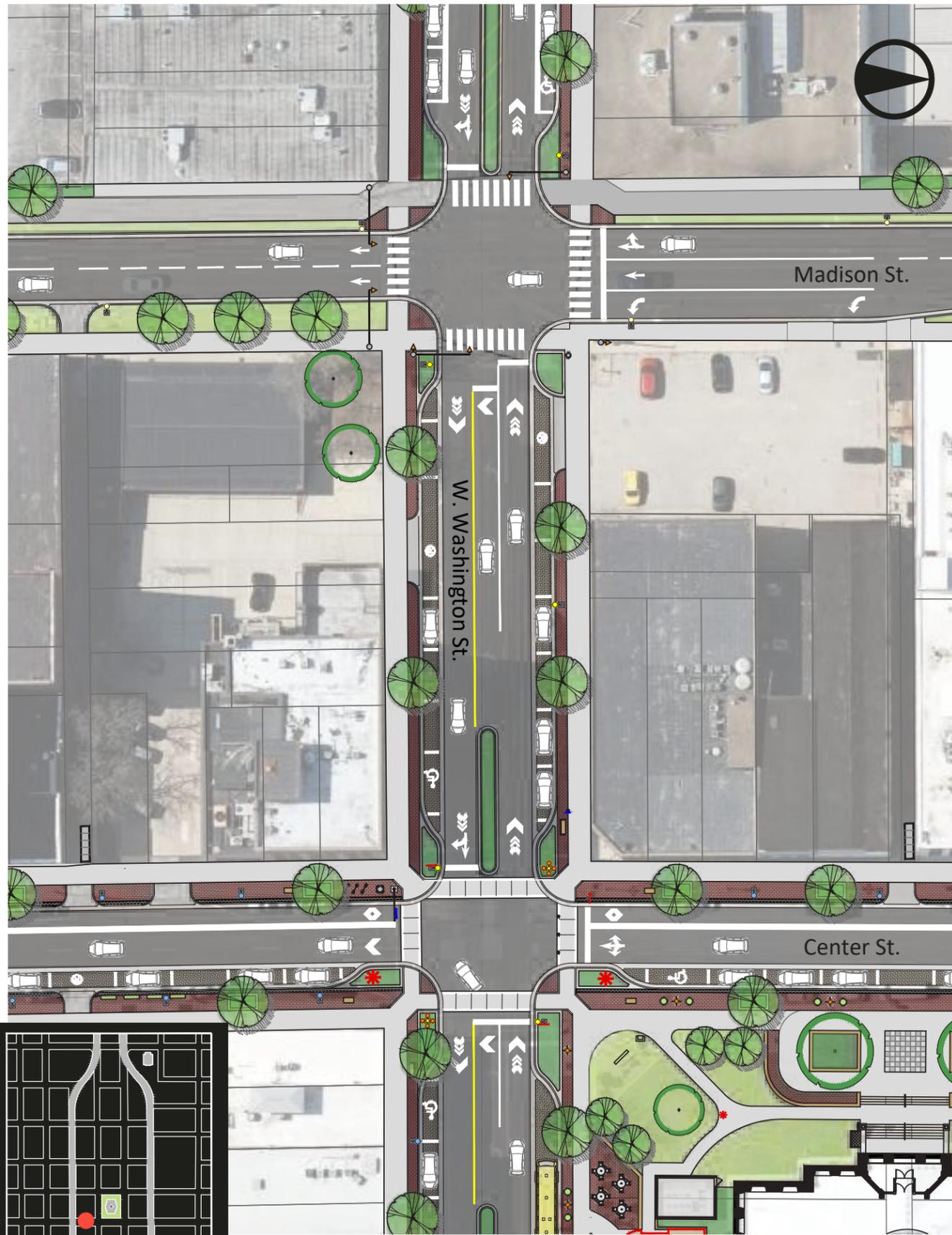


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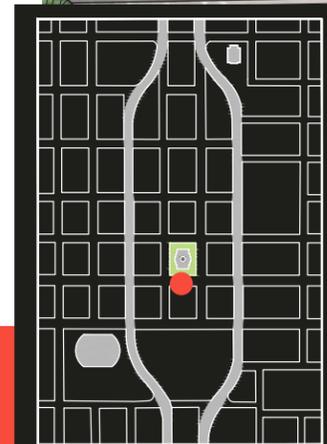
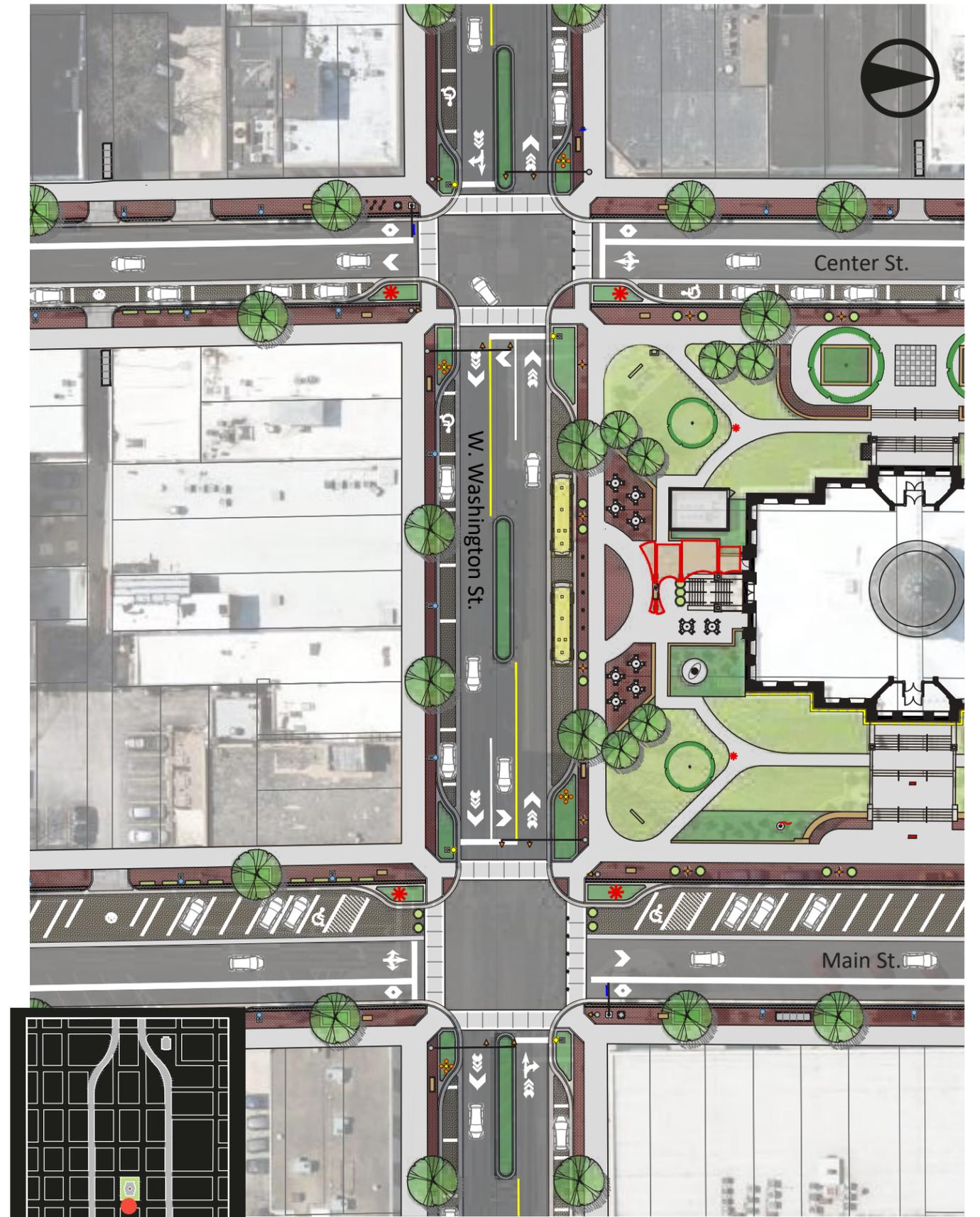


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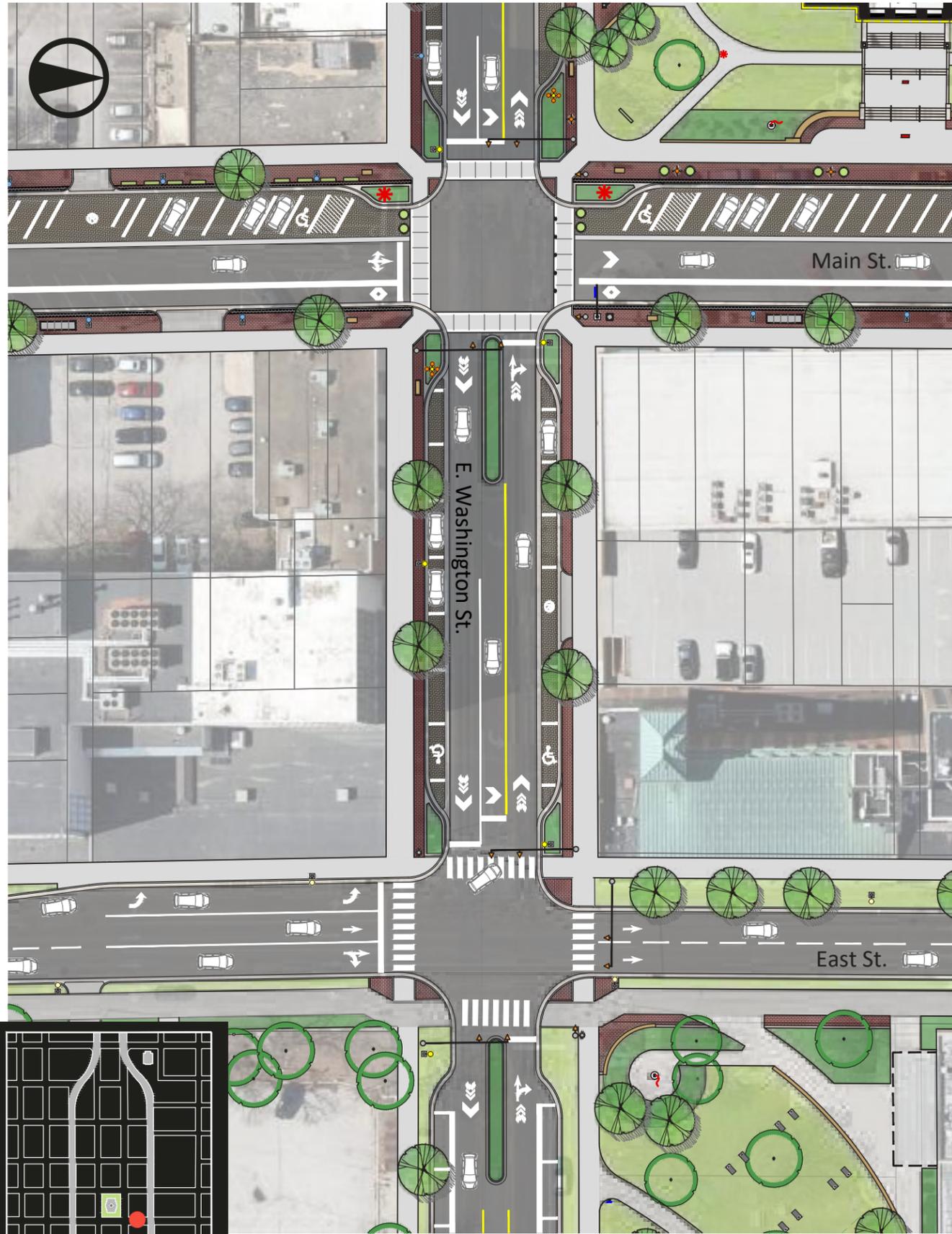
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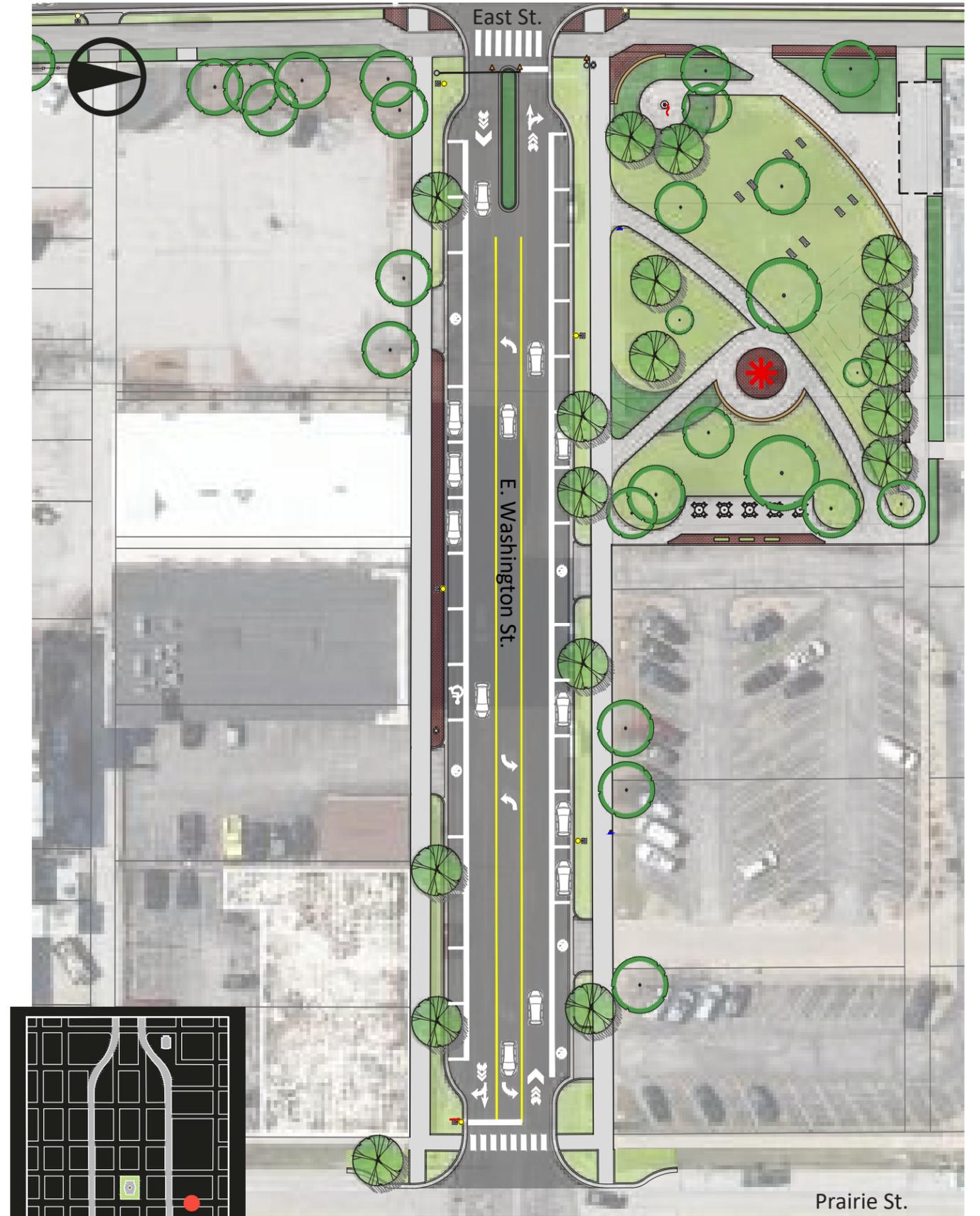
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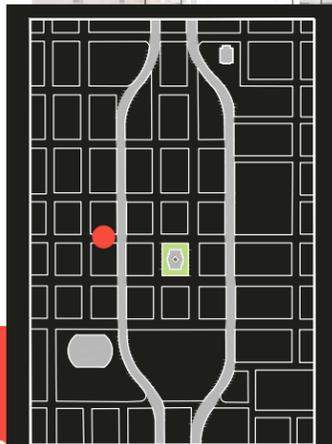
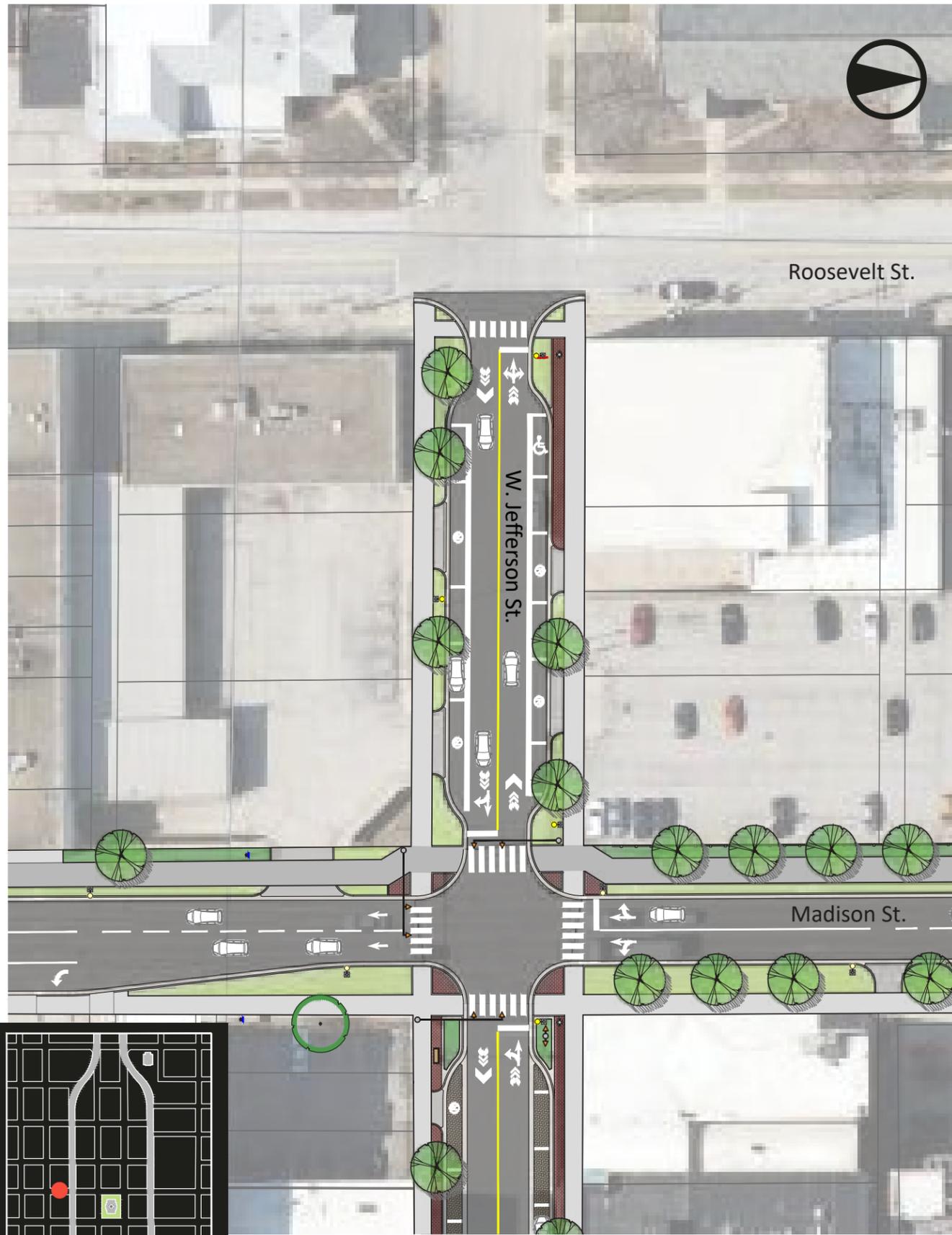
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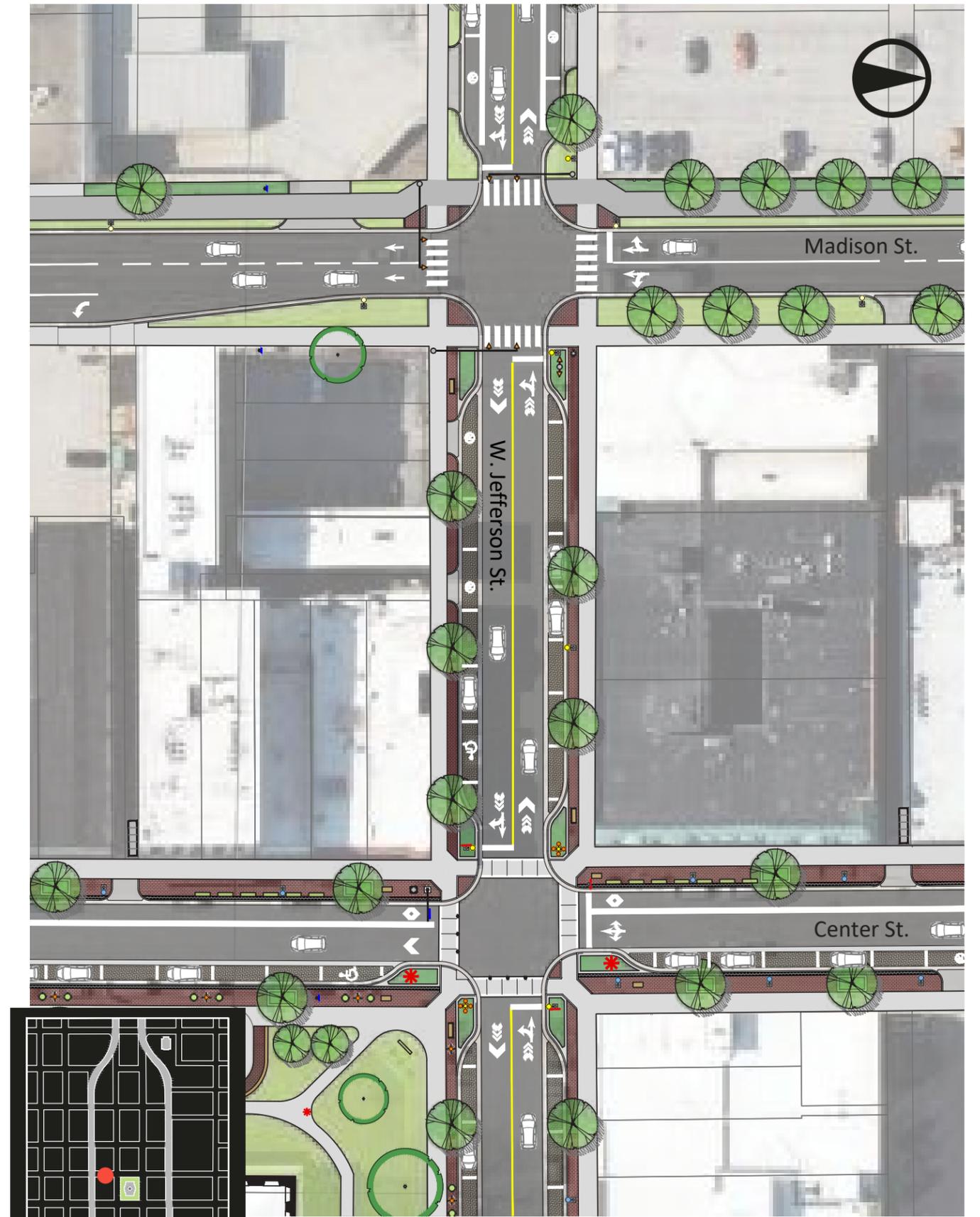
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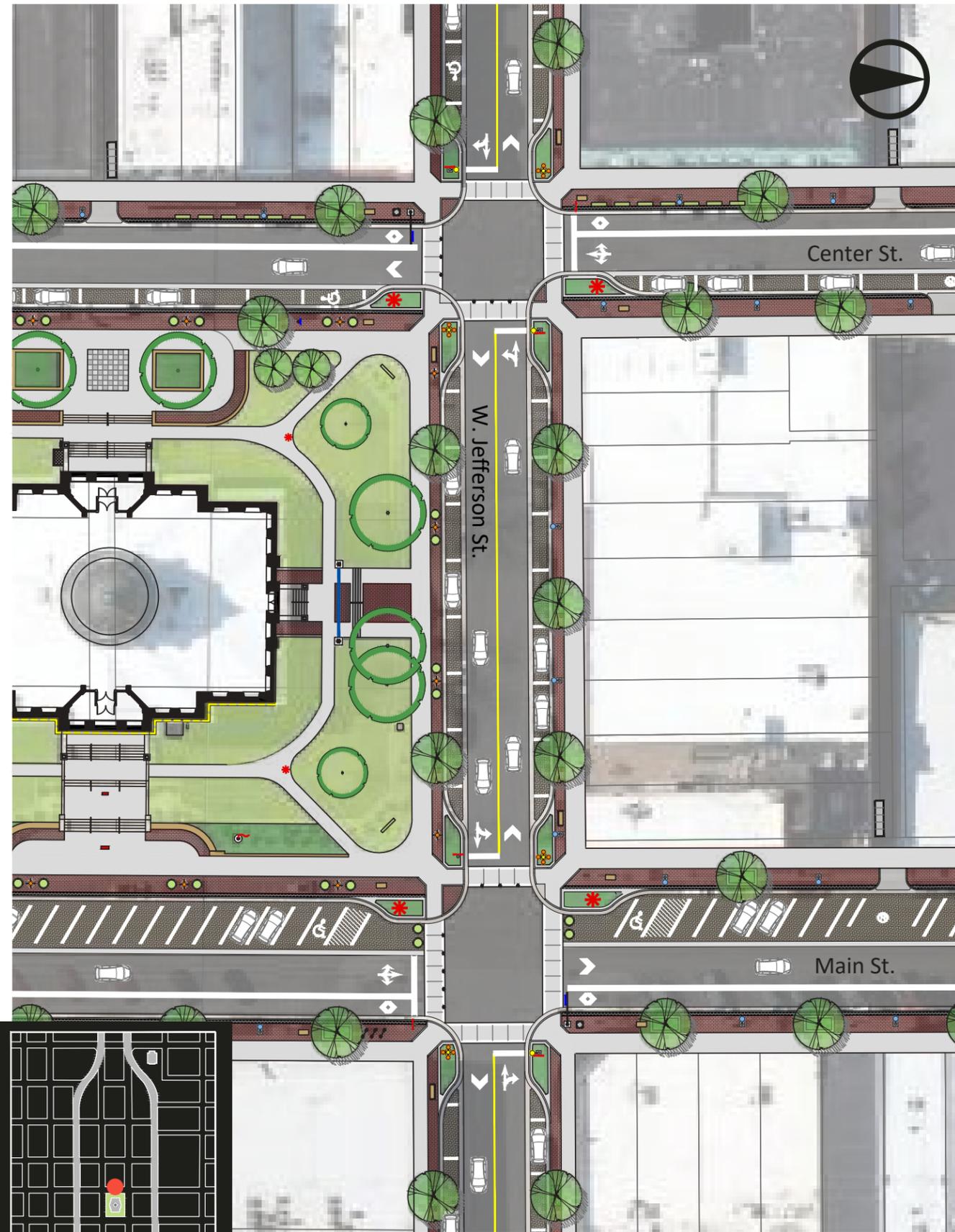
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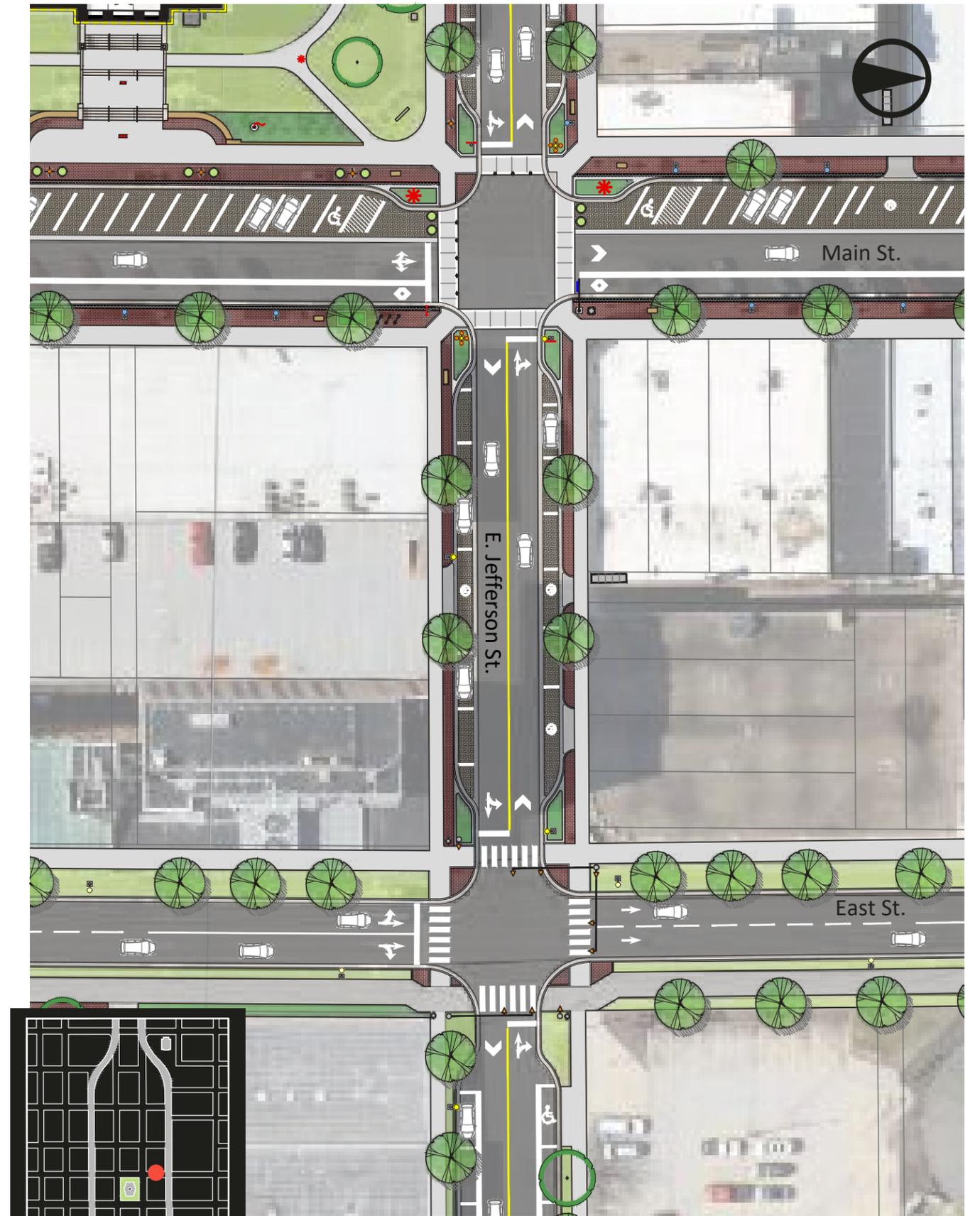
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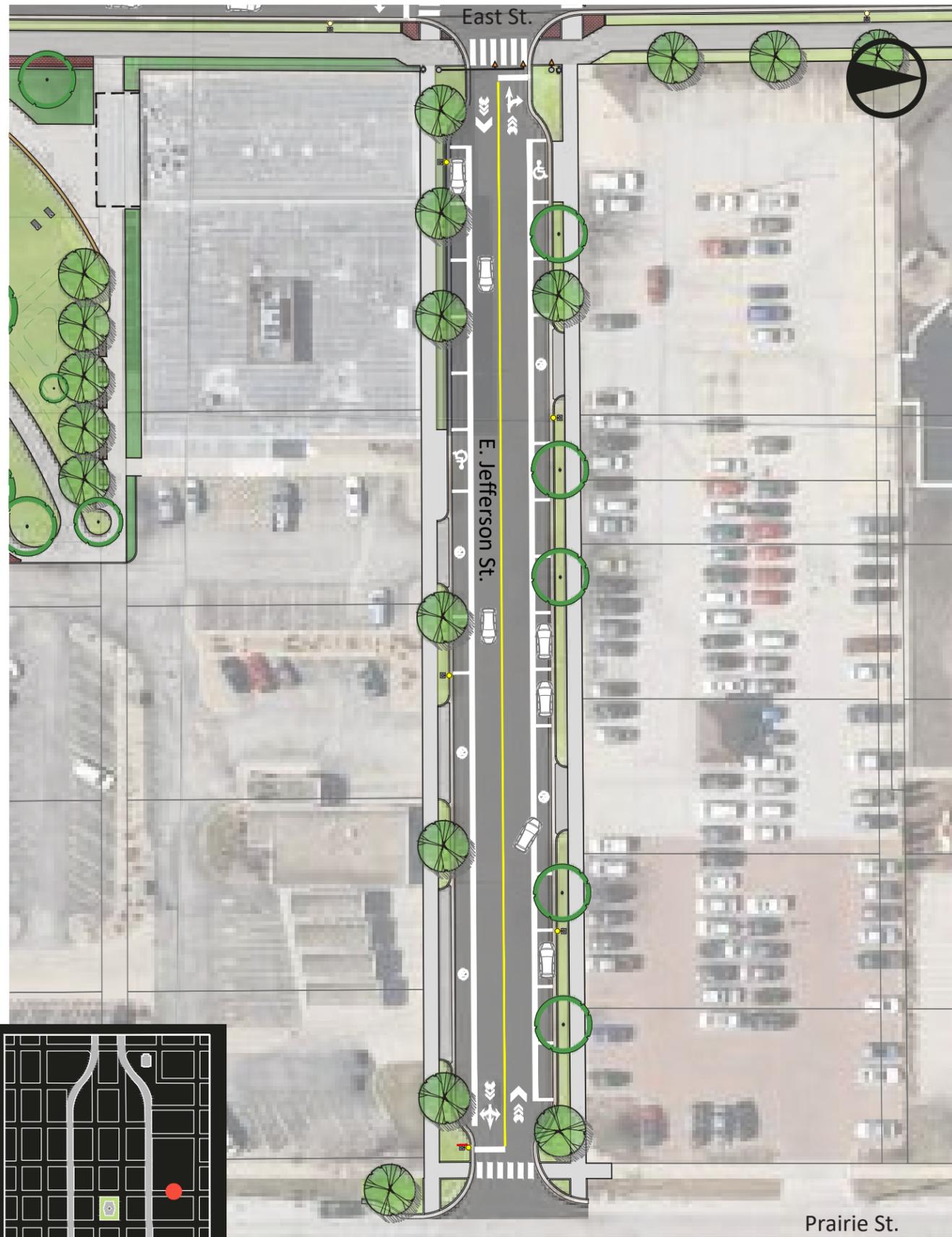
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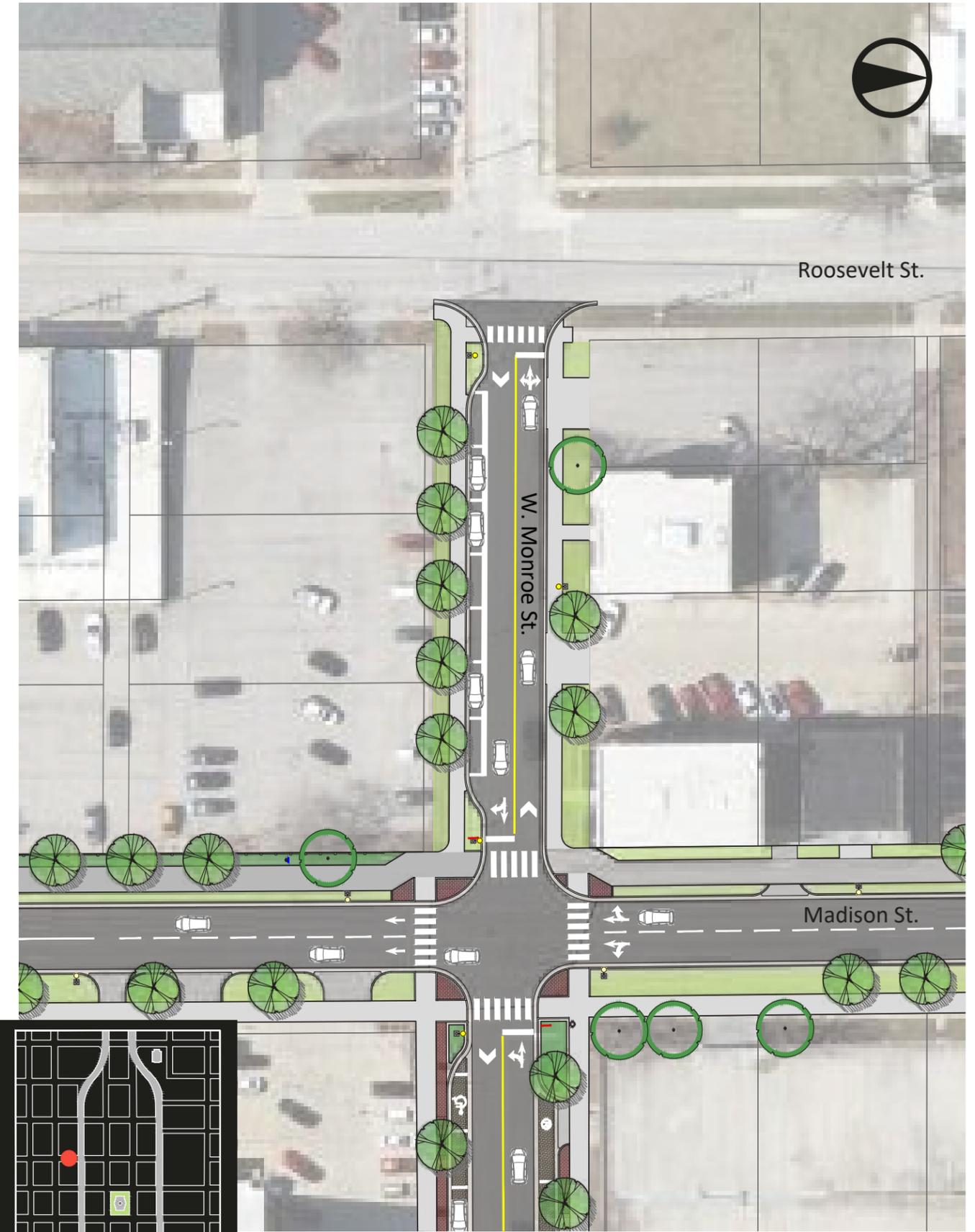
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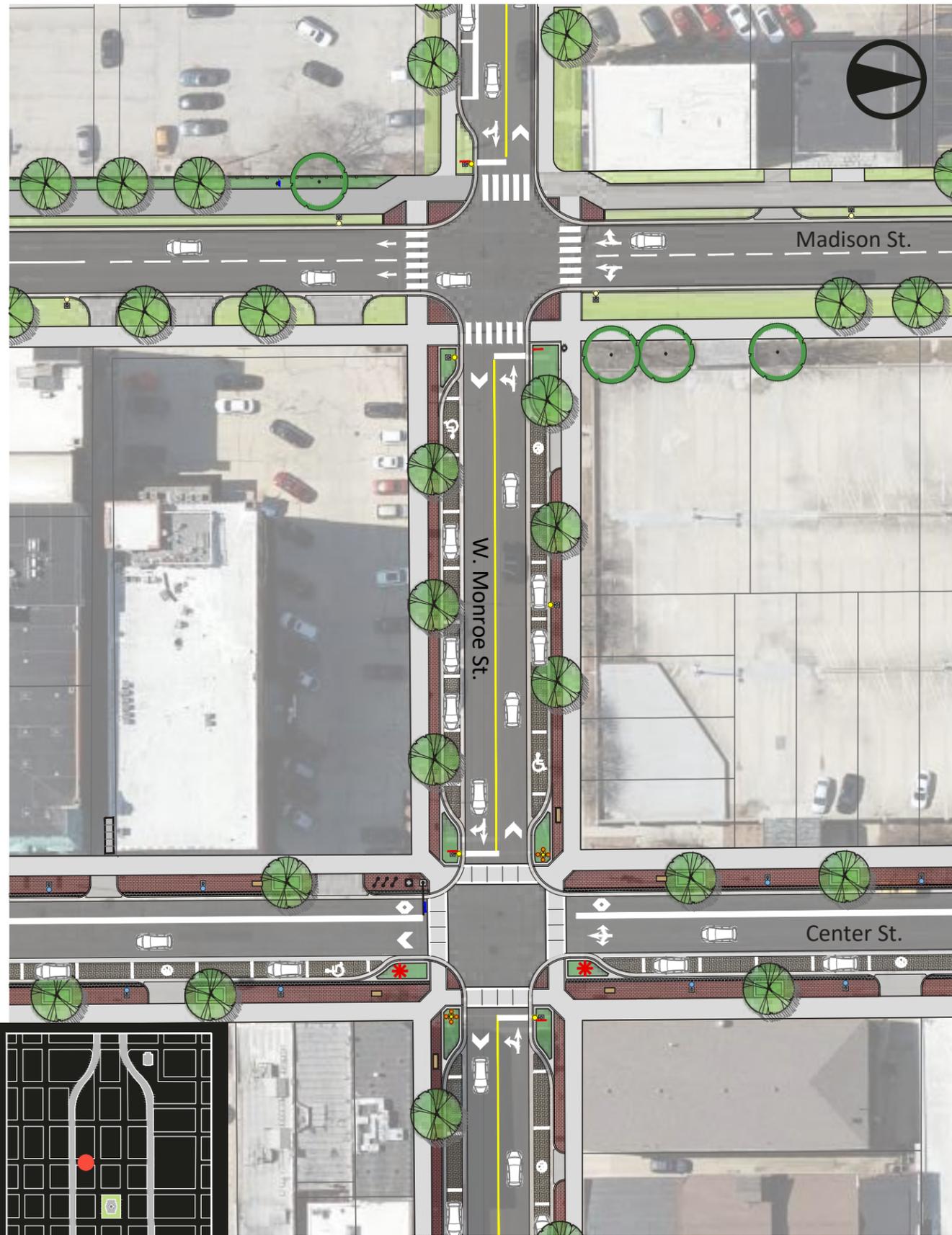
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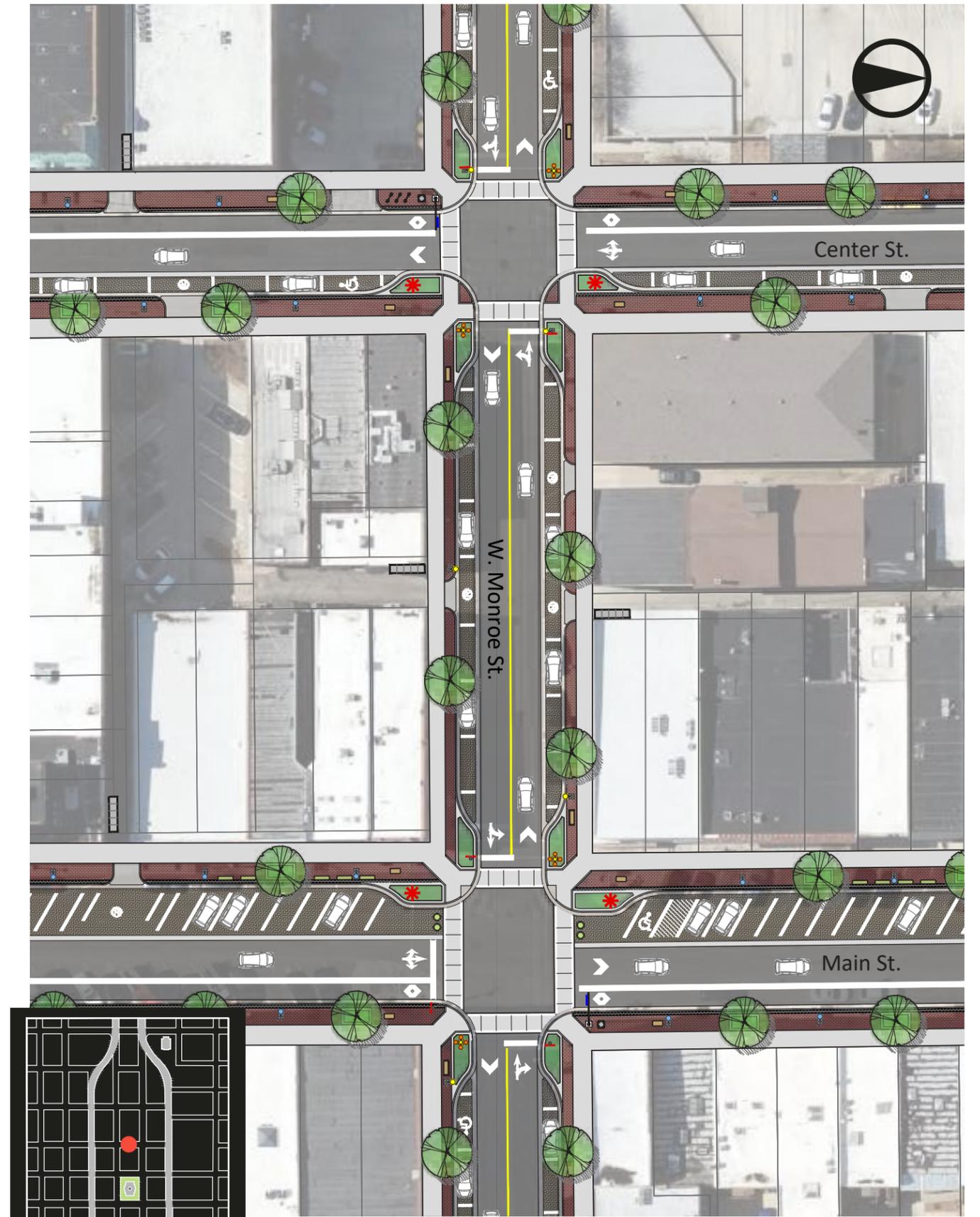
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W. MONROE STREET - 300 | ROOSEVELT ST. TO MADISON ST.



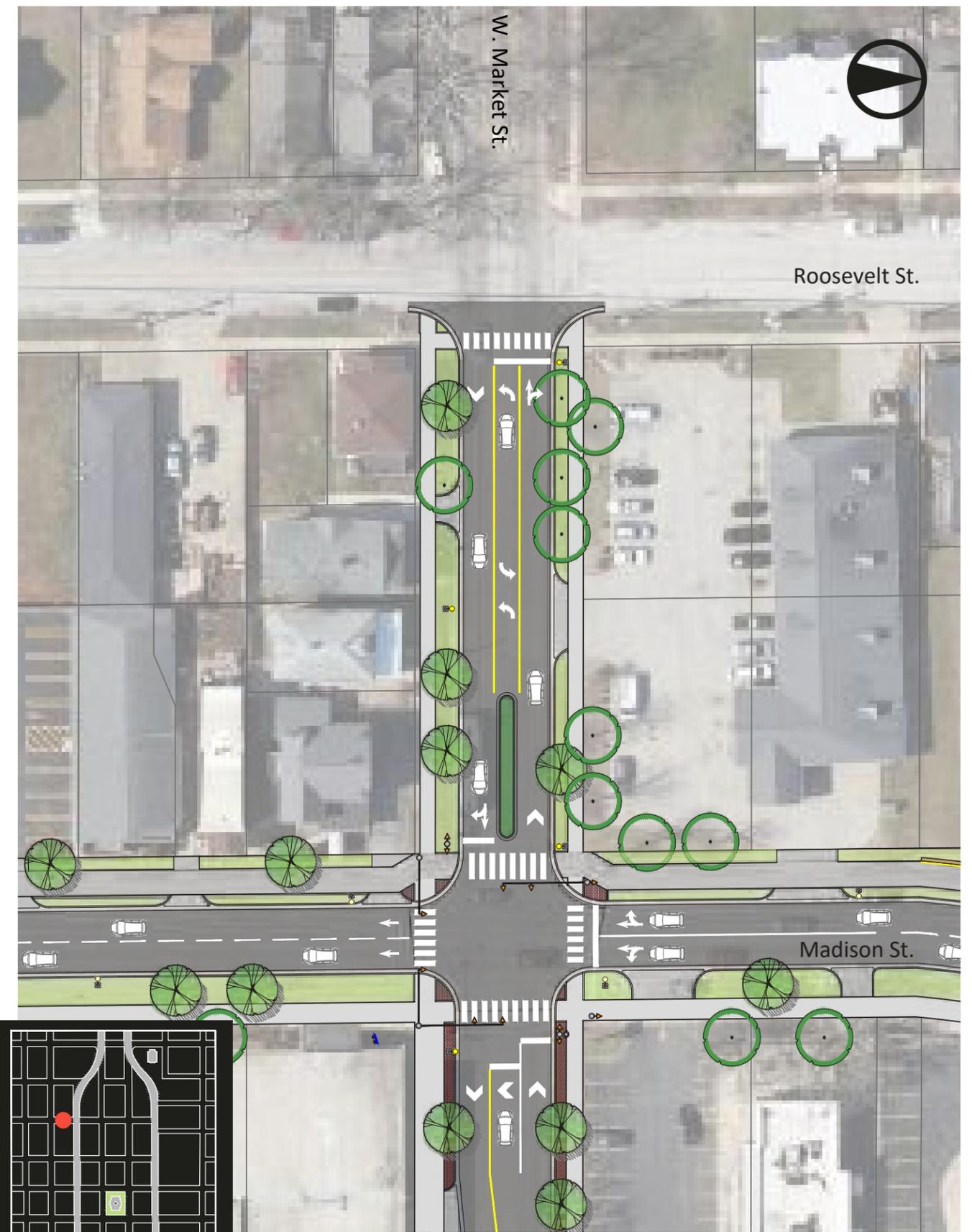
W. MONROE STREET - 200 | MADISON ST. TO CENTER ST.



W. MONROE STREET - 100 | CENTER ST. TO MAIN ST.



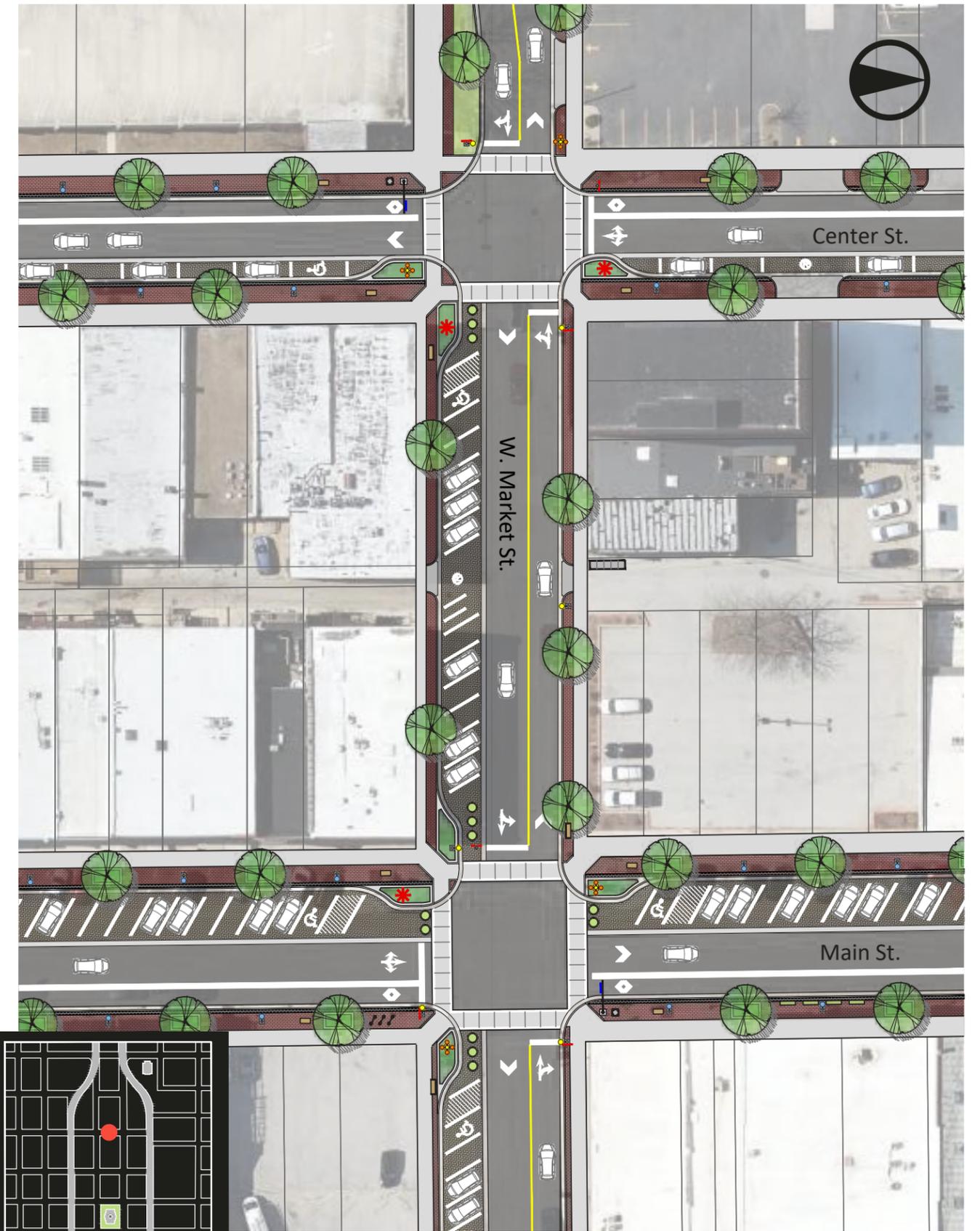
E. MONROE STREET - 100 | MAIN ST. TO EAST ST.



W. MARKET STREET - 300 | ROOSEVELT ST. TO MADISON ST.



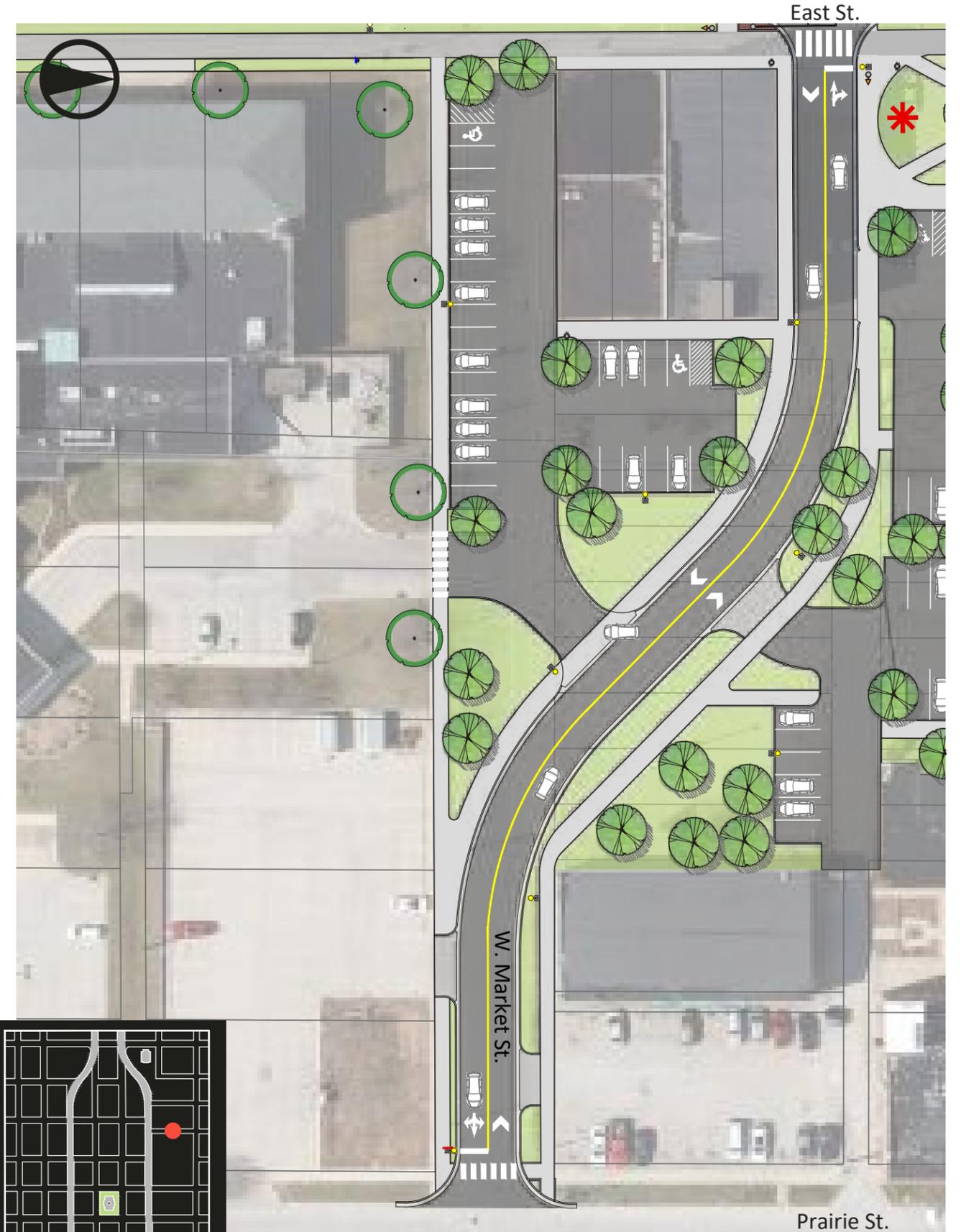
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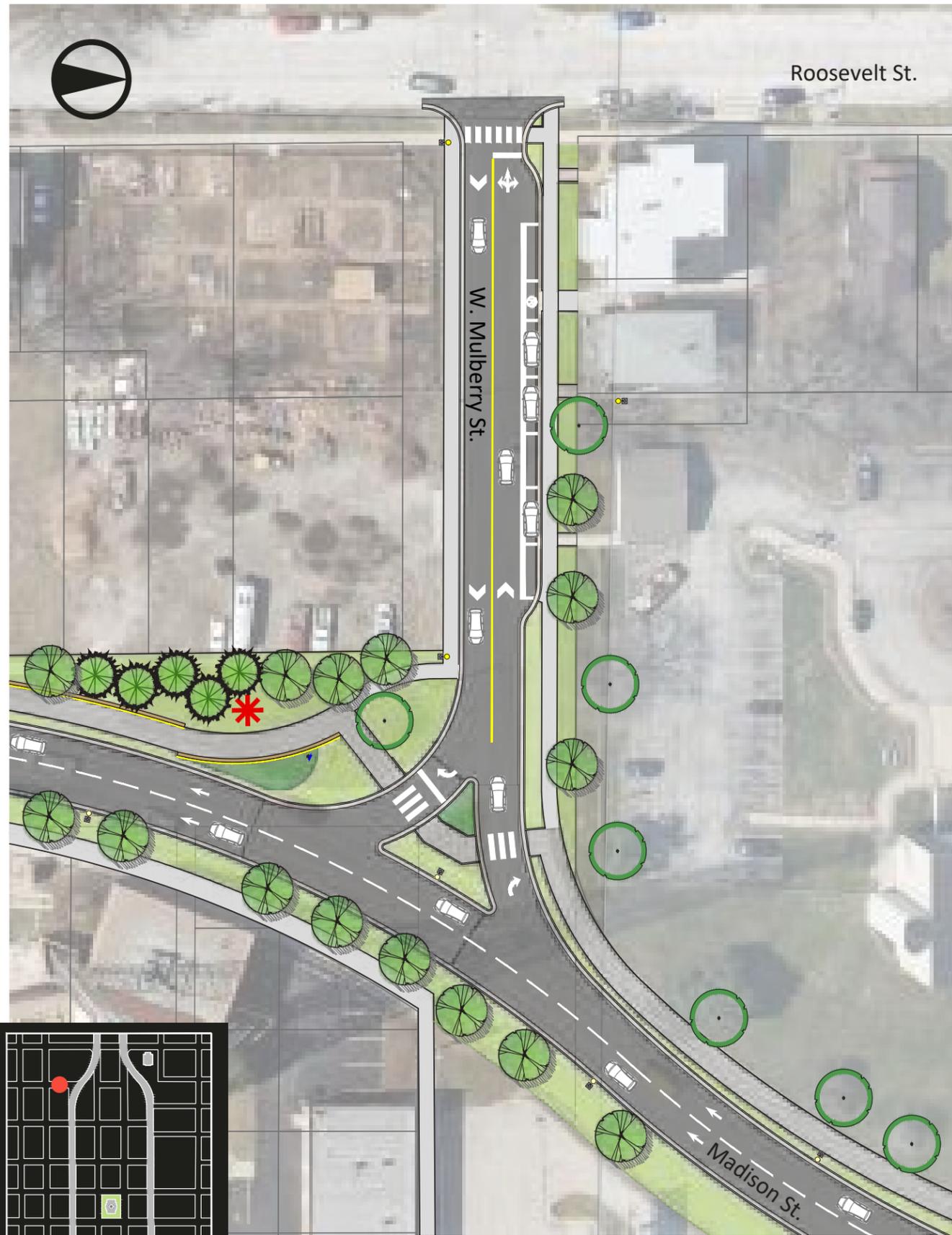
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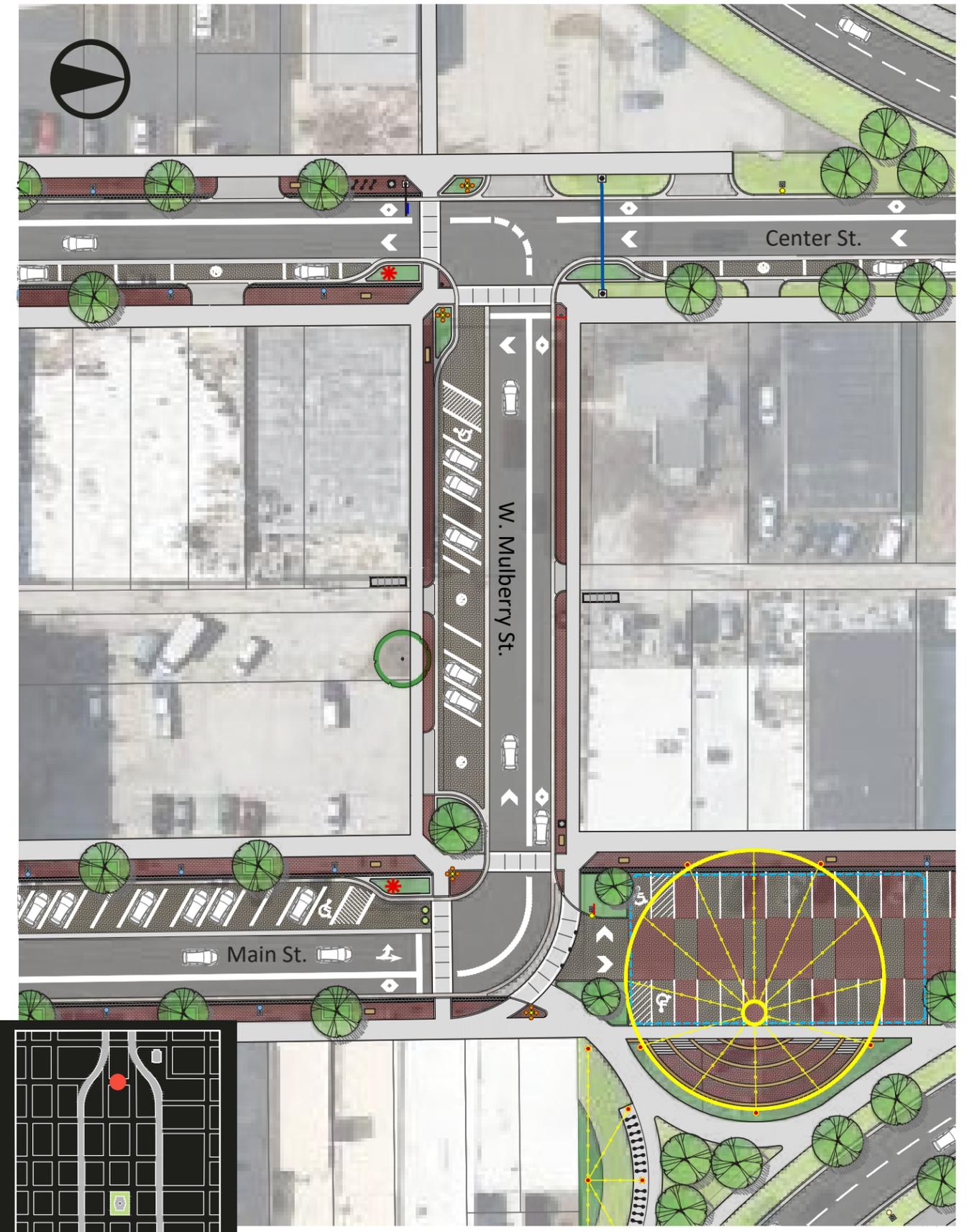
E. MARKET STREET - 100 | MAIN ST. TO EAST ST.



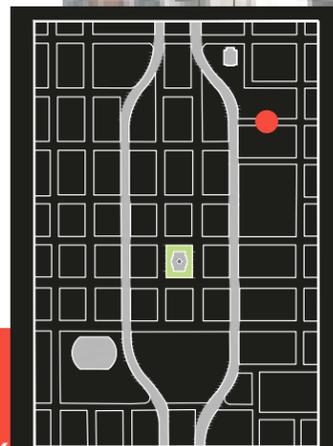
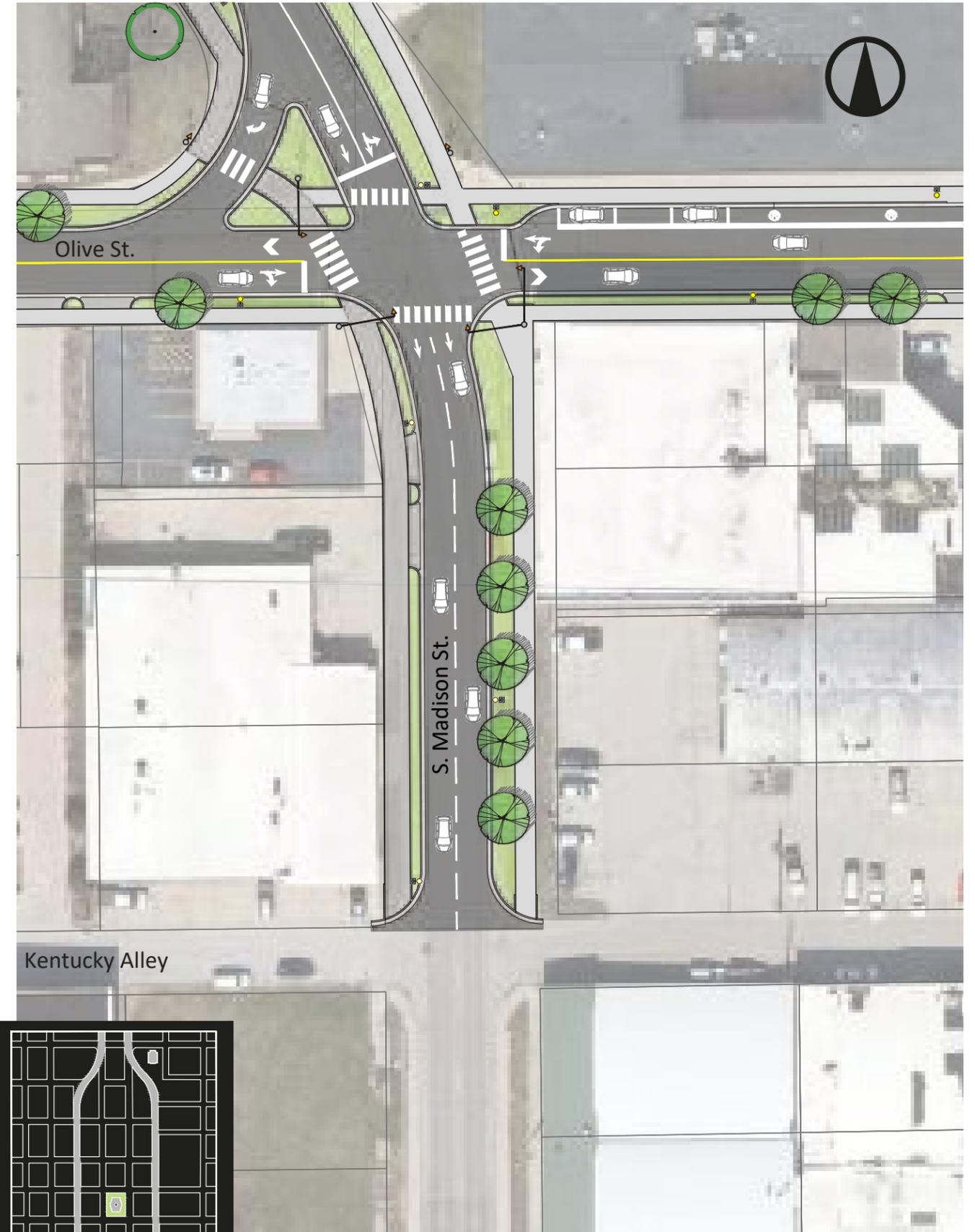
E. MARKET STREET - 200 | EAST ST. TO PRAIRIE ST.



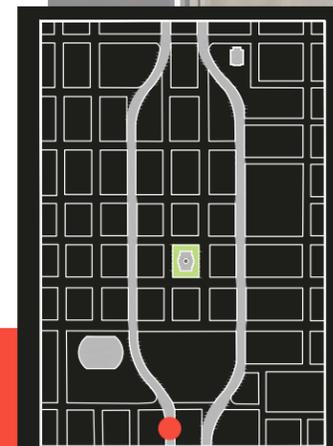
W. MULBERRY STREET - 300 | ROOSEVELT ST. TO MADISON ST.



W. MULBERRY STREET - 100 | CENTER ST. TO MAIN ST.



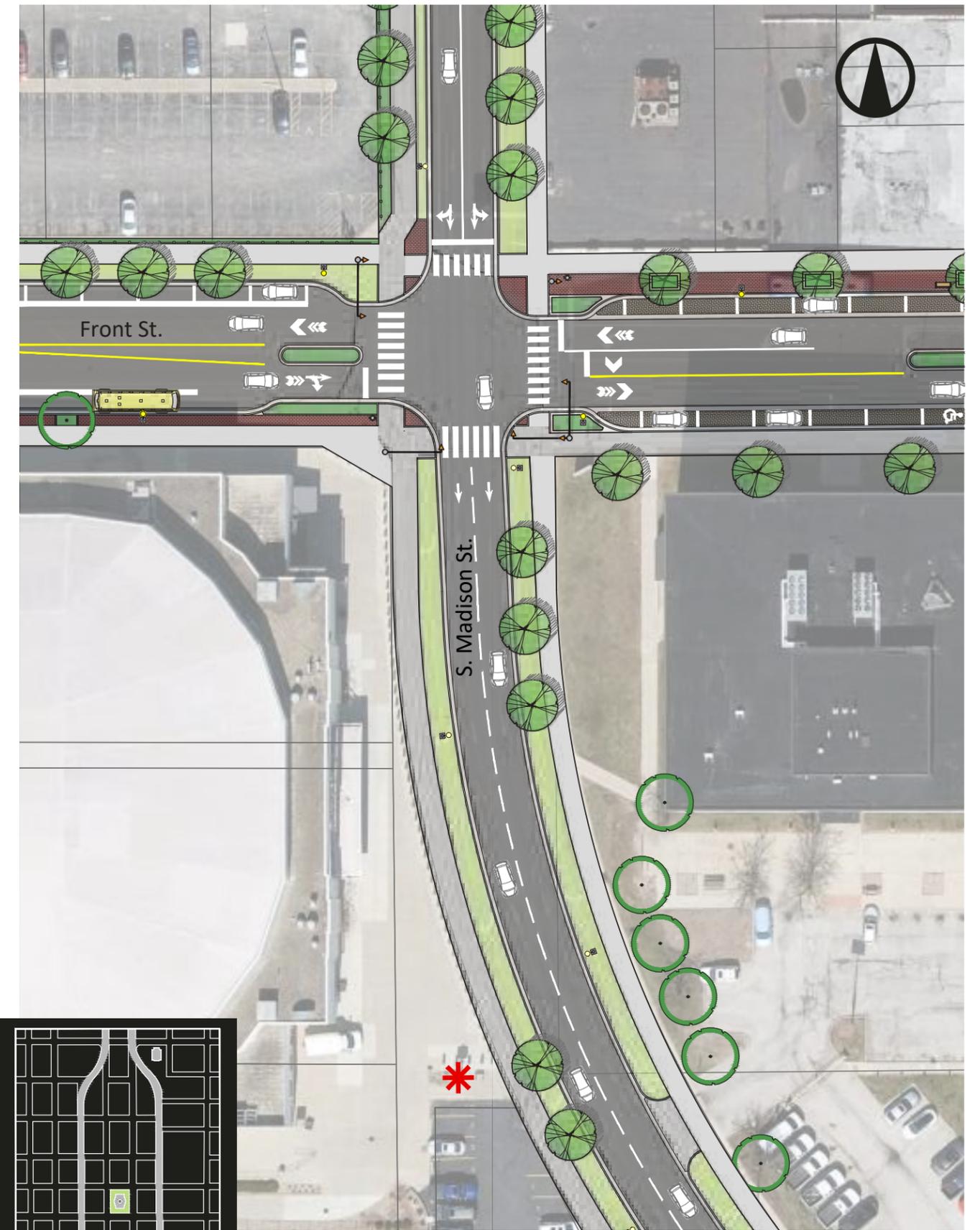
E. DOUGLAS STREET - 200 | EAST ST. TO PRAIRIE ST.



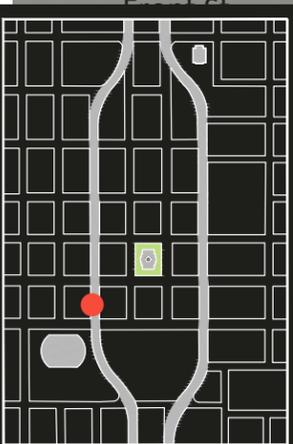
S. MADISON STREET - 300 | KENTUCKY ALLEY TO OLIVE ST.



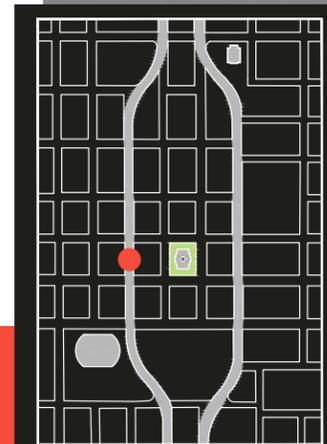
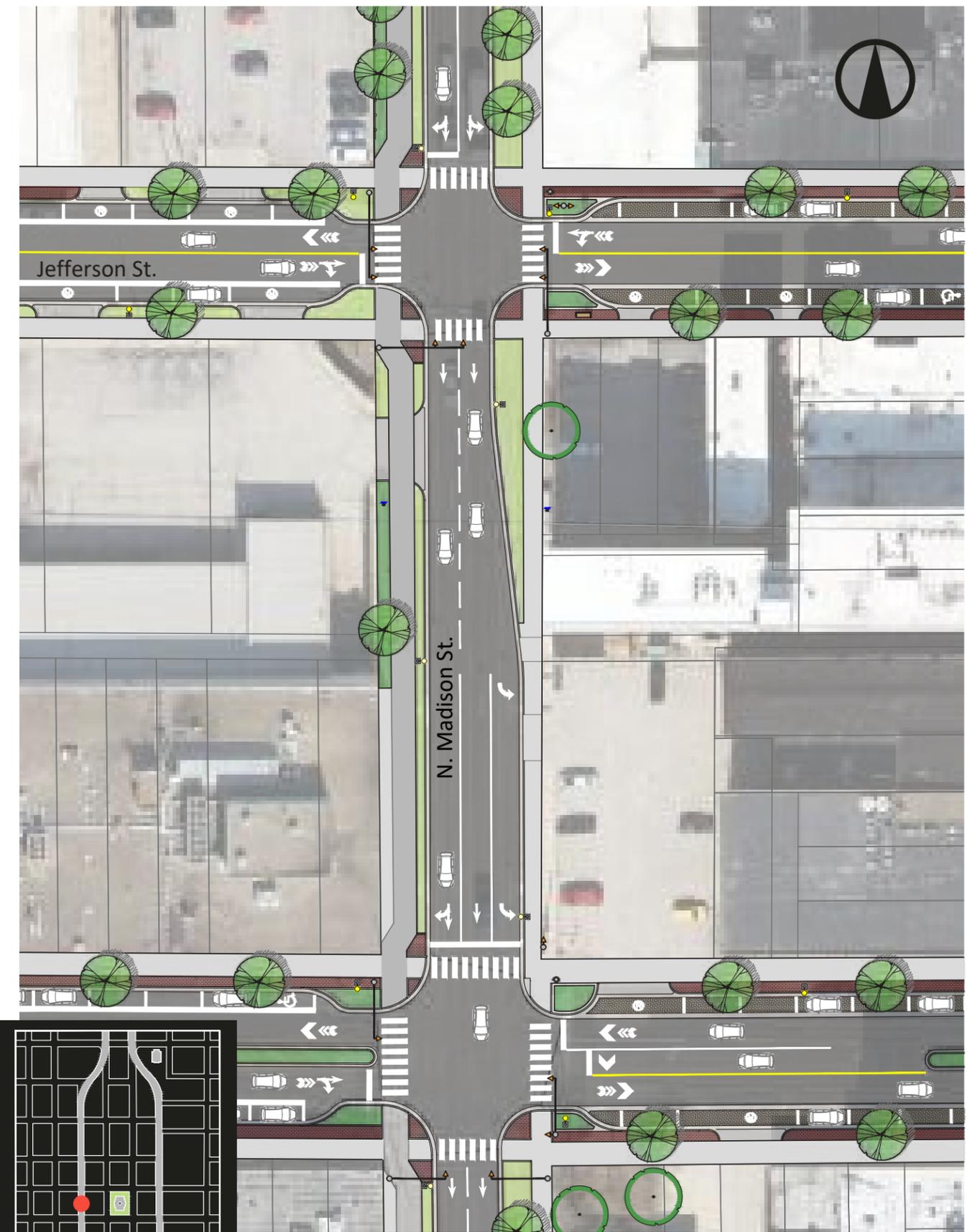
S. MADISON STREET - 200 | OLIVE ST. TO GROVE ST.



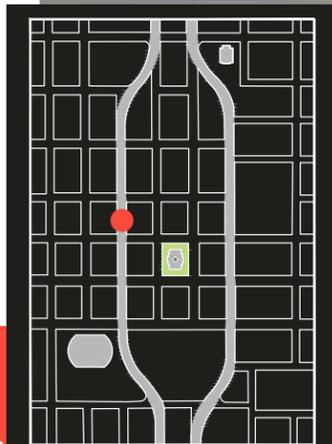
S. MADISON STREET - 100 | GROVE ST. TO FRONT ST.



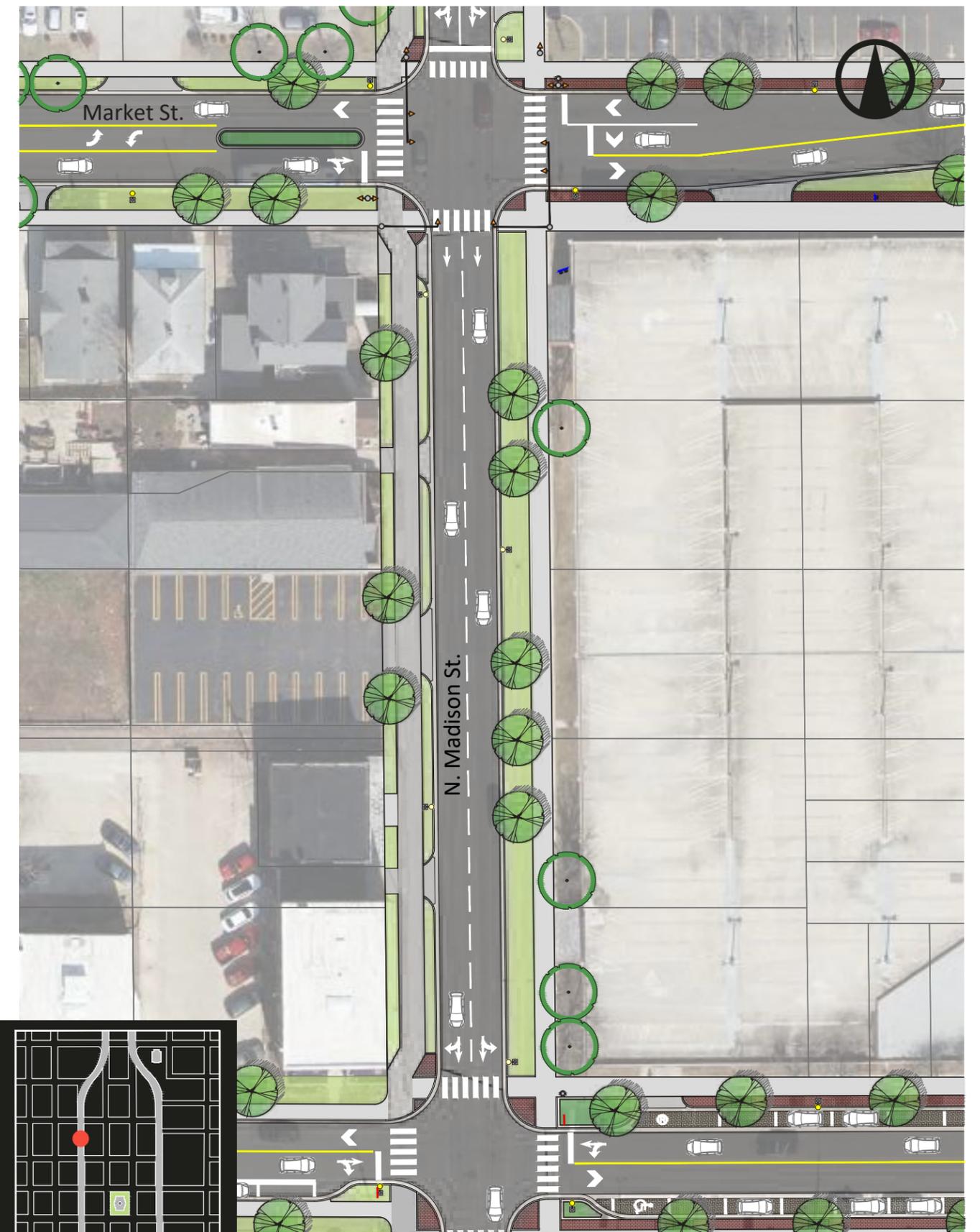
N. MADISON STREET - 100 | FRONT ST. TO WASHINGTON ST.



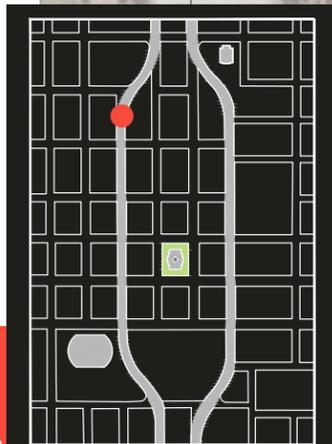
N. MADISON STREET - 200 | WASHINGTON ST. TO JEFFERSON ST.



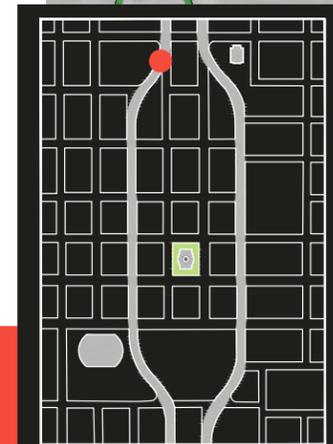
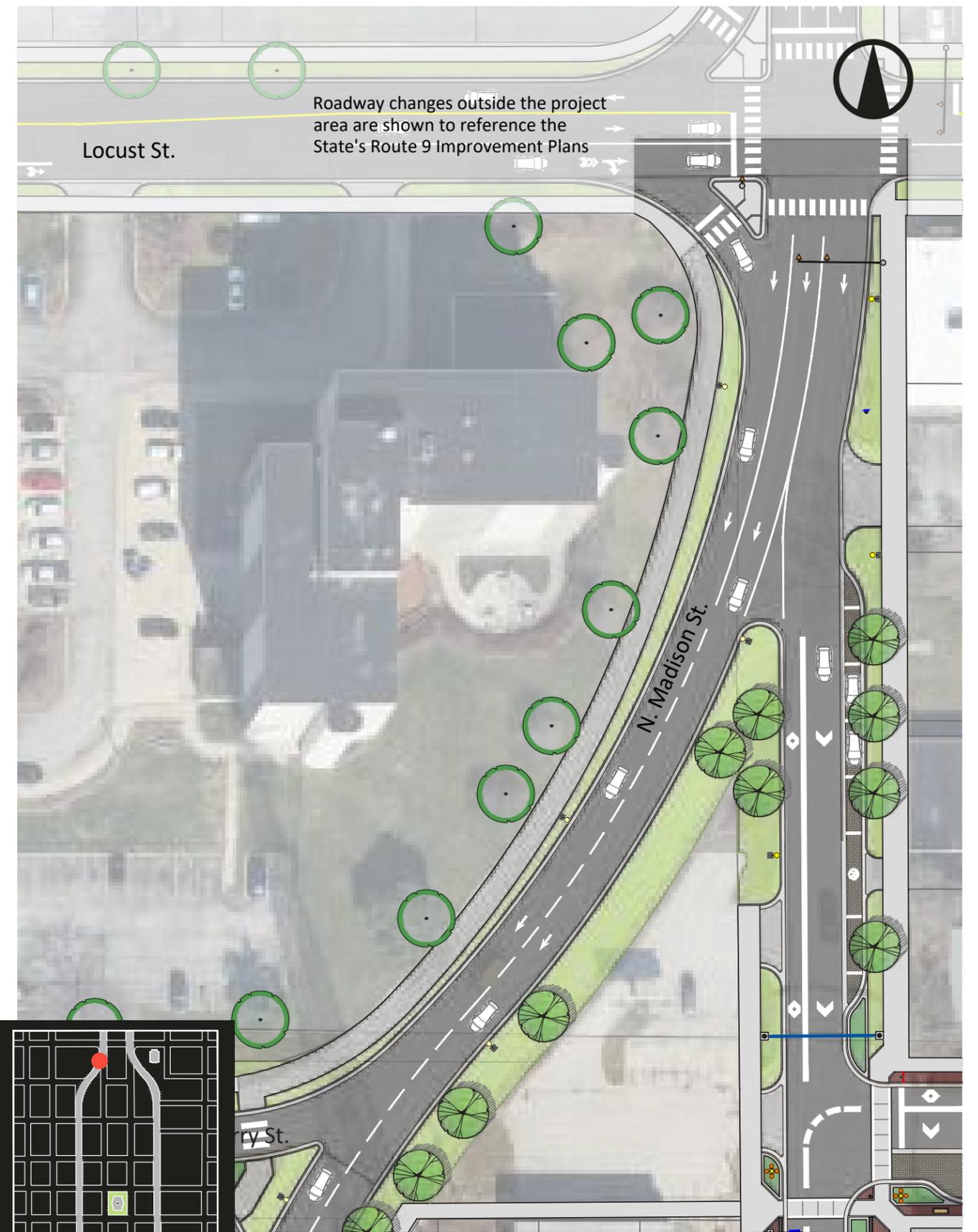
N. MADISON STREET - 300 | JEFFERSON ST. TO MONROE ST.



N. MADISON STREET - 400 | MONROE ST. TO MARKET ST.



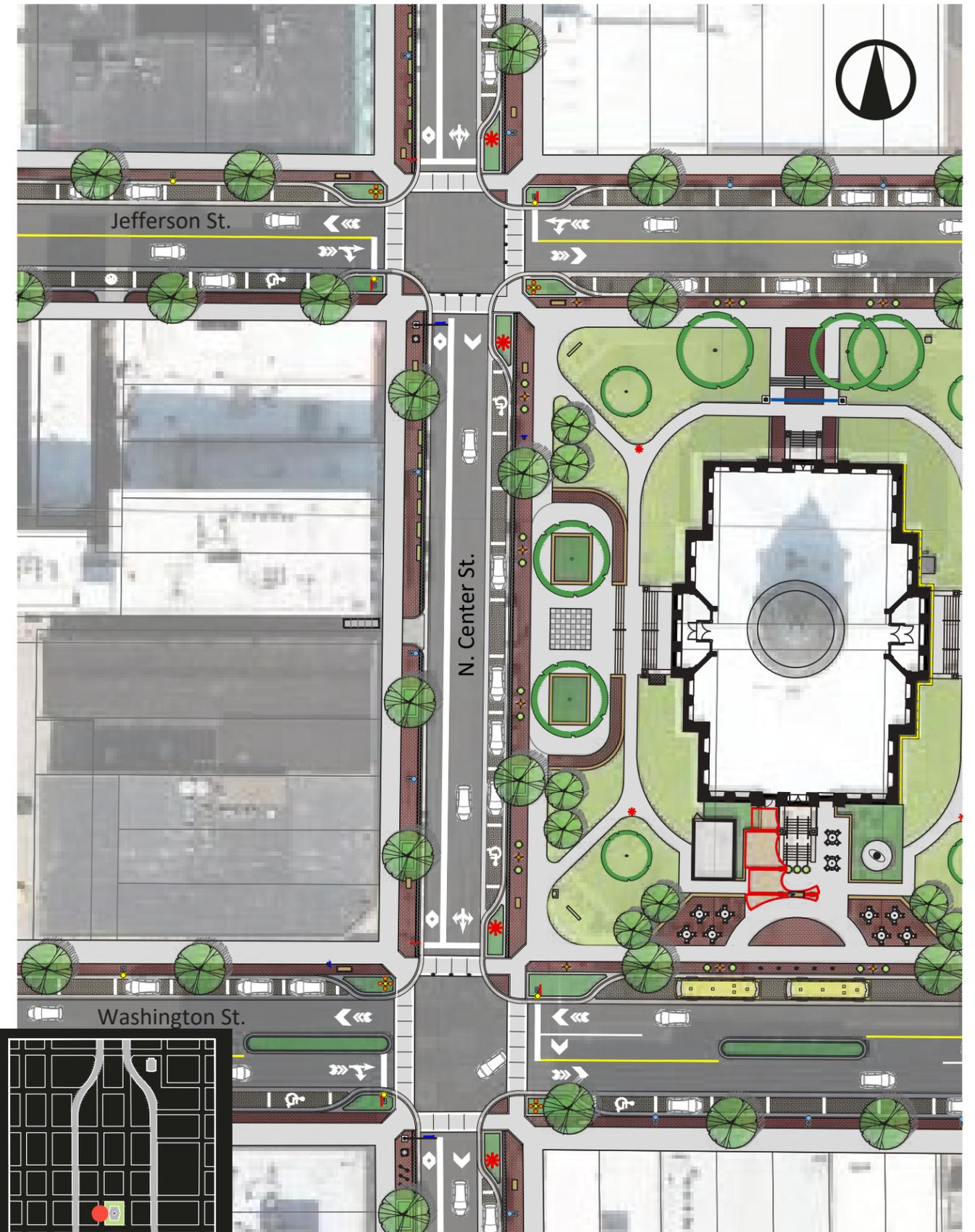
N. MADISON STREET - 500 | MARKET ST. TO MULBERRY ST.



N. MADISON STREET - 600 | MULBERRY ST. TO LOCUST ST.



N. CENTER STREET - 100 | FRONT ST. TO WASHINGTON ST.



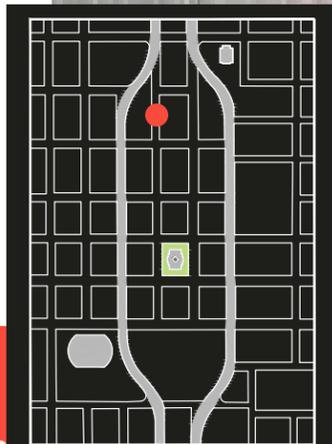
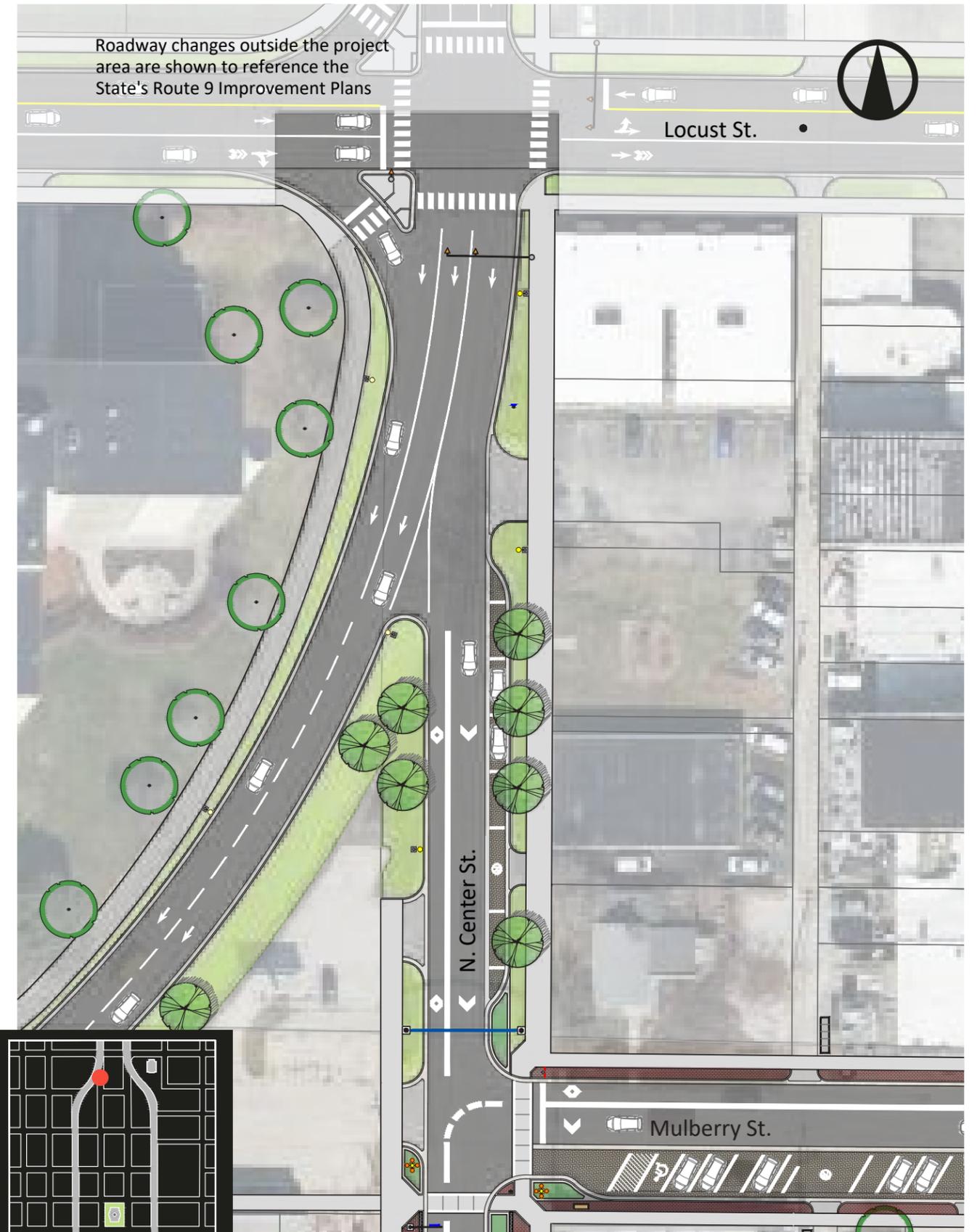
N. CENTER STREET - 200 | WASHINGTON ST. TO JEFFERSON ST.



N. CENTER STREET - 300 | JEFFERSON ST. TO MONROE ST.

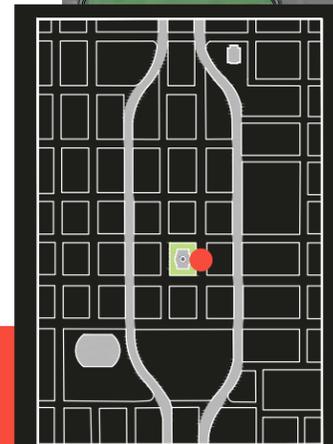
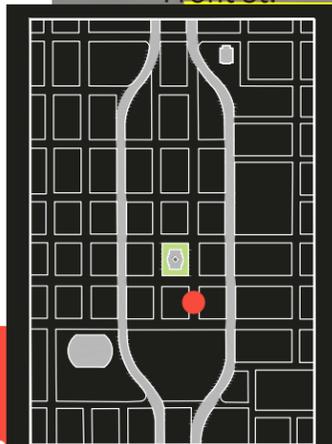
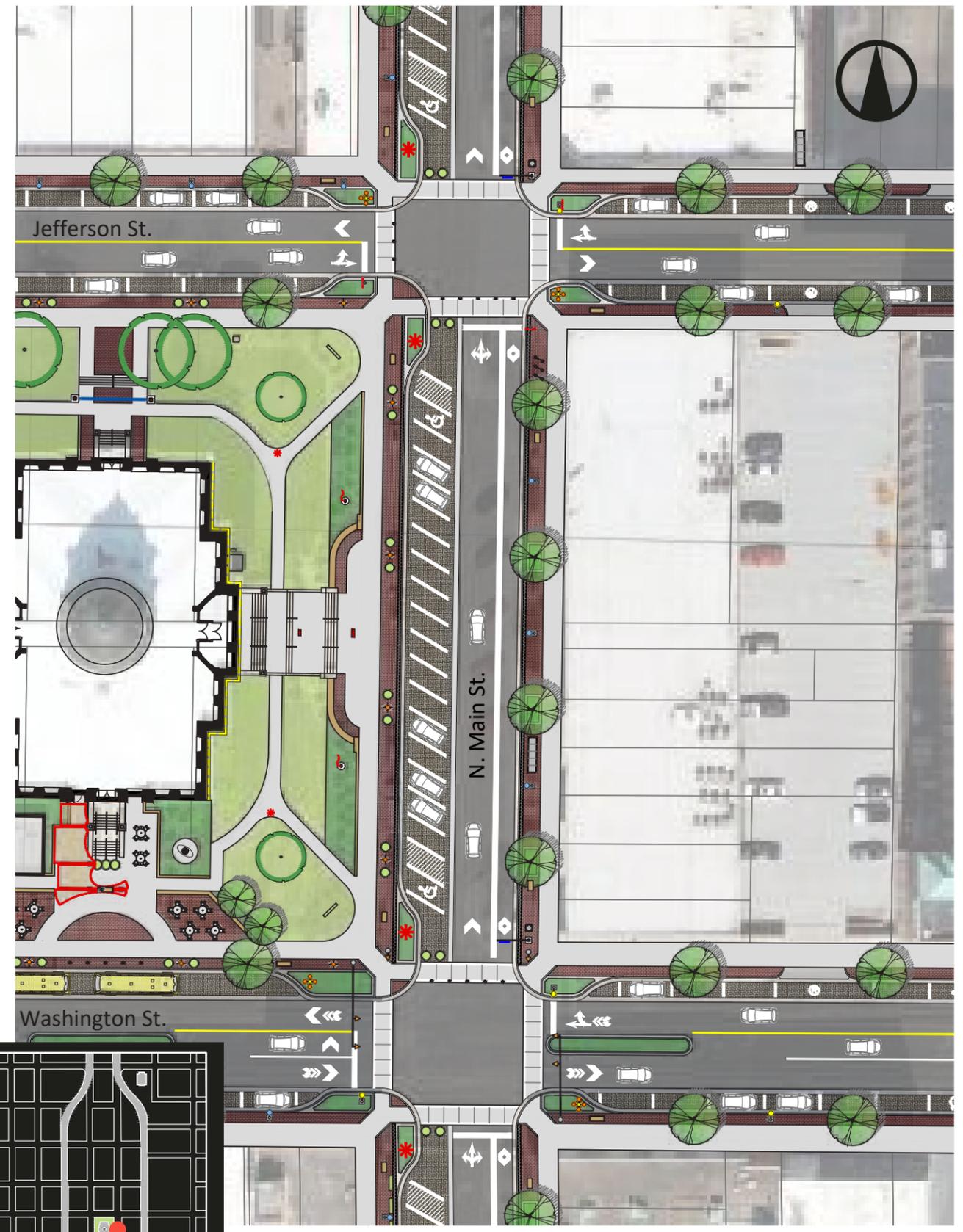
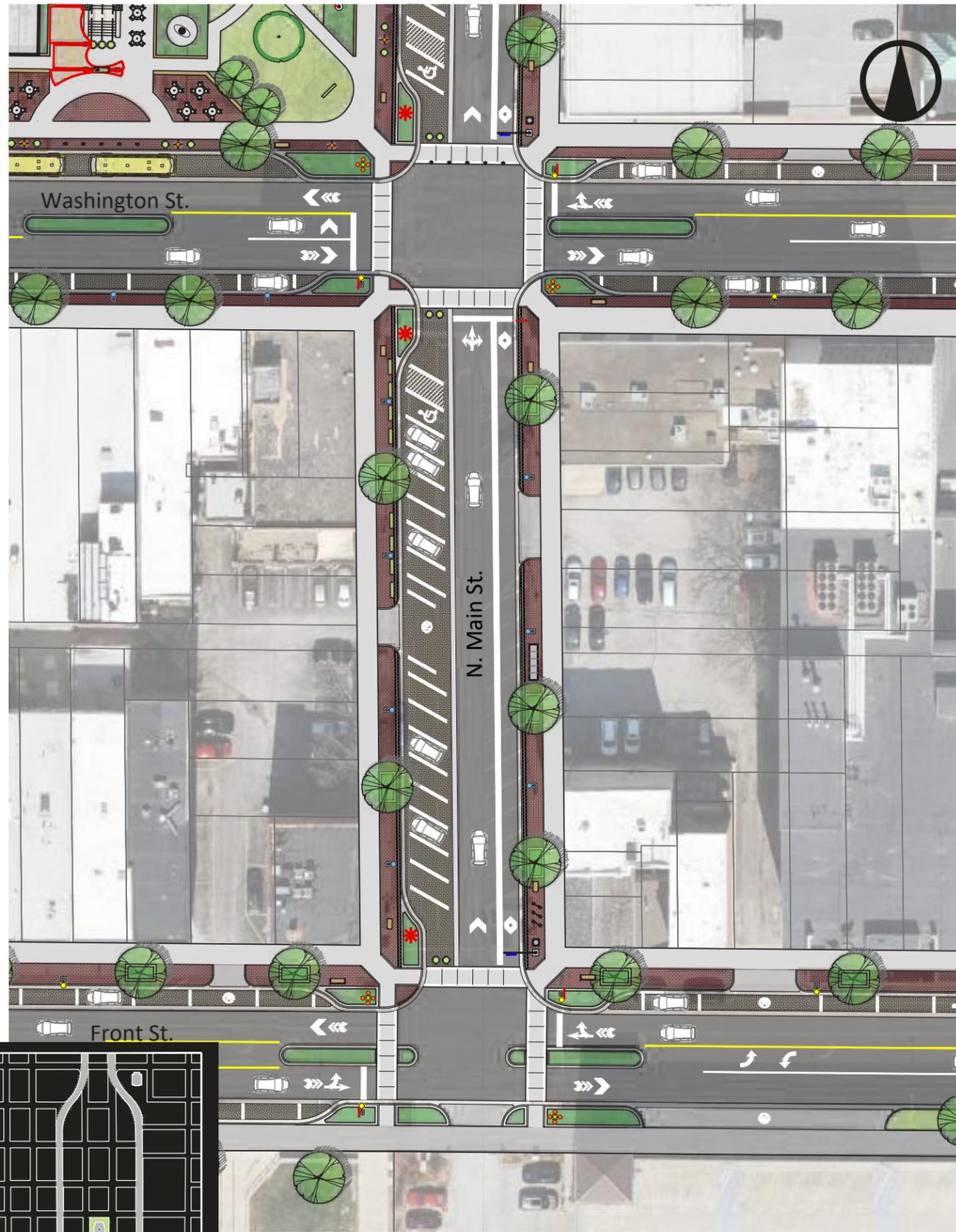


N. CENTER STREET - 400 | MONROE ST. TO MARKET ST.



N. CENTER STREET - 500 | MARKET ST. TO MULBERRY ST.

N. CENTER STREET - 600 | MULBERRY ST. TO LOCUST ST.



N. MAIN STREET - 100 | FRONT ST. TO WASHINGTON ST.

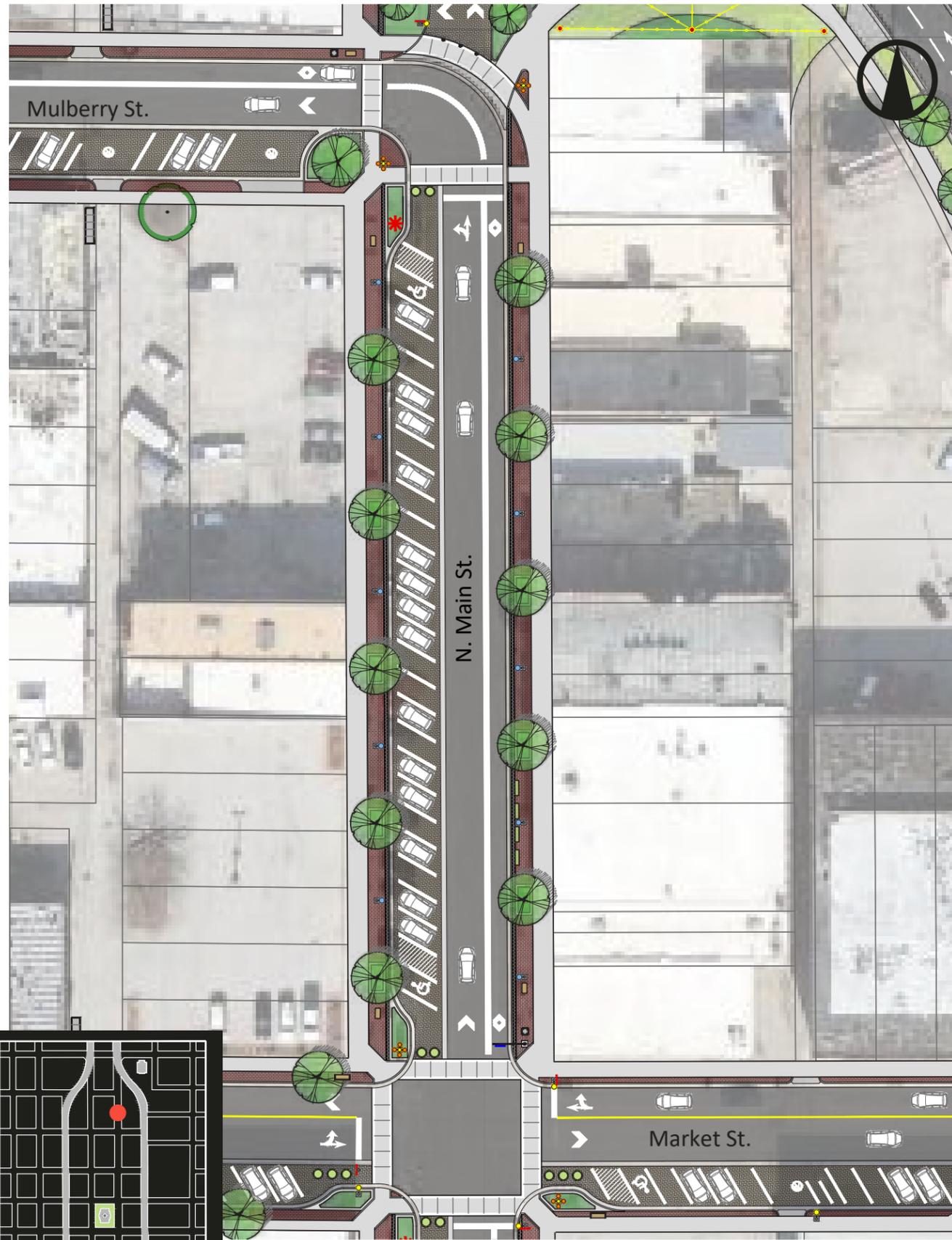
N. MAIN STREET - 200 | WASHINGTON ST. TO JEFFERSON ST.



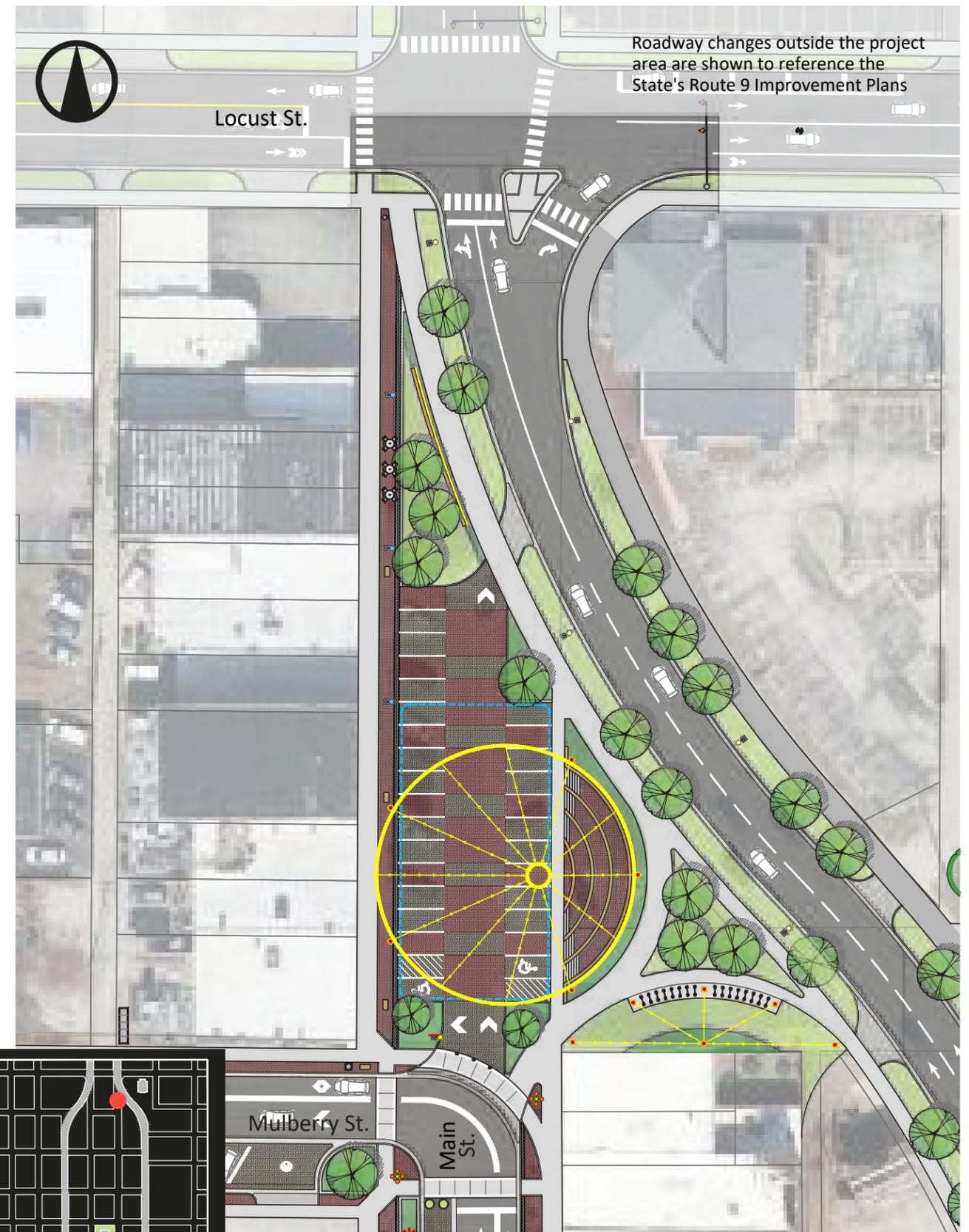
N. MAIN STREET - 300 | JEFFERSON ST. TO MONROE ST.



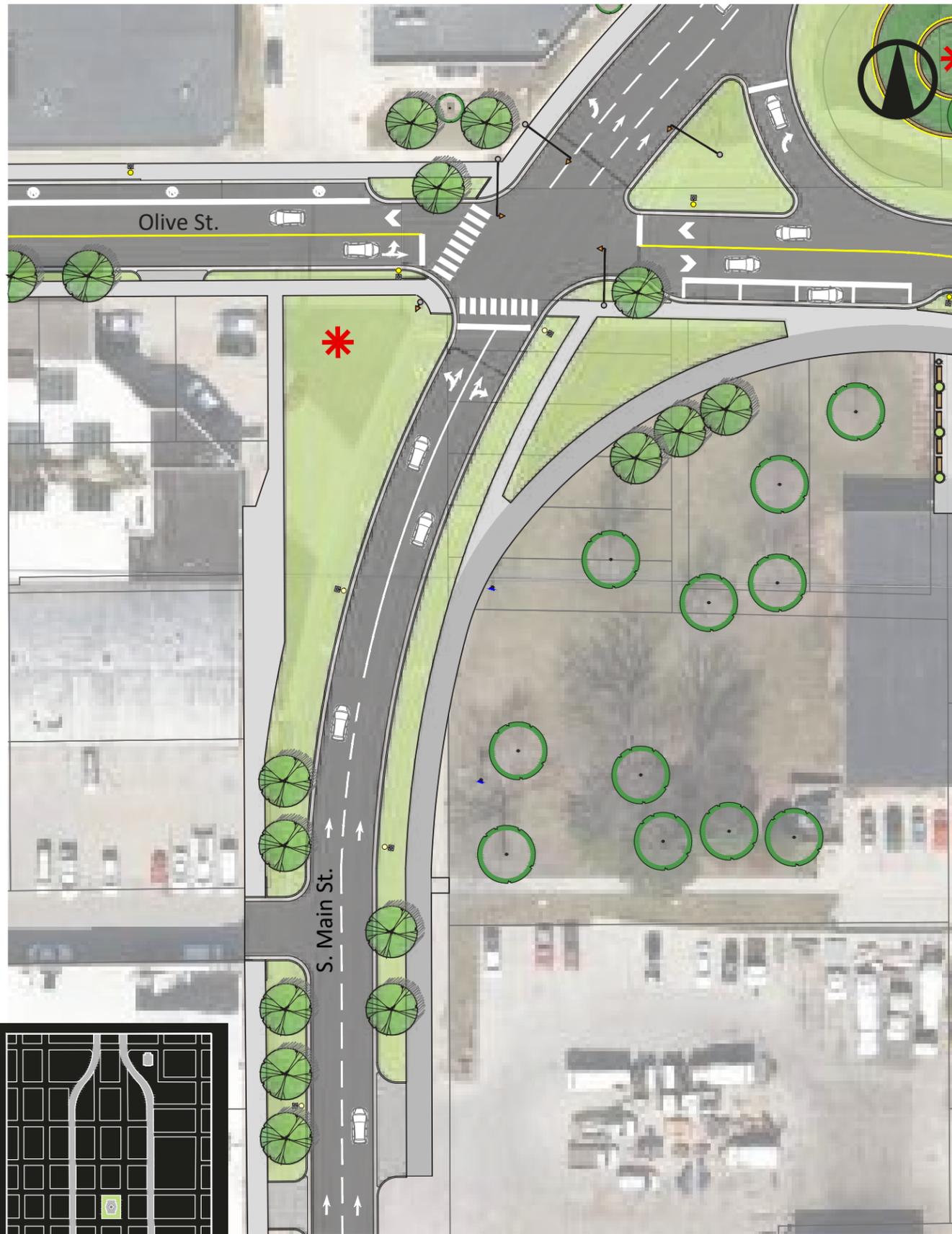
N. MAIN STREET - 400 | MONROE ST. TO MARKET ST.



N. MAIN STREET - 500 | MARKET ST. TO MULBERRY ST.



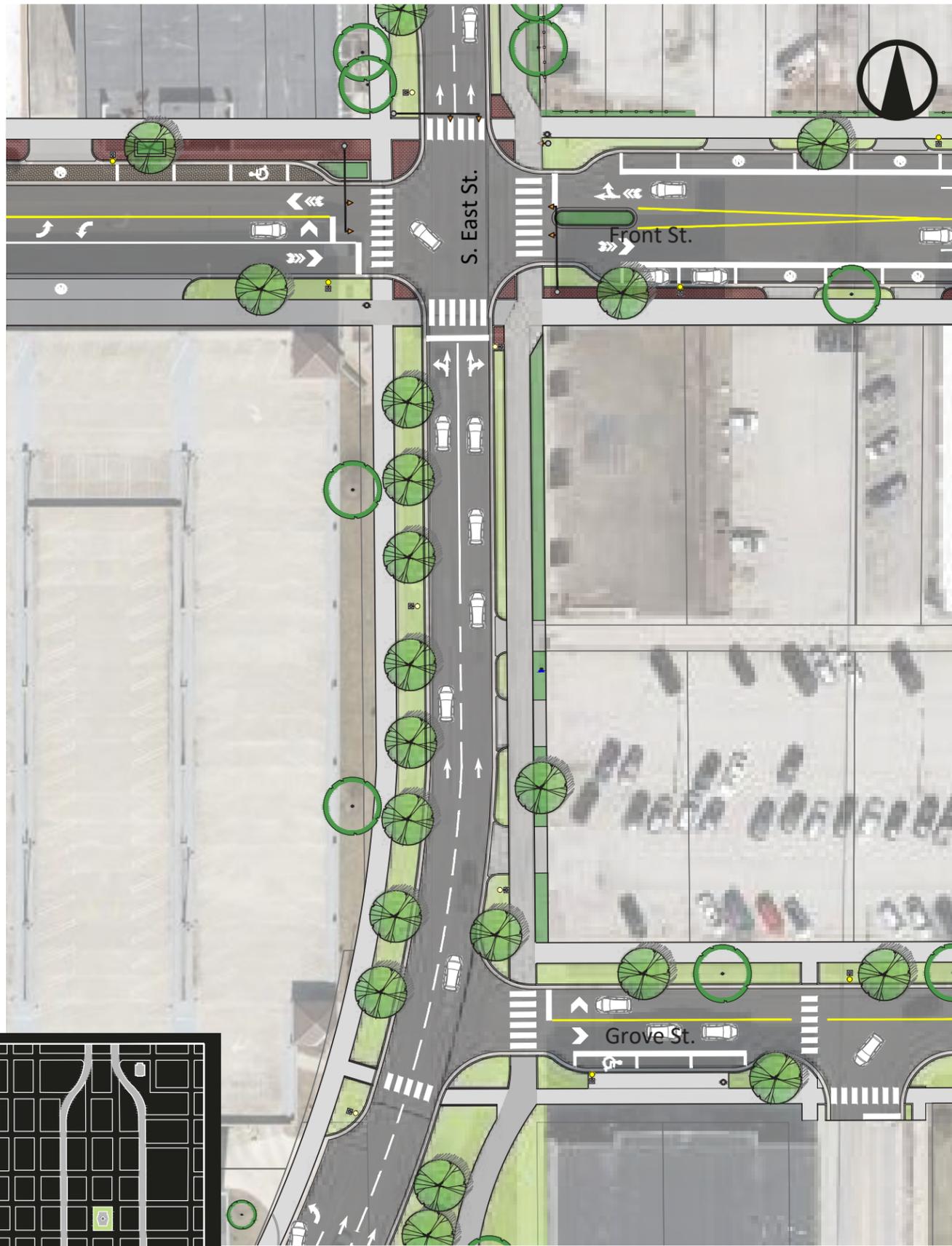
N. MAIN STREET - 600 | MULBERRY ST. TO LOCUST ST.



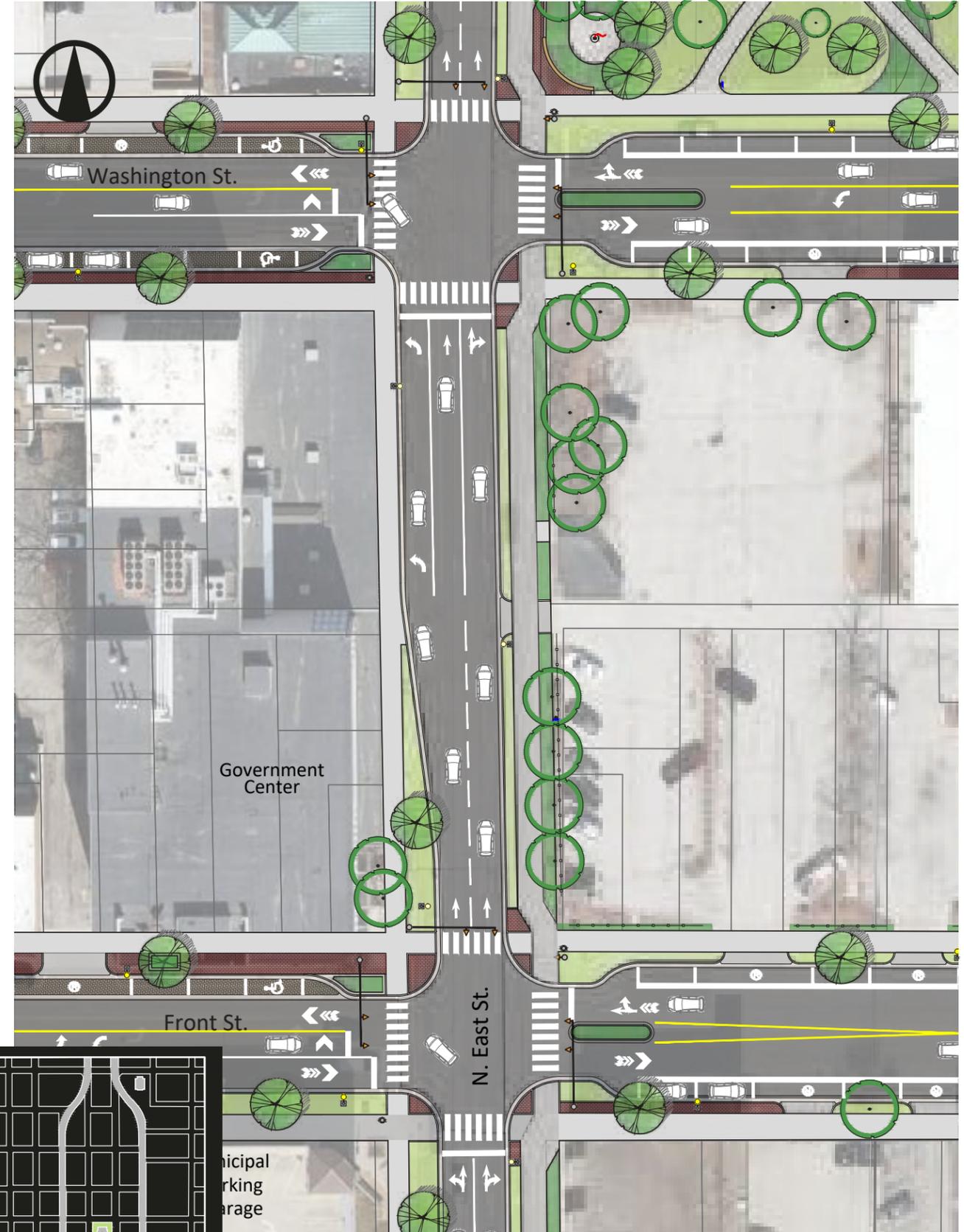
S. MAIN STREET - 300 | OLIVE ST.



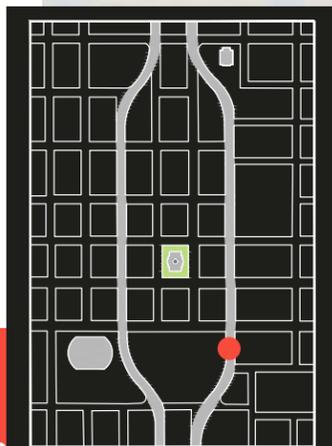
S. EAST STREET - 200 | OLIVE ST. TO GROVE ST.

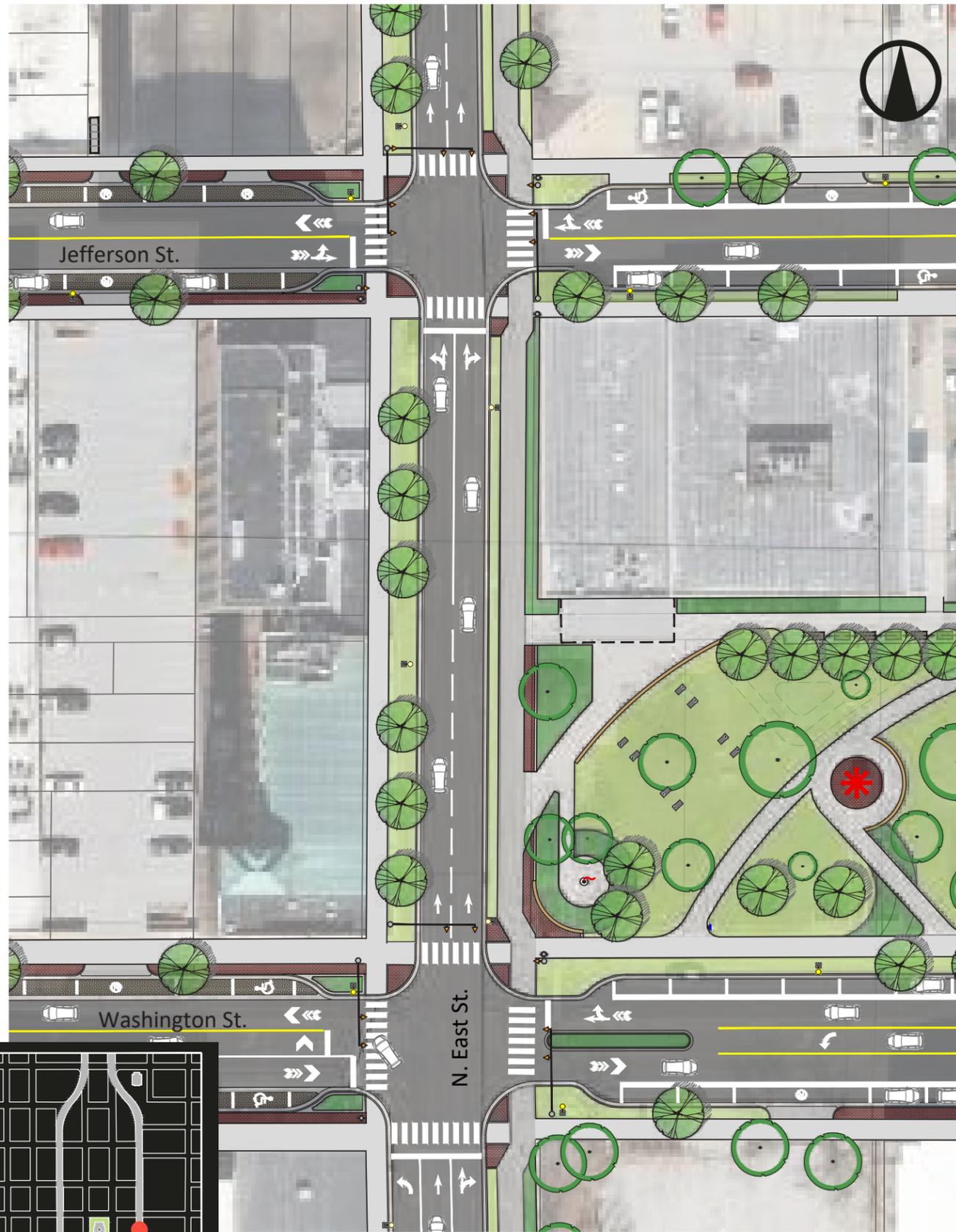


S. EAST STREET - 100 | GROVE ST. TO FRONT ST.



N. EAST STREET - 100 | FRONT ST. TO WASHINGTON ST.

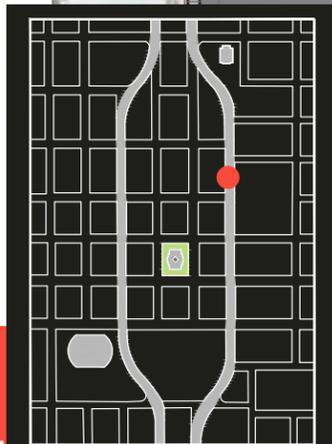




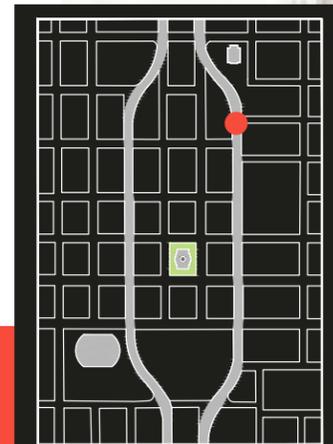
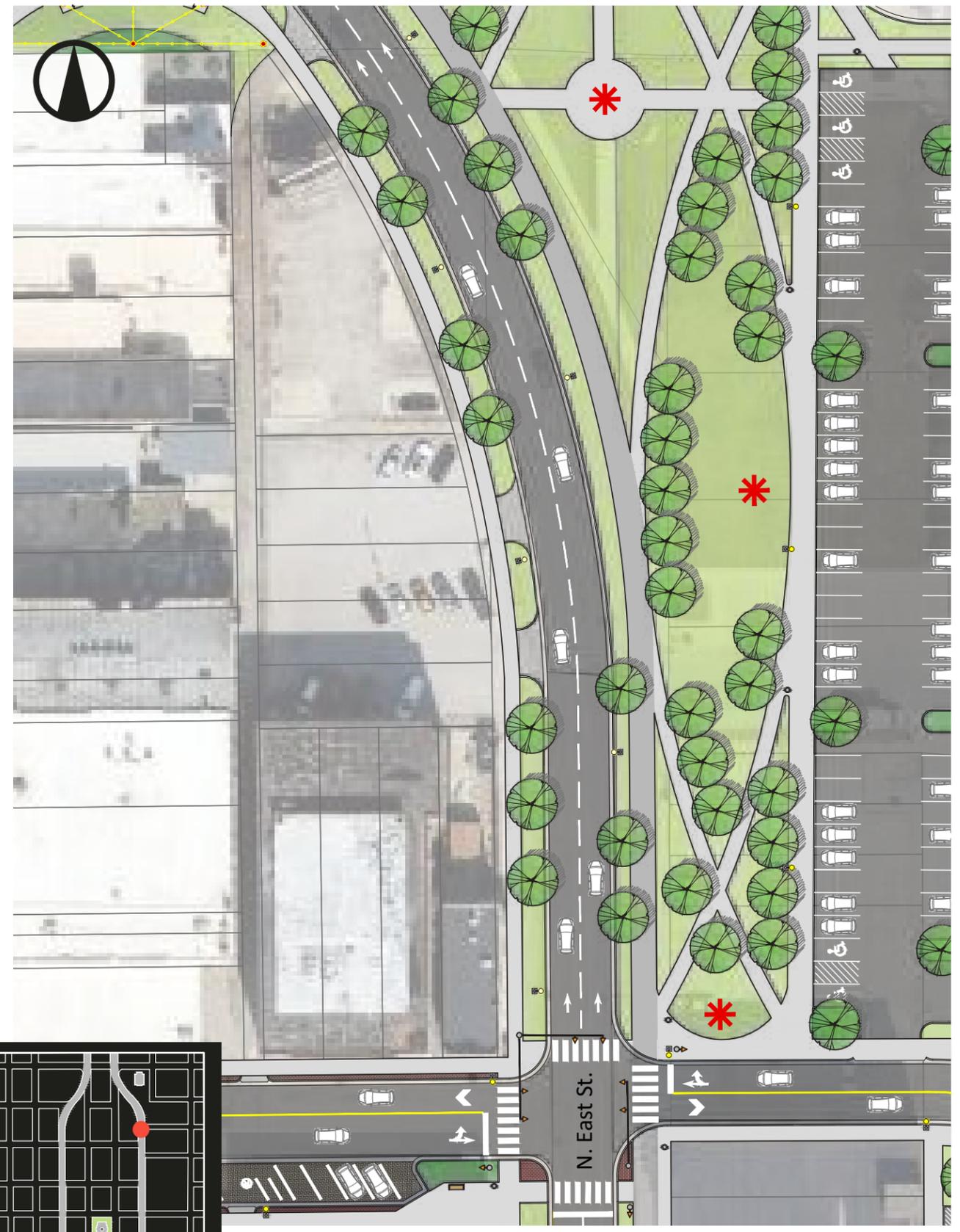
N. EAST STREET - 200 | WASHINGTON ST. TO JEFFERSON ST.



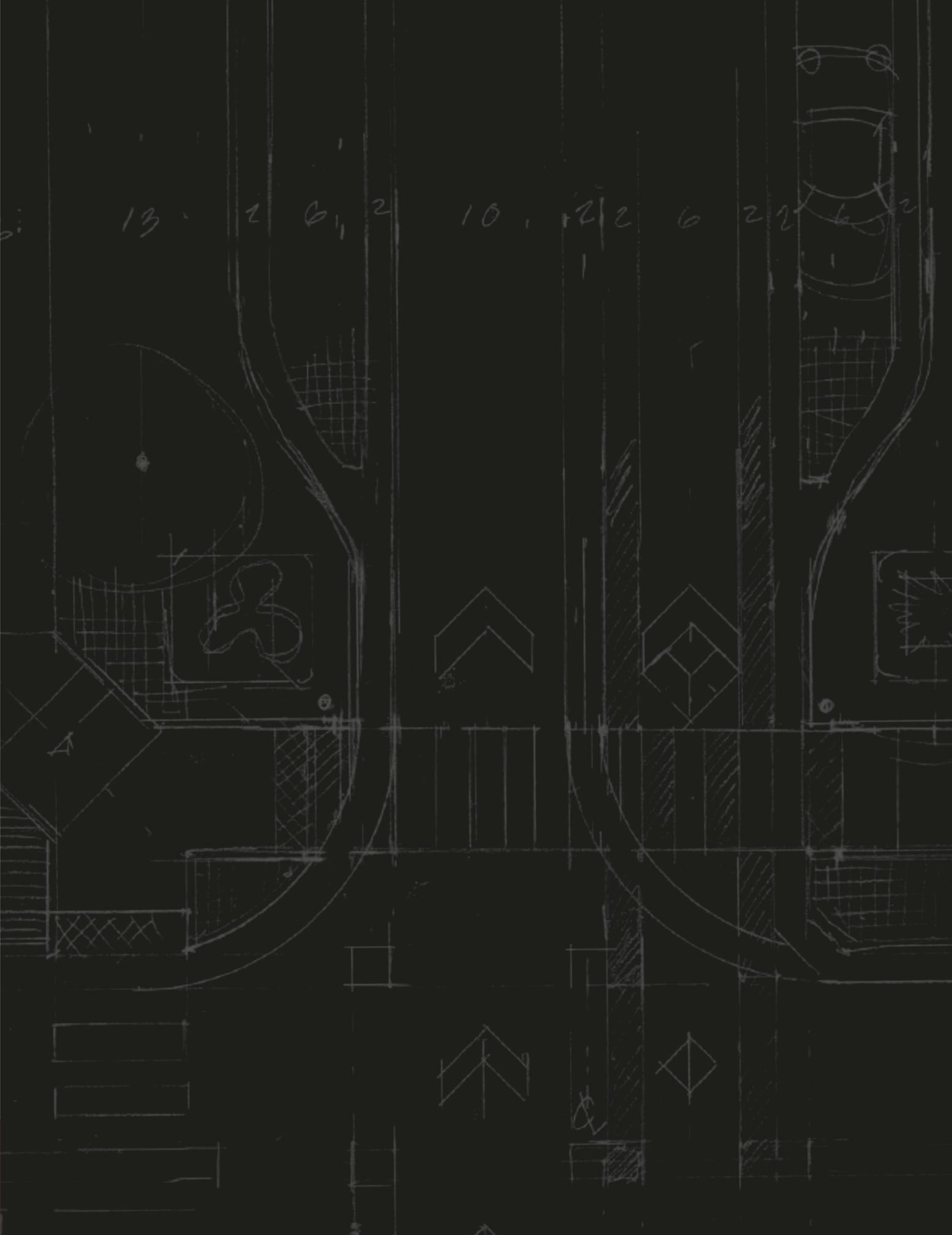
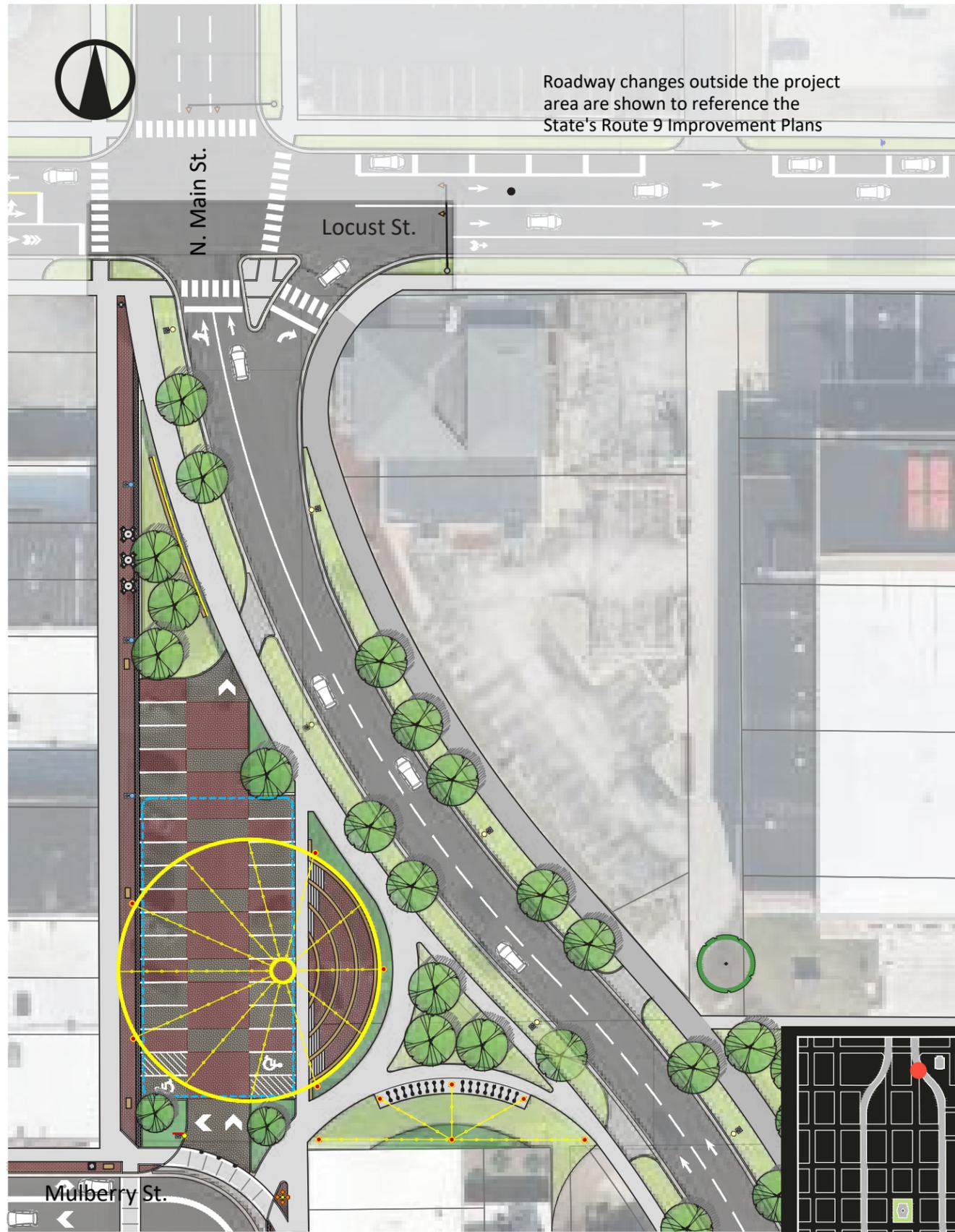
N. EAST STREET - 300 | JEFFERSON ST. TO MONROE ST.



N. EAST STREET - 400 | MONROE ST. TO MARKET ST.



N. EAST STREET - 500 | MARKET ST. TO MULBERRY ST.



N. EAST STREET - 600 | MULBERRY ST. TO LOCUST ST.

