

## Staff Report

### **DOWNTOWN PLAZA UPDATE**

November 9, 2021

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The City Council initially discussed features and amenities for a new Downtown Plaza at its November 24, 2020 meeting as it relates to the City Council goal to *“begin construction of downtown community space in 2021.”*

Subsequently, on December 8, 2020 the City Council directed staff to proceed with preparing a conceptual design for a plaza at the site located east of City Hall known as Parking Lot N. The City hired Confluence, Inc (Confluence) to help create concepts for the Lot N site that addresses the goals for the project as a new amenity and attraction to Downtown. The scope of work included an outline of the City Council’s ideas for features to include in the concept. Confluence worked with the City’s team to address these City Council interests and refine a concept for public comment.

The following ideas were given to Confluence to inform the conceptual design of the plaza.

- Year-round use of space (dancing water, flowing water, and ice skating)
- Ability to host smaller events, such as musical performances (not to compete with Bandshell productions)
- Public Restroom
- Uses for those of all ages
- Parking around the Plaza
- Shelter/Shade Structure
- Kinetic features
- Hang out space/seating areas
- Artwork as interactive pieces of furniture

- Not all concrete, green space with trees and plantings
- Innovative design, rather than traditional

City Council reviewed public input from January 2021 on a concept prepared by Confluence. Subsequently, City Council accepted a final concept and budget estimates in February 2021. This concept was also included as part of the City's Downtown Reinvestment District application.

On July 27, 2021, City Council approved a contract with Confluence to provide professional services for the design of the Plaza with a schedule to allow construction to begin in 2022. On September 14, 2021, City Council directed staff to include real ice in the plaza (as opposed to a synthetic ice-skating surface). Staff has been working with Confluence on the design of the plaza with the ideas provided by City Council and has nearly completed the design development.

The project concept has evolved since the February 2021 primarily to address escalating costs. Although the core features of the plan are still part of the project, there are changes that have influenced the character of the project.

The most significant changes are the following:

1. The water spray feature has been moved from the hardscape skating area to end of the water runnel feature on the east side of the site. This addresses concerns about the water recirculation system design and overall costs.
2. The signature sculpture location has moved from the end of the runnel to the north end of the skating ribbon. Moving the sculpture keeps it is a primary feature that highly visible and accessible to those visiting the plaza.
3. There is less open lawn area located at the north end of the site. The need to relocate the sculpture impacted the amount of open area.
4. The building overhang and seating area is oriented north towards the spray feature rather than towards the west. The north orientation creates a shaded area of seating and is centrally located to the highest interest and activity areas.
5. Smaller art installations, such as the kinetic sculpture, are reduced in scope or deferred due to costs.
6. The lighting plan includes a variety of decorative lighting features designed to create ambiance and lighting for the skating ribbon. These lighting techniques focus the light where needed however they differ from typical down lit dark sky lighting techniques used for development projects.

**Although the full details of the plans are not yet complete, at this stage staff is asking for feedback on the current design (Attachment A) before the project proceeds to the construction document development phase.**

Confluence has also developed a preliminary cost estimate for this stage of the project. This cost estimate shows all the associated costs of the project including construction, an

art piece, art wall and commission, ten percent contingency, architectural and engineering costs, real ice loop, and water tunnel and sprays. The estimate includes a line item for furniture, fixtures and equipment that will be purchased separately from this construction project. The estimate also includes the improvements on Clark Ave. and 5<sup>th</sup> Street for parking.

The table below shows a summary of the most recent estimated costs:

Construction	\$ 3,591,724.38
Contingency (10%)	359,172.44
Survey & Geotechnical Report	11,500.00
Permits & Submittals	10,850.00
Design Costs	377,250.00
<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>\$4,350,496.82</b>

City Council has included funding of \$3.7 million for the Downtown Plaza project as part of the approved FY 2021/22 budget. City Council has also allocated funding for the new parking lot on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and the parking improvements on Clark Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. After the purchase of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street property and the estimated cost of constructing the new parking lot, it is estimated that \$200,000 will be available for the Downtown Plaza project. This would bring the current overall funding to \$3.9 million. **The following table shows a breakdown for the possible funding for this project and the estimated \$450,496.82 shortfall.**

<b>Source of funding</b>	<b>Amount</b>
General Fund (2019/20 CIP)	\$1,100,000
Local Option Sales Tax (2020/21 CIP)	200,000
G.O. Bonds (2021/22 CIP)	700,000
G.O. Bonds (2022/23 CIP)	700,000
General Fund (Excess from 2019/20)	1,000,000
Estimated amount for Clark Ave. & 5 <sup>th</sup> St. Parking	200,000
Current Funding Total	\$3,900,000.00
<b>Shortfall can be covered by federal ARPA funding</b>	<b>\$450,496.82</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>\$4,350,496.82</b>

**PARKING:**

With this project removing the current Lot N, City Council approved a new parking lot (Attachment B) to be constructed on 6<sup>th</sup> Street north of City Hall. This project will be bid this winter for a spring construction and will be open before the construction on the plaza begins.

The new parking lot will be a public lot with reserved parking spaces as well as metered spaces. The design of the parking lot also includes installation of conduit for the future installation of electric vehicle charging stations. A new pedestrian crossing will be completed from the parking lot to the City Auditorium entrance.

On Clark Avenue, the meters will be equipped with a button to allow the first 10 minutes for free. The drop box space will no longer be a drive through, but instead it will be a dedicated space for drivers to pull in and drop off utility bills in an angled parking spot along Clark.

The following table shows the existing parking and the new parking including the parking being constructed on Clark Ave. and 5<sup>th</sup> St.

Type of Space	EXISTING	NEW		
	Lot N	Clark Ave. On-Street	6th St. Lot	Total
Accessible	3	2	3	5
Reserved	29	0	33	33
10-Minute Free	12	2	0	2
Metered	42	8	25	33
Dropbox	-	1	0	1
<b>Total Spaces</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>74</b>

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

The City Council has adopted a goal to construct a downtown community space. Staff has worked with Confluence to keep costs down while still meeting the goals of the downtown community space. Despite these efforts, meeting the goals outlined in the concept phase results in the project cost estimate exceeding the available funding. Therefore, either the funding sources available for the project must be increased, or the goals for the project will need to be revisited to reduce the scope and cost of the project.

**At this meeting, staff is asking for feedback on the current design (Attachment A) before the project proceeds to the construction document development phase. Should the Council prefer to proceed with all of the elements reflected in the most recent concept design, additional funding will be needed. This additional funding source could come from the approximately \$14 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money that has been earmarked for the City of Ames.**

# Attachment A Winter



# Attachment A Summer





# AMES PLAZA

NOVEMBER 9, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING





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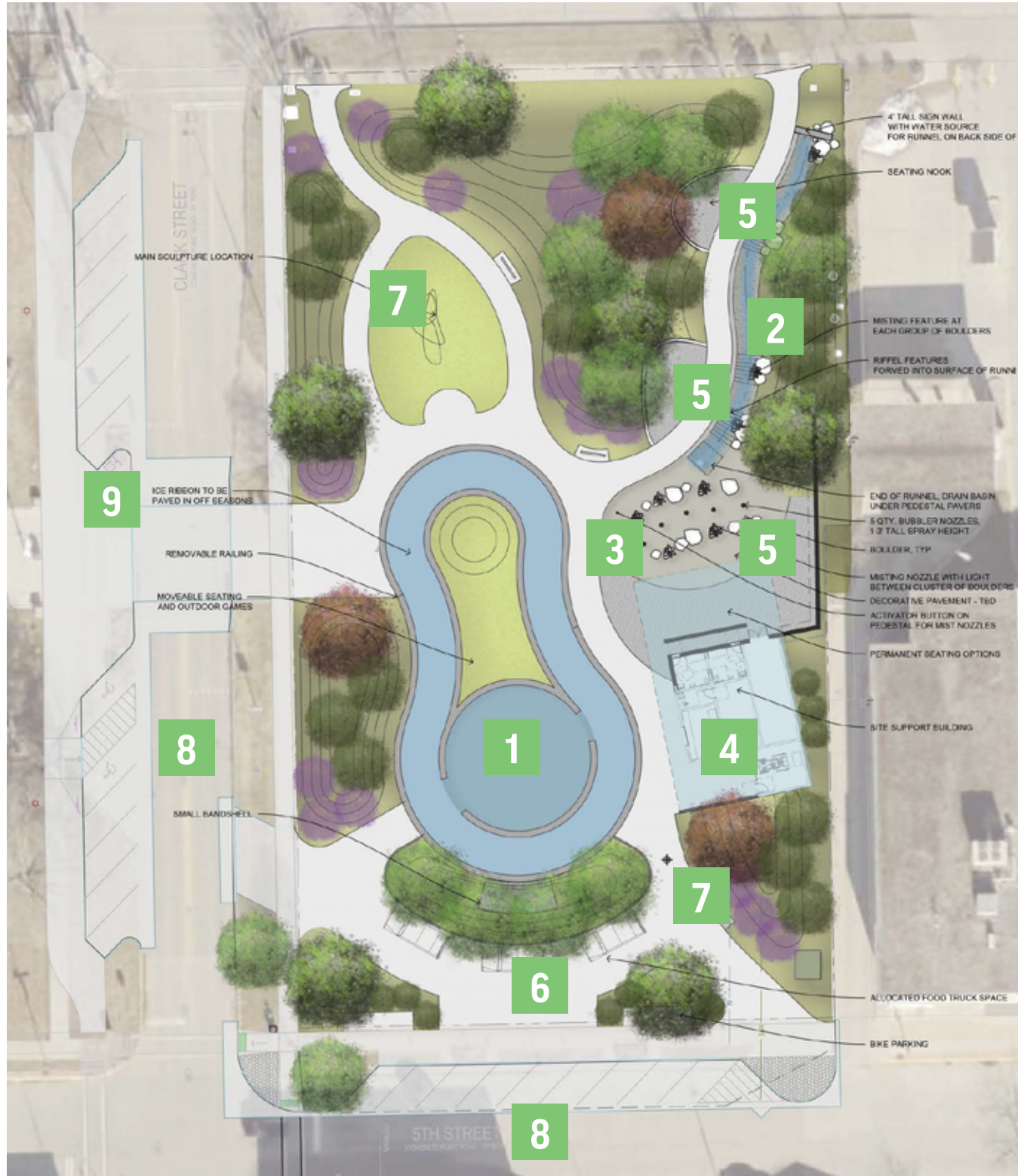
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# OVERVIEW

## SITE PLAN



- ICE LOOP 1
- WATER RUNNEL 2
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# DESIGN EVOLUTION

## STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS:

5TH STREET BACK IN PARKING

CLARK STREET ANGLED PARKING

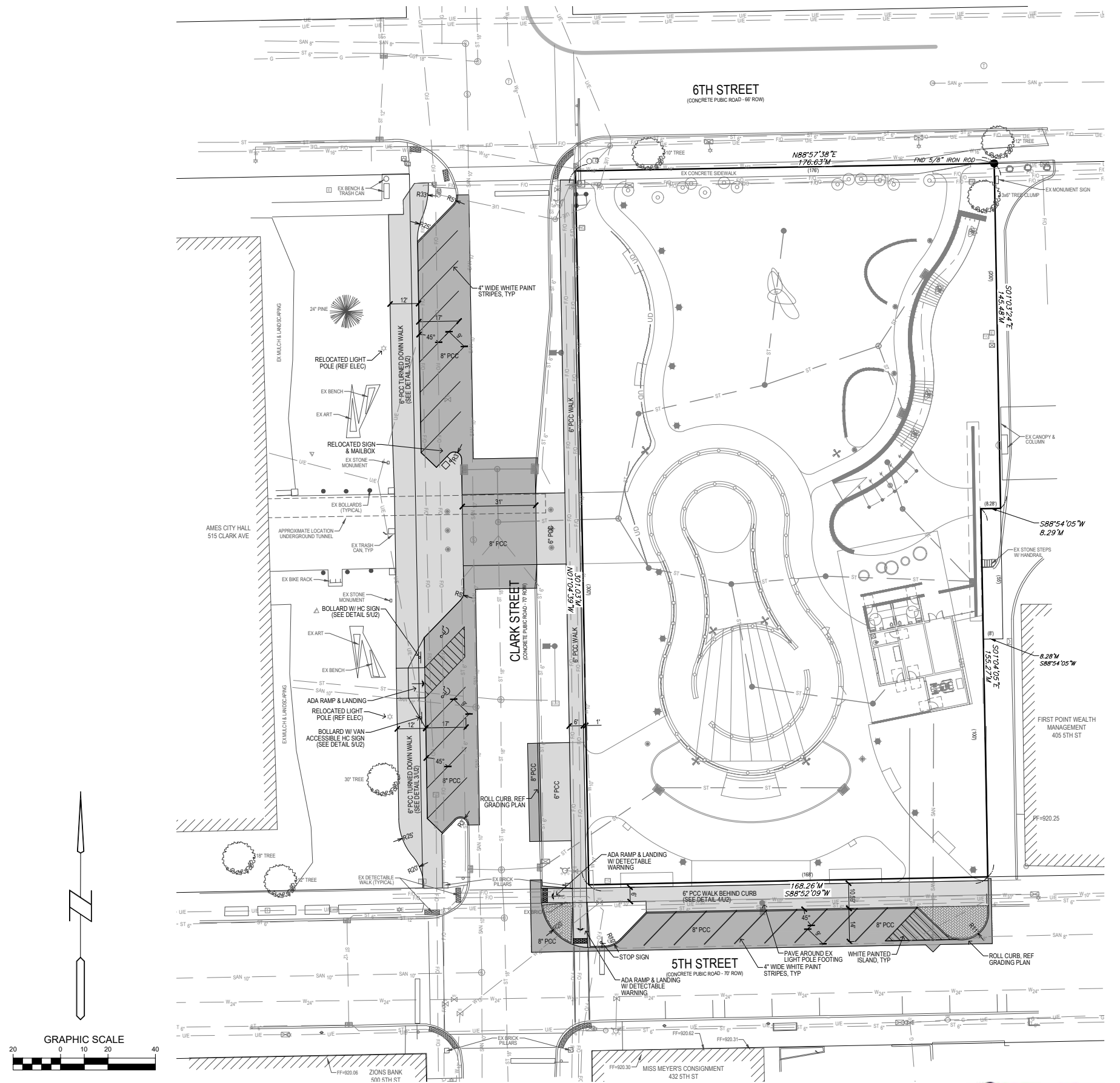
DROP BOX RELOCATION

ROLLED CURBS FOR FOOD TRUCKS

SAFER PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

MATCH 5TH STREET AESTHETICS

CONTINUATION OF COLUMN MONUMENTS



# DESIGN EVOLUTION

## ICE LOOP

NATURAL ICE

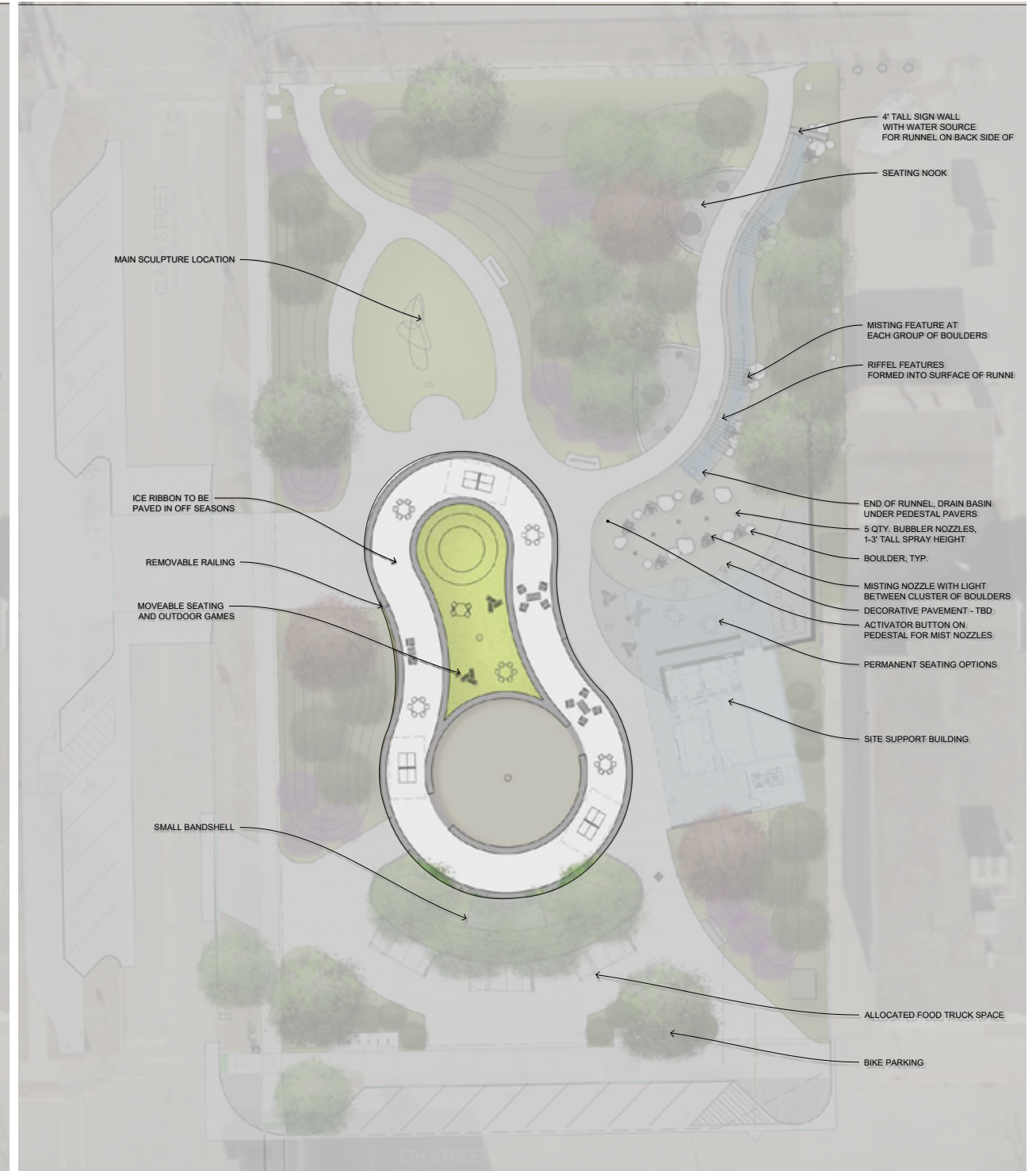
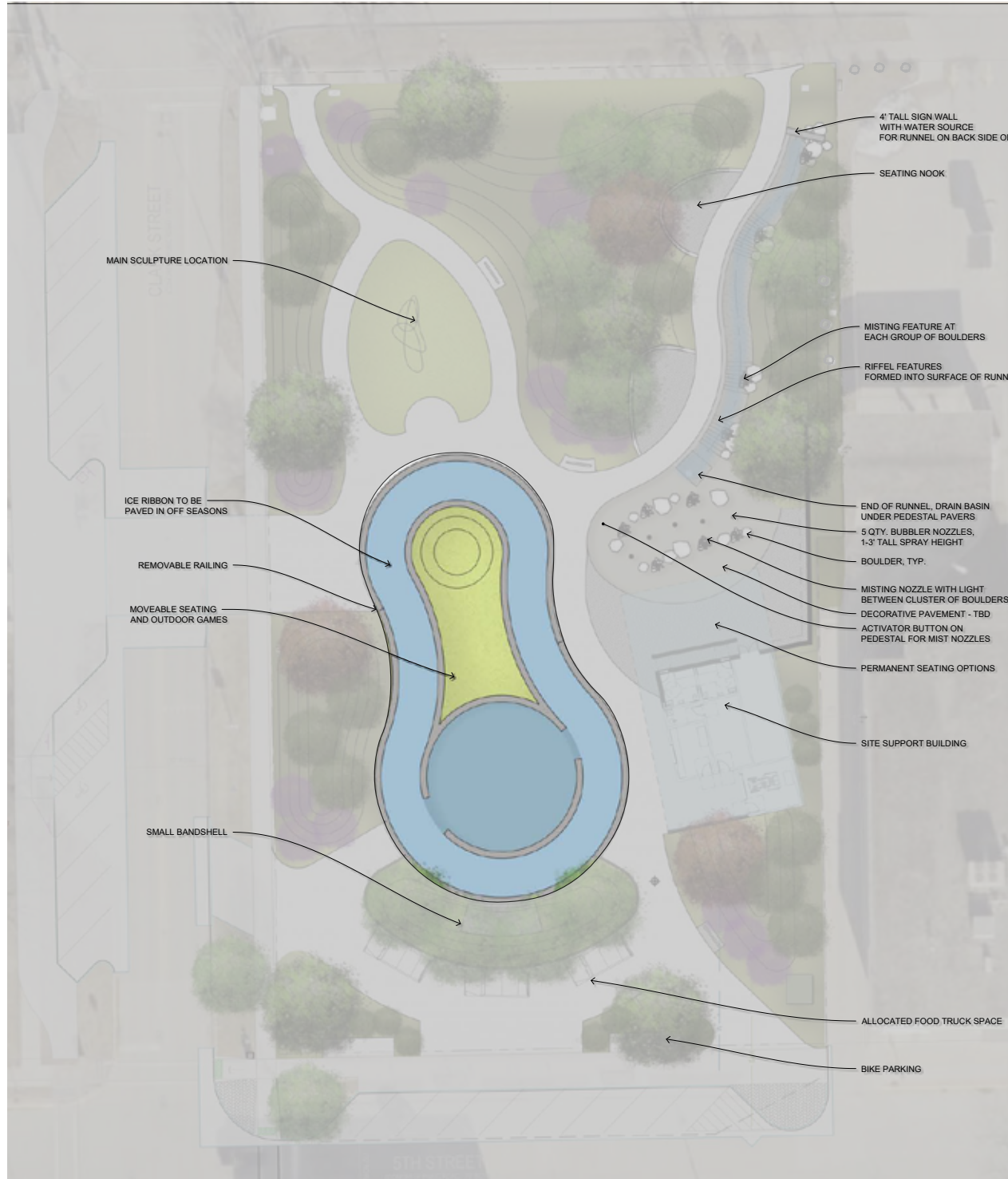
DASHER BOARD SYSTEM

REMOVABLE RAILING SYSTEM

CONTINUOUS LOOP

SPIN ZONE PULL-OFF

PAVING FILL FOR SUMMER USE





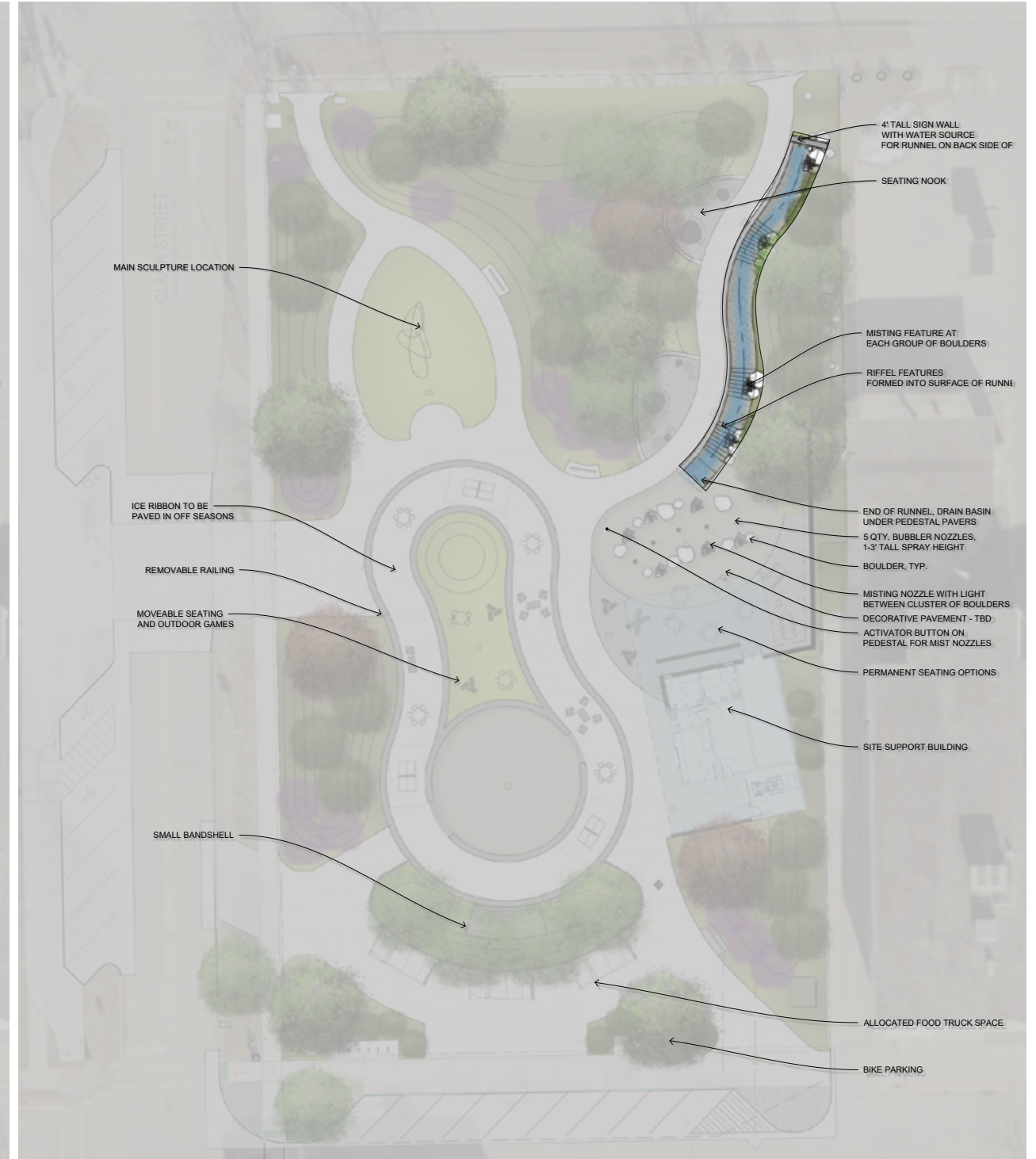
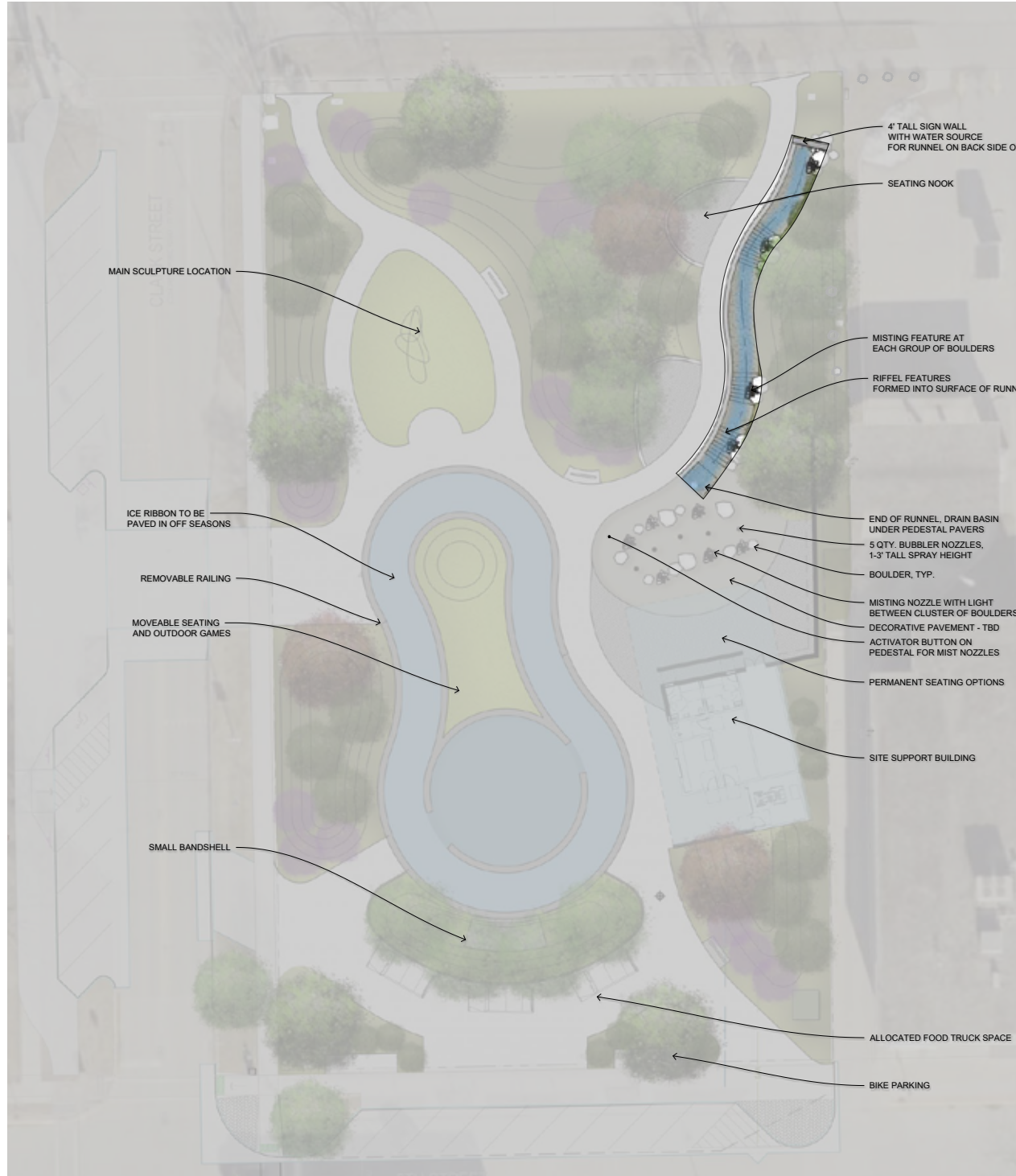
# DESIGN EVOLUTION

## WATER RUNNEL

SIGN WALL WITH JETS AT HEAD OF RUNNEL

RUNNEL AT A 1% SLOPE WITH RIFFLE STRIPS, MIST NOZZLES AND BOULDERS

UNDERGROUND TERMINUS





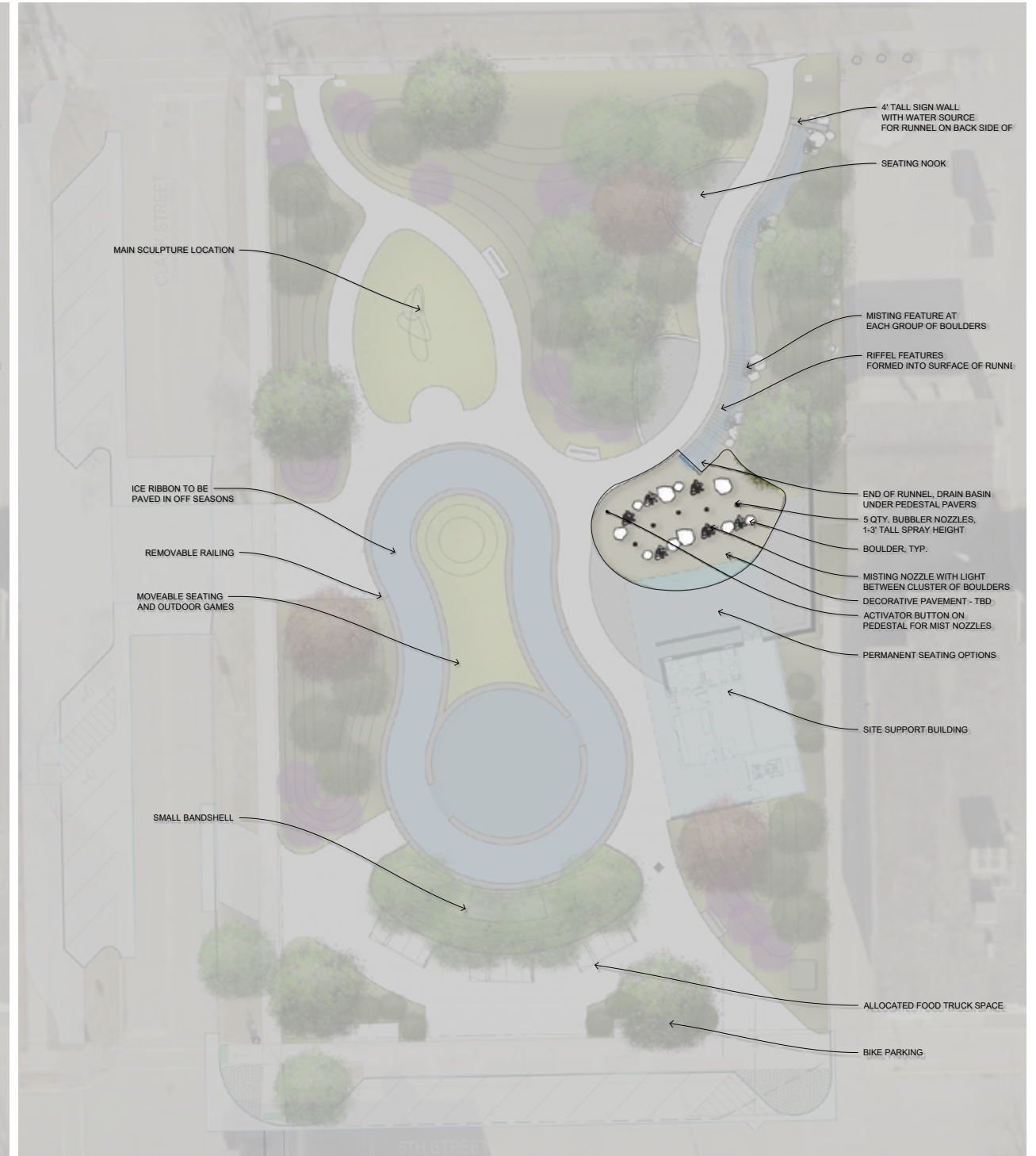
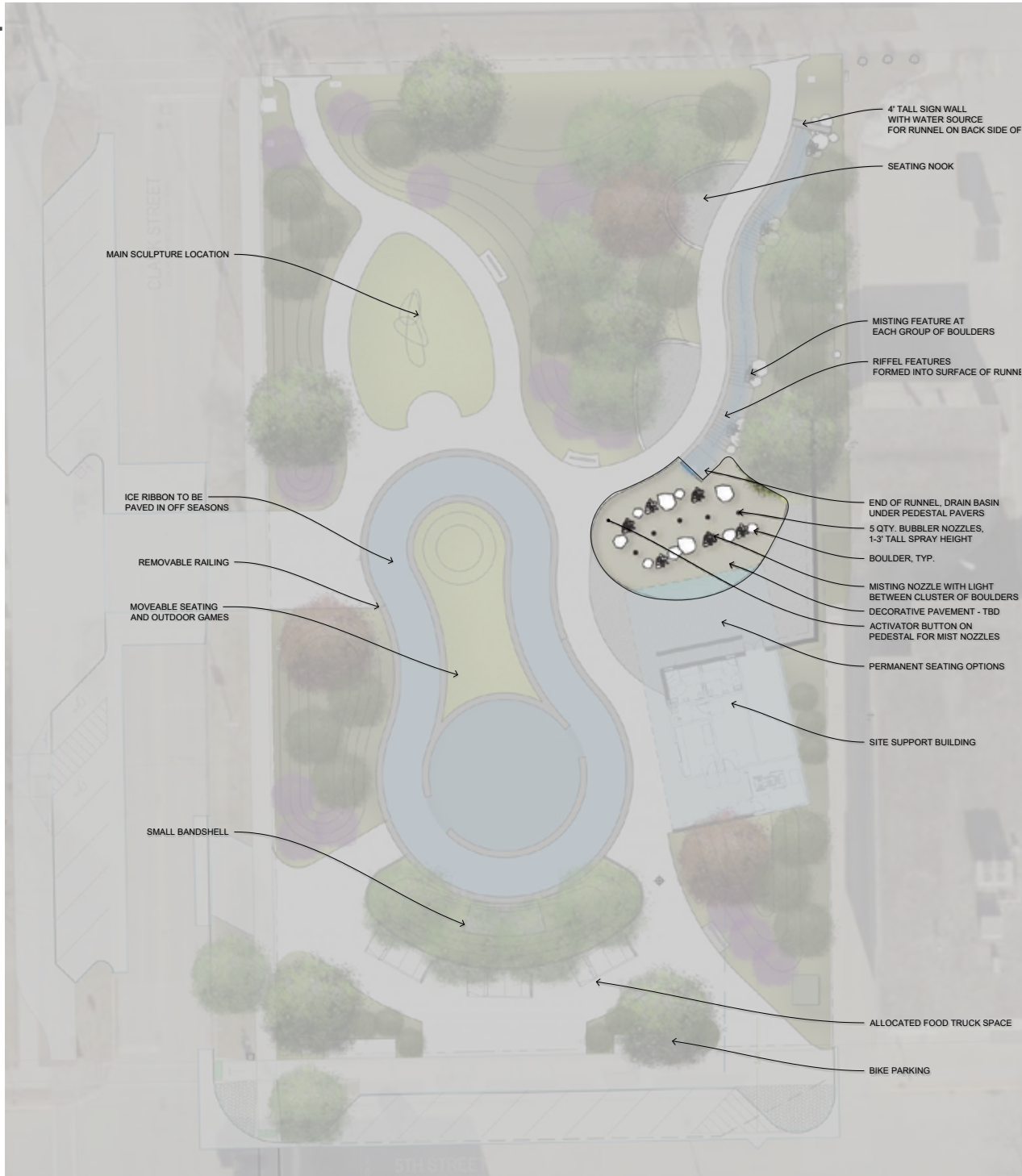
# DESIGN EVOLUTION

## SPRAY ZONE

DEDICATED PAD AT END OF RUNNEL

INCLUDES BUBBLER AND MIST NOZZELS AND BOULDERS

DRAINS TO TREATED RUNNEL VAULT FOR RECIRCULATION







# DESIGN EVOLUTION

## SITE SUPPORT BUILDING

APPROXIMATELY 1,500 SF

SKATE RENTAL SPACE

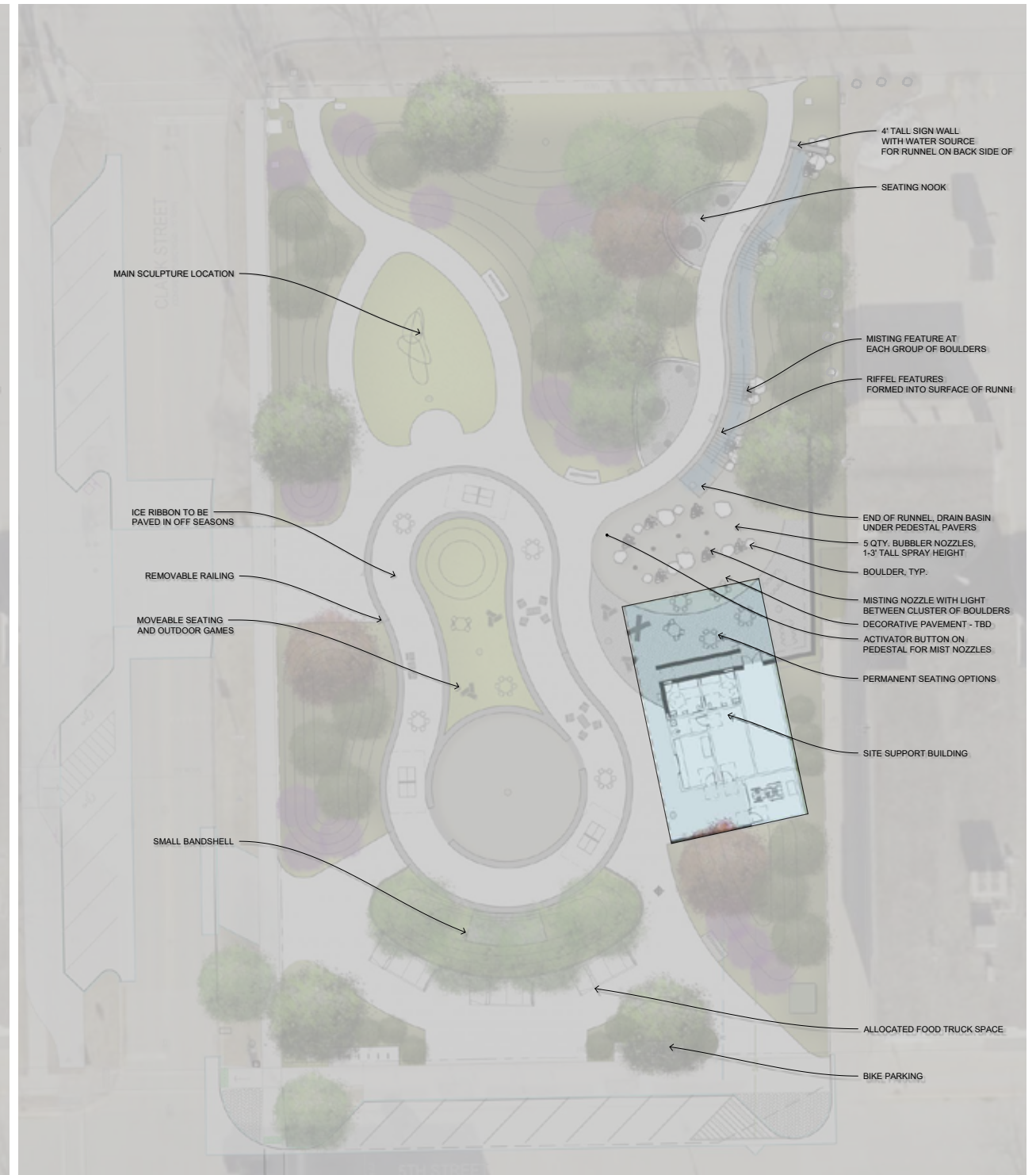
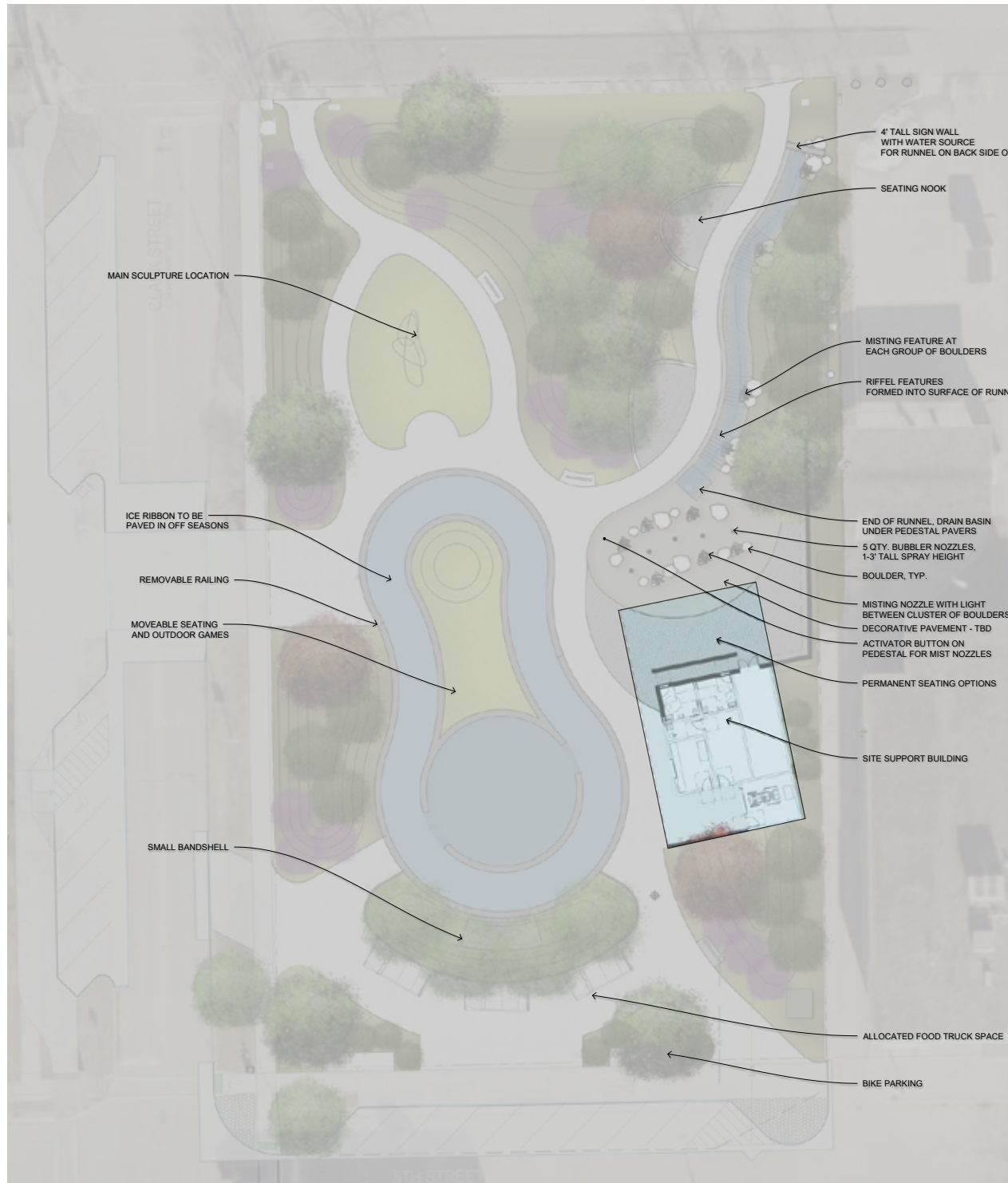
ICE AND WATER MECHANICAL ROOMS

ZAMBONI GARAGE WITH DRAINAGE

2 RESTROOMS WITH SECURITY CONTROLS

CANOPY OVERHANG FOR SEATING AREA

ART WALL CONNECTION









# SITE FURNISHINGS

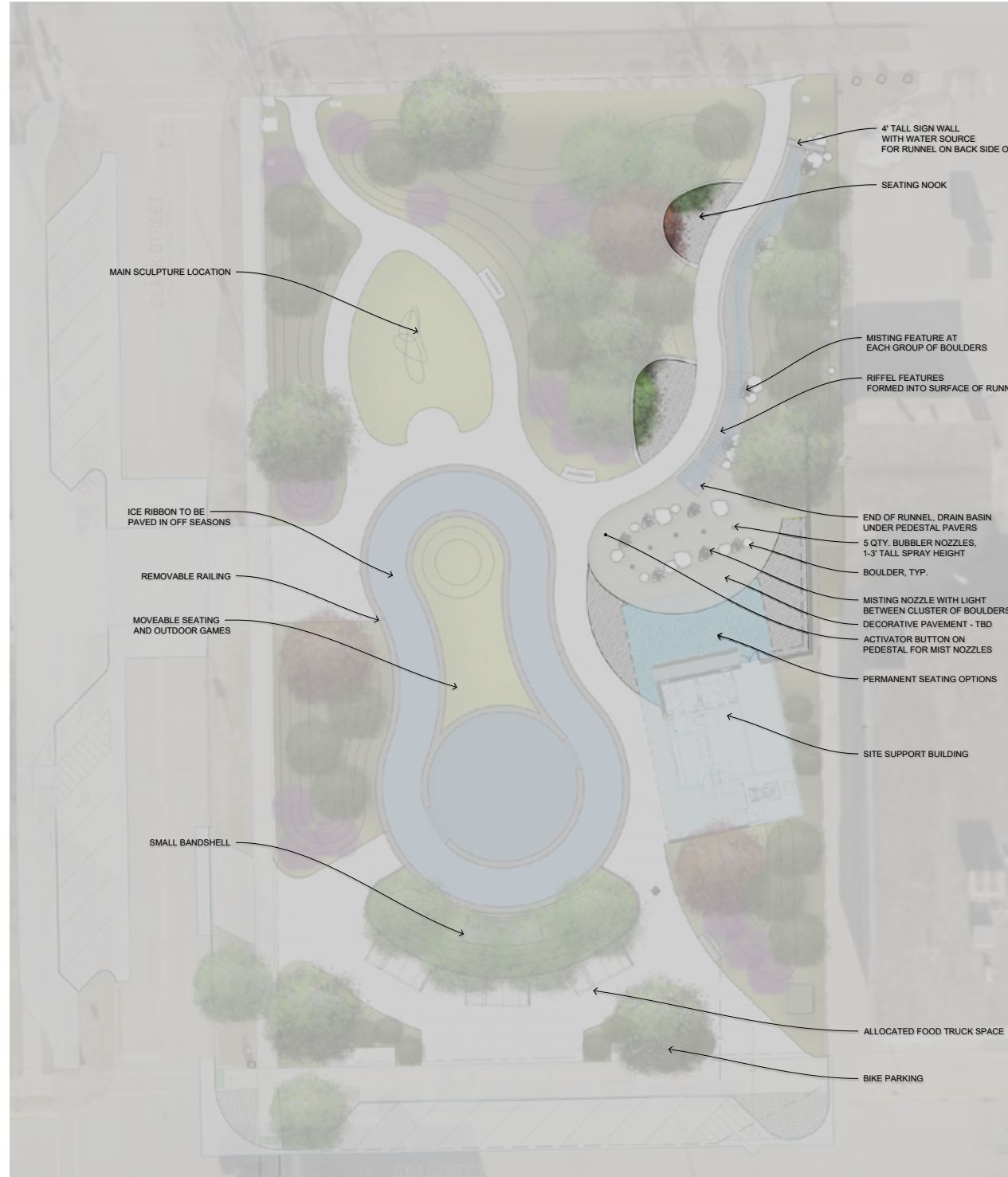
## SEATING

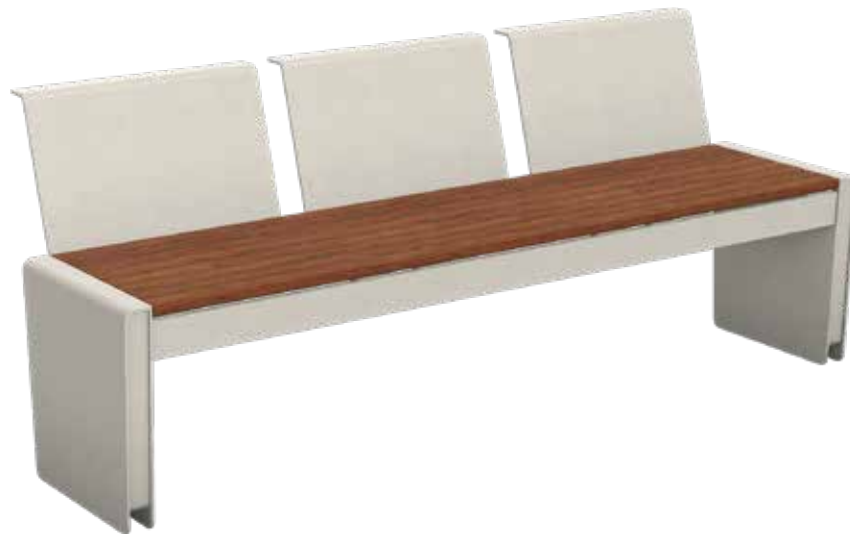
2 PASSIVE NOOKS ALONG RUNNEL PATH

TABLES AND CHAIRS UNDER BUILDING CANOPY

MOVEABLE SUMMER SEATING WITHIN ICE RIBBON PAVING

OPTIONAL SWINGING BENCHES OR STANDARD BENCHES ALONG WALKWAYS





# SITE FURNISHINGS

## AMENITIES

CONTINUATION OF DOWNTOWN COLUMNS THROUGH MODERN LIGHTING

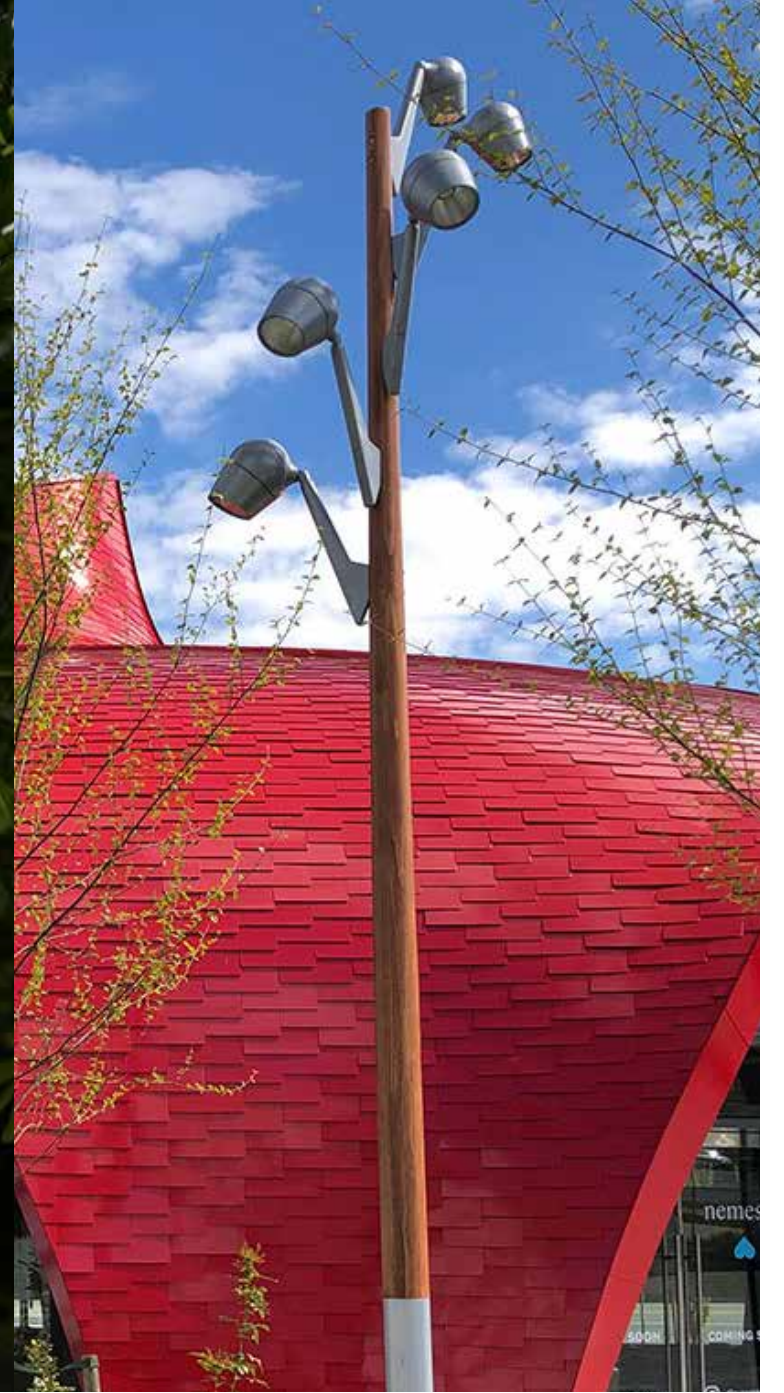
MULTI-HEAD DIRECTIONAL LIGHT POSTS

BIKE PARKING AT SOUTH END OF SITE

TRASH RECEPTACLES APPROPRIATELY LOCATED THROUGHOUT SITE







**Probable Construction Cost Opinion**

The amounts stated herein are our best estimate of probable construction costs based on current information. Because costs are influenced by market conditions, changes in project scope, and other factors beyond our control, we cannot ensure that actual construction costs will equal this cost opinion.

**Downtown Ames Plaza**

Ames, Iowa

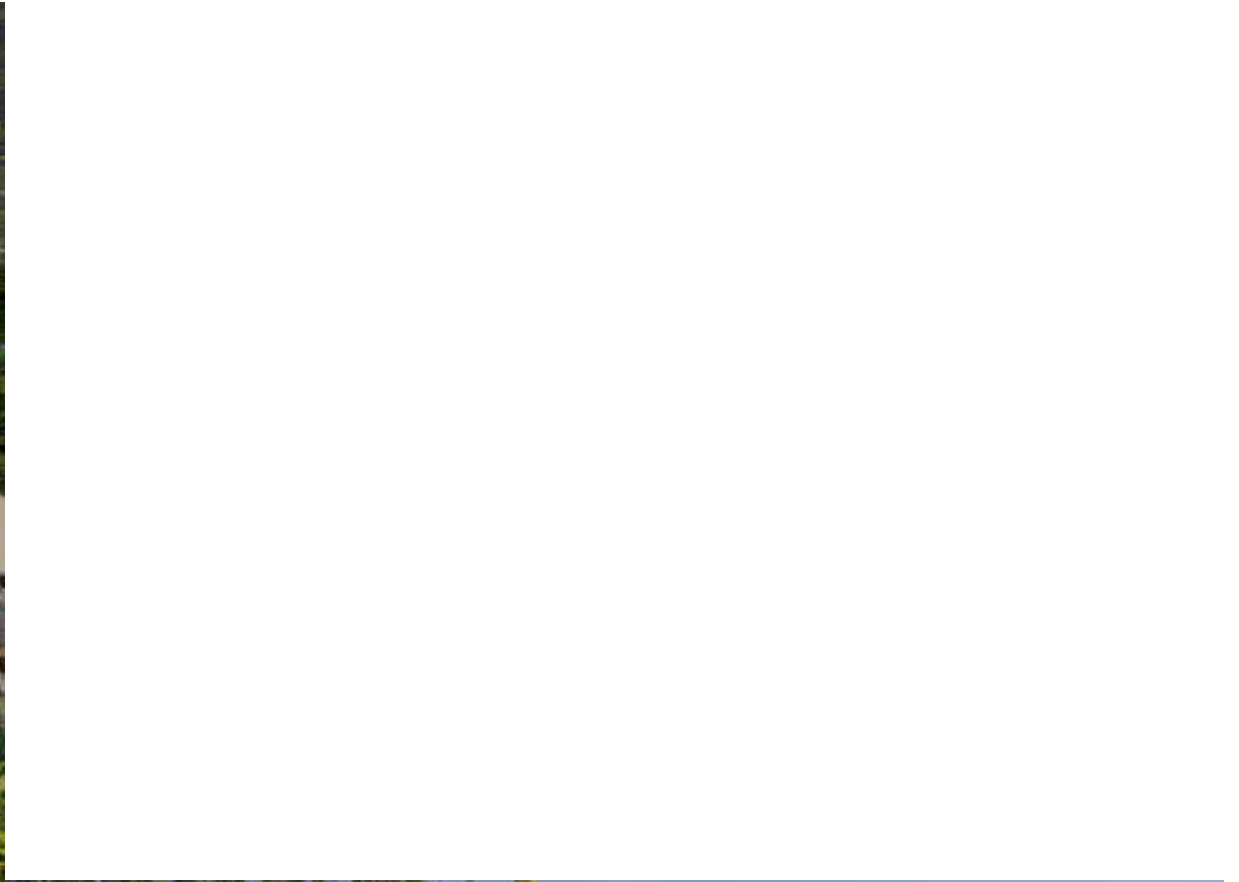
11/4/2021

Amenities	Qty	Unit	Unit Cost	Item Total	
Water Feature	1	LS	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	
Ice Ribbon	1	LS	\$ 780,000.00	\$ 780,000.00	
Concession Building	1	LS	\$ 805,347.38	\$ 805,347.38	
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FFE)	1	LS	\$ 206,000.00	\$ 206,000.00	
Art Features	1	LS	\$ 227,200.00	\$ 227,200.00	Includes Sculpture and Art Wall
Associated Design Elements	1	LS	\$ 1,173,177.00	\$ 1,173,177.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>					<b>\$3,591,724.38</b>
Contingency (10%)				\$	359,172.44
Survey and Geotechnical Reporting				\$	11,500.00
Permits and Submittals				\$	10,850.00
A & E				\$	377,250.00
<b>Estimated Total</b>					<b>\$4,350,496.82</b>

# MODEL RENDERINGS AND PLAN

PERSPECTIVE : SUMMER





# MODEL RENDERINGS AND PLAN

PERSPECTIVE : WINTER



