

Modeling the Future of the Keene Arts Corridor

Citizens' Institute on Rural Design 2021 - 22
Keene, NH

Citizens'
Institute
on Rural
Design





About

The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) is a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Housing Assistance Council. Focusing on communities with populations of 50,000 or less, CIRD's goal is to enhance the quality of life and economic viability of rural America through planning, design, and creative placemaking. CIRD is intended to empower local citizens to capitalize on unique local and regional assets to guide the civic development and future design of their communities. The CIRD program goals include:

- Building design capacity in rural communities to plan comprehensive revitalization strategies;
- Introducing creative placemaking, arts, culture, and design strategies as drivers of economic development in rural America;
- Facilitating a network of rural communities for design idea exchanges and peer learning; and
- Preparing communities to be ready and competitive for arts- and design-related state and federal funding opportunities.

Partners

Established by Congress in 1965, the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** is the independent federal agency whose funding and support give Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities.

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) is a national nonprofit that strengthens communities across rural America through investment and assistance with affordable housing and community and economic development. Based in Washington, DC, HAC is actively involved in shaping federal policy and the affordable housing industry with its research, lending, and technical assistance to local organizations that help rural communities prosper.

To Be Done Studio (TBD) is an architecture and design firm based in Washington, DC that harnesses the inherent goodness in people and the power of design to create sustainable solutions to the pressing problems that our world faces. TBD designs and builds spaces that uplift, inspire and support power within the communities they serve. TBD believes that a relevant design practice must be accessible to all rather than a few.



Citizens' Institute on Rural Design Keene, NH Workshop 2022

Description

The project is located in an area of downtown Keene, New Hampshire, that has been identified for significant development funding opportunities. This has led to several cultural development projects in the area (either underway or recently completed): library expansion, a 250-seat performance venue, expansion of an 850-seat performance venue, an affordable artist studio space, arts education space, and coffee shop with a stage for emerging artists, and an expansion on the local food coop and its outdoor stage area.

From 2018-to 2020 separate plans were made for an arts corridor, recreational area, parking improvements, underground infrastructure updates, and a regional transportation hub all for one area of downtown Keene. The private development of performing arts and cultural venues and a skatepark that will include public art is already underway. Keene artists and residents will use this opportunity to align the remaining plans and design public spaces that link these projects to fulfill the “arts corridor” vision, developing a “parking lot wasteland” that abuts the backside of Keene’s historic Main St. and turning it into an economically-viable, active public space.

Engagement

The local community team assembled a group of over 20 persons to participate in the workshop. Participants were recruited from a broad cross-section of civic, community, and business leaders and other decision-makers from the surrounding area. At the workshop, Arts Alive invited all relevant stakeholders, community members, focus group members, and municipal staff, across a mix of age groups.

Deliverables

The purpose of the workshop was to support the creation of a vision for the Keene Arts Corridor, dubbed the Arts Core. Activities during the three-day workshop led to a conceptual design rendering of the area based on community ideas and input, with an emphasis placed on a covered Marketplace/ Parking structure. Conceptual designs of the Marketplace showed multiple options, including plans, sections, elevations, or isometrics explaining potential structure and configuration. Designs for the arts corridor included similar deliverables with the Marketplace as a centerpiece, illustrating options in plans, elevations, hardscape and landscape details, and experiential sketches of activities. Work incorporated input from prior community engagement processes.

“I am a live artist. Any time there is a space or a pop-up to do my art with the community, I am there. I would love to be able to do that more here in Keene...”

- Local Artist

Local Team



Jessica Gelter Executive Director
Arts Alive!
jessica@monadnockartsalive.org

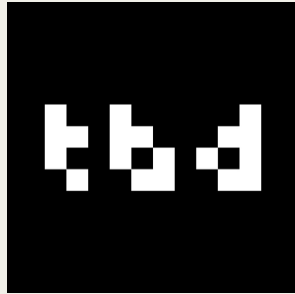
Jessica is a dedicated nonprofit leader with experience in community outreach, team leadership, event management, and program development and evaluation. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Boston University's theater conservatory program, and a Certificate in Arts Management from the University of Massachusetts. She has been awarded two fellowships through National Arts Strategies: Forward Thinking Fellowship and New England Creative Community Fellowship. She is also a professional artist - and continues that work as a musician, playwright, actress, and theater director. She was featured on the National Endowment for the Arts website for their 50th anniversary. She lives in Brattleboro, Vermont, where she serves on her town's Selectboard. She enjoys creative adventures with her husband James and daughter Evelyn, and loves coming home to their house full of furry friends.



Daniel Scully Principal
Scully Architects
dvs@scully-architects.com

While in college, Daniel Scully worked for 4 summers with Louis I. Kahn, Architect, on projects such as the Exeter Library, in Exeter, NH, and the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar: Capital of Bangladesh in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Subsequently, he worked briefly for Paul Rudolph, architect of the Art and Architecture Building at Yale University, and then Robert Venturi, his thesis advisor with whom he helped write **Learning from Las Vegas**. After a year at the American Academy in Rome and teaching a full range of design, architectural history, and energy design courses for two years at Ramapo College in New Jersey, Dan became the third member of Total Environmental Action (TEA) in 1973. At TEA, Dan was on the Board of Directors, Vice President for Design and headed a 10 person Design Group division of the company that grew to 35 people and focused on solar heating and energy efficiency. There he also taught a more conceptual course on Integrated Energy Systems as they relate to building design form and technologies - now called Sustainable Design. DVS/A has designed several academic projects intended to meet the Green Building Council LEED standards.

Design Team



The Citizen's Institute on Rural Design's design efforts are led by To Be Done Studio.

To Be Done Studio harnesses the inherent goodness in people and the power of design to create sustainable solutions to the endemic problems that our world faces. We seek a relevant practice, one which is accessible to all rather than the few. We design and build spaces that uplift, inspire and support power within the communities we work.



Omar Hakeem Project Lead
To Be Done Studio

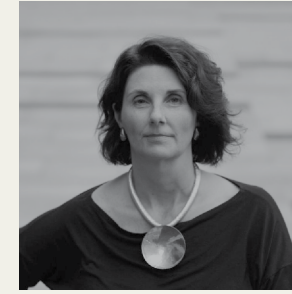
Omar Hakeem, AIA, is an architect working in the DC area as well as nationally to bring greater social and environmental equality through thoughtful design and planning. His work has been focused on geographical, social cultural frontiers and works to address the systemic poverty, health issues that plague these communities. Through these efforts he has completed award winning affordable housing, rapid response disaster housing prototypes, urban bike and pedestrian infrastructure, regional drainage improvements and community based rural planning initiatives. Omar's passion for design has taken him from the cloud forests of Costa Rica to the ravaged communities of the Gulf Coast and many places in between. Omar was recently named one of Grist's 50 Fixers for his work on climate resilient housing solutions. He is the principal and founder of To Be Done Studio.



Candace Maloney-Franklin Project Designer
To Be Done Studio
candace@tbd-studio.org

Candace was born and raised on the small Caribbean island of St. Christopher (St. Kitts), where the importance of community and looking out for one's neighbor was instilled in her from an early age. From early on in her career, Candace has carried these values into architecture - approaching her work with the deep belief that the input of residents who personally understand the history, assets and challenges of a community is critical to design and that thoughtful design should be accessible to all.

Candace has had the opportunity to work on various project types and scales throughout her ten-year career, ranging from housing and mixed-use developments to education and healthcare. Candace is excited to bring her passion for creating impactful long-term solutions through research and engagement.

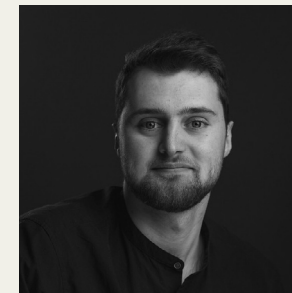


Kaki Martin Resource Team Member
Klopfer Martin Design Group
kaki@klopfermartin.com

Kaki Martin is a landscape architect with over twenty years of practice experience focused in park design and urban streetscapes, institutional and open space master planning, and experiential learning landscapes. She is keenly interested and knowledgeable in the design and construction of public urban landscapes. With extensive public design process experience, Kaki has led numerous multi-disciplinary projects in the public sector, all of which included a wide range of stakeholder groups. She is passionate about the process of finding solidarity with stakeholders and expressing a co-created vision using artful and contemporary solutions which deliver landscapes that engage and build community.



Hana Ketterer Resource Team Member
Klopfer Martin Design Group
hketterer@klopfermartin.com



Matt Khinda Resource Team Member
Harvard Graduate School of Design Urban Planning Fellow
mkhinda@gsd.harvard.edu



Jennifer Hughes Director
National Endowment for the Arts

Jen Hughes was appointed director of Design and Creative Placemaking for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in April 2018, having served as acting director since June 2017. In this position, she oversees grant portfolios that support the design and creative placemaking fields, as well as leadership initiatives that include the Mayors' Institute on City Design and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design. Since 2011, Hughes has served in multiple roles as design specialist and community solutions specialist at the NEA, playing a significant role in shaping the agency's creative placemaking and social impact design investments. At the NEA, she has managed federal, philanthropic and local relationships to strategically integrate arts, culture, and design into comprehensive community development plans. A Philadelphia native, she has a bachelors in management from the University of Pennsylvania and a masters in city planning from University of California, Berkeley with a focus on community development and design.



Courtney Spearman Design Specialist
National Endowment for the Arts

Courtney Spearman manages the Design program for the National Endowment for the Arts, overseeing the agency's relationship with and support for the design field nationwide. She also coordinates the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design, working with small-town, rural and tribal community leaders to enhance the quality of life and economic viability of rural America through planning, design, and creative placemaking. Courtney has also worked with arts and design non-profits, in landscape practice, and with a tech startup. Her educational background is in landscape architecture, architectural history, and art history, with degrees from University of Virginia and Rice University.



Natasha Moodie Project Coordinator
Housing Assistance Council
natasha@ruralhome.org

Natasha Moodie is a graduate student and fellow in the Applied Community and Economic Development Program at Illinois State University, pursuing a master's in sociology. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, where she competed as a varsity swimmer for UofM and an Olympic team member for her home country, Jamaica. After her time in Ann Arbor, Natasha began her career in secondary education. Through AmeriCorps, Natasha developed programming to increase high school graduation rates in Tampa, Florida. She then transitioned to teaching full-time as a Teach for America corps member in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas. Natasha developed a deep appreciation for rural America during her Teach for America commitment and subsequent years living and working in the Rio Grande Valley. Currently, Natasha is completing her master's thesis on equity in the housing market.



Stephen Sugg Project Coordinator
Housing Assistance Council

Stephen Sugg takes on rural arts, design, and placemaking in a special projects role at the Housing Assistance Council (HAC). Over his career, Sugg has handled government relations at HAC; spent 6 years as a Senior Policy Officer at LISC; and worked as an advisor to a U.S. Senator. He is also an active and published fiction writer. Holding a doctorate degree in education (William & Mary) and a M.S. in rural sociology (Univ. of Missouri), Sugg taught social science at the college level for 5 years. His academic research and subsequent advocacy focus on place-based education, school & community, and the link between arts in schools and student success.

Keene, NH

Historical Background

History

In 1735, colonial Governor Jonathan Belcher granted lots in the township of “Upper Ashuelot” to 63 settlers who paid £5 each.[6]:21–22 Settled after 1736 on Equivalent Lands,[7] it was intended to be a fort town protecting the Province of Massachusetts Bay from the French and their Native allies during the French and Indian Wars, the North American front of the Seven Years’ War. When the boundary between the Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire colonies was fixed in 1741, Upper Ashuelot became part of New Hampshire, although Massachusetts continued supporting the area for its own protection.

In 1747, during King George’s War, the village was attacked and burned by Natives.[6]:79 Colonists fled to safety, but would return to rebuild in 1749.[6]:96 It was regranted to its inhabitants in 1753 by Governor Benning Wentworth, who renamed it “Keene” after Sir Benjamin Keene,[8] English minister to Spain and a West Indies trader. Located at the center of Cheshire County, Keene was designated as the county seat in 1769. Land was set off for the towns of Sullivan and Roxbury, although Keene would annex 154 acres (0.62 km²) from Swanzey (formerly Lower Ashuelot).

Boston and Maine railroad yard in Keene, c. 1916

Timothy Dwight, the Yale president who chronicled his travels, described the town as “...one of the prettiest in New England.”[citation needed] Situated on an ancient lake bed surrounded by hills, the valley with fertile meadows was excellent for farming. The Ashuelot River was later used to provide water power for sawmills, gristmills and tanneries. After the railroad was constructed to the town in 1848, numerous other industries were established. Keene became a manufacturing center for wooden-ware, pails, chairs, sashes, shutters, doors, pottery, glass, soap, woolen textiles, shoes, saddles, mowing machines, carriages and sleighs. It also had a brickyard and foundry. Keene was incorporated as a city in 1874, and by 1880 had a population of 6,784. In the early 1900s, the Newburyport Silver Company moved to Keene to take advantage of its skilled workers and location.

New England manufacturing declined in the 20th century, however, particularly during the Great Depression. Keene is today a center for insurance, education, and tourism. The city retains a considerable inventory of fine Victorian architecture from its mill town era. An example is the Keene Public Library, which occupies a Second Empire mansion built about 1869 by manufacturer Henry Colony.

Keene’s manufacturing success was brought on in part by its importance as a railroad city. The Cheshire Railroad, Manchester & Keene Railroad, and the Ashuelot Railroad all met here. By the early 1900s all had been absorbed by the Boston & Maine Railroad. Keene was home to a railroad shop complex and two railroad yards. The Manchester & Keene Branch was abandoned following the floods of 1936. Beginning in 1945, Keene was a stopping point for the Boston & Maine’s streamlined trainset known at that time as the Cheshire.

Keene became notable in 1962, when F. Nelson Blount chose the city for the site of his Steamtown, U.S.A. attraction. But Blount’s plan fell through and, after one operating season in Keene, the museum was relocated to nearby Bellows Falls, Vermont. The Boston & Maine abandoned the Cheshire Branch in 1972, leaving the Ashuelot Branch as Keene’s only rail connection to the outside world.

In 1978, the B&M leased switching operations in Keene to the Green Mountain Railroad, which took over the entire Ashuelot Branch in 1982. Passenger decline and track conditions forced the Green Mountain to end service on the Ashuelot Branch in 1983 and return operating rights to the B&M. However, there were no longer enough customers to warrant service on the line. In 1984, the last train arrived in and departed Keene, consisting of Boston & Maine EMD GP9 1714, pulling flat cars to carry rails removed from the railyard. Track conditions on the Ashuelot Branch were so poor at the time that the engine returned light (without cars) to Brattleboro. A hi-rail truck was used instead to remove the flatcars.

In 1995, the freight house, one of the last remaining railroad buildings in town, burned due to arson. Since the late 20th century, the railroad beds through town have been redeveloped as the Cheshire Rail Trail and the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

In 2011, Massachusetts man Thomas Ball immolated himself on the steps of a courthouse in Keene to protest what he considered the court system’s abuse of divorced fathers’ rights.[9]



Historic image of Main Street in Keene, showing Central Square and the Keene Electric Railway



Historic image of the west side of Main Street, including The Colonial Theater, during the 1930s



Historic image of Central Square in the 1920s



Historic image of Cheshire County Courthouse between 1900 and 1920



Historic image of Bank Block, pre 1886.

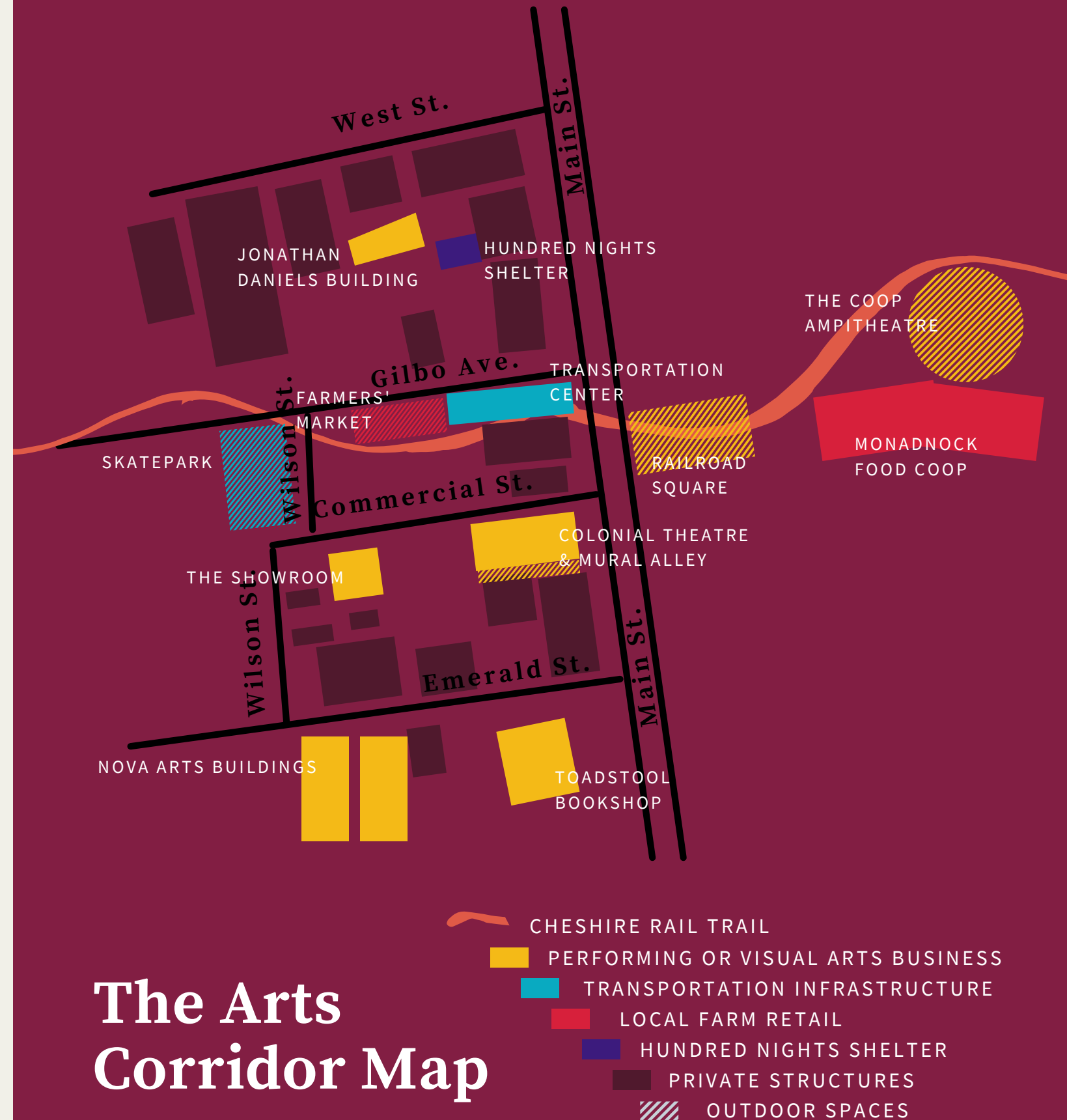
Keene, NH

Current Context

Context

The CIRD workshop activities and other related initiatives are reflections of a recent study conducted in partnership with Americans for the Arts which shows that arts and culture are significant contributors to the local economy and quality of life in the region. The Keene arts community, working with Arts Alive!, are seeking to build and sustain a flourishing cultural community that values arts and culture and takes pride in the arts as an integral part of a thriving society and economy.

Many of the anchors for this work are in place in downtown Keene, but currently adhere closely to Main Street. There is great opportunity to draw foot traffic and arts activities across Main Street, improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and wayfinding, and highlight existing arts programming and businesses throughout downtown Keene in a thoughtful, coordinated effort. Impending road construction on Gilbo Avenue also offers an opportunity to rethink current conditions and bring arts to the forefront. Through the Arts Core concept, this greater interconnectedness and physical interventions can help engage the broader community as artists and arts patrons and more deeply anchor the arts in Keene's economic and cultural prosperity.

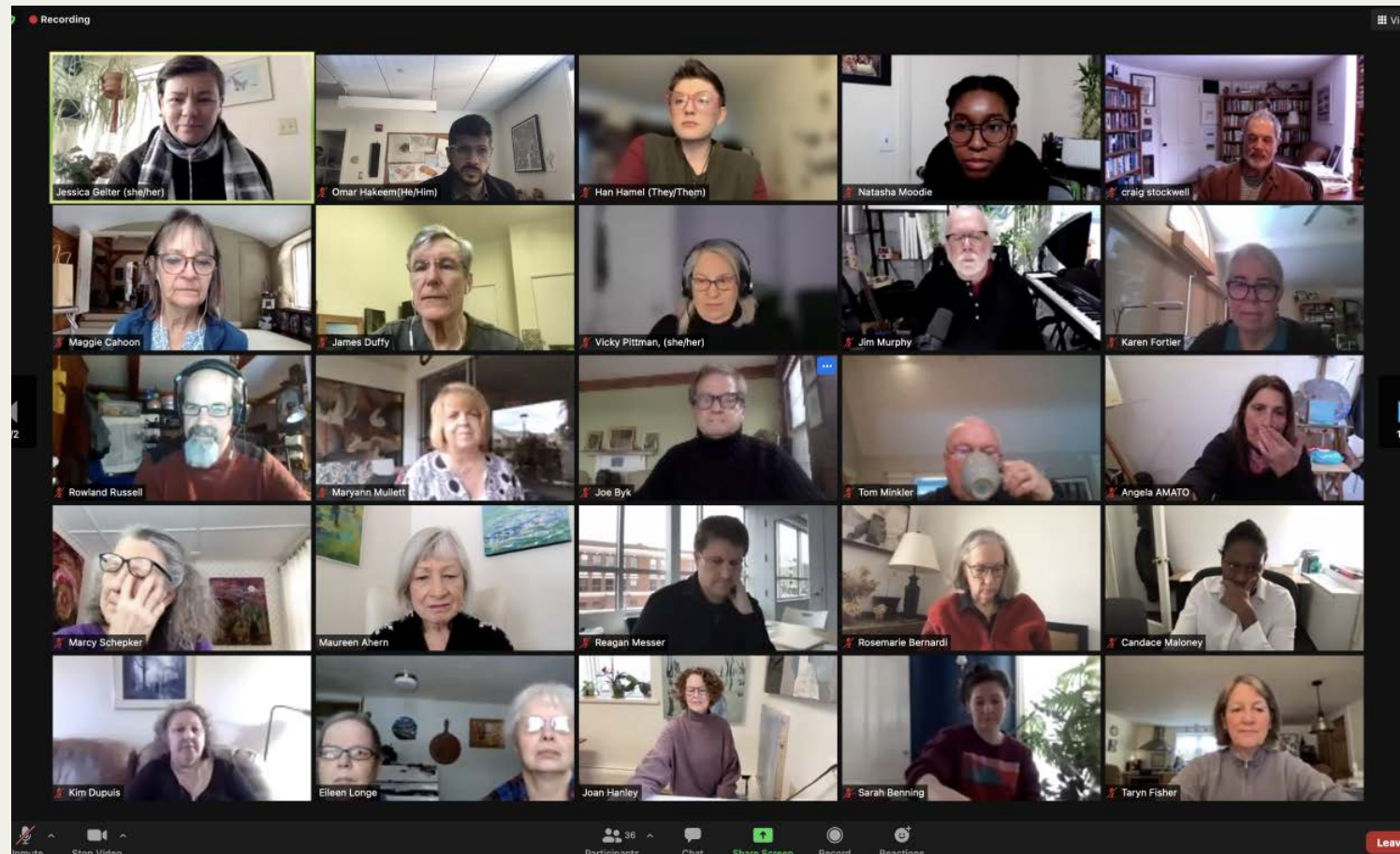




Site Visit







Group 1 – Downtown business owners and event organizers



Group 2 – Local residents and artists

Keene Arts Corridor Design Workshop Agenda

Day 1: March 22, 2022

- 1:15pm **Workshop Team Meeting, Showroom**
Design Team arrives in Keene and meets with Arts Alive.
- 1:30pm **Site Visit, at the lot at Gilbo & Commercial Street**
View designated site before workshop starts.
- 2:00pm **Community Meeting - Festivals and Downtown Businesses, Showroom**
Gather input from invited Keene stakeholders and team members.
- 3:30pm **Community Meeting - Employees and Residents, Showroom**
Gather input from invited Keene stakeholders and team members
- 6:00pm **Pop-up Market, at the lot at Gilbo & Commercial Street**
Community members gather to model future Marketplace activity in the Pueblo. Goes until 8pm.

Day 2: March 23, 2022

- 9:00am **Breakfast Debrief, Brewbakers Cafe**
CIRD team and invited participants reviews feedback from previous evening.
- 10:00am **Design Team Open Working Session, Showroom**
CIRD team continues reviewing and preparing materials.

Day 3: March 24, 2022

- 10:00am **Open House, Showroom**
Community members are invited to join a reception thanking all those who have participated in the workshop the past week. Hear from the design team and offer feedback on ideas for the future of the Keene Arts Corridor. Goes until 12pm.





Workshop Engagement

Visual Preference Survey - Parking

Ecotrust Building Parking Lot | Portland, OR



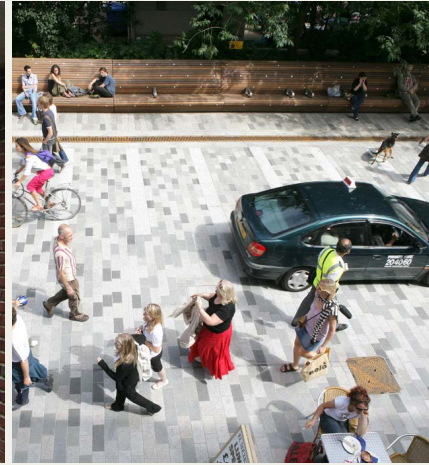
Ecotrust Building Parking Lot | Portland, OR



St. Paul Catholic Church | Cambridge, MA



New Road | London, UK



Heifer Intl. HQ | Little Rock, AK



Missouri Botanical Garden | St. Louis, MO



Paved

Paved/ Green

Green

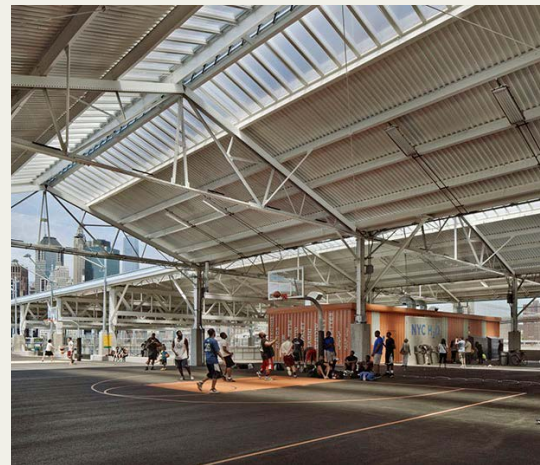


Market Spaces

Dallas Farmer's Market | Dallas, TX



Brooklyn Bridge Park | Brooklyn, NY



Granary Square | London, UK



Eastern Market | Detroit, MI



Eastern Market | Detroit, MI



Granary Square | London, UK



Open

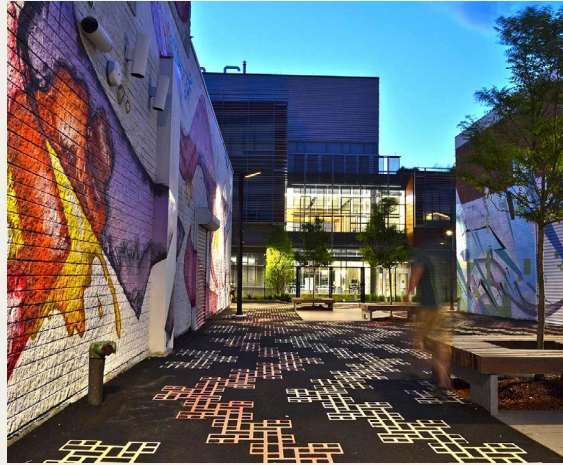
Semi - Open

Enclosed

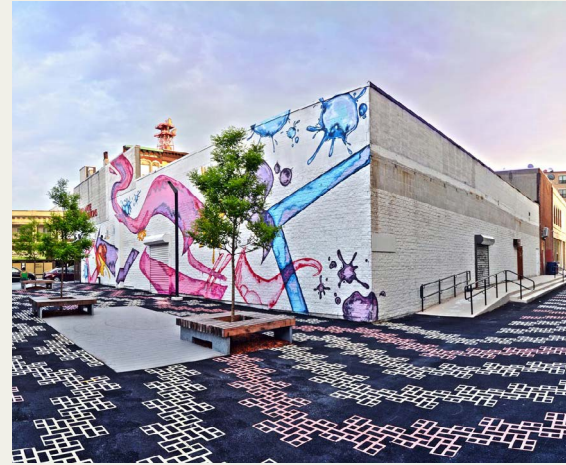


Art District

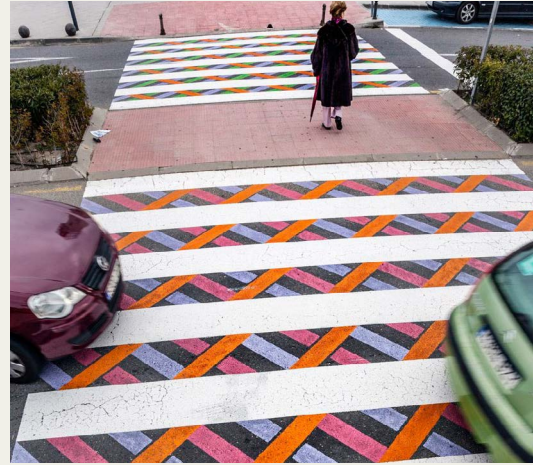
Lawrence Connector | Lawrence, MA



Lawrence Connector | Lawrence, MA



Cosswalk | Madrid, SP



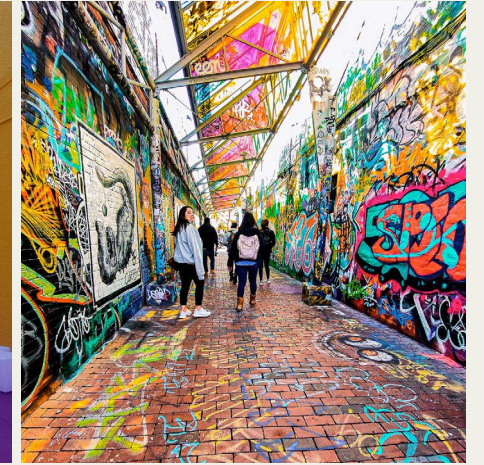
Lawn on D | Boston, MA



Vancouver Alley



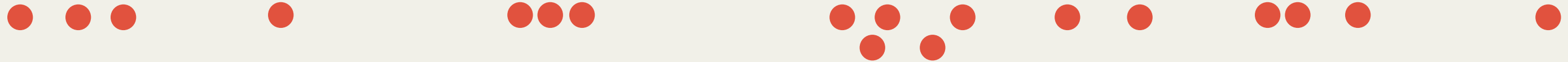
Graffiti Alley | Cambridge, MA



Small

Medium

Large



Green Spaces

Open Eating Space



Semi-Open Eating Space



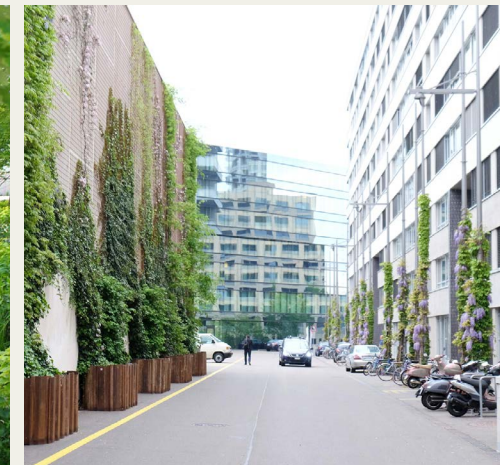
Atrium Eating Space



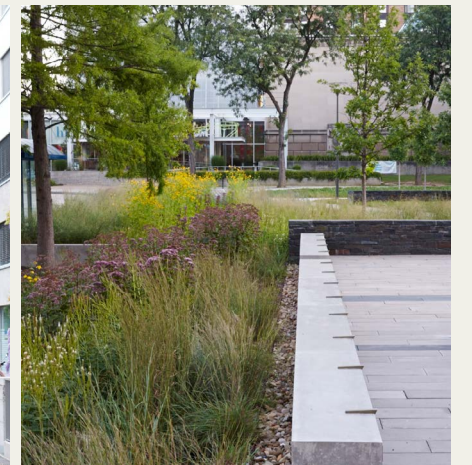
Individual Storefront Restaurants



Cafe/ Coffee Space



Cafe/ Coffee Space



Large

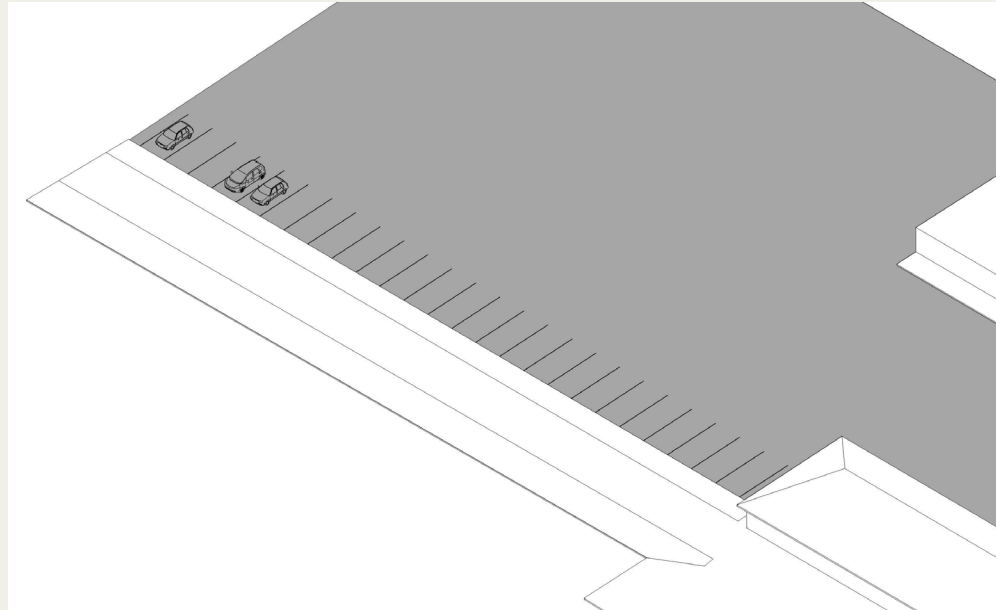
Medium

Small

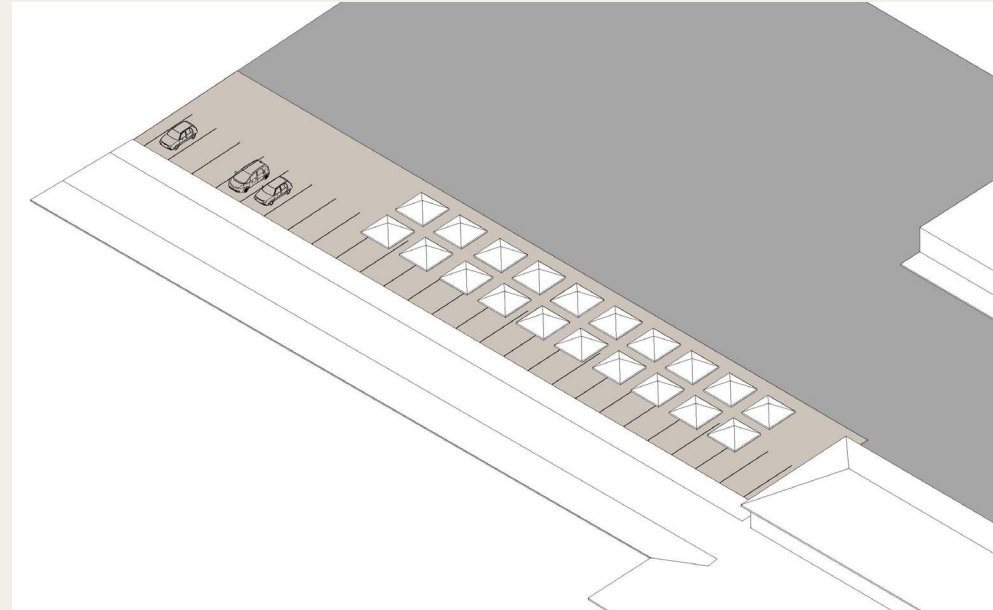


Visual Preference Survey - Parking vs. Structure

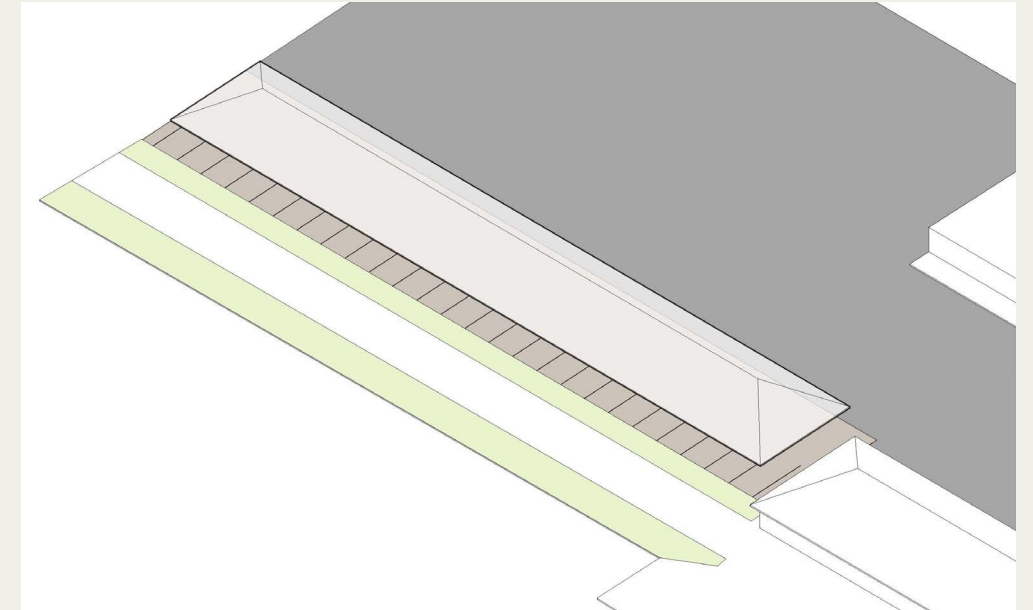
Paved Parking



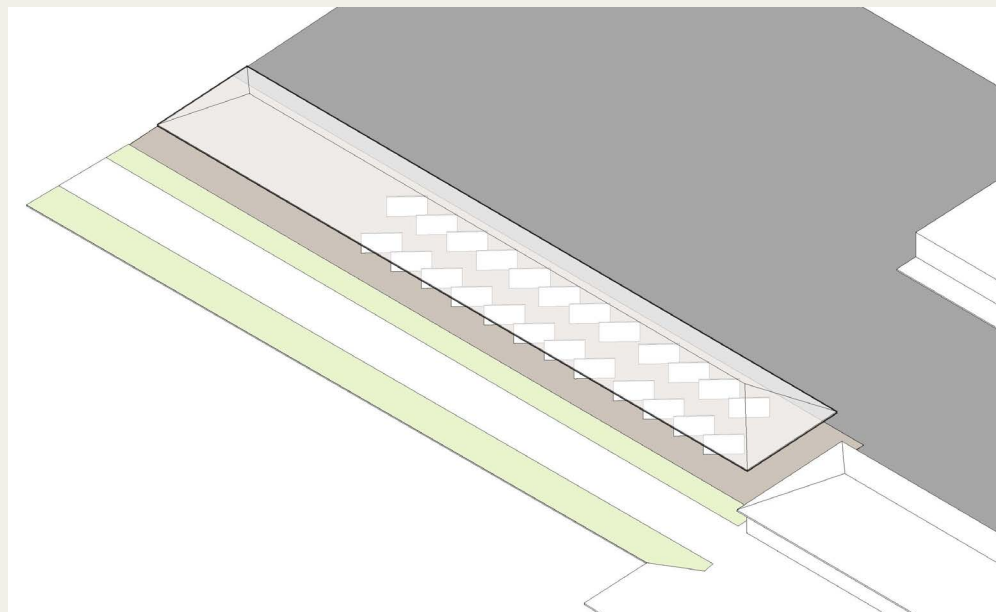
Plaza + Tents with Parking



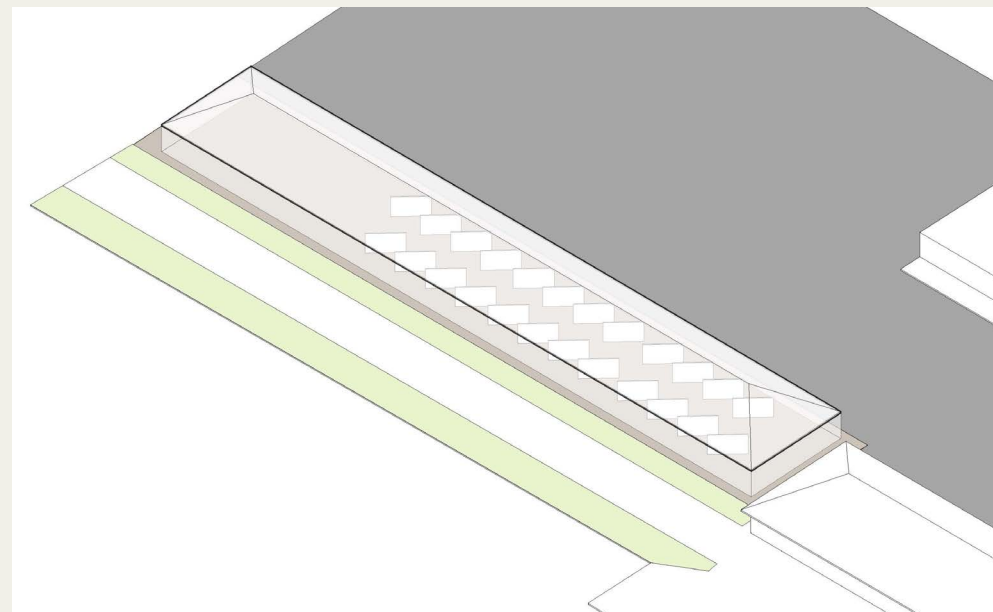
Roof Structure with Parking



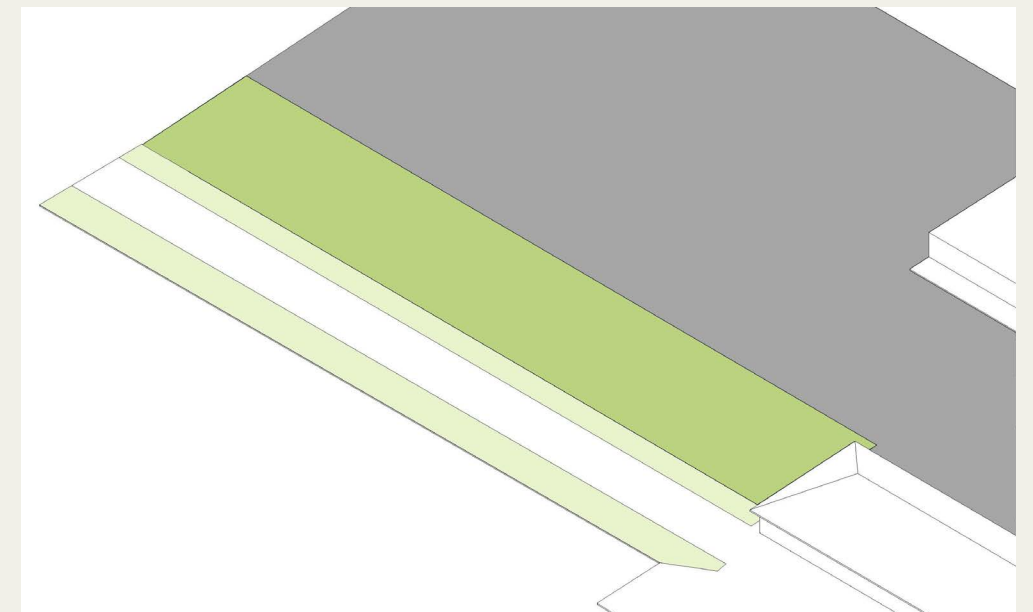
Roof Structure with Interior Stalls



Roof Structure with Enclosed Walls



Green Space



Challenges

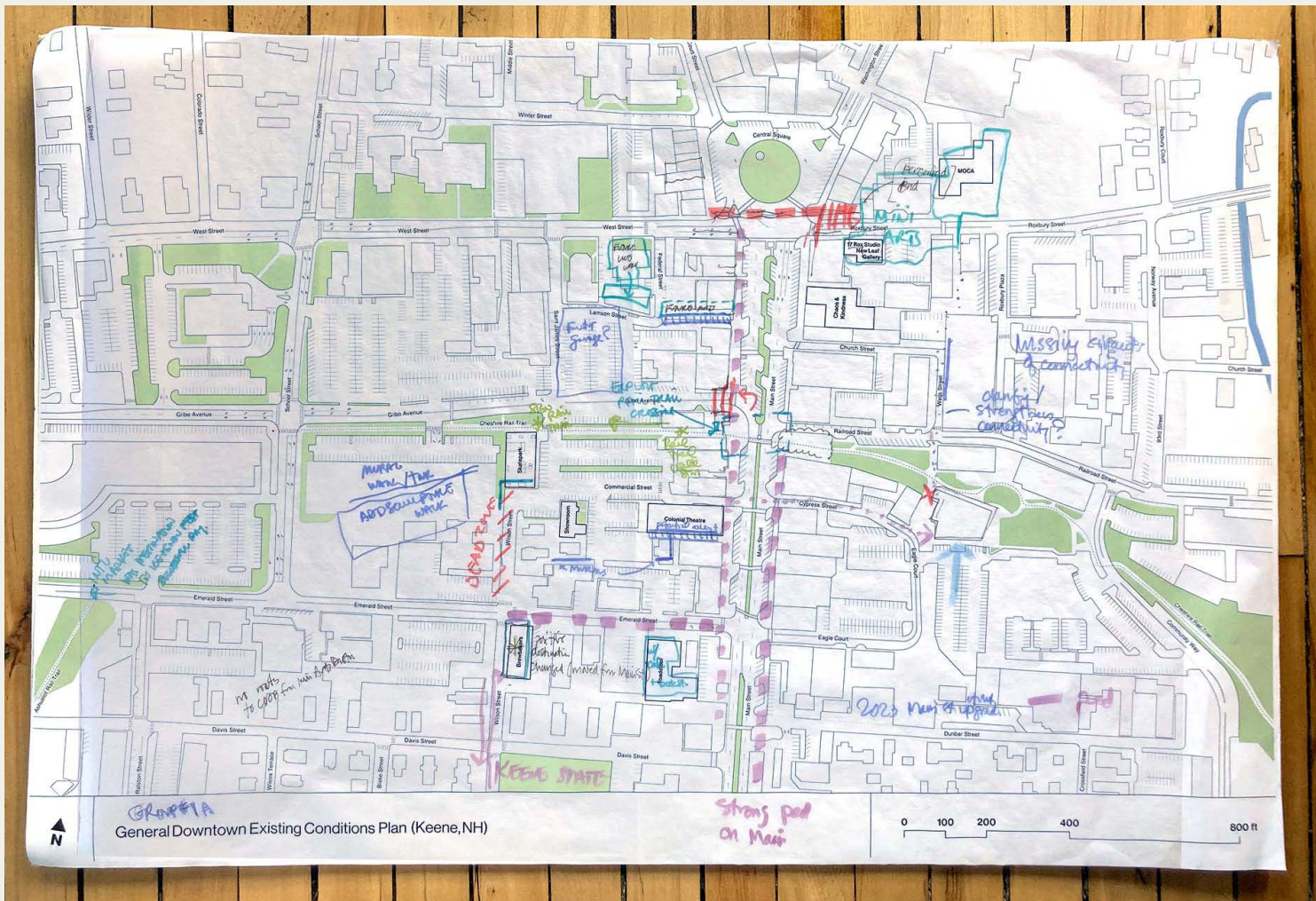
- Cost & Difficulty of Event Set-Up
- Traffic Control & Pedestrian Accessibility
- Lack of Defined Street Edges
- Need for Parking
- Lack of Street Furniture
- Safety in Public Spaces
- Opportunity for Artist to Sell & Create

Opportunities

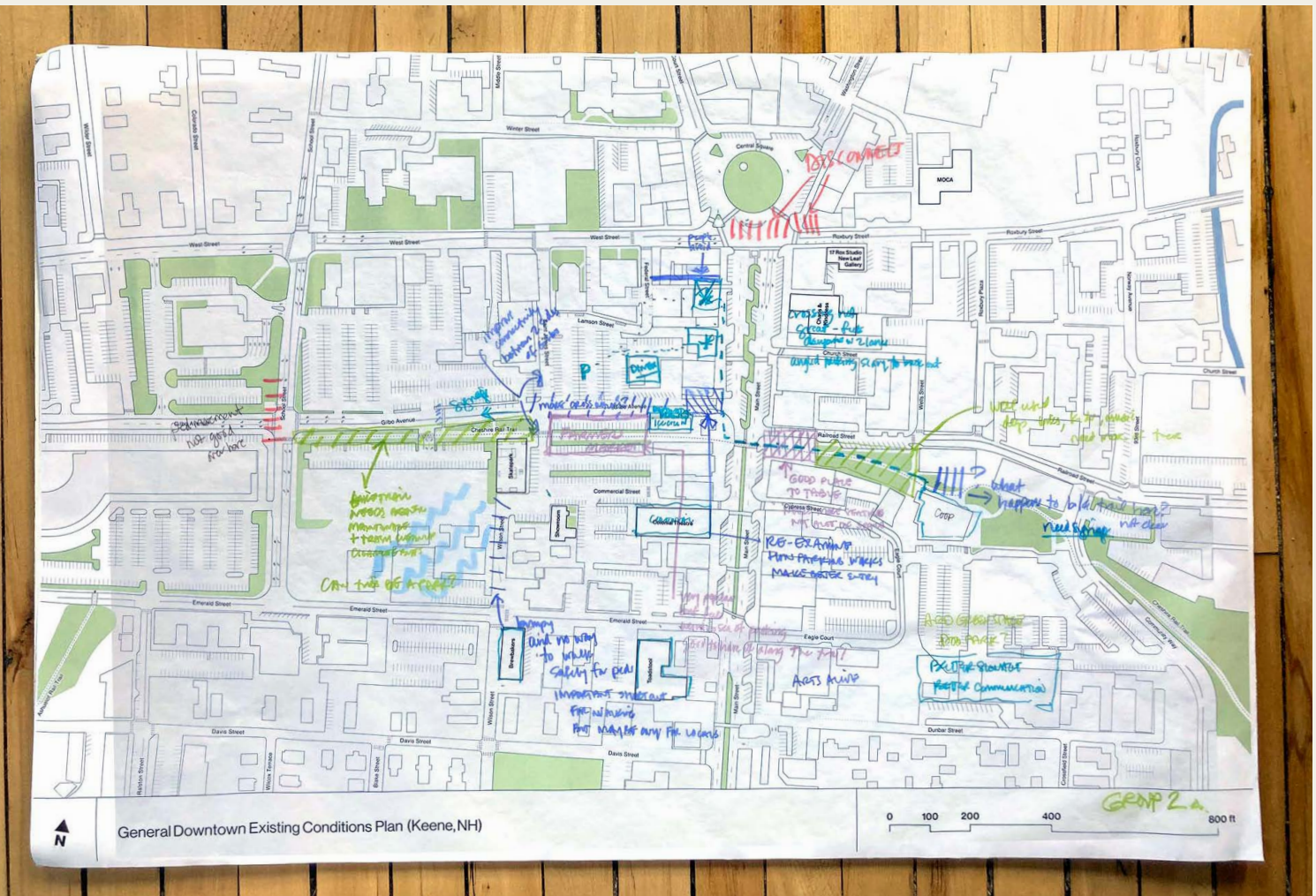
- Strong Network of Artists & Events
- Local History & Cultural Heritage
- Low-Cost, High-Impact Interventions
- Support Existing Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Opportunity for Small Businesses off of Main Street Corridor
- Spaces for Flexible & Mixed Uses
- Community Support & Engagement in the Arts



Site Modeling



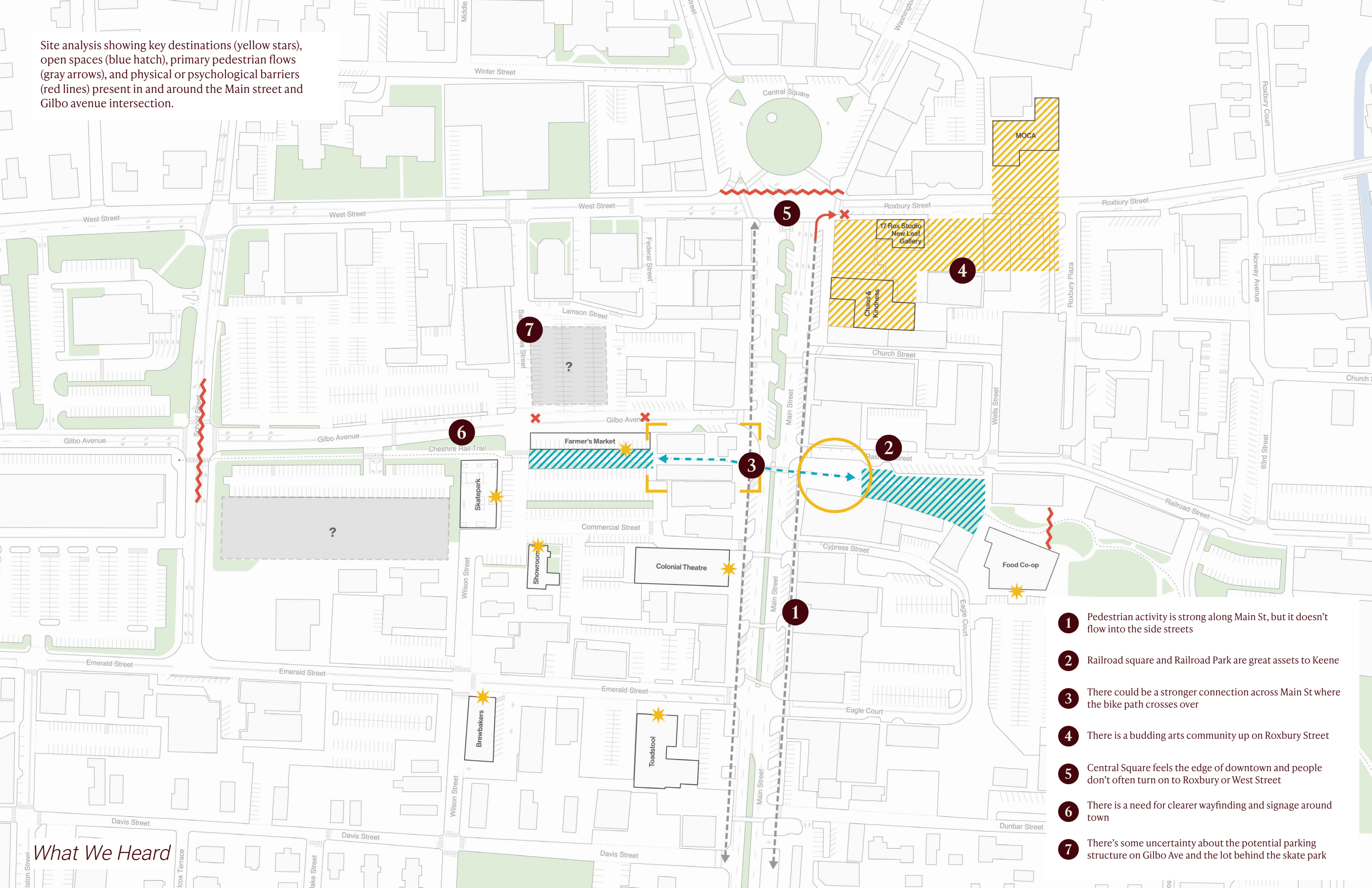
Group 1 – Downtown business owners and event organizers



Group 2 – Local residents and artists

Site Mapping + Design Concepts

Site analysis showing key destinations (yellow stars), open spaces (blue hatch), primary pedestrian flows (gray arrows), and physical or psychological barriers (red lines) present in and around the Main street and Gilbo avenue intersection.

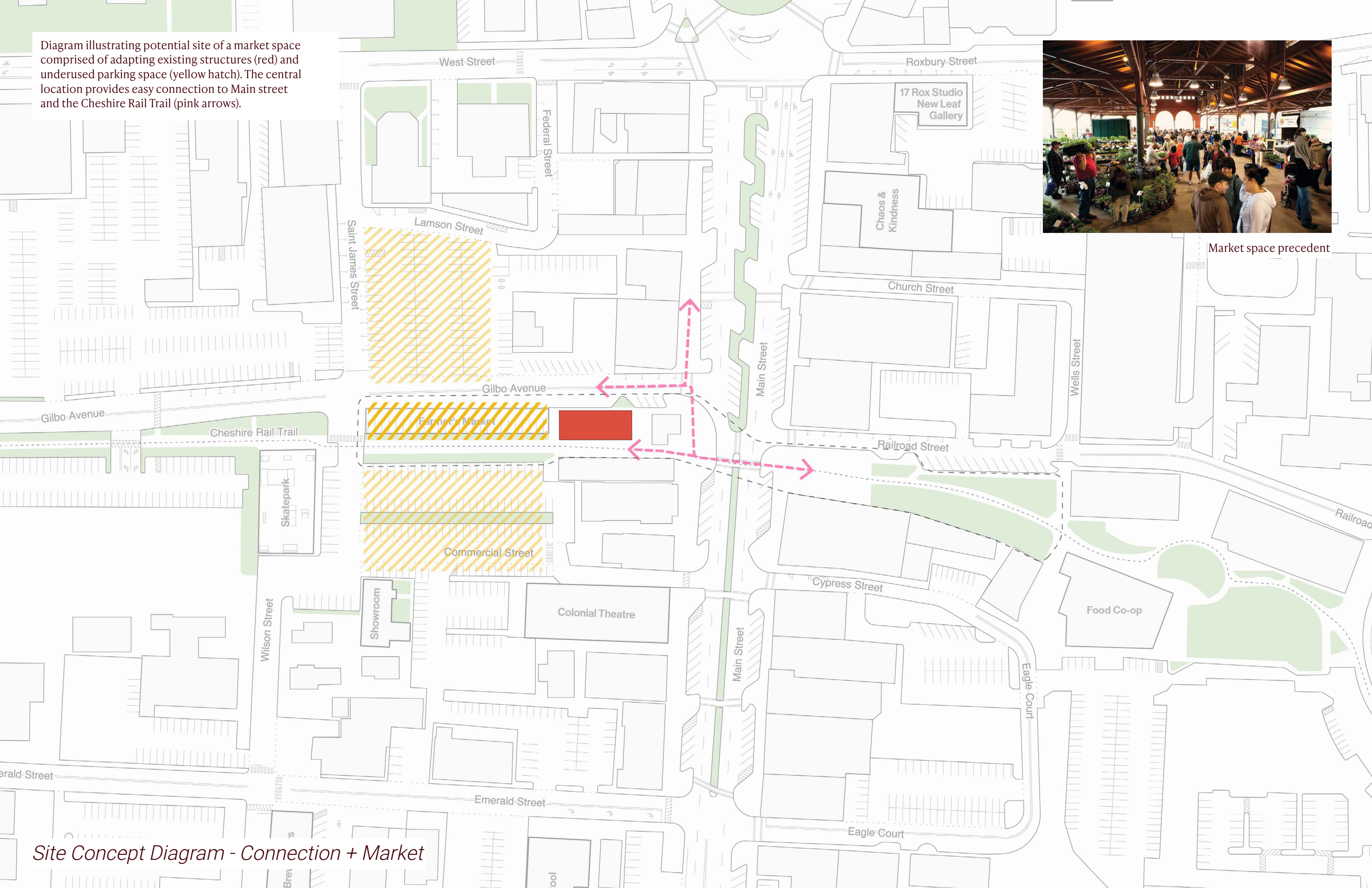


- 1 Pedestrian activity is strong along Main St, but it doesn't flow into the side streets
- 2 Railroad square and Railroad Park are great assets to Keene
- 3 There could be a stronger connection across Main St where the bike path crosses over
- 4 There is a budding arts community up on Roxbury Street
- 5 Central Square feels the edge of downtown and people don't often turn on to Roxbury or West Street
- 6 There is a need for clearer wayfinding and signage around town
- 7 There's some uncertainty about the potential parking structure on Gilbo Ave and the lot behind the skate park

Diagram illustrating potential site of a market space comprised of adapting existing structures (red) and underused parking space (yellow hatch). The central location provides easy connection to Main street and the Cheshire Rail Trail (pink arrows).

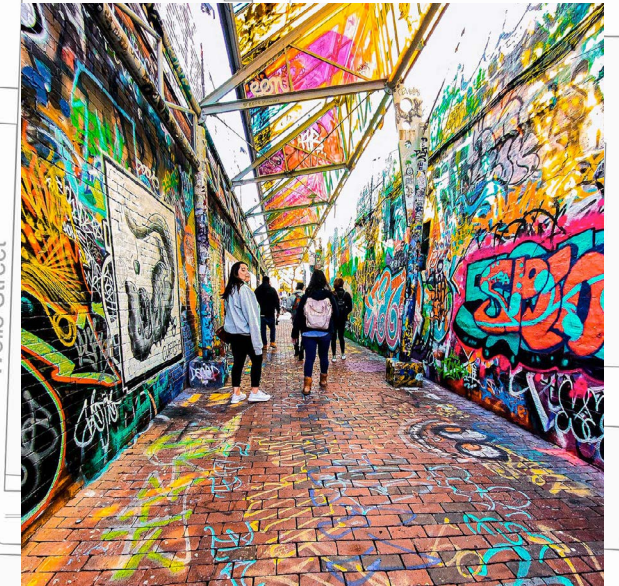
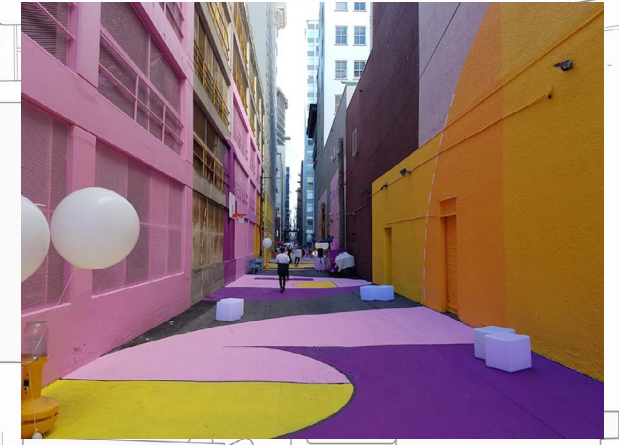
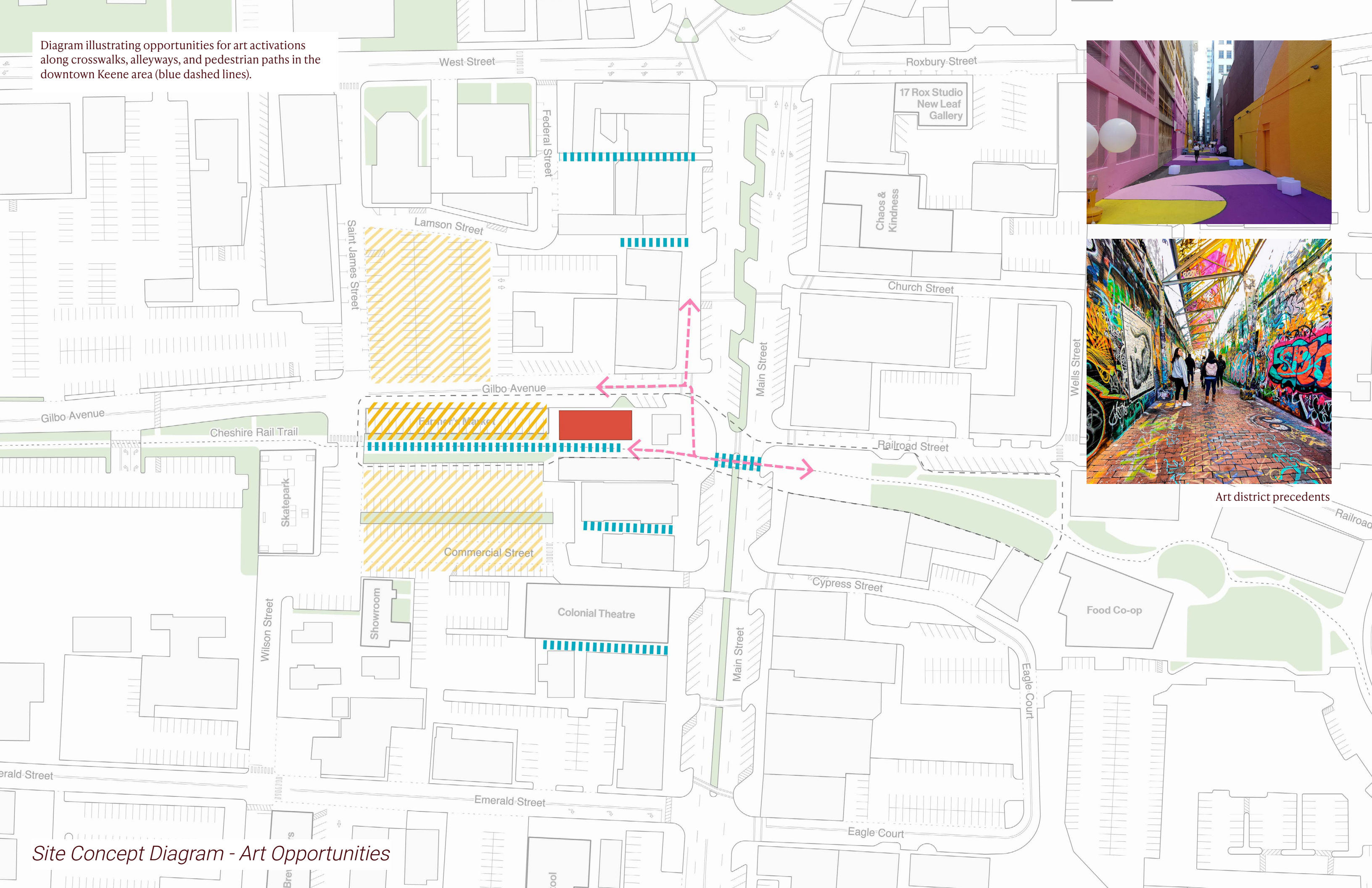


Market space precedent



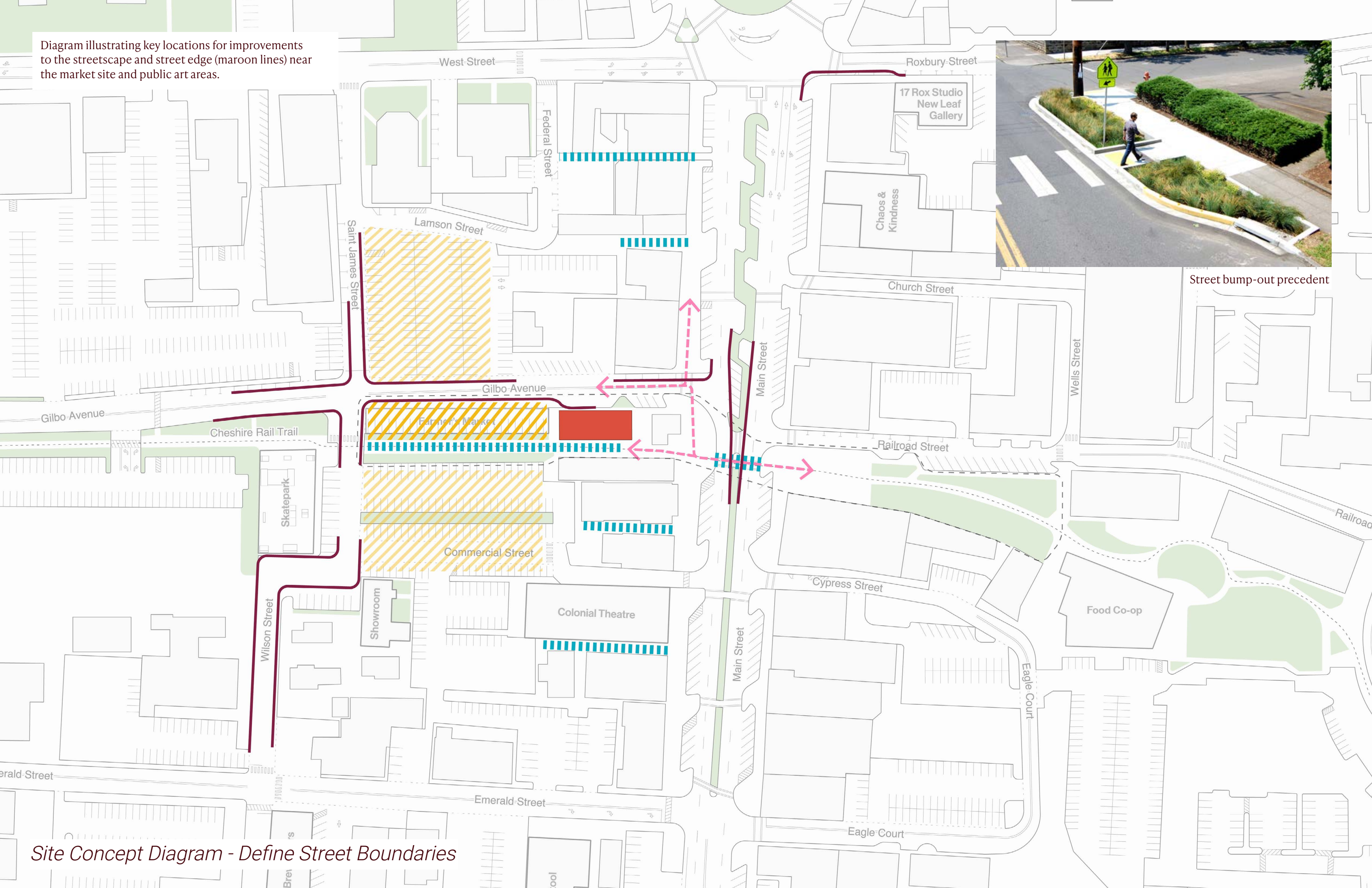
Site Concept Diagram - Connection + Market

Diagram illustrating opportunities for art activations along crosswalks, alleyways, and pedestrian paths in the downtown Keene area (blue dashed lines).



Art district precedents

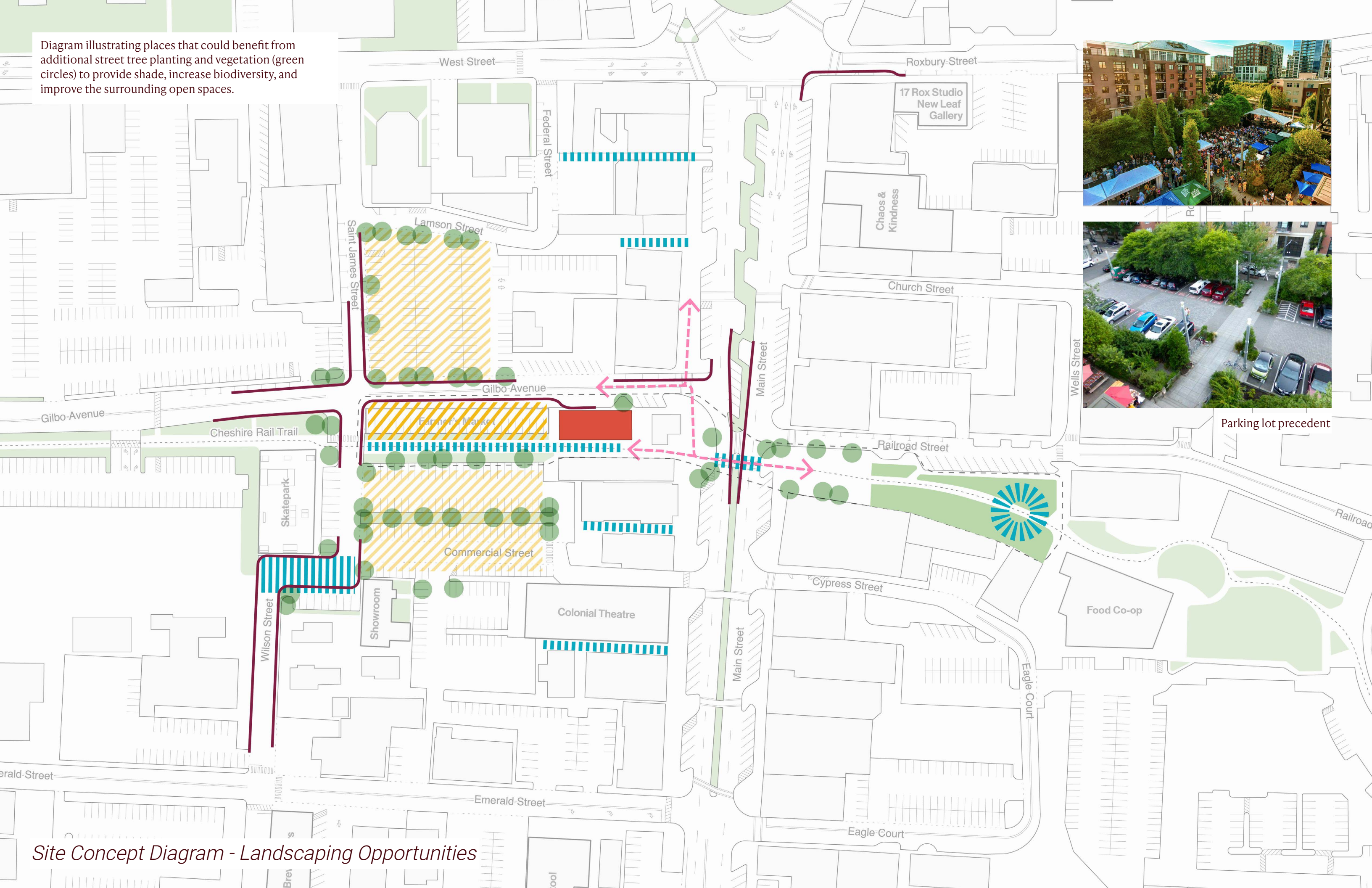
Diagram illustrating key locations for improvements to the streetscape and street edge (maroon lines) near the market site and public art areas.



Street bump-out precedent

Site Concept Diagram - Define Street Boundaries

Diagram illustrating places that could benefit from additional street tree planting and vegetation (green circles) to provide shade, increase biodiversity, and improve the surrounding open spaces.



Parking lot precedent

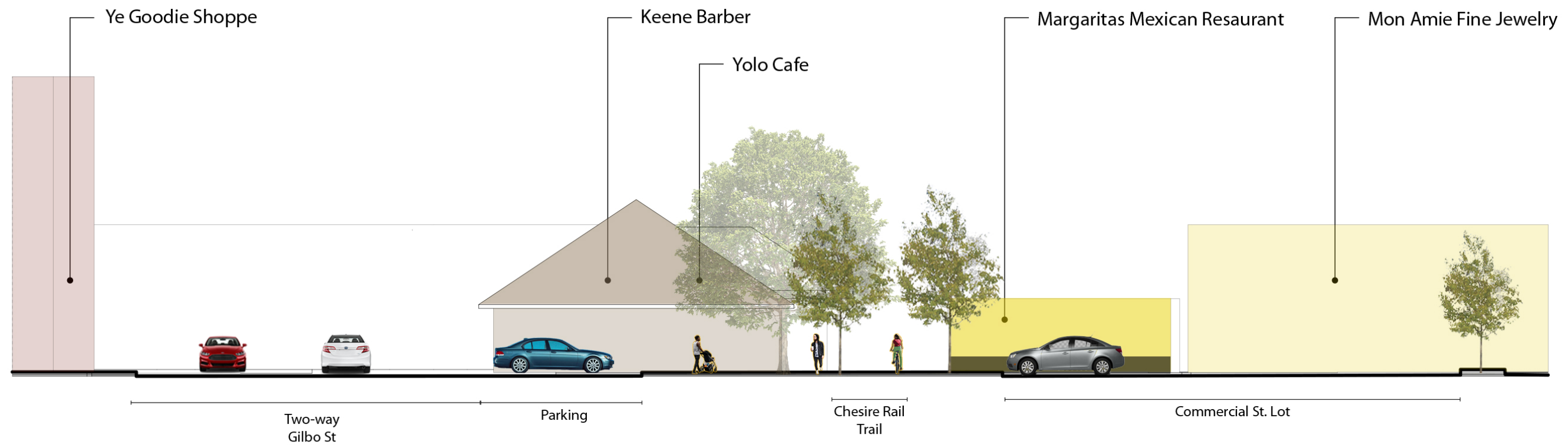
Site Concept Diagram - Landscaping Opportunities



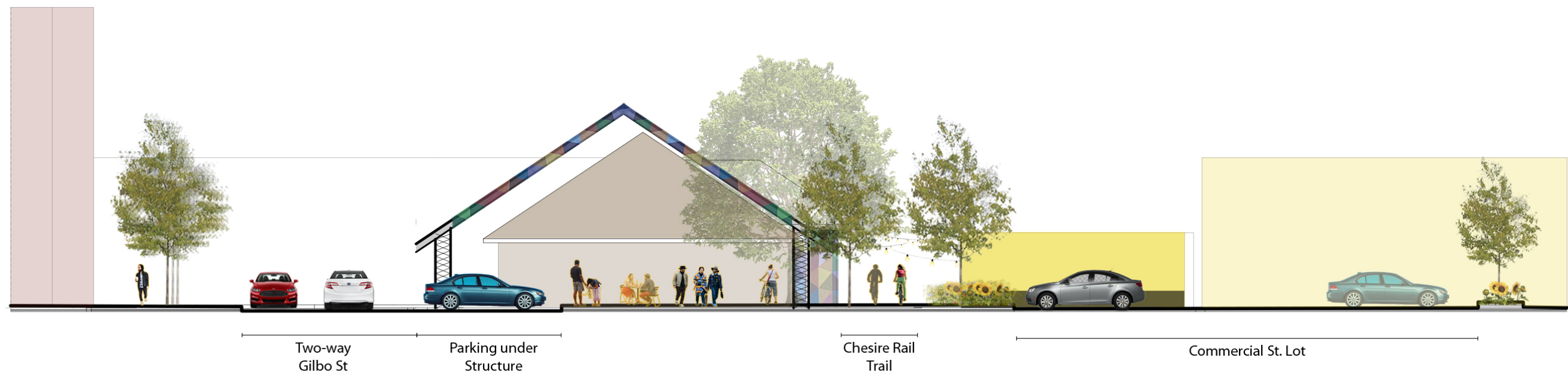
Bike Lane / Crossing - Before



Bike Lane / Crossing - After



Gilbo Street - Existing Street Section



Gilbo Street - Proposed Street Section (Everyday Use)



Gilbo Street - Proposed Street Section (Market/ Event)



Gilbo Street Parking Lot - Before



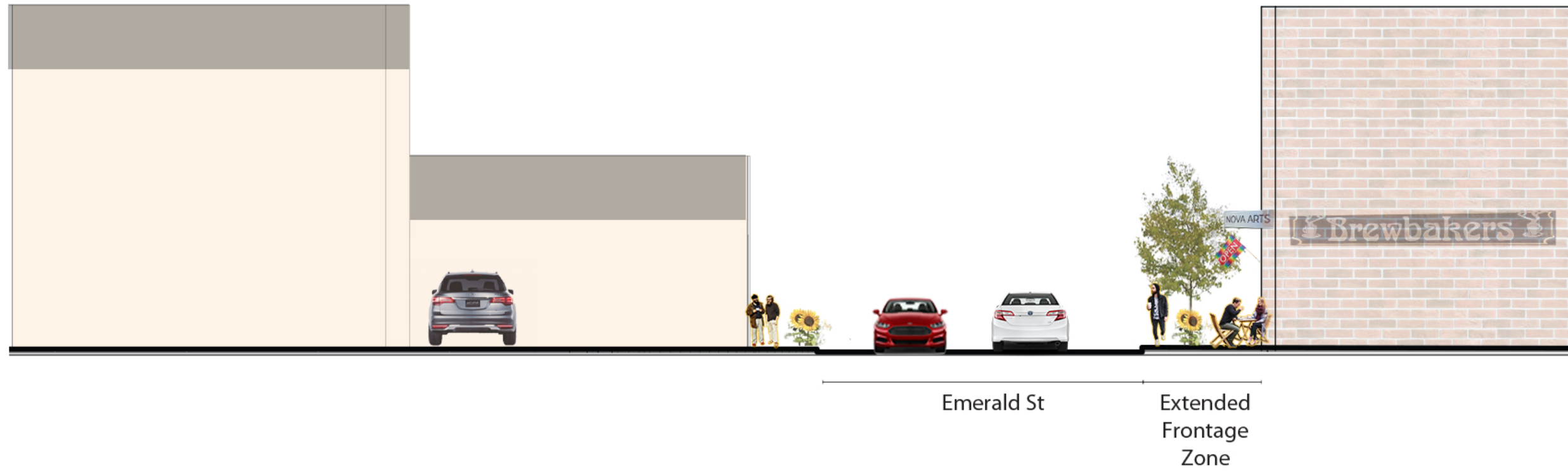
Gilbo Street Parking Lot - After (Everyday Use)



Gilbo Street Parking Lot - After (Market/ Event)



Emerald Street - Existing Street Section



Emerald Street - Proposed Street Section



COMMERCIAL ST. LOT
NO PARKING
FROM
MONDAY 6:00 AM TO 8:00 AM
WEDNESDAY 6:00 AM TO 8:00 AM
FRIDAY 6:00 AM TO 8:00 AM
MONDAY - SAT. 10 AM - 6 PM
MOVE TO ADJACENT LOT

COMMERCIAL LOT
PAY FOR
PARKING AT
KIOSK
VA - LARGE PLATE
INFO REQUIRED
8 AM - 5 PM
MONDAY - SATURDAY

Skate Park - Before



Skate Park - After



- 1** Extend the sidewalk on Gilbo Street and shift existing parking spaces forward. This will create street boundaries and pedestrian safety, and the extended sidewalks will also allow the opportunity for the proposed marketplace structure.
- 2** Proposed marketplace/parking roof cover. Allows the opportunity for defined public space during events without removing daily parking
- 3** Extend parking lot islands with new bump-outs for additional landscaping opportunities.
- 4** Add bump-outs to the sidewalk for additional landscaping opportunities and to create parking lot boundaries.
- 5** Add a sidewalk at Brewbakers on Emerald Street to allow pedestrian access and traffic safety.
- 6** Extend the existing island to allow landscaping opportunities and define street boundaries for pedestrian safety.
- 7** Add new parking lot islands with bump-outs to define parking lot and street boundaries for pedestrian safety and landscaping opportunities.
- 8** Remove street parking to define parking lot boundaries and sidewalk addition.
- 9** Extend existing bump out, add a new sidewalk, and shift parking spaces forward for pedestrian safety and landscaping opportunities.
- 10** Street, sidewalk, bike lane, building and street crossing mural opportunities to connect pedestrians to the main street and the surrounding art community

Sidewalk and Street Intervention Opportunities



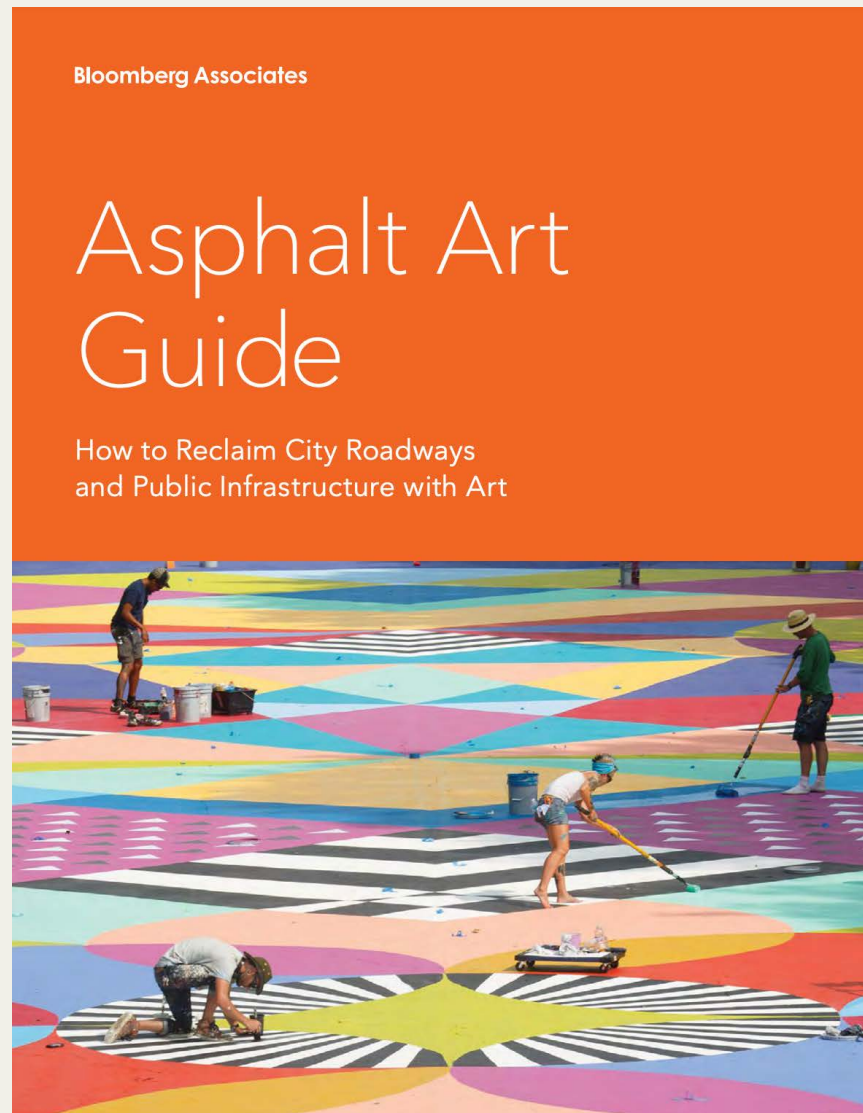
Site Concept Plan

Additional Resources

Recommendation #1:

Streetscaping and Pedestrian Safety

Creative placemaking initiatives around the country have taken on the merging of art, design, and pedestrian safety. The following resources include toolkits, blogs, and case studies of streetscaping projects across the country. Many of the projects highlighted were a part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative. This initiative supports projects that aim to implement art interventions as low-cost opportunities to engage community members, invigorate their community, and support existing transportation infrastructure and increase pedestrian and automotive safety. Streetscaping, implanting art into transportation infrastructure is an effective innovation for shifting how we engage with communities and how people experience those environments.



Streetscaping

Bloomberg Associates: [Asphalt Art Guide, How to Reclaim City Roadways and Public Infrastructure with Art](#) provide case studies of asphalt art projects with background information, cost, materials, and best practices for implementation. This guide also includes tools for planning a streetscaping project for the community and asphalt artists. Additional guides, case studies and toolkits are included in the [appendix](#).

Pedestrian Safety

The City of Kansas City, MO, in collaboration with [Street Smarts, Design + Build](#), installed asphalt art with funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Implementation of asphalt art reduced travel speeds at the intersection by approximately 50% which reduced the risk of casualty from a pedestrian-vehicular accident from 90% to 10%. Additional case studies and guides for art and pedestrian safety are included in the [appendix](#).



Recommendation #2:

Government Relationships and Resources for Community and Economic Development

Community and economic development strategies including federal programs and resources, culture planning and can support the continued development of the arts core in Keene, NH. Guides for development of infrastructure and the intersection of arts and community development are included in this section and the [appendix](#).

Federal Community and Economic Development Resources

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) release a [resource guide](#) with strategies to boost economic development across rural America. The guide includes resources around four key areas: Planning and technical assistance, Infrastructure and broadband expansion, Entrepreneurship and business assistance, Workforce development and livability. Additional federal resources and guides for community and economic development are included in the [appendix](#).



Government Funding Opportunities

The CIRD team has identified the below non-exhaustive list of federal funding opportunities aligned broadly with the work in Keene. The scale and multi-sectoral nature of the Keene Arts Corridor warrants sustained relationship building with the above-noted and other federal entities.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

- National Endowment for the Arts: Several NEA programs including [Challenge America](#), [Grants for Arts Projects](#), and [Our Town](#) offer funding opportunities relevant to the Arts Corridor. The Challenge America program, though modest in scale, offers avenues of artistic engagement for underserved populations. Several Keene stakeholders identified the importance of supporting the artistic endeavors of unhoused people in Keene.
- New Hampshire's [USDA Rural Development](#) office offers an array of programs spanning business development, housing, community facilities, and community programs. Maximizing USDA's resources requires that key USDA Rural Development staff have a working knowledge of Keene's Arts Corridor.
- HUD's [New Hampshire office](#) can link work in Keene to federal funding streams for community development, housing & homelessness, and even faith-based partnerships. The New Hampshire's Congressional delegation can be helpful in connecting to the above noted entities.
- EPA's [College/Underserved Communities](#) program offers support for linking colleges and their students with community improvement efforts. The presence of higher education institutions in Keene presents opportunities to tap federal programs (and skillsets) not available to many rural communities.

Non-Profit Funding Resources

Arts Alive!'s close ties with Radically Rural present opportunities to 1) support ongoing work in Keene and 2) ensure that Arts Alive!'s efforts in Keene receive national attention. Radically Rural's funders—including notable names from the financial services and philanthropic community—offer Arts Alive! an excellent (potential) base for developing resources.



- LISC's "[Funding Creative Placemaking](#)" website links to videos, curated lists of funders—public and private, and discusses best practices for bringing dollars to local placemaking work.
- HAC [News](#) consolidates funding opportunities and rural development news and resources. HAC News increasingly includes rural arts-linked opportunities.
- HAC's [Loan Fund](#) finances affordable housing across the country. Cognizant of Keene's housing issues and the acute impact of housing costs on the arts community, HAC and CIRD are eager to discuss affordable housing resources with the Keene community.
- [Campus Compact New Hampshire](#) offers relevant funding opportunities along with an overview of ways to link colleges and their students with the broader community. Campus Compact's work with [AmeriCorps in New Hampshire](#) (and supportive private sector funders) offers another potential source of capacity to boost the Arts Corridor effort in Keene.

Strengthening Government Partnerships and Relationships

A Comprehensive Strategy

The First Step: *CIRD suggests prioritizing fundraising relationships with entities that are connectors; these entities are also positioned to offer (and curate) information streams regarding funding sources, especially federal funding.*

- Establish working relationships with the offices of U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan and U.S. Representative Ann McLane Kuster. NH's congressional delegation is positioned to assist with identifying funding opportunities; supporting fundraising (public and private); and with grant writing.
- It is imperative that Congressional staffers understand the Arts Corridor effort—beyond the talking points. CIRD suggests:
 - Walking tours for Congressional staff; meetings with key arts corridor stakeholders; including key Congressional staff on all Arts Alive! newsletters, etc.; and linking the Keene Arts Corridor with the priorities of Congressional offices, as possible.
 - Inviting members of Congress to tour the Arts Corridor and/or delivering remarks at local gatherings related to the project. (invite staff as well)
 - Asking Congressional offices for assistance in approaching federal (and perhaps state) agencies to learn more about the Arts Corridor. For example:
 - Introductions to key USDA Rural Development staff
 - Introductions (as warranted by the project) with regional staff to HUD (community development/housing/CDBG, etc.); Department of Transportation (pedestrian programs, etc.) and other federal entities.
- Upon establishing working relationships with the Congressional delegation, several activities (also relevant for state and local elected officials) will nurture the relationships:
 - Invite federal officials to address (or deliver remarks via video) gatherings such as Radically Rural
 - Showcase on social media when Congressional staff engage with Arts Alive and the broader Arts Corridor effort
 - Offer to be of assistance to the Congressional offices! For example, Keene could:
 - Host a field hearing on arts-centered economic development (Rep. Kuster serves on the Agriculture Committee; rural development programs are under the Committee's purview); Senator Shaheen serves on the Small Business Committee (a platform to spotlight the role of small businesses in the arts corridor effort)
- Finally, Congressional offices are positioned to help local entities identify private sector funding (including writing support letters) and link with similar efforts across the state or even throughout New England.

Recommendation #3:

Community Development Strategies and Relevant Examples

Cultural Planning

Cultural planning is a method of strengthening communities through the arts. The process aims to achieve a community vision, address the community's needs, and reflect the community's culture. Cultural plans infuse the community's culture and art through the planning and development process.

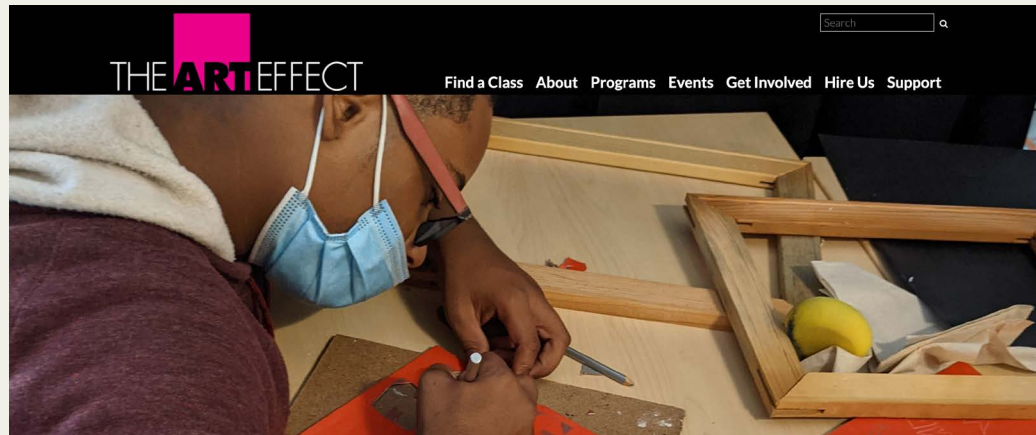


The Arts & Planning [Cultural Planning Toolkit](#) includes an overview of cultural planning, funding suggestions, examples of plans, and best practices for conducting a cultural plan in your community. This guide, and additional resources and examples are included in the [appendix](#).

Relevant Community Development Projects

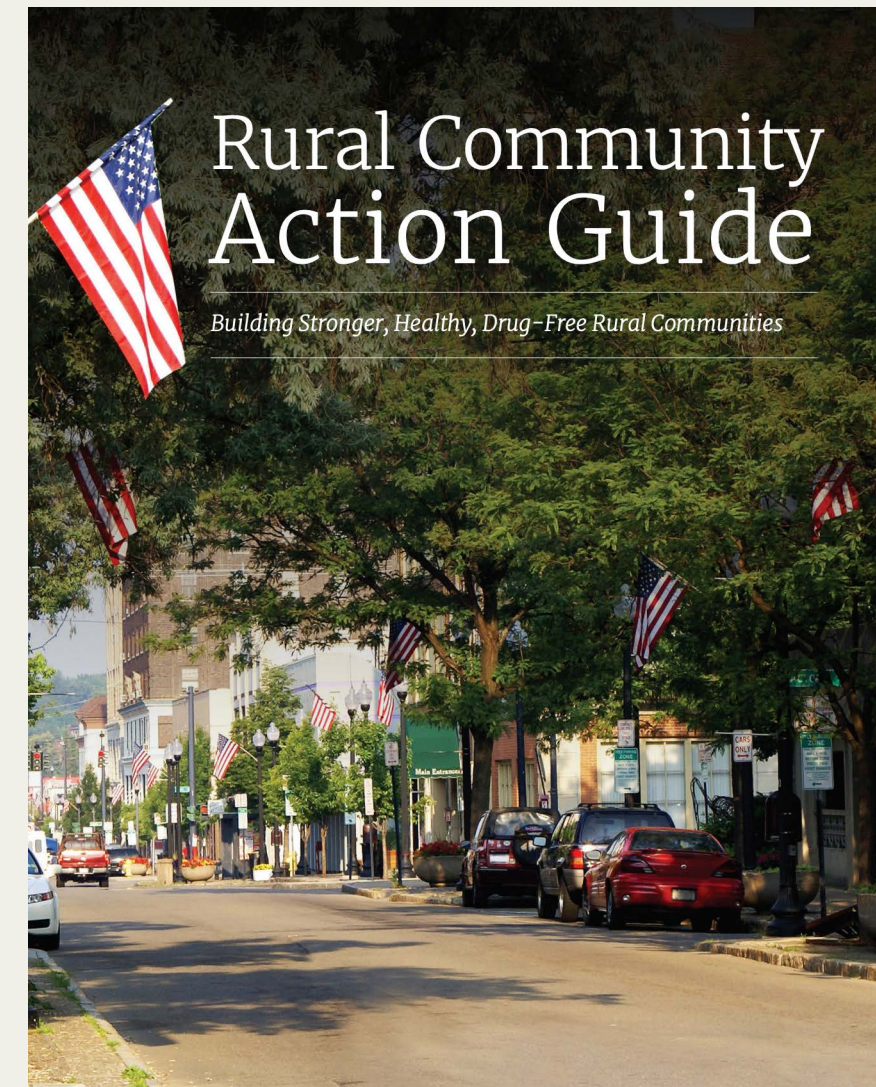
[The Art Effect](#), City of Poughkeepsie, and MASS Design Group partnered to support the establishment of a Youth Arts Empowerment Zone, public art installations, and arts programming in Poughkeepsie, New York (pop. 31,577).

For more information about this project or a connection to the community project leaders, please contact the NEA Our Town Grant program (ot@arts.gov). Additional relevant community projects from the NEA Our Town Grant Program are included in the [appendix](#).



Tools for Addressing Substance Use Disorders and Opioid Use Disorders in Rural Communities

Community members shared feedback regarding the development of the arts core and the overlap with substance use disorders (SUD) and opioid use disorders (OUD) in the area. Below are resources for rural communities around addressing SUD and OUD. The resources include federal entities, toolkits, and grant opportunities.



The USDA [Community Action Guide: Building Stronger, Healthy, Drug-Free Rural Communities](#) was created to provide rural communities with best practices for prevention, treatment, and recovery for SUD and OUD in rural America. The guide includes data to support interventions, infrastructure, and community development to create stronger, healthy, drug-free rural communities.

Designs and Case Studies for Safe Public Restrooms

Community members shared a desire for public restrooms in downtown Keene and for the arts core. The [Portland Loo](#) is an affordable stand-alone public restroom design intended to provide safe and fully available restrooms to the public. The design is intended to blend into the area with a modern and easy to clean design. The open design limits privacy for options of patrol and uses blue lights to discourage drug usage. More information the Portland Loo and case studies about the implementation of Portland Loo from the [American Restroom Association](#) are included in the [appendix](#).



The full resource book appendix can be found at the following link:
bit.ly/rbappendixkeene

Keene Workshop 2022

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