

Appendix A

Centennial Square Revitalization Project Concept Design Report



Centennial Square Revitalization Project

Concept Design Report

DIALOG®





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Executive Summary

The City of Victoria is embarking on a significant endeavor to reimagine one of its pivotal downtown public spaces. The transformation of Centennial Square seeks to meet the evolving demands of a vibrant city and redefine the concept of a “civic heart”, navigating both changing demographics and post-pandemic relationships with downtown public space. With increasing concerns about the perceived safety of the Square, aging infrastructure at the end of its life, and a public art piece in need of significant investment and restoration, the time is right to explore what a revitalized Centennial Square could be.

Originally conceived in the early 1960s, Centennial Square emerged as a bold and pioneering effort to revitalize downtown Victoria. Spearheaded by the Permanent Projects Committee of the Victoria Centennial Advisory Committee, this endeavor formed a crucial part of a broader urban renewal initiative. Amidst the wave of revitalization sweeping across North American cities in the late 1950s and 1960s, Victoria stood out by preserving its historic City Hall, evading the fate of so many other cities that lost cherished architectural landmarks to demolition. The Square’s original design envisioned a modernist civic plaza, removing Cormorant Street to seamlessly connect the historic City Hall to Government Street, blending tradition with innovation.

Since the 1960s, downtown Victoria has undergone significant transformations, shaped by shifting demographics, increased development, and the more recent challenges posed by the pandemic. The urban landscape has evolved, with new architectural styles blending with historic landmarks, reflecting changing tastes, relationships with public space, and design trends. The continual change and evolution have significantly influenced Victoria’s character and needs, prompting a reevaluation of public spaces like Centennial Square.

In 2017, the City undertook a Downtown Public Realm Plan, a five-year Arts and Culture Master Plan that sought to establish a design framework and set of principles, strategies, and standards for downtown public spaces. An important outcome of this report was the identification of Centennial Square as a priority public space for significant improvement and refresh. The resulting concept plan, approved by Council in 2019, captured a moment in time and one that responded to existing conditions in a measured and intentional way.

As Victoria continues to evolve and new challenges arise, there is a pressing need to revisit the approved design concept to ensure that it aligns with the contemporary needs of Victoria. Central to the current design challenge is the question of how to best acknowledge the past, respecting the history of the Square while still moving it firmly into the future. Just as the 1960s project represented a major transformation of the public realm to meet the needs of the day, so too must this iteration respond to the City’s contemporary needs and build future resilience.

This report represents an updated concept design for Centennial Square encompassing proposed revisions and enhancements to the Square, as well the process undertaken to get to a preferred design. It serves as a detailed blueprint that articulates a new vision, guiding principles and ideas that will guide the revitalization effort. By presenting a comprehensive overview of proposed changes, the concept report facilitated informed decision-making and ensures alignment with the evolving needs and aspirations of Victoria.



Building Blocks

The “building blocks” are the foundational elements or components that form the framework and contribute to the Square’s overall structure, function, and aesthetic. They encompass the various physical, conceptual, and experiential aspects that have informed the proposed concept design for Centennial Square. Central to this is the overall intent to re-establish Centennial Square as a great civic space, the place for Victoria to gather, to celebrate, to embark in play, to protest, or simply enjoy a quiet cup of coffee on a random Tuesday afternoon. Since the completion of the Downtown Public Realm Plan, the needs of public spaces in downtown have continued to change, with increasing demand for places that are inclusive and welcoming where families and children can relax and play together, flexible enough to support programming without impeding everyday uses, and focused on meeting the needs of Victoria residents first.

To envision and articulate any refinements to the previously approved plan, a thorough understanding of the current site was a critical part of the design process. Considerations such as the physical project site, including trees and infrastructure, the condition of the monoliths, surrounding current and proposed building uses such as office, residential, and retail, and civic programming requests and opportunities have been reviewed and assessed in a holistic manner to establish the building blocks for the future vision of the site.

IT IS NOT WHAT YOU LOOK AT THAT MATTERS, IT IS WHAT YOU SEE.

– HENRY DAVID THOREAU



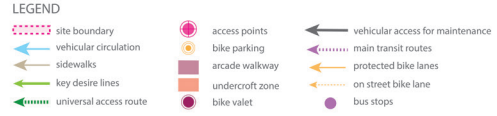
Site Analysis

Existing Context

Circulation and edge conditions were examined around the Square to understand how the current configuration influences daily use. Existing trees and how they impact sight lines, along with other CPTED considerations were also studied.

DESIGN STRATEGIES

- 1 Accessible route of travel should be intuitive and clear.
- 2 Improve loading/maintenance vehicular access.
- 3 Increase the activation of edge conditions.
- 4 Ensure the trees do not block circulation/views into or out of Square.
- 5 Maintain large mature trees around edge of the Square where sight lines are not a constraint.



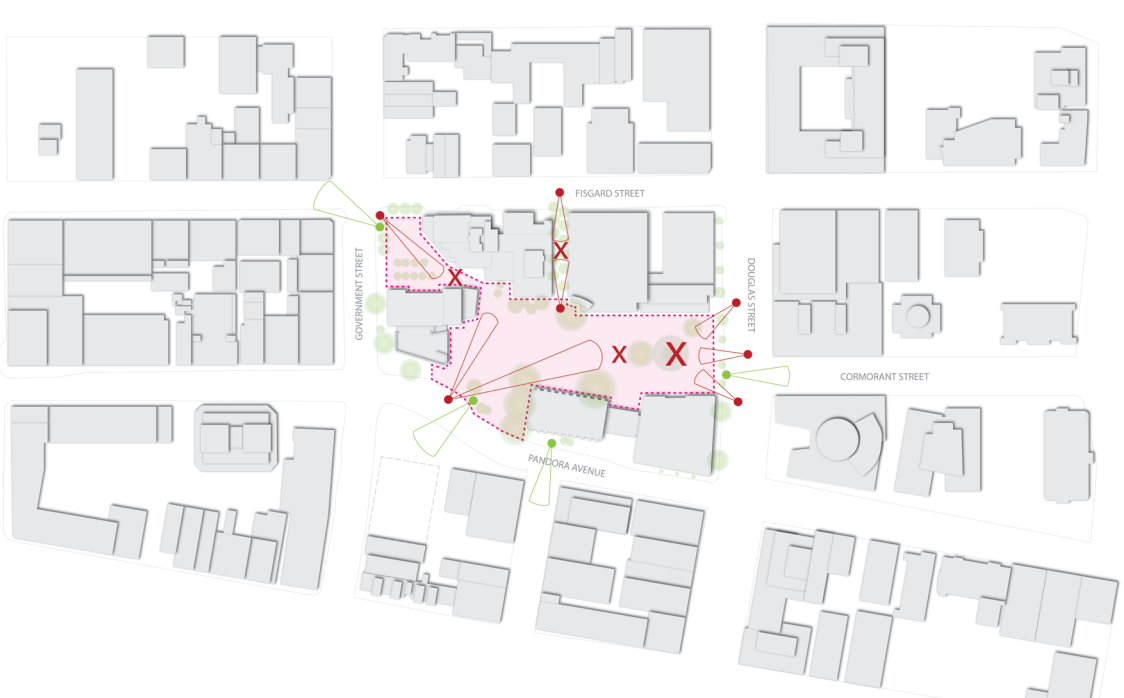
CIRCULATION + ACCESSIBILITY MAP



EDGE CONDITIONS MAP



EXISTING TREES MAP



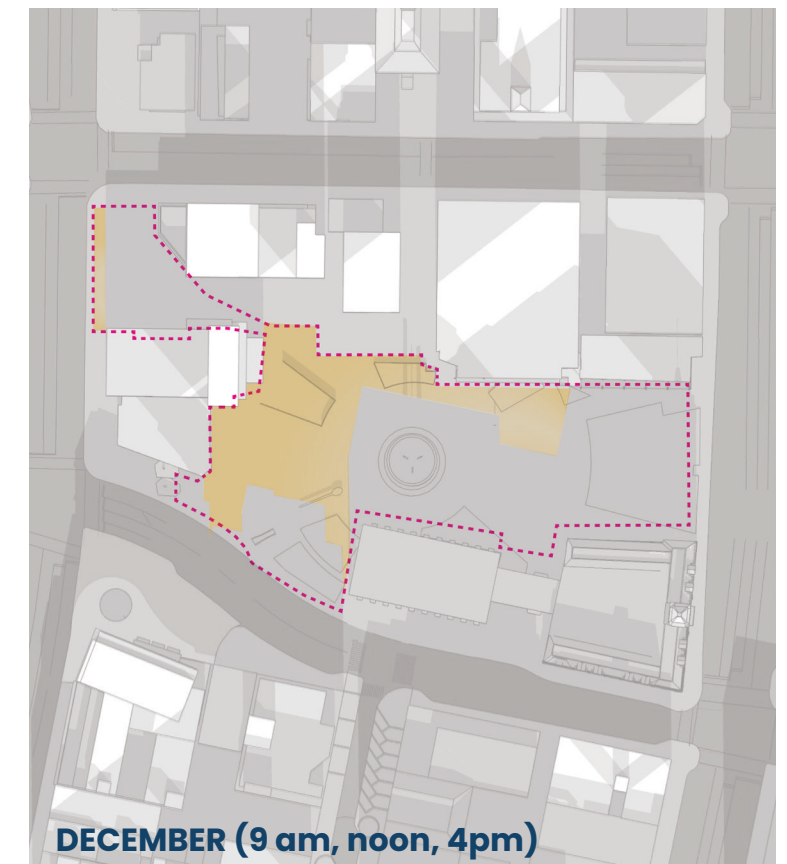
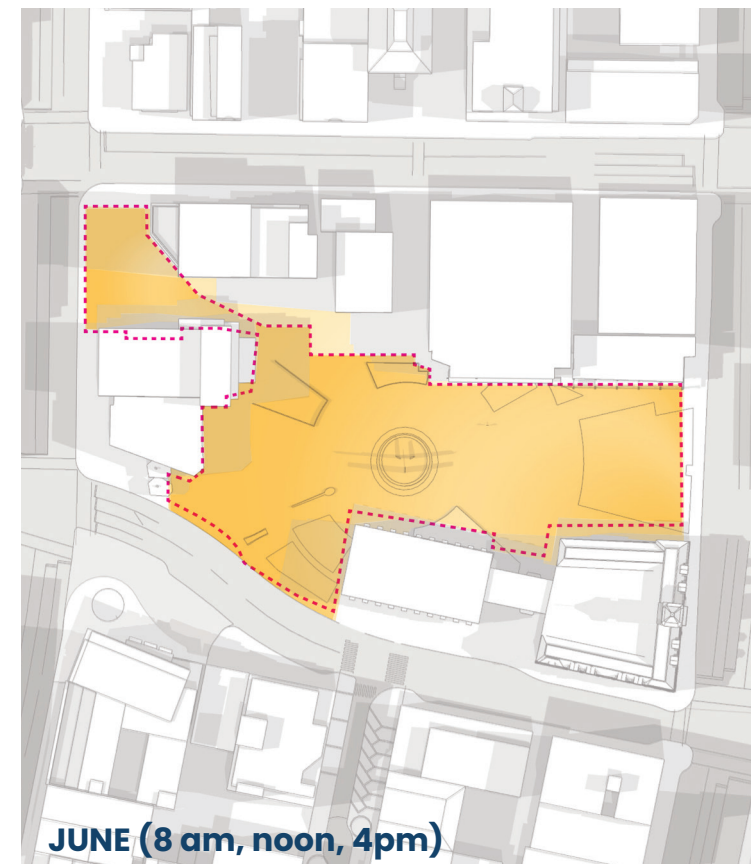
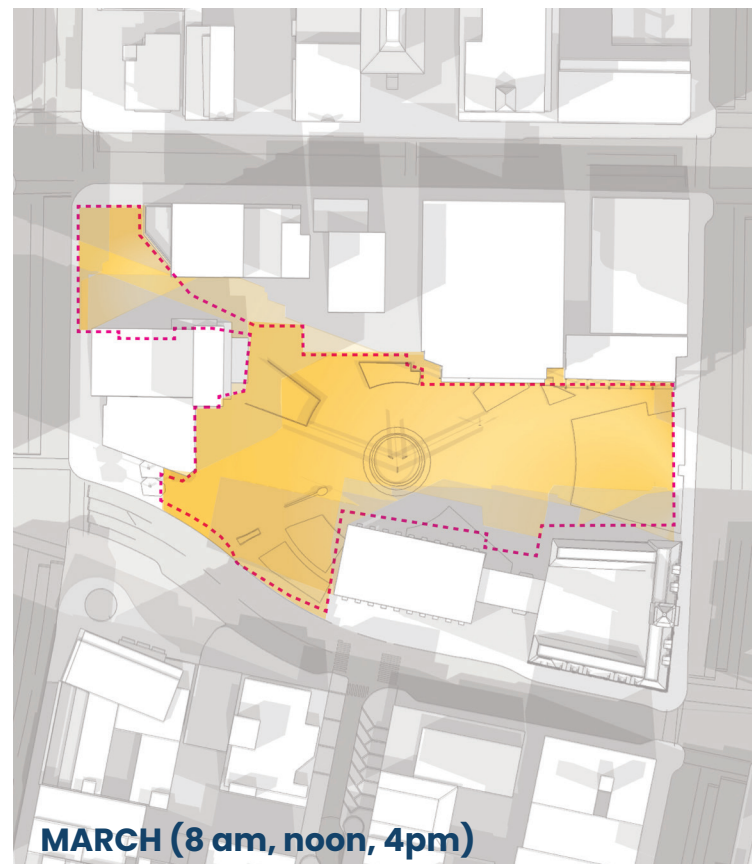
SIGHTLINES MAP

Microclimate

Working with local weather and climate patterns is important to produce comfortable spaces. Wind and sun patterns were studied to inform the location of various program elements.

DESIGN STRATEGIES

- 1 Design and orient fountains to reduce wind spray and be located in places that remain comfortable.
- 2 The western side of the site has the highest amount of year-round sun and is good to locate any future water-based amenities in a warmer zone.
- 3 The northern edge of the site can provide pockets of sun in the winter for noon-hour events or outdoor seating.
- 4 Amplify the site's gateway moments

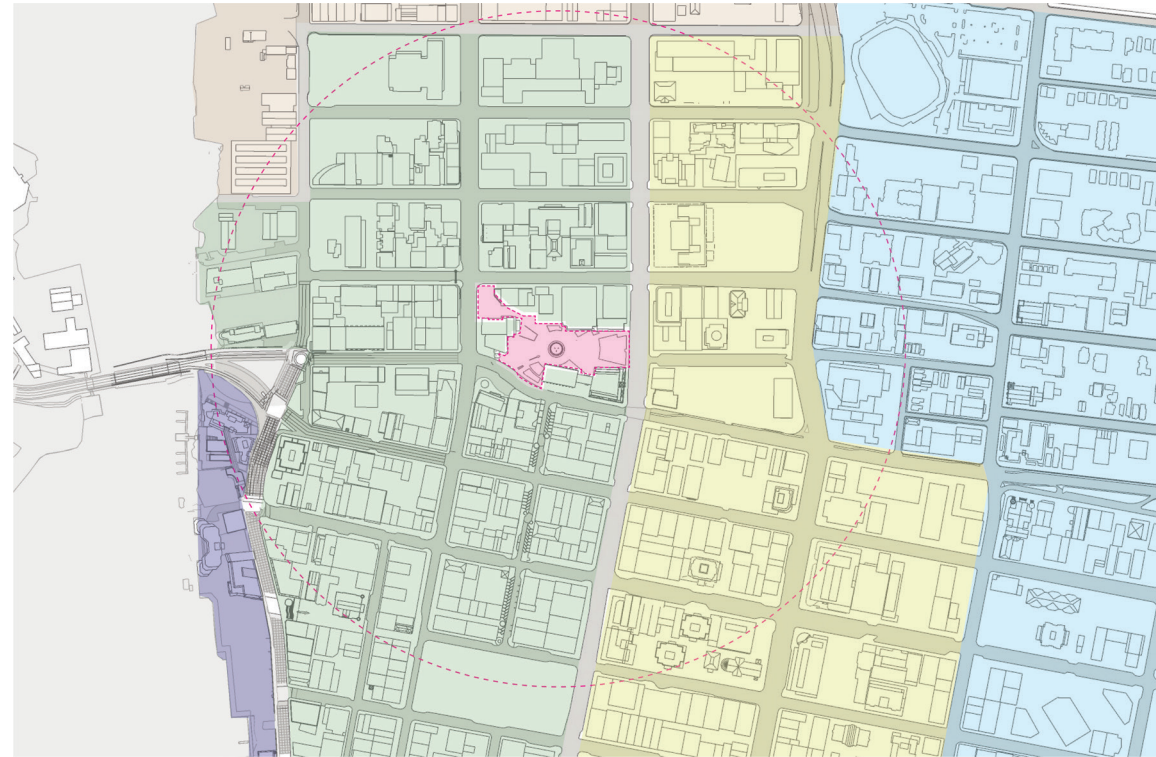


District Analysis

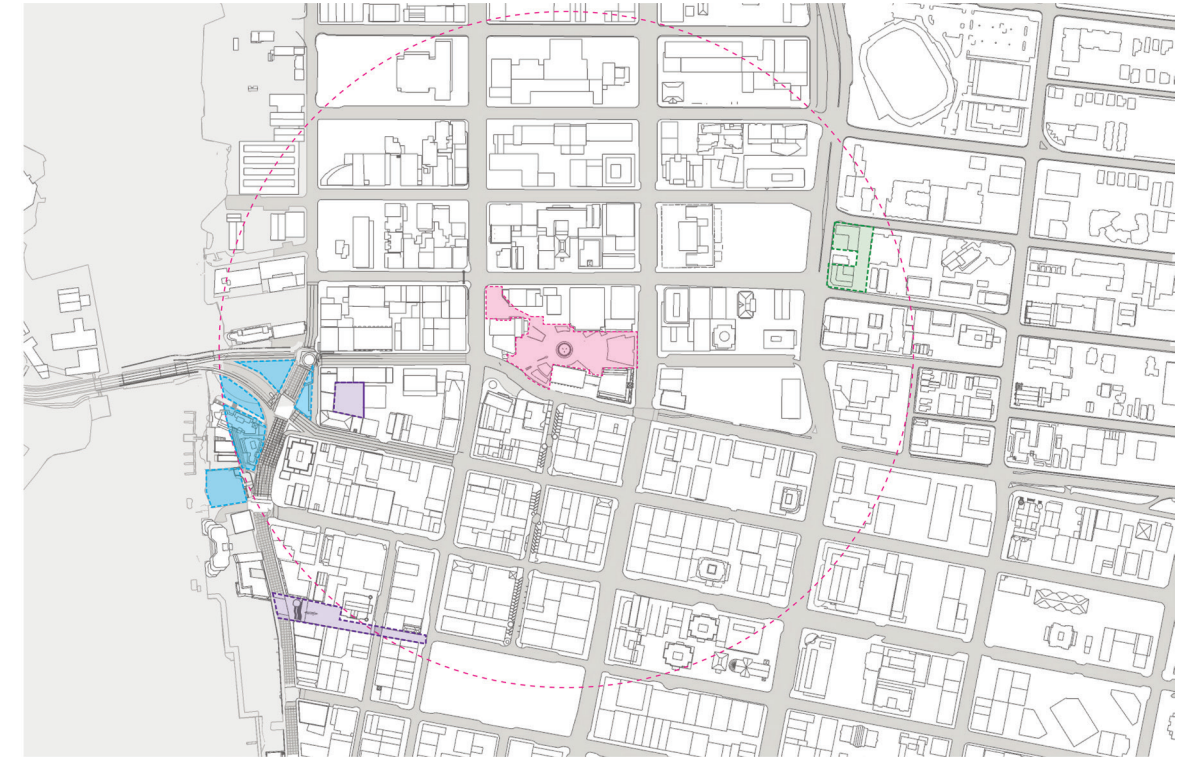
Centennial Square sits at an important place in Victoria's downtown, and will continue to be the area's main outdoor gathering space. Changing demographics and more residents downtown means it will need to be designed to accommodate these needs.

DESIGN STRATEGIES

- 1 Its place as a 'hinge point' to many surrounding cultural neighbourhoods (eg. Chinatown) means it can act as a meeting space for numerous different groups and end users.
- 2 Recognizing that the growing population downtown needs open space, design the Square to be a comfortable, daily destination.
- 3 A wide range of cultural spaces means the site can play host to various groups in close proximity.
- 4 The high proportion of younger residents (mid 20s-40s) means a need for family friendly programming and uses.
- 5 The inclusion of other age demographics suggests also creating pockets with varying activity levels and noise.



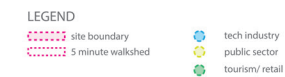
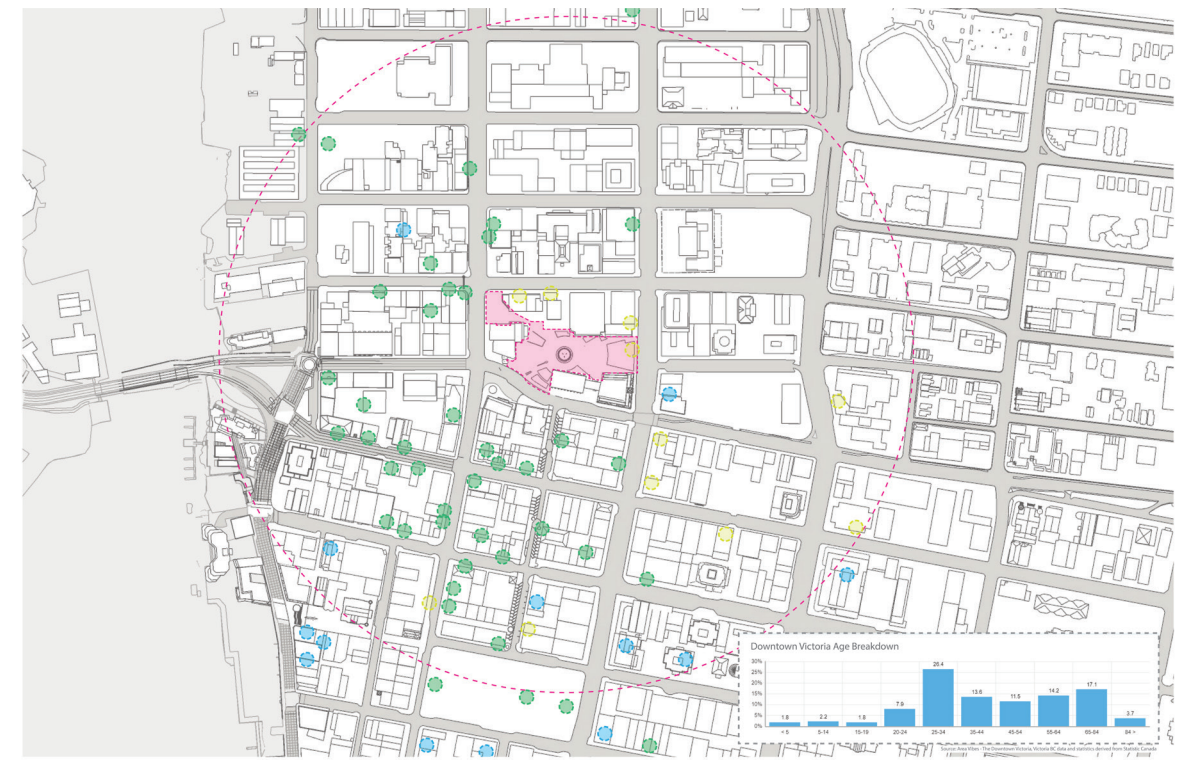
DISTRICTS



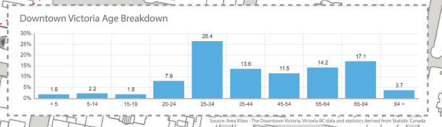
PARKS + OPEN SPACES



CULTURAL HUBS



AGE DEMOGRAPHICS + KEY INDUSTRIES

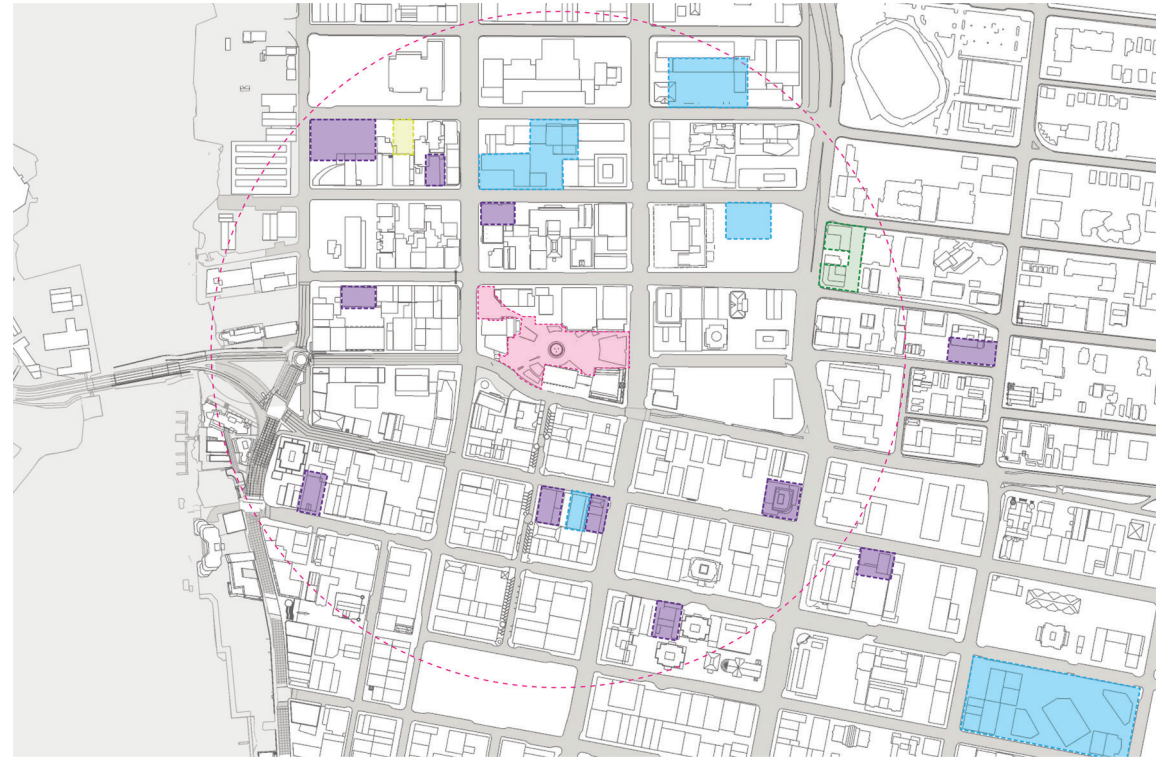


Downtown Growth

Increasing residential development has outpaced the addition of other daily needs and amenities in downtown, such as grocers and play spaces. The project analyzed these changes in the future as well as other nearby City projects to ensure alignment with other big moves.

DESIGN STRATEGIES

- 1 The increased residential population downtown means the Square will need to serve the daily open space needs of a growing population.
- 2 Smaller condo units will require a public 'living room' that operates throughout the day.
- 3 Retail traffic is along major streets, and the Square should be designed to pull shoppers through the space on their routes.
- 4 The Square should complement the lack of grocers in the area with its own offerings - food trucks, etc.
- 5 The City of Victoria is undergoing a transformation, and Centennial Square exists within a larger context of relevant policy. The Square should align with these nearby changes.



LEGEND
 site boundary
 5 minute walkshed
 existing residential buildings
 approved development
 proposed development
 city purchased lands for future urban park

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



LEGEND
 site boundary
 5 minute walkshed
 outdoor specialty stores
 gift/stationery stores
 boutique/clothing
 general stores
 grocery stores

RETAIL



LEGEND
 site boundary
 5 minute walkshed
 pubs/bar
 restaurants
 cafes

FOOD + BEVERAGE



LEGEND
 site boundary
 5 minute walkshed
 Government St. Refresh
 Government St. Refresh (Potential / Future)
 Rock Bay Industry, Arts and Innovation District
 Douglas Street Mobility Corridor
 City Purchased Land for Future Urban Park
 Future Civic Building

PUBLIC PROJECTS
 SCALE 1:800



A New Centennial Square

Transformation and change is not new for Centennial Square. As a prominent public space within the city, it has born witness to the continued revitalization of downtown Victoria and persists in responding to periods of intense change and growth for the City.

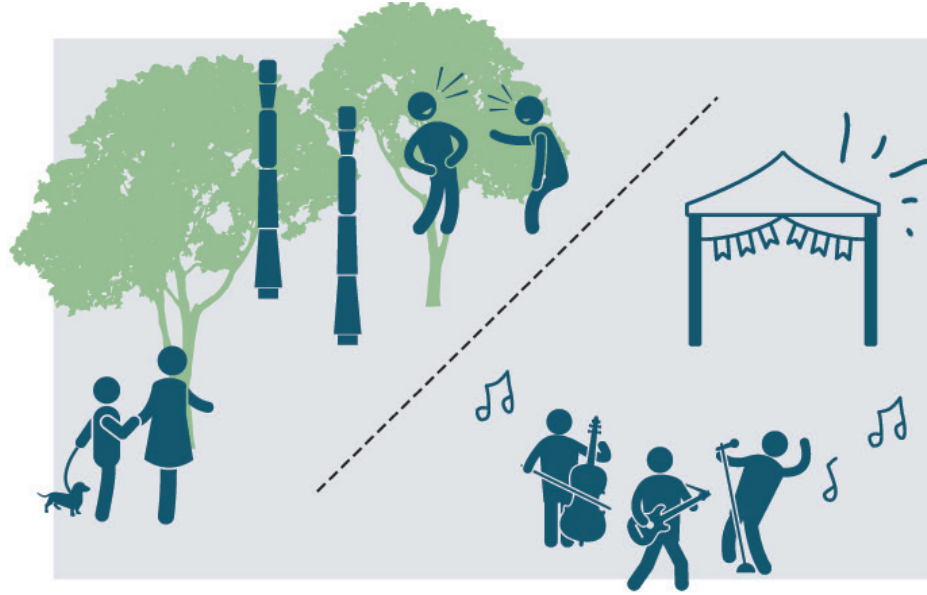
The new vision for Centennial Square balances its historic significance with the contemporary and future needs of a dynamic and evolving Victoria community. Improvements and design changes prioritize enhancing the quality and utility of the space, simultaneously acknowledging and celebrating the past, but with an eye keenly on the future. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and they require a design that is both courageous and sensitive, unafraid to propose change that, similar to the origin story of the Square, envisions a bold direction deeply rooted in the context of place.

Overall, the design intent of the Centennial Square Improvement project is to transform this important civic space, addressing not only maintenance and operational constraints, but proposing design solutions that meet the current and future needs of the city.

The following guiding principles were developed in consultation with the City Project Team and leverage the Building Blocks of the project established during the analysis phase.



Guiding Principles



A Place for All

Centennial Square is a **place of civic significance** and **urban vitality**, and its future state will serve as a catalyst for **celebration, play, and cultural expression**.

The square's success lies in its ability to reflect Victoria's diverse community as an **accessible, inclusive, and welcoming** space for people and nature.



A Magnet for Public Life

Centennial Square has **symbolic, cultural, and functional** importance within the City of Victoria and will continue to serve as a **central gathering** and **civic space** for the community.

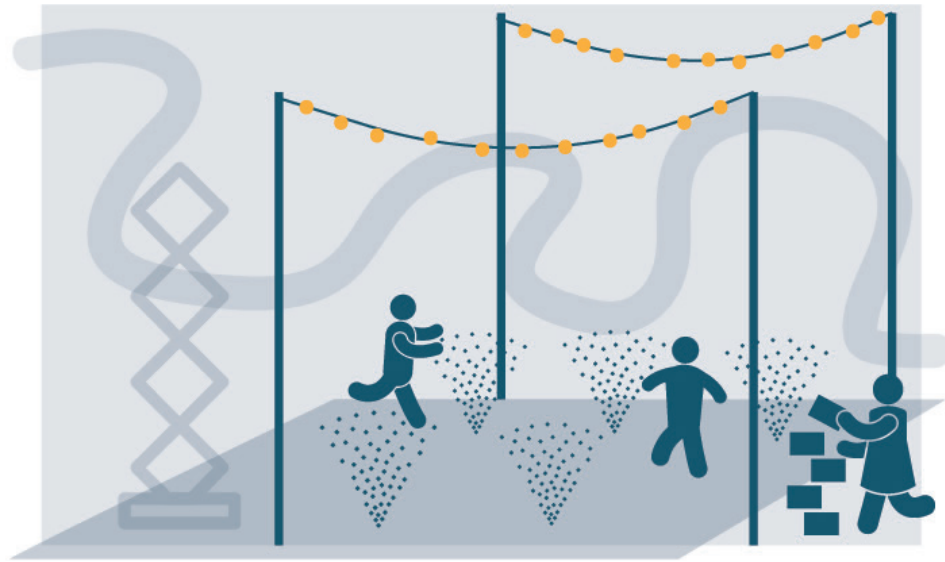
Through thoughtful design and strategic intervention, the square will be a **vibrant hub** of community **activity** and **connection** – drawing residents and visitors through engaging **programming**, and **dynamic community amenities**.



Celebrate the Past, Adapt to the Future

Great public spaces are never finished – they are constantly evolving based on the changing needs of the dynamic cities and communities that they serve. As the **civic heart** of Victoria, Centennial Square is rich with **natural, cultural, and designed histories** that can help to shape the future of the Square.

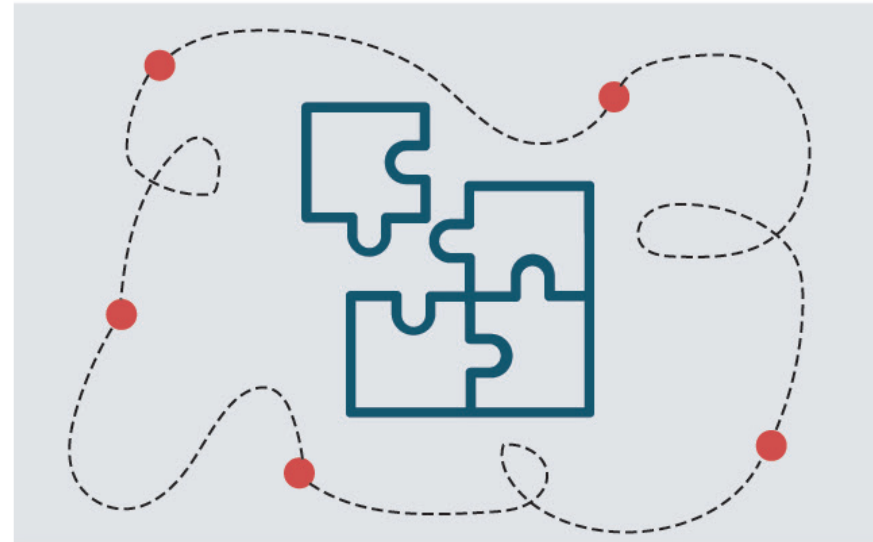
The square will reflect the site's **storied history**, its **present reality**, and its **future potential** – one that is **resilient**, accomodates **changing climates**, is **adaptable**, and **vibrant**. The transformation of the square will require **boldness**, rooted in an understanding of the **trade-offs** required to **balance** potentially competing interests.



Infuse Whimsy and Play

Public space provides the canvas to **spark joy**, foster **creativity**, and encourage **exploration** – pushing the boundaries of **creative expression**.

Centennial Square will be a place for community gathering, events, and discourse, but also be a place of **fun** and **joy**, creating a vibrant atmosphere where users can engage in **spontaneous interactions**, discover **delightful surprises**, and forge lasting **memories**.



Foster A Unified Experience

The public realm is a **shared encounter space**, setting the stage for social interaction, cultural activities, and community life.

Like a symphony, it's critical that all pieces within the public realm **coherently** come together, and each design element plays a specific role in contributing to a **unified public realm** experience.



Prioritize Timeless and Enduring Design

Amidst an ever-changing landscape of design trends, **timeless** principles of **simplicity** and **functionality** serve as a sturdy foundation that can weather the passing of time. Centennial Square's original design captures a moment in time, but it is important to recognize the changes within Victoria and address **urban renewal** and the increasing **pressure** on the downtown core.

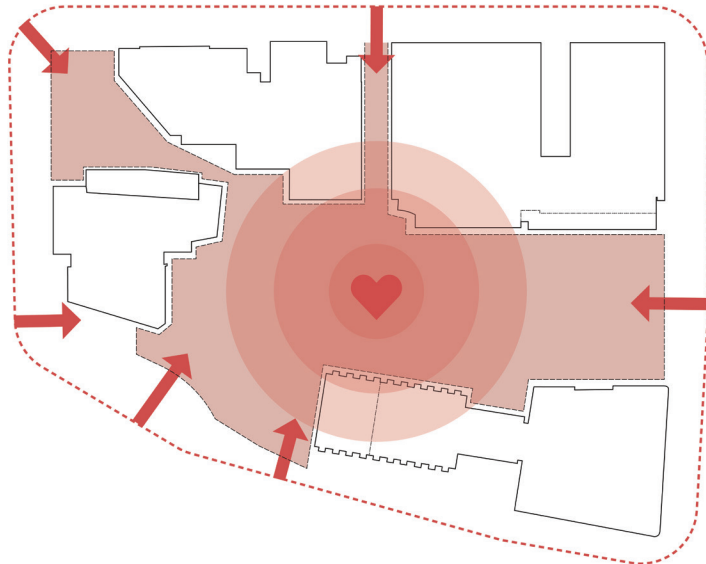
Prioritizing **timeless design** and **functional simplicity** ensures that the square will cater to the **evolving needs** of users well into the future, ensuring relevance, and **adaptability** for diverse audiences.

Design Strategies



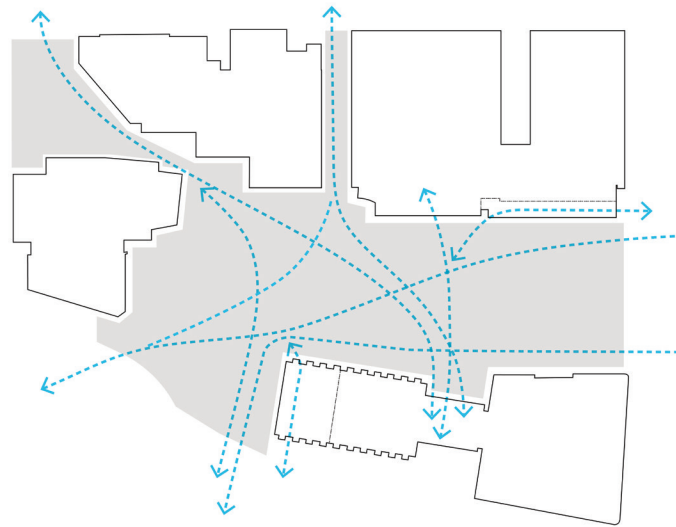
Build on Work to Date

This is not about starting from scratch, rather about refining some big moves.



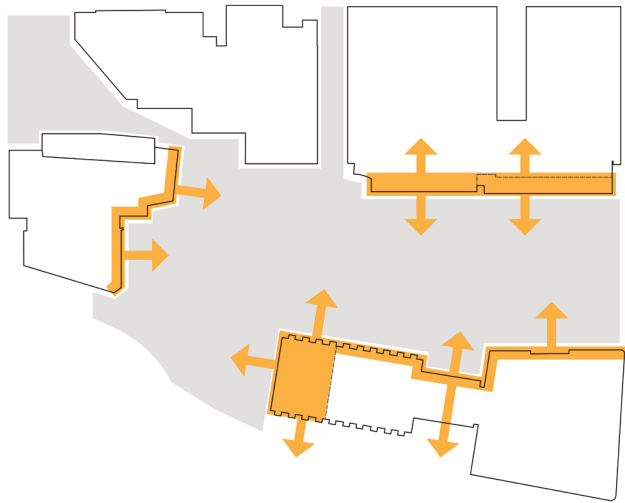
Bring Back the Civic Heart

Centennial Square will support a dynamic, evolving downtown.



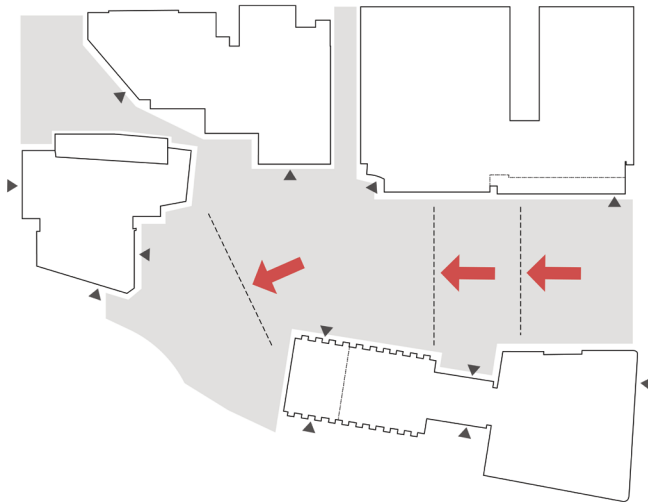
Reinforce Existing Circulation

Accessibility and movement will be simplified and realigned.



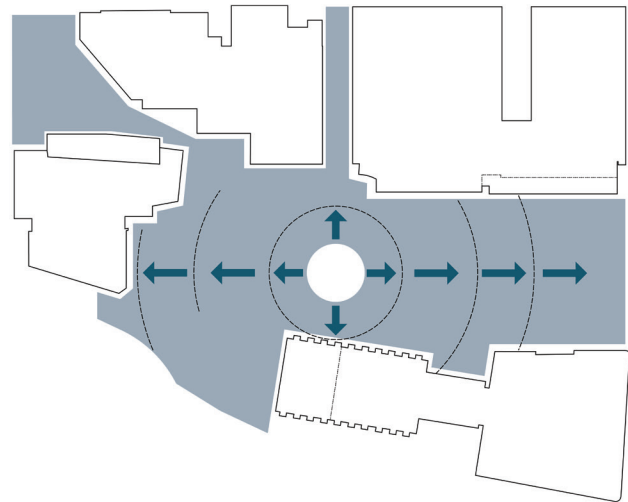
Sticky Edges

The Square is envisioned to have a series of re-imagined, active edges.



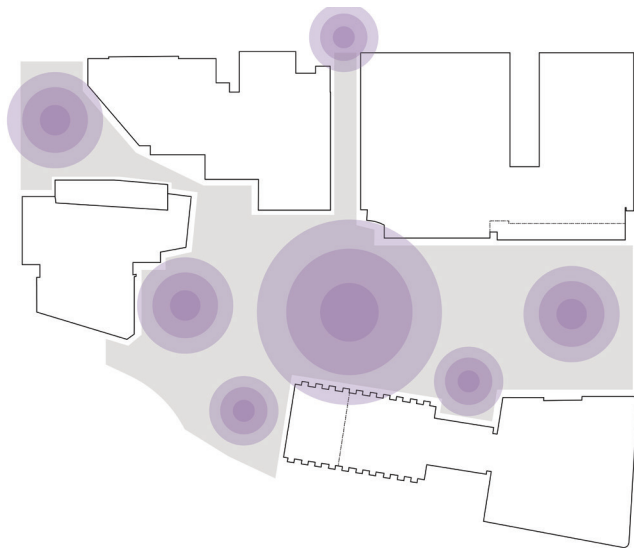
Leverage Grades

Three significant grade breaks are leveraged as a positive feature.



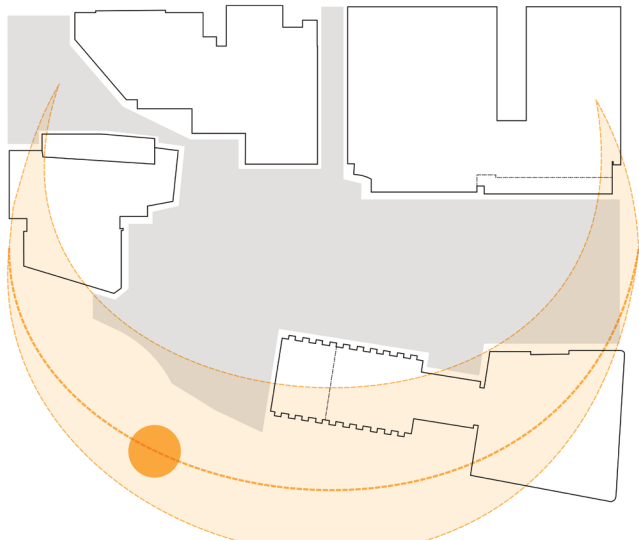
Maximize Gathering Space

The heart of the space is opened up to create new possibilities for gathering.



Create a Hierarchy of Nodes

A series of seamless 'rooms' are created to offer multiple possibilities.



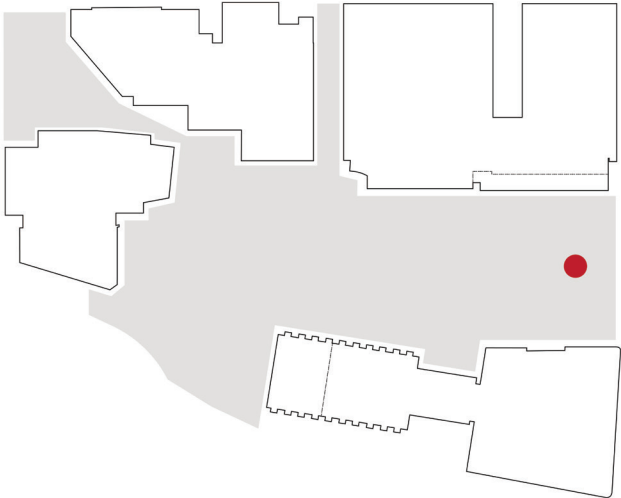
Optimize Solar Access

Seating and gathering spaces are reorientated for comfort.

The Monoliths and the Fountain

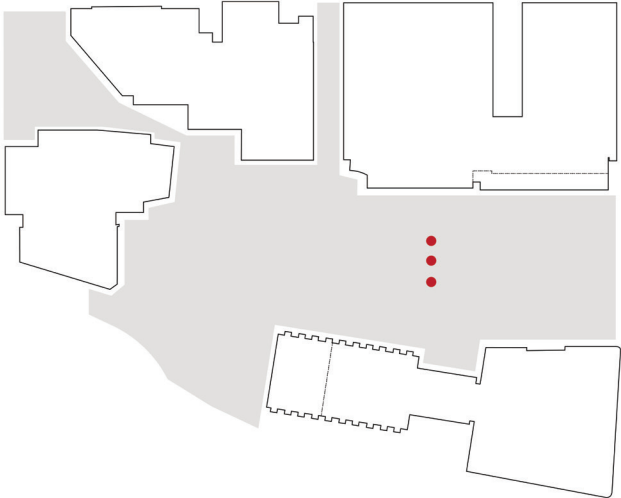
The role of the Monoliths can be rethought to open up the Square.

In their current location, they orient the entire Square towards themselves and preclude larger gatherings or other uses in the central part of the space. Various options were explored to understand how these elements might be best retained on site.



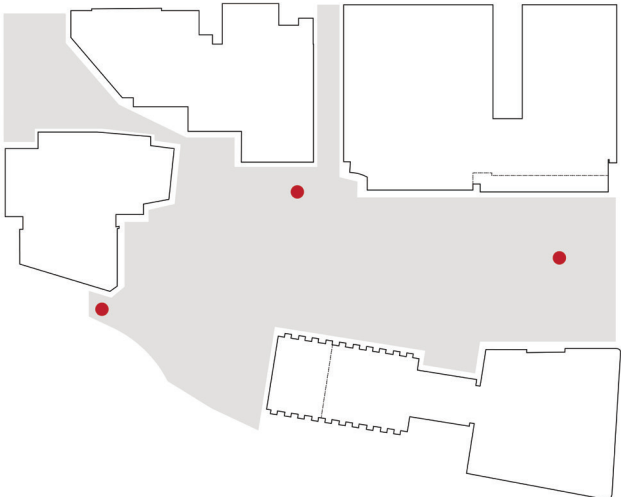
Option 1: Move Up

- One option would be to shift the monoliths to the upper Civic Plaza. Here they would speak to the heritage also personified by City Hall.



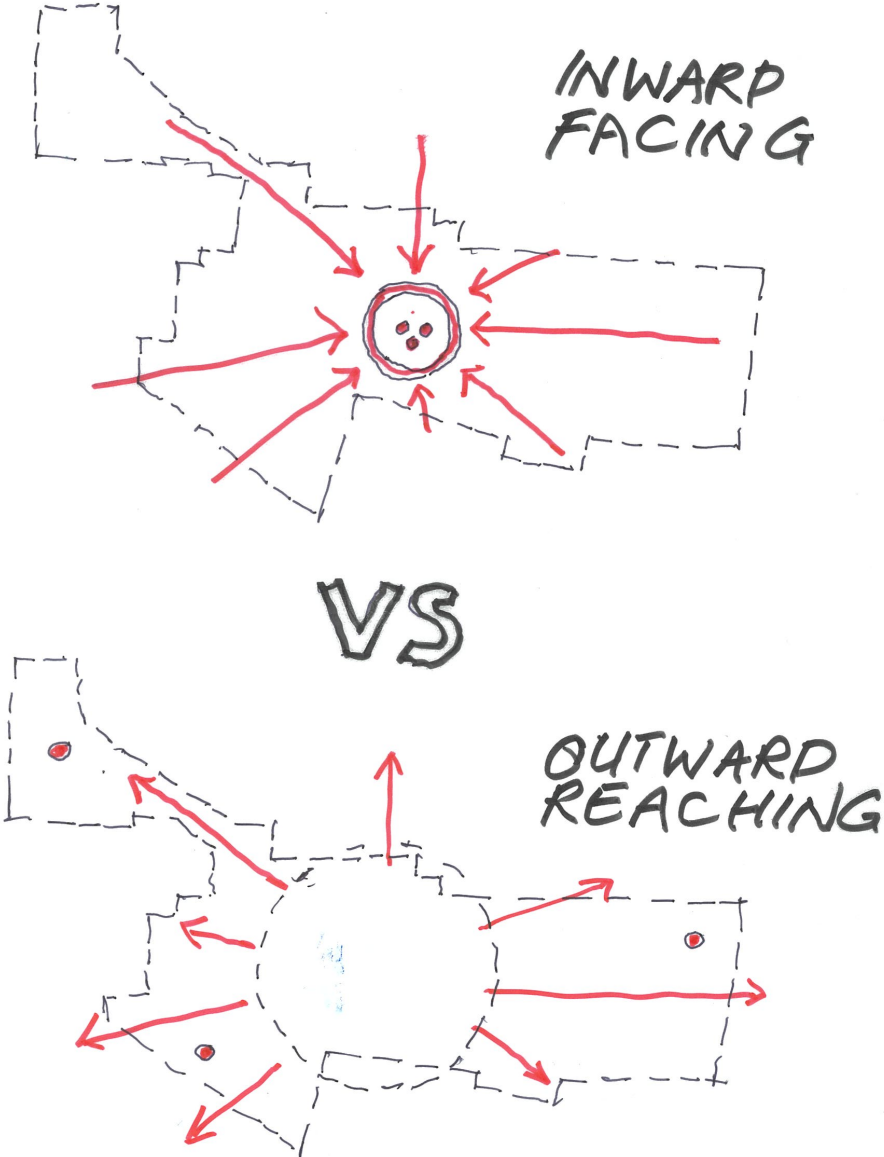
Option 2: Shift a Little

A new home for the monoliths in the central area that doesn't dominate the space is also possible.



Option 3: Scatter

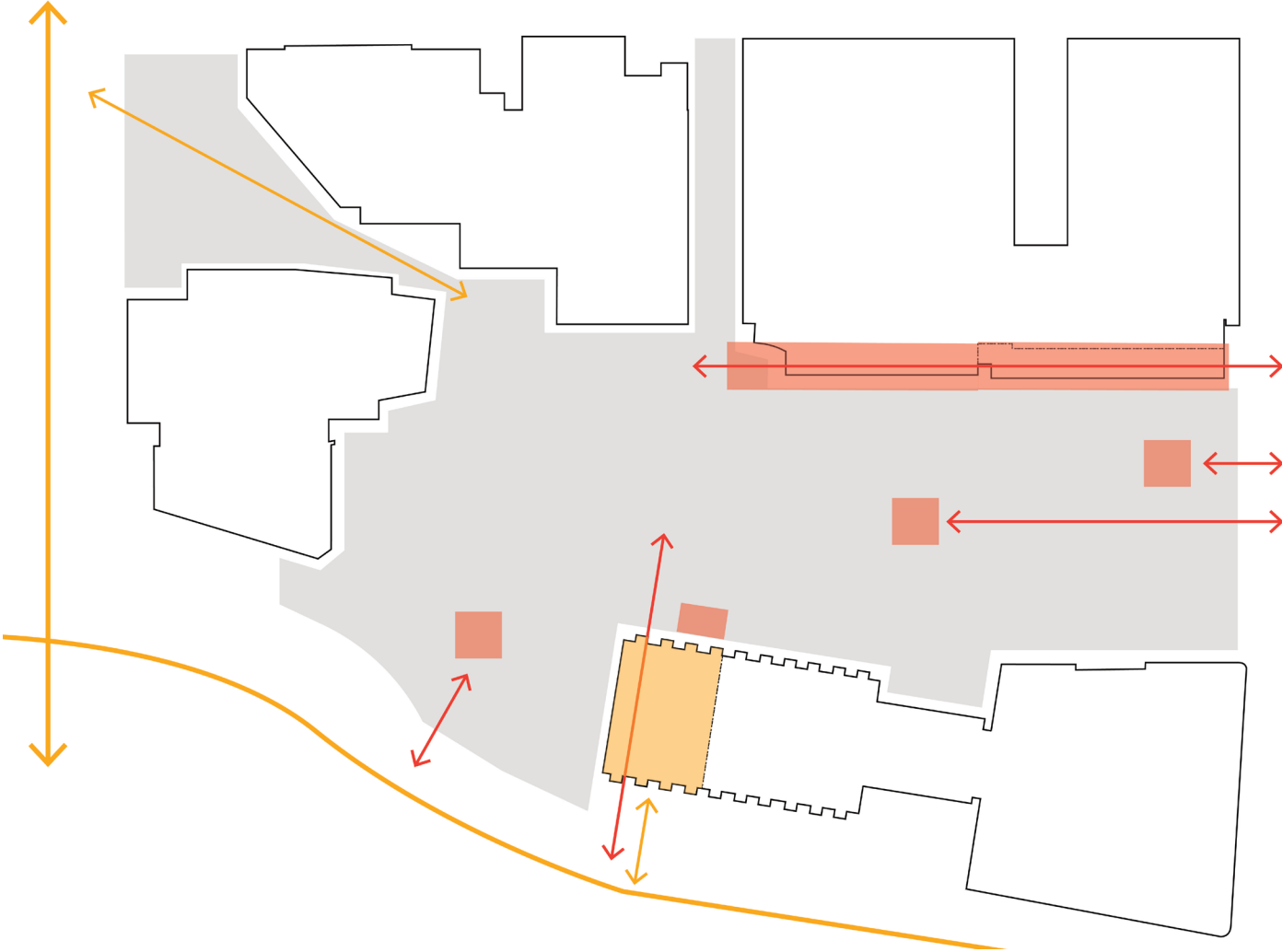
The monoliths can also be separated with one announcing an arrival from each major gateway direction.



Commercial Space + Bike Valet

A key part of activating the Square will be bringing a commercial energy to the space.

The team has looked at numerous configurations for the different commercial types and edges that might exist. The interim condition will retain the bike valet in it's current location to continue to facilitate connections. An adjacent commercial kiosk will also bring retail amenities into the park. Animating the arcade next to the parkade will anchor the Northern edge as well as help with CPTED concerns.



The Trees

The renewed Centennial Square should focus on a tree strategy for the next 50-100 years.

Many of the current trees bring a sense of character and scale to the site, however some block important sight lines, impact or damage existing infrastructure, or restrict gathering spaces. The team has looked at keeping some key specimens and introducing the next generation of trees for the future, species of appropriate scale that help the site adapt to a changing climate, reduce local heat island effects, and aid in stormwater management. In particular, the existing Sequoia and Sweetgum, planted over the old Cormorant Street paving, are causing damage to adjacent infrastructure and have a limited ability to thrive. Previous attempts to mitigate these impacts have been unsuccessful, and a new strategy better suited to the site conditions is needed, to provide growing conditions suitable for the future.



A Collaborative Process

The current process builds on Public Engagement completed as part of the Centennial Square Action Plan.

The revised concept is grounded in public and stakeholder feedback, particularly around the Action Plan process. Robust staff engagement and workshops were held, to distill a plan reflective of the needs and wants of the community.

Process statistics:

- 1500 responses from Pop Up Events and Online Survey
- 20 different stakeholder groups consulted
- 12 design ideas / solutions from an "Ideas Jam".



Experience

playful seating elements and art
 destination outdoor art gallery public art elements
 come when it's cold and rainy
 come to discover
 shady tree spots grab a bite eat and relax
 come for lunch
 come to see local art
 come to socialize
 winter markets light displays digital art covered areas
 community block party community gatherings
 markets unique events
 come for local events and food

URBAN OASIS
ACTIVE YEAR ROUND
CIVIC HEART
CELEBRATION
URBAN PLAY
DESTINATION

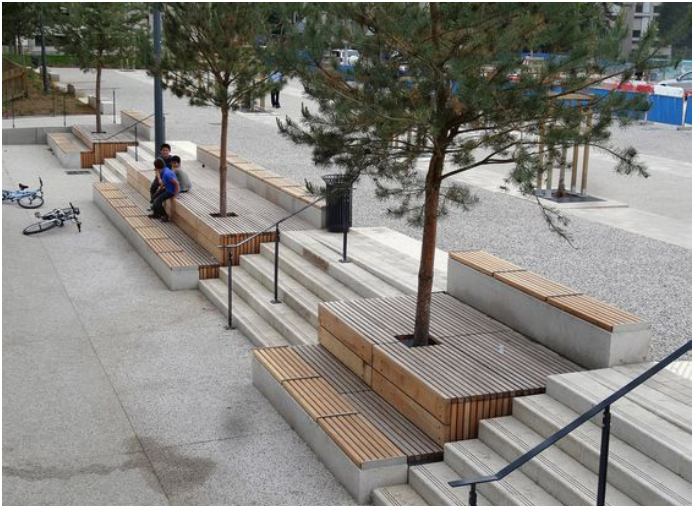
Centennial Square



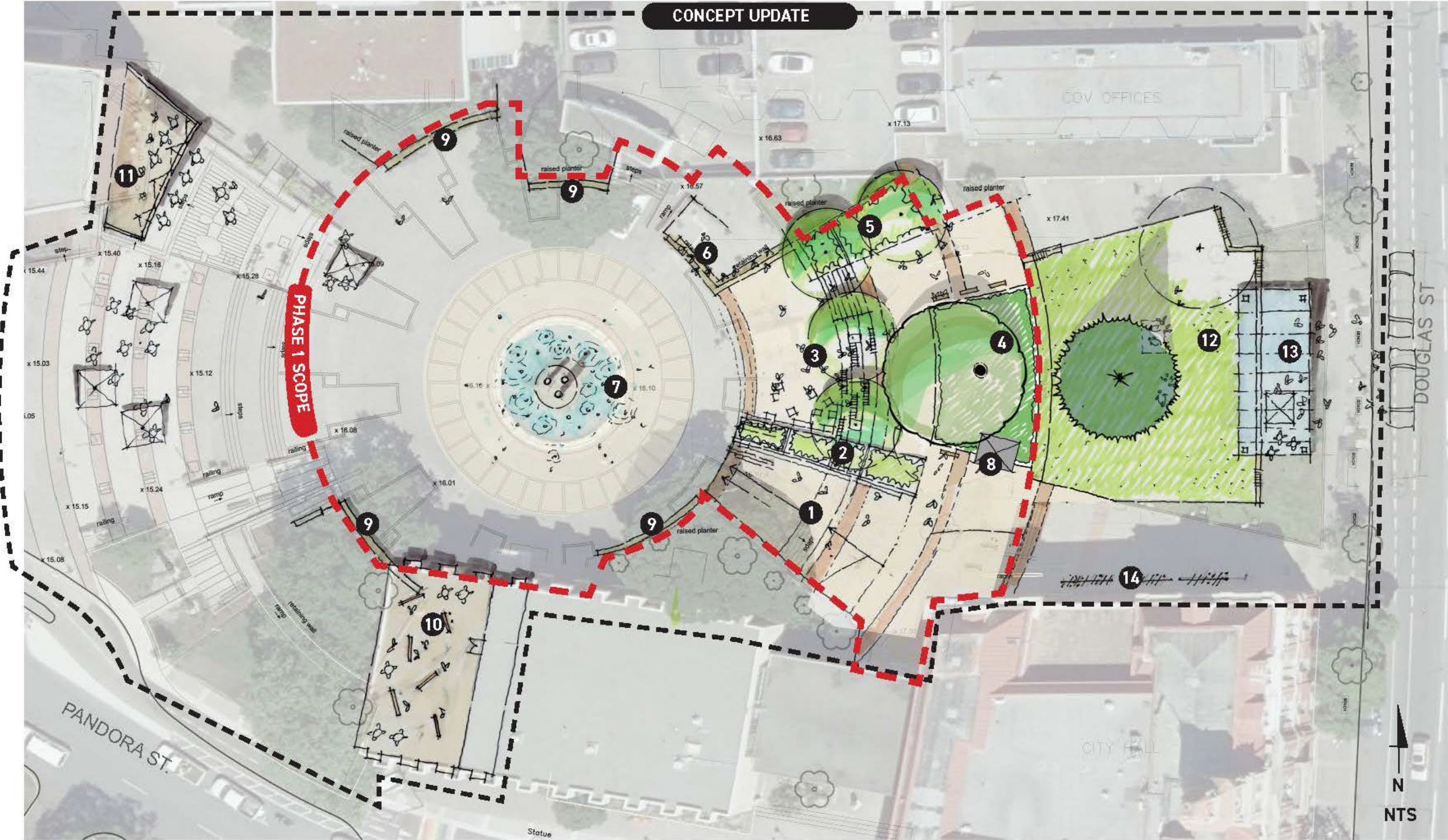
The Original Concept

The original Centennial Square Action Plan presented a vision for the Square in 2018 balancing a number of elements.

Through a variety of original site analysis, community workshops, design events, and internal working groups a vision was presented that sought to introduce a more active central feature while also providing updates to accessible paths of travel.



The Original Concept



PHASE 1

- 1. Accessible ramp
- 2. Planter / Water feature
- 3. Rest and shade area with seating terraces, new shade trees and play space and features

- 4. Planter and understory plantings around existing large canopy tree
- 5. Additional lawn area with new shade trees
- 6. Seating steps at opened platform

- 7. Splash park with in-ground spray features around existing monoliths
- 8. Commercial unit/ kiosk
- 9. Improved seating at perimeter

FUTURE PHASES

- 10. Indoor multipurpose space
- 11. Enclosed commercial space
- 12. Improved lawn area
- 13. Transit hub with large canopy structure
- 14. Bike parking

Three Concept Options

Three concepts were developed, to explore the recommended open space program for the Square.

Each concept built on the outcomes of the site analysis and staff feedback on operations and programming, to test potential design ideas and spatial configurations. Trialing each ultimately led the team to a new concept premised on the big moves developed here: improving accessibility, opening the space up for more better and family friendly programming, and upgrading infrastructure to include a more climate friendly water feature and efficient mechanical systems.



The Urban Forest

Conjoining the spaces and giving a new central identity is a central, iconic commercial element paired with a bosque that can have echoes throughout the site and can pull people into the Square from Pandora and Douglas.



The Square

This scheme focuses on taking the original concept and tweaking it, adding in some elements that have become necessary since the work in 2019. A central water feature still grounds the entire space - a true square! - with entries from the East and West that reflect a Civic gateway as well as an Indigenous focused Spirit Square.



The Urban Plaza

Where before there were multiple spaces that made up Centennial Square, this scheme prioritizes making two larger ones that speak of mixing the modern with the past. Commercial space can be located in the undercroft zone.

Urban Design Narrative

Originally conceptualized as a catalyst for civic renewal in the 1960s, Centennial Square and its modernist elements, including the bespoke fountain and artistic monoliths, no longer best serve the contemporary needs of Victoria. In 2017, the Downtown Public Realm Plan outlined a vision for renewal, improving activation, addressing safety and accessibility concerns, weaving in elements of play and whimsy, and ultimately replacing end of life infrastructure to optimize city maintenance and operations.

The Centennial Square Improvement Project began its journey with a clear mandate and a concept that built upon work completed as part of the Downtown Public Realm Plan. The initial concept, which was developed prior to the pandemic, imagined a new interactive water feature at the core of the square, flanked by ample seating, trees, and planted areas, including a grassy lawn. It proposed a space that could support and host diverse programming, from night or farmers markets to concerts to civic festivals and other events, improving sight lines to and through the site and anchored by a commercial kiosk. However, the impact of the pandemic and a growth in population within the downtown core has placed additional pressures on Centennial Square in terms of concerns over safety, accessibility, and inclusion, as well as the influx of young families and a renewed interest in the downtown core.



In addition, the modernist fountain, encircling the three monoliths adorned with Italian glass mosaic, has been an important driver of both the original concept response and urban design ethos as well as the new Centennial Square. The monoliths represent an important aspect of the history of Victoria and its relationship with its neighbours, the three surrounding municipalities of Oak Bay, Esquimalt, and Saanich. However, the fountain's aspect, orientation, and location have become problematic when looked at through the lens of a contemporary and vibrant public space, the need for flexible and supportive spaces for programming, and the importance of a safe and connected site, and the project process has sought to balance out the influence of the past with the needs of the future.



The Big Idea

In collaboration with the Project Team, the “big idea” for Centennial Square revolves around the notion of home, a space for the community to come together. The concept seeks to create three distinct “rooms”, each serving a unique purpose while seamlessly blending into one cohesive space and leveraging plants and materials that reflect and showcase the context of the Victoria landscape.

The first room, the front porch, has a prominent location on Douglas Street. This is the most formal space, the front of house that welcomes visitors graciously, and sets the tone for the experiences and opportunities within. The Douglas Street Plaza is the gateway to the Square, a formal yet inviting space – one that exudes a sense of civic importance and responds to the proximity of the historic City Hall. Accessibility has been improved by the elimination of stairs, and ramps now transition down the slope in intuitive and natural manner, connecting to the north entrance of City Hall and the Parkade.

The Heart is the living room of Centennial Square, a flexible and fun space that transitions both in formality and elevation. This is the centre of activity and energy, at times both a relaxed and playful space where users can unwind, socialize, and connect with each other. Designed with flexibility and play in mind, the openness of the Plaza invites visitors to stop and linger and supports a wide range of diverse programming opportunities for festivals and events.

Moving west, towards Chinatown, the Green expands the already successful Spirit Square into a verdant oasis, the backyard of the Square. This lush, green zone contrasts some of the more structured spaces within the Square, inviting the community in to kick off their shoes and relax on the lawn. These moves are complimented by activated edges that encourage interaction, foster connection, and increase activity both around and into the Square.



exciting, comfortable,
welcoming, friendly, cozy,
familiar, destination

**BACK
YARD**

**HOME
(HEART)**

**FRONT
YARD**

gateway, formal, green,
urban, welcoming

passive recreation, relaxing,
cozy, welcoming

Douglas Street Civic Plaza

The Douglas Street Civic Plaza stands as a testament to the City's civic pride and heritage, respecting the past while looking forward into the future. This prominent space anchors Centennial Square to the east, designed with a symmetry that acknowledges the relationship of the site to the historic City Hall as well as the urban grid of the former Cormorant Street. Within the Civic Plaza sit the relocated monoliths, thoughtfully sited to honour the artwork's historic significance and elevate civic presence along Douglas Street while also weaving the historic narrative of the city's past into the future of the Square. A bosque of trees opens sight lines to and through the Square, adding a valuable leafy green canopy to the City's urban forest without impeding light and views. The bosque creates a lush, biophilic backdrop, framing the relocated monoliths, and increasing resiliency for a changing climate, with future forward plant species selection, and the integration of soil cells and other low impact development / stormwater management features. Material selection and plaza layout have been carefully considered within the lens of designing a space that meets the needs of the community today and for future generations as well.



The Heart

The centre of the new design is The Heart, a playful focal point where the chatter of community gathering, joyous cries of delight, and the occasional splashes of water bring joy and whimsy to downtown. From the east, an elevated platform casts a watchful eye over the fountain, offering a place to sit and enjoy a coffee in the sunshine on movable tables and chairs, host buskers or street performers during the farmers market, or from which a noon-time Zumba class may be taught, and housing the modern and updated mechanical infrastructure below. Stone steps and planting traverse the grade change, spilling down to a seasonal shallow pool where toes can be dipped or water can be played in, inviting the young, and young at heart, to sit and linger. The stone, planting, and water feature is inspired by the coastal landscapes of Victoria, hearkening back to the slopes of Beacon Hill Park, and strongly connecting the Square to its sense of place in the surrounding landscapes. Heading west a flexible plaza space, with an interactive fountain, offers endless opportunities for both gathering and play. When turned on, jets of water with integrated lighting and sound and energy to the Square, inviting visitors to stop, engage with neighbours, and play. When the fountain is off, the plaza becomes a foil for celebration and gathering, hosting a holiday market, a weeknight performance, or a full-scale civic festival, or even a simple splash in the rain. Integrated seating is built into the edges of this central space, allowing people to sit and linger with a coffee purchased from the commercial kiosk or even enjoy an outdoor workday meeting with colleagues. Safety concerns are mitigated through enhanced sight lines, fostering connectivity and functionality across the Square. New and distinctive lighting will contribute to this inviting new heart.

The Green

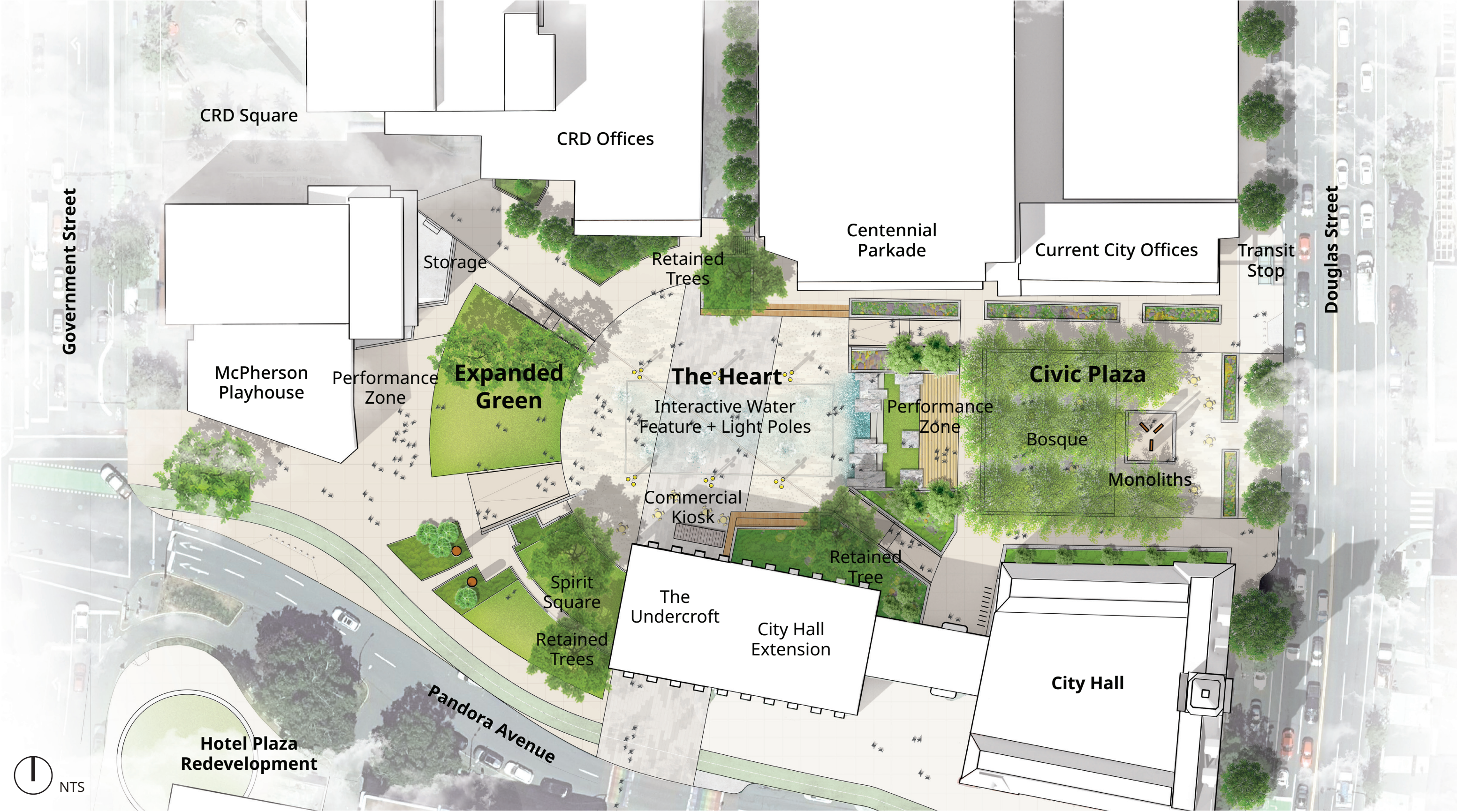
The west edge of the Square is its "backyard", the place to bask in the sunshine or spread a blanket on the lawn to take in a movie displayed on the facade of the McPherson Theatre. The transition of this space from hardscape to softscape invites additional greenery into downtown, expanding the green of Spirit Square and encouraging infiltration of stormwater and mitigating the impacts of the urban heat island. New trees in this space contribute to the City's urban forest, and create a soft, welcoming edge without blocking views into the plaza.

Active Edges

The new design seeks to intentionally activate the edges, enhancing the vibrancy and encouraging positive use of the space. Sight lines have been opened, reducing the perception of places to hide, and the addition of seating encourages activation and lingering. The long-term future of the Centennial Parkade is unknown, but a parking structure is not likely the highest and best use of the site, and the concept design responds to this anticipated future change in a way that seeks to maximize flexibility for the future without compromising the activation of the edge condition in the present. Clear pedestrian paths of travel connect Douglas Street through to Pandora and Government Street, encouraging foot traffic to traverse through rather than around the Square. Opportunities to further enhance the architecture of the arcade, such as improved lighting, colour and material selection and the transparency and activity of at grade uses are also tools that will help to energize these important edges.



The Updated Concept Plan





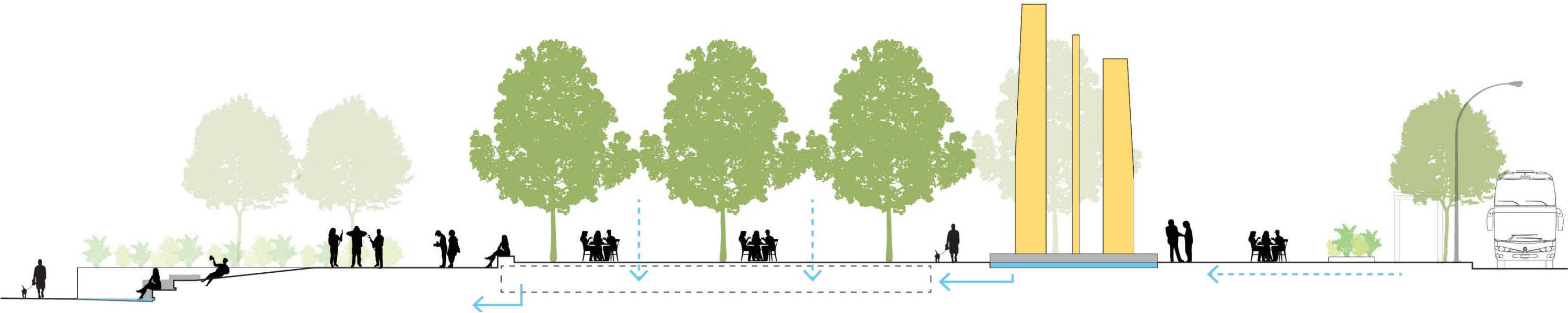
View of Douglas Street Plaza from the northeast looking south.

Douglas Street Plaza

A Civic Story

The Douglas Street Plaza is the gateway to the Square, a new front porch for Downtown Victoria. The centre of the Plaza is anchored by the relocated monoliths, honouring their significance to the story of the Victoria with this prominent location only footsteps from City Hall. New trees, planted in a traditional bosque formation, is a striking and lush backdrop that frames the public walkway to and through the Square, opening up sight lines while maintaining an essence of civic formality. Seating under the dappled shade of the trees can be replaced with tents for a Holiday or Farmers Market, and a new planter provides a gentle separation from the bustling energy of the Douglas Street transit corridor.

The front will be a broad space where food trucks or other commercial elements can find temporary homes. Further in will be the retained monuments - sitting in a skim of water - and past them will be a bosque where the trees are able to grow large due to soil cells beneath. Water can be used as a theme through highlighting stormwater at grade and then capturing it for use in the soil cells.





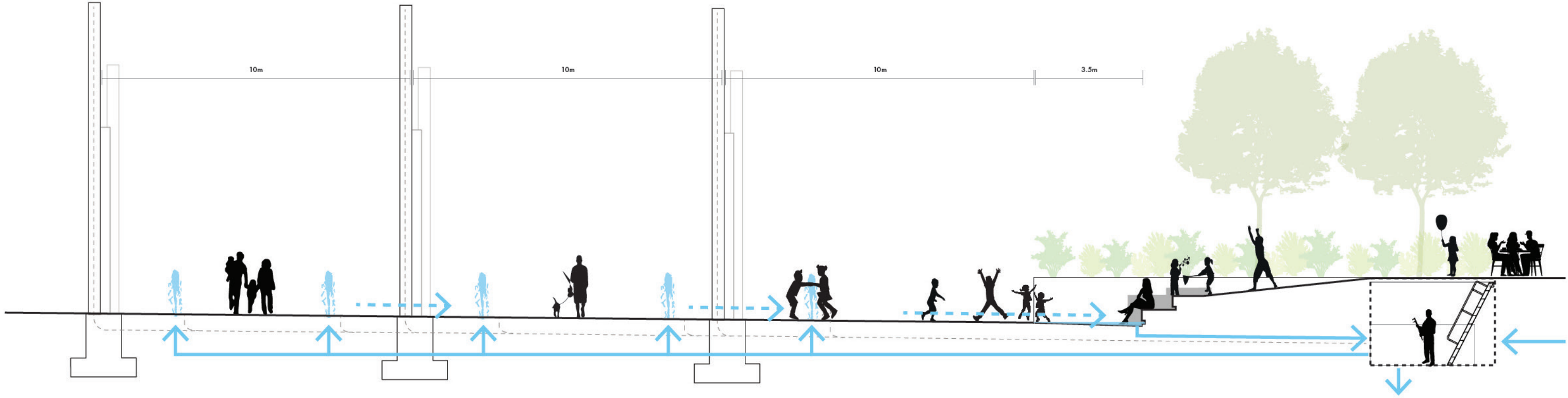
View of The Heart from the northwest looking south towards City Hall.

IF THAT YEAR, A FEW WEALTHY SAN FRANCISCO MERCHANTS REBUILT THE CITY

The Heart - A Playful Experience

A Fun and Flexible Zone

The water feature will be a series of flush spray heads that can animate the plaza. The fountains will be on programmable circuits that also feature lights that can change colour. Water will then run off - as well as pool due to help from smaller bubblers - at a small seating node. The design will allow for turning off the larger fountain zone to host events while pooling can still occur at the seating. The system will be recirculating water, and supported by a buried (but not confined space) mechanical room above the upper wood deck performance zone.





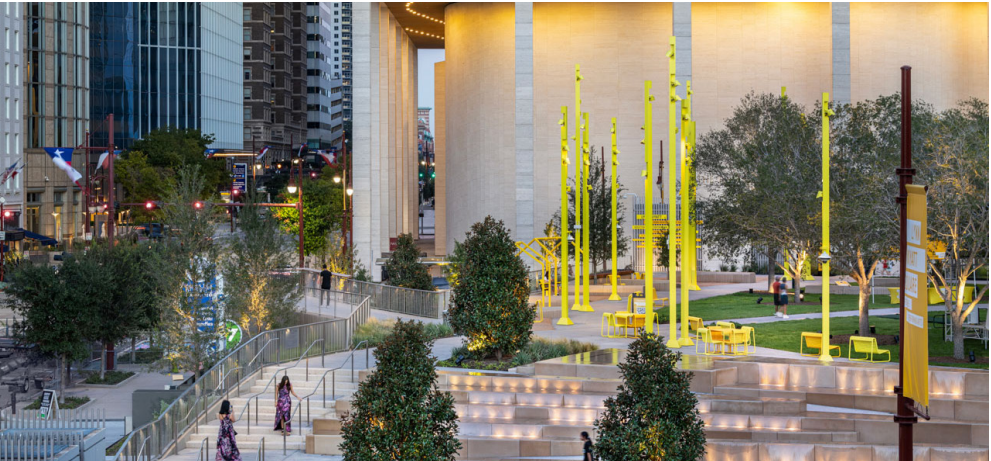
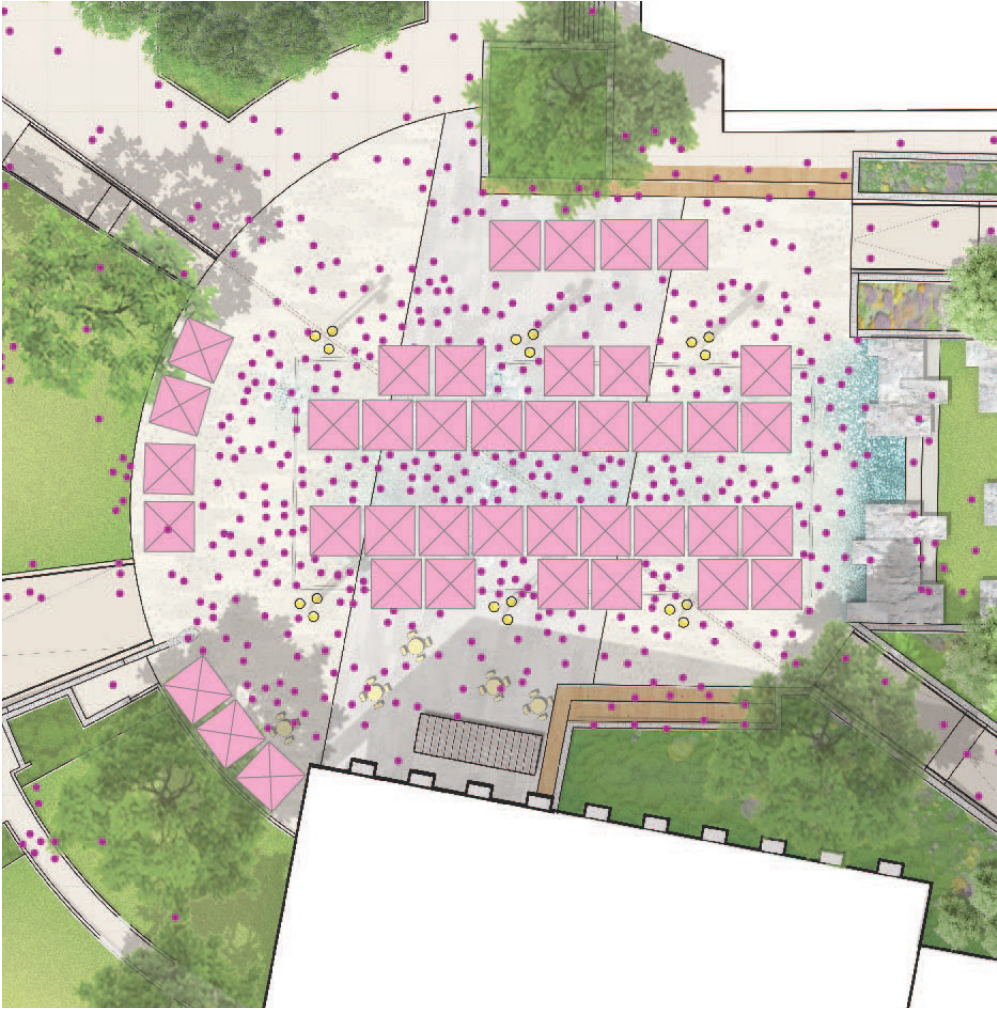
Aerial View of The Heart during a fall market, looking east.

Light Poles + Events

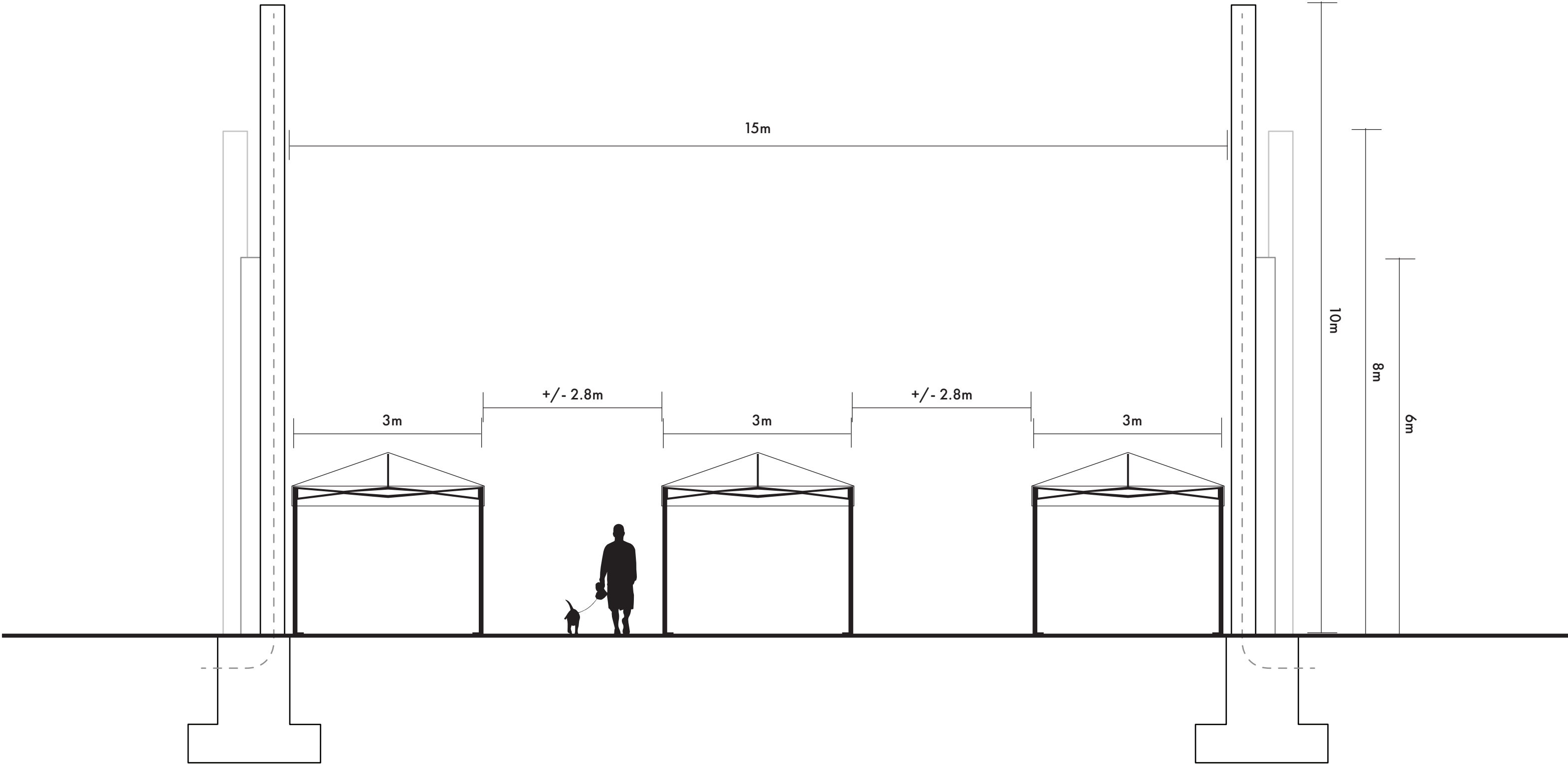
Framing the Square

The central portion of the Square is where major events will occur and the majority of day-to-day gathering will be centered. To frame this space is proposed a series of light poles that provide not just illumination, but also an opportunity to host art or other elements. The cluster of three poles reflects the height and organization of the monoliths, a contemporary and functional reference to the site's heritage. The poles also provide an opportunity for the provision of shade sails to enhance comfort and allow for flexible year-round use of the space.

Placing these poles to allow for events has been an important consideration, and the diagrams below and on the next page show spatial considerations to make sure they don't preclude any gatherings or event setup.



Light Poles + Events

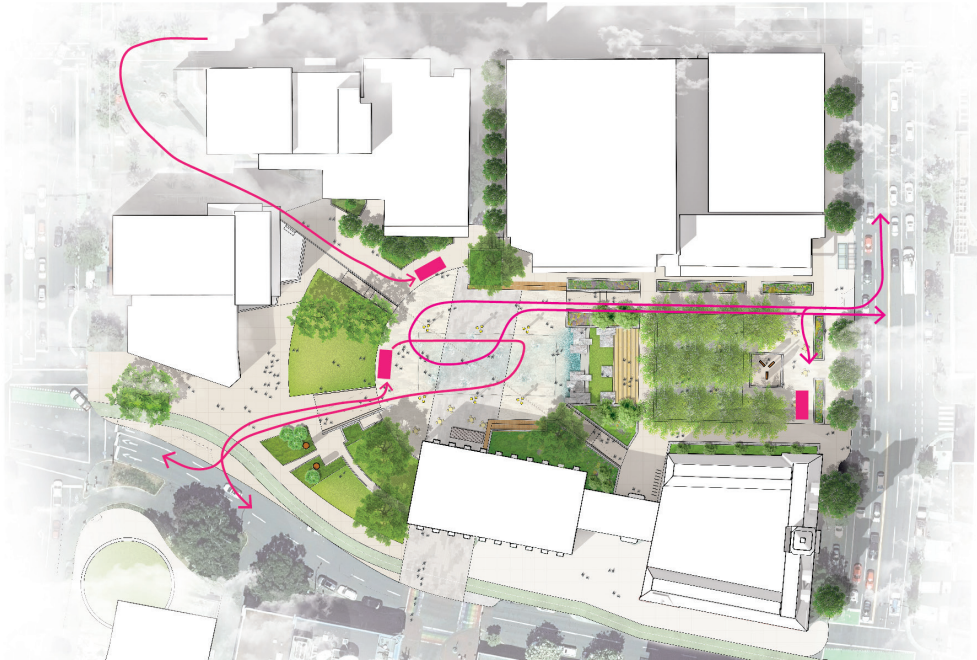


Programming and Performance Opportunities

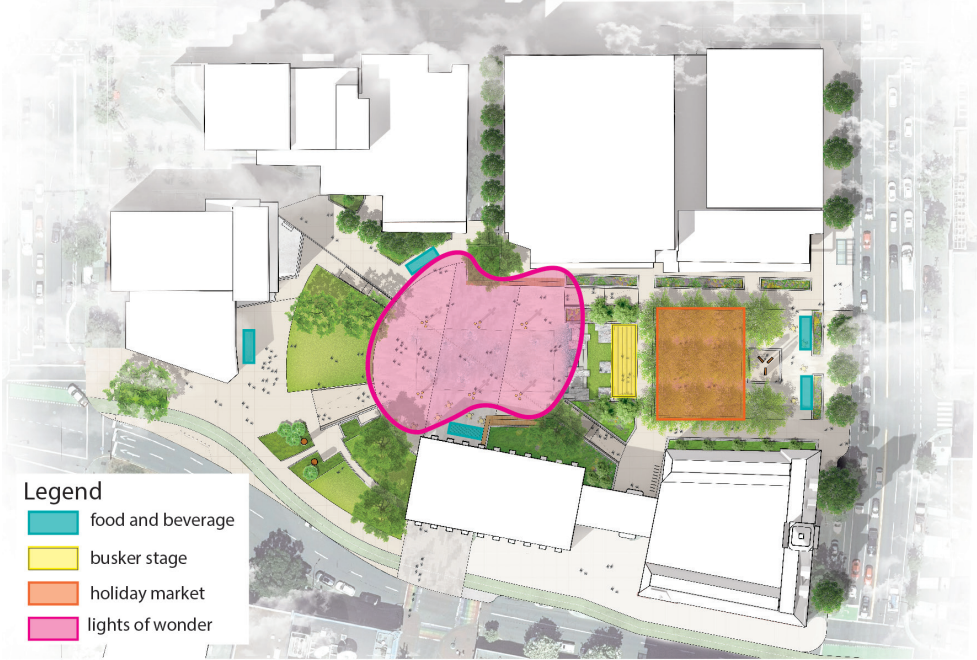
A flexible space for a variety of different events and gatherings.

The proposed concept has been tested against a series of possible events of varying sizes. The team has considered how holiday festivals, such as lights of wonder might work, as well as larger performance events. A potential market setup is also illustrated, along with possible loading options and access scenarios.

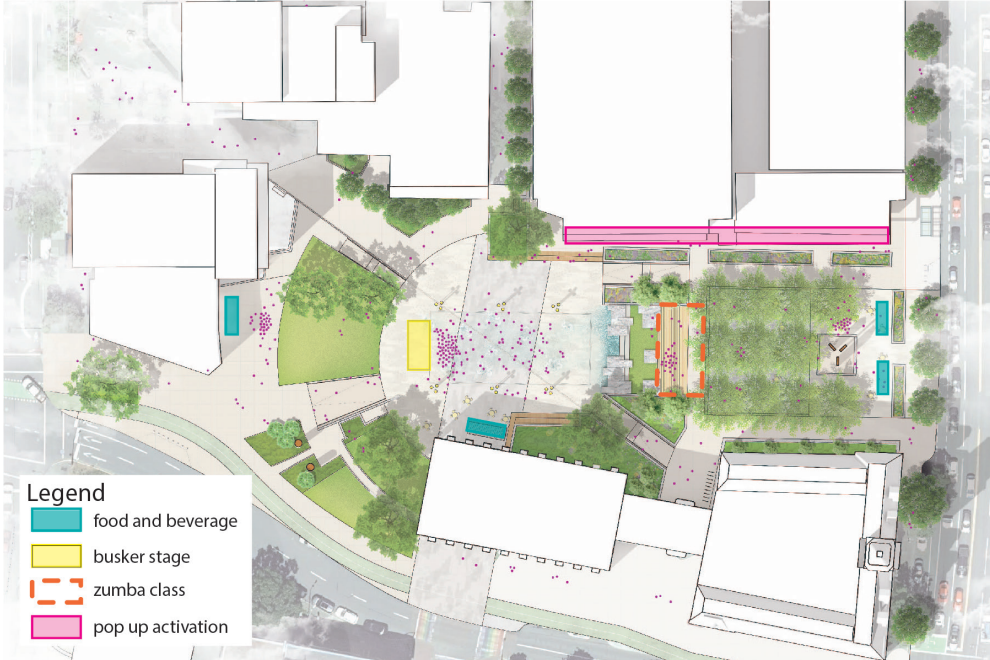
Loading + Access



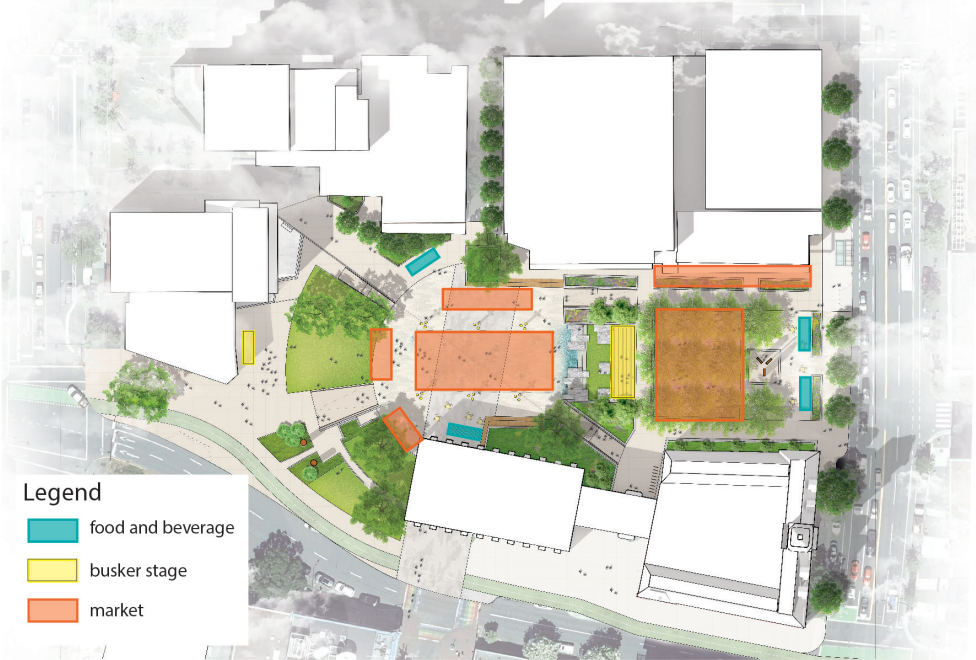
Holiday Events



Small Scale Programming

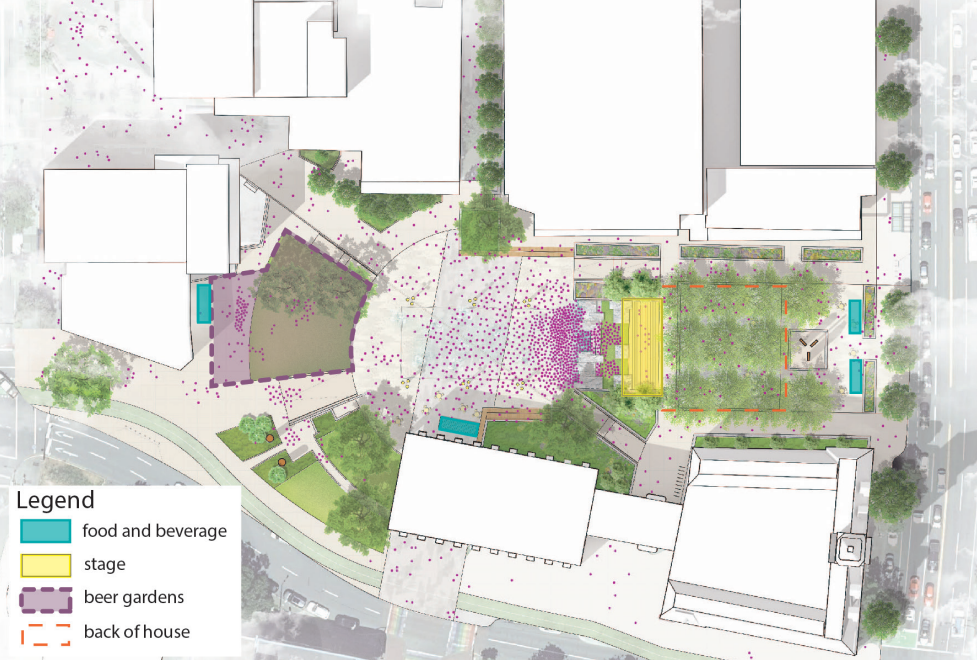


Market Day



Estimated Tent / Stall Capacity: 65-70

Large Performance

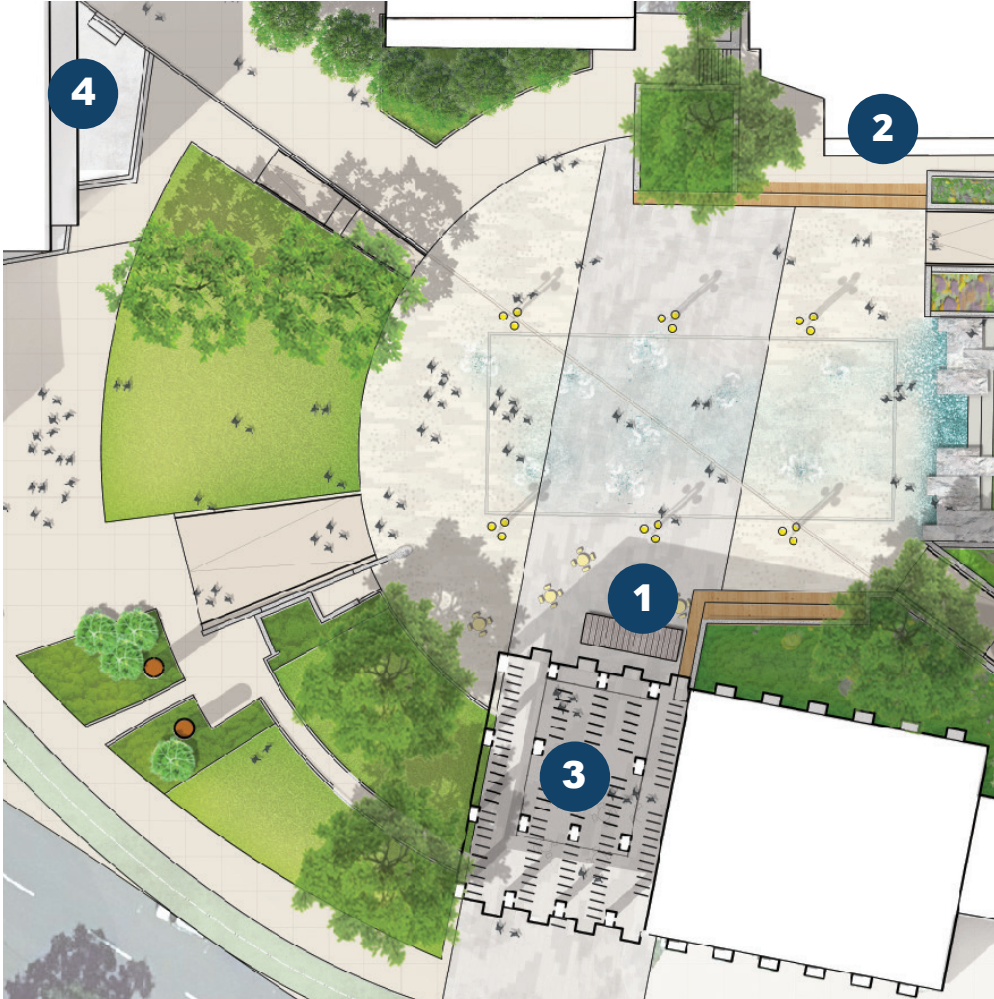


Estimated Large Event Audience Capacity: 4000 - 5000 people

Undercroft, Arcade, and Existing Stage

Supporting the Square

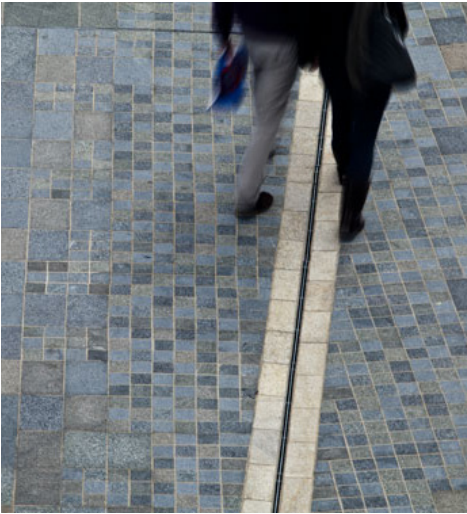
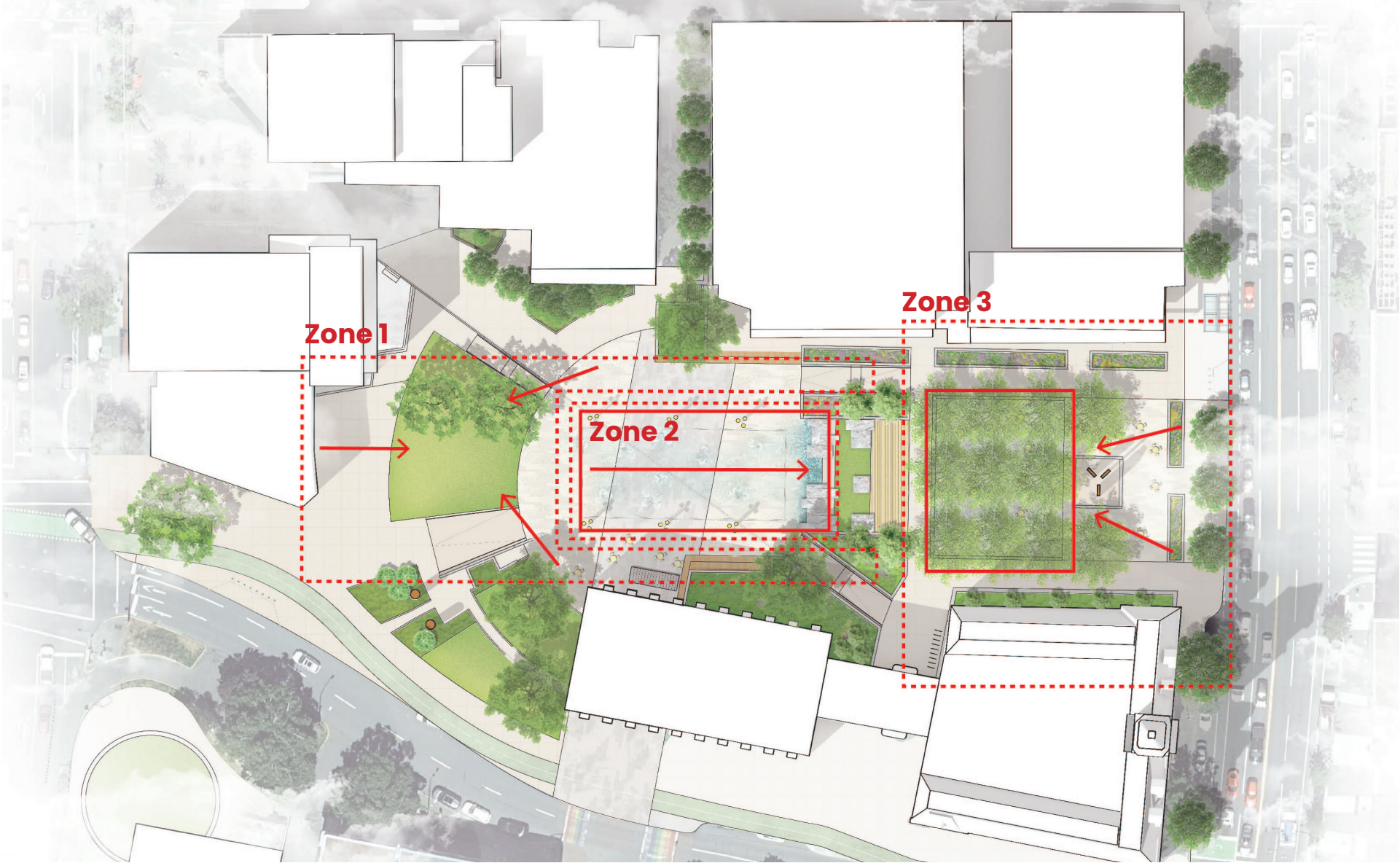
The functioning of the Square will be enhanced by a number of supporting uses and edge improvements. The undercroft will continue to house the successful bike valet with improved fencing and connections to the Square. A year-round commercial kiosk with incorporated small storage and changeroom facilities will be located adjacent to the Undercroft and have a character similar to the modified shipping containers or trailers shown in the images at right. Interior modifications will be made at the covered arcade on the north side of the site to allow temporary window art exhibits that will create interest and help animate the area. The existing stage will be modified to create enclosed, secure storage for equipment and furnishings that will support special events and daily activations.



Stormwater Strategy + Climate Resiliency

Celebrating and Reusing Water

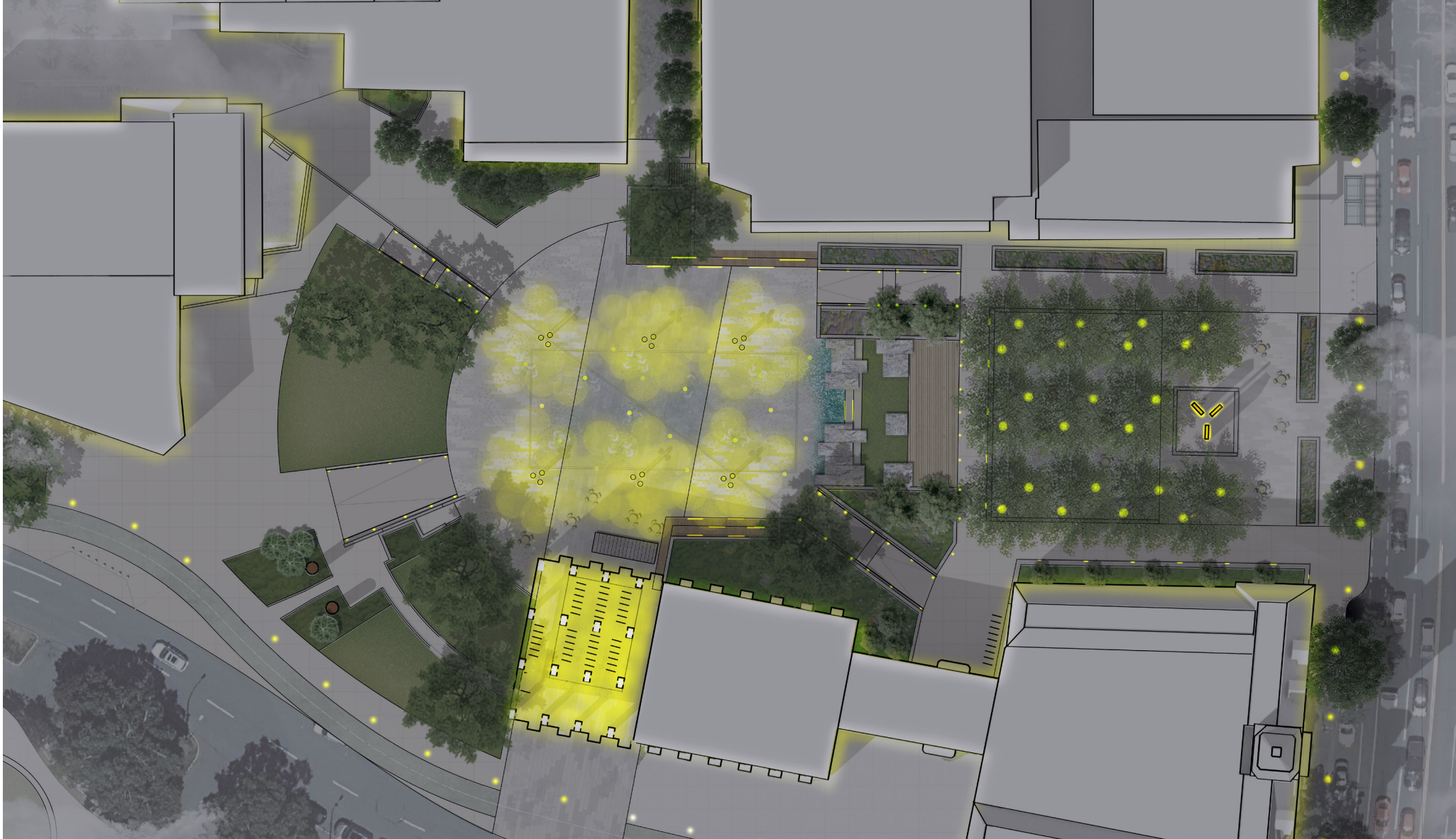
The revitalization of Centennial Square offers the opportunity to address the needs of a changing climate. The addition of new trees in the Douglas Street Civic Plaza, in soil cells, offers improved growing conditions, stormwater management, and certainty about the impacts of tree roots on below grade infrastructure. Stormwater in this plaza will be directed this soil cell gallery beneath the bosque to support the growth and vitality of large canopy trees. In the central Square, water will be captured through a series of clean, architectural drains, and the water feature is an amenity that helps in situations of extreme heat, providing cooling potential during hot days, with the ability to be turned off during periods of drought. Water in the rest of the site will be directed to planted zones where possible, and the expanded amount of green space helps to mitigate the impacts of the urban heat island effect.



Lighting Strategy

Vibrant and Colourful

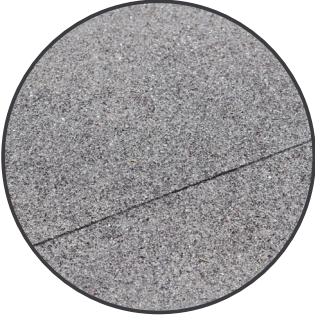
The site lighting strategy will centre on the feature light poles in the central area. These will be major elements capable of not just being illuminated, but mounted with lighting to spotlight elements during events and performances. The bosque will be lit for nighttime comfort and as a central element. A variety of supporting lighting will also be provided in the form of under-lights at walls and benches, colourful inset lights at stairs, and pedestrian pole lights as required.



Materiality

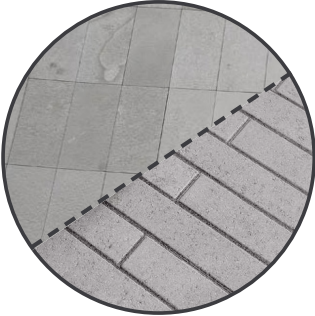
Materials to Reflect Context

Taking cues from the surrounding woods, rock, and habitats of Vancouver island a contemporary materials palette is shown.



1 CONCRETE / EXPOSED AGGREGATE

2 CRUSHED GRANULAR



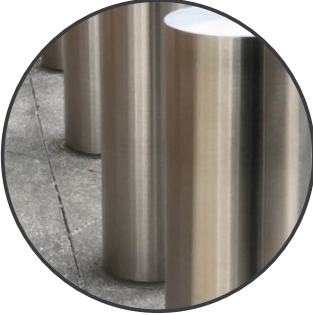
3 STONE + CONCRETE UNIT PAVERS

4 ARCHITECTURAL STONE ELEMENTS



5 BRICK IN SELECT ZONES

6 INSET STORY ELEMENTS



7 WOOD FURNISHING ELEMENTS

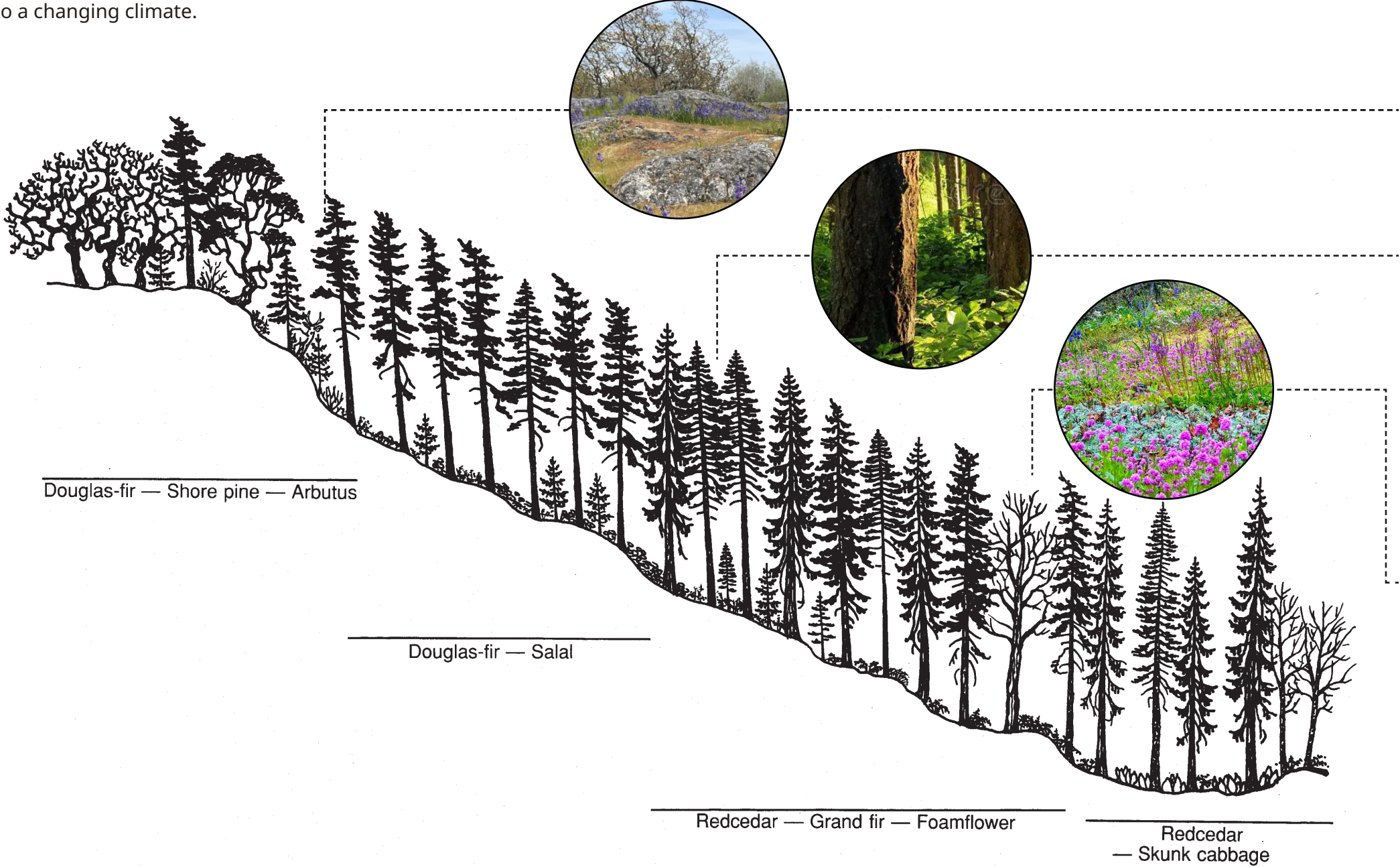
8 METAL SITE ELEMENTS



Planting

Bringing the Natural In

Victoria occupies one of Canada's most unique biogeoclimatic zones. Shown on a transect, upper Garry Oak escarpments give way to more lush midlands down through to lowlands full of colour and blooms. We propose adapting these themes to an urban setting with a plant palette that seeks to enhance the City's urban forest and is adapted to a changing climate.



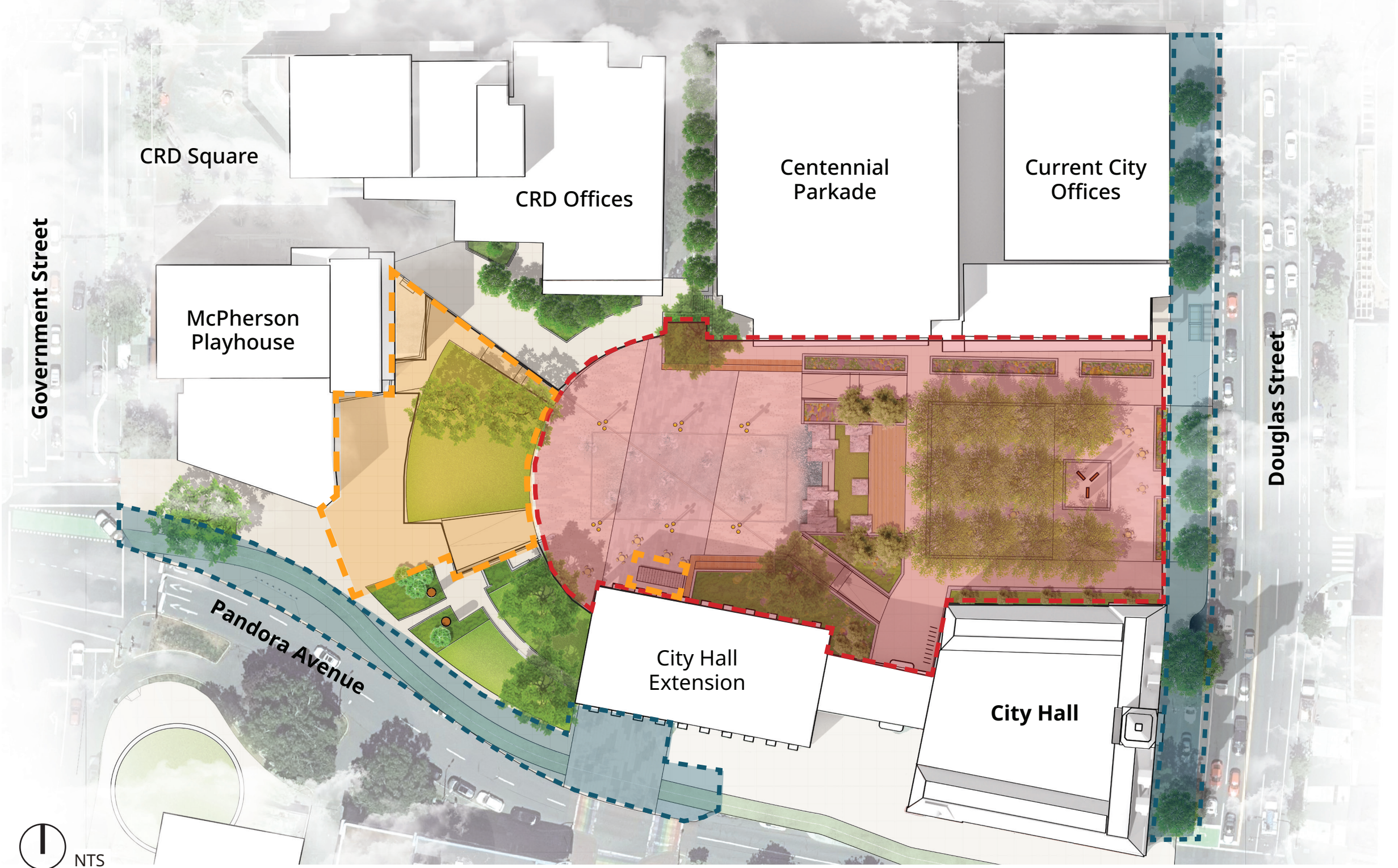
Moving Forward: Implementation




The concept for the revitalization of Centennial Square is comprised of a core scope of work that will be implemented in two phases. The core scope of work includes the relocation of the monoliths, the development of a new interactive water and play feature, the addition of the bosque of trees, and associated site improvements including decorative paving, site furnishings, planting, lighting, and associated site infrastructure. Hardscape improvements on the south side of the MacPherson Theatre and improvements to the pedestrian connections to CRD Square and Fisgard Street are not included.

Two additional scopes of work have been identified, outside of the core project, that will be completed through future transportation improvement capital projects. The phasing diagram on the next page identifies these areas on the plan. Streetscape improvements along Douglas and Pandora Streets are not required to fulfill the vision for Centennial Square and were not included in the class 'C' cost estimate completed as part of the project but are synergistic in nature and supportive of the project and the ongoing investment in Downtown Victoria.

The upcoming Douglas Street Rapid Transit Improvement project will establish an improved transit stop at the entrance to the civic plaza and will serve as a destination for RapidBus services, which aims to double ridership by 2030. This plan makes Centennial Square a key transit destination, complementing the Government Street Refresh pedestrianization efforts and strengthening connections to Chinatown. The transit stop improvements provide a key destination for pedestrians and cyclists, given the Square's central location at the heart of Downtown's commercial and tourist areas. These upgrades will enhance general transit and mobility through the Square, increasing its vibrancy and activity. Streetscape improvements envisioned at the Pandora St frontage that would better connect the existing AAA bike route to the Square may be considered for inclusion in future transportation capital projects.

Phasing Strategy



-  PHASE ONE / CORE PROJECT
-  PHASE TWO / CORE PROJECT
-  FUTURE STREETScape UPGRADES



