

Dwight P. Mitchell City Center Park Site PlacePlan Benton Harbor, MI August 18, 2015



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Presentation Outline

- ❖ Project Purpose
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- ❖ PlacePlan Process
- ❖ Design Overview
- ❖ Next Steps



Source: michigan.org

Project Purpose



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■ Selection:

Benton Harbor was one of 4 communities selected to receive PlacePlan assistance from Michigan State University and the Michigan Municipal League under the MIPlace Partnership created by Governor Snyder.

■ Purpose:

The PlacePlan initiative aims to assist communities in Michigan to plan for projects that will impact the Quality of Place where they are conducted.



Source: miplace.org

Acknowledgements



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This project was made possible by a grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and local partners.



Technical assistance and plan development was provided by the Michigan State University School of Planning, Design and Construction and the Michigan Municipal League.



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Placemaking Overview



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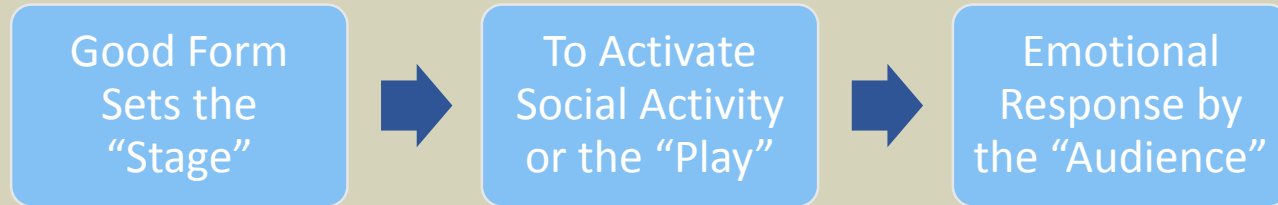
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What is Placemaking?

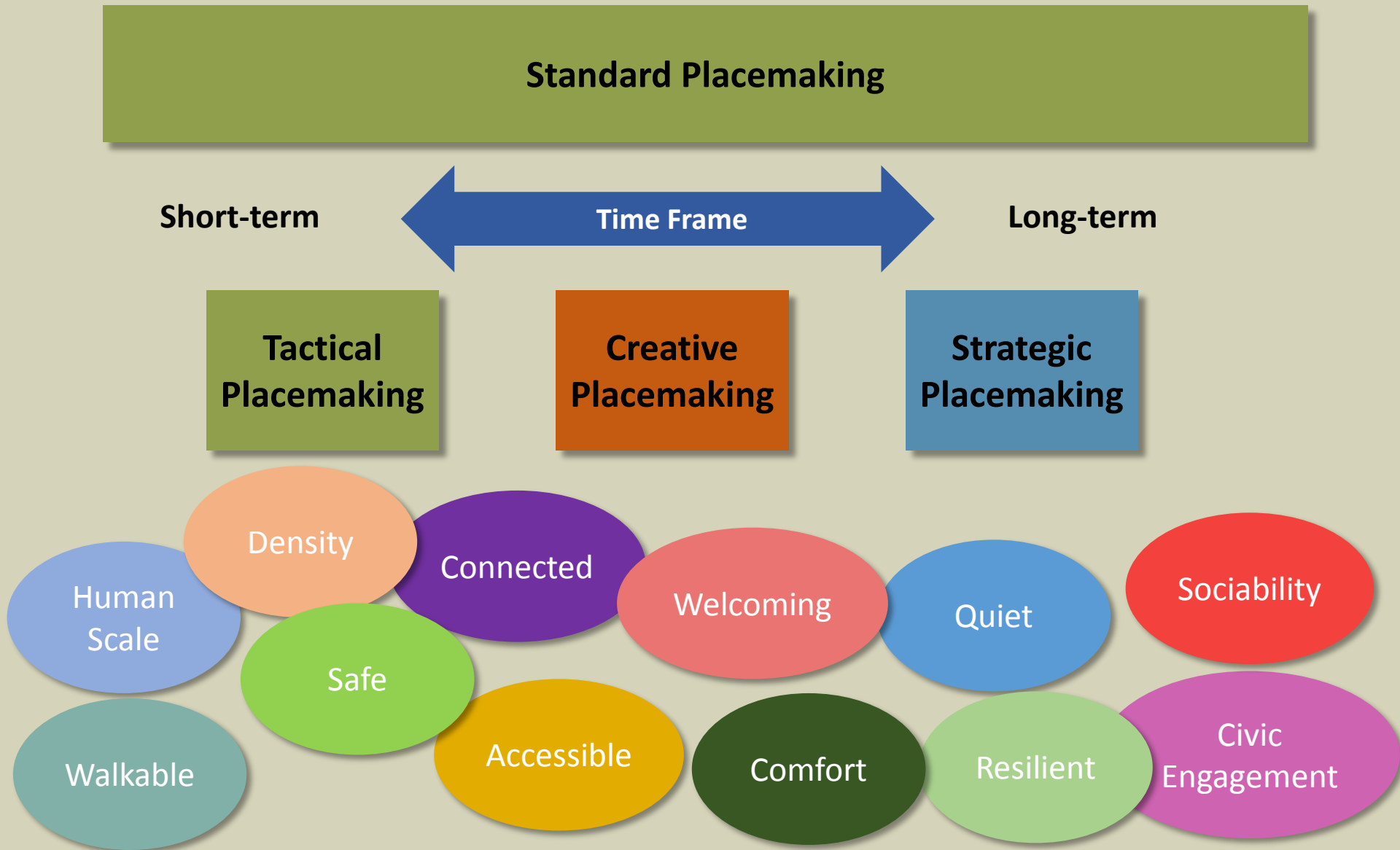


Source: michiganopera.org



Source: www.nwitimes.com

Characteristics of Placemaking



PlacePlan Process



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Process



Source: Michigan Municipal League

-Stakeholder Interviews

-Community Visioning Session

- Design Workshop

- Preliminary Draft Review

-Final Report and Presentation

Next Steps:

-Funding

-Partnerships

-Implementation

- Increased Talent Attraction & Retention

- Prosperity

March – December 2015



Source: SPDC

Meeting One: Visioning Session

Proud

- Current events and activities that exist for the park (i.e. Coming Home Coming Together Concert)
- A diverse and engaged community
- The park's potential as a centrally located open space
- History of downtown Benton Harbor

Sorry

- Poor streetscape with interrupted connectivity
- Lacks permanent amenities and resources (i.e., bathrooms, shade, seating, etc.)
- Underutilized
- Lacking aesthetic beauty

Vision

- Public art, sculptures, and statues that embrace BH culture and history
- Year-round programming and event promotion
- Amenities (bathrooms, lighting, fountains)
- Low-maintenance green space

Held in March of 2015

Attendees were asked to consider what about Benton Harbor they:

- Are proud of
- Are sorry about
- Would like to see in the future

Reflect

Share

Listen

Discuss

Meeting Two: Design Workshop

In June of 2015, a design workshop was held to gauge resident and stakeholder opinions of two proposed design options.

The charrette consisted of the following segments:

- Introduction of design images, based on meeting one input
- Exchanging of thoughts and ideas about project
- Writing comments on sticky notes placed on images



Source: Michigan Municipal League



Source: Michigan Municipal League

Design Workshop Feedback

During the Design Workshop, feedback developed around the following key points:

- Year-round Multi-Use: A concern that is shared by many residents has focused on ensuring such structures are flexible to uses that do not have to occur only during warm weather and not confined to one purpose.
- Green space: While residents have indicated that they are in favor of having more trees in the park, they have also commented that any vegetation beyond that should be minimal.
- Arts, Culture, and History: Many view the park as a place in the community where Benton Harbor's rich arts, culture, and history can be showcased.



Source: Michigan Municipal League

Feedback => Planning and Design

Design Workshop feedback shaped planning recommendations and created these four planning themes:

- Enhance Multi-Use, Year Round Capacity of the Park
- Develop Partnerships between Resident and Business Organizations
- Incorporate Benton Harbor's Unique History as a Major Theme of the Park
- Preserve and Enhance Natural Features, e.g. trees, vegetation, etc.

In addition, this feedback shaped nineteen guiding points in design planning that formed the core of the images to be presented next.



Source: Michigan Municipal League

Design Recommendations



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Location

Located on Main Street directly across the street from City Hall, the Public Library, and several commercial buildings, Dwight P. Mitchell City Center Park forms the physical and symbolic center of the community and surrounds itself with a historic downtown that is rich with activity.



Source: Google Maps

Project Description

The project entails the preparation of a physical design plan and planning recommendations for the Dwight Pete Mitchell City Center Park site. The plan is designed to:

- Create a vibrant park in Downtown Benton Harbor.
- Enhance the functionality of this key park.
- Capitalize on adjacent improvements in the surrounding area.
- Make people the focus of the park.



Source: bentonharborcity.com



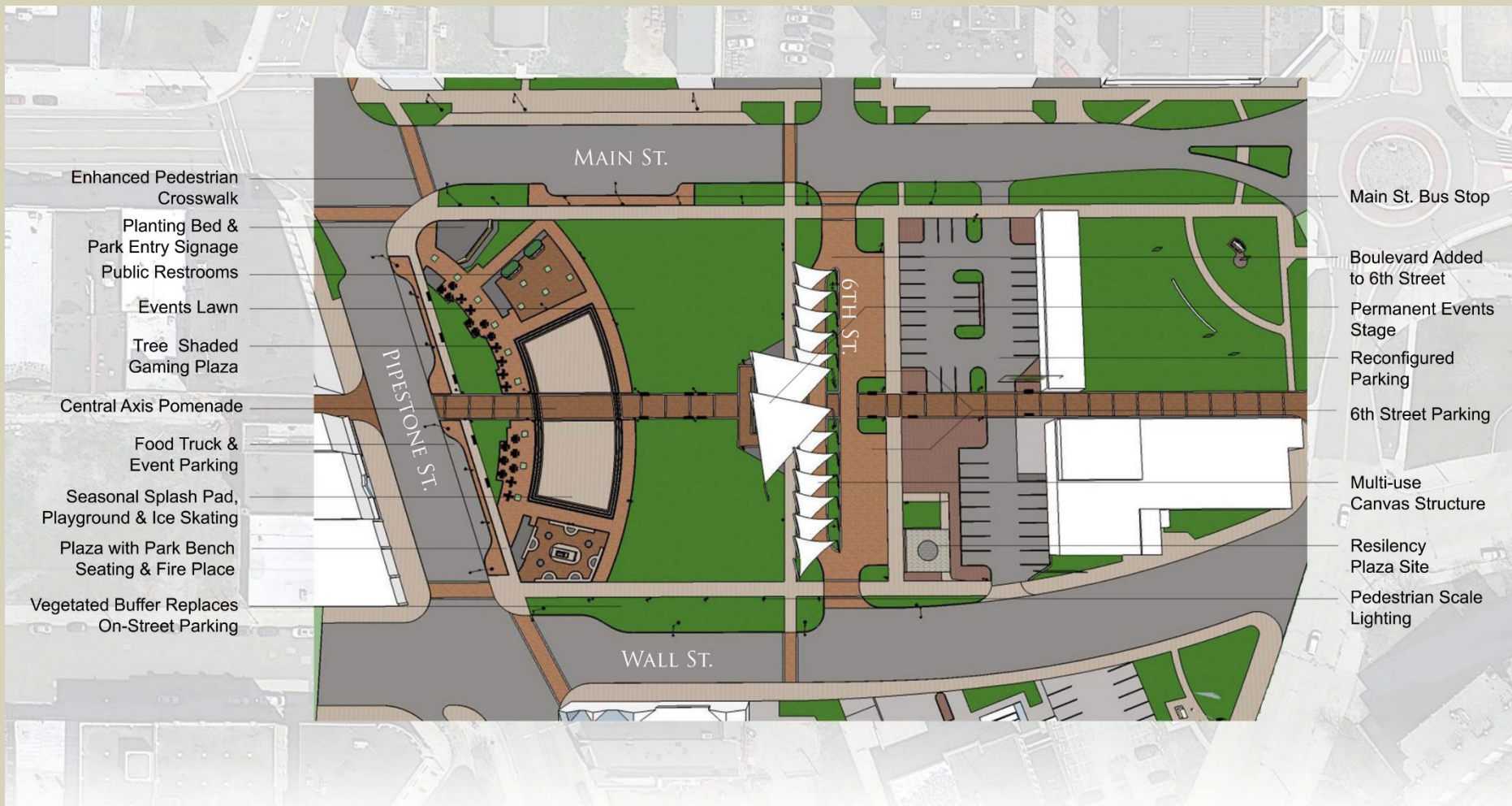
Source: Michigan Municipal League

Key Design Principles

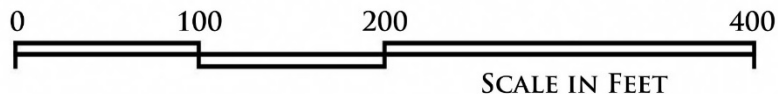
- ❖ Respect the scale of the park.
- ❖ Sustainable design practices.
- ❖ Connectivity to the surrounding area, especially the library and Arts District.
- ❖ Historical reflection.
- ❖ Setting for activities.
- ❖ Year round opportunities.
- ❖ Family oriented.
- ❖ Opportunities for all ages and abilities.
- ❖ Cohesive design.
- ❖ Public art.
- ❖ Multiple use facilities and areas.
- ❖ Beautification.
- ❖ Adjacent streetscape needs to be part of the design.
- ❖ Potential Farmer's Market location.
- ❖ Opportunity for community resurgence.
- ❖ Consider maintenance needs.
- ❖ Think security.
- ❖ Think green.
- ❖ Positive energy.
- ❖ Support facilities; ex. Restrooms.
- ❖ Consider expansion of the park area.
- ❖ Respect culture, diversity and inclusion.



Source: Michigan Municipal League



CITY PARK IMPROVEMENT PLAN BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN



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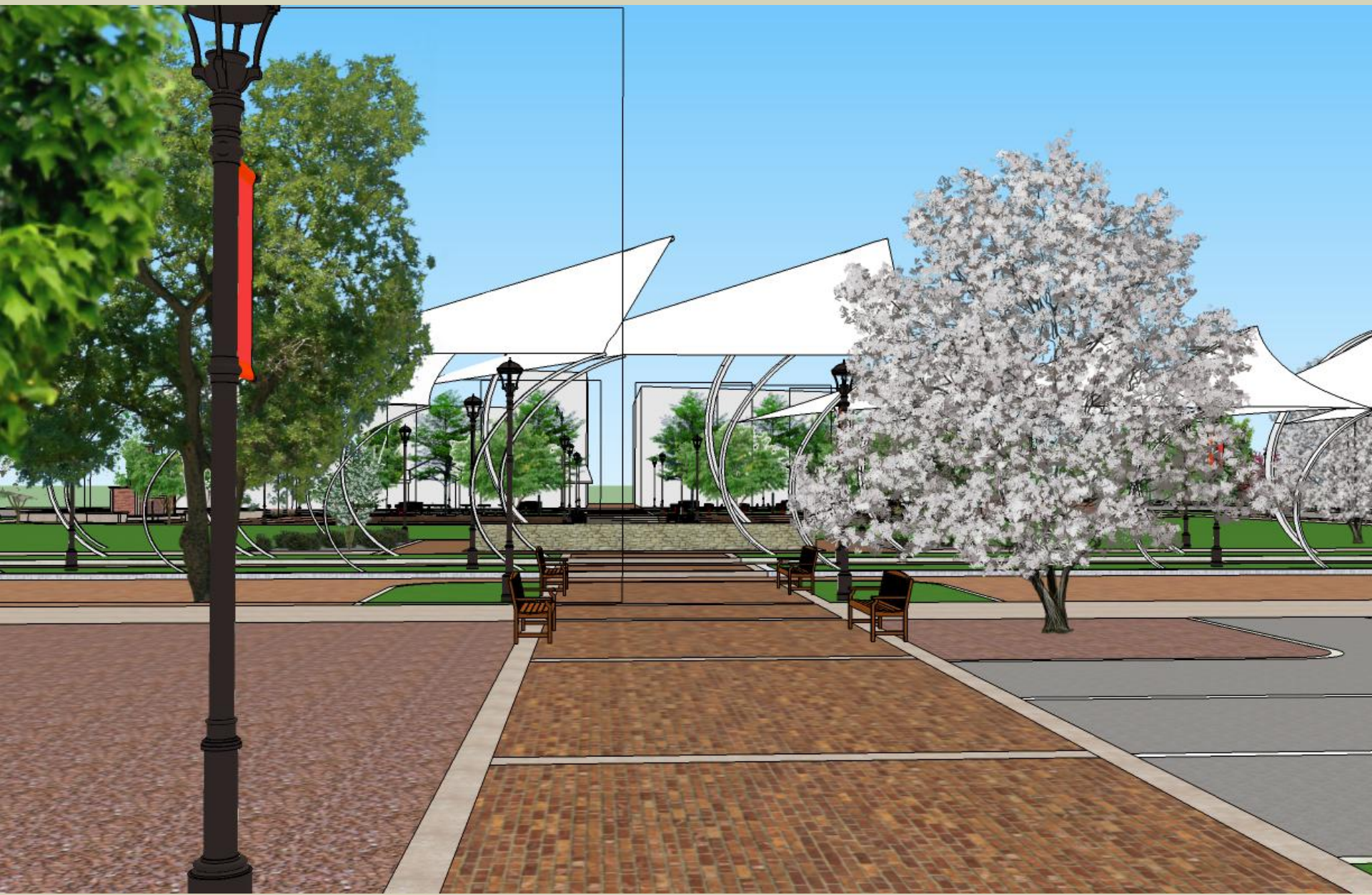




































Next Steps



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Final Report

- Delivery of the Final Report will take place in December 2015.
- This report will include final designs, implementation recommendations, and other key methods to making this plan a reality.
- The final report will include alterations based on feedback received tonight.



Implementation



“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

- Jane Jacobs



Source: Michigan Municipal League



Source: Michigan Municipal League

Thank You



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