Thomas Street at Seattle Center

Concept/Early Schematic Design Review
Seattle Design Commission

July 17, 2025

GGN

seattlecenter

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1. Introduction + Project Goals

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4. Thomas Street Kit of Parts - Block Scale

Why are we doing this project?

- Thomas Street is the busiest pedestrian corridor at Seattle Center and the place of first impression for many visitors.

- The retail along Thomas Street is aging and needs a refresh.

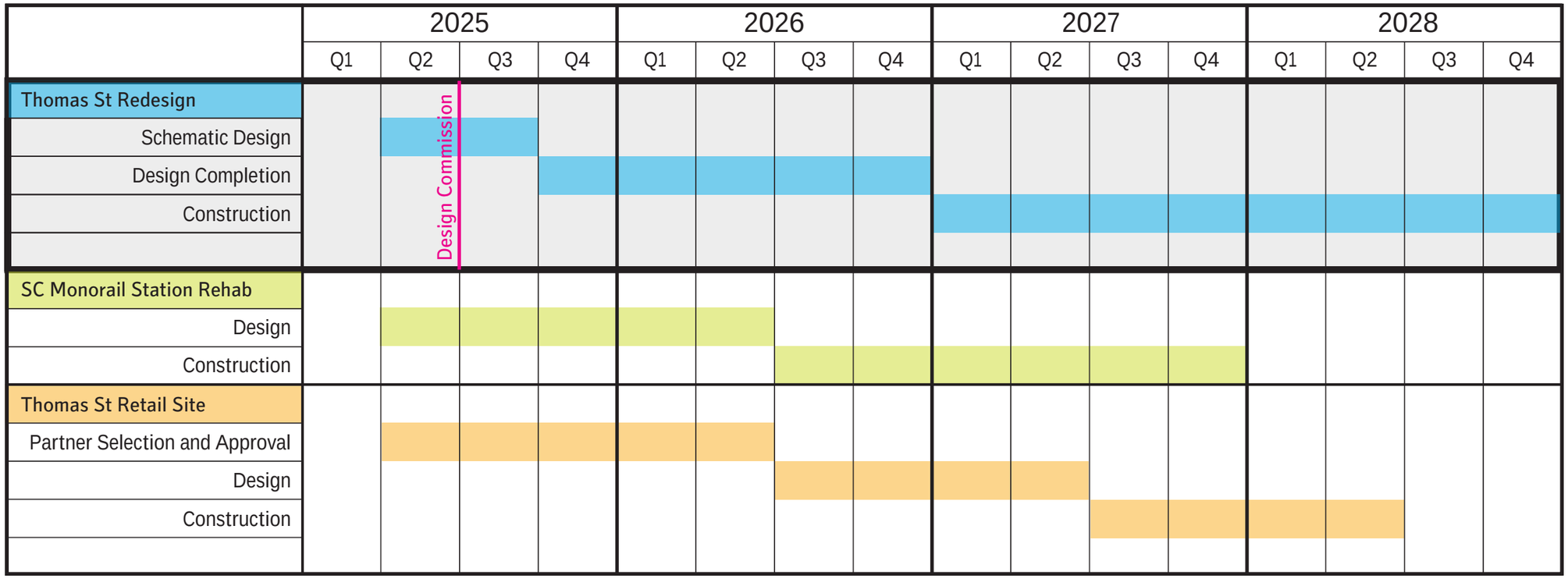
- Underutilized spaces including the Armory southern plaza offer opportunities for better placemaking, wayfinding, and accessibility.

- Other projects in the area are in concept/early design and should be integrated into a cohesive whole:
    - Seattle Center Monorail Station (new ADA compliant ramp at main entry)
    - Thomas Street Retail Opportunity (currently Expressly Northwest gift store)
    - Remodels and additions being considered by Seattle Center partner organizations

Seattle Center's New Vision for Thomas Street

- A street that looks great, works hard, and lasts long.
- A street that helps unify the Seattle Center campus.
- A space that is democratic, inclusive, and welcoming with opportunities for visitors to linger and mingle.

Project Schedule



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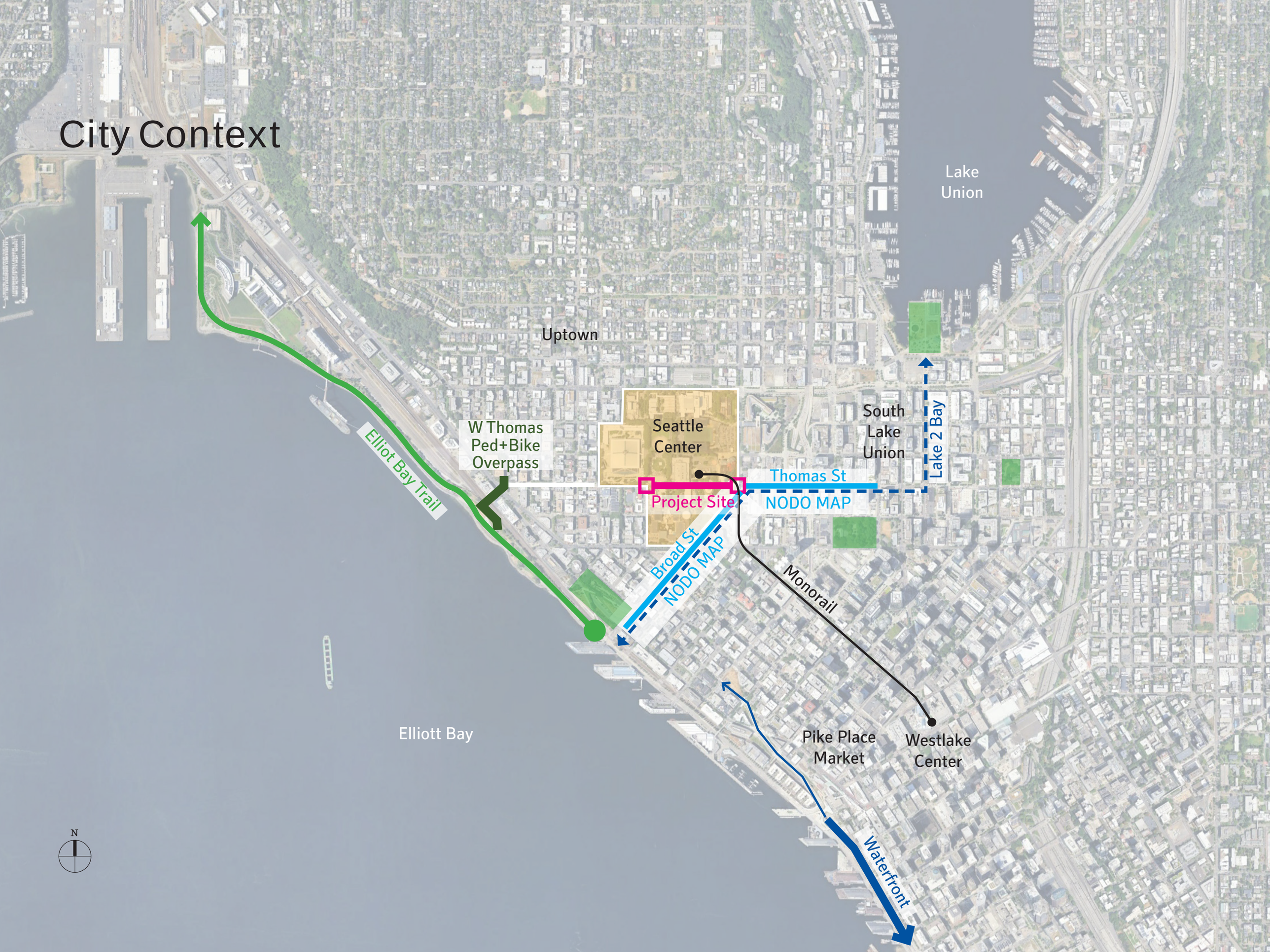
City Context



Campus Context + Project Scope

Memorial Stadium Renovation

Climate Pledge Arena

Artists at Play

Armory

Monrail Station Accessibility Upgrade

Retail

MoPOP

Skate Park

Fisher Rooftop

Arena Retail and Garage

Seattle Children's Theatre

Mural Amphitheater

Chihuly Garden and Glass

Space Needle

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Project Scope:

- Paving design
- Site furnishings
- Trees and planting
- Lighting
- Conceptual design of intersections at 2nd and 5th Ave

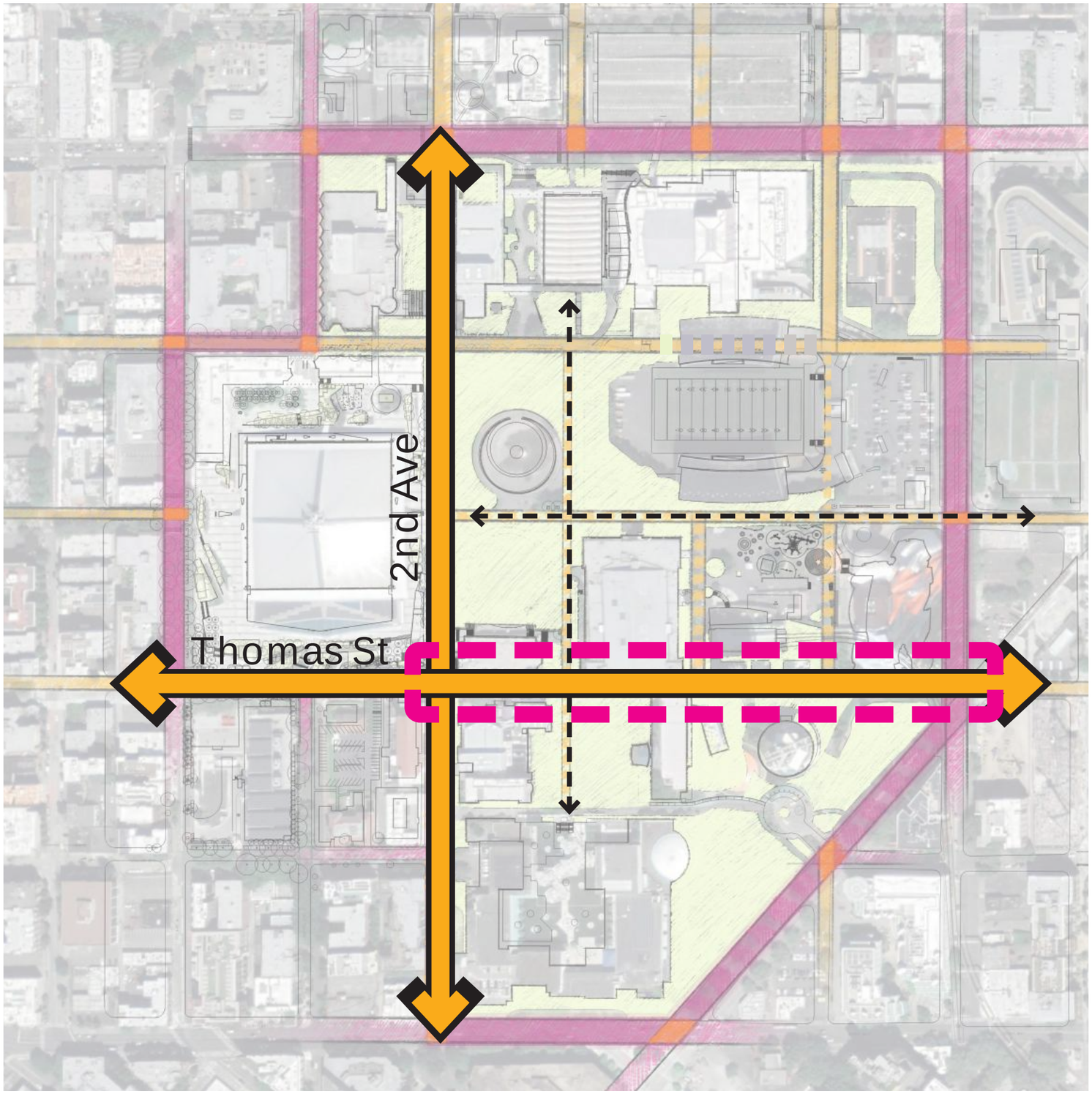
Street Network

Legend

Events Street

Interior Spine Street

Project Scope



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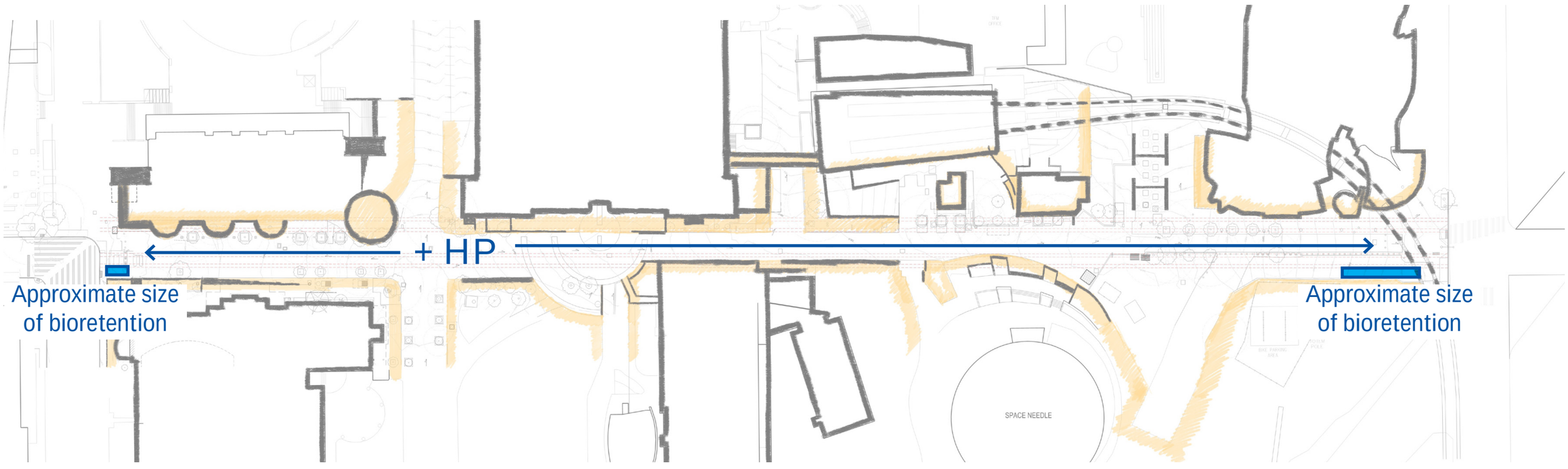
Stormwater

Design for stormwater management will be a driver for this project

- Options include bioretention, infiltration, and underground storage.
- Consider opportunities to create place with stormwater features.



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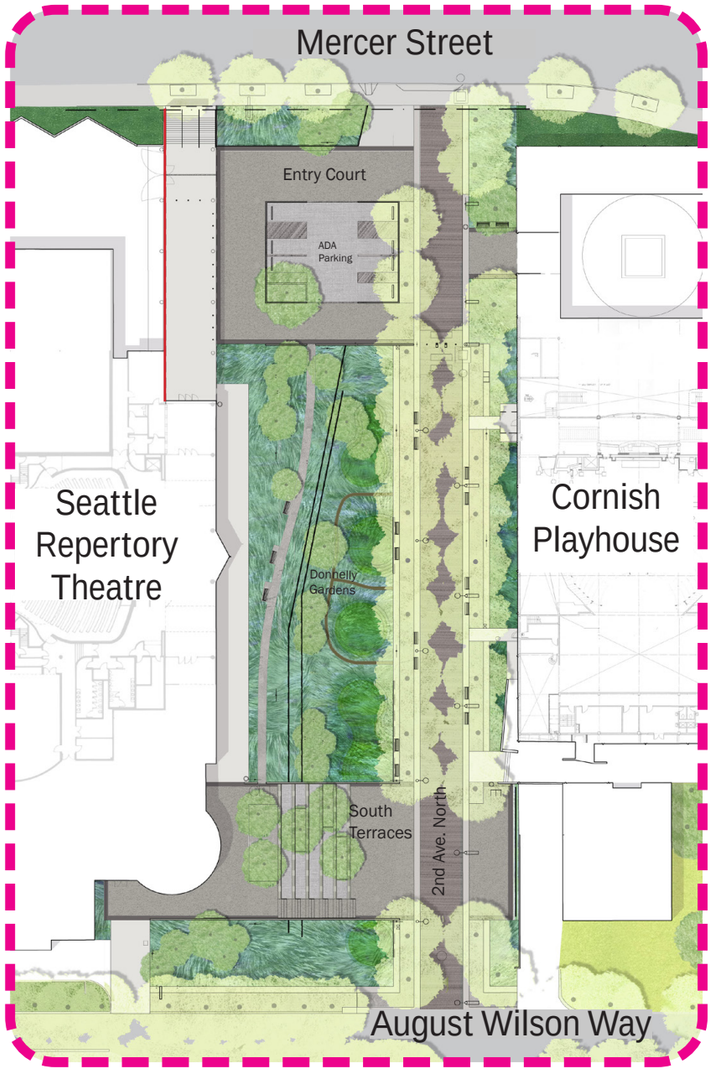
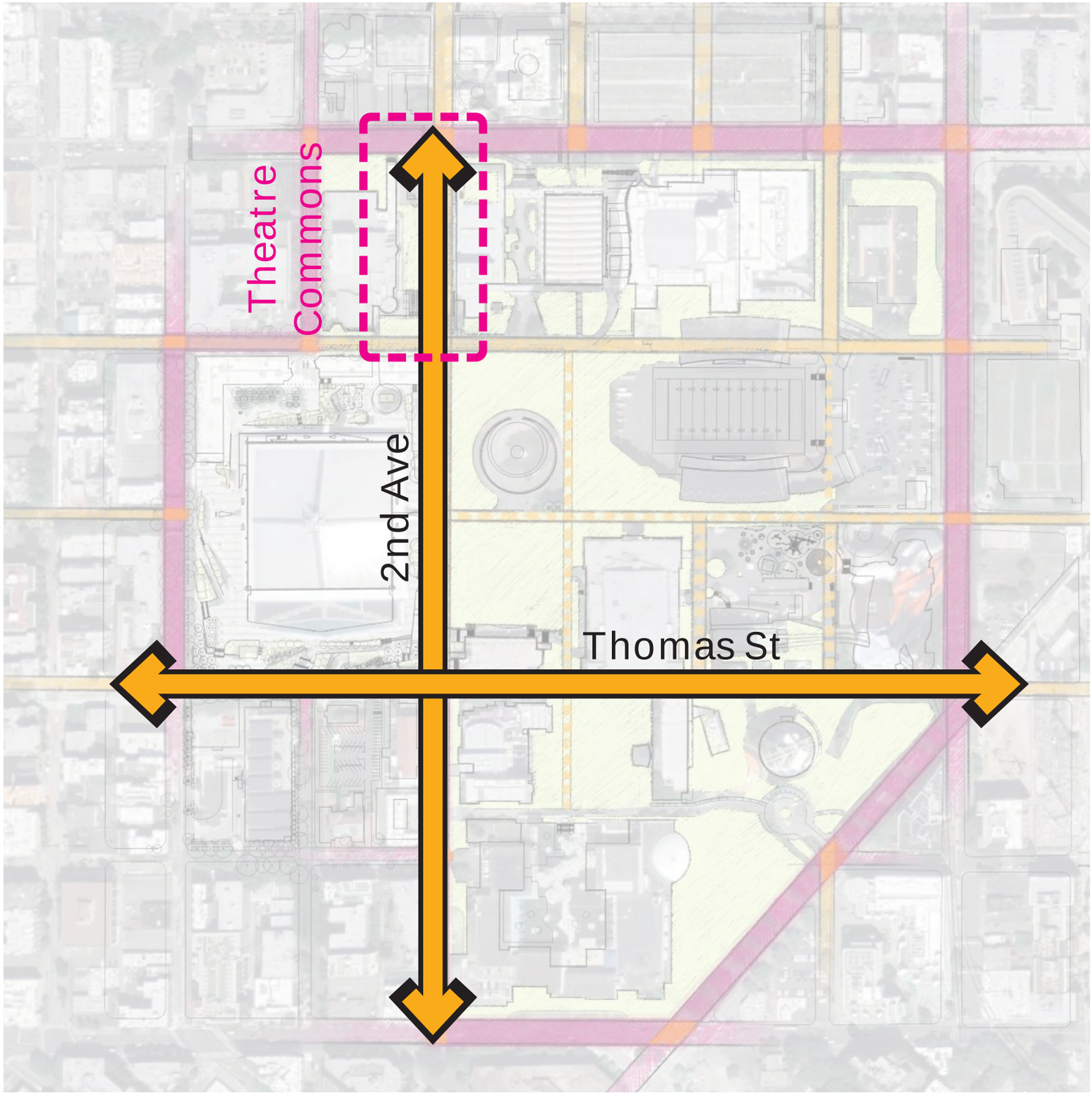
Theatre Commons Campus Street Prototype

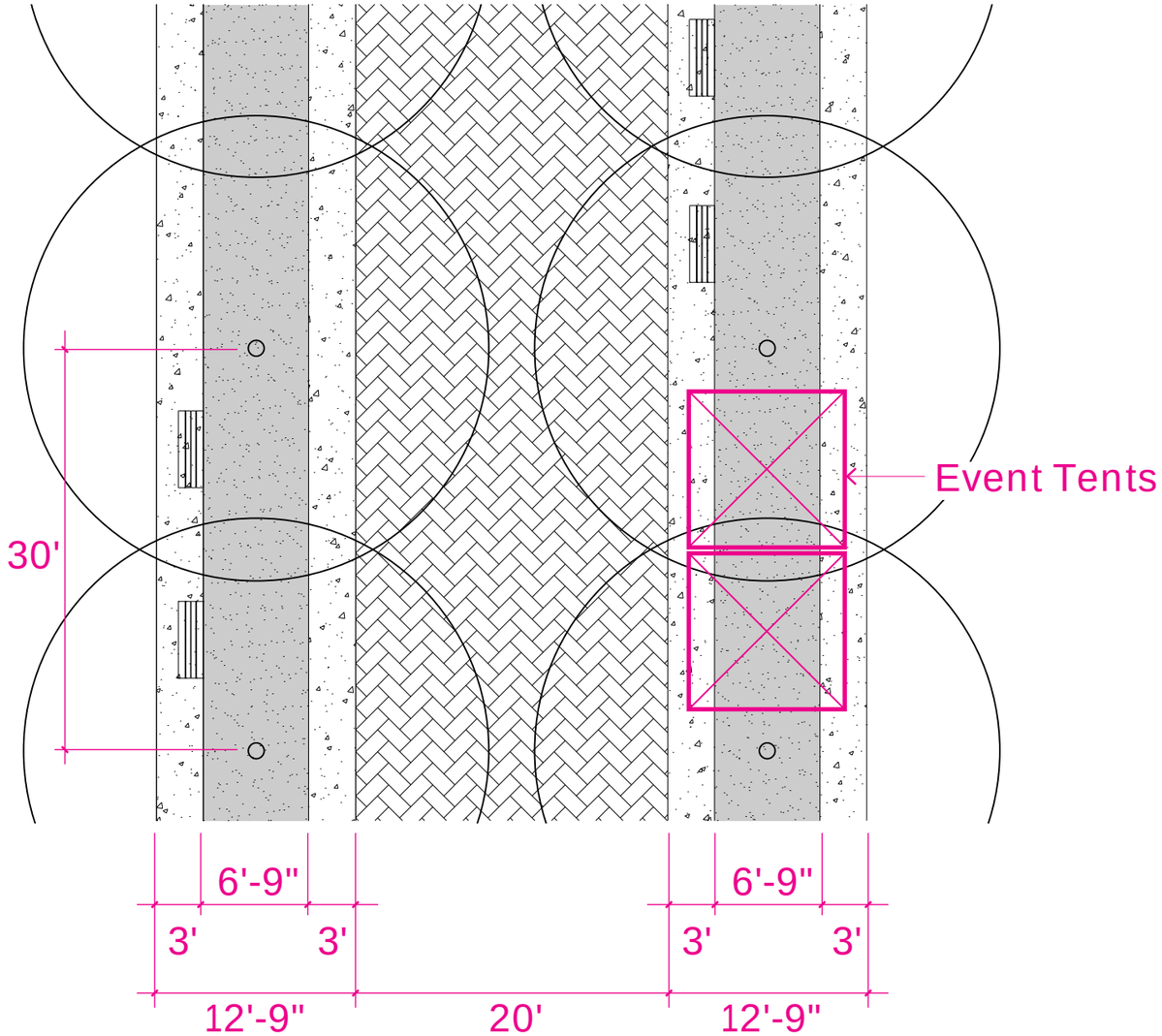
Theatre Commons Plan (2010)





Theatre Commons

Theatre Commons Template



20’-0” unit paving

- Herringbone pattern holds up to vehicular traffic.
- Standard width for emergency vehicle access.
- Option for permeable surface with open joints.

6’-9” tree and furniture zone

- Permeable material supports long term health of trees.
- Location for event tents spaced between street trees.

3’-0” concrete bands

- Provides edge for adjacent paving and planted areas.
- Mounting surface for bench seating.
- Location for large light pole and other

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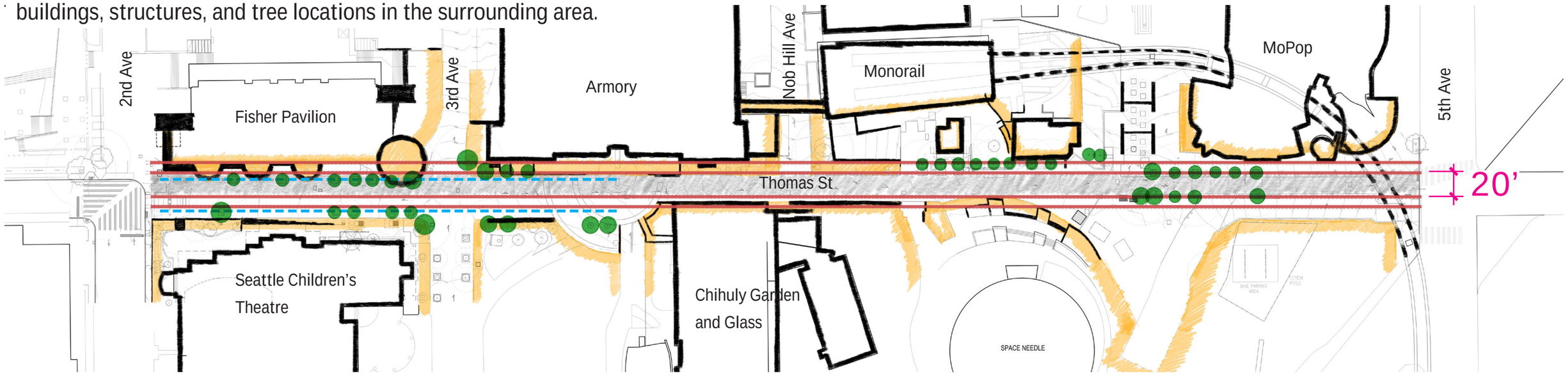
Street Alignment

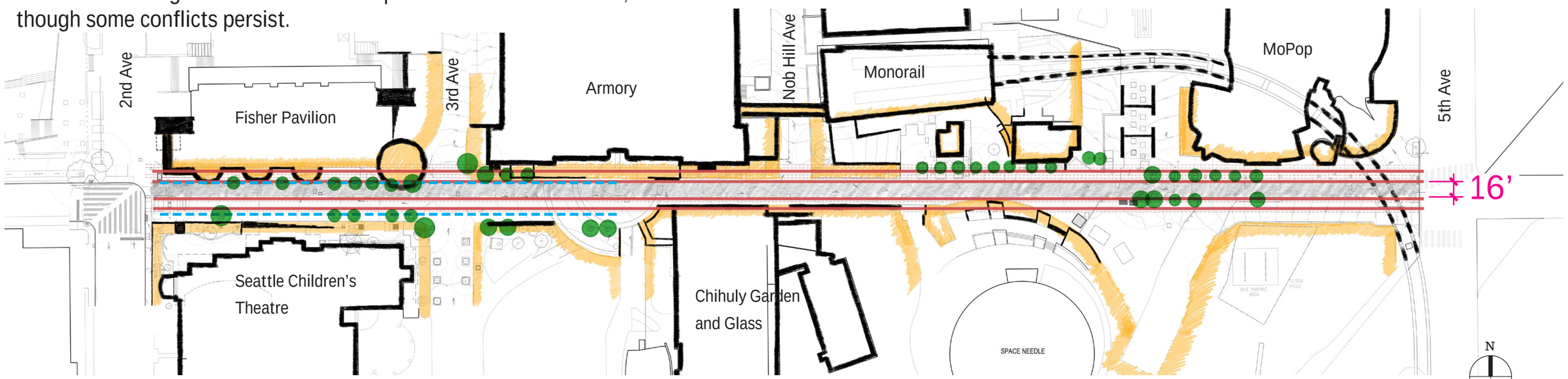
Theater Commons Overlay:

Conflicts have been observed between the proposed alignment and existing buildings, structures, and tree locations in the surrounding area.



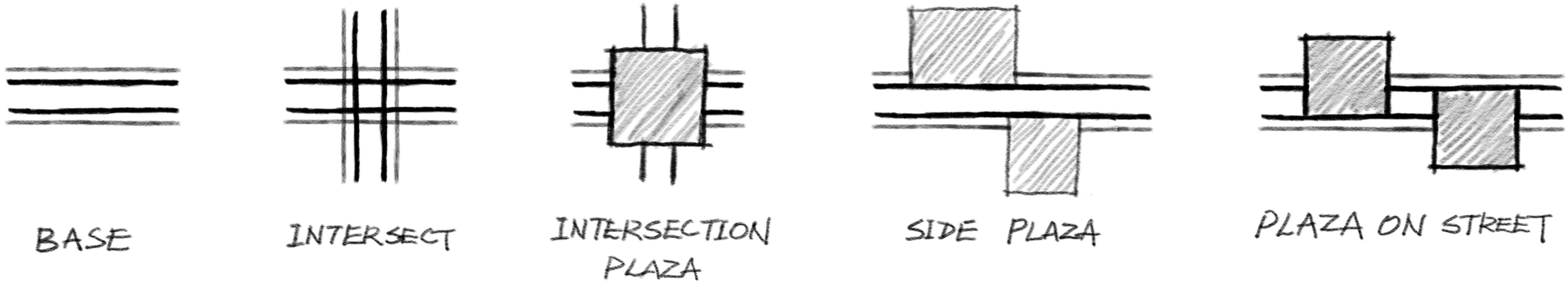
Narrowed:

The narrowed alignment fits better with portions of Thomas Street, though some conflicts persist.



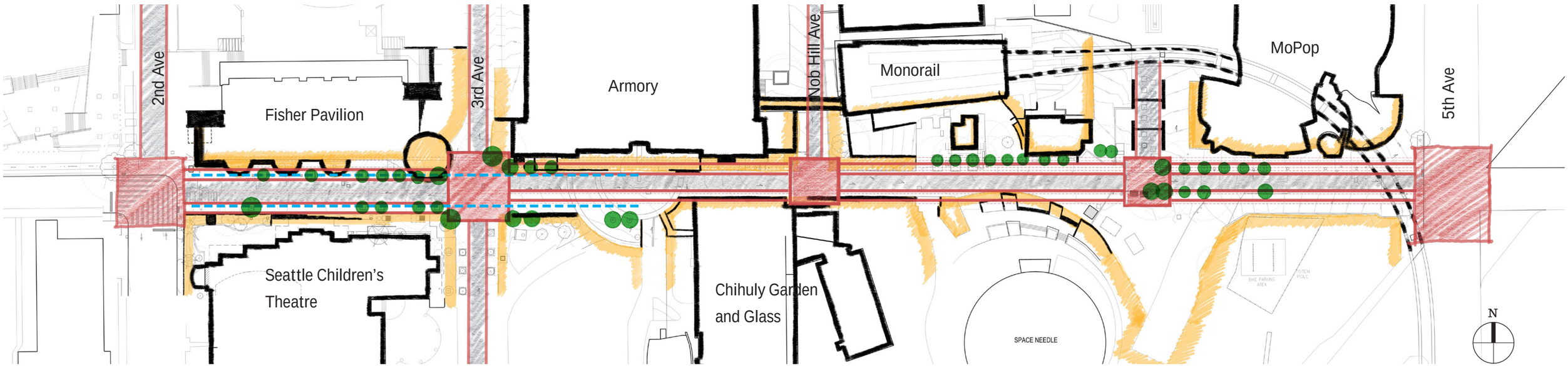
Street Alignment

A range of street typologies is explored to allow Thomas Street to respond to diverse spatial and contextual conditions.



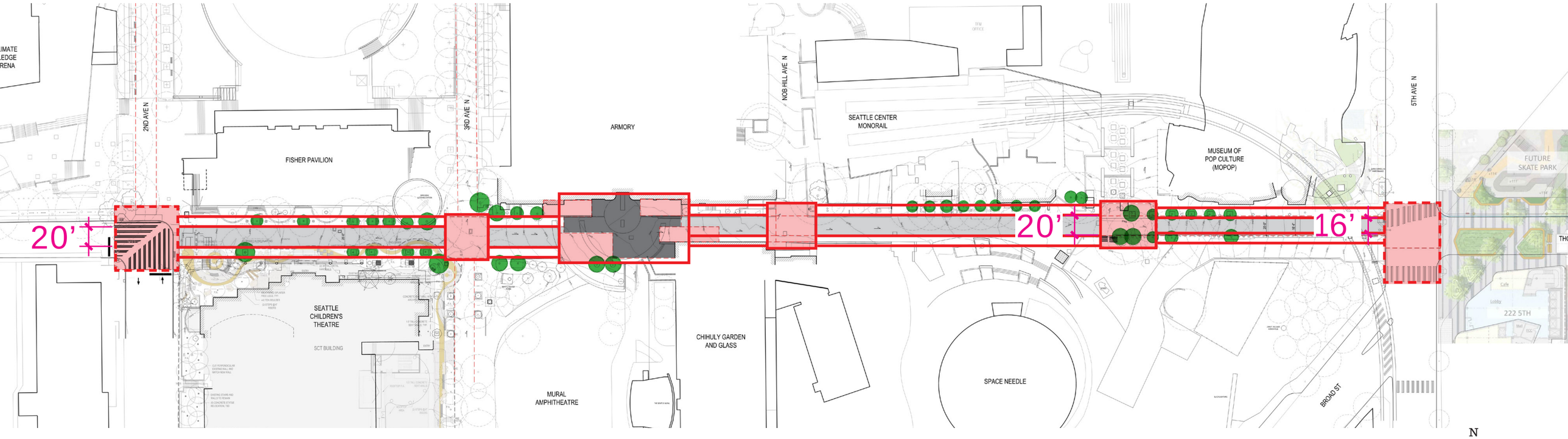
Intersections:

Introducing intersections at key nodes along Thomas Street allows for alignment shifts and width variations while maintaining overall street continuity and integrity.

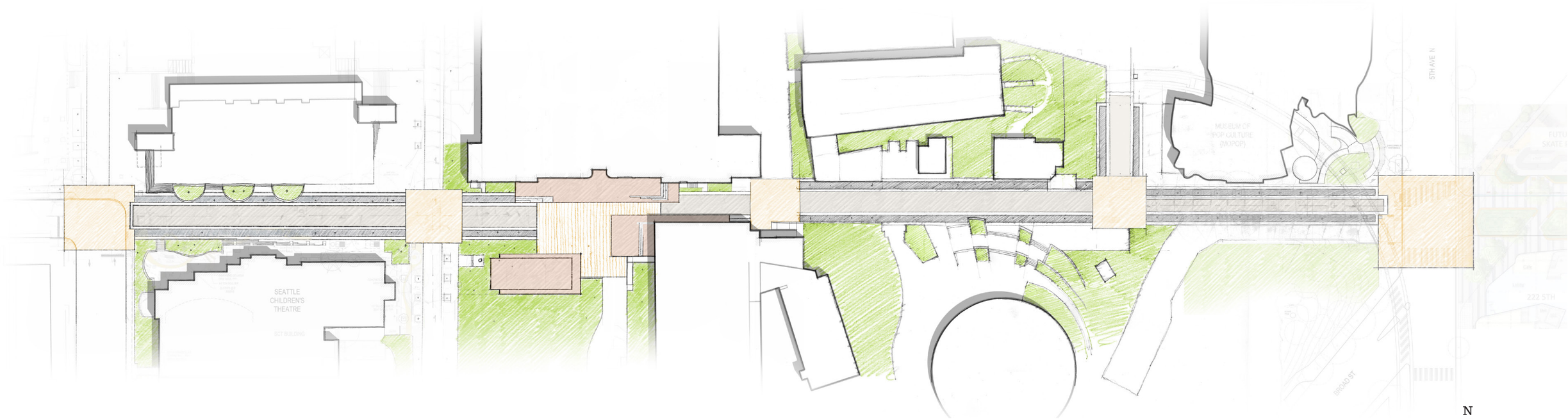


Street Alignment

Shift Street Alignment at Armory:
Recognized as the amenity hub of the Seattle Center campus, the Armory is the preferred location for the street alignment shift.



Thomas Street



SCALE: 1" = 100' 0 25 50 100 200 FEET

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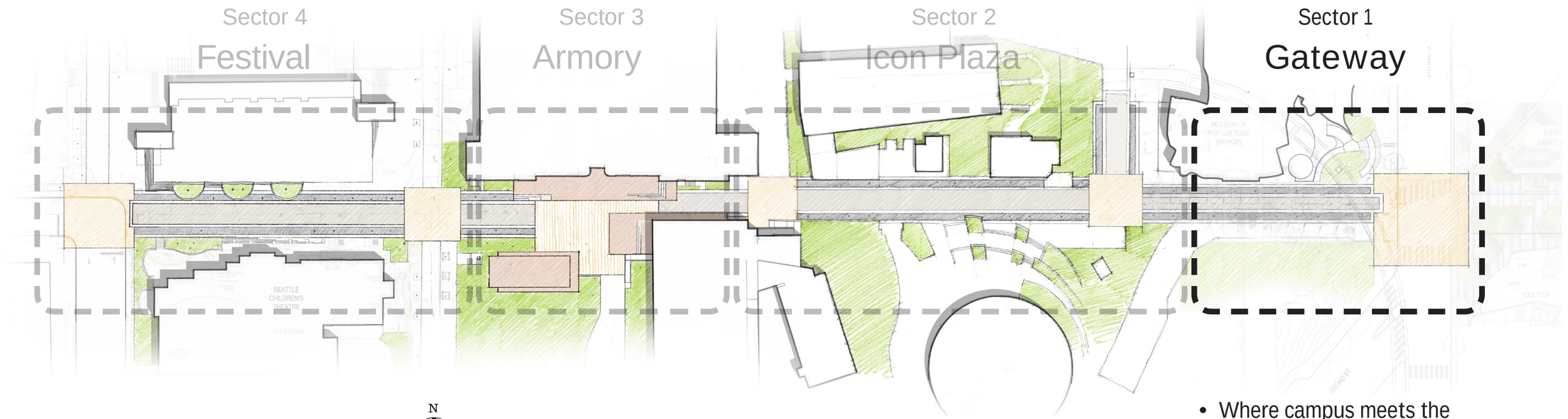
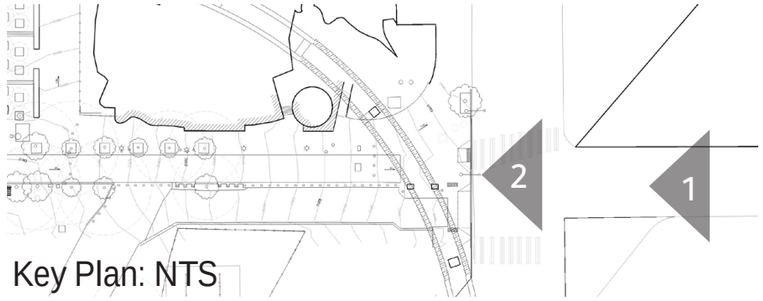
Thomas Street



SCALE: 1" = 100' 0 25 50 100 200 FEET N

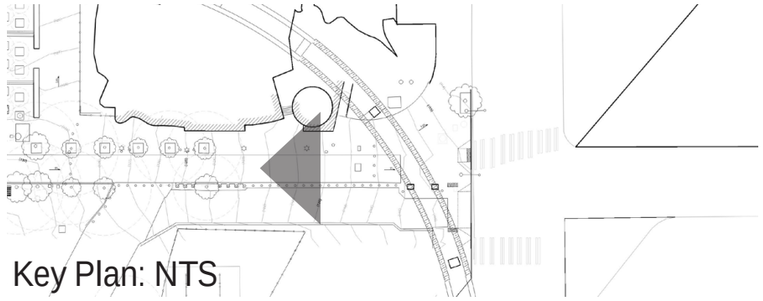
- Where campus meets the neighborhood
- Point of arrival and welcome
- Cross the threshold into civic campus

Gateway - Existing Condition



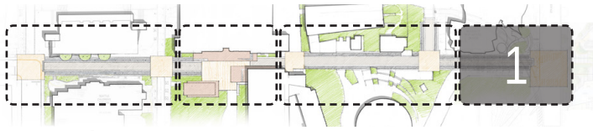
Key Plan: NTS

Gateway - Existing Condition

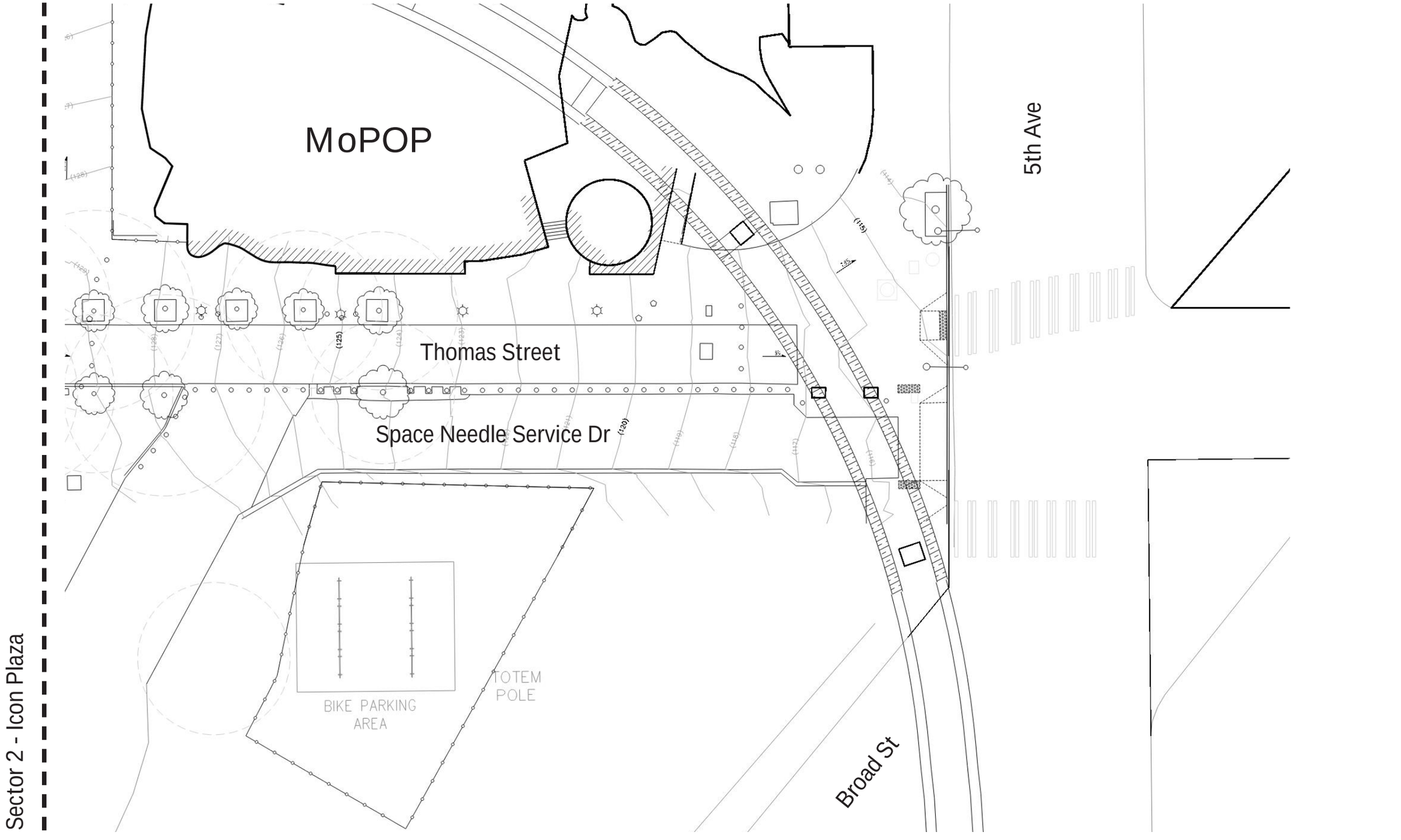


Key Plan: NTS

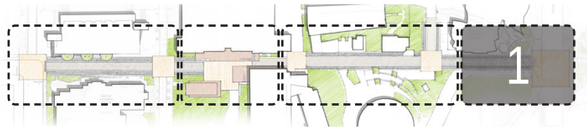
Gateway - Existing



Key Plan



Gateway - Proposed



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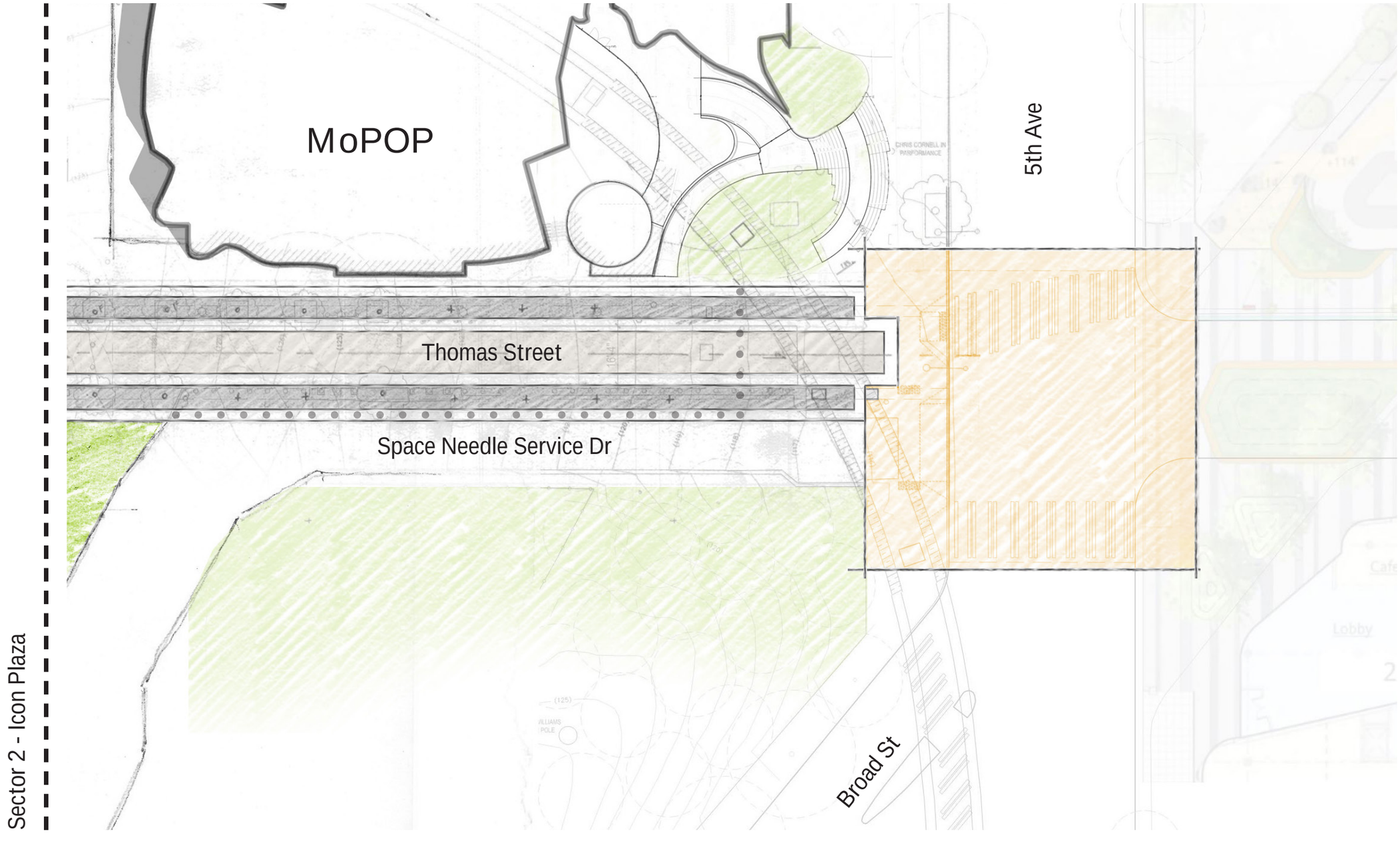


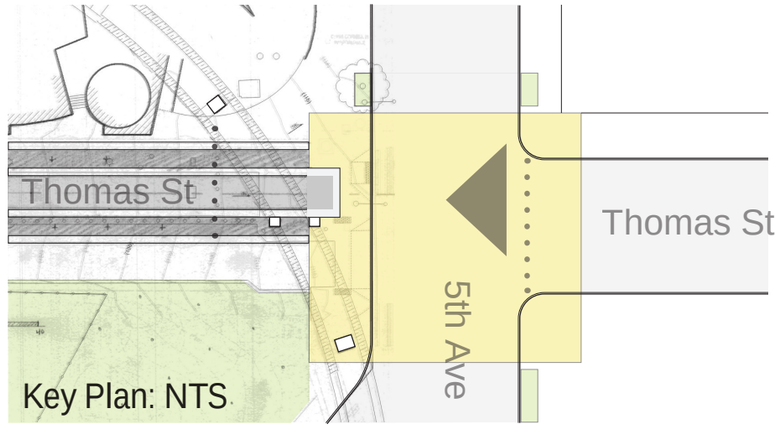
5th Avenue Gateway

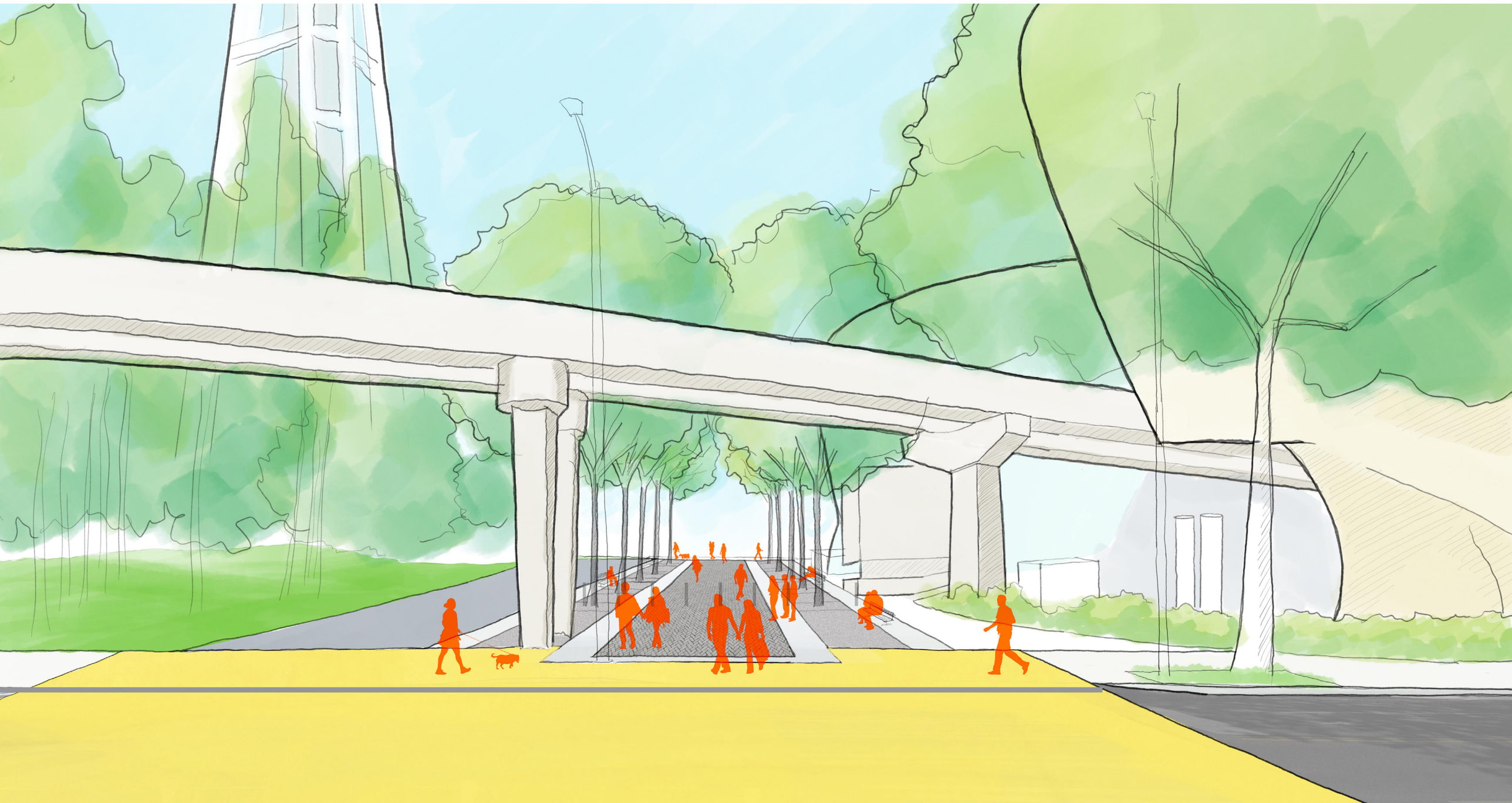
Schematic Design

Existing Intersection

5th Avenue Gateway

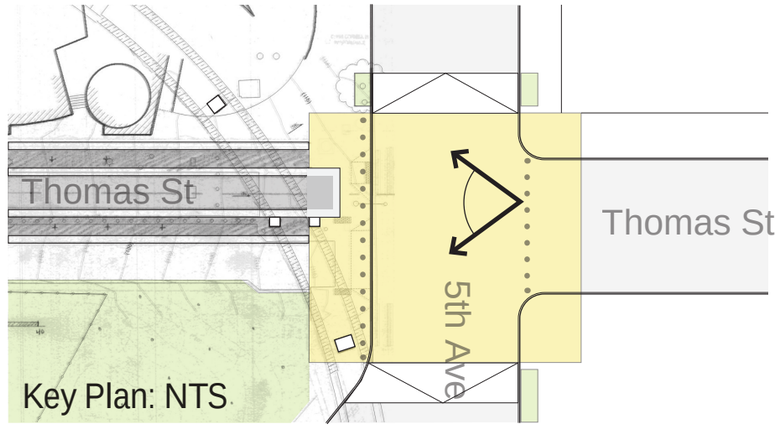
Conceptual Gateway - Painted Intersection



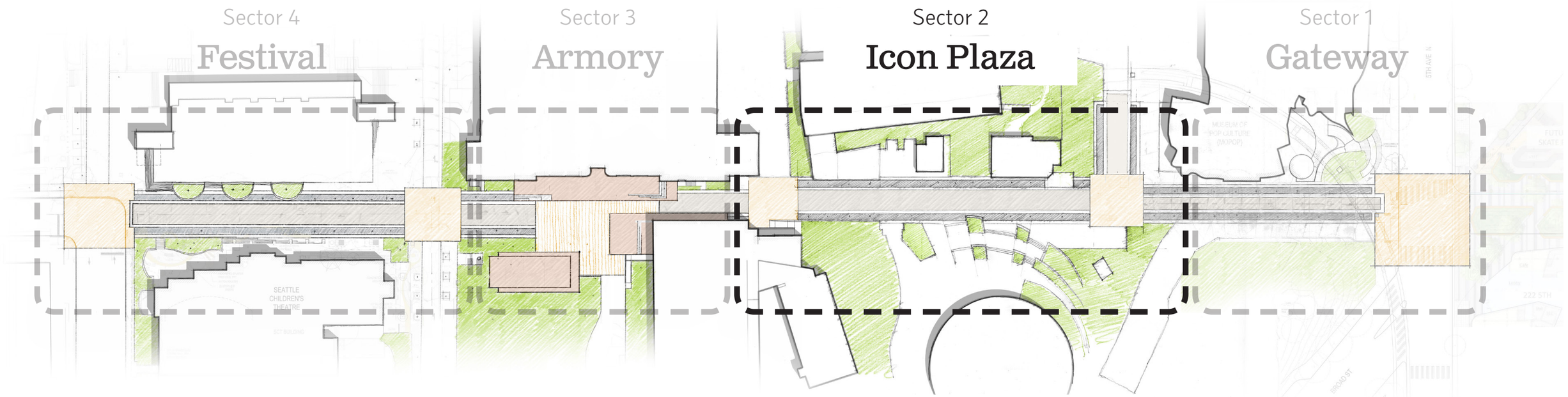


5th Avenue Gateway

Conceptual Gateway - Tabled Intersection



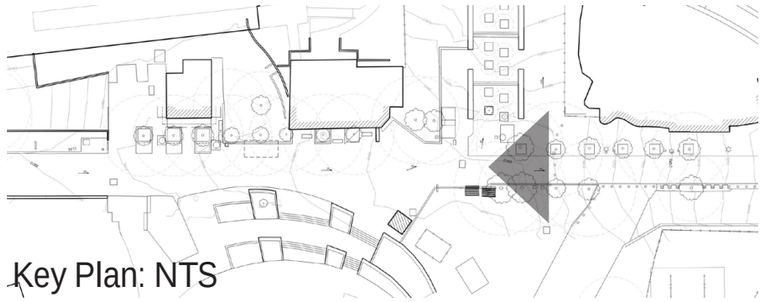
Thomas Street



SCALE: 1" = 100' 0 25 50 100 200 FEET N

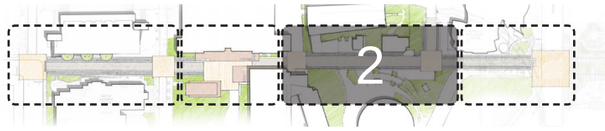
- Point to meet, linger and view
- Decide where to go next
- See and move between three icons: Monorail, MoPOP, and Space Needle
- Emphasis on casual food options and small vendors - a carnival atmosphere

Icon Plaza - Existing Condition

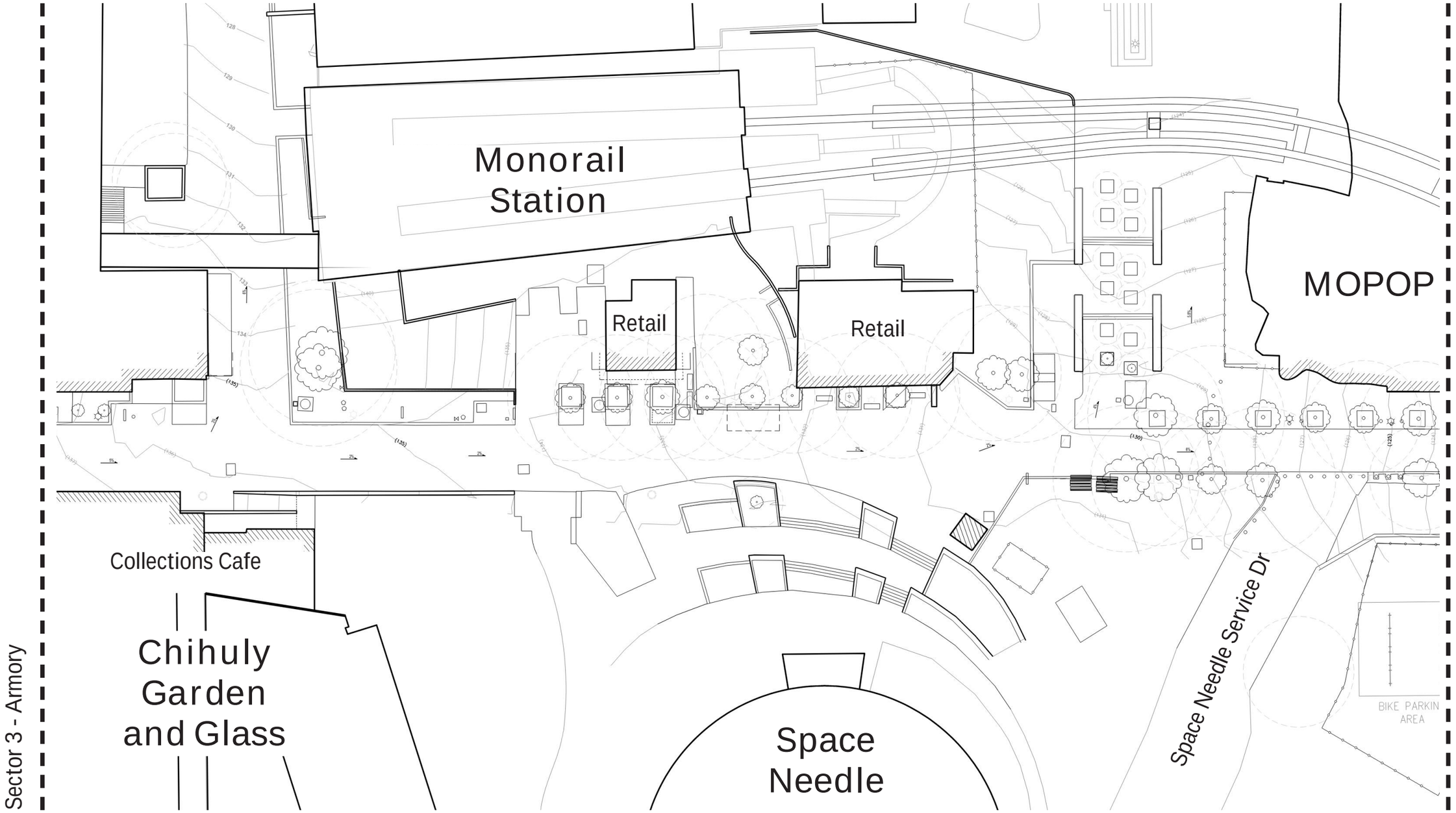


Key Plan: NTS

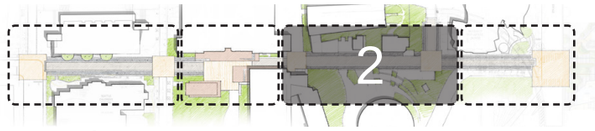
Icon Plaza - Existing



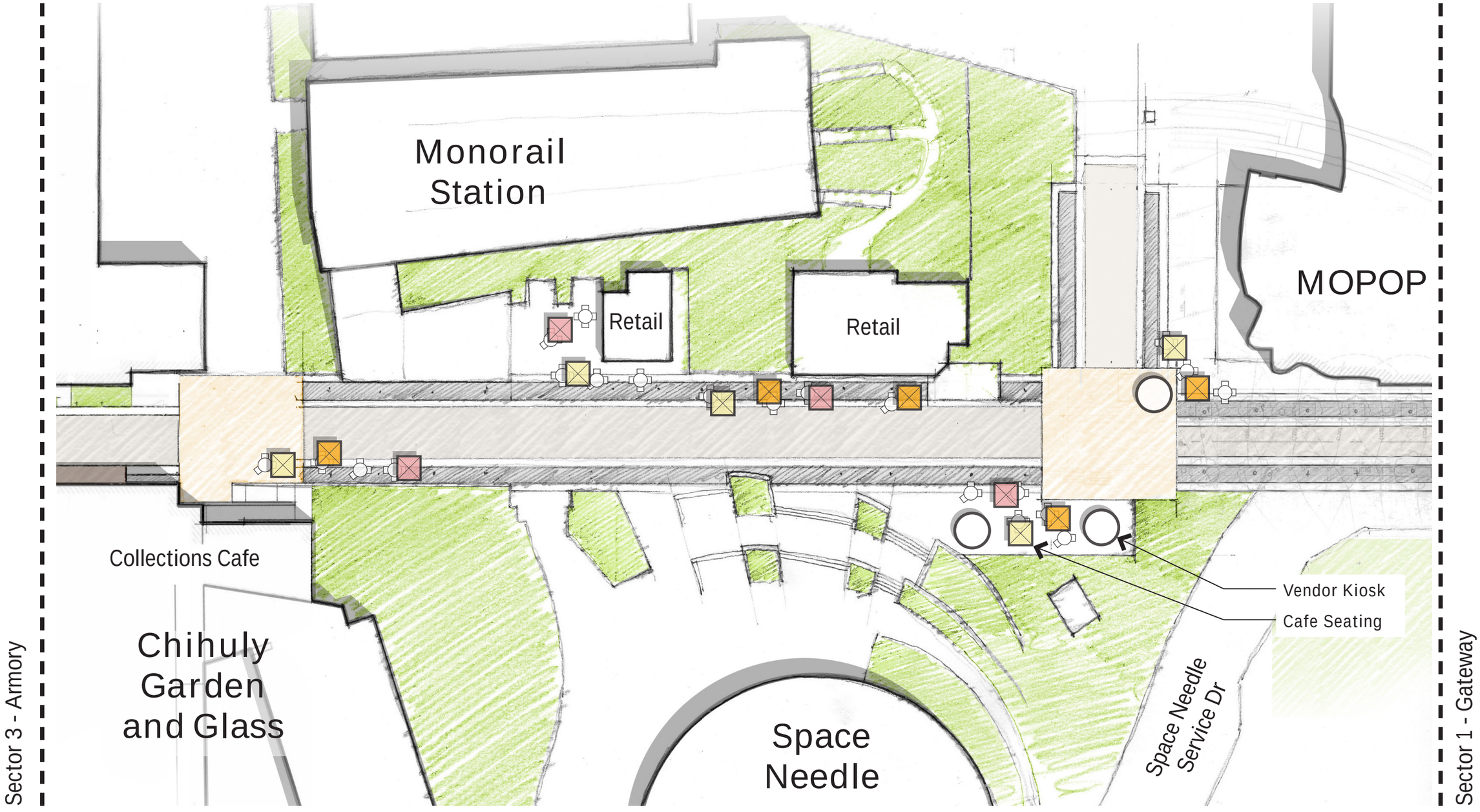
Key Plan



Street Continuity



Key Plan



SCALE: 1" = 40' 0 10 20 40 80 FEET

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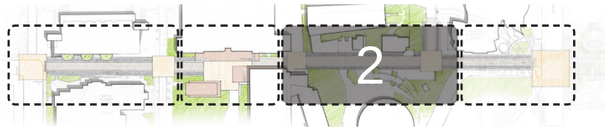
Icon Plaza - Monorail Site



Key Plan

concurrent project
Monorail Station

increase visibility

Retail RFP

Non-compliant slope

MOPOP

Collections Cafe

Chihuly Garden and Glass

Space Needle

Space Needle Service Dr

BIKE PARKIN AREA

Sector 3 - Armory

Sector 1 - Gateway

SCALE: 1" = 40' 0 10 20 40 80 FEET

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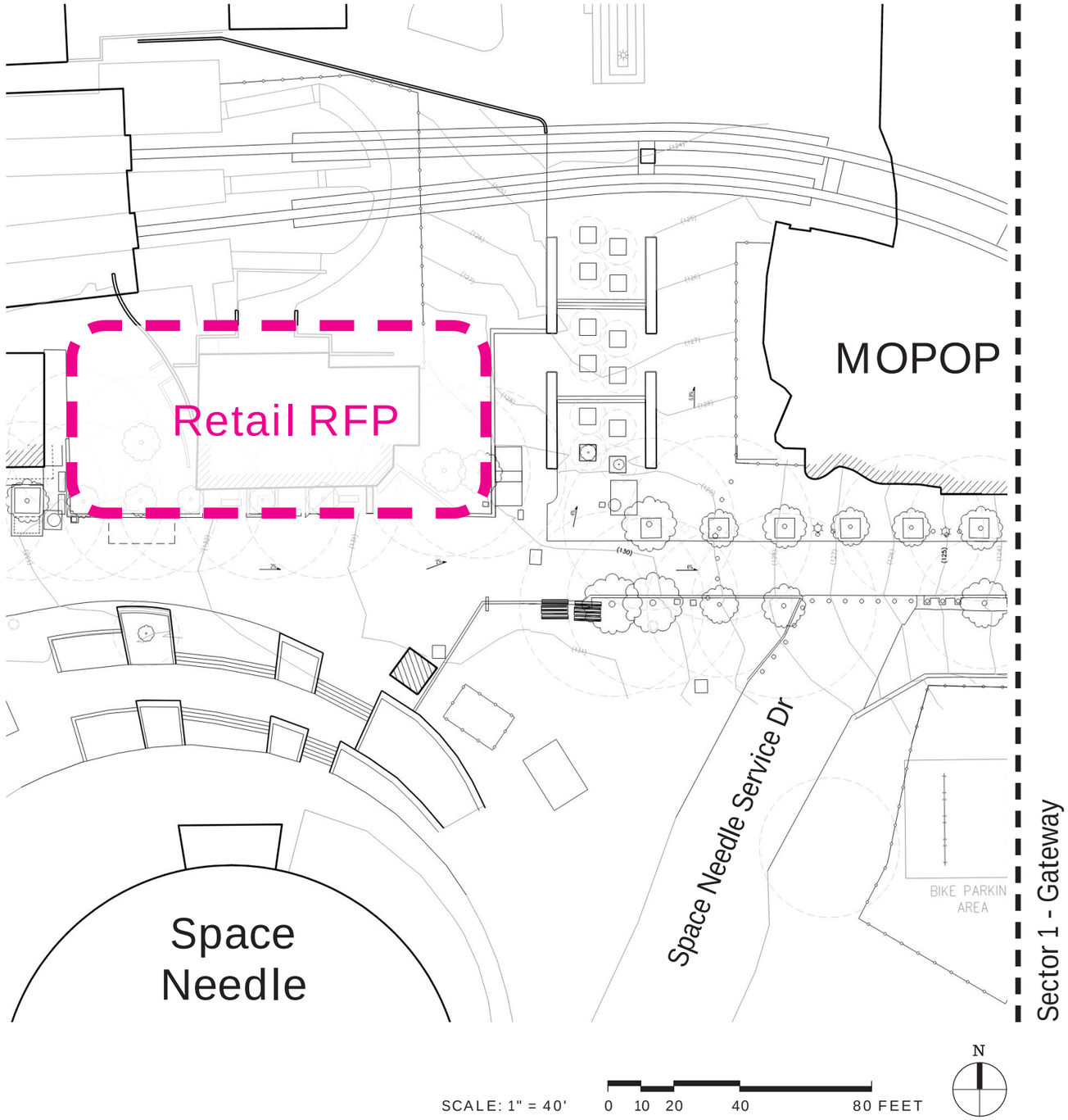
Icon Plaza - Retail RFP

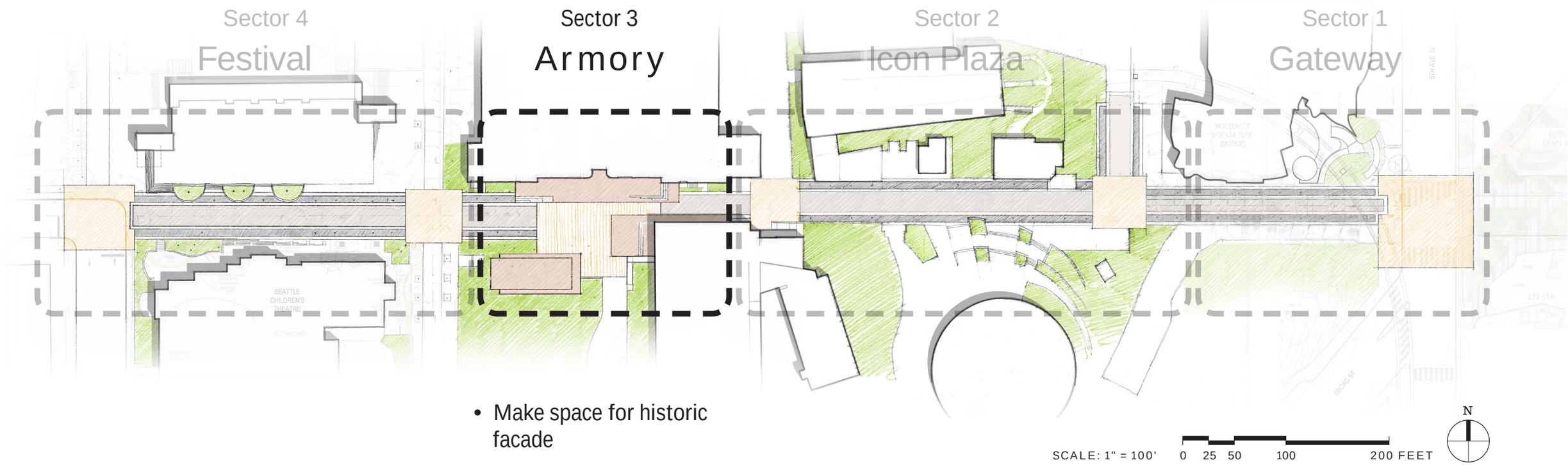
Seattle Center is looking for an experienced partner to design, build, and operate a new retail offering or attraction on Thomas Street. Future partner will collaborate with Seattle Center to integrate with Thomas Street design.

RFP goals include:

- Generate annual revenue for Seattle Center.
- Enhance the streetscape near the campus greenway at Thomas St. and 5th Ave. N.
- Add energy and interest to the area and complement the existing mix of attractions already at Seattle Center.

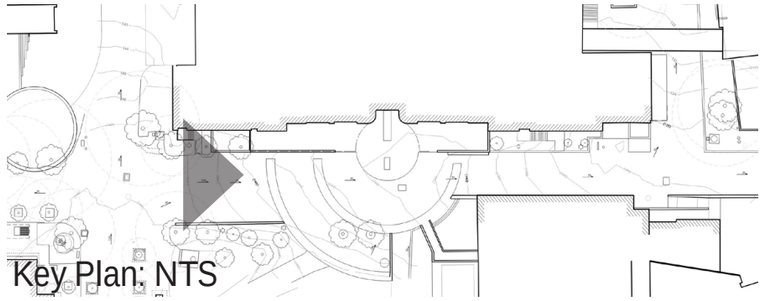


Armory



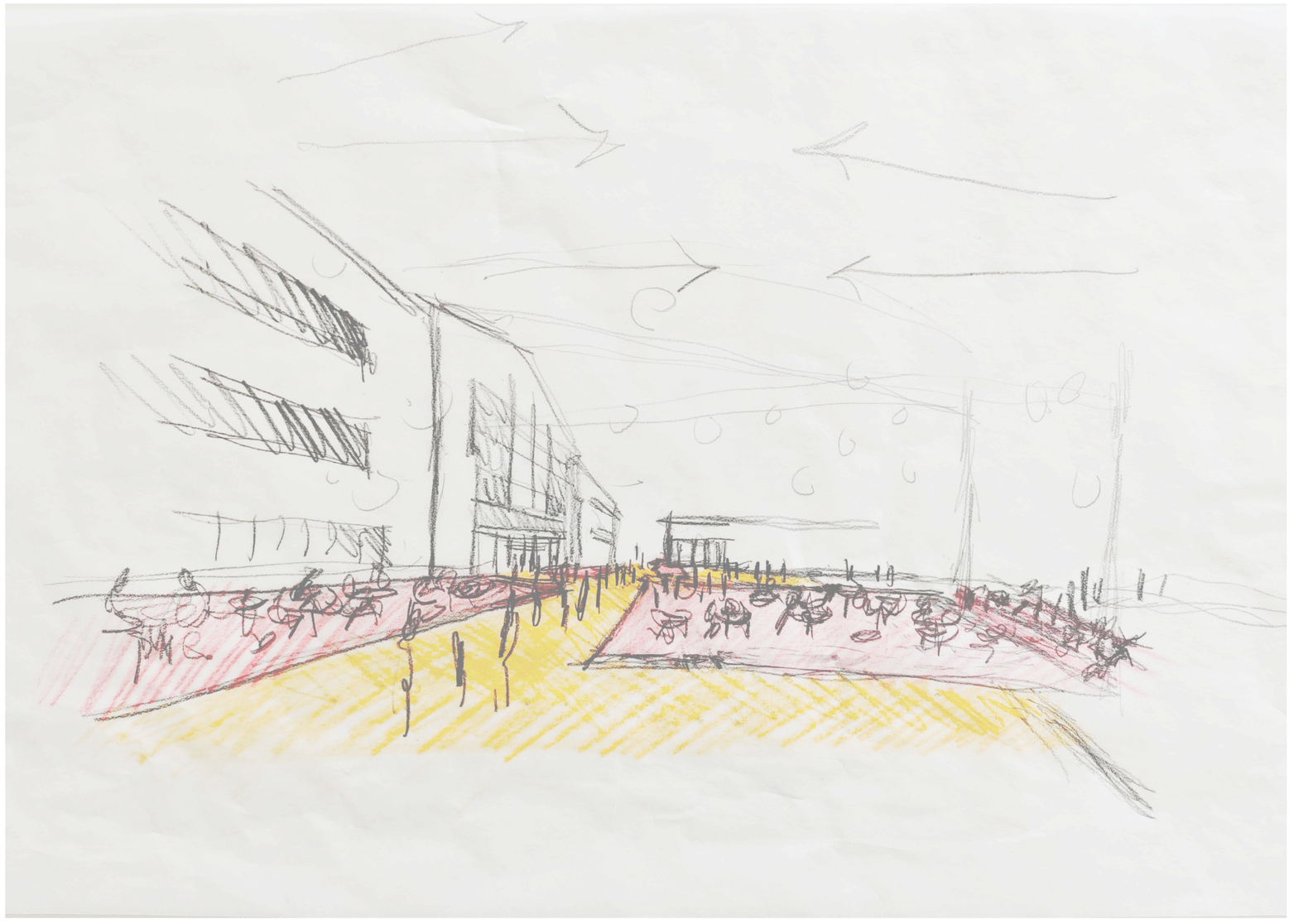
- Make space for historic facade
- Popular for spectator activity (buskers, festivals)
- Spill-out from Food and Event Hall

Armory - Existing Condition

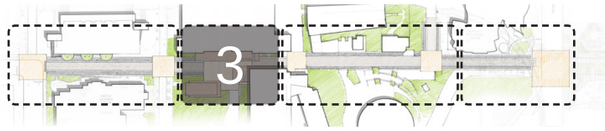


Armory Concept

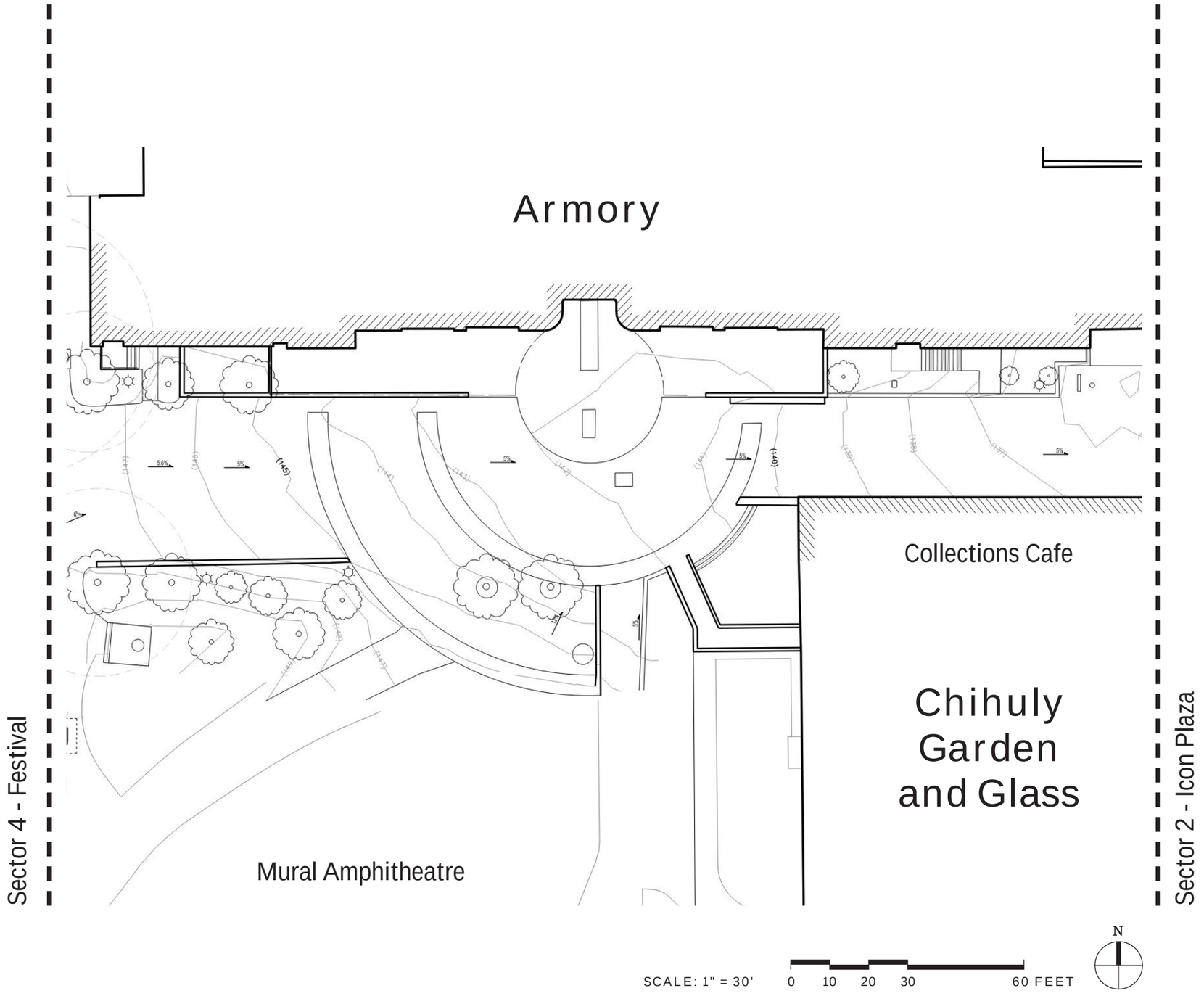
- From one-sided to two-sided social space
- Make space for historic facade
- Popular for spectator activity (buskers, festivals)
- Spill-out from Food and Event Hall



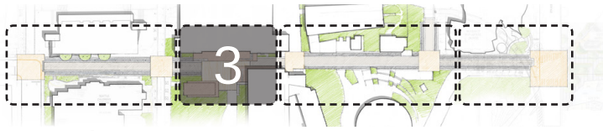
Armory - Existing



Key Plan



Armory - Proposed



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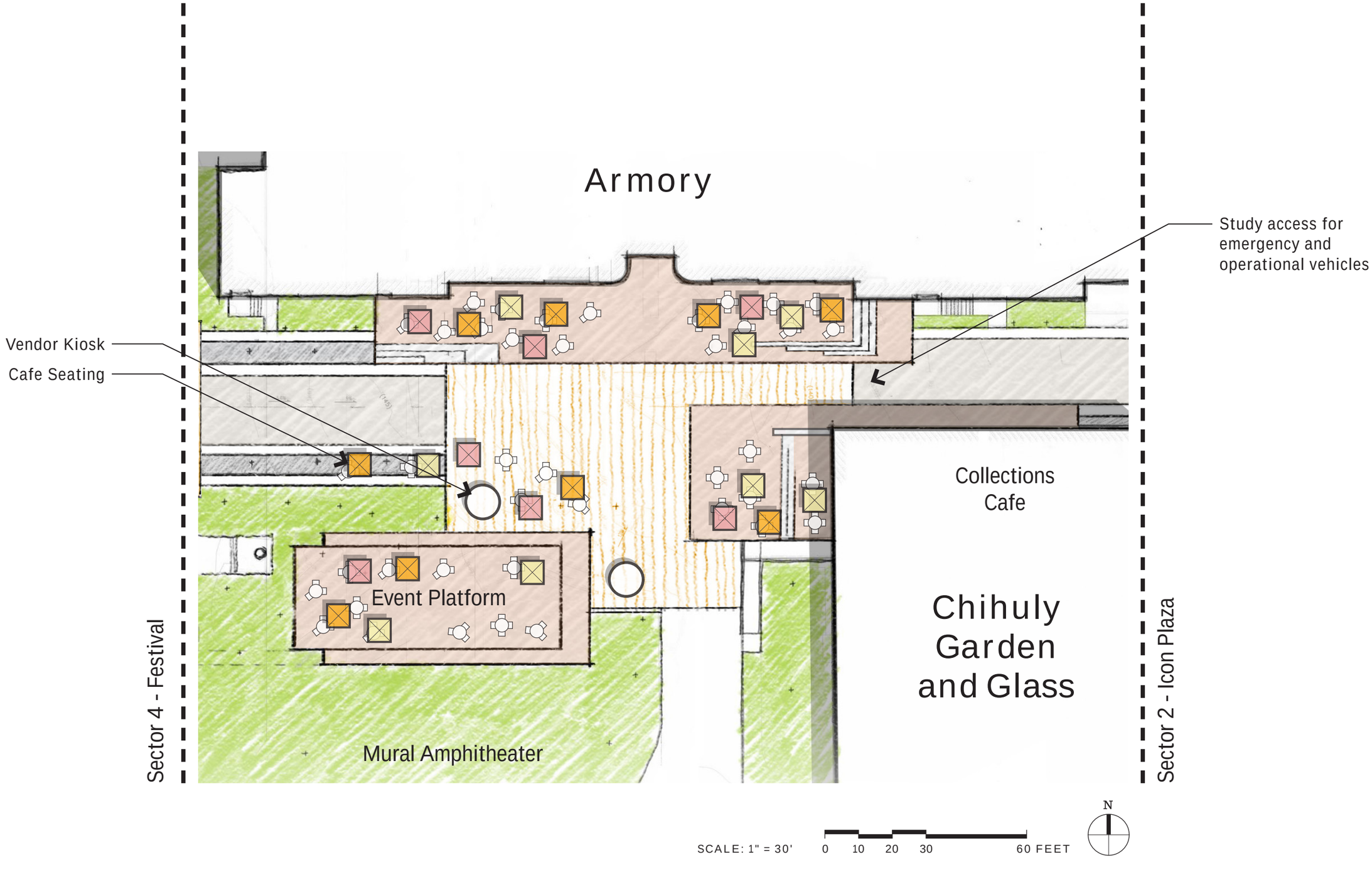
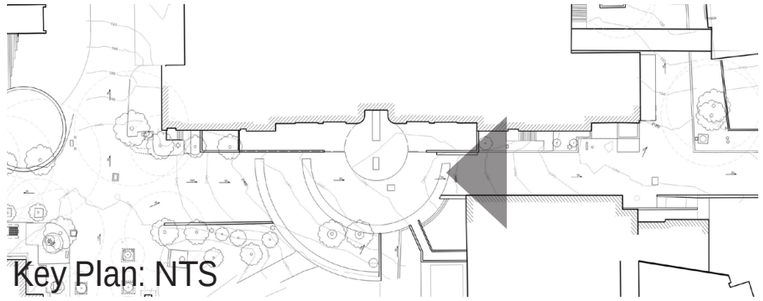
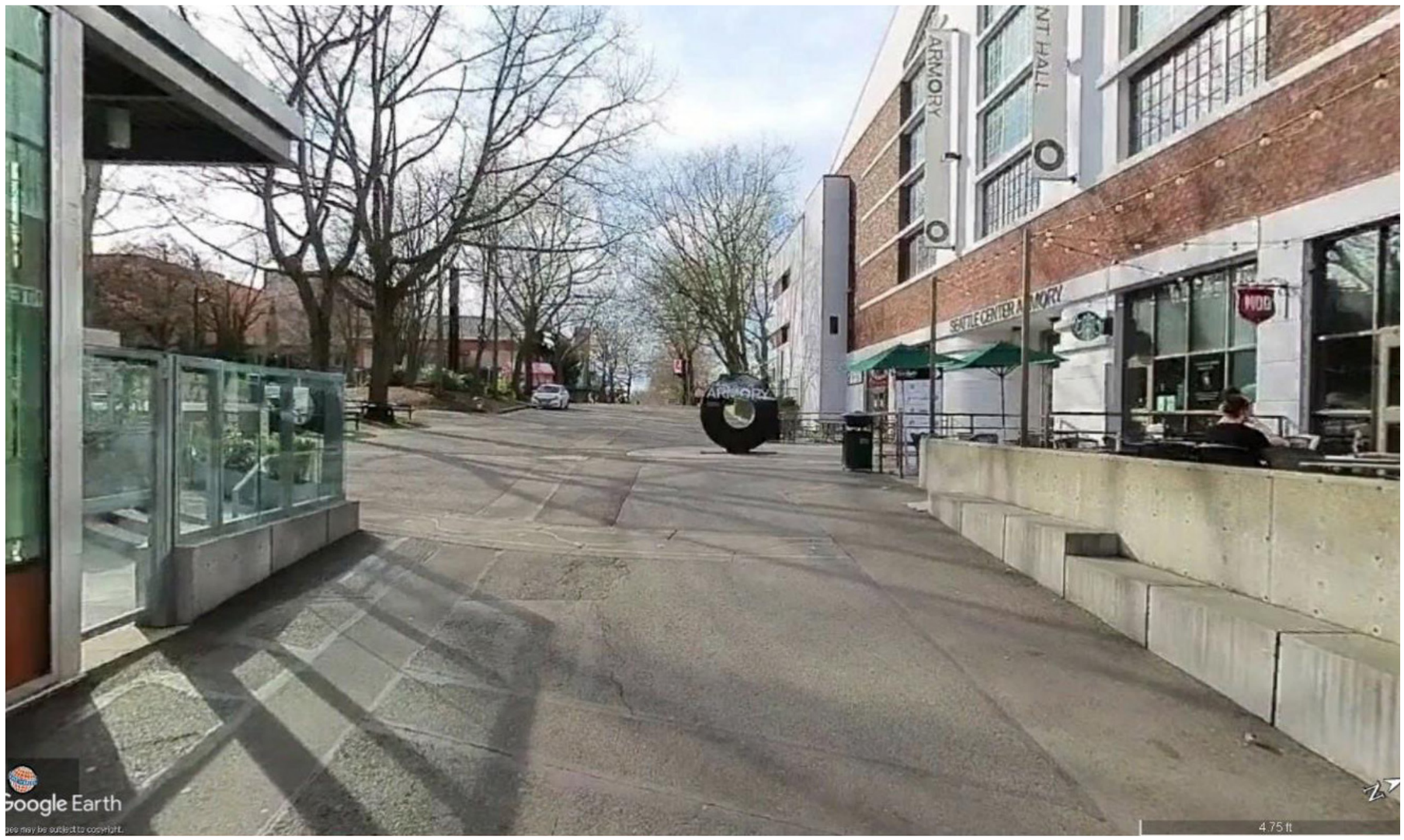
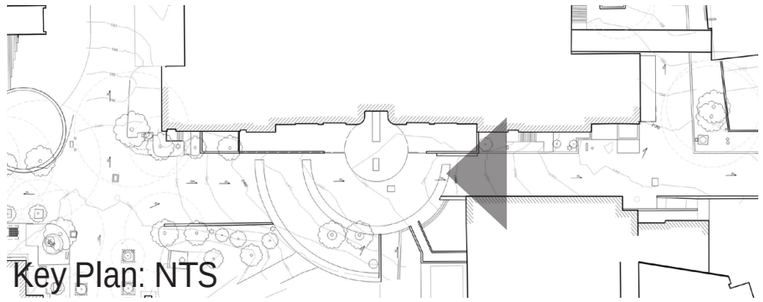


Armory - Existing



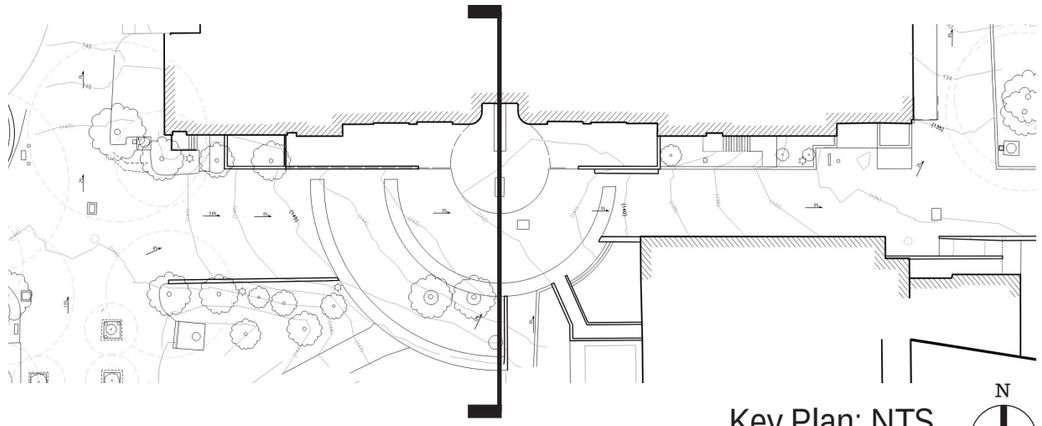


Armory - Proposed

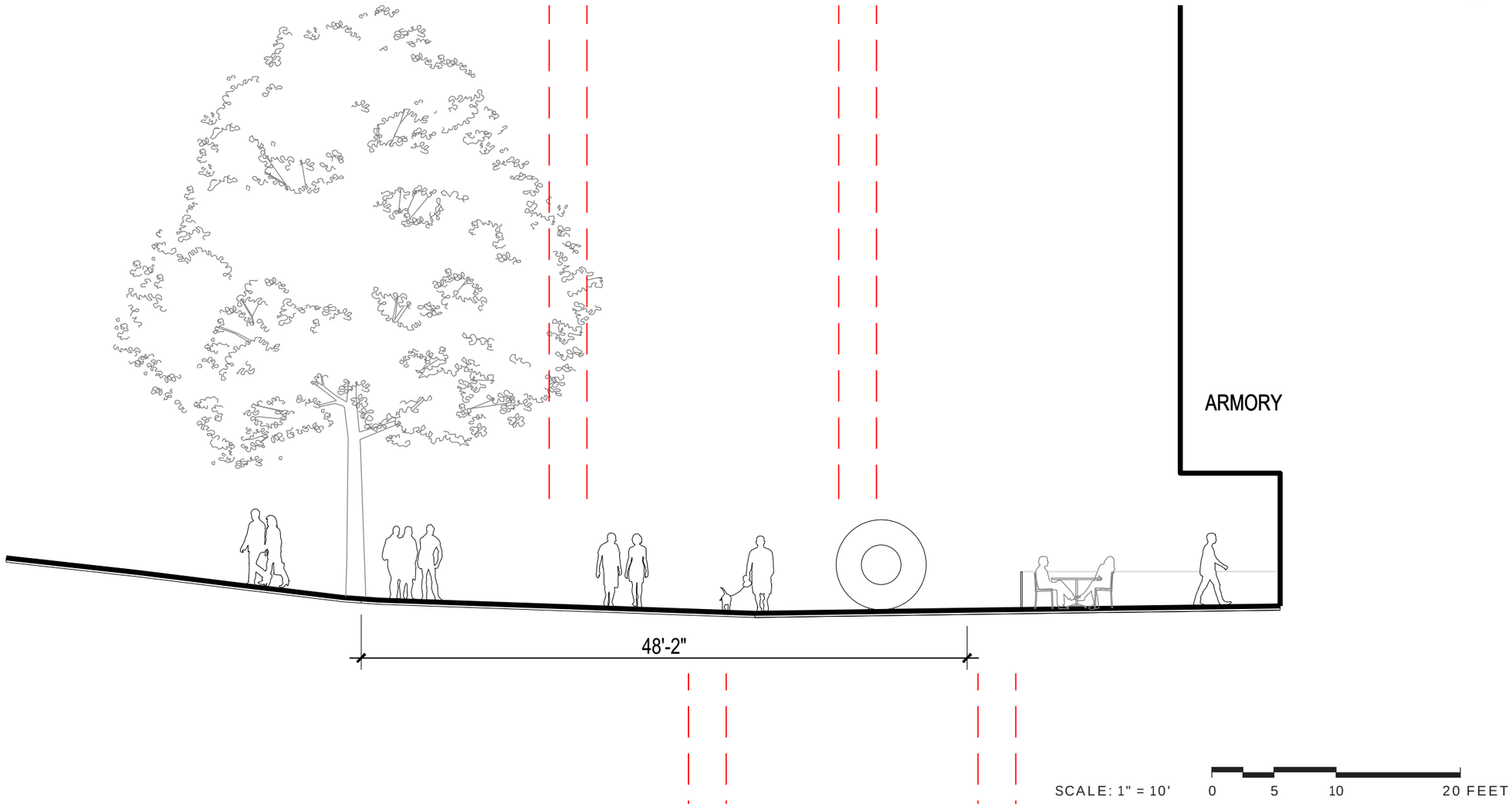


Armory

Existing Armory Plaza Section

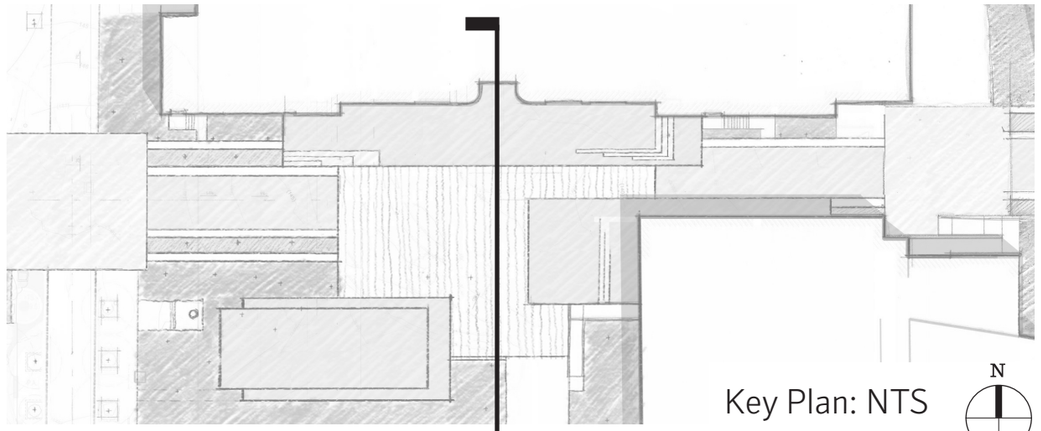


Key Plan: NTS



Armory

Proposed Armory Plaza Section



Key Plan: NTS

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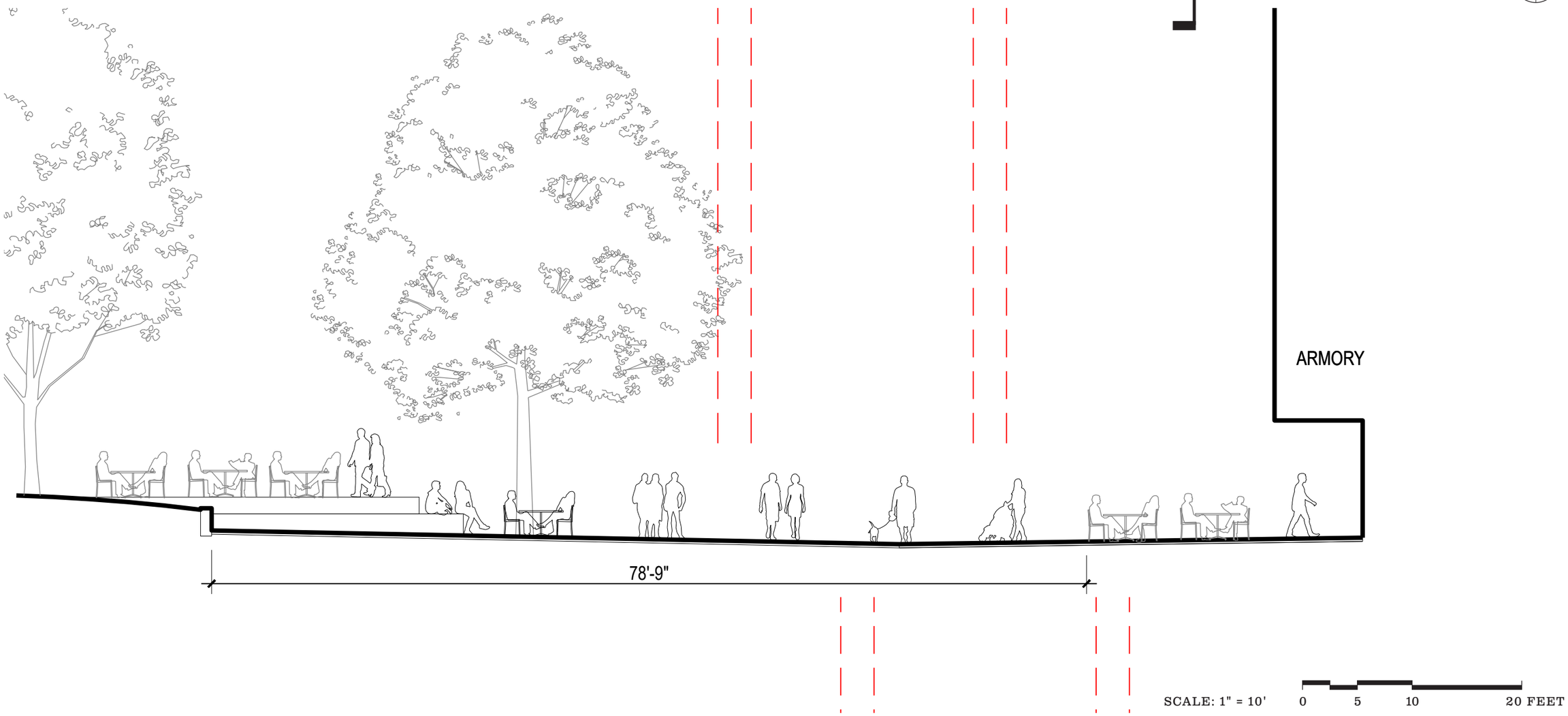
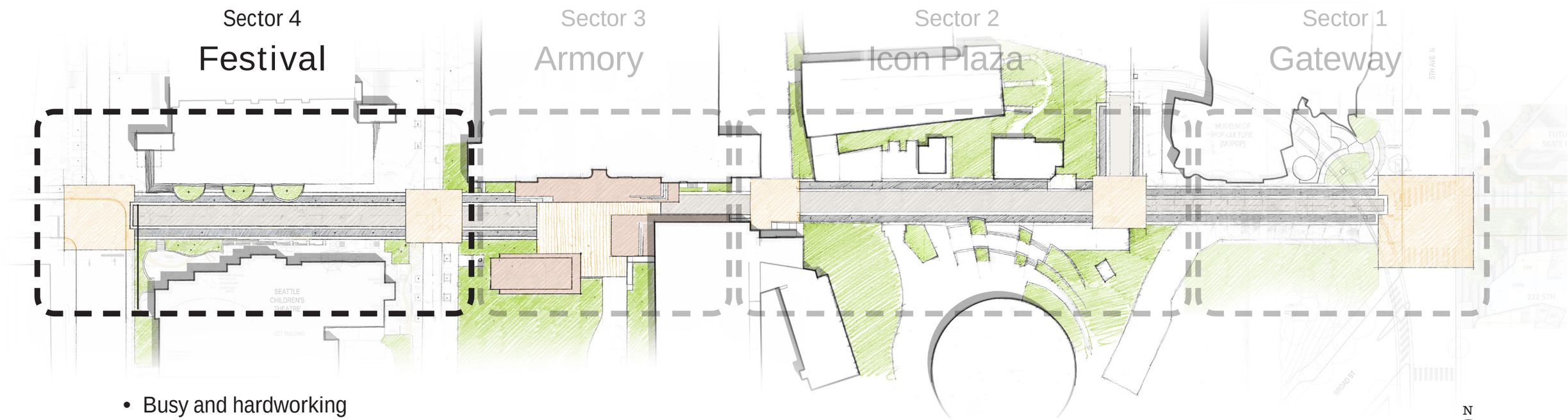


SCALE: 1" = 10'

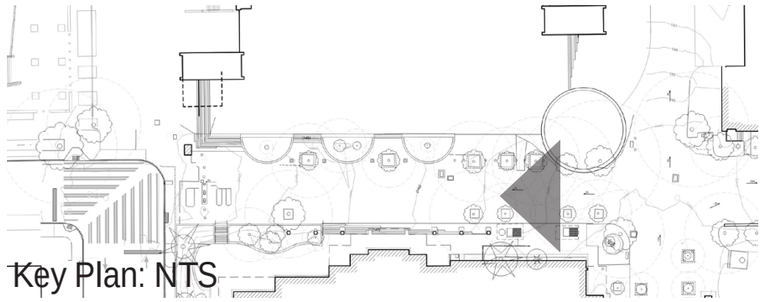
0 5 10 20 FEET

Thomas Street



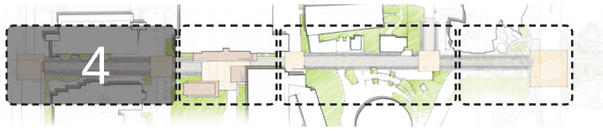
- Busy and hardworking
- Popular for festival booths
- Neighborhood entrance

Festival - Existing Conditon

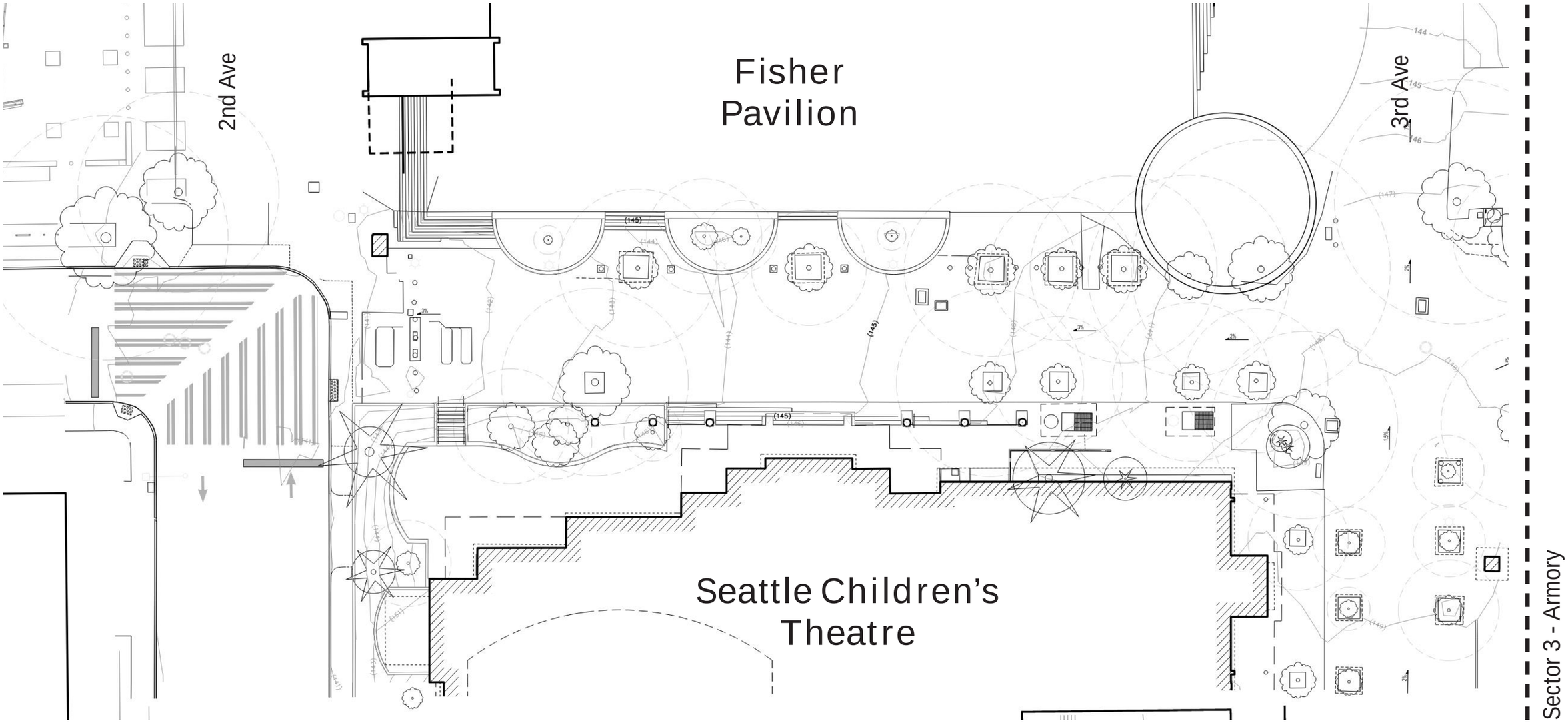


Key Plan: NTS

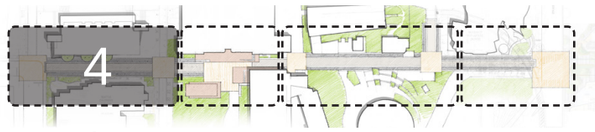
Festival - Existing



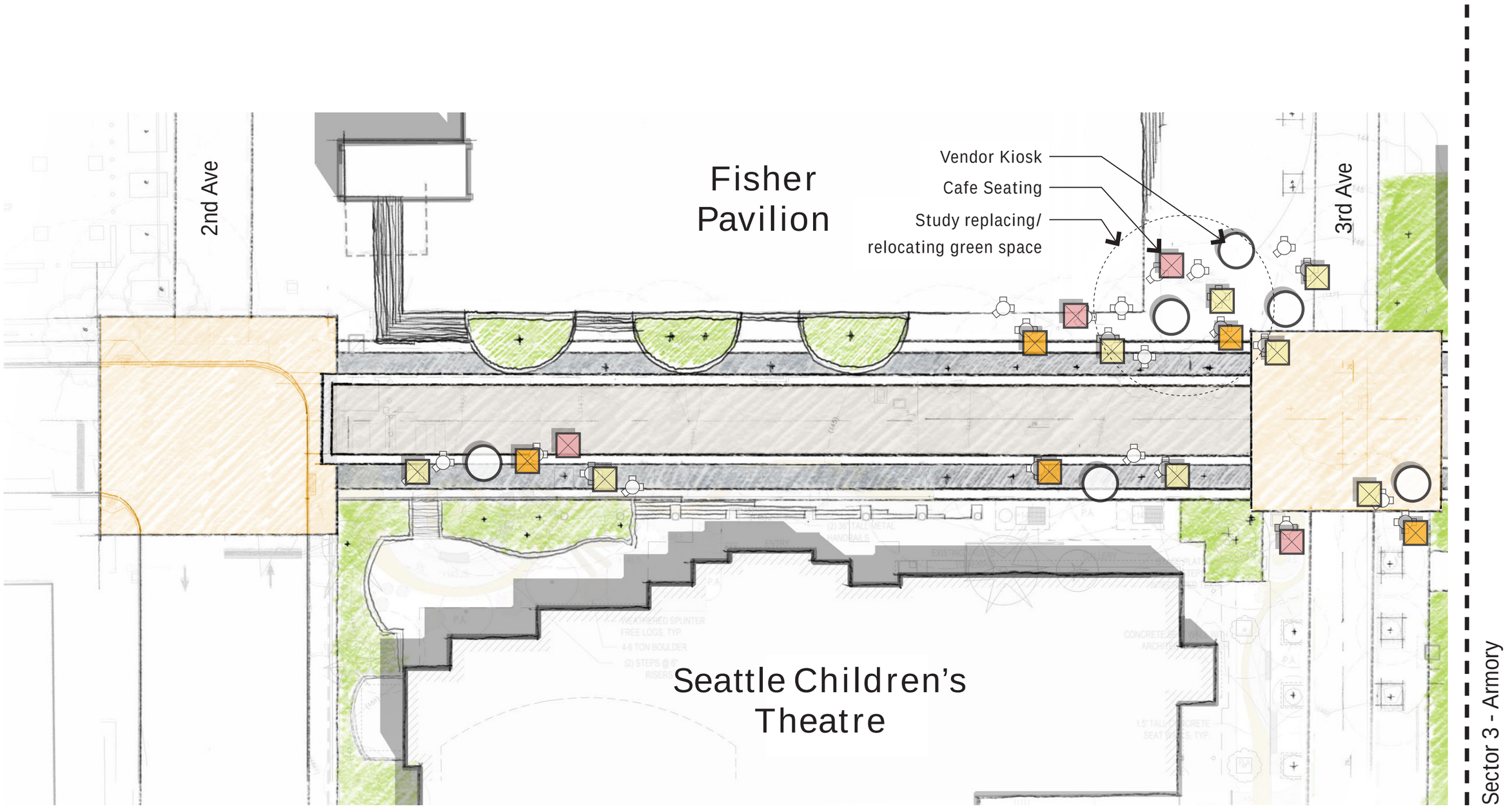
Key Plan



Festival - Proposed



Key Plan



Thank You