



Town of
Normal

Underpass at Uptown Station



**Project
Update**

October 29, 2025

Project Goals

- Provide a safe, grade-separated railroad crossing at Uptown Station for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Provide ADA compliant design
- Provide safe access to south Amtrak Boarding Platform
- Eliminate railroad barrier between Uptown North and South
- Promote economic development through jobs creation and Uptown Normal development

Project Goals

- Safety

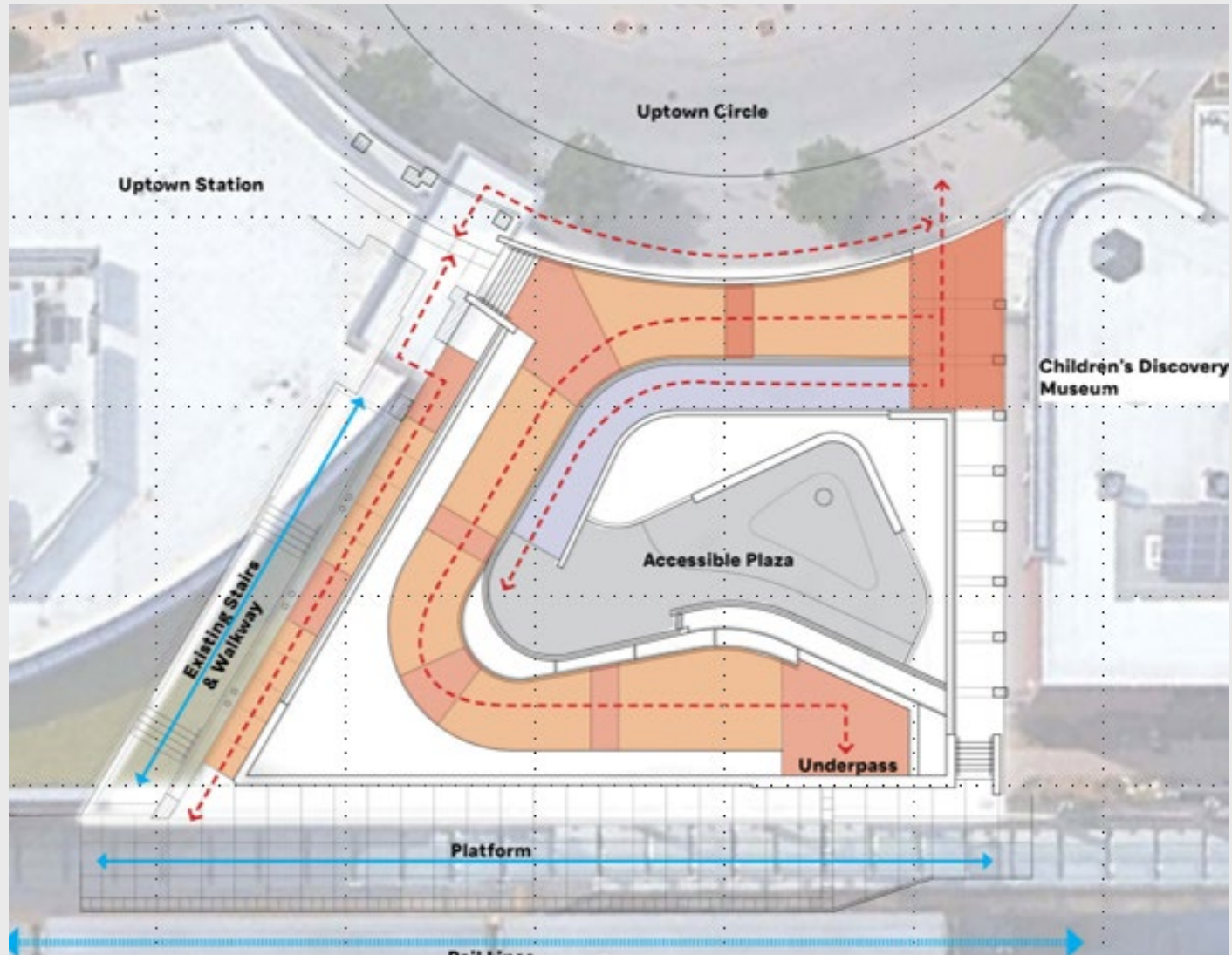


Project Goals

- Access



Project Goals - ADA Accessibility



Key Project Milestones

- April 2024: National Environmental Protection Agency re-evaluation signed
- April 2024: Final design acceptance received from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- May 2024: Illinois Commerce Commission order issued
- June 2024: Construction & Management agreement with Union Pacific executed
- Oct. 2024: Utility relocation agreements finalized
- Nov. 2024: Contractor bids submitted to Town
- May 2025: Value engineering process completed
- June 2025: Revised contractor bids received
- July 2025: Grant amendment request submitted to FRA
- Oct. 2025: Executed amended grant agreement with FRA

Project Bidding

Nov. 2024: Bids Received

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| • Millstone Weber, LLC | \$35,158,047 |
| • P.J. Hoerr, Inc. | \$40,765,000 |

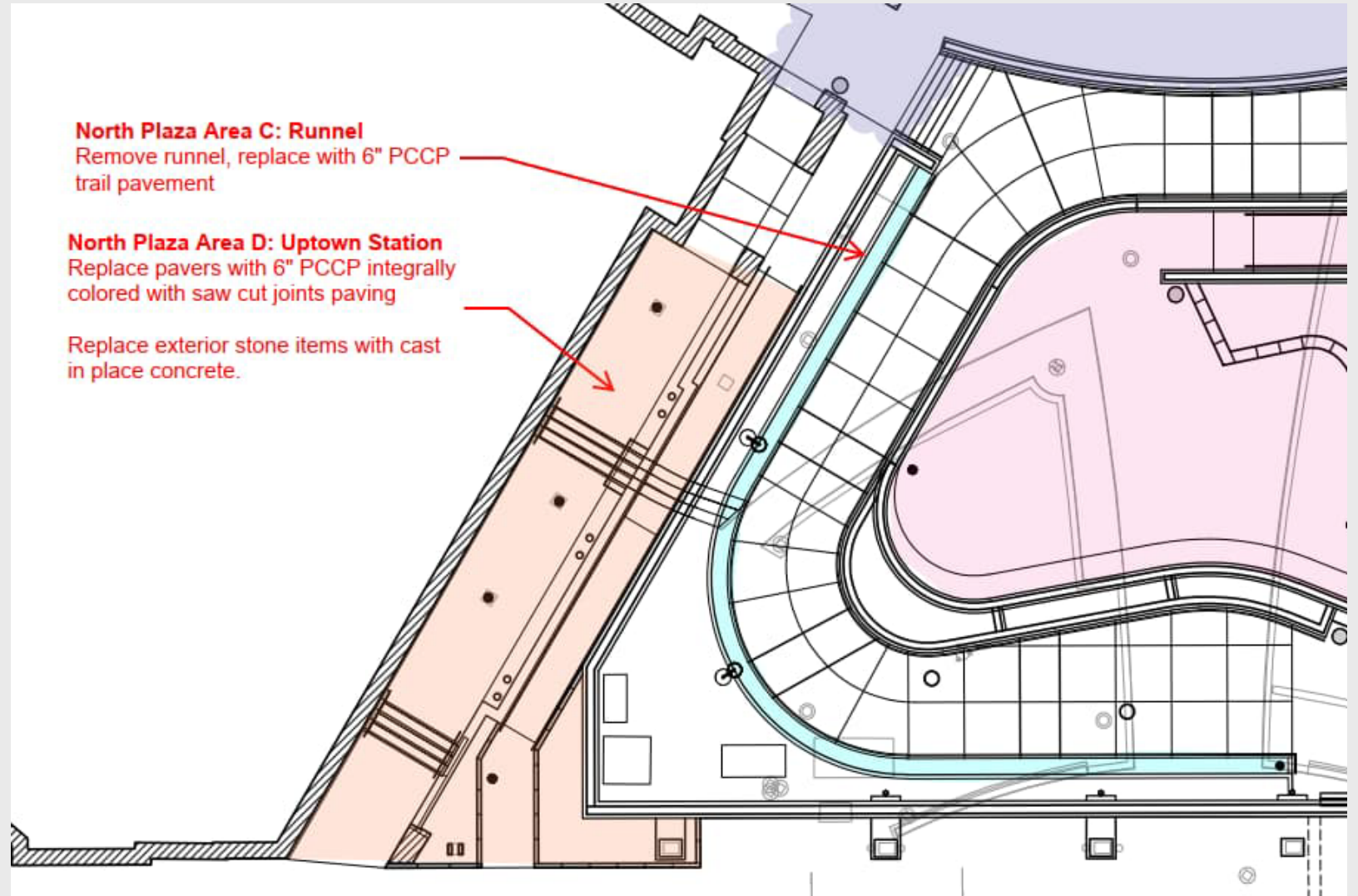
Dec. 2024: Value Engineering Process Initiated

Value Engineering

- Identified project elements driving increased costs
- Redesigned selected project components to reduce cost while maintaining project objectives
- Removed selected scope items for in-house installation by Town staff
- Reduced project footprint in South Plaza area

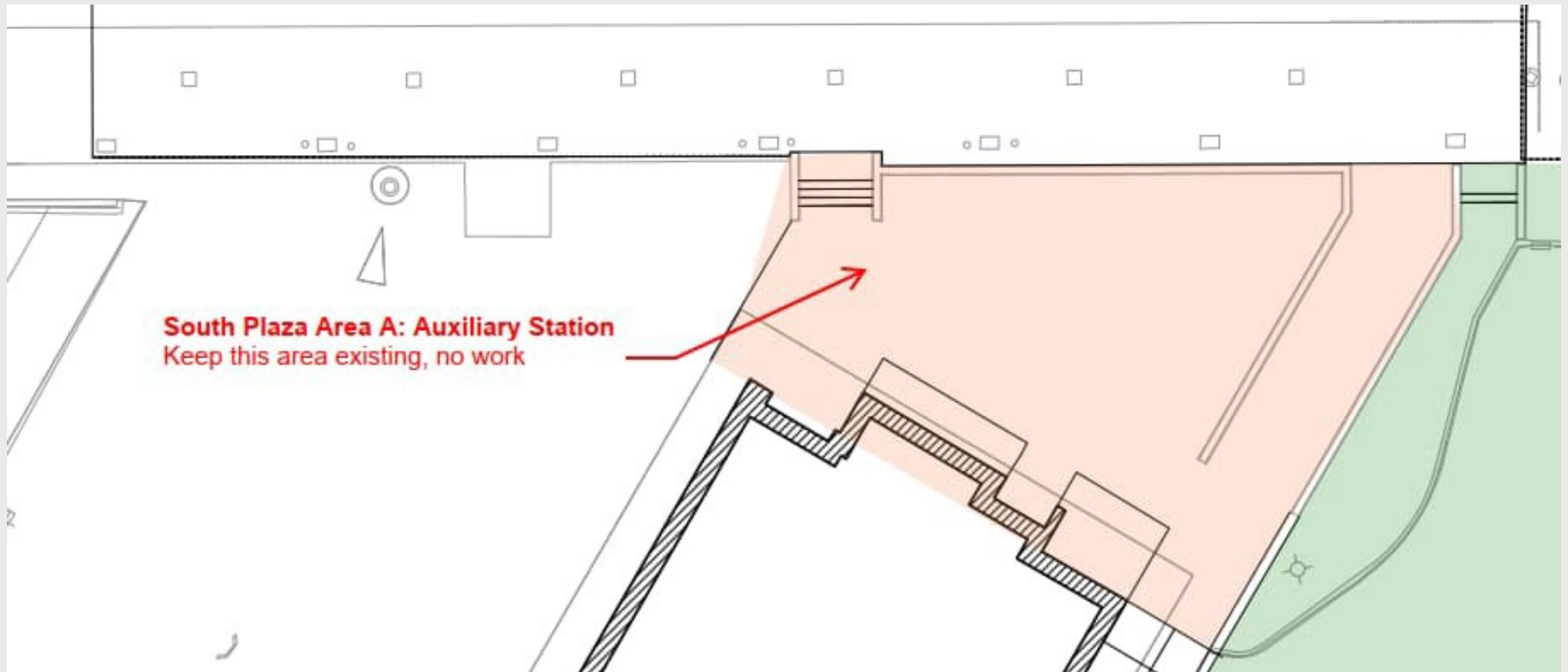
Value Engineering – North Plaza

- Remove paved runnel, replace with traditional gutters
- Replace pavers with colored concrete paving
- Replace exterior stone with cast-in-place concrete



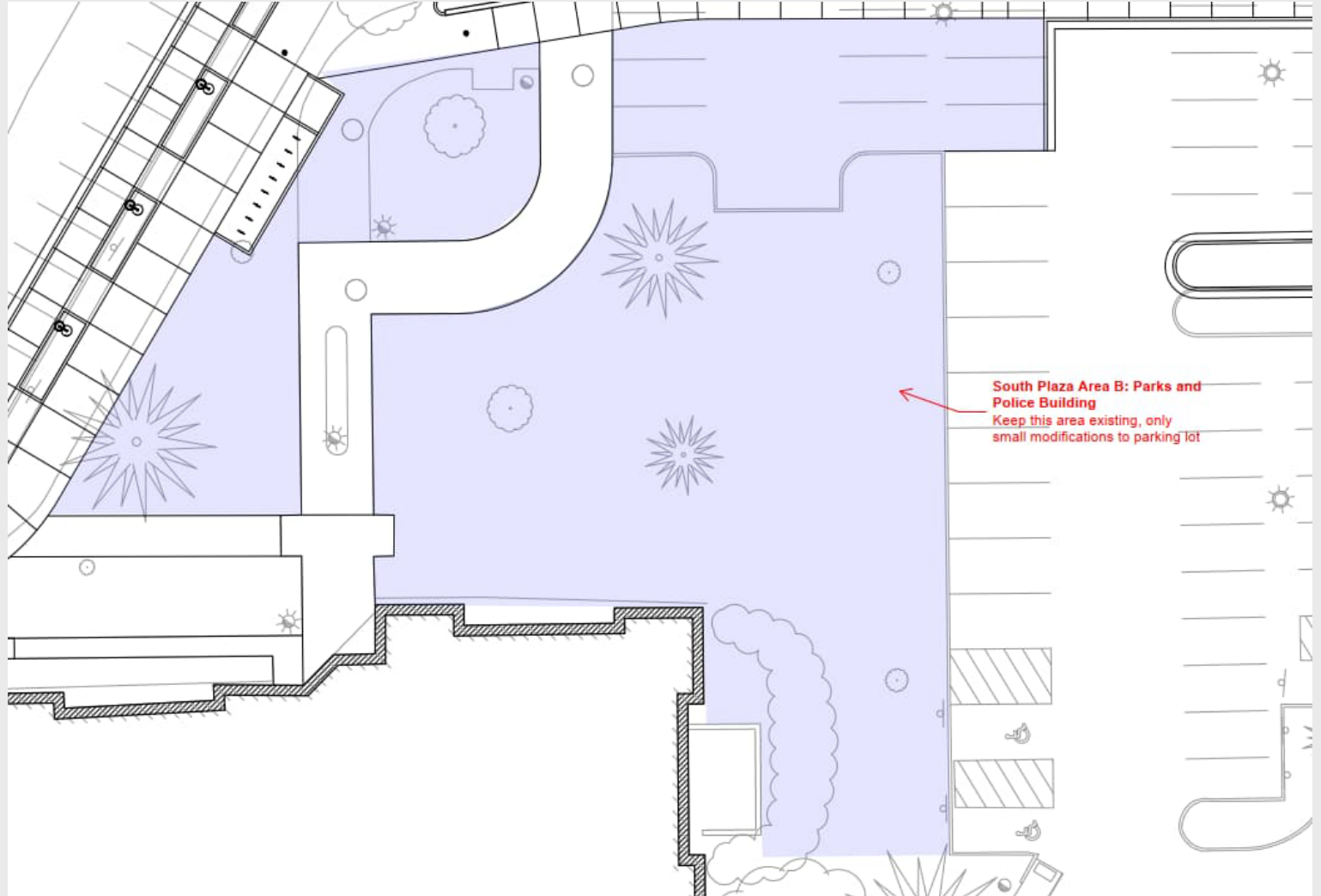
Value Engineering – South Plaza Station

Maintain current footprint around Auxiliary Station



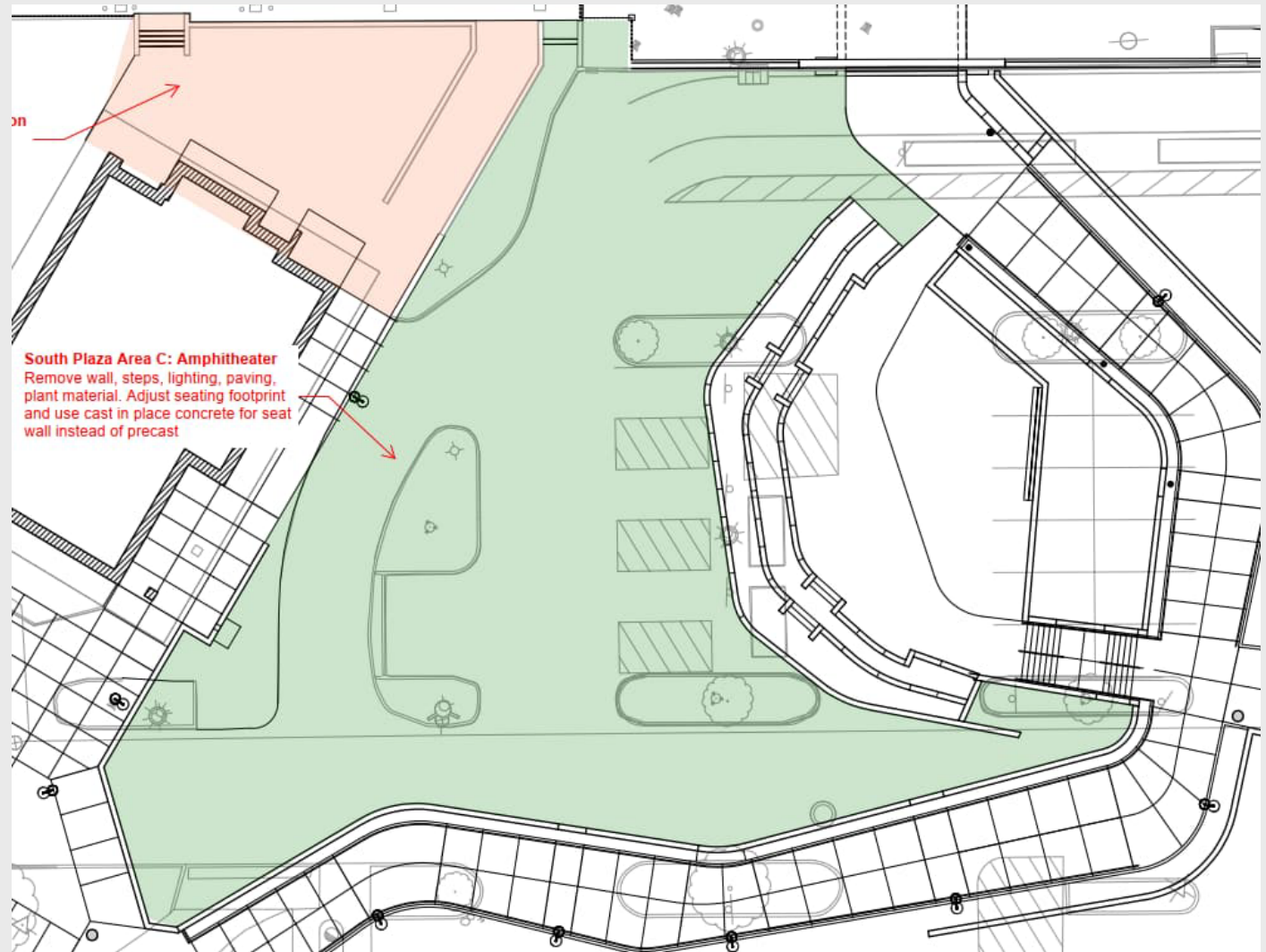
Value Engineering – South Plaza

Maintain existing conditions in the area near Parks & Recreation and Normal Police Department

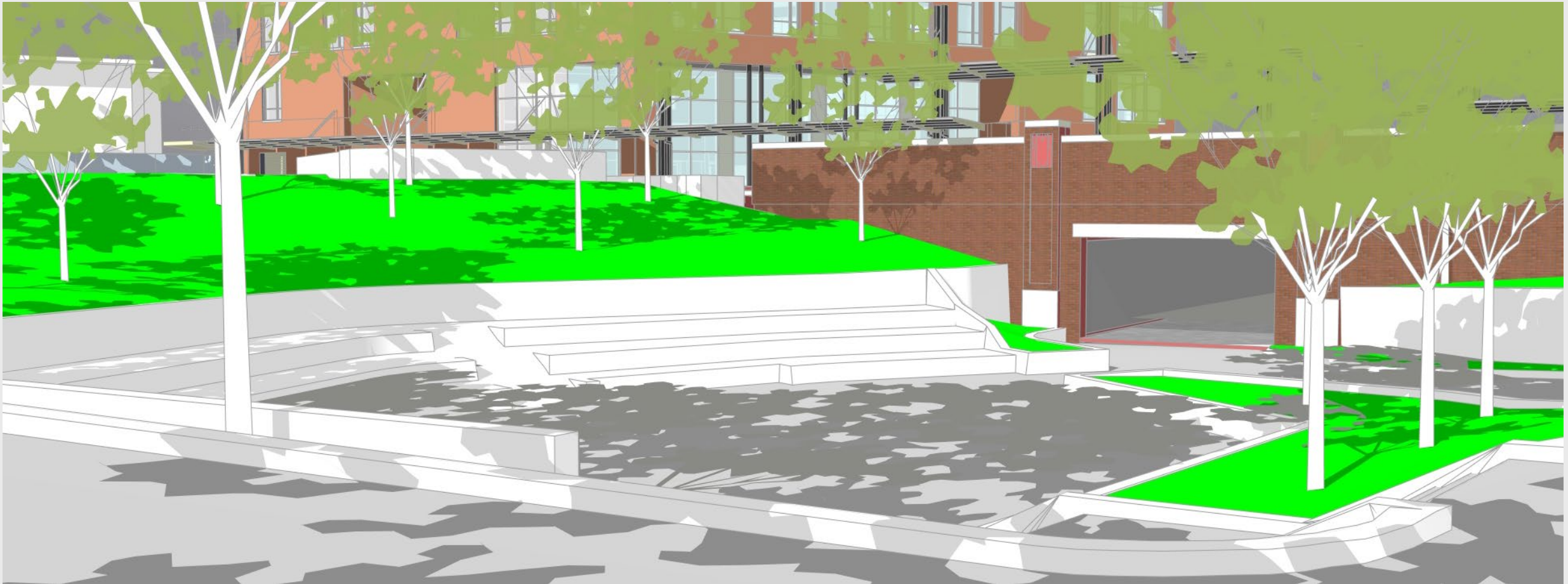


Value Engineering - Amphitheater

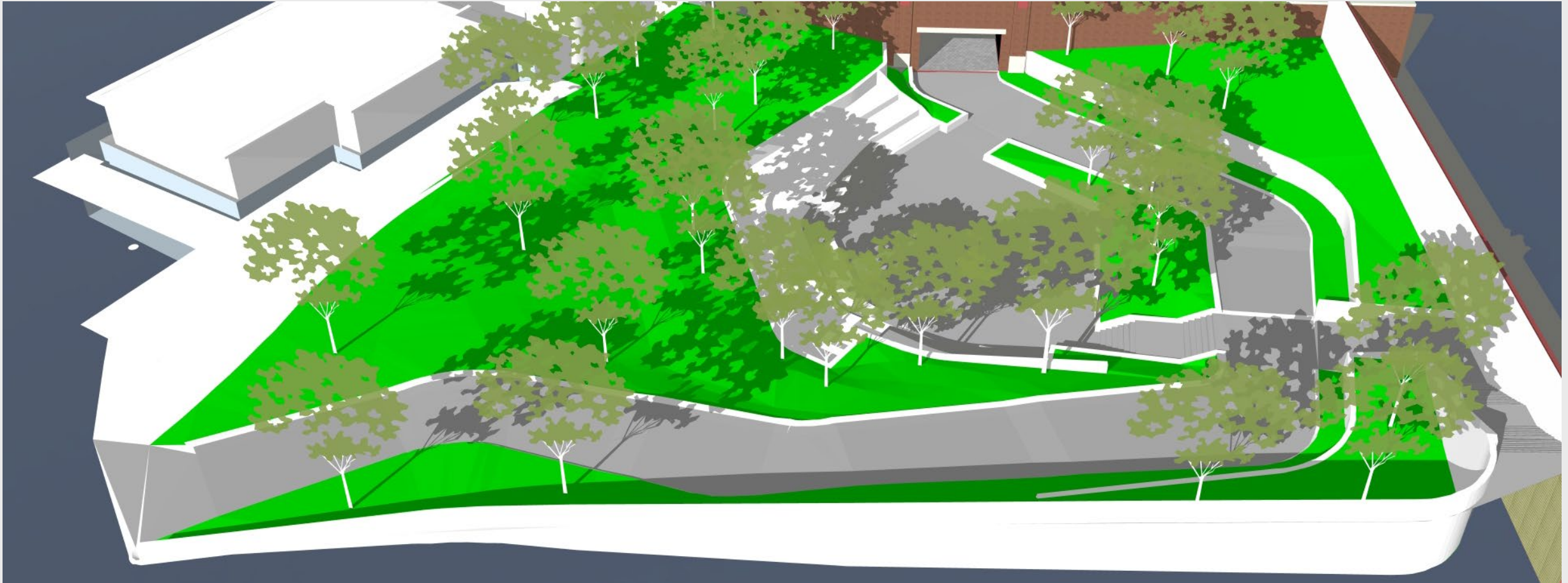
- Remove stairway along railroad tracks
- Modify:
 - Lighting
 - Paving
 - Plants
- Adjust the seating footprint
- Use concrete for seat walls instead of stone



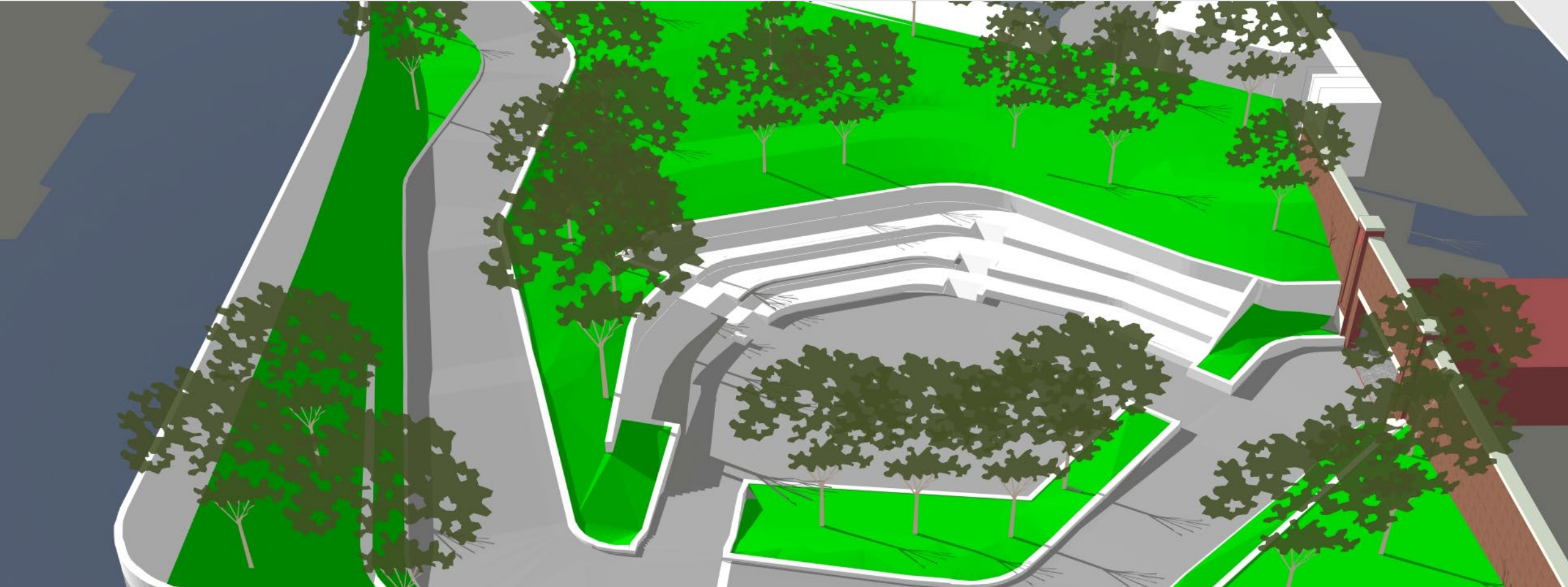
Revised South Plaza - Amphitheater



Revised South Plaza – North Aerial View



Revised South Plaza – West Aerial View



North Plaza



Underpass View



Revised Project Pricing

Revised Pricing Submitted in June 2025:

- Millstone Weber, LLC \$32,064,300
- P.J. Hoerr, Inc. \$32,240,000

Project construction cost reduced \$3,093,747 from original low bid

Project Funding

Funding Source	Project Contribution	Percent of Cost
Federal Section 130 for Final Design	\$3,000,000	7.4%
Federal BUILD Grant	\$16,157,375	40.1%
Town of Normal	\$14,893,545	37.0%
Illinois Commerce Commission	\$6,250,000	15.5%
Estimated Final Design & Construction Cost	\$40,300,920	100%

Grant Amendment & Next Steps

- Modified BUILD 2019 grant documents
 - Updates project costs to current construction cost
 - Revises project completion and milestone dates
- Planned construction start date: **November 2025**
- Substantial completion of construction date: **June 1, 2027**
- Project Performance Period – ending **Sept. 30, 2027** (end of BUILD FY2019 funding)

Project Funding – Change Illustrated

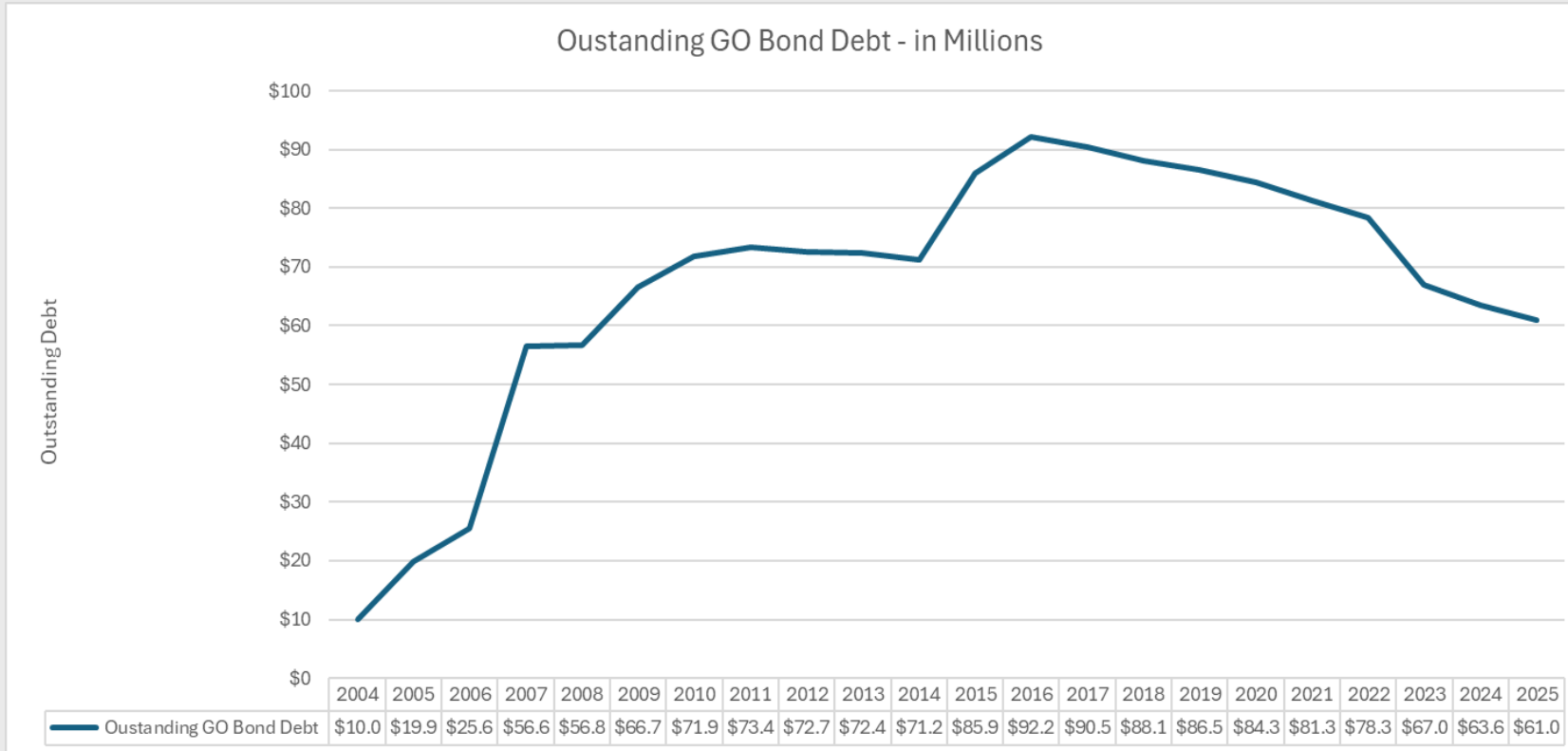
Funding Source	Estimates Prior to Construction Bids	After Construction Bids	Increase
Federal Section 130 for Final Design	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	
Federal BUILD Grant	\$16,157,375	\$16,157,375	
Town of Normal	\$2,893,545	\$14,893,545	\$12,000,000
Illinois Commerce Commission	\$6,250,000	\$6,250,000	
Estimated Final Design & Construction Cost	\$28,300,920	\$40,300,920	\$12,000,000

Project Funding - Gap

- Underpass project gap = \$12 million
- Cash or Debt?
 - Proposal: finance gap with a bond issue
- Current Debt = \$57 million (October 2025)
- Long history of utilizing debt for capital projects and economic development

Project Funding – Outstanding Debt

Outstanding debt by year



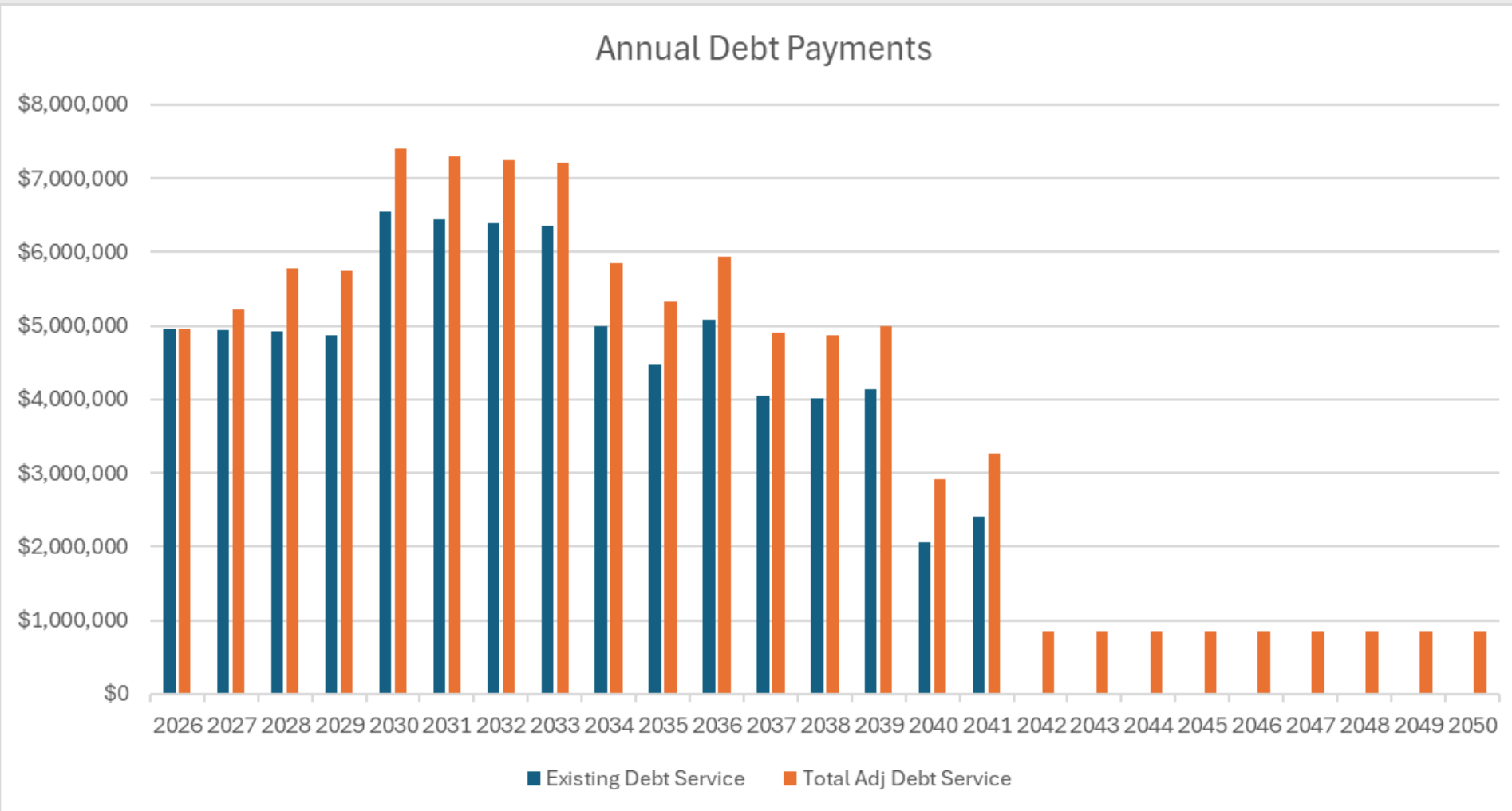
- Increased because of Uptown Normal renewal and build out of Fire Stations
- Decreased since 2016 due to regular principal payments and early pay-off strategies
- Long history of utilizing debt for capital projects and investment in economic development

Project Funding – Debt History

Since 2003 the Town has issued \$92.5 million in support of Uptown Normal economic development

- Notable Use of Bond Proceeds
 - \$27.7 million - Marriott Conference Center and parking deck
 - \$14.1 million - College street parking deck
 - \$10.5 million - Uptown Station
 - \$7.8 million - Uptown water and sewer infrastructure
 - \$5.7 million - Children's Discovery Museum
 - \$5.3 million - Uptown road work
 - \$5.1 million - Hyatt
 - \$3.5 million - Site prep and land acquisition
 - \$2.8 million - One Uptown Circle

Project Funding – Debt Payments



- After 2030: debt slopes downward
- 2041: All current/existing debt paid off
- 2050: New debt paid off

Project Funding – Estimated Terms

- Estimated Terms for \$12 million bond
 - General Obligation debt (new money issue)
 - Targeting a 25-year term
 - Estimated rates of 4.3% to 4.5%
 - Financing would close April 2026
 - Estimated annual payment of \$870,000
- Considering refunding opportunities with new money issue

Project Funding - Revenue

- Insufficient current revenue sources
- New revenue needed for annual debt payment
- Propose increasing two separate taxes:
 1. Food & Beverage tax: from 2% to 2.25%
 2. Hotel Motel tax: from 6% to 8%

Project Funding – Food & Beverage Tax

Food & Beverage tax: from 2% to 2.25%

- History

- First adopted in 2002 at 2%
- Has not changed since adoption

- Generate an estimated \$440,000

Comparison

City	Food & Beverage Tax
Bloomington	2%
Champaign	2.5%
Decatur	2%
Galesburg	2%
Normal	2%
Peoria	2%
Springfield	0%
Urbana	2%

Project Funding – Hotel Motel Tax

Hotel Motel tax: from 6% to 8%

- History
 - First adopted in 1984 at 1%
 - Increased to 2.5% in 1996
 - Increased to 6% in 2003
- Generate an estimated \$580,000

Comparison

City	Hotel Motel Tax
Bloomington	6%
Champaign	7%
Decatur	8%
Galesburg	10.8%
Normal	6%
Peoria*	8%
Springfield	8%
Urbana	7%

* Additional 1.0% Business Development Tax

Project Funding - Estimates

Food & Beverage and Hotel Motel Tax increases combined

- Generate an estimated \$1.02 million annually
- Total estimated annual debt service is \$870,000

Standard and prudent practice to have coverage ratio

- Income to debt payment ratio
- Minimum coverage ratio of 1.20
- Actual coverage ratio is 1.17 ($\$1,020,000 / \$870,000$)
- Revenue fluctuations

Project Funding - Recommendation

Issue a \$12 million General Obligation Bond to close the funding “gap”

- Fixed-rate bond issue
- 25-year term
- Close the transaction in April 2026
- Annual debt service payment of \$870,000
- Revenue to cover the debt service
 - Food & Beverage
 - Hotel Motel Tax

Underpass Economic Impact

Definitions

- **Direct** – immediate effects (e.g, jobs created)
- **Indirect** – ripple effects (e.g., supply chain, including suppliers, manufacturers, transporters, etc.)
- **Induced** – increased spending (e.g. more money spent on goods and services such as food, housing, and entertainment by those employed in direct and indirect stages)

IMPLAN

- Nationally recognized economic modeling system
- Assesses spending, employment & investment impacts

Underpass Economic Impact

Direct Impact

- Create 186 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs
- \$19.4M contribution to the local gross domestic product
- Additional indirect & induced impact

	Jobs	Labor Income (in millions)	Value Added to Local GDP (in millions)
Direct	186	\$ 13.30	\$ 19.40
Indirect	19	\$ 1.28	\$ 2.31
Induced	44	\$ 2.34	\$ 4.60
Total	249	\$ 16.90	\$ 26.30

Economic Impact Considerations

For Uptown South, the Underpass will provide:

- Essential connectivity
- Catalyst for development
- Easy access to vibrant, walkable locations
- Support of mixed-use design
- Opportunity for in-fill housing

Uptown South Economic Impact

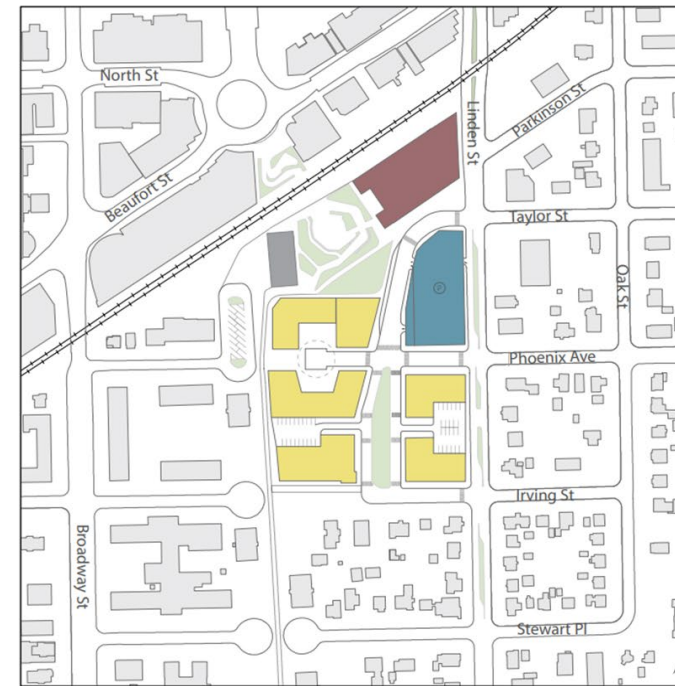
Uptown South Master Plan

- Mixed use development
490,000+ square feet of new development, including residential, retail and public institution space

Additional economic impacts

- Increased sales tax revenue
- Increased Equalized Assessed Value (EAV)
- Tourism

MIXED-USE MASTER PLAN



- 1. Amtrak
- 2. Large Format Building
- 3. Housing
- 4. Amtrak

The master plan designates four main uses for the proposed buildings, although they are all mixed-use. The ground floor frontages along Taylor Street and Taylor Boulevard allow for commercial use and create a pedestrian-friendly corridor.

City Manager's Comments

- How does this project fit with our Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan?
- Strategic priority since 2015
- Comprehensive Plan/Vision 2040 identified transformational initiatives that directly link to this project:
 - Infrastructure & Public Safety
 - Health & Sustainability
 - Human & Social Aspects
 - Community Identity and Public Place



Council Discussion