

Webberville

"the beginning"

The beginning. A place where everything originates. A place to start a new journey. A place where the future of what lies ahead shines bright with hope. Webberville is that place of beginning for the Grand River corridor in the Tri-County Region. It is the gateway that will bring people in to this area and allow them to begin their journey forth through the area. Webberville's rich past will give rise to a bright future making this town the beacon that leads people into this area.

History

Originally named Phelsptown and Leroy, Webberville has always been a part of the Grand River Corridor stretching from Lansing to Detroit. The village was relocated in the 1850's to allow travelers to access the city from Grand River and from the newly constructed railroad station. This move attracted many visitors as they traveled down the corridor. Many settlers arrived in the area in the early 1900's many of the surrounding swampland and forest were transformed into farmland. Business began to be built in the downtown area. During this time the key characteristics of the town developed. Grain elevators were established in along the railroad tracks to the west of the city and a school house was constructed. Both helped the community grow and flourish as more people were attracted to the area. The business park and school still stand today forming the same character that it used to be except Webberville has not continued to evolve like the surrounding communities.



Photo of the historic school house first opened in 1913.



Photo of the railroad station that drew people to the area.



Photo of downtown Webberville in 1900.

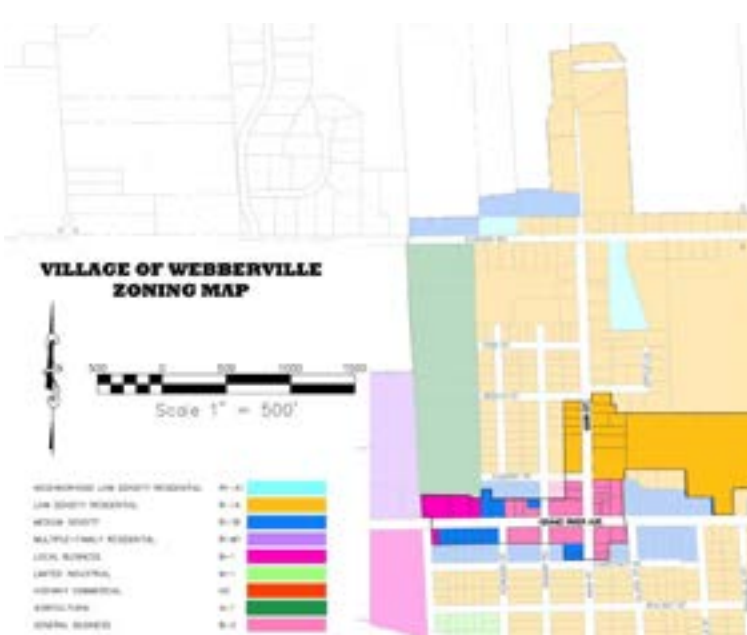
Goals and Objectives

- Make Webberville a gateway and arrival point along the Grand River corridor in the Tri County Region.
- Preserve and revitalize the historic character of Webberville buildings.
- Create a trail way system to connect the city of Webberville with the local Industrial Park and the River Trail system.
- Enhance the quality of life throughout the local neighborhoods.
- Market Downtown Webberville as a town with a lot of character and identity and keep the small town feeling.
- Develop a way to connect Webberville to Meridian Township to the Grand River Avenue/Michigan Avenue Corridor and Bus Rapid Transit system.
- Improve streetscapes to reflect the historic character of Webberville.
- Develop safe routes to and from schools with complete streets.
- Developments will comply with ADA requirements.
- Provide adequate village services to Webberville residents.

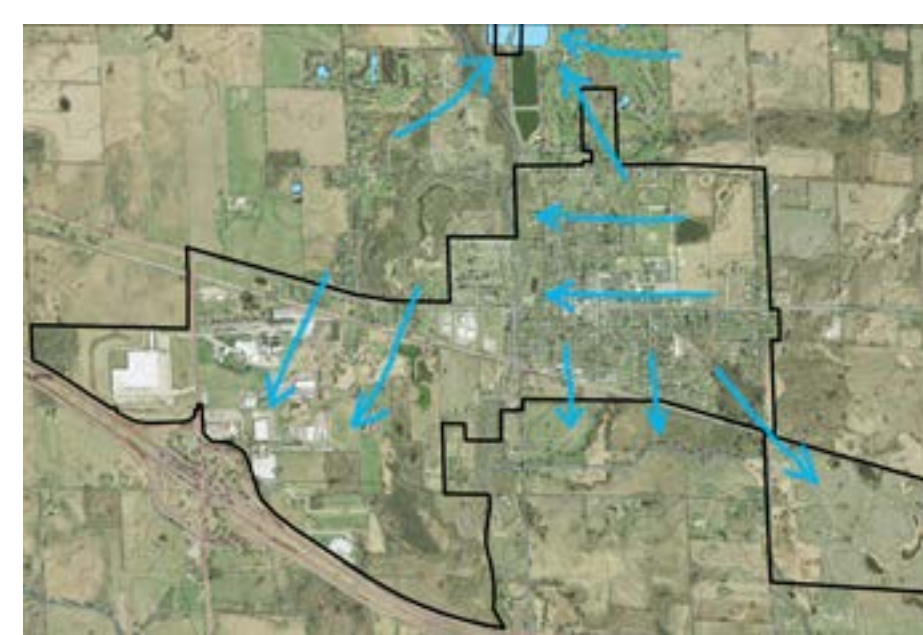
Program Elements

- Parks
- Connective Road system.
- Improved Gateways and Signage
- New sewage and drainage
- Revitalized and revamped downtown
- Non-motorized trail system
- Public event space
- Improved streetscape

Inventory - What Webberville is



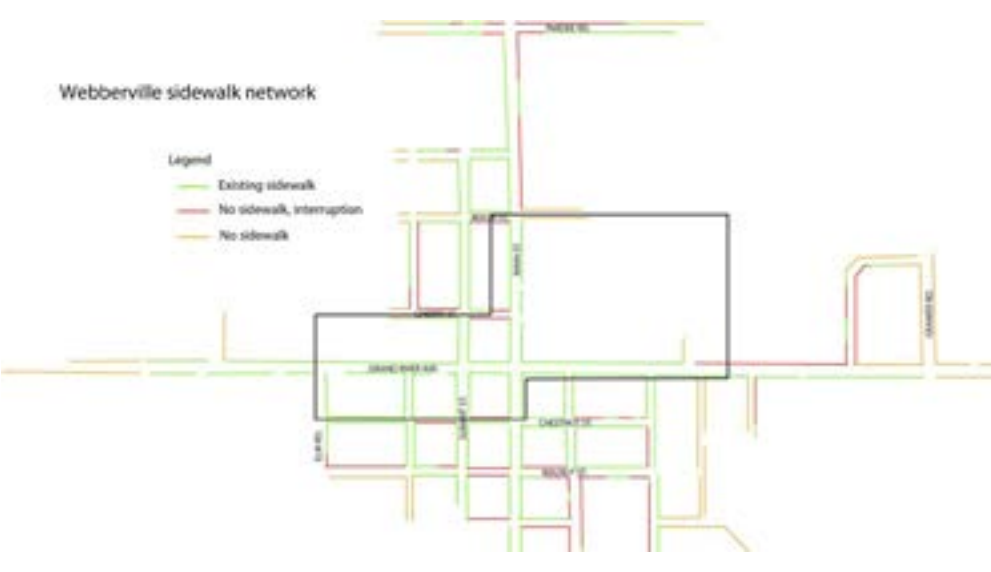
This map shows the zoning of downtown Webberville. It shows where the people are in relationship to the businesses of Webberville. Shows potential for future land uses. This is useful because it shows us where we are able to put certain program elements.



Map of the waterflow of Webberville and the surrounding area. The water seems to flow South off of the site and move toward the middle of the site into Kalamink Creek. At the northern part of the town the water is all flowing into the water treatment facility which is also along the Kalamink Creek.



This map shows the land uses of the downtown Webberville area. This helps us to see where certain types of uses have clustered or are sparse to place our program elements accordingly.



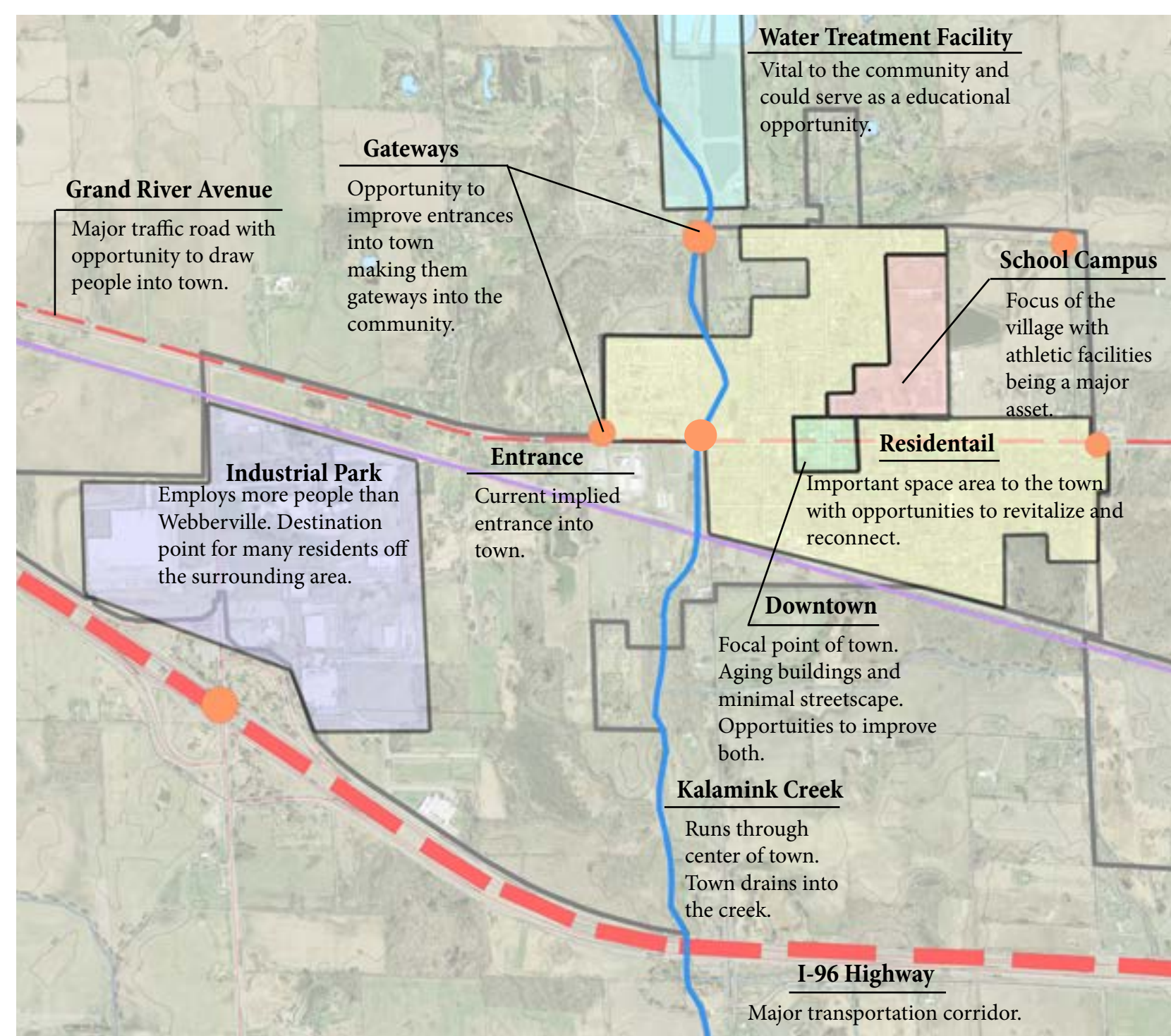
This sidewalk map shows where sidewalk exist and do not exist in the downtown area of Webberville. The sidewalk unit does not function up to its potential as there are many sidewalks that are non-existent through the downtown.



This is a map of the Grand River corridor and the surrounding area. The towns and cities are highlighted in green with the surrounding connections highlighted in different colors. The Red Cedar River is in blue, Grand River Avenue is in yellow, and I-96 is in orange. These connections tie together the entire Grand River corridor in the Tri-County region and have a big influence on the town of Webberville.

Analysis - Potential of Webberville

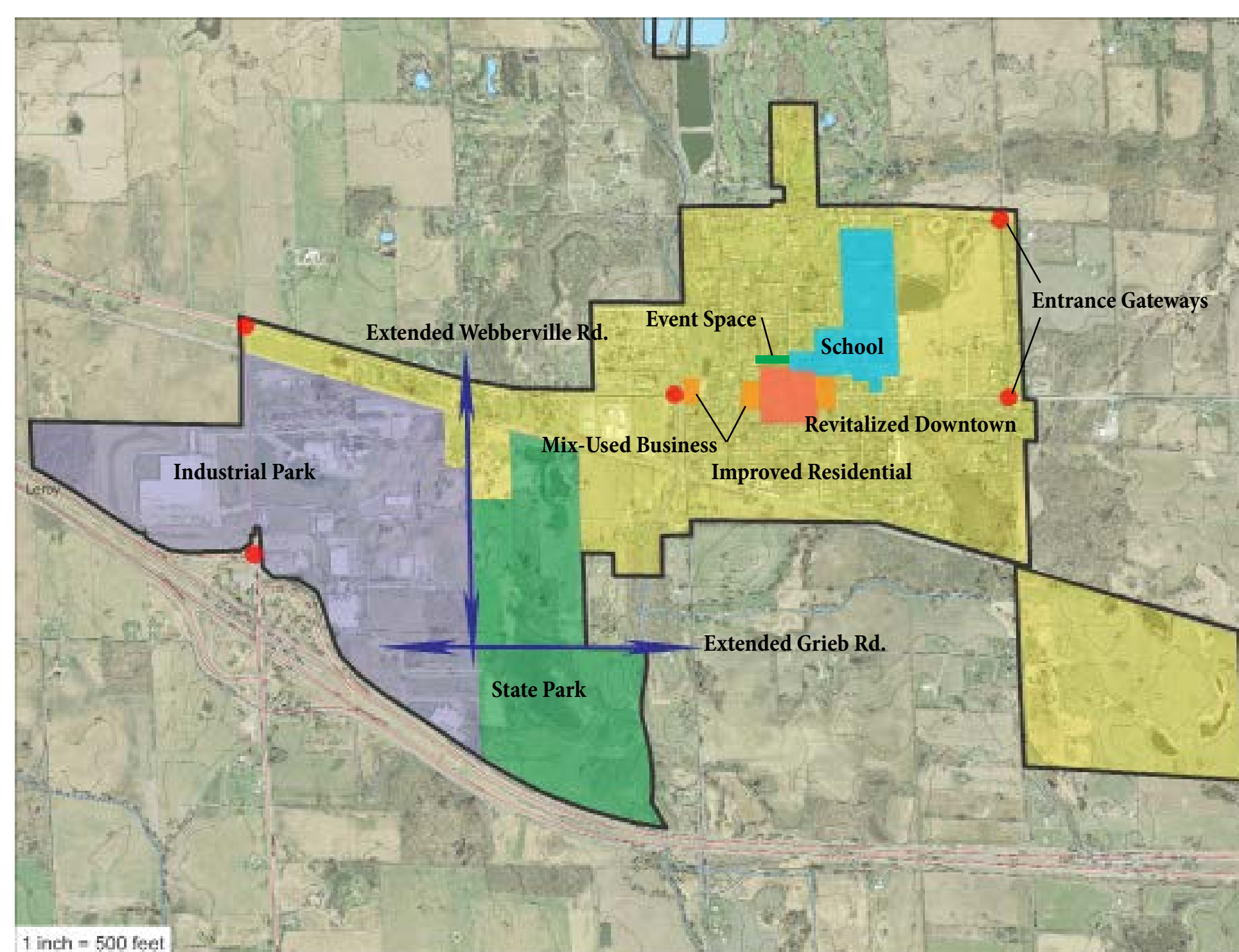
Village Map



Downtown Core Map



Synthesis - What Webberville might become



Webberville has a lot of potential to be a more connective and integrated city as shown in this synthesis. With extensions added to Webberville Rd. and Grieb Rd. into the industrial park and improved signage at the major entrances to the city, more awareness will be brought upon visitors and locals. Adding a large park on the west side of the business district can add a regional focal point and create a buffer between the industry and the residential area of the city making it more peaceful and attractive to potential residents. Bringing more awareness will increase the traffic moving through down town Webberville expanding its potential to develop a stronger core. Keeping the core to the same approximate size that it is now will keep the same small town feeling that the residents love, however revamping the signage, facades, and aesthetic values of the downtown will encourage others to stop by and enjoy the local businesses.

Strengths

- Strong existing local businesses
 - Fool's Gold
 - Sinclair's Bar and Grill
 - Moo Hoo's Ice Cream
 - Athen's Coney Island
- Education
 - Historic Elementary School
 - High School with top-of-the-line athletic facilities.
 - Library
- Location
 - Close to manufacturing plant which employs many of the town residents.
 - Oak Lane Golf Course just north of town draws players from the region.
 - Tri-County Region
- Accessibility
 - Grand River Ave. runs through the middle of town and includes bicycle lanes.
 - Railroad tracks along southern edge.
 - I-96 minutes away.
- Small town feeling



Weaknesses



- Streetscape
 - Lighting is not complete or completely effective
 - Plantings are not coordinated or cohesive
 - Parking is unclear and poorly labeled
- Public Space
 - No public meeting or event space downtown
- Building Structure
 - Older unmaintained buildings with unattractive and fragmented character
- Utilities
 - Poor sewage and drainage systems
 - unattractive powerlines that create a negative sense of enclosure.

Opportunities

- Become more connected within the city and to the surrounding Tri-County Region
- Expand or relocate existing Gazebo Park to create a community gathering and event space
- Create more attractive entries and downtown.
- Promote development to attract new business and residents
- Become a gateway into the Tri-County Region



Existing Gazebo with opportunity to expand



This is a picture of downtown Williamston showing the potential of Webberville.

Challenges

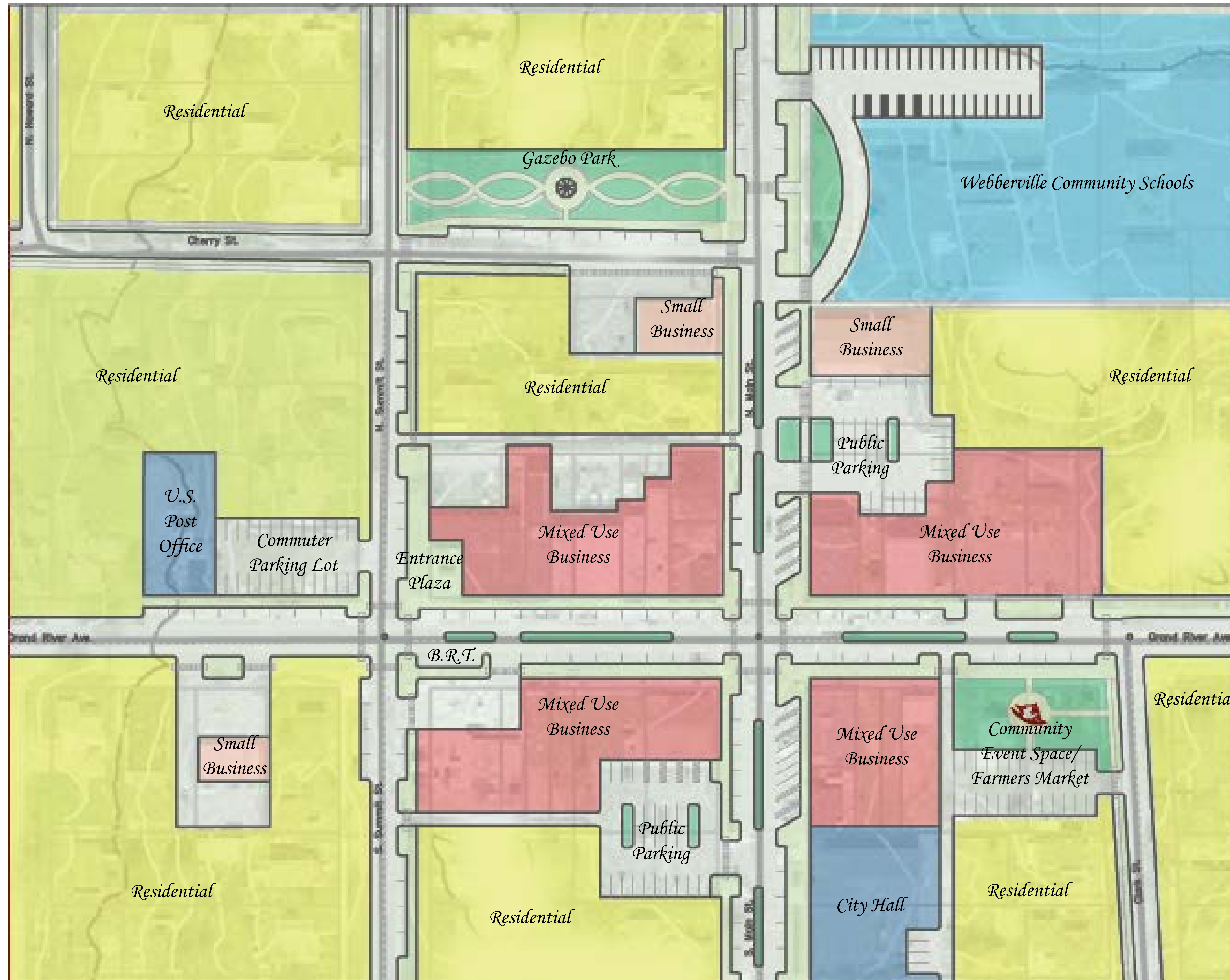


- Competition from the surrounding communities of Fowlerville and Williamston
- High tax rates could impact ability to attract new business and residents.
- Lack of awareness that Webberville is so close to the business park and I-96

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Downtown Land Use Plan

Downtown Webberville needs a new beginning, a fresh start to activate the community and make it a more eye-catching place for visitors and locals. This master plan focuses on revitalizing the downtown and creating a more functional and enjoyable environment. With new cohesive and attractive facades and streetscapes, the downtown will have a more distinguished character that will invite people to stop by and enjoy a day in Webberville. The revitalized downtown includes two new pocket parks, plant materials in the median of Grand River, and enhanced streetscapes. One new park is located North of Cherry St. and West of the historic school house and includes the relocated famous Bernard Sims gazebo for a more private setting, and the second park being in its previous location. With the previous gazebo lot being expanded into the neighboring lot, this park area now gives opportunity to feature a community gathering space with the possibility of a village farmers market at either park to encourage more use downtown. The plan also will have upgraded safe streets for schools and improved wayfinding to make users more aware of the parks and the several public parking locations downtown. With a revitalized downtown including enhanced streetscapes and sidewalks extending into the surrounding residential neighborhoods, locals will be more inspired to play a larger role in the community and interact more with downtown events and businesses giving Webberville a new beginning with a brighter future.



This is a prototype image showing the potential of what downtown Webberville could be. The design is to incorporate street medians like the ones shown (except with one lane on each side of the median) in the image to the left. These medians will greatly enhance the aesthetics of the town and make it unique to the region. Another key proponent to this design is that the powerlines are put underground to get them off of the street. This eliminates the sense of enclosure and opens the space up to be a more natural area like it was in the past.

This sketch shows the relocation of the gazebo into the park space between the church and the school. This park opens up the area, that was once underutilized as a parking lot, to draw a connection between two key elements. This further connects the city and establishes a strong downtown area with 4 distinct corners. The gazebo is to be placed in the center of the park, with plantings around it. This park will serve as a quaint relaxing area for people to go, or a bustling park full of traffic on a busy weekend day.



Renovating the facades of the buildings throughout Downtown Webberville restores the historic character that used to be present throughout the village. The more attractive building fronts are more welcoming to people visiting Webberville and could greatly increase business use. A new look will allow people to see Webberville as a progressive, inviting village with the potential to draw in more business.

This is a prototype image showing the potential for the farmer's market in the community gathering spaces in downtown Webberville. This is the space that the gazebo previously sat on. But with the gazebo and the existing house gone, it is opened up for community events. Having a community space located in downtown will encourage business use and create a stronger central core. Having the farmers market will draw the rural residents and other people from the surrounding communities into downtown Webberville.



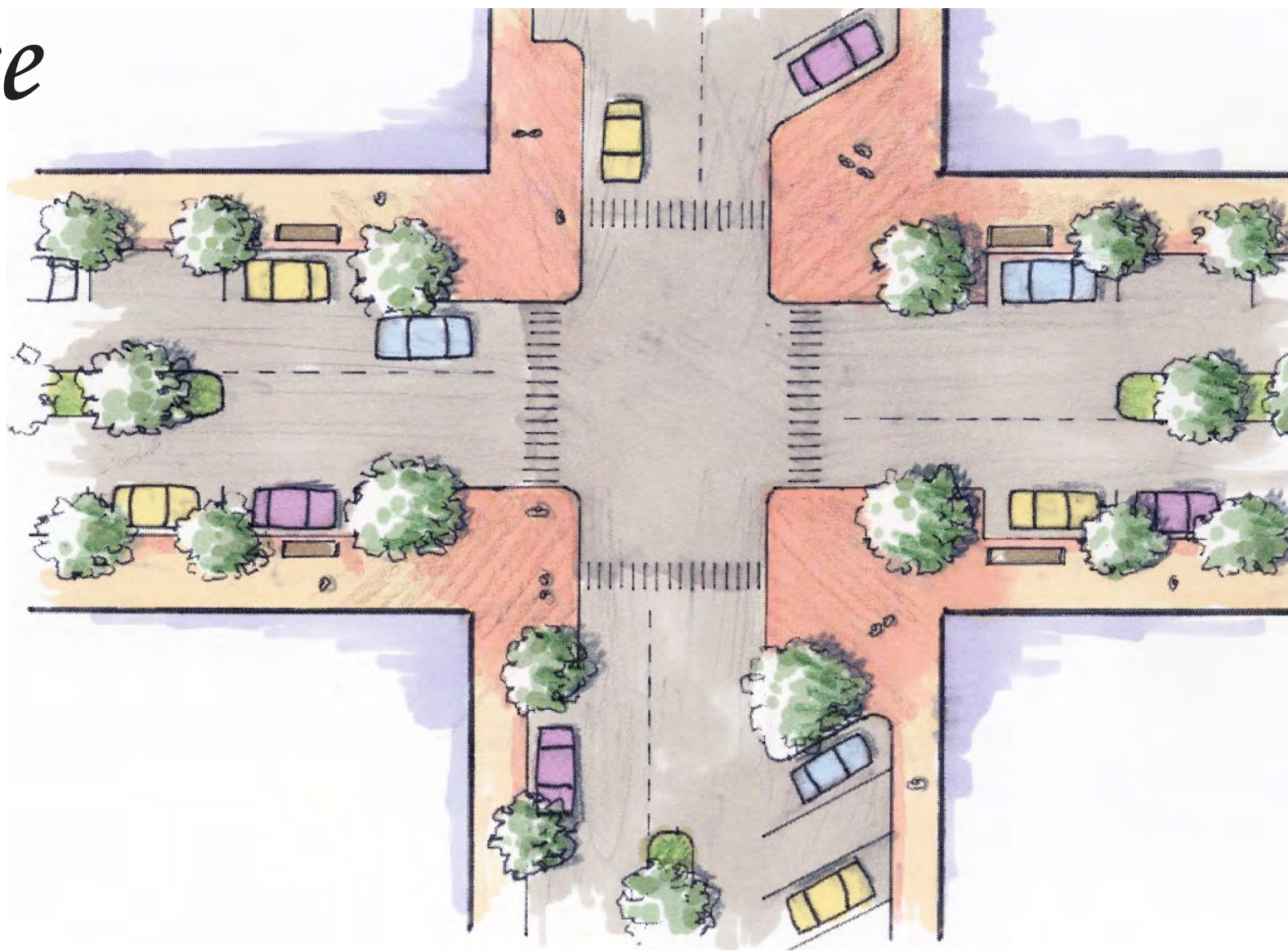
A new and improved streetscape is vital for downtown Webberville. Not only will it be visually appealing but it will be a complete street which can lead to additional grant money. The goal is to have a uniform streetscape throughout the core of Webberville with safe routes to school. Having the same tree species is important in creating a visual connection to help lead people through the downtown area.

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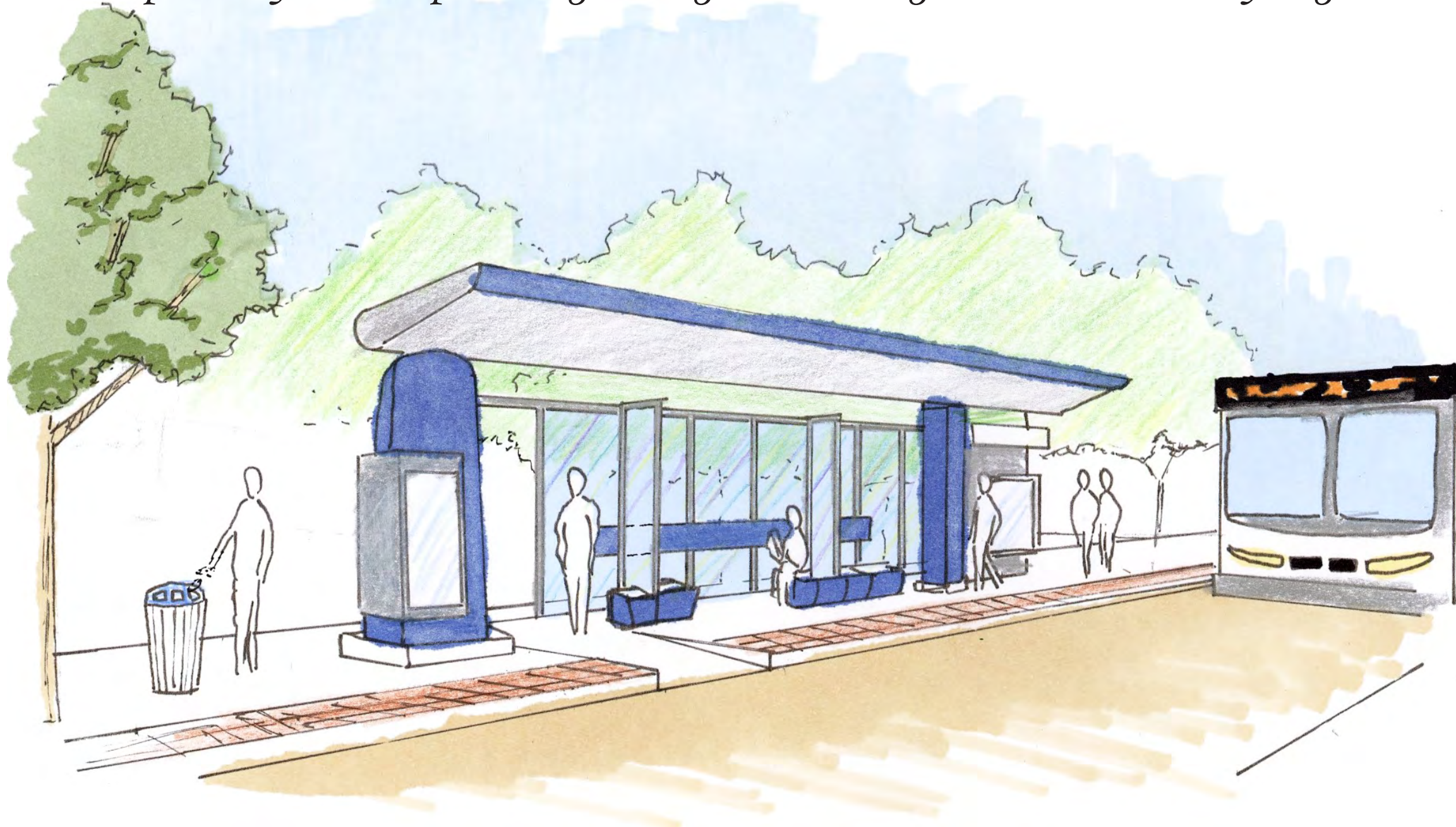
Spaces within the Place

Designed with the idea of restoring the historic character of Webberville, the new downtown environment is welcoming to visitors while preserving the small village feeling that residents can enjoy. Uniform street trees and paving details truly create a sense of coherency throughout the downtown. Creating a walkable village with complete streets allows the opportunity for local businesses to increase their sales while helping reduce the amount of pollution from automobiles.

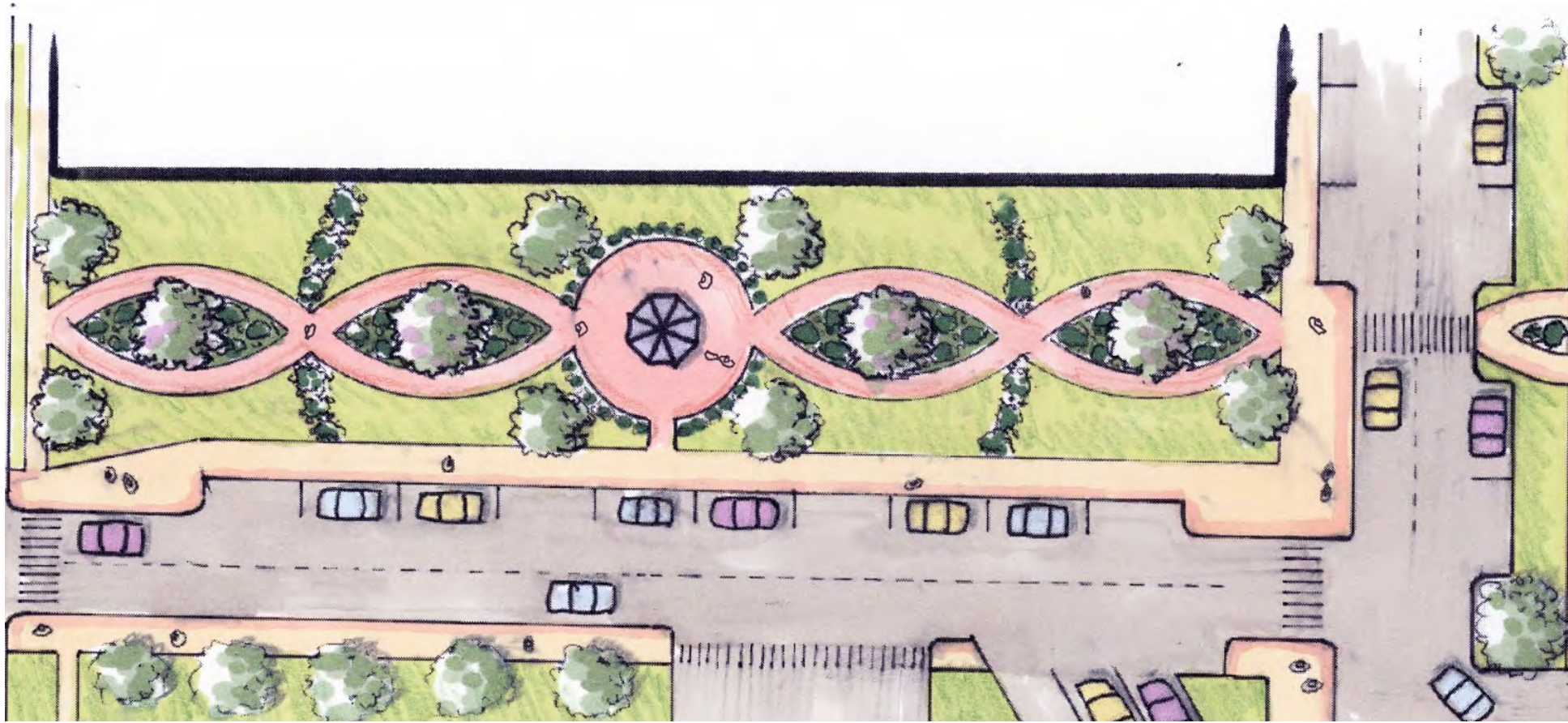


The feeling of Webberville

With the addition of the new Bus Rapid Transit stop, commuters may use Webberville as a point of departure as well as begin to see it as a destination. Webberville creates the opportunity for people to travel with more ease in a more environmentally friendly manner. Designed to create the feeling of modernism with respect to the historic past, this stop on the BRT route will be a role model to the development of new stops in neighboring cities throughout the Tri-County Region.

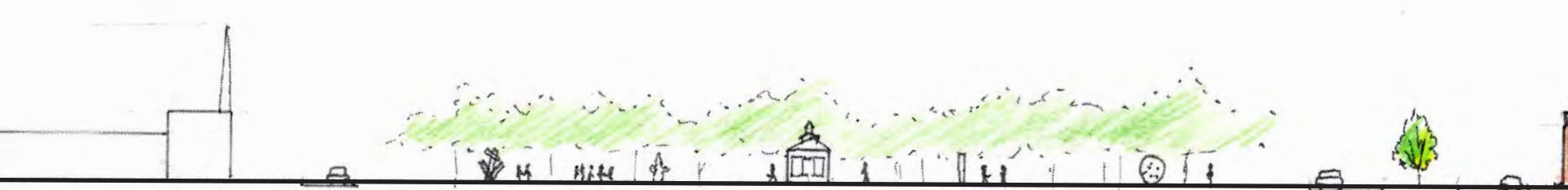


The newly defined entranceway into Webberville creates a great first impression on visitors. The classic feel of the signage sets the tone for what visitors will experience while in the village. Beautiful streetlight fixtures and trees create an enjoyable gateway for everyone entering into Webberville. No longer will visitors question if they have entered the village or not.

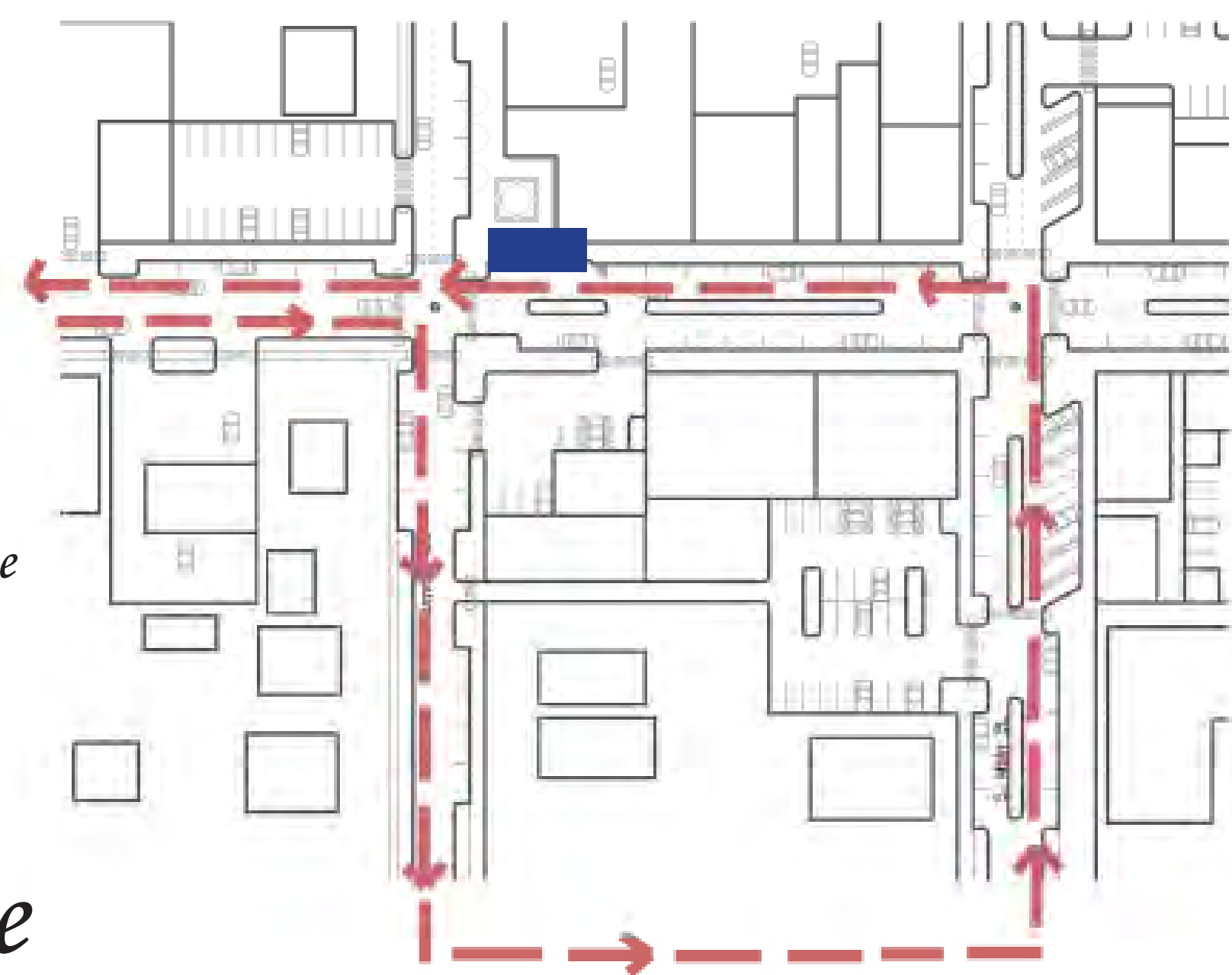


What was once the location of a parking lot is now a beautifully crafted park space that connects the historic schoolhouse to the local church. With the Bernie Simmons village gazebo at the center of the space, residents can enjoy an evening in peace and serenity. As a potential location for a farmers market, the park will become an iconic part of the village of Webberville.

Framed by the church and school, this new defined park space fits perfectly into the village of Webberville's character.



This is a diagram showing the route that the bus will take when it goes through Webberville. Webberville is the last town on the bus will get to on its route so it will have to make a loop around the town and come back to the BRT stop highlighted in blue. By circling the town, this allows Webberville to advertise its village as a destination point to the commuters on the bus



Sections of the Village

The beauty of the new street trees helps to frame downtown village into a desirable location for visitors from the surrounding areas to visit.



While traveling through Downtown Webberville, people will remember how welcoming the village was to them. The architecture of the buildings creates an environment filled with charming personality.

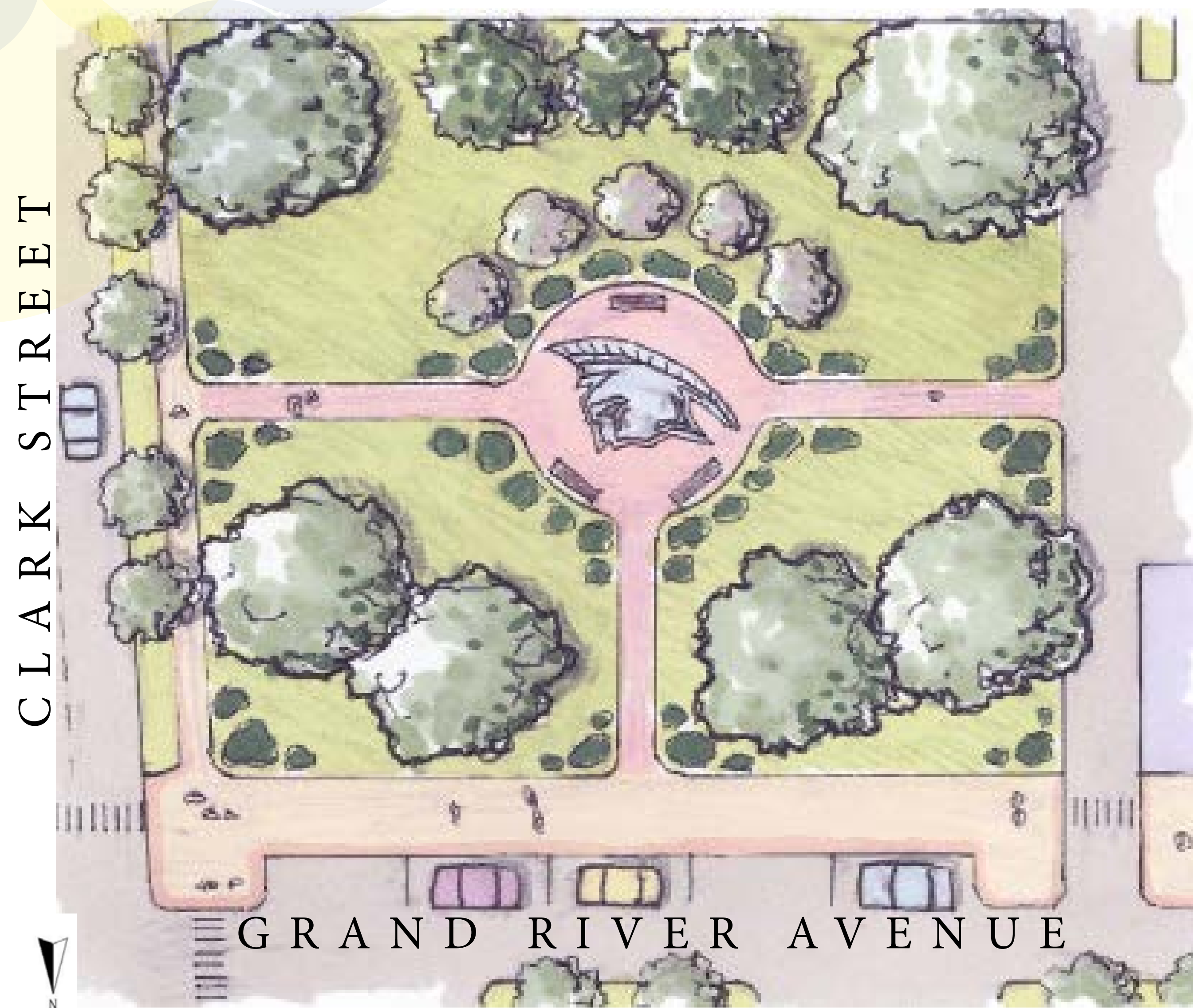


The school parking lot can function as a place for participants of the village farmers market or other community events to park after unloading their products or guests.

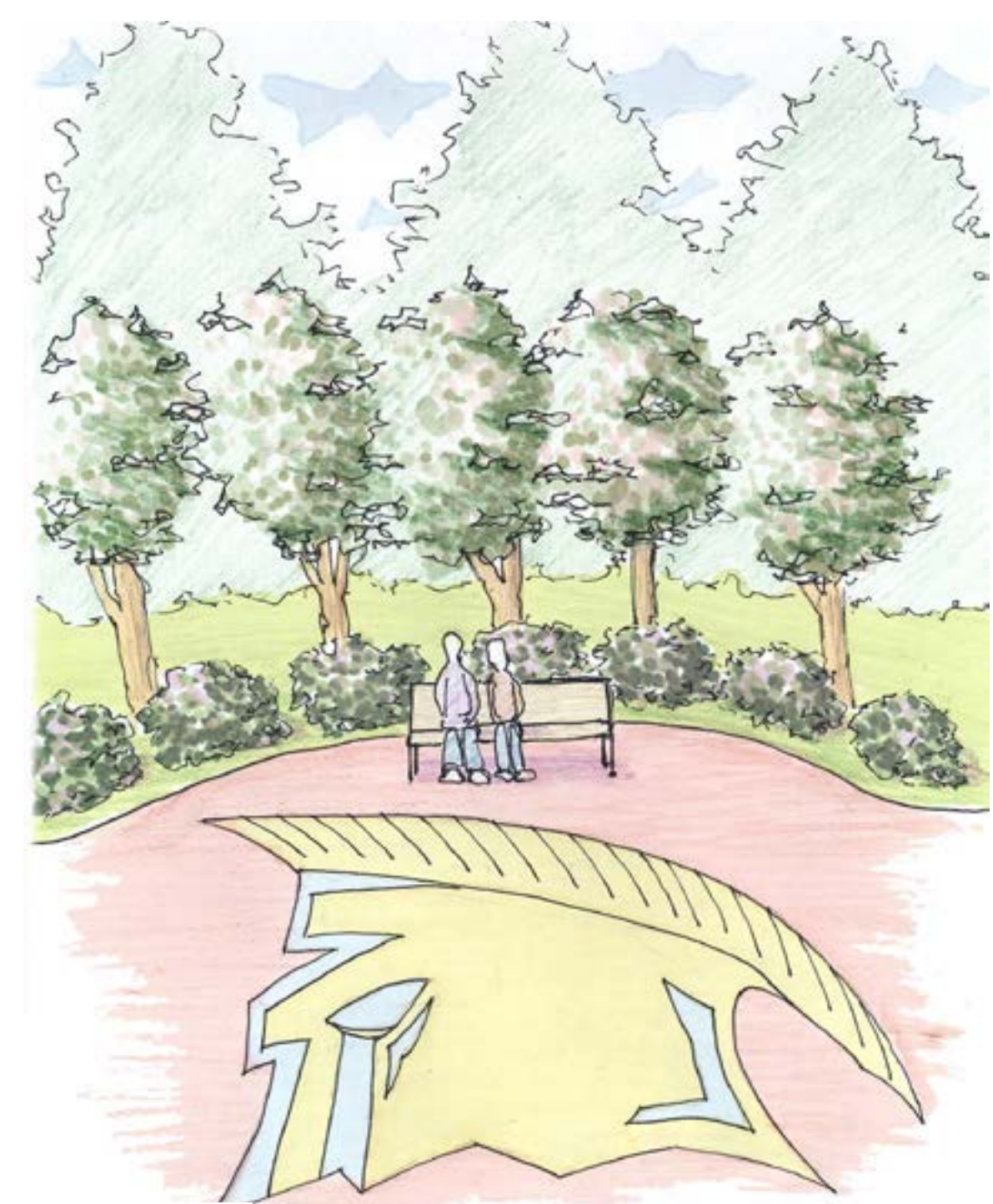
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Spartan Park

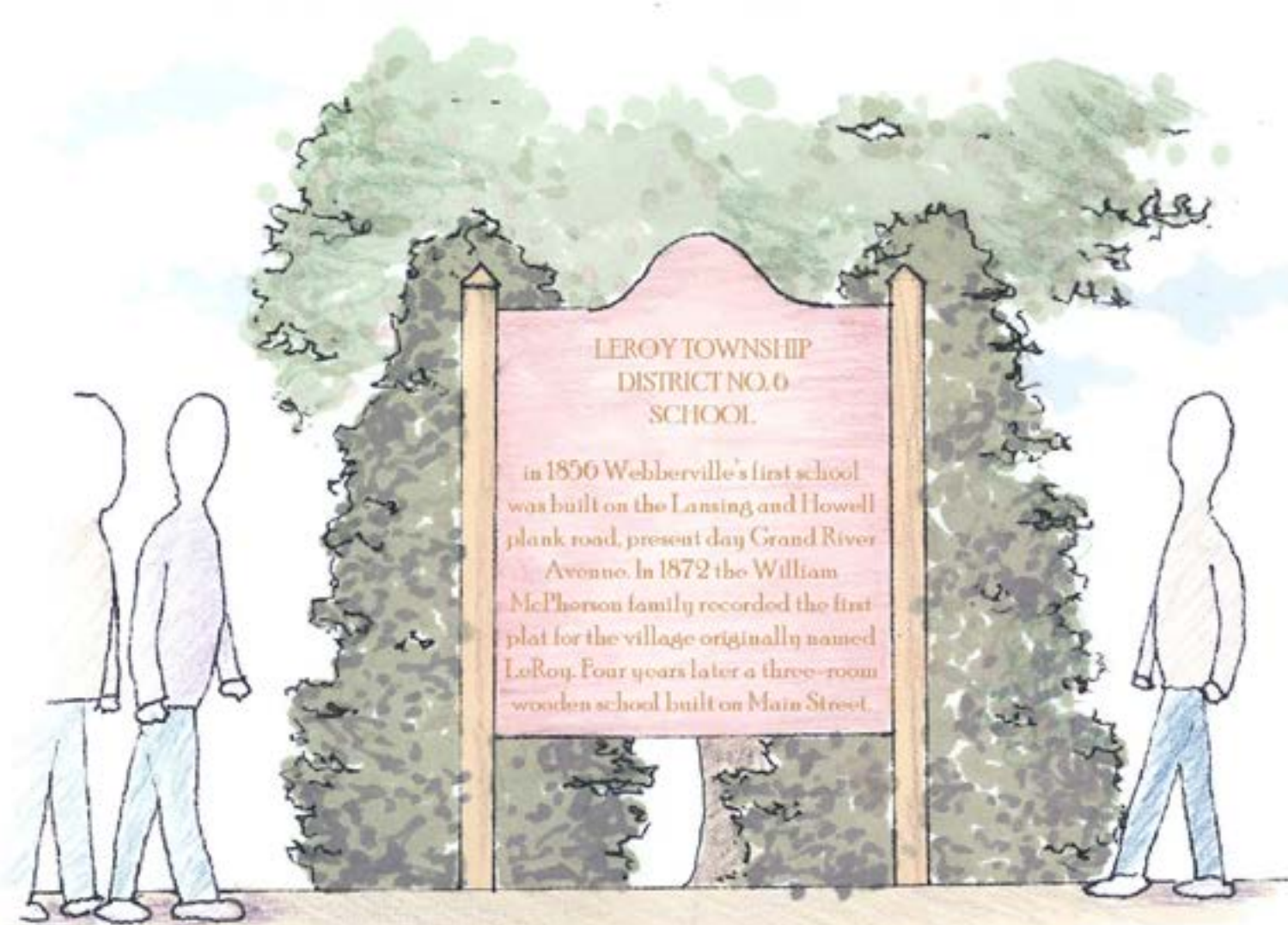


With the Webberville School District being such an important part of the community, residents will appreciate gathering in the re-designed park space that features a beautiful Spartan emblem embedded at its core. The new event space is located where the gazebo once stood and is a prime location in the downtown area. The existing house on the site will be demolished to create more room for a larger community greenspace. Whether local athletes gather around the emblem before every game or students take prom pictures each year at the park, the site could become the center of many new traditions for Webberville. It will also strive to increase the school spirit throughout the town and further strengthen the community and school connection. The aesthetic appeal of the park creates one of several focal points in the community with elegant ornamental trees creating the perfect backdrop to numerous pictures that will be captured in the park.



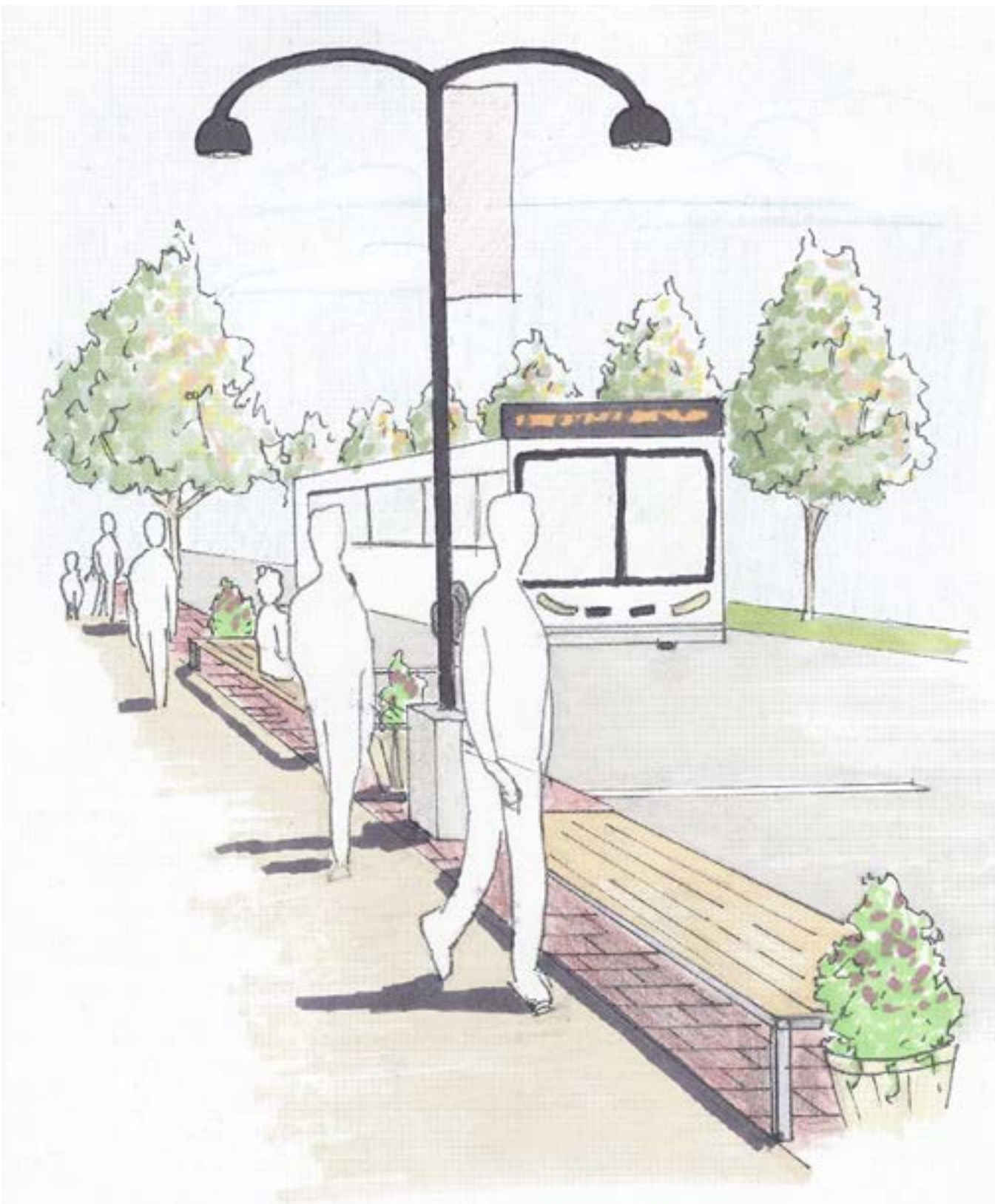
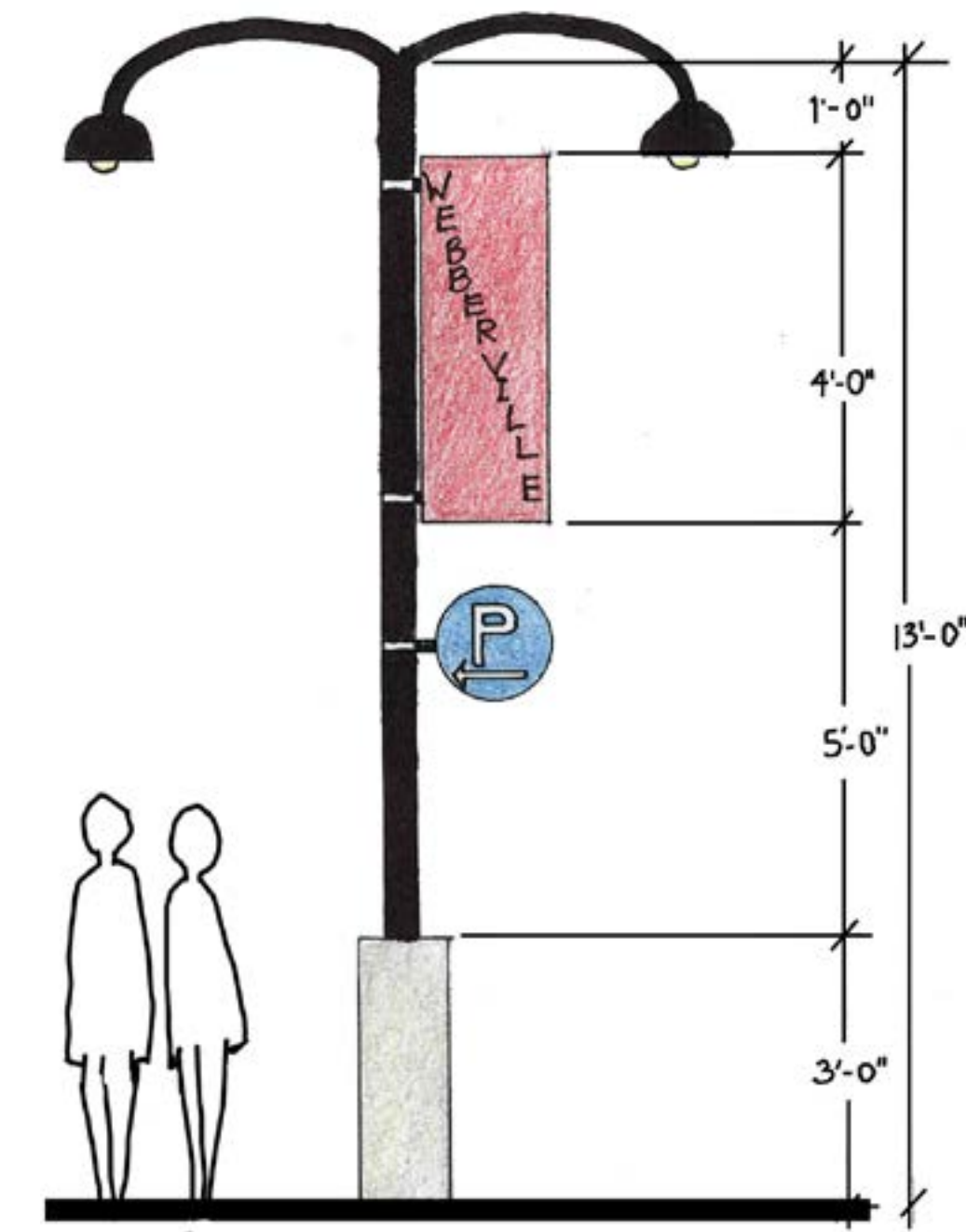
The parallel parking spots on the edge of the new Bernie Simmons gazebo park will function as a farmers market or event space on allocated days. This is a functional spot for a farmers market because it is very open and allows for a lot of traffic. The road may be closed down for the day creating a pedestrian only zone for safety and easier access to the market. The school lot nearby provides vendors with parking after they unload their supplies. The school and church are on both ends and the farmers market will connect these elements making a new town center.

Design Details

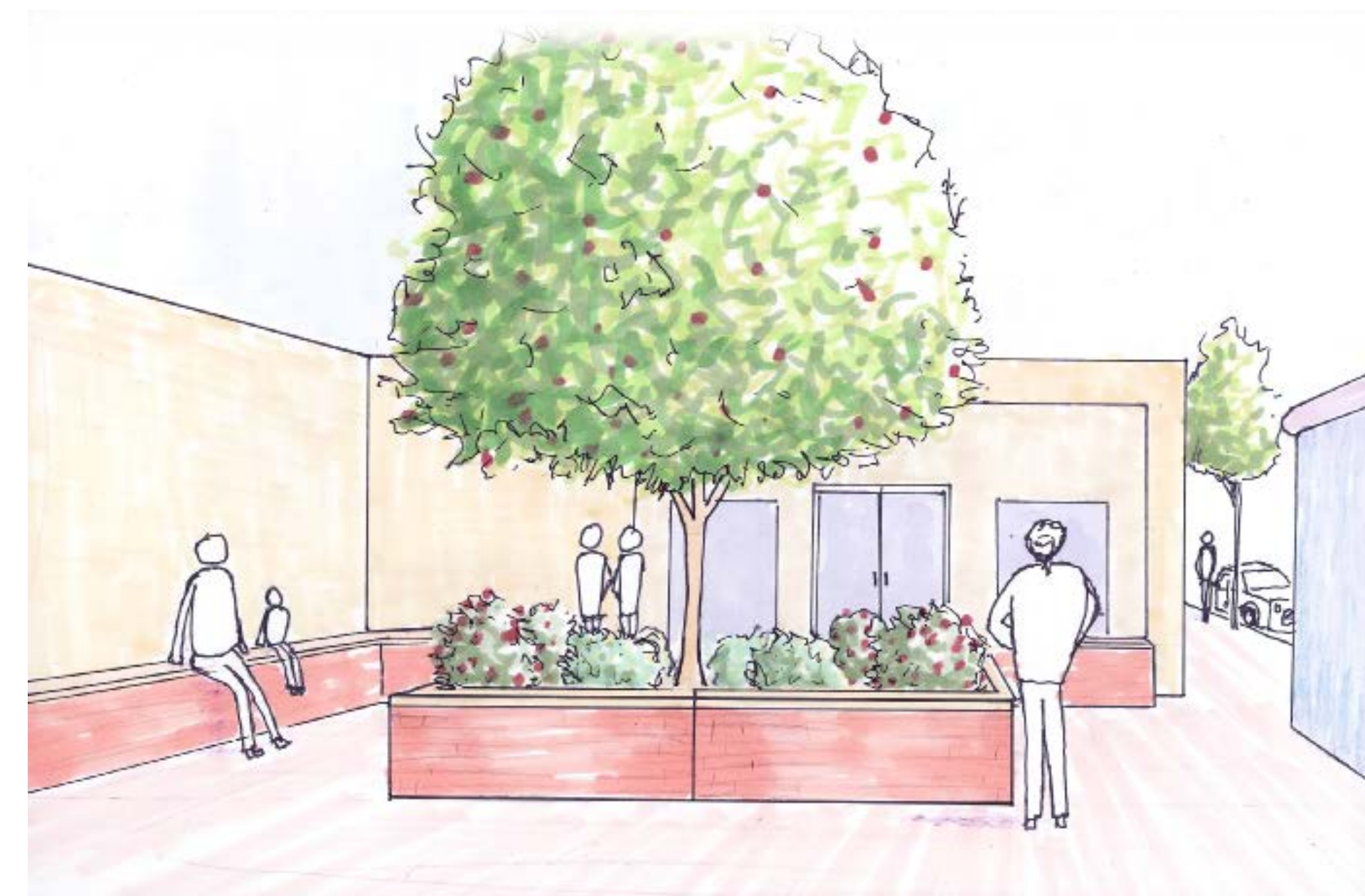
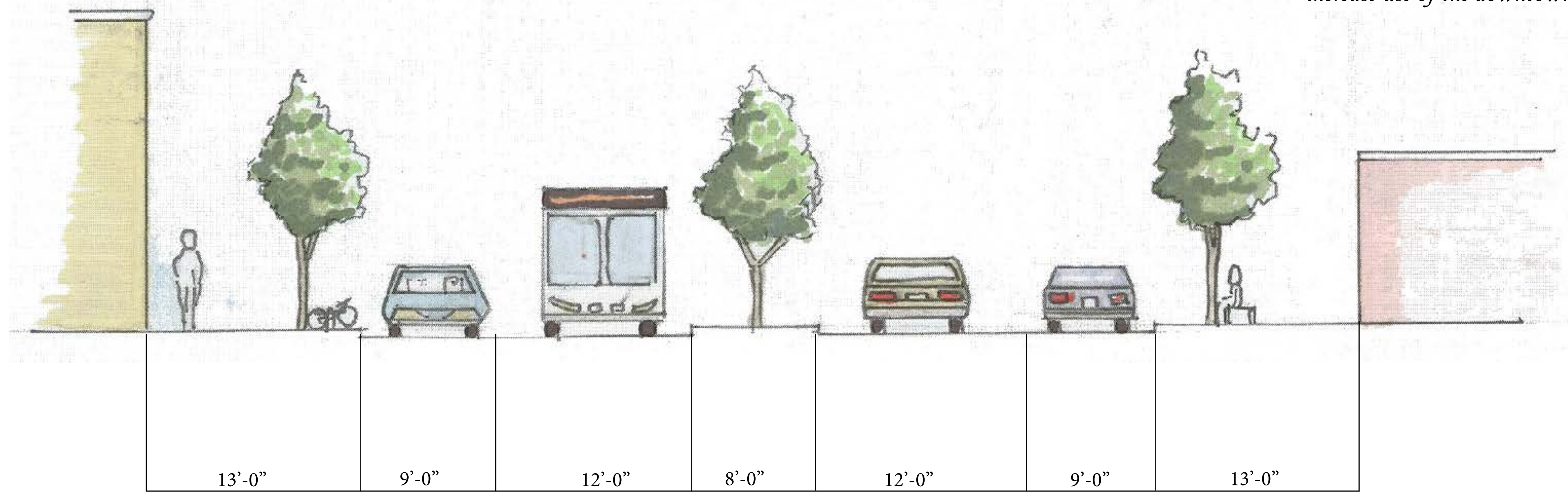


Located and centered, in-front of the historic school house is a antique, ornamental sign explaining the history and significance of the school. As one of the oldest school houses in the state, this sign helps explain its history for visitors to Webberville and reinforces the importance and influence of education in the community.

The lighting plays a very important role in establishing character throughout the streetscape. This will create a more night-friendly environment and encourage more use of the village's restaurants and venues. The light post can also work as an advertisement for the village of Webberville. The village may hang banners announcing downtown events and way-finding signs to assist users and visitors in finding places to park and access downtown businesses.



The new streetscape design for downtown Webberville was conceived to make a more naturalized and pedestrian-friendly environment. Benches and bike racks are placed in throughout the street corridor to benefit users of the space. Uniform trees are also to be installed on each side of the street as well as in the median. There is one lane of parallel parking on both side to help increase use of the downtown area.



This entrance plaza on the corner of Grand River Ave. and North Summit St. provides the first impression for Webberville visitors. It includes a raised planter bed mimicking the shape repeated throughout Bernie Simmons park, which ties the schools with the heart of Webberville creating a welcoming feeling. This corner also hosts the bus rapid transit station which will permit users to park at the commuter lot on the West side of Summit St. and use the bus to travel throughout the Tri-County Region.

