

**Thomas Charney**  
**Landscape Architecture Portfolio**





**Thomas  
Charney**

### Education

Masters of Landscape Architecture  
University of Michigan, 2023

B.S. Plant Biology & Environmental Biology, Minor in Japanese  
Language  
Michigan State University, 2019

### Experience

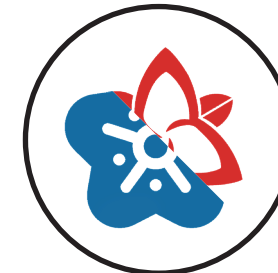
**Landscape Architecture Intern: May-July 2023**  
**Takano Landscape Planning: Obihiro, Hokkaido**  
Assisted landscape architect staff with model building, conceptual design, and public engagement.

**Research Assistant: Sep 2021 - May 2023**  
**University of Michigan Sustainable Future Lab: Ann Arbor, Michigan**  
Prepared 3D models with various software to aid in the development of public engagement projects for landscape and urban design.

**Field Crew Intern: May-Aug 2022**  
**Kurusu LLC: Portland, Oregon**  
Communicated in Japanese on a regular basis while working closely with traditional Japanese gardeners to install and maintain authentic Japanese gardens in the Portland, Oregon area.

**Landscape Intern: May-Aug 2021**  
**Creating Sustainable Landscapes LLC: Novi, Michigan**  
Received a thorough education in Midwest-native plants through the installation and maintenance of ecologically sound and aesthetically attractive landscapes.

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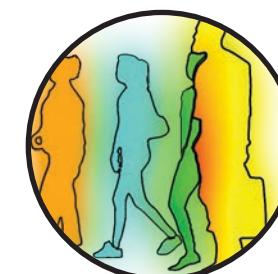
**1) A Genuine Connection**  
Fall 2022 Studio



**2) Height Hierarchy**  
Fall 2021 Studio



**3) Monarch's Rest**  
Winter 2021 Studio



**4) Walkin' on Sunshine**  
Fall 2021 Studio

# A Cord of Three Strands

As with many cultural experiences, my studies abroad in Japan increased my sensitivity to phenomena I took for granted at home in the United States. As opposed to the swathes of turf lawns and golf courses of the suburb of Detroit I came from, the dense housing of Wakayama City ( ) allowed little space for more than a fruit tree in front of most homes; however, the proximity of mountains and public greenspace made my stay there thoroughly engaging. Contemplating how best to process my experience and apply it to my upcoming undergraduate career, I majored in Plant Biology with a minor in Japanese at Michigan State University.

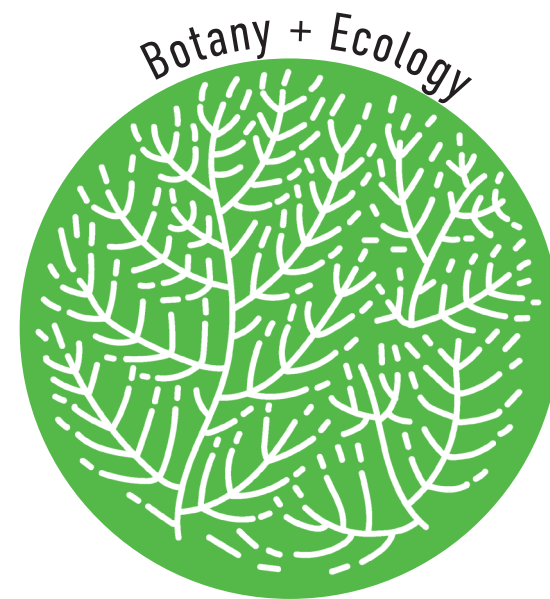
Following my undergraduate degree, I was not entirely sure how to apply my two fields of study to my career. It often seemed I could only ever find positions that satisfied my investment in one of them. Enter Landscape Architecture. Following interviews with faculty at the University of Michigan, I discovered the precedent-setting research of the Kaplans on Environmental Psychology. I was immediately fascinated and the trifecta of focus was forged for my studies in landscape architecture.

Since that time, I have continued to deepen my understanding of all three fields in the context of landscape architecture. From designing and installing native planting beds in Michigan, to carrying out a thesis on the psychological impact of a Japanese healing garden within the walls of a maximum security prison, I have pushed boundaries of what is possible and will continue to do so throughout my career.

Investigating these fields of study is what drives me to participate in landscape architecture, and I am always eager to see the multitude of ways they intertwine.



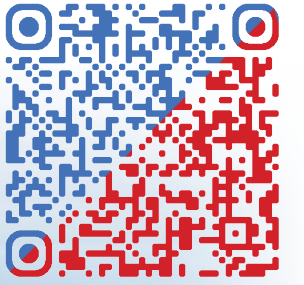
See my interview with the North American Japanese Garden Association! <https://najga.org/tc/>



# A Genuine Connection

Fall 2022 Studio

The Gordie Howe Bridge will connect Detroit and Windsor physically and economically to an unprecedented extent. However, will immediately adjacent communities and ecologies benefit to the same degree? Video Presentation: <https://bit.ly/3GNxsnW>

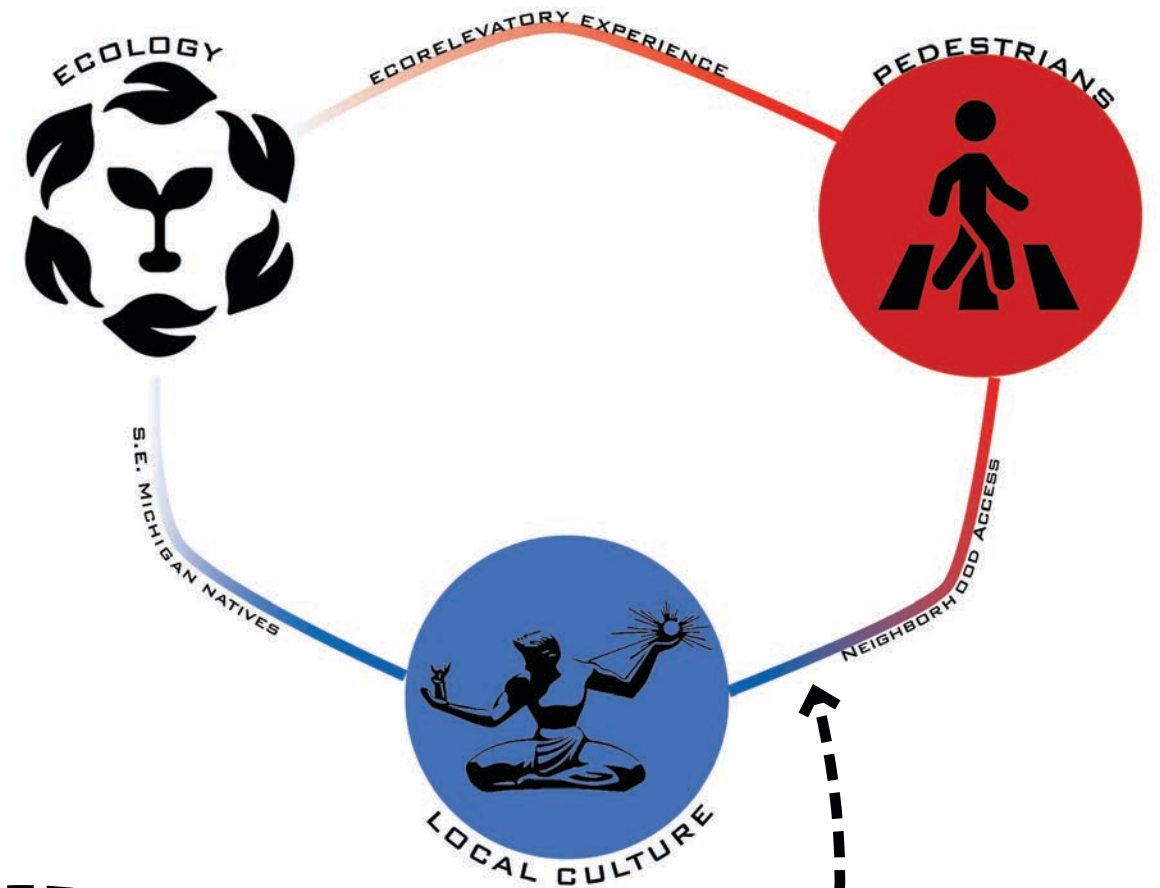


# Concept Development

My first concept for A Genuine Connection was making the Gordie Howe Bridge more rooted in the wants/needs of the neighborhoods it will be entering. This was followed by feedback from my cohort mates that provided their input on how I implement some of these ideas with landscape installations. I then took this feedback and distilled it down into five core ideas and illustrated how I would imagine them being accomplished. Finally, I trimmed the number down to three core ideas and articulated their relationships to improve the cohesiveness of the overall narrative for A Genuine Connection.



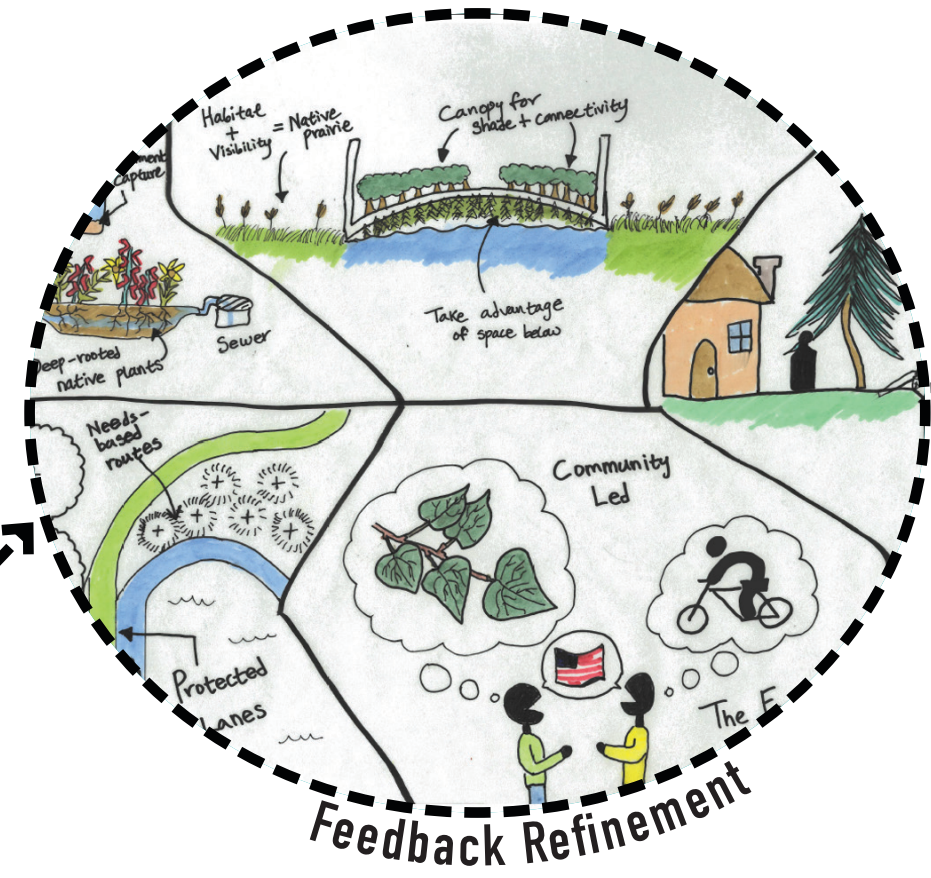
# Final Concept



# Studio Brainstorm

Connection (A Holistic Approach)

	Idea #3	Idea #4
Representation	Stormwater Management	Sound/Air Pollution Mitigation
Community-lead design/ community representation in choices	Soft edges/shorelines	Fast-growing, large plants
accessibility forms/alternate transport methods	wetland capture areas & infiltration - pollution filtration	we need a wall, they will pay for it, to reflect noise upwards through the bridge structure
pedestrian access/ walk path through separators	filtration systems (pop layer) sediment clean up	planted tree layer
IDENTIFY AREAS THAT ARE DIRECTLY IMPACTED	VEGETATION FOR RUN-OFF	CONTROLLED INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY
THE FACE OF AMERICA	RIVER FRONT REVIVAL	CAPTURE STRUCTURES

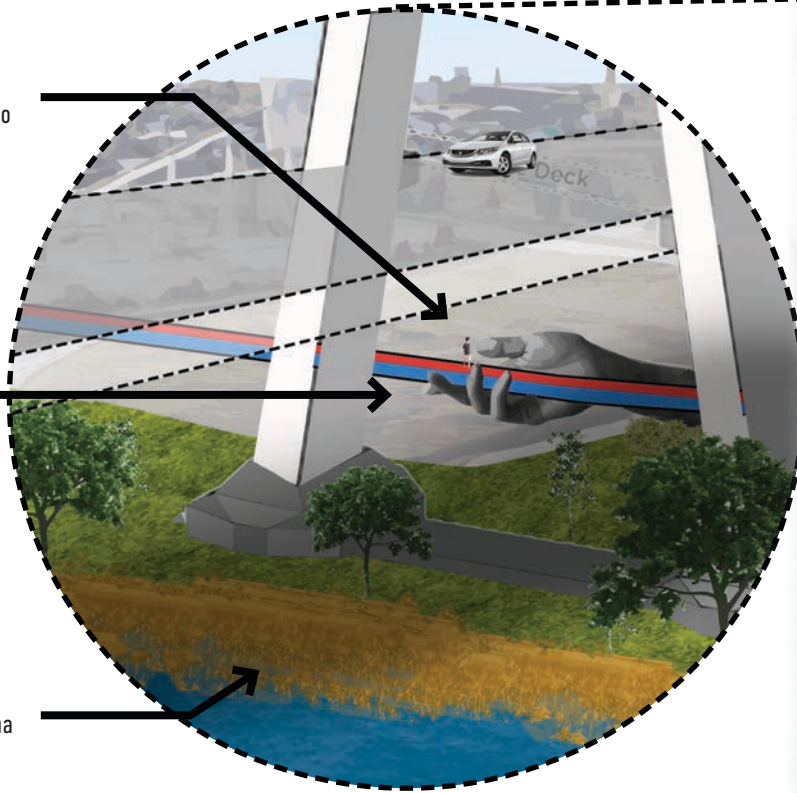


# Master Plan + Views

Separate exit from vehicular Port of Entry allows for an experience tailored to the pedestrian

Hand sculptural element reminiscent of the Monument to Joe Louis

Emergent marsh and Wet mesic flatwood restoration benefits native flora and fauna



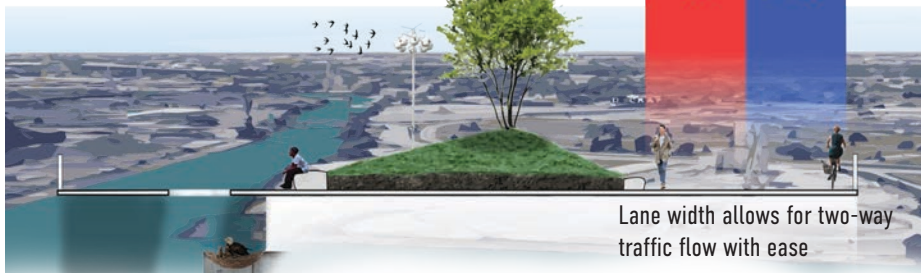
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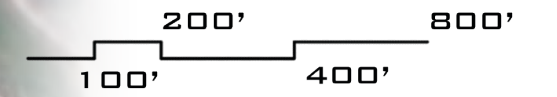
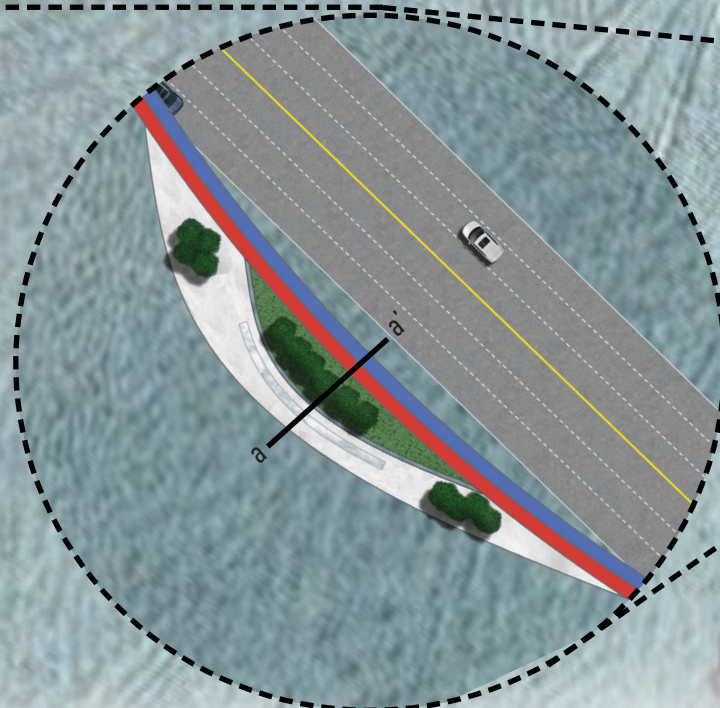
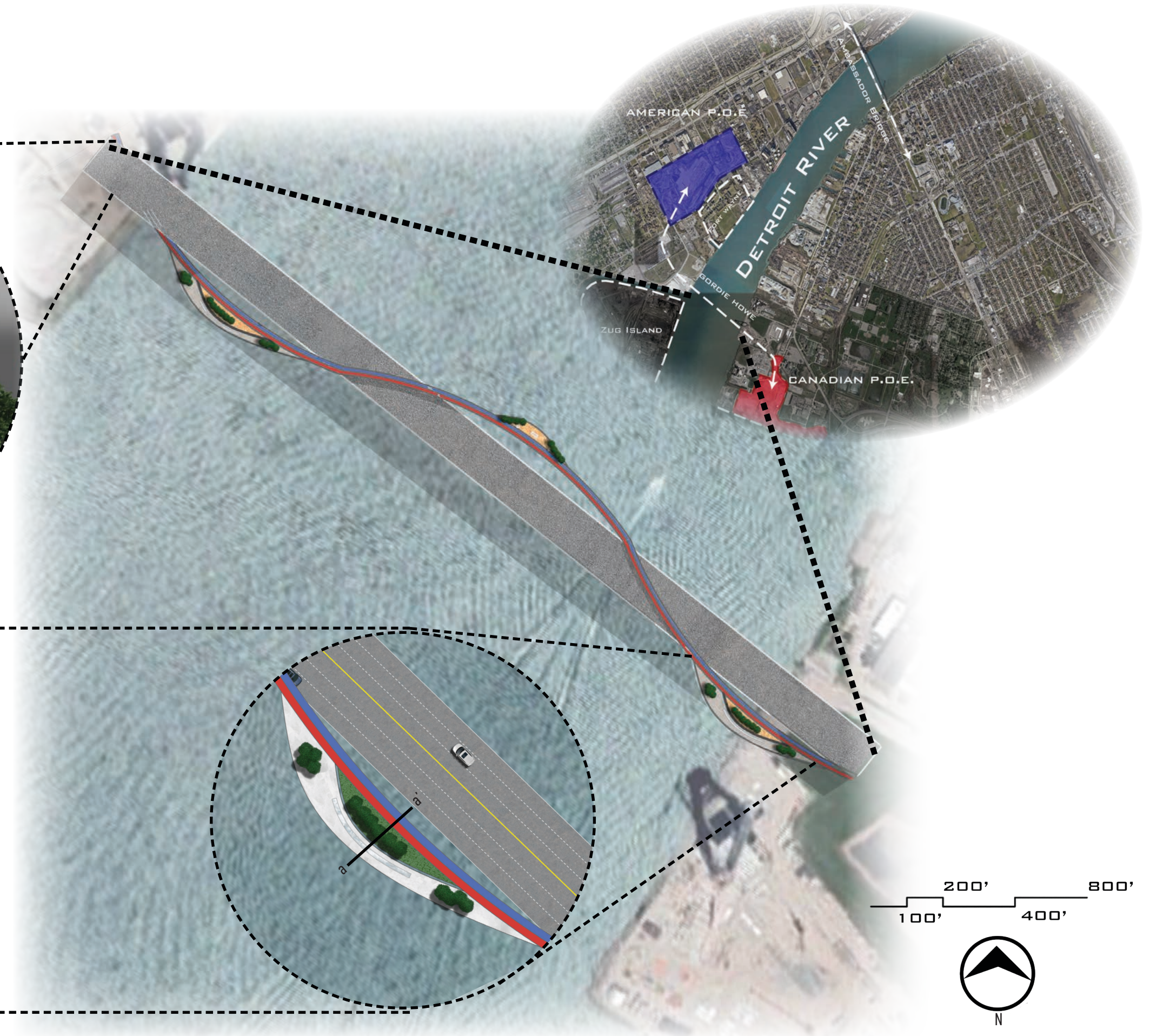
Amelanchier and gourd rack provide food and habitat for avian species



Lane width allows for two-way traffic flow with ease



Six foot wide nest structures provide Bald eagle habitat



# Height Hierarchy

## Fall 2021 Studio

The goal of this project was to improve upon the existing planting beds in front of the School for Environment and Sustainability building. While the existing condition did use native plants, they were not organized in a way that made them engaging to visitors. In this redesign, a **native plant palette** was incorporated as well since it aligns with the school's educational goals and benefits local fauna. To make these plants more engaging to visitors, three additional aesthetic concepts were incorporated: **companion plants**, **visual legibility**, and **year-round color**. This way, the planting would visually attract visitors and easily recruit support for its continued maintenance.



### Core Concepts



### Seasonal Interest Study



# Master Plan

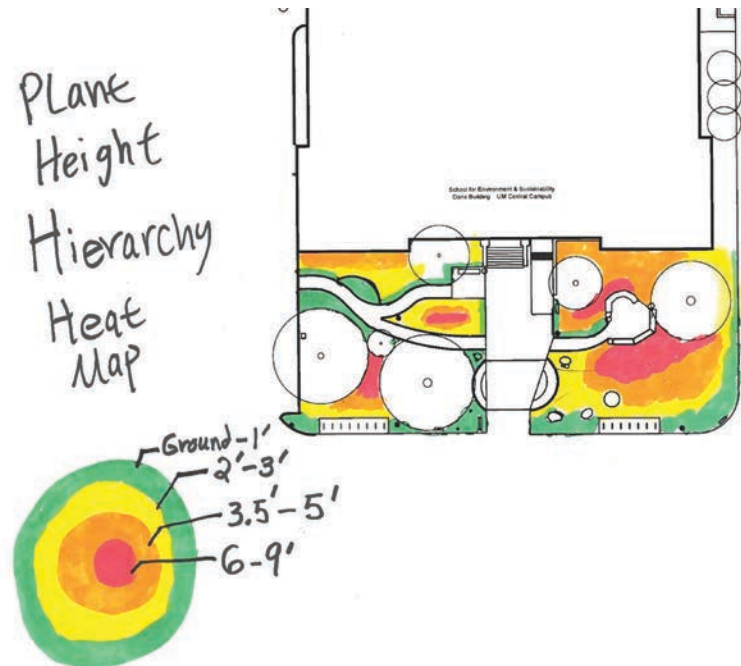
Samuel T. Dana Building





# Analysis, Plant Selection, and Visualization

At this stage of the project, I explored Midwestern native plants and drew them to scale to see which ones could serve as short ground covers near walkways, tall focal points into the center of plantings, and everything in between.

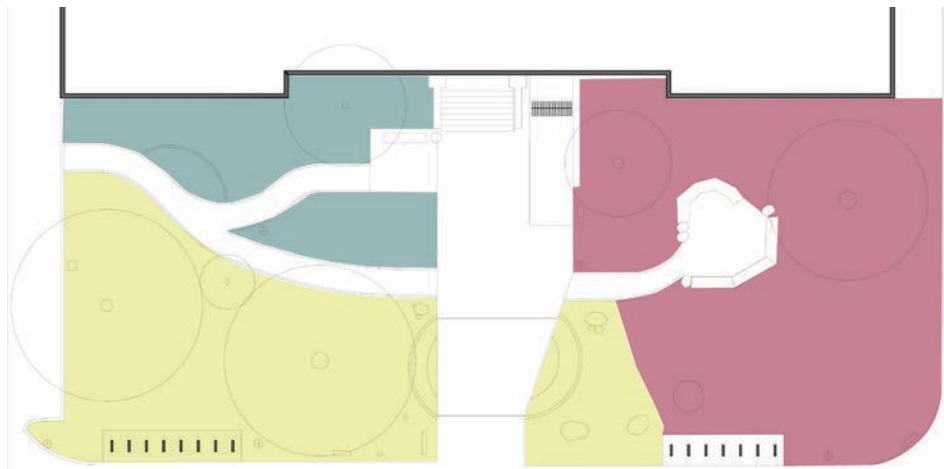


Mosses have a unique advantage in areas of poorly drained hardscape since they absorb water and nutrients directly from their surroundings. Further, this portion of the garden was given a cultural grounding to the University of Michigan's history by dedicating it to the late Dr. Howard Crum.

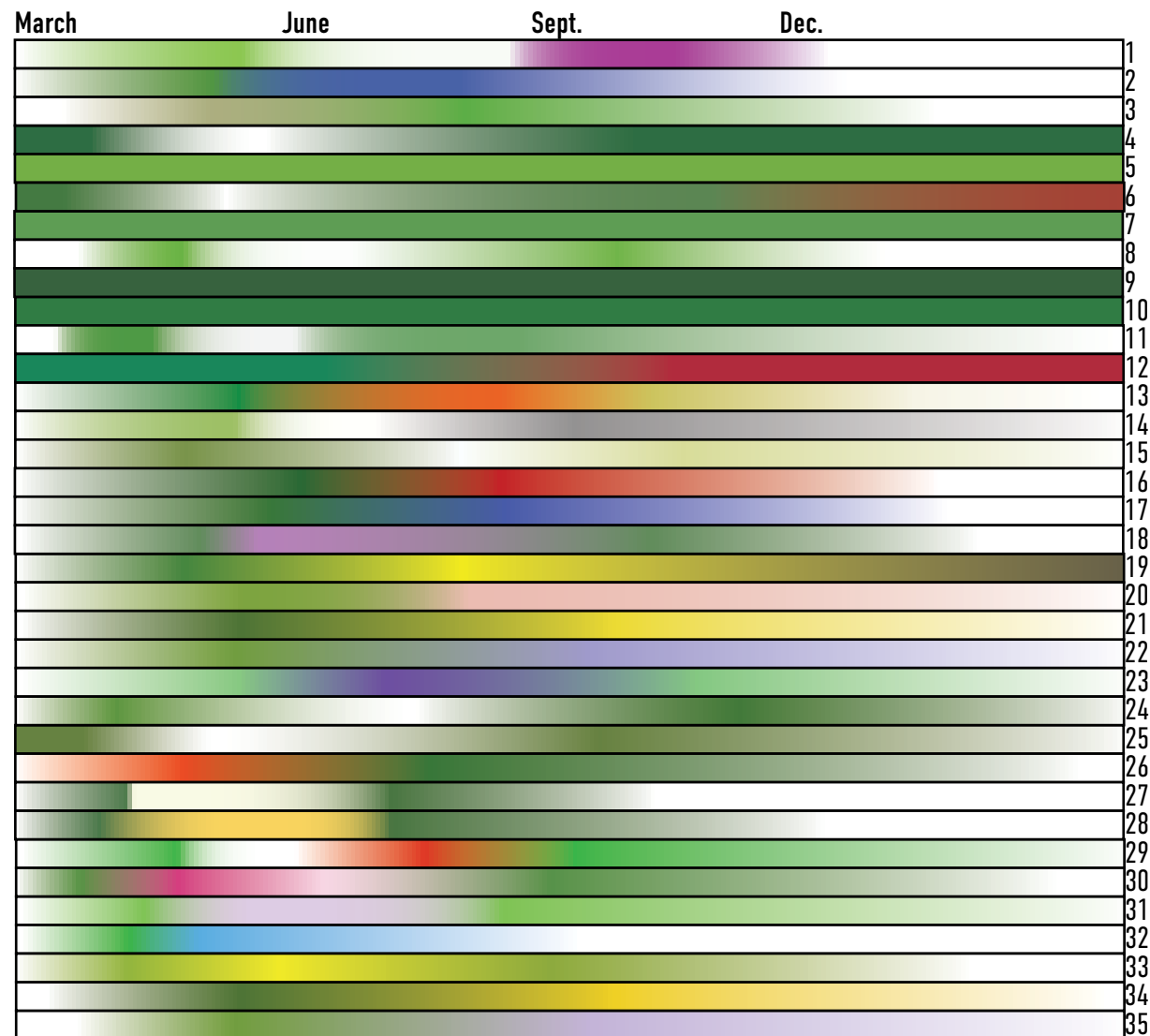
Near walkways, short groundcovers were placed in order to increase comfort. Taller plants were assigned to spaces in the center of beds to serve as visual focal points and near seating to provide privacy.



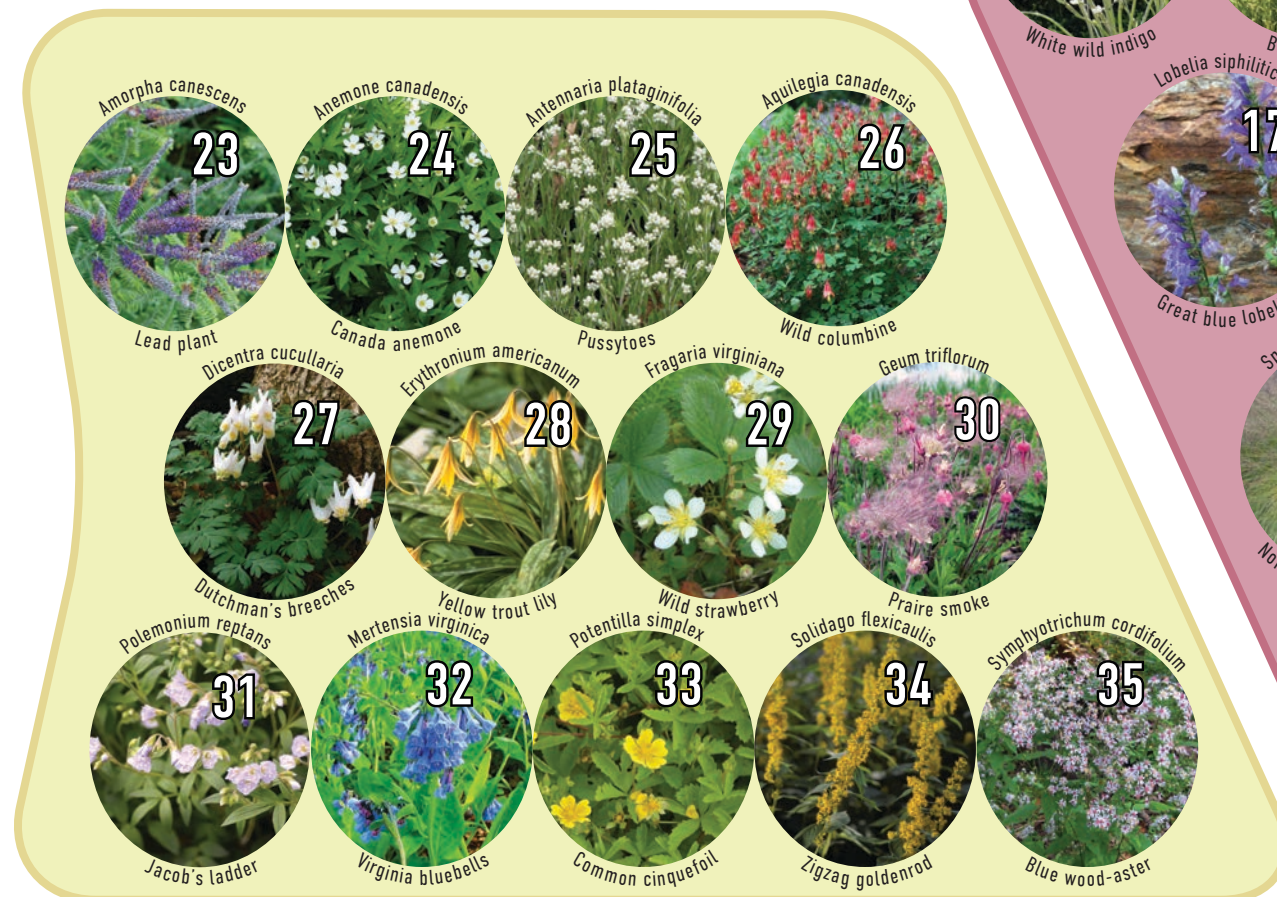
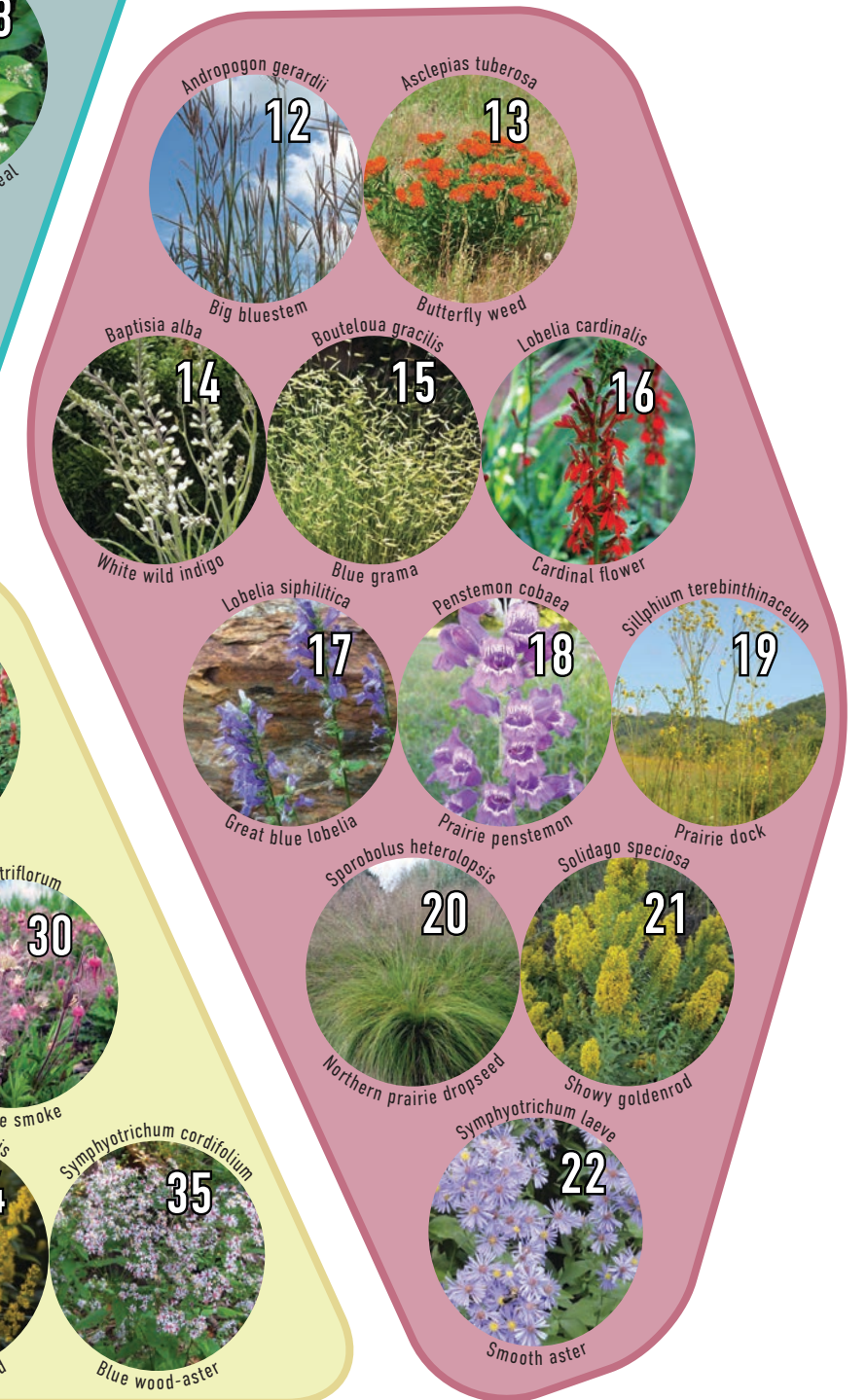
# Plant Palette Map



# Seasonal Interest Timeline

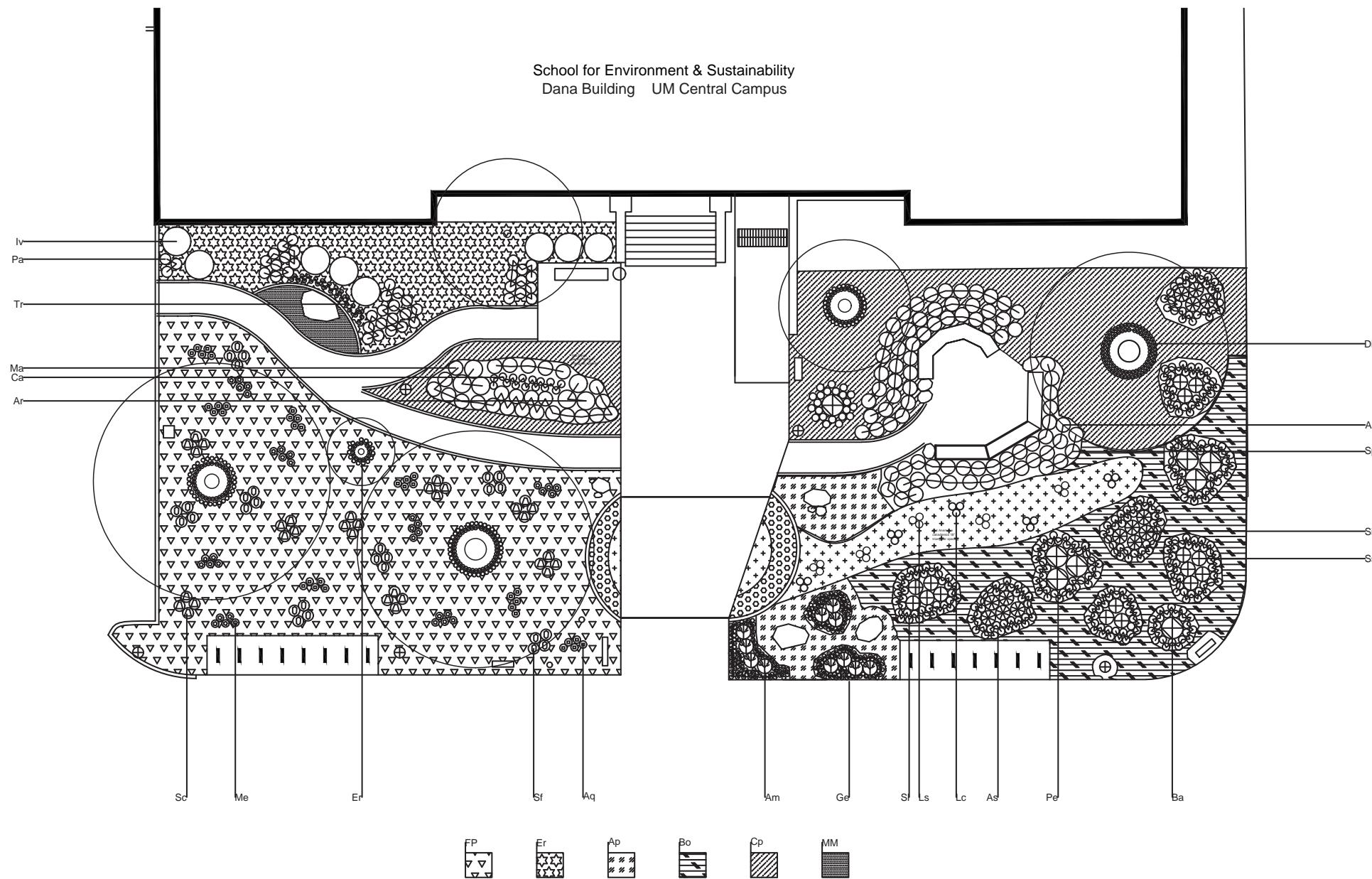


# Plant Palette List



# Technical Drawing

# Plant List



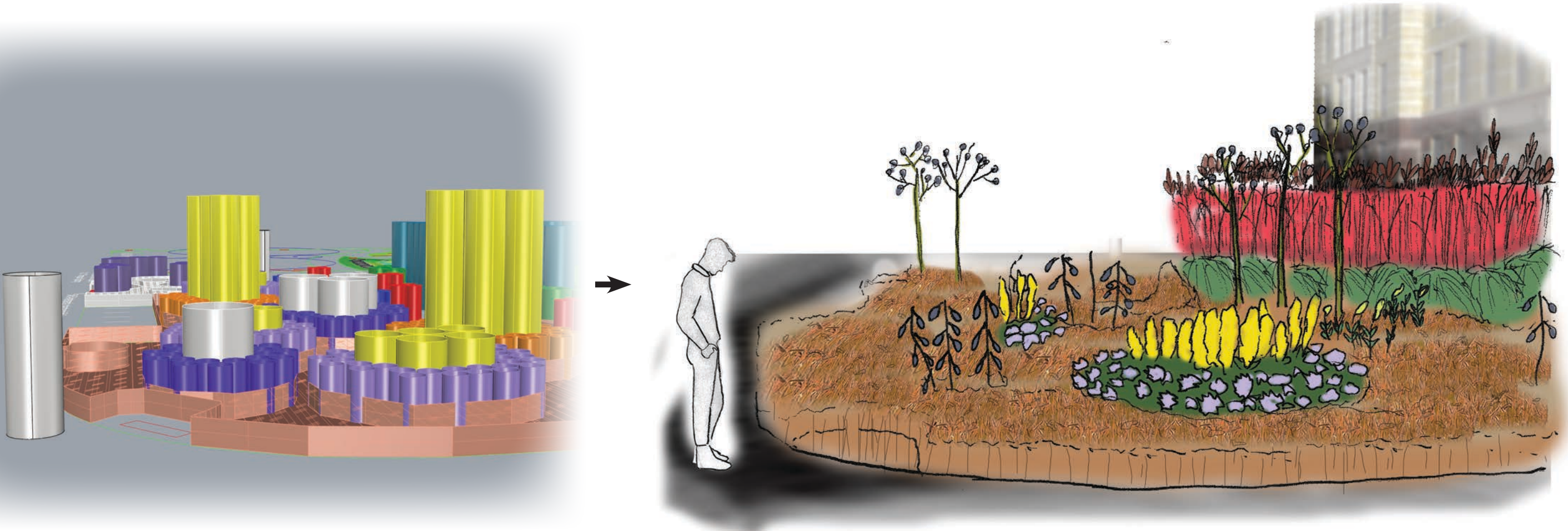
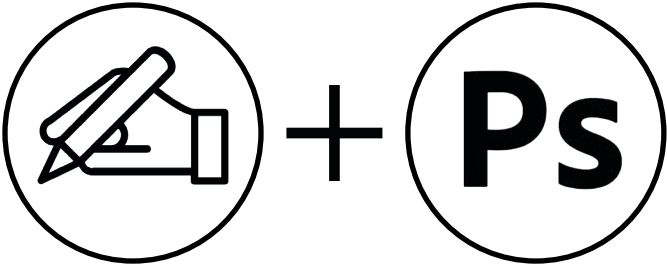
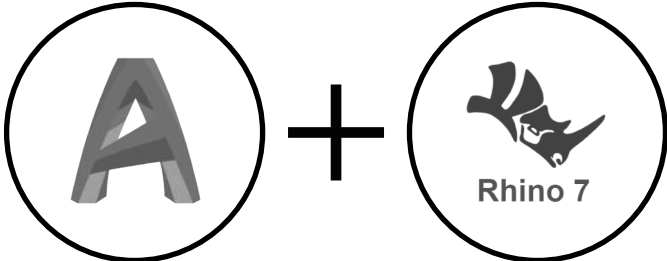
## SHRUBS

CODE	BOTANICAL	COMMON	SIZE	QTY	SPACING	REM
Iv	Ilex verticillata	Winterberry	3 gal	8	4ft	

## PERENNIALS

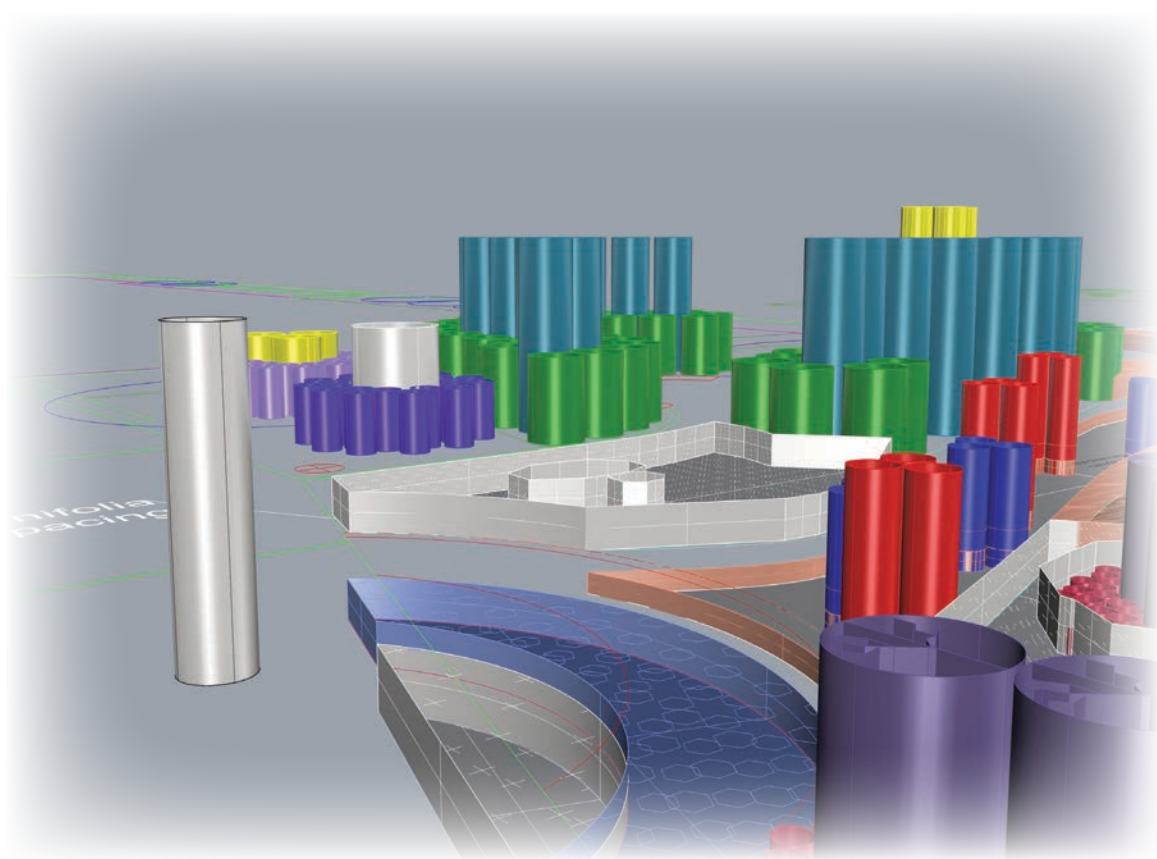
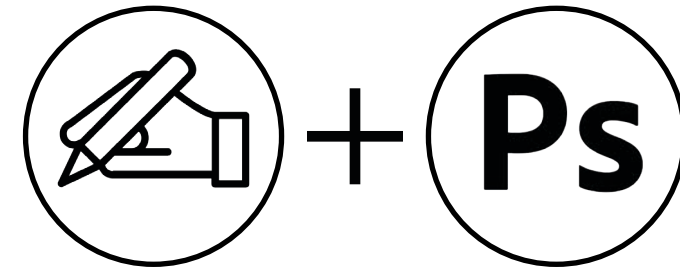
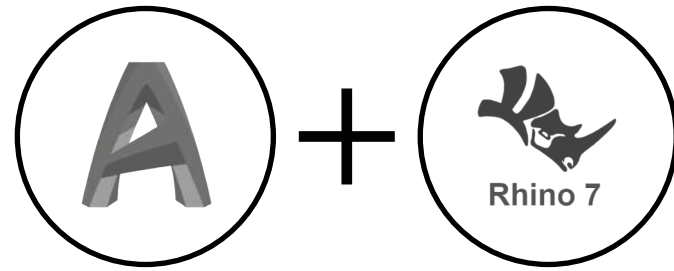
CODE	BOTANICAL	COMMON	SIZE	QTY	SPACING
Am	Amorpha canescens	Lead plant	1 gal	11	2ft
An	Andropogon gerardii	Big bluestem	1 gal	25	2ft
Ac	Anemone canadensis	Canada anemone	plug	165	1ft
Ap	Antennaria plataginifolia	Pussytoes	plug	1025	1ft
Aq	Aquilegia canadensis	Wild columbine	plug	35	1ft
Ar	Aralia racemosa	American spikenard	plug	6	3ft
As	Asclepias tuberosa	Butterfly weed	plug	100	1ft
Ba	Baptisia alba	White false indigo	plug	5	3ft
Bo	Bouteloua gracilis	Blue grama	plug	758	6"
Ca	Campanulastrum americanum	Tall bellflower	plug	23	6"
Cp	Carex pensylvanica	Pen sedge	plug	1894	1'
Di	Dicentra cucullaria	Dutchman's breeches	bulb	105	6"
Ep	Epigaea reptans	Creeping arbutus	plug	745	6"
Er	Erythronium americanum	Yellow trout lily	bulb	43	6"
FP	Fragaria virginiana + Potentilla simplex	Wild strawberry and Common cinquefoil	plug	3291	1'
Ge	Geum triflorum	Prairie smoke	plug	219	6"
Lc	Lobelia cardinalis	Cardinal flower	plug	15	1ft
Ls	Lobelia siphilitica	Great blue lobelia	plug	15	1ft
Ma	Maianthemum racemosum	False solomon's seal	plug	21	2ft
Me	Mertensia virginica	Virginia bluebells	plug	35	1ft
MM	Moss Mix	N/A	5sqft	5	N/A
Pe	Penstemon cobaea	Prairie penstemon	plug	120	1ft
Po	Polemonium reptans	Jacob's ladder	plug	72	1ft
Pa	Polystichum acrostichoides	Christmas fern	rhizome	42	1ft
Si	Silphium terebinthaceum	Prairie dock	plug	14	2ft
Sf	Solidago flexicaulis	Zigzag goldenrod	plug	28	1ft
Ss	Solidago speciosa	Showy goldenrod	plug	16	2ft
Sp	Sporobolus heterolopsis	Northern prairie dropseed	1 gal	56	2ft
Sc	Symphotrichum cordifolium	Blue wood aster	plug	143	1ft
Sl	Symphotrichum laeve	Smooth aster	plug	32	1ft
Tr	Trillium grandiflorum	Great white trillium	bulb	26	6"

# Autumn Perspective Process



Since I really wanted to demonstrate the varying heights of the plant palette, I began my perspective renders in Rhino based off an existing AutoCAD document. By doing so, I could select an entire layer named after a given plant and extrude to its biologically accurate height.

# Summer Perspective Process



After getting the 3D model to the view I wanted to portray, I printed the view out and used trace paper to do the outlines my plants. Afterwards, the outlines were scanned and brought into Photoshop for colors and additional texture.

# Monarch's Rest

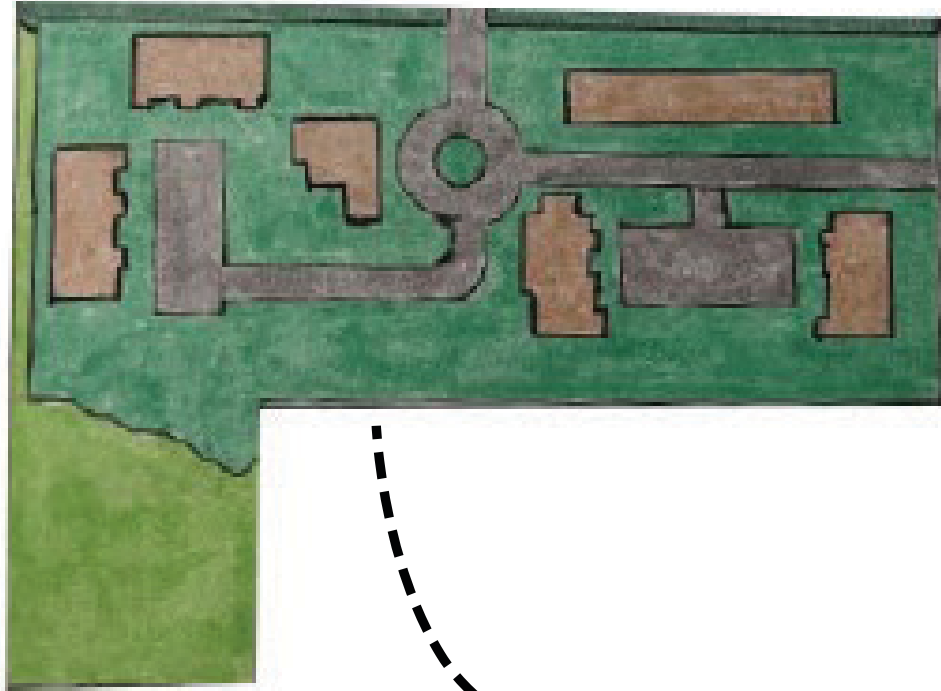
## Winter 2021 Studio

The goal of this project was to provide both a place for human respite as well resources for native wildlife. Seeing the chance of human-wildlife conflict to be particularly low, the Monarch Butterfly was chosen as the inspiration and namesake of this design.

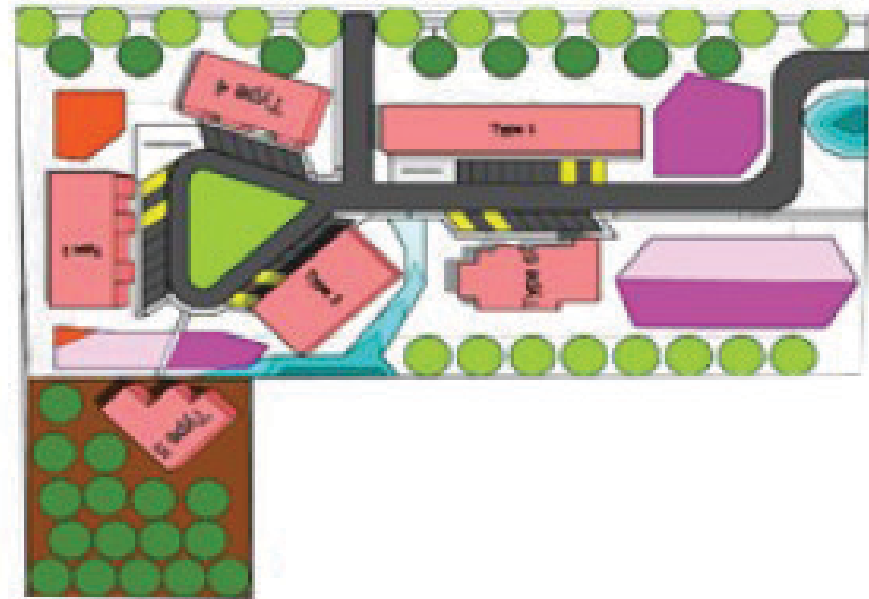
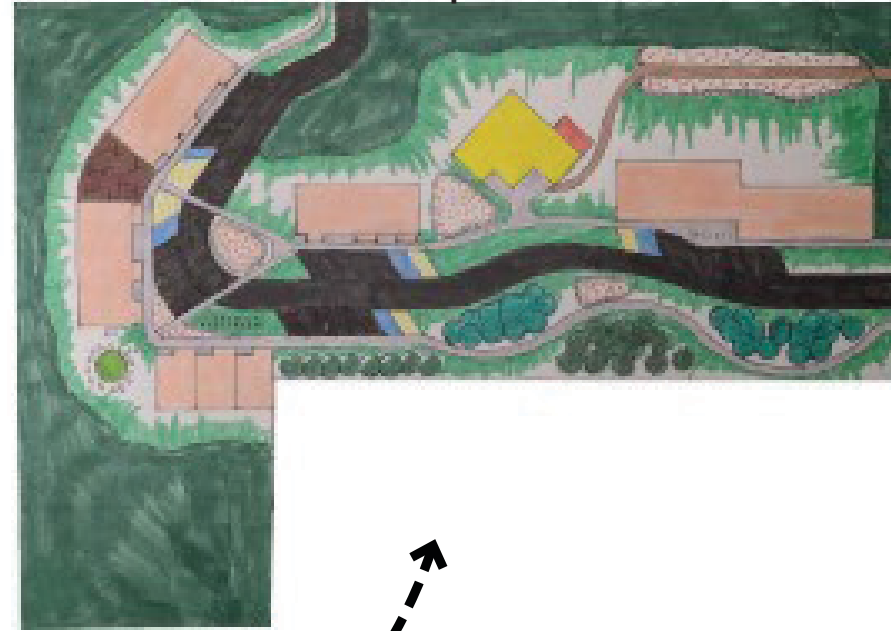


# Site Layout Evolution

Initial building placement and street layout



Return to hand-drawing to reiterate road layout and incorporate amenities

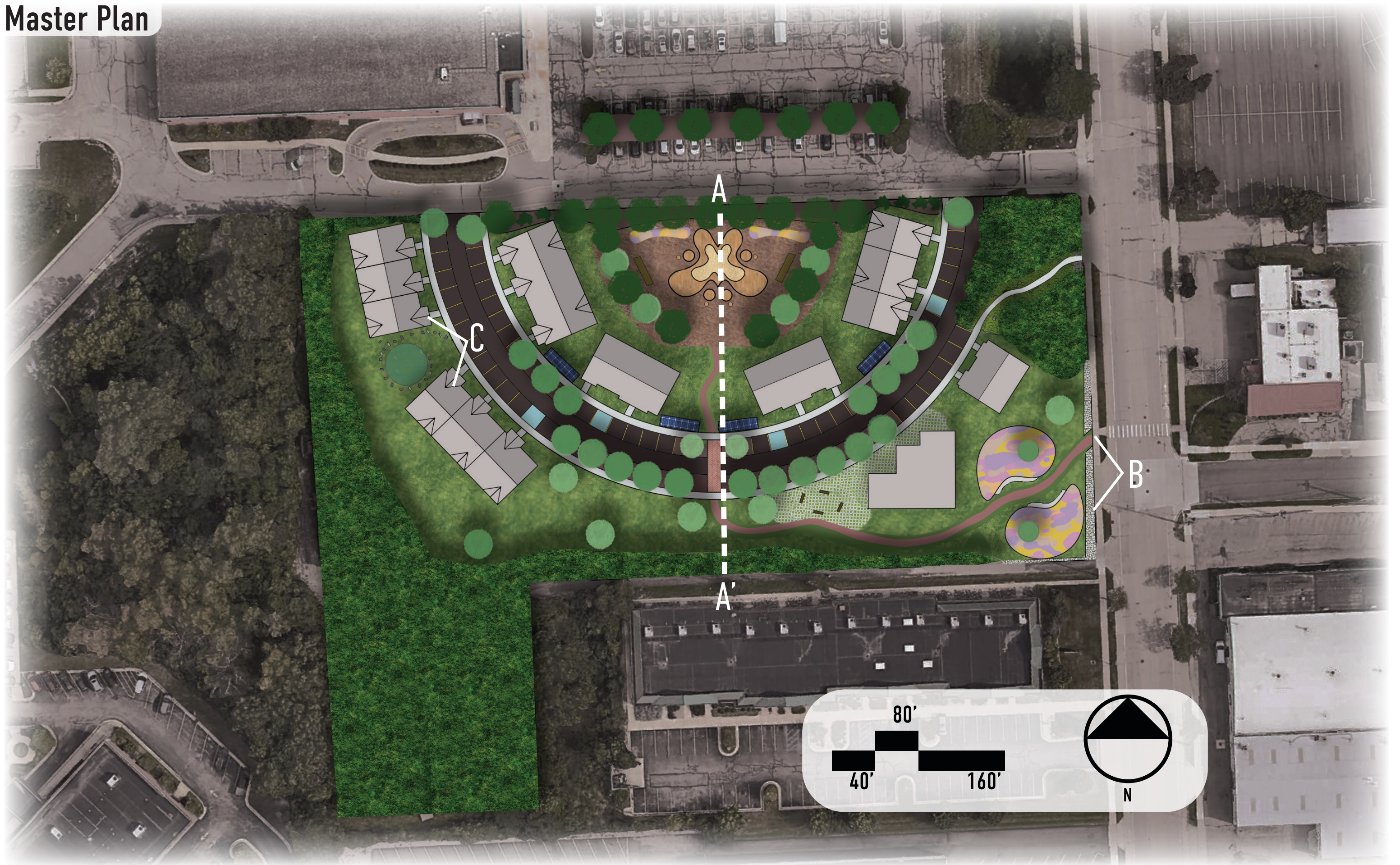


3D model to test light/shadow and design for parking



Southwest woodland patch made more cohesive, monarch motif introduced

# Master Plan





## A. Site Cross-Section



Bike racks adjacent to homes for ease of access

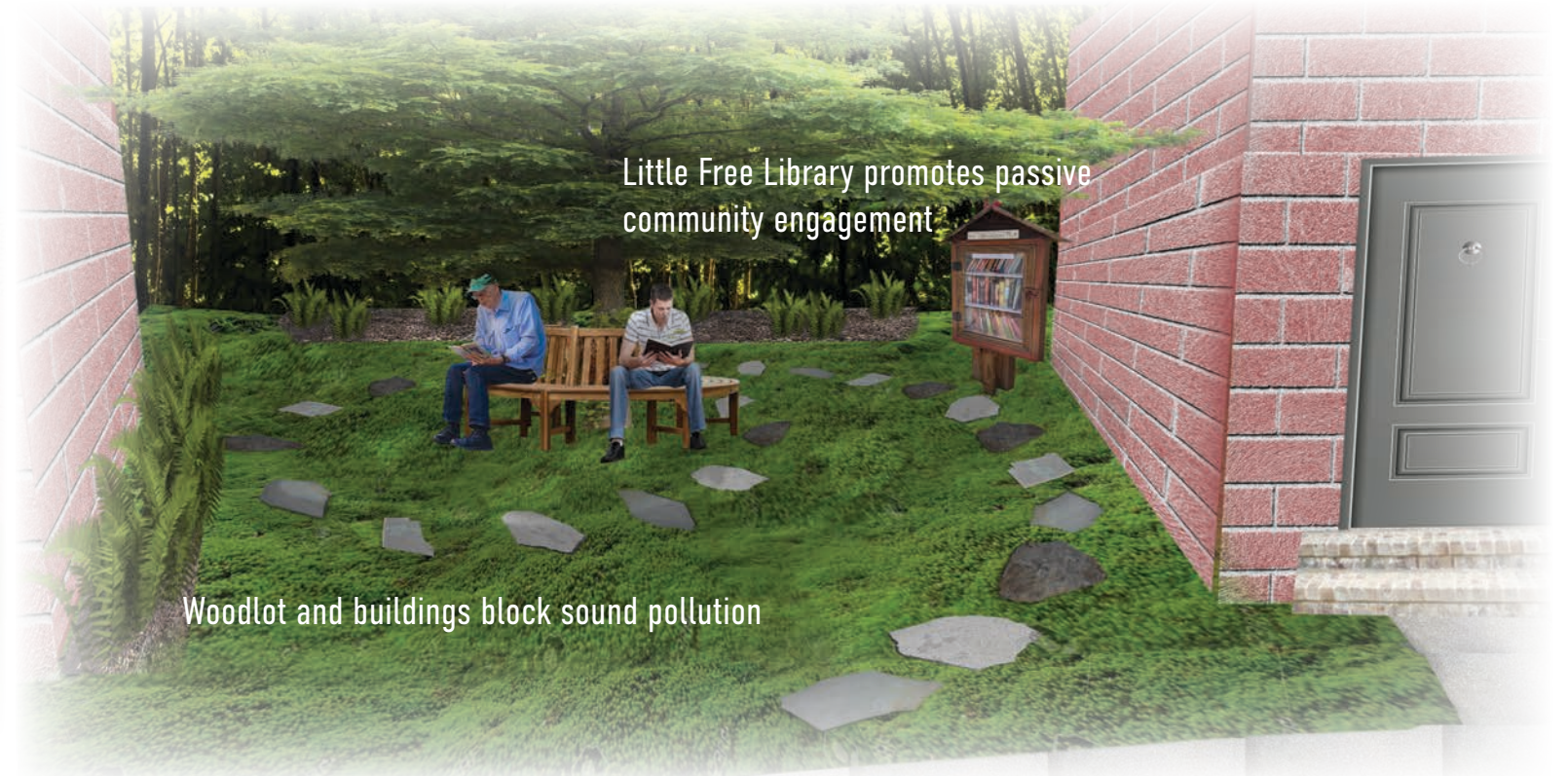
Children's Play Area familiarizes the natural world with butterfly iconography

## B. Pedestrian Entryway



Native planting beds bring residents in touch with native insects such as the monarch butterfly

## C. Little Free Library



Little Free Library promotes passive community engagement

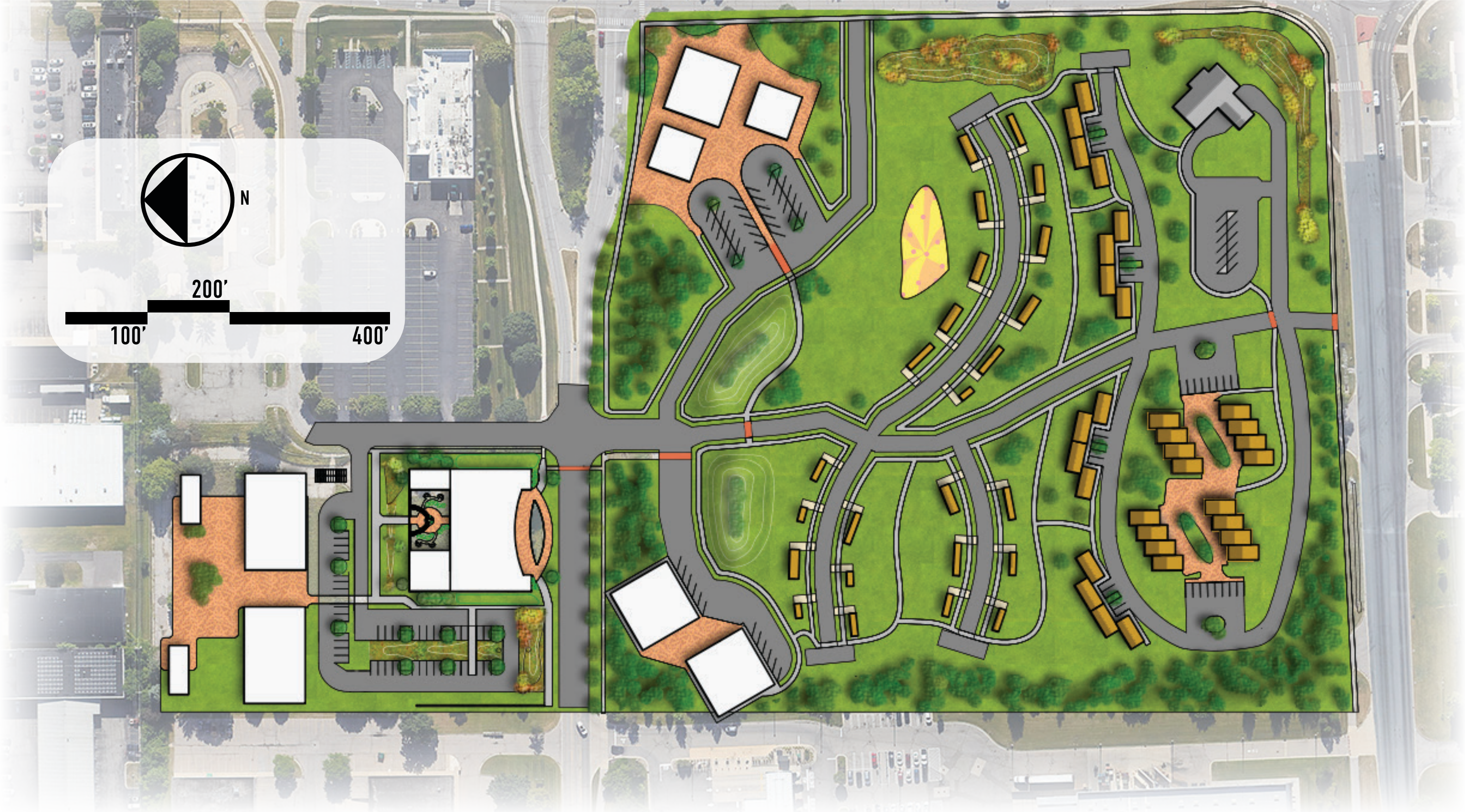
Woodlot and buildings block sound pollution

Quality greenspace with a focus on mindful programming.

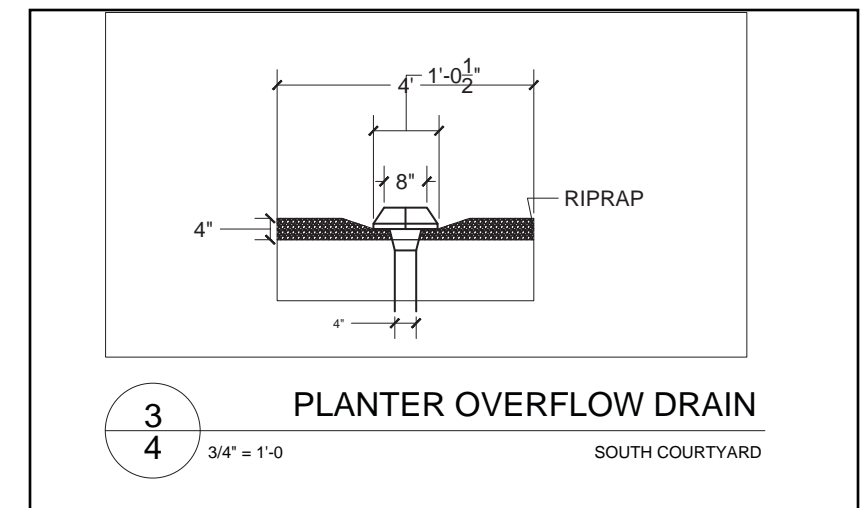
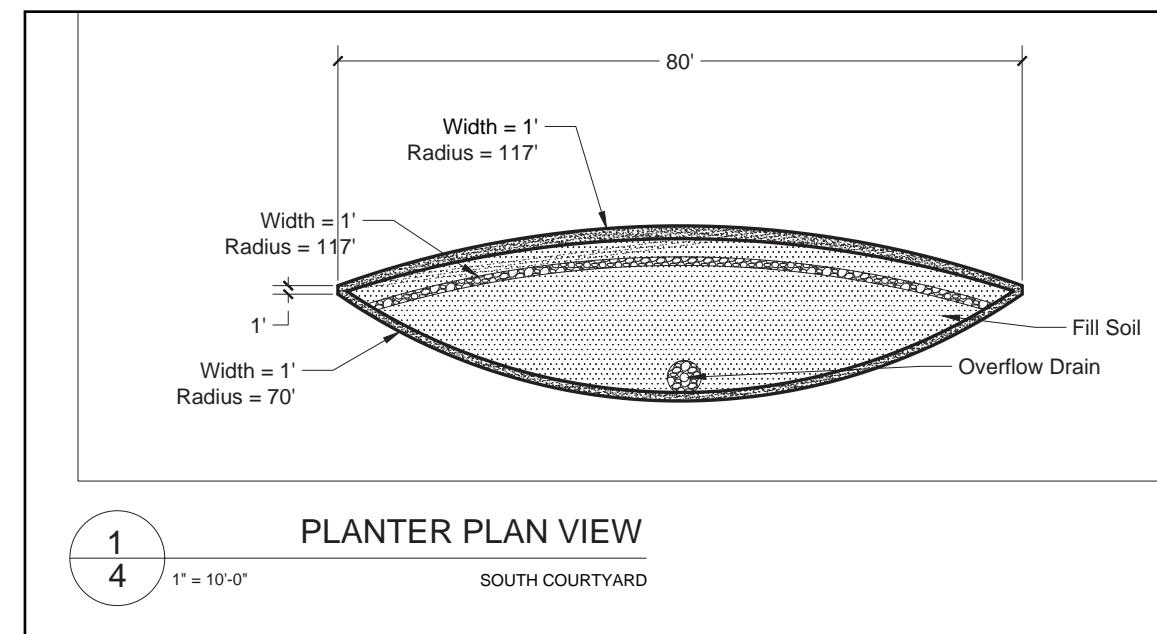
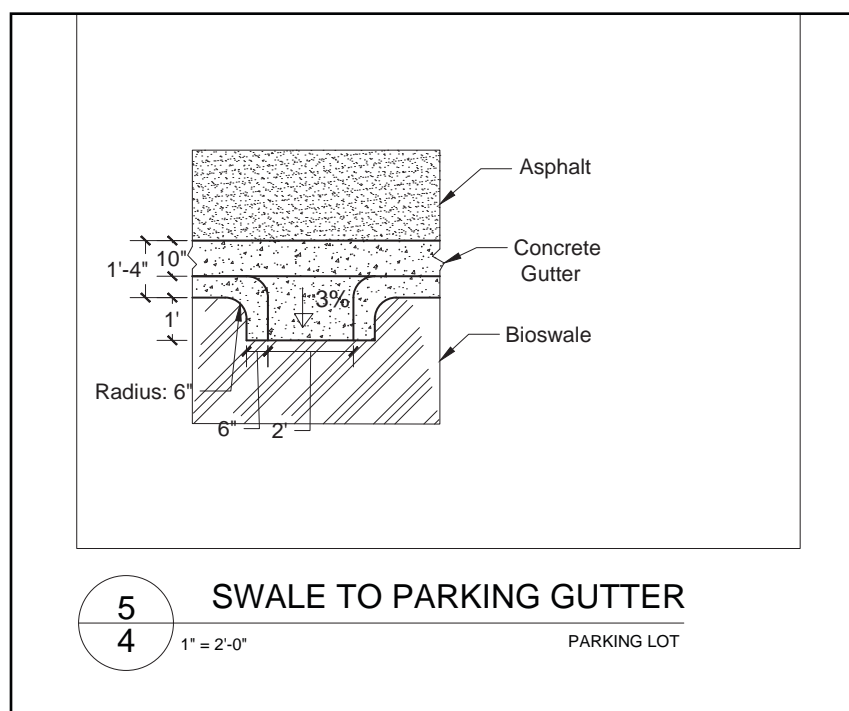
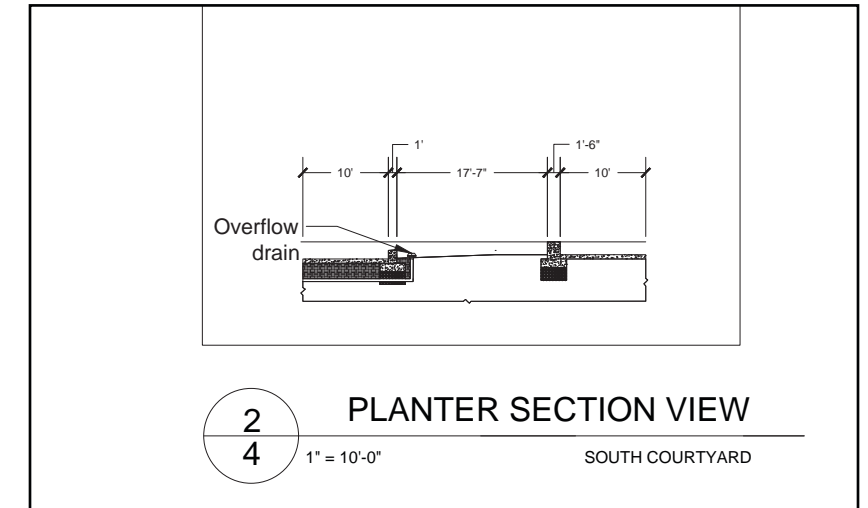
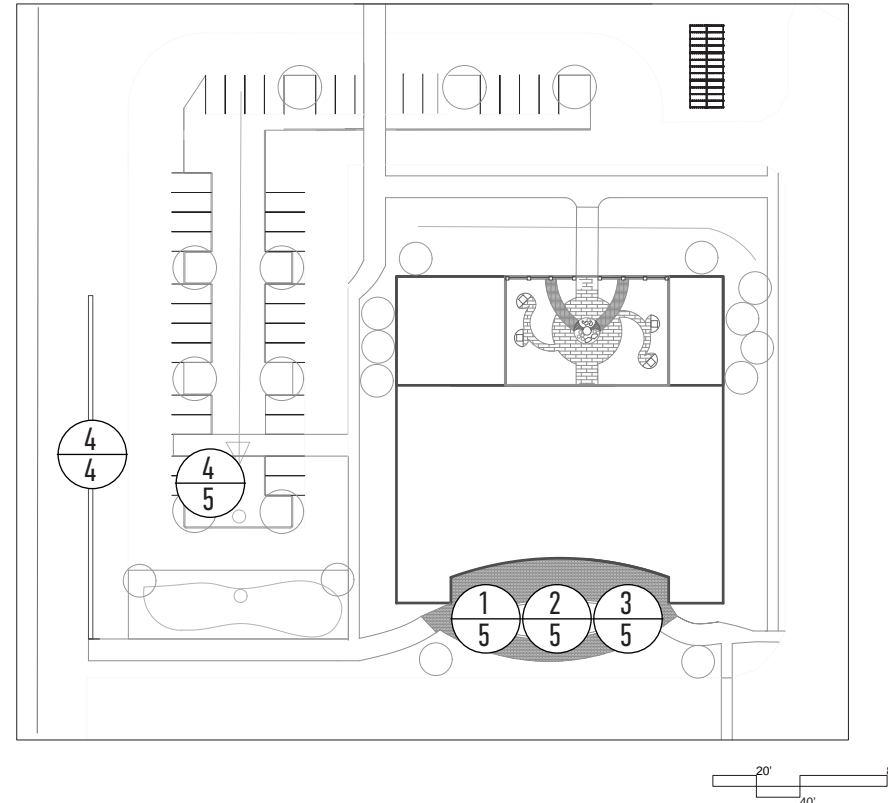
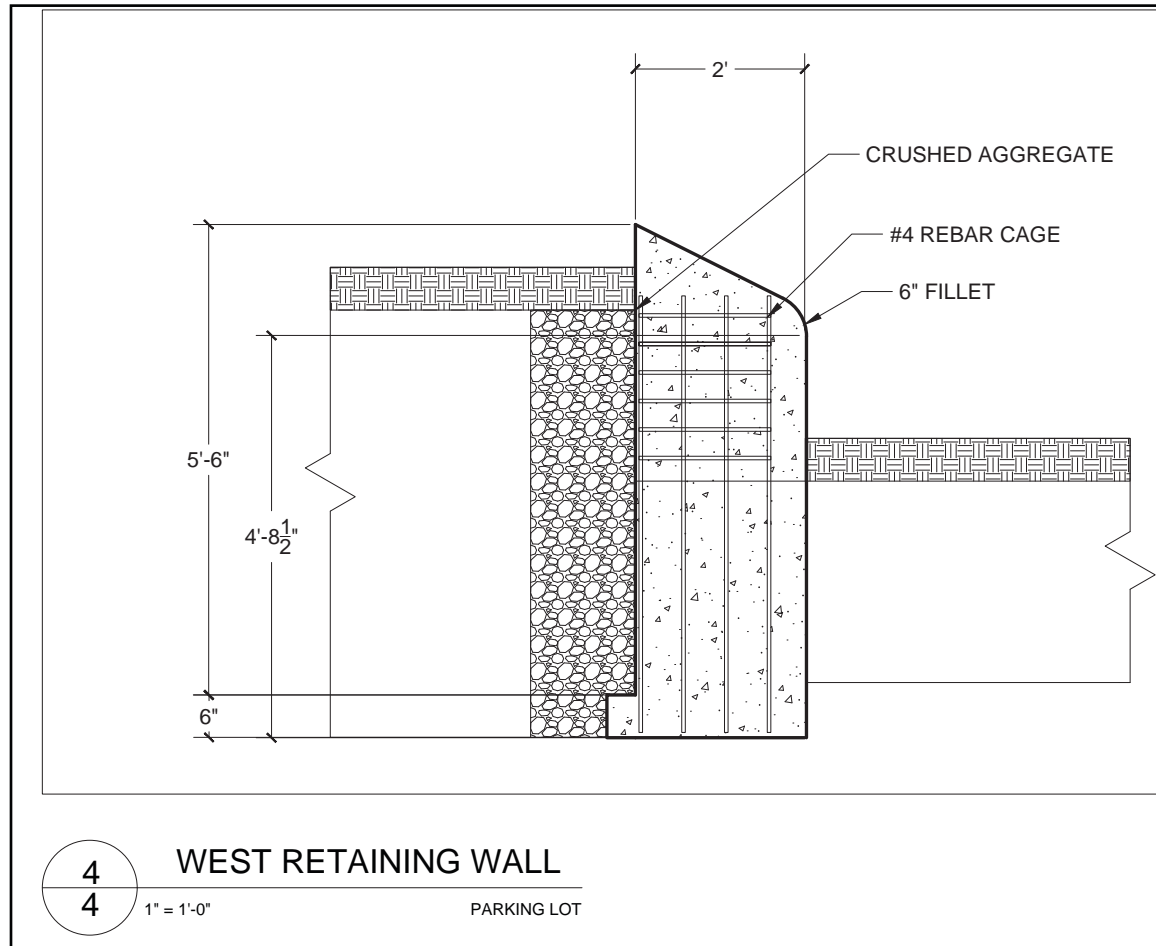
# Walkin' on Sunshine

Fall 2021 Studio

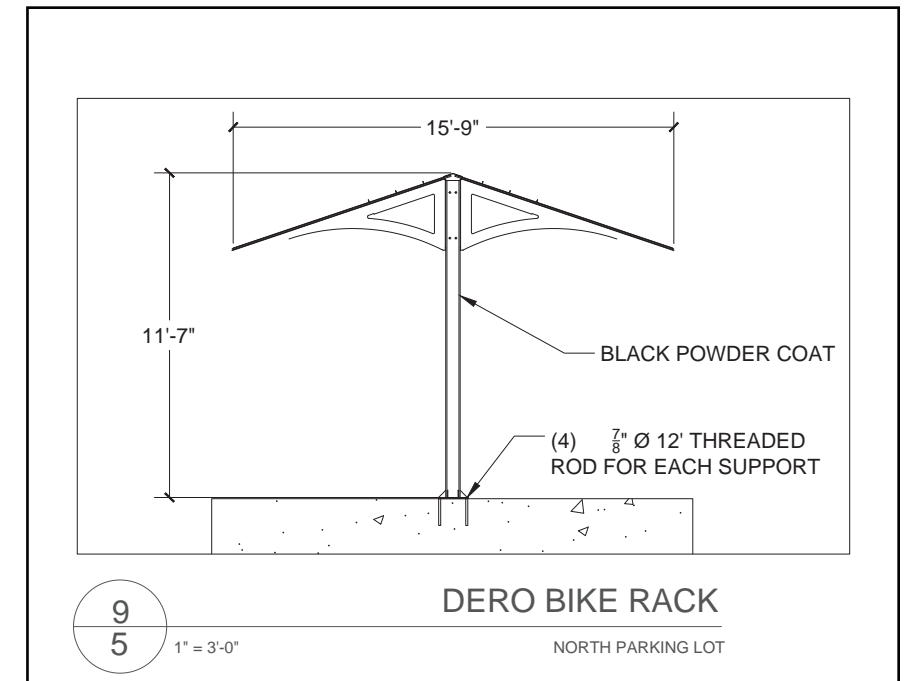
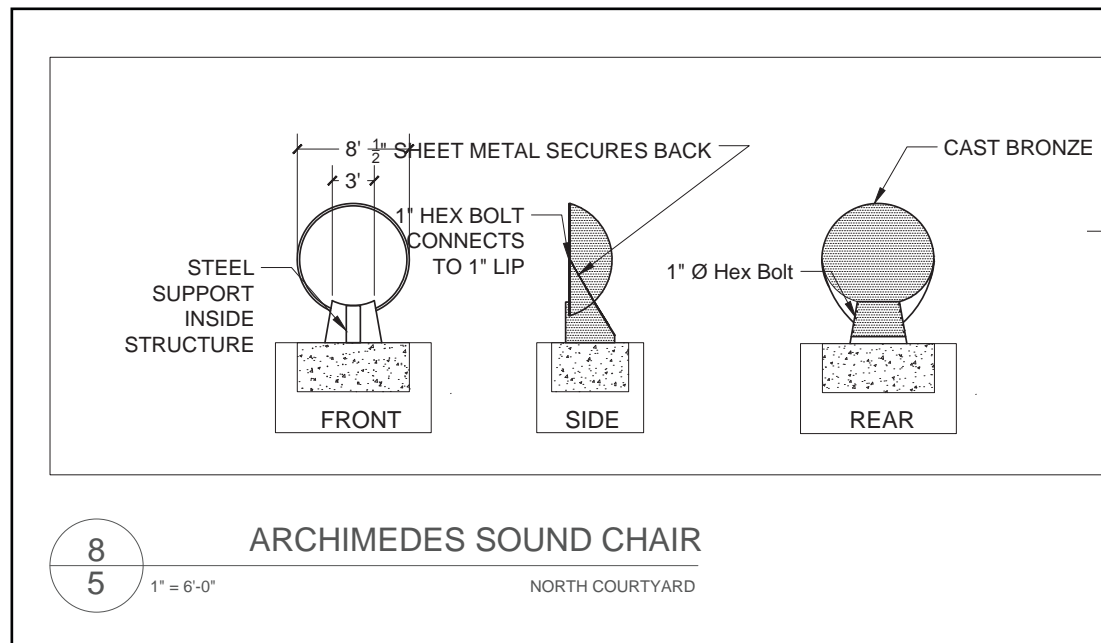
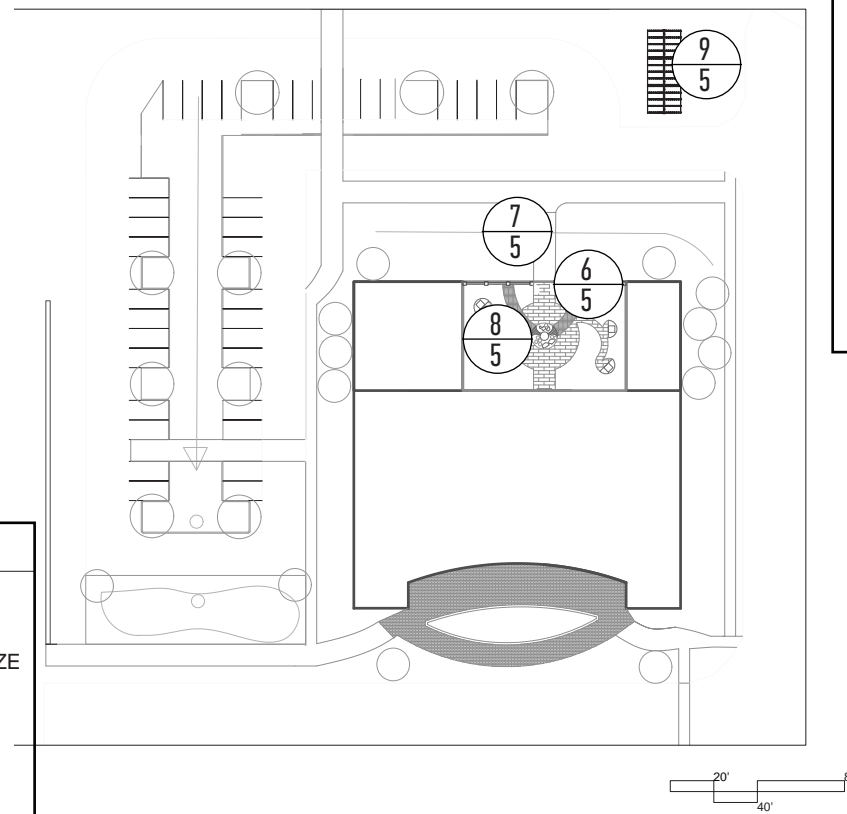
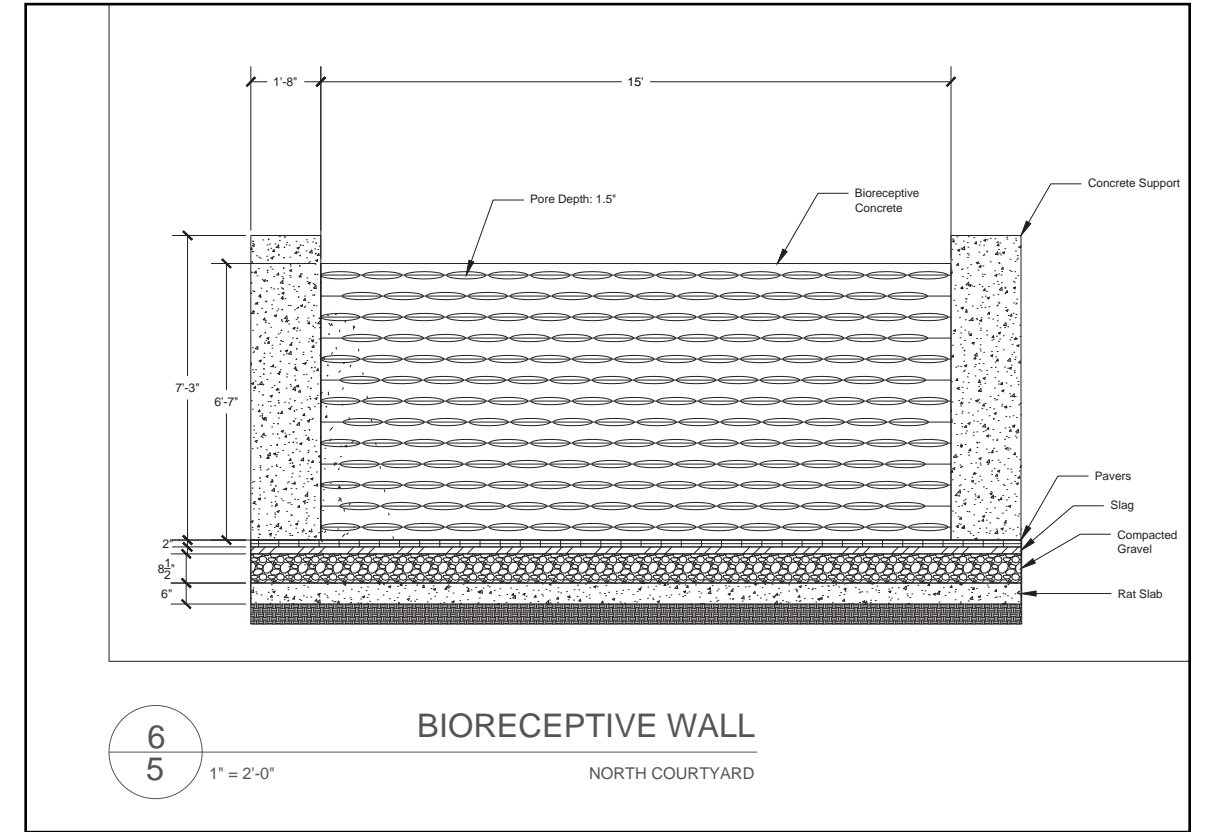
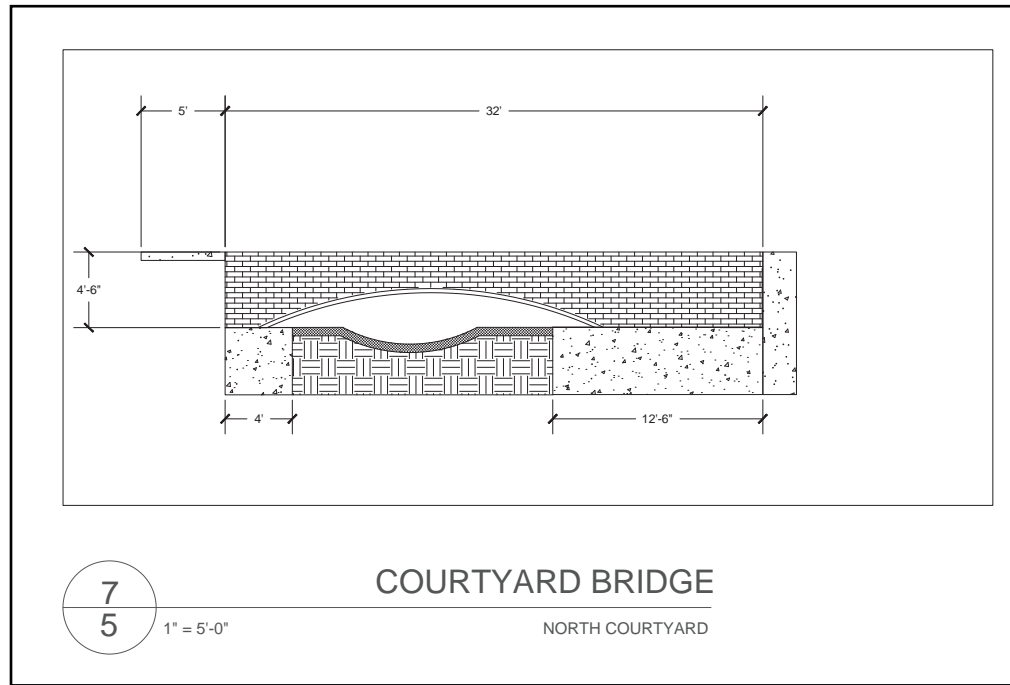
With an emphasis on passive solar and walk-ability, I designed a mixed size housing community with access to amenities such as a shopping center to the northeast and a public library directly North. Buildings were oriented southward to capitalize on the sun's position in winter and pedestrian trails were prioritized over automobile routing.



# Northern Library Details



# Northern Library Courtyard Details



# Why you should add me to your team:



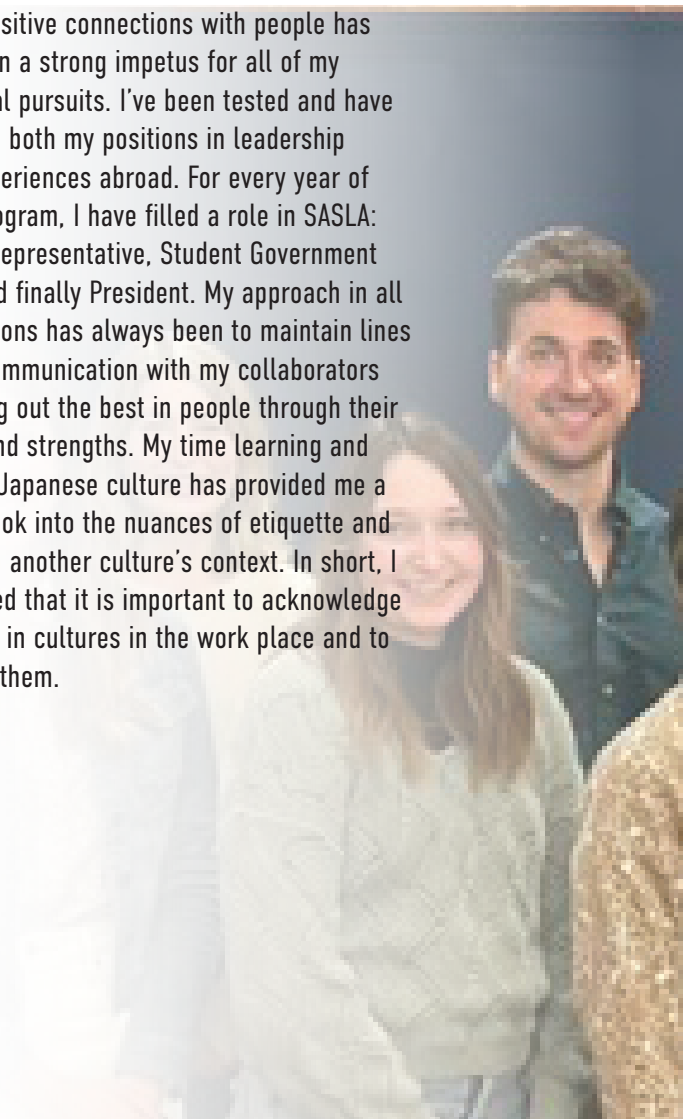
## Hands- On & Landscaping Experience

Since my starting my own garden as a high schooler back in 2013, I've had my hands in the dirt for quite a while now. Since that time, I've filled many seasonal roles with public gardens, greenhouses, suburban landscaping, native plant landscaping, and even traditional Japanese gardening companies. This hands-on experience was pivotal in gaining a sense of scale in the landscape and learning how to communicate with contractors in the field. While I aim to fill the role of a designer and researcher for my career, the tactile experience of landscape will always serve as the roots to my career in landscape architecture.



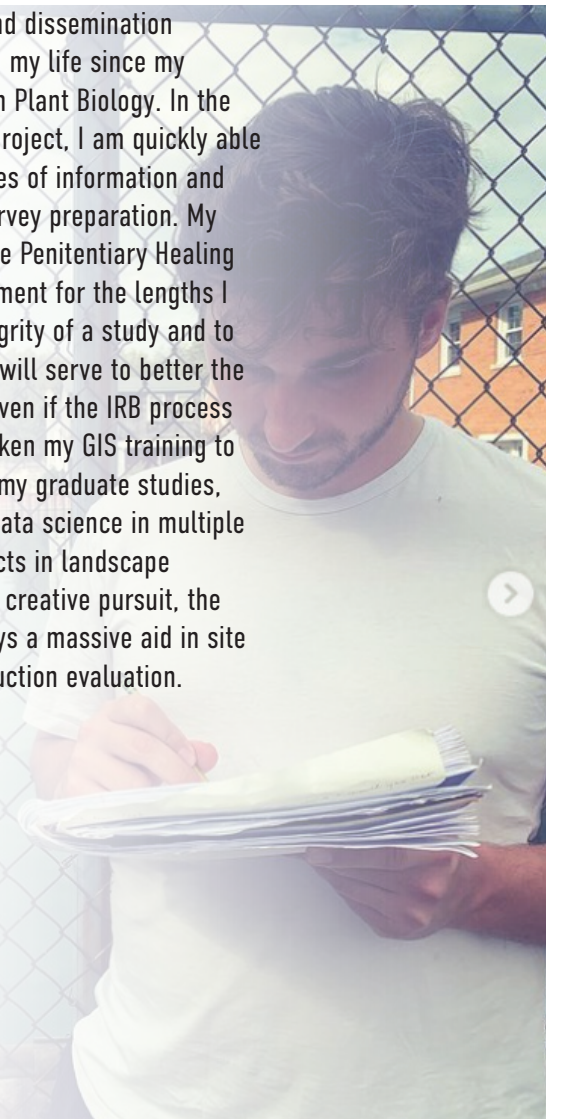
## Leadership & Inter-cultural Experience

Creating positive connections with people has always been a strong impetus for all of my professional pursuits. I've been tested and have grown from both my positions in leadership and my experiences abroad. For every year of my MLA program, I have filled a role in SASLA: First Year Representative, Student Government Liaison, and finally President. My approach in all three positions has always been to maintain lines of direct communication with my collaborators and to bring out the best in people through their interests and strengths. My time learning and working in Japanese culture has provided me a thorough look into the nuances of etiquette and priorities in another culture's context. In short, I have learned that it is important to acknowledge differences in cultures in the work place and to appreciate them.



## Research & Analysis Experience

Research methodology and dissemination has played a large role in my life since my undergraduate program in Plant Biology. In the site analysis phase of a project, I am quickly able to discern credible sources of information and have training in social survey preparation. My thesis on the Oregon State Penitentiary Healing Garden serves as a testament for the lengths I will go to ensure the integrity of a study and to chase the questions that will serve to better the systems in our society- even if the IRB process is long. Further, I have taken my GIS training to the intermediate level in my graduate studies, so I've had my hands in data science in multiple contexts. While our projects in landscape architecture are indeed a creative pursuit, the scientific method is always a massive aid in site analysis and post-construction evaluation.





**Thank you for your consideration!**

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