visual
dialogue

Utile

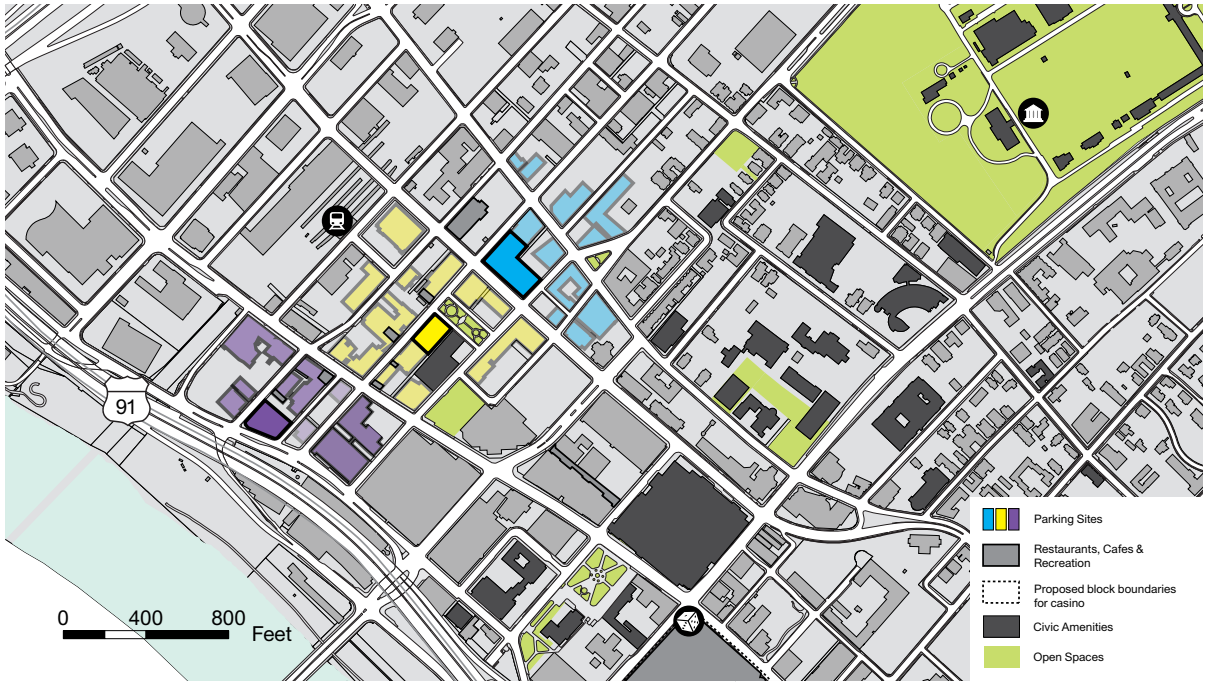
Springfield parking placemaking and branding

October 27, 2016

Project Approach

Parking in Downtown Springfield provides a first impression and introduction for visitors unfamiliar with the area. It is the starting point for the pedestrian experience, and the first opportunity to orient visitors towards Downtown Springfield's amenities. As a pedestrian's starting and end point, parking is a common experience most visitors will share. Because of its visibility and minimal form, the position of the parking lot could be appropriated for other intentions, such as reinforcing the district's brand (Springfield BID), expanding a visitor's understanding of the district via wayfinding, and hosting public events in the evenings. Parking's exposure and spatial flexibility, whether in a lot or on street, means that it can serve multiple purposes, all of which contribute positively to the public realm.

This proposal intends to provide parking lot owners with a toolkit that may be utilized to associate themselves with Springfield BID's identity; increase their income potential; and better connect their lots with the surround amenities. The primary benefit of utilizing this toolkit is the opportunity to increase revenue via the following avenues:



The study area includes three parking lots and the buildings serviced by each.

1. Increased visibility to passing cars with appropriately scaled and located signage.

2. A clearer brand identity that quickly illustrates the parking lot is open to the public.

3. Increased nighttime safety via innovative lighting strategies and 24-hour attendants.

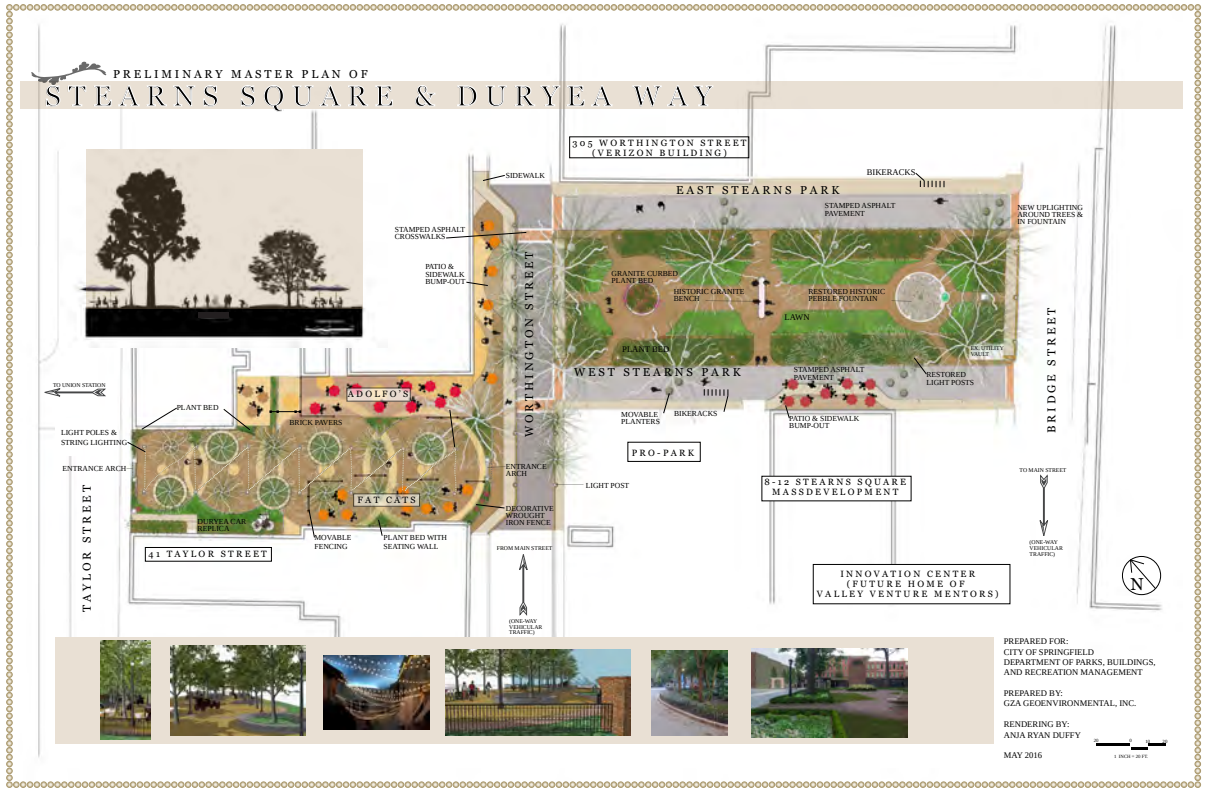
4. The opportunity to open new revenue streams by hosting public pop-up events during off-hours.

Why Now?

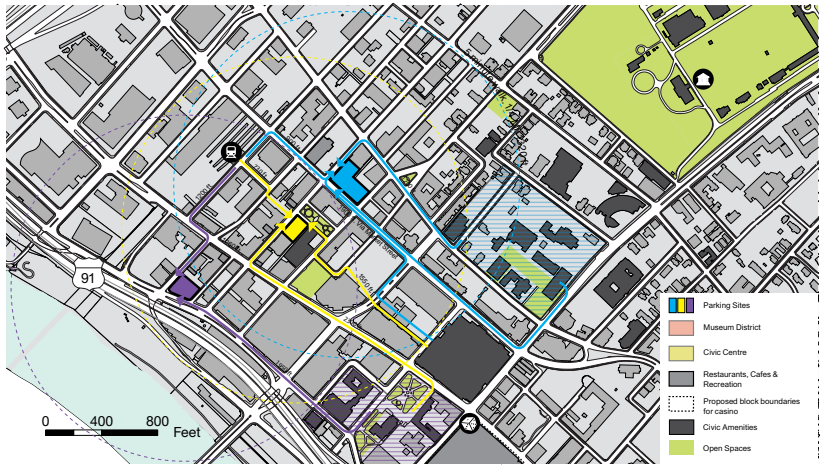
Downtown Springfield is experiencing various investments through efforts led by the City of Springfield, the Springfield BID, MassDevelopment, and DevelopSpringfield. The redevelopment of Stearn's Square in combination with the future city-wide pedestrian wayfinding system will have positive ramifications in relation to Downtown Springfield's pedestrian friendliness. Parking lots provide a key entry into this pedestrian network and can share in the benefits of a stronger Downtown pedestrian experience.

Methodology

The parking lot located at the corner of Worthington Street and Stearns Square was used as a case study to develop the design strategies that could be implemented on any of the other lots. This lot is well positioned within the Springfield BID to test strategies with a central location near Stearns Square and provides visual exposure for a potential mural on the MassDevelopment-owned adjacent property. The lot is privately owned and operated which challenged the permanency of the proposal and led to an adaptable approach. The interventions proposed are not meant to necessarily be implemented in their entirety on a single lot, such as the Worthington Street lot, but to provide a range of options from which the relevant strategies can be selected for each lot.



Above: Priminy master plan of Stearn's Square and Duryea Way.
Below: Pedestrian accessibility to Downtown destinations.



base improvements

Worthington Lot

1. Install proposed mural that will be a key initiator in a new mural program. Increase internal lighting near the mural.

2. Opportunity for a second mural by a juried artist.

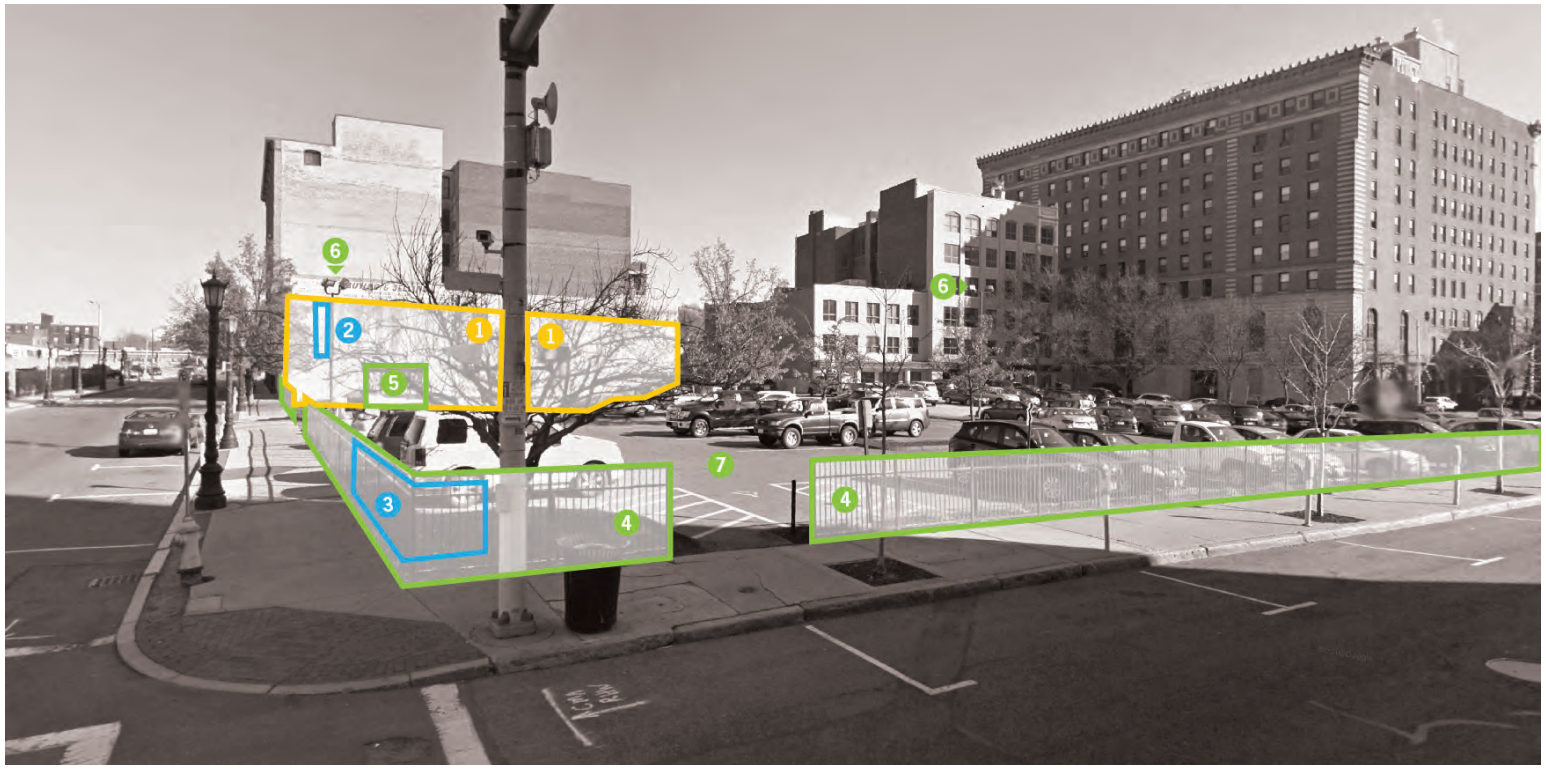
3. Update kiosk with new graphic identity by wrapping existing walls and windows with the proposed vinyl bus wrap.

4. Restore 211 Worthington St. facade and add downlighting to emphasize the “ghost wall.”

5. Replace existing signs with new signage that follows the branding identity of the Springfield BID public parking. Rename parking lot “Worthington Lot” on all signage for easy wayfinding.

6. A further study is needed to determine the viability of moving the right of way access North Church Avenue to the center of the parking lot (adjacent to the current parking kiosk, connecting directly to Worthington Street). If this emerges as the recommend access location, the lot should be reconfigured to accommodate self-parking rather than live parking.

7. Patch potholes or repave as needed.



Dwight Lot

1. Opportunity for a mural by a juried artist. Increase internal lighting near a potential future mural.

2. Replace existing signs with new signage that follows the branding identity of the Springfield BID public parking. Rename parking lot “Dwight Lot” on all signage for easy wayfinding.

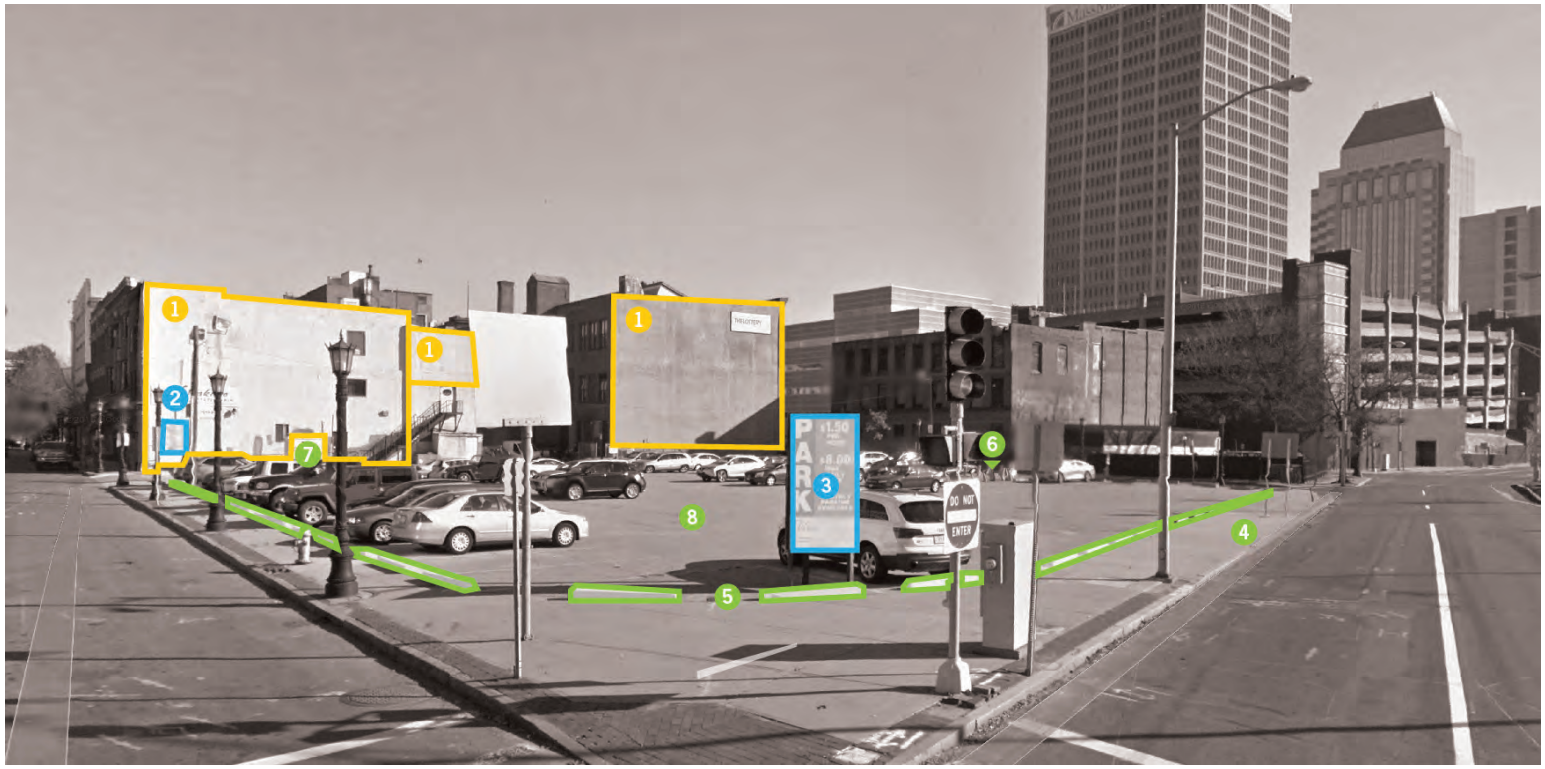
3. Add a new sign on the corner, directing cars towards the lot entrance.

4. Increase the number of openings in the fence for more pedestrian access.

5. Add a 24-hour attendant to address safety concerns since this is the primary “entry point” into the dining district.

6. Perform necessary maintenance on existing light fixtures to increase safety and accessibility.

7. Patch potholes or repave as needed.



Hampden Lot

1. Opportunity for 1–4 murals to be completed by juried artists. Increase internal lighting near a potential future mural.

2. Replace existing signs with new signage that follows the branding identity of the Springfield BID public parking. Make parking entrance much more visible from all directions by increasing signage scale. Rename parking lot “Hampden Lot” on all signage for easy wayfinding.

3. Increase visibility of signage along East Columbus Avenue to direct traffic towards the parking lot entrance.

4. Study the benefits of adding an additional curb cut on Columbus to allow for easier car access.

5. Study alternatives to curb stops to reduce pedestrian tripping opportunities. Street furniture could be used as an alternative to curb stops.

6. Remove unnecessary bollards.

7. Add a 24-hour attendant to address safety concerns since this is the primary “entry point” into the dining district.

8. Patch potholes or repave as needed.

wayfinding graphics

goals

Activate locations through graphics

Increase awareness of plentiful, convenient parking

Mitigate confusion

Direct visitors to key destinations

Convey safety

Attract attention and business

strategy

A kit of parts that can be tailored to different locations

Cost-effective and adaptable for various uses

Flexible to use and produce

COLOR PALETTE

Green
PMS 368 C
CMYK: 50 0 100 0
HEX: #8cc63e

Yellow
PMS 116 C
CMYK: 0 20 100 0
HEX: #ffcb04

Bright Blue
PMS Proc. Blue C
CMYK: 100 0 0 0
HEX: #00adef

Orange
PMS 716 C
CMYK: 0 51 88 0
HEX: #f79237

Red
PMS 1788 C
CMYK: 0 90 100 0
HEX: #ef4023

Purple
PMS 2603 C
CMYK: 70 80 0 0
HEX: #6850a1

UMass Maroon
PMS 202 C
CMYK: 9 100 64 48
HEX: #881c1c

Parking Blue
PMS 3005 C
CMYK: 100 40 0 0
HEX: #007dc5

icons

ICONOGRAPHY

(River Park)

(Dining)

(Train Station)

(Basketball Hall of Fame)

(Casino)

(Museum)

(Campus)

(Parking)

DIRECTIONAL ICONOGRAPHY

(River Park)

(Dining)

(Train Station)

(Basketball Hall of Fame)

(Casino)

(Museum)

(Campus)

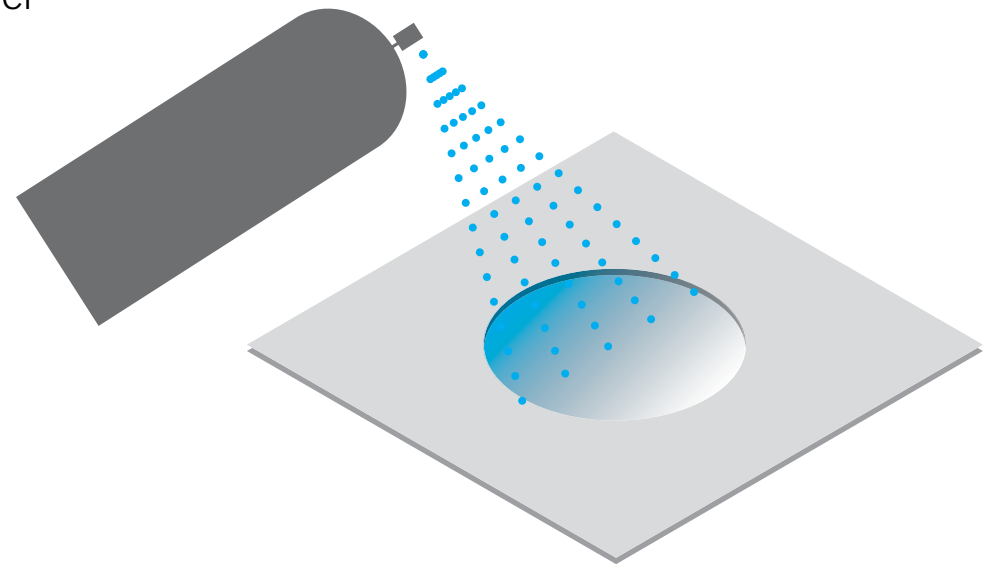
(Parking)

wayfinding
(sidewalk icons)

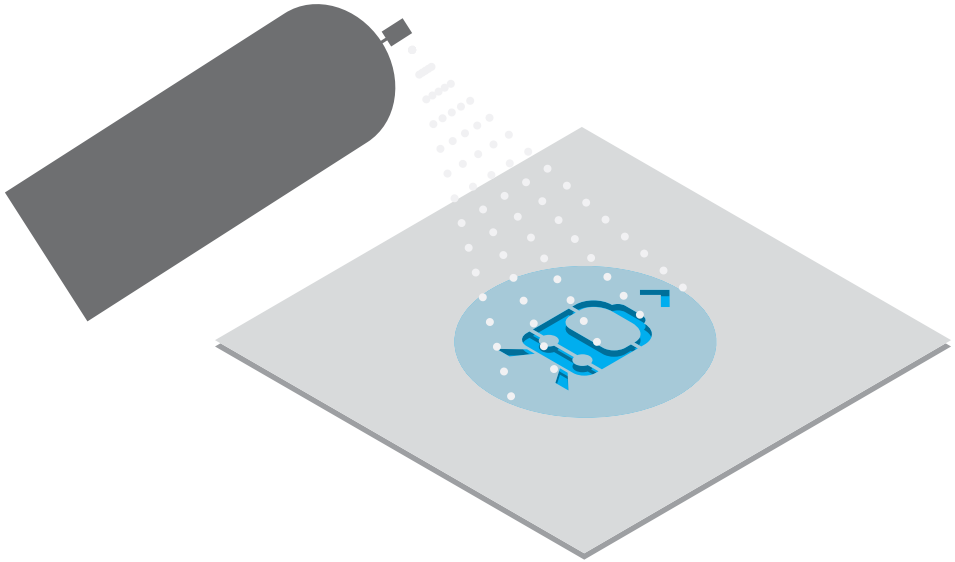
ONE WAY
MGM

STENCILED ICON APPLICATION

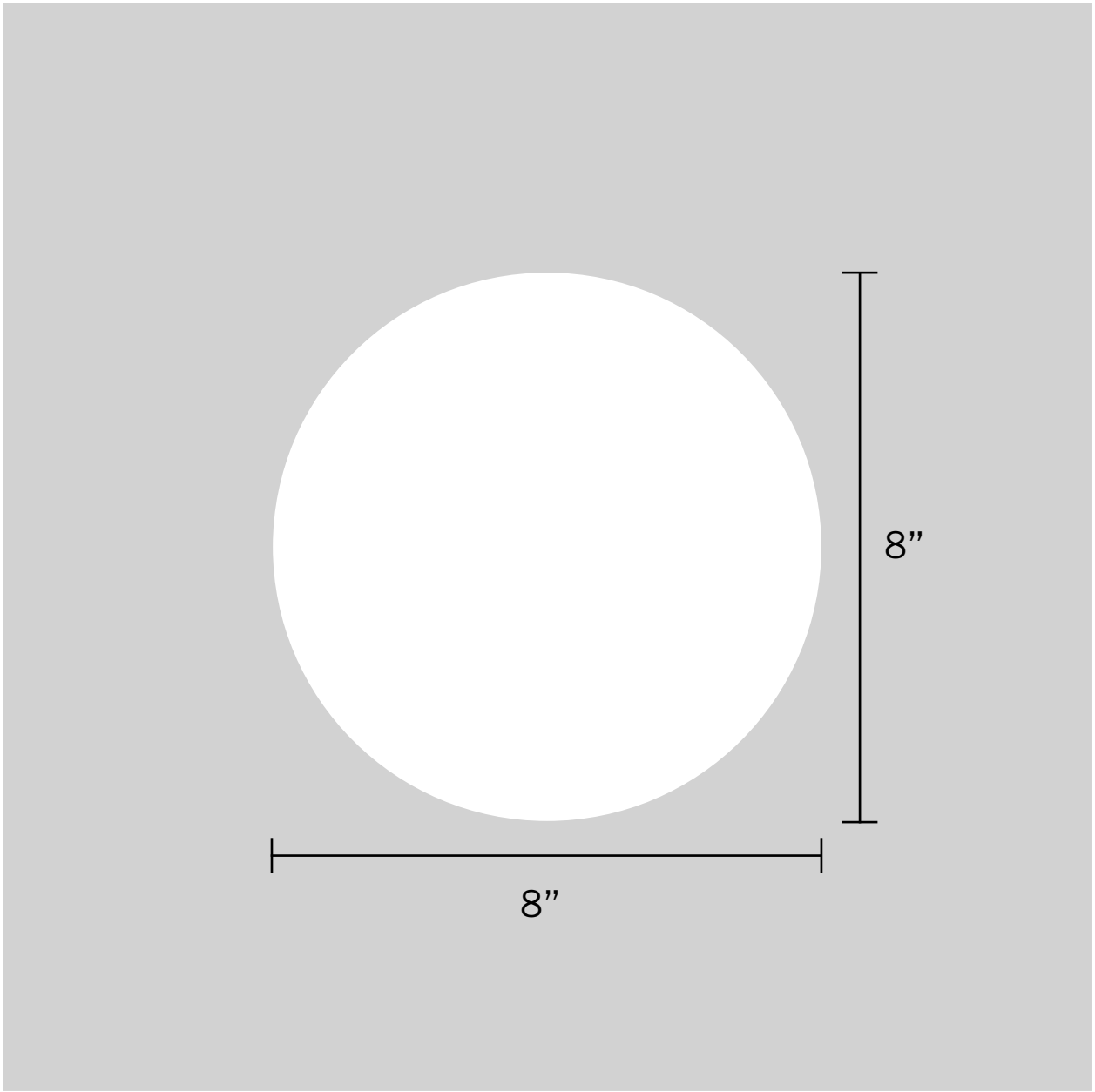
1. paint colored base layer



2. paint white icon



BASE LAYER STENCIL



RIVER PARK ICON STENCIL

DINING ICON STENCIL

TRAIN STATION ICON STENCIL

BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME ICON STENCIL

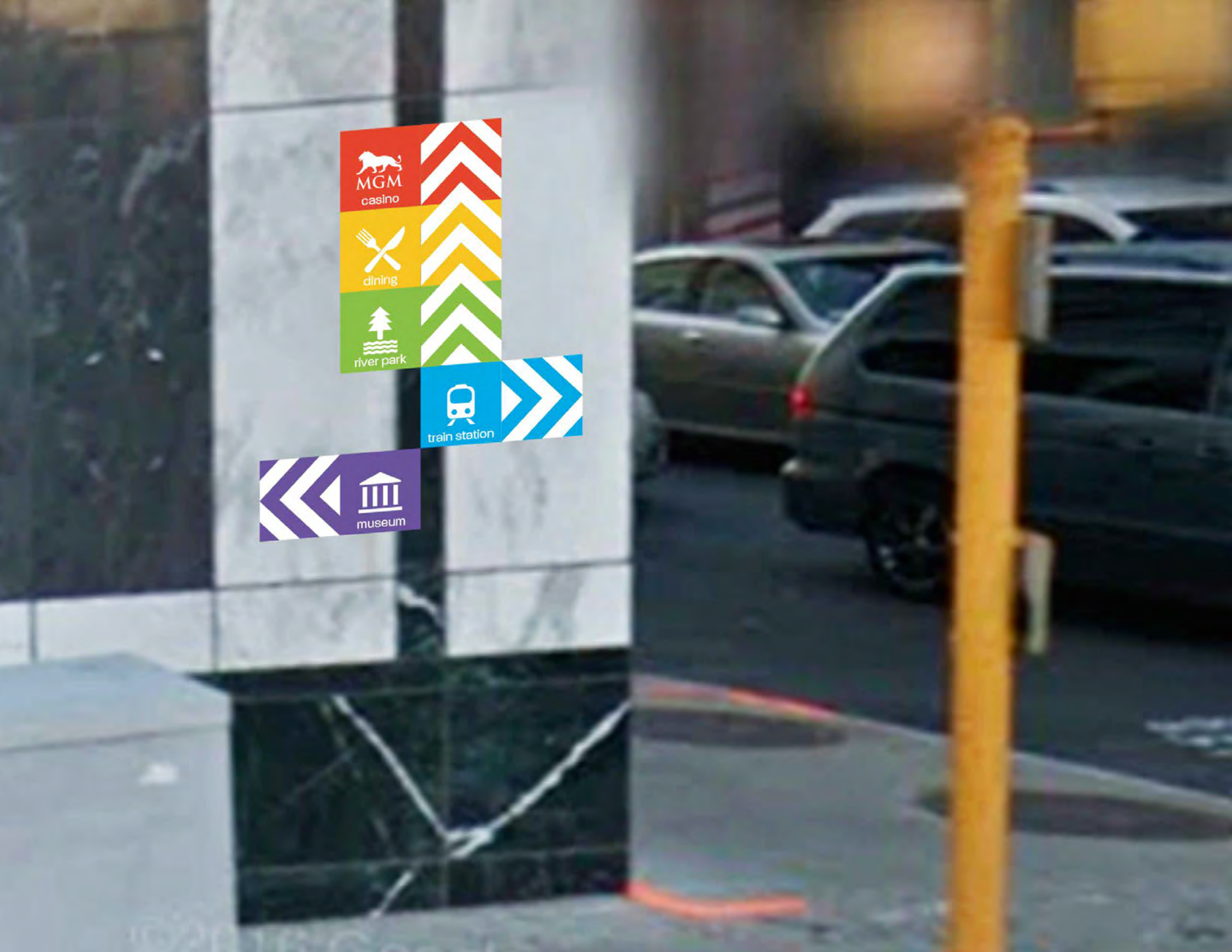
CASINO ICON STENCIL

MUSEUM ICON STENCIL

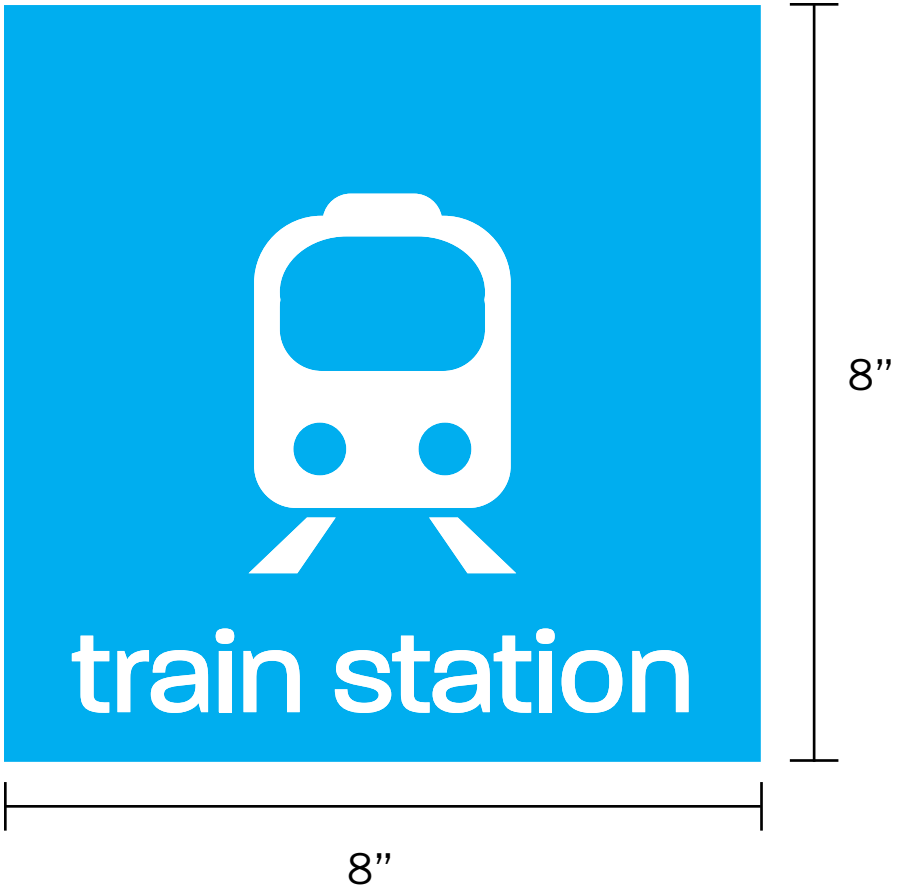
CAMPUS ICON STENCIL

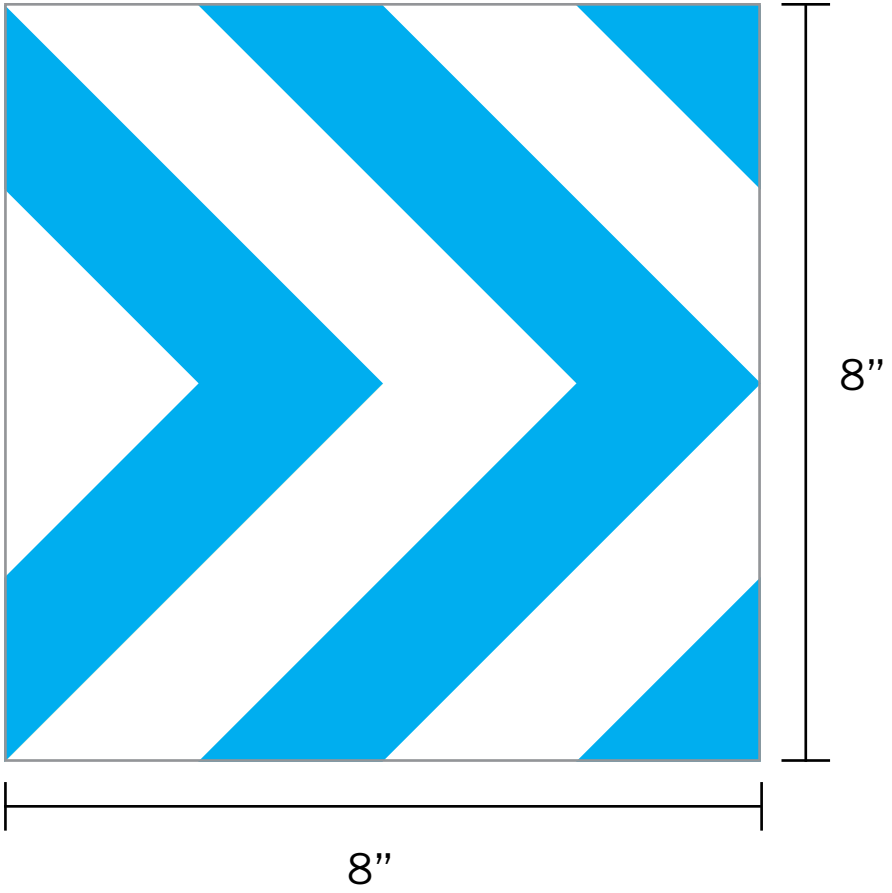
PARKING ICON STENCIL

wayfinding
(exterior vinyl signs)


MGM
casino
dining
river park
train station
museum

VINYL WAYFINDING

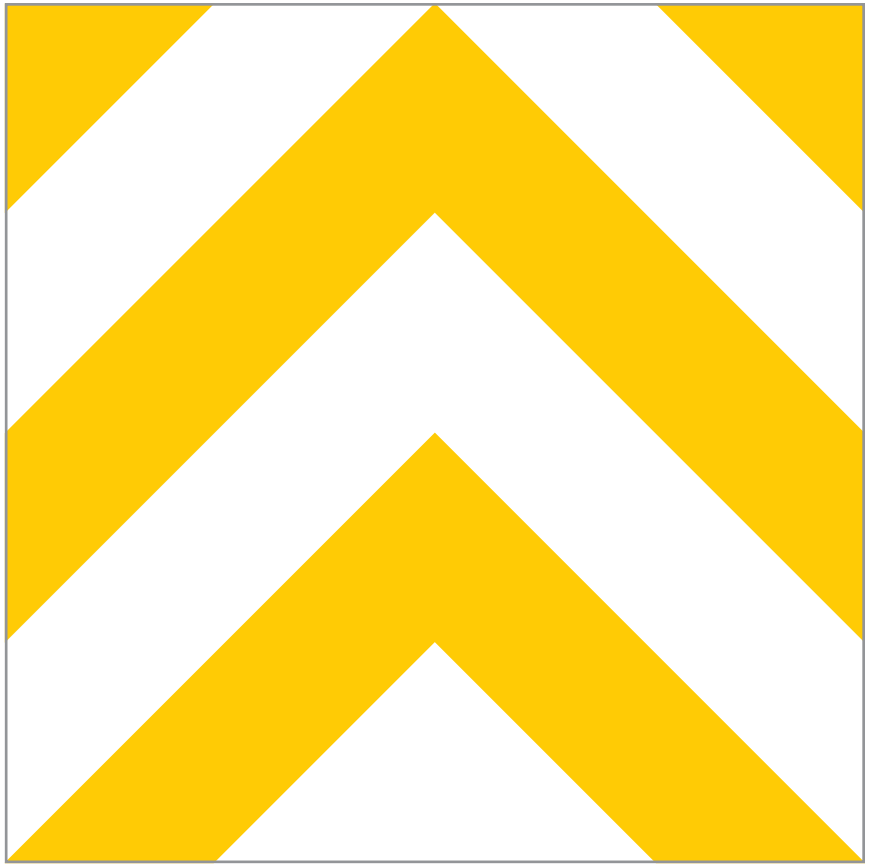




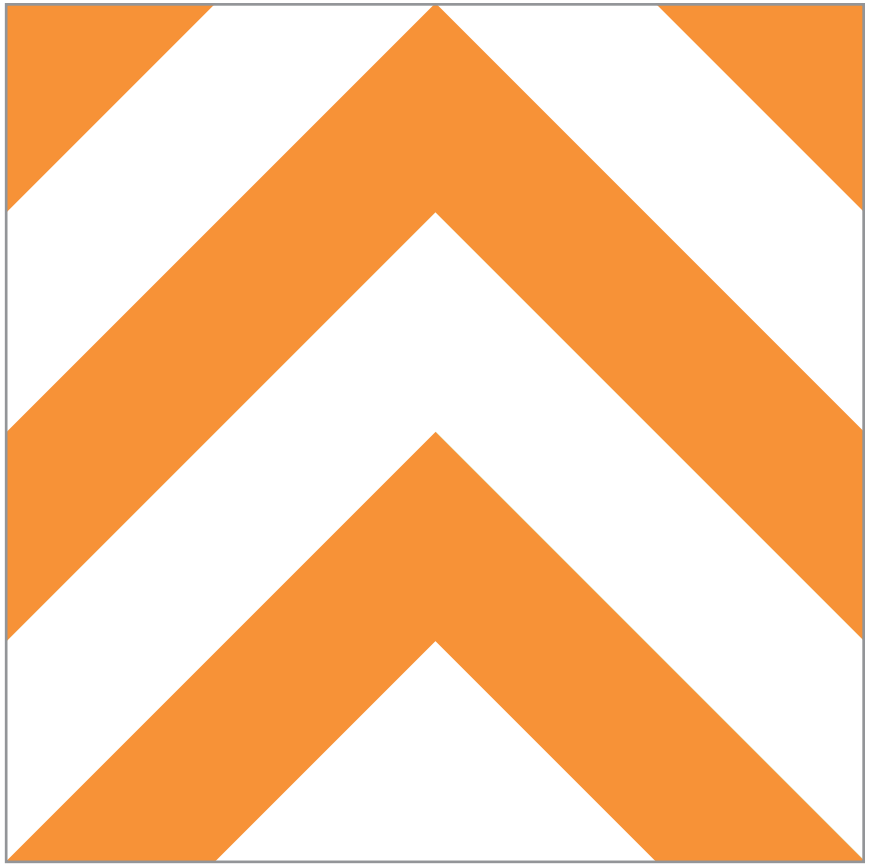
- adhesive backed vinyl
- heavy duty for exterior application
- removable

RIVER PARK VINYL SIGNAGE

DINING VINYL SIGNAGE

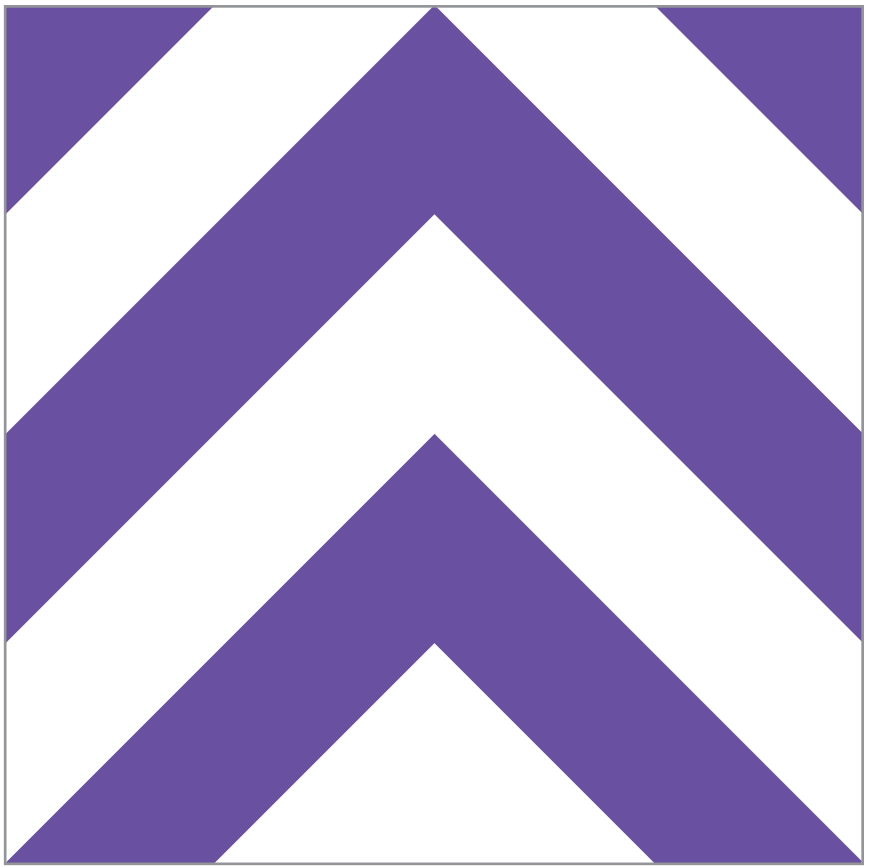


BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME VINYL SIGNAGE

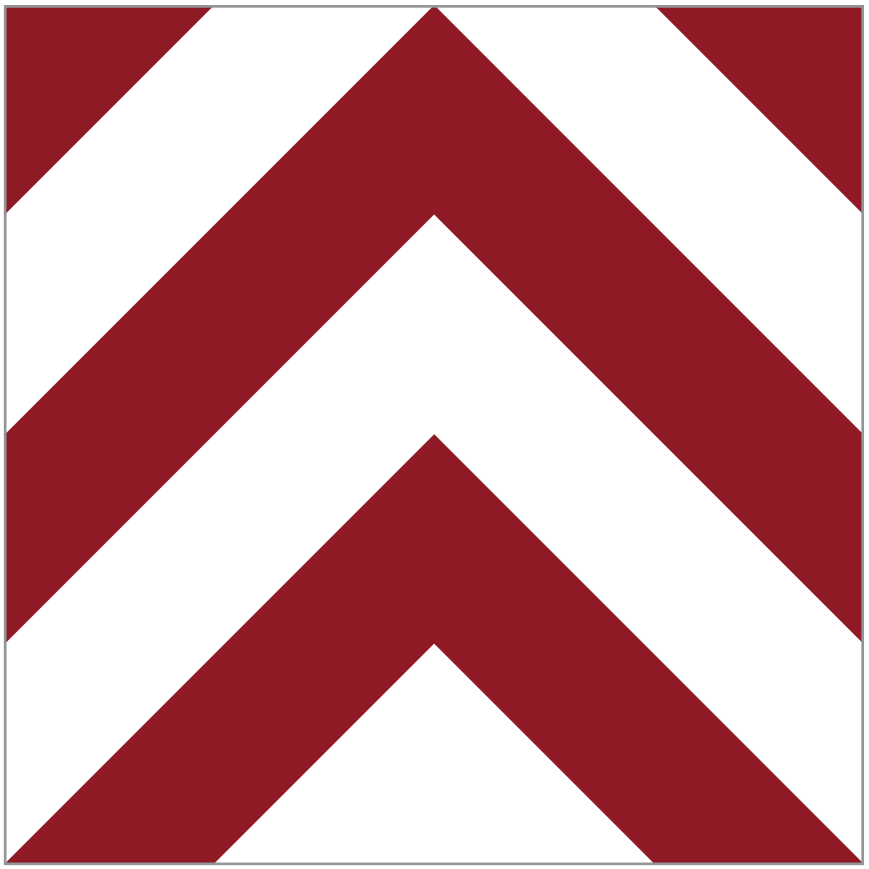


CASINO VINYL SIGNAGE

MUSEUM VINYL SIGNAGE



CAMPUS VINYL SIGNAGE



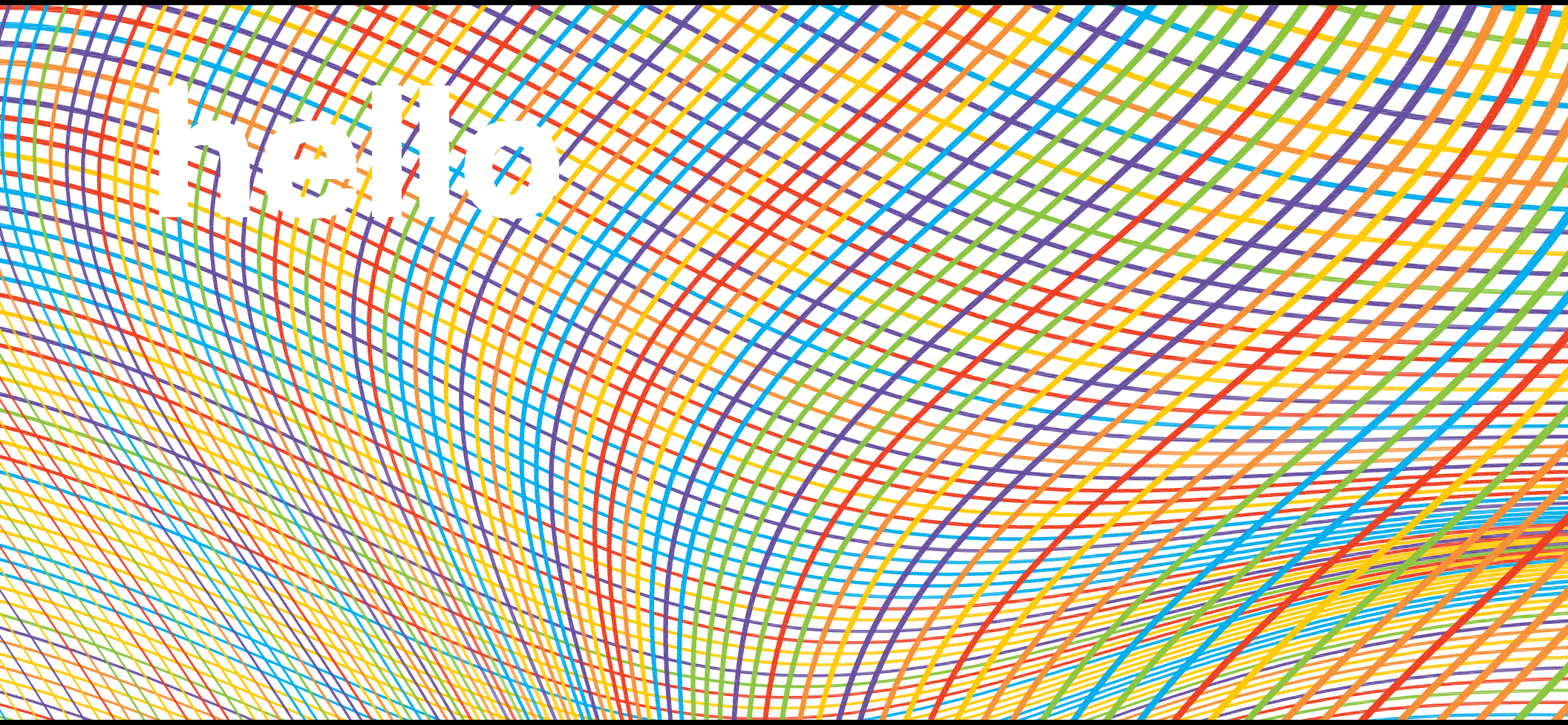
PARKING VINYL SIGNAGE

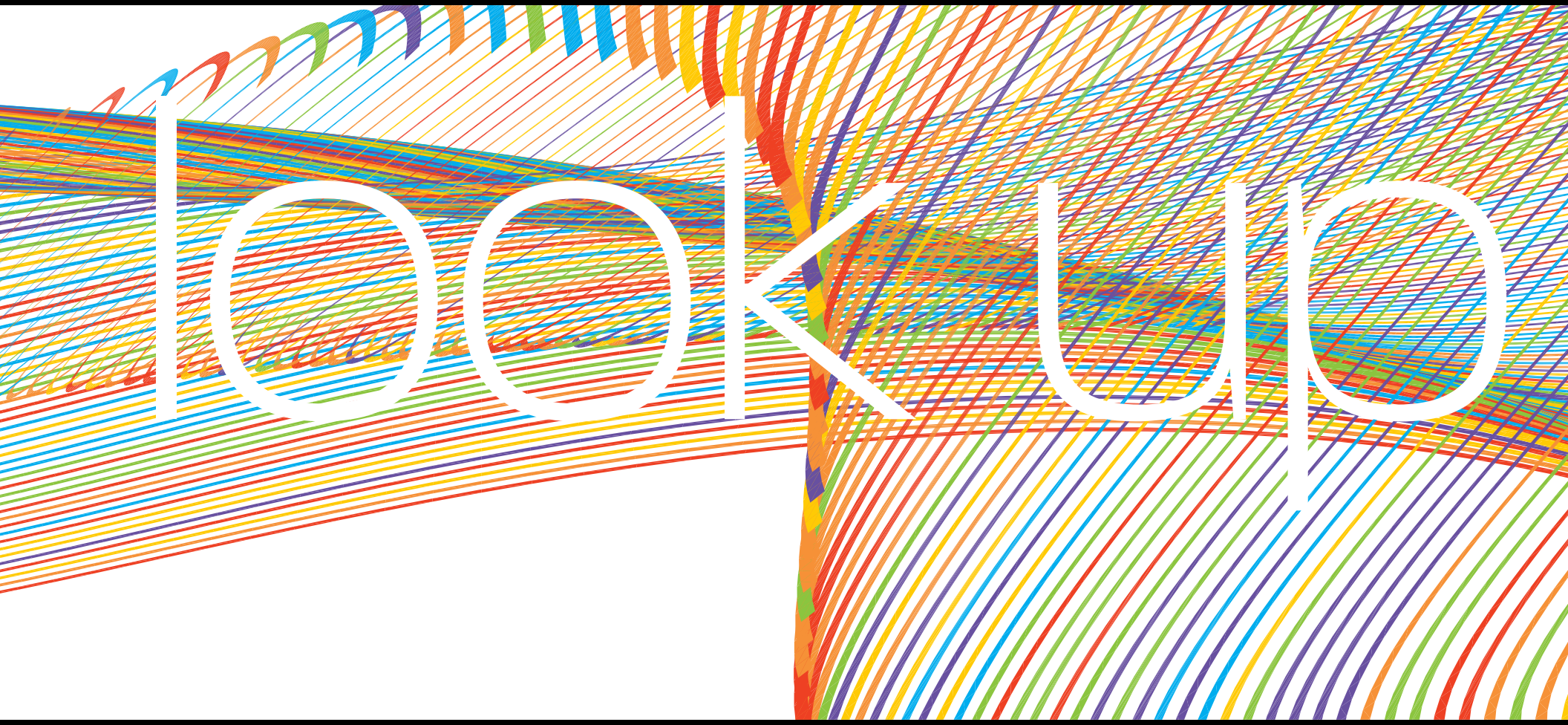
placemaking artwork & parking lot graphics

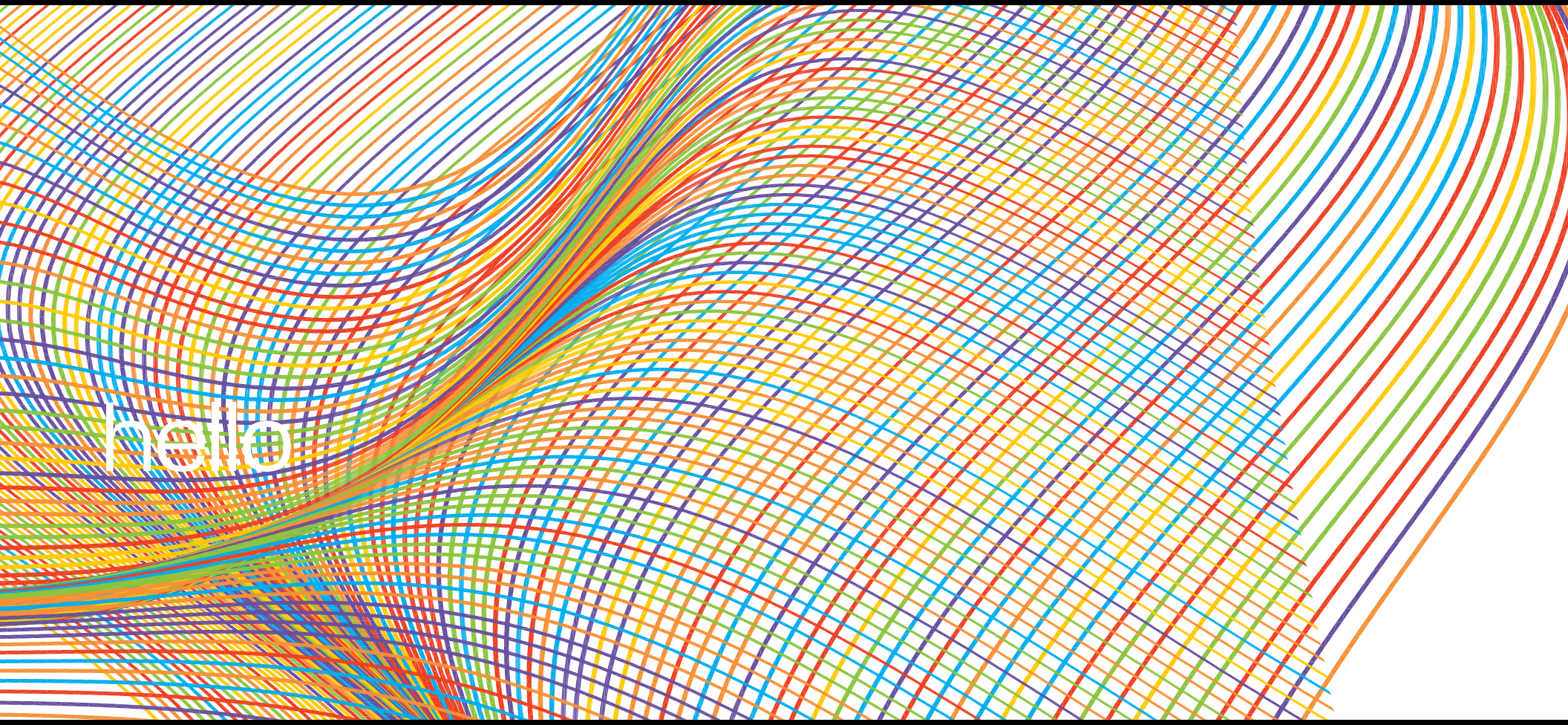
When I Grow

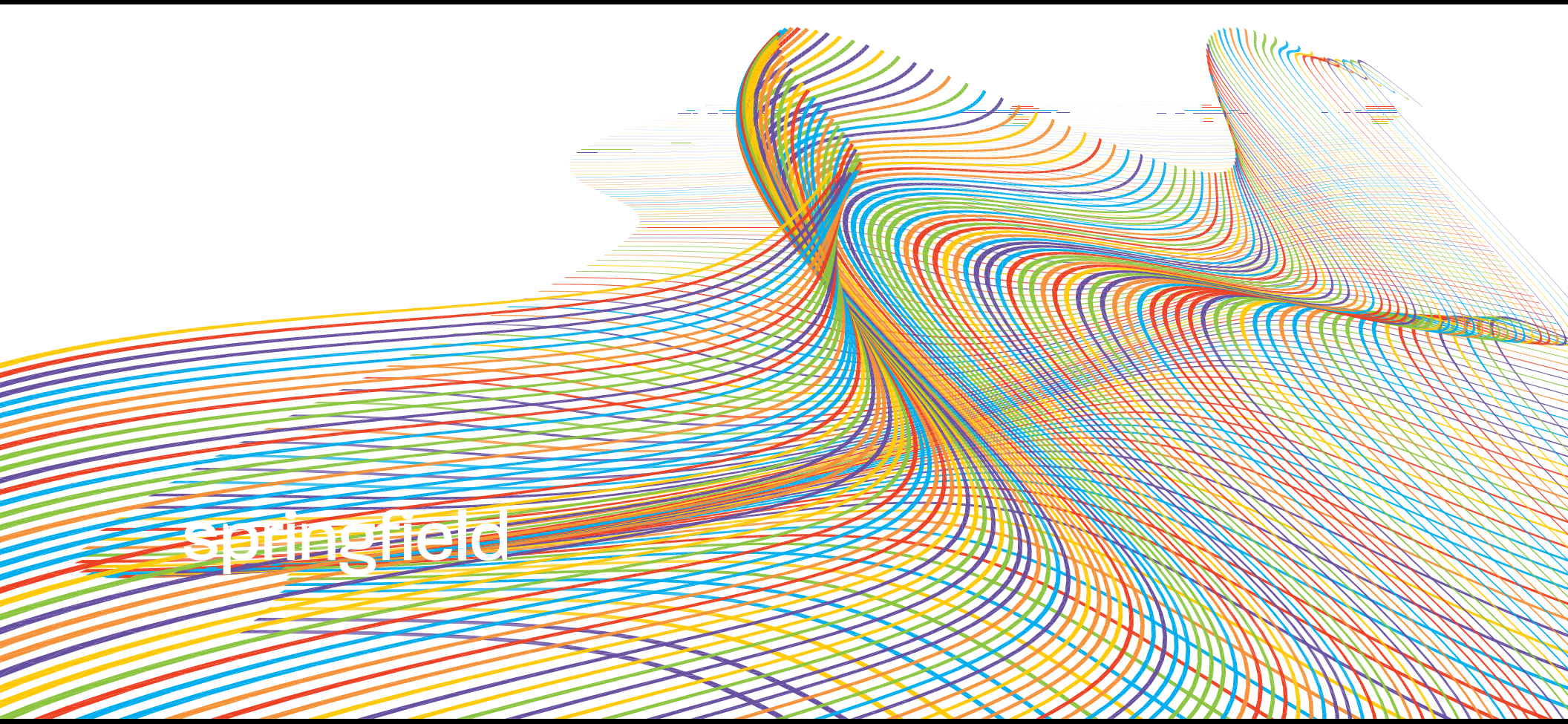
look up

HOKUP


hello


LOOKUP


hello


springfield

THELOTTERY
Shakago

Shakago
Hello

(p)
park
Propark
AMERICA
(p) park
(p)
park
Propark
propark.com
Information
This Facility
Managed By
INFO

PARK
worthington
street
Propark
AMERICA
P
Propark
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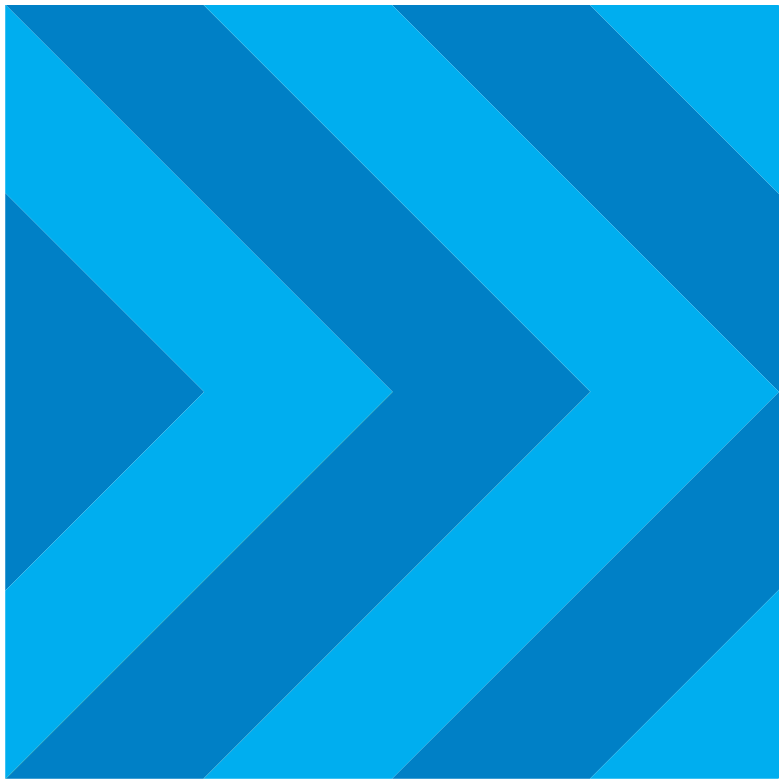
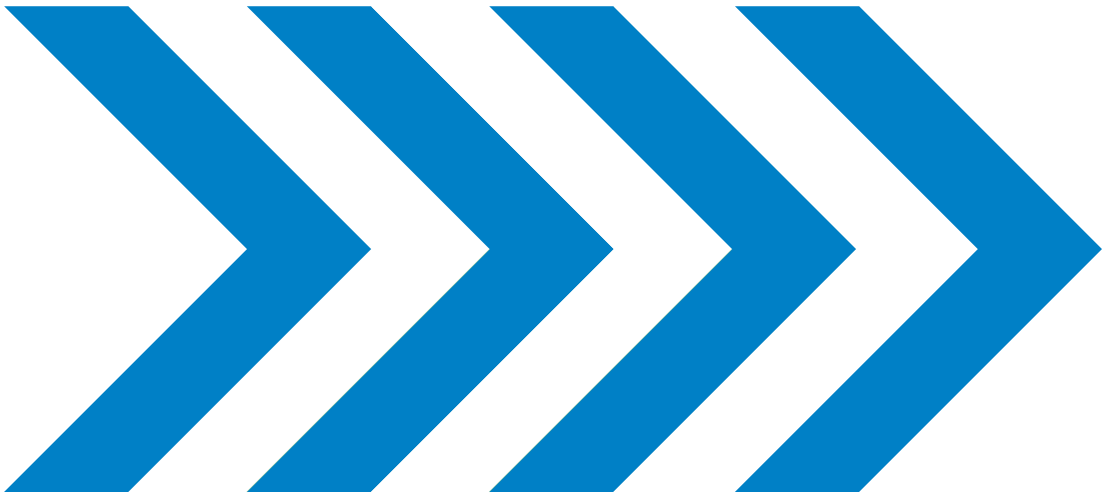
This Facility
Managed By
Propark
INFO

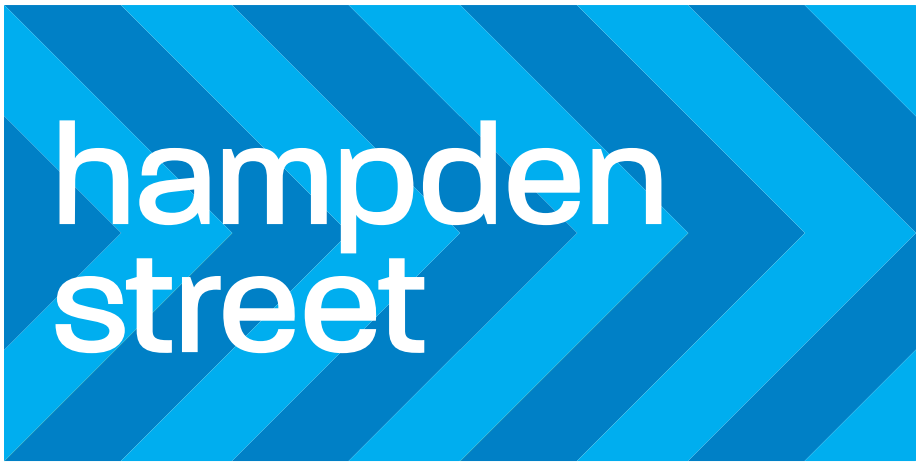
PARK
P
dwight
street

Parking Lot Assets





Parking Lot Assets



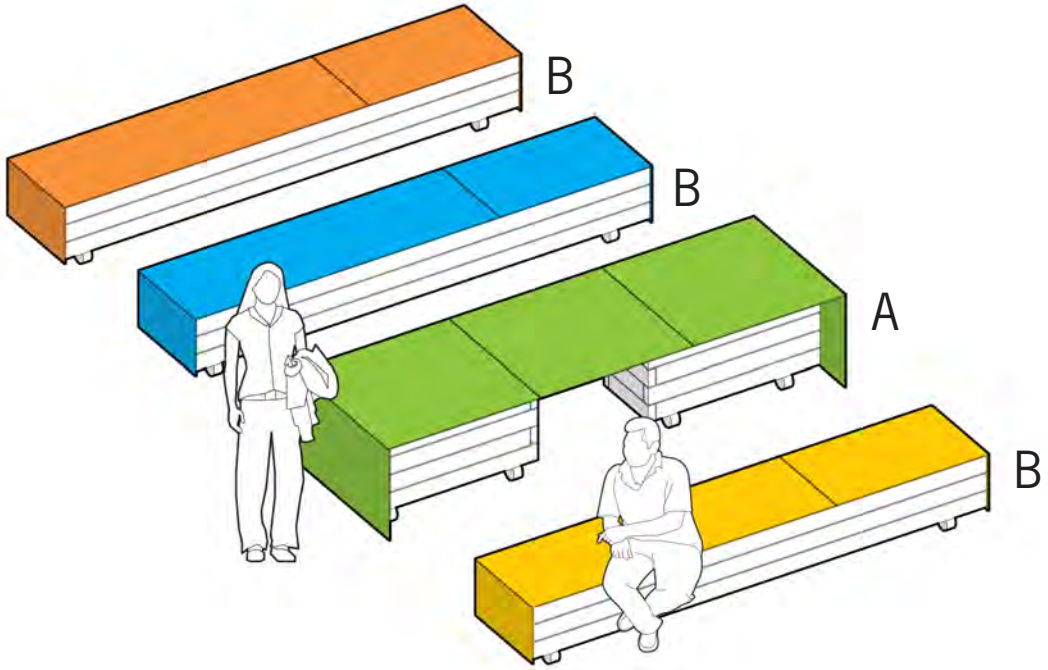
furniture

Street Furniture

The introduction of street furniture into the parking lots creates a placemaking opportunity within the underutilized areas of the lots. Most parking lots contain a portion which cannot be used as a parking spot. Often these areas are the result of two conditions—the leftover spatial difference between site boundaries and the standard parking grid or the corners of parking rows where access cannot be provided to a car. These remnant spaces in the lot can be programmed via the introduction of furniture to convert small portions of the lot into miniature parklets during daily use.

A modular furniture system comprised of two elements—a bench and a table on casters—can be rearranged and configured to meet the unique dimensions of each leftover space within the parking lot. Importantly, the design of the benches and tables addresses concerns about storage, safety, and flexibility. The portability of the furniture along with their maximum dimension (8'-0") allow them to be stored within an unused parking space or to be rolled off-site for storage on a city-owned property during the day. They can also be rearranged and reconfigured by users to accommodate the desired event type. For example, two pieces—a table and bench—would fit nicely in an unused corner of a parking lot, whereas

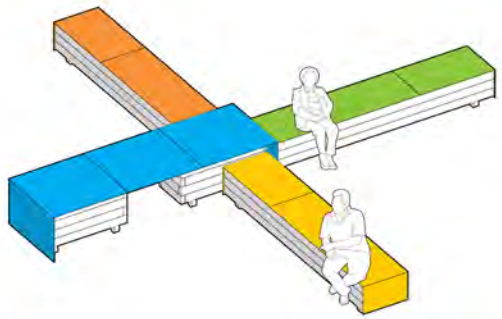
A — Table Module
B — Seating Module

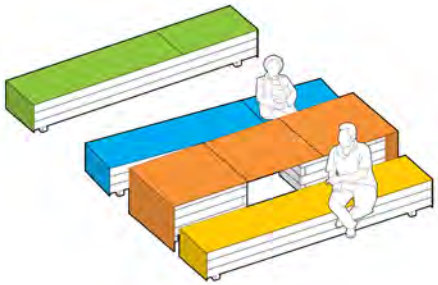


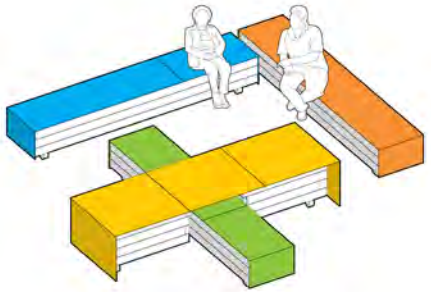
24 pieces—6 tables and 18 benches—could be rolled out at night for a public event. During the day the extra furniture could be stored within a parking spot or off-site.

Each furniture pieces maximizes impact while minimizing cost. Both the bench and the table are designed to be fabricated using commonly available material stock. Each piece is composed of a 2”x2” interior steel frame with ¾” by 3 ½” fir cladding along the long sides. The top and short side panels are constructed of painted plywood to match the wayfinding and mural color palette established by Visual Dialogue. The selection of steel and fir were chosen to balance cost with longevity and resiliency to continued exposure to the elements. The selection of painted plywood responds to the same criteria and additionally allows for the slight cantilever of the table top with minimal additional structure. Importantly, the continuous plywood top and sides can be painted to match the branding identity discussed above.

Sample configurations.

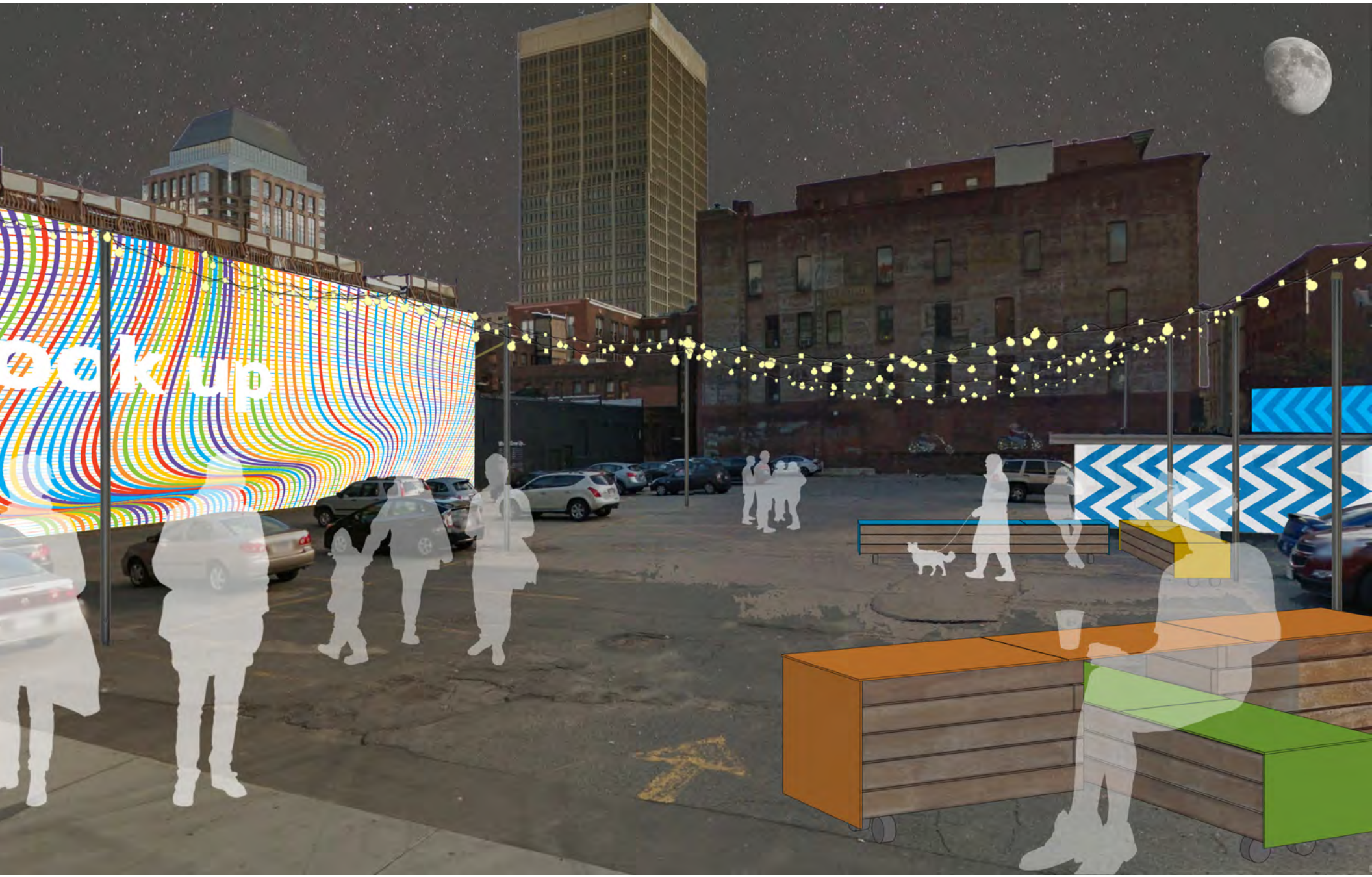




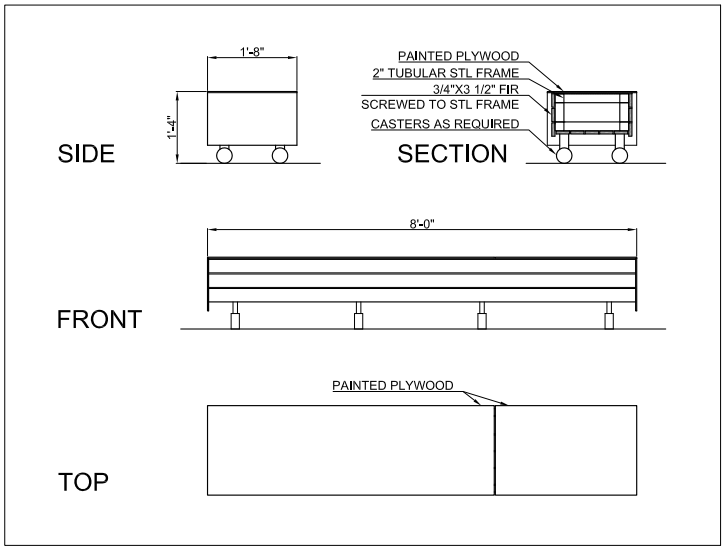


Sample Layout Illustrating
Daytime Storage

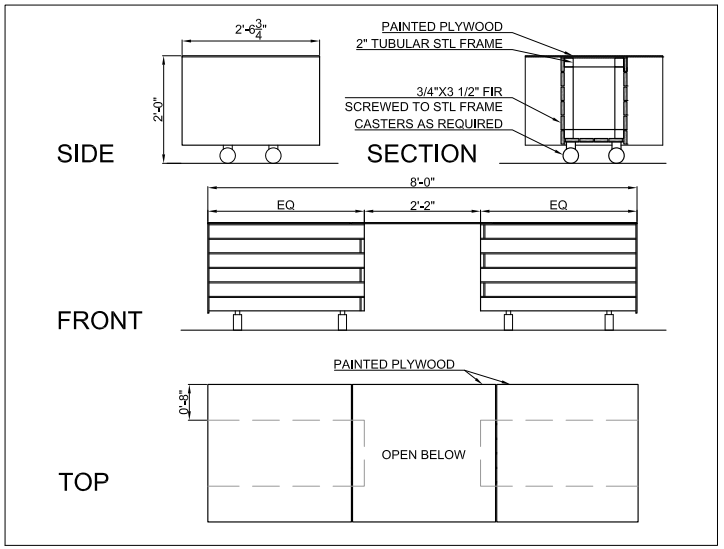
Sample Layout Illustrating
an Evening Event


pop-up

BENCH



TABLE



DISCLAIMER: These plans are conceptual only. They have not been subject to a comprehensive code and regulatory review, nor have they been tested against any as-built surveys. Discoveries in such an analysis may result in fundamental changes to the original concept.

1639 Springfield TDI Parking Study
Springfield, MA

Bench and Table Schematic Design
September 21, 2016

Not to Scale

Architecture
& Planning

utile

lighting

String Light Option

The first lighting option proposes a series of string lights to the lot to prepare the site for alternative use as an event space in the evening. This option is preferable because it establishes a unique sense of place while working double duty by safely lighting the parking lot at key moments when an event is not occurring. This option is configured along the very edge of the lot so that the majority of the installation occurs on public property. The layout offsets the majority of the utility poles onto the sidewalk rather than within the parking lot. The elements are installed within the lot are minimized and should be installed along the existing parking grid to minimize the risk of interfering with the lot operations. The remaining posts should be installed with a detachable sleeve base mounted into the ground. In the winter the posts could be removed, leaving a flush edge on the ground for plowing.

Recommended number of attachment points (posts): Eleven (6 within the lot, 5 on the sidewalk). Dewdrop fixtures rather than holiday lights are recommended.

Advantages: Best lighting quality and lowest cost implications. Does not rely on adjacent parcel owners. Increases parking lot safety.

Disadvantages: Requires installation of semi-permanent posts within the lot.

Recommended String Light Layout

Sample Layout Illustrating Daytime Storage

Sample Layout Illustrating an Evening Event

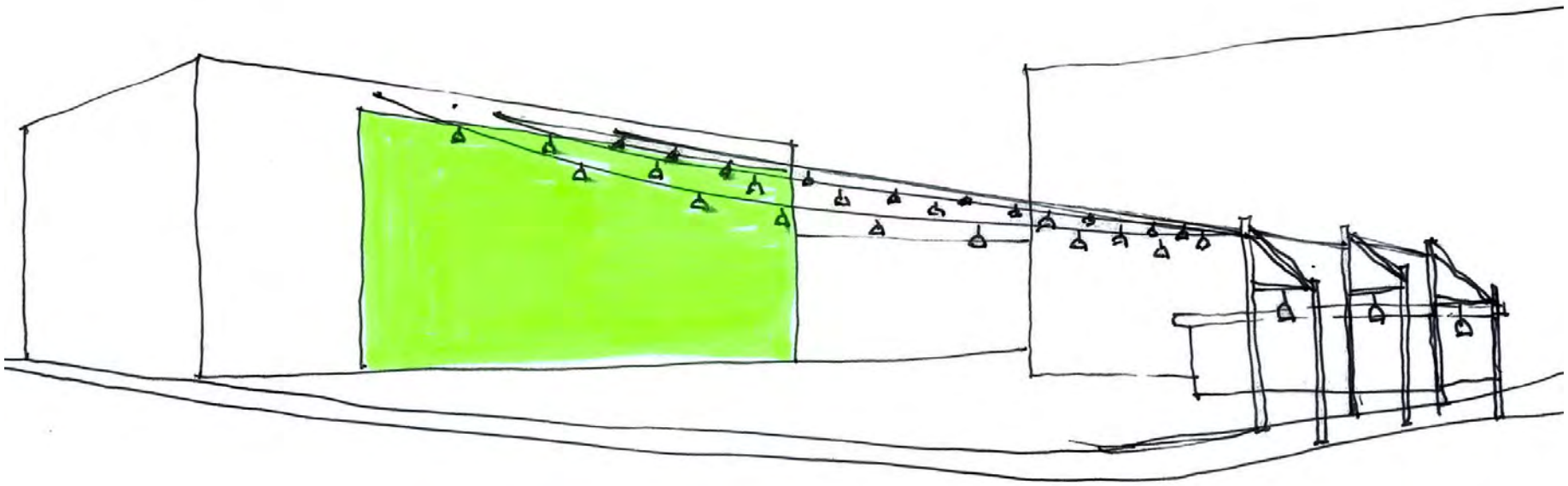
PARK

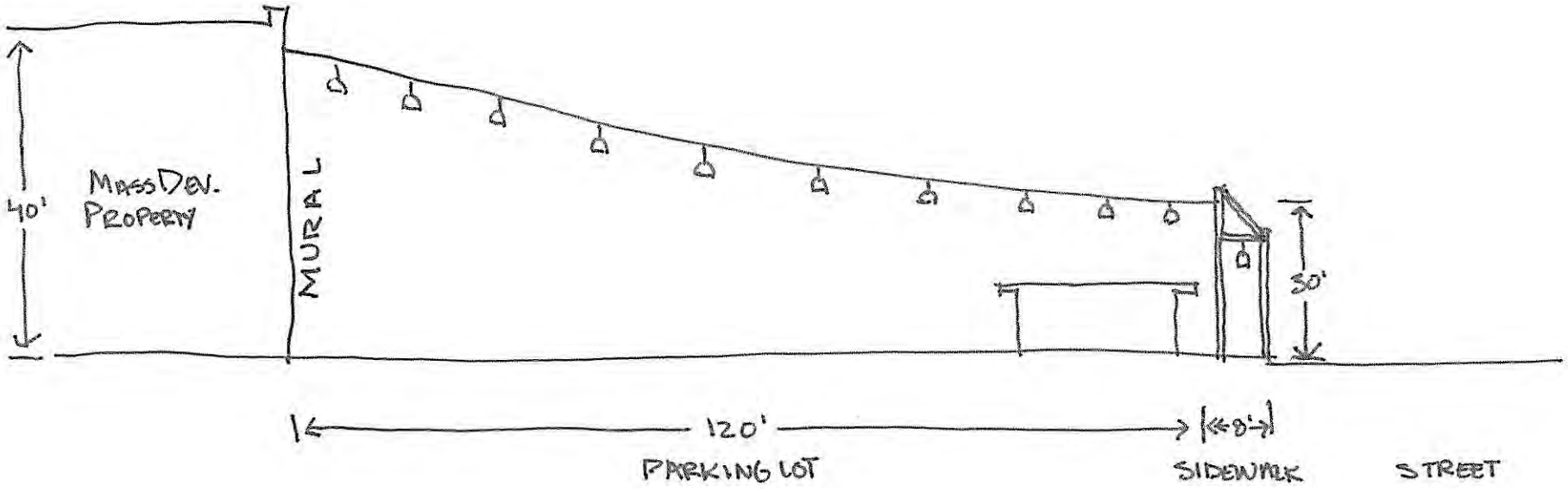
Overhead String Lights (Alternative)

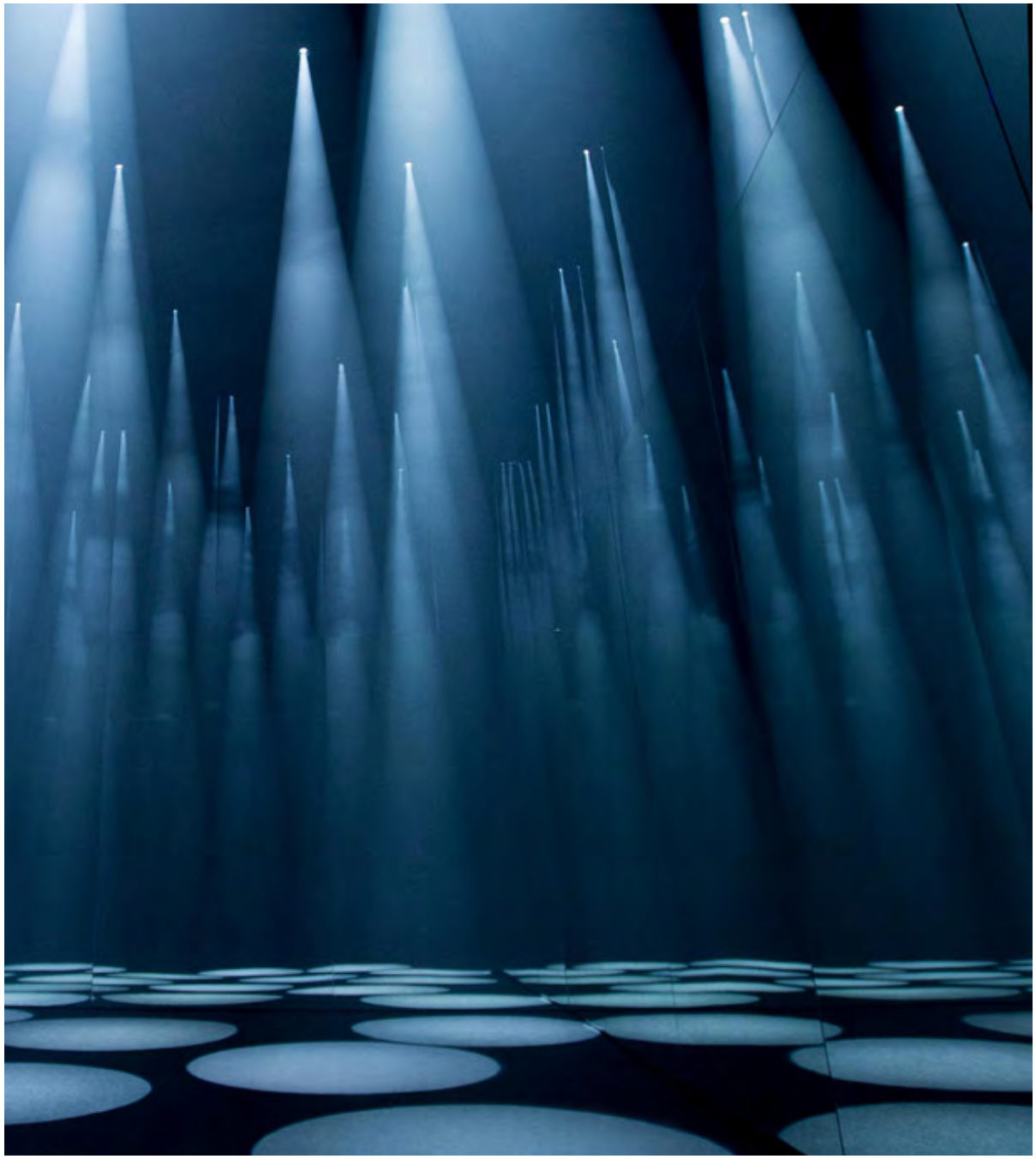
Overhead cabling is an alternative installation option that can mitigate the impact of the string light scheme on parking lot operation. Rather than relying on post installation within the lot boundaries, a network of cables could support the lights by running from the roofline of an adjacent building to the publicly-owned sidewalk. Unlike the other two options, this alternative requires further design and engineering on each parking lot to guarantee safe installation. The sketches illustrate how this system might be installed on the Worthington Street lot. Due to the Worthington Street lot's depth, an engineered support structure on the sidewalk side will need to be studied further. Options for this support structure include narrower profiles that touch down on both sides of the sidewalk to create an artificial arcade or, alternatively, a relatively thick singular tapered steel post located on the interior side of the sidewalk. Both options require the attachment of the overhead cabling network at a minimum of 30' above sidewalk height so that the lights do not interfere with the view of the mural.

Advantages: Best lighting quality while concentrating activity in front of the mural. Does not interfere with parking lot operation. Increases parking lot safety. Higher investment in the cabling structure unlocks more lighting fixture options (at a higher cost).

Disadvantages: Relies on adjacent property owners for installation, access, and maintenance. Highest cost implications with engineering necessary to safely span the depth of the parking lot. High investment cost in the lighting fixtures.




40'
MassDev.
Property
MURAL
50'
120'
8'
Parking Lot
Sidewalk
Street



Spotlight Option

The second lighting option introduces spotlights along the top parapet of the MassDevelopment-owned building that can be used during an evening event. The intention of the spotlights is not to flood the parking lot with light, but to create a unique sense of place by utilizing the spotlight's ability to restrict its beam angle to a narrow ellipsoidal profile. This playful treatment of light will distinguish this area from the uplighting found in the Springfield BID. In the case of this option, the installation angle, and maximum beam angle must be controlled to reach the desired effect. Importantly, the installation of the five spotlights should "cross" beams to impose a perceived sense of crossing volumes of light. These crossing volumes will roughly follow a 2x5 grid on the parking surface, which will contrast the seemingly random angles cast by each light.

Recommended Spotlights: Five outdoor-rated ellipsoidal spotlights capable of a 15° to 35° zoom focus beam (typically used for outdoor stage sets).

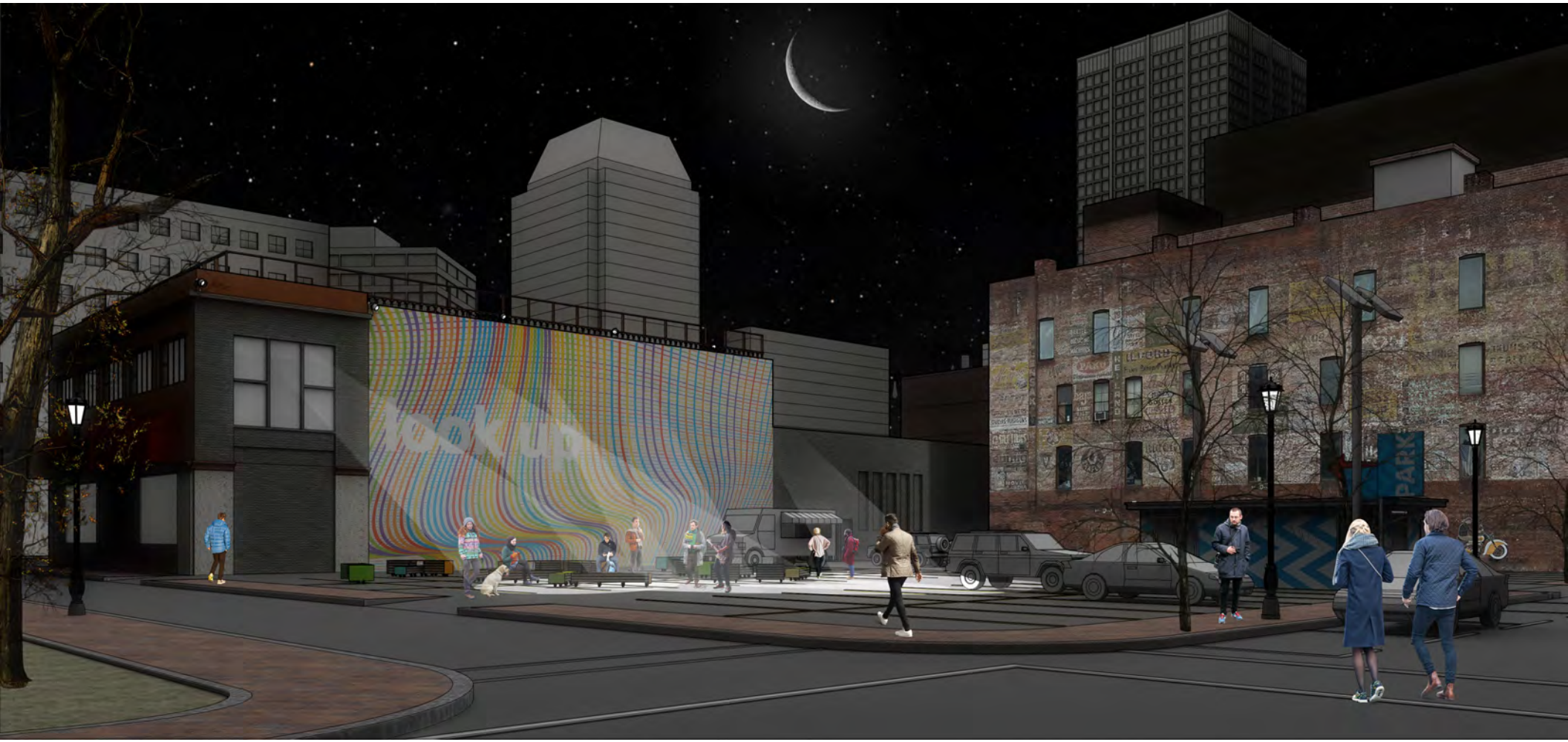
Advantages: Does not interfere with parking lot operation. Concentrates activity in front of the mural.

Disadvantages: Could contribute to the "overlit" quality of the district. Requires purchasing higher quality stage lighting fixtures to create an appropriate atmosphere that does not "overlight" the lot. Relies on adjacent property owners for installation and maintenance.

Recommended Spotlight Layout

Sample Layout Illustrating Daytime Storage

Sample Layout Illustrating an Evening Event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