

Figure 6.01: What the Bird's See

Wichita Live

Wichita's Downtown Entertainment District at Block2

Reclaiming downtowns vitality through regionalism and design.

Proposal Process

The site proposal for *Wichita Live* at Block2 is the culmination of roughly three months of a comprehensive research, planning and design process. The process began with a client introduction, site visit and design charette with the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation and additional interested parties. Verbal and visual research was conducted in the form of reading and discussion during and immediately following an initial 4-day visit to Wichita, and repeated throughout the design phase. Next, relational and sequential diagrams were created in order to locate various functions within the provided space. Circulation diagrams were ultimately used to dictate the most suitable pedestrian pathways and provide conceptual zones of retail, entertainment and leisure. This inorganic and repetitive process has led to the final synthesis of all research and diagramming. Through this intuitive design process, multiple solutions have been considered with the most suitable in terms of economic and cultural vitality prevailing.



Design Framework

The Block2 design proposal is a highly concentrated, downtown entertainment neighborhood with suitable business opportunities for a wide variety of economic investment endeavors. The goal of this retail and restaurant entertainment district is to utilize conceptual regionalism while complementing the existing features of Old Town with venues and attractions geared towards the professional and young professional market. Visitors from afar and residents of the Wichita area who travel downtown for events at Century II and Intrust Bank Arena will find *Wichita Live* at Block2 as the ideal place to meet with friends before an event, dine in comfortable indoor and outdoor environments, and reconnect afterwards to discuss their next gathering in Downtown Wichita.

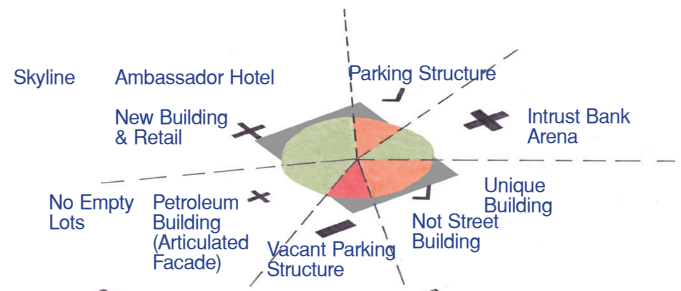
While the *Wichita Live* experience provides an exciting destination prior to and following attractions at nearby entertainment venues, the open space and variety of retail locations available also serve as a destination for office hour lunches and weekend retreats in a walkable environment. Ample parking for the businesses at *Wichita Live* and surrounding establishments is provided at a central, aboveground parking structure, itself directing visitors directly into the plaza. Upon entering the *Wichita Live* plaza from the parking structure and adjacent streets, site users will have immediate visual access to the numerous Block2 amenities, including retail shops, restaurants, an interactive water fountain, native plantings and a variety of leisure spaces. By systematically placing modern light fixtures throughout the central plaza, pedestrians and vehicular traffic on Broadway Avenue will be enticed to enter the space. Utilizing creative, abstract references to the greater Wichita area through extensive lighting and water features, *Wichita Live* will be attractive at all times of the day and week.

The open layout of *Wichita Live* at Block2 enhances interaction through design within public spaces while maintaining a sense of enclosure at the human scale. The curvilinear form of the plaza allows visual access across the space, encouraging distant interaction, drawing visitors from one business to

another and allowing visual recognition from the adjacent walkable streets. The proposal for a small, centrally-located entertainment center will act as a polarizing visual element to engage entrance to the space, providing ambient light into the plaza, supporting a safe and inviting environment.

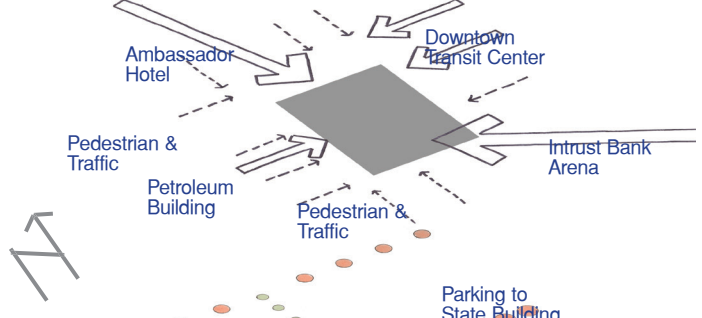
The View Out

Figure 6.02



The View In

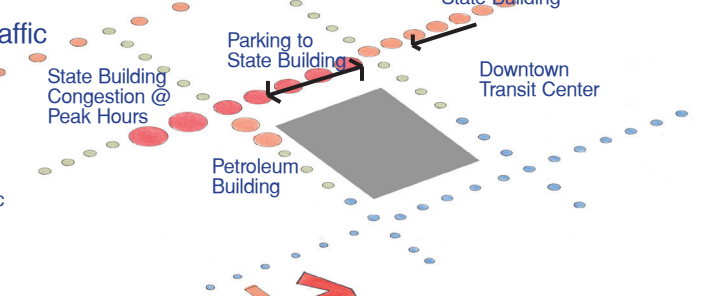
Figure 6.03



Pedestrian Traffic

Figure 6.04

- Heavy Traffic
- Medium Traffic
- Light Traffic
- Sporadic Traffic

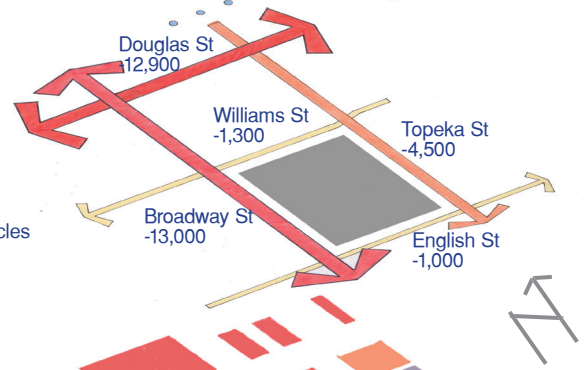


Vehicular Traffic

Figure 6.05

- Heavy Traffic
- Medium Traffic
- Light Traffic

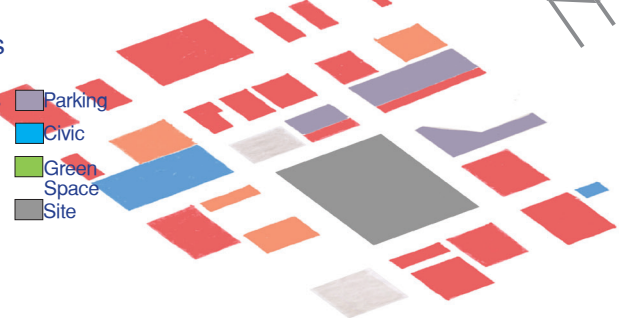
Numbers indicate vehicles



Building Uses

Figure 6.06

- Retail/Business
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Vacant Buildings
- Parking
- Civic
- Green Space
- Site



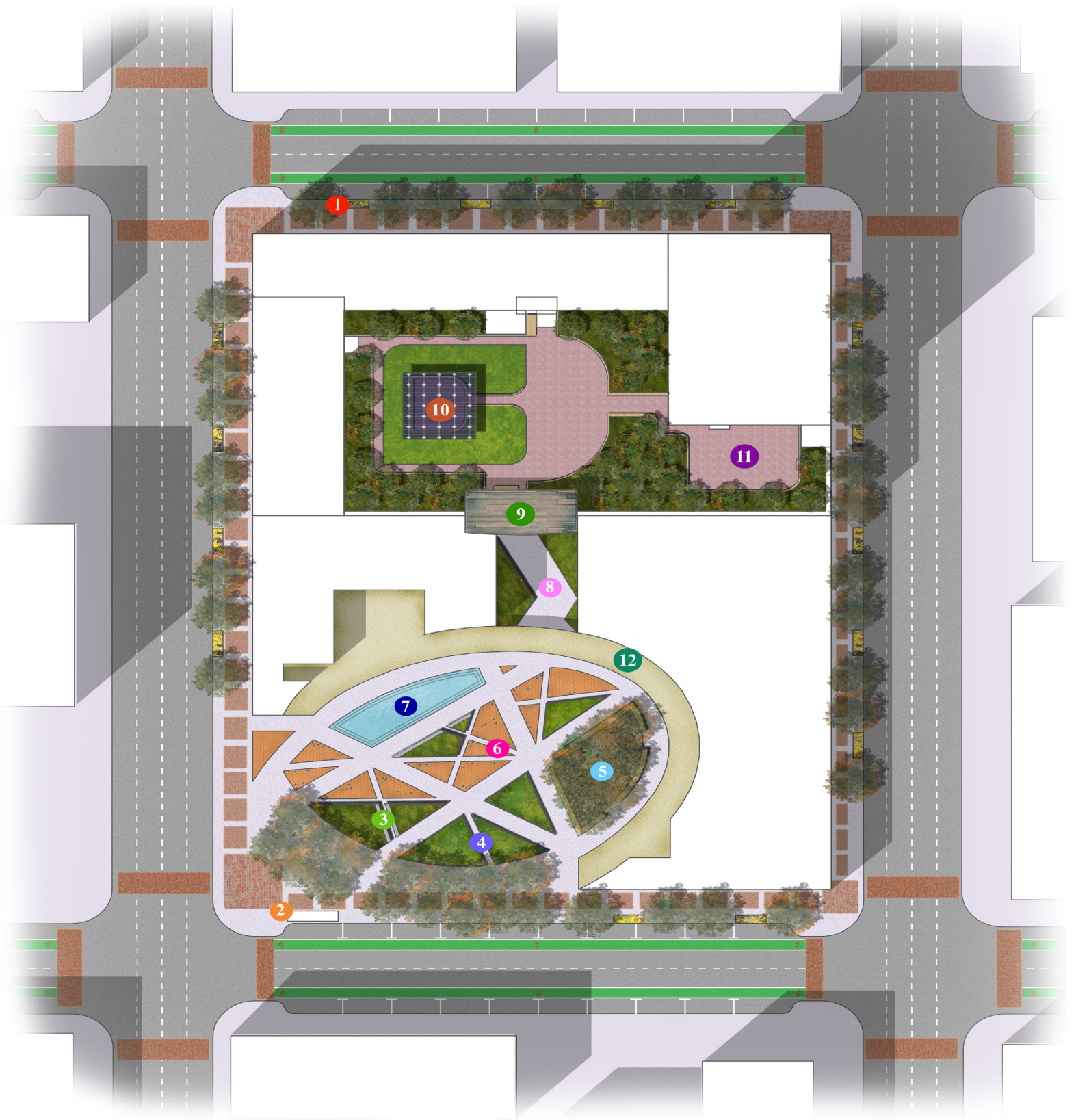


Figure 6.07: Wichita Live

1 Renewed Pedestrian Experience

- As fundamental public spaces, streets require clear access for pedestrians, bicyclists and mass transit. Sustainable stormwater management with native plantings, integrated seating and bicycle storage summarize design at the human scale.



Figure 6.08



Figure 6.09

2 Bike Sharing Network

- Urban bike sharing networks create a convenient, comfortable and economic system of accessing neighborhoods throughout downtown. Bicycles are fully adjustable and perfect for trips too far to walk, but too short to drive.



Figure 6.10



Figure 6.11

3 Native Prairie Vegetation

- These seasonally responsive tallgrass plantings are abstract forms of the Kansas prairie landscape. The use of native plants increases the system longevity while requiring minimal inputs like irrigation and management.

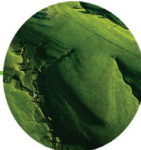


Figure 6.12



Figure 6.13



Figure 6.14

4 Dropseed Leisure Lawn

- Traditional, park-like lawns allow for social interaction, leisure open-space and clear visual recognition across the Wichita Live Plaza.



Figure 6.15



Figure 6.16

5 Oak Savanna Bosque

- This cluster of trees is an abstract representation of the oak savanna landscape found in eastern Kansas. The canopy provides shade for movable seating, enclosed by a low, limestone wall.



Figure 6.17



Figure 6.18

6 Tallgrass Midway

- The centerpiece of Wichita Live, this meandering path is complete with oscillating light poles which glow and fade, reminiscent of the waving motion of the Flint Hill prairie grasses.



Figure 6.19



Figure 6.20



Figure 6.21

7 Limestone Interactive Fountain

- With a smooth finish appealing to both the visual and tactile senses, this limestone sculpture and water element is appropriate for youth and adult interaction. Surrounded by wide steps and containing shallow water, the fountain is safe and ergonomic for all ages.



Figure 6.22



Figure 6.23



Figure 6.24

8 Parking Structure Access (Pedestrian)

- After parking a vehicle within the aboveground structure, pedestrians are directed into the plaza, maximizing foot-traffic for businesses within Wichita Live.

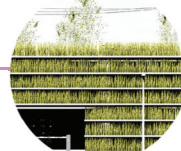


Figure 6.25



Figure 6.26

9 Green House

- This extensive greenhouse will supply the hotel restaurant with unique, niche ingredients in addition to local, seasonal flavors. Hotel guests can visit the space to experience sustainable practices and wonderful views.



Figure 6.27



Figure 6.28

10 Solar Pergola

- A gathering space at the center of the rooftop terrace will be enclosed by a low limestone wall and water feature, sheltered by a pergola fitted with solar paneling.



Figure 6.29

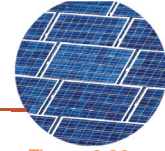


Figure 6.30

11 Terrace Outdoor Dining

- An open-air, outdoor seating space is available for use by the restaurant or formal gatherings hosted at the hotel (weddings, ceremonies, celebrations, etc.)



Figure 6.31



Figure 6.32

12 Wichita Live Esplanade

- Doubling the amount of store frontage, a second floor balcony allows for a variety of alternative uses and views into the plaza below. The 15' balcony can be used as market space, a temporary stage or vantage point for events below.



Figure 6.33

Proposed Materiality

Materials throughout Block2 have been chosen in an effort to enhance the urban fabric of Downtown Wichita. Historic buildings along nearby Douglas Avenue (complete with first floor retail, mixed-use designation on the floors above, and strong urban frontage) are used as a precedent for the retail, office, hotel and residential structures of Block2. Many of these Douglas Avenue buildings are constructed of red or cream brick with various levels of ornamentation, craftsmanship and articulated edges. In contrast, both modern materials and natural materials found within the greater Kansas landscape will be incorporated to enhance the provincial nature of *Wichita Live*. Native tallgrass prairie plantings and locally-sourced limestone will be placed within the ground level plaza and rooftop terrace. While these materials celebrate the existing nature of Wichita, modern LED and fluorescent lighting, stained concrete and pervious pavers will be used to activate the various spaces and practice sustainable design.

Site Metrics

Buildings		
Residential Units		40 Units
Retail		26,400 Sq Ft
Entertainment		25,000 Sq Ft
Green Space		
Plaza Space		.6 Acres
Roof Top Garden		.5 Acres
Parking Total		
District Parking		100 Stalls

- Retail
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Green Space
- Parking
- Civic

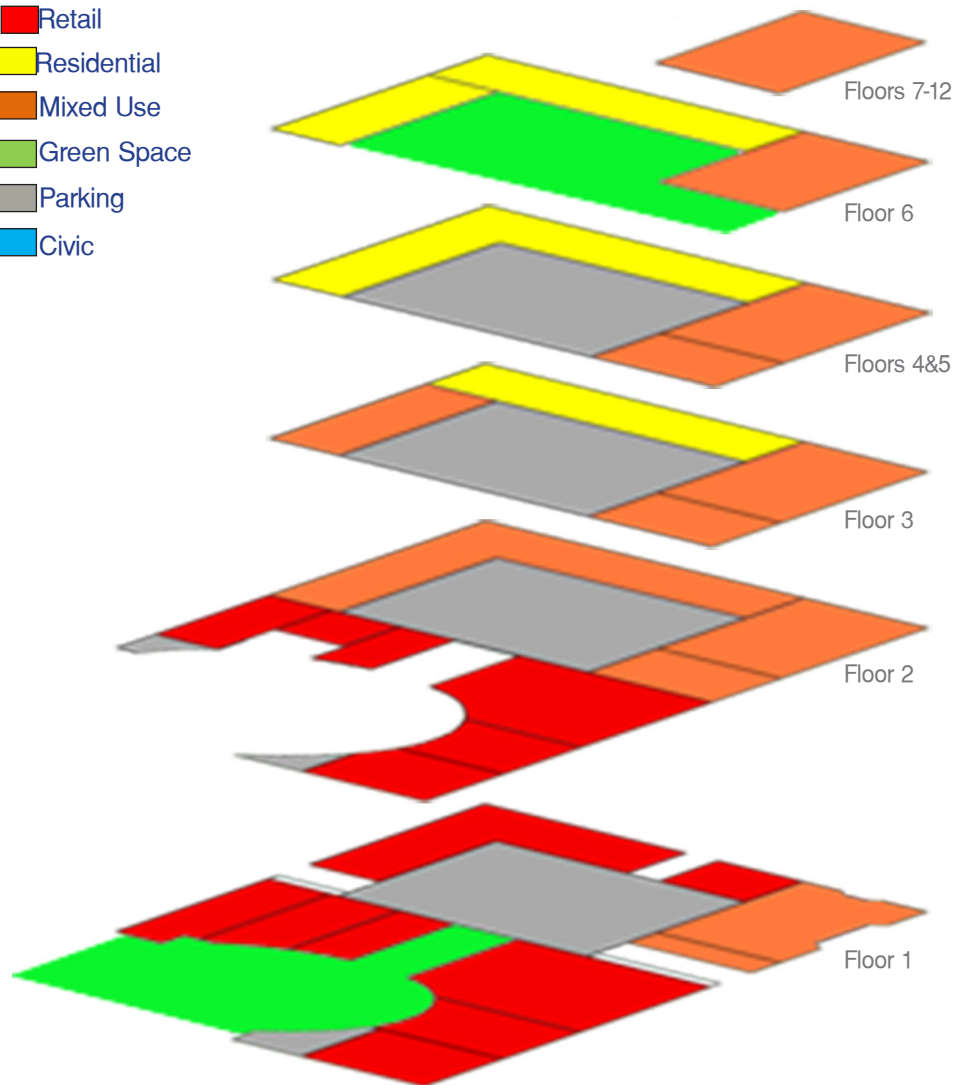


Figure 6.34: Wichita Live Usage

Urban Conflict

Revitalizing cities as functional and productive entities is one of the greatest challenges of urban design today, but when approached correctly, the result can be a vibrant civic identity, strengthened sense of community and collection of attractive

Streets as Public Spaces:

While the streets within every city function as the most fundamental system of public spaces, the system will not be utilized as a placemaking device unless designed for multiple modes of transportation. New walkable street design in direct proximity of Block2 will accommodate on-street parking, bicycles and wide sidewalks in addition to existing vehicular traffic. By designing a streetscape which facilitates slower-moving traffic and pedestrian-friendly features, Block2 can support the interpersonal interactions necessary for establishing a safe environment and sense of community.

Plazas and Open-Space as Multi-Use Destinations:

When paired together, public spaces and major public destinations act as catalysts for the local economy, social interaction and civic pride. Plazas of this nature serve as urban retreats, where people can escape into a safe and enjoyable place from the busy nature of the downtown environment. The potential for *Wichita Live* is escalated as a multiple-use destination that can accommodate a variety of artistic, recreational, leisure and economically stimulating activities.

public spaces. Four concentrations of the Block2 design that aim to stimulate Downtown Wichita include: streets, multi-use destinations, building design, local support.

Supporting Place via Building Design

In order for architecture to perform within the urban context, it must extend beyond the building footprint and permeate onto the street level. By doing so, architecture can enhance and interconnect the urban fabric for the pedestrian experience. The architecture located at Block2 is an investment in the creation of exterior spaces, enhancing social interaction and site identity.

Community Investment

The greatest social obstacle for the success of public spaces is often the lack of a cohesive direction among government, urban institutions and private interests. Cities and public spaces are most successful when the narrow approach of each party is enhanced by a collective citizenship and desire for progress. The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation is the necessary consolidating entity currently engaging urban reformation and reflecting the revitalizing goals of the urban community, without whom this effort would not be possible.

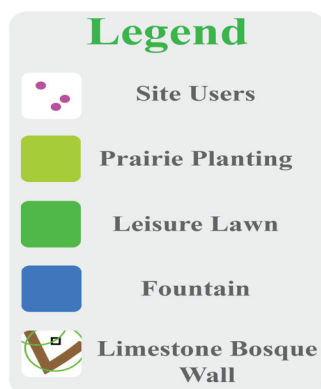


Figure 6.35: Plaza Usage Legend

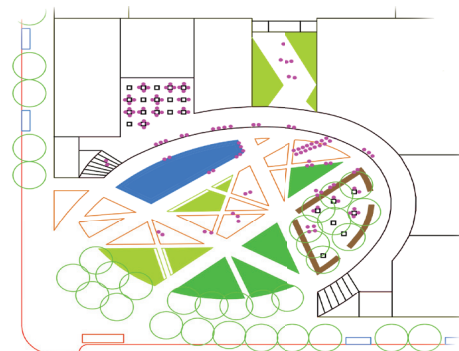


Figure 6.36: Plaza Usage "Evening"

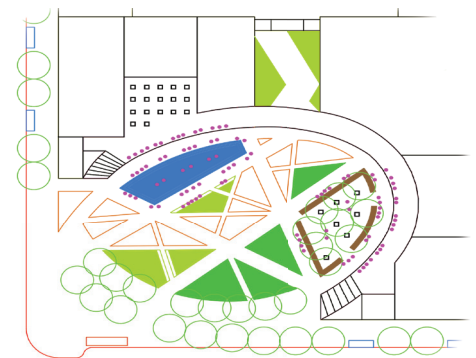


Figure 6.38: Plaza Usage "Winter Events- Ice Sculpting"

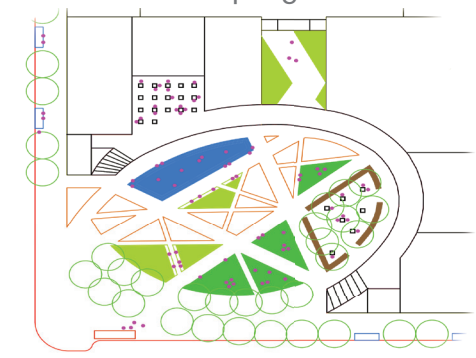


Figure 6.37: Plaza Usage "Week Day"



Figure 6.39: Outdoor Seating in the Plaza

A bosque with heavy canopy and movable chairs provides a comfortable environment for outdoor relaxation during summer months

Wichita Live Plaza

The *Wichita Live* plaza is an adaptable space activated by multiple site users throughout the week and changing seasons. Downtown employees will see *Wichita Live* as a destination for lunch meetings and after-work entertainment. Professionals and young professionals alike will venture the plaza and retail spaces on weekends to enjoy a cleaner, more refined atmosphere complementary to nearby Old Town. Visitors to Wichita for events at the Century II Convention Center and Intrust Bank Arena will utilize the entertainment center as a place to gather before and after shows.

The plaza will be active throughout the seasons by utilizing

lawns and tall vegetation for comfortable, leisure activities during the summer months. Extensive attractions for dining and entertainment will sustain business through winter months in addition to seasonal activities within the plaza.

The lighting and landscape at *Wichita Live* is a modern, colorful, abstraction of the greater Kansas landscape. The goal of the abundant, colorful lighting is to harness the potential connection with Broadway, Downtown Wichita's main arterial vehicular pathway. By attracting maximum attention from Broadway, the site has potential for strong, continual activation through new users.

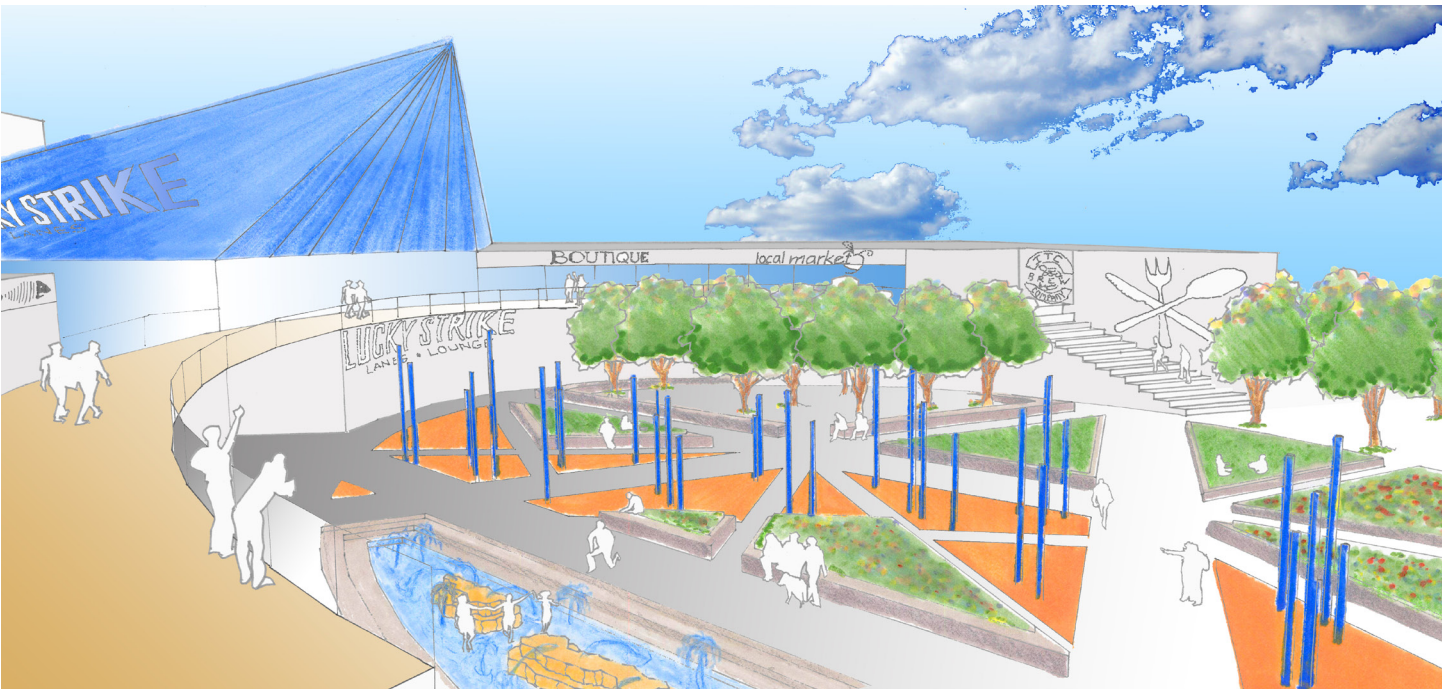


Figure 6.40: Live

View from the promenade overlooking the Wichita Live plaza.

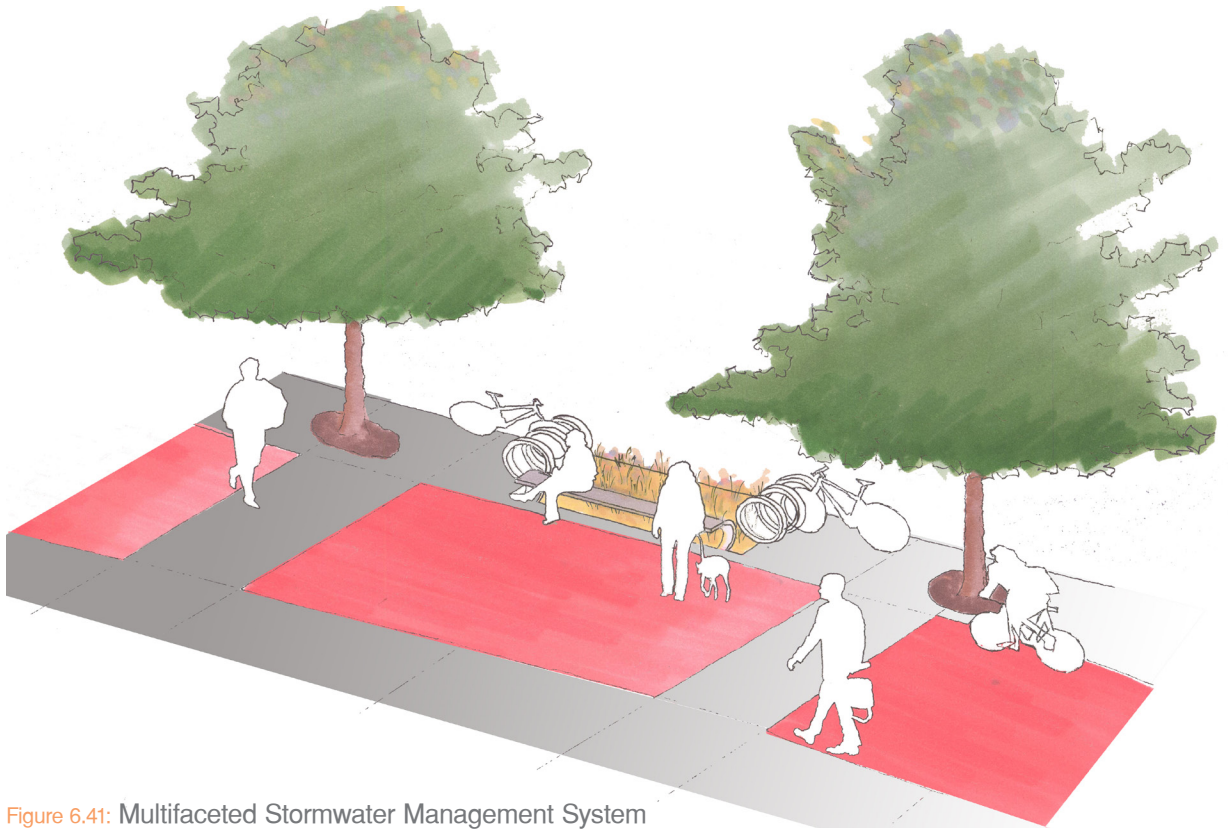


Figure 6.41: Multifaceted Stormwater Management System
 Surface water runoff is collected in reservoirs equipped with native plants, pet-friendly seating and bike racks

Stormwater Management

The retention system for surface runoff utilizes native plants to filter toxins from precipitation after removal from the surrounding streets and sidewalks. In an effort to educate

citizens on the potential for stormwater collection, reservoirs have been outfitted with bicycle parking, seating and a hands-free clip for dog leashes.

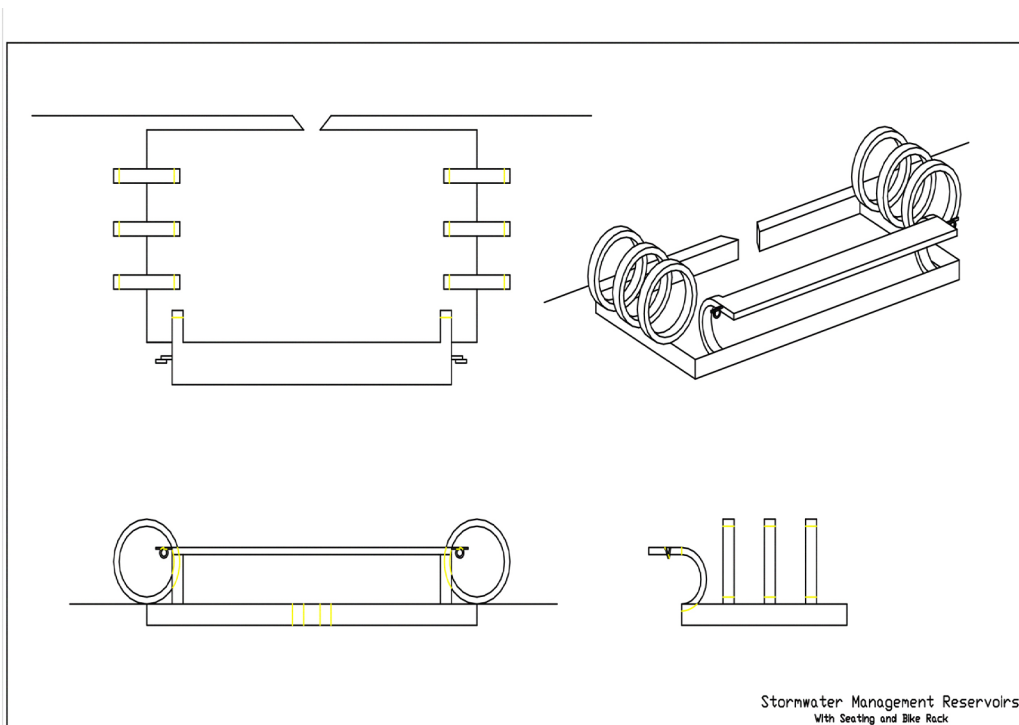


Figure 6.42: Stormwater Retention Basin Hardware

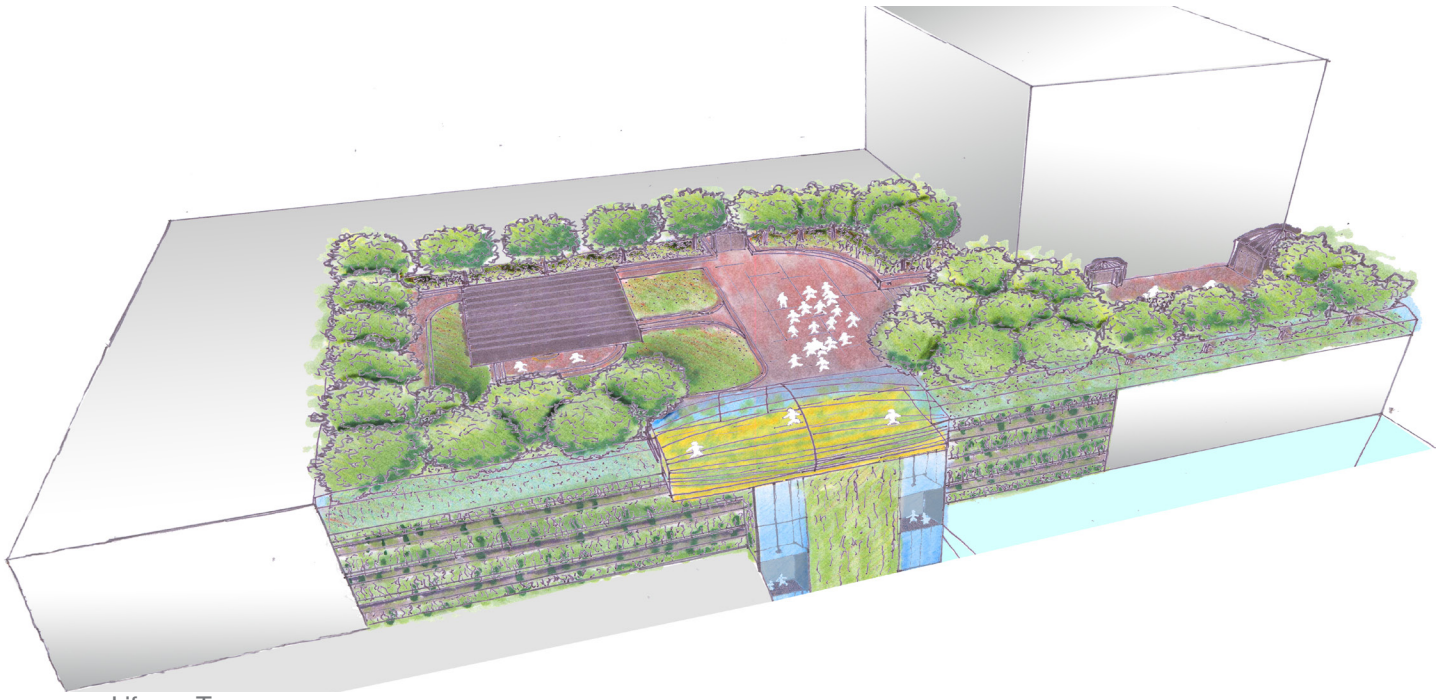


Figure 6.43: Life on Top

Garden in the Clouds

As seen in Life On Top, the roof of the parking structure will be a garden, entertaining space and dining area for the use of the hotel. The entertaining space will be able to support both large and small groups. With a large open area toward the center that will allow for events such as award ceremonies, business meetings and wedding receptions or the Chef's Green House, for smaller assemblies, with a full view of *Wichita Live's* plaza, giving guests a magnificent view of the plaza as well as an elevated view looking over southern Wichita. Apart from the view guests will also be able to see where many of their fresh vegetables are grown for the hotel restaurant. For a more intimate time there is covered seating underneath the Solar Pergola.

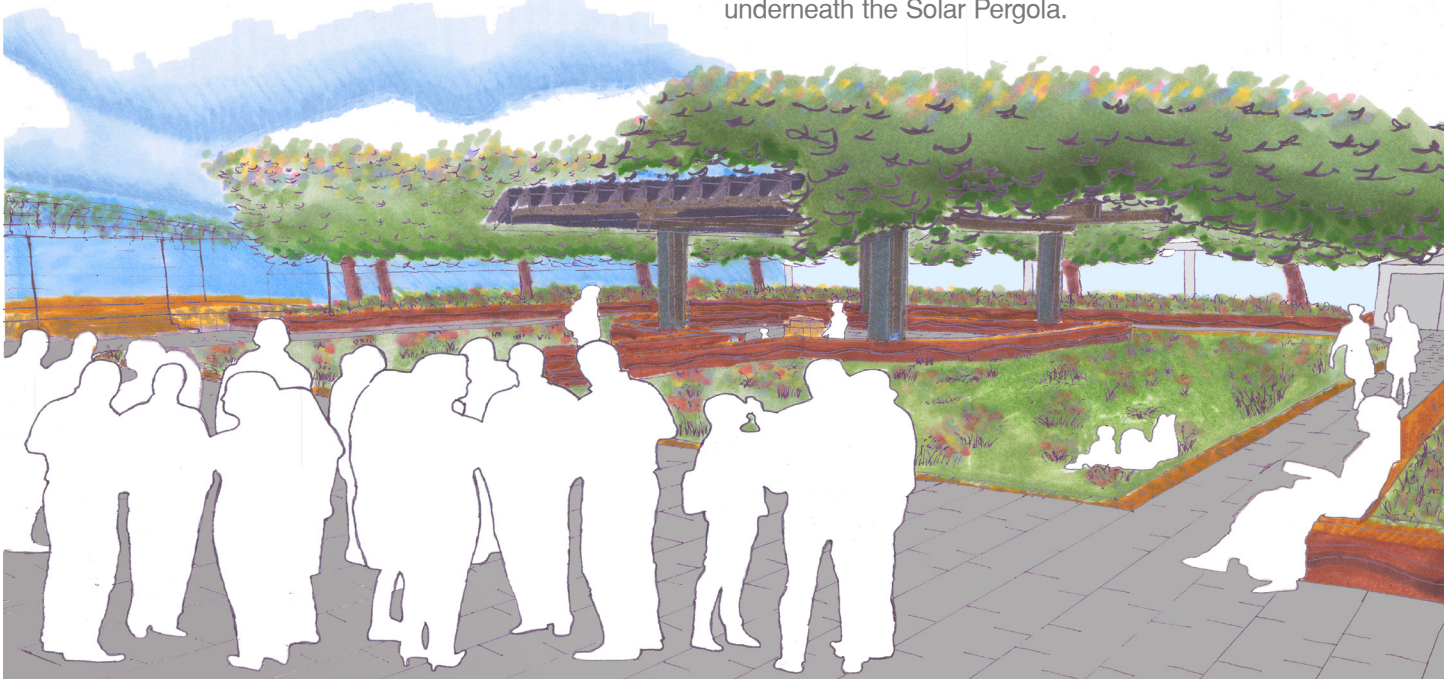


Figure 6.44: Gathering in High Places

Social gathering on the roof. The area is able to be rented out for use.



Figure 6.45: Dining Elevated

Dining in the Clouds

As part of the unique experience provided at *Wichita Live*, guests may dine in comfort on the sixth floor.

All of the roof plantings are a mixture of native grasses and flowers; providing a visual and tactile experience. These plantings will provide a slight buffer from fast pace of life in the plaza.

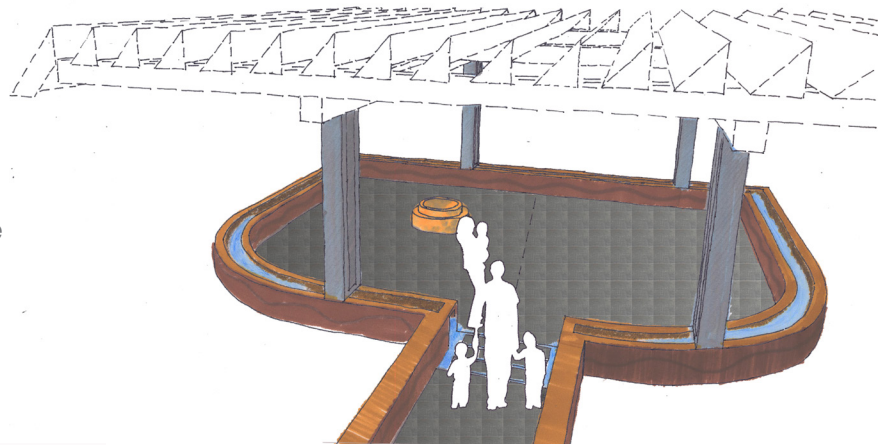


Figure 6.46: Water Flows Down

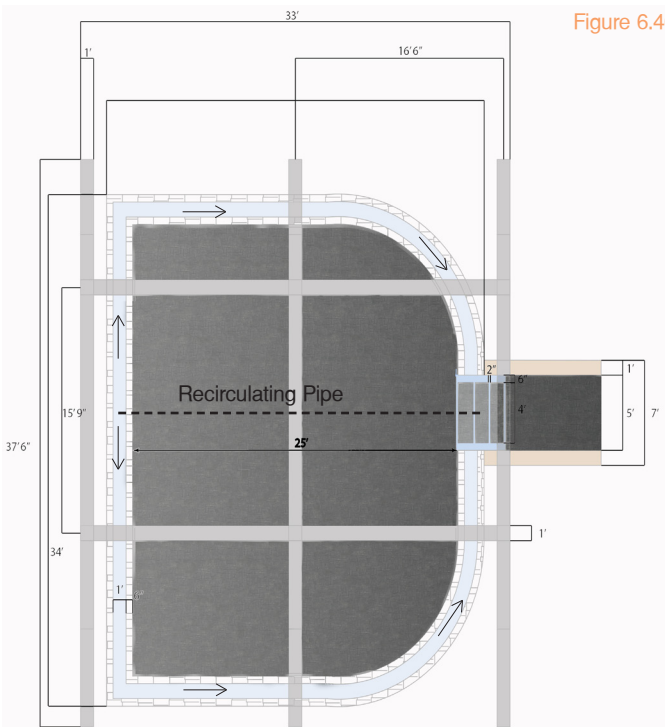


Figure 6.47: Pergola and Water Feature Dimensions

Water and Sun

As an added amenity of the roof there are two small water features. One near the entrance to the garden and the other as you cross the threshold into the pergola. The water feature is a simple system of recirculating water in an enclosed environment. Near the entrance water will only travel a few feet as it is pumped up into the path walls and then spills back to the ground plane. The pergola water feature contains a similar system and also has a "river" as the water is pumped to the far side and then flows within the wall to the entrance and is splashed out for a lovely ambient noise.