



May 25, 2023

# Berkeley's Civic Center

Design Concept  
Report

SIEGEL & STRAIN Architects | + **Gehl + ecb** + 

# A Vision for Berkeley's Civic Center

**Civic Center will be the heart of Berkeley's community. Civic Center will be the prime space for civic life, culture, and the arts. It will reflect the city's diverse identities, celebrating its history, and contributing to shaping its future. A place of shared resources and a platform for free expression accessible to all, Civic Center aims to manifest the city's values, advance social justice, and demonstrate the power of true public space.**



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# Executive Summary

## Design Concept Phase

The Berkeley Civic Center is a place in Downtown Berkeley of great community and historic significance. The 6-acre project area, set within the Berkeley Civic Center Historic District and comprised of Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, the Maudelle Shirek Building, and the Veterans Memorial Building, is located at a physical crossroads between downtown Berkeley and residential neighborhoods amid well-established educational, cultural and civic institutions. The Berkeley Civic Center is also at a crossroads in time, awaiting a re- invigoration for use by its community as an updated civic space that embodies the values the community lives by.

This design concept effort is a continuation of the work completed in 2019/20 on the Berkeley Civic Center Vision and Implementation Plan. The purpose of this work is to document a design concept that reflects a synthesis of the shared aspirations captured in the vision statement and illustrates design ideas borne out of ongoing engagement with the Berkeley community. As with the previous Berkeley Civic Center effort, members of the community turned up in high numbers to work collaboratively for a common purpose, and the resulting design concept reflects their shared vision.



Berkeley Civic Center

### → Timeline

On September 22, 2020, Berkeley City Council adopted the Vision Statement articulated in the 2020 Vision & Implementation Plan Report for the Berkeley Civic Center project. This vision statement remains the north star for the project.

On June 1, 2021 and related to City Center District Visioning Resolution No. 69,579-N.S., the Berkeley City Council allocated funding and directed City Staff to provide additional public process, planning and design to develop a preferred design concept based on input from the community, City Commissions, and City Council.

The project's Steering Team, comprised of Berkeley City Staff from Public Works, Office of Economic Development, and Civic Arts, and design consultants began work on the 2022/23 Berkeley Civic Center Design Concept effort in September 2022.

## → Methodology

The key components of the project team’s effort for this phase are research, community engagement and development of a high-level design concept.

The design team began this current effort by researching policies and improvements implemented since the conclusion of the 2019/20 Vision and Implementation Plan.

Working collaboratively with the project’s Steering Team and with input from the Community for a Cultural Civic Center (CCCC), the design team developed an approach to community engagement with the goal of collecting input to inform a preferred design concept for the Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, the Maudelle Shirek Building and the Veterans Memorial Building.

The engagement effort was organized into two major efforts:

- General Public Engagement, including an open house, workshops and an online survey
- Focused Engagement, including meetings and work sessions with specific organizations and entities who are currently active in the Berkeley Civic Center and/or whose missions and interests align with and support the adopted Vision Statement.

Based on the engagement effort, which included input from over 700 individuals and 36 separate entities and organizations, the design team developed key design drivers that informed the emerging preferred design concept. The design concept was reviewed by the CCCC, Commissioners on the Super Sub-Committee, City of Berkeley staff representatives, students from Berkeley High School and Berkeley City College, and was presented to City Council and the general public at a Work Session on March 21, 2023. Comments from these groups were integrated in the preferred design concept described in the pages that follow.

## → Key Design Drivers

The outreach effort uncovered the following key design drivers that advance the vision statement, capture the unique identity and spirit of the Berkeley community, and inform the design concepts illustrated in the plan:

1. The Civic Center park and buildings should be a place to gather as a community.
2. MLK Jr Civic Center Park should be natural in character, preserving mature trees and enhancing native biodiversity.
3. The Park and open space should offer a safe, clean, and comfortable place to be outdoors with others.
4. Many are passionate about daylighting Strawberry Creek while others raised concerns.
5. Center Street should be better integrated into the Park and open space experience.
6. The Maudelle Shirek Building should be the seat of Berkeley's democracy with meeting and public-serving spaces supporting civic participation in City government.
7. These civic uses in Maudelle Shirek Building should be paired with vision-aligned services and educational functions.
8. The Veterans Memorial Building should be a Community Arts Center for creative expression and accessible to all.
9. The Community Arts Center should be activated all day every day, hosting arts organizations and practitioners across all disciplines, delivering performances and programming for the community.

## → Design Concept

Integrating the input received through the engagement efforts, additional study on the changing context of the Civic Center, and the programmatic requirements heard from current and potential users, the Civic Center project proposes the following:

- **Maudelle Shirek Building**  
Seat of Berkeley's democracy with flexible meeting spaces and supportive and vision-aligned city services and educational uses.
- **Veterans Memorial Building**  
A Community Arts Center, run by the City, with performance venues, teaching and exhibit space, accessible by all in the community.
- **Civic Center Park & Surrounding Streets**  
A safe nature-based urban oasis for all of Berkeley, supporting community use throughout the day, evening and weekend for strolling, relaxing, having lunch, visiting, and attending an impromptu gathering or organized event.



## → Recommended Next Steps

The project team proposed the following next steps for project implementation, outlined below and described in greater detail in Section 7 of this report.

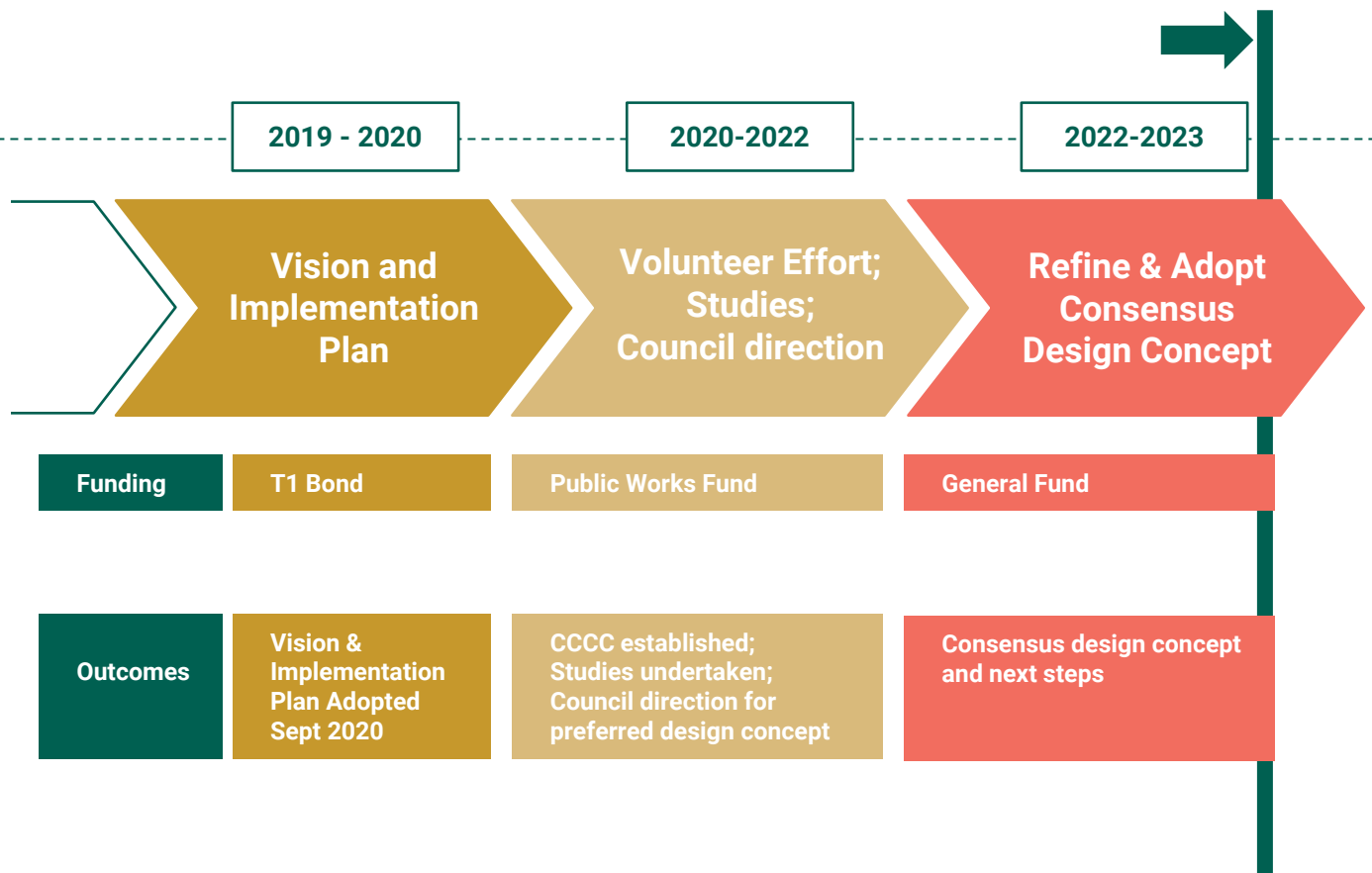
- Identify, fund and realize early activation projects.
- Initiate efforts for next phase of work including further studies and specific designs.
- Develop funding and phasing plans for each of the project components.



*View to fountain terrace and sequoia from large green*

0.2

# Overall Project Schedule



2024-2027

2027 >>>

Research, Schematic  
Design & Approvals,  
Funding Plan,  
Design Development,  
Construction Docs

Permitting,  
Bidding &  
Construction



Existing Conditions



# Existing Conditions

**1.1 Base Maps**

**1.2 Site Assessments**

## 1.1

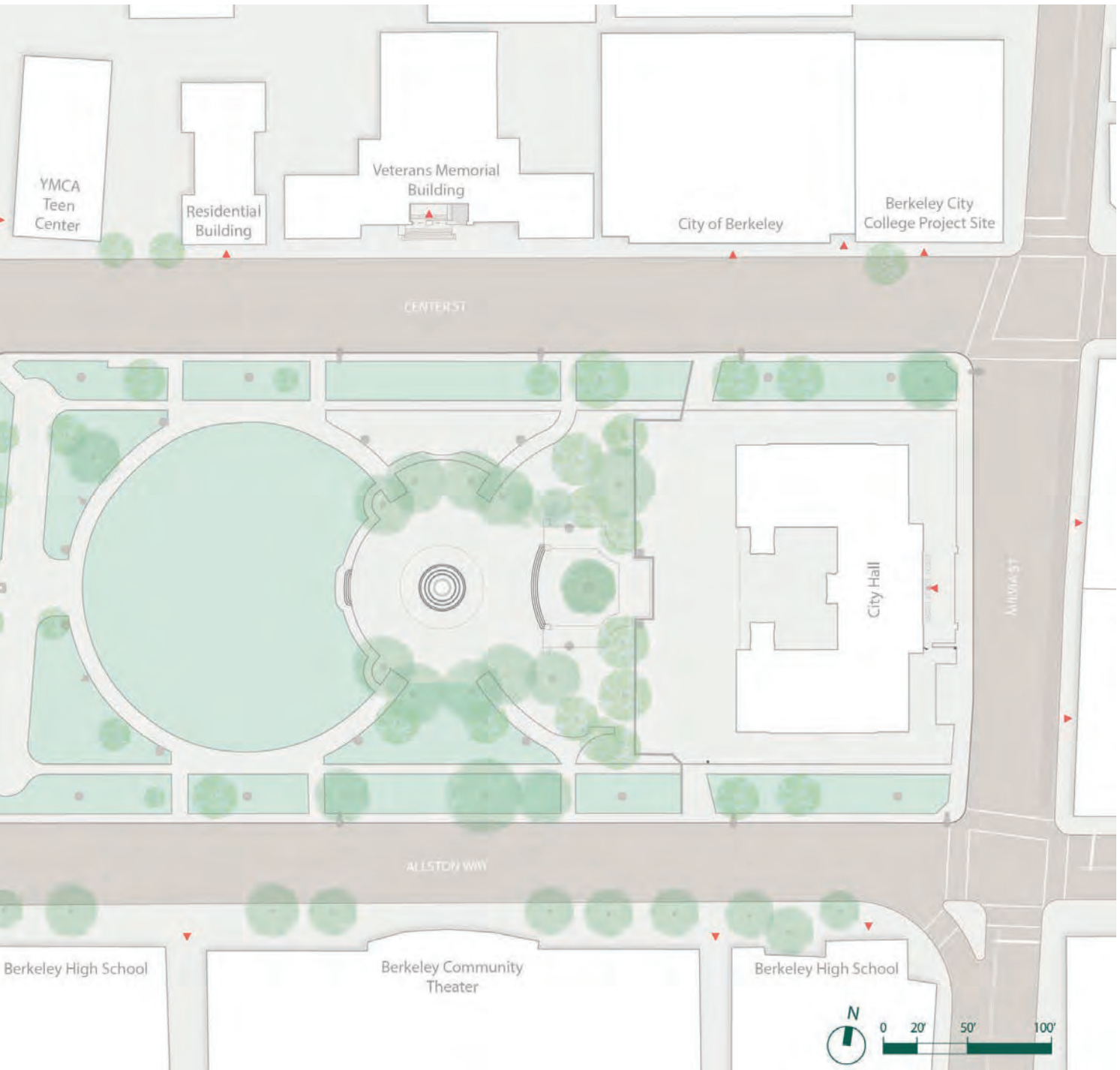
# Base Maps

As part of the 2019-2020 Vision and Implementation Plan, the consultant design team developed base maps from historical plans and aerial imagery of the Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, the Maudelle Shirek Building, and the Veterans Memorial Building in the Civic Center. The design team has continued to use these as base drawings for the current Berkeley Civic Center design concept effort.

Verification of current conditions of the buildings, park and streets are required prior to specific design efforts. See Section 7.2 for a more complete list of recommended existing conditions documentation.

Additional site assessment is offered herein as diagrams to inform the design concept.





**Existing Civic Center Site Plan**

## 1.2

# Site Assessments

### Project Area Map

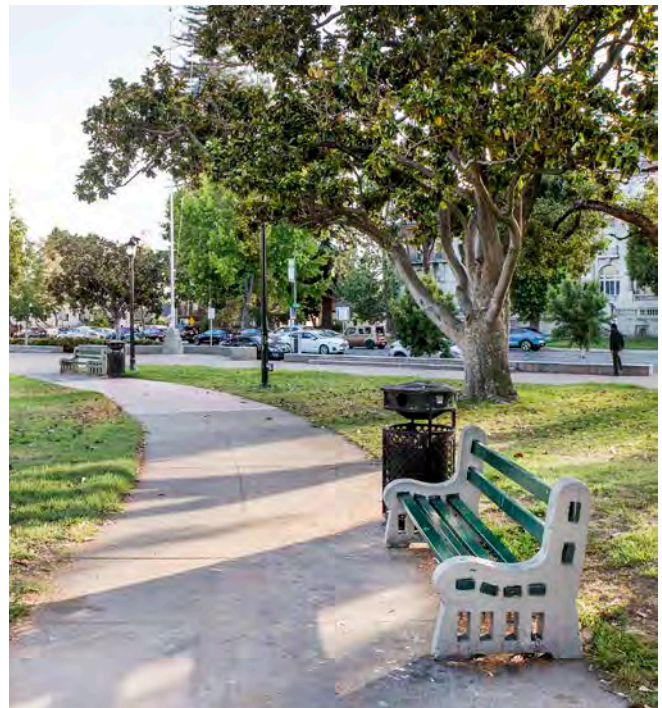
The project is located in the downtown area of Berkeley, one block west of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station, and two blocks west of the UC Berkeley campus. Directly south of the site sits the main campus of Berkeley High School. To the west, the urban fabric shifts to single family residential scale development.

As a part of this phase of work, additional site assessments were developed on the following topics:

- Policy Context
- Circulation Context
- Input since 2020
- Civic Center Park Tree Map

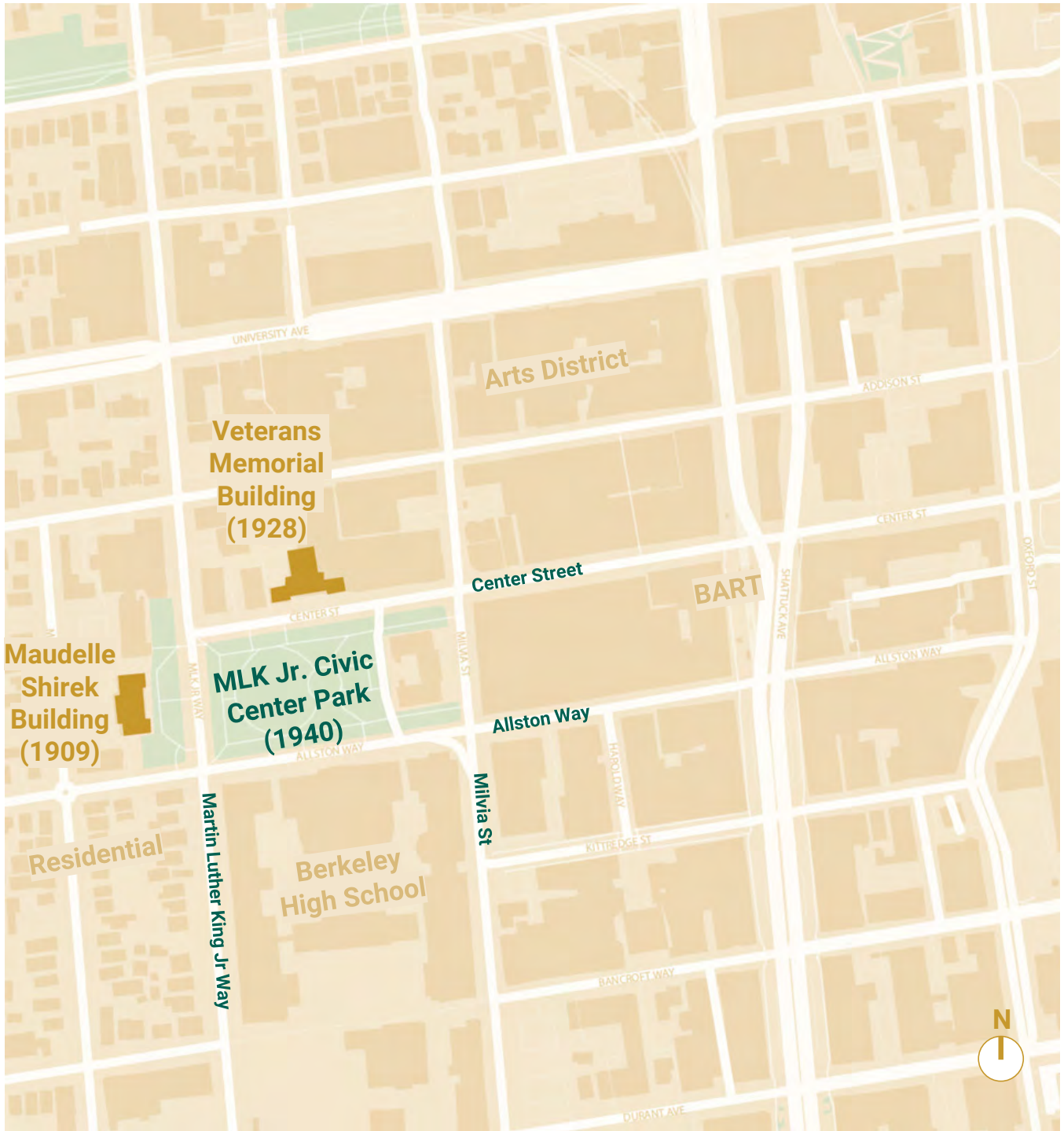


*Civic Center Park Peace Wall*



*Curved Path and Bench at Civic Center Park*





**Project Area Map**

## Policy Context

A number of City Policies affect the Berkeley Civic Center study area, including recent Council-adopted initiatives listed to the right. These have implications for proposed improvements at the buildings, park and the streets.

Most notably, the project is a part of the Civic Center Zoning Overlay District, established in 2014 and which encompasses a number of historic structures in the area. All proposed uses should fall within the allowable permitted uses listed to the right.



*Fountain at Civic Center Park*



### Vision 2050

Equity, Public Health & Safety, Strong Local Economy, Resiliency & Sustainability (May 2020)



### Existing Buildings Electrification Strategy

(November 2021)



### Native Species Policy

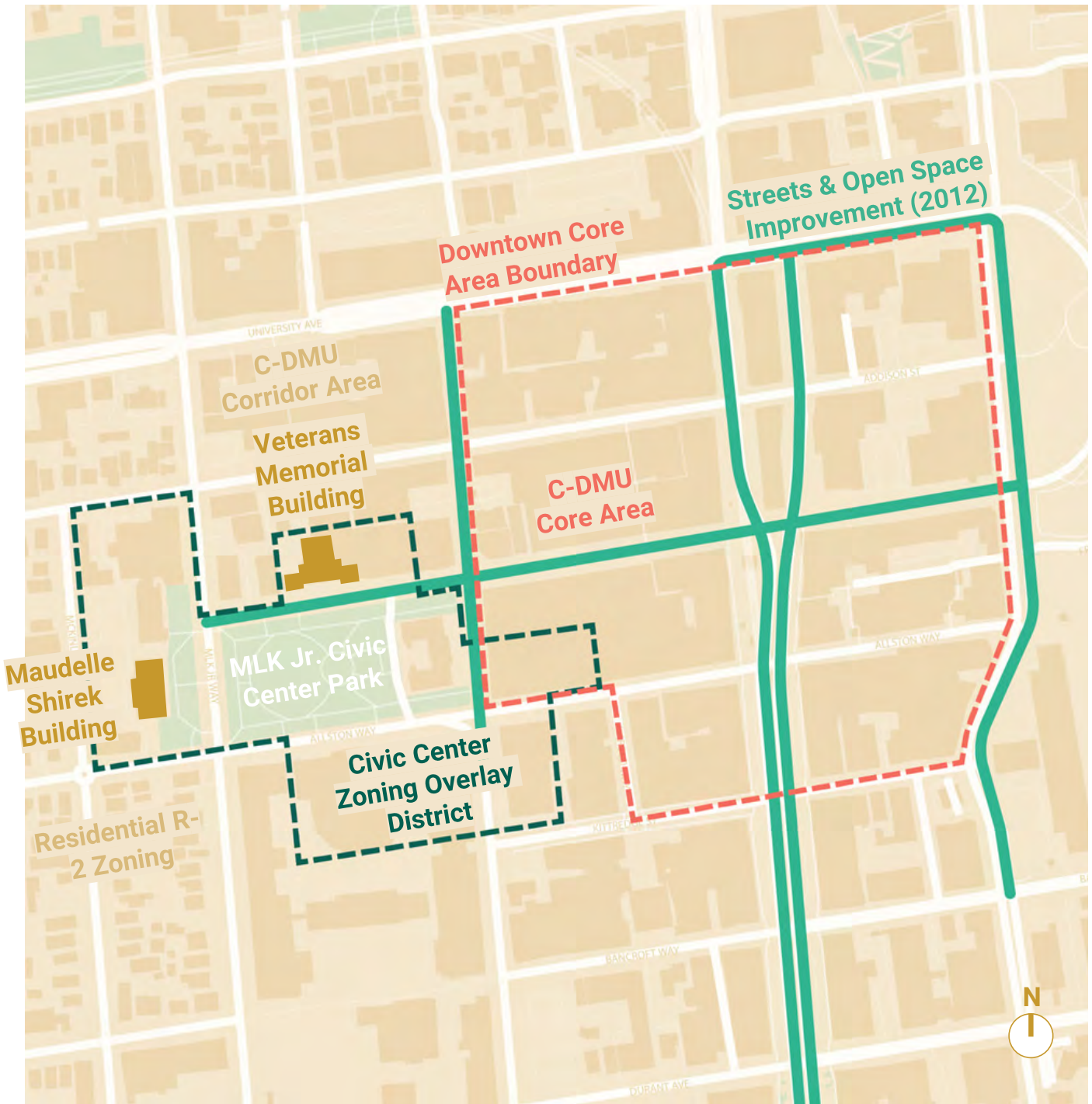
Native, Drought-Resistant, Pollinator-Friendly (April 2022)



### Permitted Uses

Civic Center Zoning Overlay District (2014)

- Libraries & Museums
- Parks & Playgrounds
- Public Safety & Emergency Services
- Government Agencies / Institutions & Judicial Courts
- Public Schools / Educational Facilities
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Live Performance Theatre
- Public Market



**Policy Context Map**

## Circulation Context

A number of improvements have been completed in the Civic Center area since conclusion of the 2020 Vision Phase.




Implementation of Milvia Bicycle Boulevard improvements changed traffic circulation west of Shattuck Avenue and the City's new Center Street Garage increased parking capacity in the downtown area.

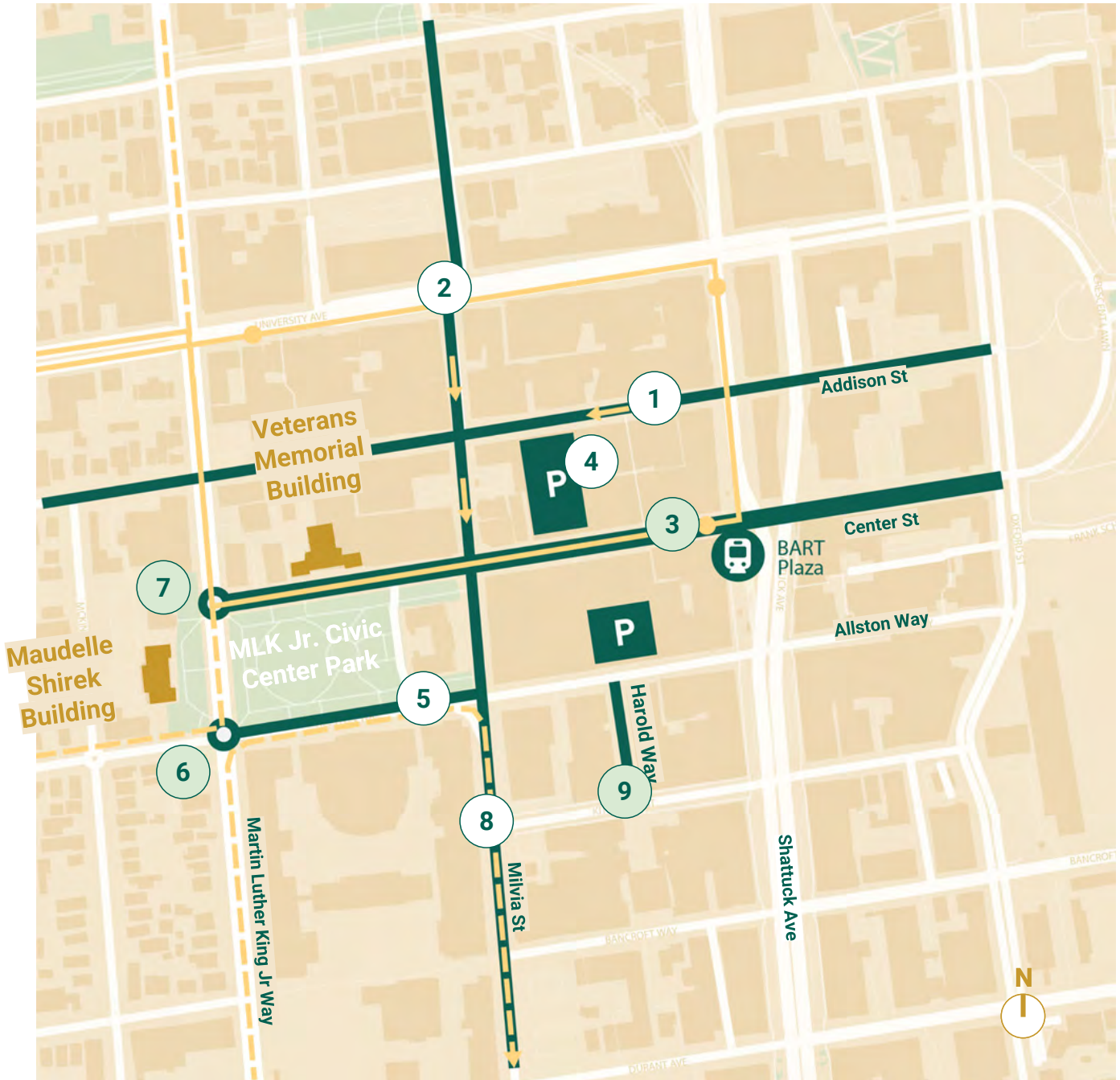
Improved pedestrian safety is an identified priority for the area and will require changes to the streets. Proposed changes to MLK Jr Way, Allston Way and Center Street need to consider existing circulation, traffic and parking patterns.



View at MLK Jr. Way & Allston Way Intersection looking North

## Legend

- 1. Addison Bicycle Boulevard**  
(Bicycle Plan 2017)
  - 2. Milvia Bicycle Boulevard**  
(Completed May 2022)
  - 3. Center Street Greenway & Center Street Plaza**  
(Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan 2012-23)
  - 4. Center Street Parking Garage and BART Bike Parking**  
720 vehicle spaces; 20 EV charging spaces; 350 bicycle spaces
  - 5. Allston Way Civic Street**  
(Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan 2012-23)
  - 6. Pedestrian Signal Improvements**  
(Pedestrian Master Plan 2019-20)
  - 7. Crosswalk Bulbouts**  
(Pedestrian Master Plan 2019-20)
  - 8. Berkeley High School Loading**  
(Completed May 2022)
  - 9. Harold Way**  
(Pedestrian Only)
-  **AC Transit Bus Route**
-  **BHS Drop-off Approach Routes**
-  **One-Way traffic**

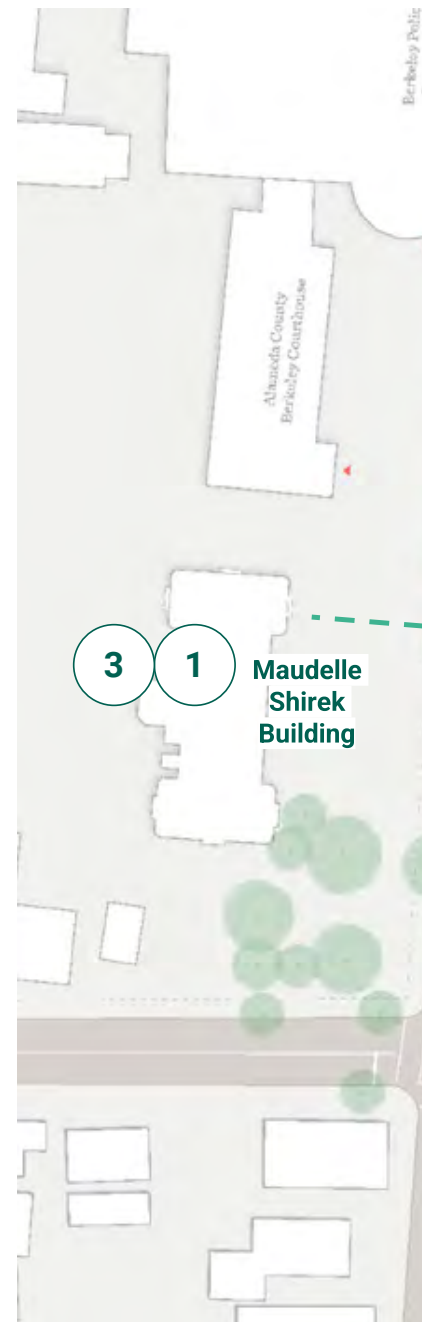


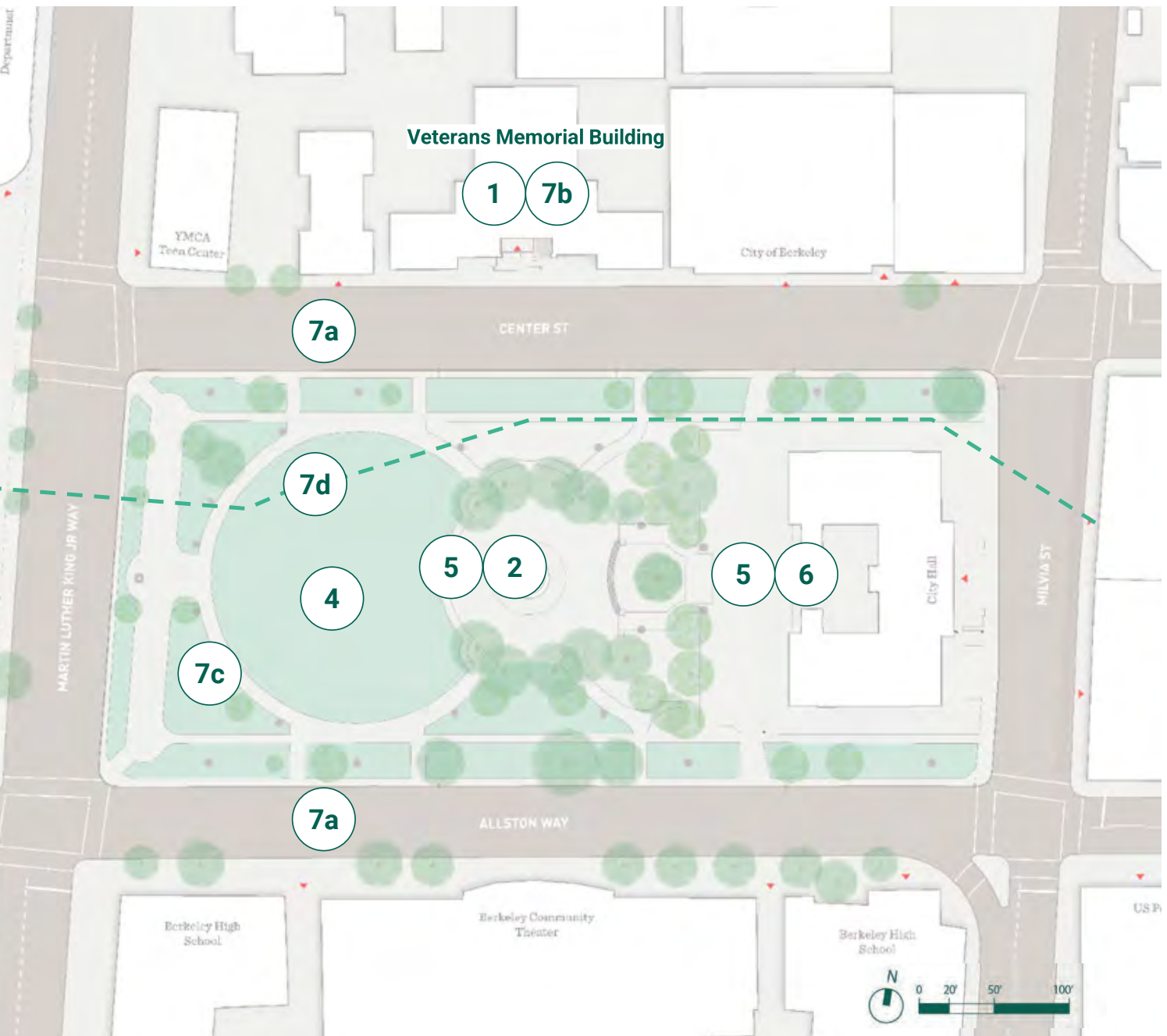
**Circulation Context Map**

## Input Since 2020

Since the adoption of the Berkeley Civic Center Vision Statement in 2020, the City and active community members, primarily associated with the Community for a Cultural Civic Center (CCCC), provided additional input on the Vision & Implementation Plan, including:

- 1. Seismic Retrofit Study**  
Exploration of alternate seismic approaches by Tipping Structural Engineers
- 2. Turtle Island Monument**  
Design Development & Funding
- 3. Meeting Hall / Council Chambers**  
Preference for Maudelle Shirek Building location
- 4. More Planting, Less Paving**  
Preference for integration of native species and biodiversity, preservation of existing mature tree canopy, and inclusion of a large green open space
- 5. Park Performance Venues**  
Study of Park performance venues by ELS Architecture & Urban Design
- 6. 2180 Milvia Parking Lot Removal**  
Integration of Park uses into the parking lot west of 2180 Milvia
- 7. Identified for additional study:**
  - a. Allston Way & Center Street closure
  - b. Dorothy Day House & Options Recovery relocation
  - c. Inclusion of historic interpretive panels
  - d. Daylighting of Strawberry Creek & culverts





Site Plan indicating areas of Additional Study

## Tree Condition Map

Dan Gallanger, City of Berkeley Urban Forester, and Thomas Dodge, City of Berkeley Forestry Technician, walked the Civic Center area with the design team. Gallanger and Dodge identified the high value trees and gave the team an oral overview of the trees' health.

In addition to discussing tree protection strategies for the high value trees, the group identified the need for an updated tree survey, a tree protection plan, and a tree succession plan to support a healthy tree canopy ecosystem in the park into the future.



Sequoia (center) east of Turtle Island Monument







## Tree Site Plan



**BERKELEY FARMERS' MARKETS**  
The heart of the local food movement since 1937

Questions? Come see our staff at the info booth!

**WE LOVE YOUR PET, BUT THEY'RE NOT ALLOWED AT MARKET**  
City Code 11.401 Section 11.401

**NO SMOKING**

**ZERO WASTE ZONE**

# Community Engagement

2.1 Engagement Plan

2.2 Engagement Summary

2.3 Key Design Drivers

## 2.1

# Engagement Plan

The primary task of this phase is to create a preferred design concept for the Civic Center based on community, Commission, and Council input. The design team combined engagement with the general public and targeted outreach efforts to groups with specialized knowledge or interests in the project, including:

### General Public Engagement

- > Open House - Nov 16, 2022
- > Online Survey - Dec 2022 - Jan 2023

### Youth Engagement

- > In-person Work Sessions - Feb 15, 2023

### Focused Engagement

- > Online & In-person Meetings  
Sept 2022 - May 2023

### Arts Organization Engagement

- > Online Survey - Jan - Feb 2023
- > Focus Group Tour & Meeting - Feb 24, 2023

Documentation of these efforts includes detailed meeting notes, and summaries of survey data and open-ended responses. The design team synthesized the input into key design drivers to guide the design concept.



*Open House Nov 16, 2022*



*Veterans Memorial Building Art Organization Focus Group Tour*

# Maudelle Shirek Building

**Question:**  
Which proposed uses are you most excited about for the Maudelle Shirek Building?  
(Pick up to four)

- Maudelle Shirek Building
- Civic Center
- Open House
- Wednesday, November 16, 2022

# Veterans Memorial Building

**Question:**  
What kinds of art programs do you think the community needs most at a new Arts Center in the Veterans Memorial Building?  
(Pick up to four)

- Visual Arts Exhibition
- Dance Performance
- Theater Performance
- Music Performance
- Film Screenings
- Visual Arts Class Spaces
- Dance Class Spaces
- Theater Class Spaces
- Music Class Spaces
- Digital Arts Class Spaces

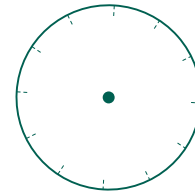
# Slower and Safer Streets

**Question:**  
How do you feel about the following design approaches to improve pedestrian safety and calm traffic around Civic Center?

- A. Reducing or eliminating parking on Center?
- B. ...

# MLK Jr. Civic Center Park

**Question:**  
In your view, what park character would best describe the vision for Civic Center Park?



Traditional  
Playful  
Natural

**Example Responses:**

"The park should be traditional and formal"



"A balance of old, new & natural"



"Mostly Natural"



City of Berkeley

Engagement Cards & Boards

## Berkeley Community Arts Center at the Veterans Memorial Building

EXISTING CHARACTER AND SPACE



## MLK Jr Civic Center Park Character Inspiration

### Traditional

Focuses on traditional park elements and materials, often with formal and symmetrical path layout that frames grand spaces and views.



### Playful

Focuses on elements that promote active uses and provide moments of delight and whimsy. Allows for use of non-traditional elements and materials, and informal path layouts.



### Natural

Focuses on organic elements, with use of wood, stone, and planting to create a space with wilder feel. Can also incorporate strategies to enhance biodiversity and local stormwater systems.



## 2.2

# Engagement Summary

### General Public Engagement

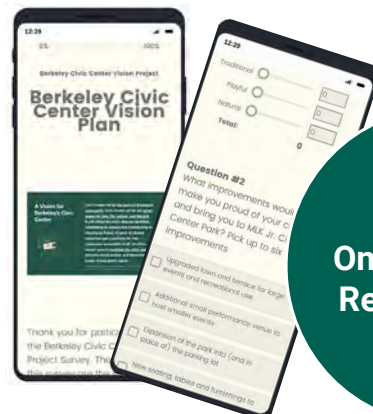
To complement the public outreach effort of the 2020 Vision & Implementation Plan, the design team developed a presentation and survey to reintroduce the Civic Center project to the public, and to gather feedback on design approaches to the buildings, park and streets.

The presentation and survey were shared in two forms - in person and online - to maximize the response rate. Almost **700** responses were gathered, providing the design team with feedback in the form of multiple-choice and open-ended responses.

#### Public Open House on Nov 16, 2022

- **Participants gave input on four topics: MLK Jr Civic Center Park, Surrounding Streets, Maudelle Shirek, and Veterans Memorial Buildings**
- **Participants provided written feedback on more than 200 postcards**
- **Held at Berkeley Main Library**

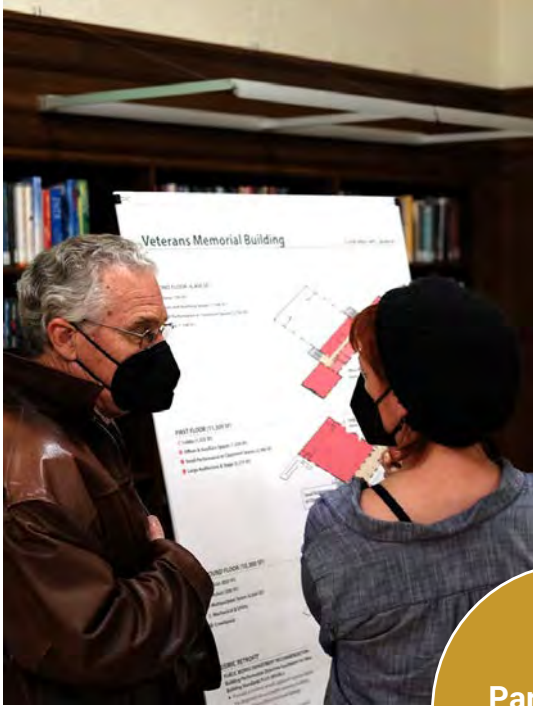
#### Online Survey Dec 9, 2022 to Jan 6, 2023



**654**

**Online Survey Respondents**

Dec 2022 to Jan 2023



**200+**  
Written  
Comments on  
Postcards  
Nov 2022

**40**  
Participants  
at Open  
House  
Nov 2022



*Photos of Open House - Nov 16, 2022*

## General Public Engagement Results

Participants in the outreach effort were asked to provide information about themselves, including age, district they lived in, and relationship to Civic Center area.

The results indicated that less than 6% of participants were between the ages of 15 and 24. With Berkeley High School and Berkeley City College in the adjacent blocks, students in this age range are important users of the Civic Center.

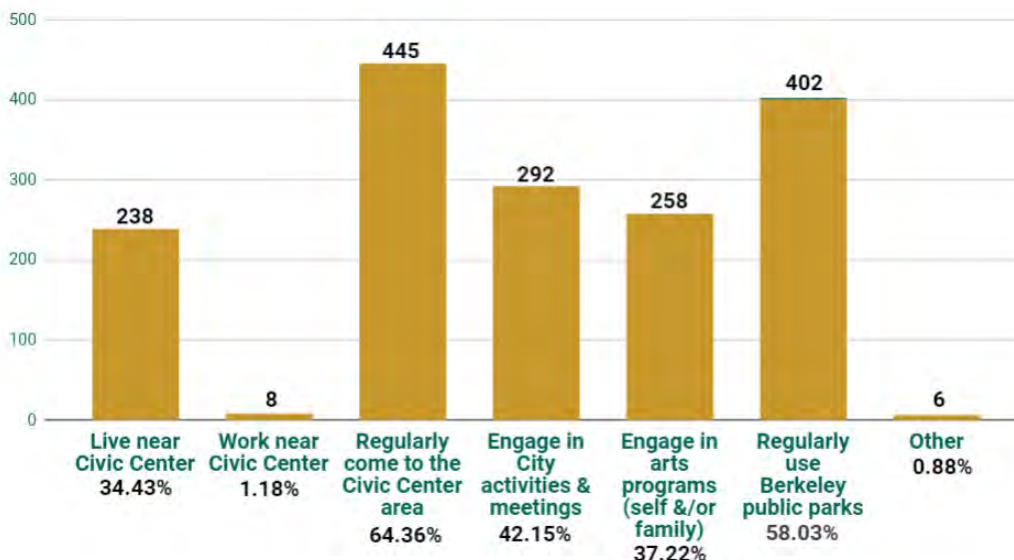
To address this missing age group, additional engagement events were held at Berkeley High School and at Berkeley Community College on February 15, 2023.

**32 additional youth participants** were shown preliminary design concepts and asked similar questions to the Open House participants about the parks and streets. Students were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on the design - what they liked, what they would change.

In most cases, their responses aligned with the commentary heard during the Open House and Online Survey - with some notable differences. Highlights from their responses are noted throughout the Engagement Results on the following pages.

## What is your relationship to MLK Jr. Civic Center Park?

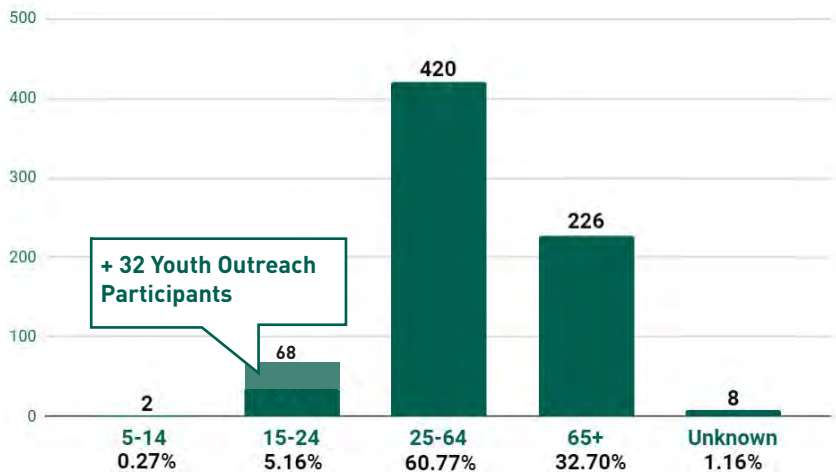
Amounts are shown as a percentage of total respondents, respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.





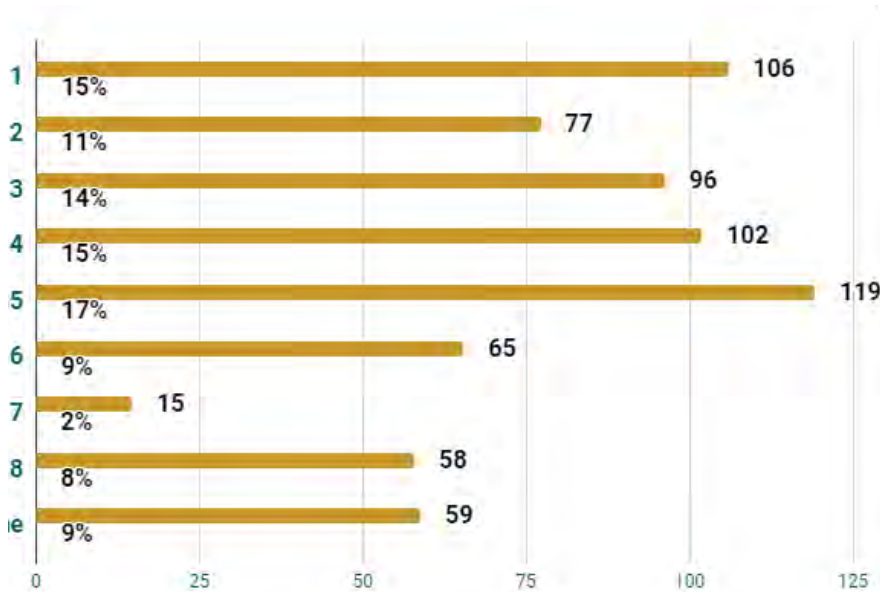
## How old are you?

Amounts are shown as a percentage of 692 total respondents.



## What City Council district do you live in?

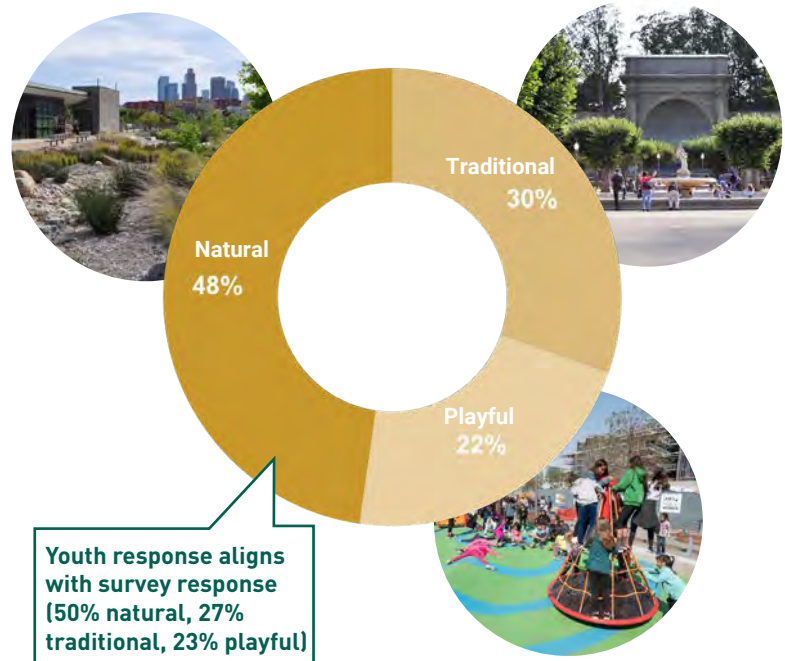
Amounts are shown as a percentage of 697 total respondents.



## Martin Luther King Jr Civic Center Park

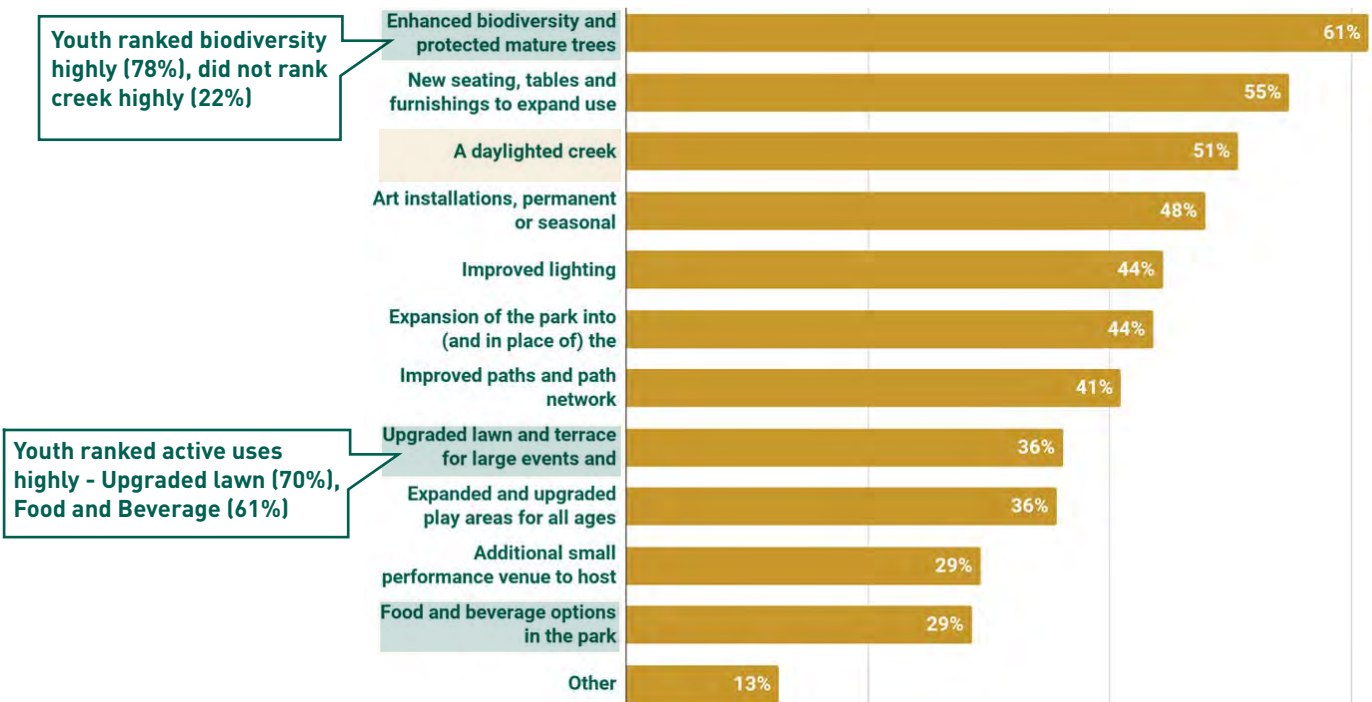
### What character would you like to see in the park?

Amounts are shown as a percentage of 692 total respondents.



### What uses would you like to see in prioritized in the park?

Amounts are shown as a percentage of 683 total respondents.



## Anything else you want to share with us about MLK Jr. Civic Center Park?

Online Survey: 290 write-in responses

## What, in your opinion, should the park be designed for?

Online Survey: 453 write-in responses



## Write-In Response Emerging Themes

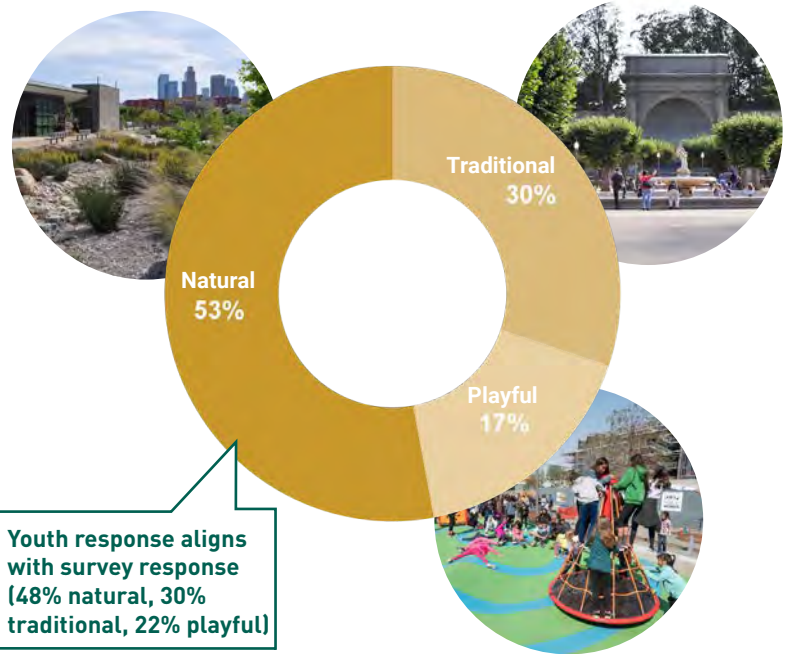
- 1 **There are significant safety concerns about the presence of the unhoused population.**
- 2 **There's a desire for a mix of programs and spaces to invite a range of people to use the park.**
- 3 **People want to bring more nature to the park by promoting biodiversity and daylighting Strawberry Creek.**
- 4 **People want to see spaces for families & kids.**
- 5 **People want clean, safe, and well-maintained restrooms.**

Youth also noted current safety concerns at park.

## Surrounding Streets

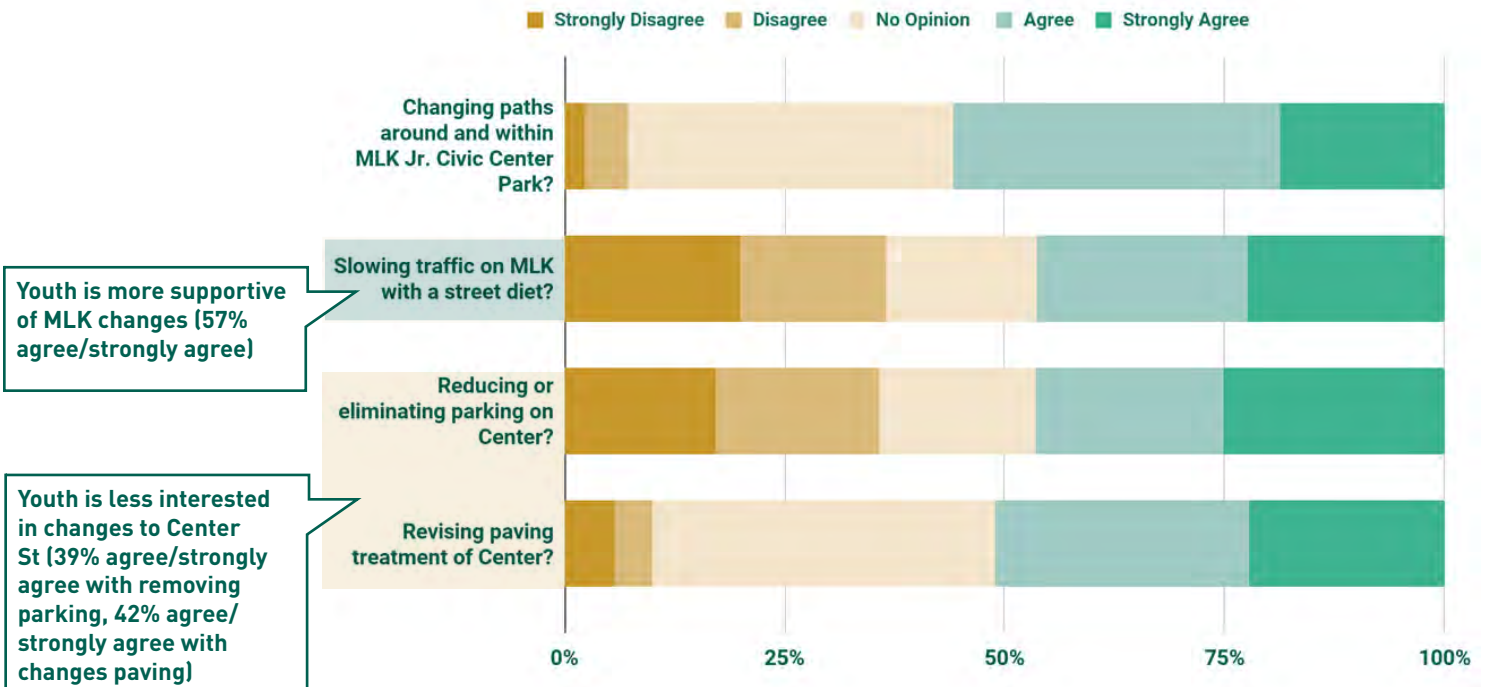
### What character would you like to see in the surrounding streets?

Amounts are shown as a percentage of 665 total respondents.



### How do you feel about the following design approaches to improve pedestrian safety and calm traffic around the park?

Amounts are shown as a percentage of 647 total respondents.



## Anything else you want to share with us about the streets around MLK Jr. Civic Center Park?

Online Survey: 274 write-in responses



### Write-In Response Emerging Themes

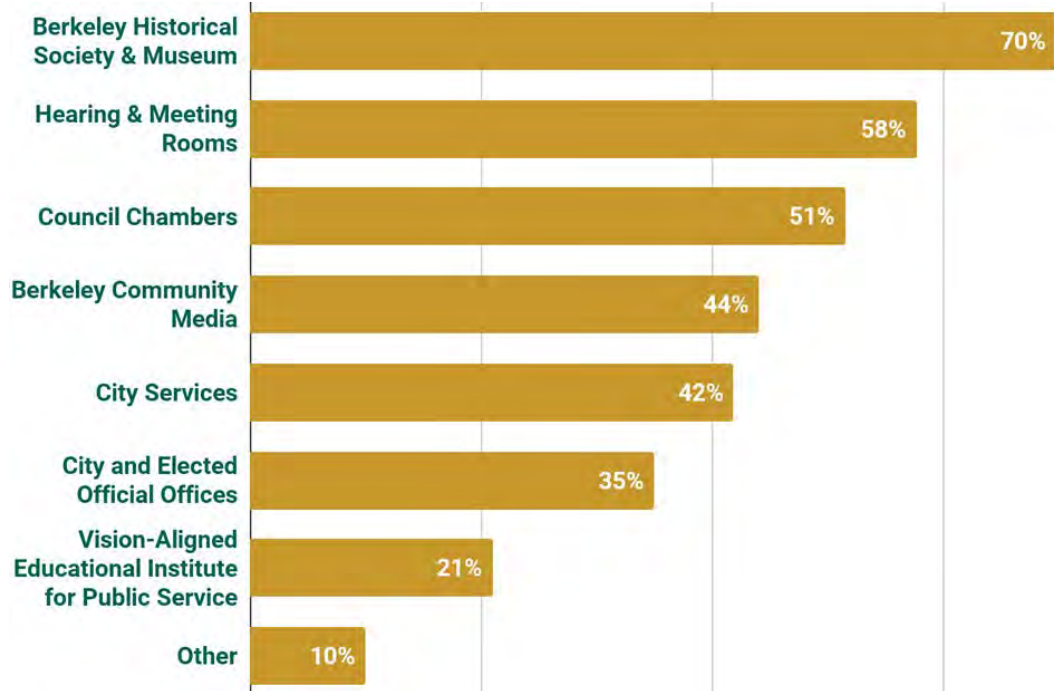
- 1 There are divergent opinions on traffic mitigation on MLK, however, the majority of comments are not in favor of a road diet.
- 2 People want to see pedestrians and cyclists prioritized on Center Street and Allston Street.
- 3 People want to ensure dropoff and pickup needs are met around Berkeley High School.
- 4 There are concerns about parking being removed.

Youth noted concerns related to dropoff and parking near BHS

## Building Uses

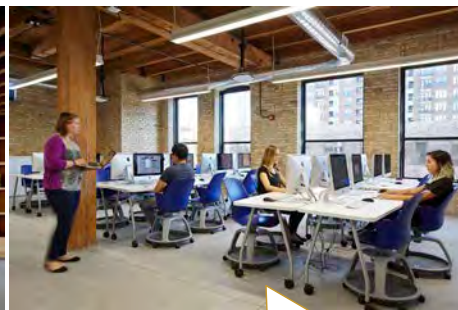
### Which proposed use are you most excited about for the Maudelle Shirek Building?

Amounts are shown as a percentage of 564 total respondents.



"Having a go to location to vote on election day and all related Berkeley city services."

BHS students noted interest in internship opportunities (BCM, Public Policy Institute)



"Active use of meeting rooms for organizing events and activism, attending City Council meetings and public meetings."

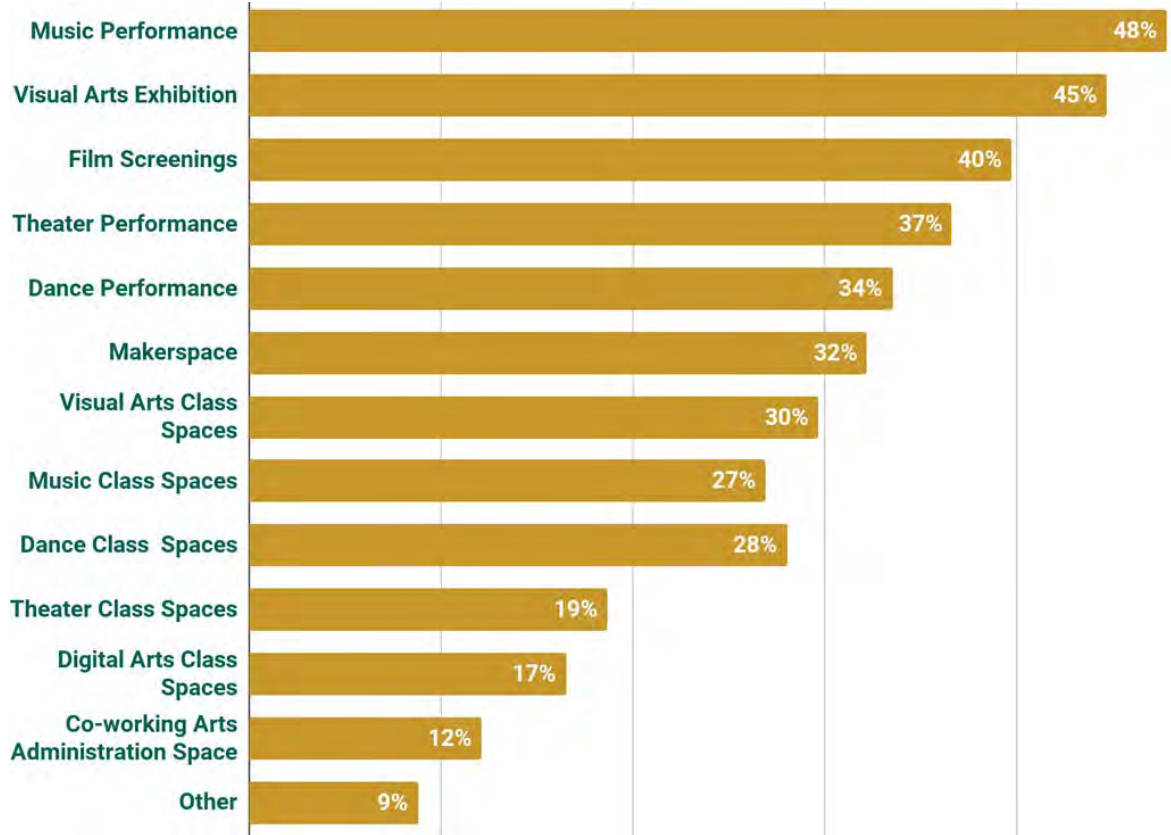


"Perhaps some sort of partnership with UC to bring new energy and researchers to the building?"

"With the co-location of the Historical Society, Vision Institute, and Community Media, the community will have better access to these resources."

## What types of programs do you think the community needs most at a new Arts Center in the Veterans Memorial Building?

Amounts are shown as a percentage of 546 total respondents.



"There's a shortage of arts class spaces, and I think this would be a great thing for the community."

"Film screenings and music performances!"

BCC students noted interest in using the space for art classes, performances

"Love the idea of a true dance/music/arts center integrated into a revitalized & restored park."

"I think it needs to appear more open, accessible, inviting and welcoming...signage and a well-designed entrance foyer."

## Focused Engagement

In addition to the general public, and with input from the project's City Steering Team, the design team identified City departments, park users, neighbors, and affiliated organizations who could provide detailed input on the design concept.

The design team shared drawings, diagrams, photographs, and precedent images of the park and buildings at these meetings and asked specific questions aimed at gathering insights from those most familiar with the area and its current condition.

The groups ranged from current tenants like the Berkeley Historical Society & Museum and The Ecology Center to discuss specific space needs, to the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department staff to discuss park maintenance budgets, approaches, and possible community involvement.

The design team met with representatives from some of these groups, such as BUSD and the CCCC, multiple times to solicit specific feedback.

## City of Berkeley Staff & Departments

Civic Arts  
City Clerk  
Elected Officials  
Fire Department  
Parks, Recreation and Waterfront  
Police Department  
Public Works Department  
Real Estate  
Special Events  
Transportation  
Urban Forester

## Neighbors, Users & Affiliated Organizations

Berkeley City College  
Berkeley Community Media  
Berkeley Commissioners  
Berkeley Historical Society & Museum  
Berkeley Unified School District  
Community for a Cultural Civic Center (CCCC)  
Creek Daylighting Advocates  
Ecology Center  
Potential Educational Partners  
Skate XP



**Farmers Market**  
2000 vtrs/wk  
60 Vendors



**Berkeley Historical Society & Museum**



**Berkeley Community Media**  
60 City Broadcasts / year



**Council, Commissions, Committee Meetings**  
350+ / year

**Special Events**  
16+ / year pre-pandemic



*Berkeley Civic Center User Groups*

## Arts Organization Engagement

As part of this effort and with assistance from the design team, the Civic Arts Division of Economic Development devised and released a survey to the recipients of City Civic Arts grants in January 2023. A focus group work session was held in February 2023 to discuss transforming the Veterans Memorial Building into a Berkeley Community Arts Center.

### 79 Arts Organizations and Cultural

**Producers** responded to questions related to their current space use, space needs, and desire to be located in the Civic Center area through the online survey.

**16 participants** from a wide-range of organization sizes, representing the disciplines of theater, dance, music, visual arts, and literary arts, attended the focus group to identify priority space needs in the Veterans Memorial Building for a Community Arts Center and to give input on the development of a spatial program.

### Strong interest and demonstrated need for a Community Arts Center

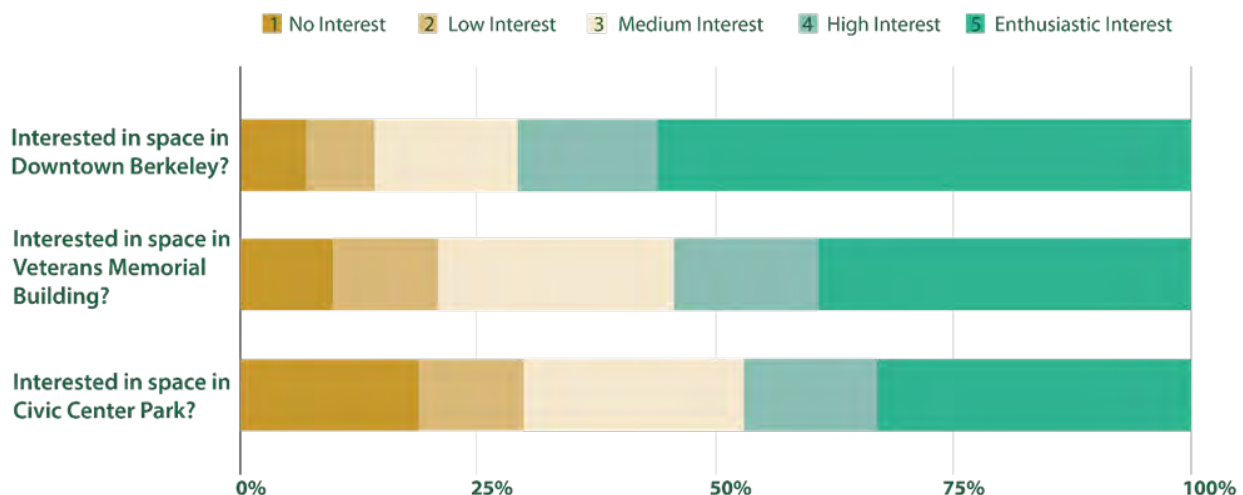
Survey responses demonstrate that Berkeley-based arts organizations have a need for spaces for performances, classes, workshops, exhibitions and other public programs:

**43% Respondents** do not have a facility for their public programming. They operate out of a home office or an administrative office and rent venues as needed for public programming.

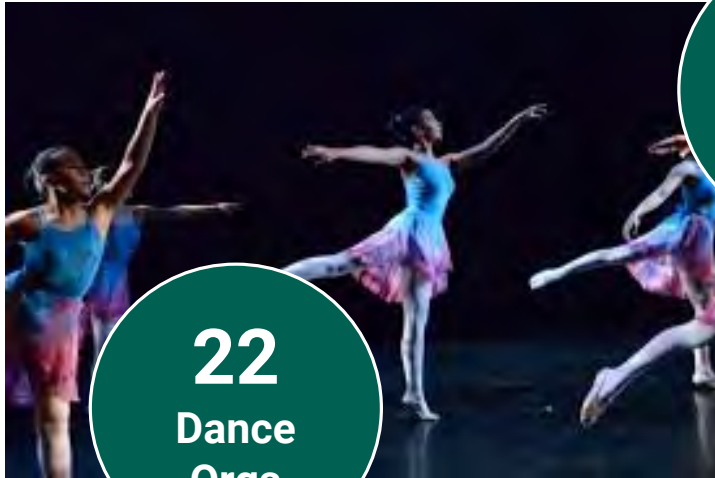
**66% Respondents** rent space for their programming. This includes organizations that do not have a facility, and those that have a facility but need additional space on an occasional basis.

**46% Respondents** produce public programs for smaller audience sizes (250 people or less) indicating a good fit for the various public spaces in the Veterans Memorial Building.

### Veterans Memorial Building's downtown, central location near the arts district and transit is very appealing to arts groups.



# Arts Survey Respondents



**22**  
Dance  
Orgs

**33**  
Music  
Orgs



**27**  
Theater  
Orgs

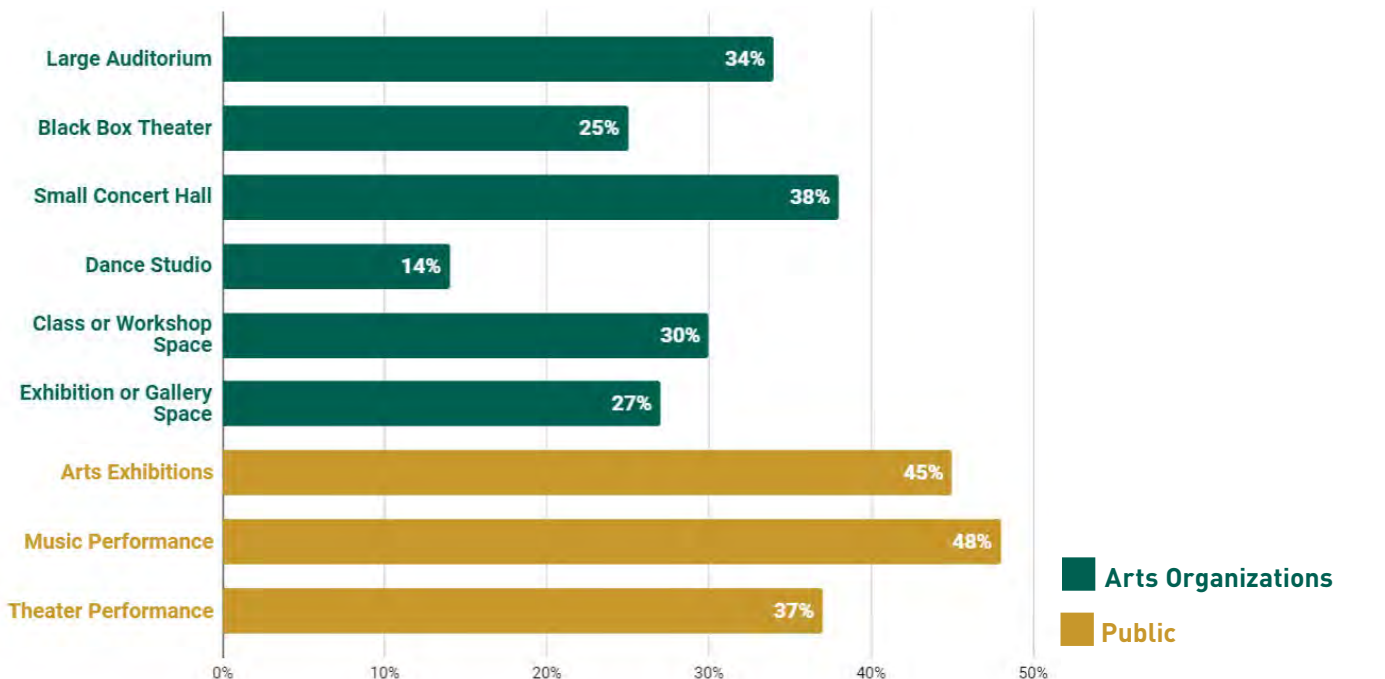


**27**  
Visual  
Arts  
Orgs



**30**  
Arts  
Education  
Orgs

Arts organizations are interested in multiple types of public program space in a renovated Veterans Memorial Building:



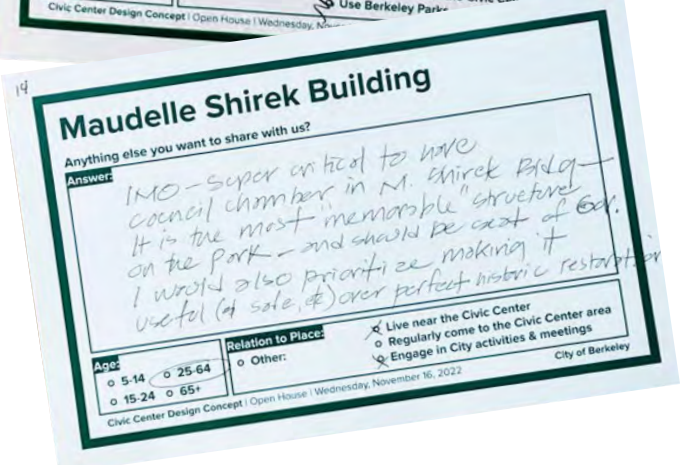
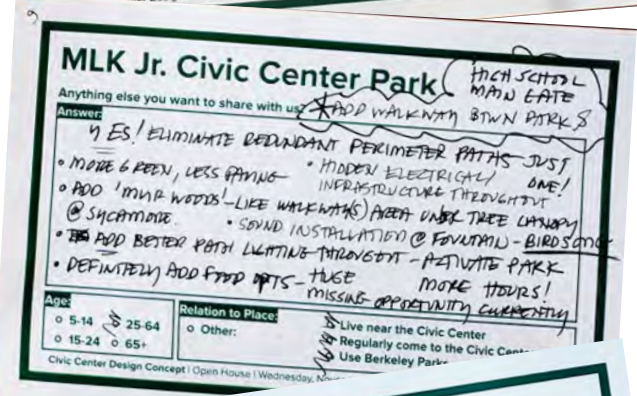
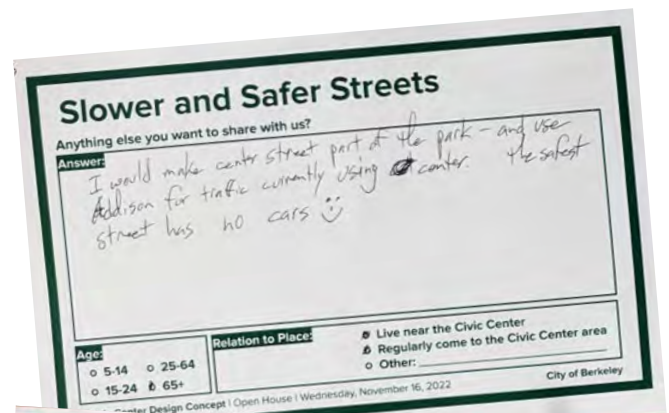
## 2.3

# Key Design Drivers

The design team received feedback during the outreach and engagement events in a number of forms - written responses to directed and open-ended survey questions, verbal feedback, and additional feedback sent via email to the Civic Center email address. The outcome of the engagement effort was integrated into **9 key design drivers** to guide the design concept.

Overall, the community's responses during this phase reinforced the 2020 Vision Statement:

- Civic Center will be the heart of Berkeley's community.
- Civic Center will be the prime space for civic life, culture, and the arts.
- It will reflect the city's diverse identities, celebrating its history and contributing to shaping its future.
- It is a place of shared resources and a platform for free expression accessible to all.
- The Civic Center aims to manifest the city's values, advance social justice, and demonstrate the power of true public space.



# 1

## The Civic Center Park and buildings should be a place to gather as a community.

Parks should bring people together

Relaxing at performances, listening to music

Inviting public space for gathering & enjoyment

“

Informal and formal gatherings of people of all ages. A safe place to be in community together.”



**300 +**  
Written comments related to community gathering

# 2 MLK Jr Civic Center Park should be natural in character, preserving mature trees and enhancing native biodiversity.

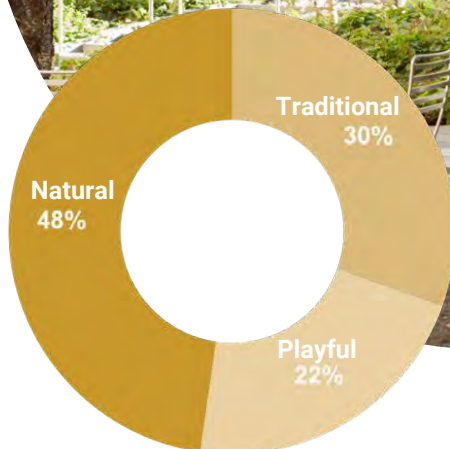
Return nature in the urban setting

The park should be a place for relaxing with nature

Amplify nature and art because that's what Berkeley is basically about.

“

As our city is becoming increasingly developed, the park should present a peaceful, calming, safe space where people can be in nature.”



**61%** of respondents prioritized biodiversity and protecting mature trees

# 3

The Park and open space should offer a safe, clean, and comfortable place to be outdoors with others.



The focus should be in day-to-day use with events being an important secondary use. Keep the park safe and accessible.

55%

of respondents prioritized new seating, tables and furnishing

Sitting & relaxing

Playing & recreating

Strolling/Walking

48%

of respondents prioritized art installations

44%

of respondents prioritized improved lighting



# 4 Many are passionate about daylighting Strawberry Creek while others raised concerns.



**51%**  
of respondents  
prioritized  
daylighting  
Strawberry  
Creek

“Costs of daylighting need to be weighed against other park improvements.”

Too expensive / infeasible, hard to maintain.

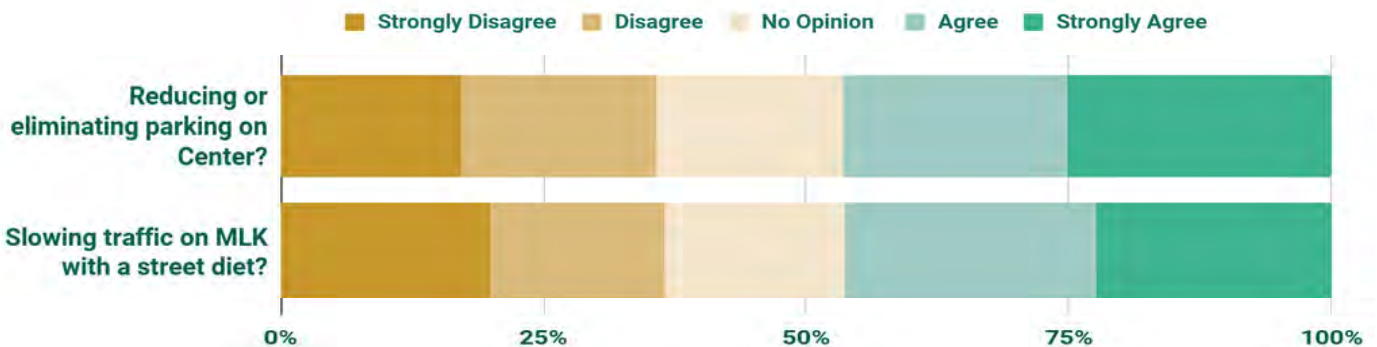
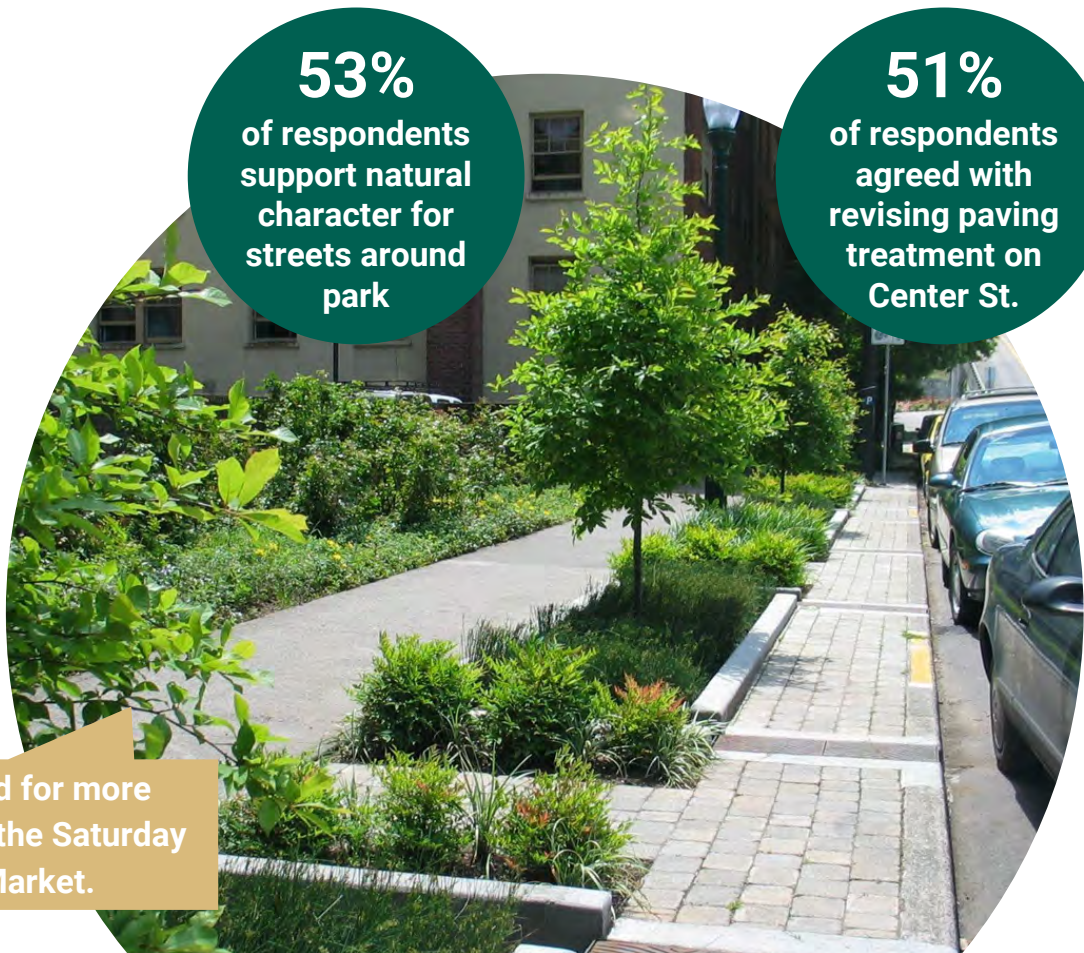
A perfect opportunity to restore native plants and biodiversity, and to daylight Strawberry Creek

“Daylighting Strawberry Creek and restoring native vegetation can be a wonderful anchor to this vision.”



# 5

## Center Street should be better integrated into the Park and open space experience.



# 6 The Maudelle Shirek Building should be the seat of Berkeley's democracy, with meeting and public-serving spaces supporting civic participation in City government.

**58%**  
of respondents  
support  
community  
hearing & mtg  
rooms at MSB

**51%**  
of respondents  
support Council  
Chambers at  
MSB

Promote access and use by all by making the building as inviting, interactive, and safe as possible.

A one stop shop for the general public.



# 7 The civic uses in the Maudelle Shirek Building should be paired with vision-aligned services and educational functions.

...center for education, inspiration, and action. Celebrate Berkeley's activist history!



**70%**  
of respondents support Berkeley Historical Society & Museum at MSB

**44%**  
of respondents support Berkeley Community Media at MSB



..a hub for BCM's important educational and public service work.

# 8 The Veterans Memorial Building should be a Community Arts Center for creative expression and accessible to all.

**72%**  
of arts survey  
respondents  
showed high  
interest in space  
downtown



It would be fantastic to have a community, municipal arts space in downtown.

# 9

**The Community Arts Center should be activated all day every day, hosting arts organizations and practitioners across all disciplines, delivering performances and programming for the community.**



Proximity to BHS, BCC supports partnerships and youth engagement

Generate lots of activity in the building day and night!



Vision



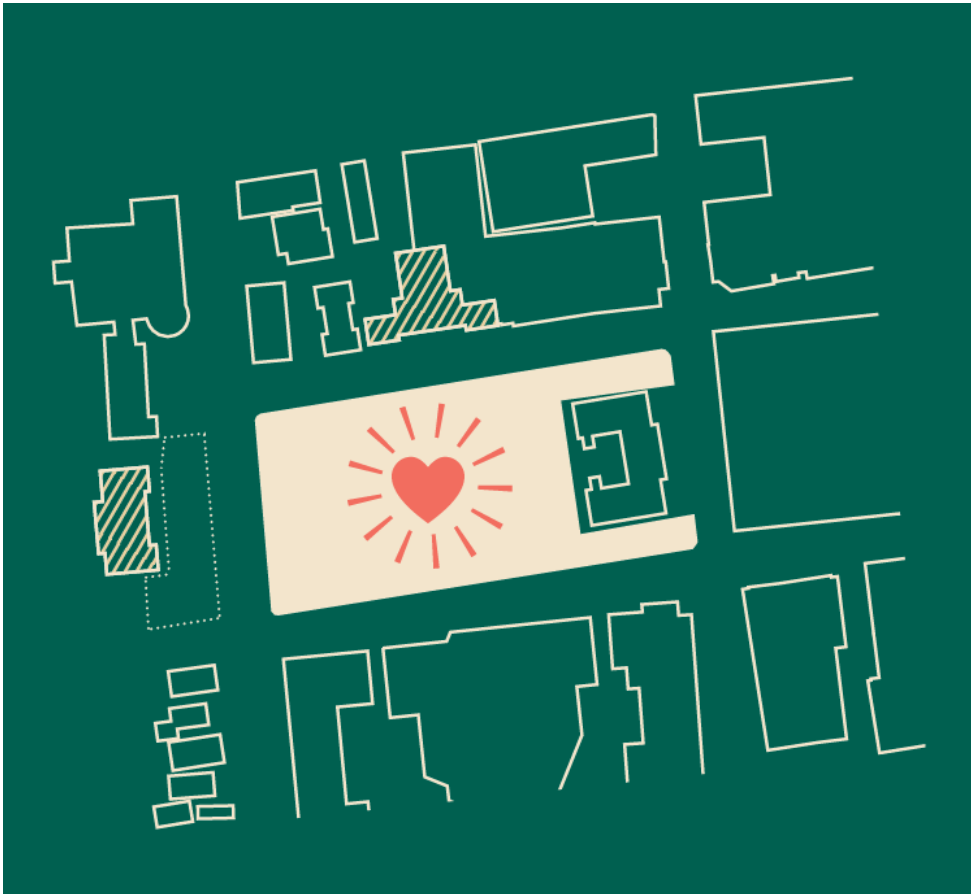
# Vision

## 3.1 Vision Statement

3.1

# Vision Statement for Berkeley's Civic Center

Reaffirmed in 2022-23 public engagement process.





**Civic Center will be the heart of Berkeley's community. Civic Center will be the prime space for civic life, culture, and the arts. It will reflect the city's diverse identities, celebrating its history and contributing to shaping its future. A place of shared resources and a platform for free expression accessible to all, the Civic Center aims to manifest the city's values, advance social justice, and demonstrate the power of true public space.**



# Design Considerations

4.1 Opportunities

4.2 Programs & Uses

## 4.1

# Opportunities

### **A Historic Asset**

The Maudelle Shirek Building, Veterans Memorial Building, and Civic Center Park are contributing structures to the Berkeley Civic Center Historic District which is recognized both locally and nationally. Together they have served and are serving the community as gathering places, the seat of democracy, and settings for art and artistic expressions. They maintain much of their historic fabric, and present to the City an opportunity to reestablish the area as the heart of Berkeley's civic life.

### **A City Campus**

This one block area of downtown contains seven structures owned or operated by the City of Berkeley. Densifying city uses in this area will further strengthen the city campus and provide flexibility for future growth and changing needs.

### **A Guiding Vision**

With the adopted vision statement as the north star for the project, four points on a compass emerge from the engagement efforts and design thinking which are representative of Berkeley's culture and collective values:

#### **Community**

an inclusive and caring community

#### **The Arts**

expressive artistic and cultural events and pieces

#### **Governance**

good governance demonstrated through progressive policies

#### **Education**

powerful education tied directly to history and nature

"It is beautiful and should be invested in now, to preserve what we have and make it publicly usable again. Don't let it further deteriorate."

"It is a historical architectural treasure that needs our love and funding!"

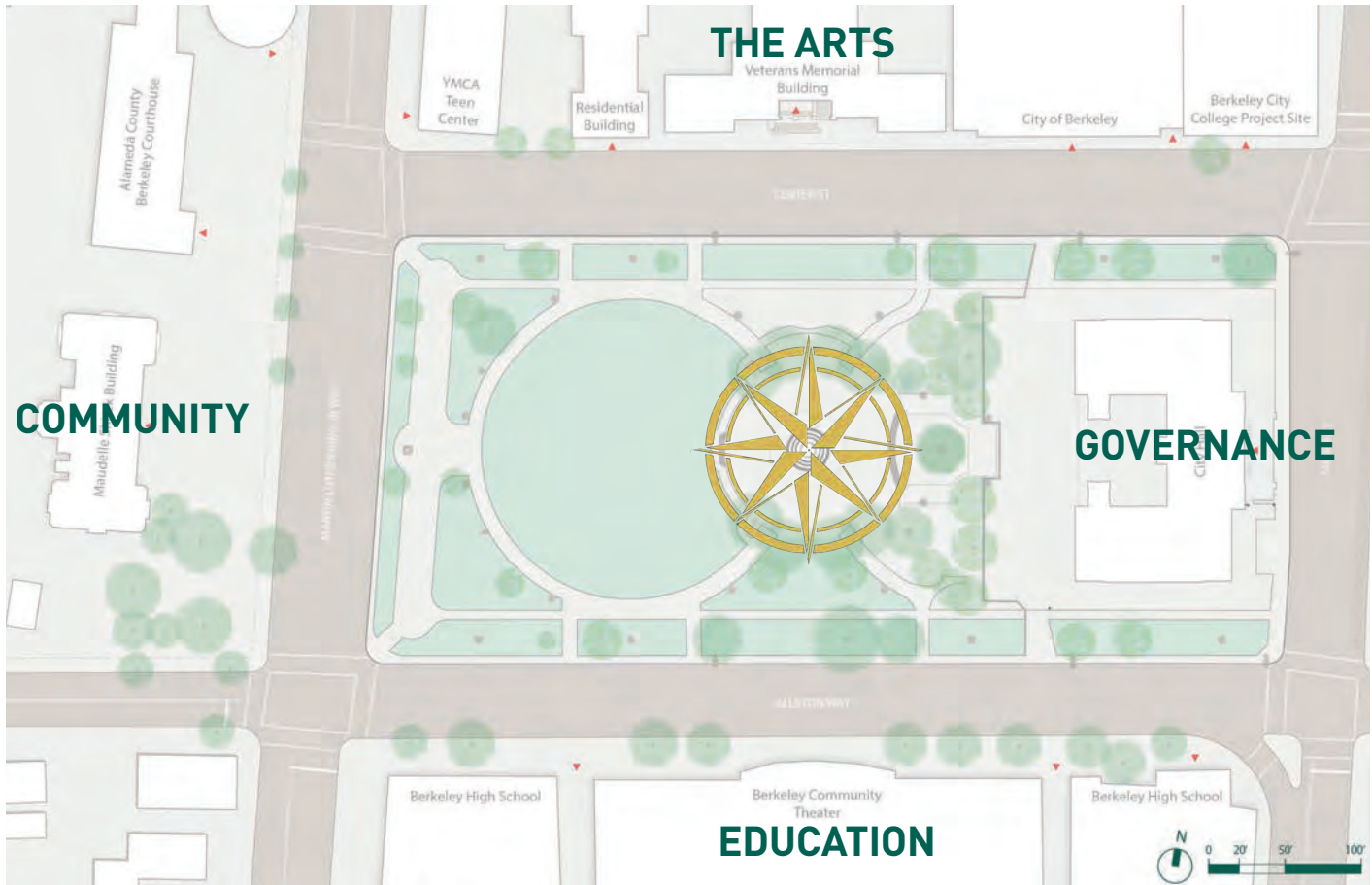
"It is beautiful, and an asset to the city."



Maudelle Shirek Building Entry



Veterans Memorial Building Ceiling



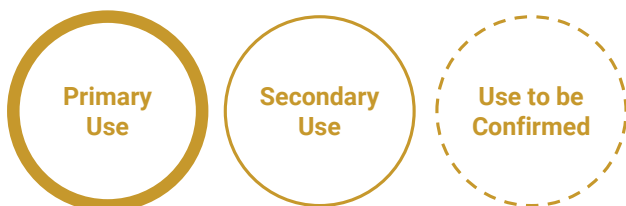
## 4.2

# Programs & Uses

## Parameters for Prioritizing Uses

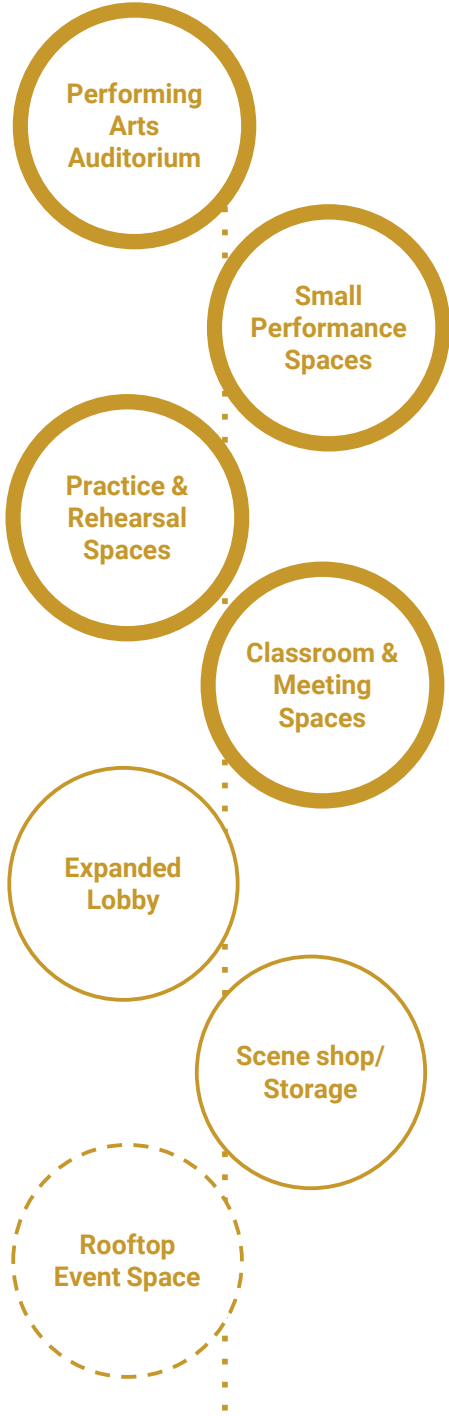
Through the public outreach effort, many programs and uses were proposed and discussed for the Civic Center Park, Maudelle Shirek Building, and Veterans Memorial building. In order to prioritize those uses in the available space, the design team considered three additional parameters:

- **Vision Aligned** - Strengthen community; support civic life, culture and the arts; reflect diverse identities; celebrate Berkeley's history; and manifest the city's values.
- **Use Aligned** - Complement co-located uses based on space type needs, access and security requirements, and time of use to activate the area 24/7.
- **Funding** - Draw on sources of outside funding to bring investment to the restoration and enhancement of this historic district.





**Maudelle Shirek Building**



**Veterans Memorial Building**

# Civic Center Park

PARK ELEMENTS	NOTES
<b>Civic Gathering Space</b> Large Green	Utilized for civic events, festivals
<b>Turtle Island Monument</b>	Separate project under Civic Arts and Park, Recreation and Waterfront Department
<b>Performance Spaces</b> Large Performance Venue Small Performance Venue(s)	Co-located with civic gathering Identify multiple small performance spaces
<b>Neighborhood Park Functions</b> Seating for individuals and groups Play Areas Skate Spot	Multi-age, natural in character Multi-use plaza w/ skatable elements
<b>Natural Habitat</b> Native plants Historic/Mature Trees	Pollinators and habitat builders Protect existing tree canopy, develop tree succession plan
<b>Food &amp; Beverage</b> Leasable space for vendors Cafe seating	For high school and city college students, people who live & work in area
<b>Farmers Market</b> Stalls, Food Trucks, Fresh Produce, Prepared Food, Crafts	Center Street, expansion into park
<b>Daylit Creek</b>	Partial-flow most likely, needs further study





**Civic Center Park**



*Entrance to fountain terrace from green*



*Existing Skate spot along MLK Jr Way*



*Large central green*

# Maudelle Shirek Building

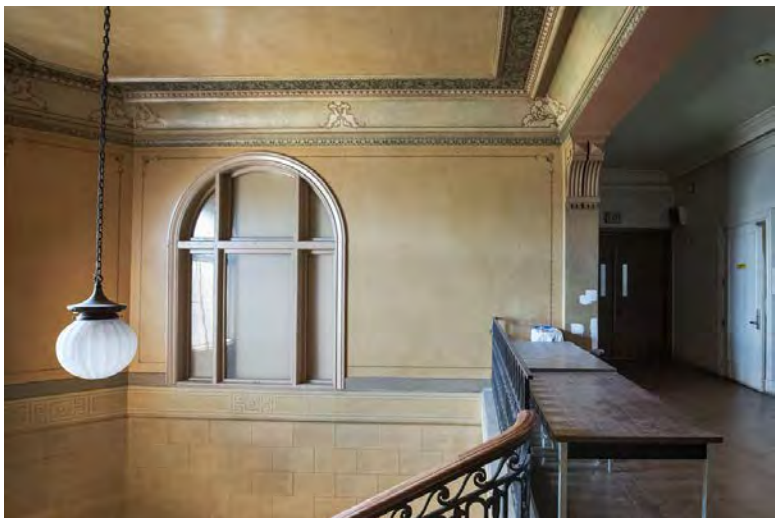
USE	NOTES
<b>Hearing Rooms - 9,600 SF</b> Large Multi-purpose meeting room/ Council Chambers Conference Room Historic Hearing Room New Hearing Room Support Spaces	Seats 200-300  Can be used for closed sessions Historic Council Chambers, seats 70 Seats 120
<b>Meeting Rooms - 2,165 SF</b> Small Meeting Rooms Large Meeting Rooms	Seat 10-20 Seat 20-30
<b>Flexible Work Spaces - 3,375 SF</b> Reception Area/Service Counter Private & Open offices Conference Rooms Print, Storage & Support Break Room/Kitchenette	
<b>Berkeley Historical Society &amp; Museum - 8,000 SF</b> Permanent & Temporary Exhibit Offices, Research Room, Meeting Rooms Exhibit Preparation Room Archival Storage Bookstore/Gift Shop	3500 SF, may be located off-site
<b>Berkeley Community Media - 5,500 SF</b> Broadcast, Podcast & Green Cove Studios Offices, Editing Suites Lounge/Classroom Kitchenette	
<b>Public Facing City Offices - SF Varies</b>	To be determined, dependent on department
<b>Public Policy Institute - SF Varies</b> Classrooms, Meeting Rooms Offices	To be determined, dependent on program development



**Maudelle Shirek Building**



*Historic Hearing Room Dias*



*Central Stair at Second Floor*



*Second Floor Office Space*

# Veterans Memorial Building

## USE

## NOTES

---

### Performance Space

Large Performance Auditorium  
Small Performance Rooms  
Backstage

300-500 seats  
100-120 seats  
Expanded for access to basement

---

### Multi-functional Spaces

Rehearsal Spaces  
Lecture/Conference spaces  
Classrooms/Workshops

Also function as small performance  
Could utilize large auditorium

---

### Exhibition Space

Visual Arts Exhibition Hall  
Flexible Arts Exhibition Space

Climate controlled, gallery lighting  
In public halls, temporary exhibits

---

### Support Spaces

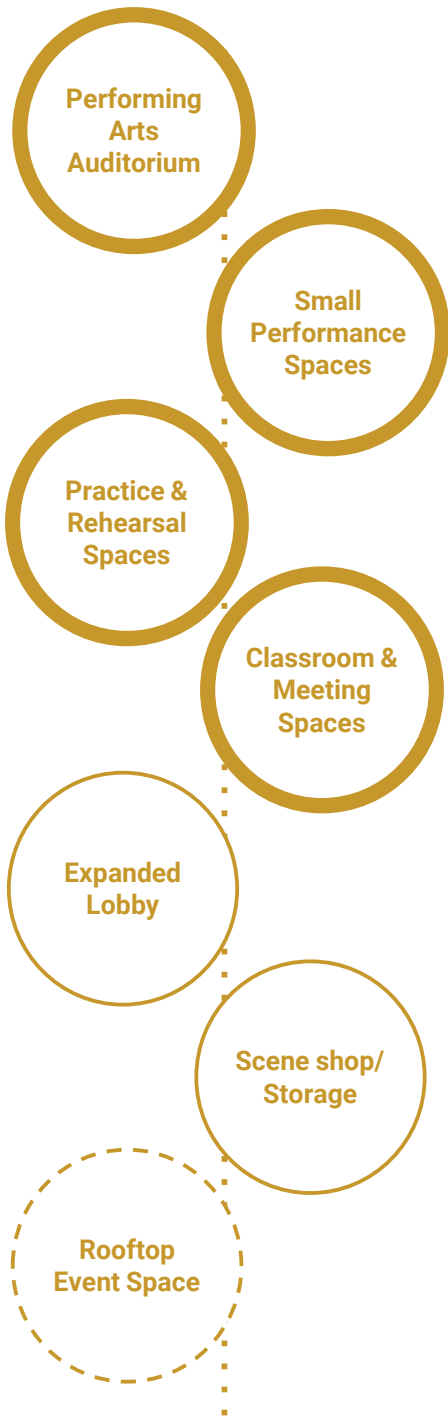
Offices  
Bathrooms  
Dressing Rooms  
Storage  
Stage/Scenery Shop

---

### Event Space

Entry Porch  
Lobby/Pre-function Space  
Banquet Area  
Commercial Kitchen  
Rooftop Terrace

To be determined



**Veterans Memorial Building**



*Veterans Memorial Building facade*



*Large Auditorium*



*Balcony ceiling*



# Design Concept

**5.1 Preferred Design Concept**

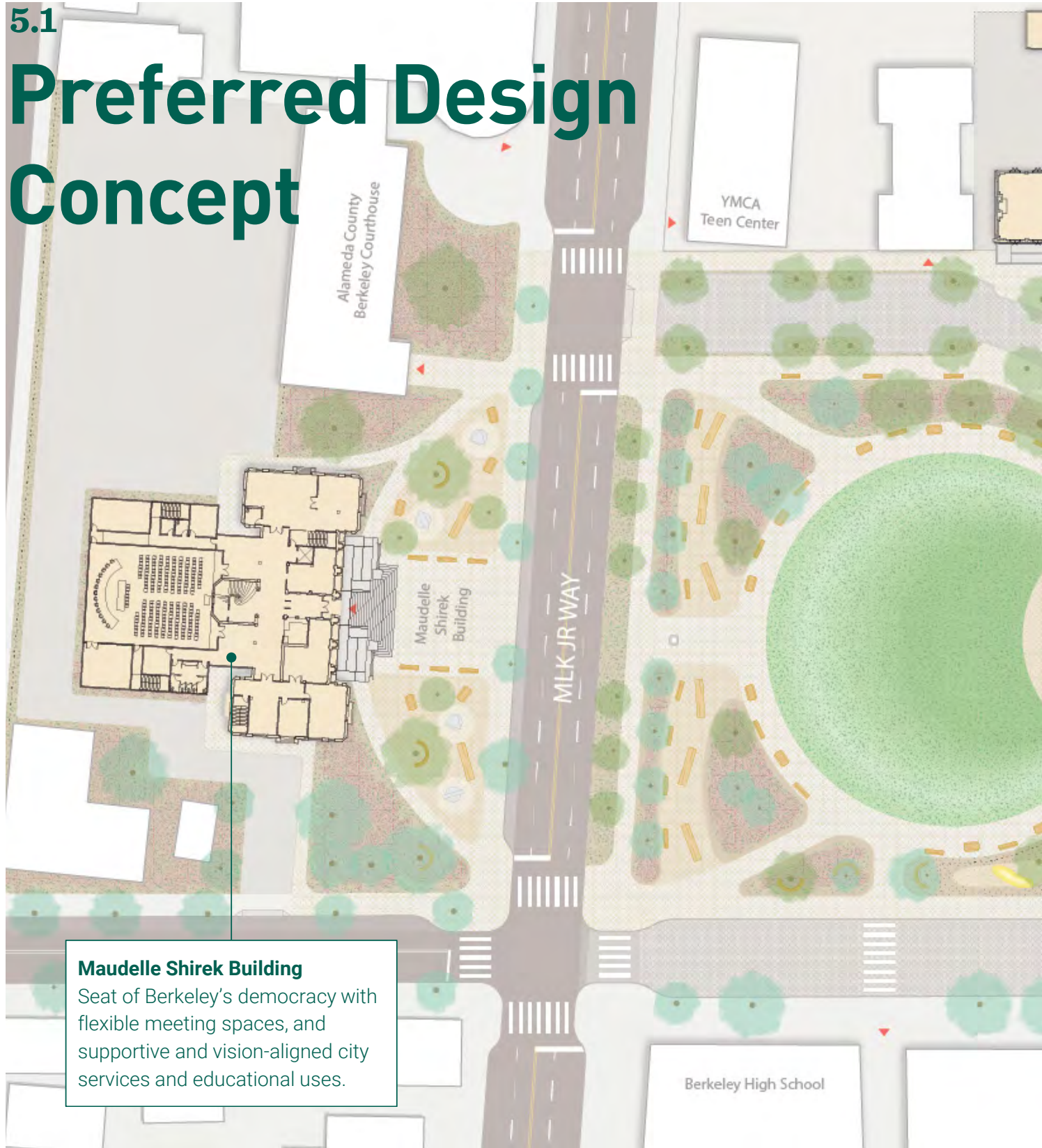
**5.2 MLK Jr Civic Center Park & Surrounding Streets**

**5.3 Maudelle Shirek Building**

**5.4 Veterans Memorial Building**

5.1

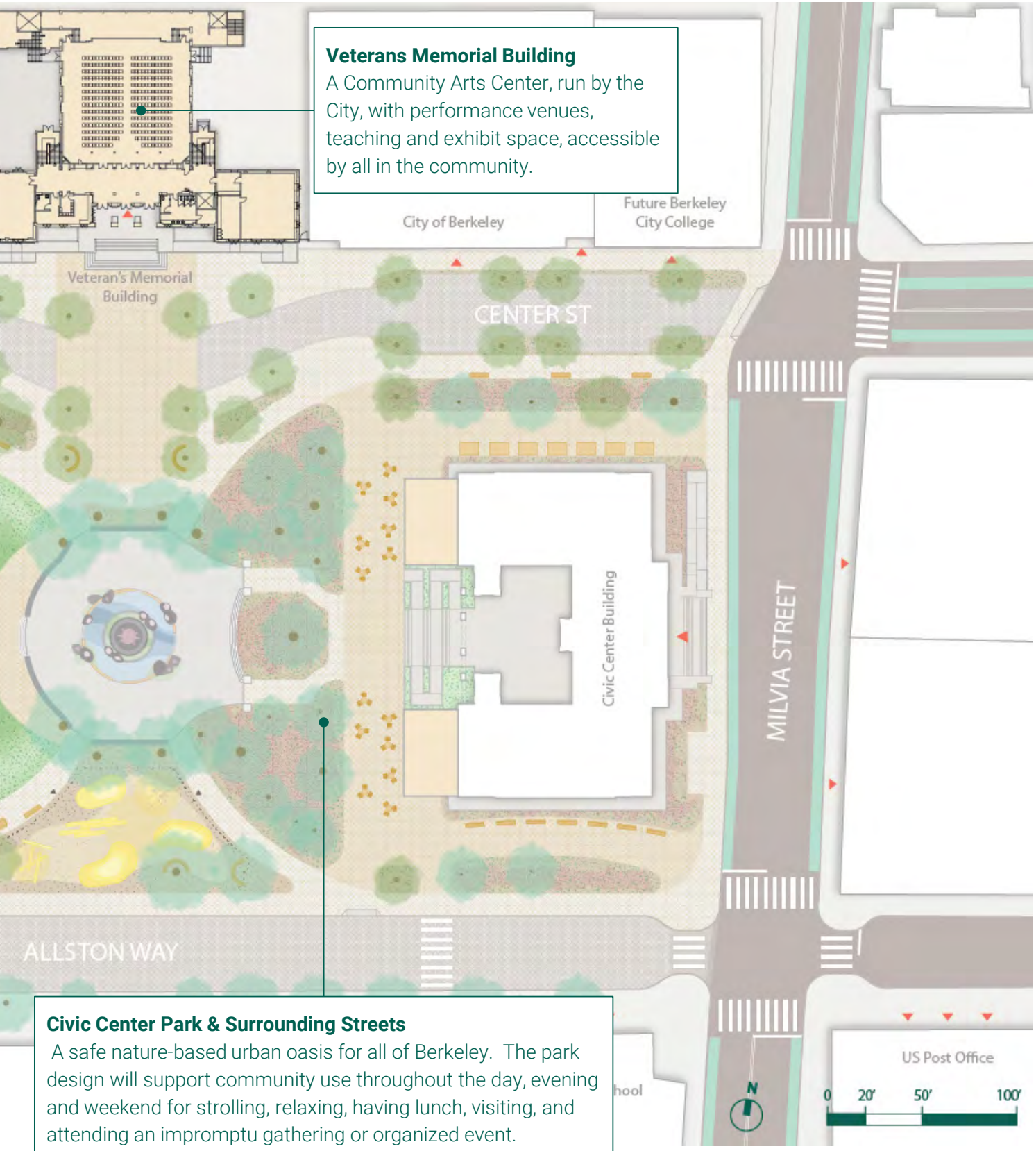
# Preferred Design Concept



**Maudelle Shirek Building**  
Seat of Berkeley's democracy with flexible meeting spaces, and supportive and vision-aligned city services and educational uses.

**Note:** All drawings are illustrative and conceptual. Further landscape and architectural design is required in future specific design phases.





**Veterans Memorial Building**  
A Community Arts Center, run by the City, with performance venues, teaching and exhibit space, accessible by all in the community.

**Civic Center Park & Surrounding Streets**  
A safe nature-based urban oasis for all of Berkeley. The park design will support community use throughout the day, evening and weekend for strolling, relaxing, having lunch, visiting, and attending an impromptu gathering or organized event.



# 5.2 MLK Jr Civic Center Park & Surrounding Streets

## 5.2

# Design Goals

## MLK Jr Civic Center Park and Surrounding Streets

Civic Center Park has the potential to be an urban oasis for residents and visitors to Berkeley's Downtown, and also provide a central gathering place for civic life - from outdoor performances to political demonstrations.

The design concept for Civic Center Park builds from the existing organization of the park, and layers in new design elements and programs that support the desired everyday vibrancy of the Park. The proposed design concept also simplifies the layout and reclaims underutilized space to accommodate new activity areas where possible.

**The design concept is based on six key design goals to be achieved through targeted reconfiguration and refurbishment of the Park.**

All of these goals point towards a future for Civic Center Park that the public is asking for: **a place of natural and architectural beauty that provides both calm retreat and invitation to participate in public life**, both through everyday activities and special events.



**1**

**Preserve and build upon Civic Center Park's strengths**

**2**

**Improve pedestrian safety and usability of paths**

**3**

**Enhance natural features, promote biodiversity and green design**

**4**

**Expand invitations for a variety of everyday uses**

**5**

**Enhance the potential of the Park to host weekly and special events**

**6**

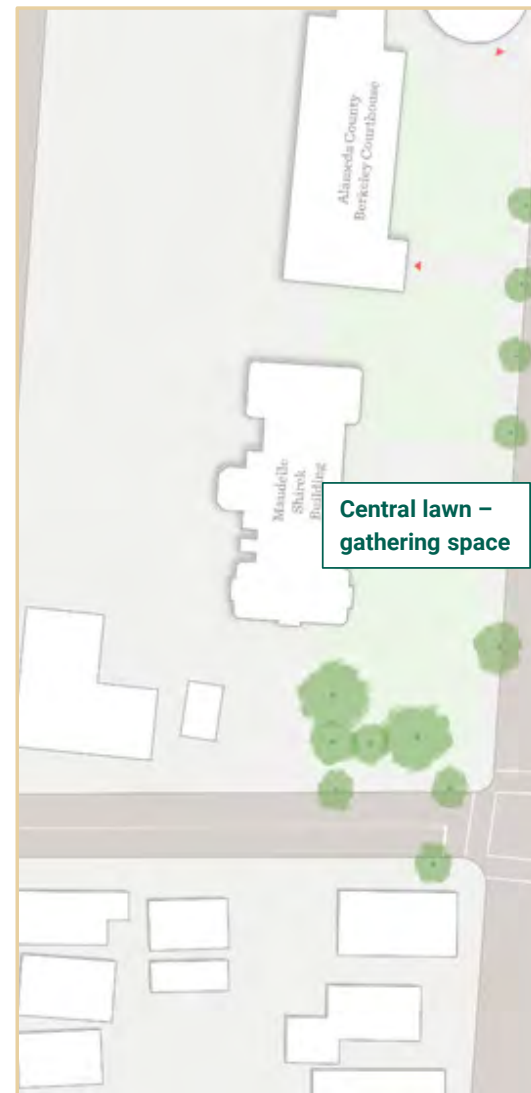
**Study feasibility and tradeoffs of daylighting Strawberry Creek**

# 1

## Preserve and build upon the strengths of Civic Center

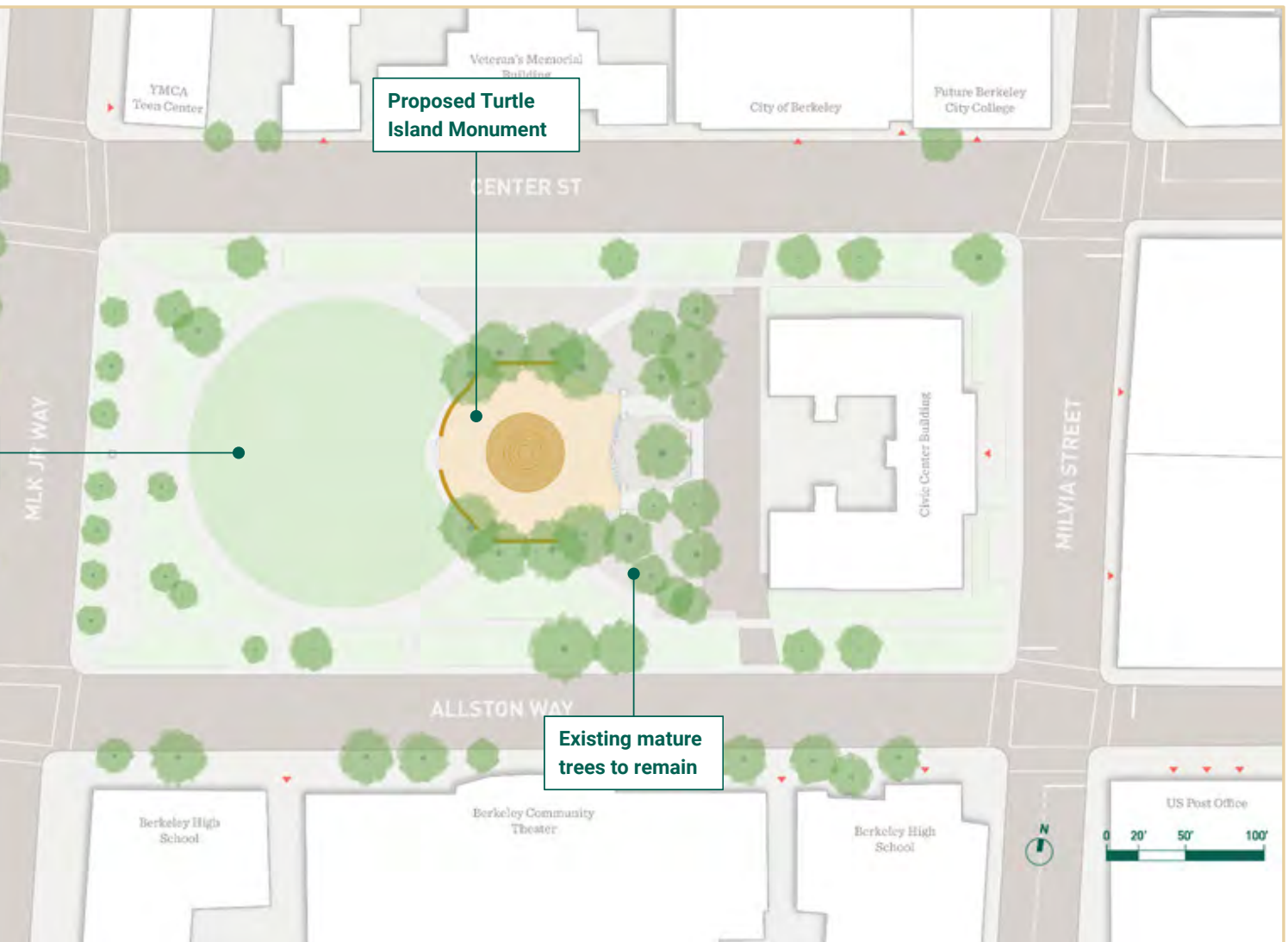
The design process for the Park and surrounding streets began with a thorough analysis of the existing elements in the Park to **determine what needs to remain and what should be improved**. This was also informed by insights into what aspects of the Park were performing well and could be enhanced through public realm upgrades.

This led to a design approach that **maintains the overall structure of the park, and preserves existing mature trees, important monuments and memorials, and the main central gathering space - the lawn**. Any upgrades to the Park will also need to be reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.



**Mature Trees, MLK Jr Civic Center Park**

**Note:** All drawings are illustrative and conceptual, further landscape design will be required.



**Site Plan with Existing Elements to Remain**



**Peace Wall and site of future Turtle Island Monument**



**Central Lawn, MLK Jr Civic Center Park**

# Learning from feedback on the 2020 Vision Plan

During the 2019/2020 Vision and Implementation Plan effort, multiple alternative design concepts were developed for the park and neighboring buildings, shown on the opposite page. These options varied in levels of intervention and big moves that organized the park.

While the overall vision statement was supported and accepted, the recommended design concept was not adopted or instructed to move forward.

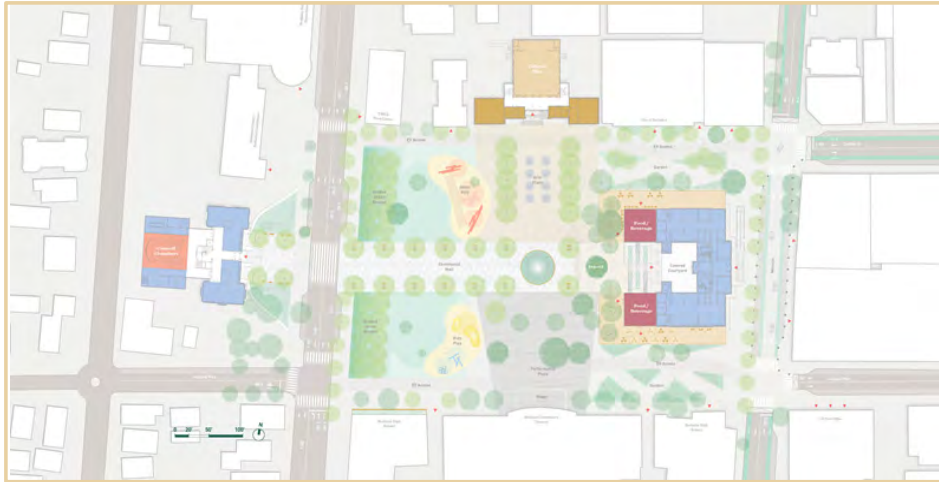
For this design concept effort, the design team employed a lighter touch towards the park, seeking a balance between retaining the historic character and key elements with park enhancements for everyday vitality and user experience.

Key guidance from the feedback received during the Vision Plan process was applied to the updated design concept:

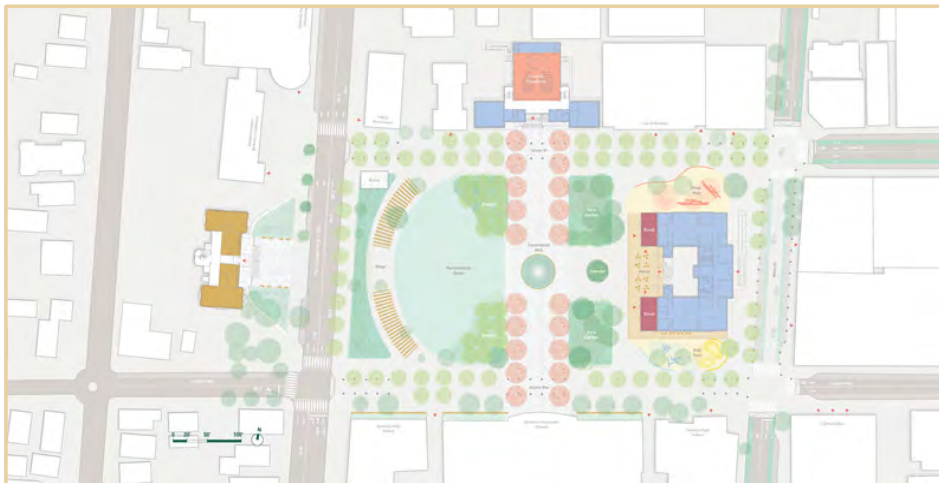
- ➔ Avoid introducing too much new hardscaping and retain as much green space and softscape as possible.
- ➔ Avoid removing existing trees if possible, especially mature trees that help create the iconic canopy and support biodiversity
- ➔ Keep Allston Way open for vehicle circulation as a key east-west connection through Berkeley



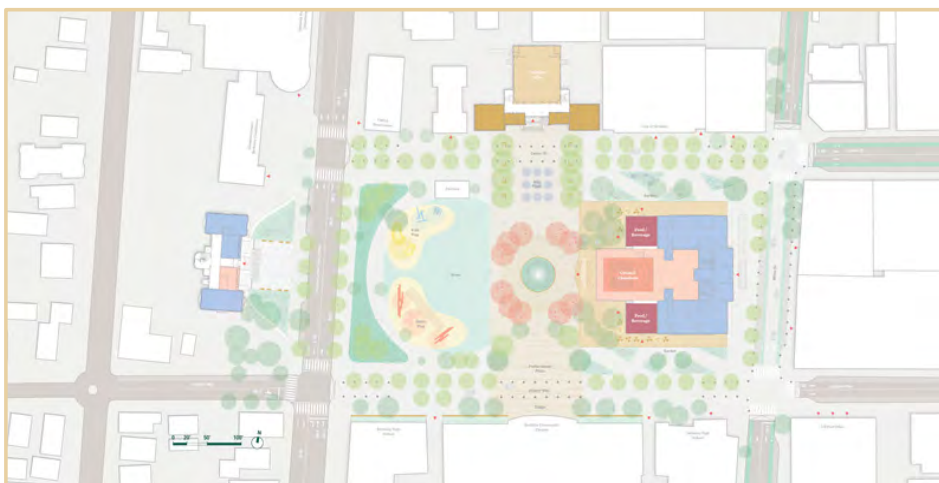
A



B



C

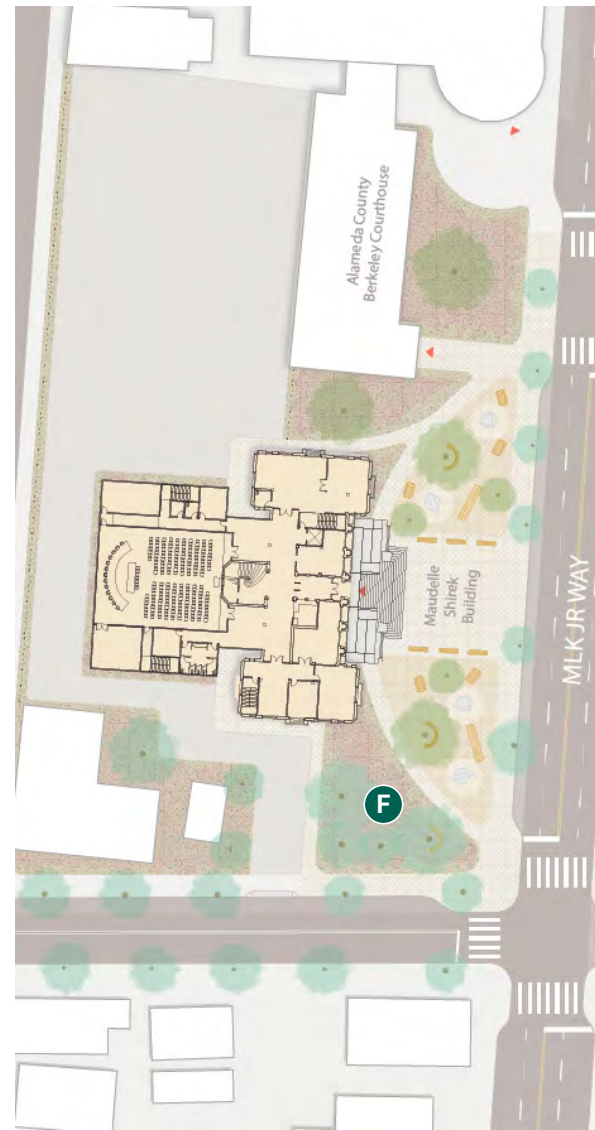


 2019/2020 Vision Plan Alternative Site Plans

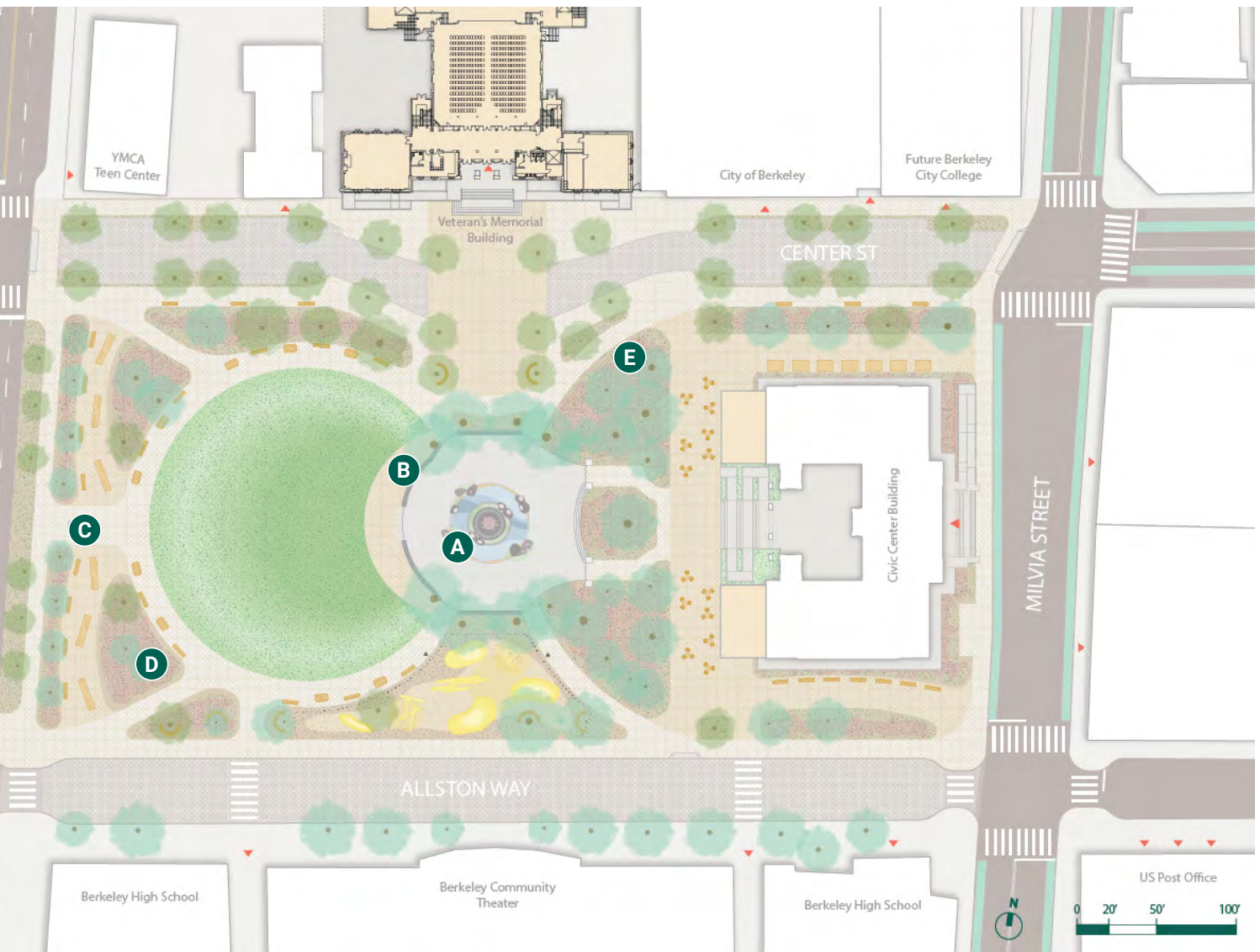
# Monuments and Memorials

The emerging design concept proposes keeping the following monuments and memorials in their current locations:

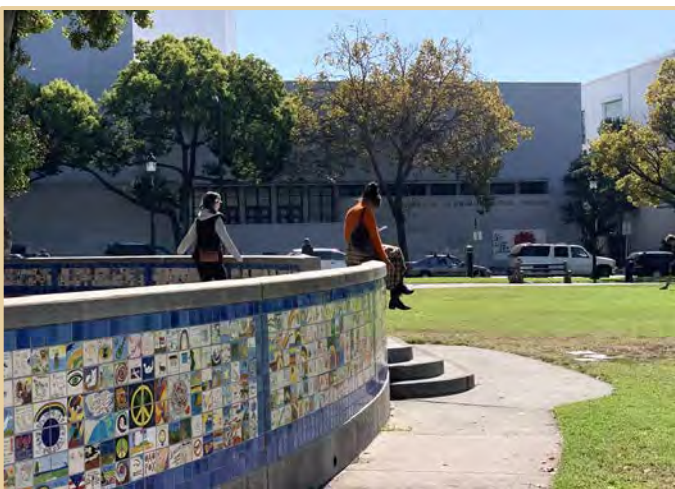
- A Turtle Island Monument**  
A proposed indigenous monument that will restore the center of the park and reintroduce water to the fountain.
- B Peace Wall**  
Perimeter wall at fountain terrace, with mosaic of individually decorated tiles, rebuilt in 1988.
- C Existing Flag Pole**  
One of the first elements of the park. It was relocated to its current position in 2006.
- D Strawberry Tree Memorial**  
Two trees and a plaque were placed to honor Irish students who died in a nearby balcony collapse.
- E Peace Marker**  
A small marker was placed here as part of the Peace Pole Project, date unknown.
- F Old City Hall Markers**  
This area has a few ground marking plaques. A proposed sculpture is also to be installed in this area.



**Turtle Island Monument, MLK Jr Civic Center Park (early concept rendering, PGAdesign)**



**Site Plan with Monuments and Memorials**



**Peace Wall, MLK Jr Civic Center Park**



**Flag Pole, MLK Jr Civic Center Park**

# 2

## Improve pedestrian safety and usability of paths

In order to better connect the park to its surrounding context and invite more pedestrian activity, the design concept shows a number of treatments to **increase safety and enhance the pedestrian experience.**

Key elements of these treatments may include:

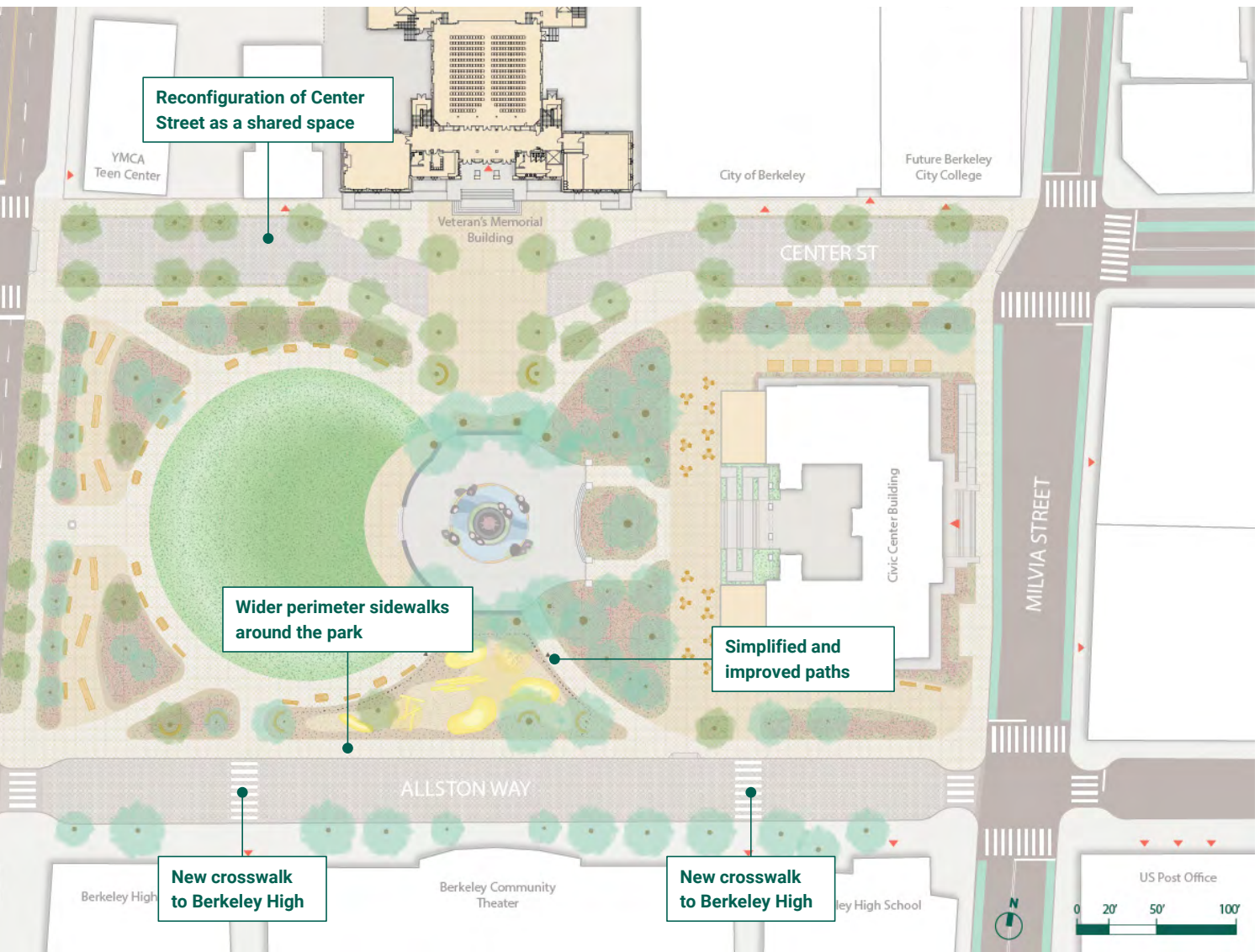
- > **pedestrian bulb-outs at intersections** on MLK Jr Way,
- > **new crosswalks** between Berkeley High School and the Park at Allston Way
- > **a new flush-surface, shared street** on Center Street.

These proposals and other traffic calming approaches, such as raised pedestrian crosswalks or tables on MLK Jr Way at Center and Allston, will be considered in an area-wide traffic study recommended by this report.

Another pivotal change is the **realignment of the park path network, elimination of the secondary interior paths, and widening of the perimeter sidewalks** to allow for a more comfortable walking experience.



 Funnycross, Madrid



**Site Plan with Pedestrian Improvements**



**Inviting and wider paths**

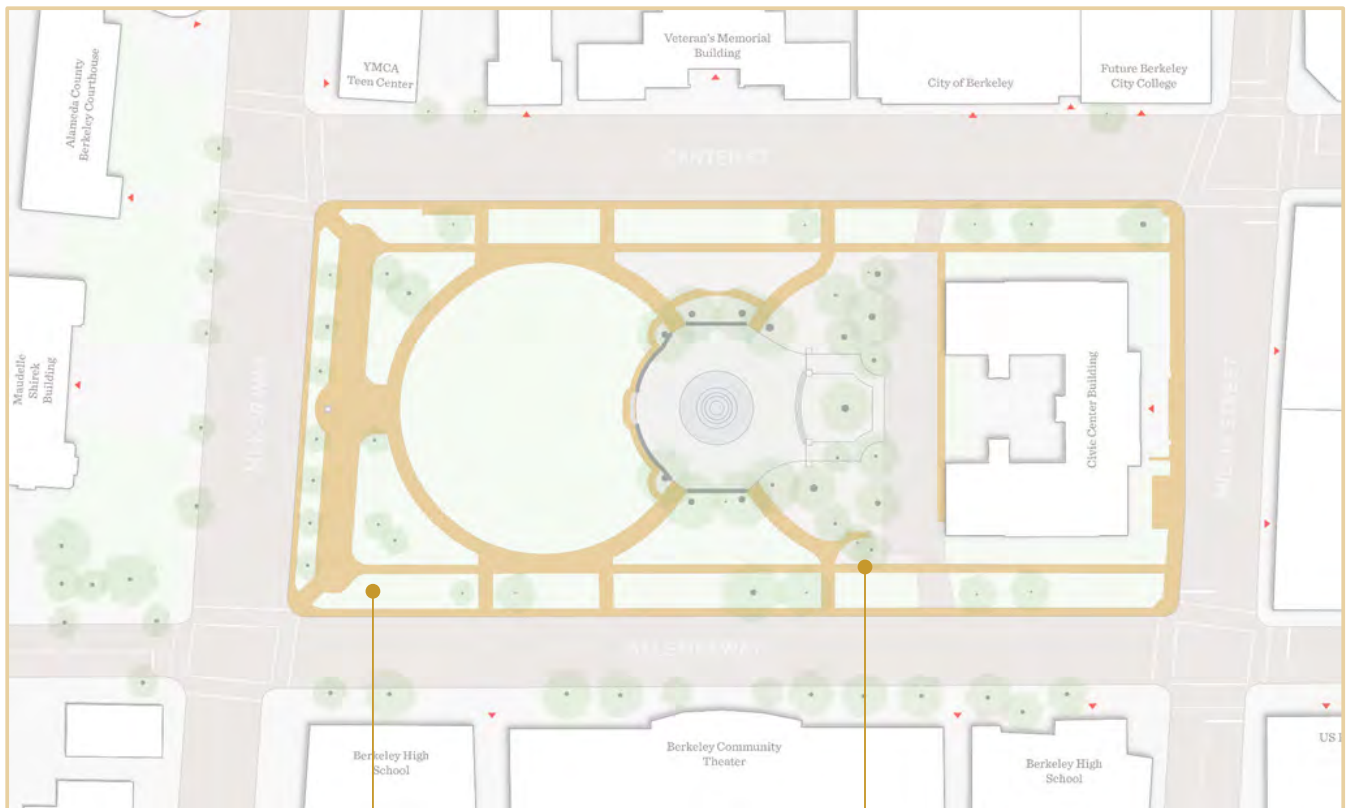
**HtO Park, Toronto**



**Pedestrian priority shared street**

**Clematis Street, West Palm Beach**

## Design Concept - MLK Jr Civic Center Park & Surrounding Streets



Small open spaces left between path divisions

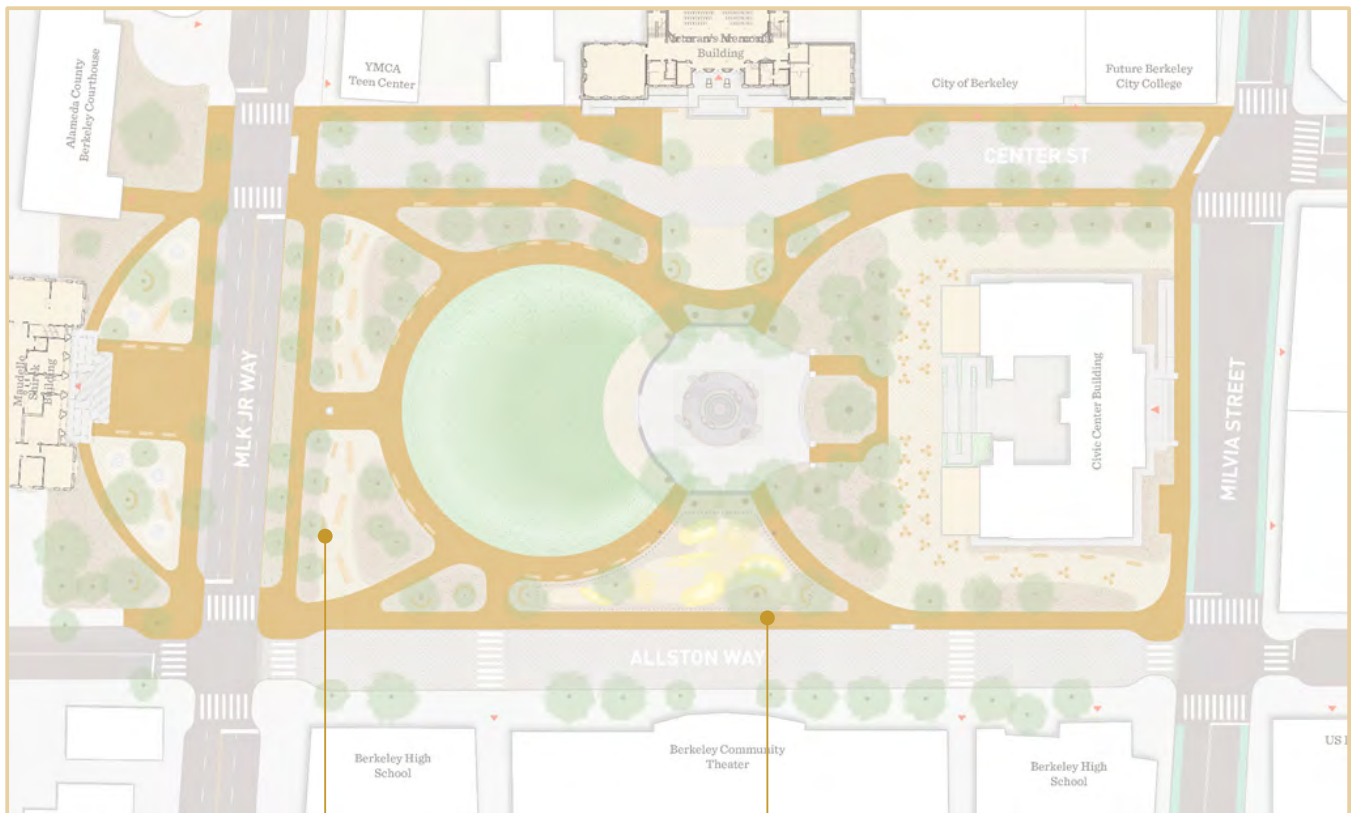
Parallel network of narrow perimeter paths

## Existing Path System

The existing path system is notably defined by the narrow perimeter sidewalk and redundant parallel path running nearby. While the original intent was to encourage more people to walk within the park, both sets of narrow paths end up providing a substandard pedestrian experience. Additionally, this layout carves the park into a multitude of small spaces that are harder to occupy and program.



MLK Jr Civic Center Park, Present



**Consolidated program areas between fewer paths**

**Wider sidewalks around the perimeter of MLK Jr Civic Center Park**

## Proposed Path System

The proposed path network eliminates redundant internal parallel paths while widening both the perimeter sidewalk and the remaining internal pathways. This provides a better pedestrian experience while creating larger program areas between the paths. It also better accommodates furnishings for pop-up programming.



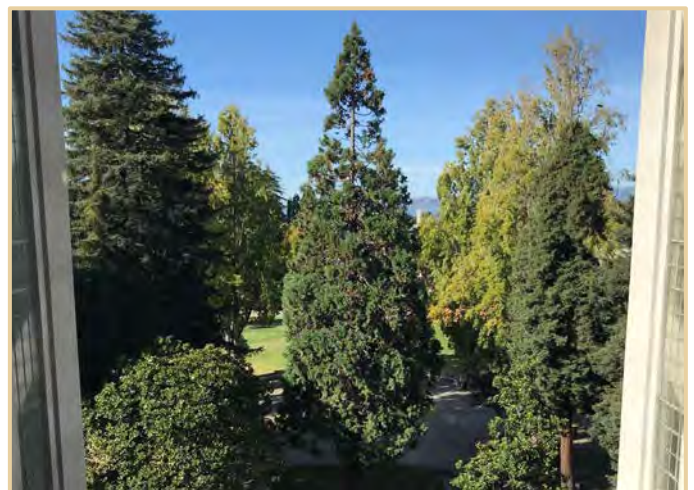
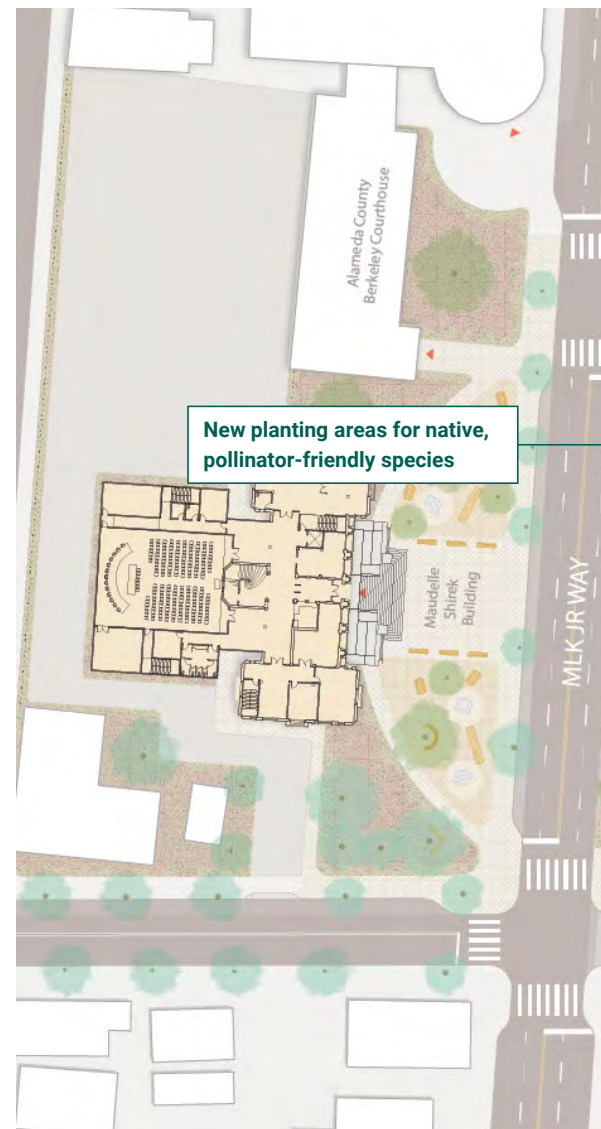
**Remiseparken, Copenhagen**

# 3

## Enhance natural features, promote biodiversity and green design

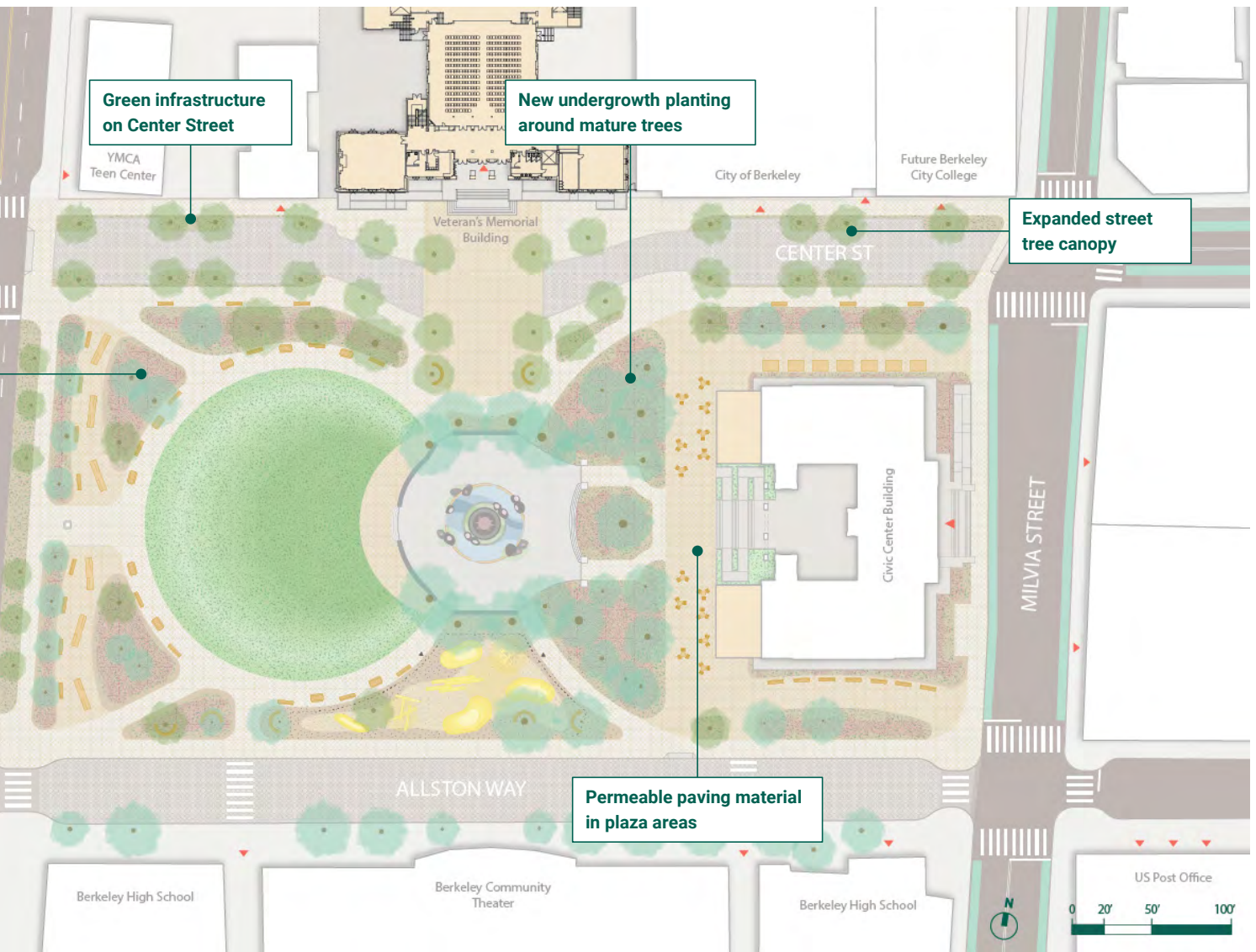
During the 2022/23 Design Concept public engagement process, participants were very clear about **prioritizing nature** in the MLK Jr Civic Center Park.

The design concept incorporates this commitment to nature in multiple ways, including the retention of almost all existing mature trees and a **“Green” Center Street** that features **stormwater infrastructure and bioswales**. Woven throughout the park between pathways and the more active open green and plaza areas are enhanced plantings that introduce **more pollinator-friendly, native, and less water-intensive softscape to the park**, adding color and habitat while protecting the roots of the trees they surround from heavy foot-traffic and over-watering.



Existing Giant Sequoia and other mature trees, Civic Center Park





**Site Plan with improved plantings & green infrastructure**



**Bioswales and permeable paving for stormwater runoff**

**SW 12th Avenue, Portland, OR**



**Pollinator-friendly, native plantings**

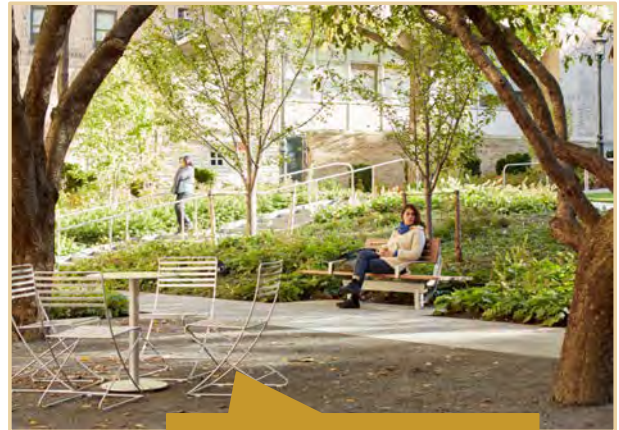
**California Native Plant Society**

# Landscape and Planting Palette

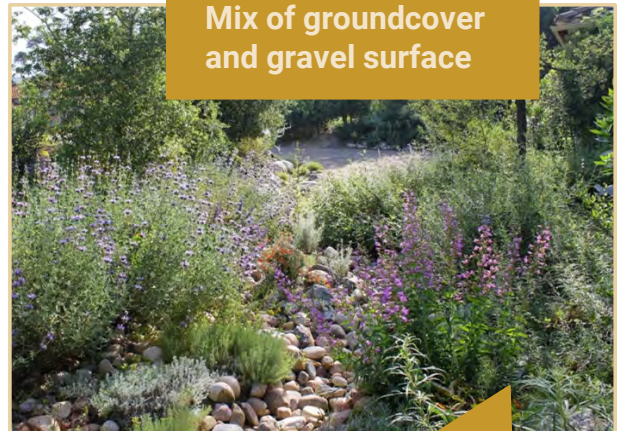
While the mature tree canopy is an irreplaceable asset for the Park that will be retained in the design concept, other existing softscape and planting areas leave room for improvement.

The design concept proposes a series of planting areas that ring the main open space, enhance the existing mature tree root zones, and help create a strong buffer along MLK Jr Way.

These planting areas will balance spaces for nature with quiet spaces for people, mixing a variety of species and programs - from quiet seating under mature trees to pollinator gardens to bioswales managing stormwater.



Mix of groundcover and gravel surface



Native, pollinator, friendly species





New undergrowth to protect mature trees



Expanded street tree canopy



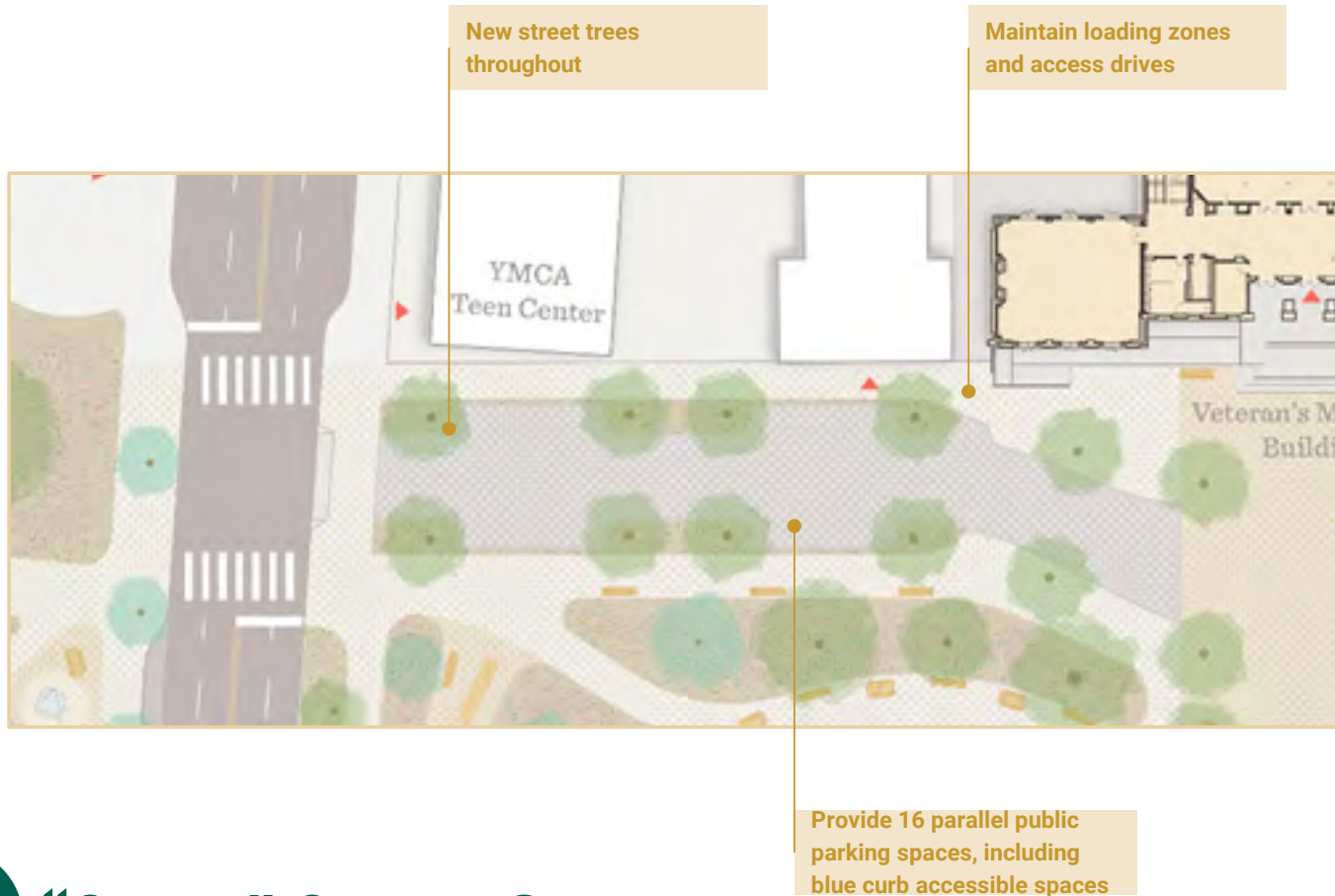
Green infrastructure for stormwater management



Permeable paving areas



## Design Concept - MLK Jr Civic Center Park & Surrounding Streets



# B “Green” Center Street

A space for all modes of transportation that prioritizes pedestrians and landscaping, aligned with the City’s Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan. An area-wide traffic study including the redesigned Center Street is recommended by this report.



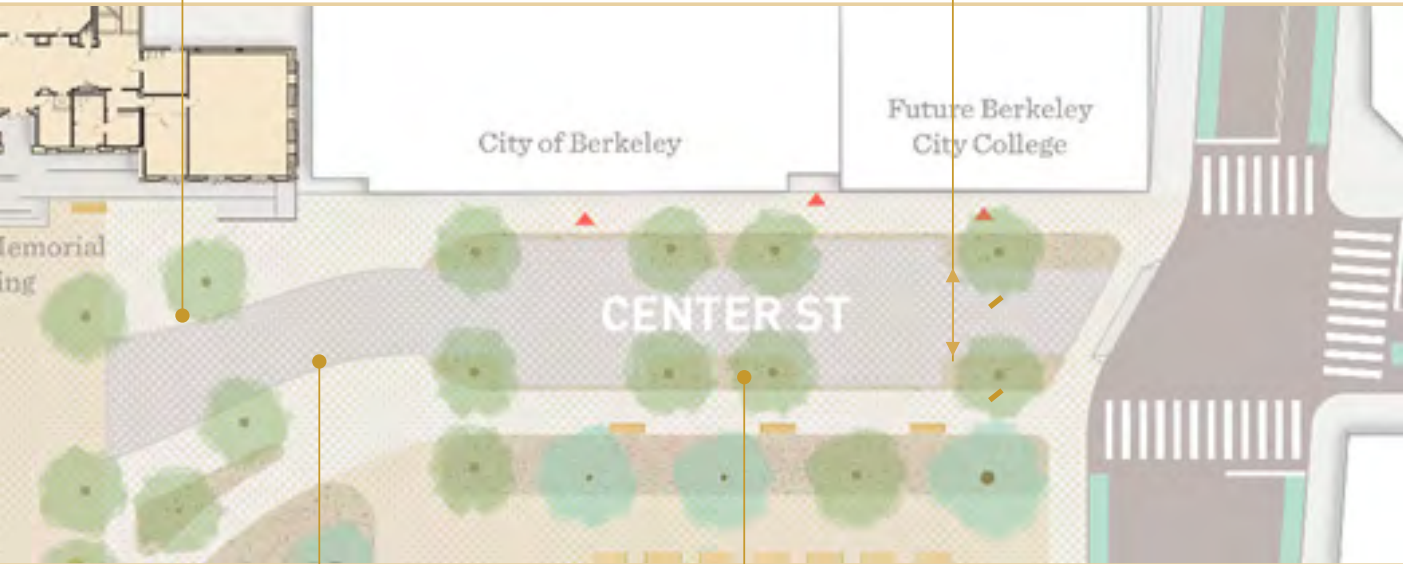
Bell Street Park, Seattle



Bell Street Park, Seattle

Realignment to create plaza space in front of Veterans Memorial Building

Maintain 26' clear for emergency access



Flush, curbless transition from street to sidewalk

Green infrastructure and bioswales for stormwater management and greening



Occidental Ave, Seattle



Woonerf, Odense

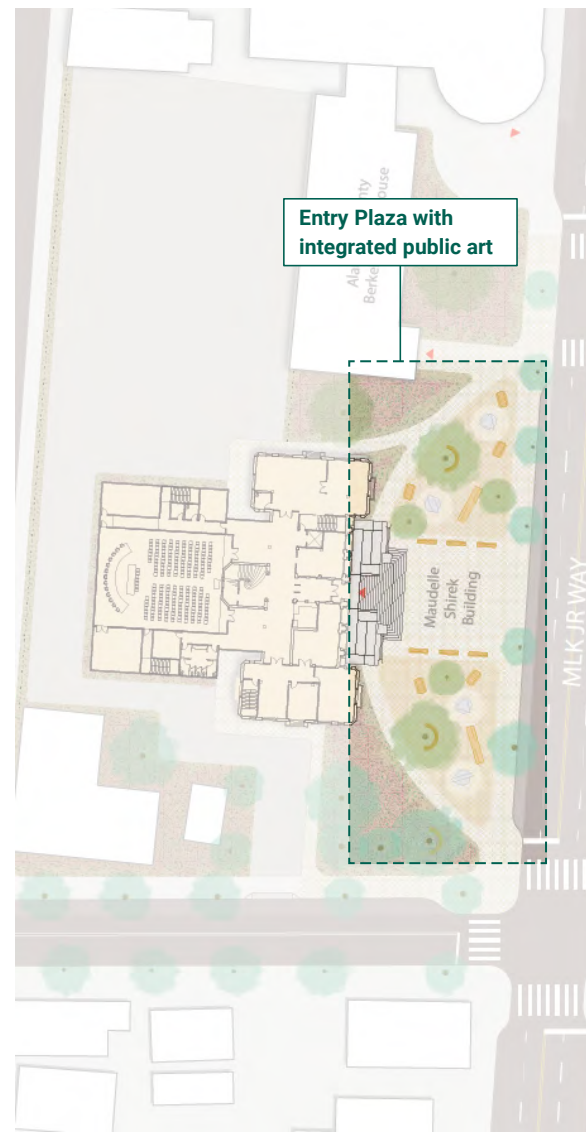
# 4

## Expand invitations for a variety of everyday uses

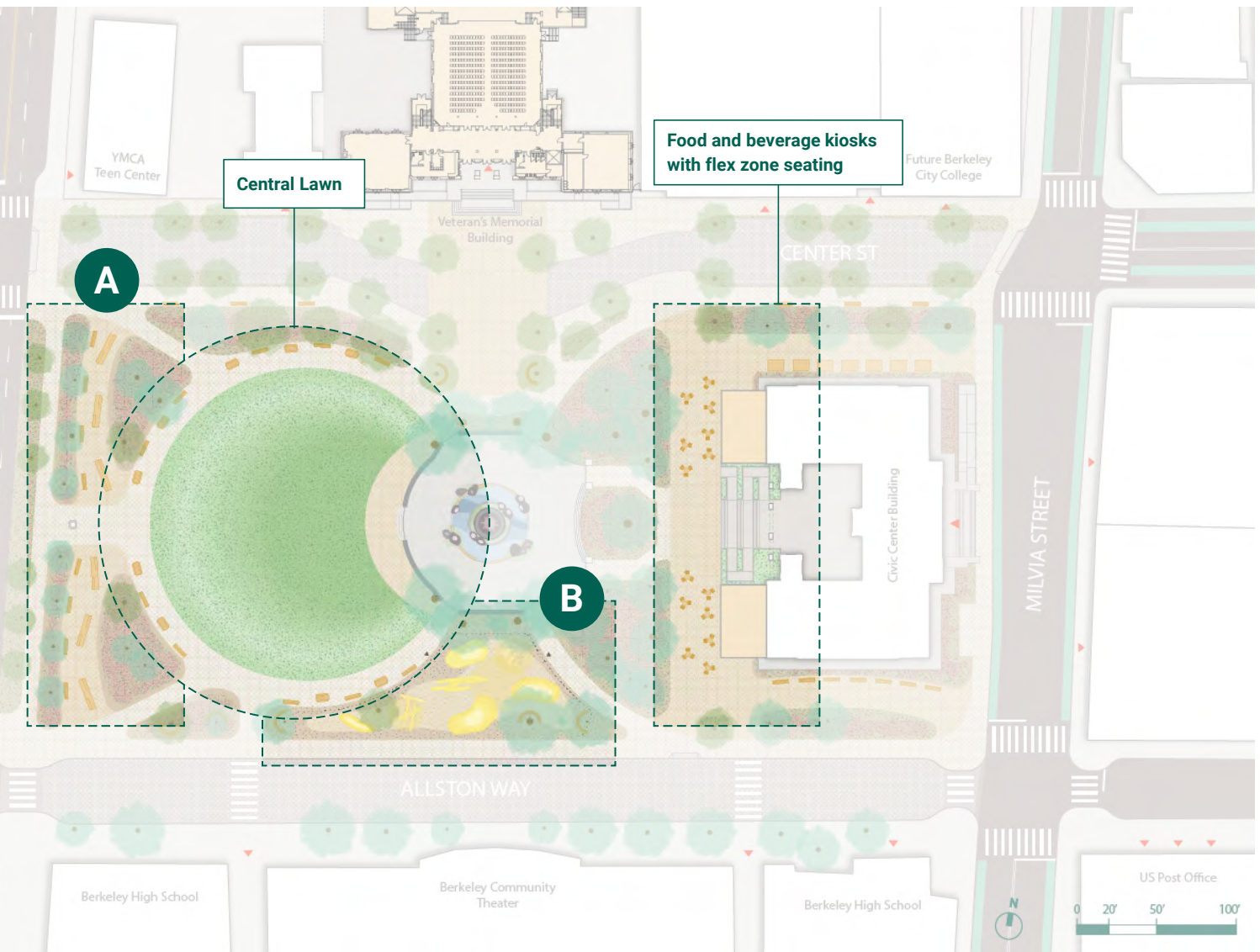
While the existing park is well-activated a few times a year for large events and festivals, it lacks furnishings and sufficient programs to enliven it on a daily basis.

Through upgrading existing park activity areas like the skate spot and lawn, and introducing new programs like food and beverage and a multi-age play area, the design concept expands the everyday potential of the space.

Along with these key program areas, upgrading and adding seating and lighting will make the park a safer and more inviting space.



 Berggruen Museum, Berlin



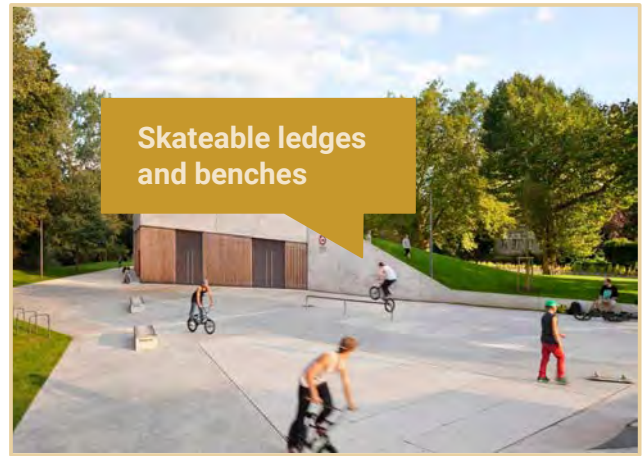
Site Plan with improvements for everyday uses



Jubilee Gardens, London



The Italian Gardens Cafe, London



■ Youth Centre, Oberhausen, Germany



■ Skate Plaza, Torroella, Spain



## Skate Spot

A plaza area with skateable features and furnishings mixed with general seating and plantings.





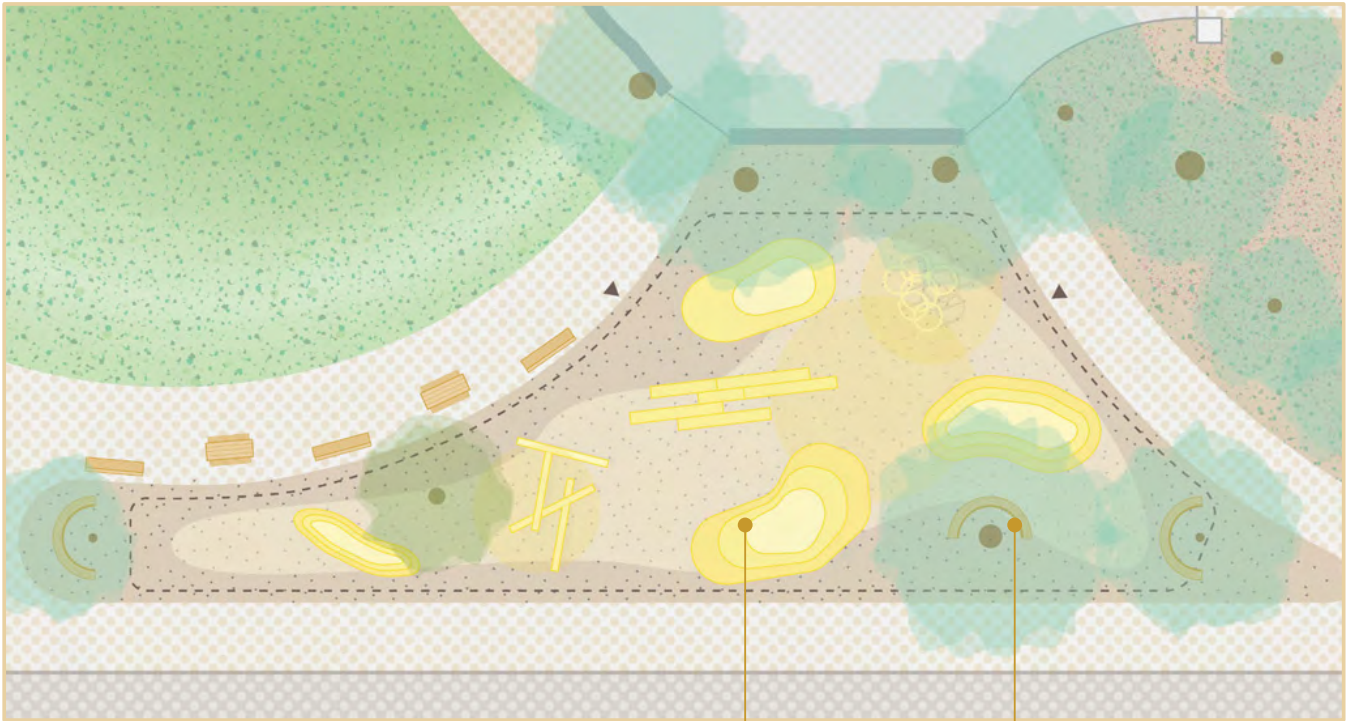
Nature-based play

Tunnel Tops Park, San Francisco



Dynamic play elements

Osdorp Oever, Amsterdam



**B**

**Playground**

A natural play area for children mixed with landscaping and trees.

Nature-inspired play features

New benches to protect tree root zones

# Seating and Furnishings

One of the key components of the design concept is the desire to expand invitations for people to use and stay in the Park by increasing the amount, variety, and quality of furnishings available.

Fixed benches in activity areas, cafe seating near new food and beverage options, and possibly larger signature seating fixtures will create space for a variety of users - from farmer's market attendees to Berkeley High students on their lunch break. Additionally, well-designed benches can be placed under mature trees to protect the roots while providing a quiet place of repose.

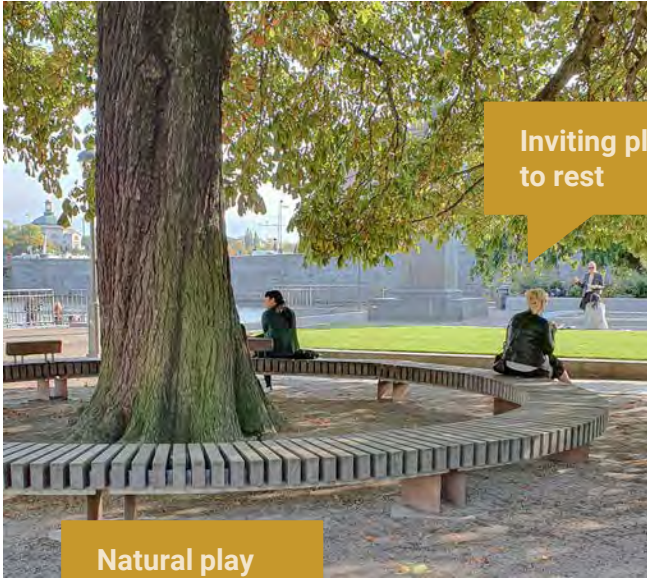
Beyond seating, other key opportunities to improve the level of comfort and safety for park users include upgrading lighting, signage, art installations, and trash receptacles. Lighting is to be carefully located and designed to provide safe pathways and gathering areas while reducing impact on adjacent neighborhoods and complying with dark-sky requirements.



Play spaces for all ages



Comfortable microclimates



Inviting places to rest

Natural play spaces



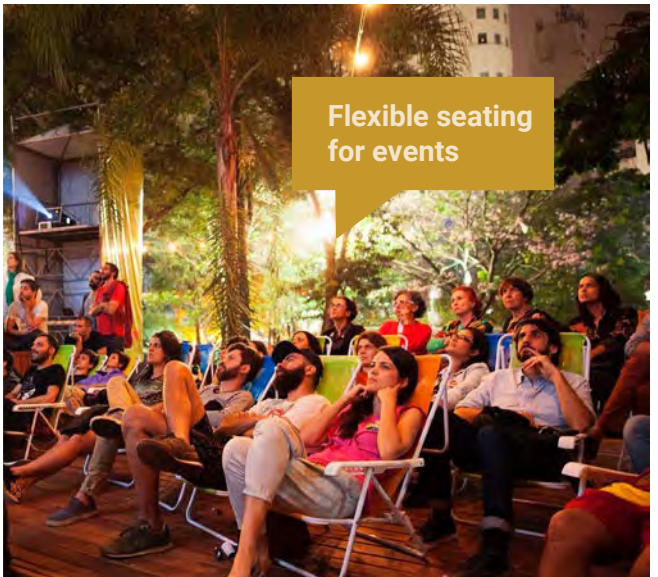
Well-lit pathways



Cafe seating



Flexible seating for events



# 5

## Enhance the potential of the park to host weekly and special events

Along with the everyday experience, the Park also needs to accommodate a variety of weekly and special events.

The design concept focuses on a few key areas that are able to **flex between everyday activity and the special gatherings** that happen at Civic Center, from outdoor music performances to craft fairs.

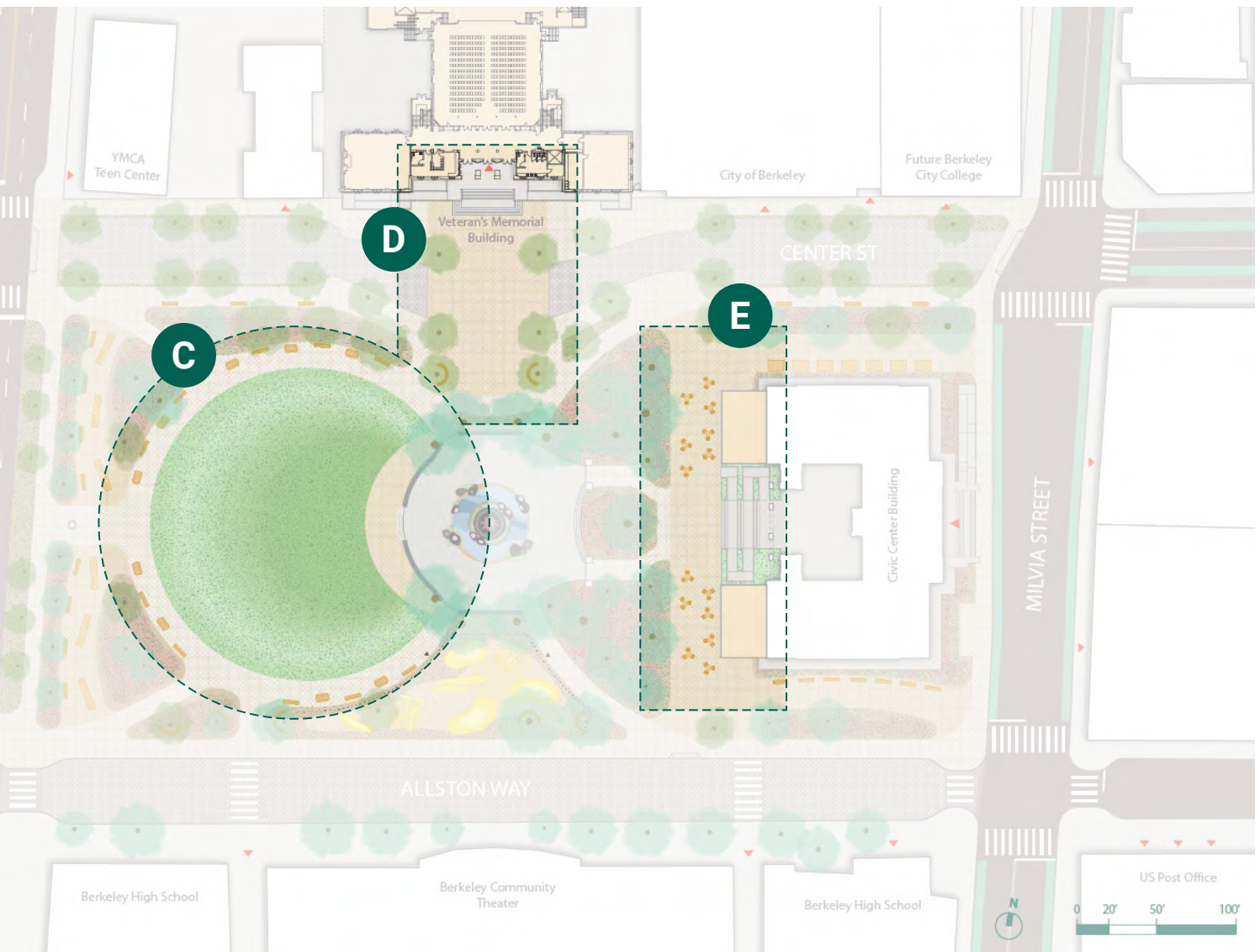
There is also an opportunity to **rethink the relationship between the farmer's market and the Park**, and create a more integrated experience between the two.



Central green for events and performances



MFA Concerts in the Courtyard, Boston



**Site Plan with improvements for special events**

Flexible space for markets and fairs

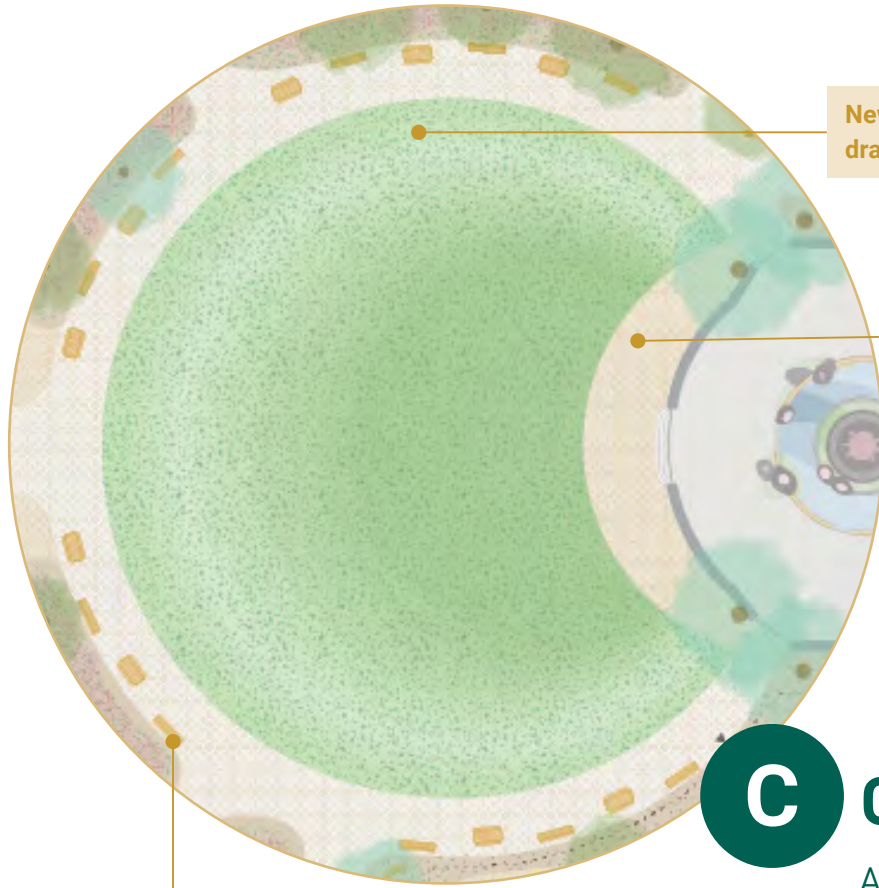


**La Placita, Mission, San Francisco**

Seating for everyday social gatherings



**Grand Park, Los Angeles**



Newly graded lawn to improve drainage and seating configuration

Performance area with carefully designed sound & light infrastructure to minimize impact on neighborhood

New seating and space for pop-up activation around perimeter paths

## C Central Lawn

A flexible, open green space for daily recreation and public gatherings.



Expansive green for everyday and special events

Queens Park, Toronto



Seating along path edges

Brunnsparcken, Gothenburg

Space for markets and commerce



Bell Street Park, Seattle

Performance areas

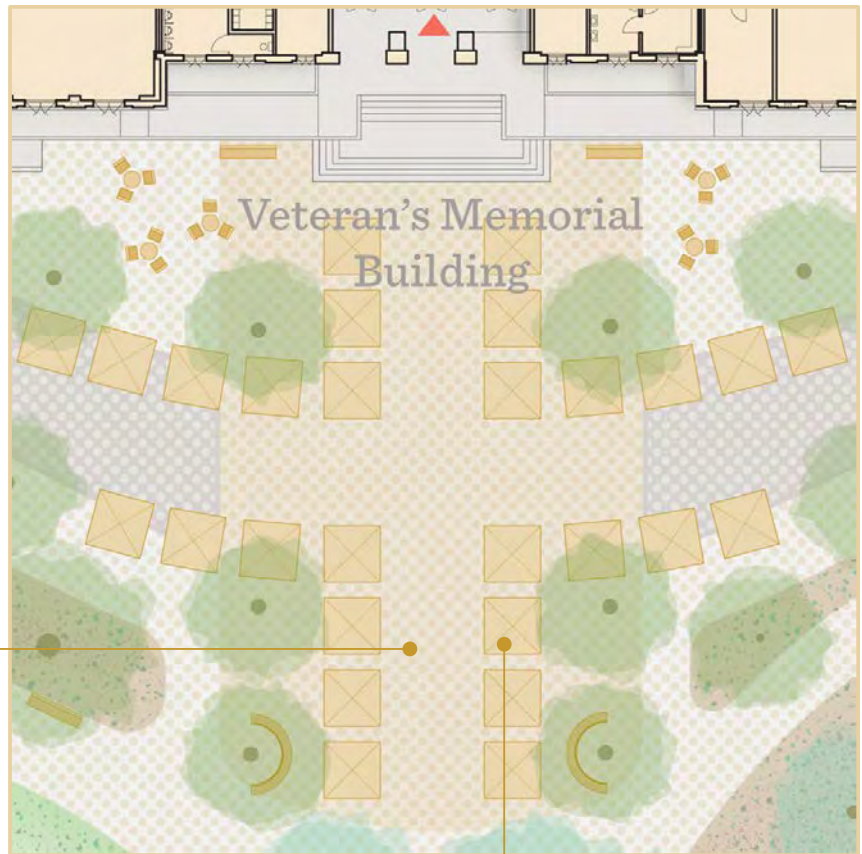


The Porch at 30th, Philadelphia

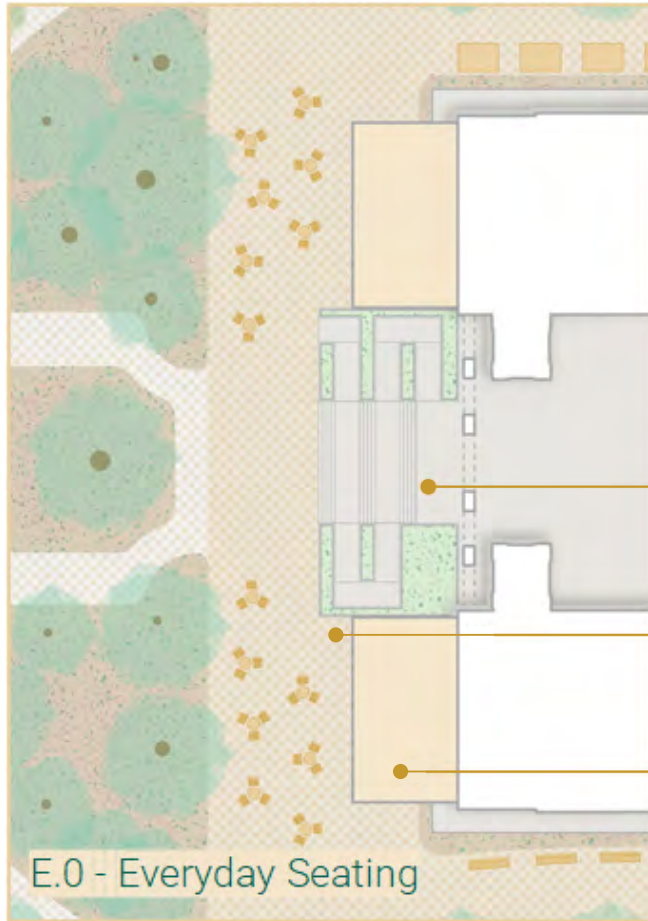
# D Arts and Market Plaza

A dignified accessible entrance to the Veterans Memorial Building that integrates Center Street and the park.

Permeable paving surface



Space to allow the farmer's market to expand into the park



## Flex Zone

Replace existing parking lot with a space for food, beverage, and outdoor seating that can flexibly accommodate events, performances, deliveries, and support functions for the park.

New open back stair and entrance to 2180 Milvia

Permeable, drivable paving treatment to accommodate a variety of uses

New food and beverage kiosks at rear of building

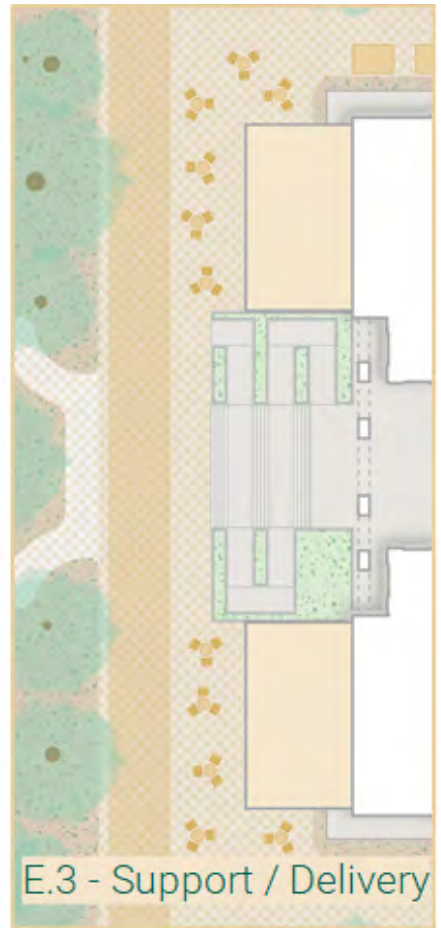
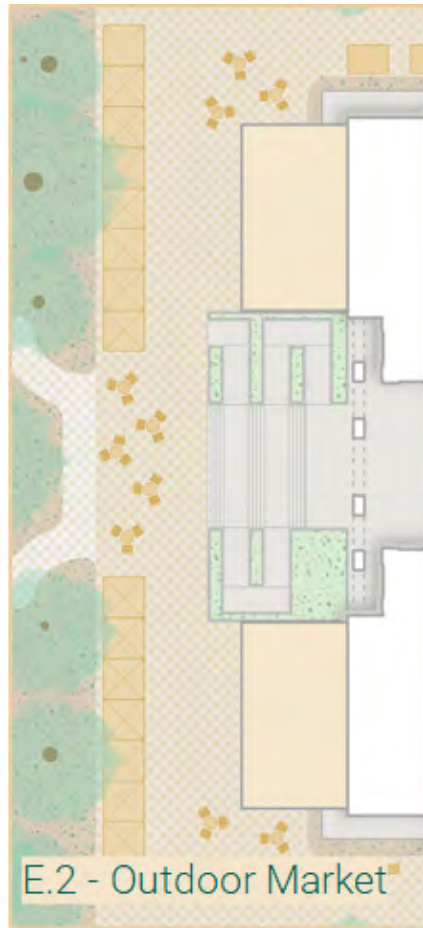
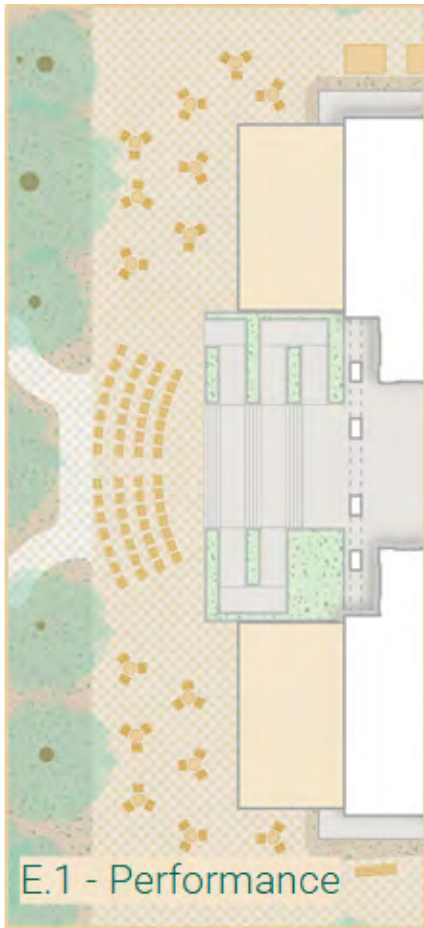


Lower Sproul Plaza, Berkeley



Monash University, Melbourne





Lincoln Center, New York



Flower Market, Barcelona

# 6

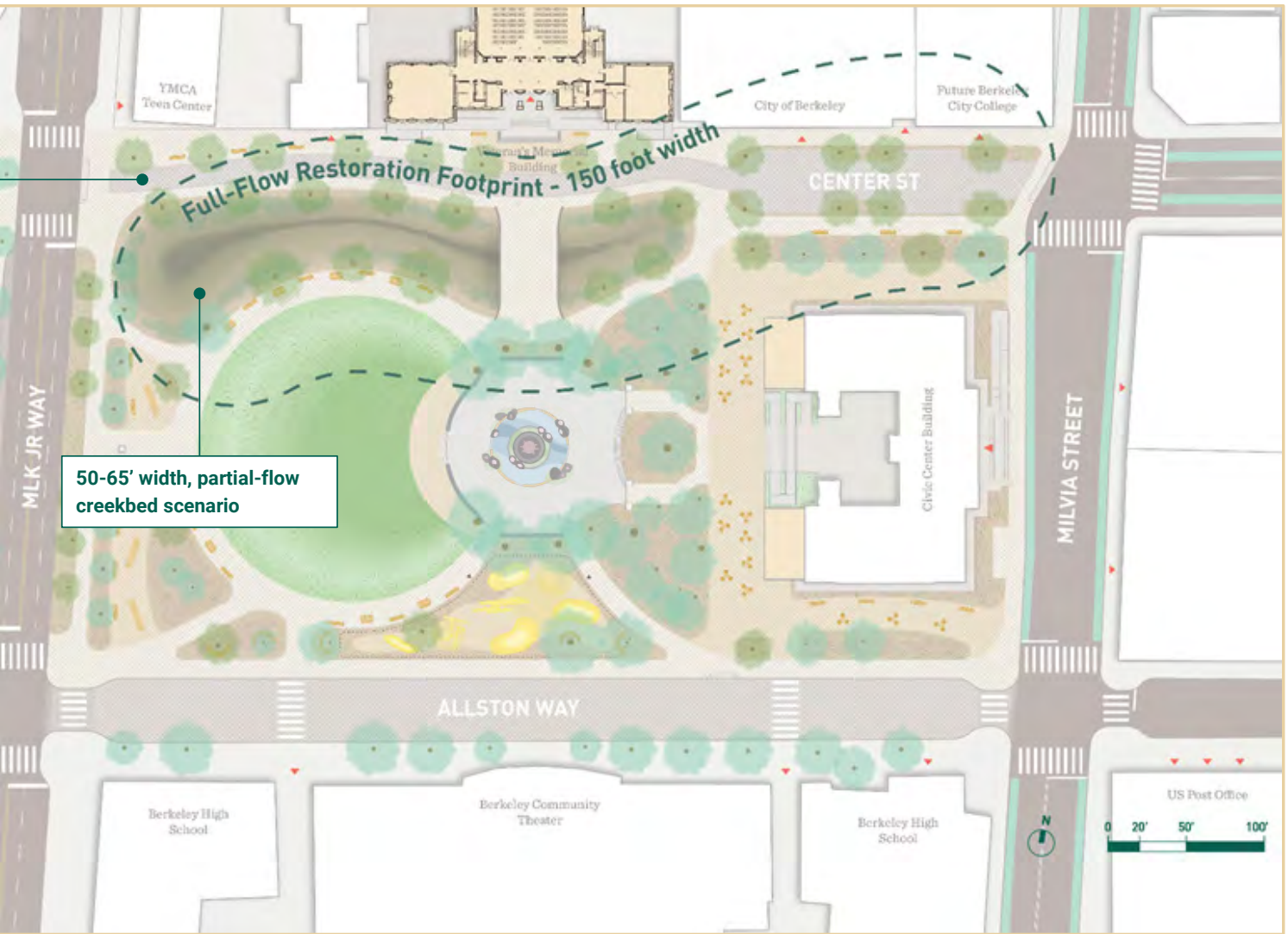
## Study feasibility and tradeoffs of daylighting Strawberry Creek

While public engagement revealed a consistent desire to daylight Strawberry Creek, it also brought up concerns of feasibility, cost, maintenance, and spatial constraints.

This alternate design concept illustrates **a partial-flow daylighting scenario** that minimizes disruption to the overall park layout and key monuments, while reducing Center St to a minimum-required driving lane for emergency and service access. Deliveries and drop-off to the Veterans Memorial Building would be impacted, and need further study. The size of the Arts & Market Plaza has been reduced to a bridge spanning the daylit creek, and the farmer's market would need to be relocated to another site. Extending the daylit creek into the block west of Martin Luther King Jr Way was also mentioned by some in the community, and needs further study.



Strawberry Creek, Berkeley



Site Plan with partial flow daylit Strawberry Creek



Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt, Oakland



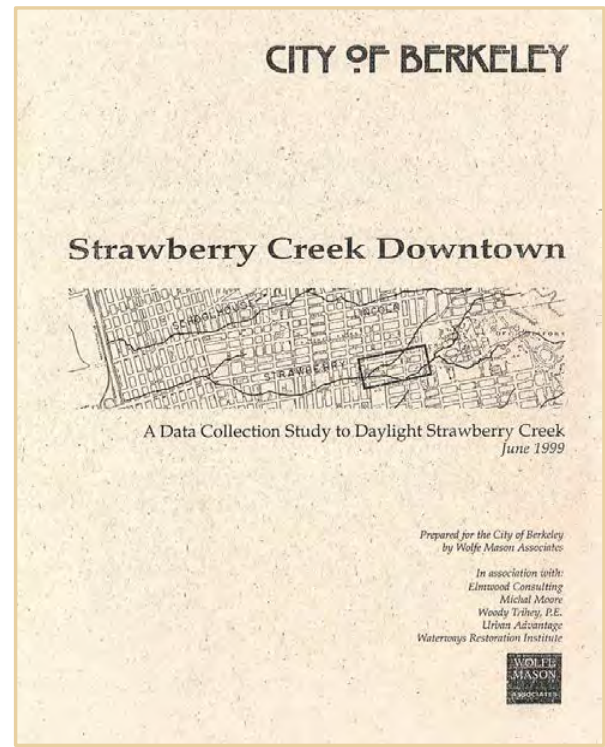
Los Angeles State Historic Park, LA

# Daylighting Considerations

A 1999 Creek Study prepared by Wolf Mason included investigation of various daylighting scenarios for Strawberry Creek in Downtown Berkeley, including a partial flow scenario at MLK Jr Civic Center Park. Key takeaways from the report and its implications on the Park are:

- ➔ The existing culvert is estimated to be roughly 18' under the surface of the park, sloping down to the west. Because of this depth, a full restoration of a natural creek bed would require over 150' of width, which is considered infeasible.
- ➔ Partial-flow scenarios require retaining the existing culvert and introducing a flow control structure somewhere downstream of the BART line, most likely near the northeast corner of Civic Center Park.

Further study will be required to ultimately determine feasibility for daylighting the creek, including studies of the creek hydrology, traffic impacts, emergency access and public use.



■ Wolfe Mason Report Cover, 1999

Further community outreach is needed to stakeholders such as the Ecology Center, festival operators, Berkeley High School, Berkeley City College, Civic Arts groups, the YMCA Teen Center, and other nearby property owners.

Once a specific project is identified, additional studies will be needed to determine impact and comply with the CEQA process. A strategy for long-term maintenance and management will need to be proposed.

While this process continues, some park upgrades may be completed outside of the area of impact of the creek.



**Existing Strawberry Creek culvert location in Downtown Berkeley**  
*(based on Wolfe Mason Study From 1999)*



# 5.3 Maudelle Shirek Building

### 5.3

# Maudelle Shirek Building- Seat of Berkeley's Democracy

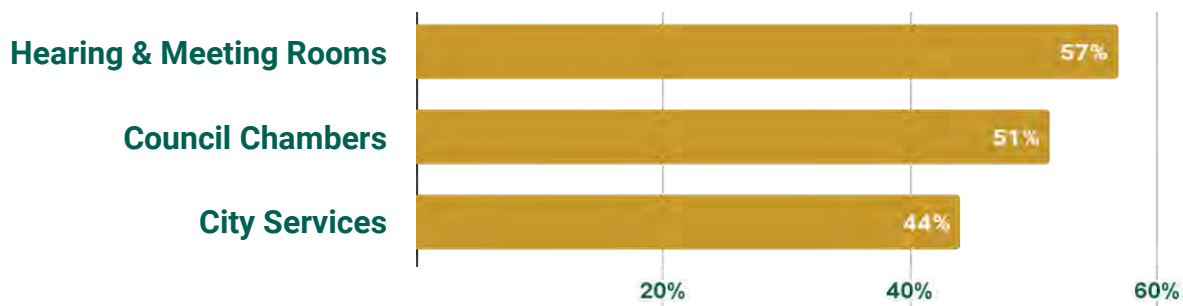
As the historic seat of government in Berkeley, this project proposes returning city functions back to the Maudelle Shirek Building. Input from public engagement scored Hearing & Meeting Rooms, Council Chambers, and public-facing city services as priority uses for the building.

Returning these functions to the heart of Berkeley's Civic Center will bring citizens to the area throughout the day and into the evening to attend meetings, hearings, and gatherings.

In order to return the highest and best use to this site, the Maudelle Shirek Building required additions, modern amenities, seismic upgrades, and other repairs.

**"Active use of meeting rooms for organizing events and activism, attending City Council meetings and public meetings."**

**"Its use should honor the memory of Maudelle Shirek with progressive social action, women's leadership, and racial justice."**







*View to Maudelle Shirek Building from roof of Veterans Memorial Building*

# Additions & Improvements

## Main Entry

The main entry to the Maudelle Shirek Building is up an inaccessible flight of stairs. This plan proposes an improved plaza and universally accessible ramps leading up to the main entry on the first floor. The ramps curve from the two crossings at Martin Luther King Jr Way towards the central entry terrace, creating a gracious way for all to access the building through the same main entry.



*Conceptual Ramp Approach*

## Rear Addition

The design concept includes an addition at the rear of the building, creating space for a modern and appropriately sized multi-purpose gathering room that can serve the community as a space for large public events and City Council meetings.



*Existing Rear Addition*

The addition replaces the ahistorical rear additions, and is sited on the southern portion of the Public Service Building's controlled parking lot.

A study of the police and fire departments parking capacity and needs is required to confirm that they can be met on this site or nearby.





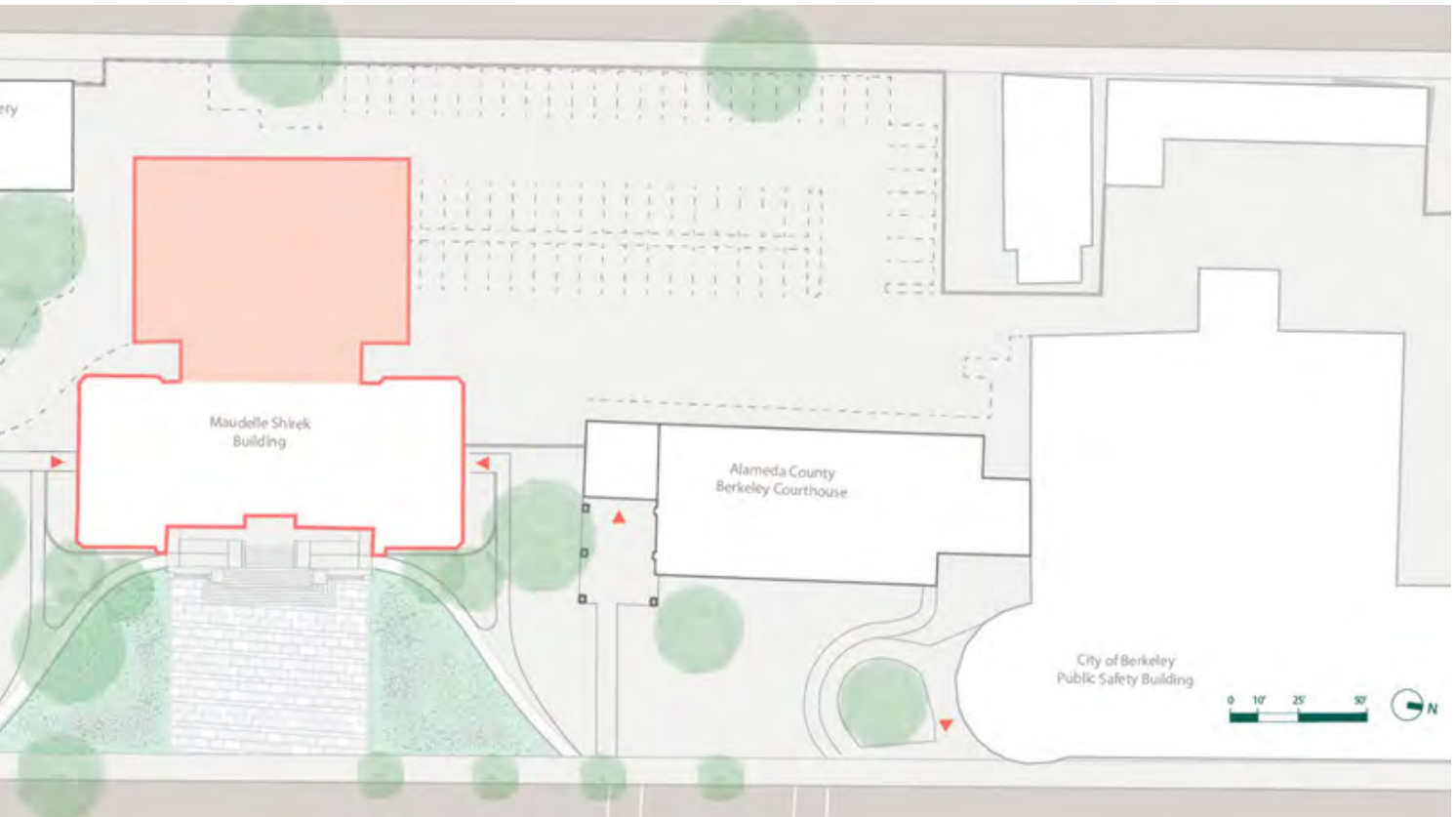
*Addition at the Exploratorium, San Francisco*



*St. Johns Library, Winnipeg, Canada*



*East Bay Performing Arts Center, Richmond*



**Site Plan - Proposed Addition Location**

## Seismic Improvements: Damage Control + to Immediate Occupancy

**Approach:** The City's Public Works Department recommends a seismic upgrade for the Maudelle Shirek Building to the level of Damage Control Plus (DC+) at the historic structure and the new addition be built to the Immediate Occupancy [IO] level.

At the DC+ level of seismic retrofit, the Maudelle Shirek Building would be occupiable weeks to months after a major seismic event. The addition, built at the IO level, could be re-opened days after a major seismic event.

**Discussion:** This combined DC+/IO structure will provide flexibility for City and public use of this asset now and in the future. After a major seismic event, the combined structure is likely to experience minimal damage. The IO addition should be designed to operate independently of the historic portion, so it can reopen quickly after inspections and minor repairs. The historic structure may need to remain closed pending further repairs, depending on the results of the inspection. With this level of improvement, the building can function

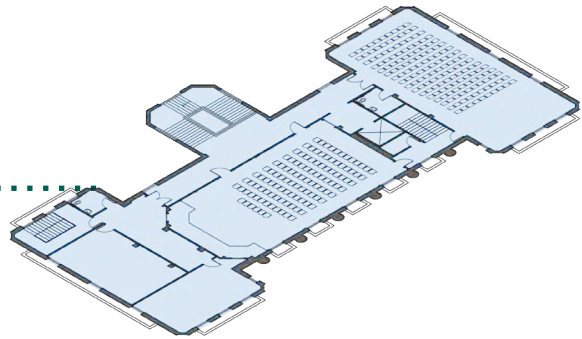
as an operations and service center in the event of natural disasters or other emergencies.

As part of the 2020 Vision Plan, the City investigated an IO solution that featured base isolators either at or below the ground level of the Maudelle Shirek Building. This approach represents a significant cost and potential impacts on usable space.

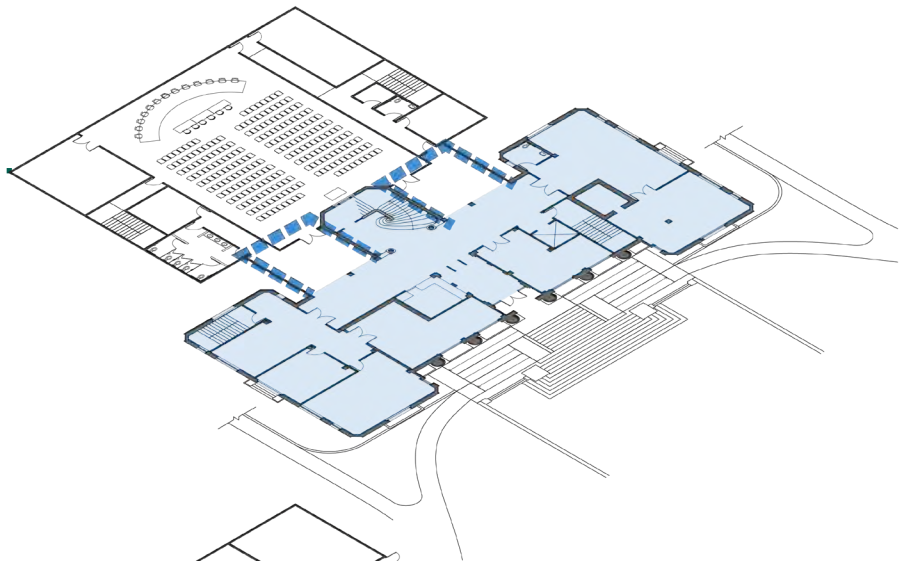
Tipping Structural Engineers developed a concept for achieving DC+ to near IO levels by addressing structural deficiencies related to lateral and shear strength through additions. This scheme would also involve strengthening individual beams and columns in shear, likely using fiber reinforced polymer sheets. Their study is documented in a report on the Civic Center buildings submitted to Council in August 2021.

Further refinement of this approach to minimize impact on historic finishes while optimizing performance and cost considerations will be required as part of the development of a specific design for the historic building and addition.

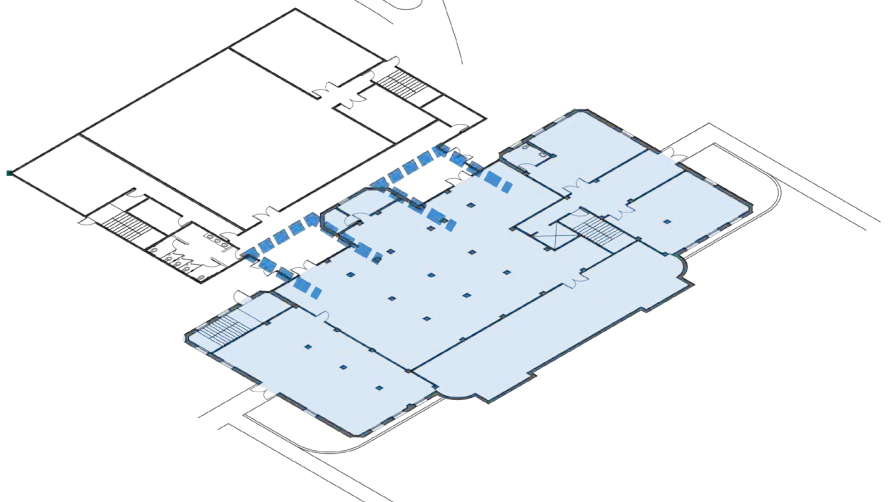
**SECOND FLOOR (6,500 SF)**



**FIRST FLOOR (14,400 SF)**



**GROUND FLOOR (16,350 SF)**



## Seismic Improvement Locations

## **Other Improvements**

Beyond the additions, a specific design will need to address other required improvements. These include addressing the mechanical, electrical, lighting and plumbing systems to bring them into compliance with current building code and City policy. The City of Berkeley is committed to converting buildings to be all-electric, including this historic structure. Relatedly, energy production through solar panels on the roof of the addition should be explored. A building assessment report was completed in 2021 by Allana Buick and Bers to identify needed improvements and repairs to the building envelope (enclosure), and their recommendations should be integrated into a future project. All of this work taken together results in a more sustainable and resilient building.

Along with the improved entrance, accessibility upgrades will be required throughout including: adjusting door widths and locations, clearing accessible

pathways, installing a modern elevator core, and modifying elements to meet accessible reach requirements.

Egress from the building does not comply with modern fire codes. Proper exit separations and paths will need to be added, as will additional stair cores and exits from the building for the increased occupancy.

An existing attic space could be upgraded to serve as storage space with improvements to the vertical circulation. This will require further study in a specific design phase.

All of these changes will need to be addressed while respecting the historic nature of the building, and meeting Secretary of the Interior standards for historic preservation. As a part of that effort, the beautiful historic finishes will need repairs and restoration, and non-historic elements will be replaced with modern, healthy and resilient materials.

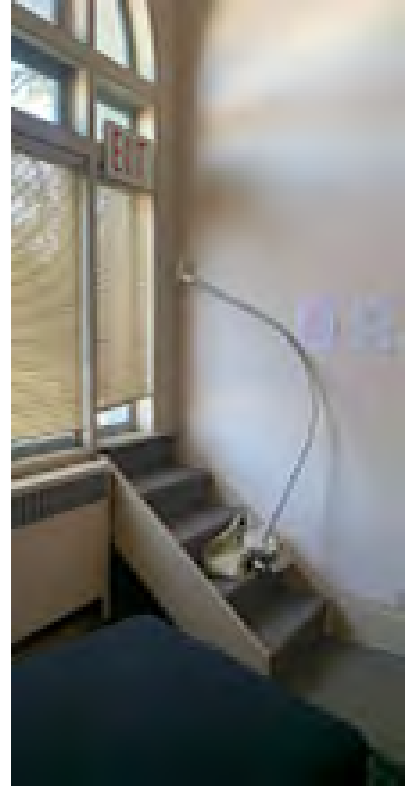
### Accessibility



### Finishes



### Egress/Safety



### System Upgrades



### Building Performance



"...upgrade to LEED standards, include solar panels...advanced MERV/HVAC...light filled with natural materials."

"...it was a pain to get to and move between rooms and floors"

"...accessibility through the front door is important."

# Space Use

## Meeting & Hearing Rooms

Between Council, Commissions and Boards, the City hosts over 350 public meetings every year. Currently City Council meetings are held at the BUSD board room on Addison Street, and most other meetings are held in various locations around Berkeley. Providing new meeting spaces in Civic Center will create a central building in the City of Berkeley that is a symbol of citizen involvement in governance.

Creation of a multi-purpose hearing room or meeting space similar in size to that of BUSD's Board Room will require an addition to the Maudelle Shirek Building, best located on the west side or behind the building.

As a two-story structure, this new addition could house the large multi-purpose hearing room with flexible seating for over 200, plus an expanded public lobby on the first floor. This level could also contain multiple support spaces for the hearing room - closed session meeting rooms, AV support, restrooms, storage, and more. Near the entry, two small meeting rooms can be used by City staff, commissions, and the public.

The historic meeting room on the second floor could be refurbished for smaller meetings of around 70 people. A proposed second small hearing room on the north wing could hold over 100 occupants and the south wing could be divided into two additional meeting rooms.



*Uppsala Town Hall, Sweden*

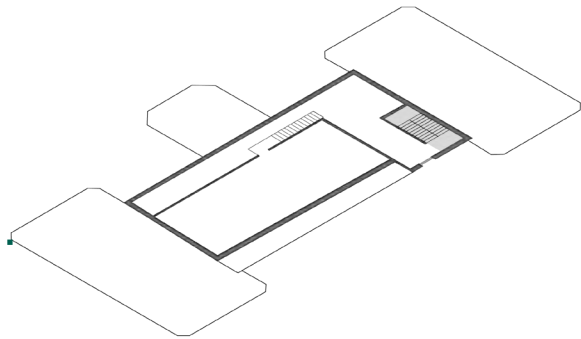
**51%**  
of respondents  
support returning  
Council  
Chambers



*Historic Hearing Room, Maudelle Shirek Building*

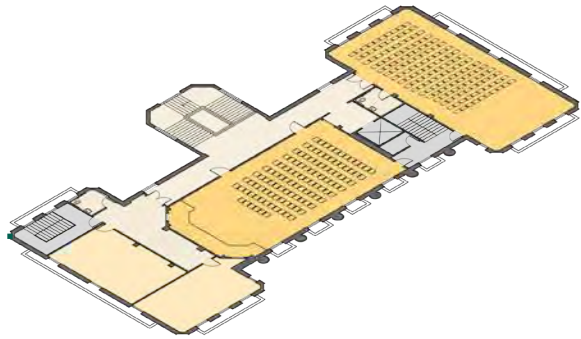


**ATTIC (2,500 SF)**



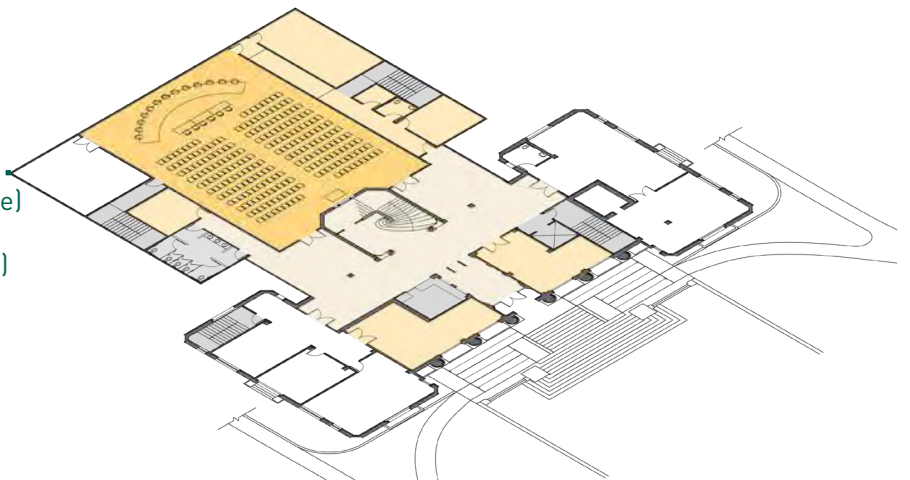
**SECOND FLOOR (6,500 SF)**

- Small Hearing Rooms (70-120 people)
- Large Meeting Rooms (20-30 people)



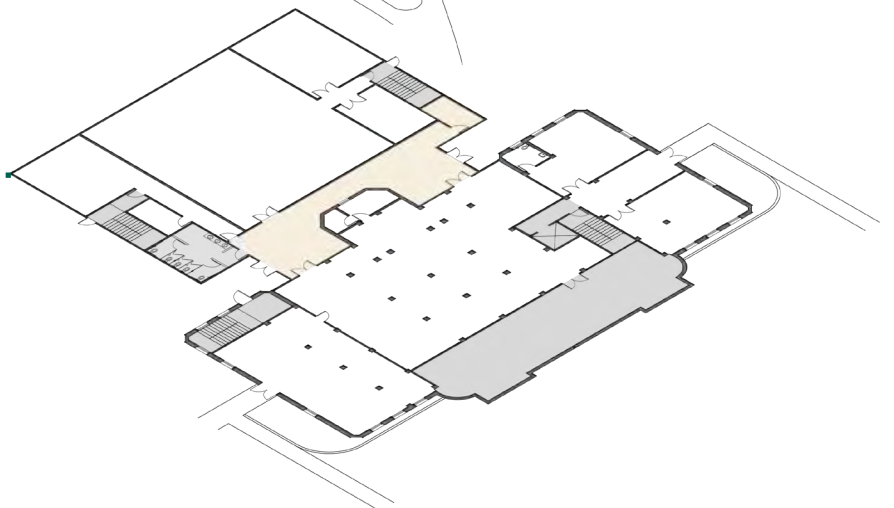
**FIRST FLOOR (14,400 SF)**

- Large Hearing Room (200-300 people)
- Council Support Spaces
- Small Meeting Rooms (10-20 people)



**GROUND FLOOR (16,350 SF)**

- Mechanical
- Vertical Circulation
- Restrooms



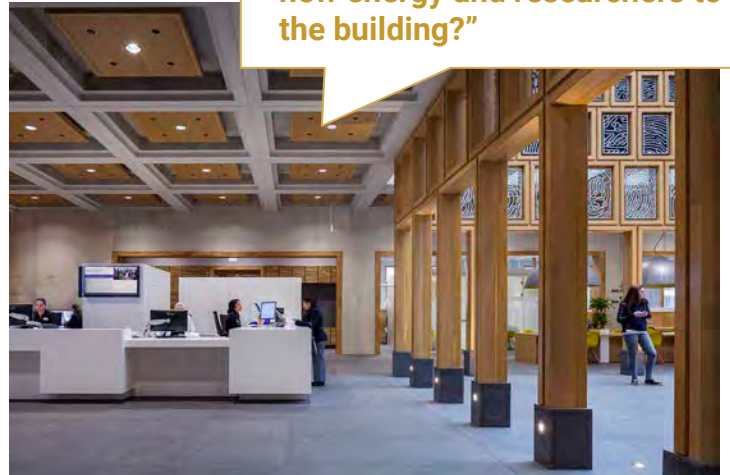
## Flexible Office/Meeting Space

The north and south wings on the first (or main) floor of the historic Maudelle Shirek Building offer high-ceiling spaces. During the engagement process the public expressed support for uses such as public-facing city services, offices, and other interactive city functions in this building as a way to bring foot-traffic to the building throughout the day. These first floor wing spaces are optimal for these types of uses.

A detailed spatial programming effort during a specific design phase is necessary to determine the appropriate uses, some ideas for consideration include:

- City Customer Service Counter - interface with City staff and get help with City processes
- Building administration offices - support spaces for running the daily operations of the meeting spaces and public services in the building.
- Public Policy Institute - partnership with local educational institutions to support the development of future decision makers

**"I'd like to see see more active uses...perhaps some sort of partnership with UC to bring new energy and researchers to the building?"**



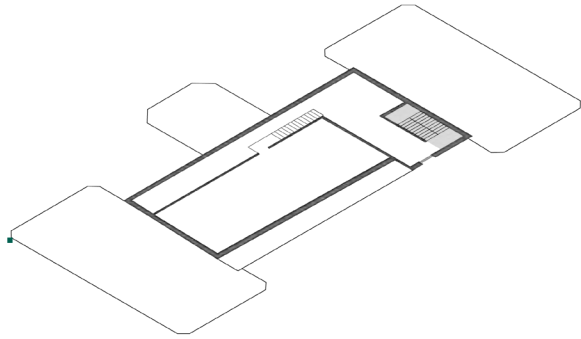
*Public Lobby at Deventer City Hall, Netherlands*

**"center for civic life...a one stop shop for the general public...."**

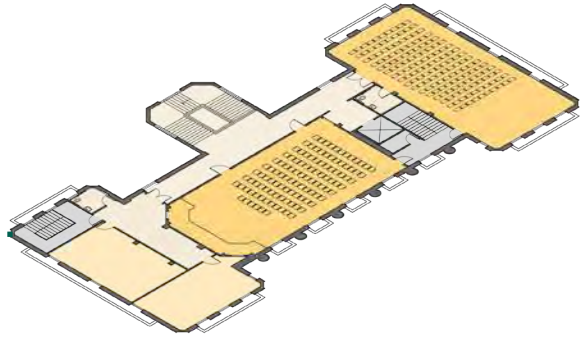


*Leiden City Hall Lobby, Netherlands*

**ATTIC (2,500 SF)**

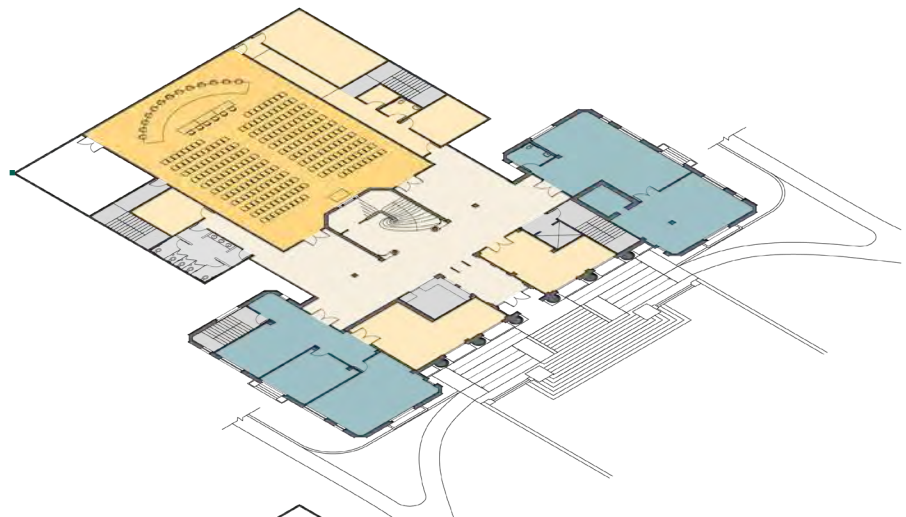


**SECOND FLOOR (6,500 SF)**

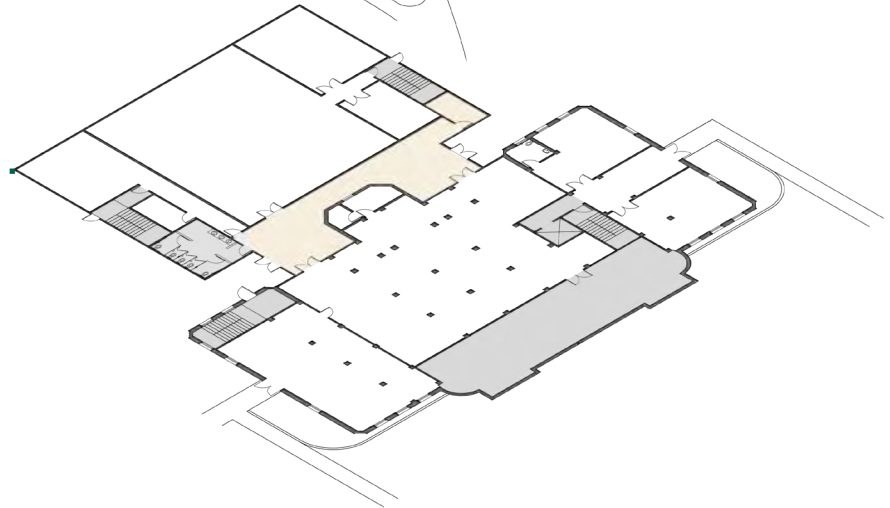


**FIRST FLOOR (14,400 SF)**

- Reception/Counter Areas
- Offices
- Conference/Meeting Rooms
- Support Spaces



**GROUND FLOOR (16,350 SF)**



## Berkeley Historical Society & Museum

The Historical Society envisions a museum that “engages visitors of all ages in learning what has made Berkeley ‘Berkeley,’ and showcases the City as a place where ideas emerge that influence the rest of the country and the world.”

Providing a source of information and inspiration for the current participants in the City’s government is a strong use of the space that aligns with the vision of the Civic Center as the heart of civic life in Berkeley. The public halls and lobbies of the Maudelle Shirek Building could host rotating exhibits that can be explored either as a visitor or while waiting to attend a public meeting or for a turn at the customer service desk.

On the ground floor, a permanent exhibit, research room, offices, and exhibit preparation room are proposed. Archival storage could be located either off-site, in an improved attic, or on the ground floor of the building, depending on other space needs.

Controlling access between the exhibits and more secure spaces of the building could present a conflict, and would need to be carefully managed. Sources for funding a museum expansion should be further studied.

70%  
of respondents  
support Berkeley  
Historical Society  
& Museum at  
MSB



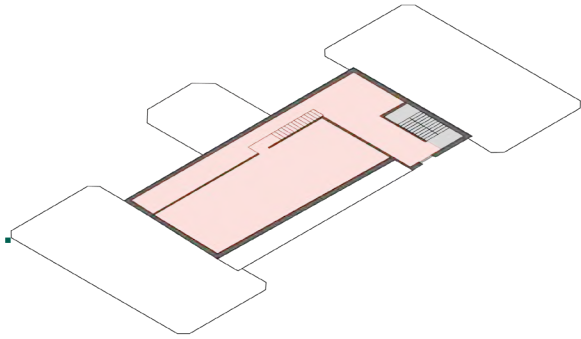
*African American Museum & Library, Oakland CA*



*Square Headquarters, San Francisco CA*

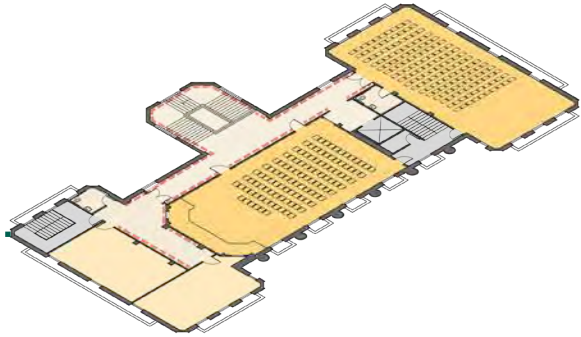
**ATTIC (2,500 SF)**

(Alternate Archive location)



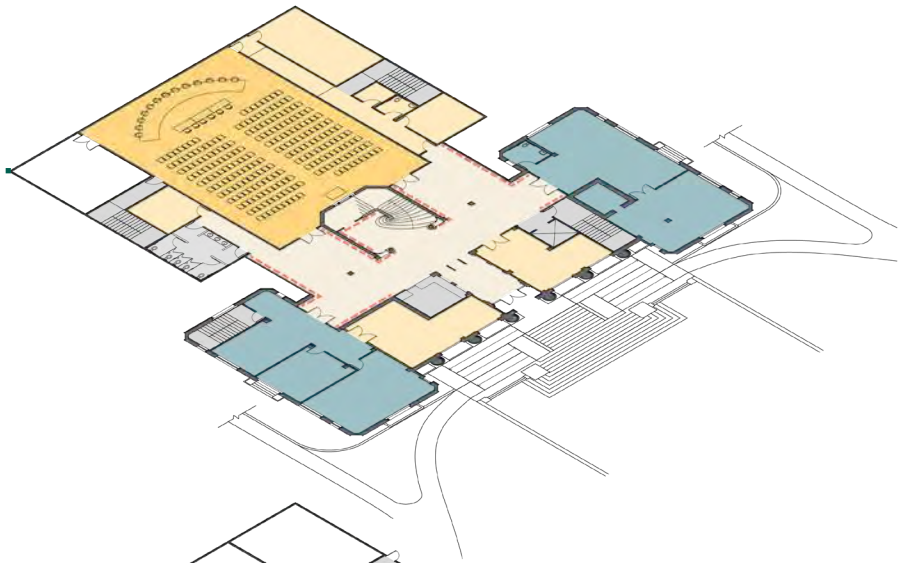
**SECOND FLOOR (6,500 SF)**

Exhibition Spaces



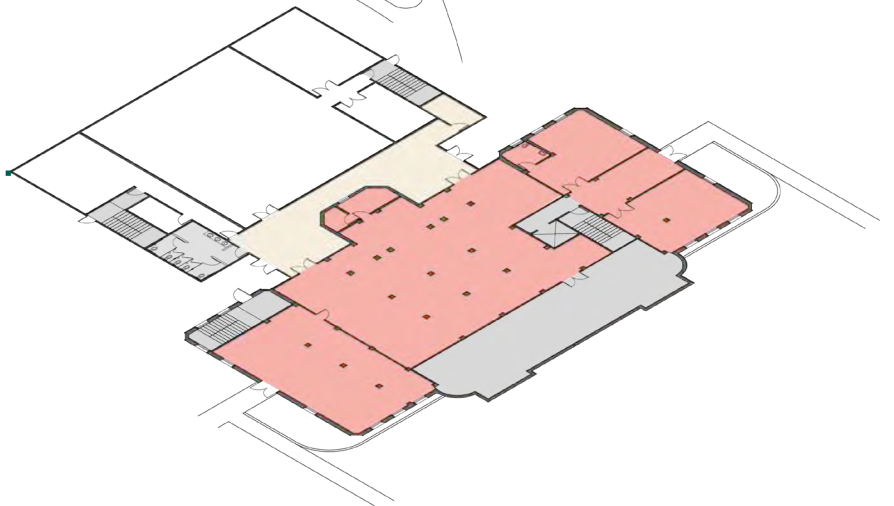
**FIRST FLOOR (14,400 SF)**

Exhibition Spaces



**GROUND FLOOR (16,350 SF)**

Exhibit Prep Room  
Offices  
Research Room  
Exhibition Space  
(Alternate Archive location)



## Berkeley Community Media

BCM serves multiple functions related to the city government. They broadcast city meetings, including Council, ZAB and Rent Stabilization meetings; they work with governmental non-profits and politicians; and they offer support in developing Public Service Announcements. Their internship program teaches students media literacy and production technology.

BCM's space needs are substantial, and many of them are single-use. They currently operate mostly through funding from the City and grants. Their mission and function are well aligned with returning public meeting spaces to the building, and with the larger vision of the Civic Center.

BCM's space needs include a broadcast studio which can double as a press conference room which is a complementary use to Council Chambers with similar controlled access requirements. BCM also needs smaller studio spaces, editing suites, offices, lounge and kitchenette.

44%  
of respondents  
support  
Berkeley  
Community  
Media at MSB

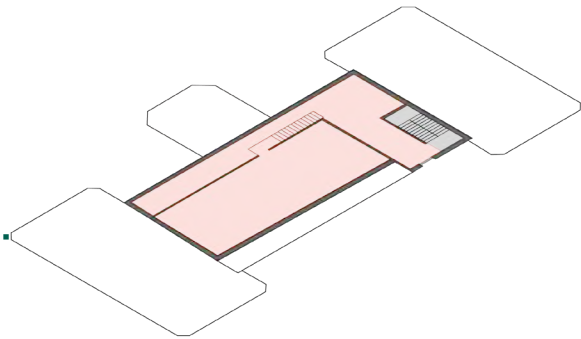


Marwen Classroom, Chicago IL

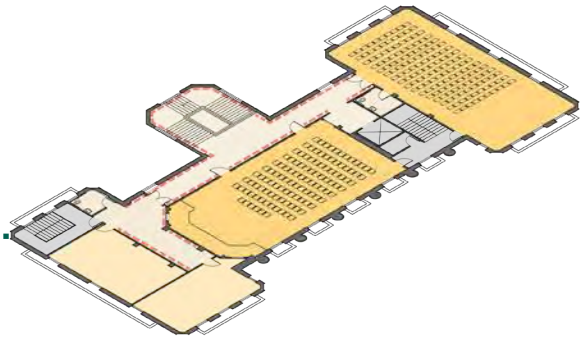


David Brower Center, Berkeley CA

**ATTIC (2,500 SF)**

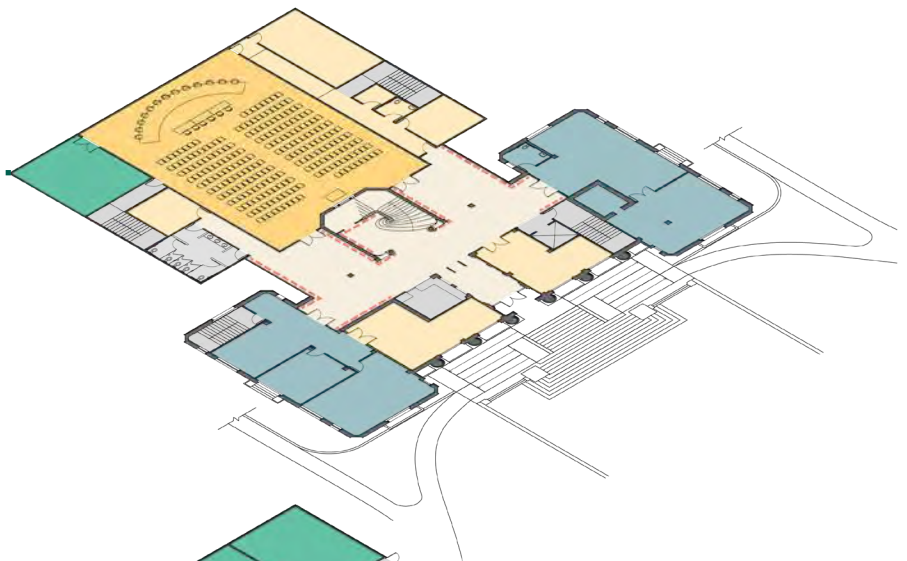


**SECOND FLOOR (6,500 SF)**



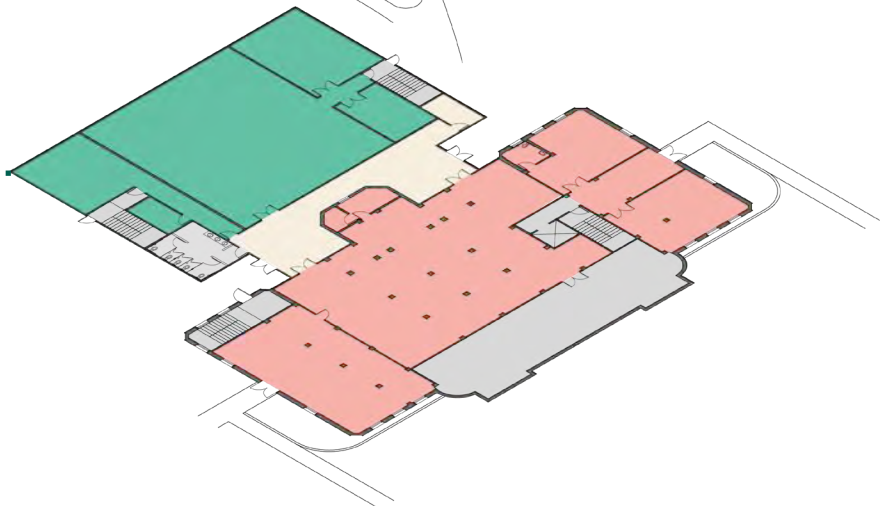
**FIRST FLOOR (14,400 SF)**

Broadcast Studio



**GROUND FLOOR (16,350 SF)**

Offices  
Editing Suite  
Small Studios  
Lounge/Kitchenette







# 5.4 Veterans Memorial Building

## 5.4

# Veterans Memorial Building- Community Arts Center

The public, Berkeley's arts community, Civic Arts Commission, and the Civic Arts Program broadly support the use of the Veterans Memorial Building as a Community Arts Center. To ensure that the building is a shared resource and platform for creative expression accessible to all, the Community Arts Center would be owned and operated by the City of Berkeley for the benefit of our community. Community need demonstrates that the Veterans Memorial Building could be active throughout the day, every day of the week, presenting and hosting all types of arts organizations and artists across all disciplines including music, theater, dance, visual arts, literary arts, and more.

New art functions may require additions, particularly related to the stage. Further study with arts organizations, Civic Arts staff, related commissions and the interested public is required to determine the detailed space needs and the best way to meet them. In a survey with local arts organizations who expressed interest

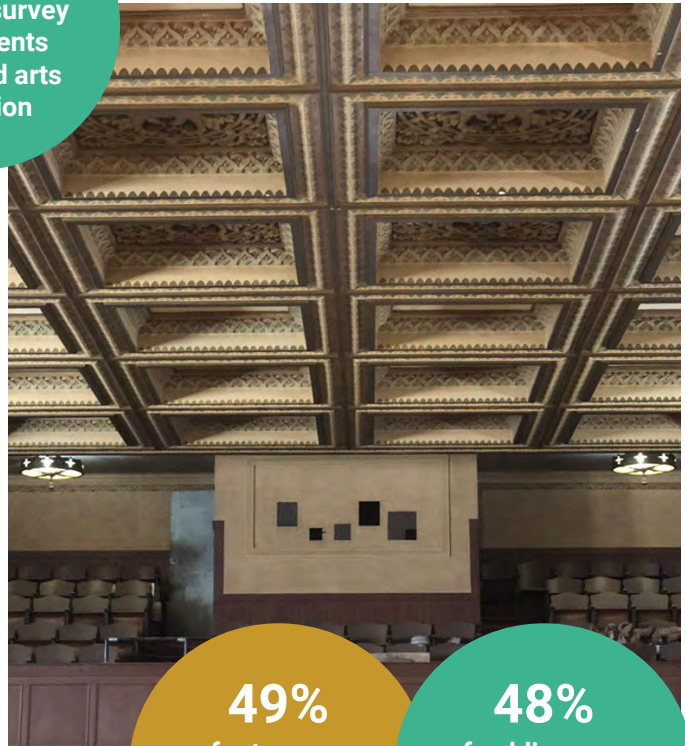
in using the building, many expressed interest in utilizing all the spaces that the VMB has to offer for public programming. These takeaways align with the perception of need in the general public survey responses.

### **Veterans Memorial Building is very desirable as an arts center:**

- Downtown, central location near arts district and transit is very appealing to arts groups.
- Multi-unit residential buildings are located nearby; VMB is accessible by walking.
- Historic structure with tall ceilings and natural light. Architectural features worth preserving.
- Unique flexible spaces and smaller performance spaces for 100–200 audience members.
- Adjacent to park, where outdoor performances could be located
- Relationship to nearby educational facilities – BHS and BCC.

**42%**  
of arts survey  
respondents  
support  
exhibition space

**45%**  
of public survey  
respondents  
prioritized arts  
exhibition



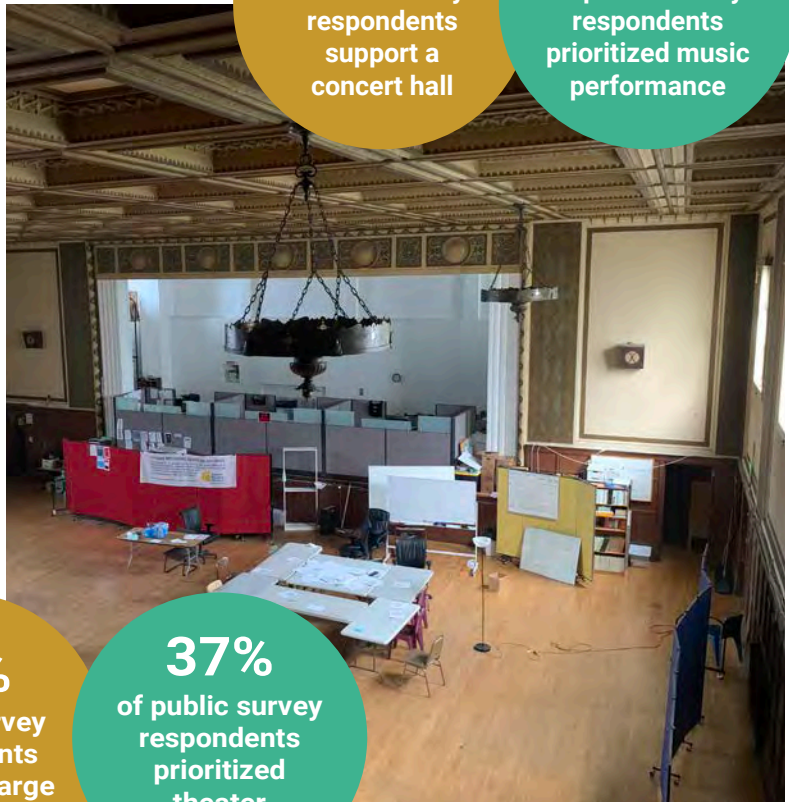
**49%**  
of arts survey  
respondents  
support a  
concert hall

**48%**  
of public survey  
respondents  
prioritized music  
performance



**47%**  
of arts survey  
respondents  
support a large  
auditorium

**37%**  
of public survey  
respondents  
prioritized  
theater  
performance



*Existing Conditions*

# Additions & Improvements

## Seismic Improvements: Building Performance Objective for New Buildings Plus

**Approach:** The City's Public Works Department recommends a seismic upgrade for the Veterans Memorial Building to the level of Building Performance Objective for New Buildings Plus (BPON+).

At this level of seismic retrofit, the building would be reoccupied several months to a year after a major seismic event.

**Discussion:** Improving the building to the level of BPON+ will provide a low risk of injury in a major seismic event. After such an event, there may be some localized structural damage that would require repairs prior to re-opening. This level of improvement is above code required minimums, providing additional protection to the historic asset.

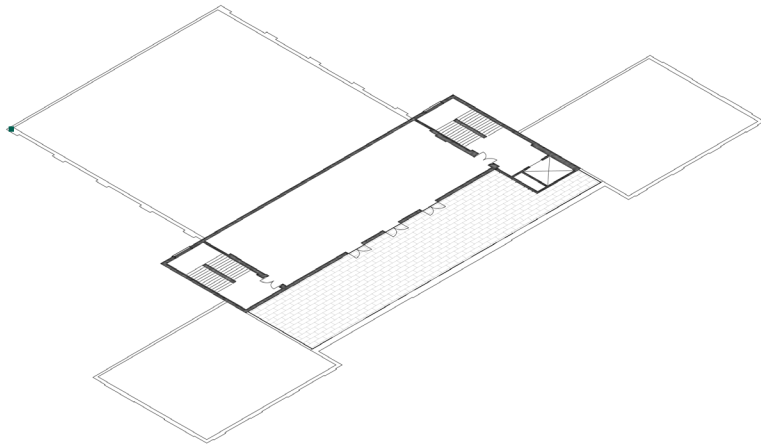
As part of the 2020 Vision Plan, the City investigated two approaches - Building Performance Objective for Existing Buildings (BPOE), and Immediate Occupancy (IO). The IO approach

represented significant cost, and the BPOE approach is a step lower than what is expected of new buildings designed to current code.

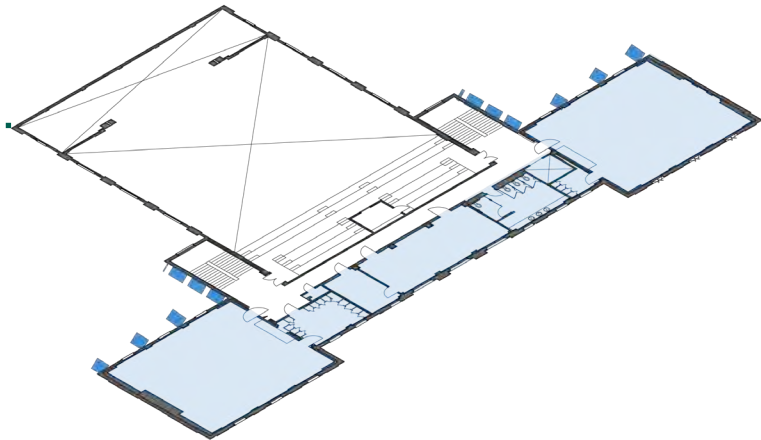
A second seismic report was submitted to City Council by Tipping Structural Engineers in August 2021, proposing a Building Performance Objective for New Building (BPON+) retrofit that addresses a lack of lateral strength and deficient strength at the roof-wall and floor-wall connections. This scheme strengthens the existing diaphragms, improves floor-to-wall and wall-to-roof connections, and reinforces select areas with shotcrete or carbon fiber.

During a specific design phase for the building, further study would be done to locate seismic improvements, including considering exterior fin buttresses at the rear, with the goal of minimizing the impact on historic finishes while optimizing performance and cost.

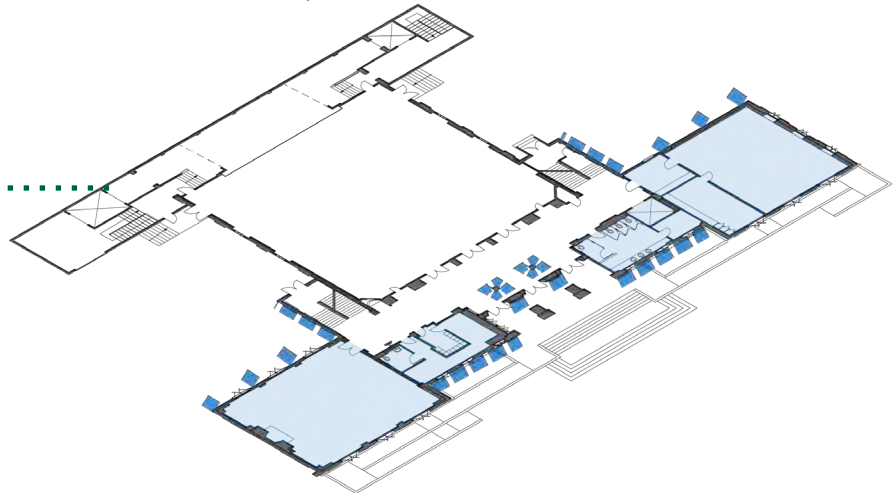
**ROOFTOP (4,000 SF)**



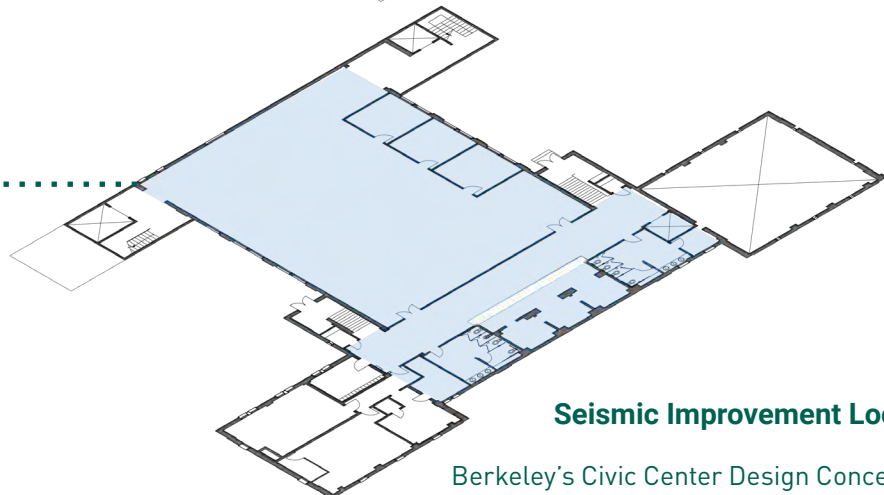
**SECOND FLOOR (6,400 SF)**



**FIRST FLOOR (11,300 SF)**



**BASEMENT (10,300 SF)**



**Seismic Improvement Locations**

## **Additions**

The results of arts organization engagement showed a real need for additional space on either side of the stage in the large auditorium. Proposed uses include a loading dock, additional backstage and greenroom spaces, a new vertical access core to the basement level, and storage for scenery. The design concept shows a possible configuration accommodating these uses. A specific design phase will need to refine the proposed additions, and confirm if any other spaces are needed, such as additional class or practice rooms.

## **Other Improvements**

A specific design will need to address other required improvements. These include new mechanical, electrical, lighting and plumbing systems to bring them into compliance with current building code and City policy. The City of Berkeley is committed to converting buildings to all-electric, including this historic structure. Relatedly, energy production through solar panels on the roof should be explored. A building assessment report was completed in 2021 by Allana Buick and Bers to identify needed improvements and repairs to the building envelope (enclosure), and their recommendations should be integrated into a future project. All of this work taken together will result in a more sustainable and resilient building.

Accessibility upgrades will be required throughout the building, including a new and more gracious accessible entry ramp sequence, a modern elevator core, and adjustment of doors and other elements to meet accessible clearance and reach requirements.

Egress from the building does not comply with modern fire codes, in particular from the basement level, and should be addressed during the specific design phase to provide proper exiting paths once space uses are confirmed. Additional exits from areas determined to have assembly uses will need to be provided, with access to the public right of way or an area of refuge.

All of these changes will need to be addressed while respecting the historic nature of the building, and meeting Secretary of the Interior standards for historic preservation. As a part of that effort, the historic finishes will need repairs and restoration, and non-historic elements will be replaced with modern, healthy and resilient materials.

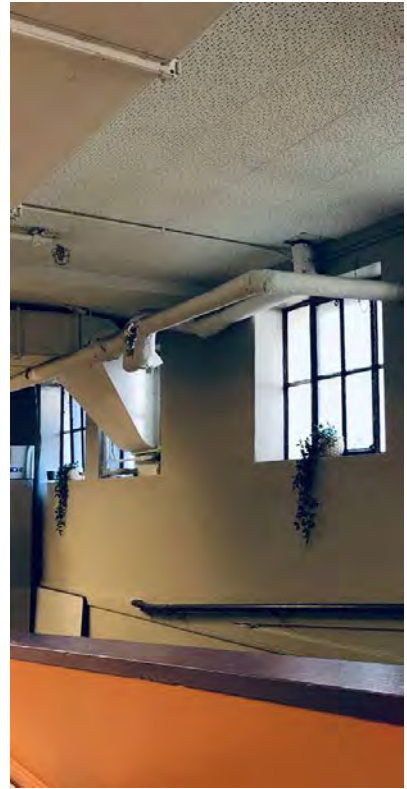
### Accessibility



### Finishes



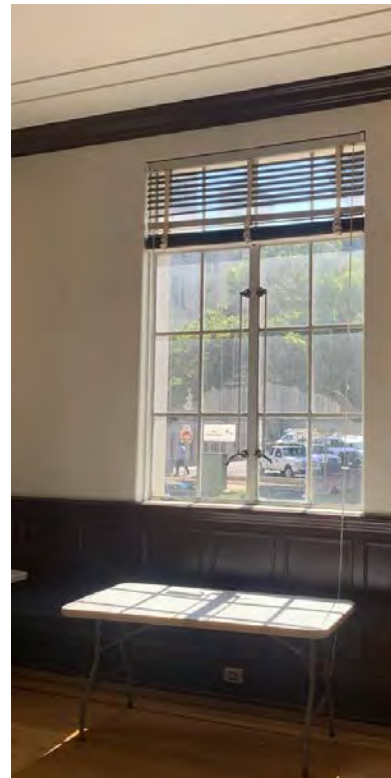
### Egress/Safety



### System Upgrades



### Building Performance



“Please make sure gender-neutral bathrooms are included.”

“it needs to appear more open, accessible, inviting and welcoming”

“...refurbish front doors and restrooms so visitors have a more pleasant experience.”

# Space Use

## Program Spaces

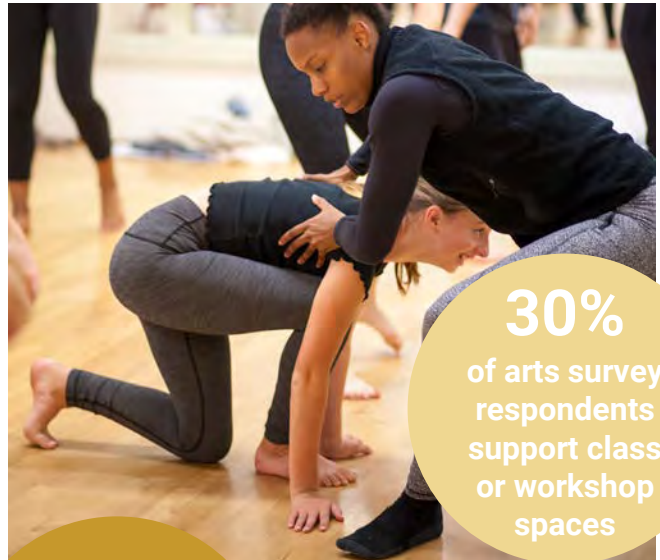
Arts Survey participants and the public all noted a need for multi-disciplinary spaces available to rent by the larger community.

During the focus group session, participants more specifically described a need for flexible, multi-use spaces that can support all types of performances, exhibitions, classes, screenings, studios, conferences, panel discussions, and readings.

The layout of the large auditorium should be carefully considered to maintain flexibility. Ideas discussed include lowering the stage, creating additions to the east and west for more backstage space, and deployable risers to allow for many performance configurations.

Some of the smaller lodge rooms on the first floor might have specific functions - a municipal gallery on the west side and a classroom that supports visual arts with storage and sinks on the east side. Others can remain flexible open spaces.

Discussions with the Veterans group during the Vision Phase showed that they were also interested in rentable spaces for classes or meetings of their own.



**30%**  
of arts survey respondents support class or workshop spaces

*Shawl-Anderson Dance Company*

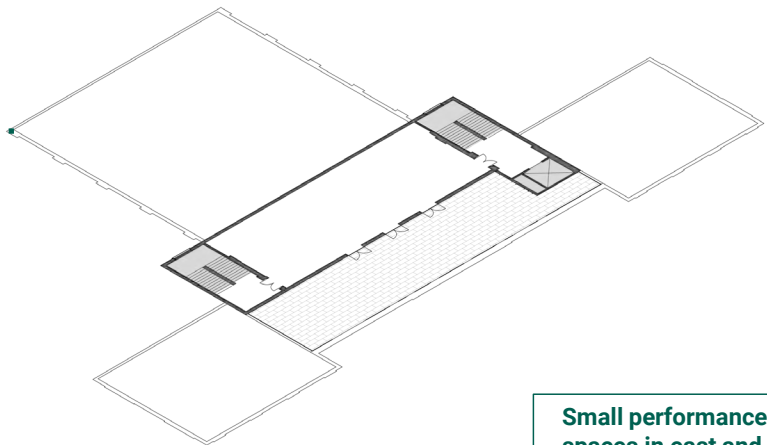
**44%**  
of arts survey respondents support rehearsal space



*View to stage at Veterans Memorial Building*

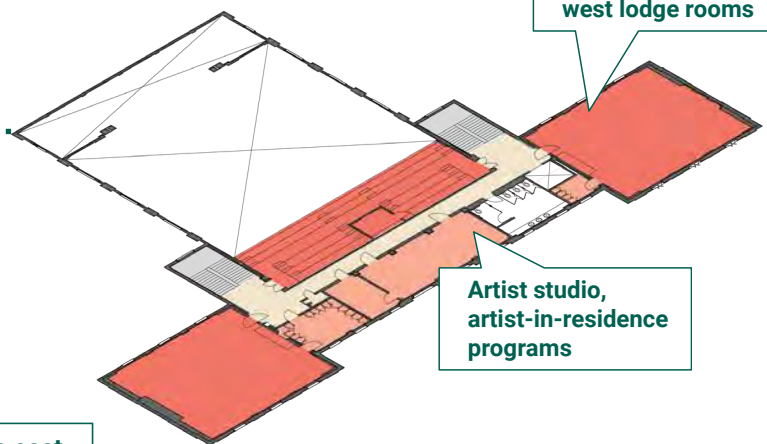


**ROOFTOP (4,000 SF)**



**SECOND FLOOR (6,400 SF)**

- Dressing Rooms
- Learning Lab/ Artist Workspace
- Small Performance/ Practice
- Balcony Seating



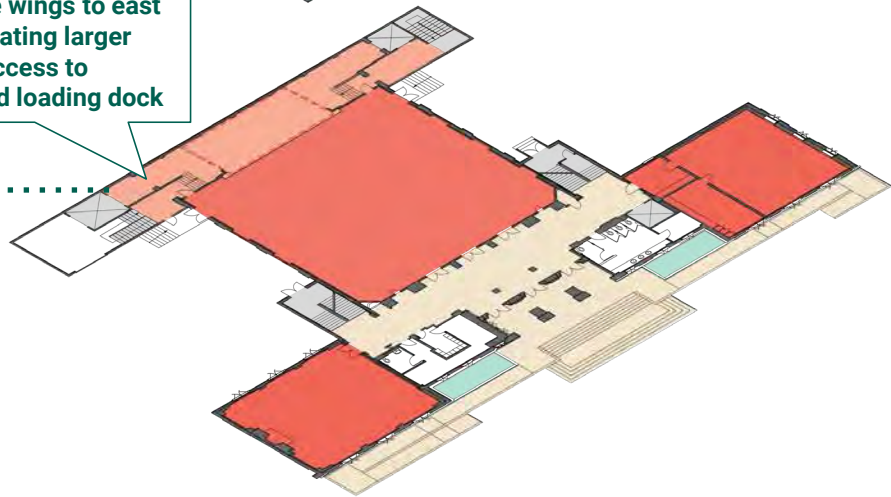
Small performance spaces in east and west lodge rooms

Artist studio, artist-in-residence programs

Expand stage wings to east and west, creating larger backstage, access to basement and loading dock

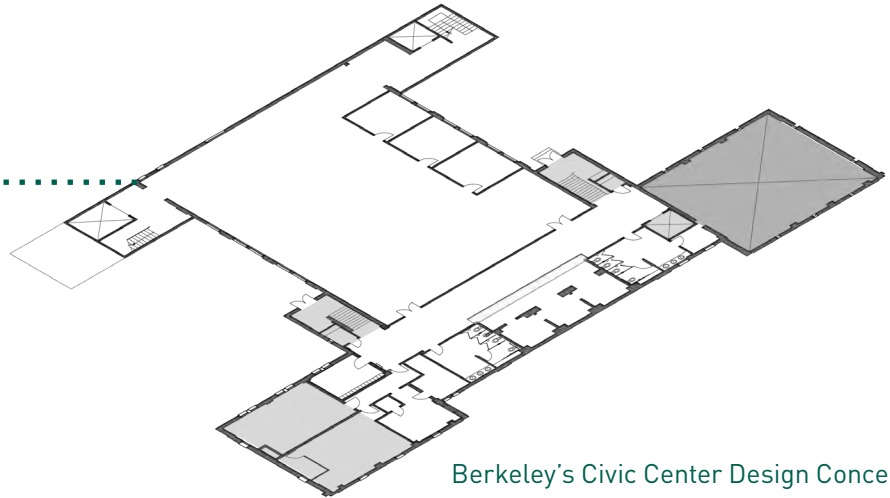
**FIRST FLOOR (11,300 SF)**

- Auditorium
- Gallery/ Visual Arts Rooms
- Stage/ Backstage



**BASEMENT (10,300 SF)**

- Mechanical/Crawl Space



## **Support Spaces**

Transforming the Veterans Memorial Building into a successful arts center will require significant and high-quality space dedicated to support functions.

One major support function mentioned by the participants in the focus group was the ability to host donor events in a large downtown space. During the 2020 Vision Plan, a rooftop event space was suggested, and is shown in this design concept, to be further studied during the specific design phase.

Spaces between the east and west wings on the first and second floor can accommodate offices, restrooms, storage, and other support spaces required for hosting classes, events, and performances in the venue.

The large open area on the basement level could be repurposed for any number of back-of-house functions including a stage shop and additional backstage and practice spaces for groups renting the large auditorium.

Back-of-house types of uses include:

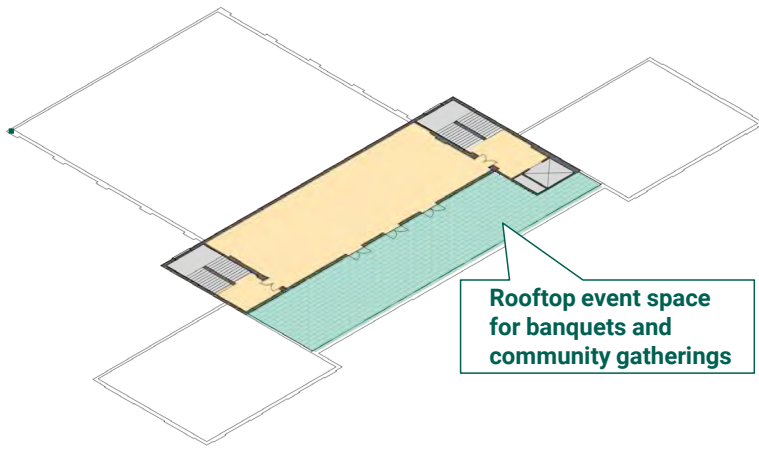
- Dressing/Changing rooms
- Offices
- Rehearsals
- Storage for productions and facility
- Storage for City's public art collection



*Studio Gang Island in the Sky, Chicago IL*

**ROOFTOP (4,000 SF)**

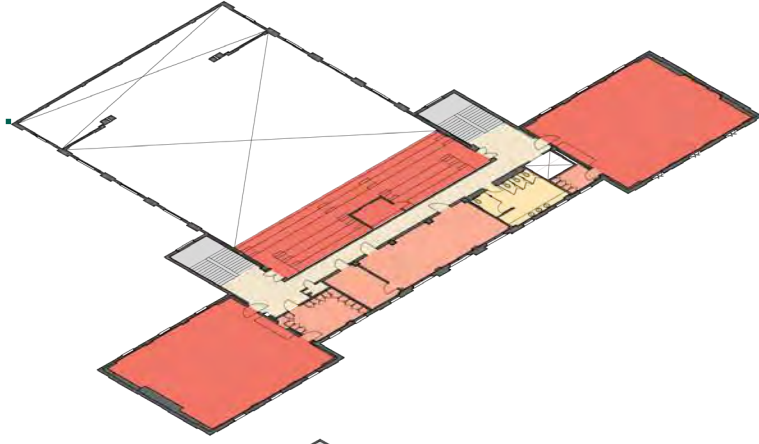
- Event Space
- Rooftop Terrace



Rooftop event space for banquets and community gatherings

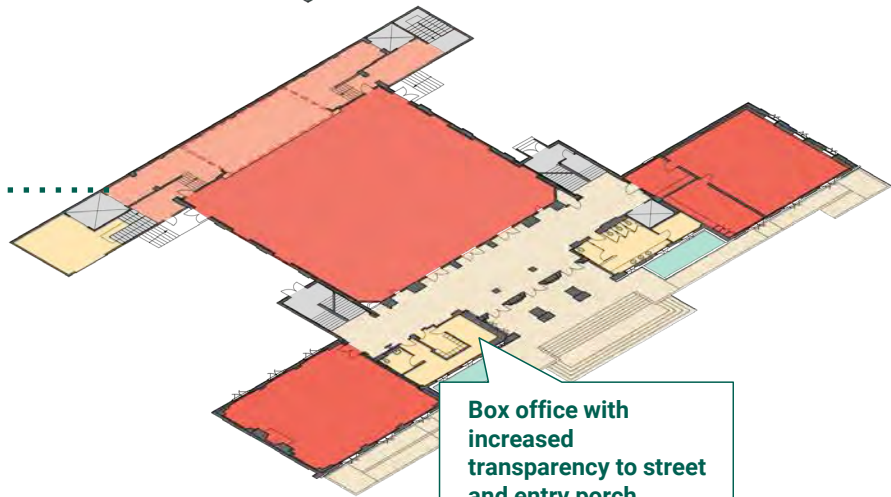
**SECOND FLOOR (6,400 SF)**

- Storage Space
- Restrooms



**FIRST FLOOR (11,300 SF)**

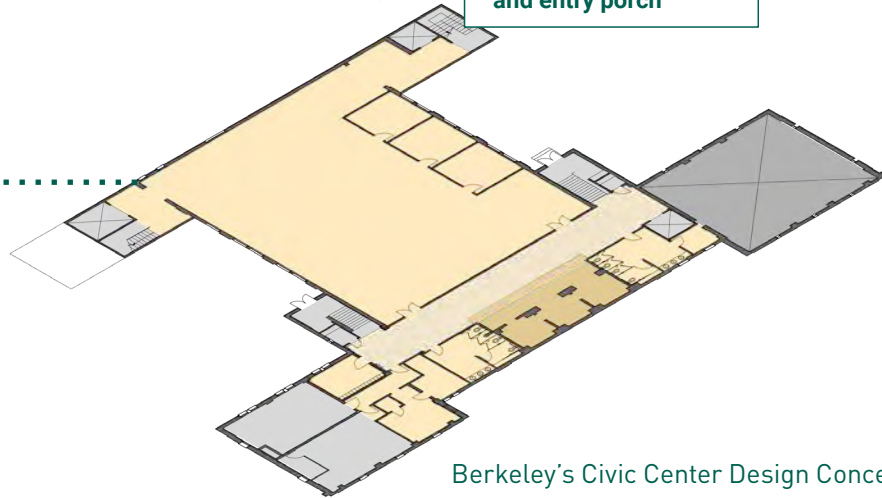
- Box Office/Administration
- Restrooms
- Loading Dock
- Main Lobby



Box office with increased transparency to street and entry porch

**BASEMENT (10,300 SF)**

- Storage
- Dressing Rooms
- Stage/Scenery Shop
- Restrooms
- Lower Lobby
- Commercial Kitchen





# Cost Summary

## 6.1 Preliminary Cost Ranges

## 6.1

# Preliminary Cost Ranges

## Construction Costs

Preliminary construction cost ranges provided in this report are based on the March 2023 Draft Berkeley Civic Center Design Concept Report, the 2021 Civic Center Buildings Study by Tipping Structural Engineers, and guidance from the City of Berkeley Public Works Department. See Appendix A for a full list of exclusions.

	Low (x \$1,000)	High (x \$1,000)
<b>Maudelle Shirek Building - 27,500 GSF Existing + 15,000 GSF Addition</b>	<b>\$ 51,200</b>	<b>\$ 62,600</b>
Seismic Retrofit - Damage Control+ to near Immediate Occupancy	\$ 13,400	\$ 16,400
Envelope & Systems (Electrification, Accessibility, upgrades, finishes)	\$ 15,500	\$ 18,900
Two-story addition on West side	\$ 19,000	\$ 23,200
PVs at new addition, panels & infrastructure	\$ 600	\$ 800
Site Improvement & Utilities	\$ 2,700	\$ 3,300
<b>Veterans Memorial Building - 28,000 GSF Existing + 5,950 GSF Addition</b>	<b>\$ 26,300</b>	<b>\$ 36,900</b>
Seismic Retrofit - Building Performance Objective for New Buildings	\$ 6,300	\$ 7,700
Envelope & Systems (Electrification, Accessibility, upgrades, finishes)	\$ 15,800	\$ 19,400
New Addition at Stage	\$ 2,900	\$ 3,500
Roof Terrace (in high range only)	(excluded)	\$ 4,600
PVs at new addition, panels & infrastructure	\$ 500	\$ 700
Site Improvement & Utilities	\$ 800	\$ 1,000
<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park &amp; Streets</b>	<b>\$ 16,470</b>	<b>\$ 20,130</b>
Paths/paving, planting/irrigation, new trees/tree protection, utilities	\$ 14,670	\$ 17,930
Site Improvements to 2180 Milvia entry, VMB entry, restrooms	\$ 1,800	\$ 2,200
<b>ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 93,970</b>	<b>\$119,630</b>
+ Construction Contingency (10%)	\$ 9,783	\$ 11,957
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS</b>	<b>\$103,753</b>	<b>\$131,587</b>

## Other City Costs

Leading up to and during construction, the City will incur costs related to technical studies, existing conditions, design, planning approvals, permitting and management, to name a few. These costs will be further refined in future efforts as more is defined about review process, design requirements and parameters, funding and financing, and timeline.

	Low (x \$1,000)	High (x \$1,000)
Other City Costs (estimated at 20% of construction costs)	\$ 21,523	\$ 26,305
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS + OTHER CITY COSTS</b>	<b>\$125,276</b>	<b>\$157,892</b>

## Operations & Maintenance Costs

Utilizing the 2023 annual Operations & Maintenance budget from the 1947 Center Street building, a \$/SF annual cost was determined for O&M at the common and occupied spaces in city-owned buildings. That was applied to the areas of the Maudelle Shirek and Veterans Memorial Building to arrive at the following annual Operations & Maintenance budgets:

<b>Maudelle Shirek Building</b>	<b>\$1,234,389</b>
Occupied Space -	\$1,167,936
Common Space -	\$ 66,453

<b>Veterans Memorial Building</b>	<b>\$1,069,860</b>
Occupied Space -	\$1,012,900
Common Space -	\$ 56,690





# Implementation

**7.1 Organizational Management Structure**

**7.2 Funding Strategies**

**7.3 Recommended Next Steps**

## 7.1

# Organization Management Structures

## Maudelle Shirek Building - The Seat of Berkeley's Democracy

With the primary uses being city and public meeting rooms, control of the Maudelle Shirek Building should remain with the City. This will ensure that the meeting spaces are available to all citizens of Berkeley, aligning with the Vision Statement's ideal of *a place of shared resources and platform for free expression for all*.

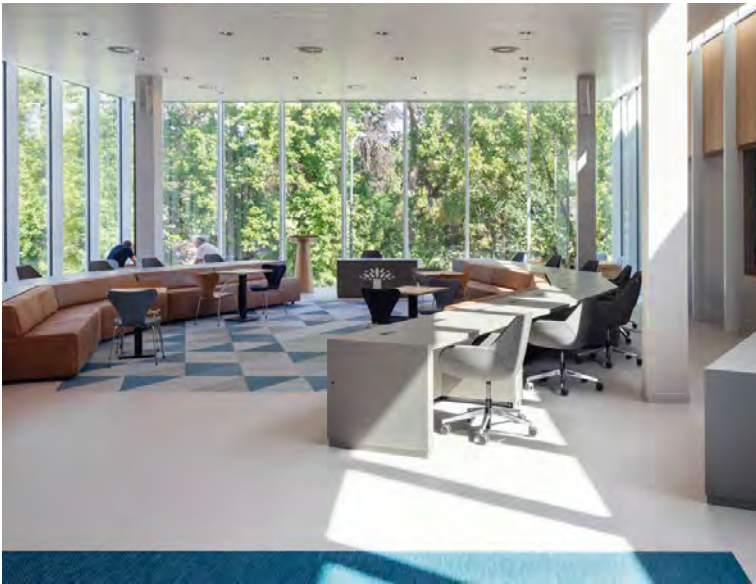
As with other buildings in the Civic Center, the Maudelle Shirek Building will be managed through the Public Works Department. Tenants, whether they be City Departments or outside non-profit entities, will enter into lease agreements for space within the building, and pay into the Building Maintenance Fund. The Public Works Department utilizes those funds to provide baseline services including building maintenance, electrical and communications systems, and janitorial services.

Tenant improvements to the spaces, including interior wall alterations, furniture, equipment, and interior finish improvements, are the responsibility of the tenant Department or non-profit. That includes design, permitting, and management of contractors, installers, deliveries, or other third-parties involved in the improvements. Proposed improvements are reviewed and approved by the Public Works department prior to execution.

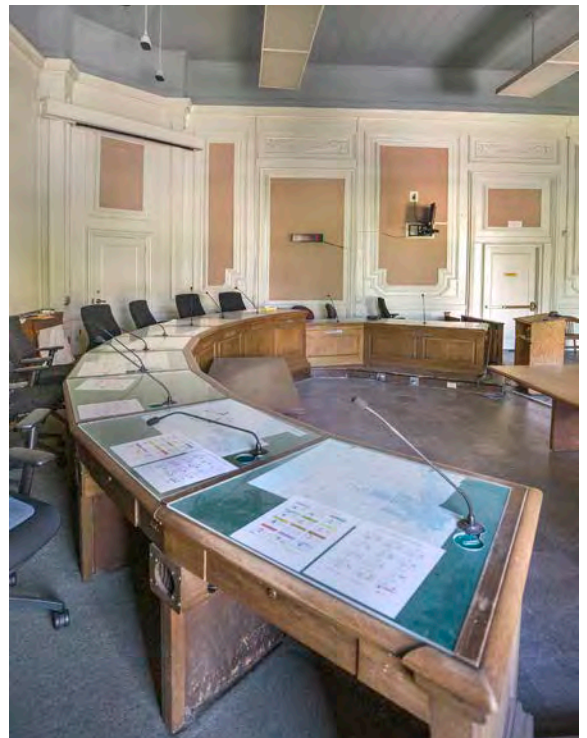
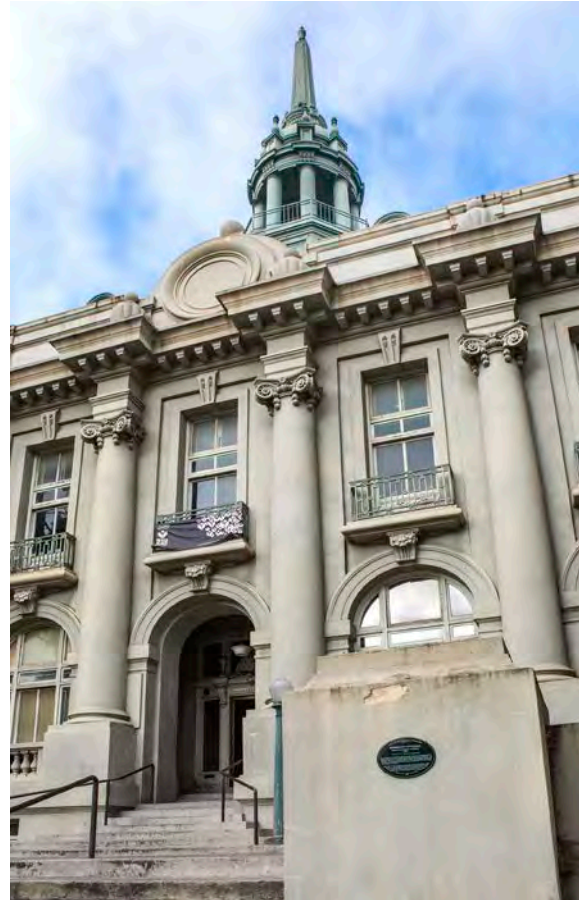
To proceed into a specific design phase, the City should create memorandums of understanding with the selected departments and vision-aligned non-profits. How space is allocated in the final design will be impacted by both the space needs and available funding of the future tenants, and will need to be finalized before lease agreements are signed.



*Baltmannsweiler Council Chambers , Germany*



*Geldrop-Mierlo Town Hall, Netherlands*



*Existing Conditions at Maudelle Shirek*

## Veterans Memorial Building - Municipal Arts Center

**A shared resource and platform for creative expression accessible to all.**

The community-serving Municipal Arts Center will be the artistic destination in the heart of Berkeley serving as a shared resource and platform for creative expression for people of all ages across all disciplines including music, theater, dance, visual arts, literary arts, and more. The Center will be accessible to all Berkeley residents and the regional Bay Area community.

The project team recommends a City-owned and operated model for the Veterans Memorial Building.

The design team and Civic Arts staff explored two approaches to the management of the Veterans Memorial Building: a City-run arts space or an anchor tenant-run arts space. Civic Arts staff and the project team held outreach meetings with several local privately-run and municipal-run cultural and arts centers to understand their operating models. This included discussions with operators and/or developers from the Palo Alto Art Center (PAAC), Walnut Creek's Leshner Center for the Arts (LCA),

"A public arts space open to all artists."

"..bring in revenue to maintain the building."

"...a space for community arts of all kinds - and for all age groups"

Oakland's Kaiser Convention Center, Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center, and San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA).

The key finding from this initial research was that operating an art center as a City-run facility ensures that it remains accessible to the entire community while also ensuring that building uses and programming aligns with City values.

The Civic Arts staff and design team also met with lease management staff in the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront and Public Works departments to discuss successful models and lessons learned from other City-owned and operated facilities and programs. From these conversations, the project

team has researched how others have operated and maintained spaces that are accessible to the community for use while also generating revenue to support operations. The research includes revenue-generating programs and offerings, required level of staffing and management, selection of programs & performances, and operating budgets.

### **Value Proposition/Offerings**

Taking into consideration the public support for an open and accessible arts center for the Berkeley community, the Vision Statement, and the desire to maximize the activation of the Civic Center, the Arts Center will offer performances in the evenings and on weekends, classes for adults and students during the day, and afterschool and weekend programs for adults, teens and children, and provide space resources to local arts organizations and artists.

The Arts Center may also include a roof top café, as well as numerous potential rental spaces including auditorium rentals for performances and rehearsals, galleries and large rooms for lectures,

panels and exhibitions, as well as other event space for rent.

The Arts Center will attract, engage, and retain paying presenters, audiences and other local and regional visitors to participate in a unique cultural synergy expressive of Berkeley's values and spirit. Importantly, the Arts Center will provide a much needed venue for local arts organizations who currently rent event, exhibition, performance and rehearsal space in other Bay Area cities because local facilities are not available.



*Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center*

### Revenue Model

The revenue model is a multi-prong approach. One revenue stream could be generated from space rentals for arts presentations by local arts organizations and arts programming, such as classes. Revenue could be generated as a share of ticket sales for performances. Rental revenue can also be earned for community gatherings and events, particularly the rooftop event space. The second revenue stream is generated through fundraising by the nonprofit public benefit corporation whose mission is to support the Arts Center's mission and to act as the fundraising arm & fiscal agent.

### Operating Structure

We envision that the Veterans Memorial Building will be managed by the City's Civic Arts program in partnership with the Public Works Department. Management of arts-specific facilities requires knowledge of the programmatic needs of the various arts disciplines. Rental agreements for space within the building would ensure that funds are paid into the Building Maintenance Fund

to be utilized by Civic Arts to maintain arts related equipment and by Public Works Department s to provide baseline services including building maintenance, electrical and communications systems, and janitorial services. In addition, a nonprofit public benefit corporation will be formed whose mission is to support the Arts Center's mission and to function as the fundraising arm & fiscal agent. This public-private partnership will be essential to support strategic planning, programming, education & community engagement, and funding of the Center. This to-be-formed organization will support costs related to fundraising, marketing, furniture/fixtures/equipment, event production, security, and auxiliary staffing.

Civic Arts staff will continue to hold additional outreach meetings with local examples of municipal-run cultural and arts centers to refine the operating model. The long-term management and staffing of Veterans Memorial Building and its associated programs will be defined through further study.



*Palo Alto Art center*



*Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek*

## 7.2

# Funding Strategies

With an approved design concept, this project would move into its next phase of additional recommended studies, environmental reviews, and initiating specific design projects. This work is estimated to cost around \$15 million and take 2-3 years.

A variety of funding sources could contribute to the City's approach to funding. The first approach would involve many different sources of funding all leading to one large project, phased in over the course of years. The following funding sources might contribute to the project:

- **Congressionally Directed Spending Requests** (aka earmarks). These are typically in the range of \$750,000-\$1.5 million. The City has submitted a request to our federal legislators for this project and should learn in the fall whether the earmark is successful. If so, funding would commence in calendar year 2024. There is no match requirement.
- **Federal Infrastructure Funding**. staff and consultants have not yet been able to find a category within the current funding stream that is a strong fit for this project, but that may change as future opportunities arise. Grant match requirements vary.
- **FEMA/Cal OES Hazard Mitigation Grants**. These grants require a cost/benefit calculation that makes the BPON+ standard more likely to qualify for a grant. For that reason, the Veteran's Building is more likely to benefit. Grants require a 25% match.
- **Sustainability/Resiliency Grants**: the state and federal government offer grants that might help fund the electric conversion, green infrastructure, permeable paving, etc. Grant match requirements vary.
- **Urban Greening Grant/Coastal Conservancy Grant**: these grants may fund a feasibility study of daylighting the creek. Grant match requirements vary.



- **City Funding.** The City's General Fund, a future tax measure, or Certificate of Participation could contribute to the project. In addition, traffic safety and stormwater elements of the project might get contributions from Measure BB, Gas Tax, and/or the City's Storm Fund.

- **Foundations and/or Private Individuals.** Given the Civic Center's history and importance, private foundations and individuals might be a component to the overall funding strategy.

- **Bonding Capacity/Debt Service**
  - Using early construction costs estimates, and the general fund as collateral, assuming the Maudelle Shirek Building has a project cost of ~\$54M, the annual debt service would be ~\$3,900,000/year (30 year amortization). A ~\$71M project cost would have debt service of ~\$4,900,000/year. For the Veterans Memorial Building, a project cost of ~\$34M would have annual debt

service of ~\$2,400,000 and a project cost of ~\$41M would have annual debt service of ~\$2,900,000. There would be a reduction in annual debt service of approximately \$50,000/year if both projects were financed together.

An alternative, more opportunistic approach would be to identify specific project components that would be good fits for available grants, and when successful in gaining grants, move those elements forward, e.g., the project's raised sidewalks and bulbouts. This approach would likely take more time, involve more project cost overall (less efficiencies of scale), but might be more realistic.

Regardless, this project will be significantly more attractive for funding with an adopted design concept. Recognizing that strong plans need funding, and funding is attracted to strong plans, and staff are excited to work with City Council on moving this project forward.

## 7.3

# Recommended Next Steps

As the City continues to develop a funding and long-term implementation plans for the Civic Center Park, surrounding streets, the Maudelle Shirek Building and the Veterans Memorial Building, immediate steps for improvements are offered as a way to initiate improvements and enhance the Civic Center experience.

Some of these steps can be undertaken in collaboration with vision-aligned partners and non-profit organizations. Future studies and longer term efforts are also offered with the goals of developing specific plans that launch the Berkeley Civic Center into its improved future.

### **Early Activation Projects**

To offer a better experience of the Civic Center Park, the City and City partners could fund early activation projects that reinvigorate the Park in advance of more significant future improvements, including:

- Installation of new furnishings, including tables and seating or picnic tables with benches, specifically selected and placed for lunch time use
- Introduction of pop-up food vendor events and/or food trucks during the weekdays
- Installation of new tree protection elements
- Biodiversity enhancement through new plantings
- Lighting and path repairs and upgrades
- Restroom repairs and upgrades
- Review of current special events needs and lease agreements for Civic Center Park, considering changes to agreements specific to this Park
- Increase funding for Park operations and maintenance

## Future Studies

Additional information is needed to support specific design projects for the Civic Center Park, surrounding streets, Maudelle Shirek Building and Veterans Memorial Building. These include:

- Topographic Survey of the Civic Center Park, surrounding streets and building sites
  - Updated Arborist Report for Civic Center and surrounding street trees, and Tree Succession Plan
  - As-Built drawings & Existing Condition reports for buildings
  - Traffic Study to identify the impacts on traffic flow/circulation/delays on adjacent city blocks, impacts on intersection capacity, emergency response times and parking of introducing traffic calming devices such as: a flush-surface shared street on Center; bulb-outs on MLK Jr Way; reduced parking on MLK Jr Way and Center; raised crosswalks or tables on MJK Jr Way at Center and Allston; and crosswalks, either raised or flush with pavers, on Allston between the existing Berkeley High School gates and Civic Center Park.
- A grant pre-application was submitted to the California Coastal Conservancy for funding of the Strawberry Creek daylighting effort. While the application reviewers were excited about the project “because of the ecological and community benefits”, they suggested the City apply to the Urban Greening program at the California Natural Resources Agency. Members of the CCCC and others are pursuing this and other grant funding opportunities. The City will need to be the lead on any formal grant applications. Creek grant applications should include:
    1. A detailed description of the project location and park features - a large green for civic gatherings, festivals and recreation; Turtle Island Monument and Plaza; Mature trees (redwoods, poplars, camphors, magnolias, oaks, and the signature Sequoia) many of which were planted 80+ years ago; and pedestrian and vehicular paths and parking areas.

## Implementation - Next Steps

2. The need for the project and benefits to the area, which is an urban setting.
3. Community-led planning and engagement, involving stakeholders such as surrounding property owners, and primary park users such as BHS, BCC, City of Berkeley, Ecology Center, festival hosts and others.
4. Plans for technical and hydrological studies for daylighting Strawberry Creek in the Civic Center area.
5. Plans for a traffic study to identify impacts to traffic flow/circulation, emergency response times and parking of daylighting the creek.
6. The process for applying for and securing permits, including the necessary studies for the CEQA process.
7. A long-term maintenance and management plan for the creek and impacted areas of the park.
8. Preliminary budget including all technical studies, design efforts, permitting efforts, and construction costs.

### Longer Term Efforts

Prior to the implementation of specific project design and construction efforts, the City may consider:

- Establish relationships with potential non-profit partners and funding entities to engage in a capital improvement campaign
- Develop funding plans for each of the constituent projects – the Park, surround streets and the historic structures
- Building assessment reports were prepared for the historic structures in 2021 identifying repairs needed as part of the future project. In the interim, City staff continues to monitor the buildings. Dependent on the project schedule, the City may need to stabilize the structures should risk of further deterioration arise before construction begins.
- Initiate specific design projects, including documentation of detailed spatial programming
- Identify entitlement/approvals path for specific designs including CEQA requirements and discretionary reviews.



