

Deck Plaza Update

April 17, 2023

Agenda:

> Process

> Summary of work to date

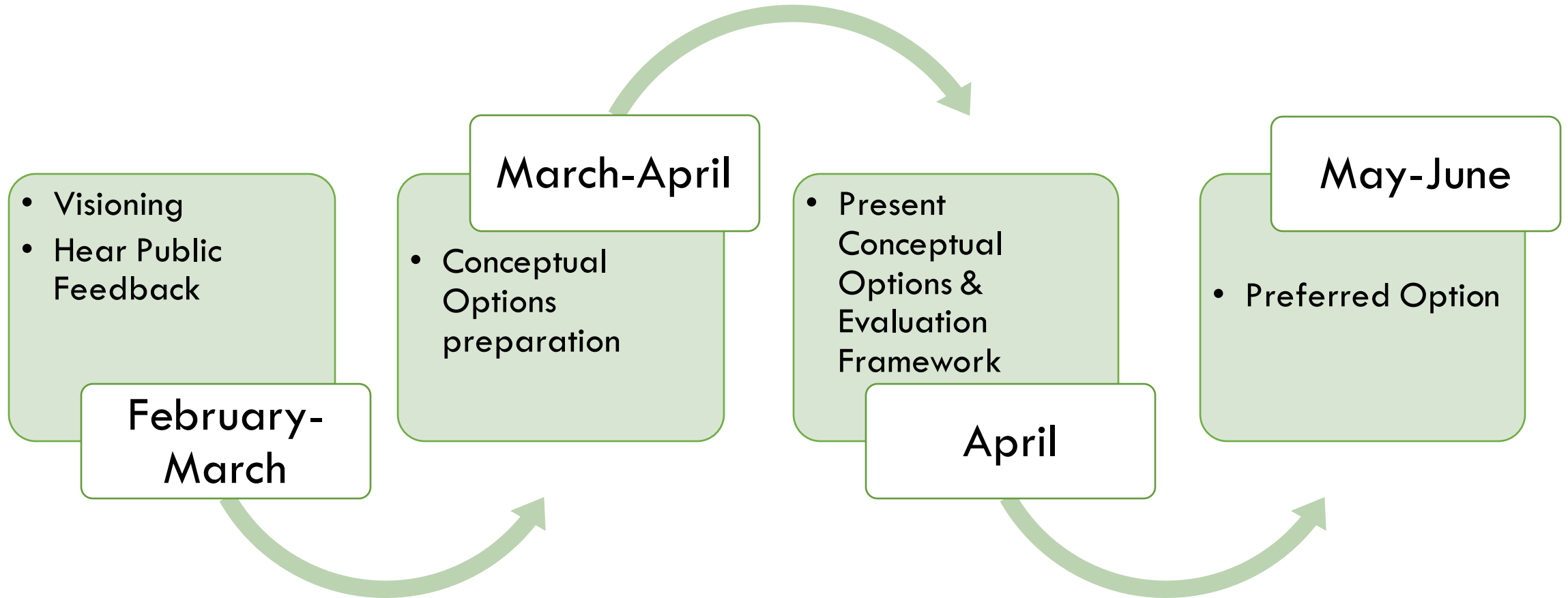
- * • Foundational Input
 - Visioning

> Current Progress

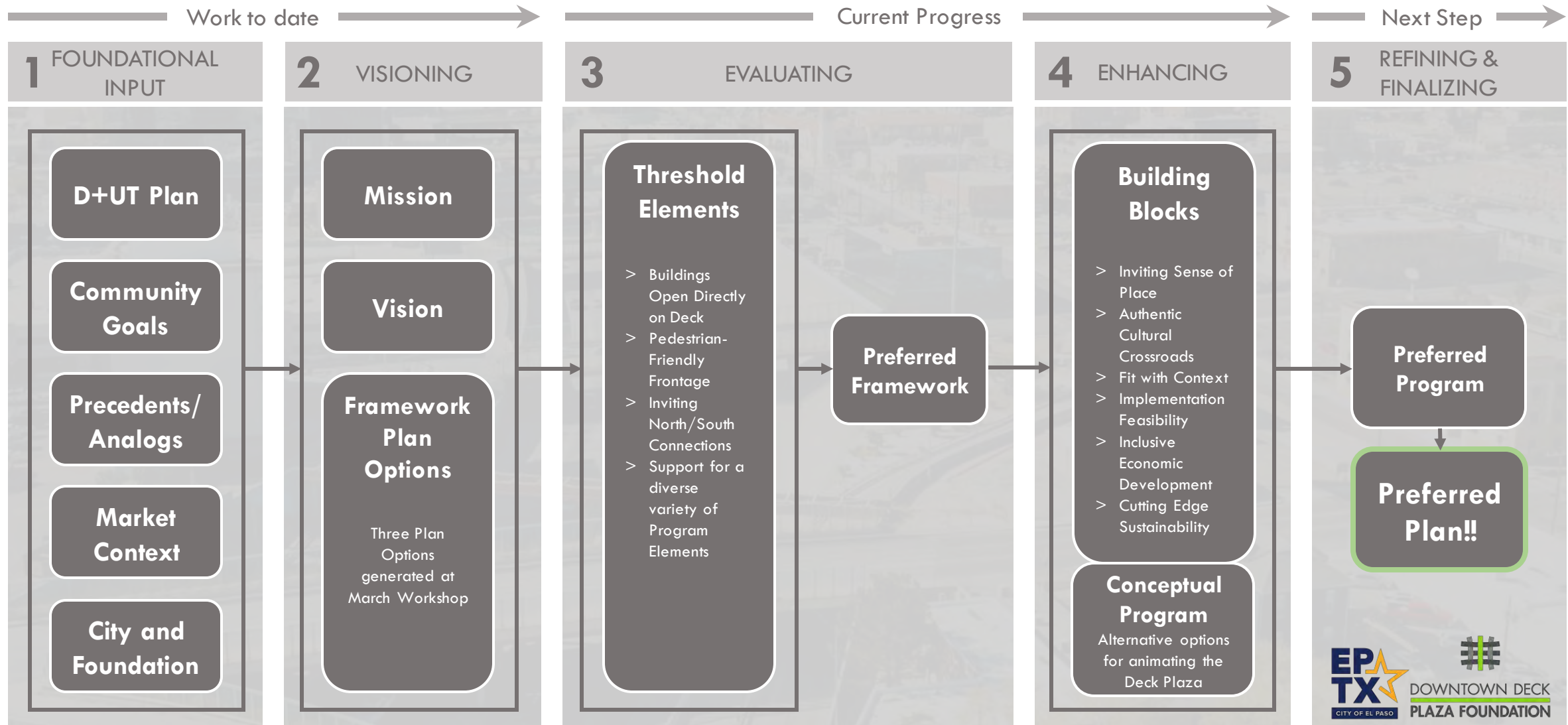
- Evaluating
 - Threshold Elements
 - Evaluation
- * • Enhancing
 - Urban Design Building Blocks
 - Conceptual Programming

> Next steps

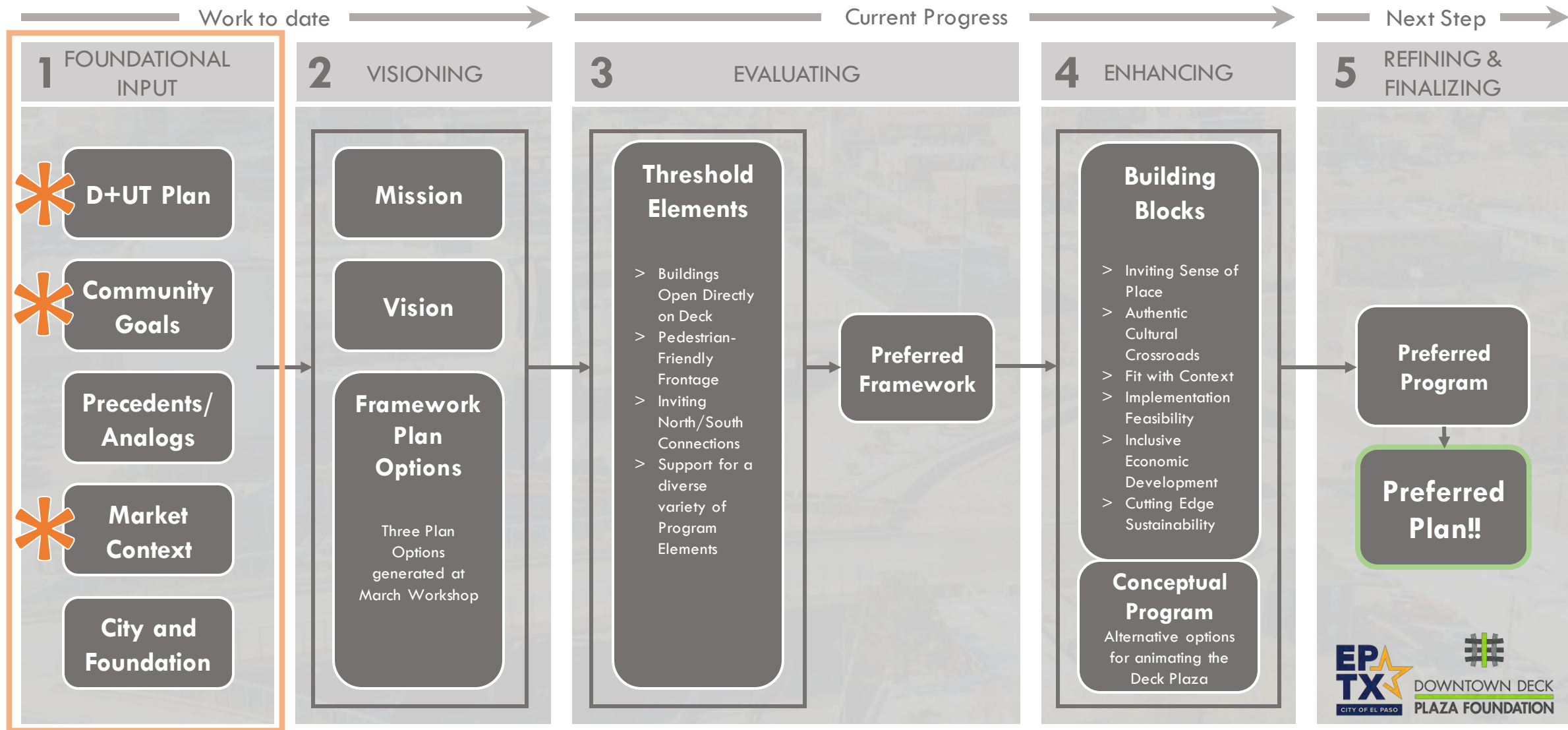
Overall Process



Design Process:



Design Process:



1. Foundational Input

D+UT Plan

Community
Goals

Precedents/
Analog

Market
Context

City and
Foundation

Key Takeaways:

- > Strengthen Downtown's connections to nearby neighborhoods.
- > Enhance Downtown as a place to live, work, play, learn, interact, and innovate.
- > ...and as a robust multicultural destination for the city and region



1. Foundational Input



Key Takeaways:

- > Reconnect neighborhoods and make the Deck Plaza a place for all El Pasoans
- > Celebrate El Paso's people and unique border city culture
- > Design for El Paso's climate with shade, native trees/plants, and green space
- > Create a space for families and children



What We Heard About El Paso

What Do You Value About El Paso

Q: What Do You Value About El Paso



THE ENVIRONMENT

LOCATION. CLIMATE. ECOLOGY



THE CONTEXT
PAST. PRESENT. FUTURE



THE LIFESTYLE
SOCIAL, CULTURAL, INSTITUTIONS



Biggest Challenges About El Paso

Q: Biggest Challenges About El Paso



THE POLITICS

POLICIES, LEADERSHIP, KEY TOPICS



THE ECONOMY
JOBS. FUNDING. OPPORTUNITY



EXTERNAL & INTERNAL THINKING



What We Heard About The Deck Plaza

Major Themes:

- Shade/green space
- Native trees/plants
- Vendor spaces/food trucks
- Performance spaces
- Reconnection of neighborhoods
- Reflect the uniqueness of El Paso
- Accessibility for all
- Child-centric spaces & activities
- Place for pets

Major Concerns:

- What will the ultimate transportation improvements look like?
- How will pedestrians interact with the space?
- Safety & security
- Unhoused/homeless
- Parking for larger events
- Mechanism to fund construction and operations/maintenance of the facility?



1. Foundational Input

D+UT Plan

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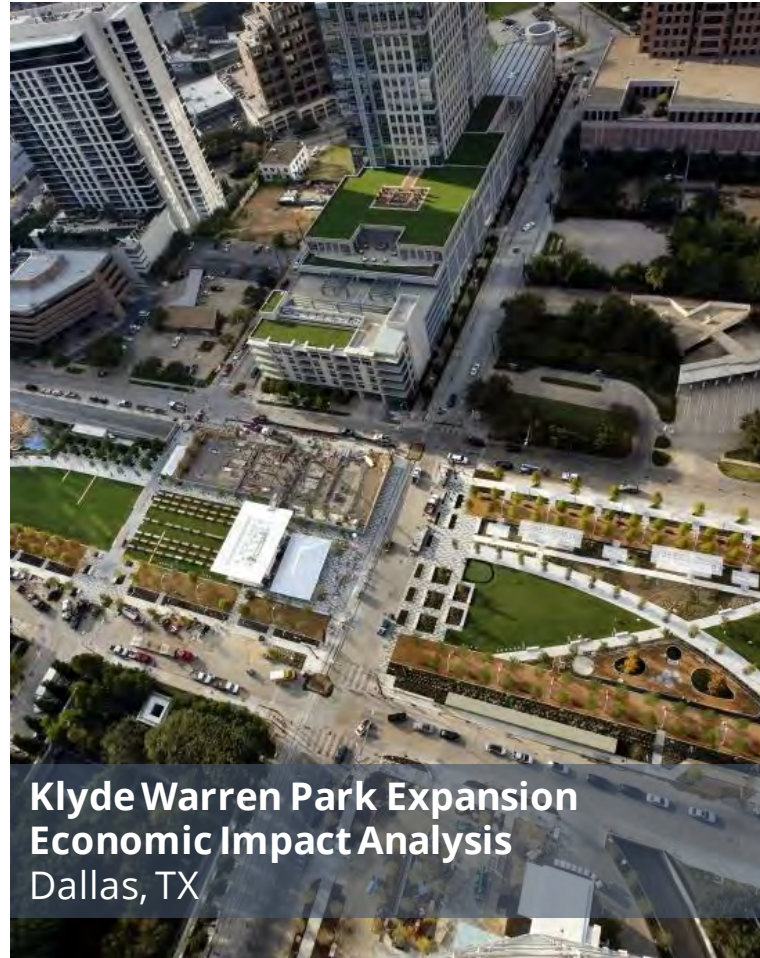
Market
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Foundation



Introduction

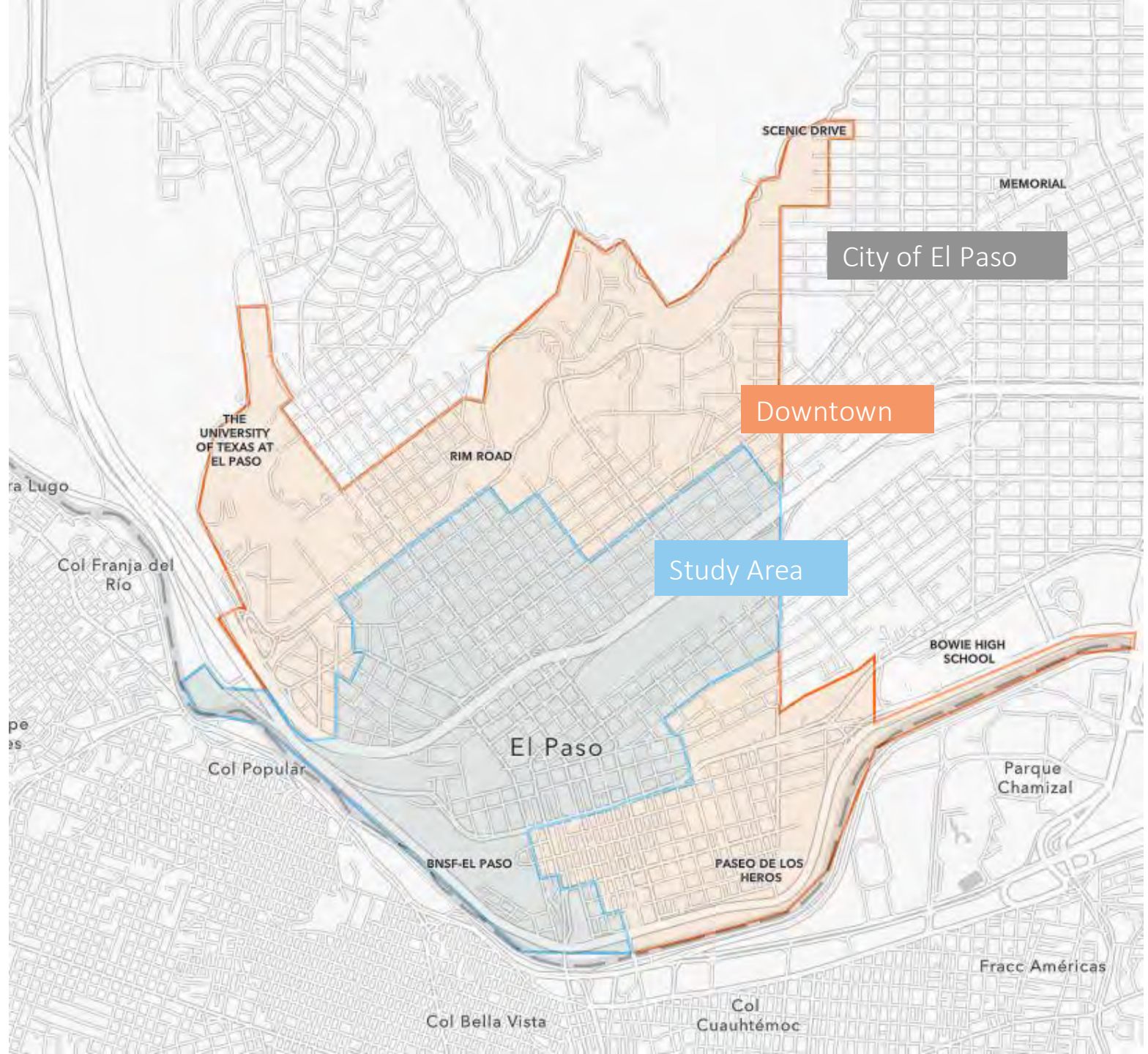
HR&A brings national experience studying the feasibility, impact, and implementation strategy of proposed and actualized highway deck projects.



Introduction

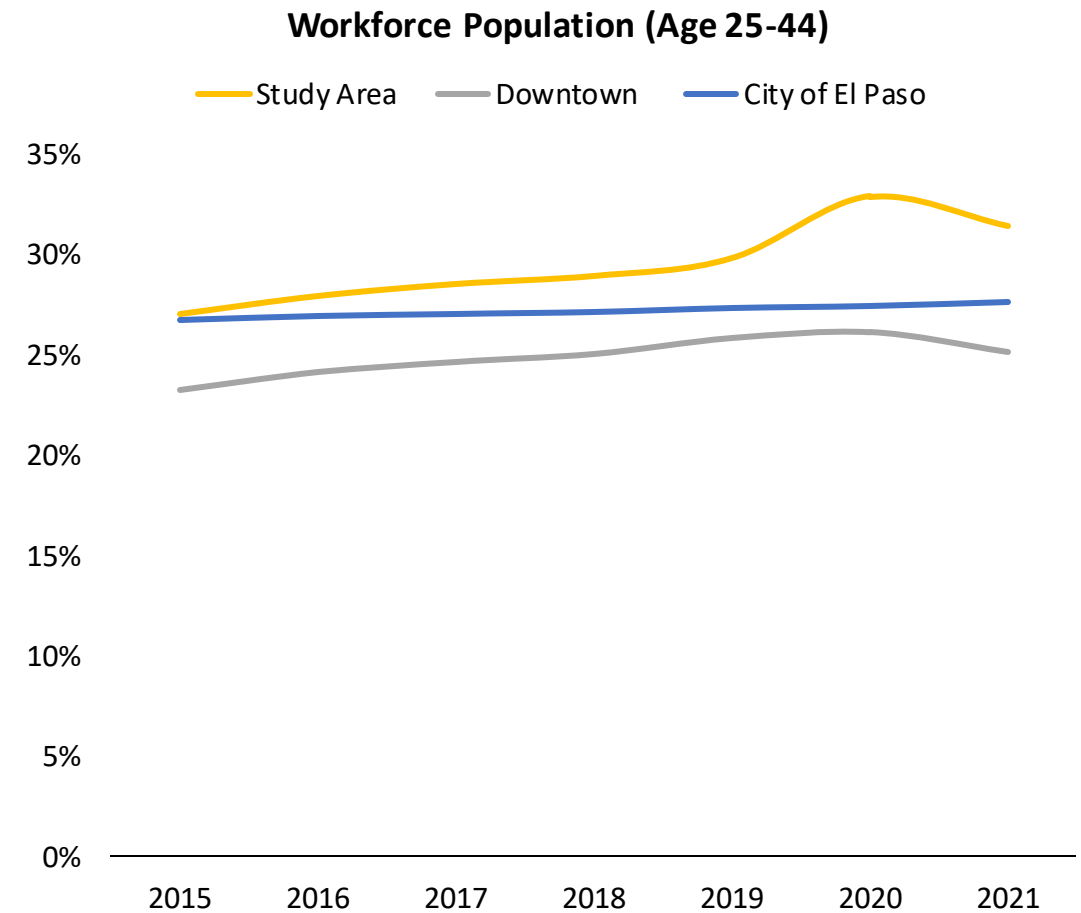
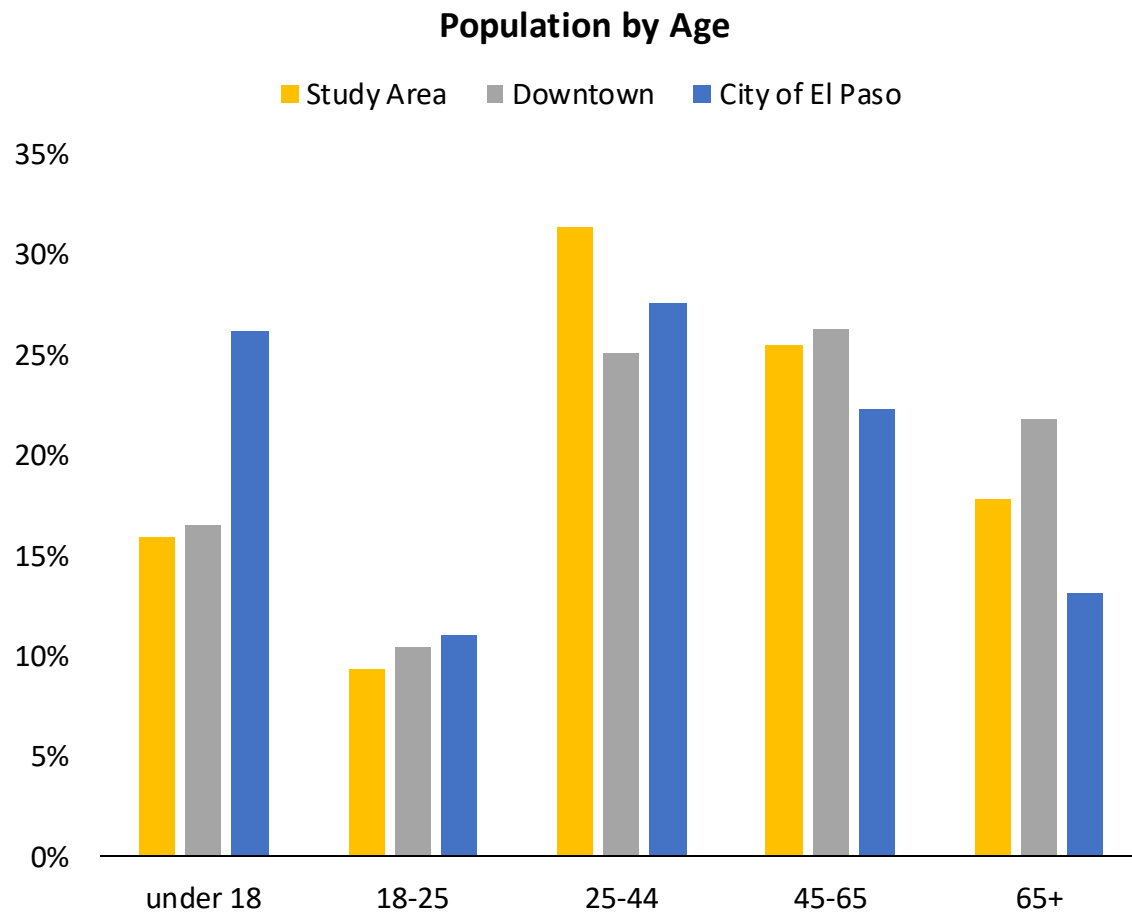
To contextualize Downtown Deck Plaza's potential, we assessed market trends in three geographies: the City of El Paso, the Downtown area (as defined by EPS), and the Study Site including all those Census Block Groups within one-half mile radius of the Plaza.

Note: Stantec's Uptown Downtown Plan "Downtown Market" closely aligns with the "Study Area" shown.



Demographic Analysis

Though the median age within the Study Area is slightly higher than other parts of the city, there has been higher growth in the workforce-aged population.



Demographic Analysis

The Study Area and Downtown have a significantly higher concentration of households with lower-than-average household income and almost no resident with an income over \$75K.

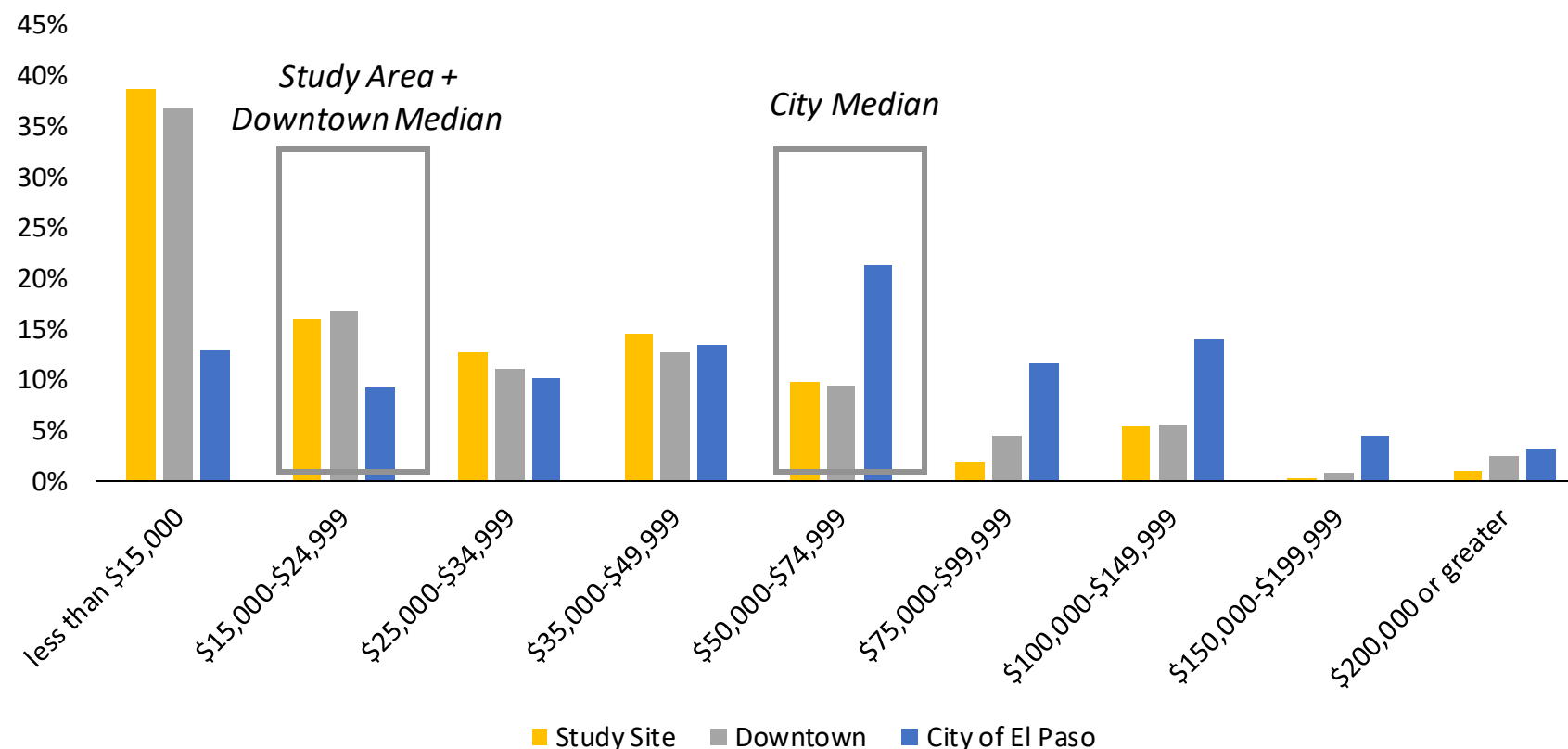
Median Household Income Distribution (2021)

Median Household Income

Study Area: \$20K

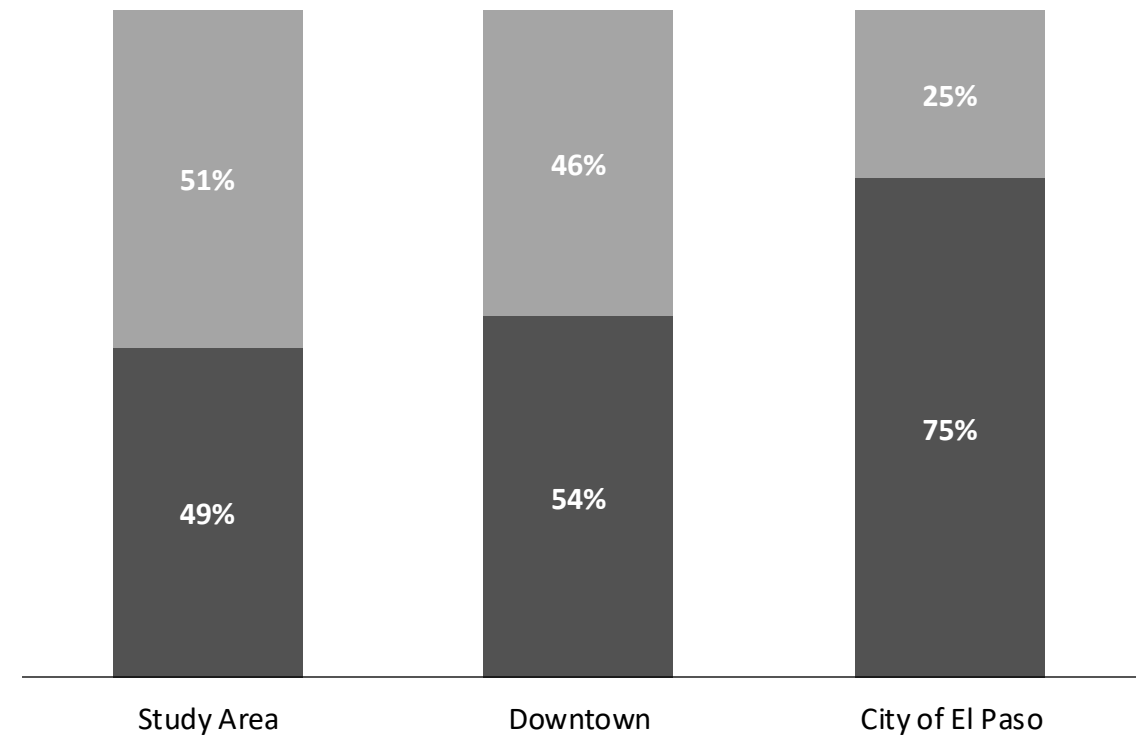
Downtown: \$22K

City of El Paso: \$54K



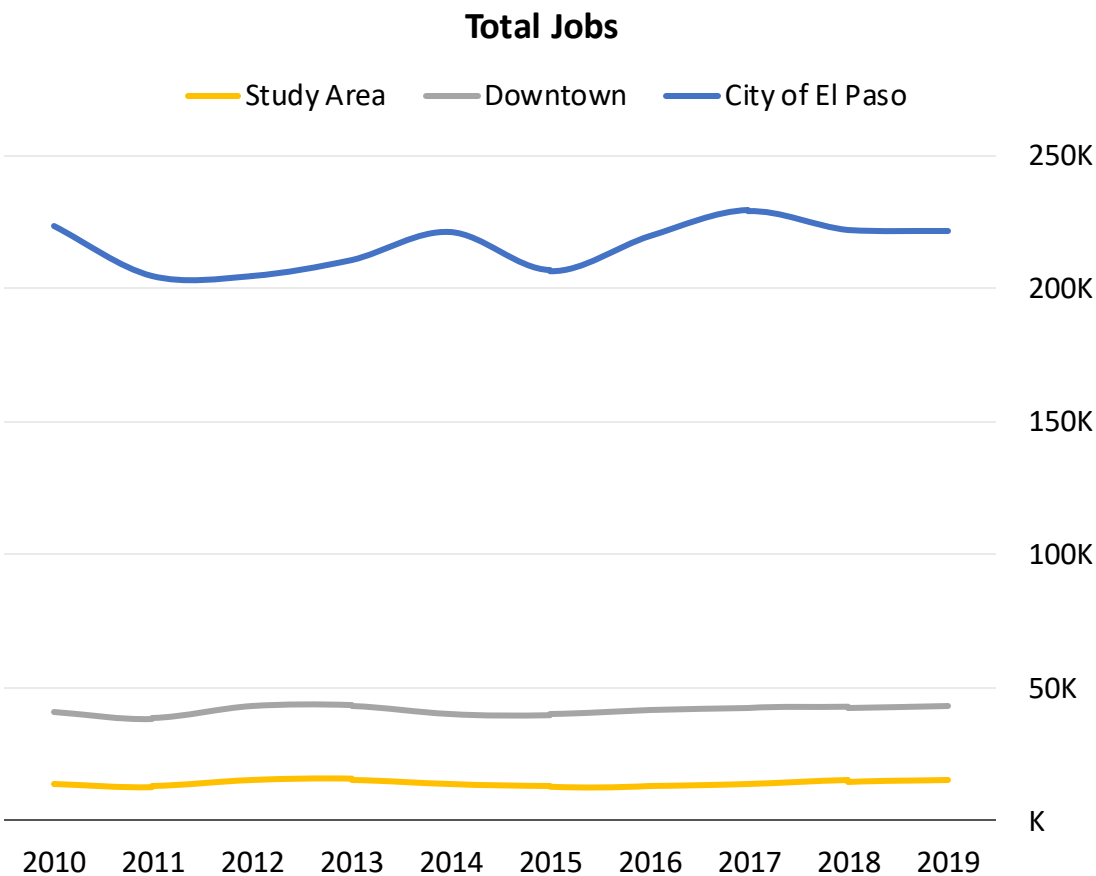
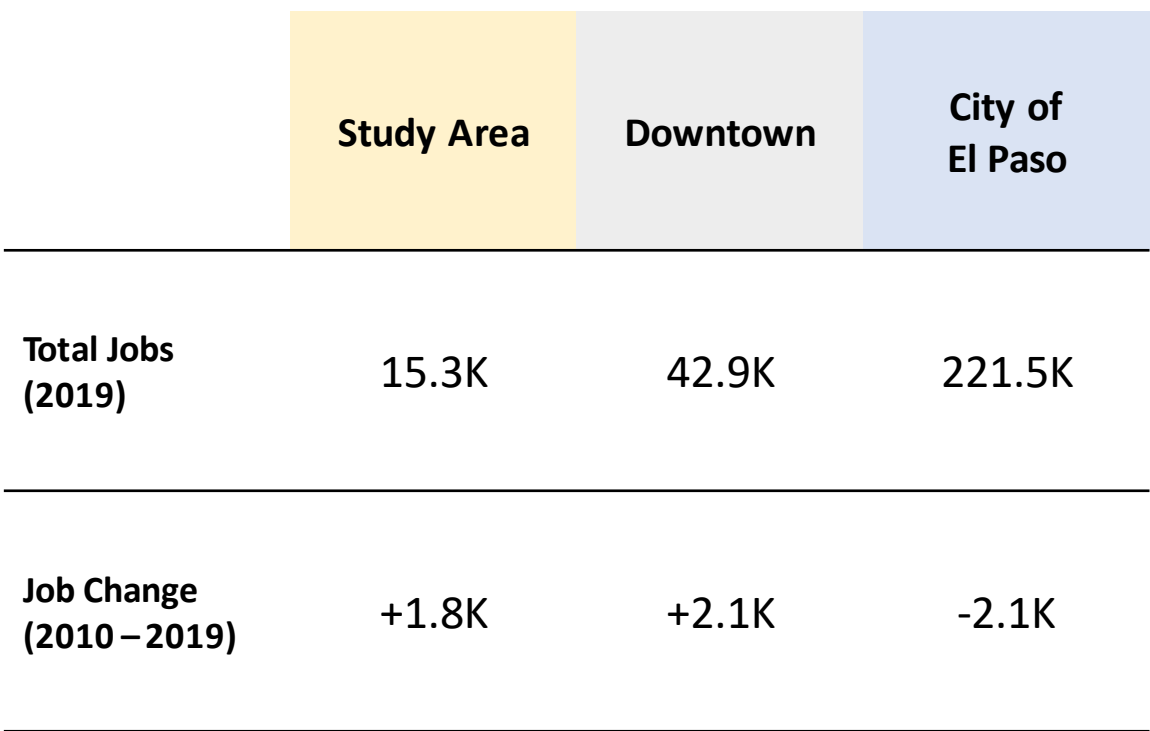
The downtown and study area have a significantly higher proportion of renters and nonfamily households than the City of El Paso.

■ Owner Occupied ■ Renter Occupied



Demographic Analysis

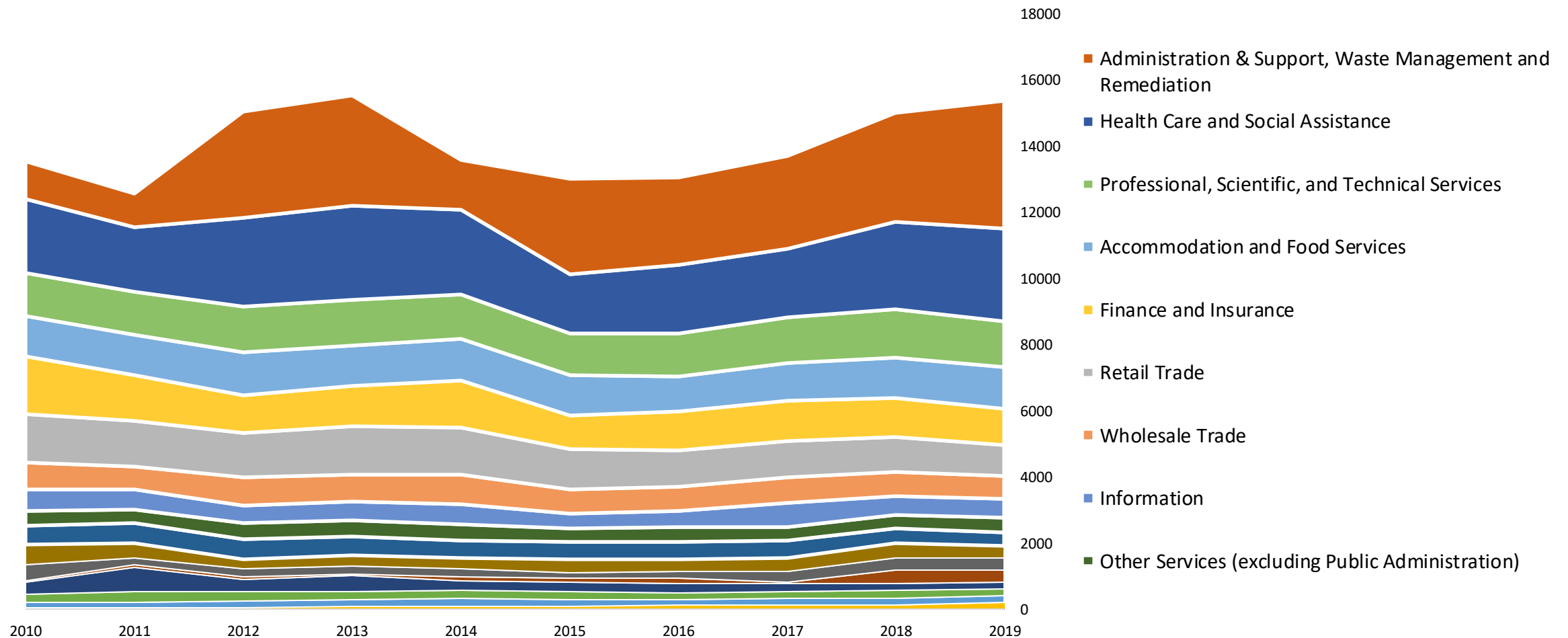
Downtown and the Study Area have been gradually gaining jobs since 2010, while employment trends in the city have fluctuated and even decreased.



Demographic Analysis

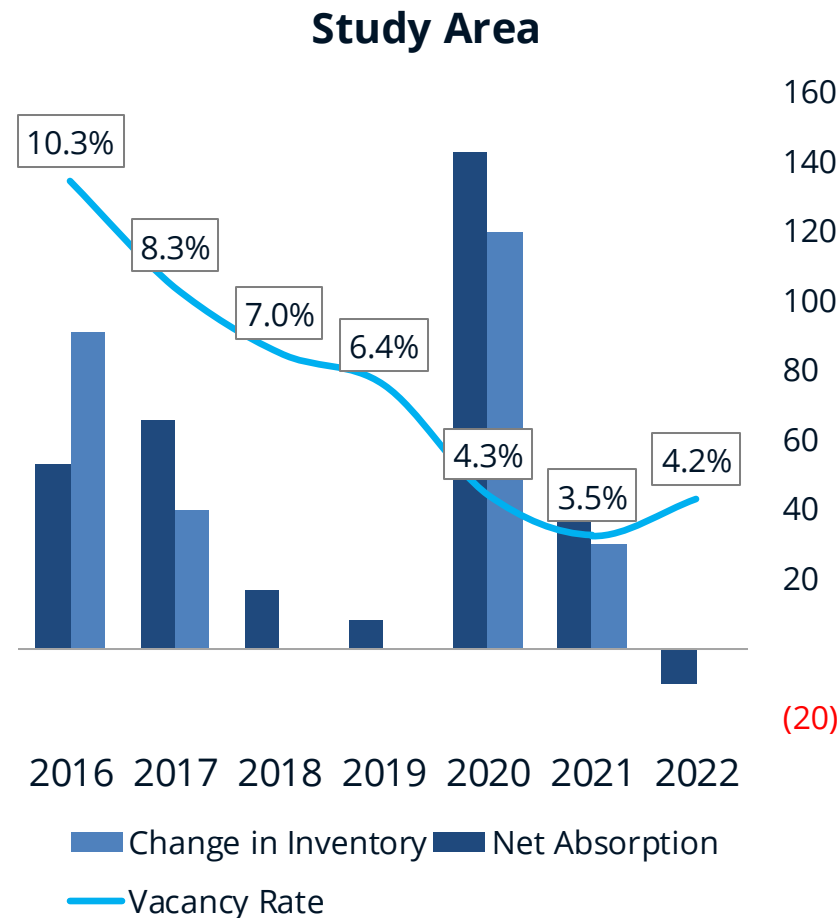
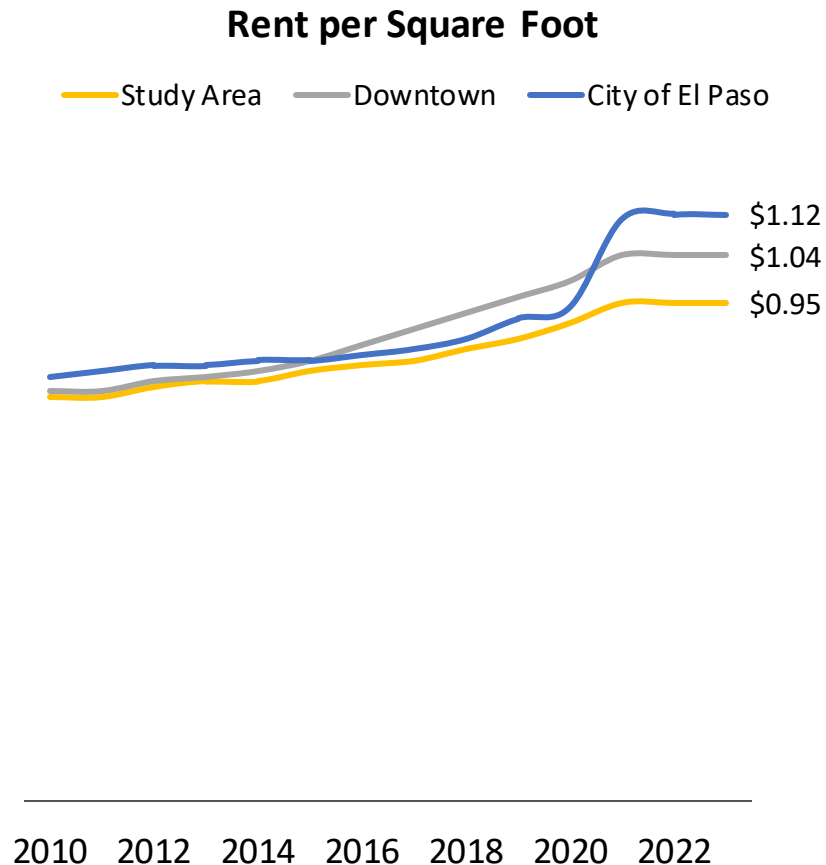
The Study Area has seen growth in administration industries and health care, while other industries have stayed consistent or declined in total jobs since 2010.

Jobs by Industry in the Study Area



Market Analysis | Multifamily

The Study Area currently holds just 2% of the City of El Paso's multifamily housing stock and is mainly comprised of affordable, subsidized units. To create viable density, housing demand in the downtown area must reach significantly higher than the historical capture.



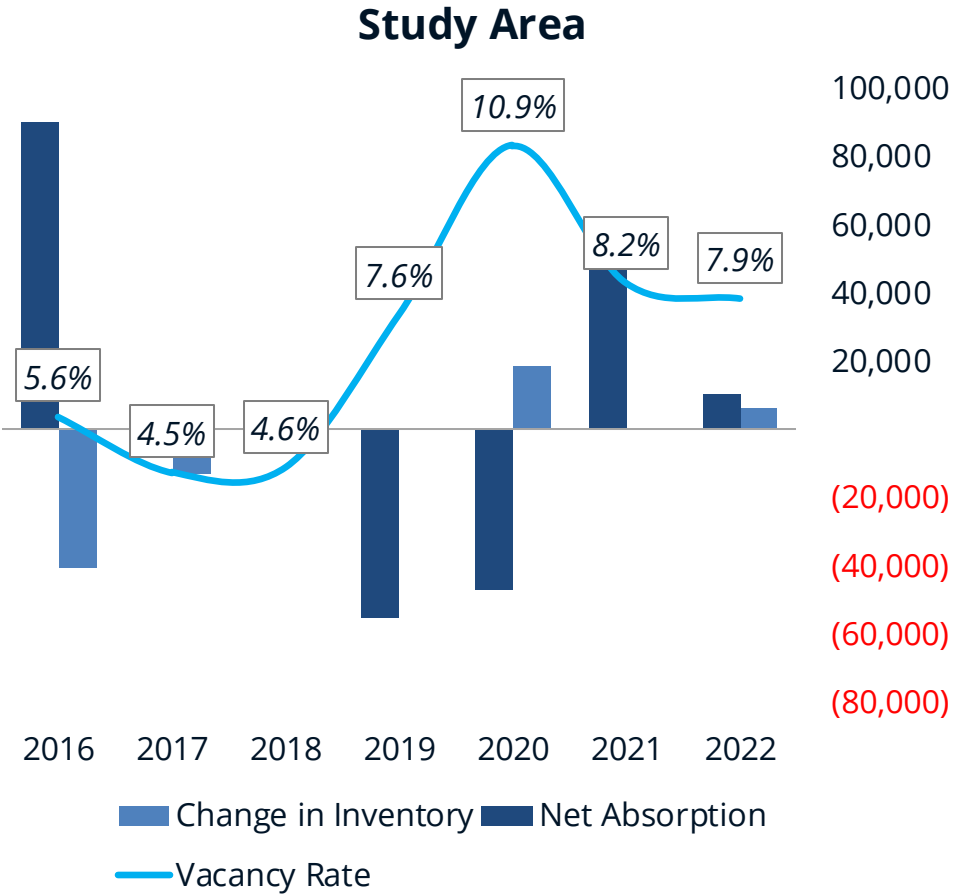
Multifamily Housing Demand

Precedent market analysis found demand for up to 65K units in El Paso and **10K new multifamily units in the Study Area** by 2040 (an aspirational 15% capture rate).

Market Analysis | Office

Office construction has been low in the Study Area, with only one new construction project completed in 2021. Speculative office demand is minimal, with 418K square feet projected for the Study Area.

	Study Area	Downtown	City of El Paso
Inventory SF (2022)	4.5M	8.0M	24.4M
Office Gross Rent Direct PSF (2022)	\$19.31	\$19.45	\$19.90

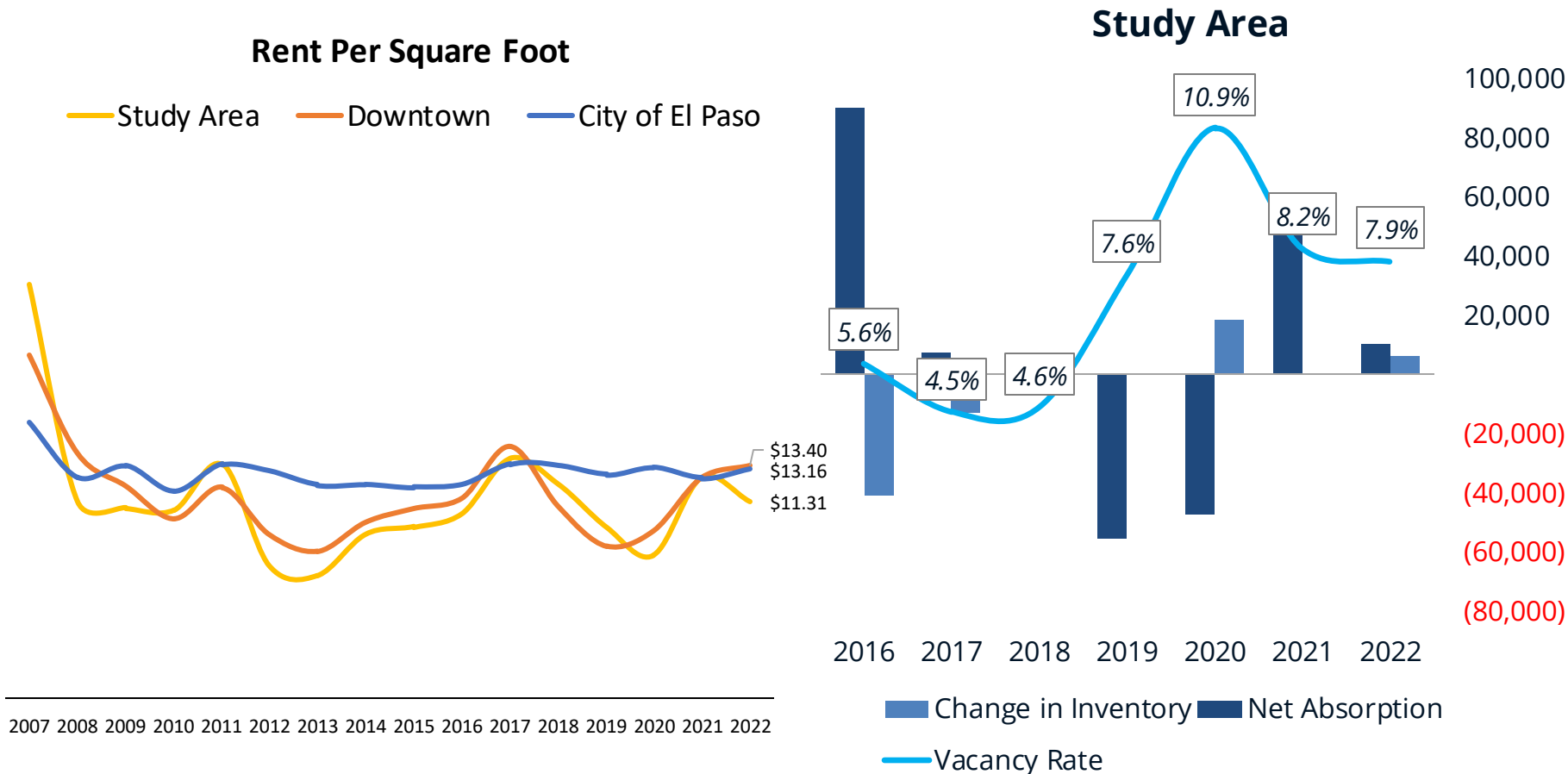


Office Demand

The Study Area is estimated to capture around **400,000 square feet** of office space by 2040, which will host up to 4,000 jobs.

Market Analysis | Retail

The Study Area shows lower rents, lower production, and higher vacancy than the City of El Paso. Moving forward, retail demand will be minimal, and primarily associated with the growth of residents and employees.



Retail Demand

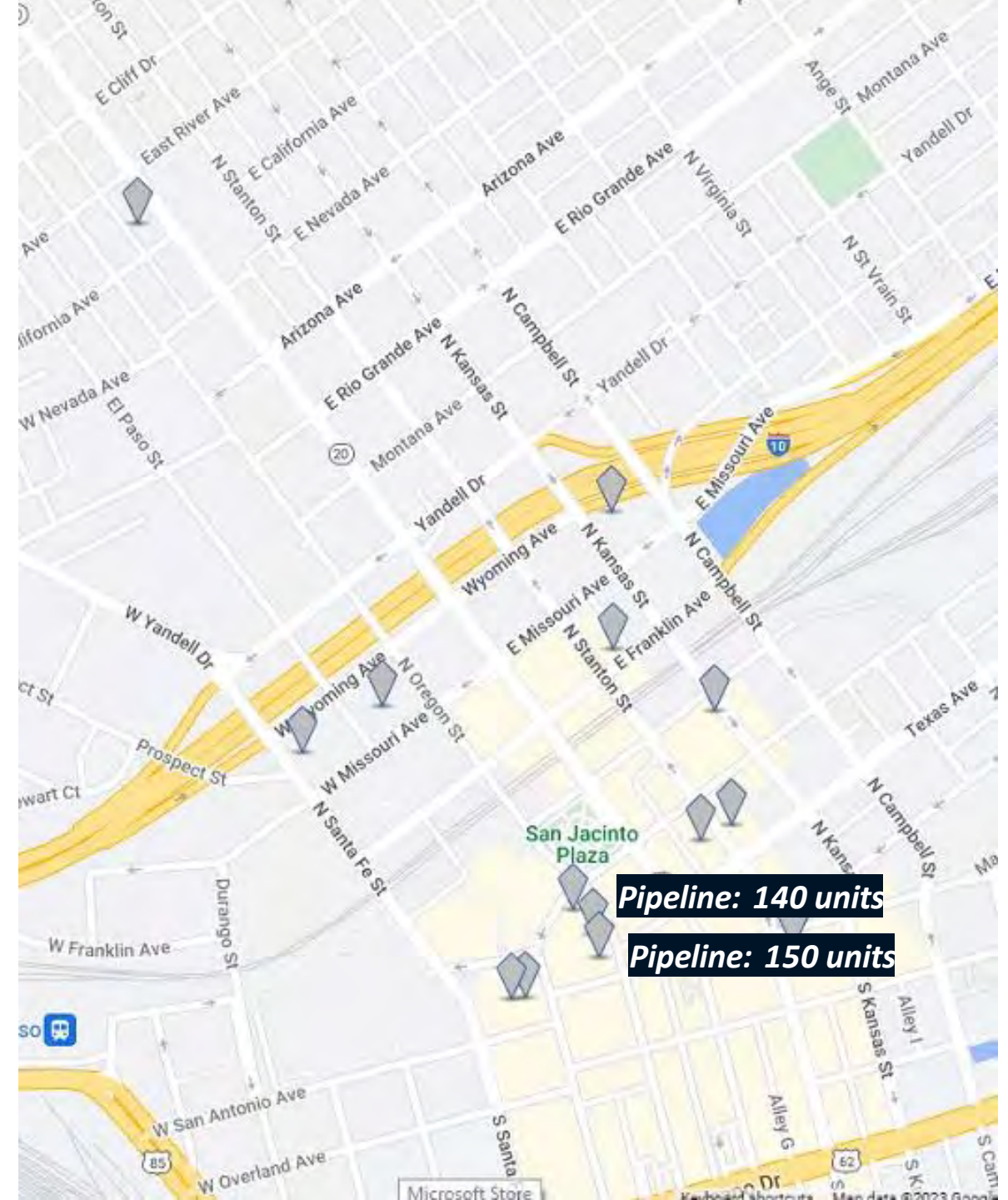
Of the 440K projected SF demand across El Paso in 2040, previous analysis estimates **162K SF of retail can be captured within the Study Area.**

Market Analysis | Hotel

Hotel occupancy rates are higher than pre-pandemic levels, though with two hotels already planned, there is unlikely additional demand for new construction.

Hotel Demand

Precedent market analysis found demand for up to **250 hotel rooms in the Study Area** by 2040, though there are 290 rooms already in the pipeline.



Market Analysis

To meet the projected aspirational demand, the City and its partners will have to make significant investment in strategic residential, office, and retail growth in the Study Area.

Land Use	2040 City Projection	2040 Study Area Projection	2040 Projected Study Area Capture Rate	Current Study Area Capture	Growth Captured Since 2010
Residential	65,000	10,000	15%	3%	2%
Office	1,087,000	418,000	38%	33%	22%
Retail	440,000	162,000	37%	9%	1.3%

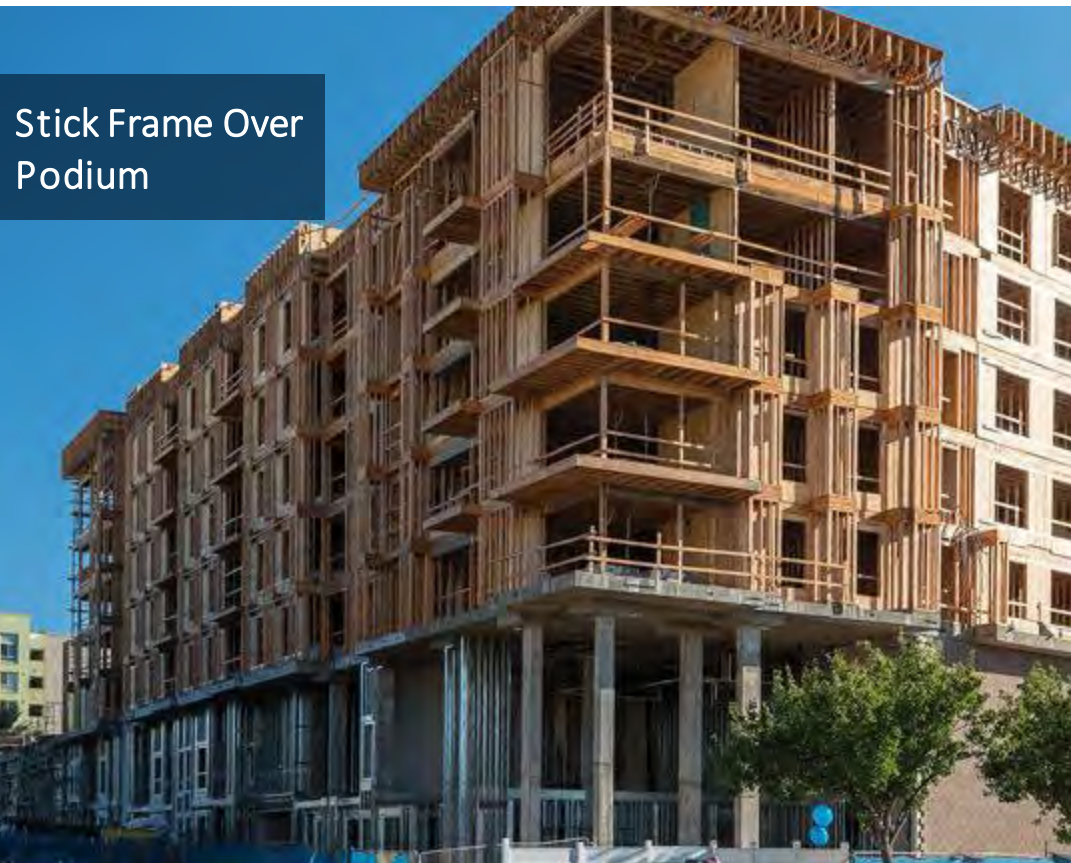
Soft Site Analysis

Within 0.25-mile radius of the proposed Deck Plaza, the consultant team has identified nine unused or underutilized opportunity sites totaling 5.2 acres, or 235K SF.



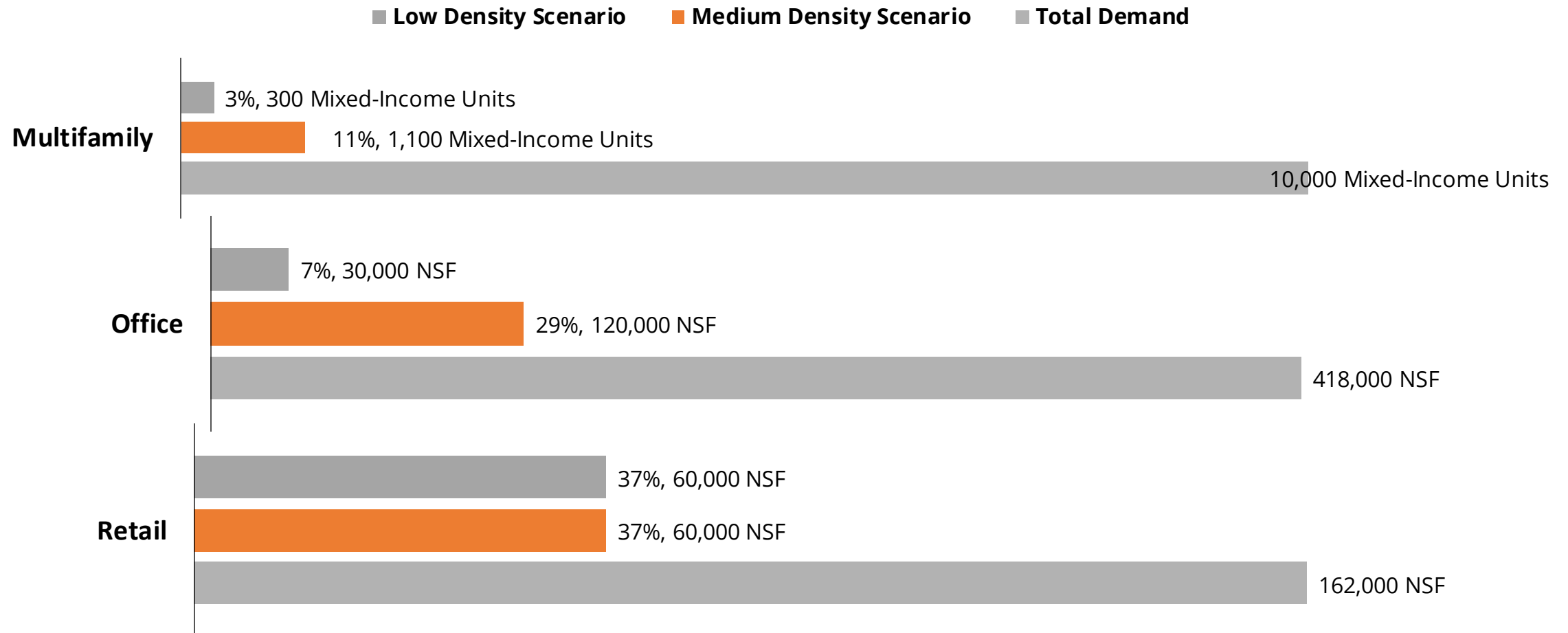
Soft Site Analysis

Lower-cost construction methods, on par with what has been completed recently, will be the most financially feasible in the existing market, though there may be room for some denser steel-framed buildings as the market strengthens.



Soft Site Analysis

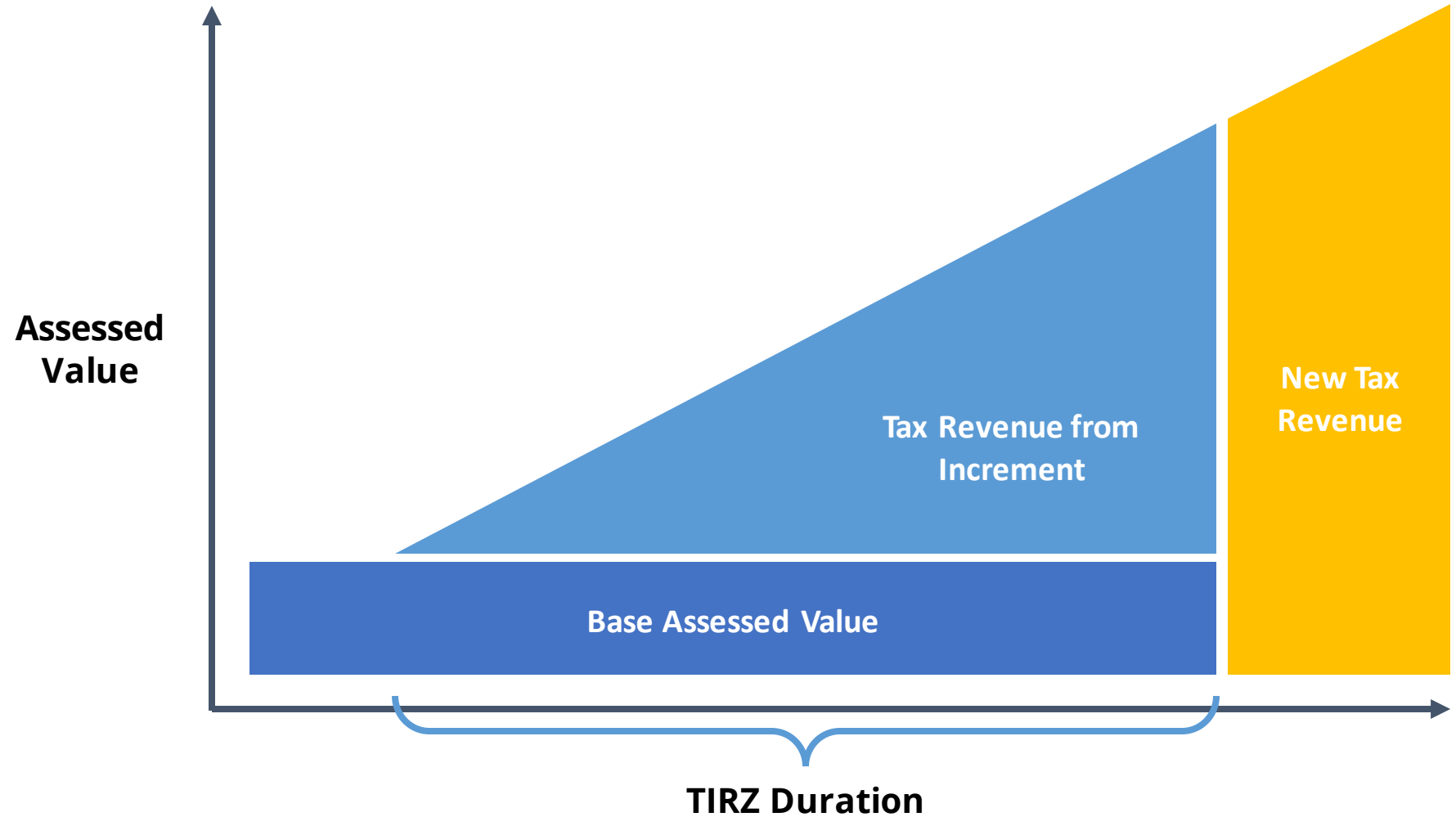
Assuming a primarily housing-driven development approach, with low-cost construction to maintain financial feasibility, the opportunity sites identified could fill up to 10% of the Study Area housing demand, 30% of office demand, and 37% of retail demand.



Next Steps

The HR&A team will study the potential impact of the Deck Plaza on the value and pace of development surrounding the site, in addition to the value of incremental property tax to understand potential funding opportunities for the Deck Plaza.

Sample Tool:
Tax Increment Financing



1. Foundational Input

D+UT Plan

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Precedents/
Analog

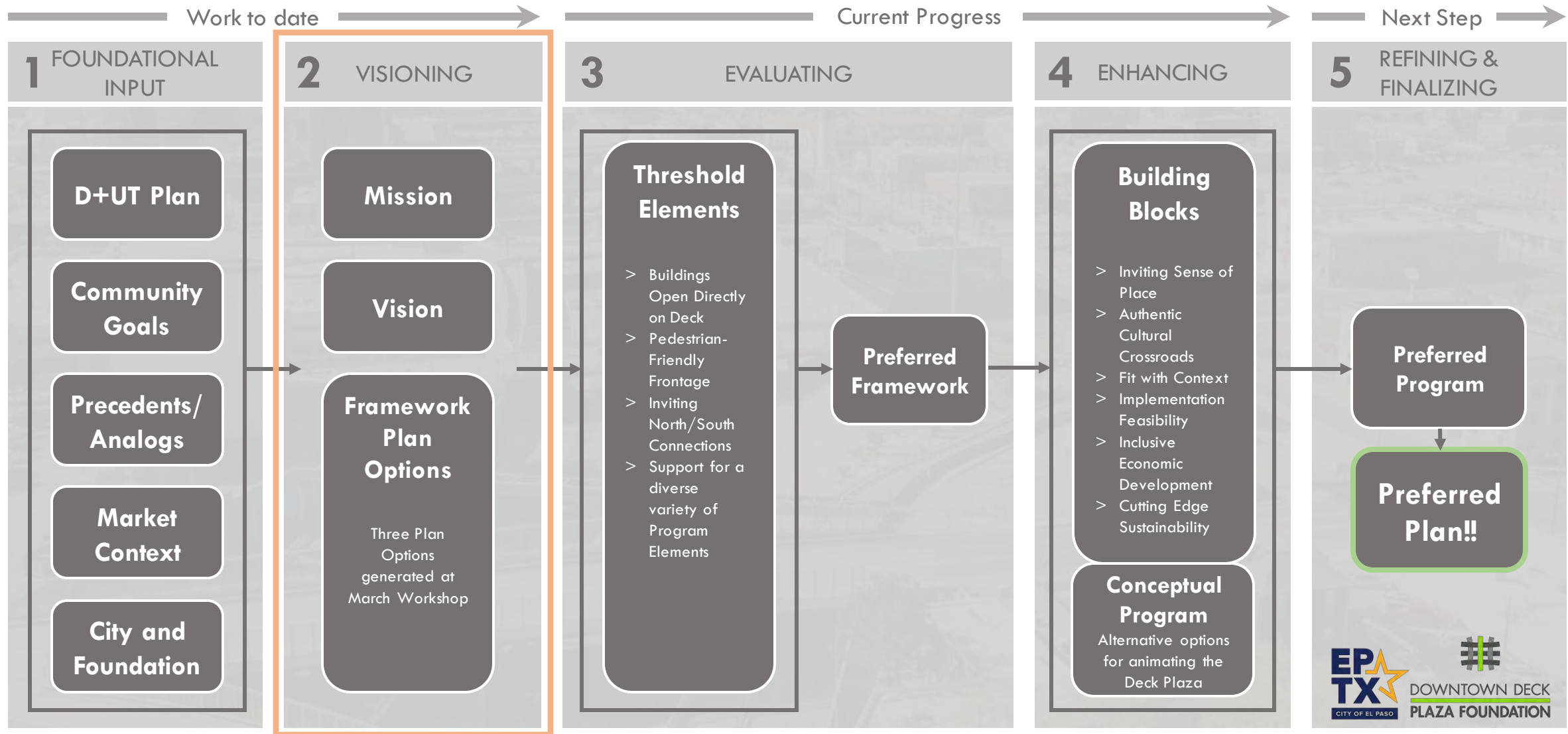
Market
Context

City and
Foundation

CAC Feedback/Questions??

- > Does this analysis resonate?
- > Do you have any questions or additional thoughts?

Design Process:



2. Visioning

Mission

Vision

Framework
Plan Options

An **unprecedented opportunity** to create a unique place that reflects El Paso's rich heritage and culture, reconnecting adjacent neighborhoods to enhance livability, economic opportunity, and a shared sense of community for the binational region.



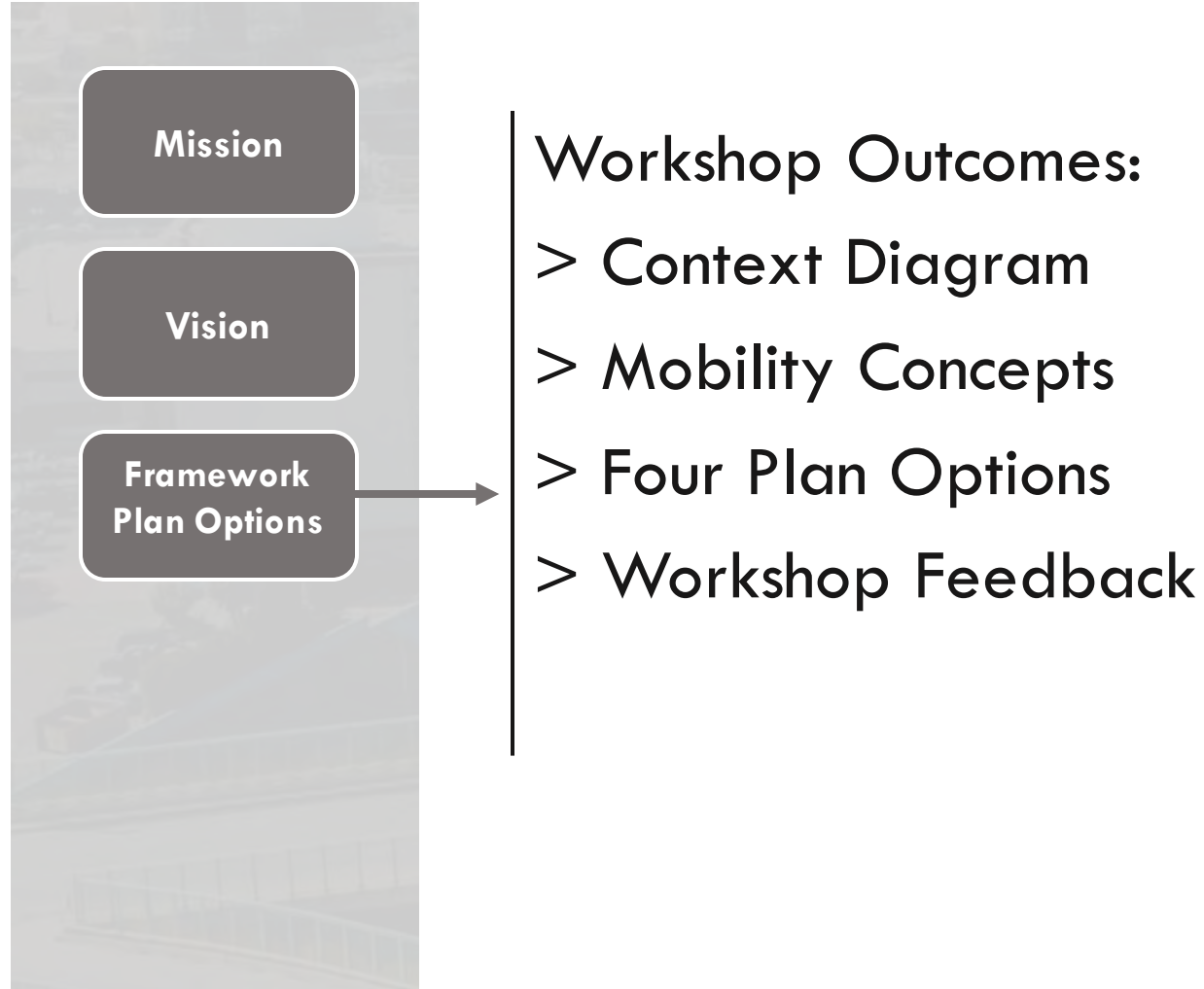
2. Visioning



Vision: The deck will achieve its full promise by being many things at once...

- > From a **regional perspective**, a compelling destination that touches and enriches the lives of all El Pasoans.
- > From a **neighborhood perspective**, an animated “seam” that restores the synergies between nearby neighborhoods and Downtown.
- > From a **Downtown perspective**, enhance Downtown as the heart of 21st century El Paso and its region.

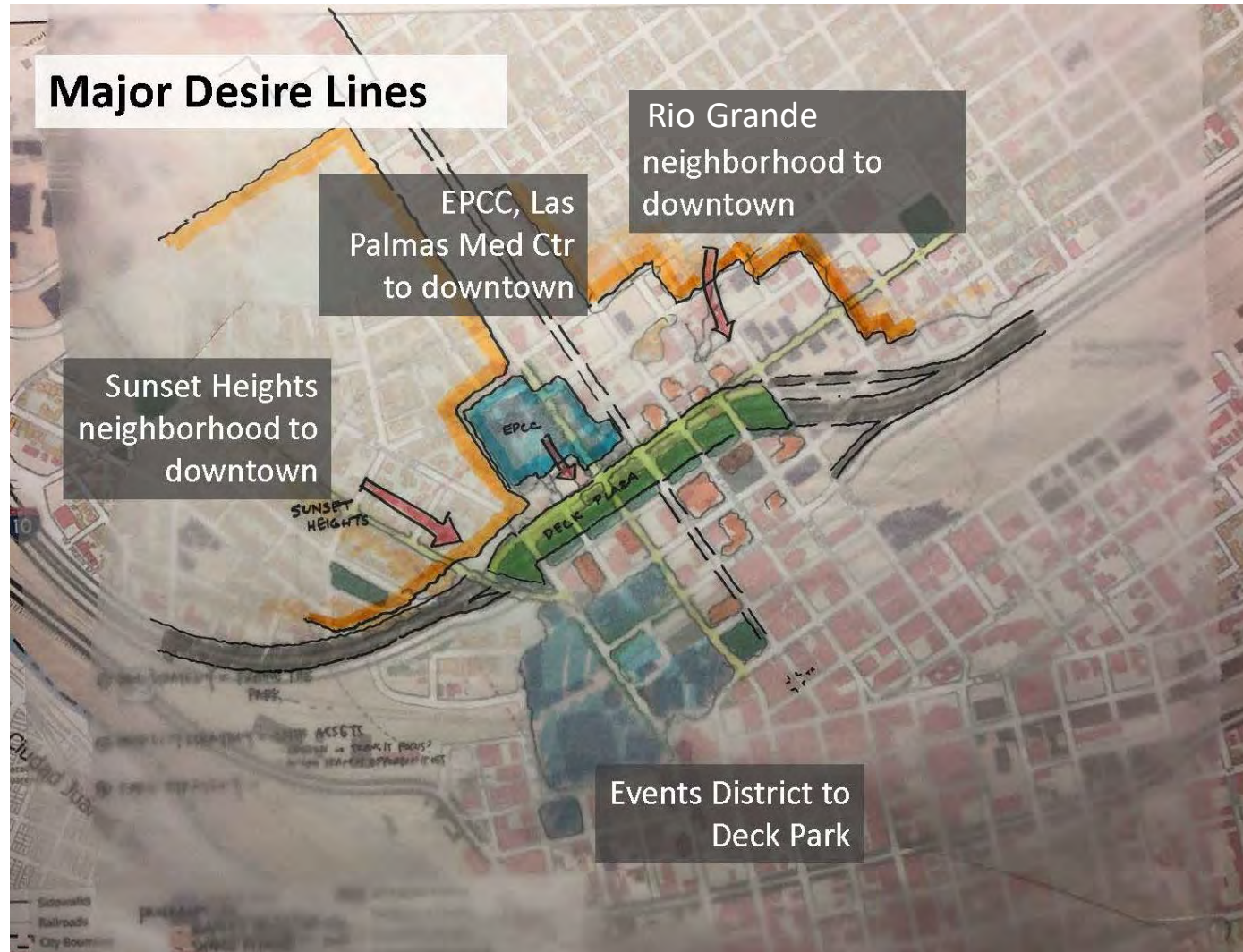
2. Visioning



Context



Mobility



Mobility



Mobility

Transit Center

Programming opportunity for space, and a potential strategy for funding (a transportation enhancement)



Mobility

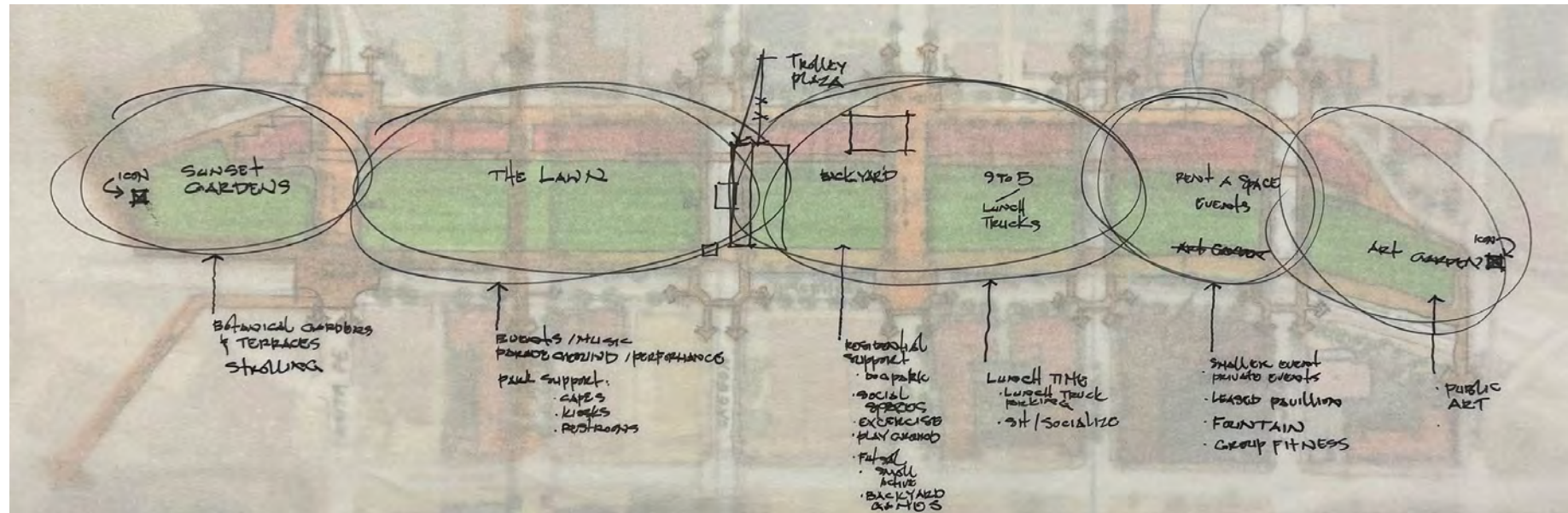
Bicycle/Mobility Hubs

Programming opportunity for space, and a potential strategy for funding (a transportation enhancement)





Early Programming Concepts



The GREAT 'LAWN'



ART GARDEN



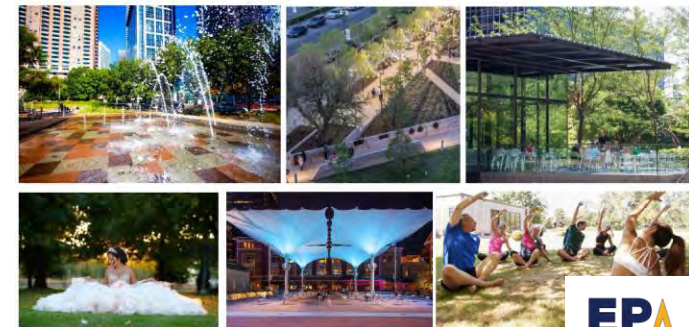
SUNSET GARDENS



BACKYARD & 9 to 5



RENT A SPACE



Framework Plan Option

1a.



Framework Plan Option

1b.



Framework Plan Option

2a.



Framework Plan Option

2b.



Feedback from Workshop:

**This needs to be a place for
all El Pasoans**

Must be welcoming

Multi-generational

No Displacement

All incomes

All abilities

Consider the experience from
the Highway

Don't forget our furry friends!

Safety of the public spaces

Must be SAFE

Physical safety of the
structure and the tunnel.

Pedestrian safety is important,
especially crossings, including
concerns about the speed and
width of those roads.

Safety for event attendees on
the deck.

**Programmatic elements
should reflect El Paso while
serving neighborhoods**

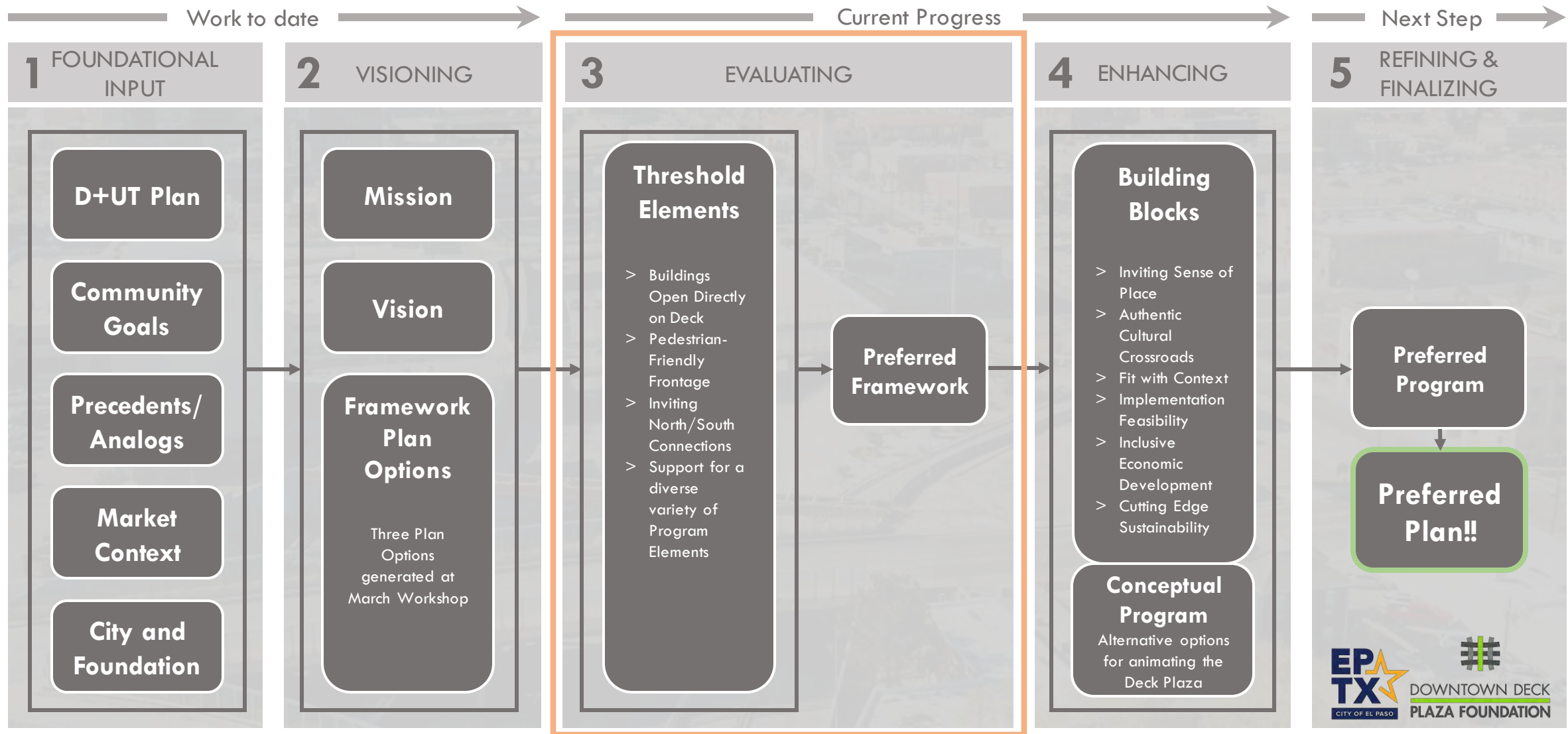
Must be Conscientious

Think of serving residences in
Rio Grande, Sunset Heights,
AND Downtown – all
neighborhoods within walking
distance

Elements should celebrate
what is unique about El Paso –
food, recreation, views,
architecture, climate

Parking is a concern.

Design Process:



3. Evaluating

Threshold Elements

- > Buildings Open Directly on Deck
- > Pedestrian-Friendly Frontage
- > Inviting North/South Connections
- > Support for a diverse variety of Program Elements

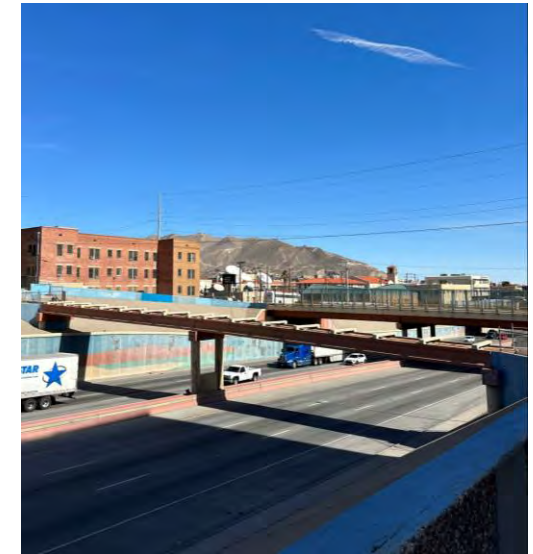
Form-enabling elements that establish the essential underpinning for the right Deck Plaza option



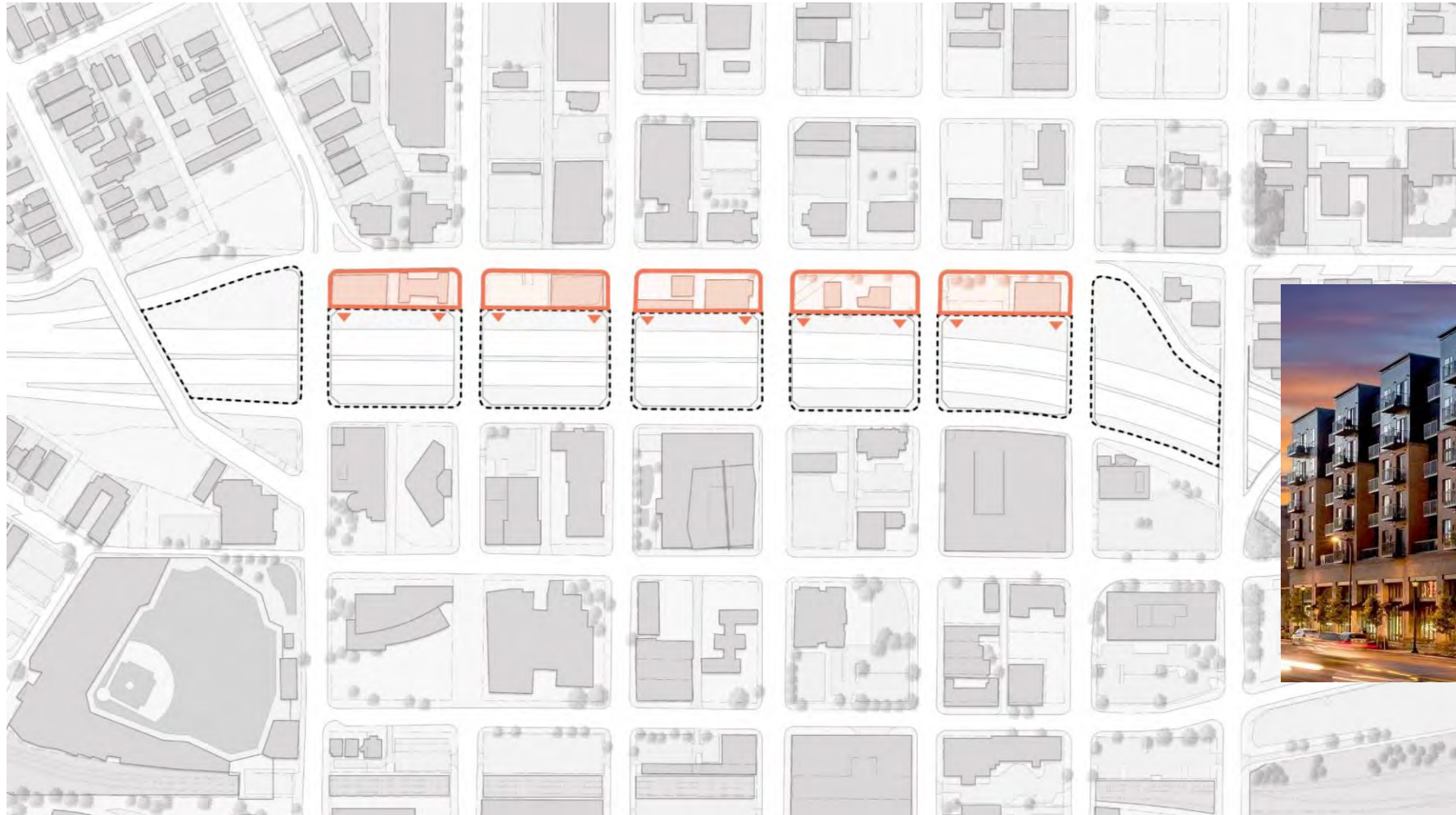
Threshold Elements



Existing Impact of I-10
on the surrounding
neighborhoods



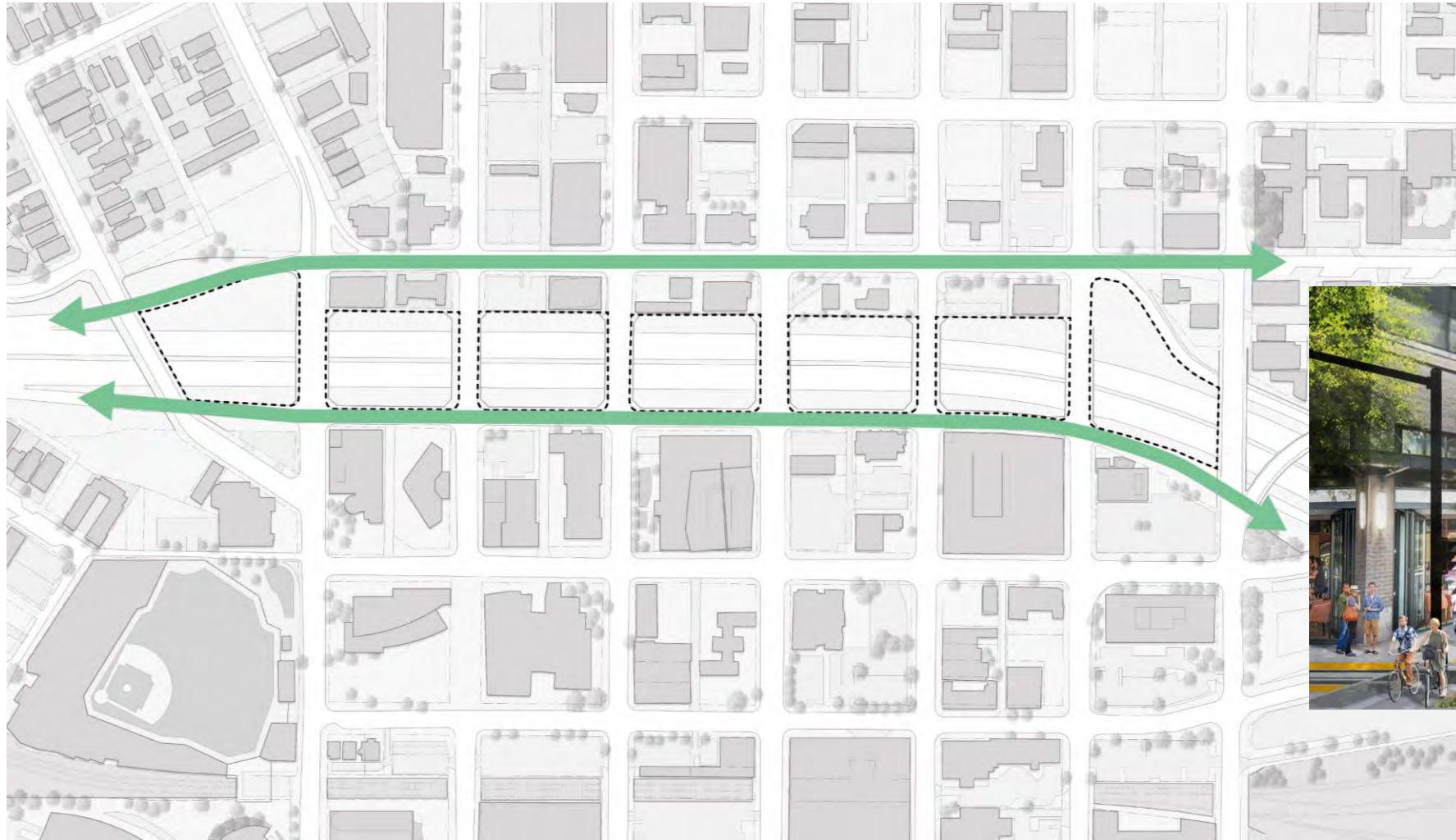
Buildings that open directly onto and animate the deck



Provide terra firma (min 70' developable) or sufficient structural support to support 5-7 story air-rights buildings on the deck.



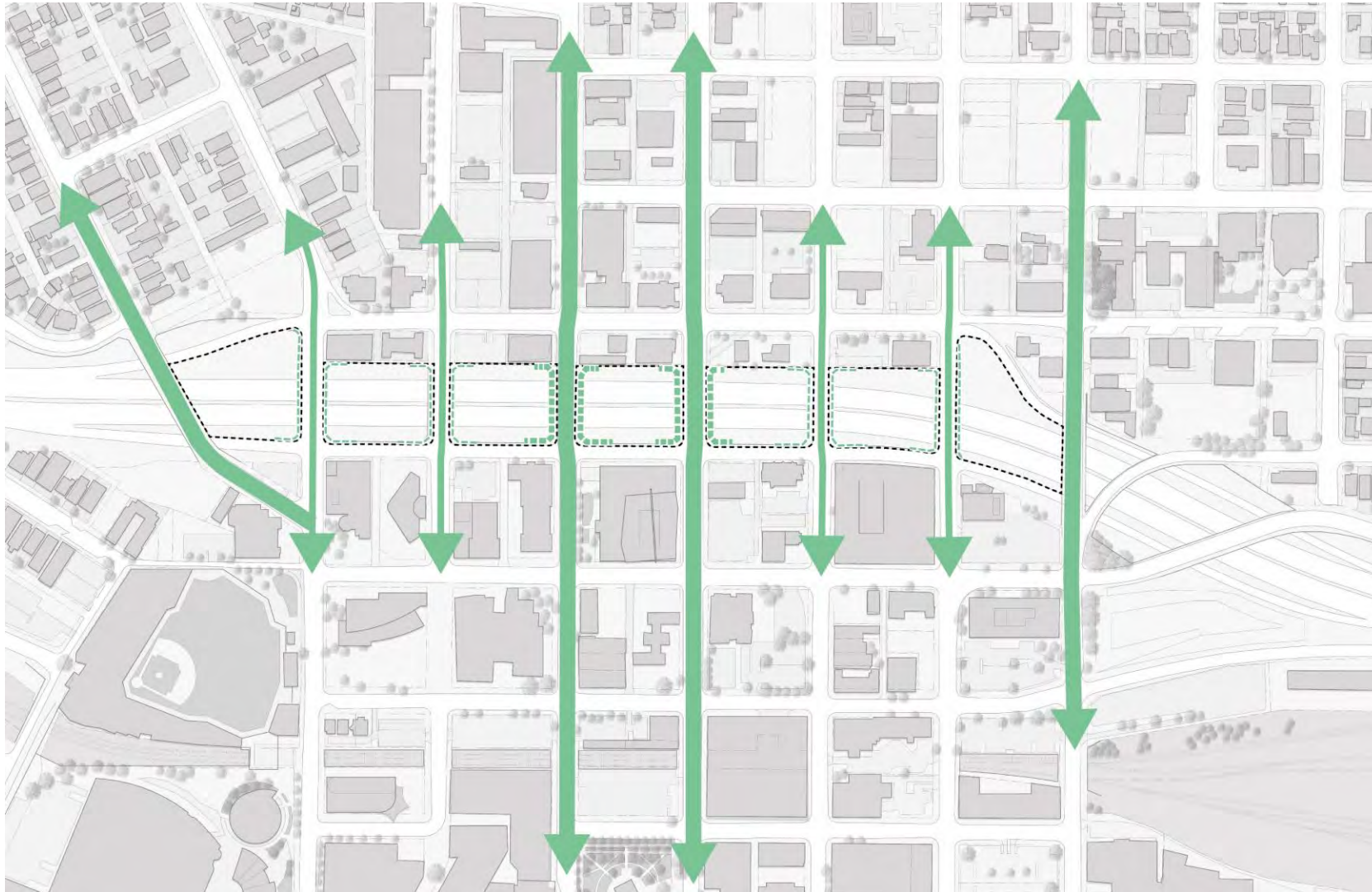
Pedestrian-friendly frontage streets



Provide maximum three lanes, weekend and evening parking or other curbside uses. Easily crossed peds and bikes.



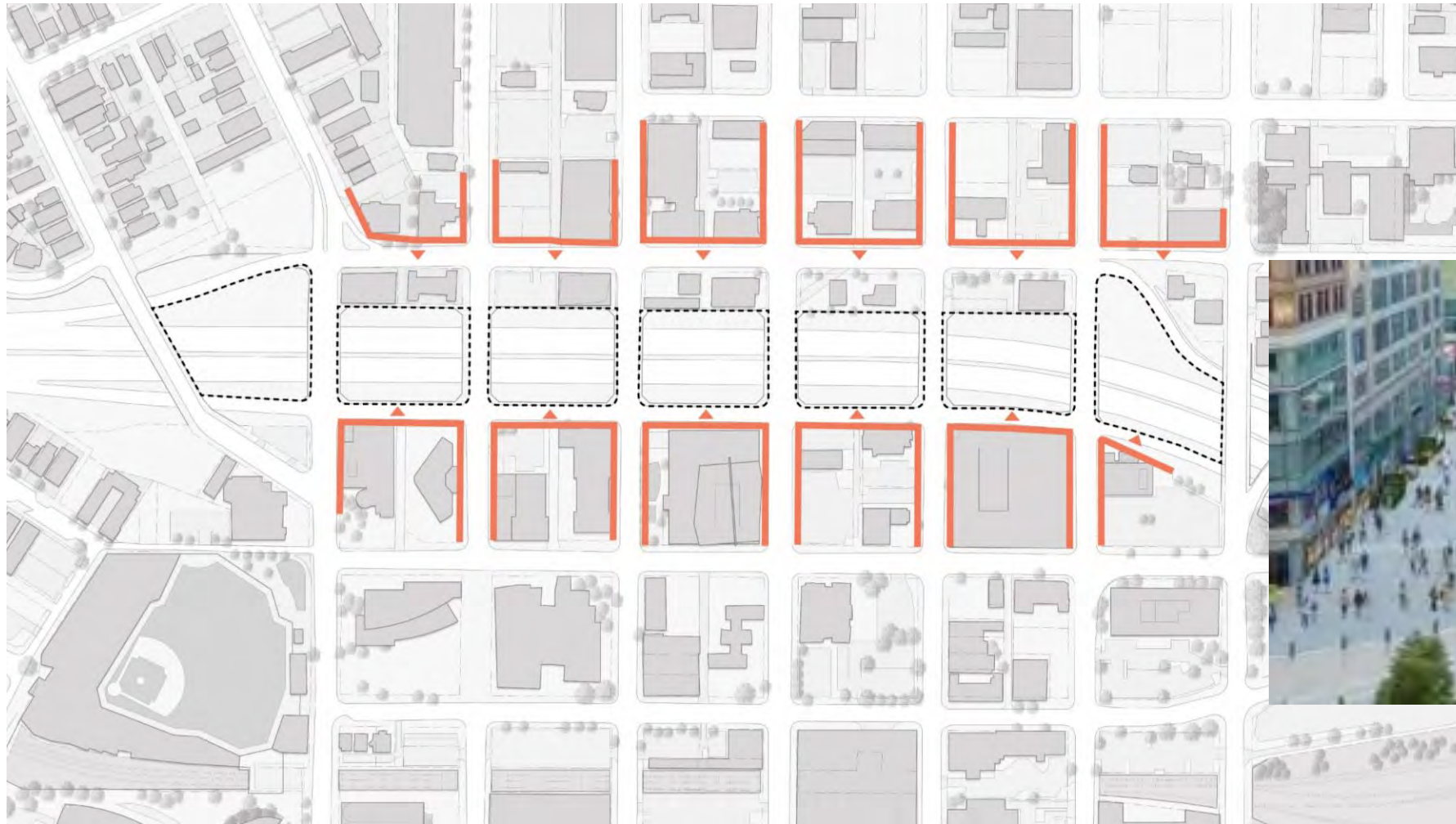
Inviting north/south pedestrian/bike connections



Support inviting north/south pedestrian/bike connections, lined with popup/permanent retail, arts & culture, shade trees/structures, and/or additional pedestrian amenities.



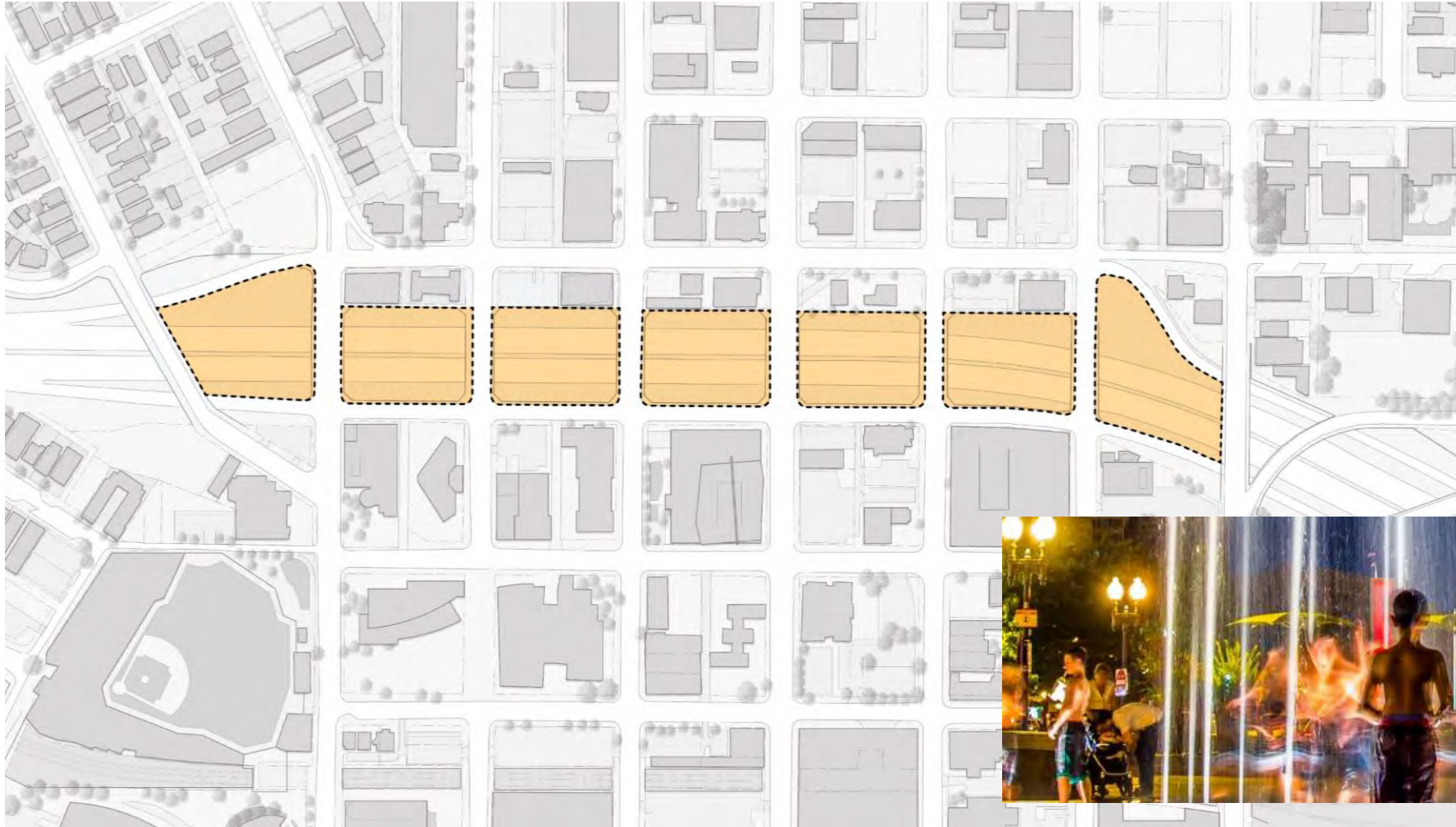
Frontage streets configured to allow new buildings and retrofits that face the Deck/Plaza



Configure frontage streets to accommodate redevelopment and/or building retrofits that face the Deck Plaza



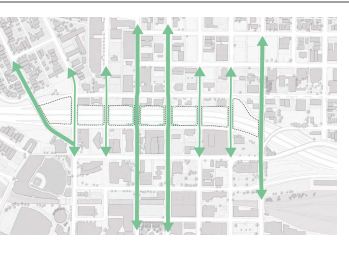
Support a diverse variety of features to animate and amenitize the Deck Plaza



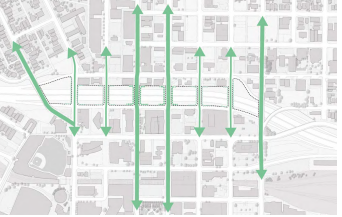
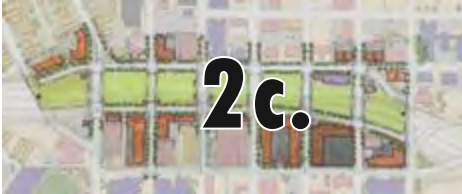
Provide sufficient structure to **support** vegetation, shallow fountains, shade structures, and more. Furthermore, these features will change over time meaning that the deck must be **adaptable** to adjust changing ideas and aspirations.



Evaluation Summary:

Framework Options → Thresholds ↓				
	Yes AND preserves Existing	Yes	No	No
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes, to north	Yes, to north	No	Yes, to south
	Yes	Yes	Yes, but wider deck span	Yes, but wider deck span
Responds to Feedback	Yes	No	No	No

Evaluation Summary:

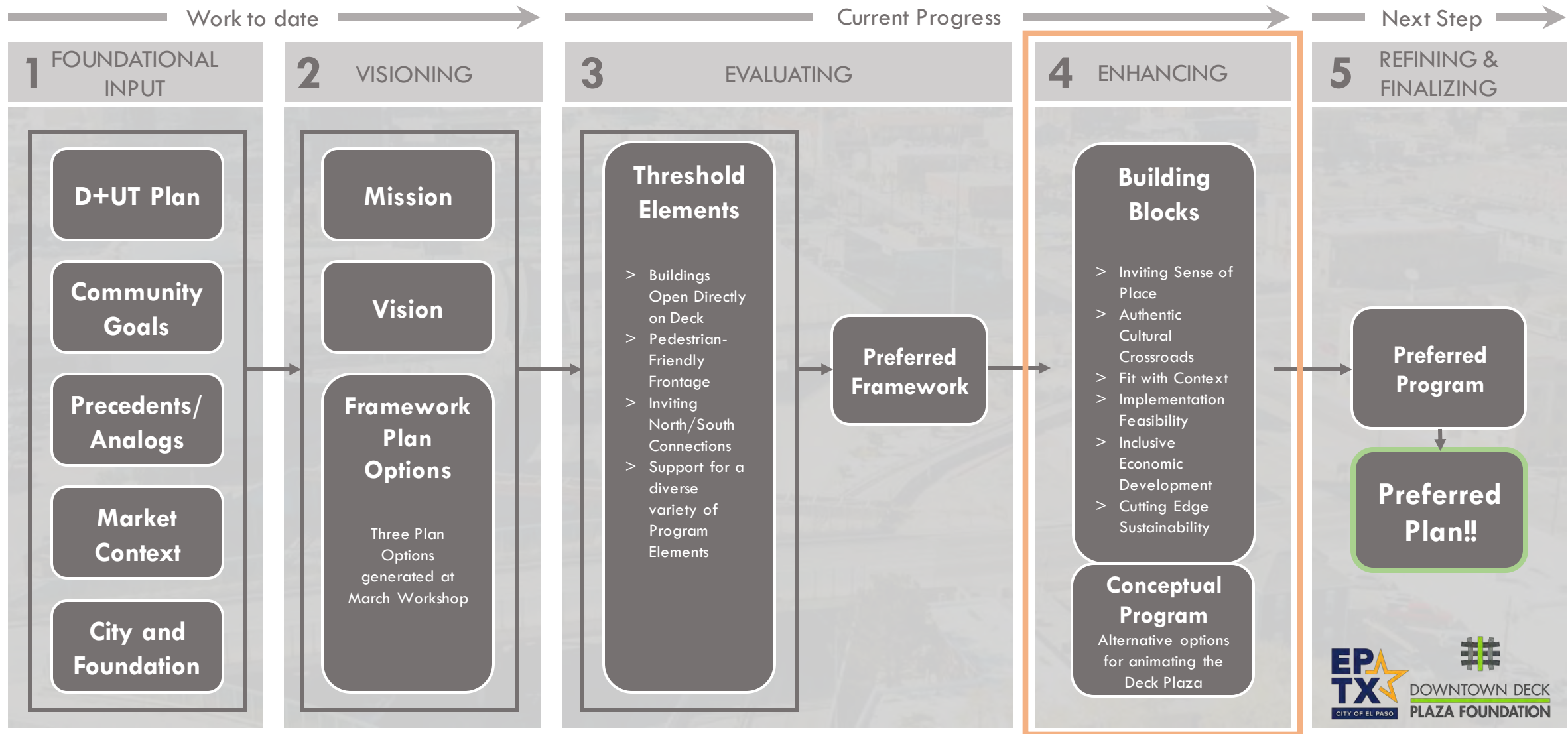
Framework Options → Thresholds ↓     				
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Framework Plan Option

1a.



Process:



4. Enhancing

Building Blocks

- > Inviting Sense of Place
- > Authentic Cultural Crossroads
- > Fit with Context
- > Implementation Feasibility
- > Inclusive Economic Development
- > Cutting Edge Sustainability

Conceptual Program

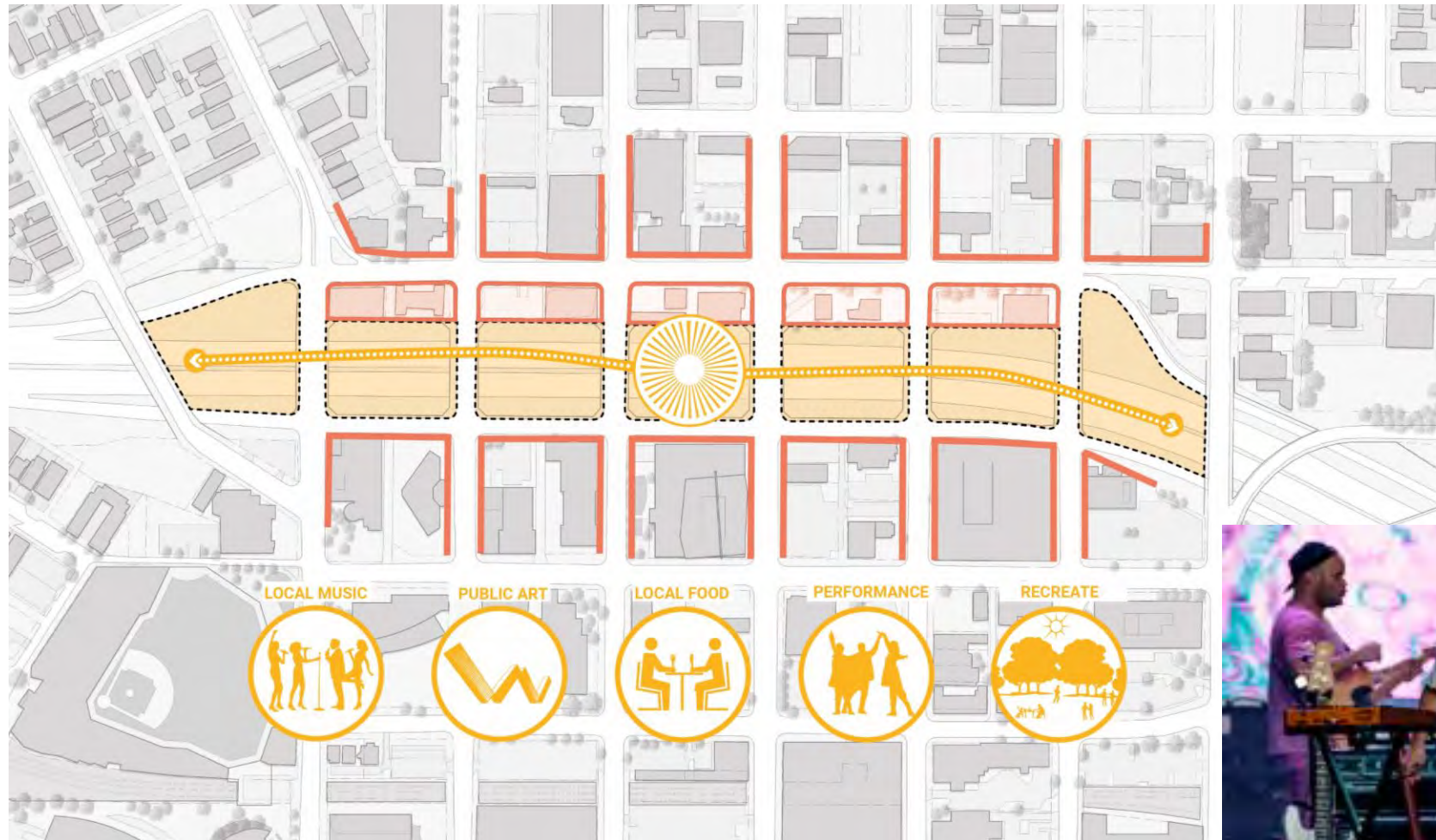
Alternative options for animating the Deck Plaza

Creating El Paso's next great public place: putting the Urban Design Building Blocks to work.

- > Inviting Sense of Place
- > Authentic Cultural Crossroads
- > Fit with Context
- > Implementation Feasibility
- > Inclusive Economic Development
- > Cutting Edge Sustainability



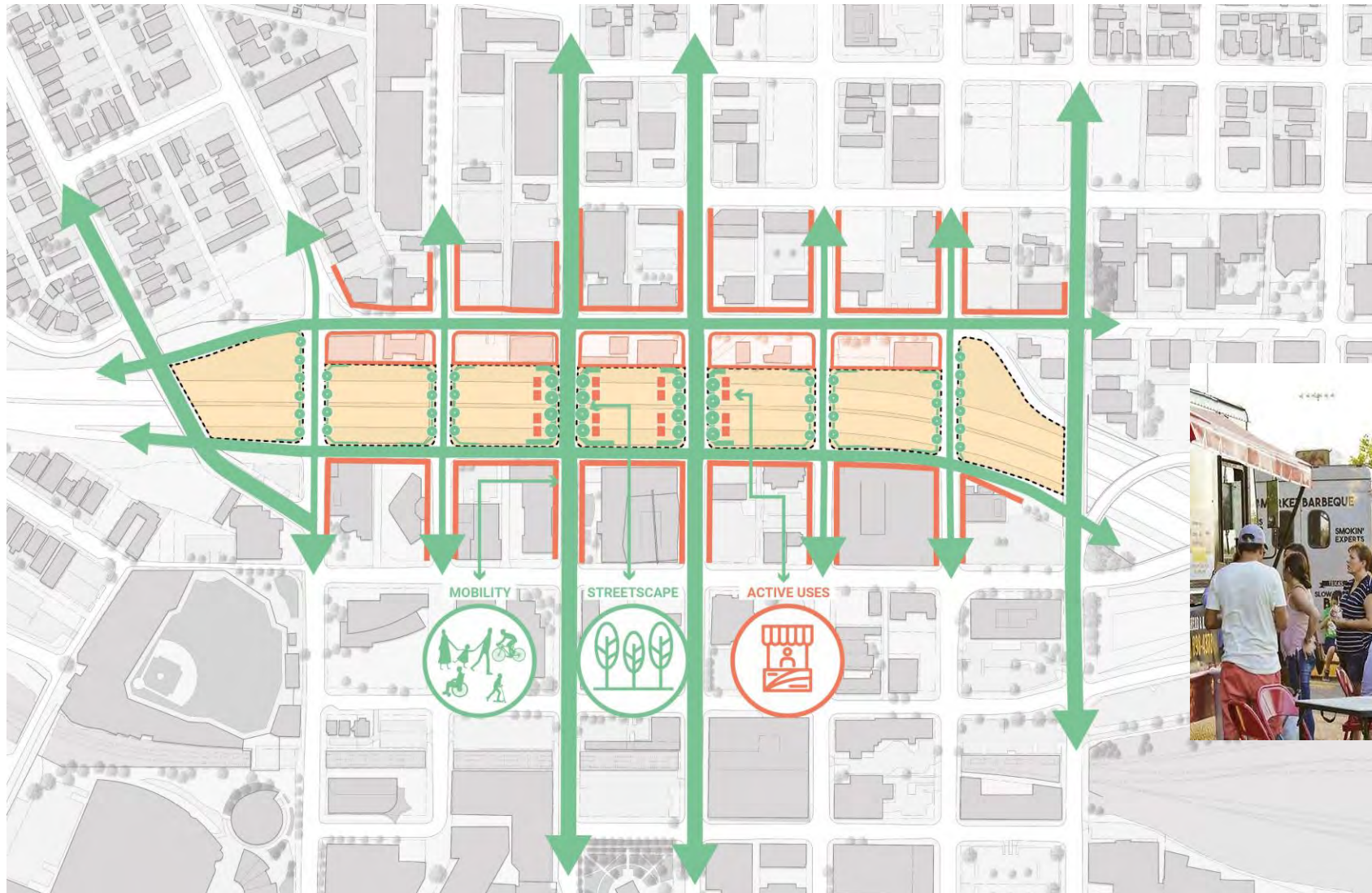
Authentic cultural crossroads



Promote a mix of cultural, nonprofit, and commercial uses that bring El Paso's diverse culture of food, music, art, performance, and innovation to **every part** of the Deck Plaza. Create a lively east/west walk that celebrates the Deck Plaza's multicultural richness.



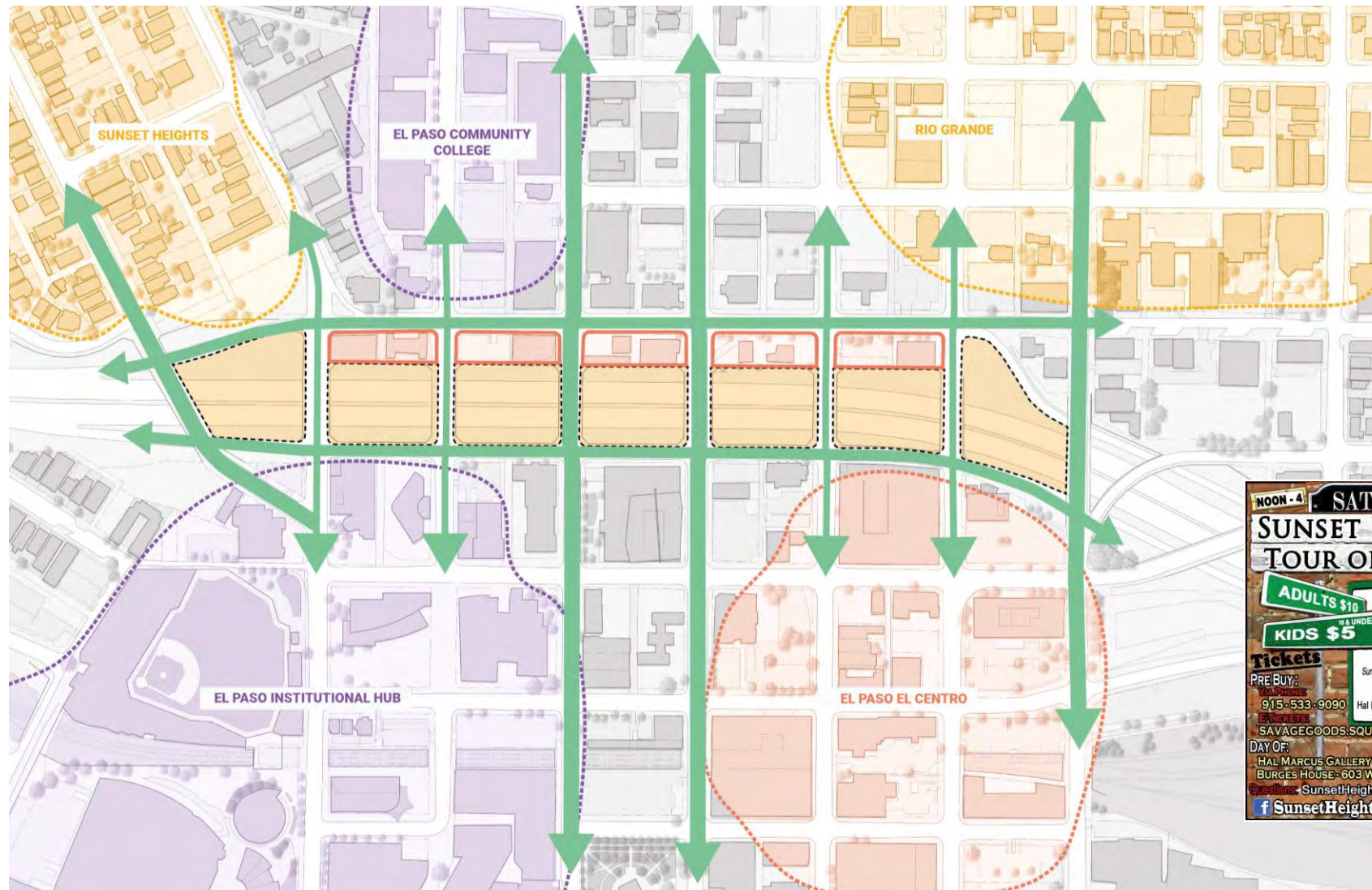
Enhanced connectivity/accessibility



Promote inviting north/south pedestrian/bike connections: popup/permanent retail, arts & culture, shade trees/structures, additional pedestrian amenities—on and off the deck.



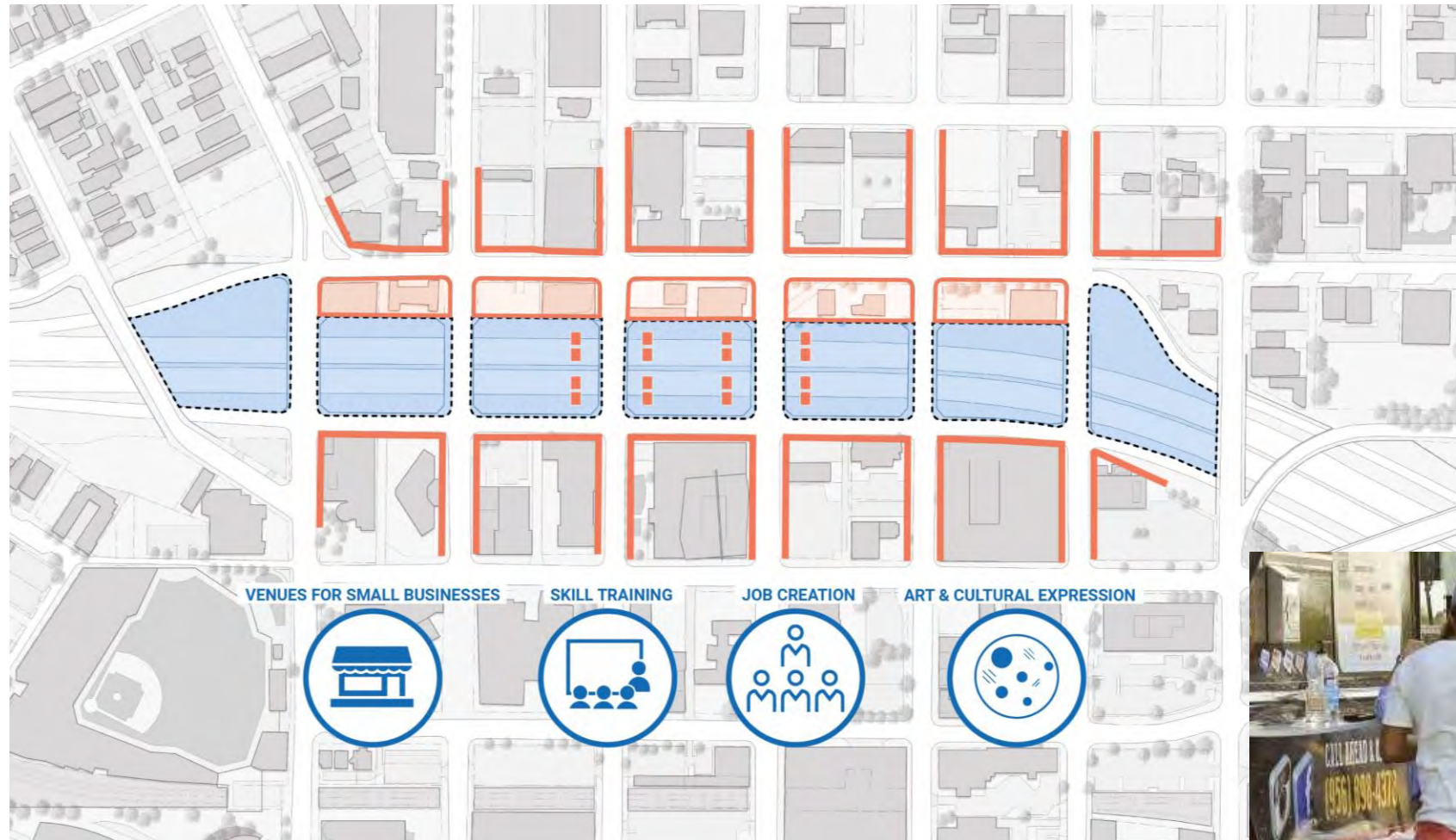
Fit with neighborhood/Downtown context



Overcome the rift created by the highway by tapping into the unique qualities of the surrounding neighborhoods, Downtown, and adjacent cultural amenities. Reinforce linkages and promote collaborative programming of the Deck Plaza



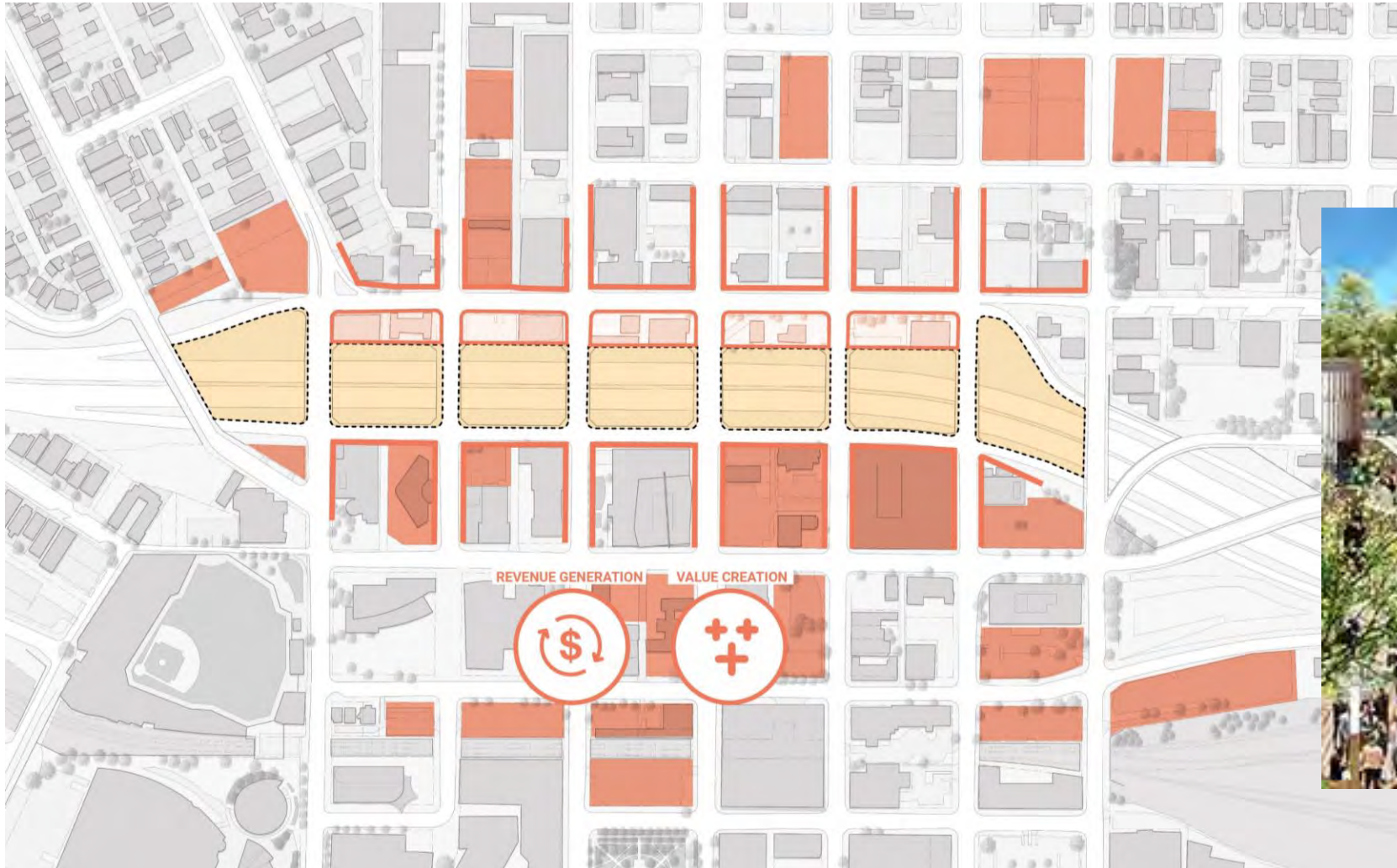
Inclusive economic opportunity



Promote inclusive job, small business, arts and cultural, and similar opportunities across the deck through diverse venues for small businesses, jobs, arts and cultural expression together with workforce readiness, skills training, business support and similar initiatives.



Implementation feasibility



Provide multiple opportunities to generate revenue and build longer-term value on and near the Deck Plaza.



Cutting-edge sustainability



Establish net-zero and water self-sufficiency as goals for buildings, programs, and public spaces across the Deck Plaza.



Creating an inviting place



Creating an inviting place



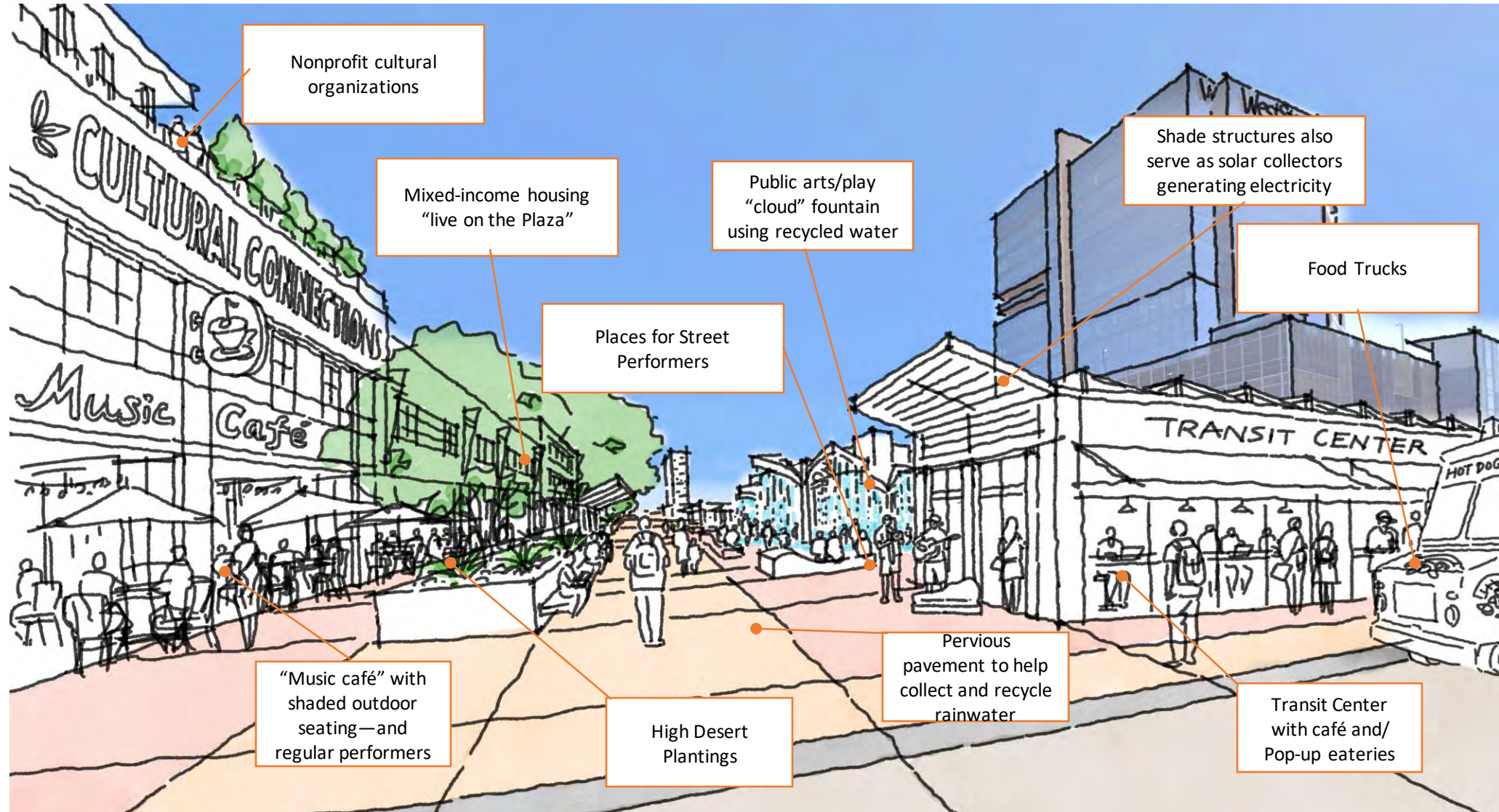
Creating an inviting place



Creating an inviting place



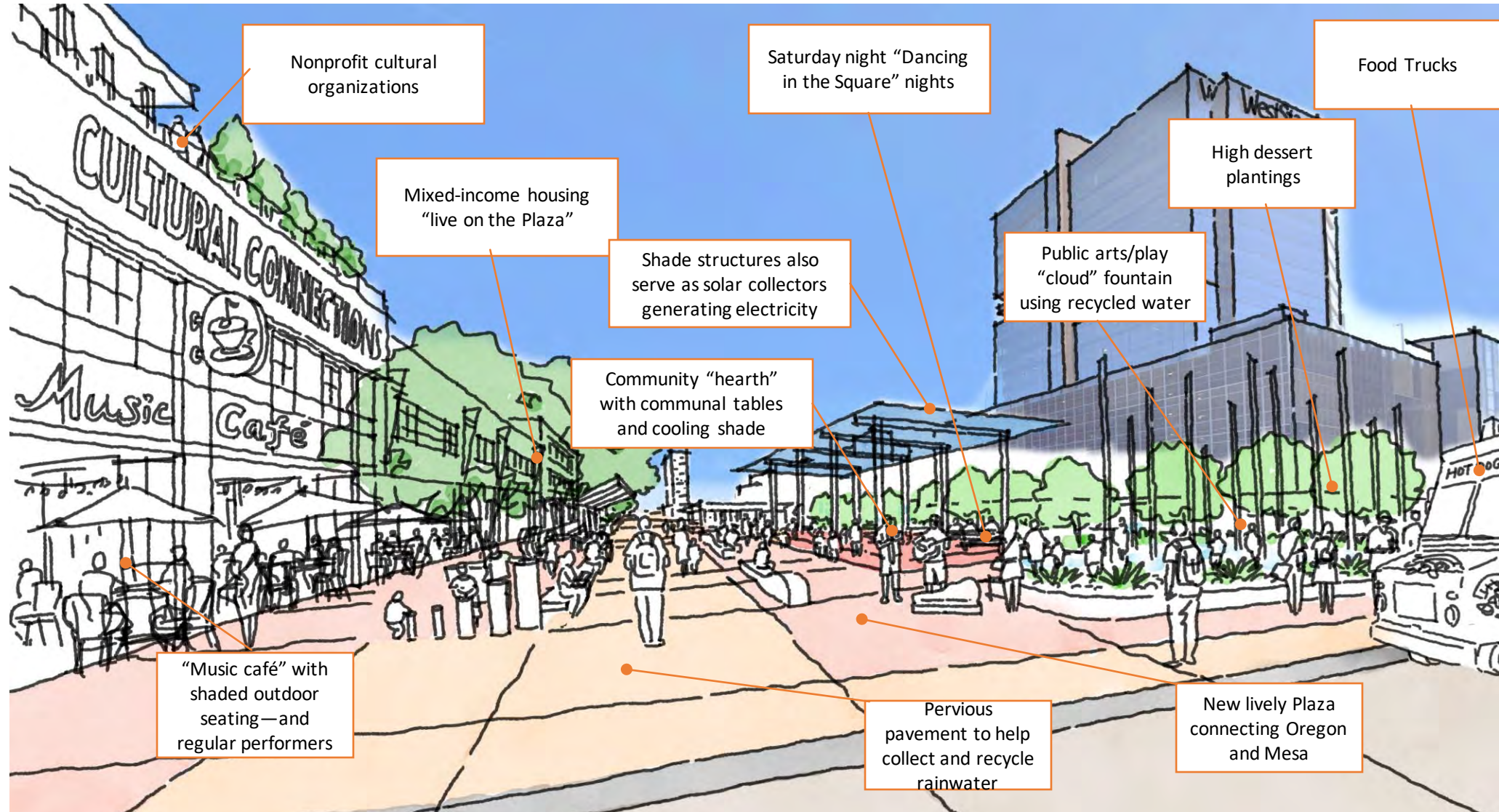
Creating an inviting place



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Creating an inviting place



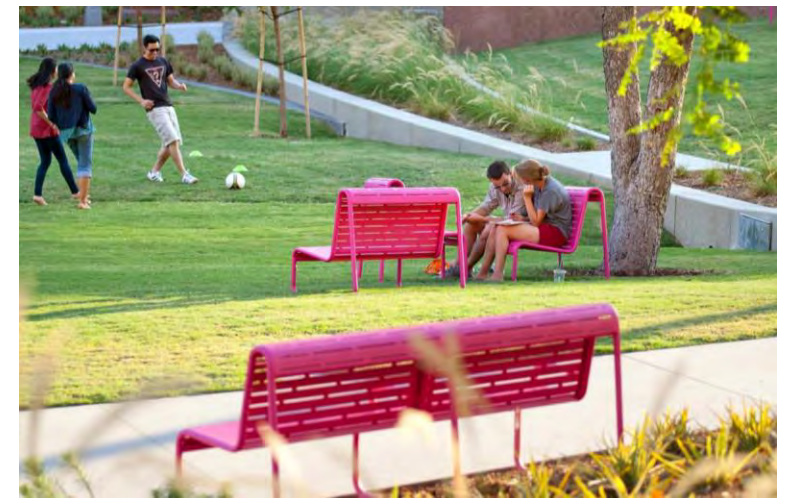
4. Enhancing

**Building
Blocks**

**Conceptual
Program**

Alternative options for
animating the Deck
Plaza

Program that achieves the
letter and spirit of the Urban
Design Building Blocks



El Paso Deck Plaza Programming

EVERYDAY AMENITIES

- Native Horticultural Gardens
- Movable Seating & Tables
- Wi-Fi Internet
- Bike Share/ Rentals
- Bike Racks
- Rotating Exhibits – History / Art / Cultural / Seasonal
- Games & Sports: Futsal / Board Games / Bocce Ball / Pickleball / Tossing Games / Shuffleboard
- Children's Play Area
- Dog Play Zone
- City and Plaza View Overlooks
- F&B: Fruit, Ice Cream, and Candy Carts
- F&B: Farmer's Market
- F&B: Food Trucks
- El Paso Visitor Center
- Flexible Open Spaces
- Signature Fountain / Water Features
- Informational & Interpretive signage (for Horticulture, El Paso..)
- Shaded Seating
- Shaded Walking Paths / Promenade
- Performance Stage
- Artwork
- Restrooms

CORE PROGRAMMING

- Park Calendar of Events
- Horticultural and gardening workshops
- Fitness Classes
- Yoga
- Arts & Culture Workshops
- Movie Nights
- Walking Club

WEEKLY PROGRAMMING

- Movie Nights
- Children's Storytime
- Music Concert Series
- Dance Nights
- Reading and Lecture Series
- Farmer's & Craft Market
- Arts & Crafts Classes
- Happy Hour
- Dog Owner Socials
- Language Classes

MONTHLY PROGRAMMING

- Music and Cultural Performances
- Specialty Markets
- Health & Wellness Classes & Seminars
- Book Club
- Cooking Classes
- Sound & Light Show

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Large Concerts
- Holiday Events
- Festivals

El Paso Deck Plaza Sustainability

An Environmental Showcase

SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT DESIGN STRATEGIES

❑ Sustainable Site:

- Access to Public Transportation
- Multimodal Accessibility
- Storm Water Management
- Native Horticultural Gardens
- Reduction in Air Pollution
- Reduction in Noise Pollution
- Access to Public Open Space

❑ Materials & Resources:

- “Green” Building Methods & “Green” Construction Materials
- Designed for Low Maintenance

❑ Water Efficiency:

- High-Efficiency Irrigation
- Recycled Stormwater / Use of Reclaimed Water
- Highly efficient fixtures to minimize the use and maximize the efficiency of water usage in the park

❑ Energy & Atmosphere / Outdoor Environmental Quality:

- Shade
- Wind Mitigation
- Education Program
- Highly Efficient Lighting
- “Green” Source Power / Energy (e.g. On-site Solar & wind energy production, Offsite “green” energy supply)

El Paso Deck Plaza Safety

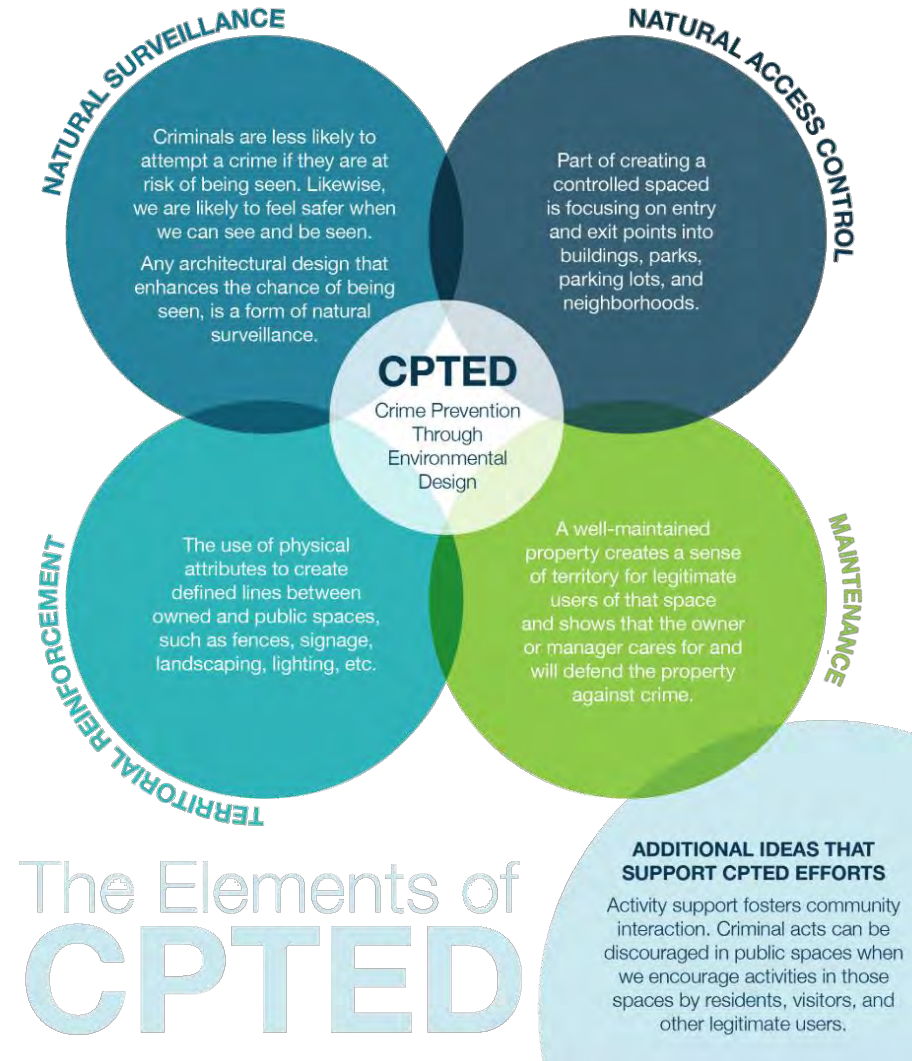
Integration of Safety:

- LIGHTING
- VIGILANCE
- MAINTENANCE
- ACTIVITIES & USES

Safety by Design:

Using Principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (**CPTED**) in Urban Parks.

- Access: Safe movement and connections
- Surveillance and sightlines: See and be seen
- Layout: Clear and logical orientation
- Activity mix: Eyes on the street
- Sense of ownership: Showing a place is cared for
- Quality Environments: Well-designed, managed, and maintained environments
- Physical protection: Using active security measures



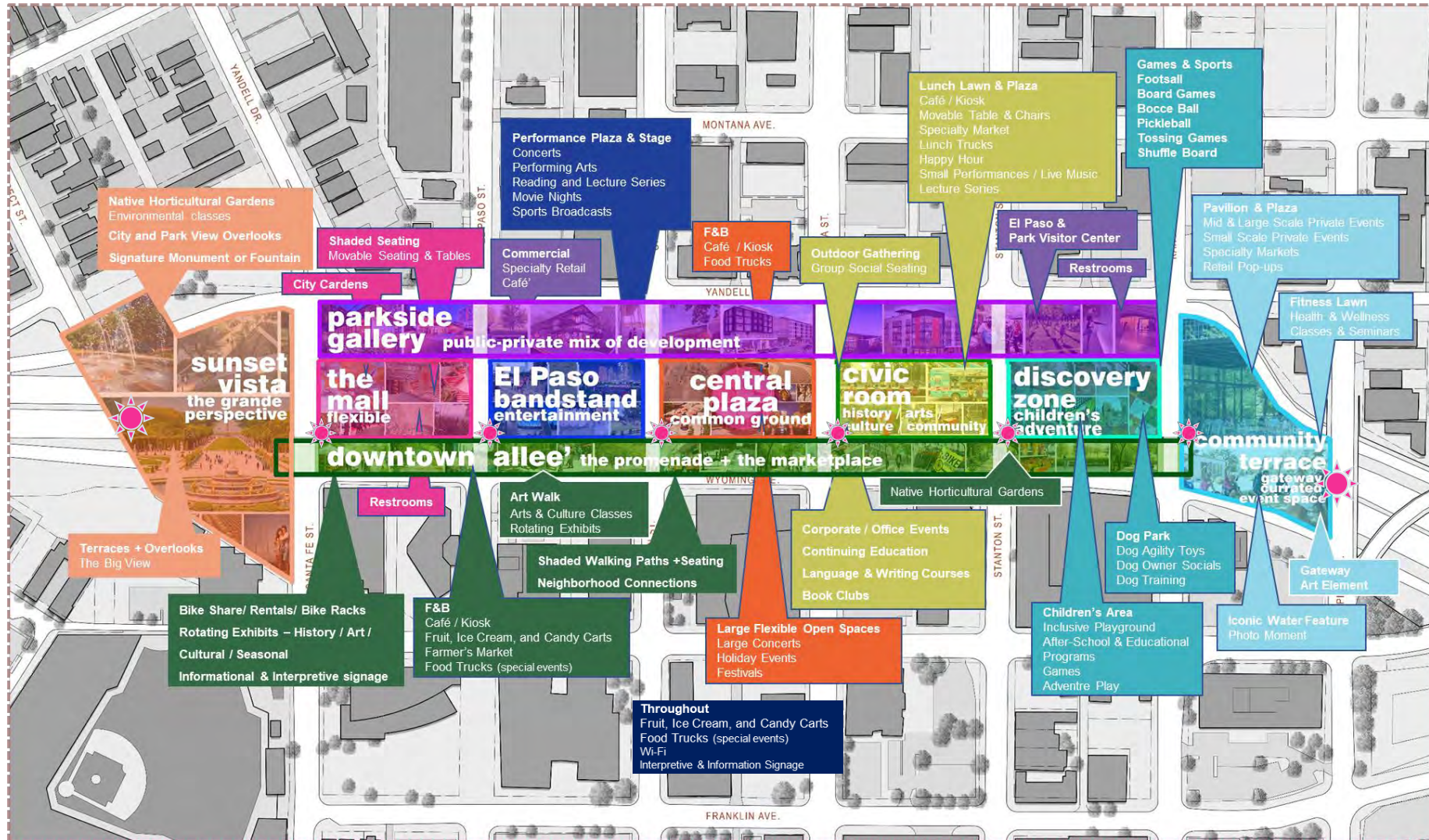
Program Development Testing Diagram

1

TEST CASE 1



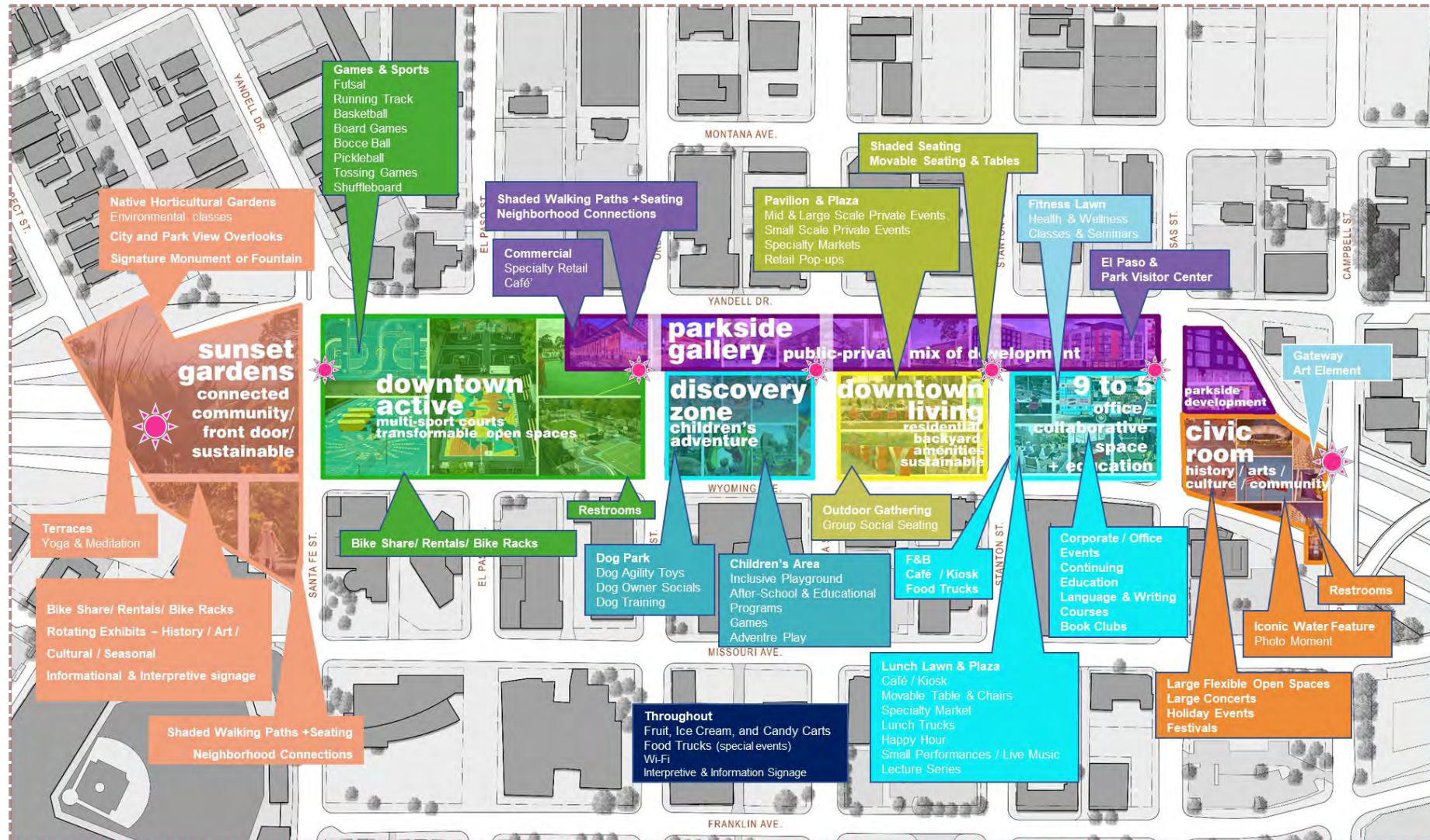
2



Program Development Testing Diagram

3

TEST CASE 3



El Paso Deck Plaza Identity



Deck Plaza Identity through Placemaking:

Leverage architectural and natural elements to create a sense of identity for the Deck Plaza for motorists below, residents, and visitors alike, leaving a strong impression of the place.

4. Enhancing

**Building
Blocks**

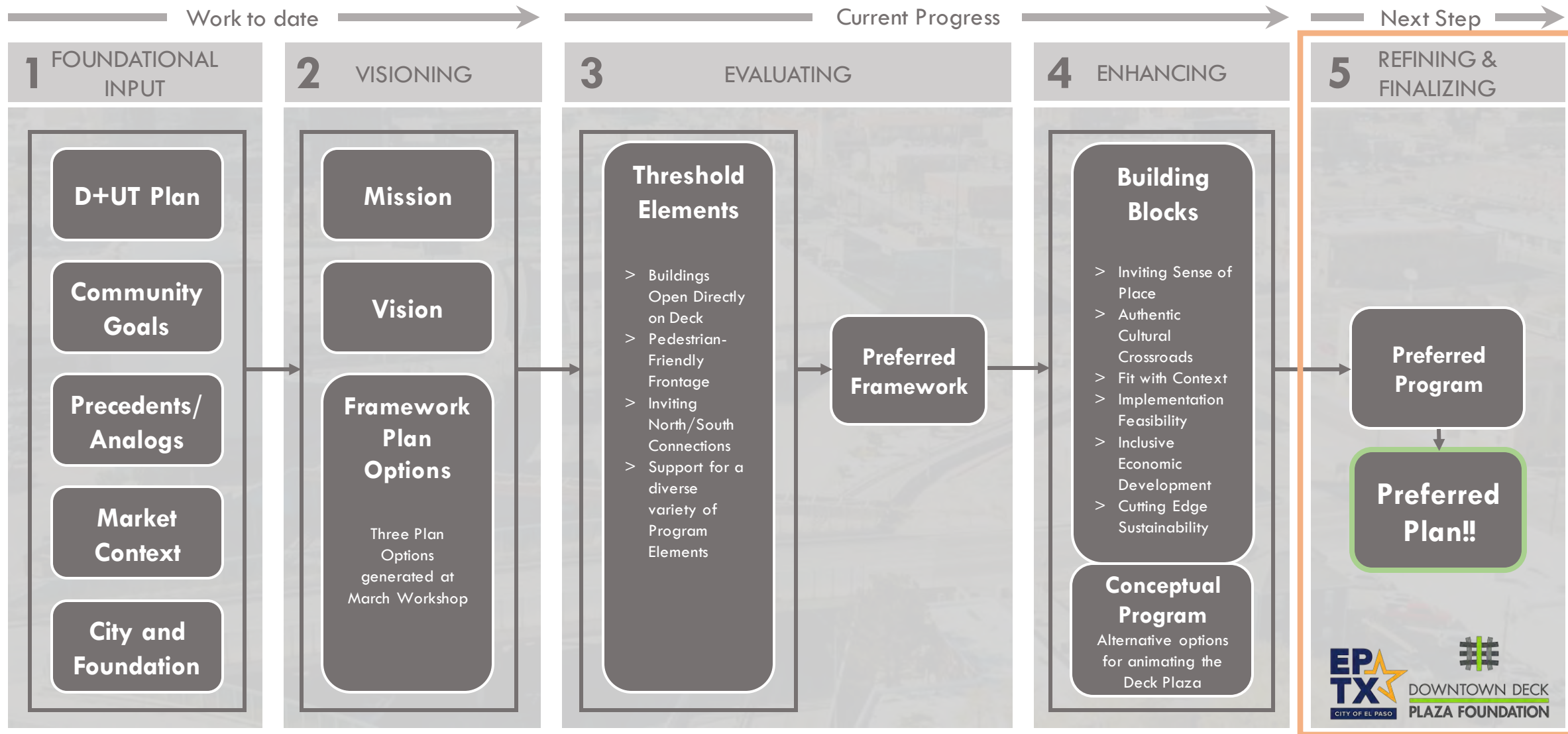
**Conceptual
Program**

Alternative options for
animating the Deck
Plaza

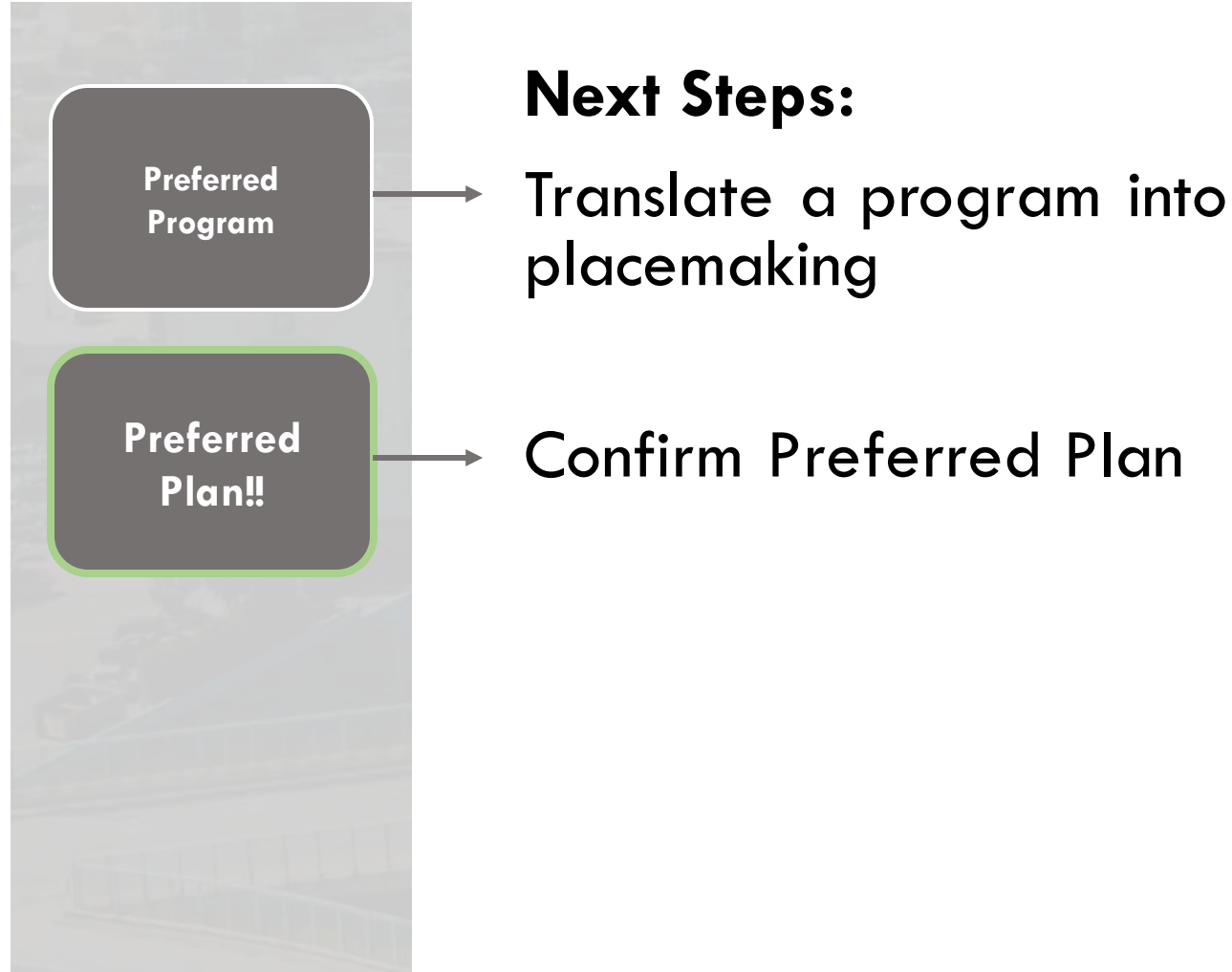
CAC Feedback:

- > Which program ideas get you most excited and capture the spirit of El Paso?
- > What uses feel appropriate for the “core” versus the “edges”?
- > What are we missing that you see as critical to the plan?

Process:



5. Refining and Finalizing



Thank you!!!!