



Kennedy Commons

Presented by the Town of



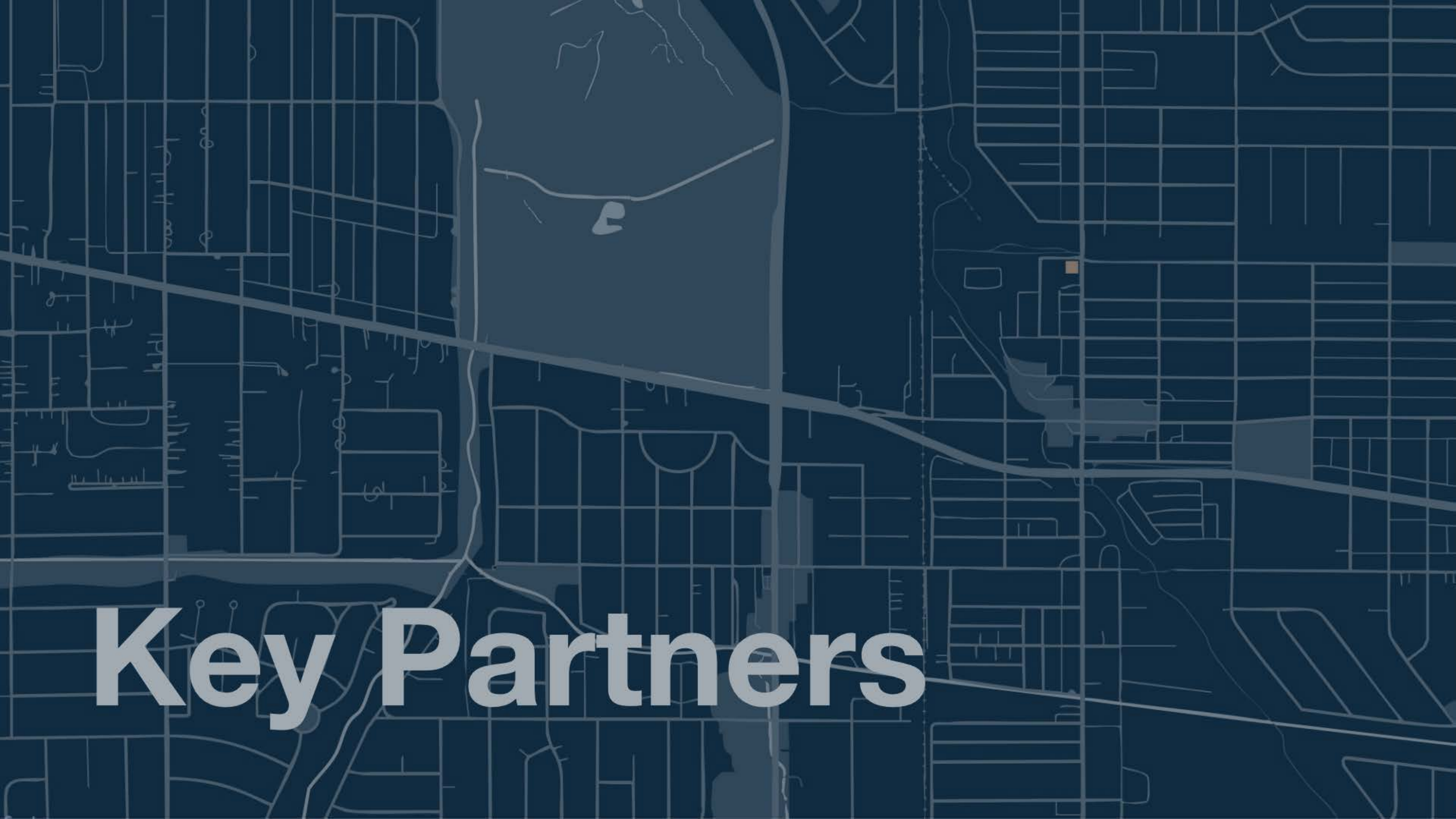
The Town of Highland is a community defined by stability, civic pride, strong parks and schools, and a strategic location within northern Lake County.

How is the Kennedy Commons project related to the Town of Highland's mission?

Enhancing quality of life is a key component of the Town of Highland's Comprehensive Plan.

The Kennedy Commons project directly supports that goal by creating a welcoming, accessible public space that brings together recreation, nature, education, community gathering, and local identity.





Key Partners

Town of Highland

Parks & Recreation

Support programming, activation, and long-term maintenance.

Tree Board & Sustainability Commission

Guide native plantings, tree canopy, environmental education.

Main Street Board & Neighbors for Sustainability

Support ongoing programming, community engagement, and stewardship.

Frost Responders

Use the storage shed to support a future program of volunteers assisting seniors and residents with mobility limitations during winter weather.



Key Local Partnerships

Legacy Foundation

Create a unified vision of the regional bike trail and connect all of Lake County.

School Town of Highland

Incorporate the outdoor classroom into educational programming.

Businesses & Organizations

Food trucks, vendors, and the Highland Griffith Chamber of Commerce will help activate the space through events and community participation.

Artists

Contribute to public art and elements that reflect Highland's identity.



KENNEDY COMMONS

Project Vision

Existing Site

Kennedy Commons will transform a long-vacant former gas station at 8436 Kennedy Avenue.



Community Need

- Kennedy Commons Directly Advances the Love Where You Live Grant goals
- Inclusive, Accessible Public Space
- Durable, Low-Maintenance Community Asset
- Welcoming Green Space
- Outdoor Classroom
- Food Access Resource
- Civic Gathering Space
- Art Walk
- Small-Scale Activation Space



Intended Users

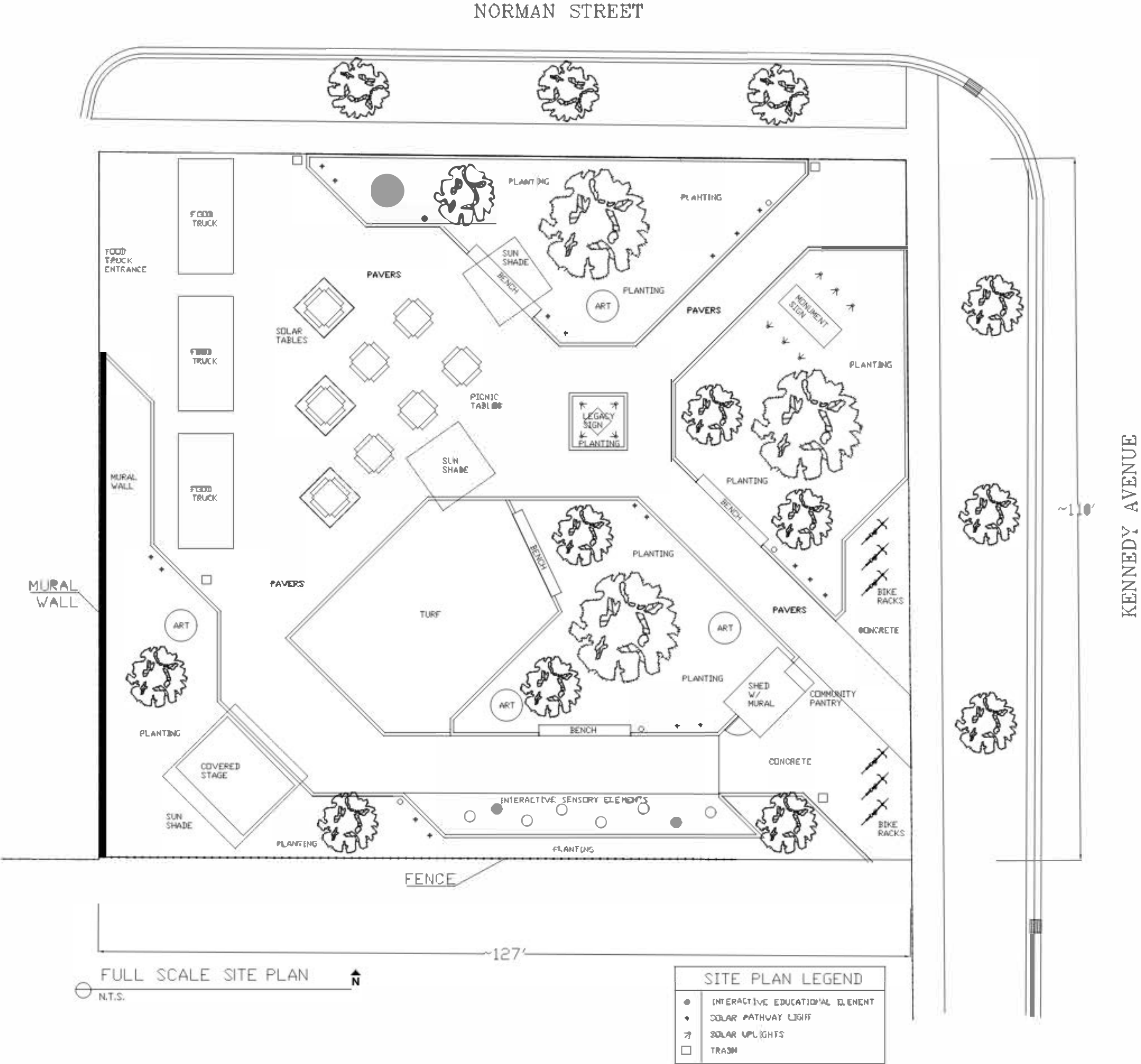
- Lake County Residents
- Schools
- Local Food Vendors
- Parks & Recreation Programs
- Local Businesses
- Local Artists
- Bike Trail Users





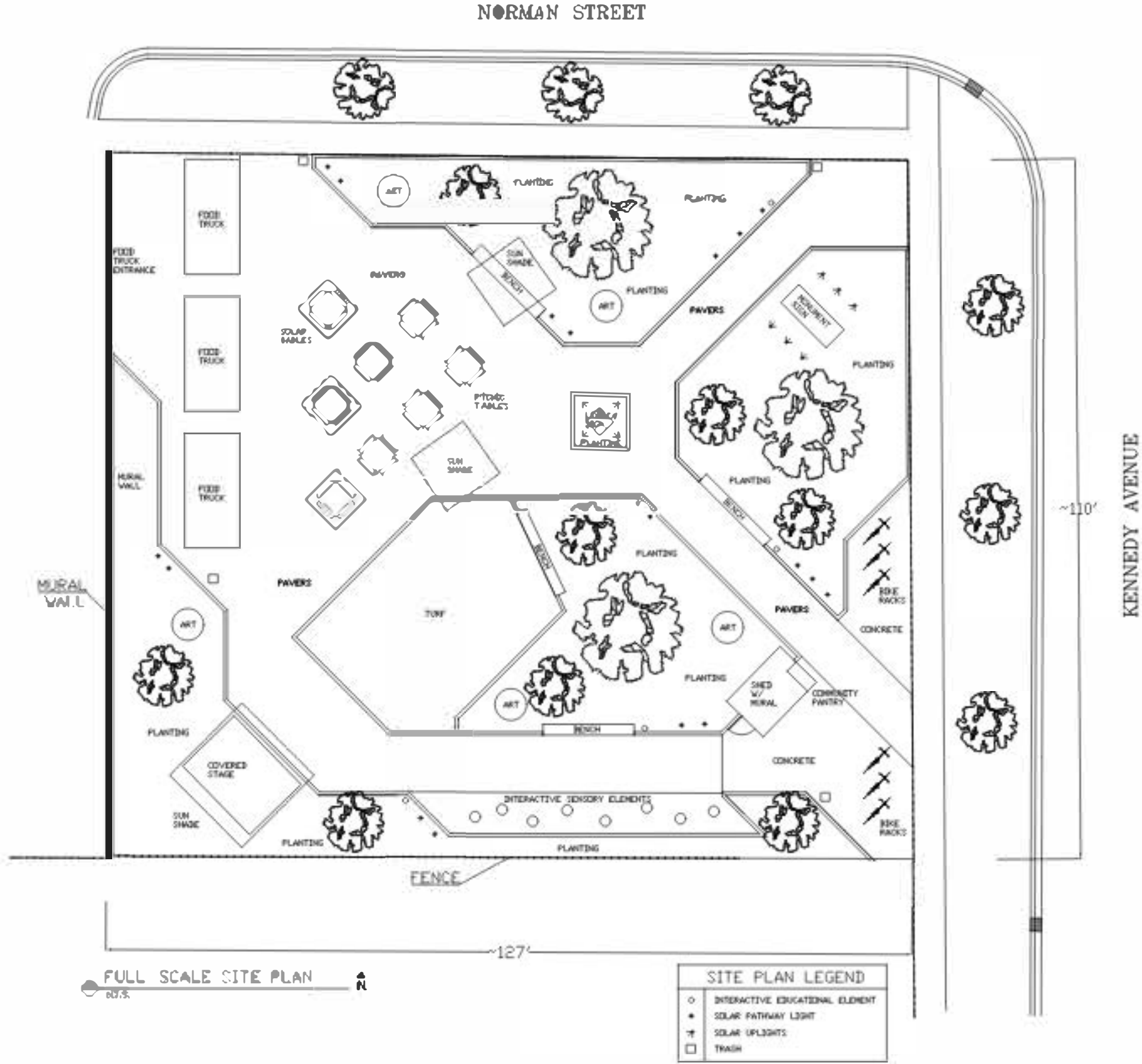
Design & Scope

Site Plan



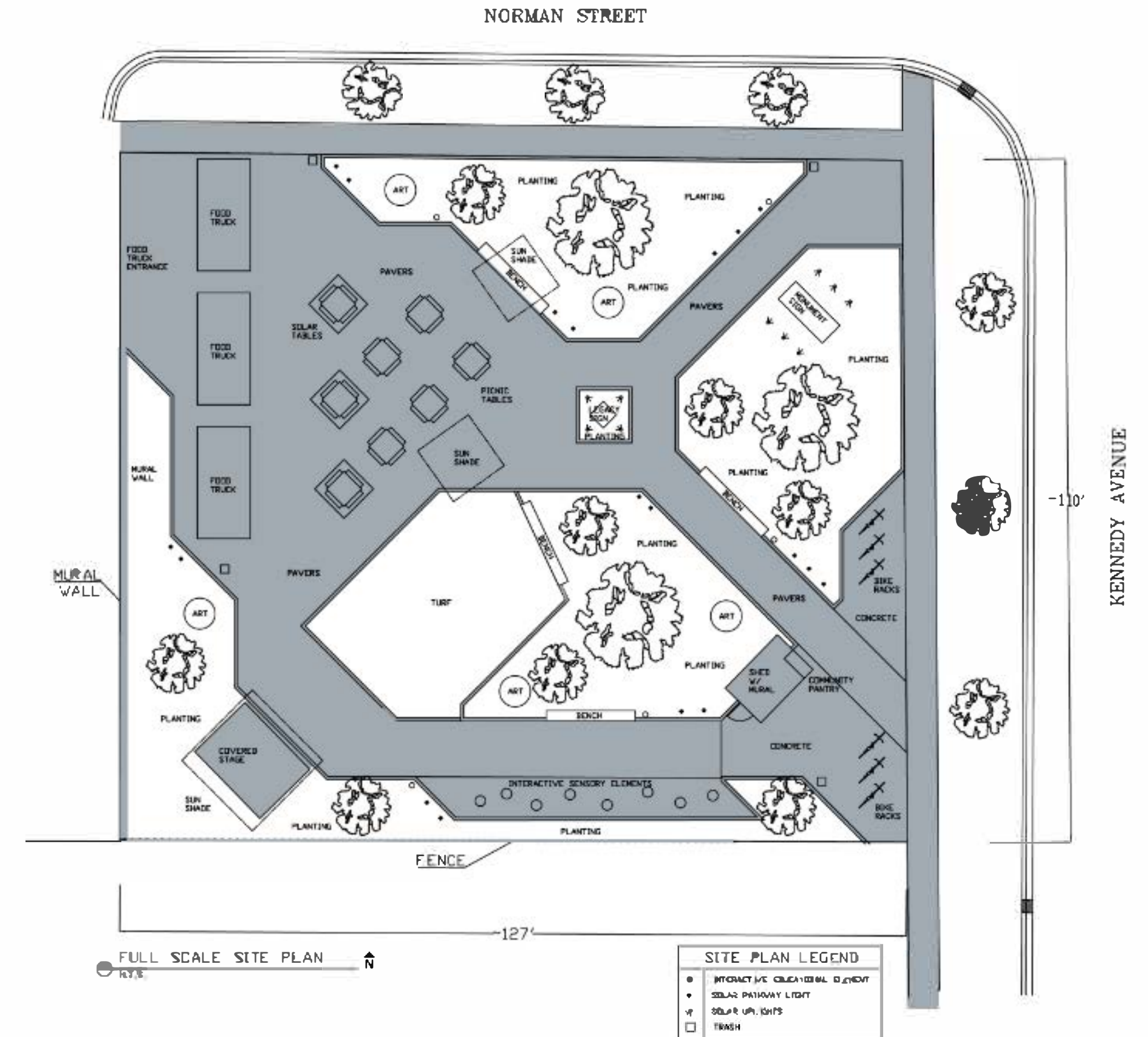
Site Preparation

- Remove Old Public Sidewalk and Old ADA Curb Ramp.
- Remove Abandoned Utility Pole with Overhead Wire.
- Remove Existing Parkway and Site Turf Grass.
- Excavate up to 24-Inch Depth of Soil Across the Site.



Hardscape

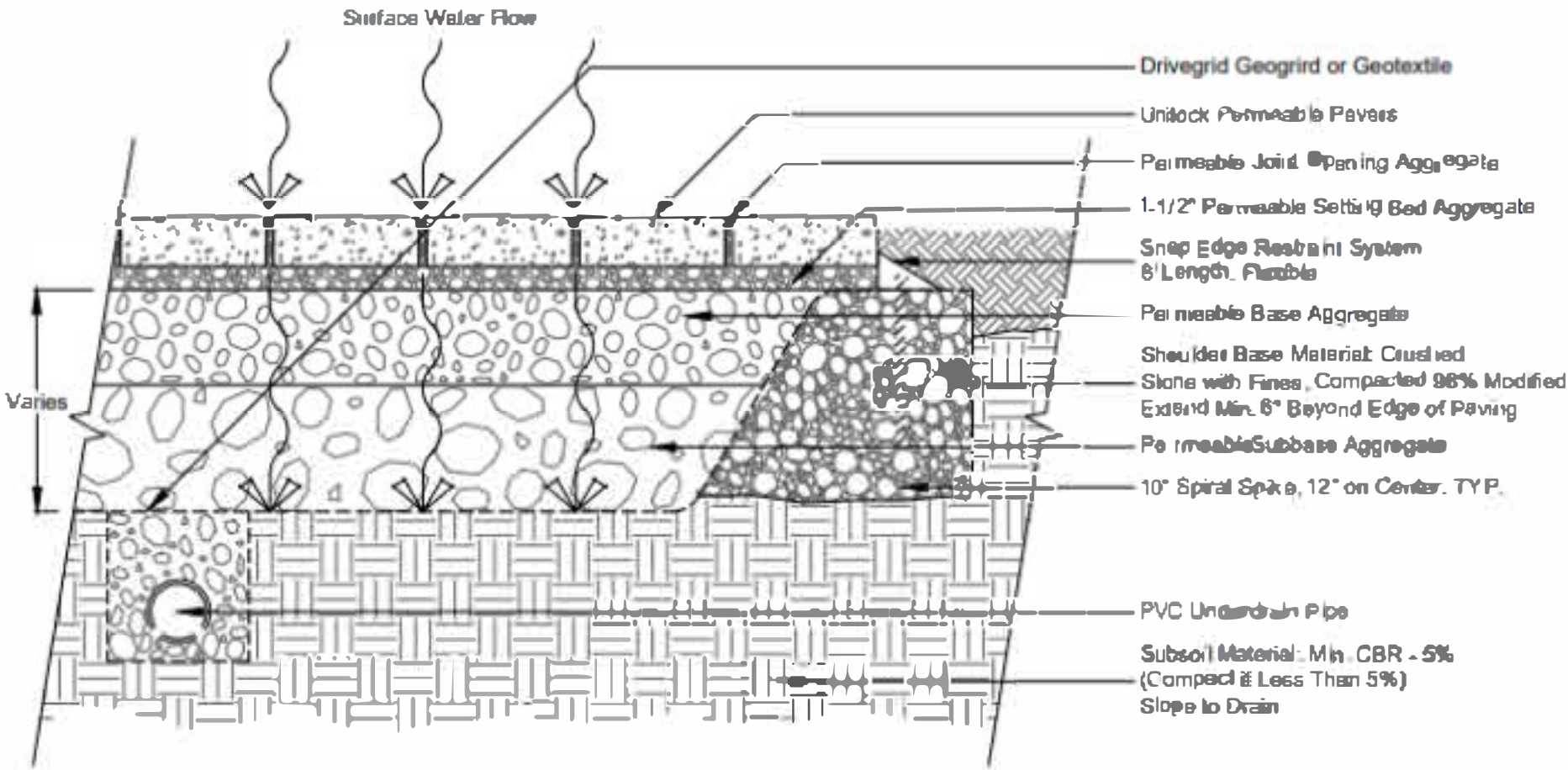
- Build a New Concrete Public Sidewalk and ADA Curb Ramp.
- Add Concrete Pads for Stage Area and Storage Shed.
- Add Concrete Walkways Around Storage Shed and Bike Rack Areas.
- Add Concrete Borders Around Landscaping Beds and Site Perimeter.
- Set Pedestrian-Scale Pervious Pavers with Deep Stone Base for Walkways and Interactive Educational Area.
- Set Vehicle-Rated Pervious Pavers with Deep Stone Base for Food Truck and Picnic Table Areas.
- Build 70-foot Long by 8-Foot Tall Mural Wall.
- Install 100-foot Long by 8-foot Tall Horizontal Slat Fence.
- Place 30-foot Long Removable Barrier Across the Food Truck Entrance.



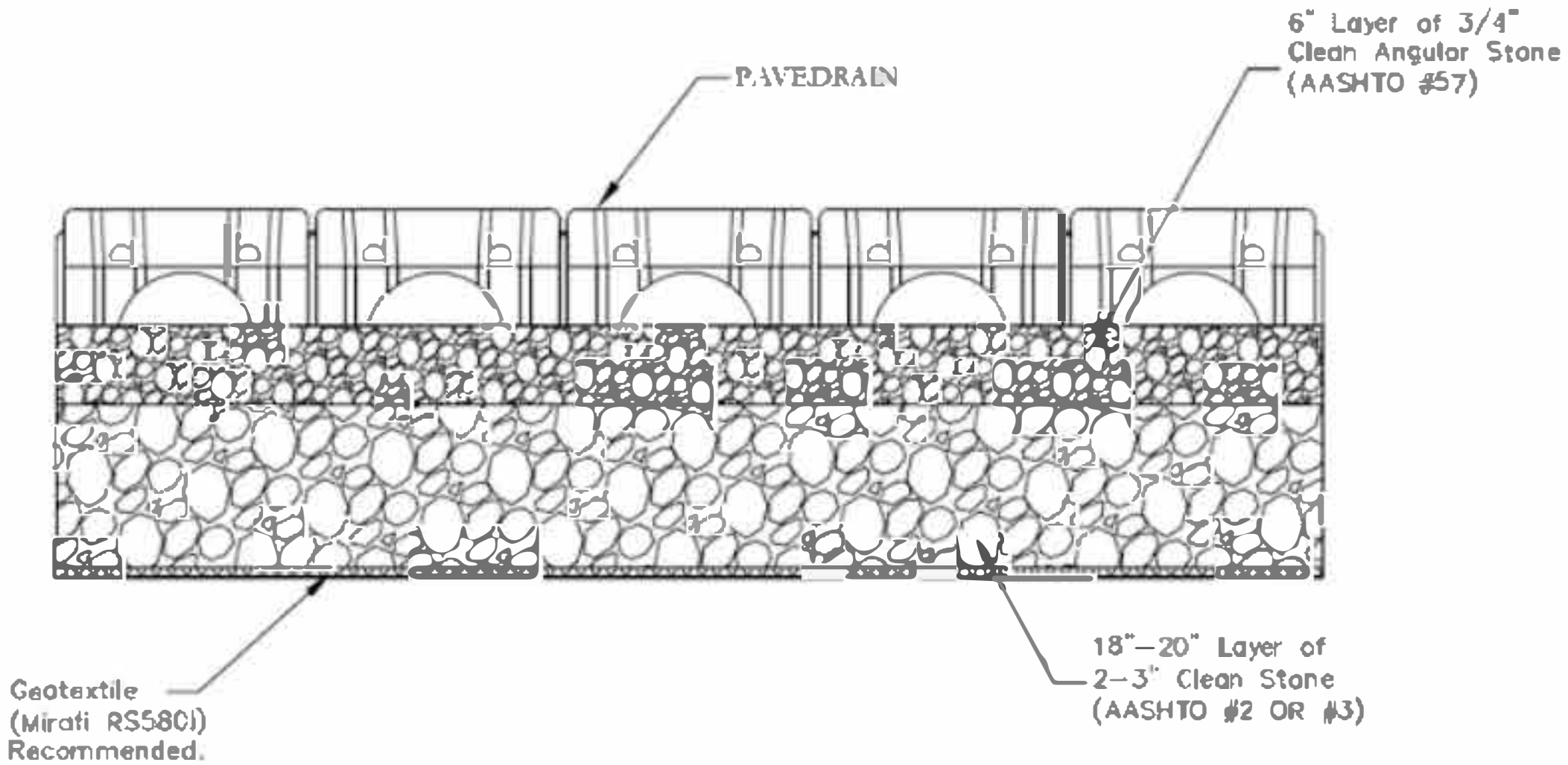
Hardscape Images & Details



Unilock Eco-Priora Pavers

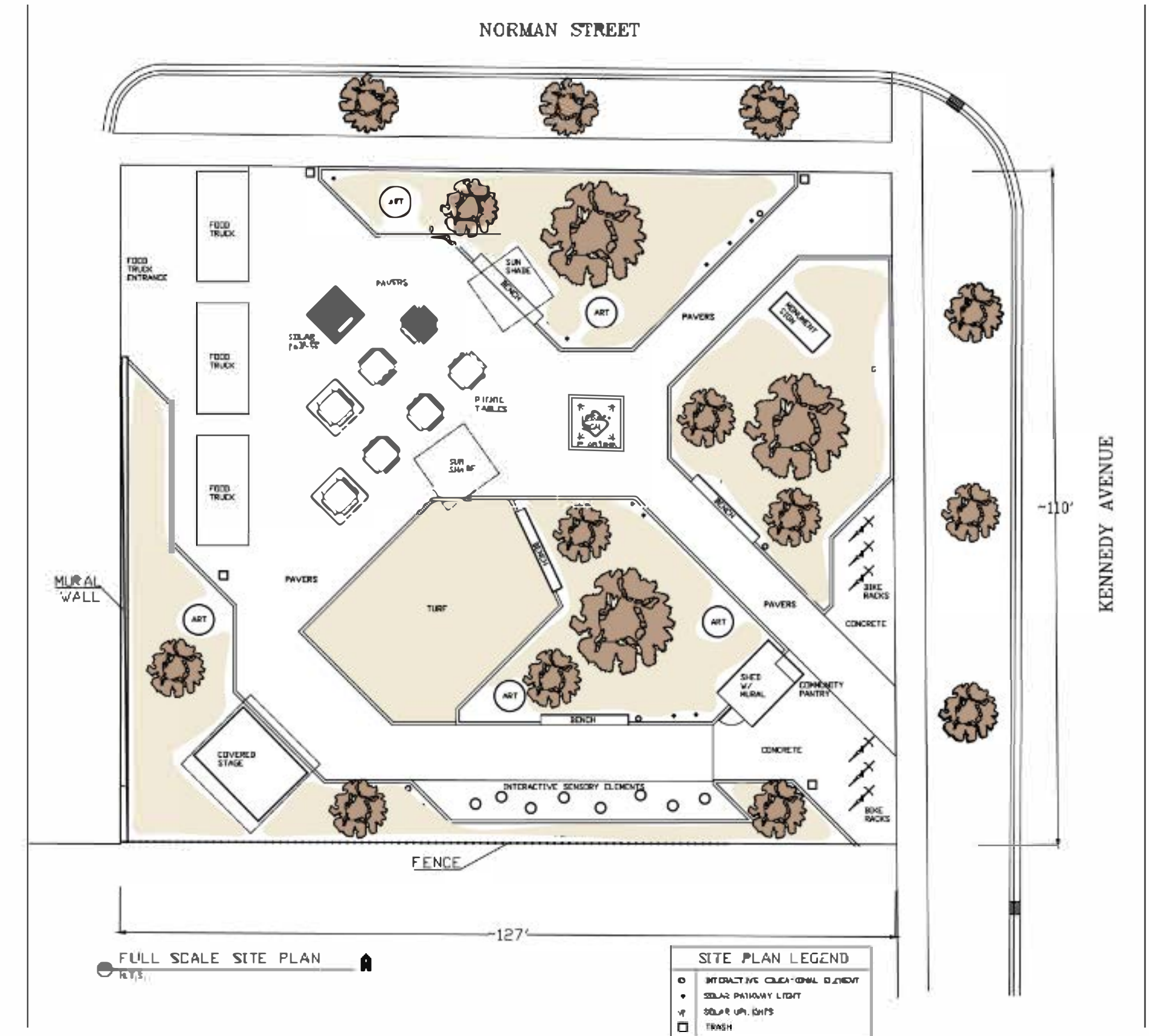


PaveDrain Pavers



Landscaping

- Turf Grass Parkways with Parkway Trees along both Norman and Kennedy
- Artificial Turf Gathering/Activity Space
- Mulched Landscape Beds with Trees
- Shrubs & Perennials (Primarily Native Species)



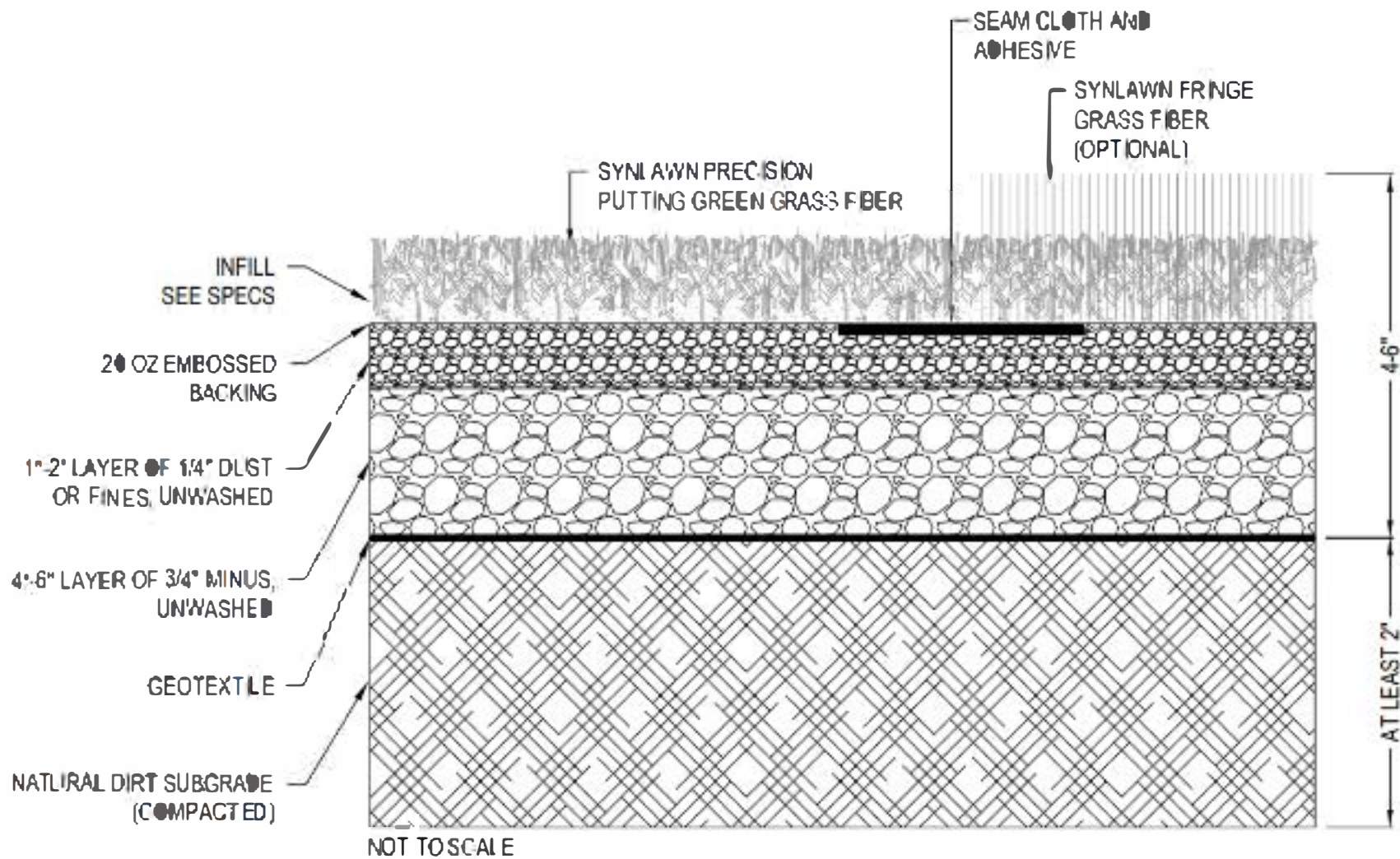
Landscaping Images & Details



Serviceberry Tree



Compact Juniper



Little Lime Hydrangea



Kobold Liatris



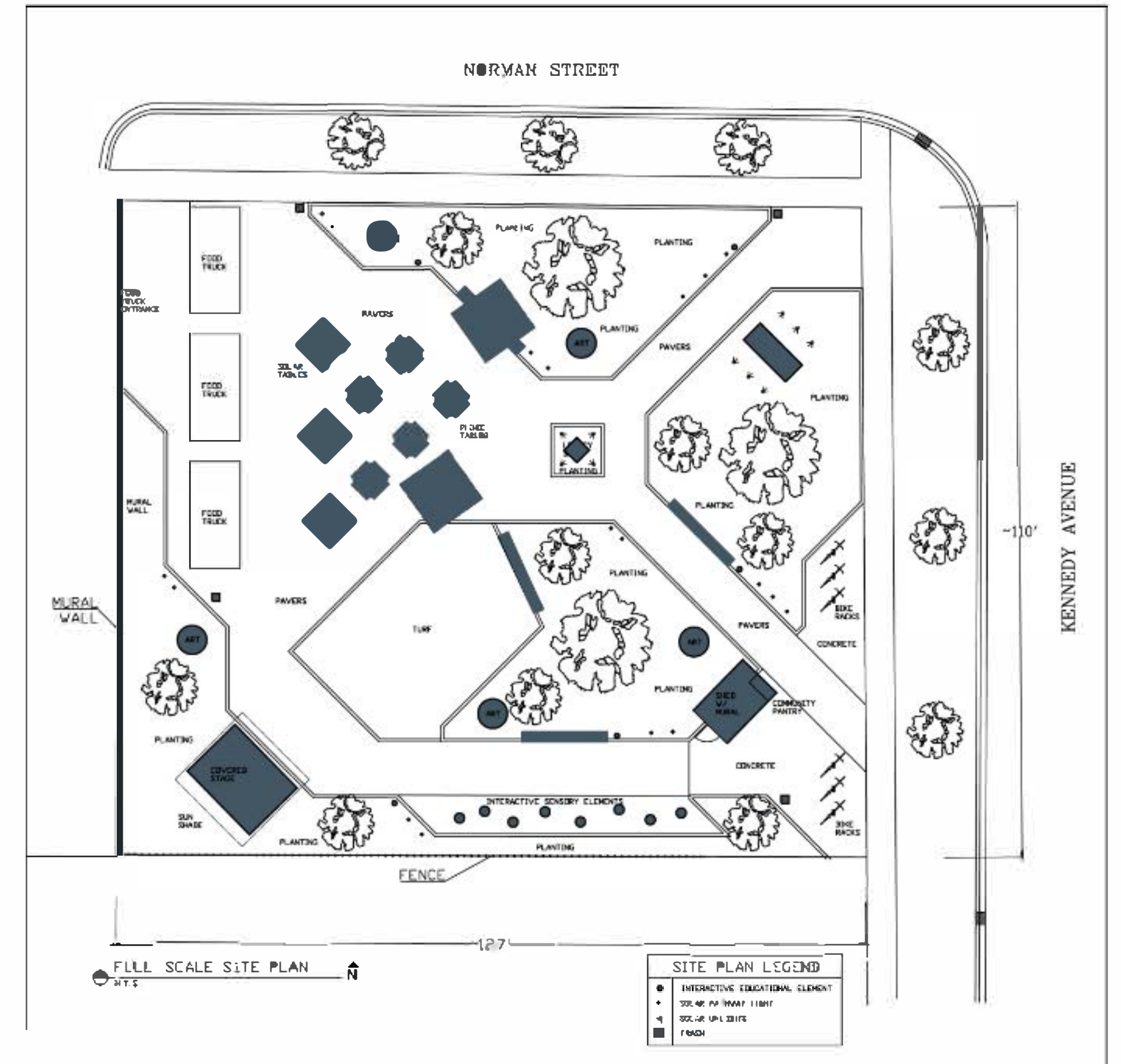
Black Eyed Susan



Prairie Dropseed

Amenities

- Stage
- Shade Structures Over the Stage and Picnic Table Seating Areas
- Solar and Non-Solar Picnic Tables
- Benches
- Monument and Legacy Foundation Signage with Solar Uplighting
- Storage Shed with Mural and Community Pantry
- Sculpture Art
- Interactive Educational Elements
- Bike Racks
- Trash Receptacles
- Solar Pathway Lighting



Amenities Images



Solar Table



ADA Picnic Table



Corten Steel & Wood Benches



Shade Structure



Sculpture Art



Corten Trash Bin



Solar Pathway Light



Sensory Flower Instrument



Magnifying Post

Accessibility

The design will support users of all ages and abilities, with attention to accessibility, seating, shade, and barrier-free use.



KENNEDY COMMONS

Project Readiness

Current Design & Engineering Status

Preliminary design for the project is complete, as well as project renderings for both the full scale (01) and scaled down (02) versions. Final design engineering will commence upon notice of funding award.

Permitting & Regulatory Approvals

Federal - None Required

State - None Required

Regulatory Approvals - None Required

BZA - For Wall and Fence Heights and Setbacks

Prior environmental concerns have been addressed through underground storage tank removal, soil mitigation and structure/foundation removal, completed earlier this year.

Site Control

Town of Highland Redevelopment Commission is owner of record and has control over the site.



Construction Schedule

		2026		2027										2028											
		Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
I.	Final Design Engineering																								
II.	BZA Setback/Height Variance																								
III.	Bidding																								
IV.	Construction																								
V.	Closeout																								



Budget & Funding

**Kennedy Commons
Budget & Funding**

Town of Highland Redevelopment Commission	\$100,000
Requested Legacy Foundation Investment.....	\$886,300
Total Project Cost.....	\$986,300



KENNEDY COMMONS

Project Management & Long-Term Sustainability

Project Leadership & Implementation Team

Redevelopment Director - Maria Becerra

- Grant Management and Compliance
- Coordinate Bid Advertisement and Procurement Process
- Monitor Progress and Review Invoices
- Provide monthly reports to Redevelopment Commission and the Legacy Foundation
- Financial Oversight

Redevelopment Commission President - Alex Robertson

- Review All Bids And Construction Contracts
- Make Final Decisions
- Financial Oversight

Town Engineer - Derek Snyder (NIES Engineering, Inc.)

- Key Consultant
- Construction Documents
- Construction Project Management
- Tabulate, Review, and Provide Recommendations on Bids
- Monitor Construction Progress and Compliance
- Daily On-Site Decisions

Clerk Treasurer - Mark Herak

- Financial Oversight



Construction Oversight

Town Engineer

- Monitor Construction Progress Daily for Compliance with the Construction Documents.
- Review Quantities for Recommending Payment on a Monthly Basis.

The Redevelopment Director

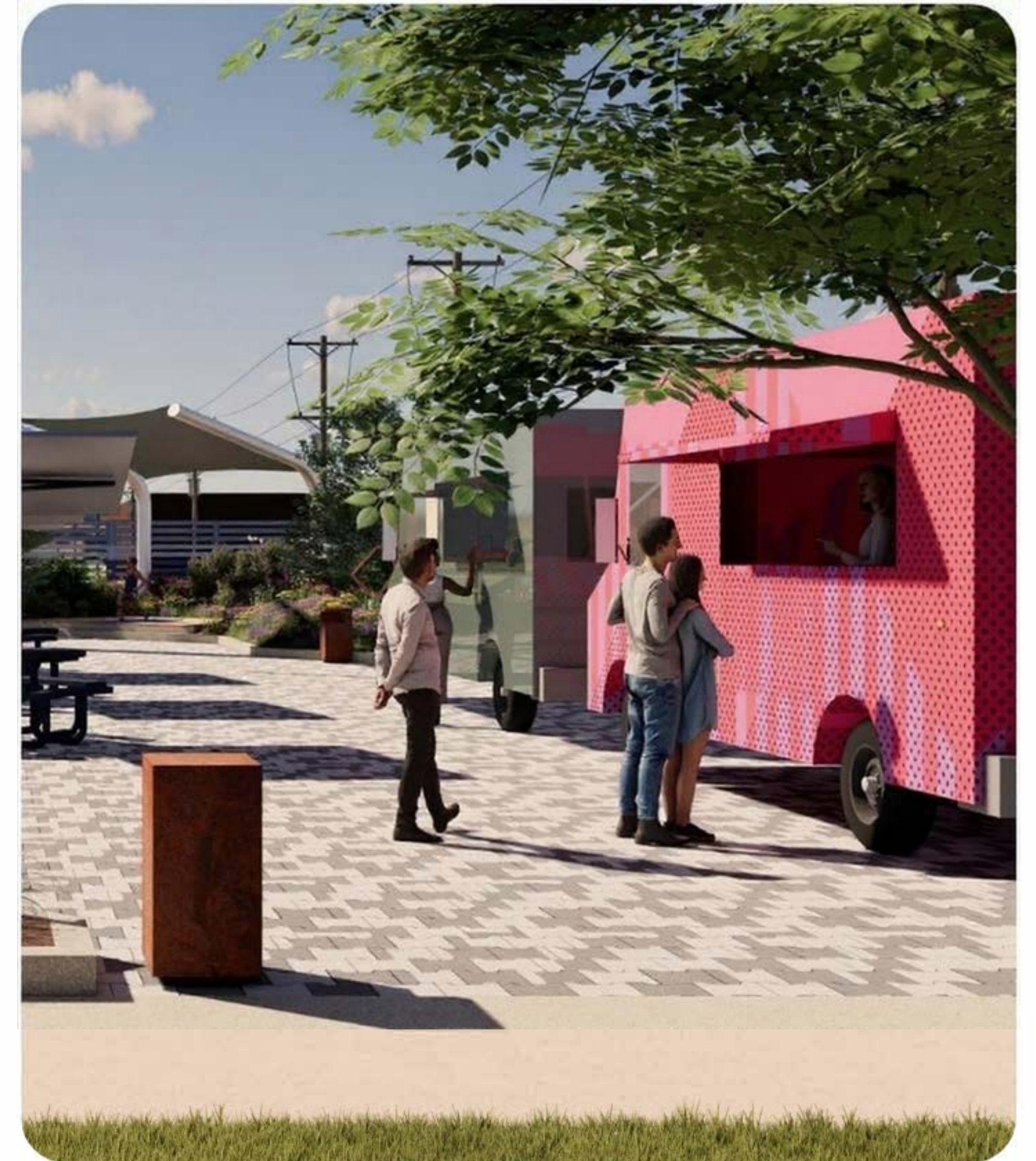
- Monitor Progress and Prepare Monthly Reports for Redevelopment Commission and the Legacy Foundation.
- Review all invoices for accuracy and deliverables prior to submission to the Redevelopment Commission for payment.

The Redevelopment Commission

- Approve All Invoices as Part of the Regular Docket at Monthly Public Meetings Held at Town Hall.

Long-Term Maintenance & Stewardship

- Highland Parks and Recreation
- Main Street Board
- Highland Tree Board
- School Town of Highland
- Neighbors for Sustainability



Ongoing Activation & Programming

- Parks & Recreation Programs
- Food Truck Lunches
- School Programs
- Art Walks
- Fitness Classes
- Acoustic Musical Performances
- Local Business Events
- Native Planting Seminars
- Bike Trail Rest Stop



Recognition of Support

Installation of a permanent, on-site Legacy Foundation recognition sign with donor acknowledgement panel and QR code linking residents and visitors to information about Legacy Foundation and donation opportunities.



SUPPORT HERE



Proudly Dedicated Through the
Generous Support of

Legacy Foundation

For more than three decades, Legacy Foundation has invested in the people, places, and ideas that strengthen Northwest Indiana communities for generations to come. Guided by the belief that meaningful and lasting change happens when everyone has the opportunity to contribute, the Foundation partners with donors, organizations, and local leaders to create vibrant public spaces, expand opportunities, and enrich quality of life throughout the region.

This park stands as a reflection of that mission: a place created for connection, recreation, wellness, and community pride. Through their commitment to thoughtful philanthropy and community investment, The Legacy Foundation continues to help shape spaces where residents of all ages can gather, grow, and build lasting memories together.

Their legacy of giving helps ensure a stronger, more connected future for generations to come.

Scalability

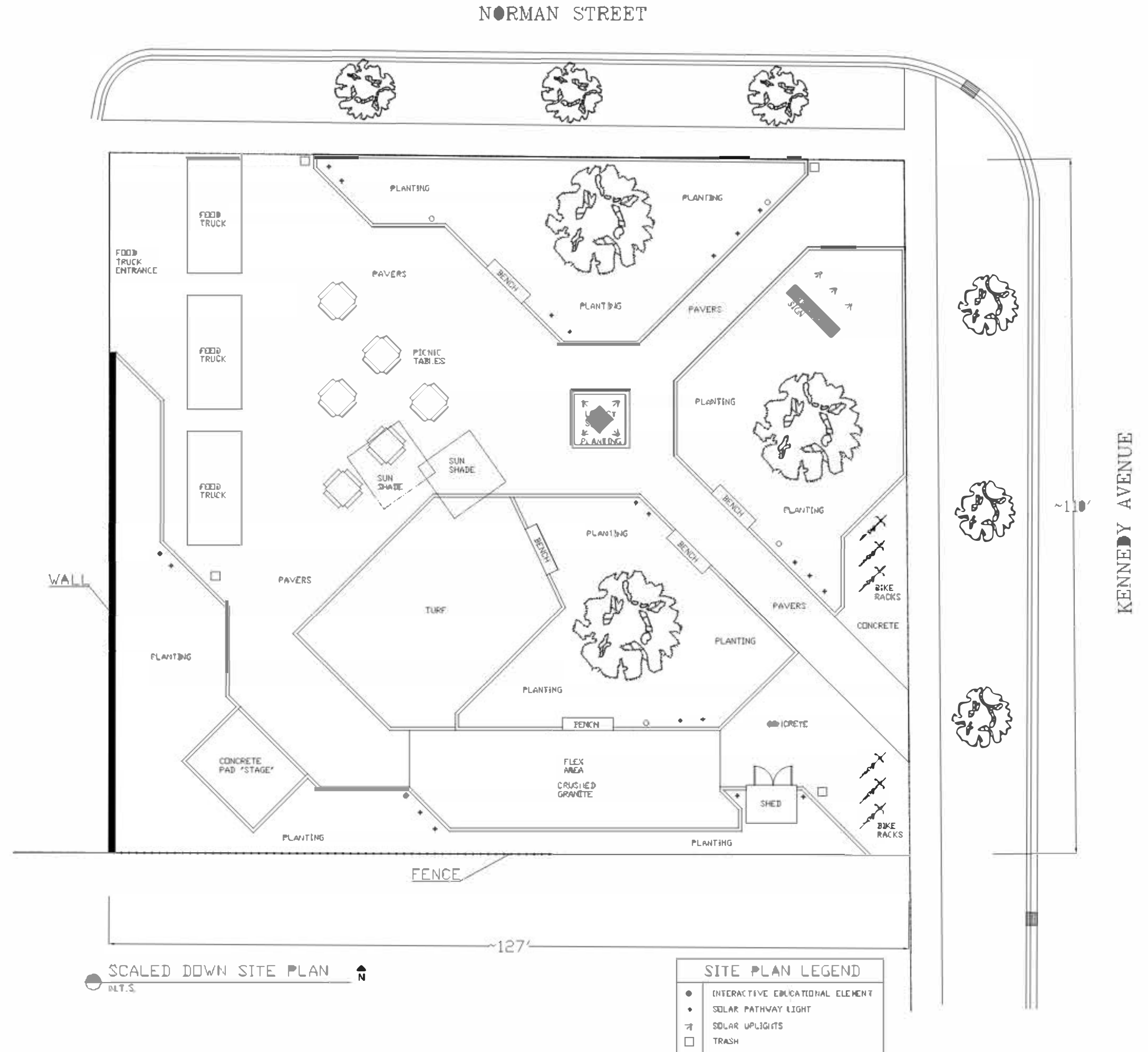


Scaled Down By Half

In both versions of the project, the overall layout of hardscape and landscape areas of the park space would be kept the same.

Public sidewalks, grass parkways with trees, the Legacy Foundation sign, planting bed locations, including concrete borders, and interactive educational elements along the borders would all remain the same as they were in the full scale version.

The idea is to have the hardscape in place to later add on more amenities and landscaping.



Landscape

Reduce number, density and size of grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees in the various planting beds.



Hardscape

Change the turf area opposite the stage from artificial turf to topsoil and sod.

Change the southern most area from a paver walkway to crushed granite.



Amenities

- Reduce size of monument sign and number of solar up lights.
- Reduce size and simplify materials for benches along planting bed perimeters.
- Eliminate shade structure over stage and shift locations for picnic shade structures.
- Eliminate solar picnic tables and replace with one additional non-solar picnic table.
- Eliminate the five art sculptures.
- Storage shed to be reduced in size, shift locations and simplify materials.
- Eliminate community pantry and mural wall components of storage shed.
- Eliminate the interactive educational elements area along south park border.
- Eliminate mural on concrete wall and replace with basic painted horizontal stripes.
- Eliminate "HIGHLAND" lettering on slat fence and maintain factory finish.



What Stays the Same as Full Scale

- Permeable paver walkways.
- Heavy-duty permeable paver area for food trucks and picnic table seating.
- Removable barrier fence along food truck entrance.
- Horizontal slat fence along south border and painted concrete wall along west border.
- Concrete pads for stage shed and bike rack areas.
- Trash receptacles, solar path lights, and bike racks.

The Town would want to pursue future Legacy Foundation grant opportunities or other funding grants or local funding sources to implement the omitted items in order to bring the full benefit to the community.



KENNEDY COMMONS

In Closing

Why Kennedy Commons is Ready for Implementation?

Construction

- Site Has Been Demolished
- Shovel Ready

Design

- Conceptual Plans Completed
- Layout Finalized
- Site Plans Drawn Up
- Renders Created
- Landscaping Selected

Commitment to the Project

The Highland Redevelopment Commission has signed on to the project.



Long Term Impact for Lake County Residents

Daily neighborhood and broader community use.

Direct access to the Regional Bike Trail Network through the Erie Lackawanna bike path.

Promote local business and artists.

Enhance local programming and educational opportunities.

Drive community pride and engagement.



Presented to you by the Town of



With Special Thanks to

SAWDUST

TL Design

(NIES)engineering, inc.
Your Vision • Our Focus