

SPRING 2025

# 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID

## Vision Plan

PREPARED BY:  
MUD WORKSHOP, HABITAT WORKSHOP, SIGHTS STUDIO



# Acknowledgments

This project is supported by the Local Center: Connected Corridors Initiative of the Urban Design Forum and the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development. The Vision Plan to activate Lou Gehrig Plaza was prepared for the 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID and produced by MUD Workshop and Habitat Workshop with support from Sichte Studio. We extend our gratitude and thanks to the Steering Committee, programming partners and all individuals who generously contributed their time and energy to guide the Vision Plan and the open space activations.

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Image Credit: All visuals and texts were prepared by MUD Workshop and Habitat Workshop unless otherwise mentioned.

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### Stan's Sport Bar

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# Letter to the Reader



Opening Day. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock



March, 2025

**From:**  
**MUD Workshop**  
**Habitat Workshop**  
**Sighte Studio**

**Dear Reader,**

We're excited to share the 161st Street Vision Plan: a plan shaped by the guidance of those who live, work, and move through the neighborhood every day. This plan is grounded in the core belief that great public spaces are an extension of the community. They are stages for our public lives - places where neighbors and friends connect, where cultural, economic, and social exchange takes place, where celebrations happen, and where we engage in civic action.

Public spaces become "civic places" when designed with the communities within which they are situated. Our work began with the carefully planned activation of Lou Gehrig Plaza via the SAIL structure, which we co-designed and co-built with community members, local businesses, and civic partners. What emerged was not just a temporary installation, but a shared act of self-actualization, in which residents could see their ideas and desires realized in real time and with real materials.

We invited citizens to participate in testing design ideas, which was a way of asking how the city's public realm could itself become an avenue for civic engagement. The process was modest in budget but rich in participation, constrained by the logistical realities of implementation in a busy, prominent area with many overlapping stakeholders. Community and stakeholder feedback was embedded in the design, fabrication, programming, and the day-to-day observations of how people used the space. Our iterative, test-and-learn approach made it possible to adjust in real time and to better understand the types of changes that would be welcomed, implemented, and, most importantly, sustained.

Additionally, through conversations and collaboration with NYC DOT and NYC Parks, we were able to navigate capital agency requirements and clarify the pathways that community-led public space improvements must follow to succeed. These conversations also highlighted the disparities that often exist between community aspirations and "placemaking" outcomes. We found that, despite the best intentions of the broader NYC planning community, it's difficult for residents to identify how they can communicate their desires and where they themselves can take initiative in shaping the public realm.

The small-scale, low-cost intervention, SAIL, revealed larger structural opportunities that have informed the broader vision for the 161st Street corridor. The plan is a testament to the power of community planning and design. It reflects what can happen when designers, planners, public agencies, and neighborhood organizations work in partnership - not necessarily to deliver a finished product, but to open up a process. It also points to bigger questions: how might we shift our systems to enable more distributed models of stewardship? How might we move from a top-down model of delivery toward one that delegates power and invests in long-term citizen control?

As you read through the plan, we encourage you to see it not only as a set of urban interventions, but also as an invitation to consider processes and structures that might lend greater agency to citizens in design and placemaking, and take the burden off of capital agencies to shepherd projects from start to finish.

# 01

## Executive Summary



The Local Center Initiative is a transformative program that empowers neighborhoods across New York City to reclaim and reimagine public space. Developed by the Urban Design Forum (UDF) in partnership with the Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development (ANHD), the initiative provides seed funding, multi-disciplinary technical support, and hands-on guidance, bringing together local leaders, designers, and government agencies to work together to implement impactful changes. At its core, the Local Center Initiative operates under the belief that every neighborhood should have the power, tools, and investment necessary to create vibrant and welcoming public spaces.

For the Local Center: Connected Corridor Initiative, a design team composed of MUD Workshop, Habitat Workshop, and Sichte Studio, in collaboration with the 161st Street BID, developed a public space vision plan (“Vision Plan”) to introduce new activations and revitalize underutilized spaces in the 161st Street BID in the Bronx.



## Design Team

### MUD WORKSHOP

MUD Workshop is an urban design practice dedicated to the revitalization of neighborhoods and public places. We emphasize sustainability and community-centric thinking in all our projects, as we recognize this to be the greatest factor in bringing about positive change and ensuring the long-term viability of projects. Our core values are firmly grounded in addressing the critical global imperatives of resiliency, championing the unmet needs of communities, and reinvigorating public spaces as vital hubs of social life. We have a keen interest in influencing policy through physical planning and fostering meaningful interactions with and between the community, policymakers, and builders.

### HABITAT WORKSHOP

Habitat Workshop is an architecture, interior, and urban design practice promoting design as a framework for positive changes in our communities. We combine research and practice to continuously refine ways of knowing, asking, learning, and making through cross-disciplinary collaborations and experiments. Our work explores the extraordinary potential in the ordinary and embraces constraints as the foundation for creative solutions.

### SIGHTS STUDIO

Sights Studio is an architectural lighting design studio based in Brooklyn, NY. We collaborate with leading architects, landscape architects, and interior designers to design elegant and effective environments. We craft design narratives through analysis, testing, and drawing in order to translate our intrinsic understanding of lighting phenomena first to our clients and collaborators, and then into real constructed environments. We are committed to integrating the principles of sustainability into every project..



161<sup>st</sup> Street Design Team, 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID, and UDF on Activation Day. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock

## The 161st Street BID and The 161st Street Corridor

The 161st Street BID stretches along 161st Street between Morris and River Avenues (“The 161st Street Corridor”). This corridor serves as a key economic and social lifeline for surrounding communities, offering both historic landmarks and modern amenities and attracting residents, visitors, and workers to the many regional and local destinations that co-exist along this spine.

The area is a mix of residential and commercial spaces, with prominent buildings like the Concourse Plaza Hotel and the Bronx County Courthouse enhancing its architectural diversity. The vicinity includes several parks and public spaces, such as Joyce Kilmer Park, providing green areas for recreation and community events. The neighborhood is well served by public transportation, with several subway lines and bus routes offering convenient access to other parts of the city.

The corridor is home to several regional destinations such as Yankee Stadium, large-scale transportation infrastructure from the Moses era, and more recent public space investments such as Lou Gehrig Plaza, which was reclaimed from a former parking lot.

Despite being an active mixed-use area, the ~200-foot-wide 161st Street Corridor offers little to support safe pedestrian movement, respite for workers, or gathering places for residents and visitors. The area lacks adequate lighting, seating, shade, wayfinding, and greenery, which discourages pedestrians from fully utilizing surrounding amenities and limits the ability of local businesses to capture retail demand.



Paint Day. Image Credit: Shaunese Crawford





Opening day celebrations for SAIL installation at Lou Gehrig Plaza. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock

## Project Goals

The Vision Plan was guided by two central goals: to engage the community directly in shaping public spaces along the 161st Street Corridor and to test design strategies through a built pilot. Rather than relying solely on design concepts and strategy conversations, the Vision Plan centered participation around designing and building a pilot and using community-centric programming to activate public space. The process also served as a live demonstration of how seasonal, low-cost interventions can inform longer-term improvements.

## Design Process

The design process was iterative and rooted in testing ideas in real space. Community and stakeholder input was gathered through a mix of workshops, surveys, events, and direct collaboration during the build phase. This approach gave residents more agency in shaping the outcomes and allowed the team to refine interventions based on real-time feedback, in ways as theoretical as defining goals and as literal as painting the built pilot structure, SAIL. The resulting plan is not just a design manifesto but a structured approach to ongoing engagement.

# Community Vision and Goals

A year-long engagement process, which brought together disparate voices into the design-making, fabrication, and space programming, uncovered specific desires and a shared community vision. Central to the community’s vision is realizing improvements to enhance the experience for residents, visitors, and patrons, thereby transforming the neighborhood into a connected, safe, and vibrant place, and expanding the area of influence for small and large businesses in the 161st Street BID. This vision is supported by three goals, including **Connect**, **Linger** and **Celebrate**.

**CONNECT:**  
Enhance physical and visual connectivity within the 161st Street BID by forging new pedestrian connections and making existing ones safer. This includes developing a pedestrian circulation network to link surrounding communities with neighborhood parks, amenities, places of work, and commerce and, where possible, reclaiming the street right-of-way to create new public spaces.

**LINGER:**  
Encourage moments of pause that can foster social gatherings and make the corridor more active and accessible. This includes providing amenities such as seating, lighting, shade, and public art, which will invite residents, workers, and visitors to spend time in the neighborhood engaging its offerings.

Project ideas supporting community vision and goals

Place	Project Idea
McDonald's Plaza	Reconstruct the existing divided plaza as one unified open space with a dedicated vending zone, plaza amenities, and public art.
E 161st and River Avenue Bus Stop	Right-size travel lanes and reclaim public right-of-way to expand and reimagine existing medians as linear public spaces with park amenities, wayfinding, and a sheltered bus stop.
River Avenue Underpass	Enhance pedestrian connection and safety through wayfinding, lighting, crosswalks, and traffic-calming interventions.
DA's Office Plaza	Create a pedestrian plaza with seating, shade, and public art at the intersection of E. 161st Street and Concourse Village West.
161st Street Underpass	Define a welcome gateway using signage, lighting, and landscaping.
Grand Concourse Median	Install a series of art frames to exhibit works that celebrate local culture and history.
SAIL at Lou Gehrig Plaza (built pilot intervention)	Develop seasonal shade and seating structures that reimagine Lou Gehrig Plaza as the neighborhood’s “front porch” for informal conversations, open invitations, and community programming.



**CELEBRATE:**

Create places for residents, visitors, small businesses, and anchors to come together for programming that enriches community experience. This includes creating spaces that are dynamic and adaptable to the needs of all users.

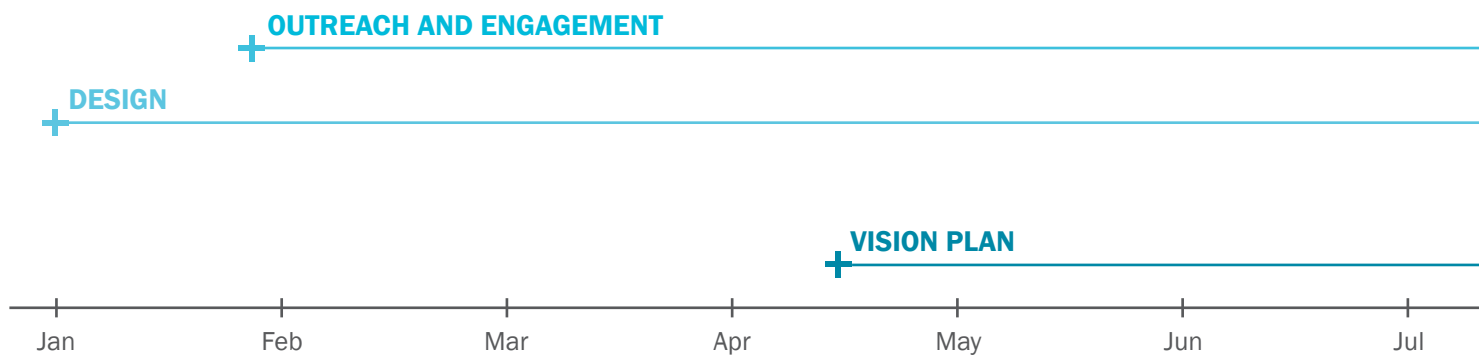
Seven distinct projects, including SAIL at Lou Gehrig Plaza, outline specific strategies, actions, and physical improvements to realize these goals. These projects target pedestrian paths within the public right-of-way and places frequented on foot to weave a safe and legible network for walking, lingering, and engaging with the neighborhood's offerings. Together these improvements create more human-scale, dynamic destinations that act as extensions of local and regional amenities, create a sense of belonging, and provide greater visibility for local businesses. These are design intervention ideas that will need to be explored further with implementation partners and the city's capital agencies.

**Report Organization**

This report is organized to reflect the full arc of the 161st Street Vision Plan, from site context and community priorities to proposed interventions and lessons learned. It begins with an introduction to the planning process and project area, followed by an overview of existing conditions across the district. The Community Vision section outlines the engagement strategy, events, partners, and emerging goals that shaped our work. The following "District-Wide Actions and Strategies" section presents seven project ideas across the 161st Street-Concourse corridor, concluding with the pilot installation of SAIL at Lou Gehrig Plaza. The report closes with further details about the pilot, including the implementation process and a behind-the-scenes look at fabrication and community engagement.

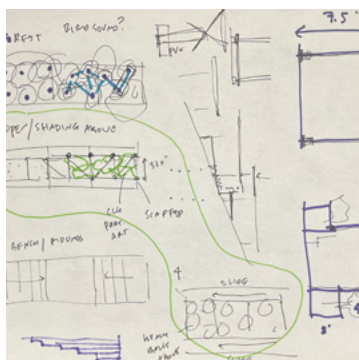


*Residents enjoying a concert after the installation of SAIL. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock*



## DESIGN

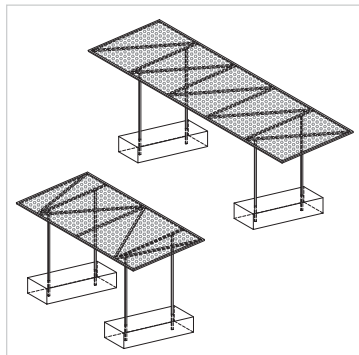
### + Ideation



### + Testing Alternatives

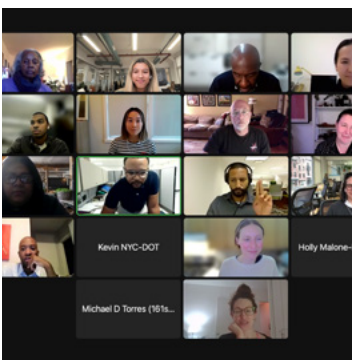


### + Preferred Alternatives Refinement



## OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

### + Steering Committee Meetings



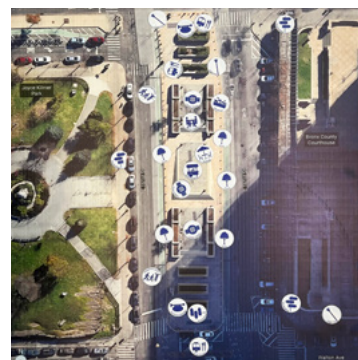
### + Design Workshops



### + Lighting and Materials Workshop



### + Desire and Constrains Pop-up



### + Programming Workshop



### + Capital Agencies Coordination Meetings





## PILOT TESTING AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

### PILOT TESTING AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

#### + Fabrication



#### + Open House New York



### VISION PLAN

#### + Vision Plan



#### + Painting



#### + 9-11 Memorial Day



#### + Vision Plan Exhibit



#### + Concert



#### + Annual 5K Run



#### + 161st Street Project Video



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# 02

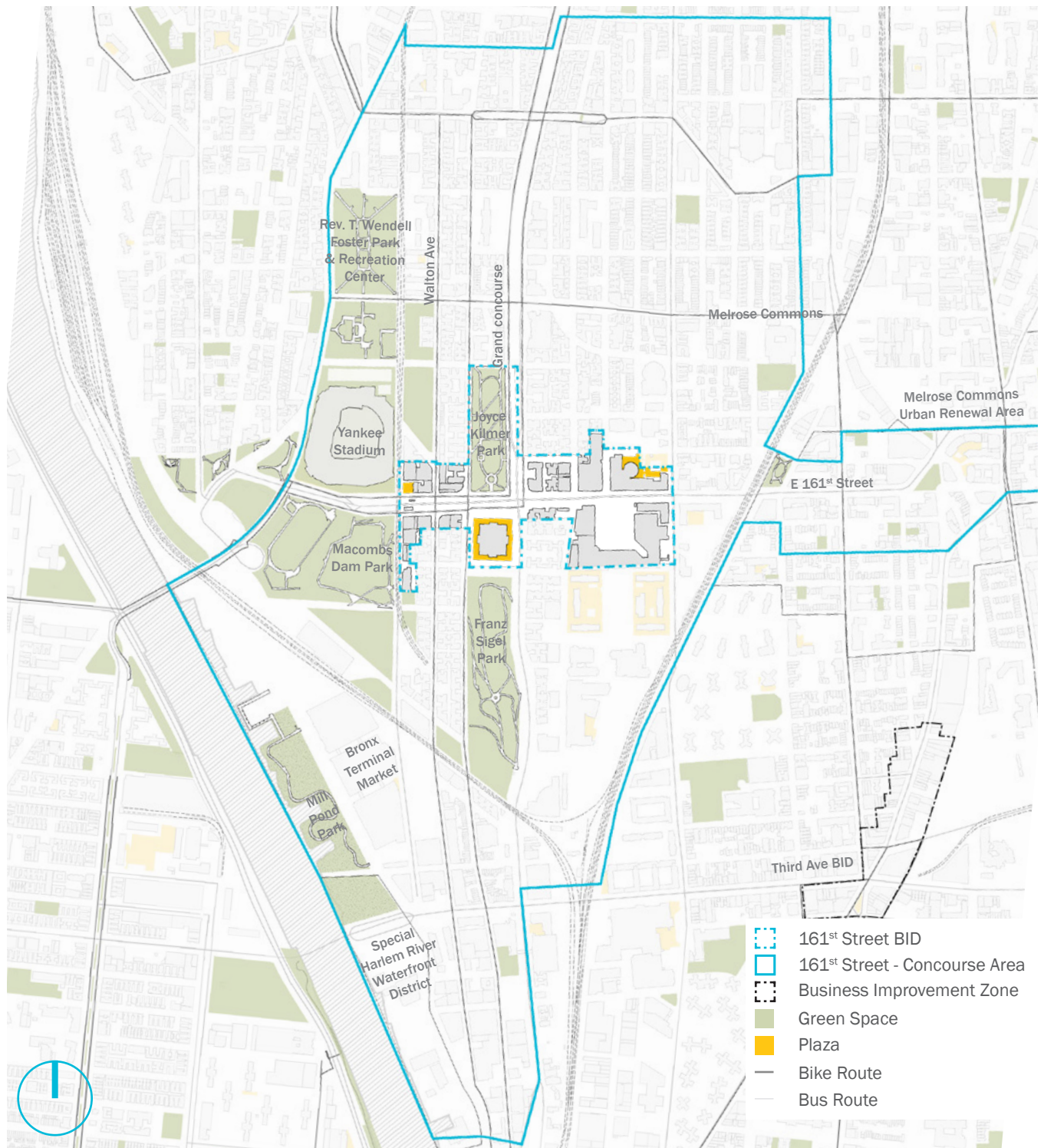
## People and Places



Founded as the Capitol District Management Association in 2009, the 161st Street BID is one of 75 Business Improvement Districts in New York City. It spans a twelve-block area from Morris Avenue in the east to River Avenue in the west. The district includes 394 storefronts that serve both local residents and visitors, alongside major anchors such as Yankee Stadium and the Bronx County Courthouse, which serve regional functions. The neighborhood is home to predominantly Black and Latino communities, with residents expressing a strong sense of unity and belonging.

Beyond the BID's formal boundary, the larger 161st Street-Concourse area shares similar characteristics and has attracted recent capital investment.





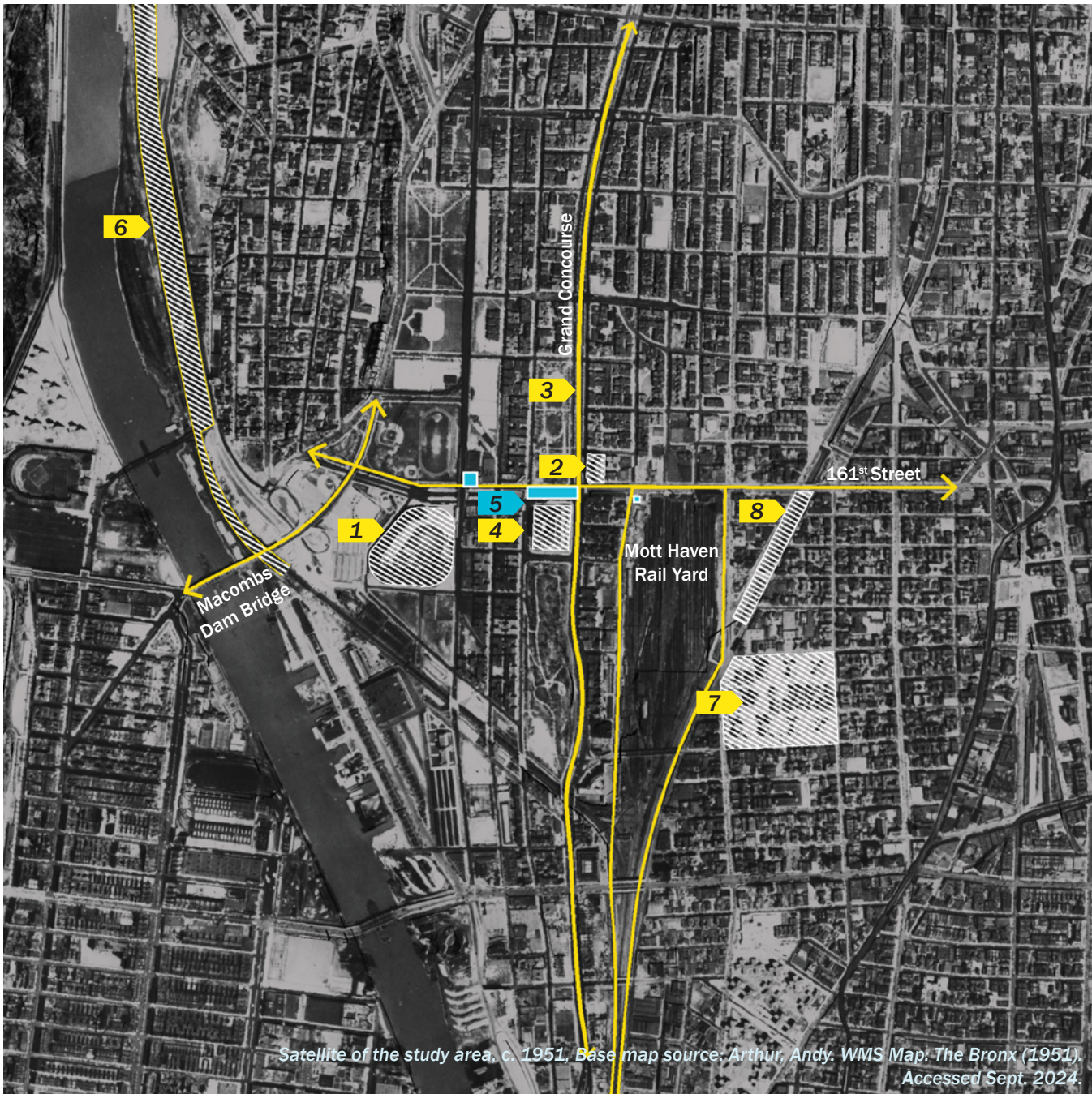
Boundary of the Study Area, Regional Context.

## PROJECT BOUNDARY

This report includes two study areas: the 161st Street BID and the broader 161st Street-Concourse area. The 161st Street BID was founded to keep streets clean, promote commerce, and enrich the neighborhood through events and cultural programming.

The 161st Street-Concourse area includes the BID as well as surrounding cultural and commercial destinations, and areas that have seen recent public and private investment in the South Bronx.





## 20th Century

The early 1900s were a period of rapid growth for the 161st Street district, driven by developments in transportation, entertainment, and employment. The Grand Concourse, designed and constructed between 1897 and 1909, originally began at 161st Street. This four-and-a-half-mile boulevard connecting the West Bronx to Manhattan symbolized the American Dream, offering upwardly mobile immigrant families access to beautiful Art Deco housing. The construction of Robert Moses's Cross Bronx Expressway marked a turning point. Over 1,500 families were displaced - many from low-income neighborhoods such as East Tremont - and the expressway created a lasting physical and economic divide between the north and south Bronx. While the expressway was not the only cause of the Bronx's decline in the 1970s and 1980s, it contributed to cultural and economic fragmentation, exacerbated by drugs, violence, and arson.

Once a beacon of middle-class prosperity, the area suffered from decades of neglect and disenfranchisement fueled by unchecked political power and systemic disinvestment.



## Early 1900s

Bronx became an immigrant neighborhood, mostly Germans and Italians.

## 1930s

Robert Moses began to focus on building major bridge to link New York City's boroughs and the surrounding area.

## 1980s

Revitalization of the Bronx

## 1923

- 1 Yankee Stadium
- 2 Concourse Hotel



Image Source:  
MLBCathedrals



Image Source:  
NYC Department of Records

## 1933

3

Concourse Line began operation.

## 1934

- 4 Bronx Country Courthouse & Bronx Country Building



Image Source:  
Historical Society of the New York Courts

## 1942

- 5 Lou Gehrig Plaza was named.



Image Source:  
Associated Press



Image Source:  
USPS

## 1949-1956

6

Major Deegan Expressway started construction.

## 1950-1970s

- 7 Melrose Houses
- 8 Morrisania Air Rights



Image Source:  
Foursquare



Image Source:  
Ian Campo

## 1949-1972

Cross Bronx Expressway finished construction.

In 2008, the Grand Concourse underwent major upgrades, including the reconstruction of Lou Gehrig Plaza in its current form. The Yankees' move to 161st Street and River Avenue in 1923 had long established the area as a regional destination. Their original stadium, now Macombs Dam Park, served as their home until the new stadium was constructed nearby in 2008. The Bronx Courthouse, built between 1931 and 1934 just south of Lou Gehrig Plaza, houses several public agencies, including the Bronx County Courthouse and the District Attorney's Office. Public transportation also shaped the neighborhood's development: the 161st Street-Yankee Stadium subway station opened in 1917 for the 4 train and expanded to include the B and D lines in 1933. These transit connections helped drive population growth and local investment.

18



## 2005

- 1 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID was formed.

## 2009

Lower Concourse Rezoning.

- 2 Bronx Terminal Market 1
- 3 Mill Pond Park 2
- 4 New Yankee Stadium 3
- 5 Lou Gehrig Plaza Renovation 4

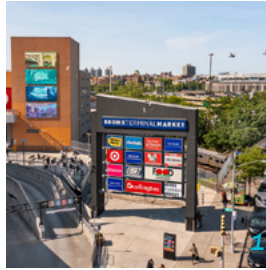


Image Source:  
Francis Dzikowski, Pinstripe Alley, NYC Streetsblog,  
SkyCamUSA

- 6 Yankees- E.153rd Street Station



Image Source:  
Gary Dunaier

## 2011

- 7 Via Verde housing development

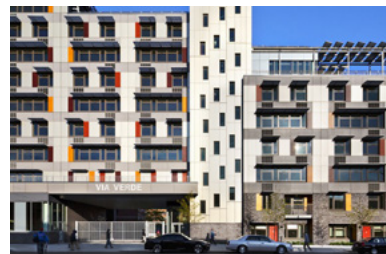


Image Source:  
Dattner Architects

- 8 Mott Haven Campus



Image Source:  
World-Architects

Sustainable South Bronx Project launched.

## 2019

- 10 Bronx Children's Museum



Image Source:  
NYC Department of Design and Construction

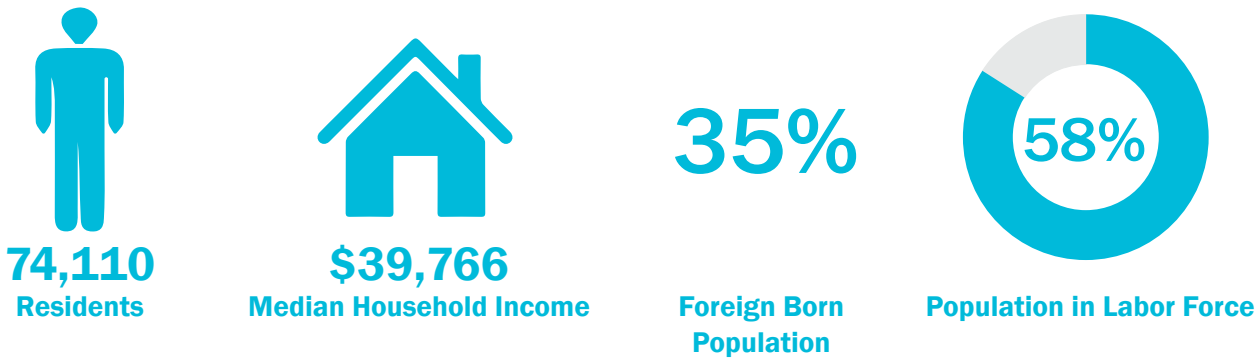
## 2012

- 9 Widen and upgrade Major Deegan Expressway.

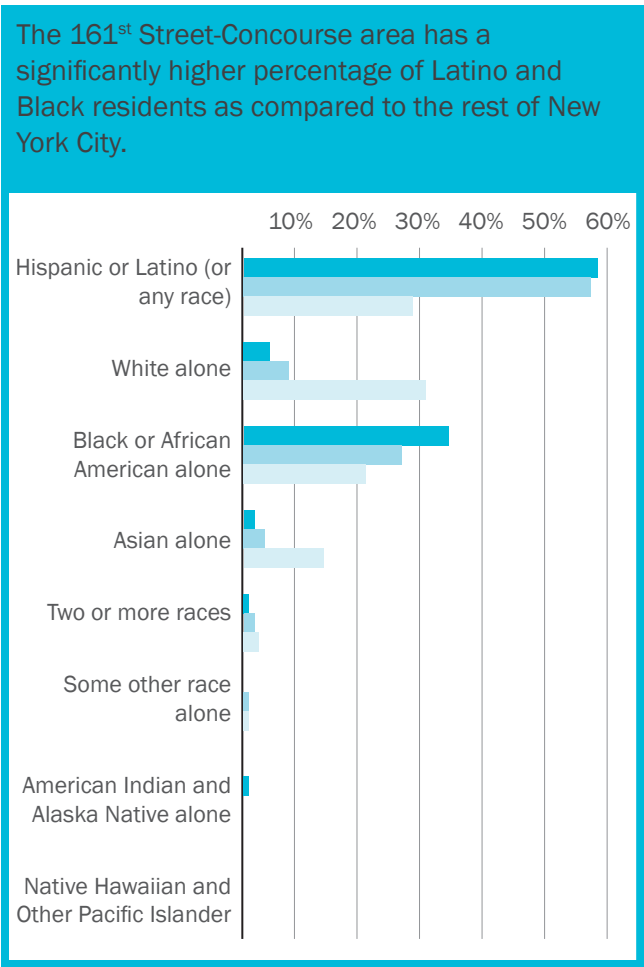
# Demographics

The 161st Street-Concourse area is home to approximately 75,000 people, about 35% of whom are foreign-born. Nearly 90% of residents identify as Latino or Black. The median household income is \$39,766, well below the citywide median of \$76,607.

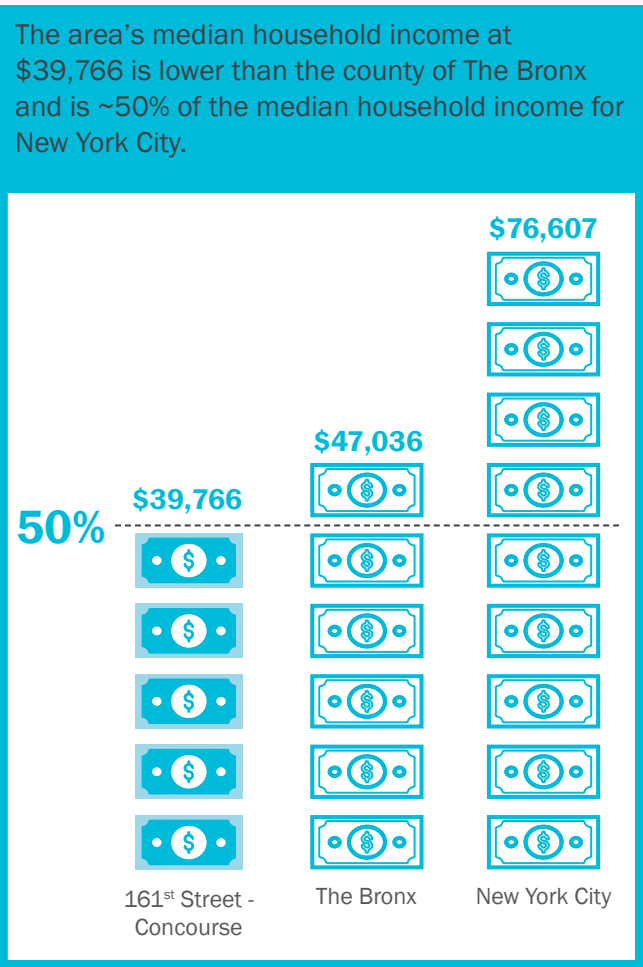
Within the study area, there are 394 storefronts, with a vacancy rate of 12.4% as of June 2024. Most small businesses have operated in the neighborhood for over a decade. However, around 34% are operated by two or fewer people, and only 1% of businesses own the property they occupy.



Note: all the demographic data boundary corresponds to the 161<sup>st</sup> Street - Concourse Boundary shown in pg. 15.  
Source: 161<sup>st</sup> Street - Concourse Bronx CDNA Report; US Census Bureau, 2018-2022; American Community Survey; NYS Department of Labor, May 2024; NYS DOT, 2023 Annual Average Daily Traffic data; NYC DOT, Bi-Annual Pedestrian Counts, 2023



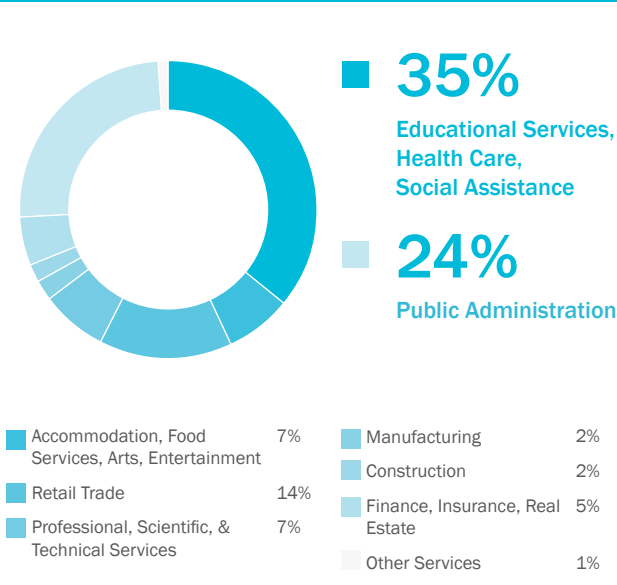
Race and Ethnicity Distribution



Median Household Income

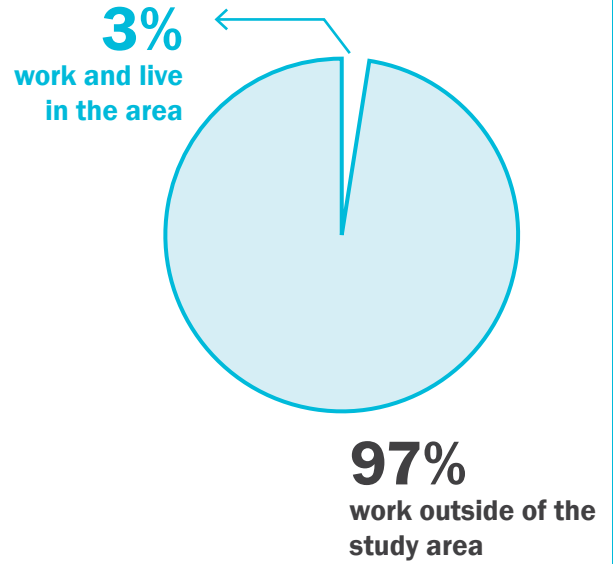


The leading job sectors are in Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Public Administration which together make up ~ 60% of the total jobs in the 161<sup>st</sup> Street-Concourse area.



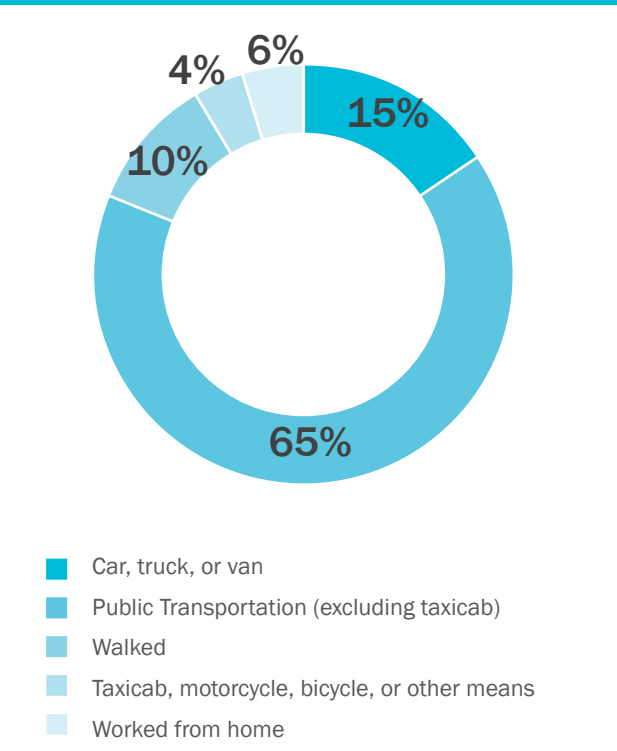
**Jobs Located in 161<sup>st</sup> Street - Concourse**

In the 161<sup>st</sup> Street-Concourse area, only 2.6% of the residents work in the neighborhood. 97% of the population works outside the study area.



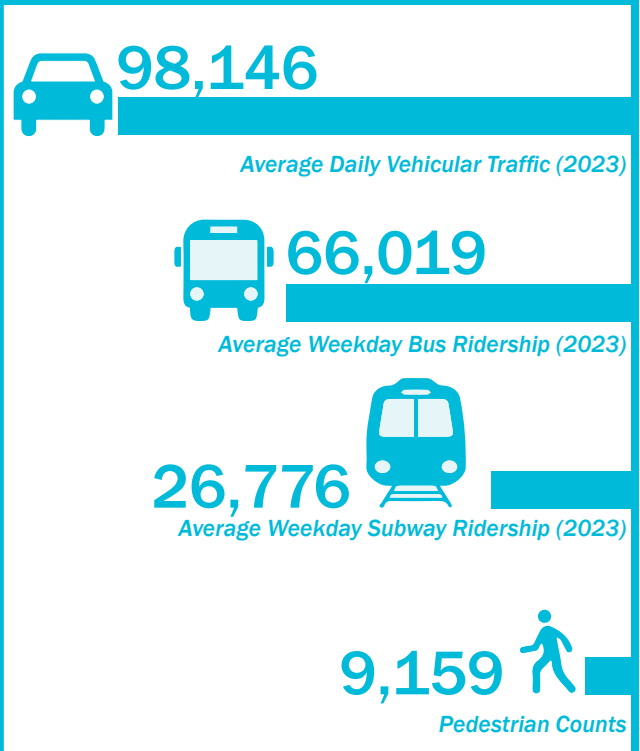
**Commuter Characteristic**

In The 161<sup>st</sup> Street-Concourse area, over 65% of the workers commute to work using some form of public transportation (excluding taxicab), 4% use taxicabs, bicycle or motorcycles, and another 10% walk to work.



**Means of Transportation to Work (2023)**

In the 161<sup>st</sup> Street- Concourse area, vehicular traffic is the highest partially due to the existence of several major roadways in the Bronx. Public transportation is also widely used in the area, with 10 bus lines, and 3 subway lines operating.



**Transportation Volume (2023)**

# Public Realm Snapshot

The 161st Street-Concourse area contains several large open spaces, including Joyce Kilmer Park, Mill Pond Park, and Lou Gehrig Plaza. Commercial activity is concentrated along 161st Street, 165th Street, and the Bronx Terminal Market, making the area a major destination within the South Bronx.

Within the 161st Street BID, several municipal institutions - including the Bronx County Courthouse, the District Attorney's Office, and Bronx County Family Court - serve a broader regional population.

## Streetscape Observation

Despite the area's civic and commercial activity, several streetscape issues require attention:

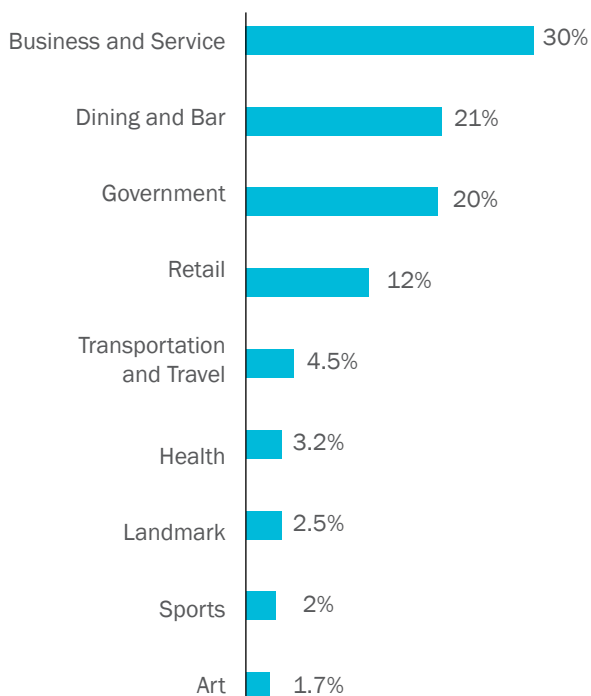
1. Illegal dumping and poor street management have led to sanitation and maintenance problems, including garbage buildup and unpleasant odors.
2. Unregulated street vending and overcrowded parking obstruct pedestrian circulation.
3. Elevation changes along 161st Street create complex and unsafe conditions for people walking.



- 1 Street vendors taking up pedestrian spaces
- 2 Vacant storefronts
- 3 Occupied tree pits
- 4 Double parked traffic lanes
- 5 No seating / shading device around administrative buildings
- 6 Multi-layer traffic
- 7 Graffiti
- 8 Unclean sidewalks due to dumping
- 9 Wide street with complex traffic conditions



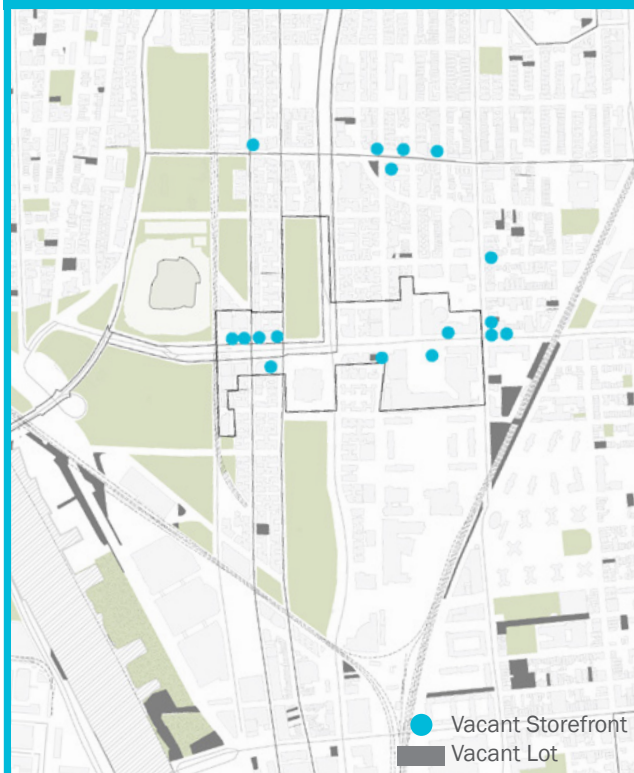
The business profile in the 161<sup>st</sup> Street-Concourse area is diverse, with a higher percentage of governmental institutions and businesses accommodating the sports audience.



### Business Profile in 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID Area

Data Source: Esri and Foursquare. Business Analyst. 2024.

According to the 161<sup>st</sup> Street - Concourse CDNA Report, the storefront vacancy in the study area is 12.4%. Vacant lots exist along transportation infrastructures and waterfront.



### Storefront Vacancy Map

Data Source: MAPPluto 23v3.1, 161<sup>st</sup> Street - Concourse Bronx CDNA Report

Yankee Stadium, near all the courthouses, and the center of what goes on politically and business-wise in the Bronx.

Underpass needs beautification, and pavement of the streets/sidewalks needs resurfacing.

More green spaces, more trees, and a pedestrian shopping mall that prohibits car traffic.

More public parking options not taken up by cops/court employees.

The district is a transportation hub.

Good foot traffic through the area.



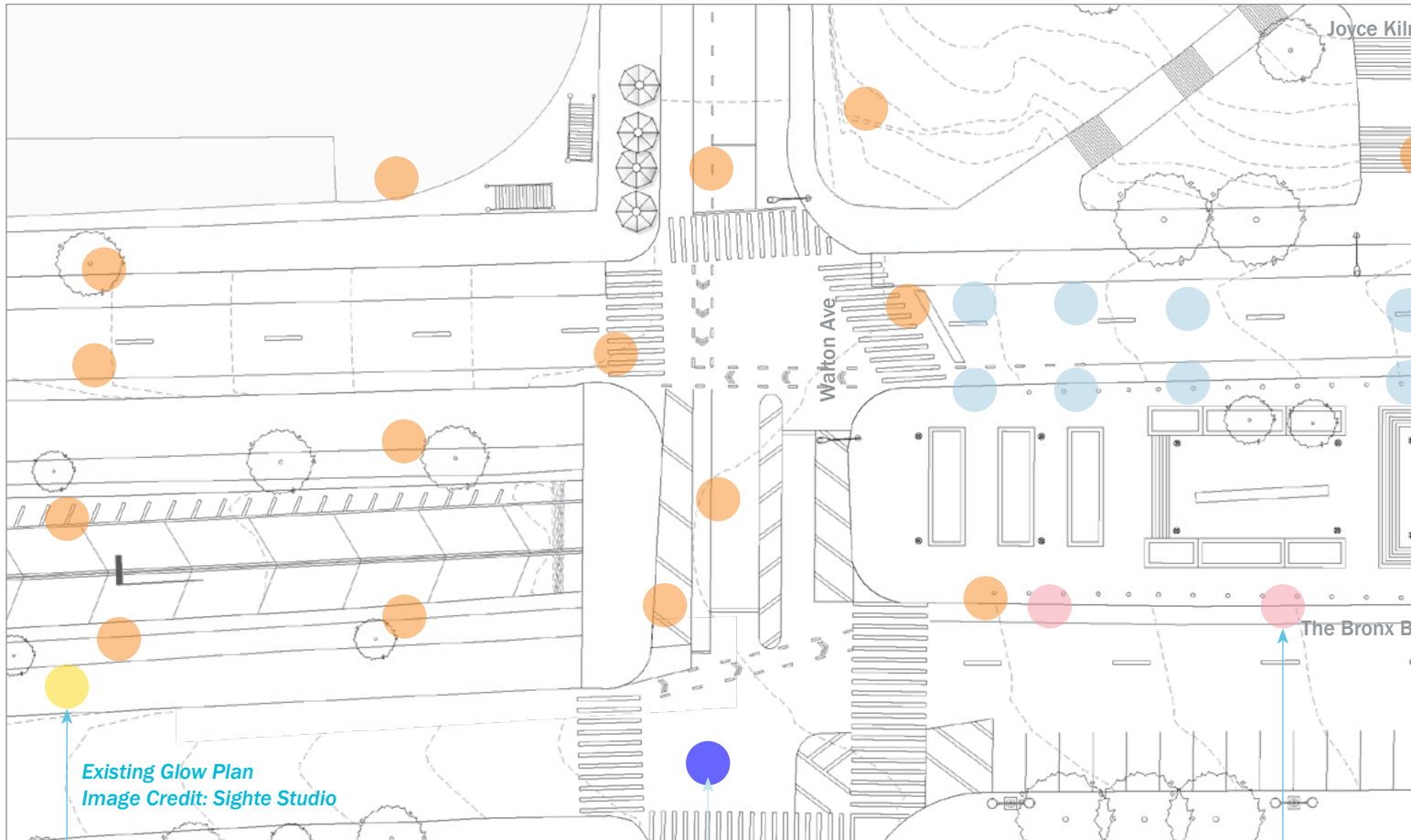
### Responses From Residents About District Identity and Desired Improvements

Data Source: 161<sup>st</sup> Street - Concourse Bronx CDNA Report

# Existing Lighting Condition

(Prepared by Sichte Studio)

Lighting throughout the 161st Street BID and commercial corridor reflects a fragmented system of oversight, with multiple public agencies - including DOT, MTA, Parks - and private businesses managing different components. As a result, lighting conditions vary widely in technology, maintenance standards, and objectives.

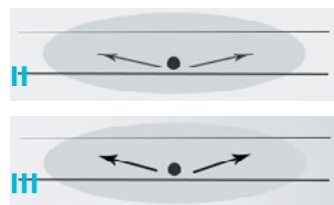


Octagonal  
(standard pole)  
LED cobra head

## APPLICATIONS

Streets  
Single & Twin Mounting

Distribution type ii/iii

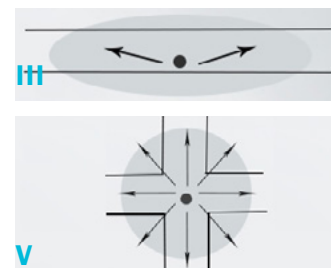


World's fair pedestrian  
(distinctive pole)  
LED

## APPLICATIONS

Historic, Streets ≥ 36'  
Single Mounting

Distribution type iii/v



Bis  
(his  
LED

## APPLICATIONS

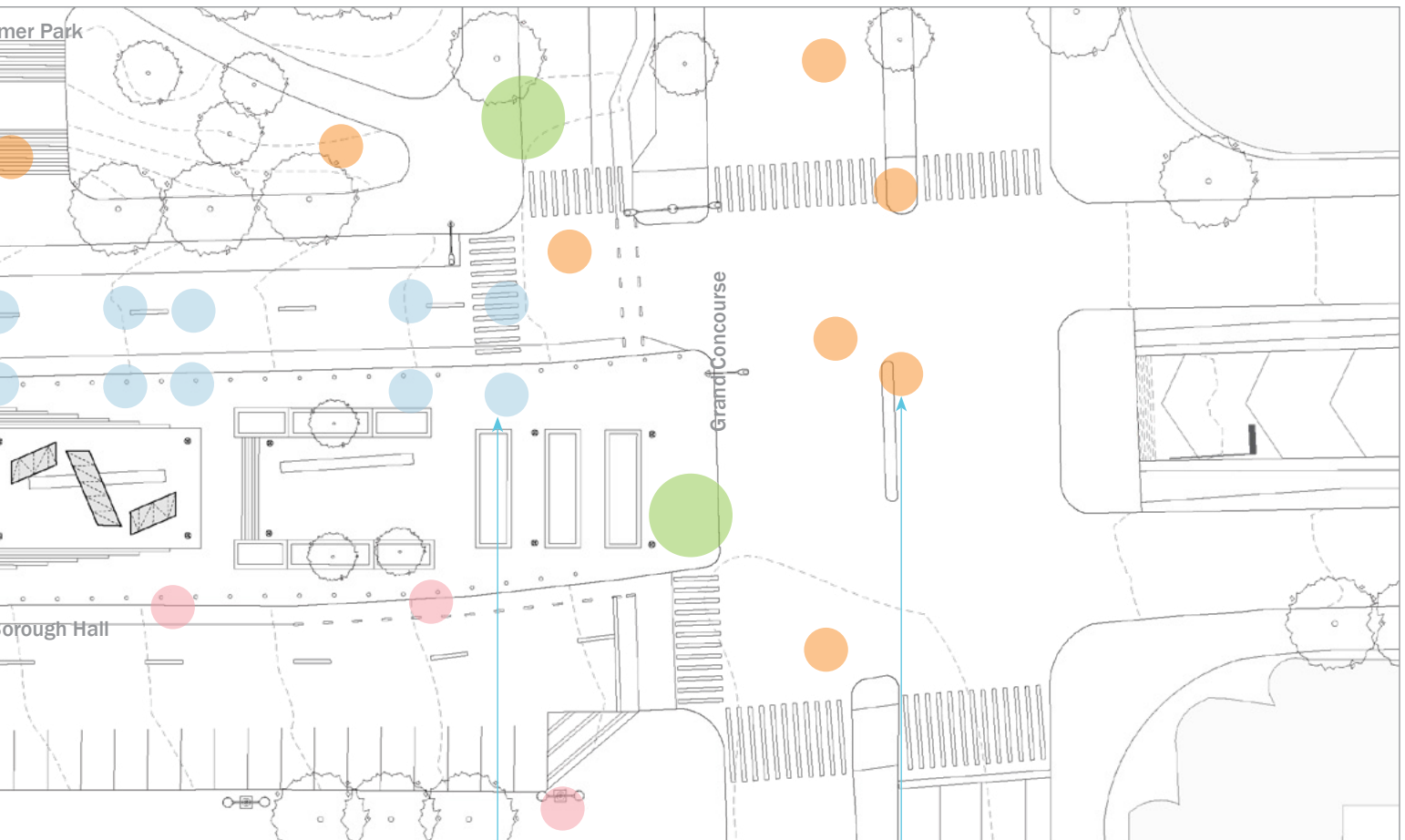
His

Dis





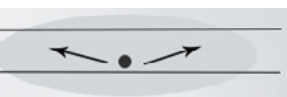
Outdated infrastructure, such as high-pressure sodium bulbs, creates inconsistent color temperatures and patchy lighting, particularly in Lou Gehrig Plaza. Maintenance lapses are common, including non-functional fixtures and missing lamp heads, due in part to the absence of a clear process for reporting and addressing issues. There are also gaps in visual continuity; lighting does little to unify major district landmarks such as Yankee Stadium and Lou Gehrig Plaza. In addition, varied storefront lighting adds to the district's fragmented nighttime character.



shops Crook pole  
(historic pole)  
D

PLICATIONS  
historic, Streets  $\geq 36'$

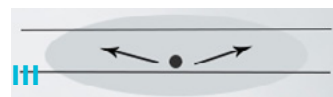
distribution type iii



Type B Pedestrian  
(distinctive pole)  
LED/HPS

APPLICATIONS  
Parks, Plazas, Ped-  
Bridges

Distribution type iii/v



Type M  
(historic pole)  
LED

APPLICATIONS  
Historic, Streets  $\geq 36'$   
Single & Twin Mounting

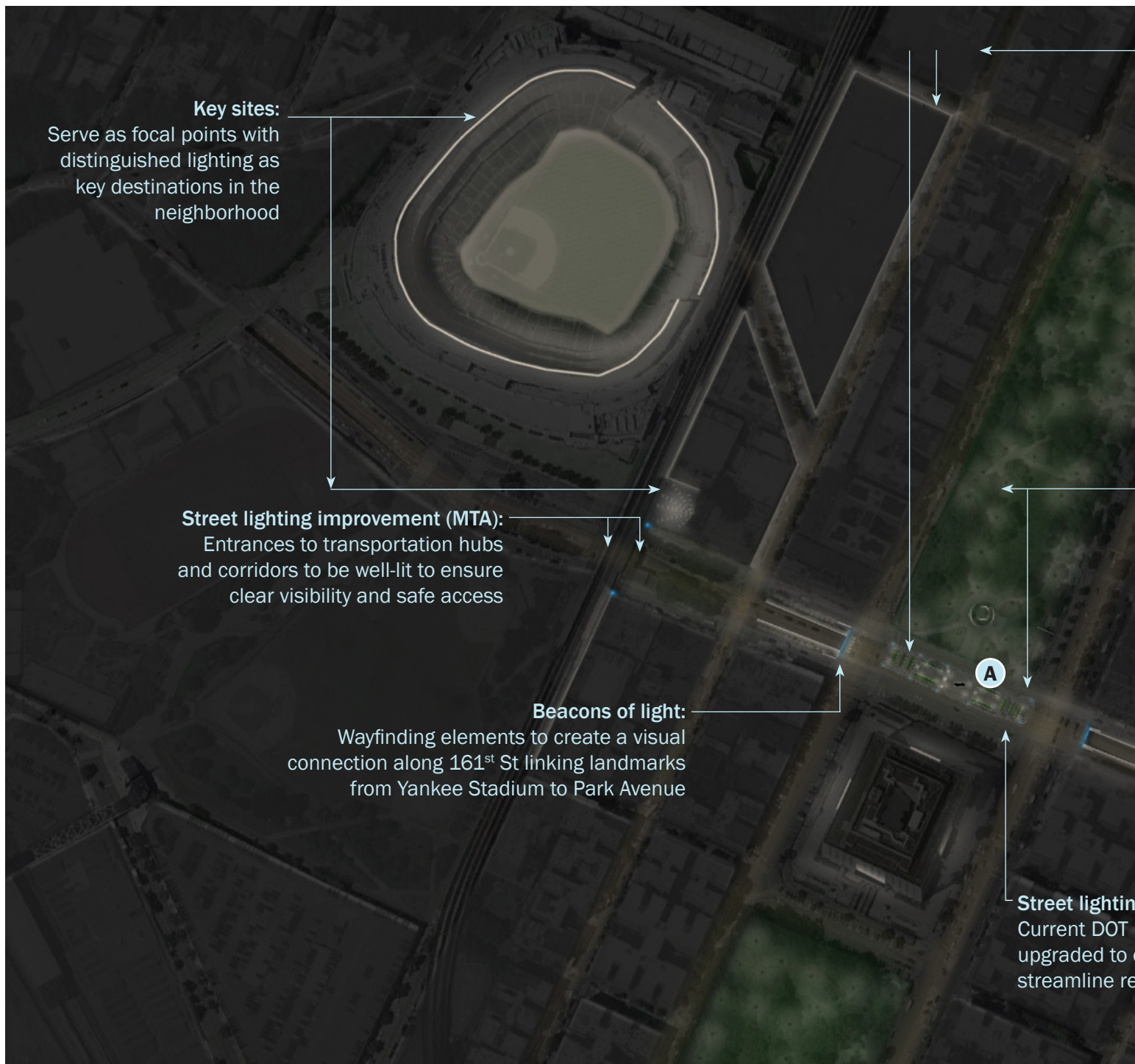
Distribution type iii



# Future Lighting Intervention Recommendation

(By Sichte Studio)

When we champion public space, we must consider its life from day to night and forefront how lighting helps to shape, energize, and connect. Alongside the 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID, we have identified how lighting can increase connectivity along the commercial corridor of 161<sup>st</sup> Street. Bronx court buildings sit on opposite sides of a hill that cuts off direct visual connection and reinforces the temporary occupation of the court is in session. We put forward the following proposals to support the BID's goals of strengthening the existing local commercial corridor and its amenities. However, we also see opportunities where visual hierarchy and connectors across the BID can invite daily visitors to explore and engage with the neighborhood.



District Glow Plan and Lighting Intervention Image Credit: Sichte Studio



ze, and activate the public realm.  
1<sup>st</sup> Street. Yankee Stadium and the  
ation during baseball games or when  
community through programming and  
to explore more of the Capitol District.



Railing Integrated Lighting

— **Cultural sites:**

Vertical illumination to celebrate the  
Bronx's history and cultural heritage

**Moments of rest:**

Thoughtfully illuminated spaces to create  
an inviting environment for community  
engagement and peaceful retreats

**Lighting improvement (DOT):**

Lighting to be replaced or  
current LED standards &  
reporting system

**Moments of activation:**

Multiple layers of light for future programs

Current lighting throughout the BID consists of the public and private mix that vary in scale and states of repair. The layers of light include DOT poles, illuminated signage and spill from business, the glow and roar from Yankee Stadium, a façade wash on the Bronx Supreme Court, and Parks post-tops peeking through tree canopies. It is a rich mix but not one that feels cohesive. One approach to address the mix is by establishing visual hierarchy. This should not be confused by an attempt to homogenize the area, as its variety is key to its vibrancy. The methodology for establishing visual hierarchy is outlined below:

### **VISUAL HIERARCHY APPROACH:**

#### **Key Sites:**

Prominent sites such as Yankee Stadium, McDonald's Plaza, Bronx Supreme Court, Concourse Plaza/Parking Lot, and Bronx County Hall of Justice will serve as focal points, with enhanced lighting distinguishing them as destinations. These spaces would undergo a survey and community engaged design process to develop lighting improvements and strategy.

#### **Key Sites identified with BID**

- i. Yankee Stadium approach
- ii. McDonald's Plaza
- iii. Greenway adjacent to MTA Station (between River Ave and Gerard Ave).
- iv. Joyce Kilmer Park Steps
- v. Lou Gehrig Plaza
- vi. Grand Concourse adjacent to Joyce Kilmer (area currently used for Bronx Night Market)
- vii. Concourse Plaza/ Parking Lot
- viii. Bronx County Hall of Justice Read Plaza



*Design Team met Steering Committee for Lighting Intervention*



**WAYFINDING:**

Beacons of light and wayfinding elements will create a visual connection along 161<sup>st</sup> Street, linking key landmarks from Yankee Stadium to Park Avenue despite the elevation changes.

Street lighting improvements and maintenance (DOT and MTA)

**Department of Transportation (DOT)**

- i. Current DOT lighting to be replaced or upgraded to current LED standard for consistent color temperature and color rendering (CRI).
- ii. DOT pole type to be standardized around Type M and Type B poles to match pole type currently used on 161<sup>st</sup> Street by Lou Gehrig Plaza.
- iii. The general street lighting to ensure there is a sufficient light level for navigating as well as provide light for the storefronts for local businesses.
  - 1. DOT to review existing lighting through survey to ensure that it meets the current DOT standard for sidewalks and plazas and is not over lit.

**A streamlined reporting system, such as a direct phone line or app, will allow the community to report issues with streetlights (e.g., flickering, outages, or color shifts), ensuring timely maintenance and upkeep.**

- i. Include contact info where they could voice their concerns about the lighting condition in the area.

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)**

- i. Entrances to transportation hubs and corridors will be well-lit to ensure clear visibility and safe access for all users.
  - 1. Create plan in coordination with MTA to upgrade lighting attached to underside of elevated 4 Train tracks.

**CULTURAL AND REST AREAS:**

In addition to creating more visual cohesion we suggest supporting the programming throughout the BID with electric and daylight strategies.

- Murals on commercial storefronts will receive vertical illumination to celebrate the Bronx's history and cultural heritage, turning these areas into must-visit destinations and community hubs.
- Moments of rest, including Lou Gehrig Plaza, Bronx County Hall of Justice's public plaza, and potentially a repurposed Chase building as a community space, will be thoughtfully illuminated to create an inviting environment that encourage community engagement and offer visitors peaceful retreats.

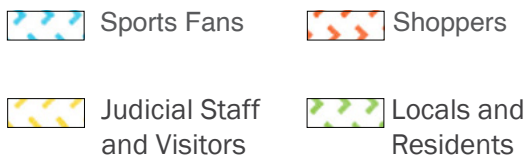
This comprehensive lighting approach integrates functionality, safety, and cultural enrichment, aiming to transform 161<sup>st</sup> Street into a vibrant, connected, and welcoming urban environment.

## Pedestrian Flow

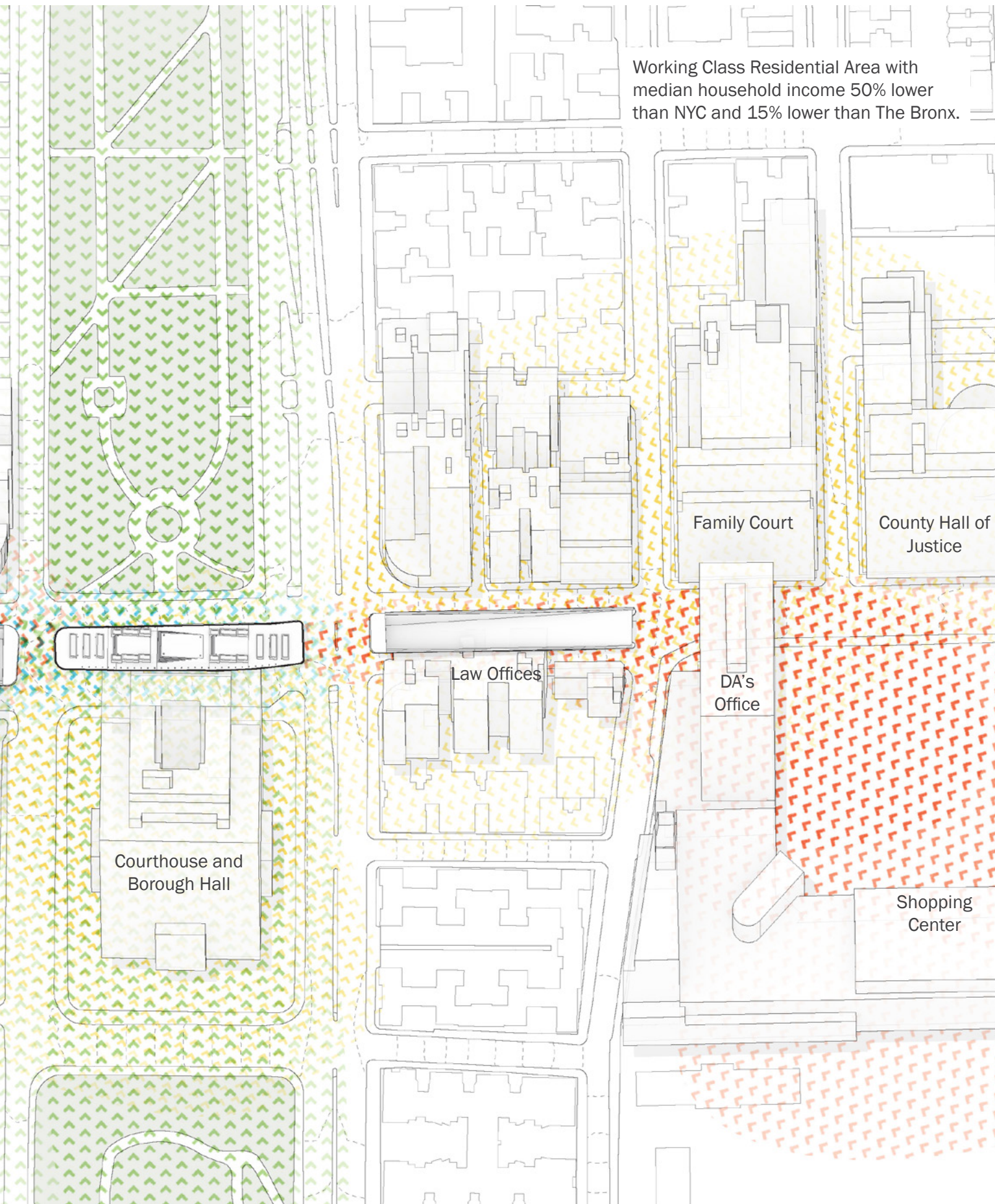
Pedestrian traffic in the 161st Street-Concourse area reflects the distinct destinations and programming throughout the district. Most foot traffic can be grouped into four categories: sports fans, shoppers, courthouse staff and visitors, and local residents.

However, the area offers few open spaces for everyday use, such as eating lunch, resting in the shade, or reading.

Given the range of pedestrian activity, seven priority sites have been identified along the public right-of-way (ROW) for future activation and design.







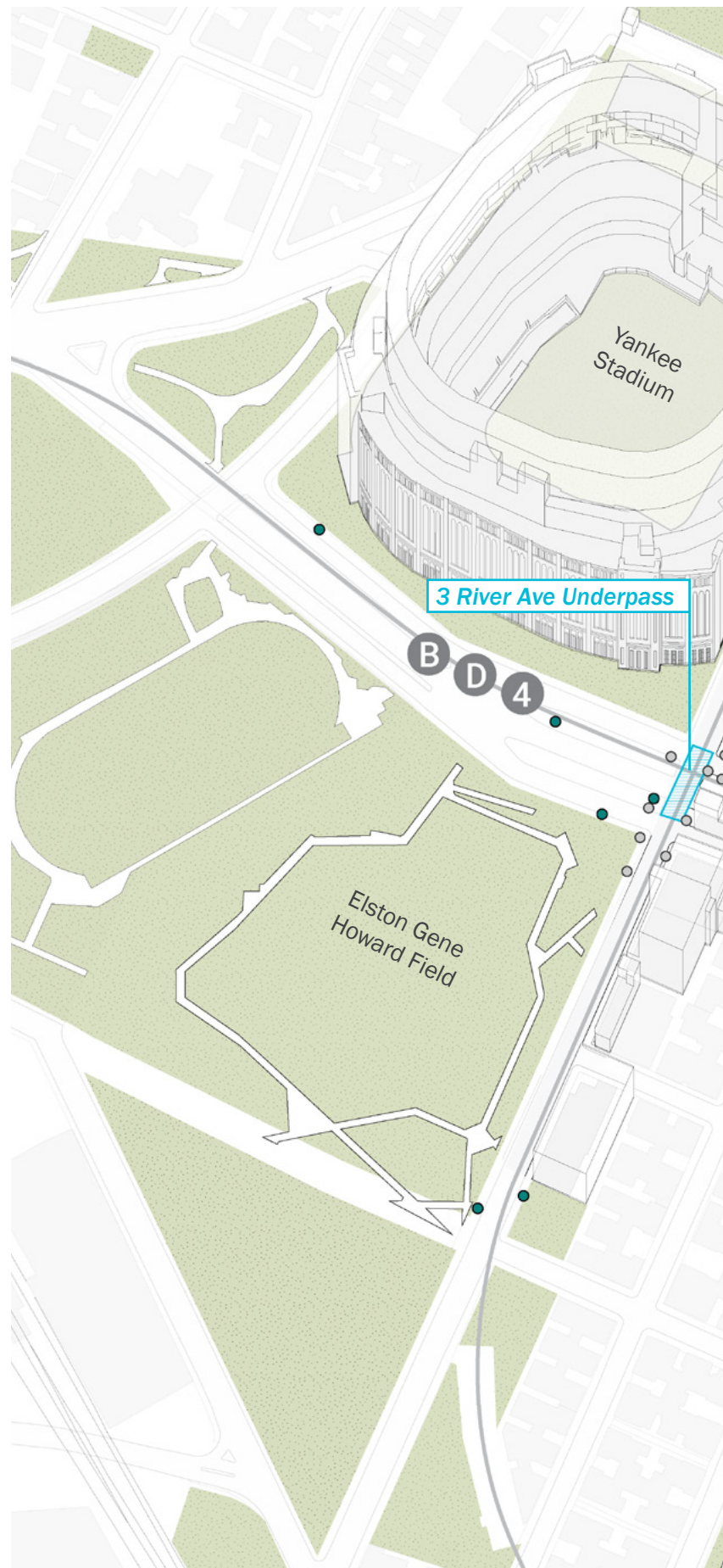


## Priority Sites for Improvement

Based on pedestrian flow and spatial analysis, seven project ideas have been identified within the 161st Street-Concourse corridor. These are commonly used pedestrian spaces with potential for public realm improvements. They fall into three categories: plazas, transit nodes, and pass-through spaces.

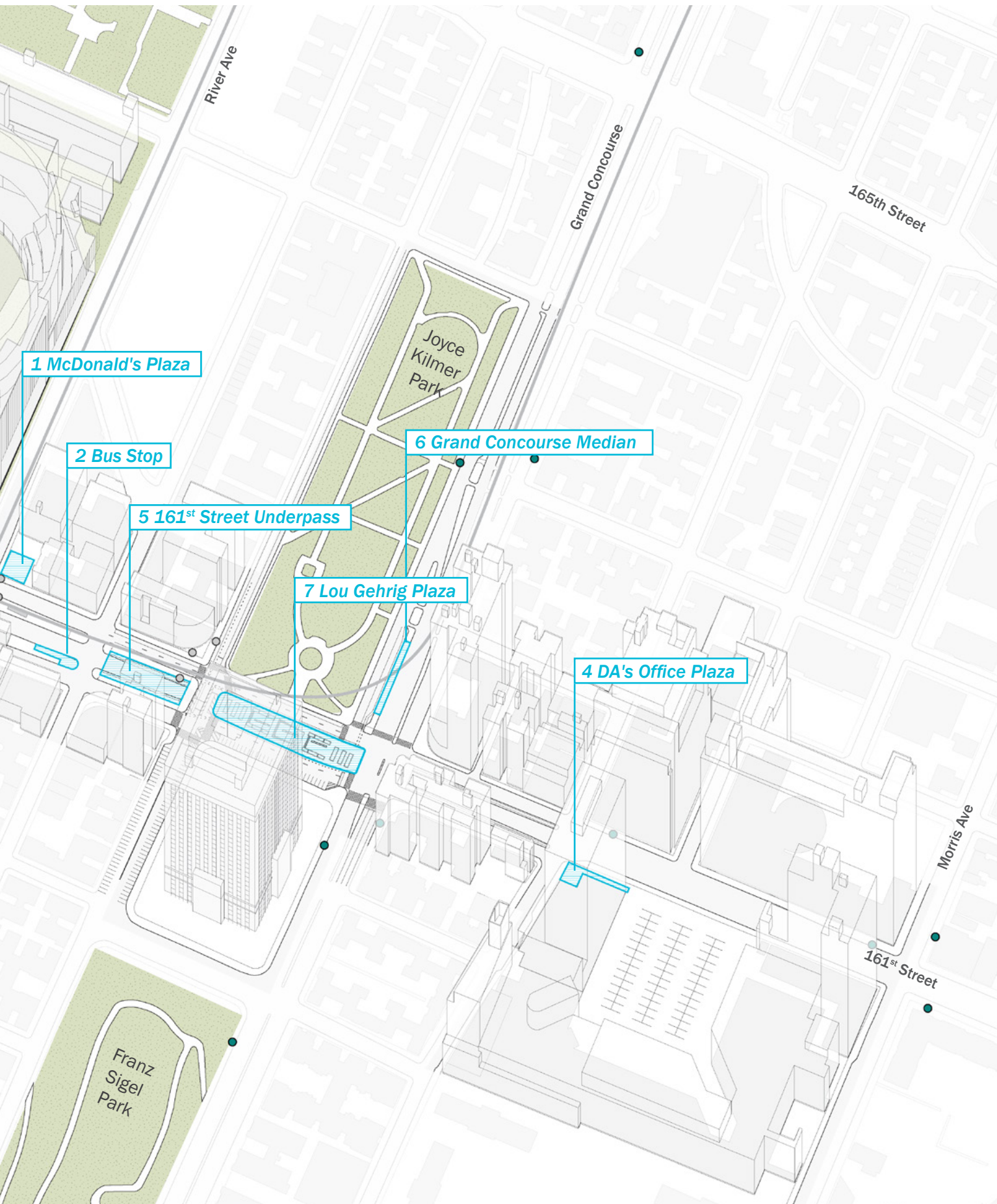
As described in the following section, 161st Street's elevation shifts create challenges related to visibility, sightlines, and pedestrian effort.

Improvements at these sites aim to enhance connectivity, provide accessible open space for residents and commuters, and raise the public profile of the district.



- Subway Entrance
- Bus Stop





# Priority Sites for Improvement

## 1: McDonald's Plaza



*View from 161 St-Yankee Stadium to McDonald's Plaza*  
*Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock*

This plaza is a key connection between Yankee Stadium, the subway station, and local businesses. Pedestrian flow here is highly influenced by game-day traffic.

## 2: E 161st and River Avenue Bus Stop



*Intersection of E 161<sup>st</sup> St and Grand Ave*  
*Image Source: Google Streetview. 2017*

The bus stop, located at the intersection of E 161<sup>st</sup> Street and Grand Avenue, is shaded by trees and is a link between the 4 train station and bus routes.

## 5: 161st Street Underpass



*161<sup>st</sup> Street Underpass towards Grand Concourse Plaza*  
*Image Source: Google Streetview, 2024*

This underpass separates pedestrian circulation from vehicular traffic on 161<sup>st</sup> Street. While it is well-utilized for vehicles, it is less pedestrian-friendly.

## 6: Grand Concourse Median



*Grand Concourse Bus Stop*  
*Image Source: Google Streetview, 2024*

This transit stop is positioned on the median of Grand Concourse. It currently lacks seating and shade for commuters, but it has strong branding potential for public visibility.



### 3: River Avenue Underpass



*Underpass along River Ave*  
*Image Source: Google Streetview, 2024*

This underpass is a highly active space with heavy vehicular traffic, pedestrians moving within the district, and connections to public transit, including overhead subway lines.

### 4: DA's Office Plaza



*Intersection at the District Attorney's Office*  
*Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock*

This plaza has significant foot traffic, especially during lunch and peak hours. It is a connection between the courthouse, local businesses, and public services.

### 7: SAIL at Lou Gehrig Plaza (built pilot intervention)



*View of Lou Gehrig Plaza in front of the Bronx Courthouse*  
*Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock*

Situated in between the courthouse and Joyce Kilmer Park, Lou Gehrig Plaza is perceived as a pass-through space by locals and is a photography spot for newlyweds.

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# 03

## Community Vision



The 161st Street BID district-wide community vision and goals were developed iteratively and informed by:

- Working sessions with an appointed Steering Committee
- Direct community engagement through programming, workshops, and tabling events in the community
- A built pilot intervention to activate Lou Gehrig Plaza and a subsequent user survey to identify further improvements
- Conversations with and feedback from NYC DPR and NYC DOT

Findings from these sessions were drafted into a community vision statement, supported by three goals and seven key interventions.



*The 161st Street BID will expand its area of influence to extend support for the district's diverse mix of small and large businesses. New open spaces reclaimed from the public right-of-way, enhancements to neglected open spaces, streetscape improvements, and pedestrian amenities will improve the experience for residents, visitors, and patrons—and transform the neighborhood into a connected, safe, and vibrant community. Ongoing collaborations with businesses, residents, and the Steering Committee will continue to garner support and investments for programming and district-wide improvements.*

## Partners and Strategy

The engagement plan was designed to invite residents, businesses, stakeholders, and implementation partners to:

- Foster a collaborative visioning and design process to shape the district's future
- Test community design concepts through built pilot activations and develop improved iterations based on user feedback
- Engage with capital agencies to identify and work through implementation bottlenecks
- Create a cohesive public realm vision and identify supporting project ideas
- Develop briefings to advocate for the community's vision and engage the City in determining next steps to realize that vision

### 161<sup>ST</sup> STREET BID

The 161st Street BID played a central role in leading the engagement and visioning process for the study area. As the primary coordinator, the BID:

- Communicated weekly with the design team to provide ongoing feedback on district conditions, design and planning analyses, and recommendations
- Mobilized local businesses and organizations to participate in engagement efforts
- Established the Steering Committee and facilitated their collaboration with the design team
- Organized and coordinated public programming at Lou Gehrig Plaza to test the built pilot
- Assisted with hosting local outreach and tabling events and gathering input from the broader community

### STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee, assembled prior to the project's launch, included representatives from local businesses, resident communities, offices of local elected officials, nonprofits, civic leaders, and Yankee Stadium. The committee was formed through the BID's extensive community network, ensuring a wide representation of voices.

Meeting regularly throughout the project, the Steering Committee engaged with the design team to identify needs and challenges, refine design concepts, ensure alignment with community priorities, and provide strategic guidance for the Vision Plan. Over the course of the year, they participated in four working sessions and hands-on workshops to test ideas for shading, seating, lighting, and art, which directly informed the design and fabrication of the built pilot: SAIL at Lou Gehrig Plaza. In addition, they provided ongoing feedback to identify additional projects and priorities to realize the community's vision and celebrate its history and culture.

### COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE

The community-at-large directly shaped the vision and goals and played a critical role in identifying priority locations for improvement, the nature of improvements, and desired programming to support those goals. This group included local residents, business owners, workers, and visitors. Methodologies included local outreach at existing community events, tabling in the neighborhood, and workshops to get direct feedback from people who move through the neighborhood every day.

A series of engagements and public activations were held to gather input, test design ideas, and refine the vision for the 161st Street BID area and the pilot installation at Lou Gehrig Plaza. These events allowed stakeholders and the broader public to provide meaningful feedback and shape the project in real time.



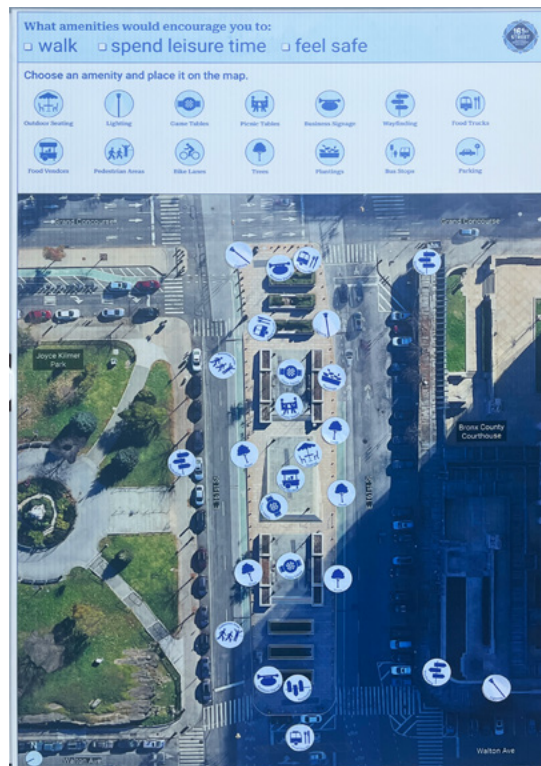
## Key Engagement Events



**Bronx Night Market**

Concurrent with The Bronx Night Market, the design team hosted a local outreach event to capture the voices of a wide range of community members—from local residents to visitors—who interacted with preliminary design concepts for the SAIL in an open, festive environment. They provided direct feedback on key elements such as shade structures, seating arrangements, and lighting options. Additionally, they offered ideas for community-centric programming, including concerts, holiday celebrations, and communal meals. Participants shared preferences on the proposed SAIL structure, materials, color, and use.

Local community members and baseball fans engaged with the design team on Yankees Opening Day to identify priority locations and types of improvements. Participants took part in an interactive mapping exercise by placing stickers to indicate desired amenities like seating, greenery, wayfinding signage, and vendor spaces. This exercise captured real-time insights and reinforced the need for a vibrant, user-friendly public space. The activation combined game-day energy with meaningful feedback, helping ensure that the plaza's transformation would resonate with local priorities.



**Yankee Opening Day**







Design Workshops



*Design workshops invited participants to help develop the pilot by testing materials, lighting, and structural elements. Feedback informed the initial fabrication as well as the final placement of the shade and seating structures.*

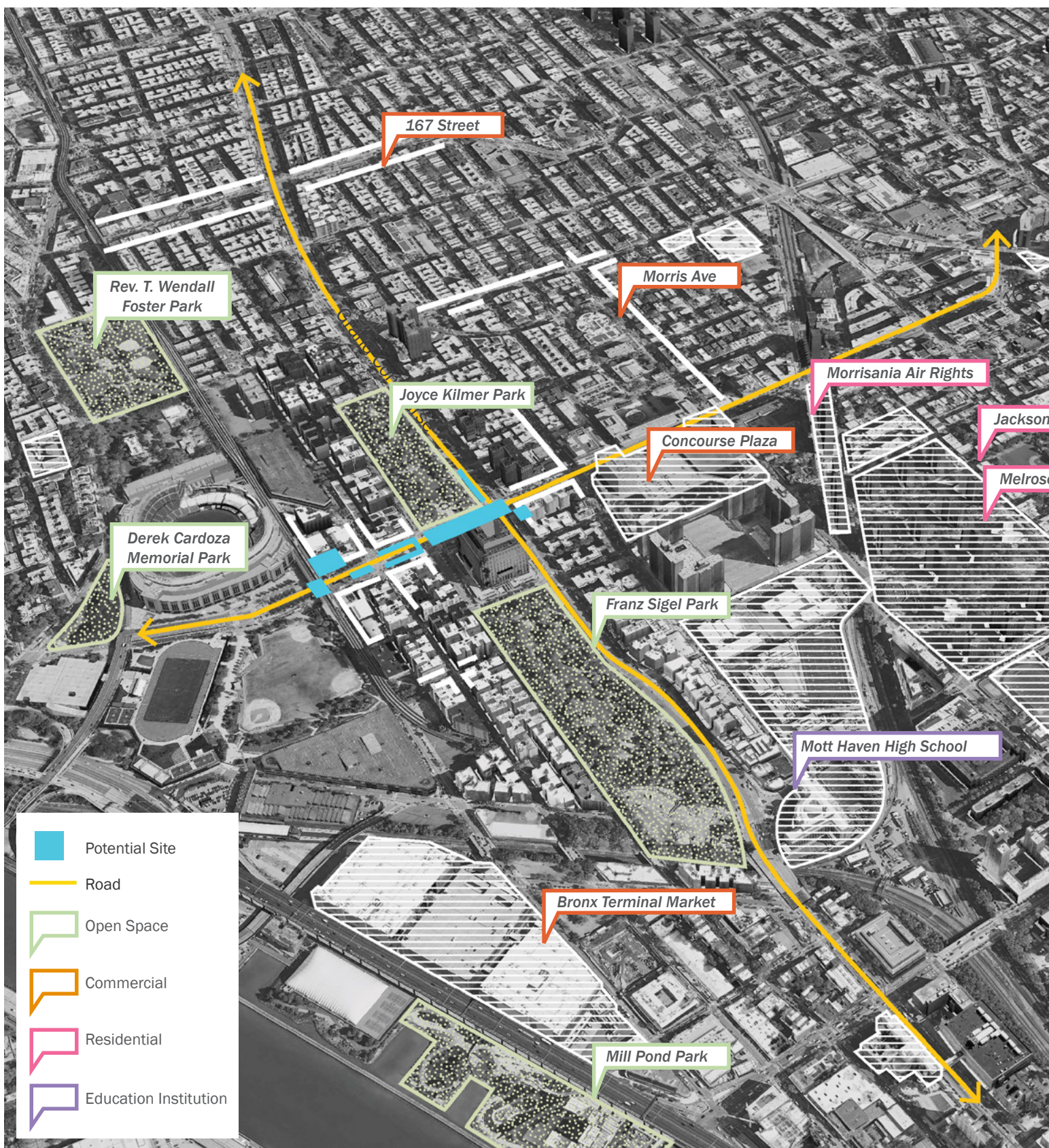




## Key Insights

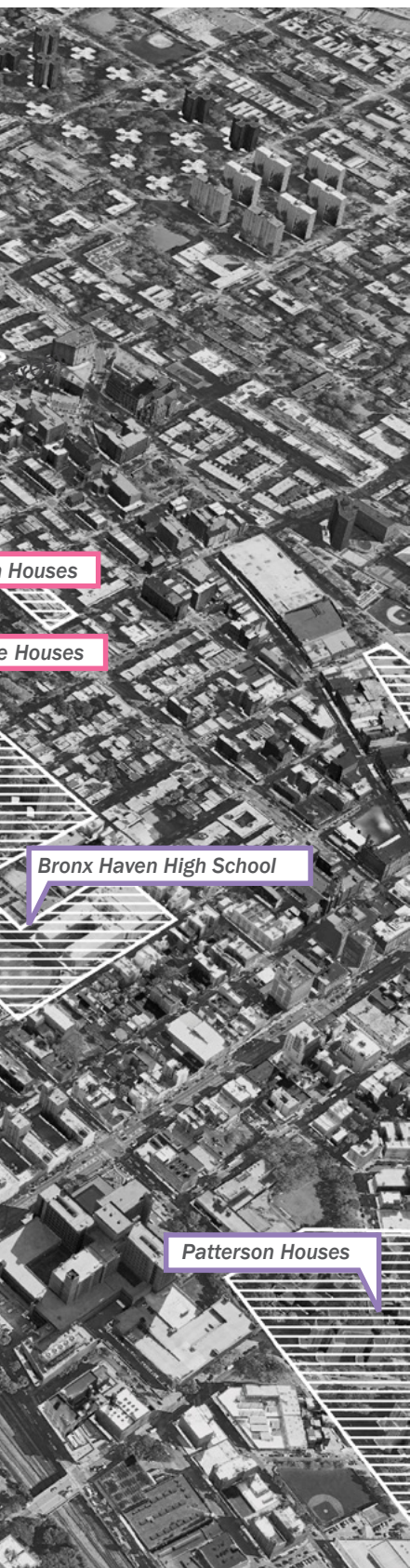
- Celebrate
- Linger
- Connect





Priority sites development as a method of connection in the neighborhood context , c. 2024  
 Base map source: Google Earth. "Satellite image of the Bronx, New York City." Collections





## Pilot Development, Testing, and Refinement

Extensive community engagement and iterative design workshops distilled three goals, which were refined as the design team developed, tested, and programmed the pilot build: SAIL. These community goals, presented through the lens of the SAIL installation at Lou Gehrig Plaza, are:

### Connect

**Enhance physical and visual connectivity within the 161st Street BID by forging new pedestrian connections and making existing ones safer.**

SAIL reconsiders Lou Gehrig Plaza as a pivotal connection for pedestrian movement, commercial activity, and civic participation. The plaza's activations extend public activity beyond the boundaries of Joyce Kilmer Park to the north and the courthouse to the south. By enhancing visual and physical connectivity—creating a seamless east-west and north-south link—Lou Gehrig Plaza can become a symbolic bridge between a vital civic institution, a beloved park, and surrounding communities. To address disconnected sidewalks and a lack of pedestrian crossings, SAIL serves as a starting point to identify additional public realm activation sites, such as the Bronx District Attorney's Office plaza, the McDonald's lot, and the traffic island between Walton Avenue and 161st Street.

### Linger

**Encourage moments of pause that foster social gathering and make the corridor more active and accessible.**

SAIL transforms Lou Gehrig Plaza into an informal gathering space for everyday moments—reflection, rest, and connection—bridging the gap between larger formal spaces like Joyce Kilmer Park and more transient pass-through areas like McDonald's Plaza. The installation offers a place for people to linger over coffee or lunch and take a break from their daily routines. Serving both residents and workers looking for respite, Lou Gehrig Plaza becomes a quiet and reliable destination for the community.

### Celebration

**Create places for residents, visitors, small businesses, and anchor institutions to come together for programming that enriches the community experience.**

SAIL supports multiple scales of interaction—from intimate memorials to borough-wide celebrations. By engaging the community throughout the transformation process, the project fosters a sense of ownership and pride. The installation creates opportunities to connect with friends and family while also showcasing the community's talent and cultural identity. No longer a passive backdrop, Lou Gehrig Plaza becomes a platform for cultivating new ideas, voices, and cultural expression that enhances the vitality of the 161st Street BID.

# 04

## District Actions & Strategies



This section introduces seven project ideas that support the community vision and goals. Together, these projects form a broader framework for enhancing connectivity, creating welcoming spaces, and supporting cultural expression. Each project idea defines a key intervention and identifies actions, strategies, high-level timeline and costs, and potential resources for implementation. . While we recognize that these project ideas will need to be developed further in collaboration with city agencies, property owners, and stakeholders, they are a starting point to begin these conversations and represent the desires of surrounding communities. Each project idea may have a different champion, and though the Vision Plan was developed for the 161st Street BID, it invites partners who can work together to shape these project ideas into capital projects.

The goal of the SAIL is to present a flexible and replicable model for small-scale, community-driven interventions, allowing future public space activations to be driven by the community itself.



## Connect

Enhance physical and visual connectivity within the 161st Street BID by forging new pedestrian connections and making existing ones safer.

Connect in this context refers to safe, comfortable, and comprehensible pedestrian access between key destinations along the corridor. Wide roadways, fragmented intersections, and leftover infrastructure from the Moses era have long prioritized cars over people. The proposed interventions aim to repair those disconnects through streetscape improvements, reclaiming the street right-of-way for pedestrian use where possible, and introducing wayfinding, signage, and lighting. These interventions will ultimately support local businesses, improve accessibility, and encourage foot traffic across the district.

## Linger

Encourage moments of pause that can foster social gatherings and make the corridor more active and accessible.

Creating space to linger means inviting people to slow down, rest, and spend time in the public realm. This goal is supported through amenities like seating, shade, planted medians, and designated areas for vendors. By introducing these features, the public spaces support daily activities and encourage local gathering rather than existing as pass-through spaces. These changes are especially important in a dense, high-traffic district where opportunities for pause are limited.

## Celebrate

Create places for residents, visitors, small businesses, and anchors to come together for programming that enriches community experience.

Celebrate means making space for cultural expression, shared memory, and neighborhood pride. This includes physical features, like art, color, and flexible programming spaces that reflect local identity and invite ongoing participation. The goal is to create a sense of ownership, where residents feel empowered to shape and use the public realm for events, performances, and everyday life because their cultural heritage is reflected in the built environment.

# 1: McDonald's Plaza

Reconstruct the existing divided plaza as one unified open space with a dedicated vending zone, plaza amenities, and public art.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

McDonald's Plaza is a highly active space, especially on game days, due to its proximity to Yankee Stadium and the subway. However, the plaza faces several challenges, including abandoned storefronts (such as the former Chase Bank), which have become hotspots for illicit activity. Disorganized vending, poor sanitation management, and unclear utility of existing structures contribute to an unwelcoming environment.

Despite these challenges, the plaza has strong community significance and potential for transformation. Engagement revealed a desire to unify the split levels of the plaza to be at-grade with shade, seating, and public art. In addition, participants expressed a need for wayfinding and working with the property owner to reorganize the current vending activity into a neighborhood market.



Vendors and pedestrians on McDonald's Plaza during game season. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock





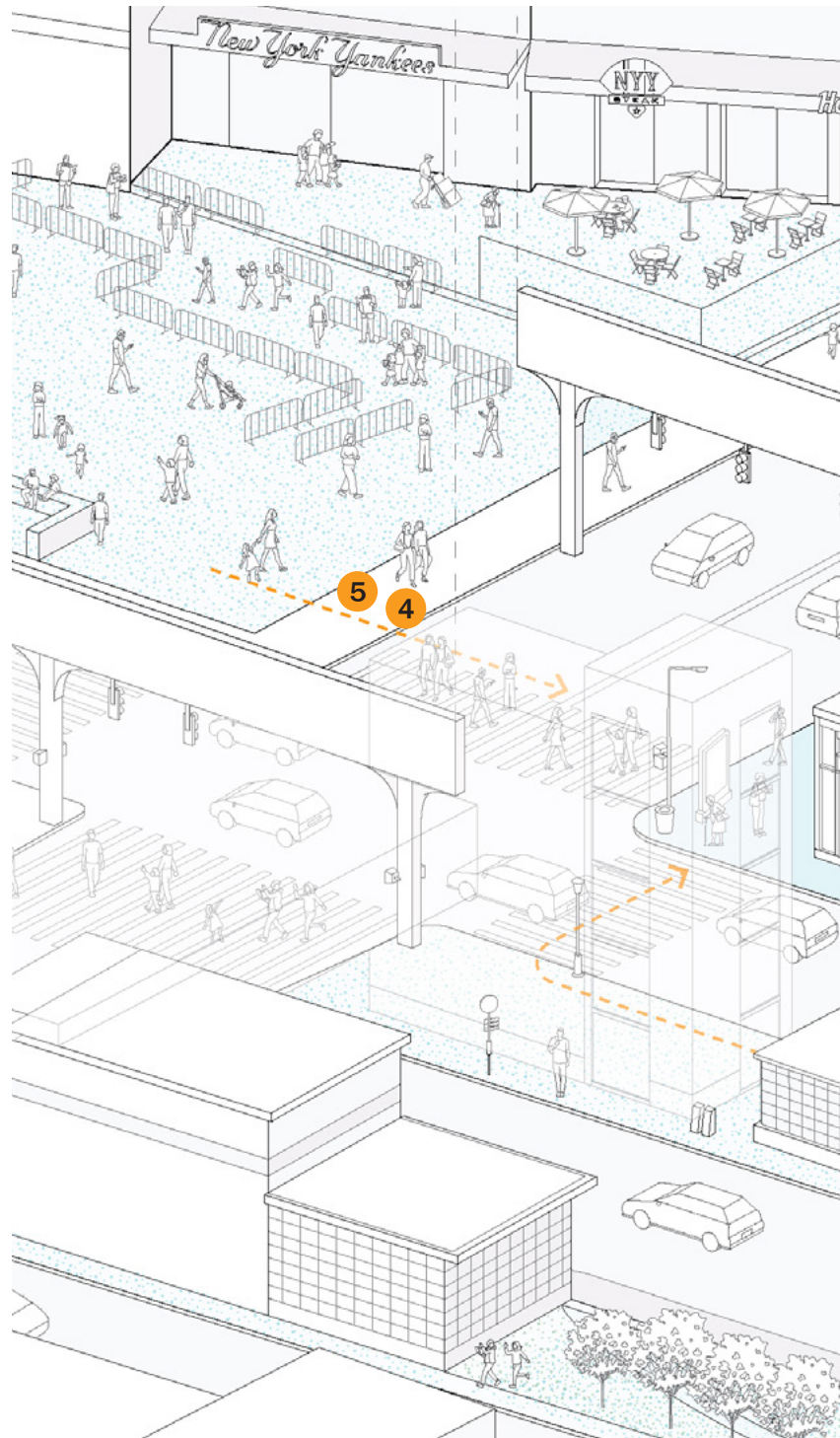
The diagram indicates locations of interventions. Please refer to the "Proposed Actions and Strategies" matrix for description of interventions.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

		Duration	Cost	Potential Partners	Funding Sources
4 & 5	Add wayfinding and clear pedestrian pathway to better connect Yankee Stadium with transit.	Long	\$\$	NYC DOT, DDC	Public Realm Programming (DOT, DDC)
2	Clean existing tree guards and containerize trash.	Short	\$	NYC DOT, DSNY	Borough President Discretionary Funding
3	Work with owner of McDonald's Plaza to create a place for neighborhood markets.	Medium	\$\$	DCWP, FDNY, SBS	Neighborhood 360° Grants (SBS)
6	Regrade and reconstruct Mc.Donald's at one level.	Long	\$\$\$	NYC DOB, DDC, DOT	Public Realm Programming (DOT, DDC)
1	Work with private property owners and local artists to create public art.	Short	\$	DCLA, DOB, Property Owner	Cultural Funding (DCLA)
7	Work with owner of vacant Chase Building to re-imagine it as a community space.	Long	\$\$\$	NYC DOB, EDC, SBS	City Council Discretionary Funding

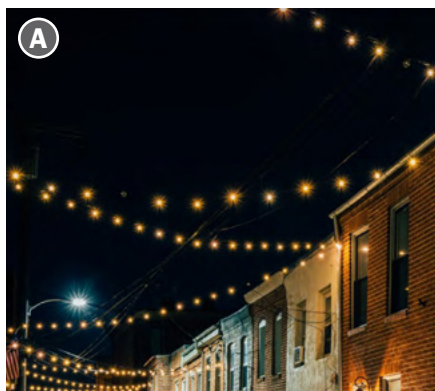
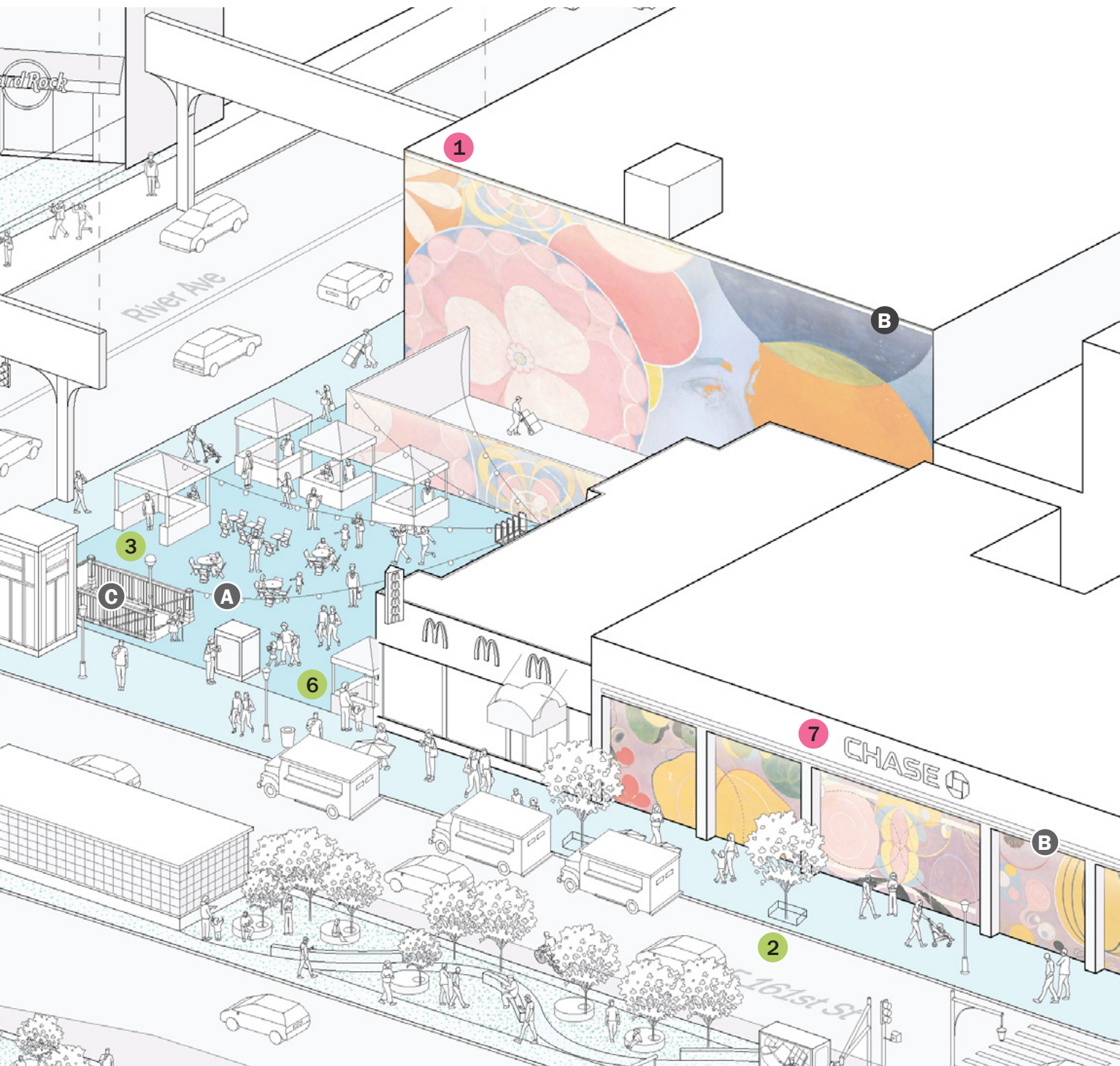
## EXPECTED OUTCOME

To raise the plaza's visibility, baseball-themed murals will be developed in collaboration with local artists. Vacant storefronts will be reactivated for community use, and streetscape conditions will be improved through regular maintenance. Vendor zones will be formalized to improve efficiency and order. Pedestrian connectivity between McDonald's Plaza, Yankee Stadium, and transit stops will be enhanced through targeted safety upgrades.

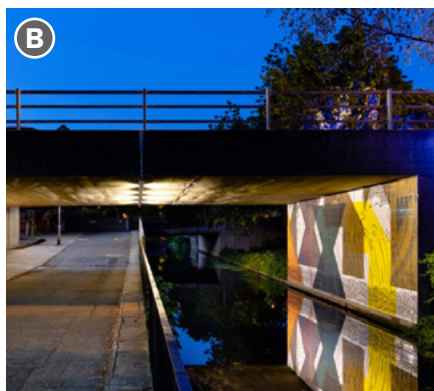


- 1 Work with private property owners and local artists to create public art.
- 2 Clean existing tree guards and containerize trash.
- 3 Work with owner of McDonald's Plaza to create a place for neighborhood markets.
- 4 Add wayfinding and clear pedestrian
- 5 pathway to better connect Yankee Stadium with transit.
- 6 Regrade and reconstruct McDonald's at one level.
- 7 Work with owner of vacant Chase Building to re-imagine it as a community space.

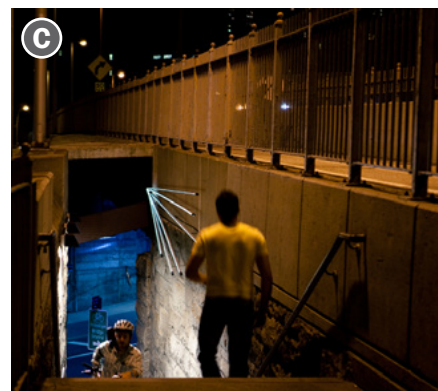




Catenary Lighting Options



Vertical Mural Lighting



Beacon/ Wayfinding Lighting Options





Wall Wash

String Lights



Seating

Pop-up / Small Stalls

Bike Rack

## 2: E 161 St/River Av Bus Stop

Right-size travel lanes and reclaim public right-of-way to expand and reimagine existing medians as linear public spaces with park amenities, wayfinding, and a sheltered bus stop.

### ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This site is a major transit hub, connecting the Bx6 bus route with the subway. However, the pedestrian path between the bus stop and the train station is narrow and exposed, making it unsafe and uncomfortable for transit users. An adjacent wide median, slightly elevated above street level, presents an opportunity to create a more welcoming and functional space.

Public feedback highlighted strong interest in transforming this underutilized median into a cohesive public space with infrastructure such as seating, shade, public art, and wayfinding to enhance safety and experience.



Bus stops by the potential site, Image Source: Google Streetview, 2017





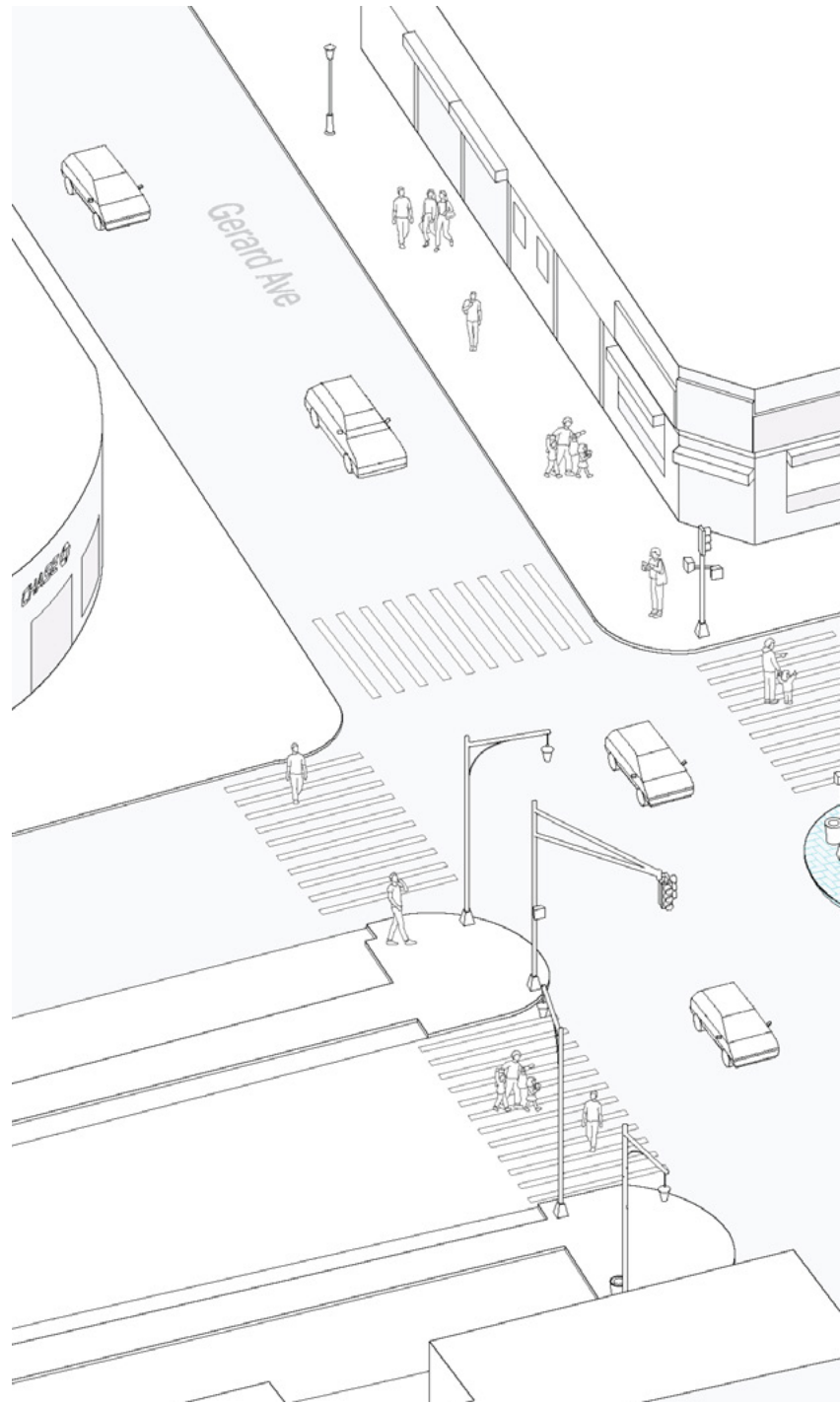
The diagram indicates locations of interventions. Please refer to the "Proposed Actions and Strategies" matrix for description of interventions.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

		Duration	Cost	Potential Partners	Funding Sources
1	Right-size travel lane to expand sidewalk	Medium	\$\$\$	NYC DOT, EDC, DDC	DOT Capital
4	Install lighting and wayfinding signage	Short	\$	LinkNYC	NYC DOT Art, LinkLocal
2	Install shade and seating structures	Short	\$\$	NYC DOT, Parks Dept.	Council Discretionary
5	Transform existing median into a linear park	Medium	\$\$\$	NYC DOT, Parks Dept.	DEP Green Infrastructure
3	Create storage space that covers obsolete infrastructure and use external surface for wayfinding	Short	\$	-	Council Discretionary

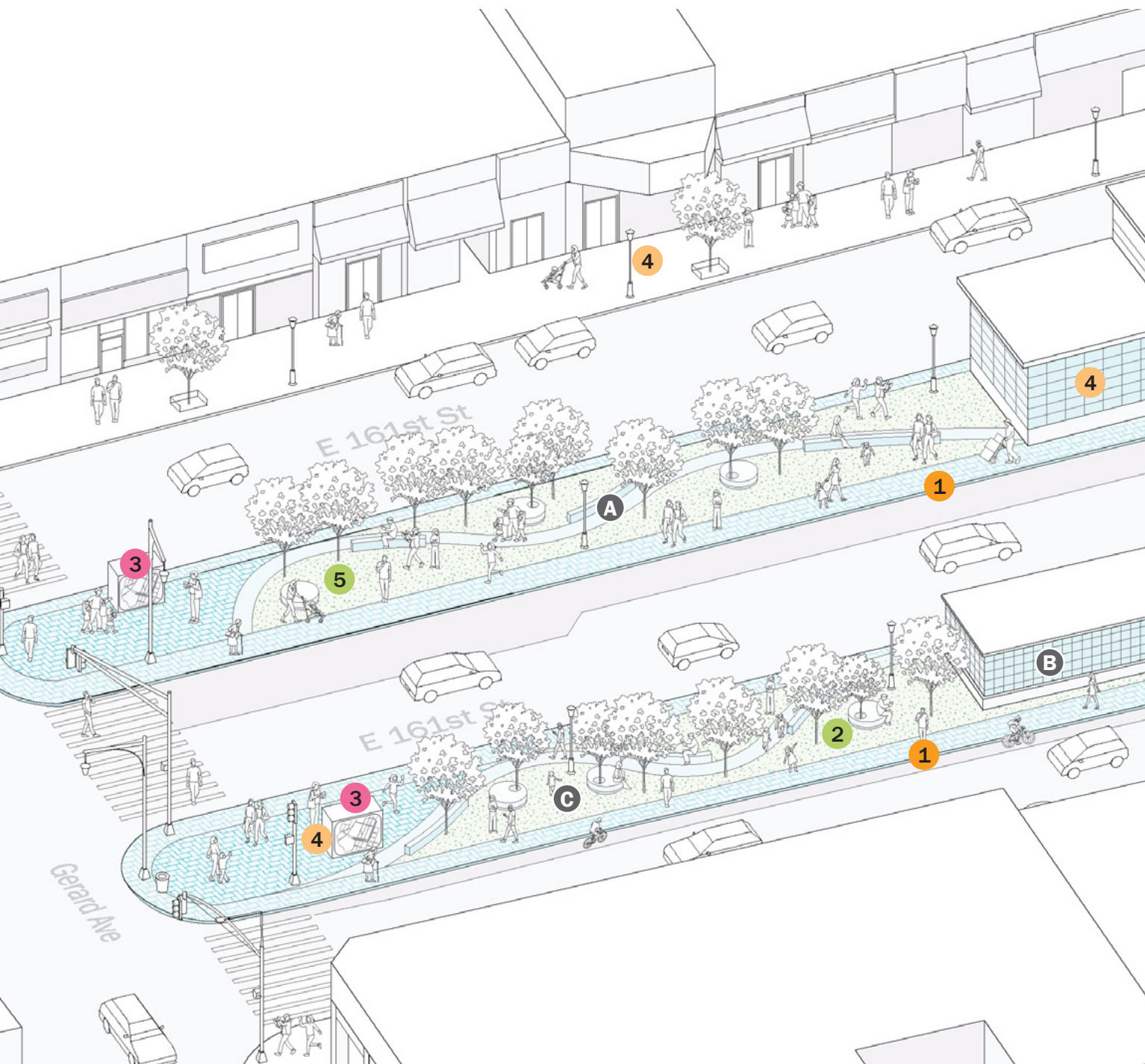
## EXPECTED OUTCOME

Removing parked vehicles from pedestrian and bike zones will allow for safer, more comfortable circulation. Infrastructure improvements - such as new seating, signage, and lighting - will make the area more usable and legible. Turning the median into a flexible open space will encourage more activity and improve the site's role as a transit gateway.



- 1 Right-size travel lane to expand sidewalk.
- 2 Install shade and seating structures.
- 3 Create storage space that covers obsolete infrastructure and use external surface for wayfinding.
- 4 Install lighting and wayfinding signage.
- 5 Transform existing median into a linear park.

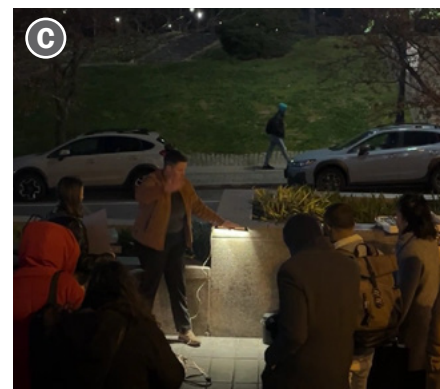




Pathway - Bench Lighting



Beacon Lighting Options



Vertical Surface - Planter Lighting



Blue Light Under Overpass for Wayfinding

Mural with Wall Wash Light

Trees / Shade



Filtered Light Through Glass Brick

Bike



Lighting Under Roof Canopy

Storage Shed and Information Kiosk



Rack

Seating and Gathering Pods

### 3: River Ave Underpass

Enhance pedestrian connection and safety through wayfinding, lighting, crosswalks, and traffic-calming interventions.

#### ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

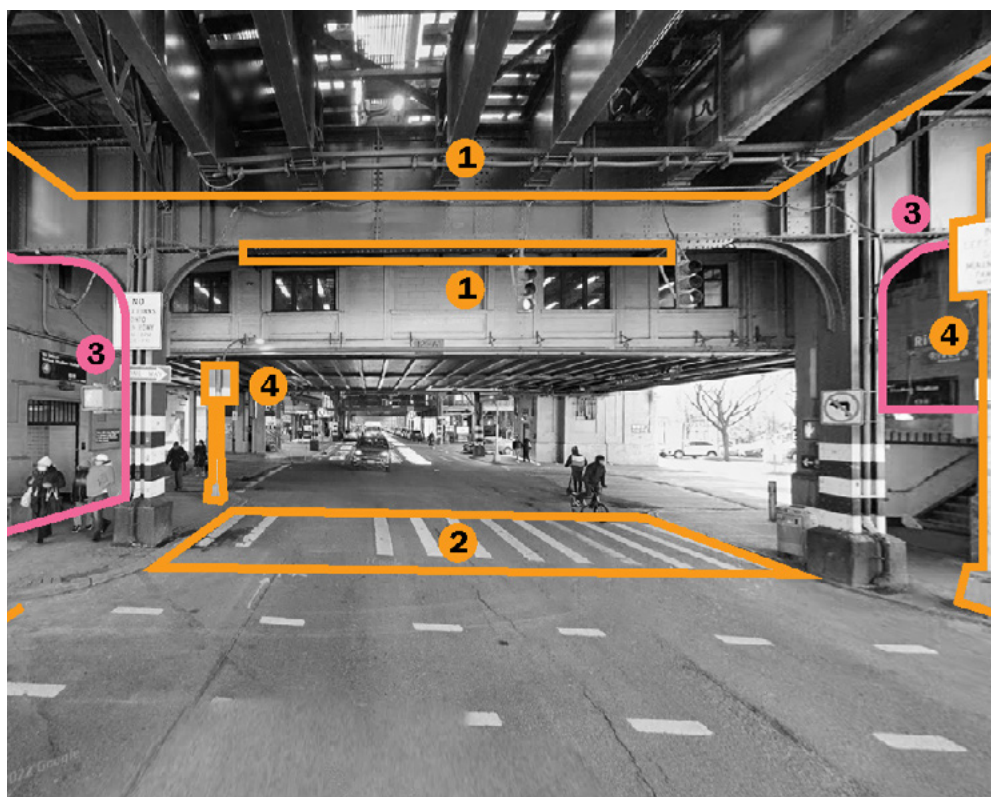
River Avenue is a heavily trafficked corridor with the elevated 4 train running overhead. It experiences a mix of drivers, pedestrians, sports fans, and subway riders, especially on game days. Safety is a major concern due to faded road markings and the absence of adequate signage or wayfinding.

As the first point of entry for many visitors to the district, the underpass represents a key opportunity to improve first impressions, reinforce the identity of the area, and connect it to surrounding destinations.



River Ave Underpass, Image Source: Google Streetview





The diagram indicates locations of interventions. Please refer to the "Proposed Actions and Strategies" matrix for description of interventions.

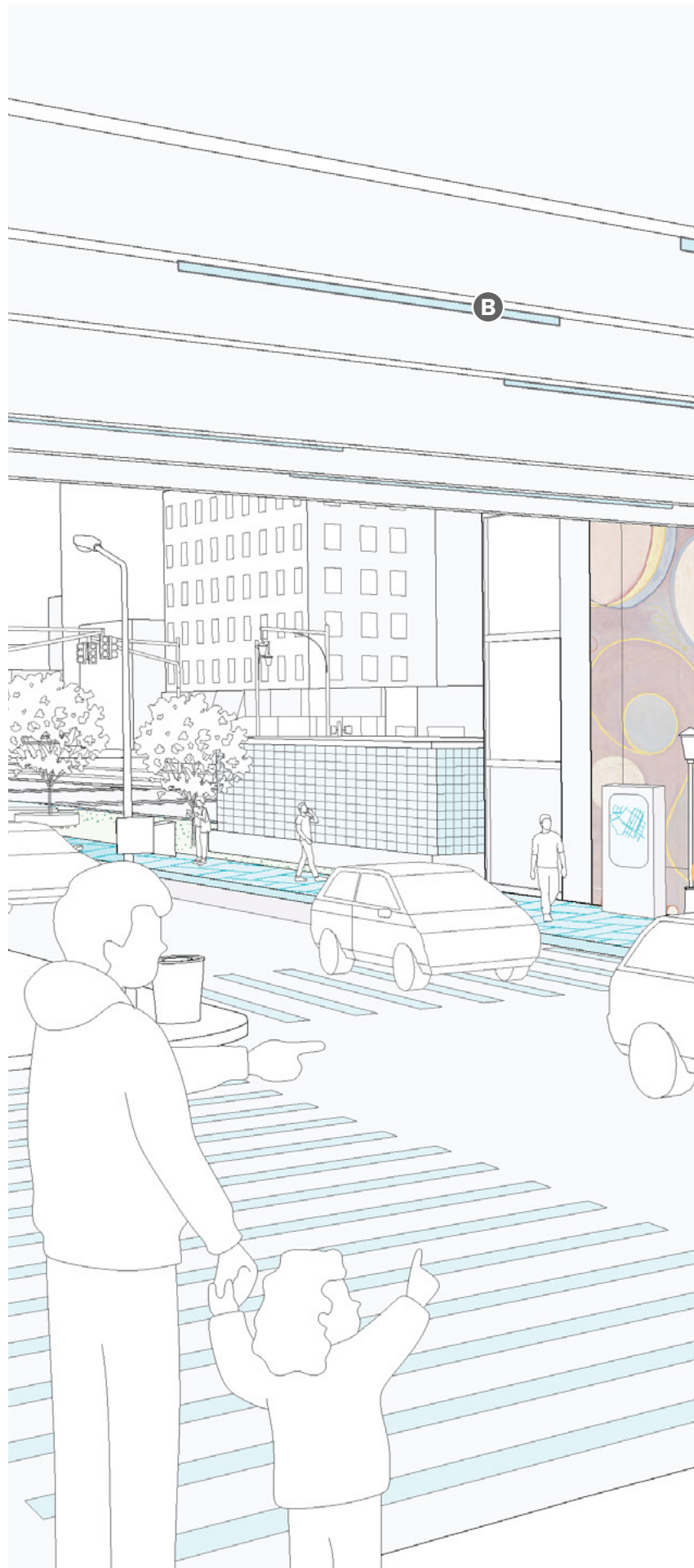
## PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

		Duration	Cost	Potential Partners	Funding Sources
1	Install new lighting and paint elevated structure	Short	\$\$	MTA Capital Construction	MTA Capital Program
2	Repaint and refresh road markings and pedestrian crosswalks	Short	\$	NYC DOT, MTA	NYC DOT Operational Funds
4	Add wayfinding signage	Short	\$\$	NYC DOT, MTA, DCLA	NYC DOT Art
3	Collaborate with local artists and DOT to create public art	Short	\$	MTA, DCLA	Cultural Funding (DCLA)

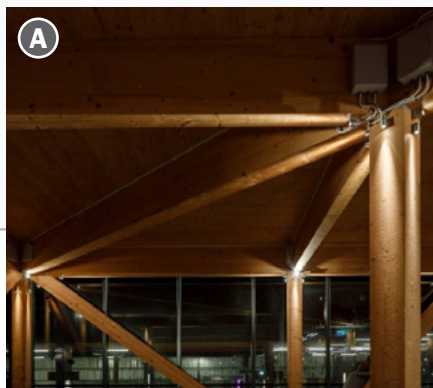
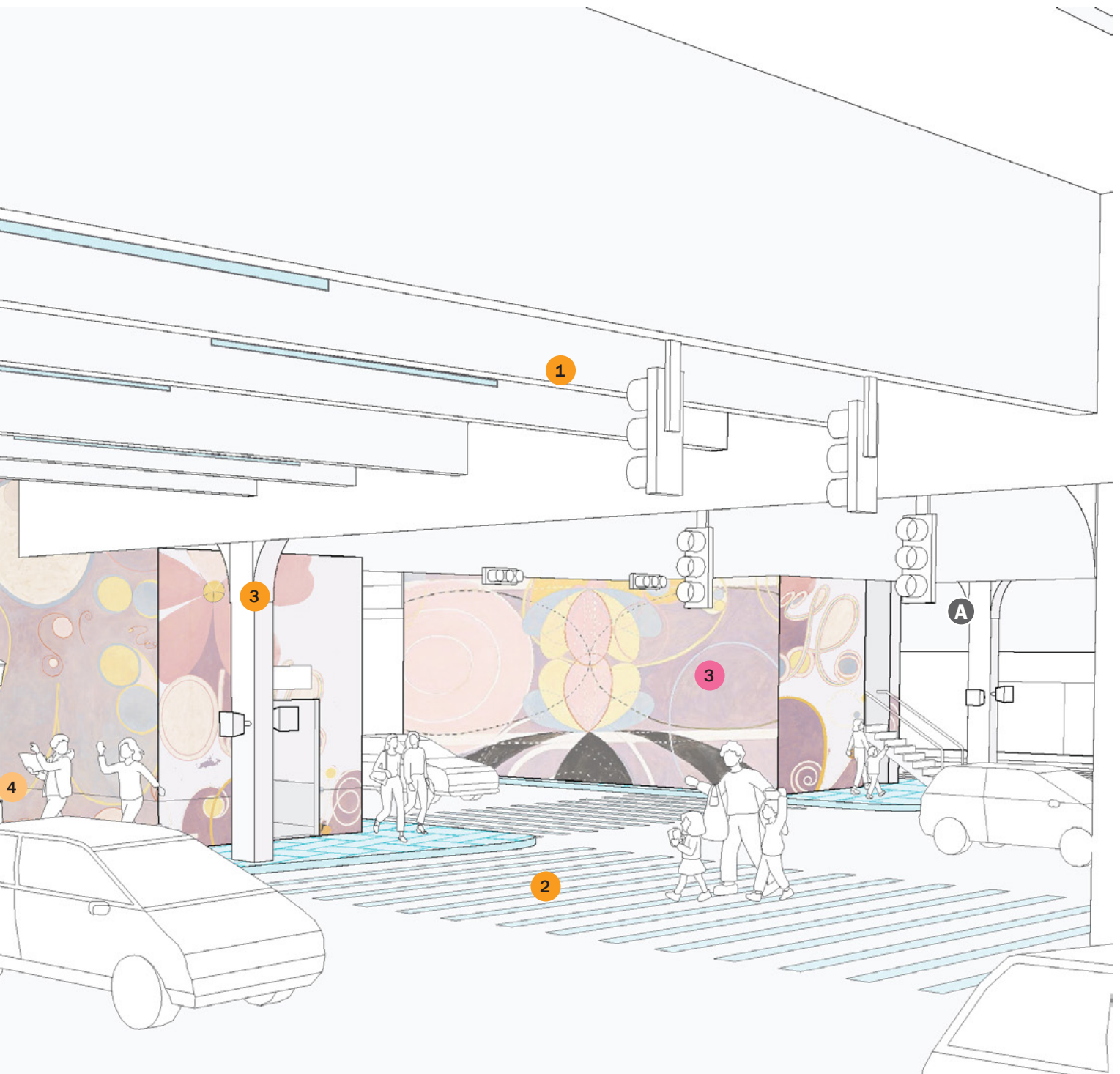
## EXPECTED OUTCOME

Lighting will be installed both along the structure (linear fixtures) and in targeted locations (spotlights) to guide both pedestrians and drivers. Road markings will be repainted to clarify traffic and pedestrian zones. Murals will be created in partnership with local artists to celebrate the Bronx's cultural identity and mark the entry to the district.

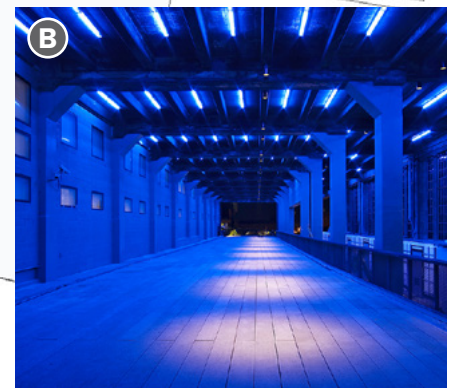
- 1 Install new lighting and paint elevated structure.
- 2 Repaint and refresh road markings and pedestrian crosswalks.
- 3 Collaborate with local artists and DOT to create public art.
- 4 Add wayfinding signage.







Underpass Lighting



Underpass Lighting

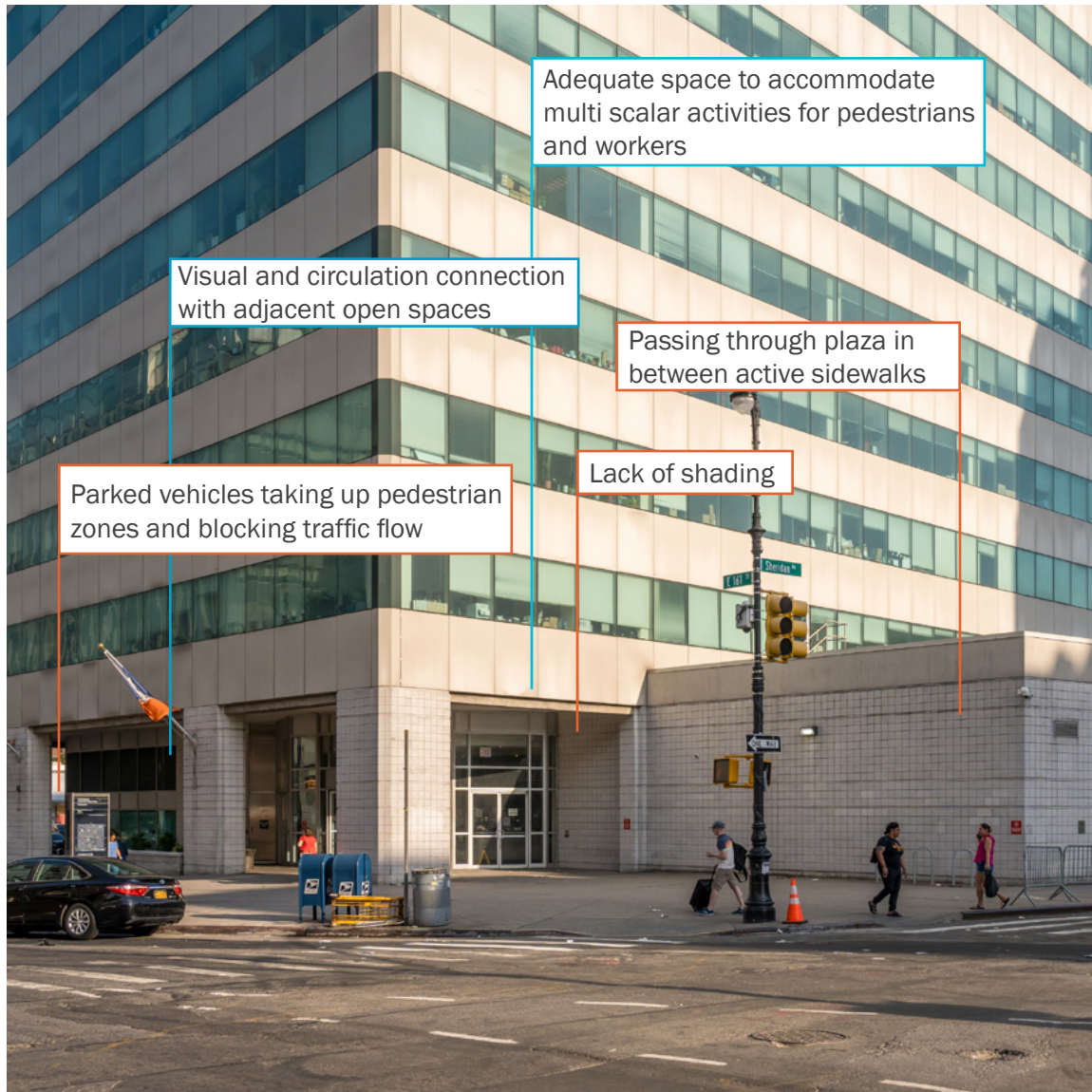
## 4: DA's Office Plaza

Create a pedestrian plaza with seating, shade, and public art at the intersection of E. 161st Street and Concourse Village West.

### ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

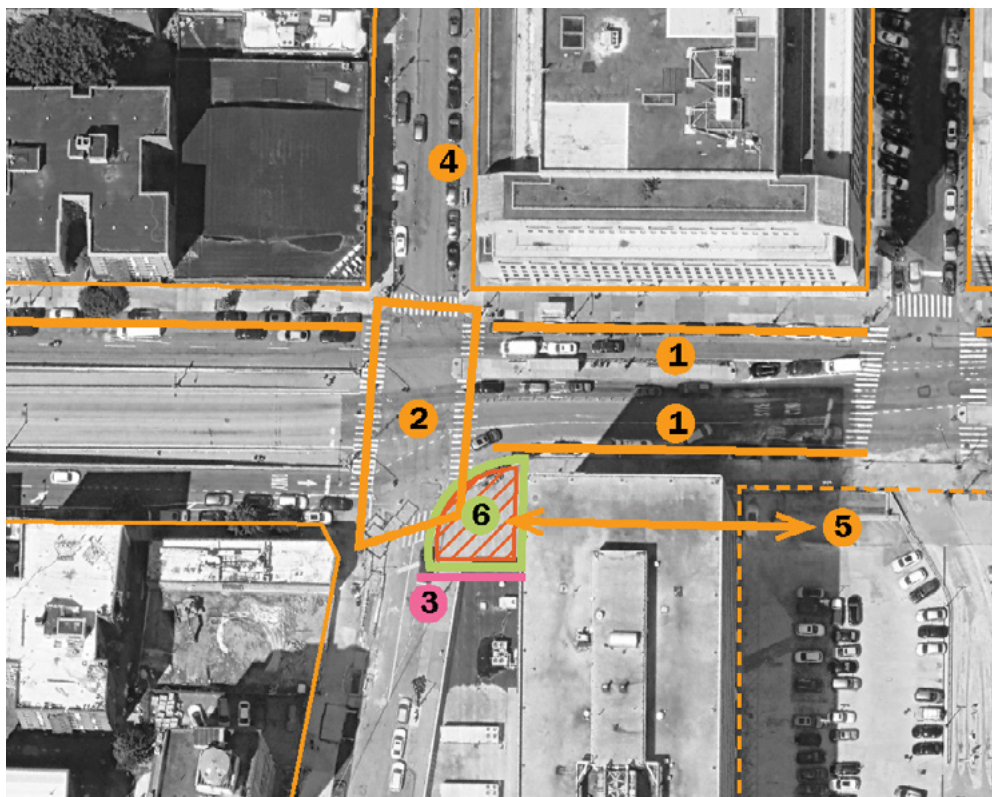
Located at a high-traffic intersection, this plaza serves commuters, government workers, and visitors but is currently underutilized. It functions mostly as a pass-through, offering little shade or seating for people waiting to enter the DA's Office or taking breaks from nearby workplaces.

The site's central location and steady foot traffic position it well to become a welcoming and flexible public space.



DA's Office Plaza. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock





The diagram indicates locations of interventions. Please refer to the "Proposed Actions and Strategies" matrix for description of interventions.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

		Duration	Cost	Potential Partners	Funding Sources
1	Right size travel lanes to reclaim street right-of-way as pedestrian space.	Short	\$	NYC DOT, NYPD Traffic	Neighborhood 360° Grants (SBS)
2	Repaint and refresh road markings and pedestrian crosswalks	Short	\$	NYC DOT	NYC DOT Operational Funds
4	Work with private property owner to create a façade wayfinding system.	Short	\$\$	LinkNYC	NYC DOT Art, LinkLocal
5	Create a pedestrian plaza with new paving and connect to community commercial center.	Medium	\$\$	DA's Office, Property Owner	Public Realm Programming
6	Add shade, seating, and art structures.	Short	\$\$	NYC DOT, DA's Office	Council Discretionary
3	Collaborate with local artists and DOT to create public art	Short	\$	NYC DOB, DCLA	Cultural Funding (DCLA)

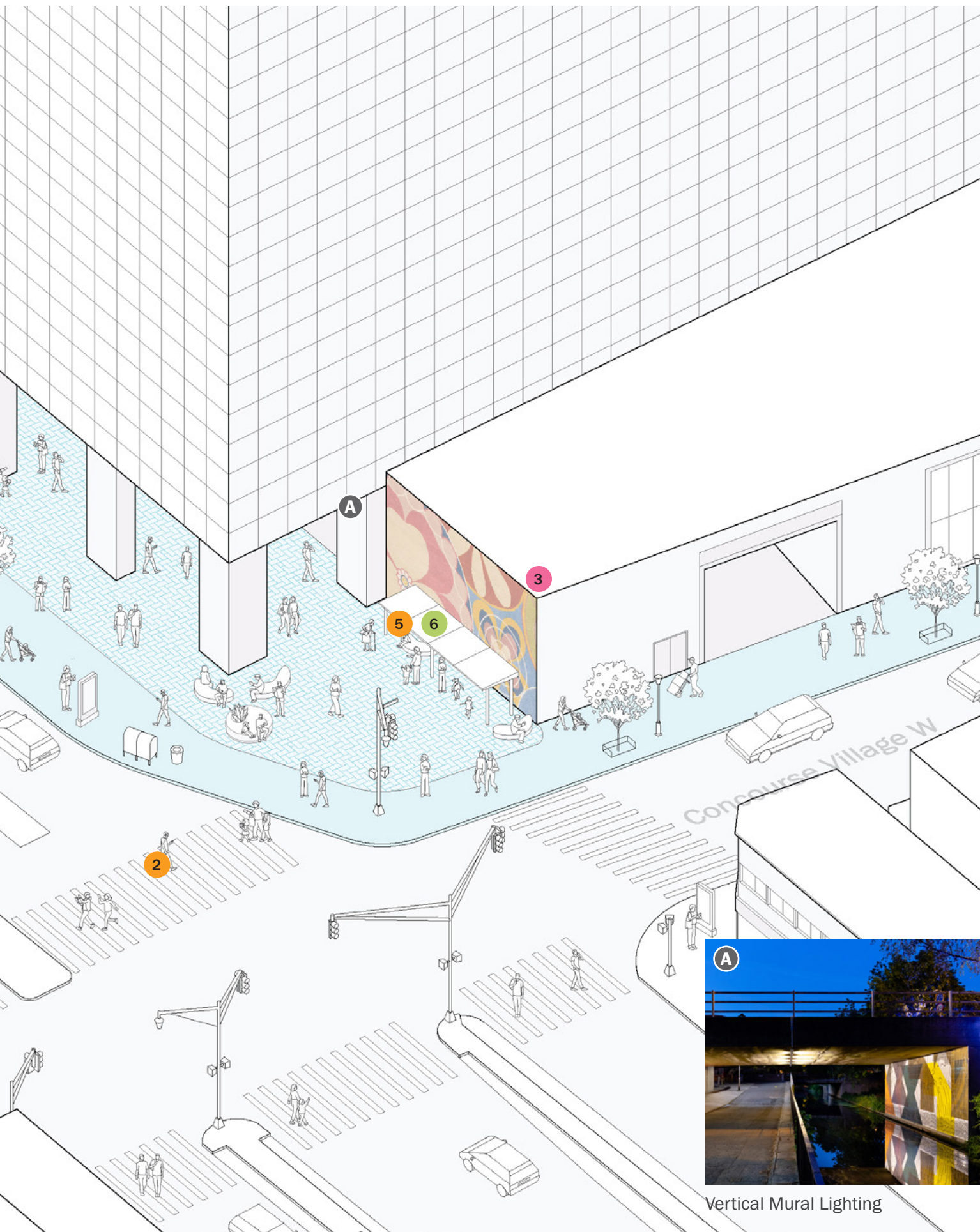
## EXPECTED OUTCOME

Clearer walkways and new seating will create comfort for workers and visitors. Local artists will be commissioned to create murals, and a branding system will reinforce the plaza's civic importance. These changes will make the space feel more inviting while activating its relationship to nearby businesses and institutions.

- 1 Right size travel lanes to reclaim street right-of-way as pedestrian space.
- 2 Repaint and refresh road markings and pedestrian crosswalks
- 3 Collaborate with local artists and DOT to create public art
- 4 Work with private property owner to create a façade wayfinding system.
- 5 Create a pedestrian plaza with new paving and connect to community commercial center.
- 6 Add shade, seating, and art structures.







Vertical Mural Lighting



Bike Rack

Me



Shading & Seating, with Integrated Lighting

Tiled Mural



Meeting Point

Info Kiosk

## 5: 161st Street Underpass

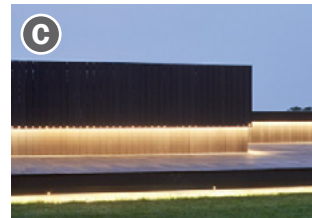
Define a welcome gateway using signage, lighting, and landscaping.



Vertical Mural Lighting



Scrim Effect Metal Mesh



Railing Integrated Light

### PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

		Duration	Cost	Potential Partners	Funding Sources
1	Work with local artists to create public art along pedestrian underpass	Short	\$	MTA Arts & Design, DCLA	NYC DOT Art, DCLA Cultural Fund
1	Install lighting and wayfinding	Short	\$	NYC DOT, MTA, DCLA	NYC DOT Art, DCLA Cultural Fund
3	Improve and add to exsiting landscaping	Short	\$\$	NYC DOT, DEP ,Parks Dept.	DEP Green Infrastructure Grant
4	Install "Welcome to the Bronx" gateway signage.	Short	\$	Community Board	Neighborhood 360° Grants (SBS)



## 6: Grand Concourse Median

Install a series of art frames to exhibit works that celebrate local culture and history.



### PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

	Duration	Cost	Potential Partners	Funding Sources
<b>1</b> Install art frames to host rotating work exhibits of local artists.	Short	\$	NYC DOT, DCLA	NYC DOT Art, DCLA Cultural Fund

## 7: Lou Gehrig Plaza

Develop seasonal shade and seating structures that reimagine Lou Gehrig Plaza as the neighborhood’s “front porch” for informal conversations, open invitations, and community programming.

### ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Lou Gehrig Plaza, a key public space in the district, was transformed from a parking lot into a pedestrian-friendly plaza as part of the 2008 Grand Concourse improvements.

Although the plaza includes terraces, granite pavers, and seating, it remains largely a pass-through space with limited amenities. The steep grade along Walton Avenue lacks clear wayfinding, and sparse tree cover leaves the area without adequate shade.

Despite these challenges, the plaza’s prominent location and high pedestrian traffic present a strong opportunity to improve its usability and foster greater community engagement.



Lou Gehrig Plaza connecting to Yankee Stadium. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock

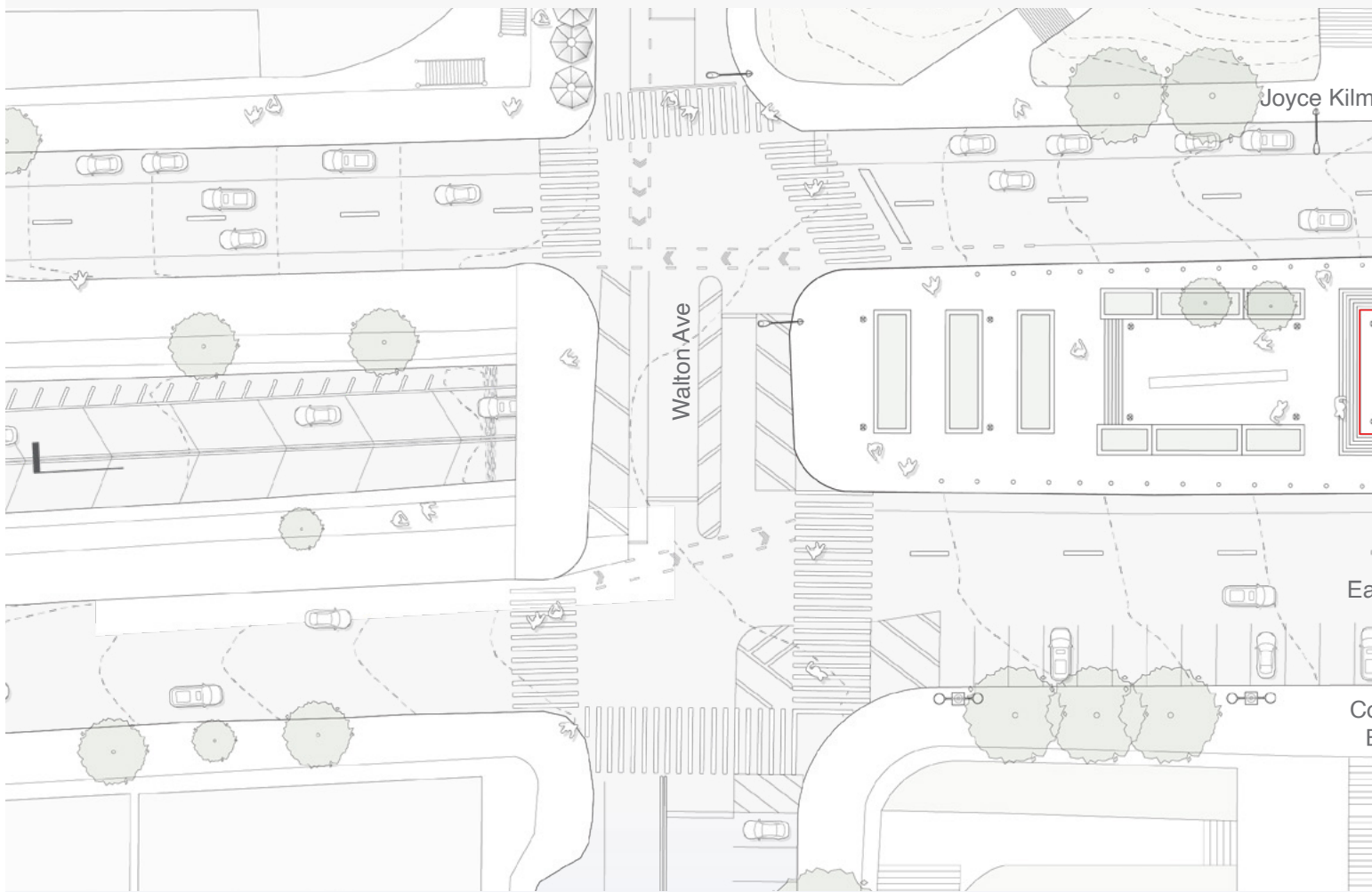




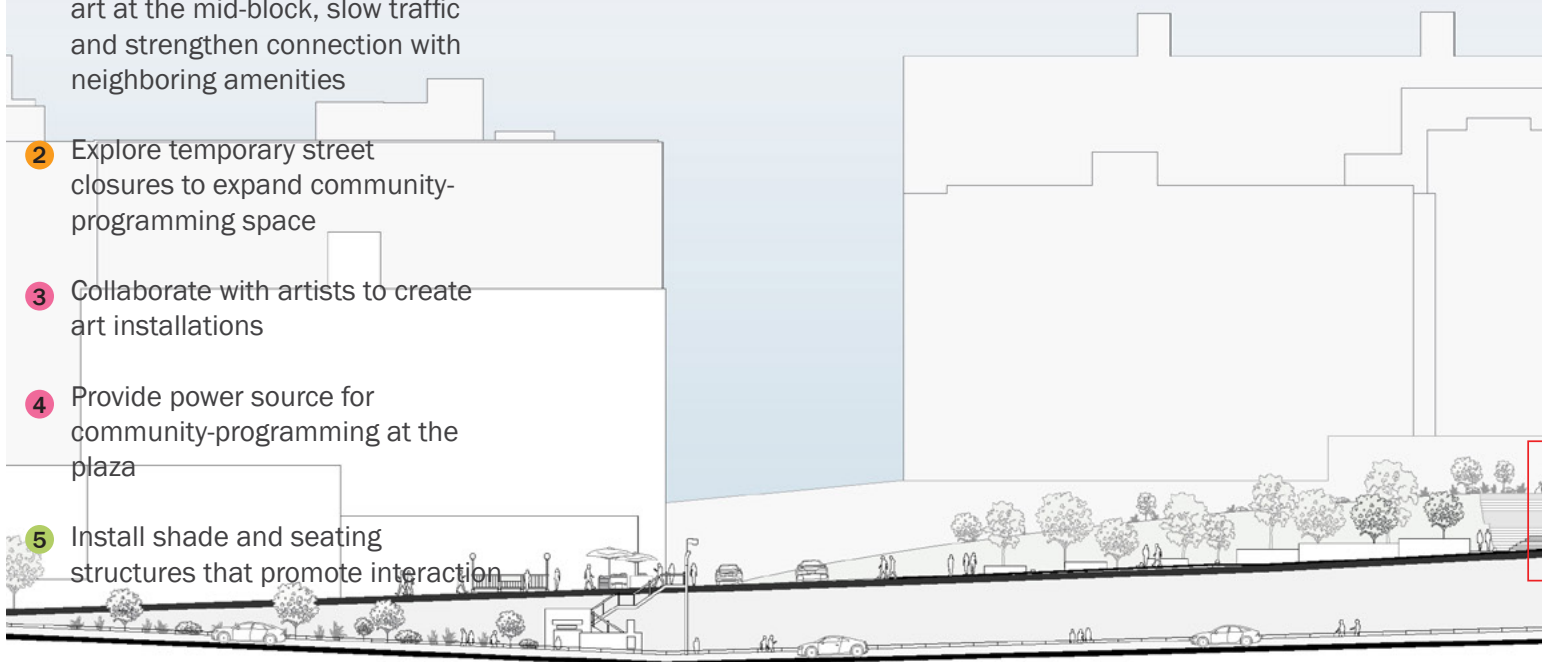
The diagram indicates locations of interventions. Please refer to the "Proposed Actions and Strategies" matrix for description of interventions.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

		Duration	Cost	Potential Partners	Funding Sources
1	Use paving material or street art at the mid-block, slow traffic and strengthen connection with neighboring amenities	Medium	\$\$	NYC DOT, DDC	Public Realm Programming (DOT, DDC)
2	Explore temporary street closures to expand community-programming space.	Medium	\$\$	NYC DOT	Public Realm Programming (DOT, DDC)
5	Install shade and seating structures that promote interaction	Short	\$	NYC DOT, DA's Office	Borough President Discretionary Funding
3	Collaborate with artists to create art installations	Short	\$	NYC DOT Art, DCLA	DCLA Cultural Fund
4	Provide power source for community-programming at the plaza	Short	\$	NYC DOT	Borough President Capital Fund

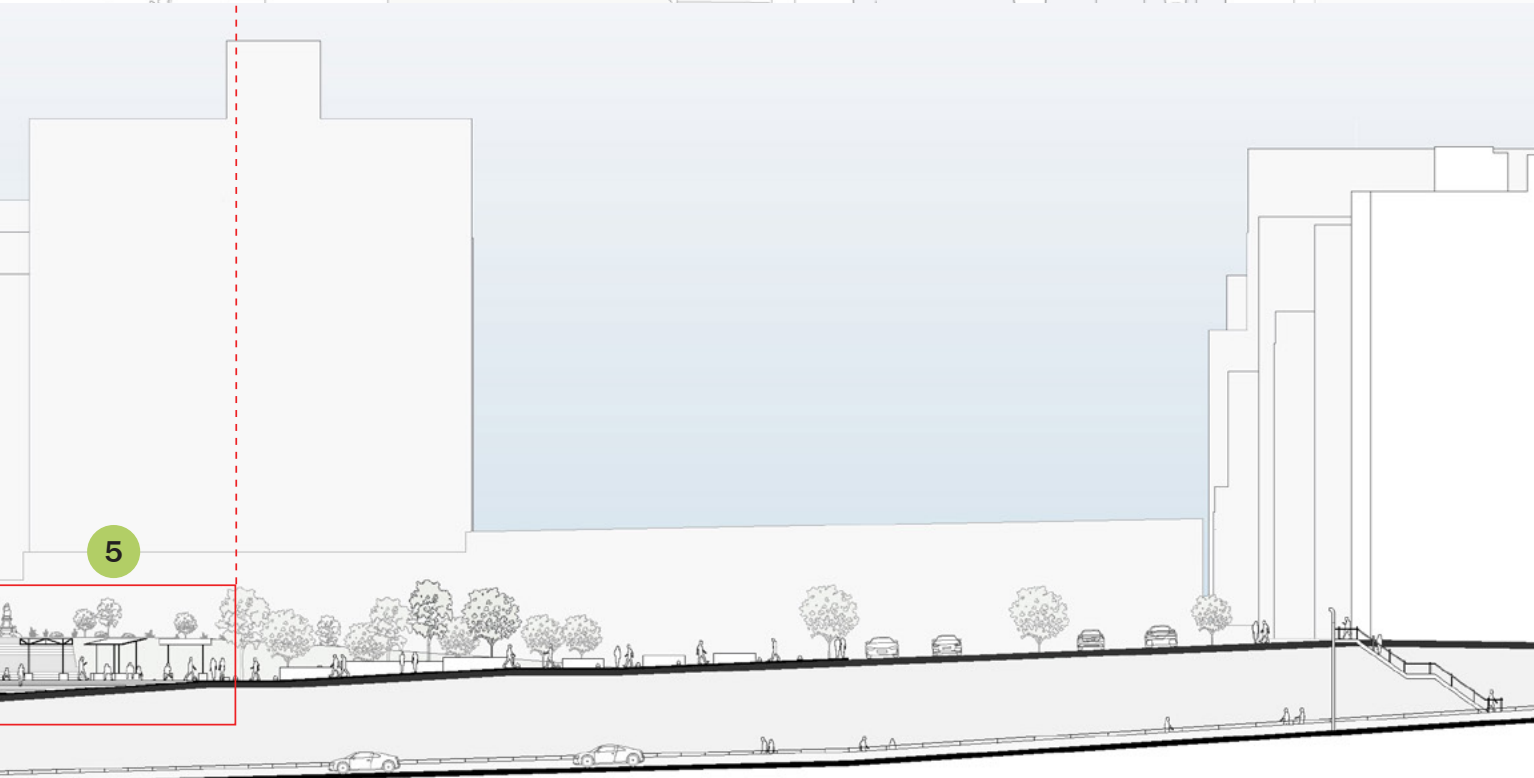
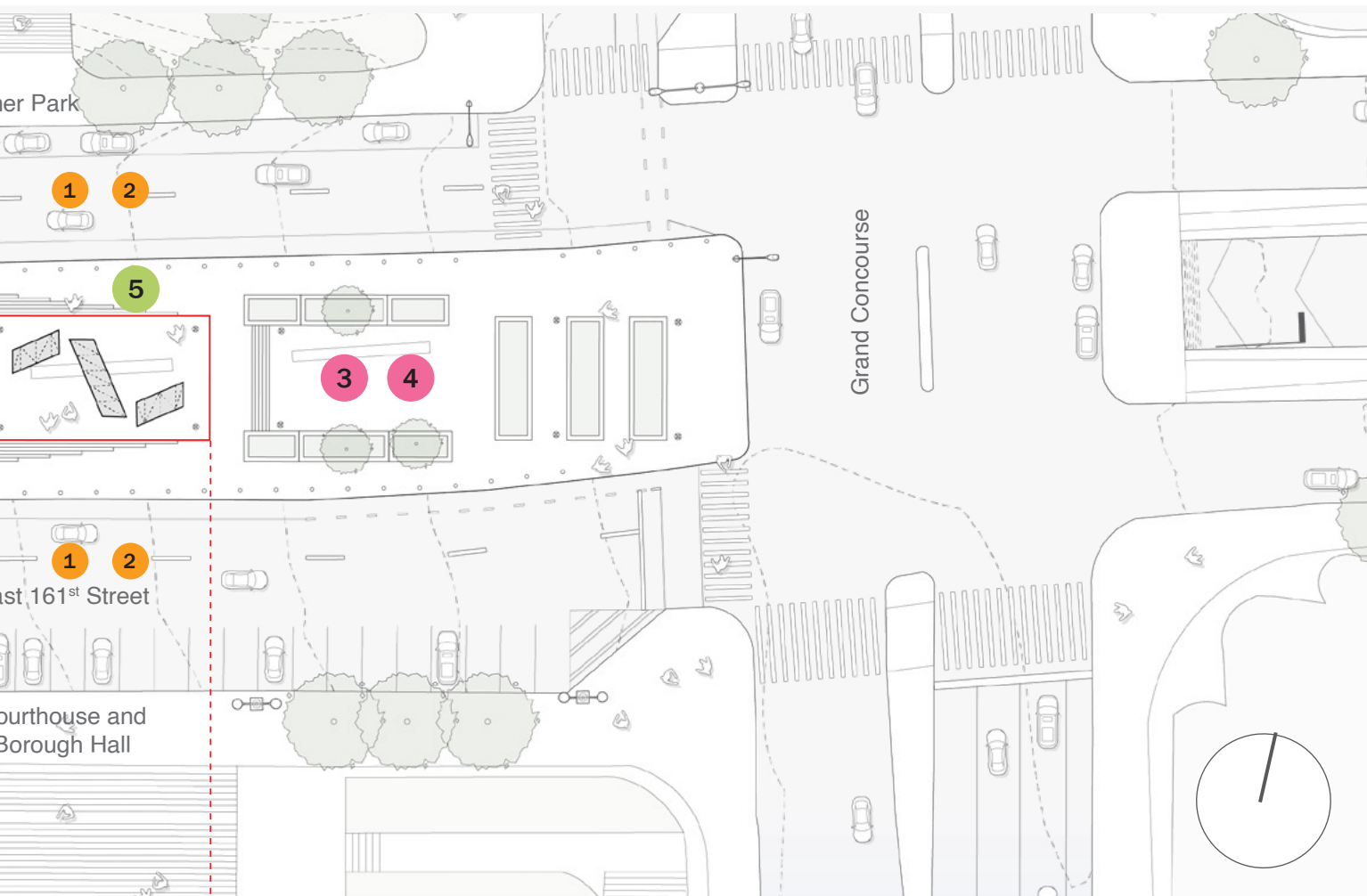


- 1 Use paving material or street art at the mid-block, slow traffic and strengthen connection with neighboring amenities
- 2 Explore temporary street closures to expand community-programming space
- 3 Collaborate with artists to create art installations
- 4 Provide power source for community-programming at the plaza
- 5 Install shade and seating structures that promote interaction



Walton Ave





Lou Gehrig Plaza

Grand Concourse

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# 05

## The SAIL: Putting the Pilot Together



SAIL creates multiple scales of engagement through seating, shade, and color in response to the community's desire to activate Lou Gehrig Plaza. A sun and shade analysis revealed that the site is exposed to intense sunlight during summer months, with integrated planters offering little respite. The linear organization of traditional formal seating did not foster organic interactions among neighbors and workers passing through the area.

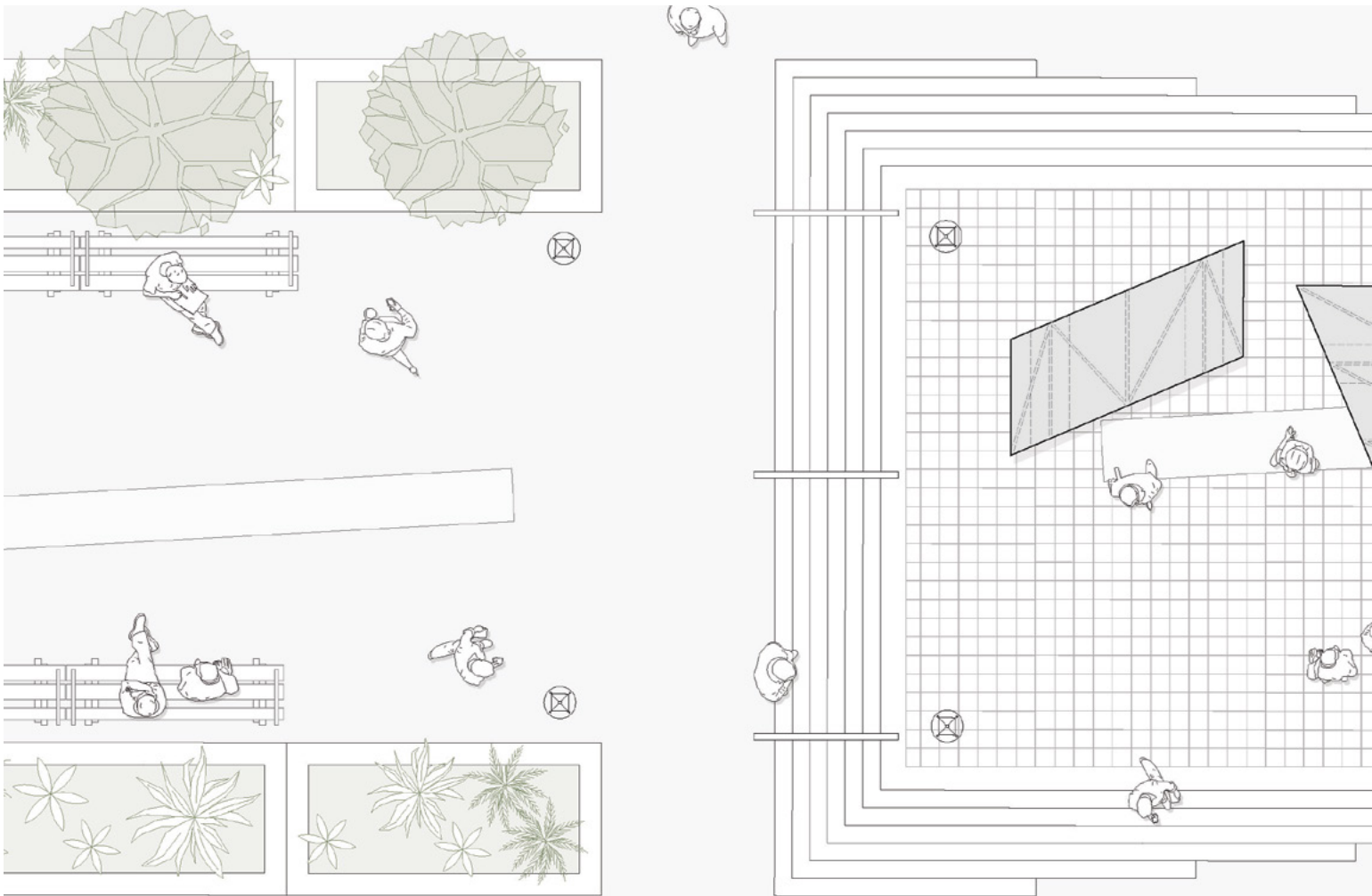
By breaking up the project into one long module and two short modules of shade and seating, SAIL creates multiple pockets for smaller groups while also allowing the full installation to serve larger community events. Brightly colored benches help draw people in, and the pitched shade structures create dynamic views overlooking the Harlem River, visible from both the higher and lower points of the plaza's steep terrain.





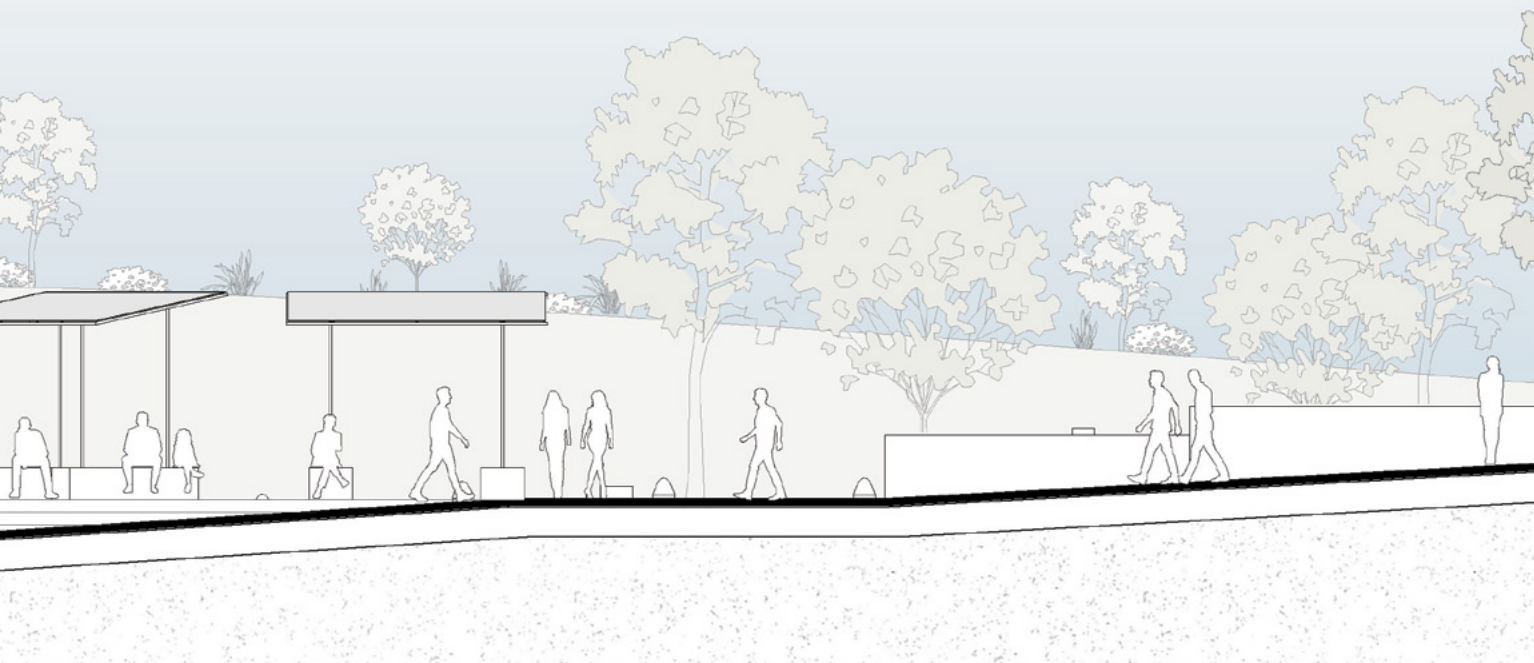
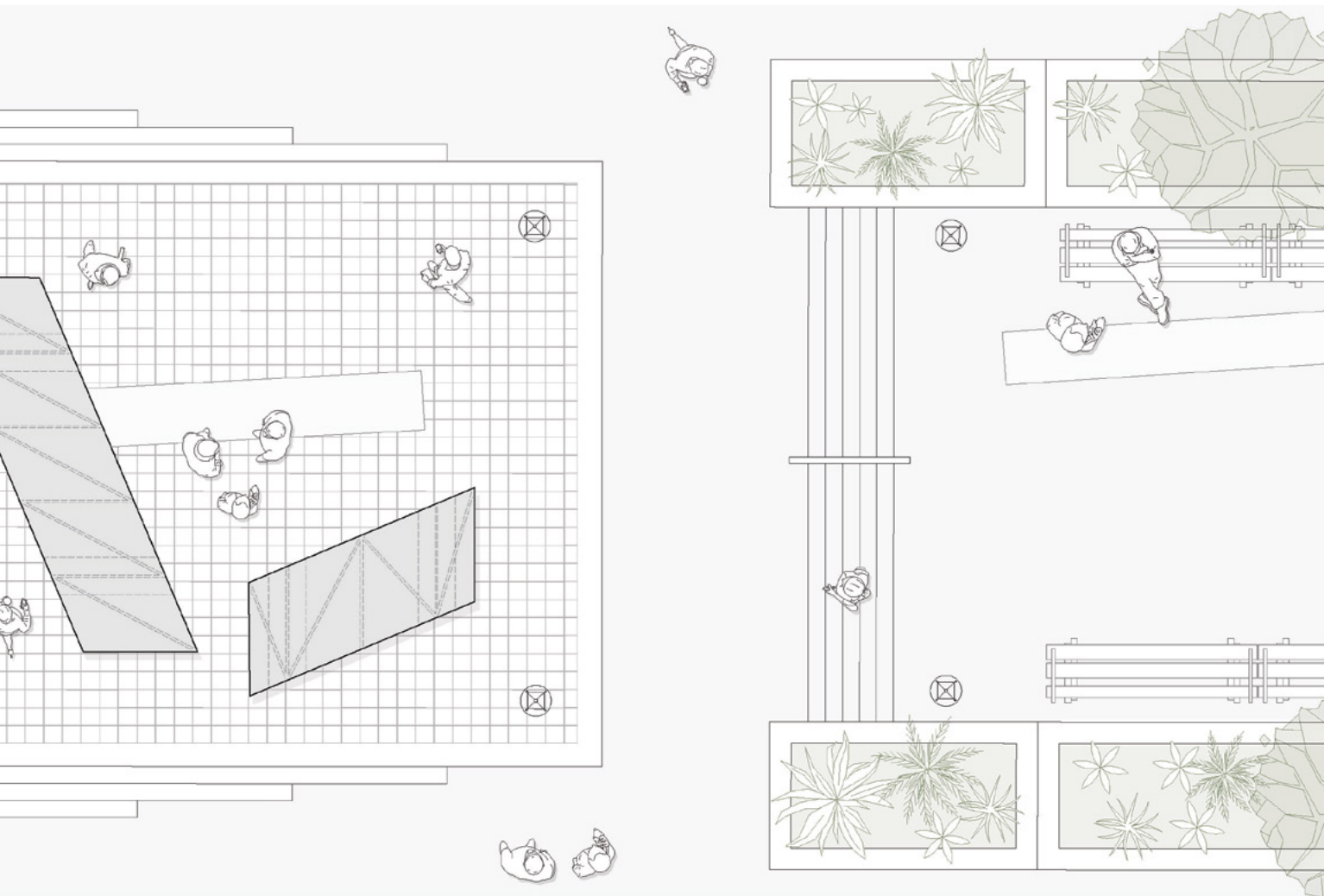
*View from the Installation towards Yankee Stadium*





SAIL Plan and Section











*People Lingering at Lou Gehrig Plaza in front of Joyce Kilmer Park*





*Sail Installation in front of the Bronx Courthouse*







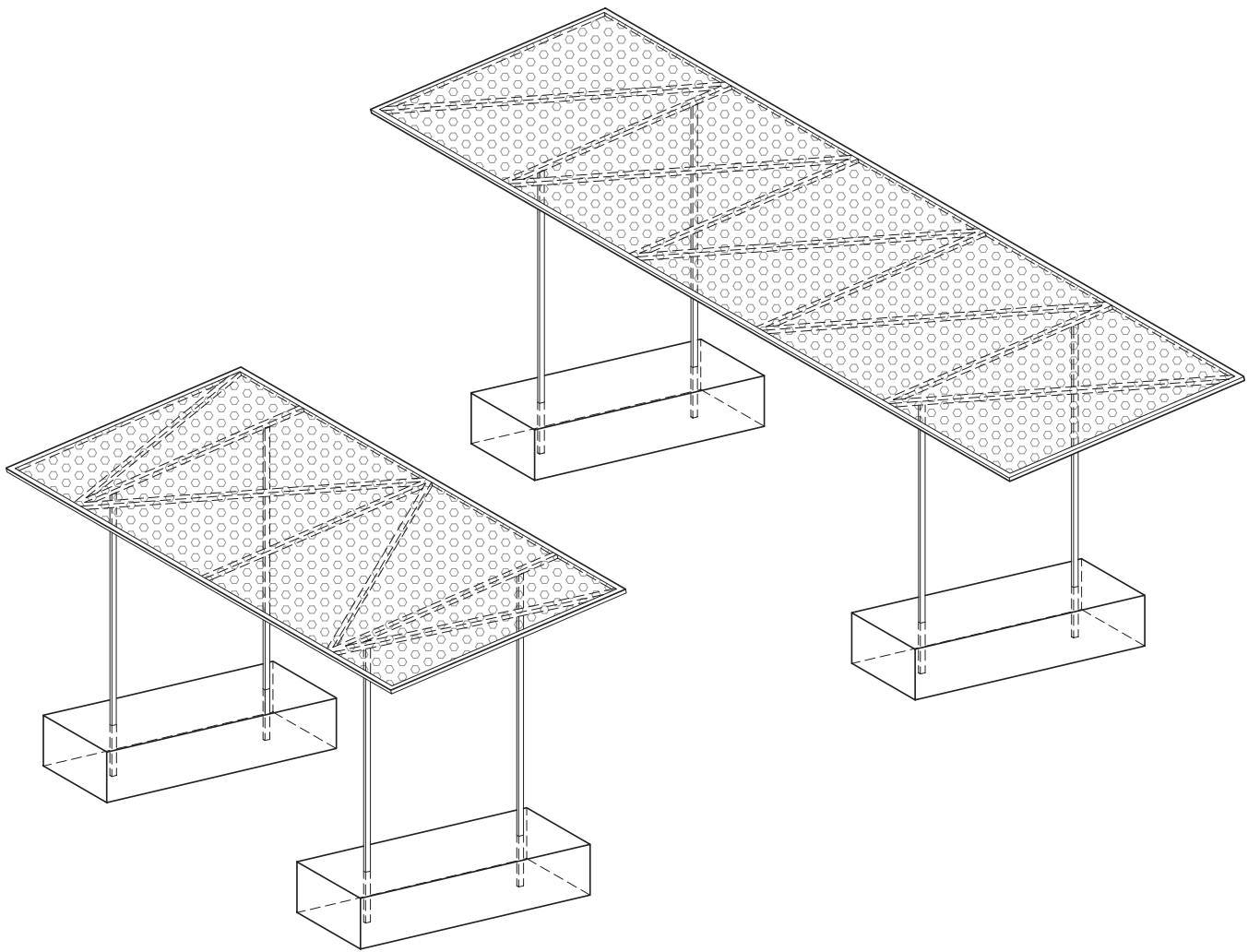




Residents attending Activation Day on Lou Gehrig Plaza. Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock







Type A and Type B Units

SAIL is a temporary installation of three shaded seating structures on the Lou Gehrig Plaza's middle platform. The design was informed through community input, illustrating the necessity of shades and seating to make the plaza more inviting. The design iteration began with a larger-scale tent-like structure covering the full extent of the middle platform. The community preferred the sawtooth-like structure. The final iteration of the structure integrates seating components and flexibility to host different types of events and community engagement activities.

#### Dimensions

- (1) Type A: 21.75' L x 5.5' D x 9.75' H
- (2) Type B: 13' L x 5.5' D x 9.75' H

#### Medium

Aluminum frame, painted plywood seating filled with CMU blocks, perforated mesh-like shading fabric, solar and battery-powered light fixtures

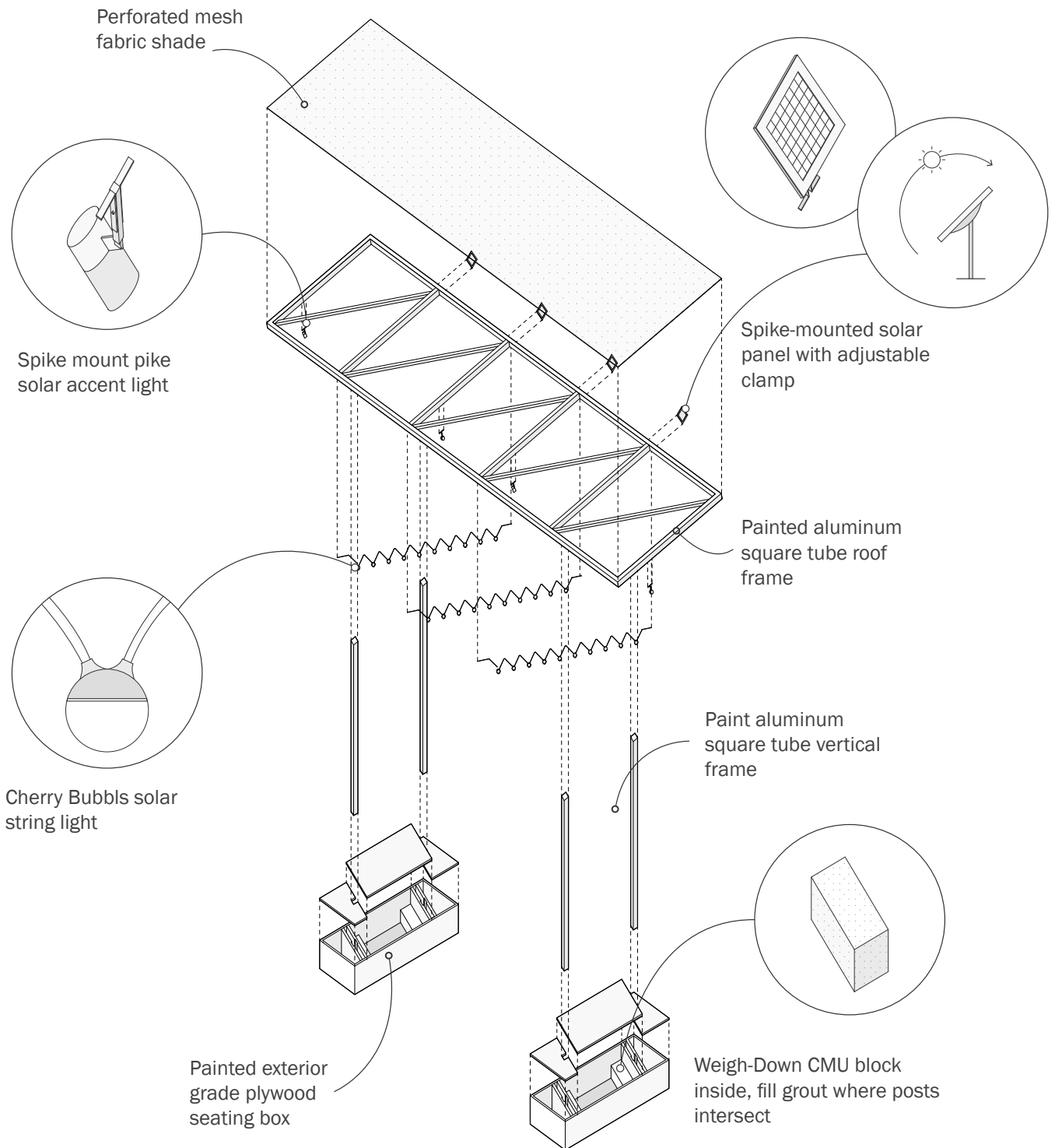
#### Weight

Minimum 800 lbs for each seating structure

#### Installation Method & Procedure

- Freestanding structures with no direct anchor to the site, weighed down with CMU blocks inside the seating box
- Each component (seat, vertical posts, roof frame, shading material, lights) to be fabricated and delivered to the site for assembly





Structural Detail of SAIL Structure

## Community Activations

Situated on the middle platform of Lou Gehrig Plaza, SAIL responds to both the upper and lower tiers, providing seating for the upper stage and acting as a focal point when approaching from below. The flexibility of its arrangement, the range of activity scales it supports, and its responsiveness to the site's topography make the installation versatile and adaptable to the community's needs.

The smaller courtyards created by the modular layout allow for flexible activation, easily adapting to larger gatherings with additional seating, tables, platforms, and centerpieces.

The spaces between the vertical posts can serve as flexible display areas to showcase Bronx artists, community stories, or local events.

The courtyards between structures can also be transformed and co-created by connecting string lights and decorations, hosting events in partnership with community organizations.

### COMMUNITY CONCERT

Aug. 24, 2024

After the SAIL structure was installed, a community concert was held at Lou Gehrig Plaza to celebrate local culture and the plaza's activation.



Community Concert Day  
Image Credit: Cameron Blaylock



## PAINT DAY

Aug. 24, 2024

Following installation day, local residents were invited to Lou Gehrig Plaza to join the design team in painting SAIL. The event attracted children and their families, who added vibrant color to the installation. With added seating, shading, and painted surfaces, the plaza was reactivated - encouraging more spontaneous use and activity around the structure.



*Paint Day*  
Image Credit: Habitat Workshop

## 9-11 MEMORIAL DAY

Sep. 11, 2024

On Memorial Day, the Bronx held its annual 9/11 event at Lou Gehrig Plaza to honor those who lost their lives in the attacks. Community members gathered around the SAIL structure to hear stories and reflections.



*9-11 Memorial Day*  
Image Credit: 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID

## OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK

Oct. 19, 2024

Each October, Open House New York Weekend offers unparalleled access to the city's built environment, unlocking more than 200 sites for tours, talks, and exploration. SAIL was one of the featured sites, where visitors met the design team and learned about the design and engagement process firsthand.



Open House New York  
Image Credit: MUD Workshop

## 5K RUN

Oct. 26, 2024

Bronx District Attorney announced that the Bronx DA's Office will hold its seventh annual 5K Run/Walk/Roll to End Domestic Violence.

The design team renovate the SAIL using purple and white ribbons. Allowing people to share their inspiring words. About 800 people participated in the 5K Run.

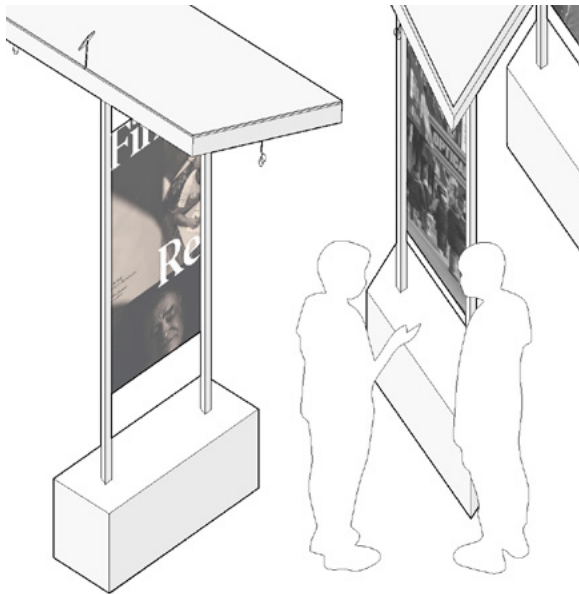


5K Run  
Image Credit: MUD Workshop

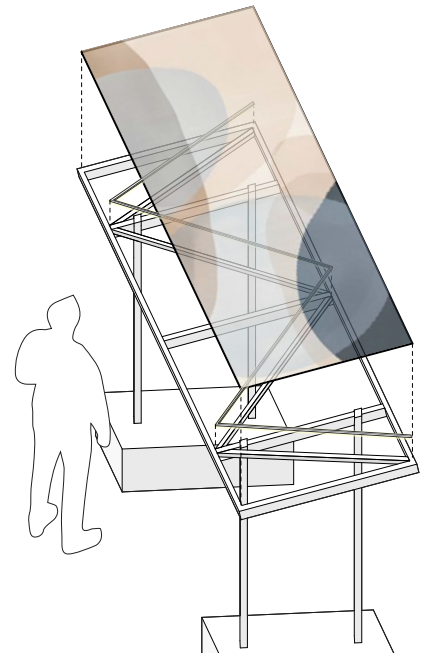


## Future Adaptation

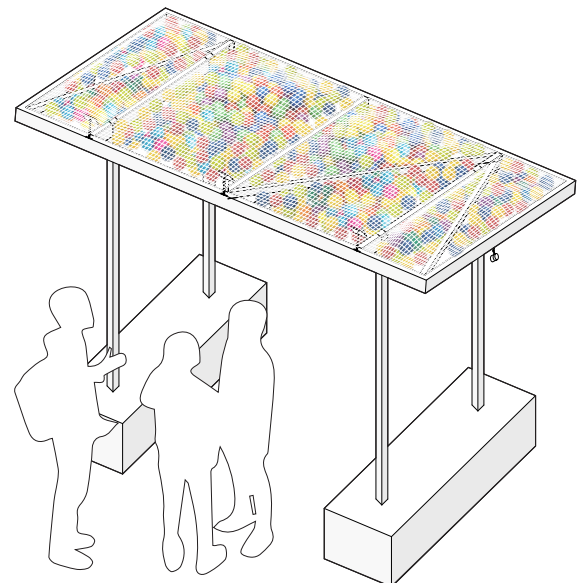
SAIL's simple and separate components - including an aluminum frame roof with perforated vinyl shade, vertical aluminum posts, and painted plywood benches weighted with CMU blocks - make it easy to redeploy and adapt in the future. By swapping vinyl shades with different objects or materials, or repainting the plywood benches, SAIL can be visually refreshed. The aluminum structure can also anchor future amenities such as misting stations or plant life, allowing for seasonal or event-based modifications.



*Portrait Installation*

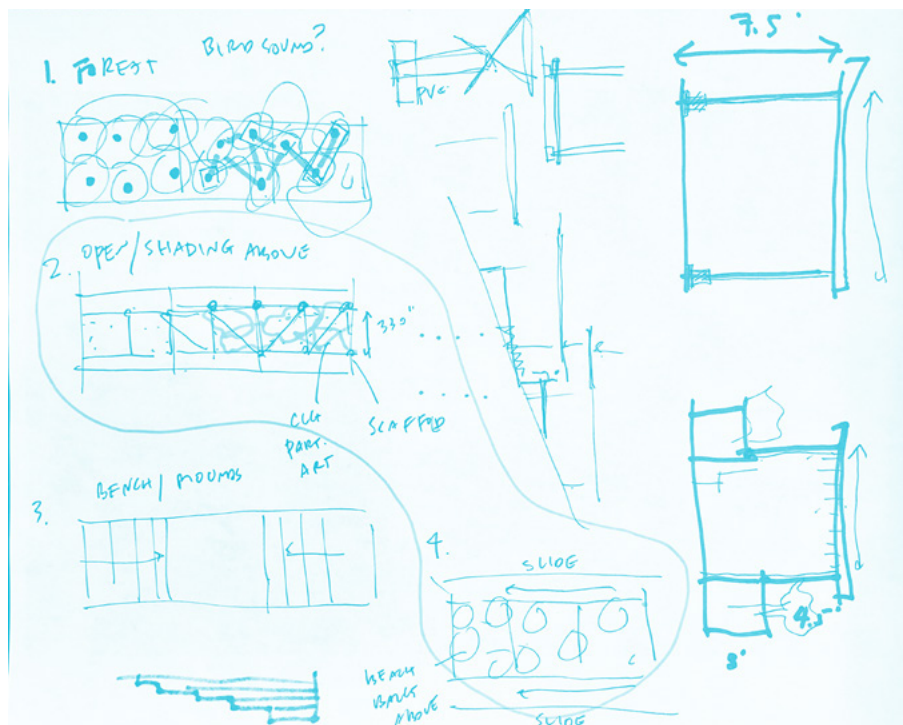


*Printed Roof*



*Beach Ball Stuffed Roof*

# Behind the Scenes

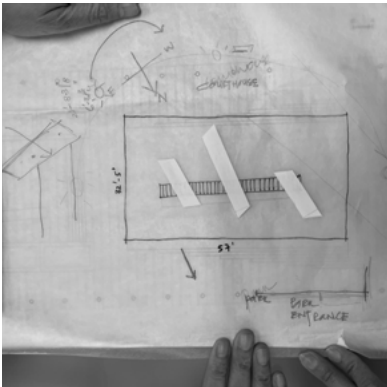
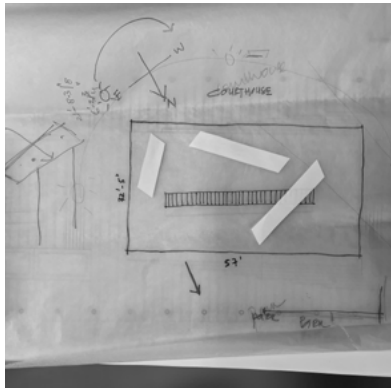
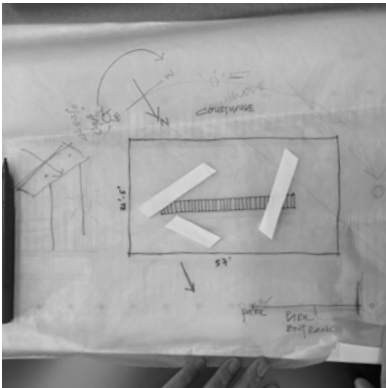
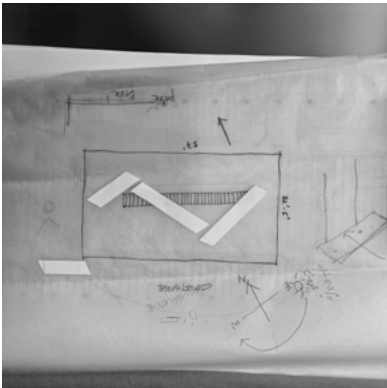
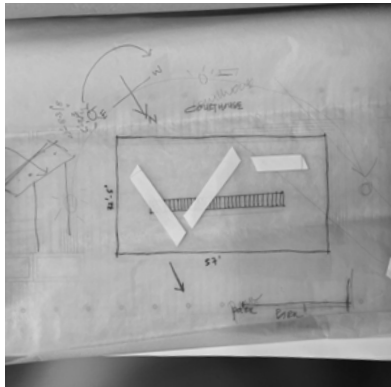
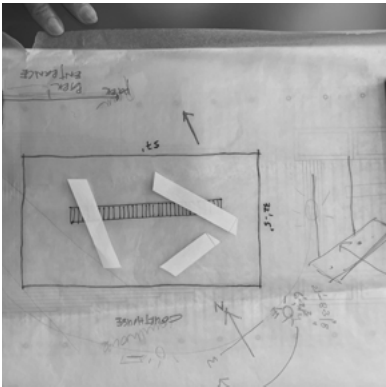
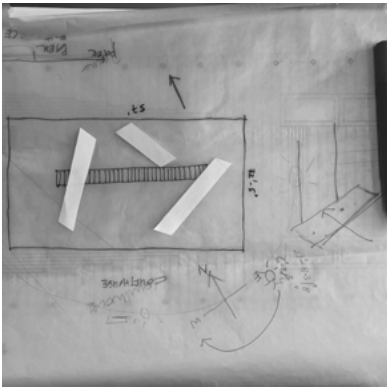
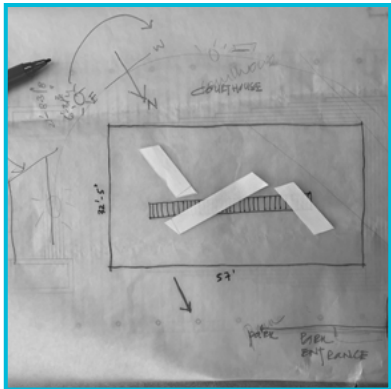
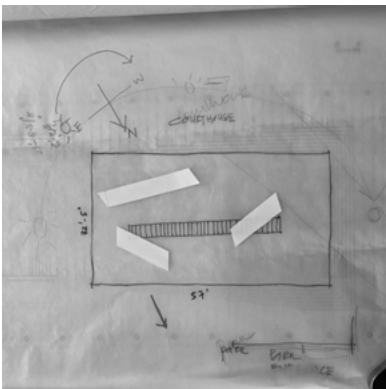
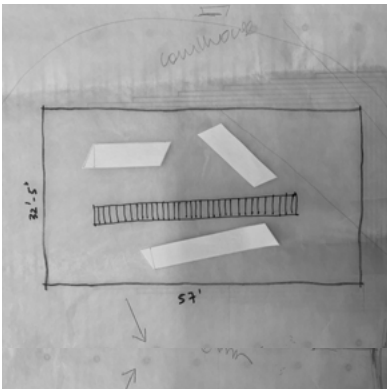


The 161<sup>st</sup> Street BID Vision Plan included a number of steering committee meetings, direct engagement with the community, temporary activations, and planning and design workshops. We are sharing snippets from moments and people who made it all happen.



# Configuration Design

161st St BID Vision Plan | Behind the Scene



# Unit Iterations

Unit Typology

Towards Yankee Stadium

Towards Joyce Kilmer Park

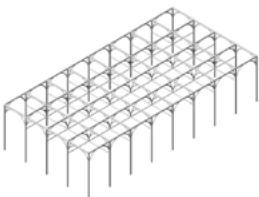
Option 1: Sail



Option 2



Option 3



Option 4





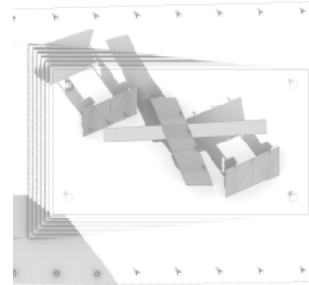
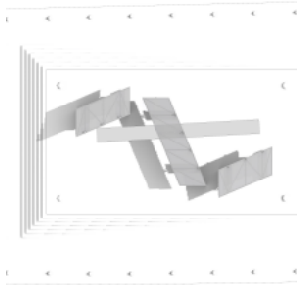
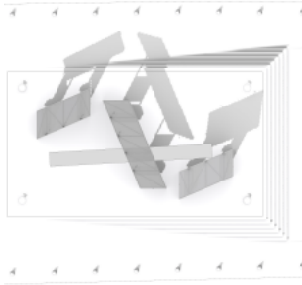
# Sun/Shade Studies

9 AM

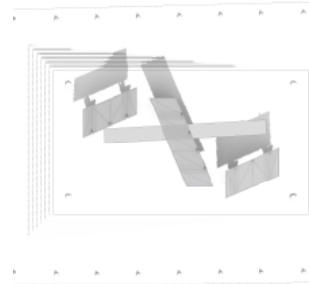
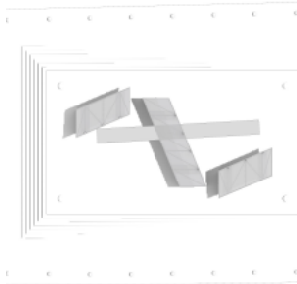
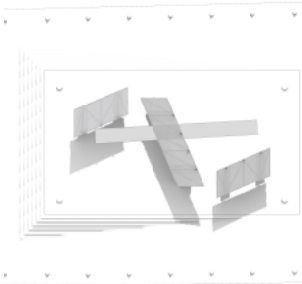
12PM

3PM

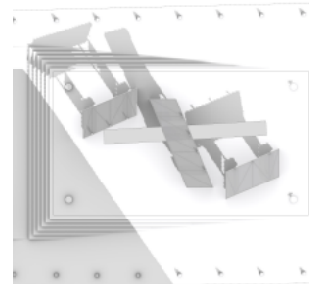
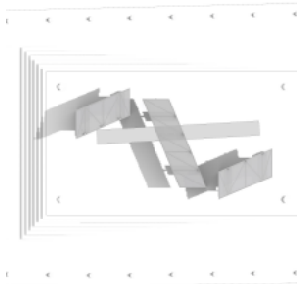
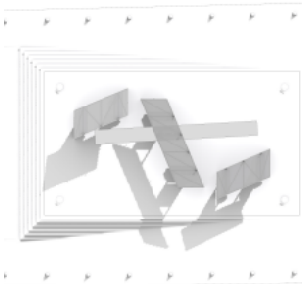
Mar.



June



Sept.



Dec.

