



Town of Aurora

General Committee Report No. PBS17-096

Subject: Preferred Design for Library Square

Prepared by: Fausto Filipetto, Senior Policy Planner

Department: Planning and Development Services

Date: December 5, 2017

Recommendations

- 1. That Report No. PBS17-096 be received; and*
- 2. That Council endorse Option 2, the lowered square option as the preferred option for the Library Square design; and*
- 3. That Council direct staff to proceed with the detailed design for the development of Library Square.*

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council endorsement of the Option 2, the lowered square concept for the Library Square redevelopment.

- on December 5, 2016 Council provided direction regarding a concept plan for the Cultural Precinct that would involve the demolition of the former library and former senior's centre
- on May 16, 2017 Council directed staff to move forward with the detailed design of Library Square
- two viable options were designed and considered; one with an upper square and one with a lowered square - both options consist of a large programmable space which is framed by landscaping; both also contain 80 parking spaces and accessible parking
- the two options were presented to stakeholders, residents and members of Council for their input

- although both options are viable, staff and the Town's consultant, The Planning Partnership are recommending that Council endorse Option 2, the lowered squared option as the preferred option on which to move forward to detailed design

Background

On December 5, 2016, Council provided direction regarding a concept plan for the Cultural Precinct that would involve the demolition of the former library and former senior's centre. This decision was made taking into consideration public input obtained from the vast public consultation that took place in 2016 as part of the Council endorsed public consultation strategy with respect to the Cultural Precinct. Fotenn Planning + Design prepared two alternative revisions of the Library Square Concept Plans which were presented to Council on May 16, 2017. At that meeting, Council received the revised concept plans and directed staff to move forward with the procurement process for design services in the next planning stages for Library Square. The contract for the detailed design phase was awarded to The Planning Partnership on September 5, 2017.

Analysis

The Aurora Promenade Concept Plan - Urban Design Strategy

The Aurora Promenade Concept Plan - Urban Design Strategy was approved by Council in 2010 along with the adoption of the related Official Plan policy. The goal of the Plan is downtown revitalization and (re)development. With that in mind two of the pillars of the vision for the area are to create vibrant places and beautiful civic spaces by enhancing the existing amenities and establishing new opportunities to provide a connected system of outdoor public places.

One of the key overarching strategies of the Promenade Plan is to reinforce and enhance a Cultural Precinct. Many of Aurora's cultural assets are within a three block area running from Yonge Street to Larmont Street; such as the Aurora Public Library, the Church Street School/Aurora Cultural Centre, Trinity Anglican Church, The Wells Street School, the Armoury and Town Park. There is an opportunity to leverage this concentration of cultural assets as an attraction; reinforced by additional facilities, enhanced public spaces and distinct streetscape treatment.

A key objective of The Promenade is the eventual transformation from an automobile-oriented and dependent suburban environment to a vibrant pedestrian-oriented one. This objective is not only a function of good and sustainable planning, it is also necessary given the constraints to road capacity and is in-keeping with the planned Yonge Street rapid transit plans.

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These goals, strategies and objectives were all vital considerations in the formation of the two design options presented in this report.

Stakeholder Consultations

The Aurora Promenade Concept Plan and Official Plan Policy were developed based on a vast amount of public and stakeholder consultations; as were the conceptual designs for the Cultural Precinct prepared by Fotenn Planning + Design. A full list of consultations which were undertaken is attached to this report as Appendix 1. The detailed design of Library Square focussed on consultations with key stakeholders such as The Aurora Public Library, The Aurora Cultural Centre, The Aurora Museum and Archives, The Chamber of Commerce, The Ratepayers and interested parties. Stakeholder consultations were conducted on November 27, 2017; during which two design options were presented. Option 1 proposed an upper square with underground parking and Option 2 proposed a lowered square.

Stakeholder comments can be summarized as follows:

Chamber of Commerce

- concerns about the cost of implementation/construction of the plans
- concerns over how loading will occur
- questioning whether this is the best use for this space
- desire expressed regarding provision of retail and food/beverage

Aurora Public Library

- can further excavation occur to provide a greater amount of underground parking
- concerns over the underground entrance and the cost of maintenance
- parking is inadequate in the Option 2
- Option 1 is preferable and creates a more desirable entrance to the library
- construction should be coordinated with the renovation of the library

An email was also received from the CEO indicating that *“The Committee is endorsing Concept 1 and intends to bring a recommendation to the Board for its consideration at our meeting on December 13th.”*

Recommendation:

THAT the Aurora Public Library Board endorse Aurora Town Square Concept 1, and

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THAT with permission of Town Council, the Library Board request a portion of the Development Charge monies currently being collected for Land, Construction and FF & E for Aurora Public Library be used to offset the costs related to the design and construction of Concept 1 for Aurora Town Square.

The Committee agrees that this is the preferred design to ensure that library use can be sustained at current levels and, more importantly, increased as time passes. It expands our community programming capacity, maintains the current level of parking near the Library and improves the look and appeal of our well-used, versatile facility."

Aurora Cultural Centre

- the detailed design process is proceeding too quickly and a needs assessment is required with respect to the proposed extension
- Option 2 provides for a more programmable space and creates an amphitheater setting
- Option 2 is preferable but requires the Cultural Centre expansion to be built in order to relate the Cultural Centre to the square
- if Option 1 is chosen, would like an entrance roughed in to the Cultural Centre expansion so that underground parking could be provided in the future
- cost of Option 1 is a concern, including the maintenance associated with the underground parking
- would appreciate an opportunity to have a meeting with the Library to come to a consensus

Members of the Public

- need to have good pedestrian connections; ie. better connection between Temperance Street parking lot and the Library via a crosswalk, need to have marked crossings
- Mosley should be utilized as a link to the square
- the space should not be called Library Square but rather something like Civic Square or Town Square to reflect the true use of the space

The Two Design Options

The goals, strategies and objectives of The Aurora Promenade were all vital considerations in the formation of the two design options presented in this report. The options were designed based on the following parameters:

- Provision of a flat hard surface for programming year round activities;
- provision of a barrier free connection to the Library and Cultural Centre;
- increase pedestrian connections to and through the site - strengthen the east/west link;
- maintain accessible parking and deliveries to the Library and Cultural Centre; and
- build upon the previous work and in accordance with input received from the previous rounds of public and stakeholder consultations; which was to build a highly programmable square which could be used for a variety of uses including community space/uses as well as retail/food/beverage establishments.

Two options were developed and considered; one with an upper square and one with a lowered square. Both options consist of a large programmable space which is framed by landscaping; both also contain 80 parking spaces and accessible parking. Staff and The Planning Partnership believes that both options are viable, however **Option 2**, with the **lowered square** has been identified as the preferred option. The options have been attached to this report for Council's review and consideration. The conceptual plans contain information with respect to site area, parking, delivery areas, capacity and other statistical information.

As previously mentioned, both design concepts for Library Square are viable and have merit in creating a public gathering space that connects both the Library and the Cultural Centre buildings. However, Option 2 is considered the preferred concept and has advantages over Option 1 for the following reasons:

- Visibility from the street and safety;
- architectural impact - the square would be framed by a two storey library instead of just one storey;
- sense of space - the lowered square would provide for an amphitheater setting, where seating would be designed into the retaining walls;

- cost of construction - it is estimated that this option would be less expensive by approximately \$2,000,000; and
- cost of maintaining the underground parking and safety issues associated with it.

It should be noted that the front street entrance to the Library is accessible so barrier free access and parking as well as deliveries could occur on Yonge Street. With respect to parking, both design options would replace the parking which would be lost in the square; however, additional parking would not be provided. As previously mentioned, a key objective for the Promenade is the eventual transformation from an automobile-oriented and dependent suburban environment to a vibrant pedestrian-oriented one. As such, the amount of required parking has been reduced within the Promenade and it should be noted that the space which is being created is an urban one and not a suburban one with suburban parking standards.

Advisory Committee Review

Not applicable.

Financial Implications

In May 2017 Council approved budget funding of \$500,000 for the demolition and design services from the Council Discretionary Reserve Fund. A future report will be prepared outlining recommendations for additional funding and sources for the construction phase of the project.

Communications Considerations

Not applicable.

Link to Strategic Plan

The Cultural Precinct Plan, including the redesign of Library Square, supports the Strategic Plan goal of **Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all** through the following key objectives:

- *Develop a Cultural Master Plan that includes heritage, music, and art to promote more cohesive and coordinated cultural services;*
- *expand opportunities and partnerships that contribute to the celebration of culture in the community; and*

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- *actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown that includes culture.*

Alternatives to the Recommendation

1. Council has the option of selecting the upper square concept, Option 1.

Conclusions

As previously mentioned, two options were designed and considered for Library Square; one with an upper square and one with a lowered square. Both options consist of a large programmable space which is framed by landscaping; both also contain 80 parking spaces and accessible parking. The designs were built upon the previous work and in accordance with input received from the previous rounds of public and stakeholder consultations; which was to build a highly programmable square which could be used for a variety of uses including community space/uses as well as retail/food/beverage establishments. The two options were presented to stakeholders, residents and members of Council for their input.

While both options are viable, **Option 2**, with the **lowered square** has been identified as the preferred option based on the perspective of visibility from the street, safety, architectural impact, sense of space, cost and maintenance. It is therefore recommended that Council endorse Option 2.

Attachments

Appendixes

Appendix 1 - Consultations for The Aurora Promenade/Cultural Precinct /Library Square

Figures

- Figure 1 - Location Plan/Site Context
- Figure 2 - Concept Plan for Option 1
- Figure 3 - Pedestrian Circulation for Option 1
- Figure 4 - Rendering of Option 1
- Figure 5 - Rendering of Option 1
- Figure 6 - Concept Plan for Option 2
- Figure 7 - Pedestrian Circulation for Option 2
- Figure 8 - Rendering of Option 2
- Figure 9 - Rendering of Option 2

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Previous Reports

- PR15-026 - Award of Request for Proposal PRS 2015-77 Cultural Precinct Plan, September 15 and December 1, 2015;
- PRS15-040 - Purchase Order Increase for Cultural Precinct Consultant, December 1, 2015;
- PRS16-006 - Status of the Cultural Precinct Plan, January 19, 2016;
- PDS16-026 - Cultural Precinct/Library Square Repurposing Endorsement of Planning Approvals Process, April 19, 2016;
- PRS16-028 - Seeking Council Investment for Library Square Repurposing Study, May 3, 2016;
- PDS16-041 - Cultural Precinct Consultation Process & Timeline, June 21, 2016;
- PBS17-009 - Next Steps Report for Library Square, February 14, 2017; and
- PBS17-032 - Presentation of the revised Fotenn Plans to Council , May 16, 2017; and
- PBS17-066 - Award of Contract for Library Square Site Plan, September 5, 2017.

Pre-submission Review

Reviewed by the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Planning and Development Services.

Departmental Approval



Marco Ramunno
Director
Planning and Development Services

Approved for Agenda



Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDIX 1

CONSULTATIONS FOR THE AURORA PROMENADE/CULTURAL PRECINCT AND LIBRARY SQUARE

Aurora Promenade Concept Plan/Secondary Plan

- 4 public consultations; including a 3 day design charrette
- 8 Steering Committee meetings
- 2 meetings with the Town's Economic Development Advisory Committee
- 2 meetings with OP/2C Secondary Plan Steering Committee
- 1 Statutory Public Meeting

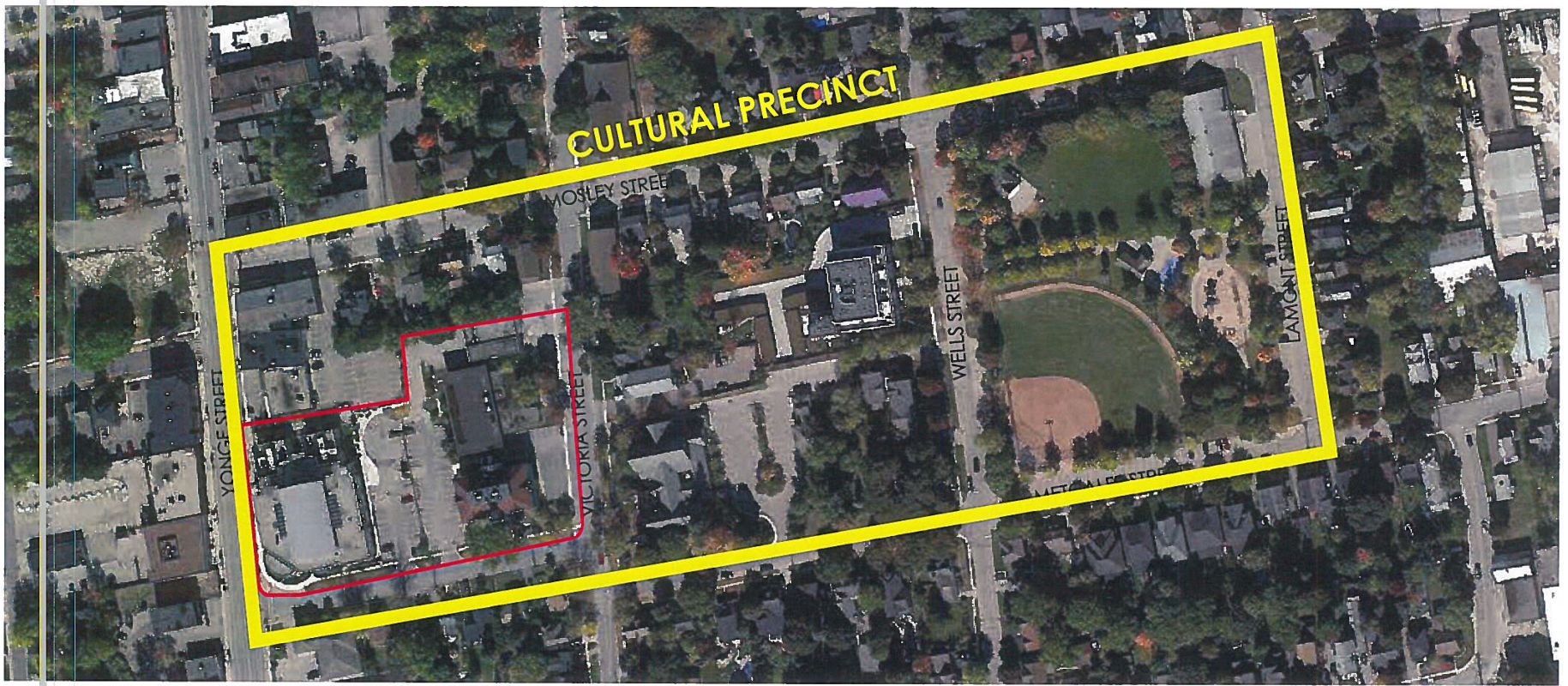
Cultural Precinct Concepts (Fotenn Planning + Design)

- Visioning Workshop was held with key staff, Aurora Cultural Centre staff and Aurora Public Library staff on October 6, 2015
- Councillor's Open House on October 6, 2015
- Culture Walk (Public Engagement) on October 25, 2015
- Online Survey was launched on October 27, 2015
- Development Community review of Cultural Precinct Plan held on November 17, 2015
- Presentation/Workshop for draft Vision and "What We Heard" document with Town staff on November 10, 2015
- Presentation/Workshop for Members of Council on November 10, 2015
- Stakeholder/Area Residents Roundtable on November 24, 2015
- CultureQuest! Aurora on November 25, 2015
- Presentation of Concept Plan to Council held on December 8, 2015

Council Endorsed Consultation Strategy Summer 2016

- Public Outreach (Survey/Questionnaire)
- On-line Survey
- Social Media Strategy
- Public Meetings
- In-person Surveys during August 2016 at Concerts in the Park, Farmers Markets, Doors Open and at the Aurora Public Library
- Rate Payers Meeting on September 19, 2016
- Public Meeting on September 21, 2016
- Meeting with Chamber of Commerce on November 17, 2016
- Accessibility Advisory Committee on October 5, 2016
- Economic Development Advisory Committee on October 13, 2016
- Heritage Advisory Committee on October 17, 2016
- Aurora Public Library Board on October 19, 2016
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee on November 17, 2016
- Trails & Active Transportation Committee on Nov. 18, 2016
- Environmental Advisory Committee on November 24, 2016

Figure 1



SITE

Figure 2

AN UPPER SQUARE

CONCEPT 1

Elevate the square to connect
 Library and cultural centre.
 Relocate parking to the north.

- SITE AREA 11,300m²
- PARKING LOT 1,075m² (at grade) and 980m² (below grade)
- ON-STREET PARKING 16
- TOWN SQUARE (hardscape plaza) 1,520m²
- PARK (softscape, terraces and paths) 3,980m²
- DELIVERIES Existing - ramp under square
- LIBRARY MAIN ENTRANCE Yonge Street
- ACCESSIBLE PARKING Existing - parking under square
- STANDING CAPACITY 2,280 people
- SEATING CAPACITY (on seatwalls) 252 people

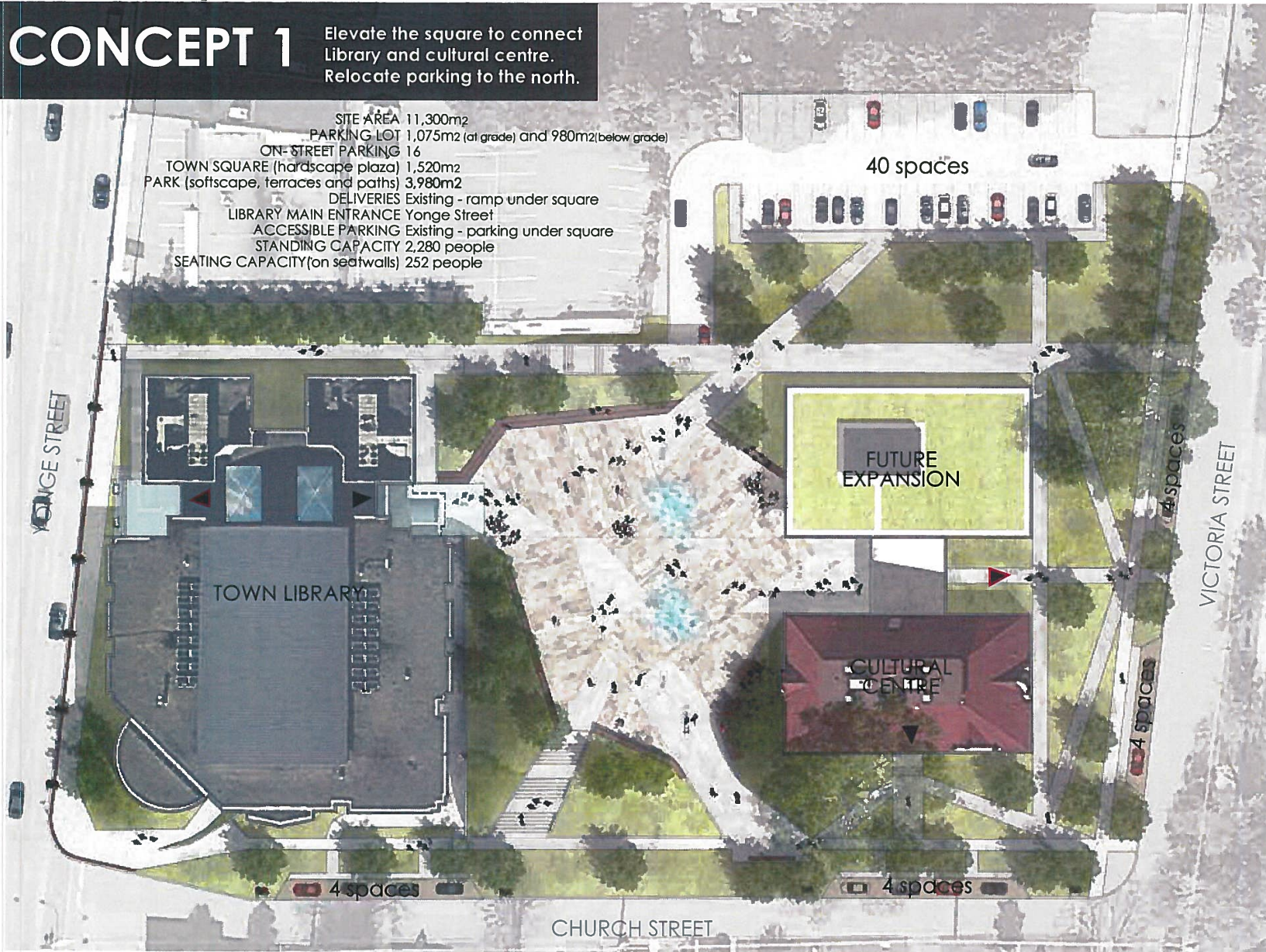
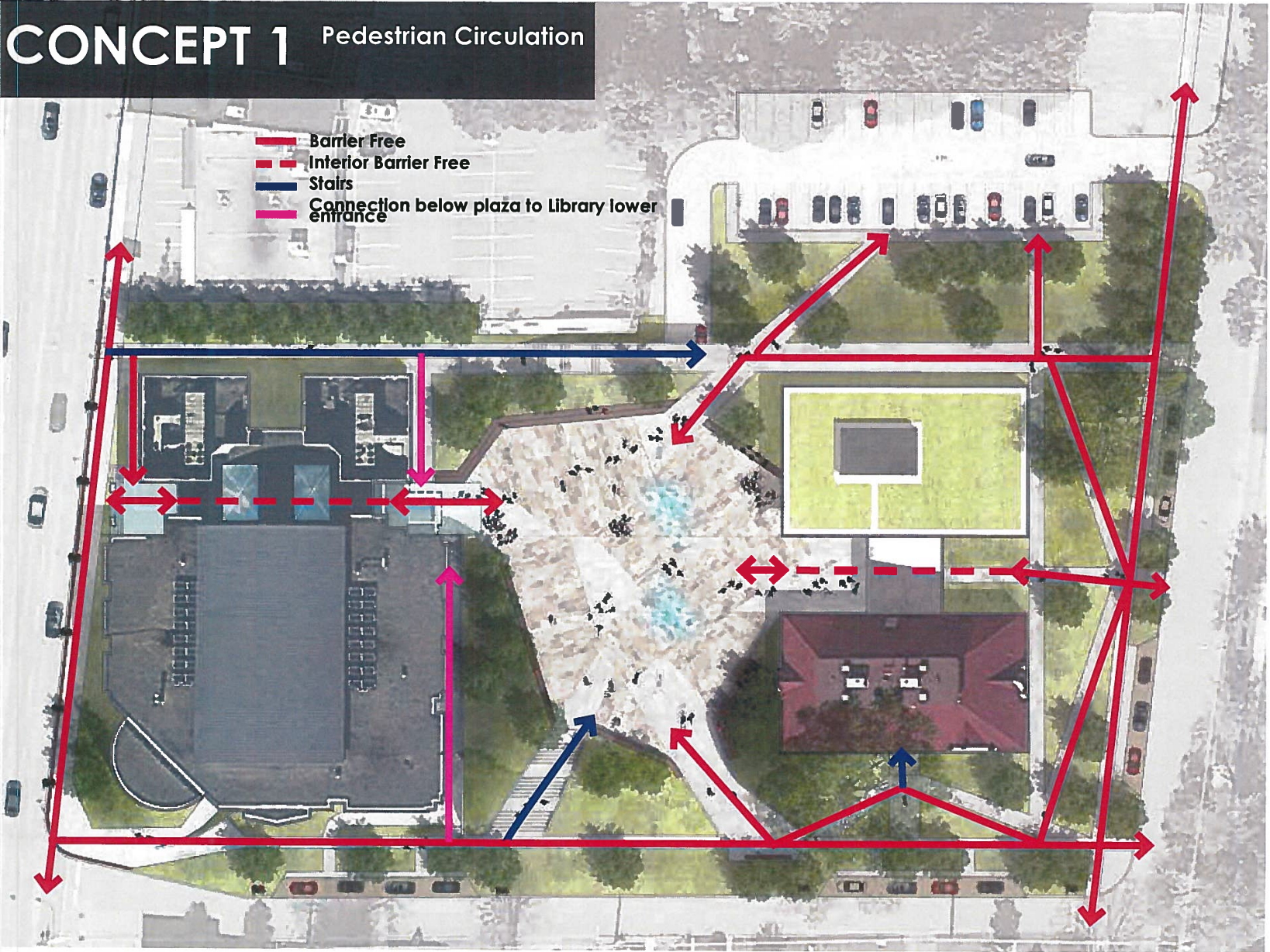


Figure 3

AN UPPER SQUARE

CONCEPT 1

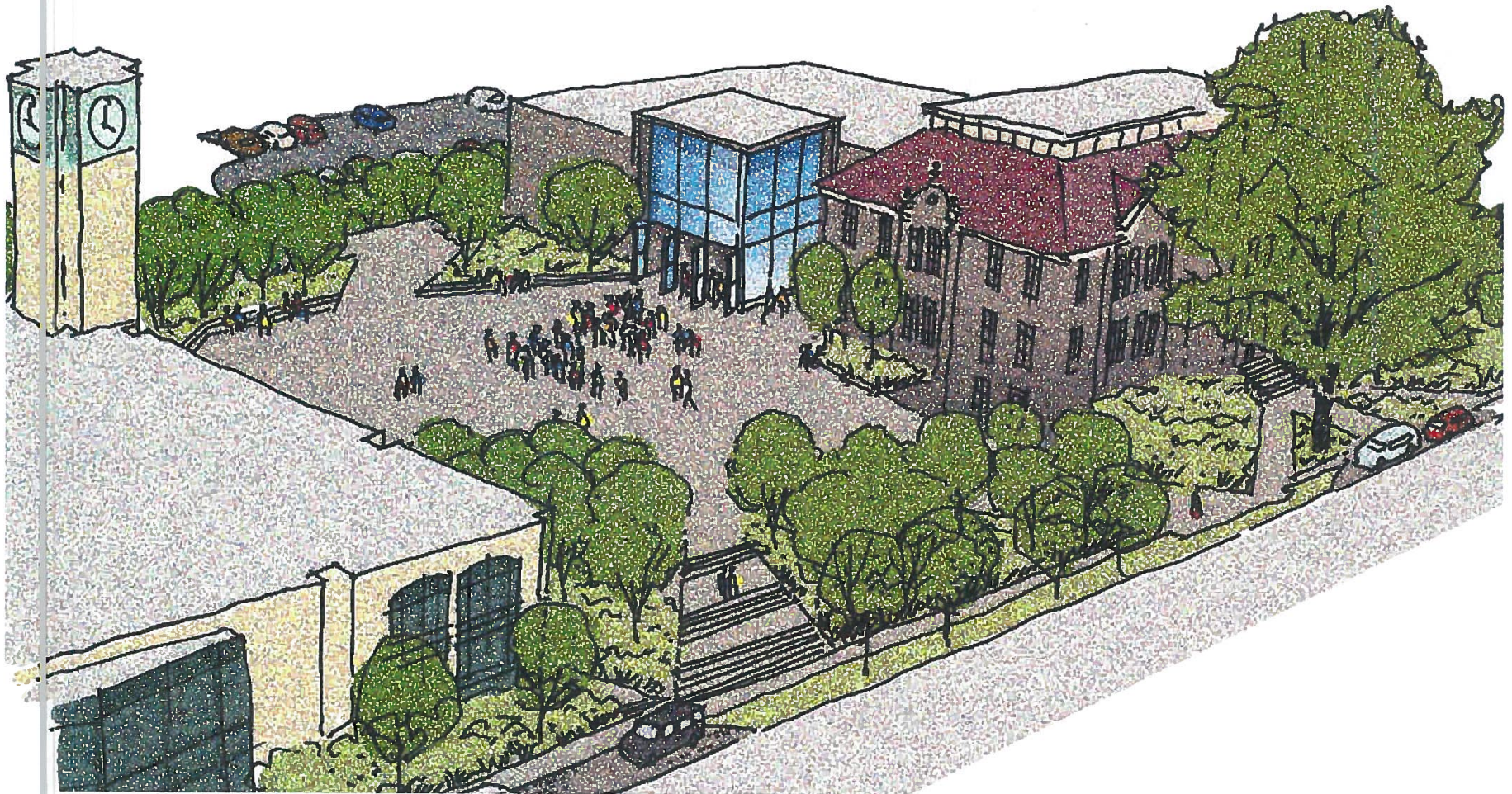
Pedestrian Circulation



AN UPPER SQUARE

CONCEPT 1

Figure 4



AN UPPER SQUARE

CONCEPT 1

Figure 5

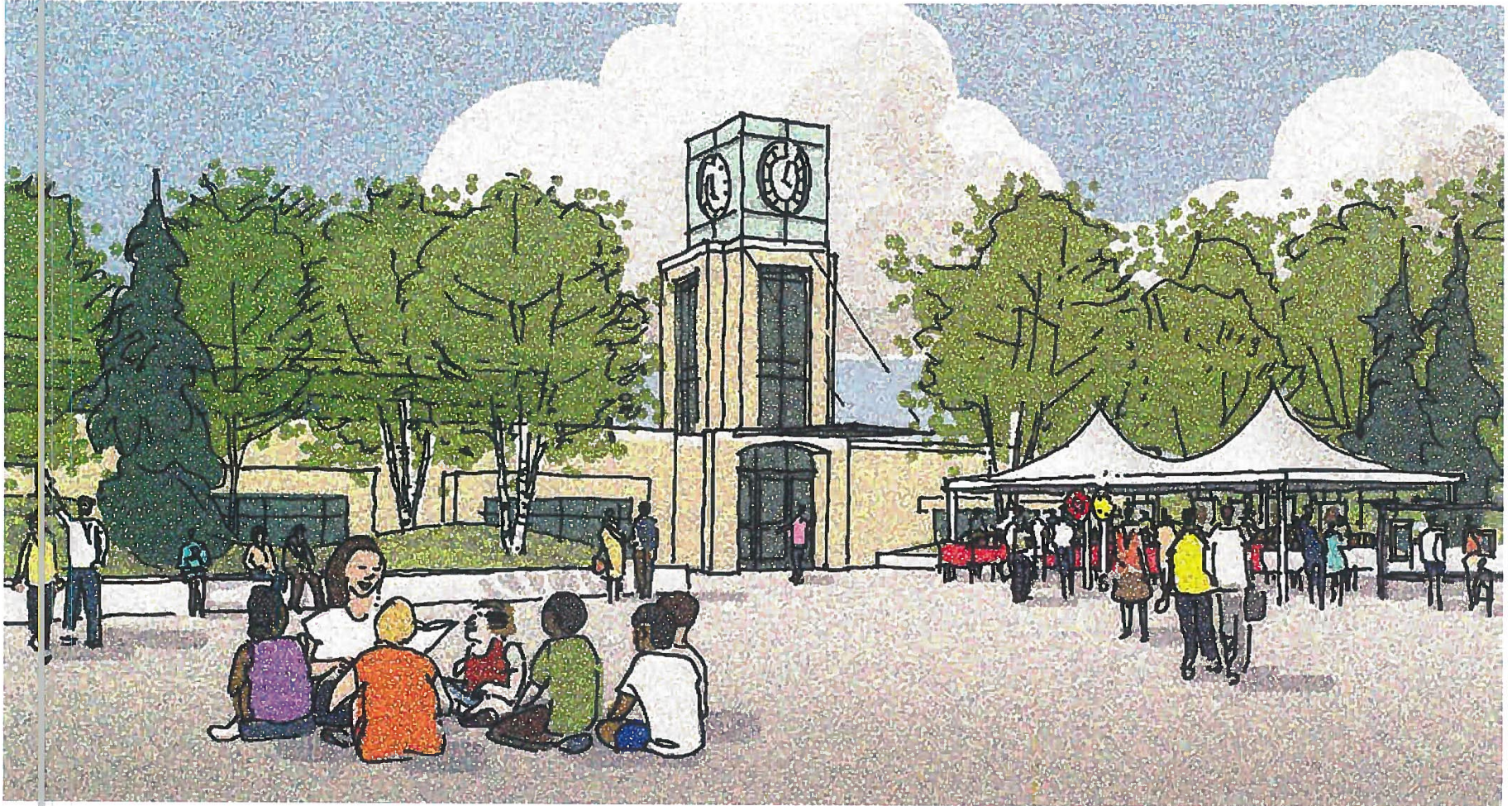


Figure 6

A LOWERED SQUARE

CONCEPT 2

Lower the square to connect
 Library and cultural centre.
 Relocate parking to the north.

- SITE AREA 11,300m²
- PARKING LOT 1,650m²
- ON-STREET PARKING 16
- TOWN SQUARE (hardscape plaza) 1,700m²
- PARK (softscape, terraces and paths) 3,800m²
- DELIVERIES Yonge Street
- LIBRARY MAIN ENTRANCE Existing
- ACCESSIBLE PARKING Yonge St., Church St. and Victoria St.
- STANDING CAPACITY 2,550 people
- SEATING CAPACITY (on seatwalls) 1,040 people

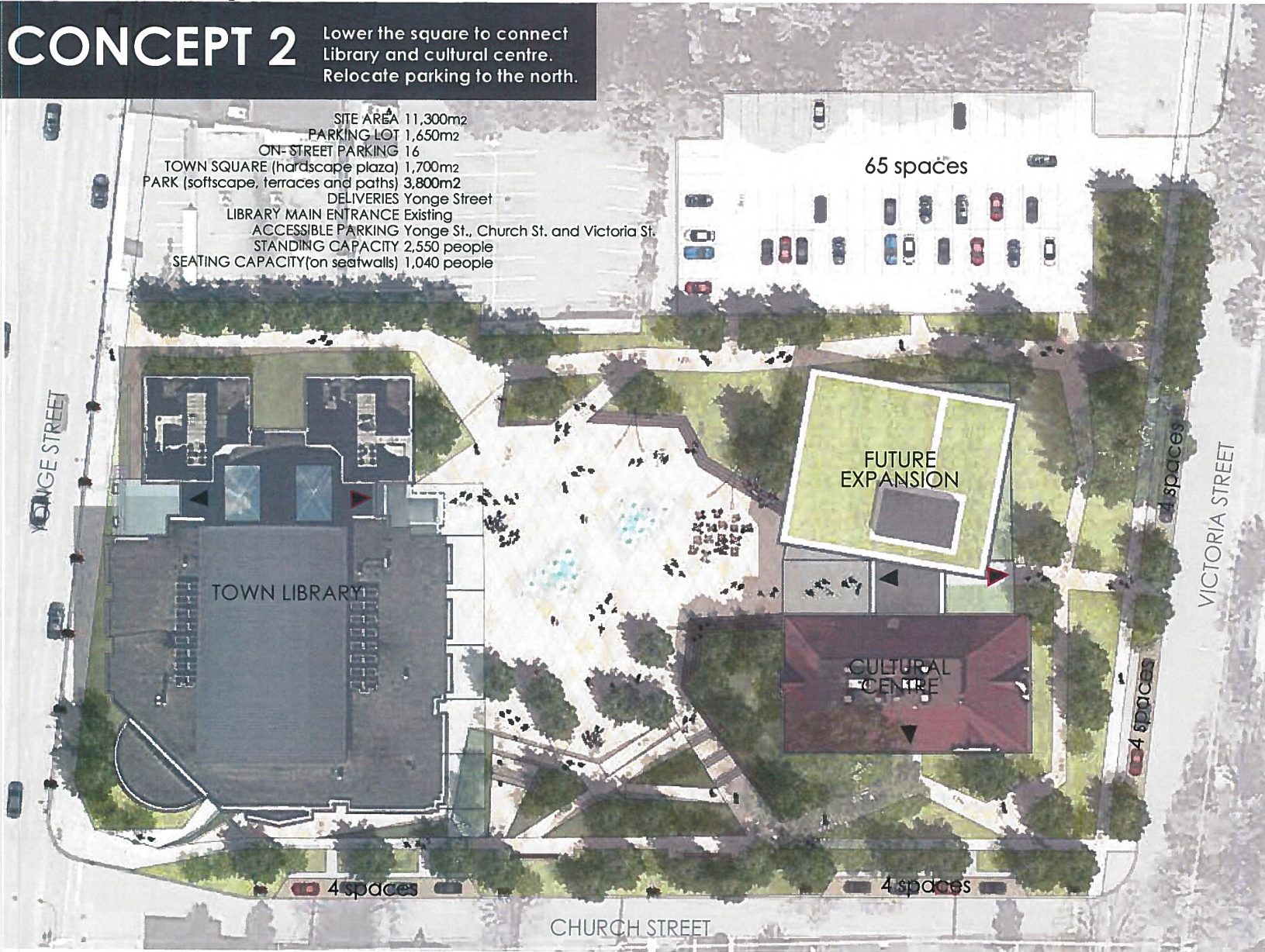


Figure 7

A LOWERED SQUARE

CONCEPT 2 Pedestrian Circulation

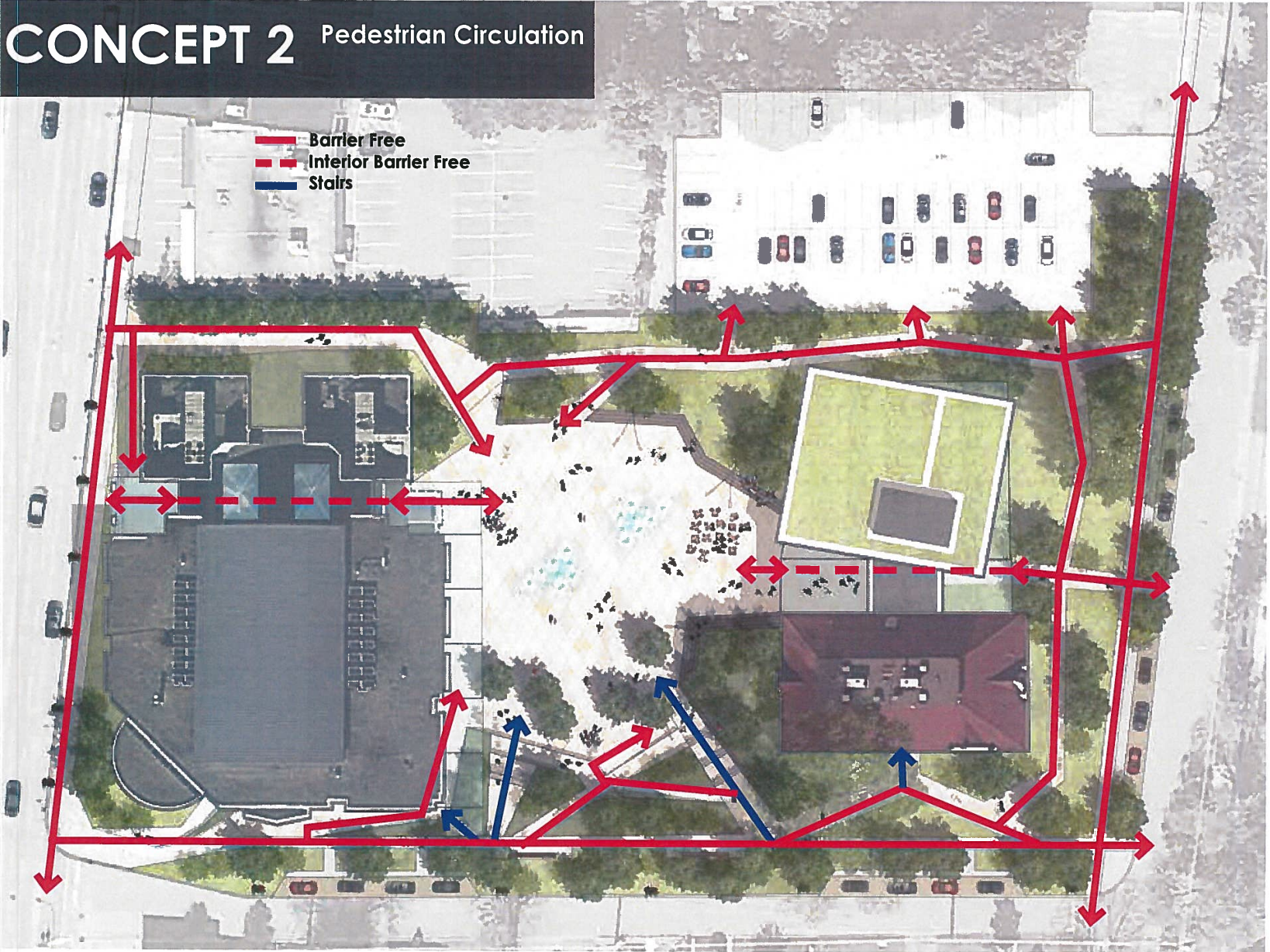
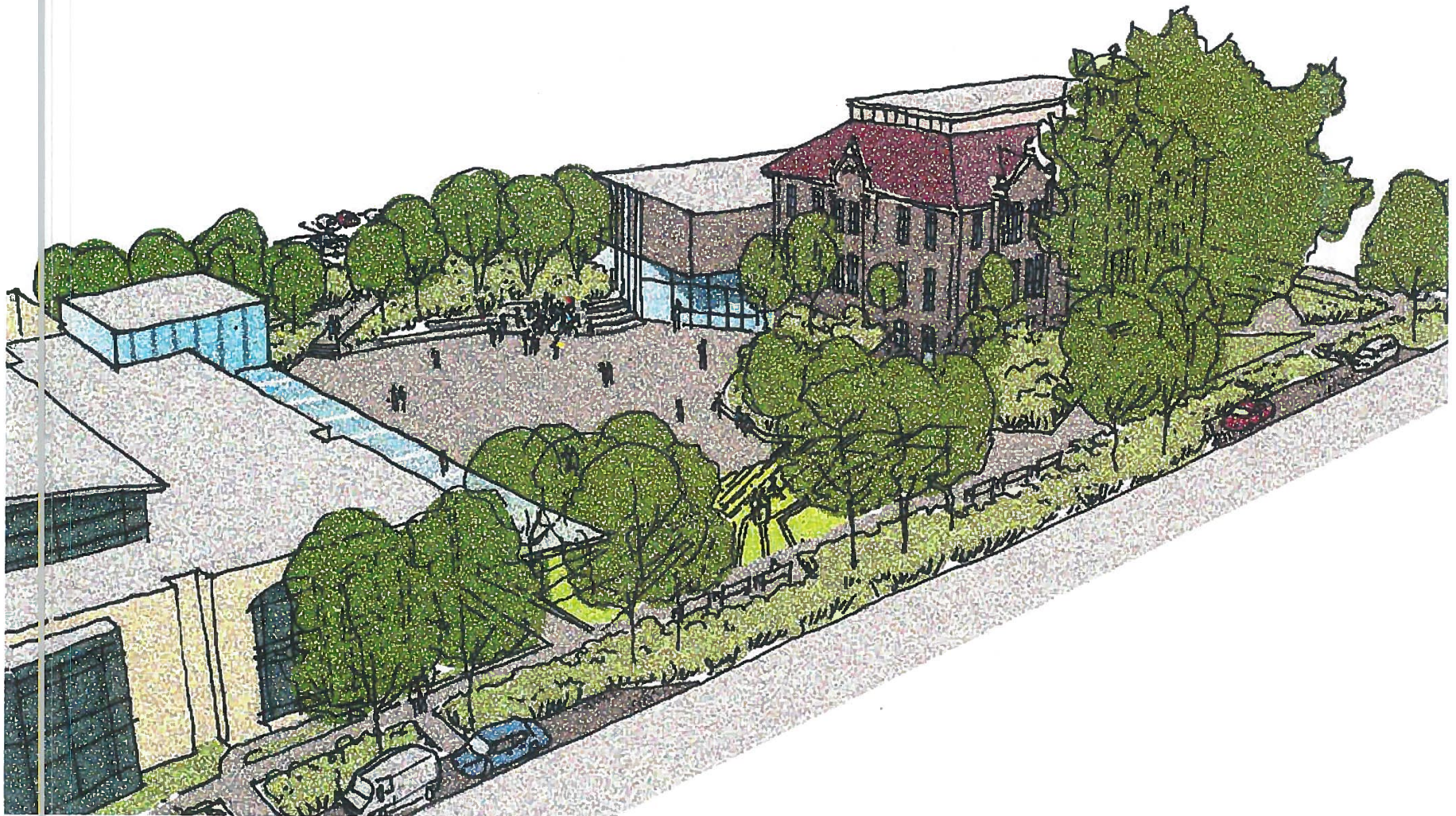


Figure 8



A LOWERED SQUARE
CONCEPT 2

A LOWERED SQUARE

CONCEPT 2

Figure 9

