

Suburban Intervention

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Suburban Intervention
Thesis Book

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Abstract

Today's way of life is leading away from recognizing and appreciating the surrounding world. Architecture and planning is providing nothing more than a mere shelter which is cutting off the human sensory experience from the surrounding natural world. Today's development of technologies has led to the formation of edge cities that are replacing the natural landscape and substituting them with a false sense of reality.

The architectural planning of today is creating generic spaces that are merely providing people with shelter from the landscape. They are becoming separated from the character and experience of where they live, work, and play. When the people are in these generic spaces they could be anywhere, these places don't allow the natural character and elements of a place to be experienced in its architecture and planning, thus losing the connection to the place.

The development of the suburban environment has created a division between people and the landscape. Usable green spaces in the developing suburban areas are being paved over for parking lots, shopping centers, and subdivisions. These edge cities develop with the mindset of escaping the urban environment to live in a semi rural area. As the people move out of the city they discover they miss the convenience of urban living and start to develop the land around them not considering the need to incorporate the landscape into the developments, thinking that they are live out in the country and there are trees, farmland, and open green space all around. Only to realize a few years later that there is no more natural landscape, as it has all been replaced with subdivisions and strip malls, leaving only the difficult to develop lots that have become forgotten and overgrown.

The fact is that human development and the creation of edge cities are going to continue even though it is doing damage to the relationship with the natural landscape. To repair the relationship with the landscape in today's society, people need to revalue the roles of these developments in architecture and planning. There is a need to intelligently and patiently change these roles to create better architectural planning that uses technology to inspire

and generate a better sensory relationship with the landscape, There is a need to create public spaces that encourage not only human interaction with each other but with landscape. Human senses need to be brought into architecture to create spaces that bring a tension between humans and the world around them to reorient this relationship.

Today's society is in danger of losing its connection with the natural landscape. Society is becoming absorbed with the development of technologies that are separating people from the world around them. Things like the internet, cell phone, television are creating this false sense of reality that people find comfort in and are beginning to live their lives through. By living in this false reality they become sheltered from what is all around them. The senses and experiences of the world become lost in these technologies. "With every advance in technology, there is a corresponding loss of sensory experience."¹

This lost of the senses and experiences in the world can best be seen in an example based on transportation. The original form of transportation was to simply walk where one needed to go. A person would spend thirty minutes to walk across a field where their senses became glorified. The senses of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch were all celebrated and experienced. Then as transportation developed and the train became the preferred mode of transit, many of the senses that were celebrated in walking became lost. Sounds, smells, taste, and touch all were limited to the interior of the train car where one would sit and watch the world go by, framed by the train's windows. Then with the automobile senses became more limited, like in the train sound, smell, taste, and touch are all restricted to the interior of the car. But with the car the sense of sight becomes even more limited as one can not freely look upon the world, but rather seeing must be reserved to watching the traffic around them. And now with the most efficient means of travel that today's society is familiar with, the airplane. With the aircraft all senses are lost; people sit in a metal cylinder watching a movie in the headrest directly in front of them that has nothing to do with reality. And while these people sit isolated from the world they having no sense of where they are. "As the world becomes more accessible, we access it more, and we waste more time doing so."² So, even though these technologies make the world more accessible, people seem to be experiencing less of it.

1 Campbell 39

2 Campbell 39

The void in reality goes much further than transportation; peoples' everyday lives have become absorbed by technologies. Technologies such as the internet, cell phone, and television are more accessible than every before. It seems that the internet can be found almost everywhere and it is accessible to anyone with a cell phone. Though these technologies seem to provide greater access to the world they are merely providing a false reality. A person may be able to sent documents or video conference with another person on the other side of the world, but what senses are being experienced when this is done? People can stay in a single room and on their computer see the entire world but they don't ever experience it; people can work from home and talk to people on the phone but never interact with anyone; or people can form relationships with the characters on the television screen but after a half hour what relationships have really formed? In fact there is an entire generation of children who have never known a world without these technologies. Going outside to play has been replaced with going online, watching television, or texting on a cell phone. So these technologies provide this false front of a sensory experience that does not let anyone sense or experience anything.

So how does this relate to architecture? Well, architecture's role in society today has only hurt the relationship with the sensory relationship and the landscape. Architecture in its original form was to merely provide shelter from the harsh climate conditions, and as time has advanced society has used technology and architecture together to create a space that is completely separated from the natural environment. Architecture and planning has developed in a way that allows each building has its own environment, thus not just merely providing shelter from harsh climatic conditions but sheltering ones senses from the rest of the world. Architectural planning has developed into places isolated from the landscape in which these technologies or distractions from everyday life have found a place to thrive. "The way people see themselves as it relates to nature is fundamental to culture."³ With a culture

that has become obsessed with these distractions, the connection that architecture once had with its site, surroundings, and the landscape is beginning to vanish. Buildings today are becoming more and more generic looking simply to provide spaces removed from the landscape so that people don't get distracted by the outside world.

If these technologies are hurting the relationship that people have with the landscape what is it that needs to be done? Should the government ban these technologies and turn back the clocks to the 1800's? No. The truth is these technological distractions from life are not going anywhere, nor should they. Even though they are having a negative impact on the way people live and experience their lives, they do provide for greater access and a greater knowledge of the world. But there is a need to reevaluate the role these technologies, architectural planning, and landscape have in the way people live their lives.

Architecture and planning has this great potential to bring these technologies and the landscape together to create a better way to experience the world. These technologies can grant us access to the world but we can't experience the world without interaction with it. The Landscape is more than just trees and fields it is all around us helping us to define and give character to a place, it gives places an identity. It can give places an identity through plants, animals, culture, etc. And it is with the interaction of natural elements that allows one to truly experience the world. For example someone can go online and learn about palm trees in the tropical regions but never really experience it. Viewing a picture of a palm tree through a computer screen puts blinders on the person as they are only seeing a small isolated portion of what this tropical region is like. Not until this person travels to the tropics and stands barefoot in the sand, hearing the sounds of waves washing onto a beach and observes the palm tree as a coconut falls from it and then breaking it open to smell and taste the juices from within the coconut, has a person experienced what this tree and place actually is. Architectural planning

can come in here to create spaces that take elements from their natural landscape and allow them to be celebrated and provide portals in which technology can come into not to distract but rather enhance the local identity to create an overall greater sensory experience.

With these thoughts in mind the next steps was to find a city that was suffering from this lost identity and connection with the landscape. In search for a city the suburban condition came to mind, as these suburb environments were once nothing more than forest, fields, or farmlands before the transportation revolution took place in Detroit with Henry Ford's invention of the assembly line in 1913. That revolutionized the way people could live, leading to the need of major road infrastructure that has been growing outside of the city limits of Detroit ever since.⁴ These farmlands and field started to be developed creating the take over of these once natural landscapes and turning them into a mini urban environment, or edge city, outside of Detroit. This development of edge cities has only encouraged this separation of people from nature. And now as people are moving out farther from the edge cities that developed in the first half of the twentieth century they seek to live in what they call the country side only to realize they miss the urban lifestyle of shopping, entertainment, and employment all within a short travel distance. They tire of traveling the expressway back and forth to the city multiple times per week and they start to develop this countryside with the amenities of city life. And as this new edge city develops the landscape becomes a secondary thought as the people think that they are living in the country and nature is all around them. But then over the next several years all the landscape becomes developed into streets and parking lots for their cars, strip malls for their shopping, office buildings for their work, and subdivision housing developments for their living. So now this once natural landscape has become this edge city with the many amenities of urban living that the people wanted to escape and thus will spawn its own suburbs.

4 Garreau 104

The current suburban conditions of the metropolitan Detroit area is composed of multiple layers of developing edge cities. As the search for this suburb site took form three sites conditions seemed to develop. The first potential site explored was in Madison Heights, Michigan deemed as the lost suburb. The lost suburban condition was composed of an early edge city that has since been leapfrog and locked into an area that has become so developed the area is almost completely paved over with streets and parking lots. It is influenced by the heavy shopping in the area with the Oakland Mall and many other strip shopping centers and has a heavy traffic flow from I-75 and four to five lane roadways. The next potential site I explored was on the other end of the development spectrum and deemed the developing suburb. The developing suburb is still a fairly undeveloped area but is being threatened by development plans to place shopping center, office centers, and townhouse living 30 miles outside of the City of Detroit. The site I explored was a development in Commerce Township to expand M-5 an additional one and a half miles through a project they are calling the Martin Parkway expansion. Although both of these sites had potential for the reintroduction of natural green space and identity a third site appeared and it seems to have the greatest potential, this site was in Novi, Michigan and its condition was deemed the fading suburb.

The Fading suburb condition is defined with the disappearing of green space being replaced by shopping center, parking lots, and subdivision housing developments. With this condition in mind the city of Novi became an obvious site that fit the criteria and could use a reintroduce of the landscape. The area of I-96 and Novi Road seemed to have the greatest potential for this exploration to reintroduce of usable green space. Novi has become defined for its shopping since the development of Twelve Oaks Mall in the 1976; it is also home to many shopping centers, and in addition Novi is home to the Rock Financial Show place that was a proposed replacement site for the North American International Auto Show to move to if Cobo Hall did not expand; thus would have taking away something else from the urban environment

to move it out to the suburbs. Novi as a suburban city has many amenities that one would expect to find in an urban environment which is why this is the site that will be explored further in this thesis. Novi has developed to be an anti-pedestrian city that makes everyone rely on automobile transportation to get anywhere in the city. It has very limited sidewalks and all of the shopping center buildings are separated with seas of parking lots. But as the exploration of Novi continued a glimmer of hope appeared as Lakeshore Park was discovered; the park stretches almost a mile and a half and has playground equipment, sports fields, beach access, and over ten miles of paths for walkers, hikers, mountain bikers, casual bikers, and cross country skiers for year round use. Even though this park has a great program it is very limited as the only access to the park is down a small residential road just south of Walled Lake. Its paths reach down to Twelve Mile Road but remain very disconnected from the shopping area that starts at Twelve Mile and Novi Road. Though the area has many flaws that have caused the city to become lost, it has many amenities that would allow the area to reconnect to the landscape.

For the city to reconnect to the landscape the organic elements of the site must be examined. In this shopping district along Novi Road from Twelve Mile down to Grand River a mission to connect the landscape in a desert of pavement began. The most obvious sign of green space was these few undeveloped lots that have become overgrown and ignored which included the paths of Lakeshore Park that were simply across the street and behind a new apartment and townhouse subdivision that was only half developed creating a disconnect between the park and the rest of the city. The next thing that came to mind, as it was raining on one of the days these explorations took place, was a question that asked where does the rain water go to? With the paved surfaces that seemed never ending it was clear that the rain could not just simply absorb into the ground as it naturally would, but instead it was just being drained down into the sewer system and being wasted. Upon making this observation of rain water

just washing down the drain it seemed that this water could have a much greater potential. If the rain water were to be channeled from the parking lots, streets, and roof it could be filtered through a natural process and then reused in other helpful applications in this area such as landscape watering, toilet flushing, or just simply used as an organic element in this reinvention of Novi. Then as the search continued a common element in the concrete started to make itself know. In every parking lot and on every road an organic element had been trying to fight its way through the concrete and reclaim what was once natural landscape. This organic element was cracks. Cracks are a simple way for the landscape to fight back against the man made conditions of parking lots. And from these explorations this man made condition of paved surface started to take on an organic nature as these cracks came to life.

So with the idea of allowing a crack to penetrate the suburban fabric of Novi a program to reconnect the city can take form. This crack will grow freely in the undeveloped field and creep and crawl its way through the deserts of pavement in parking lots and start to reclaim vacant buildings, and then over time taking over the entire city reconnecting it to the landscape. This crack can take the potential programs of Lakeshore Park, a rain water reuse system and use them to reconnect the city. With this crack would come a program that will challenge the current conditions of the city of Novi, with spaces that provide for one to truly experience the place through a sensory exploration that would adapt natural green zones where one could use their senses to explore natural spaces, activity space where people would be encouraged to interact with each other as well as the landscape, market areas where one could look and touch products they could purchase, and replenishment zones where one could sit, smell, and taste the food that will give them the energy to carry on through the day. So it is through this architectural exploration that will strive to allow the City of Novi to rediscover its true identity; letting the people who have become lost in the technologies of today be able to once again experience the world around them.

So, carrying these conceptual thoughts through to a final proposal would begin with the addition of extensive pedestrian transportation paths that would allow for walkers or bikers to navigate the city that is very disconnected. The path system creates new dynamic spaces throughout the area as it provides a gateway for Lakeshore Park to enter the entertainment district of Novi and allows people to access the city without an automobile. The intervention of the Fountain Walk Shopping Center Site starts with dissolving the boundaries of the shopping center with the landscape; taking the once straight road and winding it through the landscape, redefining the outline of the parking lots, and allowing the green space to takeover empty parking lot space and the site of the demolished building. Elements of activity, market, and replenishment are blended together with the landscape to create a new dynamic in the shopping center. The natural water treatment system is brought in with the addition of a more efficient rain water drainage system throughout the site and the addition of retention ponds and natural filtration streams lined with natural vegetation that will remove toxins and allow the water to be reused in site vegetation watering, decorative fountains, or allowing the water to be returned to the earth. Spaces within the shopping center allow for a diverse number of activities to take place. Open spaces for festivals and markets; areas themed like the rolling hills area that encourages people to interact with each other and the landscape. As the Fountain Walk Shopping Center is built to house large national chain anchor stores so the addition of smaller scale retail buildings will foster a new sense of the local community. The local businesses and restaurants will be able to find a home in the shopping center and help to supplement the existing large commercial retailers and also provide support for the site's new infrastructure, incorporating things like a bike rental and repair shop. The vacant lot adjacent to the existing Fountain Walk Site will be converted into a park land that flows in to the shopping center and creates a place for people to connect to the landscape through its open lawns, wooded areas, and varying lengths of permeable paths that will expand up to the Lakeshore Park paths.

Through these interventions Novi's suburban shopping center becomes a place with a new dynamic that allows people to recognize and appreciate the landscape. So, as society has developed and people have become able to move out to the countryside only to create a less efficient urban atmosphere and losing their connection to the landscape, it can be resolved with this insertion of usable green space. Infusing green space into suburban conditions can begin to redefine how people approach and see the new developments and existing suburbs creating a new healthy relationship between people and the landscape.

Precedent Studies

Precedents



Garrison Creek

Brown + Storey Architects, Toronto, Canada

Brown + Storey's design of Garrison Creek was inspired with the idea that "the connection or disconnection between urbanism and environmentalism - city and nature - is made by the human intervention of 'infrastructure'." Garrison Creek was polluted and then buried by the early settlers of the Toronto area. B+SA saw this project "as a catalyst in the creation of a series of connected open spaces knitting both an urban and green infrastructure back to the waterfront of Lake Ontario". So by recreating this creek it becomes a system feed by rainwater retention ponds to help treat and promote the reuse of water and the connection with humans and the landscape.



All Images Courtesy of: <http://www.browncandstorey.com/projects/garrisoncreek/T-projectframes.htm>.

Precedents

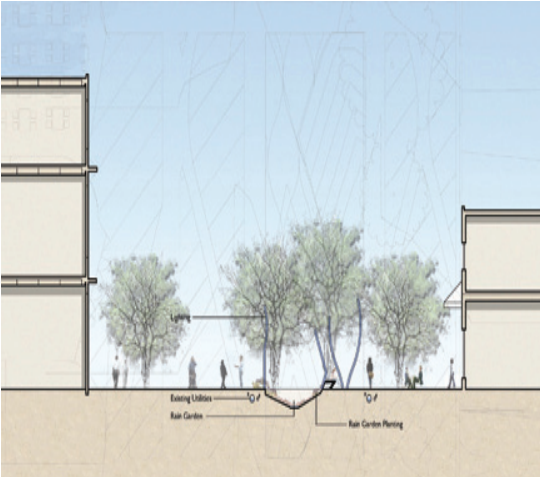


All Images Courtesy of: <<http://www.wjhooddesign.com/centerstreet.html>>.

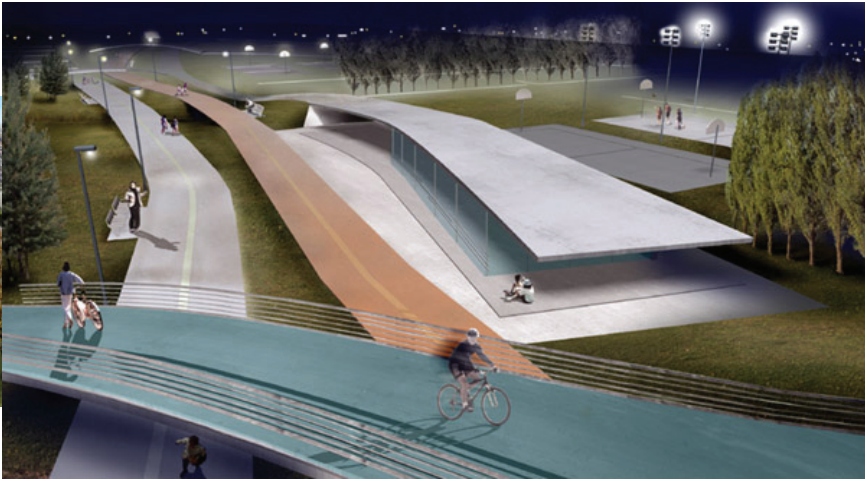
Central Street Plaza

Walter Hood Architects, Berkeley, CA

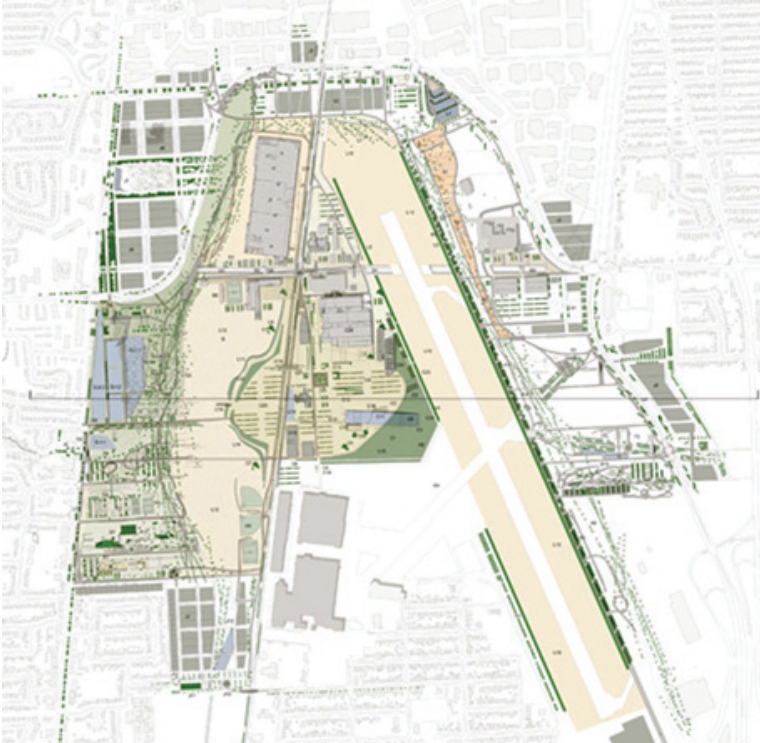
In Walter Hood's Center Street Plaza plans he created a public space that became the location for the day lighting of a creek. Through this day lighting method the gathering of rain water and the process of natural filtration is used to celebrate the creek; and also allows this normally wasted city space between two streets to become a place of connection of people and nature.



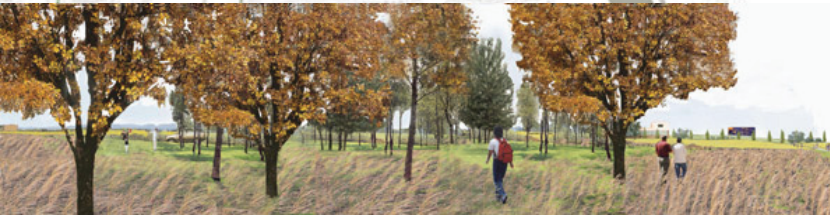
Precedents



Downsview Park Proposal Finalist Brown + Storey Architects, Toronto, Canada



A finalist design for the Downsview Park competition near Toronto Canada by Brown and Storey Architects takes the site of an old air force air field and reintroduces an urban forest and field area in the center of this new park. The outer zone consists of supporting infrastructure of communities and activity nodes that help to create a connection with the greater city. The design of the "Community Nodes and Activity Landscapes simultaneously permit the Park to fuse with and recharge the surrounding context in a way that is mutually enervating." The park also takes into account "the infrastructural systems of water treatment, planting, and movement systems of cars, cyclists, and pedestrians to continually combine in new evolving programmes and events."



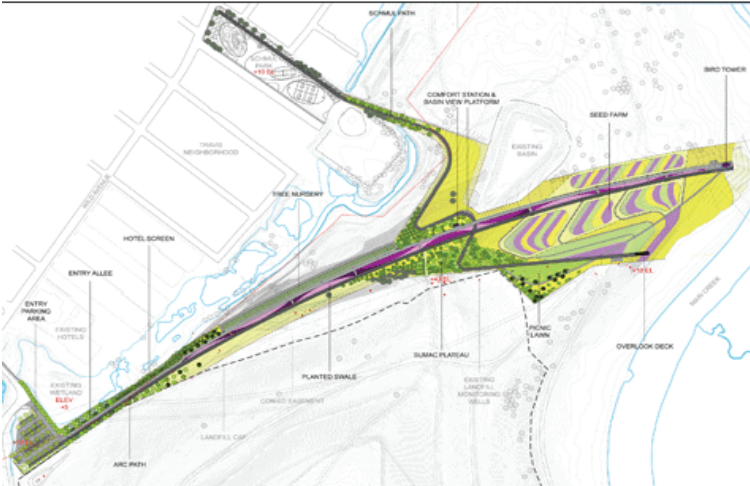
All Images Courtesy of: <<http://www.browncandstorey.com/projects/downsview/T-projectframes.htm>>

Precedents



Fresh Kills Park Field Operations, Staten Island, NY

This idea of outdoor activity that creates the interaction of people with the landscape and each other is a strong concept in Field Operations' Fresh Kills Park design. The park is to be built on the close Fresh Kills Landfill and "will be transformed into innovative, ecologically diverse and culturally active new parkland."



All Images Courtesy of: <http://www.fieldoperations.net/>

Precedents



Millennium Park

Chicago, IL



Chicago's Millennium Park is another activity based park with a multilayer design system including several different architects, and artist designs that have created interactive sculptures, public spaces, and gardens that is able to be used year round in a northern climate. These spaces within the park allow for people to do things they enjoy in an outdoor environment thus allowing them to be connected to the landscape in a very urban condition.



All Images Courtesy of: [google.com/images](https://www.google.com/images)

Precedents



Splash Pad Park

Walter Hood Architects, Oakland, CA



Splash Pad Park became divided by an expressway and over time the one end became separated and ignored. Hood's design gave this space new life; he "transformed the space into a park that people can actually occupy with flexible spaces that support a variety of uses." In fact this space was transformed into something Hood himself never imagined as it became the home of a weekly farmers market which helps to complement the space. The space was able to reconnect the park and community by allowing a diverse number of activities to take place that the space is not dependant on but only enhanced by.

All Images Courtesy of: <http://www.wjhooddesign.com/splashpad.html>

Precedents



Shake Shack

SITE Architecture, Madison Square Park, NY



SITE Architecture's Shake Shack in Madison Sq Park in NY is a simple food kiosk designed to provide simple lunch options in this historic park setting. The intention of the building is to becoming a garden itself while it provides nourishment year round to its customers.



All Images Courtesy of: <http://sitenevork.com/projects/sshack/ss01.htm>

Potential Sites



The Lost Suburb: Madison Heights



The first potential site explored was in Madison Heights, Michigan deemed as the lost suburb. The lost suburban condition was composed of an early edge city that has since been leapfrog and locked into an area that has become so developed the area is almost completely paved over with streets and parking lots. It is influenced by the heavy shopping in the area with the Oakland Mall and many other strip shopping centers and has a heavy traffic flow from I-75 and four to five lane roadways.

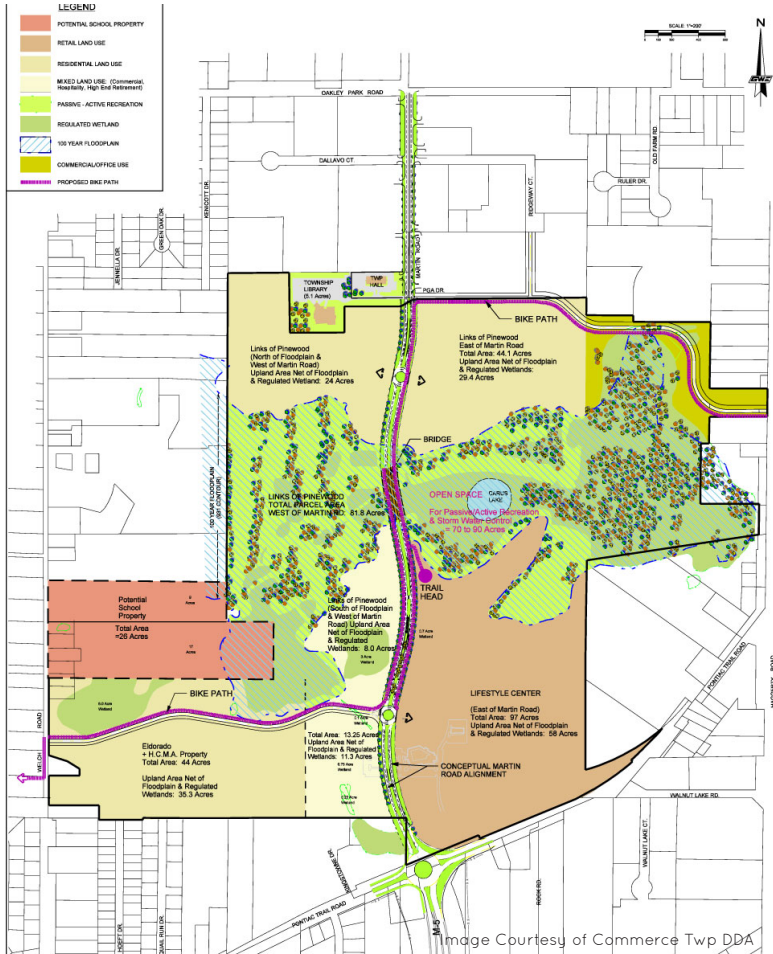
All Images Courtesy of the author

Potential Sites



All Images Courtesy of the author

The Developing Suburb: Commerce Twp.



The next potential site I explored was on the other end of the development spectrum and deemed the developing suburb. The developing suburb is still a fairly natural area but is being threatened by development plans to place shopping center, office centers, and townhouse living 30 miles outside of the City of Detroit. The site I explored was a development in Commerce Township to expand M-5 an additional one and a half miles through a project they are calling the Martin Parkway expansion. Which plans to tear through two existing golf courses and develop as much of the landscape as they can; leaving only undevelopable wetlands as so called natural space.

Selected Site

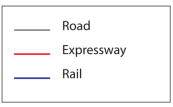


All Images Courtesy of: google.com/images

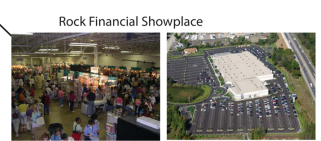
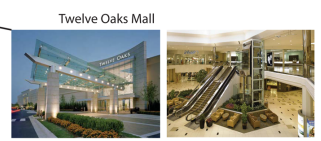
The Fading Suburb: Novi



Although both of the previous sites had potential to be reconnected to the landscape a third site appeared and it seems to have the greatest potential. This site was in Novi, Michigan and its condition was deemed the fading suburb. The Fading suburb condition is defined with the disappearing of green space being replaced by shopping center, parking lots, and subdivision housing developments. With this condition in mind the city of Novi became an obvious site that fit the criteria and could use a reintroduce of the landscape.



Novi, Michigan



The City of Novi was an ideal candidate for this suburban intervention. The city of Novi goes up from 8 Mile road to 14 mile and stretches from Naiper to Hagerty Road west to east. Interstate-96 runs through it and has a major interchange of I-96, I-696, M-5, and Grand River Avenue. Novi has become defined for its shopping since the development of 12 Oaks Mall in 1976. Novi is home to many shopping centers especially in the area of I-96 and Novi road. Novi is also home of the Rock Financial Show place that is a proposed replacement site for the Auto-Show to move to if Detroit's Cobo Hall does not expand. An element of green space that Novi has is Lakeshore Park that stretches almost a 1.5 miles and has playground equipment, sports fields, beach access, and over 10 miles of paths for hikers, mountain bikers, casual bikers, and cross country skiers. However, Lakeshore Park is very limited as the only access is down a small residential road just south of Walled Lake making it very disconnected from the shopping area. Thus, Novi as a suburban city has many amenities that one would expect to find in an urban environment.

Site Exploration

An exploration of how the landscape has found to fight back was employed to help inform the process of intervention of Novi's condition. One of the simplest ways that the landscape has found to fight back is evident in every parking lot and on every roadway, this organic element is fighting its way through the concrete and reclaim what was once natural landscape. This element was the formation of cracks in pavement. And with Novi having a large area of paved surfaces an exploration based on the different cracks would help to enlighten this project.

Crack Exploration

This first exploration focus on the uniqueness of cracks and how they can be form in a number of different ways whether it is a weakness in the concrete, uneven distribution of weight in the surface, or the penetration of water into the pavement. All cracks have their own set of circumstances that lead to the forming of their unique pattern and intensity.



Exploration [A] crack in the pavement



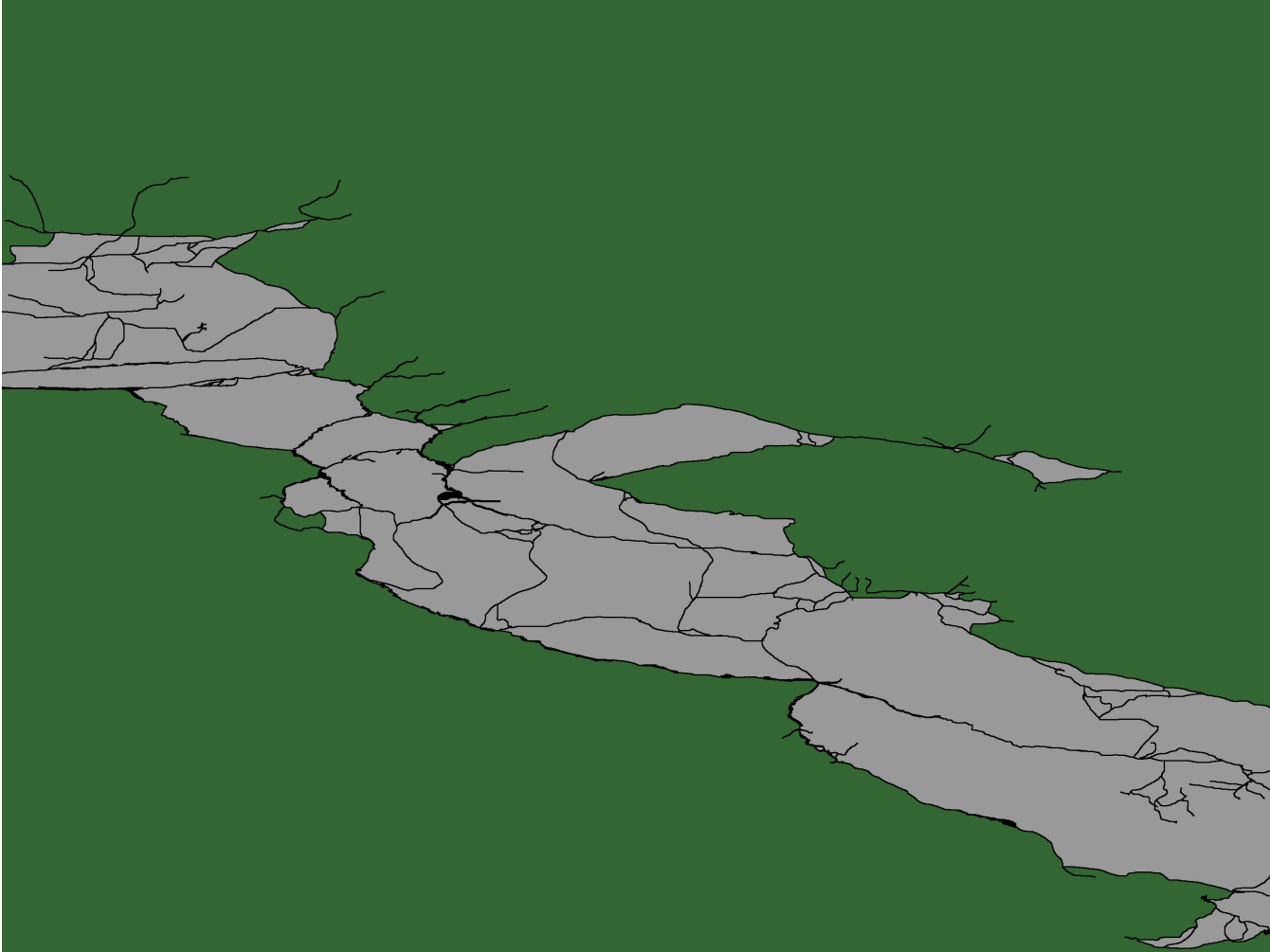


Exploration [A] crack in the pavement



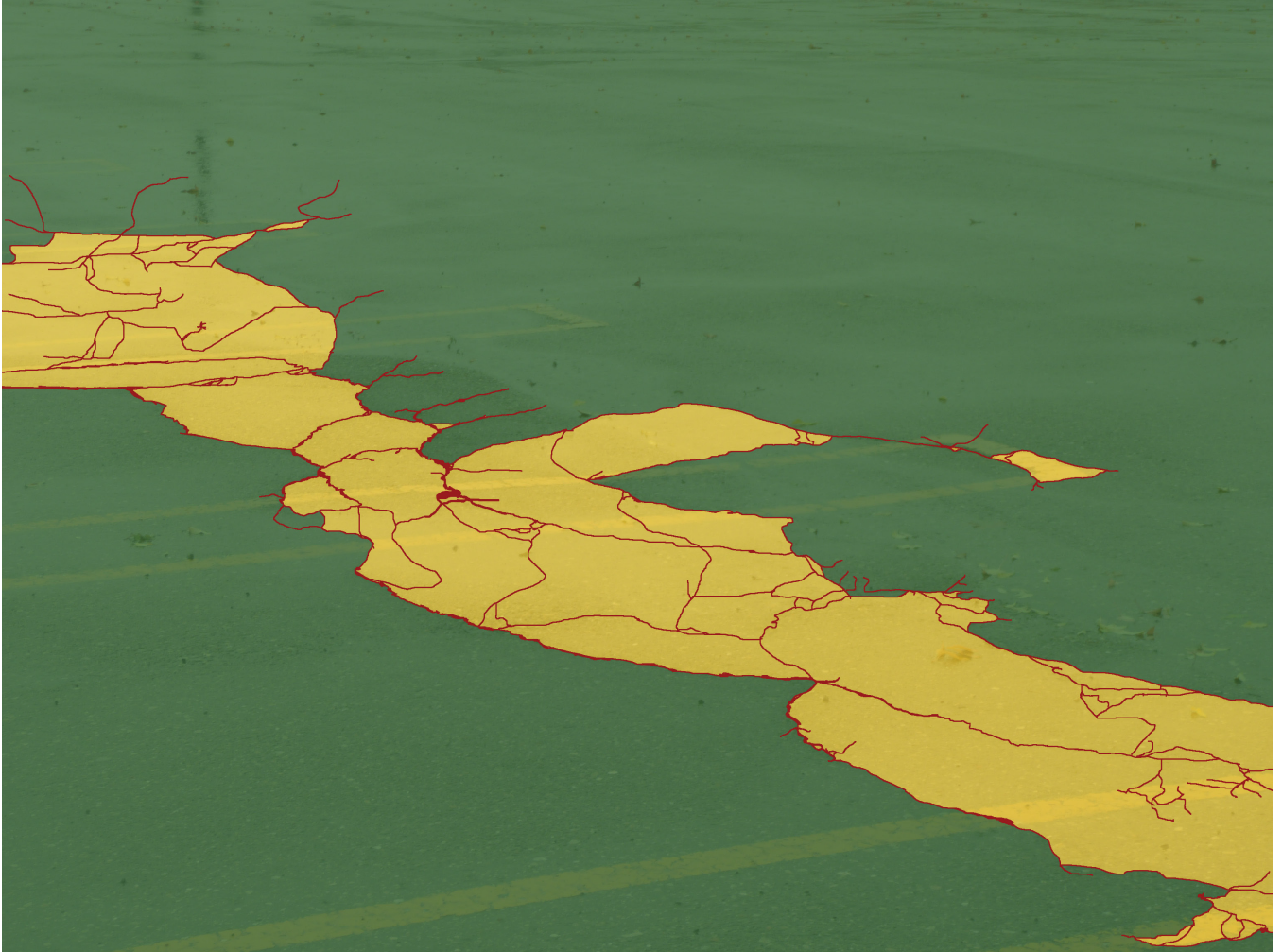


Exploration [A] crack in the pavement



Crack Exploration

Cracks are a simple way for the landscape to fight back against the man made conditions of parking lots. And from these explorations this man made condition of paved surface started to take on an organic nature as these cracks came to life.



Exploration [A] crack in the pavement

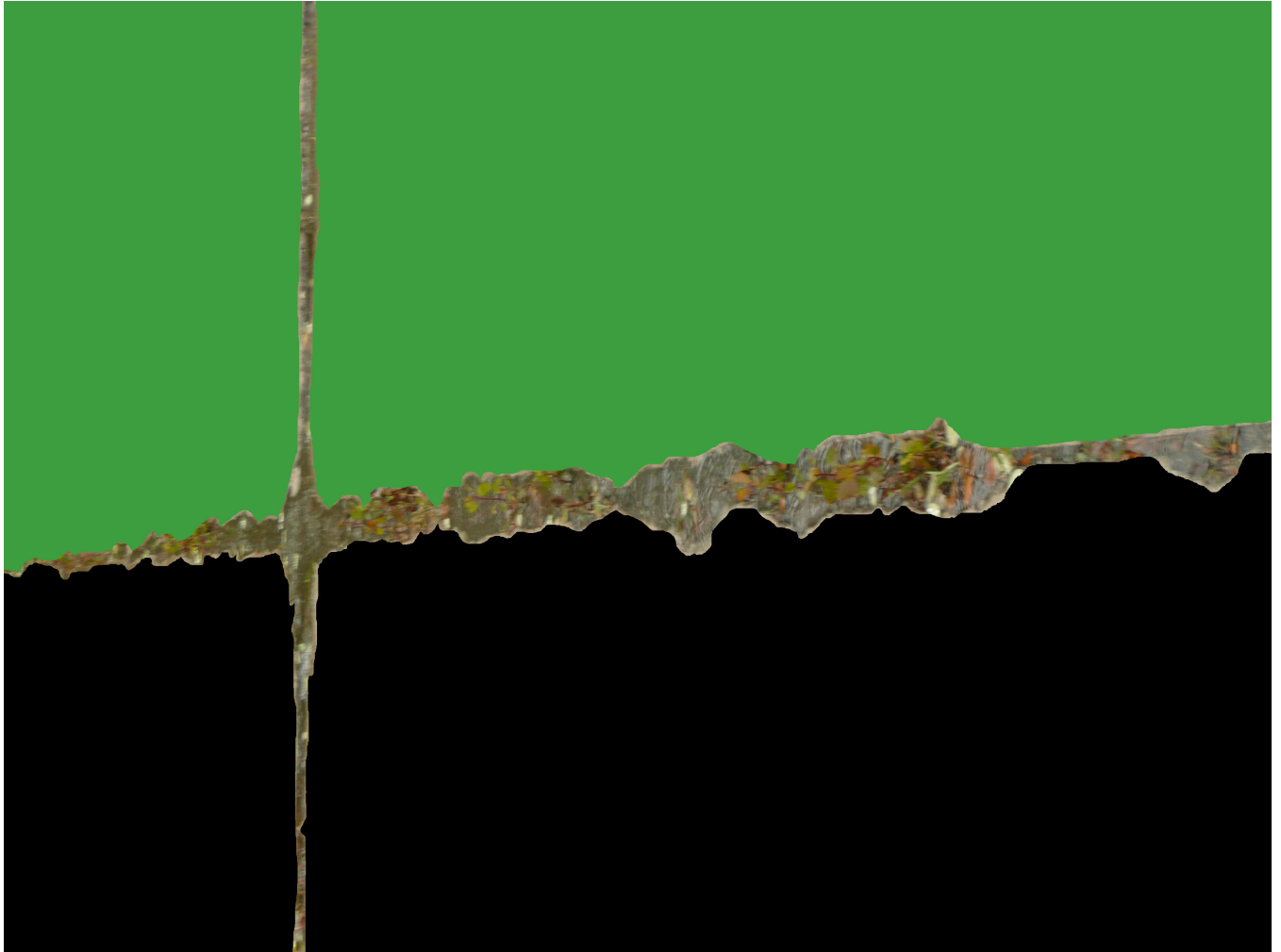


Crack Exploration

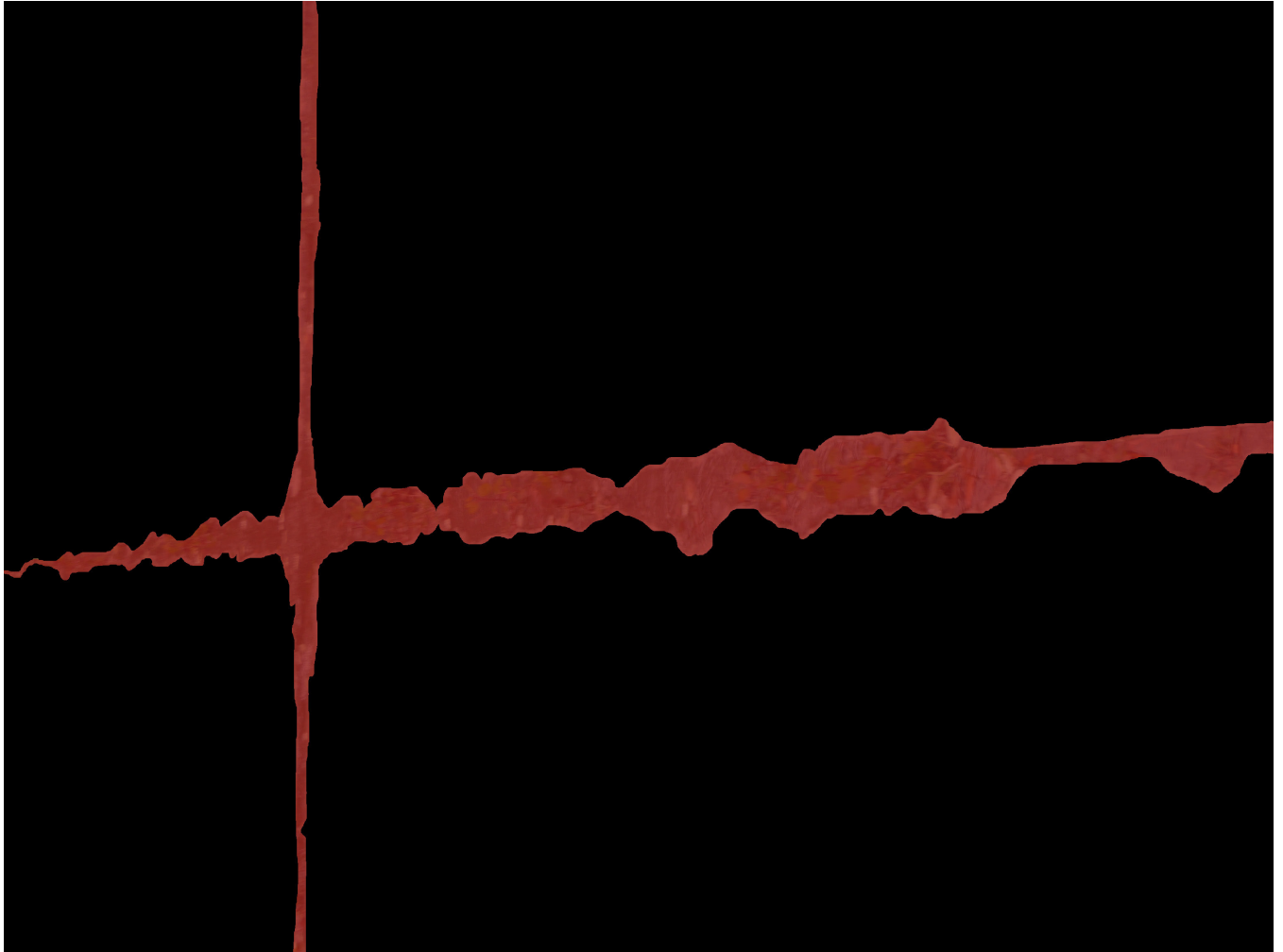
The second exploration shows how people attempt to prevent and contain cracks with the seams that are put in this street. And though these preventive measures are taken the edges of these seams become eroded and a sense of separation and division takes form.

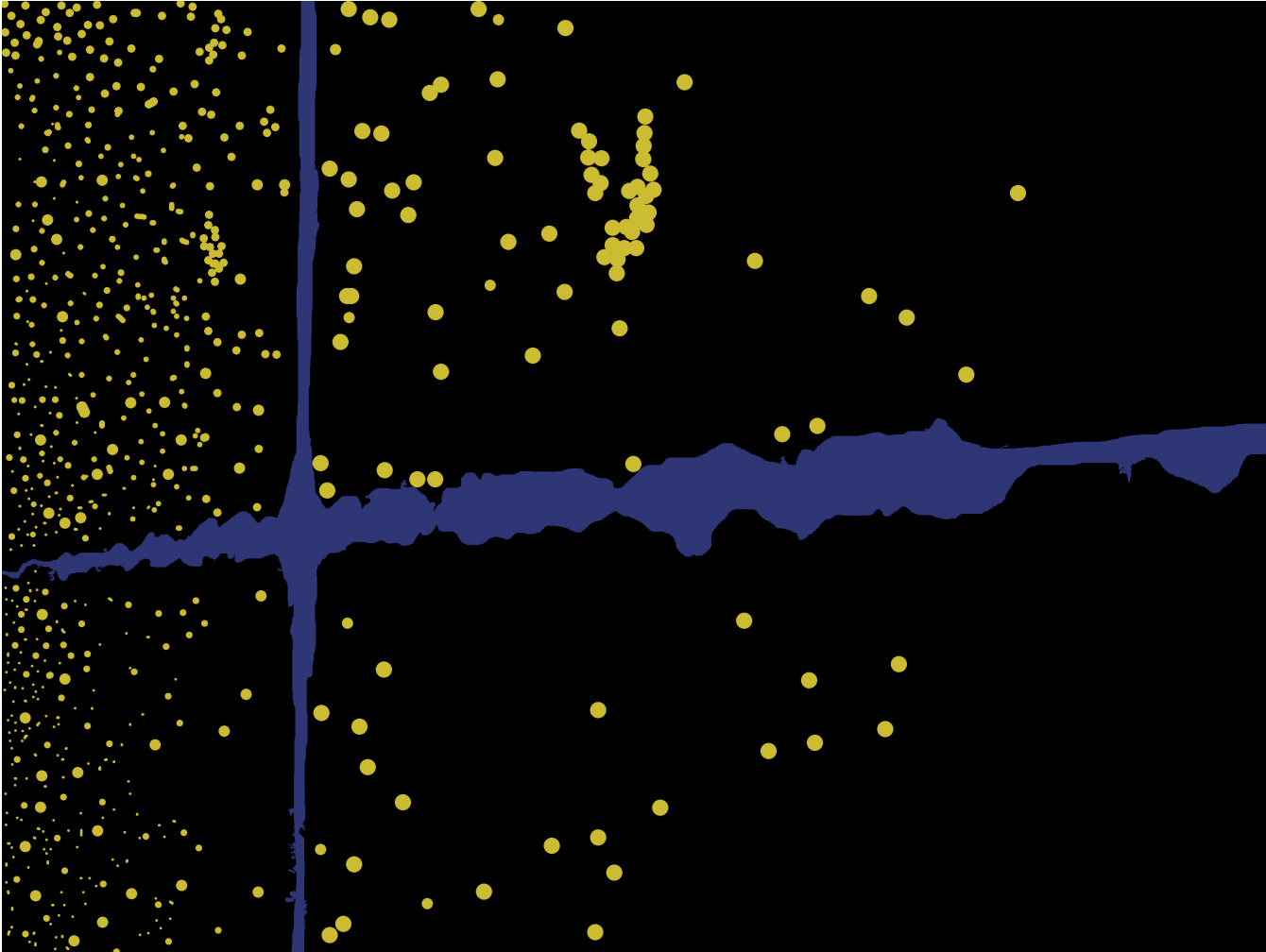










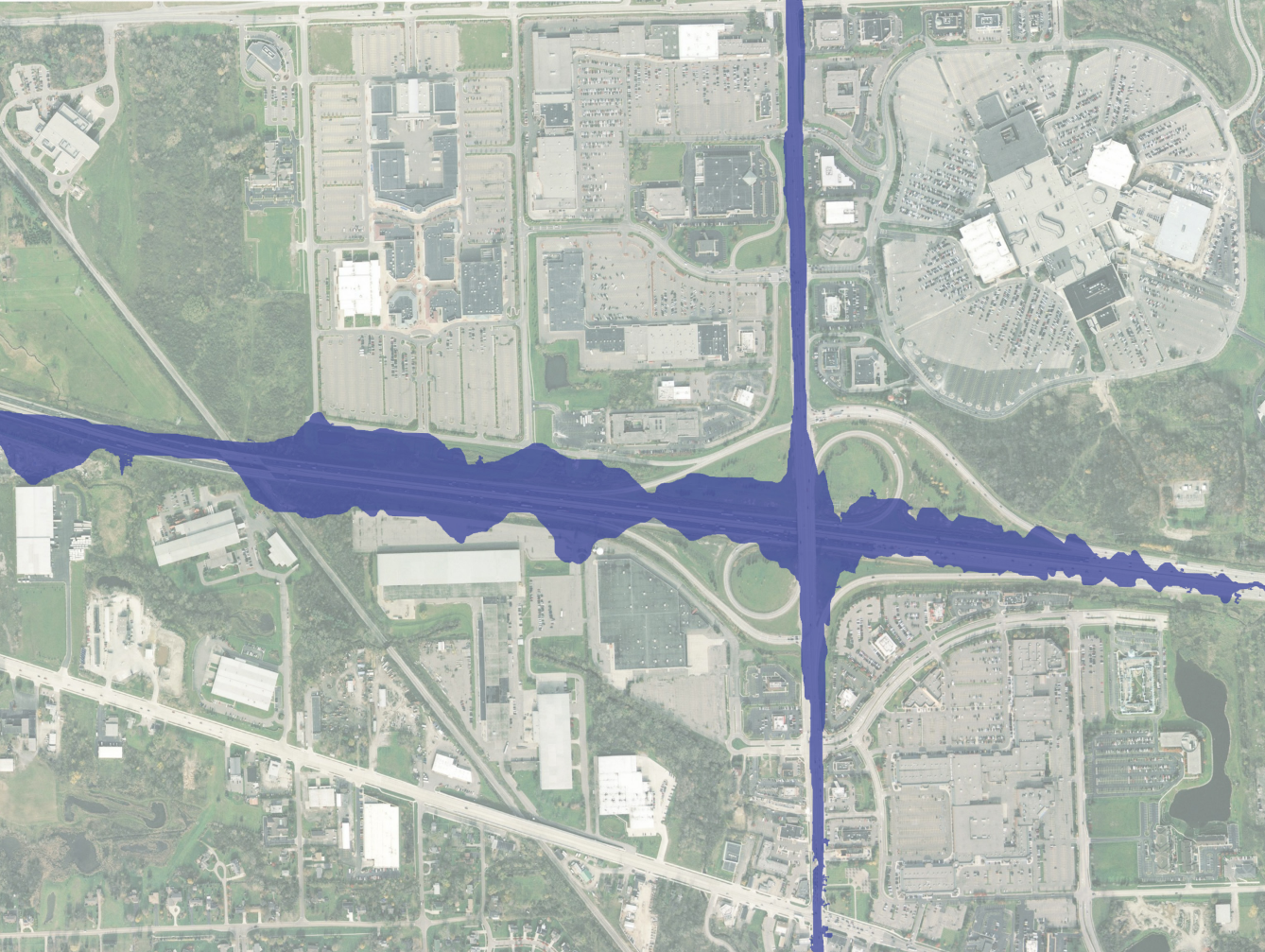


Crack Exploration

This sense of separation and division that takes form from this crack is very representative of how the city of Novi has separated the many elements of their city. The streets are separated just for vehicle access having limited functional sidewalks, the shopping centers focus away from the parking which seems to be an endless desert of pavement and the only natural landscape just being undeveloped lots that have become overgrown and ignored.



Exploration [B] the great divide



With this anti-pedestrian environment the roads act as cracks dividing and isolating Novi's elements.

Crack Exploration

The third exploration was inspired when a crack that led to an abandoned electronics store was discovered. Leading to asking, at what point, if left untreated, would nature take this site back over? At what point would the landscape expand itself to take over what has been left behind by people.

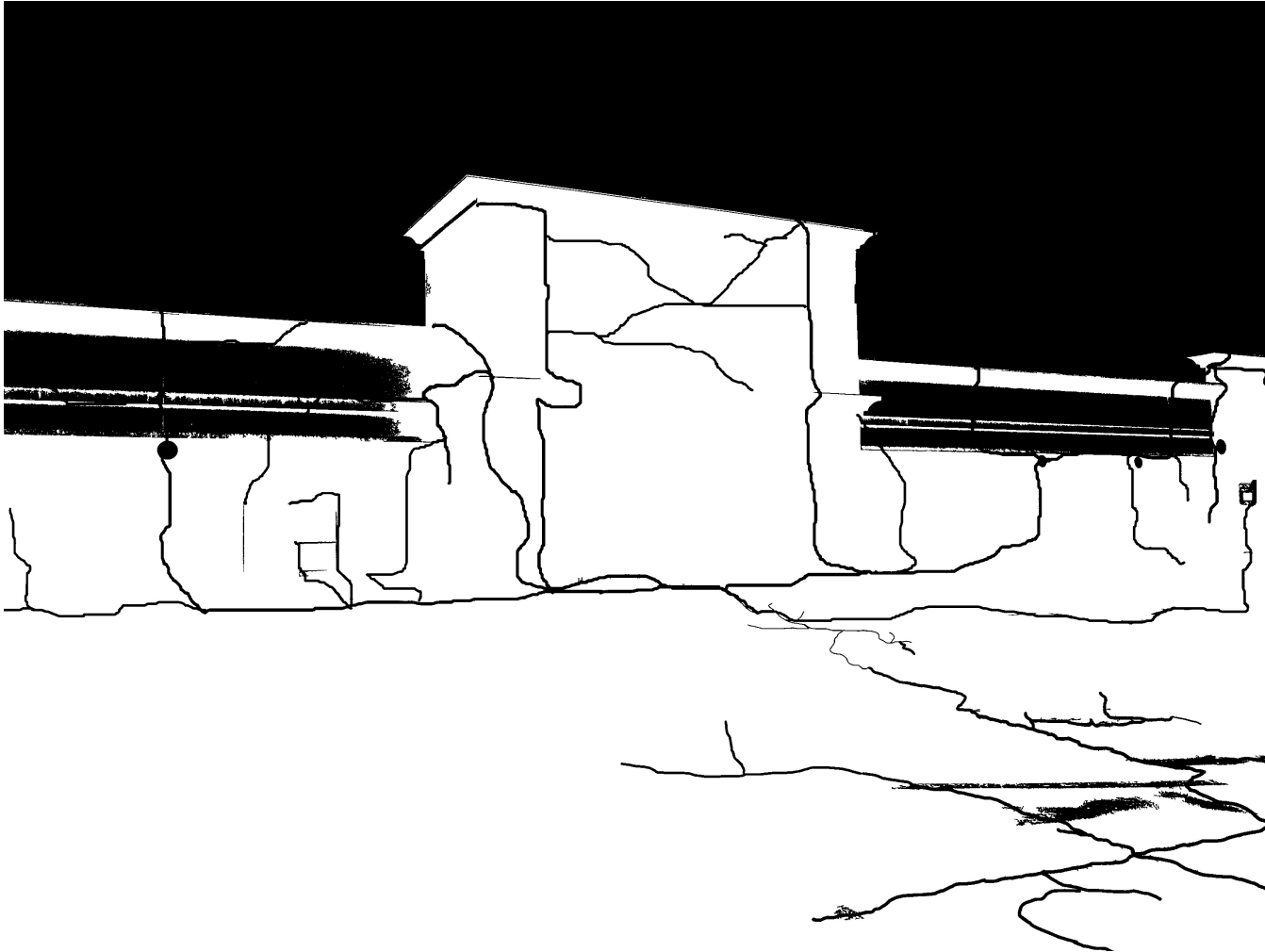


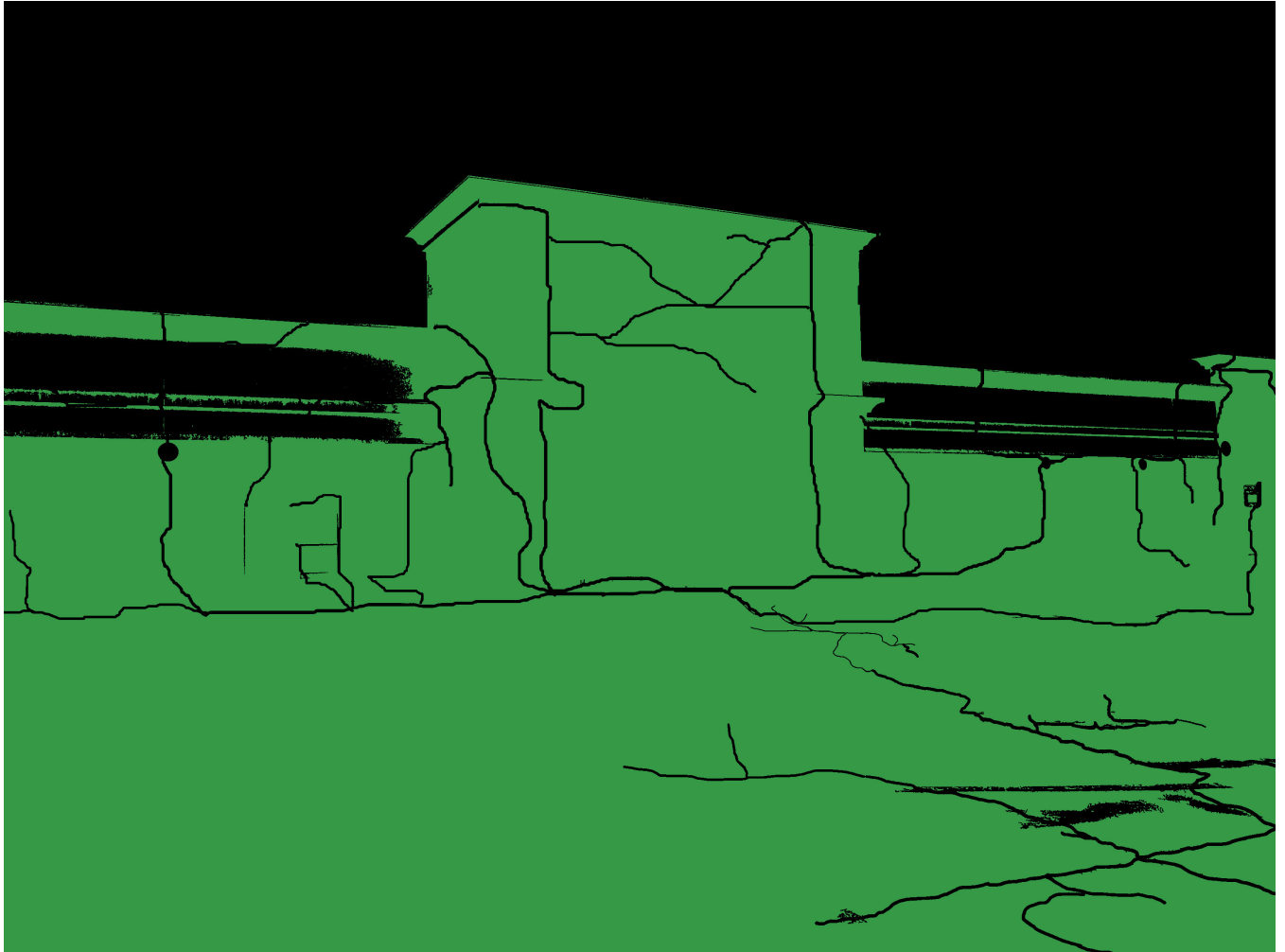
Exploration [C] return to nature



Crack Exploration







Exploration [C] return to nature



Crack Exploration



Exploration [C] return to nature



Crack Exploration

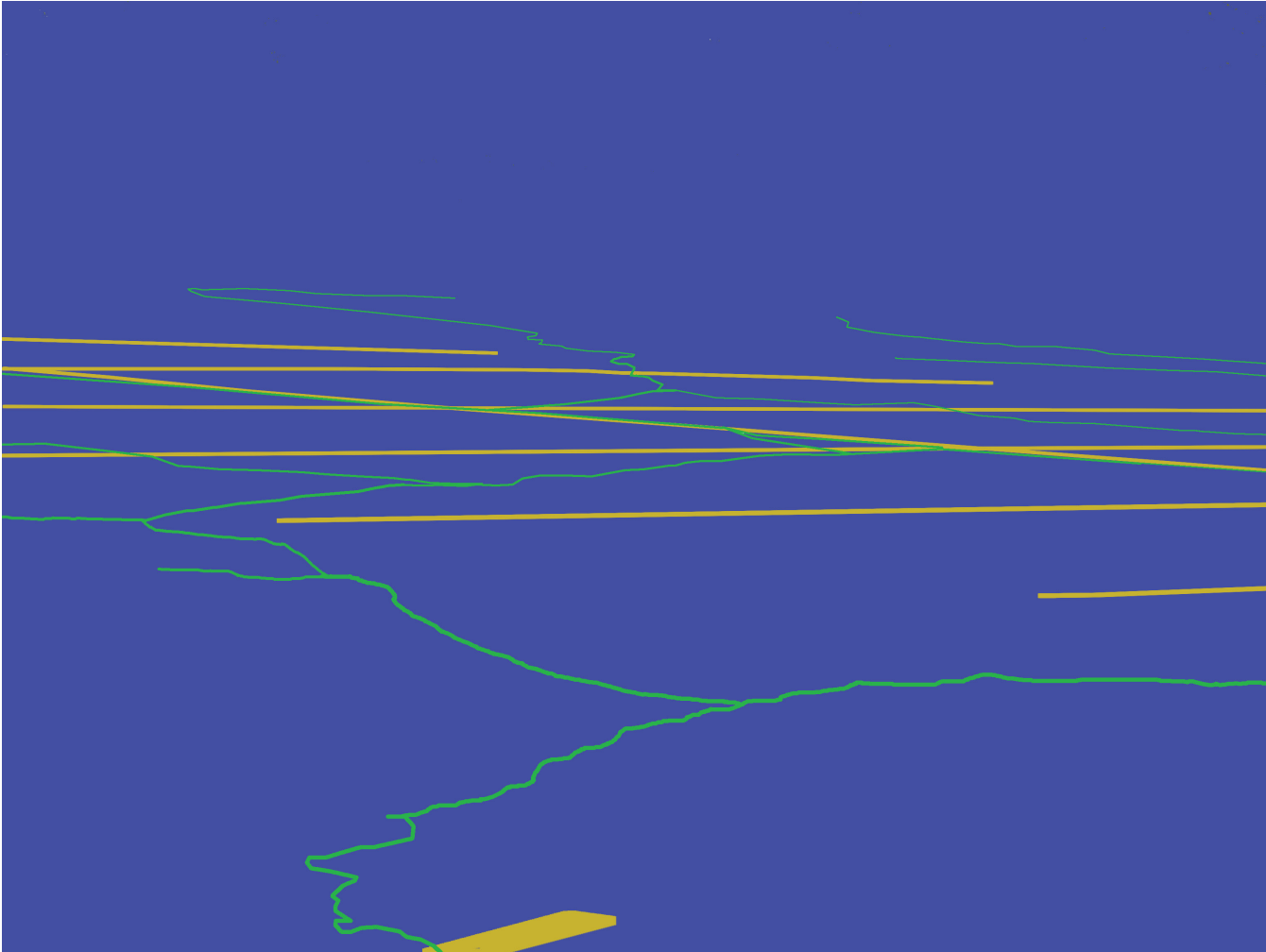
This fourth crack was discovered in the vacant back end of a parking lot. The crack was stretched over a large distance and crossed several yellow painted lines. And the question of what if these yellow painted lines grew organically like the crack and how could this organic expression influence the way spaces in empty parking lots were treated.





Crack Exploration





Crack Exploration



Exploration [D] abstract + extrude





Site Amenities



As potential sites in Novi were explored the discover of a space between one of Novi's newer shopping centers the Fountain Walk Center, a vacant lot, and the southern end of Lakeshore Park. The existing amenities that this area has are many restaurants and entertainment venues, a sporting goods store, and being across the street from the Lakeshore park system although there is no access. One element of the site that stood out is that the Fountain Walk center having been built in 2002 had already had a building demolished and has an empty lot sitting in the middle of the site. With this Fountain Walk shopping center being less than ten years old and already having to tear down apart of its design signaled that the program of the site, and maybe the city, is starting to faultier. These amenities and circumstances provides for a potential support system for a multi layer program to be added to this site which would allow it to be reconnected with the landscape.



Programed Site

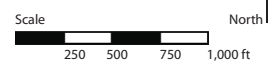
- Green Space
- Activity Space
- Market Space
- Replenishment Space
- Storm Water Treatment

Lakeshore Park

12 Mile Road

Novel Road

Rouge River



North

So with the idea of allowing a crack to penetrate the suburban fabric of Novi a program to reconnect the city can take form. This crack will grow freely in the undeveloped field, creep and crawl its way through the deserts of pavement in parking lots, start to reclaim vacant buildings, and then over time taking over the entire city reconnecting it to the landscape. This crack can take the potential programs of Lakeshore Park, a rain water treatment system and use them to reconnect Novi. With this crack would come a program that will challenge the current conditions of the City of Novi, with spaces that provide for a natural green zone, activity space, market area, replenishment zones, and a natural water treatment system. This architectural exploration will strive to allow the City of Novi to become reconnected with the landscape.

Conceptual Program

Create a natural area



Storm water Management and treatment



Permeable paths



Public lawns



Green Zones

The green zones will allow this natural landscape to develop with permeable path, public lawns, and walking and riding paths. Also a storm water management system where runoff water from streets, parking lots, and roof tops can be collected and ran through streams with natural vegetation to filter out toxins allowing the water to be reused in landscape watering, toilet flushing and as a natural element in the rest of the development.



Conceptual Program

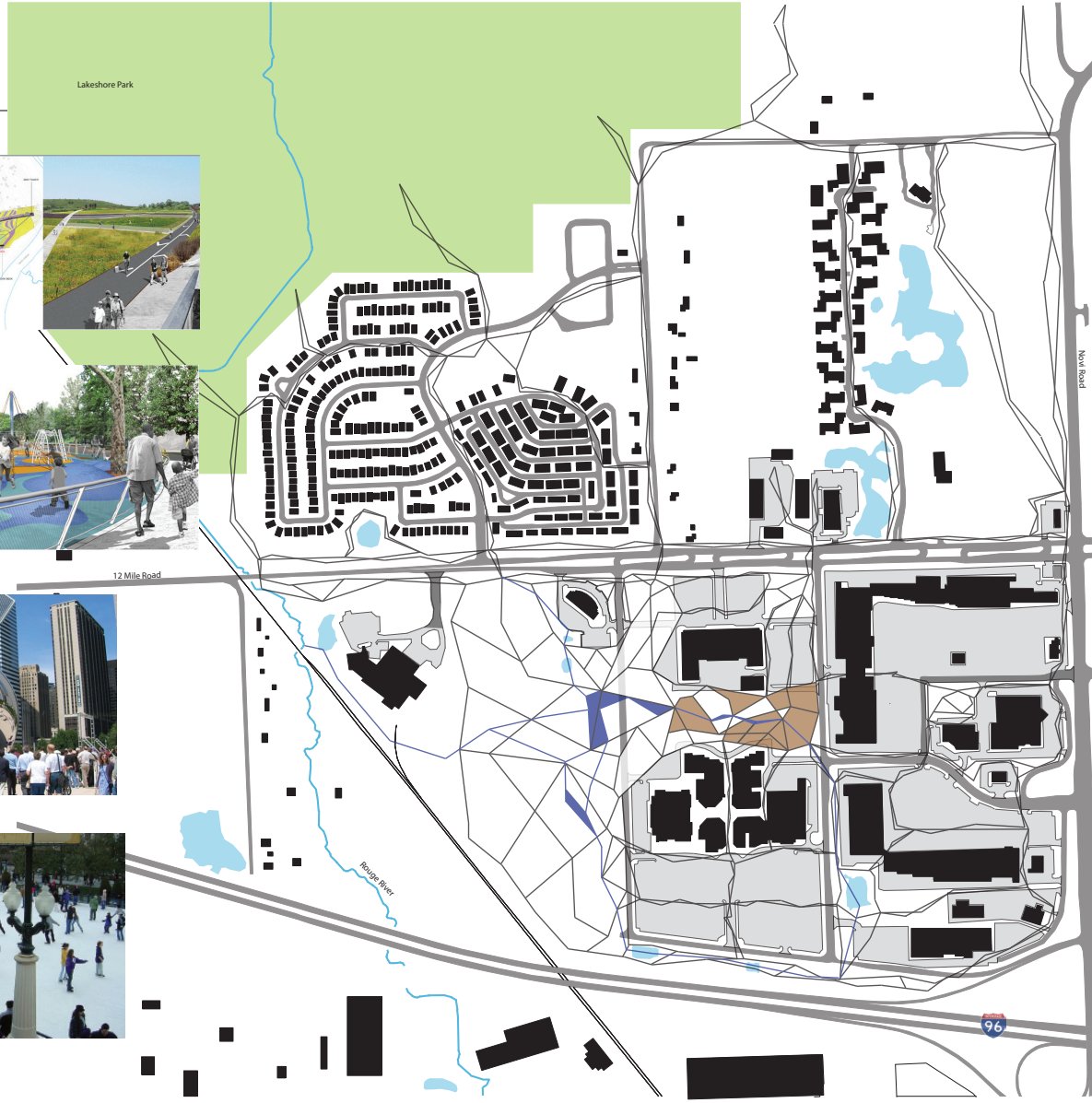
Merge the boundaries of mall and nature



Interactive landscape and art



Public interaction space



Activity Space

The activity space will help to merge the boundaries of the shopping center and green space with public space that encourages interaction with landscape as well as other people.



Conceptual Program

Market center
focused on non-
commercialized
shopping



Established structures
to house support
retail and services

Temporary market
space for localized
goods



Market Area

The Market space will provide for infrastructure support, and provide space for local markets and other events to form within the space, but not be dependant on these temporary events.



Conceptual Program

Dining areas that connects people to the outdoors

Utilize local produce

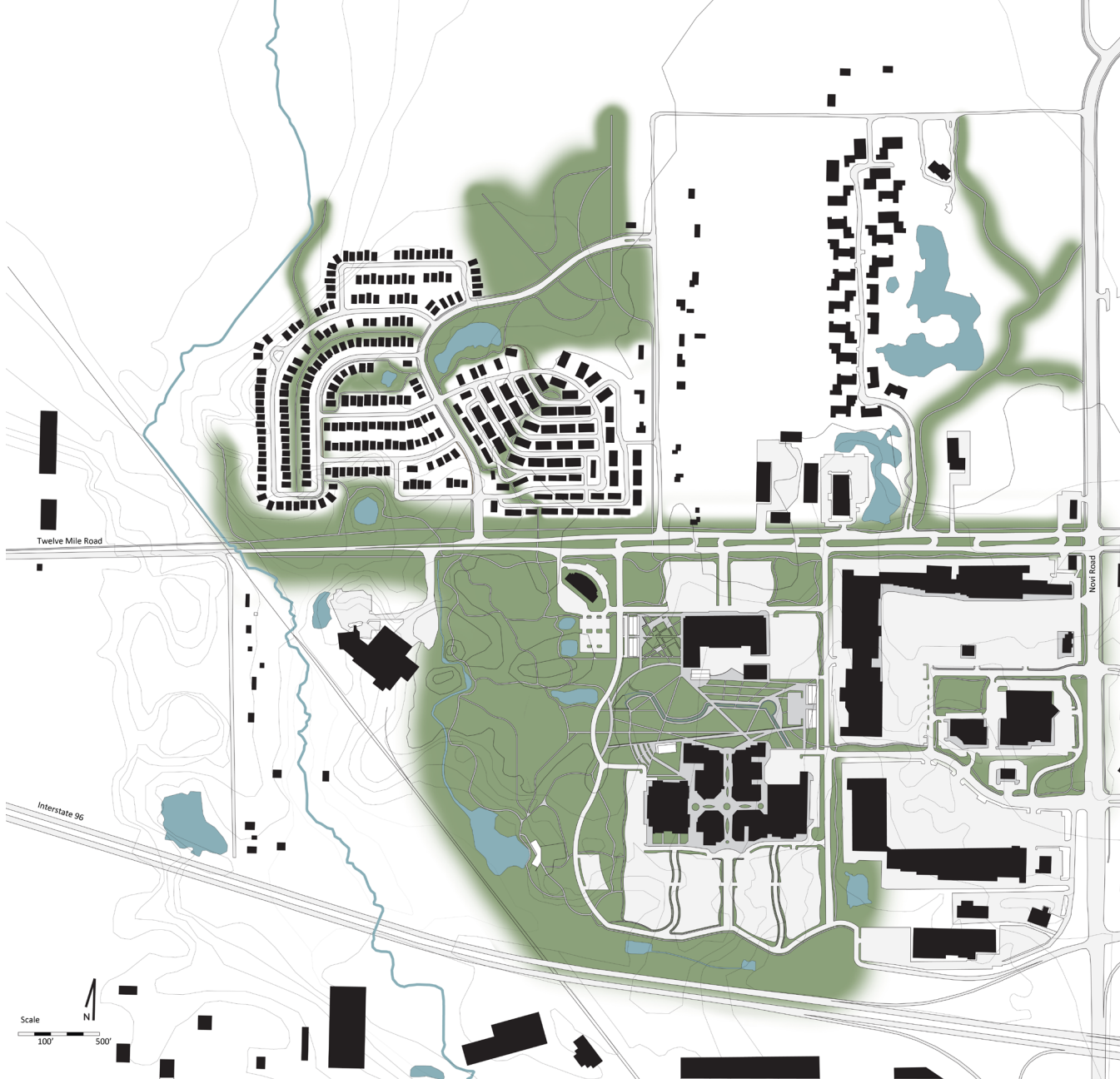


Replenishment Space

The replenishment zone will provide an eating and drinking area that will use local produce and provide connections to the outdoors.

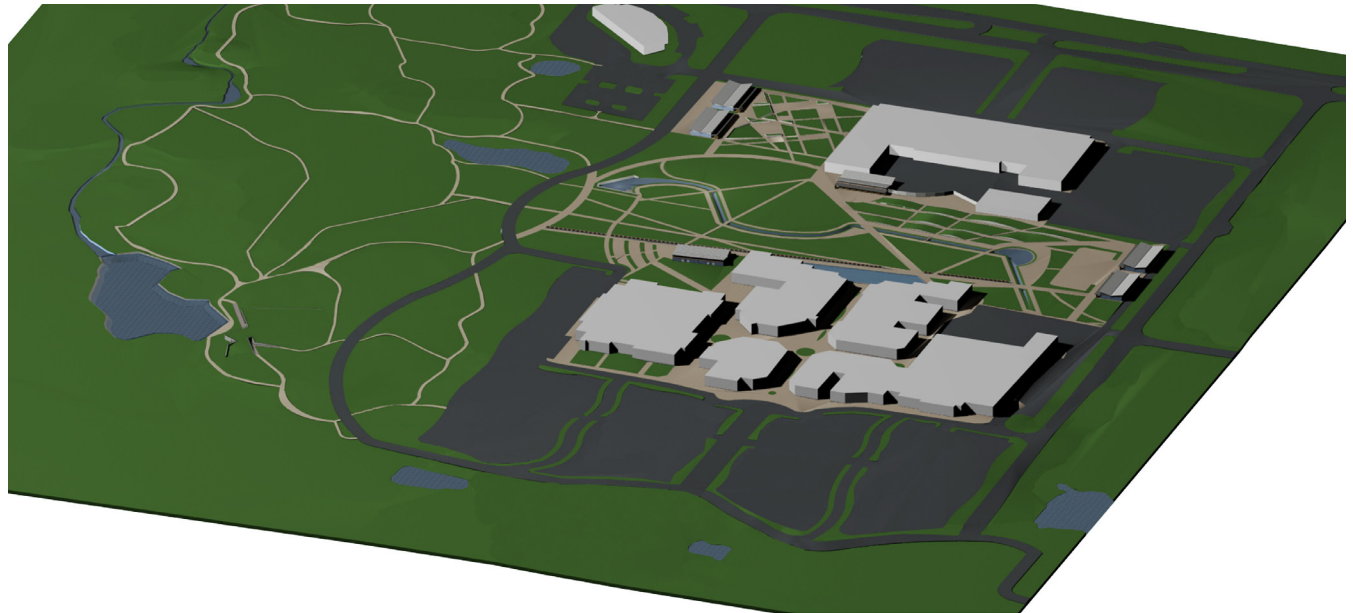


Using the pervious conceptual thoughts to create a final proposal would begin with addition of extensive pedestrian transportation paths that would allow for walkers or bikers to navigate the city that is very disconnected. The path system creates new dynamic spaces throughout the area as it provides a gateway for Lakeshore Park to enter the entertainment district of Novi and allows people to access the city without an automobile.



Final Proposal Site Plan

The intervention of the Fountain Walk site starts with dissolving the boundaries of the shopping center with the landscape. Taking the once straight road and winding it through the landscape, redefining the outline of the parking lots, and allowing the green space to takeover empty parking lot space as well as the site of the demolished building. Elements of activity, market, and replenishment are blended together with the landscape to create a new dynamic in the shopping center.

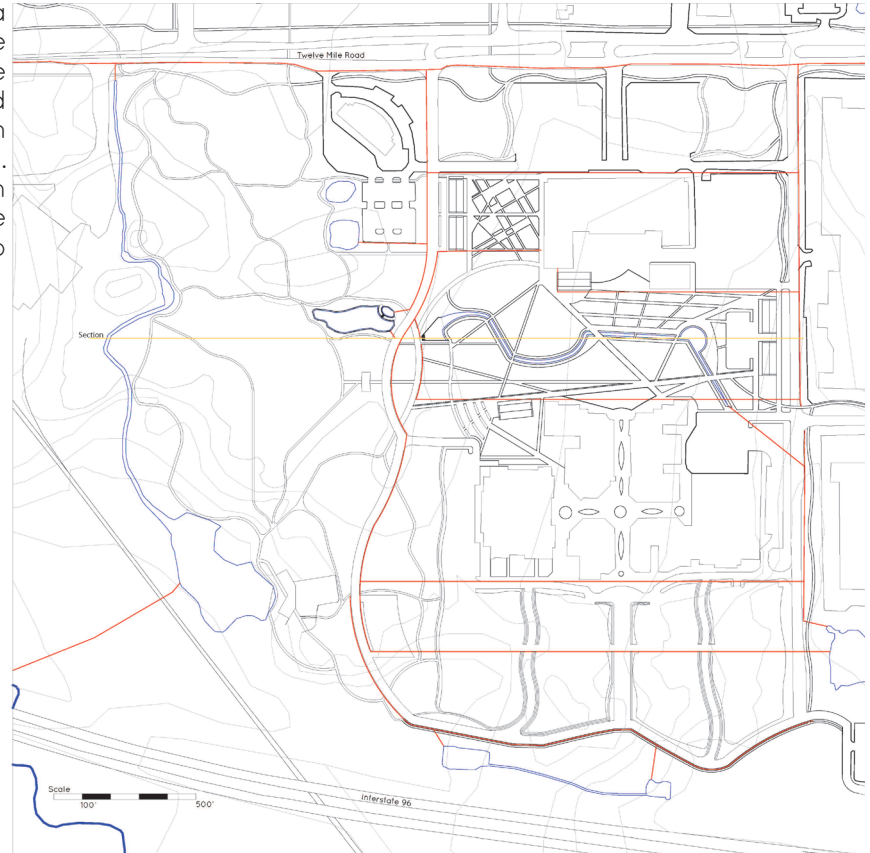


SITE AERIAL

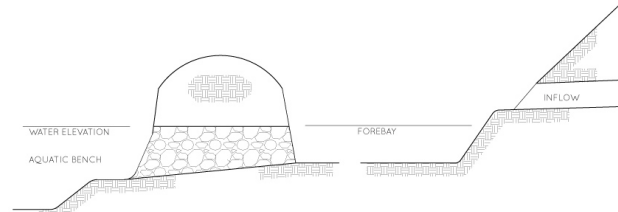
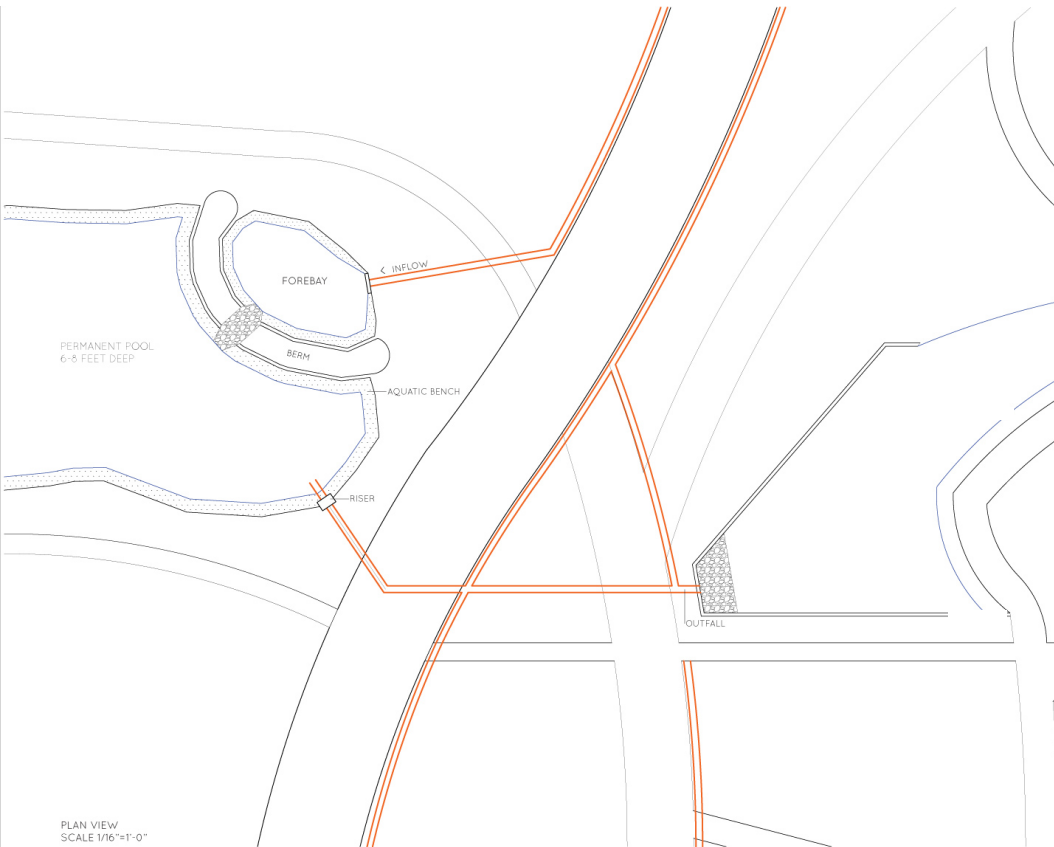


Natural Water Treatment Plan

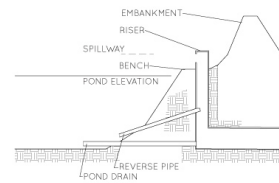
The natural water treatment system is brought in with the addition of a more efficient rain water drainage system throughout the site, the addition of retention ponds, and natural filtration streams lined with local vegetation to remove toxins. Allowing the water to be reused in site vegetation watering, decorative fountains, or allowing the water to be returned to the earth.



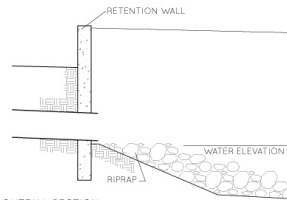
Final Proposal



INFLOW SECTION
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



RISER SECTION
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"

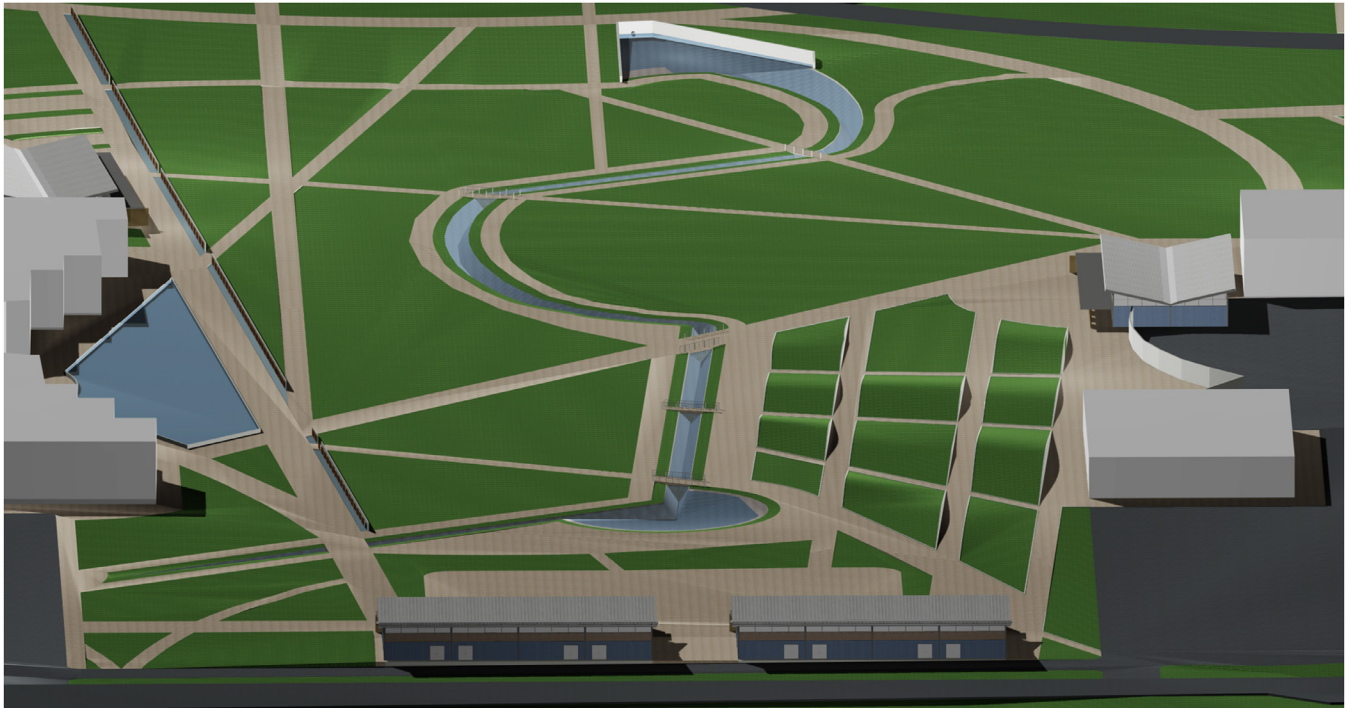


OUTFALL SECTION
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



Activity Space

Spaces within the shopping center allow for a diverse number of activities to take place both on paved surfaces and grass covered surfaces; open spaces for festivals and markets, and areas themed like the rolling hills area that encourages people to interact with each other and the landscape. The space would also be open and operationally in winter seasons providing spaces for an ice skating rink, dog sled races, and snowman or snow fort building competitions.



EASTERN AERIAL



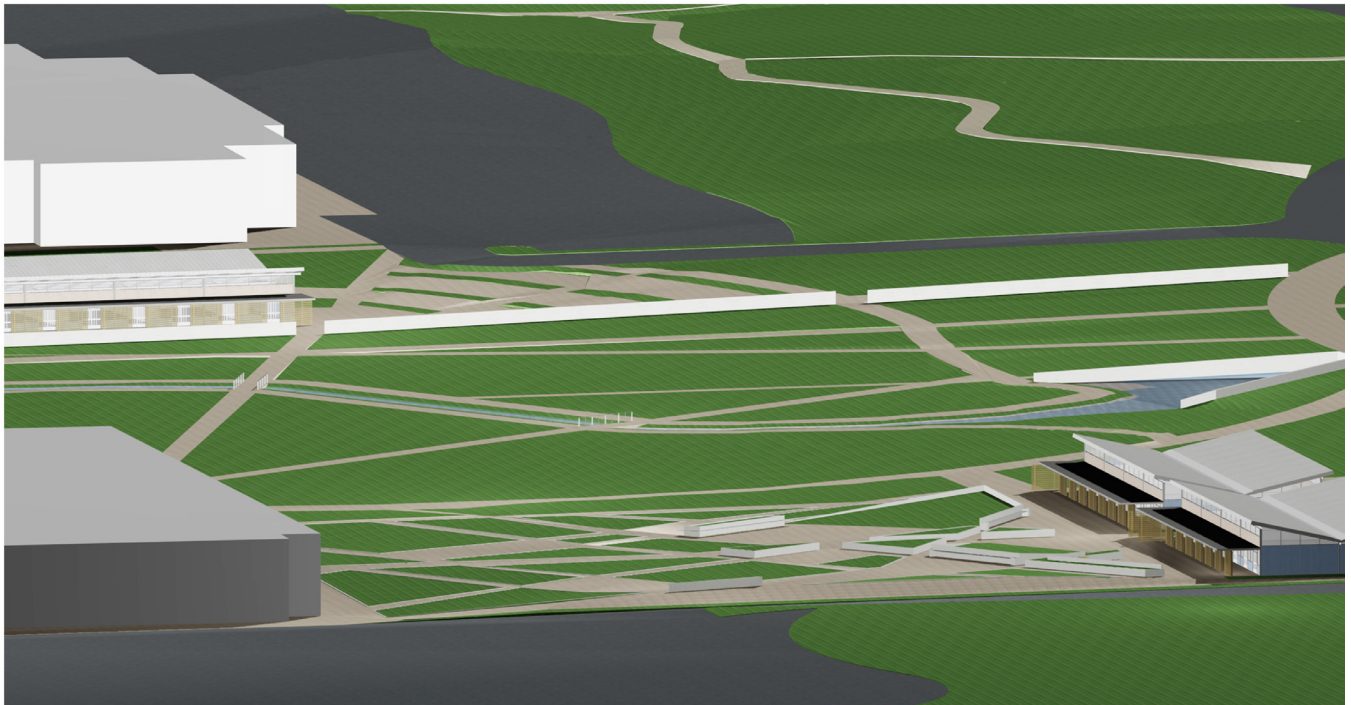
Activity Space



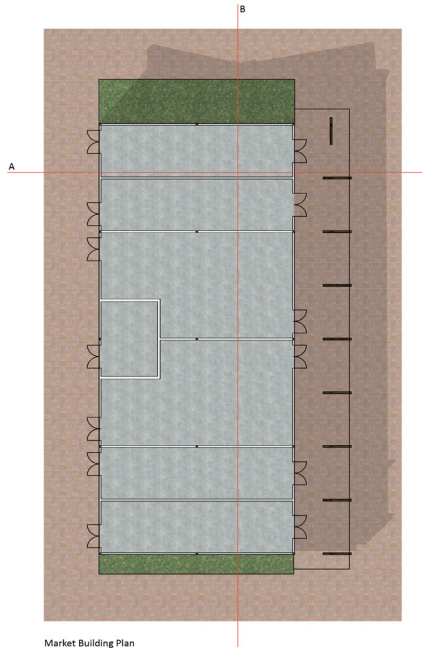


Market Area

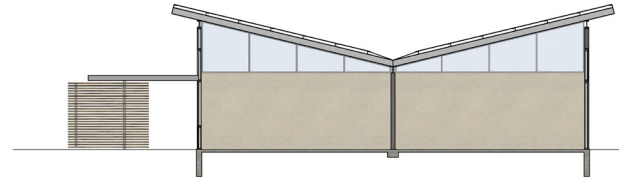
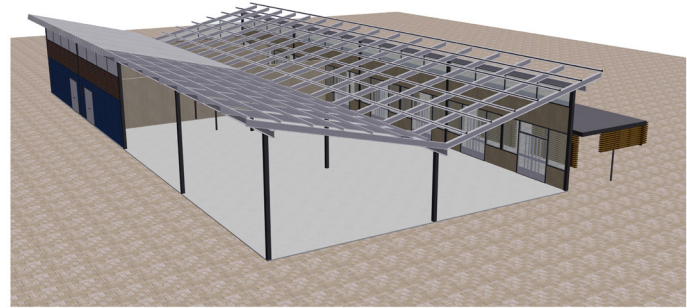
The Fountain Walk Shopping Center is built to house large national chain stores, so the addition of smaller scale retail buildings will foster a new sense of the local community. This new building would be similar incorporated six times on the site. The building is steel framed and has a butterfly roof used to collect rain water to be used in the natural water filtration system. The local businesses and restaurants will be able to find a home in the shopping center and help to supplement the existing large commercial retailers and also provide support for the sites new infrastructure, incorporating things like a bike rental and repair shop.



NORTHEAST AERIAL



Market Building Plan



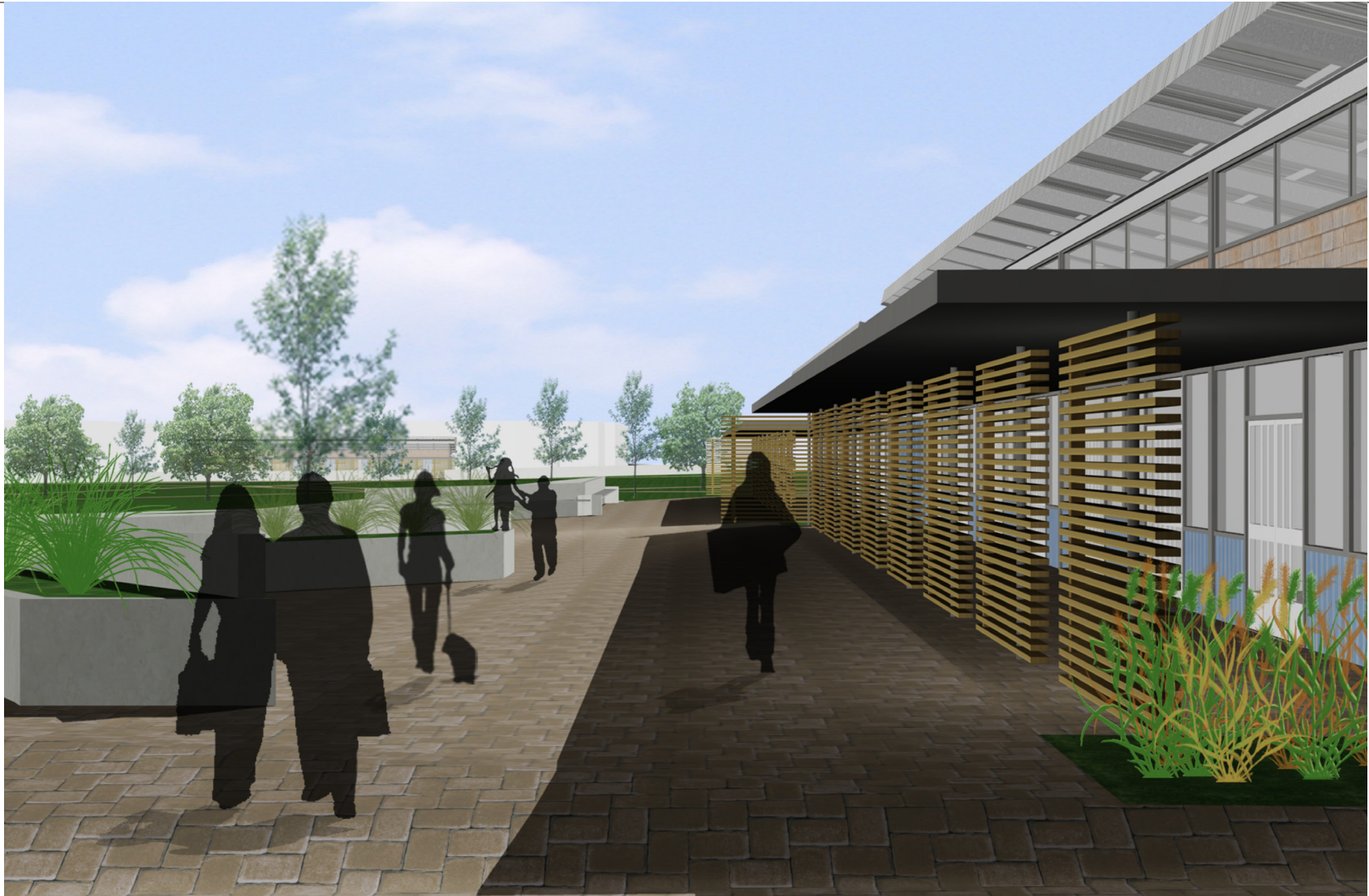
Market Building Section A



Market Building Section B

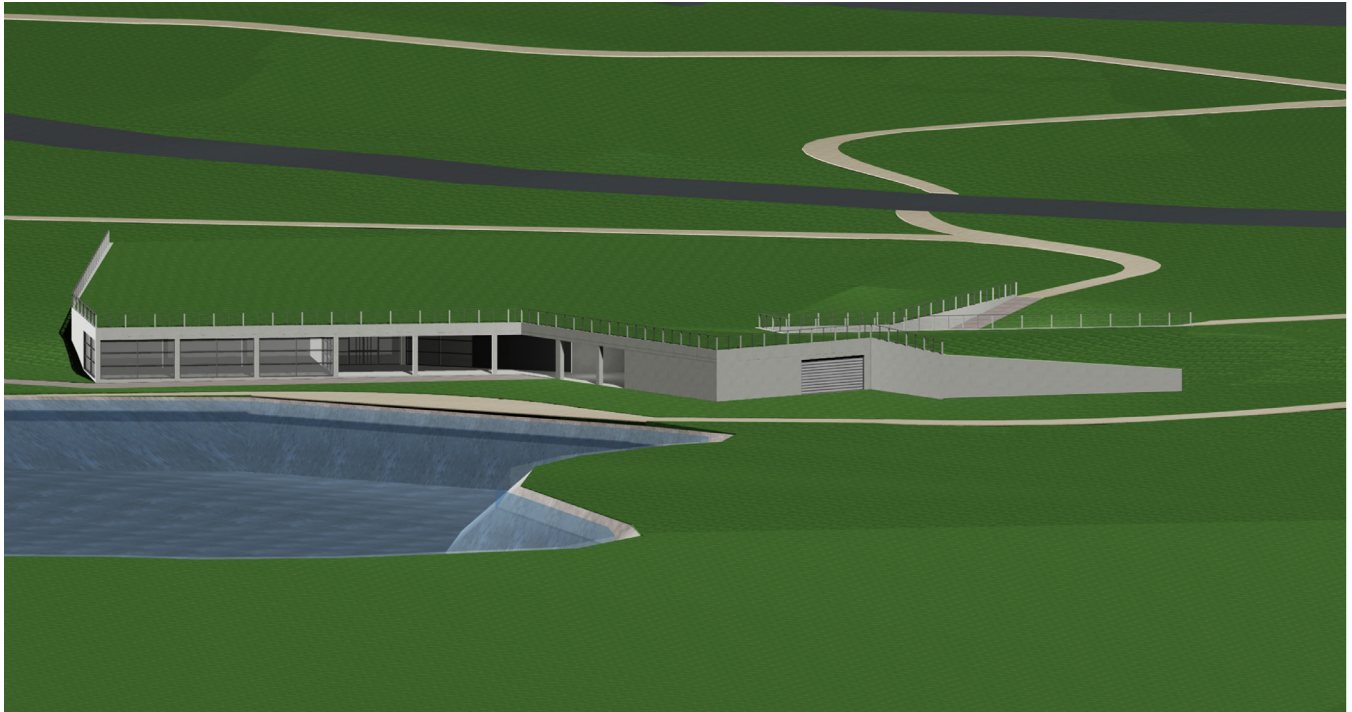
Market Area



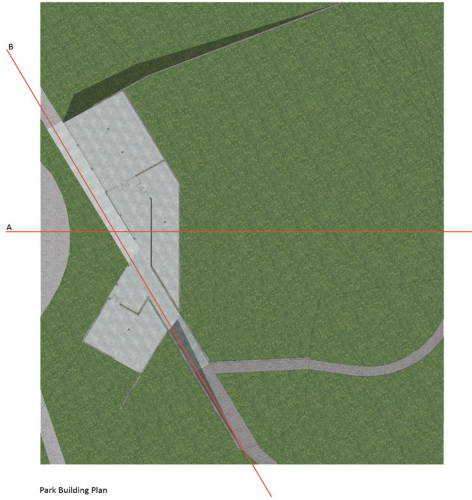


Park Area

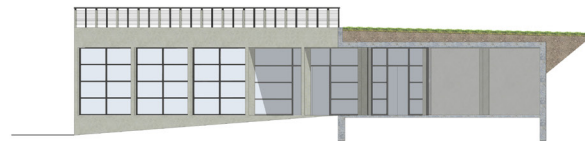
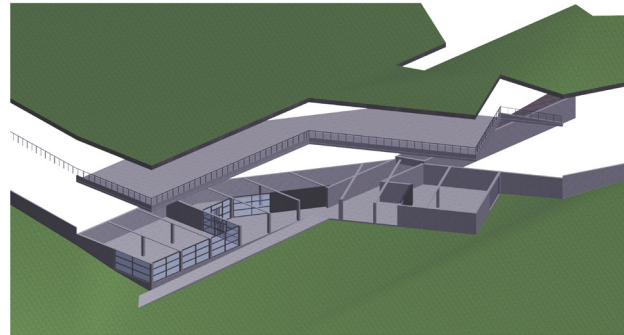
The vacant lot adjacent to the existing Fountain Walk Site will be converted into a park land that flows into the shopping center and creates a place for people to connect to the landscape. Through its open lawns, wooded areas, and its vast permeable paths that will accommodate walkers, hikers, bikers, and cross country skiers, it will expand up to the Lakeshore Park paths acting as a gateway to and from the shopping district. Within the park is a building built into the earth with a walkable green roof that overlooks a retention pond. This structure is made of precast concrete and would house a maintenance shed for park maintenance, a café, and a bike/ski rental/repair shop. A feature of this structure is that it has a path that will cut through the building allowing walkers and bikers to either pass freely through or provide them a place to stop and rest or receive repairs.



PARK BUILDING AERIAL



Park Building Plan

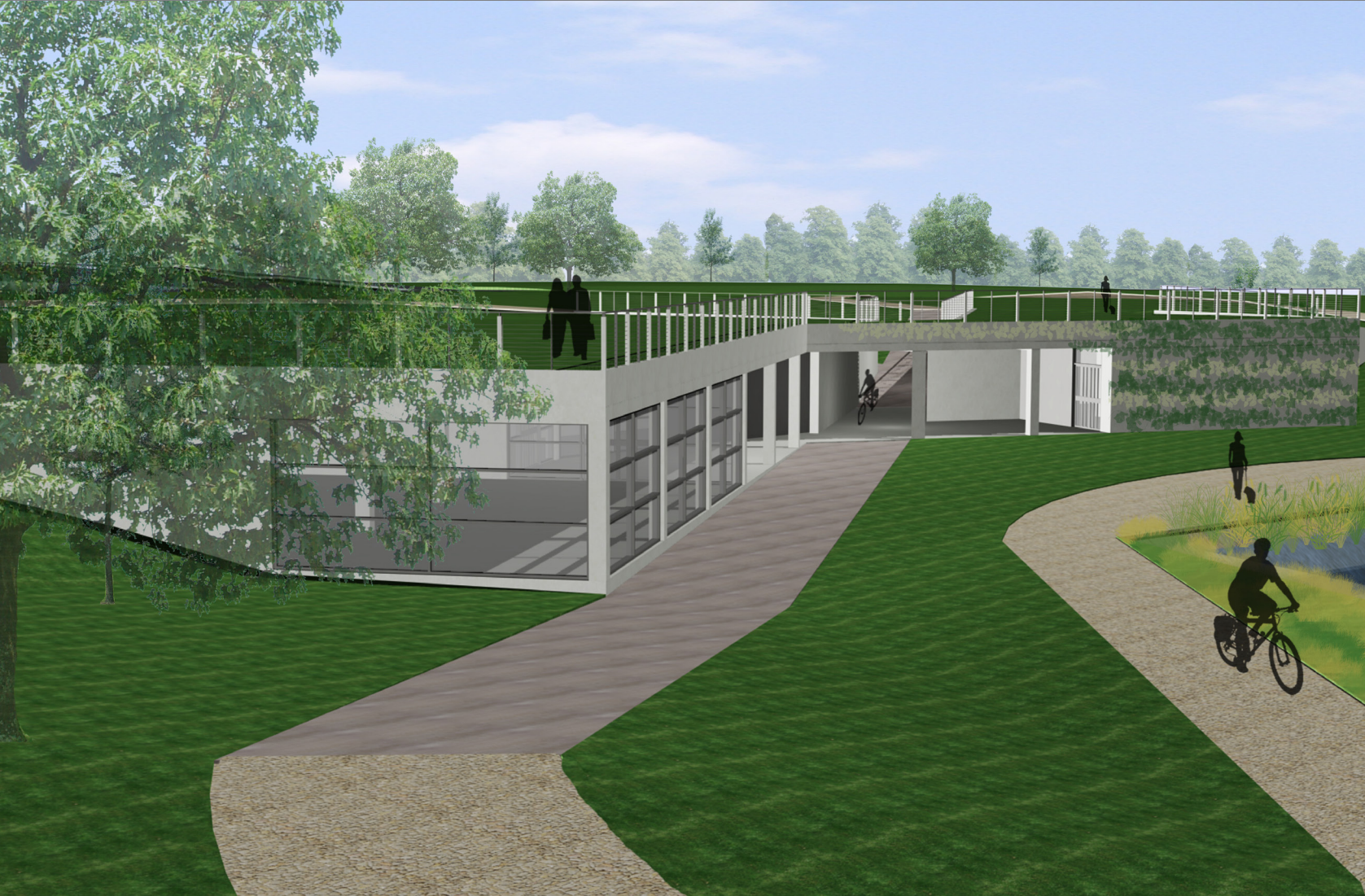


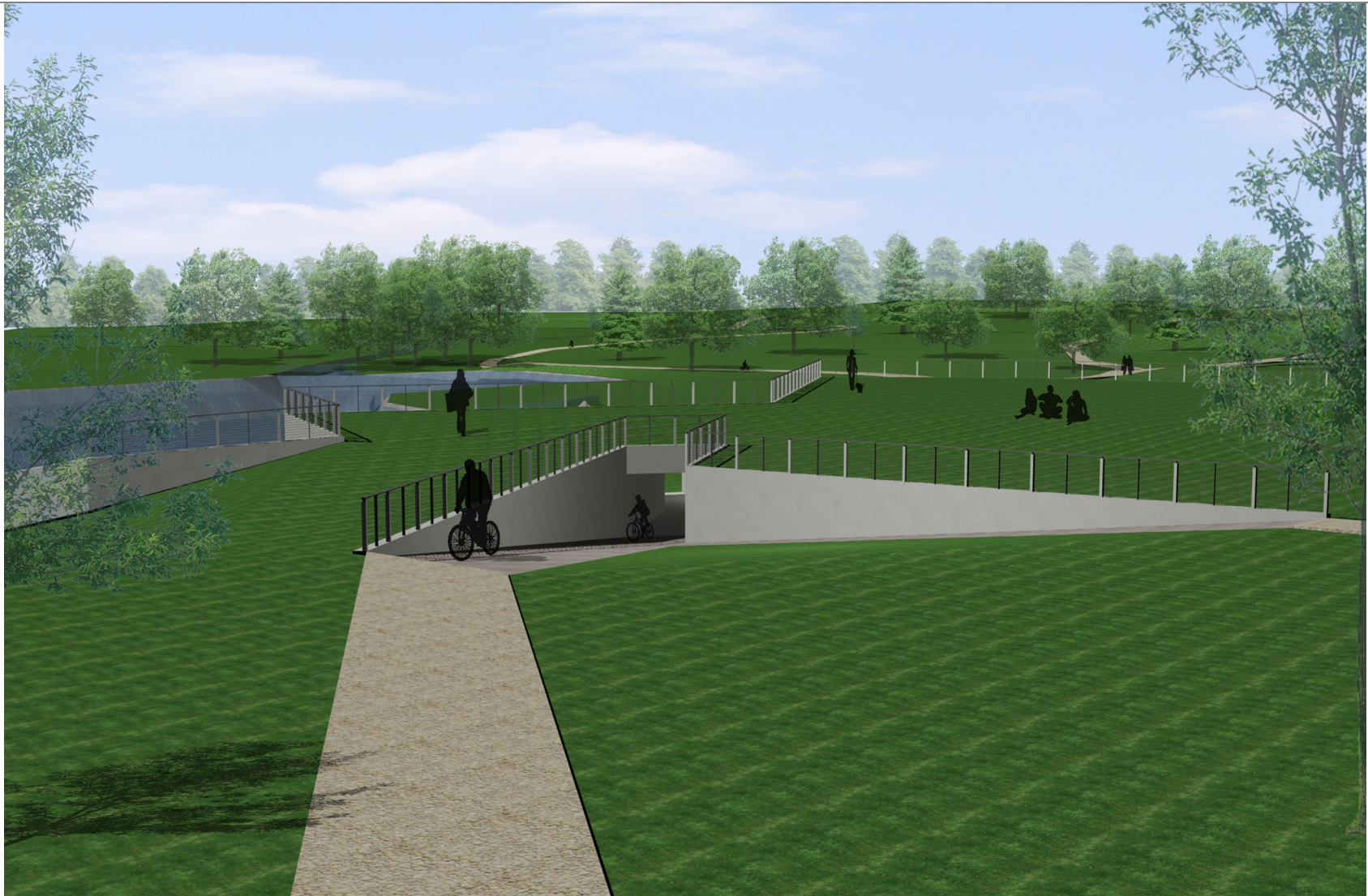
Park Building Section A



Park Building Section B

Park Area





Final Thoughts

This project was initially conceived with the mindset of finding a way for people to better connect to the natural landscape, as the trends in today's society of new technologies and land development have created this withdrawal from the natural world. The site selection of Novi just seemed to make sense to me as it has always been a city that I quite frankly cannot stand. After selecting Novi the project seemed to take on a life of its own with a number of different elements seeming to just fall into place. The challenge of the suburban environment and land development became major issues in my project and I feel that they are uncommon but valid issues to bring up in an architectural thesis project, as many of the other projects this year focused on the urban environment. My project brought to light issues outside of the city of Detroit which are affecting our area. The scope of the project could have developed a little more as many critics wanted to see existing buildings on the site dissected. Though I agree it would have added an element to the project the thing I would have liked to spend more time on is the development of the park space, especially getting more into the water treatment and reuse system. The development of the retention ponds and rainwater collection system is something I was only able to grasp a basic knowledge of and is something that would have benefited me more than dissecting buildings, which is something that has been explored in several other projects throughout my time at UDM. This project is one that I truly enjoyed and began to develop a new way for people to see new suburban environments and ways to fix existing suburban areas.



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