

# North Dakota State University

## Graduate School

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**Title**

THE KENOSHA AUTOMOTIVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK: AN  
ETHNOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT FOR PARK DESIGN

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**By**

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**MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

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THE KENOSHA AUTOMOTIVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC  
ASSESSMENT FOR PARK DESIGN

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood is a multimillion-dollar development located on a site with significant historical background. What once housed a hub of the automotive industry is now intended to be a neighborhood geared toward tech startups, technology institutes and multifamily housing. While this will benefit the economy of Kenosha, the history of the site is at risk of being lost to time. Focusing on the people that once occupied the site, one can see how important these automotive plants were to not only the employees that worked there but the city of Kenosha itself. Through ethnographic assessments and historical research, the site now aims to represent the long-standing history by incorporating historically appropriate materials, themed areas within the park, informative signs and a cultural trail that will connect the new neighborhood to the existing surrounding ones.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to express my thanks to my thesis advisor, Dominic Fischer. Thank you for pushing me to be better and reminding all your students the work we do matters.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis disquisition is dedicated to my father, Joe Trifone. He taught me what it is to be passionate, ambitious, and driven. Without him I would have never discovered the love for landscape architecture I have. Thank you, dad, I love you.

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1. Problem Statement**

Designers today focus on the cutting edge and modern sensibilities today's society is used to. They forget or ignore the past that has brought us to where we are today. This is a recurring problem that is seen all too often.

Along Lake Michigan in Southeast Wisconsin is a city named Kenosha. Kenosha has a longstanding history with the automotive industry, particularly a 100-acre site that has been stripped of its historic buildings and seemingly forgotten about. Left abandoned for decades, the city and its people forgot about it. Around 2020 the city suddenly took interest in the property and decided to put it to use. After a series of city meetings and design revisions, the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood was decided to be the next use for the 100-acre site. The proposed neighborhood would hold a technology school, start-up pods, a range of housing options, and offices and labs. Not one mention of the 100-year history the site has with the automotive industry and how it helped shape Kenosha into what it is today. I am proposing through ethnographic assessment and historical research the history of the site can be implemented through park design.

## **1.2. Objective**

The objective of this historical analysis is to research, collect data and prove the automotive history of Kenosha, Wisconsin is worth incorporating into new plans for the 100-acre site stated in the problem statement.

## **1.3. History of Kenosha Development**

Before Kenosha was known as Kenosha, it was known as Kenoza amongst the Potawatomi tribe. Kenoza means "place of the Pike", referring to the fish found in the area.

According to Kenosha.com, “In 1836, after more settlers arrived and the first post office was established, it was renamed to Pike Creek.” From there it went through a few more name changes before finally receiving its final name of Kenosha. For a long time, Kenosha was known for its manufacturing. From the automotive industry to the brass industry, even the manufacturing of bedding. With its close proximity to Lake Michigan, Milwaukee, and Chicago, Kenosha was an ideal place to manufacture goods. Though many of the early companies that occupied space within Kenosha have moved or closed, some remain such as Jockey and Snap-on. As the years went by some major companies moved in and helped diversify the job opportunities Kenosha had to offer. Companies like Amazon, Ocean Spray and Uline have offered jobs to Kenosha residents and reinvigorated the economy.

As things changed in Kenosha, a few historical places remained and can still be found today. Kenosha holds the “United States' oldest operating **velodrome** (bicycle racing track), the oldest continuously operating **lunch car diner** in the U.S., and the 1920 **ballpark** where the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League team Kenosha Comets played.” (Kenosha.com) As Kenosha has grown it has kept hold of its rich history and continued to bring attention to all it has to offer.

## 2. GEOGRAPHIC HISTORY

### 2.1. Sanborn Maps

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are an archive of historical maps dating back to the 1800's. These maps provided information that helped create a timeline for the progression of Kenosha's automotive industry. The first map with information pertaining to the site dates to 1900. At this point in time the land was being used for a bicycle factory that went by the name "American Bicycle Co."

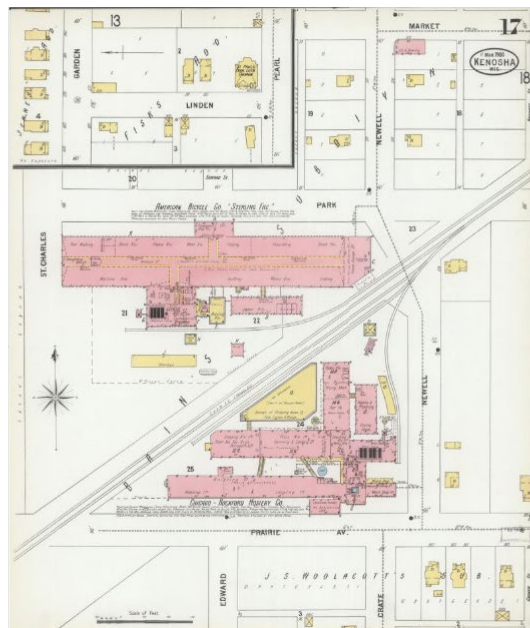


Figure 1: Sanborn Map I

Above is quadrant 17 of the Sanborn map for the year 1900. Notice the long linear building labeled "American Bicycle Co."

The next map available was for the year 1905 which shows the first automotive plant located on the site, Thomas B. Jeffery Co. This was the start of a long history between Kenosha and the automotive industry. From there the next available map is 1911 and the Thomas B. Jeffery Co. still has ownership. You can see in the 1911 maps that the plant has grown

substantially and has started to shape the South end of the site.

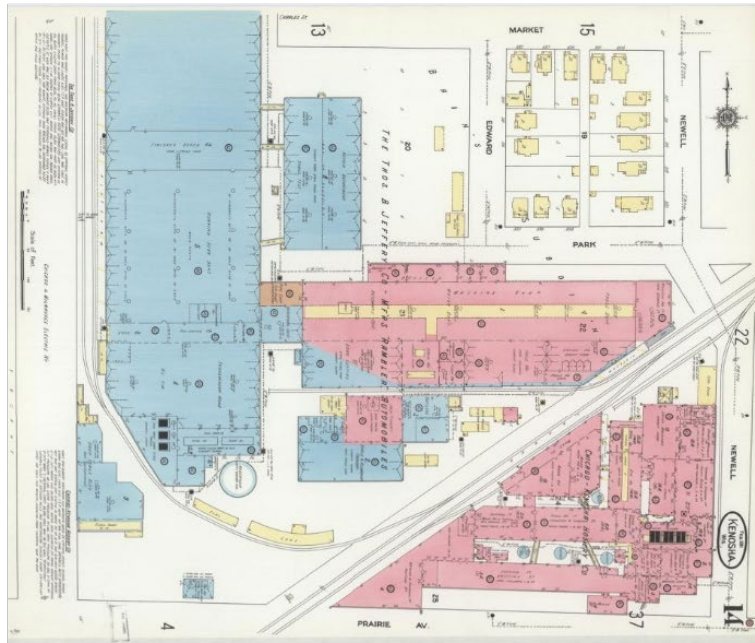


Figure 2: Sanborn Map II  
Quadrant 14 of the Sanborn map for the year 1911. The South end of the site has grown substantially and started to grow North.

From there we jump to 1918 where there is new ownership. Nash Motors now owns the site and has continued to expand North toward 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. After a merger with Kelvinator the site falls under the ownership of Nash-Kelvinator Corporation, which you can see in the 1949 maps. Between 1918 and 1949 the site showed its largest growth, creating the site boundary seen today.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1. Historical Analysis

##### 3.1.1. Thomas B. Jeffery Co.

The first automobile company to take up residence on the 100-acre site was Thomas B. Jeffery Co. “Jeffery immigrated to the United States when he was 18 and settled in Chicago.” (Tate) Long before he was known for his contributions to the automobile industry, Jeffery was a staple in the bicycle industry, known for creating the clincher tire. He sold his bicycle company and moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin to start building automobiles with his son Charles. Thomas was known for his one-cylinder Rambler automobile which was the “world’s second mass-produced car, one year after the Olds and a year ahead of Ford.” (Tate) Thomas B. Jeffery Co. went on to create two- and four-cylinder models and became well known in the early 1900s.

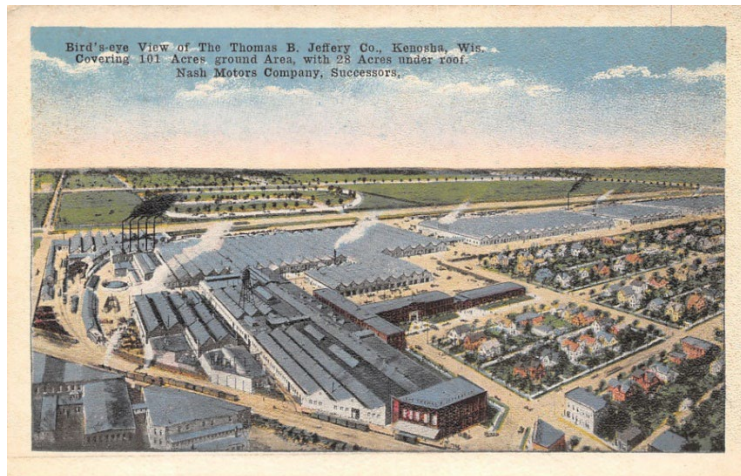


Figure 3: Thomas B. Jeffery Co. Aerial View supplied by Motor Cities

Thomas Jeffery passed away from a stroke in 1910, leaving his son Charles the family company. Seven years later in 1917 Charles W. Nash purchased the company and renamed it Nash Motors.

### 3.1.2. Nash Motors Co.

The second automobile company to grow on the 100-acre site was Nash Motors, eventually Nash-Kelvinator Corporation. Charles W. Nash was president of General Motors and resigned to start his own automobile company. He bought the Thomas B. Jeffery Company, and its plant in Kenosha, WI., to begin production of his Nash cars. Much like the Thomas B. Jeffery Company, Nash Motors had their own innovations like the heating and cooling system, compact cars, and seat belts. Charles focused on making affordable cars for the middle class that looked luxurious for a low price. Nash Motors sold a variety of vehicles ranging from large high-quality to compact to eventually releasing luxury models called “Ambassador”.



Figure 4: Nash Motors Plant Aerial View 1930-1954  
Found in the collection “Kenosha’s Lost Industries” in UW-Madison’s online library.





Figure 5: Nash Motors Employees

Pictured in Figure 5 are several Nash Motors employees assembling a shipping crate around an already built Nash Rambler.

Nash would eventually merge with Kelvinator to become Nash-Kelvinator Corporation. Nash remained the automotive division of the company while Kelvinator remained focused on appliances. Five years after this merger Nash-Kelvinator stopped making automobiles to focus on contributing to the war efforts by making aircraft engines and helicopters.

Charles W. Nash would merge Nash Motors with the Hudson Motor Car Company to become American Motors Company.

### 3.1.3. American Motors Company

American Motors Company would be the last automobile company to truly contribute to Kenosha's economy. In 1954 Nash-Kelvinator combined with Hudson Car Company and became American Motors Company (AMC).

### 3.1.4. Chrysler

Chrysler bought AMC in 1987 and shortly thereafter closed the Kenosha plant after promising to keep the plant open for at least five more years. The plant was officially closed in December of 1988 causing over 6,000 employees to lose their jobs. Lawmakers were obviously outraged by Chrysler going back on a promise that Chrysler claims was never made. According to the Chicago Tribune, "Kenosha was sacrificed to keep the Jefferson plant and its 4,300 workers employed." (O'Connor, Mateja) The Jefferson plant is located in Detroit, Michigan.



Figure 6: Chrysler Plant (2002)

Above is what was left of the Chrysler plant in 2002, according to Google Earth.

## **3.2. Ethnographic Assessment**

### **3.2.1. Interviews**

The Kenosha History Center participated in an oral history project called “Kenosha Voices”. This oral history project interviewed four previous employees of American Motors (AMC) that worked there in the 70’s and 80’s. The employees speak about the culture at the plant, the hiring process, UAW local 72 and even where they would grab beers during lunch.

#### ***3.2.1.1. John Drew***

John Drew was hired at American Motors on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1974, to work the assembly lines. There was a high turnover rate that kept AMC constantly hiring and willing to hire just about anyone. It was a fast-paced environment that gave employees three days to learn a job in sweltering factories that had no A/C.

John was deeply involved in the culture of the plant and was part of the group of workers that wrote “Fighting Times”, articles covering sexual harassment, difficulty with jobs, safety concerns, and racial discrimination. These articles led him and others to be sued by six supervisors for slander and intentional infliction of emotional distress. John walked away after a two-week jury trial with no damages and went back to work. Being so involved with the culture of the plant, John also decided to join UAW Local 72, a local union specifically for auto workers. Local 72 was the first local to negotiate a Martin Luther King holiday in the auto industry, before it was a national holiday. The union believed it was an important step in the right direction as 15-20% of the employees were African American. John recalls a friendly atmosphere amongst employees and a sense of pride in the work they were doing.

Shortly after Chrysler bought AMC, 5,500 people lost their jobs due to the plant closing. Roughly 1,000 people transferred to other plants across the U.S. to keep working at Chrysler

while most were left jobless. The ones that moved to the engine plant across town experienced a plethora of injuries due to repetitive motion and even respiratory disease. The union forced Chrysler to improve their working conditions at the engine plant after employees started showing symptoms of respiratory problems. Employees that stayed noticed a difference in working for Chrysler instead of AMC and could feel how the culture amongst employees had changed.

John had retired before Chrysler bought AMC but was a union official during the change of ownership. Mr. Drew was an activist for the auto industry before the term was mainstream. He spoke up for hundreds and changed the lives of the employees working in the automotive industry during the 1970's and 1980's.

#### ***3.2.1.2. Jan Michalski***

Jan Michalski's family had immigrated to the United States from Poland during WWII. During this time there was a large influx of people immigrating to Kenosha in particular. He was a second-generation employee at American Motors, hired in 1975 because his dad had already worked there. Jan started off on the assembly line like most people and did not enjoy it.

He ended up being laid off but was hired back in 1977 through an apprenticeship program. He was a machinist apprentice making \$9.00/hour which was considered good money at the time. The increased pay and good benefits increased the pay and benefits for surrounding companies in Kenosha. The machinist apprenticeship was state sponsored, and AMC was required to supply certain training as well as payment during class hours. Jan already had a degree in history from UW-Madison but enjoyed the challenge of being a machinist. He worked third shift for 20+ years, enjoying the quiet hours and challenging work.

When Chrysler bought AMC, the culture began to change. Jan recalls during lunch hours employees would run across the street to grab a beer and cash their checks, but when Chrysler

took over that changed. Drinking was not permitted whatsoever and there were now harsh consequences if you disobeyed this rule. Although this new rule ruffled feathers, Jan admits the plants were safer than when AMC was in charge.

Jan was one of the few that were moved to the engine plant during the closing of the assembly line plant. He retired in 2005 or 2006 with a pension and a year later the engine plant closed. When asked how he felt hearing the plant closed he said, “Terrible. Broke my heart”. These emotions were a recurring theme across all employees when the assembly plant closed and again when the engine plant closed.

### ***3.2.1.3. Marv Owens***

The third interviewee is Marv Owens, who was born and raised in Kenosha and remained in town until 2017. Marv was a third-generation employee at American Motors, starting there on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1972, just days after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Marv started out in the trim department installing front passenger seats. As far as training went, there wasn't actual training, you just had three days to learn the job with occasional help from other employees. A lot of people were being hired around the time Marv was but there was also a high employee turnover. The work was strenuous and fast paced, especially for a first full-time job right out of high school.

His starting wage was \$4.50/hour, and the benefit package was one of the best in the area. His typical day at the plant meant getting to work half an hour early and waiting for the shift before his to leave so he could get a parking spot. Once he acquired a parking spot, he clocked in and waited for the whistle to blow, signaling the assembly line would start moving. About halfway between the start of the shift and lunch, someone would relieve him for a fifteen-minute break. He would receive another fifteen-minute break halfway between lunch and then the end of

his shift. This was standard for all AMC employees. During lunchtime most employees ran across 52<sup>nd</sup> Street to go to Freddie's for go-go dancers and beer or cash their checks on Thursday nights.

After 60 days working in the same position, you were eligible to upgrade to a different position. The machining departments were preferred because there was a lot of overtime available, and it was slow paced. There was a chain of command for solving problems starting with the supervisor. If the supervisor couldn't solve the problem, it went to the chief steward with the union and general foreman with AMC. If it still couldn't be solved it was reduced to writing as a general grievance, then eventually went up the ladder to the superintendent.

Marv was in department 816 at the main plant then transferred to department 2862 at the main plant as a spray booth cleaner eventually becoming a rough sprayer until 1977. In 1977 he was elected as assistant chief steward for local 72 at 23 years old. He was in charge of keeping the peace between employees and resolving issues.

Marv reflected on both the lakefront plant and the main plant and the differences between them. Both plants had a body shop to make the shell of the car, a paint shop, and a trim shop. Only the main plant had a final assembly plant so all cars from the lakefront plant had to be loaded and moved across town to the main plant. The main plant was one story and covered roughly 110 acres while the lakefront plant was six stories at some buildings and felt like navigating through a maze. The lakefront plant was also more dangerous as the floors were hardwood instead of concrete so the forklifts would create holes in the floor. There was a carpentry unit on staff every day to make repairs.

The closing of the plant wasn't entirely surprising since Marv remembers there being talk of it closing from the time he was a child. He said it was the timing of it closing that was

surprising. He first found out about the plant closing from his wife who had heard about it at her job. When he called the union hall the secretary said, “turn on the news at ten o’clock”. He was one of the first people to find out the plant would be closing in a month.

The plant closing created massive problems for employees which in turn created problems for Chrysler. To combat the issues, Chrysler offered employees a plant closing agreement which gave preferential hiring at other Chrysler facilities. Marv took advantage of this opportunity and transferred to Belvidere, Illinois where he eventually retired.

#### ***3.2.1.4. Tod Ohnstad***

The last person that was interviewed was Tod Ohnstad, not a Kenosha native but a Wisconsin native from Eau Claire. He moved to Kenosha in January of 1974 after seeing a job posting in the unemployment office and was hired along with 1,200 other people on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1974.

There were several commonalities throughout all four interviews like how short the initial interview was, only having three days to learn your job, and the fast-paced environment one experienced while working on the assembly line. Tod was heavily involved in local 72 like John Drew and Marv Owens. He was one of the three people that were sued by supervisors for his articles in the “Fighting Times”. Like John Drew, he was found not guilty in court and didn’t owe any damages to the six supervisors that sued. As Tod continued working at American Motors he was elected as a steward, having the same responsibilities as Marv Owens, and later sat on the board of directors for local 72.

When asked about the culture at American Motors, he reflected on the friendliness between employees and different clubs and intramural sports you could join. American Motors

was also known as one of the few places that women were paid the same as the men, something many companies still do not offer today. There also seemed to be a common enemy amongst employees, the supervisors. One of the six supervisors that sued Tod and John was known as a man that often-used derogatory terms towards African American employees and even told a female employee if she wanted to make it past the probationary period, she had to have sex with him. Tod was straight forward about what it was like working at AMC making sure to point out the good as well as the bad.

When the main plant closed, Tod transferred to the lakefront plant and continued working on the board for local 72. During his time on the board, he ensured all employees that were laid off got their full pension while waiting to be called back to work, regardless of how long it was they had to wait. Some waited 7 or 8 years to be recalled and Tod made sure they were receiving their pension benefits that entire time. Tod worked at the lakefront plant until 2004, shortly after hitting 30 years with AMC and Chrysler.

### **3.2.2. Archival Data**

Based on the interviews, site visits and Sanborn maps the historical significance of the site is discovered. Through interviews done by the Kenosha History Center, we can learn what the culture and day-to-day routine was at the Chrysler plant as well as the impact the closing had on employees of the time. While on site visits, the progression of construction of the proposed Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood is noticeable as walls of buildings are going up and initial grading of the land is being completed. One can tell how close these buildings are going to be to the surrounding neighborhoods and hopefully efficiently connected through appropriate circulation patterns. The Sanborn maps provided by the Library of Congress are a great resource



to see how the site has changed and developed over time. The site grew exponentially throughout the 1900s, hosting various buildings for the manufacturing of vehicles.

Table 1: Methods, Data, Product, and What Can Be Learned

Methods	Data	Product	What Can Be Learned
Interviews	Recorded interviews courtesy of Kenosha History Center	Description of culture at Chrysler plant from former employees' point of view	Historical value of the site, impact the Chrysler plant had on community, impact the closing of the Chrysler plant had on community
Site Visits	Photos	Photos of current state of site	Where proposed buildings are going, proximity proposed buildings are to surrounding community
Sanborn Maps	Specific time period maps	Scanned maps from Library of Congress	How site has developed over 100+ years

Due to these methods of investigation into the site, specific areas of interest were identified. The Beer Run is a proposed intersection for pedestrians to safely cross 52<sup>nd</sup> street instead of having to run like the employees at the plant had to. Another area of interest is 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. What once was employee parking is going to be residential townhomes. This means there needs to be safe intersections for residents to cross into the site. Chrysler crossing will provide these safe passageways into the site for the residents of the townhouses as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. Nash Plaza (named after Charles W. Nash) once held assembly lines and hundreds of employees. It will now consist of the commercial district on site. Jeffery Plaza (named after Thomas B. Jeffery) used to be the main shipping area for the plant and will now be the main plaza on site. There is a proposed main pedestrian passageway on site, which will become a cultural trail showcasing the historical significance of the site.

Figure 7: Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood Areas of Interest  
Below is a basemap of the site with specific areas of interest outlined based on the research completed.

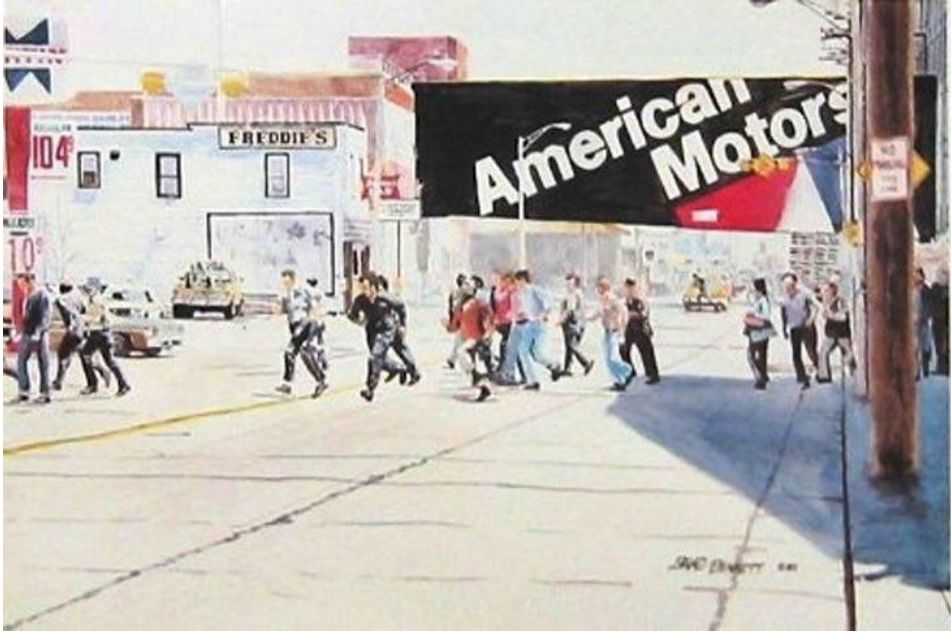
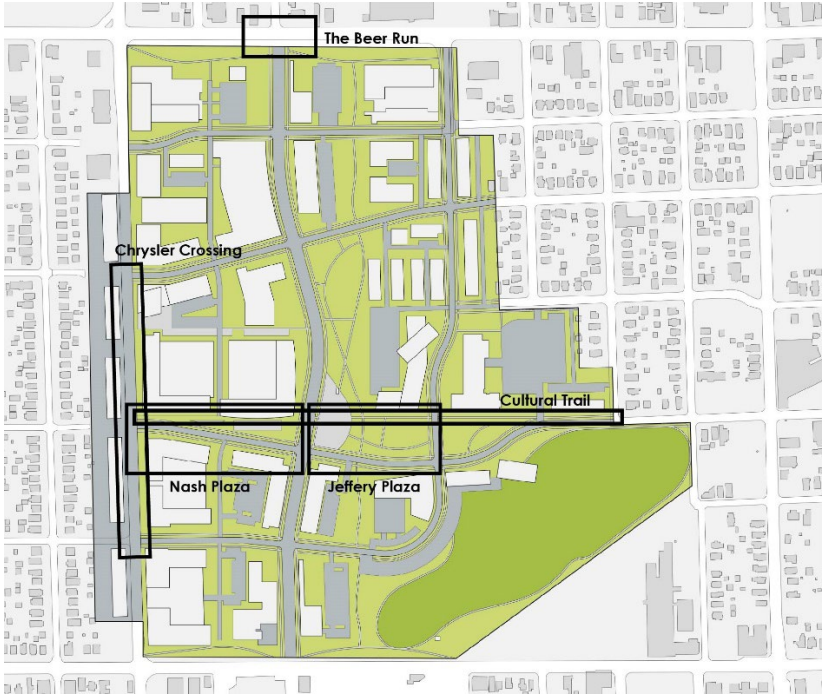


Figure 8: “The Beer Run.”  
Above is a painting by Brad Bennett of American Motors employees running to the bar on their lunch break.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Discussion & Limitations

By completing the ethnographic assessment, we can decipher what the site needs as well as where these needs should be met. While listening to the interviews one could better understand the culture of the plant during the years leading up to its closing. The interviews also gave insight into the day-to-day lives of the employees that worked there. Employees loved working there and were heartbroken by the closing of the plant. Today things are quite different with most employees just wanting a paycheck and strict rules within the workplace. Interviewing employees that once spent substantial time there offers a new view on the site that holds many memories.

When working on the “Methods, Data, Product, and What Can Be Learned” table, I began to better understand what each method brought in terms of research. The interviews were most helpful, as I have pointed out in the previous paragraph, but the site visits and Sanborn maps were helpful as well. The site visits I took were right before the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood broke ground and shortly after they broke ground. The first site visit the land was essentially a huge field blocked off by 6-foot fences. There has been no entry into the site for many years. When I visited again in December, the walls to Lakeview Technology Academy, a local tech high school, were going up and soil was being moved around. You could tell things were moving faster than normal thanks to the good weather. The Sanborn maps were the last method of research I conducted, revealing a strong history of what once occupied the site. Through these maps I was able to see the history of the site stretched much further into the past than I had originally imagined. The maps revealed decades of history with the automotive industry and prior to that it was a history with bicycles. There were 100+ years of transportation

built on the site and most people had no idea! The Sanborn maps helped create a timeline of how the site became the shape it did by showing the growth of numerous companies. It is because of these companies that we have the 107-acre site we have today.



Figure 9: Site Photograph (December 2023)  
This site photo facing south shows Lakeview Technology Academy being built.

## 5. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS & APPLICATION

In concluding historical research and ethnographic assessments, one can understand the historical significance of the site and recognize the need to incorporate said significance through park design. From the various methods used to collect historical data, we can find ways to appropriately implement this data into park design. The various companies who once occupied the site at different points in time are key themes to consider when beginning design work. These companies helped shape and give an identity to the site as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. How the site was used, the people who worked here and the products they manufactured can all be incorporated into the park design. By using results of historical research in park design, one can bring more meaning to the different areas within the park as well as offer interesting design elements for the user to enjoy. What could be a simple playground can become a playground that mimics the assembly lines that were once there or what could have been a splash pad can now have more meaning by using significant colors of a company that took residence on site.

The proposed Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood is currently lacking properly designed open space due to the lack of knowledge of historical significance and needs of the community on site. The three main objectives the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood should focus on are historical significance, open space and pedestrian circulation. Appropriately designed open space will draw citizens of Kenosha into the site and create an atmosphere that users crave to be a part of. Safe and efficient pedestrian circulation can effectively join the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood to the surrounding existing neighborhoods. This will strengthen the relationship between the various neighborhoods that surround the site. By focusing on these three objectives

and ensuring they are implemented, the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood can become a target destination for citizens and tourists.

## 6. SITE

### 6.1. Site Context

Kenosha is the furthest Southeast city in Wisconsin, bordered by Lake Michigan and the Wisconsin-Illinois border. It is located along I-94 between Milwaukee and Chicago, making it a highly populated area. Although the area is home to roughly 100,000 residents, the community remains tight knit. Many flock to Kenosha for their proximity to Lake Michigan, the old-time trolley system, local businesses, brew fests, Taste of Wisconsin, and Kingfish baseball games.

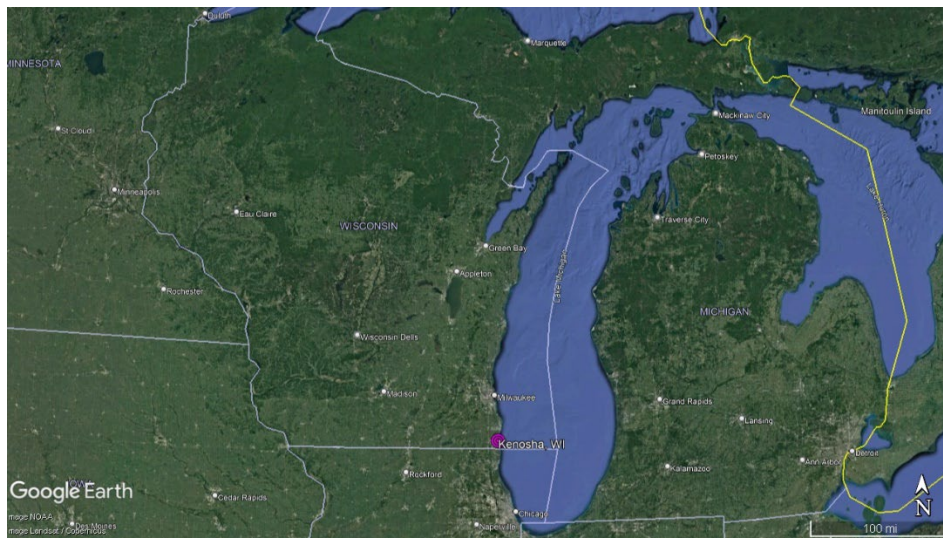


Figure 10: Kenosha, WI. State Level Location  
Location of Kenosha in proximity to Milwaukee and Chicago.

The site that once held factories for various companies like Chrysler, is a mile East of Lake Michigan and is roughly 100 acres. The site remained vacant until 2012 when the factories were removed, and soil remediation began. In November of 2023 the city broke ground on the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood, a 100-acre community geared toward tech startups, tech institutes, office buildings, commercial buildings, and multi-family housing. The site is located in a highly populated area called Uptown. Uptown is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Kenosha, consisting of residential and local businesses. The Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood

is bordered by two of the most popular streets in town, 52<sup>nd</sup> street and 60<sup>th</sup> street. These streets lead directly to Lake Michigan to the East and Kenosha County to the West. This makes the site a high traffic area that will draw plenty of users.

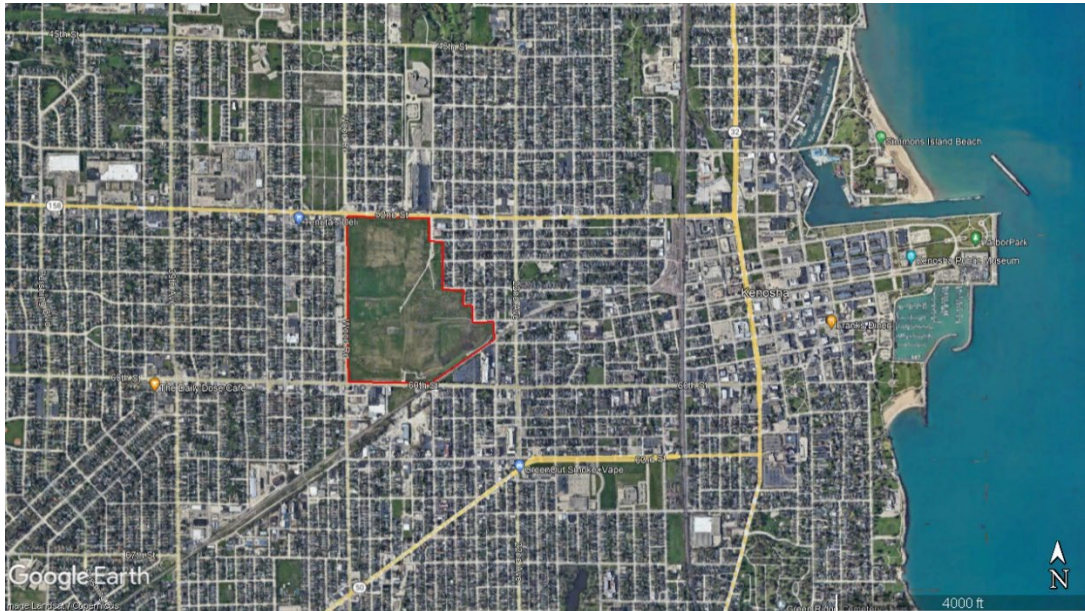


Figure 11: Kenosha, WI. City Level Location  
Location of Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood within the City of Kenosha.

## 6.2. Site Inventory

By completing a site inventory, certain objectives that need to be focused on begin to present themselves. For this particular site the three objectives that presented themselves: historical significance, open space uses, and pedestrian circulation. Focusing on these objectives will create strong spaces and uses throughout the park.

The first objective, historical significance, reflects the significant areas throughout the site. Identifying these areas required knowing the previous layout of the Chrysler plant before it was demolished as well as listening to interviews with previous Chrysler employees to understand how the site was used. Once we understand how the site once operated, we can map out the circulation patterns of the employees and notice the importance of certain areas.





Figure 12: Objective 1

Pictured above is an inventory graphic for site objective 1: historical significance.

Objective two focused on how proposed open spaces will be used as well as how existing open spaces are currently being used. First, we need to look at the existing open spaces surrounding the site. By starting with a one-mile radius we can easily see how many open spaces there are and how many active and passive elements they have to offer. From there we can shrink the radius to observe what open spaces are within a five-to-ten-minute walk from the site and what active and passive elements they have. That smaller radius revealed two sites on the East and West ends of the site who have various active and passive elements. When looking within

the site, there are three proposed open spaces with various active and passive elements. Although these proposed open spaces have several active and passive elements, the elements are lacking in substance. Once all open spaces both proposed and existing were identified we can give a rating to decipher what open spaces are most promising and what the site needs within their open spaces.



Figure 13: Objective 2  
This inventory graphic depicts site objective 2: open space.

The final objective was focusing on the pedestrian circulation within the site and how it connects to the surrounding neighborhoods. This was completed by recognizing the proposed primary and secondary roads as well as the potential pedestrian crossings that lead into the surrounding neighborhoods. This inventory and analysis revealed the pedestrian crossings in particular are currently lacking and need more safety precautions. Another element of this

inventory and analysis that needs attention is the streetscape. The proposed streetscape features large driving lanes, narrow sidewalks, and narrow bike lanes. We can see the areas of circulation that need the most attention and begin finding ways to combat these problems.



Figure 14: Objective 3  
The above graphic identifies the focus areas for objective 3: pedestrian circulation.

## 7. PRE-DESIGN PROGRAMMING & DESIGN PRECEDENTS

Upon completion of the inventory and analysis one can reveal the area of interest that needs to be further developed. This area is the center of the site along the primary road running East to West clearly connecting the surrounding neighborhoods to the site. Now that the areas of interest and what objectives will be focused on have been determined, we can begin a list of programming elements that need to be included for each objective. Taking inspiration from various case studies, these programming elements will define the various objectives and create a strong park design.

Table 2: Objective 1 Programming Elements

Objective	Programming Element
Historical Significance	Display artifacts found on site
Historical Significance	Themed entrances & exits
Historical Significance	Themed plazas
Historical Significance	Themed crossings
Historical Significance	Incorporate trolley rails
Historical Significance	Use of historically appropriate materials
Historical Significance	Interactive play mimicking assembly line

Table 3: Objective 2 Programming Elements

Objective	Programming Element
Open Space	Movable seating
Open Space	Non interactive water feature
Open Space	Interactive water feature
Open Space	Raised planters
Open Space	Raised stage
Open Space	Restrooms
Open Space	Outdoor dining opportunities
Open Space	Shade structures
Open Space	Beer garden

Table 4: Objective 3 Programming Elements

Objective	Programming Element
Circulation	5' bike lanes
Circulation	Crosswalks
Circulation	Narrow travel lanes (8-10')
Circulation	Cultural trail
Circulation	Change in material at crosswalk
Circulation	Pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB)
Circulation	Cultural trail different material

## 8. SCHEMATIC DESIGN

Once the area of interest, objectives and programming elements are defined we can begin schematic design. Schematic design is the first step in the process of design work. We start incorporating those programming elements and find solutions to the problems identified. The different parts of the park began to identify themselves and themes were given to each “room”. Whether the area is passive or active, historical significance is implemented by assigning company names to each room.

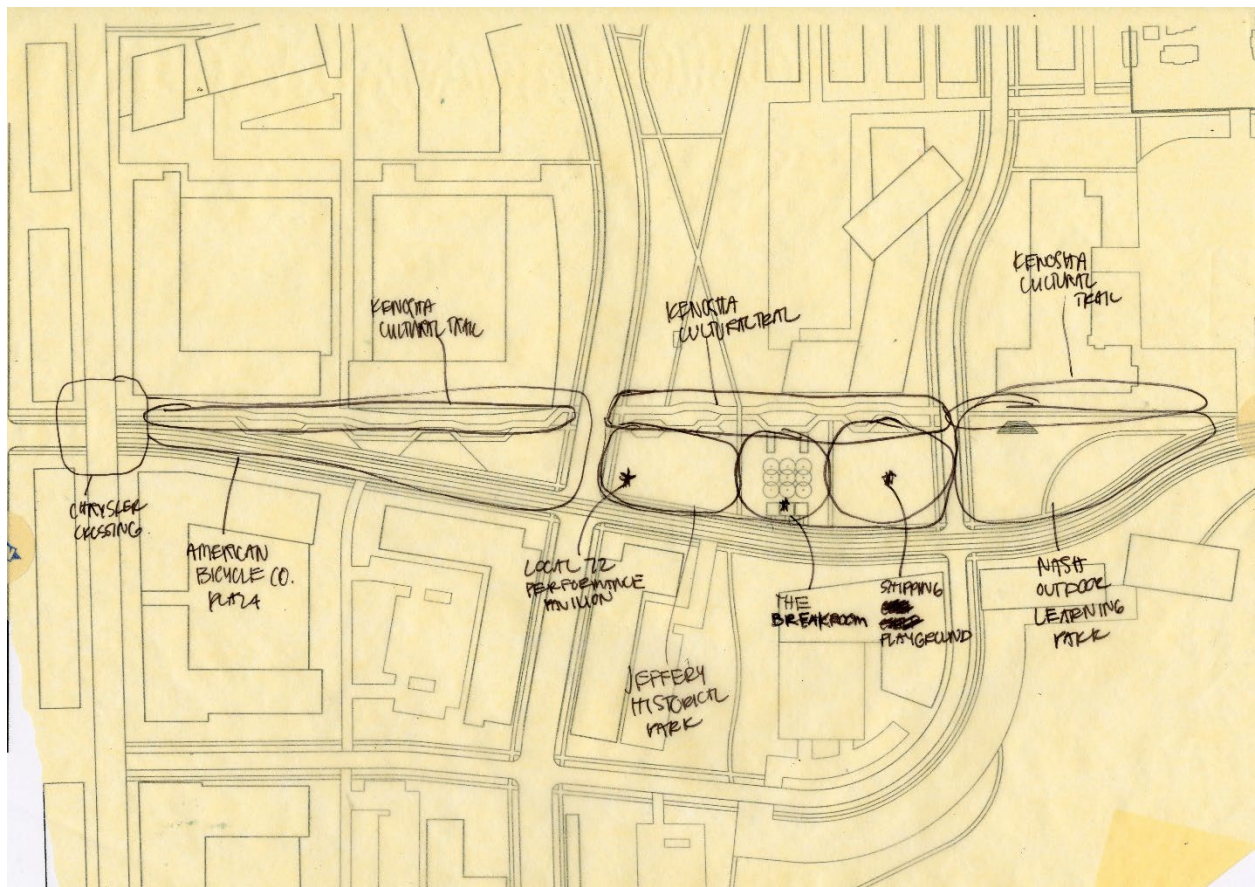


Figure 15: Schematic Masterplan

The above masterplan shows the first process drawing of the various themed areas within the site and their approximate size.

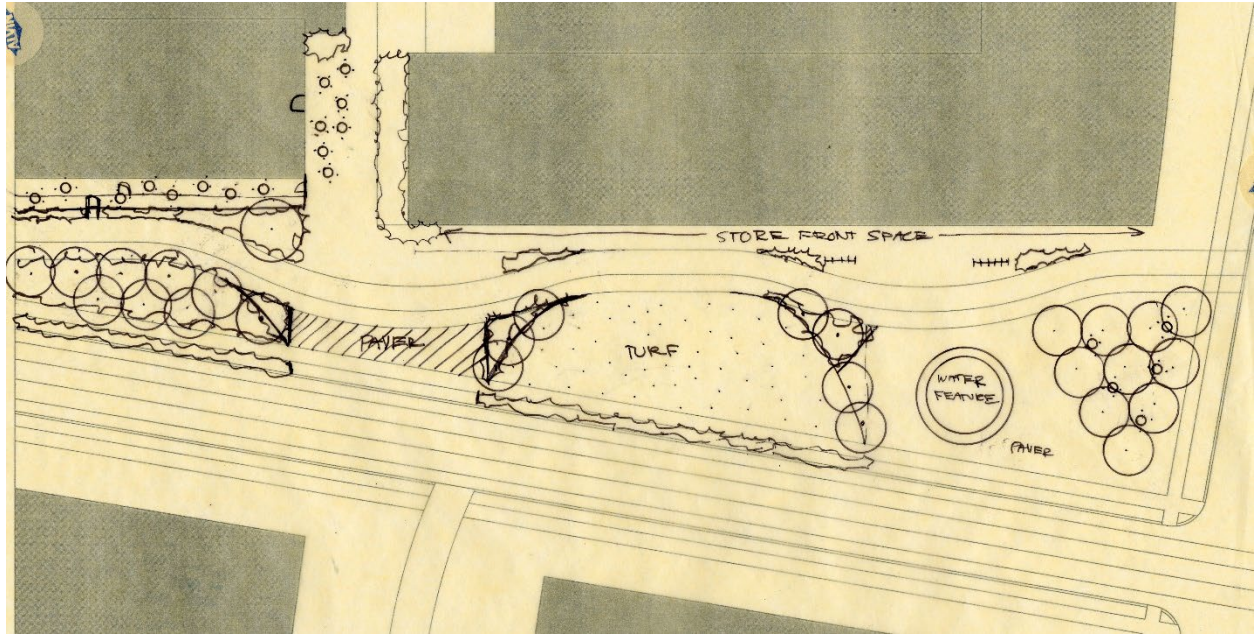


Figure 16: American Bicycle Co. Plaza schematic drawing

The schematic drawing above displays the various elements of the proposed plaza. This plaza is meant to be a passive plaza geared toward casual shopping, sitting outdoors, outdoor dining and passage along the cultural trail to the surrounding neighborhoods.

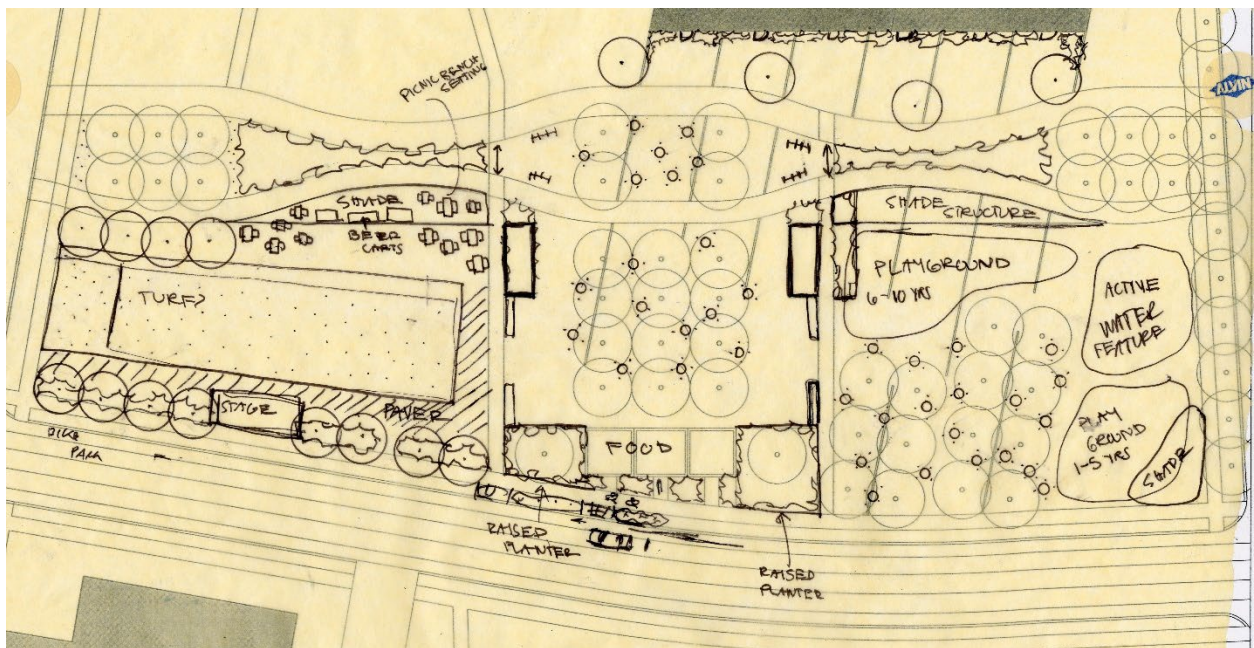


Figure 17: Nash Motors Historical Park schematic drawing

This schematic drawing features three “rooms” that occupy much of the site. From left to right these areas are as follows: Local 72 Performance Pavilion, The Breakroom, and Shipping Playground. These areas are geared towards various passive and active elements including beer garden, stage, restrooms, movable seating, bike racks, food stalls and playgrounds.

## 9. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The final process in design is design development. Here we nail down the final details of the site and create final renderings based on all the previous steps completed. The final renderings show which programming elements made the cut and how the site is intended to be used. The Nash Motors Historical Park has different rooms for different uses, but the entire park is filled with reminders of the history the site holds. From the American Bicycle Co. to Chrysler and every company in between there is a reminder of how much this site has meant to Kenosha.



Figure 18: Nash Motors Historical Park Masterplan

The above masterplan shows the four parts of the park that were focused on. From left to right they are American Bicycle Co. Plaza, a passive plaza meant for local shopping, outdoor dining and relaxing. Local 72 Performance Pavilion, an area with flexible open space, a raised stage for live music and a large shade structure where a beer garden will be located. The third area is The Breakroom, a space meant for socialization, taking a break, and trying different foods at the Chrysler café stalls. The last area is Shipping Playground which is an outdoor play area for



children of different ages. This area has an interactive water feature, different playgrounds as well as movable seating and plenty of shade.



Figure 19: American Bicycle Co. Plaza Perspective I

This perspective offers a great view of the Kenosha Cultural Trail which runs through the entire site leading into the surrounding neighborhoods. The Kenosha Cultural Trail mimics the various sized rectangles in the Nash logo, again bringing the history of the site into the park design. This plaza offers movable seating, local shops, a large water feature, raised planters that double as seating, an open lawn, and outdoor dining opportunities.



Figure 20: American Bicycle Co. Plaza Perspective II

Within this perspective you can see how the open lawn within the space may be used as well as the close proximity to the commercial buildings and Kenosha Cultural Trail. While children play on the lawn, parents may sit on the raised planters and read a book or relax. See Figure 21 for section pointing out where each programming element is within the site.

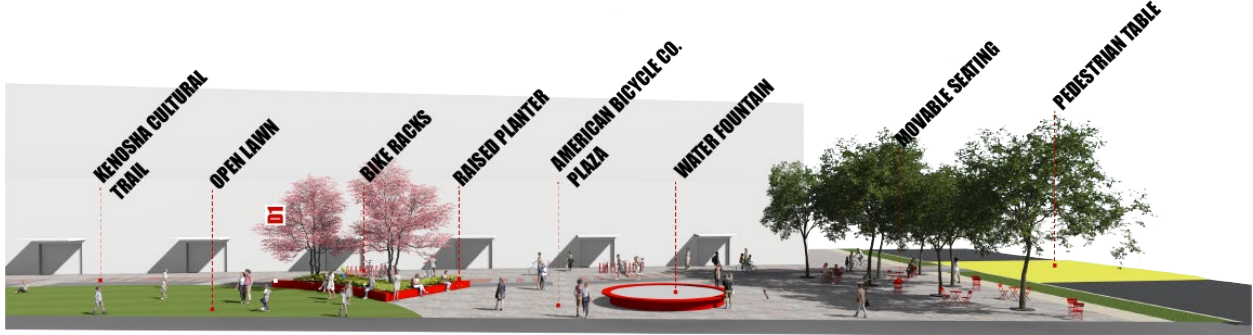


Figure 21: American Bicycle Co. Plaza Section

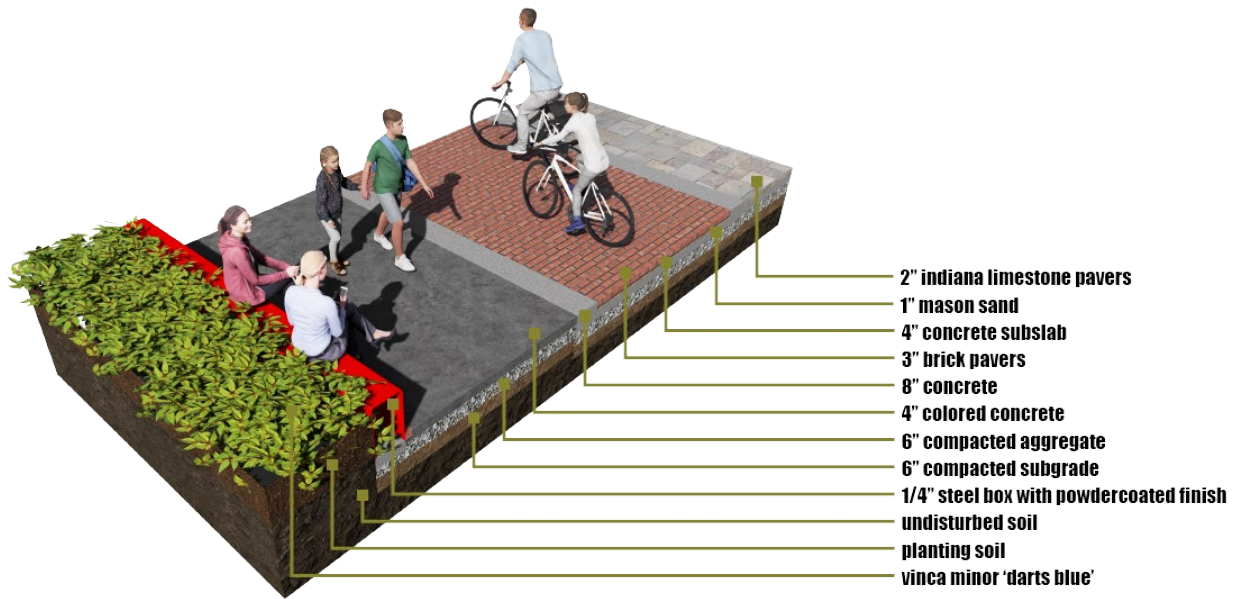


Figure 22: Kenosha Cultural Trail & Raised Planter Detail

This detail shows the various materials used to develop the Kenosha Cultural Trail as well as the raised planters that are found in the American Bicycle Co. Plaza.

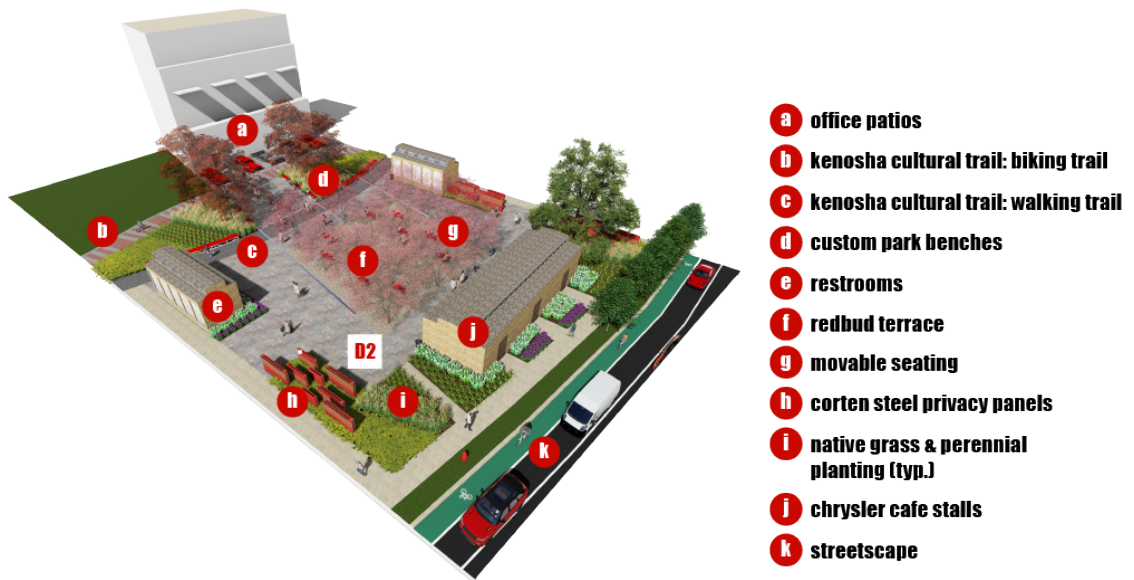


Figure 23: The Breakroom Site Plan

The Breakroom was the area that was developed in the greatest detail. This area is the heart of the site and creates ways to connect surrounding office buildings and various parts of the park. This area has plenty to offer as listed in the site key to the right. For more information on the corten steel privacy panels, reference figure 26.

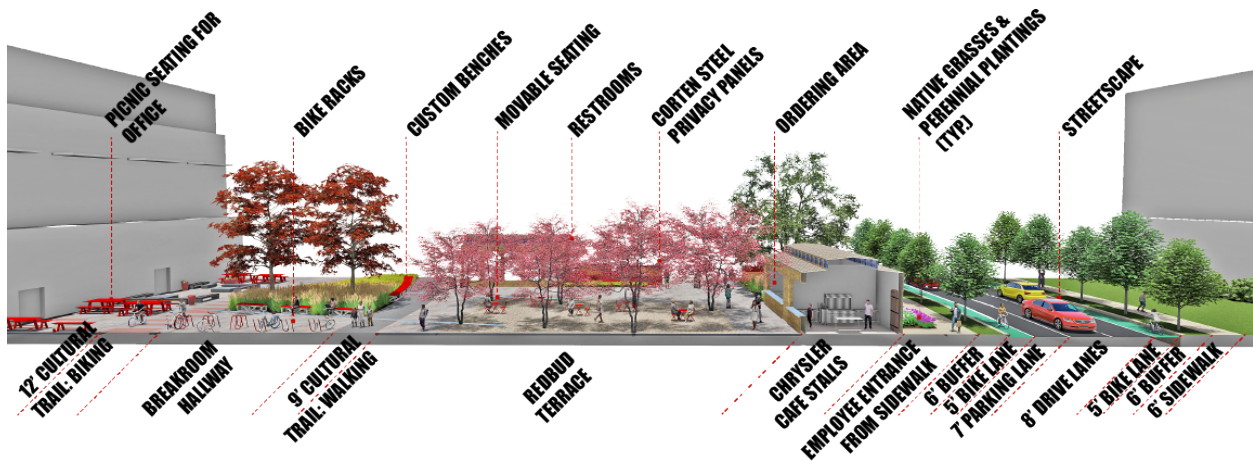


Figure 24: The Breakroom Section



Figure 25: The Breakroom Perspective I

The first Breakroom perspective shows what someone from the nearby office building would see if they were entering the site. They would enter through the “Breakroom Hallway”, referenced in Figure 23. This area holds bike racks for users who are taking a break from the cultural trail as well as custom benches. These custom benches were designed to mimic a historical photograph (Figure 5) of Nash employees building a shipping crate around an already assembled Nash Rambler.



Figure 26: The Breakroom Perspective II

This perspective shows what someone entering the breakroom from Shipping Playground would see. To the left are large privacy panels that help break up the flatness of the site. To the right are the Chrysler Café stalls where local food trucks can rent the kitchen space to try their hand at restaurant style cooking without committing to an actual restaurant. These stalls were designed based off a historical photograph of Sterling Cycle Works, which was the first company to occupy the site. This view also features Redbud Terrace as well as the bright red movable seating that is a staple within the Nash Motors Historical Park.

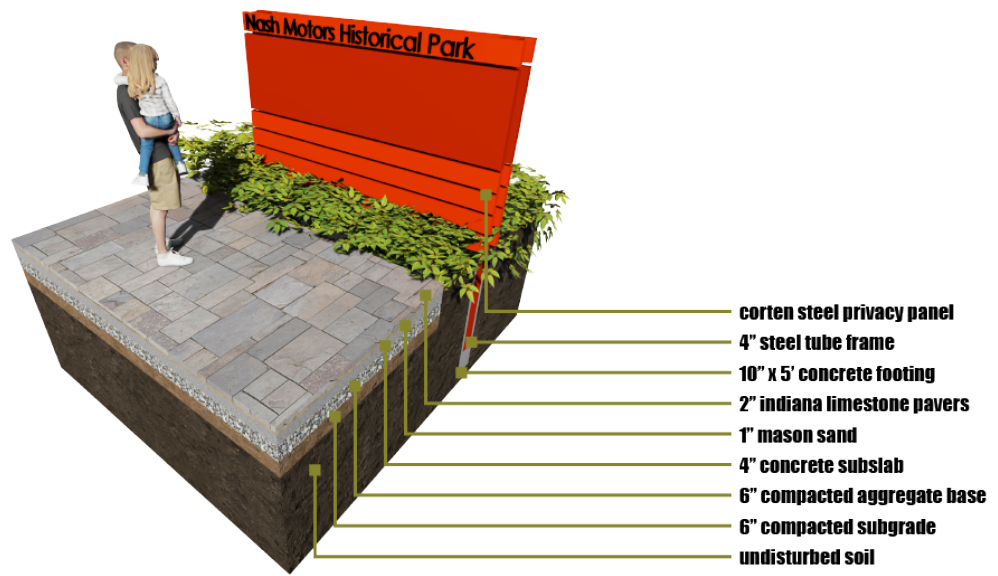


Figure 27: Privacy Panel Detail

The privacy panels found on site were designed with the idea local metal and 3D artists will design the large blank portion of the panels to show the history of the site and Kenosha.



Figure 28: Shipping Playground Perspective I

The last part of the site is Shipping Playground. This area was designed with children and play in mind. It features different playgrounds for different age groups as well as a three-part interactive water play area.



Figure 29: Shipping Playground Perspective II

This final perspective shows in detail the interactive water feature within Shipping Playground. This area features custom tipping buckets, splash pads, and water fountains. The fun colors encourage playfulness for children while the large canopy trees and movable seating offer a place for parents to keep an eye on their children and relax.

## 10. DESIGN CONCLUSIONS & REFLECTION

Kenosha has a long history as a city, starting as KenoZIA among the Potawatomi tribe to becoming a booming economic landmark for the state of Wisconsin. The site discussed has displayed how it and the city of Kenosha itself has changed over many years. The city of Kenosha holds onto its historical significance tightly, so why does this not apply to the site that once held companies such as Nash Motors and Chrysler?

The site was originally used for manufacturing bicycles in the 1800's at Sterling Cycle Works then American Bicycle Company. As the 1800's came to a close, bicycles fell out of favor for cars which brought about Thomas B. Jeffery Co., Nash Motors, American Motor Company and lastly Chrysler. Whilst researching these various companies I found oral history projects that were completed by the Kenosha Historical Society. These oral history projects interviewed previous employees at AMC and Chrysler, which offered insight into the day-to-day operations on site as well as the culture of the plant. This historical research and ethnographic assessment led to ideas on how to incorporate this into park design.

The design of the park needed to showcase the history of the site as if it was a museum patrons were walking through. This led to objectives that needed to be focused on and eventually programming elements that would make up the site. These programming elements needed to showcase the history of the site while also creating safe pedestrian circulation as well as appropriate open spaces for users. These needs led to elements such as themed areas and crossings, the Kenosha Cultural Trail, new streetscape designed with pedestrians in mind, and open spaces that were flexible and had intent whether it be passive or active. The final design development of the site displays these programming elements and creates an outdoor museum of sorts.



While I believe the site was designed with the objectives and programming elements in mind, there are also things I wish I could have done. I would have liked to focus more in detail on some of the streetscapes such as “Chrysler Crossing” as well as “The Beer Run” on the north end of the site. If I had more time I would have further developed Local 72 Performance Pavilion so it was more detailed rather than left in the schematic stage. There never seemed to be enough time to focus on every little detail I would have liked to.

For any future landscape architect that may take interest in this thesis, the most important part to focus on is the history. This site has held so much meaning to the city of Kenosha as well as previous employees who once worked on site. The goal is to bring the history of this site into the proposed Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood and this thesis proves through proper research and design this can be accomplished.

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