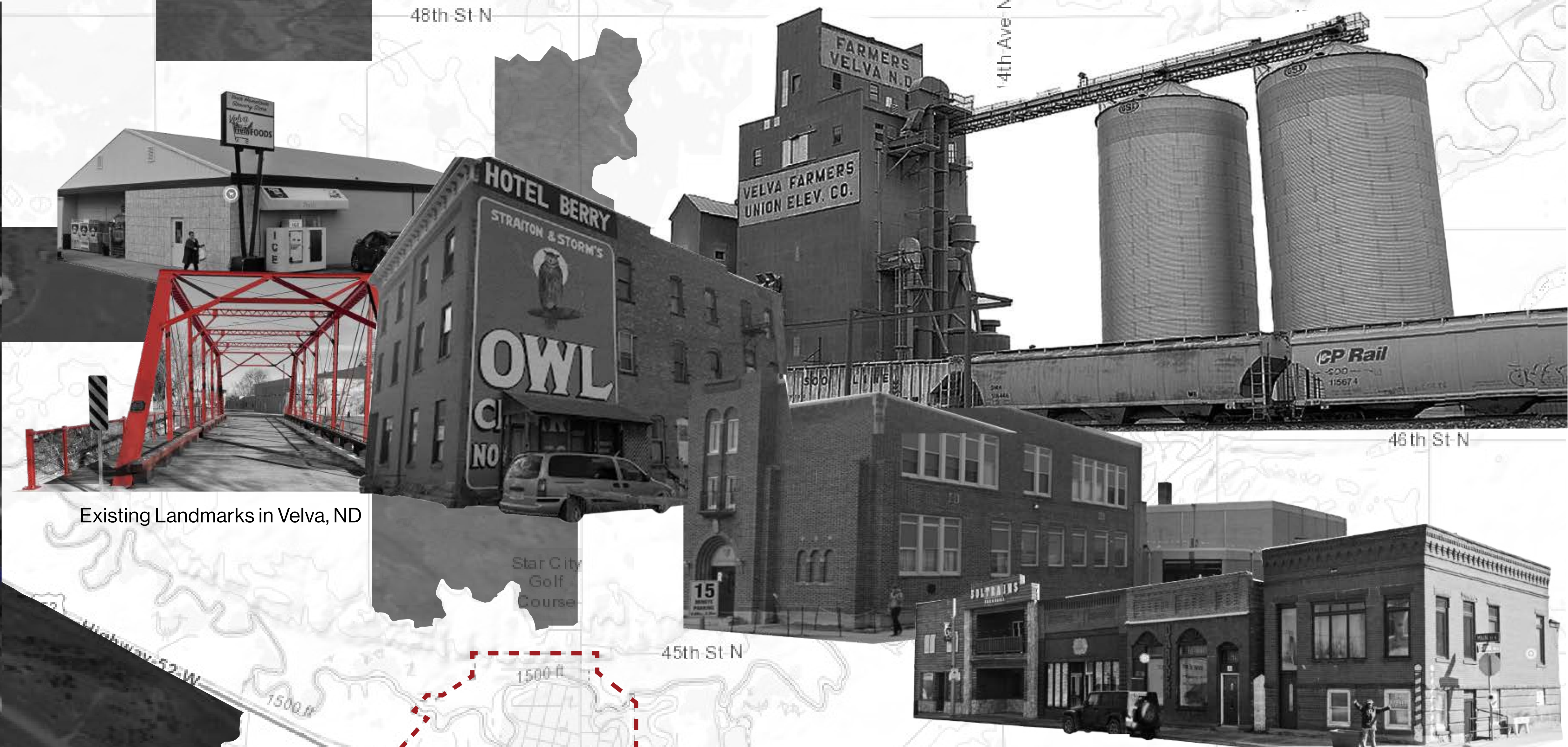




Map of Velva, ND highlighting major paths and landmarks



Existing Landmarks in Velva, ND

# HOW CAN DECLINING RURAL COMMUNITIES IN NORTH DAKOTA BE SAVED? A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION

Rural America's population decline can be attributed to a variety of factors, with perhaps the most imposing issue being a lack of opportunity. Small towns struggle to maintain vitality with limited educational, professional, and recreational opportunities. While small-town life offers many benefits, many Americans leave for urban amenities. The primary scope of this project focuses on the reintroduction of these opportunities into a rural town as a strategy to retain and attract residents.

Small towns face distinct challenges stemming from outmigration and lack of opportunity, according to the Rural Revitalization Survey investigating conditions in North Dakota, but they also possess unique opportunities for developing their economies and built environments. With this data, a comprehensive program addressing socioeconomic policies and facility programs, designed to attract new residents and businesses while enhancing conditions for existing entities was developed. This project investigates the application of the proposed Rural Revitalization program in the town of Velva, North Dakota. Velva's identity is researched, while the core focus areas identified in the program are prioritized in the outlined revitalization effort. Findings from the survey are as shown below.

## CORE FOCUS AREAS IDENTIFIED

-  CHILD CARE SERVICES & FACILITIES
-  COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AMENITIES
-  DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
-  SINGLE & MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING
-  EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

## CHILD CARE SERVICES & FACILITIES

As a major service gap identified in rural ND, childcare in Velva is currently limited to in-home childcare providers. A childcare center was included in the community center, featuring private access points and a secure adjacent playground to provide accessible care for parents and children in the community.

## COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AMENITIES

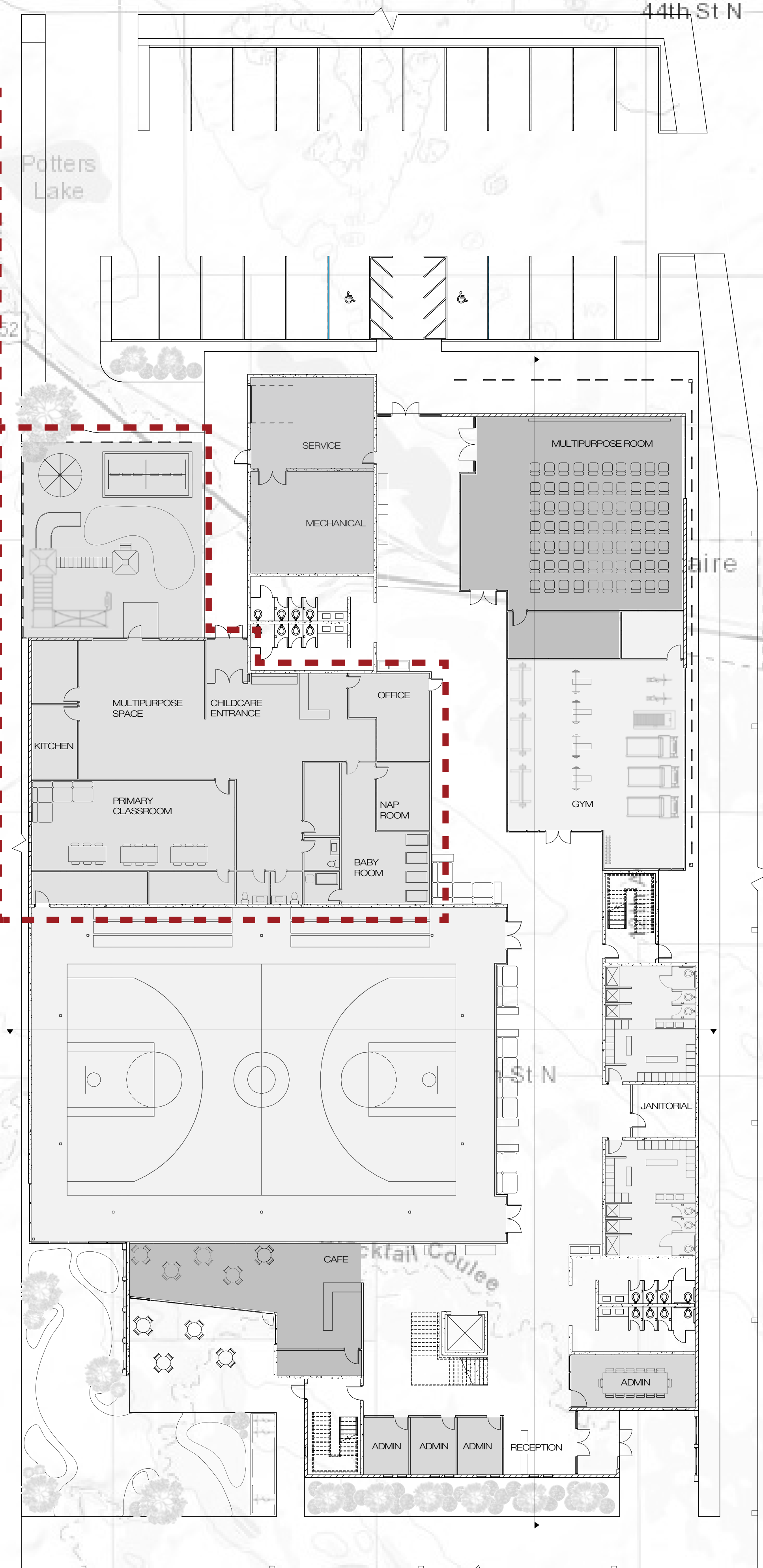
Functional spaces are included in the community center in response to identified gaps in Velva. Spaces are organized based on user groups, accessibility, shared spaces, circulation, noise, safety and security, and square footage. The community center (shown right) would be a multi-functional way to provide Velva with all the amenities it currently lacks, while livening the community. The building is located along Main St, at the North end of the downtown district, to optimize accessibility and functionality. The community center responds to feedback from the Rural Revitalization in ND Survey providing spaces for gathering, recreation, administrative offices, and childcare, along with city offices a gallery on the upper floor.



Multi-Use Meeting Space View

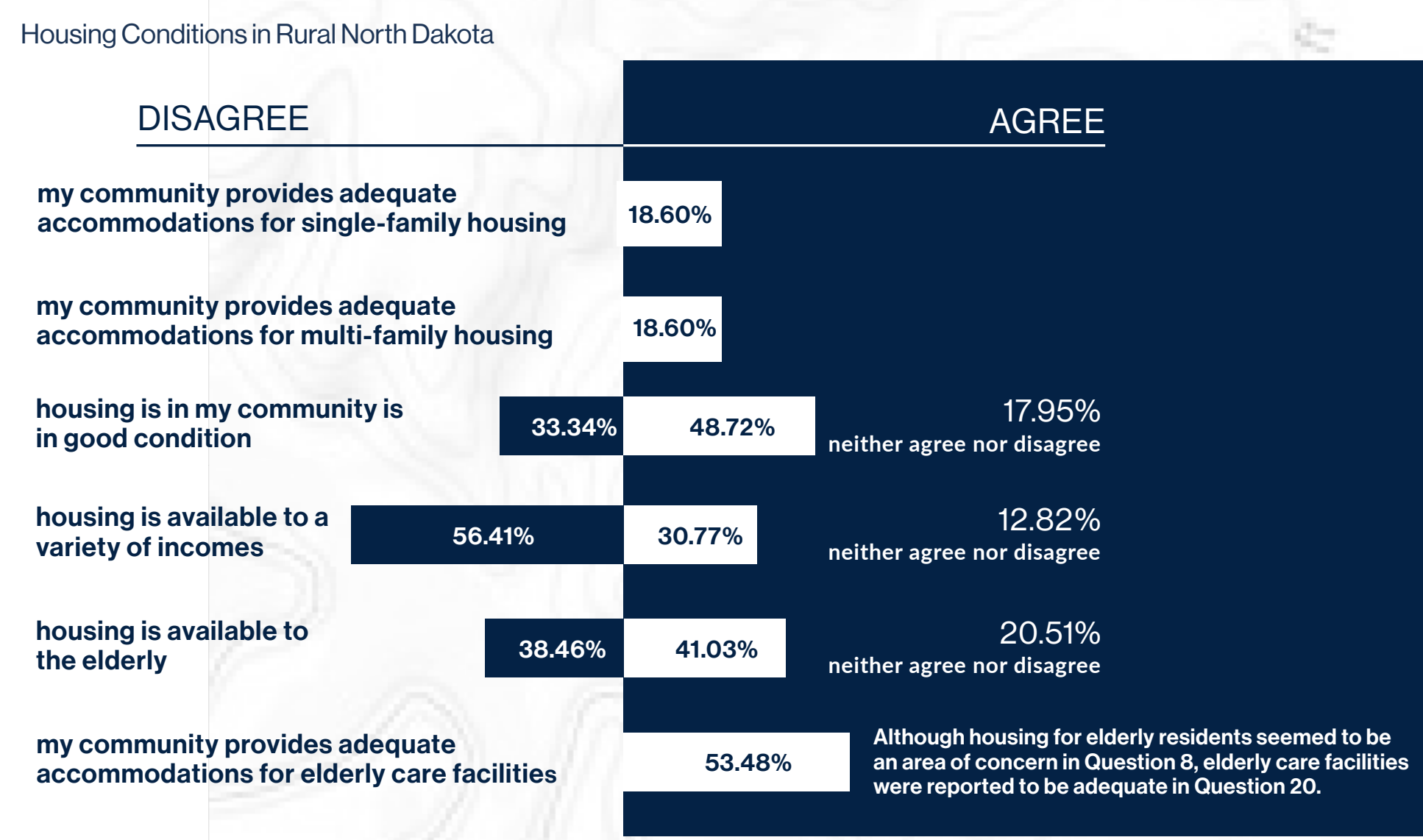
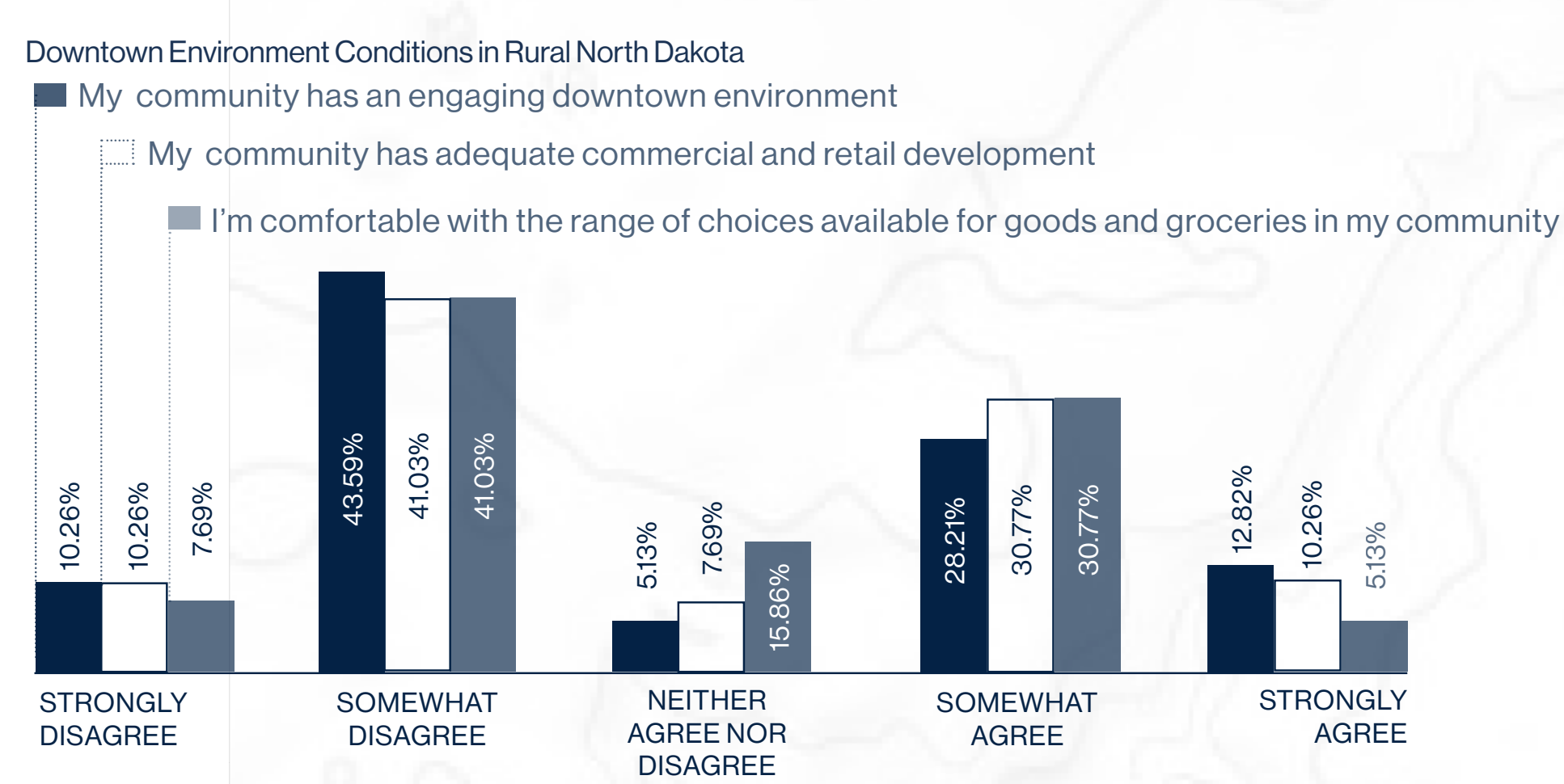
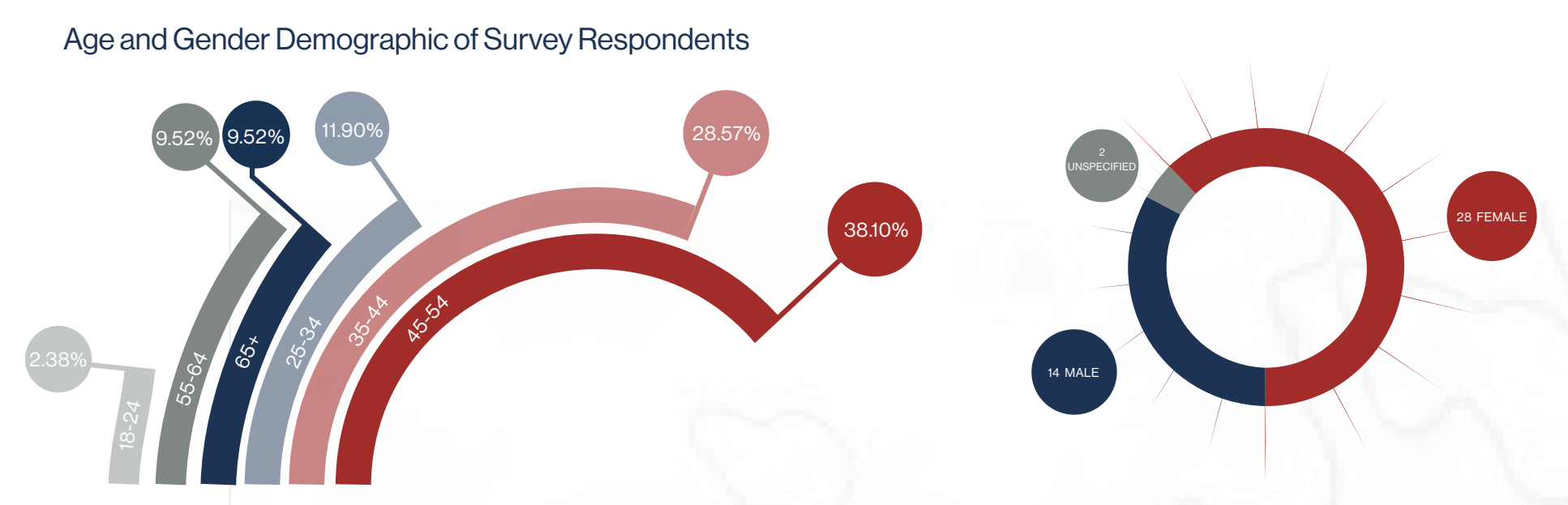


Southeast Elevation: Front Entrance



COMMUNITY-CENTER GROUND FLOOR PLAN





Project Location Selection Criteria

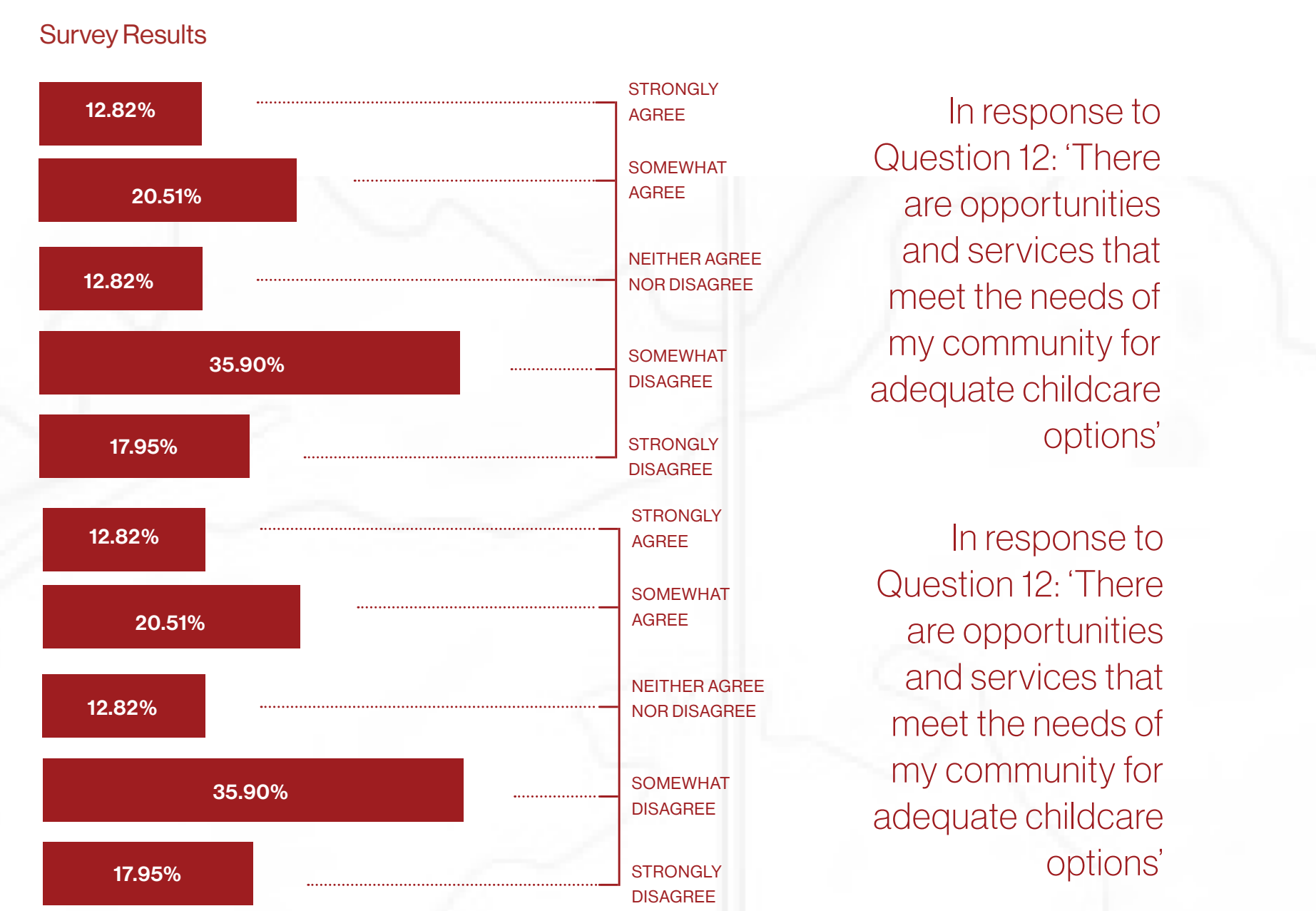
Criteria	Measurable	Yes	No	A	B	C	D	E
Best Service in South Dakota (population over 2000)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Closest to Interstate	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Close Proximity to Best Secondary Education Facility	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Historic Building in the Downtown District	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Availability of Housing to Accommodate Some Growth	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Low Environmental and Cultural Impact	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Existing Infrastructure to be Utilized or Repaired	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

Velva's original public school was updated and has recently received a significant addition. The building currently functions as a K-12 educational facility and a public library. The project features a new library located along Main St, allowing Velva Public Schools to absorb the space currently used for the library.



Velva Public School and Public Library



Responses to Question 12: 'There are opportunities and services that meet the needs of my community for adequate childcare options'

- LACK OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- LACK OF CULTURAL AMENITIES
- LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE
- ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES
- AGING POPULATION
- ISOLATION

Responses to Question 18: 'What are some of the most important characteristics of your community to maintain? select all that apply'

- HISTORY AND TRADITION
- SAFETY AND SECURITY
- HISTORICAL HOMESTEADS
- RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT
- COMMUNITY GATHERINGS
- CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Responses to Question 15: 'What are some core challenges your community faces? select all that apply'

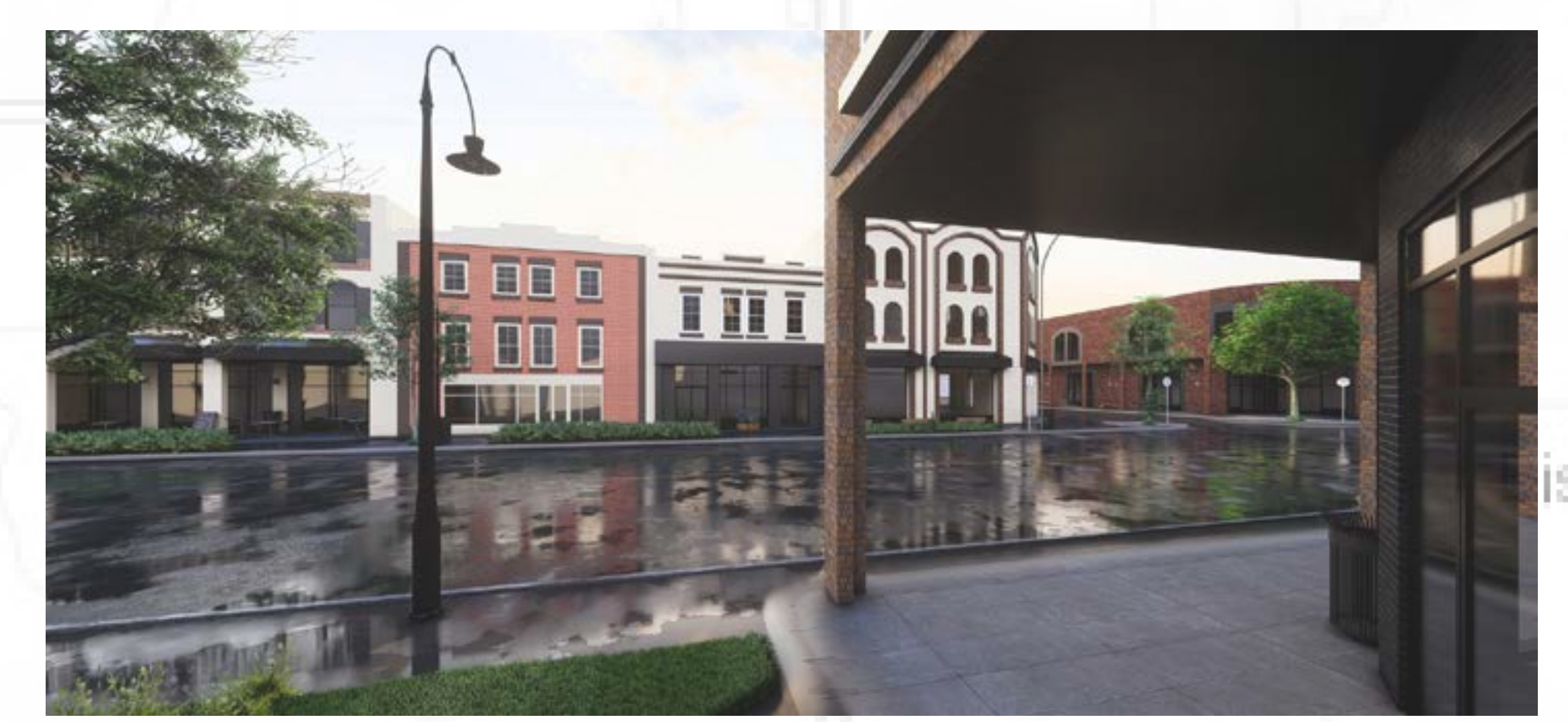
- LACK OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- LACK OF CULTURAL AMENITIES
- LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE
- ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES
- AGING POPULATION
- ISOLATION

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Historically, Velva's mainstreet was lined with traditional commercial storefronts (shown below). One goal of this project is to reclaim the charm of Velva's historic downtown with proposed restoration and respectful infill projects. The buildings in dark gray highlight intentionally filled services gaps, with the remaining buildings ambiguous in function.



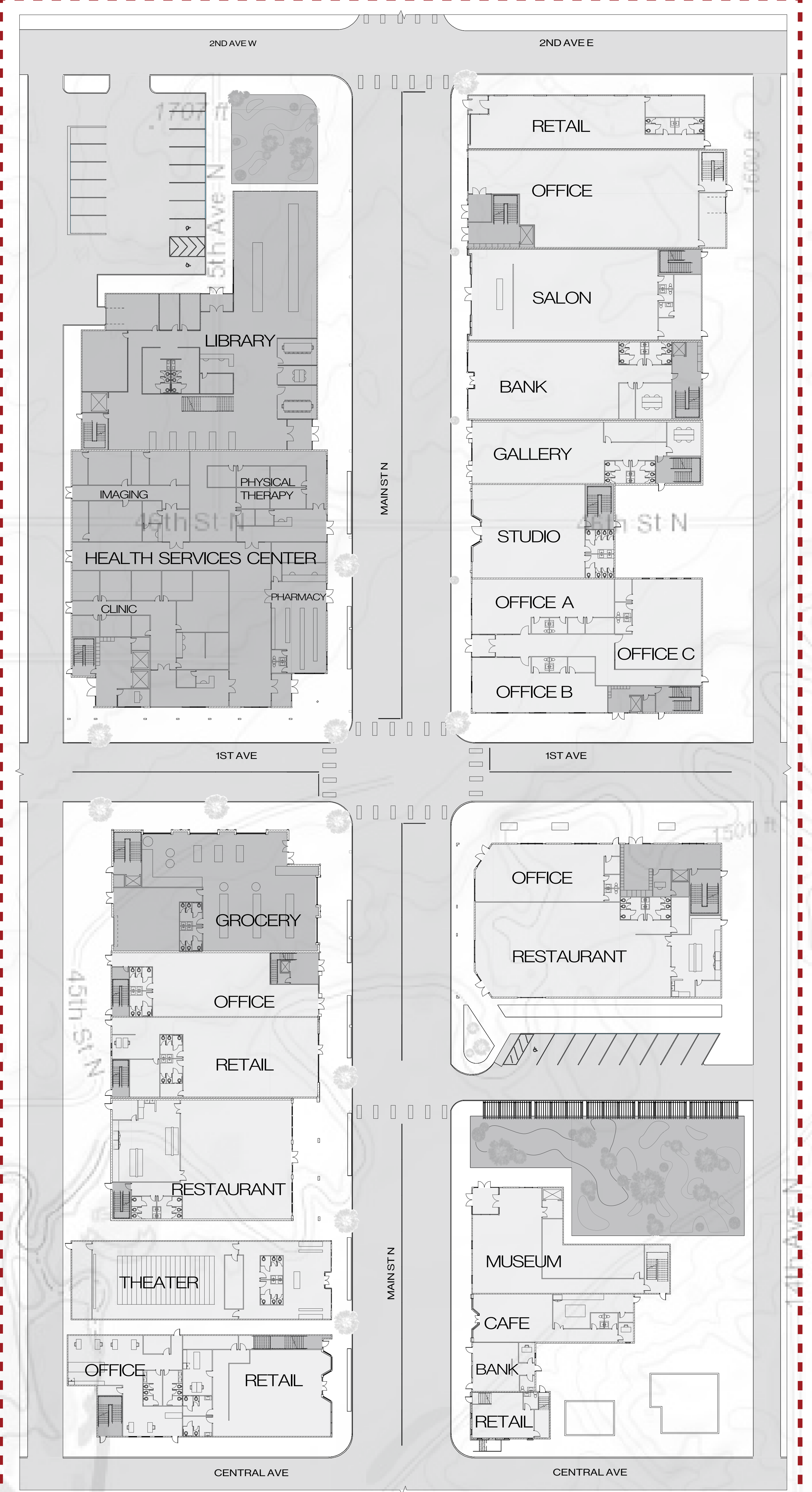
Historic Downtown Velva



Revitalized Downtown View

## SINGLE & MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

Velva currently requires multi-family housing opportunities introduced into the community, as they already have adequate single-family housing accommodations. The revitalization of the downtown district allows for multi-family housing opportunities above ground level storefronts. Apartment lobbies and egress stairwells are highlighted in dark gray on the Downtown Ground Floor Plan (shown right).



DOWNTOWN GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Revitalized Downtown District Elevations

