

THE IMPACT OF THE THIRD PLACE

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**Title**

The Impact of Third Places

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## **ABSTRACT**

The research conducted will look at the importance third places have for a community's well-being and happiness, and why they need to be valued within society. It will consider the positive impacts third spaces have on humans, as well as the negative consequences involved in neglecting places of connection and congregation within a community. There has been a dramatic increase in ways to connect with people due to the increased popularity of technology. Yet, there has been an equal increase in the feeling of loneliness and social isolation by Americans. Physical and tangible third places are the answer to the rising problem of loneliness and social isolation. They provide true authentic connections and relationships that people need to have a high quality of life. The design proposal will be a hub of third places located within the downtown area of Grand Rapids, MN. It will include spaces for all hours of the day and provide a safe and friendly atmosphere that will foster community and encourage growth.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Face-to-face interactions with other people have always been a regular aspect of life. These usually happen through public meeting places which invoke conversation. Recently, there has been an explosion of ways to connect with people in the past decade, from chat rooms on the internet, multiplayer video game platforms, various modes of social media, access to mobile smart phones. The quantity has grown while the quality has not. Is the quantity of these methods of “connection” a good thing? Are they real networks of connectivity, which can sustain a certain quality of life for human beings? Are they assisting to decrease the depression rates and suicidal thoughts that are also rising in America? (Inc, 2023) If there are so many ways to connect with other humans why is the feeling of loneliness and social isolation increasing? (MacDonald & Schermer, 2021) There is a common understanding that humans ought to be consistently and regularly interacting with other human beings. (Williams, 2019) Connections are most often sustained at public spaces within a city. These spaces are referred to as *Third Places*.

As society it is common ground that everyone needs a home, a place to take shelter. It is also commonly known that work is a necessity to provide the means to live. Americans often attribute so much importance on those two aspects that it is easy to forget the necessity of engaging in their community, and the importance of finding a place amid busy schedules to spend time with other community members. A typical day of an American consists of waking up and going to work until the clock strikes five, then it is straight home just to leave for work the next day again (Bureau, n.d.). Occasionally, there are invitations for dinner, however, often the overpowering standard is to be alone. (“Opinion | Americans Are Choosing to Be Alone. Here’s Why We Should Reverse That.,” 2022) In fact, Americans spend 50% of their awake hours alone, since 2019 that number is only increasing due to COVID (Bureau, n.d.). While that was

happening, the time spent with people outside of one's household dropped from 21.9% in 2003 to 17.3% in 2019 before plummeting to 14.1% in 2021. ("Opinion | Americans Are Choosing to Be Alone. Here's Why We Should Reverse That.," 2022)

Time spent at *Home*, and *Work*, contribute to 80-85% of the average Americans day. (Bureau, n.d.) Both places are very important aspects of life, but are they the only important spaces that are important to spend time in? Or are there places in addition to *Home* and *Work* which play a major role in one's quality of life. The places outside of those two main places are classified as *Third Places*, or the *Informal Public Space*. These spaces are what connect a community and improve the well-being of the individuals within the community. (Oldenburg 1999) A community is defined as a group of like-minded people who share common interests and ultimately pursue a common goal of inclusion and acceptance. (Oldenburg 1999) Third places are found where co-workers frequent the local bar for happy hour, and where friends join conversation over a cup of coffee. They are where life is shared between people and a sense of belonging is established. Third places create both physical and emotional connections within a community, and aid in better the quality of life for its people. (Oldenburg 1999) Oldenburg refers to third places as the social infrastructure of society in the book, *The Great Good Places*. Meaning third places are essential to the group of people called society. They are not merely small stores with products or goods to be bought, they are something much more valuable.

### **1.1. Problem Statement**

Research pertaining to the impact of third places on an individual's well-being and quality of life struggles to find quantitative conclusions, due to the nature of the problem it faces. Oldenburg argues the importance of third places based on a qualitative approach in his book *The Great Good Place*. There is agreement of the problems America is facing from the suburban

explosion after World War II. Oldenburg along with Max Lerner point out the lack of place in America. Which increases the feeling of loneliness and social isolation experienced by Americans. (Demarinis, 2020) Therefore, awareness of the lack of third places must be recognized by the American public.

As the popularity of suburban life increases so does the need for third places. (Oldenburg 1999) Often Americans value materialistic objects such as their home and workplace over how they engage in their surrounding community. The problem with community today is that there is a lack of authentic connections within the communities in society. This arises because Americans do not value social connections. (“Opinion | Americans Are Choosing to Be Alone. Here’s Why We Should Reverse That.,” 2022) Instead, value is placed on spending time alone, usually on smartphones and computers. Interacting virtually with people instead of being present with the people in the community.

Therefore, there needs to be an increase of value placed on third places by Americans, so that the loneliness widely felt by the American population will decrease. Recently there has been efforts spent studying the benefits correlated with valuing third places. (Jeffres et al., 2009; Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982; Thompson, 2018) The value of the third place increases well-being and quality of life for Americans, not because of what can be physically obtained in regards to a product, but rather it is by the experience felt by its user that the value is found. Third places, throughout time have offered more than a product, they have offered authentic connections which benefit the greater good of society. Therefore, there needs to be an emphasis tied to the third place itself as a essential part of Americas social infrastructure.

## **1.2. Proposed Outcomes**

The proposed project will rely on gathered information on sources relating to one another on the importance of the third place in America, and the impact it has on the epidemic of loneliness and social isolation. The buildings designed will offer a variety of spaces and products with one common goal, to foster the community into a connected network of people who share an informal public space. (Oldenburg 1999) The buildings that will make up the final proposal will accommodate all times of day in order to always provide an informal public space. The proposed outcome is not merely a building, but rather a destination which provides opportunities for people to be connected through all aspects of life.

## **1.3. Project Objective**

The purpose of the project, through its research and design solution, was to place importance on the physical third place. To bring awareness to the physical points of connection sprinkled throughout the cities and towns of America. Also, to communicate the way Americans under value the public spaces that function as public living rooms. That there is too much reliance on digital connections platforms, which are sadly leaving people feeling isolated and depressed, instead of connected and full of joy. The physical meeting places which are the third places, are essential in re-establishing a healthy authentic community founded on well-being and true connections through relationships with other people.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. What Are Third Places?

The third place is anywhere outside of work and home. Home (first place) and work (second place), apart from the former two spaces there is an alternative space where there is little to no responsibility of either the first or second spaces. Oldenburg along with Brissett argue that third places help “sustain a sense of well-being” (p. 269) through their affordance of “spontaneous and freewheeling social experiences” (p. 277). This alternative space, which is outside of home and work provides a sense of community and sustains a high quality of life.

As Ray Oldenburg describes in “The Great Good Place”,

...the great “good places” that foster community and communication among people outside of home and work, the first and second places of daily life. Third places are the bars and coffee shops, the beauty salons and barbershops, bowling alleys and recreation centers, public places where people meet, congregate, and communicate. (1999)

The third place is a space where friends or strangers can engage in conversation, where co-workers meet and discuss life outside of work. Oldenburg and Brissett also note in *Qualitative Sociology*, “Third places exist outside the home and beyond the ‘work lots’ of modern economic production. They are places where people gather primarily to enjoy each other’s company” (p. 269). It is agreed on by scholars and sociologists that the third place fosters and encourages authentic relationships.

## 2.2. Third Places

The third place is separate from where you sleep (your first space) or where you work to make ends meet (your second space). They are the spaces in-between, where you freely encounter other people, ideas, and experiences. (*Third Spaces Lab | Boston.Gov*, 2016) Third places are the everyday coffee shop, the local small-town restaurant, the public library, even the downtown bar is a third place. Third places are not ‘one size fits all’, they are a sophisticatedly simple topic with an intangible outcome, authentic relationships. Third places are not simply a building or product. Instead, they are the intricacies of the social network, which rely on experiences being felt by the occupant of the space not the product. Third spaces bring excitement to the day and energize the human spirit.

### 2.2.1. What Makes a Third Places?

Third places are often overlooked by society and the people interacting with those places. Ray Oldenburg believes there is more than meets the eye pertaining to the third place.

Ray Oldenburg states in “The Great Good Place”,

“...there is far more than escape and relief from stress involved in regular visits to a third place. There is more than shelter against the raindrops of life’s tedium and more than breather on sidelines of the rat race to be had amid the company of third places.” (21)

Oldenburg lays out a few characteristics which he believes make a third place valuable. He comments in chapter two of his book *The Great Good Place* that third places are valuable because they are neutral ground, they are a leveler. Where conversation is the main activity, the spaces are accessible and make accommodations for all people. Third places usually have a low profile, the mood is playful full of regulars, and they function as a home away from home. (Oldenburg 1999) A healthy and thriving third place usually is welcoming and accessible (Thompson, 2018). Third places have many characteristics including being accessible, allowing



socialization between friends and strangers. They often provide an ability to socialize and make connections. The third place provides a sense of a community and social sustainability (Oldenburg 1999 Jeffres et al,2009).

### ***2.2.1.1. Typologies of Third Places***

As stated before Third Places are not a ‘one size fits all’ or a copy paste entity. In fact, there are an infinite number of possibilities for which a third place can take form. However, third places can thrive based on how a space is used, as well as the scale of the place. Usually, smaller more intimate spaces allow for more personal connections. Coffee shops cafés are a great example of an intimate third place.

#### ***2.2.1.1.1. Coffee Shops***

Coffee shops are very prevalent as the scene changes from large chain corporations to smaller family-owned businesses that are set apart from one another. These are places where it is usually quiet and peaceful, paired with some soft music playing overhead. Coffee shops provide communities with a destination which does not exclude minors or push away the single mom with kids. They also offer a very open space often used by people who work a remote job, or for themselves. In addition, coffee shops can provide space for friends to join in conversation and commune through a cup of coffee. Because the main product is something for most hours of the day, it allows for coffee shops to act as a hub for people when other places have yet to open, mainly in the morning.

Coffee shops also do not have time limits like other spaces. Go to a restaurant and try staying past your last bite. You will be given your check shortly after your meal is done. At this point you will be asked if you are hungry for a dessert. If you say no the pressure to leave

promptly sets in and you fold your napkin and leave. Coffee shops allow for loitering, in fact they invite people to stay awhile.

The modern coffee shop in America stems from the 17th century coffee house in Europe. *(NCA Releases 2020 National Coffee Data Trends, the “Atlas of American Coffee,” n.d.)* America differs from Europe since coffee culture revolves around coffee outlets. The unique features offered by the American coffee shop continues to play a key role in encouraging college students and young adults to visit coffee shops. In fact, over 45% of coffee in America is consumed by young adults, data also continues to show that young Americans are 2 times more likely to consume coffee than adults over 60. This further presents itself as a hub for the younger generation to find connections with people within their community.



Figure 1. Twenty Below Coffee, Fargo ND, in 2023

Note: Picture of how the space is set up to be used and invites users to “Set up shop” for working”, Photo: courtesy of the author’s personal collection.

#### 2.2.1.1.2. *The American Brewery*

For a long time in American history breweries and craft beer was permanently an urban amenity, especially in the early 2000’s. Since then it has become more prevalent in rural areas, and the benefits have been outstanding. (Chris, 2021) According to Bart Watson who is the chief economist at the Brewers Association, nearly 85% of American adults live just 10 miles from the local brewery as of 2018. (Chris, 2021)



Figure 2. Drekker Brewing Company, Fargo ND.

Note: Picture above displays how the space can be utilized and invite lots of people to gather, anywhere from two people to a large group of 12+ people.

Recently the environment of a brewery has found itself amid a new trend, best described as local public markets. America has seen a rise in the local public markets and will most likely see more and more as the urban mall is removed from American Cities.

#### *2.2.1.1.3. Local Public Markets*

Local public markets like third places are not a copy paste project. They often have similarities to one another but also have critical differences. Brew Halla in Fargo Nort Dakota is a great example of a space which is sprinkled with different kinds of businesses and third places, yet it also as an entire floor dedicated to leisure. A space where people are able to connect with each other through meaningful conversation. The Ponce City Market in Atlanta Georgia is another example. Ponce City is much larger and more diverse in the spaces available when compared to Brewhalla. Ponce City Market also has less space for leisure, which discourages people from staying. These examples will be discussed further in the next chapter.



Figure 3. Ponce City Market. Atlanta, GA

Note: Picture above displays how the Ponce City Market was once an industrial building, now renovated to be a large market with many shops and third places located within. As well as apartments and loft in the upper levels.

#### 2.2.1.1.4. *The Library*

In comparison the library contributes greatly to the community. It not only serves students, but it also serves the homeless and the poor. It allows people who do not have access to the internet to use it freely. Libraries are very inclusive by nature, free to use for all peoples. They also provide a space for community gathering spaces. A place which can hold classes, concerts, book clubs and other social events. (*Social Role of the Library | Libraries Matter, n.d.*) Libraries serve as a public living room, open to all and inclusive to the neglected groups of society. (*Social Role of the Library | Libraries Matter, n.d.*)



Figure 4. Fargo Public Library - Main Library, Fargo ND.

Note: The image depicts the exterior of the library building not how it functions.

People also prefer to live near a library if possible. These people often perceive library access as part of an enhanced quality of life. (*Social Role of the Library | Libraries Matter*, n.d.)

Libraries can also support personal productivity and cultural engagement.

#### 2.2.1.1.5. Gyms

It has been addressed that third places are places where people can join together in a community and spend time with one another, either leisurely or actively. Not every American join a gym or is actively working out. However, the gym can be a great place for people who do enjoy the physical activity and the satisfaction of being physically active. For those people the gym is a crucial third place to attend each day. It provides a place to join in an activity with friends, to be around strangers yet be connected through both desiring to workout at that time.



Figure 5. Group Active.

Note: The image above illustrates how a gym can promote community.

(Group Active | Cardiovascular Fitness Class, n.d.)

#### 2.2.1.1.6. Churches

The Church has historically been a central backbone to the social infrastructure.

(*Placemaking with Places of Worship*, 2023) The Church is place where people connect not only physically or even through conversation but also through the spiritual realm. This aspect of churches makes them a vital aspect of how communities connect and thrive. They allow people to use their space free of charge and without judgement.

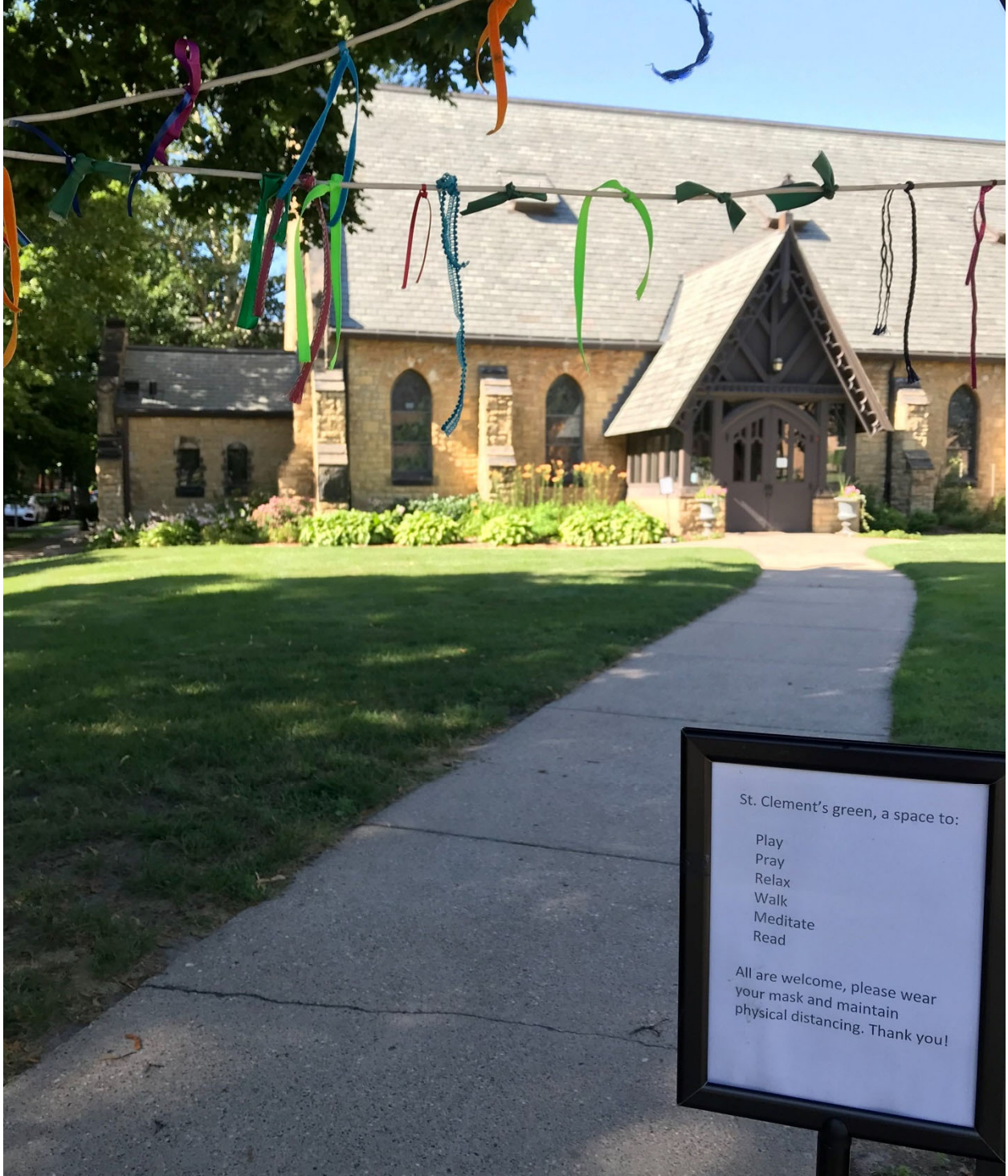


Figure 6. St. Clement Church, St. Paul, MN.

Note: The image above shows how a church in St. Paul MN simply put a sign up inviting anyone to use their yard. The Church invited people to use their space as an public third place.

(Placemaking with Places of Worship, 2023)



### 2.2.1.1.7. Parks

Parks are commonly agreed upon as being beneficial to have within a city. They provide green space which has been proven to be beneficial for many reasons. Spending a total of two hours outside each week drastically improves individual well-being. (White et al., 2019)

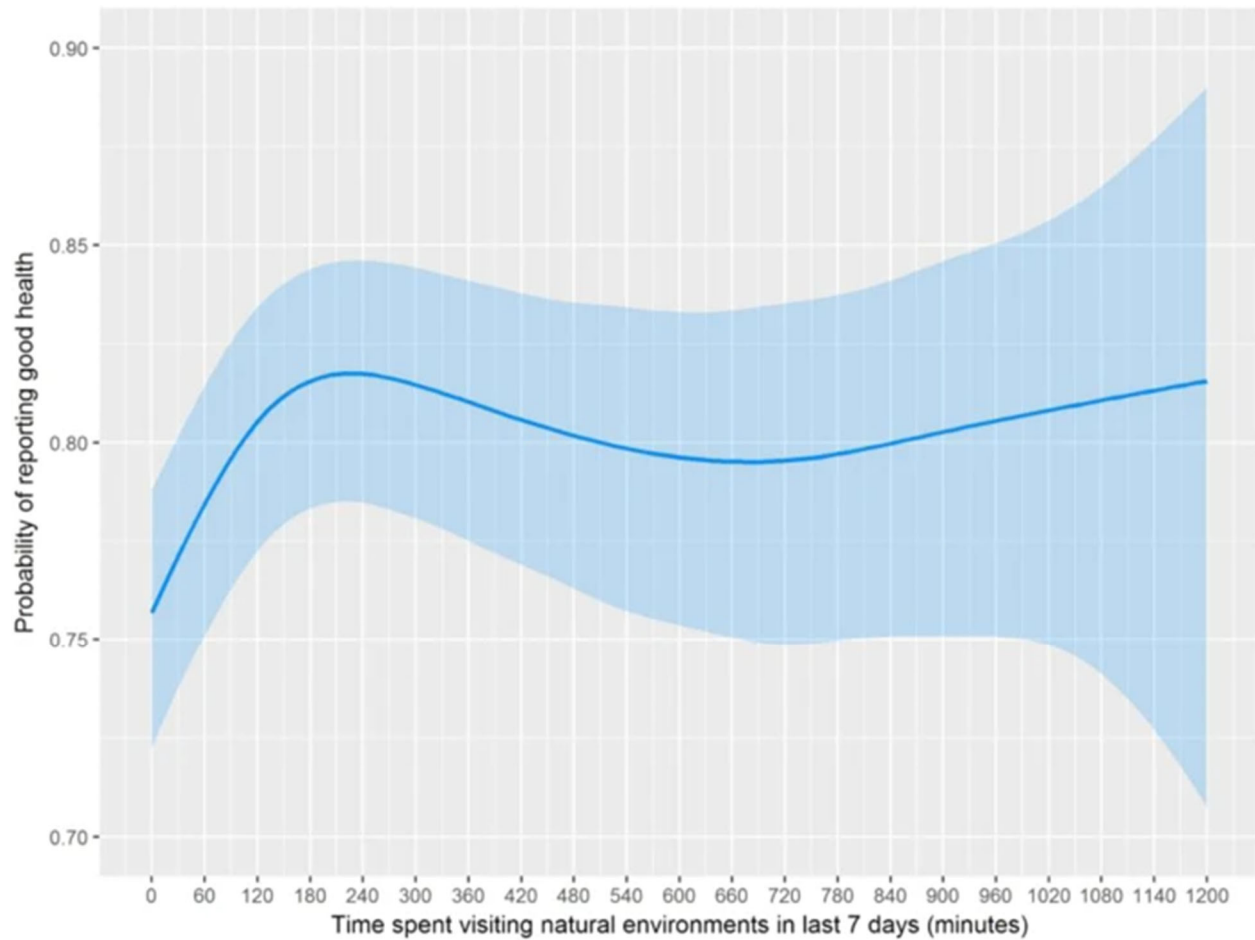


Figure 7. Reporting Good Health - Time Outdoors

Note: The graph illustrates how time spent outdoors directly correlates with good health and well-being.

(White et al., 2019)

### 2.2.1.2. Public Vs. Private Third Places

Apart from being the space between two aspects of life, third places also differ in the way they are presented to the community. Often third places are privately owned and have a closing time designated for the day. These places often can appear as public spaces or have an

atmosphere similar to being publicly owned. Public third places typically are parks and open green spaces within cities. Private third places are the coffee shop, barbershops, restaurants, breweries, etc.

### **2.2.2. What Makes Up an Attractive Third Place?**

Recent research shows people are more likely attend a third place due to the welcoming and accessible characteristics it offers. (Thompson, 2018) They often provide an ability to socialize and connect with other people, as well as a sense of a community and social sustainability (Oldenburg 1999 Jeffres et al,2009). Not all third places are the same, they are not made up of the same qualities. Many third places are private entities, owned by a member of the community. There are also public third places such as parks and trails for hiking.

#### ***2.2.2.1. Are Public or Private Third Places Better?***

It is very difficult to quantify the comparable features of either public or private spaces. They both provide benefits to society, as well as to the individuals experiencing the spaces. Economically, private third places are better, or contribute more heavily to the economy. They also can encourage people living in the community more. Public third places do not only invite individuals to relax and rest on their own, but they also encourage large gatherings where many people are able to engage in their community.

### **2.2.3. Outdoor Living Rooms**

The third places which create the most interconnected community are the ones which allow for space to be used in many ways and can conform to the customers' desires. These types of third spaces can be thought of as '*Outdoor Living Rooms*'. Living rooms in the setting of a home are where the family watches their favorite sports team play, or family movie nights, even where they erect their Christmas tree and host loved ones for their Christmas celebration.

Outdoor living rooms are similar but create different environments and memories. They are spaces that serve as living rooms for the larger community and include all kinds of people groups to be connected to one another through relationships. These spaces usually provide an atmosphere which encourages diversity while also fostering unity.

### 2.3. Social Isolation

According to a survey published by the Health Insurer Cigna more than three in five Americans are lonely. (Demarinis, 2020) Since 2013 the time Americans 15 years and older have continually spent more time alone and less time with friends and family. (“Opinion | Americans Are Choosing to Be Alone. Here’s Why We Should Reverse That.,” 2022)

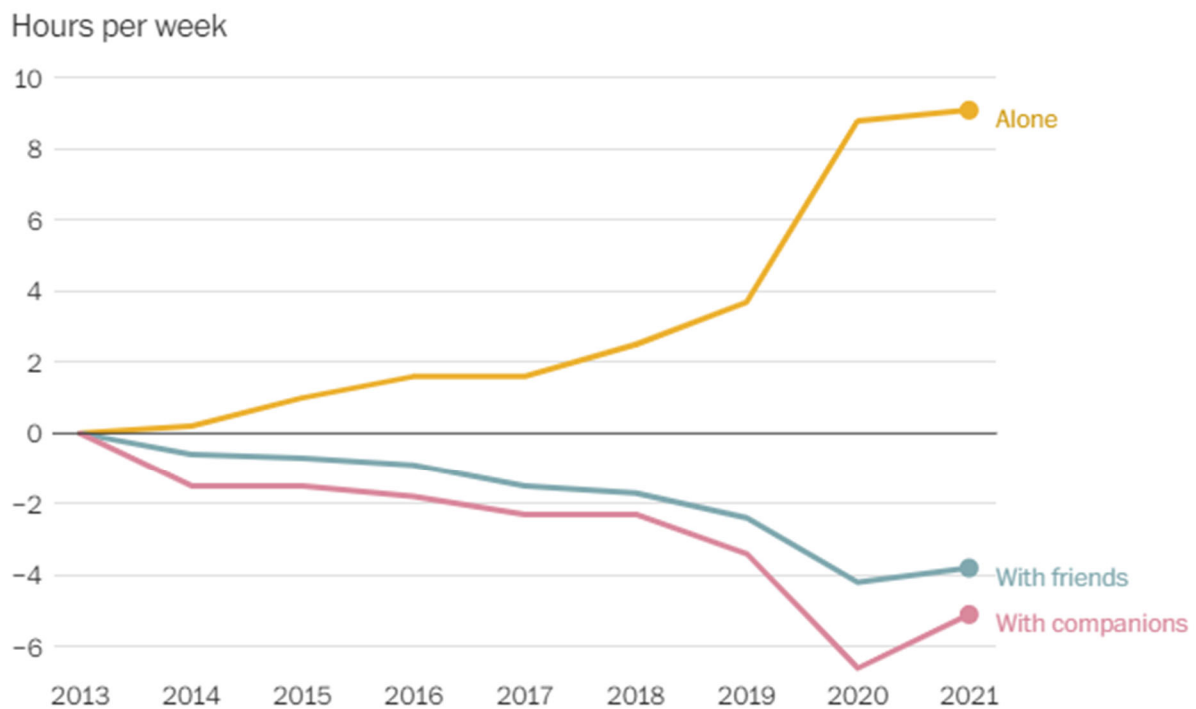


Figure 8. *Who Americans Spend Their Time With*  
 Note: This illustrates the time spent by Americans in comparison with 2013. (“Opinion | Americans Are Choosing to Be Alone. Here’s Why We Should Reverse That.,” 2022)

Loneliness is a subjective, undesirable feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It can heavily affect the well-being of Americans and negatively affect quality of life.

### **2.3.1. Negative Effects of Social Isolation**

Pervasive loneliness has been found to be widespread effects and is strongly linked to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, moreover research suggests that the impacts don't end with mental health, but evidence points to the fact that relationships impact physical health as well. (Demarinis, 2020)

### **2.3.2. Why is Social Isolation Rising in America?**

The introduction of smart phones and their rapid popularity is not the full problem. Smart phones are very valuable to modern life, it is the dependency on smart phones which can cause loneliness. Matthew Lapiere along with his collaborators Pengfei Zhao and Benjamin Custer conducted a study between dependency on smart phones and depression in older adolescents. (*Which Comes First*, 2019). The use of technology is not the reason for depression/loneliness it is the dependency people often have on the device itself.

### **2.3.3. How can Third Places Bring Change?**

Third places are often overlooked by society and the people interacting with those places. Joseph Addison, a famous essayist said, "Third places can be seen as only little contributions to the greater good of society". Oldenburg said Addison faintly attributed credit to third places, even though third places provided the stage and forum for his efforts and fired the greatest era of letters England would ever see. (Oldenburg 1999) Ray Oldenburg believes there was much more than meets the eye with third place.

### ***2.3.3.1. Benefits Directly Connected to Third Places***

Oldenburg argues that third places help “sustain a sense of well-being”, through their affordance of “spontaneous and freewheeling social experiences” (Oldenburg 1999). They allow people to relax from their busy day. They provide a space to find common ground with other people in society through conversation and interaction and have in the past served as a political safe space, being a venue for civic association and thus contributing to social capital. The relationships developed and maintained in third places are largely acquaintanceships. (Granovetter 1973, Oldenburg 1999) Strong relationships, such as with family and close friends, may also be maintained through the presence of third places. (Rosenbaum 2006).

## **2.4. Valuing Third Places**

Oldenburg argues that traditional third places are vanishing with the increase of human population and infrastructure as well as increase in consumerism and technology. (Oldenburg 1999) With the growing popularity of suburban lifestyle there are more and more places that technically are third places, such as Target, McDonalds, grocery stores, and all kinds of strip malls. These places do not function as a third place. At least not the third places that makeup the backbone of our society. (Oldenburg 1999) True third places are the spaces that find ways to connect people in ways that truly bind one person to another.

### **2.4.1. Why We Need to Value Third Places?**

The frontier of third places is not alike to others, Oldenburg says, “It does not yield to the mere passage of time and policy of letting the chips fall where they may as developments proceeds in other realms of urban life. To the contrary, neglect of the informal public life can make a jungle of what had been a garden while, at the same time, diminishing the ability of people to cultivate it.” (Oldenburg 1999). If third places continue to be neglected there will no

longer be an informal public space. All that will be left is traffic jammed roads connecting quiet homes and lonely workplaces, resulting in a society so focused on the next big trip or promotion that it forgets about the present time it has as a common community.

## **2.5. Gap Identification**

Third places at first glance seem to have no downfalls. They are places where all kinds of people can connect and form relationships through personal connections. Or are they? Third places at face value are inclusive and welcoming to all. That is for those who can get to the location of each third place, as well as be able to afford the goods being sold there. Does that truly provide a public open space for all to use? One might argue that third places can be exclusive, especially to the outskirts of the bell curve. They can alienate those who have no way to travel there, no money, the wrong clothes, etc. Not all third places exclude those who are on the outskirts of society. Libraries are one of the leaders in creating and fostering an inclusive space. Due to the fact that they are publicly owned. By law they cannot turn anyone away. Libraries have found a way to be inclusive and available for all kinds of people. Is it possible to combine the inclusivity of libraries with the appeal and popularity of other third places?

## **2.6. Project Type**

As discussed earlier, third places can be created and designed in many variations, from the doctor's office to the local coffee shop. Every space has its own importance in which way they are impacting the community. It is crucial to look at the need of the existing community to effectively evaluate and determine the correct type of third place to implement. The intended design solution for Grand Rapids includes the creation of a social and business hub. A hub consisting of multiple third places that fosters community in a downtown setting which does not have many spaces that allows for communities to gather. Installing multiple third places into a

concentrated location will allow for each space to conduct individually while also being connected as one destination. It can consist of all different types of third places discussed previously. Which allows for all people to feel like they can find themselves in the spaces, as well as being welcomed. It also brings people there throughout the day, from morning bakeries to evening breweries.

### **2.7. Project Issues**

This study will expend its efforts attempting to locate the importance of third places, especially the ones which allow for an individual to spend an extended period of time there. A place which invites the person experiencing it to enjoy some time of leisure. It will look at how these spaces impact the individuals' mental and physical health and their overall wellbeing. It will ask, are people valuing the third places that are presently available? Along with why Americans should be placing value in these space that offer so many benefits to society.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This paper will be conducting research through observation and cross-sectional study of three different types of third places, Coffee Shops, Breweries, and Public markets. The data collection needed for analysis will be completed through research, case studies, observation. A site in Grand Rapids, MN, will be the where the third places will be implemented, with the intent of serving the local community and creating connections for those who are experiencing loneliness.

#### **3.1. Approach**

##### **3.1.1. Data Collection**

Research will be conducted from professional articles and journal entries that will provide the proper background on the history of third places and their impact on society. An analysis will be done to identify the common qualities of third places that attribute to the well-being of a community. Once these qualities are identified the negative effects from undervaluing third places will be addressed. To further illustrate the role the third place in a communities well-being. Research into the rise of loneliness in America will show the increasing necessity to value to third place.

Secondly, case studies will be conducted to better understand the impact varying types of third places have when compared to other third places. The case studies will also demonstrate the use of architectural features on the attractiveness of the third place. Each space studied will also be visited and observed. By observing the case studies there is an opportunity to experience the space as someone from the community.



### **3.1.2. Analysis**

This paper is developed and constructed through the use of data collection from online articles and books. Each source was read and given a thorough analysis in order to find relative information obtained to the topic. There is a also a simple matrix that will allow accurate and consistent analysis of the third places presented in this paper. The book *The Great Good Place* by Ray Oldenburg was read and referred to heavily not only for this paper but also by the online articles found pertaining to the topic. The design goal will focus on providing a variety of destinations that are close in proximity to one another and provide a social connectedness for the community.

### **3.1.3. Conclusion**

The research concludes that America is faced with a population desiring time alone more than time within a community. (Bureau, n.d.) Even with the drastic increase of ways to connect with others due to technology and virtual connections, the loneliness has continued to increase at a similar rate. (Demarinis, 2020) There has also been a trend to compartmentalize of spaces into such distinct characteristics that there is no ability to utilize and enjoy them as third places. In other words, America does not value third places, instead the value is placed on what benefits personal life. (Oldenburg 1999) This now leads us to expend our efforts in bringing back valuable third places. To illustrate how valuable a space is when it allows for people to connect with people. As well as displaying the importance third places have on an individual's well-being and even more so on the well-being of the community.

## **3.2. Grand Rapids, MN**

The location of the project is in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. It is a small town in northern Minnesota and is around 11,000 in population for most of the year, in the summer it tends to

grow by a couple thousand. The city of Grand Rapids has beautiful winters with an average of around 50 inches of snow a year. (*Climate in Grand Rapids, MN, n.d.; Weather Averages Grand Rapids, Minnesota, n.d.*)

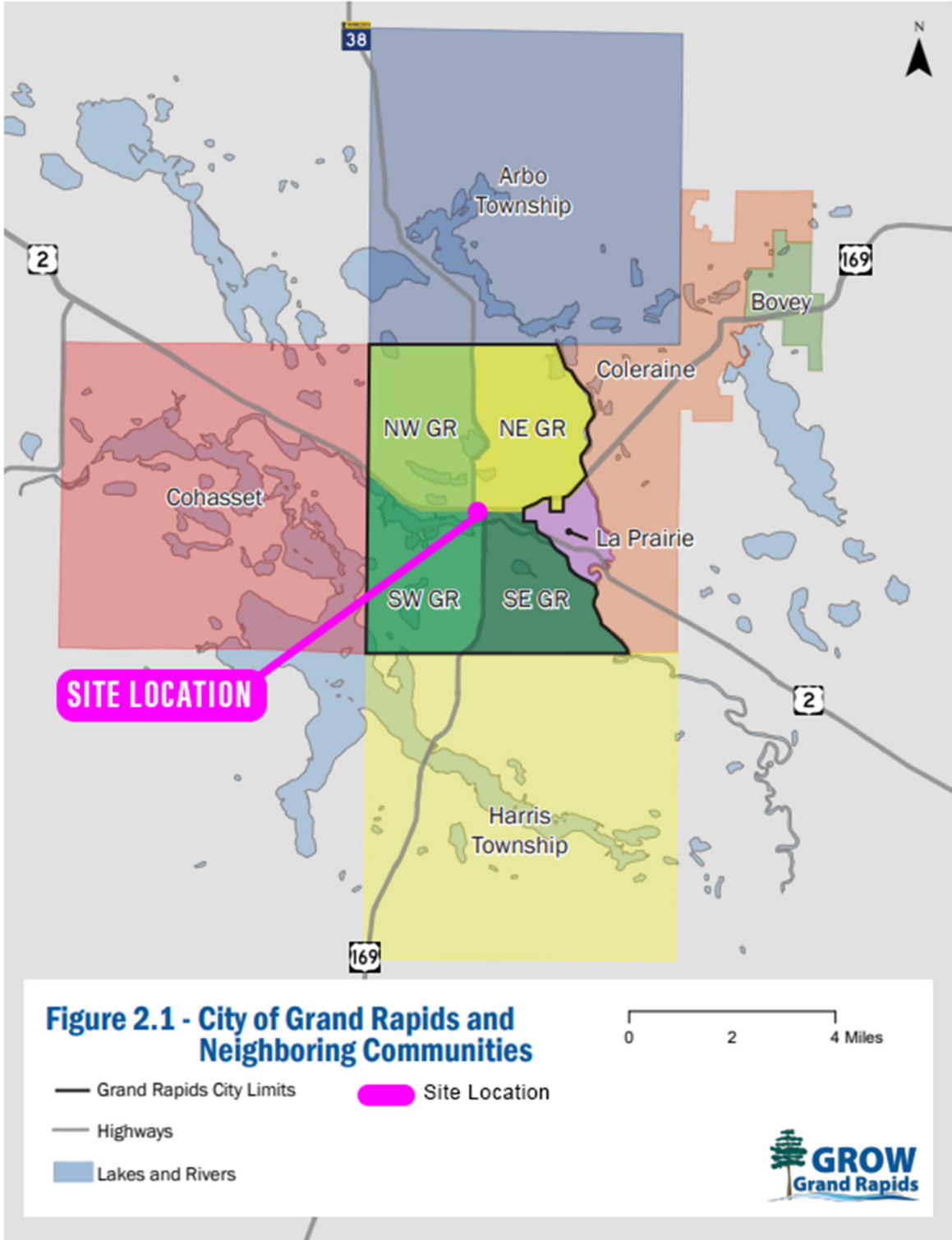


Figure 9. Existing Land Use – City Wide

Note: The Depiction above is for all of Grand Rapids. The main city core will be illustrated in the next image.

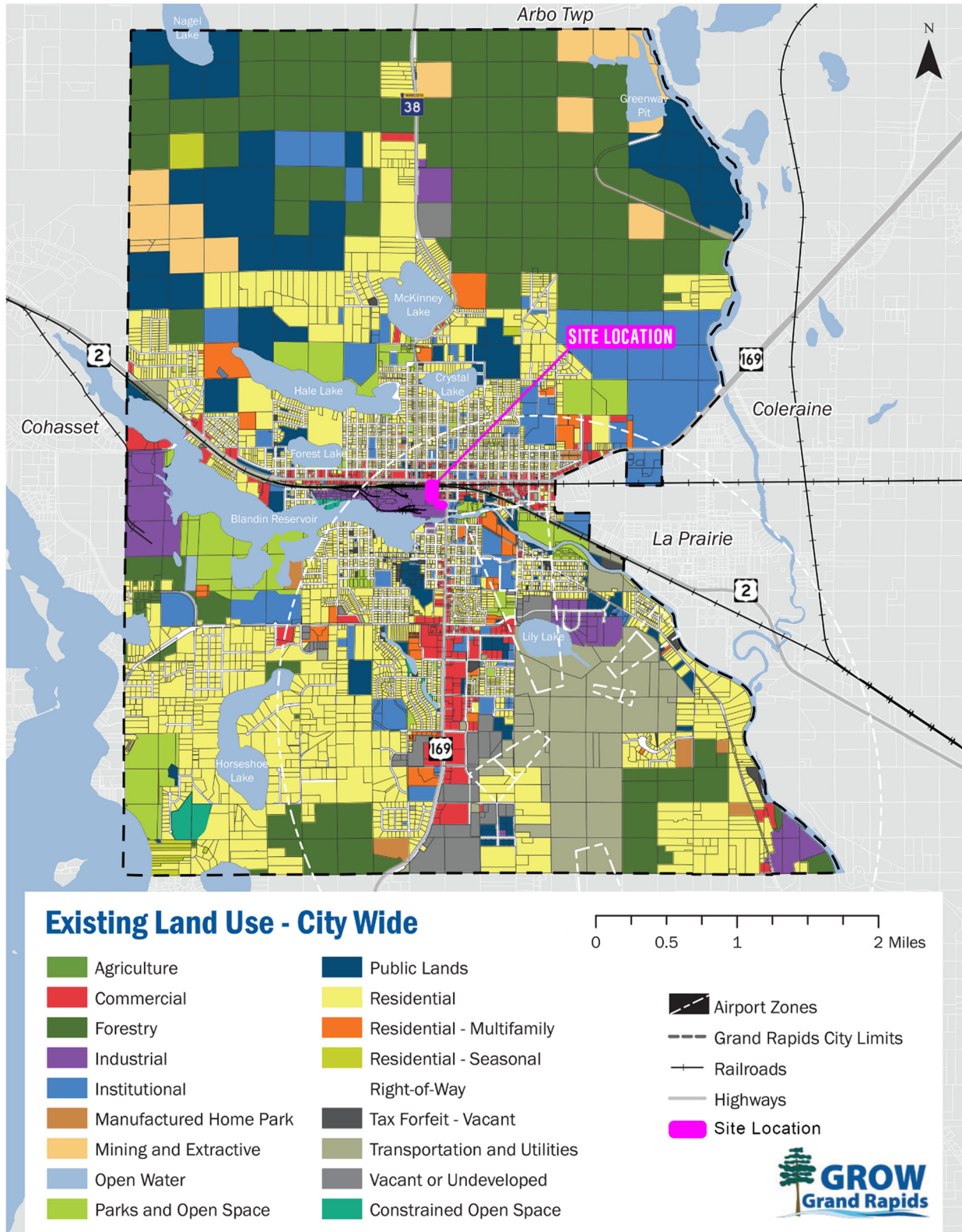


Figure 10. Existing Land Use – City Wide

Note: The Depiction above is for all of Grand Rapids. The main city core will be illustrated in the next image.

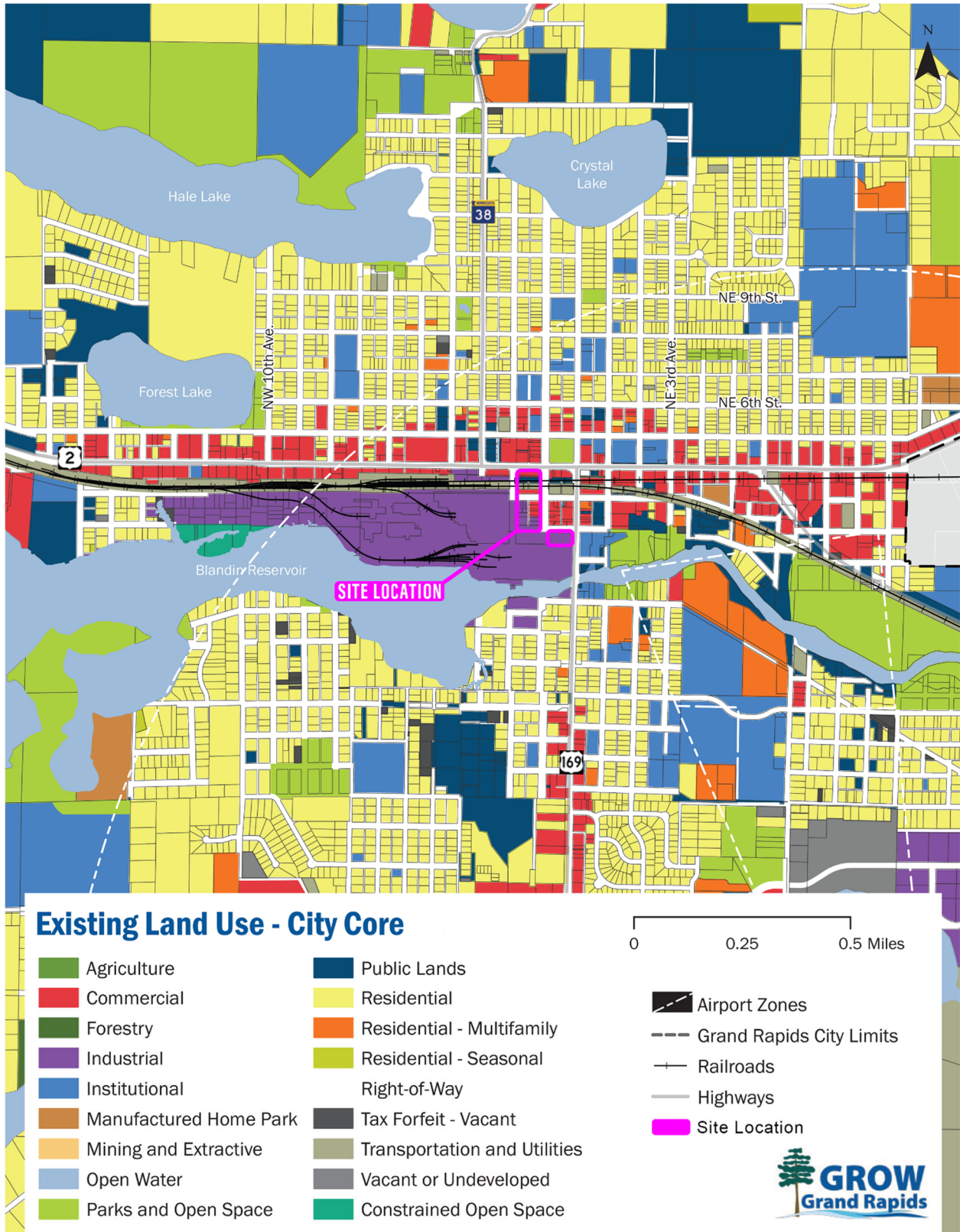


Figure 11. Existing Land Use – City Core

Note: The Depiction above is for the city core of Grand Rapids, MN.

### **3.3. Downtown Grand Rapids**

The city of Grand rapids has had recent additions of third places, one located in the downtown sector. Through observation and conversations with locals there is an evident need for more third places. The ones that currently exist are well appreciated by the people of Grand Rapids. The addition of a central hub of third places downtown would boost the livelihood of the downtown district and bring the community together. There are also potential sites located outside of city limits that would benefit from an addition of a third place.

### **3.4. Specific Site**

#### **3.4.1. Site Selection**

There are three potential sites that could be the location for the final design. Each one is unique and has aspects that make it a sufficient site in different ways. When comparing the sites, three qualities were used to compare and contrast them to understand the differences. These qualities are *Proximity*, *Potential Uses*, and *Size*. These are basic qualities that ultimately have the ability to alter the outcome of the final project. The proximity of the site to downtown Grand Rapids and other third places is very important. The sites location is well located to be accessible by pedestrian travel as well as being near public transportation. With this in mind it will be more accessible by all kinds of people. The potential uses is a preliminary assessment based on the zoning and the surrounding area, which helps determine the value of the site. Lastly, the size of the site is recorded. The size of the site directly influences the way it can be used and what kind of third place would best be used on the site.

Table 1: Site Selection

<b>SITE</b>	<b>PROXIMITY</b>	<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<b>SIZE</b>
<i>Cohasset Lumber Yard</i>	4.7 miles from downtown. Nothing close enough to walk to.	General Business. Wedding Venue Open Market Multiple little shops	24.1 Acres (1,049,796sf)
<i>Downtown Hub</i>	Central to downtown. Walkability to everything.	Central Business. There are many buildings existing. Anything could be there.	2.6 Acres (113,256sf)
<i>710 Plot</i>	3/4 miles from downtown. Near other third places.	General Business. Large open market. One building with many third places.	1.9 Acres (82,764sf)

Note: The above table is a simple matrix for analyzing and comparing the three potential sites for my final project.

The table was reviewed, one site stood out above the rest, the *Downtown Hub*. It is close to other third places, which allows more foot traffic. It is also a dense area which is good for having many different kinds of places utilized. Having many kinds of space available to be used in different ways makes it a valuable site for a third-place hub.

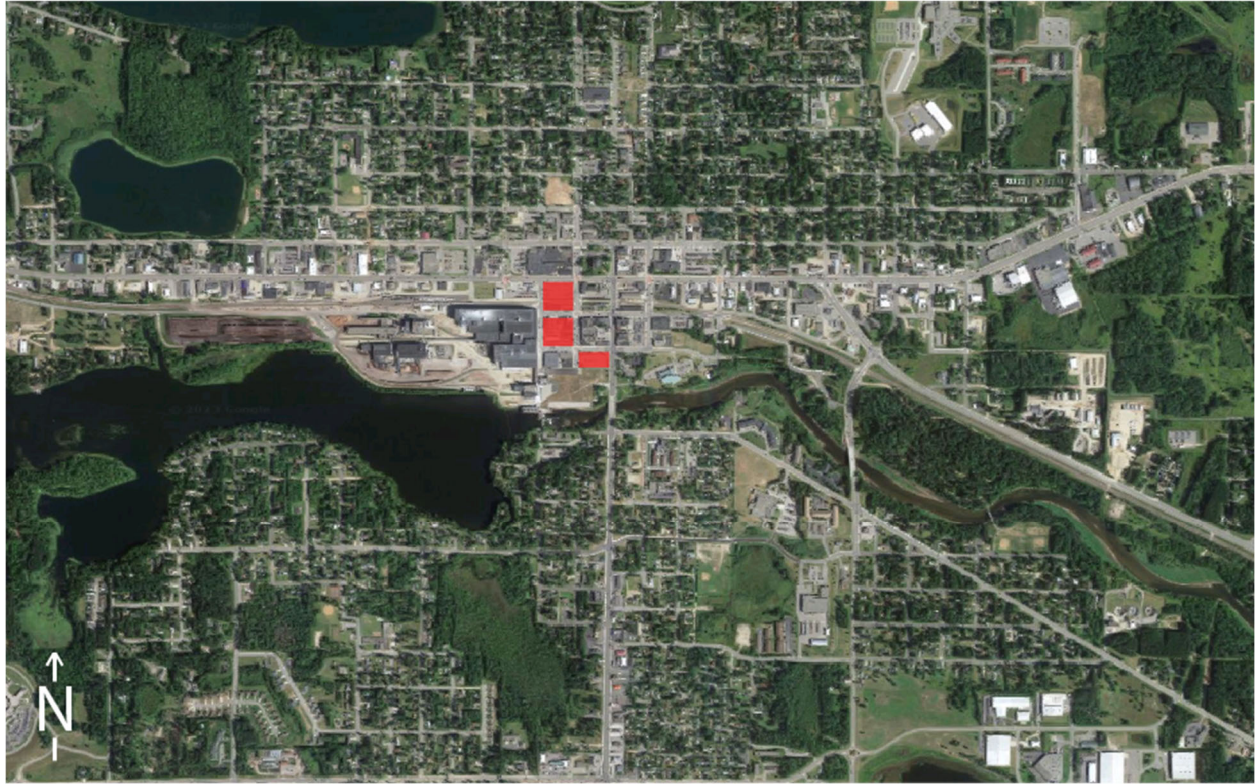


Figure 12. Site Location, Grand Rapids – Minnesota

Note: This depicts the where the site is located in Grand Rapids, MN.



### 3.4.2. Grand Rapids Site Analysis

#### 3.4.2.1. Site Narrative

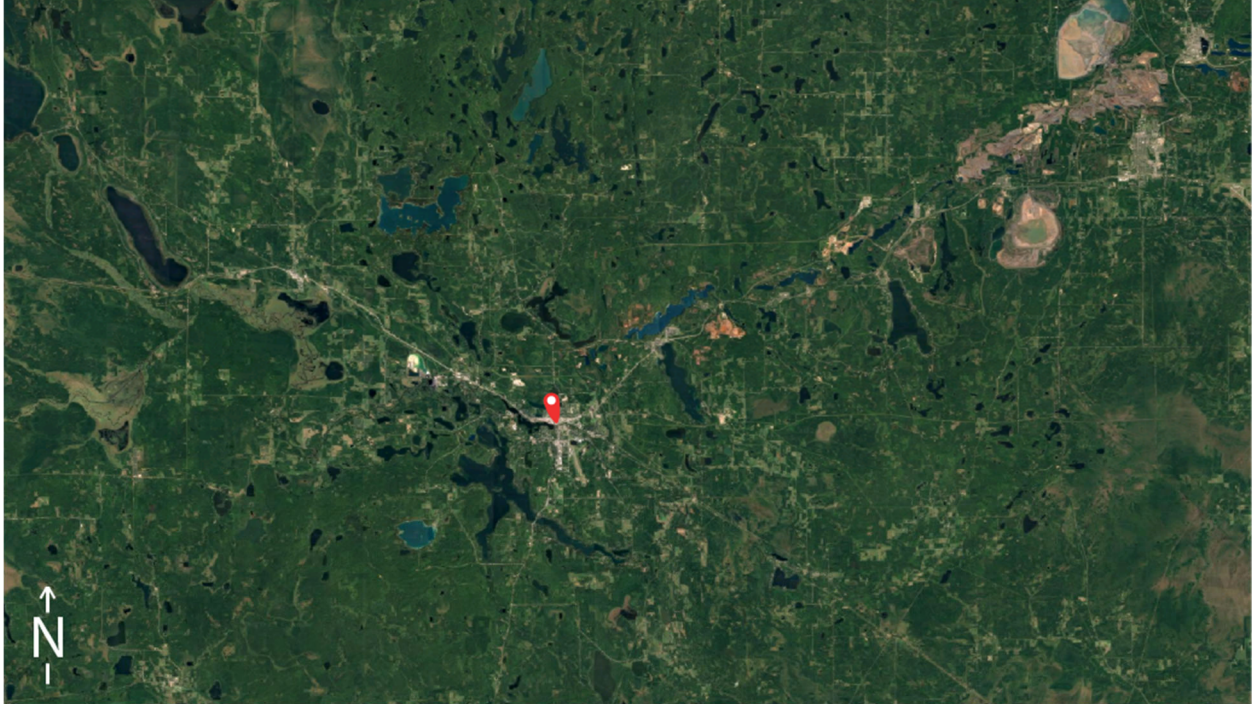


Figure 13. Grand Rapids, Minnesota

Note: This depicts the area of Grand Rapids, MN.

Grand Rapids is growing from a small logging town into a popular and attractive city. It is surrounded by amazingly pristine lakes, rolling hills and a breathtaking thick forest. There are miles and miles of trails surrounding Grand Rapids with scenic views and destinations scattered throughout the area. The Mississippi finds its way through the heart of the city, filling the area with the sound of rushing water. Grand Rapids provides all four seasons of the years making it a beautiful and destination year-round and has many activities to offer for each season. The people of Grand Rapids are simple people who enjoy the company of friends and family. They enjoy the creating surrounding them and the beauty found in the simple little things of life.

### 3.4.2.2. *History of the Site*

Grand Rapids Minnesota was settled in 1872 along three and a half miles of rapids in the Mississippi river. It grew in population as a logging town because the Mississippi provided an optimal method of log shipments to population centers. Blandin Paper Mill opened in 1902, which provided many jobs for the people who live there, and it still does. Grand Rapids sits neatly at the intersection of highway 169 and highway 2, making it a popular destination for tourism. Grand Rapids is a local place for people to travel to in the summertime from Minneapolis and Duluth. One building which is located on the south end of the site was a little hometown bakery called Janicke Bakery. It was a local favorite and brought many people to the area early in the morning. There were all kinds of pastries and treats, people talking, and life being shared between people.

Grand Rapids followed the layout of many other small towns in northern Minnesota. There was the main avenue and then many of the side streets on either side of main would have parking in the middle of the street. NW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. is the last street in Grand Rapids to maintain this parking system. NW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. used to be named *Kindred Avenue*. Just west of Kindred Avenue was Hoffman Avenue, and to the east was Legend Avenue. It makes the street have character and history, all avenues in Grand Rapids used to be named important people in the history of the town. The image below shows the original names of the avenues.



Figure 14. Grand Rapids, Minnesota 1897

Note: This depicts what Grand Rapids looked like in 1897, along with the original avenue names.

(Image 1 of Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Grand Rapids, Itasca County, Minnesota., n.d.)



Figure 15. Grand Rapids, Minnesota  
Note: Grand Rapids in 1940.



Figure 16. Grand Rapids, Minnesota  
Note: Grand Rapids in 2013.



Figure 17. Grand Rapids, Minnesota  
Note: Grand Rapids in 2023.

### ***3.4.2.3. Site Character***

Being in a downtown location the character of the site is compact and lacking natural green spaces. There are no buildings blocking the sun on the south end of the site, which allows for lots of sunlight to hit the site throughout most of the day. There is a large hill which begins to rise on the south bank of the Mississippi. This hill can influence the amount of sunlight that reaches the site in the winter months. This is shown in the images below.

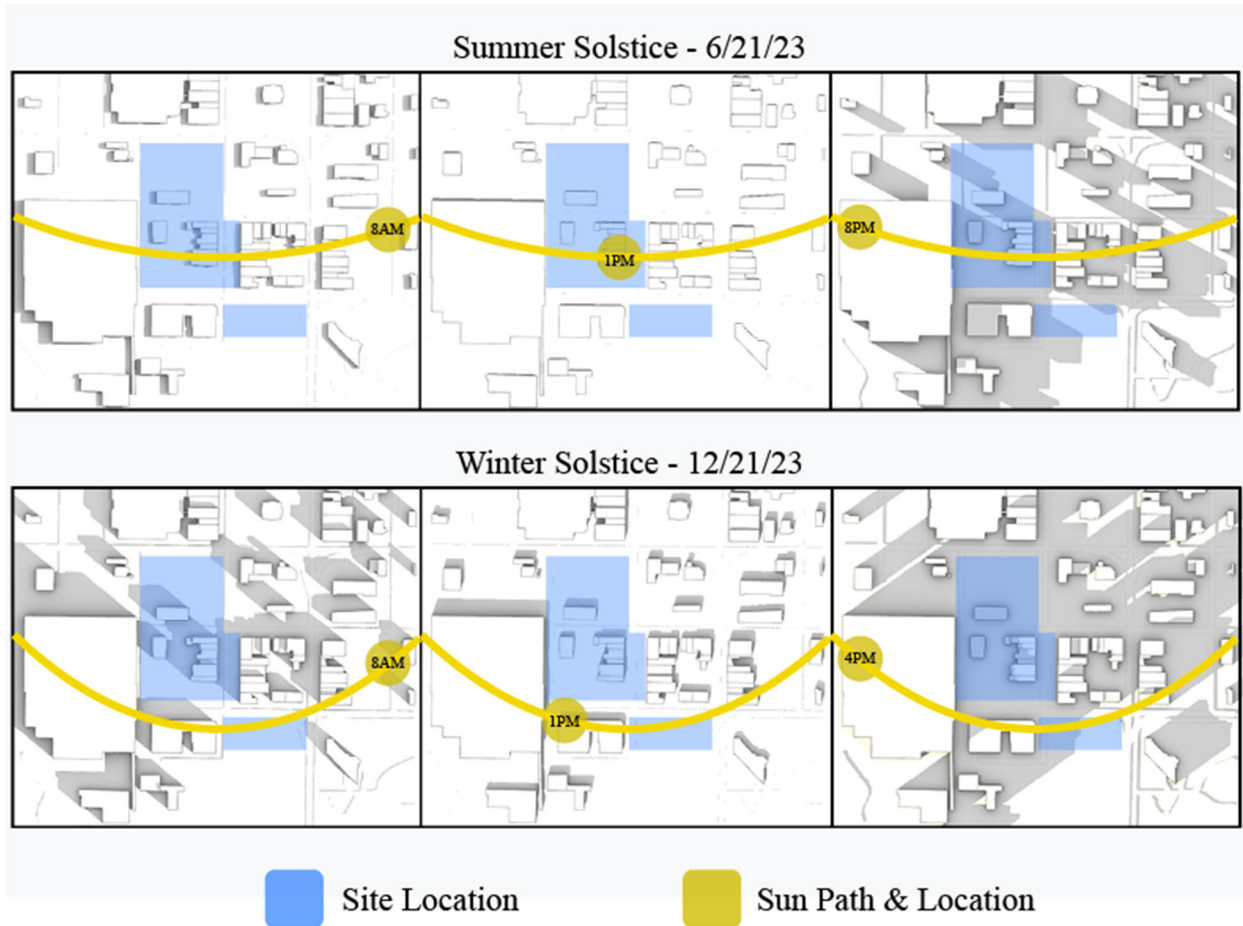


Figure 18. Sun Path & Location – Grand Rapids, MN

Note: The image shows both the summer and winter solstice at three different times throughout the day.

Due to the location of the site, already having been developed and excavated a few times the site exists fairly flat. There are very limited trees and almost no green space existing. There are no places to sit or to take leisure. The buildings that do exist replicate storefronts from the 50's. The materials used to make these storefronts are mainly brick, wood, metal, stucco. However, each building has its own finish and coloring.



Figure 19. Storefront on the Site – Google Maps  
Note: The image shows the storefronts of the site in Grand Rapids.

The streets are populated with many historic light poles. Grand Rapids downtown has these all over, which gives the city more character. There are typically flowers hung on the light poles in the summertime, when it nears Christmas, the city decorates by assigning each light pole a snowflake, reef, or Christmas tree.



Figure 20. Light Poles – Google Maps  
Note: This is an image of the light poles in Grand Rapids, MN





Figure 21. Street View – Google Maps

Note: The image shows the street the site is on in Grand Rapids.

#### **3.4.2.4. *Weather Patterns***

Located in Northern Minnesota, Grand Rapids has snow heavy winters and beautiful summers. Temperatures can get as low as -3 on average, the coldest days can reach -25. In the summer months temperatures average in the 80's, with the extreme closer to one 100 degrees.

*(Weather Averages Grand Rapids, Minnesota, n.d.)*

Climate data for Grand Rapids, Minnesota (1991–2020 normals, records 1915–present)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °F (°C)	51 (11)	61 (16)	80 (27)	93 (34)	101 (38)	100 (38)	104 (40)	100 (38)	99 (37)	89 (32)	74 (23)	59 (15)	104 (40)
Mean maximum °F (°C)	41.0 (5.0)	47.3 (8.5)	60.9 (16.1)	75.1 (23.9)	86.2 (30.1)	89.2 (31.8)	91.0 (32.8)	90.0 (32.2)	85.4 (29.7)	76.9 (24.9)	56.6 (13.7)	42.1 (5.6)	93.0 (33.9)
Average high °F (°C)	18.9 (-7.3)	25.7 (-3.5)	38.8 (3.8)	52.6 (11.4)	66.1 (18.9)	75.2 (24.0)	79.7 (26.5)	77.8 (25.4)	68.1 (20.1)	52.8 (11.6)	36.1 (2.3)	23.1 (-4.9)	51.2 (10.7)
Daily mean °F (°C)	8.7 (-12.9)	13.9 (-10.1)	27.1 (-2.7)	40.3 (4.6)	53.2 (11.8)	62.9 (17.2)	67.6 (19.8)	65.5 (18.6)	56.4 (13.6)	43.1 (6.2)	28.1 (-2.2)	14.8 (-9.6)	40.1 (4.5)
Average low °F (°C)	-1.5 (-18.6)	2.1 (-16.6)	15.4 (-9.2)	28.0 (-2.2)	40.2 (4.6)	50.5 (10.3)	55.4 (13.0)	53.2 (11.8)	44.7 (7.1)	33.3 (0.7)	20.1 (-6.6)	6.5 (-14.2)	29.0 (-1.7)
Mean minimum °F (°C)	-26.4 (-32.4)	-21.5 (-29.7)	-10.5 (-23.6)	13.9 (-10.1)	27.2 (-2.7)	37.8 (3.2)	44.9 (7.2)	42.1 (5.6)	30.3 (-0.9)	20.3 (-6.5)	1.5 (-16.9)	-18.5 (-28.1)	-29.0 (-33.9)
Record low °F (°C)	-51 (-46)	-45 (-43)	-39 (-39)	-10 (-23)	11 (-12)	24 (-4)	33 (1)	27 (-3)	15 (-9)	-3 (-19)	-25 (-32)	-45 (-43)	-51 (-46)
Average precipitation inches (mm)	0.97 (25)	0.85 (22)	1.33 (34)	2.10 (53)	3.23 (82)	4.70 (119)	4.14 (105)	3.40 (86)	3.05 (77)	2.79 (71)	1.59 (40)	1.23 (31)	29.38 (746)
Average snowfall inches (cm)	12.2 (31)	9.7 (25)	7.5 (19)	5.6 (14)	0.2 (0.51)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	2.0 (5.1)	9.0 (23)	13.4 (34)	59.6 (151)
Average extreme snow depth inches (cm)	15.0 (38)	18.1 (46)	16.7 (42)	5.9 (15)	0.1 (0.25)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.9 (2.3)	5.6 (14)	10.2 (26)	19.6 (50)
Average precipitation days (≥ 0.01 in)	10.9	8.8	8.4	9.8	12.7	13.5	12.2	10.4	11.4	11.3	10.6	11.7	131.7
Average snowy days (≥ 0.1 in)	11.5	8.7	6.3	3.8	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	7.3	11.8	51.4

Figure 22. Climate in Grand Rapids, Minnesota  
 Note: This information was found here:  
 (US Department of Commerce, n.d.)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Average high in °F	19	26	38	54	67	76
Average low in °F	-3	2	16	30	41	51
Av. precipitation in inch	0.93	0.64	1.32	2.07	3.09	4.37
Av. snowfall in inch	13	7	8	4	0	0

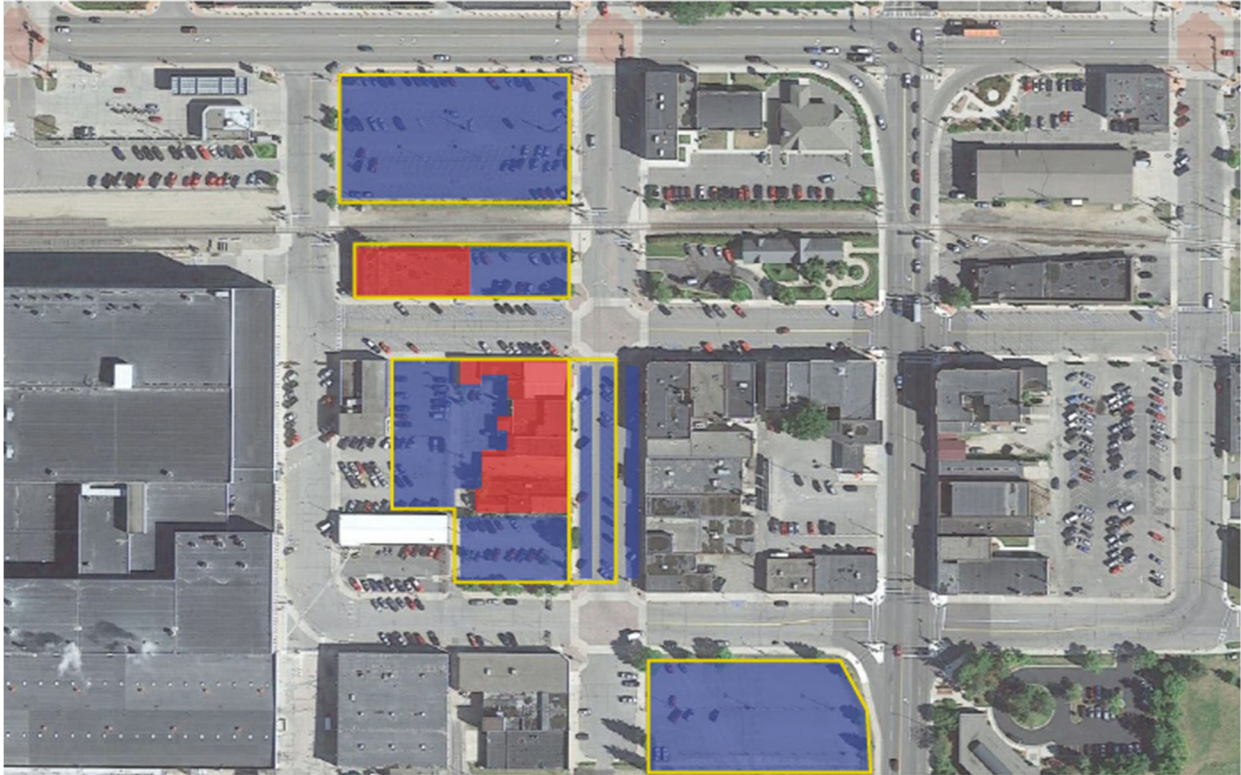
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average high in °F	80	78	68	54	37	22
Average low in °F	56	54	45	33	20	4
Av. precipitation in inch	4.29	3.41	3.32	2.81	1.61	1.07
Av. snowfall in inch	0	0	0	2	10	13

Figure 23. Climate Grand Rapids – Minnesota

Note: These are only averages, the temperature can vary higher and lower than depicted above. Grand Rapids receives about 26in/year and 45in/year respectively. Snow removal is a problem every year, inevitably a dozen parking lots are filled with piles of dirty snow. (Weather Averages Grand Rapids, Minnesota, n.d.)

#### 3.4.2.5. *Human Characteristics*

There are a total of nine buildings located throughout the site. Only two of the nine buildings are currently in use. These two companies will be able to stay within the site. However, their buildings will undergo a potential remodel, with the potential of being relocated on the site to accommodate the best use of space.



 Existing Buildings       Existing Parking       Proposed Site Boundaries

Figure 24. Human Characteristics

Note: The image shows human characteristics on the site.  
(City of Grand Rapids Municipal Code, n.d.)

The site is very large and consists of more than one block. The zoning is mainly Central business with only the southern section being Shoreland General Industrial Park. The bottom section is the most detached and is the only section of the proposed site and is the only part zoned in Shoreland General Industrial Park. Being that the majority of my site is Central Business there is very little restriction on the typology of the third places allowed in the space. The use of case studies will help determine which types of space will be most appreciated within the space.

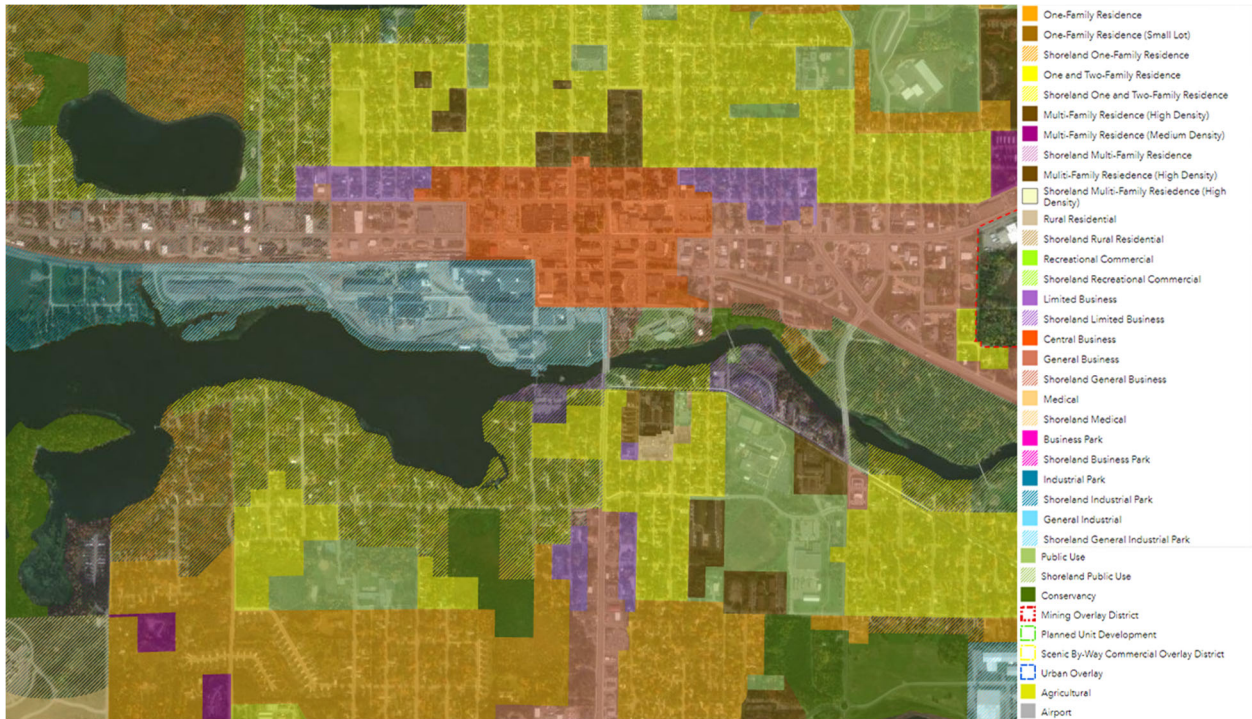


Figure 25. Zoning Map

Note: The image shows the zoning of Grand Rapids (City of Grand Rapids Municipal Code, n.d.)

### 3.5. Any Other Pertinent Research

The Great Good Places wrote by Ray Oldenburg was and still is the most prevalent resource for *Third Places*. There are many student articles, professional articles and research, but the one thing they all have in common is that they pulled information from Oldenburg's work.

### 3.6. Case Studies

Case studies will allow for an additional understanding of how well each type of third place below functions as a space which builds community. This will be conducted by looking at each case study with three questions in mind. (1) Can the space be used for various uses by the user? (2) Is the location of the space within a walkable distance to other third places? (3) What is the cost of being accepted in the space?

### **3.6.1. Coffee Shops**

As discussed earlier with the example of Twenty Below Coffee, a coffee shop located in Fargo North Dakota. Coffee shops often allow for all kinds of activities and uses due to the fact that it is an informal public space. This makes coffee shops a versatile option to implement into a community to be inclusive and accepting to many people. Below are listed a few coffee shops visited to observe how people interacted with the space.

#### ***3.6.1.1. Twenty Below Coffee***

Twenty Below Coffee is a small coffee shop in Fargo, North Dakota. In 2021 they opened a second location across the Red River in Moorhead, Minnesota. When visiting either location, you will find a common quality, a space provided which offers plenty of ability to interact in unique ways with other people there at each location. For this case study the Fargo the Fargo location was the main focus.



Figure 26. Twenty Below Coffee, Fargo ND.

Note: This picture shows the entire space available at Twenty Below Fargo, ND.

### *3.6.1.1.1. Architectural Qualities*

Twenty Below Coffee is in a thriving downtown which unlike most urban centers in America valued their story rich historic buildings that were there when the city was established. Twenty below is in a historic building with a small street storefront, the depth of the space is four of the storefronts put together. Inside the coffee shop there is modern drywall and hard wood floors. There is a bay window on the east side of the shop which lets in the only natural light the shop receives all day. The craftsmanship of the interior space and furniture brings a unique quality to the coffee shop. The woodwork on the accent wall, paired with the handmade tables, stools, shelves, and mugs, creates an atmosphere different from most other coffee shops. It is

these little details that set Twenty Below apart from mainstream coffee shops. It is also these key aspects of craftsmanship that brings people back to the locally owned coffee shop. A place which creates a unique experience for the user, set apart and only available in your community.

#### *3.6.1.1.2. Questions*

*1 - Can the space be used for various uses by the user?*

Yes, the coffee shop has seating for all kinds of users. There is seating which invites a large party of people to congregate on a set of couches with a table between them. As well as one-to-two-person seating, intended for the people who need to work and not be bothered. They have a large table for many people to use at the same time. Most importantly there is no time limit for being in the shop. I have tested this by sitting there myself for the better part of four hours.

*2 - Is the location of the space within a walkable distance to other third places?*

Twenty Below Coffee is located in the midst of downtown Fargo, ND. It is on the west side of Roberts Street just north of NP Ave. With this location the shops receive lots of foot traffic from the North Dakota State University school building on the south side of NP Ave. It is also near the heart of downtown Fargo which brings all kinds of businesspeople into the coffee shop.

*3 - What is the cost of being accepted in the space?*

Being a coffee shop the cost of being there is roughly 3-8 U.S. dollars depending on what you order. Through observation it was concluded the coffee shop could be attended without buying anything. However, the feeling that something needed to be bought in order to stay long was felt. Whether or not they ask you to leave you will begin to feel the pressure of 'wrongfully'



using their space. There is an expectation to buy the goods they sell to have the right to use the space as you wish.

### **3.6.1.2. NoPo Kitchen**

NoPo Kitchen is a small café that offers pastries, sandwiches, coffee drinks as well as alcoholic drinks. By offering such a variety of goods NoPo is able to be open and remain busy longer and later into the night. They close at 9pm most days. It is a modern take on the old café.



Figure 27. NoPo Kitchen, Grand Rapids, MN.

Note: This picture shows the entire space available at NoPo Kitchen in Grand Rapids, MN

#### **3.6.1.2.1. Architectural Qualities**

The interior design of NoPo Kitchen is a very modern and contemporary style paired with the elegance of vintage café styles. It is in the middle of a new build development which is part of the expanding of Grand Rapids, MN. There is comfortable diffused light from the north facing windows. This, however, is the only natural light allowed into the space. Since there is only diffused light it limits the amount of glare on computer screens which benefits students and

people who are working there. The dark paint and diffused light can create a very dark atmosphere.

#### *3.6.1.2.2. Questions*

*1 - Can the space be used for various uses by the user?*

Yes, similar to Twenty Below there are a variety of ways to use the space along with differing types of seating. NoPo along with most all coffee shops does not request you to leave after a certain amount of time.

*2 - Is the location of the space within a walkable distance to other third places?*

There is some space in the development that NoPo resides in. However, there is not as many as what is best for foot traffic and accessibility for different kinds of people. The development is a five-minute drive from any other leisure space.

*3 - What is the cost of being accepted in the space?*

The cost of the product you purchase, which can vary from 3-8 U.S. dollars. There is more expensive products to purchase but the most common price is relatively the same as most coffee shops.

### **3.6.2. Breweries**

As discussed earlier, breweries allow for a certain kind of activity, mainly enjoying a few drinks while conversating with close friends. This can make breweries a third place that does not allow for differing experiences of the space provided. However, breweries do offer unique experiences due to the leisure quality of the space. Yes, you are mainly provided beer, but you are also able to use the space to however it best accommodates your group. Below are listed a few breweries visited to observe for research. This research showed how people interacted with the space.

### ***3.6.2.1. Rapids Brewing Company***

Rapids Brewing Co. is located in Grand Rapids, MN. It is on east side of highway 169 in the heart of Grand Rapids. In the summer months the brewery utilizes its open space on the north side of the building. It is a hopping place being the only brewery in Grand Rapids. It is also one of the first repurposing projects that Grand Rapids has seen, which makes it a local favorite to frequent.



Figure 28: Rapids Brewing Co. Grand Rapids, MN.

Note: This shows the main entrance to the brewery, along with a brief look at the outdoor seating area.

#### ***3.6.2.1.1. Architectural Qualities***

Rapids Brewing Co. is a beautifully repurposed building in downtown Grand Rapids. It is a combination of the existing brick building acting as the main indoor gathering space, along with the newly constructed kitchen situated neatly adjacent to the original building. This Kitchen being added onto the north side of the building allows for privacy for the outdoor seating from the parking lot. It also stitches together the new modern design with the historic building which already existed.



Figure 29: Rapids Brewing Co. Grand Rapids, MN.  
Note: This shows the interior of the brewery.

### 3.6.2.1.2. Questions

1 - Can the space be used for various uses by the user?

Yes and no, there is lots of space inside and outside, however, the main purpose of the brewery is to drink beer or eat food. With the outdoor space there is the potential to bring your own food and drink the beers on tap. It is not a space which invites people to spend multiple hours editing photos or working on homework. The music is loud, and the atmosphere is full of energy, usually filled with people destressing after a long day of work. There are two stages, one indoor and the other outdoors. This allows for local musicians and nationally recognized artists to play concerts and display their talents for the public.

2 - Is the location of the space within a walkable distance to other third places?

Yes, since it is located in the heart of downtown it is easy to reach all the other spaces and potential spaces around it. It is near other little local shops and store, along with a winery.

3 - What is the cost of being accepted in the space?

Since it is a brewery/restaurant the cost to enjoy its space and amenities includes at least a beer if not a meal as well. Unlike most restaurants, Rapids Brewing will not ask you to leave. They encourage you to stay and connect with other people.

### ***3.6.2.2. Bent Paddle Brewing Company***

Bent Paddle is a local brewery located just north of I-35 near the southern side of Duluth, MN. It is an energy-filled brewery in the midst of a historic section of the city. It is a quarter of a mile from the canal, and it butts up next to the railway.



Figure 30: Bent Paddle Brewing Co. Duluth, MN.

Note: This shows the Exterior of the brewery, and how the outdoor seating is available next to some greenery.

### 3.6.2.2.1. Architectural Qualities

The brewery is set within a old brick building with heavy timber framing. It is a building type of much scarcity, which makes it a very interesting destination to go to for the locals and the tourists who are on their way north to Grand Marais.

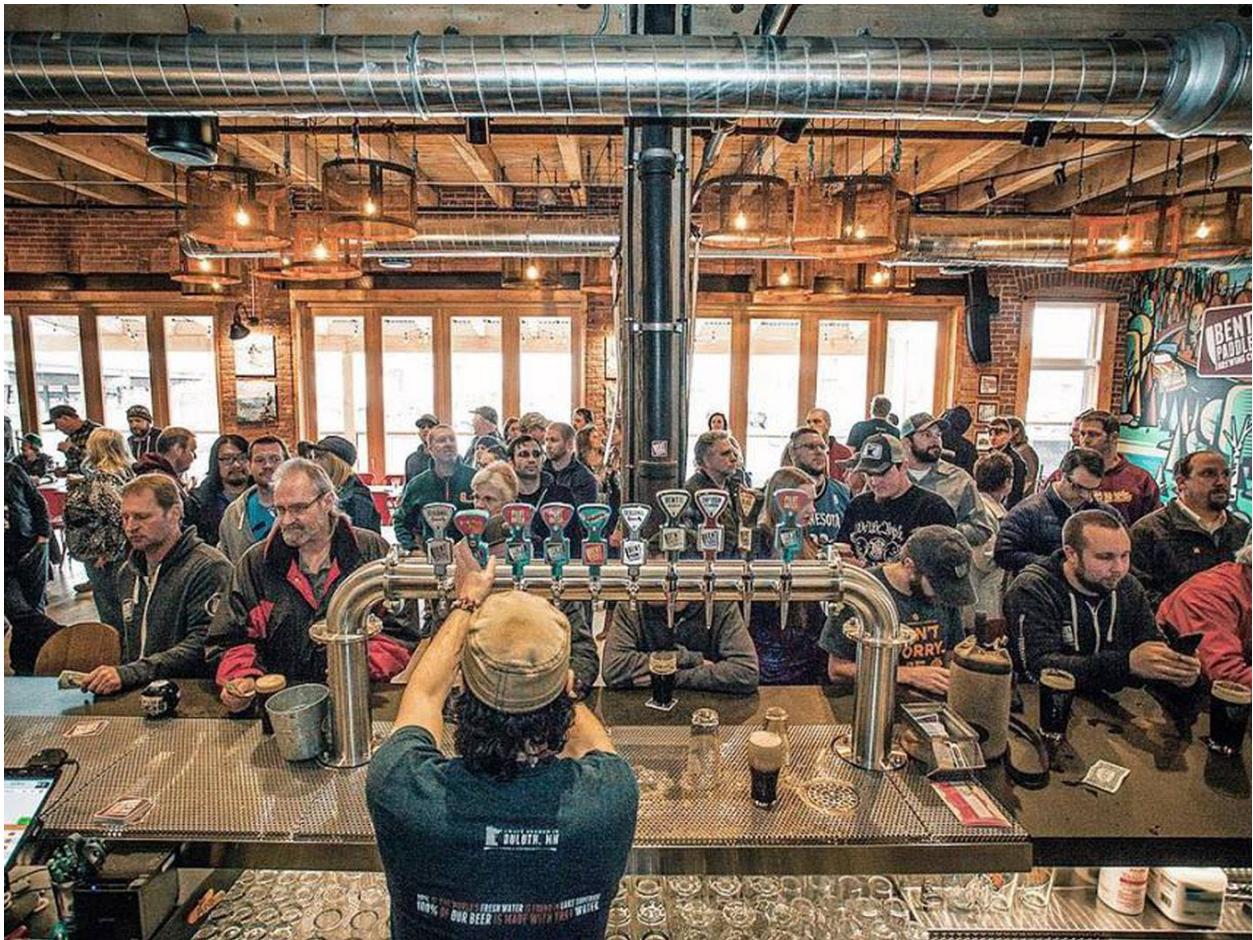


Figure 31: Bent Paddle Brewing Co. Duluth, MN.

Note: This shows the interior of the brewery.

### 3.6.2.2.2. Questions

1 - Can the space be used for various uses by the user?

Yes and no, similar to Rapids Brewing there is a main purpose to the space, which is to host people with beer and food. The space for Bent Paddle is not like a restaurant, there is a the

ability to stay awhile and enjoy the space for its uniqueness and appreciate the company you are with.

2 - Is the location of the space within a walkable distance to other third places?

Yes, across the street is located a coffee and tea place, 190 Coffee Tea. Just south of these two places is a tidy and inviting strip of shops ranging from cafés to meat and cheese shops and shoes stores. There is a grand selection of other space in a walkable distance from the brewery.

3 - What is the cost of being accepted in the space?

Bent Paddle differs from Rapids Brewing since there is no in-house food served. They do have vendors come in and sell different food products. However, since the main good sold is the craft beer the price to be there is as low as four dollars for a small beer, although the average price is five to ten dollars.

### **3.6.3. Public Markets**

Public markets are a rising trend in America, with locations being erected all over the country. The concept is similar to a mall, yet the function and atmosphere is in incredible contrast to that of the mall, which had become popular in the fifties. The public/open market is more open and freer flowing, it allows for more diverse spaces to occupy within its walls. The ability holds both large and small events is much more flexible.

#### **3.6.3.1. Brewhalla**

Brewhalla is an open market which is sprinkled inside a variety of local shops. It also provides the second floor with a large open space which is scattered with different types of seating. It is a large building with plenty of space for all kinds of activities and events.



Figure 32: Brewhalla. Fargo, ND.

Note: The image above depicts the entrance and exterior of the building.

### *3.6.3.1.1. Architectural Qualities*

Brewhalla is a contemporary steel building with very modern characteristics. It has multiple types of metal panel siding and is accented with a vertical form wrapped in Corten steel. The structure is exposed to the interior which emulates a modern industrial warehouse. It is a four-story building with a ground level of retail stores and shops, the second level is mainly open seating as well as a event space and breakout work rooms.





Figure 33: Interior of Brewhalla. Fargo, ND.

Note: The image above depicts the how the space is used within the building.

### 3.6.3.1.2. Questions

1 - Can the space be used for various uses by the user?

Yes, there is a lot of space on the second floor which allows for all kinds of use. There is space for individuals and large groups, and there is even space for organizations to hold events and meetings there.

2 - Is the location of the space within a walkable distance to other third places?

No, it is located on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. just west of downtown Fargo. There is very limited access to other third places. There is Drekker Brewing Company connected through a walkway. However, it does not act as a separate space since it is owned as the same company.

### 3 - What is the cost of being accepted in the space?

This space in particular is actually a free space to attend. I have when there many times myself and purchased nothing from any of the shops and stayed there for 8 plus hours without being asked to leave. There is an ability to enjoy the space without purchasing any goods.

#### 3.6.4. Case Studies Conclusions

Table 2: Side-by-Side Case Studies

<i>Case Study</i>	<b>Use of Space</b>	<b>Allows for Leisure</b>	<b>Cost to Participate</b>
<i>Twenty Below</i>	Coffee Shop	Yes. Multiple seating options.	\$3-\$8 Minimum
<i>NoPo Coffee Co.</i>	Coffee Shop	Yes. Limited seating.	\$3-\$8 Minimum
<i>Rapids Brewing Co.</i>	Brewery	Yes. Limited hours.	\$5-\$10 Minimum
<i>Bent Paddle Brewing Co.</i>	Brewery	Yes. Limited Hours	\$5-\$10 Minimum
<i>Brewhalla</i>	Open Market	Yes. Plethora amounts of seating.	Free

Note: The above table compares each space observed side-by-side to visually see the differences between third places.

##### 3.6.4.1. Coffee Shop Conclusion

Through observation coffee shops were studied, the results found that they are one of the most appreciated and popular third places. They provide space that can be used in many ways and the exact use is up to the individual(s) using the space provided. They also have a very affordable price tag tied to the product they provide. There is no “correct” duration of time you should or should not spend there. The acceptance of people staying all day is unmatched

anywhere else. They also provide a atmosphere which invites intimate connections and conversations to take place.

#### ***3.6.4.2. Brewery Conclusions***

Breweries are a right behind coffee shops in how they are appreciated within the communities they are in. Breweries are again a place where the individual enters the space and immediately feels the freedom to use the space in a manner which best accommodates their needs and desires. A couple downfalls breweries have when compared to other popular third places are the hours of operation. More often than not breweries are only open from four in the afternoon until nine or ten. They open much later in the day than other third places, however, they stay open later than most third places.

#### ***3.6.4.3. Public Market Conclusions***

Public markets are new trending space in America. They are these spaces that house all kinds of third places, and often hold many events and have the ability to create memorable times within a community. Because they typically have both morning third places (coffee shops) and evening third places (breweries), they become the a happy medium for everyone. They are open early and provide a space during the day for people to work from, as well as staying open late which provides a night life for the community. All this can take place in on building/space because it has multiple spaces within one larger space.

### **3.7. Detailed Space Program**

Through the research and case studies that were conducted, the conclusion of which spaces best provide people with a place to connect was found. There are three spaces intended to be included in the final design solution. There will be a brewery or distillery implemented because Grand Rapids does not have a distillery yet. As well as the intention of including a

coffee shop as well as a café. Moreover, there will be a larger central space which functions as a public market. Added green space, so that outdoor activities can take place with more accessibility. Due to the expected increase in parking demand, and the removal of surface level parking lots there will be a parking garage on the southwest corner of the lot to provide parking for the spaces nearby, as well as replace the parking that will be removed which is for Blandin employees. There is currently a gym located on the site which will stay or be relocated somewhere else on the site. As well as some offices, which will be accommodated for by including office space above the previous spaces.

## 4. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1. Final Project Description

The final project design finds its fulfillment within an urban master plan of downtown Grand Rapids, MN. Along with a detailed design solution of a third place within the masterplan. The master plan implements a variety of design solutions through improved green spaces, removal of surface parking, revitalizing historic buildings, and implanting a handful of new build as well. A parking garage is also added in consideration of removing the current surface parking lots. The section of NW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. located directly east of the reimagined masterplan of the downtown block is also closed off to allow for a safer and quieter pedestrian area. This also provides ample space for greenery to be added throughout the site, which hopefully bleeds into the rest of the city.

Happy Bird is a further detailed and designed third place within the masterplan. It is a 6,500sf Bakery, Coffee Bar, Bookstore all in one. The space is designed for the community to involve themselves in other people's lives. It has ample space for connections to be made and current ones to further establish themselves throughout the building. The main purpose of Happy Bird is to build up true authentic physical connections between people, and to be a place of meeting and relaxation amid the busy schedules of life.

Happy Bird is a reuse project of two adjacent buildings in downtown Grand Rapids, MN. The two buildings have a historic downtown storefront appearance, which gives the space plenty of character. They tell a story through its material and historic architecture and construction methods. Considering the historic value of the exterior of the buildings, Happy Bird is designed to be warm and cozy, providing a welcoming atmosphere for its users. There is a fireplace centrally located on the wall which joins the two separate buildings. This previously separating

wall is opened to create one space using the two exterior shells of the building. There is a Mezzanine located on the east side of the buildings allowing for a dynamic sense of space. It provides pockets of quiet intimate seating areas while also having large open spaces for groups and public uses. The west side of the building has glass garage doors, designed to open to the downtown plaza implanted through the masterplan. This creates a tie between the interior and the exterior of the building. There also three skylights located on the roof to allow for ample natural light to penetrate the building.

#### **4.2. Project Objection**

The purpose of the project, through its research and design solution, was to place importance on the physical third place. To bring awareness to the physical points of connection sprinkled throughout the cities and towns of America. Also, to communicate the way Americans under value the public spaces that function as public living rooms. That there is too much reliance on digital connections platforms, which are sadly leaving people feeling isolated and depressed, instead of connected and full of joy. The physical meeting places which are the third places, are essential in re-establishing a healthy authentic community founded on well-being and true connections through relationships with other people.

### 4.3. Project Design and Documentation

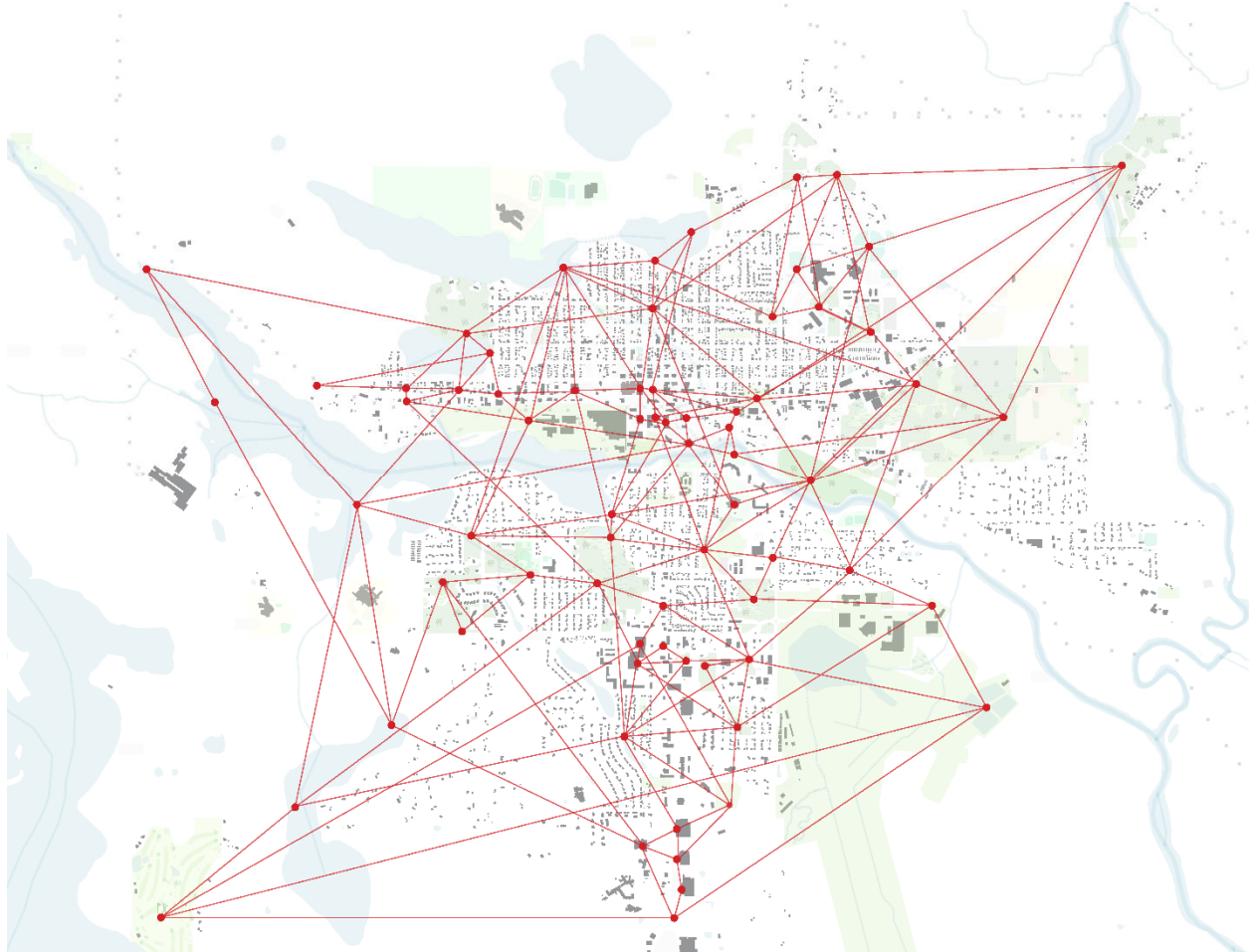


Figure 34: Brochure Image

Note: Masterplan of third places implemented throughout a city. A depiction of how interconnected the physical third place is, and how it builds connected communities.



Figure 35: Bench – A Physical Third Place

Note: Something as simple as a bench can be impactful for building community.





Figure 36: Picnic – A Physical Third Place

Note: Families can join in making a memory at the park.



Figure 37: Play – A Physical Third Place

Note: Physical activities often bring people together and establish authentic connection points through a game.

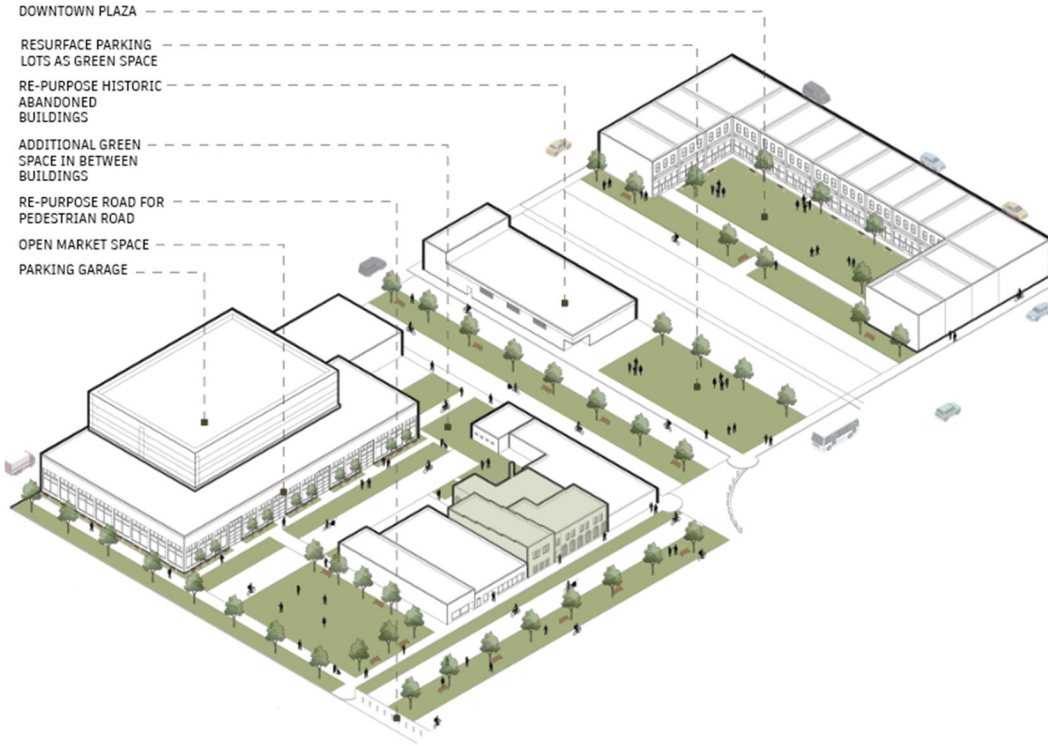


Figure 38: Masterplan Isometric of Downtown Block

Note: Masterplan of third places implemented throughout a city block. A depiction of how there should be less surface parking lots and more green space sprinkled in between the built environment.



Figure 39: Elevations and Sections

Note: Illustrates the individual third place designed within the masterplan shown above.



Figure 40: Elevations

Note: Closer look at the existing buildings being utilized and reused to become a third place.



Figure 41: Sections

Note: Closer look at the existing buildings being utilized and reused to become a third place.

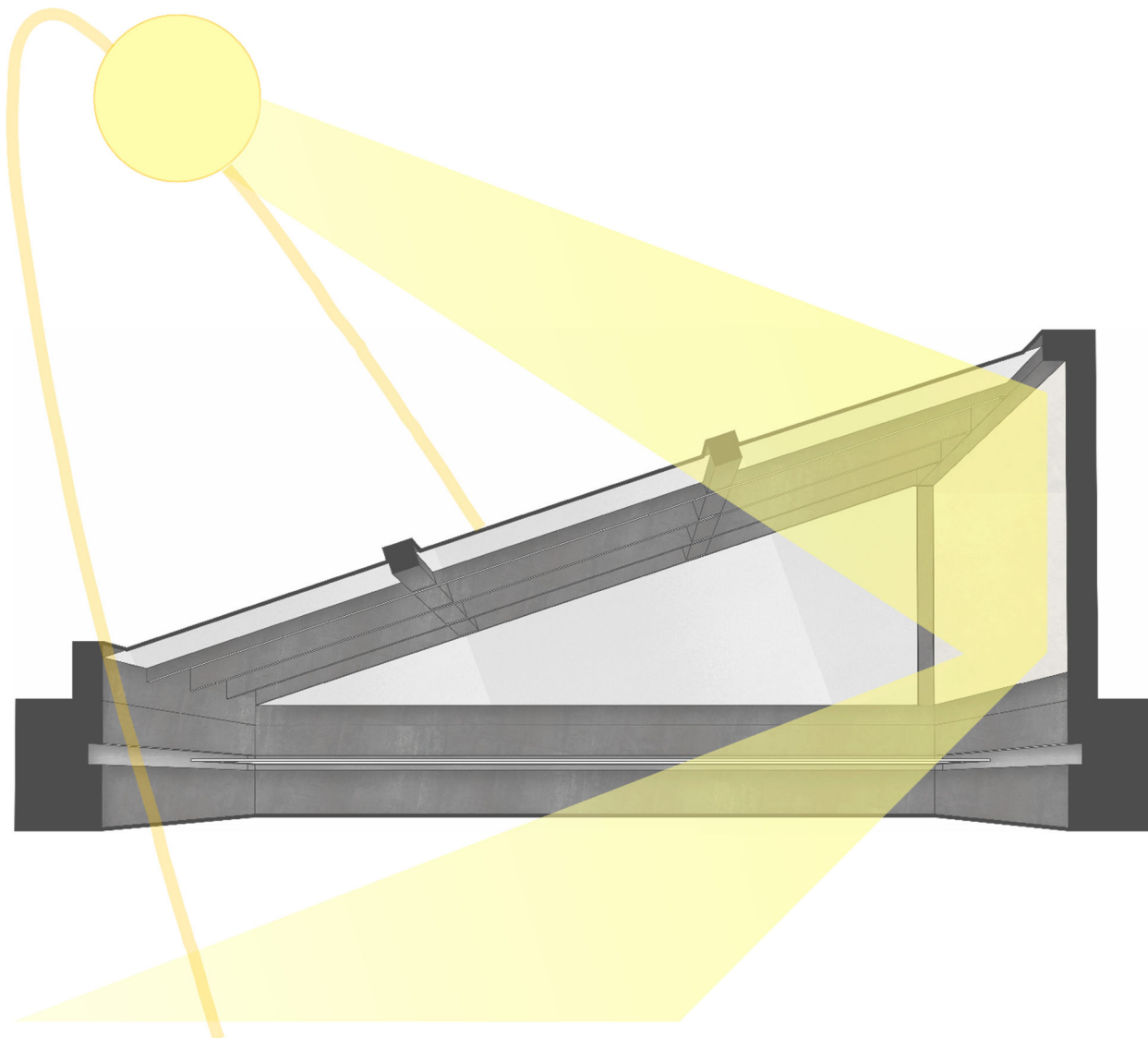


Figure 42: Skylight Section

Note: Three implemented on the roof to provide adequate natural lighting throughout the building.

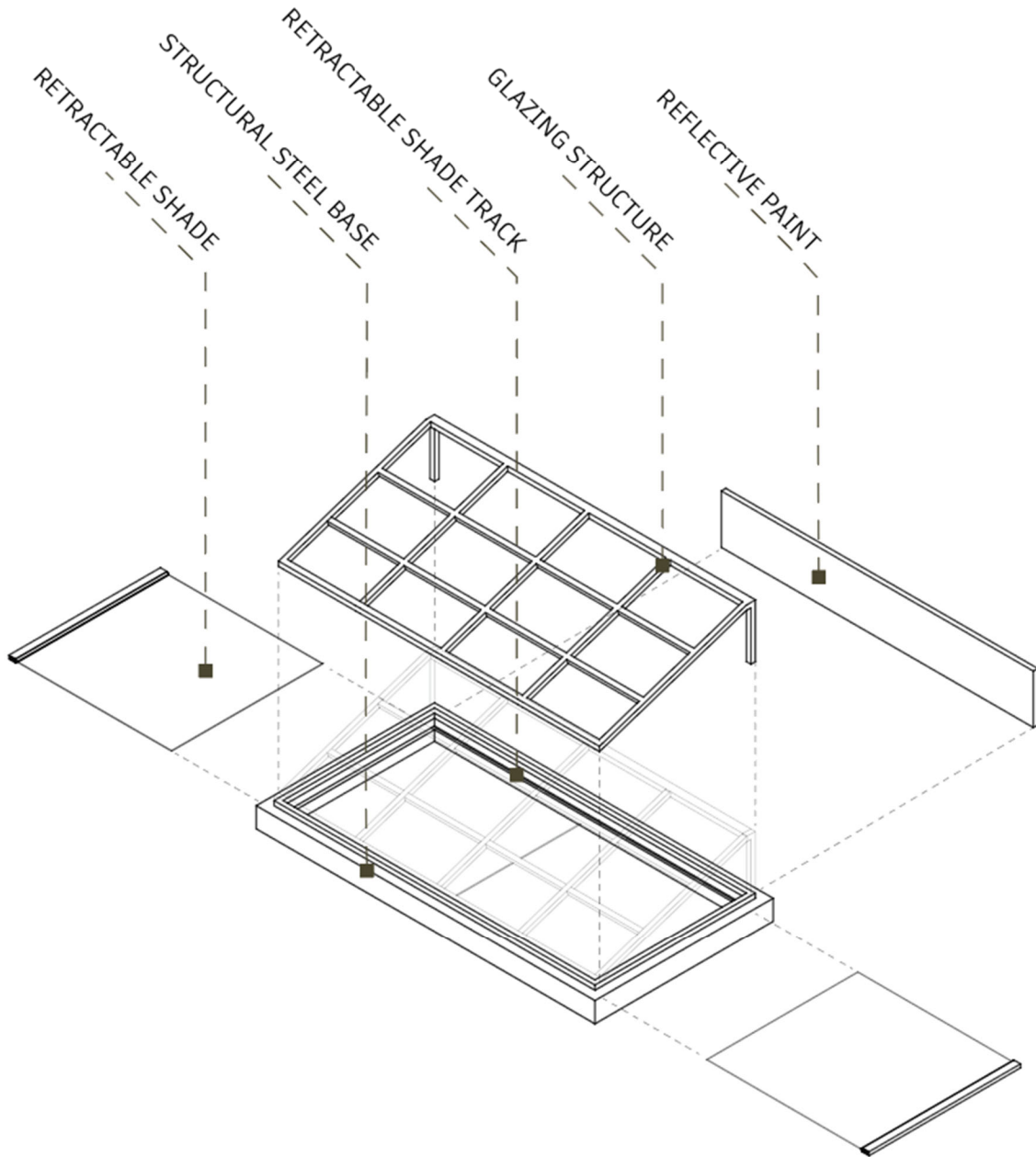


Figure 43: Skylight Diagram

Note: Illustrating the function of each part of the skylight.

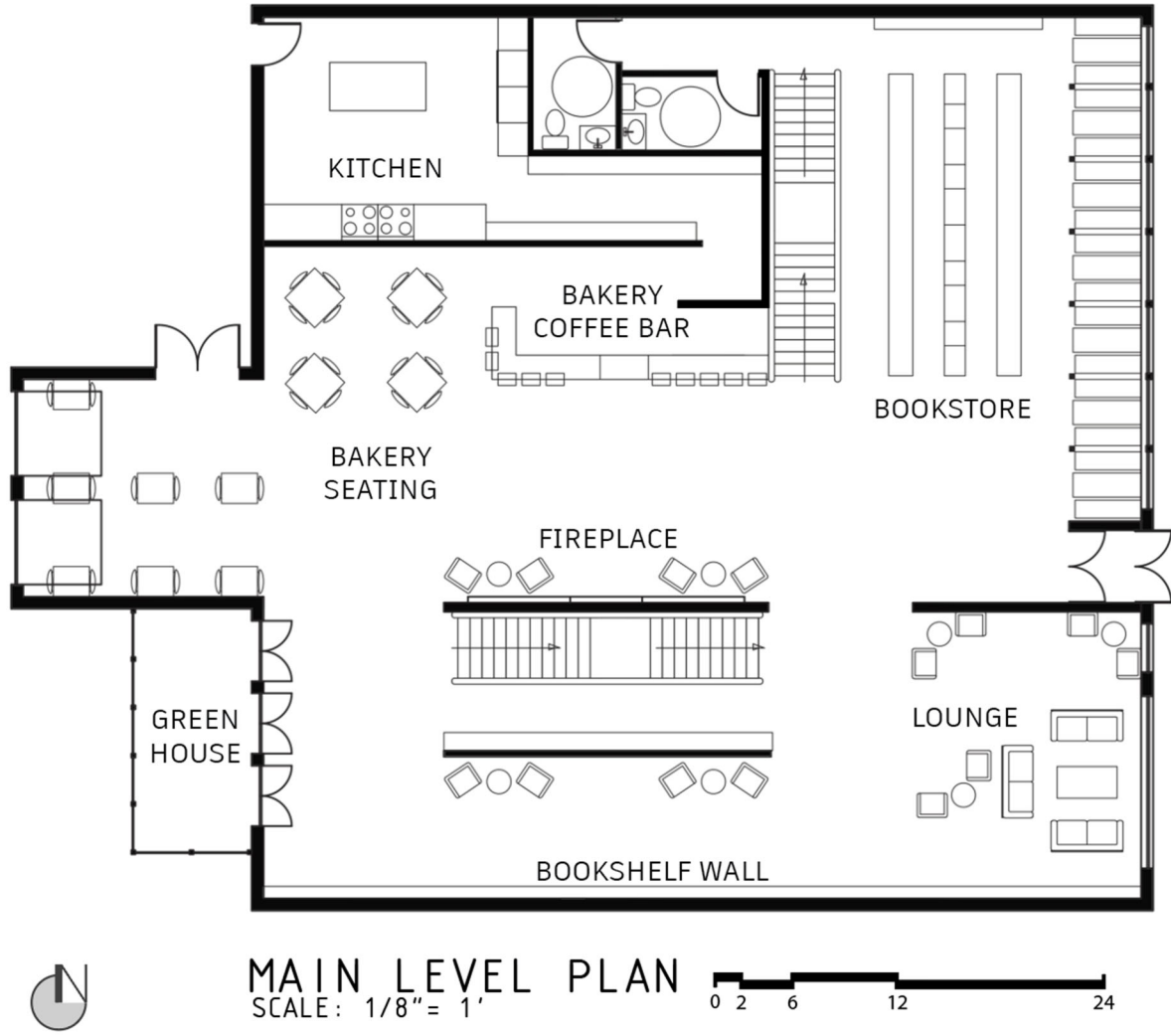
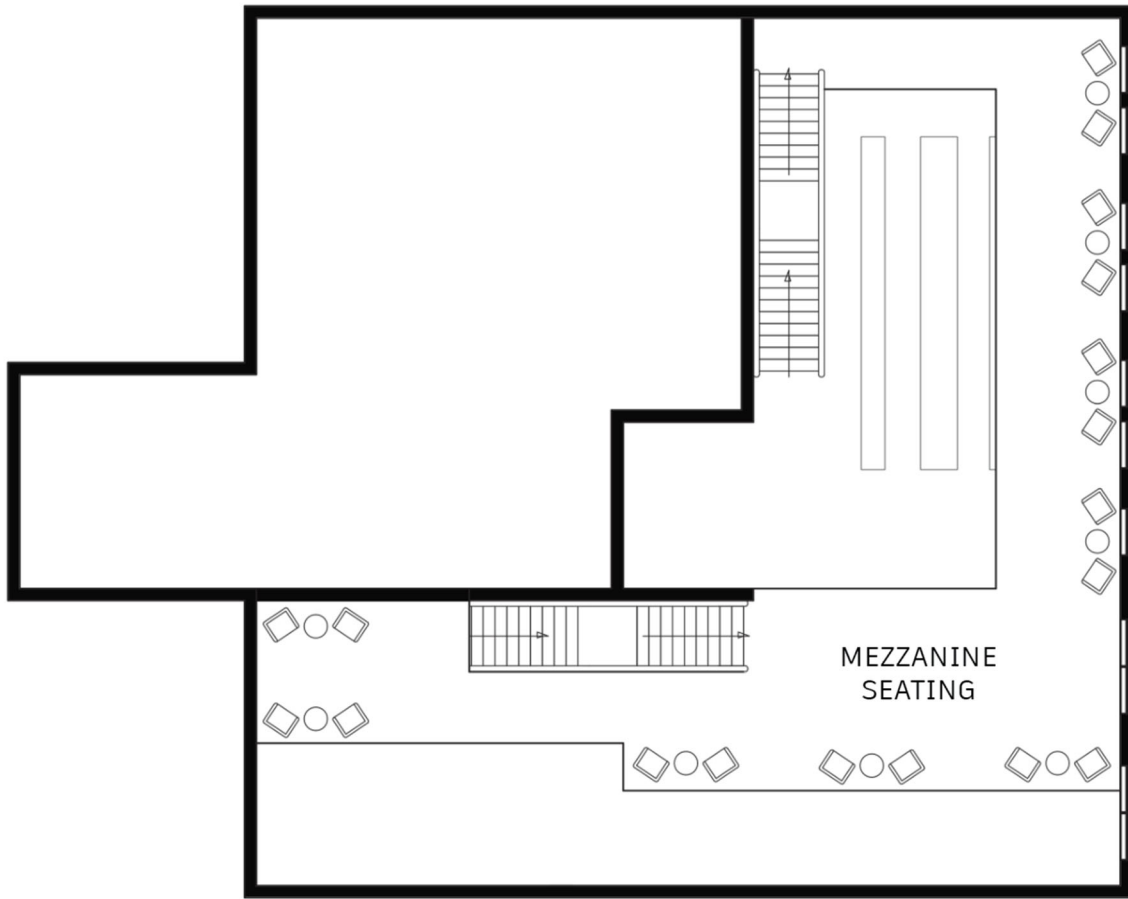


Figure 44: Main Level Floor Plan  
Note: Showcasing the layout of the interior of the space.



**MEZZANINE PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'

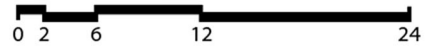


Figure 45: Mezzanine Floor Plan

Note: Showcasing the layout of the interior of the space above the main level.





Figure 46: Coffee Bar Render

Note: Illustrating the use of materials to provide a cozy and welcoming atmosphere.



Figure 47: Fireplace Render

Note: Located across from the Coffee Bar. A Metaphor which bridges the gap between the private living room and the public living room.



Figure 48: Mezzanine Render

Note: Showcasing the use of the skylights throughout the building. Natural light being provided throughout the building.



Figure 49: Bookstore Render

Note: Illustrating the inviting area of the bookstore. Seating provided as the reader previews the next ‘good read’.

#### 4.4. Conclusions

In conclusion, my design has shown the importance of the physical third place, the impact it has on a community and their well-being, as well as the ways in which Americans undervalue physical places of meeting. There are still avenues to research and discuss, which will be fulfilling to investigate further. However, this exercise of research and design has concluded physical third places are important and do in fact improve quality of life and well-being.



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