

# Cultivating Community Commons within Baltimore's Oliver Neighborhood

## CONTEXT



## CONCEPT

The concept is to provide the community of the Oliver neighborhood with community commons that serve as potential agricultural and educational areas while still allocating places for recreation and relaxation to occur. Through the implementation of a combined compost and education program, residents will be able to come together over a common interest strengthening the ties between the young and the old.

By allocating a program to interior vacant lots, and providing centrally located open space, the residents are provided with a space for such events as neighborhood meetings and cookouts further strengthening the bond between community members. With the addition of this programmed space, a new habitat is created that is designed to benefit both pollinators and soil microbes and increase the amount of greenspace that is currently lacking in the city of Baltimore.

By specifically selecting plants that flower throughout the year, seasonal interest will be created and will keep the residents interested year round. With this comes added security as people take more pride in the area, eyes on the space will be at an all time high as people will want to keep this place pristine and free of trouble that is often associated with inner city Baltimore.

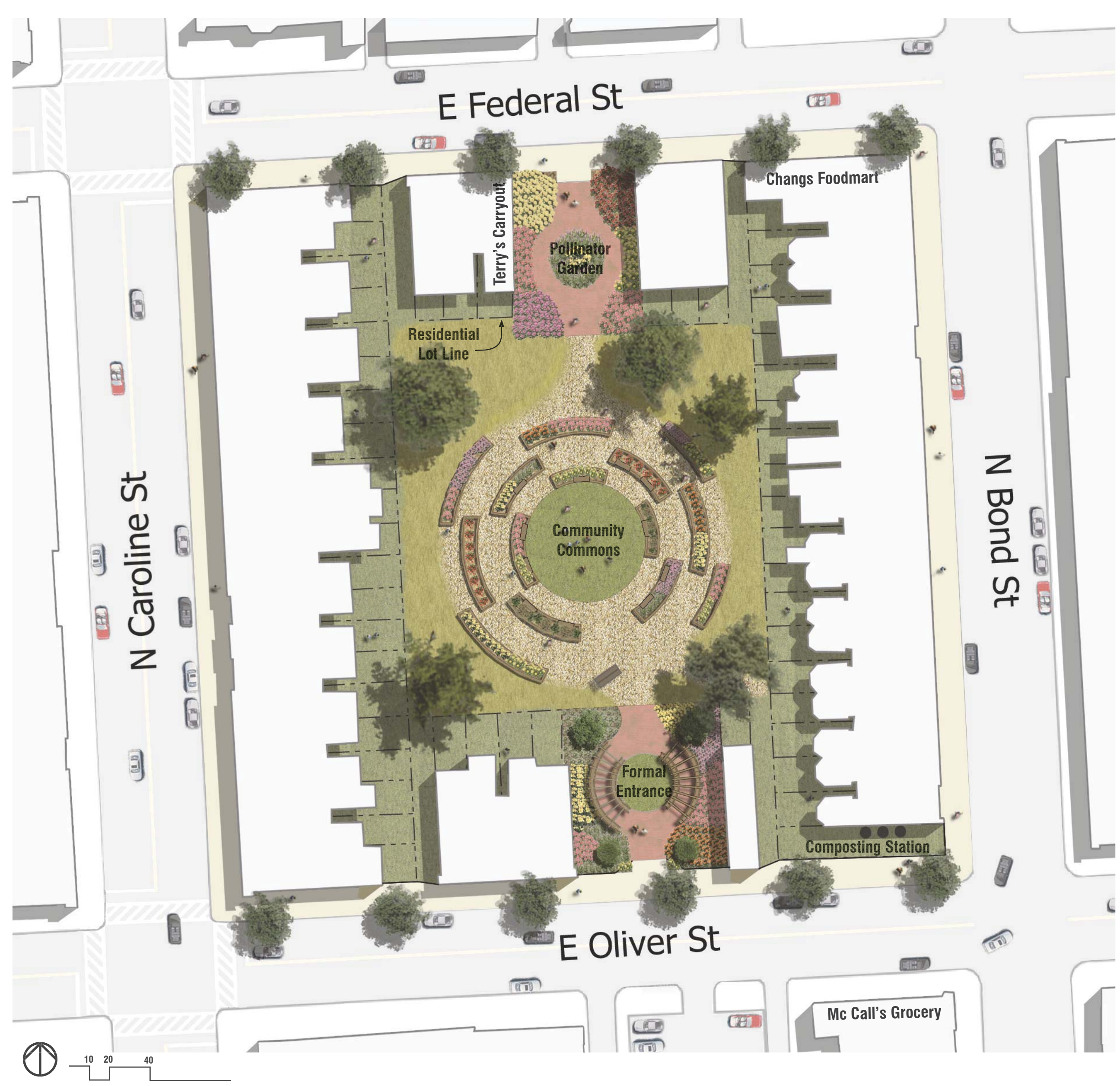
## Spring Gardens, Philadelphia



An example of a successful community garden in a city is Spring Gardens in Philadelphia. It provides open space, clean air, and is a welcoming gathering place to the 180 diverse families who garden there. Occupying an entire city block, the Gardens also give back to the larger community by retaining excess stormwater and growing fresh produce. By educating local school children about nature, the Gardens help involve young people in the greening movement.

## Site Masterplan

The master plan for the interior block that details surrounding landmarks, as well as the programs found within the vacant lots. The central community commons allows visitors to be immersed within their hard work while providing a place for programs to occur.



## Formal Entrance Perspective

A view from E Oliver St detailing the experience one would have upon entering the formal entrance. The reclaimed pavers would be constructed with open joints allowing for vegetation to grow and water to seep through.



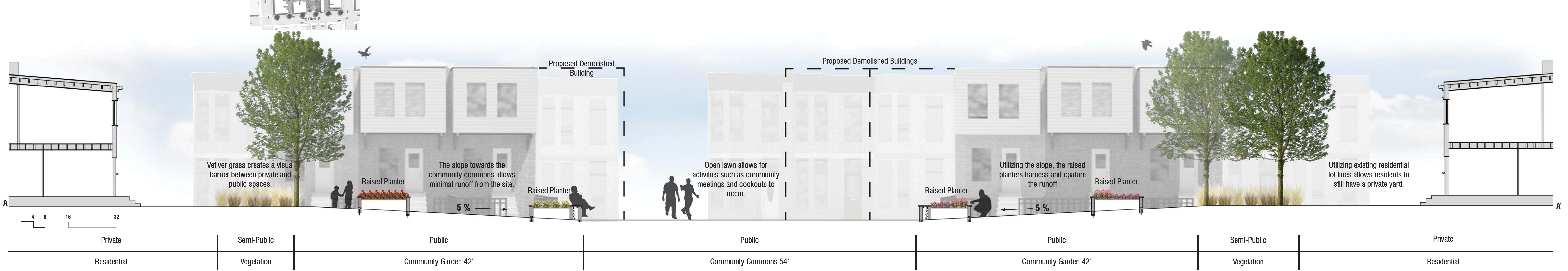
## Community Commons Perspective

A view looking from the 2500 sqft community commons detailing the embrace of the raised planters when in the center. Also views of the seating and storage space underneath can be seen.



## Section A - A': Entire Site

A site section detailing the interaction between public space and private space as well as showing the 5% slope towards the community commons that helps capture stormwater and harness it towards watering the vegetation in the raised planters.

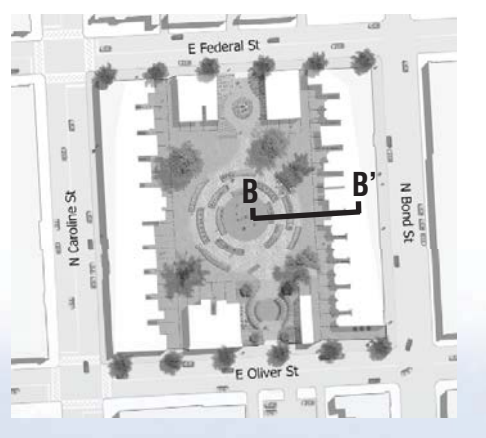


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- .86 acres**

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## Section B - B': House and Community Garden

A section detailing the relationship between the community commons and a private residence. The grasses and trees act as a visual barrier separating private from public space.



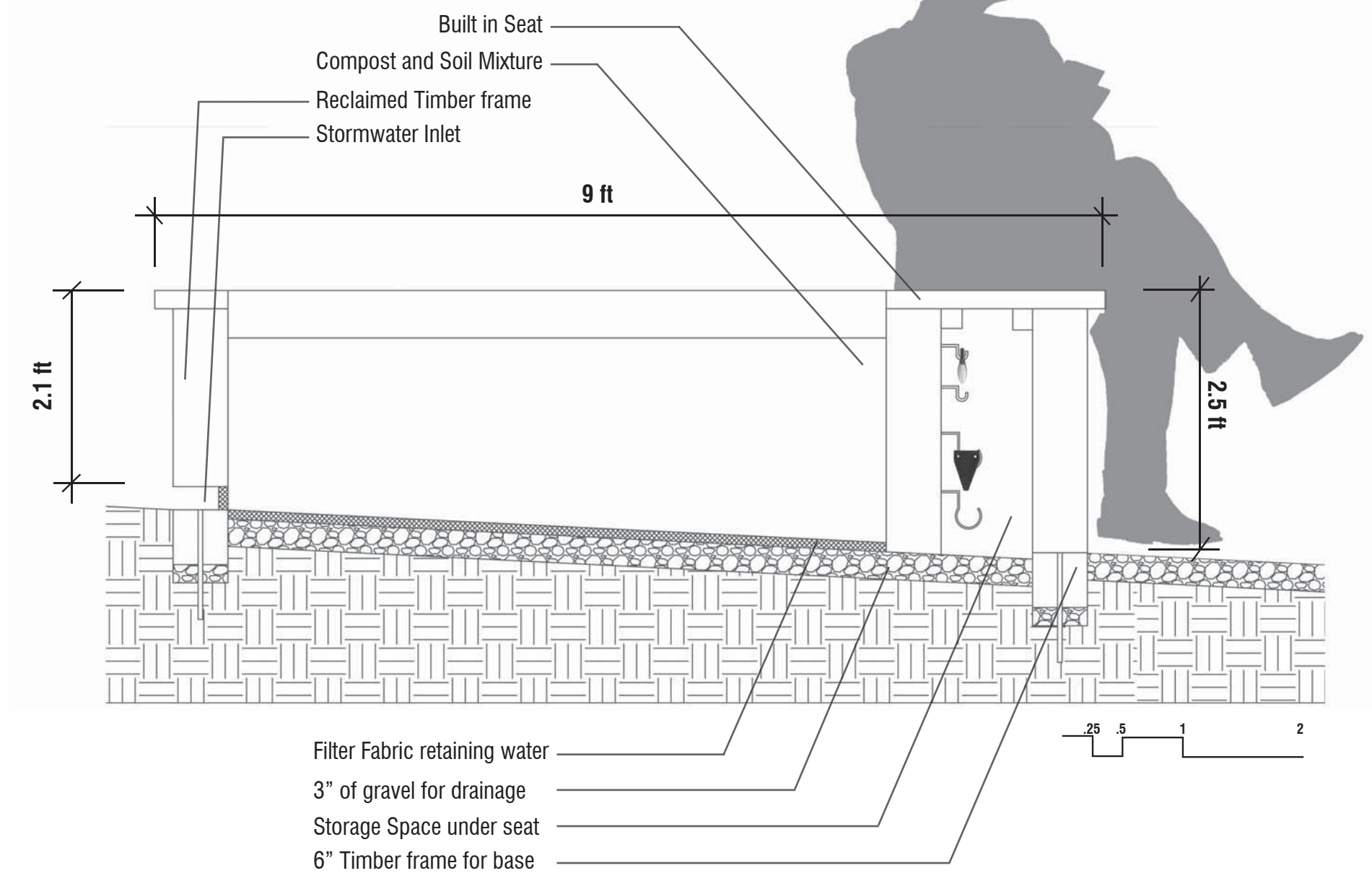
## Eyes on the Space Perspective

A view looking out of a residential window into the community commons showing how community interest in the space can increase security and deter illicit activities.



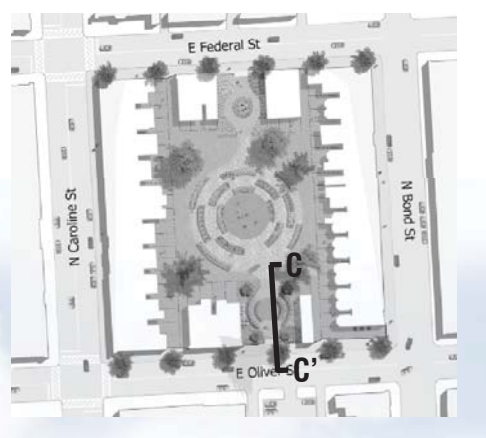
## Detail of a Raised Planter Bed

A detail of a raised planter with a seat. Underneath the seat there is a storage space for gardening tools. The upper side of the planter has openings at intervals that allow stormwater to enter the raised planter watering the plants through the wicking process.

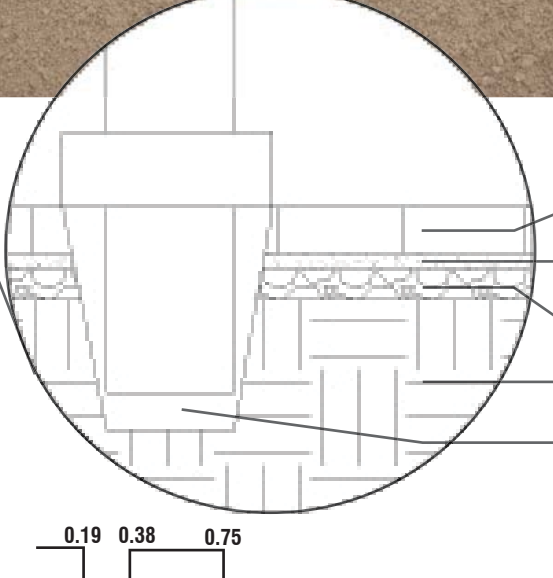


## Section C - C': Formal Entrance

A section detailing the pergola and its construction method with the surrounding vegetation and buildings.



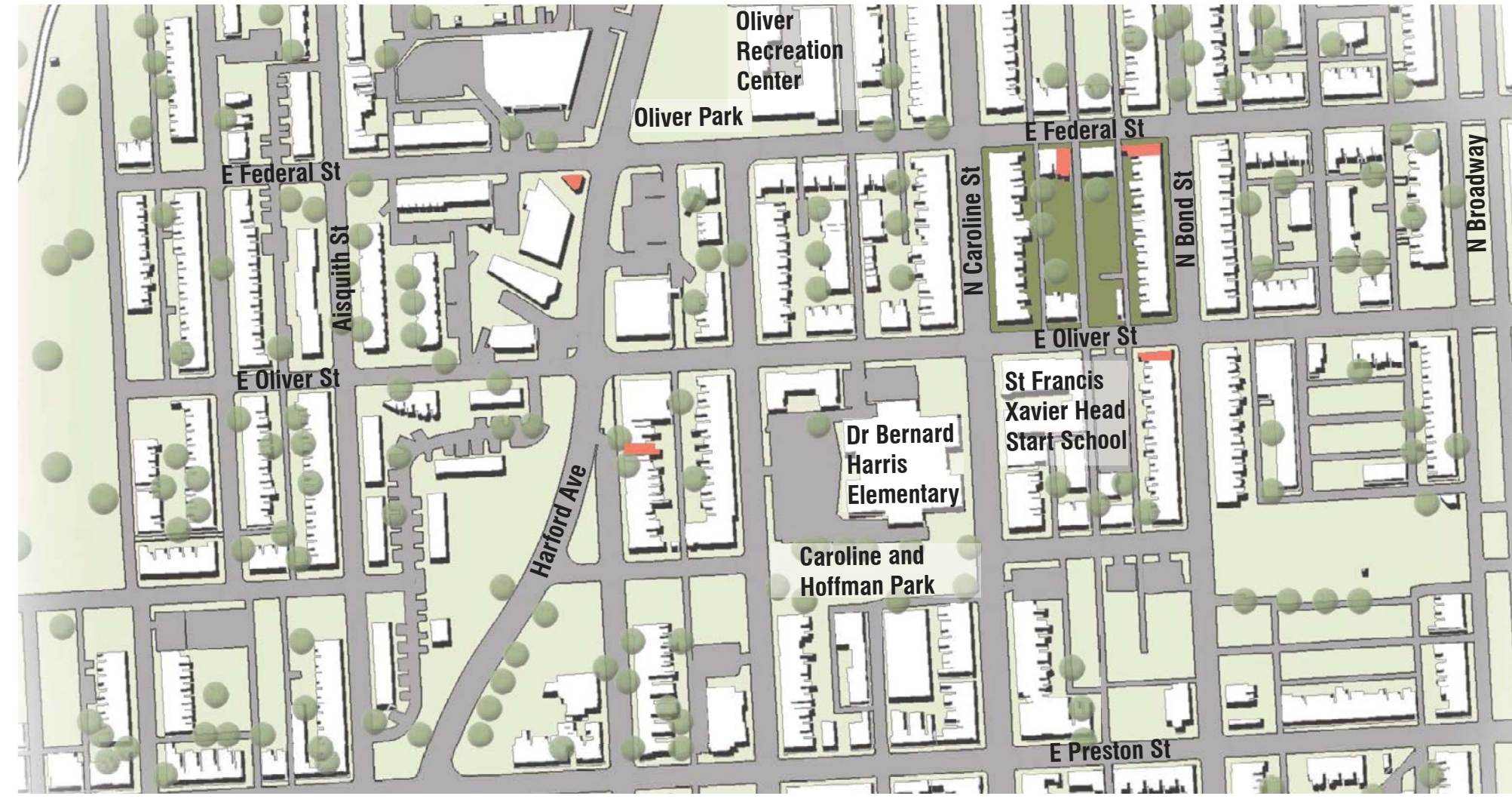
Pergola made from reclaimed timber  
Existing Mural incorporates local artists



Pavers (No joints create permeable paving)  
1 - 2\"/>

Street Tree (Ball and Burlap Installation)  
Tree Grate for Street Tree  
Existing Soil  
Reclaimed Paver walkway

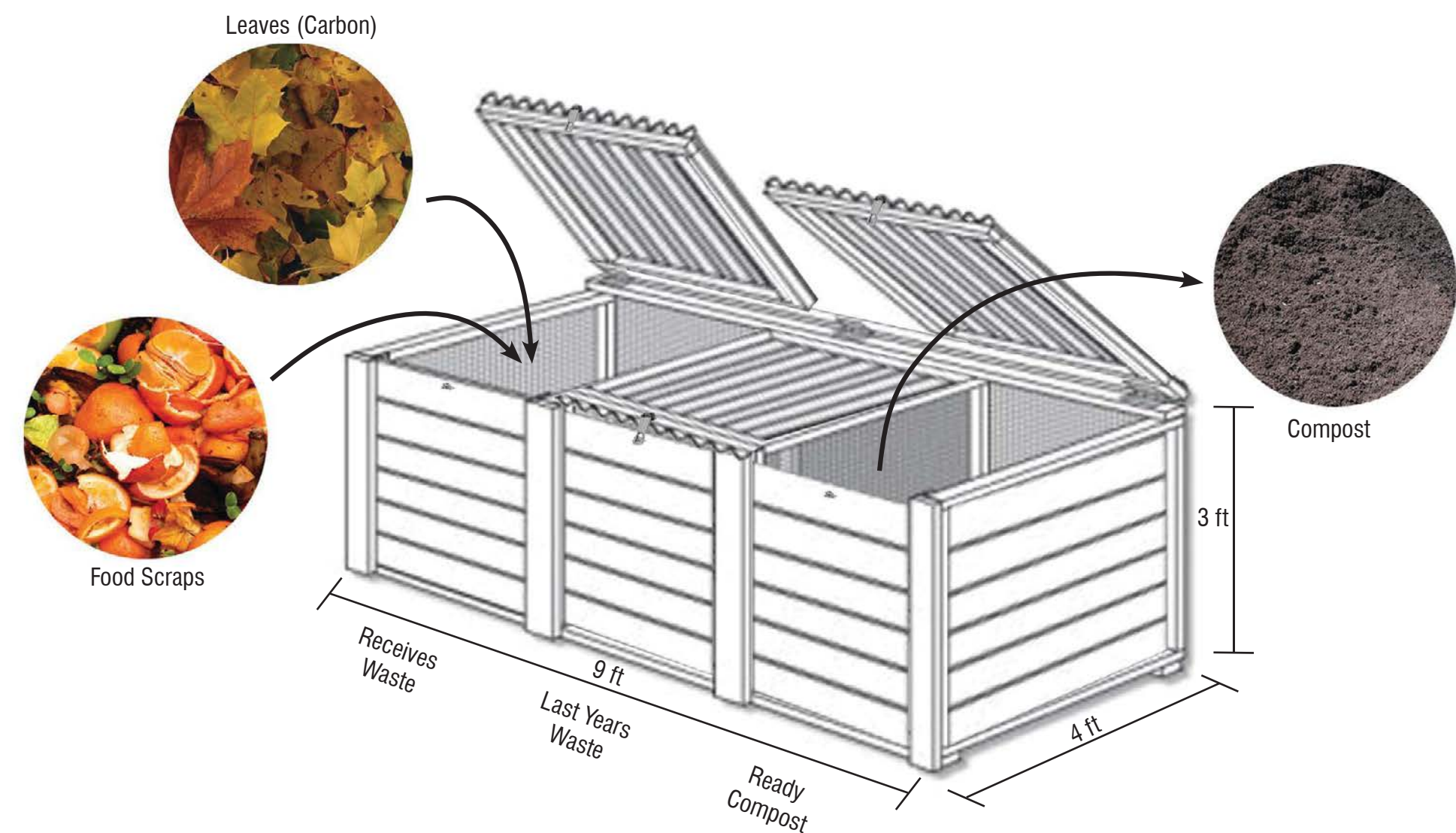
## Composting Masterplan



The map details grocery and corner stores found around Oliver that could be implemented into a compost collection program. This program would be achieved by:

- 1) Collecting expired fruits and vegetables from grocery stores and corner stores.
- 2) Providing a place for compost storage within the site to allow for easy access to and from raised planters.
- 3) Creating an educational program to educate the public, teachers and business owners about the benefits of composting.
- 4) Providing incentives such as cheaper materials to become certified in compost production and usage.

## 3 Bin Composting Procedure



Left to its own devices, compost takes about a year to fully mature and utilizing the three-compartment bin allows for less tending and turning to the compost piles.

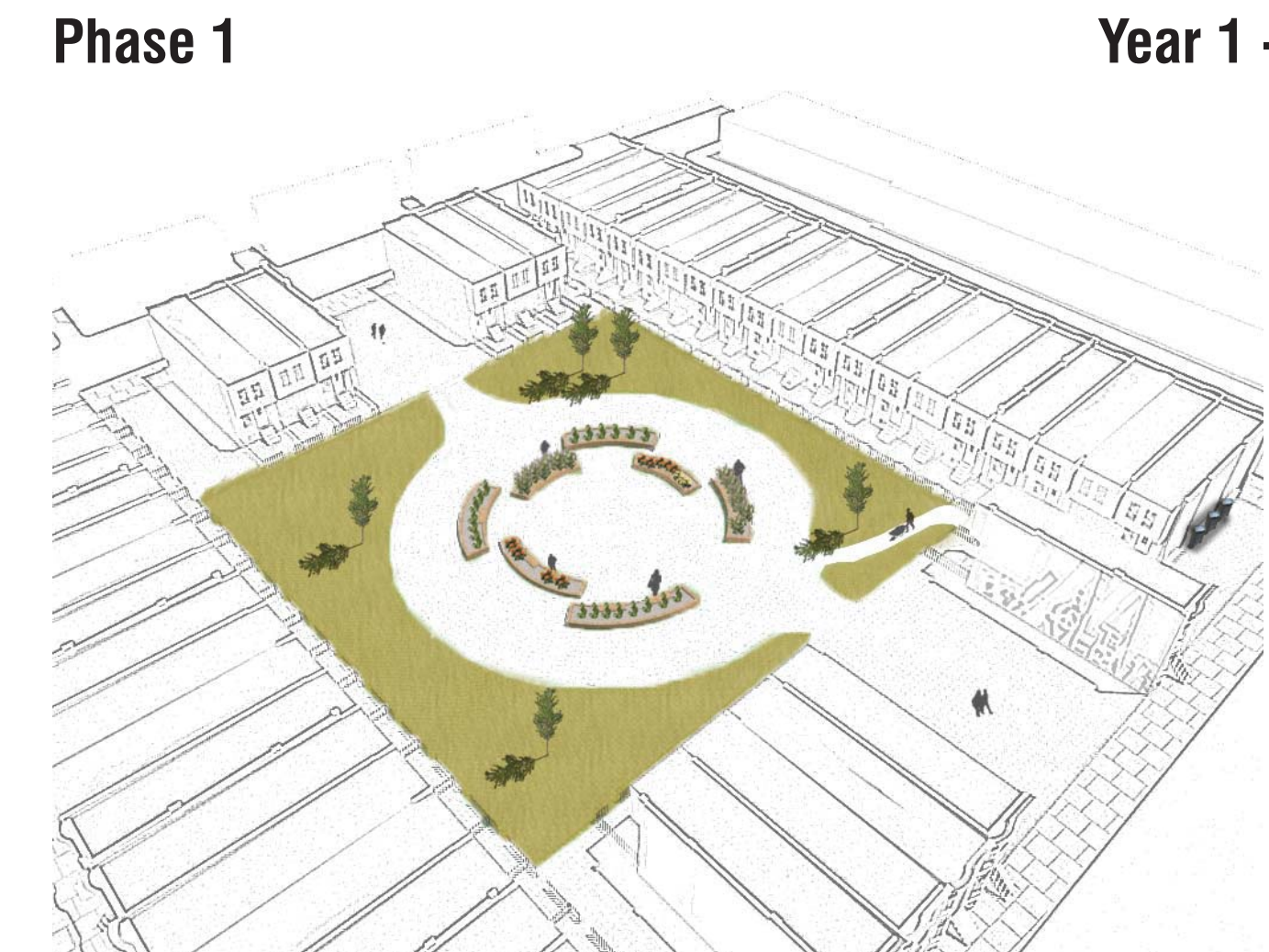
The first bin receives waste, whether it be scraps from households or the newly implemented composting program. When this bin becomes full the lid will be closed and left to its own accord for a year.

Last years waste is in the process of decomposing which allows resident to utilize the compost found within the third bin. Once this bin is empty, the third bin becomes the bin that receives waste and the second bin will now be utilized for compost as it becomes ready.



# Cultivating Community Commons within Baltimore's Oliver Neighborhood

## Temporal Phasing



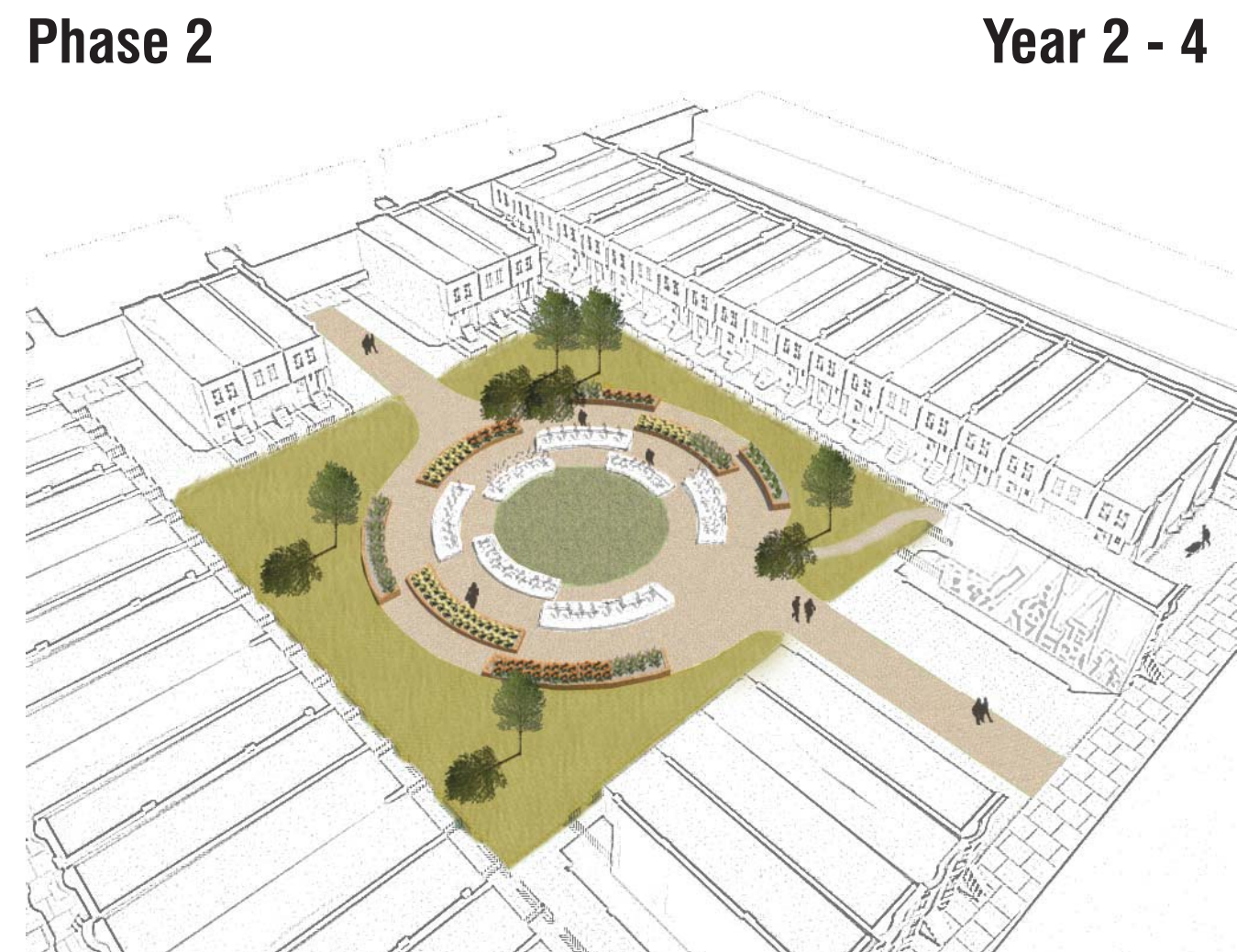
**Phase 1** Year 1 - 2

**Site Program**

- Demolish vacant houses to the North of the site in order to create a new entrance.
- Grade site to a 5% slope in order to harness and capture stormwater runoff.
- Build the inner 7 raised planters.
- Sow the remediating grass seeds.
- Plant 5 gal trees around site.

**Site Maintenance**

- Remove any debris found on the site.
- Till the area for the grasses to grow to a depth of 24" before sowing seeds.
- Clear weeds found within the community commons area to keep pristine look.



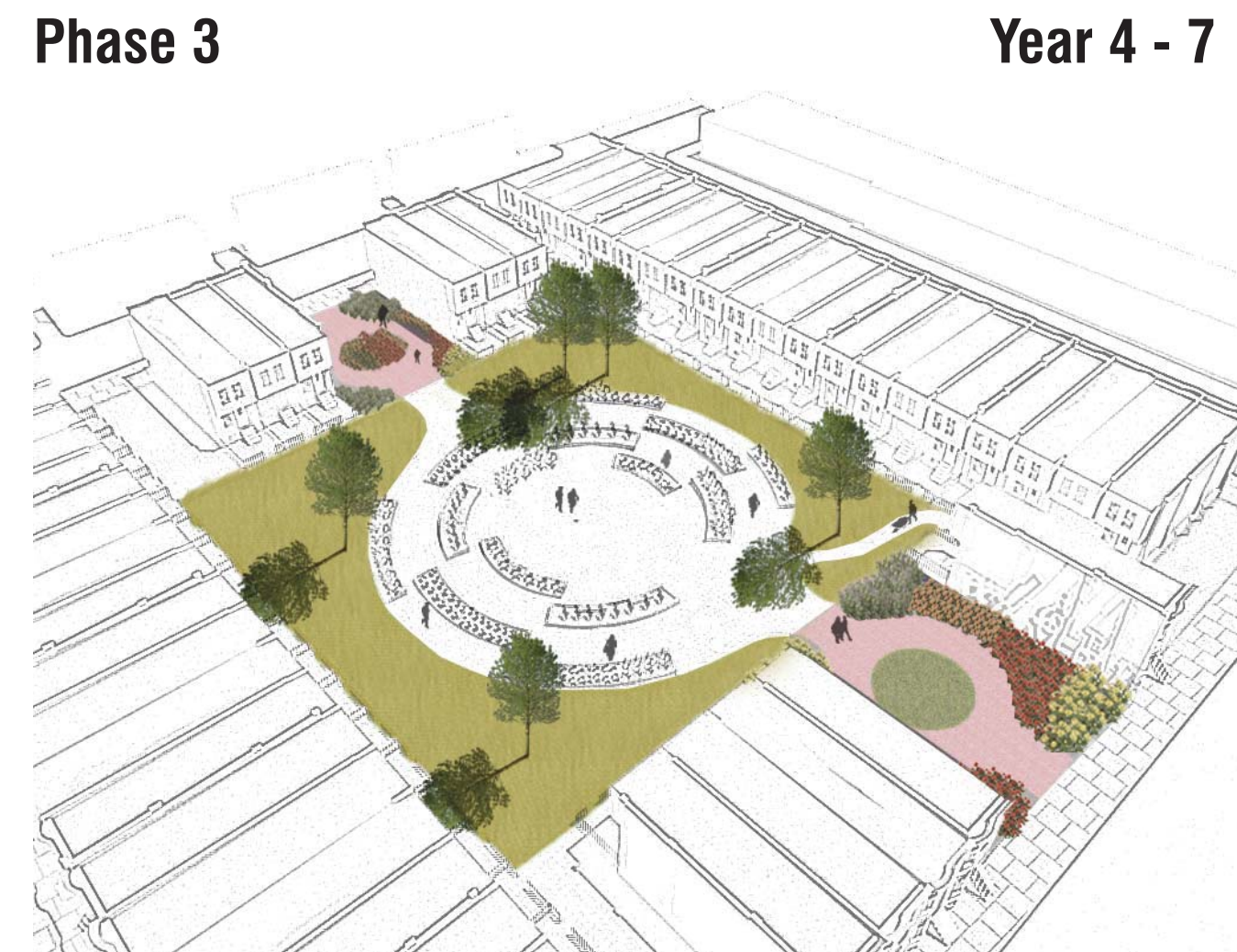
**Phase 2** Year 2 - 4

**Site Program**

- Trees are taller and beginning to reach maturity.
- Complete the outer 7 raised planters
- Place gravel around the raised planters and create a minimal throughway to attract visitors.

**Site Maintenance**

- Regular watering of the 14 raised planters in times of dry weather.
- Mow remediating grasses to 3' to deter illicit activity.
- Clear debris from within community commons



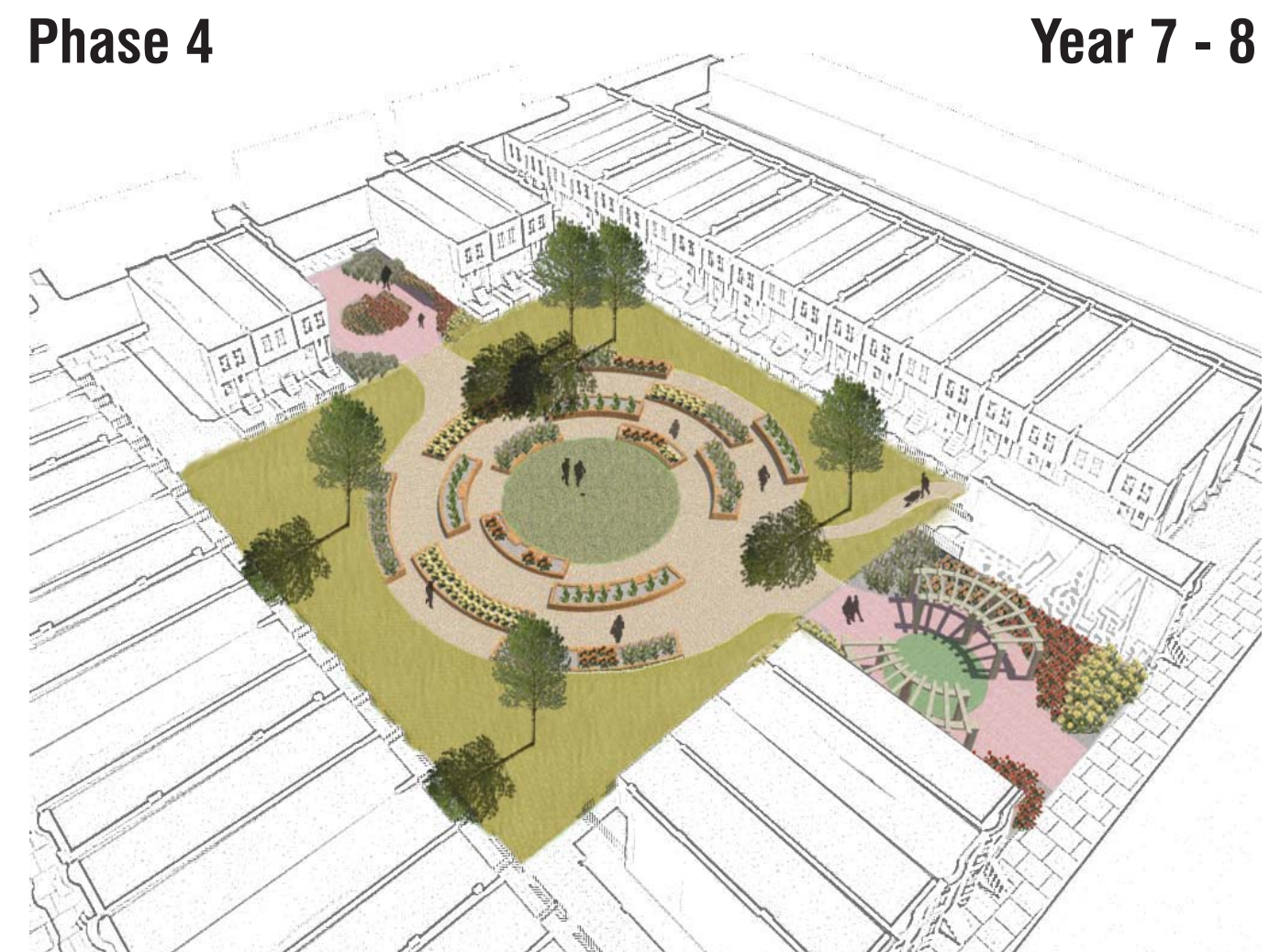
**Phase 3** Year 4 - 7

**Site Program**

- Trees are now reaching maturity providing shade within the site.
- Utilize exiting gravel path as subgrade for the permeable paving.
- Install reclaimed pavers found from demolition of surrounding buildings.
- Add flowers from raised planters to create the beginnings of the entrances.

**Site Maintenance**

- Allow grass but remove weeds from within the joints of the pavers.
- Clear weeds from the community commons area.
- Maintain watering of pollinating gardens and raised planters.



**Phase 4** Year 7 - 8

**Site Program**

- Trees are now mature.
- Install fences around the area to enclose the site and increase security.
- Adding a gazebo finishes the formal entrance to the South of the site.
- Installing trees in the formal area provides the opportunity for more shade and habitat creation.

**Site Maintenance**

- Individual lots will need to be tilled, planted, watered, weeded and harvested throughout the growing season.
- Regular litter pickup from the community commons.
- Grasses need to be mowed in order to decrease illicit activities on site.



## Baltimore City Green Connectivity



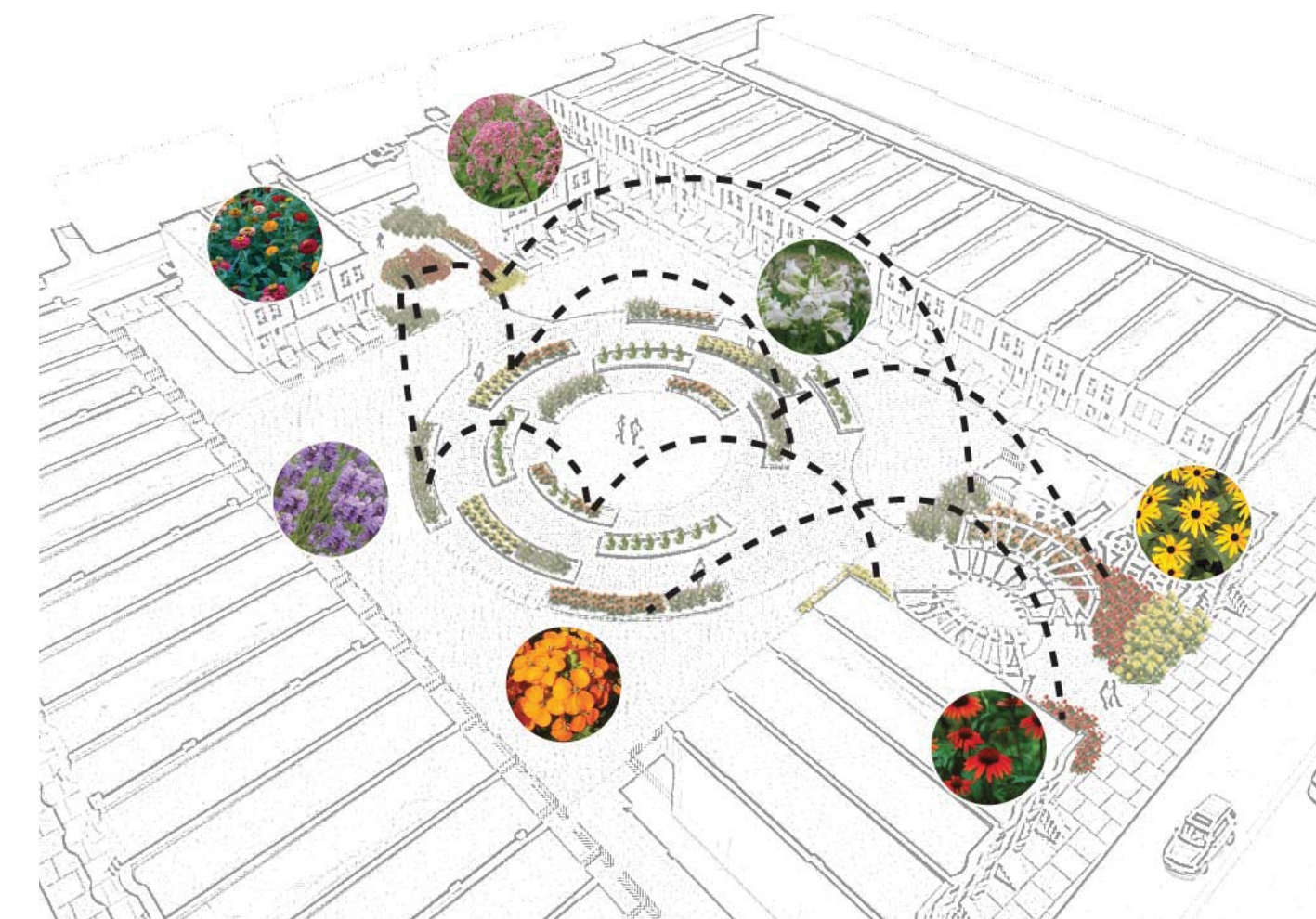
This map details significant green patches found within the city of Baltimore and how by creating more green patches, a network can be created that would allow pollinators to move from one space to another.

Total Acreage: 2728.80 acres

With spaces varying greatly in size and distance from the Oliver Neighborhood, there is a need for more green space that would allow for biodiversity to safely migrate from one area to another.

Utilizing information from the BES the information states that gardens are embedded within a mosaic of habitats which provide favorable and unfavorable conditions in which pollinators must survive and navigate. Therefore increasing and connecting green spaces can increase the number of pollinators and improve the habitat in which they live in.

## Site Green Connectivity

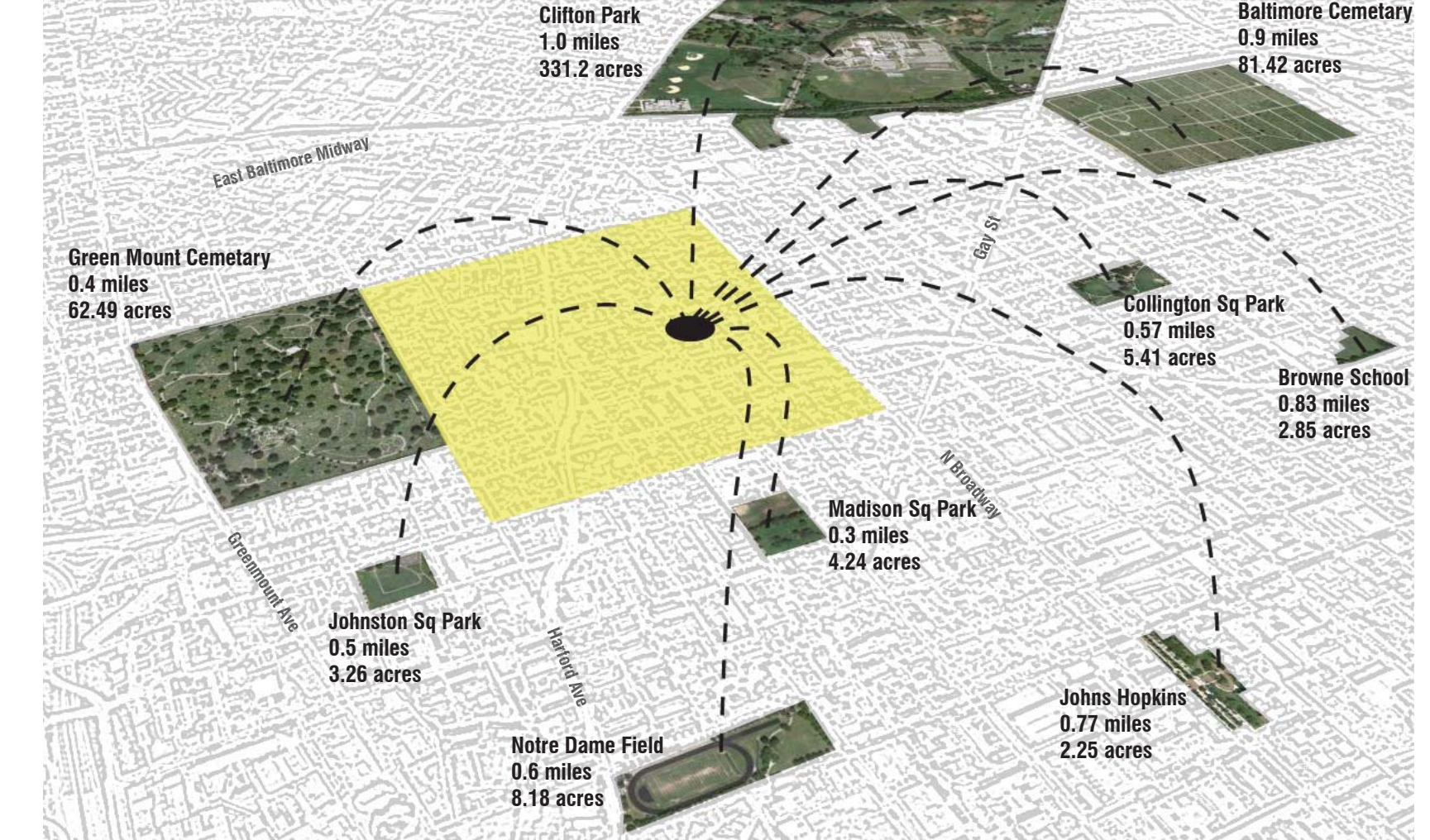


This diagram depicts an example of the many routes a pollinator attracted to the site may possibly take. The idea here is to take note that flowers are clumped together to increase the number of pollinators attracted.

Traversing the landscape takes the pollinators to Black Eyed Susans, Coneflowers, Wallflowers, Lavender, Zinnias, Joe Pye Weed and Wild Stonecrops.

The research done by the BES have found that bee diversity significantly increases as a function of within-garden characteristics such as floral abundance, floral diversity and sunlight. They have also found a non-significant trend towards increasing pollinator diversity as a function of landscape level greenspace surrounding gardens.

## Adjacent Neighborhood Green Connectivity



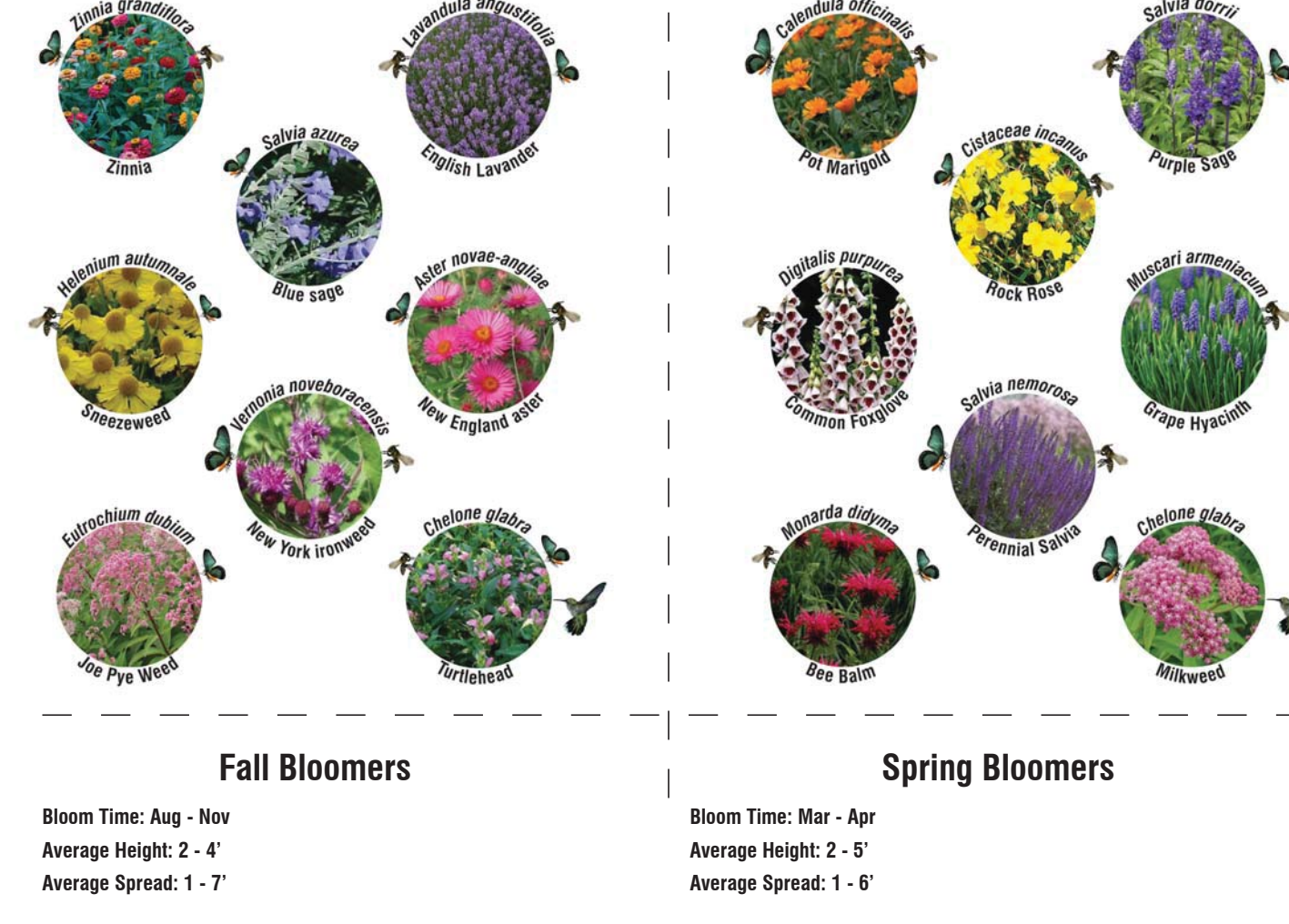
This map details significant green patches found within adjacent neighborhoods to the Oliver Neighborhood and by creating more green patches, a network can be created that would allow pollinators to move from one space to another.

Total Acreage: 832.50 acres

By improving green spaces within the Oliver neighborhood, more biodiversity will be attracted to the area. With more biodiversity and pollinators, more plants and flowers grow beautifying the area further.

Results from the BES study on pollinators suggests that community groups and private citizens can conserve pollinator populations by simply maintaining a garden. Furthermore, urban planners may be able to contribute to the conservation of insect pollinators by incorporating more greenspace into developed landscapes.

## Proposed Plant List



This table provides a beginning idea of possible plants that could be utilized within raised planters and the pollinator garden. The images attached to flowers depict the type of pollinator they attract.

- Native plants are four times more likely to attract pollinators than exotics.
- Planting flowers in clumps attracts more pollinators.
- Choosing several colors of flowers attract more pollinators.
- Include flowers of different shapes.
- Pollinators favor sunny spots over shade and shelter from winds which makes interior lots ideal for them.

## Cost Estimate Example for Raised Planters

Cost Estimates	Cost per unit	Units	Total Cost
<b>Construction</b>			
Site Grading	Contingent on site conditions		TBD
<b>Landscape Materials</b>			
Planting mix (can be substituted with less expensive top soil with organic compost content)	\$30/cu. yd.	60	\$1,800
mulch for pollinator garden (Can be substituted with low cost or donated)	\$28/cu. yd.	17	\$476
<b>Raised Planter Beds</b>			
8' x 2" x 12" fir timbers	\$11.27	24	\$271
16' x 2" x 12" fir timbers	\$23.39	48	\$1,123
8' x 4" x 4" fir timbers (if your budget allows, fir timbers can be substituted with cedar)	\$12.50	18	\$225
Hardware for Construction	\$1.06/sq.ft		\$100
<b>Subtotal Cost</b>			\$3995
Contingency 10%			\$399.50
<b>Total Project Cost</b>			\$4394.50

\* Above are just estimates based on research from community gardens of similar program.

There is the opportunity to get donations from programs found within the Oliver and surrounding neighborhoods such as Operation Oliver and Power in Dirt. Also utilizing reclaimed materials will reduce the above costs but treatment of the materials to stop leachment into the soil will need to be considered