

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING | OPEN SPACE

OVERALL OPEN SPACE PLAN

A diversity in open spaces is essential to the Master Plan's intent of creating public amenities unique and essential to the subareas. The size, shape, and program of each open space is informed by the character of the surrounding development and the people likely to utilize the space. The City of Cedar Rapids is putting additional focus on multi-generational, free, and accessible elements throughout the park system. The outdoor environments, then, are made the places most visible and most used that are representative of the context and "feel" of the given area.

The open space network centered on the concept of pulling the river and its greenway into the various developments. As the plan diagram to the left illustrates, two large swaths of green space, the manicured greenway park in Czech Village and the more natural stormwater detention basin in the NewBo Expansion, serve as middle grounds, both visual and functional, for the riverfront meeting the neighborhoods. A smaller green space is proposed at the African American Museum of Iowa, providing a ceremonial landscape at its entrance.

Further into the three subareas, plazas, shared space streets, and small-scale pocket parks are found throughout, located at key street intersections or centered within major nodes of development. Connected along trails or enhanced street corridors with bike and pedestrian facilities, these spaces, while primarily meant to serve local use, create a robust network of activity centers that unifies the area.

On the following pages, several of the major open spaces are highlighted and described in detail.



LEGEND:

- PLAZA SPACE / SHARED SPACE STREETS
- PUBLIC GREEN SPACE
- PRIVATE GREEN / AMENITY AREAS
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- LEVEES
- RIVERS EDGE EXISTING COVERAGE

This map represents a vision of how public and private property could be redeveloped. New development shown on private property is contingent on the decisions of those property owners.

THE GREENWAY PARK

The greenway park will be a destination public open space for the city of Cedar Rapids and region at-large. Approximately 10 acres in size, the park will be enclosed by new developments on its north and west sides. Its west edge is comprised of a shared space street segment that serves as a plaza-type streetscape feature. The urban space may include amenities such as seating areas, specialty paving, decorative light fixtures, street trees, and landscaped planters. The adjacent residential development block will be recessed back at its corner intersections, allowing for widened views into the park from C Street and the existing neighborhoods to the west.

On its east end, the greenway park will engage the riverfront levee to better connect the open space and the surrounding development to the river. A small amphitheater with terraced seating recessed into the levee side could lie on the north side of the park. Near the park's center, a grand stair and sloping ramp will pull park users up to the levee top trail and its views of the river and city beyond.

A large destination playground connects with the grand stair and serves as a primary focal point for the entire park. Amenities may include natural and man-made play elements, pavilions, water features, and seating. The south side of the park is enclosed by 21st Avenue, but sidewalk connections are provided to the natural stormwater basin feature on the opposite side of the street.

Anchoring the north half of the greenway park is the Roundhouse. The Master Plan shows the historic structure, planned for restoration in the near future, within a large pedestrian square adjacent to 18th Avenue. The space is open, providing unobstructed views of the Roundhouse as well as easy access to the structure for big events. The Roundhouse aligns with the pedestrian promenade that runs directly from the 16th Avenue commercial corridor to the greenway park.



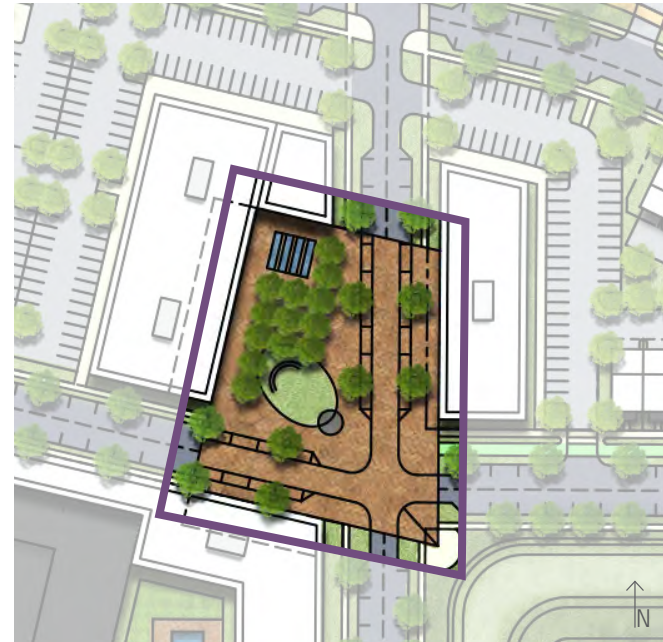
DESTINATION PARK AMENITIES



Birds-eye perspective over the levee looking west at the greenway park, Roundhouse, and adjacent development

SINCLAIR PLAZA

At the center of the NewBo Expansion area, Sinclair Plaza could be an urban public space lined by buildings with active retail and restaurant frontages. The shared space will equally accommodate vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The streets that enclose the plaza may include on-street parking stalls and will be curbless, as bollards could be employed as vertical markers guiding vehicle movements. Thus, the plaza will be able to be closed off and able to accommodate large public events. The plaza opens up at its southeast corner to the large detention basin as well as Mt. Trashmore and the future Smokestack Bridge farther on. Attractive planting beds, a small lawn space, a seating area canopied by shade trees, and an interactive water feature are elements that could be included in the west side of the plaza. Amenities like these could be heavily used by residents and office workers of the district.



URBAN PLAZA

DETENTION BASINS

Two large stormwater detention basins are included as parts of the City's flood control improvements project. The larger of the two, located in the NewBo Expansion area, has been constructed. The smaller basin, located along side of 21st Avenue south of the greenway park, is currently under construction. The Plan intends for both basins to serve as focal green amenity areas and function as a means to collect, treat, and allow stormwater to percolate naturally into the ground.



DETENTION BASIN AMENITY AREA



SHARED SPACE STREET / URBAN INTERSECTION



INTERSECTION PLAZA

Currently, the 3rd Street & 16th Avenue intersection presents mobility challenges to bicyclists and drivers alike. High vehicle speeds and free-flowing bike movements can increase the likelihood of crash incidents. To help slow speeds and create a safer multi-modal environment, the Master Plan proposes an urban roundabout plaza to be implemented at the intersection. The plaza space could be curbsless, allowing for increased awareness/reaction among drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Bollards could delineate the separation between the street travel lanes and the protected pedestrian space. A small raised planter would be utilized as the center median feature, guiding vehicle movements through the intersection while avoiding any visibility issues and creating a focal element for the two mobility corridors.



PLAZA NEAR HISTORIC STRUCTURE



CZECH SCHOOL / DELI PLAZA

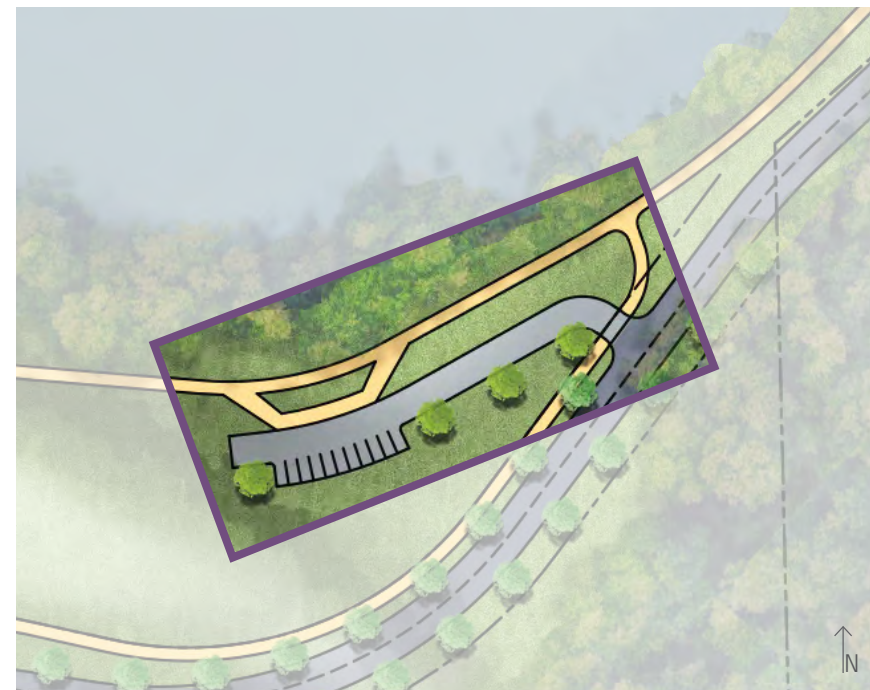
At the west terminus of the Community Arts Trail, the existing Czech School Deli building is an important historic structure. With nearby access to both the proposed Community Arts Trail and existing riverfront trail, and the potential for apartments developing along 2nd Street, there is an opportunity for an urban plaza to be incorporated around the building. The plaza would provide an active outdoor space that could be utilized for events and/or amenities extending out from the building. The plaza would be a highly-detailed, pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment that would still allow for service access to the adjacent pump station. Both the plaza and the building tenant could have an arts focus to better tie the development into the rest of NewBo.



RIVER ACCESS & OVERLOOK

With the levee and flood wall components of the flood control system improvements planned, physical access to the Cedar River will be limited within the Planning Area. Bicyclists and pedestrians will be able to ride along sections of levee-top and levee-side trails. A recently-constructed slip-in, sensitively placed within the tree-lined river bank, can be accessed off 21st Avenue and is serviced by a small surface parking lot. The location is ideal, as the access point is removed from high-development areas, but provided connection to the trail and thus the amenities of the nearby greenway park. Additionally, the City has recently initiated the River Recreation Feasibility Study to determine opportunities for river access and use.

On the east side of the river in NewBo, the Market Trail corridor will terminate at the riverfront levee, where public art installation captures views and large staircase and accessibility ramp will provide access to a river overlook. This point on top of the levee will provide panoramic views along the riverfront. The overlook will also connect to the levee-side trail via a small switchback accessibility ramp. The overlook is sure to attract users among resident of NewBo eager to connect to the riverfront and its greenway trail.



OVERLOOKS & WATER ACCESS POINT