

Revisiting South Neil



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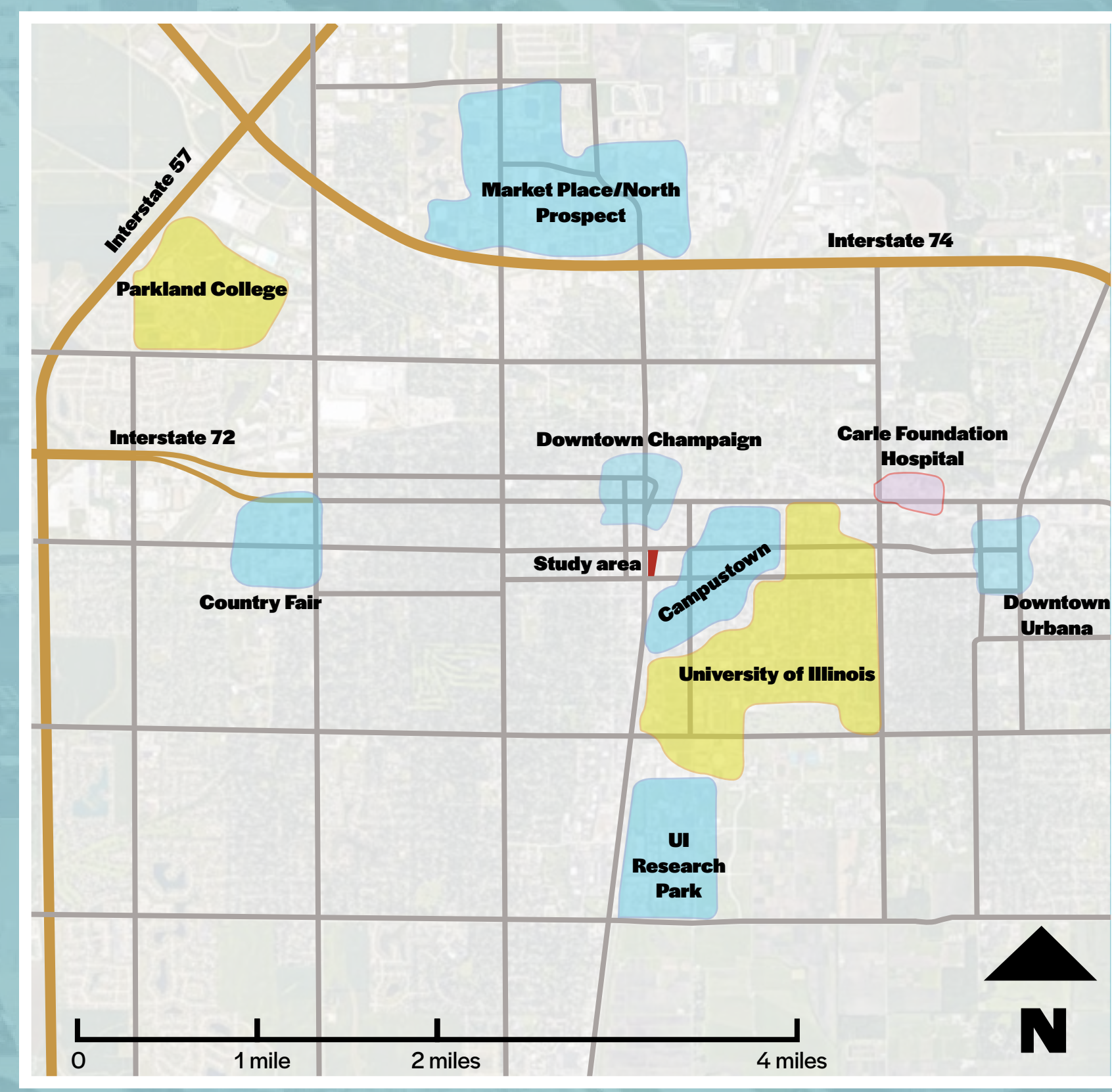
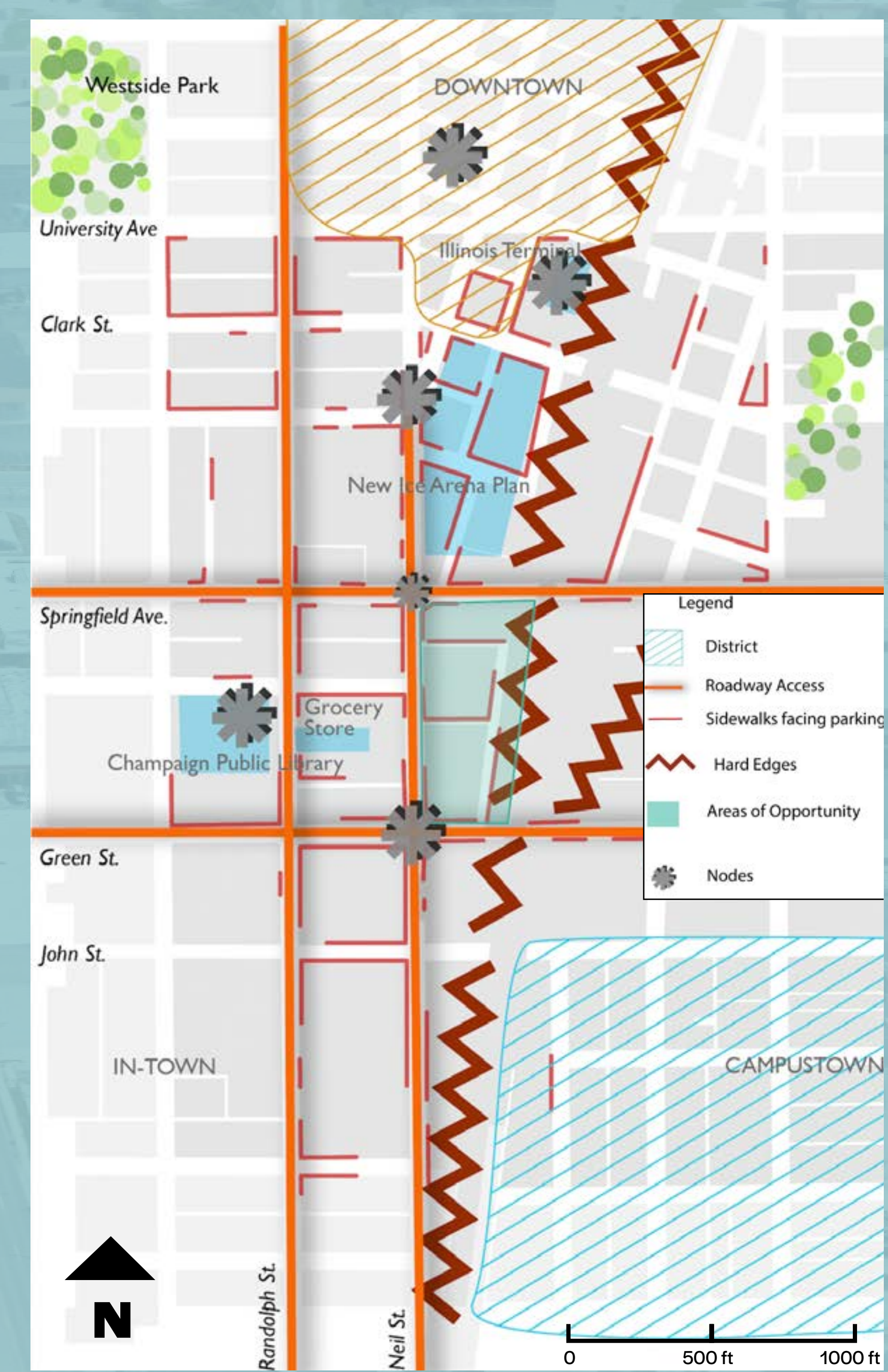
Abstract and study area identification

Our South Neil Street study consists of a block bounded by **Springfield Avenue** to the north, **Green Street** to the south, the **CN Railroad** embankment to the east, and **Neil Street** to the west; throughout this report, we will analyze the current conditions of the study area, present a proposal for densification and integration into the dense surrounding neighborhoods, outline specific goals and objectives, and justify our proposal.

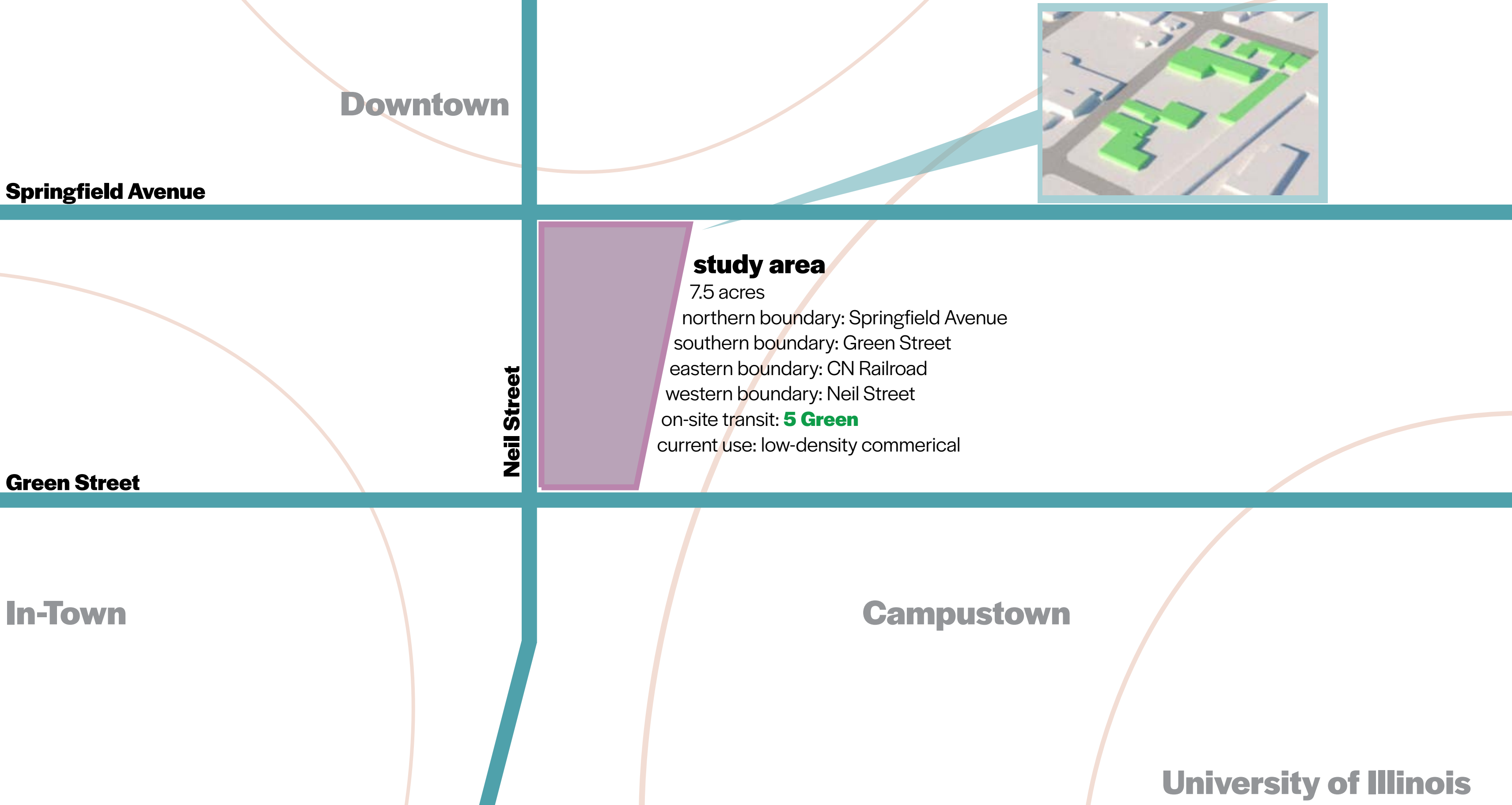
It should be noted that this report makes the assumption that urban intensification will take place directly to the north of our selected site, most likely in the form of a new multi-purpose arena, convention space, hotel, and expansion of Illinois Terminal. While this proposal remains in the works at the time of this report, we believe that some sort of dense project will occur in the area in the near future, thus strengthening the case of increasing density and widening the variety of land uses along South Neil Street.

It is quite easy to draw many parallels between this site and the Midtown neighborhood of Champaign and we believe this study area, too, has the potential to connect the downtown and Campustown districts by bridging a low-density gap with a mixed-use, dense, and cohesive urban form.

We seek to propose a mixed-use development featuring 156 apartment units, a cinema, office space, and ground-level retail. The study area's proximity to the University of Illinois and central location will make for an attractive destination, especially for University students who cannot conveniently commute to fringe shopping centers. The area's proximity to the new arena can be leveraged to create a veritable entertainment district. Additionally, we will propose numerous transportation improvements and treatments that a dense, centralized neighborhood requires. We believe that a redevelopment of this scale can catalyze future densification of Neil Street, eventually building out to a dense, regional corridor.



Neighborhood introduction

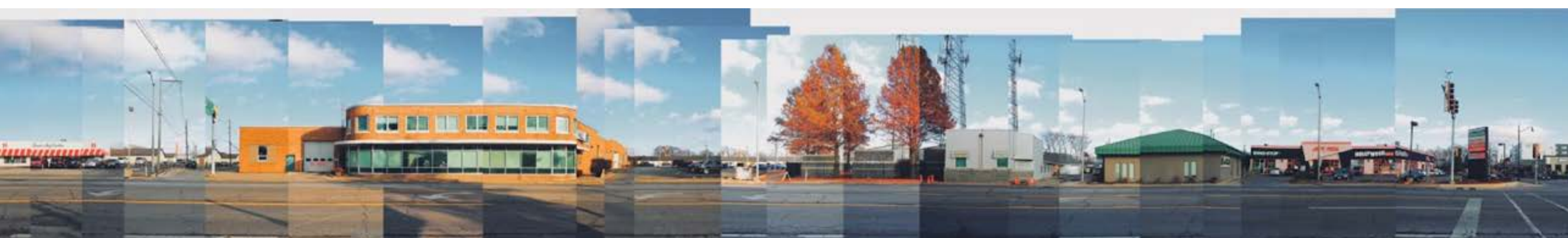
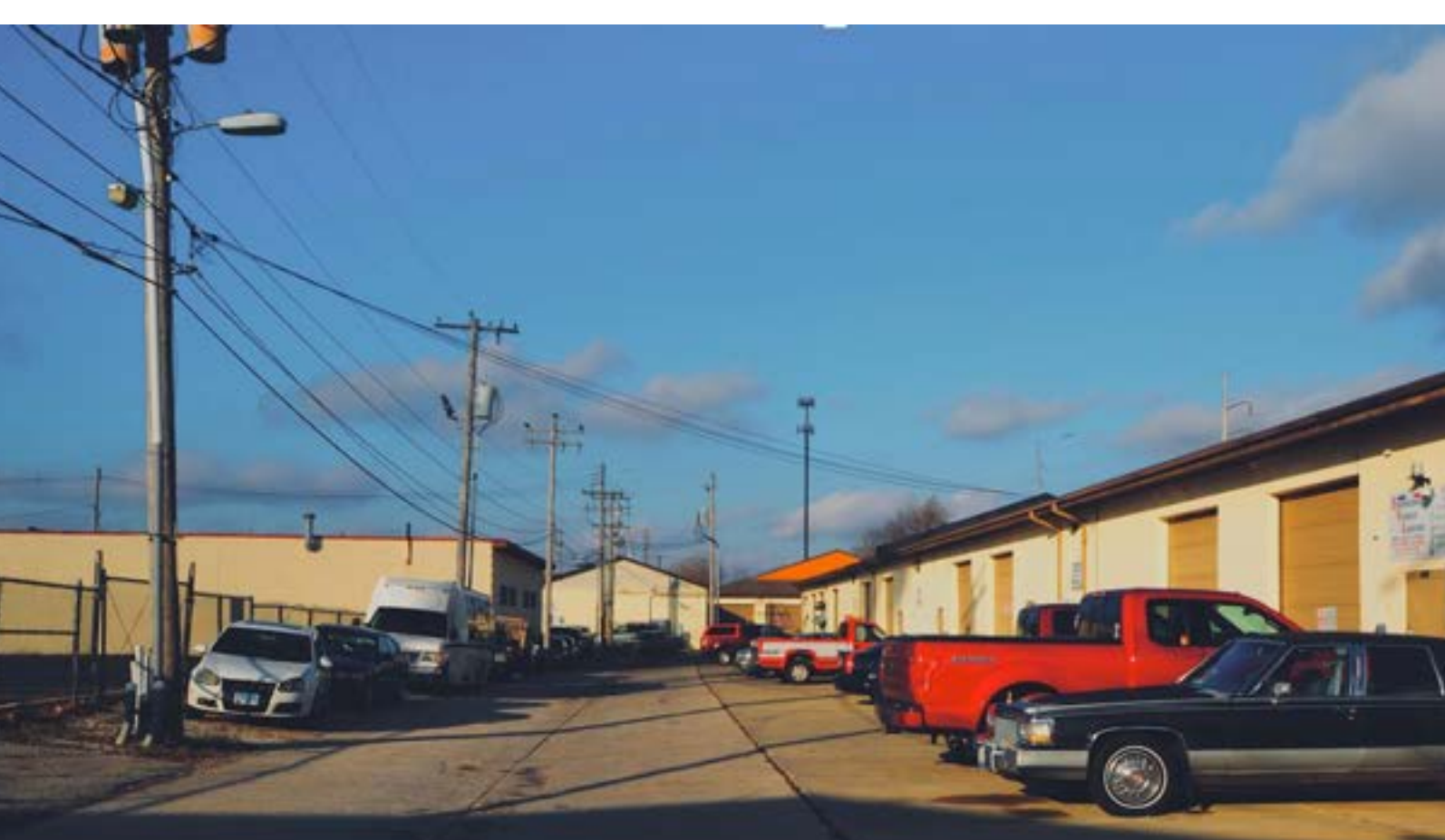


Location

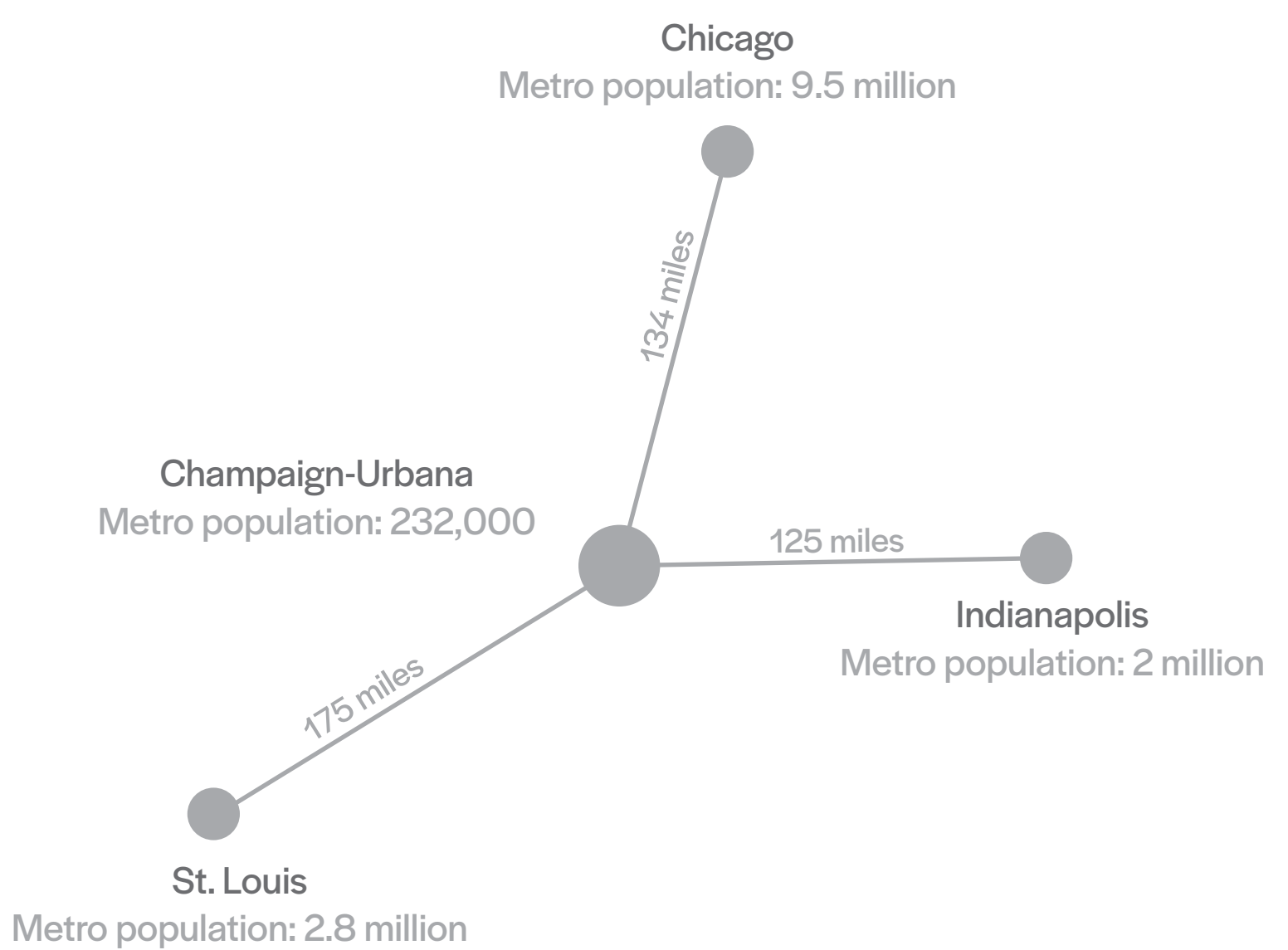
The study area is flanked by Champaign's downtown area to the north, Campustown to the east, and the residential In-Town district to the west. Neil Street is the major north-south artery for the City of Champaign, though its roadway design and narrow sidewalk makes for an unpleasant pedestrian experience. The site is located within walking distance of Illinois Terminal but it is only directly served by the MTD's 5 Green bus.

Land Use

The uses on the study area are primarily commercial and light industrial in the form of warehouses. Despite its proximity to the dense and mixed-use downtown and Campustown districts, the study area presents a monoculture of low-rise land uses. Its buildings are oriented for automobiles traffic and this is reflected in the roadway design and infrastructure allocation. While underdeveloped, the study area lends itself to future densification as it piggybacks off of surrounding growth.



Context, study area constraints, and GOSM



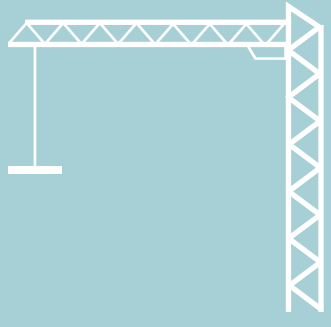
- Situated in micropolitan area
- Distant from large Midwestern population centers
- High saturation of existing housing
- Automobile-oriented buildings and roadways
- Low density area, underutilized

GOSM

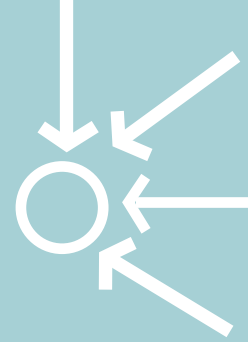
Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Measurements
Improve Connectivity of the neighborhood and the surrounding Intown, Downtown and Campus Town area.	Improve density though leveraging parking lots to form more buildings and commercial residents	Recreate street design to both allow different modes of traffics and promote the streetscape.	Use ADT traffic to see possibility of road diet for later phases. Measure current sidewalk width along both areas
Increase in sustainable commercial buildings and tax revenue generating businesses	Increase the FAR for commercial buildings located on the parcels.	Increase TIF district to encompass current site area. Use LEED tax credit	Look into current properties that generate revenue within buildings.
Improve Connection of public transportation from the site area to downtown and campustown locations	Increase MTD frequencies and lines from campustown to site area	Leverage entertainment and retail draw population from both ice arena, downtown, and campustown areas	Use current busline frequency and lines that travel and stop at our current area.

Opportunities

Plan



Capitalize off of the development of nearby multi-use arena, transit center, convention center, and mixed-use properties to the north and nearby neighborhood growth.



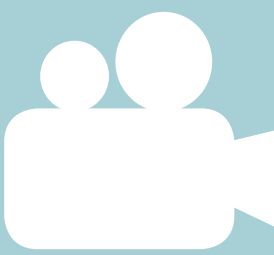
Bridge the gap in urban form between the denser Campustown and downtown districts



Improve the safety and accessibility of transit and non-motorized transportation in the area



Reclaim roadway space and produce new, unique public space as a neighborhood focal point



Introduce entertainment options and other uses not present in the area, taking advantage of the area's proximity to Campustown

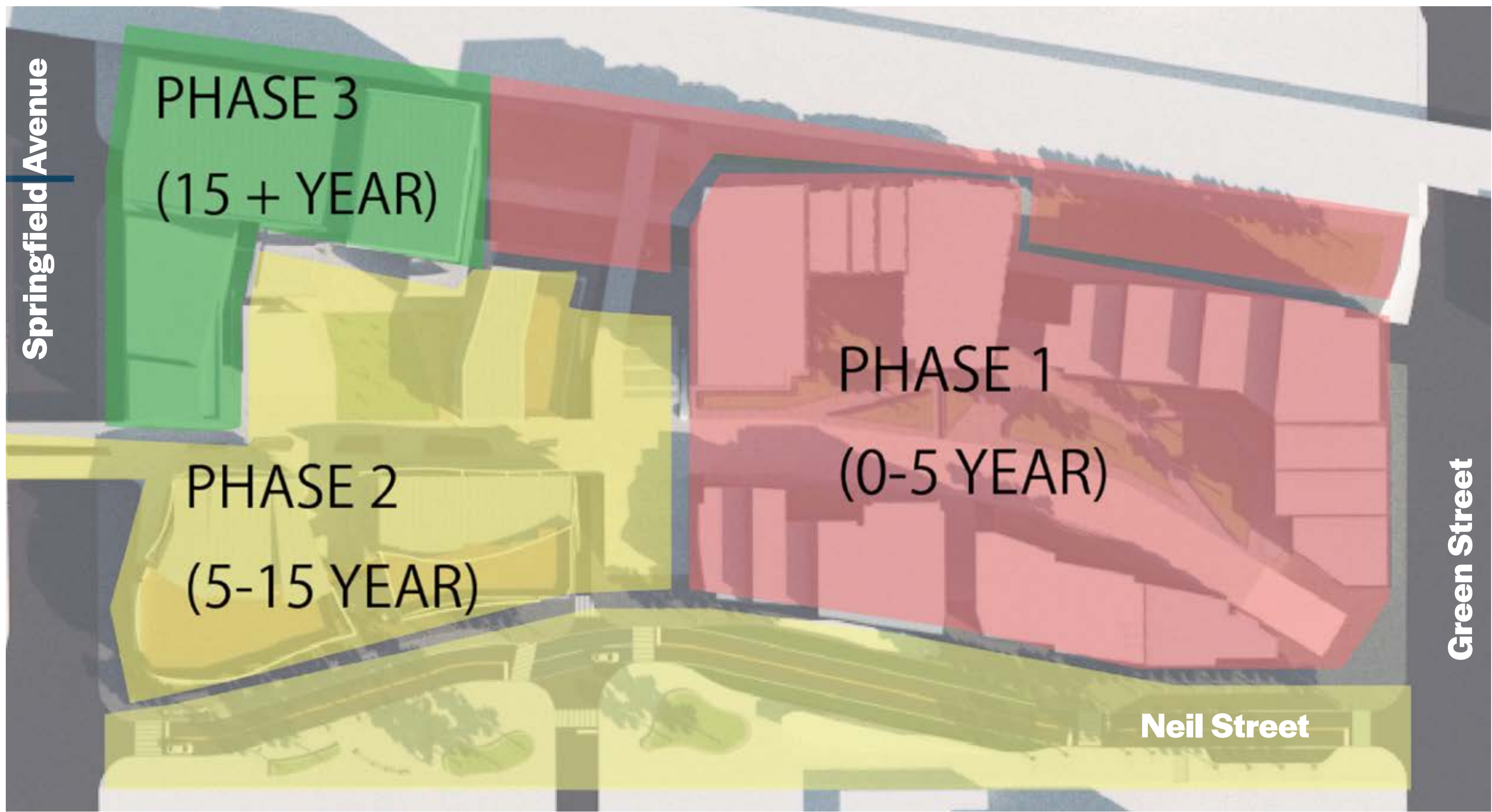
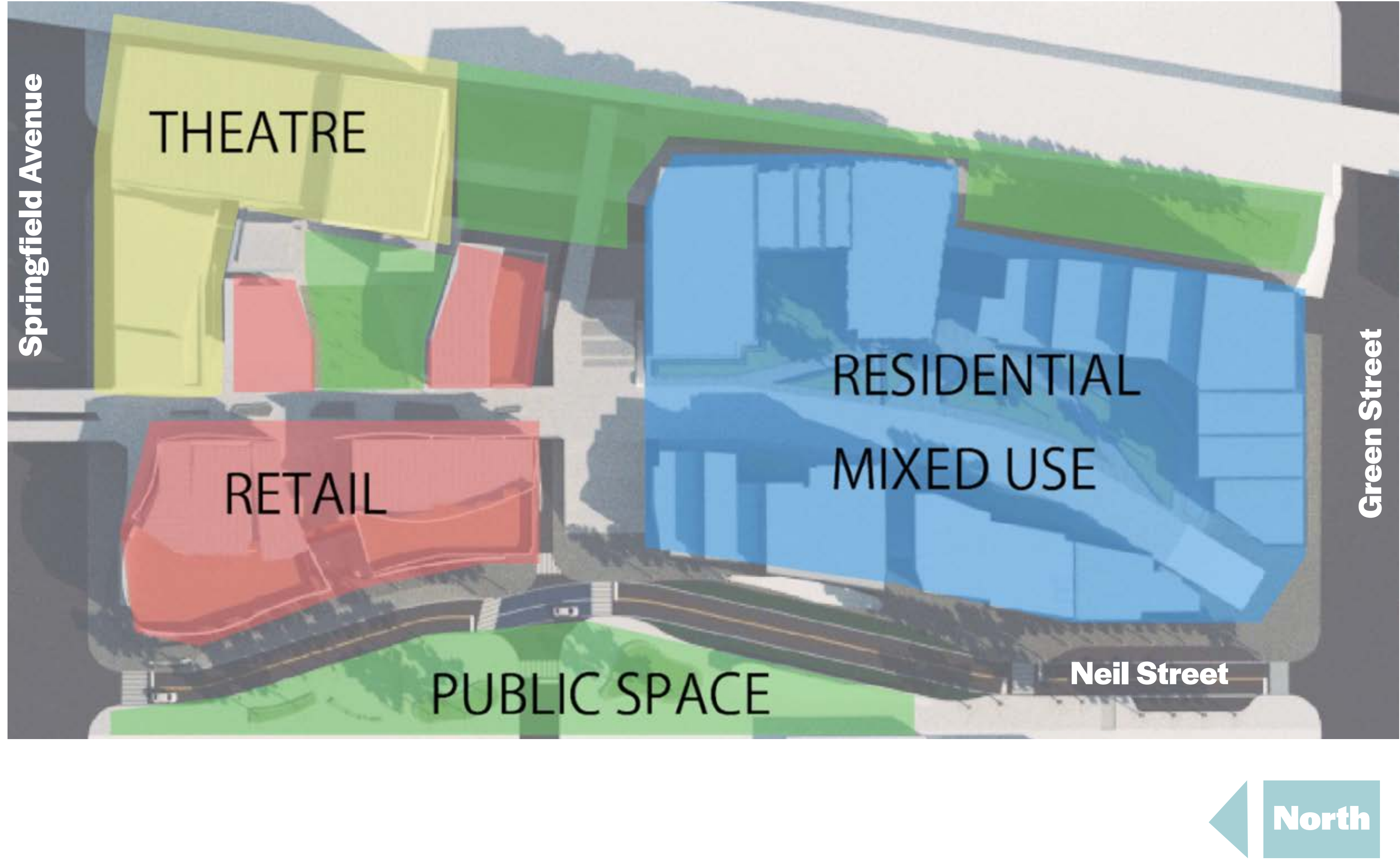


Act as a stepping stone for the densification and intensification of the Neil Street corridor, shaping a nascent regional spine

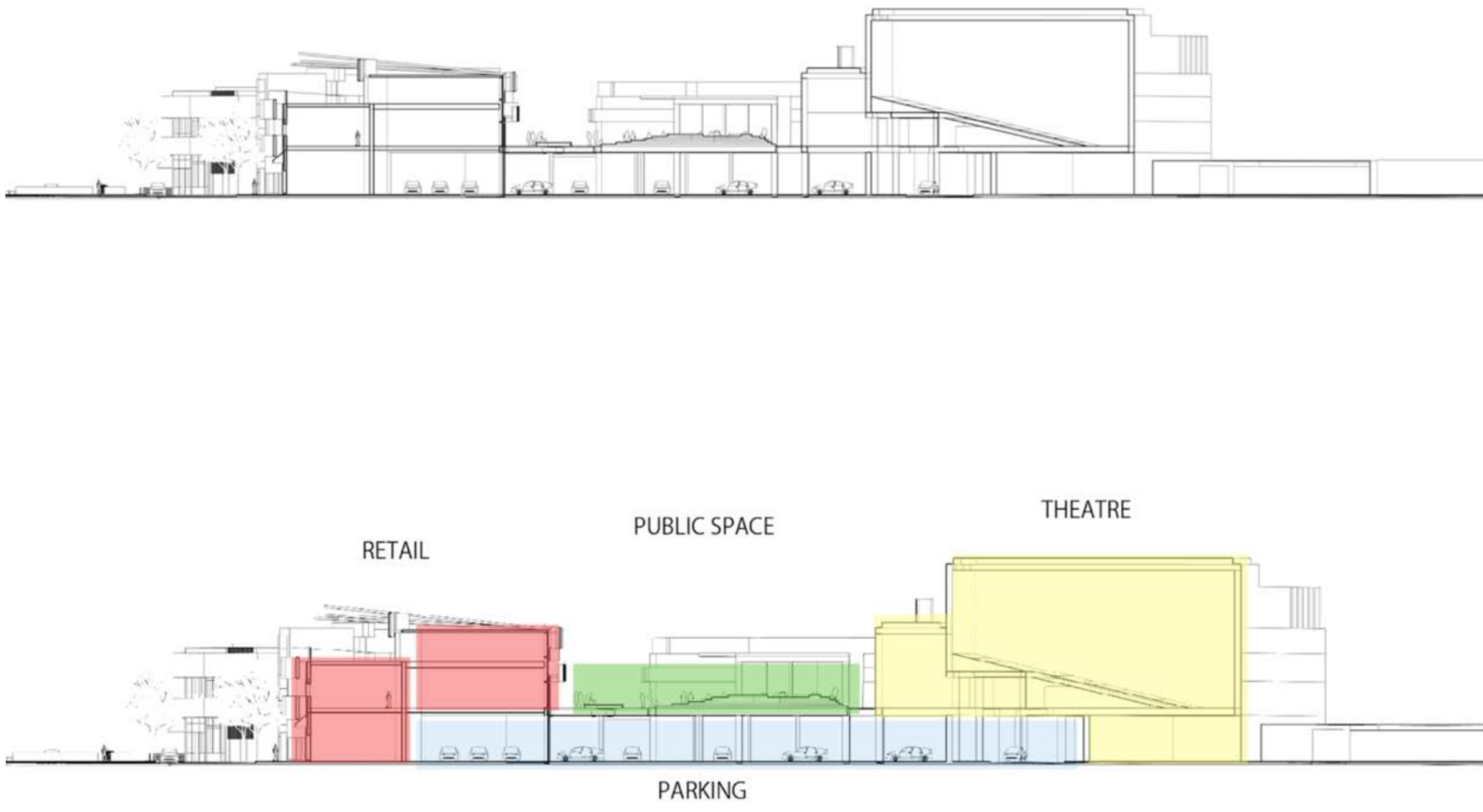
Located directly south of Champaign's largest downtown redevelopment project, the study area has the potential to create a framework for new development in the South Neil area, harnessing opportunity from the economic engines of the central business and university district. Linking the downtown and campus areas will foster a large, regional core and encourage a shift in urban form along the South Neil Street corridor.



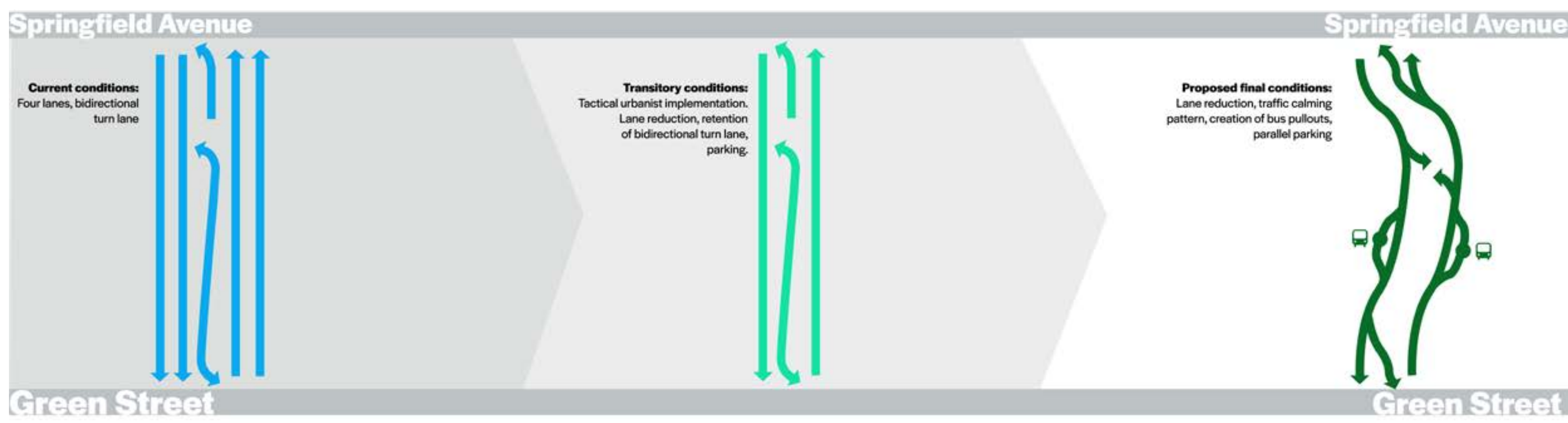
Plan - components and phasing



Plan - sections and elevation



Plan - streetscape treatment



Neil Street Streetscaping Program

under 5 years | **5-10 years** | **15 + years**

Streetscape alteration objectives:

Traffic calming

Roadway curving, reducing parking lot entrances to Neil, Healey signalization

Pedestrian experience improvement

Crosswalks, sidewalk widening, shorter crossing distance

Transit improvements

Bus pull out lanes, shelters

Beautification

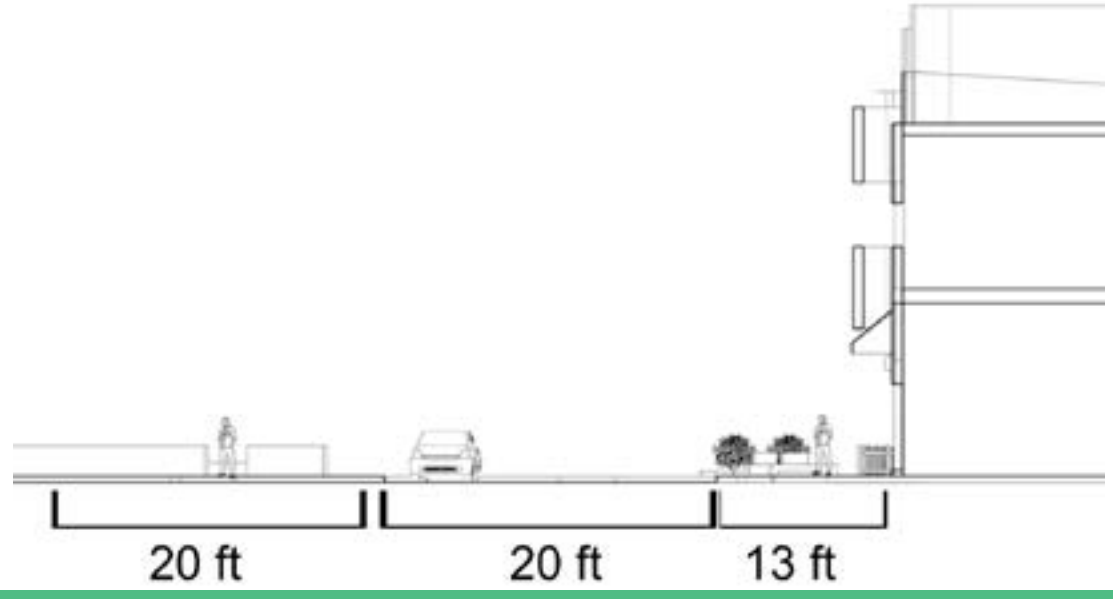
Street trees doubling as means of noise reduction, planters, public art

Public Space

Creation of public plazas as a result of newly-available right-of-way

Street parking

Adding street parking along Neil to support businesses abutting the street



streetscape section

streetscape view, facing southeast from Neil & Healey



Plan - axonometric

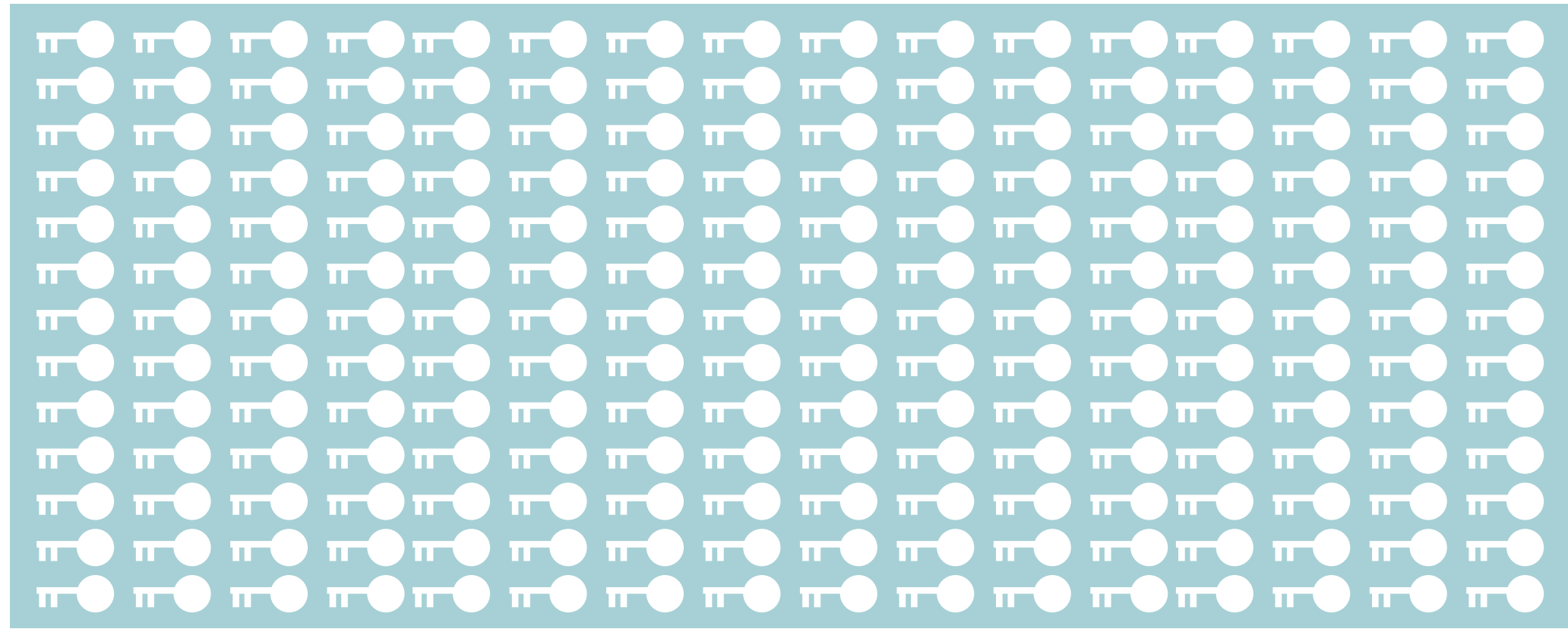


Looking northeast

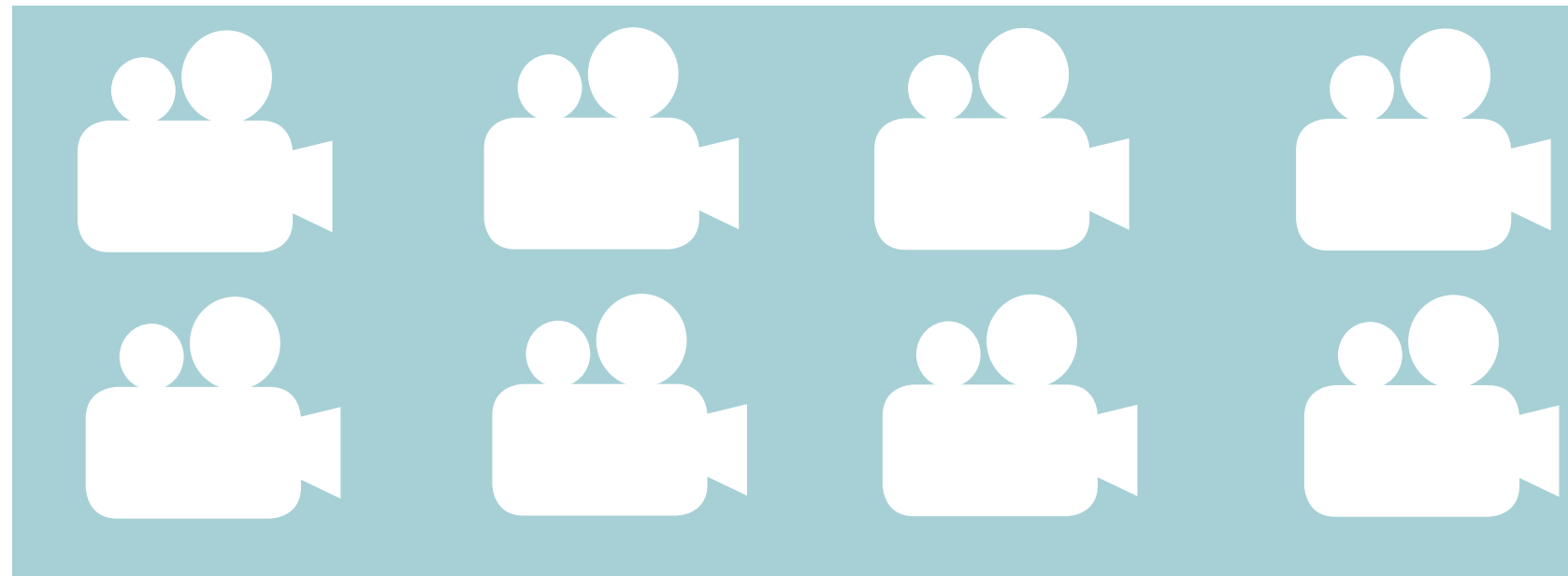


Looking southeast

Plan - specifics



156
apartment
units




8
screen cinema



55,000
square feet of
commercial space

31,000
square feet of
public space



200
on-site parking
spaces



Conclusion

While the study area is hindered by some limiting factors, its location represents an opportunity to create a dense, mixed use neighborhood that expands a nascent entertainment district. The development can piggyback off of the high level of construction activity in the adjacent downtown and Campustown districts. The study area is also an ideal site for entertainment uses that are not widely available in Campustown, accessing a market of almost 40,000 people without even considering nearby neighborhoods to the west. As it stands, the study area is only directly served by a single bus route, the 5 Green; however, this bus route is also one of the most frequent in the Champaign-Urbana area and boast the highest daily ridership. Additionally the site is only two blocks south of Illinois Terminal, the largest transit center in downstate Illinois and the hub for MTD buses, intercity buses, and Amtrak in the area. The area also falls within the Downtown Fringe TIF district, which could feasibly help fund some of the infrastructure improvements.

We recommend that the site follow strict urbanist guidelines allowing for allocation of public space, prioritization of active transportation modes, and allowances for features like outdoor dining to enhance the quality of the public space. Interventions on the street level, such as bus shelters, mid-block crosswalks, planters, and a new signalized intersection at Healey Street.

Over the long term, this site would ideally blend downtown and Campustown, once separated by the hard edge of the railroad tracks, into a contiguous neighborhood. Streetscape treatments may also increase the multimodal capacity of Neil Street, Champaign's primary north-south artery, potentially creating a new a denser corridor throughout.

