

Community Meeting #2

I-80 Des Plaines River Bridge Community Plan

11/13/2025

Agenda

1. Community Plan Update
2. Community Meeting #1 Recap
3. Community Needs and Priorities
4. Vision Statement
5. Improvement Concepts
6. Short- and Long-Term Improvements
7. Next Steps



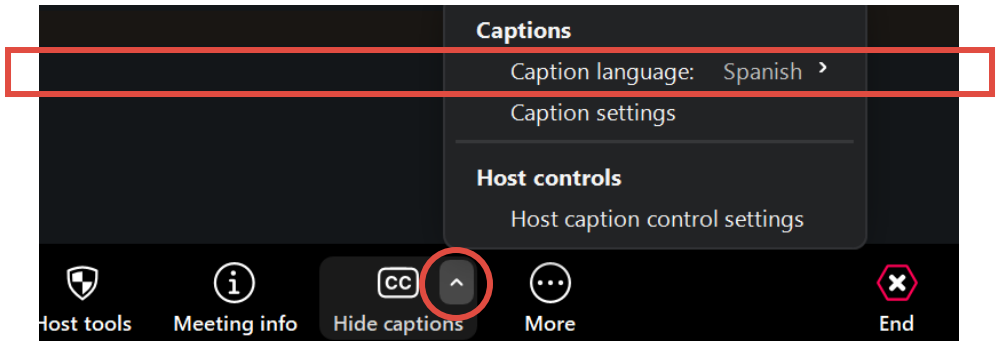
Meeting Guidelines

General

- **Update** your Zoom display name with your name.
- Stay on **mute** unless asked to speak.

Translations

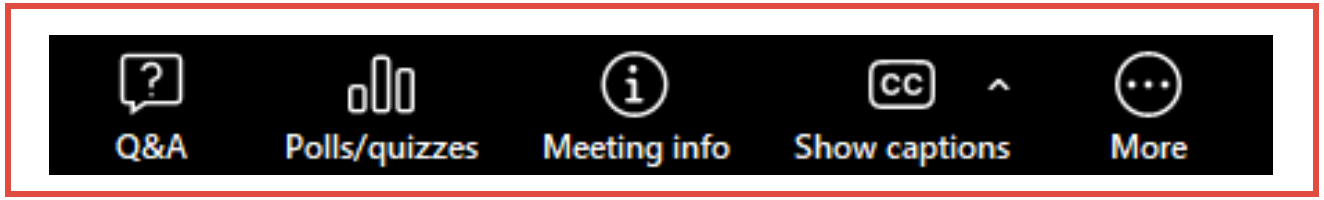
- Para traducciones al español, haga clic en la flecha junto a los subtítulos cerrados, seleccione traducción y elija su idioma.



Meeting Guidelines

Participant Engagement

- **Share your thoughts and comments in the chat**.
- Use the **Q&A** feature for questions to the team.
- Access **poll and/or closed caption features** in your Zoom panel.
  - *If you do not see these features, click the "more" button.*





1. Community Plan Update

Community Plan Area



Community Plan Update



Community Interviews

Sign up to participate in a community interview!

Contact:

(312) 588-6983

i80communityplan@joliet.gov





2. Community Meeting #1 Recap

Community Meeting #1: At a Glance

Purpose: Visioning

Date: July 22, 2025

Four Stations:

- Project Background and Community Identity
- Improvement Concepts
- Future Land Use Discussion
- Next Steps



Community Meeting #1: Feedback Collected

- **64+ Attendees** signed in
- **19 Comment Forms** collected
- **99 Total Sticky Notes** Comments/Votes across all stations







Engagement Results – Shared Use Path

There was **overall support** for a trail.

- There was preference for **‘riverfront’** (top) or **‘neighborhood’** (bottom) trails.

- **Other feedback:**
  - Participants liked both recreational and connectivity trail uses.
  - Preferred amenities: shaded bike rack, lighting, and seating.
  - Desire for improved connectivity (biking, walking, etc.).





Engagement Results – Historic Plaque

Community **mostly expressed support** for a plaque honoring Reverend Varnado.

What We Heard:

- Representation can be more inclusive of other historic community figures.
- No strong preference for plaque design.
  - *The two options below were tied with low vote totals.*





Engagement Results – Traffic Calming

Community **expressed overall support** for traffic calming on Water Street.

- Attendees identified **safety issues** such as lack of streetlights, poor sidewalk conditions, and pedestrian/bike concerns.
- **Note:** the City of Joliet is doing a traffic study to better understand safety issues and needs.





Speed feedback signs (left) were preferred, followed closely by **traffic circles** (right).

Engagement Results – Future Land Use

Community **expressed an overall preference** for all three future land use options.

What We Heard:

- Strong preference for **active community spaces.**
- Desire for **community art** and **low-maintenance landscaping**.
- Incorporate safe family **gathering spaces**.
- Concerns about **overgrown land and maintenance**.

Open Space

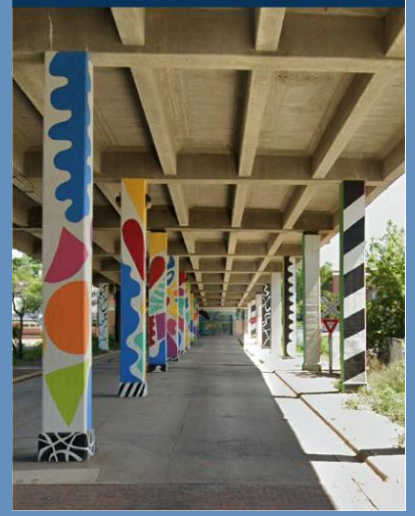
Least Preferred



Landscape



Community Art





3. Community Needs and Priorities

Engagement Results – Community Needs and Priorities

Things mentioned by residents as needs:

Safety & Security

- More streetlights and cameras
- Police presence and traffic enforcement
- Addressing crime and abandoned properties

Access to Resources

- Grocery stores with fresh produce
- Senior resources and housing
- Community centers and informational hubs

Health & Wellness

- Urgent care facilities, physician offices
- Mental health and outreach resources

Recreation & Public Space

- Parks for seniors and children (indoor & outdoor)
- Basketball courts and water features
- Holiday decorations and streetscape beautification

Amplifying Community Voices

- Ensure improvements chosen reflect resident's voices and needs
- Honor the residents' history and identity

Engagement Results – Community Needs and Priorities (cont.)

A wide range of community needs were brought up, including (in descending order of emphasis):

- Safer, more multimodal transportation infrastructure
- Greater community investment and economic development/opportunity
- Improved safety/security and law enforcement
- More youth- and family-oriented green/recreational space
- More health/lifestyle and community amenities
- More vacant lot clean-up accountability
- Care for aging populations
- Access to healthier food options
- Care for local wildlife and education about conservation



4. Vision Statement

Vision Statement

Our Steering Committee voted on a **Vision Statement** as a **broad outline of the aspirations for the future**, describing hopes for achievement and providing a sense of direction.

Community Vision Statement:

We envision a community that unites legacy and progress by honoring cultural roots and amplifying resident visions for the future. We envision investment in thoughtful infrastructure, public health, local entrepreneurship, and safe, accessible spaces to help the community flourish as a vibrant, inclusive place for all.



Respond to our meeting poll:
Do you agree with this vision statement?

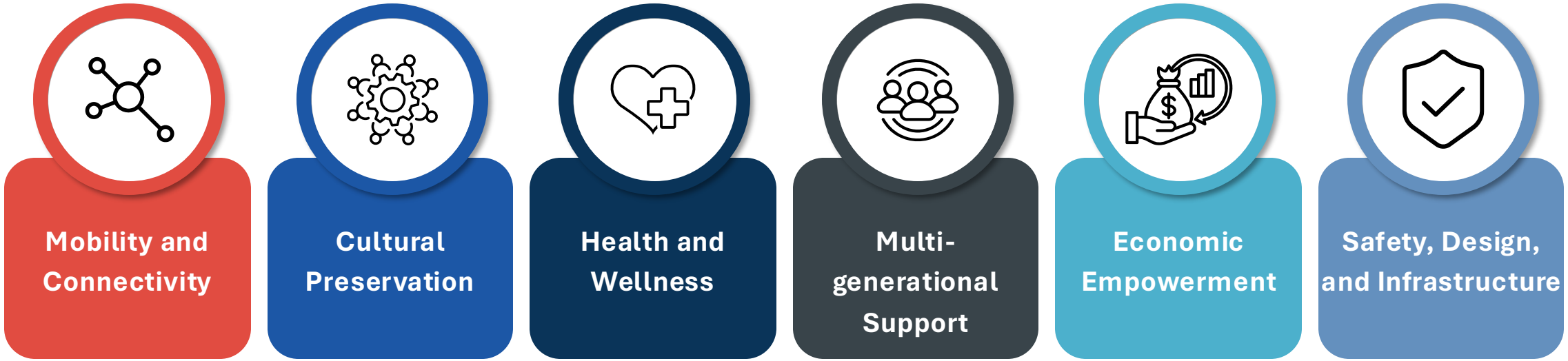


Share additional thoughts in the chat!

What We Heard: Potential Community Needs

A Vision Statement can be subdivided into the more specific community needs that have been identified to guide implementation.

Community needs were categorized into 6 themes:



Detailed Community Needs

I-80 Des Plaines River Bridge Community Plan

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Project Overview

The I-80 Des Plaines River Bridge Community Plan is an important partnership between the City of Joliet and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The Plan will address community improvements in the neighborhoods surrounding the I-80 Des Plaines River Bridge.

IDOT's larger I-80 reconstruction project includes replacing and relocating the Des Plaines River Bridge. IDOT has committed $3.5 million for community improvements to address impacts from the bridge relocation. This Community Plan will determine how those funds should be used to best benefit the surrounding neighborhoods.

Unlike previous I-80 engagement efforts that focused on environmental review and property acquisition, this planning process concentrates specifically on identifying and implementing community improvements that enhance connectivity, community cohesion, and neighborhood identity.

Project study area:



Review detailed community needs on our website!

joliet.gov/i80communityplan

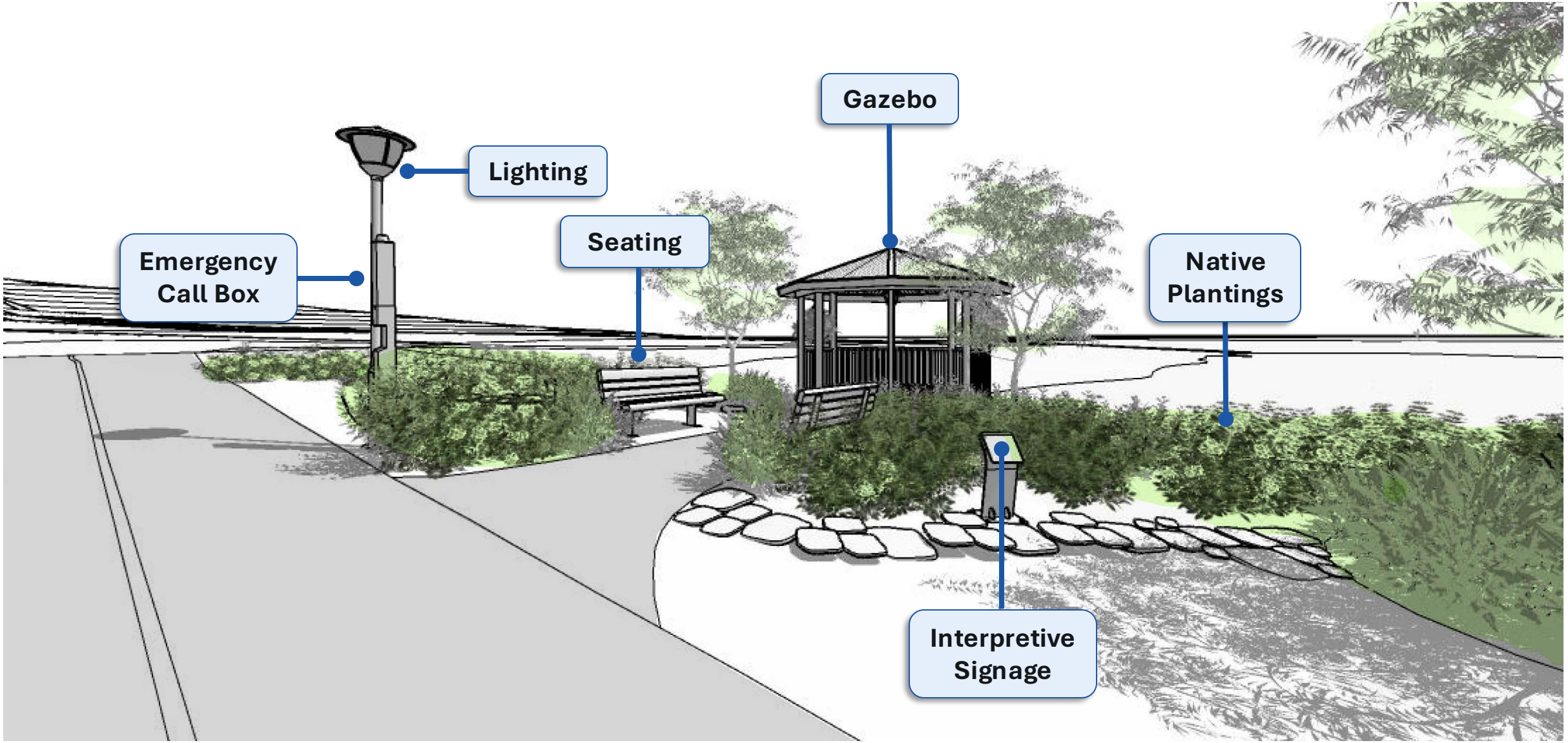


5. Improvement Concepts

Site Plan


TO DOWNTOWN
Historic Signage
(Varnado Park)
Native Garden
Play Area
Gathering Area
Under Bridge
Recreation
80
Road Improvements
TO NOWELL PARK

Native Garden – Looking North Along Path



Share your thoughts!

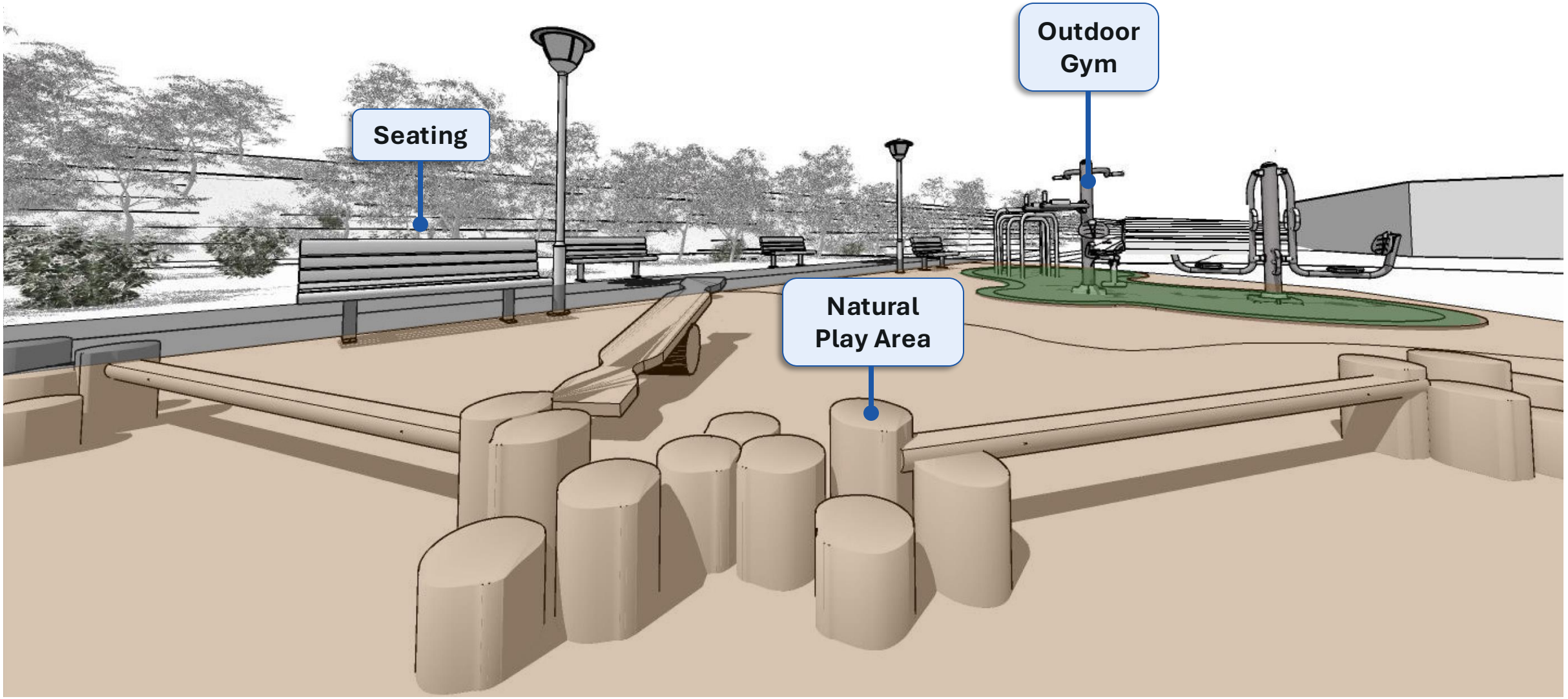
Respond to our meeting poll:
Does this feel like a nice space that you would use?

Put your thoughts in the chat:
What would make this space more welcoming for you?



Native Garden

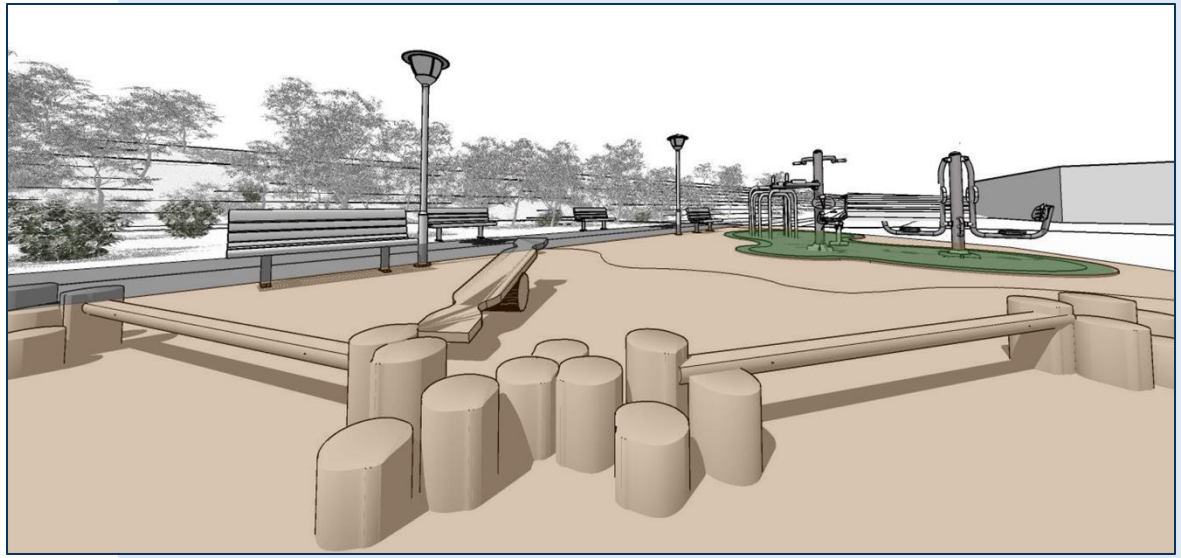
Play Area – Looking West at Path



Share your thoughts!

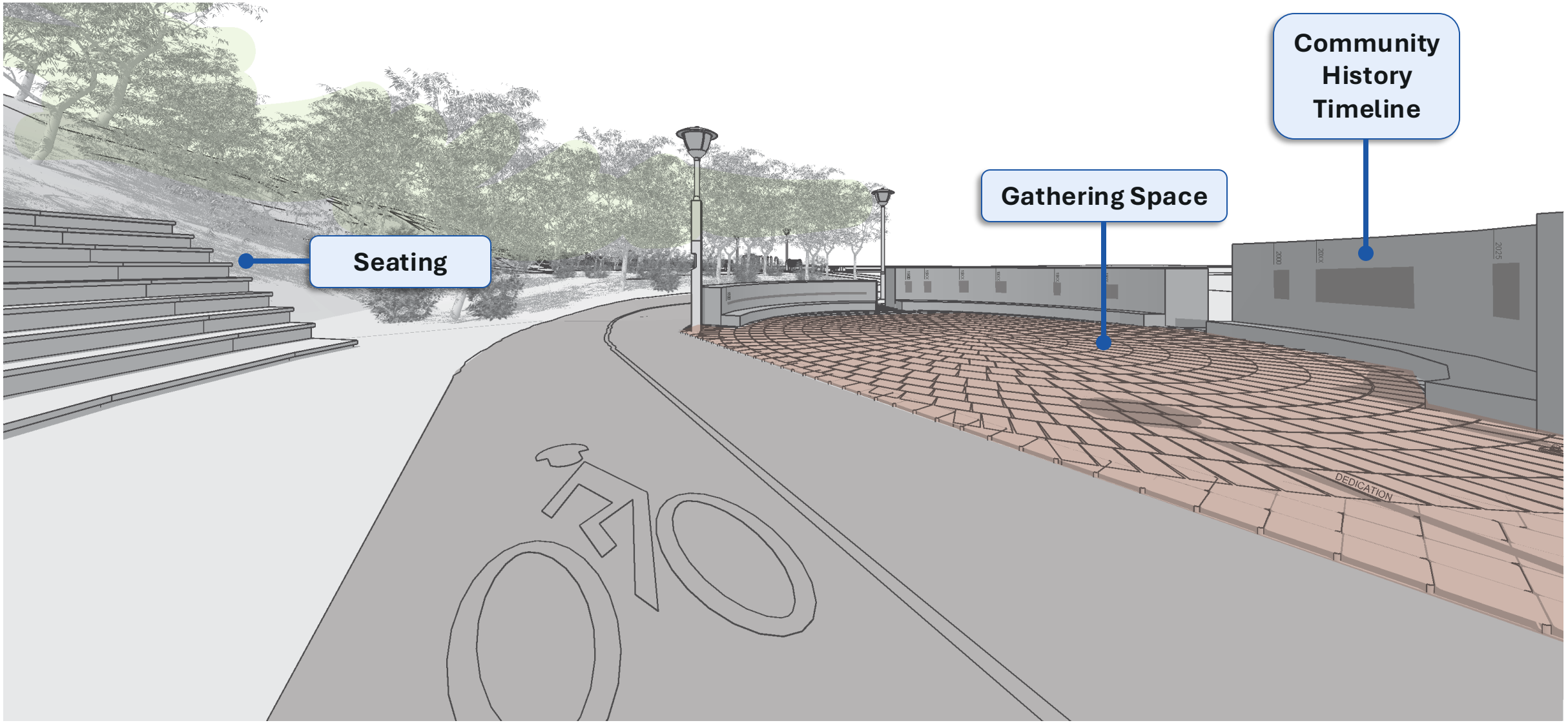
Respond to our meeting poll:
Would this play area meet your family's needs?

Put your thoughts in the chat:
What age groups or activities should we prioritize here?



Play Area

Gathering Space – Looking North Along Path



Share your thoughts!

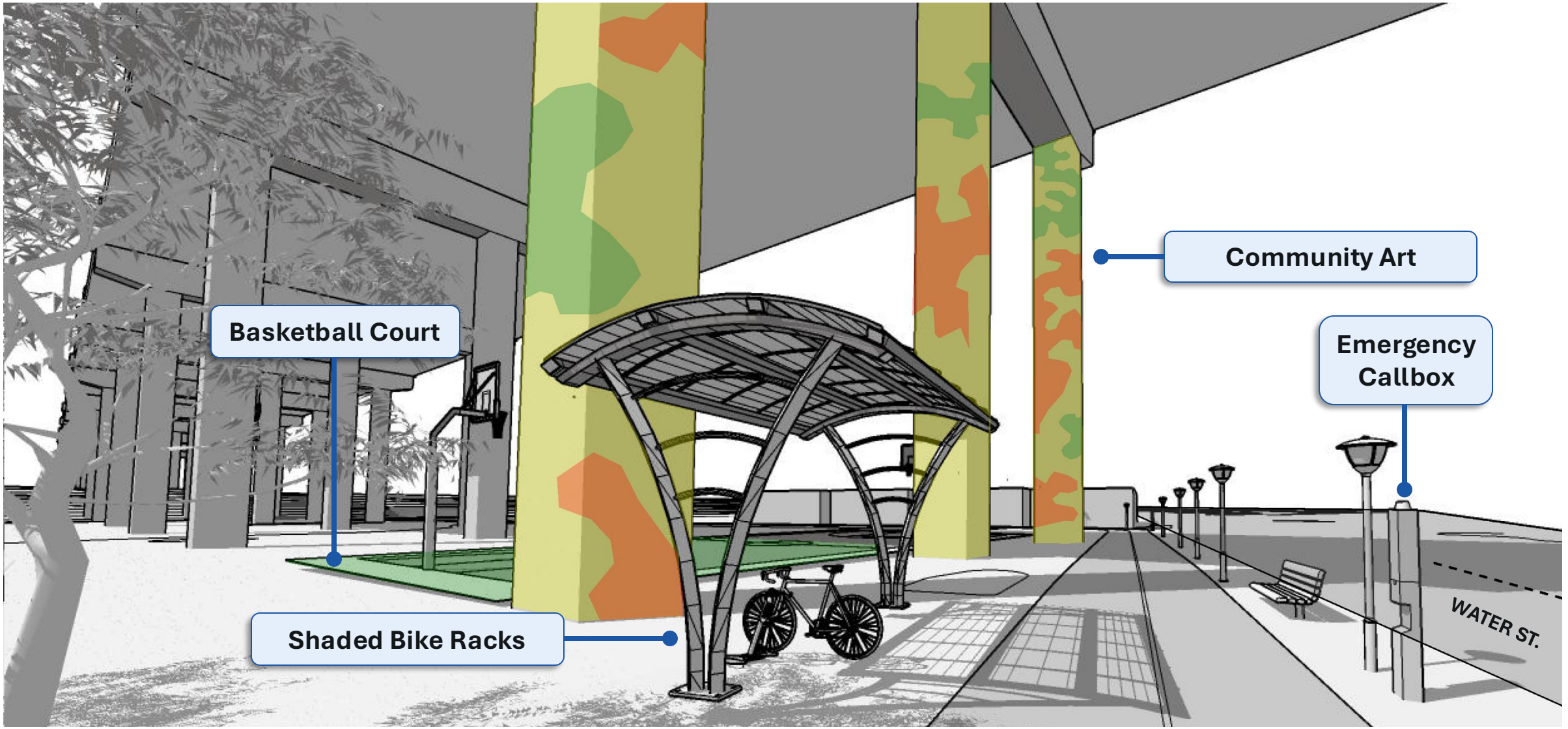
Respond to our meeting poll:
Can you see yourself or your community using this gathering space?

Put your thoughts in the chat:
What types of events or uses do you envision for this space?



Gathering Space

Under Bridge – Looking North Along Path



Share your thoughts!

Respond to our meeting poll:
Does this under-bridge space feel safe and inviting to you?

Put your thoughts in the chat:
Does basketball work here, or would you prefer a different use?



Under Bridge

Share your thoughts!

Respond to our meeting polls!

1. **Overall, does this concept reflect what you told us the community needs?**
2. **If budget requires trade-offs, which is MOST important to you?**
   - Enhanced lighting and safety features
   - More gathering/event spaces
   - Better play equipment and features
   - Community art and cultural markers
   - Expanded landscaping and native plantings

Final chat invitation:

What works? What doesn't? What's missing? Share any additional feedback in the chat—we're reading everything.



6. Short- and Long-Term Improvements

Short Term Improvements

Funded by $3.5 Millions

- **Shared-Use Path & Connectivity**
- **Safety & Lighting**
- **Community Spaces**
- **Cultural Recognition**
- **Potential Traffic Calming**

Long Term Recommendations

For Future Funding

- **Expanded Connectivity**
- **Community Facilities & Services**
- **Health & Wellness Resources**
- **Economic Development Support**



7. Next Steps

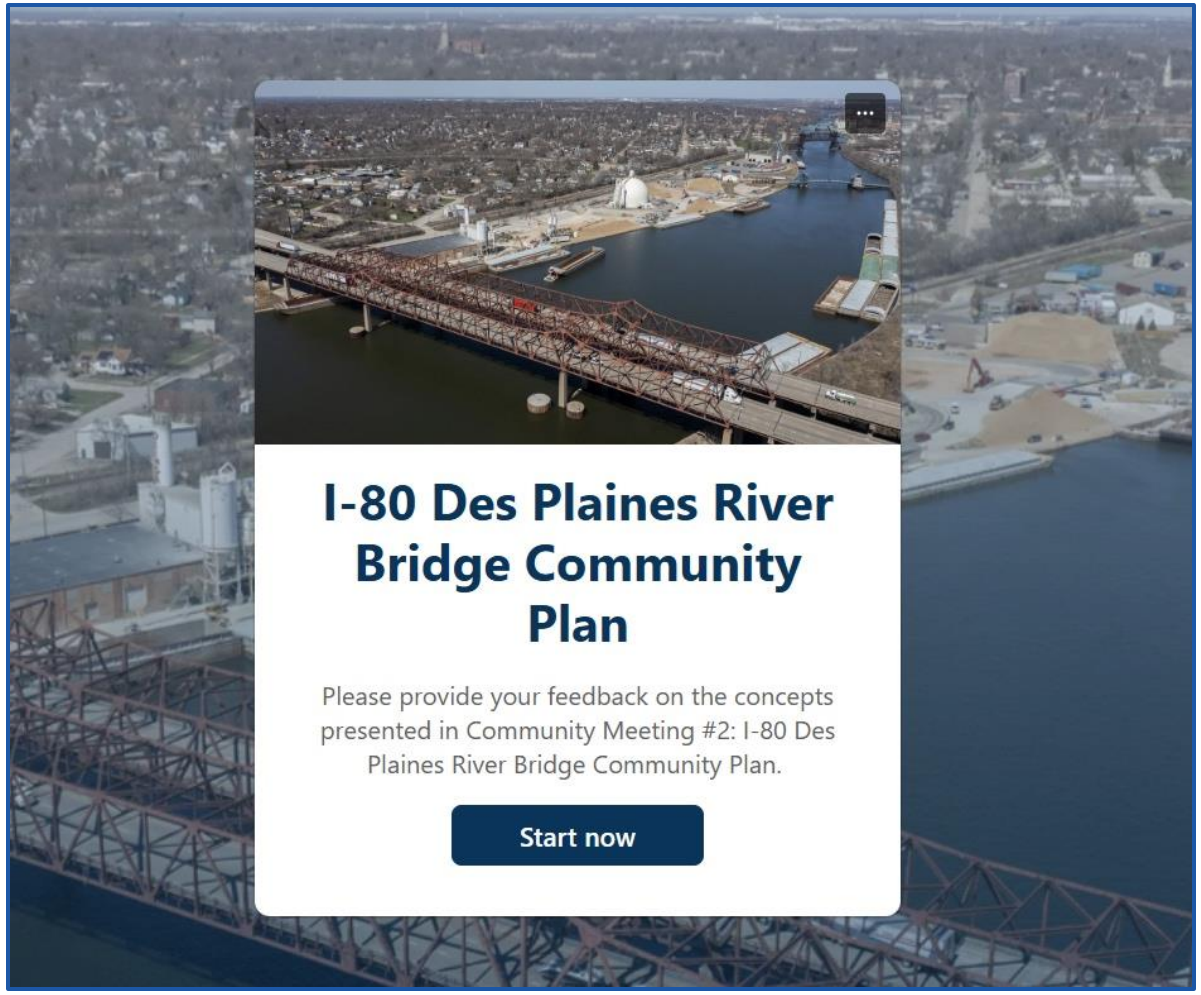
Next Steps

1. Refine the Concepts
2. Check Feasibility & Cost Estimates
3. Complete Oral History Interviews and Documentation
4. Begin Drafting Community Plan

Comment Forms

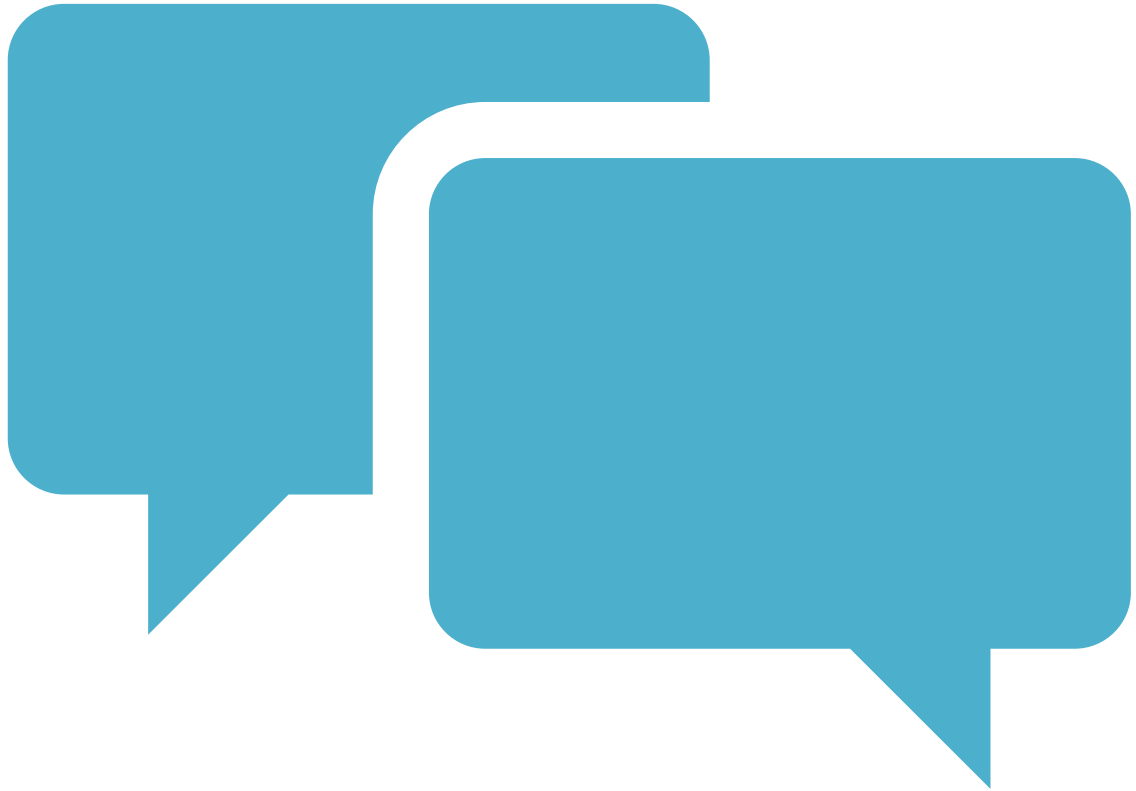
View meeting materials on our website and fill out a comment form!

joliet.gov/i80communityplan



Discussion

- Q&A
- Final thoughts





Thank You!