
DATE: Monday, June 22, 2026
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, June 22, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: DeShawn Williams, Mayor; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey, CM Verdell Jones III, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Elizabeth Hannan, Tal Prendergast, Vince Gustafson, Seok Hyun Cho, Larry Boone, Don Ho, Evan Alvarez, Olivia Jovine, Darius White, Matthew Roeschley

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathryn Holliday, Member of the Historic Preservation Commission; Joseph Altshuler, Assistant Professor of the Illinois School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Ashlee McLaughlin, External Affairs Director of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District; Karl Gnadt, Managing Director of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District; Dr. Stephanie Renae Cockrell, Ward 5 Vacancy Candidate

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, Mayor Williams called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. 05-04-2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

b. 05-11-2026 City Council Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Presentations and Public Input

a. Change, Adaptive Reuse, and Historic Preservation

Presented by Kathryn Holliday, Member of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Shared the HPC began to protect the West Urbana neighborhood from being demolished by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) in the 1960s and has now evolved to

a. Change, Adaptive Reuse, and Historic Preservation (Continued)

formerly excluded areas such as mid-century modern architecture and African American history. Stated the HPC seeks public feedback to inform their work and cooperation from the City of Urbana to conduct preservation. Expressed concerns regarding misinformation and lapses in communication between the HPC and the City, leading to trust issues that stemmed from the Section 106 review process for the Urbana Civic Center. Stated the HPC was not involved in the Section 106 review of the Civic Center and did not receive any official notice from the City or invitation to participate. Requested the public to contact HPC members for more information. Shared personal work experience regarding historic preservation and Section 106 reviews, emphasizing the HPC did not receive any formal invitation to participate. Shared instances of communication between the HPC and Champaign Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD).

Clarified that historic preservation can involve change and landmarked properties have four options available: Preservation (maintaining existing building conditions); Rehabilitation (altering the building while maintaining the identity of a building); Restoration (repairing the building to its original condition when it was significant); and Reconstruction (rebuilding a demolished building at its original site). Expressed the HPC seeks for the Civic Center to proceed with a rehabilitation of the building. Shared images illustrating how rehabilitation functions. Shared examples of how the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a private research university, and City Harvest, the largest food rescue non-profit organization in New York City in the State of New York, were able to implement adaptive reuse.

Expressed support for expanding public transit access while compromising and actively collaborating with the HPC. Stated City Council could require the CUMTD to form committees on adaptive reuse, to include conditions regarding the use of the building, to hire a preservation architect to survey the building, and to redo the Section 106 review. Questions and discussion followed. *Presentation slides can be found attached.*

b. Changing the Discourse: Collaborative and Adaptive Reuse – CM's Evans and Wilken

Presented by Joseph Altshuler, Assistant Professor of the Illinois School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Expressed that the presentation seeks to inform the public on adaptive reuse and the potential for compromise with the Civic Center to preserve the historic building while expanding the area's public transit access. Shared the City of Urbana and CUMTD previously collaborated with him for a UIUC course that challenged students to design a transit center that implements adaptive reuse of the Civic Center building.

Spoke on the history of the Civic Center and its original intent to be a small part of a larger development that was never built. Shared schematics of potential designs by the original architect firm, Smith, Seaton, & Olach. Emphasized potential for collaboration still exists and a compromise can be reached for the Civic Center.

Stated the total area of the Civic Center and adjacent parking lot are around 82,000 square feet and the area used by the Civic Center building is around 8,394 square feet. Affirmed the current design of the Civic Center creates a narrow space on the north side of the lot that would prevent the flow of buses. Stated the demolition of the northern annex will create enough clearance for CUMTD buses to travel through and will enable saw-cut parking of buses. Expressed other options are available for the CUMTD if more clearance is required.

Displayed personal analyses and diagrams of how adaptive reuse can be used on the building to

c. Changing the Discourse: Collaborative and Adaptive Reuse – CM’s Evans and Wilken (Continued)

illustrate how both the needs for a potential transit center can be met while preserving the Civic Center. Emphasized the original hope for the Civic Center to serve as an entryway to a larger building can be fulfilled through the implementation of adaptive reuse in the development of the future transit center. Shared various configurations and diagrams on how the Civic Center can be utilized in adaptive reuse for a transit center. Questions and discussion followed.

Presentation slides can be found attached.

b. MTD Downtown Urbana Transit Facility

Presented by Ashlee McLaughlin, External Affairs Director of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District and Karl Gnadt, Managing Director of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District. Karl Gnadt expressed this presentation seeks to share the CUMTD’s perspective on the topic of the Civic Center and the potential transit center. Spoke on the miscommunications between CUMTD and HPC regarding plans for the transit center. Stated the CUMTD seeks to improve public transit in downtown Urbana through the development of a transit center to accommodate off-street transferring, improve accessibility, and improve rider safety.

Emphasized the downtown location is ideal for bus riders and would support the downtown Urbana economy. Stated the 13-to-14-year search, involving the City of Urbana, has identified the location of the Civic Center as an ideal location for a future transit center. Stated the CUMTD is not opposed to preservation, but their consultants concluded the Civic Center must be demolished to meet their needs for a downtown transit center. Stated the transit center cannot use a saw-tooth bus bay configuration due to the bus fleet’s 60-foot articulated buses; requires layover areas for buses awaiting opportunities to support routes facing delays in service; and must meet the Urbana School District #116’s (USD116) needs for their planned offices.

Stated the CUMTD has paused its pursuit of the transit center to respect the HPC and City’s deliberative process regarding the Civic Center, noting a grant opportunity was missed during the pause and the CUMTD hopes to retain its credibility with its funding partners. Expressed willingness to discuss how the architectural design of the transit center can respect the area, the wishes of the HPC, City Council, the CUMTD Board of Trustees, the community, and the original architects of the Civic Center. Emphasized that the top priority of the transit center is its service to the public transit riders. Noted a landmark designation is anticipated to delay development and increase projected costs. Questions and discussion followed.

Mayor Williams called for a five-minute recess at 8:37 p.m.

With a quorum present, Council reconvened from recess at 8:42 p.m.

c. Public Input

Gabriel Dunn thanked the presenters for sharing their perspectives and information regarding the transit center and the Civic Center. Spoke in opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-06-016 regarding the designation of 108 East Water Street, the “Urbana Civic Center”, as a Historic Landmark. Stressed that the need for a downtown public transit center in Urbana should be prioritized over conducting historic preservation. Suggested Urbana should reallocate funding for the Historic Preservation Commission toward the future Alternate Response Program.

Angela Urban stated she has shared a timeline from the HPC’s perspective on the Section 106 review to Council and requested for it to be included in the meeting record. Voiced the letter to

d. Public Input (Continued)

Council does not seek to accuse people of miscommunication or ill intent across all bodies. Spoke on the need for better engagement and clarity throughout the Section 106 historic review process of the Urbana Civic Center and expressed support for Ordinance No. 2026-06-016. Stated HPC should have been involved in the Section 106 process for the Civic Center so that the public could be meaningfully engaged. **Sara Rand** expressed support for developing a downtown transit center to expand rider access to paratransit as riders can only purchase paratransit tokens at the transit center in the downtown of the City of Champaign. Requested clarification on how the City of Urbana upholds compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requested tracking for ADA compliance relevant expenditures, as FOIA Requests for the information were inconclusive. **Anna Hough** spoke in opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-06-016. Stated the landmark designation stifles the opportunity to transform the unutilized Civic Center into a new public good and critical infrastructure asset. Stated that the transit center provides necessary amenities for riders and operators such as indoor bathrooms, protection from the weather, and clear bus stops. Emphasized that the landmark designation further threatens a potential \$32,000,000 grant to fund the development. **Anthony Fisher** requested Council to consider establishing and supporting worker protections for rideshare drivers to require fair treatment and due process for deactivation. Spoke on the services that rideshare drivers provide to the community that supplement areas of public transit. Emphasized the importance of public safety and responding to credible reports of violence, sexual misconduct, and fraudulent activity against rideshare drivers. Explained the importance of establishing safety nets to protect rideshare drivers from the precarity of app-based work. **Phil Fiscella** spoke in support of CUMTD and shared information regarding the Section 106 review of the Civic Center. Stated HPC were invited by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to participate in the review process on May 31, 2024, satisfying the requirement for the Section 106 review. Shared the secretary of the HPC responded to the email and the FTA representative later emailed another HPC member to detail all parties contacted and their involvement. Stated a transit center will provide better conditions for CUMTD employees and transit riders. **Nancy Westcott** expressed gratitude for CUMTD's services throughout the entirety of her time living in the Urbana-Champaign area. Highlighted the significance of the presence of the transit center in downtown Champaign. Stated the exposure to weather conditions at the Lincoln Square bus transfer area is uncomfortable experience for riders and the stop configuration is difficult to navigate as well. Requested for Council to trust the CUMTD to consider the historic value of the Civic Center and consider the potential high cost of resolving asbestos issues in the Civic Center. **Phyllis Williams** shared City staff affirmed to the HPC that the Civic Center meets five criteria to be considered a historic landmark. Spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-06-016, requesting Council to base their decision on the fact that, technically, the Civic Center meets the requirements to be considered a historic landmark. **Susan Appel** requested Council designate the Civic Center as a historic landmark based on the finding that it meets five criteria to be considered a historic landmark. Stated the building is unique in the area, remains valuable despite its deterioration, and deserves more consideration. Applauded the HPC for being comprised of thoughtful, experienced professionals and emphasized Council should value their recommendations. Noted a new building will require a new roof and materials, similar to how the Civic Center requires a new roof and materials.

Written Public Input regarding Ordinance No. 2026-06-016 were received from the following individuals and read by Council: Nick Anand, Kate Levy, D. Garnett, and Steve Fay.

Written Public Input regarding Ordinance No. 2026-06-016 were received from the following individuals but were not read: Soumya Dasgupta and Liz Cardman.

5. Council Input and Communications

CM Wu thanked the members of the public for their comments and presentations and thanked everyone for their work around the topic of the Civic Center. **CM Wilken** shared her experiences participating in an observance, at Homer Lake, of the Potawatomi Trail of Death, the forced removal of the Potawatomi from their homelands in 1837. Read an excerpt from a talk conducted by Allison Winter, CEO of Community Foundation of East Central Illinois, speaking on the violence of the Trail of Death, the endurance of the Potawatomi people in the present, and current community strides toward amplifying truth. Stated George Godfrey, Potawatomi Elder shared stories of accounts of living through the Potawatomi Trail of Death at the event. Shared further information can be found at <https://www.trailofdeath.org/>. **CM Quisenberry** thanked the public for sharing their perspectives on the Urbana Civic Center. Additionally thanked the organizers, staff, and supporters of the events and parade for Juneteenth. **Mayor Williams** thanked The Well Experience, Urbana Park District, City of Urbana, and the organizations that supported the Juneteenth community events that saw members of all communities celebrating Juneteenth. **CM Hursey** voiced appreciation for the public sharing their knowledge, concerns, and views on the Urbana Civic Center. **CM Jones** echoed thanks for the MTD, the Historic Preservation Commission, City staff, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for the time they have invested on the topic of the Urbana Civic Center.

6. Reports of Standing Committees

None.

7. Committee of the Whole (Council Member Verdell Jones III, Ward 4)

1. Consent Agenda

None.

2. Regular Agenda

- a. **Resolution No. 2026-06-023R:** A Resolution Amending an Intergovernmental Agreement for the Emergency Telephone System Board between the City of Urbana, the City of Champaign, the Village of Rantoul Illinois, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois and the County of Champaign, Illinois – FD

The Resolution amends an intergovernmental agreement for the Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) to include updates to reflect current Illinois 9-1-1 laws, operational practices, governance structures, financial administration requirements, and changes for the integration of the Village of Rantoul's dispatch Services into Metropolitan Computer Aided Dispatch (METCAD) operations.

Motion to approve by CM Jones, seconded by CM Wu.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- b. Ordinance No. 2026-06-015:** An Ordinance Approving a Special Use Permit (Medical Clinic at 909 North Cunningham Avenue / Plan Case No. 2522-SU-26) – CD

Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services was present for questions. The Ordinance approves a Special Use Permit for a medical clinic at 909 North Cunningham Avenue, a property zoned as B-3, General Business. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve, as amended, by CM Jones, seconded by CM Wilken.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- i.** Motion to amend to include language for limitation to Suite A to the legal description by CM Wu, seconded by CM Quisenberry.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- c. Ordinance No. 2026-06-016:** An Ordinance Designating a Historic Landmark (108 East Water Street, “Urbana Civic Center” / Historic Preservation Case No. HP-2026-L-01) – CD

Vince Gustafson, Public Works Director was present for questions. The Ordinance designates the property at 108 East Water Street, a property owned by the City, known as the Urbana Civic Center, as a historic landmark under Section XII-5 of the Zoning Ordinance. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve by CM Jones, seconded by CM Wilken.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Evans, Wilken

NAY: Wu, Hursey, Jones, Quisenberry

- d. Ordinance No. 2026-06-017:** An Ordinance Approving the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Annual Budget – HRF

Present for questions were Vince Gustafson, Public Works Director and Elizabeth Hannan, Human Resources & Finance Director/ CFO. The Ordinance adopts the FY2027 annual budget. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve by CM Jones, seconded by CM Wu.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry, Williams

NAY: None.

d. Ordinance No. 2026-06-017: An Ordinance Approving the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Annual Budget – HRF **(Continued)**

- i. Motion to amend to remove \$455,221 from the Community Engagement Team budget by CM Evans, seconded by CM Wilken. Discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Evans, Wilken

NAY: Wu, Jones, Quisenberry, Williams

- ii. Motion to allocate \$100,000 in recurring funds toward ADA compliance and sidewalk clearing snow removal by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Evans. Discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Evans, Wilken

NAY: Wu, Hursey, Jones, Quisenberry, Williams

e. Ordinance No. 2026-06-018: An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget Ordinance (Budget Amendment #10 – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Estimates) – HRF

The Ordinance amends the FY2026 budget to conform to estimates provided in the proposed FY2027 budget.

Motion to approve by CM Jones, seconded by CM Wu.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry, Williams

NAY: None.

8. Reports of Special Committees

None.

9. Reports of Officers

None.

10. Discussion

a. Surveillance Ordinance

CM Wilken requested the Surveillance Ordinance, Ordinance No. 2024-12-042, return to a Special Committee of the Whole meeting on July 13, 2026.

Motion to extend the meeting time to 11:00 p.m. by CM Wu, seconded by CM Quisenberry.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

11. Mayoral Appointments

1. Board and Commission Appointments

a. Traffic Commission

- Justin Swinford
- Verdell Jones III

b. Police Pension Fund Board

- Don Ho (term ending June 30, 2028)

The Zoning Board of Appeals

- Mark Wenneborg (term ending June 30, 2029)

Human Rights Commission

- Katrina Kindle (effective July 1, 2026 with term ending June 30, 2029)

Motion to approve the Board and Commission Appointments by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Wu.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

2. Board and Commission Reappointments

a. Human Rights Commission

- Shalini Smith (term ending June 30, 2029)

Sustainability Advisory Commission

- Andrew Stumpf (term ending June 30, 2029)
- Luke Westawker (term ending June 30, 2029)

The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

- Deb Newell (term ending June 30, 2029)
- Meena Malik (term ending June 30, 2029)

Tree Commission

- Carol Augspurger (term ending June 30, 2029)

2. Board and Commission Reappointments (Continued)

a. Urbana Arts & Culture Commission

– Abby Heras (term ending June 30, 2029)

Motion to approve the Board and Commission Reappointments by CM Wu, seconded by CM Quisenberry.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

3. Vacant Public Office Appointment

a. Ward 5 Council Member

– Stephanie Renae Cockrell (term ending April 6, 2027, the date of the next consolidated election)

Introduced by Mayor Williams with remarks from Dr. Stephanie Renae Cockrell, Ward 5 Vacancy Candidate. Dr. Stephanie R. Cockrell expressed gratitude for the opportunity to represent Ward 5 on City Council and continue the progress made by the late former Ward 5 Council Member Chaundra Bishop. Emphasized her commitment to representing the community and contributing her experiences to the collaborative efforts of Council.

Motion to approve by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Wu.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

12. Adjournment

With no further business before the Urbana City Council, Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 10:33p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

This meeting was video recorded and is viewable [on-demand HERE](#).

Minutes approved: 8/10/26

June 21, 2026

Mayor DeShawn B. Williams and Members of the Urbana City Council
City of Urbana
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Re: Urbana Civic Center Local Landmark Consideration

Dear Mayor Williams and Members of the Urbana City Council:

At the June 15, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting, Councilperson Shirese Hursey asked a valid question: "Why has MTD been excluded from the conversation?" I believe this question reflects a broader issue. Many members of the public, and perhaps some members of the Council itself, may not be fully aware of the timeline of events that led to the current discussion surrounding the Urbana Civic Center and the Section 106 process.

I respectfully offer the following timeline in the interest of transparency and public understanding.

In April 2024, David Hayes and I were elected to serve as Chair and Vice Chair of the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), respectively. Prior to that election, the Commission benefited greatly from the experience and expertise of Commissioner Chair Alice Novak, whose decades of community activism and work documenting Urbana's historic resources have significantly contributed to preservation efforts throughout our city.

Around this same period, and unbeknownst to the Commission, the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD) had begun the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the property bounded by Broadway Avenue and Vine Street, including 108 E. Water Street, the Urbana Civic Center ([CUMTD BOT Meeting Minutes, October 29, 2025](#)). In those CUMTD meeting minutes, it was reported that visioning workshops with the City of Urbana began as early as 2018 to discuss the downtown mixed-use development. Former Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin supported CUMTD's efforts to identify a location for a downtown transfer facility and said so publicly in her opposition to the HPC considering the June 2026 local landmark nomination. According to Community Development Director Olivia Jovine, other sites were not pursued "because they were privately owned, possible displacements of existing tenants, and complexity" ([Committee of the Whole Meeting, June 15, 2026](#)).

As a newly reformed Commission, we sought to establish new goals and build momentum. We set out a timeline to work with staff to update the City's long-outdated Historic Preservation Plan, pursue grant opportunities, and strengthen preservation and adaptive reuse initiatives across Urbana. However, while we were successful in securing a [Certified Local Government](#) (CLG) grant in 2025, our broader efforts were repeatedly interrupted by meeting cancellations. In 2025 alone, only five of 12 HPC regular meetings took place, and that includes one where we pushed to have the meeting rescheduled since the original date fell on a holiday. In 2024, it was the same (only five total regular meetings). After reforming the Commission in April 2024, four months

went by without a scheduled meeting taking place. Let me be very clear – these cancellations were not due to lack of quorum. We had the motivation, the expertise, and the commissioners but we kept receiving cancellation notices from City staff usually only a few days or a week before.

These meeting cancellations were frustrating not merely because they interrupted our progress, but because they effectively prevented the Commission from carrying out its duties. Under the Illinois Open Meetings Act, commissioners cannot simply meet informally and conduct public business. Public notice requirements exist to ensure transparency and public participation. When meetings are repeatedly canceled, when prior minutes are not provided for approval and public release, a volunteer commission's ability to function is substantially diminished.

While CUMTD's NEPA process was ongoing, in January 2025, the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) determined that the Urbana Civic Center possessed historical significance and was eligible for the National Register (SHPO log #001053124, referenced in attached February 2025 letter to FTA).

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation (54 U.S.C. § 306108) was subsequently triggered. Yet despite this development, no staff report presented to the Historic Preservation Commission referenced either the Urbana Civic Center or Section 106. Indeed, anyone reviewing the City's website will find that Commission records are incomplete and inconsistent. Certain meeting minutes, agenda packets, and video links are missing, making it difficult for both commissioners and members of the public to reconstruct events.

It was not until August 2025 that the Commission received any substantive information concerning the Urbana Civic Center. On August 6, 2025, Phyllis Winters-Williams sent correspondence to the Commission and included documentation regarding the Civic Center's historical significance (communication sent to Historic Preservation Commissioners and attached). However, the significance and urgency of this information were not apparent at the time, particularly given the lack of prior communication or context regarding the ongoing federal review process. Not to mention, the three subsequent HPC meetings were all cancelled by City staff. By the time we met again, the email was not publicly shared, nor was the Civic Center or the Section 106 process mentioned in a staff report.

Meanwhile, others in the community were beginning to notice CUMTD taking interest in the Civic Center property. During the fall of 2025, Professor Joseph Altshuler and architecture students at the University of Illinois worked with faculty members and CUMTD to explore the "art of the possible" regarding adaptive reuse and redevelopment opportunities surrounding 108 E. Water Street ([Bismarck, 19th Century](#)).

The Historic Preservation Commission received a presentation from the U of I professor in February 2026 on the prior semester's work and we learned that CUMTD representatives had participated in the capstone project and attended the students' presentations ([HPC Special Meeting, February 18, 2026](#)). A News-Gazette article similarly reported that CUMTD Managing Director Karl Gnadt stated that "in terms of adaptive reuse, we're open to having a conversation" ([Wiersema, News-Gazette article February 26, 2026](#)). Yet, an earlier News-Gazette article during the semester and in response to having to mitigate adverse affects from demolition quoted Gnadt

stating “It could have been worse, we could’ve gotten a designation that didn’t allow us to tear down the building and would have created a situation where the building would have had to have been preserved. Having to pay about \$30,000 for recordation is, in a sense, getting off easy” ([Wiersema, News-Gazette article, November 8, 2025](#)).

The Commission also learned we had apparently been identified as a consulting party in the Section 106 process. However, the Commission itself never knowingly received an invitation to participate in that capacity, nor did City staff share the invitation with us.

The records indicate that the matter was not formally brought before the Commission until February 2026, when new planning staff attempted to reconstruct what had occurred and why the Commission was advocating to be involved so late in the process. During that review, Olivia Jovine located a single email from approximately thirteen months earlier that was written on behalf of the HPC by a City staff member (attached letter from February 20, 2025). I, as the HPC Chair, had been listed in the response letter to FTA and my city email address was shown as being blind copied (BCC’d). The attached letter purported to be sent on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Even assuming that communication had reached me or the HPC, which it did not, there was no accompanying explanation of its significance, nor were any of us included in prior or subsequent communications between SHPO, the FTA, and other consulting parties. If the mistake were attributed to an email communication deficit, which is possible, at a minimum, such correspondence should have been discussed in a staff report and entered into the Commission's public record ([HPC Regular Meeting, October 2, 2024 note emails were not coming through properly to our commission](#)).

The issue extends beyond the Commission itself.

Section 106 requires consultation with consulting parties and meaningful opportunities for public participation throughout the review process. The City Council approved an update to the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (2026-2030) on May 27, 2025, and embedded within the plan was the line item to demolish the Urbana Civic Center (Memorandum to the Mayor and City Council, June 15, 2026). According to the CUMTD Board of Trustees October 2025 meeting minutes, the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission was not listed as a consulting party and was not invited to review the project documentation during the proceeding meetings on July 17 and September 15, 2025 ([CUMTD BOT Meeting Minutes, October 29, 2025](#)). Moreover, even though it is acknowledged by CUMTD that public involvement is required per Section 106, I have found no evidence that these meetings were publicly announced through news media or otherwise made known to the public in a meaningful way.

Whether these omissions were the result of misunderstanding, administrative breakdown, or other circumstances, the result was the same—the Historic Preservation Commission and the public were not meaningfully engaged in a process that legally requires it.

I share this history because the decision before you need not become a lose-lose situation. Section 106 procedure was fumbled and HPC representation as a consulting party was wholly absent.

The question of landmark status should be considered on the merits of the Urbana Civic Center itself, its 45+ years of operation as a “welcoming and inclusive civic venue” to residents across the demographic spectrum ([Wiersema, News-Gazette article February 26, 2026](#)). The vote should be based on the landmark nomination from community member Phyllis Winters-Williams and the carefully considered recommendation brought forth by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Members of both the City Council and the Historic Preservation Commission toured the building. Commissioners also independently examined the building's exterior and surroundings. Based upon our observations, the building's interior and exterior remain in remarkably good condition for a structure that is approximately fifty-six years old. Buildings proposed for demolition are often in substantially worse condition.

More importantly, the Urbana Civic Center was more than a building. It was a civic space open to all members of the community. It provided affordable and inclusive gathering space for residents, organizations, celebrations, and public events. Although the City may have determined that operating the facility was no longer financially sustainable, its closure at the end of 2018 represented a genuine loss to the community. As City facilities staff have noted, approximately six months of previously scheduled events had to be canceled when the building closed ([HPC Regular Meeting, May 6, 2026](#)).

Some on the Council have asked why there was not greater public interest in the building's future years earlier? I would reverse that question and ask why the City had not been more transparent with its intentions years earlier? The answer to both of these questions may be relatively simple—many residents did not understand that the Civic Center had been permanently closed. There was no formal closing ceremony, no public acknowledgment that this long-standing civic asset had reached the end of its municipal use, and no broad public conversation about its future.

As you deliberate, I respectfully ask you to consider how this situation can become a win-win for Urbana.

The question before the Council is not whether the Urbana Civic Center must be preserved at all costs, nor whether MTD should be prevented from pursuing its objectives. Section 106 itself recognizes that preservation and development interests must be balanced and that consultation does not mandate a specific outcome. Rather, it requires that preservation values and the views of consulting parties and the public be meaningfully considered in the decision-making process. As the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation explains, "Section 106 review encourages, but does not mandate, preservation," but it does require that federal agencies be "publicly accountable for their decisions" and that they fully consider "the views of the public during project planning." The process works only when all parties are informed and meaningfully included ([ACHP, 2026](#)).

Landmark designation and adaptive reuse are not mutually exclusive. Restoring public confidence requires transparency, meaningful public engagement, and proper utilization of the commissions that the City has appointed to advise it. Allow the Historic Preservation Commission to perform the duties for which its members were appointed. Involve the public meaningfully in decisions affecting community assets.

On a personal note, I supported and voted for Mayor Williams because I believe in his commitment to listen to residents and engage the community in shaping Urbana's future. I believe in representative government where the appointed commissions are utilized in a manner that reflects their given expertise. I also support CUMTD's efforts to write a federal grant that will hopefully finally allow Urbana to have a bus transfer station worthy of our citizens. The Urbana Civic Center is part of our shared civic history and part of our home. The residents of Urbana deserve an opportunity to participate in decisions about its future.

Finally, I want to emphasize that this need not be a zero-sum discussion. The Historic Preservation Commission is eager to work collaboratively with CUMTD and other stakeholders to explore the art of the possible for the Urbana Civic Center. We remain open to creative and flexible approaches to adaptive reuse and believe that preservation and progress can coexist. The Civic Center's history, community significance, and architectural features invite us to imagine new possibilities rather than foreclose them. As the City Council, I ask that you support this vision as well and encourage a process that embraces collaboration, innovation, and meaningful public engagement.

Sincerely,

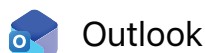


Angela Urban
Chair, Urbana Historic Preservation Commission

The views expressed herein are my own and do not represent the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission.

Enclosures:

- Email from Phyllis Williams-Winters to HPC, dated August 6, 2025
- Letter from SHPO to FTA, dated February 6, 2025
- Response letter to FTA allegedly from HPC but actually from City staff, dated February 20, 2025



Outlook

PACA response to the 106 review of the proposed transit hub

From Winters-Williams, Phyllis B [REDACTED]**Date** Wed 8/6/2025 4:31 PM**To** Kathryn Holliday [BC] <Kathryn.Holliday@UrbanalL.gov>; Laura O'Donnell [BC] <Laura.O'Donnell@UrbanalL.gov>; Dennis Roberts [BC] <Dennis.Roberts@UrbanalL.gov>; Andrew Weiss [BC] <Andrew.Weiss@UrbanalL.gov>; Angela Urban [BC] <Angela.Urban@UrbanalL.gov>; Trent Shepard [BC] <Trent.Shepard@UrbanalL.gov>; David.Hayes@urbanail.gov <david.hayes@urbanail.gov>

1 attachment (27 KB)

Civic Center.docx;

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear members of the UHC,
I want to share with you PACA's position on the proposed transit hub for downtown. At the last Zoom meeting of the parties, the city was not represented. This must mean Urbana is not interested in mitigating the damage to be done to the Civic Center.

The need is great to shelter transit users. There is also a once in a lifetime opportunity to rethink that corner of downtown by combining the transit hub plans with the now vacant jail site. Urbana deserves better than another rectangular building or another County parking lot.

As always, thank-you for volunteering.

Phyllis Williams
PACA Advocacy Committee



Urbana IL 61801

I am PACA's representative to the Section 106 review of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District's Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project in Urbana, IL, which would replace the Urbana Civic Center with a multi-use building as a transfer station.

The Importance of a Shelter

The need for a transit hub is tremendous. In downtown Urbana, bus riders must wait in the elements, barely sheltered by the parking deck, or open benches on the West side of the courthouse, the only amenity available is the Port-a-Potty on the South end of the parking deck. The lack of accommodations gives the impression of an unsafe space in the parking deck for those parking and those riding. The exposure demonstrates a lack of regard for the dignity of the bus rider. Our citizens do deserve better.

As envisioned, the transit facility would provide shelter and amenities for bus riders and drivers, plus meeting and business space. All of these are admirable goals. The project was awarded a ten-million-dollar grant from the Biden Administration in January 2025, which one hopes will still be available in the new administration.

A Brief History

The Urbana Civic Center was envisioned by the Urbana Association of Commerce as a necessary improvement over the single-story Community Building on Elm Street, known to local high school students as the Tigers' Den, a place to hang out, spin records, and have fun on Friday and Saturday nights, during the fifties and sixties, admission twenty-five cents, under the watchful eyes of Coach Oscar Adams. At other times, the Community Building was booked to capacity in spite of a lack of any formal space for weddings and receptions, the accommodations were comparable to any church fellowship space in the area. Once the decision was made to raze the businesses on this block for parking, a replacement space was needed.

Mimicking the funding for The Urbana Free Library, the UAC set about raising funds for the project. Despite some sizable contributions from businesses and individuals, it was a struggle to fund phase one, according to the Daily Illini, 12 February, 1969. "Civic Center Construction Delayed":

as estimates were "25% more than anticipated...the [Civic Center] Committee met with the architects, (Smith, Seaton, and Olach) in order to cut \$30,000 from the construction costs. Dr. Robert Rowe [of the Committee] explained: "The building is the same. It is less expensive and a little more serviceable than the original." Withers [Executive Vice-President of the Urbana Association of Commerce] said they were striving to make the center practical, useful and eye-appealing. "The center will contain only the bare necessities, he said, because longevity and not cheapness of construction is wanted."

Text by Jim Hopwood, DI Staff Reporter

The Urbana Civic Center was the only non-secular gathering space in the community for those who could not afford a hotel ballroom. Modern and pleasing with its large windows, close parking and central location, the Civic Center could be divided into as many as four separate spaces with enormous partition walls. The main entry, hallway, restrooms, and kitchen with pass through window were simple and comparable to any church fellowship hall.

The founders envisioned additional phases of development to include a swimming pool, outdoor courts, and space for the performing arts, with funding and oversight by the Urbana Park District. The cost was prohibitive for the UPD. In time, ownership fell to the city.

The Civic Center was popular and well used for its entire active life. Months of paid reservations were refunded when the Center closed. There was no concerted effort to market the Civic Center, advocating for its use and care.

In a site designated "Urbana Out Lot", across Water Street from two and three story buildings such as Montgomery Wards, and next to a hay and feed store, this modern pavilion, while different from the rest of the downtown, was similarly scaled, and seemed perfectly suited for an Urbana-Champaign home to the Max Abramovitz designed Assembly Hall (now State Farm Center), Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, and the works of architects such as Jack Baker, and John Replinger. The Urbana Civic Center was different from its surroundings, and yet, in keeping with the architectural modernism sprouting in Urbana-Champaign.

The Champaign County Bank and Trust building was constructed in 1980 to replace the former site on the Southwest corner of the same block, after the closing of Montgomery Wards. With height which rivaled the County Courthouse, this was a "bank-palace" with a brushed steel circular vault door on display on the first floor and lots of clear black granite, plenty of glass, and red oak trim. The building itself seemed to guarantee the safety of one's investment. By 1985, the County Bank and Trust had ceased doing business in the building. The Plaza building would pass through a series of owner/tenants until it was bought by the County Board in 2022. The plaza building, now the Bennett Administrative Center, since construction, has blocked the view of the Civic Center in effect erasing it from day-to-day awareness.

Archeological Concerns

A desk top archeological study was performed and determined to yield no significant impacts at the site. Within the boundaries of this study, all development since the founding of Urbana has been surface level and up. Sheds for lumber and coal, a hay and feed store, even the city power plant was located on the site. Due to the proximity of the site to Leal Park, where unknown graves were found when expanding a parking lot, I wonder about the potential to find unknown graves or encampment remains around the Civic Center site. Put simply: we don't know what might be found.

Alternate Sites

The alternate sites listed in the original materials for review are in error as private business property such as Alternate D, the Schnucks grocery store and out-lots, alternate E, Lincoln Square and surrounds, although the parking lots are Urbana City property, including the space for the weekly Farmers' Market, alternate C is the immensely popular H Mart, and alternate B includes the historic and privately held Station Theater as well as parking for Bunny's and the Rose Bowl, both popular gathering spaces and venues.

The presentation ignores the most obvious alternate site: the now vacant Champaign County Jail block, bounded by Water, Walnut, Main and Vine Streets. This property offers more land to the project. Even in a scenario which replaces the existing Civic Center, the County Jail site should be combined with the Transit development to rethink this corner of downtown. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to realize some of the connective green space envisioned in the initial stages of the "Imagine Urbana" comprehensive plan update. The thought was to connect the 4,000+ shoppers at the Farmers' Market each week with the shops of the downtown core through improved green spaces, gathering spaces and entertainment spaces from Lincoln Square to the Rose Bowl, Courier café and beyond.

Mitigation

There are two routes of mitigation: first, repair and repurpose the Civic Center as the transit hub with or without the additional land of the downtown jail site. The second, is to raze the Civic Center and build the transit hub as new construction. In this choice, irreparable harm would be done to the existing building. As mitigation, photographs, and records of the Urbana Civic Center should be offered first to the Champaign County Historical Archives at the Urbana Free Library, or the Champaign County History Museum with oversight from SHPO.

Conclusion

It is the position of the Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County, PACA, the existing Civic Center should be repaired, remodeled, and reused as a transit hub.

Thank-you for the opportunity for this study and input.

Phyllis Williams
PACA Advocacy Committee

[REDACTED]

Urbana, IL 61801

[REDACTED]



**Champaign County
Urbana
New Construction, Transit Transfer Facility**

**FTA,
SHPO Log #001053124**

February 6, 2025

**Anshu Singh
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
200 W. Adams St., Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606-5253**

Dear Ms. Singh:

Thank you for the Eligibility and Effects Report for the Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project (SHPO log # 001053124), which we received on 1/10/25. Our comments are required by Section 106 of the [National Historic Preservation Act of 1966](#), as amended, 54 U.S.C. § 306108, and its [implementing regulations](#) (36 CFR Part 800) (Act).

This office does not concur with two determinations in the Eligibility and Effects Report. The Urbana Civic Center building at 108 East Water Street is an excellent example of architectural modernism and is eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A for recreation as a locus of community events and culture, and under Criterion C for its structurally expressive, modernist design. The building at 210 North Broadway is eligible for listing to the NRHP under Criterion C as an excellent example of a professional building in the Modern style, with an entrance courtyard surrounded by a pierced brick screen wall, which was a very characteristic element for the period. Both appear to have excellent integrity.

This project proposes to demolish 108 East Water and 210 North Broadway, which will adversely affect both historic properties.

Please continue to consult with Rita Baker (rita.baker@illinois.gov) and CJ Wallace (carol.wallace@illinois.gov) to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate the adverse effect.

Sincerely,

**Carey L. Mayer, AIA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer**

c: Anthony Greep, U.S. Department of Transportation



Outlook

RE: SHPO # 001053124 -CUMTD - Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project, Urbana, Champaign County, Illinois - Eligibility and Effects Report and Determination of Effects

From Marcus Ricci <Marcus.Ricci@UrbanalL.gov>**Date** Thu 2/20/2025 3:19 PM**To** 'Singh, Anshu (FTA)' <anshu.singh1@dot.gov>**Cc** Trovela, Mariliza (FTA) <Mariliza.Trovela@dot.gov>; Ashlee McLaughlin <amclaughlin@mtd.org>; SHPO.Review@Illinois.gov <SHPO.Review@Illinois.gov>; Wallace, Carol <Carol.Wallace@Illinois.gov>; Anthony Rubano <Anthony.Rubano@Illinois.gov>; Baker, Rita E <Rita.E.Baker@Illinois.gov>; jeff.kruchten@illinois.gov <Jeff.Kruchten@Illinois.gov>; Young, LaDonna <LaDonna.Young@Illinois.gov>; Diane Marlin <Diane.Marlin@UrbanalL.gov>; Winters-Williams, Phyllis B [REDACTED]; PACA [REDACTED]**Bcc** Carol Mitten <Carol.Mitten@UrbanalL.gov>; Kevin Garcia <Kevin.Garcia@UrbanalL.gov>; Diane Marlin <Diane.Marlin@UrbanalL.gov>; Angela Urban [BC] <Angela.Urban@UrbanalL.gov>

1 attachment (212 KB)

Urbana Response to HDR Report_FINAL_20250220.pdf;

Good afternoon, Anshu.

Attached is the City of Urbana's response letter. Thank you for the continued opportunity to participate in this review.

Be safe, stay healthy,

Marcus Ricci, AICP (*he/him/his*)

Planner II, Secretary to the Historic Preservation Commission

Community Development Services Department | City of Urbana

400 S. Vine St. | Urbana, Illinois 61801

217.328.8283

**From:** Singh, Anshu (FTA)**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 7:25 AM**To:** SHPO.Review@Illinois.gov; Wallace, Carol ; Anthony Rubano ; Baker, Rita E ; jeff.kruchten@illinois.gov; Young, LaDonna ; Diane Marlin ; Marcus Ricci ; Winters-Williams, Phyllis B ; PACA**Cc:** Trovela, Mariliza (FTA) ; Ashlee McLaughlin**Subject:** SHPO # 001053124 -CUMTD - Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project, Urbana, Champaign County, Illinois - Eligibility and Effects Report and Determination of Effects***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hello,

Please find attached Eligibility and Effects Report along with FTA's determination of No Adverse Effect for the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District's (CUMTD) Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project (the Project) in Urbana, Champaign County, Illinois.

Your review is requested within 30 days. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Anshu

Anshu Singh, Ph.D. (She/Her)

Environmental Protection Specialist

Federal Transit Administration, Region V

200 West Adams, Suite 320, Chicago, IL 60606

Phone: 312-353-4344

Email: anshu.singh1@dot.gov



U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 384-2440
planning@urbanailinois.us

February 20, 2025

Anshu Singh
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
200 West Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606-5253

Dear Anshu:

Thank you for the Eligibility and Effects Report for the Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project (SHPO log # 001053124), which we received on January 10, 2025. As the representative of the local Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), our comments are required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 54 U.S.C. § 306108, and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800) (Act).

Staff at the City of Urbana appreciate the effort and research that went into preparing the *Cultural Resources Investigation for the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project* (November 2024), and **agree with the FTA's determination that the project would result in "no adverse effect on historic properties."**

While the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) finds that the Urbana Civic Center appears to have "excellent integrity," the physical condition of the building is poor. As part of a City-wide Facilities Master Plan in 2019, a Facilities Condition Assessment by Cannon Design evaluated all of the building's systems, and rated each one of them as "failing." The assessment recommended demolishing the building, as project repair costs – over \$1.2 million at the time – would have exceeded the cost to completely replace the structure, and operations costs were annually \$50,000 more than the building generated in revenue as a public event venue. The City closed the Civic Center in 2019, and the building's physical condition has only gotten worse since then.

To clarify a statement in the IL SHPO comments, the current project scope *does not* include purchasing or demolishing the Langacker Law Building (Resource 2, 210 North Broadway Avenue). Neither of the buildings referenced in their comments – the Urbana Civic Center or the Langacker Law Building – are Local or National Landmarks, nor are they located in Local or Historic Districts. Finally, neither of the buildings have been the subject of a local Historic

Resource Inventory Survey, nor are either in the collection of "Urbana's 100 Most Important Buildings" (2011).

City staff believe that the Civic Center has outlived its usefulness as an event venue, the costs to rehabilitate the building for some other purpose are far beyond what the City could reasonably afford, and the interests of the City would be better served by completion of the proposed transit center. One final note of interest: the original intended use of the Urbana Civic Center was as the initial phase of a multi-phase Recreation Complex, initiated by the Urbana Park District, which would have included a pool, diving well, gymnasium, and spectator areas, as well as smaller indoor recreational venues. The project never got past this first phase, and was later transferred to the City for use as a meeting venue.

Attached is a short list of suggested corrections to the report. If you have any questions, please contact me at 217-328-8283 or e-mail me at marcus.ricci@urbanail.gov. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,



Marcus Ricci, AICP
Planner II

Cc: Kevin Garcia, Urbana Principal Planner & Zoning Administrator
Carol Mitten, Urbana City Administrator & Acting Community Development Services
Department Director
Angela Urban, Chair, Urbana Historic Preservation Commission
Diane Wolfe Marlin, Urbana Mayor

LIST OF COMMENTS:

- Typographic error: change "Lindlay House" in Table 1 to "Lindley House" (p.10)
- Current owner of 401 North Broadway Avenue is now Smith Hospitality, LLC (p. 34)
- Parcel information: 400 North Broadway Avenue: owned by MCDJ, LLC, and is a 0.59-ac parcel, PIN 91-21-08-459-005 (p.36)
- Typographic error: 400 North Broadway Avenue, not "401" (p.37)
- Parcel information: 203 North Vine Street: PIN is 91-21-08-461-009 (p.41)

Public Input: 22 June 2026: Ordinance No. 2026-06-016: An Ordinance Designating a Historic Landmark

From E R Cardman [REDACTED]
Date Sun 6/21/2026 1:44 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

To: Mayor Williams and City Council Members

Re: Ordinance No. 2026-06-016: An Ordinance Designating a Historic Landmark

Is the Civic Center **worthy** of Landmark status? Yes.

Is the Civic Center **worth** landmarking? No.

Landmarked? You lose the MTD.

The MTD has made it clear it will:

- NOT go forth with the project to build a transfer station if the Civic Center is landmarked.
- NOT apply for a federal grant unless it has full authority over the construction.

Some people think Adaptive Reuse is the way to go.

Adaptive Reuse? Who's more qualified to calculate bus-flow and building needs?

- transportation engineers at the MTD? or
- commissioners and undergraduate students with a tape measure in hand?

For years the MTD has been looking to site a transit center in Urbana. All planning has presumed an empty lot. This is the first and only parcel they've identified as an excellent site to accommodate a transit center with bus traffic, public parking, taxi/uber parking, and bicycling amenities, as is available at the Illinois Terminal.

Adaptive Reuse? How much space is needed for a transfer station? Has any Commissioner actually calculated this? Here's what's at the Illinois Terminal:

- Passenger Waiting Area
- Office Space for MTD Personnel
- Customer Service Center
- Maintenance Staff and Supplies
- Security Desk

- Vending Area
- Public and Staff Restrooms
- Possible space for other charter or regional bus companies [Peoria Charter, Danville]

Adaptive Reuse?: To the landfill: Electric, Plumbing, and Roofing materials. But also not mentioned:

- Glass windows and walls.

Glass windows and walls are a sinkhole of energy inefficiency. No modern construction is going to retain 55-plus-year-old-glass.

Adaptive Reuse?: It means no ability to offset the costs of running the transit station through rental income. Nor would it support worthwhile programs.

- The Illinois Terminal has DREAMM and the READY Program. Why not USD 116 or Urbana Adult Ed at the Urbana Terminal?

The spirit of cooperation and collaboration is worthwhile, but Adaptive Reuse is an unlikely outcome.

If the Civic Center is landmarked? The City will own a building that will continue to sit idle as it has for the last eight years.

To vote away a \$32 million investment in Downtown Urbana is a colossal loss.

Please vote 'No' to landmarking, and say a 'Big Yes' to a vibrant downtown.

Thank you for your consideration.

Liz Cardman, Urbana

PUBLIC INPUT: City Council Regular Meeting (June 22, 2026)

From Anand, Nick [REDACTED]
Date Sun 6/21/2026 6:52 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I request that the following be read into the record during the public comment portion of the City Council meeting on June 22, 2026:

Dear Urbana City Council,

My name is Nick Anand and I have been a resident of the Champaign-Urbana area for 9 years. I am writing to urge the City Council to prioritize Urbana's future by voting against the designation of the Urbana Civic Center as a historic property, which would allow MTD to move forward with its plans to build a transfer center in downtown Urbana.

As cities grow, they eventually reach a scale where they cannot handle everyone driving in their own personal car. Urbana is already past this point, as illustrated by the frequent congestion and backups on Lincoln and University Avenue. To reduce traffic and stimulate economic activity, we must continue to work to make riding the bus a practical alternative to driving.

Our current primary transfer point, the Lincoln Square garage and courthouse, is not adequate for a modern transit system that ranks among the best in the country. It lacks the reinforced concrete needed for the volume of bus traffic it currently handles, has only small shelters to shield passengers from the elements, and forces both bus riders and operators to rely on a single porta-potty. The lack of adequate signage makes it difficult for new riders to find the appropriate platform and riders are forced to cross the street to get from one platform to another. Additionally, the lack of staff creates safety concerns - anecdotally, I recently had a friend ask me to pick her up from Lincoln Square because she did not feel safe waiting ten minutes for the next bus. Our transit stations should be places that our community takes pride in, not places where people fear for their safety.

MTD's proposed facility on the site of the Civic Center resolves all of these issues. If we choose to reject this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a \$32 million transit center, we are choosing to permanently cripple the future of Urbana's transit infrastructure and the safety and mobility of residents for generations to come. I urge the Council to reject the historic designation and invest in a safer and more equitable Urbana.

Thank you,
Nick Anand
[REDACTED], Urbana IL

PUBLIC INPUT June 22 2026 (Ordinance No. 2026-06-016 - Urbana Civic Center)

From Soumya Dasgupta [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/22/2026 10:25 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanaIL.gov>

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***** Email From An External Source *****

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Dear Urbana City Council,

I am a resident of Historic Urbana. I write to urge you to support the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation to designate the Urbana Civic Center as a historic landmark.

As an international scholar and an everyday commuter of the MTD bus service, I deeply appreciate our local infrastructure; I have never felt the need to buy a car because MTD has made my life here so seamless. While I fully understand that a new transit center will benefit commuters like me immensely, I do not believe this progress must come at the cost of our shared history.

Through my time here, I have learned about the profound cultural and historical significance of the Civic Center to the Urbana community, which I call my second home. I love Historic Urbana because it provides a calm, reflective environment. Its century-old architecture and rich urban fabric host a global cosmopolis, making it a truly unique place to live and work. Having lived here, I have come to deeply respect the city's tradition of preserving its architectural heritage as a way of welcoming the world.

The functional necessity of a new transit center does not require us to lose our historic civic infrastructure. I sincerely urge you to pursue an adaptive reuse approach. Thoughtful design can allow us to meet the changing needs of a modern transit system while preserving the irreplaceable value of the old.

Your stewardship can help the residents of Urbana imagine a more thoughtful, sustainable, and cohesive vision for our built environment—one that honors the generations who built this city and protects it for the generations to come.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to our community.

Sincerely,
Soumya Dasgupta
[REDACTED], Urbana, IL

Public Input for June 22, 2026

From Dottie G [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/22/2026 1:56 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>; Historic Preservation Commission
<HistoricPreservationCommission@urbanail.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please read my comments aloud into the public record at tonight's meeting.

Please vote against landmarking the Urbana Civic Center. Recent comments from HPC about the site raise several unsubstantiated claims that should be carefully reviewed as the City Council considers making the building a local landmark.

Condition and Cost

Claims that the building is in "excellent condition" are subjective and conflict with assessments from City staff responsible for maintenance. In 2018, repair costs were estimated between \$750,000 and \$1 million, and those numbers are now outdated. They do not reflect inflation, further deterioration, or the cost of meeting modern building codes and accessibility standards.

Some argue these estimates are unreliable because no architect completed them. However, architects design buildings; cost estimates and condition assessments are typically done by facility managers, engineers, and construction professionals. Staff evaluations should not be dismissed simply because they were not prepared by an architect.

The question is not whether the building is in good condition, but whether the City is willing to invest the significant funds needed to make it usable long-term if it becomes a landmark.

Section 106 Review Process

Claims that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was excluded from the federal review process conflict with City staff statements that all procedures were followed. The timeline also shows that demolition had been considered since 2023, well before the federal review concluded in early 2026.

If there were communication issues, they should be addressed directly, but there is no evidence that City staff bypassed required steps.

HPC's Role

Some concerns stem from broader frustrations with the HPC's role in City decisions. While valid, those concerns are separate from the current decision. MTD does not control preservation policy, the City does. Directing frustration at MTD is misplaced.

C-U MTD's Position and Site Planning

MTD has consistently said it cannot plan for property it does not own. After years of study, the Civic Center site was identified as the most feasible location for a transit center.

MTD also states that keeping the current building would prevent proper development because it limits safe bus movement and flexibility. Even if buses might physically fit around the corners, the design must safely handle multiple buses under real operational conditions. MTD's conclusions are based on professional experience and should carry more weight than opinions from onlookers..

Landmark Designation and Project Control

If the building becomes a landmark, the HPC would need to approve future changes. This creates uncertainty for a major public project. When federal funding is secured, MTD will be responsible for delivering the project on time and within budget. It is reasonable they would hesitate if an independent body could influence final design decisions. Clear control is standard for large public projects.

Preservation as a Reactive Strategy

A key question is why landmark designation is being pursued now. The building has been eligible for years, but efforts increased only after significant time and money were invested in planning the transit center. This makes it appear reactive rather than part of a long-term preservation strategy.

If preservation is a priority, the City should answer practical questions:

- How will repairs and upgrades be funded?
- What will the building be used for long-term?
- How will ongoing operations be paid for?
- Who will maintain it?
- How does it fit into broader city goals?

Without clear answers, preservation risks maintaining a liability rather than creating a useful asset.

Why City Council Should Vote Against Landmark Designation

As a daily C-U MTD rider, I support building a downtown transit center. MTD has indicated that landmark designation would likely stop the project. Therefore, landmarking the Civic Center would effectively prevent the transit hub.

This would impact riders, businesses, schools, and the future of the site, which has not attracted other viable development interest.

Historic preservation is important, but it should include realistic funding, clear benefits, and long-term planning. Without that, landmarking the Civic Center would only delay its problems while blocking a project that meets real transportation needs of Urbana residents.

City Council should reject landmark status and allow the transit project to move forward for the benefit of the community.

D Garnett

Public input - Please read | Civic Center and Transit

From Steve and Kanittha Fay [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/22/2026 5:17 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

***** Email From An External Source *****

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Dear Mayor Williams and Members of the Urbana City Council,

I respectfully ask the Council to prioritize human needs, accessibility, and the public good as you consider the future of the Urbana Civic Center and transit infrastructure.

I appreciate the importance of historic preservation and recognize the value that landmarks such as the Urbana Civic Center hold for many members of our community. Historic buildings tell stories, preserve memory, and contribute to our sense of place. These spaces matter.

At the same time, I respectfully urge the Council to prioritize people, especially students, residents who use wheelchairs, and marginalized communities who may not have the luxury of owning a car.

Places matter because people give them meaning. A building becomes significant because of the lives, memories, relationships, and communities connected to it. When we make decisions about public infrastructure, we must ask not only what we preserve, but whom we serve.

Public transit is not merely about buses or buildings. It is about access, dignity, opportunity, and quality of life.

A modern and accessible transit center has the potential to improve daily life for thousands of people, including students, seniors, working families, people with disabilities, and marginalized community members who rely on public transportation. It can better serve wheelchair users, riders with mobility challenges, cyclists who depend on bike racks and bike-on-bus access, and many others who rely on safe and reliable transit to move through our city.

For many residents, transit is essential for accessing education, employment, healthcare, grocery stores, and community resources. Improvements to transit infrastructure can reduce barriers and expand opportunity, especially for those who already face systemic inequities.

I believe historic preservation should remain an important consideration. However, preservation should not prevent necessary investments in accessibility, mobility, equity, and public well-being when critical infrastructure improvements are needed.

A caring city must continually ask: How do we create a community that is more inclusive, more accessible, and more equitable for current and future generations?

Urbana has long been a city that values both history and progress. I believe we can honor our past while making courageous decisions that better serve people today and tomorrow.

Thank you for your service and for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Fay

Urbana resident

Good evening, Mayor Williams and Council Members.

I am a 21-year employee of the City of Urbana, but I am writing as a 21-year resident who cares about this community and its future.

The Civic Center has been vacant for eight years.

If there were developers lined up to restore it and put it back into productive use, you would probably be having a different conversation tonight. But that hasn't happened. For eight years, the building has sat empty.

Today, we have MTD willing to invest millions of dollars in downtown Urbana. MTD isn't bringing us a wish list or a concept sketch. They have a real project, real funding opportunities, and a track record of delivering major public infrastructure projects. They've spent years looking for a suitable location in Urbana, and they believe this site works.

They've also been very clear: if the building is landmarked, the project will not move forward.

I understand the appeal of adaptive reuse. In theory, it sounds like the best of both worlds. But I haven't heard a realistic explanation of how it would work.

The more conditions we place on redevelopment, the harder redevelopment becomes. We've seen that firsthand in downtown Urbana. Development is hard. It takes time. It takes money. It takes the right partner.

The City assembled and cleared the block at Vine and Main and still spent years trying to bring a project to life. Even then, adjustments had to be made to make the project financially viable.

The Hotel Royer also took years to become the showpiece it is today.

Development doesn't happen because we hope it will. It happens when someone is willing to invest, take a risk, and commit to the community. Right now, that's exactly what MTD is prepared to do.

I respect those who want to preserve the Civic Center. Their commitment to Urbana's history comes from a good place.

But do we want to continue holding onto a building that has sat vacant for nearly a decade while we wait for a solution that may never come? Or do we want to support a project that brings people, activity, services, and investment into downtown Urbana?

I believe landmarking this building makes redevelopment less likely, not more likely. And I believe turning away a \$32 million investment in downtown Urbana would be a costly mistake that downtown Urbana can ill afford.

Thank you, Kate Levy

CONTACT: [REDACTED]
PHONE: [REDACTED]

ENTER INTO PUBLIC RECORD Public Comment Speech

Good evening Mayor, City Council Members, and staff.

My name is Anthony Fisher, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight about an issue that affects many working people in our community: fair treatment and due-process protections for rideshare drivers.

Every day, Uber and Lyft drivers help connect Urbana/Champaign residents, University of Illinois students, visitors, workers, seniors, and people with disabilities to the places they need to go. These drivers provide transportation at all hours of the day and night, often filling gaps where public transportation may not be available or convenient.

For many drivers, rideshare work is more than just extra income. It helps pay rent, utilities, groceries, medical bills, tuition, and other essential expenses. Some drivers work full-time. Others drive part-time to support their families or supplement retirement income.

Despite the important service they provide, rideshare drivers can sometimes lose access to their livelihood with little warning and limited opportunity to defend themselves.

A driver may wake up one morning and find that their account has been deactivated. They may receive only a brief explanation or an automated message. In some cases, they may not know exactly what allegation led to the deactivation or what evidence was considered. Even when a complaint is mistaken or false, the process for appealing can be confusing, slow, or ineffective.

I want to be very clear: public safety must always come first.

If there are credible allegations involving violence, sexual misconduct, fraud, threats, or other serious safety concerns, transportation companies should have the authority to take immediate action to protect passengers and the public.

But there is a difference between protecting safety and denying due process.

When a driver's ability to earn income is at stake, there should be basic fairness.

That means:

- Providing notice when possible.
- Explaining the reason for a deactivation.
- Allowing drivers an opportunity to respond.
- Considering evidence from both sides.
- Offering a meaningful appeal process.

These are not radical ideas. They are principles that reflect fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Across the country, policymakers have begun examining whether app-based workers deserve greater protection. New York City recently adopted measures designed to give rideshare drivers more due-process rights before permanent deactivation. The goal was not to undermine safety but to ensure that workers are treated fairly when important decisions are made about their ability to earn a living.

I believe Urbana can help lead a similar conversation in Illinois.

I understand that state law may limit the City's ability to directly regulate transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft. However, there are still meaningful actions the City can take.

The City Council could adopt a resolution supporting fair deactivation procedures.

The City could encourage rideshare companies to voluntarily implement transparent appeal systems.

The City could partner with drivers, community organizations, and state lawmakers to identify best practices and advocate for statewide reforms where appropriate.

Most importantly, the City can send a message that workers deserve fairness and transparency.

When someone loses access to a platform that provides their income, they deserve more than an automated email. They deserve a process that is understandable, consistent, and respectful.

This issue is not only about drivers. It is about the kind of community we want to be.

Do we believe that people should have an opportunity to respond before decisions are made that affect their livelihoods?

Do we believe that transparency and accountability make systems stronger?

Do we believe that technology companies should treat workers with fairness and dignity?

I believe the answer to all of those questions is yes.

Tonight, I respectfully ask the City Council to explore ways Urbana can support fair due-process protections for rideshare drivers, whether through a resolution, dialogue with stakeholders, or advocacy at the state level.

By doing so, Urbana can help ensure that innovation and economic opportunity are balanced with fairness, accountability, and respect for the people who help keep our community moving.

Thank you for your time, your service to our community, and your consideration of this important issue.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

For the Public Record, please.

June 22, 2026

To the Urbana Mayor and City Council:

My name is Susan Appel, I'm a resident of Champaign (and former resident of Urbana), but I'm speaking tonight as Chair of the Advocacy Committee of PACA, the Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County. PACA is, naturally, very interested in the nomination of the Urbana Civic Center as an historic landmark, and we support that effort whole-heartedly.

I wish to underscore that this building, while long neglected other than minimally, has been shown, to the satisfaction of the Historic Preservation Commission to satisfy five of the seven categories of significance as a landmark. Please recognize that landmarking only requires a structure or site to satisfy ONE such category. The Civic Center satisfies FIVE of seven. That alone should warrant your attention and thought. It may be easier for you to overlook all this, given that the building has been allowed to deteriorate for a number of years. But its essential form and worth are still there. There is nothing else like it in Urbana – or Champaign, for that matter. It deserves your thoughtful consideration.

I would also like to point out that Urbana is fortunate to have a very professional Historic Preservation Commission. Its members include scholars and experts with extensive experience in historic preservation, architectural history, and related fields. Not all cities have such effective commissioners, and since I have attended a good number of their meetings, I can say that their careful discussion and consideration is often enlightening, and demonstrates their expertise and careful thinking. I'm in a position to appreciate that, since I'm a retired professor of architectural and art history myself, and I served on Champaign's HPC for nine years. Some of you may have some experience in such things as well, and if you do, you likely recognize the value of the determinations of your HPC.

My point here is to stress that the Preservation Commission does not review nominations lightly. You can count on their solid, deliberate decision-making. And their recent consideration of the Civic Center was thorough and appropriate. This building warrants landmark status as an unusual local example of public Modernist architecture. Please do not allow it to be dispensed with without very careful thought.

Recognize, too, that, if it is replaced, a new building will also need a new roof, new systems, etc. The fact that those features here are no longer in good condition doesn't mean that they cannot be replaced. And the building itself is adaptable to new uses. It does not have to enlarge a local landfill. Recycling is far better than demolition. And retaining a distinctive existing building is far better than destroying it, in the hope for a replacement that may not be as interesting or worthwhile. That is especially true when there are no current plans or funding to support a new structure in its place.

Thank you.


Susan Appel


Champaign, IL 61821


Change, Adaptive Reuse, and Historic Preservation

Until a city has a past,
it has no future.

Patrick Mogan, 1986

Kathryn Holliday
Member, Urbana Historic Preservation Commission
Remarks for 6.22.2026 Urbana City Council Meeting

Urbana cares about historic preservation

Thank you



Preservation is for everyone ...

Preservation is a work in progress ...

HPC is ready to do this work with Urbana

We started with the State
Streets and West Urbana
19th and early 20th century

But there is much more work to do.....

Midcentury modern

African American History

What else?



Communication and Trust

Misinformation has been harmful to this process

Though the Historic Preservation Commission was named as a consulting party for the MTD commissioned Section 106 review process, it was *not* included. No invitations to meetings were extended to its members and no invitations to provide comment were extended to its members.

The commission members were not informed the review was happening until its February 4, 2026 meeting, when the review was over. HPC was asked to sign off on the review. HPC did *not* sign off. The recording of this Feb. 4 meeting is not available.

The HPC was not informed that the SHPO had found the Civic Center eligible for the National Register in February 2025 until February 4, 2026.

Urbana city staff on February 20, 2025 commented on the review representing HPC. HPC has never seen this comment, but believe through verbal communication that it indicated the city's position *against* eligibility for the National Register. HPC was *neither* informed *nor* consulted for this comment.

SHPO signed off on this review in 2026 believing that the Urbana HPC had participated in this process – when it in fact had not.

The resulting Section 106 review is deeply flawed. All procedural steps were not followed.

Communication and Trust

At its February 4, 2026 meeting, when it first learned that Section 106 was concluded without its participation, HPC requested information from MTD.

“We have no plans for the site.”

MTD to Historic Preservation Commission, February 18, 2026

Communication and Trust

Misinformation has been harmful to this process

Landmark status does
not require putting a building
“back the way it was”

There are *four* recognized approaches to historic preservation for landmark property



No one wants to restore or reconstruct or freeze the Civic Center in amber!

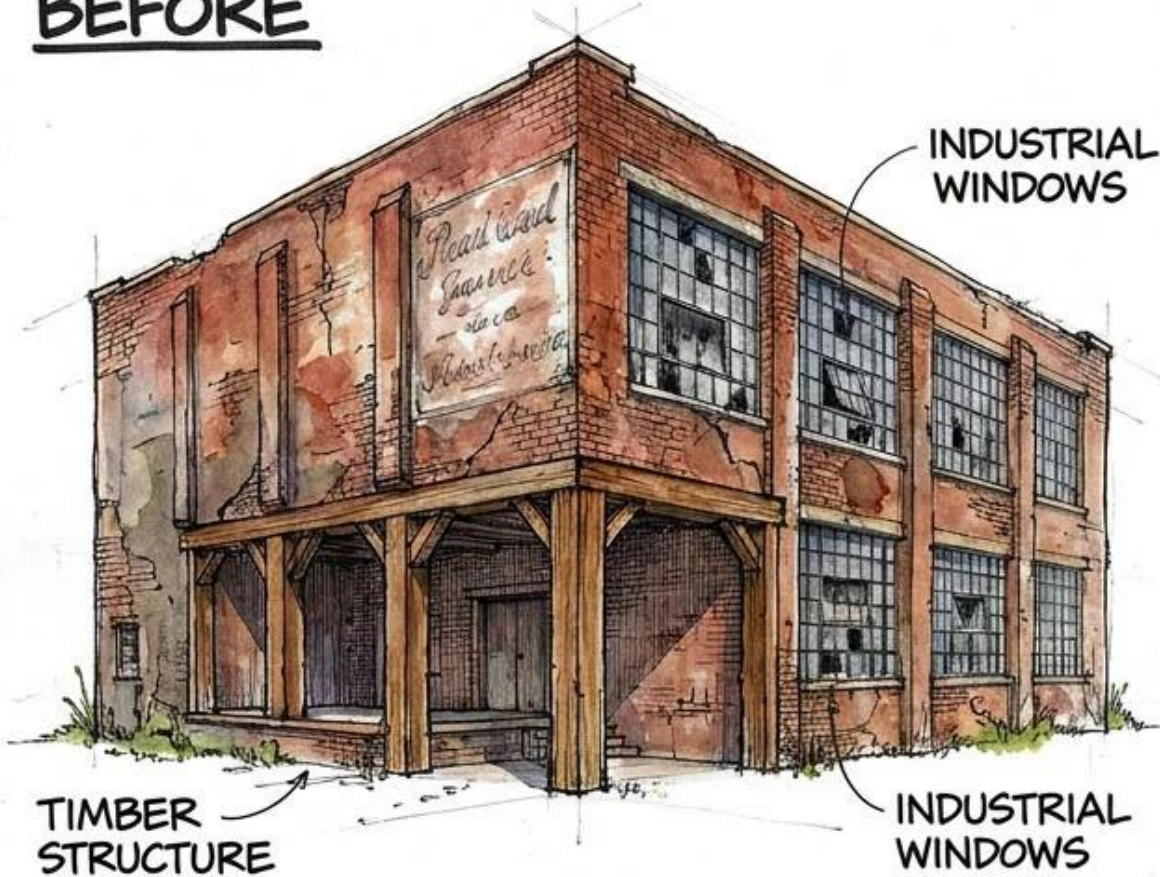
Rehabilitation allows substantial change



REHABILITATION

REUSE, ADAPT IT FOR A NEW LIFE

BEFORE



AFTER



ALLOWS NEW ADDITIONS ✓

UPGRADE BUILDING SYSTEMS ✓

NEW WORK MUST BE DISTINGUISHABLE FROM OLD ✓

TIED TO 20% FEDERAL TAX CREDIT ✓

THE ONLY APPROACH THAT ALLOWS ADDITIONS, GIVE IT A NEW LIFE WHILE RESPECTING THE OLD ONE

YOUNGARCHITECT.COM/HISTORIC

Examples of rehabilitation

MIT Metropolitan Warehouse (2026)

<https://dsrny.com/project/mit-metropolitan-warehouse>



cut new windows

remove back walls



before



after

Examples of rehabilitation

City Harvest, non-profit food rescue center (2025)

<https://www.ennead-engage.com/restoration-and-renovation/>



LEED Gold energy efficiency updates





Urbana Civic Center

Compromise and communication

Urbana community

Urbana Historic Preservation
Commission

SHPO

FTA

Landmarks Illinois

National Trust for Historic
Preservation

CHANGING THE DISCOURSE:

Collaborative and
Adaptive Reuse



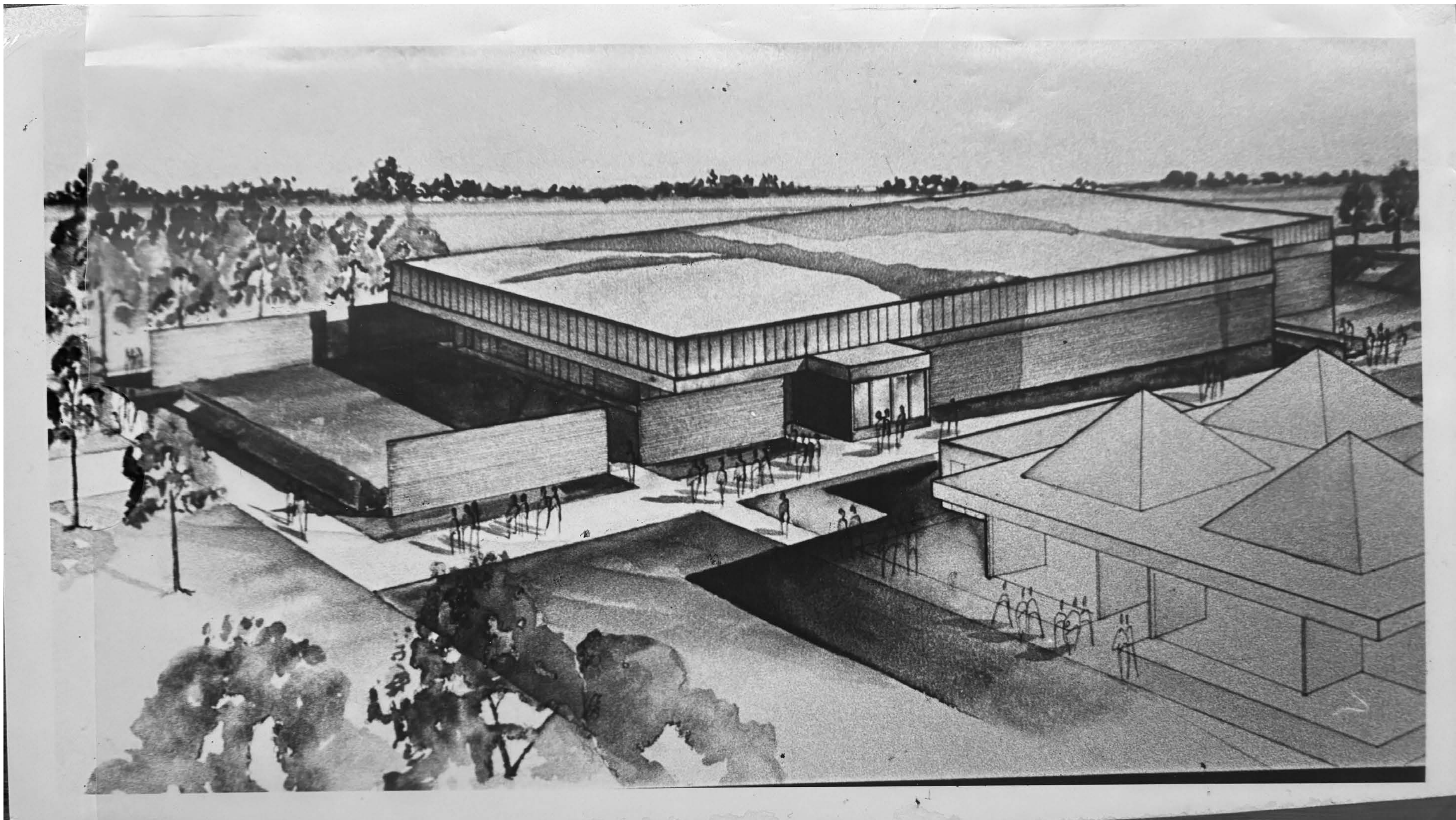
Source: Champaign County Historical Archives.



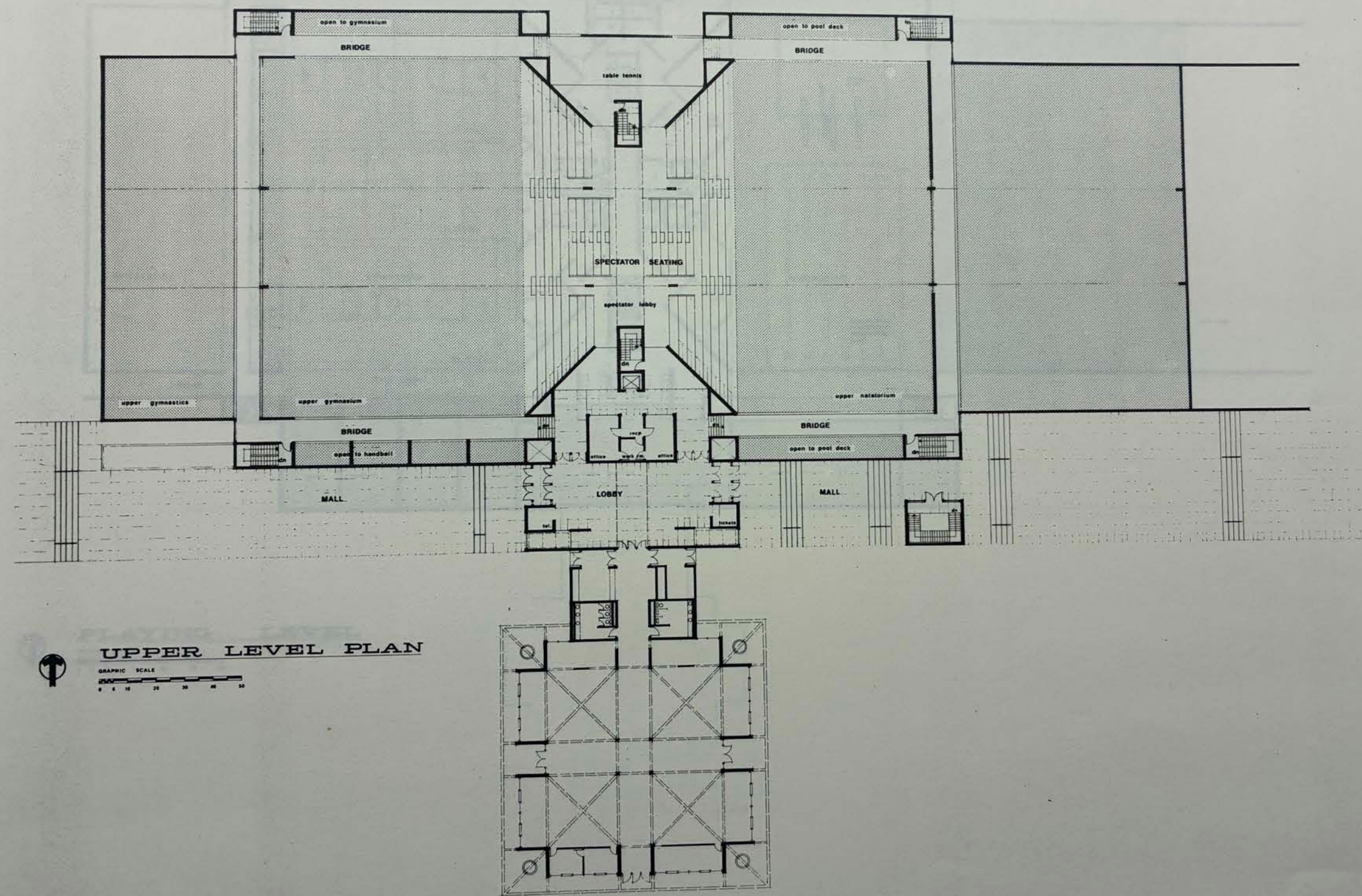
Illinois School of Architecture students tour the Urbana Civic Center, September 2025. Special thanks to the City of Urbana Public Works team. Photo by Joseph Altshuler.

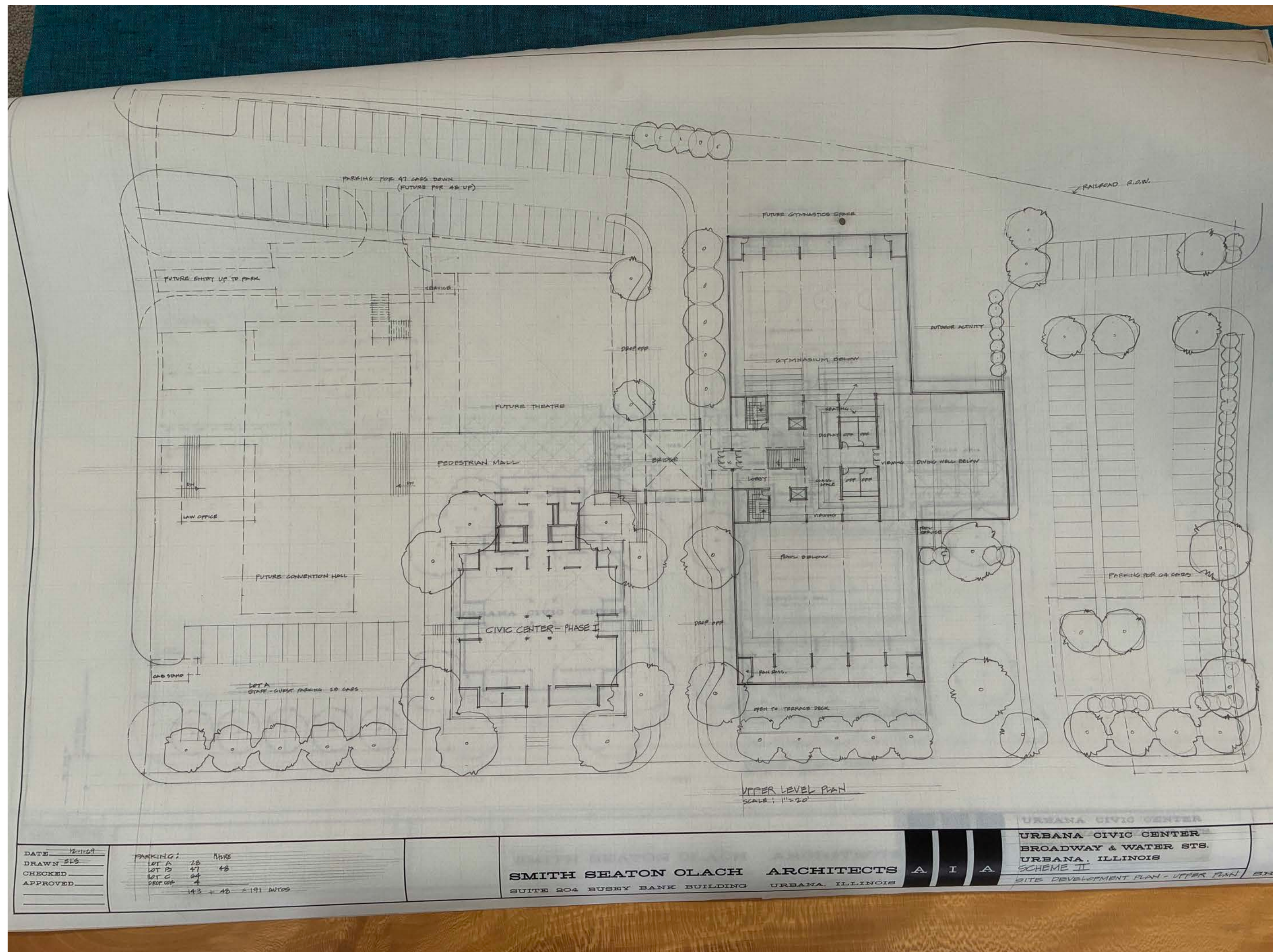


Illinois School of Architecture students tour the Urbana Civic Center, September 2025. Special thanks to the City of Urbana Public Works team. Photo by Joseph Altshuler.

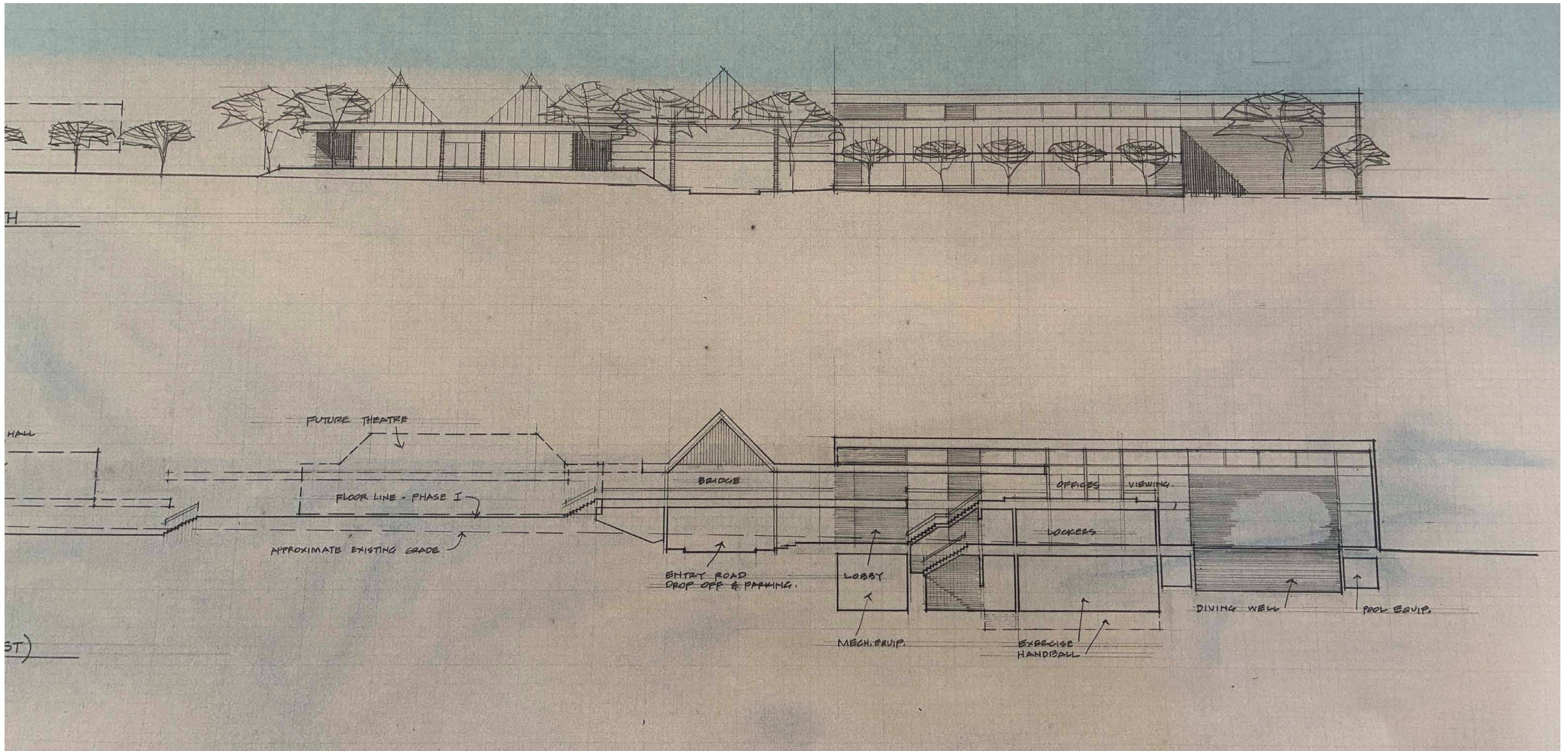


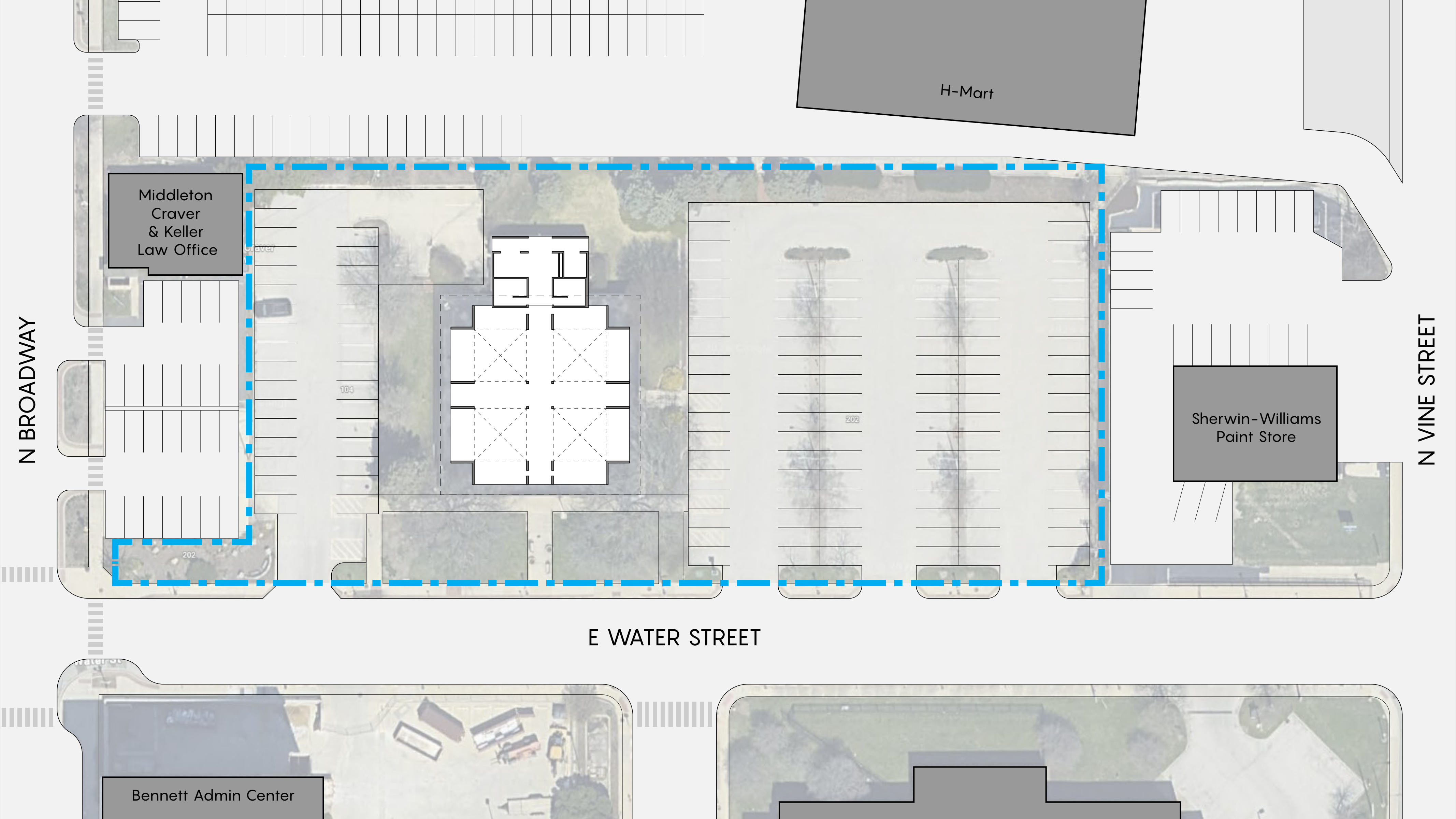
Source: Champaign County Historical Archives.





Source: Smith Seaton Olach Architects archives, courtesy of Kim Smith.





N BROADWAY

N VINE STREET

E WATER STREET

H-Mart

Middleton
Craver
& Keller
Law Office

Sherwin-Williams
Paint Store

Bennett Admin Center

202

104

202

**TOTAL SITE
82,000 SF**

**OPEN AREA
73,606 SF (90%)**

**CIVIC CENTER
8,394 SF (10%)**

EXISTING CONDITION

Middleton
Craver
& Keller
Law Office

H-Mart

Sherwin-Williams
Paint Store

Bennett Admin Center

199'

406'

33'

N Broadway Ave

N Broadway Ave

N BROADWAY

N Broadway Ave

N Vine St

N VINE STREET

N Vine St

N Vine St

E WATER STREET

E Water St

E Water St

E Water St

E Water St

E Water St

E Water St

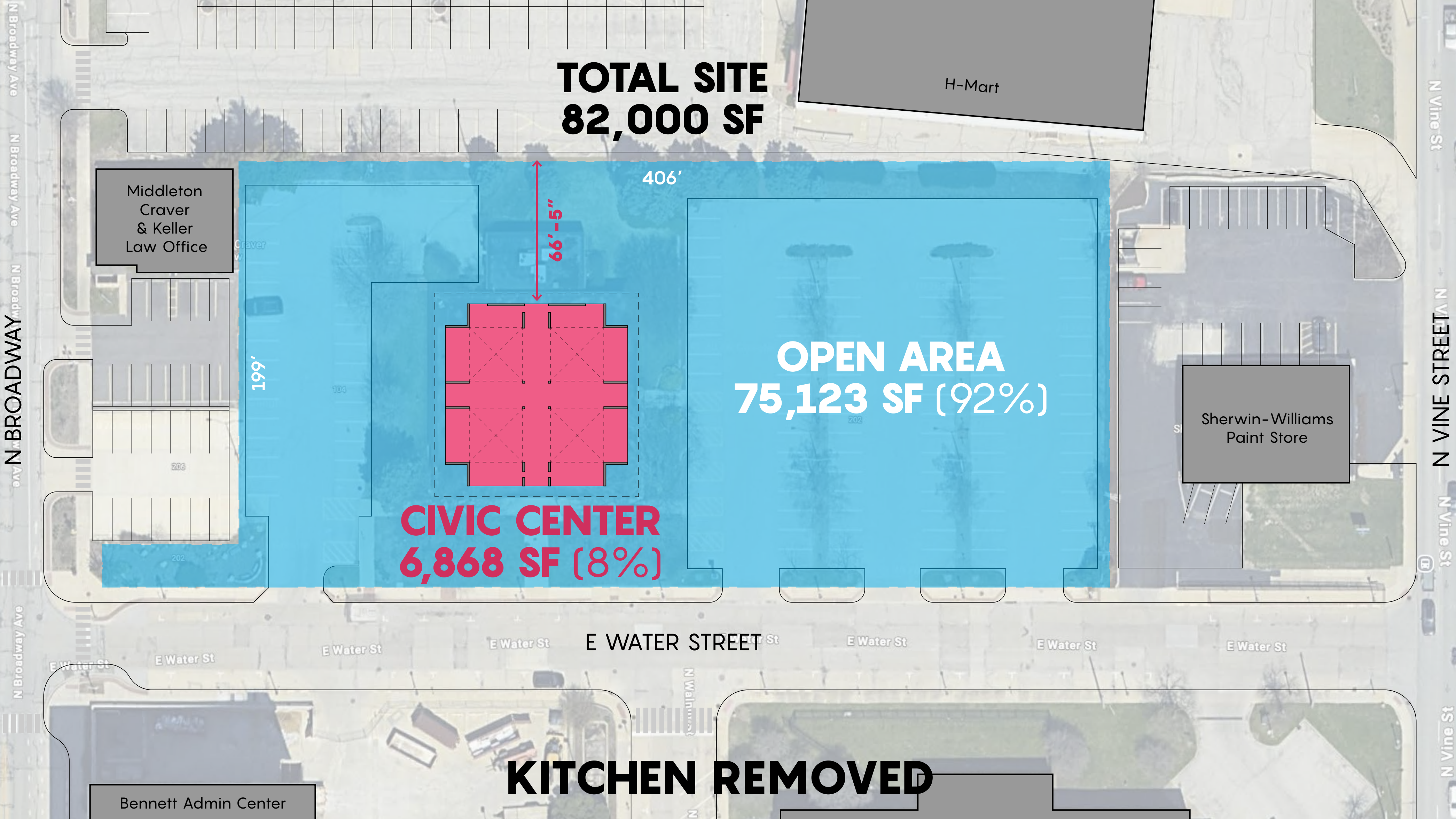
E Water St

**TOTAL SITE
82,000 SF**

**OPEN AREA
75,123 SF (92%)**

**CIVIC CENTER
6,868 SF (8%)**

KITCHEN REMOVED



**TOTAL SITE
82,000 SF**

**OPEN AREA
75,800 SF (93%)**

**CIVIC CENTER
6,200 SF (7%)**

76'-10"

406'

199'

Middleton
Craver
& Keller
Law Office

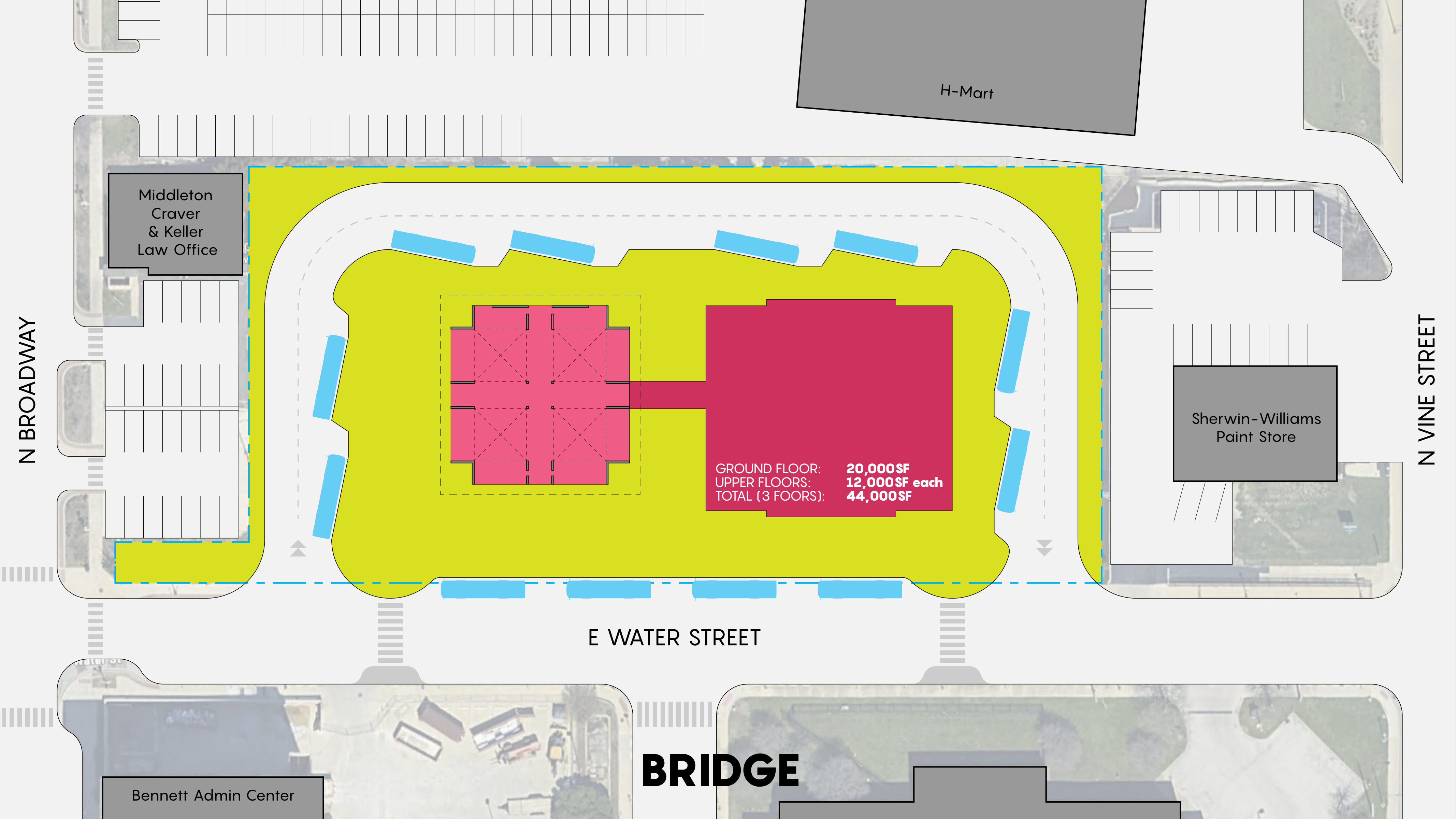
H-Mart

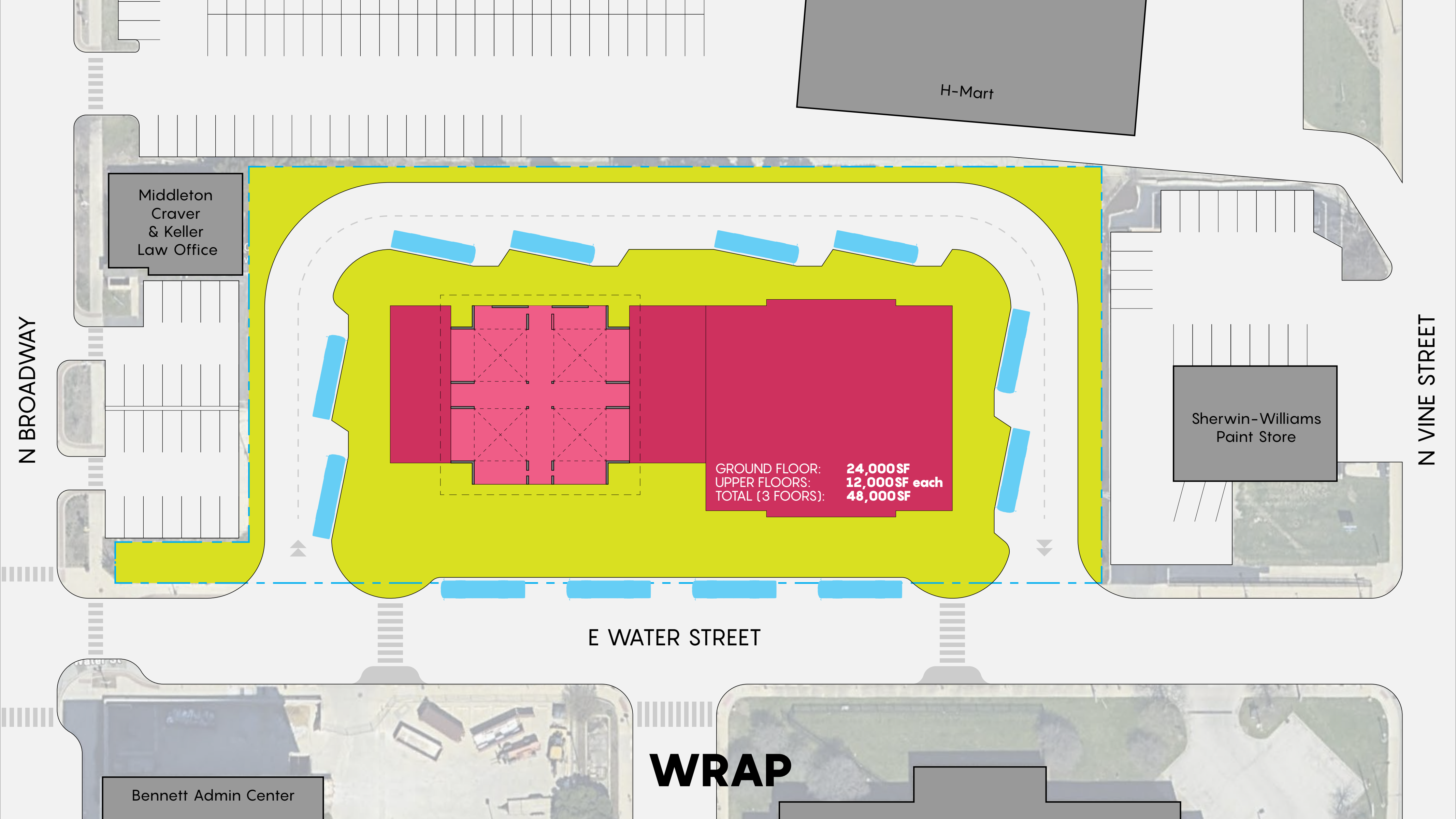
Sherwin-Williams
Paint Store

E WATER STREET

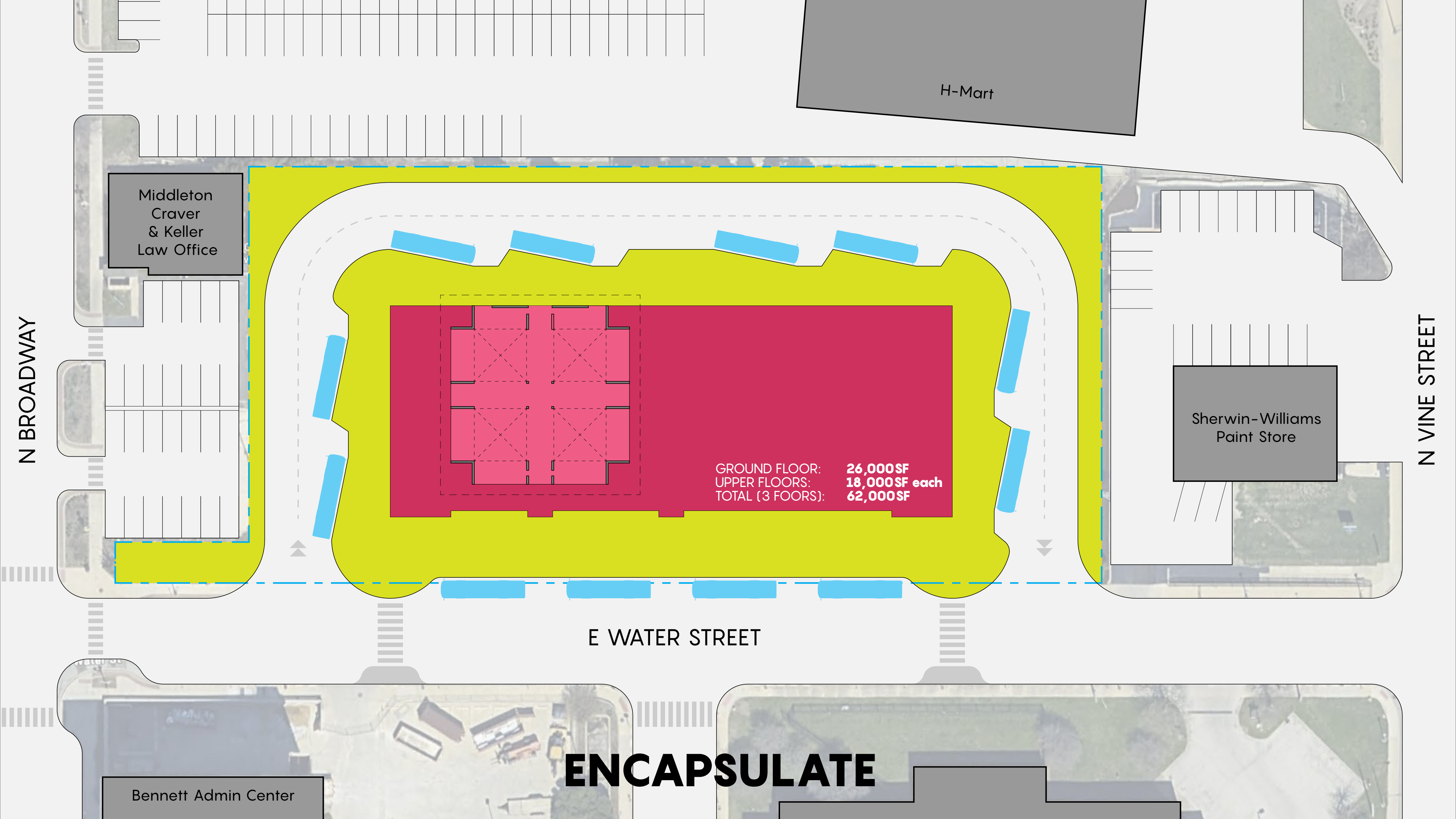
KITCHEN REMOVED + REAR WALL RECEDED

Bennett Admin Center





WRAP



N BROADWAY

N VINE STREET

E WATER STREET

Middleton
Craver
& Keller
Law Office

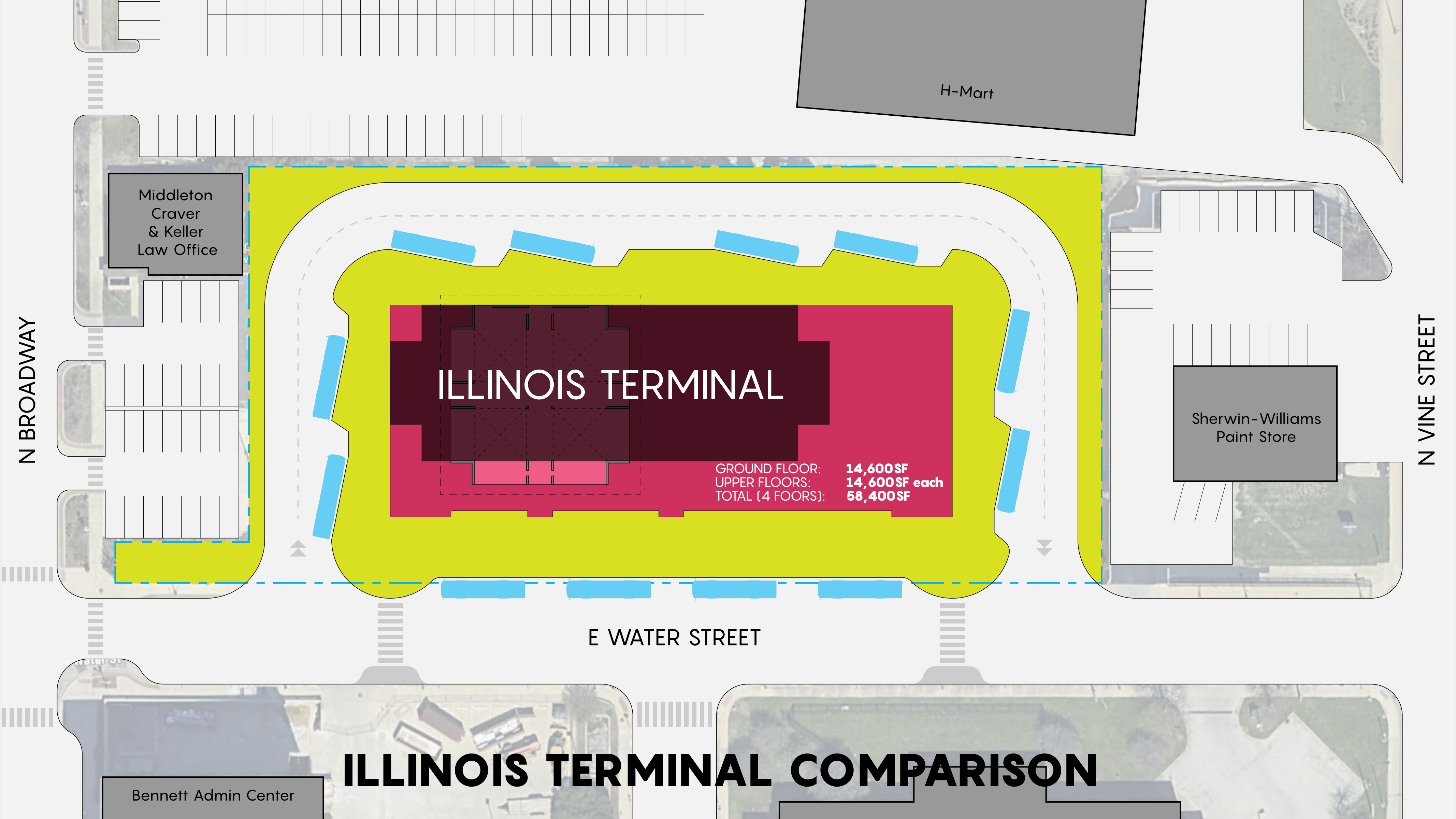
Sherwin-Williams
Paint Store

H-Mart

Bennett Admin Center

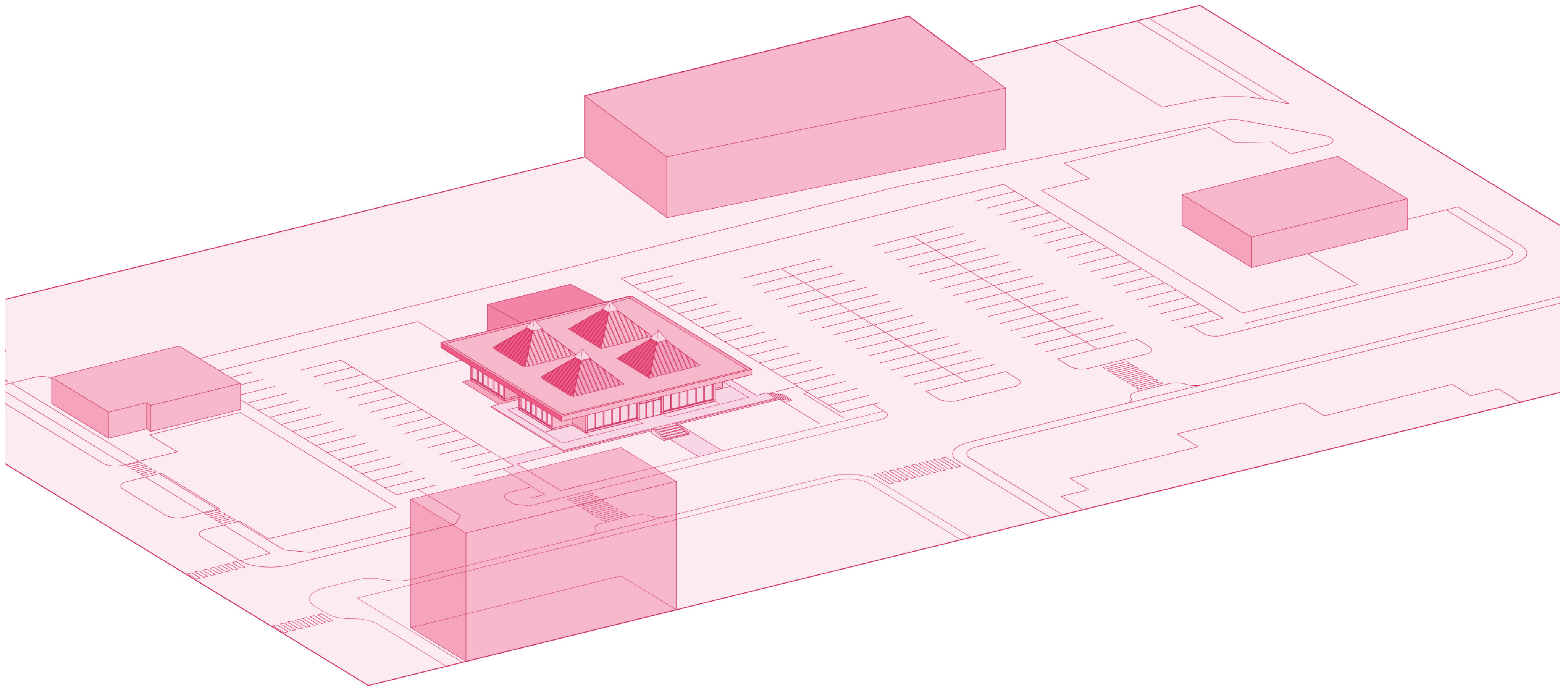
ENCAPSULATE

GROUND FLOOR: 26,000SF
UPPER FLOORS: 18,000SF each
TOTAL (3 FOORS): 62,000SF



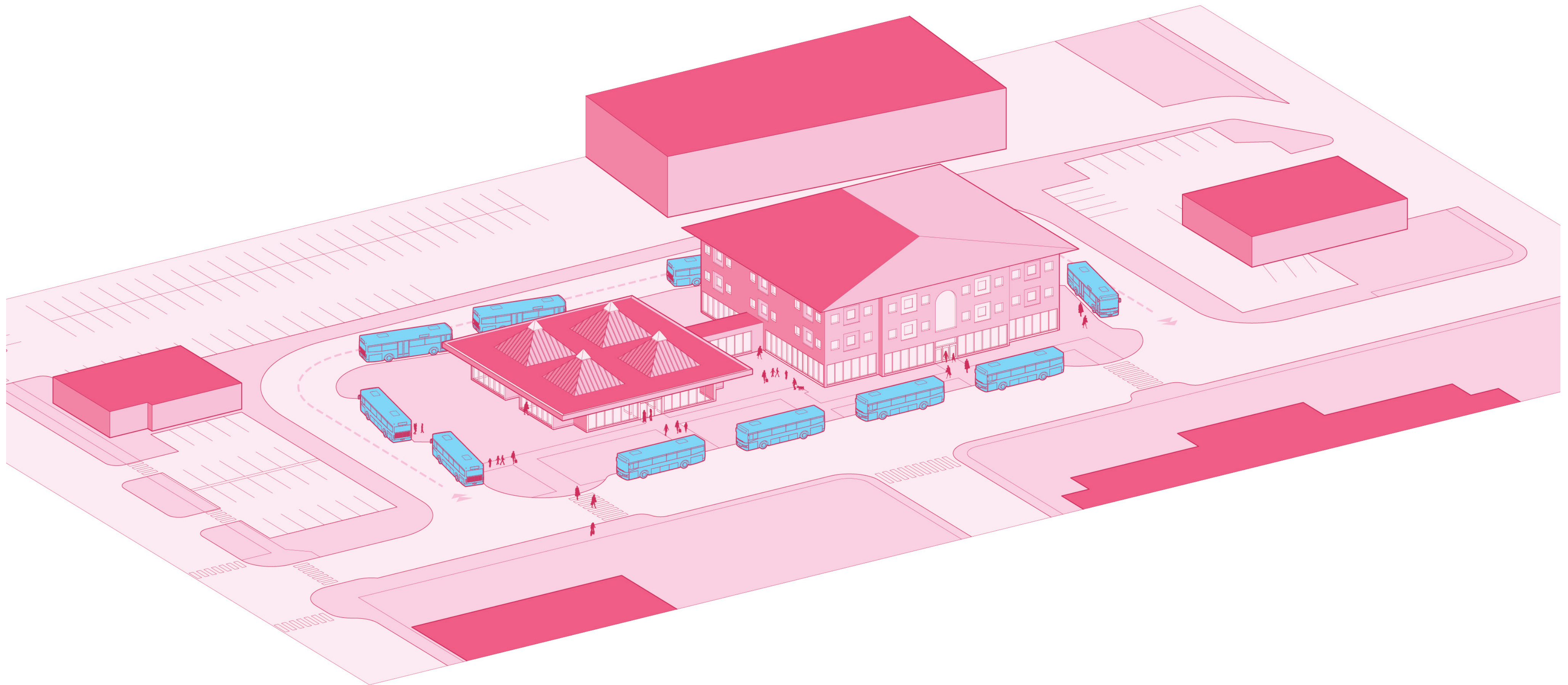
ILLINOIS TERMINAL COMPARISON

Bennett Admin Center



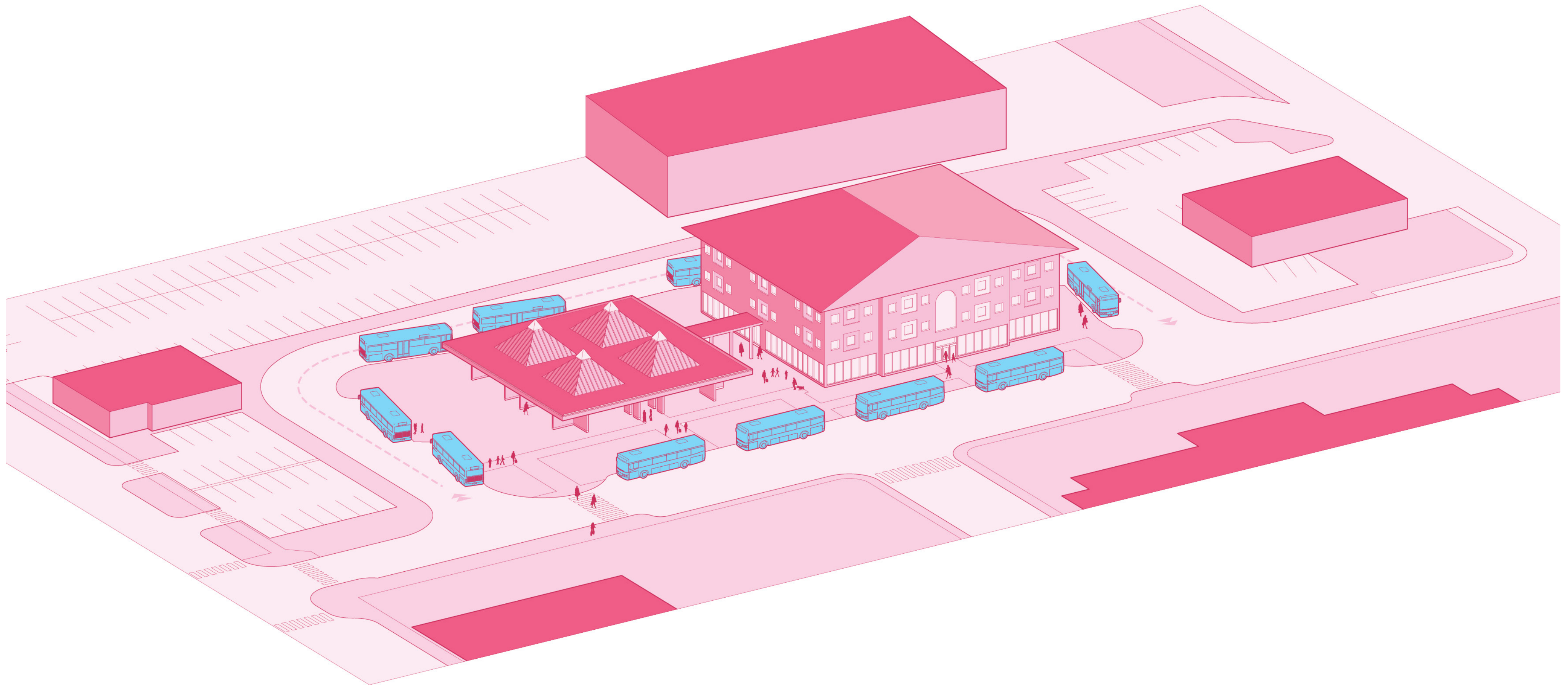
EXISTING CONDITION

Reuse/Rehab Option 1a



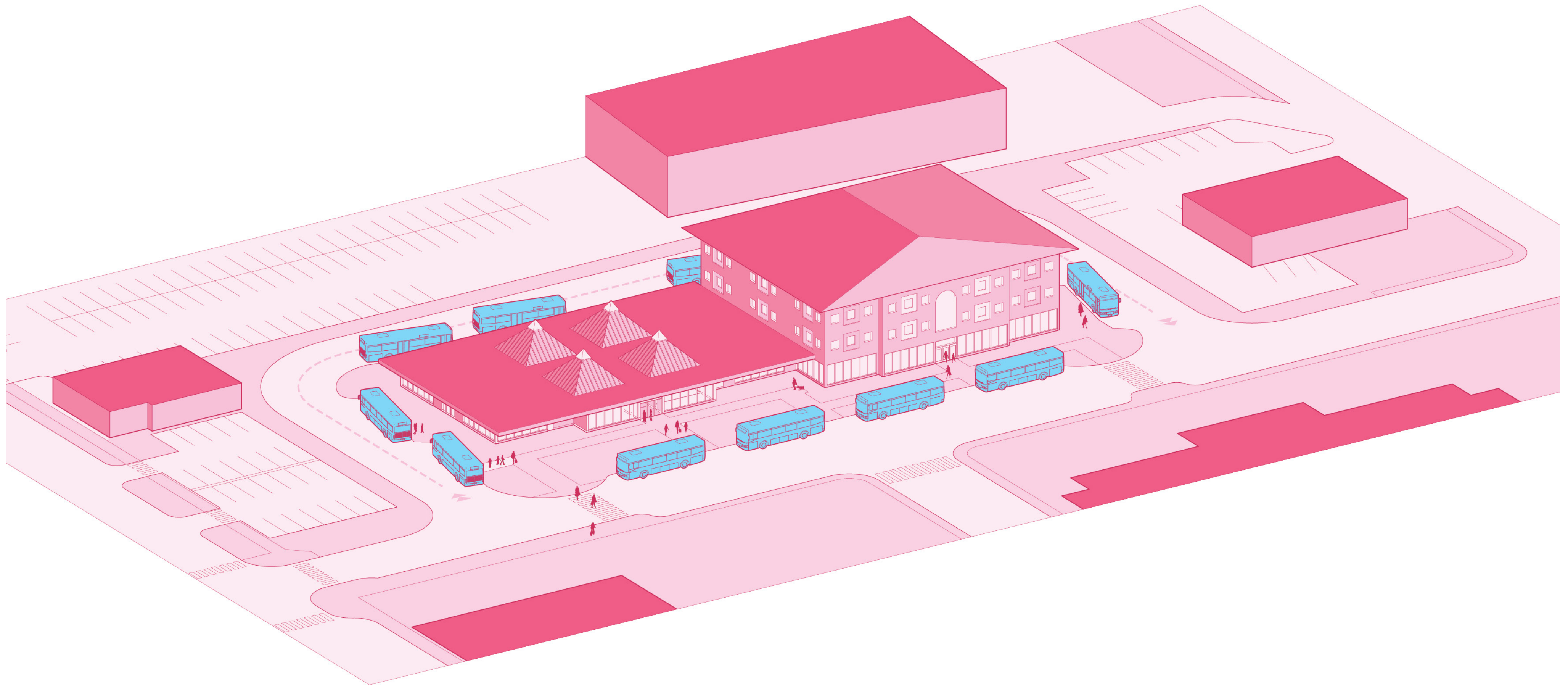
BRIDGE

Reuse/Rehab Option 1b



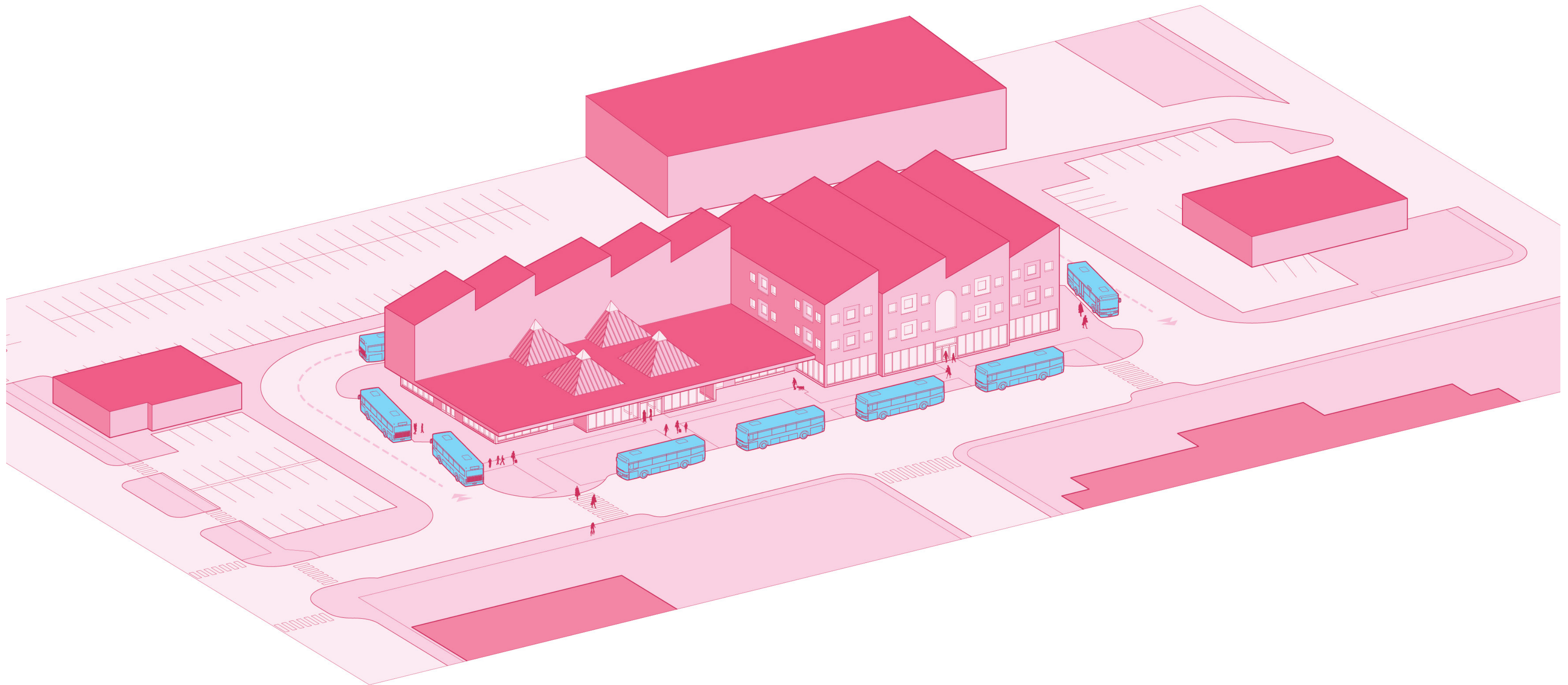
BRIDGE + OPEN WALLS

Reuse/Rehab Option 2a



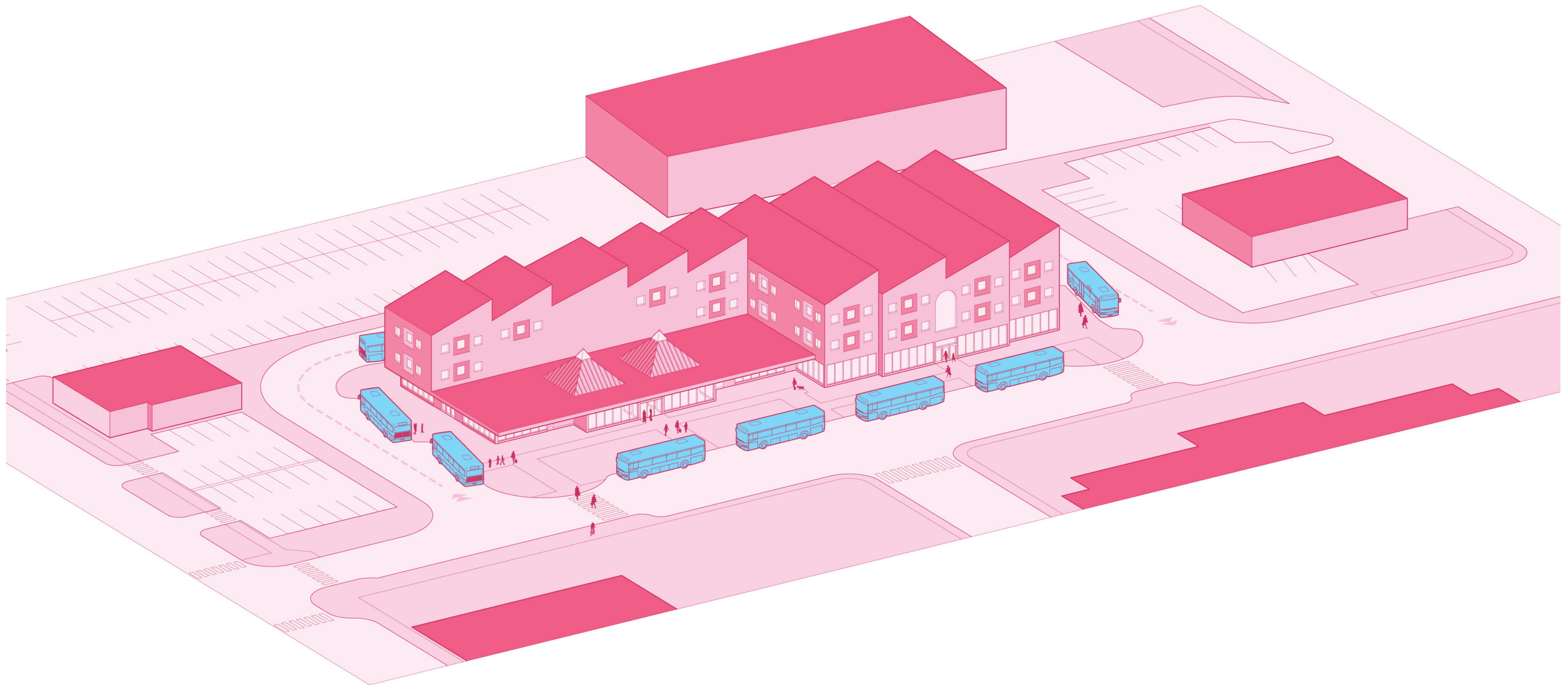
WRAP

Reuse/Rehab Option 2b



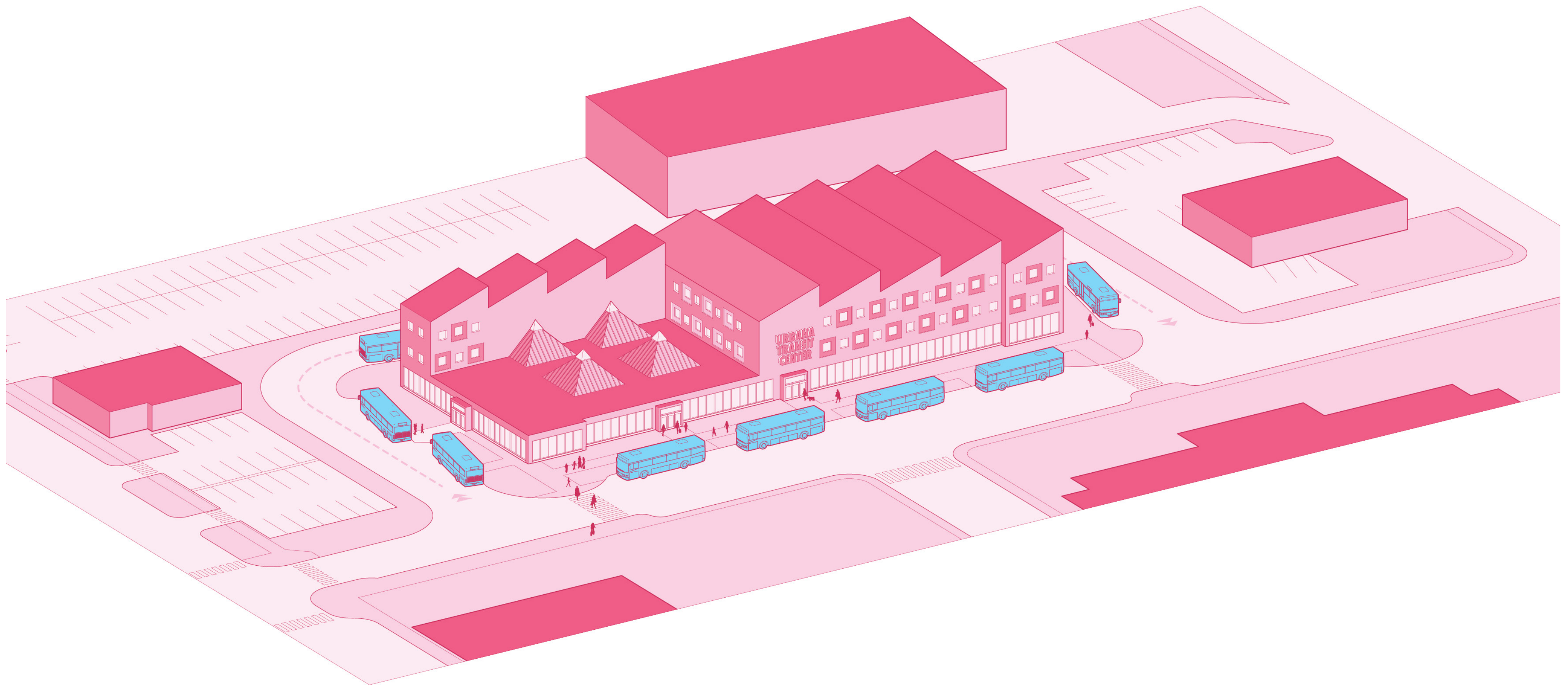
WRAP + BACKDROP

Reuse/Rehab Option 2c



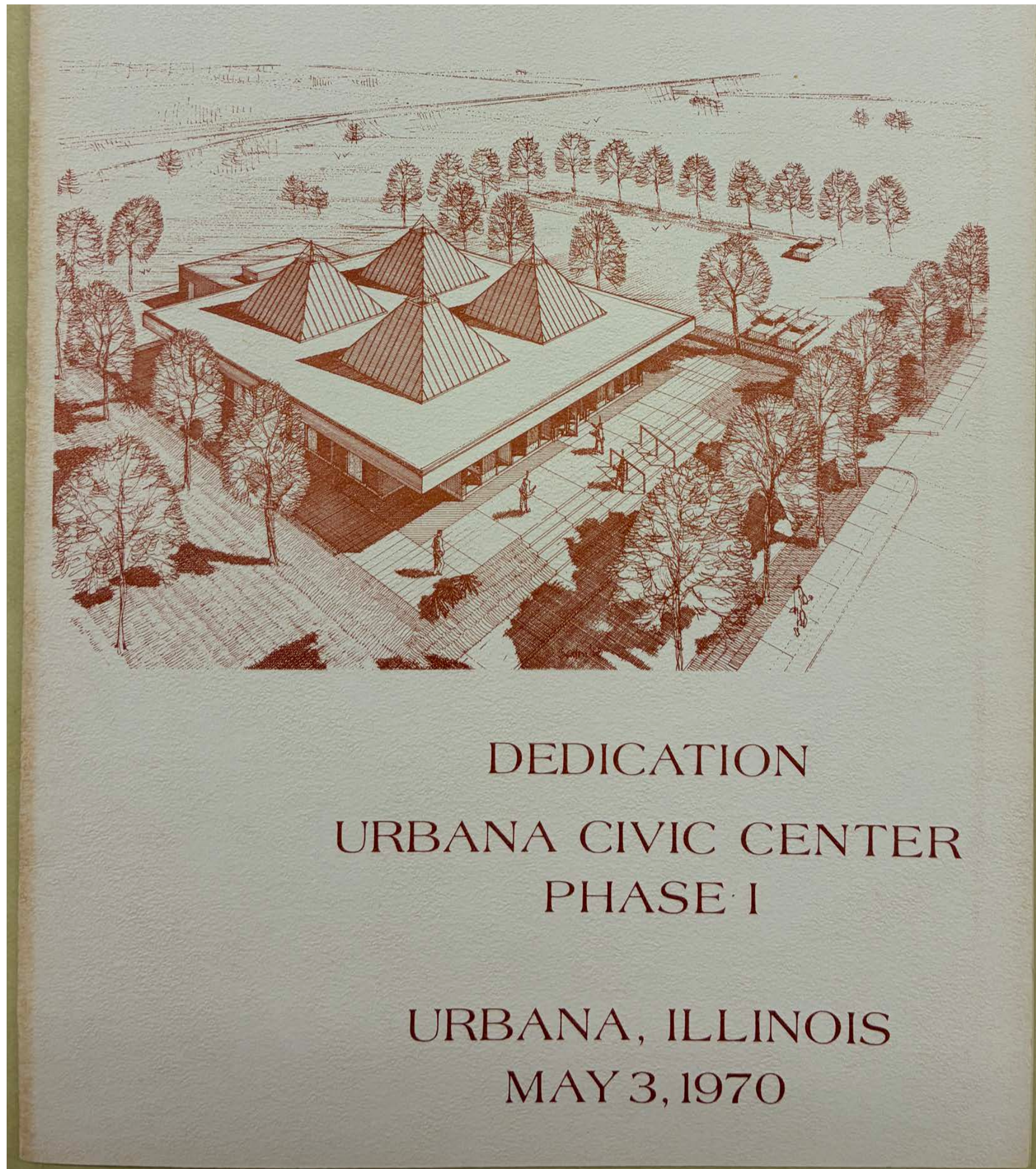
WRAP + THICKEN BACKDROP

Reuse/Rehab Option 3

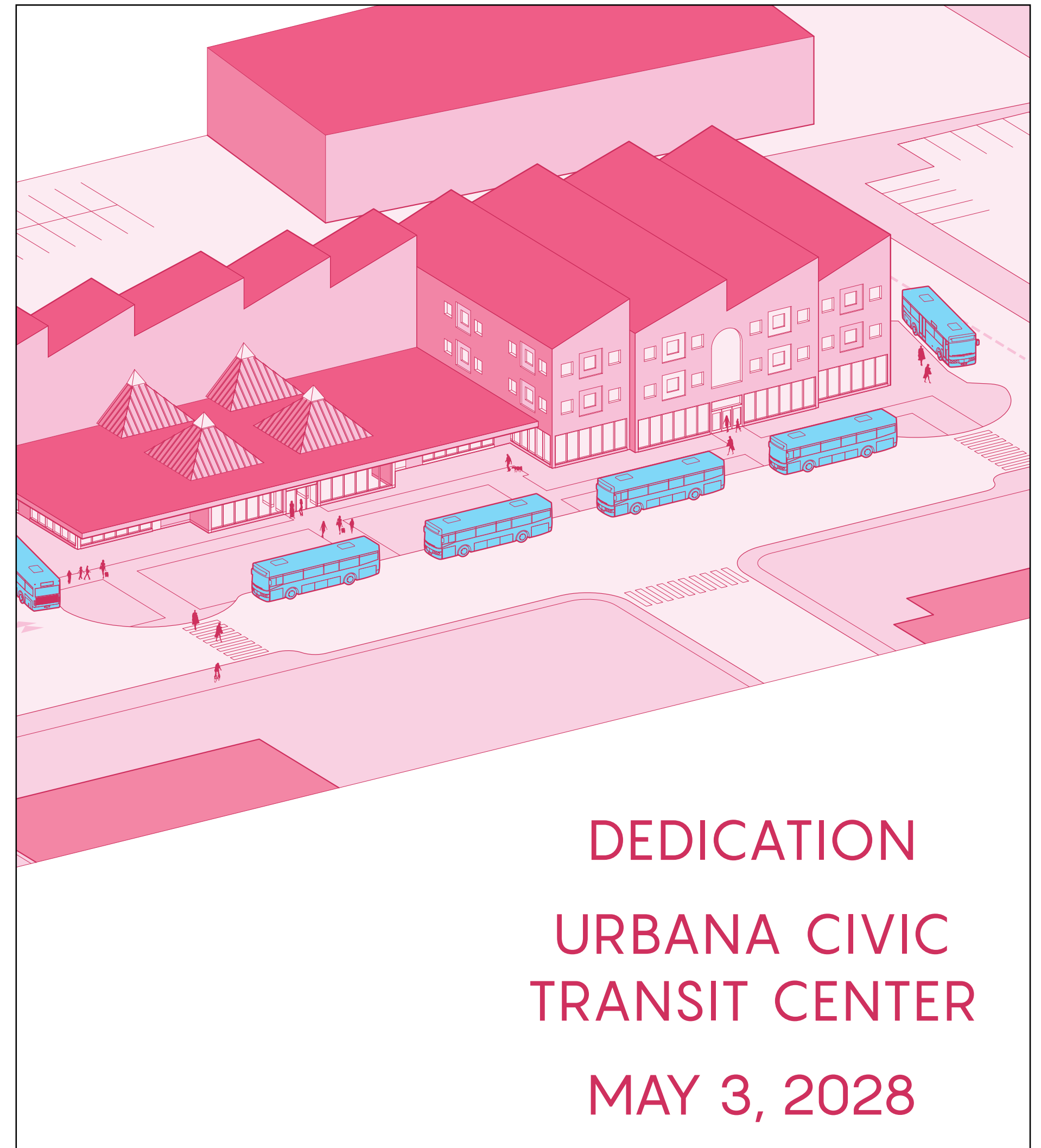


ENCAPSULATE





Program cover for opening, 1970. Source: Champaign County Historical Archives.



Program cover for speculative future re-opening, 2028.

IMAGINE

URBANA

CIVIC

TRANSIT

CENTER



Students: Brianne Baird + Brianna Parziale. Illinois School of Architecture.