



**HILLEL PLACE PLAZA
THE JUNCTION**

A Junction of Communities





tions
Place





LAB ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SPACE

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executive summary

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

If I am not for others, what am I?

And if not now, when?”

Rabbi Hillel

The Hillel Place Plaza Project at Flatbush Junction is a part of the Plaza program established by the NYC Department of Transportation (DoT) to create a temporary plaza for one year and the Flatbush Junction Business Improvement District. The Director of the Flatbush Junction BID, Kenneth Mbonu, has partnered with Placemakers at Pratt Institute to help aid in the design and programming of the future plaza.

Flatbush Junction has been a major transit hub in Brooklyn since the 19th century, when trolley cars and railroads were the primary means of getting around. In fact, “The Junction” got its nickname precisely because of the number of trolley cars intersecting at the junction of Nostrand Avenue and Flatbush Avenue. In the 20th century, trolley cars were replaced by two MTA subway lines that terminate at Flatbush and Nostrand Avenues and 9 separate bus routes that service and connect the remainder of south Brooklyn. Public transit still dominates the area in the 21st century – The Junction is still primarily used as a commuter thoroughfare, where people go to and from home, work and school. Besides transit, Flatbush Junction is also a commercial and institutional hub. Big box chain stores such as Target, Nike, and McDonalds are nearby, as well as a large number of small businesses like the comic shop and restaurants dishing up Haitian or Jamaican food. Brooklyn College, New York’s acclaimed public university with a student population of 16,000 is a block a way from the Junction’s intersection, and Midwood High school which is home to 4,000 students is nearby as well.

Hillel Place, the proposed site for the pedestrian only plaza, is a smaller, quieter street that serves as a transition from the verdant Brooklyn College area to the bustling Flatbush Junction. In order to plan for a new pedestrian plaza at Hillel Place, this study to analyze the issues facing the complex and dynamic area of Flatbush Junction as a whole.

As Placemakers, we are sensitive to the unintended negative aspects of neighborhood revitalization, so we aimed to incorporate contemporary theories on equity and community empowerment to inform our planning and design process. Our methodology relied heavily on civic engagement strategies such as intercept surveys, ethnographic research, and place audits to better understand what resources the community was missing and what needs could be met by a new pedestrian plaza.

Through this lens, we came up with a vision for Hillel Plaza to be a public plaza not just for rest and relaxation, but a plaza for the public realm – a place where positive social interaction could occur that will integrate and strengthen the existing community, which will in turn create a public space that is generative and sustainable, building upon its success and learning from its failures. We attempted to achieve this goal through minimally invasive, economically feasible, and innovative design, as well as a robust programming framework that was built with input from community stakeholders and businesses.

Ultimately, our recommendations went beyond the scope of the year-long timeline established by the Department of Transportation and just Hillel Place Plaza itself. We propose transportation improvements for The Junction, as well as a feasible economic and political strategy that aims to empower residents and community stakeholders so that they have a voice in the future development and rezoning of their neighborhood.

CONTEXT



Figure 1. Historical map of Brooklyn, 1776

Figure 2. Map of New York and its environs. Towns of Flatbush, Utrecht, Gravesend and Flatlands, 1860

Figure 3. Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Cooperation (BMT) Route Map, 1939

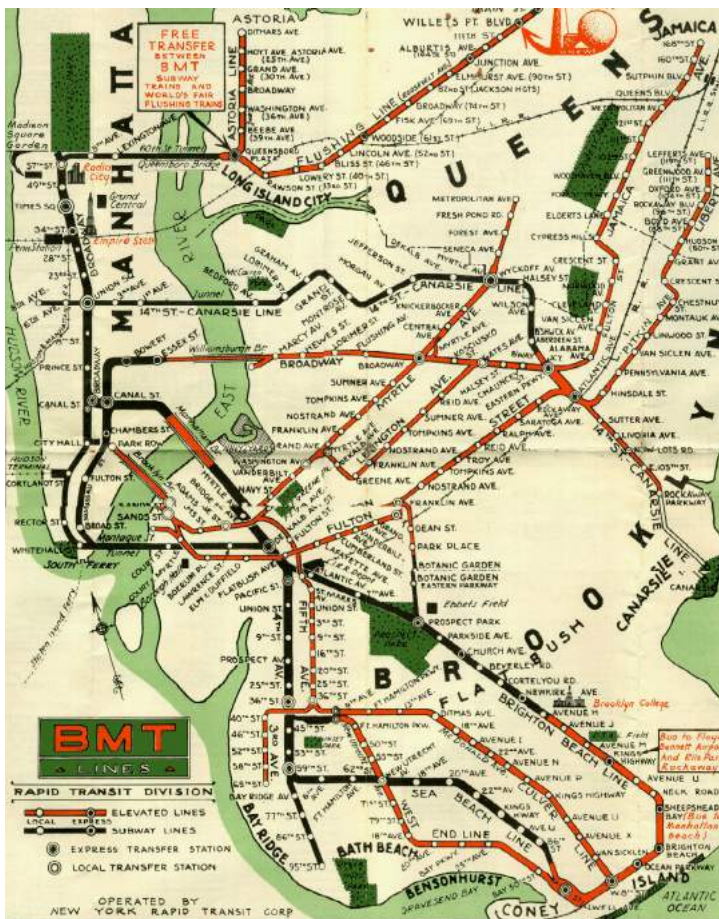


Throughout its extensive history, Flatbush Junction has experienced many transformations to its environment, infrastructure, population, and culture. However, one aspect that has remained relatively constant is that Flatbush Junction has quite consistently been a literal junction.

After Dutch colonists arrived in the 16th and 17th centuries, it was a rural junction of two independent towns known as Midwood and Flatbush. These towns were isolated from the rest of Brooklyn by rolling hills and open countryside, and were solely populated by large Dutch families who used the land for subsistence farming. The area remained mostly agrarian and autonomous throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and even had its own schools, churches, system of government, and municipal services.

During the 19th century, the advent of new transportation technologies and the industrial boom slowly transformed Flatbush and Midwood from lush agricultural landscapes to places of burgeoning industry. In 1870, the Nostrand Avenue Trolley Line opened, running straight through the heart of Flatbush and Midwood, crossing Flatbush Avenue and creating an “X” shaped intersection that the modern Junction is still known for today. The introduction of the streetcar transformed land use in the area, making Flatbush a hub for industrial and commercial growth. In 1896, Flatbush was incorporated into the greater city of Brooklyn. By 1910, Flatbush Avenue was a highly successful commercial area without a trace of farmland left.

At the start of the 20th century, when the US opened its borders to immigrants from around the world, Flatbush morphed into a different kind of junction – a junction of people. Jewish, Italian and Irish immigrants began to settle in the Midwood area. Residential development shifted from single-family colonial houses to apartment buildings that targeted an increasingly middle and immigrant working-class population.



West Indian communities, either migrating directly to Brooklyn from their country of origin, or a large number from nearby Crown Heights in pursuit of the better land prices. The influx of immigrants meant that a new set of mom-and-pop shops opened on Flatbush Avenue. The Flatbush Development Corporation, formed in 1975, addressed neighborhood issues, such as deterioration of property and made efforts to rehabilitate apartment buildings, offer job training services, after-school programs, and help immigrants adjust to daily life.

Immigration was vital to the development of Flatbush, and continues to be a driving force today in the 21st century. The area's large Caribbean population today includes residents from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Granada, Barbados, St. Vincent, Haiti, and the Grenadines. These communities are vital to the Flatbush that exists today.

More than any other Brooklyn neighborhood perhaps, Flatbush consists of many different subdivisions whose members associate strongly with them-- Beverley Square, Ditmas Park, Kensington, and even potentially, Midwood to the East. Midwood itself however, consists of so many of its own micro-communities to make it a separate entity from Flatbush proper.

The fuzzy outlines of Flatbush therefore result in the multiple definitions of the neighborhood's boundaries, where it starts, and where it ends. The confluence of residents from Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, East New York, and Flatlands, overlapping and mingling, highlight the area's diversity. Each community has their own Flatbush. Nonetheless, there is a unifying point--the Junction at Nostrand and Flatbush Avenues, the transit hub, the commercial hub, the cultural hub -- that is central to the identity of the dynamic neighborhood.

Flatbush and Midwood continued to flourish until the middle of twentieth century, when overall changes in New York City and the country at large began to impact Flatbush. The 1957 move of the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles was a historic moment that continues to be mourned today. The closure of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which truly impacted the economy and the population of Flatbush. Crime rates spiked in the seventies and eighties, as businesses followed the fleeing white population. Real estate values declined, and many thought of Flatbush as a blighted neighborhood.

In the late seventies to the nineties, new groups of people began their migration to Flatbush. This time, many of the residents were from

Figure 4. Postcard Flatbush, Brooklyn, 1913

Figure 5. Cover of the book Brooklyn's East Flatbush: Rugby & Pigtown Communities by Brian Merlis & Lee A. Rosenweig (2009)

Figure 6. Intersection The Junction at Flatlands

Figure 7. The Junction at Fatbush and Nostrand avenues, north west, 1945

Figure 8. Looking outh at The Junction -girl distributing pamphlets-, 1951

Figure 9. The junction at Fatbush and Nostrand avenues, 1967

Figure 10. Flatbush, Glenwood and Nostrand streets, 1896

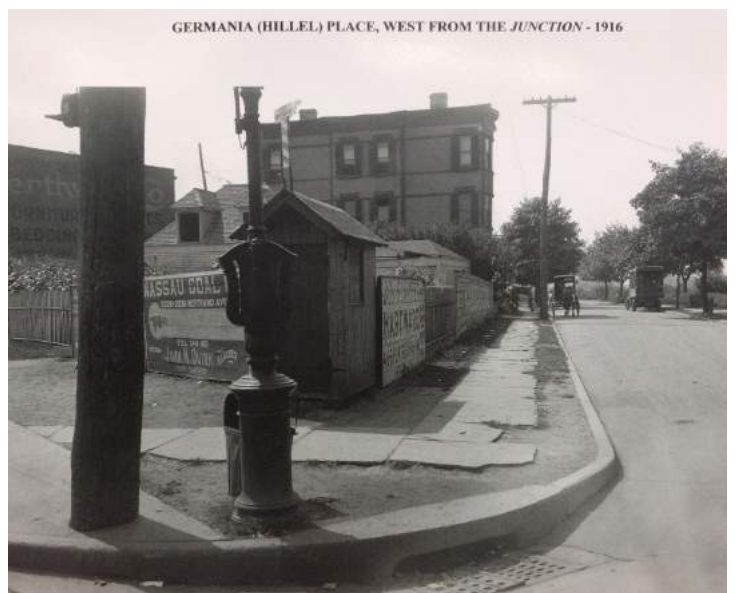
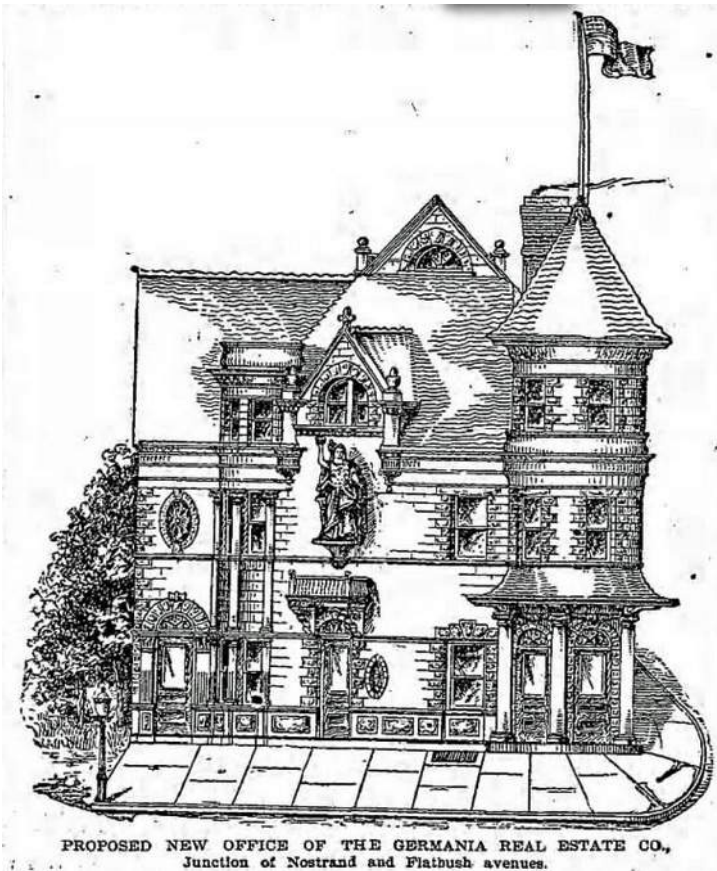
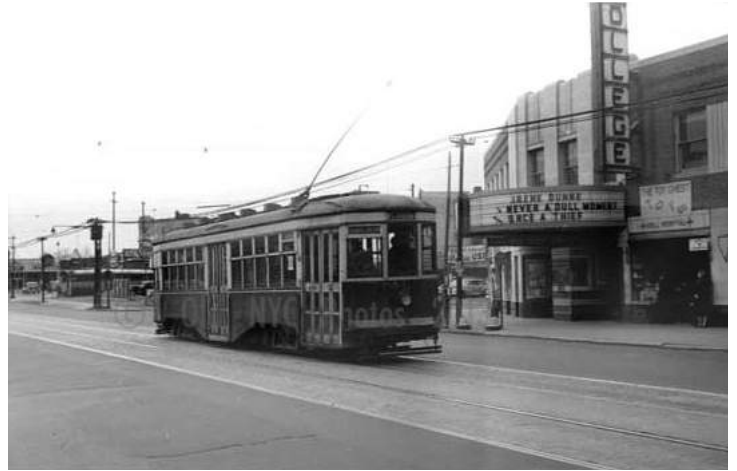
Figure 11. Trolley passing infront of the College Theater on Flatbush Avenue, 1948

Figure 12. Office of the Germania Real State CO. at Junction and Nostrand, 1898

Figure 13. Germania Place, 1895

Figure 14. Germania (Hillel)Place, 1916





Hillel Pl

Neustadt



DENT

E34+HDV



LITTER ONLY
NO HOUSEHOLD TRASH
NO BUSINESS TRASH
\$100 FINE





1477
FLATBUSH AVE.

SUITS

39.

1533

nyc.gov/visionzero
YOU
STUPID!
YOU
CRASH!
DON'T BREAK A
FAMILY!
VISION ZERO

ST

INGS PLAZA

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PA

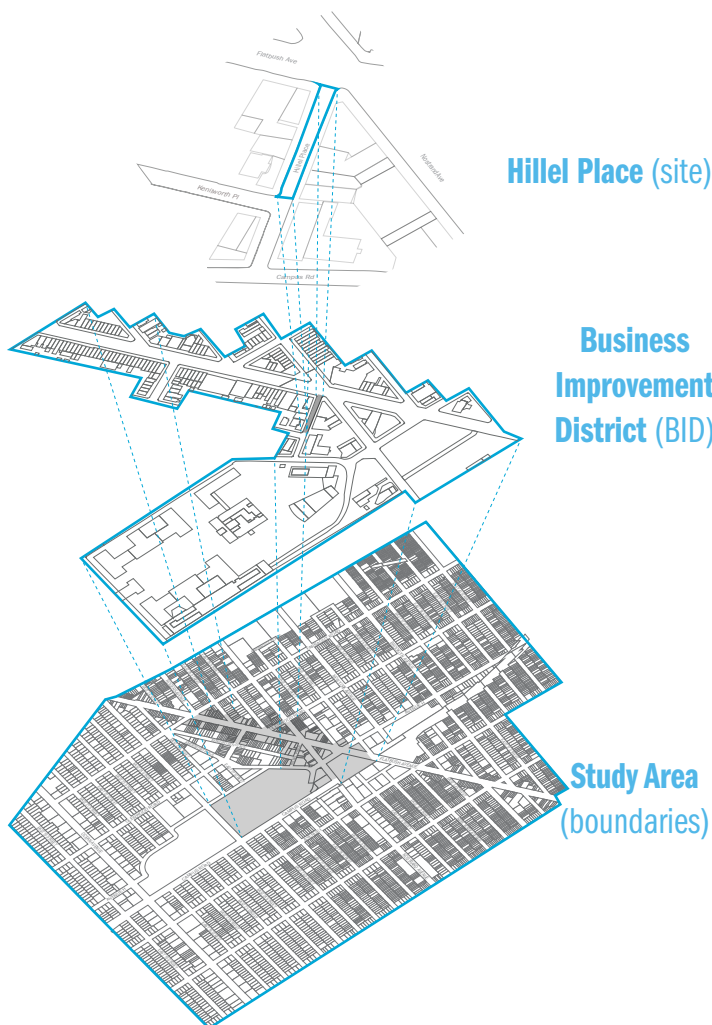
BAKE ANYTHING

W...
KITCHEN

THE W...
RESTAURANT

\$29

study area in facts...



Hillel Place & The Junction

1/2 mile surrounding area (10 minutes walking)

701 Acres (1.1 S.Q. Mile)

144 Blocks

15 Census Tract:

742, 740, 776, 780, 784, 786, 782, 788,

770, 764, 766, 772, 762, 752, 750.

Neighborhoods:

Flatbush

Midwood

Manhattan Terrace

East Flatbush

Flatlands

Marine Park

Part of Community Boards:

14, 17 & 18

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The study area incorporated a ten-minute walking radius, with Hillel Place as the point of origin. This area was selected for two specific reasons: First, PlaNYC has mandated that each New Yorker have access to a park or public space within 10 minutes of where they live. It should be noted that the Parks map shows only two green spaces in the general vicinity of the study area, which supports the theory that this area has a specific need for more open space. Second, a ten-minute walk is roughly how long it takes someone to walk a half-mile. People living, working, and going to school within the half mile can become the core users of the plaza at Hillel Place.

Land Use

Although Flatbush Junction has a past rooted in manufacturing and industry, it has evolved over time into a major hub for commercial, public facility, and mixed residential buildings.

Land Use



Legend













	All Others or No Data		Industrial
	One & Two Family Buildings		Transportation/Utility
	Multi-Family Walk Up Buildings		Public Facilities
	Multi-Family Elevator Buildings		Open Space
	Mixed Commercial/Residential Buildings		Parking Facilities
	Commercial/Office Buildings		Vacant Land

Figure 17. Park and Open Spaces map
 Figure 18. Nostrand Playground (A)
 Figure 19. Paerdegat Park (B)

Park and Open Spaces



- Legend**
- Open Space
 - Hillel Place

INDEX	
green space per inhabitant	
BROOKLYN	219 sq ft
World Health Organization recommendation	96 sq ft
STUDY AREA	0.17 sq. ft



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Parks and Open Space

There is a lack of parks and open space in the area. Clearly, there is a need for new public space at the Junction.

Street Trees

Although there are many trees in the Midwood area, many of the trees on the Junction intersection are not thriving. They are not well kept and some are dead.



Public Transportation



Legend

- Subway Lines
- Bus Route
- Hillel Place

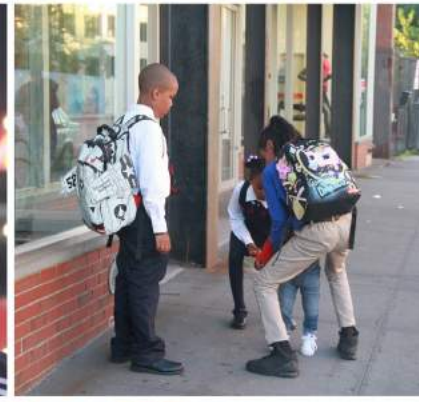
Transit Routes

Reflected on this map are the nine MTA buses that traverse the area as well as the termination of the 2 and the 5 subway lines at Flatbush Junction. These transit options are vital to the residents, students, shoppers and others who make up the community. The array of transit options provides a sense of energy and connectivity to the area. It is common to see students waiting for the bus after school by the McDonalds, and neighbors greeting each other before scurrying off to catch the 2 or 5 trains. There are also informal methods of transportation not illustrated by this map, such as the ride-sharing dollar vans that go up and down Flatbush Avenue.

Although these transit options are great for neighborhood accessibility, Flatbush Junction is in need of updated transportation infrastructure. The MTA buses have no designated area to park, causing them to idle on the street which creates pollution and traffic. The dollar vans are often double parked to pick up passengers, which also creates a bottleneck. And finally, pedestrian crossings at intersections are very long and wide, making it hazardous to cross the street.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS





50,281 *inhabitants* within the study area

Age and Gender

The statistics on gender in the study area show a slight skew towards female. This skew is an important reminder to ensure that the design and programming of the space makes women feel safe and included. An overwhelming amount of the population falls between 18 and 65. Community feedback indicated a desire for places to hangout (High School Students), and a clean area with activities (Families) and a safe place to relax (Seniors). By creating a plaza with these features, people of different genders, ages, cultures and backgrounds will all feel welcome.

Race

The Junction is an intersection of many aspects; including where different races converge. Data shows the study area is mostly African American. The map of languages for the study area shows a more complex picture. It reveals that Haitian Creole speakers live in the Northeast part of the study area and make up the largest section of the African American population. To the Southwest, languages including Urdu, Hebrew, and Chinese present a much more complex mix of ethnicity.

Gender and Age Composition

MALE: 24,638



FEMALE: 30,252



Under 18: 13,358



19-65 Age Range: 34,933



65 Plus: 6,599



Race & Ethnicity Composition

Black or African American: 31,921



White: 10,465



Asian Alone: 3,408



Some other race: 3,045



American Indian or Alaska Native: 52



Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 5



Figure 22. Languages map
 Figure 23. Migrant map
 Figure 24. Median Income map
 Figure 25. Renter-Occupied Housing map

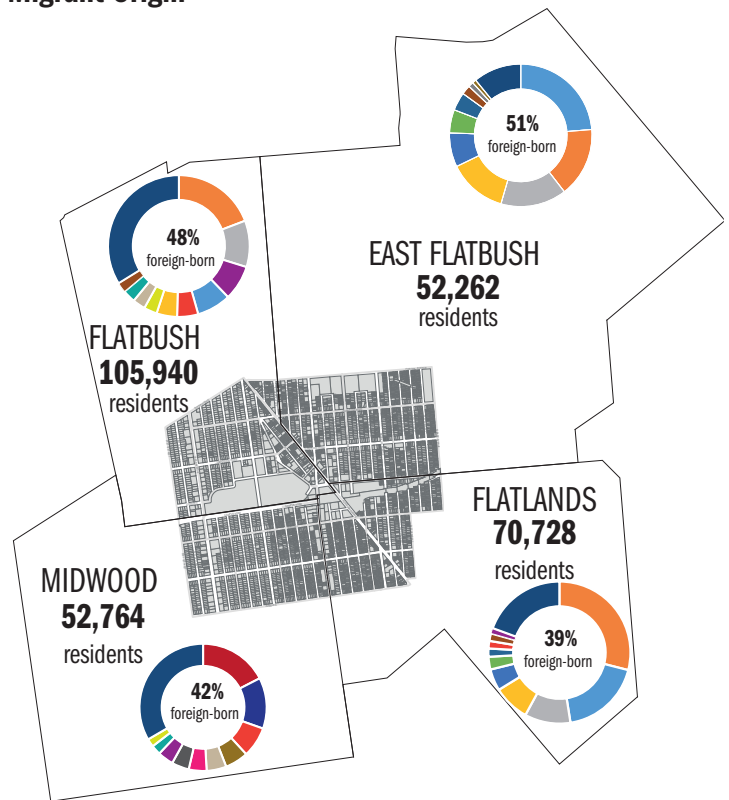
Spoken languages excluding English and Spanish



Legend

- French Creole
- African Languages
- Hebrew
- Urdu
- Russian
- Chinese
- Hindi
- Other Indo European Languages

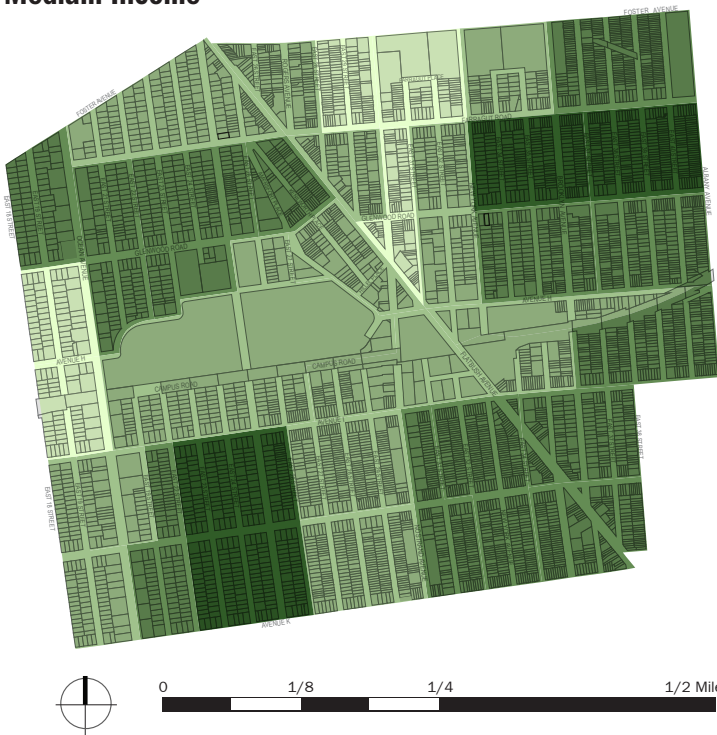
Migrant Origin



- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Trinidad & Tobago
- Guyana
- Grenada
- Barbados
- St. Vicent & Grenadines
- Panama
- Nigeria
- United Kingdom
- Mexico
- Pakistan
- Israel
- Dominican Republic
- China
- Bangladesh
- Russia
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan
- Belarus
- Poland
- All others

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Median Income



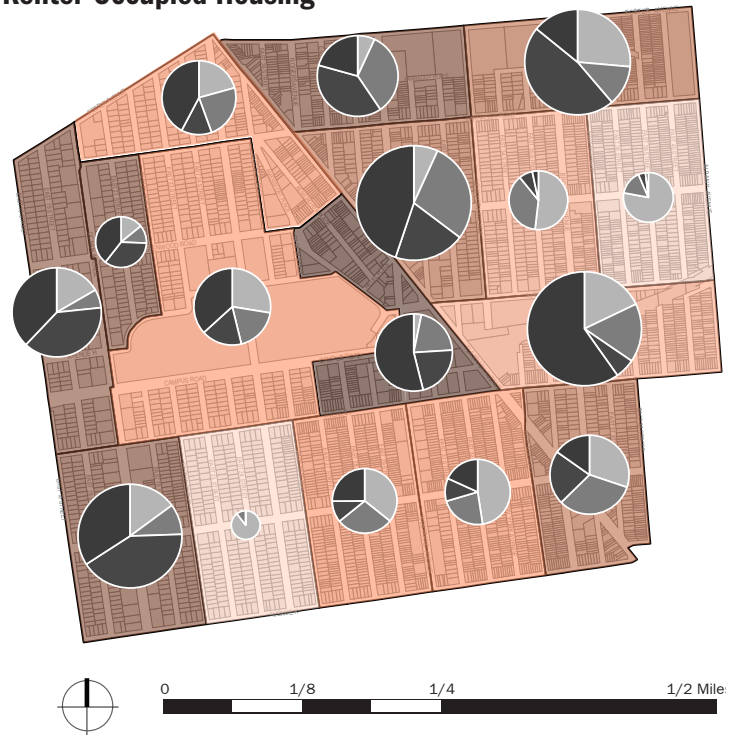
Legend



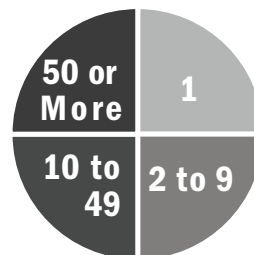
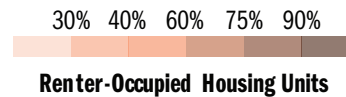
Income

The Median Household Income of the study area is slightly higher than Brooklyn and New York City. The study area numbers are buoyed by four census tracts that have a Median Household Income of over \$75K. Without these four census tracts the Median Household Income for the study area is much closer to New York City Median Household Income.

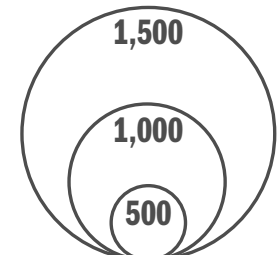
Renter-Occupied Housing



Legend



Units in Structure

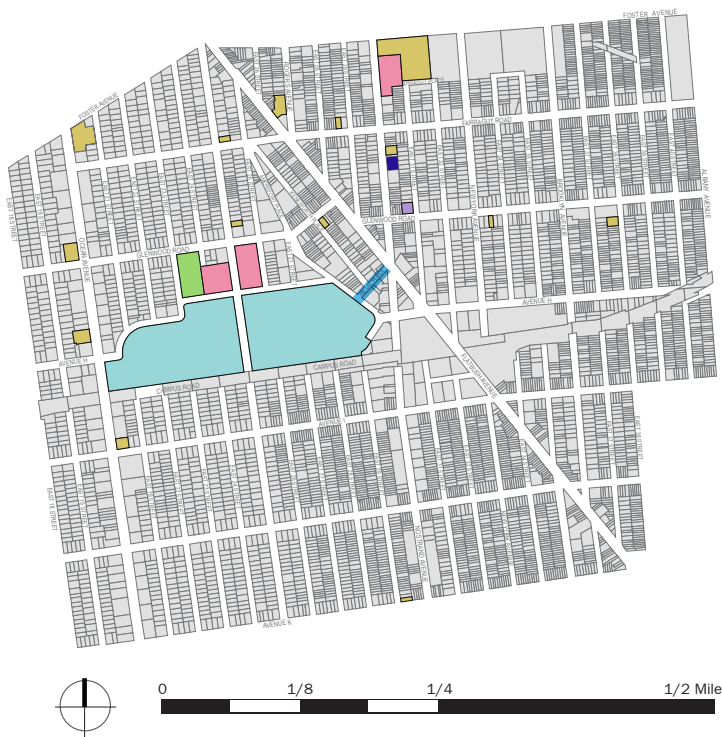


Housing Units





Educational Services



Educational Services

There are a number of schools in the Junction area, both public and private. Brooklyn College, which is adjacent to Hillel Place, has 16,000 students. Another 4,000 students attend the nearby Midwood High School. Other educational programs can also be found throughout the neighborhoods surrounding Hillel Place.

Childcare

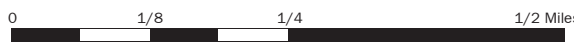
There are a significant number of childcare facilities within the study area. This provides an opportunity for future partnership in order to program the proposed plaza. This younger population can bring energy and diversity to the Hillel Place Plaza once it is built.

Legend

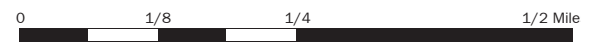
- College
- Public School
- Private School
- Head Start Program
- Adult & Continuing Education
- Public Library
- Hillel Place

COMMUNITY-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Childcare Services



Community Centers



Legend

- Childcare
- Hillel Place

Legend

- Socio-Cultural
- Social Services
- Sustainability
- Senior Centers
- Educational Institution
- Radio Stations
- Religious Institutions
- Hillel Place



Community Board and BID Area



Legend

- Community Board boundaries
- Junction BID area
- Hillel Place

Community Boards

The community boards of New York City are appointed advisory groups bounded by geographic outlines. Their responsibilities include advising on land use and zoning, city budgeting, and services specific to their area. Community boards 14, 17 & 18 include, among others, the neighborhoods of Flatbush, Midwood, Kensington, and East Flatbush.

Business Improvement Districts

Business Improvement Districts came out of New York's fiscal crisis during the Seventies where local stakeholders gather together to oversee and fund the maintenance, improvement, and promotion of their commercial district. BIDs self-organize to ensure the safety, cleanliness, and vibrant atmosphere of their neighborhood.

Business Improvement Districts coordinate with the various networks, stakeholders, and community groups for a safe, clean, and vibrant place. Most importantly, BIDs aim to create a place for the people of their neighborhood.

COMMUNITY-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Retail Section

Retail information was gathered through interviews, site visits, and information given by the Business Improvement District. Flatbush and Nostrand Avenues have high concentrations of retail culminating at their intersection, the Junction itself being a major commercial hub that is comprised of local and big brand retail. There is a major retail mall to the south and more local businesses to the north. There is a low vacancy rate within The Junction. A majority of the retail in mixed use development is below the allowable floor area permitted by Code. This means there is potential for growth if The Junction district developed further.

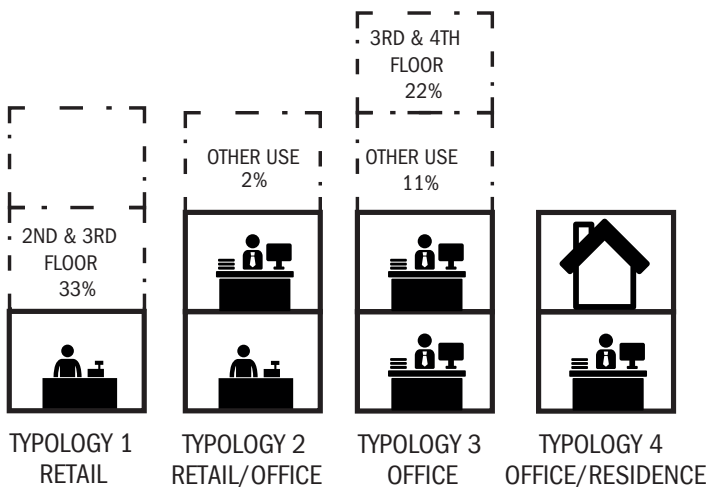


Figure 30. Retail patterns and locations
 Figure 31. Vacant and under utilized parcels locations

Retail Patterns



Vacant and Under Utilized Parcels

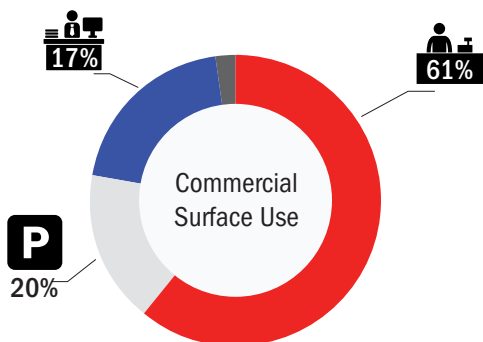


Legend

- Retail
- Office
- Retail/Office
- Retail/Other
- Office/Other
- Retail/Office/Other
- Retail/Residence
- Office/Residence
- Hillel Place

Legend

- Underutilized Parcel
- C1-3
- C2-4
- Possible Mix use Parcel
- C8-4
- C2-2
- Built-out Parcel
- C4-4A
- Hillel Place



Vacant and Under Utilized Parcels

Forty four percent (44%) of parcels marked for retail are currently being under utilized, given that they are below the stipulated COMFAR (4). Forty Seven percent (47%) of parcels with a current commercial use are underutilized and, according to zoning laws they could be a combination of housing and retail. Nine percent (9%) of the parcels fulfill both their COMFAR limit and zoning use. The commercial districts in the area are overlaid with residential districts mapped along streets that serve local retail needs, typical of lower and medium-density areas.



Typical retail uses include neighborhood grocery stores, restaurants and beauty parlors. C2 districts permit a slightly wider range of uses, such as funeral homes and repair services. In mixed buildings, commercial uses are limited to one or two floors and must always be located below the residential use.



In the C4-4A district the floor area may be increased with a public plaza or Inclusionary Housing Program bonus. Off streets parking requirements vary with district and use. Automotive uses in C8-1 to C8-3 districts require substantial parking. C8-4 districts are usually exempt from parking requirements.

C8 districts, bridging commercial and manufacturing uses, provide for automotive and other heavy commercial services that often require large amounts of land.

Summary of Findings

The urgent need for more public green space in the study area is the most important takeaway from our preliminary research. Although the Hillel Place currently has two parks within a half mile radius, there is only 0.17 square feet of public green space per resident in the study area compared to 219 square feet per resident on average for the whole borough of Brooklyn. It is evident that the communities living near or commuting through the Junction are being inequitably served in terms of public space.

As previously mentioned, Flatbush Junction is a transit hub, served by nine different bus routes, two subway stops, and dollar vans that run up and down Flatbush. However, the lack of updated transportation infrastructure and design on the street level makes the area feel chaotic and uncomfortable. There are no bus shelters or benches for commuters using the buses, causing sidewalks to be flooded with people during morning and afternoon rush hour. There is very little way-finding in the Junction, making it difficult for newcomers to the area to find the correct bus or subway. And finally, although the Junction is often a turnaround point for the various MTA bus lines, there is no place for these buses to park. This results in many MTA buses idling on the side of the road, jamming up vehicular traffic and contributing to air pollution in the area.

The diverse population of the Junction is served by an abundance of established community centers offering a wide variety of educational, social, cultural and environmental services. Brooklyn College has the largest physical presence in the area, serving 16,000 students, and close by is Midwood High School, which serves nearly 4,000 students. Both of these institutions are within a 10 minute walk

to Hillel Place. The Clarendon branch of the New York Public Library is within a ten minute walk of Hillel Place and offers an incredible amount of services, from childcare for toddlers and teens to language and technology classes for adults. Local radio stations, social hubs for the Caribbean populations in the neighborhood have a unique cultural presence in the area, as well as other Caribbean groups and non-profits such as CaribBeing and CAMBA. Finally, there is a large senior center just south of Hillel Place.

Mapping and identifying some these physical and demographic characteristics in the study area allowed the class to get to know Hillel Place and the Junction deeper than a traditional urban planning perspective. These maps highlighted the desperate need for more public space in the area, and pointed to places where planning and design could mitigate some issues concerning public transportation. However, as Placemakers, we went a step further and used this context information as an origin point to identify key stakeholders to reach out to about a new public plaza at Hillel Place, as well as relevant community organizations that could use and program the space. Our underlying goal was that a new public green space would first and foremost be designed for the existing communities in the Junction.

ANALYSIS

What We Heard, What We Did



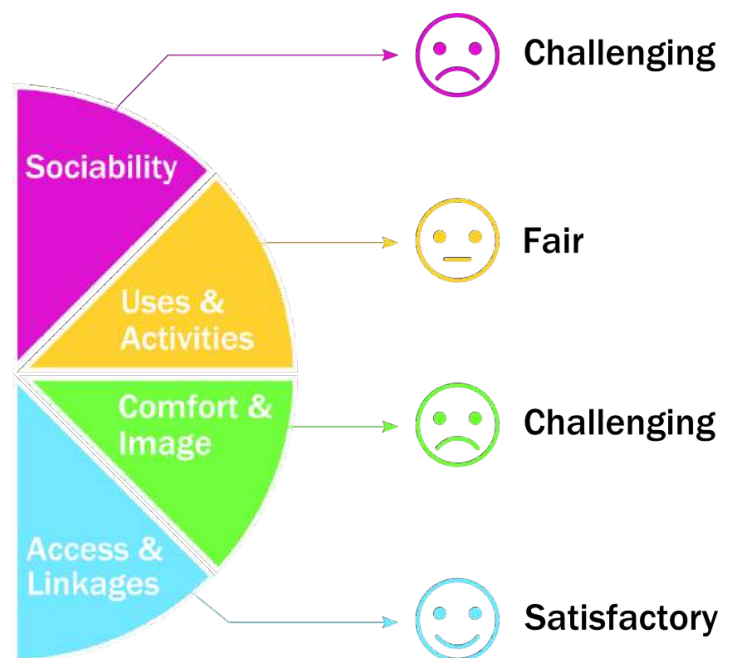
Initial Walk Thru With Kenneth

On the evening of our first site visit, the director of the Flatbush Junction BID, Kenneth Mbonu, led our Urban Placemaking and Management (UPM) class on a tour of the surrounding neighborhood. His tour of the Flatbush Junction provided tremendous insight into how residents and commuters moved throughout the space. Mr. Mbonu highlighted some of the unique and successful businesses in the area, as well as some challenging aspects that we might encounter over the course of our study. After the walking tour, Mr. Mbonu invited UPM students to participate in a food festival event that he was hosting on Hillel Place called “Taste of the Junction.” During this event, local restaurants would supply free samples of their food and attendees could experience what Hillel Place could look and feel like when it was closed to traffic. It was at this time that UPM students first endeavored to engage with the community.

Place Audit

Following the neighborhood tour with Mr. Mbonu, UPM students conducted a Place Audit, a tool used to analyze and evaluate how public spaces operate as successful places from a human perspective. According to Project for Public Spaces, the four elements of a Place Audit are sociability, uses and activities, comfort and image, and access and linkages. These four elements are rated on a scale of good, satisfactory, challenging, and poor. The Place Audit illuminated the areas in the Junction that could be targeted for improvement, and highlighted existing community assets that could be strengthened and built upon.

Place Audit Strategy at Hillel Place



Assets

Place



Audit

Challenges



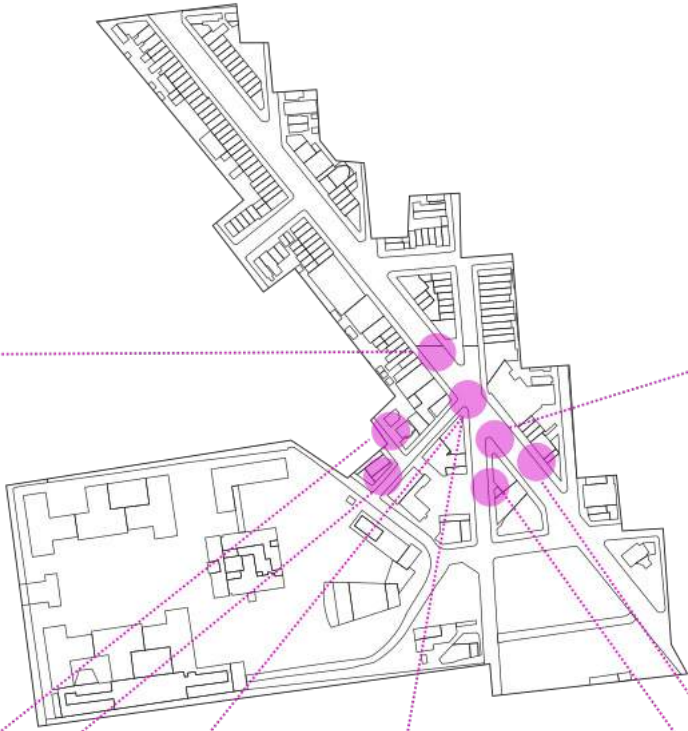
Vehicle Congestion



Street Obstacles



Unwelcoming Facade



Large Intersection



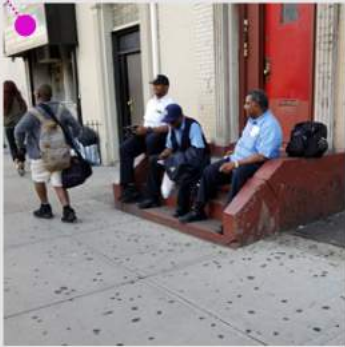
Rush-hour People



Blocked Sidewalk



Not Good for Bikes



Lack of Seating

Figure 36. Intercept Survey Results
 Figure 37. Intercept Survey Word Bubble
 Figure 38. Collection of information through the Idea Tree
 Figure 39. Analysis of ideas collected

The BID's 'Taste the Junction' Food Event

During the 'Taste of the Junction' food event, UPM students gathered as much feedback from attendees as possible. Students used two different intercept surveys to solicit feedback on the potential conversion of Hillel Place as a public plaza and the experience of Flatbush Junction as a whole. Pratt students also utilized creative mapping, letting attendees designate the kind of urban furniture and activities they would want to see in the proposed plaza, as well as an Idea Tree, once again attempting to get residents excited about Hillel Plaza and imagine how they might use the plaza. These engagement activities led to many extensive and fruitful conversations with community members about their desires, needs and concerns. Some of the top responses referred to safety in the area and healthier food options from stores and restaurants.

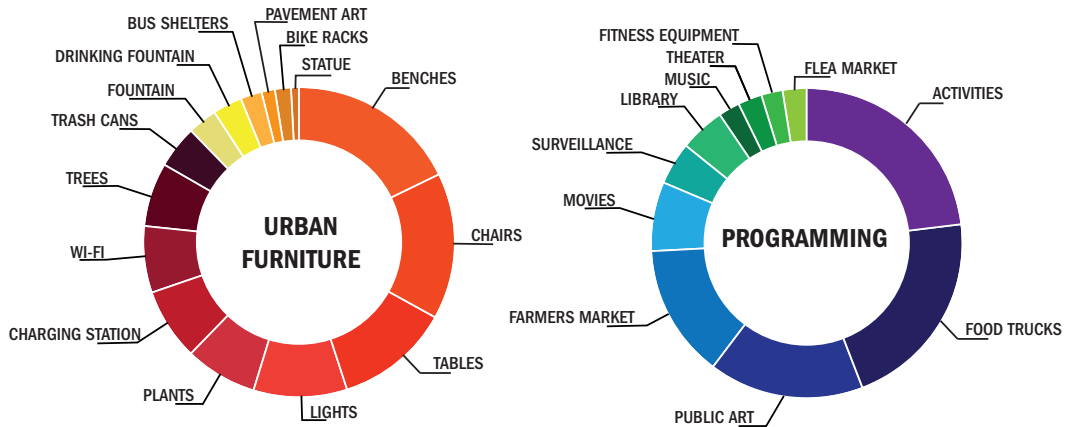
The 'Taste of the Junction' attendees and survey respondents varied in age and gender, but because the event was from 4 pm to 7 pm, many of the respondents were middle aged with young children or elderly residents that lived nearby. During a post-event reflection, UPM students identified that local high school students were a substantial presence in the Junction, but were largely absent during the event. This observation led the our class to reach out to the administration at Midwood High School to talk to their students about what they would like to see at Hillel Place Plaza.



"If Hillel Place were closed to traffic, what would you like to see?"

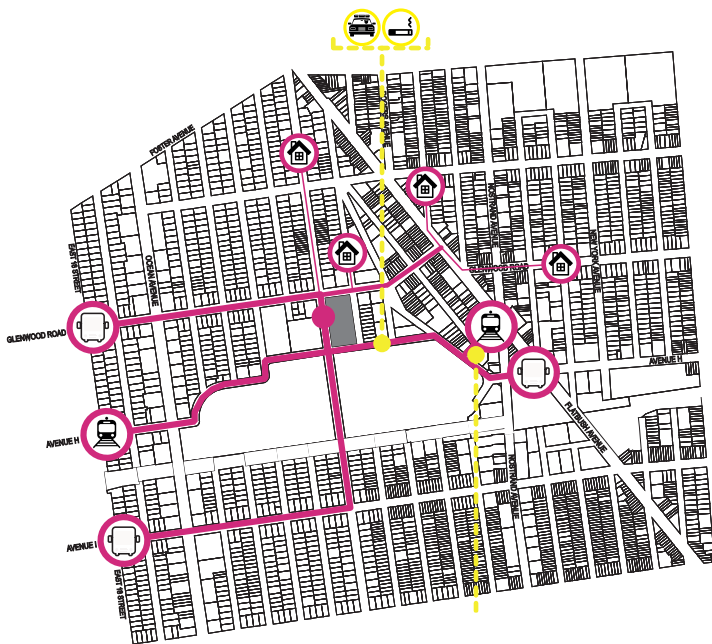


What Does Midwood High School Want in Hillel Place?



Midwood High School Student Workshops

The school administration connected UPM students with Mr. Kolotkin, Midwood High School's student activity coordinator. Pratt students met with approximately 175 high school students in six different classes. During workshops, students engaged with the same creative mapping activity that was utilized at the 'Taste of the Junction' event, which identified what kinds of urban furniture were important to the students and what activities they would want to see at Hillel Place Plaza. In terms of urban furniture, Midwood students overwhelmingly responded that they favored benches, chairs and tables. In terms of programming, students favored activities such as music on Fridays, food trucks and public art. Furthermore, while we were talking to each class, students were asked their route through the neighborhood. The answers to this questions helped our class understand how Hillel Place Plaza could serve the students in the area.



LEGEND

- Daily route of a Midwood high school student
- Midwood high school

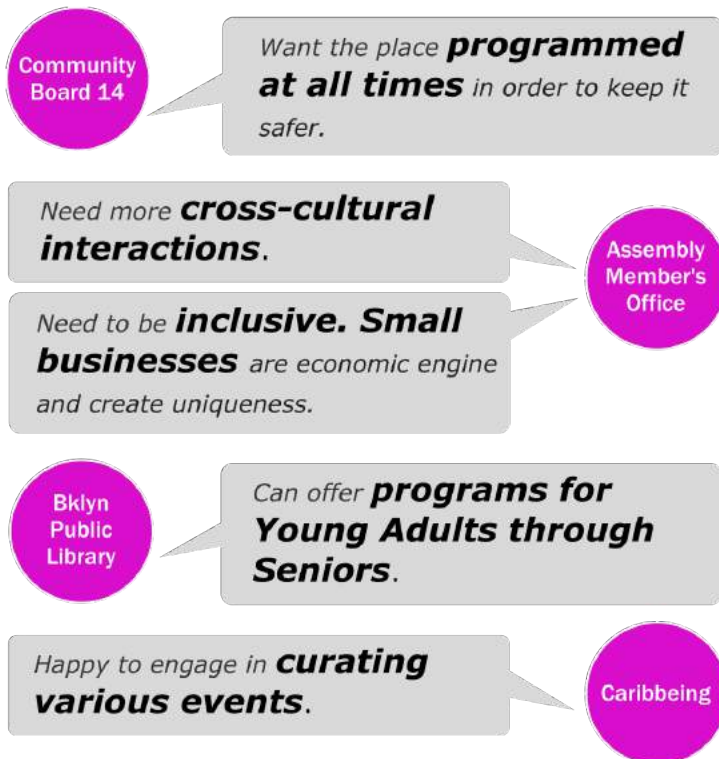


Senior Centers

Senior citizens were the second user group UPM students identified during class reflection that needed further outreach regarding the design and programming of Hillel Place Plaza. Pratt students visited two local senior centers in Midwood and led focus groups about what would make the seniors in the area more comfortable in a public plaza. The main takeaways from this engagement were a desire for safer streets, more places to sit, and more access to green spaces.

What Do Senior Citizens Want at Hillel Plaza?





Community Interviews-

The final element of our methodology was a series of community stakeholder interviews. As a class, we formulated a long list of community organizations, political leaders, business owners, and other stakeholders that could provide insight and feedback to how the community would react to and potentially utilize Hillel Place Plaza. In teams of two or three, UPM students made contact and conducted informal interviews. The first interview conducted was with Robert Weinstein, the Clarendon Branch Library Information Supervisor. Several goals were established ahead of the interview. First, to see how this library branch works with and within the community. Second, to get library staffs thoughts on the proposed plaza at Hillel Place. For reference, the Clarendon Branch library is a short five minute walk away from Hillel Place and it works within the community by offering a variety of programs for families, young adults, and senior citizens. UPM students discovered that high school students frequently will go to the branch after school to hang out and do homework. These students remarked that the library can be so busy during after-school hours that there is often not enough space for everyone to work. Mr. Weinstein was very supportive of the idea of a potential plaza at Hillel Place and he emphasized the library would also like to see a reciprocal relationship that drives people to the library and back to the plaza. He offered to send the library's "book-mobile" down to Hillel Place Plaza every Friday for a year.

Political Leaders and Entities

Throughout the semester, UPM students established the importance of gathering the opinions of political leaders in the area. Shawn Mendes, District Manager of Community Board 14 was the first to offer to share her thoughts. During the interview questions were aimed at understanding the needs of the District, the Community Boards relationship with the DoT, and their thoughts on the Plaza. Shawn, like many other community stakeholders, expressed safety as a top concern for the Community Board. Ms. Mendes stressed the importance of making sure the Hillel Place Plaza was thoroughly programmed throughout the day and night, in order to keep the area from becoming a dead space. Ms. Mendes also suggested that emphasizing Caribbean culture through design might help the community become more attached and comfortable in the plaza.

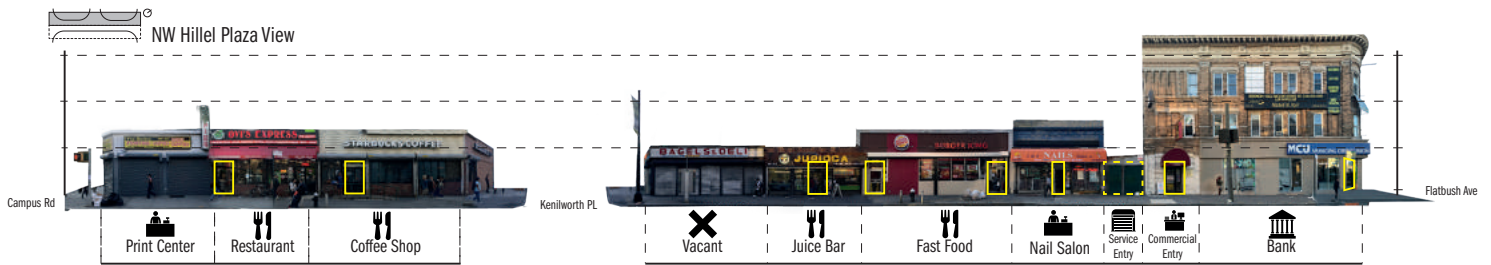
Another key political leader that UPM students interviewed was Rona Taylor, the Chief of Staff for Assemblymember Rodneyse Biochette. This interview sought to understand community features and issues, areas for potential growth, ongoing changes, and infrastructural problems. Ms. Taylor described the community as being comprised of several ethnic groups that were mostly self-segregating, and that there was a strong desire from the Assembly member's office to have an inclusive cross cultural place in the neighborhood. One of the primary concerns of the community is rising housing prices and the overburdened transportation systems. Ms. Taylor also pointed out that small, locally owned businesses make up 75% of the businesses in the area, and are the economic engine that accounts for the unique feeling in the Junction. She noted that the

abundance of Haitian merchants in the area brings a sense of vibrancy and community. Many locals refer to the neighborhood as "Little Haiti."

CaribBeing, the final community organization UPM students interviewed, is a well-known and influential non-profit organization that promotes and supports Caribbean culture in Brooklyn. CaribBeing currently runs cultural tours throughout Flatbush to strengthen understanding of Caribbean culture. During the interview Ms. Shelley Worrell, said that CaribBeing would be happy to curate events at the Hillel Place plaza.

Hillel Place

North



OVERALL RESULTS: SATISFACTORY

- Mostly active storefronts
- Variety in storefronts and restaurants
- Comparitively well maintained
- Satisfactory signage
- Poor Shade
- Comparitively well lit



Lighting



Store Gate



Signage



Awning



Transparency

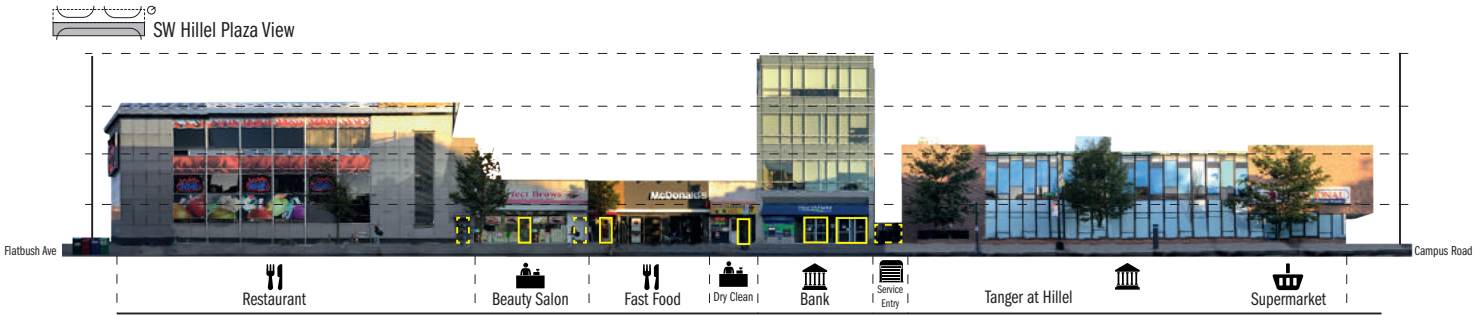


Street facade analysis

A detailed study of commercial storefronts and office spaces was conducted to create a qualitative analysis of existing conditions. The criteria of evaluation was based on the NYC storefront guidelines such as awnings, lighting, signage, window transparency, roll down gates and aesthetic appeal. The high proportion of storefronts on Flatbush Avenue and Nostrand Avenue makes these streets active and appealing to users. This is aligned with Jan Gehl's research that states "the ideal storefront width is about 19 feet, which corresponds with roughly four seconds

South

Hillel Place



OVERALL RESULTS: POOR

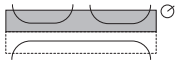
- Blank walls with poor transparency
- Poor maintenance
- Long inactive edges at the ends of Hillel Place

Lighting	Store Gate	Signage	Awning	Transparency

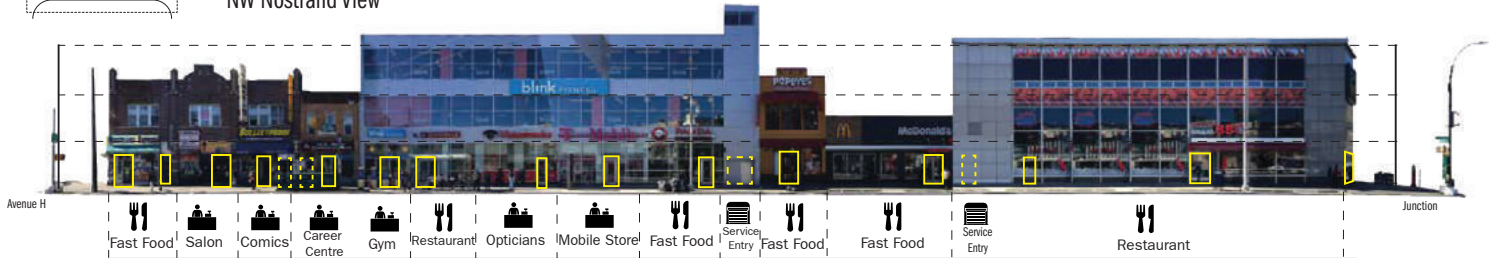
of walking.” (PlanPhilly:<http://planphilly.com/articles/2016/03/16/walking-market-street-with-jan-gehl>) In contrast to the activity on Flatbush and Nostrand, Hillel Place has large sections that are inactive due to the positioning of storefronts and large blank walls. Two particular challenges, the long blank edges of Dallas BBQ and the supermarket at the ends of the street could be activated by design of permanent structures or kiosks placed against their walls or by murals on the facade.

Nostrand Flatbush

West



NW Nostrand View



OVERALL RESULTS: SATISFACTORY

- Active storefronts and variety of shops
- Comparitively well maintained storefronts
- Well designed signs
- No vegetation/shade
- Comparitively well lit



Lighting



Store Gate



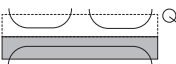
Signage



Awning



Transparency



SW Flatbush View



OVERALL RESULTS: POOR

- Blank walls with poor transparency
- Inactive edges due to activity types
- No street vegetation/resting spaces
- Poor lighting



Lighting



Store Gate



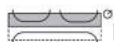
Signage



Awning



Transparency



NW Flatbush View



Overall Results: Good

- Colorful storefronts with a good transparency condition.
- Well designed signages.
- Most stores have awnings in the front.
- Enough open store gates for the customers.
- Poor lighting.



Lighting



Store Gate



Signage



Awning



Transparency



East

Nostrand Flatbush



OVERALL RESULTS: SATISFACTORY

- Mostly active storefronts
- Variety of shops
- Comparitively well maintained storefronts
- Signage upgrade/regulation needed
- Poor shade
- Comparitively well lit

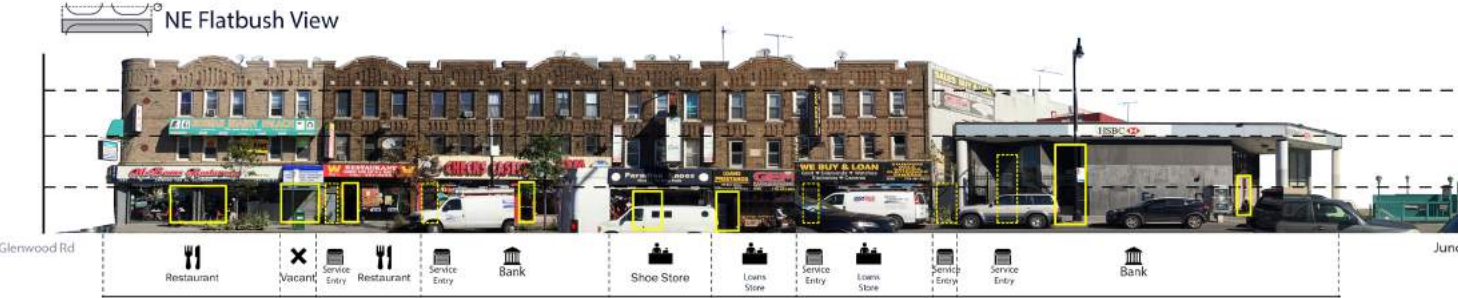
Lighting	Store Gate	Signage	Awning	Transparency



OVERALL RESULTS: POOR

- Blank walls with poor transparency
- Poor maintenance
- No street vegetation/resting spaces
- Poor lighting

Lighting	Store Gate	Signage	Awning	Transparency



Overall Results: Poor

- Blank walls with low transparency.
- Well designed signages.
- Most stores have awnings in the front.
- Most stores have narrow store gates, some are even closed.
- Poor lighting.

Lighting	Store Gate	Signage	Awning	Transparency

Summary of Findings

Our methodologies for data collection relied heavily on community engagement tools and events. During the Taste of the Junction event, UPM students gathered prospective user data through intercept surveys and activities such as the Idea Tree and Creative Mapping, both aimed towards what types of uses, programming and urban furniture the residents of Flatbush Junction would like to see in Hillel Place Plaza. Some other tools that were useful in our analysis were the Place Audit and Facade Analysis. These tools helped identify specific strengths and weakness in the physical infrastructure of the Junction that could be enhanced or improved by design recommendations. Stakeholder interviews and focus groups with underrepresented populations such as the high school students and senior citizens also provided valuable information on what kinds of programming and urban design could help bring both of these groups together in the same public space.

This qualitative data was crucial to broaden our understanding of the various communities of the Junction in more detail, and led UPM students to develop some core goals and values that would inform our design recommendations.

After analyzing our data, UPM students decided to develop concept design goals that would lead to our recommendations for Hillel Place Plaza. We thought of Hillel Place Plaza as the metaphorical seed, and its roots as our short term goals for the space. Over time, these four goals would grow into a tree, or beyond the public plaza and into the public realm of the Junction. The branches of the tree are our long term goals, which are stronger ideations of our original four goals.

Our four short term goals for Hillel Place Plaza are:

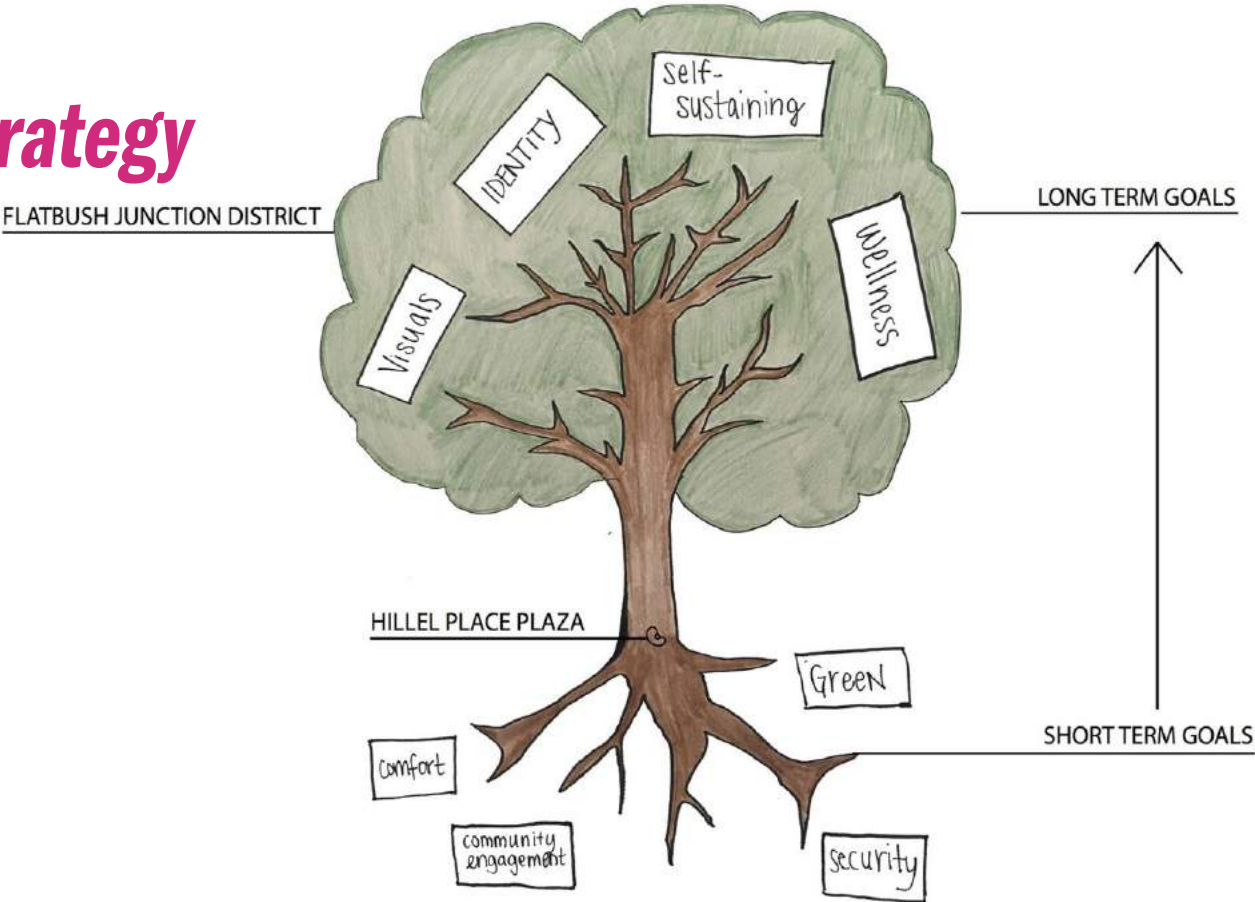
- To create an inclusive space where different cultures come together comfortably
- Foster relationships with local community members and actors to gauge the success of the Plaza and enact change when needed
- Successful programming that engages the area and its users at all times to prevent “dead space”
- To create more opportunities for green space

Long term goals include:

- Building a plaza with strong visual character and identity for the area
- A self-sustaining plaza aimed towards wellness, both socially and physically.

We wanted to make these goals broad and general as possible, so as to be flexible as the space is used and develops its own character, but it was important to articulate these ideas so that our designs would promote some of these core values.

Strategy



There are dual concept goals for Hillel Place and the Flatbush Junction District. The roots of the Strategy Tree starts with short term goals at Hillel Place. The four goals are increasing greenery, ensuring security, maximizing comfort and prioritizing community engagement. The amount of greenery can be increased on the street by maintaining healthy trees and adding planters to the street. Air filtration and psychological benefits are two important results of this goal. Ensuring security will allow all users to feel welcome and safe in Hillel Place. This can be achieved using the Junction BID’s plan to hire Plaza manager (is this accurate). Comfort can be maximized by providing seating options for users as well as elements such shade in the warmer months. Prioritized community engagement will allow users to feel ownership of the Plaza and help grow to their vision.

As the tree grows, the longer term goals of the Junction can begin to develop around aesthetics (visuals), identity, being self sustaining,

and wellness. Similar to Hillel Place, the aesthetics around greenery and making sure the area is free from litter will have positive and immediate effects. A strong brand identity for the Junction lets businesses maintain competitiveness with surrounding vendors while highlighting special characteristics of themselves. A self sustaining future is critical to long term success of business and users. This symbiotic relationship is core to the long term goals. Finally, promoting wellness among residents by giving them a safe area to walk in, healthy food choices to decide from and a public place congregate will have a lasting positive impact.

The cohesion of the short term and long term goal will enable the study area to continue to develop into a tree with strong roots and a vibrant set of branches that residents can continue to be proud of and celebrate.





RECOMMENDATIONS



Fall



Winter



Spring



Summer



PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

Hillel Place Plaza

Functional Design

In order to successfully transform Hillel Place from a transit corridor into the pedestrian only Hillel Place Plaza, several considerations were taken into account, and would be the framework for the design of the plaza.

1. Seasonality.
2. Flexibility and dynamism.
3. Responsive to the needs of the community.
4. Places to stay and spaces to move.

Overall, the functionality would be the same; however the programming and infrastructure improvements would change during time of day and season.

Short Term - Design

Flexible spaces for cultural activities such as performance, art, or markets are located at opposite ends of the plaza, to welcome pedestrians in to the space.

Moveable seating would be primarily located in the center of the plaza, close some of the restaurants to encourage users to stay in the plaza longer.

A non-linear pedestrian path would create a leisurely experience while moving through the plaza.

To create a sense of care and identity, we propose Hillel Place Plaza signage, public art such as murals, and more trash bins throughout the plaza.

Short Term - Programming

Our main focus for programming was that the plaza be active year-round.

Hillel Place is slated to turn into a public plaza in the Spring of 2018. For its grand opening, we recommend to follow up on the Clarendon Branch Library's offer to use their book mobile every Friday in the new space. GrowNYC, which already has a presence across the street from Hillel Place, could use the plaza for a spring farmers market. This is also a good time to introduce flexible seating options, and invite the senior centers to use the space during the day for light exercise and relaxation.

During the summer, programming can be geared more towards children and families on summer break. The plaza could have street games, music performances, and horticulture classes for adults, children, and seniors that would also help maintain some new plantings in the plaza to make the area more green.

As the plaza moves into fall, and students return to Brooklyn College and the nearby high school, we propose a back-to-school craft fair/market to celebrate the upcoming school year. In addition to this, activities themed on holidays such as Labor Day or Halloween will help activate the space.

During the winter, the least active time of year for most New Yorkers, we recommend the plaza still be used regularly by those who can brave the weather. We recommend temporary modular structures in the space that will provide shelter and warmth for people using the plaza. Once again, the holidays will play a major role in activating the space through events like holiday markets and performances.

Figure 44. Partnership Map Function and Responsibilities
 Figure 45. Hillel Place Plaza. Economic Development. Branding



Partnership Strategy

The most striking features of the Flatbus Junction neighborhood were its diversity and its historic significance as a transit hub. The unique demography of the Junction gave rise to a large number of non-profits and grassroots that organized themselves in the 2 mile radius from the proposed plaza.

The major existing financial partners for the BID were

- HABNET- Haitian American Chamber of Commerce
- FDC - Flatbus Development Corporation.

Unlike with the businesses in the area, the BID's did not have a strong link with certain groups in the neighborhood.

We saw the missing links and created a Local Assets and partnership maps linking the BID & DOT with intersted local organizations and businesses in programing efforts such as wellness, culture, business and sustainability at the junction

For example, Brooklyn college, could be more active with the neighborhood.

To foster positive encounters & Interaction between elderly and young people common activities like community gardening or wellness activities can be curated.

The large number of Haitian-Creole speaking users/residents can be represented and reached by using the overwhelming number of Haitian/ Caribbean Radio stations (both pirate and legal) in the Flatbus and Nostrand avenues as communication tools.

Modular

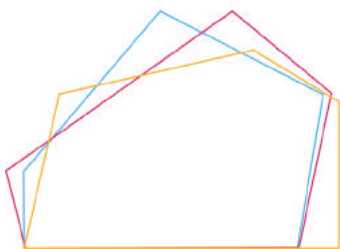
Long Term - Modular Public Space Design

Hillel Place Plaza will require its own furniture that responds to the needs of the community. We propose creating a modular pavilion that can be easily assembled and disassembled to create temporary spaces for exhibitions, community meetings or musical performances.

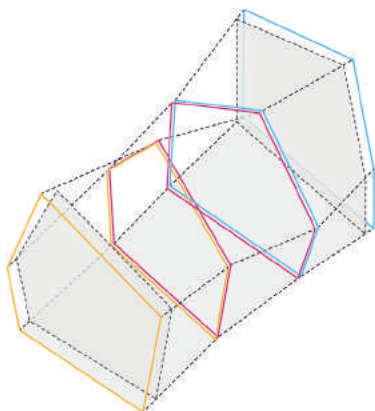
These modular structures could also double as shelter for users during the colder winter months.

While these modular structures are not being used, they can be compacted and stored by the BID director.

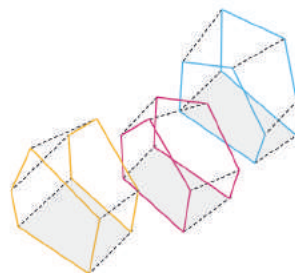
Junction of Frames



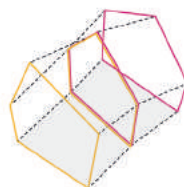
Cover for After Hours



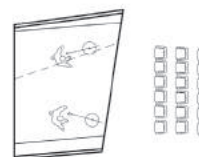
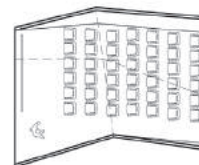
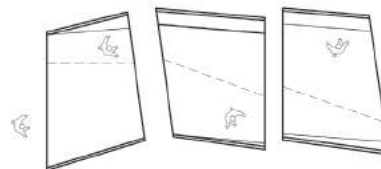
Exhibition



Board Meeting



Concert



PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

Hillel Place Plaza



community meetings

Long Term - Programming and Design

Long term programming will be dependent on the successes and shortcomings of the short term programming. Once again, our ultimate goal for Hillel Place Plaza is for it to be a flexible space that responds to the wants and needs of the community and availability of resources over time. Programming should be predicated on the identity that is created in Hillel Place Plaza -- we do not presume to predict these trends, but rather feel that programming should be community driven. Community stakeholder feedback is key to the success of this area in the long term.



exhibitions



General concept:

One of the most critical points of The Junction area, is the main intersection. The corners of the intersection have subway entrances that are heavily used by the whole district. For this reason, they deserve special treatment. Also, due to the transportation hub characteristics, and proximity to Brooklyn College, the amount of pedestrians crossing this intersection, especially during commuting hours can be overwhelming. To better accommodate the pedestrian traffic and improve their experience and security, we redesigned the Nostrand and Flatbush Ave intersection.

First we divided the intersection into 5 areas: the 4 main corners and the street portion that connect them. The design proposed for this area was based on Gehl's human scale design. All the design recommendations are conceptual. The main goals for this design are:

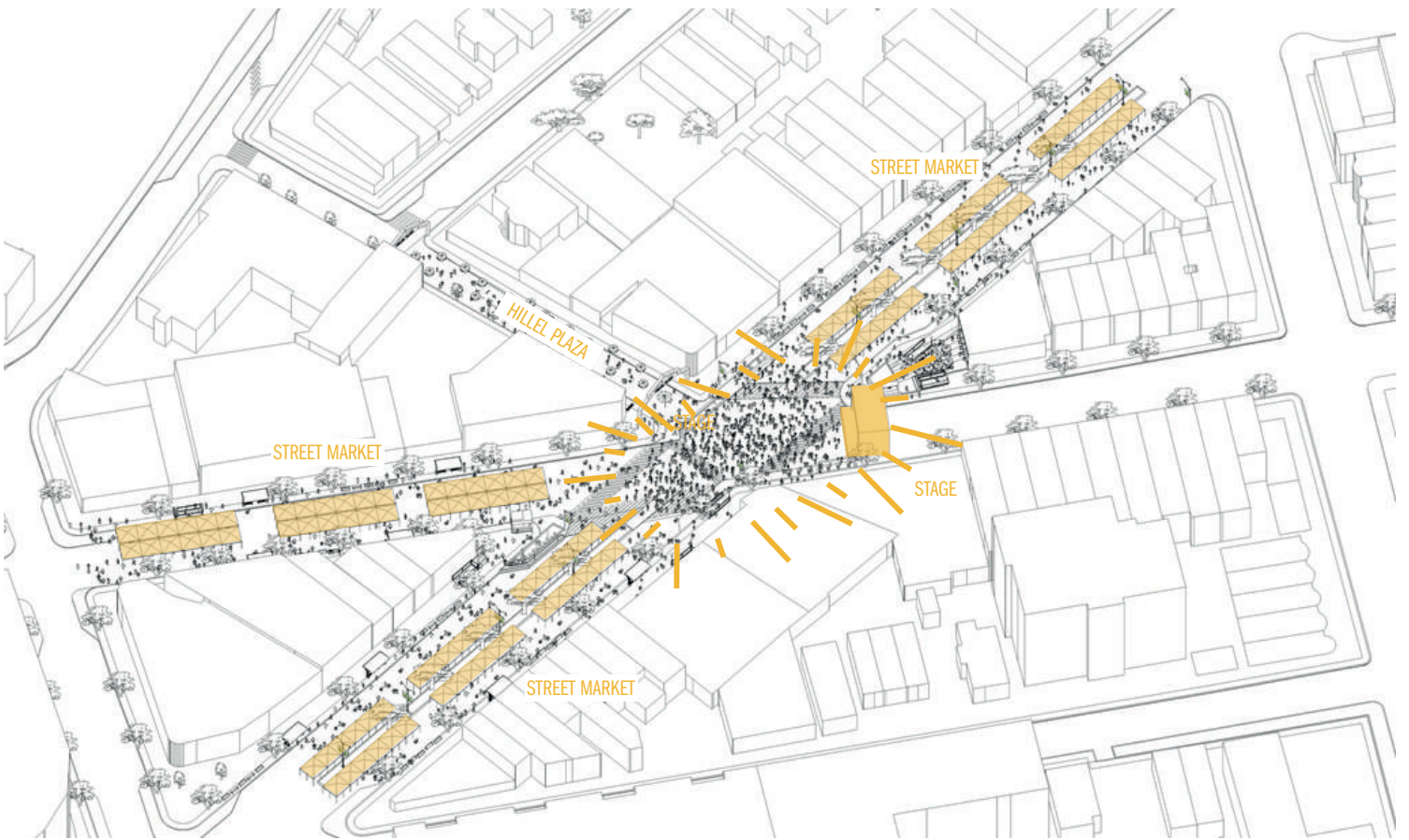
- Improve the user experience of the public space in the area by proposing solutions of human scale

- Improve pedestrian safety when crossing the streets by creating curb extensions.

- Activate the corners with new commerce and public spaces

PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

The Junction





Area 01 general concept:

This area has the potential to be a new plaza. In this area our idea is to focus on activating the corner with a kiosk and provide seating spaces and improve the scale of the site, creating the sense of an al fresco room, instead of a simple corner/curbside area.

Subway Entrances: The subway entrances can be turned into a design solution by adding infrastructure that allows for seating in this area such as benches and high top tables with stools. The idea is to use the current entrance positions to create enclosures and improve the feeling of the user in the space.

Green: Planters filled with trees and shrubbery can add a natural element that makes people feel comfortable, while doubling as enclosures that create a space within a space.

HSBC Façade: currently the facade has a lone ATM machine. We recommend working with the bank to move the ATM to a different location on the building and adding in benches, tables and chairs to the area where the ATM once lived.

Hanging Lights: We recommend installing hanging lights that run from the kiosk to the HSBC facade. This can help with the sidewalk lighting and also create ambience for the whole corner.

Kiosk: The kiosk should be located on the corner to have maximum visibility and help to create a boundary to the plaza. We recommend

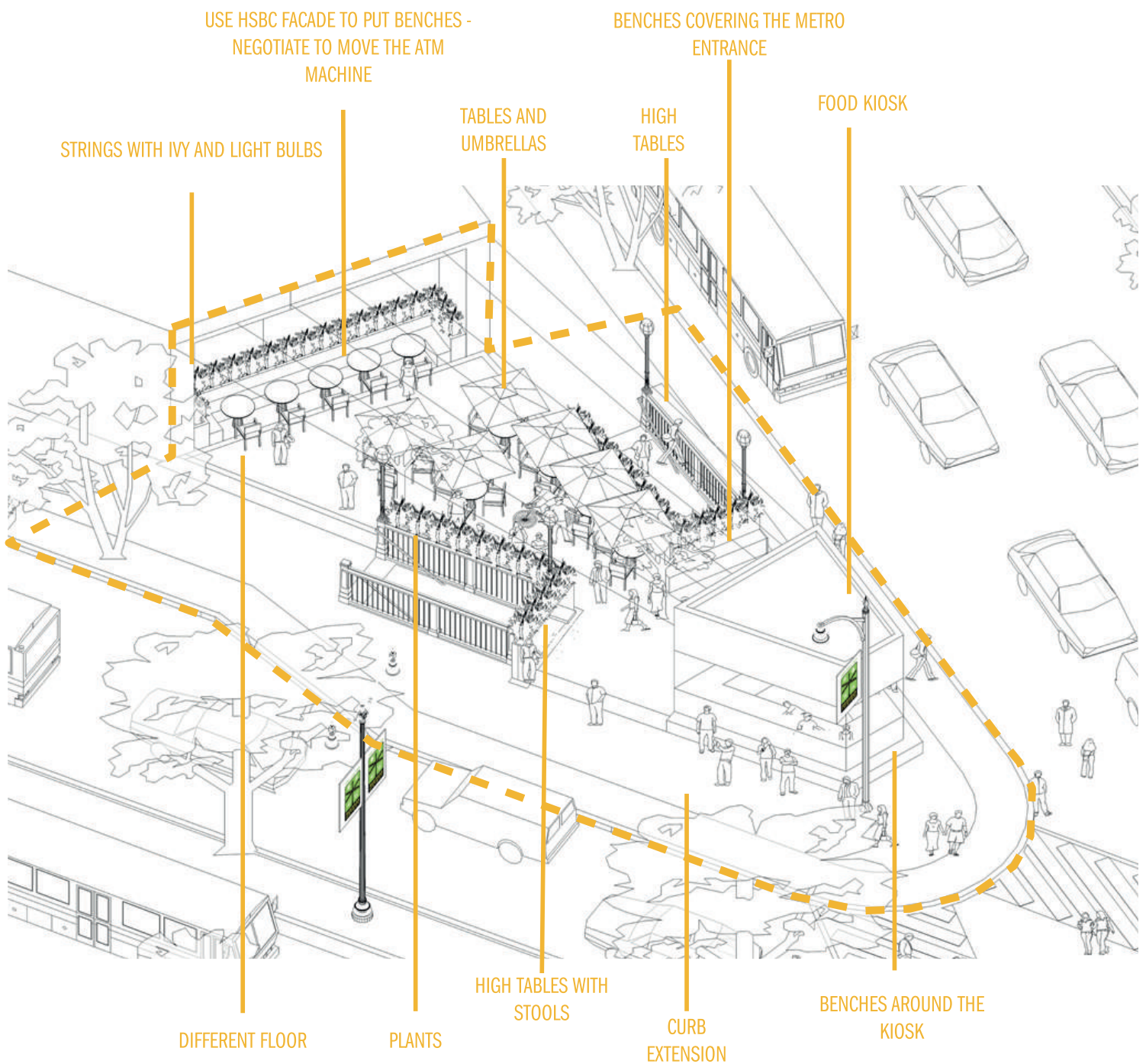


that the kiosk follow the shape of the corner and utilize extra benches facing the intersection for more seating. The front of the kiosk will face the HSBC bank, and act as the place to take orders and operate the business.

Floor: We recommend the ground of the plaza be a different surface material than that of the surrounding sidewalk. This will help to create a border for the plaza, reinforcing it as an area separate from the sidewalk.

Curb Extension: Create a curb extension to improve security for pedestrians.

Area 01



Area 02 general concept:

This corner already has a lot of street life, the main problem with this corner is the crosswalk being in the same place as the subway entrances. The main concept is to create improved pedestrian flow in the area.

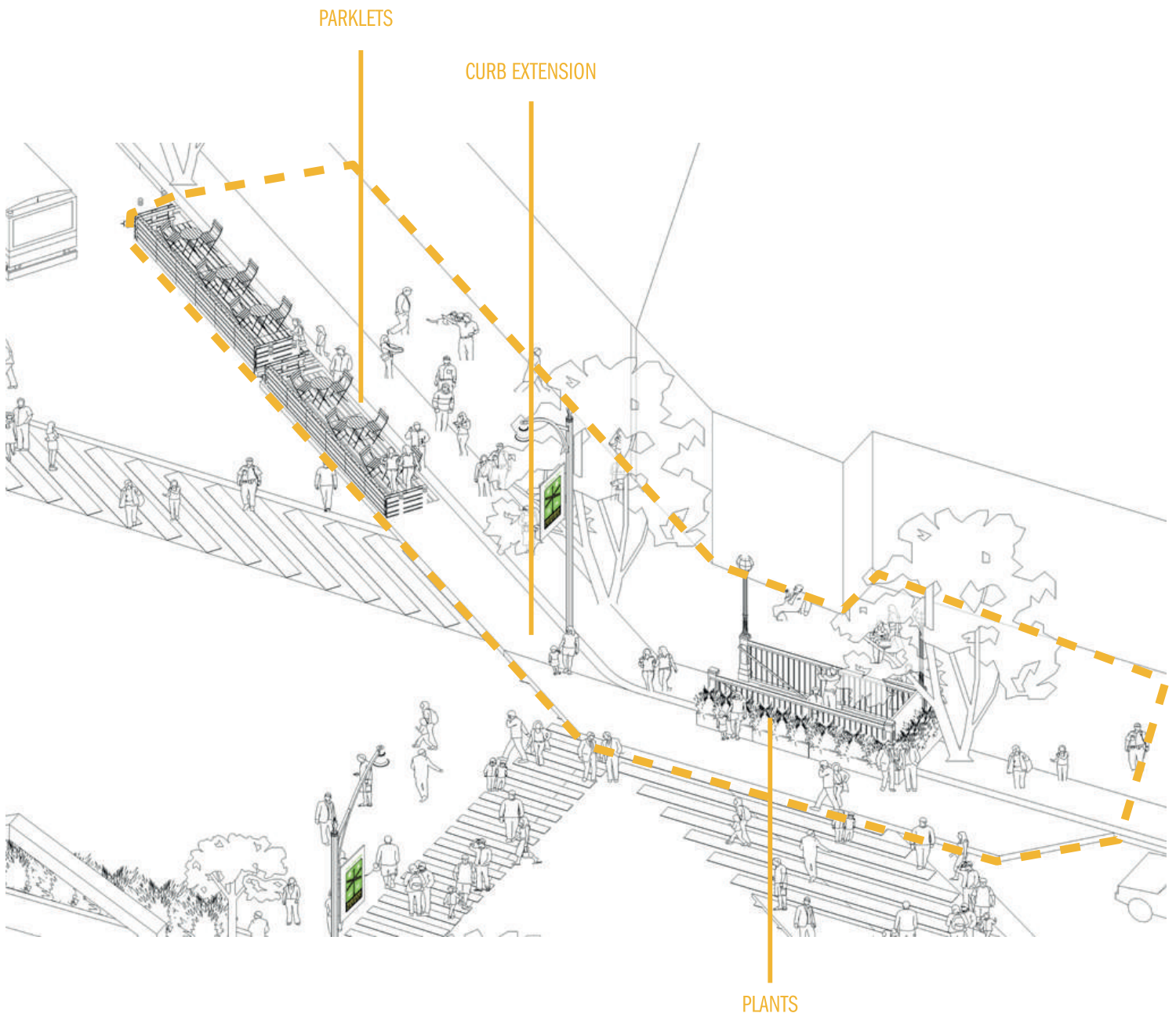
Curb Extension: The curb extension should be enough to solve the conflict between the subway entrance and the crosswalk path.

Metro Entrance: Provide planters to increase the natural elements in the area.

Parklets: We propose parklets in front of the business. This can help to create a small sitting space and improve the sales for the stores. The parklets should have planters and vegetation.



Area 02



Area 03 general concept:

This area is the entrance for Hillel Plaza, which is the main path to access Brooklyn College. The main concept for this area is to mark the entrance of Hillel plaza and help to reinforce the district's new identity that focuses on public space and pedestrians.

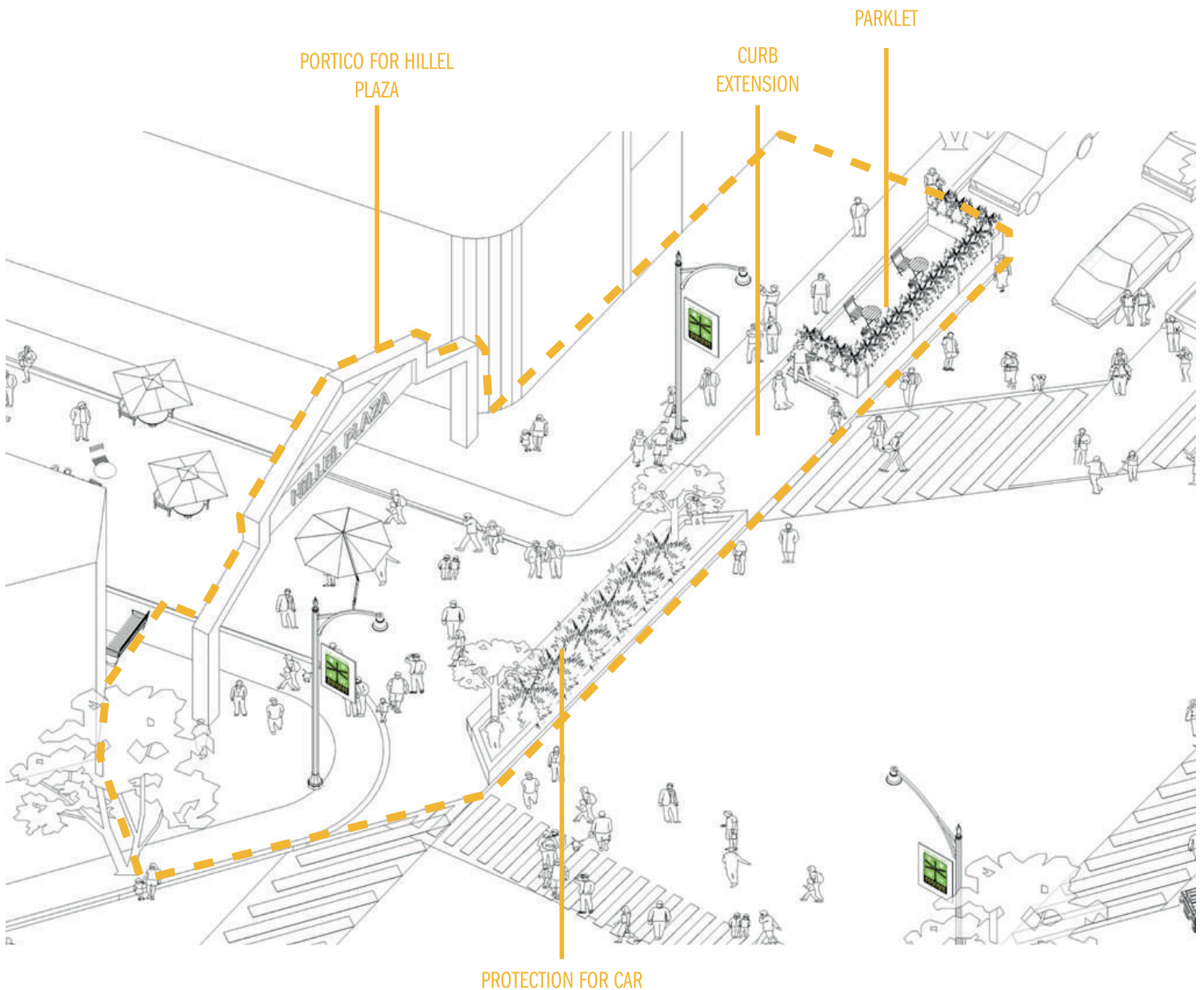
Portico: We recommend creating a Portico for Hillel Plaza. This should help the local population recognize the street as a new public space in the district. The fabrication of this portico could be a good way to engage the local population in a design competition where artists or fabricators can submit design ideas for the portico. Engaging locals would also foster a sense of ownership and authenticity of the area.

Traffic Protection: We recommend that the area have protection from cars and trucks. Since this area has normally operated as a through street, protection is key to avoid pedestrian or automobile accidents for those used to turning right. Protective barriers can be movable planters or planters or retractable bollards; elements designed to move quickly out of the way should emergency response vehicles need immediate access to the area.

Parklets: We propose parklets in front of the businesses. These can help to create a small sitting space and improve the sales for the stores. The parklets should have planters and vegetation.



Area 03



Area 04 general concept:

The main feature on this corner is the subway elevator. This necessary amenity does not make the streetscape better. The main idea for this corner would be to improve the elevator façade that contributes to the overall district design, while creating another small plaza space.

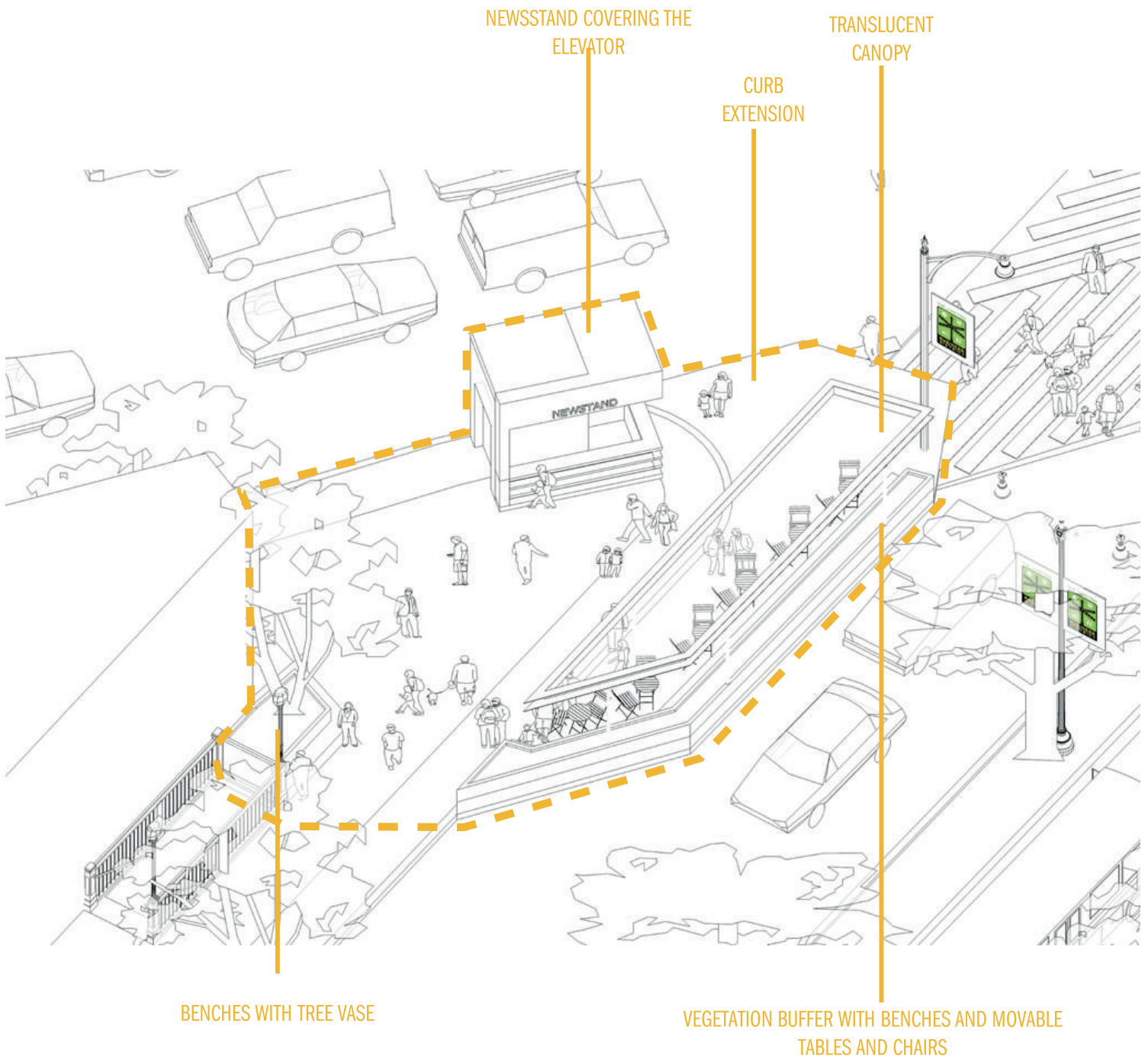
Elevator: Our recommendation for the elevator is to create a newsstand around the façade of the elevator, helping to activate the corner. This new structure must not cover the elevator entrance, detracting from its primary use as a subway accessibility feature.

Curb Extension: Create a curb extension to improve security for pedestrians.

Seating Space: We propose a seating space with benches tables and chairs. A vegetation buffer should be created to improve the quality of the public space.



Area 04



Area 05 general concept:

This is the main intersection of the district, where many modes of transportation meet, including the subway, where the 2 and 5 trains terminate. For this reason, it has a very high population of pedestrians. The main focus is to increase and ensure safety here.

Pavement in the Intersection: We recommend changing the pavement in the intersection. This is a solution applied successfully in many other places, as a traffic calming element. This can be done using cobblestones or other pavement. We also suggest that this area of the street be elevated to the sidewalk level, to add another element to traffic calming.

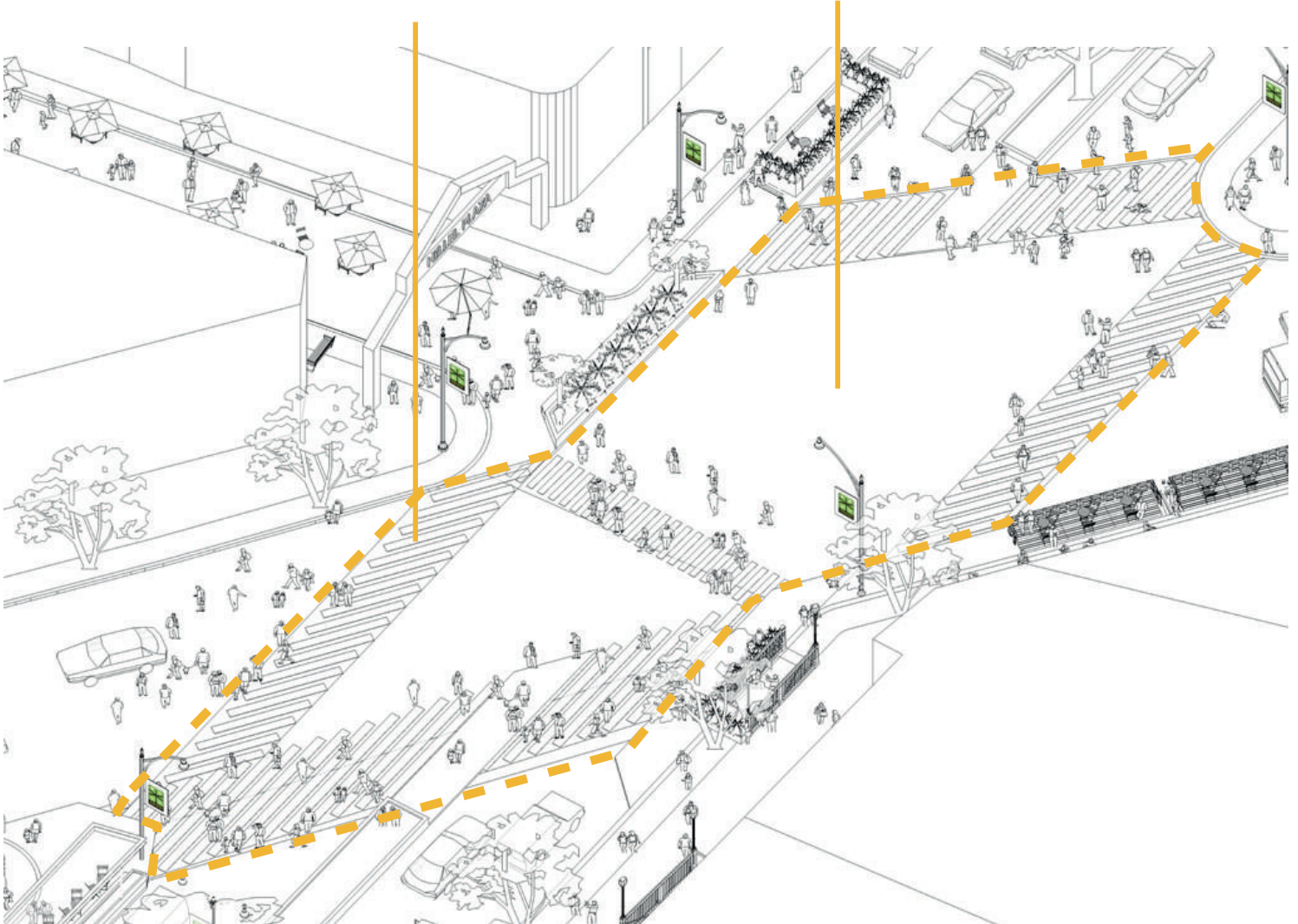
Crosswalk Redesign: the cross walk should be redesigned to fit the curb extensions and the median applied by the road diet recommendation.

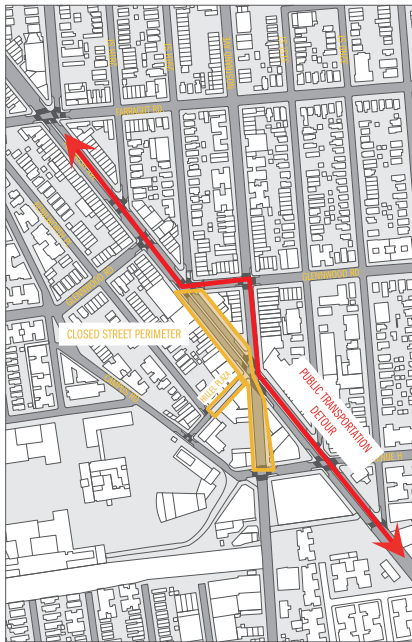


Area 05

REDESIGN OF ALL CROSSWALKS

COBBLESTONE PAVEMENT
ONLY IN THE
INTERSECTION

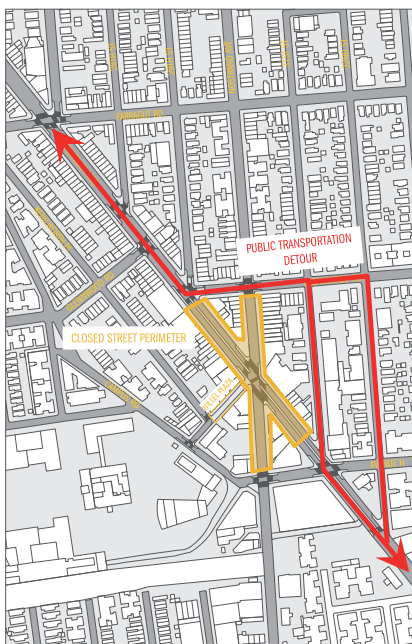




Partial

Programming: Junction Closure Possibilities

Our recommendation is to create programming related specifically to the Junction. The programming should not only be specific to the existing conditions but should help to achieve and keep the recommendations proposed by this report. Since there are many issues that design can't solve by itself, the programming should also help to solve the district problems and that is why it is one of the key points in the recommendations. The main expected result is to create a sense of ownership over the space. We framed the programming into themes that the BID could explore and separated them in two categories: for the district and for the weekend closure of streets.



Total

Our recommendation is to close the intersection of Flatbush and Nostrand Ave and promote events in the area. Due to the high amount of traffic in those transportation hubs we recommend that it should be closed only during Sundays during the summer or during special events. This recommendation should increase the attractiveness of the district and also create a feeling of ownership in the area by the local population. The area can be configured according to the event that will happen. To illustrate this we prepared some examples of configurations of music festivals and street markets and also an option to close only part of Nostrand and part of Flatbush.

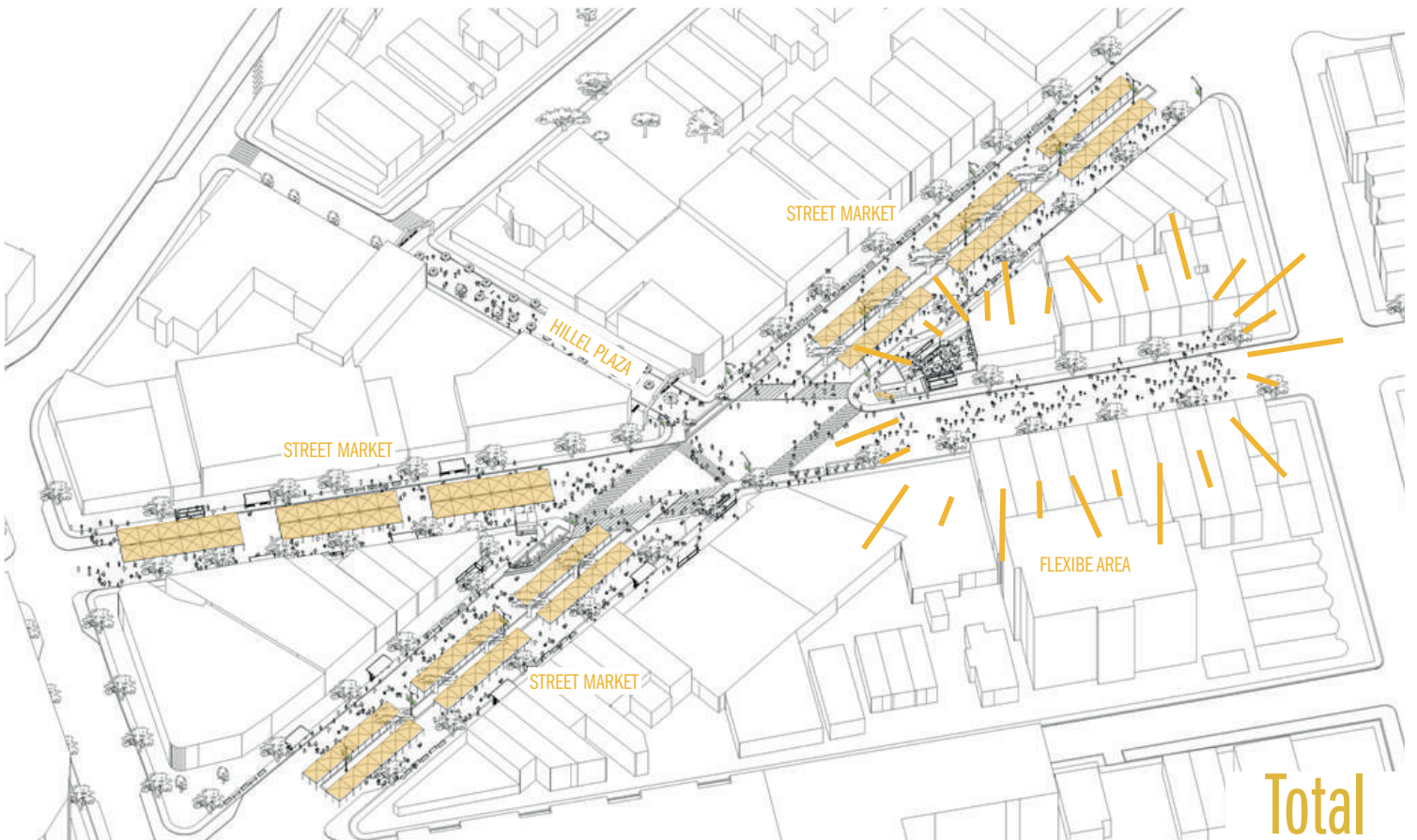
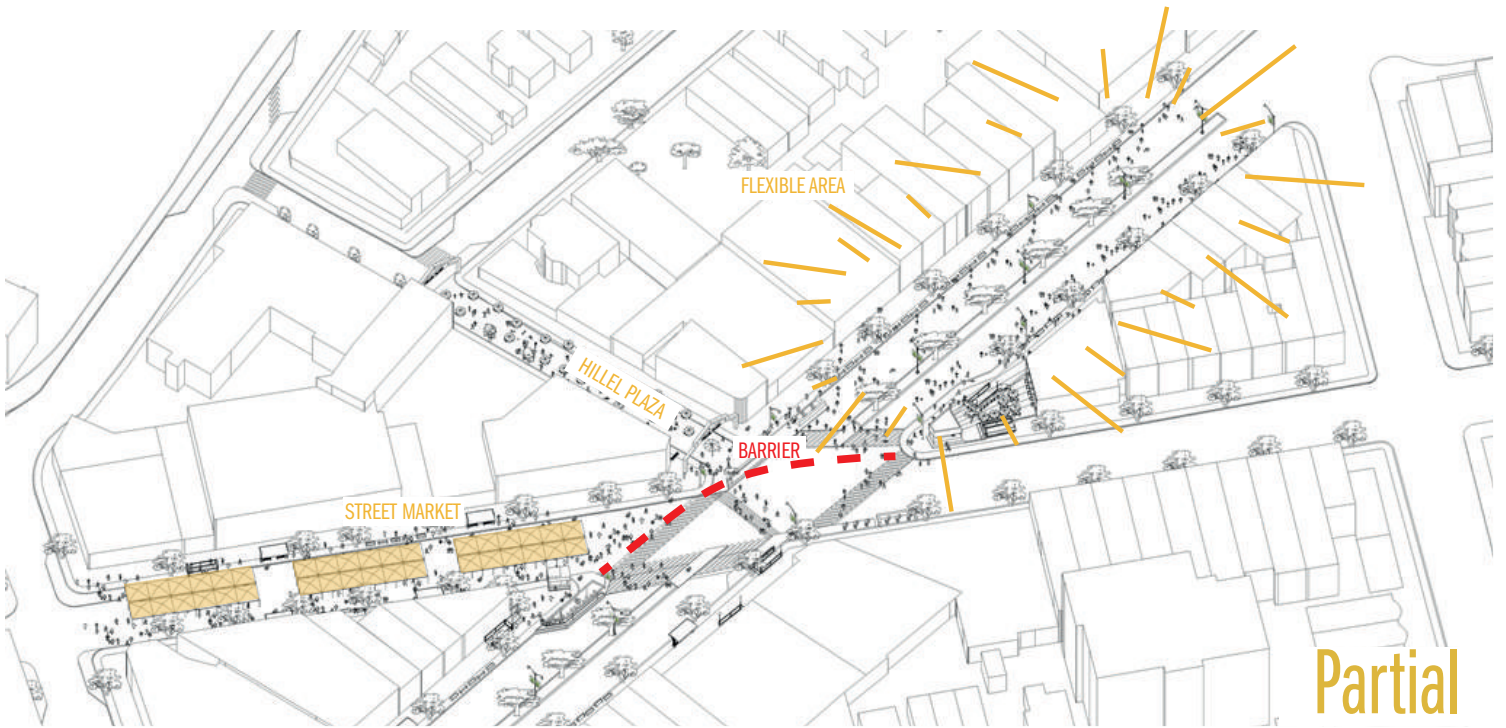
PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

The Junction

PROGRAMMING MENU				
THEMES	CATEGORY	CONCEPT	PROGRAMMING	REFERENCES
Design Competitions	District	The design competitions should work as a way to involve the community in the design process. The competitions could involve local artists, high school students or the design program in Brooklyn college.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trash disposal - Café/kiosks - Planters - Retail building in Brooklyn College parking lot - Art for murals 	
Merchant competitions	District	Merchant competitions could be a good and participative way to involve the storefront owners in the area and stimulate the design guidelines for the storefronts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best storefront - Greener storefront - Best sidewalk maintenance 	
Art expansion in the district	District	Art can be a quick and cheap way to improve the facades of the district. The expansion of art can also provide the district an identity that not only can improve the business but also help the community to identify with the space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art exposition in the banks facades - Empty storefront facade painting (paint the roll down doors to create a mock storefront facade) - Bump out floor paintings - Intersection crosswalk painting - Paint blank walls to create murals 	
Expanding green infrastructure	District	Greenery should be expanded in the district and should involve the community. There are many private gardens in the district but not many trees in the district. The green infrastructure can be a way to give character to the district and make it more attractive to people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use light posts to hang plants - Green task force to maintain the trees 	
Use programming to increase governance and ownership	District	The programming can also help with the governance in the area and the maintenance over the district. By empowering people in the district to point what is wrong can also improve the feeling of ownership over the public space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiate with crystal manor to let meetings for the organizations of the events happen in their facilities, maybe during hours when they don't have occupancy 	
Ethnic events	Weekend	One of the main things about the events is that they should reflect the local population. As the research showed us, the ethnic diversity is something characteristic from the area. We recommend that those ethnic events should come from the community in a form of civic engagement. We suggested some ideas but the scope shouldn't be limited to that.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caribbean Music Festival - Ethnic open air film festival - Haitian carnival - fete gede - all souls day - Rara - easter week - Maroon festival - Celebration of the peace treaty between the Maroon slaves and the British - Bob Marley's Birthday Bash - music festival - Saint Ann Kite Festival - can be done in Brooklyn College lawn - with kite market in the junction - Jamaica's Carnival (Bacchanal) 	
General events	Weekend	Although they are common to many other locations, those events that are more general can be a way to work with a broader audience and bring all the Junction ethnic tapestry together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children on the streets - Flea market - Food market - Music festival - Fitness week end (yoga, functional, crossfit, seniors) black friday/ sales market (with the BID business and others) 	
Summer temporary park/public space	Weekend	The idea is to provide recreational public space by closing the junction and building a temporary park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mock lawn with artificial grass carpet - Mock beach with huge sandboxes - Temporary water feature - Temporary playground 	

Figure 54. The Junction. Programming Variants with Partial and Total Closure

Flexible

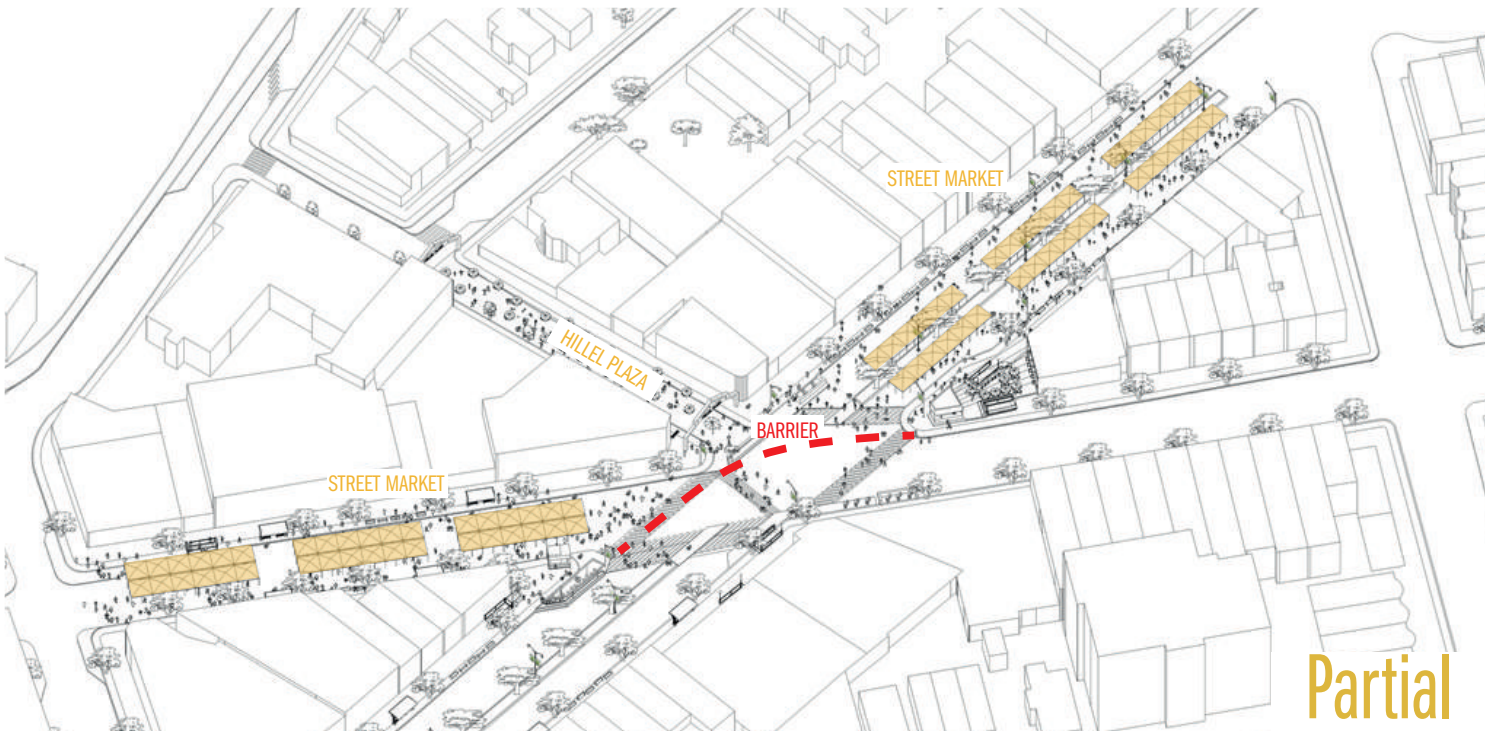


Festival



Figure 55. The Junction. Programming Variants with Partial and Total Closure

Market



Market+Festival

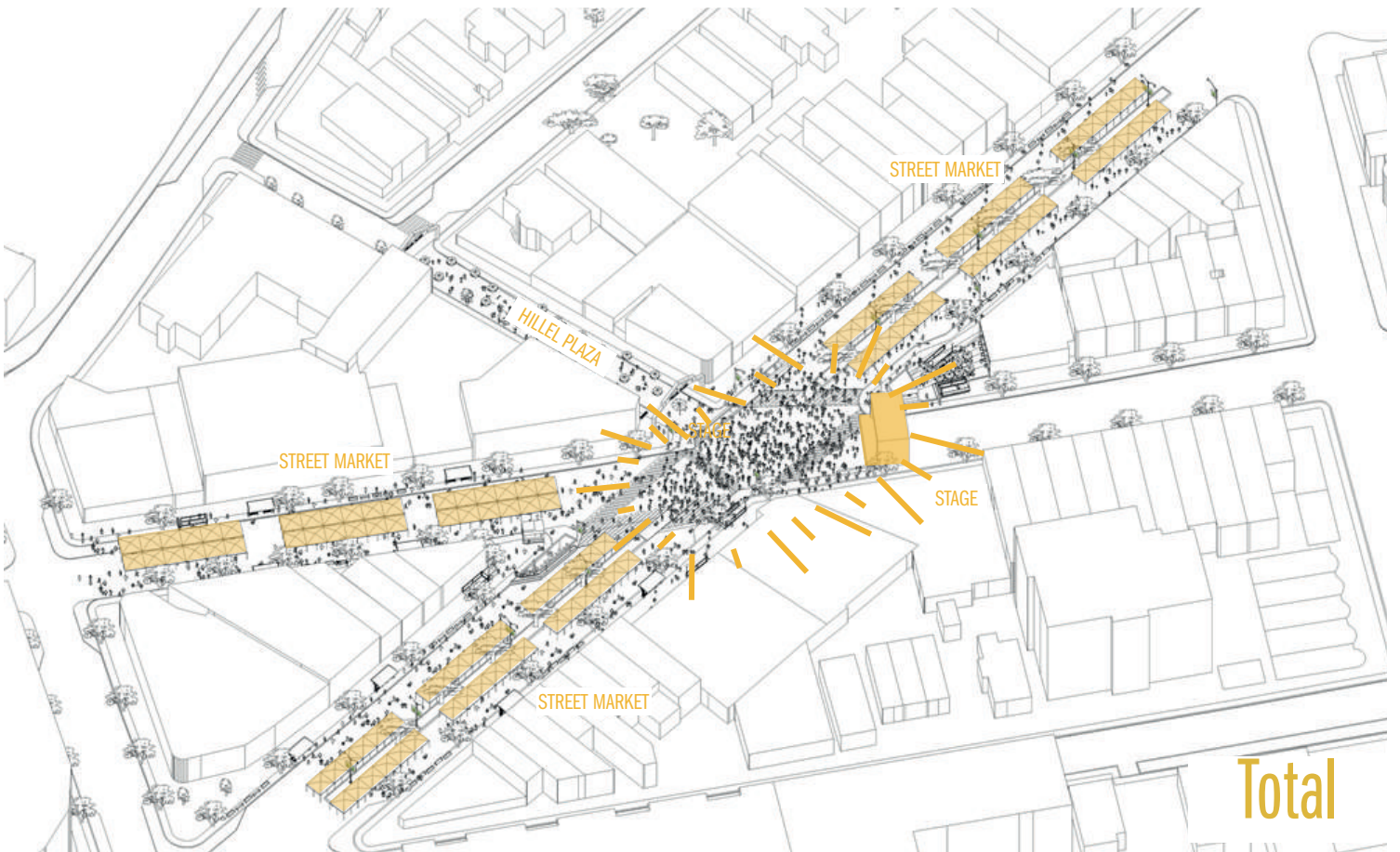
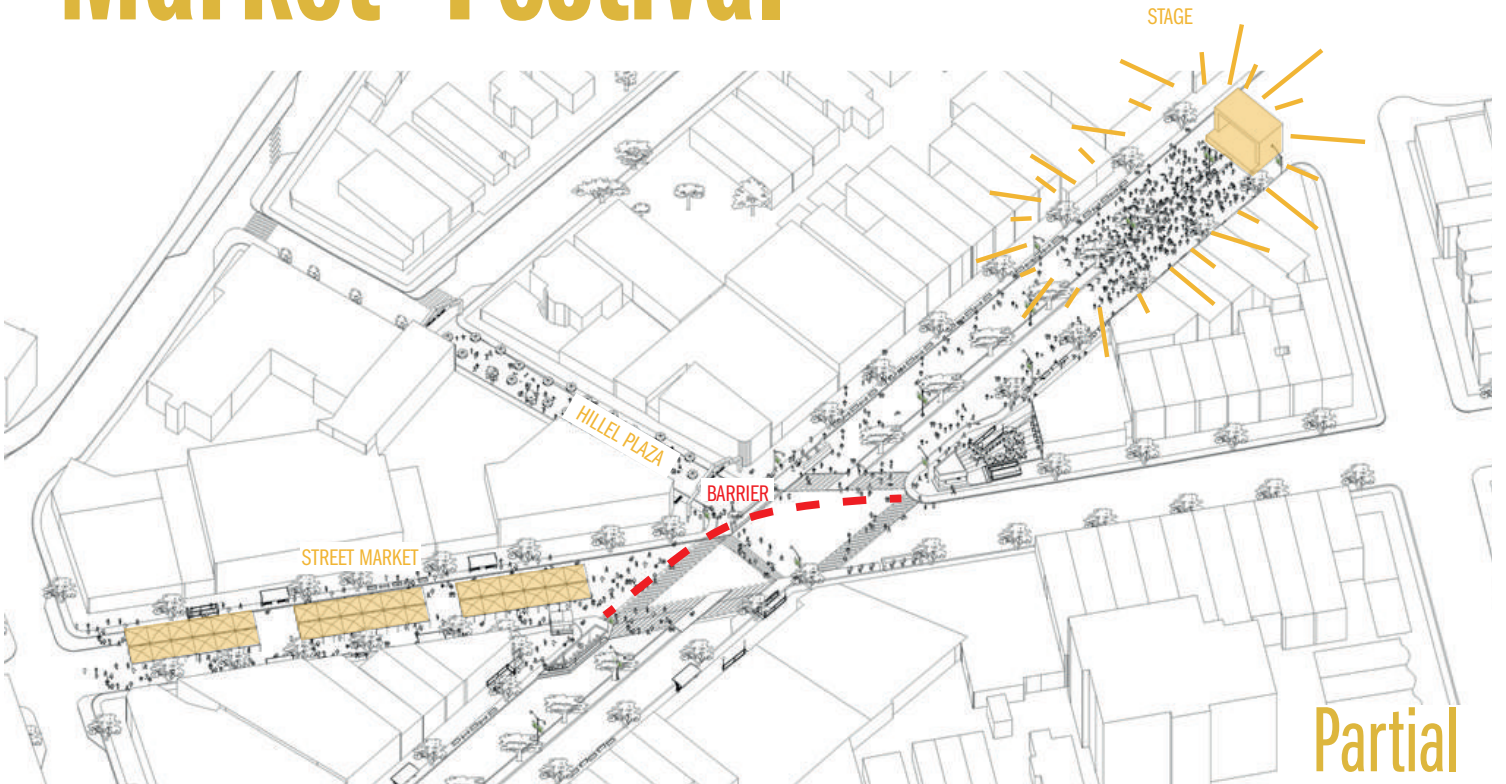


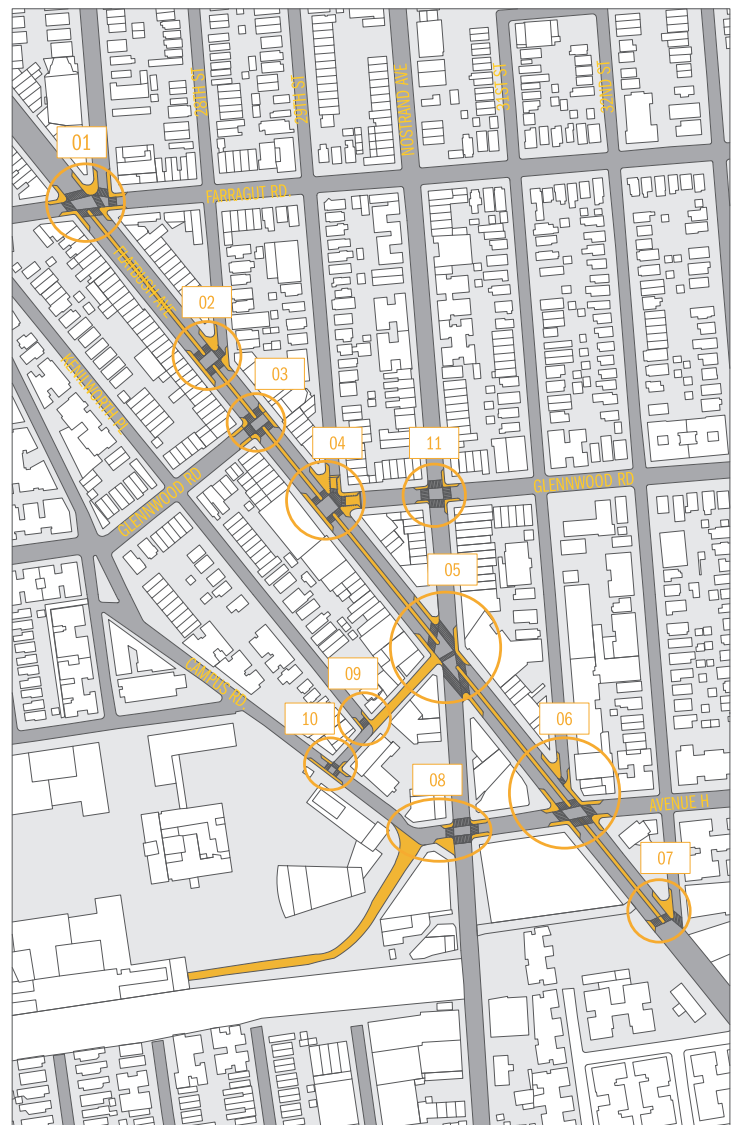
Figure 56. The Junction. Street Design. Proposed locations for curb extensions

Roadway Re-design

Curb extensions, otherwise known as “bumpouts”, are a specific way to enhance the pedestrian safety. Within the study area, we recommend some form of curb extension at each intersection along Flatbush Ave. Repurposing street space to pedestrian usage has several benefits. According to NACTO, “Curb extensions visually and physically narrow the roadway, creating safer and shorter crossings for pedestrians while increasing the available space for street furniture, benches, plantings, and street trees. They may be implemented on downtown, neighborhood, and residential streets, large and small.” (NACTO)

Additionally, decreasing the overall width of the roadway serves as a visual cue to drivers that they are entering a neighborhood street or area and it encourages slower vehicle speed. Subsequently, the added space a bumpout provides will reduce the distance it takes to cross an intersection. Shorter distances between intersections is particularly beneficial for young children, seniors and people with disabilities.

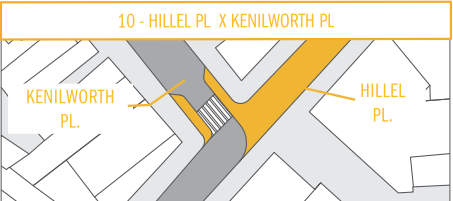
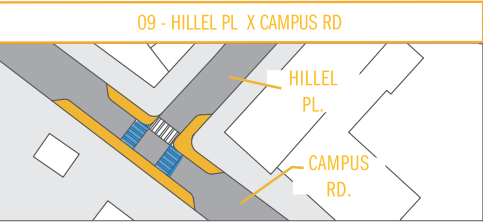
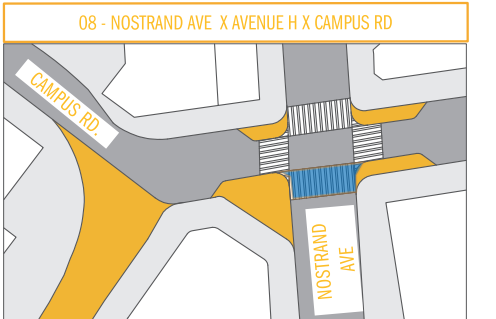
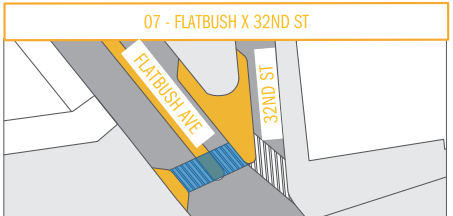
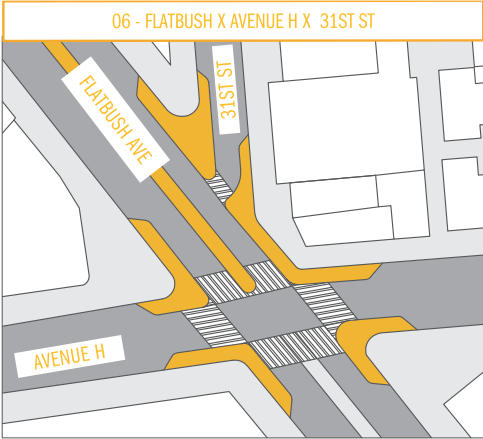
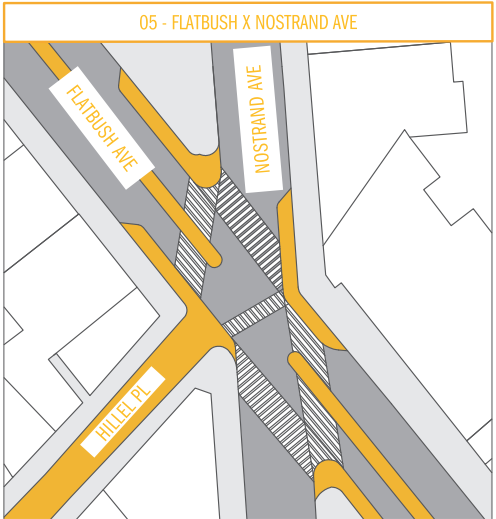
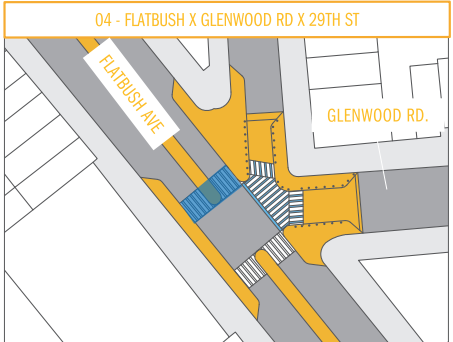
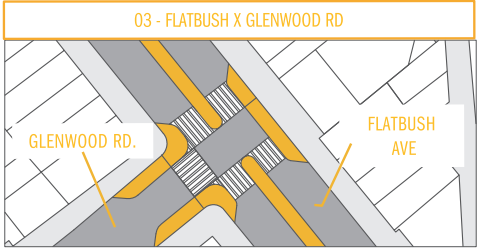
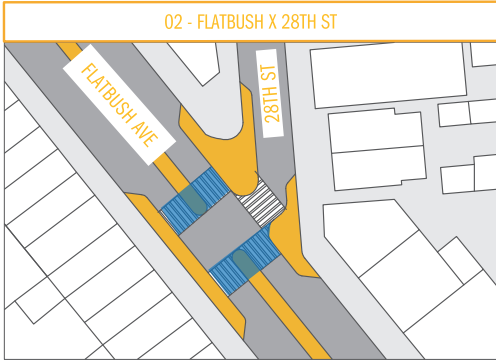
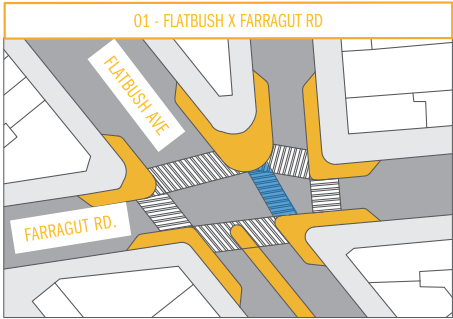
The ability to provide additional safety in a timely manner is a must for municipalities. Fortunately, bumpouts can be implemented relatively quickly. NACTO states, “curb extensions can be implemented using low-cost, interim materials. In such cases, curb extensions should be demarcated from the existing road- bed using temporary curbs, bollards, planters, or striping.” (NACTO) This initiative is particularly important in the Junction because it has been marked as a Vision Zero corridor.



STREET DESIGN

The Junction

Detailed solutions for cubs extentions



Facade Activation

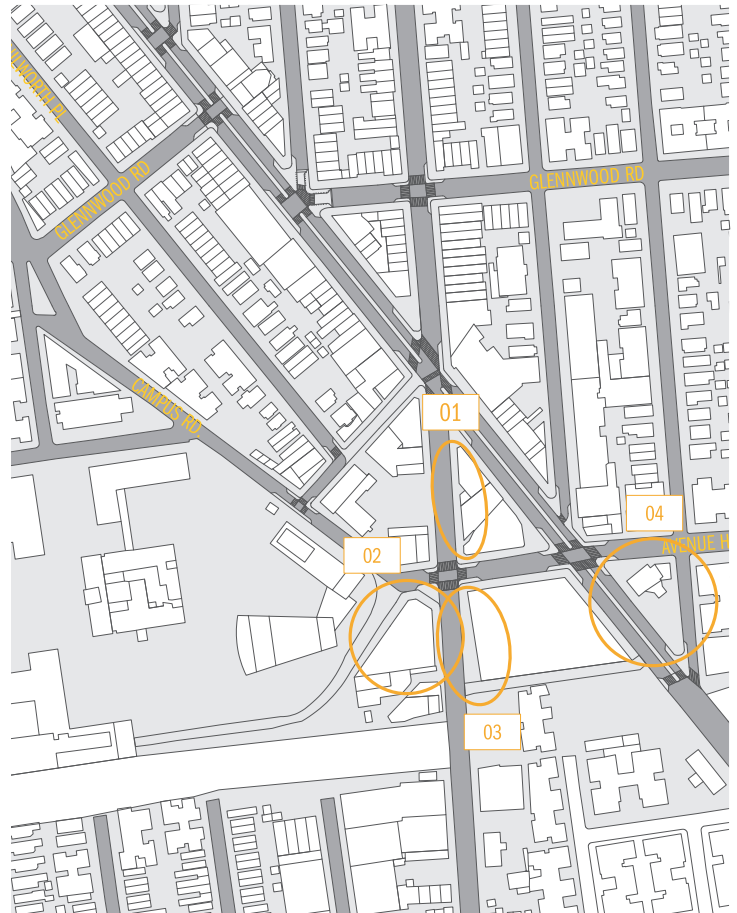
The planning intervention here was most critical to active and inactive facades. It promoted active facades while making recommendations for inactive facades in the area. The method adopted for this intervention was similar to urban acupuncture. Instead of a holistic approach to the area in general specific sites were target in order to release the pressure of the area. The area in general is walkable but key sites caused build-up, discord and friction when walking. Changes in these key areas will reduce the tension, or energy in the junction impeded by barriers that stop the flow of people through a place, in the area. This intervention also lends to the idea of expanding the BID south to incorporate bigger businesses such as Nike

01-Target

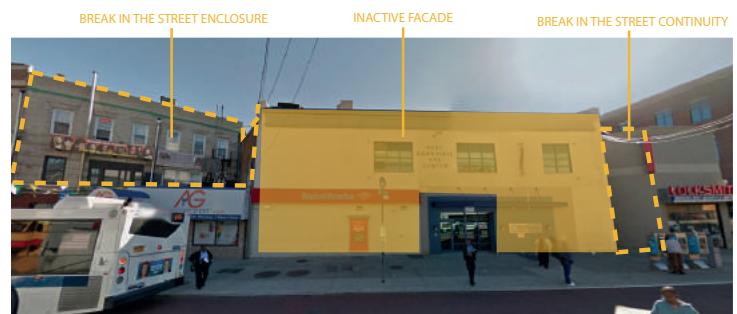
The problem at the existing site is that there is a stretch of long inactive façade that is both unwelcoming and underutilized. The area as it is now has many dead corners and is treacherous to navigate on foot. Our recommendation here is a full intervention encompassing a “lighter, quicker, cheaper” approach. Recommendations include a glass wall or fence to show the railroad tracks an evoke a memory of the junction’s past, much more vertical green space on the parking garage as well as a potential retail site and plaza next to the sidewalk.

02-Brooklyn College theatre parking

The Brooklyn college parking lot has the potential to incorporate more cars as well as a small amount of potential retail buildings. Right now, there are 60 parking spots and the lot is surrounded by an unwelcoming fence and the gate to campus road can be confusing for drivers. With our recommendations the number of usable spots increases to 67, the inactive fence façade is replaced with a potential retail site and the gate is brought forward for continuity, clarity and safety.



01 Before



After



STREET DESIGN

The Junction

03-Chase bank parking

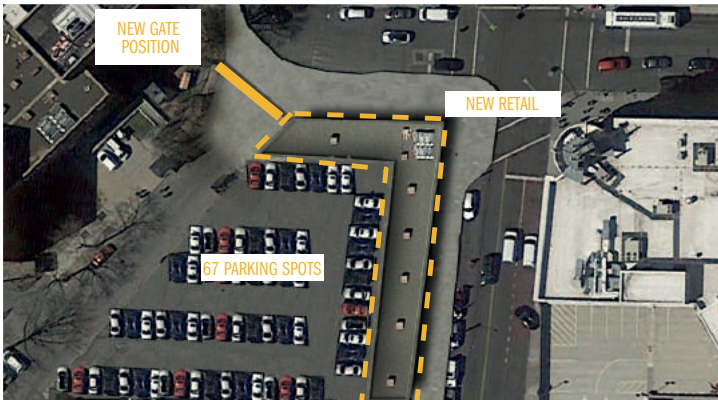
Here the intervention proposed is simple, the parking lot will remain the same, the spots will be reorganized, one of the three gates is removed, new retail spaces as well as a small public space is added to better utilize the existing area and open the bank to a more diversified use.

04- Façade enhancement

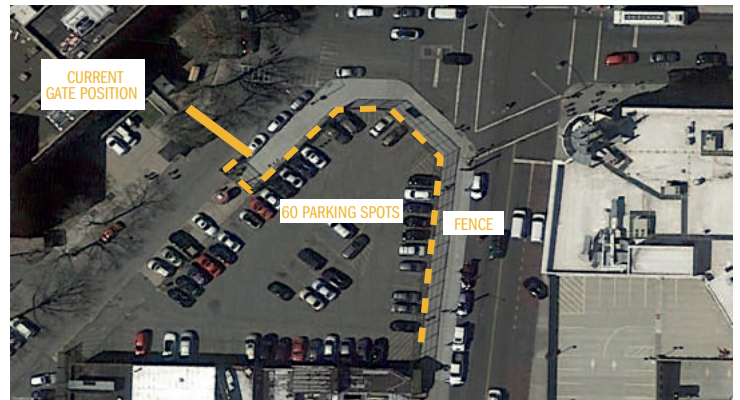
The Bank of America has an inactive façade, blank wall and no windows. We propose the addition of a street vendor, a new window and the addition of some decorations that complement the surrounding area or a mock façade. This would enhance the user experience and lend continuity to the district.

02

Before



After



03

Before

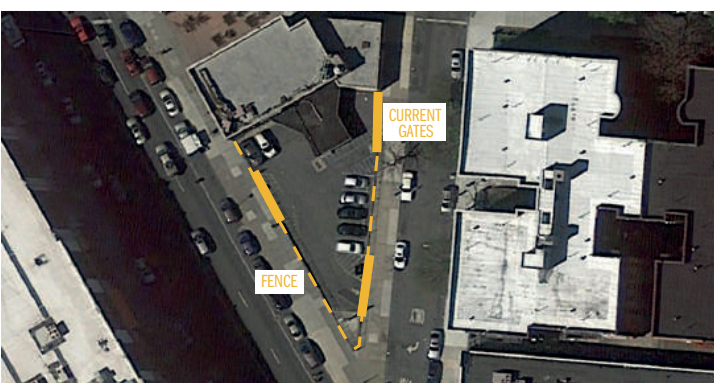


After



04

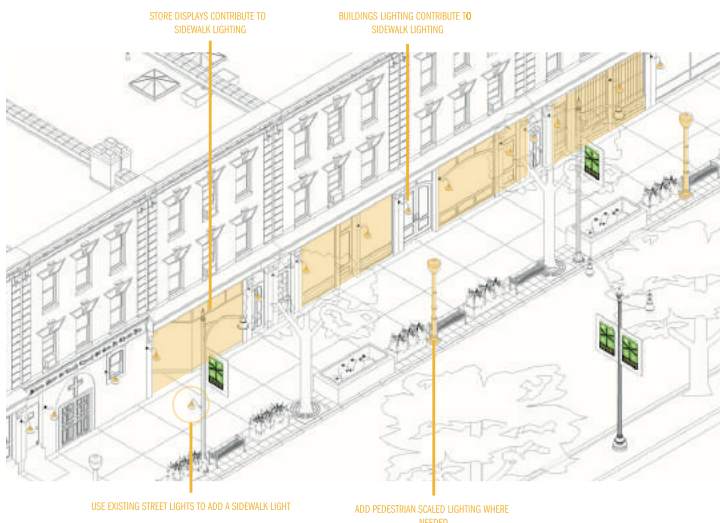
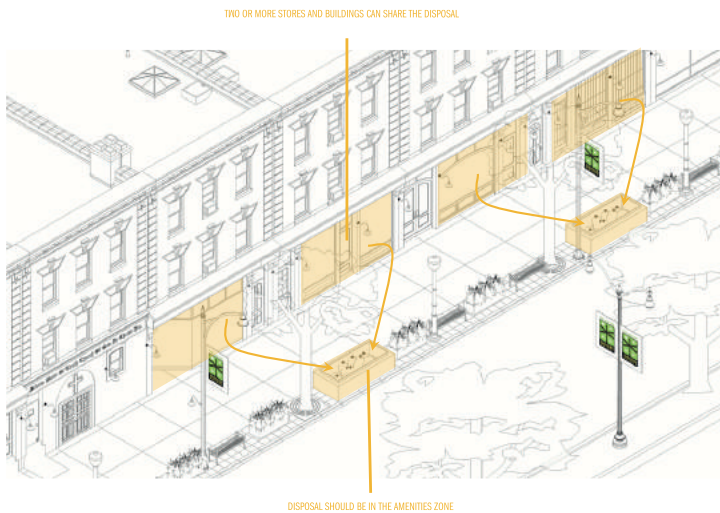
Before



After



Figure 58. The Junction. Street Design. Trash Disposal Design and Locations
 Figure 59. The Junction. Street Design. Street Lights



Trash Disposal and Waste Management

According to DATA2GO.NYC, the district area produces 1.04 tons of waste per person annually. That data represents the highest rate in NYC and is reflected on the streets in an excess of trash bags on the sidewalks. During a site visit, it was noted that trash bags often ended up in the planters.

Our recommendation is to create dedicated waste disposal. This urban furniture should be dimensioned according to amount of waste that is produced by the stores and buildings in the area. We recommend the height of these waste bins do not exceed 20 inches in height. These bins can be shared amongst neighboring buildings, dependent on the waste they generate.

Street Lights:

Around The Junction, we recommend that the sidewalks be just as bright or brighter than the lighting directed on the street. This can be accomplished by having businesses place more lighting on their storefronts and using existing street lamps to illuminate the sidewalks.

A second way to to accomplish this is to retrofit existing street lighting to add sidewalk facing lamps to the poles. We believe that a brighter sidewalk will make a safer environment for everyone especially after businesses close for the evening. At the moment, this is particularly important because a majority of businesses have protective roll down doors that do not let any light in or out.

STREET DESIGN

The Junction

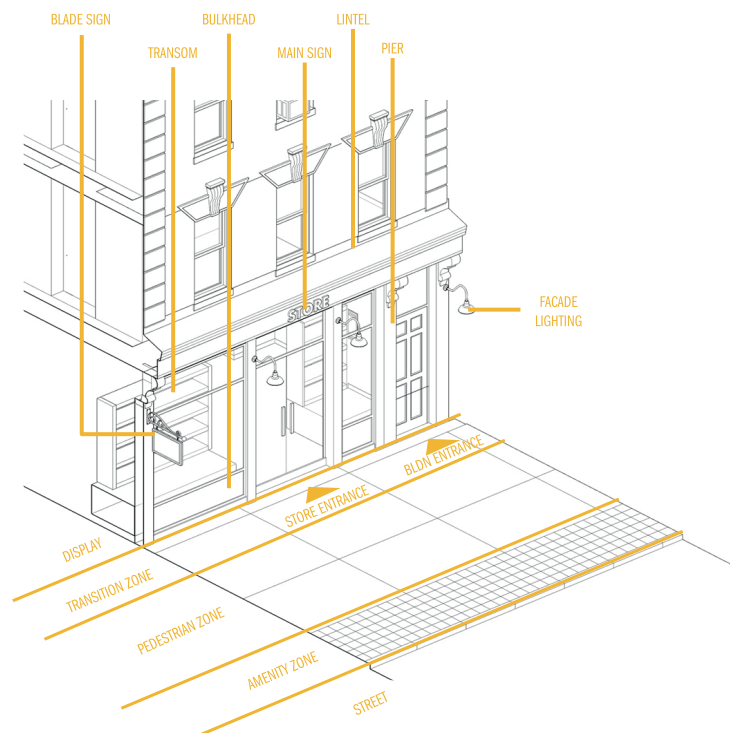
Storefront Design General Concept:

According to the site visits, it is our belief that many storefronts are poorly designed. Problems were noticed in the following aspects: use of the sidewalk to display merchandise, signs, interior visibility, awnings, roll down doors and covering material over the building façades.

Those practices can negatively affect businesses by deflecting foot traffic away from store fronts, reducing the quality of the pedestrian experience, interference with the identity of the neighborhood and creating of an unsafe environment.

Our recommendation is to apply, by negotiation and reinforcement, storefronts design guidelines. Although many design guidelines can homogenize areas and be bad for the business, that is not what those recommendations intend. The main concepts for the design of the plan are:

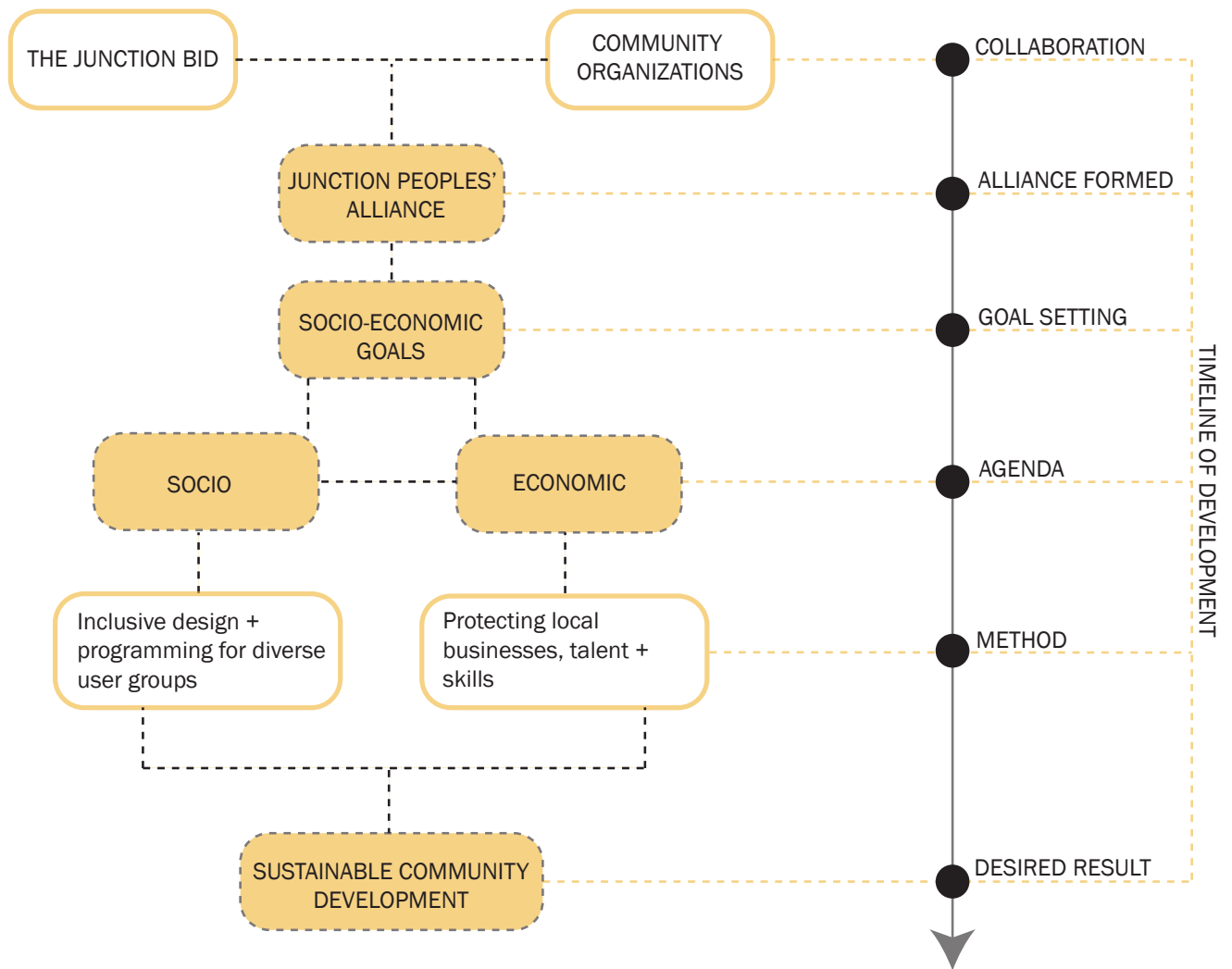
- **Avoid homogenization**
- **Promote diversity of facades**
- **Improve the sidewalk user experience**
- **Promote security**
- **Guarantee a good and organized use of the sidewalk**
- **Attract more people**



(find storefront guidelines in the appendix)

Figure 60. Diagram of the Junction Peoples' Alliance Structure
 Figure 61. Diagram of the Junction Peoples' Alliance phases and duties

JPA for The Junction



GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Junction Peoples' Alliance

Governance at The Junction

The strategy consists of empowering the community to provide economic development and to stretch the governance and responsibility over the maintenance, funding and programming of the public space in the area and also to place the community as an active participant in future issues concerning the area. The main goal is to achieve community economic resilience. The start of the process is the design and community outreach for Hillel Place plaza. For that we developed a road map putting in phases the evolution of the governance along with strategies for economic development.

Junction Peoples' Alliance (JPA)

WHO WE ARE?

A group of community based associations collaborating with the BID to create a better environment and common space.

The alliance focuses on the economy, sanitation, pedestrian/public safety, and advocacy service.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

To promote and support the artistic, architectural, cultural, and historic features that defines Hillel Place, and represent the Flatbush neighborhood identity. To enhance of the quality of life for those who live, work and visit the district.

PHASE 01	PHASE 02	PHASE 03
HILLEL PLAZA	THE JUNCTION	ALLIANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage, and operate the public space • Program, manage and execute events • Be an accessible representative of the public space • Outreach the community • Manage the conflicts in the plaza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage, and operate the public space • Program, manage and execute events • Be an accessible representative of the public space • Outreach the community • Look for partnerships • Outreach city institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a representative of the area to city, borough and state institutions. • Outreach the community • Be the institution that can connect the tree community boards in the benefit of the community,

Figure 62. The Junction BID Networking. Resources Map (existing and potential)
 Figure 63. The Junction Area. Economic Development Opportunities Map and Zones by Phases.

BID Networking

In collaboration with BID, provides economic, sanitation, pedestrian and public safety, and advocacy service. An advisory group using members for guidance, expertise, and skills when working on locally based community and economic development projects.

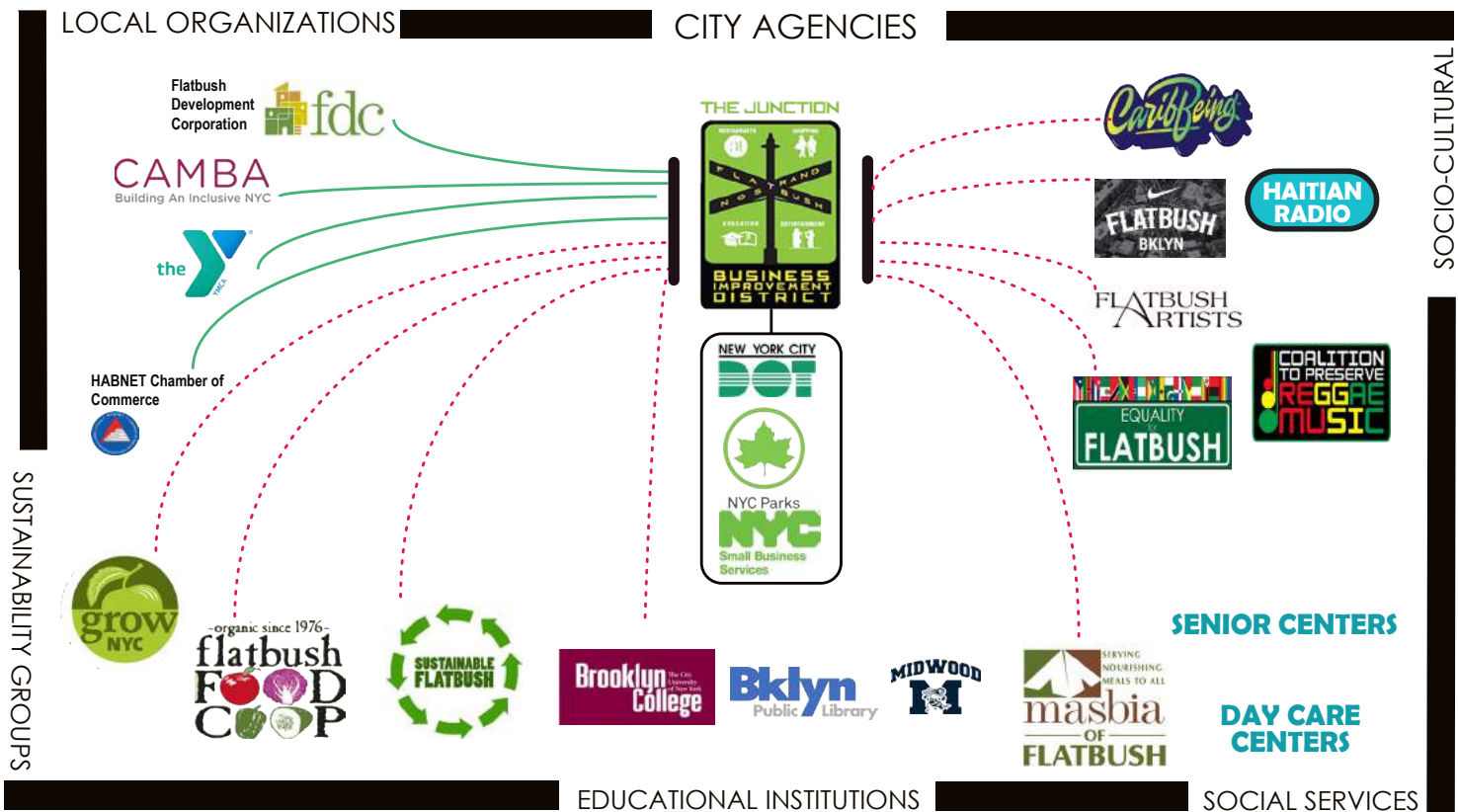
The promotion and support of the artistic, architectural, cultural, and historic features that give Hillel Place, the Junction and Flatbush neighborhood its identity, the enhancement of the quality of life for those who live, work and visit the district.

Executive board consists of representatives of both commercial and residential interests, creating a joint Residential and Business Improvement District.

LEGEND

Resources Map

- EXISTING CONNECTIONS
- - - - POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS



GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Networking & Economic Development

Economic Development by Phases

The proposed economic development in the District is divided into 3 phases.

Phase One is the construction of Hillel Plaza.

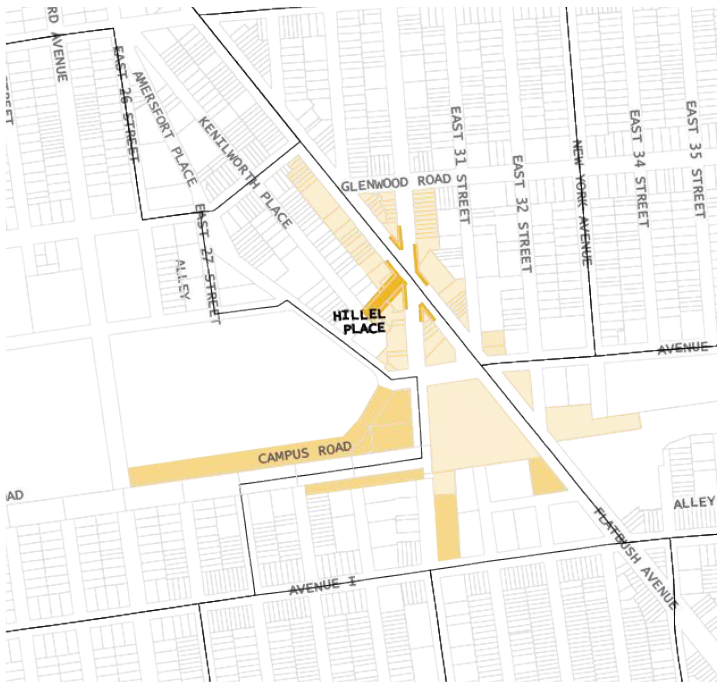
Phase Two aims to bring programming to the existing vacant lots.

Phase Three looks to re-zone some of the lots in the District, allowing new development.


Those phases work in conjunction with the development of additional governance, which combines community outreach, and economic development that grow together in a sustainable way.

The third phase is the most critical one. In this phase new development is expected and the re-zoning should be negotiated with the city. Our recommendation is that the rezoning should be negotiated by the JPA in order to realize a community benefit.


The new development could be a great economic improvement for the district but could have bad consequences to street life if not well designed. Our recommendation is to establish design guidelines for those new developments.



Opportunities Map

Phase 1 
Hillel Place Plaza and
sidewalks bump out

Phase 2 
Programming on vacant lots

Phase 3 
Rezoning commercial
area in The Junction



Phase 1
Hillel Place Plaza and sidewalks bump out



Phase 2
Programming on vacant lots

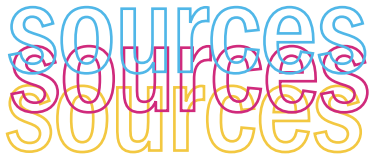


Phase 3
Rezoning commercial area in The Junction

(find details in the appendix)







-Brooklyn Historical Society, 2017, brooklynhistory.org/ Accessed August-December. 2017.

-Brooklyn Public Library, 2018, bklynlibrary.org/ Accessed August-December. 2017.

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-Nacto: <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/street-design-elements/curb-extensions/>

by David Burney & Meg Walker

In the introduction to his book “PLACE an introduction” Tim Cresswell comments:

“But place is also a way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world. When we look at the world as a world of places, we see different things. We see attachments and connections between people and place. We see worlds of meaning and experience. Sometimes this way of seeing can seem to be an act of resistance against a rationalization of the world that focuses more on space than place. To think of an area of the world as a rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment - as a place - is to free us from thinking of it as facts and figures.” (Cresswell, 2015)

The purpose of this workshop has been to introduce students to this way of thinking about “place” and the methods and techniques for analyzing the public realm in cities. Students have learned to observe public spaces through the use of statistical data collection, interviews, photography, and video. Students have learned to analyze spatial characteristics involving use, circulation, programming, servicing, landscape, etc. But above all, “placemaking’ is a lens through which we can understand the social dynamics of a community and the ways in which that community interacts with its public space. From the student’s work emerges a portrait of a neighborhood that goes beyond the statistics to reveal the deeper characteristics that make it different and unique. The recommendations in this report are practical - from traffic

calming and improvements to the pedestrian experience, to changes in local governance. But all the recommendations are aimed at supporting the people that live in the Junction and improving the public domain in which they live and interact.

Our dynamic client, Kenneth Mbonu, Director of the Junction BID, is on a mission to accomplish many of the goals and recommendations in this report. We wish him well and hope that the work of this report adds some wind to his sails.

Figure 64. The Junction Area. Zoning Map

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LEGEND

Zoning

- R - RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
- C - COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
- M - MANUFACTURING DISTRICT

- SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICT
The letter(s) within the shaded area designates the special purpose district as described in the text of the Zoning Resolution.
- AREA(S) REZONED

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

NOTE: Where no dimensions for zoning district boundaries appear on the zoning maps, such dimensions are determined in Article VII, Chapter 6 (Location of District Boundaries) of the Zoning Resolution.



STREET DESIGN The Junction

Design Elements (Comming from page 89)

Bulkhead: The low paneled base of a storefront bay that supports the glazing and elevates merchandise for pedestrian viewing.

Lintel: The horizontal structural element that spans above the storefront bays to support the weight of the upper façade.

Pier: The vertical structural or decorative elements, also know as a column, which supports and/or frames the glazing.

Transom: The small, operable or inoperable framed windows above the glazing and below the lintel that filter light into the ground floor space; sometimes sheltered by awnings.

Sidewalk Zones

Transition Zone: Area dedicated to merchandize display, tables, chairs and other amenities for the store owners.

Pedestrian Zone: Area dedicated for pedestrian traffic.

Amenity Zone: Area dedicated for pedestrian amenities; like benches, and street infrastructure like hydrants, transit signs, light posts, etc.

Street: area dedicated for cars and bikes.

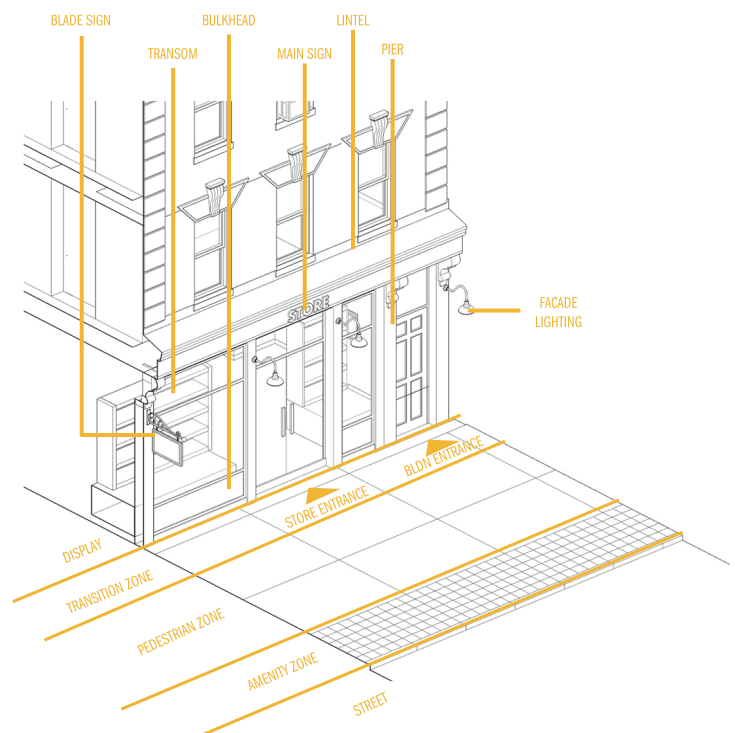
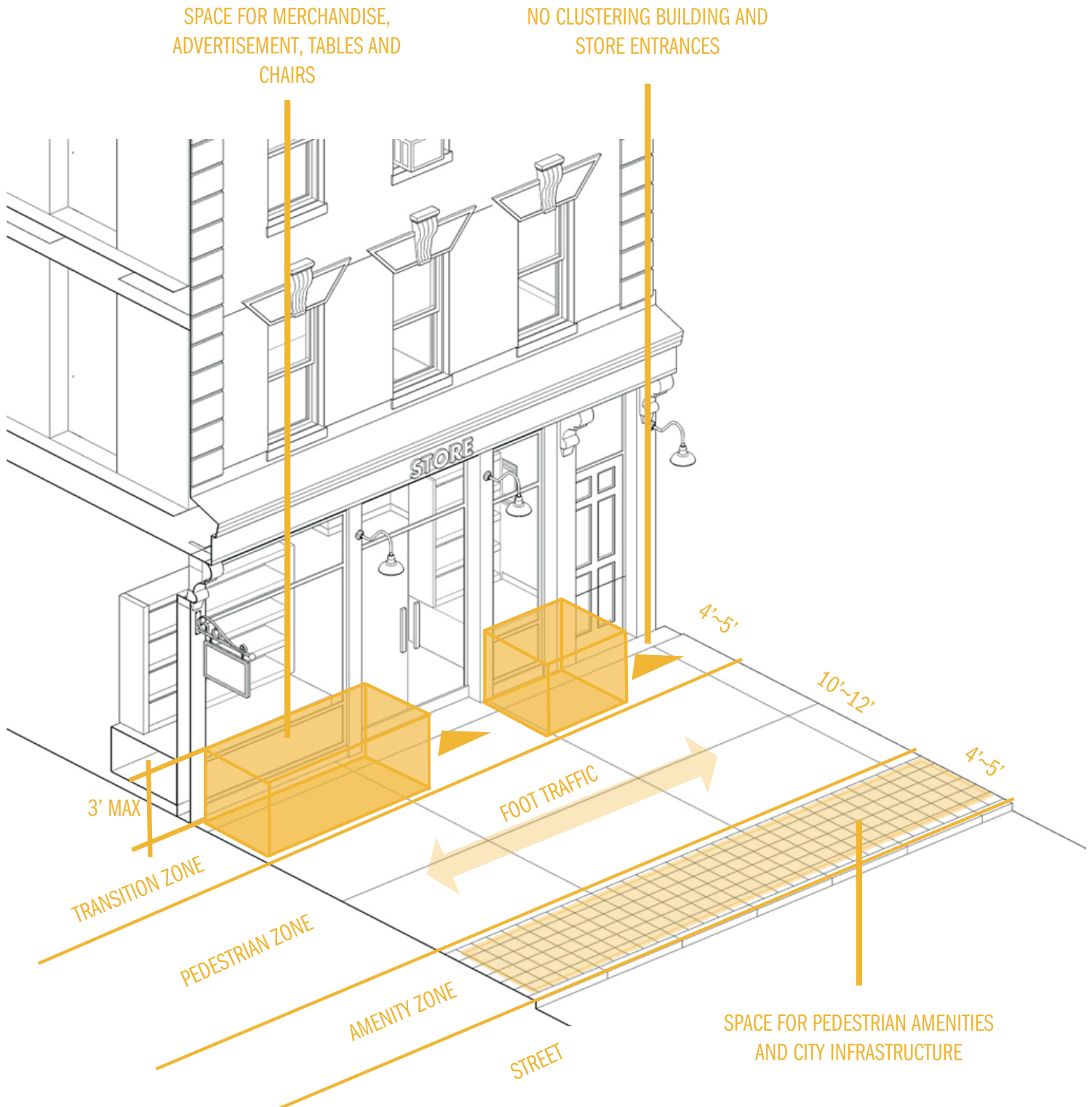


Figure 65. The Junction. Street Design. Storefront Guidelines
Figure 66. Transition Zone (Good and Bad References)



STREET DESIGN The Junction



Transition Zones

The transition zone is a place that can be used by the storefront owners in different ways. From merchandise displays outside of shops, to tables and chairs outside of cafes or eateries, these elements can improve the streetscape, encourage more business and lead to a more lively environment. However, the addition of these elements should not be abused, leading to more streetscape clutter and less space for pedestrian movement, along with decreased sales.

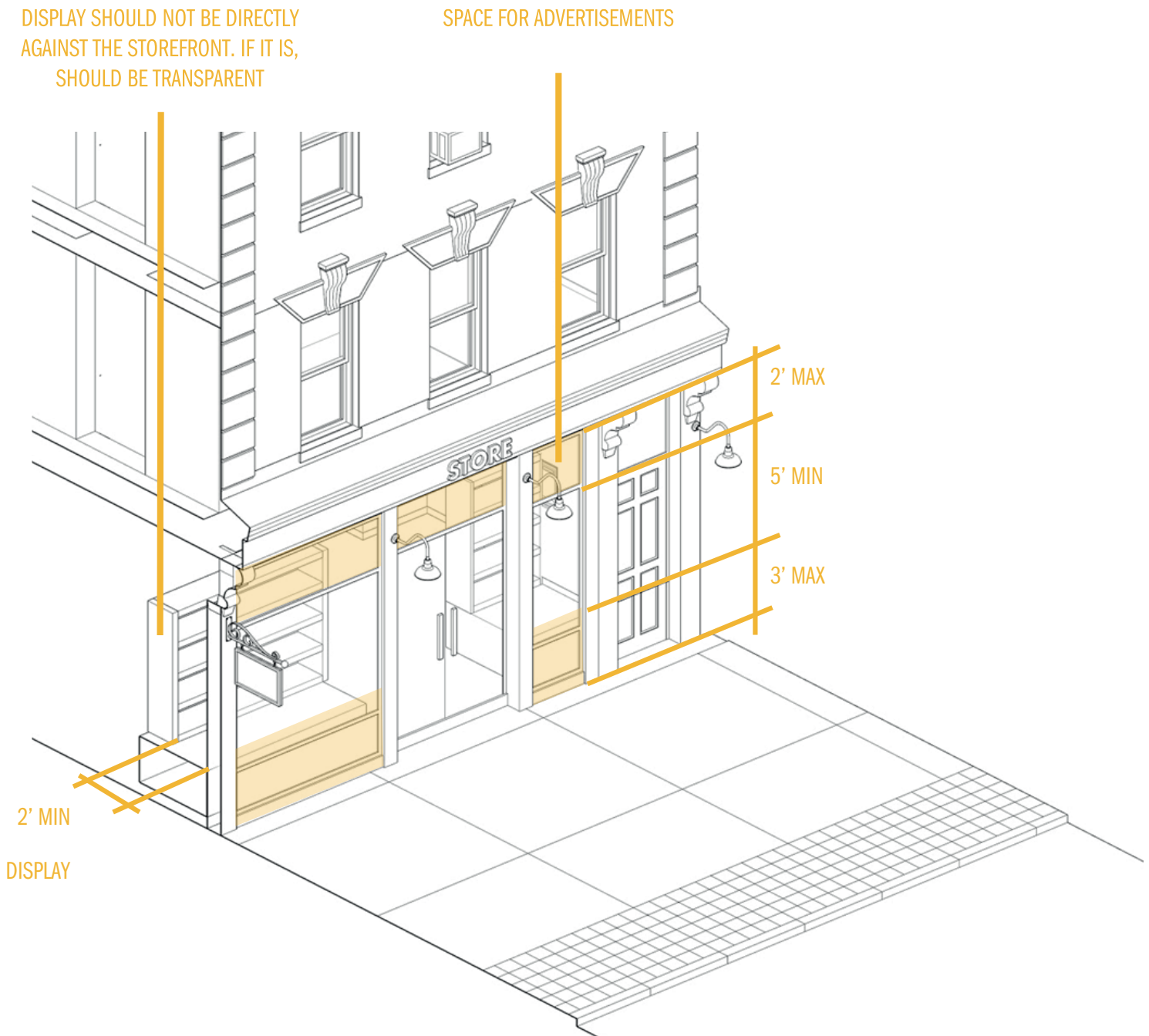


Our recommendation is to create guidelines, reinforced by the BID, that clearly state where the transition zone is, while offering maximum heights to merchandise displays and the amount of tables and chairs, or other side walk elements, in front of their businesses in order to retain store front transparency.



Occupying too much sidewalk space.

Figure 67. The Junction. Street Design. Storefront Guidelines
Figure 68. Transparency (Good and Bad References)



STREET DESIGN The Junction



Transparency

Storefront transparency is a key element in a lively, vibrant and pedestrian scale business facade. By keeping the storefronts free of advertisement and other obstructions it will provide a better experience for the pedestrian and the merchant will be able to see outside his store and keep eyes on the street, increasing the safety in the neighborhood. Although transparency is good, at the same time advertisements are crucial for some business to thrive.

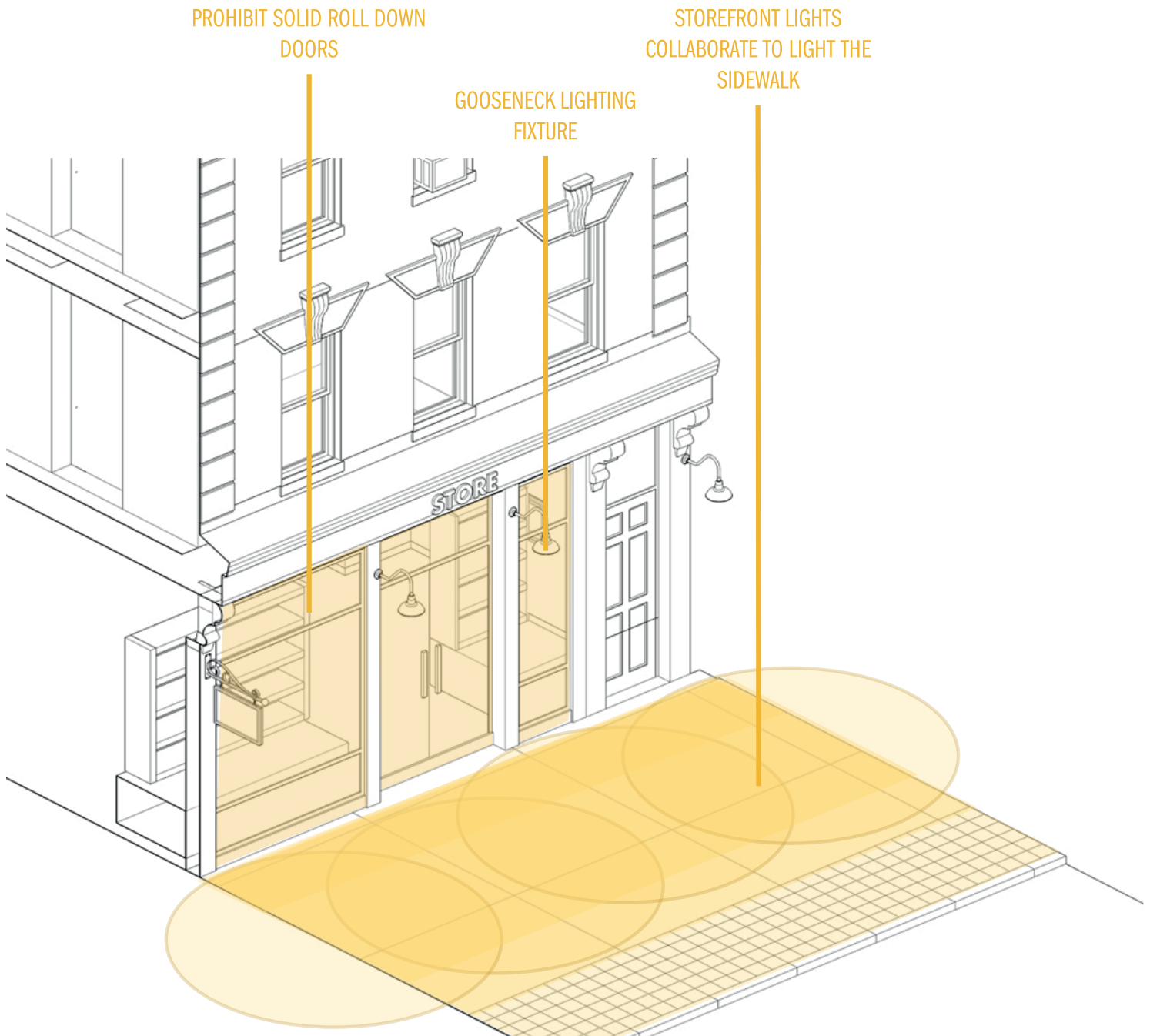


Due to that context, our recommendation is to provide a transparent façade only in the pedestrian eye level, between 3 and 8 feet measured from the ground level. This will allow the merchant to put advertisements but keep the transparency in the area with most impact. The accomplish the wanted transparency, we also recommend that any shelf type display have a 2 feet setback from glass facade.



Blanc facades

Figure 69. The Junction. Street Design. Storefront Guidelines
Figure 70. Lights and roll down doors (Good and Bad References)



STREET DESIGN The Junction



Lights and roll down doors

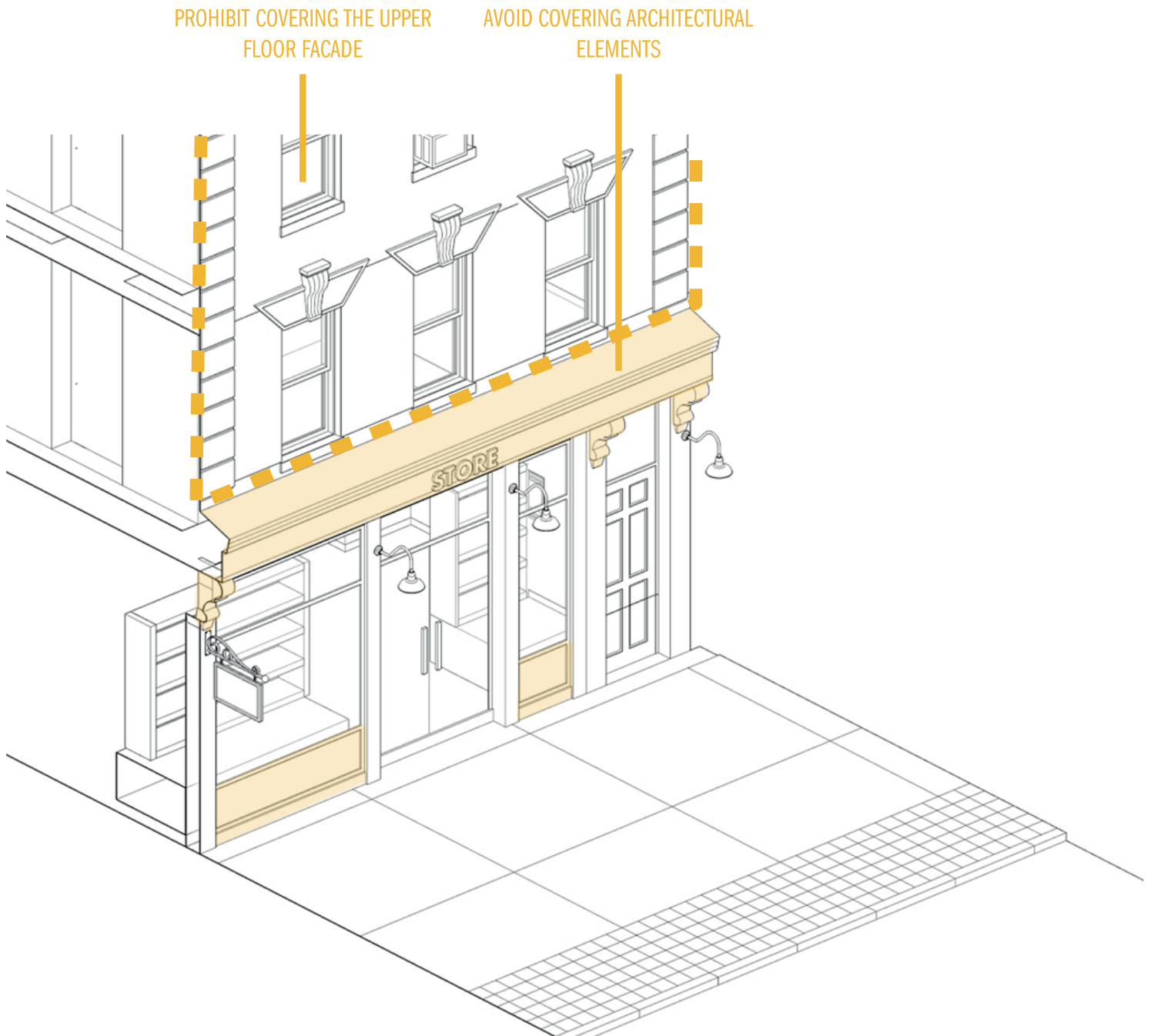
The street lights provided by the city are insufficient to make the sidewalks a welcoming and safe place at night. The district, because of Brooklyn College, has the potential for a lively and vibrant night life. According to surveys done there, many students felt the lack of youth focused places to hang out at night, for example cocktail bars. This may represent a market gap that the district is not attending to. In order to provide a better and more secure nightlife in the district, the street lighting needs to be considered as a key component.



To improve the street lights in the district, our recommendation is to prohibit solid roll down doors and to negotiate with the merchants to leave the lights of the display on during late hours. Also negotiate with the merchants to put extra lights in the façade to collaborate with the visibility of the sidewalk. This can benefit them by providing improvements on the feeling of safety in the whole district and to unlock the night life market gap.



Solid security gates reduce transparency.



STREET DESIGN The Junction

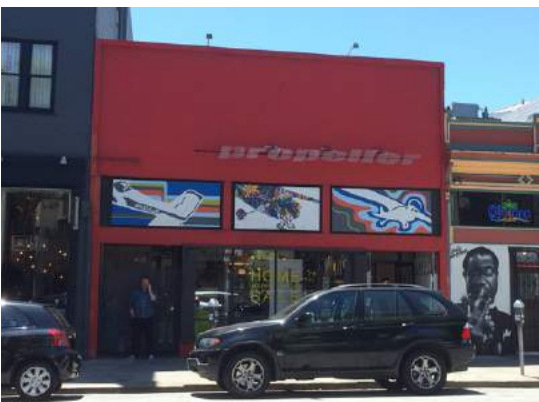


Preservation

One of the main goals we recommend for the district is the improvement of the district image and identity, specifically retaining its authentic heritage. Some stores in the district have covered the whole building with other materials, like metal, and cement panels. By covering building with those materials, the stores lack the authenticity of the district architecture.

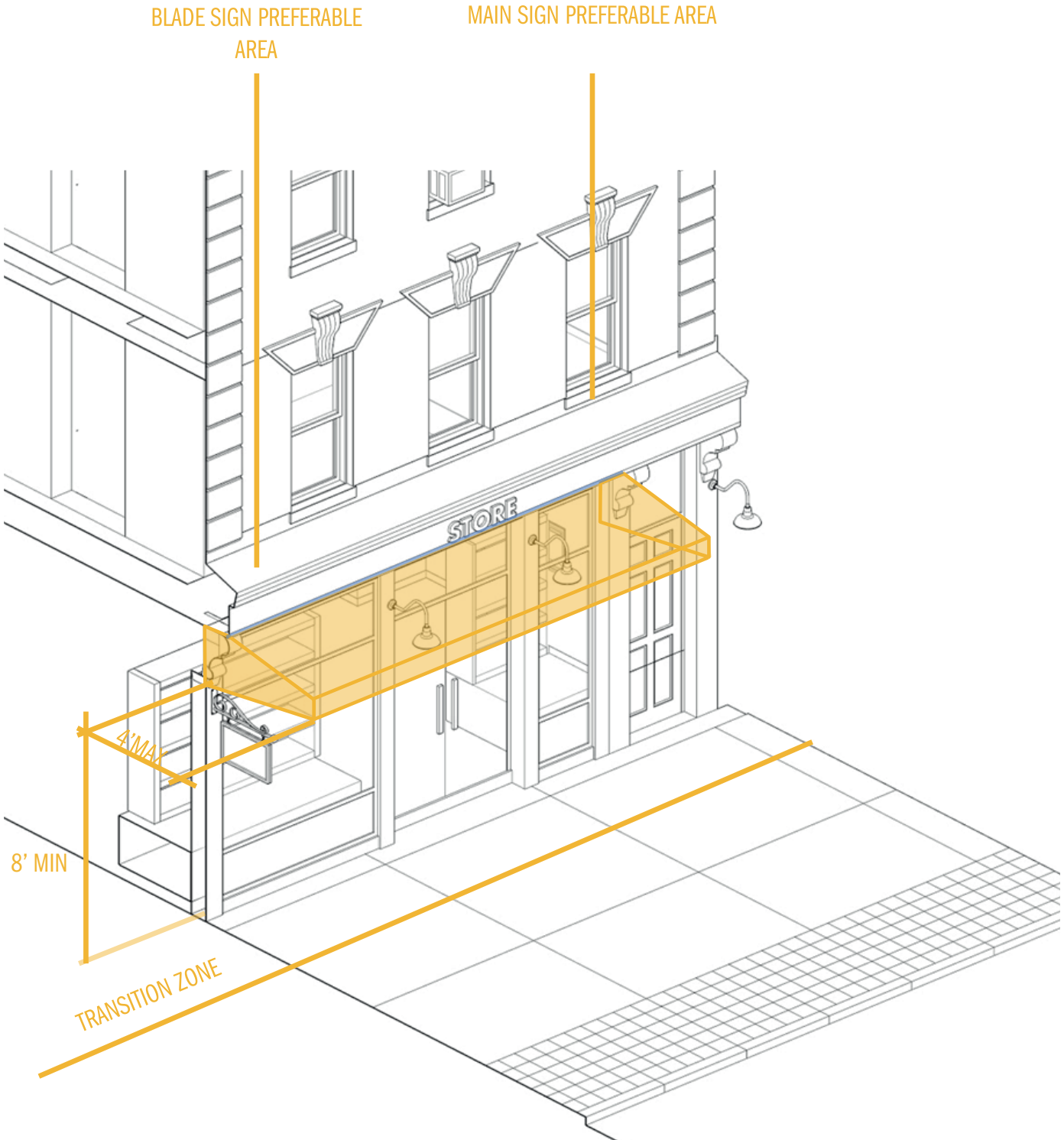


Our recommendation is to prohibit covering the upper floors and other indigenous architectural elements with elements in line with the existing vernacular. This should be implemented immediately to avoid the creep of design trends not in keeping with the district.



Poorly design retrofit of storefronts destroys original architecture.

Figure 73. The Junction. Street Design. Storefront Guidelines.
Figure 74. Awnings (Good and Bad References)



STREET DESIGN The Junction



Awnings

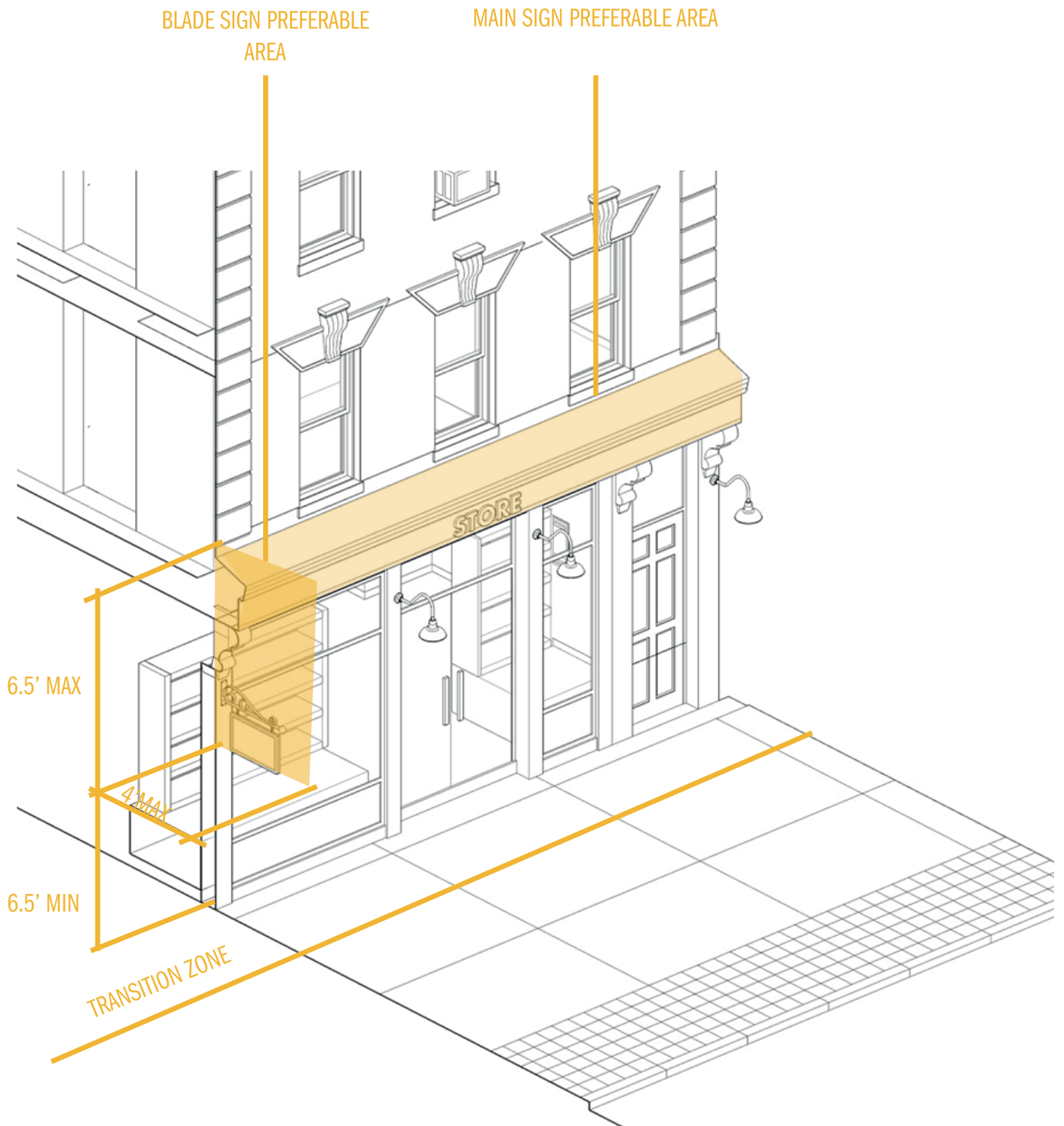
Awnings are a great storefront element; they can give character to a store, while providing shade in the presence of abundant sunlight. While awnings can be a great storefront addition, they can sometimes invade the sidewalks and make the streets worse if they act as a canopy for people parking curbside as well. Those interventions not only create a cluster in the amenities zone, but also collaborate with the visual pollution of the district by adding signs and advertisements into the sides and front of the canopy. Some examples of this were found in the district.

Our recommendation consists in limiting the extension of the awnings to the transition zone to avoid those kinds of canopies.



Innapropriated extension over sidewalk space.

Figure 75. The Junction. Street Design. Storefront Guidelines
Figure 76. Signs (Good and Bad References)



STREET DESIGN The Junction



Signs

Storefront signage is a main asset for the businesses in the area. Many districts suffer from visual pollution due to the amount and size of signs. Inconsistent signage leads to competition between businesses as they compete for visibility, which in turns amplifies the visual pollution. By having clear and consistent signage guidelines, the BID can collaborate with the business to have cleaner store front appearances in the district. Set guidelines also create an equity among the stores where no one owner feels as if they need to compete with another for representation.



Although guidelines for size and placement will be standardized, diversity should be encouraged so as to avoid homogeneity. Many stores in the district should consider blade signs that present the uniqueness of their business. Blade signs are one of the most effective ways of attracting foot traffic into businesses, which is helpful due to the amount of pedestrians foot traffic in the district.



Excessive and obtrusive signage.

Economic Development (comming from page 93)

1-Typology: Mixed use building with stores in the ground floor and a housing high rise on the top.

2-Large retail façade strategy: The idea is to contain bigger stores that might be interested to come to the district. For that we proposed 2 options. The first one is a 2-floor store that occupies only a small portion of the facade on the ground floor. The second option is reducing the big store storefront by adding small stores in the perimeter.

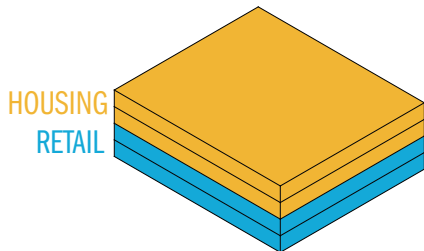
3-High rise height strategy: The height should be proportional to the base. The idea is that the person walking in the street does not perceive the tower height. Our recommendation is to adopt a setback after the base last floor to preserve the character of the street.

4-Base height strategy: The base should have the same height as the rest of the neighborhood. This can help to preserve the identity and character of the area.

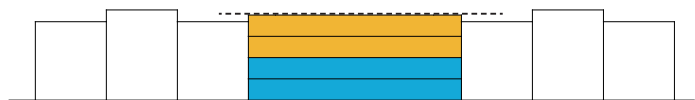
5-Facade readability: This recommendation is related to the architectural design. By the principles of the gestalt theory, the human brain perceives the form better when it can be easily read. If the building is too big and is read as only one form the pedestrians feel less comfortable. We recommend that the façade be divided in modules that could be perceived by the human eye. For that to happen we suggest making a big volume composed by small volumes as the illustration shows.

Option 1

01 - TYPOLOGY - MIXED USE BUILDING



04 - BASE HEIGHT STRATEGY

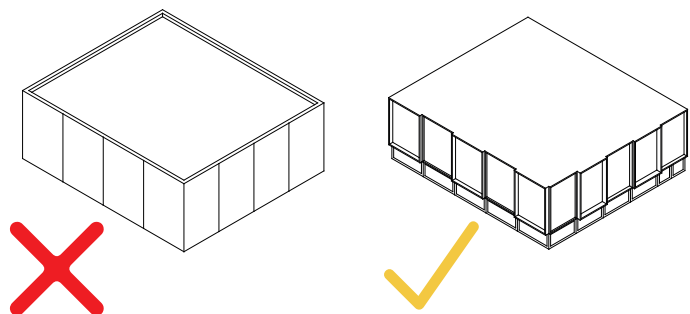


THE BASE SHOULD NOT BE HIGHER THAN THE SURROUNDING BUILDINGS

02 - LARGE RETAIL FACADE STRATEGY



05 - FACADE READABILITY

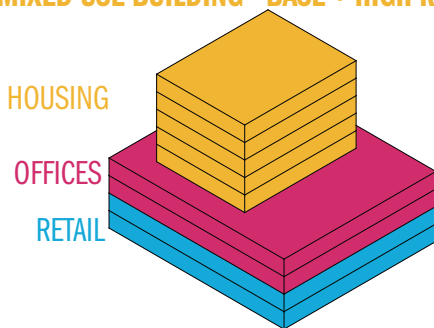


THE FACADE SHOULD BE VOLUMETRIC TO THE EASIER TO BE READ BY PEOPLE

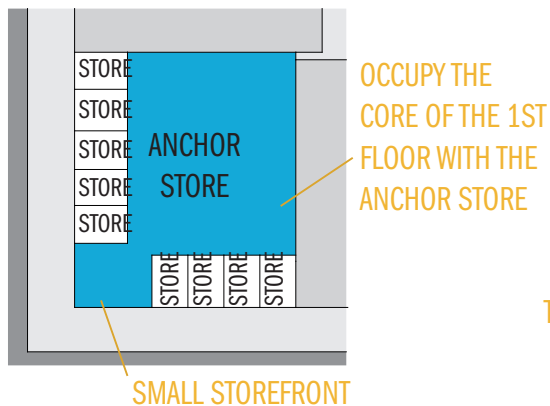
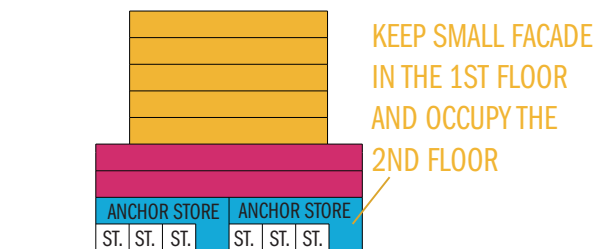
GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT Economic Development

Option 2

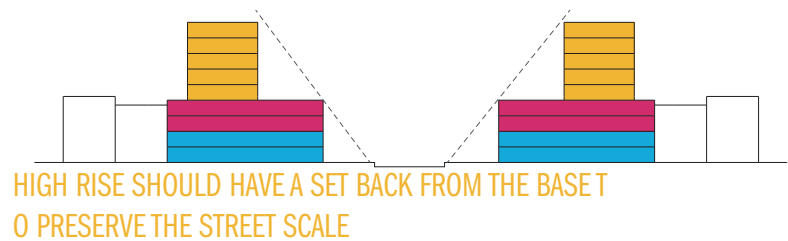
01 - TYPOLOGY - MIXED USE BUILDING - BASE + HIGH RISE



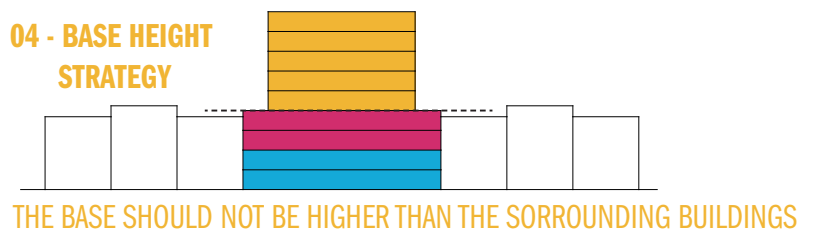
02 - LARGE RETAIL FACADE STRATEGY



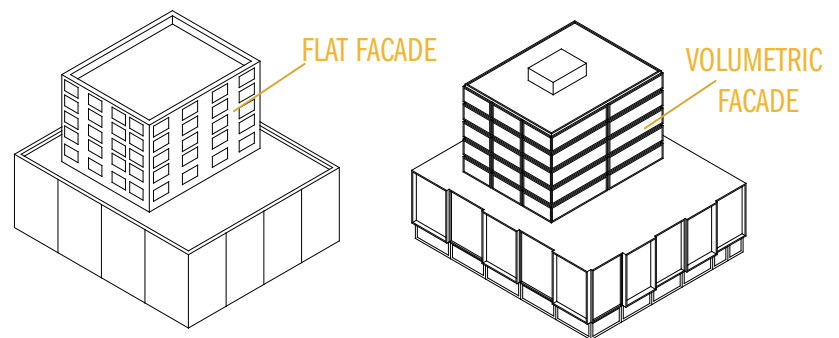
03 - HIGH RISE HEIGHT STRATEGY



04 - BASE HEIGHT STRATEGY



05 - FACADE READABILITY



Placemaking Recommendations for the Public Realm: Hillel



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Place



