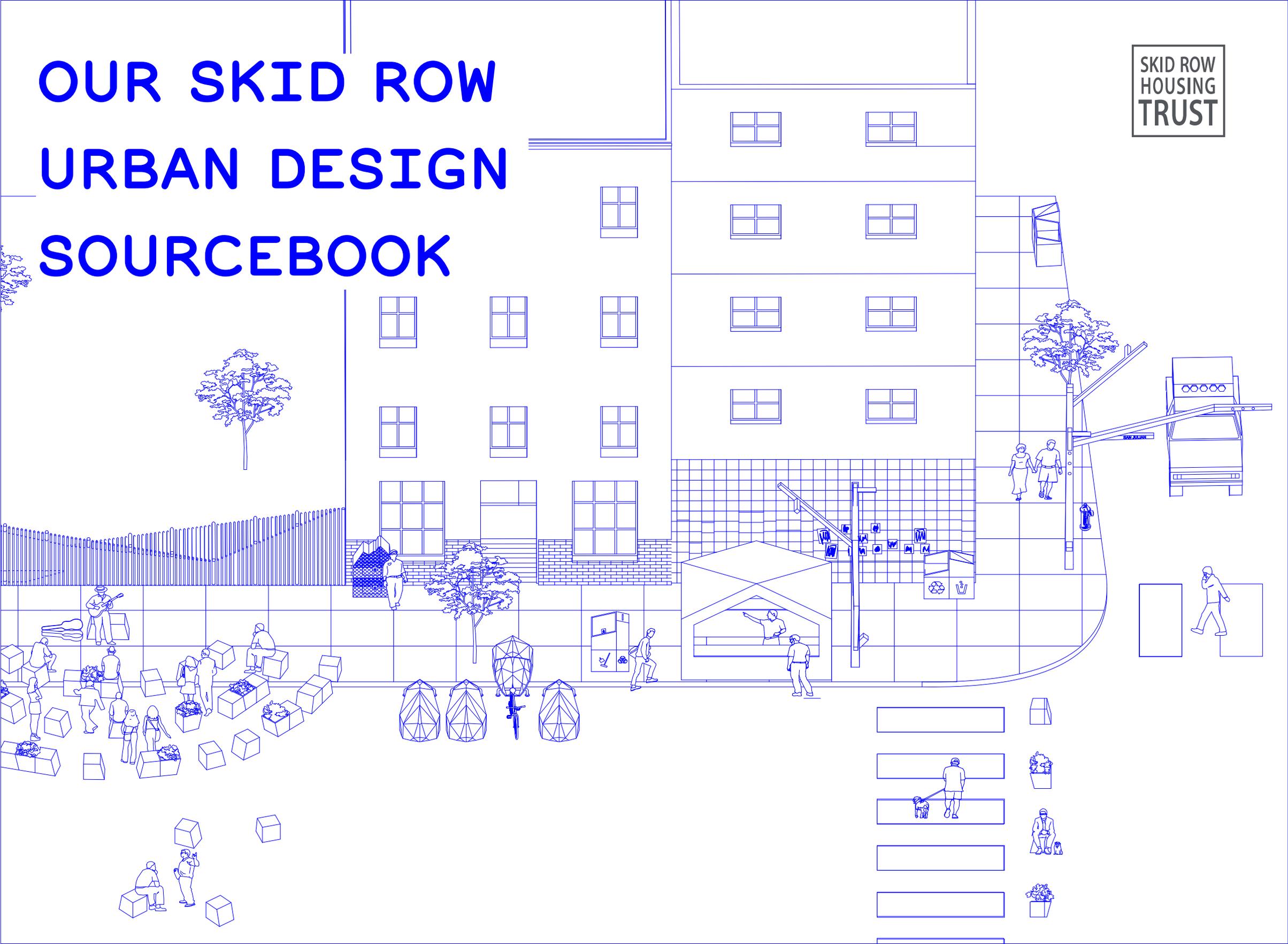


# OUR SKID ROW URBAN DESIGN SOURCEBOOK

SKID ROW  
HOUSING  
TRUST



# CONTENTS

2	INTRODUCTION
3	NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND OUR SKID ROW
4	GUIDING PRINCIPLES
5	RECOMMENDATIONS
6	STREET SCENES
7	SAFETY ZONES
8	REST STOPS
9	"THE ROW"
10	COMPONENTS
	FENCES
11	SHADE
12	STORAGE
13	VENDING TRASHCANS
	UTILITY POLES
14	ELECTRICAL
15	CHARGING
16	COMMUNICATION
17	COOLING
	SIDEWALKS/STREETS
18	WATER COLLECTION
19	MOBILITY
20	TRASHCANS
21	SEATING/LANDSCAPE/SIGNAGE
22	BIKE RACKS
23	BIKE STORAGE
24	BATHROOMS AND SHOWERS
25	STORAGE FACILITIES

## Design Sourcebook Project Team

Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects [LOHA]

 Lorcan O'Herlihy, FAIA  
Ian Dickenson  
Chris Gassaway  
Patricia Bacalao

Theresa Hwang

Rosten Woo & Tiffanie Tran

A Publication of the Skid Row Housing Trust

# INTRODUCTION

The Our Skid Row Urban Design Sourcebook proposes a modular, kit-of-parts approach to multi-functional street utilities and furniture, providing context-based solutions focused on safety, places of rest, and access to basic services like showers, bathrooms, drinking water, safe storage, seating, shelter, shade, community wayfinding, recycling and trash collection, information and utilities.

The design guidelines evaluate the various physical conditions found in Skid Row along a set of spatial criteria – walls, sidewalks, curbs, lighting, streets, and vicinity to public services – to determine the scale, distribution, location and programmatic elements of the interventions. This process adapts and reorganizes typical existing street infrastructure and hybridizes the kit-of-parts to meet diverse neighborhood needs.

Informed by the recommendations of Our Skid Row, this sourcebook suggests new ways that urban design can provide basic services that can be strategically mobilized and deployed to bring vital resources directly to public streets.

Homelessness has multiple causes and symptoms, so no singular solution can offer exhaustive relief. The Our Skid Row Urban Design tbook proposes multiple approaches, quickly deployed and adapted, to ameliorate the basic day-to-day challenges of homelessness and create safe, clean, habitable environments to empower the transition to more permanent options.

In the spirit of the resourcefulness and creativity found in Skid Row, the design of these elements lends itself to multiple uses that can be easily combined and appropriated for a variety of needs. In the end, these urban interventions will belong to the community to adopt and repurpose as needed, over time becoming an integral part of the backdrop of Skid Row. – [Lorcan O’Herlihy Architects \[LOHA\]](#)

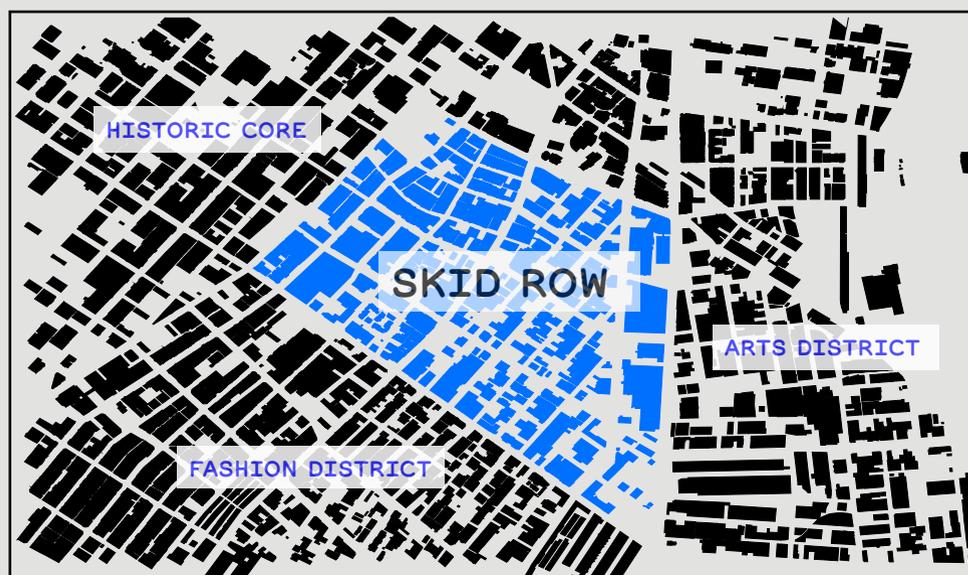
# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Skid Row is a 50 block and 0.4 square mile neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles that has an estimated total population of 10,000 residents. (2010 Census)

Over two-thirds of the population is male. Approximately 60% are African-American, 14% Caucasian and 11% Latino. The median household income is just over \$11,000, less than a quarter of the Los Angeles average of \$46,000. (2011 City Data)

Approximately, over one-third of the population is homeless, with over 3500 people living in temporary beds in shelters or on the streets (2014 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority), making Skid Row the site of the highest concentration of homeless individuals in the United States.

Although historically a transient community, Skid Row has grown into a place of permanence with long-time residents that have created a strong social fabric that supports extensive grassroots organizing efforts to strengthen the neighborhood. The physical infrastructure does not appropriately support the equitable growth of the community, and the perceived narrative of Skid Row does not reflect the culture of resiliency and innovation.



# OUR SKID ROW

The Our Skid Row Urban Design Source Book is built upon Our Skid Row, a community planning process that took place 2014–2015. Our Skid Row is a collective vision that redesigns Skid Row as a place that actively supports recovery and provides resources for the existing low-income community. It imagines new ways that a city can develop to prioritize people and place. Our Skid Row celebrates the history and residents that call this neighborhood home. Over a year and a half, Our Skid Row gathered residents to share stories about the importance of Skid Row, impart lessons on the struggles of the neighborhood and design solutions to improve the area and enhance the community in which we would like to live.

The development process for Our Skid Row was rooted in the expertise of the existing resident community. We implemented a spectrum of participatory activities with multiple points of entry for engagement to ensure there were several and varied opportunities for participation. Programs included community-engaged asset mapping, participatory visioning sessions, a mobile participation station, and design resources workshops. We held over 25 opportunities for involvement that ranged from sidewalk interactions to 4 hour-long design charrettes. Attendance and participation was measured at over 600 engagements, with over 380 unique participants, representing over 40 different communities across Los Angeles County, with many participants returning for several events.



# OUR SKID ROW

---

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

From the design solutions workshops, a series of guiding principles emerged that outline a thriving and equitable neighborhood. Six major categories of improvement were identified as:

### **FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NEEDS:**

- All residents should have the option to permanent housing
- Everyone needs to have access to public hygiene facilities, including showers, bathrooms, clean water and a place to store belonging while accessing services, 24 hours, 7 days a week
- All residents should have sustained access to healthy food
- Ensure residents are involved with decisions related to the community

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY:**

- Ability to move, live, play and work with security and a sense of dignity and independence
- Equal rights for all residents
- Reinforce cultural competency
- Prioritize pedestrians over vehicles
- Support more community-led initiatives

### **HEALTHY LIVING:**

- Access to physical healthcare, mental health, and substance abuse counseling 24 hours/7 days
- Wellness resources that encourage a holistic lifestyle with exercise and spiritual well being
- Access to healthy food options
- Everyone should live in a sustainable neighborhood supporting energy, water, and material efficiency and conservation

### **RECREATION AND LEISURE:**

- High quality open and green spaces accessible for all residents for extended periods of time
- Non-clinical programs and amenities that support growth, recovery, and rest
- Ensure residents have the ability to rejuvenate and grow

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION:**

- Accessible educational resources to support professional development
- Ample job opportunities for local residents
- Sustained resources to support the development of local businesses and patronage
- More opportunities for outside investment for community-supporting enterprises

### **CREATIVITY AND SELF-EXPRESSION:**

- Resources to develop the existing creative class and arts economy of Skid Row
- Well-supported artistic outlets to have Skid Row residents tell their own stories
- Promote neighborhood identity and social connections

# OUR SKID ROW RECOMMENDATIONS:

All the design workshops generated the foundation for Our Skid Row community vision. Highlights are listed below.

## IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS:

  More trashcans and daily sanitation services

---

  Create Rest Stops with mobile showers, bathrooms, drinking foundations and storage facilities

---

  Create Safety Zones that have 24/7 programming in conjunction with partner organization. No drug or alcohol use permitted.



 Invest in community wayfinding signage and cultural banners

---

  Install public art by Skid Row residents

---

## COMMUNITY PLANNING PILOTS:

   **Welcome Stations**– information kiosks for neighborhood resources and services, tourist information and general orientation information

---

     **“The Row”**– Establish 6th Street as a corridor of economic and cultural development along the 6th Street major retail and commercial avenue, linking the 6th Street Viaduct, Arts District and downtown with Skid Row

---

## PERMANENT INFRASTRUCTURE:

 More Low Income and Permanent Supportive Housing

- More rental subsidies for low income housing
- More capital for construction for affordable housing
- Fast-track affordable housing projects
- Linkage housing and community benefits funds

---

  Establish Dash lines and accessible bus stops

---

  Implement Complete Streets and Slow Zones: multi-modal transit and pedestrian safety

---

  Support People Streets: transform under-utilized streets for public space, shared streets, parklets, and green alleys

Our Skid Row was a project of Skid Row Housing Trust.

### Community Partners:

Downtown Women’s Action Coalition, Downtown Women’s Center, Lamp Community Arts Program, Los Angeles Community Action Network, Los Angeles Poverty Department, United Coalition East Prevention Project and the Skid Row Residents working group

# STREET SCENES

Community Anchors are micro-neighborhood centers and destinations that are focused places of interaction. Community anchors in the short term will provide hubs for access to services and safety for the existing community, but in the long term serve as place-making nodes for neighborhood activities.

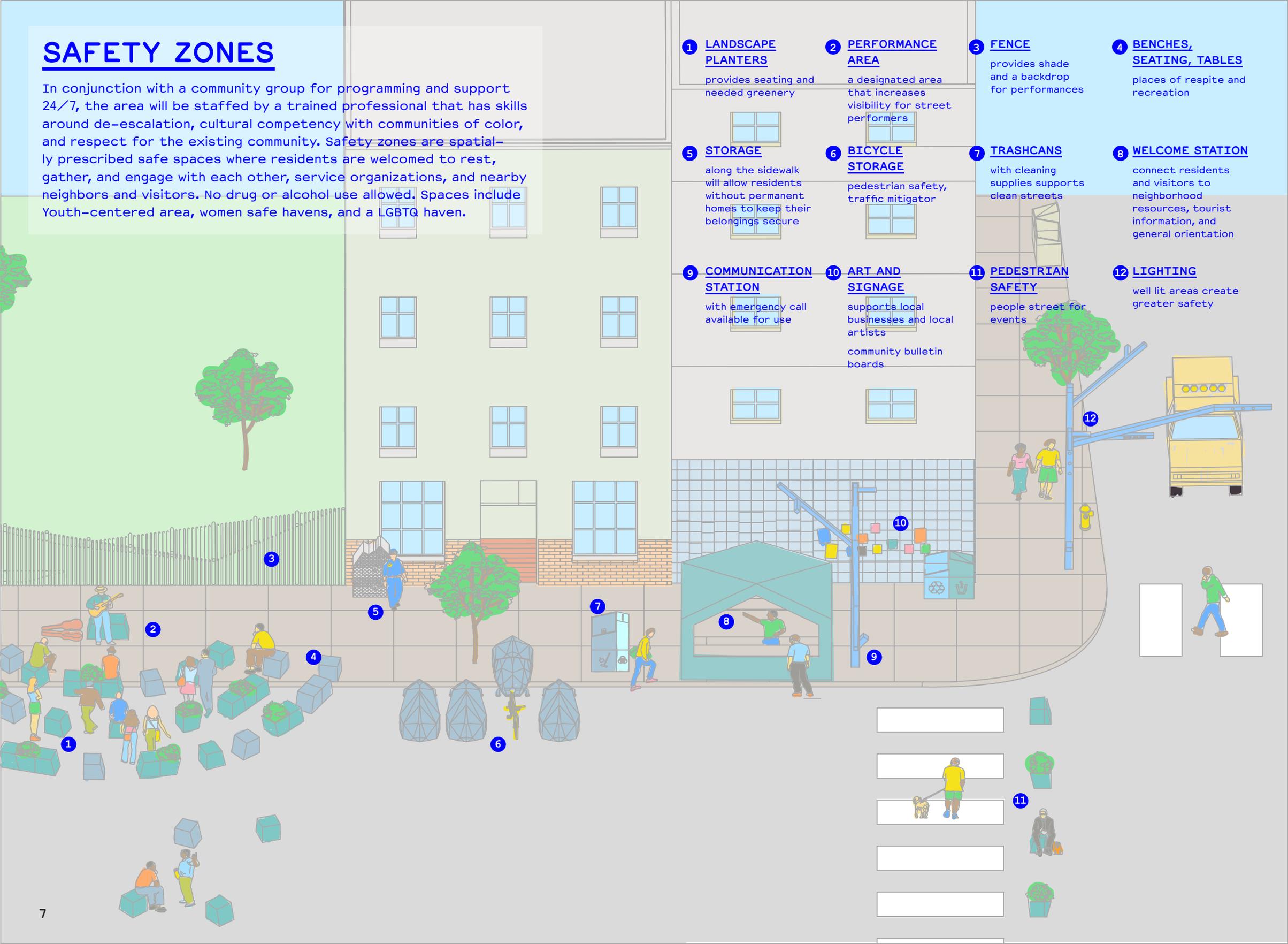
These Street Scenes are a series of architectural studies by Lorcan O’Herlihy Architects, inspired by the residents’ vision, Our Skid Row. LOHA participated in several Our Skid Row workshops, directly listening to residents’ concerns and design solutions for Skid Row.

These Street Scenes are meant to serve as inspiration and by no means comprehensive or the only solution.

# SAFETY ZONES

In conjunction with a community group for programming and support 24/7, the area will be staffed by a trained professional that has skills around de-escalation, cultural competency with communities of color, and respect for the existing community. Safety zones are spatially prescribed safe spaces where residents are welcomed to rest, gather, and engage with each other, service organizations, and nearby neighbors and visitors. No drug or alcohol use allowed. Spaces include Youth-centered area, women safe havens, and a LGBTQ haven.

- 1 LANDSCAPE PLANTERS**  
provides seating and needed greenery
- 2 PERFORMANCE AREA**  
a designated area that increases visibility for street performers
- 3 FENCE**  
provides shade and a backdrop for performances
- 4 BENCHES, SEATING, TABLES**  
places of respite and recreation
- 5 STORAGE**  
along the sidewalk will allow residents without permanent homes to keep their belongings secure
- 6 BICYCLE STORAGE**  
pedestrian safety, traffic mitigator
- 7 TRASHCANS**  
with cleaning supplies supports clean streets
- 8 WELCOME STATION**  
connect residents and visitors to neighborhood resources, tourist information, and general orientation
- 9 COMMUNICATION STATION**  
with emergency call available for use
- 10 ART AND SIGNAGE**  
supports local businesses and local artists  
community bulletin boards
- 11 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**  
people street for events
- 12 LIGHTING**  
well lit areas create greater safety



# REST STOPS

Provide hygiene services of showers and bathrooms, along with storage lockers and cold water drinking stations. Social service outreach areas will be on-site to provide a linkage to housing. Open Space and areas of respite available.

**1** COMMUNICATION STATION

internet and computer access

**2** TRASHCANS

with cleaning supplies supports clean streets

**3** BIKE RACKS

short-term bike storage

**4** CHARGING/WI-FI

electrical utility and wifi hotspot

**5** LANDSCAPE PLANTERS

provides seating and needed greenery

**6** SHOWERS AND BATHROOMS

with 24/7 access ensure public hygiene amenities

**7** BENCHES, SEATING, TABLES

places of respite and recreation

**8** COOLING STATION

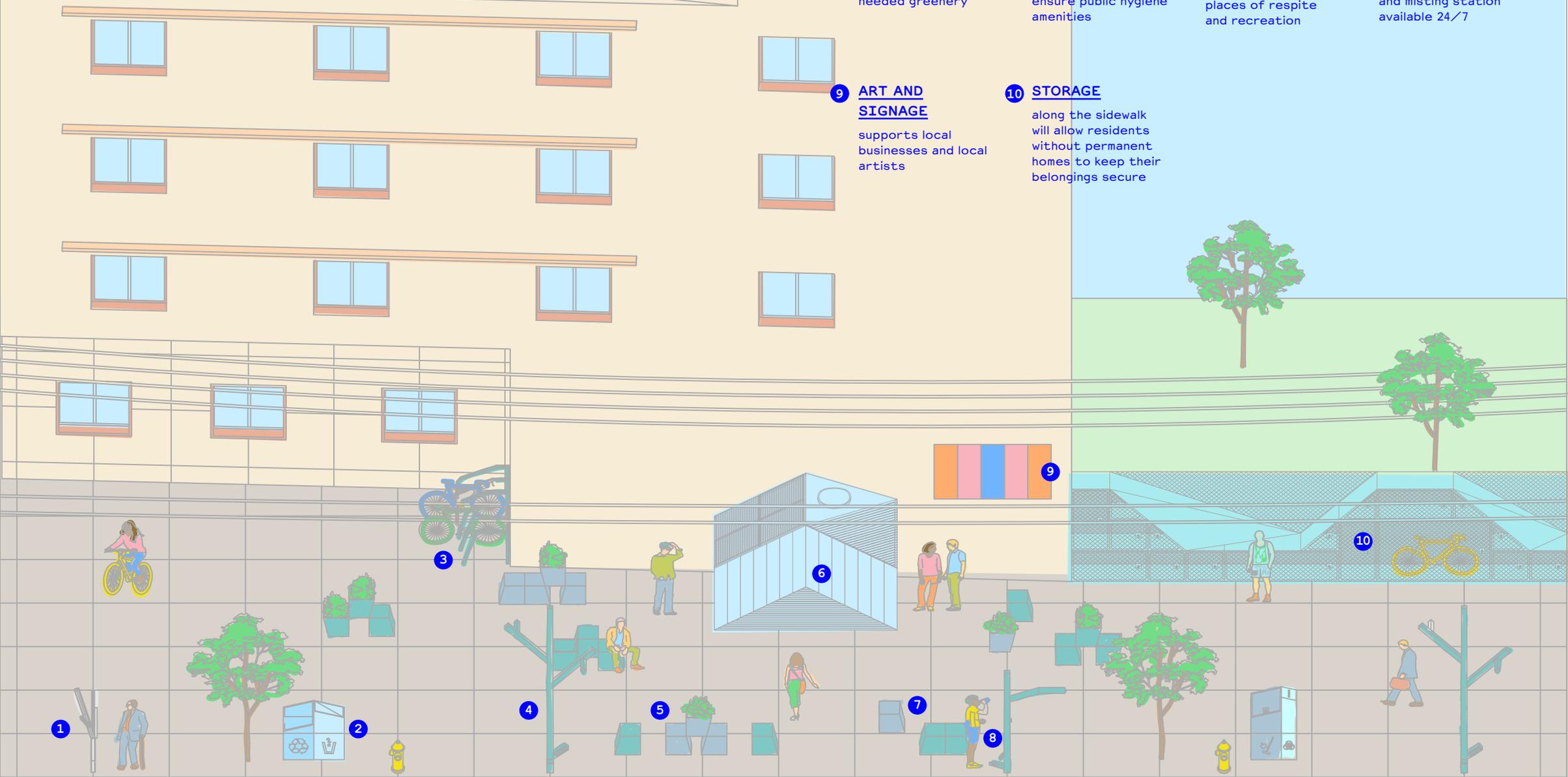
clean potable water and misting station available 24/7

**9** ART AND SIGNAGE

supports local businesses and local artists

**10** STORAGE

along the sidewalk will allow residents without permanent homes to keep their belongings secure



# "THE ROW"

"The Row" is a mixed use corridor of economic and cultural development. This will be the major commercial corridor linking Downtown LA to the Arts District and 6th Street Viaduct. Social enterprises, job training centers, and cultural spaces that support Skid Row residents will be incentivized along this corridor. Highlights areas of economic development along 6th Street with active storefronts that support small business, resident-led business incubators with additional areas for vending and sidewalk micro-enterprises in the public realm. The Street Scene also shows a "Complete Street" with bike/wheelchair lanes, along with speed bumps in the road to slow traffic. "Slow Zone" are specific areas that prioritize pedestrian safety over automobiles. Speed bumps, paving, and signage signal to automobiles this is a 25 MPH zone.

**1** LANDSCAPE/STORMWATER TREATMENT  
added permeability

**2** CONNECTION TO STOREFRONTS  
supports local businesses

**3** ART AND SIGNAGE  
adds vibrancy to the area and supports local Skid Row artists

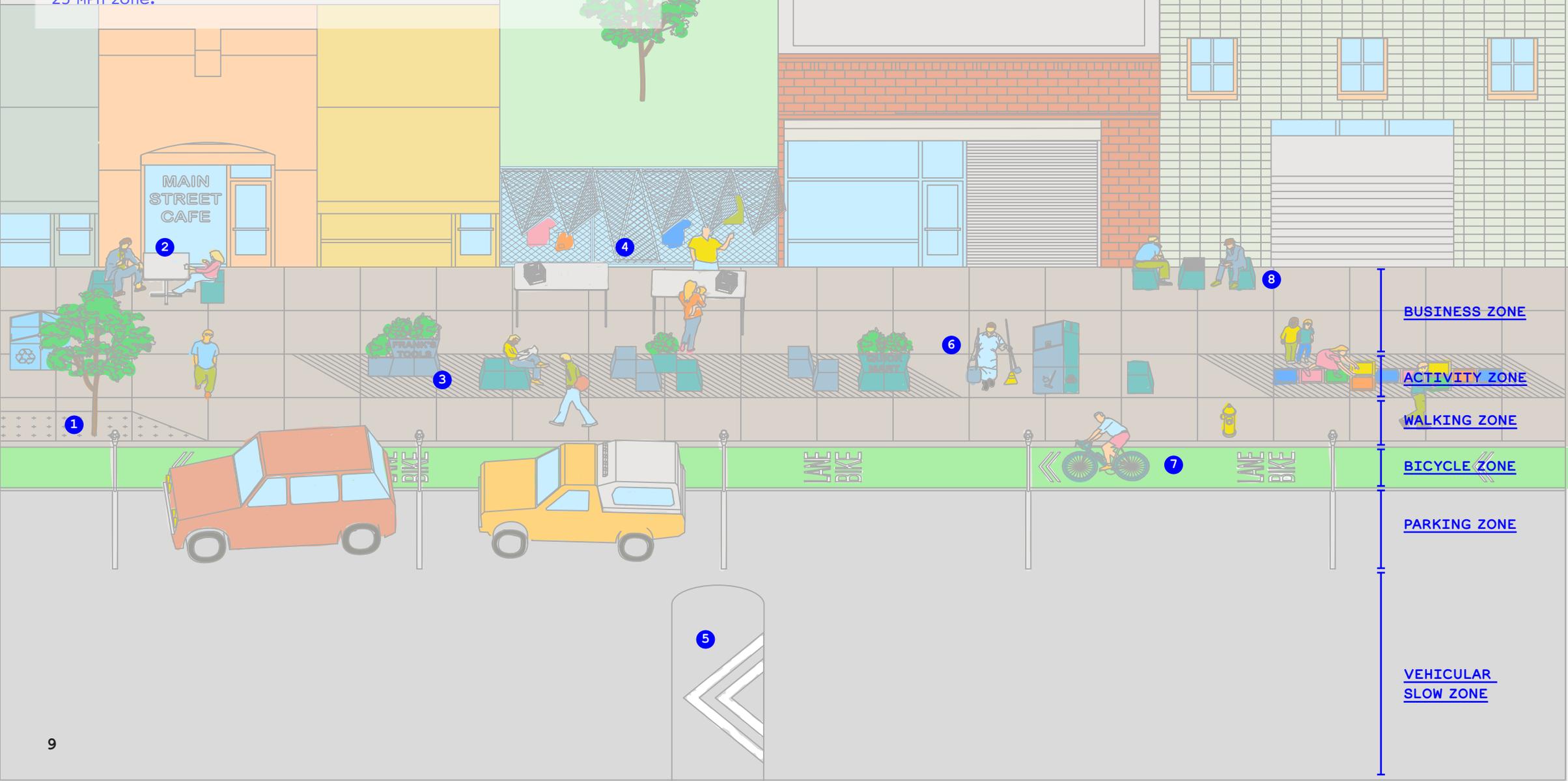
**4** VENDING SPACES AND VENDING FENCES  
on the sidewalk provides spaces for micro-enterprises

**5** SLOW ZONES  
speed bumps in street and signage to slow people

**6** COMMUNITY-IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
community staff on sidewalk cleaning up and providing job opportunities

**7** BIKE LANES/WHEELCHAIR LANES  
ensures clear alternative modes of transit and mobility. Alternative transport lanes are protected by parked cars along driving area

**8** BENCHES, SEATING, TABLES  
places of respite and recreation



BUSINESS ZONE

ACTIVITY ZONE

WALKING ZONE

BICYCLE ZONE

PARKING ZONE

VEHICULAR SLOW ZONE

# STREETSCAPE COMPONENTS

The following is a catalog of urban design street elements needed in the Skid Row neighborhood. The design and function of each element is specific to the place and culture of Skid Row. Some of the elements are tweaks to traditional streetscape elements, others are completely new interventions necessary to actively support the community. We accommodate for bodies, shopping carts, and tents– they are important aspects of the urban design landscape but introduced by the individual.

# FENCE #1 (SHADE / DISPLAY)

## CATEGORY



Healthy Living



Economic Development and Education

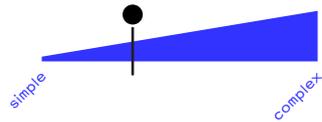


Recreation and Leisure

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

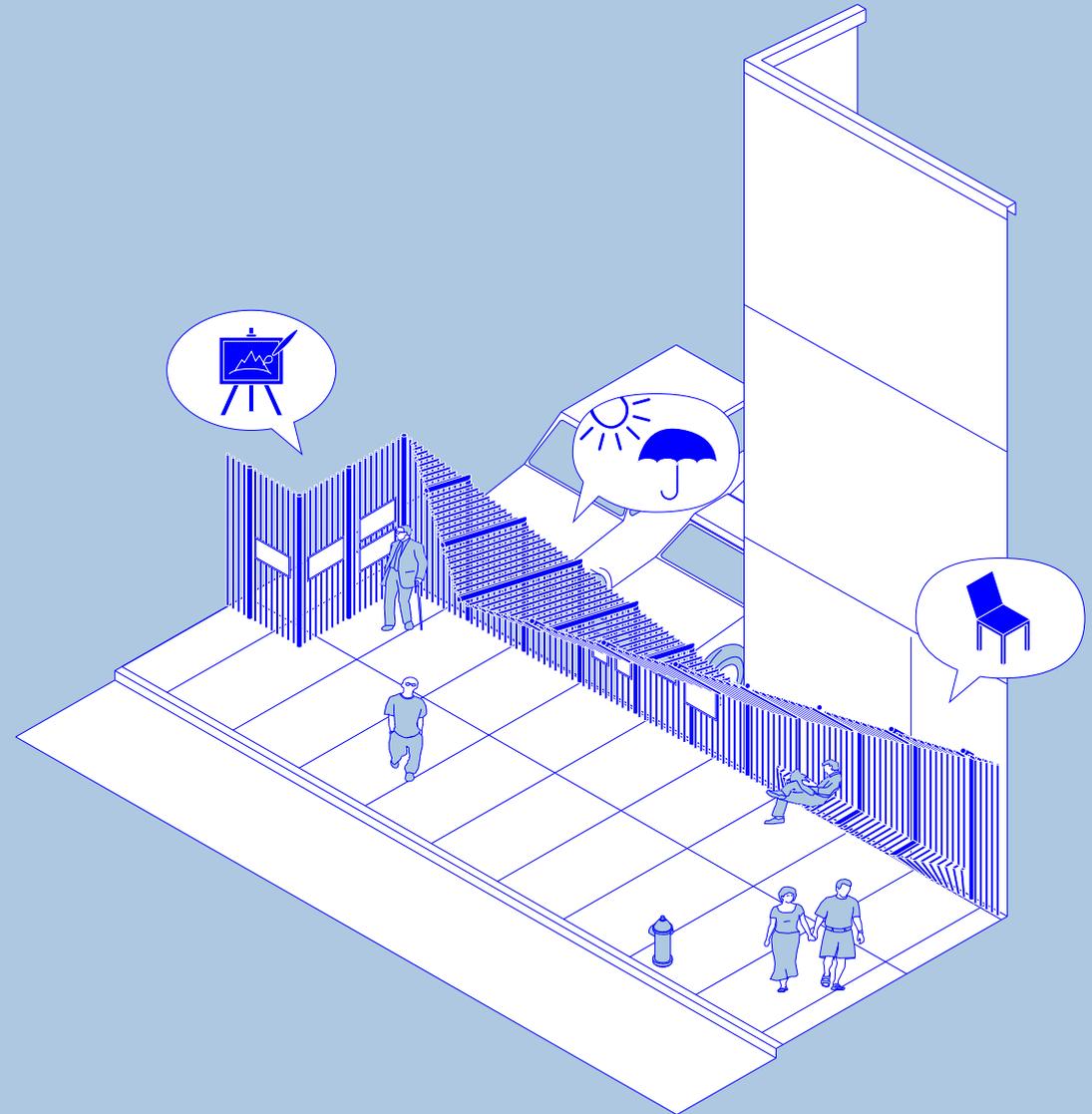
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

Fences in Skid Row should be more active and serve multiple purposes aside from demarcating private property. Fences can be infrastructure for murals and wayfinding signage, shade, seating and economic development.

A standard wrought iron fence is bent and manipulated to provide opportunities for shade and seating. Fences are also an opportunity to display and sell art or other articles.



# FENCE #2 (STORAGE)

## CATEGORY

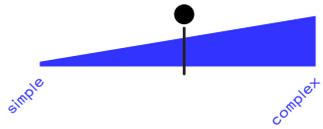


Community Safety

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

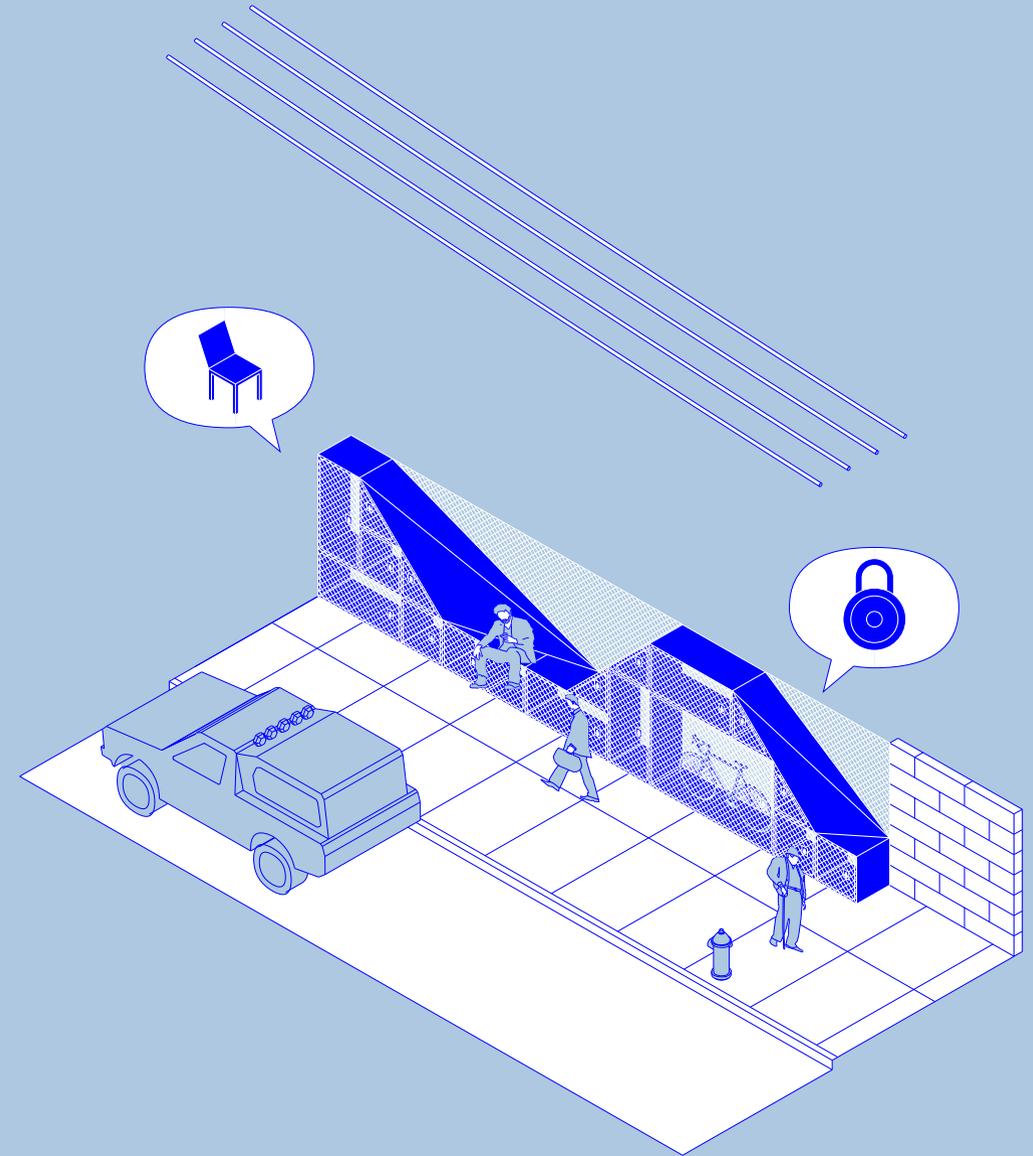
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

Fences in Skid Row should be more active and serve multiple purposes aside from demarcating private property. Fences can be infrastructure for murals and wayfinding signage, shade, seating and economic development.

The storage facility takes the standard chain-link fence, common throughout Skid Row, and simply adds on an extra layer of chain-link to secure property. This modifiable design can be easily integrated into existing public streets.



# FENCE #3 (SHADE / VENDING)

## CATEGORY

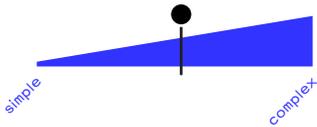


Economic Development and Education

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

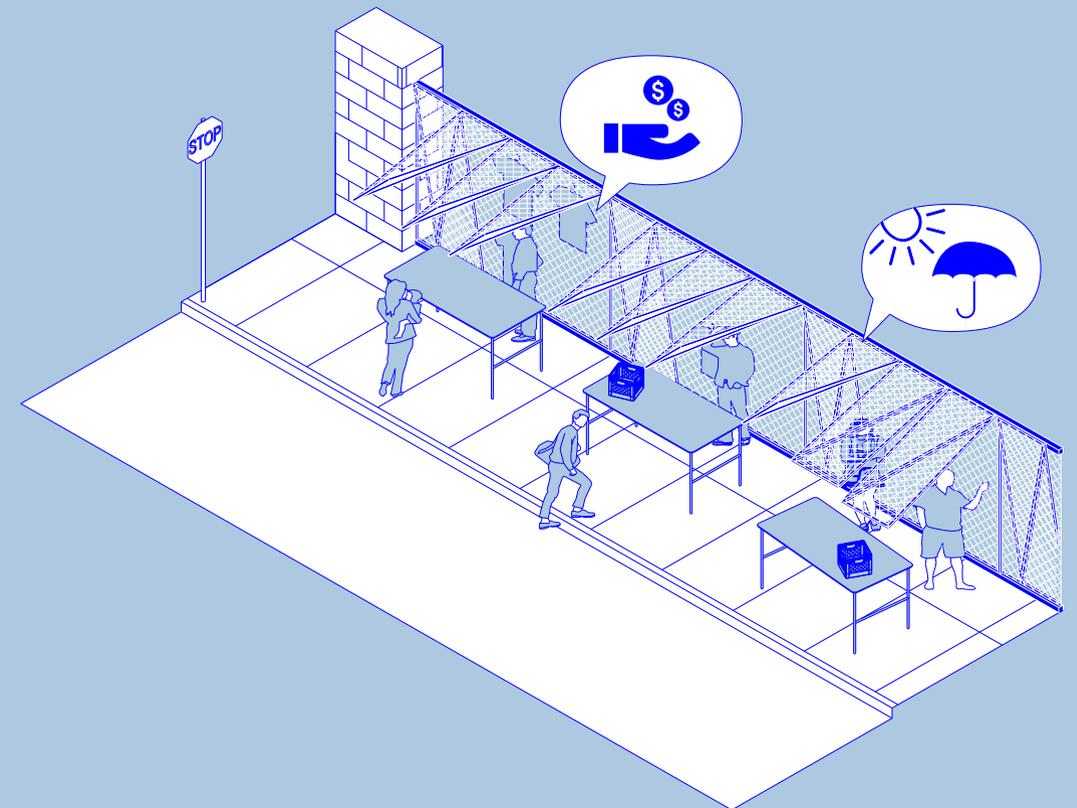
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

Fences in Skid Row should be more active and serve multiple purposes aside from demarcating private property. Fences can be infrastructure for murals and wayfinding signage, shade, seating and economic development.

This chain-link fence is triangulated to fold up to denote space and create shade for a pop-up market. These sidewalk markets can generate earned income and serve as a first step towards economic independence.



# UTILITY POLE #1 (EMERGENCY)

## CATEGORY

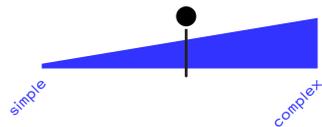


Community Safety

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

## IMPLEMENTATION

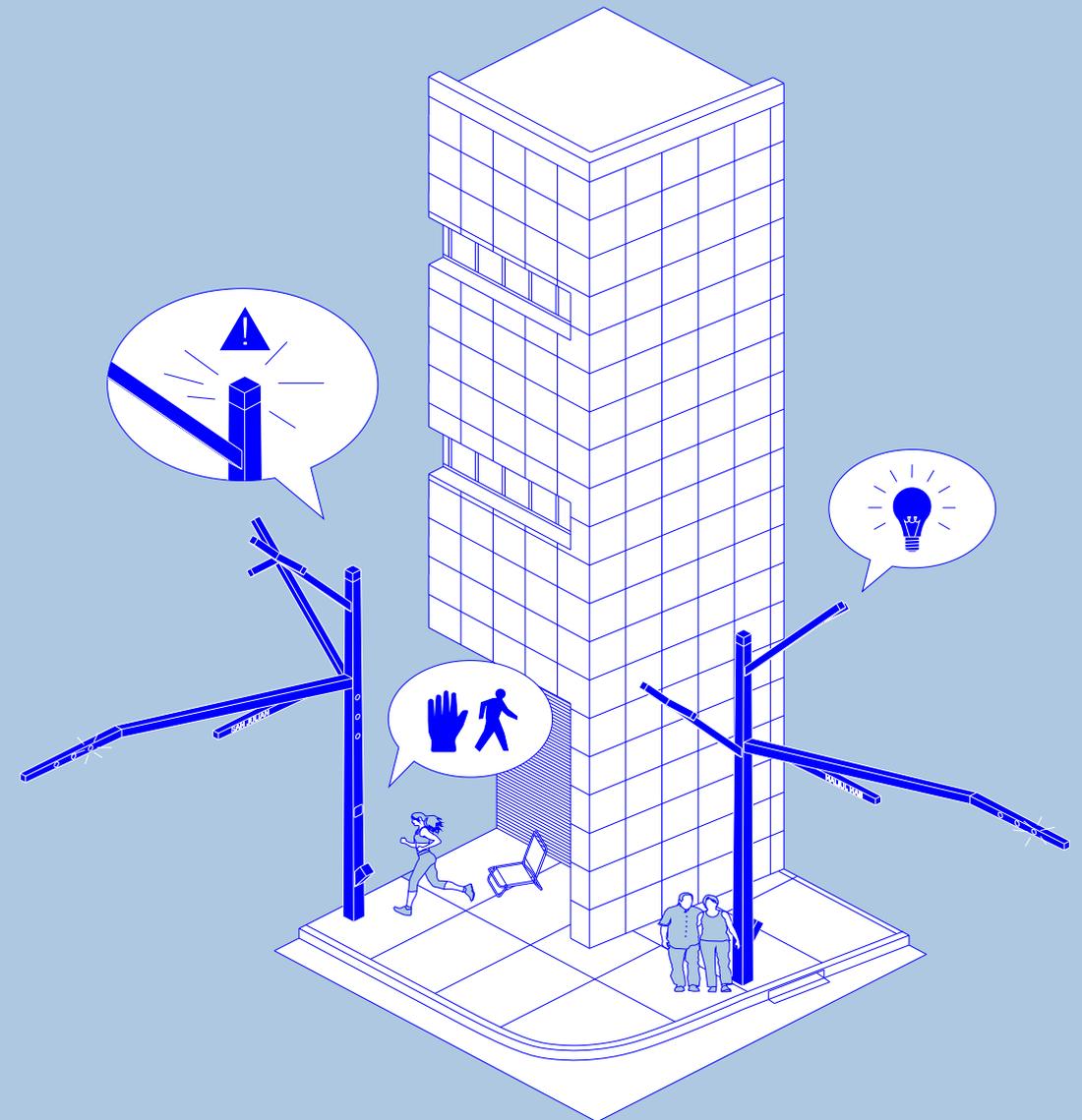


## PURPOSE

The installation of emergency call stations can provide immediate assistance for physical health, mental health, substance abuse, and immediate danger.

Traffic lights are also opportunities for additional lighting, wayfinding, signage, and communication, creating safer conditions for pedestrians and residents.

Located on highly-visible and active street corners in the community, these utility poles are scaled and positioned to establish well-lit, unique markers, identifying safe areas from a distance



# UTILITY POLE #2 (CHARGING)

## CATEGORY



Community Safety

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

## IMPLEMENTATION

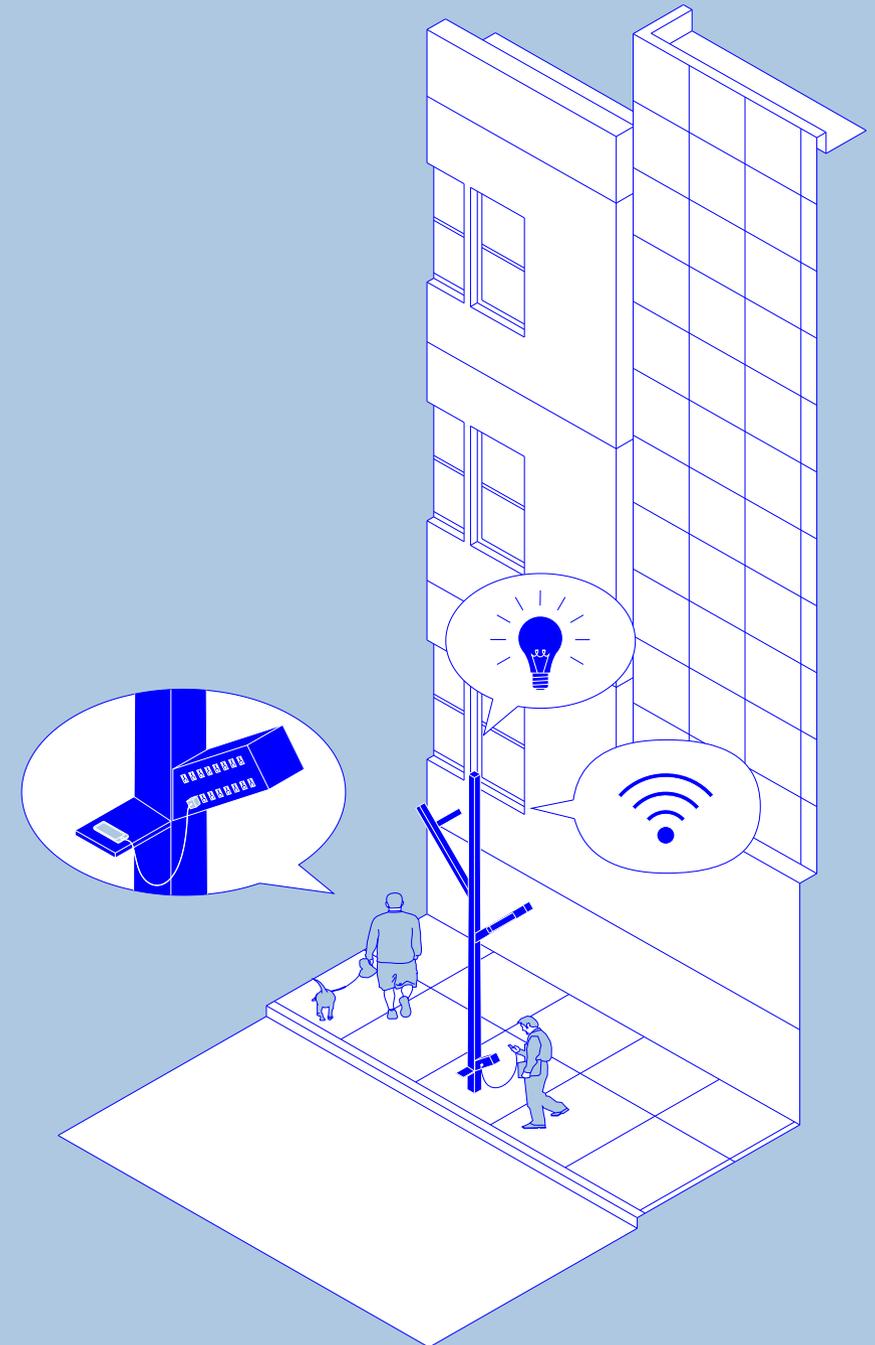


## PURPOSE

The Charging Station will provide a place to charge cell phones and access Wi-Fi for personal and professional matters.

Unobtrusively located in typical mid-block conditions appropriate for protracted use, the Charging Station provide access to resources rarely found in public streets.

When paired with additional shaded elements, such as landscape, these mid-block zones create safe spaces for comfortable respite.



# UTILITY POLE #3 (COMMUNICATION)

## CATEGORY



Community Safety

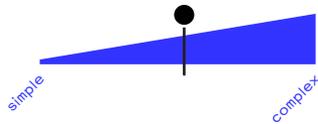


Recreation and Leisure

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

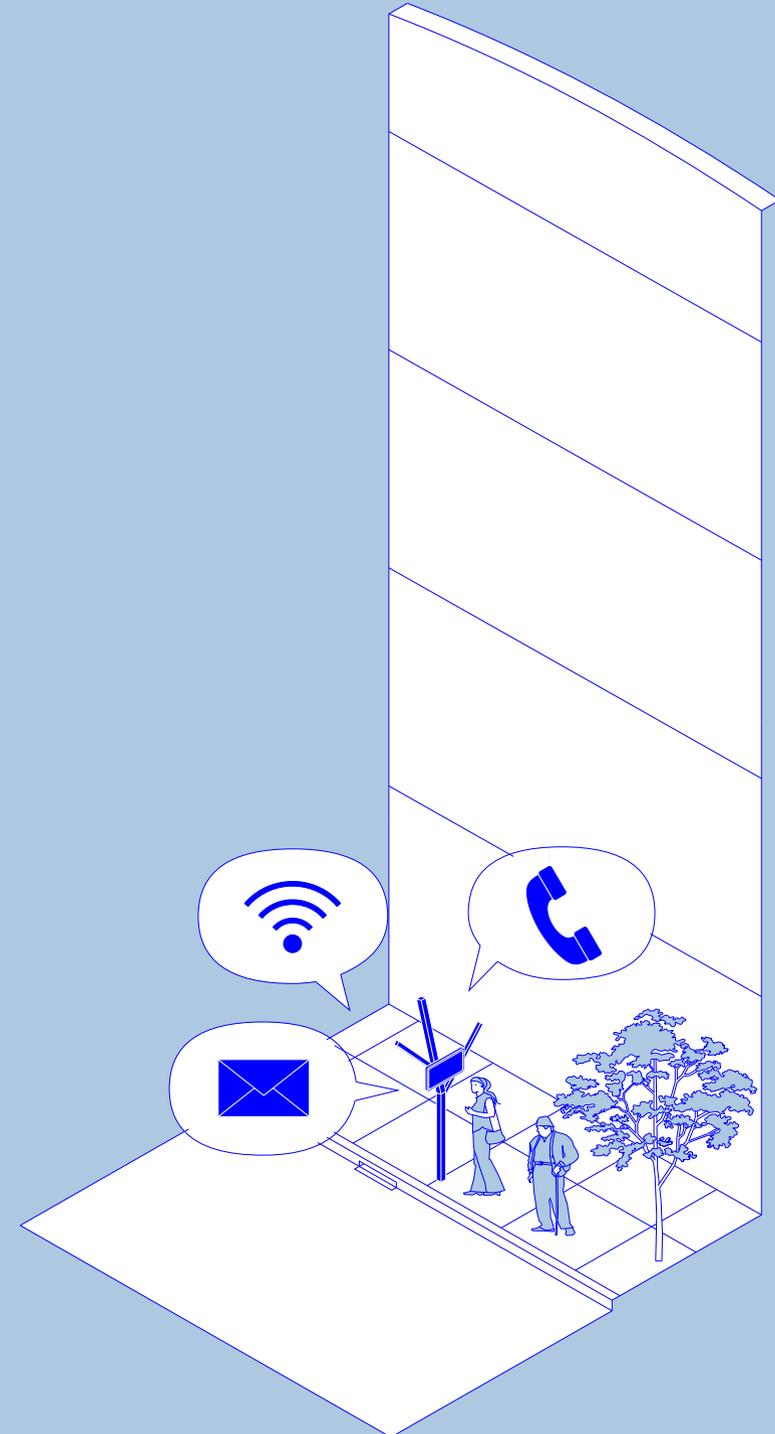
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

There is no public infrastructure to support communications via telephones or internet. Access to the internet and online resources is necessary for most aspects of modern life. Meanwhile, many Skid Row streets are not well-lit, creating unsafe conditions. An adaptation of a standardized street light, this multi-pronged utility pole resolves some of these issues while formally suggesting its various functions. This will ensure all residents have an outlet for communication and connections: a 21st century phone booth.

In the community, there is currently no public infrastructure to support communications via telephones or internet. The Communication Station will provide a place to charge cell phones, access the internet, and make phone calls. This will ensure all Skid Row residents have an outlet for communication and connections: a 21st century phone booth.



# UTILITY POLE #4 (COOLING)

## CATEGORY



Fundamental Human Needs



Healthy Living

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

To provide safe and clean water for drinking and cooling 24/7 throughout the neighborhood that is well maintained and fully accessible.

The homeless often face issues locating safe drinking water, a public health concern that leads to dehydration and other health issues. Combining a drinking fountain with a misting/cooling station as a piece of standard street infrastructure provides vital relief in the summer months.



# SIDEWALKS / STREETS (WATER COLLECTION)

## CATEGORY

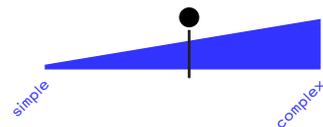


Healthy Living

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

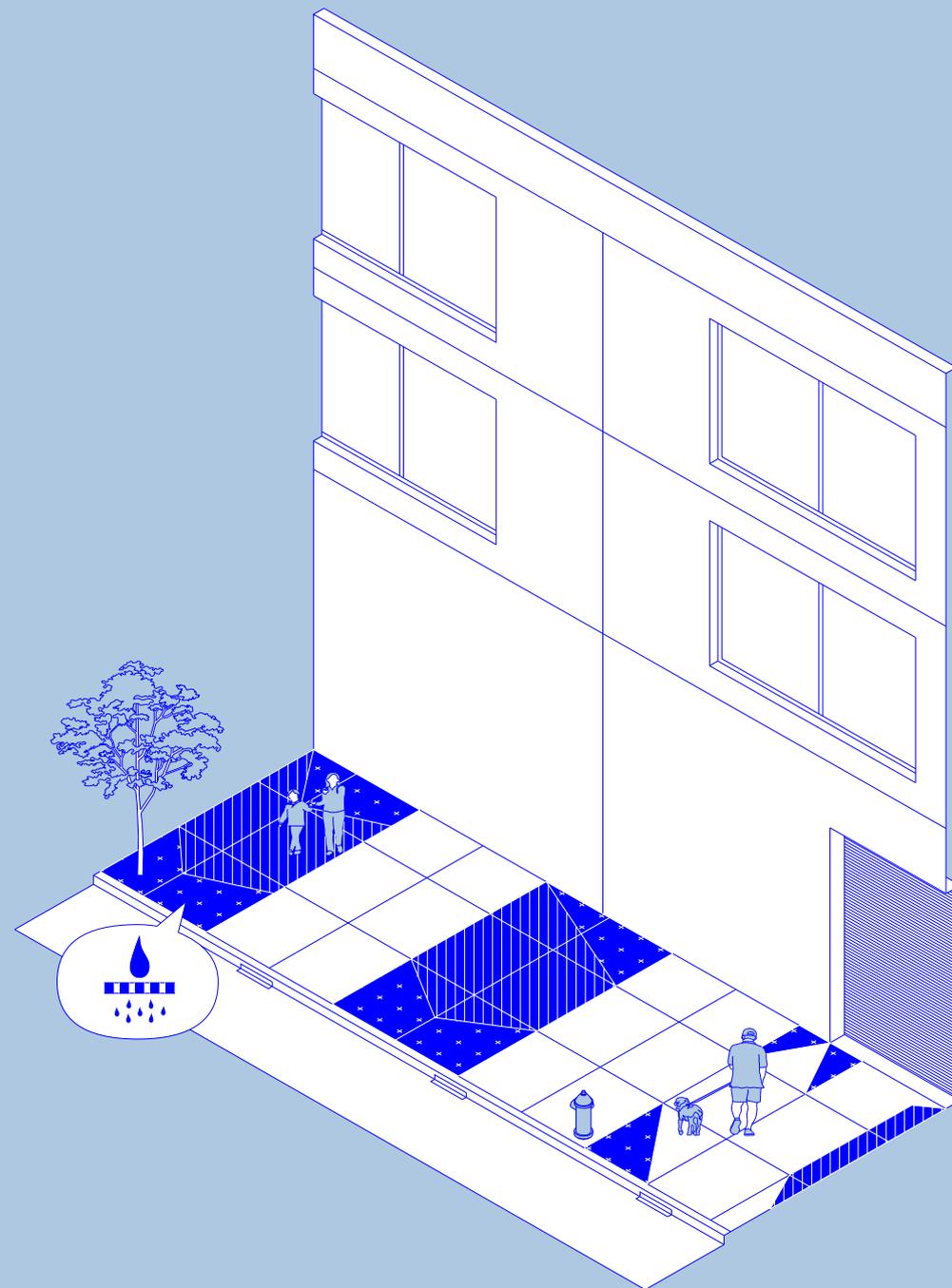
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

Patching sidewalks with a softer surface, like permeable concrete or grass pavers, will allow more water to percolate into the soil and provide relief for the overwhelmed existing storm-water drainage system. This will help protect the homeless in the event of seasonal storms and flooding, which can damage belongings and cause exposure to illness-bearing bacteria.

By reducing the amount of concrete in the sidewalk, these green permeable patches will also help minimize the heat island effect commonly found in dense, urban areas.



# SIDEWALKS / STREETS (MOBILITY)

## CATEGORY



Healthy Living



Community Safety

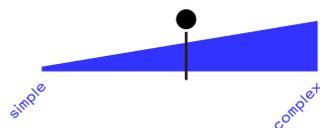


Recreation and Leisure

## BUDGET

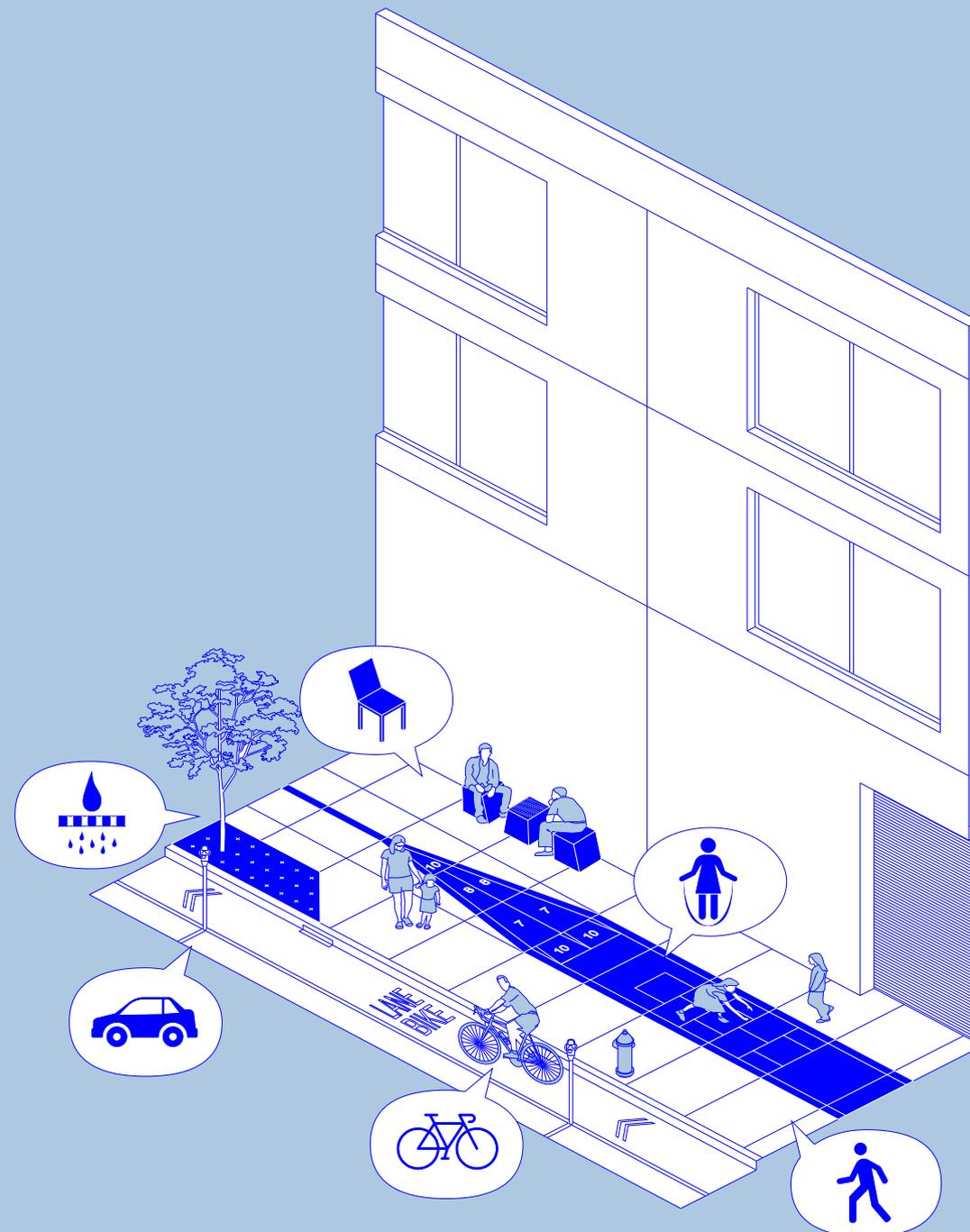
\$\$\$\$\$

## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

Improving pedestrian, bicycle, and car safety, and access to and throughout Skid Row will help in community connectivity while resolving isolation problems. When controlled and monitored, the sidewalk can become a safe, active place for informal gatherings and play. By applying various surface treatments, streets and sidewalks can also become opportunities for recreation or community wayfinding.



# TRASHCANS

## CATEGORY



Fundamental Human Needs



Healthy Living

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

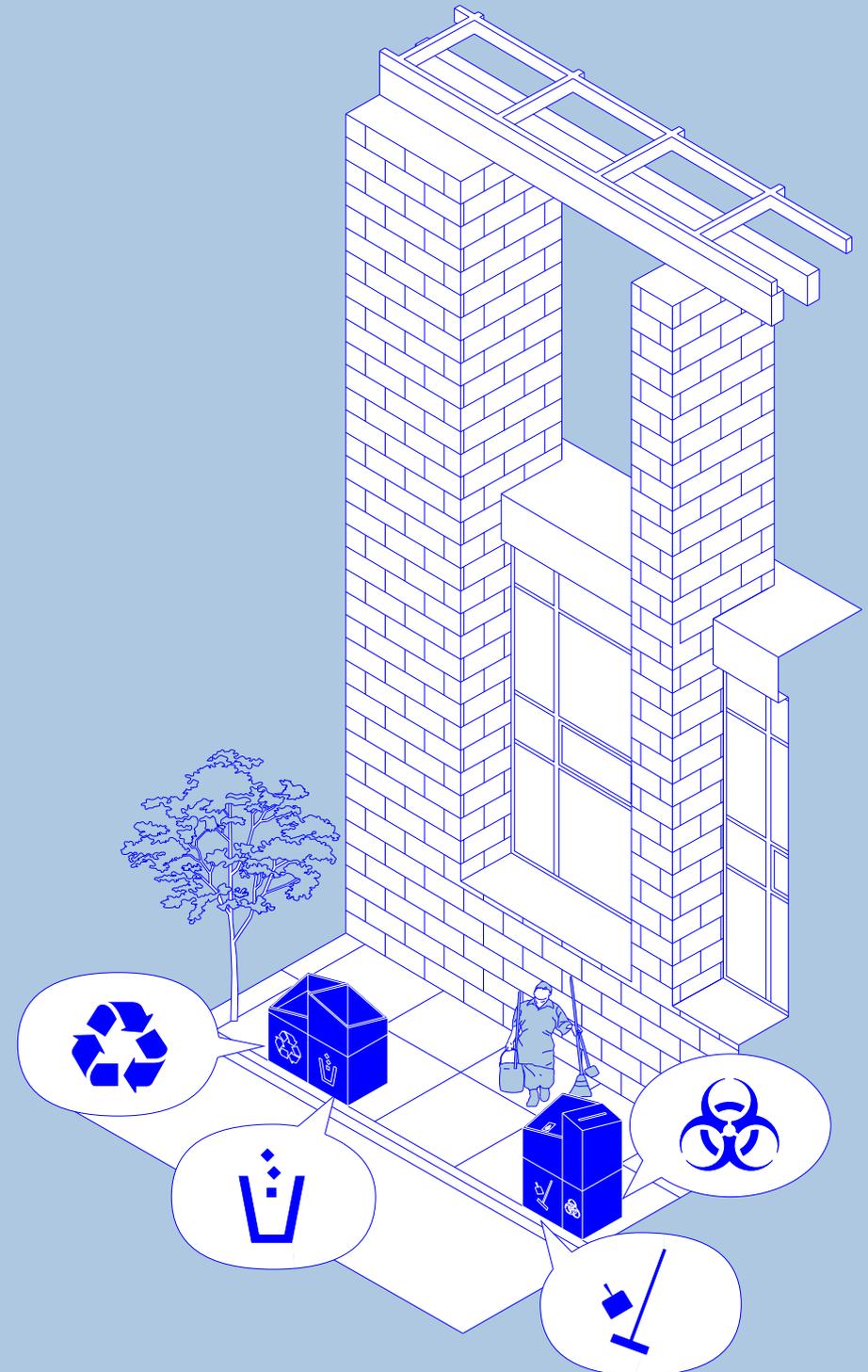
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

Dedicated bins for recycling, trash, used needle collection, clothing donation, and cleaning supplies storage can be placed either in groups or as singular units in areas lacking in access to proper disposal methods. This modulation allows these units to be spread throughout the community – combined and clustered during events or used individually on a daily basis.

A designated area for disposable trash can be placed along the sidewalk at every corner and emptied daily. This allows for passersby to discard trash and for sidewalk residents to dispose of their daily refuse. This is also a designated area to place recyclables for city pick up that also allows for easy can collection. Additionally, a donation platform allows for good condition items to be donated for public use. Items include clothing, blankets, food, and other items that can be reused by residents in the area. Cleaning supplies such as brooms, cleaning agents, and other materials allow sidewalk residents to clean up their immediate public space.



# SEATING, LANDSCAPE, SIGNAGE

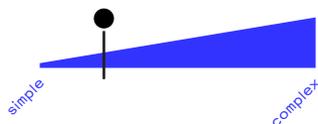
## CATEGORY

-  Healthy Living
-  Recreation and Leisure
-  Economic Development
-  Creativity and Self-expression

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

## IMPLEMENTATION



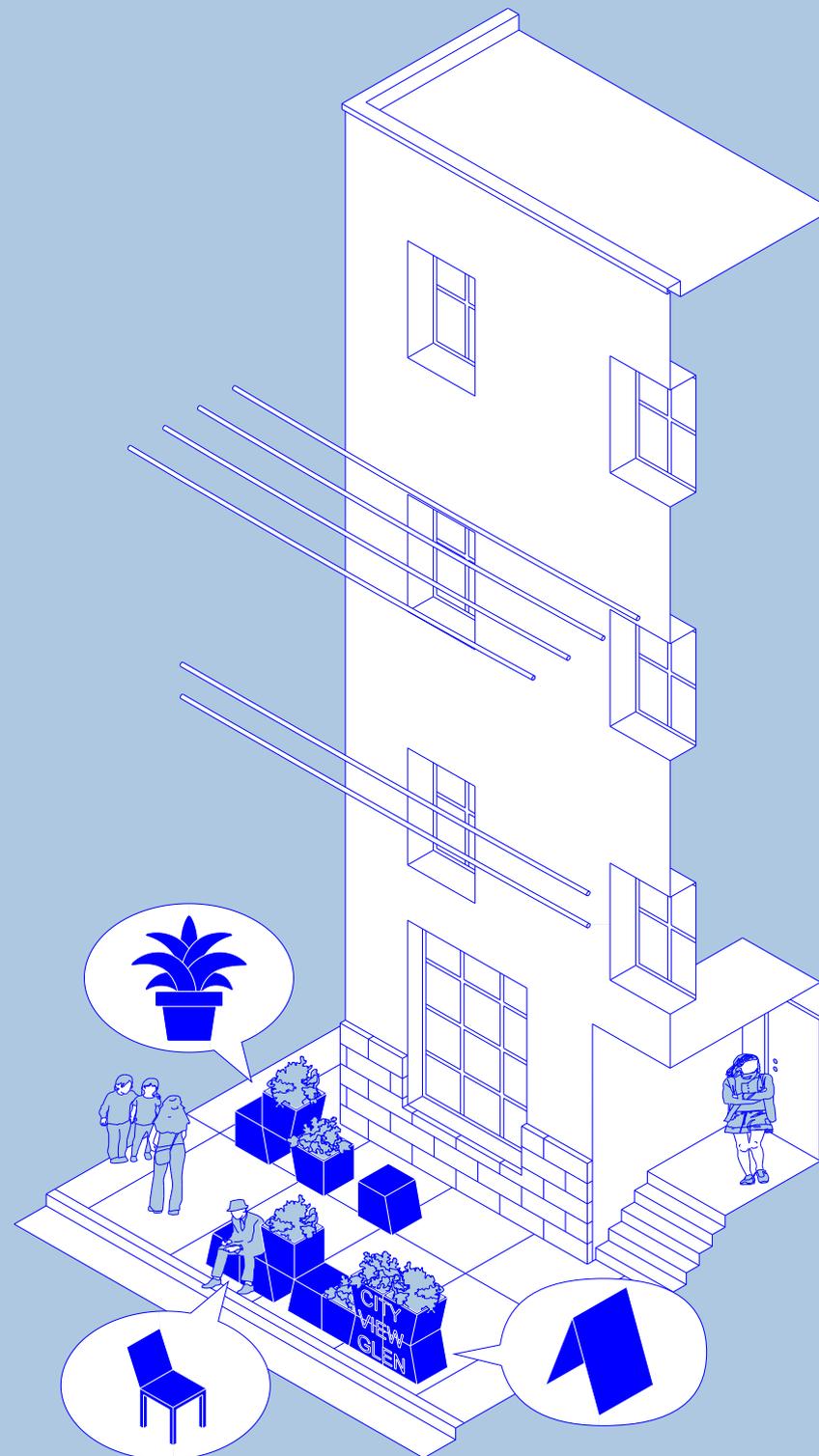
## PURPOSE

Based on their configurations, these 5-sided cubes can form blocks of planters or seating, adding green spaces to this landscape-poor neighborhood. These multi-functional elements also provide opportunities for community way-finding or storytelling, functioning as bulletin boards for community announcements or store signage. These elements can also mitigate traffic and control community circulation day-to-day or during special events.

These elements provide planters, shade and green space while simultaneously acting as seating and tables.

These planters are also available to the community for planting small, individual gardens, fostering a sense of ownership and caretaking.

Additional signage will point out landmarks of interest to encourage visitors to meander through Skid Row. This will be an opportunity for local artists to collaborate on public art pieces. This signage can also commemorate history and important people in the community.



# BIKE RACKS

## CATEGORY



Healthy Living



Recreation and Leisure

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

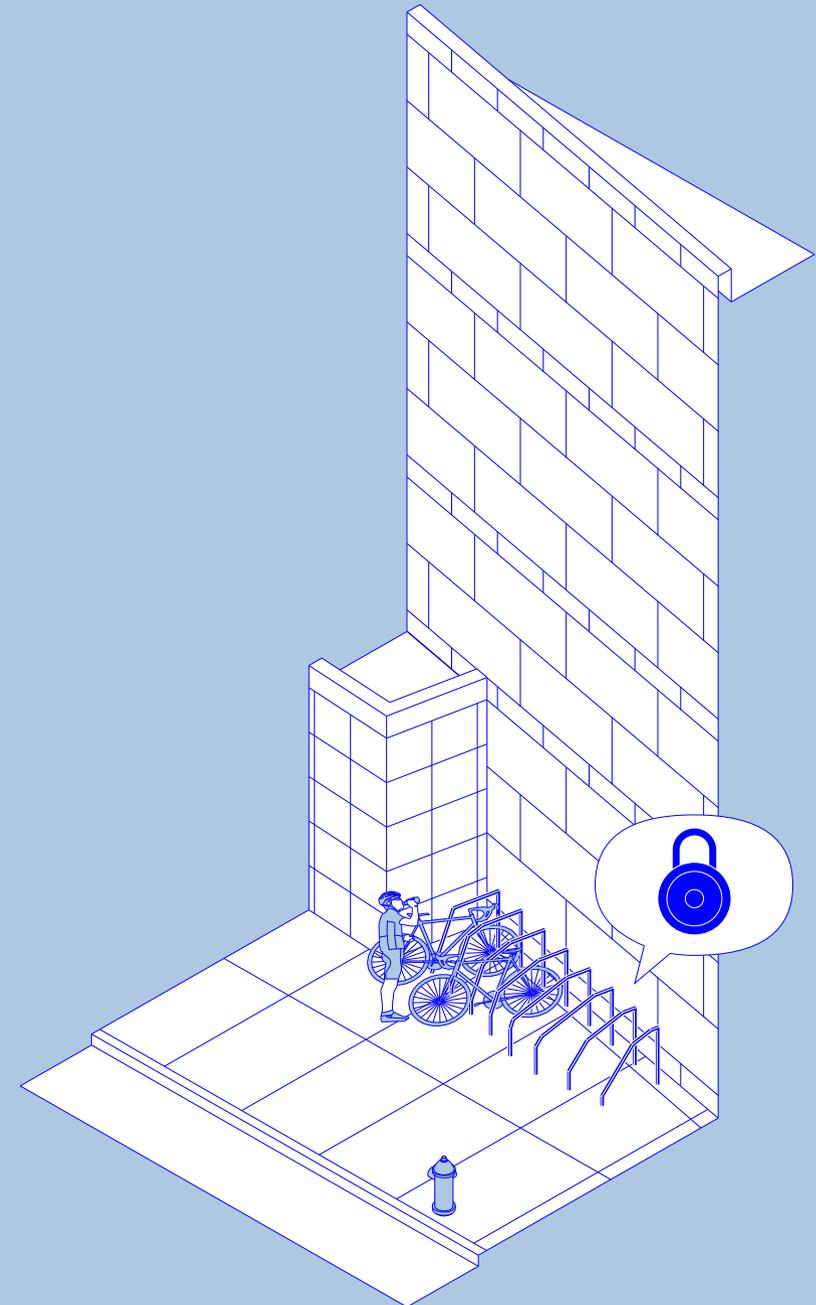
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

To provide secure areas to lock bikes for short term usage.

Bicycles provide mobility and are often the primary mode of transportation throughout the community. Visible, integrated sidewalk bike racks can safely secure these valuable assets.



# BIKE STORAGE

## CATEGORY



Healthy Living

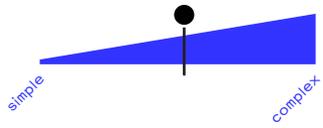


Recreation and Leisure

## BUDGET

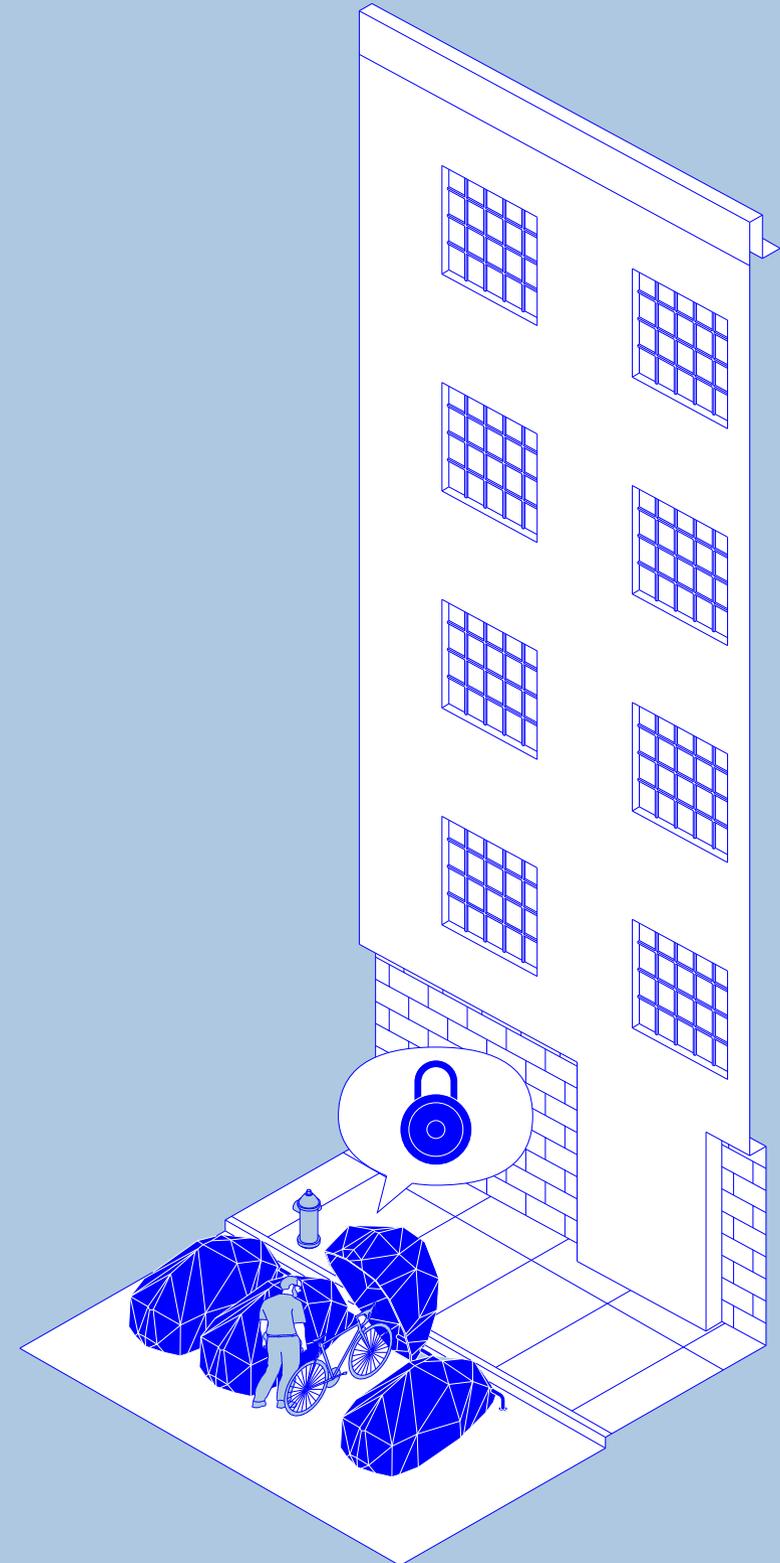
\$\$\$\$\$

## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

To provide secure areas to lock bikes for long term usage for over 8 hours a day. This will allow residents to go to work and complete errands while ensuring their property is secured properly. This also provides storage for helmets, pumps, and other bike related accessories and acts like a garage.



# BATHROOMS AND SHOWERS

## CATEGORY



Fundamental Human Needs

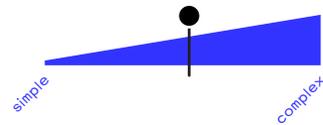


Healthy Living

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

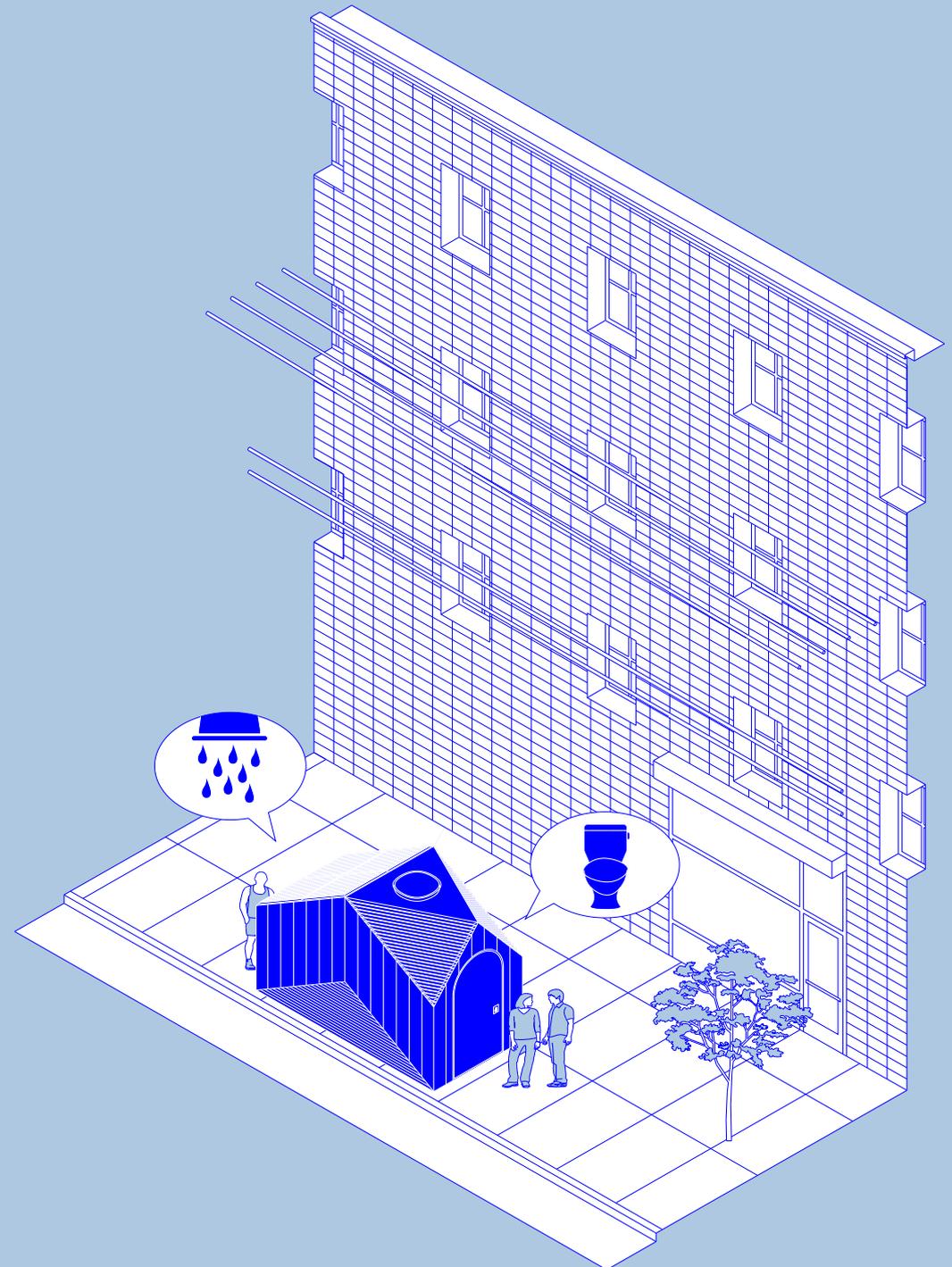
## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

To provide safe, clean and decent public restrooms and showers 24/7 throughout the neighborhood that is well maintained and fully accessible.

Public bathrooms can be installed on wider sidewalks or in vacant lots, providing much-needed access to hygiene and sanitation in a more private setting.



# STORAGE FACILITIES

## CATEGORY



Healthy Living



Economic Development and Education



Community Safety

## BUDGET

\$\$\$\$\$

## IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE

Storage along the sidewalk will allow residents without permanent homes to keep their belongings secure while they run errands, shower, go on interviews, talk a walk, etc. This will ensure their belongings are not seized improperly or stolen and they can access their belongings 24 hours, 7 days a week.

One of homelessness' main challenges is a lack of access to safe storage facilities. Many are faced with having to continuously transport belongings or leave them open to theft or pickups. Adding more storage lockers is a proven, easy solution that can be a first step in providing additional flexibility and options to ease the burden of homelessness.

When sidewalk conditions allow, larger storage units can be adapted to fold down to add seating opportunities and places of rest. The storage lockers are made of a porous chain-link material for ease of maintenance.

