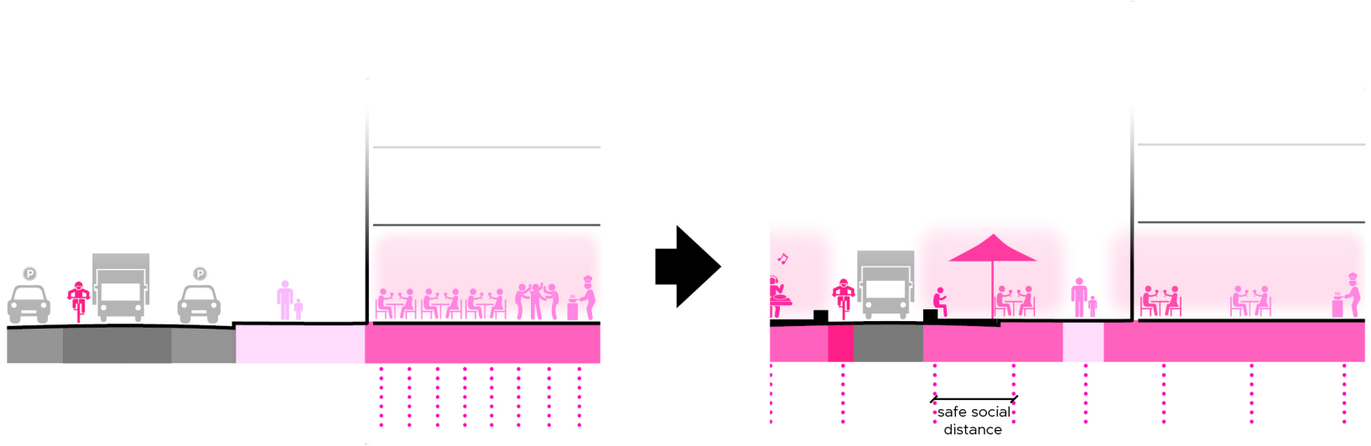
FLATIRON & NOMAD

Flatiron & NoMad Public Space & Streetscape Study
COVID-19 Recovery
June 2020

Prepared for the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

OSD PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

INTRODUCTION



In response to the impacts of COVID-19 on Flatiron & NoMad, the OSD team assessed the district's existing physical and social conditions and proposes recommendations for expanding business operations to enhance social distancing, quality of life, and the overall neighborhood experience. Two online surveys, a focus group comprised of ground floor business stakeholders, and in-person field observations, led by Project for Public Spaces (PPS), identified business owner concerns and considered the public realm as a potential lifeline for business operations.

As such, the OSD team analyzed how streets, sidewalks, plazas, and parks were being utilized both before NYC transitioned into Phase Two of reopening on June 22nd, and thereafter through month's end. Pedestrian, subway, and bus ridership data was gathered and analyzed comparing June 2020 with pre-COVID June 2019.

Local and global precedents, in combination with the Partnership's legacy of public programming and district enhancement, were channeled into recommendations at both the individual business and district-wide scales, that may provide functional solutions for Flatiron & NoMad.

1. District Analysis **4**

Data 4

Ground Floor Stakeholder Focus Group & Business Recovery Surveys 16

Field Observations 22

2. Public Realm Recommendations **26**

Individual Businesses 2 8

District-wide 33

Project Renderings 49

3. Contact Information **65**

BUSINESS LOCATION & TYPES

- Fast Casual
- Restaurants
- Café and Bars
- Service and Hospitality
- Retail

Fast-casual locations tend to cluster together, and the three outlined are near subway stations and bus stops.

https://www.citiesense.com/

MAJOR OFFICE BUILDINGS

Largest business spaces (RSF)

The largest office buildings are predominantly between Madison Avenue and Park Avenue South.

There is limited mixed-use activity in this area.

Data source: Flatiron Partnership

MIXED-USE SIDE STREETS - WEST OF THE PARK

Streets West of Park
Streets East of Park

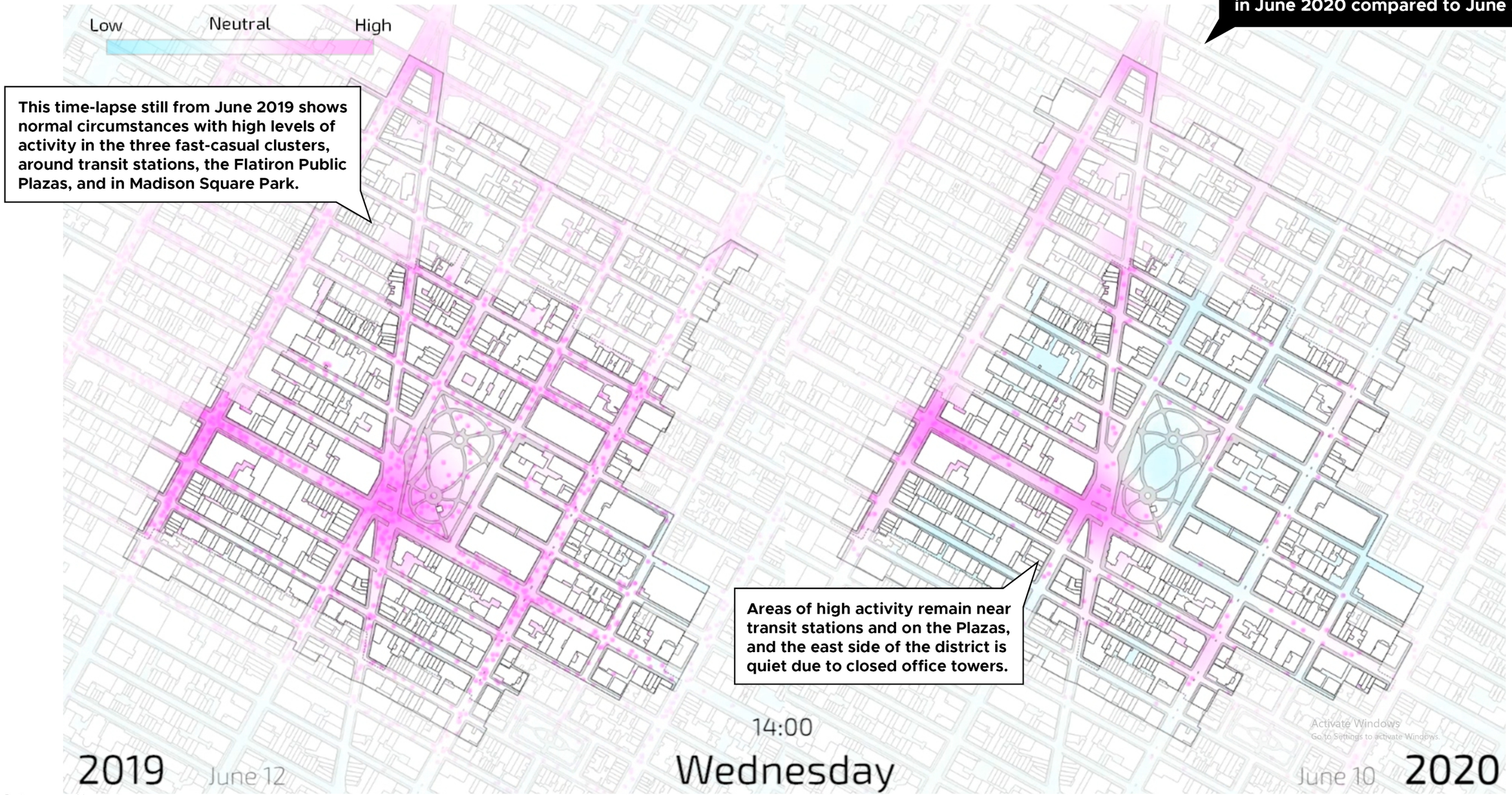
Streets west of the Park offer more mixed-use than those east of the Park. The blocks east of Madison Square Park are home to large office tenants and fewer ground floor establishments.

Hill Country BBQ

Ulivo

BXL Zoute

PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY - JUNE 2019 v JUNE 2020

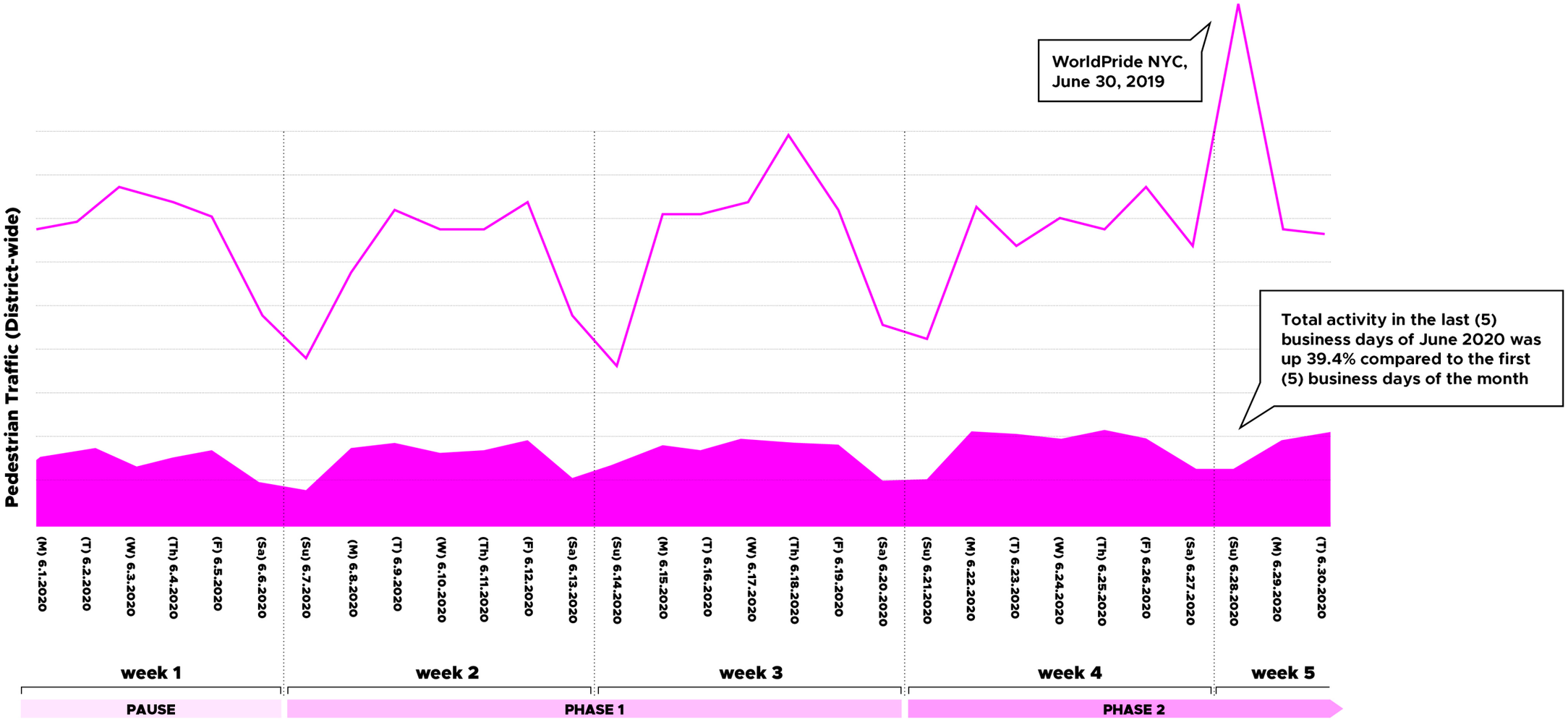


Data source: Unacast

DAILY PEDESTRIAN AVERAGE (reduction in 2020 v 2019)

2019 Pedestrian Activity

2020 Pedestrian Activity



Source: Unacast

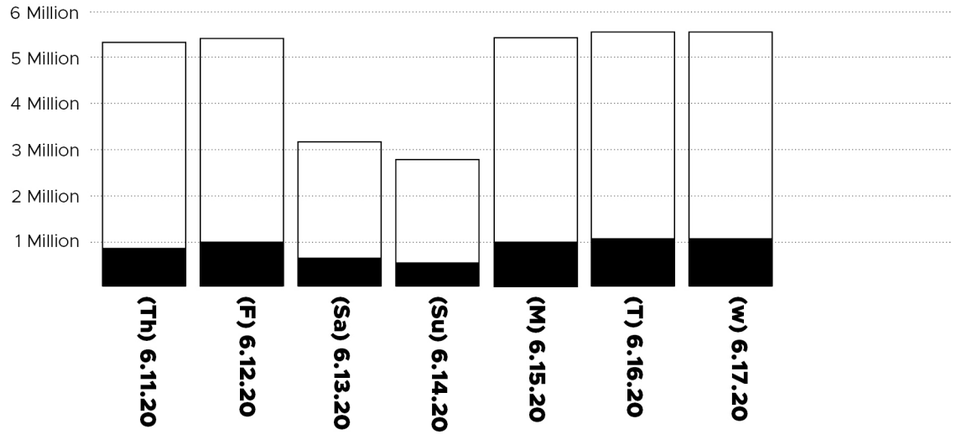
DAILY BUS & SUBWAY RIDERSHIP - WEEKDAY (CITYWIDE)

2019 (SUBWAY)
2020 (SUBWAY)
2019 (BUS)
2020 (BUS)

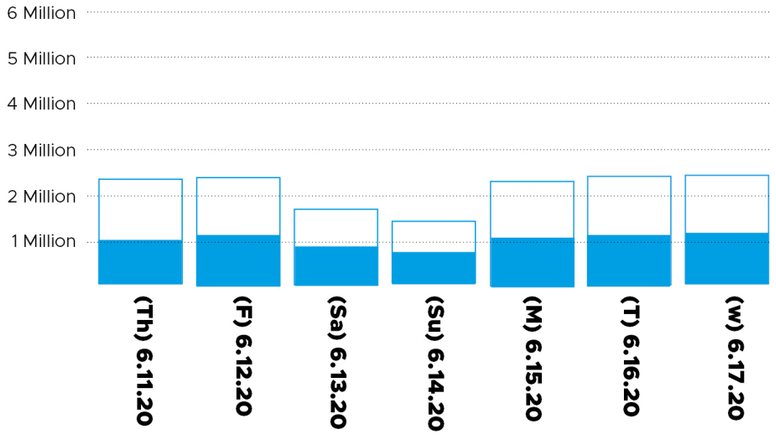
Sideway ridership is down ~83% compared to 2019

MTA bus ridership decreased at a smaller rate, down -53%. For the first time in decades, buses had more ridership than the subway.

SUBWAY RIDERSHIP



BUS RIDERSHIP

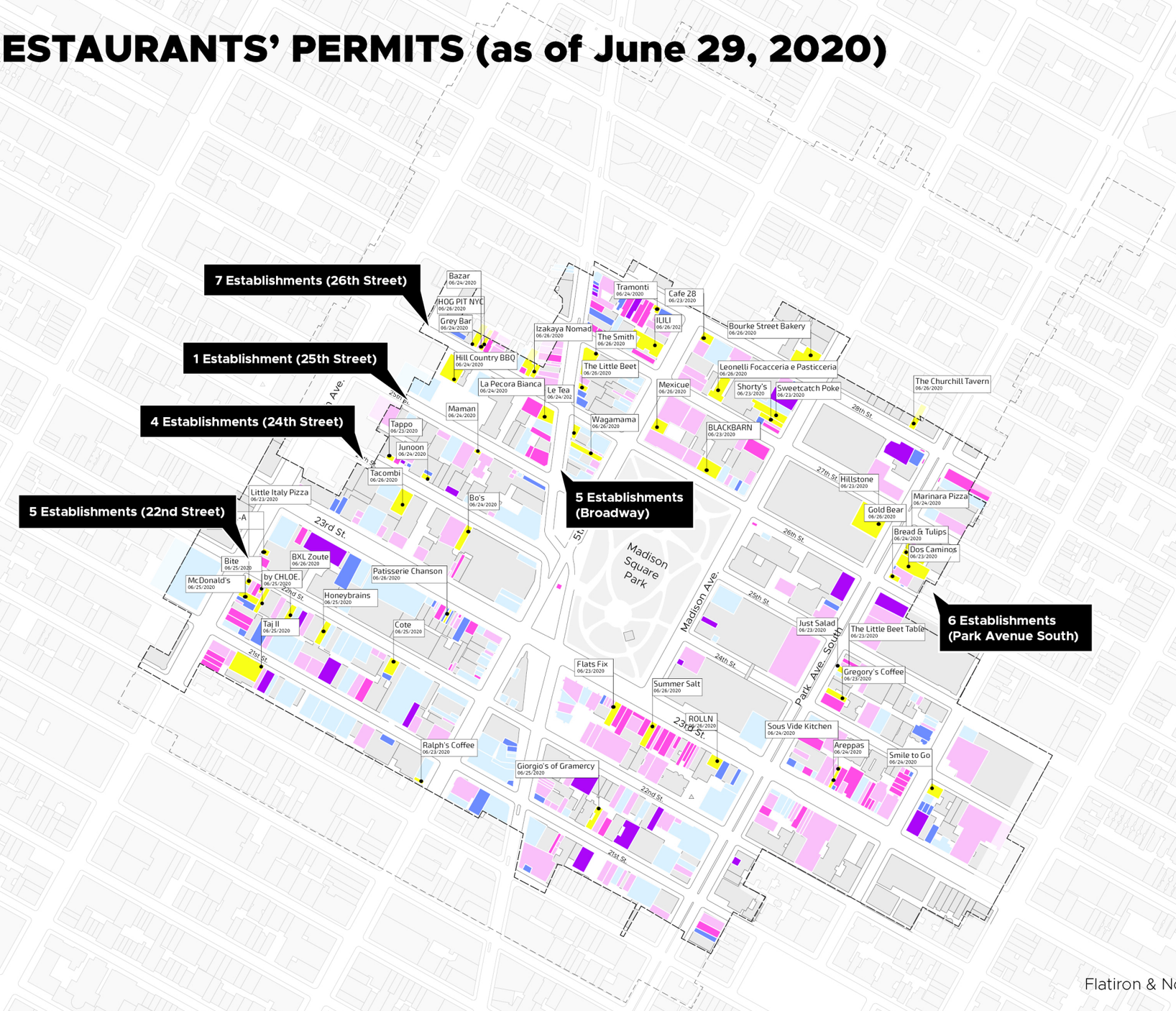


According to studies, vehicular traffic in NYC is down 35-50% compared to 2019.

Source: https://new.mta.info/coronavirus/ridership

NYC ‘OPEN RESTAURANTS’ PERMITS (as of June 29, 2020)

- Fast Casual
- Restaurants
- Café and Bars
- Service and Hospitality
- Retail
- ‘Open Restaurant’



Data source: Flatiron Partnership

The OSD Team - OSD + PPS

SIDEWALK WIDTHS

- 0-6’
- 6-9’

Social distancing is hard/not possible

- 9-12’
- 12-15’

Social distancing may be possible but only for people walking single-file

- 15-18’
- 18-21’

Social distancing is possible for both pedestrians walking through and for sidewalk dining

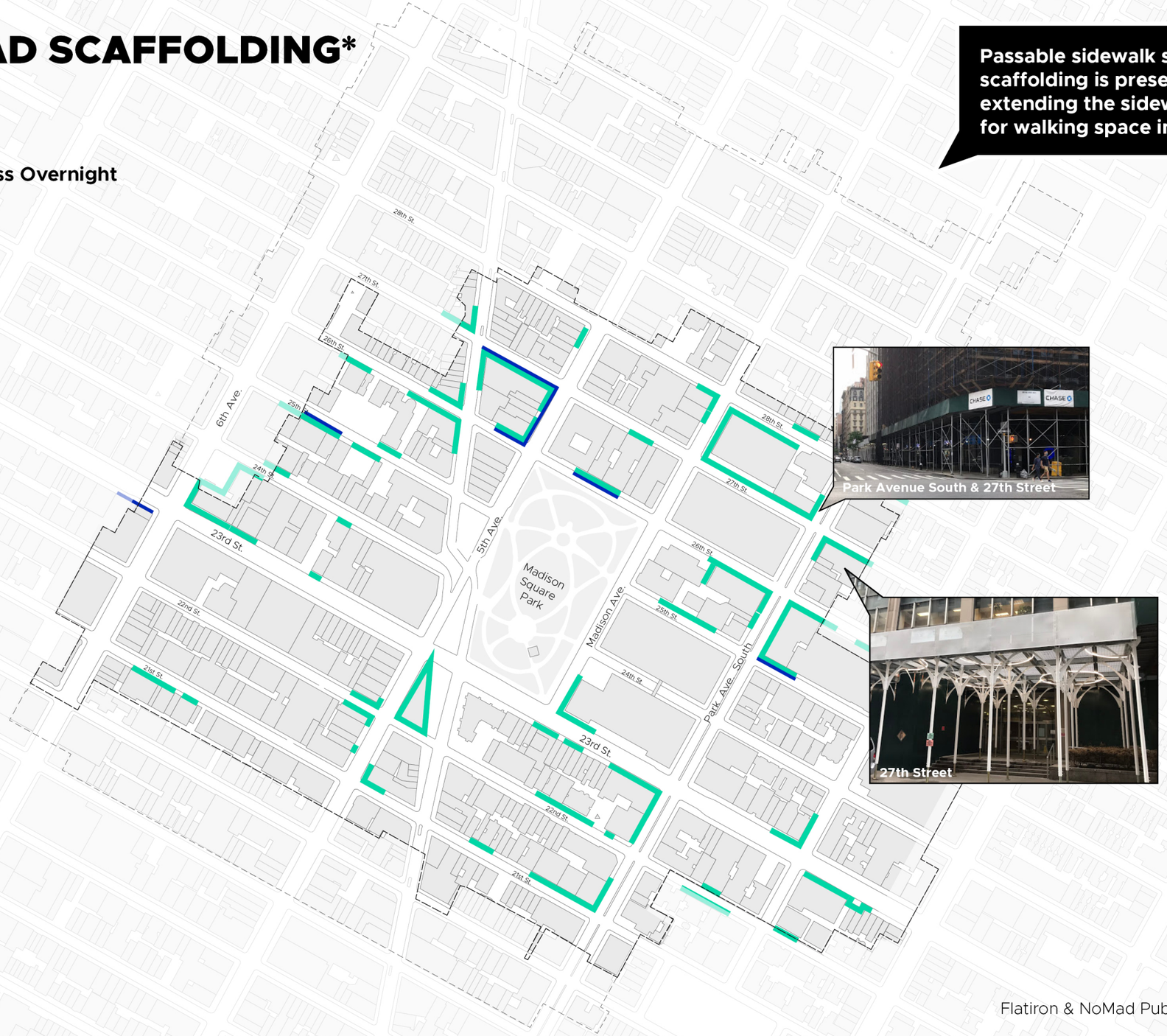
Source: https://www.sidewalkwidths.nyc/

FLATIRON & NOMAD SCAFFOLDING*

Sidewalk Sheds
Total Linear Length ft: 10,092
Total Number: 57

Recurring Location for Homeless Overnight

Passable sidewalk space is narrowed when scaffolding is present. We recommend extending the sidewalk into curbside lanes for walking space in these areas.



Park Avenue South & 27th Street

27th Street

Data source: Flatiron Partnership
*as of winter 2020

COOL STREETS

Regular Shade

Afternoon Sun

A solar study reveals that east-west cross streets are shaded by tall buildings through the district and are cooler than wide north-south avenues during warm months.

Data source: ONE NYC 3D model

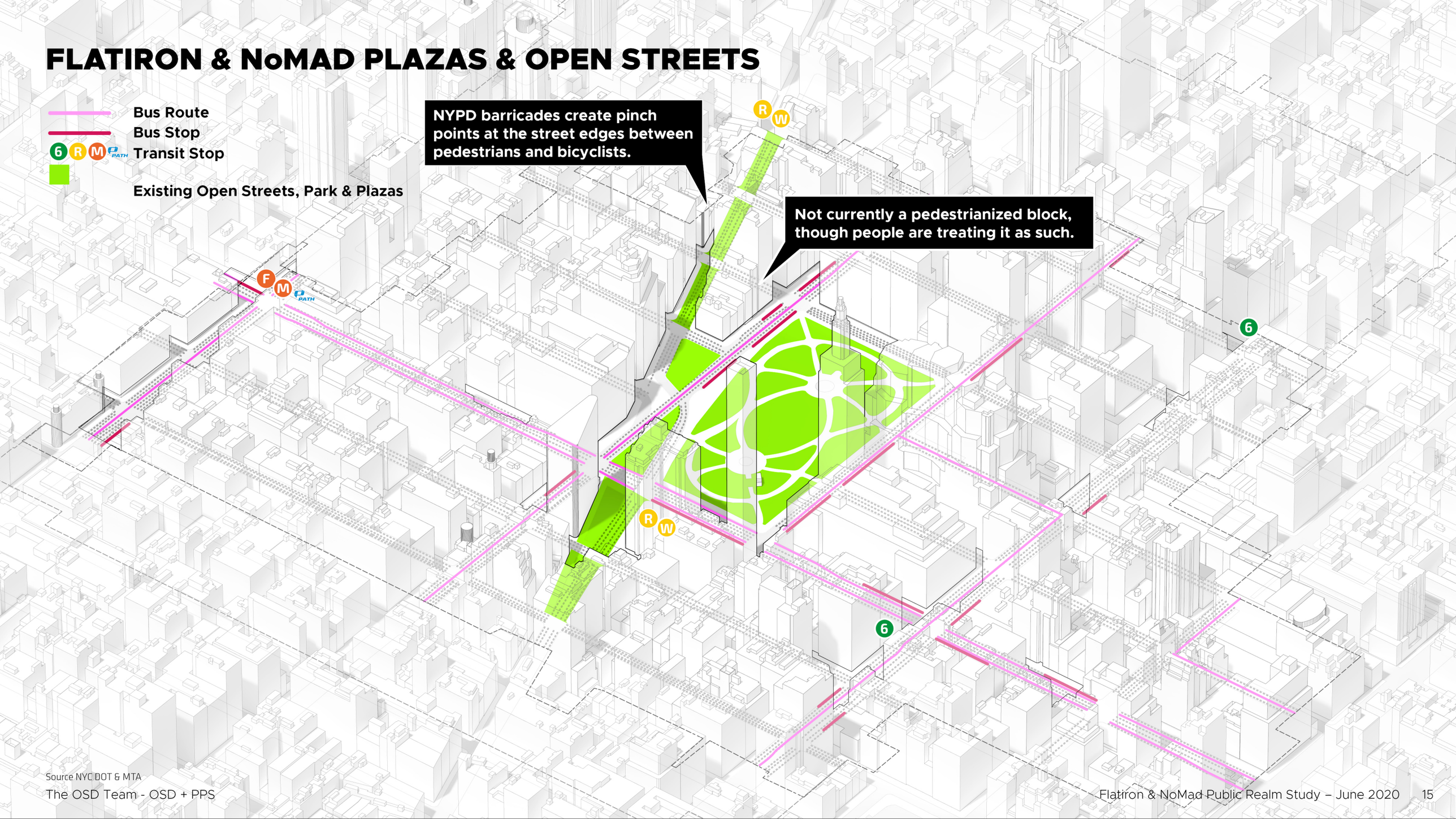
STREETSCAPES

- Lane (Parking, Thru-traffic, Turn, etc.)
- Bus Route
- Bus Stop
- Bicycle Lane
- Transit Stop
- Existing Open Streets, Park & Plazas

Bus routes, bikeways, and primary vehicular corridors are preserved.

Source NYC DOT & MTA

FLATIRON & NoMAD PLAZAS & OPEN STREETS



Source NYC DOT & MTA

FOCUS GROUP MEETING - GROUND FLOOR BUSINESS REOPENING (June 10, 2020)

FOCUS GROUP MEETING - GROUND FLOOR BUSINESS REOPENING (June 10, 2020)

Many businesses may benefit from using the parking/ curbside lane in front of their establishments in other ways.

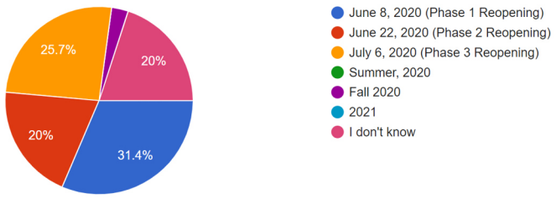
*"It's important for us to keep our **loading zone clear.** Right now we're having issues with double parking as people are not using public transit"*

-Kerriann Broussard, General Manager, Fotografiska

SURVEY 1 - RESPONSES
Staff Returns

When do you plan to reopen? (GROUND FLOOR)

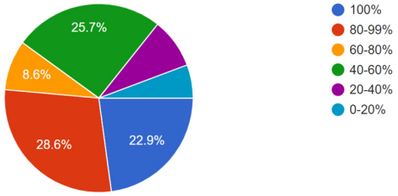
35 responses



70% of respondents plan to be open in early July

What percentage of your employees do you anticipate retaining once you reopen? (GROUND FLOOR)

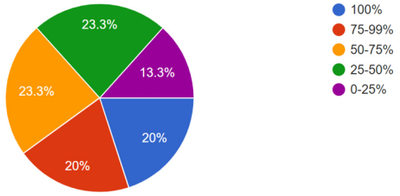
35 responses



30% of ground floor employees might not return to the district

If you have a reopening plan, what percentage of your employees do you expect to return to in-person work? (UPPER FLOOR)

30 responses



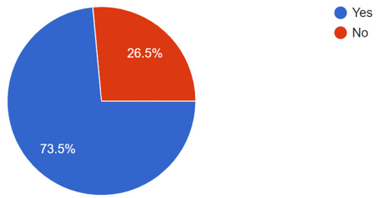
38% of upper floor employess might not return to the district

SURVEYS 1 & 2 - RESPONSES
Curb Use

A large majority of ground floor businesses would invest in outdoor operations

If the sidewalk, curbside lane or street in front of your business were available, would that help you reopen?

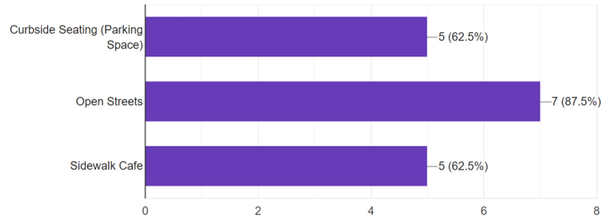
34 responses



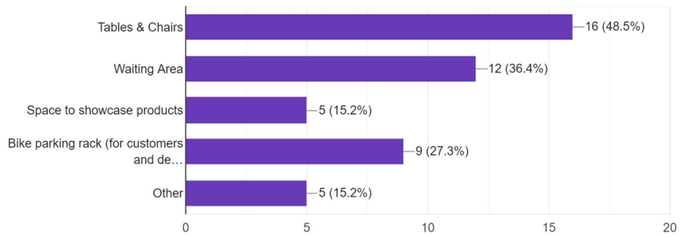
Which configuration would you invest in for a temporary outdoor operation (possibly July-October)?

9 responses

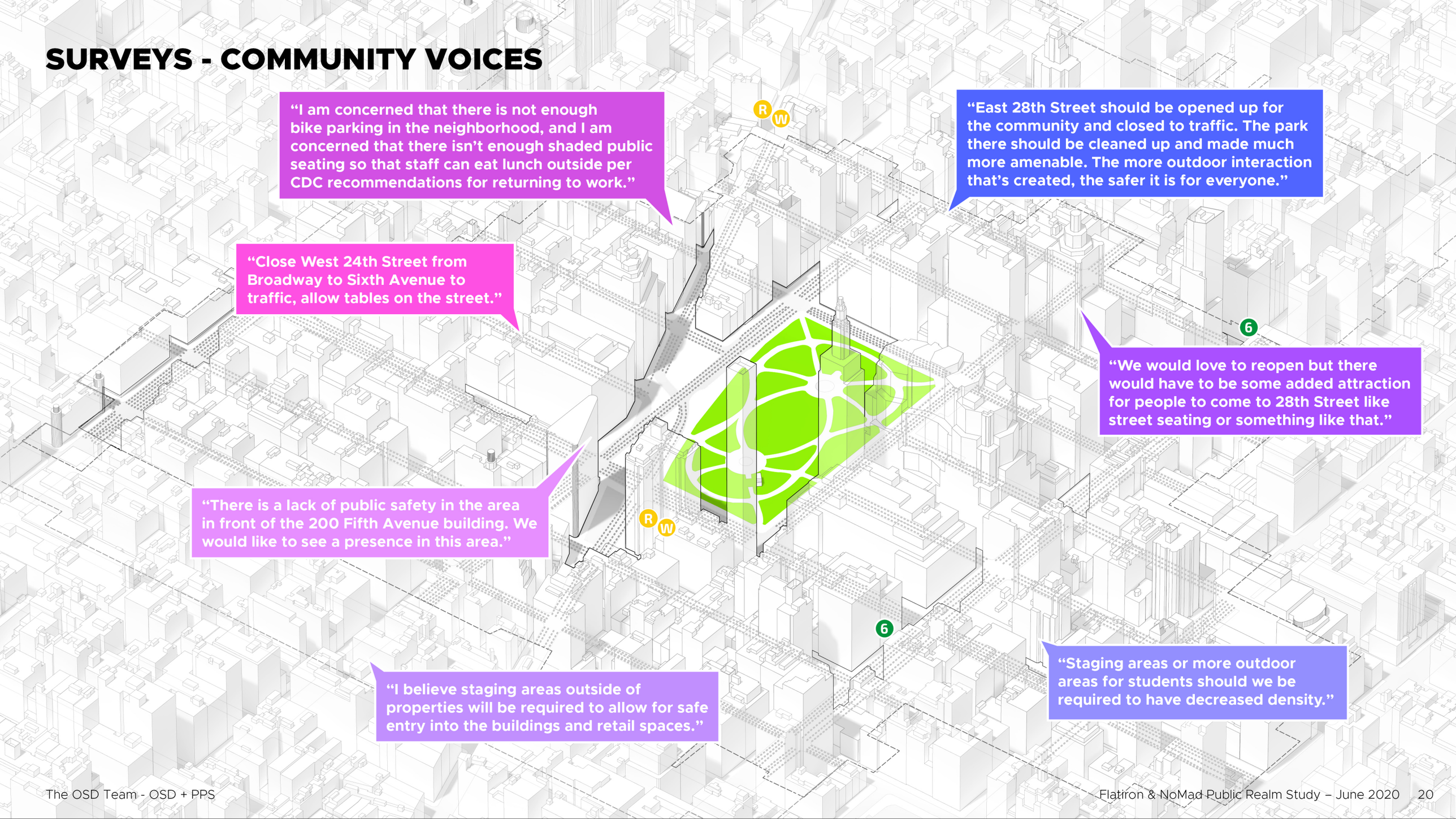
Which outdoor dining programs are you interested in for your establishment?



If sidewalk, curbside lane or street were made available, what furnishings would be the most useful?



SURVEYS - COMMUNITY VOICES



FIELD OBSERVATION JUNE 2020

The team conducted field observations throughout the district as NYC moved into NY Forward Phase Two in late June.

FIELD OBSERVATION - SIXTH AVENUE LARGE RETAIL

As Flatiron & NoMad activity returns, hotspots were observed and analyzed for social distancing protocols and allocation of space in the public realm for customer queuing and pedestrian access.

FIELD OBSERVATION - SIXTH AVE FAST-CASUAL

There were several instances where commercial **trash placed on the sidewalk**, on both Sixth Avenue and side streets, **interrupts and co-opts pedestrian access** in the area. It is also unsightly.

Amenities including public **seating, shade, trash receptacles, and bike racks are either absent or misplaced** which is leading to makeshift arrangements.

Sidewalks in front of large retailers, including Best Buy, Trader Joes, and Burlington Coat Factory, become **cramped with queuing and vendors. Space needs to be clearly marked and demarcated to for adequate distancing, vending, and pedestrian movement.**

Nearly all fast-casual restaurants lack areas for outdoor seating and public seating on the Flatiron Public Plazas and in Madison Square Park is not nearby

FIELD OBSERVATION - WEST 22nd STREET

Not yet an open street, West 22nd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues is a good candidate for enhanced pedestrian circulation. Field observations on June 27th noted that the sidewalks are too narrow for people to walk side-by-side nor do they allow for sidewalk café setups.

Clusters of delivery bicycles were observed near the intersection of 22nd Street and Sixth Avenue that caused an uninviting bottleneck that can deter people from entering the block.

Marketing materials, such as sandwich boards, have no convenient placement area and bagged commercial refuse further interrupts access and space that could be better used for seating.

FIELD OBSERVATION - MADISON SQUARE PARK

Park lawns and amenities are in high demand during COVID-19

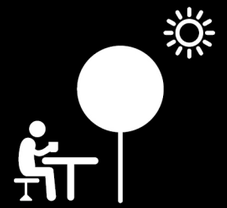
RECOMMENDATION AMBITIONS

Health & Safety

Signage, barriers, walking areas and all modifications should ensure that the district functions safely

Access

Ensure people are able to safely and conveniently move throughout the district with adequate walking space, comfortable bike lanes, queuing zones, and welcoming bus and subway areas



Comfort

Create a comfortable environment that reduces stress

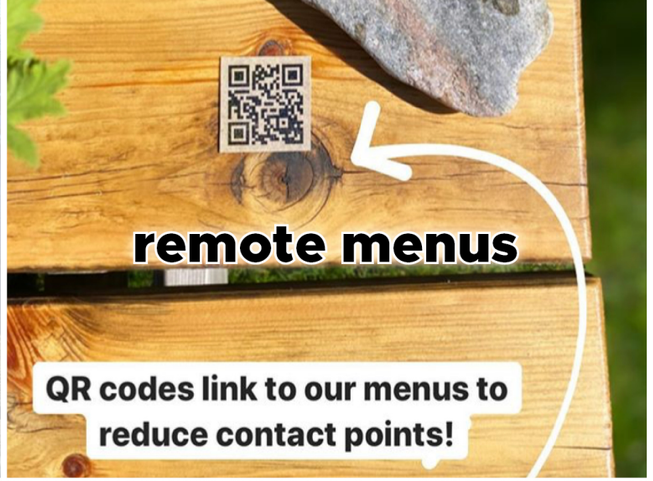
Enjoyment

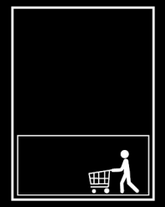
Offer reasons for people to come and linger in the District

Identity

Build upon Flatiron & NoMad's identity to foster an overall district experience

GLOBAL PRECEDENTS

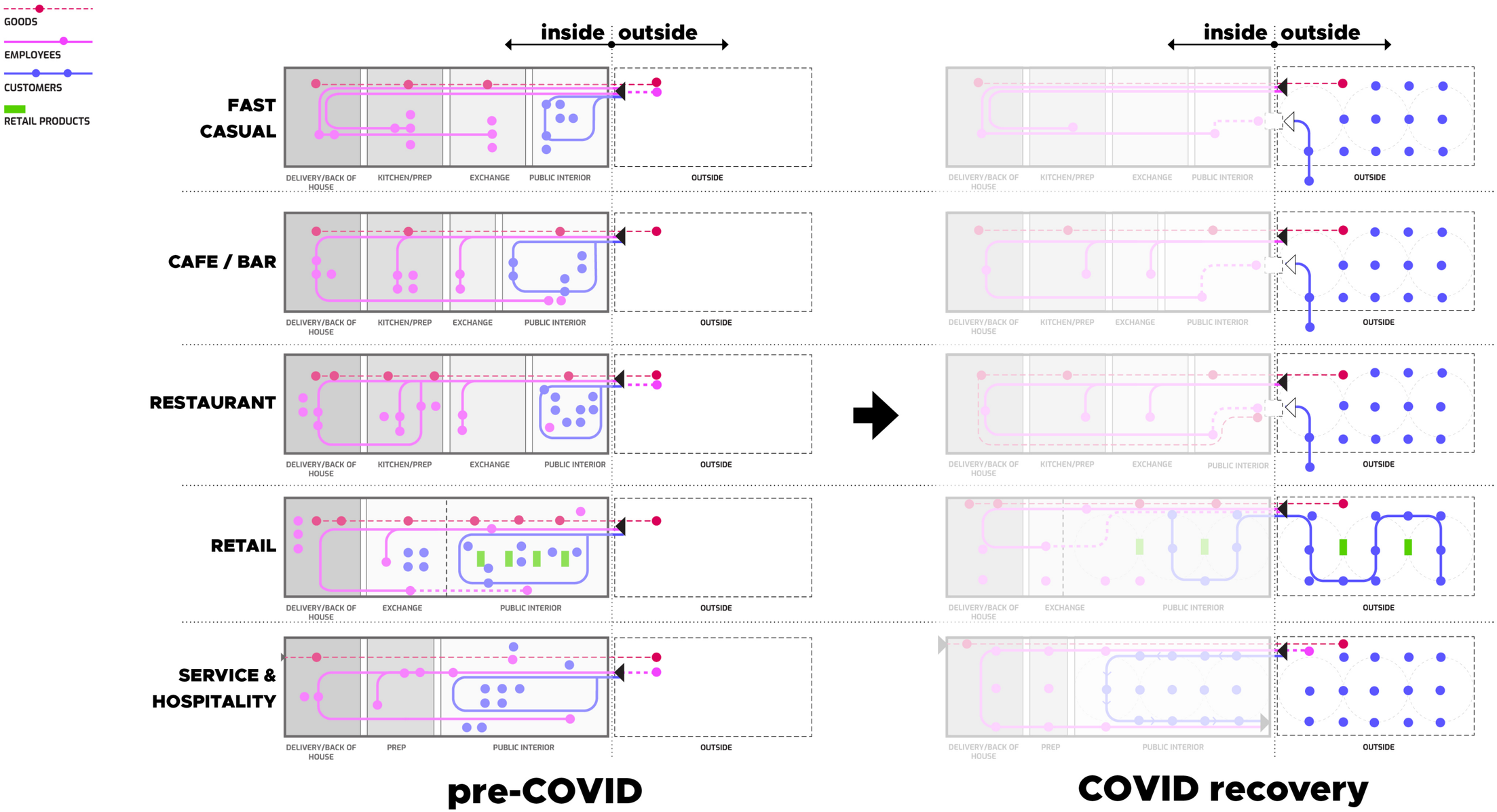




RECOMMENDATIONS

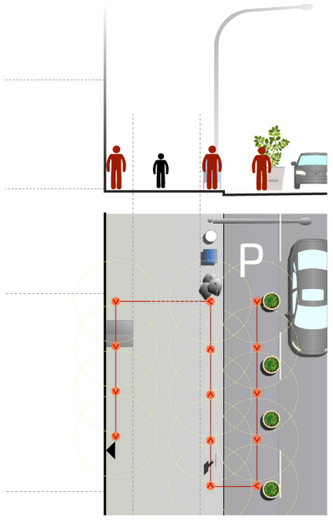
INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS SCALE

INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

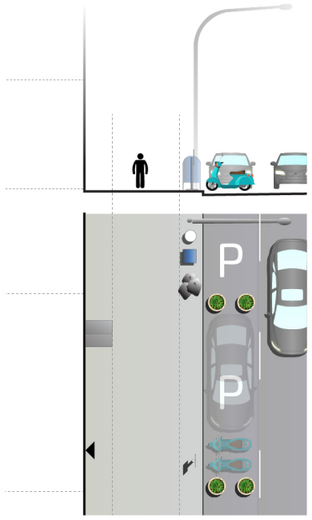


RECOMMENDATION - CURBSIDE FLEXIBLE KIT-OF-PARTS

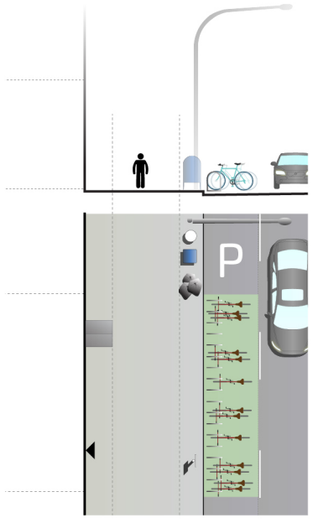
The Partnership may be able to assist with planning and implementing curbside/parking modifications that can be helpful for businesses.



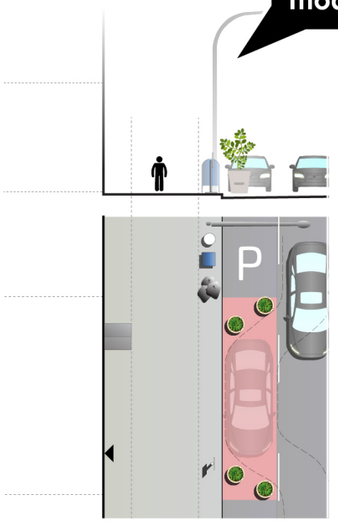
queuing



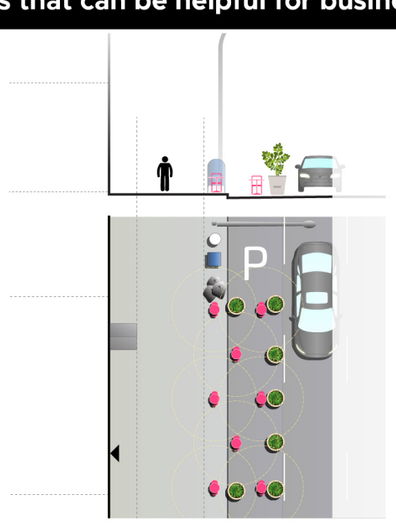
dedicated parking



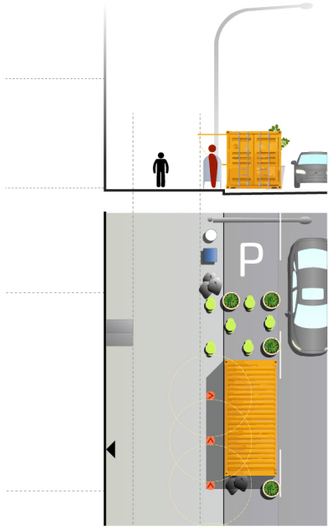
bicycle parking



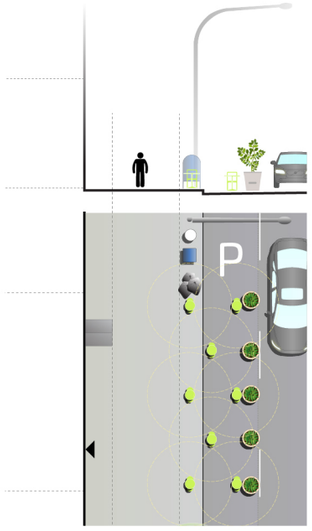
dropoff



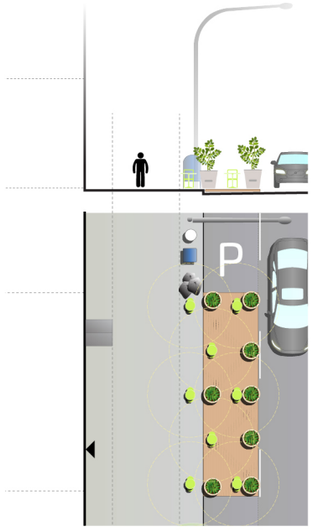
working



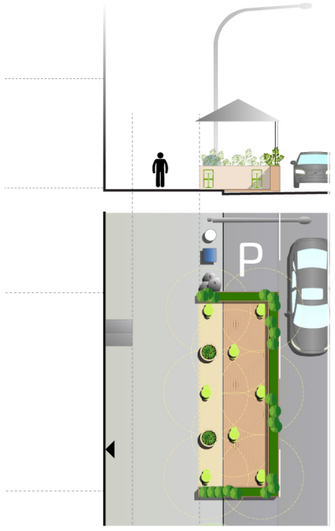
container



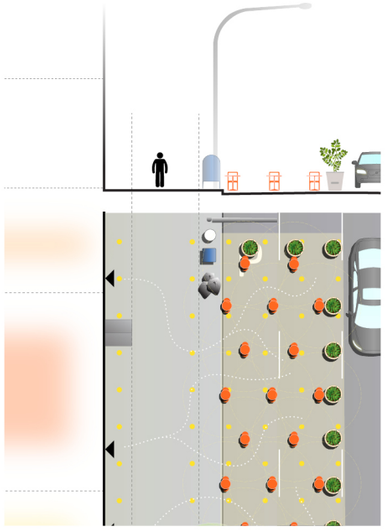
basic dining



platform dining



custom dining



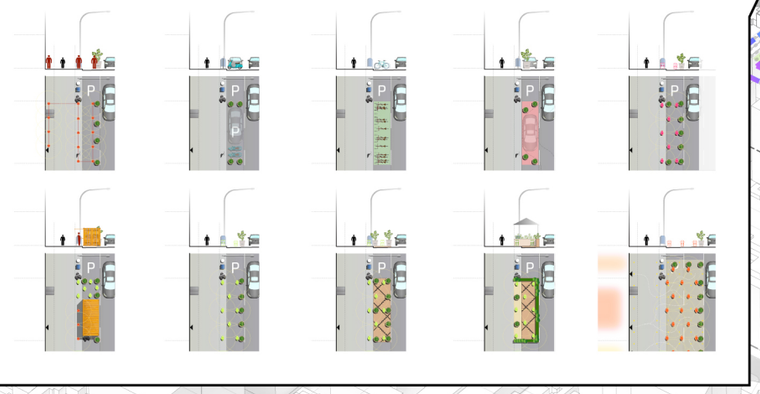
shared space

PARKING BECOMES DINING & DIVERSE BUSINESS USES

Diverse Use of Parking Spaces to Creatively Adapt Curbside Lanes

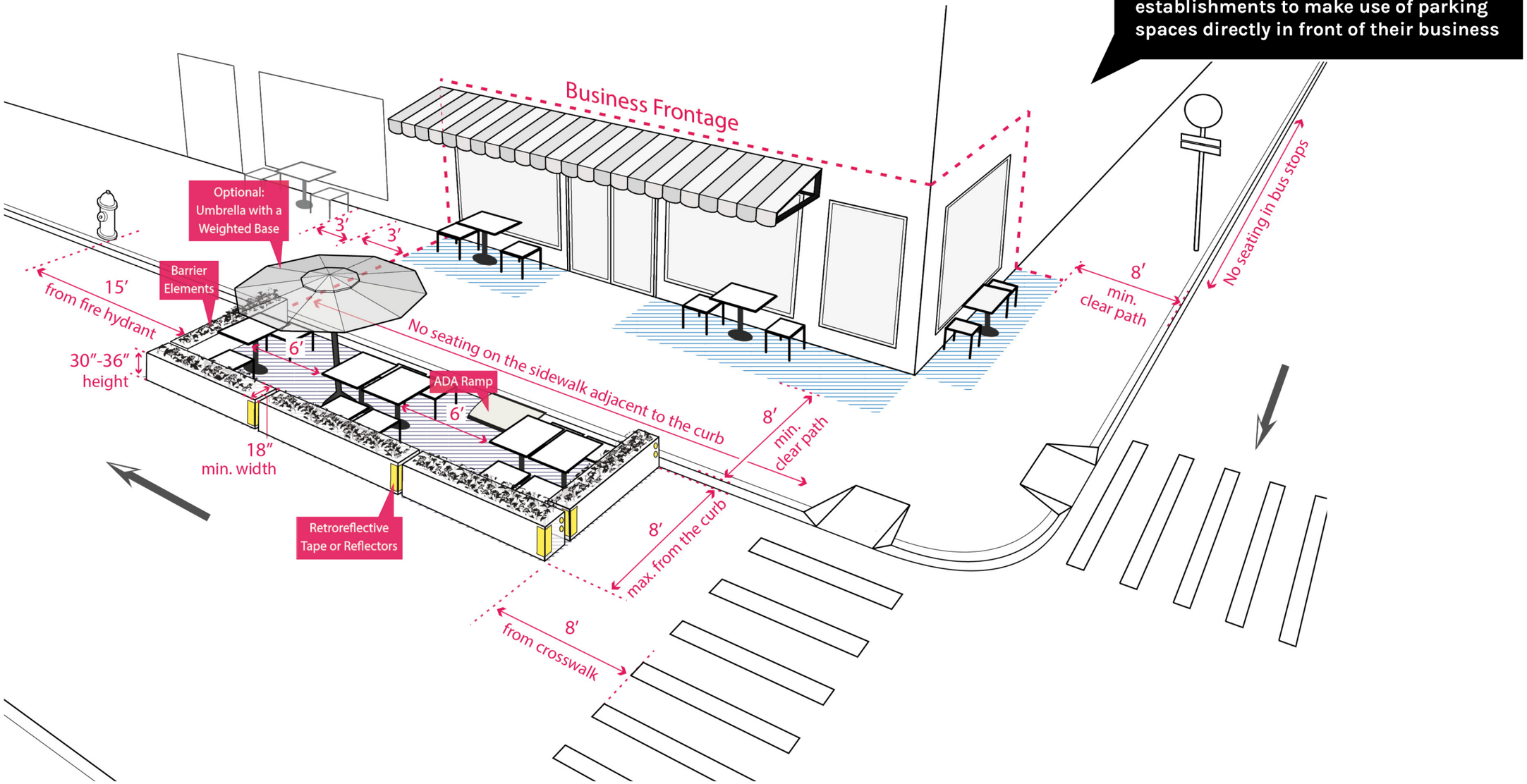
Public Space

In addition to DOT's 'Open Restaurants' Initiative, could parking spaces be adapted in other ways to assist local businesses?

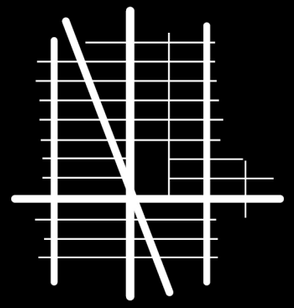


NYC DOT ‘Open Restaurants’

DOT’s ‘Open Restaurants’ initiative is a great opportunity for F&B establishments to make use of parking spaces directly in front of their business



https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/openrestaurants.shtml



RECOMMENDATIONS

DISTRICT SCALE

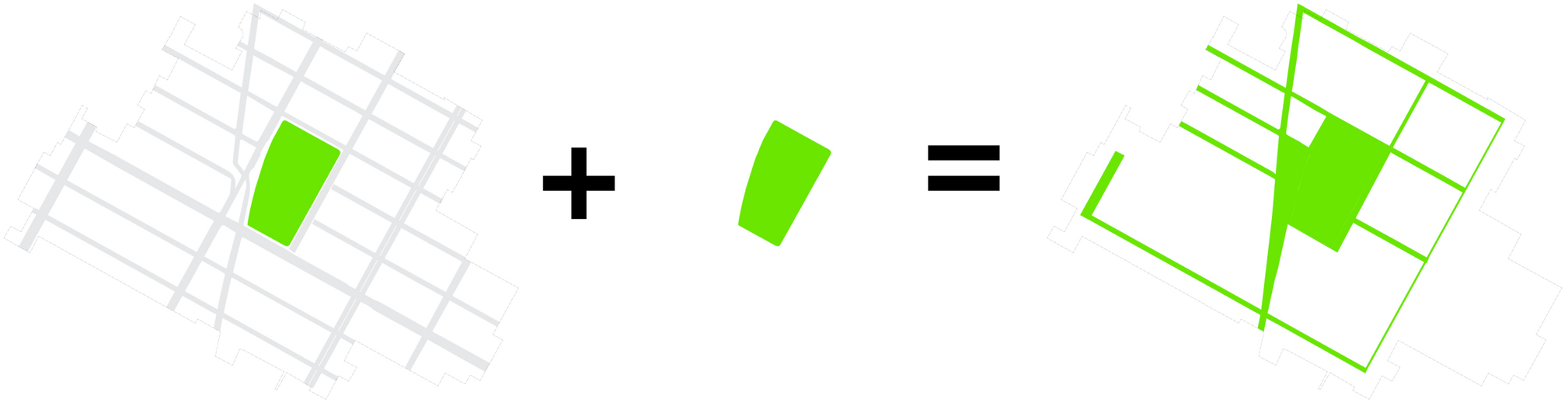
“The area is like a valley with its own ecosystem, and the park is a beautiful lung for us. An opportunity is here to expand the park as much as possible, with trees, planters, all that, and give people a feeling of transformation when they’re coming into this neighborhood to be lifted up.

I think we can do something spectacular. Nature takes your stress level down, and why not tell people that NoMad is where we add value to you, not take value out of you.”

-Philippe Massoud, ilili Restaurant

RECOMMENDATIONS - DISTRICT SCALE

With vehicular traffic down, and the need for people to safely use streets on the rise, we propose a ‘second park’ as an interconnected network of generous pedestrian routes hosting outdoor dining, working, and relaxation



THE FLATIRON DISTRICT

Park = 6.5 Acres (6% of District)
Roadway = 21.5 Acres (20% of District)

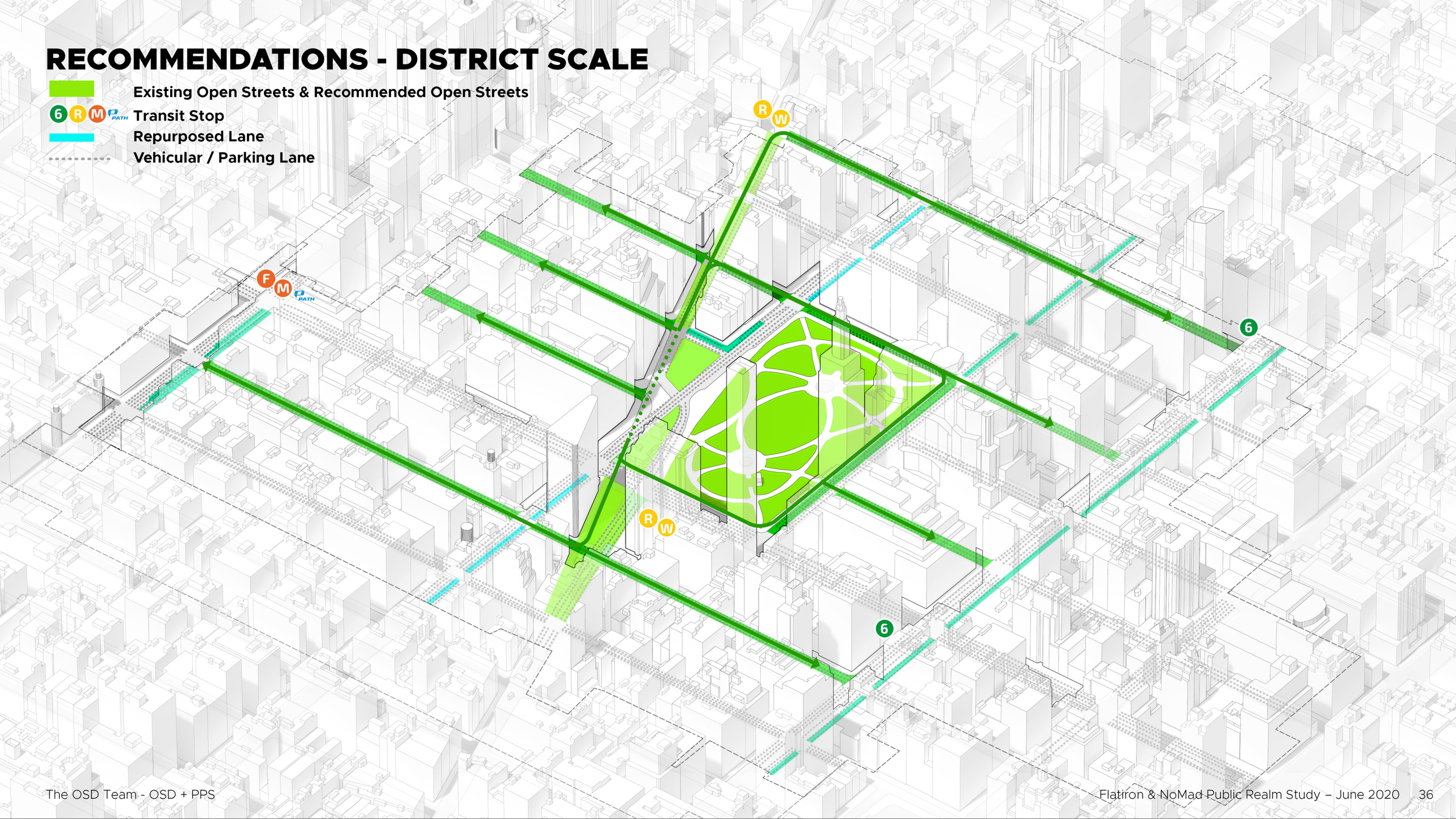
A SECOND PARK

6.5 Acres

PARK NETWORK

13 Acres (12% of District)

RECOMMENDATIONS - DISTRICT SCALE



PROJECT PARTNERS MATRIX

	MTA	NYC DOT	NYC DOT - Art	NYC PARKS	Madison Square Park Conservancy	Citi Bike	District Stakeholders
Extend the Park • Open Street - 26th Street (Between 6th Ave & Madison): Park Extension • Pedestrianized Parking & Vehicular Lanes - Madison Avenue Parklet: Park Extension	✳	✳		✳	✳		✳
People Priority Streets • Open Streets West - 24th, 25th (Between 6th Ave & 5th Ave): Eats Street • Open Streets East - 24th & 26th (Between Madison & Park Ave South): Programming • Open Street - 28th Street (Between Broadway & Park Ave South): Transit Connector • Open Street - 22nd Street (Between 6th Ave & Broadway): Eats Street		✳					✳
Street Plazas & Lane Openings • 6th Ave Fast-Casual Plaza (Between 21st - 23rd): Eats Street Park Ave South (East Side): Eats Street		✳					✳
Safety Grid, Programming & Public Art • District Safety Grid: Programming, Events & Arts • Open Streets East - 24th & 26th (Between Madison & Park Ave South): Programming		✳	✳			✳	✳

RECOMMENDATION: EXTEND THE PARK (26th STREET)

RECOMMENDATION: EXTEND THE PARK (MADISON AVENUE)

RECOMMENDATION: PEOPLE PRIORITY STREETS - ‘PARK WEST’ (DINING & RETAIL)

Existing Open Streets & Recommended Open Streets

Bus Route

Bus Stop

Transit Stop

7 Establishments (26th Street)

1 Establishment (25th Street)

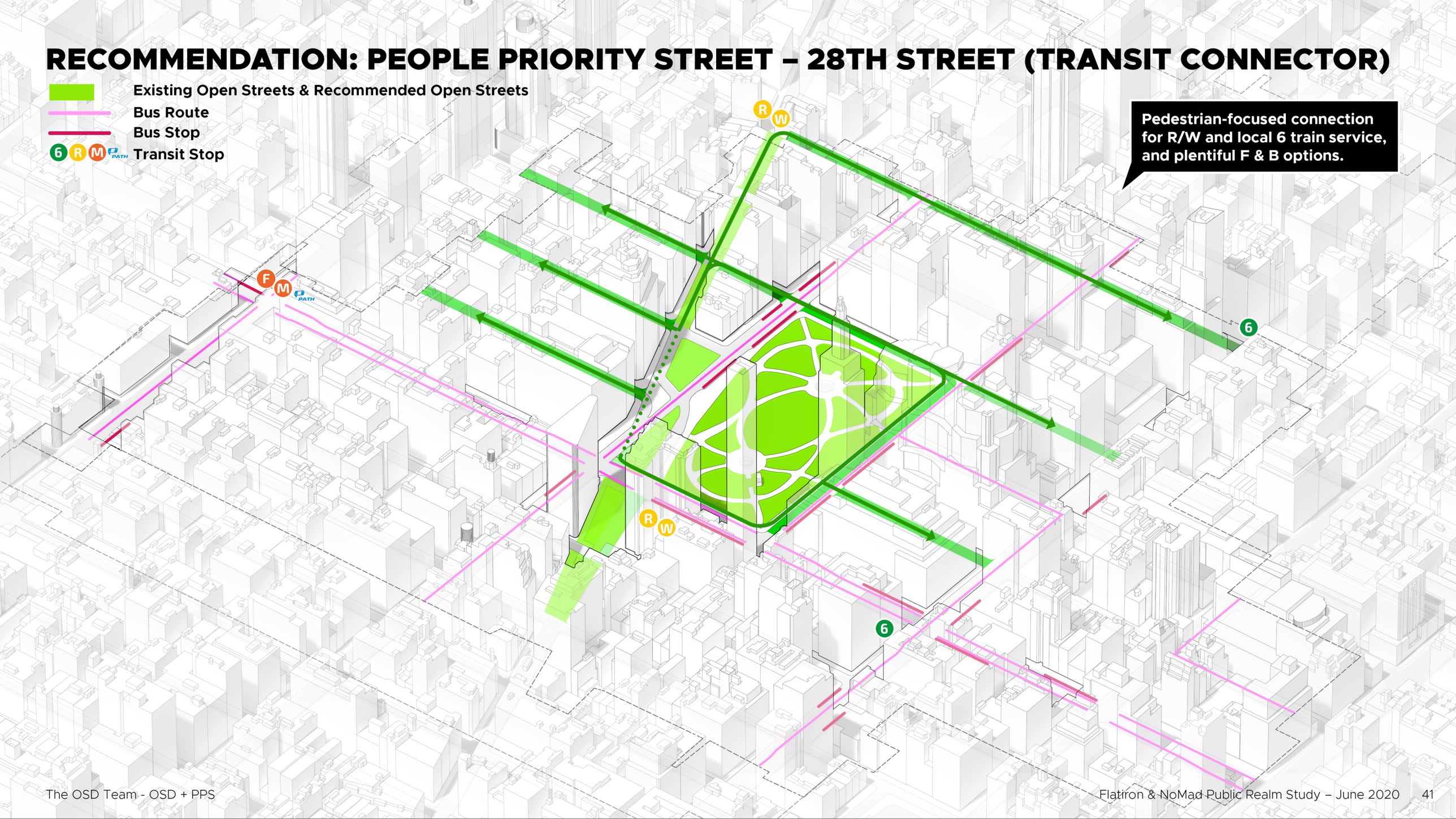
4 Establishments (24th Street)

Shaded side streets are home to numerous food & beverage establishments and small, independent retail outlets.

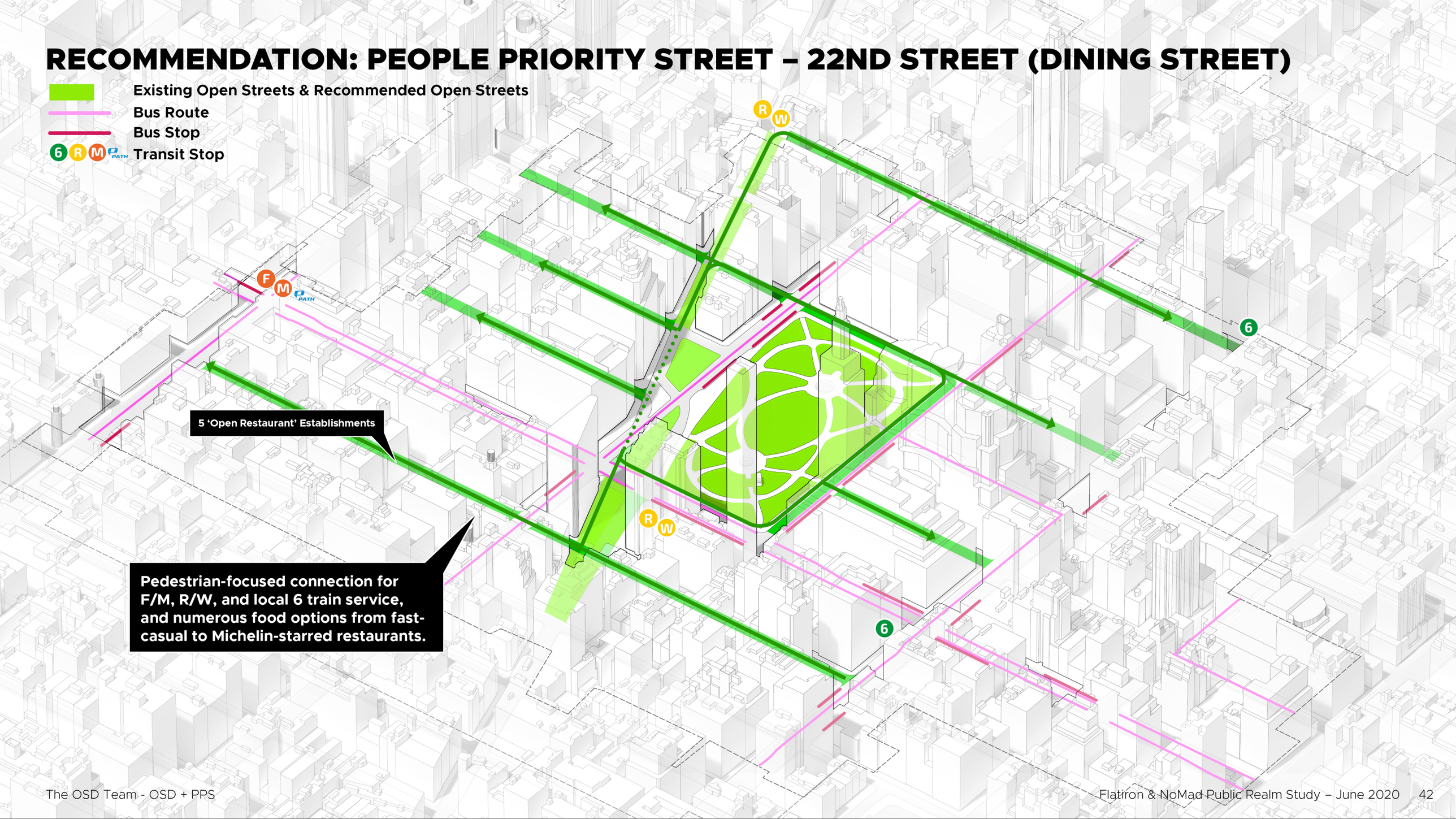
Stone Street, Lower Manhattan

Portobello Market, Notting Hill, London

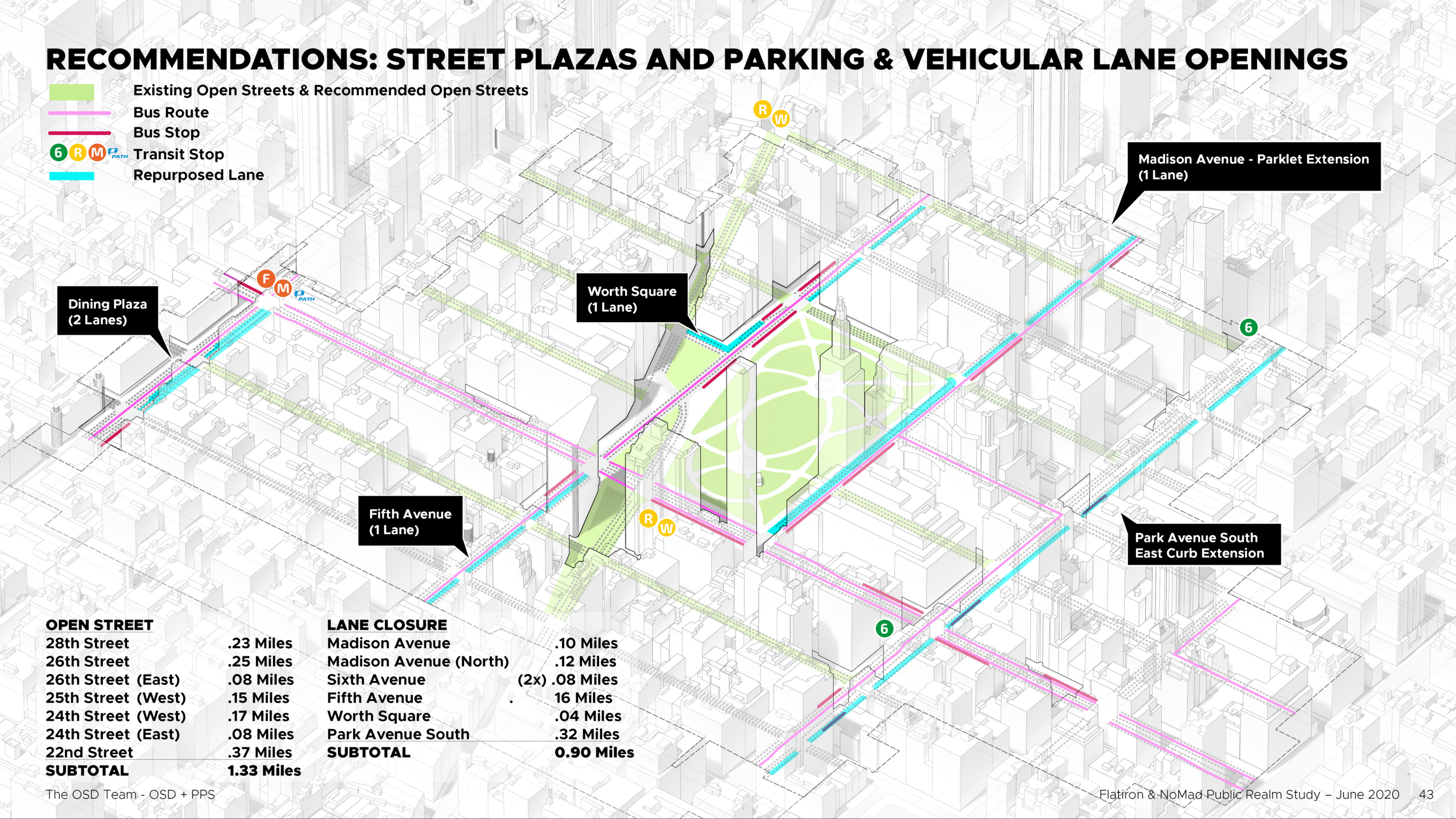
RECOMMENDATION: PEOPLE PRIORITY STREET – 28TH STREET (TRANSIT CONNECTOR)



RECOMMENDATION: PEOPLE PRIORITY STREET – 22ND STREET (DINING STREET)



RECOMMENDATIONS: STREET PLAZAS AND PARKING & VEHICULAR LANE OPENINGS

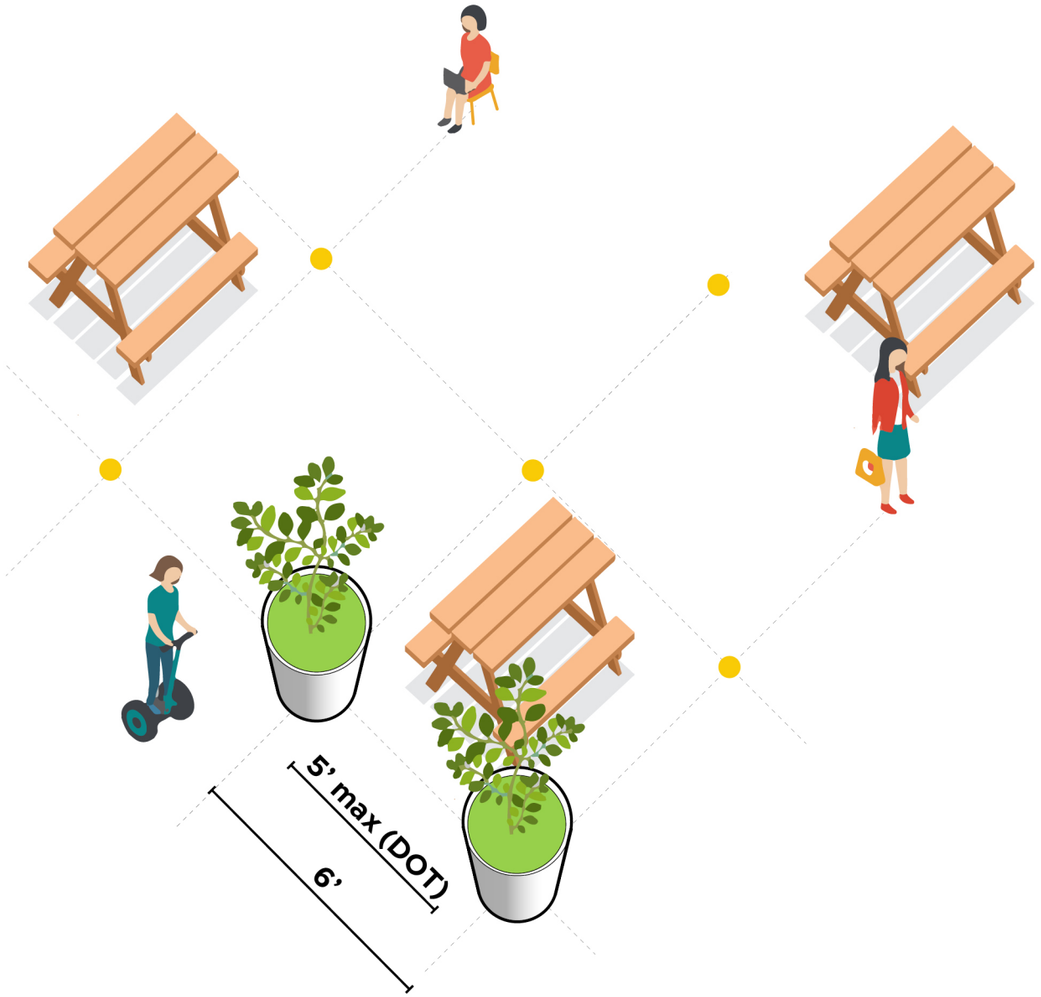


OPEN STREET	
28th Street	.23 Miles
26th Street	.25 Miles
26th Street (East)	.08 Miles
25th Street (West)	.15 Miles
24th Street (West)	.17 Miles
24th Street (East)	.08 Miles
22nd Street	.37 Miles
SUBTOTAL	**1.33 Miles**

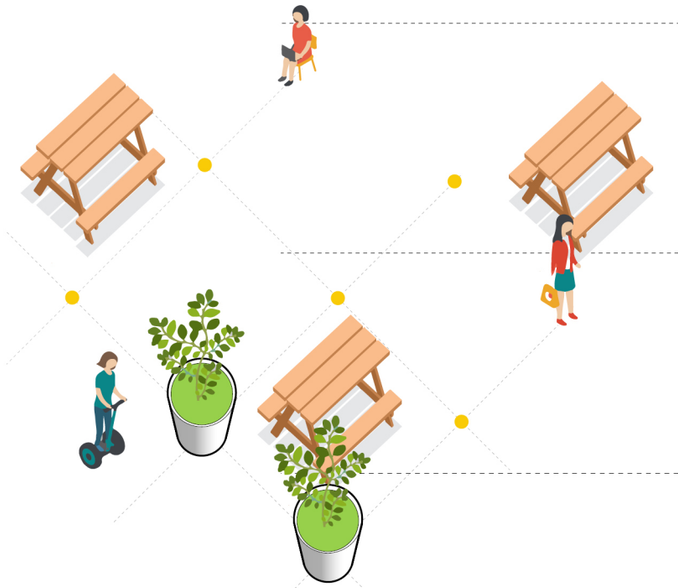
LANE CLOSURE	
Madison Avenue	.10 Miles
Madison Avenue (North)	.12 Miles
Sixth Avenue	(2x) .08 Miles
Fifth Avenue	16 Miles
Worth Square	.04 Miles
Park Avenue South	.32 Miles
SUBTOTAL	**0.90 Miles**

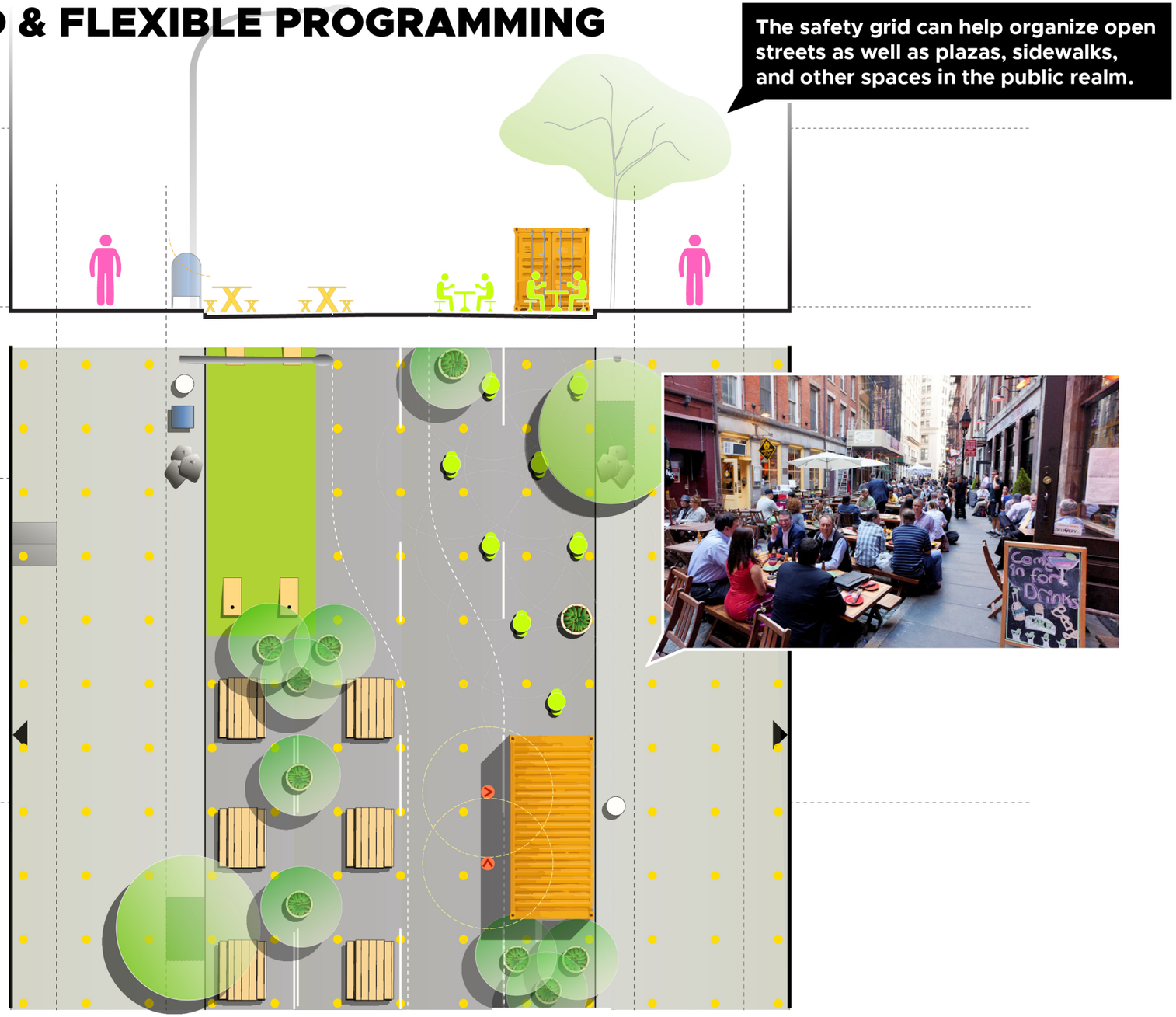
RECOMMENDATION: SAFETY GRID & FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING

A safety grid can provide an intuitive understanding of safe social distancing and aid businesses for laying out outdoor dining furniture and queuing lines, and can help the Partnership in assisting with special events setup.



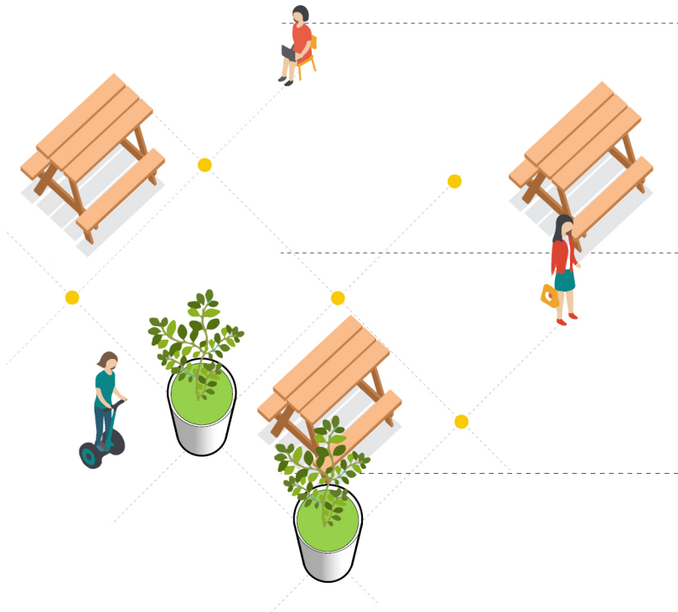
RECOMMENDATION: SAFETY GRID & FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING



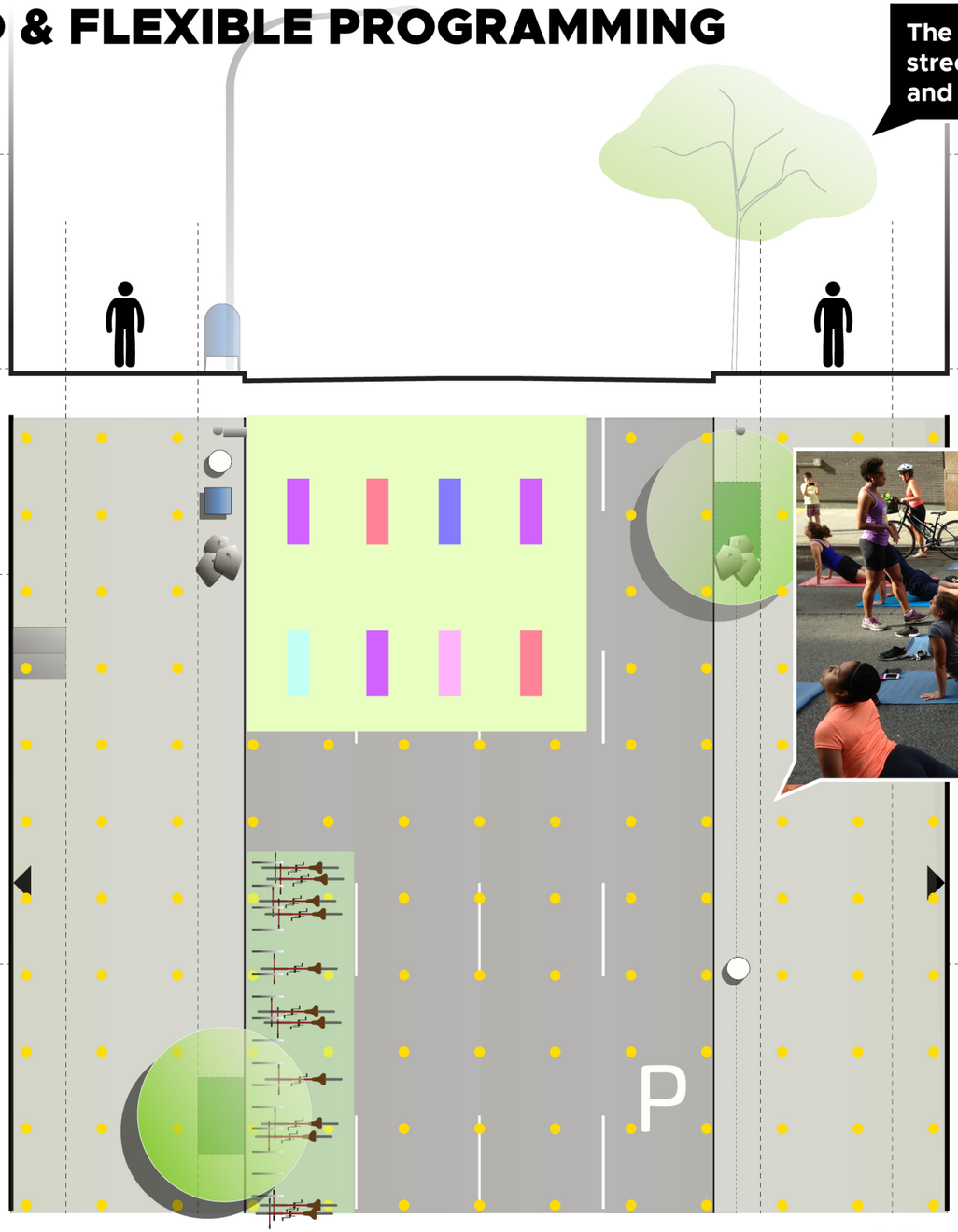


The safety grid can help organize open streets as well as plazas, sidewalks, and other spaces in the public realm.

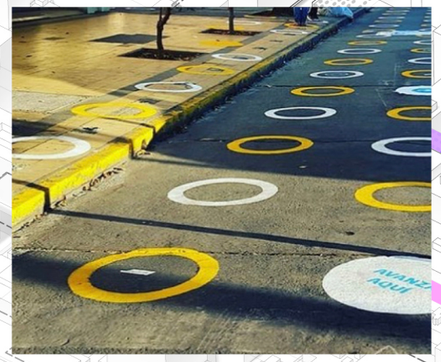
RECOMMENDATION: SAFETY GRID & FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING



The safety grid can help organize open streets as well as plazas, sidewalks, and other spaces in the public realm.



RECOMMENDATION: SAFETY, PUBLIC ART & FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING



Like the spires of the skyline, and the crosswalks of the West Village, could the safety grid express itself at both a local and citywide scale? As an extension of the Partnership's public art program, the grid can combine the need for social distancing while supporting the notion that streets are for all people.

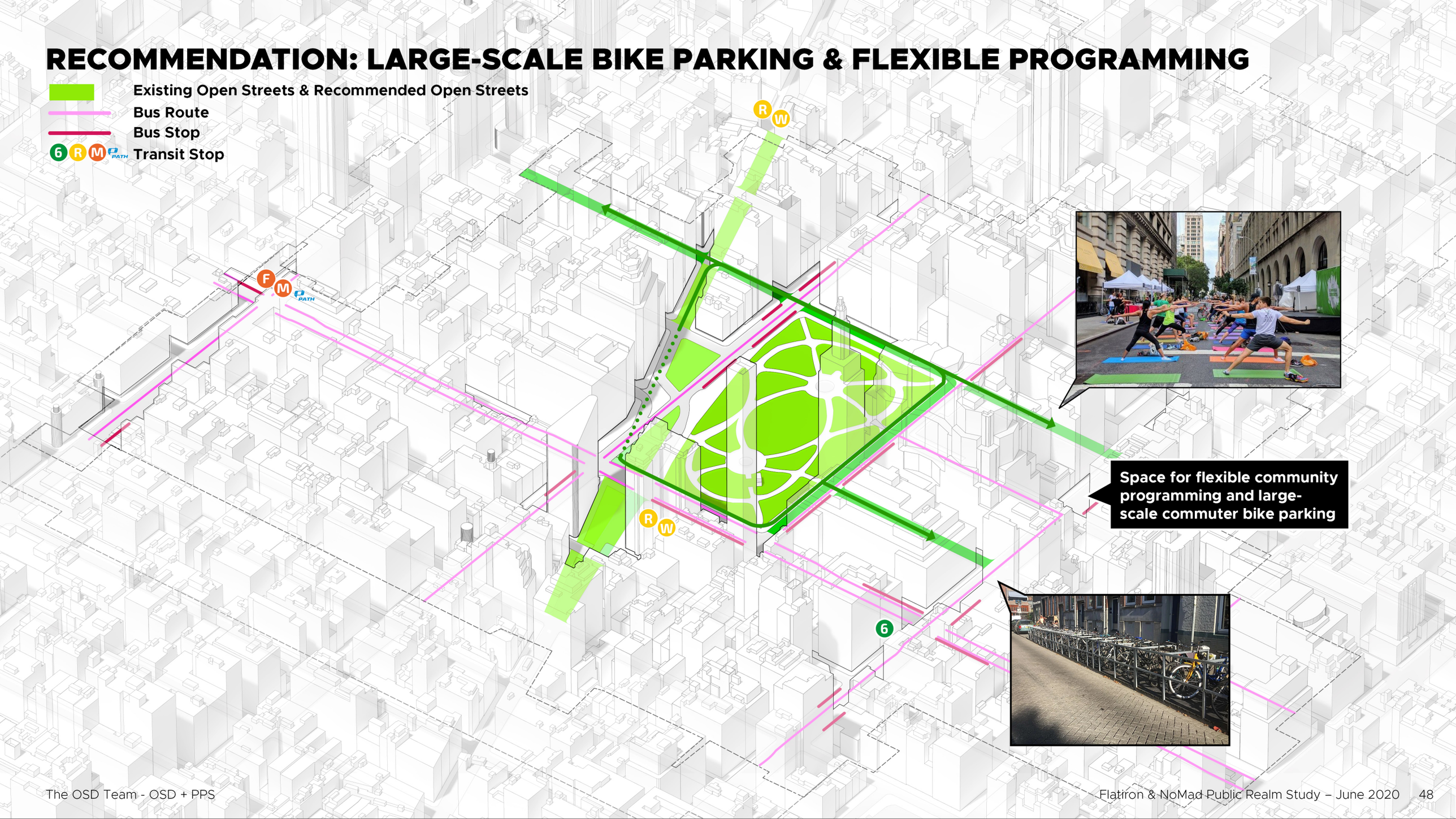
RECOMMENDATION: LARGE-SCALE BIKE PARKING & FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING

Existing Open Streets & Recommended Open Streets

Bus Route

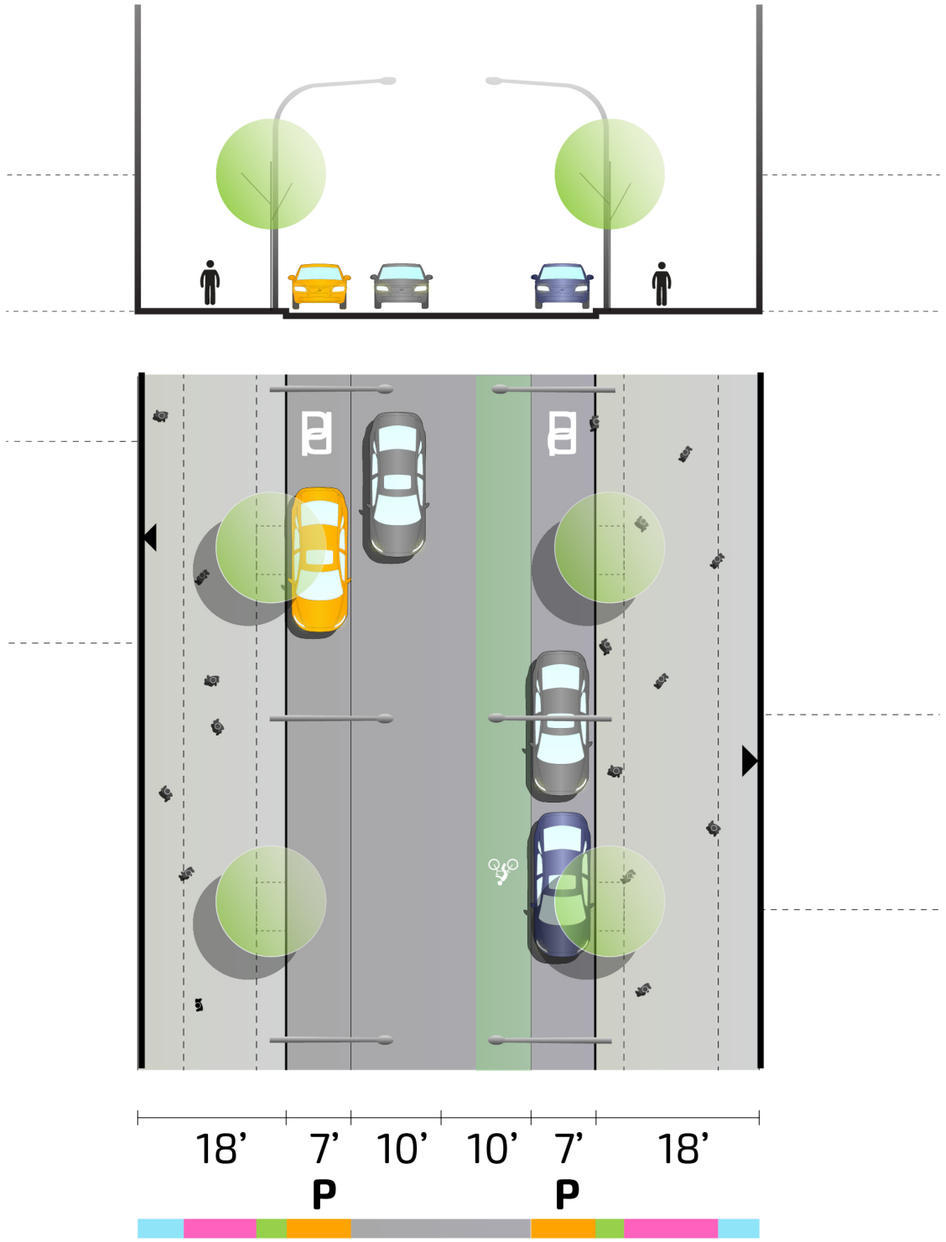
Bus Stop

Transit Stop

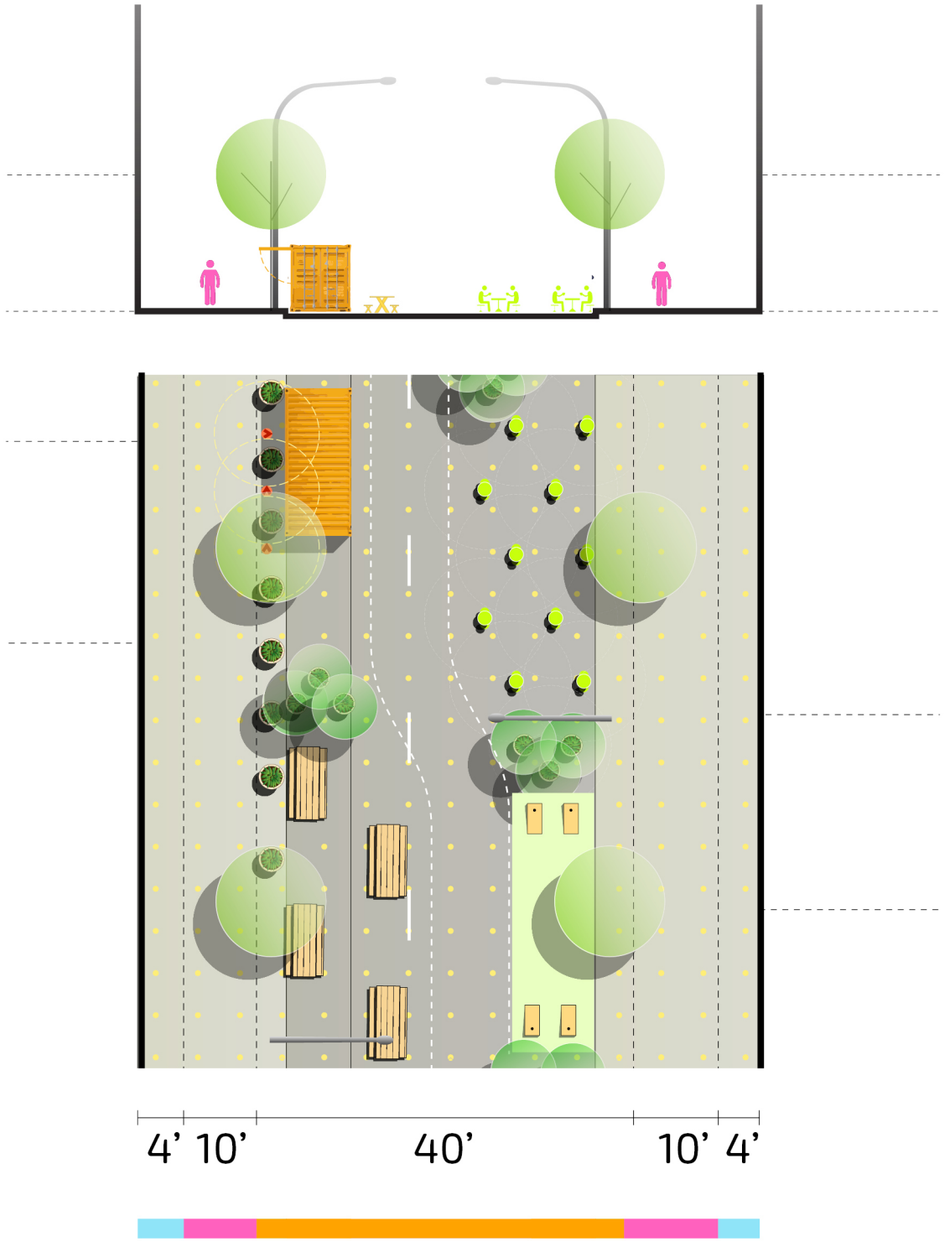


SAFETY GRID AS PUBLIC ART / CURBSIDE DINING

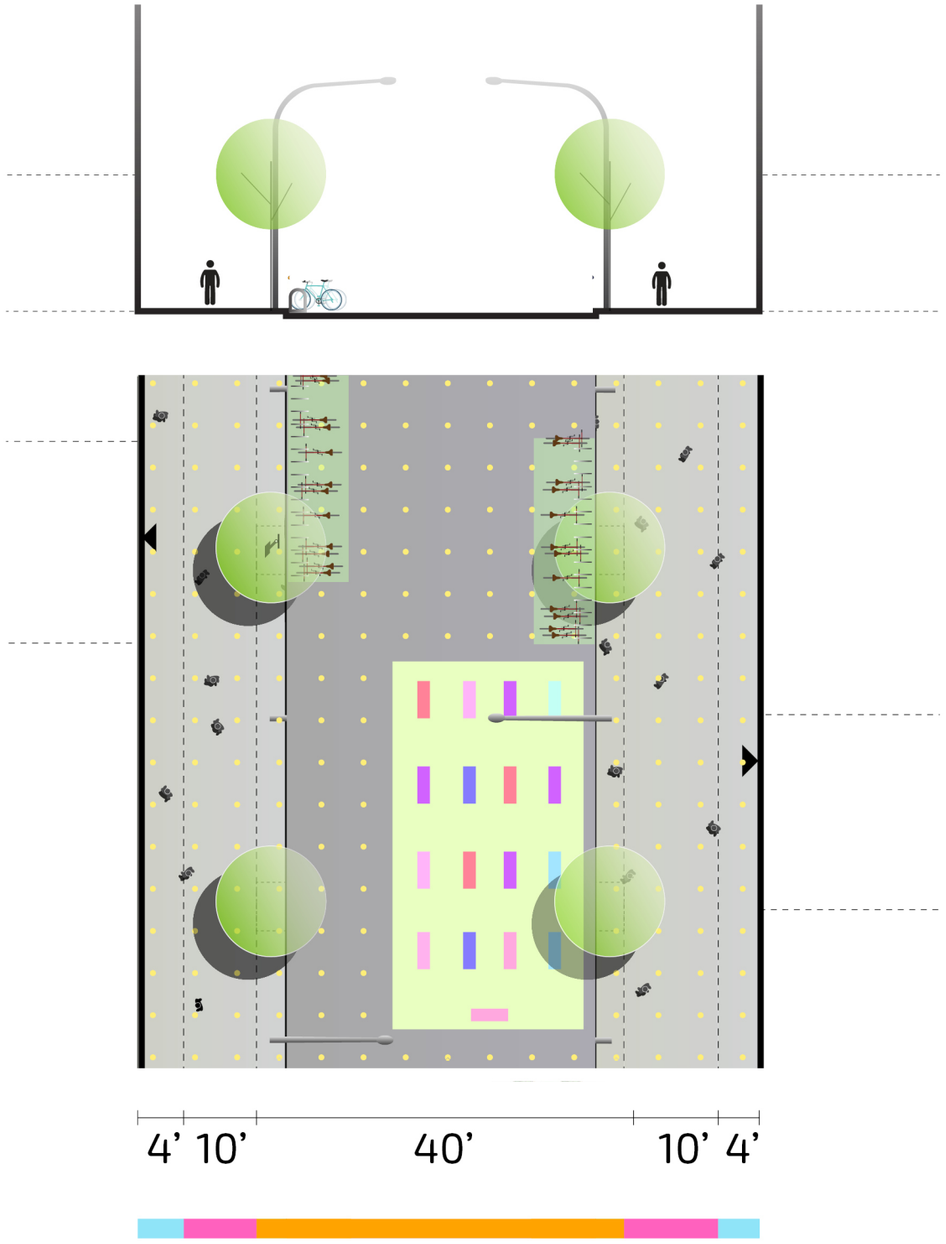
SIDE STREETS - EXISTING



RECOMMENDATION - OPEN STREETS WEST (DINING & RETAIL)



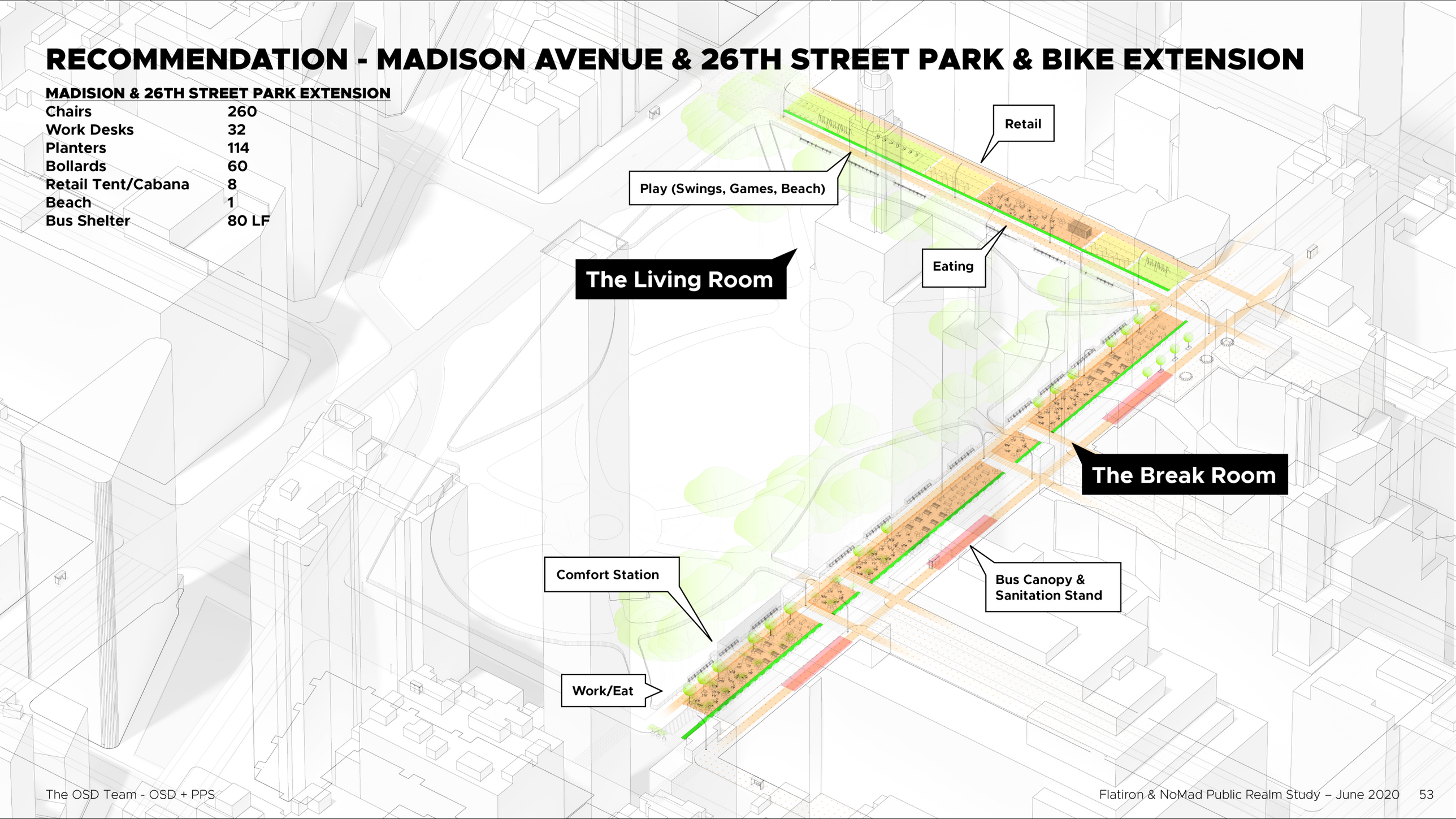
RECOMMENDATION - OPEN STREETS EAST (EVENT & BACK OF HOUSE)



RECOMMENDATION - MADISON AVENUE & 26TH STREET PARK & BIKE EXTENSION

MADISION & 26TH STREET PARK EXTENSION

Chairs	260
Work Desks	32
Planters	114
Bollards	60
Retail Tent/Cabana	8
Beach	1
Bus Shelter	80 LF



RECOMMENDATION: MADISON AVENUE PARK & BIKE NETWORK EXTENSION

MADISION & 26TH STREET PARK EXTENSION

Chairs	260
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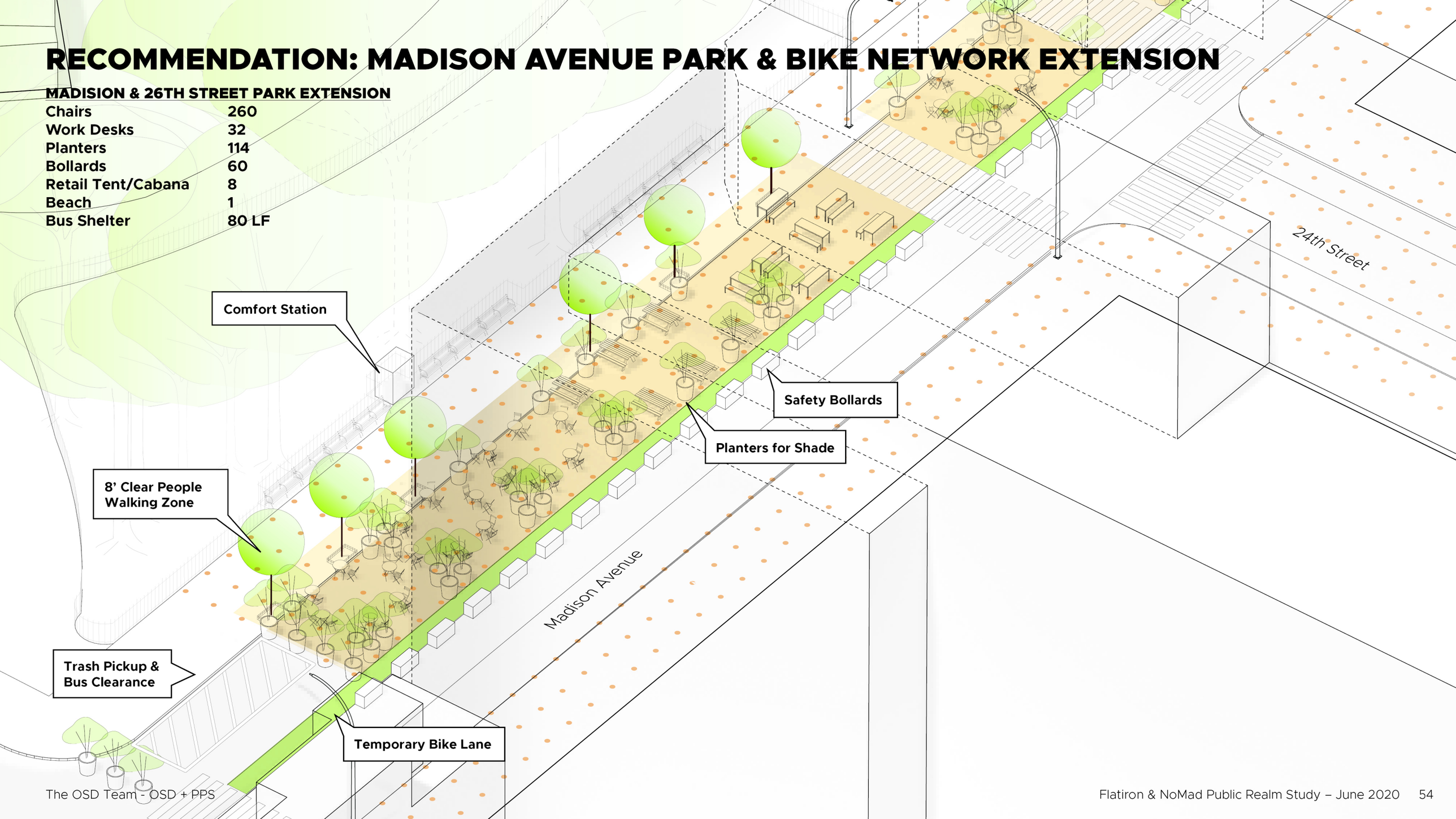
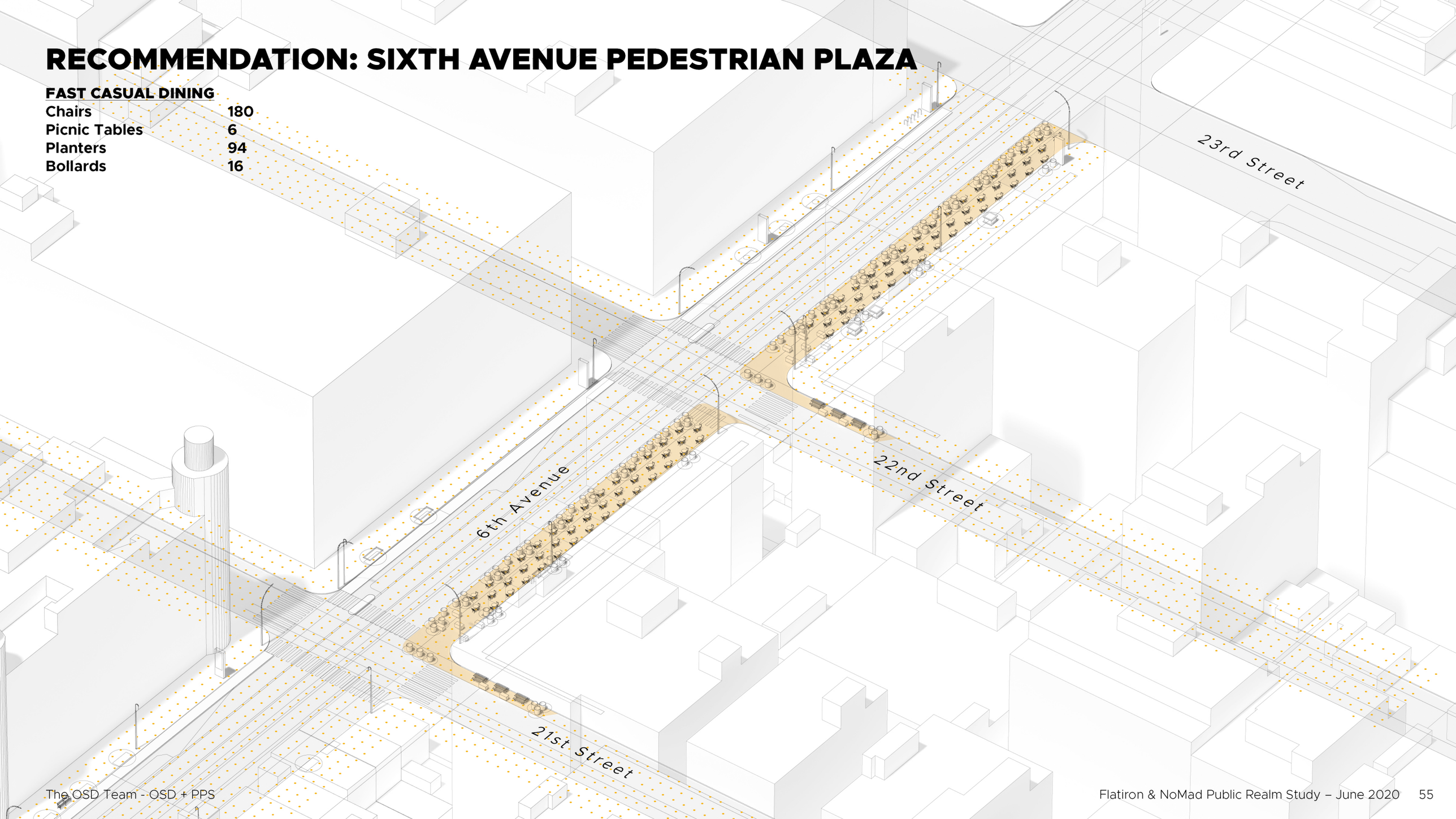


RECOMMENDATION: SIXTH AVENUE PEDESTRIAN PLAZA

FAST CASUAL DINING

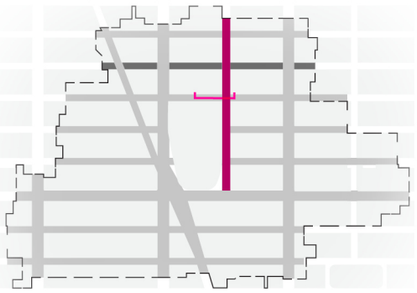
Chairs	180
Picnic Tables	6
Planters	94
Bollards	16

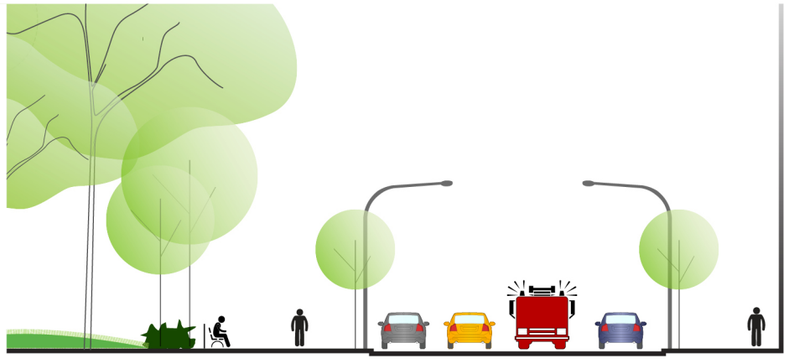


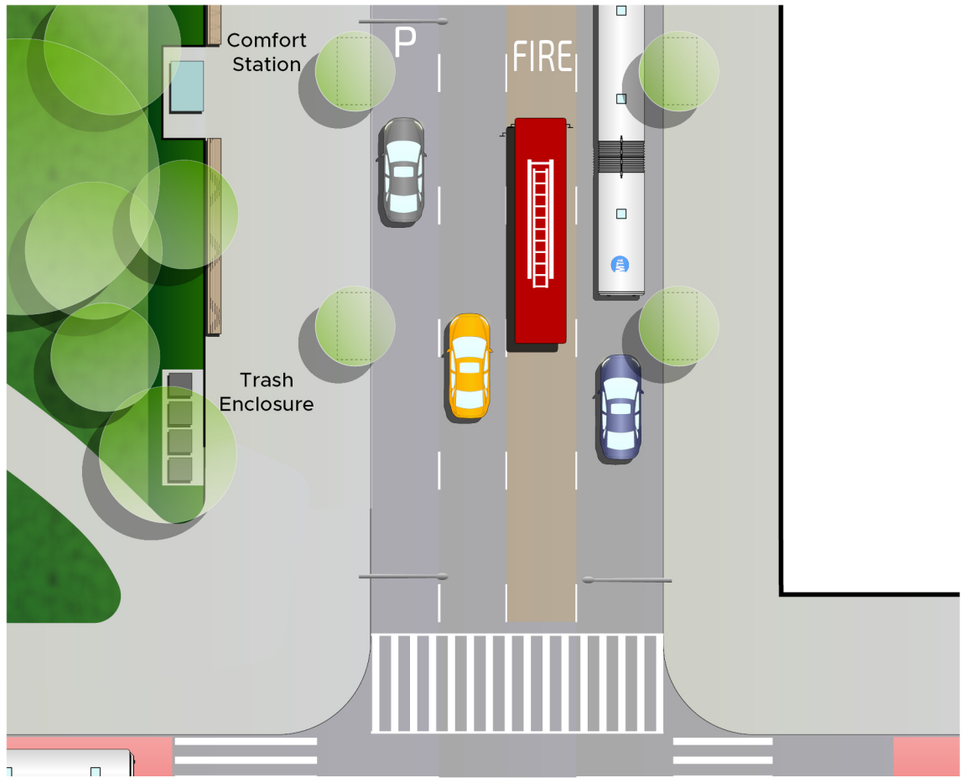
MADISON AVENUE - CURRENT CONDITION

RECOMMENDATION: MADISON AVENUE PARK & BIKE NETWORK EXTENSION

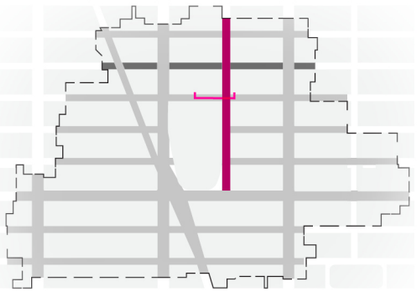
MADISON AVENUE - CURRENT CONDITION

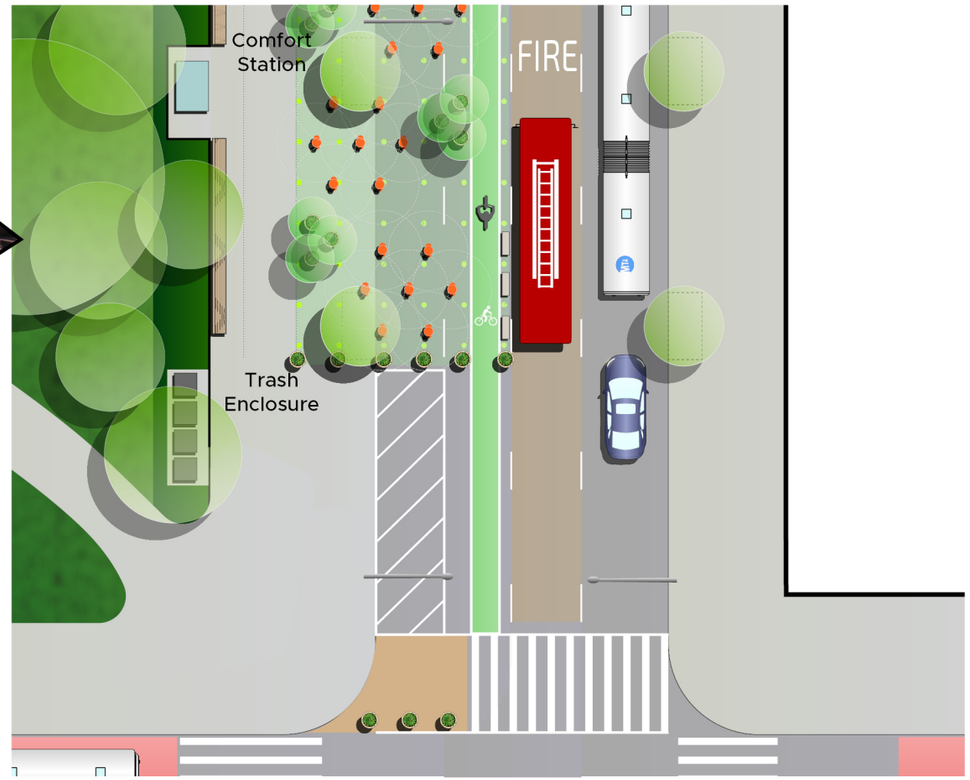






RECOMMENDATION: MADISON AVENUE PARK & BIKE NETWORK EXTENSION

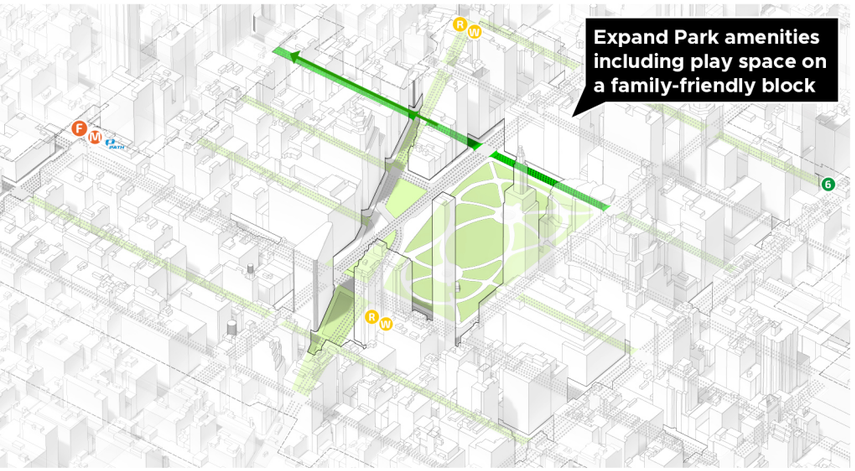




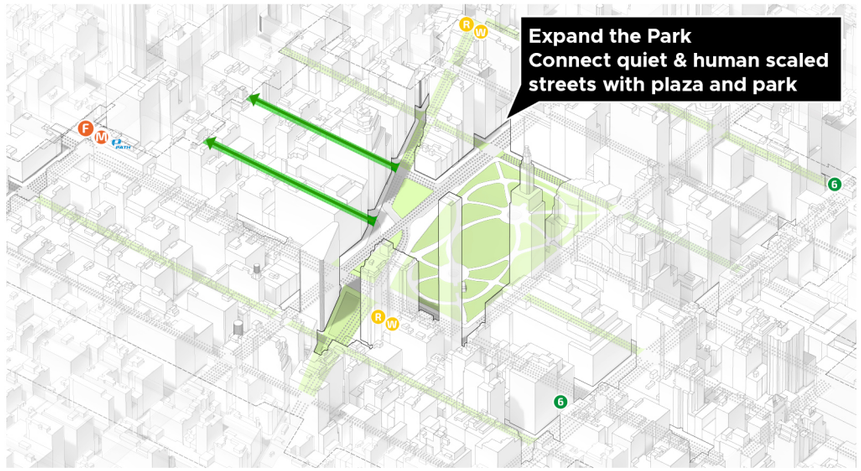
SIXTH AVENUE - CURRENT CONDITION

PROPOSED - SIXTH AVENUE PEDESTRIAN PLAZA

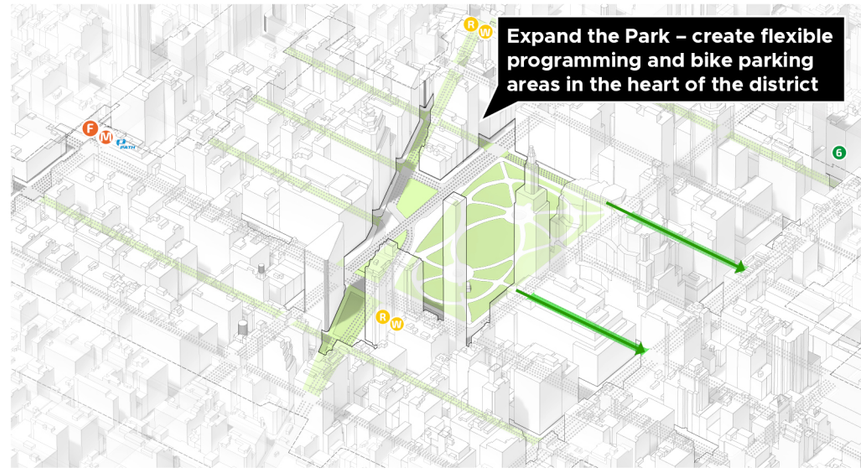
IDENTIFY OPEN STREET CANDIDATES



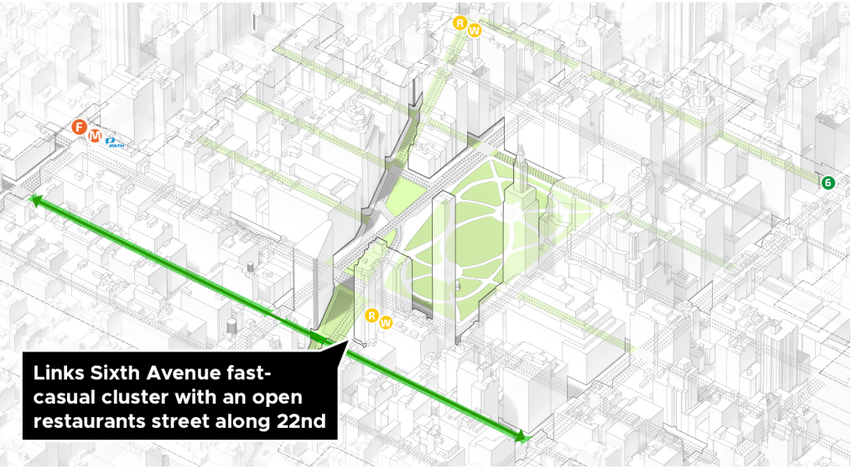
26th Street between Madison Avenue & Sixth Avenue



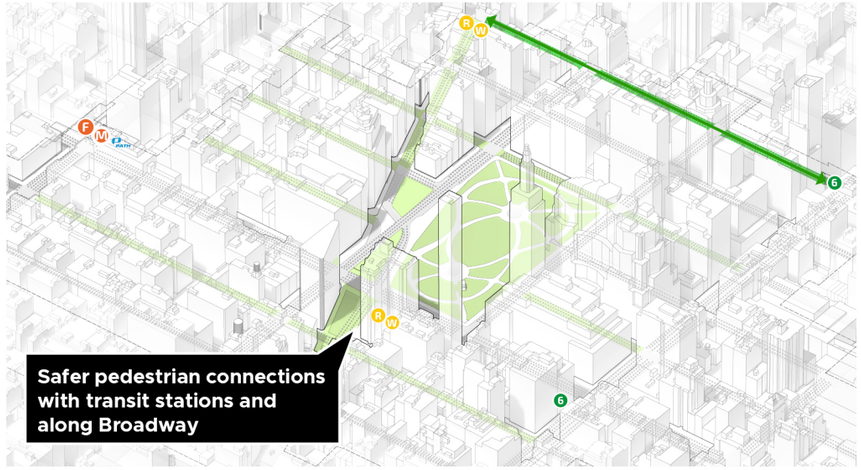
24th Street between Broadway & Sixth Avenue
25th Street between Broadway & Sixth Avenue



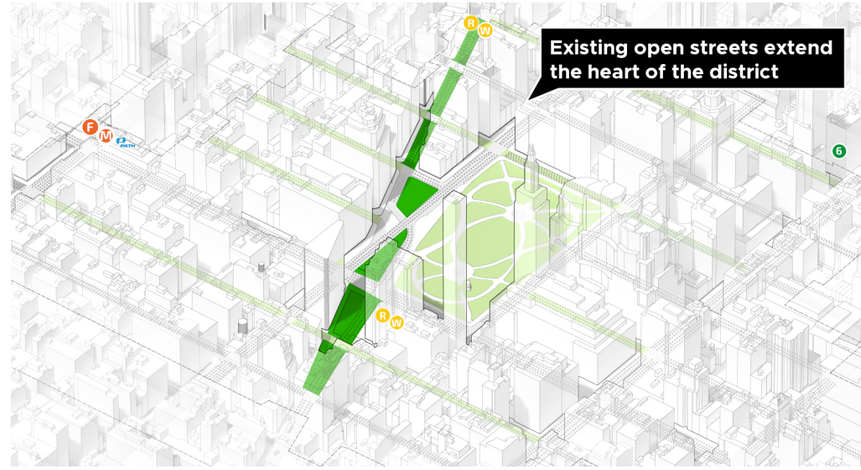
24th Street between Madison Avenue & Park Aveue South
26th Street between Madison Avenue & Park Aveue South



22nd Street between Broadway & Park Avenue South

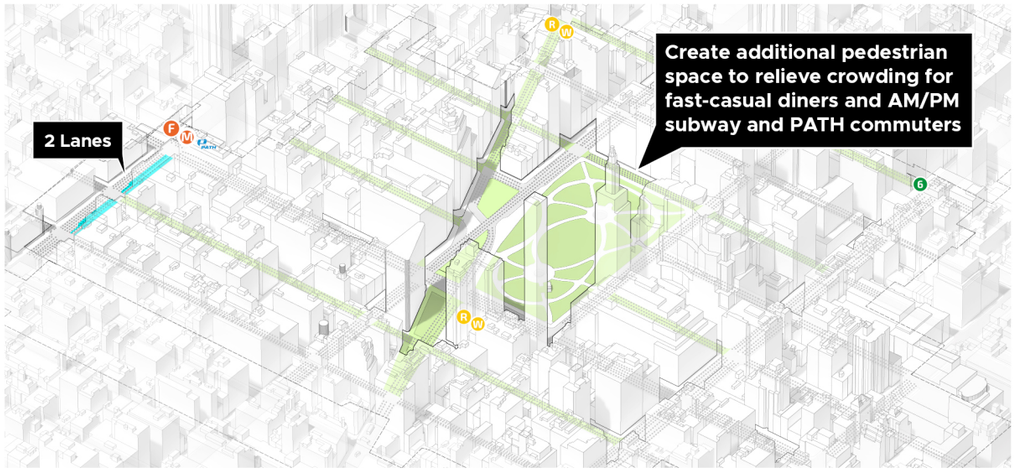


28th Street between Broadway & Park Avenue South



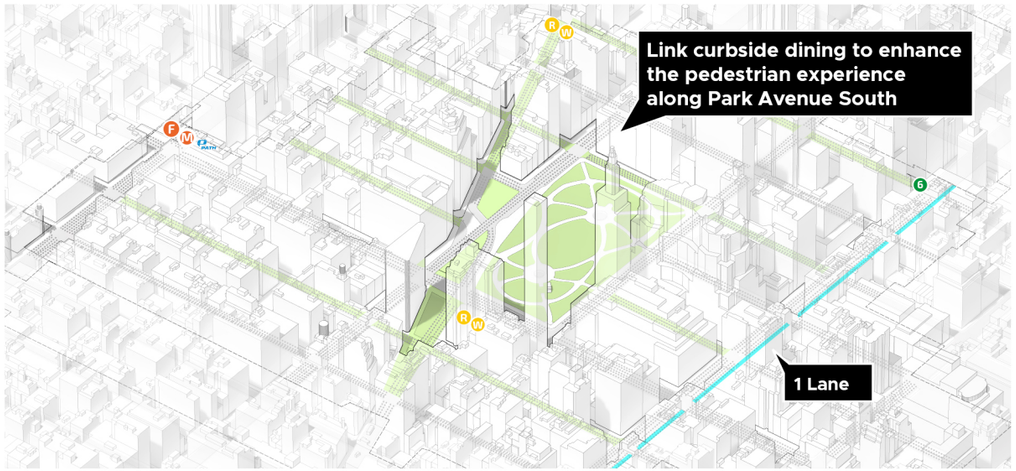
Existing - Broadway Open Streets & Flatiron Plaza

REPURPOSE PARKING & VEHICULAR LANES

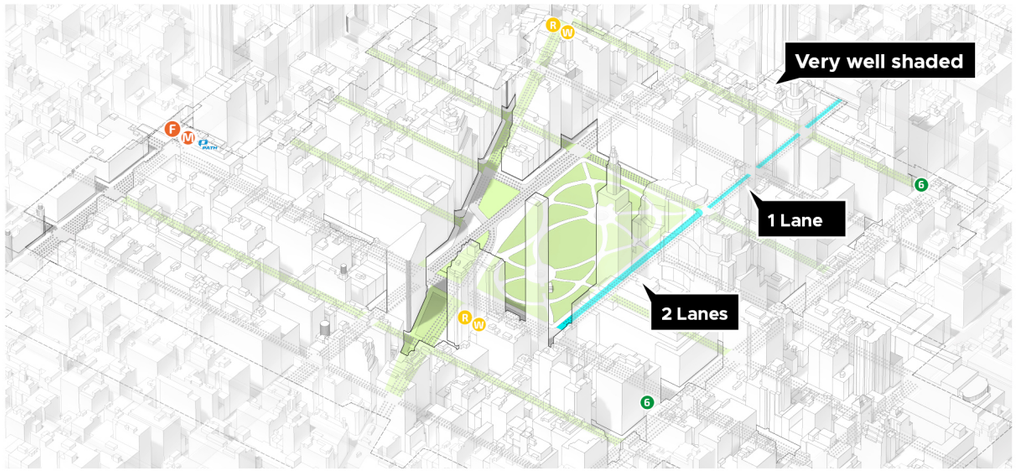


6th Avenue Plaza (.16 Miles (2 lanes x .08 Mi))

Worth Square / Porcelanosa Extension (.04 Miles)



Park Avenue South - East Curb (.32 Miles)



Park Extended (.22 Miles)

thank you

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