

Existing and proposed trail and sidewalk connections in Independence.

Trail Connections

The existing trails and sidewalks in Independence are not connected, which is an issue for many residents. Improving trail amenities and connectivity was mentioned many times during the focus groups and design workshop. One resident mentioned, "There [are] areas where there [are] sidewalk and/or trails, and then there [are] areas where there's nothing and people are walking in the street," (re: What People Said, 3b).

The addition of trail amenities throughout the trail system would allow for a better user experience. Lighting on the existing trails is inconsistent and increased lighting was desired to improve trail safety and accessibility. During the design workshops aging residents expressed a desire for frequent resting places along the trails.

Liberty Trail currently links the west side of town to the schools, but there are no trail connections to the east side of the community with the Wapsipinicon River being the divider. "I ride my bike to...different places, and I find that all of the sudden...if you're on a trail—poof—you're off a trail... it isn't always easy to reach a destination by bike," (re: What People Said, 3b). The design team worked with INRCOG to determine what the existing connectivity issues were and what areas additional sidewalks or trails could be added. The design team recommended the addition of sidewalks and trails throughout town to better connect the systems as a whole.

Proposed trailheads throughout the community would provide trail users with a location for a rest stop, bike repair station, dog stations, trash receptacles, and directional way-finding signage to popular destinations.



Proposed trail amenities such as solar lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and signage could be added to existing trails such as Liberty Trail shown above.

Independence Trail Connections

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

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Trail Connections

Many residents expressed their disappointment in the disconnect to some of their favorite destinations within Independence. The Independence Baseball/Softball Complex and the Falcon Civic Center are among the top destinations that residents felt unable to access via walking or biking.

The existing pedestrian/cyclist route to the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex is a paved shoulder trail. Residents think this type of trail is not a safe way for youth to access this destination. Many residents preferred an off-road trail solution that would run along Three Elms Park Boulevard but would have a buffer between the trail and the roadway.

The Falcon Civic Center located on the north end of Independence is a great resource for the community, but people have to drive to get there because the current sidewalk stops two blocks short of this popular location. The creation of a sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow residents to walk or bike to the Falcon Civic Center since adjacent sidewalks are already in place. It would also make it easier for people to get to the visitor center on foot or on a bike.

Existing



There is no sidewalk connection to Buchanan County Visitor Center or Falcon Civic Center from 11th Street NE. Only one block of sidewalk is needed to connect to these popular destinations.

Proposed



The addition of one block of sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow people to access the visitor center and the Falcon Civic Center by walking or biking.



Residents feel the paved shoulder trail is not the safest option to access the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex on Three Elms Park Boulevard.



Residents would prefer an off-road trail to Independence Baseball/Softball Complex because there is adequate space and this type of trail is safer.

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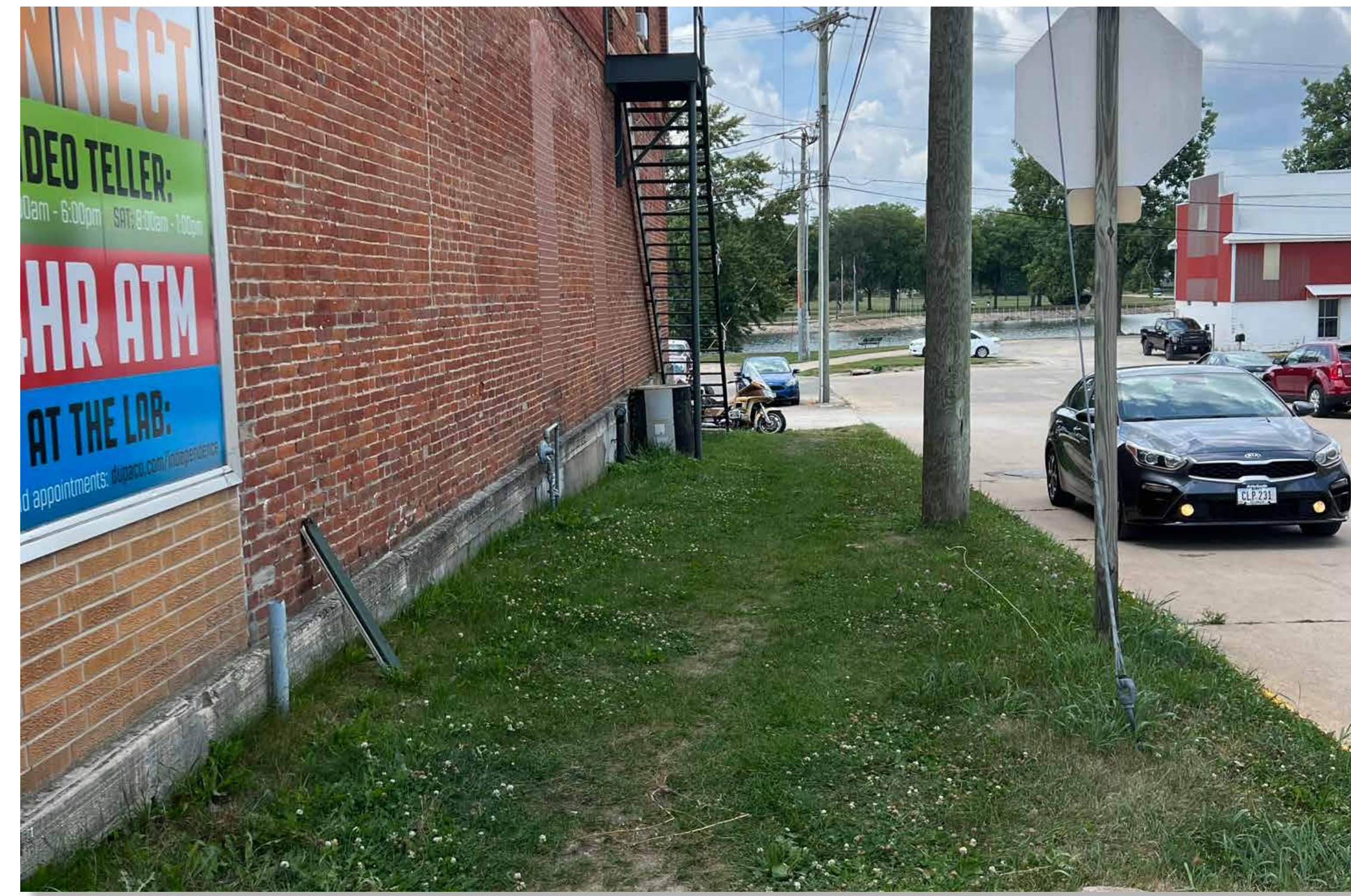
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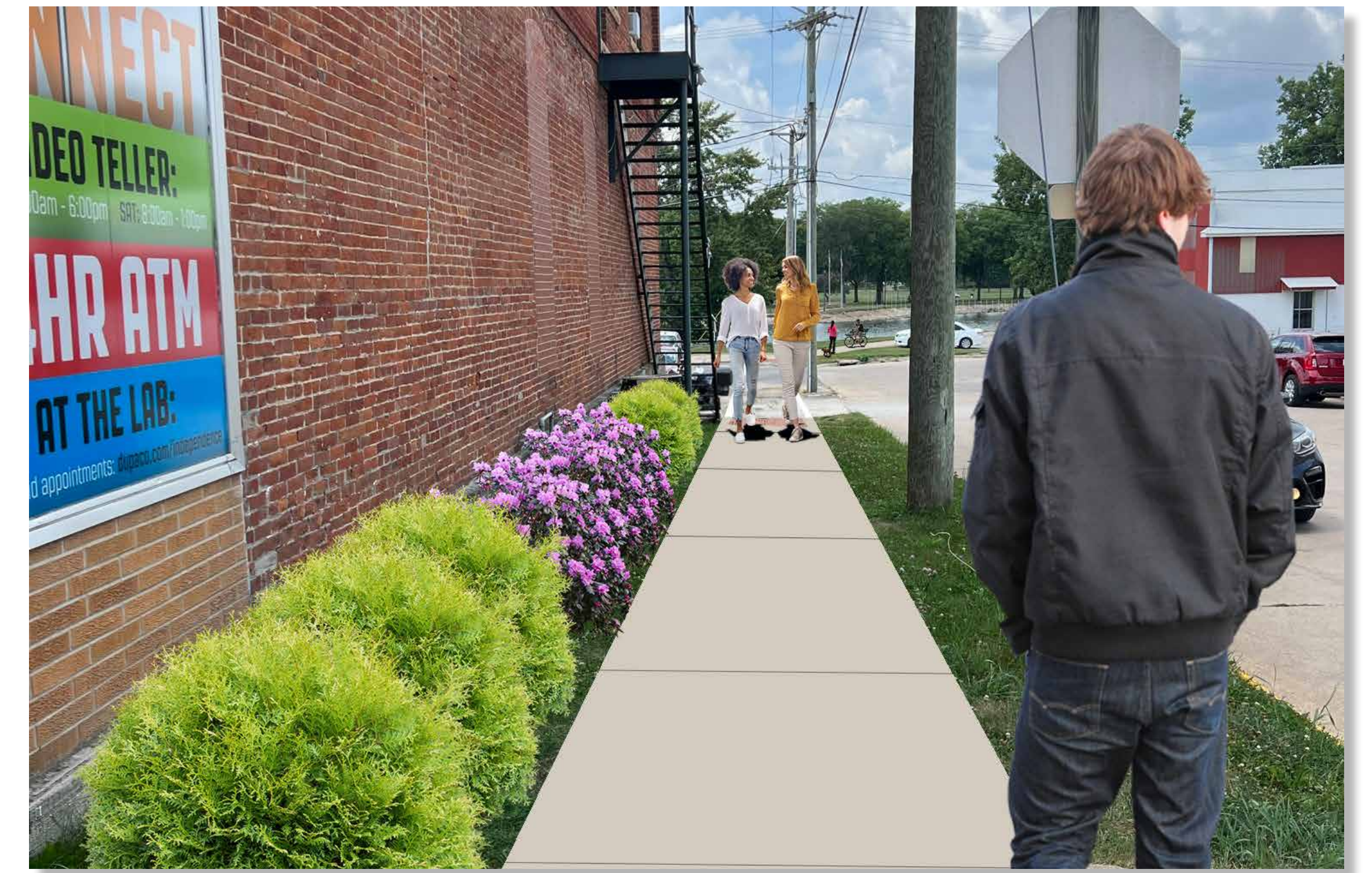
Trail Connections

River Walk Trail is a beautiful trail along the Wapsipinicon River that dead ends in a parking lot, with no clear route to get to Brimmer Park to the south or 2nd Ave NE to the east. Both routes lead to Independence's business district on 1st Street E. The design team suggested a new sidewalk on the south side of 2nd Street NE. This link would allow River Walk Trail users to be connected to the business district via a hard surface trail or sidewalk. Improvements to the parking lot where River Walk Trail ends would create a better user experience and would include signage directing users where to go to access the nearby shops, restaurants, and businesses.

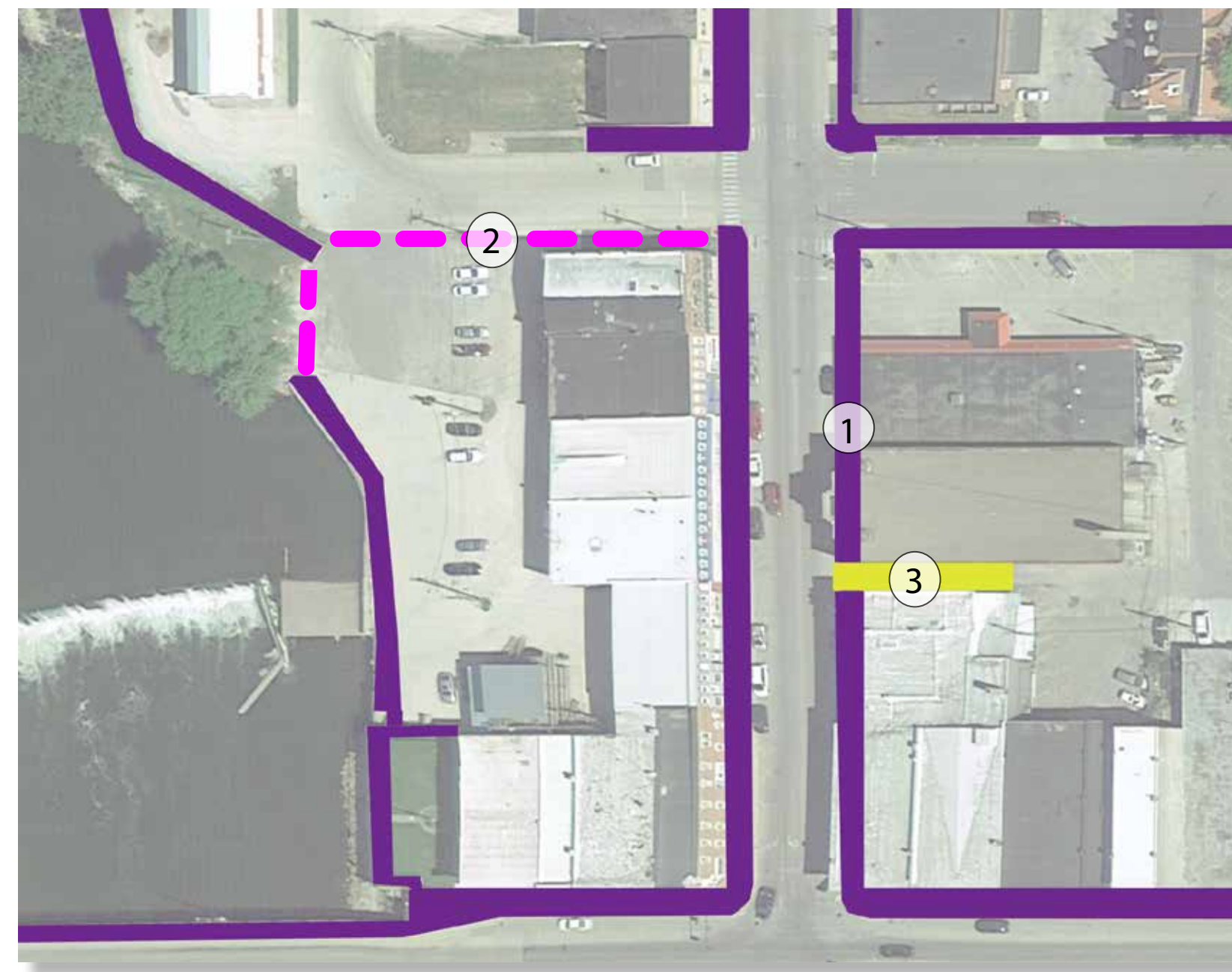
The steering committee suggested the alleyway south of Malek Theatre be turned into a public plaza area with outdoor seating, art, festoon lighting, and decorative pavers. Changing the alley drive would also allow for replacing the curb and adding a parallel parking spot on 2nd Ave NE. The plaza area would not impact the existing parking area to the east nor the egress for the adjacent buildings.



A worn "cow path" shows the desired connection along 2nd Street NE to Riverwalk Park.

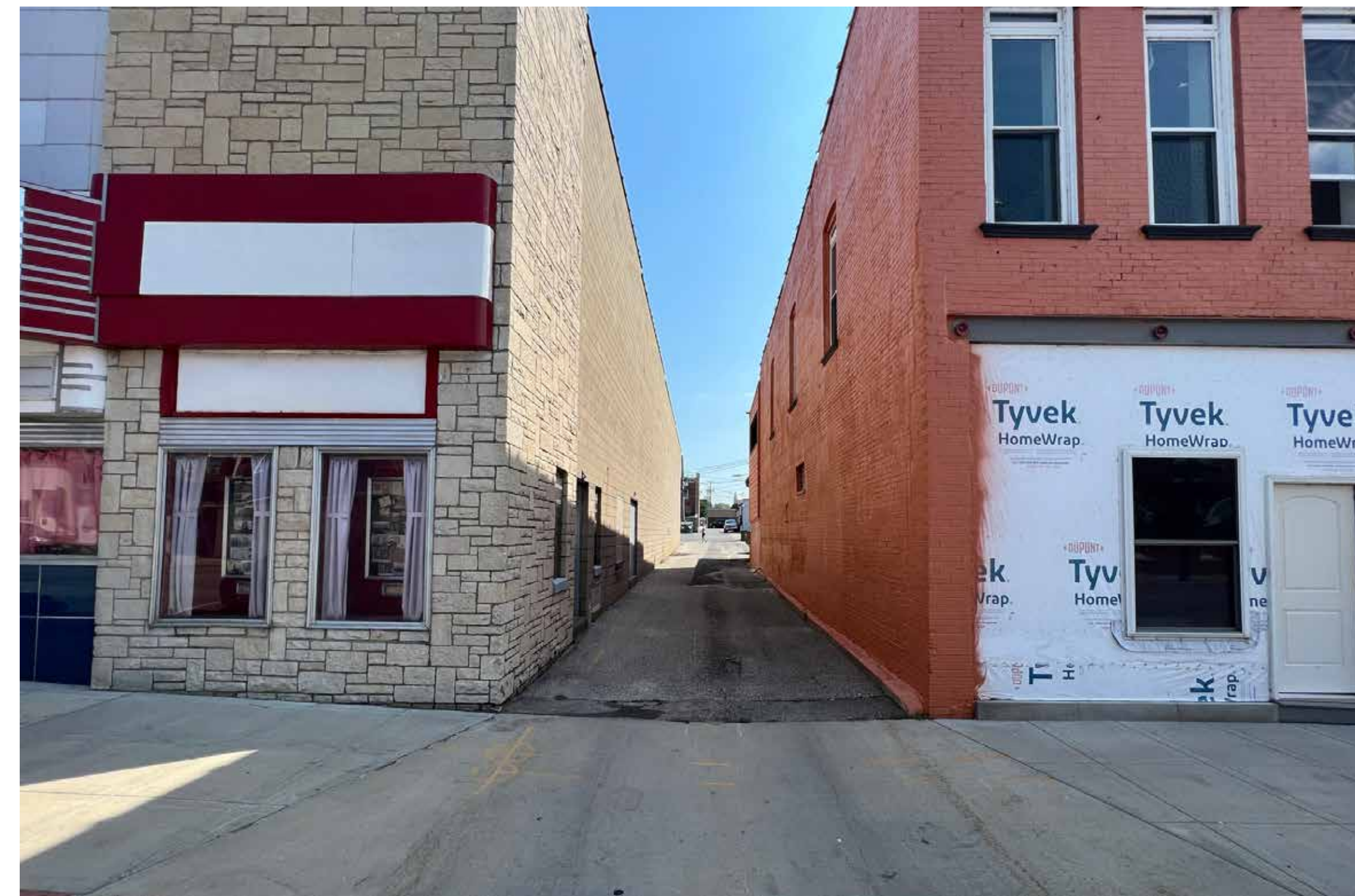


The proposed trail connection to Riverwalk Park includes a crosswalk to the existing trail and provides a paved walkway to 2nd Ave NE.



Legend

- ① Existing Sidewalks or Trails (Typical)
- ② Proposed Sidewalks (Typical)
- ③ Proposed Public Plaza



The steering committee suggested utilizing the narrow alleyway to the south of Malek Theatre for a public plaza area.



The proposed plaza space could include art, festoon lighting, planters, trash receptacles, outdoor seating, and decorative paving.

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