

# History of the re-development of the CN Station Grounds



Prior to 2013, the Town had submitted proposals including rough drawings and ideas for a re-developed station area which would be located directly north of the existing station building in Biggar. The proposal was contingent on the restoration if possible or the removal of the old station and included significant enhancements to developing the land into a historical site for Canadian National Railway and the Town.

In 2013, The Town and Canadian National Railway had constant communication regarding the condition of the building and grounds at the Railway Station in Biggar. CN requested the Town's assistance in their wishes to demolish the station building in Biggar and the Town revisited the same re-development proposals that were sent to CN in previous years and the Town sent a letter in May 2013 to CN outlining our intentions and wishes for the area.

In July 2014, Canadian National Railway issued a public notice that they have submitted an application under section six of the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act to demolish the station building in Biggar. This notice asked for public opinions.



## PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the *Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act* (the "Act") and the *Heritage Railway Stations Regulations*, notice is hereby given that Canadian National Railway Company ("CN") proposes to demolish its Railway Station Building situated in Biggar, Saskatchewan, at mile 0.0 of the Wainwright subdivision and mile 247.3 of the Watrous subdivision.

The demolition work will begin as soon as possible following receipt of approval under the Act.

CN will file an application for authority to demolish the Station with the Minister of the Environment on July 25, 2014.

Any person objecting to the proposed demolition of the Station may, within sixty (60) days after the application is filed, serve a notice of objection in the form of a letter setting out the reasons for the objection and any relevant facts in accordance with Section 7(1) of the Act, upon:

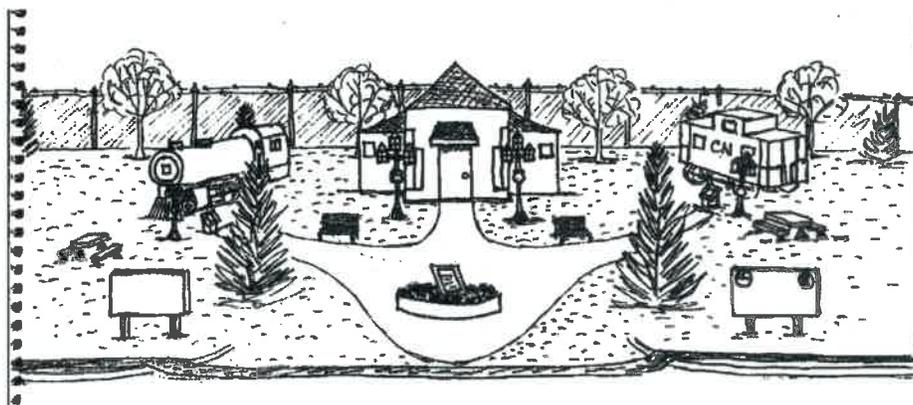
In October 2014, an extensive condition assessment of the station building was completed by Parks Canada.

In December 2014, the Town hosted a meeting between, CN, Parks Canada, Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada, Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, Western Development Museum and the Biggar Museum and Gallery.

In 2016, as everyone awaited Parks Canada final decision on the demolition request, CN sent Parks Canada a letter on June 17, 2016 in which they stated the following:

Further to CN's correspondence of December 23, 2014 whereby CN provided additional information to the Historic Site and Monuments Board of Canada, CN wishes to provide the following supplementary information and updates.

CN understands the importance of preserving character-defining elements and as such, CN and the Town of Biggar are jointly committed to the development of a railroad-themed monument in the Town to preserve the cultural and heritage aspects of the railway in the community. In this regard, the Town and CN have held discussions surrounding a park that would include railway monuments (drawing enclosed).



And the following:

CN has a positive and longstanding relationship with the Town of Biggar and we remain committed to work with the Town Council, as well as the community at large to ensure a long-standing heritage memorial is developed in the community that will represent the significant history between both parties.

On March 6, 2018 Parks Canada approved the application with the following conditions:

**PC Number:** 2018-0208

**Date:** 2018-03-06

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Her Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to section 8 of the *Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act*, authorizes the Canadian National Railway Company to alter its railway station in Biggar, Saskatchewan, by dismantling the building in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the attached schedule.

## SCHEDULE

It is recommended that the Canadian National Railway Company be authorized to alter its railway station in Biggar, Saskatchewan, by dismantling the building in accordance with terms and conditions as follows:

- 1) It is acknowledged that the Canadian National Railway Company has advised that it understands the importance of preserving the character defining features of the Biggar railway station that are salvageable and can be reused;
- 2) It is acknowledged that the Canadian National Railway Company and the Town of Biggar have advised that they are jointly committed to developing a railway-themed commemorative park or monument in the Town of Biggar to preserve and present the cultural and heritage aspects of the railway in the community;
- 3) Canadian National Railway Company will carry out the dismantling of the railway station building with care in a manner that will allow it to remove, for preservation and re-use, any character defining features referred to in the *Heritage Character* Statement for the station, that are salvageable and can be reused;
- 4) Canadian National Railway Company will work with the Town of Biggar, heritage stakeholders, and any other interested parties, to reuse any of these character defining features and any other elements of interest removed, to establish a railway-themed commemorative park or monument on a dedicated portion of its existing railway land, or on other adjacent or nearby property as CN agrees to with the Town of Biggar;
- 5) Canadian National Railway Company will make available any remaining character defining features and any other elements of interest removed, for reuse at other heritage buildings or places in other areas within the Town of Biggar or in the Province of Saskatchewan.

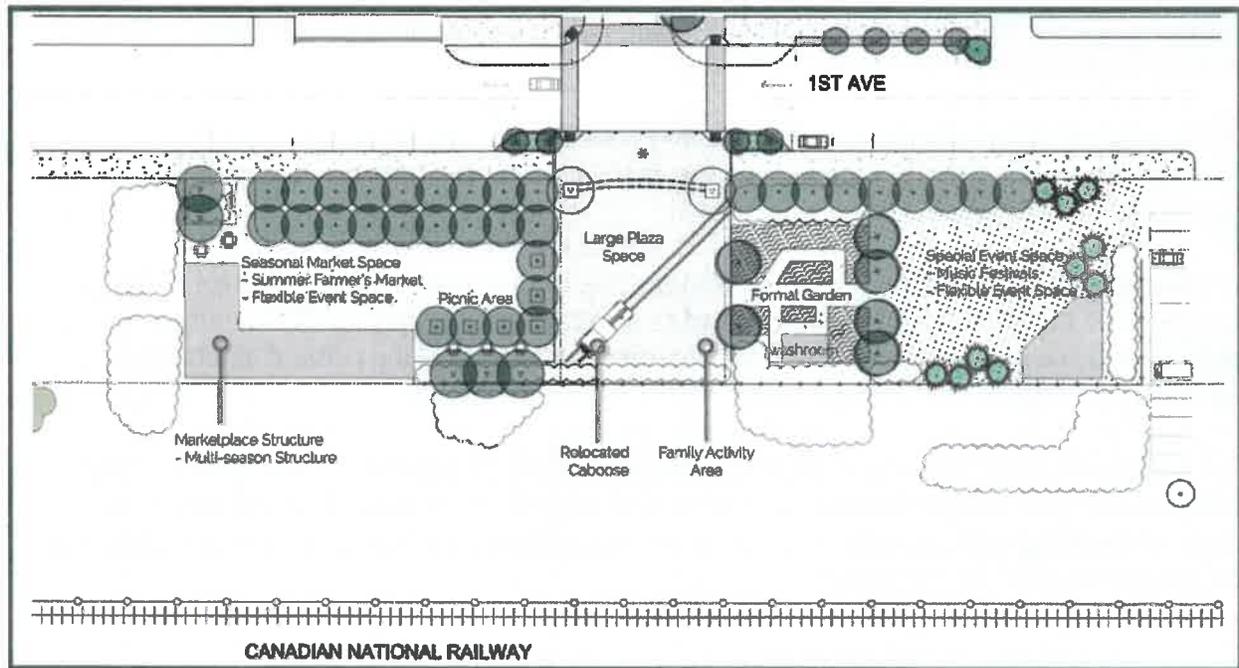
**On August 8, 2018 – The station was demolished.**

Following the demolition of the station the Town and CN communicated on how to proceed with the re-development of the area and during this time, the Biggar Revitalization Project was started.

**On March 15, 2019 – The Town was approached by a fundraising firm stating that there was a donor family that wanted to see if there was a special project in Biggar that they could support.**

From this moment on, the volunteers that spearheaded the Biggar Revitalization Project also provided valuable input and suggestions for Town Council to proceed on the recommended four phases of the Biggar Revitalization Project. Business Core, Transition Zone, Gateway and Grand Central Park. The Town was almost ready for the open house when Covid 19 started in March 2020. The open houses were delayed to January 2021 due to the restrictions in place by public health with respect to the pandemic.

The Town used the community feedback and tweaked the plans and Council approved the concept and fundraising policies in April of 2021.



The volunteers at this moment are now known as the Biggar Revitalization Leadership Committee and they are the champions that worked on the largest fundraiser in the Town's history. Due to their efforts, what is being shown at this open house on April 6, 2023, is fully funded through the current pledges and matching donations. The more donations we receive, the greater the potential to increase what is offered in these areas.

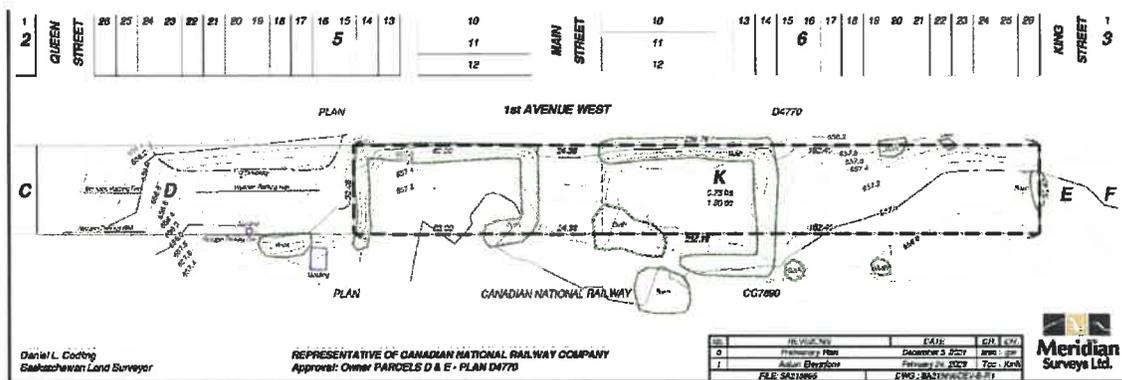
During 2022, CN committed additional land to the Town to expand our potential programming and areas of the Grand Central Park.

On May 6, 2022, CN wrote a letter of support for a grant application the Town was requesting funding for which CN stated:

CN has been in close discussion with the Town of Biggar on the development of a railway-themed commemorative park in the town since the old CN station building was torn down in 2018. CN has committed its support for the project and is actively working on transferring the required land to the Town, pending an environmental assessment.

Many CN employees and pensioners call Biggar home. The town has been an important neighbour and ally to CN for generations and it is our honour to support their application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

The Town has begun the subdivision process and CN has completed their environmental assessment on the additional land and it is now with their real estate division.



As the funding is in place for this phase of the Biggar Revitalization Project, the Town passed a resolution on January 17, 2023 to complete the detailed design of the new updated concept. Part of this process is the public input during the open house as like before the Town may tweak the proposed concept as it completes the detailed design up to the point of being tender ready. Council felt it was of utmost importance to show the donors that the Town has brought this phase of the project as far as it possibly could as we await the final transfer document from CN to transfer the land into the Town's name.

On March 9, 2023 the Town invited the Biggar Revitalization Leadership Committee and other volunteers to a sneak peak of the updated concept for review and comments. The Town then used these comments to make additional tweaks that we are now prepared to present to the general public on April 6, 2023.

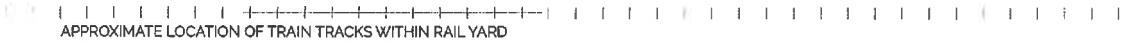
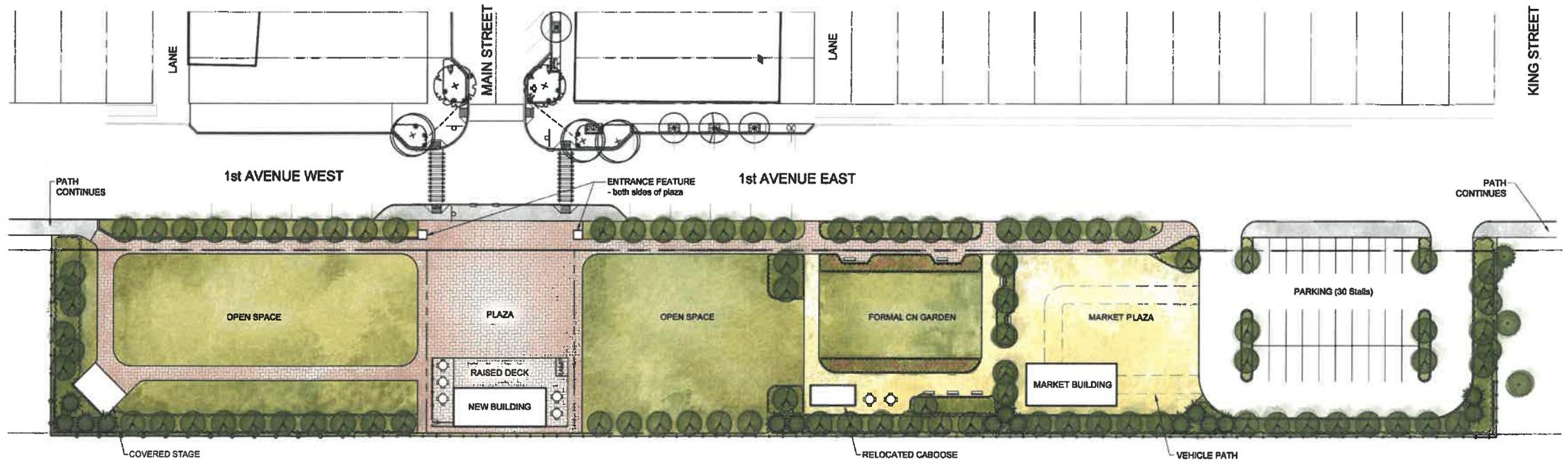
We have provided this history document, along with all the pictures and story boards you will see tonight at the open house for you to take home. There are questions at the end of the package that we would like your feedback on. If you feel comfortable and confident about your feedback, you are more than welcome to fill out the questions and turn in before you leave the open house.

If you need more time, we will have this entire document available for viewing online starting tomorrow and we will have all the poster boards available for viewing all next week at the Town Office. We do ask that all feedback forms be dropped off at the Town Office by 4pm on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

We thank you for your time and input on this amazing project. Knowing that we continue to work with CN and that we want to be ready to tender the project as soon as we have the go ahead from CN. Your input is valuable as we continue our detailed design on this project.

Thank you,

Town Council



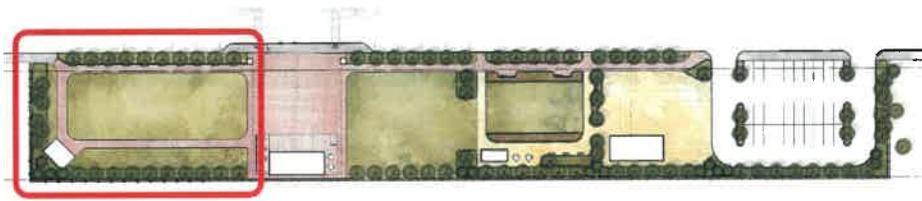
The Grand Central Park Master Plan has been under development since 2019, when discussions related to Main Street improvements highlighted the importance of a high-quality downtown park for the Town of Biggar.

This plan is the result of discussions with Town Council, the Main Street Steering Committee, Town Administration, and information gathered from previous open houses.

The design team is now looking for additional feedback from the community to ensure the Grand Central park meets the needs of the Town.

# MASTER PLAN

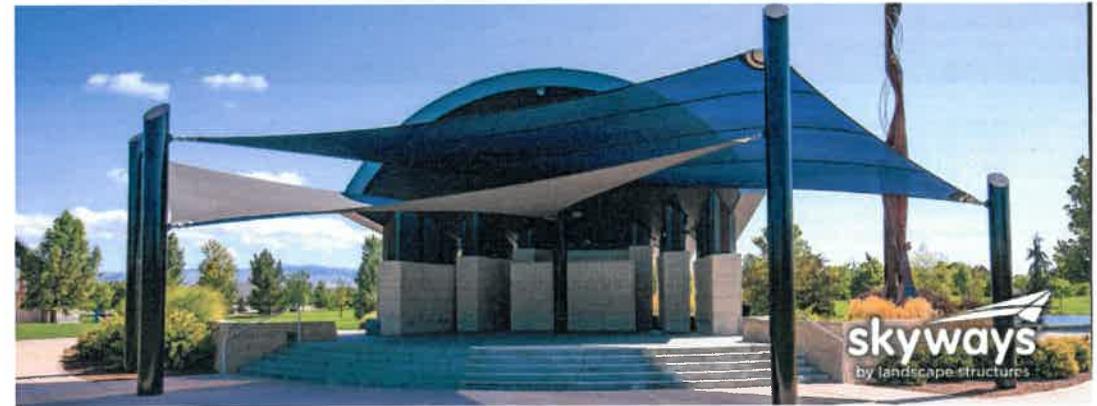
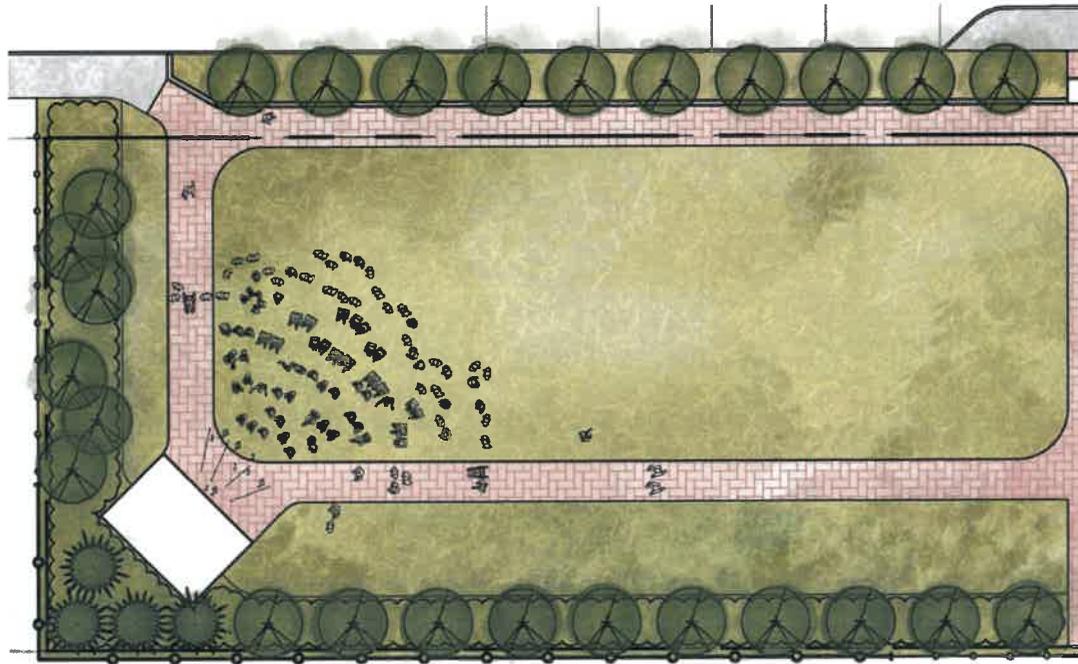
# BIGGAR GRAND CENTRAL PARK



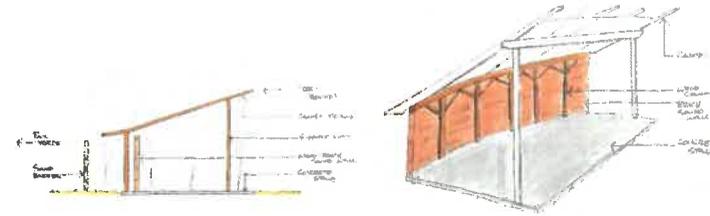
## COVERED STAGE

The Covered Stage and surrounding open area is an ideal venue for music and arts festivals, concerts, and other events that would benefit from a small stage. With a gentle slope towards the stage, the landscape provides a natural open-air amphitheatre. This is one of several open areas within Grand Central Park that can be used for various events and festivals.

The stage itself will be a raised platform, bounded in the back by a brick-clad sound wall that references the former Roundhouse. The canopy options include a traditional architectural roof or a more contemporary shade structure.



Option 1: Shade-Sail Canopy



Option 2: Architectural Roof Canopy



**WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK**

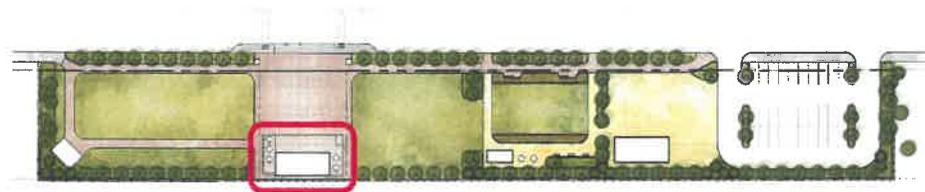
Should the Community Stage structure be designed as a traditional architectural roof, or a contemporary shade structure?

Please provide your feedback on the survey response sheet.



Round-House Inspired Sound Wall

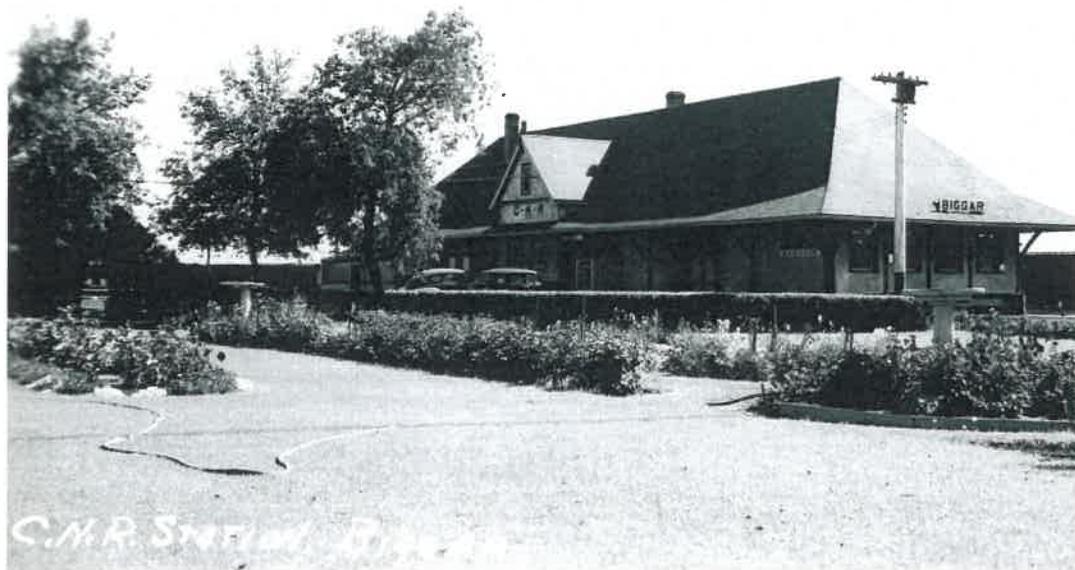




## ORIGINAL CN RAIL BUILDING

The original CNR Station demolished several years ago still holds a special place in the hearts of many Town residents.

Built in 1909, the original building was a good example of prototypical rural western Canadian railway station design. The standardized design from which it was built was influenced by a style of building popular in the early 20th century, the "artistic" bungalow style, which rejected the excesses of decoration of historic architectural styles but retained the basic forms of vernacular architecture.



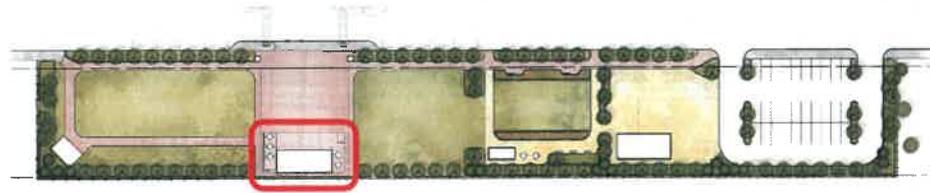
Generally, architectural details were chosen for their simplicity and practicality; materials were employed for their colour, texture and variety; and the elevations were arranged in a disciplined and aesthetically pleasing manner. The original building finish – lap wood siding – was later converted to stucco.

### Character Defining Elements:

- Low, horizontal massing, consisting of an elongated one-and-a-half-storey structure capped by a prominent hip roof, with projecting bays on both facades capped by gabled dormers
- Roof line, consisting of: a high, bell-cast, hip roof; large, gabled dormers; a single, shed dormer beside the larger dormer on each side; wide, overhanging eaves carried on curved timber brackets; and square, brick, chimney stacks
- Features typical of early-20th-century, rural, railway stations, including: a broad, hip roof; wide, overhanging eaves; oversized wooden brackets; and a projecting operator's bay
- Original windows consisted of tall, rectangular, double-hung window units, with multiple light over single-light sash
- Doors, consisting of: framed-and-panelled single and double doors; and sliding, freight doors with panels of vertical and diagonal "V"-joint boarding



**BIGGAR GRAND CENTRAL PARK**

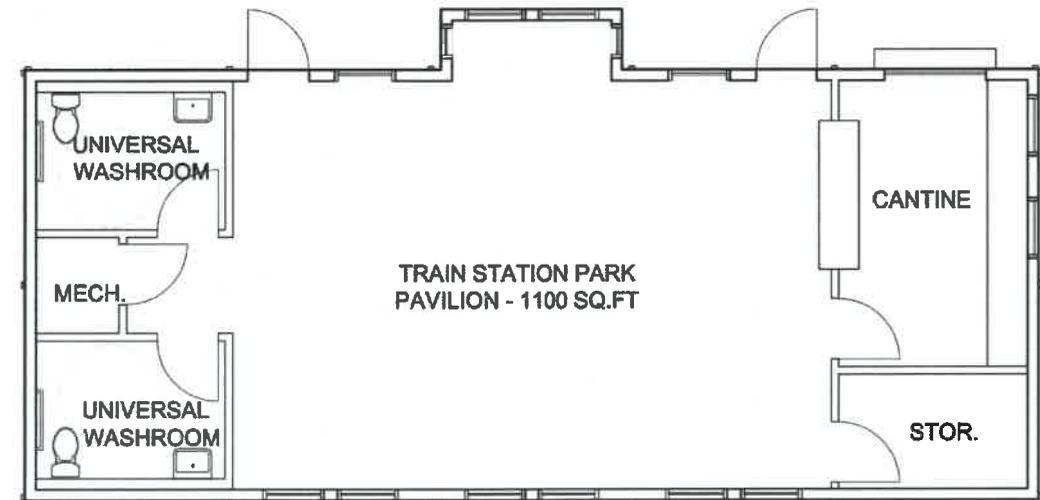


## REPLICA CN RAIL BUILDING

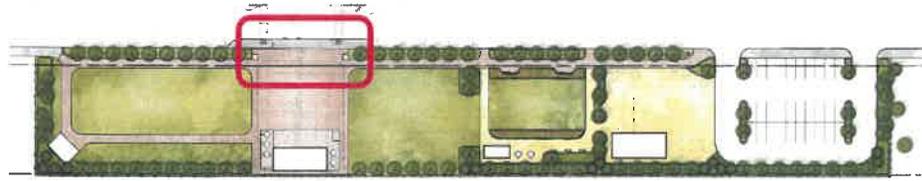
The Replica Station is a central feature of Grand Central Park and is the primary focal point as travellers move southward down the revitalized Main Street towards the park. A new Replica Station cannot replace the original historic structure, but will help tell the story of the Town of Biggar and its relationship to the railway. Views of the station are framed on both sides by the historic buildings that form the framework of Biggar's downtown core.

The new Replica Rail Station building will include two universal public washrooms, a food/beverage service area, and a flexible open area available for community events. The building may host temporary or seasonal museum exhibits and displays. It will have a footprint of 50' x 22', which is smaller than the original, but similar in proportion to the historic structure.

The original station features the iconic 'Bellcast' roof profile of many early Canadian Rail stations, and the proposed new building will feature this roof shape. There are opportunities to include wooden components under the soffit to add warmth, while using more durable, low-maintenance materials for exterior walls. Knee braces will be incorporated into the new design to reference the historic structure, and there are opportunities to incorporate the Town of Biggar signage and branding into the building. Interior spaces will feature durable materials.



**BIGGAR GRAND CENTRAL PARK**

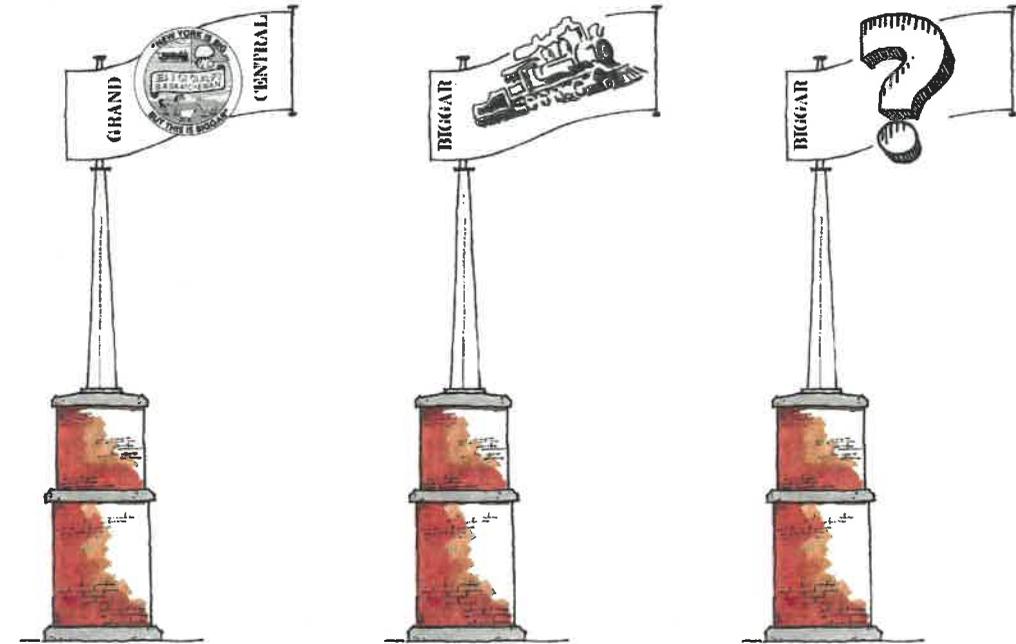
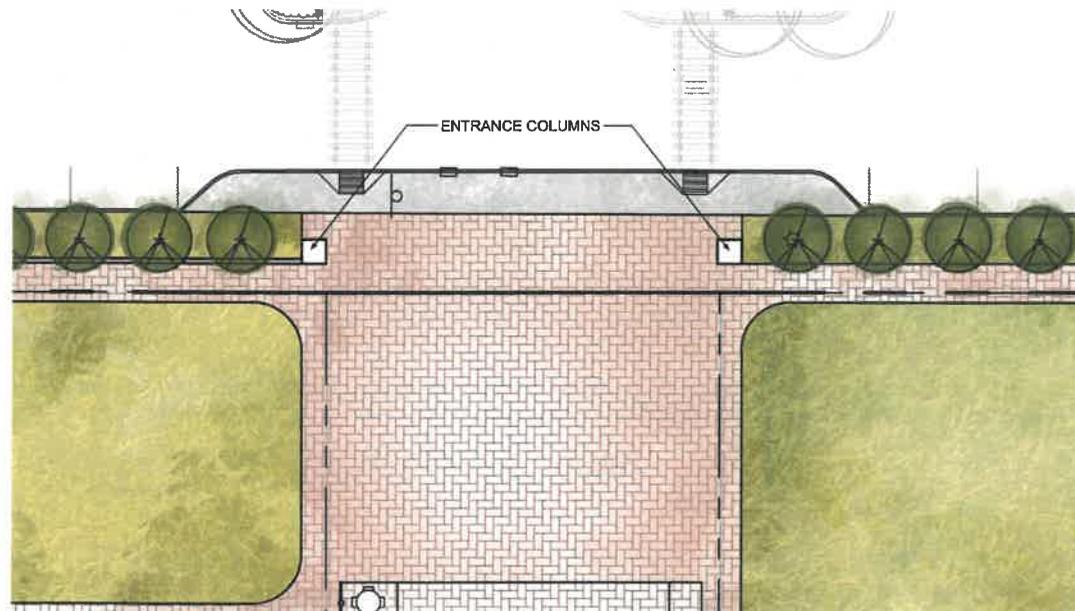


## PLAZA & ENTRANCE COLUMNS

The public plaza in front and surrounding the Replica Station is the gateway to Grand Central Park, and will be the main point of entrance for visitors passing from Main Street into the park.

The plaza is characterized by a spacious open area suitable for community events or festivals. The raised platform around the Replica Rail building can double as a performance area, turning the entire plaza into an amphitheatre for special events.

At the threshold between the plaza and 1st Avenue, visitors will pass under entrance features designed to help celebrate Biggar and its relationship to the park. Entrance columns will anchor each corner of the north side of the plaza and create a gateway into the park.

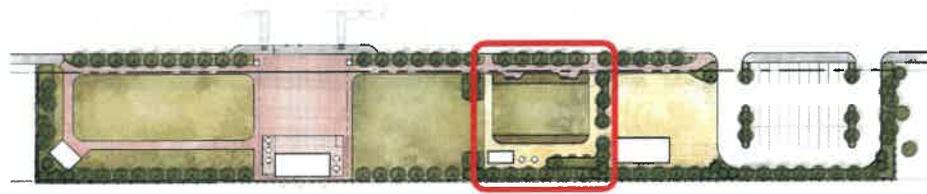


Entrance columns can be designed to celebrate Biggar and its brand by including the Town's logo, focus on the railway history by incorporating rail-related graphics, or be designed to highlight other aspects of the Town and its history.

### WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK

Should the entrance feature be designed with Biggar Town branding? Or to highlight the railway theme of the Grand Central Park? Or is there another aspect of the Town that should be considered for these features?

Please provide your feedback on the survey response sheet.



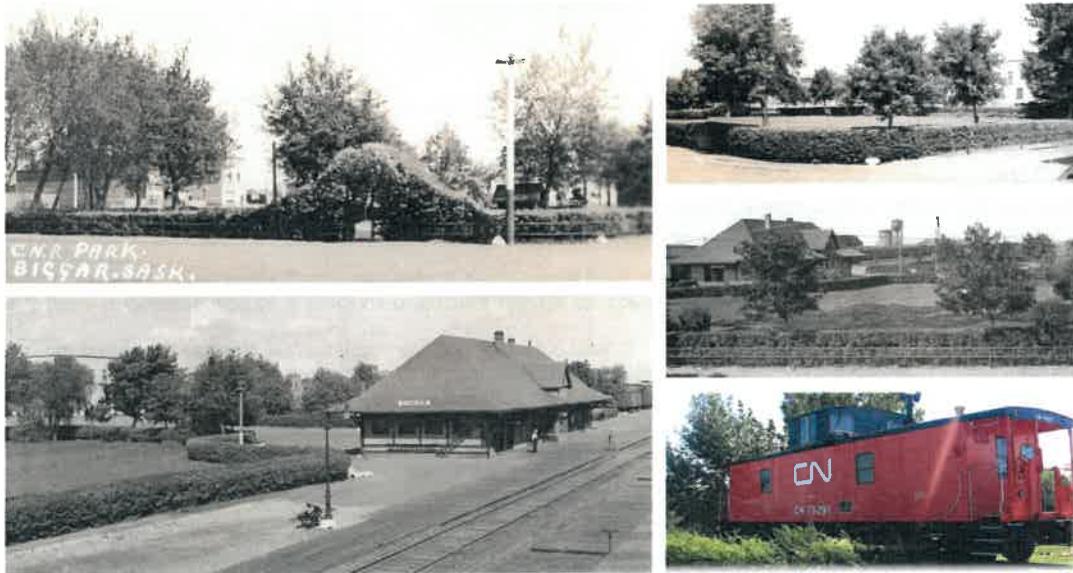
## HISTORIC CN GARDEN

Surrounding the original CNR Station was the historic CN Gardens – a highly manicured and stunning garden that provided a backdrop to the station. The new Grand Central Park will re-create a modern version of these historic gardens.

Inspired by some of the original CN Garden design elements, this space will be more formal and structured than other areas of the park, but still designed to be a comfortable and flexible space for community use. Seating areas, picnic tables, pathways, and an open lawn will create a welcoming and comfortable space for all park visitors.

The ornamental gardens will include by some of the plants that were a part of the original CN Garden, and also include new horticultural species to reflect both the historic connection and the contemporary aspect of this space.

The caboose, currently located on Main Street, will be relocated to this area, and will create a threshold between the formal gardens and adjacent open space to the west.



Peony



Peony



Peony



Russian Sage



False Sunflower



Ornamental Grasses

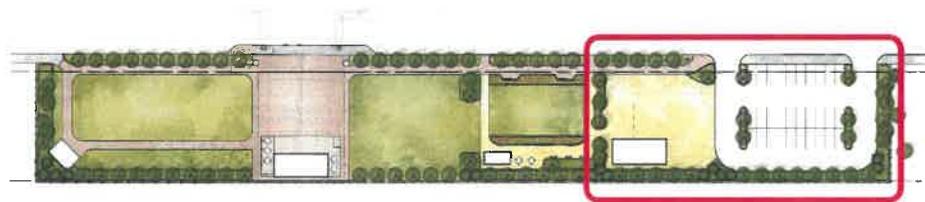


Hydrangea



Hydrangea

**BIGGAR GRAND CENTRAL PARK**

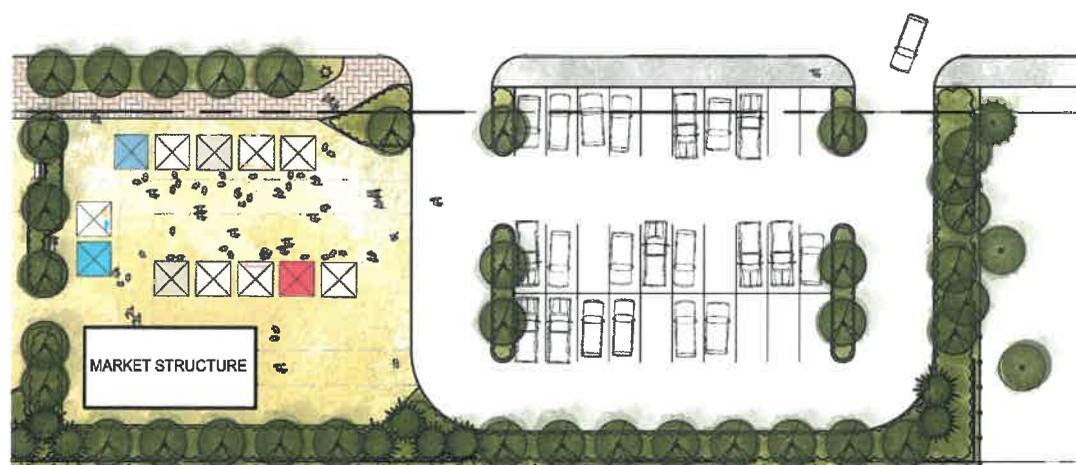


## MARKET SQUARE

Market Square will become the future home of Biggar's Farmer's Market. Market Square is characterized by a large open space for the market, and includes a covered structure to provide some protection from the elements.

Inspiration images are presented to show possible market structure designs. The structure will be an open-air covered market space, and designed to be a friendly, flexible functional area for markets and other events. The structure will be a simple roof structure with a possible reference to historical siding buildings, and be designed to celebrate an exposed timber construction.

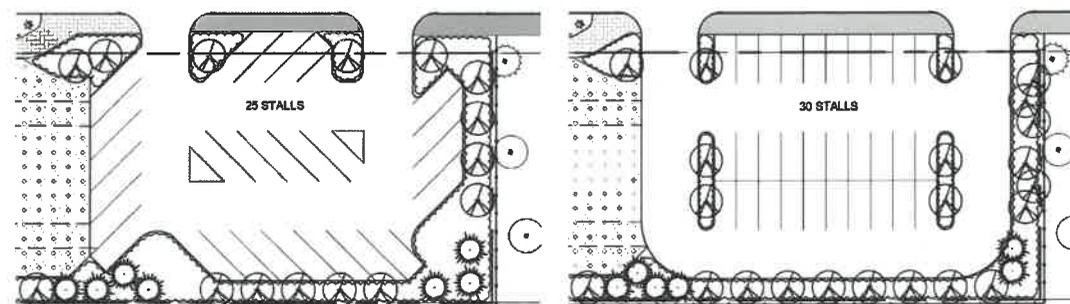
Market Square also includes a parking lot to service market events and other events and will supplement the existing on-street parking along 1st Avenue and Main Street.



### WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK

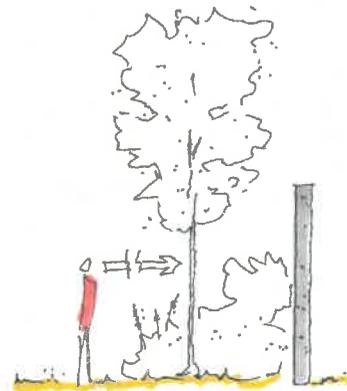
The parking lot at Market Square can take one of several forms.

Please provide feedback on the survey response sheet on your preferred parking lot layout.

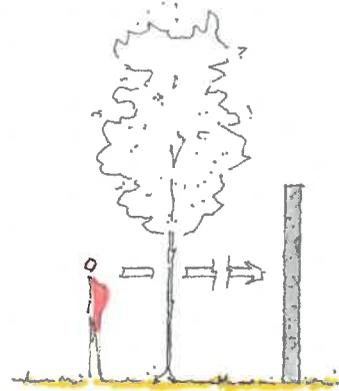




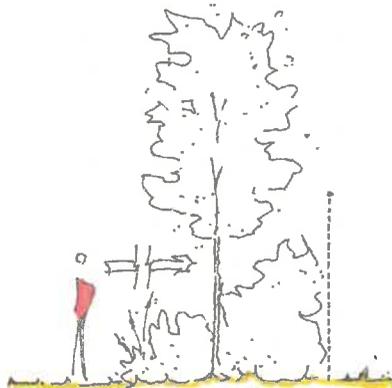
## SOUND BARRIER & SAFETY FENCING



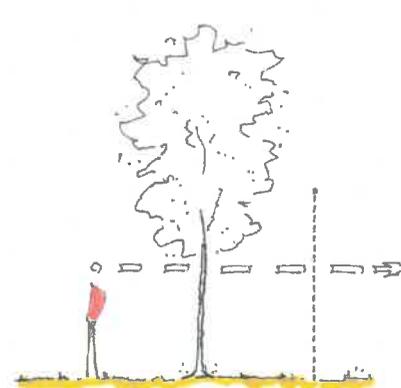
Vegetation blocks views of Sound Barrier



Visible Sound Barrier



Vegetation blocks views into rail yard



Filtered views into rail yard

It is important to ensure that the safety and comfort of all Grand Central Park visitors are considered, given the proximity of the park to an active train line. To ensure public safety, the park will be enclosed by a non-climbable barrier. This barrier may take the form of a non-climbable welded-wire fence, or a sound barrier.

Current plans show sound barrier around the Community Stage to provide a suitable sound environment for festivals and other events, but the fencing material around the rest of the park is still under consideration.

**Sound Barrier** (below left): A solid sound barrier would block views into train yards to the south and would also provide some sound attenuation, reducing the impact of the noisy train yards on events in the park.

**Welded Wire Fence** (below right): safety fencing of this type, combined with strategic plantings, can provide a filtered view into the train yards to the south and strengthen the connection between the historical rail theme of the park and the current rail yards.



Sound Barrier



Welded Wire Fence

### WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK

Is there a desire to maintain views into the active rail yards? Or is it more important to block the noise of the railway and provide visual separation between the park and the railway? Or is a balanced approach most appropriate, seeking to find the right mix of filtered views and sound attenuation?

Please provide your feedback on the survey response sheet.

# BIGGAR GRAND CENTRAL PARK

# Grand Central Park

April 06 Public Open House  
Survey Response Form

Your feedback will help to ensure that the new Grand Central Park will reflect the values and meet the needs of the community of Biggar. Thank you for taking the time to provide your thoughts and comments.

## 1. Does the proposed Grand Central Park provide the right balance of open space and programmed space?

| Strongly agree           | Agree                    | Neither agree<br>nor disagree | Disagree                 | Strongly<br>Disagree     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## 2. Does the proposed Grand Central Park provide useable spaces for community events?

| Strongly agree           | Agree                    | Neither agree<br>nor disagree | Disagree                 | Strongly<br>Disagree     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## 3. Covered stage

Should the Covered Stage structure be designed as a traditional architectural roof, or a contemporary shade-sail structure?

| ARCHITECTURAL<br>ROOF    | SHADE SAIL               |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## 4. Entrance columns

Should the entrance columns feature Biggar Town branding? Or highlight the railway theme of Grand Central Park? Or is there another aspect of Biggar that should be considered for these features?

| TRAIN GRAPHIC            | BIGGAR BRANDING<br>/ LOGO | OTHER                    |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you selected Other, please provide additional information:

|  |
|--|
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> |
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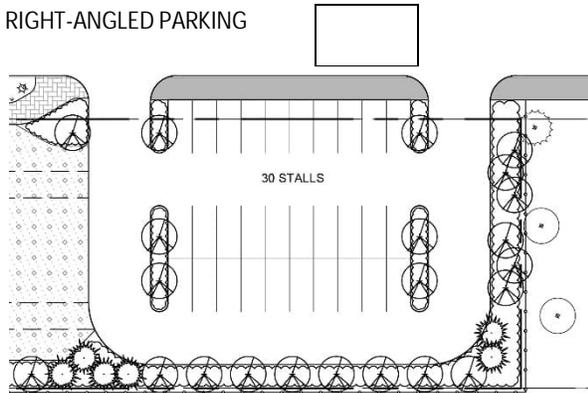
## 5. Should the Grand Central Park include spaces for public art?

| YES                      | NO                       |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

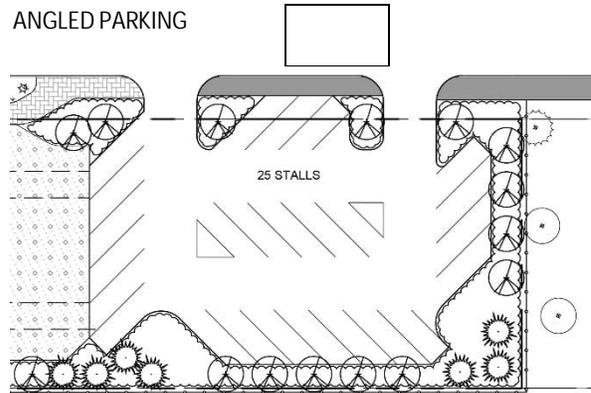
**6. Parking**

The parking lot can take several forms. Please indicate your preferred parking lot layout.

RIGHT-ANGLED PARKING



ANGLED PARKING



**7. Fencing and sound barriers**

A fence will be erected between the park and the railway. Is there a desire to maintain views into the active rail yards, or is it more important to block the noise of the railway? Or is a balanced approach most appropriate, seeking to find the right mix of filtered views and sound attenuation?

| MAINTAIN VIEWS<br>(metal safety fence) | BLOCK SOUND & VIEWS<br>(sound barrier) | BALANCED APPROACH<br>(combination) |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
|  |  |                                    |

**8. Additional donor recognition opportunities**

A downtown park provides a range of opportunities to allow residents to contribute to the creation of and fundraising for the park. Engraved paving stones and sponsorship signs are a few options to allow residents to contribute to the process.

|  | YES   | NO |
|--|---|----|
| If engraved commemorative or donor-recognition bricks or pavers were available, would you consider purchasing one? |   |    |
| If commemorative plaques on sponsorship signs were available, would you consider purchasing one?                   |   |    |
| If yes, at what donation amount?   | DONATION VALUE <input type="text"/> |    |

9. Do you have any additional comments?