

# DREXEL AVENUE CONCEPTUAL STREETSCAPE MASTER PLAN STUDY

**City of Oak Creek**  
April 2022

Prepared for:  
City of Oak Creek  
Plan Commission



# Table of Contents

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- I. Introduction.....2**
  - Project Introduction
  - Project Boundaries
  - Project Design Approach
  - Project Design Vision Framework
  
- II. Concept.....6**
  - Conceptual Treatments
  - Inspiration
  
- III. Schematic Design.....12**
  - South Ikea Way - I-94/43
  - I-94/43 - South 13th Street
  - South 13th Street - South 10th Street
  - South 10th Street - Oak Creek
  - Oak Creek - South Main Street
  - South Main Street - South Howell Avenue
  - Typical Sections
  - 3D Visualization
  
- IV. Streetscape Elements.....42**
  - Street Trees
  - Planting Beds
  - Ground Cover
  - Walls
  - Site Furnishings (seating, bike racks, litter receptacles)
  - Lighting (street & decorative)
  - Monuments & Sculptures
  
- V. Implementation.....56**

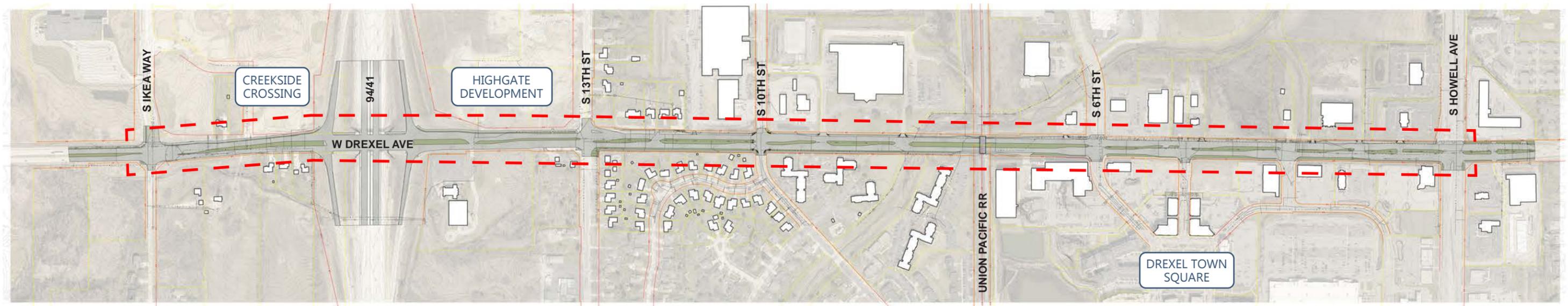
## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

- **1.5 mile long streetscape design** of W. Drexel Ave between S. Ikea Way and S. Howell Ave
- **Create a cohesive corridor design** for Drexel Ave that incorporates **bold plantings and iconic visual elements**
- Design will work to incorporate a variety of existing uses, including residential, commercial and mixed use
- Corridor utilizes various modes of transportation, including vehicular, pedestrian, and an intersecting freeway and railway



## PROJECT BOUNDARIES

- North Boundary - Drexel Avenue R.O.W.
- Southern Boundary - Drexel Avenue R.O.W.
- Eastern Boundary - South Howell Avenue
- Western Boundary - South Ikea Way



# I. Introduction



## PROJECT DESIGN APPROACH

- Cohesive design for Drexel Ave that incorporates iconic visual elements, locations for public art, wayfinding and entry signage
- An attractive environment for residents and visitors
- Incorporate adjacent developments, such as Drexel Town Square, Creekside Crossing Marketplace and Highgate
- Design that is innovative, inviting, and represents Oak Creek's identity as a city on the lake

# I. Introduction

## PROJECT DESIGN VISION FRAMEWORK

• Three distinct zones:

**West** - Interchange

**Central** - Residential / Industrial

**East** - Mixed-use / Commercial



### WEST

- DRAWS YOU IN
- DREXEL AVE EXIT = ARRIVAL TO THE 'CITY ON THE LAKE'
- MEMORABLE LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ELEMENTS
- INCORPORATES GATEWAY & CLEAR WAYFINDING ELEMENTS

### CENTRAL

- PULLS YOU FURTHER INTO OAK CREEK
- VISUALLY STUNNING THAT SLOWS TRAFFIC
- REPETITIVE ELEMENTS KEEP INTEREST
- ESTABLISHES A SENSE OF PLACE

### EAST

- CLEAR THRESHOLD THAT TRANSITIONS INTO EAST ZONE
- EMPHASIS SHIFTS FROM ROADWAY TO DOWNTOWN DESTINATION
- MULTIPLE PEDESTRIAN POINTS OF INTEREST
- DESIGN PALETTE CARRIES EAST TO LAKE VISTA PARK



## CONCEPTUAL TREATMENTS

- A bold planting design creates visual interest and continuity throughout the corridor
- Plant species, including ornamental grasses and Quaking Aspen, create movement in the landscape
- A repetitive change in topography through landform manipulation and wall integration draws the eye down the avenue
- A cohesive lighting scheme emphasizes movement
- Monuments and sculptural elements repeat along the corridor to create continuity and a sense of place

# II. Concept

## CONCEPTUAL TREATMENTS: KEY MAP

- A** Large median treatment: 15'-30' width
- B** Small median treatment: 0'-15' width
-  Railroad bridge treatment
-  Intersection treatment (Monument element)
-  Additional treatment (Monument element / Artistic sculpture)



# II. Concept

## MEDIAN TREATMENT INSPIRATION

- **Plant massings** provide high visual impact
- **Tree groves** provide visual screening without creating a solid wall
- **Stone & corten steel materials** complement each other to create a varied and interesting backdrop for the plant material



# II. Concept

## RAIL ROAD BRIDGE TREATMENT INSPIRATION

As part of the conceptual design process, the City explored multiple solutions for design applications at the existing railroad bridge. These concepts included artistic paintings/murals, sculptural elements, lighting, and other applications detached from the railroad structure itself. Due to the high level of maintenance and operational coordination with the railroad company, the design concepts included in this report focus on interventions that focus less on the railroad structure itself, and more on elements leading up to the structure.



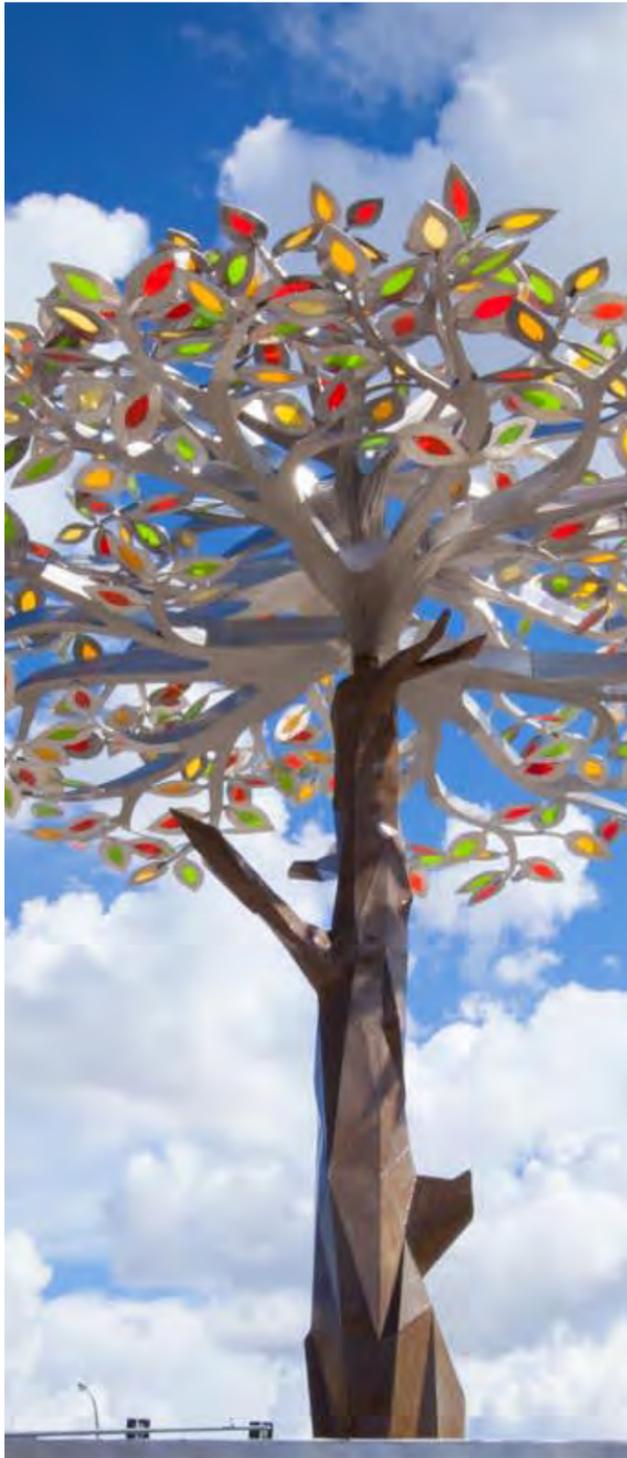


## INTERSECTION TREATMENT INSPIRATION

- Wayfinding
- Cohesive throughout corridor
- Stone/concrete & corten steel materials

## SCULPTURAL ELEMENT INSPIRATION

- Tree/plant inspired
- Large scale
- Steel material



# III. Schematic Design

## SCHEMATIC DESIGN

- The schematic design combines the conceptual landscape and sculptural elements into a unified treatment of the corridor that creates visual interest at all scales, from pedestrian to motorist
- The heavy landscape and integration of sculptural monuments create a sense of place and provide visual wayfinding cues
- The combination of stone and corten steel complement the bold planting scheme and offer opportunities for signage

As part of a cost reduction exercise, three schematic design approaches are included on the following pages:

**Alternative 1:** All-Inclusive Streetscape Approach

**Alternative 2:** Phased Monument Signage Approach

**Alternative 3:** Median-Only Landscape Treatment Approach

Alternatives 2 and 3 remove the secondary, tertiary, and artistic sculpture design elements and include only primary monuments in the design. Alternative 3 removes all landscape improvements outside of the medians. Alternatives 2 and 3 would still allow for the removed streetscape elements to be added in later as a phased construction approach.

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# Alternative 1: All-Inclusive Streetscape Approach

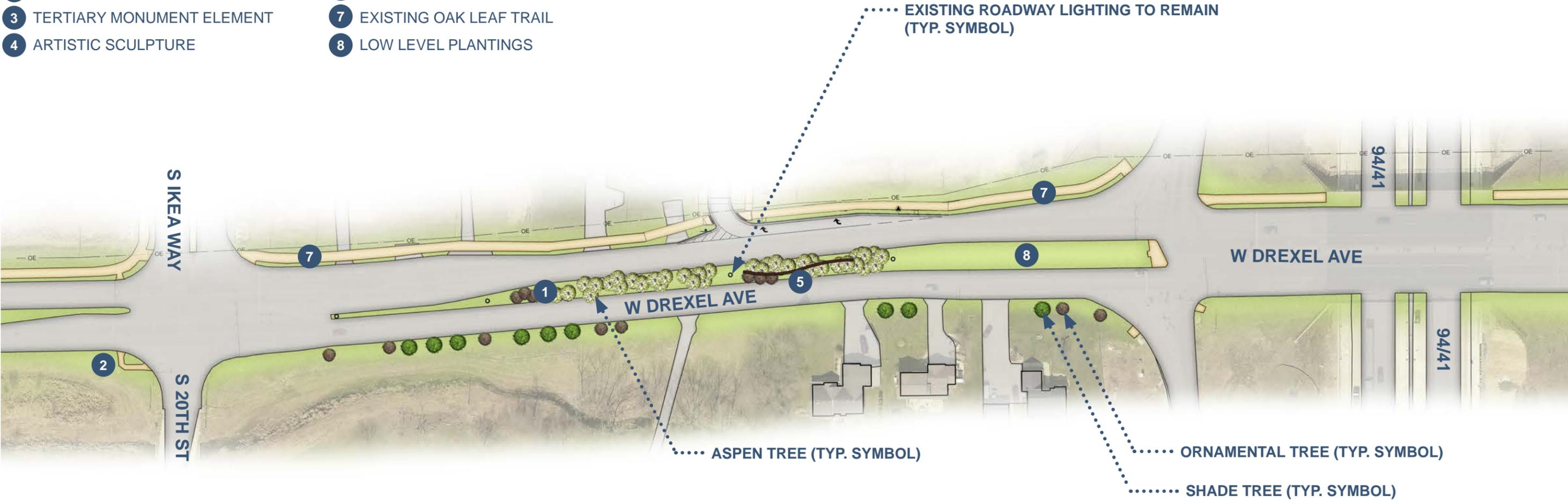
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 1: ALL-INCLUSIVE STREETSCAPE APPROACH SOUTH IKEA WAY - I-94/43

- 1 PRIMARY MONUMENT ELEMENT
- 2 SECONDARY MONUMENT ELEMENT
- 3 TERTIARY MONUMENT ELEMENT
- 4 ARTISTIC SCULPTURE
- 5 STONE WALL
- 6 CORTEN WALL
- 7 EXISTING OAK LEAF TRAIL
- 8 LOW LEVEL PLANTINGS



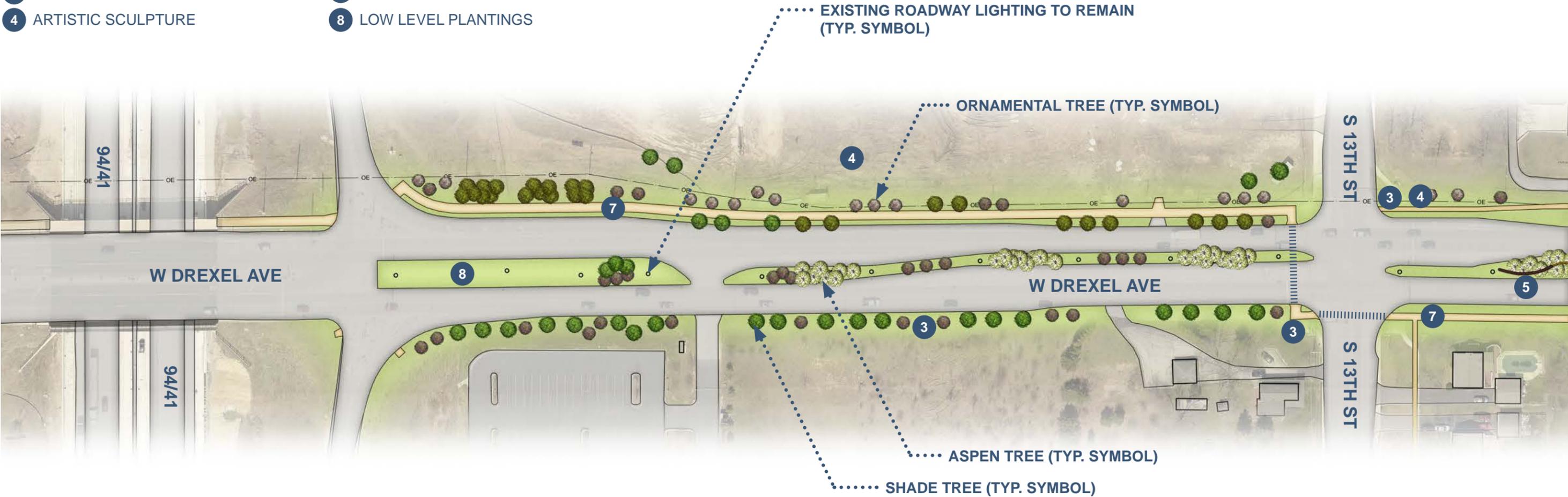
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 1: ALL-INCLUSIVE STREETSCAPE APPROACH I-94/43 - SOUTH 13TH STREET

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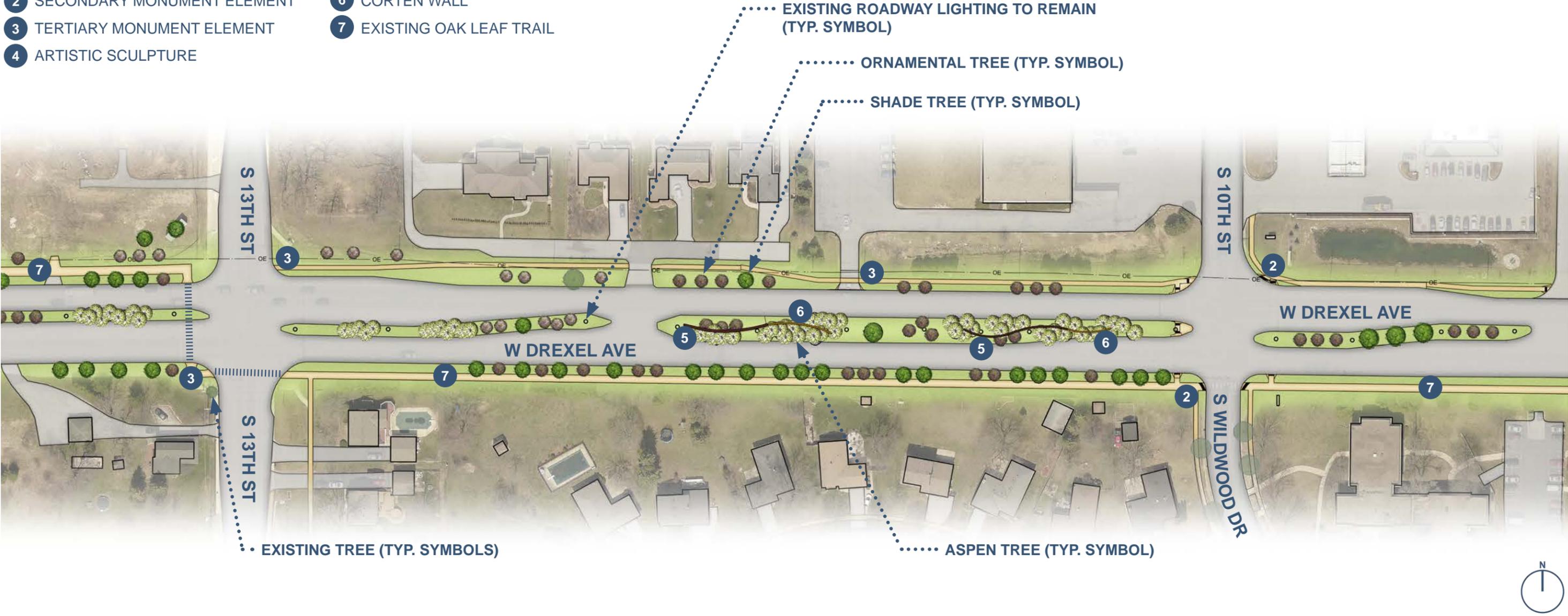
# III. Schematic Design

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## ALTERNATIVE 1: ALL-INCLUSIVE STREETSCAPE APPROACH SOUTH 13TH ST. - SOUTH 10TH ST.

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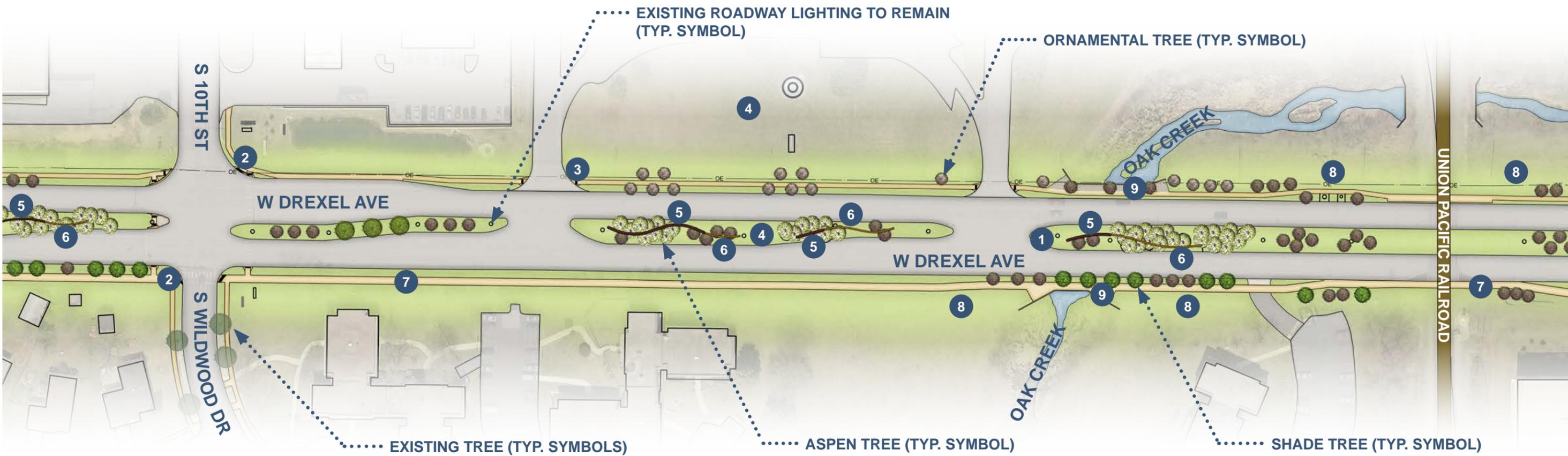
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 1: ALL-INCLUSIVE STREETScape APPROACH SOUTH 10TH STREET - OAK CREEK

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- 8 RAIN GARDEN
- 9 SCENIC OVERLOOK



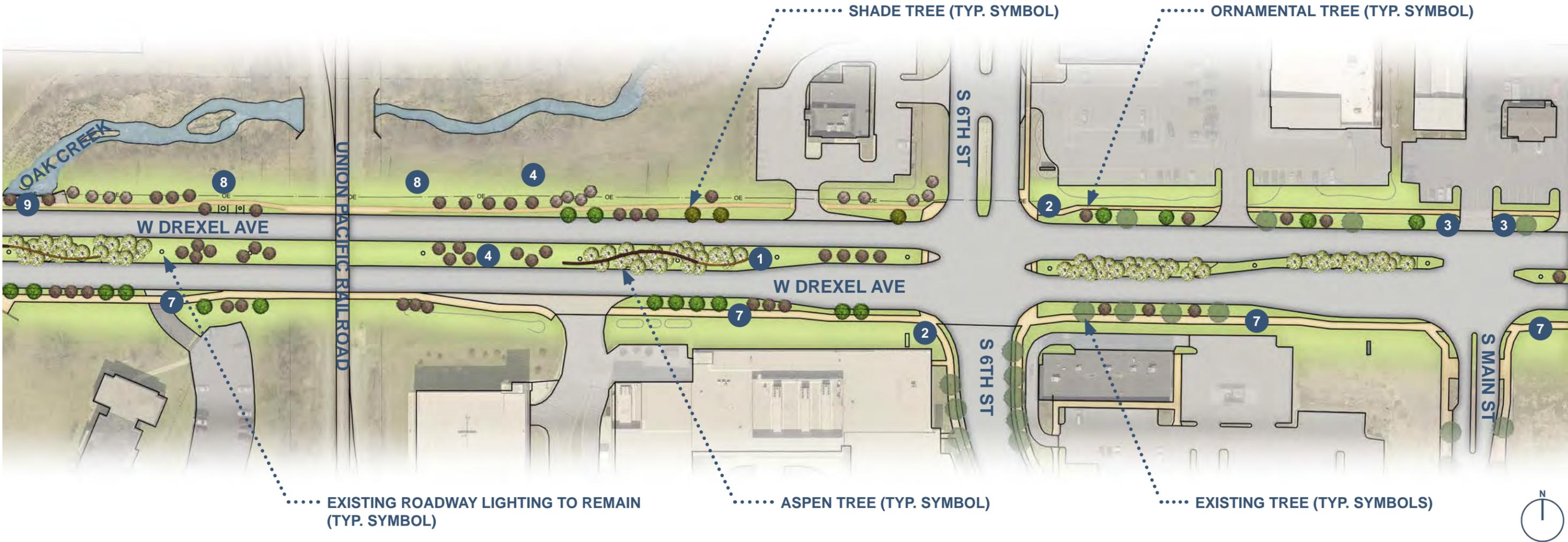
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



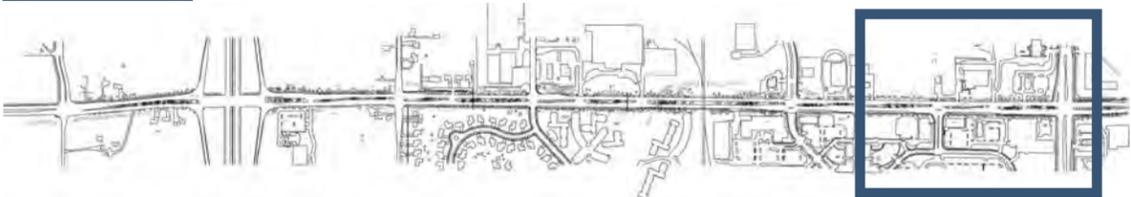
## ALTERNATIVE 1: ALL-INCLUSIVE STREETSCAPE APPROACH OAK CREEK - SOUTH MAIN STREET

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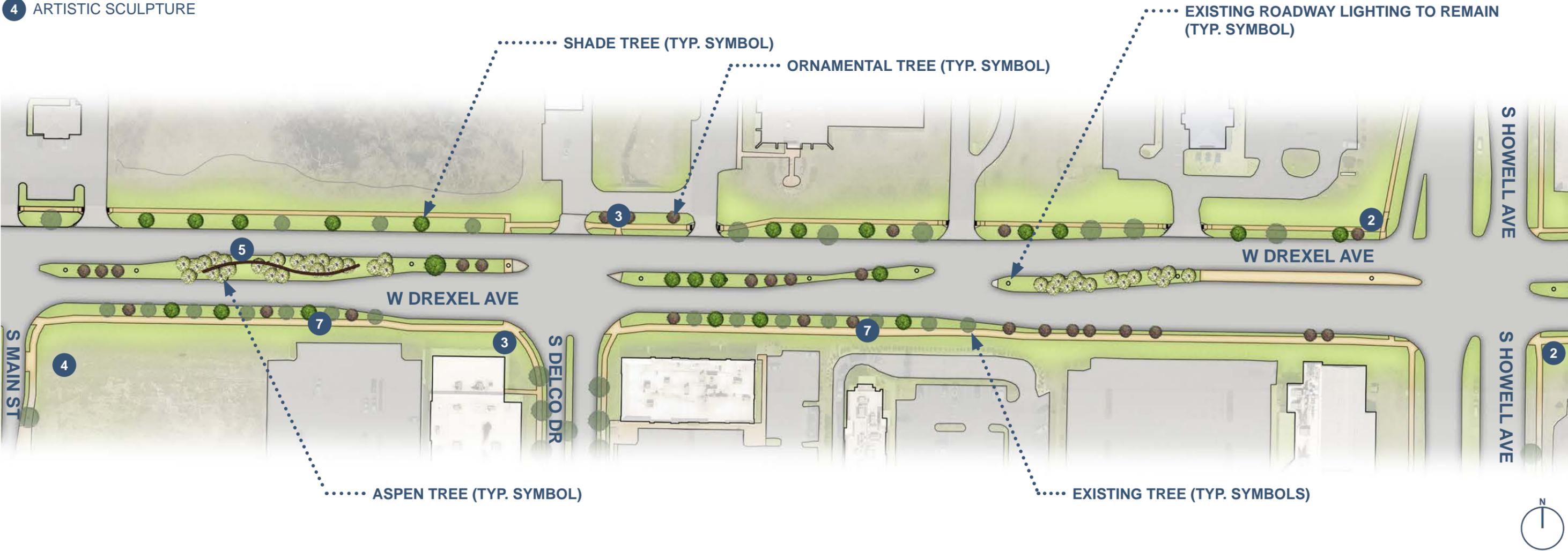
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 1: ALL-INCLUSIVE STREETSCAPE APPROACH SOUTH MAIN ST. - SOUTH HOWELL AVE.

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# Alternative 2: Phased Monument Signage Approach

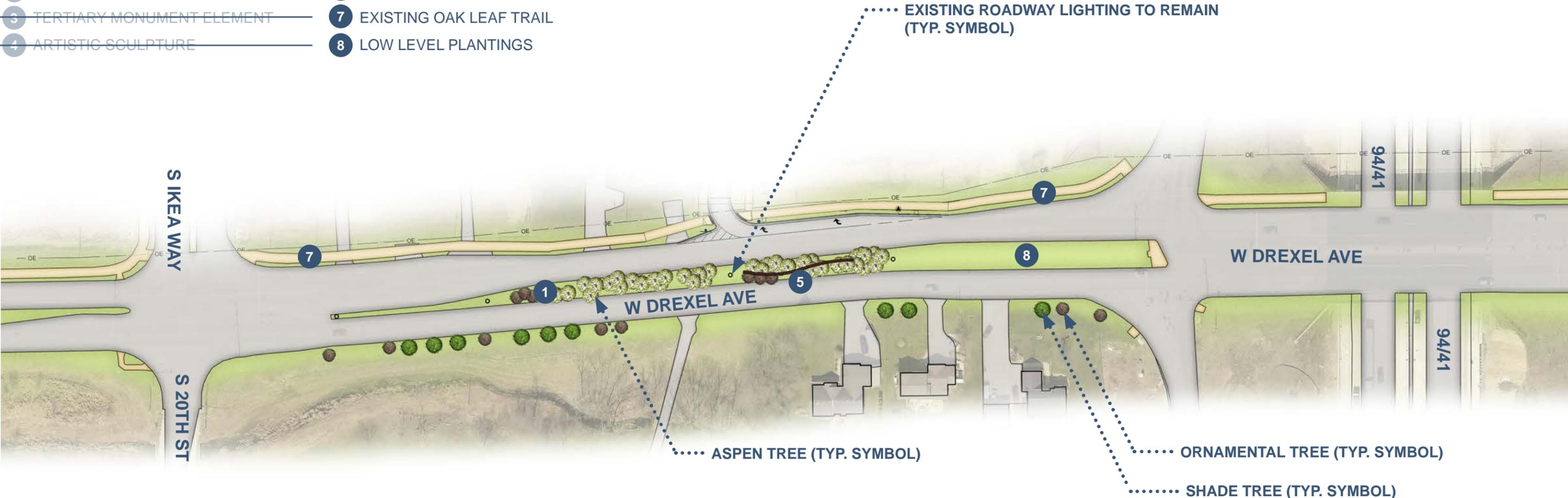
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 2: PHASED MONUMENT SIGNAGE APPROACH SOUTH IKEA WAY - I-94/43

- 1 PRIMARY MONUMENT ELEMENT
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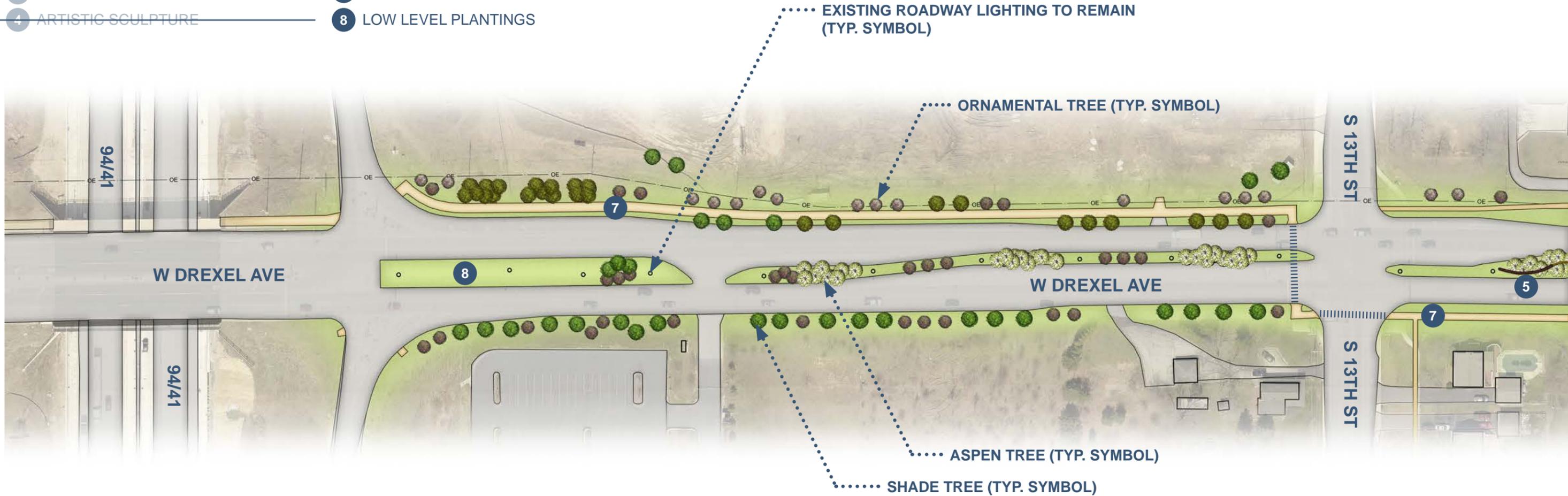
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 2: PHASED MONUMENT SIGNAGE APPROACH I-94/43 - SOUTH 13TH STREET

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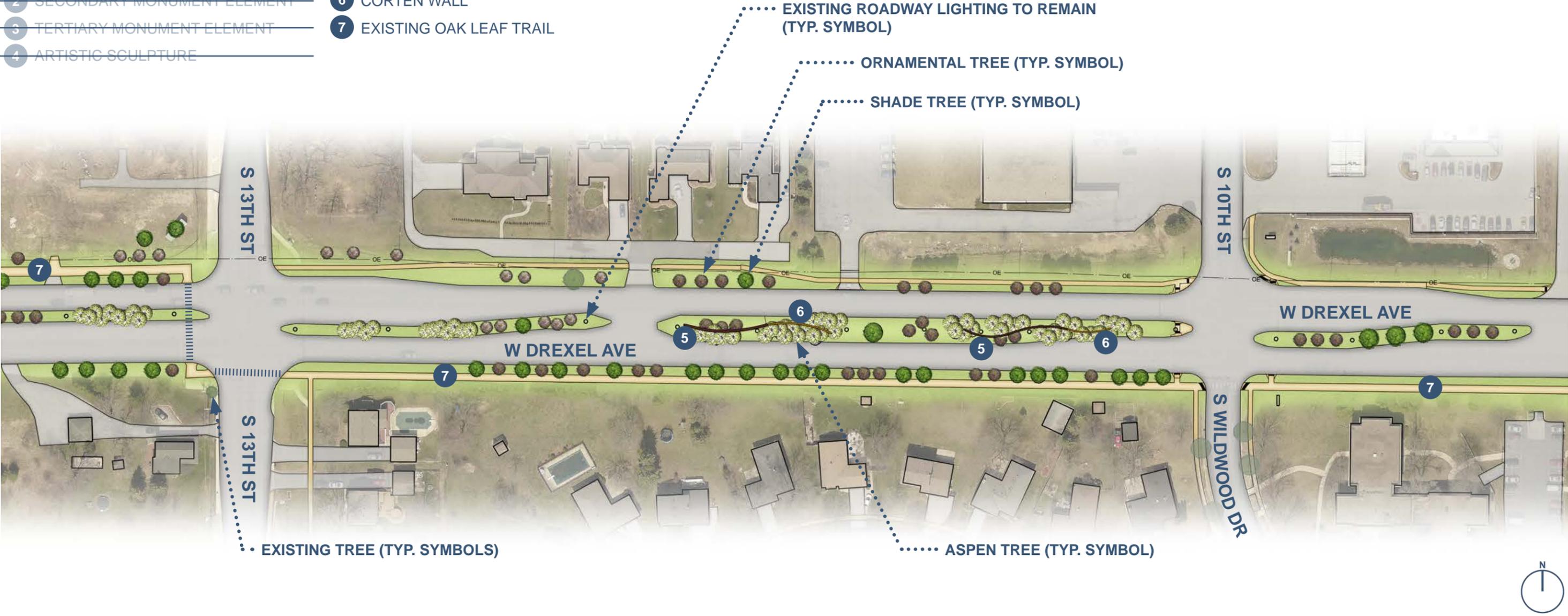
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 2: PHASED MONUMENT SIGNAGE APPROACH SOUTH 13TH ST. - SOUTH 10TH ST.

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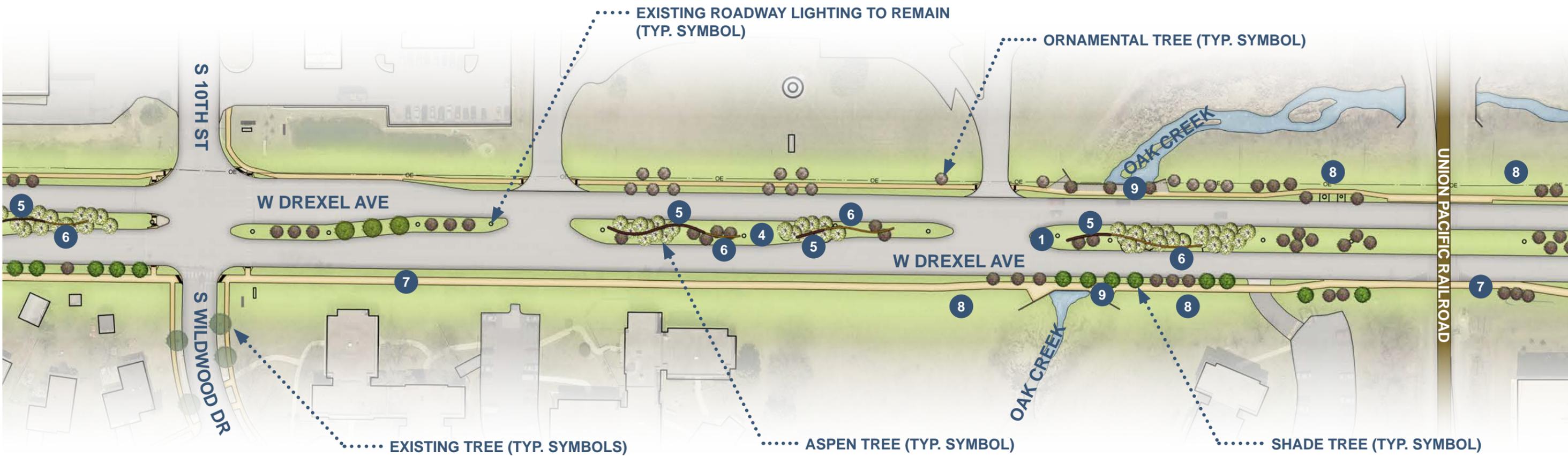
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 2: PHASED MONUMENT SIGNAGE APPROACH SOUTH 10TH STREET - OAK CREEK

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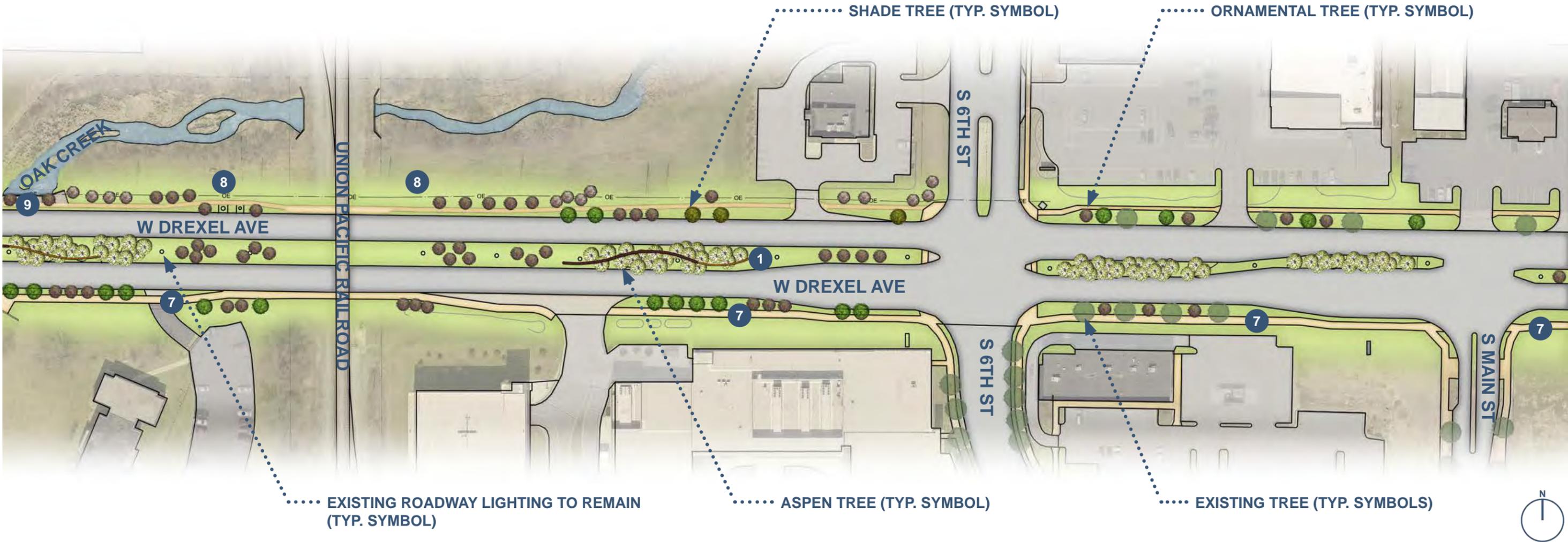
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 2: PHASED MONUMENT SIGNAGE APPROACH OAK CREEK - SOUTH MAIN STREET

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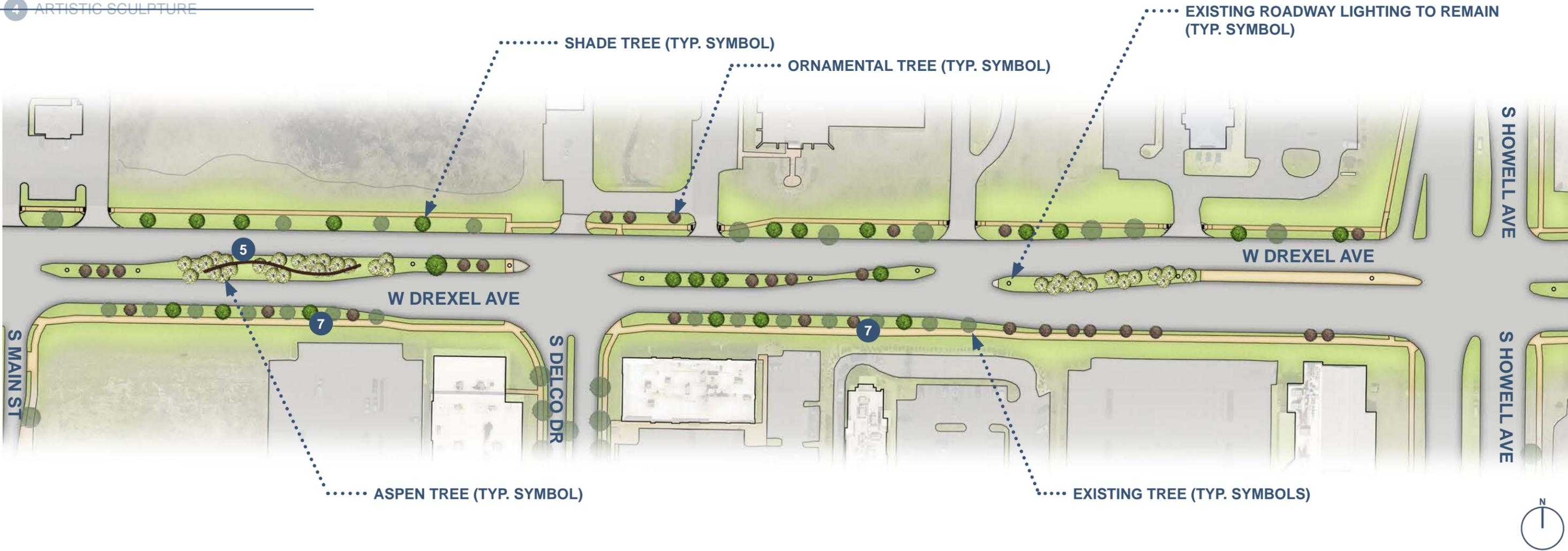
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## ALTERNATIVE 2: PHASED MONUMENT SIGNAGE APPROACH SOUTH MAIN ST. - SOUTH HOWELL AVE.



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# Alternative 3: Median-Only Landscape Treatment Approach

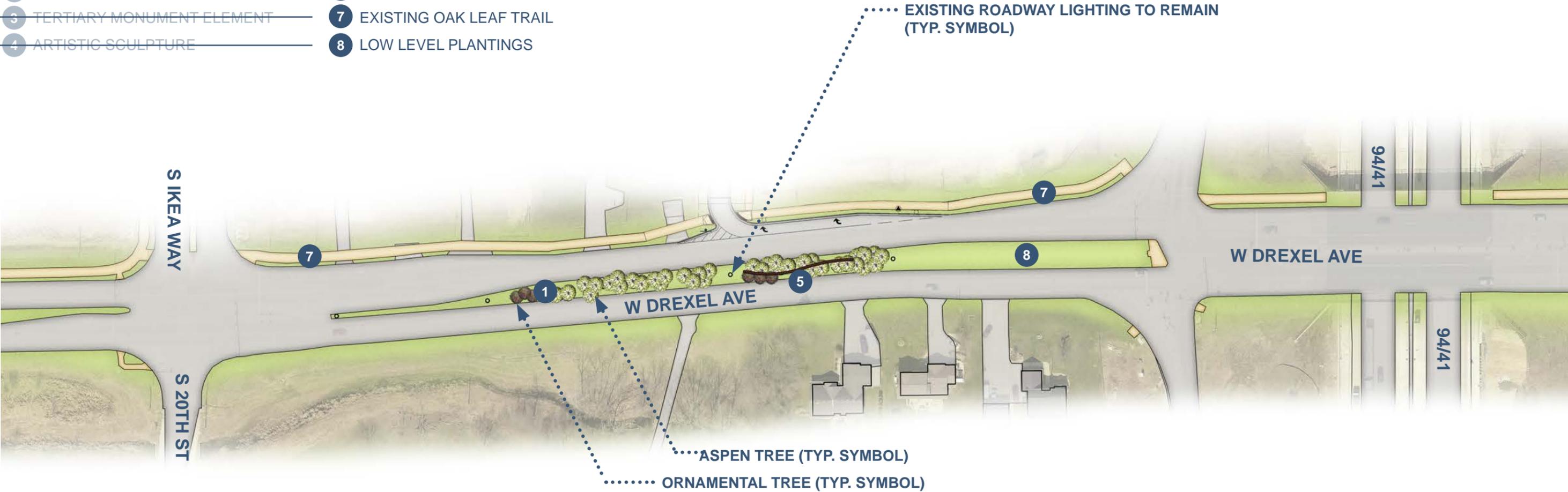
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 3: MEDIAN-ONLY LANDSCAPE TREATMENT APPROACH SOUTH IKEA WAY - I-94/43

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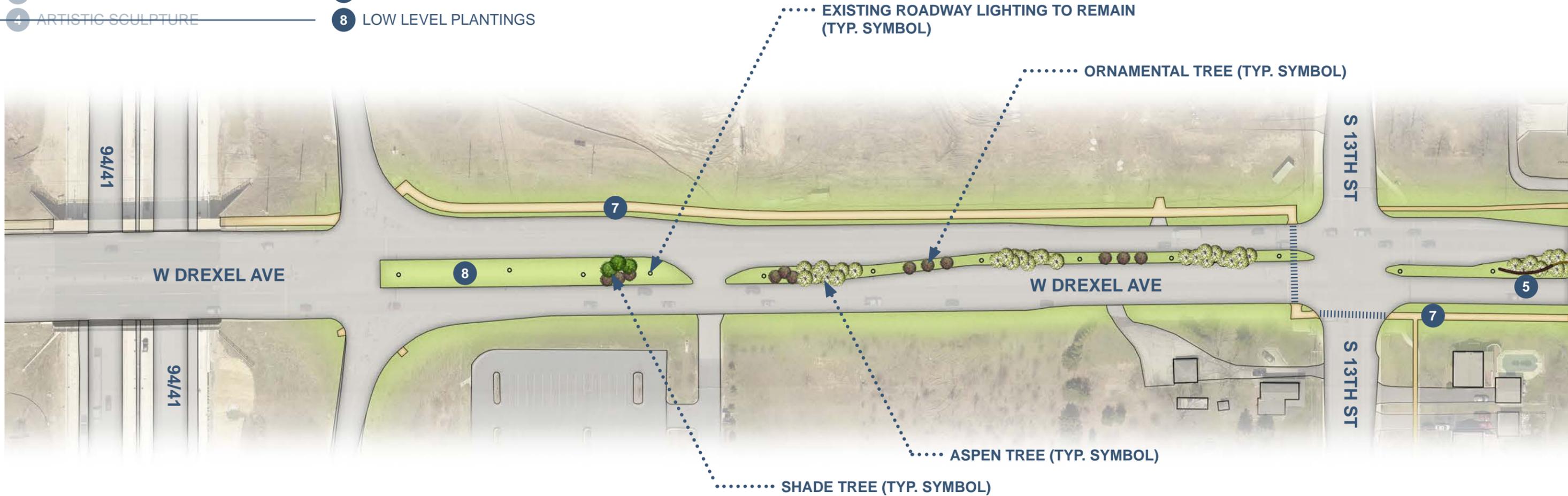
# III. Schematic Design

**KEY MAP**



## ALTERNATIVE 3: MEDIAN-ONLY LANDSCAPE TREATMENT APPROACH I-94/43 - SOUTH 13TH STREET

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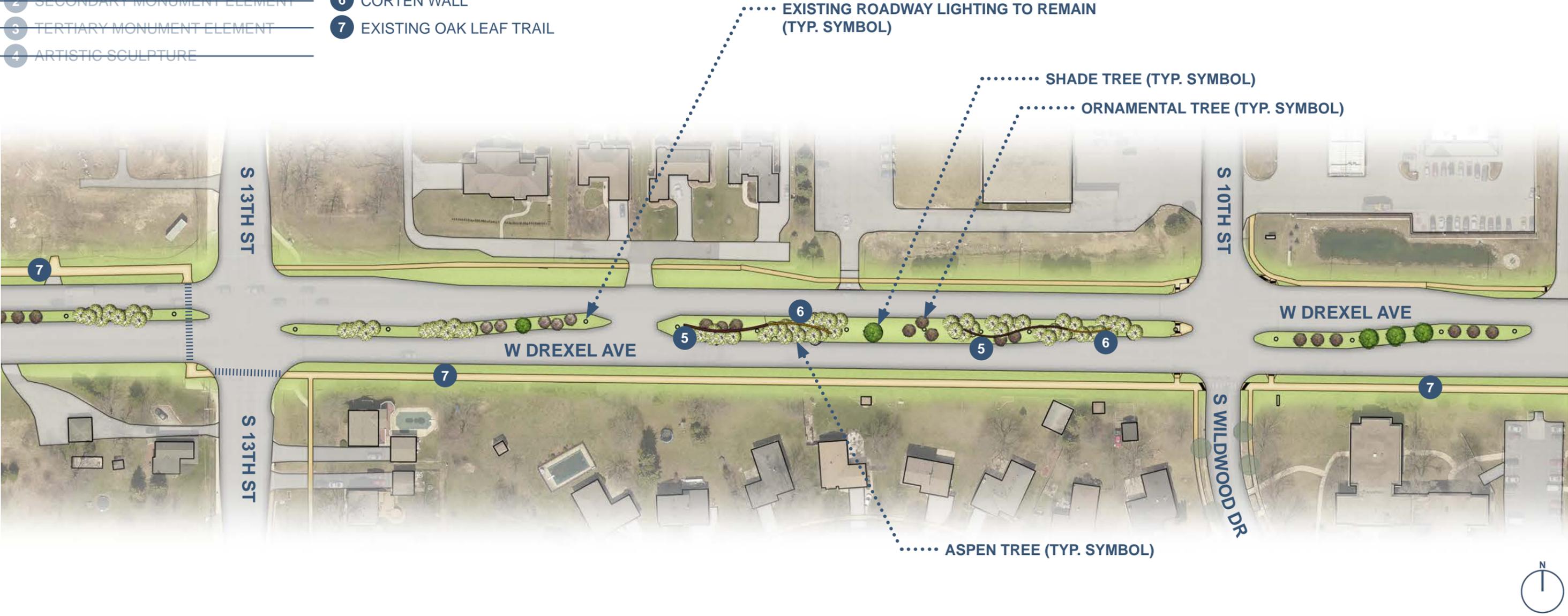
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



## ALTERNATIVE 3: MEDIAN-ONLY LANDSCAPE TREATMENT APPROACH SOUTH 13TH ST. - SOUTH 10TH ST.

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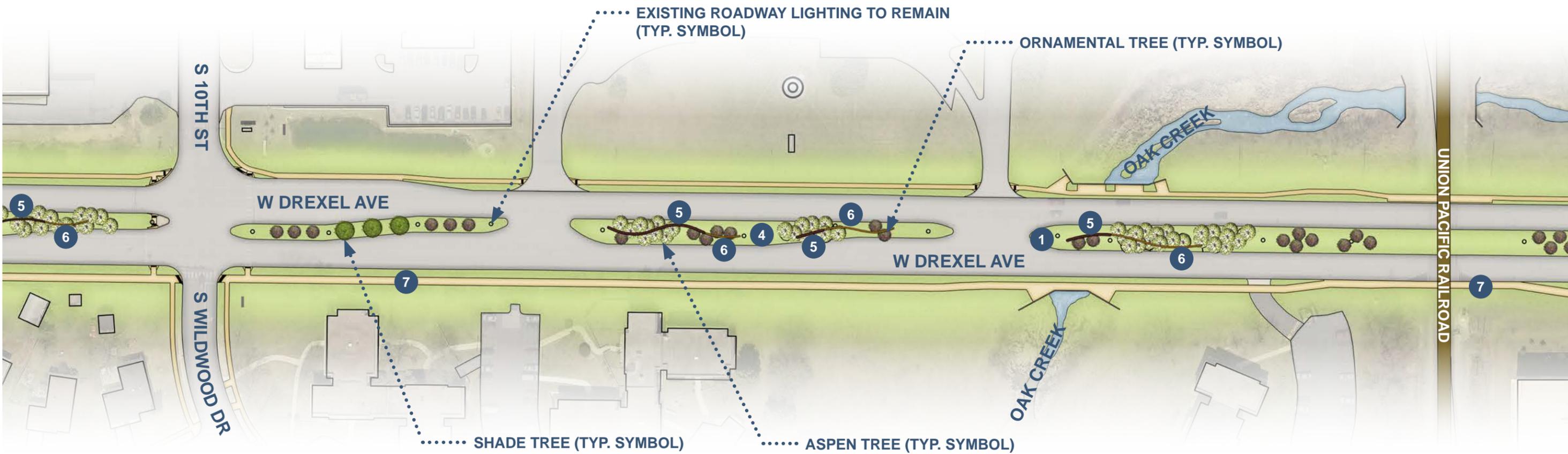
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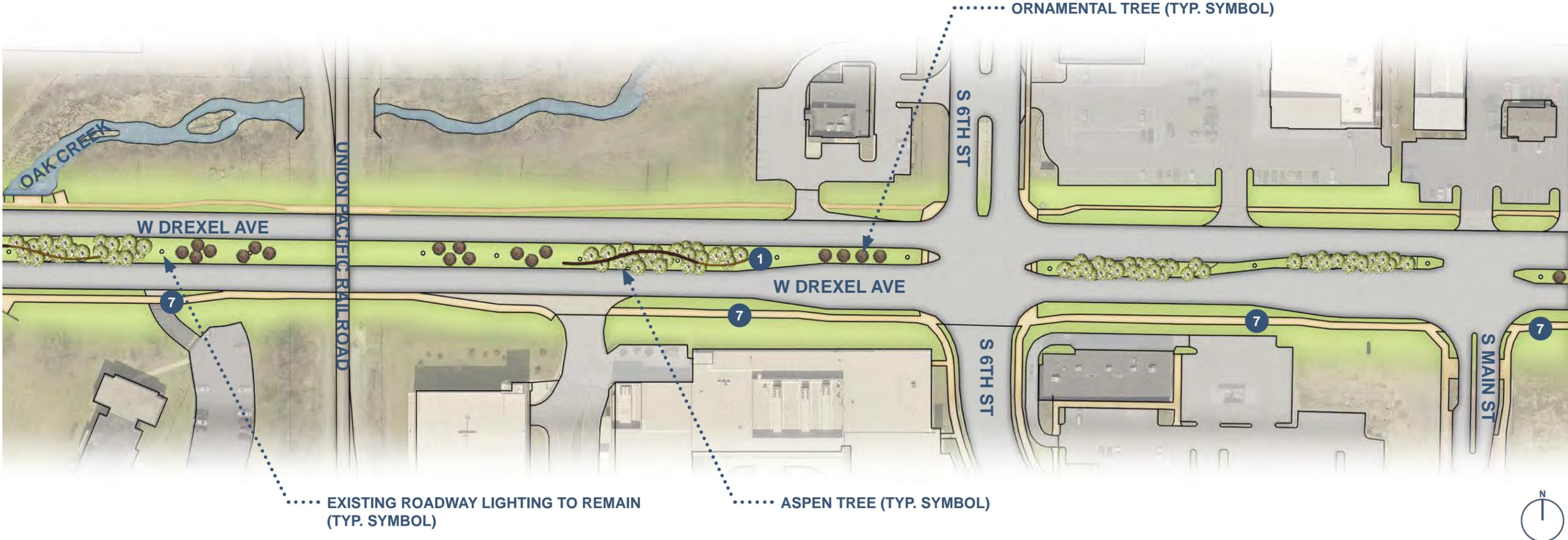
# III. Schematic Design

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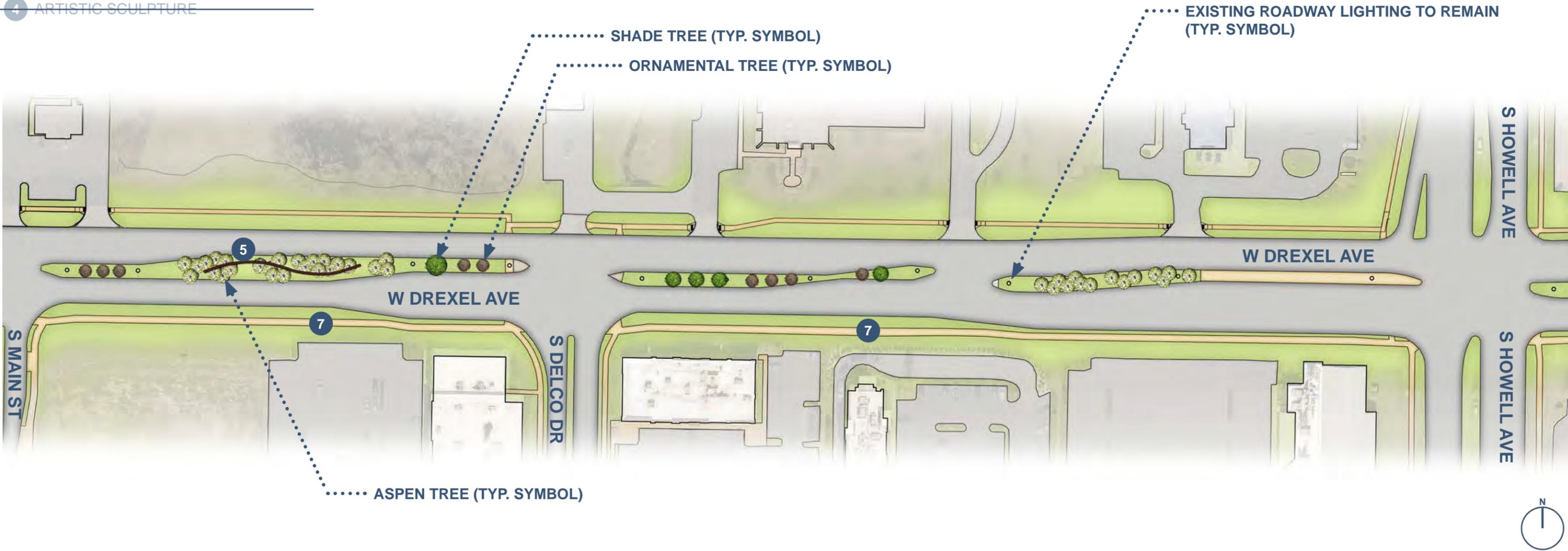
# III. Schematic Design

## KEY MAP



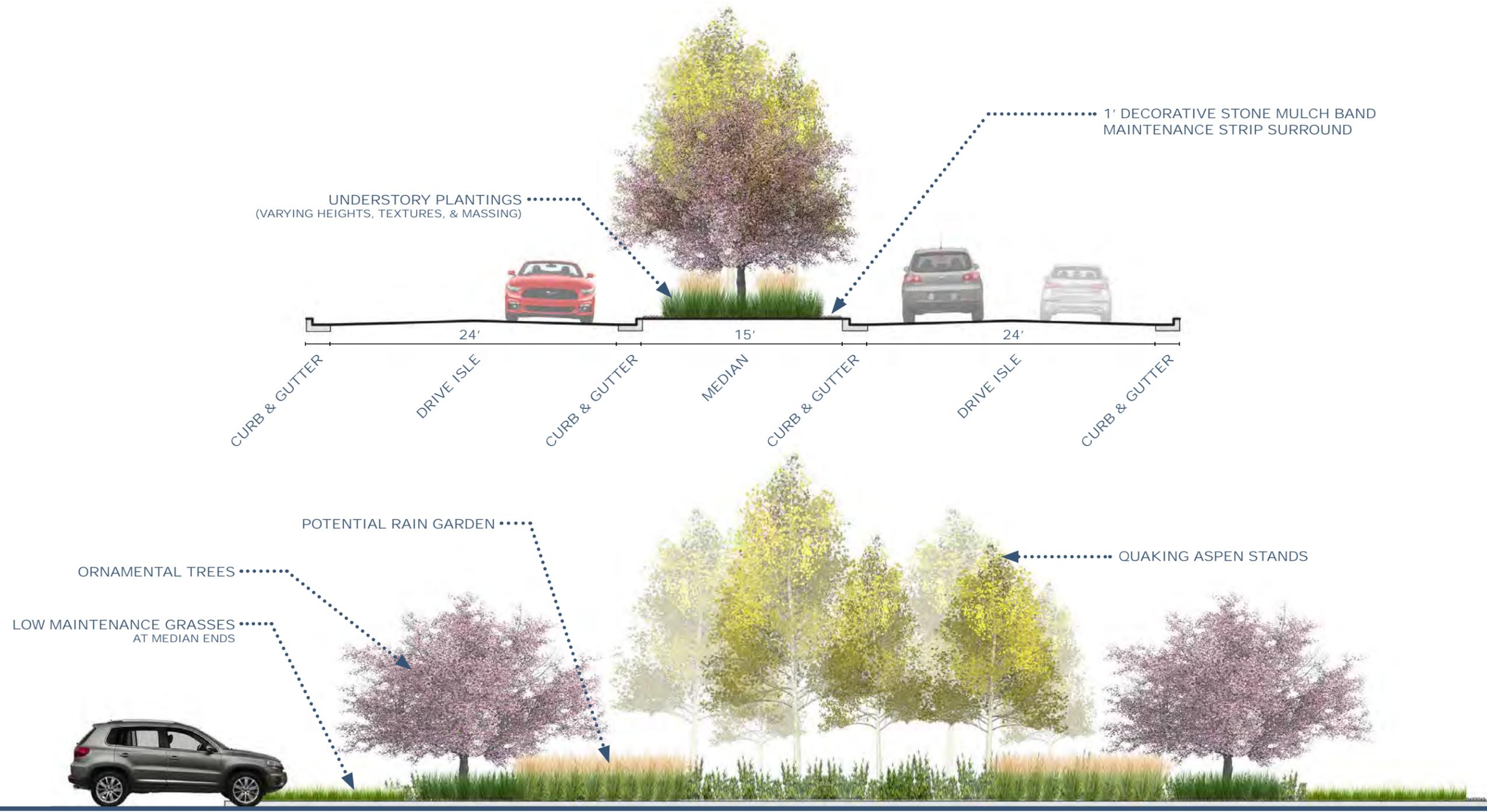
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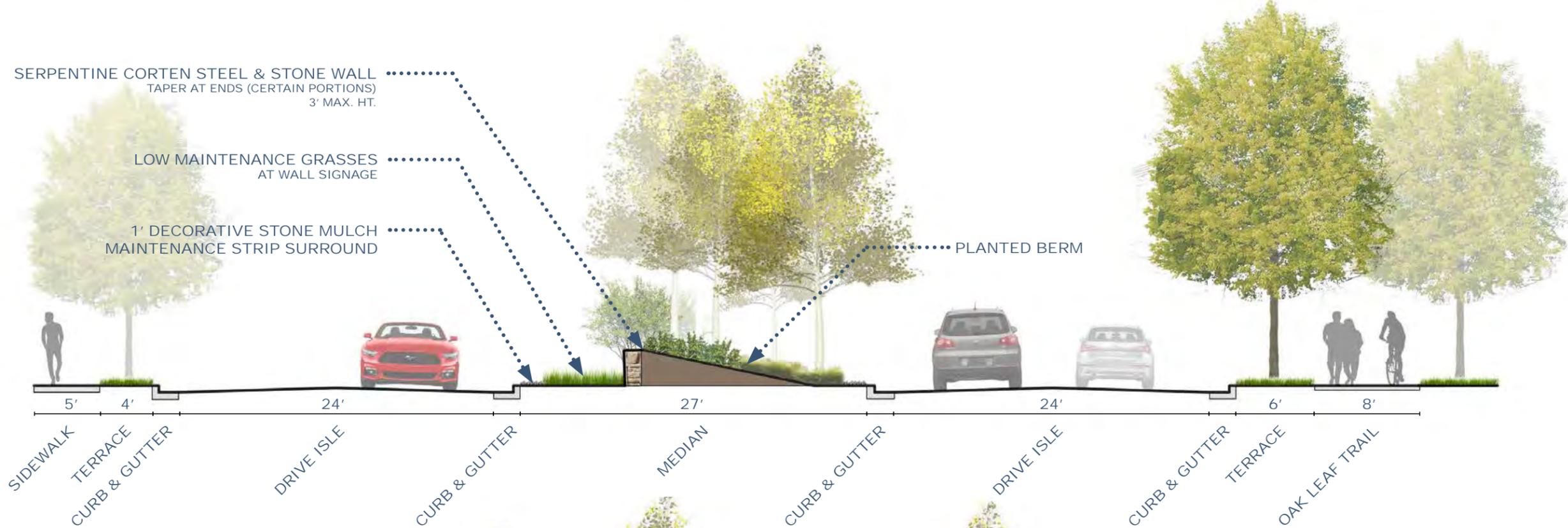
# III. Schematic Design

## TYPICAL SECTIONS - MEDIANS (0'-15' WIDTH)



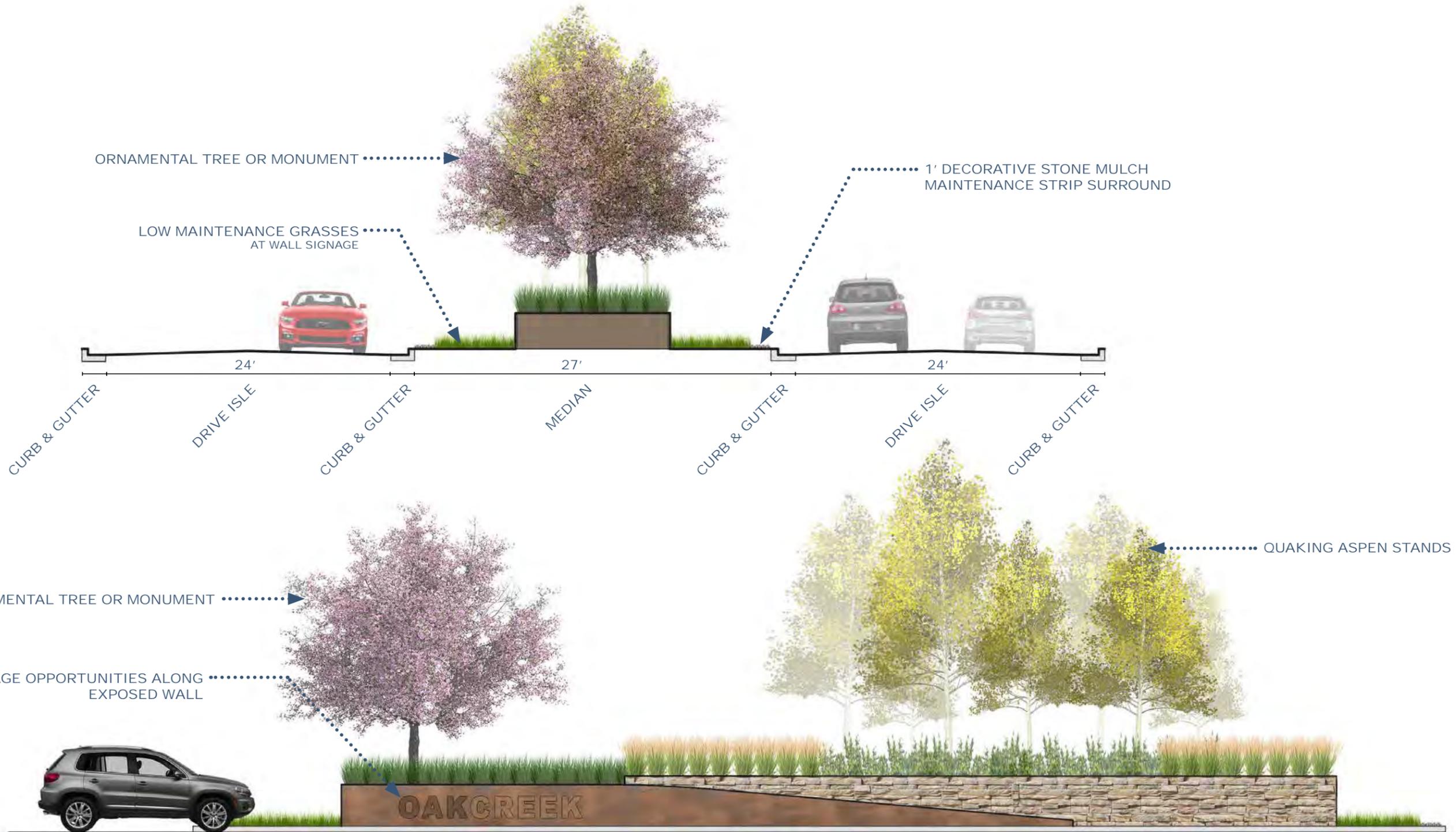
# III. Schematic Design

## TYPICAL SECTIONS - MEDIANS (15'-30' WIDTH)



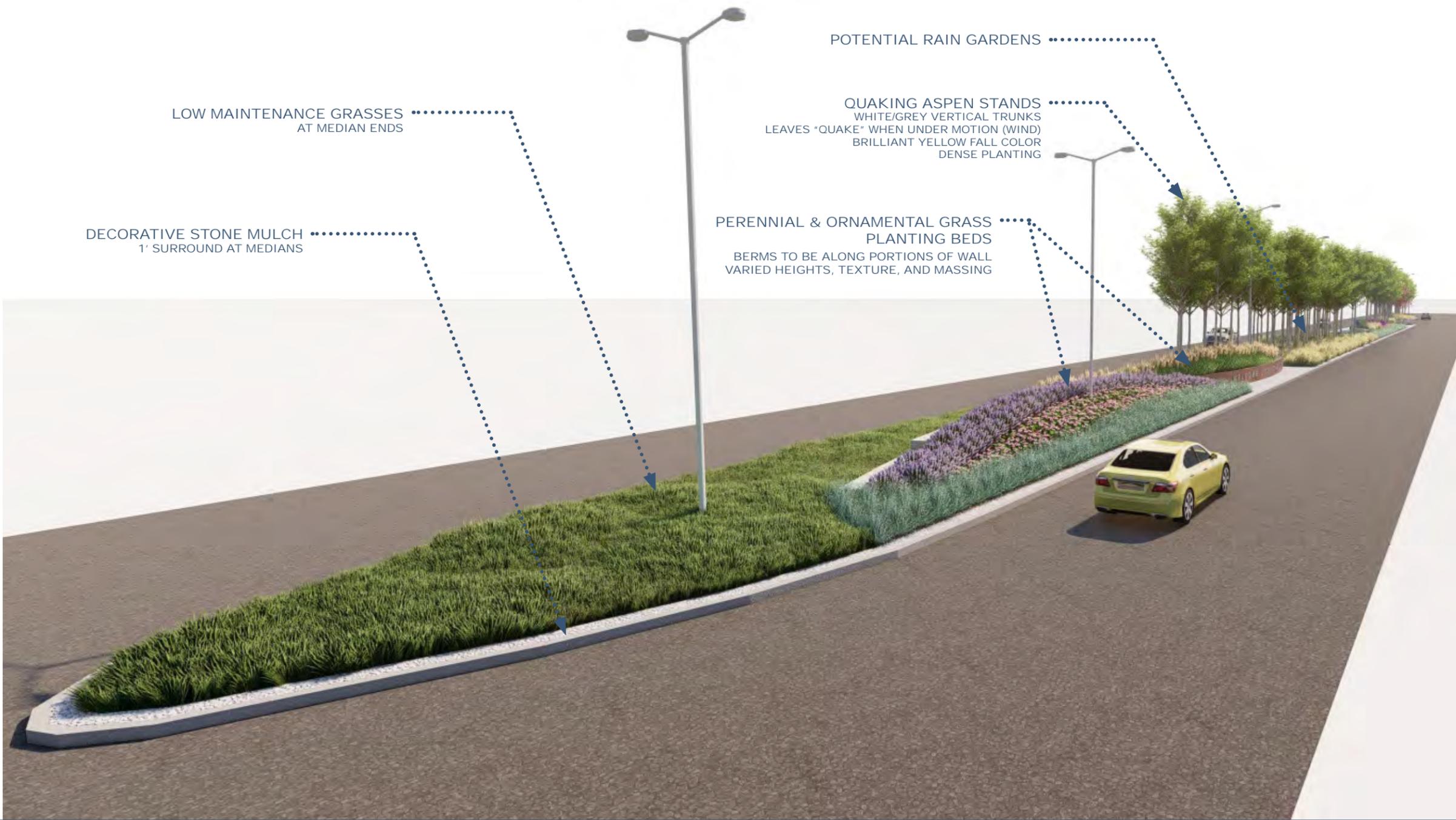
# III. Schematic Design

## TYPICAL SECTIONS - MEDIAN ENDS (15'-30' WIDTH)



# III. Schematic Design

## 3D VISUALIZATION - PLANT BED MASSING



# III. Schematic Design

## 3D VISUALIZATION - TREE STANDS



# III. Schematic Design

## 3D VISUALIZATION - STONE WALL SIGNAGE



# III. Schematic Design

## 3D VISUALIZATION - CORTEN WALL SIGNAGE



# III. Schematic Design

## 3D VISUALIZATION - CORTEN WALL END



# IV. Streetscape Elements

## STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

- Streetscape elements provided throughout the corridor help tie Drexel Avenue into the City of Oak Creek's identity and overall aesthetic theme
- These elements are catered to provide visual and physical interaction from vehicular to pedestrian use
- The specific products and materials correlate to the The City of Oak Creek's Drexel Town Square and Lake Vista Park and help to achieve a bold and iconic visual experience throughout the corridor

# IV. Streetscape Elements

## STREET TREES

Street trees within the Drexel Avenue corridor will be planted in the medians and terrace spaces adjacent to the sidewalks. Both large shade trees and smaller ornamental trees of many varieties will be used to create a healthy and visually diverse landscape throughout the corridor. One main species of tree, *Populus tremuloides* (Quaking Aspen) will be planted in dense stands within the medians, creating a coherent planting scheme throughout the corridor.



# IV. Streetscape Elements

## PLANTING BEDS

Planting beds within the medians will consist of deciduous & evergreen shrubs, perennials, and ornamental grasses of diverse species. These planting beds will create stunning visual interest across all four seasons Wisconsin offers, and will help to provide an iconic visual theme along Drexel Avenue.



# IV. Streetscape Elements



## GROUND COVER

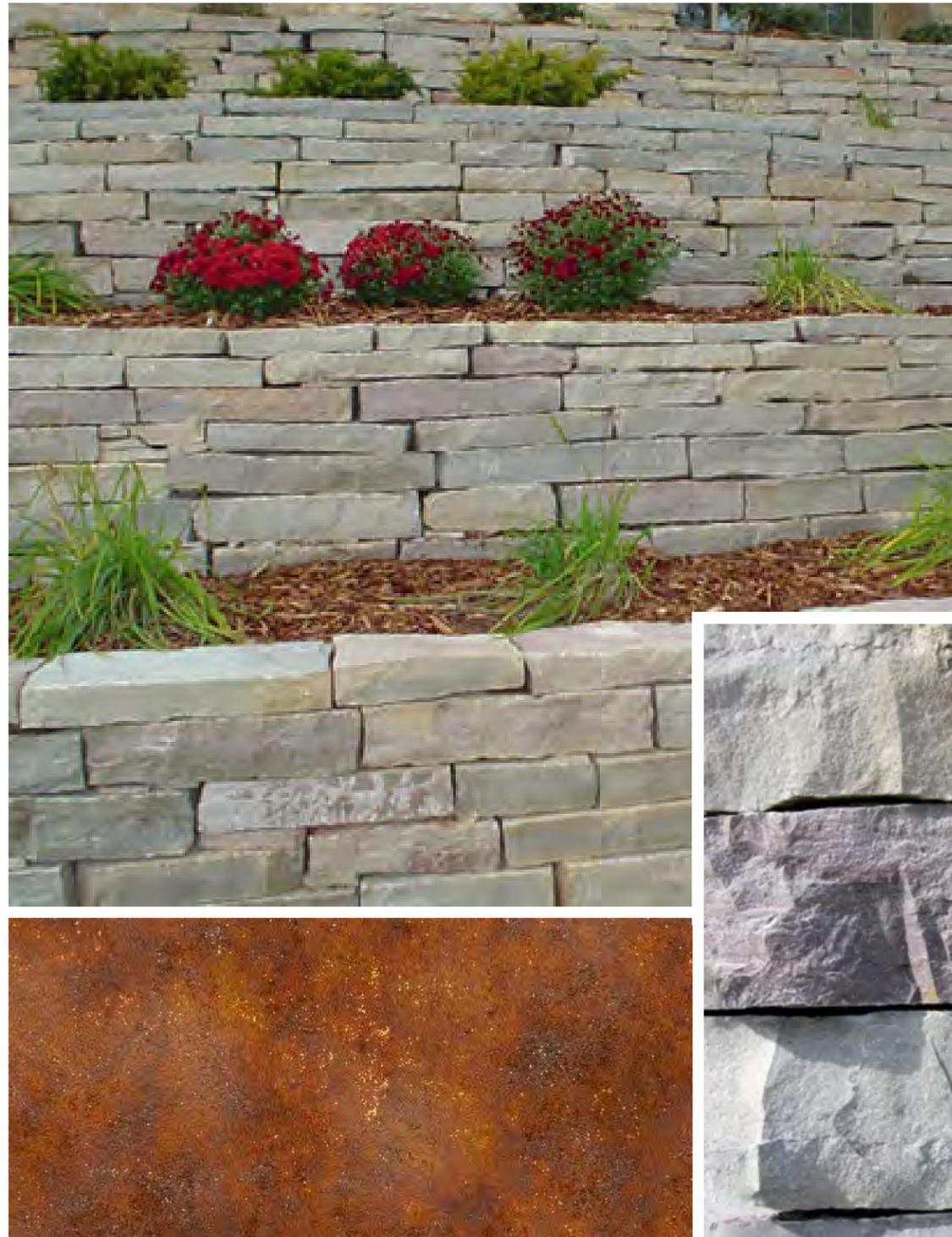
Shredded Hardwood Bark Mulch:  
Brown Mulch  
\*For planting beds & tree rings

Decorative Stone Chip Mulch:  
Gray/Slate  
\*For surround at medians & in front of wall signage

Low Maintenance Turf:  
\*For areas in-between planting beds within medians



# IV. Streetscape Elements



## WALLS

Corten Steel:

\*For portions of wall elements within medians and components of primary & secondary monuments

Drywall Stone (Alternate Stone Veneer):  
Chilton Wallstone

\*For portions of wall elements within medians and components of primary & secondary monuments

# IV. Streetscape Elements



## SITE FURNISHINGS

The site furnishings for the Drexel Avenue corridor are to compliment those of Drexel Town Square, maintaining a sense of coherence for these elements within the City of Oak Creek.

### Benches:

Knight Bench provided by Forms+Surfaces  
Model No. = SBKNI-072B (6', backed, surface-mounted, IPE wood slats)  
Finish = Standard Aluminum Texture (for metal components)  
\*To be strategically located along Drexel Avenue project corridor during the design development phase

### Bike Racks:

Twist Bike Rack provided by Forms+Surfaces  
Model No. = SKTWS  
Finish = Standard Aluminum Texture  
\*To be strategically located along Drexel Avenue project corridor during the design development phase

### Litter & Recycling Receptacles:

Universal Receptacle provided by Forms+Surfaces  
Model No. = SLUNN-30SSS (30-gallon, side opening, stainless steel lid)  
Finish = Stainless Steel Sandstone (High Durability)  
\*To be strategically located along Drexel Avenue project corridor during the design development phase

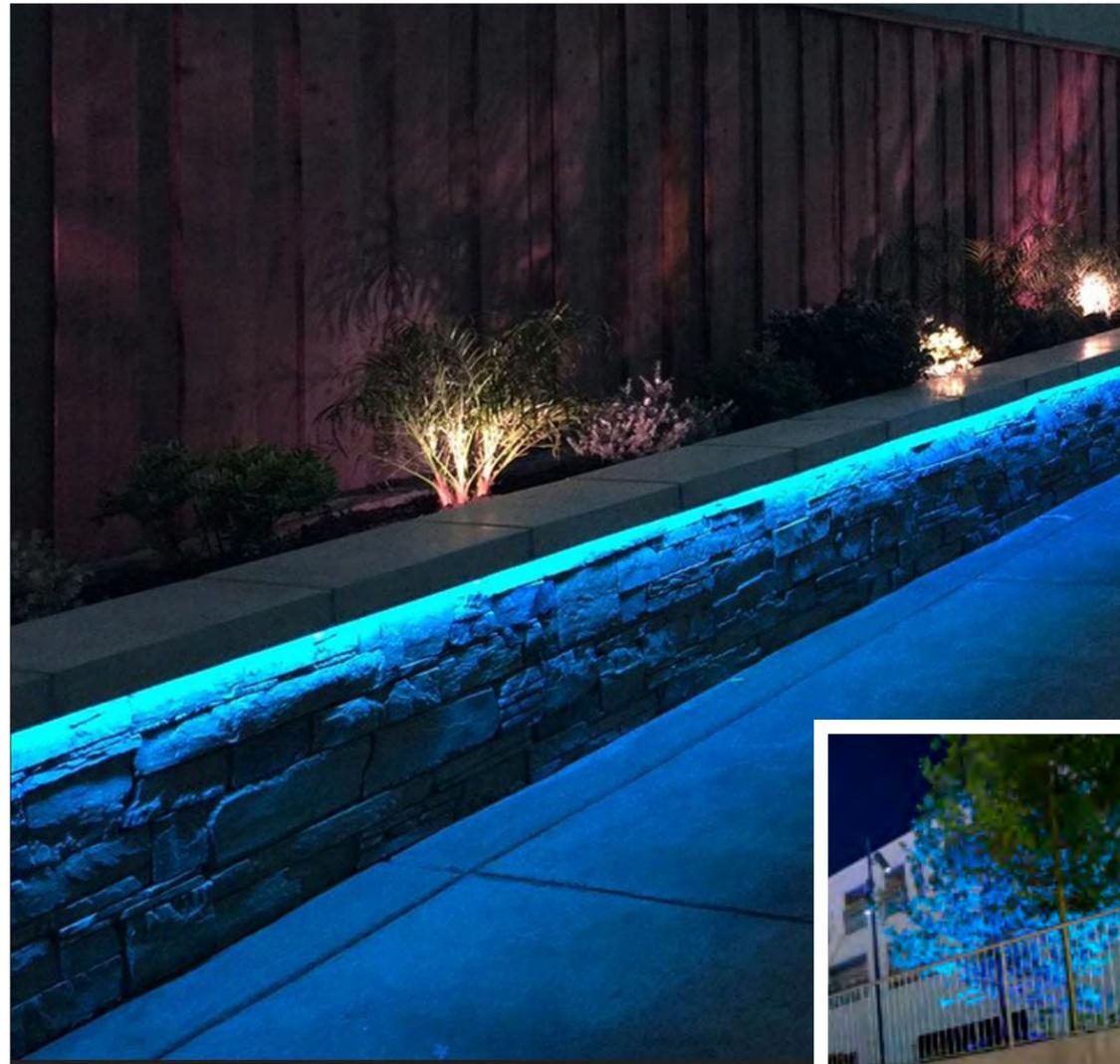
# IV. Streetscape Elements

## LIGHTING (STREET)

Existing street lighting pole type and locations to remain throughout Drexel Avenue corridor.



# IV. Streetscape Elements



## LIGHTING (DECORATIVE)

Decorative lighting to be included on stone and corten wall elements as well as primary and secondary monuments throughout the corridor.

Additionally, other decorative lighting solutions were explored as part of the planning process and can be further explored if desired by the City. Decorative lighting ideas include the following:

- Illuminated features including rhythmic glowing reeds or cattails, highlighted tree or arch sculptures, ethereal dandelions, twinkling fireflies, rock formations grazed with light, uplit towers or columns, lighted banners, and the viaduct
- Varied color, pulsing, glowing, rhythmic effects to add more visual interest
- Varied illuminated elements would be tied together for harmonious movement of light and color to create “Motion”
- Voice or music activated per microphones integrated inside buildings & plazas, triggering waves of animated light and color within these features that ripple down Drexel Avenue
- Magic touch points or QR code interface to launch interactions
- Food and beverage venues along Drexel Avenue contribute to the interactive flow of light and color
- Train passings to activate light and color

# IV. Streetscape Elements

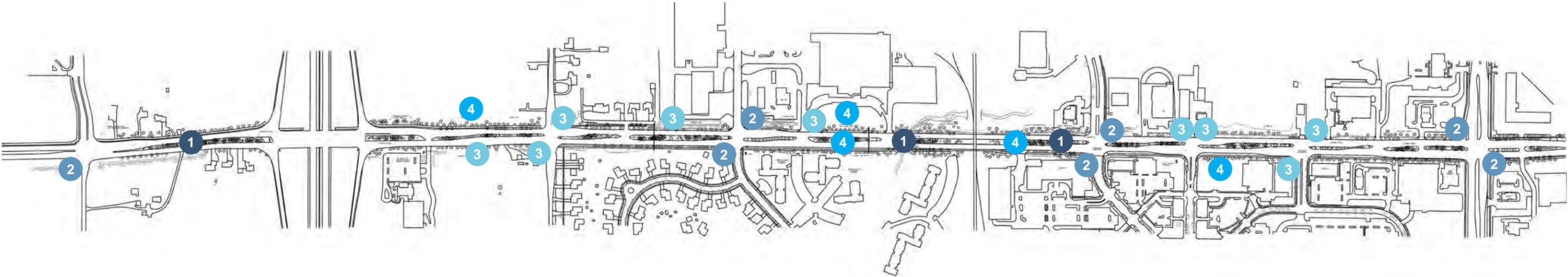
## KEY MAP

- 1 PRIMARY MONUMENT ELEMENT
- 2 SECONDARY MONUMENT ELEMENT
- 3 TERTIARY MONUMENT ELEMENT
- 4 ARTISTIC SCULPTURE

## MONUMENTS & SCULPTURES

The monuments and sculptures integrated into the corridor provide many important opportunities for:

- Wayfinding
- Collaboration with local artists
- Enhancing Oak Creek’s identity
- Signage
- Visual cues for vehicles
- Interest at a pedestrian level

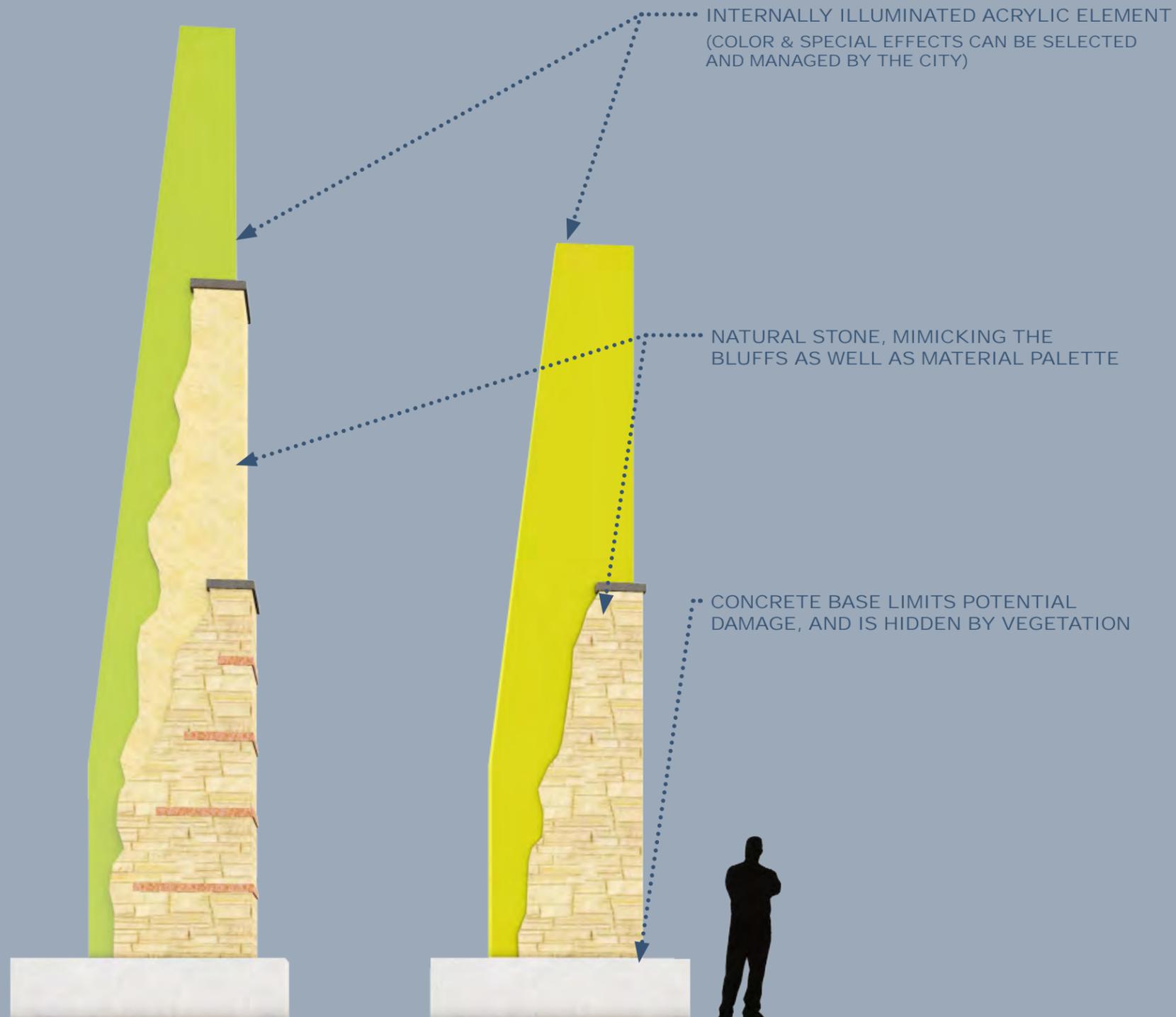


# IV. Streetscape Elements

## PRIMARY MONUMENT ELEMENTS

Gateway markers signaling arrival to the City as well as placed strategically along Drexel Avenue to draw individuals through the corridor.

- Limited locations
- Restricted to medians
- 30' & 24' heights
- Icons or gateways



# IV. Streetscape Elements

## PRIMARY MONUMENT ELEMENTS



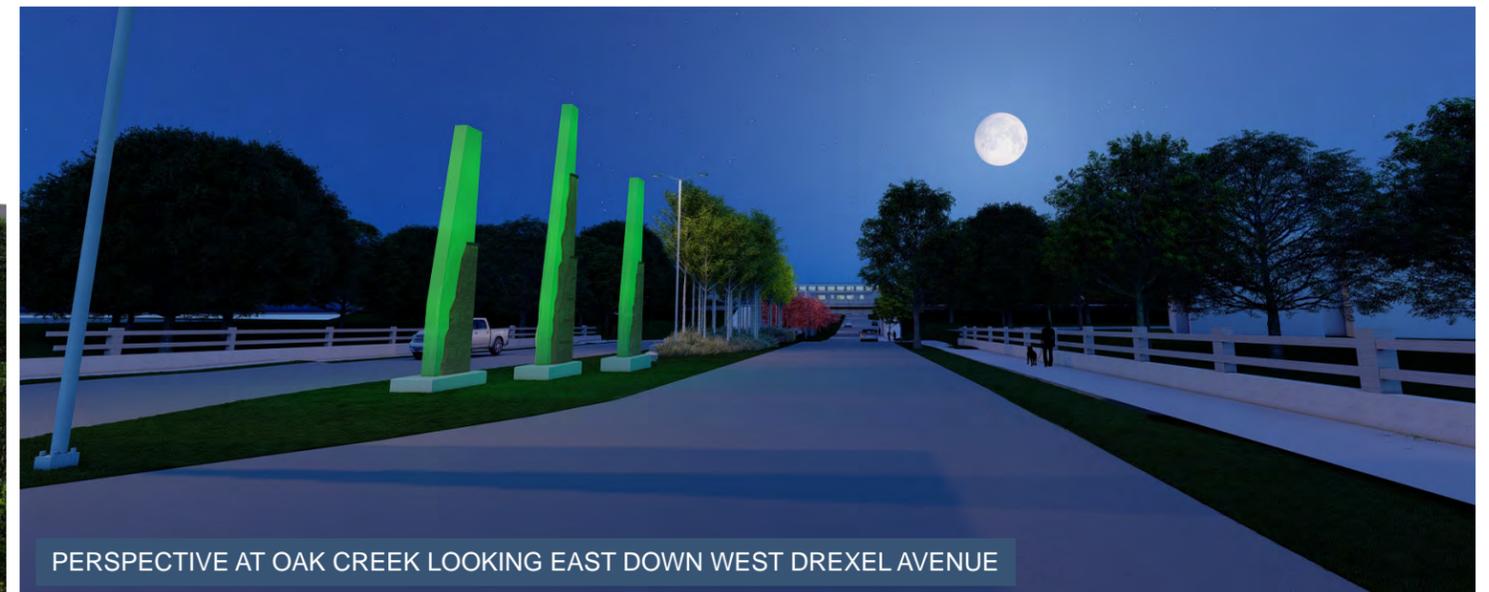
BIRDSEYE AT SOUTH 6TH STREET LOOKING WEST DOWN WEST DREXEL AVENUE



PERSPECTIVE AT OAK CREEK LOOKING EAST DOWN WEST DREXEL AVENUE



BIRDSEYE AT OAK CREEK LOOKING EAST DOWN WEST DREXEL AVENUE



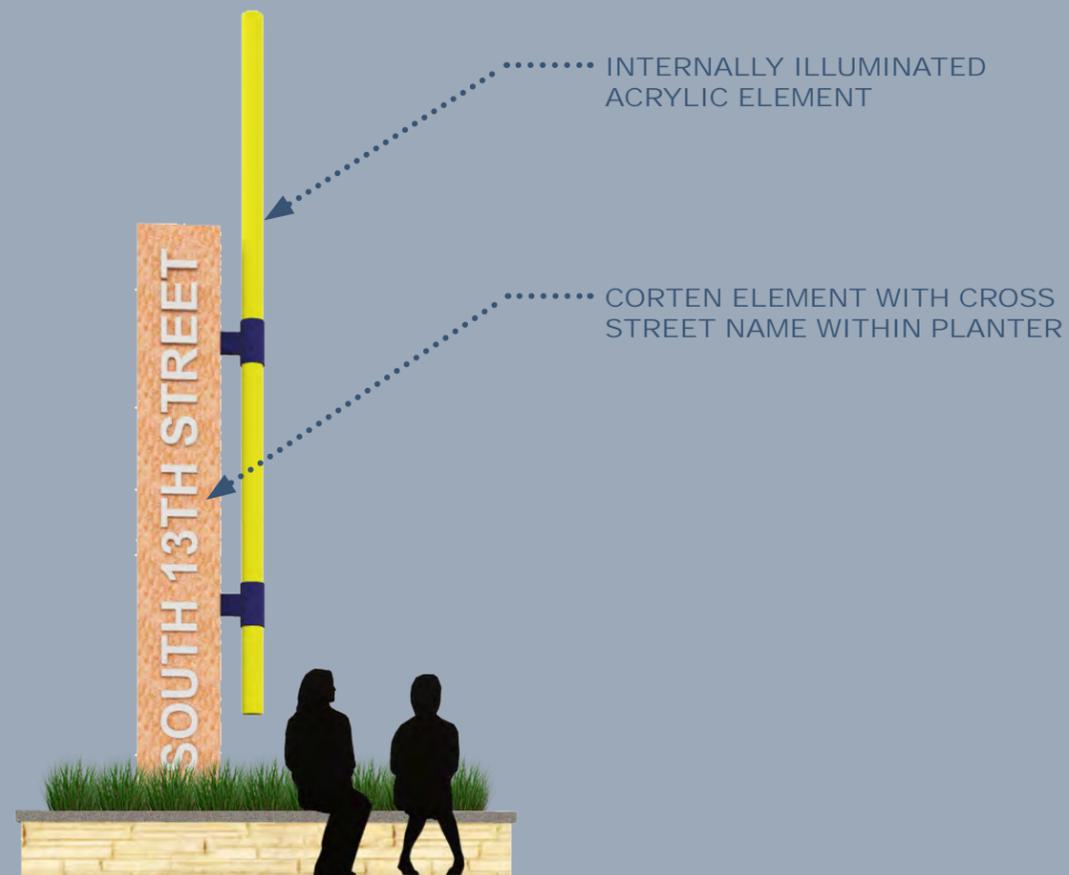
PERSPECTIVE AT OAK CREEK LOOKING EAST DOWN WEST DREXEL AVENUE

# IV. Streetscape Elements

## SECONDARY MONUMENT ELEMENTS

Wayfinding monuments at major intersections.

- Located at cross streets
- Incorporated seating element
- Raised planter
- Internally illuminated

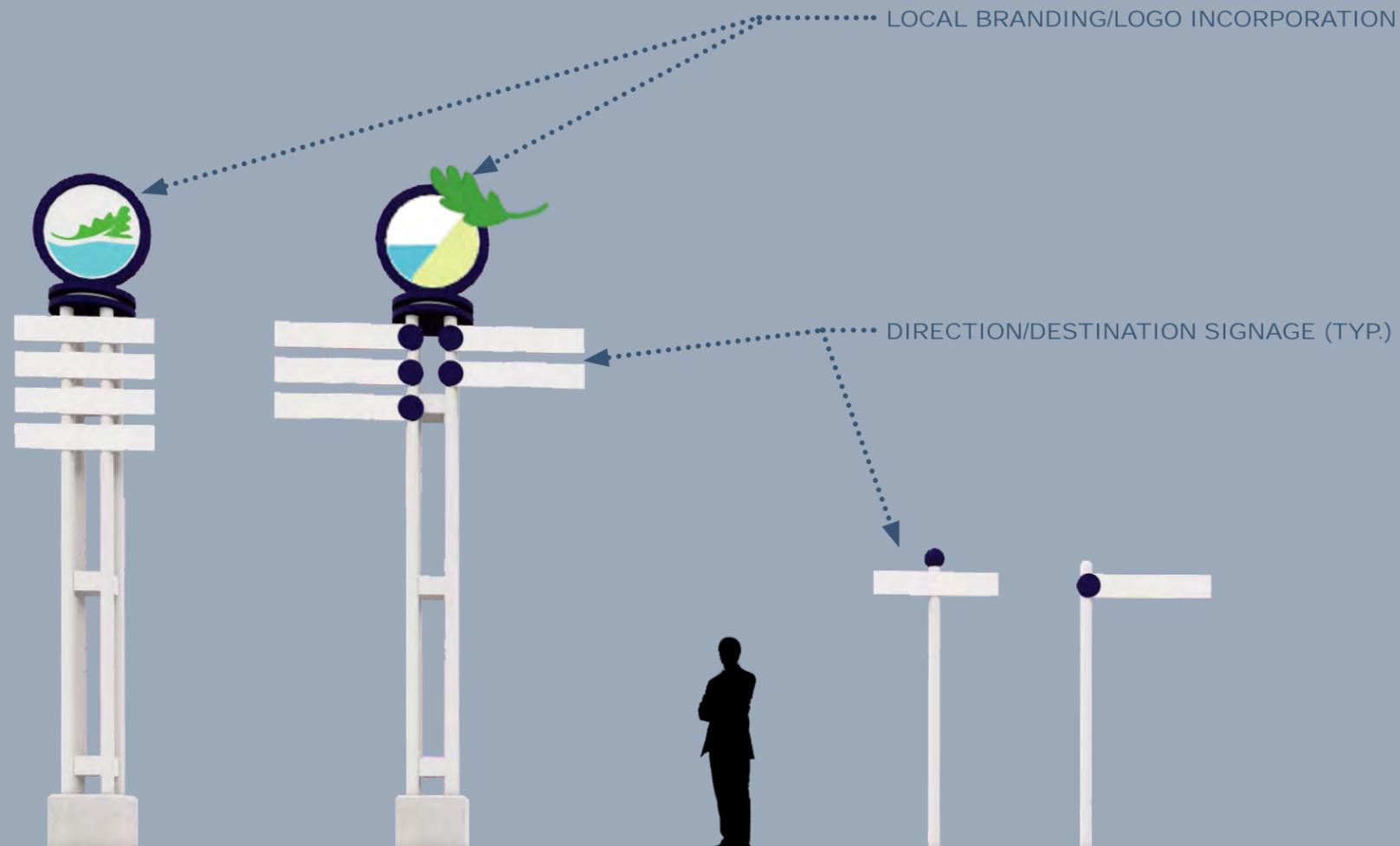


# IV. Streetscape Elements

## TERTIARY MONUMENT ELEMENTS

Wayfinding signage with city-wide application potential.

- Identifies destinations
- Provides directionals
- Becomes part of the corridor brand



# IV. Streetscape Elements

## SCULPTURES

- Plant inspired
- Color & lighting elements
- Steel material
- Interactive / kinetic

VERTICAL WIND TURBINES/  
SCULPTURES WITHIN LOW  
MAINTENANCE GRASS AREAS  
- POTENTIAL POWER  
GENERATION



STEEL FABRICATED OAKS



# V. Implementation



## IMPLEMENTATION

It is important to consider implementation of the proposed enhancements of the *Drexel Avenue Conceptual Streetscape Master Plan Study* as a phased approach. The Master Plan represents a compilation or fusion of the following:

- Visionary ideas
- Landscape enhancements as part of the street's reconstruction
- Blending of a variety of modes of transportation/pedestrian mobility
- Visual enhancement of a major gateway into the community
- Responsible yet innovative approach to operations and maintenance
- Leveraging the corridor's treatment to elevate and reinforce the identity of community and the Oak Creek Brand

The elements of the Master Plan can be logically viewed as a series of layers that compose the desired outcome based on the street's reconstruction schedule, anticipated development projects along the corridor, new public open space improvements, wayfinding, community branding, and a part of ongoing annual operations and maintenance.

This approach not only makes sense from a construction sequence, but also from formulating funding strategies. Due to the current CIP budgets, operational/maintenance budgets, and ongoing design activity and availability of additional funding; traditional short term, midterm, and long-term categories may not be the primary categorization appropriate for implementation. In contrast to historic phasing strategies, the Master Plan may need to embrace an implementation model based on flexibility. The driving force being the alignment of budgets, prioritization of capital improvement funds, the opportunity to leverage economic investment in the corridor through creative financing (e.g. TID), identify private fund raising opportunities, and the successful pursuit of other public/private partnerships or funding sources.

The following lists include implementation recommendations as well as how various elements of the *Drexel Avenue Conceptual Streetscape Master Plan Study* become action items. Their implementation will help achieve the overall design vision.

# V. Implementation

## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Approve the Drexel Avenue Conceptual Streetscape Master Plan Study
- Consensus on prioritization of enhancement elements regardless of available funding (see preliminary list of action items, p.43)
- Consensus on overall construction budget
- Develop final design (design development and construction documents) based on phasing of construction
- Develop matrix based on a list of action items to be accomplished
- Identify parties typically responsible to champion each action item
- Identify as broad a list of potential funding sources
  - This includes CIP funds and operation and maintenance funds and should include information regarding timing of funding cycles



# V. Implementation



## PRELIMINARY LIST OF ACTION ITEMS

- Median grading and low walls (East of Interstate)
- Plantings (East of Interstate)
- Median grading and low walls (West of Interstate)
- Plantings (West of Interstate)
- Tertiary monuments
- Artistic lighting
- Secondary monuments
- Iconic primary monuments with lighted piers
- Site furnishings
- Artistic sculptures
- Railroad bridge enhancements

**MINUTES OF THE  
OAK CREEK PLAN COMMISSION MEETING  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021**

**PLAN REVIEW  
CITY OF OAK CREEK AND GRAEF DREXEL AVENUE STREETScape**

Planner Papelbon provided an overview of the Master Development Plan review for the Drexel Avenue Streetscape Project between Ikea Way and Howell Ave. (see staff report for details).

Craig Huebner, 275 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, introduced himself and his colleague, Joe Pepitone, on behalf of Graef.

Mr. Huebner presented a brief overview of the conceptual streetscape plan to the Commission. The boundaries of the streetscape, span Drexel Avenue, from Ikea Way to Howell Avenue. There will be no change to the existing roadway or lane configuration. The approach is meant to identify one has arrived in Oak Creek, so the design palette is meant to mimic that of other City landmarks such as Lake Vista Park and Drexel Town Square. The plan divides the street corridor into three main components: west, central and east. The main treatments are focused within the medians. The recommendation for the railroad underpass, is to focus on streetscaping the two sides that flank the underpass in order to detract from it. Gateway signage is a key component of the streetscape, along with sculptural elements. Some earthwork, stone walls, and Corten steel, are also being proposed throughout the corridor. Low maintenance plantings and ground cover are incorporated, along with quaking aspen trees. The proposal retains the existing lighting, although decorative lighting could be added if the City so desires. Specific wall lighting, and lighting for the monument elements, is incorporated along the corridor. Programmable lighting is still an alternative, but is not a core recommendation. The monument elements are divided between primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary elements are meant to convey a sense of arrival, with added branding opportunities. Secondary monuments are for wayfinding and have an internally lighted element, and tertiary monuments are elements that could be incorporated City wide. Sculptures would require interaction with local artists to find ways to incorporate into the streetscape. Next steps include design development, understanding budgets and funding, and specifically identifying which core elements should be included in the project.

Commissioner Hanna asked if there were any concerns with visibility, given the density of landscaping. Mr. Pepitone said the idea is to have a minimalist approach to the plantings, which would include perennials and ornamental grasses with high salt tolerance. The visual movement the streetscape hopes to achieve, works best when large masses of plantings are adjacent to each other.

Commissioner Hanna inquired about maintenance, and whether the plantings would be easy to remove or replace without causing damage to underground utilities. Mr. Pepitone said there is always a risk when enhancing a median, however, they are very conscious of the durability of the materials and plantings being used, such as Corten steel and stone, to avoid future issues.

Commissioner Carrillo, Alderman Loreck, and Alderman Guzikowski, expressed their enthusiasm for the plan.

Commissioner Siefert questioned whether there would be sidewalks on both sides of Drexel Avenue. Mr. Pepitone answered that although the roadway project is outside of his scope, he believes it is planned to add sidewalks on Drexel Avenue where there are currently none.

Commissioner Siefert asked if there would be lighting on the islands as is there currently. Mr. Huebner responded the existing light poles could be used, and the only additional proposed lighting was an ambient, programmable, aesthetic lighting, as part of the walls along the medians.

Commissioner Chandler asked if the taller landscape items would block the existing street lighting, and if so, how would more light be created. Mr. Pepitone, said he would guess there are double headed fixtures almost every hundred feet along Drexel Avenue already, which are necessary for safety and functionality. The ambient lighting of the enhancements is meant to be very subtle, and to catch your eye with its beauty, rather than its brightness.

Commissioner Chandler said her concern was more with large trees that may be blocking the light. Mr. Pepitone said the quaking aspens are not necessarily large trees, as you would think of a shade tree. They are meant to have multiple trunks and fluttering leaves of green and silver, to enhance, rather than overwhelm, the corridor.

Commissioner Chandler questioned if streetlight maintenance would be easily upkept with the landscaping in place. Commissioner Sullivan answered that the City has its own bucket truck and maintenance would be no different than it currently is. Commissioner Sullivan noted that the arms on the streetlights can be extended from 8 feet, to 10 or 12 feet, if getting enough light on the road becomes an issue.

Mayor Bukiewicz commented that he approved of the overall plan, but noted a large sign for Froedtert was just added to the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> St. and Drexel Ave., so that should be kept in mind going forward. Mayor Bukiewicz added he would like to see a wall camouflaging the homes on the south side of Drexel Ave., between 13<sup>th</sup> St. and 10<sup>th</sup> St.

Mayor Bukiewicz addressed the issue of the difficulty of hiding the railroad trestle. Mr. Pepitone acknowledged that working with the railroad was very challenging, and adding eye catching elements before the bridge will be key to making the bridge seem secondary and less of an eyesore.

Mayor Bukiewicz concluded by saying the goal was to make Oak Creek a destination city, and the streetscape and the art within in it, will help define it.

Alderman Loreck moved that the Plan Commission approve the Master Development Plan for the Drexel Avenue Streetscape Project with the following conditions:

1. That all plans for structures are submitted for Plan Commission review and approval prior to submission of permit applications and construction/installation.
2. That all detailed, revised, and finalized plans (including landscaping plans) are submitted in digital format to the Department of Community Development prior to submission of permit applications and construction/installation.

Alderman Guzikowski seconded. On roll call: all voted aye. Motion carried

ATTEST:

Kari Papelbon, Plan Commission Secretary

1-11-22  
Date