



ROSSVILLE PEERLESS WOOLEN MILLS

URBAN DESIGN STUDIO
COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENT + DESIGN
CARL VINSON INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA | JULY 2016

CREDITS



PEERLESS WOOLEN MILL OWNERS

Hazel and Mitchell Bell

We would like to extend a special thank you to Hazel Bell and Mitchell Bell for welcoming us. They were gracious hosts, giving us multiple tours of the mill property. They supported the students throughout the process, visiting the students in Athens and providing feedback.

LYNDHURST FOUNDATION

This project was made possible by the generous contribution of the Lyndhurst Foundation.

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PEERLESS WOOLEN MILLS INTRODUCTION

Just south of Chattanooga and the Tennessee border sits Rossville, Georgia.

Incorporated in 1905 with the establishment of the Peerless Woolen Mills, the city of Rossville had always been tied to manufacturing. It not only provided employment for the city, but also the network that tied Rossville together. Peerless Woolen Mills was truly the heart of the city. Unfortunately, the mill eventually closed in 1962 and the site became the home of the Downtown Development Corp. Just five years later, a massive fire would decimate the buildings, costing more than a thousand jobs and causing millions in damages. Since that time, the mill has been occupied sporadically with smaller companies using the space for everything from shipping to photography.

In January of 2016, a class of students from the University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design traveled to Rossville to study the Peerless Woolen Mills site and look for ways to revitalize the former heart of the city. The students were excited to apply what they had learned in the classroom to design solutions for the Peerless Mills.

A strong network of partnerships is a key component of any revitalization effort. In Rossville, such a network has already developed with the help of the Georgia Downtown Renaissance Partnership, launched by the Georgia Municipal Association and UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, which coordinates the efforts of the Urban Design Studio and the city. The network also includes the philanthropic Lyndhurst Foundation and the citizen-led organization Thrive 2055, which work together to benefit the Chattanooga region.

For their midterm projects, the students were charged with creating conceptual plans for the Peerless Mills site based on six given frameworks. The students used a combination of high tech programs and critical thinking exercises to produce design solutions that fit into those frameworks. At midterm, a jury representing university faculty, community stakeholders, the mill owners, and members of the networks supporting the project came together to give the students feedback on their designs.

After their midterm presentations, the students further developed and refined their six "BIG IDEAS," or redevelopment concepts, for their final projects. From ecotourism to modern manufacturing, and from public plaza to complete campus, the groups used a variety of approaches to develop their visions for the Peerless Woolen Mills site. The class then returned to Rossville to give their final presentations to the community. Now, those invested in Rossville's future have these six 2016 Urban Design Studio projects at their disposal as they continue planning the redevelopment of the Peerless Woolen Mills.

PEERLESS WOOLEN MILLS SITE ANALYSIS

Rossville's position is unique.

It sits just south of the Georgia-Tennessee border near Chattanooga, in the valley between Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain. The two cities developed side by side, but while Chattanooga grew to metropolitan scale, Rossville remained a small town with manufacturing at its core.

Rossville's 27-acre Peerless Woolen Mills site was, and is, the heart and soul of Rossville. Though it officially closed in 1962, the mill's over 1 million square feet of floor space and massive smokestacks remain evident from the ground as well as the sky. The northeast corner of the site is marked by the intersection of Dye Creek and a rail line originating from Chattanooga. The creek is prone to the flooding, which affects a significant portion of the western part of the site and is most likely why it has remained relatively undeveloped.

THE 6 BIG IDEAS:

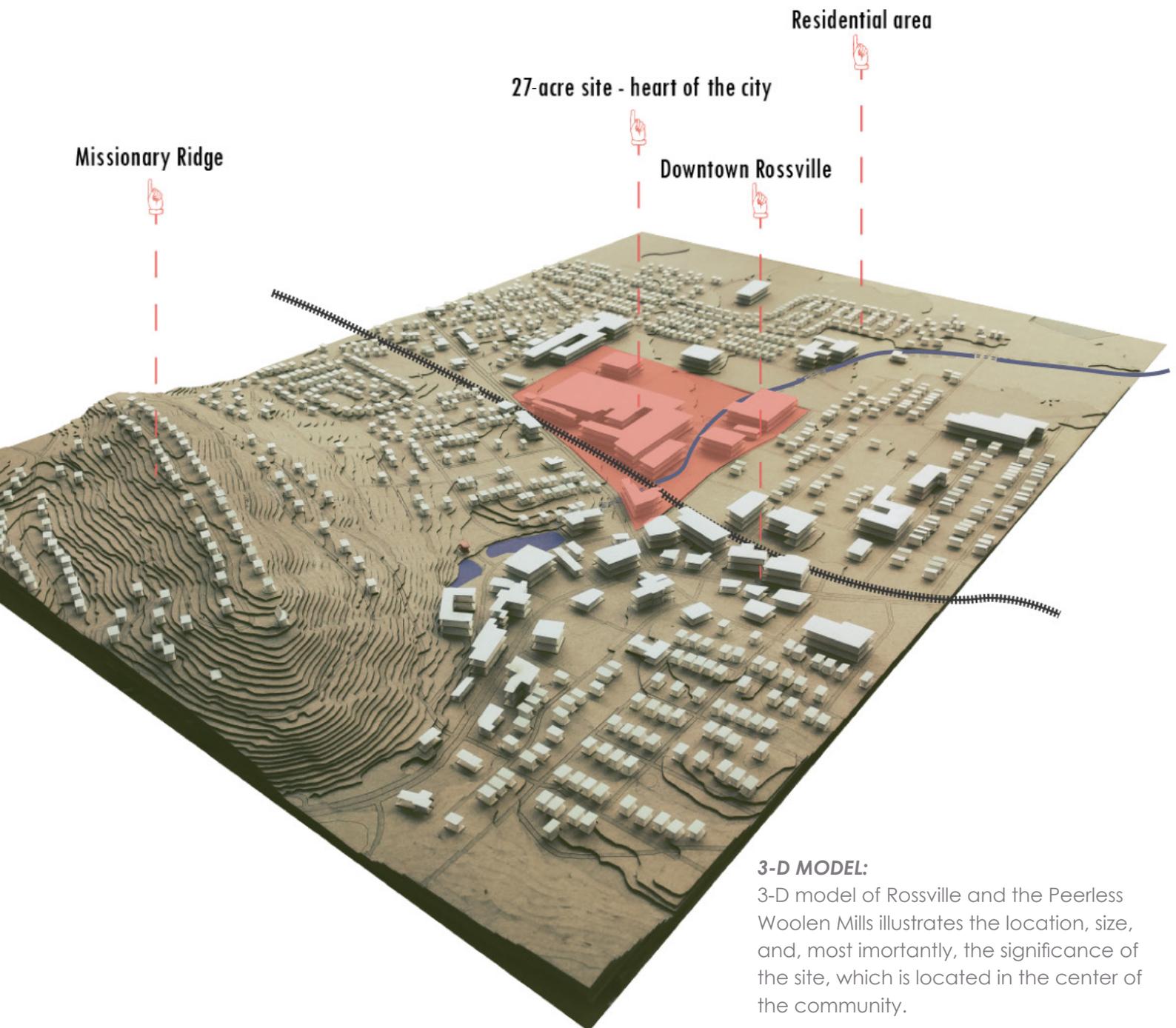
Eighteen landscape architecture students produced six alternative solutions to reinvigorate the 27-acre mill site as a nexus for the kinds of social and business activities that can be seamlessly incorporated into the fast-growing metropolitan Chattanooga region.

- 1** ***The Metamorphosis of Peerless Mills:*** Outdoor Recreational and Ecotourism Redevelopment
- 2** ***Thrive 365, A Community-Centered Design:*** Live, Work, Play Mixed-use Redevelopment
- 3** ***Peerless Plaza, Framing the Way:*** A Public Plaza to Catalyze Redevelopment
- 4** ***The Train Industry, 5P's:*** Leveraging Existing Infrastructure and the 21st Century Transit Industry to Revitalize Rossville
- 5** ***Peerless Yards, A Community-Centered Design:*** Green/Education Industry
- 6** ***The Ripple Effect of Peerless Mills:*** Low Cost, Immediate Initial Steps for Mill Site Redevelopment

The Heart of Rossville

“A city without a center is like a man without a heart.”

— STROUD WATSON



1 BIG IDEA: METAMORPHOSIS OF PEERLESS MILLS

SIYU HOU, SHANNON MUNDY, CANDACE YOUNG

OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AND ECOTOURISM REDEVELOPMENT

The Metamorphosis of Peerless Mills reimagines the 27-acre mill site as the central hub for outdoor recreation and ecotourism in the Rossville-Chattanooga area. Active outdoor recreation, such as hiking, rafting, and rock climbing, are already popular pastimes in the Chattanooga area. Many people travel hours to engage in these activities, making Rossville a prime location for a recreational hub of activity, eco-centric manufacturing, and living. In addition, Rossville sits between the Cumberland Plateau and the Appalachian Mountains, making it an ecological hotspot. The Peerless Woolen Mills differentiates Rossville from other communities in the area, offering an ideal space to reintroduce manufacturing and outdoor-centric regional retail to the area, while providing a live, work, and play space that could lead to stable economic development. Leveraging these three existing systems provides the site and city opportunities to become an ecological recreational hub, bringing tourism and new textile industries to Rossville and revitalizing the town for decades to come.

Rossville is ideally located to quickly become a popular meeting place for outdoor enthusiasts, athletes, and families alike. A mere 5.5 miles of paved trails would connect the town to the greater Chattanooga region, catalyzing the Superfund Corridor for fast, smart recreational development.

Additionally, the Metamorphosis of Peerless Mills proposal supports Rossville's relationship with Tennessee American Water, emphasizing phyto- and bioremediation strategies that would elevate the town's green footprint and improve the quality of life for its citizens. The existing mill structures would provide spaces for manufacturing, hotel accommodations, retail shopping, a regional departure point for recreation, on-site activities, and meeting places for friends and important community events and activities.

U.S. OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY'S ECONOMIC IMPACT

OUTDOOR RECREATION PRODUCT SALES:

\$120.7 BILLION

APPAREL, FOOTWEAR, EQUIPMENT,
VEHICLES, ACCESSORIES, SERVICES



TRIPS & TRAVEL— RELATED SPENDING:

\$524.8 BILLION

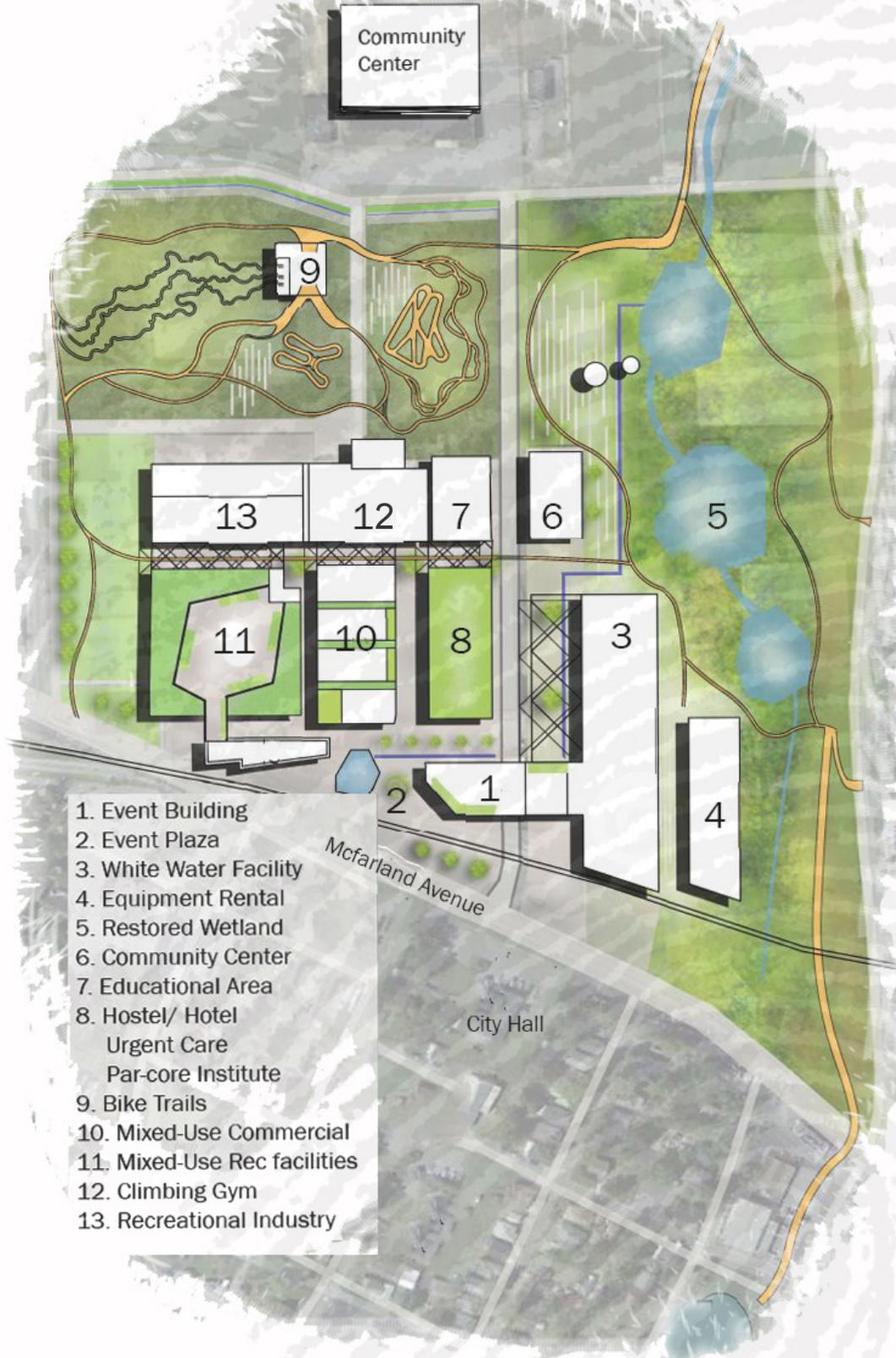
FOOD/DRINK, TRANSPORTATION,
ENTERTAINMENT/ACTIVITIES, LODGING,
SOUVENIRS/GIFTS/MISC.



+

=





- 1. Event Building
- 2. Event Plaza
- 3. White Water Facility
- 4. Equipment Rental
- 5. Restored Wetland
- 6. Community Center
- 7. Educational Area
- 8. Hostel/ Hotel
Urgent Care
Par-core Institute
- 9. Bike Trails
- 10. Mixed-Use Commercial
- 11. Mixed-Use Rec facilities
- 12. Climbing Gym
- 13. Recreational Industry

**MASTER SITE
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

1 BIG IDEA: METAMORPHOSIS OF PEERLESS MILLS

Rossville has the potential to quickly become a popular meeting place for outdoor enthusiasts, athletes, and families alike. A mere 5.5 miles of paved trails would connect the town to the greater Chattanooga region, catalyzing the Superfund Corridor for fast, smart recreational development.

PUMP TRACK

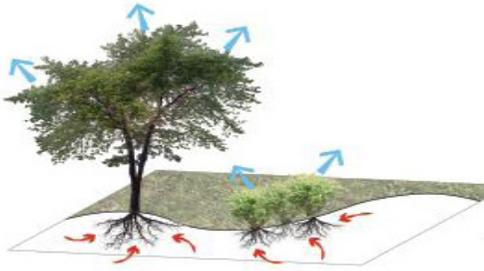
The mill grounds could be used for outdoor recreation activities like the pump track shown in the rendering. The opportunities are limitless, ranging from biking and skating to climbing, bouldering, parkour, and more.

BEFORE



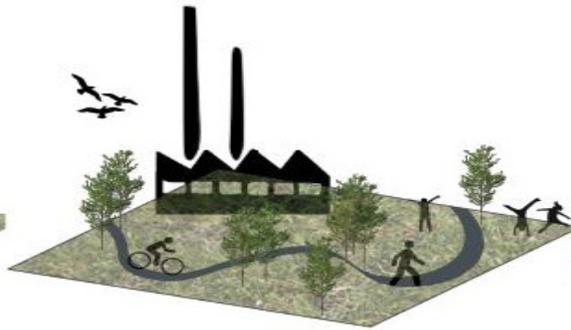
AFTER





PHYTOREMEDIATION + BIOREMEDIATION

- Native Plantings
- Natural Parks
- Storm-Water Management
- Reforestation



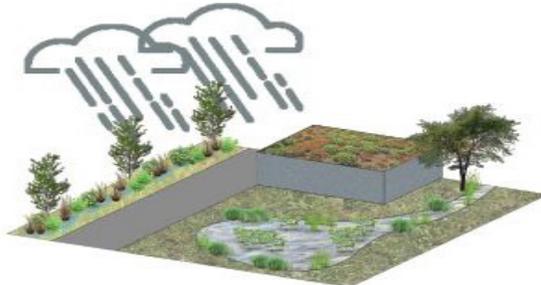
COMMUNITY + OPEN SPACES

- Walkable Fabric
- Multiple Accesses
- Greenway Trails
- Naturalized Open Space
- Structured Event Space



REDEVELOPED HABITAT

- Conservation Efforts
- Pollinator Gardens
- Establish a Wetland
- Reintroduce Native Flora



BLUE + GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Small Retention Ponds
- Floodplain Wetland
- Roof-Top Gardens
- Swales + Infiltration Along Roads & Sidewalks
- Develop Tree Canopies
- Solar Panels

GREENWAY TRAIL: SECTION ELEVATION

The section-elevation below shows how the greenway trail could work, with a reforested habitat, wetland, and community park or open space.



2

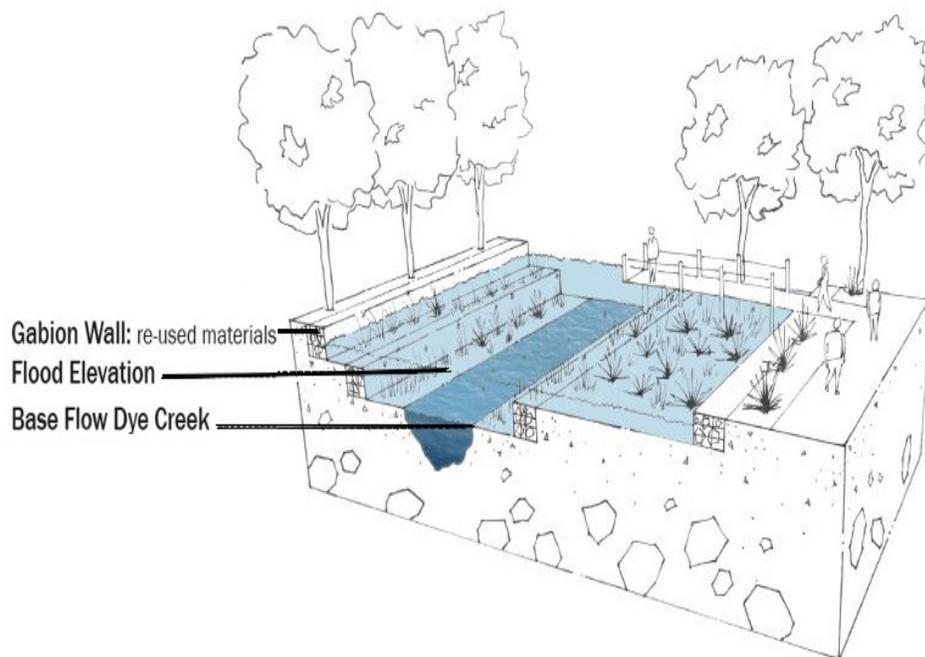
BIG IDEA: **THRIVE 365,** **A COMMUNITY-CENTERED DESIGN**

STUART JOHNSON, DUSTIN JONES, EMILIE TRAN

LIVE, WORK, PLAY MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT

The Thrive 365 plan encourages the development of the Peerless Woolen Mills into a live/work space with “green” initiatives. The four-phase Thrive 365 plan starts with small-scale projects that will immediately embolden and inspire the community of Rossville. Preservation tours will highlight the Peerless Woolen Mills’ place in history while supplying a source of income for the community. Material repurposing projects will tether the rich past of Rossville to its burgeoning future. Green trails, including wetland boardwalks, will promote outdoor recreation and ecological awareness, while helping to minimize the effects of floods and pollution.

The demolition of unsafe buildings within the Peerless Woolen Mills site will create a surplus of materials that can be repurposed in new structures. “Incubator spaces” will enable businesses to congregate, allowing for more creativity and new opportunities for social engagement. Internet cafes will enable the public to use Chattanooga’s fiber optic grid.



GABION WALL

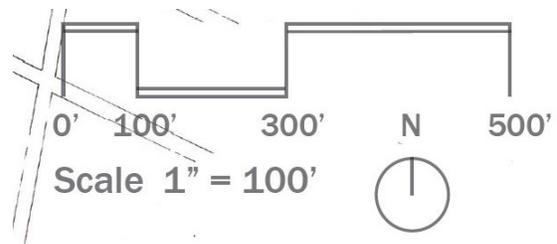
Some of the materials recovered from the mill will be used to build up the Gabion Wall, along Dye Creek, decreasing the likelihood of flooding throughout Rossville.

MASTER SITE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

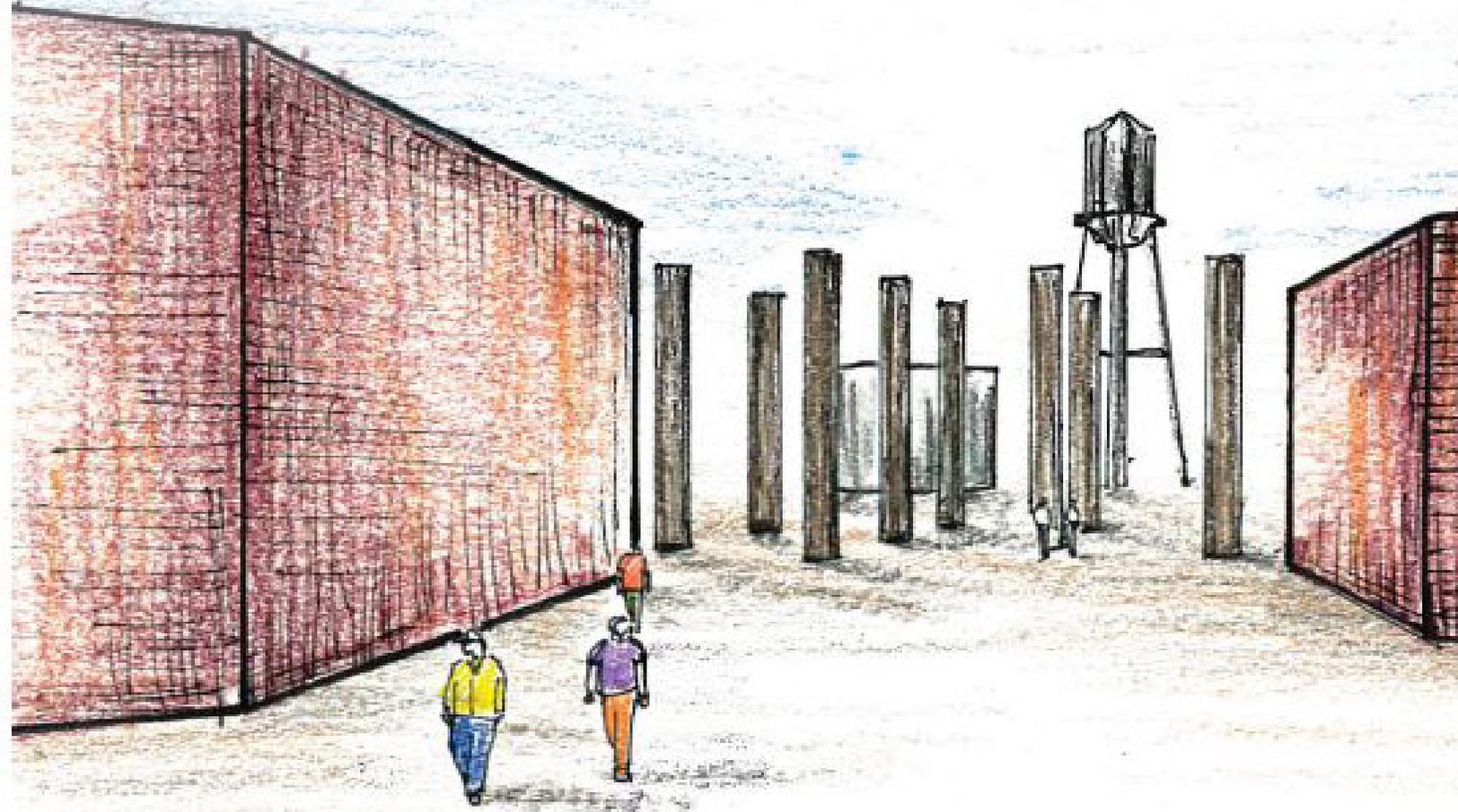


MASTER SITE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Thrive 365 plan promotes the growth and preservation of Rossville as an inclusive, exciting part of the greater Chattanooga region.



2 BIG IDEA: THRIVE 365, A COMMUNITY-CENTERED DESIGN



SKELETONIZATION

Skeletonization is the process of removing parts of buildings or structures, exposing underlying components, such as columns, beams, and joists.



RENDERING (ABOVE)

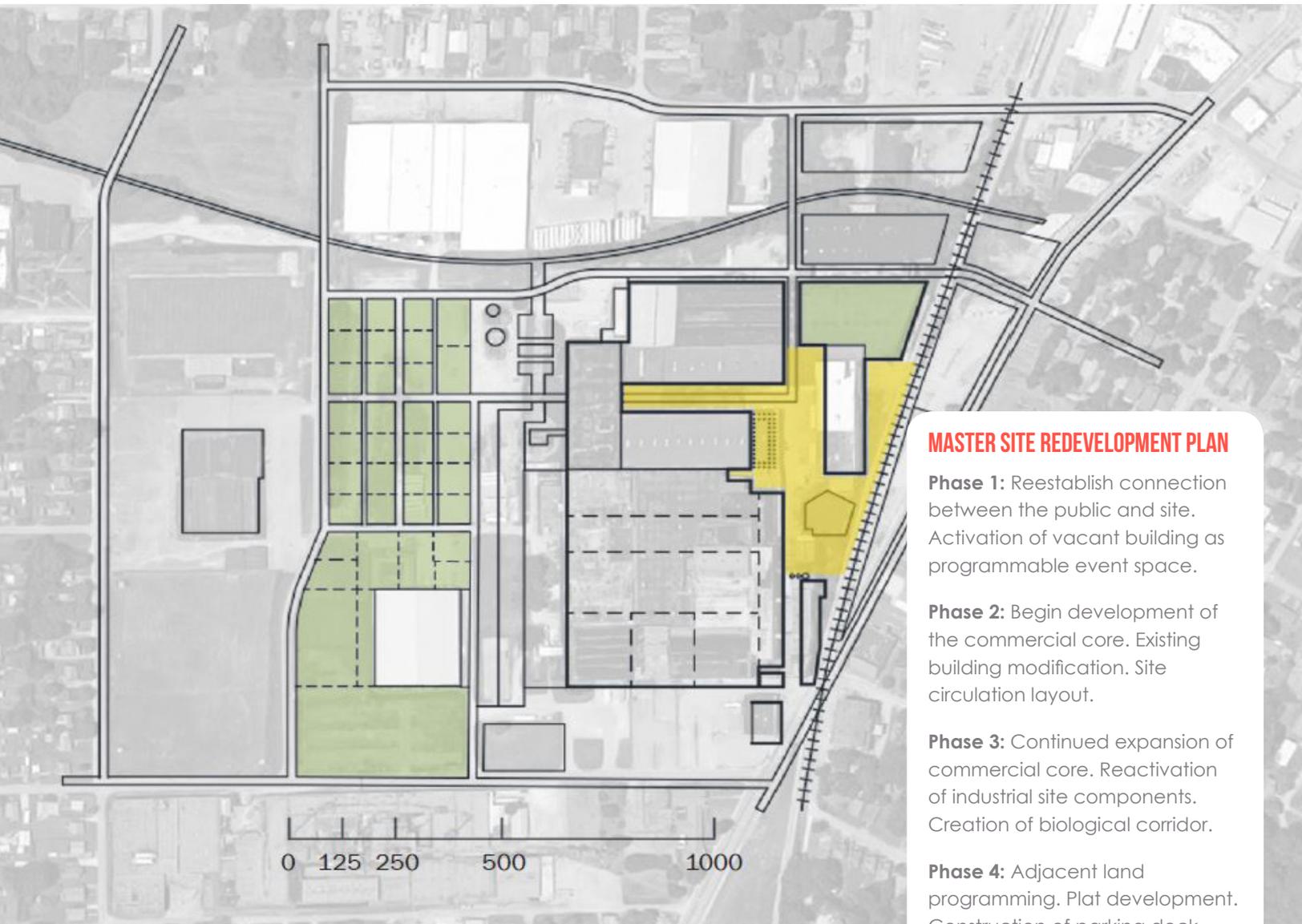
Using skeletonization to puncture sections of the buildings makes the site physically and visually accessible while still retaining unique structural elements.

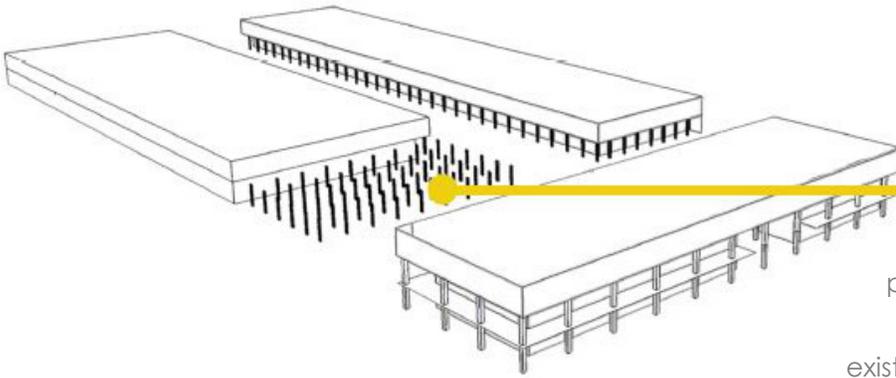
3 BIG IDEA: PEERLESS PLAZA, FRAMING THE WAY

CARL RUNGE, MORIAH TERMUNDE, ELLIOTT WIEGAND

A PUBLIC PLAZA TO CATALYZE REDEVELOPMENT

The Peerless Plaza, Framing the Way proposal establishes a tactile connection between the people of Rossville and the Peerless Mills site as a communal space. Juxtaposing the iconography and structuring of early Roman architecture and that of modern public spaces (i.e., Jamison Square in Portland, Oregon), this proposal hones in on the utility and sensation of the Peerless Mills site and its potential as a lasting commercial and communal event plaza and market. The result is a hybrid that bridges the gap between old and new, decay and beauty.





BUILDING TYPOLOGY

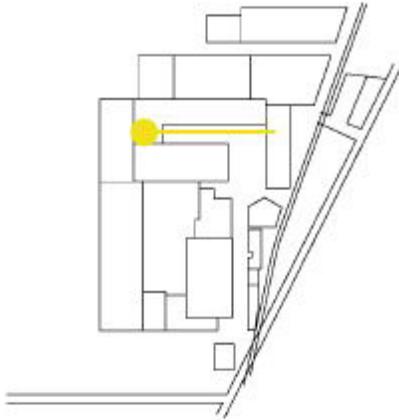
The existing mill buildings around the main plaza center have individual unique typologies that serve different uses and incorporate the existing infrastructure. Each building is designed to diversify the experience of the plaza while relating to each other through the use of exposed steel beams and concrete piers. These typologies offer unique public space, commercial store fronts, and balcony spaces that are formed around simple vehicular circulation to activate the area.



PRESERVATION IS KEY TO DESIGN

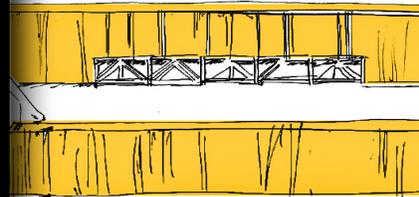
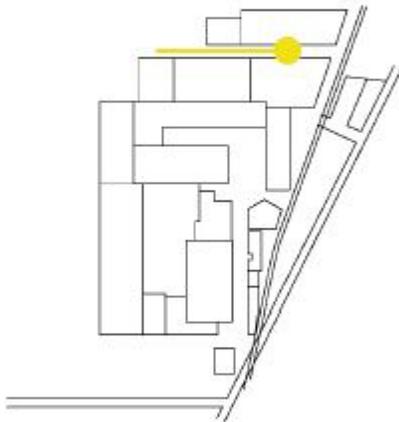
The exposed steel beams and concrete piers unify the appearance of the buildings.

3 BIG IDEA: PEERLESS PLAZA: FRAMING THE WAY



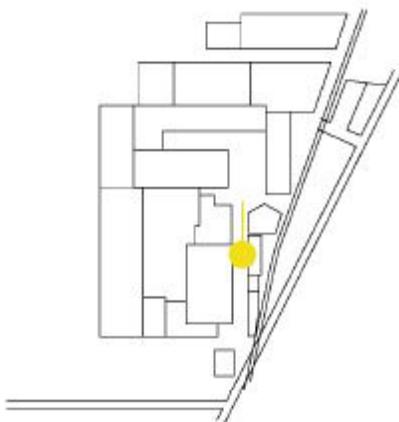
THE STOA

This hybrid offers a covered walkway and mercantile strip that encourages business and leisure in all weather.



THE CAMPANILE

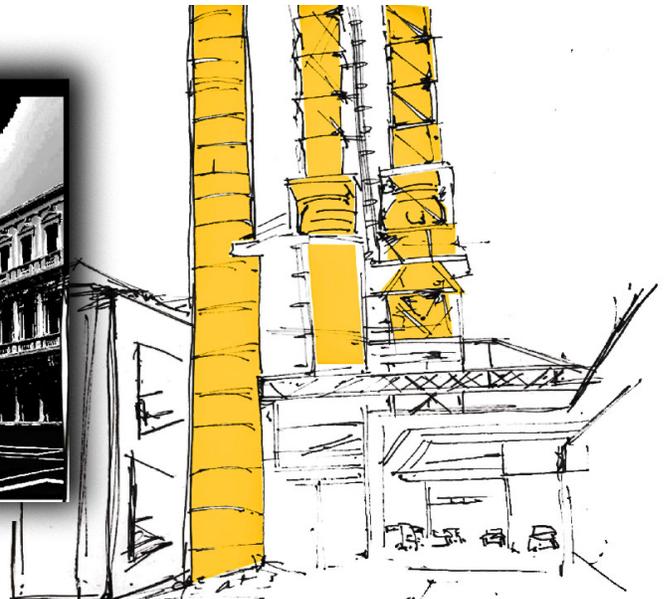
Preservation is the key to this design: old smokestacks are kept solely for their historic and visual value. Three existing buildings around the main plaza add visual variation to the atmosphere. Their unique typologies serve different uses and incorporate the existing infrastructure in their own ways. The exposed steel beams and concrete piers unify the buildings' appearance.





THE ARCH

Inspired by the Triumphal Arch of Constantine, Rome, the Arch is designed to span the width of the road.



4 BIG IDEA: THE TRAIN INDUSTRY, 5Ps

JACOB SCHINDLER, JONATHAN RAY, JAY MILLER

LEVERAGING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE 21ST CENTURY TRANSIT INDUSTRY TO REVITALIZE ROSSVILLE

The Peerless Woolen Mills site has the potential to act as a catalyst for success in Rossville by integrating education, industry, and commerce. To initiate this integration, investors should look to leverage existing systems. This model explores the possibility of leveraging the railroad industry through a series of joint capital funding ventures and public-private partnerships. By introducing any combination of the three components as opportunities present themselves, investors can build long-term relationships that combine private investment with public support. This might manifest itself in the form of tax support and municipal assistance in pursuing federal and state grants, combined with strong capital financing from private investors.

The Peerless Mills site is ideal to be redeveloped into a manufacturing and maintenance hub for of all types of heavy transit, such as light rail vehicles and high-speed trains (see rendering below). The existing site structures provide the framework necessary to house the variety of operations, while access to flowing and underground water can support the industrial processes. With a citizenry capable of pursuing postsecondary technical education, Rossville can provide its own workforce to spur economic growth promoting high educational attainment among area residents.



5Ps

PEERLESS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PLAN



BUSINESS

Investment interest
in Rossville

EDUCATION

Higher degree of
education in Rossville

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Higher standard of living

The Peerless Public-Private Partnership Plan (PPPPP) will bring more businesses to the mill and to Rossville, safeguarding the community's future.

4 BIG IDEA: THE TRAIN INDUSTRY, 5Ps



MASTER SITE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN, KEY:

1. USG Satellite Campus — State Funded, Industry Sponsored
2. Greenway Extension — Federal/State/County Funding
3. Existing Public Recreation Facility
4. Rail Yard — Federal Grants, Industry Funded and Maintained
5. Industrial Operations — Industry Funded with Tax Support from State/County/City
6. Industrial Operations — Industry Funded with Tax Support from State/County/City
7. Commercial Operations with Tax Support
8. Office Space for Private/Public Use — Joint Funding
9. Rail Entry — Industry Funded with Tax Support from State/County/City
10. Railcar Inspection — Industry Funded with Tax Support from State/County/City
11. Concourse — Public Infrastructure, Private Commercial Businesses



MASTER SITE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

5 BIG IDEA: PEERLESS YARDS, A COMMUNITY-CENTERED DESIGN

STUART JOHNSON, DUSTIN JONES, EMILIE TRAN

GREEN/EDUCATION INDUSTRY

Peerless Yards: A Community-Centered Design turns to industry and education to revitalize the Peerless Mills site and the Rossville community. This plan's chief goal is to promote and establish the mill as a key site for green industry tied to new green education and job training. This plan leverages two assets of the Rossville community to attract new businesses to the Peerless Mills site: the short commute from Chattanooga to Rossville and the significantly lower rental rates in Rossville.

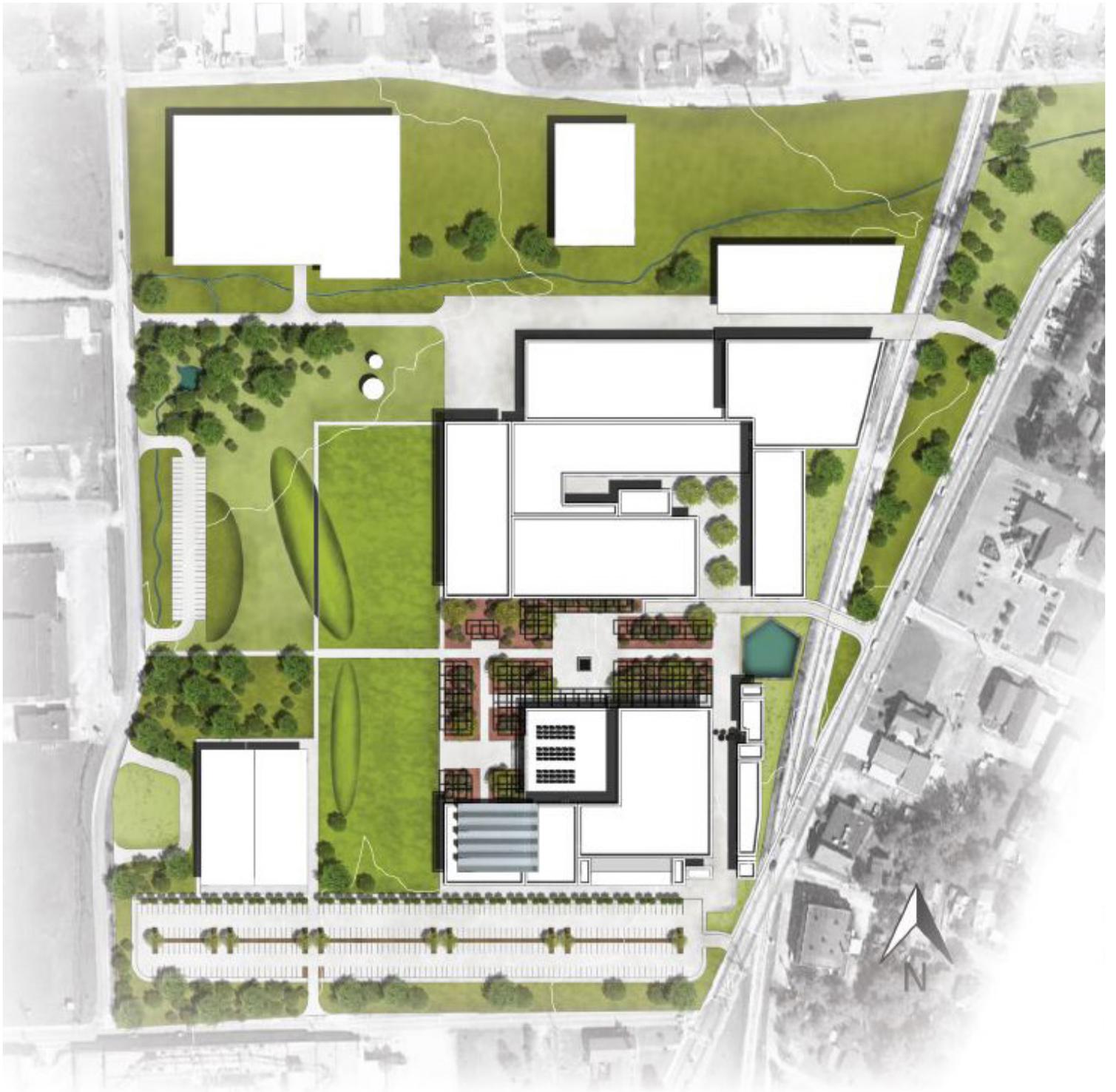
Under this proposal, the mill would be the economic and social base of Rossville, showcasing the town's rich history and high quality of life, providing employment for many Rossville citizens, and attracting outside interest through the promotion of the arts, history, ecology, and tourism.

Rossville's long-term commercial success could be further secured by extending Chattanooga's light rail into the town. Day trips to and from Chattanooga and Rossville would be easy and fun on the light rail extension.

TOURISM & ECOLOGY: RAIL WITH TRAIL CONNECTION

Possible multi-use corridor for train, green trail, and light rail.





MASTER SITE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

- INDUSTRY
- EDUCATION
- COMMERCIAL
- AMENITIES
- TOURISM



5 BIG IDEA: PEERLESS YARDS, A COMMUNITY-CENTERED DESIGN

PERSPECTIVE RENDERING

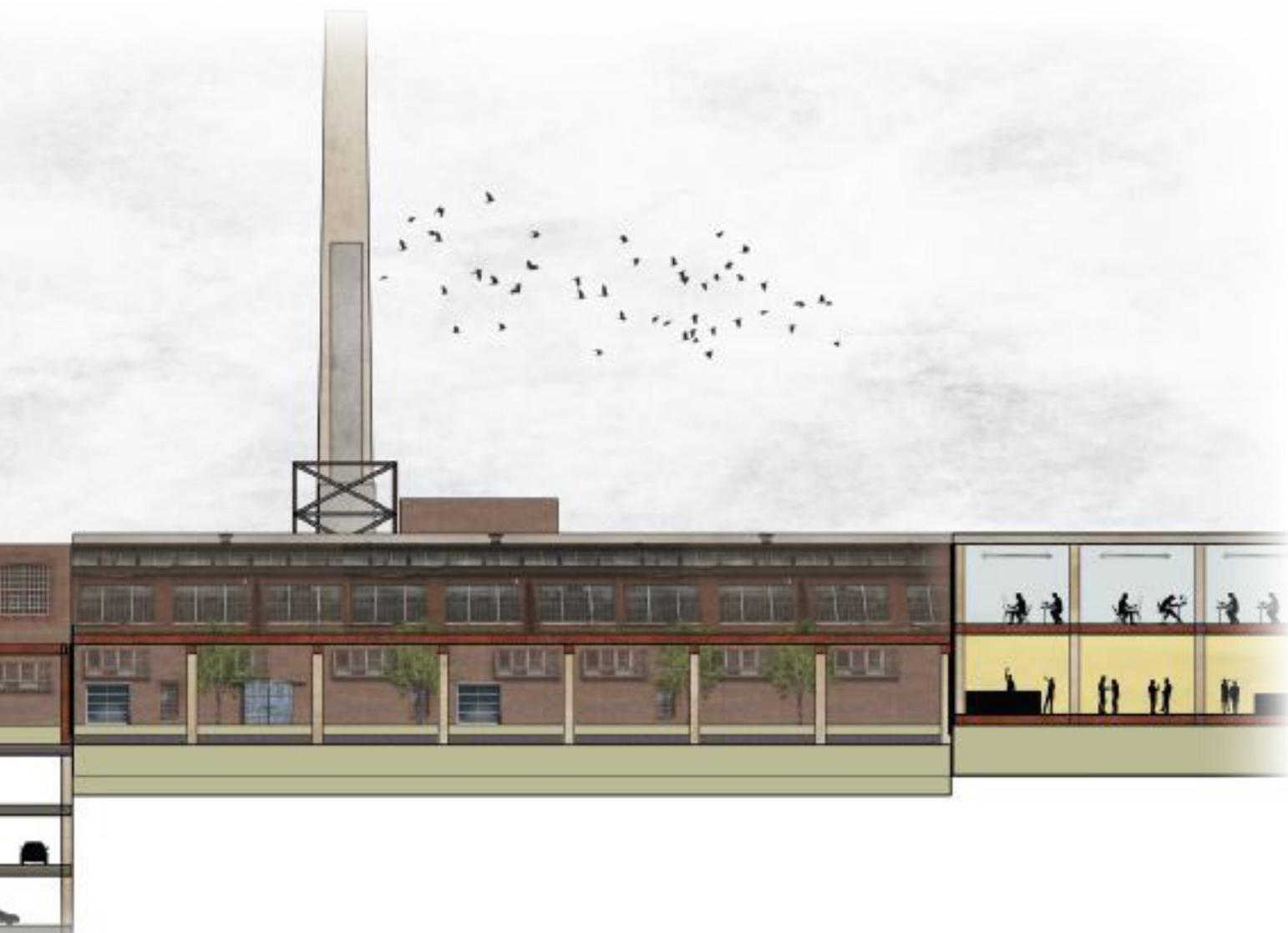
Skeletonization converts the mill building into a plaza space.



SECTION-ELEVATION

This section-elevation shows the underground floors of the building used for parking, which leaves more space for activity on the ground floor.







BIG IDEA:

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF PEERLESS MILLS

LOW-COST, IMMEDIATE, INITIAL STEPS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

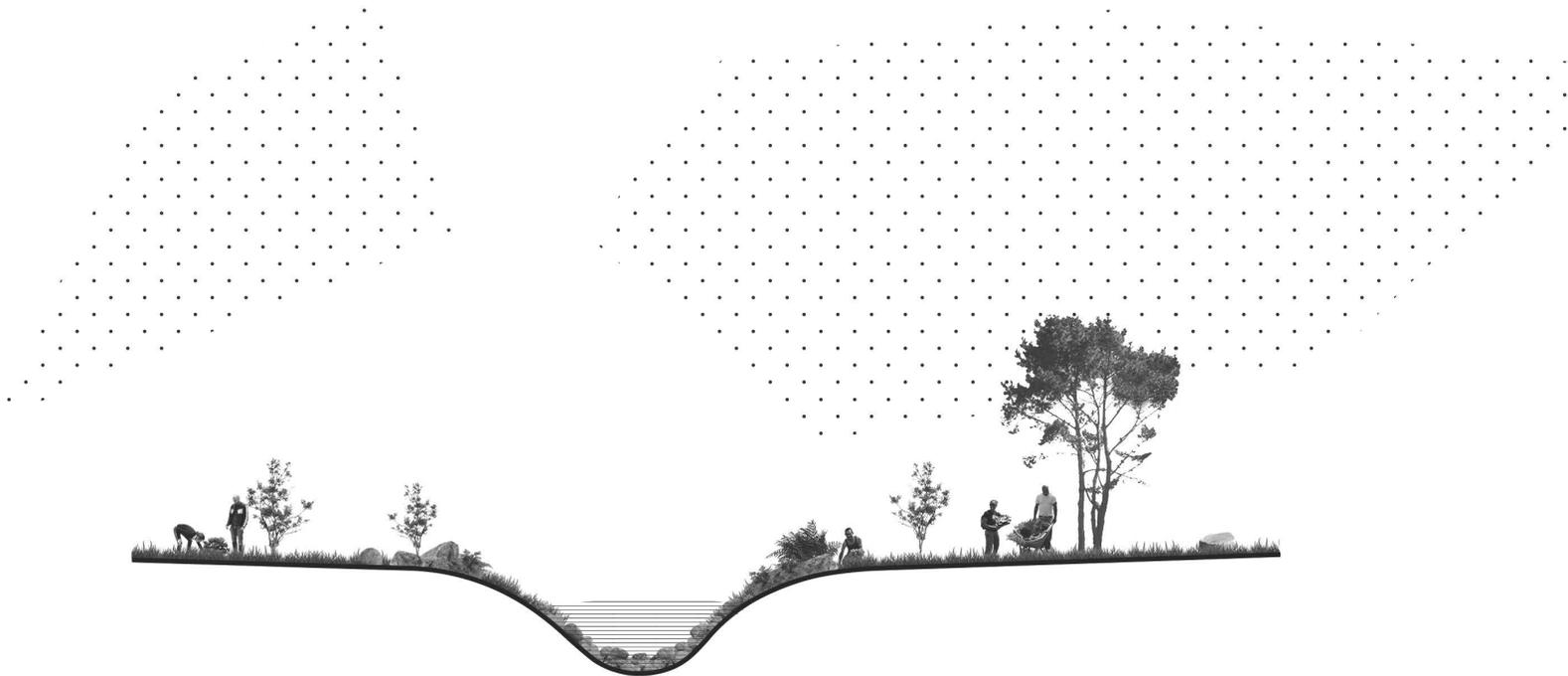
DAVID HASSLINGER, PATRICK HESLIN, KEVIN J. PFEIFFER



Rossville is no longer the bustling community it once was, with few jobs, an emigrating population, and a resulting loss of communal identity.

But the Peerless Woolen Mills has a lot of life left in it yet. The 27-acre mill site holds many untapped opportunities for the town of Rossville. Rossville's proximity to Chattanooga makes it an obvious choice for new regional growth as does its untapped aquifers, low cost of living, and existing outdoor recreation.

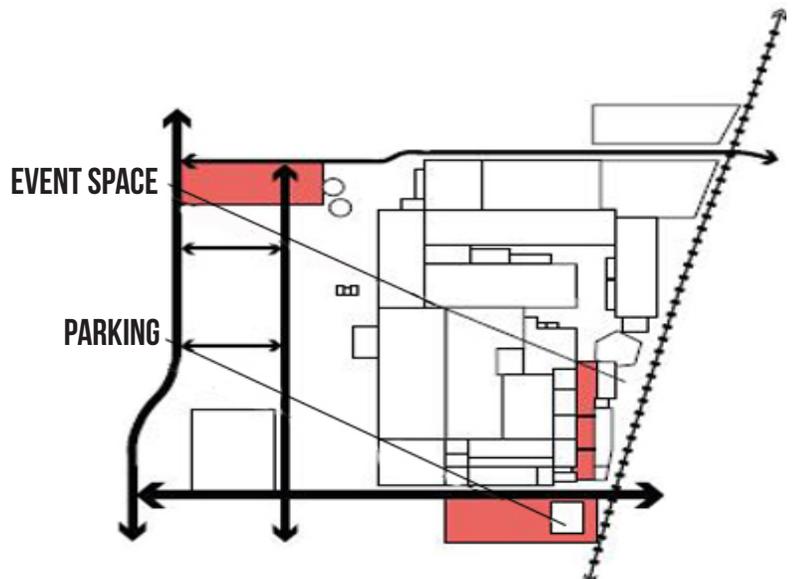
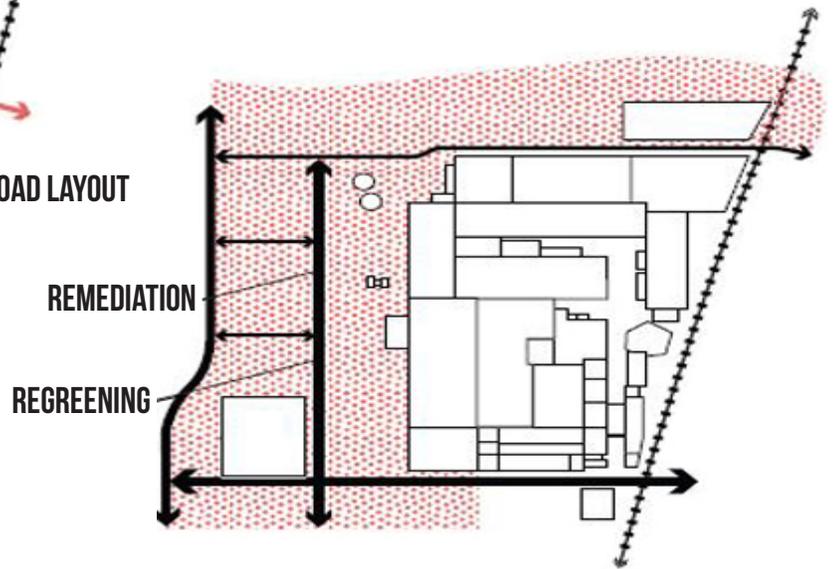
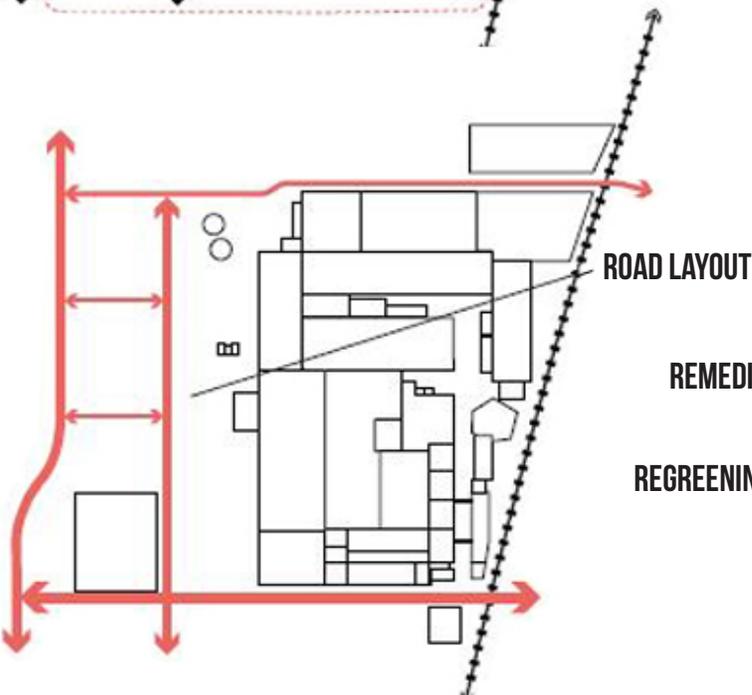
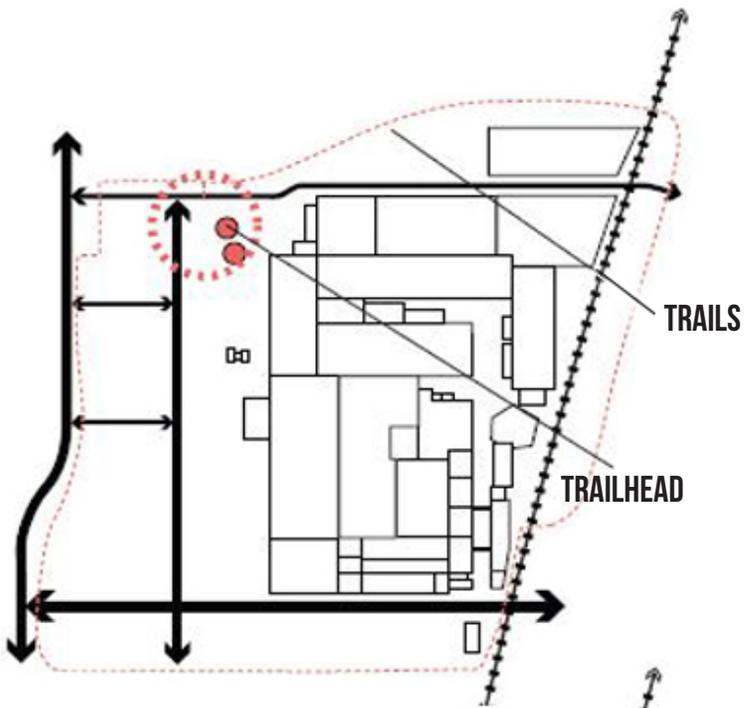
The Ripple Effect of Peerless Mills proposal focuses on these kinds of opportunities to drive new commercial growth. Starting small, under this proposal the Peerless Woolen Mills would host a variety of events: outdoor concerts, nature workshops, films on the lawn, history tours, farmers' markets, and craft fairs. Some of these events have already proven successful for the town. Further promotion of these events in Chattanooga and other surrounding towns would bring more tourists to Rossville. The Peerless Woolen Mills site would be a destination in itself, as a model of possibility and sustainable, responsible living.



CREEK, SECTION-ELEVATION

This section-elevation shows native grasses being planted along the creek as an initial step.

MASTER SITE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



6 BIG IDEA: THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF PEERLESS MILLS

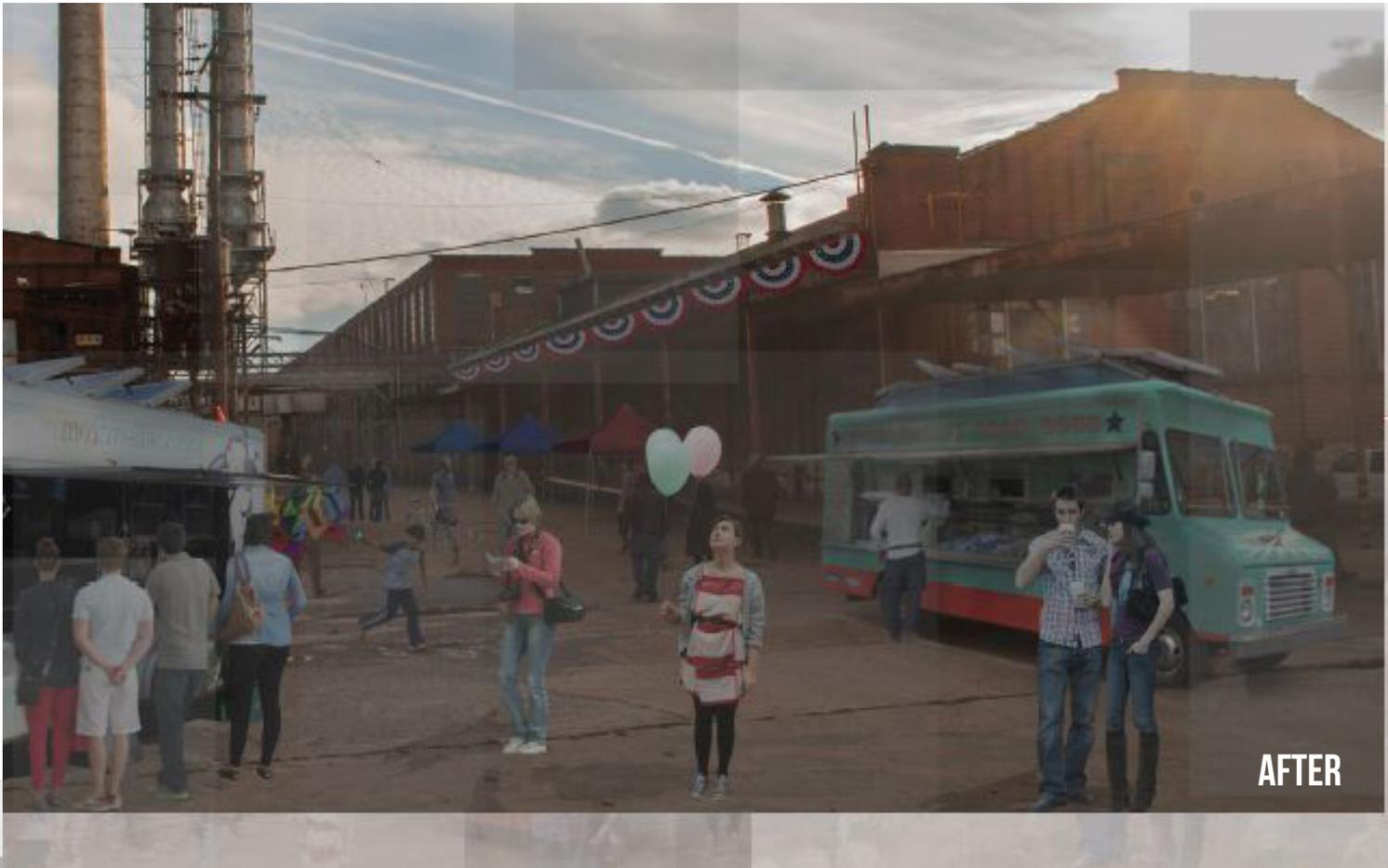


ROOFTOP VIEWS

The Peerless site has many spectacular views of the surrounding ridges and valleys. An initial step would be to allow visitors to access and program pop-up markets and café for roof-top viewing and activities.

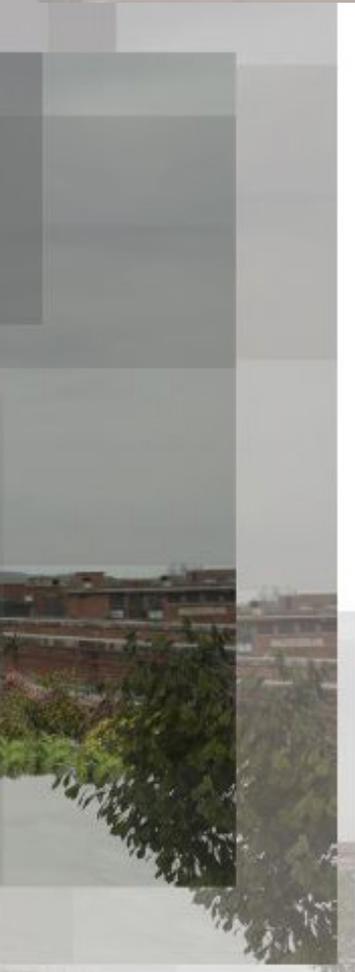
Over time, these roof tops could be transformed into roof-top gardens.





URBAN PLAZA CONCEPT (ABOVE)

The center drive of the Peerless Woolen Mills site could be transformed into an urban plaza that hosts activities. By simply sectioning one end with fencing and preventing access into buildings, the plaza can safely be used for events like food carts, music acts, and markets. The space becomes a makeshift plaza defined by the exterior walls and industrial architecture, creating a one-of-a kind space and draw.





NEXT STEPS

4 INITIAL IDEAS

Five of the six “Big Ideas” proposed by students are complex, large-scale redevelopment projects. This section outlines four additional low-cost projects that the City of Rossville could begin tomorrow. Implementing these initial projects would signal to the greater Rossville community that activity and action are taking place, with growth to follow.

1 TREES: The public triangular park located in the heart of downtown Rossville at the intersection of Rossville Boulevard and McFarland Avenue acts as a small green space with overflow parking. This key landmark could easily be improved by planting a few trees along Rossville Boulevard. Trees create a sense of place, slow vehicular traffic, provide shade, and communicate a feeling of arrival. New plantings would also help to unify and connect the newly updated streetscape along Rossville Boulevard.

2 LITTER: Small steps such as picking up the litter in downtown Rossville would signify community pride. It is a little thing that can act as a community catalyst. The vacant lot adjacent to Roy’s is an ideal place to begin. Roy’s is a unique and well-known Rossville landmark, and improvements there could signal good things to come for the community. By simply picking up the litter, removing the unwanted vegetation, adding gravel, and painting a retro Roy’s mural, the vacant lot would be transformed into a welcoming space. The city could even work with the property owner to maintain the lot as public parking, thus providing Roy’s with additional parking on the main street.

3 LIGHTING UP THE MILL: The Peerless Woolen Mills site is seen by Rossville residents as the economic and social center of the community. As the mill goes, so goes the town, acting as a beacon of hope for the community. Moreover, the mill is Rossville’s primary landmark. Simple LED lighting for short periods in the evenings in strategic locations throughout the mill complex would make it once again a landmark that signifies possibilities for the community.

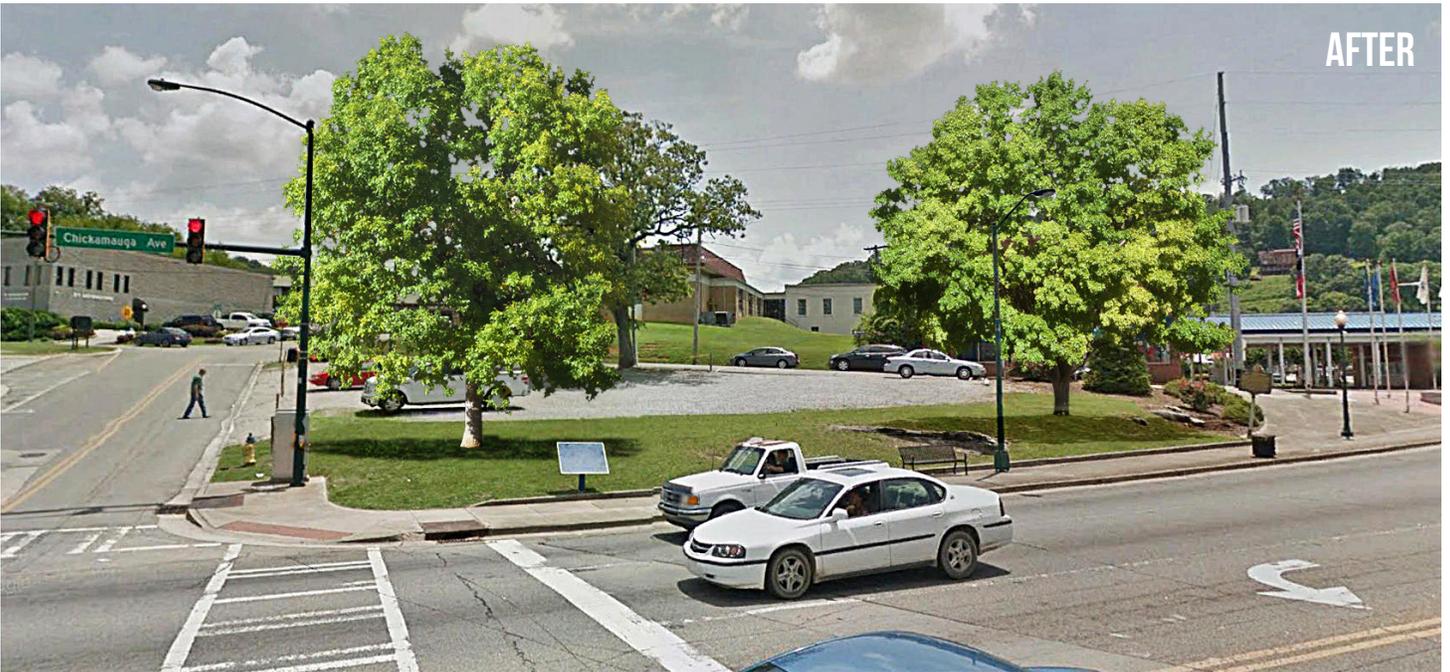
4 TRAIN VIEWING PLATFORM: Both locals and tourists enjoy watching trains. Other communities have created train viewing platforms as a central location for train enthusiasts to meet and socialize. Building a train viewing platform can be cost prohibitive, but Rossville has an advantage. The city could use the existing train platform on the Peerless Woolen Mills site. One major hurdle would be liability. The city would have to create a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the owners of the Peerless Mills to take on liability and maintain the viewing platform. The city would also have to clean up and maintain the adjacent parking lot. Doing so would begin to beautify the mill site along McFarland Avenue and provide a draw for both tourists and locals.

1 PLANTING TREES



Before: A view of the corner at Chickamauga Avenue and West Gordon Avenue.

After: The rendering shows willow oaks planted at the corner to improve the downtown streetscape.



2 PICKING UP LITTER

PICKING UP LITTER AT ROY'S GRILL

Before: Roy's Grill has been operating since 1934 and is known as "Chattanooga's Oldest Grill and Diner." Located on Chickamauga Avenue, the building's exterior and surrounding property could use some improvements.

After: The rendering shows several improvements made to the property, including:

- Parking lot filled with new gravel and weeds cleaned up
- Trash receptacles moved
- A new hamburger mural advertising the restaurant's claim of having the best burgers in town and the words, "Since 1934" painted to celebrate its longevity



3

LIGHTING UP THE MILL

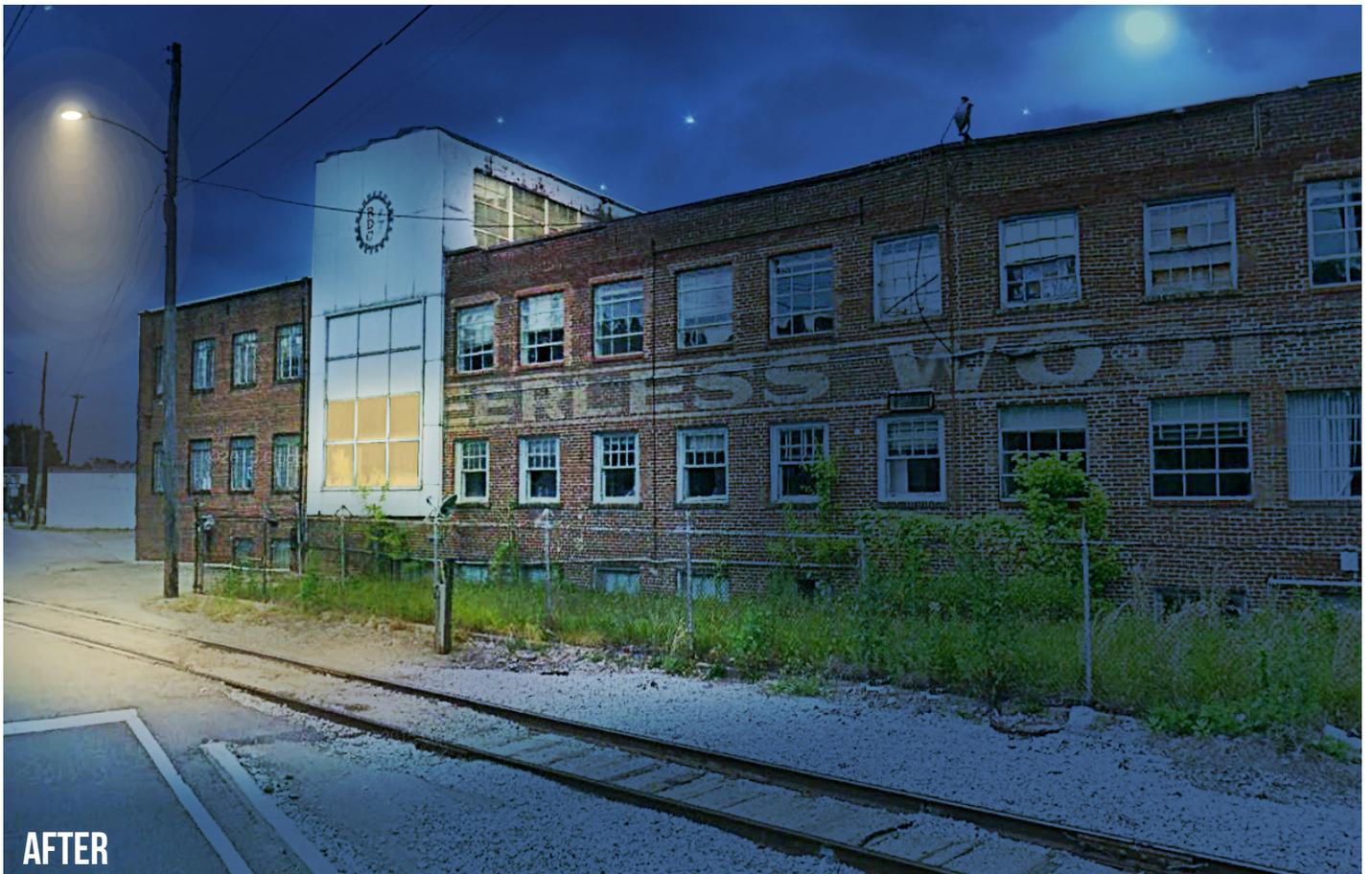


BEFORE

LIGHTS ON AT NIGHT

Before: The mill's buildings are large vacant structures and can be dark and appear desolate, especially at night.

After: The rendering shows the mill building with lights on at night, a simple fix that communicates that the mill is safe and not quite as intimidating as before.



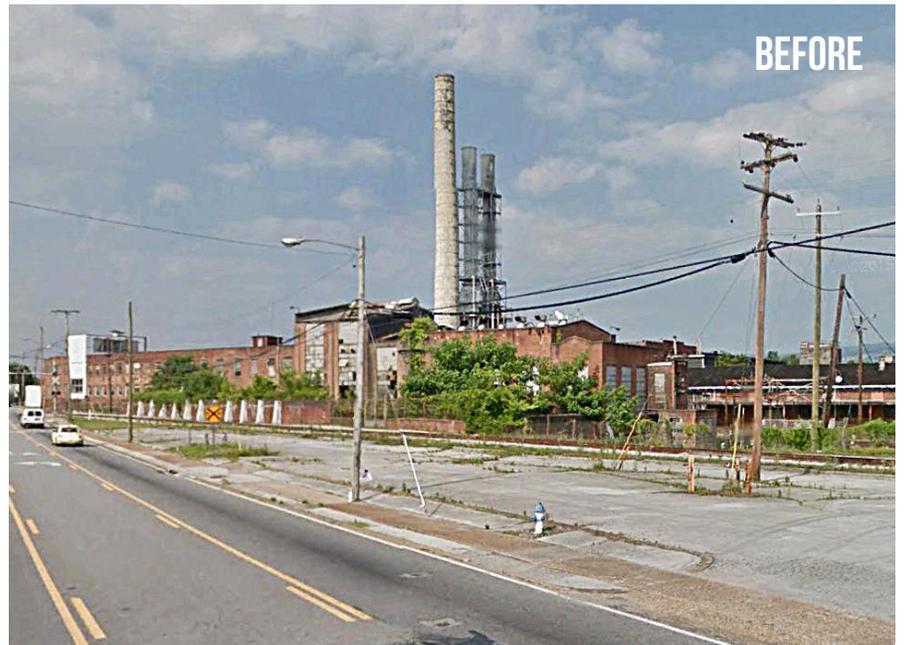
AFTER

SMOKESTACK

Peerless Mills' smokestack is a Rossville landmark and can be seen from far away. Though it's vacant, the tower can still be used as an opportunity to celebrate the landmark's history by "dressing it up."

Before: The photograph shows a view of the Peerless Mill smokestack and surrounding buildings during the daytime.

After: The rendering shows the smokestack with LED lights at night, creating a beautiful nighttime architectural feature.



4 TRAIN VIEWING PLATFORM

Before: a view of the railroad tracks along McFarland Avenue directly across from City Hall.

After: The rendering shows a new covered train viewing platform where visitors can safely enjoy watching the trains go by in the shade. The lot has been repaved and some landscaping improvements have been made.





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