



From: CRA Staff

To: CRA Board

Date: 5/16/2016

MEMO: 3rd & Binney Temporary Civic Space Plan

CONTEXT

HISTORY

- A 40' x 150' parcel at the southwest corner of 3rd & Binney Streets was acquired in the 1960s by the CRA in anticipation of making 3rd Street much wider in the future, which never happened.
- The site was used as a construction staging site for many projects in Kendall Square over the years.
- Newport Construction, the contractor for the Main Street streetscape reconstruction project of 2014-2016, signed a license agreement with the CRA that obligates them to make improvements to the site when they vacate.
- The site is anticipated to become part of a larger Volpe redevelopment project in the future and is likely to be integrated with ground floor retail space in a future building based on Cambridge zoning requirements.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing conditions for the 3rd & Binney site today include:

- Full sun nearly all day long in the summer
- High pedestrian and bike traffic
- Three large residential buildings adjacent to the site, with a residential neighborhood to the north starting one block away
- Many significant commercial office buildings within a 10 minute walking distance
- The federal government has a fence running along the back side of the property with a dark green color screen shielding the view of their maintenance yard
- One above ground wooden electric utility pole remains nearby
- Four street lights occupy the perimeter of the property, providing some ambient light

DESIGN PROCESS

DESIGN ASSUMPTIONS

- No electricity service on site (no Eversource account)
- Restrictions exist on excavation into soil more than 3 feet due to an environmental concern documented as RTN 3-26562
- No municipal water service to the site
- The CRA owned fence on site will be taken down
- Newport will complete hardscape improvements; CRA would coordinate the remainder of the improvements. Some CRA improvements could be cost-shared with other parties

PLANNING BACKGROUND

- **2014:** CRA hired local consultant Relish to develop concepts for temporary use of the site, previously presented to CRA Board in December 2014. None of the concepts developed were considered financially feasible or the consultant determined the concepts would not have enough demand to be supportable by

the community at that time. The only concept that was determined to be potentially self-sufficient was providing a space for food trucks that would pay a daily fee. Other concepts deemed economically unsupportable included a farmers market, makers market, community tool sharing, and vending machine market. Simultaneously, the construction contractor using the site asked for an extension through 2016 for use of the site as a construction staging area.

- **Late Summer 2015:** CRA staff placed a poster on site and received dozens of ideas from the public via text message on CRA's coUrbanize website.
- **March 2016:** CRA staff convened a design charrette with local Kendall Square architecture and engineering consultants such as Jacobs and LDA as well as staff from KSA. KSA staff in attendance helped input the design into CAD.
- **April 2016:** Board member Barry Zevin inventoried all of the CRA's reusable granite stockpile and helped to further refine the CAD drawings. CRA staff began approaching several adjacent land owners about participating in a cost-sharing arrangement for a Hubway station on-site. While everyone showed interest, formal agreements have not yet been pursued.
- **April/May 2016:** CRA staff created an accurate 3D-SketchUp model (images attached) and a cost estimate for the site furnishings

FOOD TRUCKS

In Spring 2016, CRA issued an RFP for food trucks to occupy this site from June through October 2016. The food truck RFP results were discussed at the April 2016 CRA Board meeting. In May 2016, contracts were signed with one dessert food truck that changes each day of the week (M-F) and one entrée food truck that will stay the same throughout the food truck season. All food trucks are required to be present for lunch hours. Food trucks have been given the option to stay late for dinner hours or come early for breakfast hours, although none have expressed interest in that option yet.

MAY 2016 CONCEPT DESIGN

The concept design developed by CRA staff includes the following features:

First Phase:

- Hardscape area with either asphalt or compacted stone dust
- Extending the sidewalk width with asphalt by 2-3 additional feet in some areas
- Food truck parking area for two vehicles
- Garden area with tall grasses and stones/boulders (using CRA granite pieces)
- Tall sunflowers along the back wall
- Bike corral / bike rack
- KSA Library

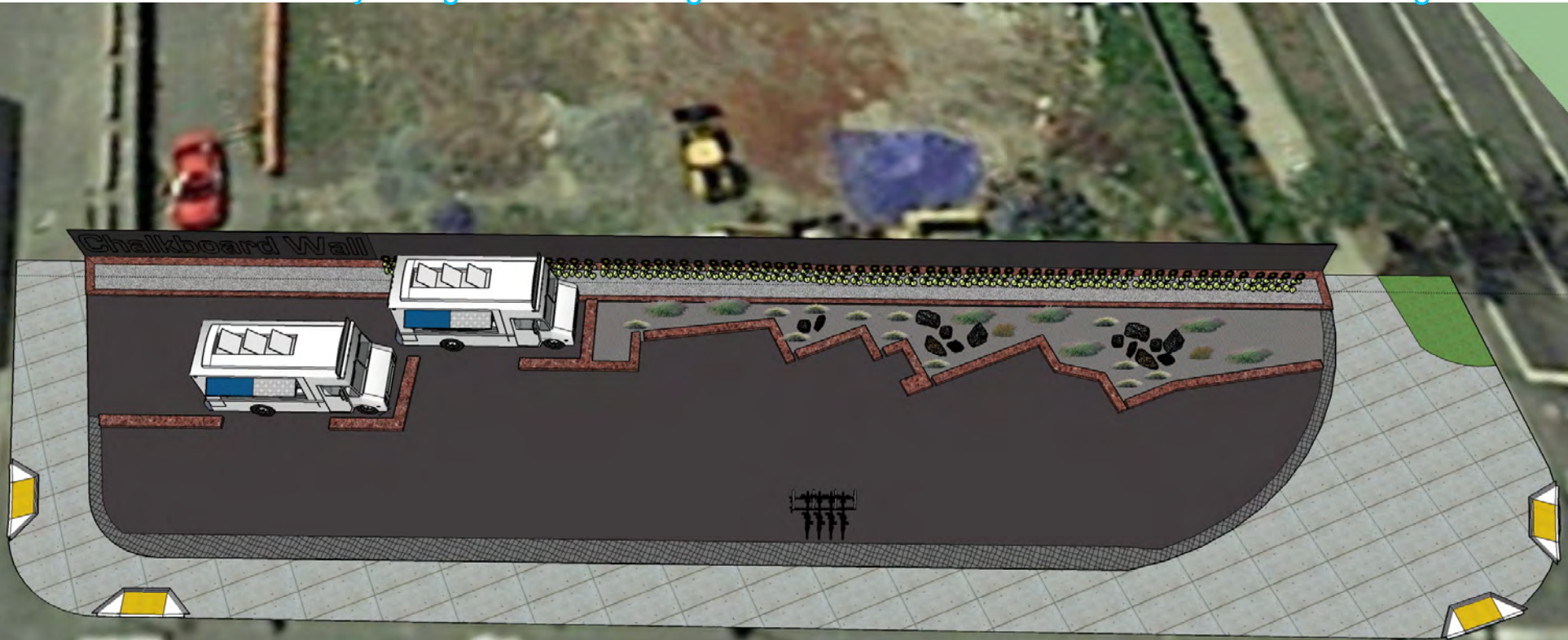
Optional Future Improvements:

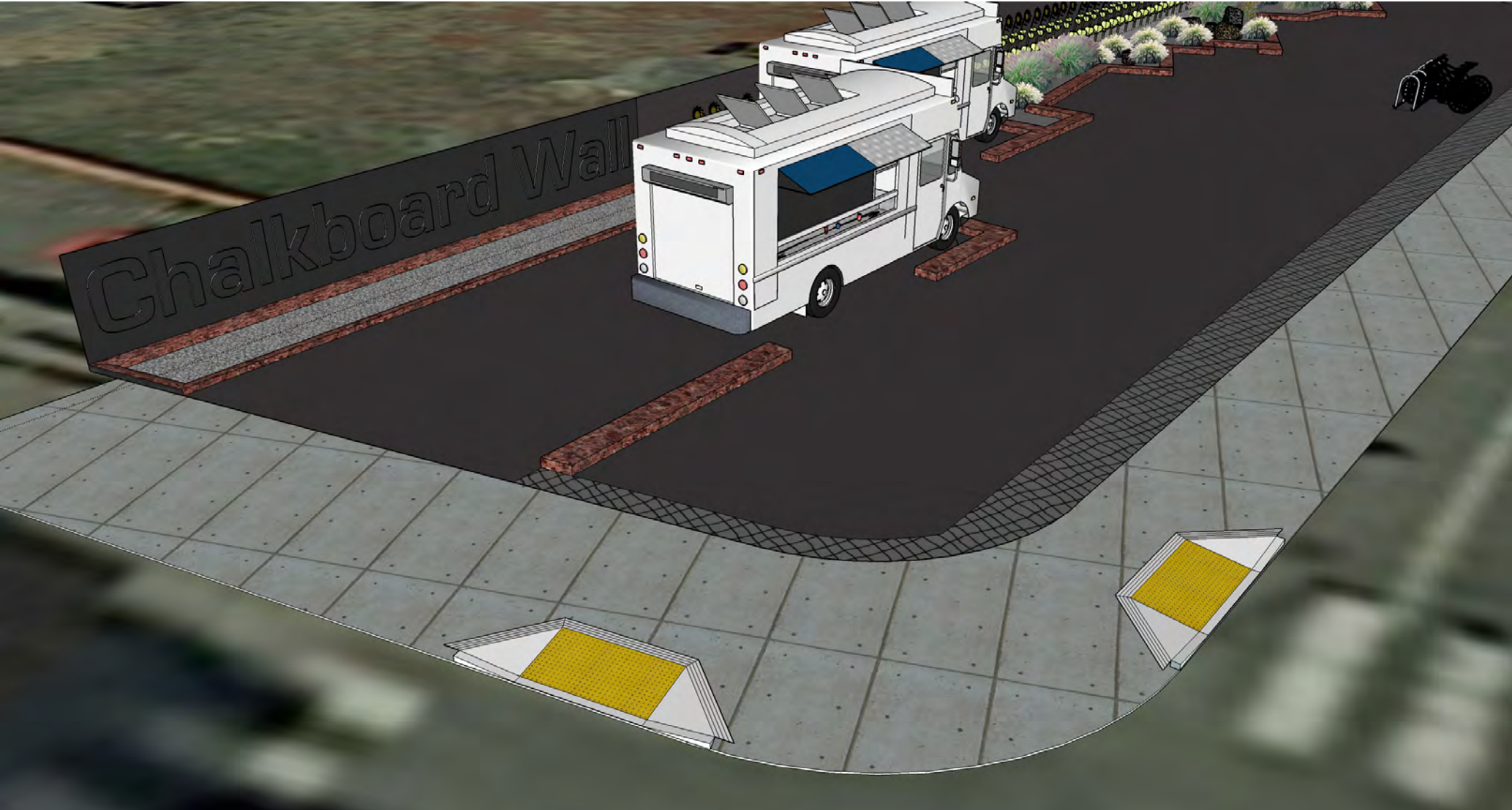
- Large planters with colorful plantings and/or trees
- Hubway Station
- Individual and group seating options (tables, comfortable chairs, stand-up tables)
- Artwork along the back wall
- Artwork on the hardscape (if asphalt)
- Electricity service
- String light system
- BigBelly trash and recycling compactor

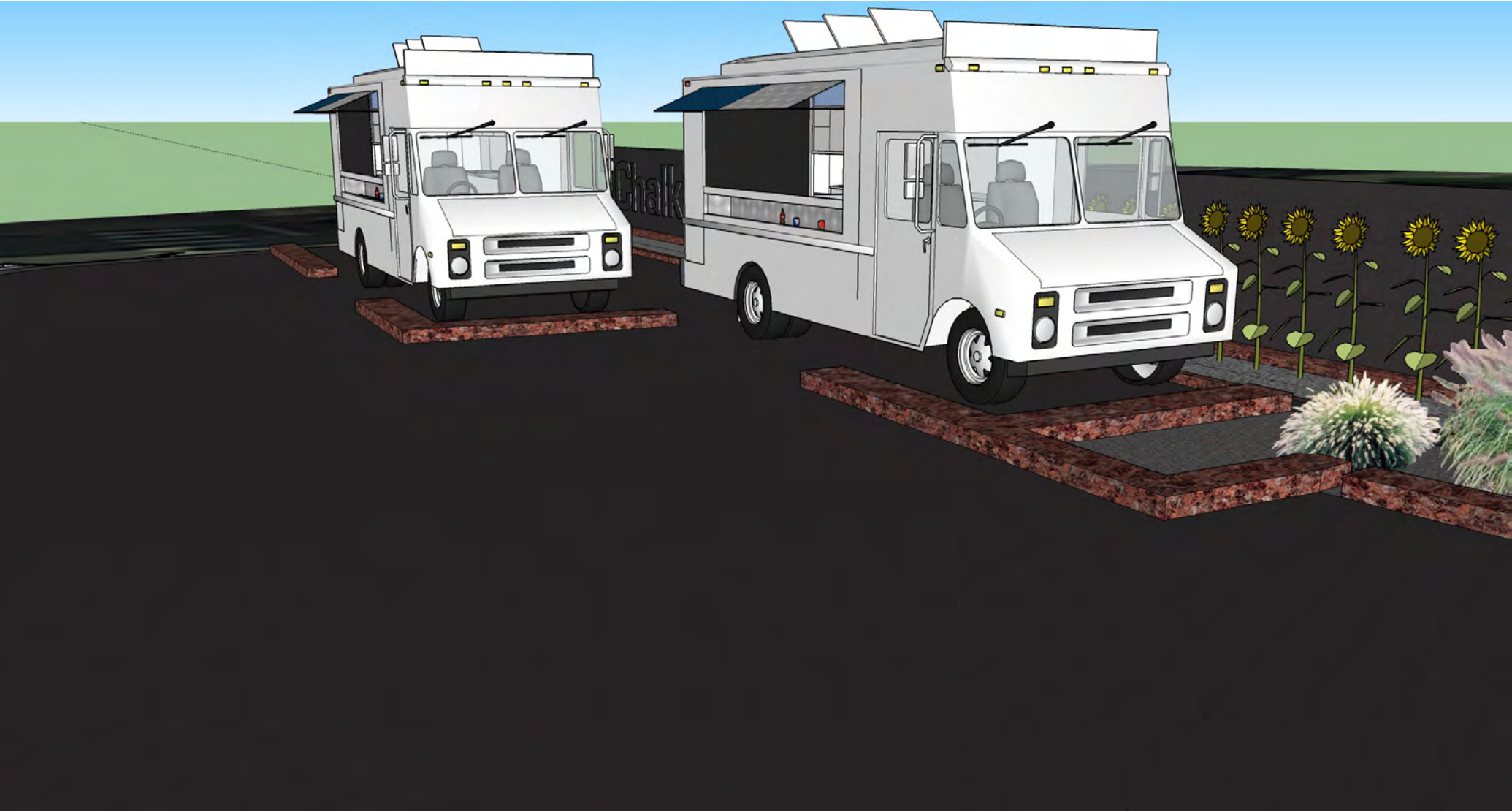
Discussions with Newport Construction are ongoing and an estimated schedule will be provided at the CRA Board meeting.

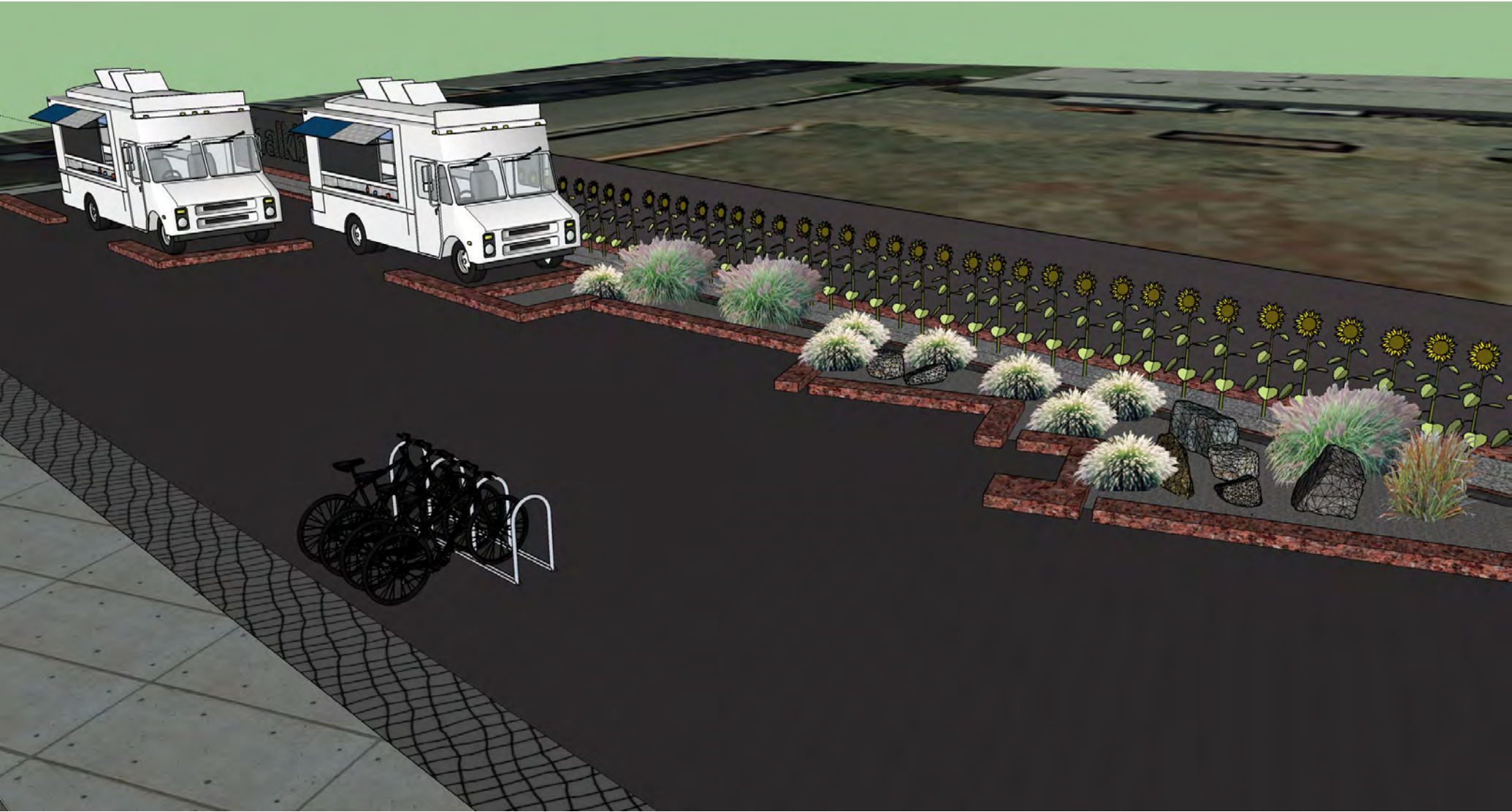
Version A

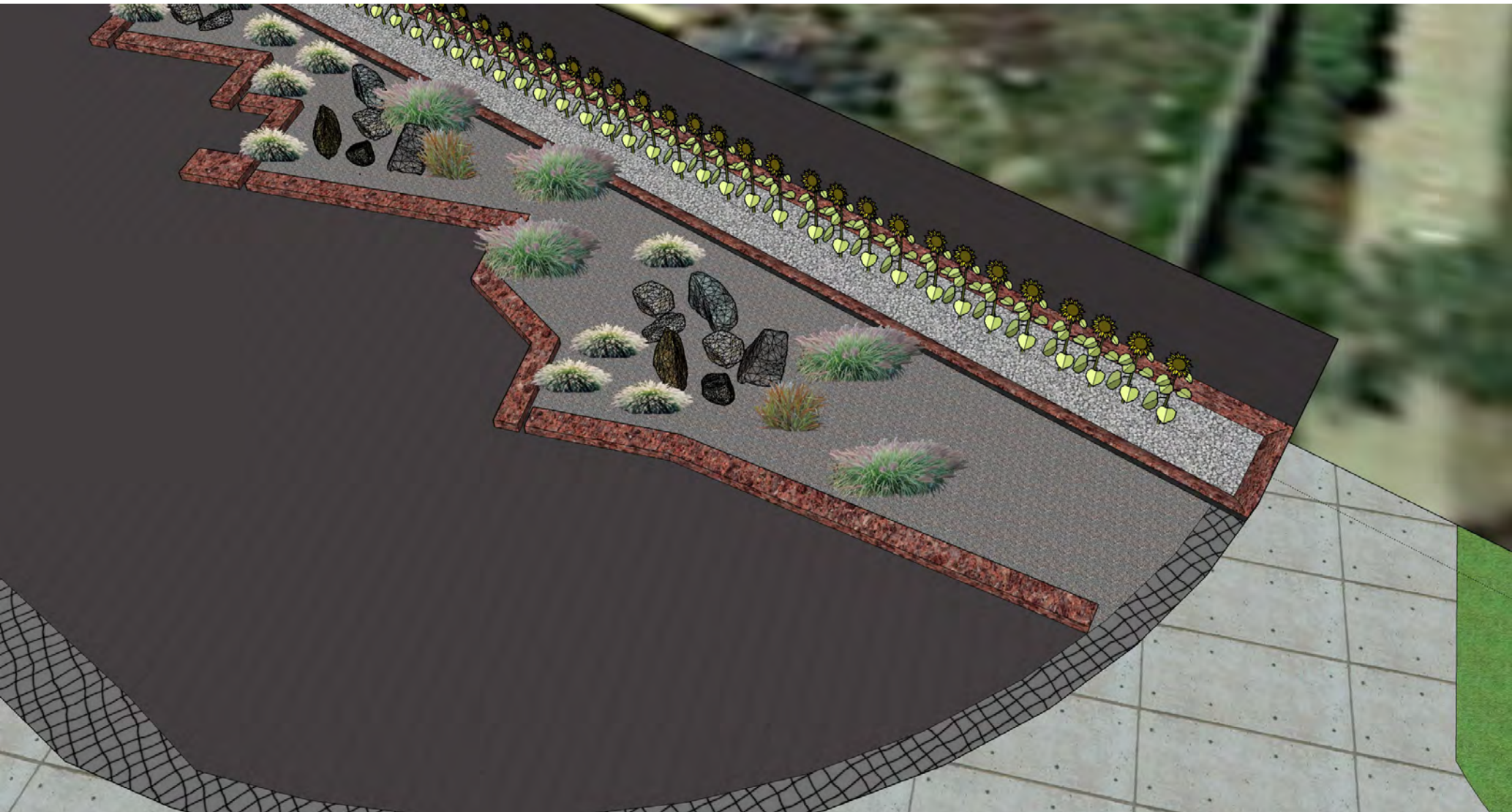
This version shows just hardscape and minimal landscaping improvements. Hardscape could be either asphalt or compacted stone dust. Red granite already owned by the CRA would be used on its side to line the edges of the space and delineate food truck parking. Small stone fill would be used in the garden area at the back of the site. Sunflowers could add color and verticality along the fence. Tall grasses add movement and visual interest in the garden area.

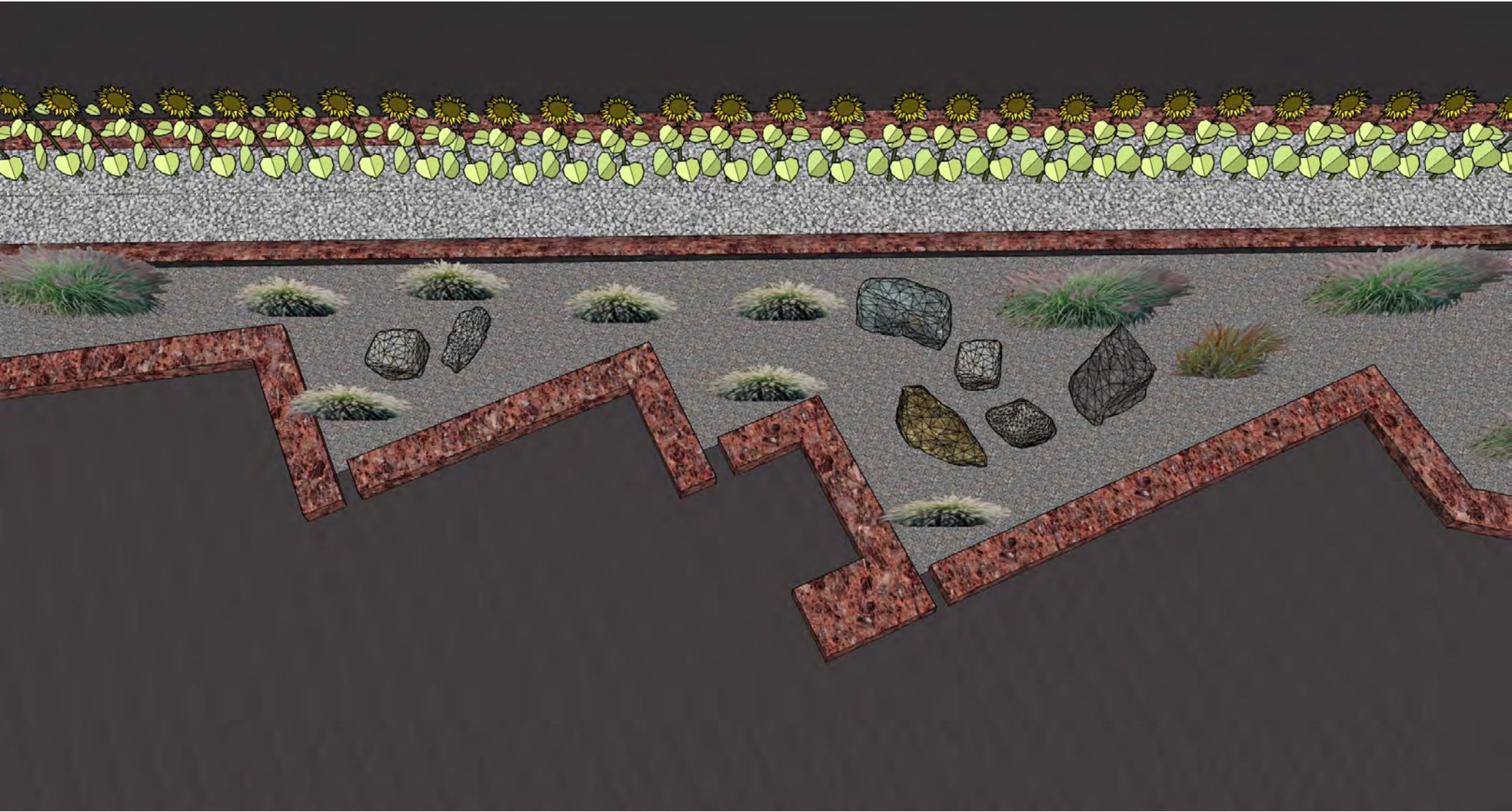












Version B

This version adds: individual and group seating, stand up tables, planters, trees, Hubway Station, KSA Library, umbrellas, and waste bins. Umbrellas could be changed out for trees in large planters to provide shade.



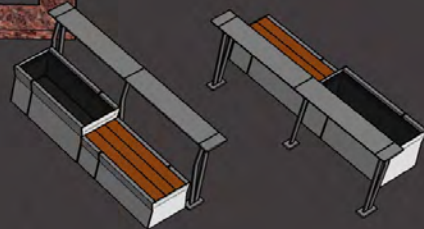




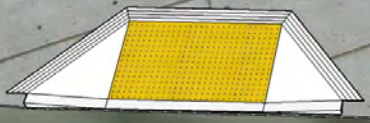
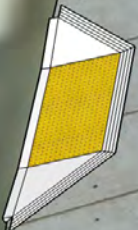




Chalkboard Wall



3rd & binney



Version C

This version adds: artwork on the back fence, artwork on the pavement hardscape, and string lights. Note - all of these are abstract representations only, and are not intended to be exact designs for artwork or string lights.



