

“FOSTERING TOURISM THROUGH AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE”

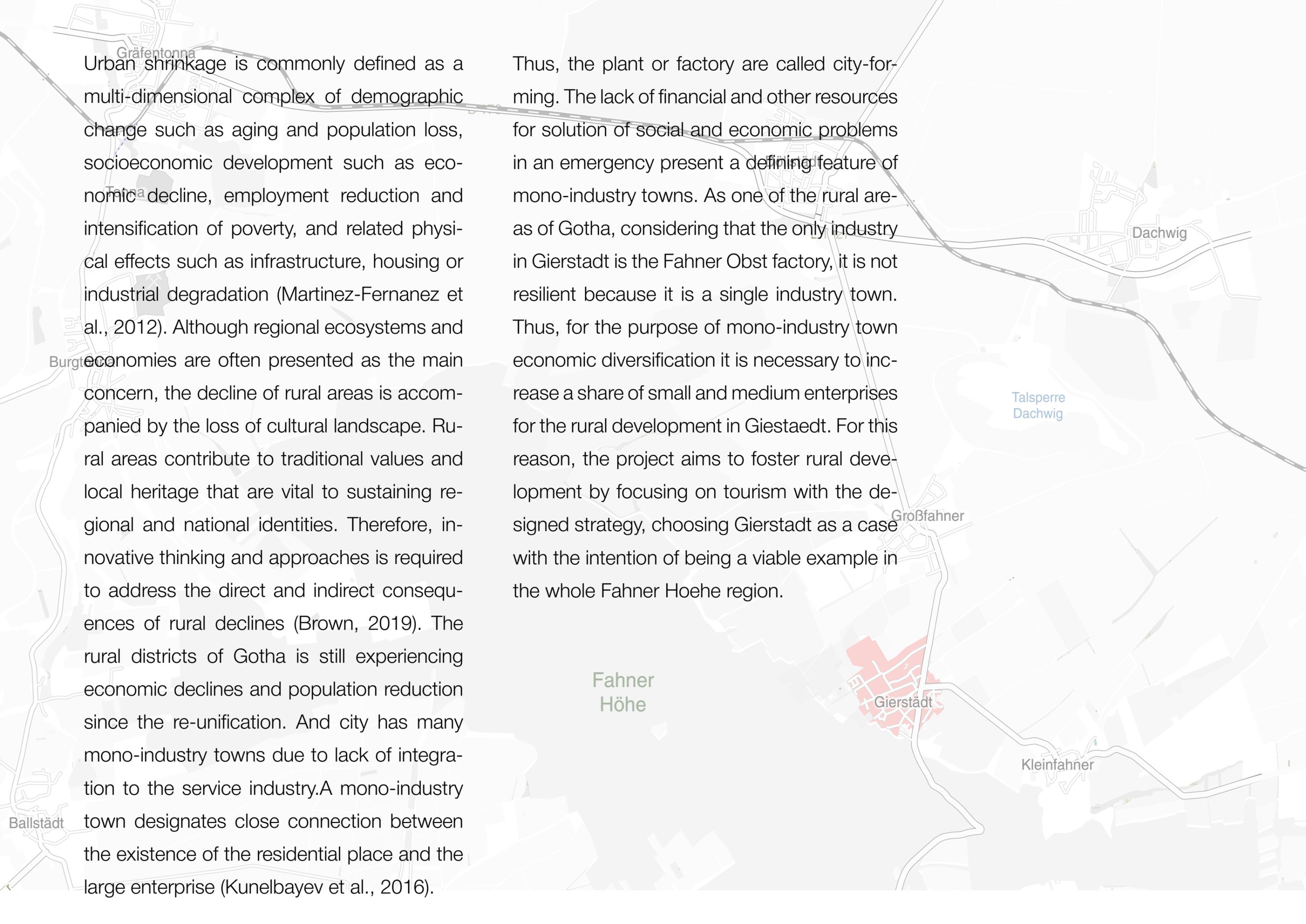
BAUHAUS UNIVERSITY-WEIMAR

New Urban Approaches for a smarter and healthier
Thuringia SoSe2021

INDEX

1. Introduction
2. Understanding the Site
3. Strategy and Vision
4. Proposal
5. Bibliography

1. Introduction

A map of the Fahner Höhe region in Gotha, Germany. The map shows several villages: Gräfentonna, Triesa, Burgteich, Ballstädt, Gierstädt, Großfahner, Kleinfahner, and Dachwig. A red shaded area highlights Gierstädt. A blue shaded area labeled 'Talsperre Dachwig' is also visible. The text on the left side of the image discusses urban shrinkage and mono-industry towns, with a specific reference to Gierstadt and the Fahner Obst factory.

Urban shrinkage is commonly defined as a multi-dimensional complex of demographic change such as aging and population loss, socioeconomic development such as economic decline, employment reduction and intensification of poverty, and related physical effects such as infrastructure, housing or industrial degradation (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012). Although regional ecosystems and economies are often presented as the main concern, the decline of rural areas is accompanied by the loss of cultural landscape. Rural areas contribute to traditional values and local heritage that are vital to sustaining regional and national identities. Therefore, innovative thinking and approaches is required to address the direct and indirect consequences of rural declines (Brown, 2019). The rural districts of Gotha is still experiencing economic declines and population reduction since the re-unification. And city has many mono-industry towns due to lack of integration to the service industry. A mono-industry town designates close connection between the existence of the residential place and the large enterprise (Kunelbayev et al., 2016).

Thus, the plant or factory are called city-forming. The lack of financial and other resources for solution of social and economic problems in an emergency present a defining feature of mono-industry towns. As one of the rural areas of Gotha, considering that the only industry in Gierstadt is the Fahner Obst factory, it is not resilient because it is a single industry town. Thus, for the purpose of mono-industry town economic diversification it is necessary to increase a share of small and medium enterprises for the rural development in Gierstadt. For this reason, the project aims to foster rural development by focusing on tourism with the designed strategy, choosing Gierstadt as a case with the intention of being a viable example in the whole Fahner Höhe region.

2. Understanding the Site

LAND USE IN GIERSTÄDT

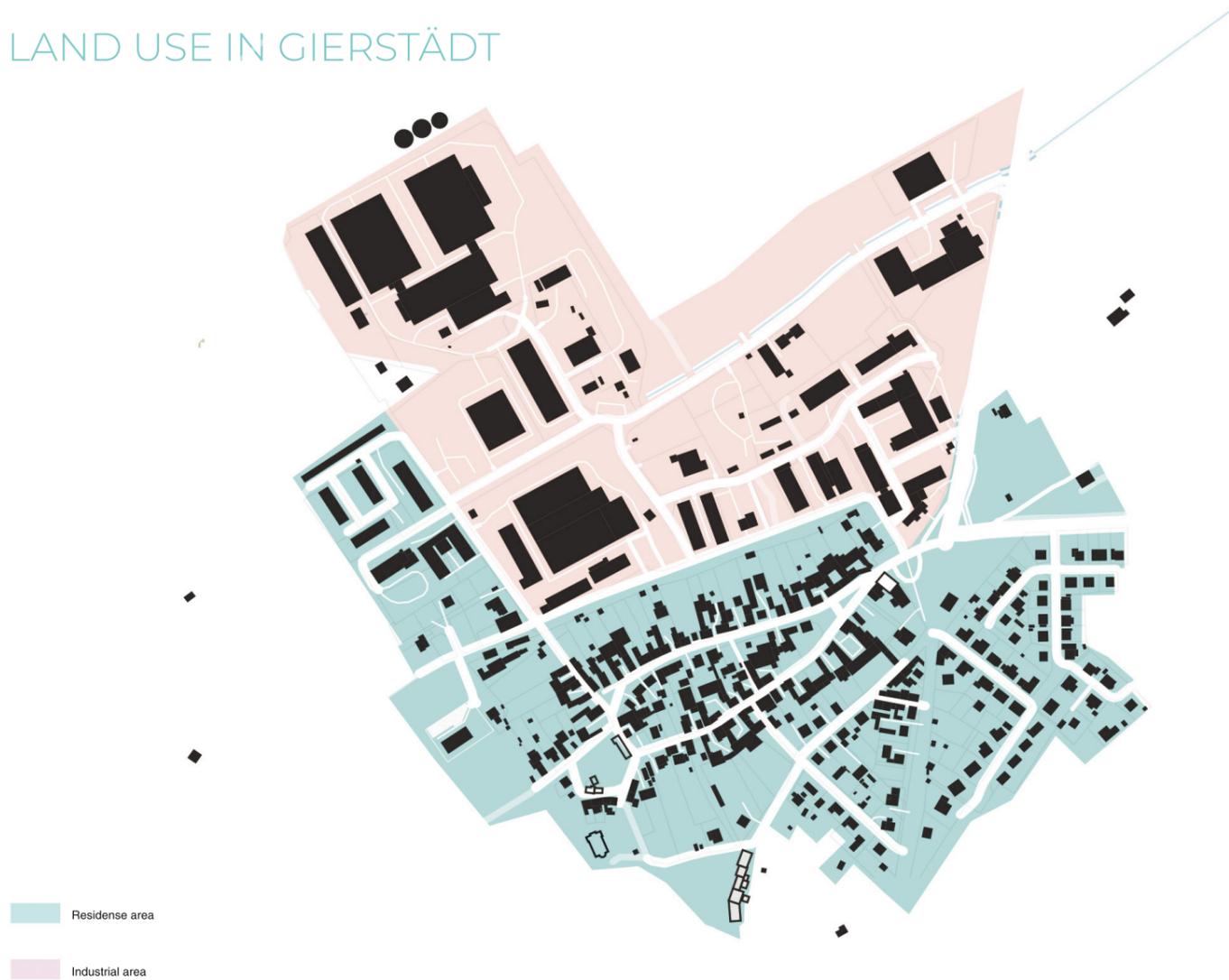


Fig 1. Land Use Map

Land Use:

The land use map shows that there is a sharp separation between the industrial and residential area in the city of Gierstätt, and the city is functionally divided into two differently characterised urban space. This separation due to usage weakened the connection between the two parts of the city. Thus, this land use mapping contributed to the project in identifying strategic locations for the integration of the two functional areas.



Fig 2. Mapping the Green Areas

Green Areas:

In order to create touristic attractions in a place, the diversity of public uses and the existence of green spaces that provide space for these uses are very important. When we look at the green space analysis, we observe that just as the city is divided into industrial and residential functions, the publicity of the use of green space is the same. As a result of the analysis, we determined that there are very few green areas open to public use, and that there are few open meeting points for both tourists and city residents. This mapping gives us information about which green areas we can expand and which areas we can open to public use more easily.



Fig 3. Plot Typology Map

Plot Typology:

During our site trip, we noticed that the plot types of the houses in the residential area differ from each other. Different plot types were clustered at specific points. This map shows the way the houses are positioned on the main street for the garden. In Gierstaedt's example, these uses appear as one-side use, dispersed use and edge use. These plot typologies shed light on the implementation of the 'farm-stays' concept during the design phase. Since one-side usage offers a larger garden area and interacts more with the adjacent street, it is more convenient to apply the farm stay concept for touristic purposes. Plot types that will support this application are marked in this mapping and affect the location selection decision at the design phase.



Fig 5. Garden Typology Map

Garden Typology:

The way the gardens are positioned on the street has been analyzed to be interpreted in line with the same logic with the plot typology. Typologies with direct links to the street were used in accordance with the concepts developed during the design, in order to increase the integration to the events that will take place in public spaces. Garden typologies with high potential for public relations have been determined for temporary use within soft programs. As we can see on the map, the garden typology located at the intersection of the industrial zone and the residential area is the most suitable areas to be combined with the street. And this interaction level is also important in determining the application location of the project.

3. Strategy and Visions

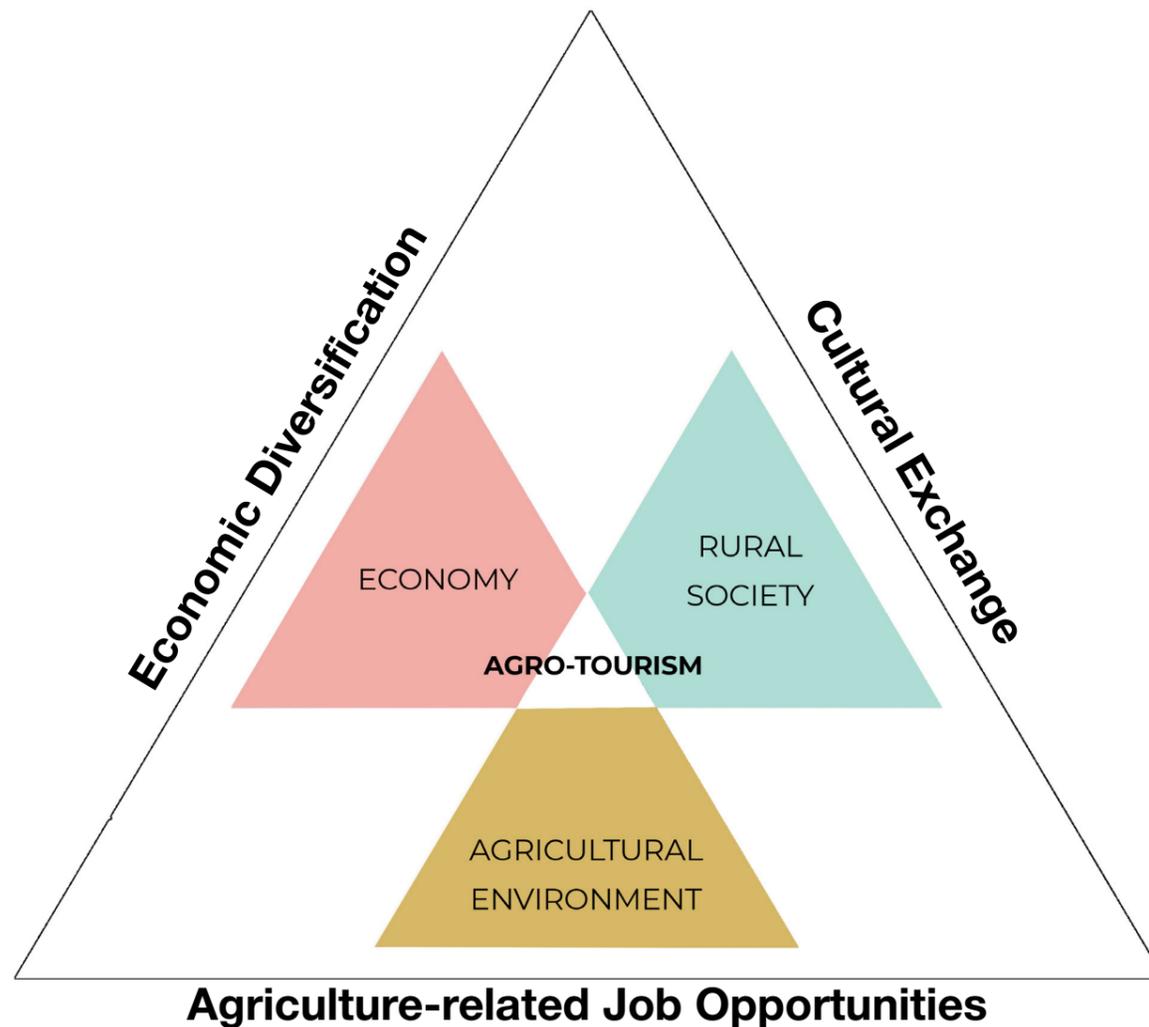


Fig 5. Conceptual Diagram

Concept:

The main idea of the project is to ensure the development of the economy, rural society and agricultural environment by using the agricultural experience. Our first purpose is to improve livelihoods of the people across the city by developing integrated tourism infrastructure, increasing tourism activities and products, generating employment in the rural town enhancing inclusiveness of the deprived community and spreading the benefits of tourism to the grassroots level. The project benefits from agricultural experience to achieve economic development by creating economic diversity; foster agricultural development by creating new job opportunities in the sector and support rural societal development through cultural and economic exchange.

Concept:

The alternative tourism approaches including agricultural experience are closely related with rural economy and thereby rural development. We aimed for Gierstaedt that an alternative tourism creates a new economic opportunity in rural area by using agricultural experience and it leads to the relationship between socioeconomic development and tourism.

It is a hybrid concept that merges elements of two complex industries-agriculture and travel/tourism-to open up new profitable markets for farm products and services and provide travel experiences for a large regional market.

We had a vision of making these two sectors are interrelated or interlinked with good unified integrity, the city can make tremendous economic progress in a sustainable way and diversify its economy. And the allocation of economic and social benefits to the farming community for rural society development.



RURAL SOCIETY

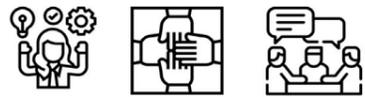


AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT



ECONOMY

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT



Creating interaction Places
Cultural Exchange
Upskilling Local People



Public Food Production
Boosting Agricultural
Development



Economic Diversification
Creating Job Opportunities

ACTIONS

Creating Community Bazaar
Street as place of interaction
New Open/Closed Public Places

Urban Gardening
Public Fruit Trees
Cultivation in the Pension
gardens for touristic experi-
ence

Home Pension Culture
Creating Public Market and
Community Center
Small local gastronomy shops
Festivals & Events

We have created an action list to realize our strategic development plan, which consists of 3 main pillars. First of all, it is aimed to create interaction spaces, support cultural exchange and increase the skills of local people in providing rural social development. To achieve this, practices such as the community market, increasing public use of streets and creating new public spaces were designed. For the development of the agricultural environment, we have determined the action plan to support local production, increase urban production, support urban gardening, production in private ownership and present it as a tourist attraction. And for economic development, we aimed to diversify the economy by offering farm-stays, public markets and local gastronomy shops.

HARD PROGRAMS



Playground

Playgrounds and Game areas for children.



Pensions

Hospitality Services through the sharing room in residential area.



Market

Temporary and permanent shops along the street and Warehouse.



Garden & Planting

Installation of urban gardens and trees for public food.



Cafe & Restaurants

Creating spaces for cafe and restaurants.

SOFT PROGRAMS



Festivals

-Weekly street festival by blocking the car traffic on sundays
-Weekly food market at the Warehouse



Educational Experience

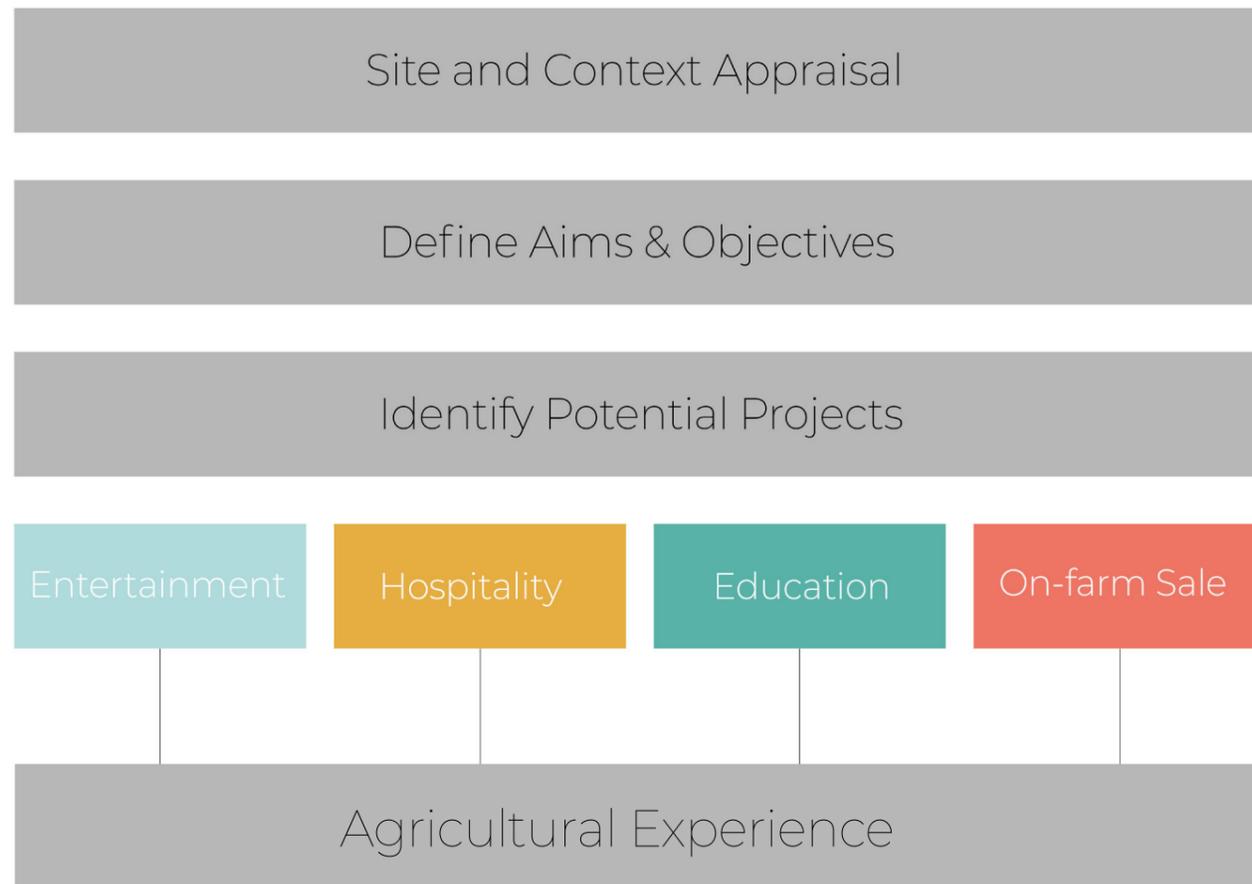
-Agricultural education for children and adults
-Learning urban gardening



Food Market Organization

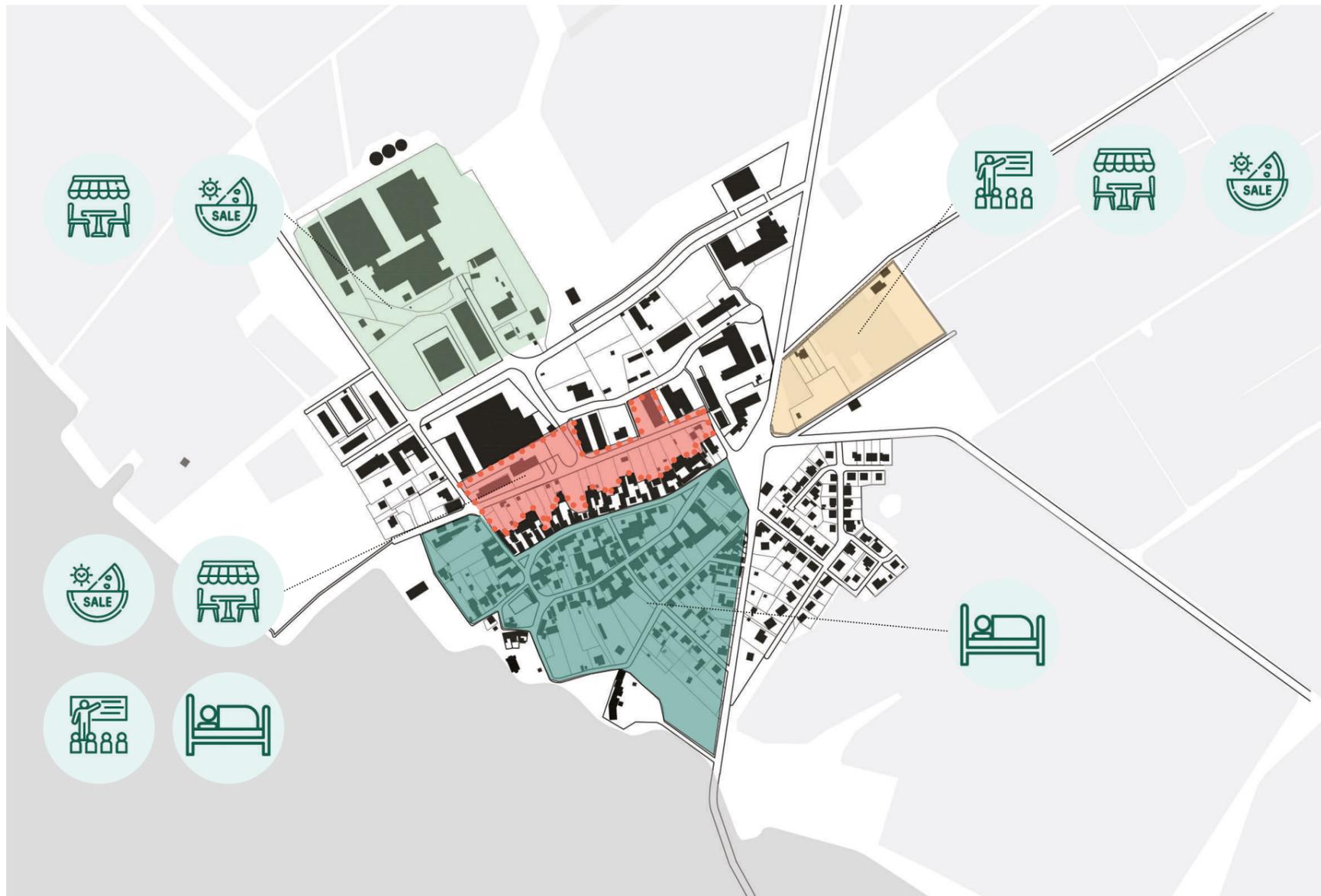
-Integrating overnight stayers into food market activity.
-Weekly food market at the Warehouse.

Our action plan is divided into two categories as hard and soft programs. While hard programs refer to more concrete urban interventions; soft programs mostly refer to intangible planning such as festivals and events. Due to the perceived lack of infrastructure and public spaces in the city within the framework of hard programs, the production of these spaces was focused. These include elements such as playground, public market, upgrading infrastructure for festival area, community center, urban gardens, cafes and restaurant facilities, such as the environment supporting them. Soft programs, on the other hand, focus on presenting festivals and events to increase the diversity of urban activities. It also consists of programs that integrate tourists into agricultural education experiences and weekly food market events.



The weaknesses and potentials we reached as a result of the field analysis made it possible for us to determine our objectives regarding the project, and by focusing on the potential use of Gierstaedt, we decided that agriculture activities were the most attainable result in creating a tourist attraction and diversifying the city's economy. In our project, which aims to increase tourism activities by creating agricultural experience, we have determined 4 main areas to apply this experience; entertainment; hospitality; education and on-farm Sale.

4. Proposal



We have determined four zones according to the land use of the city and the prominent character of each location. We decided to implement our project concepts that will be compatible with each zone with its location and resources.

Yellow Zone:

The area where Green Class, which is already used as a training facility, is located, is suitable for education and on-farm sale concept due to its proximity to the fields and its educational role. In addition to its educational role, we aimed to present the entertainment activity in this region and offer parent-child activities together to families visiting the city for agricultural tourism.

Light Green Zone:

This industrial zone is the center of fruit production, packaging and distribution. There was already a point within the facility where residents could purchase products directly, but the location was very low in visibility and use. By combining this point of sale with the cafeteria function, it was aimed to change the solid industrial character in a small city. As the industrial zone becomes more attractive and access increases, residences and visitors will be able to witness the production mode of agricultural activities and establish a closer relationship with this industry, which is the center of the city.

Red Zone:

The red zone, which is the border between the industrial area and the residential area, is of great importance for the project. This street, which creates this strict separation, has the potential to functionally connect these two areas, which are socially and physically disconnected from each other. Therefore, it is planned to realize the spatial and conceptual manifestations of the 4 concepts determined by the project in this area. While this region offers entertainment opportunities to break the monotony in the city center, it also has a commercial character and supports farm product sale and accommodation activities.

Green Zone:

In this area, which mostly consists of residential buildings, the applications are kept to a minimal scale in order not to disturb the daily life of the city residents. Due to the accommodation character in this region, the applicability of the touristic farmstays concept is possible.



Education (Yellow Zone):

The educational activities offered on farms range from half day classes or short-term workshops to full-scale, accredited courses of study. Farm schools accommodate interns or apprentices, and charge tuition for the learning opportunity. Some farms offer classes in cooking, arranging flowers, or making herbal medicines.

In addition to educational activities, there are cafes where they can try the products and drink beverages, and points where they can buy products directly from the farm for parents who want to accompany their children or visitors who just want to feel this atmosphere.



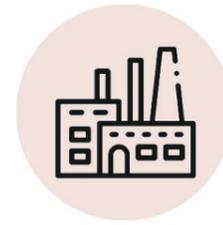
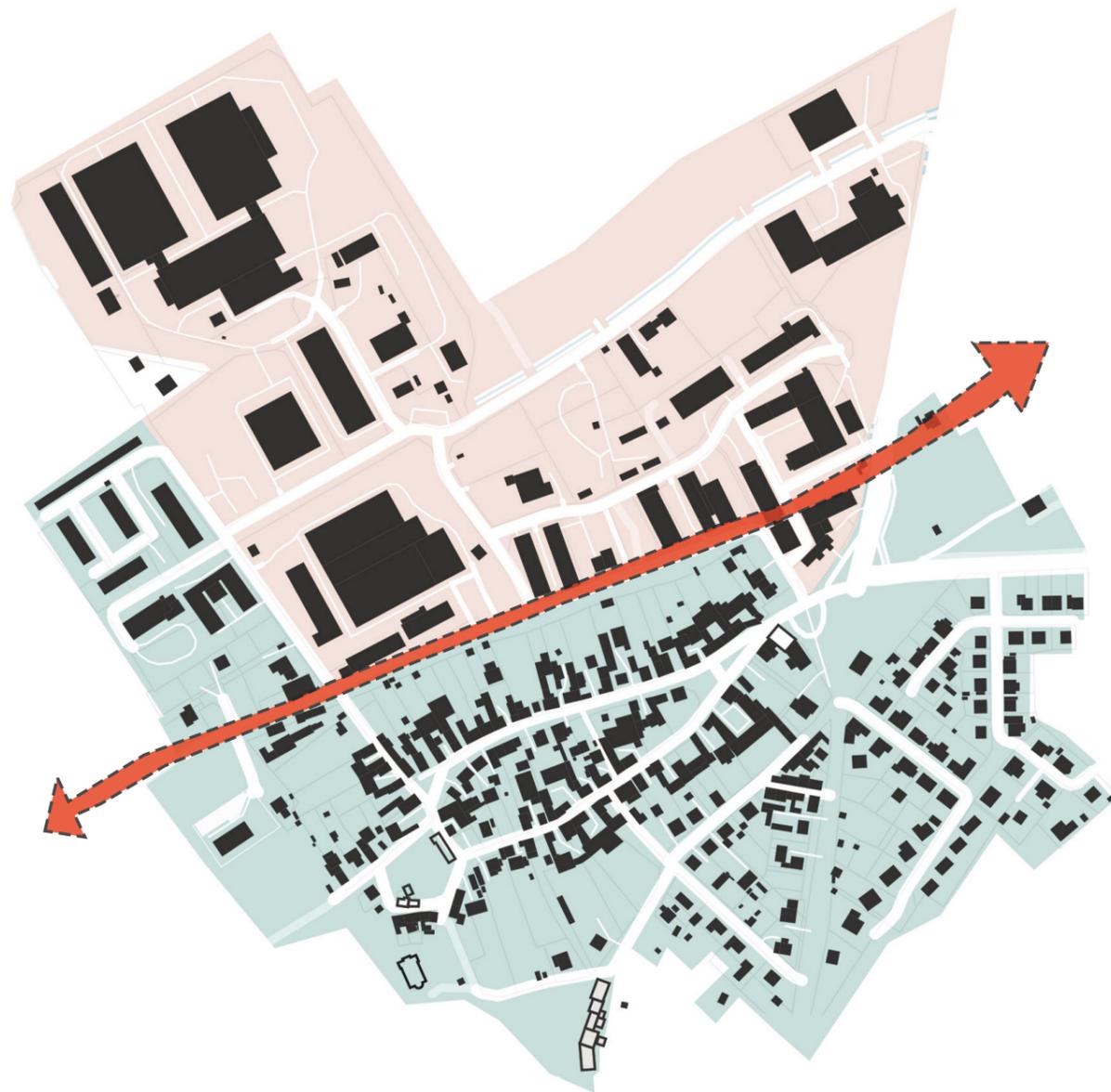
Pension Culture (Red Zone/Green Zone):

The primary direct target beneficiaries are the poor farmers, unemployed youths and women mainly engaged in small scale agriculture activities. In the present context, only few people who are directly engaged in hotel and restaurant business and tour guides are mainly grasping the benefits from the tourism sector. With the implementation of the agro-tourism programs the farmers and marginalized people residing in the periphery of the trekking routes will be benefited mostly. By offering a suitable room of their house to tourists as accommodation, they will both earn an economic income and experience a cultural exchange environment.



On-Farm Direct Sale:

In this concept, it is aimed to create a physical environment where the producer and the consumer come together directly. The products collected from the orchards can be purchased directly at the sales points established in the industrial area or directly at the points in the farm area. Thus, while the isolated character of the industrial area becomes more integrated into the city, the fact that the consumer can directly see what he/she consumes and access the fresh products supports the agricultural experience. These units, which are placed in the industrial area and around the fields, keep the interaction high and ensure the continuity of commercial mobility.



As we mentioned earlier in the land use map, the city is sharply divided into two according to its functions in use. In the next stage, we chose the location where it is most possible to break this division in order to choose our pilot project implementation area. The street indicated by the red arrow creates a distinction between two areas. The street is one of the widest streets in the city and has the most important supermarket on which the residents go for shopping. For this reason, this street, which is used very little despite its frequent potential, is the main application area of our proposal, as we have shown by red in our zoning plan.



Apart from being a shopping route for the city residents, this street also provides transportation to the industrial area as an alternative to other roads, although the mobility is low. In addition, another potential of the area is that the garden typologies of the houses on the street facing the industrial area are located on the road side. This will help in the planning of activities that will ensure the integration of the green area with the street functions. In addition, during the use of private property for tourism purposes, the high relationship with the tourism activities created on the street makes this place an attraction. Therefore, the red zone was chosen as an example in terms of the applicability of the 4 concepts we determined and it was desired to show what kind of design could be applied through this street.



Although industrial traffic is not very heavy, it is necessary to determine the existing functional routes in order to show an alternative traffic plan. Apart from the private car use of this street, the other two uses are transportation to the industrial area and transportation to the post office and market on the street.

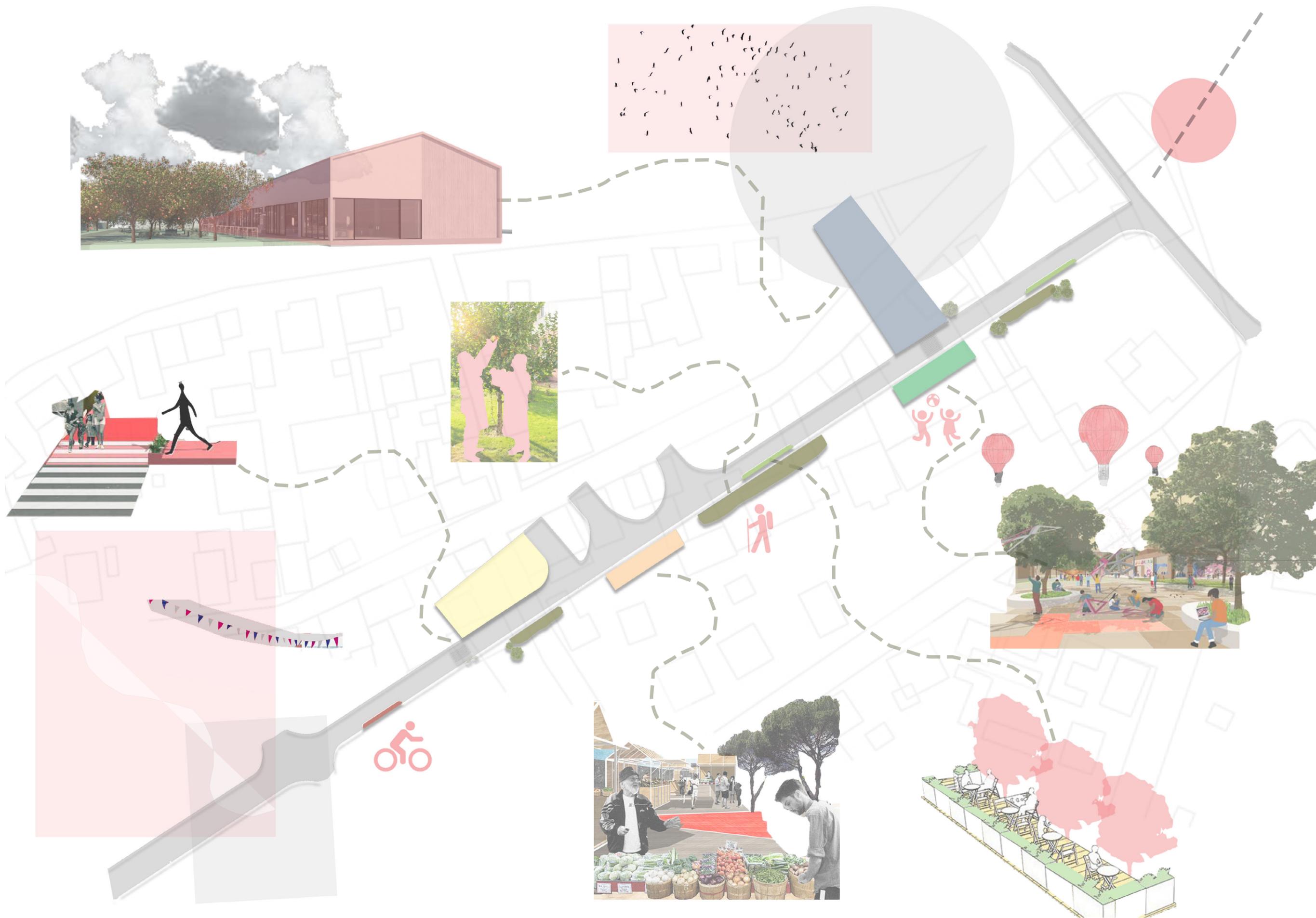
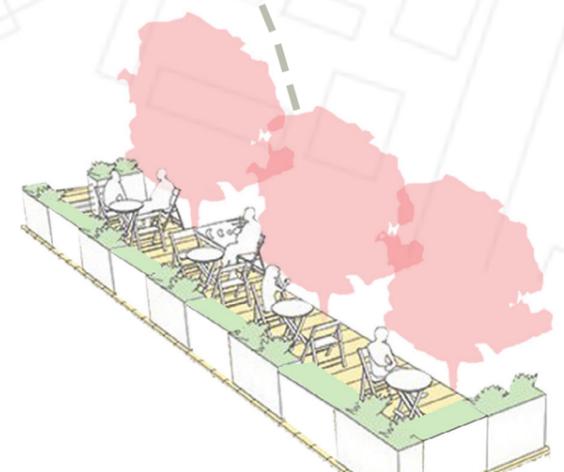
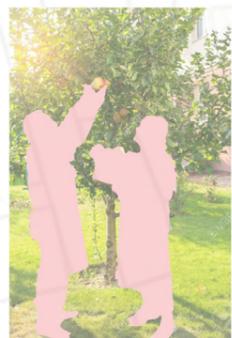


As an alternative to the existing traffic routes shown in red, an broadening is planned for the road shown in green. This arrangement will be useful to make space for soft programs such as the festival that will be held on this street that connects the industrial and residential area. Pedestrianization of the street will be in the form of placing a food market on Sundays, excluding working days. Although there is no industrial flow on Sunday, it is important to widen the road marked with green in order to offer an alternative to this street.





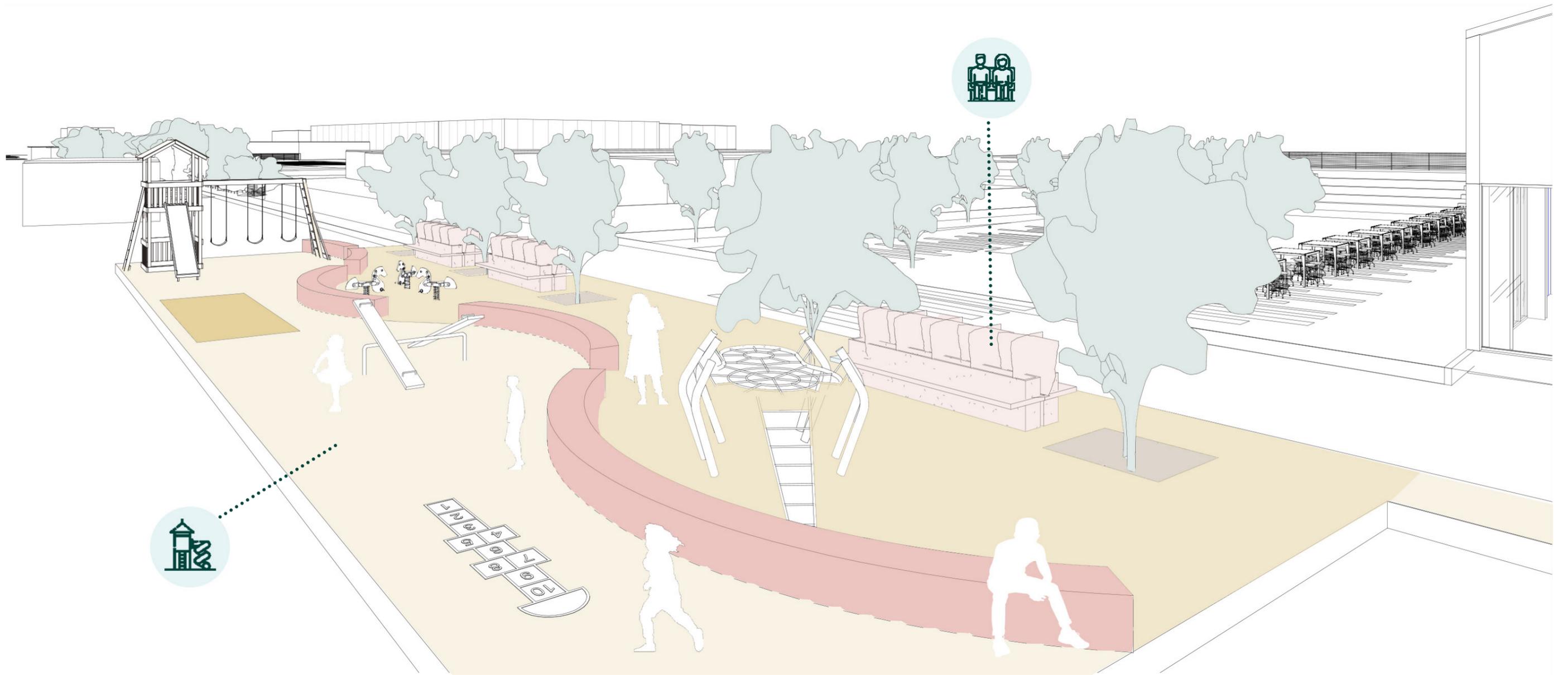
Five different usage areas have been determined along the street. The first and most important of these is the transformation of an un-used industrial structure into a public food market area and community center. The second important application is to place a playground in the green area. Later, it is planned to locate public resting points, pick-up food/coffee kiosks and a platform for those who want to shop, eat and relax at the market to sit and spend time.

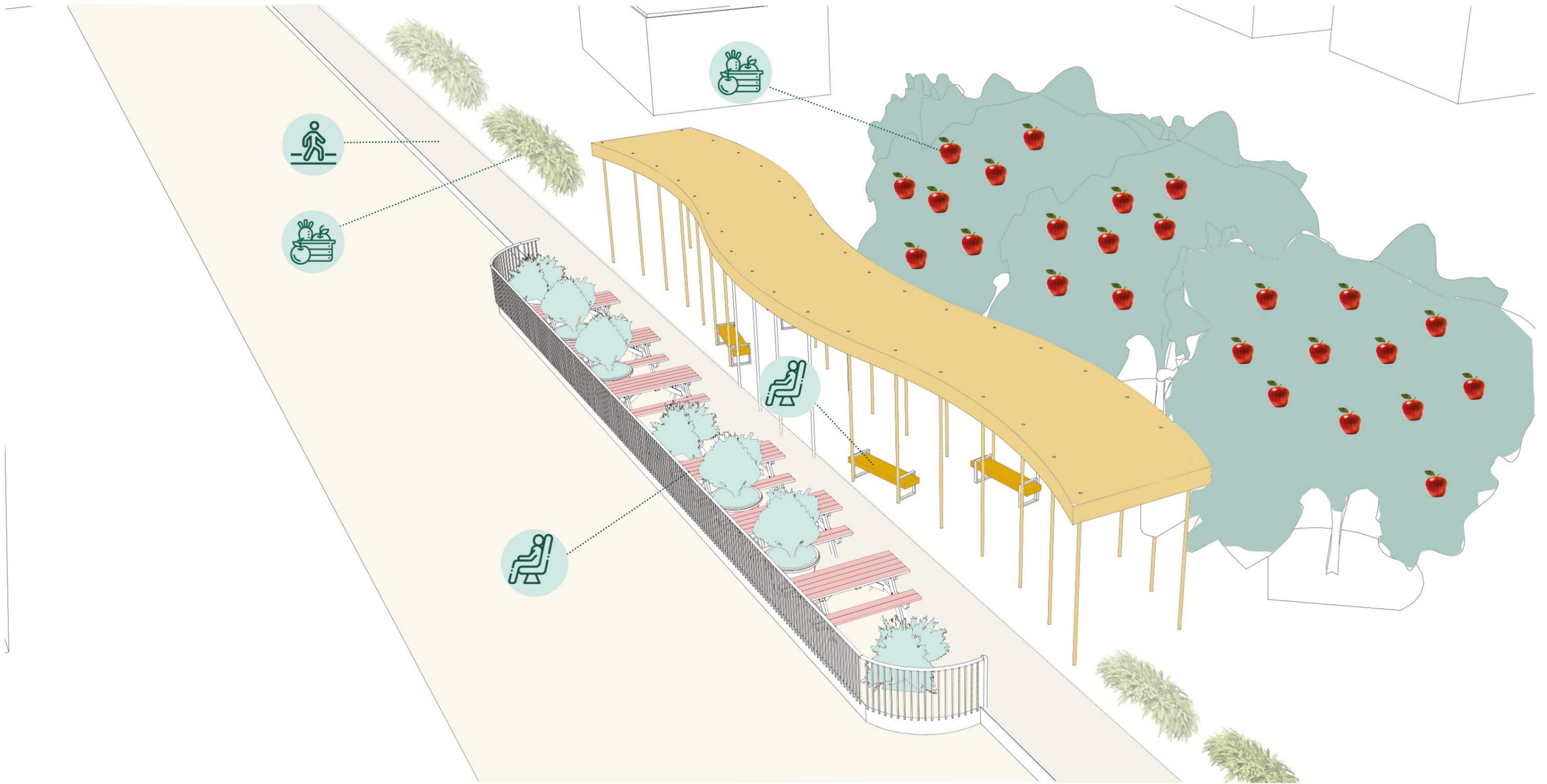


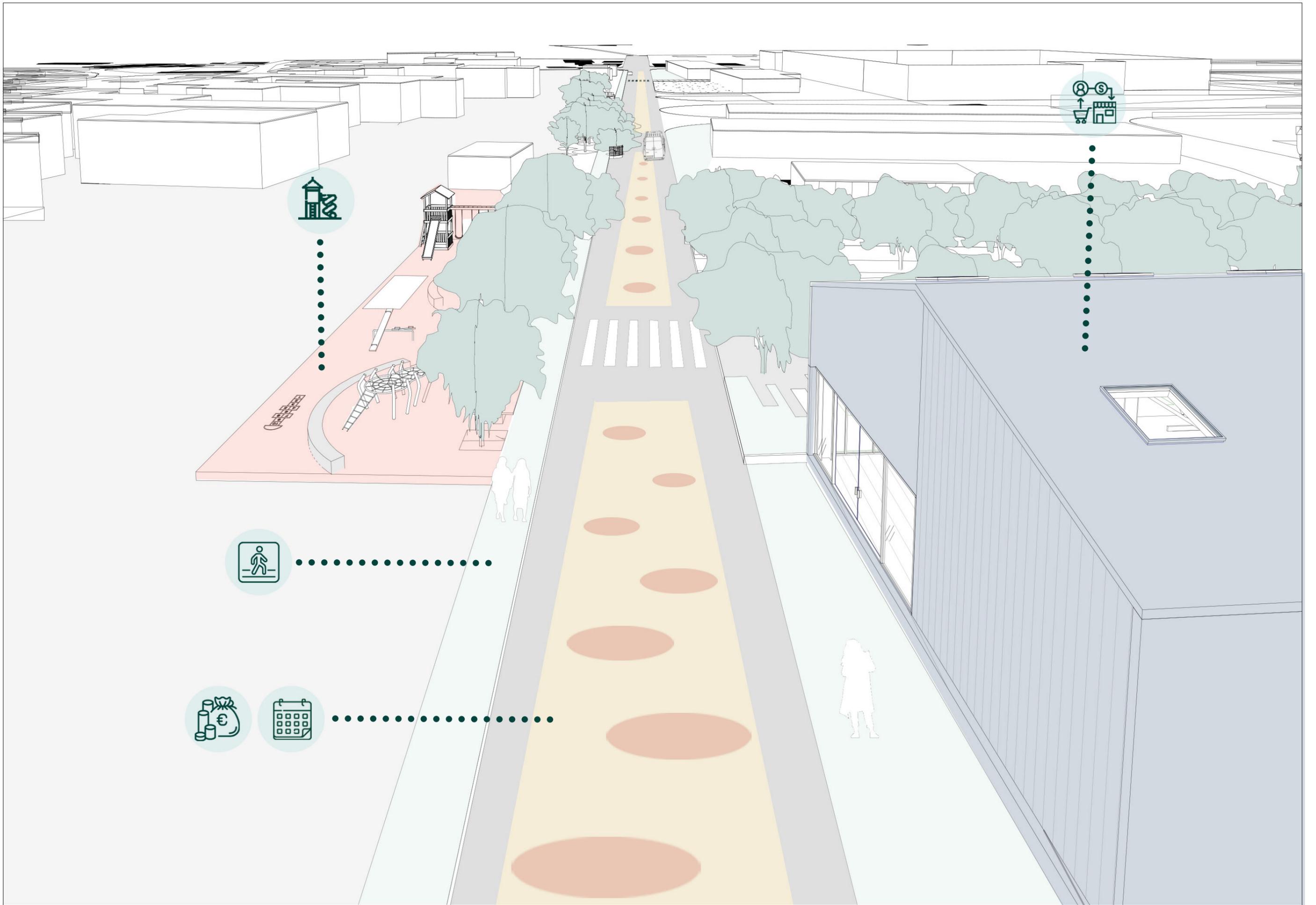


If we take a closer look at the design we made for the street, we see this street view, where the building, which was not used at first, was converted into a public market and a playground was located across it.

Warehouse has been transformed into a public market, and it has become an area where local producers can sell first-hand, where tourists will come to sell the products they harvested for agricultural tourism, and where industrial producers can sell. While the designed garden provides a flexible usage area, it not only provides the community area that is lacking in the city, but also becomes a cultural and commercial exchange center. The proposed playground will gain more functions especially on Sundays when the street is turned into a food and cultural festival. In addition, the resting areas placed along the road create a social interaction point both during the festival and outside.







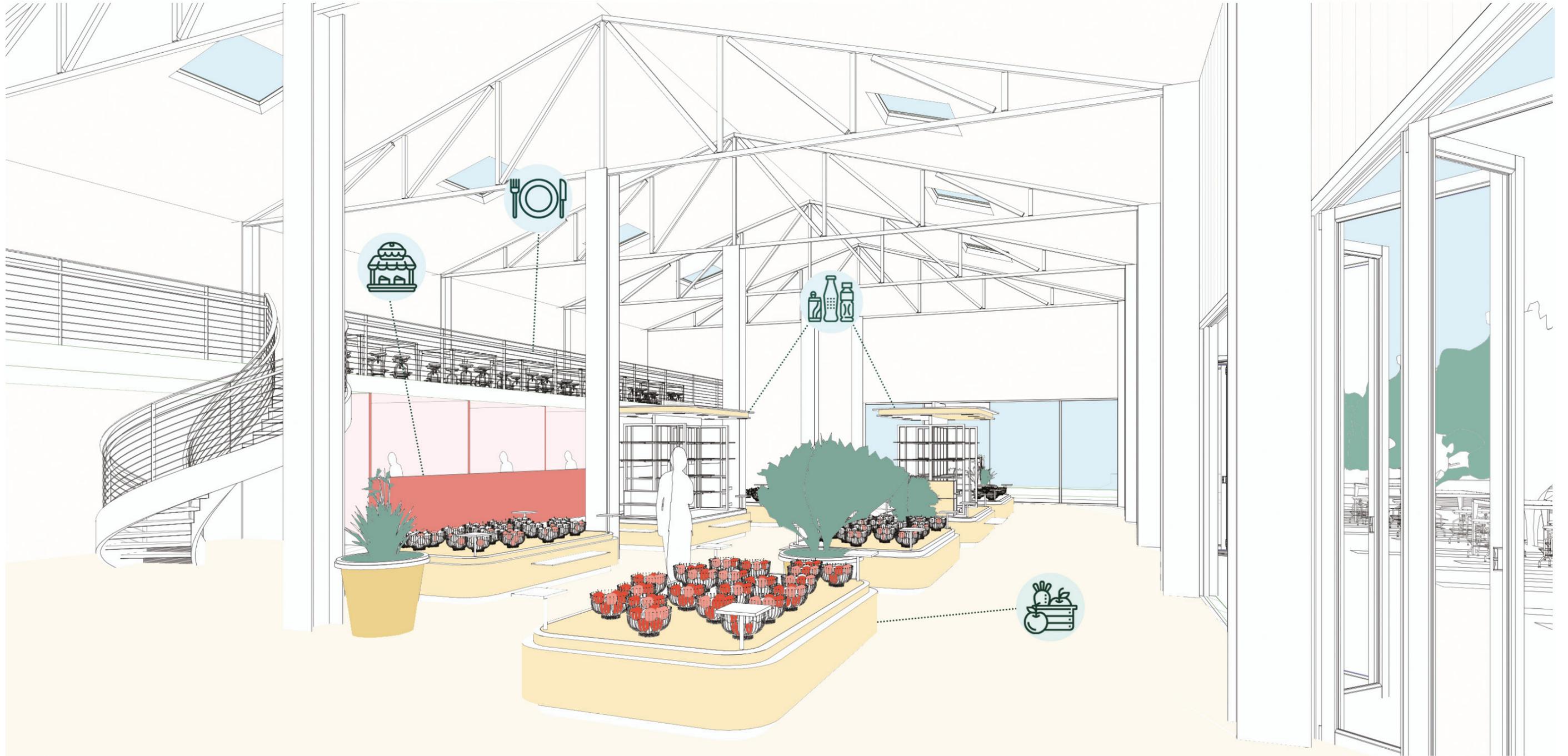
Warehouse:

Warehouse is planned as a flexible functional structure as a community center, a food market and an event space. For this reason, it can be re-adjusted according to the desired situation with small touches and flexible furniture system without much physical application.

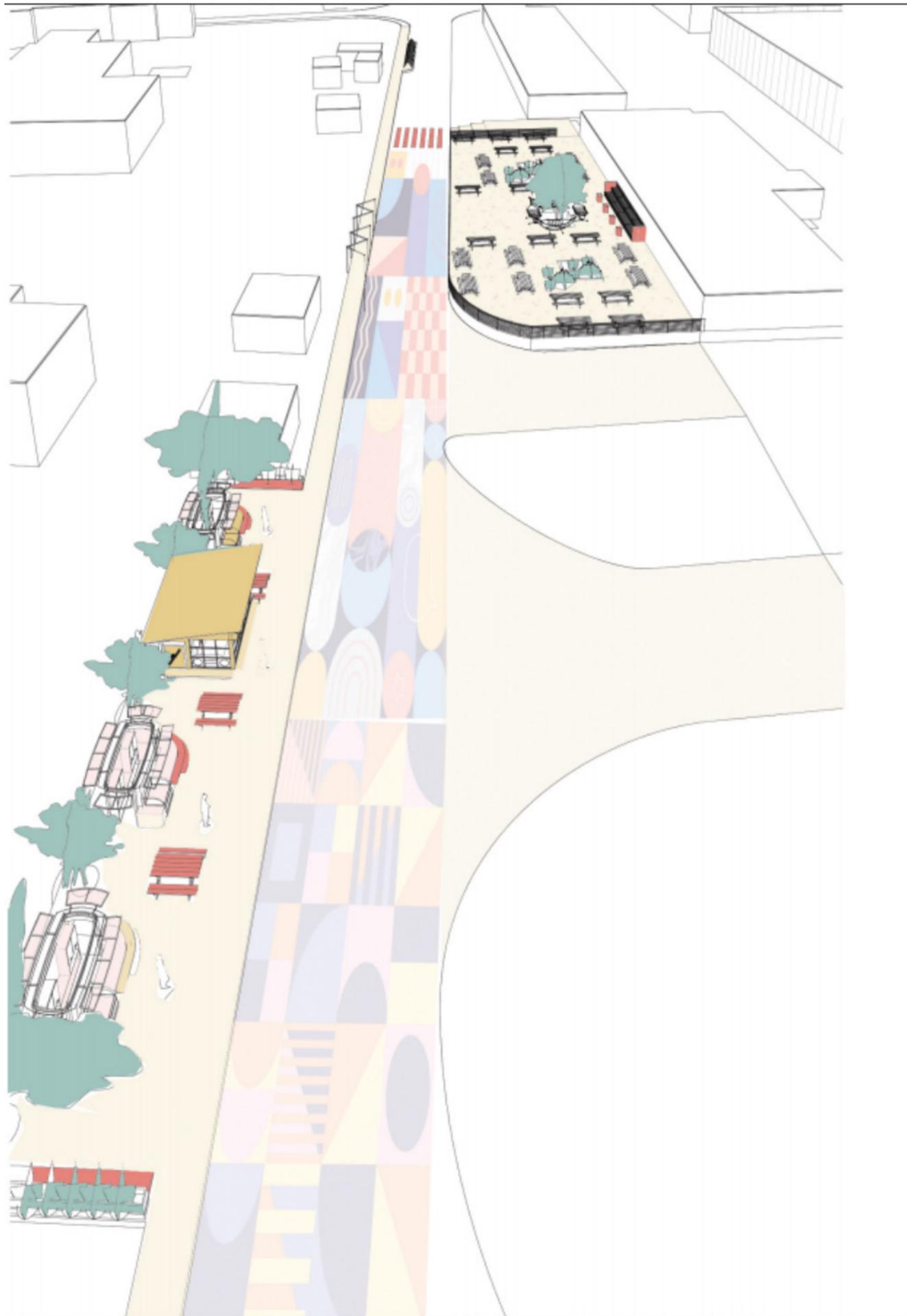
The main goal of this structure is to change this image that has remained idle and negatively affects the image of the city and to create a cultural and commercial interaction center that the city needs. At the same time, an environment is created that supports economic activities and involves local producers more in trade.

The structural part of the building is easily integrated with the exterior according to the usage, allowing cultural events such as festivals to be realized.





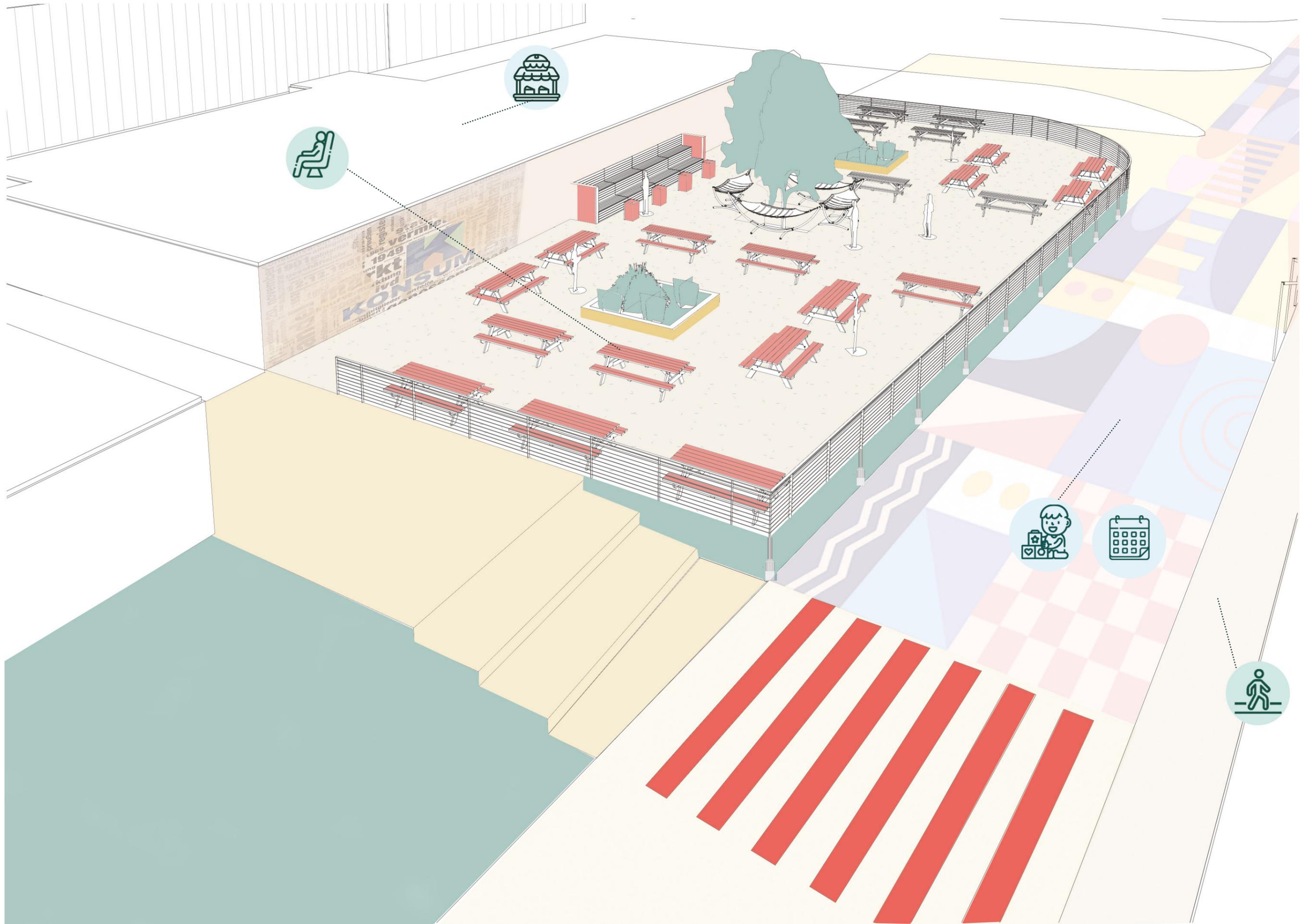




When we look at the part of the street where Konsum market is located, it is aimed to create a social interaction area with the platform created next to the market. Designed for city dwellers who normally do their shopping and return home without any social activities, this area creates a space where people can come together between daily practices. It also accommodates visitors to the food market scheduled on the street on Sundays.

Also, permanently planned coffee and bakery kiosks are located across the street. It is a planned solution to give a commercial identity to this street, which is located in the center of the city, and to keep it active every day of the week. Thus, both tourists, city dwellers or employees have areas where they can sit and relax while they go to the market for shopping and have a chat with their neighbor or friend they encounter.





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