

# SAN FRANCISCO FEDERAL BUILDING PLAZA DESIGN CHALLENGE



*“Envision a  
design intervention that activates  
the New San Francisco Federal  
Building plaza”*

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# PLAZA TOP VIEW



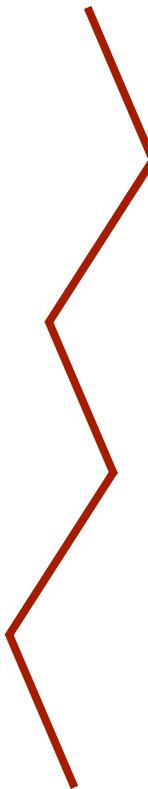


Premises Taken Building  
Address: 60-600  
Area: 100000

The plaza sits vacant because it has failed to attract a cohesive community of visitors.

**Employees of the  
federal building  
and local  
business owners**

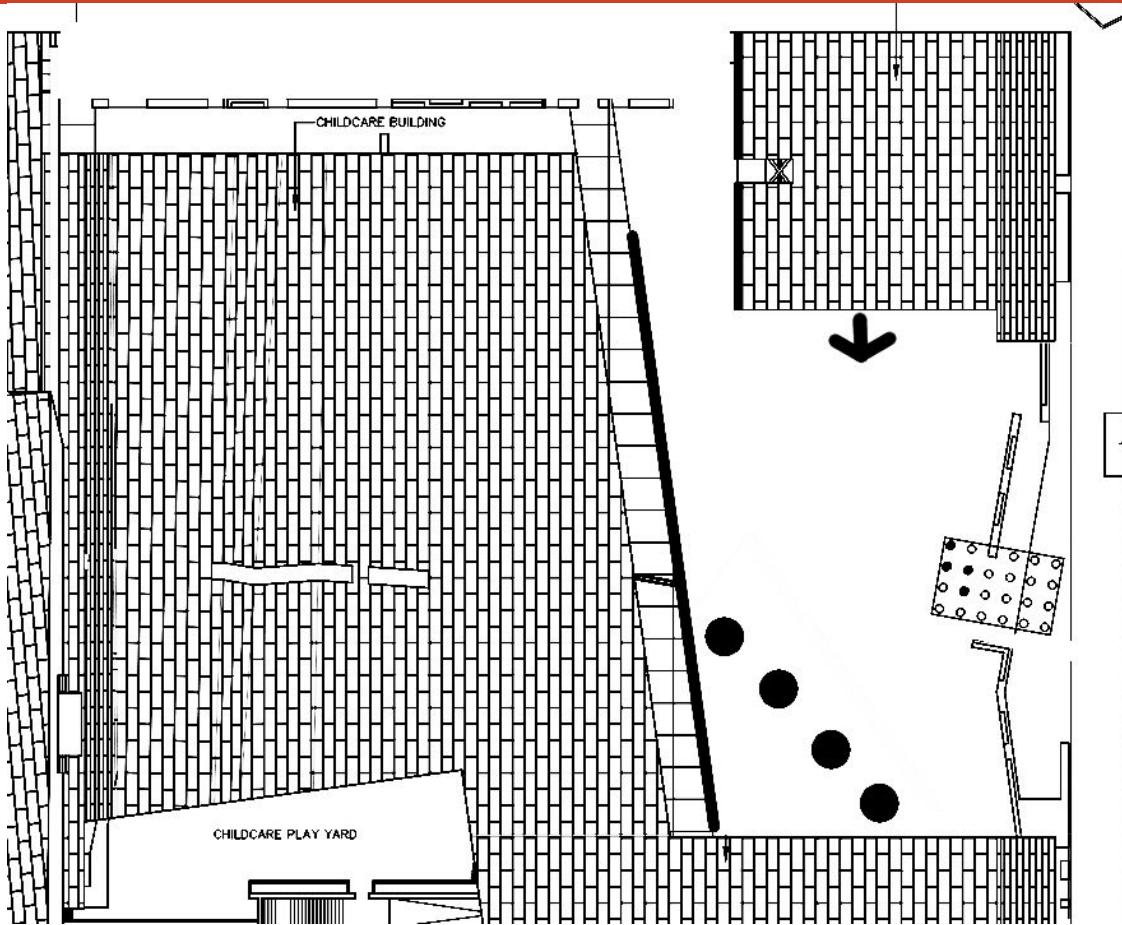
**Surrounding  
community**



# DESIGN HEURISTICS (Mehta, 2014)

INCLUSIVENESS	MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES	COMFORT	SAFETY	PLEASURABILITY
→ Diversity	→ Space of community gathering	→ Ample seating	→ Connection to the street	→ Imageability
→ Perceived Openness	→ Proximity to food	→ No elements discouraging use of space	→ Lighting quality	→ Sense of enclosure
→ Lack of surveillance	→ Perceived usefulness	→ Maintenance	→ Perceived safety from crime	→ Unique architectural elements
→ Flexibility in design and layout	→ Variety	→ Climatic comfort	→ Physical upkeep	→ Perceived aesthetic value

# O. CURRENT LAYOUT



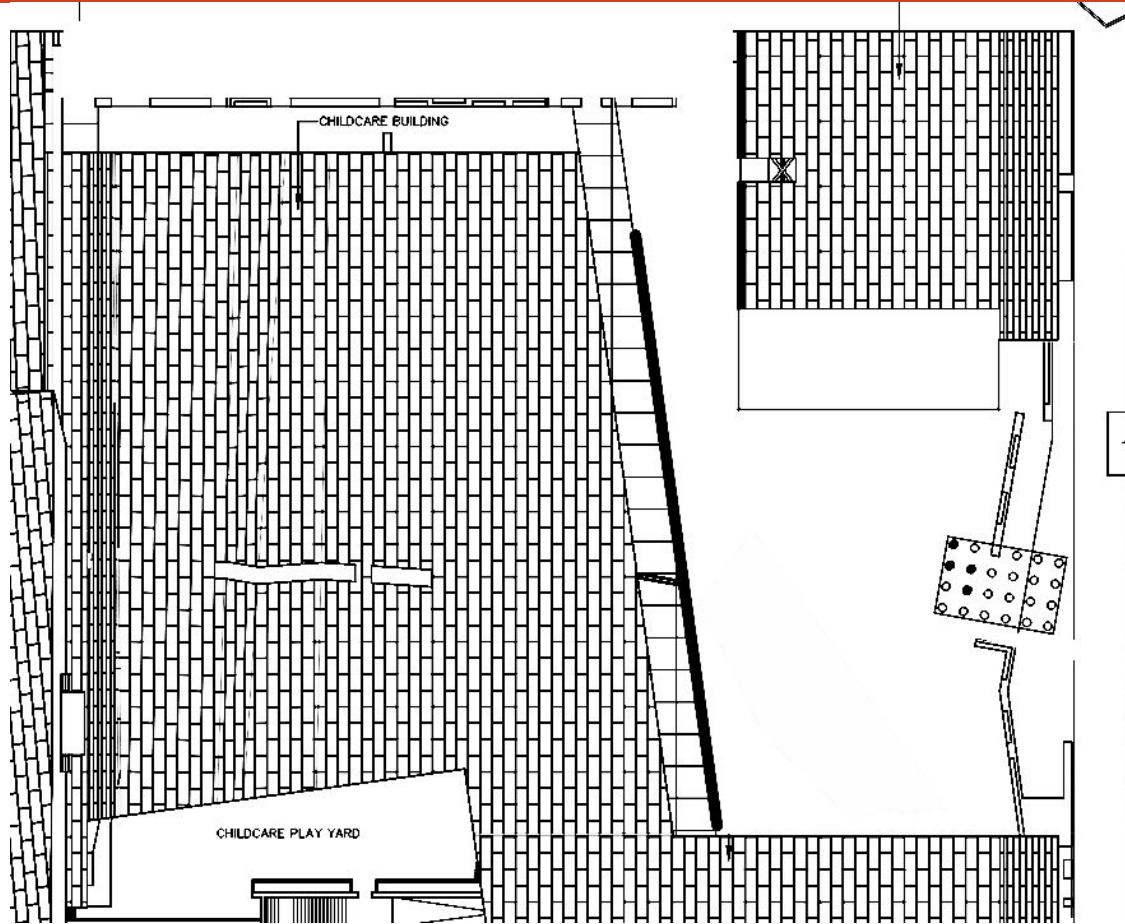
# 1. REMOVE PLANTS

## COMFORT

The plants did not help organize the space

## SAFETY

Cannot hide things in bushes anymore



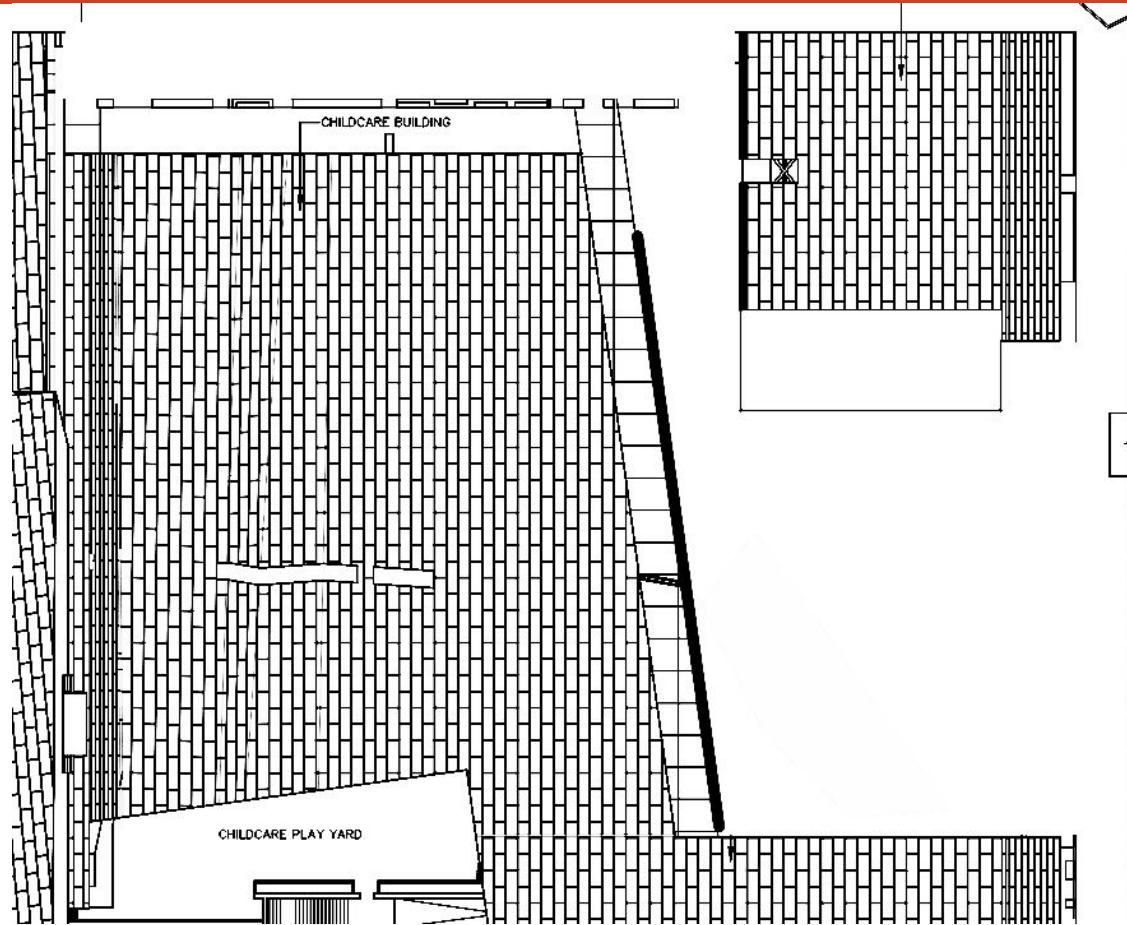
## 2. REMOVE STREET BENCHES

### INCLUSIVENESS

Simplified access  
to street and bus  
stop

### PLEASURABILITY

Ease of entering  
and exiting plaza



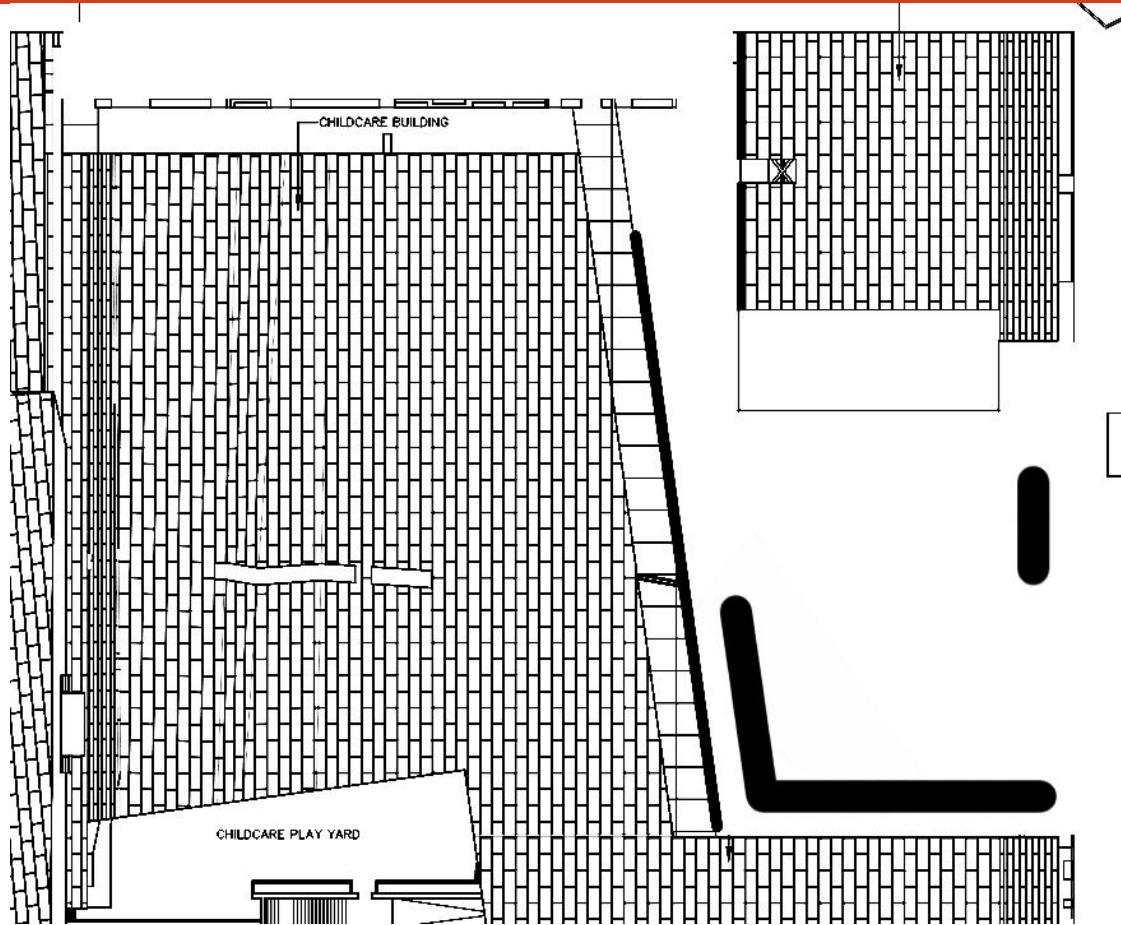
### 3. ADD BENCHES

#### COMFORT

Benches next to where people walk

#### MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

Corner allows for group meetings



# 4. REMOVE RESTAURANT FENCE

## INCLUSIVENESS

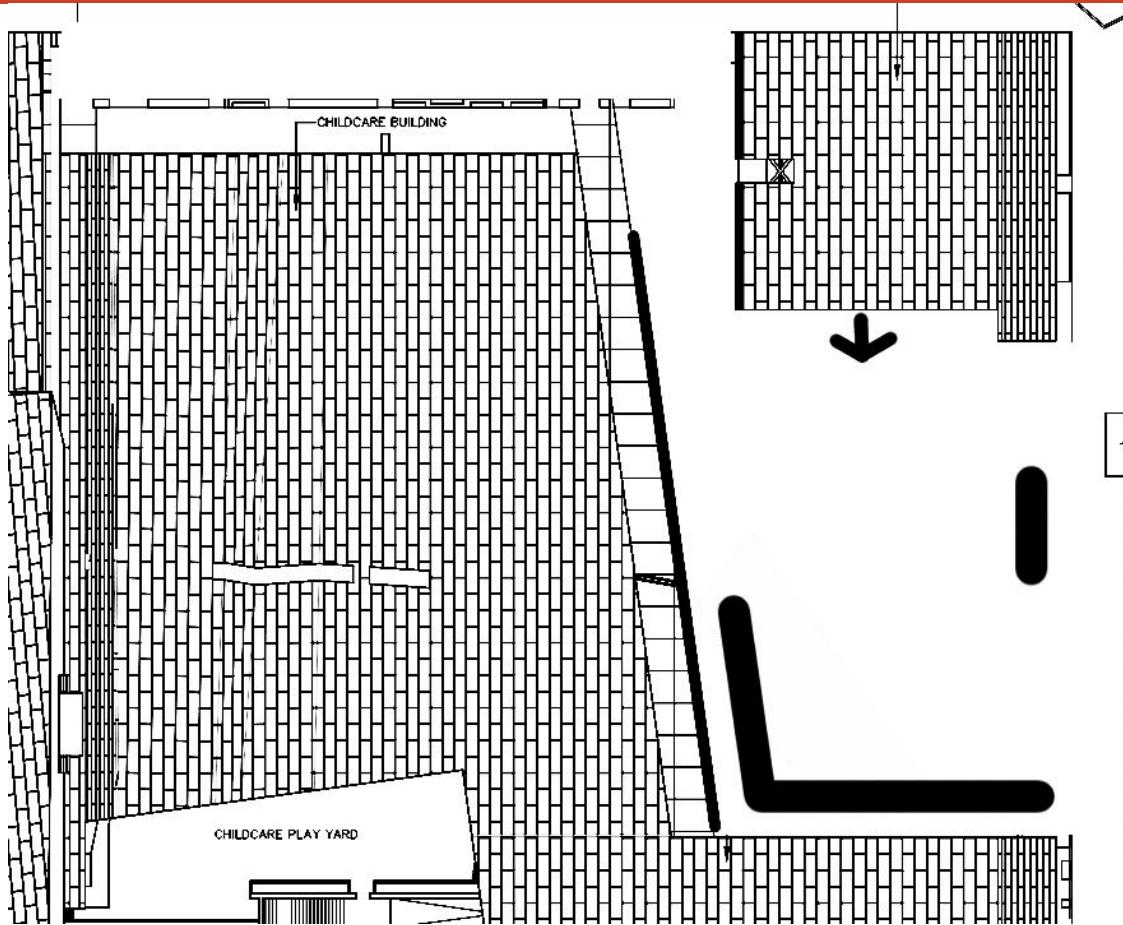
No exclusive spaces

## COMFORT

Two entries and exits to restaurant

## SAFETY

All areas are visible from cameras



# 5. ADD FIXED TABLES & CHAIRS

## COMFORT

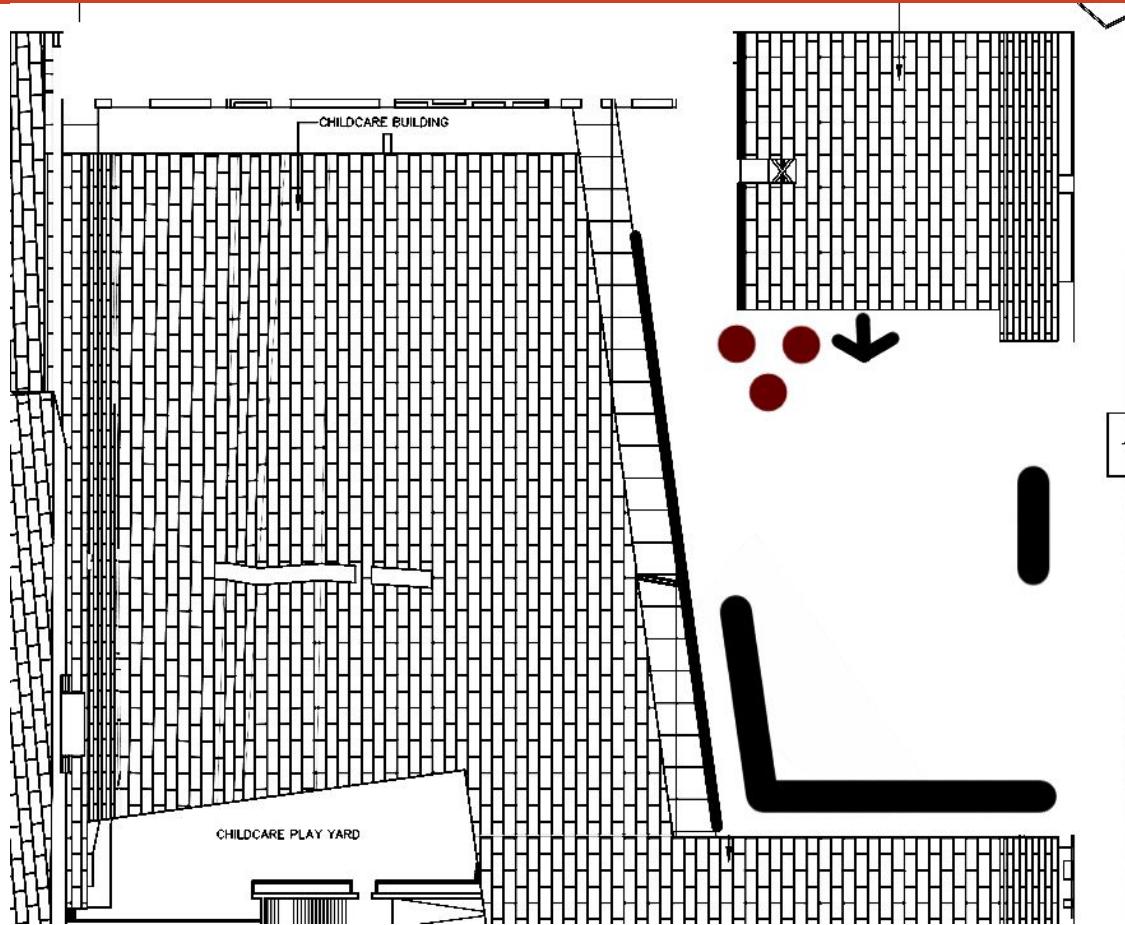
Tables close to restaurant entrance

## SAFETY

Tables and chairs are not removable

## MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

Possibility to eat outdoors



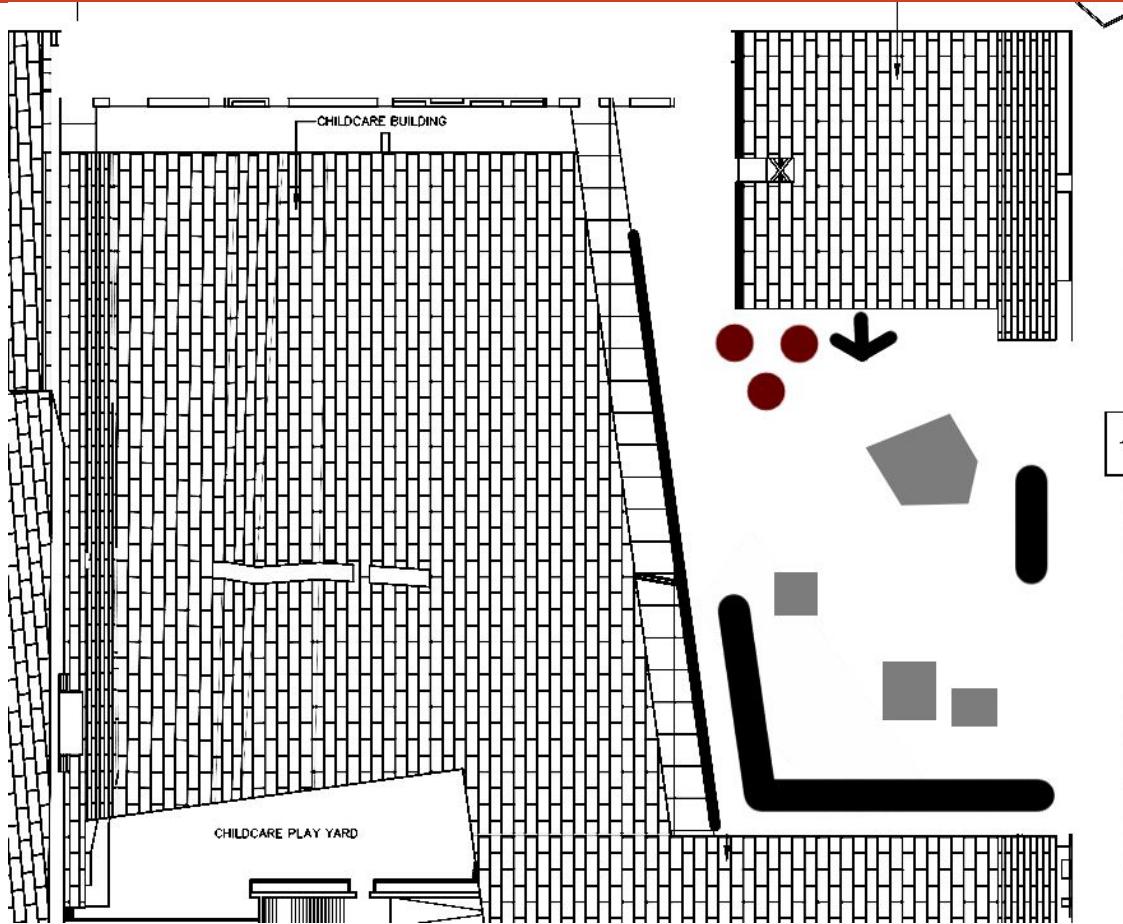
# 6. CASUAL SEATING

## PLEASURABILITY

Playful, multi purpose and colorful seats

## COMFORT

Diversity of seating options



# 7. LIGHTING

## SAFETY

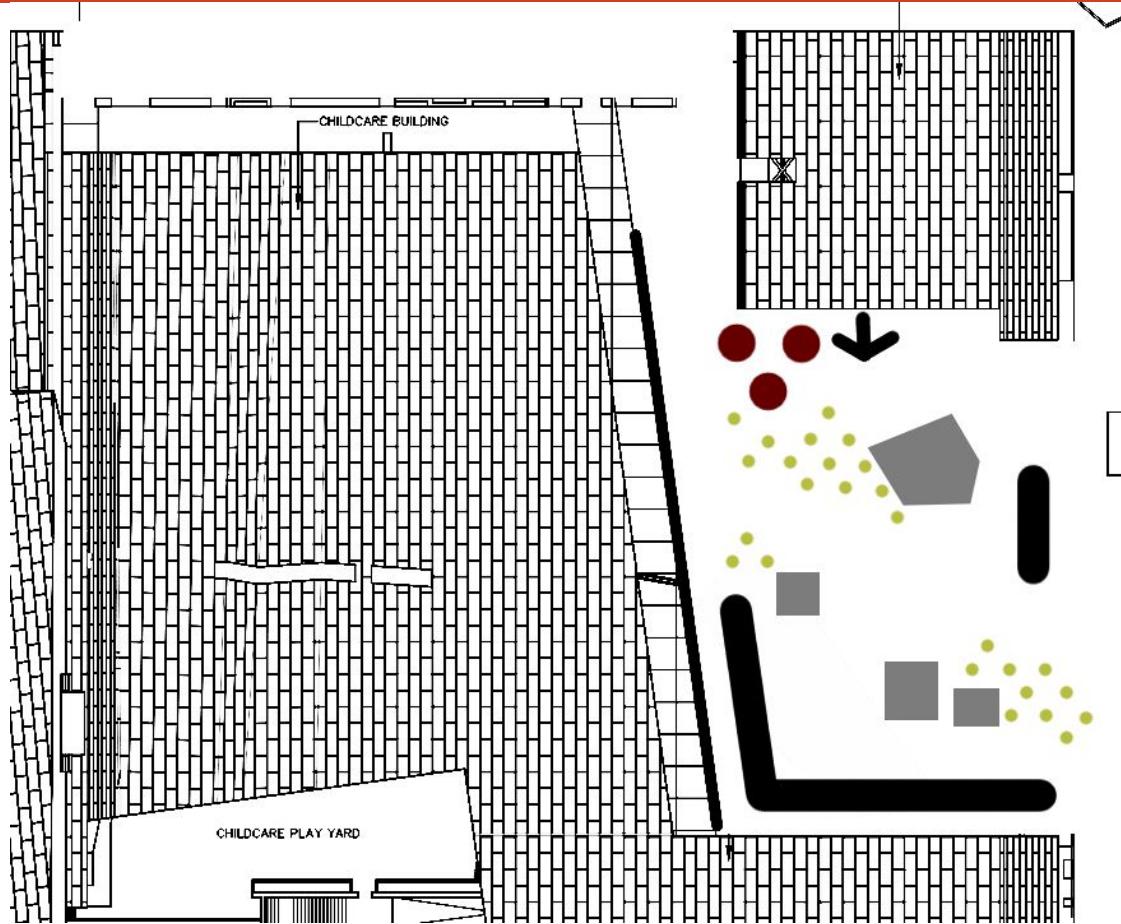
Safety at night

## COMFORT

Suggesting path  
for walking

## INCLUSIVENESS

Inviting street  
walkers into the  
plaza



# 8. TRASHCANS

## PLEASURABILITY

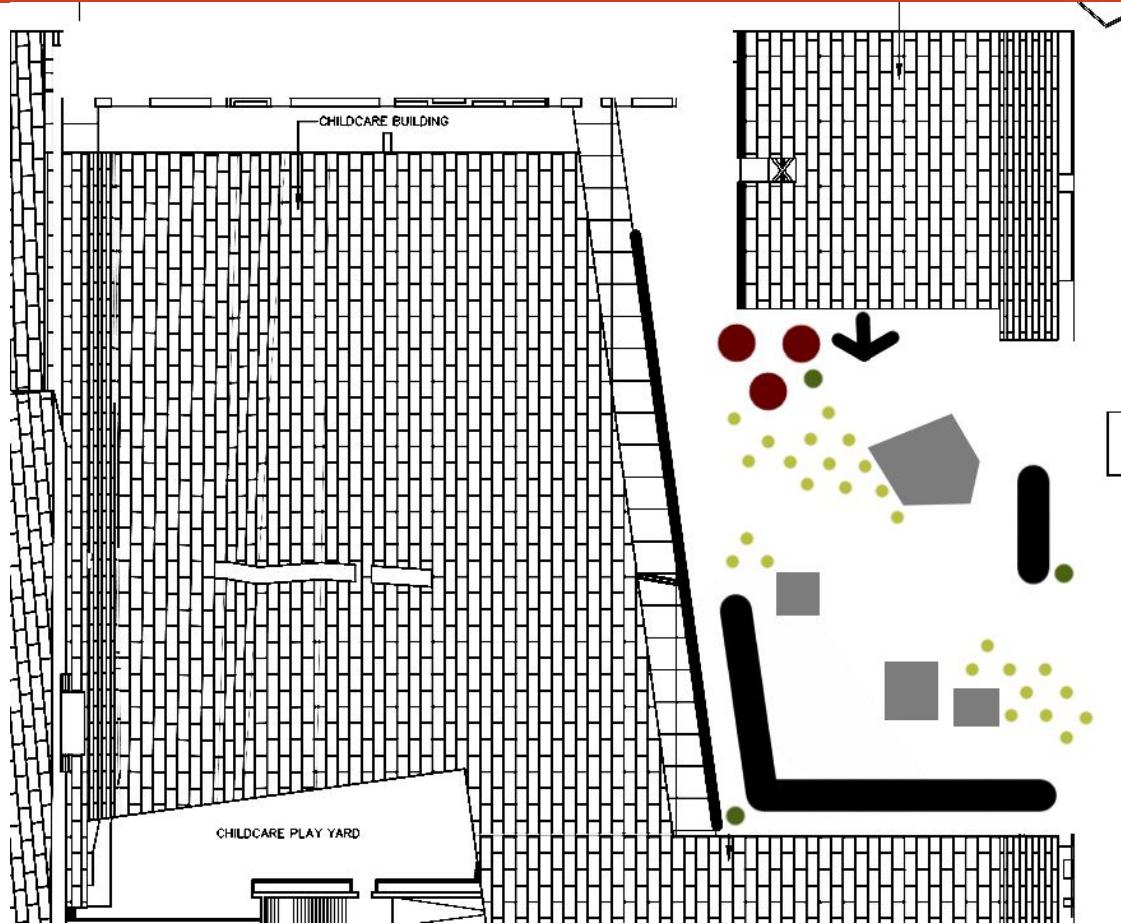
No trash on the floor of the plaza

## MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

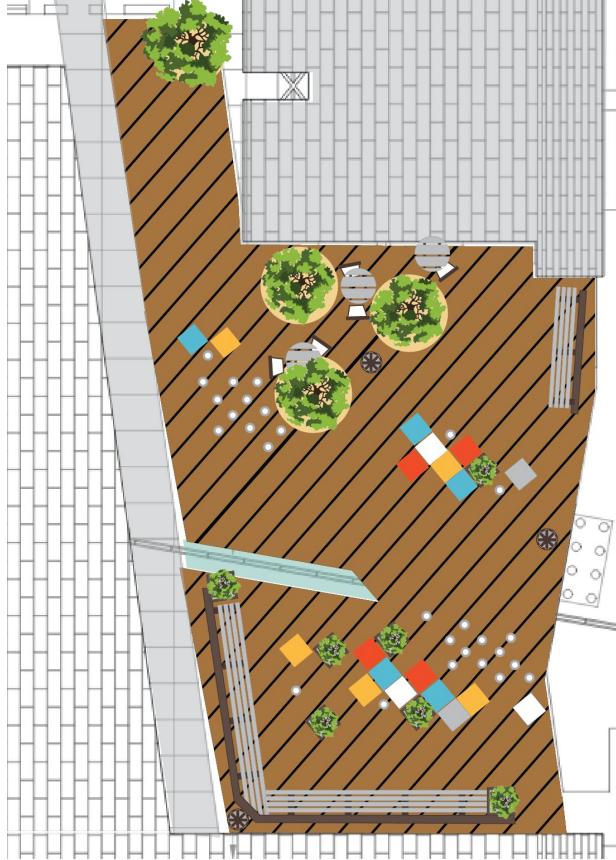
Possibility to eat outdoors

## COMFORT

Trash next to seating and tables



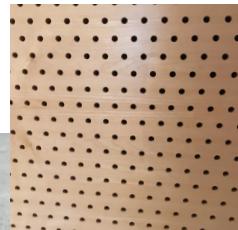
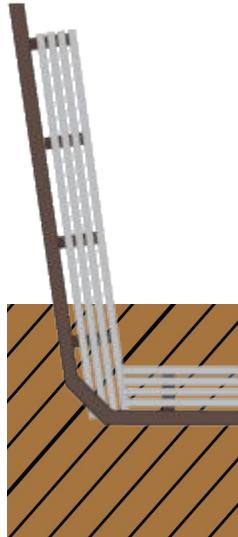
# FINAL DESIGN



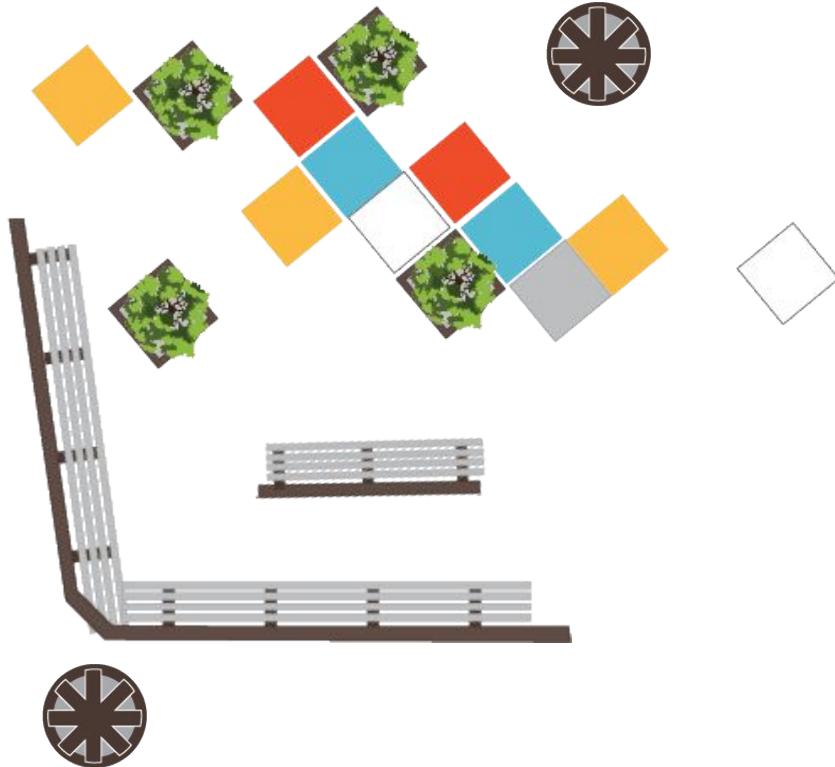
# FINAL DESIGN



# FINAL ELEMENTS



# COMFORT + MEANINGFUL ACTIV. + PLEASURABILITY



## “FURNITURE”

- Everywhere
- Doubles as art
- Frames area boundaries and walking corridors
- Geometric sculpture
  - different heights so kids can climb and can serve as a ledge for personal stuff
- Lighting

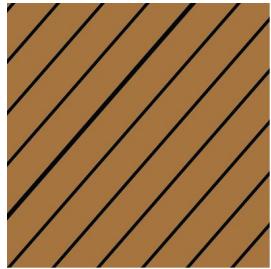
# PLEASURABILITY



## AESTHETICS

- Inspired by Isamu Noguchi's Playground sculptures
- Seating that is both visually compelling and welcomes:
  - sitting
  - play (children)
  - people-watching
- Complementary colors to break up cooler, gray (concrete) tones
- Geometric elements:
  - cubes
  - dotted recessed lights (continued indoor element)

# PLEASURABILITY - MATERIAL DESIGN



## MATERIAL DESIGN

- Work with existing polished concrete
- Imbue organic elements
  - wood panels (cherry)
  - greenery
- painted concrete
- beveled edges

# SAFETY

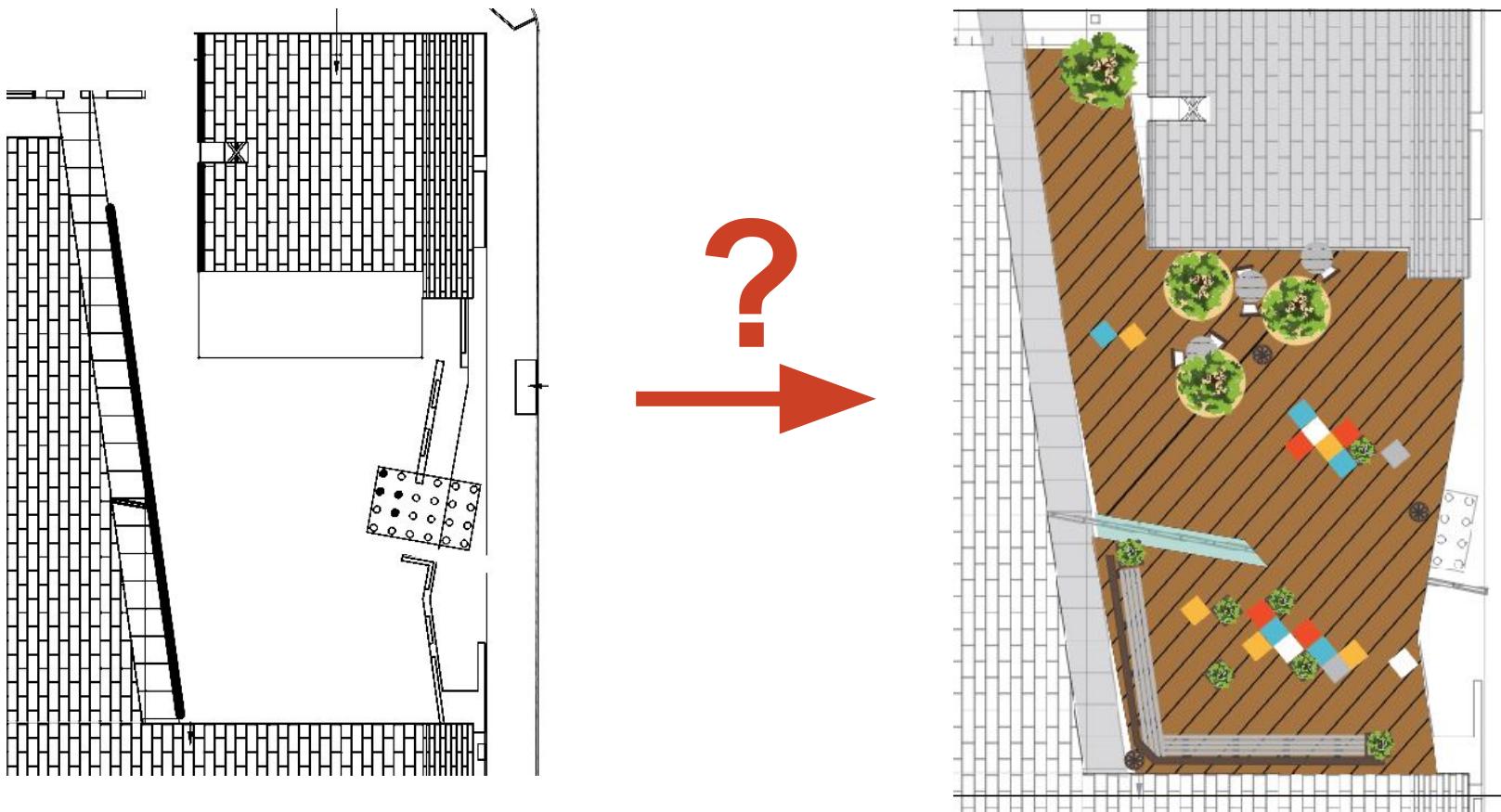


## LIGHTING

- Recessed lights provide softer light that make sure walkways are apparent
- Clustered in areas adjacent to main walkways/corridors
  - reinforce the path
- Bump lights underneath benches and “holes” created by sculptures
  - discourages lying/sleeping on
  - discourages hiding things in these areas

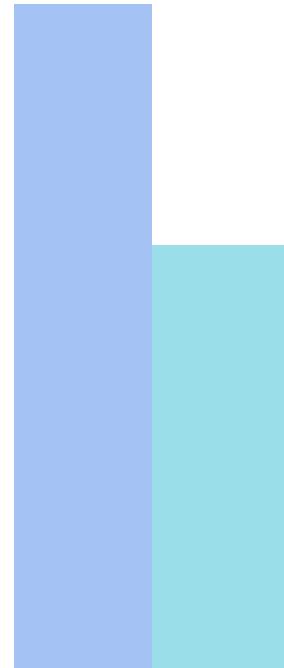


# HOW CAN WE MEASURE SUCCESS?



# PUBLIC SPACE INDEX

**Introduced by Vikas Mehta in 2014, the public space index (PSI) provides an easy method for quantifying the relative success of public spaces in fostering the core tenets of universal design.**



# HOW DID WE DO?

CURRENT DESIGN: TOTAL: 63

INCLUSIVENESS	MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES	COMFORT	SAFETY	PLEASURABILITY
16.1	9.3	12.0	18.8	6.8

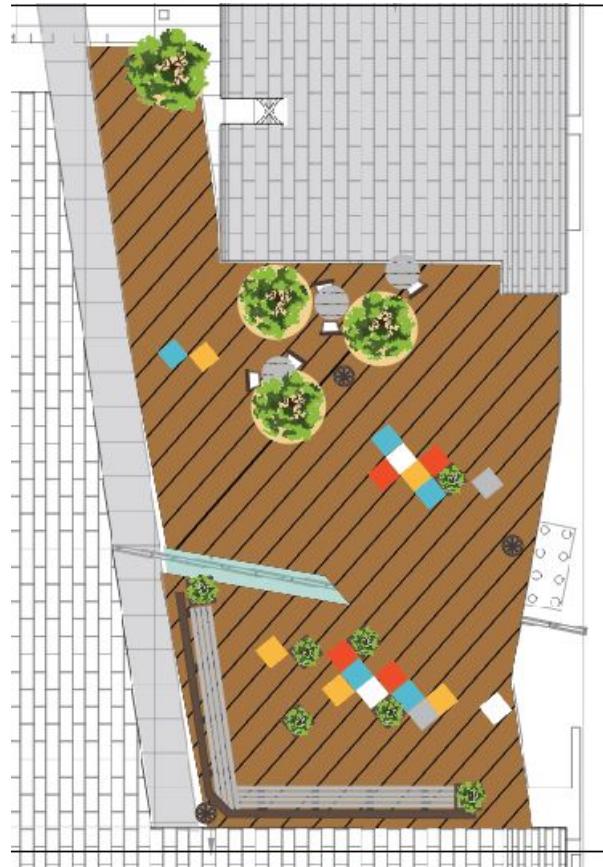
OUR DESIGN: TOTAL: 117.9

INCLUSIVENESS	MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES	COMFORT	SAFETY	PLEASURABILITY
24.6	19.5	24.0	25.5	24.3

# OUR DESIGN FOSTERS ENGAGEMENT

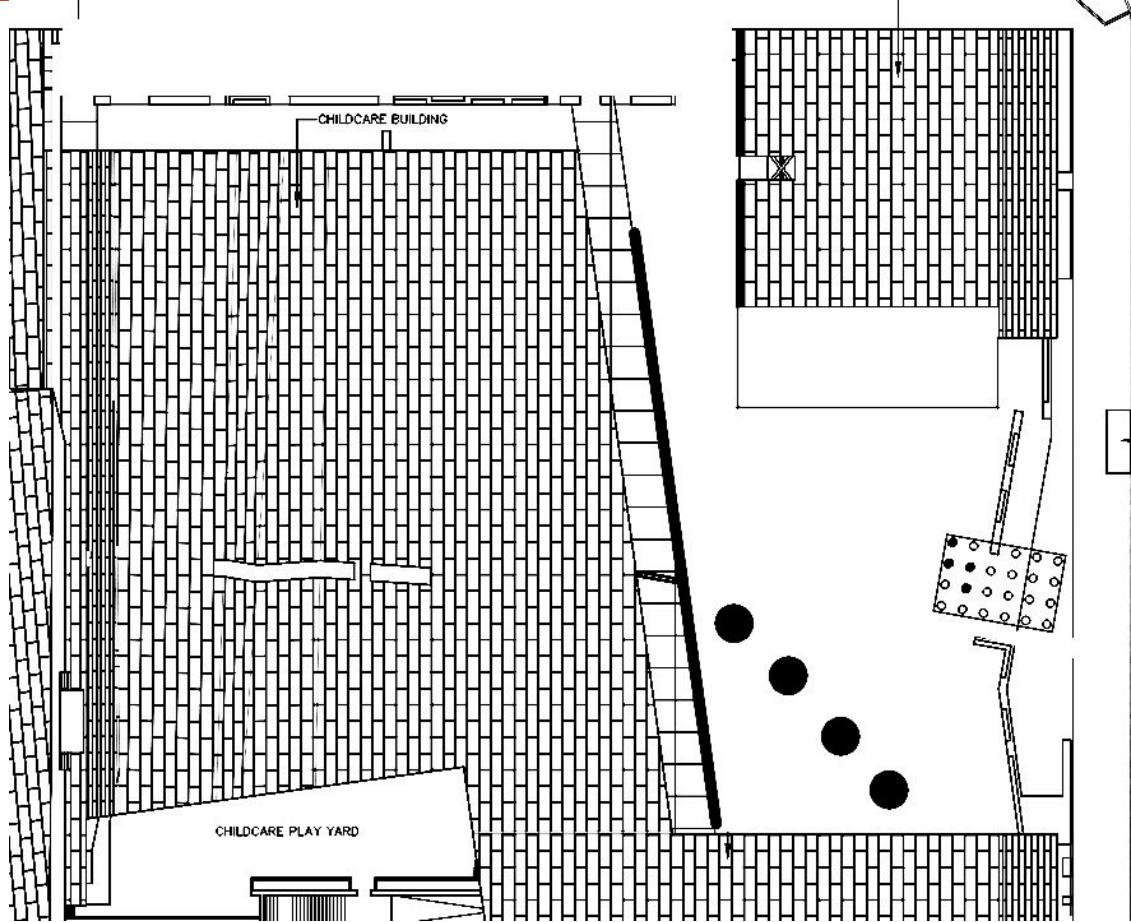
We improved in every heuristic, but there is *still room for growth*.

- Initially, users did not see the space as usable
  - No seating
  - Nothing to do
  - No cohesive community
- By designing for these five heuristics we aimed to solve these problems
- Could benefit from further design iterations

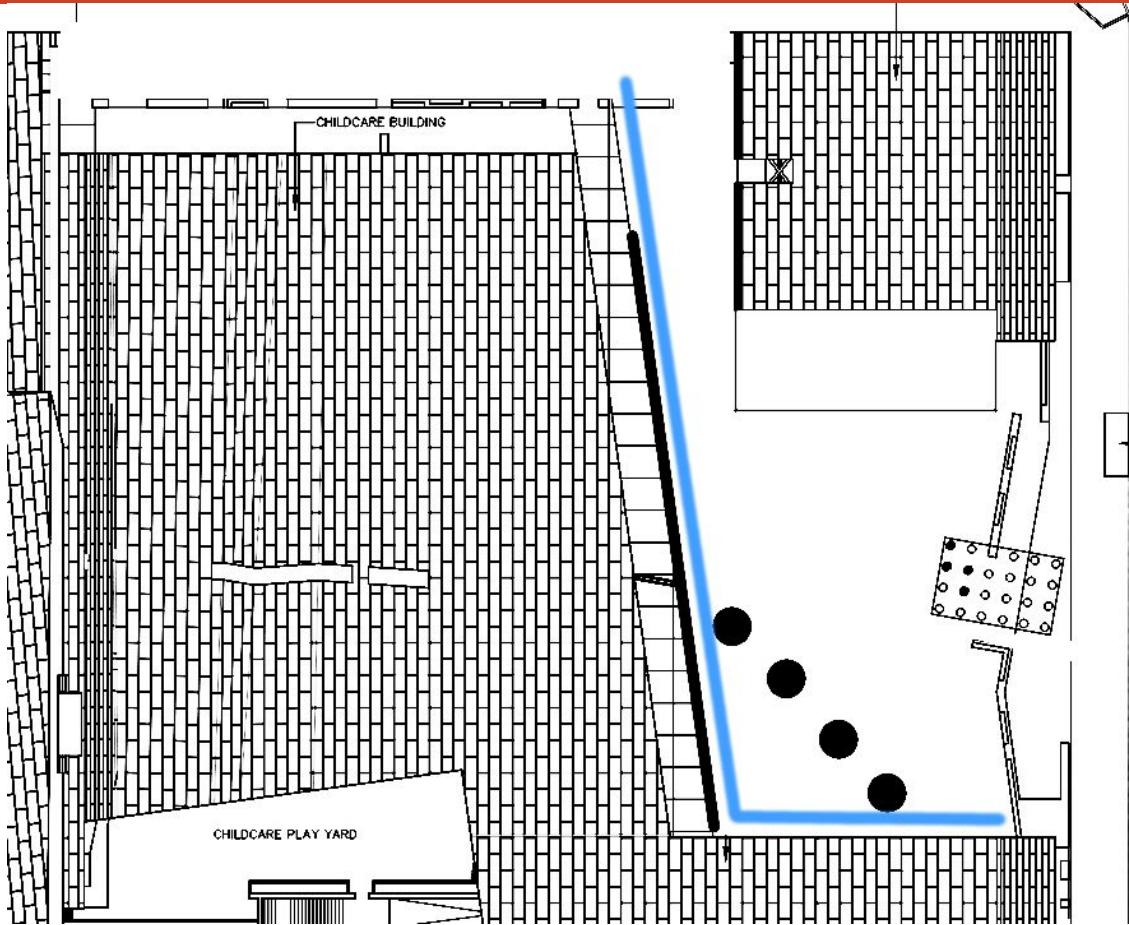


**THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?**

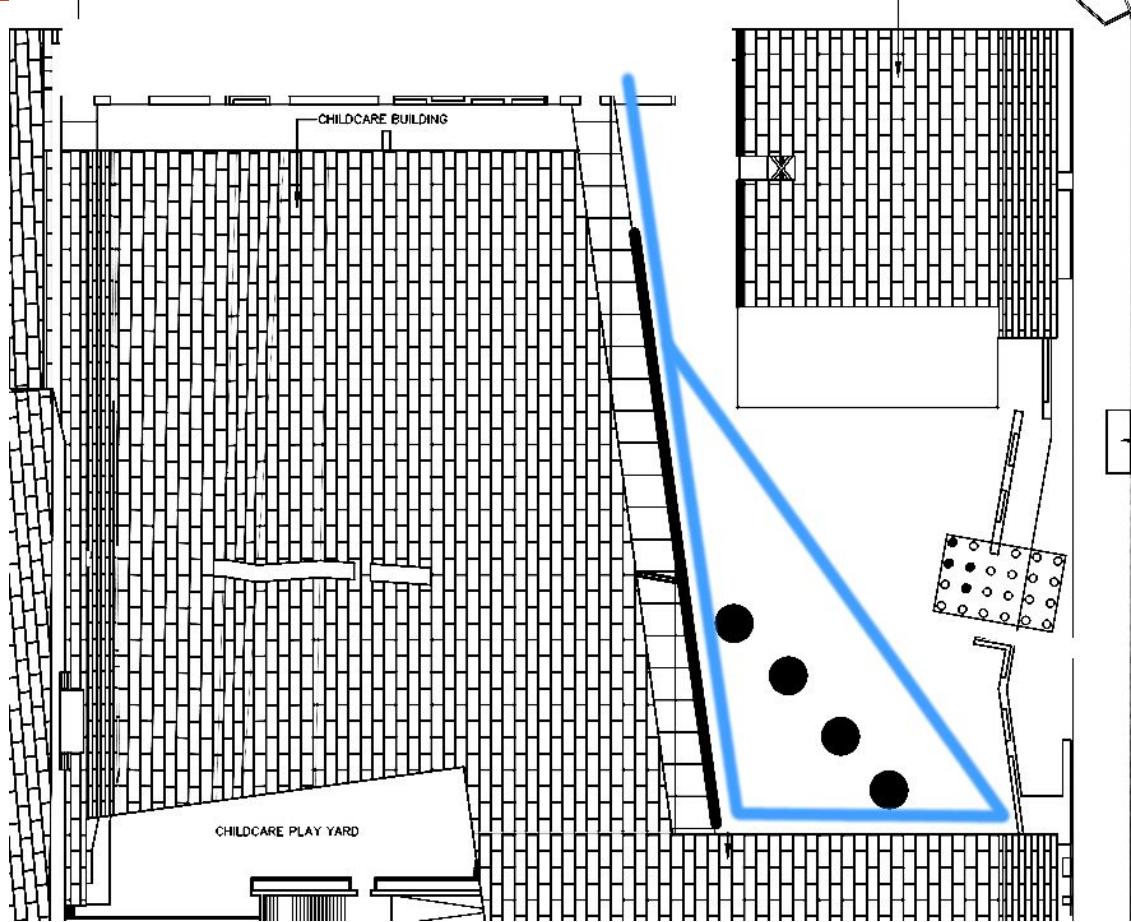
# CURRENT LAYOUT



# OBS1: MANY APPOINTMENTS AT SS BUILDING



# OBS2: WALK ACROSS THE PLAZA



# DESIGN HEURISTICS (Mehta, 2014)

## INCLUSIVENESS

Presence of diverse people (ages, genders, classes, abilities)  
No gates, open hours, no barriers to entry, no signs excluding people or behavior  
Bus line on edge of plaza, lots of foot traffic, close to BART stop

# DESIGN HEURISTICS (Mehta, 2014)

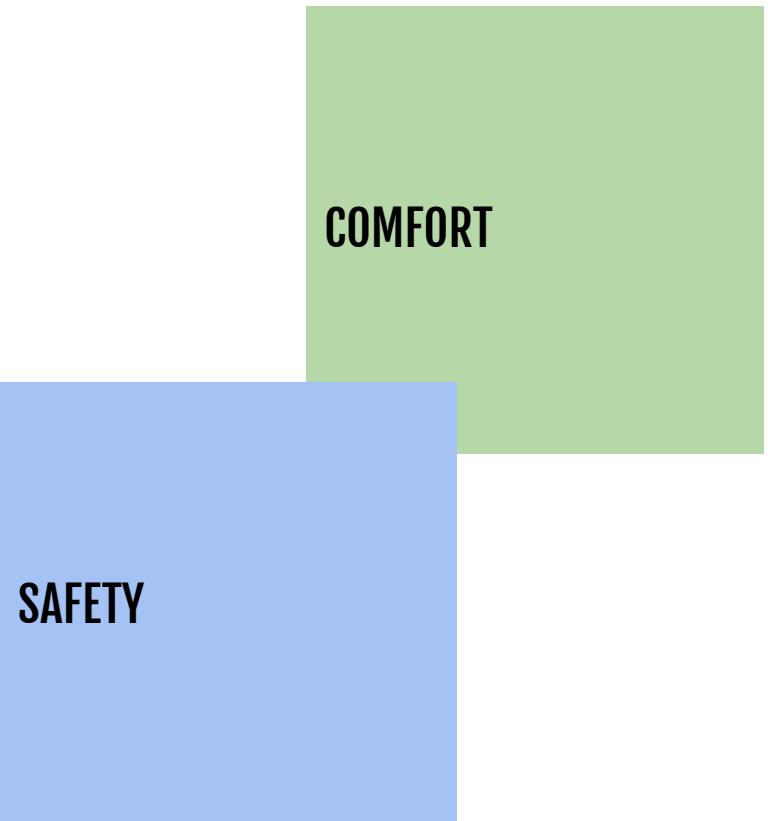
## MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

Spaces that encourage more than one type of activity (more diverse types of people, ages); different types of activities available in the plaza (restaurant, waiting, play, etc.)

Focus on making structures that are open to interpretation - visitors can decide on the use for themselves

## PLEASURABILITY

# DESIGN HEURISTICS (Mehta, 2014)



COMFORT

SAFETY

# LATEST ADDITION: FLOWER POTS

