



November 10, 2017

Bozeman School Board of Trustees  
Bozeman School District 7  
PO BOX 520  
Bozeman, MT 59771

Dear Trustees:

Please find the attached proposal submitted in response to the Bozeman School District 7 Request for Proposals for Emerson Lawn.

The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture's Board of Directors, donors, and staff fully support this proposal. When you issued this RFP at your September meeting you called upon the community to show you their creativity. We believe that our proposal is the embodiment of creativity. In our proposal, we are inviting you to collaborate with us in supporting the arts and culture that enrich our lives and our community.

For 25-years we have co-managed the Emerson Lawn. By doubling down on our partnership – together we can enhance the Emerson Lawn as open space for our community to continue to gather in the heart of Bozeman, surrounded by the arts. By investing together in open space and the arts we are investing in the future of our community. This is our moment to show Bozeman that we are willing to invest in them, just like they have invested in us.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our proposal. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our proposal in detail with you at any time.

Together let's create a place that makes the community proud.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Denson-Guy". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being more prominent.

Susan Denson-Guy  
Executive Director

Proposal for Emerson Lawn (Bozeman School District 7)  
submitted by  
Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture

1. Organization: Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture  
111 South Grand Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59715

Name: Susan Denson-Guy, Executive Director  
susan@theemerson.org  
Office: 406.587.9797 ext. 102  
Mobile: 406.580.4422

2. Signature:  Date: 10 November 2017

3. Here we propose to transform the current Emerson Lawn into the Grand Lawn. The new name represents the proximity of the lawn to Grand Ave and illustrates the commitment of the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture to the community-wide use of the lawn. The Grand Lawn will expand on the rich history of the Emerson Lawn by providing an open space for our community to gather and celebrate the arts from performing arts to outdoor public art. Furthermore, we propose that the Grand Lawn becomes in part a venue for displaying student art of all ages (particularly students in the Bozeman School District), along with other local, regional, and national artists.

The Grand Lawn will revitalize the current Emerson Lawn, which will undoubtedly become more of a focal point for Bozeman School District students, Bozeman residents, and non-residents. As you will find in the attached documents, the Grand Lawn is envisioned as an enhancement and extension of the existing lawn and sculpture court areas currently on the north lawn of the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture. The proposed performance stage will be located on the southern edge of the lawn, slightly elevated and showcase a solid backdrop to project sound away from neighbors. The lawn area will be graded smooth and contain a number of new trees that will scale and define the space to feel more as a room. The perimeter of the lawn area will have 10' high hops fences at either side and surrounding 6' high art fences allowing for metal and other art forms constructed by artists to be displayed and rotated in-out on a regular basis.

The center of the site will feature a concrete plaza area where four specialty food trucks can assemble on a regular basis to serve patrons. The plaza space will also feature three large overhead retractable canopies and festival overhead string lighting. Bistro tables and chairs will serve the needs of both patrons to food trucks as well as visitors viewing the performances on stage.

The northern portion of the Grand Lawn will feature a sculpture court consisting of a permeable perimeter fence that would remain open, but also can be closed and secured depending on the nature of a special event. The court area will feature decomposed granite surfacing with concrete perimeter and connections throughout to the food plaza area. The sculptures will be set against an 8' high board-formed concrete panel to feature the pieces appropriately. The court will provide linear bench seating to help contain the perimeter and feature interior benches for viewing.

The semi-permanent stage will be a venue for performing arts such as concerts and plays performed by Bozeman School District students, Shakespeare in the Parks, Lunch on the Lawn, Bozeman Symphony, Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Bozeman Actors Theater, and outdoor music and film festivals. The sculpture garden at the north end of the Grand Lawn, along Babcock Street, will include sculptures that integrate and complement the current sculptures currently on the north lawn of the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture. The sculpture exhibits will rotate and we envision that this area could be used to highlight Bozeman School District student-designed sculptures (designed and constructed by students in traditional arts classes along with students studying wood working and welding). The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture has a long history of working with the Bozeman Public School District and surrounding districts to engage their students in art appreciation. The Schools in the Gallery program has been the premier arts education program for students of all ages for more than 15 years at the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture. Through this program we invite students of all ages to engage with exhibits highlighting the works of local, regional, and national artists. The Schools in the Gallery program has hosted more than 4,500 students in the past 5 years from the Bozeman School District and surrounding areas. The Schools in the Gallery program will be fully integrated into the Grand Lawn by educating students on the importance of public art exhibits in a location where their community gathers.

The Grand Lawn will be fully landscaped such that is esthetically pleasing and inviting to all members of the community. We believe the Grand Lawn will be an outstanding open space for the community to gather within walking distance of downtown Bozeman. Moreover, the Grand Lawn will be a showcase and model for other communities throughout the Intermountain West, much like the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture. The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture is an enormous asset to Bozeman and surrounding communities, thus pairing that resource with the Grand Lawn would enrich our community and provide an outdoor venue for student, local, and national artists while providing a place for the community to relax and enjoy downtown Bozeman.

As requested in the RFP (i.e., '...City of Bozeman's downtown redevelopment initiatives. '), we describe how the philosophy of the Grand Lawn aligns perfectly with the Guiding Principles (GP) outlined in the Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan (dated December 14, 2009; [https://downtownbozeman.org/uploads/Pdfs/DBIP\\_Final\\_12-14-09\\_SM.pdf](https://downtownbozeman.org/uploads/Pdfs/DBIP_Final_12-14-09_SM.pdf)):

- The Grand Lawn will provide safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists, and will be ADA compliant. The design for the Grand Lawn is visually appealing and complements the neighborhood and downtown Bozeman (GP 2).

- The Grand Lawn will be a focal location for civic life. It will also serve as an outdoor education space for Bozeman Public School District students and a variety of outdoor arts and culture events. The importance of preserving and enhancing a space such as the Grand Lawn is clearly noted by Guetzkow (2002) where "...community arts programs are said to build social capital by boosting individuals' ability and motivation to be civically engaged, as well as, building organizational capacity for effective action." (<https://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/workpap/WP20%20-%20Guetzkow.pdf>) (GP 3).
- The Grand Lawn will be the premier outdoor venue for arts and culture in Bozeman (GP 3).
- The Grand Lawn project will take into account the character of Bozeman's historic core and match the architecture and style of the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture while allowing for thoughtfully constructed contemporary aspects (GP 4).
- Unlike many projects in downtown Bozeman, parking will not be as problematic given the current parking lot owned by the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture and easy access to street parking. Additionally, the parking garage is a few blocks away and is within easy walking distance to the Grand Lawn (GP 5).
- The Grand Lawn is perfectly situated for the community that participates in Bozeman's public transit system. Currently, the Streamline bus service has a stop on the northeast corner of the proposed Grand Lawn (GP 6).
- The Grand Lawn will be a large public space managed by the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture and will be active through use by the community and Bozeman Public School District (GP 7).
- The Grand Lawn will be open space that will contribute to a healthier community by providing a venue for all people to appreciate what arts and culture provide to society (GP 9).
- The Grand Lawn will be a perfect blend of historic and contemporary design. Moreover, the materials used in the Grand Lawn will be sustainable and durable such that the Grand Lawn maintains its function and visual appeal over time (GP 10).
- The Grand Lawn will provide a strong connection to the downtown arts community by promoting all arts within Bozeman and surrounding communities. The philosophy and mission for the Grand Lawn complements that of the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture (GP 11).
- The Grand Lawn landscaping will complement the surrounding landscape and the mountain setting. The development of the Grand Lawn will frame the current view of downtown Bozeman with the Bridger mountains serving as its backdrop. The Grand Lawn will undoubtedly strengthen the amenities unique to the City of Bozeman (GP 12).

In addition to meeting the guiding principles, the Grand Lawn directly meets the criteria mentioned in section 4 'A Well-Planned City' in the draft Bozeman Strategic Plan. Specifically, section 4.4.e states 'Downtown and Midtown Public Space. Develop public spaces in the downtown area and other commercial locations.'

The Grand Lawn also links directly to the Bozeman Public School District's 20 Year Planning Horizon mentioned under the heading 'A Vivid Description of the Desired Future' where 'Together, Bozeman Public Schools, students, families and the community regularly collaborate as equal partners to achieve the shared goals for the District and community' (<https://www.bsd7.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=112502&pageId=676750>). The Grand Lawn will be a gathering place for students, families, and the community and we propose a partnership between the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture and the Bozeman Public School District for the benefit of students and the community. Furthermore, it is stated in the same document that 'Bozeman Public Schools are integral to the community and recognized as a significant contributor to Bozeman's outstanding quality of life.' We argue that building upon the successful 25-year partnership between the Bozeman Public School District and the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture to develop the Grand Lawn would significantly contribute to the quality of life in Bozeman by way of art and cultural appreciation in a venue that exemplifies the quality of life expressed by the community.

4. Parking is not a concern, as stated above, given the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture has parking available.

5. The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture's Board of Directors and leadership team have extensive experience in successful project development and implementation for projects of varying size.

#### Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture Board of Directors:

- Wynn Jessup, President - extensive career in the investment industry, including most recently serving as the Chairman and President of Chartwell Investment Partners and Rigel Capital
- Mike Drewiske, Vice President - former Vice President of First Security Bank
- Brook Merrow - writing instructor for Gallatin College and Montana State University
- Jim Runyan - Owner of Runyan and Associates
- Jessica Plamer - Investment banker and artist
- Alissa Banks - Owner A. Banks Gallery
- Maggie Hammett - Assistant to the President, Montana State University
- Vicki Saab - Researcher, U.S. Forest Service

#### Leadership Team

- Susan Denson-Guy, Executive Director - 25+ years in nonprofit leadership and project management
- Renee Stephens, Director of Operations - 20+ years in project management
- Alissa Popken, Education Curator - 5 years in exhibit curation and 10 years in educational program management
- Erik Hansen, Maintenance Technician - 20+ years in construction, contracting, and facility maintenance

- Mike Weix, Theater Manager - 18 years with the Emerson's Theater
- Sonja Bahr, Director of Community Outreach - 8 years in development and outreach
- Tamara Knappenbeger, Events & Membership Manager - 8 years in event and program development

The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture staff have more than 90 years of combined experience in successfully developing and executing projects of all sizes. For example, a fire-suppression system was completed in 2014 that involved securing \$135,000 and implementing a contract with a vendor and retrofitting the system to a building that is 100 years old. A \$100,000 solar array was constructed so the building could be more energy efficient and at its completion was the largest solar array in Bozeman. The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture designed and secured funding for the outside sculpture park along Babcock Street. Moreover, the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture has invested in the Emerson Lawn to provide a venue for the community to gather to enjoy the arts and culture. The staff are constantly securing extramural funding to maintain and upgrade the Emerson building, which involves working closely with the City of Bozeman to obtain the proper permits and meet code regulations. We are very familiar with the permitting process and have a good working relationship with the City of Bozeman, our neighbors, and the community.

6. We recognize the monetary value of the Emerson Lawn. However, we and many members of the community recognize the value and necessity of maintaining open space in our Downtown/Midtown community, which has been recognized as a priority by city planners and the city commission (see above). Furthermore, the connection that students of all ages have with the arts and culture in a venue such as the proposed Grand Lawn and the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture is priceless. How do you put a price on a young adult studying an outdoor sculpture on a warm day in May, that then inspires them to be creative in their endeavors? How do you monetize the feeling that a band of young musicians has playing in front of a few hundred people? What is the price of a parent seeing their child's art displayed along Babcock Street for thousands of people to enjoy? How do you monetize that place where a weary tourist can take a break to just reflect?

6-a. The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture has secured funding for the development and maintenance of the Grand Lawn from an anonymous donor. It is our sincere hope that this proposal is selected by the Bozeman School Districts Board of trustees as the best investment in the future of our community. Once the proposal is advanced we will provide the funding documentation at that time. Until then the donor requests to remain anonymous.

6-b. Not applicable at this time.

6-c. We propose that the Bozeman Public School District work with the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture to see the Grand Lawn to fruition. As stated above, full funding for the development and maintenance is secured. Below are four options to consider for the partnership:

1. Bozeman Public School District donates the property to the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture
2. Bozeman Public School District and the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture continue to co-manage the space
3. Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture enters a long-term lease for the property with the Bozeman Public School District recognizing that all improvements to the Grand Lawn are the property of the Bozeman Public School District
4. Bozeman Public School District agrees to sell the property to the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture at two times its fair market value when the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture was originally acquired in 1992.

7-a. Done. The feasibility of the project has been determined through consultation with Design.5 Landscape Architecture and the Emerson Center for the Arts and Cultures Board Members with experience in planning and development. The project is very feasible and we believe it will have broad support from the community and the City of Bozeman because it pairs nicely with the guiding principles in the Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan and the Bozeman Public School District's 20 Year Planning Horizon.

7-b. Done. Funding for development and long-term maintenance has been secured through an anonymous donor.

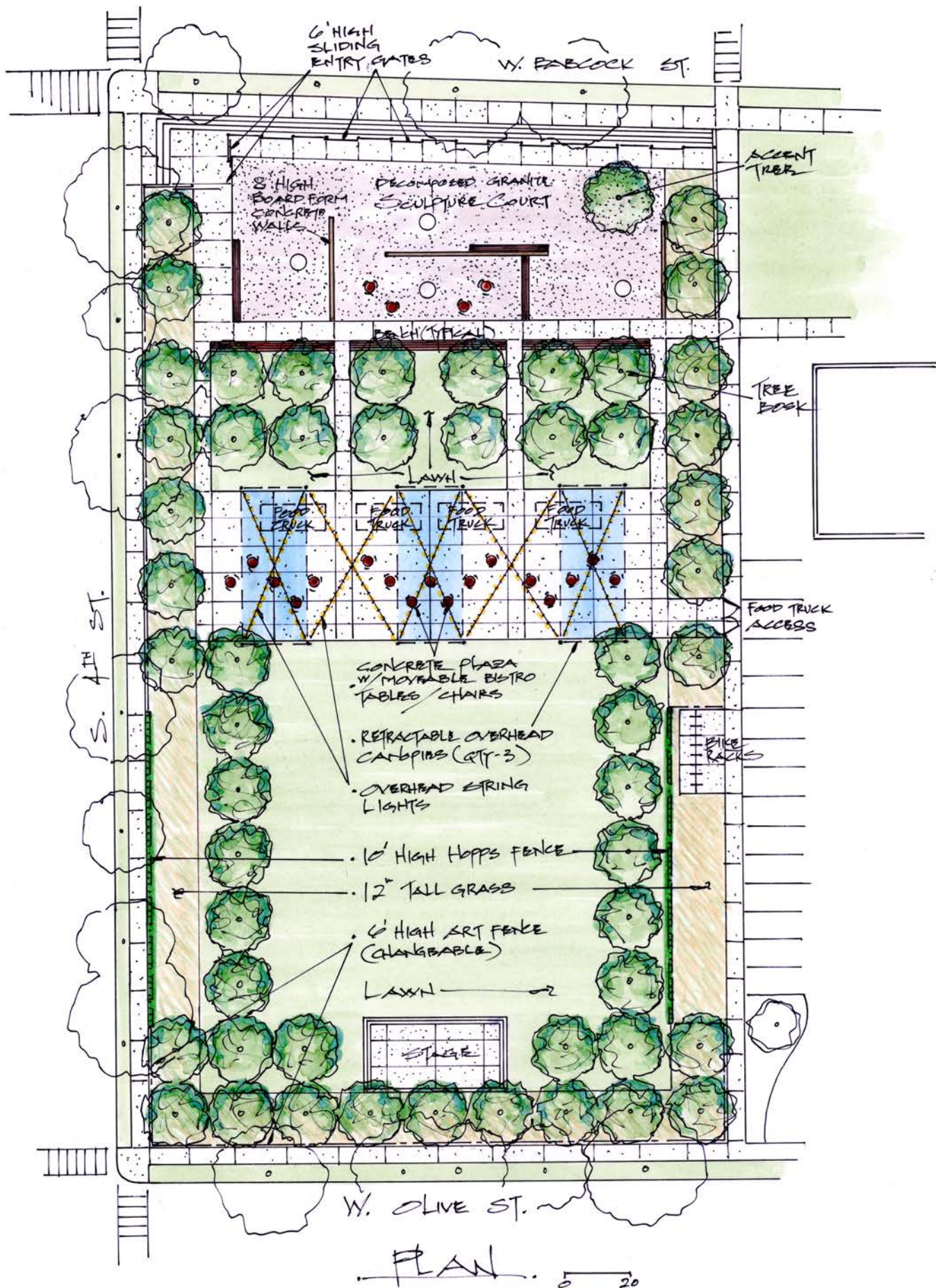
7-c. A few months. We anticipate that it will take little time to finalize the development plans (see attached documents) and to secure the necessary government approvals, especially given the good working relationship the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture has with the city.

7-d. We anticipate the Grand Lawn could be completed by autumn 2018 or spring 2019 at the latest.

8. See attached documents.

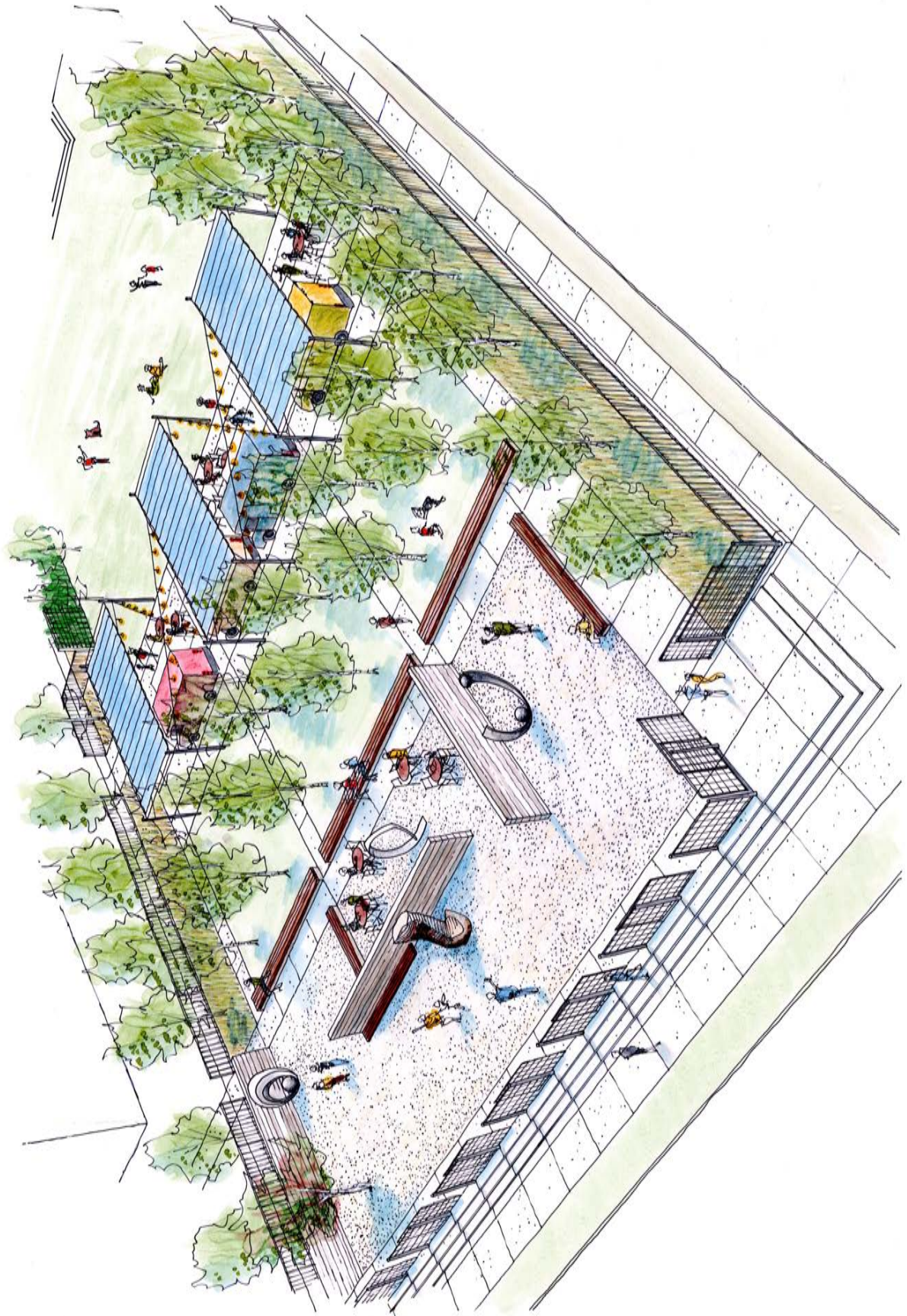
- Pages 7-9; Grand Lawn architectural renderings
- Page 10; Examples of artistic perimeters from other communities
- Pages 11-16; Photographs illustrating the mixed use of the Emerson Lawn in its current and historic use





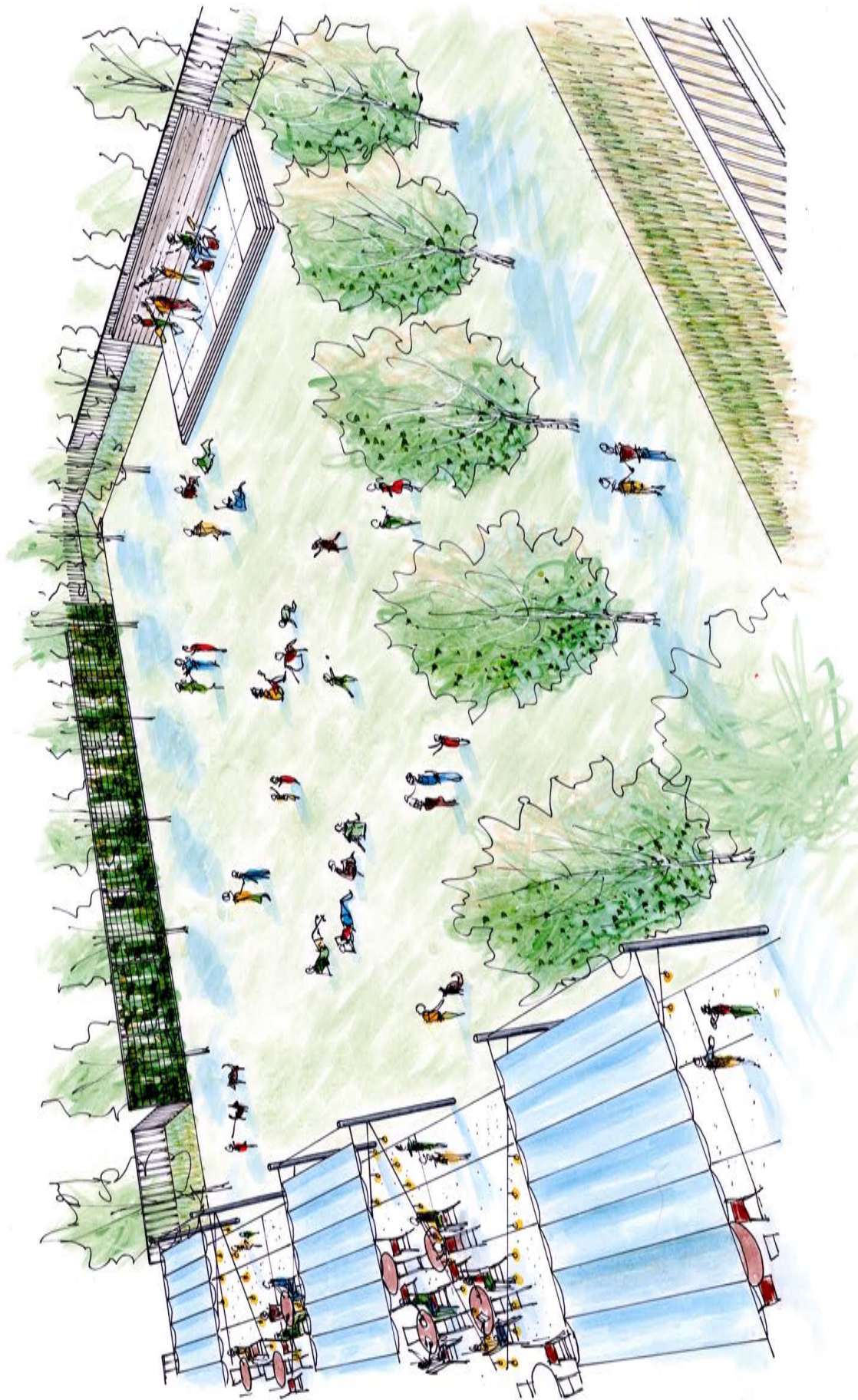
Plan view of the Grand Lawn.





Isometric view of the Grand Lawn.





Isometric view of the Grand Lawn.





Example of artistic perimeter.



Example of a sculpture park.



Photo 1. - Band in front of the Emerson illustrating that the Emerson was established with arts and culture from its inception.



Photo 2. - Musician playing on the current stage at the Emerson Lawn illustrating the current use of the lawn for performing arts.





Photo 3. - The Emerson Lawn full of community members enjoying Lunch on the Lawn. The Grand Lawn will undoubtedly enhance the experience.

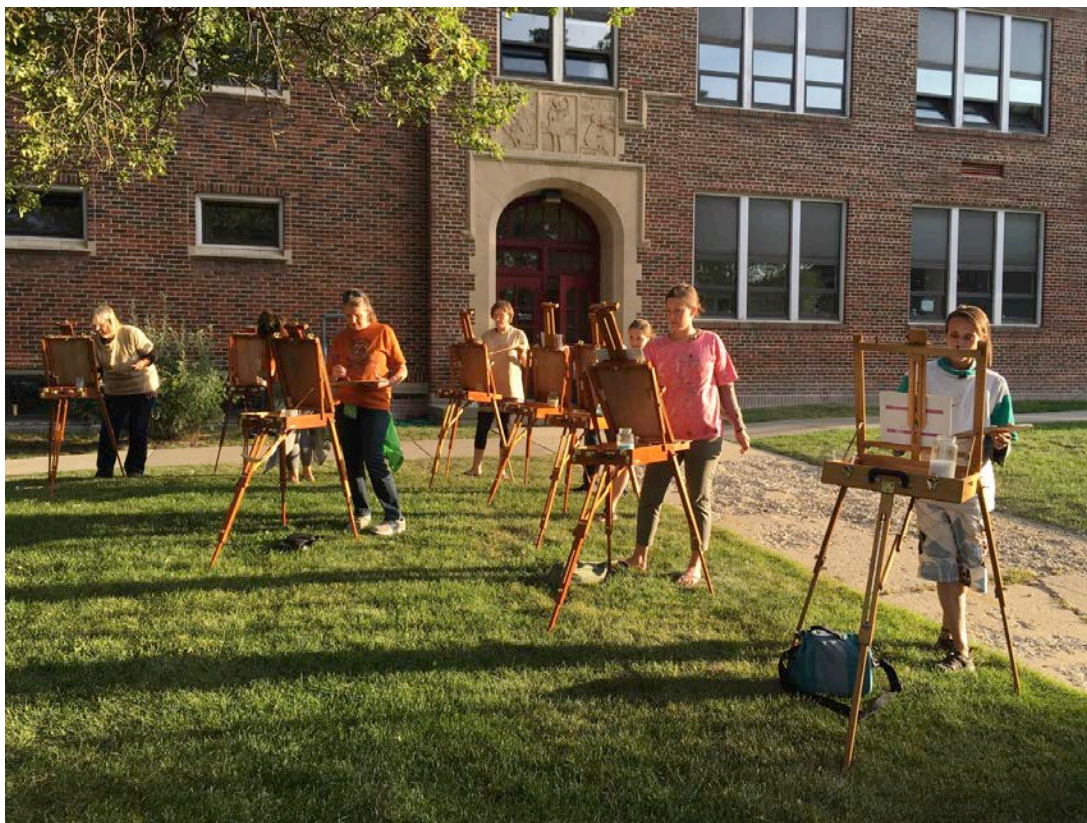


Photo 4. - Outdoor arts education on the north lawn.





Photo 5. - Sculpture installation on the north lawn.





Photo 6. - International ice climbing festival at the Emerson Lawn.



Photo 7. - A moment when art sparked imagination--imagine what the Grand Lawn will inspire.