

# SPECIAL AREA PLAN CALHOUN STREET-EAST/COOPER RIVER WATERFRONT

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



prepared by:



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ADOPTED FEBRUARY 9, 2010

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**PREPARED FOR:**

THE CITY OF CHARLESTON  
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# SPECIAL AREA PLAN: CALHOUN STREET-EAST/COOPER RIVER WATERFRONT

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# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Cooper River waterfront is Charleston’s next opportunity to create a mixed-use neighborhood worthy of a city well known for its high standards for livability, beauty, and charm. The former industrial areas along the riverfront east of East Bay Street can, and should, be redeveloped over time with a vibrant mix of hotel, office and mixed-income residential uses supported by ground-level and waterfront retail. The Calhoun Street corridor leading to the riverfront will serve as the primary gateway from King and Meeting Streets to the Cooper River, and should be aesthetically improved to be more like Charleston’s renowned streets like Broad and King. The Cooper River waterfront and the East Bay/Washington corridor can become an economic engine that strengthens the lower peninsula’s competitive position relative to nearby cities and to other mid-sized cities along the East Coast.

This development vision can be achieved with a combination of economic incentives necessary to attract the right types of development and design guidelines to ensure a quality result. In addition, the City must also invest in improvements to public parks and roadways to support quality development, take full advantage of public parking supplies, and ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian, and transit access. The plan recommends the following specific action steps by which the City can realize the vision. This plan is intended to work in concert with future redevelopment of the Union Pier, particularly the planned removal of the existing railway and the completion of Concord Street to the South.

## 1. INVEST IN A QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

Charleston is known for its generous public streets and parks. The Cooper River waterfront and Calhoun Street should be no exception. A successful mixed-use district depends upon quality streets and open spaces to attract residents, new businesses, hotels, and ground-level retail. The City will need to invest in the streetscape of Calhoun Street, East Bay, and Washington streets to enhance the primary gateways and the major thoroughfares of the district. Public waterfront spaces, such as Liberty Square, the park next to the Maritime Center, and the Gaillard Center forecourt, must be designed to support visitors and locals, particularly families, the target audience of the South Carolina Aquarium and future institutions such as the International African American Museum.

## 2. BALANCE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

The goal for the East Bay and Calhoun Street Corridors is to maintain the current vehicular capacity, but improve problem intersections for pedestrians, and provide bike paths and bike lanes wherever possible. A more attractive and walkable district will draw year round residents, new businesses and visitors, and keep them in the district for longer periods. A walkable district will support future ridership in transit whether it is bus, water taxi service or light rail. In addition, required levels for on-site parking should be reduced, to anticipate a future less dependent upon private vehicles and to more efficiently share existing parking resources and reduce the impact of vehicles on the built environment.

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### 3. ADOPT FORM BASED DESIGN CONTROLS FOR THE CORRIDOR

New development must be held to the highest urban design standards, not necessarily to control architectural style, but to assure that scale, height, and density do not detract or overwhelm adjacent historic residential neighborhoods. A system of street-by-street, form-based design controls, based on character is proposed. These guidelines will increase certainty of outcomes for potential developers and protect neighborhoods with a more detailed regulatory structure than is currently used to guide development. The Board of Architectural Review will still review development proposals, but will have more structure on which to base decisions.

### 4. USE PUBLICLY OWNED PARCELS FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT

Publicly owned parcels along the waterfront at Concord Park should be utilized to ensure affordable housing opportunities with active ground-level uses along the waterfront. The city should competitively market the two remaining parcels to ensure public views and access to the water and require allowable active ground-level uses within the flood zone to ensure public ground-level activity. Aggressive targets for attainable housing will ensure that a greater portion of renters or purchasers are year-round residents and will contribute to community life.

### 5. EXPAND THE ACCOMMODATIONS ZONE

Limited and targeted expansion of the Accommodations Zone will allow for up to 200 new hotel rooms in the area to strengthen the visitor experience without overwhelming the mix of uses within the district. The expansion of the Accommodations Zone will be limited to the Calhoun Street corridor between Alexander Street and the waterfront, to ensure a vibrant core of day and evening activity leading to the waterfront with the least disruption to adjacent residential neighborhoods. New hotels north of Calhoun Street will be limited to 100 rooms while the existing limit of 50 rooms will remain in effect below Calhoun Street.

### 6. BETTER UTILIZE PUBLIC PARKING STRUCTURES AND ADD MORE ON-STREET PARKING

The study area has two significant public parking structures that are under-utilized due to outdated leasing structures. Conversion of the management of these structures to pay-as-you-go, would allow for more efficient use of hundreds of unused spaces in these structures. Small-scale development within a certain radius of those structures should be exempted from parking requirements to encourage in-fill housing, retail, and offices within the corridor. Ground-level retail would be exempt from parking requirements on streets with on-street parking. Large office projects would still be required to provide off street parking, but at lower rates to reflect a commitment to alternative transit with ride-share programs and bike storage, lockers, and showers.

### 7. VIGOROUSLY MARKET AND BRAND THE DISTRICT TO NEW AND EMERGING MARKET BUSINESSES

The scale of available redevelopment parcels east of East Bay Street should be exploited, to attract businesses to the lower peninsula, close to recent graduates, other workforce, transit and urban lifestyle attractions that only the center of Charleston can offer. The Cooper River waterfront is a cost-effective alternative to traditional office locations on Broad Street. It offers larger sites for larger floor-plates and superior access to suburban residents. Office workers will enhance the district with increased daytime activity, which will balance the evening and weekend activity of residents and hotel visitors. Only with a full complement of uses provided by office workers, residents, and hotel visitors, can retail be expected to thrive along the waterfront and the Calhoun Street corridor. This effort should be undertaken with the resources available through the Charleston Digital Corridor to recruit knowledge based businesses and research.



## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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2.1 WHAT IS THE CALHOUN STREET-EAST/  
COOPER RIVER WATERFRONT?

2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.4 ACCESS & CIRCULATION

2.5 REGULATORY CONTROLS

## 2.1 WHAT IS THE CALHOUN STREET-EAST/COOPER RIVER WATERFRONT?

### PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The 2000 Downtown Plan identified the Calhoun Street Corridor to the Cooper River as an area to be more fully planned with a Special Area Master Plan. The 2008 Preservation Plan designates most of the study area a “transitional zone” which indicates an opportunity to create or strengthen character through strategic redevelopment. This plan is the direct result of these, and other, plans and recommendations. The purpose of the Calhoun Street-East Cooper Riverfront Waterfront Plan is to establish policies and priorities for coordinated development, land use planning, and budgetary preparation. Specifically the plan was intended to:

- Determine Downtown market niche
- Examine appropriateness of current zoning/development standards
- Recommend ways to energize the area
- Examine application of the accommodations zone
- Recommend physical improvements
- Provide a marketing plan to attract investment and consumers
- Provide strategies and goals to encourage residential and commercial growth
- Preserve and enhance the quality of life for Charleston residents and businesses.

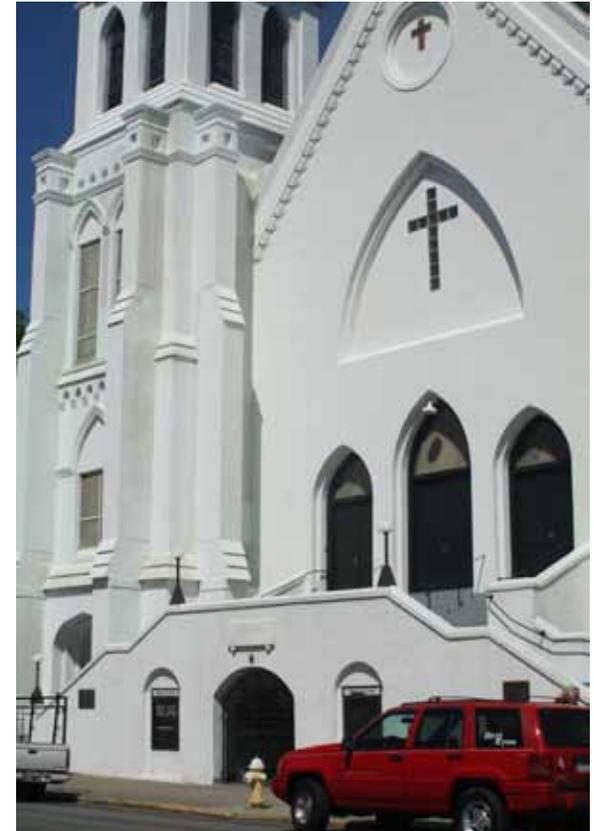
The plan boundaries were extended to the north and south to ensure that the East Bay and Washington Street corridors would be integrally considered in roadway and development plans.

### SITE HISTORY

Calhoun Street, named after the 19th Century southern political leader John C. Calhoun, is located at the geographic center of the Charleston Peninsula, yet is considered the northern edge of the tourist experience in Charleston. Despite this perception, many historic building and neighborhoods, and the visitors center lie to the north of Calhoun Street. Nevertheless, the earlier name for the street, Boundary Street, still expresses a time in which Calhoun Street did define the northern edge of the city that started at the Battery and grew slowly to the north.

The western end of Calhoun Street is primarily defined by the Charleston Medical Center. The intersection with King Street, at Marion Square, is the heart of the retail district running north to south through the Peninsula. The eastern end of Calhoun Street has historically been dominated by the working waterfront along the Cooper River and the neighborhoods that historically housed its work force. 20th Century redevelopment policies dramatically altered this historic condition, when the Ansonborough public housing was first built in the 1950s. Hurricane Hugo damaged the structures to such an extent that demolition became necessary in the 1990s making way for redevelopment of the then derelict waterfront. Redevelopment in the area included the 18-story Dockside Towers, the South Carolina Aquarium, parking structures and new office and residential buildings.

Calhoun Street is also now host to several important civic buildings. Several have been built over the last decade including the Charleston County School



*Emanuel AME Church on Calhoun Street*

District Building and the Charleston County Public Library across the street. Additionally, Calhoun Street has several important and historic churches along its length. Buist Academy, a public magnet school, sits at the corner of Anson Street.

## 2.1 WHAT IS THE CALHOUN STREET-EAST/COOPER RIVER WATERFRONT?

### RECENT INVESTMENTS & PLANNING

Several large scale projects currently in the planning stages will collectively alter the look and feel of the Calhoun Street Corridor in the coming years.

**Concord Park**, a mixed-use development created with public and private financing on the previous Ansonborough Housing site, includes housing, a 100-room hotel and a five-acre public park.

The **International African American Museum (IAAM)** is proposed to be built on public land directly across Concord Street from the South Carolina Aquarium. This project is currently in the design phase.

The City has approved funds to construct a new park, the **Charlotte Street Park**, on the last block of Charlotte Street, eastward of Concord Street, with a commemoration space for Irish Americans.

The buildings of **Fountain Walk** are under consideration for redevelopment by a private entity into a waterfront hotel.

Two hotel projects are planned fronting on Marien Square, one at the vacant federal building site on Meeting Street and one at the old library site on King Street.



The South Carolina Aquarium will have a new neighbor to the west with the International African American Museum

### PLANNED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

This planning effort acknowledged and considered the redevelopment recommendations for **Union Pier**. The first phase of Union Pier is proceeding with planning underway for the modernization of the cruise facility and adjacent mixed-use development. Early actions that can precede any Union Pier redevelopment include the realignment of selected Washington Street and East Bay intersections to improve traffic flow as called for in the Union Pier redevelopment plan. Full redevelopment of Union Pier, when it occurs, would facilitate an important recommendation in this plan, namely the removal of rail access, the widening of Washington Street, and the extension of the bike path through the Cooper Riverfront. Full buildout of Union Pier would see the reconnection of Concord Street from Calhoun Street to Market Street and Waterfront Park.

During the course of this study a traffic signal has been installed at the corner of Anson and Calhoun to enable better pedestrian connections across Calhoun Street. On-street parking has been added to Anson Street in conformance with recommendations made early in this planning process.



Rendering of the Proposed Concord Park project. Image: East West Partners.

### LAND USE & OWNERSHIP

Land uses within the corridor, as in much of Charleston, are very mixed. One can find housing and office uses side by side. Churches and schools are mixed into neighborhoods. Calhoun Street, in typical Charleston fashion, is fronted by small scale retailers, two churches, a school, several public buildings and a few homes.

East of East Bay Street the primary land use is commercial including a large supermarket, several smaller retail shopping centers and a large number of vacant or industrial/commercial parcels used to store materials. There are a limited number of new residential units that have been constructed recently.

Along the Cooper River waterfront, land uses are primarily multi-family housing interspersed with well known landmarks: Fountain Walk, the Hippodrome theater, the South Carolina Aquarium, the Fort Sumter Visitor Education Center and Ferry Departure Facility, and the Maritime Center. New housing is being constructed near Dockside, a high-rise residential project built in the mid-1970s. The waterfront is a combination of public parks and docking facilities for tours and charters and a stop for the water shuttle.

The City of Charleston has site control of Concord Park, two development sites near the Maritime Center and a third site slated for the International African American Museum. The two unreserved sites are available for appropriate redevelopment as determined by this planning process. The Gaillard Auditorium and the adjacent park are owned by the City and are considered candidates for improvements as determined by this planning process.

## 2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT



For the purpose of a demographic assessment and market analysis, ERA created a primary and secondary trade area. **The Primary Trade Area** is the East Calhoun Street study area. **The Secondary Trade Area** is the remaining peninsula of Charleston, from just north of Heriot Street south to the water.

### INTRODUCTION

Economics Research Associates (ERA) reviewed market conditions in the study area and the City of Charleston for residential, workplace, commercial, and lodging uses. Data reviewed includes but is not limited to:

- Secondary data on development patterns such as building permits and housing starts, pipeline projects, etc.
- Current and historic market performance by use.
- Inventory, rents, occupancy levels, room rates, historic absorption, tenant characteristics, ongoing construction, proposed projects.

Synthesizing the findings of previous tasks, ERA identified development opportunities for specific focus areas within the planning area by testing demand for various land uses.

This analysis is intended to inform market-supportable development potentials for the preliminary master plan, and to subsequently test the phasing, and implementation strategies.

For the purpose of a demographic assessment and market analysis, ERA defined a primary and secondary trade area. The Primary Trade Area is the East Calhoun Street study area extended to include some adjacent residential streets. The Secondary Trade Area is the remaining peninsula of Charleston, from just north of Heriot Street south to the tip of the Peninsula.

## 2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

### HOUSEHOLD AND POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The demographic assessment evaluates appropriate economic indices to identify and measure fundamental sources of demand now and in the future for a range of land uses including residential, office space, retail space and lodging.

ERA reviewed historic, current and projected growth in population and households, age composition, labor force, employment by sector and occupational category, household incomes, and other measures of economic growth.

ERA focused on competitive strengths and weaknesses of the planning area relative to citywide and regional trends, strategic economic development initiatives currently underway, infrastructure patterns, and geographic distribution of jobs, population and income.

- Peninsula Charleston has a total current population of approximately 35,043 residents; population is projected to increase by 0.3 percent over the next five years, adding 553 new residents, for a total of 35,596 residents by 2012.
- The total number of households on Charleston's peninsula is projected to increase from 14,521 in 2007 to 15,019 by 2012, adding 498 households.
- Residents in the primary trade area are older than those living in the secondary area with a median age of 44.1 years compared to 29.1 years; average household size is 1.5 in the primary trade area and 2.1 in the secondary trade area.
- Incomes in the primary trade area are much higher compared to the secondary trade area. In 2007 the average household income in the primary trade area was \$83,327 compared to \$56,038 in the secondary trade area.

Category	Primary	Secondary	Total
2007 Population	342	34,701	35,043
2012 Population	358	35,238	35,596
CAGR 07-12	0.92%	0.31%	0.31%
2007 Households	223	14,298	14,521
2012 Households	237	14,782	15,019
CAGR 07-12	1.23%	0.67%	0.68%
2007 Median Age	44.1	29.1	
2007 Avg HH size	1.5	2.1	
2007 Avg Household Income	\$83,327	\$56,038	
2012 Avg Household Income	\$102,649	\$67,306	
CAGR 07-12	4.26%	3.73%	
Real Growth Rate 1/	1.78%	1.25%	
2007 Median Household Income	\$60,000	\$26,263	
2012 Median Household Income	\$70,227	\$30,044	
CAGR 07-12	3.20%	2.73%	
Total Income 2007	\$28,497,834	\$1,944,574,638	\$1,973,072,472
Total Income 2012	\$36,748,342	\$2,371,728,828	\$2,408,477,170
CAGR 07-12	5.22%	4.05%	4.07%

Note: CAGR is the compounded annual rate

1/ Real Growth Rate adjusts the CAGR based on real inflation rates between 1997 and 2006

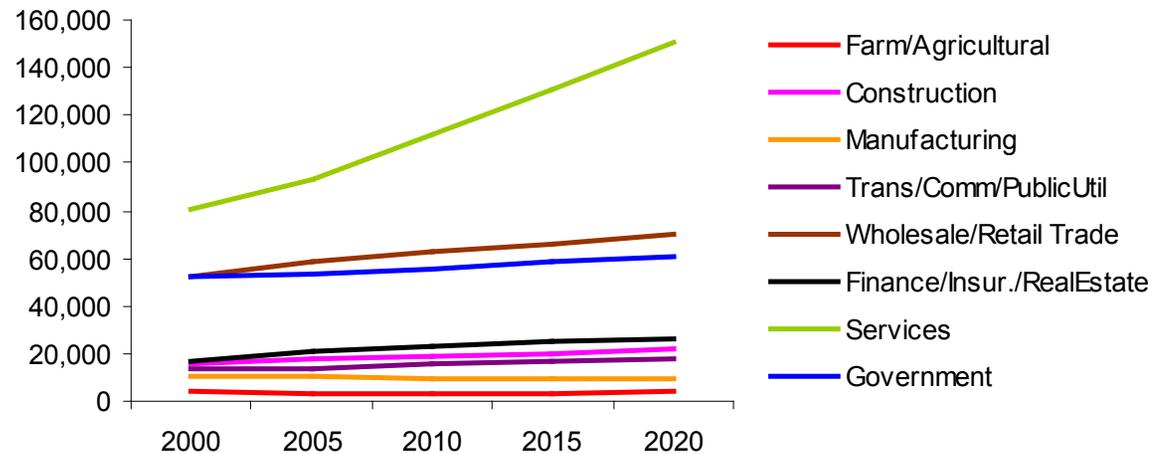
Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, 2007

## 2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

### WORKFORCE AND JOBS

- The U.S. Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators reports that the employment market in Charleston County is healthy and continues to add jobs.
- These indicators compare the third quarter of 2008 with the average of the current and three prior third quarters.
- The current level of “Total Employment” is higher than the previous third quarter levels and the number of “New Hires” to the Charleston market is also higher than average.
- “Job Creation” and “Net Job Flows” in Charleston County are still positive but much lower than average, indicating that certain industries are contracting employment; in this case a majority of these jobs are in the entertainment and recreation industries.
- “Earnings” have declined slightly but are still at healthy levels.
- Historically, the “Services” industry has employed the most people in Charleston County. This trend is expected to continue, adding approximately 38,500 new jobs by 2020.
- The “Wholesale and Retail Trade” industry and the “Government” industry are also strong employers in Charleston County and currently employ almost 85,000 people.

**Charleston County Employment by Industry, 2000 to 2020**



	Charleston (Q3)	Charleston (Avg:Selected + 3 Prior qtrs)	South Carolina (Q3)	South Carolina (Avg:Selected + 3 Prior qtrs)
Total Employment	207,051	197,820	1,864,226	1,846,958
Net Job Flows	531	7,800	-2,505	28,396
Job Creation	12,270	18,085	99,667	124,698
New Hires	45,222	43,822	367,648	356,588
Turnover	11.40%	12.70%	10.80%	11.00%
Avg Monthly Earnings	\$3,185.00	\$3,219.50	\$3,017.00	\$3,060.50
Avg New Hire Earnings	\$1,983.00	\$2,040.00	\$1,916.00	\$1,918.75

Source: U.S. Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2008.

### EXISTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

#### THE CHARLESTON DIGITAL CORRIDOR

The Charleston Digital Corridor was launched in February 2001 to attract, nurture and promote Charleston's knowledge economy (includes, but not limited to, those in the fields of information technology, life sciences, telecommunications, medical device design and engineering, scientific discovery and proprietary electronic equipment and applications). The program is accomplished through a combination of technology enabled initiatives and business incentives, private business support and member-driven programming. The Digital Corridor's commitment is to facilitate a business, cultural and social environment where technology companies thrive. The Charleston Digital Corridor consists of four geographic areas (districts), offering a diverse range of options to meet the unique size, personality, price and infrastructure requirements for all types of knowledge-based industries. Other programs offered by the city include:

#### **Five-Year Municipal Property Tax**

**Abatement:** In addition to the County property tax abatement, companies may apply for a five-year exemption from City property taxes for the following:

New research and development facilities and additions costing \$50,000 or more

New corporate office facility and additions costing \$50,000 or more and where at least 75 full-time jobs are created

New manufacturing facilities and all additions costing \$50,000 or more

Additionally, to qualify for City property tax abatement, a company must have a minimum of 10 employees and offer these employees a comprehensive benefits package.

**Streamline Permitting:** Recognizing the importance of timely development approvals and effective communication with the various regulatory agencies, companies located in the corridor or desiring to relocate into the corridor receive one-on-one assistance by the Corridor's project manager.

**Reduced Business License Fees:** Companies located in the Charleston Digital Corridor offering computer programming services and prepackaged software services (SIC code 7371 and 7372) benefit from dramatically reduced business license fees. The fee schedule follows:

Amount of Income Fee Calculation

0 - \$2,000; \$10.00

\$2,000 - \$1 million; \$0.50 per thousand over \$2,000

\$1 million - \$2 million; \$0.10 per thousand

\$2 million - \$10 million; \$0.05 per thousand

Over \$10 million; \$0.025 per thousand

**Parking:** Due to the high density of development on the Charleston peninsula portion of the Digital Corridor, the availability of parking associated with some office buildings is limited. There are however, an abundance of public parking facilities located throughout peninsular Charleston. The Charleston Digital Corridor will facilitate securing parking for qualified technology intense companies at prevailing parking rates or at discounted rates at limited public parking facilities. Occasionally, the Corridor will provide companies with a small parking subsidy.

#### CHARLESTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Charleston Local Development Corporation's (LDC) mission is to create jobs and foster economic growth. The LDC offers start-up and small businesses financial assistance through a host of loan programs. Loan options include the Small Business Incentive Loan, SBA Microloan, LDC Revolving Loan Fund, and SBA 504 Loan Program. In addition to providing financial assistance, the LDC also offers technical assistance for business planning and development. Companies may be able to combine funds available from the Charleston LDC with monies available from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Government's Revolving Loan Fund.

## 2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### RESIDENTIAL MARKET ASSESSMENT

Charleston's peninsula has seen a moderate amount of new residential development over the last ten years, a majority of which is located along the waterfronts of both the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. Most recently, projects including One Vendue Range, Lauren's Place, Anson House and East Bay & Elliot on the eastern side of the peninsula offer condominium product ranging from \$500,000 for a smaller unit to almost \$5,000,000 for penthouse views. Bee Street Lofts, on the western side of the peninsula, is one of the newest developments and had an average selling price of just under \$434,000 in 2007.

According to the Charleston MLS, there were a total of 77 multi-family unit sales between November 2007 and October 2008 (includes resales) on the peninsula. The number of sales a month during this time period ranged between one and 13 units. Overall, sales of multi-family units are down compared to the previous two years when total sales were 110 and 105 units.

Over the last five years, the projects mentioned above have an average annual absorption ranging from less than one unit to 7.33 units. The exception is the Bee Street Lofts which started sales in 2006 and have closed on 70 units (approximately two units per month); the project is now 65 percent sold out according to the sales department. The developer is offering significant discounts and incentives.

According to the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors, the average closing price for a multi-family unit on the peninsula (of those listed at \$500,000 or more) has declined steadily from \$1,262,000 in March of 2005 to \$757,083 in March of 2008. The

current level of inventory for the same product over the same period of time has increased from only 39 units to 276 units, an indication that the market may need considerable time to absorb current supply. Currently, multi-family units spend an average of 190 days on the market (South of the cross-town), which equates to 46 months of available inventory.

The modest amount of development on the peninsula is constrained by non-market factors such as high land costs (which require higher selling prices), limitations on height and density, and more complicated review and approvals processes.

ERA's research suggests that current inventory on the peninsula is priced higher than market demand. ERA suspects that more affordable inventory would increase absorption; however there is limited sales data to confirm this assumption.

The development of Concord Park includes plans for 169 residential units, 64 of which are workforce housing. This development would likely absorb most of the residential demand in the study area for some time to come, based on current levels of absorption in the market. However, the lack of previous development of workforce housing on the peninsula suggests that there would be unmet demand for for-sale units at that price point. Performance of the new residential developments may indicate whether there is additional residential demand in the primary market area.



### RESIDENTIAL MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

#### FOR-SALE DEMAND METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of the analysis, and consistent with the study area's traditional role in the metropolitan housing market as a higher-end location, ERA defined the target-market, income-qualified households as those earning more than \$75,000 per year, indicating an affordability range beginning at about \$225,000 per unit.

To calculate demand potentials, three general segments were identified:

- Demand from new households
- Demand from converting renter households
- Turnover from existing households meeting the demographic and income criteria.

Within each segment, ERA also takes into account the lifestyle preference of existing households that are likely buyer candidates for the proposed development. In this analysis, preferences for multi-family units in an urban setting were considered. After this filtering process ERA arrives at a total target market annual demand figure, assigns a capture rate for the entire study area and applies a percentage of investor demand.

ERA estimates the total market demand for multi-family, for-sale units that meet the above requirements to be 18 units annually on the peninsula. ERA estimates that the East Calhoun Street study area can capture approximately 35 percent of that total target market demand, or 7 for-sale units annually.

Presuming that the study area successfully captures these target households, and based on existing absorption patterns in nearby competitive residential projects, this would suggest that all target markets could be expected to generate annual absorption of approximately seven multi-family units per year; which is in line with the average absorption of current and recent developments on the peninsula. Current trends in the housing market nationally, along with competitive developments under construction in the trade area led ERA to conservatively estimate the likely market capture in the study area.



## 2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



### Estimated Annual Demand for Multi Family For-Sale, 2007 - 2012

<b>Peninsula Charleston</b>	
<b>I. Demand from New Households</b>	
New Households, 2007-2012	498
Annual New Households	100
Income Qualified /1	19%
Estimated Lifestyle Preference/2	28%
<u>Propensity to Own</u>	<u>38%</u>
New Target Market Households	2
<b>II. Demand from Converting Renter Households</b>	
Total Households, 2007	14,521
Income Qualified /1	19%
Existing Renters	48%
Annual Turnover Rate	5%
Estimated Lifestyle Preference/2	28%
<u>Propensity to Buy</u>	<u>5%</u>
Conversion Target Market Households	1
<b>III. Turnover of Existing Households</b>	
Total Households, 2007	14,521
Income Qualified /1	19%
Tenure Qualified	38%
Estimated Lifestyle Preference/2	28%
Estimated Annual Turnover Rate	5%
Existing Target Market Households	15
<b>Project Absorption Potential</b>	
Total Target Market Annual Demand	18
Estimated Achievable East Calhoun Street Mar	35%
Total Absorption from Core Market Segments	6.18
Potential Investor/Second Home Demand	10%
<b>Annual Absorption Potential</b>	<b>7</b>

1/ Target market minimum income range of \$75000 or greater

2/ Estimated Lifestyle Preference is based on segmented demographic data provided by ESRI Business Analyst, 2007

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; US Census; Economics Research Associates, 2008

## 2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### RESIDENTIAL MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

#### FOR-RENT MULTI-FAMILY

There is a high level of demand for rental apartments on the Peninsula. According to Real Data Apartment Index, the peninsula has the smallest amount of for-rent inventory in the overall Charleston market, representing less than 2% of the total area market with only 430 units (does not include student housing and rental units in single-family homes etc.). A majority of for-rent apartment buildings are located in West Ashley, Mount Pleasant and North Charleston. The vacancy rate in the downtown sub-market is currently 2.1%, which is the lowest of any sub-market in the overall Charleston market.

The apartments in downtown have the highest rent per square foot at \$1.27 on average or \$716 per month.

Downtown Charleston apartments have an average size of 563 square feet, which is only 60% of the size of the average apartment in the overall market. There were 17 units absorbed over the past year in the downtown Charleston sub-market.

#### FOR-RENT DEMAND METHODOLOGY

ERA used a similar methodology to estimate demand for for-rent multi-family units.

ERA estimates the total market demand for for-rent, multi-family units on the peninsula to be 129 units annually. ERA estimates that the East Calhoun Street study area can capture approximately 10 percent of that total target market demand; or approximately 13 units annually.

#### Estimated Annual Demand for Multi Family For-Rent, 2007 - 2012

	Peninsula Charleston
<b>I. Demand from New Households</b>	
New Households 2007-2012	498
Annual New Households	100
Income Qualified /1	33%
Tenure Qualified	62%
Candidate Renter Segments /2	40%
New Target Market Households:	8
<b>II. Demand from Existing Households (Turnover)</b>	
Total Households, 2007	14,521
Income Qualified	33%
Tenure Qualified	62%
Candidate Renter Segments	40%
Annual Turnover Rate	10%
Existing Target Market Households:	121
<b>Annual Absorption Potential</b>	
Total Target Market Annual Demand	129
Estimated Achievable East Calhoun Street Market Share	10.0%
<b>Annual Absorption Potential:</b>	<b>13</b>

1/ Target market income range is \$45,000+

2/ Estimated Lifestyle Preference is based on segmented demographic data provided by ESRI

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, US Census, Economics Research Associates, 2008

## 2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### HOTEL MARKET ASSESSMENT & OPPORTUNITY

The lodging market in Charleston is strong. Average annual occupancy in downtown Charleston reached 72.7 percent in 2007, increasing 1.8 percent between 2006 and 2007.

Room supply increased 11.4 percent during the same period indicating that occupancy would have increased more than 11 percent if supply had remained consistent. An additional 825 rooms have been approved, however the development of 244 of those rooms are on hold for various reasons.

It is clear the city has pent-up demand for lodging properties. In addition to strong occupancies, the average daily rate reached \$151 in 2007, increasing 7.8 percent between 2006 and 2007.

The market has long been constrained by a zoning restriction limiting hotel development to a strict corridor within the historic district of the city. However, there are many strongly-performing luxury guest houses and bed and breakfasts outside the designated zone.

As a result of the zoning restrictions, many hotels have located across the river in Mount Pleasant or West Ashley. While occupancy and rate is slightly lower in these areas than historic downtown Charleston, they are still quite strong at 70.1 percent occupancy and \$131 average daily rate (ADR). The success of properties in Mount Pleasant as well as the strong occupancy and rate performance of downtown Charleston itself indicates potential for additional hotel rooms in the East Calhoun Street Corridor. Because the site is further from Charleston's main historic attractions, it would be

well-suited to upscale hotels that are an alternative to the luxury properties that exist inside the current accommodations zone.

Based on visitation and hotel performance trends, ERA's initial lodging analysis suggests there is demand for approximately 1,107 to 1,409 additional hotel rooms on the peninsula over the next five years.

In addition to evaluating room night demand on a market-wide basis, ERA evaluated room night demand as it relates to market preferences based on average household incomes of visitors to Charleston. A majority of the demand exists in the "Upscale" category and would include properties similar to the **Doubletree**, the **Renaissance**, and **The Andrew Pinckney Inn**. The results of this analysis are not necessarily to be used as direct recommendations for development but rather as a tool to identify gaps in supply and demand.



## 2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

East Calhoun Street Study Area Lodging Demand, 2007-2012

<b>Local Unaccommodated Demand</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Charleston annual visitation	4,330,000	4,455,570	4,584,782	4,717,740	4,854,555	4,995,337
Charleston annual overnight visitation	3,377,400	3,475,345	3,576,130	3,679,837	3,786,553	3,896,363
Average Party Size	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Average Length of Stay	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
Charleston hotel stays	6,585,930	6,776,922	6,973,453	7,175,683	7,383,778	7,597,907
Historic District market share	28.0%	28.0%	28.0%	28.0%	28.0%	28.0%
Historic District hotel stays	1,844,060	1,897,538	1,952,567	2,009,191	2,067,458	2,127,414
Days in a year	365	365	365	365	365	365
<b>Total Roomnight demand</b>	<b>5,052</b>	<b>5,199</b>	<b>5,349</b>	<b>5,505</b>	<b>5,664</b>	<b>5,829</b>
Existing Supply	4,183	4,183	4,183	4,183	4,183	4,183
Total Existing and planned room supp	4,183	4,659	4,659	4,659	4,659	4,659
<b>Total unaccommodated demand</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>1,005</b>	<b>1,169</b>
<b>Total Demand Potential</b>						
Projected occupancy	72.7%	74.0%	75.3%	76.7%	78.1%	79.5%
<b>Total Room Demand</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>1,409</b>

Source: Smith Travel Research, Charleston Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Economics Research Associates, 2008



## 2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### OFFICE MARKET ASSESSMENT & OPPORTUNITY

Historically, office market performance in Peninsula Charleston is very strong with low vacancy rates, high rent rates and solid absorption. There is currently more than 522,000 square feet of office space in the primary trade area.

This space is comprised mainly of The Carolina First Center and RBC Centura Bank Building. These properties, along with smaller office spaces, demand rents upward of \$28 per square foot and keep vacancy rates, on average, under 2.0 percent.

The Carolina First Center was built in 1997 and has a current average rental rate of \$30.62 per square foot and a vacancy rate of 18 percent, according to CoStar. The building has a total of 130,000 square feet and is occupied by various law firms, financial services firms and Rivers Enterprises. The RBC Centura Bank Building is classified as class B space and its almost 90,000 square feet are fully leased; no rental rate data was available.

The seven-story, 90,151 square foot L. Mendel Rivers building was built in 1966 and has remained vacant since it sustained damage during Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The building sits on more than 2 acres along North Meeting Street and awaits rehabilitation or demolition and specific development plans. The building was not included in the office market demand calculations due to the uncertainty of its future use.

There is moderate market demand for office space in the East Calhoun Street study area. Based on employment projections for the area over the next 15 years and current trends in the Peninsula Charleston market (such as absorption at the Carolina First Center), ERA estimates that the study

area can support demand for approximately 14,000 square feet of office space annually, or a total of 214,000 new square feet by 2020.

It is important to note that this is a *minimum* level estimate for office demand that might be expected to be absorbed without a targeted recruitment

effort and the recruitment of a built-to-suit tenant is a viable option for the study area. As one of the Charleston Digital Corridor districts, the study area may be able to offer incentives that would increase interest in locating in appropriate buildings that might be developed as part of a targeted or specific recruitment effort.

#### East Calhoun Street: Office Demand Model

"A" and "B" Office Market Summary		Charleston County
Total Inventory (SF)		12,702,930
Vacant Space (SF)		1,287,897
Under Construction (SF)		-
Pre-Leased (%)		0%
<b>Total Vacant &amp; New Inventory</b>		<b>1,287,897</b>
<b>Avg Ann'l Absorption (SF)</b>		<b>450,000</b>
<b>Years to Stabilization <sup>1/</sup></b>		<b>2.65</b>

Market Demand	Avg Ann'l	2007-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020
Historic Market Demand (SF)	450,000	1,350,000	1,800,000	1,800,000
Employment-based Demand (SF)	948,344	4,078,403	1,366,037	6,884,030

Submarket Allocation	Avg Ann'l	2007-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020
Share of New Demand <sup>1/</sup>	100.00%	110.00%	121.00%	133.10%
Historic Market Demand (SF)	450,000	1,485,000	2,178,000	2,395,800
Employment-based Demand (SF)	948,344	4,486,244	1,652,905	9,162,644
<b>Estimated Submarket Allocation (Average SF)</b>	<b>699,000</b>	<b>2,986,000</b>	<b>1,915,000</b>	<b>5,779,000</b>

Project Capture @ 2%	Avg Ann'l	2007-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020
Capture - Market Demand (SF)	9,000	29,700	43,560	47,916
Capture - Employment (SF)	18,967	89,725	33,058	183,253
<b>Average Capture (SF)</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>38,000</b>	<b>116,000</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Assumes a 10% in growth of capture of avg ann'l demand in each period.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Woods & Poole; CoStar Property Research; Economics Research Associates, 2008.

## 2.3 MARKET ASSESSMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### RETAIL MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Based on historical resident spending patterns and estimated calculations of visitor spending, ERA estimates that the East Calhoun Street study area can support between 67,800 and 90,300 square feet of retail by 2012. However, the existing retail inventory in the East Calhoun Street study area will have implications on any new retail development:

**Calhoun Street Retail-** existing retail totals 23,413 square feet. This includes Kennedy’s restaurant, Arrow Cleaners, Saffron’s and other small retailers. These businesses are generally supported by neighborhood residents and ERA believes that any future residential development within the study area (including Concord Park) can be accompanied by new, similar neighborhood serving retail tenants.

**East Bay Street Retail-** existing retail totals 149,735 square feet. This includes Harris Teeter, Ansonborough Square Shopping Center, East bay Street Shops and other retailers. Construction requirements regarding flood management east of East Bay Street may cause some of these ground level tenants to seek other locations in the future. This may provide opportunity for East Calhoun Street to capture established retailers already within the study area or decrease the net amount of existing retail in the study area.

**Miscellaneous Retail-** located on Laurens/ Meeting / Society/Hasell and Henrietta Streets. Existing retail totals 27,898 square feet.

**King Street Retail-** existing retail at the corner of King and Calhoun Streets total 99,187 square feet. This includes the Marion Square Shopping Center,

East Calhoun Street: 2012 Supportable Sq. Ft. Retail

Area	Low Range	Site Supportable	High Range
Apparel & Apparel Services	4,000	4,400	5,300
Entertainment & Recreation	8,600	9,600	11,500
Personal Care	5,500	6,100	7,300
Household Furnishings and Equipment	2,900	3,200	3,800
Grocery	31,600	35,100	42,100
Food and Drink Away From Home	15,200	16,900	20,300
<b>Subtotal 2012 Supportable SF</b>	<b>67,800</b>	<b>75,300</b>	<b>90,300</b>

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, 2008

Moe’s Southwest Grill, Jackson Davenport and a few other small retailers. These retailers target both residents and tourists with restaurants and goods. While the whole of King Street retail is more of a destination, it also provides convenience shopping for residents and visitors.

Due to the large quantity of existing retail described above, retail projections for the study area actually reflect negative net supportable square foot ranges in 2012, indicating that, at a certain point in time, there may be more retail space than the current market expenditure potential can support. However ERA believes that opportunities do exist within the study area to enhance existing retail offerings and create new offerings to support current and future residents, particularly along the riverfront and at the Maritime Center. Not all of the existing retail in the study area is in Class “A” condition. New

retail space configured for current retail operations preferences may have an advantage over unimproved existing space in Class “B” condition.

Markets evolve and shift as the amount and type of available retail changes. What today may appear to be oversupply can attract new spenders from outside the immediate trade area and become positive over time. A ‘negative’ supportable square footage estimate in 2012 does not mean an area is permanently oversupplied. Generally speaking, retail market demand analysis should not be considered conclusive, as it combines “typical” and “industry average” performance measures with professional judgment based on local conditions and knowledge of the market and retail industry. There are several factors that will determine the success or failure of any individual retail business, resulting in an industry that is constantly changing.

## 2.4 ACCESS & CIRCULATION

### PEDESTRIAN

The pedestrian environment within the study area is decidedly unfriendly, particularly compared to many of Charleston's more favored streets such as Broad and King. Accommodations within the study area include sidewalks along all block fronts but many are narrow and are located immediately adjacent to high speed traffic. Portions of the study area have many curb cuts that break up the street frontage and create friction between vehicles and pedestrian movements. The lack of tree cover and presence of overhead utilities detracts from the pedestrian character of Calhoun Street.

High-visibility crosswalks have been installed at some locations, but crosswalk pavement markings are absent along much of the East Bay Street and Washington Street corridors. Uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, where vehicles are not required to stop by a signal or stop sign, can be found along Calhoun Street and along East Bay and Washington Streets. Fortunately, a new signal recently has been constructed at the intersection of Calhoun Street and Anson Street/Elizabeth Street, which will aid pedestrian crossings in this corridor.

Complaints of excessive speed along Calhoun and East Bay Streets were heard during the stakeholder meetings. These corridors and the intersection of Calhoun and East Bay are seen as pedestrian barriers due to the volume of traffic and undesirable geometric features.

On-street parking, which can be found in some of the blocks, acts as a buffer from moving vehicular traffic, but additional locations were identified where additional on-street parking could be added to help calm traffic and further improve the pedestrian experience.

### BICYCLE

The level topography and urban character of the study area lends itself to bicycle transportation. While peak period congestion and narrow lane widths make the main traffic corridors, such as Calhoun and East Bay, difficult for cyclists, the surrounding street grid provides suitable alternatives.

There are posted bicycle routes on the Charleston peninsula, but the study area is not part of that network. A recently completed bicycle path along East Bay Street extends to the northern edge of the study area and connects to the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge, which is the route to Mount Pleasant. The path is used for recreational and commuting cyclists.

### BUS AND TRANSIT

The DASH circulator system operated by CARTA (Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority) serves the study area well. It provides circulation throughout the area connecting the Maritime Center, the Aquarium Garage, the Charleston Visitors Center, the College of Charleston and other key destinations on the peninsula. CARTA also provides regional bus service to communities and park 'n ride lots beyond the peninsula. The College of Charleston has arranged for all students, faculty and staff to ride the CARTA system free of charge by compensating the city.



*Existing intersection of East Bay and Calhoun Street is decidedly pedestrian unfriendly*

## 2.4 ACCESS & CIRCULATION

A facility for tour and school buses is located on the north side of the Aquarium Garage. This facility is entered from Washington Street and exits onto Concord Street. It is used by charter and school buses bringing visitors to the South Carolina Aquarium and the Ft. Sumter Visitor Center. Passengers can disembark at the facility and restrooms are provided. The facility will also serve patrons to the International African American History Museum, which is currently being planned. It has the capacity to accommodate approximately 15 buses parked in tandem, with capacity for more, depending on how it is managed. Bus drivers arriving to the Aquarium are instructed to use the facility prior to the trip, but no wayfinding signage guides drivers as they come into the area and approach the facility.



School buses on Calhoun Street at the Buist Academy

School buses park on Calhoun Street in front of the Buist Academy. There are as many as three buses parked at a time, particularly during afternoon pick up when the buses have arrived prior to students being dismissed. Parents pick up and drop off students on Anson Street adjacent to the school. The Academy takes efforts to manage parent activity on Anson Street. The morning drop off activity is the most concentrated and overlaps with the commuter peak traffic.

The Charleston Water Taxi provides service between the Maritime Center and Mt. Pleasant. Presently it is mainly used by tourists and by locals for recreational purposes. If financially viable, the operators have the desire to increase the hours of operation and service to other areas of the Charleston peninsula.

A new light rail line that would run from Summerville to downtown Charleston is being studied. It will use existing rail alignments and within the peninsula it will run between King and Meeting Streets terminating near the Visitors Center.



Existing DASH routes within the study area

## 2.4 ACCESS & CIRCULATION

### ROAD NETWORK AND TRAFFIC

The study area experiences peak period traffic congestion along the Meeting, Calhoun and East Bay Street Corridors. Delays occur particularly at the intersections of Calhoun/King Streets, Calhoun/Meeting Streets, and Calhoun/East Bay Streets.

Calhoun Street is one of the few corridors that runs completely east to west across the peninsula. From a traffic flow standpoint Calhoun Street effectively terminates at East Bay Street with most traffic turning left or right. East Bay is the main north-south artery on the east side of the peninsula. It carries commuter traffic from the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge south into the peninsula during the morning peak and in the opposite direction during the evening commuter peak.

Major intersections along the Calhoun Street and East Bay Street corridors within the study area operate under signal control. A signal re-timing study for the peninsula was completed recently and timings are being implemented to improve traffic flow.

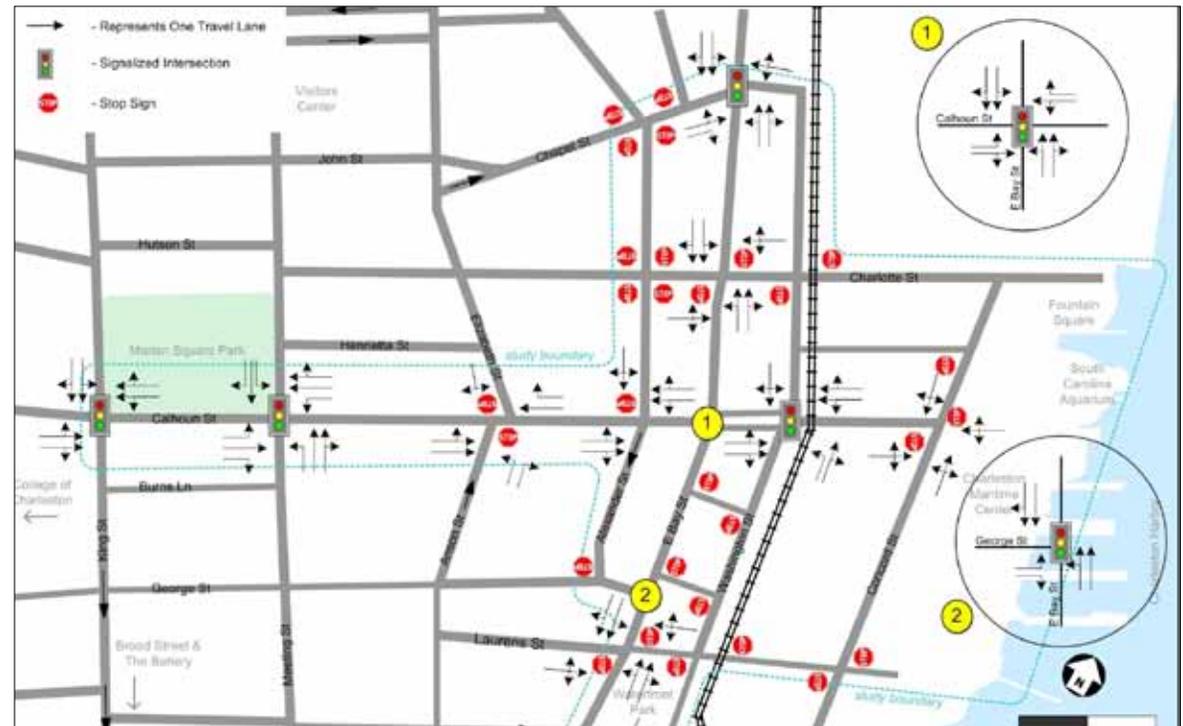


Freight trains routinely block access to the waterfront

The traffic signal at Calhoun and Washington Streets is coordinated with the adjacent rail signal. This intersection was signalized with the construction of the Aquarium. A new traffic signal has recently been installed at the Calhoun Street and Elizabeth/Anson Streets intersection. The new signal was warranted based on pedestrian safety.

Cut through traffic is a concern of residents, particularly the neighborhoods located north and south of Calhoun Street. During peak periods this concern is greater as traffic looks for alternate routes to avoid chokepoints.

The rail line that parallels Washington Street creates a barrier when a train is entering the port, exiting the port or moving rail cars around in the yard. During these periods the waterfront is effectively cut off from the rest of the street network. While this activity does not last for extended periods of time, there is no set schedule and visitors to the area may not be aware of other street connections to the north or south that may offer an alternative access point. This issue will be resolved with the removal of the rail when the Union Pier project is implemented.



Existing transportation conditions within study area

**ON-STREET PARKING**

On-street parking exists in some capacity on all of the streets in the study area. Some blocks, on East Bay north of Calhoun Street and on Calhoun between East Bay and Concord Streets, do not have on-street parking. Parking is primarily absent in the block faces where the street is needed for traffic operations. However, there are block faces where additional parking could be provided, such as the south side of Calhoun Street between Anson Street and Alexander Street.

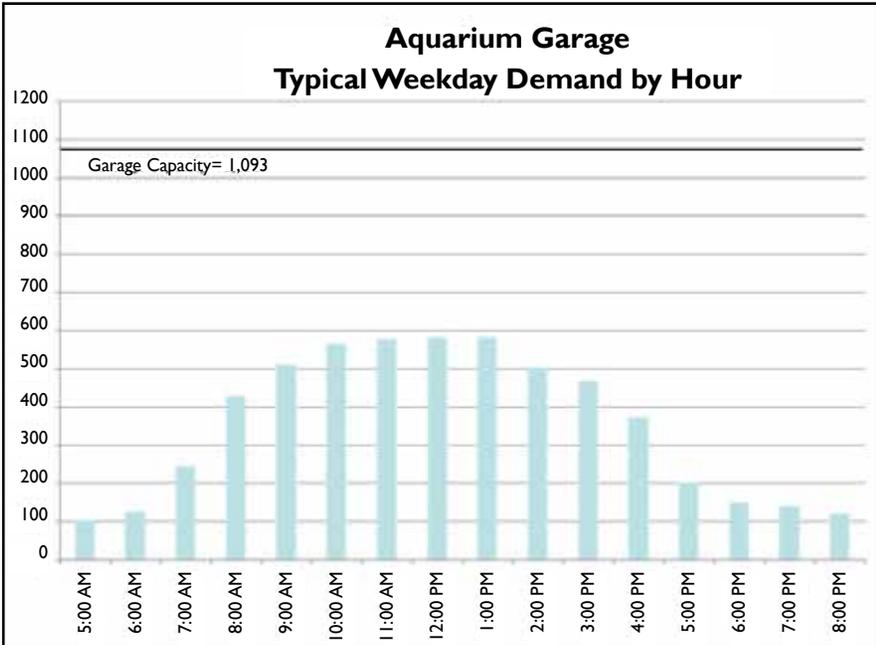
The residential blocks to the north and south of Calhoun Street are under control of the Residential Parking Permit program. Parking in the residential parking zones is restricted to two hours maximum.

Residents with a valid permit issued by the City are exempt from this restriction. Concerns were expressed by residents that there is increasing pressure for on-street parking particularly during events at the Gaillard.

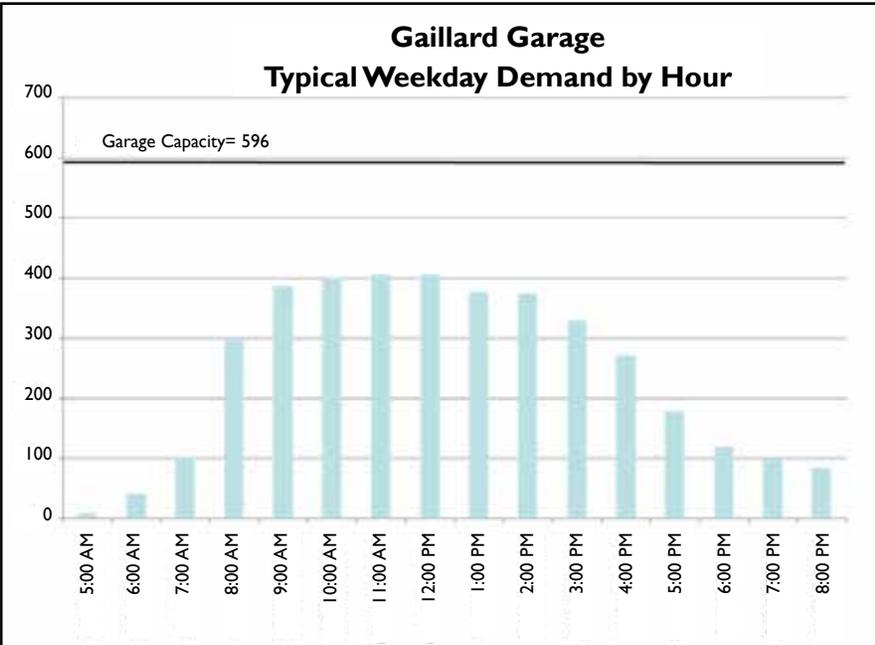
There are peak-period parking restrictions in some locations, notably on Calhoun Street west of the study area that are managed by the City. Parking enforcement is controlled by a division of the Department of Budget, Finance & Revenue Collection.



*On-street resident parking on Alexander Street*



*Typical daily utilization rates for the Aquarium Garage*



*Typical daily utilization rates for the Gaillard Garage- recorded June 18, 2008*

## 2.4 ACCESS & CIRCULATION

### OFF-STREET PARKING

There are numerous off-street parking facilities within the study area consisting of surface lots, ground-level parking under buildings and structured garages. They vary in size from a few spaces to more than a 1,000 spaces. In total, there are approximately 2,500 public parking spaces controlled by the City and 1,200 parking spaces under private control in the study area.

There are three garages operated by the City and several metered surface lots. The three garages include the Aquarium Garage located on Calhoun Street between Washington and Concord Streets, the Gaillard Garage accessed from Alexander Street and located adjacent to the Gaillard Municipal Auditorium, and the Marion Square Garage located next to the historic Francis Marion Hotel on King Street. The garages are managed by the Department of Budget, Finance & Revenue Collection and operated by Republic Parking under contract to the City.

The Marion Square Garage contains 308 spaces and is used primarily by the Francis Marion Hotel. It is open to other public users dependent on the hotel's need as it has no other parking.

The Gaillard Garage contains 596 spaces. According to data supplied by Republic Parking, the garage is generally 2/3 full or 400 spaces at peak demand on a typical weekday. Most days this garage accommodates a daytime need generated by leaseholders that work in the vicinity. There is little evening demand except when there is an event at the Gaillard Auditorium. Gaillard events are generally accommodated by the garage except during some daytime events. Daytime events when the daily garage user needs conflict with Gaillard patrons can cause the garage demand to exceed supply. During these times Gaillard patrons are instructed to use the Aquarium Garage. There are also a few other times of the year such as Spoleto or the Cooper River Bridge Run when parking demands need to be managed.

The largest parking structure in the area is the Aquarium Garage at 1,093 spaces. This garage was built to serve the South Carolina Aquarium, but it also serves the Fort Sumter Visitor Center and provides parking to a variety of leaseholders. The College of Charleston is the largest leaseholder with approximately 600 leases, although the daily demand produced by the College is significantly less than this. Total peak demand for all users of the garage is approximately 550 spaces or 50%. This demand drops to 420 during the summer when the College is in summer session. Based on the limited data available, there are days when the demand spikes to as much as 800 cars, but it never reaches capacity. Weekend demand is less than weekday demand, and evening demand is limited.

Future development in the vicinity of the Aquarium Garage will increase utilization of the garage. Concord Park, a mixed-use project south of the garage, will park all residential tenants on site with the hotel and restaurants using the garage under agreement with the City. The International African American Museum and the Fountain Walk Hotel (currently under consideration, but not approved) are two other new uses that will use the garage. Future development is expected to displace some surface parking that will need to be accommodated by the garage. The potential future expected peak daily demand is approximately 950 spaces or 87% capacity assuming the College continues to park students, faculty and staff in the garage. Due to limited information, some of the parking demand projections for the future expected users of the garage may be overstated. The real peak demand could be less than the forecast of 950 spaces.

PUBLIC STRUCTURE	CAPACITY	DAILY PEAK SURPLUS
GAILLARD GARAGE	596 SPACES	~196 SPACES
AQUARIUM GARAGE	1,093 SPACE	~543 SPACES
TOTAL	1,689	739 SPACES

*Observed parking capacity and surplus parking available at daily peaks periods*

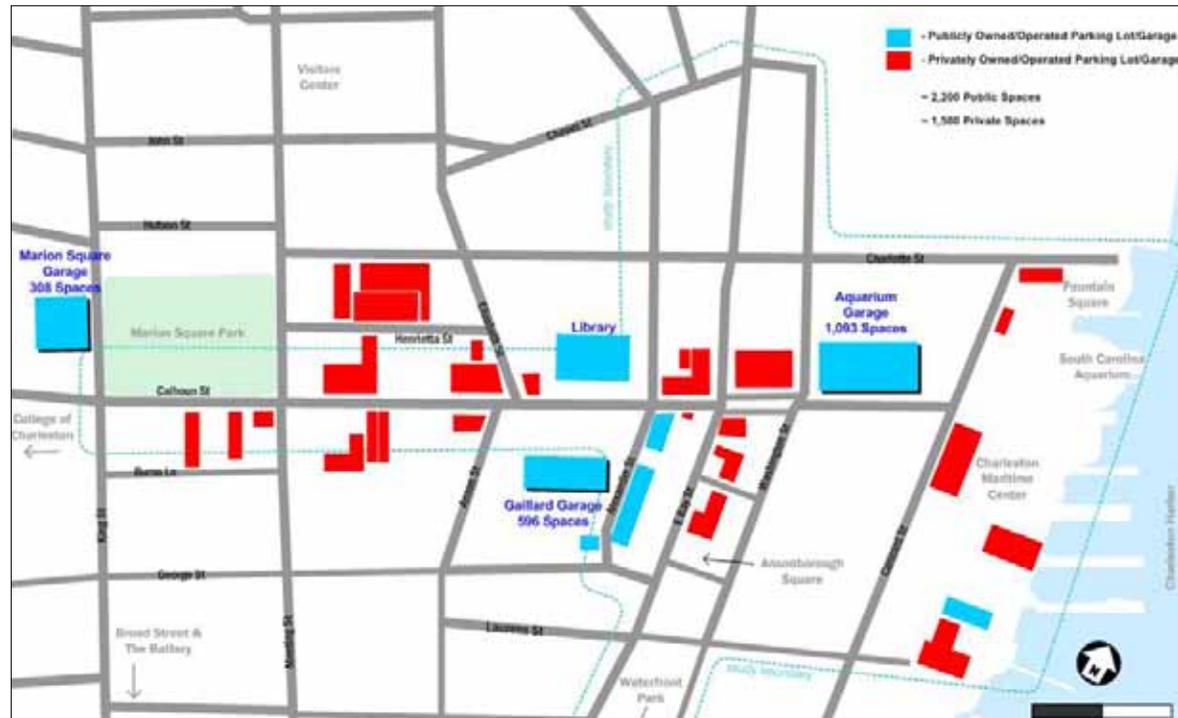
**EXISTING PARKING REQUIREMENTS**

According to Charleston ordinance, off-street parking that is fulfilling a zoning requirement must be located within 400 feet of the building or land use. If the spaces are not on-site, a long-term lease of at least 10 years is required. After 10 years, the lease is renewed or left to market conditions to determine parking provisions as the requirement expires.

The current zoning ordinance does not have a provision to allow for shared parking among compatible uses. An amendment that would allow shared parking for mixed uses based on SmartCode was under consideration, but it did not receive public support over concerns of impact to residential on-street parking. There is also no consideration for on street parking to serve the needs of an adjacent land use. The current zoning encourages the construction of parking rather than seeking management of the demand.

Exemptions for parking requirements are made at the discretion of the Board of Zoning Appeals for difficulties pertaining to lot size, configuration, or access.

All new buildings are required to provide off-street loading. Existing buildings located in the historic district are exempt.



*Inventory of public and private off-street parking within the study area*



*One of the private surface parking lots on Calhoun St.*

## 2.5 REGULATORY CONTROLS

### EXISTING FLOOD REGULATIONS

Due to the devastation of Hurricane Hugo in 1989, restrictions on construction within potential flood zones has been greatly strengthened. Portions of the study area east of East Bay Street lie within the most restrictive of flood zones, an area expected to have moving floodwaters near the Cooper River. Very few uses are permitted in this area below the flood elevation which is established as high as 17 feet above street level. The result is that most new development locates parking on the ground floor and all habitable spaces are lifted above the flood plain. Anything built within the Velocity Zone must be of “breakaway” construction that will collapse

in the face of flooding waters so that the structure is not compromised and flood waters are not inordinately obstructed. Many existing retailers have been grand-fathered into this zone but would be prevented from rebuilding after a storm event or upon redevelopment.

The second zone is the A-Zone that permits uses on the ground floor below flood height, but it requires that all habitable spaces, except residential, be waterproofed with removable protective systems such as panels that can be affixed into place before a storm event. The expense of such waterproofing

is generally a deterrent for the use of the ground level for anything other than parking. Additionally, it is not allowed in residential structures. Many buildings in the Calhoun Street Corridor, the Library and City Government Offices, for example, feature ground level parking with all uses elevated above. The result is a rather lifeless street environment that contributes little to the pedestrian experience on Calhoun Street.

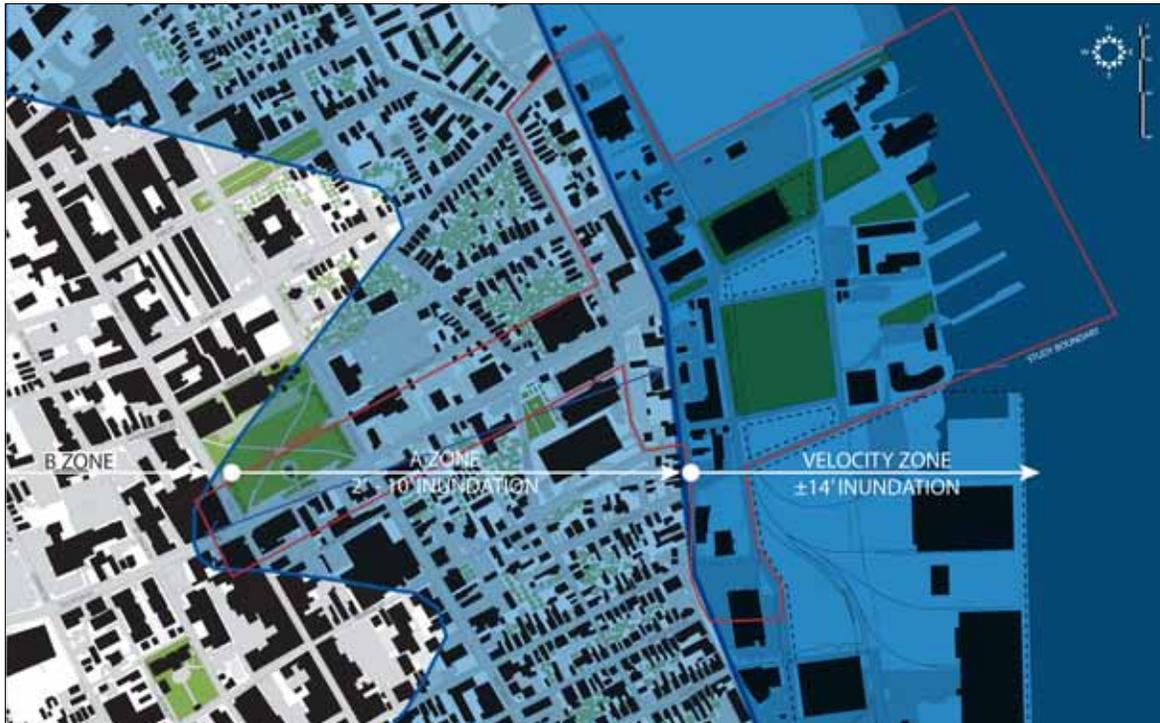


Diagram of the various flood zones ranging from the most restrictive “velocity zone” to less restrictive “inundation zone”



The ground-floor entrance to the County building on Calhoun Street not suitable for an important public facility.



A common condition found in the study area: parking dominates the ground floor

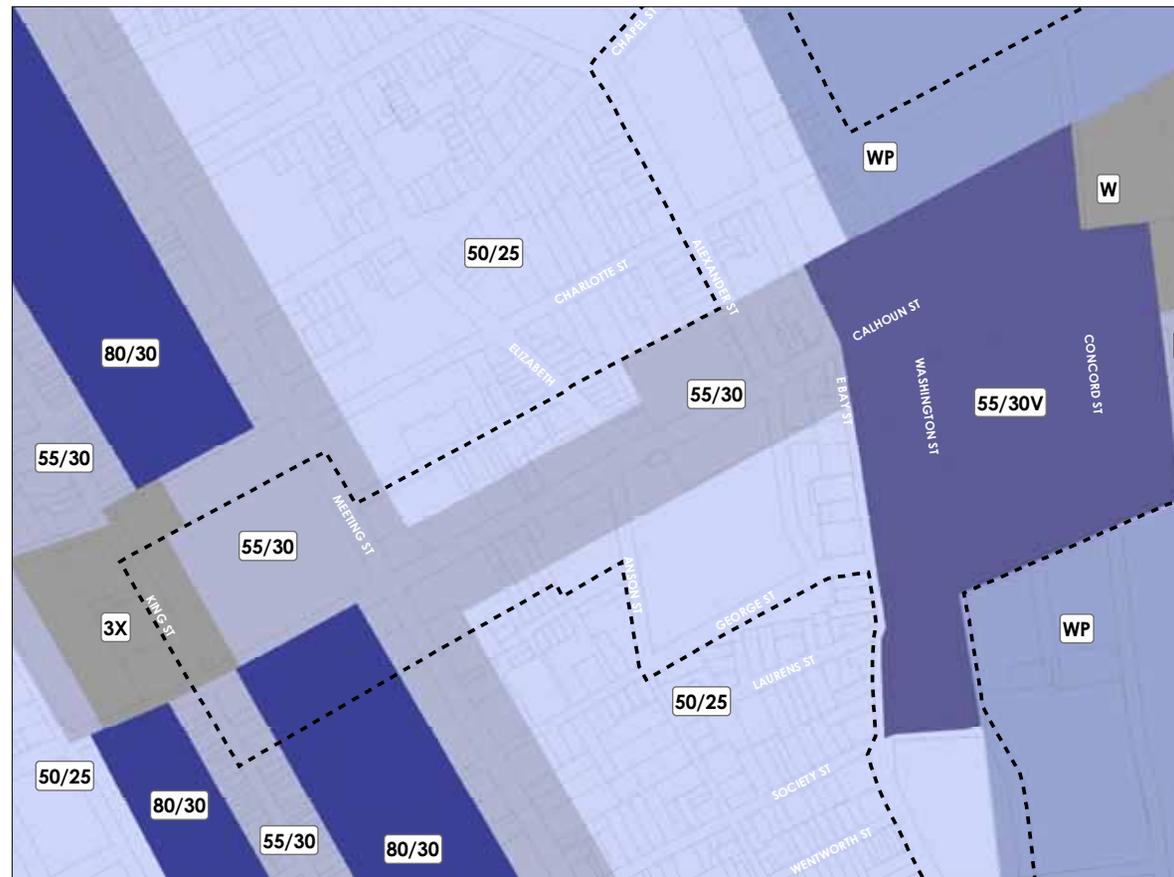
EXISTING HEIGHT REGULATIONS

Charleston has height controls that are based upon extensive preservation planning efforts that were established to protect the historic scale and character of the city. As such, taller buildings, up to 80 feet and in limited cases 100'-120', are only permitted in a narrow corridor in the middle of the peninsula along King and Meeting Streets. In the remainder of the study area, and along the waterfront, heights of new buildings are limited to 55 feet except in residential neighborhoods where the limits are less at 50 feet. Most of the recently constructed buildings in the study area have uniformly approached the maximum height allowed leaving the district with a rather consistent, flat roofed, building style that lacks the variety found in historic portions of the City.

Heights can be increased in the V-Zone through the introduction of public amenities such as outdoor dining, temporary shops, green spaces, lobbies, or building access stairs on the ground floor. As an example, this bonus was used to increase building heights in Anson House. Heights in the V-Zone are measured from the curb. Portions of buildings above 55 feet are required to be set back 25 feet from the right-of-way to reduce bulk and mass.



Anson House (under construction) with bonus penthouse above the 55 foot building limit.



Existing height map for the study area. The numbers represent the maximum and minimum heights in feet for each district.



### EXISTING LAND USE CONTROLS

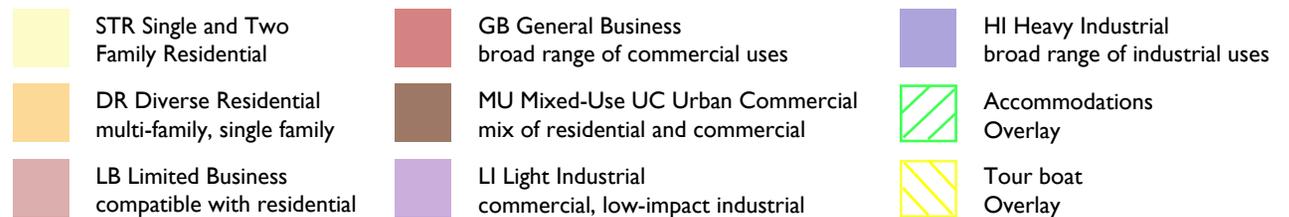
Underlying land use designations within the study area are very accommodating. A mix of uses is possible in nearly any area. The most restrictive zone is for multifamily housing (DR-1F) on Alexander Street, while the most permissive is the Heavy Industrial zoning underlying the Aquarium Garage and future site of the International African American Museum. Much of the site is General Business (GB) which allows many uses including mixed-use and multi-family housing.

The Accommodations Overlay covers the western portion of the study area along King and Meeting Streets, with additional pockets to the east, including a quadrangle in Concord Park. This is slated for construction of a 100 room hotel. Smaller bed and breakfast Inns are zoned Accommodations Overlay on East Bay Street.

The Cooper River waterfront has a tour boat overlay district to preserve this use along the waterfront.



Existing Zoning





### 3. PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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3.1 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.2 ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

3.4 PARKING STRATEGIES

3.5 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

## 3.1 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### INTRODUCTION

Charleston, long admired for its urban beauty and livability, owes much of its reputation to the strong tradition of urban design and architecture in the downtown peninsula. The 2000 Downtown Plan identified the collection of under-utilized sites in the Calhoun Street-East/Cooper River Waterfront area and determined that new planning goals were needed to guide future investments here. More recently, the 2008 Preservation Plan designated the area as a “Transitional Zone”. The following urban design principles establish the overall goals for the study area and establish the context for detailed design recommendations. These principles were developed after consultation with public participants in two charrettes and aim to strengthen the Calhoun Street-East/Cooper River Waterfront in ways that reinforce the City goals for the entire peninsula.

### STRENGTHEN THE SUB-DISTRICTS

The Calhoun Street Corridor comprises several distinct sub-districts, each requiring public investment priorities and development guidelines tailored to their individual character and needs. Around Marion Square, for example, the historic park and a wide variety of existing uses guide the discussion about improvements here. Further east, Calhoun becomes dominated by institutions, large and small, with some areas of surface parking. Along the north-south spines of East Bay and Washington, large under-utilized sites offer sizable footprints attractive to commercial uses—a rarity in the downtown area. Lastly, the Cooper River waterfront contains a mix of uses including major cultural attractions that could benefit from increased activity levels.



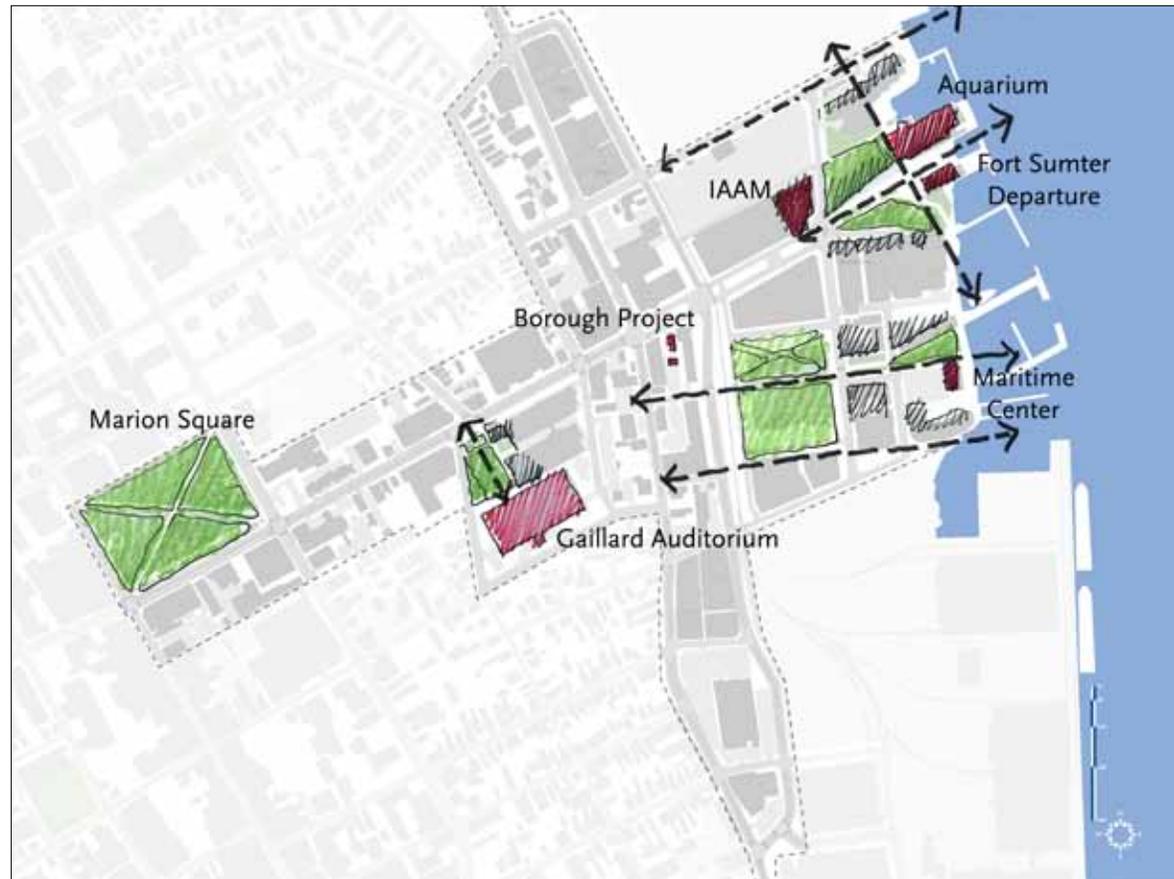
#### ENHANCE VIEWS TO AND ALONG THE WATER

Navigation through a city, by residents and visitors, is enabled by a mental map informed by visual cues. One of the great barriers of movement to the Cooper River from Calhoun is the absence of these cues. Looking east on Calhoun Street from any spot between Marion Square and East Bay Street, it is impossible to see the attractions on or near the waterfront. Even standing at the edge of Liberty Park, just a few hundred feet from the Aquarium door, one can still only barely see the top of the building above the trees! One of the great complaints for this area is that people cannot find the waterfront and the Aquarium, even when they are at its edge.

In order to attract visitors and residents to the riverfront, visual cues must be created or uncovered to establish this mental map and a real spatial understanding of this segment of the city. Views to the water and a sense of public accessibility must be preserved and enhanced in future development decisions. Views of civic and cultural attractions and monuments are particularly important as landmarks to navigate.

Though the essential components of a waterfront such as the water and its boats, bridges, habitat, and working industries are important, a successful waterfront aims to be more than just this thin strip. To create a successful waterfront district, the activity and presence of the river must extend into adjacent blocks through clear pedestrian pathways and wide view corridors.

Views extending out to the harbor and islands are also important. The National Park Service celebrates Fort Sumter and launches tours to the



island from a museum and visitor center located next to the aquarium. Programming at the future International African American Museum is linked to Sullivan's Island.

The Cooper River is perhaps the greatest asset of the Calhoun Street corridor and adjacent neighborhoods. Like Charleston's other beloved riverfront districts, the area from the Maritime Center up to the future Charlotte Street Park should be a collection of spaces that may be enjoyed by everyone.

### 3.1 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

#### DEFINE GATEWAYS AT DECISION POINTS

Currently, wayfinding is a challenge in the Calhoun Street area. The need for better and more cohesive signage was a frequent request in stakeholder meetings. However, it is not just the absence of signs that is to blame here. Empty lots, for example, signal an end to the activity of a district, suggesting to exploring pedestrians that “there’s nothing more to see here.”

Various types of improvements are needed to announce Calhoun Street and the riverfront as important places and to help define the district. A stronger visual character in the streetscape and street wall, more consistent ground-level activity in buildings, more consistent screening of parking lots, and pedestrian improvements that ease street crossings will be just as important as a new signage system.

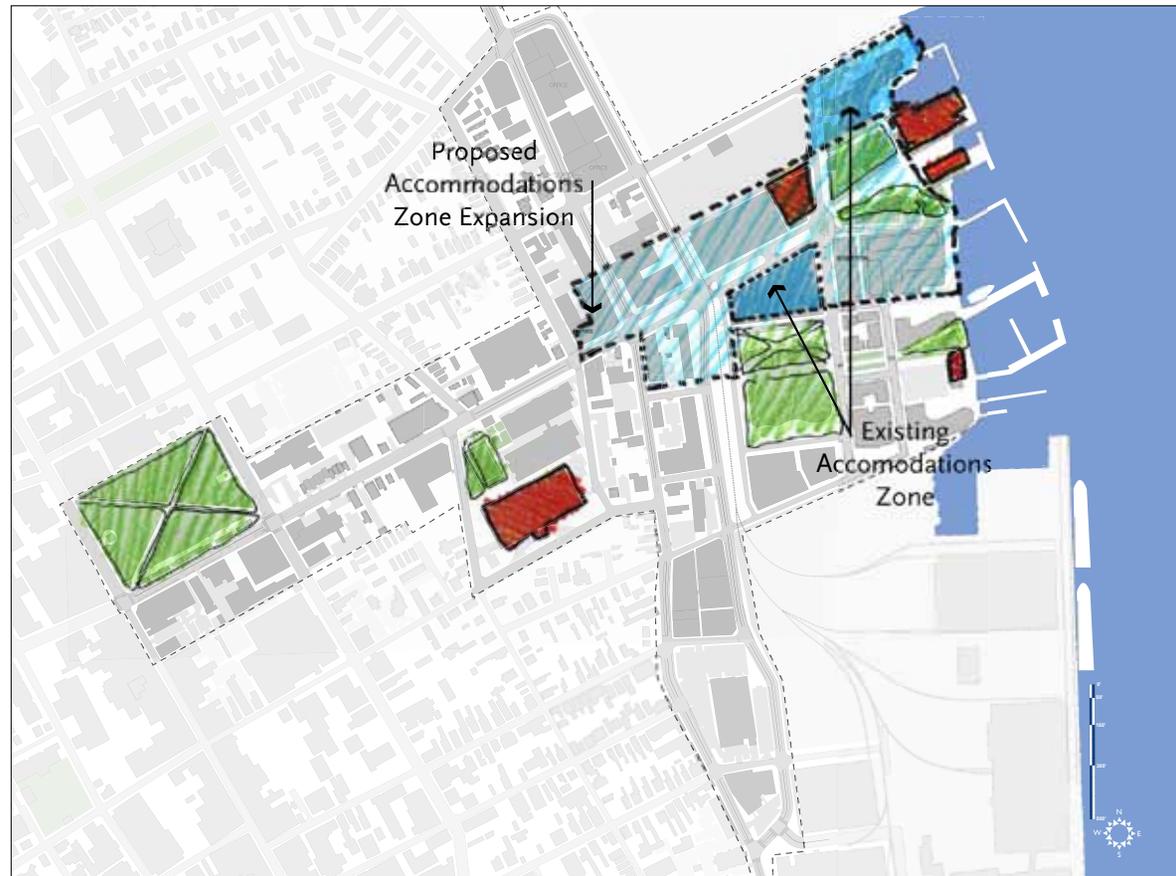
Several locations along the course of Calhoun Street cry out for better definition, often at key decision-making points. These tend to occur in the transitions between neighborhoods (such as the Meeting and Calhoun streets intersection), where visibility is low (such as at East Bay and Calhoun, looking east), and at sites of civic importance (as at the start of the waterfront, at Calhoun and Concord).



#### CREATE INTENSITY AROUND ATTRACTIONS

Despite being among the most visited attractions on the peninsula, the South Carolina Aquarium and other waterfront attractions could increase visitors if there was an intensity of activities sited in close proximity. With its slate of existing and proposed attractions, the Cooper River waterfront has the potential for greater drawing power. If successful, these developments could help achieve the goal of the 1998 Tourism Update to alleviate intense pressure on existing tourism centers. However, in order for the waterfront to be a vibrant district that will attract visitors and new businesses, some additional hotels—which bring restaurants, retail, transit, and 16-hour pedestrian activity with them—are needed.

To ensure that hotels would not dominate the character of the waterfront and adversely impact residential neighborhoods, hotel development has been limited to certain areas on the peninsula in accordance with the Visitors Accommodation Overlay District. A controlled expansion of the Accommodations Zone will be beneficial to this area and further the goals of attracting more visitors to the Aquarium and new attractions along the Cooper River. An enlarged Accommodations Zone should stretch on either side of Calhoun Street from the river to East Bay Street and Alexander Street to allow for a limited number of new hotels to activate the Calhoun Street frontage within easy walking distance of the Aquarium. Limits on the number of hotel rooms per hotel and number of total hotel rooms in the zone should be established to avoid overbuilding or overscaled facilities.



### 3.1 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

#### BALANCE PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICLE NEEDS

Charleston is full of pleasurable walks, but the Calhoun Street corridor has yet to become one of them. Some of the elements that detract from the walking experience are related to vehicle traffic and the way in which intersections preference the movement of cars over people. For example, we frequently heard residents and area workers describe the difficulty for even the most able-bodied pedestrian to cross the intersection of Calhoun and East Bay street. Others spoke of accidents involving pedestrians.

While existing vehicle capacity should be preserved through the corridor, new enhancements will favor pedestrian safety and control excessive vehicle speeds by widening sidewalks, reducing the radii of turns and adding on-street parking where possible.

A network approach will be taken. For example, congestion on East Bay Street can be reduced by re-balancing traffic between East Bay and Washington Streets to better control existing peak-traffic volumes, and still add on-street parking, wider sidewalks, and improved pedestrian crossings. Modifications to the intersections at the southern and northern end of the study area will be necessary to achieve this rebalance of traffic. Eventually Concord Street will reconnect through Union Pier and add another north south street along the Cooper River, linking the Aquarium to the City's other attractions.

Cyclists will, in the future, be able to travel through the East Bay Corridor from the Ravenel Bridge southward on an extended multi-use path that will follow Washington Street along the railway right of way to Union Pier.

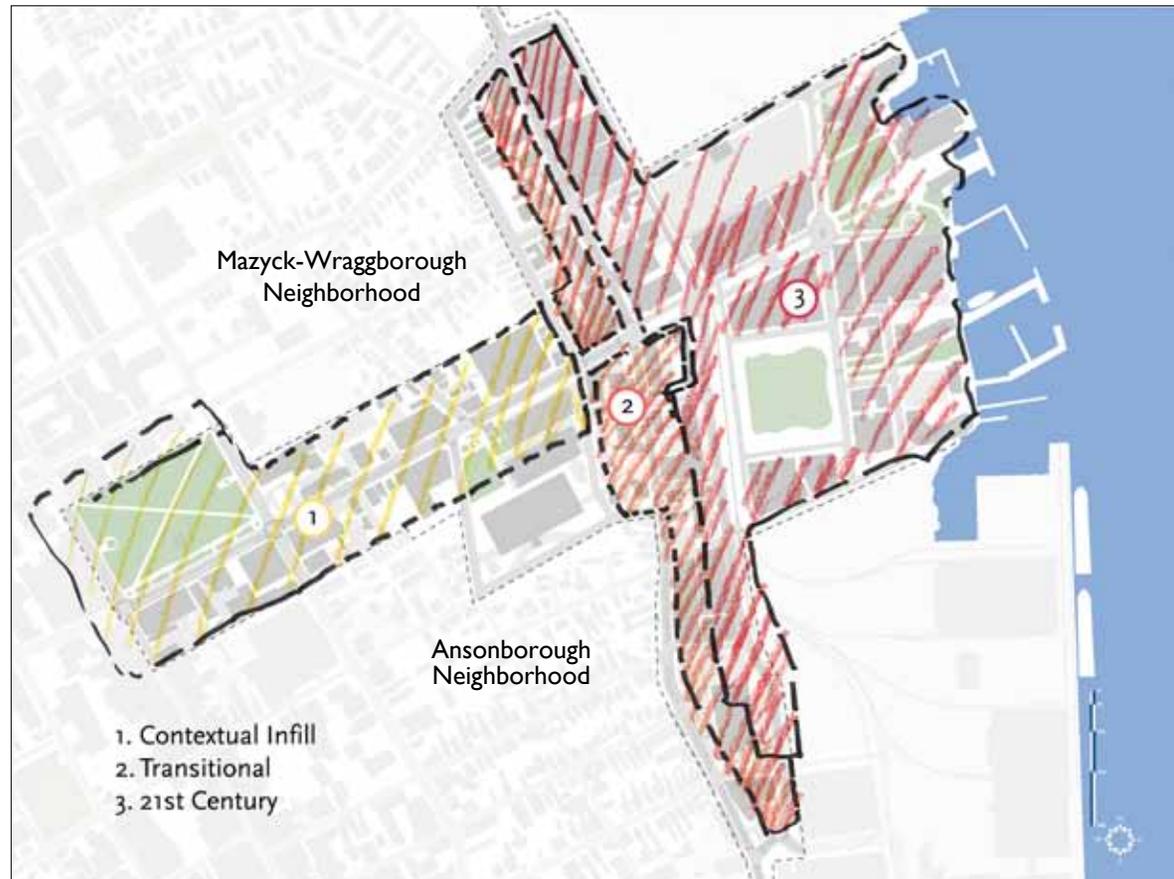


#### TRANSITION FROM HISTORIC TO 21ST CENTURY CHARACTER

Within the Calhoun Street Corridor between Marion Square and Alexander Street, future infill should be respectful of adjacent properties, particularly those that are historic and contextual in scale. The Mazyck-Wraggborough and the Ansonborough neighborhoods are fine examples of historic neighborhoods worthy of preservation and protection from inappropriately scaled developments.

To the east of Washington Street, a variety of traditional and contemporary 21st century expressions and bolder forms are appropriate along the waterfront, near the Aquarium, and adjacent to industrial zones.

In between these two zones, new buildings are charged with transitioning between the old and the new and must be carefully designed to respond to differing uses, heights, and character on blocks to either side of them. Along East Bay Street, for instance, historic homes line one side of the street, while current zoning allows buildings of up to 55 feet directly across the street with additional incentives that could increase that height to 70 feet. Here, a more nuanced approach to height is necessary to avoid overwhelming historic buildings and respect the scale and character of the historic neighborhoods.

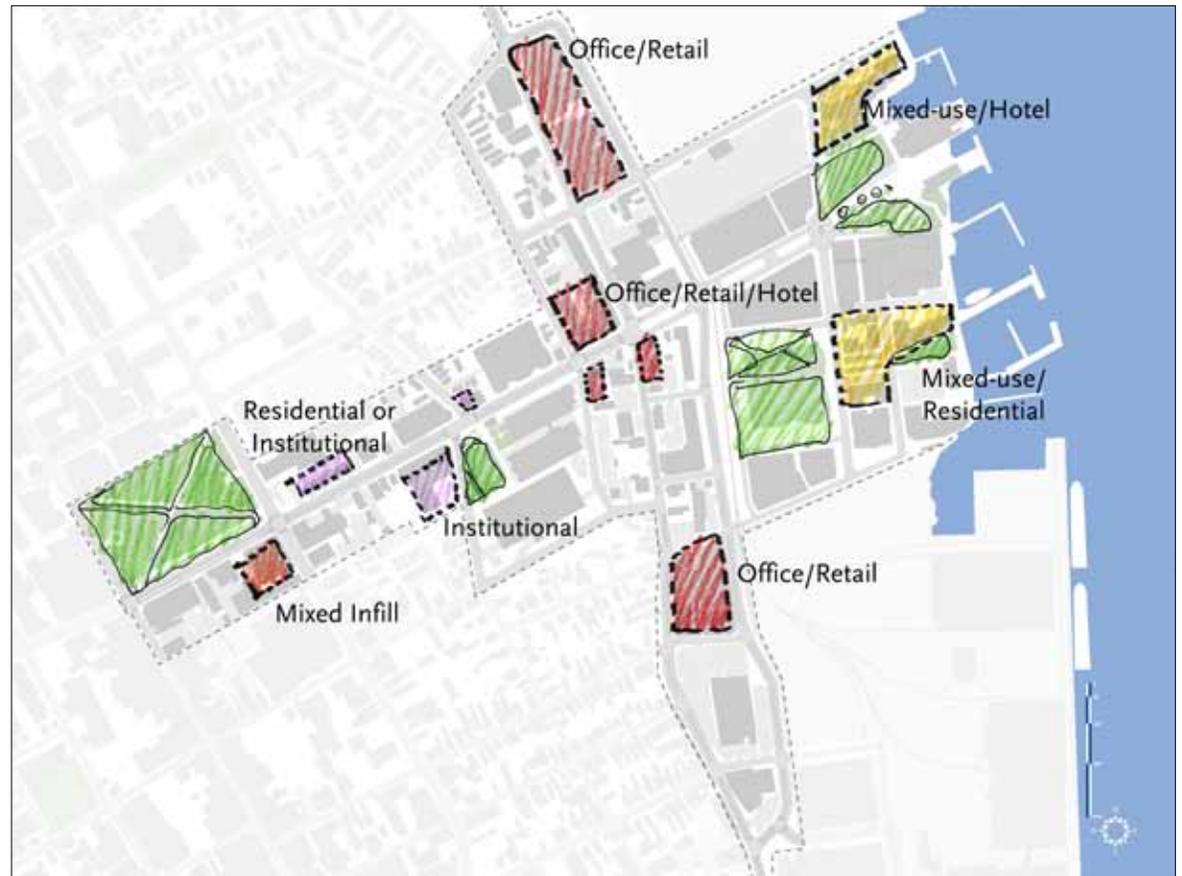


### 3.1 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

#### ENCOURAGE SITE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT

While mixed-use is desirable for most locations in the Calhoun Street-East/Cooper Riverfront study area, land use regulations for each sub-district should make allowances for sites that have a unique potential to support the goals of the plan. In addition to regulatory controls, recruitment and incentives should target specific uses and guide them to particular zones and sites. This is discussed in greater detail in later sections of this report.

One of the economic development functions of a city, particularly those that are land-constrained, is to strategically identify sites that are attractive to desired uses and industries. For example, large parcels in transitional, formerly-industrial areas between the waterfront and the historic neighborhoods may be especially valuable for their potential to attract job-rich businesses to Charleston’s downtown. These parcels are capable of accommodating spatial demands and build-to-suit designs for Class-A office space in a way that smaller downtown sites cannot. In addition, the redevelopment of city-owned sites can be tied to the provision of affordable housing at levels that might not otherwise be achievable in projects that occur without public-sector participation.



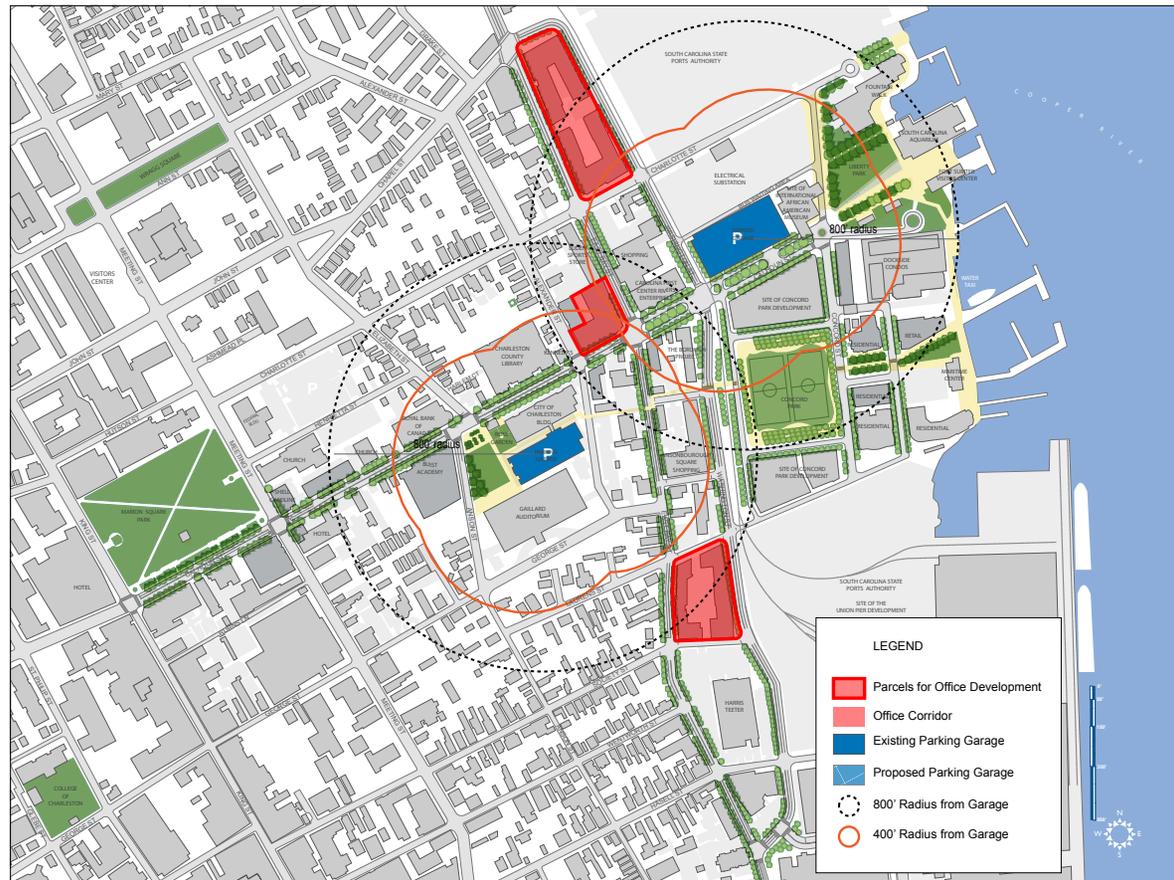
#### REQUIRE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The City of Charleston must continue to encourage sustainable development practices in alternative transit, reduction of stormwater impacts and reduction of risk from rising sea levels.

The City has implemented ambitious and progressive parking requirements and encourages off-site parking within the downtown. These policies allow more flexible use of existing parking supplies and reduce the visual and environmental impacts of new parking structures. The City, however, needs to amplify these policies to encourage alternative forms of transit in the future. Increasing the minimum distance of remote parking for office users would further the ability to use public parking and avoid overbuilding of parking today that may not be necessary tomorrow.

Existing stormwater infrastructure within the study area is not capable of handling increased volume without significant new investment. New development should be required to create no net increase in impervious surfaces to avoid overloading the existing pumping facilities and low impact development techniques should be implemented.

Portions of the study area, east of East Bay Street, lie within the most vulnerable of coastal flood zones. Stringent requirements for breakaway construction are necessary to avoid costly damage as sea levels rise. Ground level parking is a suitable and prevalent use for the ground floors within this zone, but many nonconforming retail uses can be found in the study area. Over time as these uses are replaced, retail serving the neighborhood will have to be relocated to other higher locations.



## 3.2 ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

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### PEDESTRIANS

The study area does not have the same pedestrian-oriented character as the surrounding streets. Providing pedestrian enhancements such as shade plantings, improved street furniture and buried utilities will make the area more conducive to pedestrian traffic. Curb cuts and driveways should also be minimized and removed where possible. Driveways increase vehicle-pedestrian crossings and interrupt the fabric of a continuous street frontage.

Pedestrian street crossings should be enhanced along Calhoun, East Bay and Washington Streets through high visibility pavement markings, signage and other treatments such as textured pavement. The new traffic signal on Calhoun Street at Anson/Elizabeth Streets will aid pedestrian crossings in the corridor.

Geometric changes should be considered where possible to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and widen sidewalks. Curb radii should be kept at minimums that still accommodate prevailing geometric traffic needs. Channelization, such as the eastbound right turn from Calhoun Street to East Bay Street, favor vehicular movement over pedestrian movements and are not appropriate for an urban environment.

Unnecessary pavement and wide travel lanes should be avoided to slow vehicle speeds and shorten crossings. Introducing on-street parking where possible to buffer pedestrians from moving traffic and slow vehicle travel speeds to 25 mph is desirable. Future improvements that effectively extend the curb may also be appropriate.

### BICYCLES

There are presently no specific bicycle accommodations in the study area. Separate bicycle lanes were studied for the major corridors. This would require a 5' lane for bicycles in each direction, and for most locations, the limited right-of-way makes the bicycle lanes infeasible. However, it is recommended that Calhoun Street be re-striped to show shared vehicle-bicycle lanes. The 40' cartway should be re-striped to include 13' shared travel lanes ("Sharrows") in each direction along with 7' parking lanes. While the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) design recommendation is 14' for a shared lane, lanes as narrow as 12' feet can function as shared lanes. The edge of the parking lane should be striped to encourage vehicle parking close to the curb and bicycle pavement markings should be used at the edge of the travel lane to alert motorists that it is a shared facility. Not only will the pavement markings help accommodate cyclists, but they will also have the effect of helping to control speeds as motorists will perceive a narrowed travel way.

The proposed long range plan for the Washington Street corridor would include a multi-use path within the right of way of the existing railway once this is abandoned. The path would be an extension of the facility that runs northward along East Bay Street and connects to the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge crossing the Cooper River into Mt. Pleasant. This is a facility that is off-street and a minimum of 10' wide to support two-way traffic. It is foreseeable that this path could extend further to the south, through future redevelopment of the port, becoming a major conduit on the east side of the peninsula for cyclists, joggers and pedestrians.

Increasing the signed on-street bicycle routes helps support a multi-modal environment. Signed routes should be encouraged along parallel east-west and north-south streets that have limited and slow moving vehicular traffic. A comprehensive network will provide complete connections east-west and north-south on the Charleston peninsula.

Bicycle parking is currently a requirement for dormitories, schools, libraries and some retail establishments. This practice should be enhanced to include other commercial and residential uses. Bike racks should be provided at key locations where the bike-friendly, minor through streets intersect Calhoun, East Bay, and Washington Streets.

A significant facility such as a bike station should be considered to encourage cycling and promote a "park once" objective for those who must drive. Potential station locations include the Aquarium Garage, the Visitors Center or the College of Charleston. Bike stations can have a variety of amenities such as bike lockers, an informational kiosk, bike rentals and a mechanic. A bike sharing program as implemented in Washington, DC and Paris could also have merit particularly considering the student population on the peninsula. Many students shuttle between the Aquarium Garage and the College of Charleston campus or pass through the study area to go grocery shopping.

A bikeway plan, now underway, will further refine the routes and facilities to be constructed within the Calhoun Street study area.

### DRIVEWAYS AND CURB CUTS

As previously noted, the prevalence of curb cuts interrupts the pedestrian environment and breaks up the street frontage. Curb cuts reduce available on street parking which is helpful to support adjacent land uses and slow traffic. Traffic operations are also complicated by driveways that generate significant traffic in between intersections.

In an urban environment it is beneficial to minimize curb cuts and consolidate driveways where possible. As redevelopment and new projects are planned, access should be sought from lesser volume “side” streets rather than main traffic carrying streets such as Calhoun Street and East Bay Street. Where alleys exist or where a new one can be created, it is desirable to use them for access.

### LOADING

It is preferable that loading occur off-street, out of public space and accessed from a service alley or minor street. For historic areas or constrained lots where off street loading is not practical, an on street loading zone should be established if there are frequent deliveries. Loading zones need to be enforced to minimize abuse. Some cities are implementing loading zone meters to encourage turnover and assess a fine if abuse of the loading space persists.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

The DASH circulator and CARTA regional bus routes link the study area with other local and regional destinations. Transit amenities that encourage ridership by making it more comfortable and convenient to use should be enhanced particularly at heavily used stops. These amenities include shelters, seating, neighborhood wayfinding signage/maps, transit service/route identification markers, and route timetables. For routes that warrant it, more frequent service (10-to-15 minute headways) helps to promote ridership since it increases the service’s convenience and lessens the need to consult a schedule.

Expansion of the water taxi service and continued integration with other modes of transportation should be encouraged. The development of a multi-modal transportation facility where all modes intersect would be beneficial to the City. A logical location for such a facility is at the Aquarium Garage or the Visitor Center. This would promote a “park once” practice by encouraging utilization of other transportation mode options.

### BUSES

Charter and school buses arriving to the bus facility at the Aquarium Garage need additional guidance to minimize their impact. A wayfinding signage plan should be designed to guide buses along the most suitable streets. Buses should be encouraged to arrive using East Bay from the north and then make the final approach via Washington Street by turning at Chapel Street. The bus facility exits onto Concord Street, but an immediate left turn to the north to exit back to Washington and then East Bay should be the route. Bus traffic and pick up/drop off activity should be minimized on Concord Street, particularly at Calhoun Street where there will be a concentration of pedestrian activity.

The bus wayfinding needs to be coordinated with an informational packet that is sent out to bus companies and tour coordinators ahead of the trip. The Aquarium presently makes efforts to educate and manage bus traffic. It is beneficial to expand this practice for all destinations that have scheduled patrons arriving via bus.

A recommendation of the plan is to introduce on-street, metered parking in locations where it does not exist today. One of these locations is the south side of Calhoun Street between Anson and Alexander Streets, which is a No Parking zone.

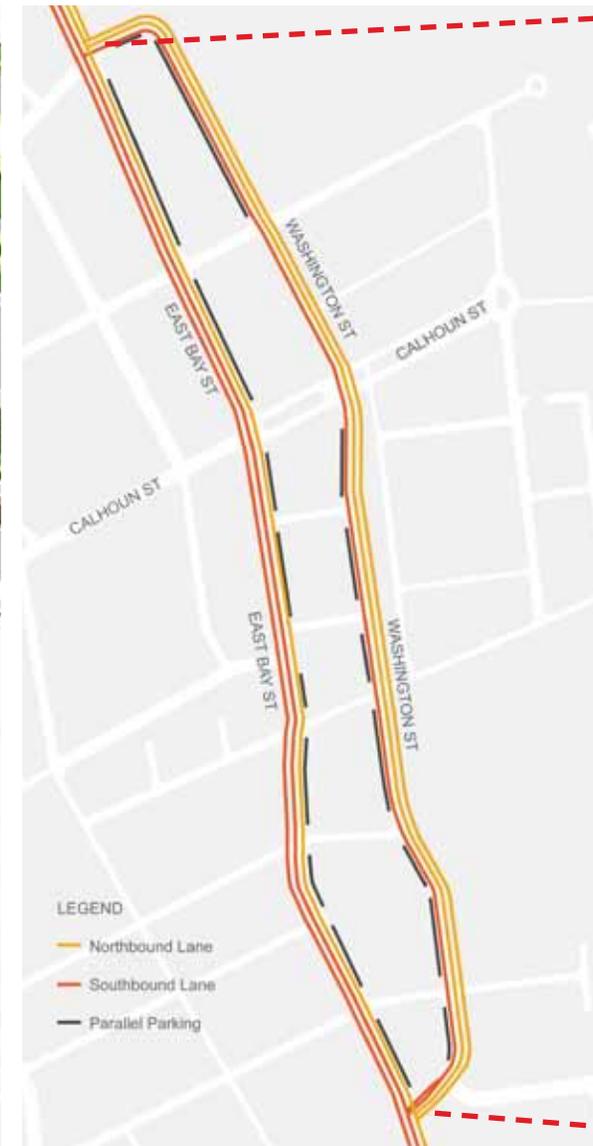
### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

#### EAST BAY/WASHINGTON CORRIDOR

Improvements to East Bay and Washington Streets should ease access in support of redevelopment, improve the pedestrian experience, and add on-street parking to support retailers and potential office uses. East Bay currently accommodates a great deal of traffic. Washington Street, however, is relatively under-utilized yet runs parallel to East Bay and is only one block away to the east. The planning team proposes shifting some vehicular traffic to Washington. East Bay will take the greater share of southbound traffic by having two lanes for southbound cars, and only one northbound lane. In contrast, Washington will be designed to take more northbound traffic by having two northbound travel lanes and only one for southbound.

On both East Bay and Washington, one travel lane should be converted to a full-time (24 hours) parking lane. In addition, off-peak-hour parking can be introduced to support evening and weekend uses. On-street parking supports retail and has the effect of helping to slow traffic and buffer sidewalks. After introducing a parking lane on each of these streets, both East Bay and Washington will have three travel lanes.

In order for Washington to carry an increased level of vehicles heading into and out of downtown, a new intersection between East Bay Street and Washington Street should be created where Washington currently ends to the south by becoming Pritchard Street, which turns east into the port. East Bay already connects with Washington Street at the latter street's northern terminus.



*Proposed couplet of Washington and East Bay Streets*

### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS



Proposed northern intersection of Washington and East Bay



Existing conditions at the northern intersection of Washington and East Bay.



Proposed southern intersection of Washington and East Bay



Existing conditions of Washington Street, just north of the proposed southern intersection with East Bay.

### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

#### EAST BAY STREET

The goals for East Bay Street are to reduce traffic congestion and introduce street parking that can be utilized by future development along the corridor.

New on-street parallel parking is proposed for the eastern side of East Bay Street to support future development envisioned for the blocks between East Bay and Washington. On the opposite side, off-peak parking may also be allowed depending on the results of more detailed traffic studies.

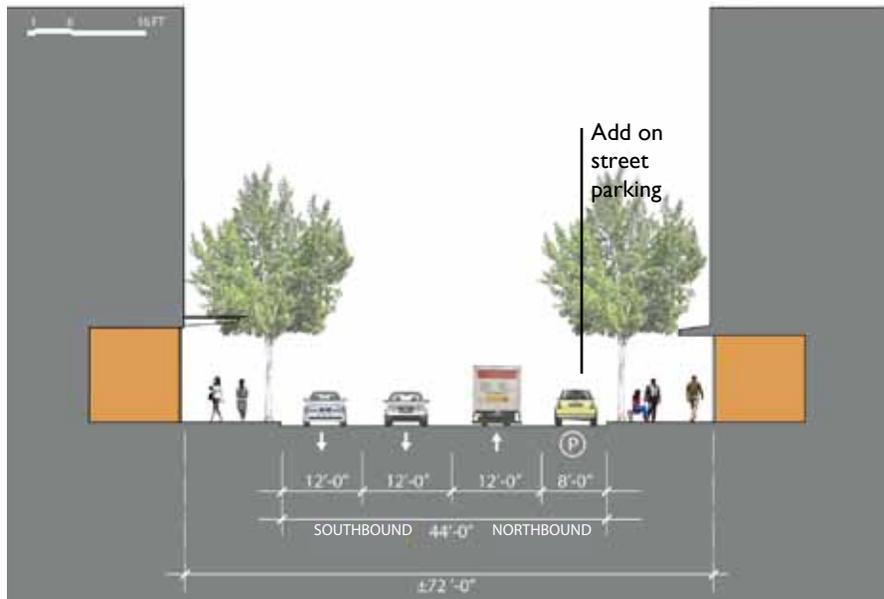
The intersection of East Bay and Calhoun was often cited by residents as dangerous for pedestrians. The team’s traffic consultant agreed that the perception was not without merit. The intersection is wide and

the duration of the “walk” signal is extremely short. The existing free right hand lane from eastbound Calhoun Street to southbound East Bay Street fails to slow vehicles and results in narrow sidewalks and an unsafe traffic island.

Changes are proposed to the geometry of this intersection. The proposed removal of the “channelized” right turn from Calhoun Street heading onto East Bay has several intended goals. It will reduce the walking distance, slow traffic and have a more urban geometry thereby increasing visibility, all of which benefit pedestrian safety. Better crosswalks and fewer lanes along East Bay Street will further aid the pedestrian environment by

shortening crossing lengths.

The Calhoun-East Bay intersection would also be greatly enhanced with strong buildings on all four corners. Buildings on all four corners would slow traffic speeds and comfort pedestrians waiting on the corners. This is important not just for the intersection but to the neighborhood as an entry gateway to the Cooper River waterfront.



Section of East Bay. Off-peak on-street parking on west side of East Bay. Full-time on-street parking on east side of East Bay.



Proposed intersection of East Bay and Calhoun. Existing pavement edge in dotted orange line.

### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

#### WASHINGTON STREET

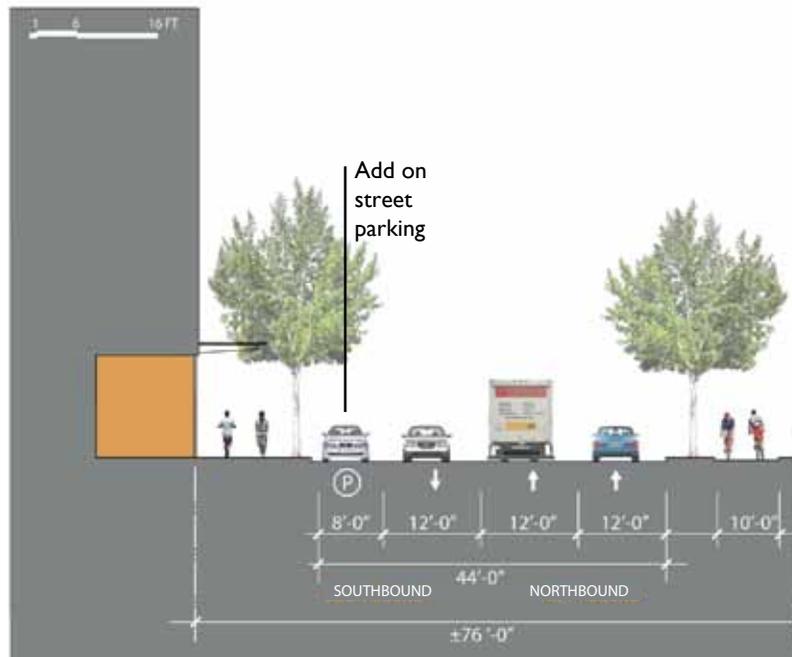
The goals for Washington Street are to increase traffic levels on this under-utilized street to reduce congestion on East Bay and provide access to and parking for existing and future buildings on adjacent parcels.

In order to ease navigation, we propose rebuilding the segment of Washington at the intersection with Calhoun so that it is more closely aligned with the segment to the north. Unfortunately, the railroad prohibits a direct alignment, but the street could get closer to the railroad right-of-way. This action should be conducted after the railway is removed and replaced with a dedicated bike trail.

We also propose a vehicular cut in the median on Calhoun to serve as an 'escape route' when the trains are stopped on the lines, allowing vehicles to seek an alternative route while the railway tracks are in existence.

Similar to East Bay, Washington's new permanent parking lane aims to support development between East Bay and Washington; as such, it will be on the western side of the street. On the opposite side, off-peak parking may be also be allowed.

In the future, once the railroad line is no longer in use, a bike path will be located on the eastern side of the street, on the railroad right-of-way. Washington was identified as the best place in the study area for accommodating bicycles traveling north and south because it is the street that connects to the existing Cooper River Bridge bike path, to the north.



Proposed intersection of Washington and Calhoun. Existing pavement edge in dotted orange line.

Proposed section of Washington Street.

### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

#### CALHOUN STREET

The goals for Calhoun Street are to strengthen important intersections, reduce congestion, introduce on-street parking, and provide greater protection to pedestrians.

There are only a few remaining significant redevelopment sites on Calhoun, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. While changes to parking and height regulations could ignite interest on smaller unbuilt parcels, a strong focus must be trained on the streetscape itself, including improving the pedestrian experience and neighborhood connections and enhancing the street as a primary gateway to the Cooper River waterfront and its attractions.

A resident pointed out to us that Calhoun is a rarity among Charleston streets in that it offers so little shade, due to the many missing street trees—a condition that only increases the prominence of overhead utilities on some blocks. The width of the sidewalk and the distance to which buildings are set back varies widely along the street. Pedestrians cannot see the waterfront or any of the attractions, and there are few cues to guide them in that direction. The intersections are too wide, and crossing times are sometimes too short.

At key points along the length of the street, elements such as signs should be added to assist visitors in finding attractions such as the South Carolina Aquarium.

#### GATEWAY #1 | MEETING STREET

The intersection of Meeting and Calhoun forms the southeast corner of Marion Square. Instead of helping frame this important open space in the heart of Charleston, the intersection includes three corners with surface parking lots along the sidewalk. Better definition of this corner of Marion Square—with pedestrian-scale active uses at the ground floor of appropriately scaled buildings—will be critical to drawing pedestrians onto Calhoun Street from existing high-visitation areas along King and Meeting.



Gateway #1, Meeting Street

### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

#### GATEWAY #2 | ANSON AND ELIZABETH

This difficult intersection is now improved with a full set of traffic lights with pedestrian phases. This new condition should help pedestrians wishing to travel between neighborhoods north and south of Calhoun Street and make safer crossings for children and the elderly. It should also help to reduce speeds on Calhoun Street by regulating traffic. This improvement was underway before the study began, but was heartily endorsed by the public and the design team.



Gateway #2, Anson Street and Elizabeth Street

#### GATEWAY #3 | EAST BAY STREET

East Bay and Calhoun is another unfortunate intersection in which three out of four corners are devoted primarily to surface parking. Ground-level uses and other pedestrian activity on these vacant lots would help reduce the suburban feel here.

Changes to the curbs and travel lanes are also needed. The cut-through corner island should be eliminated and replaced with a curb that can accommodate the travel radius of a bus but also extend into the intersection to create a shorter walking distance for pedestrians. Pedestrian enhancements as well as better street oriented development would improve the intersection for pedestrians traveling to the waterfront. See also the section of East Bay Street on page 44.



Gateway #3, East Bay Street

#### GATEWAY #4 | CONCORD STREET

Calhoun is an important cross-peninsula corridor, and its terminus on the waterfront should be marked and celebrated as such. Elements are needed here to mark arrival at the waterfront and could begin as early as East Bay Street.

The sidewalks on Calhoun Street between Washington and Concord streets could be lined with a row of public art pieces, geared towards children. This would serve as a “sign” for pedestrians and drivers, visitors and residents alike, that a place for families was approaching. The intersection of Calhoun and Concord will be a place of even greater pedestrian activity as visitors enter and exit from several major current and anticipated destinations.

Concord Street could be closed to vehicular traffic on Sundays and/or special occasions in the block between Calhoun and Charlotte, to accommodate large events in Liberty Park and connect these festivities to the IAAM. Pavement markings, special pavings, or a raised planted circle at this intersection could help to reduce vehicle speeds and serve as a focal point at this intersection.



Gateway #4, Eastern Terminus of Calhoun Street

### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

#### CALHOUN STREET CONTINUED

Calhoun Street has the width to accommodate two full travel lanes in either directions, but traffic levels do not warrant two full lanes. Replacing under-utilized travel lanes with on-street parking is one of the first steps recommended for Calhoun Street. This will improve the pedestrian experience and support retail uses. Approximately 60 on-street parking spaces could be provided along Calhoun Street in this manner, which would support retail uses along the street and serve to protect pedestrians from vehicles. More detailed traffic analysis will be necessary to determine if time managed on-street parking is necessary to maintain traffic volumes during peak commuter hours. This method has been successfully demonstrated on Calhoun Street to the west of King Street.

Geometric changes to the shape and size of certain intersections, such as at East Bay and Washington Streets, will make pedestrians and bicycles more comfortable in this area, while accommodating existing levels of vehicle traffic.

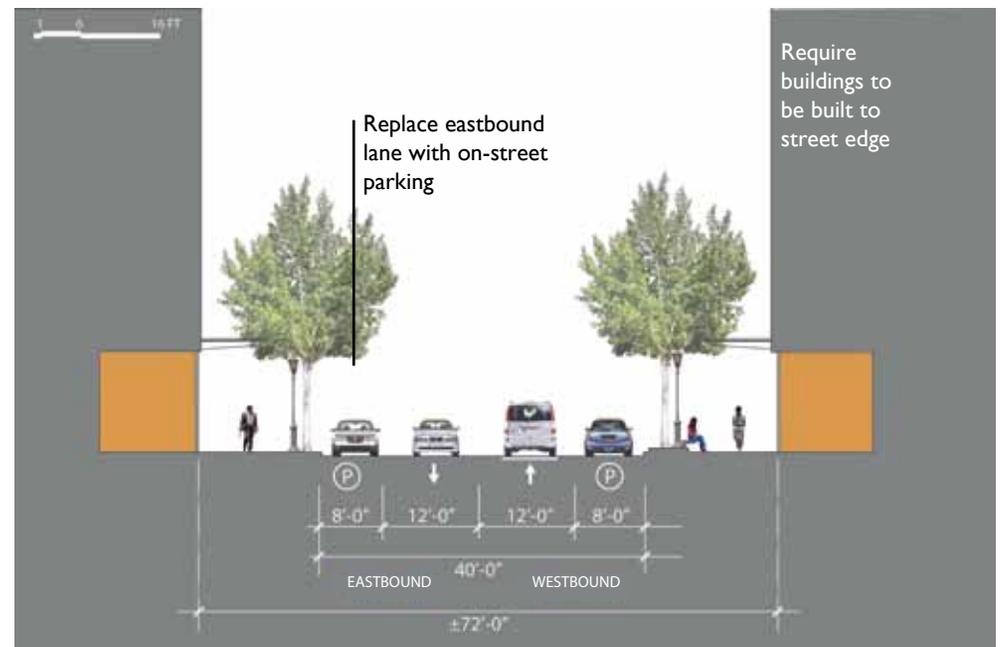
Although ample space is available on Calhoun Street for a full five foot dedicated lane, it is not possible without the loss of a parking lane. In order to preserve on-street parking a shared lane is recommended on Calhoun Street.



Existing conditions on Calhoun



Proposed street design on Calhoun. Convert the east bound lane to parking. All new development should have ground level activity.



Proposed typical street section for Calhoun. Convert the east bound lane to parking. Prohibit parking from street frontage.

### 3.3 SITE SPECIFIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

#### CALHOUN STREET CONTINUED

Design regulations and standards can greatly influence the quality of the pedestrian experience. Surface parking lots can create undesirable conditions for pedestrians. Numerous curb cuts create unsafe intersections between the cars and pedestrians. A lack of street trees on the parking lots and along the street creates discomfort for pedestrians in hot months and results in hotter cars and heat buildup within the urban area. The scale of lighting can be either geared towards vehicles, with higher light locations placed less often. This creates gaps in lighting levels for pedestrians and dark areas.

Lower, pedestrian-scale fixtures, spaced between street trees, create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and more even lighting levels.

Strict guidelines on surface parking lots are essential. Screening of vehicles with fences and hedges serves to hide the vehicles and make for a safer pedestrian experience with fewer curb cuts and incursions into the sidewalk zone. Parking security is also enhanced.

Redevelopment of surface parking areas should include the provision to require all new parking to be placed behind buildings. Build-to requirements

can be used to ensure that new construction helps to define the sidewalk zone with parking on the back side. Frequent openings and pedestrian entrances helps to improve the pedestrian experience with street level activity.



*Existing conditions. Surface parking is not screened. Gaps in street trees. No pedestrian lighting.*



*Proposed streetscaping with pedestrian lighting and parking lot screening.*



*Proposed build-out of street with redevelopment of bank site and the Citadel Square Baptist Church parking lot.*

### 3.4 PARKING STRATEGIES

#### PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

This plan proposes to better utilize existing public parking supplies to avoid the unnecessary (and expensive) construction of additional parking. While additional parking will be necessary to support new development, minimum amounts should be required, to anticipate a future where alternative transit methods can begin to replace the need for the private vehicles.

Office development presents the best case study for shared parking because it has a peak demand between 10 am and 2 pm, and is complementary with retail, entertainment and cultural venues that peak in the evenings and weekends. The existing public structures in the study area are thus ideal for this type of shared use.

Residential uses have the greatest need at night and on the weekends, but tenants occasionally store their vehicles during the day. For this and other reasons, residential parking is often difficult to share with other uses. Despite expected complications, shared parking should be considered for some portion of residential demand.

Commercial development near residential areas will put more pressure on parking in the blocks nearest the Calhoun Street and East Bay corridors. Neighborhood Residential Parking Permits need to be actively enforced to protect parking for residents. Parking fines should be high enough so that they encourage parking in publicly accessible pay facilities.



*On-street parking opportunities (above in orange) within the study area*

NEW PARKING SUPPLIES

The plan proposes new street-oriented development, which is greatly enhanced by convenient, short-term parking. On-street parking supports this type of development, particularly the smaller in-fill sites, and it should be added where it does not exist today. It is estimated that the on-street parking on Calhoun Street could increase by 60 spaces. The proposed parking lanes on East Bay and Washington Streets could add another 60 spaces. These spaces, especially the ones supporting commercial uses, should be metered and managed to encourage short duration parking that turns over frequently. Longer duration parking of more than an hour should be encouraged in off-street facilities.

PROPOSED PARKING REGULATIONS

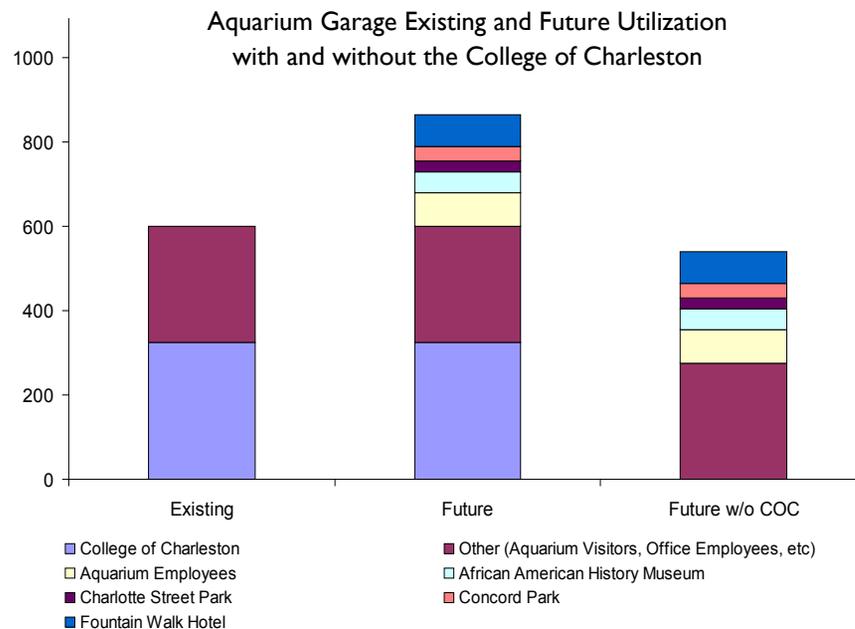
To take advantage of parking that already exists in the study area, it is recommended that the off-site parking limit restriction for office uses only be extended from 400 feet to 800 feet. This distance represents a 4-5 minute walk and it will allow the proposed office corridor between East Bay and Washington Streets to utilize either the Gaillard or Aquarium Garage for employee parking. This is intended to allow office development within the office corridor to reduce, but not eliminate, on-site parking requirements and replace it with proximate public parking.

In order to encourage smaller in-fill redevelopment, such as those found along Calhoun Street, on-site parking requirements should be waived or a payment should be accepted in lieu of on-site parking. This should be considered for any site smaller than

5,000 square feet that is within 400' of a public parking facility. These sites will be served by on-street parking for short-term patron needs and employees will use the public garage or make other arrangements with their employer. Residents can use the Residential Parking Permit system to park within the adjacent neighborhoods.

On larger parcels, mixed-use projects should be encouraged that share parking resources on-site. As a condition of approval for large projects, a shared parking plan should be prepared to show where parking will be located, accessed, and managed. If it is a mixed-use facility or will be providing parking

to an off-site land use, a parking study should be conducted that shows how the time of day needs of the shared uses will be satisfied. If some of the parking need will be satisfied off-site, then the study must consider the needs of the project in relation to the availability of the off-site resource. The parking study would be based on industry standard data such as in the Urban Land Institute's Shared Parking publication or other source(s) the City staff deem appropriate. This could reduce the requirements for office users to produce as much parking on-site and thus reduce development costs and increase incentive to build.



Of the available 1,093 spaces, this graph illustrates the existing and future anticipated parking demand at the South Carolina Aquarium parking structure with and without lease by College of Charleston. The College leases over 300 unused spaces for students but should not necessarily be considered a permanent user of the Aquarium Parking Garage as the Cooper River waterfront develops.

### 3.4 PARKING STRATEGIES

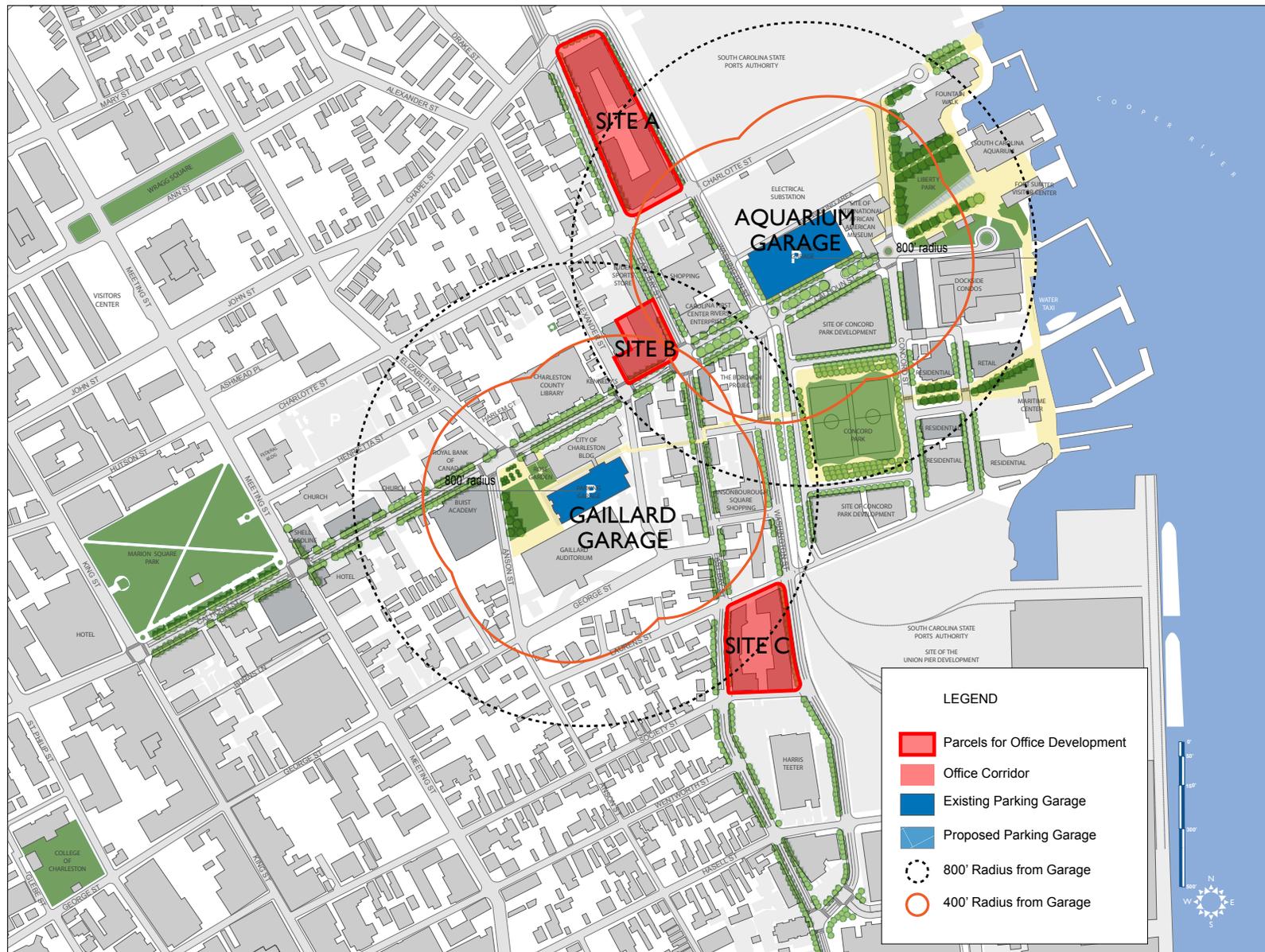
#### BUILDOUT AND PARKING ANALYSIS OF THREE SELECTED DEVELOPMENT SITES FOR USE IN DETERMINING NEEDED OFF-SITE PARKING

 <p><b>SITE A</b></p>	<p>RECOMMENDED LAND USE: Retail, Office</p> <p>HEIGHT: 4 and 5 floors maximum</p> <p>RESTRICTIONS: Ground level active uses on street frontage. Limited access from East Bay and Washington Street. Preferred access from Charlotte and Chapel St.</p>	<p>SITE A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 360,000 square feet of OFFICE</li> <li>• 724 total parking spaces needed</li> <li>• 377 parking spaces provided on site on-grade</li> <li>• 347 SHORTFALL to be provided in Aquarium Garage* which is 600-1,000 feet away</li> </ul>
 <p><b>SITE B</b></p>	<p>RECOMMENDED LAND USE: Retail, Housing, and/or Hotel</p> <p>HEIGHT: 3.5 and 5 floors maximum</p> <p>RESTRICTIONS: Required retail on ground floor on Calhoun Street. Parking setback.</p>	<p>SITE B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100,000 square feet of OFFICE</li> <li>• 100 Room HOTEL</li> <li>• 12 units of RESIDENTIAL</li> <li>• 208 total parking spaces needed</li> <li>• 104 parking spaces provided on site on-grade or on one level above grade in structure</li> <li>• 156 SHORTFALL to be provided in Aquarium or Gaillard Garage* or the future garage on the Union Pier property.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>SITE C</b></p>	<p>RECOMMENDED LAND USE: Retail, Office</p> <p>HEIGHT: 4 and 5 floors maximum</p> <p>RESTRICTIONS: Ground level active uses on street frontages Limited access from East Bay and Washington: preferred access from Society and Laurens St.</p>	<p>SITE C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 190,000 square feet of OFFICE</li> <li>• 377 total parking spaces needed</li> <li>• 228 parking spaces provided on site on-grade</li> <li>• 149 SHORTFALL to be provided in Gaillard Garage* which is 700-900 feet away or in the future garage on the Union Pier property.</li> </ul>

\* While there is peak surplus in the existing parking garages (p. 22), it is not enough to accommodate all three of these developments. Future development would be able to apply for use of this parking on first come- first serve basis. Additionally, the College of Charleston is currently leasing 500 spaces in these garages. The continued involvement or a dropping of the program by the College will also determine the number of spaces available to future developments.

### 3.4 PARKING STRATEGIES

#### PARKING ANALYSIS OF THREE SELECTED DEVELOPMENT SITES FOR USE IN DETERMINING NEEDED OFF-SITE PARKING



### 3.5 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

#### CONCORD PARK AND MARITIME CENTER

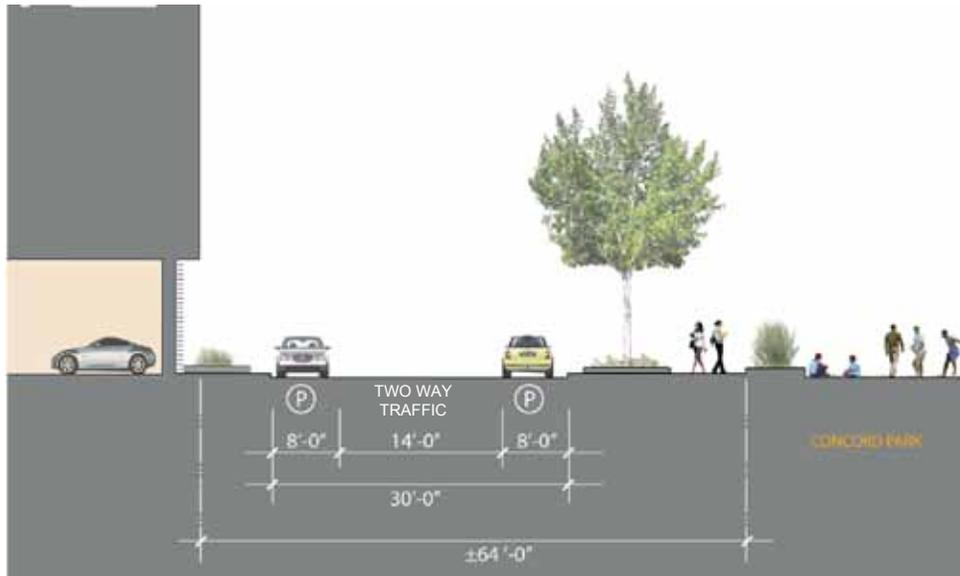
The goals of the Maritime Center should be supported by design decisions for Concord Park—a process that we recognize has been underway for some time in a public setting. One of this plan’s goals is to strengthen connections between residential neighborhoods and the Cooper River waterfront. Ansonborough, in particular, would be better connected to the river if a clear pedestrian connection were provided over the railway tracks in alignment with Inspection Street, allowing one to walk from that neighborhood across the Concord Park to where the disconnected street begins again, near the Maritime Center. While a path through the

park here would also help strengthen this “desire line” between Ansonborough residents and the river, we realize the most recent designs for Concord park do not include such a path. This pedestrian connection may not be possible until the railway is removed, but the park should acknowledge the need for this future connection in its layout.

Open spaces that are not supported by public parking and right-of-ways are at risk of becoming seemingly private—the space may be perceived to be for the exclusive use of abutting uses. For this reason, the planned vehicular streets between

Concord Park and new development should be lined, on one or both sides, with on-street public parking. This parking will also encourage use by residents from surrounding areas.

The park would also benefit from a public street on its western edge that connects all the way from Laurens Street to Calhoun Street. This helps maximize the park’s visibility and accessibility while also serving as an “escape valve” from Calhoun Street when trains stop there, blocking the passage of cars unexpectedly.



*Proposed two-way street with parallel parking between Concord Park and new development*



*Maritime Center*

### 3.5 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS



The Maritime Center is poised to serve an even greater role as a central feature of the waterfront experience. The Maritime Center, host to functions enjoyed by visitors and residents, is a building with a contemporary design and a prominent location near several Cooper River cultural attractions. In addition, it is located where a primary walking route from the west to the Cooper River terminates.

The Maritime Center should be supported by other active public uses—such as the outdoor and ground-floor restaurant seating—that encourage public access. Ground-level activity should be required along the primary walking route to the water (along the Inspection Street extension) to ensure public accessibility and to avoid privatizing the waterfront.

The two publicly owned parcels on Concord Street should be spaced well apart to allow for an ample view corridor to the Cooper River and the Maritime Center from Concord Park. This open space should feel like an extension of Concord Park extending to the waterfront and will encourage public use. Wider spacing of developments may justify taller building heights at this location to offset lost development potential.

Publicly managed surface parking should be retained at the Maritime Center for those attending functions in the building. Spaces can be available to residents outside event hours, by special permit.

*Sketch of proposed park and view corridor from Concord Park to the Cooper River and Maritime Center*

### 3.5 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

#### LIBERTY SQUARE

Charleston has relatively few attractions catering to children. Indeed, the average tourist is an older, affluent person traveling with a companion, enjoying his or her own pursuits. But Liberty Square is a place specifically for children in Charleston. We heard the comment that what is great about Liberty Square is that you can go with your kids or grandchildren, and once there, “let go of their hands.” Enhancements to Liberty Square should maintain its family-friendly aspects and increase activity levels, while also improving its function as a link between waterfront attractions and Calhoun Street. This means increasing the visibility of the park itself as well as of the Aquarium and other features at the river. It also means allowing programming elements in the park that will help activate it.

The Aquarium building should be more visible from the edge of the park at Concord Street—trees should have higher canopies, and pathways should be broadened. This will allow greater views and access to the building and its immediate surrounds. Future plantings should support the aforementioned widening of views and orienting walkways to destinations. In addition, Aquarium activity should extend outside the facility to offer free, visible programming enjoyable to those in the park. Such elements might include an outdoor aquarium display, or simply an interactive water feature and trees with a higher canopy to create views to the Aquarium and Cooper River.

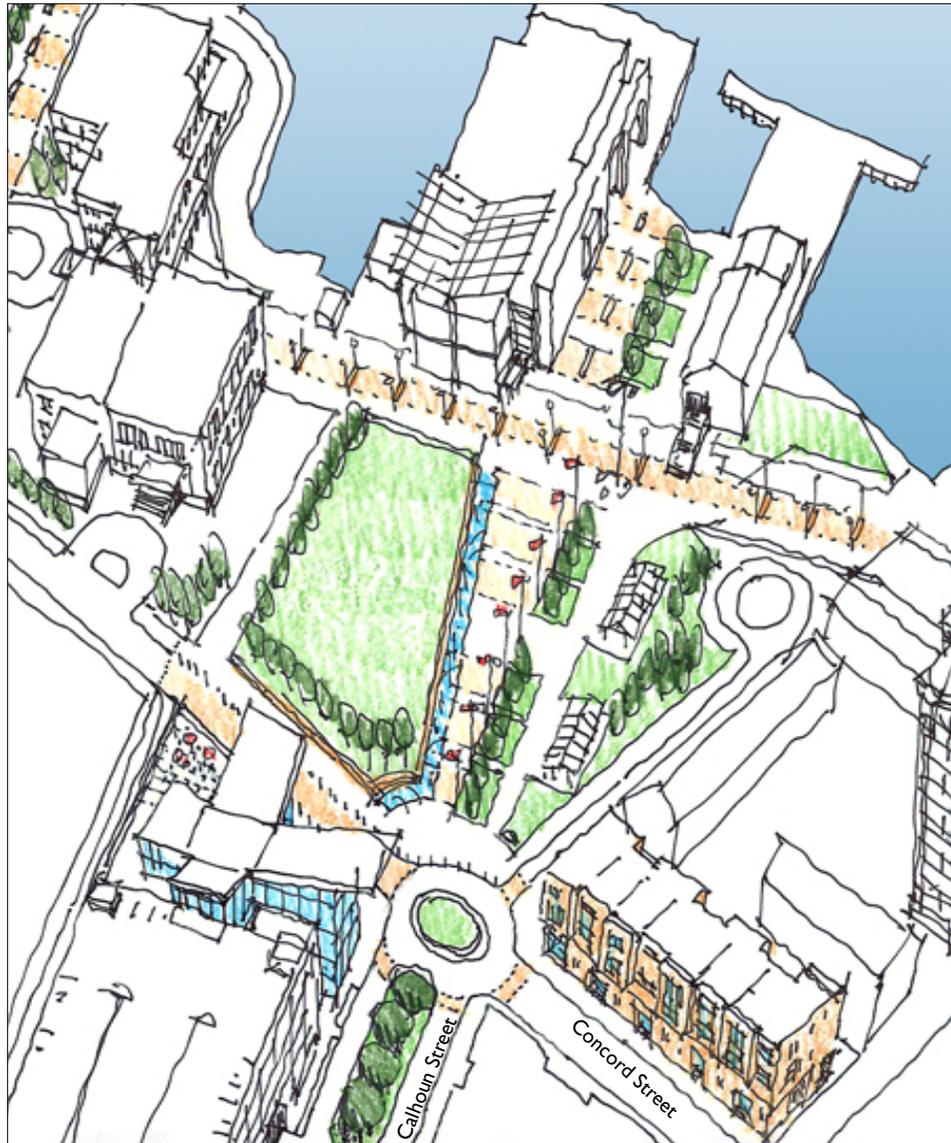
Waterfront open spaces that aim to cater to families with children and help draw people to attractions usually benefit from the presence of amenities that includes food and drink and restrooms.



*Liberty Park. Existing Conditions to the left. The placement of the low trees creates a visual barrier to the Aquarium and waterfront. Below, proposed landscape changes including removing visual barriers, introducing a water feature and trees with a higher canopy to create views to the Aquarium and Cooper River.*



### 3.5 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS



Unfortunately, prohibitions on vending currently precludes these features. A limited amount of seasonal outdoor vending here would be appropriate and easily accommodated in the available space. Vending will be necessary to support an increased level of activities frequented by families and visitors.

Concord Street north of Calhoun Street should be rebuilt for pedestrians, with flush curbs and bollards so that during weekends or special events, vehicular traffic can be diverted to Charlotte Street to create a larger pedestrian-only zone surrounded by three cultural institutions in one car-free zone. This should appeal to families.

*Concord Street between Liberty Park and the Proposed International African American Museum, should be designed as a pedestrian oriented street with flush curbs and bollards for use in festivals and events where traffic can be blocked off.*



### 3.5 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

#### GAILLARD AUDITORIUM

The Gaillard Auditorium open space—or “forecourt”—is currently under-utilized, and should be reconfigured to take its place as an integral piece of the Calhoun Street open space network.

The Rose Garden is a cherished fixture of Calhoun Street, however its location at the very center of the Gaillard forecourt has the effect of dividing the space into several disconnected, smaller parts. We support the suggestion to move the Rose Garden to the eastern edge of the park, in the area framed by the Civic Design Center and the County building, currently used as informal parking area for public vehicles. This move will free up the center of the forecourt and unite several smaller spaces into one large, flexible interior field that can accommodate many activities, including festival events, special Auditorium-related programming, and recreational needs of Buist Academy students.

As discussions advance on Gaillard Auditorium renovations, particular attention should be paid to improving its civic presence on Calhoun Street. The opportunity to combine a new face for the Gaillard with an improved forecourt can create a much stronger civic amenity on Calhoun Street and will reinforce the overall goals of the plan.

Next door to the Gaillard forecourt, the Buist Academy campus leases surface parking spaces on the corner of Anson and Calhoun streets. Any future expansion plans for the Academy should seek to locate new school facilities at this prominent corner site, replacing surface parking to better define both the street and the edge of the Gaillard forecourt.



*Possible expansion at Buist Academy should replace surface parking and bring the build to the corner*

### MARION SQUARE

Marion Square has long been a significant park in the City of Charleston, but has recently gained civic prominence as being the site of the City's Christmas tree in addition to the Charleston Farmers Market. Not only does this intersection form one corner of Marion Square, but it is also the gateway to Calhoun Street and the Cooper River waterfront, and down Meeting Street, to Market Street.

The other corners of Marion Square are well defined by prominent buildings such as the Francis Marion Hotel, The Old Citadel, and continuous retail shops along King Street. In comparison, the southeast corner of the park is currently occupied by a gas station, a drive through bank, and a hotel driveway. None of the buildings hold the corner at the street, and all of the buildings are more suburban than urban in nature. The Holiday Inn, at 125 Calhoun Street, does have a plan to expand with a ground level extension that would sit on this corner.

These three parcels should be redeveloped with urban buildings that hold the corner, create street-level activity and mark this intersection as a significant one in the city. Marion Square would benefit from additional retail street life and pedestrians would be more comfortable walking to the Cooper River waterfront.



*Full build-out of the corners of Meeting and Calhoun intersection will improve an important gateway to the district.*

## 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

There are three basic recommendations for the study area:

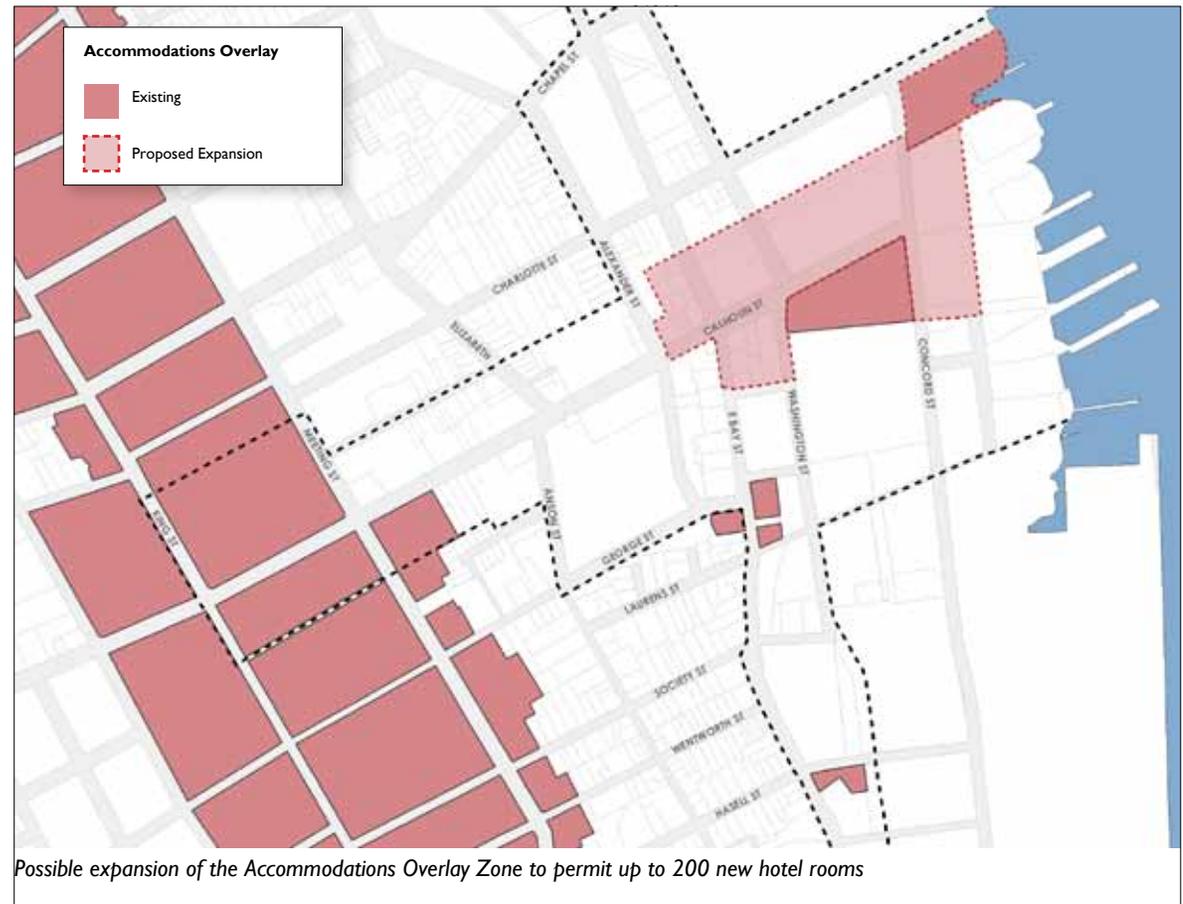
- Expand the Accommodations Overlay zone
- Revise the height map and control by stories
- Develop a new form based overlay zone to control building form

The last two recommendations are in accordance with actions called for in the 2008 Preservation Plan.

### THE ACCOMMODATIONS OVERLAY ZONE

The Accommodations Overlay zone should be expanded to include both sides of Calhoun Street from the Cooper Riverfront to East Bay Street and Alexander Street. Within this zone, up to 200 new hotel rooms would be permitted on a first come basis. This is in addition to the 100 rooms that have been approved in the Concord Park Development Plan. The size of hotels would be limited to no one hotel having more than 100 rooms north of Calhoun Street. The current limit of 50 rooms per hotel would be maintained south of Calhoun Street.

The accommodations overlay has been located away from the majority of the Alexander Street frontage, allowing for future residential development. Any future hotel's access should be accommodated on East Bay Street rather than neighborhood streets.



### BUILDING HEIGHTS

The concept is raised and recommended in the City's recently-adopted Preservation Plan (see pgs. 44 - 48). The intent is to encourage the development community to design quality buildings – without focusing on squeezing in an additional floor within the height limits. In contrast to regulating in feet, it can be anticipated that varied roof forms, and varied floor heights would occur – either through developer initiative or BAR specification. Regulating using total height in feet (as the City currently does) sometimes results in buildings with low ceiling heights as developers try to achieve additional floor area, and in a loss of pitched roof forms as developers squeeze in the tallest building they can under the limit. A uniform height measurement in feet also penalizes retail uses, which demand tall first-floor heights.

The use of height measured in stories sets the basic amount of floor area available to the developer, simplifying the design and allowing a focus on quality building design. Since different kinds of uses often demand differing floor heights, there is a benefit to measuring in stories related to encouraging retail on the ground floor. Under a story-based system of height measurement, all uses have an equal opportunity to occur in the area – subject to market demand. Finally, the proposed height measurement also takes into account the variation in base flood elevation across the study area. Since height is measured in stories, and in the V-Zone, the first-floor elevation is keyed to flood heights, there is no benefit (or disincentive) associated with the base flood elevation

Factors in formulating proposed height changes include:

- Respecting existing maximum heights,
- Creating transitions to residential neighborhoods; stepping down to historic neighborhoods from higher development,
- Allowing height in areas where it will not block views or impinge on neighborhoods,
- Consider the map as a whole, permitting more height closer to high density areas,
- According to existing regulations; the height of a building can be limited by the proximity of a historic structure in certain districts.



2 stories



3 stories



4 stories



5 stories



6 stories

### 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

#### BUILDING HEIGHTS



Height Comparison (proposed and existing)

**BUILDING HEIGHT COMPARISONS**

For the great majority of people, the phrase “a three story building” is more significant than “a building that is forty-five feet high.” The city should move to a system that controls maximum and minimum height based on number stories, as called for in the 2008 Preservation Plan.

This alternative system tends to create desirable variations of roof lines and discourages the reduction of ceiling heights in order to squeeze extra floors into a given building height. Control by stories, rather than feet, ensures better reproduction of the historic proportion of historic buildings in Charleston that feature tall ceiling heights.

The examples (at right) illustrate how two existing height zones would be modified under a story-based height limit. The existing 55’ height zone now found on much of Calhoun Street has resulted in buildings of five floors squeezed into the 55 foot height limit. Under proposed regulations, a maximum of four floors would be permitted. This would allow for taller ground floor retail uses or the introduction of a sloped roof.

In the areas east of East Bay Street, the current height controls allow buildings of 55 feet with additional height allowed for bonusable ground level uses. These parcels directly face historic buildings of three stories (over basements). Under story-based regulations, these transitional parcels would be limited to 4 floors maximum regardless of incentives. The result would likely be buildings that better reflect the historic proportions of buildings on the west side of East Bay street, with fewer floors and taller proportions.

**55’ height zone (Calhoun St)**



**55’ height zone (with bonus to 70’) East Bay St.**



## 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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### A FORM BASED ZONING OVERLAY

The plan proposes “development guidelines” with many of the characteristics of a form-based code. An actual replacement or overlay code has not been prepared. Most of the elements proposed are similar to regulations already in place. Any future zoning code amendment or overlay zone would require additional study and public input and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council. This plan provides general guidelines for such an amendment.

A form-based code can effectively help retain traditional patterns of development. This coding of form should not, however, replace the discretionary review by design and historic preservation professionals, but rather should be used to improve the initial submissions received from developers. This concept is recommended in the City’s recently adopted and award winning preservation plan – Vision / Community / Heritage – A Preservation Plan for Charleston, SC.

The BAR will remain a key player in the review of projects in the plan – unlike most form-based codes across the country. The intent of the new approach is to focus the zoning process on the overall entitlement associated with a property (how much height, bulk and floor area is the applicant entitled to?). The BAR would still retain all its current powers and responsibilities. While the guidelines suggest preferred quantities for windows and doors, limits on blank walls, and entrance spacing, the BAR would work with the developer on these issues as well. The BAR would also be involved in other design issues such as building materials, architectural style, and many of the detailed issues of the “look and feel” of the building.

A zoning overlay district is proposed to implement the urban design principles of the plan. The overlay district would put form standards in place without altering the underlying use districts. Within this framework, five “frontages” are proposed for specific street segments. Each frontage has its own set of building standards, intended to foster a distinct character for each frontage.

Frontages are divided into two groups: those in the A-flood zone (west of East Bay Street) and those in the V-flood zone (east of East Bay Street). According to FEMA regulations, in the V-zone spaces below base flood elevation may not be used for permanent residential or commercial activity. This significantly reduces the potential for street level activity. Conversely, FEMA regulations in the A-zone allow street level commercial uses provided that the building is flood-proofed up to base flood elevation. This increases potential for active uses at street level. Habitable residential space must still be located above base flood in the A-zone.

### A-ZONE

**Shopfront-A:** Requires flood-proofed shop fronts at grade along street edge.

**General-A:** Allows for a variety of flood-proofed buildings (shopfronts, offices, apartments) along street edge. Residential units must be located above base flood elevation.

**Mixed Residential-A:** Allows both attached and detached housing units compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

### V-ZONE

**Shopfront-V:** Requires ground story retail or outdoor dining uses along the waterfront with permanent access to space in upper stories.

**General-V:** Allows for a variety of buildings (offices, apartments). Entrances, lobbies, and staircases are required on ground floors.



\* Additional Setback is required.

## 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### COMPONENTS OF FORM

The City of Charleston uses a conventional zoning approach, often termed Euclidean zoning after the first significant zoning case, *Euclid v. Ambler Realty*, to control development on the Peninsula. This zoning scenario is typical of many, Euclidean zoning concentrates on separating incompatible uses. The approach was originally intended to resolve two separate concerns—placement of dangerous industry near residential areas, and the need for additional air and light in slum tenements.

Thus, Euclidean zoning focused on districts that separate uses, and on controlling height, bulk and building mass within districts to ensure public health and safety. Unfortunately, the concept of separation of uses has been taken to an extreme

in recent times, and we often build in a fashion that is contrary to what people today want as part of their lifestyle. Conventional zoning is fundamentally about keeping things apart, but in order to create healthy neighborhoods, towns and cities, zoning must work to integrate different aspects of daily life. With the right controls on urban form, a greater integration of building uses can become natural and comfortable. Land use is not ignored, but more loosely regulated using broad parameters that can respond to market economics, while also prohibiting socially or environmentally undesirable uses. While specific criteria may vary greatly from area to area, the basic issues critical to good urban form are fairly constant and are outlined below

#### HEIGHT



A continuous roof line which does not vary from one building to the next can appear monotonous.

#### SITING



Locating parking in front of buildings increases the cross-street distance between buildings and isolates pedestrians, creating an unattractive, possibly unsafe walking environment.

#### ELEMENTS



Blank facades tend to be monotonous, even intimidating part of the streetscape.

#### USE



Structures which have only one use tend to have less activity at street level. Activity may be limited to entry and exit.



Slight variations in the roof line can create a rhythm for the street wall and add variety to the streetscape.



Front setbacks of limited depth pull buildings up to the street or sidewalk. Parking setbacks ensure that cars are tucked behind buildings.



Functioning entrances generate activity at street level. Windows enable interaction between pedestrians and ground story spaces. Windows and doors reinforce a human scale for the street.



Variations in use within a single building can provide active uses at street level. Some uses compliment and reinforce each other.

SHOPFRONT-A

Requires active shopfronts at grade along the street edge. The ground story is at street level, and is flood-proofed up to base flood elevation. Upper stories can be used for a variety of uses (office, residential). Buildings are pulled up to the street. There is no on-site surface parking between the building and the street; ground story parking is set back at least 30 feet from the sidewalk. Building entrances are prominent and street facing. Large storefront windows encourage interaction between pedestrians and the ground story space.



GENERAL-A

Allows for a variety of buildings (shopfronts, offices, apartments, rowhouses) along the street edge. Ground floor nonresidential uses are located at street level, and are flood-proofed up to base flood elevation. Active shopfronts are preferred but not mandatory. Ground floor residential uses are raised up to base flood elevation. Buildings are pulled up to the street. There is no on-site parking between the building and the street; ground story parking is set back at least 30 feet from the sidewalk. Building entrances are prominent and street facing. Each ground floor residential unit must have its own street facing entrance.



### 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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#### MIXED RESIDENTIAL

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Intended as the second stage of transition between established residential neighborhoods and new development adjacent to the corridor. Mixed Residential encourages a mix of both attached and detached dwellings. The ground floor must be raised up to base flood elevation. There is no on-site overnight parking between the building and the street; parking must be set back at least 30 feet from the sidewalk. However, driveway access from the street to residential garage or carport is allowed. Garage doors should not be visible from the street. Each ground floor unit must have its own street-facing entrance.



#### SHOPFRONT-V

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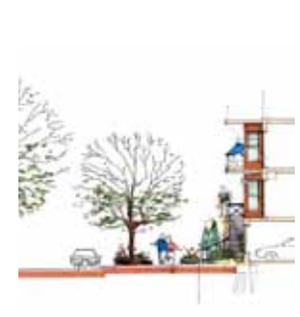
Requires ground story retail or outdoor dining uses along the waterfront with permanent access to space in upper stories. Passage between ground and upper stories enables easy transfer of materials in case of flooding. Below base flood elevation, buildings are constructed of breakaway materials. Buildings are pulled up to a street, sidewalk or pedestrian area. Ground story parking is set back at least 30 feet from the sidewalk. Large storefront windows or operable doors encourage interaction between pedestrians and the ground story space.



#### GENERAL-V

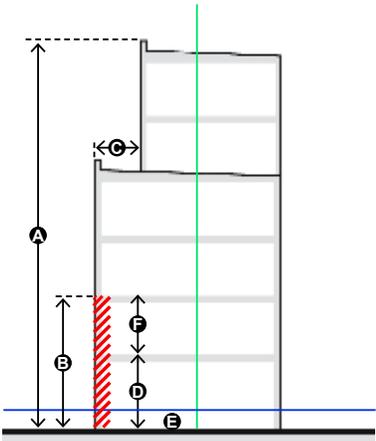
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Allows for a variety of buildings (offices, apartments, rowhouses) raised up to base flood elevation. Buildings are pulled up to the street; however, active uses are not permitted at street level. Parking is permitted on the ground floor but must be set back at least 10 feet from the sidewalk. Entrances, lobbies, and staircases are required at street level to engage pedestrians and avoid the blank wall effect. Each ground floor unit must have its own entrance that opens directly on to a street-facing sidewalk.

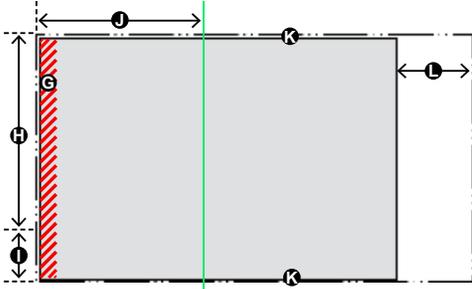


SHOPFRONT-A

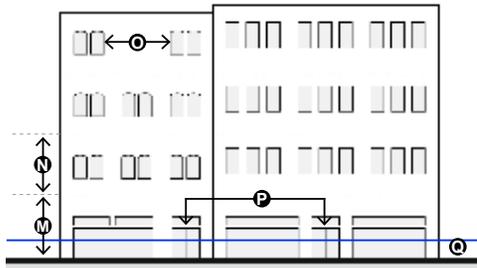
**KEY:**  
 // Front setback area    - · · · Property line  
 — Parking setback        □ Buildable area  
 — Base flood elevation



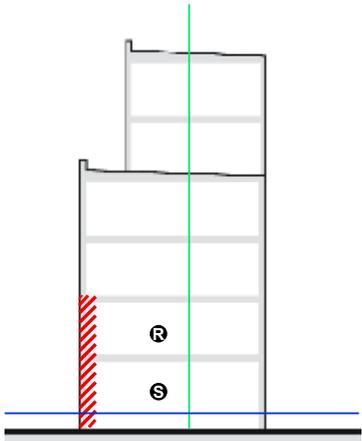
HEIGHT



SITING



ELEMENTS



USE

**BUILDING HEIGHT**

A	Stories, max	see Height Map
B	Stories, min (in front setback area)	2
C	Stepback at 4 stories, min	15'

**GROUND STORY HEIGHT**

D	Floor to floor, min/max	15'/18'
E	Ground floor elevation (floodproof)	0'

**UPPER STORY HEIGHT**

F	Floor to floor, min/max	9'/12'
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**STREET FACADE**

G	Front setback area, min/max	0'/5'
H	Frontage, min (in front setback area)	90%

**STREET WALL**

I	Encouraged along unbuilt portion of front setback area	
	Height, min/max	6'/12'

**SETBACK**

J	Parking setback, min	30'
K	Side setback	none
L	Rear setback, no alley, min	10'
L	Rear setback, with alley	3'

**BUILDING COVERAGE**

	% of lot occupied by buildings, max	90%
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**TRANSPARENCY**

M	Ground story facade, preferred min/max	60%/90%
N	Upper story facade, preferred min/max	20%/60%
O	Length of blank wall, preferred max	20'

**DOORS AND ENTRIES**

P	Distance between entries, preferred	50'
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**FLOOD PROTECTION**

Q	Commercial	Floodproof
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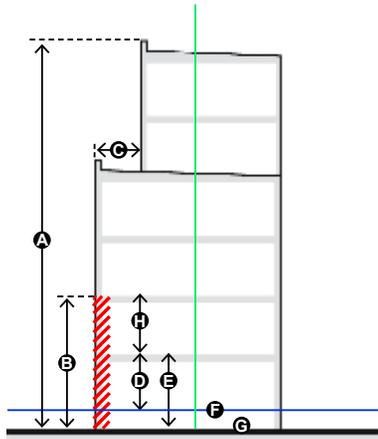
**PERMITTED USES**

R	Ground story	Commercial, Parking (behind parking setback line)
S	Upper stories	Commercial, Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)

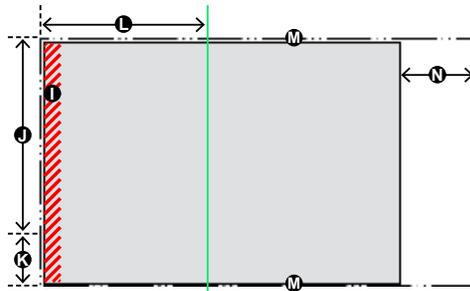
# 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

## GENERAL-A

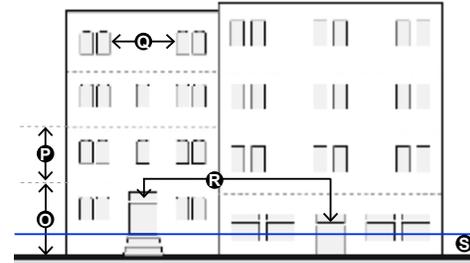
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 // Front setback area      - - - - Property line  
 — Parking setback      □ Buildable area  
 — Base flood elevation



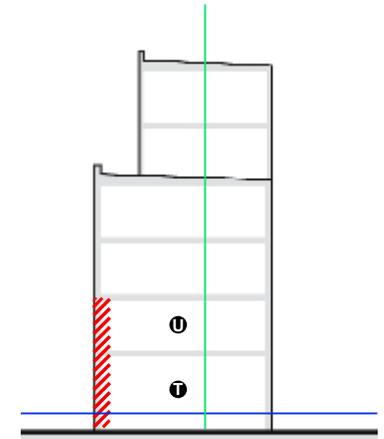
**HEIGHT**



**SITING**



**ELEMENTS**



**USE**

**BUILDING HEIGHT**

<b>A</b> Stories, max	see Height Map
<b>B</b> Stories, min (in front setback area)	2
<b>C</b> Stepback at 4 stories, min	15'

**GROUND STORY HEIGHT**

<b>D</b> Floor to floor, residential, min	10'
<b>E</b> Grade to floor, min/max	15'/18'
<b>F</b> Ground floor elevation, residential	base flood elevation
<b>G</b> Ground floor elevation, commercial	0'

**UPPER STORY HEIGHT**

<b>H</b> Floor to floor, min/max	9'/12'
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**STREET FACADE**

<b>I</b> Front setback area, min/max	0'/10'
<b>J</b> Frontage in front setback area, min	80%

**STREET WALL**

<b>K</b> Encouraged along unbuilt portion of front setback area	
Height, min/max	6'/12'

**SETBACK**

<b>L</b> Parking setback, min	30'
<b>M</b> Side setback	none
<b>N</b> Rear setback, no alley, min	10'
<b>N</b> Rear setback, with alley	3'

**BUILDING COVERAGE**

% of lot occupied by buildings, max	80%
-------------------------------------	-----

**TRANSPARENCY**

<b>Q</b> Ground story facade, preferred min/max	50%/80%
<b>P</b> Upper story facade, preferred min/max	20%/60%
<b>C</b> Length of blank wall, preferred max	30'

**DOORS AND ENTRIES**

<b>R</b> Distance between entries, preferred max	60'
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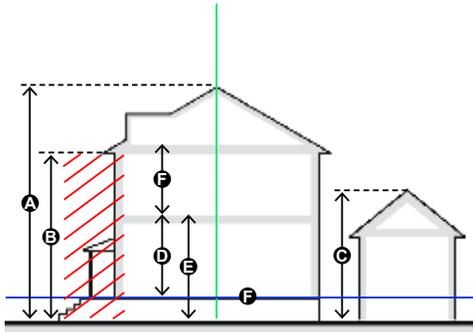
**FLOOD PROTECTION**

<b>S</b> Residential	Elevate
<b>S</b> Commercial	Floodproof

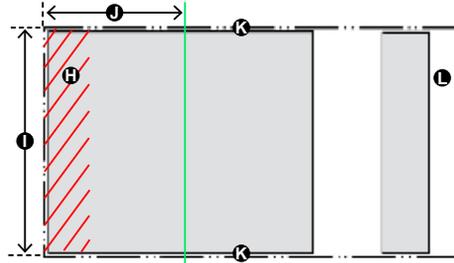
**PERMITTED USES**

<b>T</b> Ground story	Commercial, Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)
<b>U</b> Upper Stories	Commercial, Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)

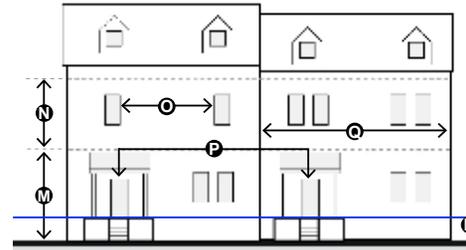
**KEY:**  
 Front setback area (red hatched)    Property line (dashed line)  
 Parking setback (green line)    Buildable area (grey shaded)  
 Base flood elevation (blue line)



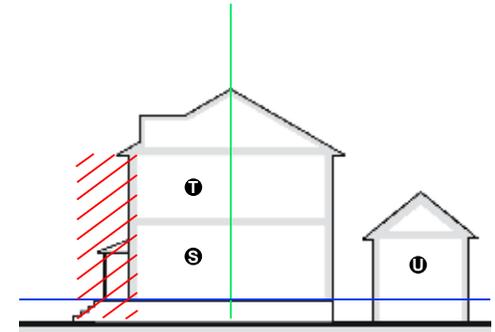
**HEIGHT**



**SITING**



**ELEMENTS**



**USE**

**BUILDING HEIGHT**

- A** Stories, max see Height Map
- B** Stories, min (in front setback area) 2

**ACCESSORY STRUCTURE**

- C** Height, max see Height Map, same as principal structure

**GROUND STORY HEIGHT**

- D** Floor to floor, min 10'
- E** Grade to floor, max 15'
- F** Ground floor elevation, min base flood elevation

**UPPER STORY HEIGHT**

- G** Floor to floor, min/max 9'/12'

**STREET FACADE**

- H** Front setback area, min/max 0'/15'
- I** Frontage, min (in front setback area) 70%

**SETBACK**

- J** Parking setback, min 30'
- K** Side setback 3'
- L** Rear setback, no alley, min 10'
- M** Rear setback, with alley none

**BUILDING COVERAGE**

- % of lot occupied by buildings, max 70%

**TRANSPARENCY**

- M** Ground story facade, preferred min/max 30%/70%
- N** Upper story facade, preferred min/max 20%/60%
- O** Length of blank wall, preferred max 15'

**DOORS AND ENTRIES**

- P** Distance between entries, preferred max 50'

**STREET FACADE**

- Q** Unit width, min 14'

**FLOOD PROTECTION**

- R** Residential Elevate

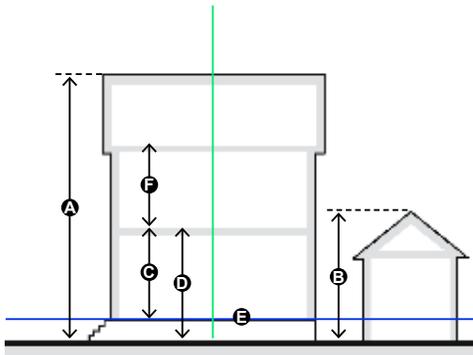
**PERMITTED USES**

- S** Ground story Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)
- T** Upper Stories Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)
- U** Accessory Structure Residential, Parking

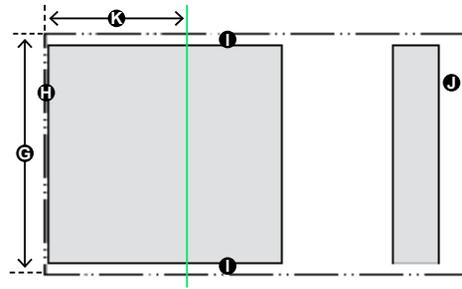
# 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

## MIXED RESIDENTIAL DETACHED

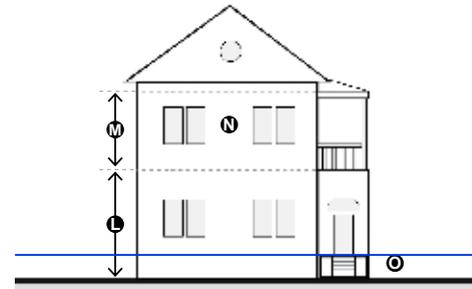
**KEY:**  
— Parking setback      - - - - Property line  
— Base flood elevation       Buildable area



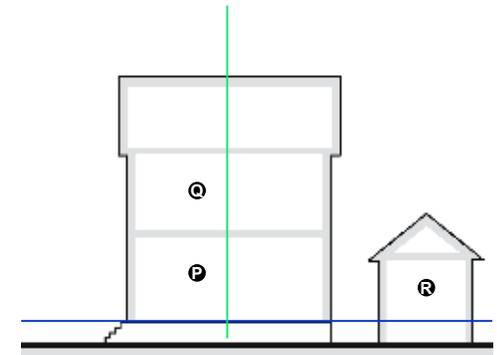
**HEIGHT**



**SITING**



**ELEMENTS**



**USE**

**BUILDING HEIGHT**

**A** Stories, max      see Height Map

**ACCESSORY STRUCTURE**

**B** Height, max      see Height Map, same as principal structure

**GROUND STORY HEIGHT**

**C** Floor to floor, min      10'  
**D** Grade to floor, max      15'  
**E** Ground floor elevation, min      base flood elevation

**UPPER STORY HEIGHT**

**F** Floor to floor, min/max      9'/12'

**LOT**

**G** Width, min      25'

**SETBACKS**

**H** Front setback, min      0'  
**I** Side setback      3'  
**J** Rear setback, no alley, min      10'  
**K** Rear setback, with alley      none  
**L** Parking setback, min      30'

**BUILDING COVERAGE**

% of lot occupied by buildings, max      70%

**TRANSPARENCY**

**M** Ground story facade, preferred min/max      30%/70%  
**N** Upper story facade, preferred min/max      20%/60%  
**O** Length of blank wall, preferred max      15'

**FLOOD PROTECTION**

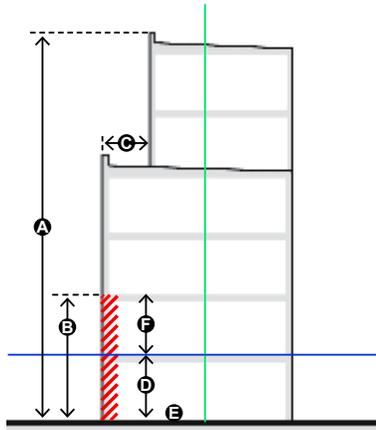
**P** Residential      Elevate

**PERMITTED USES**

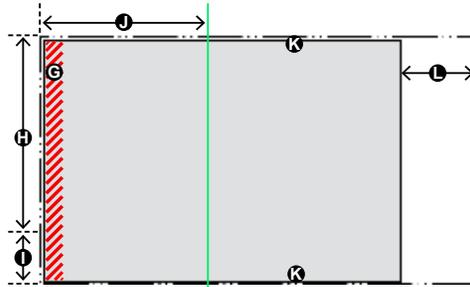
**Q** Ground story      Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)  
**R** Upper Stories      Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)  
**S** Accessory Structure      Residential, Parking

## SHOPFRONT-V

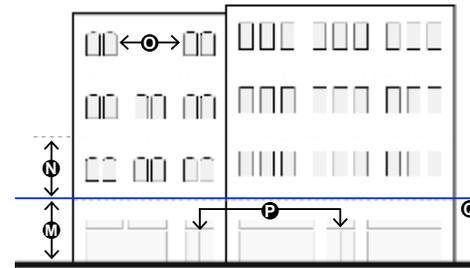
**KEY:**  
 // Front setback area    - · · · Property line  
 — Parking setback        □ Buildable area  
 — Base flood elevation



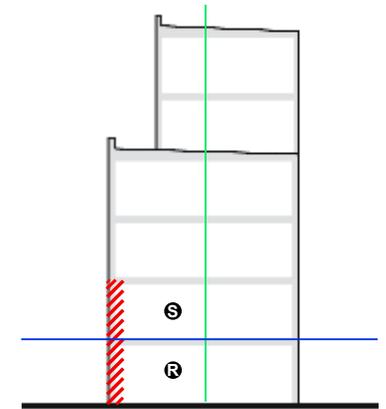
**HEIGHT**



**SITING**



**ELEMENTS**



**USE**

**BUILDING HEIGHT**

<b>A</b> Stories, max	see Height Map
<b>B</b> Stories, min (in front setback area)	2
<b>C</b> Stepback at 4 stories, min	15'

**GROUND STORY HEIGHT**

<b>D</b> Floor to floor, min/max	base flood elevation
<b>E</b> Ground floor elevation	0'

**UPPER STORY HEIGHT**

<b>F</b> Floor to floor, min/max	9'/12'
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**STREET FACADE**

<b>G</b> Front setback area, min/max	0'/5'
<b>H</b> Frontage, min (in front setback area)	90%

**STREET WALL**

<b>I</b> Encouraged along unbuilt portion of front setback area	
Height, min/max	6'/12'

**SETBACK**

<b>J</b> Parking setback, min	30'
<b>K</b> Side setback	none
<b>L</b> Rear setback, no alley, min	10'
<b>M</b> Rear setback, with alley	3'

**BUILDING COVERAGE**

% of lot occupied by buildings, max	90%
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**TRANSPARENCY**

<b>M</b> Ground story facade, preferred min/max	60%/90%
<b>N</b> Upper story facade, preferred min/max	20%/60%
<b>O</b> Length of blank wall, preferred max	20'

**DOORS AND ENTRIES**

<b>P</b> Distance between entries, preferred max	50'
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**FLOOD PROTECTION**

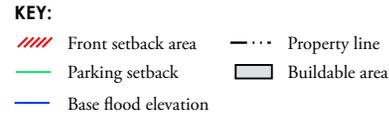
<b>Q</b> Ground story	breakaway construction
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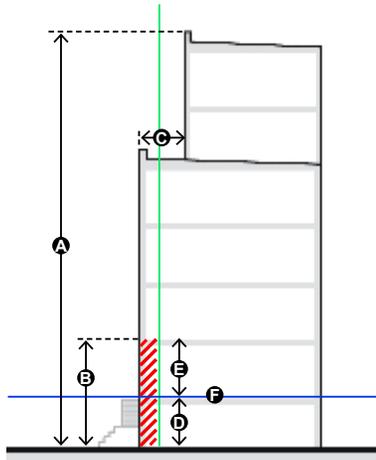
**PERMITTED USES**

<b>R</b> Ground story	Temporary Retail, Outdoor Dining, Parking (behind parking setback line)
<b>S</b> Upper Stories	Commercial, Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)

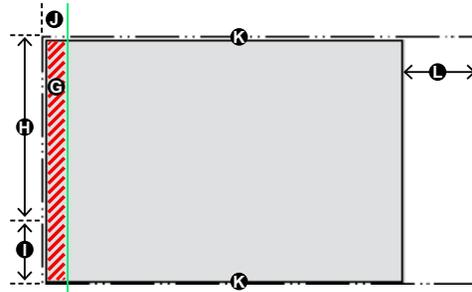
# 3.6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

## GENERAL-V

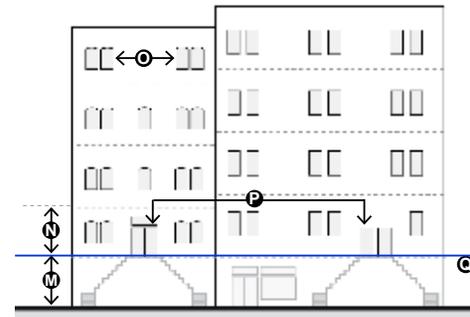
**KEY:**  
  
 Front setback area    Property line  
 Parking setback    Buildable area  
 Base flood elevation



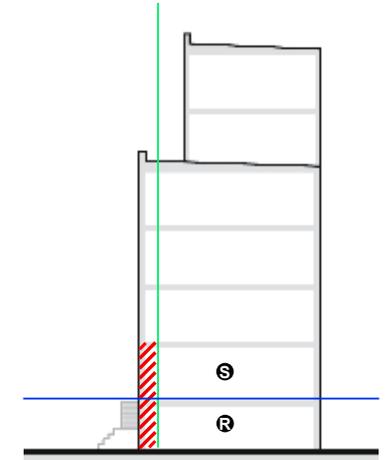
**HEIGHT**



**SITING**



**ELEMENTS**



**USE**

**BUILDING HEIGHT**

<b>A</b> Stories, max	see Height Map
<b>B</b> Stories, min (in front setback area)	2
<b>C</b> Stepback at 4 stories, min	15'

**GROUND STORY HEIGHT**

<b>D</b> Floor to floor, min/max	base flood elevation
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**UPPER STORY HEIGHT**

<b>E</b> Floor to floor, min/max	9'/12'
<b>F</b> Second floor elevation, min/max	base flood elevation

**STREET FACADE**

<b>G</b> Front setback area, min/max	0'/10'
<b>H</b> Frontage in front setback area, min	80%

**STREET WALL**

<b>I</b> Encouraged along unbuilt portion of front setback area	
Height, min/max	6'/12'

**SETBACK**

<b>J</b> Parking setback	10'
<b>K</b> Side setback	none
<b>L</b> Rear setback, no alley, min	10'
<b>L</b> Rear setback, with alley	3'

**BUILDING COVERAGE**

% of lot occupied by buildings, max	80%
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**TRANSPARENCY**

<b>M</b> Ground story facade, preferred min/max	0%/50%
<b>N</b> Upper story facade, preferred min/max	20%/60%
Ground story, length of blank wall, preferred max	n/a
<b>O</b> Upper story, length of blank wall, preferred max	30'

**DOORS AND ENTRIES**

<b>P</b> Distance between functioning entries, max	60'
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**FLOOD PROTECTION**

<b>Q</b> Ground story	breakaway construction
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**PERMITTED USES**

<b>R</b> Ground story	Lobby, Storage, Outdoor Dining, Parking (behind parking setback line)
<b>S</b> Upper Stories	Commercial, Residential, Parking (behind parking setback line)



### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED



Map of strategic opportunity sites illustrated in following pages

### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

In this section, seven strategic opportunity sites within the study area were selected to illustrate the possibilities and potentials of development. The sites selected are either vacant or under-utilized. Each site has the potential to bring a powerful and positive addition to the community. There is the potential to create office space, housing, restaurants and retail- all of which will enhance the lives of the existing adjacent neighborhoods and create jobs for the peninsula. Proposed development follows the guidelines set aside in this document.

1. MEETING AND CALHOUN, Southwest Corner
2. CALHOUN STREET, Church Parking Lot
3. EAST BAY AND CALHOUN, Northwest Corner
4. EAST BAY AND WASHINGTON, at Charlotte
5. EAST BAY AND WASHINGTON, at Laurens
- 6+7. AROUND THE MARITIME CENTER



Site 1: currently the site of a drive-in bank



Site 4: currently a mix of vacant uses on Washington St.



Sites 6 + 7: Vacant City-owned parcels on River

### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

#### MEETING AND CALHOUN, Southwest Corner

This site is located at the southeast corner of Marion Square and is currently occupied by a drive-in bank. Under proposed guidelines, the site could be developed into a four floor mixed-use development that would better define this corner of Marion Square and add ground-level retail vitality to Calhoun Street. Existing setback requirements will require that the building be modified to avoid casting shadows on Marion Square, but a corner element should be permitted to acknowledge the importance of the intersection of Calhoun and Meeting streets.



**RECOMMENDED LAND USE:** Retail, Office  
**HEIGHT:** 4 floors maximum  
**RESTRICTIONS:**

- No ground floor parking within 30 ft of Calhoun Street frontage.
- Required ground floor retail on Calhoun Street. Access from Meeting Street only.



### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

#### CALHOUN STREET, Citadel Square Baptist Church Parking Lot

Two sites in this area are currently occupied by a gas station and surface parking, the latter owned by the Citadel Square Baptist Church. Both parcels could be developed into mixed-use or residential uses. The illustration shows a mixed-use building of four floors at the corner of Calhoun and Meeting streets and multi-family housing on Calhoun Street. The mixed-use parcel would benefit from the availability of parking at the Mendel Rivers building site nearby, if public parking would offset the need to provide on-site parking on this small parcel. The housing on Calhoun could be developed to provide a more pedestrian-friendly street environment here and add affordable housing to the area.



**RECOMMENDED LAND USE:** Residential, Institutional

**HEIGHT:** 4 floors maximum

**RESTRICTIONS:**

- Required ground floor retail at corner.
- Limited access from corner of Calhoun and Meeting Streets.



### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

#### EAST BAY AND CALHOUN, Northwest Corner

This site, at the busy corner of Calhoun and East Bay, is currently occupied by a one-story retail building housing a coffee shop and other services. It would be included in the proposed expansion to the Accommodations Zone and, as such, it could be developed into a hotel with ground-level retail on Calhoun Street. Height restrictions would allow five floors on most of the site with lower heights required on Alexander Street adjacent to the neighborhood. The site could also benefit from proximity to the Aquarium and Gaillard garages, for offsetting parking requirements.



**RECOMMENDED LAND USE:** Retail, Housing, Office and/or Hotel

**HEIGHT:** 3 and 5 floors maximum

**RESTRICTIONS:**

- Required retail on ground floor on Calhoun Street.
- Hotel access only from East Bay Street



### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

#### EAST BAY AND WASHINGTON, at Charlotte

The block between East Bay and Washington streets along Charlotte is occupied by several warehouses, vacant buildings and vacant lots. The Board of Architectural Review would continue to make the determination of the value of any existing structures and how they should be incorporated into any new development. Given its location within the proposed office corridor, the site is ideal for developing office uses in a mix of four and five story buildings, with parking on the ground level. The site, located within 800 feet of the Aquarium Garage, would allow office uses to take advantage of surplus parking in that structure to offset a shortfall of on-site parking on the ground level. Vehicular access to the site will be from cross streets rather than East Bay or Washington Street to improve circulation in those busy corridors.



RECOMMENDED LAND USE: Retail, Office

HEIGHT: 4 and 5 floors maximum

RESTRICTIONS:

- Ground level active uses on street frontage. Limited access from East Bay and Washington Street. Preferred access from Charlotte and Chapel St.

### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

#### EAST BAY AND WASHINGTON, at Laurens

The site currently occupied by the Vegetable Bin (and other warehouse uses) lies within the proposed office corridor, and could be developed as office or a mix of office and residential uses. The site is limited to four and five floors, and allows ground-level parking with a 5-foot setback from the property line. The site lies within easy walking distance of the Galliard garage, and the surplus spaces there could offset a shortfall of on-site office parking. The site's proximity to the Ansonborough neighborhood would require special review of the west edge of the site.



RECOMMENDED LAND USE: Retail, Office

HEIGHT: 4 and 5 floors maximum

RESTRICTIONS:

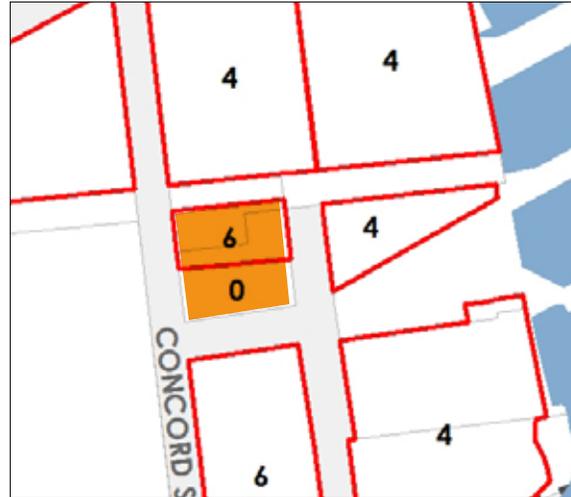
- Ground level active uses on street frontages.
- Limited access from East Bay and Washington, preferred access from Society and Laurens St.



### 3.7 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY SITES ILLUSTRATED

#### Around the Maritime Center

Two of the last three remaining vacant parcels between Concord Street and the Cooper River are owned by the City of Charleston. These two parcels could be developed to expand housing opportunities along the Cooper River with immediate access and views to the planned Concord Park. These parcels could be built to six floors. Additional height adjacent to Docksider should be considered as an incentive for further setback to create a wider view corridor from Concord Park to the Cooper River. Studies show that six floors (or even more) will not block views from the new International African-American Museum to Fort Sumter. Ground-level activity will be required along specific block fronts in this area, to ensure the public feels invited to approach the waterfront below the housing. The only privately-owned parcel near the river is slated for a waterfront restaurant with a maximum height of four floors.



**RECOMMENDED LAND USE:** Residential, Restaurants, Retail

**HEIGHT:** 4, and 6 floors maximum

**RESTRICTIONS:**

- Ground level active uses on street frontages
- Restaurants and retail on ground level



## 4. IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

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### 4.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

### 4.2 BRANDING & MARKET NICHE

## 4.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

ERA believes that new jobs, industry expansion and programs will drive economic development on Charleston's peninsula. The study area has assets and amenities that lends themselves to specific approaches to economic development. The assets include:

- Proximity to the port.
- Areas outside of the traditional historic context providing some flexibility in design and approval processes.
- Inclusion in the Charleston Digital Corridor.
- Access to the Cooper River waterfront and a developing neighborhood.
- Aquarium and other cultural uses

Due to the opportunity presented to provide Class "A" space in a more contemporary, flexible design not broadly available elsewhere on the Peninsula, the study area can become an employment center. Located in the "Wharf" district of the Charleston Digital Corridor, the study area is positioned to attract companies that require larger open floor plates and flexible spaces such as:

- Larger architecture and engineering firms.
- Specialized technology consulting and systems integration and computer graphics design firms.
- Life sciences laboratories and offices.

Transitional use - cargo shipping is an industry that continues to grow and expand, as it is one of the means by which the globalization of the business

world is made possible. There are some shipping industry establishments primarily engaged in arranging transportation of freight between shippers and carriers that might be appropriate for office space in the study area including:

- freight forwarders
- marine shipping agents
- custom brokers

As changes occur in shipping facilities needs and current port facilities move away from the study area, port-related businesses may transition to other uses such as life sciences firms looking for expansion space.

Life sciences firms are attracted to Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). The new South Carolina Research Authority life sciences business incubator will foster start-up medical and life sciences-related enterprises. As these businesses expand and develop, they will need space away from the incubator. The Calhoun Street study area can serve as a future location for the expanding "graduates" of the incubator, providing flexible laboratory and office space in an attractive setting for a highly-educated employment base.

An approach to building a life sciences industry in the study area would include:

- Incubator Spin-Off Companies. (A "spin-off" is a company that has a direct affiliation; maybe even a for-profit subsidiary of the research or university facility.)
- Spin-In Companies which are developing technologies not at the incubator, but which could make a positive contribution to the intellectual life of the Charleston life sciences community through their direct participation in Digital Corridor programs and by providing technology that is relevant to the research interests of the incubator. (A "spin-in" is a company that chooses on its own to locate near a research facility or university to take advantage of any synergy that may be possible by proximity and availability of resources. These are usually knowledge-based companies like tech and bio or other research. They may not be formally affiliated.)
- Established Companies Venture-backed or venture-backable companies with no connection to the incubator but with compatible customer and/or workforce bases.

## 4.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

### SHORT-, MID-, AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

It is important to prioritize development initiatives over the course of the study area plan in order to provide the best assistance to new and existing businesses within the study area. Short-term initiatives are generally thought of as those that should develop within five years while mid-term initiatives should develop after the plan is underway and headed toward maturity. Long-term initiatives come into play after about ten years, when the plan is established and in a mature stage

### SHORT-TERM PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (0 TO 5 YEARS):

- Expansion of the accommodation zone to allow development of additional hotels in study area
- Definition of development parameters in the non-historic area so that the development timeline and approval process can be reduced and provide a level of predictability needed for creation of a significant employment center.
- Targeted recruitment of port-related businesses, architecture & engineering firms, and technology firms through the Digital Corridor effort.

### MID-TERM PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (5 TO 10 YEARS):

- Use of city-owned property holdings to reduce residential development costs, thus creating more workforce housing for young, educated workers for technology and life sciences businesses.
- Development of amenities along waterfront to create a mixed-use neighborhood that attracts knowledge industry workers
- Recruitment of incubator spin-outs.

### LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (10 + YEARS):

- Development of life sciences and technology space as Union Pier transitions

### INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The largest implications of industrial maritime services on a city are on its transportation system. Thus continued growth in the cargo shipping industry must be complemented by growth in capacity and efficiency of transportation systems. Potential conflicts between the rail and truck access needed by port facilities and the traffic congestion may continue to be an issue in the study area.

Technology-oriented businesses infrastructure needs include:

- Reliable high-speed fiber connections
- Access to venture capital
- Highly-educated workforce (supported by attractive amenities and available housing)

### SUSTAINABLE VALUE CREATION

Sustainable value creation is defined as “increasing economic value added.” In community economic development terms, sustainable value creation connects jobs and industry in a way that sustains and supports the community educationally, socially, and culturally in an environmentally responsible way.

Critical elements for sustainable value creation in line with overall planning goals in the study area include:

- A multi-functional, urban neighborhood providing a lifestyle attractive to a knowledge industry workforce
- Available jobs providing incomes attractive to young, educated professionals
- A mix of housing types and price points to allow families to remain in the area throughout life stage transitions (single, couple, families with children, and “empty-nesters”)
- Supportive cultural and retail amenities
- As port facilities transition, plans should be in place to adjust economic, physical and social structures of the neighborhood to allow for growth

## 4.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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### PUBLIC FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The City of Charleston and its surrounding area is similar to cities such as Washington, DC and San Francisco, CA where available land is limited and land costs are high. This leads to even higher development costs and often creates a large barrier for new development.

In order to attract and sustain the key businesses that would complement and thrive in the study area, it may be necessary to offer financial and technical assistance, as well as public policy support. The examples on the following pages highlight best practices in public financial assistance for business development. It is important to note that the Charleston LDC currently offers some similar incentives.

#### WASHINGTON, DC

**Commercial Property Tax Relief:** The relief consists of \$11 million to ease the pressure of rising property taxes for business owners. Due to rising commercial property taxes throughout Washington D.C., the D.C. Council has set aside a lump, one-time sum of \$11 million in an attempt to prevent some small businesses from shutting down. This relief will be extended to 11,000 businesses in the city that gross no higher than \$500,000 per year. Commercial property values rose by almost 28%, on average, from 2006-2007 in the district, while at the extreme, Columbia Heights property values have risen more than 50% in the same period.

#### SAN FRANCISCO, CA

**Neighborhood Market Initiative:** The City and LISC form a public/private partnership with residents and merchants to provide eligible neighborhoods with financial assistance and other services. The City and LISC are backing the Neighborhood Marketplace Initiative to stimulate job creation, development of businesses selling quality goods and services, financial investment and the improvement of physical landscapes in San Francisco's neighborhoods.

The City and LISC jointly plan to invest approximately \$500,000 in grant funds annually to support neighborhoods selected for the program. The targeted neighborhoods will benefit from several coordinated city services including but not limited to façade improvement grants, help in filling vacant retail properties, help in forming CBD's (similar to BID's), and other assistance based on primarily on what the residents and merchants of the districts need and want.

#### PORTLAND, OR

**Direct TIF Loan Program:** This program is designed to assist new and existing small businesses in an urban renewal area by providing financing for the gap between project cost and private financing through tax increment. Therefore it is tied to the redevelopment and physical improvements of real estate projects within an urban renewal area. Loan fees are waived and interest rates are generally below market. The borrower must provide a minimum of 10% of the total project cost and must have reasonable credit.

#### SAN DIEGO, CA

**Storefront Improvement Program:** Façade improvement program specifically for small businesses. Created in 1986, this program is designed to enhance and revitalize older commercial neighborhoods throughout the city of San Diego. The city of San Diego rebates small businesses (with 12 or fewer employees) or property owners as an incentive for them to improve their storefronts consistent with design standards for their commercial areas. The program accepts applications from businesses with 12 or fewer employees AND/OR property owners who lease space to small businesses. The City rebates from 1/3 to 1/2 of the storefront construction costs but may not exceed \$7,500.

## 4.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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### BOSTON, MA

**Neighborhood Commercial Management Program:** City partners with financial entities to provide loan and grant money to small and local businesses. The Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative created by the Boston Office of Business Development in 2004, provides loans of up to \$100,000 to assist restaurants that promise to create ten or more jobs and that locate in commercial districts underserved by sit-down restaurants. This initiative has facilitated the opening and renovation of some 50 restaurants in neighborhoods throughout the city. In 2005, the initiative made about \$500,000 in loans to 22 new restaurants in 12 neighborhoods. Apart from financial assistance, the program also helps restaurateurs to develop marketing strategies, acquire necessary licenses and permits, and receive technical assistance through workshops.

**Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative:** A loan and technical assistance program aimed at attracting restaurants and creating more jobs.

### AUSTIN, TX

**Small Business Growth Fund:** Loans for small businesses aimed at creating and/or retaining permanent jobs using CDBG funds. The Neighborhood Commercial Management Program is designed to create or retain jobs for low and moderate income persons by providing financial assistance – with CDBG funds – to commercial businesses located in the Eligible Program Area. Loans may only be used to purchase, acquire, construct or rehabilitate fixed assets whose useful life exceeds five years. Loan amounts range from \$10,000 to \$250,000 and carry a 3% to 6% interest rate.

**Creative Industries Loan Guarantee Program:** Loans specifically aimed at individuals and businesses whose primary field of work is in the creative industries in Austin. The Creative Industries Loan Guarantee Program is designed to encourage private lenders to provide financing for creative industries in Austin, non-profits related to those creative industries, and individuals involved in those creative industries in Austin.

These loans do require that the borrower creates at least one permanent full-time job within 6 months for every \$15,000 of CIL money borrowed. Eligible borrowers include individuals, businesses and non-profits whose work is primarily related to music, film, art, and technology industries such as the digital and video game industries. Program loan amounts range from \$10,000 to \$75,000.

**Business Retention & Expansion Program:** Loans specifically for locally-owned or minority-owned businesses. This is a city of Austin economic development program to re-establish Congress Avenue and East 6th Street as retail and urban entertainment district destinations. The BRE Program is intended to provide low-interest loans for eligible costs to existing businesses located within the eligible area that are being displaced because of development. It is also intended to attract new businesses to the eligible area. The loan amount may not exceed 250,000 dollars, the annual interest rate will not exceed 6%, and can only be used towards fixed-asset projects whose useful lives equal or exceed five years. Eligibility preference is given to locally-owned businesses as well as minority-owned or women-owned businesses.

## 4.2 BRANDING & MARKET NICHE

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### BRAND ESSENCE

*“Why does place matter? A sense of place provides a sense of belonging and of commitment. It is the repository of our shared memories, experiences and dreams. It is a place of family and community ties – of roots – that stems from our connection to a particular location and its people.*

*And when people feel connected to a place – emotionally, culturally and spiritually – they are more apt to care for it.”*

*– “The Making of Place,” Urban Land Institute*

Charleston’s downtown peninsula is teeming with a unique historic ambiance; intimate streetscapes of boutiques, eateries, galleries and grand homes; mature trees and authentic architectural elements, textures and character. Calhoun Street and the Aquarium Wharf waterfront area, however, contrast with these surroundings both aesthetically and experientially. This area lacks energy. It lacks a compelling, cohesive experience. It does not project a sense of place. The community needs a reason to care for it. This place needs a brand.

### THE PLACE BRAND: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IT MATTERS

A brand is more than a name and logo. It’s the total experience and the promise of value a place makes to all its audiences. A place brand must be based on truth – it must be inspired by the area’s authentic people, heritage, history and physical qualities. It must also truthfully project a clear vision for what the place will become, what it will offer and the experiences it will create. A place brand creates a sense of purpose and defines the direction that should inspire all stakeholders, shape planning efforts and drive consistency of execution. Consider the brand a hub that connects and inspires the spokes of all the uses. It should direct marketing, place design, environmental graphics, customer experiences – everything. When this happens, each use supports the other, competitive advantage occurs, message fragmentation is minimized, dollars work harder and greater value creation occurs.

### PURPOSE

This master planning initiative seeks to create a new “brand” for the section of downtown comprised of the following three zones:

#### • **Calhoun Street Corridor**

The streetscape of this major east-west thoroughfare feels barren and unwelcoming, lacks the characteristic intimacy of other downtown avenues, and fails to draw people down to the waterfront.

#### • **East Bay Street & Washington Street**

These north-south arteries are underdeveloped and provide excellent opportunity to draw people up to the waterfront area and assets along Calhoun Street.

#### • **Waterfront**

This waterfront area, anchored by the Aquarium, sits isolated with a passive park front door. Currently, there is little to draw people all the way to the waterfront.

### COMPETITIVE DISTINCTION

Following are key competitive insights gleaned through our discovery initiatives:

- Charleston’s current positioning line used in marketing is “Where History Lives.”
- Primary competition is Asheville, Savannah, Williamsburg, Hilton Head. But downtown also attracts day-trippers from Myrtle Beach.
- Charleston is increasingly known as a dining destination, a higher-end destination; it’s competing with major “food” destinations like San Francisco and New Orleans.
- With the exception of the Aquarium and Children’s Museum, the downtown overall is not a “family friendly” destination. There aren’t a lot of kids living downtown, and downtown tends to attract older, affluent Empty Nesters.

By creating a distinctive experience for this district that both complements and completes the downtown experience, it will help Downtown Charleston as a whole create even greater competitive advantage.

#### Points of Difference

Of all the opportunities explored for competitive distinction, integration of the following three offer the most compelling underpinnings for a new downtown experience that adds value and stands apart from other marketplace choices. These are the most important differentiators to be conveyed in the brand story.

- **An environment that’s family-friendly.**

Tourism statistics show most current visitors are mature (mean age 48; mode 50-60 years old). The area appeals to mature visitors with its fine dining, shopping, arts, and history; but it lacks extensive options for families. This district will leverage and expand upon its Aquarium anchor to create an interesting, engaging, stimulating collection of experiences in a comfortable neighborhood setting that appeals to families.

- **A mixed-use destination that activates the downtown waterfront.**

The Mayor and a majority of the interviewed stakeholders noted “drawing people to the water” as a primary element of the vision for this district. Additionally, although the downtown peninsula is surrounded by water, there are no true “mixed-use” destinations on the water. Other parts of downtown are known for their singular focus: the retail mecca of King Street, the waterfront park, affluent historic homes South of Broad, the Market Street tourist magnet, the college. The mix in this district will be distinctive. The overall district will maintain an authentic, lively neighborhood character that’s uniquely enhanced by the Aquarium and future International African-American Museum.

- **“Emerging Economies” employment zone.**

Leveraging the visibility and access attributes of the East Bay Street and Washington Street arteries, this new “emerging economies” zone will add new office spaces and help spur economic development in the downtown economy by introducing a new employment-based corridor in a setting unlike anything in the area.

## 4.2 BRANDING & MARKET NICHE

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### SUCCESSFUL WATERFRONT PLACES

These examples of successful waterfront districts demonstrate how an interesting mix of uses and interactive programming help create enduring places that communities cherish:

#### **Riverfront in Downtown Chattanooga, TN**

- \$120-million “21st Century Waterfront Project”
- A diverse mix energizes the riverfront: Aquarium, Art Museum, Arts District, IMAX, Hands-On Children’s Museum, Events

#### **Fisherman’s Wharf, San Francisco, CA**

- Engaging and constantly evolving programming help draw repeat crowds and increase revenue streams. “Whether temporary or permanent, amenities help establish a convivial setting for social interaction” – Project for Public Spaces.

#### **Downtown Providence, RI**

- The “Waterfire” public art installment on the downtown waterfront is a distinctive, popular attraction featuring 100 bonfires synchronized to music. “Public art is a great magnet for children of all ages to come together.” – Project for Public Spaces.

### PERSONALITY

What’s the character of this district? How does it complement the authentic “Downtown Charleston” character yet project a fresh, new experience? The Brand Personality sets the tone for the brand story and inspires the types of experiences and placemaking for the district.

- Authentic but not stuffy; it’s Charleston with a view forward; authentic without being nostalgic
- New and modern; something for the 21st century; a contemporary design that harmonizes with the area’s historic roots and unique heritage
- Family-friendly and healthy (think Farmer’s Market, green spaces)
- Vibrant and local, but not typical
- Welcoming and closer than downtown
- Colorful and diverse
- Urban and a little edgy; but affordable
- Comfortable, open, less congested and easy parking
- Connected; blends with surrounding neighborhoods; interconnects with area; close to everything
- Engaging, social and interactive

## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Based on the competitive distinction of this district, the brand story must primarily resonate with the following audience types:

#### Families

- Visitor and tourist families seeking a new way to enjoy downtown (a destination where they can visit often and stay longer with more to see and do; the Aquarium becomes integral to a fuller experience, not the sole draw.
- Downtown and local families who want another after-school or weekend venue to enhance their lifestyle and enrich their family time

#### Prospective Office Tenants & Employees

- Appeals to businesses who need flexible and customizable new Class A space; have outgrown their current downtown office
- A desirable office setting with premier employers helps recruit/retain top talent; creative class
- Seeks to minimize the “brain drain”—gives graduates new, attractive employment opportunities

#### Other audiences the brand must connect with

- Future residents (affordable housing options, in particular, broaden the base to include first-time homebuyers, young professionals, single parents and families with young children, Empty Nesters and retirees—a diversity of people that helps give this district an authentic neighborhood character.)
- Leasing agents (office, retail) and prospective tenants
- Community: downtown neighborhoods and businesses, arts and cultural organizations
- City and other municipal stakeholders
- The media

### BRAND STORY: INSPIRATION

The brand story for this mixed-use, family-friendly waterfront destination and emerging economies district is inspired and shaped by the following:

#### Learning / Exploration / Education / Innovation supporting assets:

- Aquarium (marine ecology, river, science)
- Library, Buist Academy, College of Charleston

NOTE: Buist Academy is the first school in Charleston to be authorized to offer the “International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme”; a program that “connects our teachers and students to global resources for shared learning and exciting new opportunities.”

- “Emerging economies” zone (innovators, research-related, international/global businesses)
- Maritime Center
- History: Ft. Sumter, future International African-American Museum, Borough Houses

#### Expression of New Ideas supporting assets:

- Gaillard Auditorium (theater, music, dance)
- Future placemaking and public art elements celebrating Learning / Exploration / Education / Innovation

#### Connection / Integration supporting assets:

- Port: international / global commerce
- Intersection of Calhoun / East Bay / Washington streets (visually/experientially connect this district with downtown)
- Connection/blending with surrounding neighborhoods

## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

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### THE BRAND STORY PLATFORM

This place is where people and ideas converge in a new way in Charleston's downtown. Situated in the literal intersection of Calhoun, East Bay and Washington Streets, this district is all about a coming together – a mix of uses that creates a palpable vibrancy, a connectivity with its surrounding context, a cross-sharing mind-set. Every aspect is about learning, reaching, exploring, innovating, inspiring. But this isn't a high-tech business zone that's intimidating or off-limits-feeling. It's about everyday imagination, unlimited possibilities, new beginnings. It's a real neighborhood setting, projecting the notion that all ideas are welcome – a diversity of thinking that makes the collective experience better. The creative expression and celebration of these ideas happen in the district's interactive gathering places and green spaces. Art is the vehicle for that expression; after all, this IS Charleston. Interactive public art elements activate the experience, engage the public and create memories. Children in particular are invited to add their creative touch, express their ideas, participate in the experience.

Water, too, is central to the experience. Water draws people together, encourages contemplation and interaction, and reminds all of us about our connection to nature and the world at large; a nod to the community's desire for diversity and sustainability. All of these elements of place harmonize in a way that honors the area's heritage while offering a new take on Downtown Charleston. Yes, it's a decidedly Charleston neighborhood in character and tone: welcoming, friendly, comfortable. But it's also a projection of a new Charleston, one that respects its past and reaches for new ideas to inspire its future.

### KEY MESSAGES: FAMILIES / VISITORS / COMMUNITIES / FUTURE RESIDENTS

- Families will flock to this great new Downtown Charleston neighborhood. It's a place to gather with each other outdoors in a lively neighborhood setting near the water and interconnected with Liberty Park, Concord Park, and ample green spaces in between. The environment invites you and your children to connect in so many ways – color the sidewalk with chalk, play in the fountain, read together under the trees and feel invigorated by this new kind of friendly Charleston experience.
- Finally a place your children will love in Downtown Charleston. Anchored by the Aquarium and infused with interactive and educational features that bring the Aquarium experience outdoors, this hands-on district celebrates learning, exploring, discovery and innovation. The creative energy is palpable here. The mix is meant to engage you, inspire you and welcome you for any occasion. You'll want to come here often.
- This is where Charleston families come together for simple family fun. No frills. A comfortable, always welcoming setting for easy after-school play, weekend walks and anytime enjoyment.
- When you live here, the experience is magnified. This vibrant district creates an all-new way to call Downtown Charleston home. If you work downtown (or in the district itself), you're steps from the office; commute time is reduced to mere minutes of a pleasant outdoor stroll rather than time wasted in traffic congestion. Your back yard here is the series of connected parks and waterfront green spaces parks. It's a fresh, modern home setting that maintains all the distinctive charm of historic Charleston.

## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

### KEY MESSAGES TO PROSPECTIVE OFFICE TENANTS

- Enhance your business image and your customer experience with an office setting unlike anything in the market. Customers will appreciate the convenience of being in this lively, mixed-use neighborhood setting where they can run an errand or grab a bite to eat before meeting with you. Employees will enjoy the benefit of working in this innovation hub; a district that's infused with creative energy; it's THE place to work in Downtown Charleston.
- Downtown Charleston's business community just got cooler. This district is designated as the innovation hub for the best of the creative class; keeping downtown's talent pool strong. Your business will benefit from exposure in this leading-edge commercial setting designed to celebrate idea generation, information sharing, research and discovery. This is a location that gives you the edge: top tier talent will want to work here, and that makes you an even more attractive employer for being here. Make a statement about your business and reap the benefits of the competitive advantage this place gives you.
- While other office choices are limited in Downtown Charleston, this address gives you all new, easily customizable Class A office space to choose from. Whether you're moving into downtown or moving up to this premier address, you'll be one of the fortunate few to be a part of this one-of-a-kind place.
- Access is uncommonly convenient when your office is situated here. Directly connected to East Bay and Washington streets, you'll arrive at your downtown address while other downtown commuters are still commuting. You'll also enjoy the variety of convenient transportation choices with future bike paths, water taxi and walkable streets.



## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

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### BRAND NAME

#### The Brand Identity

Currently, this district’s waterfront area is known as “Aquarium Wharf.” Additionally, Calhoun Street – a main east/west thoroughfare – has been known through the years as “Boundary Street.” The Cooper River Waterfront / Calhoun Street East Corridor is in need of a distinctive brand name. For maximum branding impact, the name should be based on the points of difference, in support of the brand story, and reflective of the brand personality.

#### Brand Name: Word Categories

The following categories of words serve as “idea starters” and provide the foundation of thinking for name generation. These words are purposefully selected to reflect this district as a “forward looking” expression of Charleston; other words nod to the area’s unique history, character and culture.

- Connection
- Innovation
- Intersection
- Ideas
- Exploration
- Integration
- Expression
- Diversity
- Multi (generational, cultural, sensory)
- Neighborhood
- Vibrancy
- Explore
- World
- Interactive
- Together
- Involve
- Engage
- Shape
- Learn
- Friendly
- Legacy
- Heritage
- Stories
- Family
- Colorful
- Reach
- New
- Creativity
- Energy
- Blend
- Green
- Comfortable
- Water
- Harbor
- Future
- Knowledge
- Think
- Smart
- Convergence
- Welcome
- Business
- Mix
- Medley
- Kaleidoscope
- Crossroads
- Infuse
- Exchange
- Fort Sumter
- Cooper
- Calhoun
- Ansonborough
- Boundary
- Borough

## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

### BRAND NAME: NAMING IDEAS

By design, the following naming ideas leverage the distinctive “exploration, discovery, innovation” aspects of the brand. It’s about Charleston with a modern twist; creating a district that respects its historic roots but does not attempt to create a poor imitation of the past. This is authentic Charleston a new way, for a new day.

#### The Exchange

- Idea speaks to the innovation, learning, exploration activities
- Nods to the sharing, integration, connection, mix aspects of the place
- Exchange has a business and commerce connotation; feels complementary to the notion of a creative class / emerging economies district

#### Integration Station

- Station nods to adjacent railway, port, commerce
- Integration of uses
- New experience where roads and people come together

#### Rendezvous

- Conveys the aspect of gathering, connection, welcoming feeling
- It’s about people coming together, defined as a “popular gathering place”
- Feels celebratory (reflects the “vibrant, colorful, engaging” personality traits)

#### Kaleidoscope

- Speaks to the integration of uses
- Conveys an “artistic” expression; multitude of colors and shapes that could inspire placemaking and public art elements
- A cherished childhood toy; relates to children/families today and the “childlike wonder” that inspires innovative thinking

The following additional name ideas introduce an aspect of the authentic character and history of this locale and present somewhat more traditional naming structures.

Borough Exchange

Boroughway

Cooper Borough District

Calhoun East Riverfront

Calhoun-Cooper Place

Northport Exchange

Northport Waterfront

DEW District (Downtown East Waterfront)

Maritime Block

Commerce Towne

Ansonborough Rivertowne

Calanco District (Calhoun and Ansonborough on the Cooper)

Eastcal Exchange (East Calhoun)

Uptown East Riverfront

## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

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### BRAND EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Following are preliminary ideas for how the brand can inspire the place experience and design.

Attributes of the brand should act as planning “filters” to inspire the elements of place. For example:

- How is the “family friendly” distinction reflected?
- In what ways can the “emerging economies” zone inspire the experience?
- How can the “mix” be reflected?
- How can the “waterfront” aspect be leveraged?
- How can the “vibrant, welcoming, colorful, comfortable” aspects of the personality be reflected and inspire the tonality of imagery and messaging?
- In what ways can the “connected, engaging” personality traits inspire the experience?
- How can the experience be “authentic yet fresh” (honoring the history/heritage while introducing a contemporary expression of the Charleston experience?)

### 1. CALHOUN STREET BECOMES THE GATEWAY. AMP UP AND BRAND THE WAYFINDING.

- Calhoun Street, as a major east-west thoroughfare, creates the “gateway” to the experience, and is itself part of the experience. Its assets should be linked experientially and aesthetically to purposefully draw people down to the newly activated waterfront.
- Currently, there is no sense of arrival to the waterfront area and visitors cannot find the aquarium. Begin the branded wayfinding at Meeting Street and continue to the waterfront district; this creates visual continuity and changes the perception of Calhoun Street as the “dividing line” to the “connector.”
- Wayfinding signage should tell the brand story and reflect the character of the brand personality. It’s an opportunity to visually enhance and promote the district’s character, increase distinction, and further communicate the multi-use, multi-audience makeup of this district.
- As a nod to Gaillard and the area’s rich arts and cultural heritage, let art influence the form and function. In addition to directional information, add meaningful symbols, materials, unique color palette.
- Add building murals inspired by assets: Aquarium, Library, Buist Academy, IAA Museum.
- Add large banners or building projections to complement the scale of Calhoun Street and the buildings on its streetscape; this welcomes visitors; creates character and immediate sense of place.

### 2. INFUSE THE PLACE WITH INTERACTIVE WATER FEATURES.

- People are drawn to the water. Add details that create a water-themed arrival sequence into this maritime-flavored district.
- Add a memorable water-inspired public art element to activate the intersection of Calhoun, East Bay, Washington streets; serves as wayfinding and an iconic gateway element to enhance the sense of arrival into the district.
- Invite local artists (public art contest) to create this gateway public art element.
- Incorporate interactive, engaging and family-friendly water features into Liberty Park such as fountains, a water wall, pop jet fountains, reflecting pools. Make the water experience multi-sensory (sound, touch, add lights for dramatic effect, add music).
- Add interactive Aquarium exhibits to Liberty Park to bring the Aquarium experience outdoors and activate this public green space. Make it a more inviting “front door.”
- Reflect an environmental theme in public art and wayfinding to reference the Aquarium, river, environment/ecosystem. Look for ways to use eco-friendly materials to support the city’s green initiatives.

## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3. INJECT MORE FAMILY-FRIENDLY FEATURES AND AMBIANCE TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE.

- Currently, the Aquarium and Liberty Park are a passive front door, lack color and energy that would appeal to children/families.
- Leverage existing assets (Library, Buist, Aquarium) to inspire “children’s art” environmental graphics and interactive elements
- Program with activities for families: children’s sidewalk art, balloons, face-painting, play areas in the park

### 4. ADD GATHERING PLACES TO THE GREEN SPACES

Liberty Park, Concord Park and the green space near the Maritime Center are passive and could be made more inviting. Create a lively, welcoming environment that appeals to families, residents and workers from the new employment district, a place that feels safe, a place that’s a lunchtime retreat or a place to play after-school. Purposeful view corridors will be further magnets. People will appreciate the opportunity to relax in a comfortable park setting and enjoy the water views.

- Add seating arrangements and fountains to encourage gathering and socializing. This seating helps to enliven and activate public spaces.
- Benches could be public art elements.
- Add music to add to the ambiance (a nod to Gaillard).
- Programming can create a more vibrant sense of place and welcoming feel. Create new traditions in this space; something for the neighborhood (not necessarily tourists) – movies in the park, open markets featuring works by local artists, dog walks/parks.



## 4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

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### PRELIMINARY MARKETING IDEAS

#### Targeting Families / the Community

New community programs / events that connect and cross-promote the assets:

- Buist Academy partnering with Aquarium for “global environmental learning”
- Gaillard partnering with Aquarium for “singing with the fishes” music-inspired event or community concert in Liberty Park
- Library and Buist sponsor a “storytelling in the park” event or create a permanent area for weekend or after-school reading (public art references this learning/reading angle); employers in “emerging economies” zone sponsor a scholarship
- Outdoor theatre, or areas in the park for impromptu performances

#### Guerilla marketing around downtown to build word-of-mouth buzz:

- T-shirts worn by Bike Taxi drivers imprinted with “ask me about (district name)”
- Ads on trolleys and horse carriages; allow horse carriages to travel to this district on weekends (not interfering with weekday commuter traffic)
- Utilize existing structures as a “canvas” for projecting light-art as dramatic messaging (i.e., project imagery and messaging onto the facade of the Aquarium Parking Garage or the wall of the building adjacent to the IAAM site).
- Event banners along Calhoun will tell the story to the daily commuters into /out of downtown.
- Hire “street teams” to distribute branded messaging in key downtown areas.

#### Targeting Prospective Office Tenants / Employees

- Open House event on-site with local office/commercial brokers
- Provide distinctive marketing materials for Chamber/Economic Development relocation packages
- Target top employers based on profile and available office space
- PR to gain publicity for this unique district, benefits to Charleston economy
- PR tenants are announced (trade media)

4.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS





## 5. APPENDIX

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### 5.1 Planning Process

## 5.1 PLANNING PROCESS

### INTRODUCTION

As part of the data gathering stage of this planning process, Chan Krieger Sieniewicz and the team of sub-consultants visited Charleston on several occasions. One trip included extensive stakeholder meetings with individuals invited to attend by the city. On two occasions, public meetings were held. These meetings were open to the public.

The following pages represent some of the findings from these community meetings. The meetings were held at the library on Calhoun Street and the Maritime Center.

The map to the right and text below are two exercises from the first workshop. For the map exercise, participants were given red and green dots and asked to place their green dots on places that they liked in the community. The red dots were reserved for places that they viewed to be challenges to the community. The lists below the map are additional assets and challenges to the community that were voiced by participants.

In addition to the public meetings, we also reviewed planning documents that exist for the City of Charleston. These documents include: the Downtown Plan 1999, Preservation Plan, Calhoun Street Study 1989, Tourism Management Update 1998, Visitor Accommodations Study 1998, and the Parking Study 2000.



*During the first public workshop, attendees placed red dots on places needing improvement and green dots on places they liked.*

#### ASSETS

- Attractive abutting neighborhoods
- Proximity to traditional downtown
- Proximity to Cooper River
- Ample open space (Marion Square, Gaillard, Concord Park, Library Park, etc.)
- Cultural & public institutions (County Library, Gaillard, Aquarium, Buist, etc.)
- Festivals (Spoleto, Southeastern Wildlife, etc.)
- Historic buildings, sites (Borough Project, Emanuel A.M.E., etc.)
- Existing neighborhood retail/services

#### CHALLENGES

- Lack of ground-floor activity
- Large massing of institutional buildings
- Surface parking lots
- Programming, design, visibility of open spaces
- Housing non-affordability
- Port properties and rail lines as barriers
- Difficult intersections for pedestrians
- Too little shade
- Signage and wayfinding insufficient
- Few elements draw people to the waterfront

### PUBLIC MEETING #1 - BRAINSTORMING A VISION, BUILDING CONSENSUS REGARDING LAND USE

Following a presentation, the participants broke out into three groups. Each group focused on one specific area of the study area: Calhoun Street, East Bay and Washington Streets, and the Cooper River waterfront. The following lists are the outcome of these discussions and represent concerns and desires for these specific places.

#### CALHOUN STREET

- Development opportunities are limited
- Focus on streetscape improvements
- Traffic calming desired by neighborhood
- Transitions to neighborhoods to north and south are important
- Ground Level uses lacking

#### EAST BAY / WASHINGTON:

- Embrace “Emerging Economies” concept - prevent the City’s “brain drain”
- Job-intensive commercial, combined with neighborhood-serving retail should be the focus; other supporting uses include hotels, housing, etc.
- Higher density is welcome and encouraged here
- Take advantage of large block sizes
- Reinforce east-west connections to the water
- “Grandfather” in existing retail wherever possible
- Address traffic issue at Calhoun/East Bay and cut-through traffic

#### THE WATERFRONT:

- Waterfront should more mixed use, embrace a variety of users and activities and be more active
- Uses other than housing especially needed to liven it up
- Pedestrian circulation should be clarified, improved
- Make it seem more public
- Better arrival for Aquarium

## 5.1 PLANNING PROCESS

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### PUBLIC MEETING #2 - REFINING THE VISION, AND DISCUSSING SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC, URBAN DESIGN ISSUES

Following a presentation, the participants broke out into three groups. Each group focused on one specific area of the study area: Calhoun Street, East Bay and Washington Streets, and the Cooper River waterfront. The following lists are the outcome of these discussions and represent concerns and desires, and neighborhood recommendations for these specific places.

#### CALHOUN STREET

- Improve the intersections of Calhoun with Meeting and East Bay.
- Add to existing streetscape: Street trees, flags, lighting, visual focus at the end of Calhoun Street.
- Reduce speed of cars and make safer for pedestrians. Add on-street parking and bump outs.
- Activate underutilized parcels
- Buildings should address garden at the Gaillard.
- Citadel Baptist parking lot and other vacant lots should be developed.
- Implement strategies with public-private partnerships.
- Require new buildings to have ground-level activity for a portion of the building.
- Alleviate demands on small lot developments: Do not require parking.

#### EAST BAY / WASHINGTON:

- Commemorate Ansonborough neighborhood in future Concord Park.
- Strengthen connection between Borough Project and IAAM.
- Mitigate cruise day traffic & street closings (Saturdays).
- Protect Borough Project site from oversized development.

#### THE WATERFRONT:

- Roundabouts are not understood by local drivers and don't work with buses.
- NPS constrains options for their property.
- Accommodating bus traffic is a big issue.
- There's very little active use here after 5pm--it's inconsistent.
- Wider knowledge of plans for IAAM is a must.
- Better, more open visibility to water is welcome.
- Visitor information (or lack of) and wayfinding is a huge challenge.
- "Thumbs up" for wider views to water at Inspection Street.
- We are open to conversations about increasing height in exchange for wider physical and visual access.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS\*

- Develop for the benefit of residents and businesses, but attractive to visitors.
- Improve pedestrian environment on Calhoun, and improve it as a gateway from King Street to the waterfront.
- Calm the traffic on major streets (Calhoun/East Bay) and protect neighborhoods from cut-through traffic.
- Build an identity (brand) for Cooper River waterfront/Calhoun Street Corridor.
- Preserve authenticity of the adjacent historic districts by advocating for contemporary but compatible new development that avoids nostalgia.
- Transform Calhoun Street from a divider into a place of connections.
- Create a vital and attractive street environment within flood zones.

