

City of Charleston

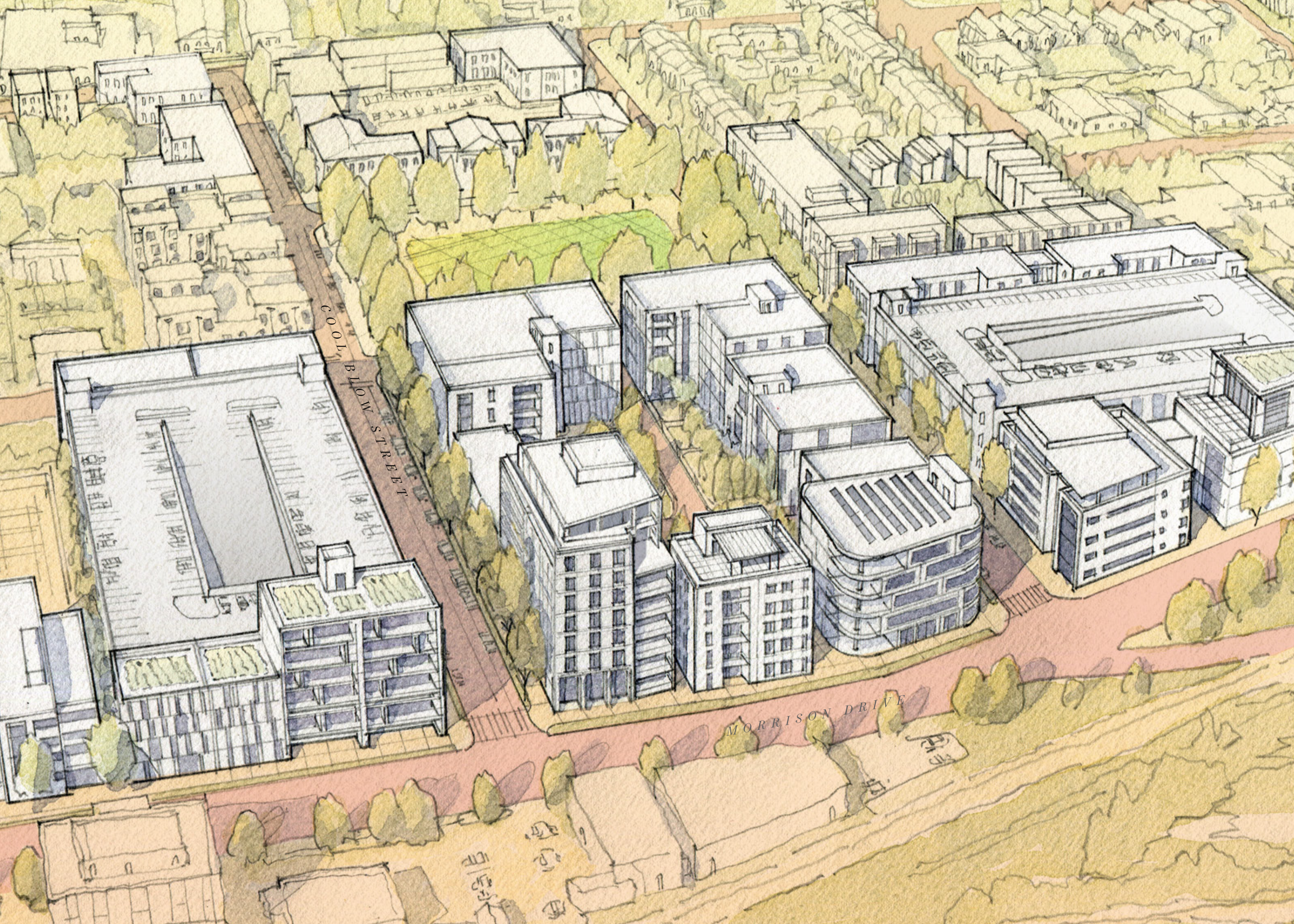
DESIGN DIVISION

REPORT 01

THE UPPER PENINSULA PLANNING STUDY



SEPTEMBER 2014



COOL BLOW STREET

MORRISON DRIVE

THE UPPER PENINSULA PLANNING STUDY

September, 2014

WELCOME

From July 21st to August 1st, 2014, the Design Division staff held a design workshop focused on redevelopment of the Upper Peninsula. This report is the result of that workshop, which presents findings on redevelopment, street redesigns, transit locations and a long-term parking strategy. This report does not make any changes to City policy or zoning, but recommends key ideas to be implemented by City staff in coordination with the community.

CITY OF CHARLESTON

Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr.

Tim Keane, Director,

Planning, Preservation & Sustainability

DESIGN DIVISION PROJECT TEAM

Jacob Lindsey, Director

David Herrero, Urban Designer

Rachel Powell, Intern

Arif Javed, Intern

PLANNING DIVISION

Christopher Morgan, Director

Katie McKain, Senior Planner

CONTENTS

03

Introduction

06

Study Area

08

Analysis

10

Design Recommendations

14

District Parking & Transit

16

Street Design

20

The Big Picture

21

Moving Forward

INTRODUCTION

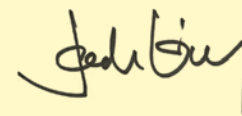
Planning for the Future

Over the next 25 years, the Charleston region will experience unprecedented expansion, with population growing to over 1 million people from the current population of 640,000. Ideally, the majority of this growth can occur on previously built sites, rather than sprawling further out into undeveloped land at the rural edges of our region. Building up, rather than out, requires a different approach to planning, in anticipation of positive growth that increases quality of life, rather than placing strain on our infrastructure and resources.

The Upper Peninsula of Charleston, an area formerly dominated by light industrial uses, is under increased demand for redevelopment. Properties have changed hands at rapid pace over the past two years, in a rush to acquire some of the last large unbuilt parcels on the Charleston peninsula.

Development of these parcels will take place regardless of further City intervention. But without guidance, these developments may take the form of suburban-style, low value developments, dominated by surface parking, rather than transforming into a dense, high value, sustainable neighborhood.

This neighborhood can contribute to our region's solutions for increasing population growth and high-value economic development while retaining its unique character. Many visions for the Upper Peninsula exist, and with this plan we hope to support and unify these visions into one physical design. Moving forward, we hope to develop balanced, progressive policies that realize an ideal outcome for diverse, walkable, sustainable development.

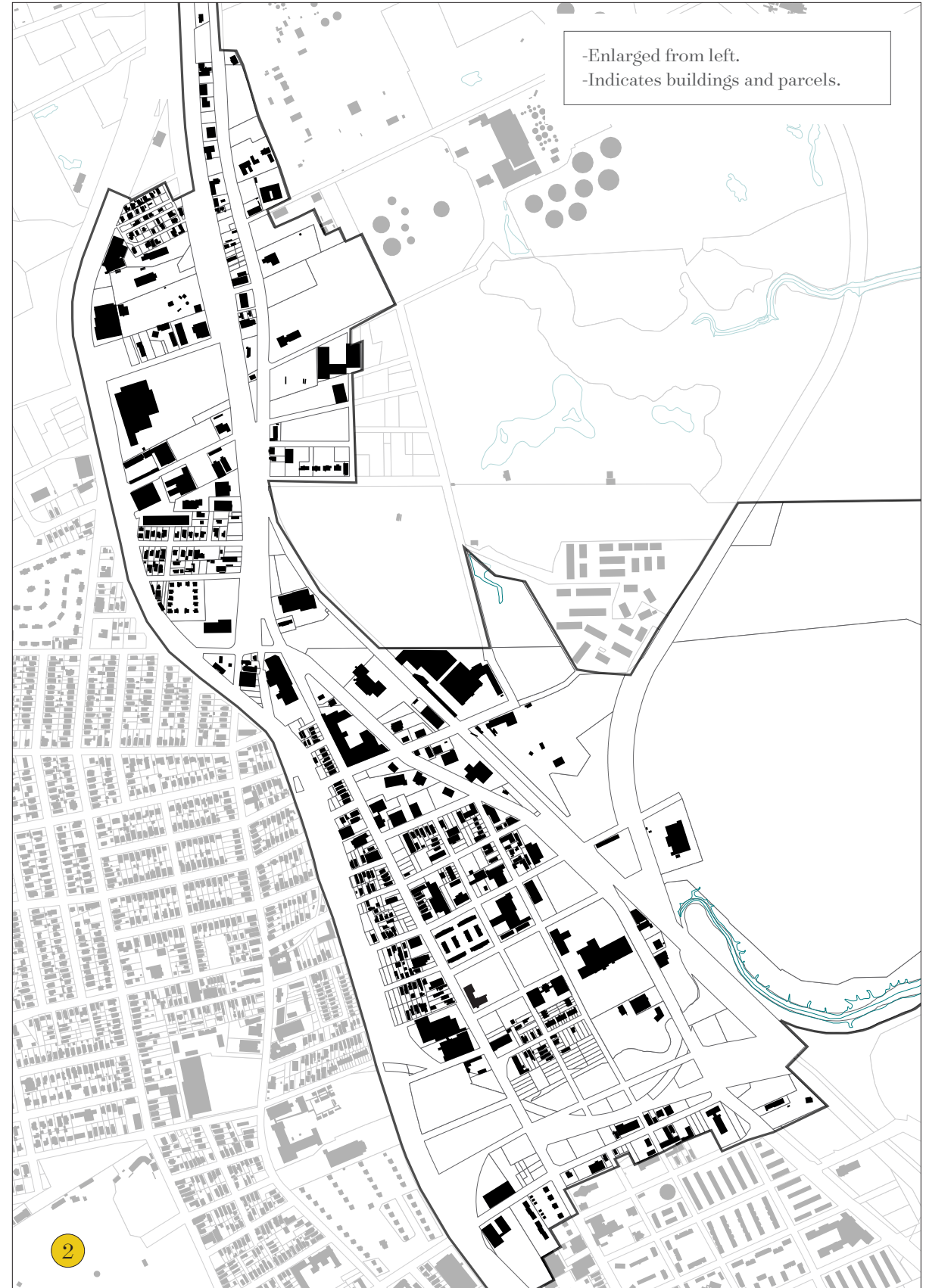


Jacob Lindsey

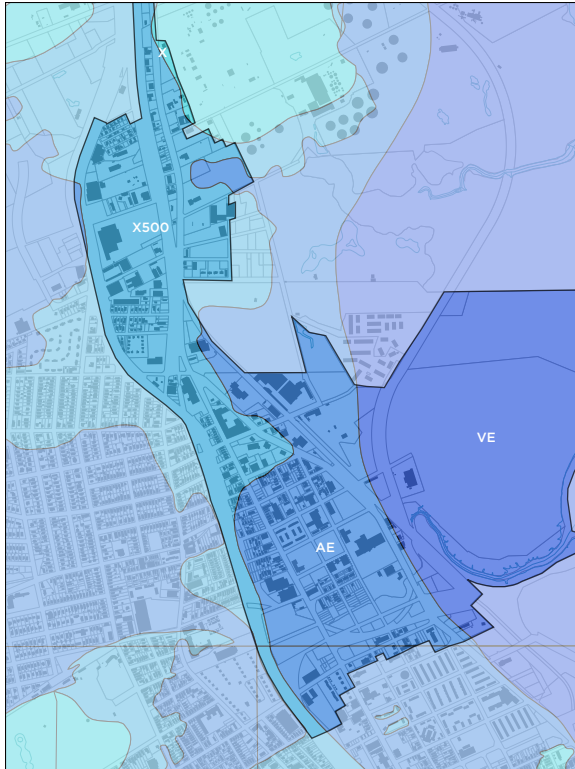
*Director, Design Division
City of Charleston
August 15, 2014*



STUDY AREA



ANALYSIS



FLOOD ZONES

FLOOD ZONES

Within AE flood zones, buildings are required to either elevate their ground levels or floodproof the buildings. Higher insurance rates accompany buildings in the AE zone. Within V zones, buildings must be raised above the flood elevation. In X zones, buildings need not be elevated or carry additional flood insurances.

HEIGHTS

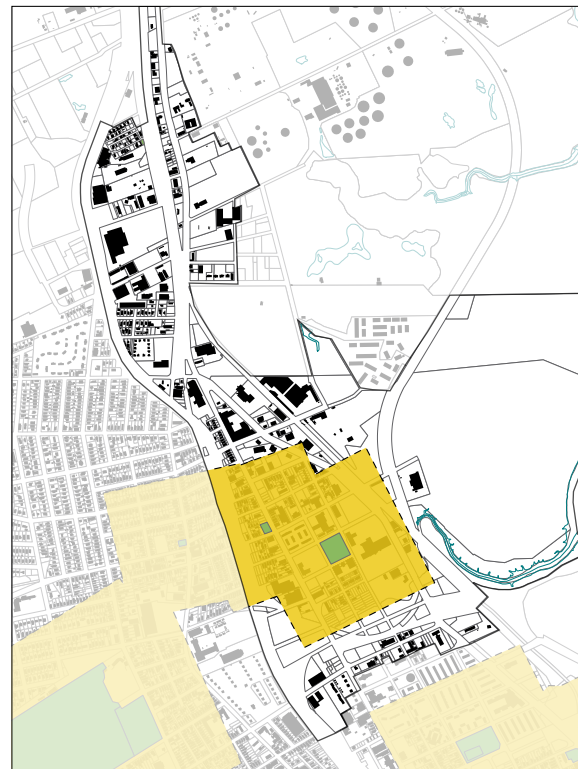
The majority of the study area is currently zoned below 55', although many "spot zoned" areas of additional height exist, and testify to the demand for higher buildings in this area.

PUBLIC SPACE

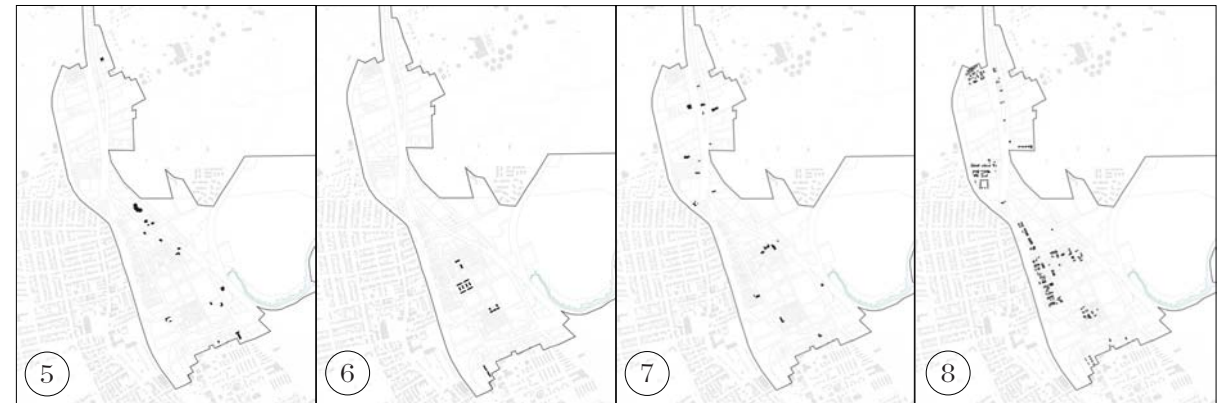
Very few park spaces exist here. The central green space shown on this map is in fact in private land ownership and should be preserved for public use through public-private coordination.



HEIGHTS



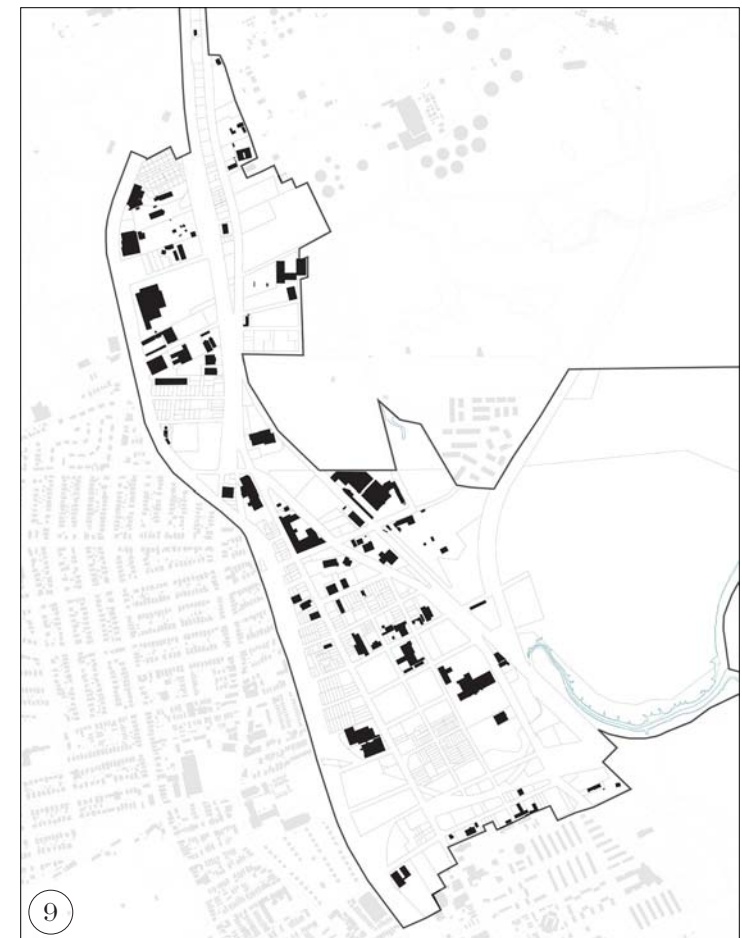
PUBLIC SPACE



- 1 School
- 2 Utilities
- 3 Apartments
- 4 Civic
- 5 Office
- 6 Rowhouses
- 7 Commercial
- 8 Houses
- 9 Warehouses

BUILDING TYPES

Warehouses, shown to the right, are the most plentiful building type in this district, making this neighborhood unique among neighborhoods on the Charleston peninsula. Single family detached houses are the next most plentiful (8), and are predominantly located along the Meeting Street corridor.

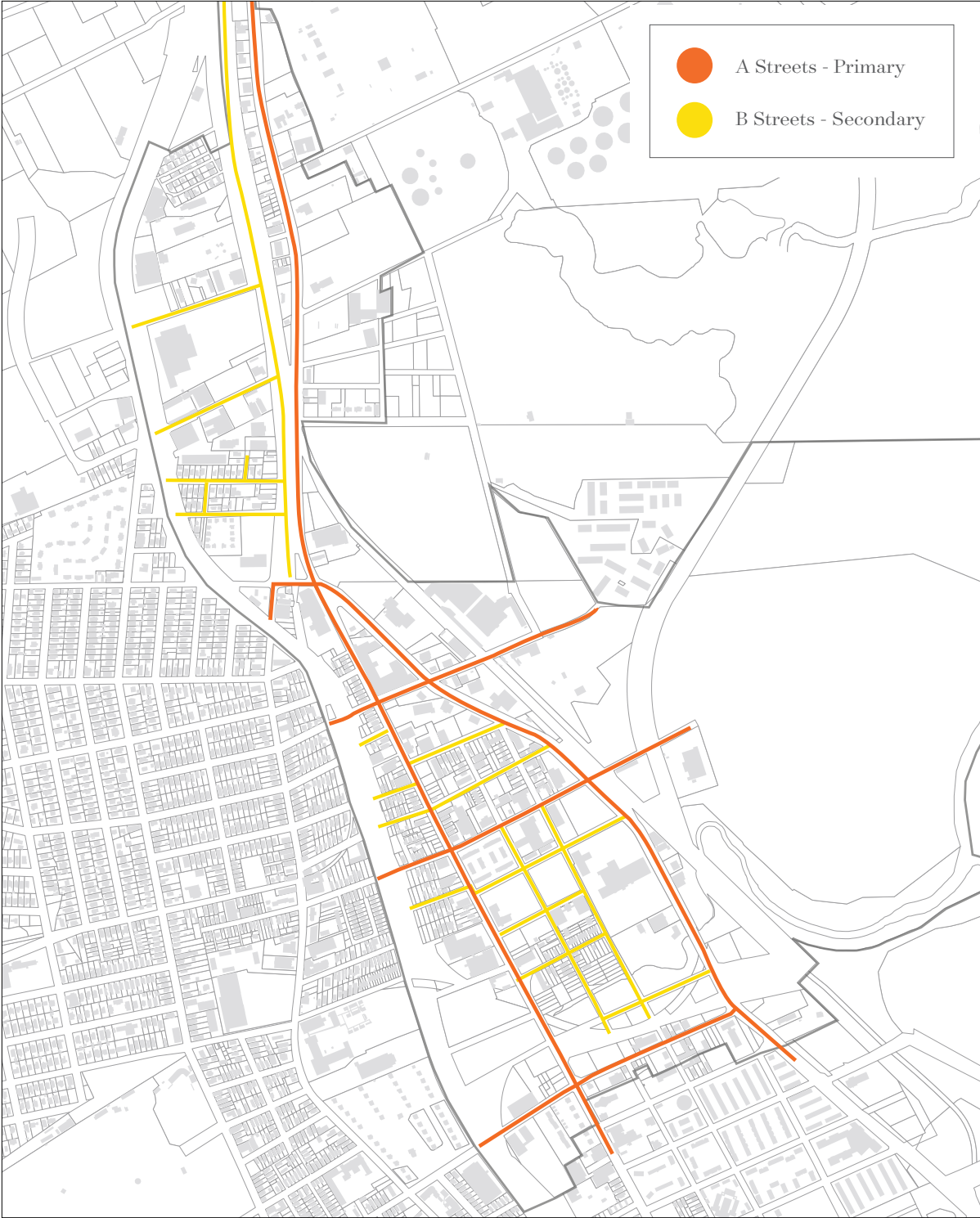


DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS



1 DENSITY LEVELS

This is a key recommendation. We propose that the small parcels near Meeting Street and the existing low density housing remain at low and medium density, shown here in pink and yellow. Areas around Morrison Drive, near highway ramps, and on former industrial sites are recommended for high density.



2 A/B STREETS

Primary, or “A” Streets, should have entrances on-grade, at short distances from one another, with ample sidewalks, tree plantings and all other elements that make great streets in the Charleston tradition. On Secondary, or “B” streets, buildings may be elevated out of the flood zone, more appropriate for a residential condition.

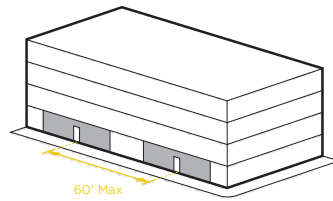
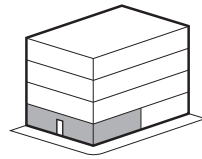
3 BUILDING TYPES

The height and general disposition of each building is determined by (1)the density zone and (2)the street that the building sits upon. In combination, these add up to 4 different configurations, shown in small and larger footprint versions. Buildings with large footprints should provide entrances at a minimum of 60’.

MEDIUM DENSITY

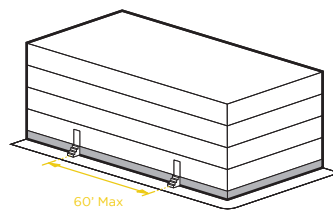
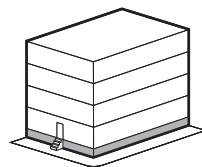
A STREET

- 1-4 Stories
- Active use on ground floor
- Floodproof active use



B STREET

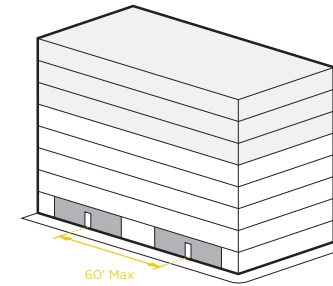
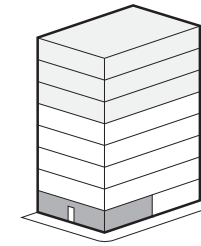
- 1-4 Stories
- Ground floor may be elevated



HIGH DENSITY

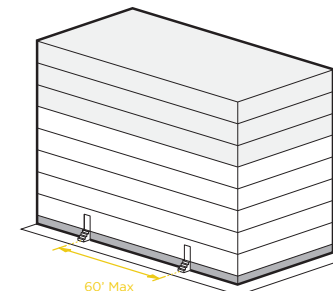
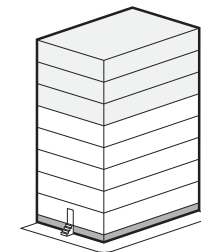
A STREET

- 1-5 Stories
- 6-8 Stories bonus density
- Active use on ground floor
- Floodproof active use



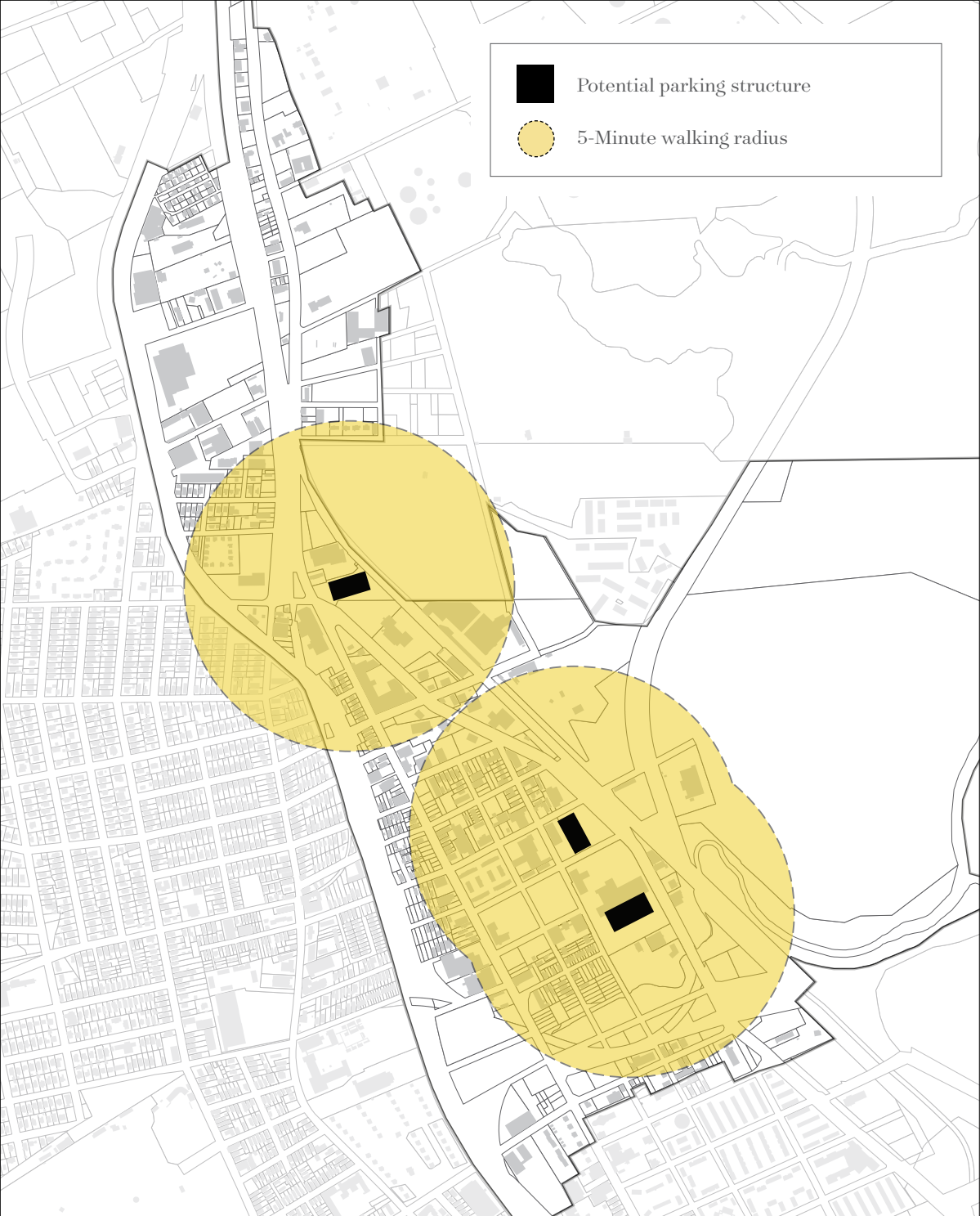
B STREET

- 1-5 Stories
- 6-8 Stories bonus density
- Ground floor may be elevated



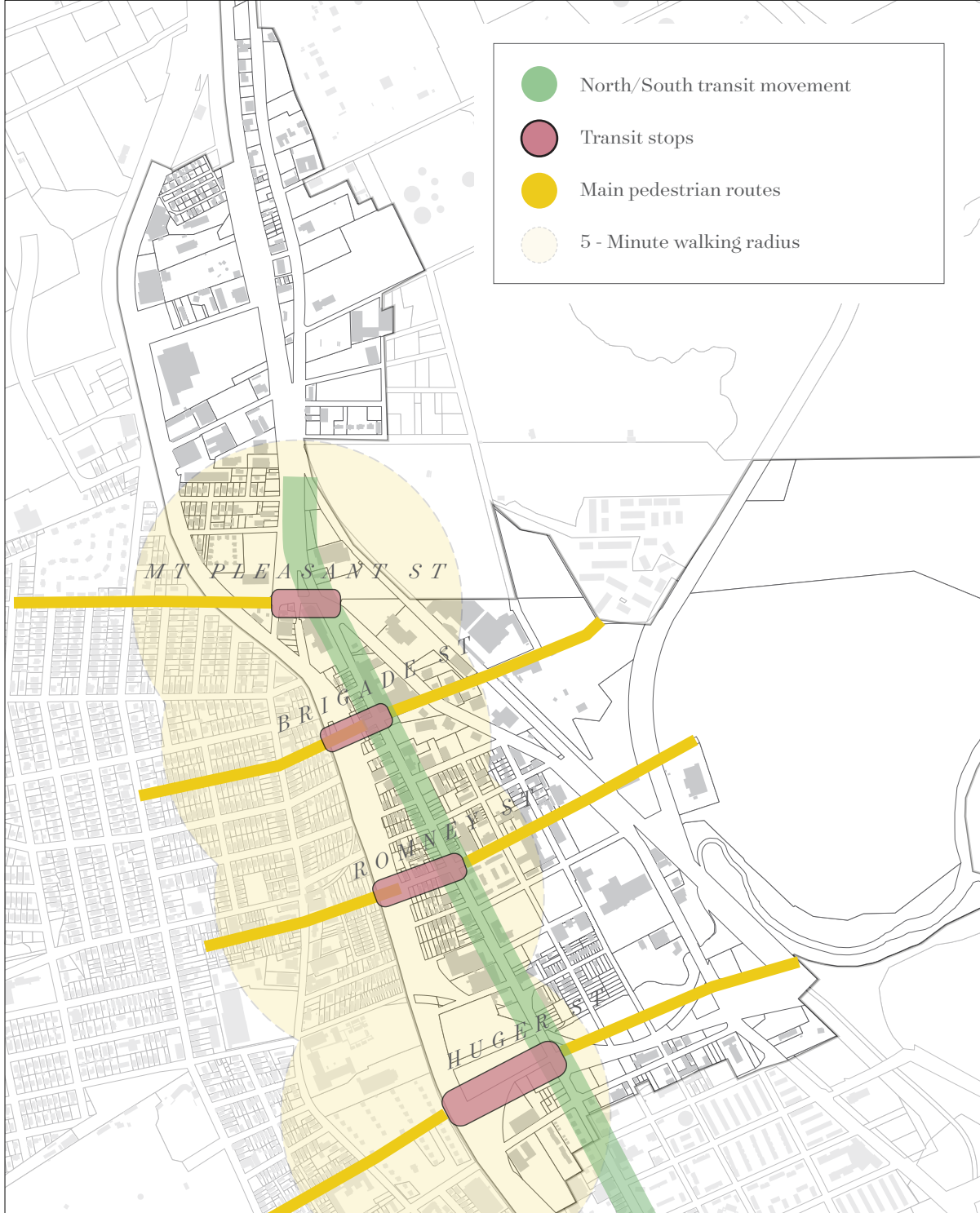
DISTRICT PARKING

As the neighborhood grows, every single property shouldn't be expected to contain its own parking. In dense urban environments, car parking is handled in shared facilities, and this neighborhood should create a shared parking environment to handle car storage. With this shared parking strategy, the correct mix of uses, good bike facilities and future transit, the Upper Peninsula can be a connected district easily accessed by all modes of transportation.



TRANSIT

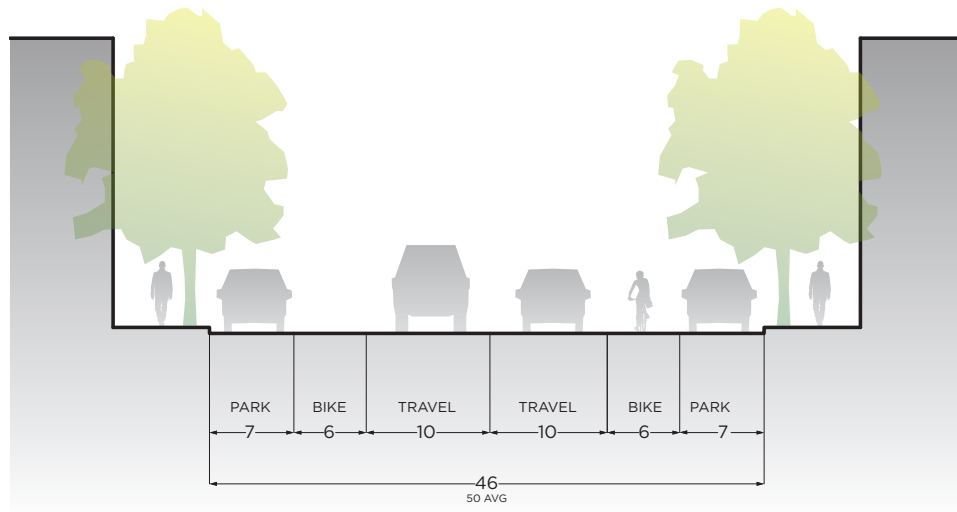
If the primary transit route is to run north/south on the peninsula, we propose that stops be made at each of the streets that cross I-26: Huger, Romney, Brigade and Mt. Pleasant. This gives a direct walking route into neighborhoods to the east and west. Under this arrangement, the entire Upper Peninsula area would be within walking distance of transit stops.



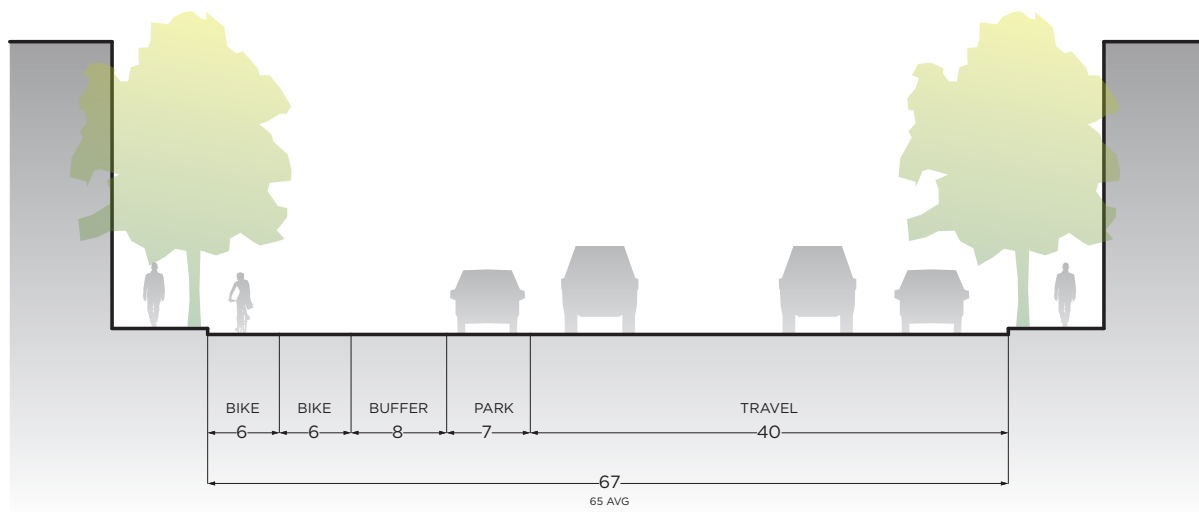
STREET DESIGN

Bicycle Lanes

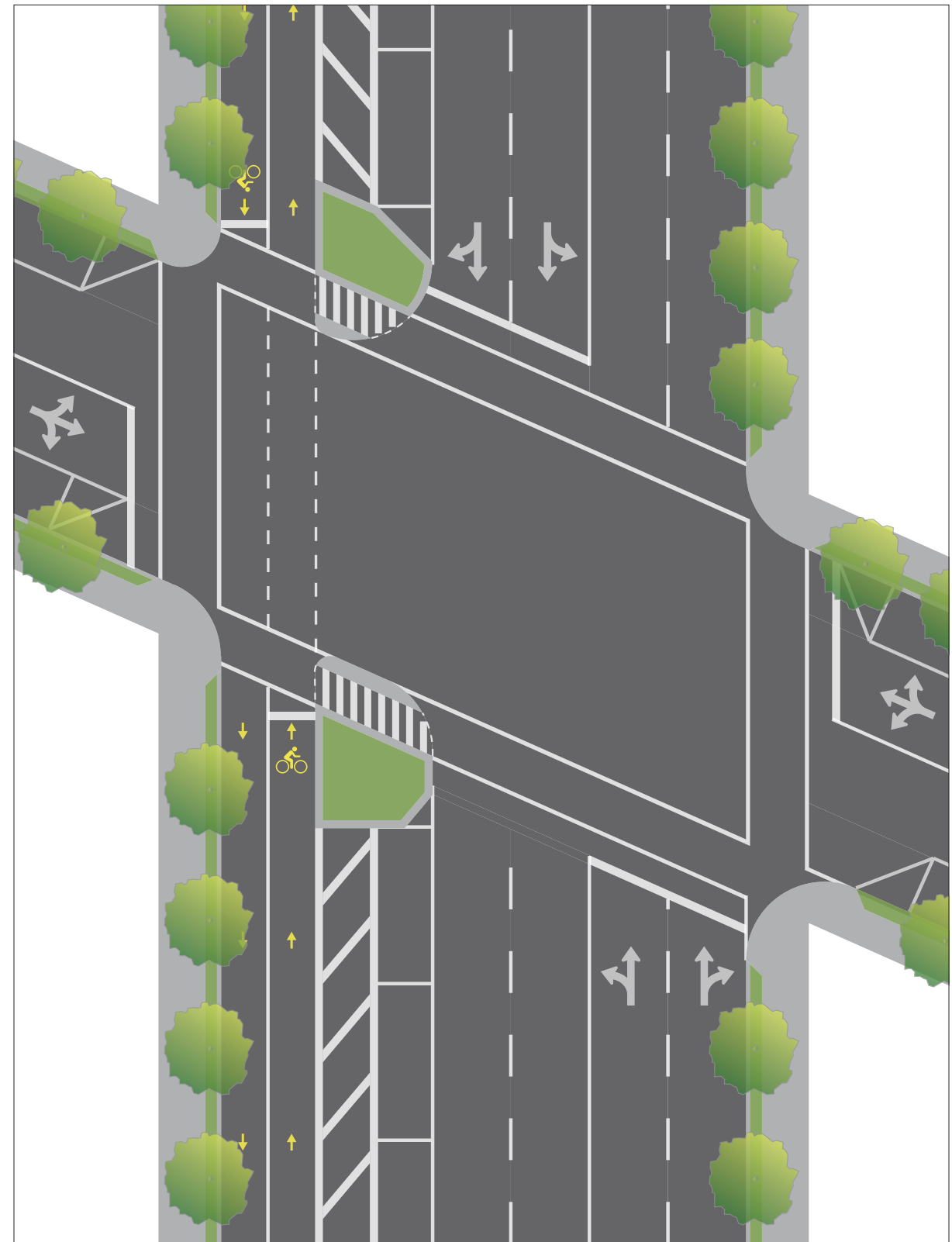
Streets in the Upper Peninsula can use improvement. Many lack sidewalks and adequate drainage. We recommend simple upgrades that can be performed over time, and most importantly our designs for bicycle lanes don't require relocating curbs--they can all be accomplished by repainting.



MEETING STREET SECTION



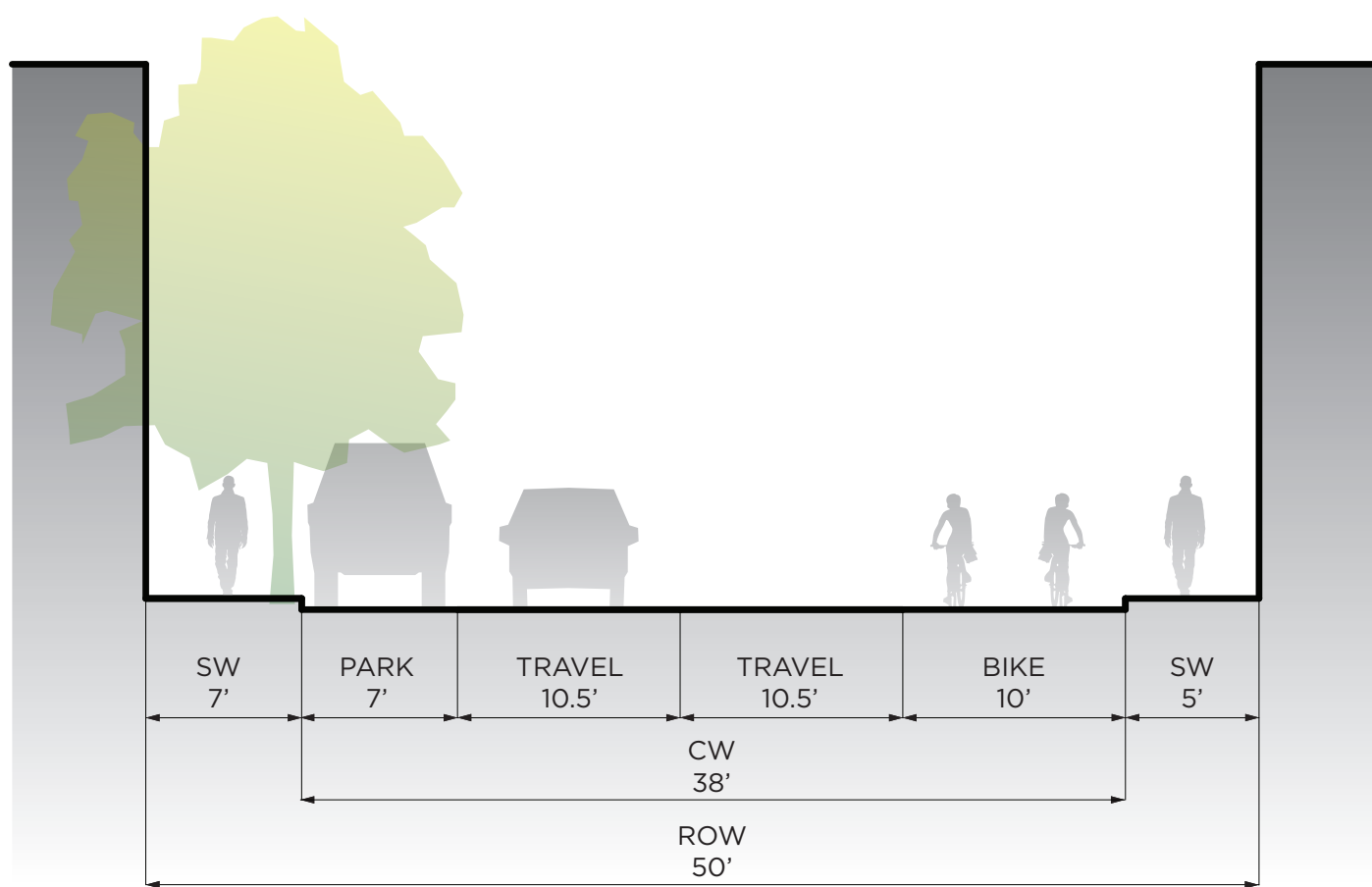
MORRISON DRIVE SECTION



MORRISON DR & BRIGADE ST

HUGER STREET SECTION
MEETING TO MORRISON DR

50' ROW



Separated Bike Lanes

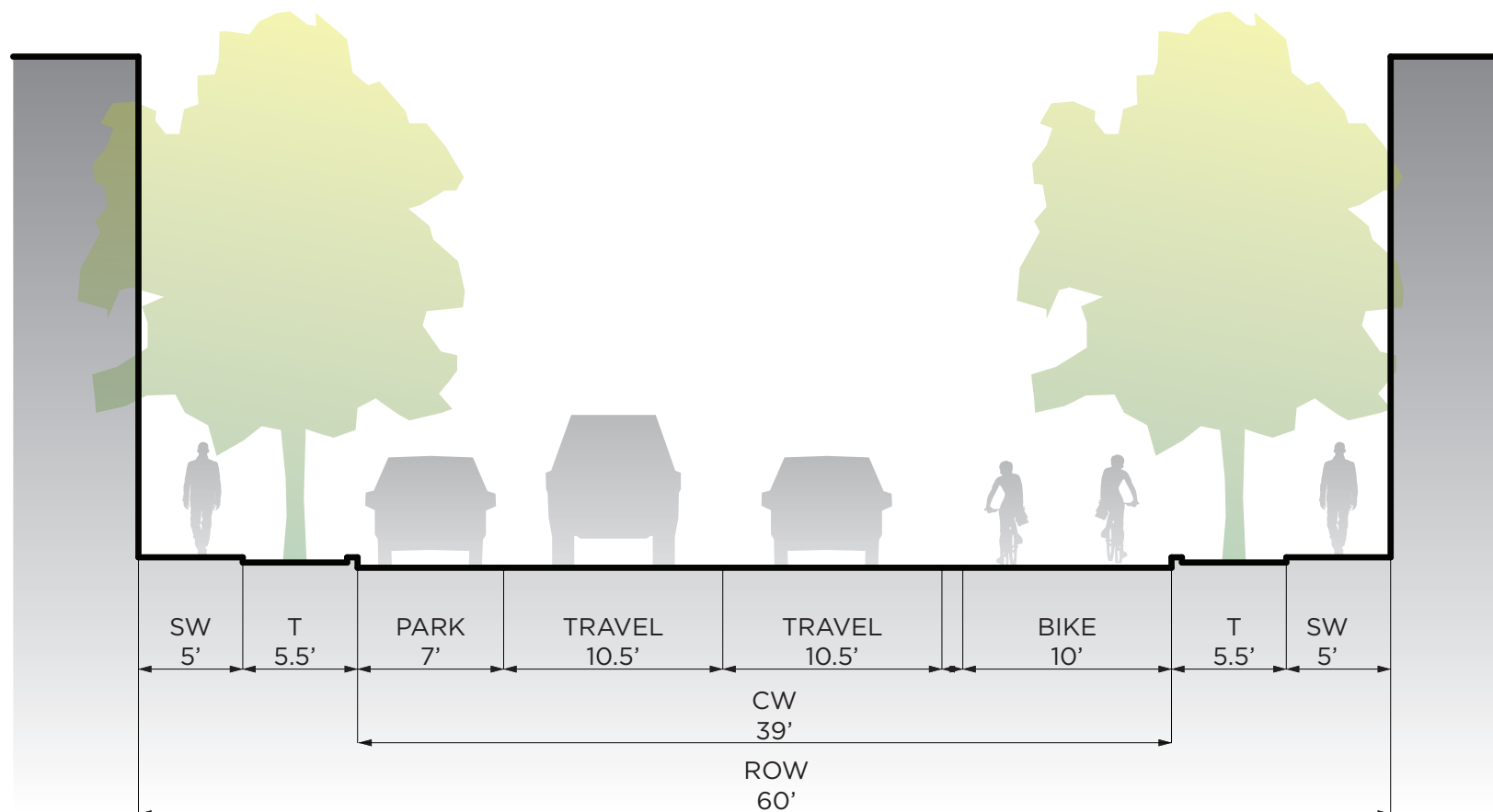
On Huger and Morrison Streets, we recommend the use of separated bicycle lanes, or cycle tracks. These lanes place two-way movement of bicycles on one side of the street. In this case, the lanes are an advantage to cyclists because they keep bicycles off the sidewalk and out of the “door zone”—the area where parked cars may open a door into a moving cyclist’s path.

While street width does not permit full 6' bike lanes, we believe 5' can suffice given the separated lane treatment.

Where street width permits, buffers or vertical barriers should be installed between bike lanes and car lanes.

HUGER STREET SECTION
KING TO MEETING ST

60' ROW



THE BIG PICTURE

This plan proposes a thoughtful, well planned neighborhood for Charleston which preserves the unique qualities of this place while enabling dense redevelopment and new construction. We envision this place as one for all walks of life; for living, working, and relaxation. This place will need to be built like a city neighborhood with daily needs within walking distance, diverse groups of residents, and the ability to live or work without car ownership.

Create new land use and zoning practices to support positive redevelopment.

The City should adopt new zoning districts for the Upper Peninsula that enable appropriate densities, heights limitations and design standards consistent with this study. The zoning district(s) will reference the A/B street design suggestions and density pattern as proposed. The district will create incentives for use of sustainable practices and creative design that enables lower cost housing and workplaces. This should be a new mixed use zoning district that guides development through design standards rather than setting arbitrary density limits.

Create new standards for mobility.

This district should develop in a manner that makes walking, cycling, car sharing and public transit as easy as personal auto use. New parking standards with parking maximums for private development, shared parking in centrally located parking facilities and promotion of car and bike sharing are all goals for this neighborhood. Streets should be redesigned to support safe cycling and comfortable walking, and the neighborhood must develop densely enough to support transit.



MOVING FORWARD

New Policies

This planning and design study has led us to a number of recommendations that relate to land use, density of development, design, and mobility. The suggestions presented here represent a first draft of ideas, to be refined in the future prior to any changes in municipal regulations.

An optional code

Any new zoning code to come from this study should be adopted as an optional, or parallel, code. Existing conventional zoning and height limits would stay in place, but landowners desiring higher density could opt-in to the new code.

Achieving bonus densities

In order to qualify for bonus densities, developments must go above and beyond the basics of great place making. The benchmarks to achieve bonus densities should indicate a development's commitment to improve street life, transportation, stormwater, housing affordability, energy efficiency or a combination of elements. The process of achieving these bonus densities will be determined by City staff and based upon best practices nationally.

Managing higher densities

Increased parking demand from development must be managed through shared district parking, or risk widespread expansion of surface parking lots. Second, mid-rise buildings often end up with empty ground floors of lobbies and unused space; design recommendations will require active ground floor uses.

Implementing the bicycle network

The street designs proposed in this study are based upon national best practices for bicycle facilities, but would be the first of their type in Charleston. We recommend strong coordination among City departments to implement these key links in the bicycle network.

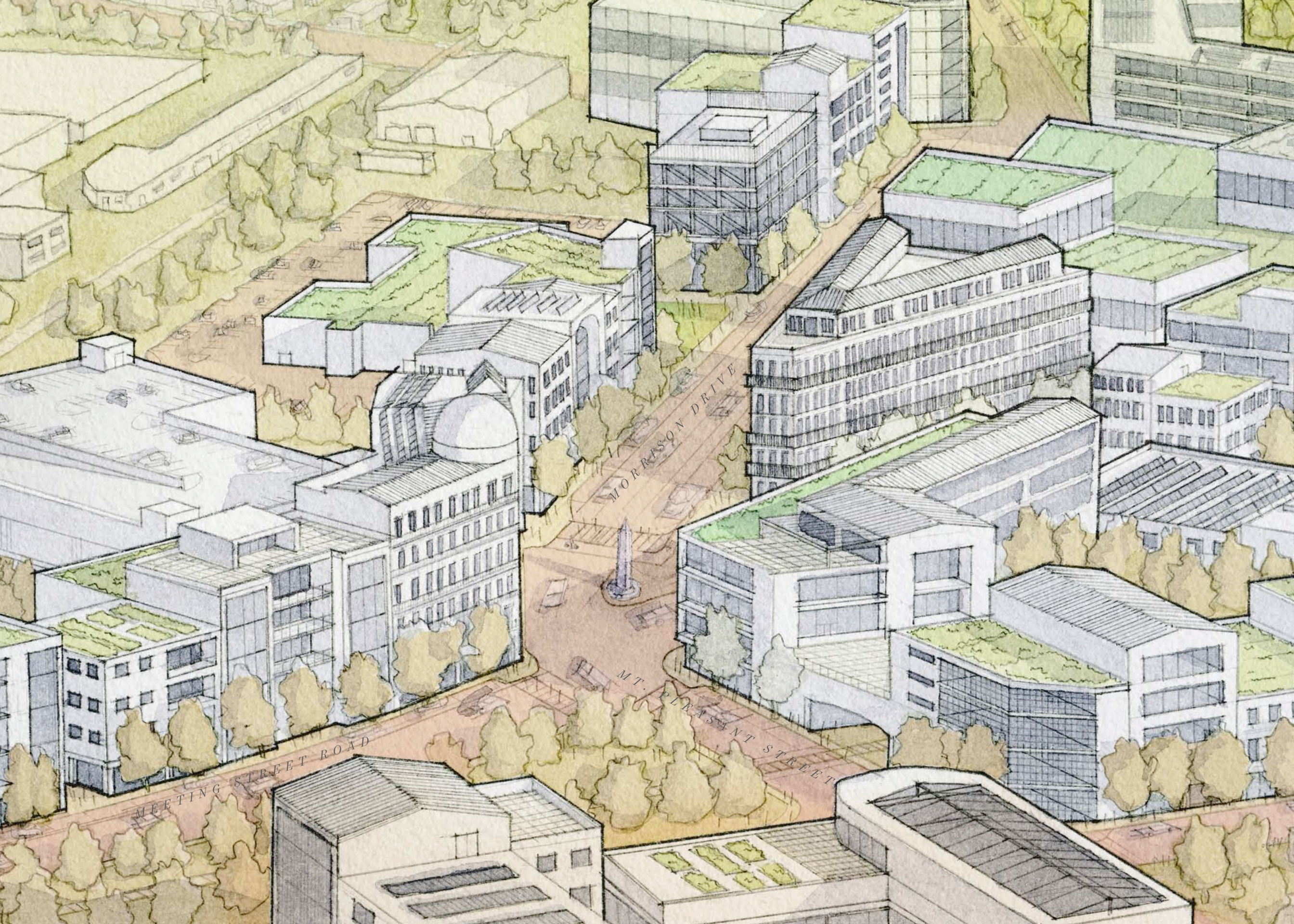
Protecting and expanding park spaces

The block at Cool Blow street, currently used as open space but privately owned, should be permanently preserved as a city park. Additionally, the area near Meeting/Morrison/Mt. Pleasant streets is in need of public space and we recommend an additional public park to be located nearby.

Evaluating Progress

Set clear benchmarks to measure success. As development proceeds, reevaluate progress at yearly intervals and adjust policies accordingly.







DESIGNDIVISION.ORG