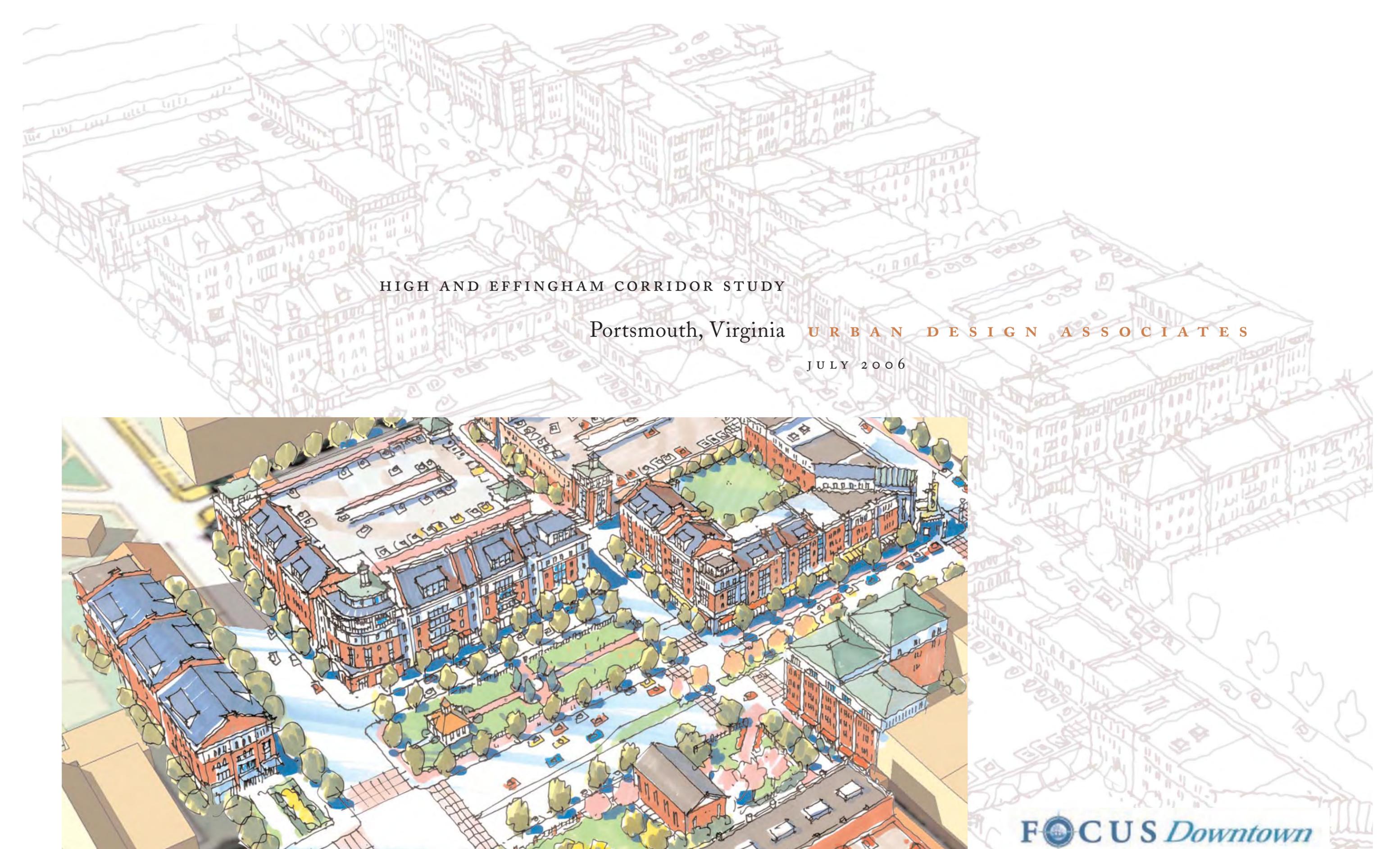


HIGH AND EFFINGHAM CORRIDOR STUDY

Portsmouth, Virginia

URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

JULY 2006



FOCUS *Downtown*

High and Effingham Corridor Study

PREPARED FOR
City of Portsmouth

FUNDED BY
City of Portsmouth

CONSULTANT TEAM
Urban Design Associates

CORE CLIENT GROUP

Robert Baldwin, AICP
Director of Planning

Steven L. Lynch
Director of Economic Development

Landon Wellford, AICP
Project Manager, Senior Planner

CITY COUNCIL

Dr. James W. Holley, III,
Mayor

William E. Moody, Jr.,
Vice-Mayor

Charles B. Whitehurst, Sr.
Marlene W. Randall
Stephen E. Heretick
Elizabeth M. Psimas
Ray A. Smith, Sr.

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Simonee R. Thomas,
Secretary

Glen Francis
Carolyn Hersh
R. J. Hayes
Thomas Moody

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW 1

PROCESS 6

Strengths and Weaknesses Summary 4

Criteria and Goals for the Plan 4

Charrette Summary 7

THE STRATEGIC PLAN 10

Framework of Streets and Open Spaces 9

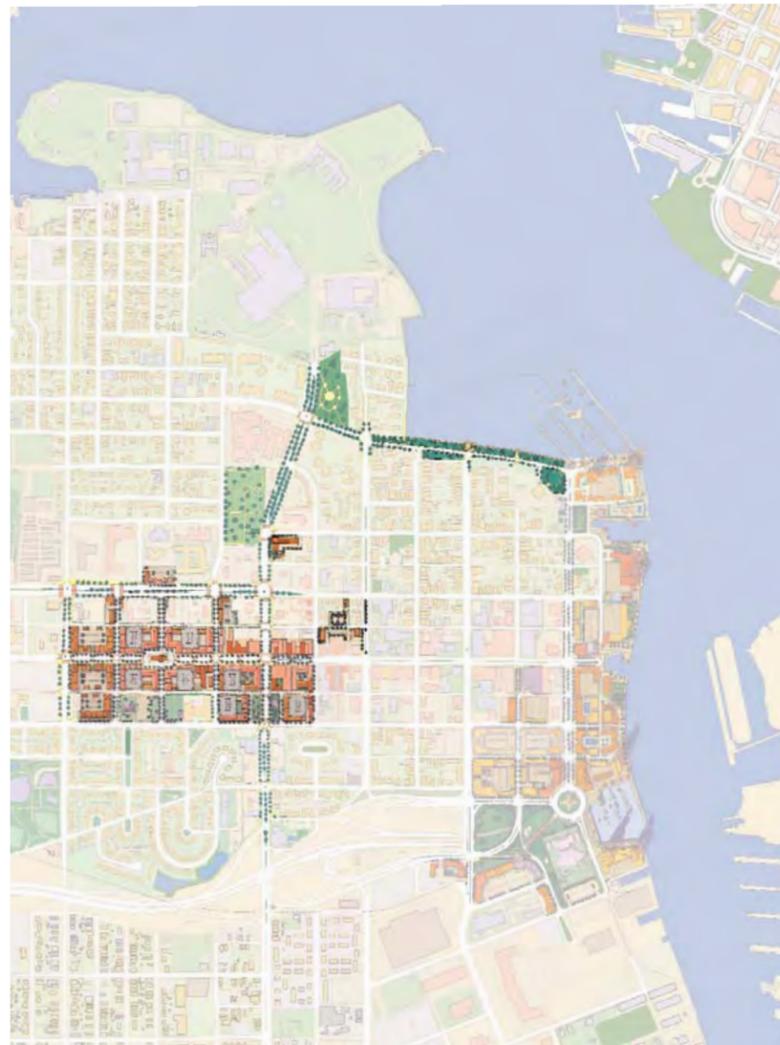
Development Initiatives 11

Development Strategy and Phasing 11

Phasing 15

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 14

Overview



Project Area in relation to the Waterfront

URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES WAS COMMISSIONED by the City of Portsmouth to undertake a corridor study of High Street and Effingham Street. From the onset of this study, it was clear that the High and Effingham corridor plays a pivotal role in the continued revitalization of Downtown Portsmouth. Understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the corridor itself and how those relate to the overall strategy for Downtown became crucial to generating the key recommendations and implementation strategies summarized in this memorandum. As a result of the process, we recommend that a preferred alternative be tested for economic feasibility with various densities of development. This memorandum summarized the recommendations and introduces the set of design drawings which describe these variations for the plan.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Transform High Street and Effingham Street into desirable urban addresses.

The High and Effingham corridor is a major gateway to retail along High Street, to Downtown, to Olde Towne and other historic neighborhoods, to new residential development such as The Mrytles, and the Naval Hospital. It is well poised to be an Activity Center (defined by the Portsmouth Comprehensive Plan 2205) that becomes a destination for surrounding areas due to the concentration and variety of uses developed.

In order to best leverage the strength of its location a new urban Market Square is proposed at High Street and Hatton Street. This new civic space will provide an identity for the City and a focus for mixed-use development in the underutilized area west of Effingham Street.



Proposed aerial view looking West

While Market Square will provide a new urban core, a new residential park along Effingham Street will create a desirable address for in-town residential market. This address is ideal for condominiums and apartments. It will also provide an urban park setting in which to house the Chevra T'helim Synagogue.

2. Encourage residential development to create a critical mass to support new retail.

Effingham Park will create a critical mass of residential units that supports both the Market Square core and the existing retail uses along High Street. This initiative however, can only be made possible through the leveraging of public and private property that combined create new, higher density residential developments that support the proposed and existing retail uses in the area.

The new community will draw on the strengths of the revitalized surrounding neighborhoods of Park Place, Westbury and Olde Towne. Housing types, heights and densities will vary in response to both market demands and physical context. For example new housing on County Street will be townhouses or duplexes, in scale with Westbury while new buildings on High Street and Effingham Street will be condominium or apartment buildings ranging in scale from 3 to 8 stories.

3. Mitigate the impact of outbound tunnel traffic by managing the traffic signals on Effingham Street to enable the creation of attractive public spaces and a pedestrian friendly environment.

Traffic on Effingham Street will be tamed and controlled by a series of measures. Left turns will be encouraged at County Street and London Boulevard but discouraged at High Street. Pedestrian crossings at High Street will be facilitated with bump outs and tex-

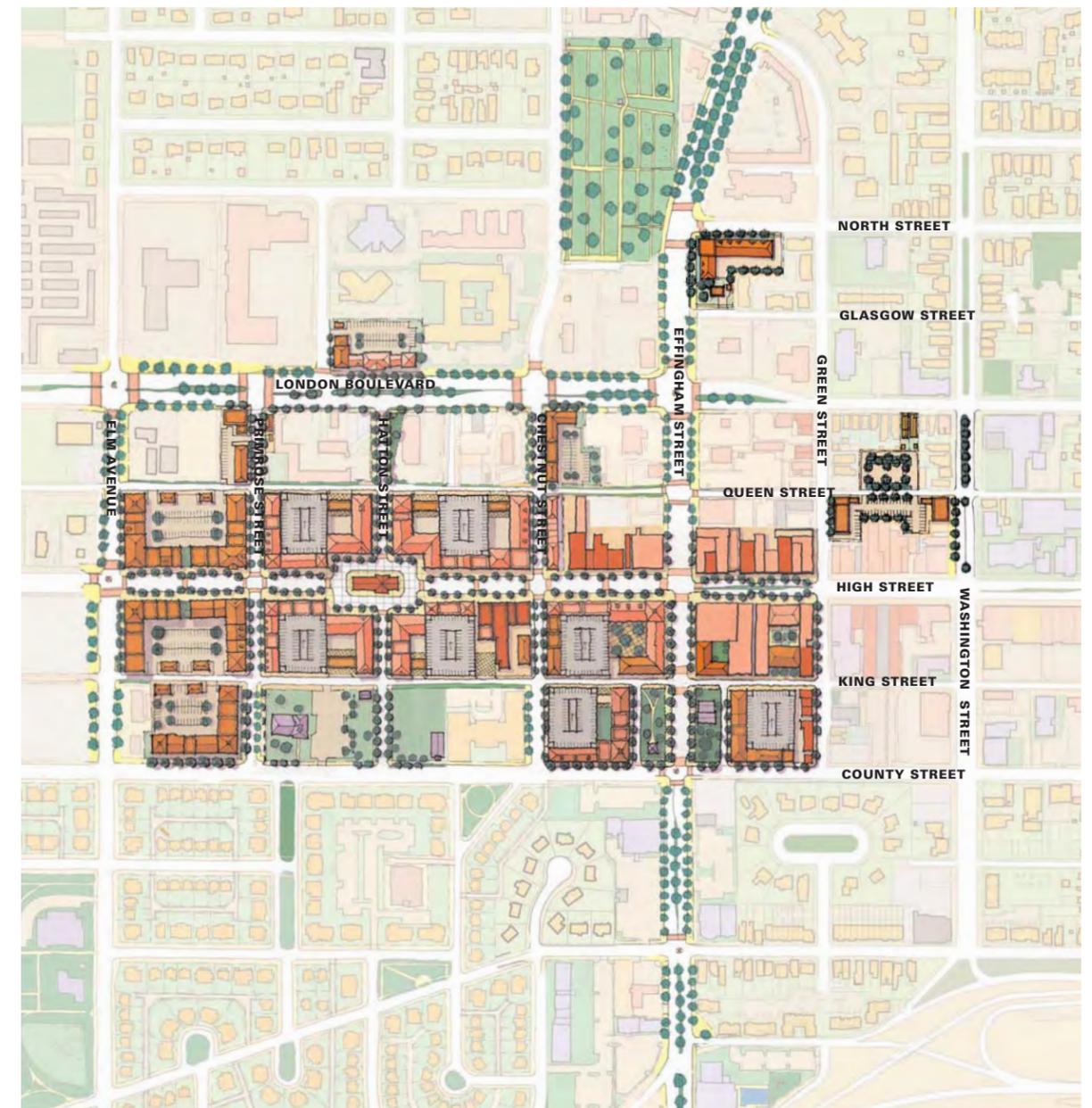
tured paving. Traffic signals will be timed to strategically cue traffic back-up on Effingham in order to facilitate the movement of pedestrians, cross traffic, and public transportation.

4. Reconnect Primrose and Hatton Streets perpendicular to London Boulevard and High Street to reestablish the street network .

Access to High Street and Market Square will be greatly increased as Hatton and Primrose are re-connected to London Boulevard. Queen and King Streets will remain in their current alignment but will become service alleys for higher density developments. Re-establishing the street and block grid will also help eliminate the current loitering problems associated with the those underutilized blocks between High Street and London Boulevard.

The subsequent sections of the report will further describe Market Square, Effingham Park, and the development strategies needed to begin implementation. It is worth noting that these recommendations were derived from a public process through a series of focus groups, public meetings, and interviews in order to understand the perceptions and aspirations of the community. A series of concepts were developed and then tested by a broad cross section of stakeholders during working sessions .

The outcome of these working sessions provided these key recommendations for public improvements that create an effective framework of streets and open spaces and implementation strategies that leverage development initiatives.



PROPOSED ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN - MARKET SQUARE ALTERNATIVE

Effingham Park

The Plan recommends creating a new park on Effingham Street to create a high quality urban space and address for new development. The new Effingham Park will straddle Effingham Street and create a dignified setting for the refurbished Chevra T'helim Synagogue. Effingham Park will provide a buffer to and separation from the relatively high traffic volumes occurring throughout the day and during rush hour peaks. In turn, the park will also provide the opportunity to capitalize on the beneficial attributes of high traffic counts and high visibility.

The Plan supports revitalization of the Chevra T'helim Synagogue. Effingham Park would be built around the synagogue and proposed adjacent visitor center. A new frontage road, parallel to Effingham Street would provide drop off space for busses and visitors.

The park is framed by new residential and mixed-use buildings providing the park with a 24-hour balance of activities and users. The proposed design for the park maximizes frontage on the street without compromising the block dimension. Development on Effingham Park can range in scale from 3 stories to a small residential tower (micro-tower) of approximately 12 stories. Development capacity will ultimately be determined by the market conditions and the chosen mid-block parking strategy. Development on the west side of the park should be primarily residential while development on the east side of the park can be mixed-use with active frontages at grade consisting of retail, grocery, restaurant or entertainment.

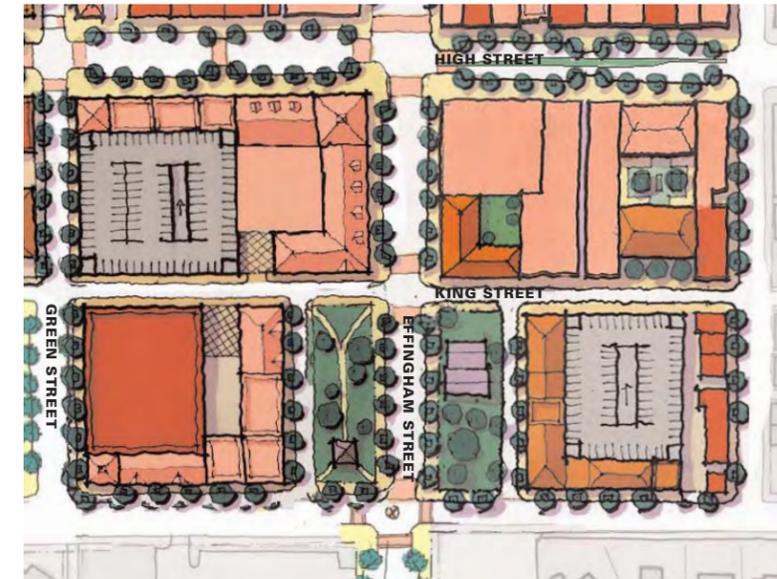
Development on both sides of Effingham Park will be supported by parking garages. The parking garage on the east side of the Park must be sized to support redevelopment of the 700 Block of High Street.



AERIAL PERSPECTIVE: Effingham Park



Existing view looking North along Effingham Street



ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN: Effingham Park



Proposed perspective view looking North along Effingham Park

Market Square

The public process and analysis phase identified the corner of High and Effingham Street as the center of the psychological and physical barriers to development west of Effingham Street along High Street. As a result the land is underutilized and blighted. This in turn is causing a detrimental affect on the existing retail uses to the east as well as surrounding neighborhoods. The Plan recommends creating an urban Market Square on High Street at Hatton Street. This market will create a focus for a six block development area (between Effingham Street and Elm Street) and will attract major investment west of Effingham Street. Market Square located far enough to create an additional retail node but close enough to the core High Street retailers for shoppers to enjoy the diversity of stores both areas have to offer.

In order to accommodate the required parking and servicing of these mixed-use development blocks, the Plan recommends that King and Queen Streets revert to being service lanes for the new medium density blocks. These lanes will be widened slightly to (to 20') accommodate slow two-way traffic for service and access to mid-block parking

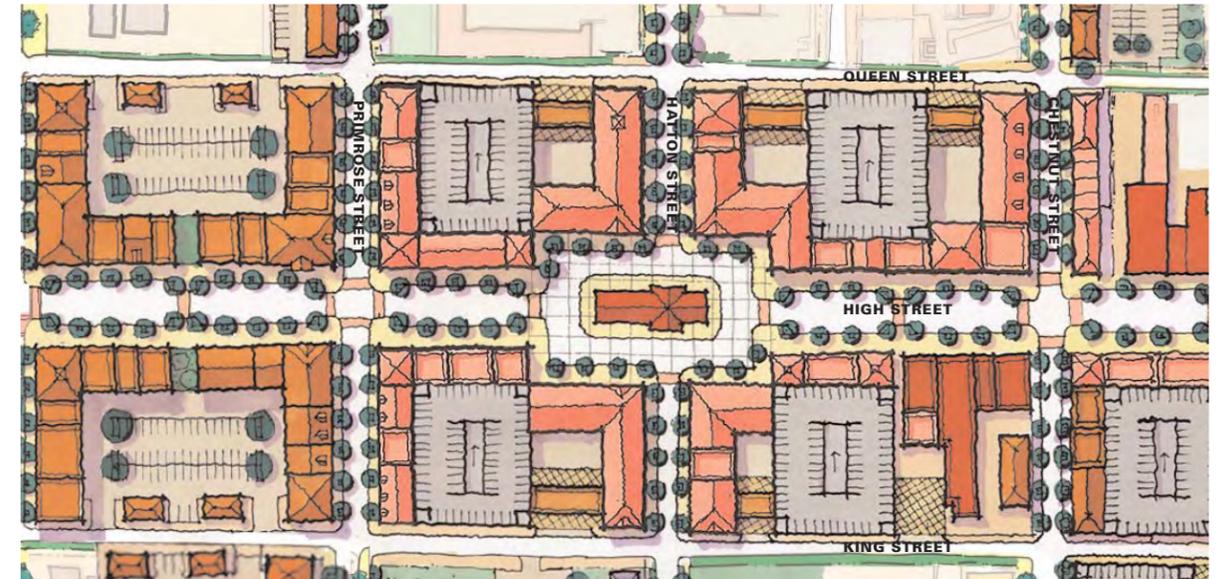
The resulting block sizes are designed to accommodate a range of development types and capacities. The blocks can be developed with surface parking (low in density) or with a compact double bay garage of up to 5-levels. Development in the six block Market Square area can range in height from two and a half story townhouses to larger 6-8 story multi-use buildings. Development directly adjacent to Market Square should be a minimum of three stories and can range from 4 stories to 8 stories depending on the size of the mid block parking garage.



AERIAL PERSPECTIVE: Market Square



Existing view looking West along High Street past Effingham Street



ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN: Market Square

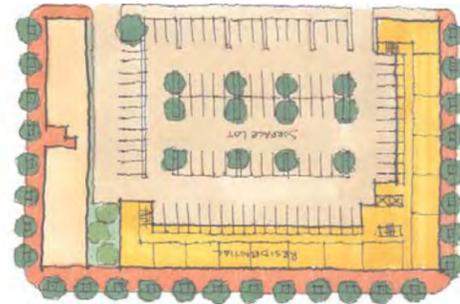


Proposed perspective view looking West along High Street towards Market Square

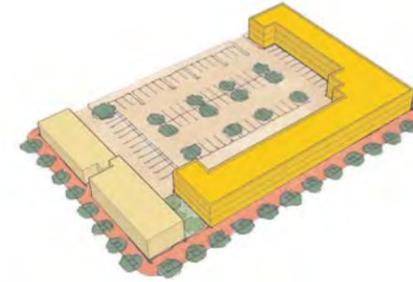
BLOCK TYPES

Alternative configurations for the development of the blocks served by the framework include different densities and ratio between new construction and the preservation of existing structures. The basic block pattern includes parking in the center of the blocks with the perimeter developed as mixed use structures.

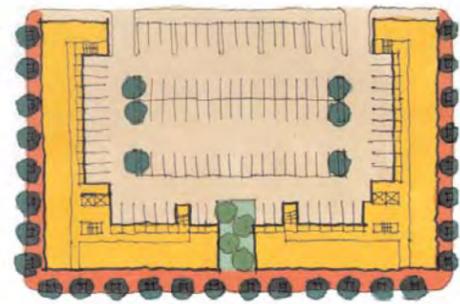
The block patterns on this page illustrate the flexibility in development scenarios. The blocks can be developed with existing buildings or with buildings at a range of densities. In all scenarios parking is contained in the middle of the block, King or Queen Streets become service lanes and building form the perimeter of the block.



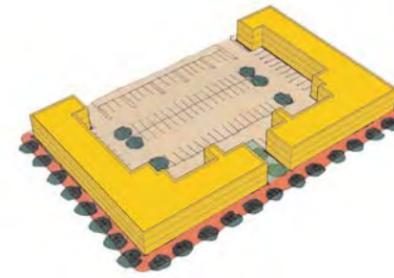
Plan diagram of a residential block with existing buildings and surface parking



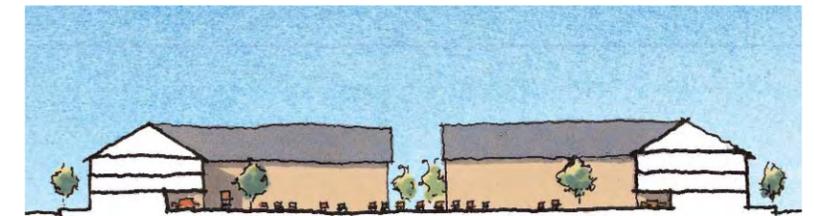
Axonometric diagram of a residential block with existing buildings and surface parking



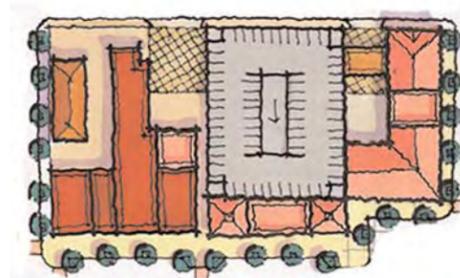
Axonometric diagram of a new residential block with surface parking



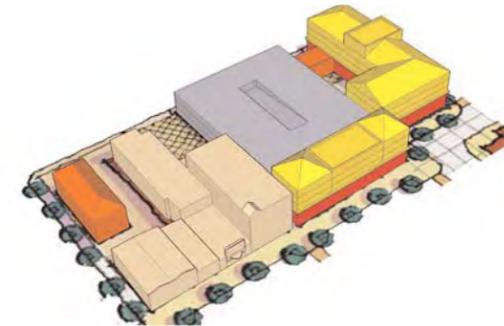
Axonometric diagram of a new residential block with surface parking



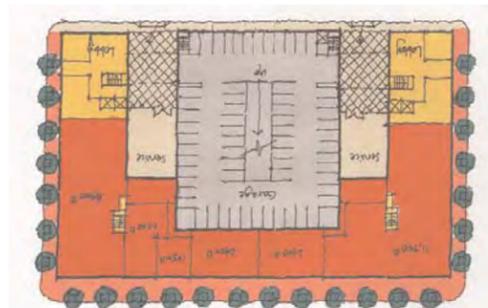
Axonometric diagram of mixed-use block



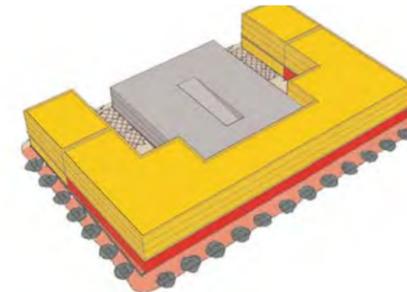
Plan diagram of a mixed-use block with existing buildings and parking structures



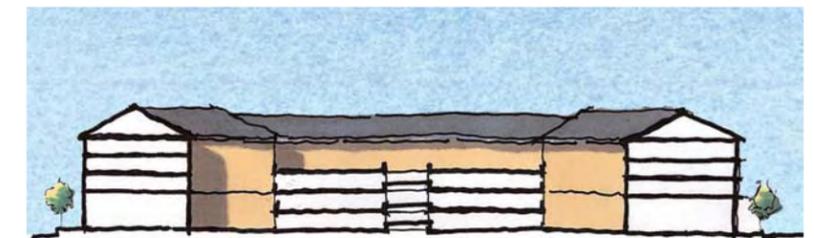
Axonometric diagram of a mixed-use block with existing buildings and parking structures



Plan diagram of a mixed-use block with parking structure



Axonometric diagram of a mixed-use block with parking structure



Axonometric diagram of mixed-use block

Process

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES SUMMARY

The first phase of the planning process identified the strength and weaknesses of the study area and set forth the goals and criteria for the Plan

The areas' strengths include its location at the entry to Downtown Portsmouth, the large amount of available land, its proximity to High Street retail, proximity to Olde Towne and other strong and emerging neighborhoods, and its relationship to the Naval Hospital (Portsmouth's largest employer) Effingham Street is a heavily traveled corridor (25,000 vehicles per day). The traffic on Effingham is an asset in that it renders the area visible to a large number of people daily and creates a drive by market for certain commercial uses. However the traffic on Effingham is also a significant detractor to investment. The properties along Effingham Street are run down and blighted. Both Effingham and High Street west of Effingham have the perception of being unsafe.

The heavy traffic on Effingham Street also acts as a barrier. The back-ups caused by the tunnel effect the city streets, especially Effingham Street. Frequently traffic headed for the tunnels backs up to High Street.

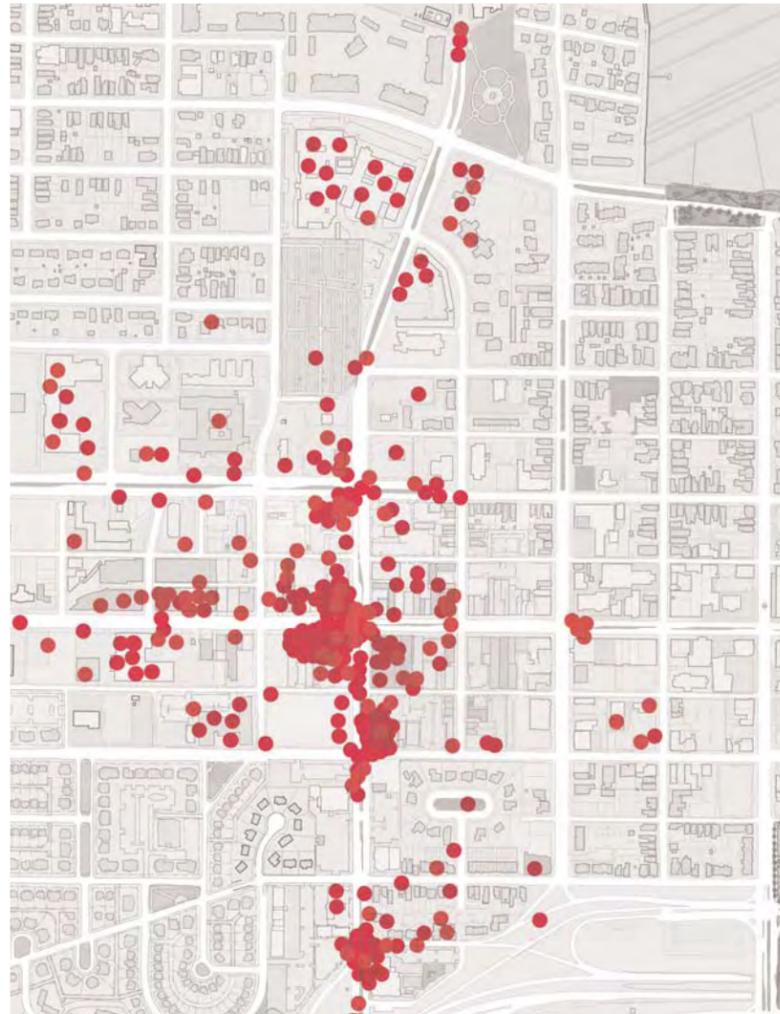
Effingham is both an edge: it is a physical and psychological barrier. Development falls apart west of Effingham. Effingham was the traditional barrier between social classes and the memory of public housing helps perpetuate the image of a run down dangerous area. the character of Effingham Street is unfriendly to pedestrians because of both the heavy traffic and the lack of coherent and consistent pedestrian amenities - in some cases as basic as a sidewalk.



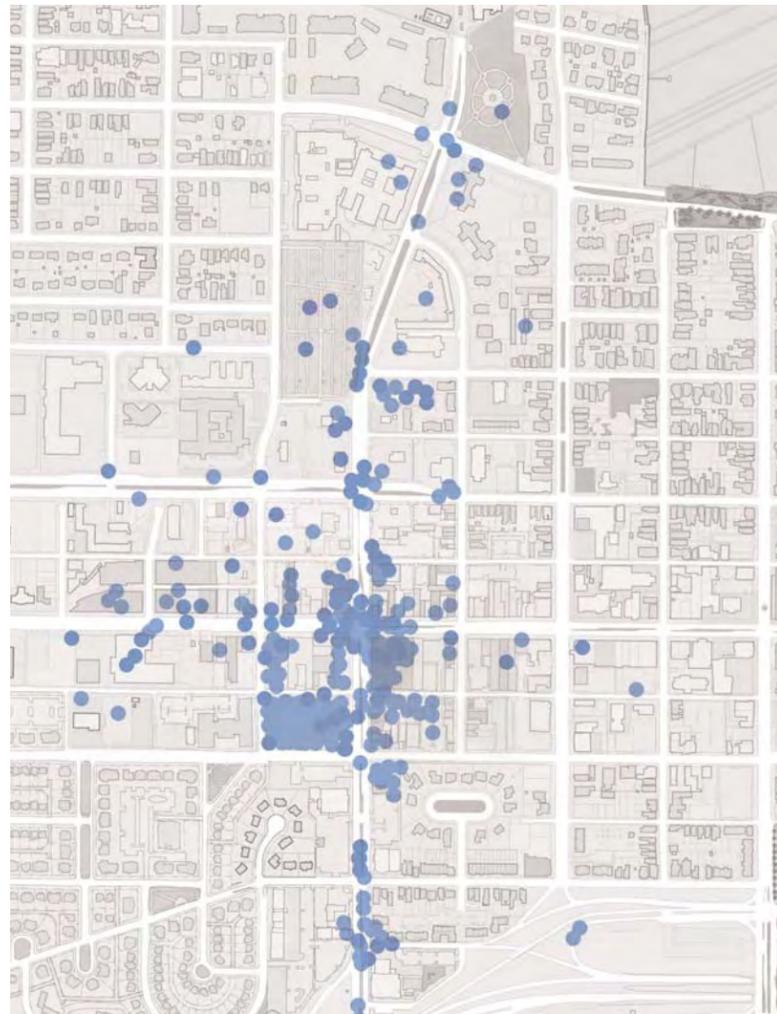
STRENGTHS

- Traffic volume
- Centrally located to amenities and regional interstate routes
- Historic buildings
- Churches and local institutions
- High Street shops
- Walkability
- Good grid/ street network
- Surrounding residential neighborhoods





- WEAKNESSES**
- Tunnel traffic and backup
 - Effingham does not give a reason for people to stop and get out of their cars
 - Effingham provides no directional signage to shops on High Street
 - Lack of consistent street section along Effingham
 - Character of Effingham is blighted
 - Vacant lots
 - Loitering activities



- VISIONS**
- Jitney service that provides access to remote parking for ship yard and hospital workers
 - Shuttle service strictly for tunnel section allowing the 45 Route not to be disrupted by delays in tunnel
 - Redirect traffic at peak hours off of Effingham
 - Grocery store
 - Mixed-use buildings along Effingham
 - Include Effingham in Museum District
 - Make Effingham and High a destinations
 - Make stronger connection between Effingham and waterfront
 - Create outdoor gathering spaces

CRITERIA AND GOALS FOR THE PLAN

Market Flexibility

The Plan should be flexible. It should present a new image for the study area but one that is responsive to changing market conditions. In addition, the Plan should be able to accommodate existing buildings landowners and planned investments. To that end, the Plan should focus on creating new addresses for development and a framework of streets and blocks within which a variety of development densities can occur.

Significant Impact and Critical Mass

Redevelopment must have an impact significant enough to create a critical mass that eventually reshapes the marketplace's image of the study area. The barriers of London Boulevard and Effingham Street are significant. London Boulevard will remain a limited access highway for the near future and traffic volumes on Effingham will likely increase not decrease. Therefore the Plan must attract significant investment by presenting a compelling image of how the area can significantly transform.

Authenticity

The most cherished places and buildings in Portsmouth are those that are most authentic - places that are unique to the city and region, not buildings and places that are imported or replicated. The Plan therefore must present an image that is compelling and new, however it must also be authentic. It must draw on the strengths of the area and be seeded in the best of Portsmouth traditions and vernacular.

UDA X RAYS

The diagrams on this page are X-Ray drawings that are used to analyze the structure of the City. Each drawing contains a single layer of information: streets, land use, etc. By examining the City one layer at a time, an assessment can be made of the physical health of the City - structural problems become evident.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. Use public land and investment to encourage the highest quality private development
2. Encourage residential development in order to create a critical mass of stable downtown residents
3. Create an attractive gateway into Downtown Portsmouth from all directions
4. Mitigate the impact of congestion caused by tunnel traffic
5. Transform Effingham Street and London Boulevard from barriers to centers of activity.
6. Provide appropriate retail uses for downtown residents and workers
7. Create an attractive series of public spaces that support high quality development and existing neighborhoods
8. Build on the successes of recent development in the area.

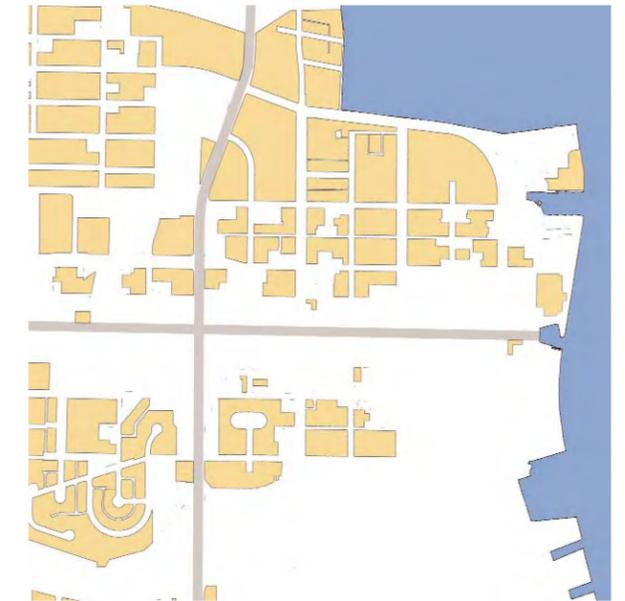
PORTRAIT Existing conditions in the project area and surrounding neighborhoods



COMMERCIAL Commercial uses are concentrated along High Street



RESIDENTIAL The residential lack a strong connection across High Street



BUILDING FOOTPRINTS High street and the waterfront contain larger buildings than are found in the neighborhoods



STREETS Streets create small urban blocks



PARKS & INSTITUTIONS The Naval Hospital and various dispersed churches make up the institutional fabric

Strategic Plan

The plan includes three types of recommendations: (1) Framework of streets and open space, (2) Development Blocks, and (3) Phasing Strategy.

1) FRAMEWORK OF STREETS AND OPEN SPACE

The plan recommends ways of improving the pattern of streets and public open space in order to create an orderly, pedestrian-friendly framework for development. These include the following elements:

High Street

High Street west of Effingham Street has no focal point or definition. The Plan recommends that the existing overall right-of-way on High Street west of Effingham be maintained on High Street west of Effingham but that the cartway be reduced to 34 feet. This would allow for the creation of generous 23.5 foot wide sidewalks on either side as well as on-street parking. This cross section is modified to accommodate the creation of the market square and new commercial development.

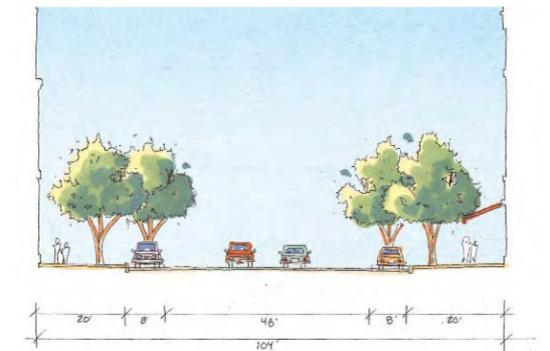
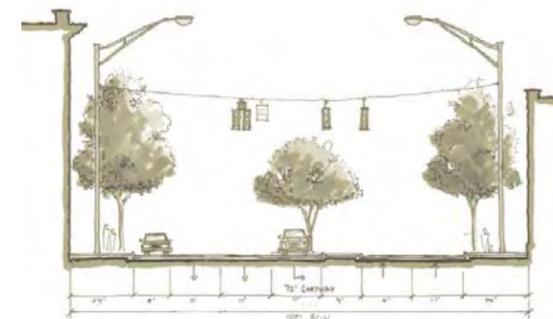
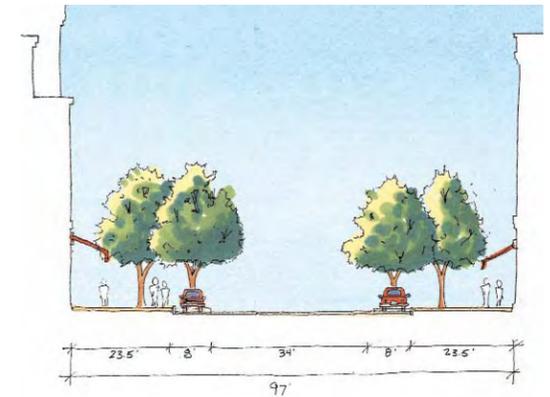
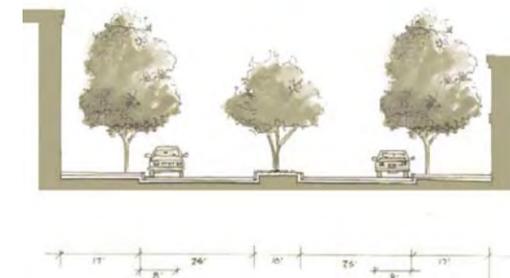
New street trees located at least 35' on center are needed to create a comfortable pedestrian environment and a desirable address for new development. Bulbouts and textured concrete should also be utilized to help facilitate pedestrian crossings.



PROBLEM: "HURRY UP AND WAIT"
Backups at the Freeway cause congestion on Effingham Street. In turn, this creates a barrier to movement of pedestrians, cross traffic, and public transportation

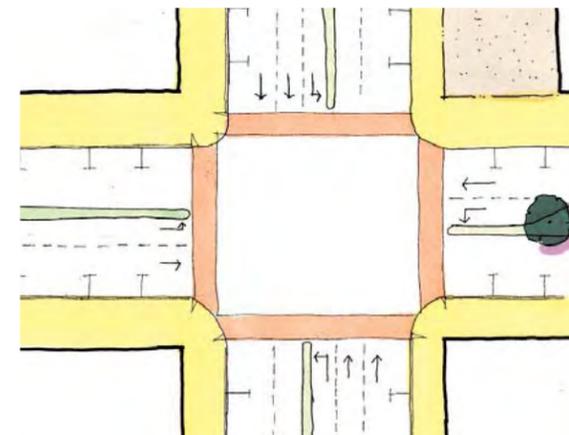


SOLUTION: "CHOPPING THE CUE"
Traffic signals are timed to strategically cue traffic on Effingham Street in a manner that facilitates the east/west movement of pedestrians, vehicles, and public transportation.



STREET SECTIONS

Existing High Street (above left) Proposed High Street west of Effingham (above right)
Existing Effingham Street (below left) Proposed Effingham Street (below right)



INTERSECTION PLANS

Existing Intersection of High and Effingham Street (below left)
Proposed Intersection of High and Effingham Street west of Effingham (below right)

Effingham Street

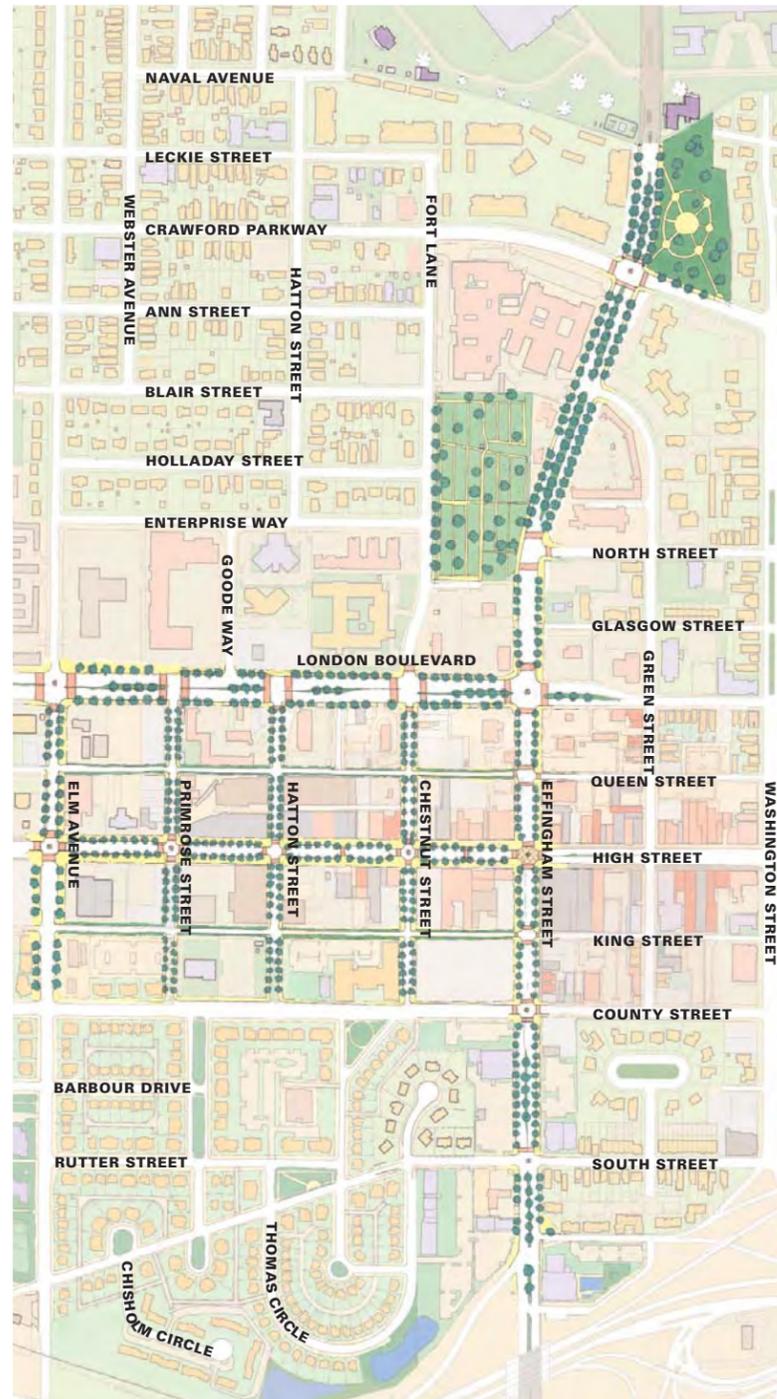
The intersection of Effingham and High Streets must become more pedestrian friendly if the area to the west is to be developed. As a gateway marker, the intersection of High and Effingham Street should be enhanced with pedestrian amenities such as decorative concrete for the crosswalks and the entire intersection. Left turns should only be encouraged at London Boulevard and County Street in order to calm traffic and provide a comfortable pedestrian environment. Sidewalks should be expanded along the length of Effingham Street to provide pedestrian continuity.

Primrose and Hatton Streets

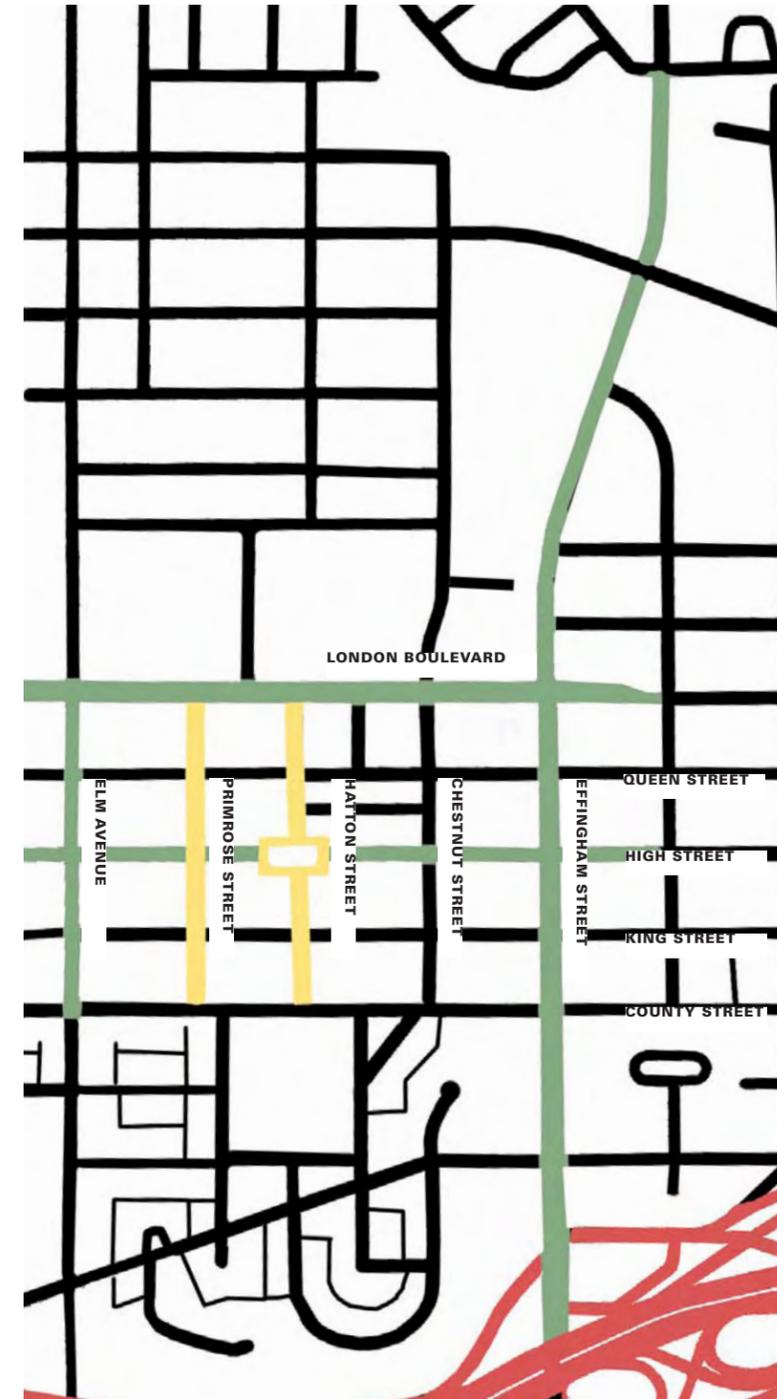
The Plan recommends modest but important street connections. Hatton and Primrose Streets should be reconnected to London Boulevard. Reconnecting these streets to London Boulevard will allow the benefits of a city grid to be realized. Specifically, it will increase access to Market Square and the new developments on High Street. These new connections can also be seen as the catalyst needed to change London Boulevard from a limited access highway to more of a city boulevard in both character and uses.

Streetscapes

Over time, County Street, Elm Street and other streets in the area should be embellished with appropriate streetscapes to further create a continuous pedestrian scale environment.



FRAMEWORKS DIAGRAM



STREETS IMPROVEMENT DIAGRAM

2) DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS

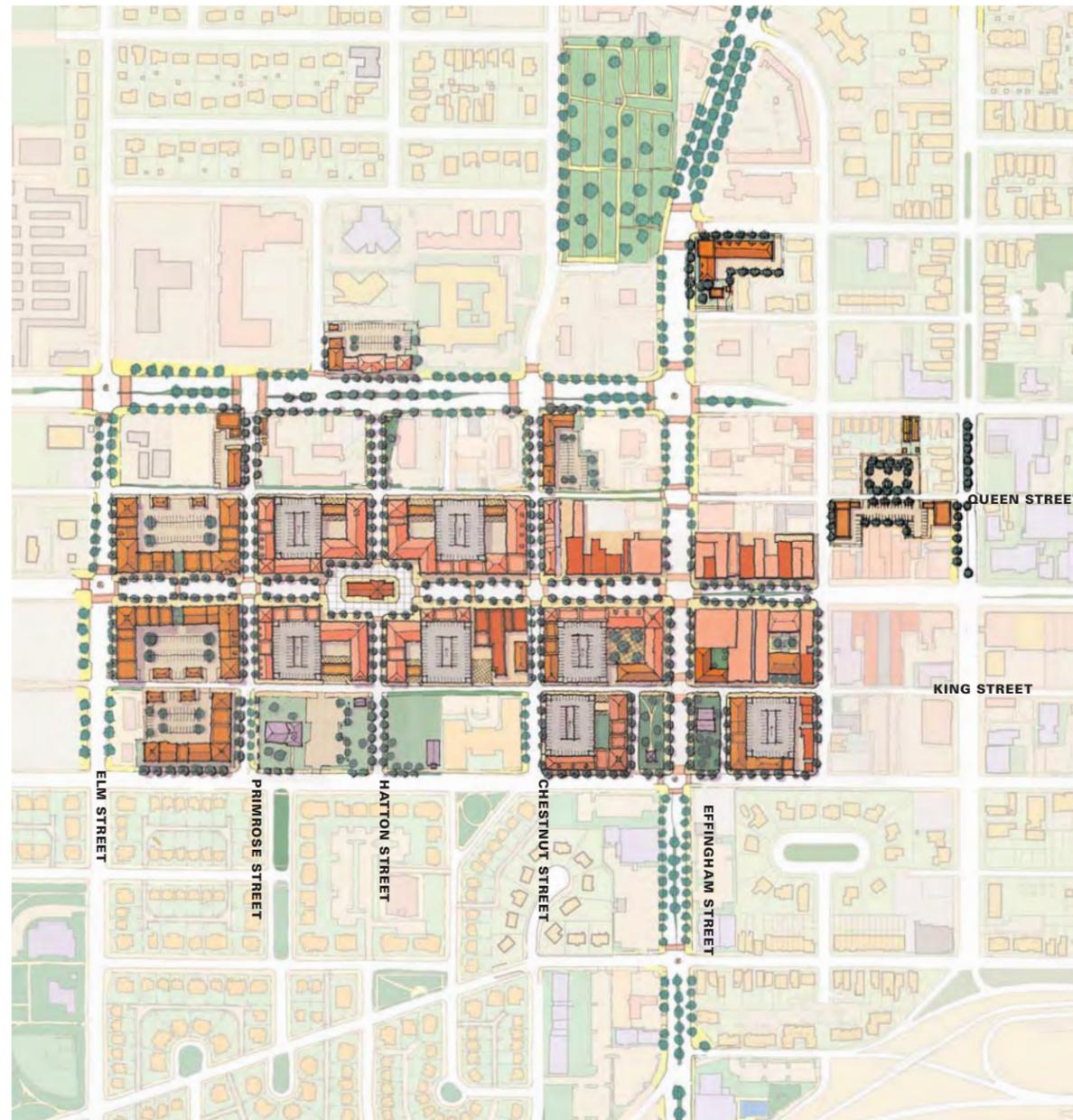
The new framework of streets and open spaces will create a framework of development parcels. The Plan recommends types of development that are appropriate for each parcel depending on its context. These alternative configurations are comprised of varying densities and ratios between new construction and the preservation of existing structures. There are a number of proposals underway and we recommend proceeding to select a developer for them as the first phase of the project. The Effingham Park and Market Square initiatives will take longer to develop because of their scale but will undoubtedly benefit from the image improvement that will result from the first phase.

Effingham Park Blocks

The blocks surrounding Effingham Park will become mixed-use blocks with integrated parking garages as shown on the illustrative Plan (near right). The garage to the east of Effingham Park must support redevelopment of the 700 Block of High Street. Access to service and parking should be located on King Street. The park will become a dignified setting for the Chevra T'helim Synagogue. A visitors center can be appended to the synagogue and a lane can be provided for drop-off.

Market Square and Elm Street Blocks

The new Urban Market will become the focus for development on High Street. All four blocks surrounding the Market Square will be developed with moderate amounts of retail at grade and apartments or condominiums above street level. Existing buildings on these blocks can be retained and folded into new development if they



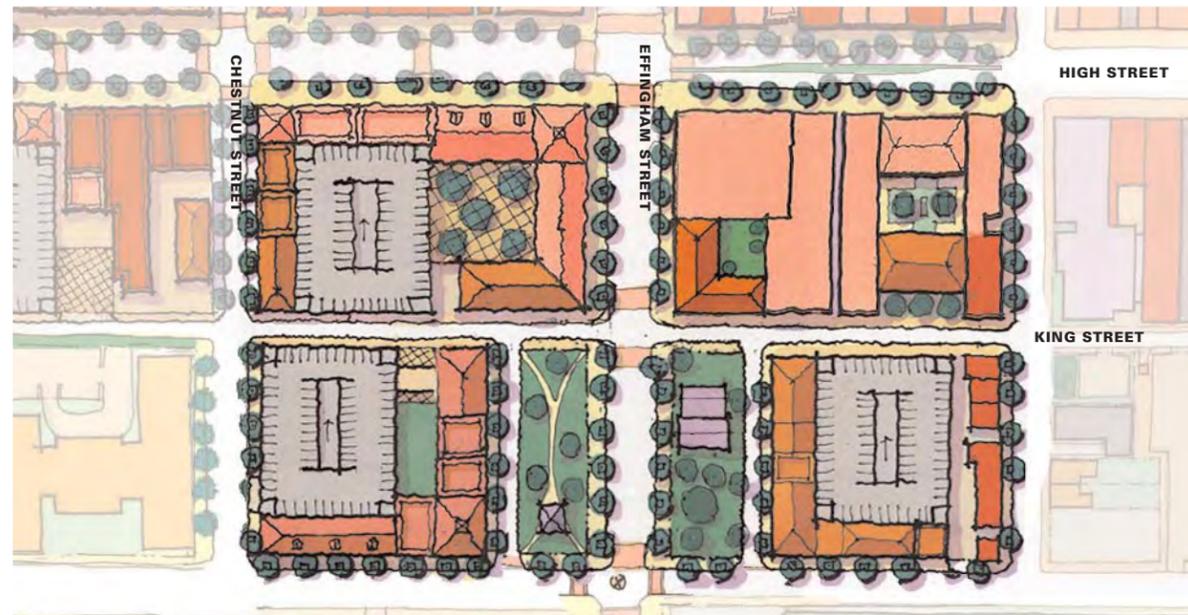
PROPOSED ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN.



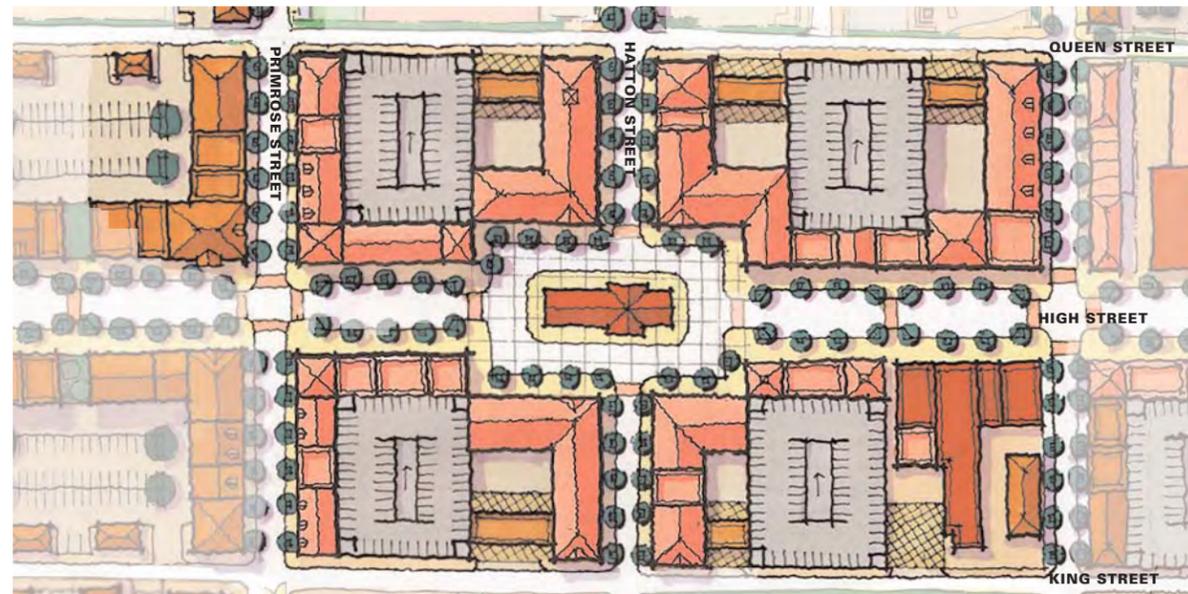
Development potential on publicly owned properties

contribute to the overall vision of the area. Parking garages, located behind the buildings will support the developments. The illustrative plan shows four equal garages but in a coordinated development, it may be possible to build two larger structures and provide surface parking on the other two blocks.

Elm Street will become a new residential address. The Plan recommends the two blocks on Elm Street be developed as exclusively residential uses. The blocks will be services and accessed from King and Queen Street. These blocks may be developed with townhouses or mid rise condominiums/apartments.



Effingham Park



Market Square



Elm street Blocks

Implementation Strategy

Three scenarios will be evaluated in the context of a market study and through economic modeling. Development capacities were determined by adjusting the parking strategies. The first scenario assumes surface parking, the second assumes three level parking garages, and the final scenario assumes five level garages. Building Heights were adjusted accordingly.

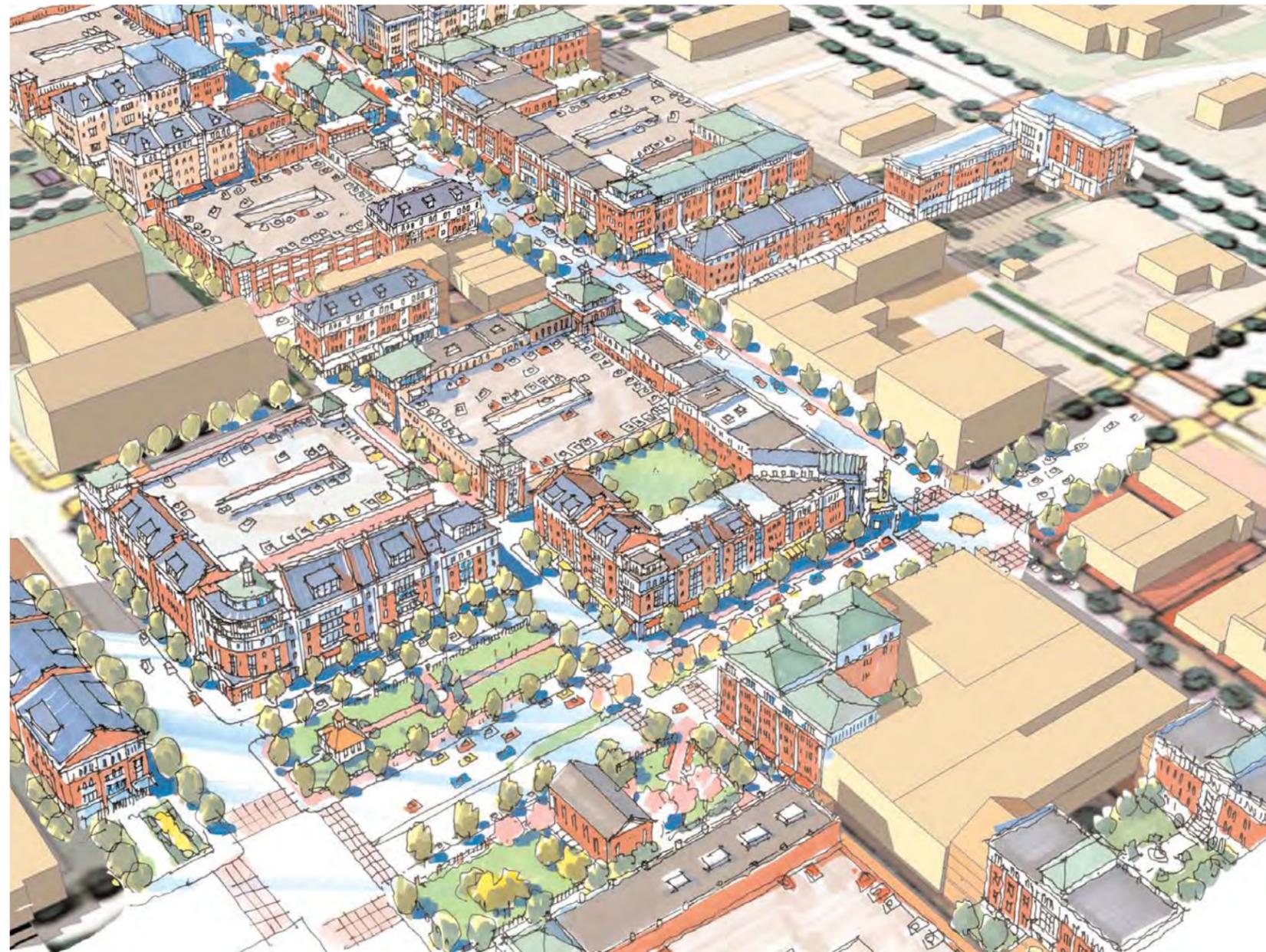
The plan identified two nodes of activity: Effingham Park and Market Square.

Effingham Park

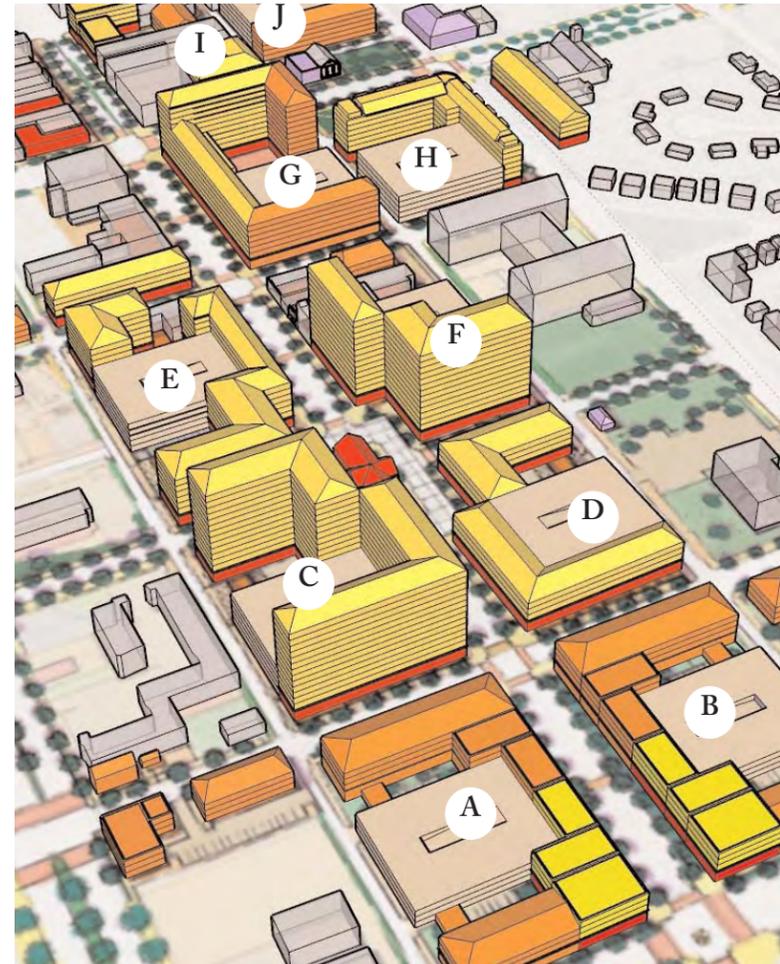
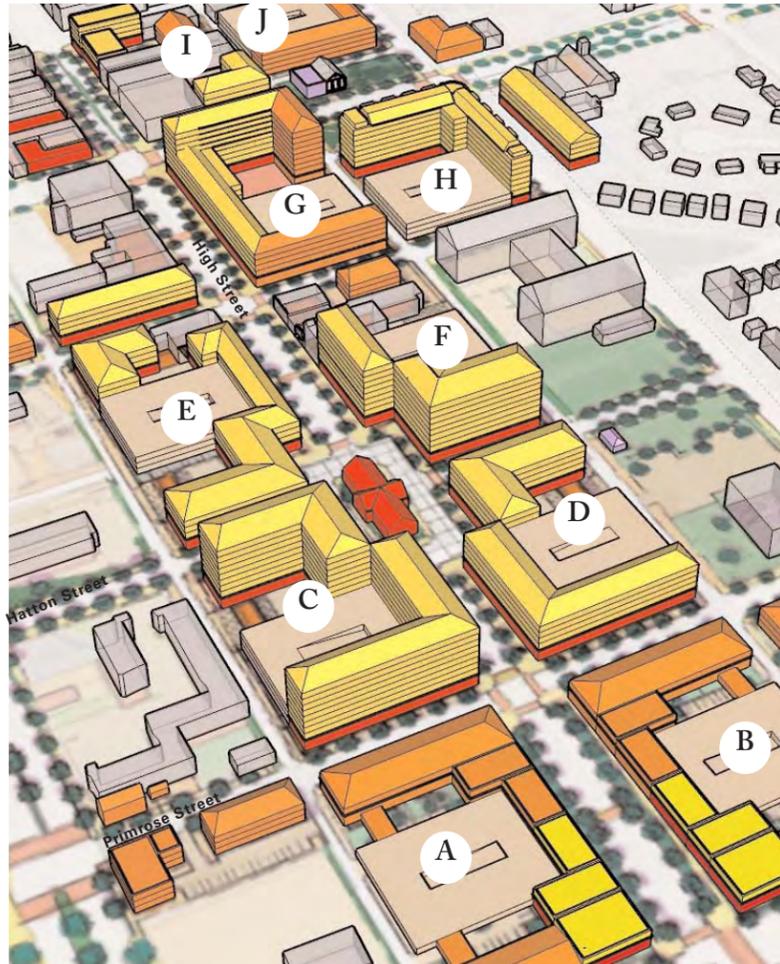
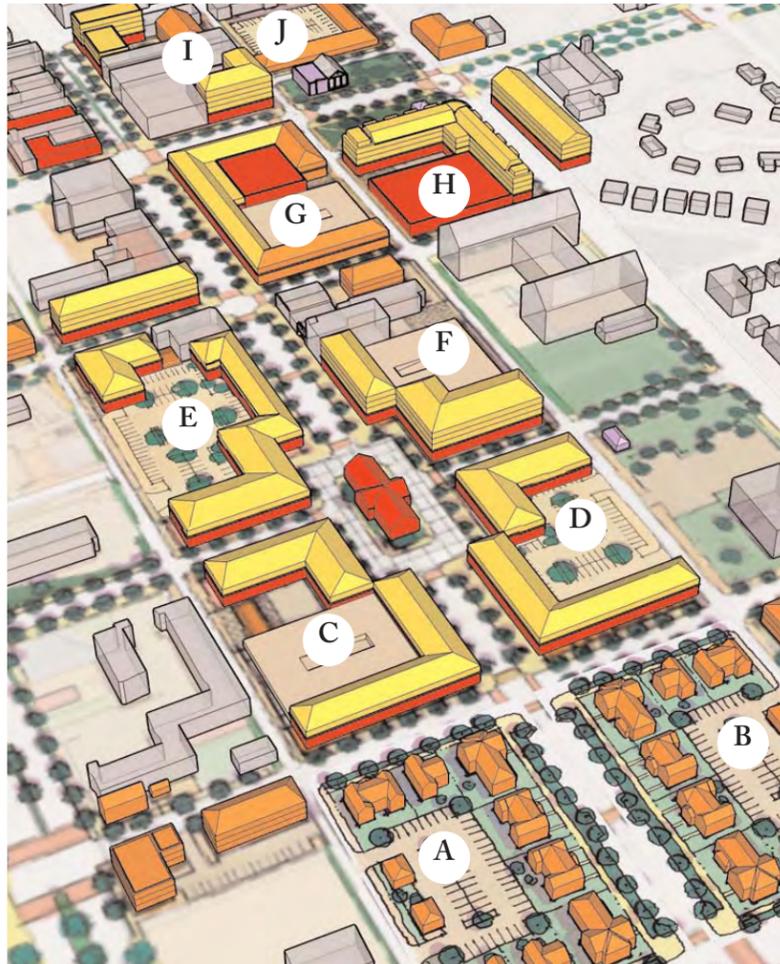
The preferred alternative includes residential development along Effingham Park with retail uses on the ground floor at Effingham and High. It includes the conversion of 739 High Street into a loft apartment but with the southern portion of the lot developed as new construction. The block between King and County, east of Effingham Street, includes a parking structure lined with residential uses. The west side of Effingham should be developed between High and County Streets.

Market Square

The number of underutilized properties and capacity to coordinate development their assembly presents a unique opportunity. The plan calls for a market square as the central focus of a mixed use development with retail uses on the ground floor, parking in the center of the blocks, and residential uses on the upper floors.



DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES



surface lot			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
A	3150	28	60
B	3150	28	60
subtotal	6300	56	120

LOW surface lots and 2 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
C	25425	40	140
D	25425	40	87
E	30750	48	95
F	14175	58	140
subtotal	95775	186	462

LOW 2 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
G	9975	66	140
H	5550	79	140
I	0	0	0
J	3750	11	140
subtotal	19275	155	420
TOTAL	115050	341	882

2 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
A	5760	67	140
B	5760	67	140
subtotal	11520	134	280

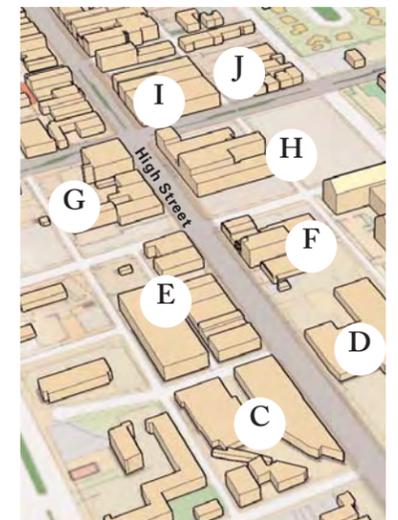
MEDIUM 4 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
C	25425	136	280
D	25425	136	280
E	30750	126	280
F	14175	147	280
subtotal	95775	545	1120

MEDIUM 4 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
G	8475	152	280
H	5550	162	280
I	0	0	0
J	3750	53	280
subtotal	17775	367	840
TOTAL	113550	912	1960

4 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
A	5760	176	280
B	5760	176	280
subtotal	11520	351	560

HIGH 6 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
C	25425	232	420
D	25425	232	420
E	30750	203	420
F	14175	236	420
subtotal	95775	903	1680

High 6 level garage			
blocks	comm sf	res units	parking
G	9975	254	420
H	5550	267	420
I	0	0	0
J	3750	152	420
subtotal	19275	673	1260
TOTAL	115050	1576	2940



Existing Density Massing

CHARETTE EVALUATION

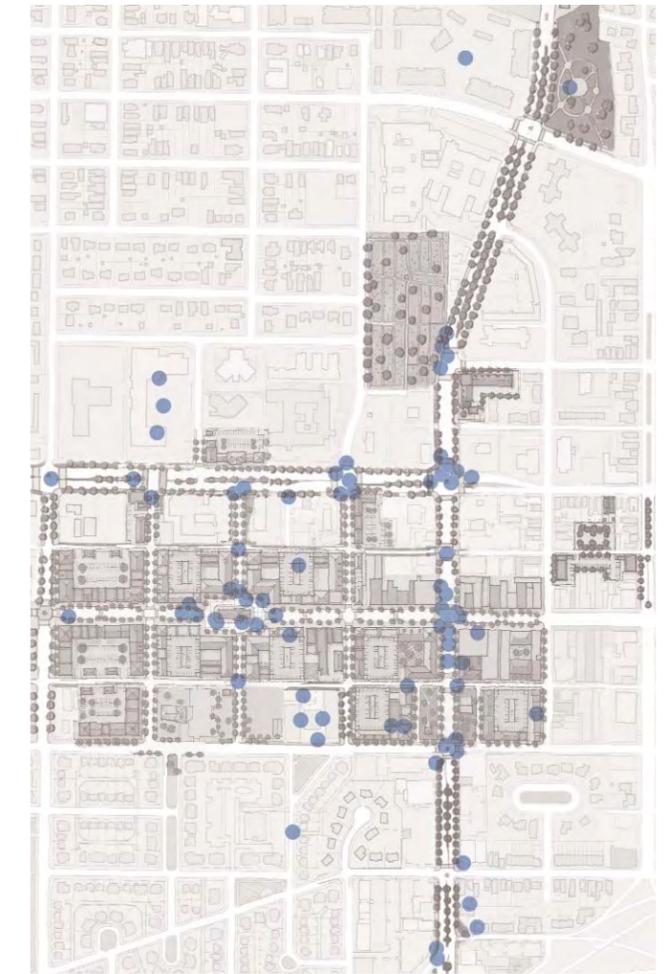
Following the design charrette, participants were invited to comment on the positive and negative aspects of the plan. In addition, participants were asked to identify which elements of the plan are most critical and should therefore be early action items. The results of the input is shown on this page.



POSITIVE COMMENTS OF THE CHARRETTE PLAN	
- Preferred Market Square over residential Park	- Development of green spaces
- Dynamic Plan has right mixture of activities	- Improvement of the western corridor
- Sense of destination	- Continuity with Portsmouth's architectural style
- Creation of a gateway at Effingham and High Street	- Opportunities with the Synagogue
- Development of Furniture store into lofts	
- Movement of develop-	



NEGATIVE COMMENTS OF THE CHARRETTE PLAN	
-Lack of pet walking areas	- Parallel parking on Effingham
- Lack of development and Effingham and London	- Financial obligations on property owners
- Parking against residential buildings	- Does not make financial sense for developers
- Lack of a mix of housing types	- Lack of incorporation of blocks north of London
- Lack of Navy involvement	
-Traffic on King and Queen: Streets too narrow	



EARLY ACTION ITEMS OF THE CHARRETTE PLAN	
- Open Air Market	- re-routing of truck traffic
- Beautification of exits/entrances to I-264	
- Address and celebrate the Naval History	
- Create destinations that target families	
- Begin with streetscape and pattern book guidelines	
- Signage and lighting	