Vision Outcomes - Urban Framework

General

The Neck area is in an excellent economic position for growth and development. It is relevant and important to the region’s future thanks to its central location, regional accessibility, number of jobs present, and proximity to major economic drivers, such as the airport, port, Downtown Charleston and emerging economic catalysts like the Clemson University Restoration Institute. The significant number of major employers and development projects already located in the Neck area demonstrates its competitive advantages. Growth in employment and economic investment is expected to continue in the future, through announced plans/projects, ongoing initiatives, and the continuation of the Neck area as a key part of the economic heart of the Charleston region.

Neck area residents historically have not shared in the prosperity produced by the economic investment happening around them. Only a small percentage of residents work in the Neck area, and those who do earn less than non-residents on average. Overall, Neck area residents have lower incomes and are more burdened by housing costs when compared to the rest of the region. Their lower educational attainment levels also make it difficult to get better paying jobs in a competitive regional labor market. Despite close proximity to the region’s economic heart (and bearing the brunt of negative impacts from some of its industrial and related transportation activities), Neck area residents and their neighborhoods have found it difficult to improve their situations and tap into the economic strength of the place that they live in.

Given this context, a key goal of the Partnership for

Figure 5.1 Economic Framework (See Appendix A pg. 210)
Prosperity Master Plan is to foster economic opportunities that permeate the Neck area and are attainable by its residents and local businesses. The demonstrated competitive advantage that the Neck area possesses is a valuable thing that should be promoted, expanded, and capitalized upon to generate increasing prosperity. An effective Master Plan will seek to harness that advantage for the benefit of the entire Neck area – from the major business enterprises that power its economy to the residents and local businesses whose well-being are dependent on the quality of the place and the opportunities for economic success it offers. The economic activities in the Neck area are interdependent, so the health of one sector or area has implications for the others.

Accomplishing this goal means focusing on two separate but interrelated objectives:

- **Economic development**: Maximizing and optimizing future employment and investment growth
- **Revitalization**: Achieving and sustaining prosperity for Neck area residents, local businesses, and neighborhoods

These two objectives work hand in hand; success in one makes it easier to accomplish the other. For that reason the pursuit of economic development and revitalization in the Neck area should be a balanced approach that seizes the most promising specific opportunities when they are present but recognizes that a diverse mix of targets, strategies, and programs will ultimately serve the area best in building an economic foundation is both broad-based and long-lasting. The Master Plan should be a guidebook for capturing investment in a competitive marketplace, attracting new residents and businesses to revitalized and high-quality places, and improving the lives and economic opportunities for existing residents and local businesses.

**Community Viability**

The Master Plan strives to build and/or maintain a resilient community in the Neck that is economically sustainable and can rely on well developed networks and places to ensure its long-term viability. By looking ahead and planning, a resilient community remains agile and adaptive. A resilient community encompasses:

- Economic development
- Community building
- Connectivity and access
- Placemaking

A resilient community responds and adapts to changes in the environment - social, economic, and natural - by looking ahead and planning for shifts in demographics, technology, costs of living, government policy and investments, or other forces with the potential to affect the neighborhood. In an ever-changing environment, the resilient community relies on its well-developed networks and lines of communication to reorganize and reroute information and resources as needed to ensure the long-term viability of the neighborhood. The resilient community strives for greater levels of neighborhood satisfaction knowing that ‘place attachment’ can mean sustained neighborhood investment and involvement in times of stress.

A great neighborhood has resources that allow all residents to live active, healthful, and fulfilling lives. The foundation of a great neighborhood is its livability—the quality of the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities. A great neighborhood is safe, walkable, and inviting, and has attractive and comfortable spaces for playing, relaxing, and socializing. Complete streets accommodate multiple forms of travel throughout the neighborhood. Good transportation access is a fundamental precept for successful industry and commerce. Vibrant business districts are destinations for shopping, dining, and gathering. Local businesses offer goods and services regularly used by residents and also create jobs for the neighborhood’s workforce. Social problems such as crime and homelessness are managed through neighborhood partnerships with city government, law enforcement, and non-profits. Trees, natural drainage ways, and other green infrastructure provide a range of ecosystem services to the neighborhood including assimilating pollution, managing stormwater, and supporting wildlife, while also creating beauty.
A neighborhood that is vibrant has a distinct sense of place and identity and is supported by strong social networks and organizations. Information and resources flow smoothly through the community from where these assets exist to where they can be best applied. The people within a thriving community feel cared for, acknowledged, and yearn to give back to their community as a whole as well as to the people within it. There is a sense that the community becomes greater than the sum of the parts. Community involvement provides residents a sense of pride in and ownership of their community.

Continued collaboration between the City of Charleston, City of North Charleston, Charleston County, the Ports Authority, Joint Base Charleston South Carolina Department of Transportation, and the Neck community is essential to fulfilling the vision and implementing the Partnership for Prosperity Master Plan and addressing issues or opportunities which may emerge in the future. Strong relationships are a key element to a resilient and livable Neck area for the next 50 years and beyond.

**Land Use and Urban Design**

The Master Plan for the Neck Area is grounded in several closely linked urban design principles. Each of these principles represents a distinct concept, but each reinforces the others within the context of the Master Plan. This interconnected approach helps create efficient land use and transportation systems, while embracing and promoting the assets and heritage of the Neck area.

Coordinated planning and development effectively integrate these urban design principles. Quality housing choices that enhance a sense of community among neighborhood residents; pedestrian-friendly retail and civic streets; open spaces offering a variety of environmental and recreational amenities; and different transportation options all represent elements, that when well designed and considered as one larger system, contribute to good urban form and provide vitality to the Neck area.

The following urban design principles embrace the unique qualities that characterize the Neck area and are meant to promote development that reinforces and preserves those characteristics:

- **Establish catalyst areas as centers of activity**

  Catalyst areas are focal points of the community and places where regional or local services are concentrated. They are the hubs where regional and local transportation networks converge to create a high level of access for various purposes. There will be a variety of activity centers within the Neck area, each containing diverse elements to cater to the varying needs of residents and visitors. Activity centers can include employment centers, shopping centers, entertainment centers, and neighborhood centers. Each center will exude a strong and distinctive sense of place; some, like the Mall Drive area, with a more regional context and others, like the Stromboli corridor, with a more neighborhood focus.

- **Promote connectivity**

  Connectivity facilitates pedestrian or vehicular movement within the community by providing opportunities for people to reach a variety of destinations from a given point. To accomplish this, the Neck area should be connected by a functional interconnected network of streets and blocks. This network should be maintained and improved in ways that accommodate various modes of transportation balanced the with needs of pedestrians. Connectivity should enhance linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and other areas, especially public services (such as schools, transit, and civic uses) and amenities (such as parks, water bodies, and natural open spaces).

- **Create a sense of place that strengthens communities**

  Sense of place is about more than the physical environment of an area. It is about the people who live and work there, the culture of their social and economic groupings, and the way they interact with the environment. Sense of place is the intangible characteristics of place that make it attractive to actual and potential residents and influences their behavior in observable ways. Urban design and sense of place are inextricably linked and both should be seen in a broad context, with good urban design strengthening a community’s sense of place.

- **Promote and facilitate social interaction**

  The Neck neighborhoods should contain usable public spaces that provide people with the opportunity to meet and connect each day. These interactions create support networks, improve wellness, and promote a sense of place.

- **Emphasize transportation options**

  Enhance public transportation by making it more comfortable and convenient to use. Create a balanced circulation system that promotes mobility choice (pedestrians, automobiles, bicycles, and transit).

- **Provide a diversity of land uses**

  Good urban design strengthens a community’s sense of place.
Neighborhoods should be comprised of a rich mix of land uses. Such diversity uses land efficiently, provides convenience, and contributes to unique urban experiences. This diversity also includes preservation of land for open spaces and environmental habitat.

- **Ensure neighborhood compatibility**
  A cohesive neighborhood environment depends on buildings that complement each other. The size, shape, and location of buildings, as well as the uses contained in them, create patterns that define neighborhood character. New development should be compatible with the pattern of its existing context.

- **Create pedestrian-friendly design**
  Urban areas are for people and an environment designed to accommodate the pedestrian heightens human experience and sense of place. Neighborhoods should accommodate shopping and services within a five minute walk radius. New development should be designed to create an attractive, comfortable, and safe environment for all users.

**Neck Area Districts**

One of the central themes of the Partnership for Prosperity Master Plan is to help define a more organized pattern of development in the Neck area, for both transportation

*Figure 5.2 Study Area Districts (See Appendix A pg. 208)*
and land use. The objective is to clarify expectations for areas that should remain primarily residential in character that are free from industrial encroachment, encourage the clustering of industrial- and port-related development in areas with excellent rail and highway access, define areas of synergy for emerging research and development activities, and establish mixed use centers that can become catalysts for diverse housing and focal points for effective and efficient multimodal transportation. By creating this organizing pattern using broad districts as a guide to more detailed plans, the study partners for the Neck area can establish cooperative working agreements with the private sector, community stakeholders and non-traditional partners to fulfill the Master Plan’s recommendations over time.

Figure 5.2 presents a general map showing the major districts of the Neck area. The map is not intended to set precise boundaries or formally define the districts in any specific way. Rather, it is meant to complement the vision map presented earlier (see Figure 4.5) by presenting a unifying framework for existing and future development activities in each area. One of the benefits of this framework is that it provides the opportunity for each district to establish a unique character. By clarifying the urban design intent of each district, private investors and developers have a baseline expectation of the future urban form on which to rely over time. The map also recognizes that many development patterns are set in the study area, but with redevelopment and increasing demand for freight movement by commercial vehicle and rail, more clarity is needed to guide future activities.

The districts are as follows:

**Gateway Entertainment District**

The area encompassing the Charleston International Airport, Tanger Outlet Mall, the North Charleston Coliseum and North Charleston City Hall is an emerging regional destination hub for mixed use development with substantial capacity for increasing development density and intensity. With the confluence of I-26 and I-526 near the airport, Rivers Avenue and Montague Avenue, the area benefits from excellent regional transportation access. The challenge is in its disaggregated nature, lack of street connectivity and large parcels with a suburban design that contributes to traffic congestion and limits the viability of transit and active transportation modes. The area features numerous hotels with a growing demand for convention and conference meeting space, and venues for entertainment acts and other events. The area has a large and growing workforce that includes highly skilled technical fields, white collar professions and service sector employees. The Gateway Entertainment District is often the first experience many people have of the greater Charleston area, and is frequently used as a base from which trips into the Charleston Historic District, the beaches and other parts of the region occur. However, it has the potential of becoming an 18- to 24-hour destination in its own right.

A strategy to unify the Gateway Entertainment District is needed. As described in subsequent sections of this report, that must include creating a finer-grain street network with improved connectivity, a locally-oriented transit network that can efficiently connect the existing and emerging focal points within the district, and designation of one or more regional transit stations, such as for commuter rail and Bus Rapid Transit that would provide an anchor mixed use development. Height and visibility restrictions related to the Air Force Base and Charleston International Airport will have an effect on development form, but infill and redevelopment opportunities mean the area can support a substantial increase in density through proximity of buildings and smaller block patterns, which will help improve the area’s accessibility for non-motorized travel and transit.

**Research and Development**

The area surrounding Clemson University’s Restoration Institute wind turbine facility along the Cooper River on the former Naval Yard is planned to become a center for clean energy employment and research, and other forms of technology development. The existing warehouse and World War II period buildings provide a functional and relatively inexpensive template for R&D start-up activity, along with generally compatible uses such as light manufacturing and artist showroom/work spaces. New residential development as part of the Noisette plan offers a good fit with “cleaner” forms of light manufacturing, research and technology. Those activities benefit from proximity of similar uses. The area will still need to accommodate some commercial vehicle traffic to access industrial uses along the Cooper River and gain access to I-526, but an expansion of industrial development and intermodal facilities into the area is incompatible with the area’s redevelopment and emerging uses.

**Industrial Development**

The legacy of the Neck area is that industrial and related uses were scattered throughout much of the area, creating conflicts with residential neighborhoods and leaving contaminated soils, but also providing workforce employment. The Port and its expansion is a major economic driver for the region and state, and it depends on efficient commercial vehicle travel and rail access. While dispersed
Urban Framework

Intermodal facilities and warehousing is a fact of life in the Neck area and will continue, efforts should be made to focus industrial related development to areas where it already exists and is supported by existing and planned transportation improvements to ensure better interstate highway access. The industrial area along the Cooper River in North Charleston may eventually give way to residential or mixed use development, but for purposes of this Master Plan it is assumed those uses will continue until market forces dictate otherwise.

Creative Corridor

The City of Charleston operates a Digital Corridor (www.charlestondigitalcorridor.com) initiative that has been successful at creating a physical, business, and social environment that helps companies and workers in technology and related industries to thrive. The initiative has two centerpiece properties in Downtown Charleston that serve as business incubators and work spaces where startups and small companies can find flexible, tech-friendly work spaces that are adaptable to their needs. The influence of the Digital Corridor and the size of the regional knowledge economy are growing and neighborhoods in and around the downtown area are beginning to show the influence of an economic sector that tends to prefer distinctive urban, walkable, mixed-use environments for working and living. In order to capitalize on and continue to expand this influence, the district centered on Meeting Street at the southern end of the Neck area should be planned to preserve the unique and edgy character of an urban environment while adding public and private amenities, enhancing multimodal access (especially transit), and encouraging development that contributes to the diversity and livability of the district.

Residential Neighborhoods

The remaining areas without coloring on the map should remain primarily residential in character. These areas represent a variety of existing conditions, including areas that need stabilization, areas that are in active revitalization and areas that have the potential for new development, including workforce housing and densification. While there continues to be non-residential development along many of the arterial and collector roads through these areas, the dominant character is residential, and efforts should be made to buffer these areas from industrial uses and heavy regional traffic. By establishing mixed use centers at key nodes where good regional and local transportation access exists, it lessens the potential for intrusive non-residential development in these areas.

As the remainder of this chapter and subsequent chapters explains, the character and form of development and transportation facilities will vary throughout each of the districts, fitting the context of the surrounding neighborhood or corridor.

Catalyst Development

Economic Opportunity and Evidence

Development of catalyst areas as shown on the vision map represents a major economic opportunity for the Neck area. Simply attracting new construction and investment to the area would create economic benefits, but encouraging economic development and revitalization to take place in a form that connects the local community with an enhanced economy through better accessibiility can open up opportunities for creating sustainable long-term prosperity. Both existing residents and new participants can benefit from this approach.

The Master Plan focuses on encouraging the redevelopment and reuse of existing properties, which creates many economic benefits for the local community. Local spending on construction and related activities related to site cleanup and building renovation flows directly into the local economy, producing a multiplier effect that supports other businesses and job creation. A study of brownfield cleanup impacts (Paul, Evans. “The Environmental and Economic Impacts of Brownfields Redevelopment.” Working Paper, Northwester-Midwest Institute. July 2008.) found that one job was created for every $5,700 spent on site preparation. The type of work involved in redevelopment also produces the potential for more local benefits. Research on national construction spending data has shown that renovating existing residential buildings produces about 50 percent more jobs than building new ones. This is because 41 percent of renovation project costs go to labor, while for new construction labor makes up only 28 percent of project costs. Catalyst area development will spur demand for construction and related skills, and local neighborhoods will be a convenient supply of labor as long as the skills are available. This presents an opportunity to use redevelopment activities as a framework for skills development—supplying local labor for local projects, spurring community engagement in the revitalization process, and creating jobs that can’t be relocated and create spin-off benefits for the local economy.

The vision for the Neck area is of a place with characteristics that are increasingly coming to be seen as competitive advantages in attracting jobs and new investment. Diverse, distinctive, and densely developed places are proving to be highly demanded by the sorts of innovative companies and workers that are being targeted by state, regional, and local economic development initiatives. Connected, walkable neighborhoods with unique character and flexible, low-cost building space are valuable tools for attracting high-tech and creative businesses, as has been shown by the success of the City of Charleston’s Digital Corridor program. Catalyst area development can synchronize new and rehabilitated development product (homes, work spaces, etc.) with the Neck area’s distinctive characteristics and the preferences of the target industries identified as the future of the regional economy, to make the Neck area a highly competitive center for new investment.
Finally, the Master Plan envisions a more accessible and connected Neck area, which will improve its location efficiency – a benefit and advantage for both households and businesses. With new high quality transit service, dedicated facilities for biking, and walkable, interconnected places, transportation to, from, and within the Neck area would be easier and less costly, facilitating economic activity and improving quality of life. Workers could spend more time with their families and put some of the money spent on transportation to better use, such as housing. Companies would have happier, healthier, and more productive employees, which are all documented benefits of shorter commutes. The benefits of location efficiency can be seen in the price/value premium of real estate that is conveniently located near rail transit service. A substantial body of research has shown that all else being equal, homes, offices, and retail stores become more valuable the closer they are to a transit station. Not only is this premium a benefit to homeowners, developers, and property investors, but it can also potentially be available for public investment through “value capture” techniques such as tax increment financing (TIF) that redirect the increased property taxes generated by redeveloped properties to a fund for the purposes of improving infrastructure, providing affordable housing, and encouraging more redevelopment in the surrounding area. Location efficiency is the principle that makes the accessibility, proximity, and connectivity of a place into economic development advantages.

The images above illustrate how a street can transform within the existing right-of-way width to become more of a complete street.

Figure 5.3 Catalyst Areas (See Appendix A pg. 219)
Catalyst Areas

The Master Plan identifies eight catalyst areas (see Figure 5.3). Each of these areas is listed and discussed below.

- South of Mount Pleasant Street
- North of Mount Pleasant Street
- Stromboli Corridor
- Shipwatch Square
- Olde North Charleston
- Amtrak Station area
- Mall Drive area
- Convention Center

Preliminary programs for each catalyst area are conceptual and were developed using the existing zoning and character of an area as a starting point for density and building height, next adding potential infill and redevelopment parcels, and finally defining catalyst opportunities where upzoning to a mixed-use designation could create community focal points and improve the organization and connectivity for both land use and transportation. Programs were then checked against economic trends and revised as appropriate to maintain realism with the market. Phasing for each catalyst area was created by projecting the potential development availability of catalyst opportunities, timing of transit services, orderly transition of uses and character within a given area.

South of Mount Pleasant Street

Context/Setting

The South of Mount Pleasant Street catalyst area (see Figure 5.4), located just north of downtown Charleston and the established residential neighborhoods that surround the Citadel and Hampton Park, is a community gateway. It is still part of the well-connected grid system that originates in the historic district, with Meeting Street and King Street, primary roadways providing access to downtown from points along the peninsula, running through the heart of the catalyst area. Both I-26 (coming from the northwest along the peninsula) and US 17 (coming from the northeast and Mount Pleasant) have exits providing direct access to major roadways in this gateway area. There are two large sites (Bridgeview Village and the former Promenade development area) that are located along the Cooper River east of the railroad tracks with single points of entry. As freight traffic increases, these areas may face access issues and vehicular delays.

Catalyst Opportunities

This catalyst area is located within the Gateway District of the Charleston Digital Corridor. This initiative, a creative effort to promote Charleston’s “knowledge community,” offers incentives, resources, and support to entrepreneurs and professionals in an effort to facilitate a business and social environment where technology companies can thrive. With companies like Radiate Technologies and Equiscript LLC already established in areas along the fringes of the catalyst area, the Charleston Digital Corridor is actively marketing sites on Meeting Street to prospective occupants. The area should take advantage of this established marketing network to further promote and develop catalyst opportunities along both Meeting Street and Morrison Street.

Form and Development Concepts

Building sizes in the southern portion of the catalyst area are envisioned as mid-rise (3-5 stories), similar to the scale of the Cool Blow building, with one or two landmark buildings at 7-9 stories in order to visually rise above the elevated interstate sections located along the perimeter of the area. This height would also allow views of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and be an orienting gateway feature for travelers entering Charleston. In the northern portion of the catalyst area, building sizes are envisioned as low-rise (1-3 stories) to act as a transition and complement the scale of existing uses.

Meeting Street runs along the western edge of the catalyst area and serves as its connection to the transportation spine that connects the entire Neck area both internally and to points beyond. New transit stops for a future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or Light Rail Transit (LRT) system are planned for the intersections...
of Meeting Street with Brigade Street and Romney Street. An extension of the existing shared-use path under I-26 improves accessibility for non-auto travel modes. The grid street system within the catalyst area facilitates pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit and other places within the area.

The preliminary planning level program derived from Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that approximately about 850 residential dwelling units and 1,000,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area.

**Phasing**

While the short-, intermediate-, and long-term phasing within this catalyst area will be dependent on a combination of economic conditions, regulatory policies, capital funding, and free market forces, the following graphics illustrate a general sequence of infill development, redevelopment, and preservation that could occur within the catalyst area, based on community input and the development forms described above. The projects shown are meant to convey a conceptual progression of planned and orderly development within the area, not to dictate future uses or specify time frames for individual private properties. (Note: this is typical for the phasing in all of the catalyst areas).

**Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.5)**
- Promote the Charleston Digital Corridor along Meeting Street and Morrison Drive. (Public/Private)
- Provide community open space to serve the emerging mixed use, including a skate park and multi-use trail. (Public)
- Begin to fill in the street faces with mixed use development. (Public/Private)
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility through sidewalk improvements and the addition of bicycle lanes. Create a link between King Street and Meeting Street along Romney Street. (Public)
- Create a gateway element along Morrison Drive to identify the area and act as an entry feature for I-26 traffic accessing the downtown cruise ship terminal. (Public)

**Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 5.6)**
- Establish transit stops for BRT/LRT routes on Meeting Street at both Brigade and Romney Streets. (Public)
- Continue mixed use development and redevelopment, including civic uses. (Public/Private)
- Begin conversion of strip centers along King Street to mixed uses. (Public/Private)
- Designate additional open space areas to create community focal points recreation opportunities, and serve new residential development. (Public)

**Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.7)**
- Continue development and redevelopment of parcels to complete blocks and improve area connectivity. (Public/Private)
- Create a gateway element on Romney Street east of Morrison Drive to identify the Laurel Island development. (Public/Private)
NORTH OF MOUNT PLEASANT STREET

CONTEXT/SETTING

The North of Mount Pleasant Street catalyst area (see Figure 5.8) is a transitional district. While the southern fringe still contains remnants of the grid street network projecting north from downtown, this residential area soon gives way to commercial and light industrial uses between I-26 and King Street, ending the pattern of street connectivity. The narrow wedge of land between King and Meeting Streets contains railroad tracks and a mix of residential and small commercial lots, while on the east side of Meeting Street, Magnolia Cemetery provides a large open space that buffers some of the Cooper River tributary areas. Large scale industrial operation border Magnolia Cemetery to the north. There are a number of historic structures in this area that should be preserved or redeveloped with appropriate uses.

CATALYST OPPORTUNITIES

With this area envisioned as a transitional district with a mix of both residential and non-residential uses, catalyst opportunities should be oriented towards both residential and public uses to help promote economic opportunity and provide needed community services for the area residents. Accompanying the residential uses should be open space for recreation that is much lacking in this part of the Neck area. There are several vacant or underutilized properties along King Street that could provide development sites and create new neighborhood destinations.

FORM AND DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The center of this catalyst area will be the Meeting/Mount Pleasant intersection; buildings in this area are envisioned as mid-rise (5-7 stories) with higher density uses around a transit core and access points to an extended shared-use path under I-26. This high level of accessibility and connectivity is expected to enhance the prospects for development and spur greater levels of activity in this location. Other areas will be mid-rise (3-5 stories) transitioning down to low-rise (1-3 stories) adjacent to existing uses, especially to the north near open space areas and industrial uses. Another transit stop is planned for Greenleaf Street to enhance accessibility from the north end of the catalyst area to other points along the Neck area’s multimodal spine.

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 400 residential dwelling units and 700,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area. Residential product developed for each phase of the catalyst area transition should include a variety of housing options for low income seniors in the event that the Joseph Floyd Manor is redeveloped in the future for other uses.

PHASING

The following graphics illustrate the transition of uses and broad-brush phasing within this catalyst area:
Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.10)

- Begin to fill in the street face of King Street and Meeting Street with mixed use and light industrial development. (Public/Private)
- Extend the shared-use path (off-road trail) under I-26 to connect existing neighborhood areas and new open spaces. (Public)
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility and access through sidewalk improvements and the addition of bicycle lanes along Meeting Street. (Public)

Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 6.11 and Figure 6.12)

- Establish transit stops for BRT/LRT routes on Meeting Street at Morrison Drive and Greenleaf Road. (Public)
- Redesign the Mount Pleasant Street/Meeting Street intersection to eliminate acute angles and improve traffic flow; create a mixed use core around the intersection. (Public/Private)
- Continue mixed use and light industrial development, as well as community civic uses. Introduce residential products as extensions of existing neighborhoods. (Public/Private)
• Designate open space areas to create community focal points and recreation opportunities and serve new residential development. (Public)

Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.13 thru Figure 5.15)

• Create a mixed use block along Petty Street and Mechanic Street as a pedestrian-oriented gateway entrance into the Magnolia project. (Public/Private)

• Continue development and redevelopment of parcels to complete blocks and improve area connectivity. (Public/Private)

**Stromboli Corridor**

**Context/Setting**

The Stromboli Corridor catalyst area (see Figure 5.16) is a neighborhood center district today. It consists primarily of large lot industrial uses and container storage areas that effectively separate the Five Mile and Windsor neighborhoods between Carner Avenue and Spruill Avenue. The two neighborhoods are included in the LAMC Area Revitalization Plan. There are some residential, commercial and civic uses along the southern (Hampton Avenue) and northern (Jacksonville Road) fringes of the catalyst area, as well as vacant residential lots. Stromboli Avenue is closed between Column Street and Carner Avenue. Park South, an underutilized City of North Charleston recreation facility, is located on the east side of Spruill Avenue between Stromboli Avenue and Jacksonville Road.

**Catalyst Opportunities**

With this area envisioned as a community focal point, services node and area for social gathering and interaction, catalyst opportunities should be oriented towards civic uses such as a community center, workforce training, health care amenities, education facilities and other programs that help promote economic opportunity and prosperity and provide needed community services for neighborhood residents. There are several large underutilized properties along Stromboli Avenue that could serve as community anchors, providing neighborhood destinations and facilitating multimodal connections between the existing residential areas to the north and south.
A Master Plan for the Neck Area of Charleston and North Charleston

Form and Development Concepts

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 300 residential dwelling units and 280,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area, which is consistent with preliminary program numbers for the Stromboli area from the LAMC Final Plan. Non-residential uses as envisioned in this Concept Plan include 150,000 SF of retail; 50,000 SF of office/commercial; and 80,000 SF of institutional.

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 300 residential dwelling units and 250,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area.

Phasing

The following graphics illustrate conceptual phasing for this catalyst area:

Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.17)

- Open Stromboli Avenue between Meeting Street and Spruill Avenue and design it as a “complete street.” (Public)
- Create a gateway element at the Meeting Street/Carner Avenue “Y” intersection at Stromboli Avenue to identify the area. Consider using striped off median areas for an obelisk type identifier. (Public)
- Identify a new community open space on the north side of Stromboli Avenue and create pedestrian connections to existing neighborhoods to the north and south. (Public)
- Promote mixed use development in the areas adjacent to the new community open space. (Public/Private)
- Develop a community center, workforce training, and other civic uses as a community core. (Public/Private)

Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 5.18)

- Develop Park South as a neighborhood park that provides both active recreation areas and a public gathering spaces. (Public)
- Extend Stromboli Avenue to the east of Spruill Avenue in advance of connections to new port area development. Connect to Port Access Road as appropriate. (Public)
- Establish a transit stop for BRT/LRT routes at the Meeting Street/Stromboli Avenue intersection. (Public)
- Continue mixed use development and redevelopment. (Public/Private)

Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.19 thru Figure 5.21)

- Continue mixed use development and redevelopment to complete blocks and the street face. (Public/Private)
**Figure 5.20** shows a view along the existing Stromboli Avenue at Spruill Avenue. **Figure 5.21** is a conceptual depiction of that same intersection illustrating how the elements of a “complete street” can come together to provide a neighborhood supportive mixed use destination that helps unite two neighborhoods as a community focal point.

**Shipwatch Square**

**Context/Setting**

The Shipwatch Square catalyst area (see **Figure 5.21**) is a community core district. Centered along Rivers Avenue/US 52, a major north/south principal arterial roadway running through the peninsula, this area once thrived as a result of growth and military activities at the Charleston Naval Complex and drew people from all parts of the Neck. At the Rivers Avenue/McMillan Avenue intersection, a gateway entrance into the former Naval Complex area, two shopping centers and a hospital facility now sit closed, underutilized, or under demolition. A variety of
small lot commercial uses, residences once used as base housing, and civic/service uses surround the intersection. A small area of light industrial uses backs up to the railroad tracks along Meeting Street from McMillan Avenue to Dorchester Road. The southern portion of the catalyst area is part of the Chicora/Cherokee neighborhood, which is part of LAMC. Reynolds Avenue, another entrance into the former Naval Complex area and a center of retail commerce when the base was in operation, is a neighborhood center that contains some local commercial uses, offices, and several churches along the area between Rivers Avenue and Spruill Avenue.

**Figure 5.22 Shipwatch Square Catalyst Area**

Cosgrove Avenue is planned as a “through route” for freight movement to facilitate truck access to I-26 from the ICTF and industrial zones to the east and southeast. This makes the Cosgrove Avenue/Rivers Avenue intersection another important node in this catalyst area, with proposed uses and redevelopment being primarily non-residential and service oriented. Additionally, the blocks along Rivers Avenue between McMillan Avenue and Cosgrove Avenue become an important corridor connecting these two intersections, with an emphasis on multimodal access, pedestrian safety and comfort. Catalyst development can include mixed uses with ground floor retail uses and upper floor office and/or residential, as well as green spaces.

**Form and Development Concepts**

The Rivers Avenue/McMillan Avenue intersection is the core of this catalyst area and building sizes in this area are envisioned as mid-rise (5-7 stories), similar to that of the existing navy hospital. Development in the core area will capitalize on the regional and local connectivity provided by new transit service: a planned commuter rail station, a planned BRT/LRT station, and an expanded and relocated Super Stop for local bus service. Shipwatch Square will be one of the most connected places in the Neck area. From this core, buildings will transition into mid-rise (3-5 stories) and low-rise (1-3 stories) further back to complement existing uses and neighborhoods. Rivers Avenue is an important freight route within the Neck area, but the Master Plan recommends a number of improvements and actions meant to balance the competing needs of users of this key roadway.

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 500 residential dwelling units and 700,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area.

**Phasing**

Phasing for this important community center is illustrated in the following graphics:

**Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.23 and Figure 5.24)**

- Establish a mixed use core that includes a grocery store and drug store. (Public/Private)
- Provide a community open space to serve the emerging mixed use, as well as adjacent existing neighborhood areas. (Public)
- Realign McMillan Avenue west of Rivers Avenue to make it perpendicular to Meeting Street. Maintain the existing McMillan Avenue right-of-way during this phase. (Public)
- Fill in the street face along Reynolds Avenue. (Public/Private)
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility through sidewalk improvements and the addition of shared lane markings along McMillan Avenue and Dorchester Road. (Public)
### Urban Framework Draft

**Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 5.25 and Figure 5.26)**

- Establish a transit stop for BRT/LRT routes at the Rivers Avenue/McMillan Avenue intersection. (Public)
- Convert excess right of way on Rivers Avenue into non-roadway land and narrow the travel lanes in order to create a multimodal street with transit operating in the right of way. (Public)
- Begin redevelopment of the naval hospital site to mixed uses. (Public/Private)
- Transition McMillan Avenue between Rivers Avenue and Spruill Avenue by reducing lane widths or lanes to become a “complete street” and a “front door” to development in the port area. (Public/Private)
- Remove the existing McMillan Avenue west of Rivers Avenue and incorporate into the emerging gridded street network. (Public)
• Continue mixed use development and redevelopment; design in anticipation of and in accordance with a potential commuter rail station location. (Public/Private)
• Begin conversion of surface parking to parking structures in central locations as development density/intensity increases. (Public/Private)

Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.27 thru Figure 5.30)
• Establish a commuter rail station one block south of the western terminus of realigned McMillan Avenue. (Public)
• Continue development and redevelopment of parcels to complete blocks and improve area connectivity. (Public/Private)
• Designate additional open space areas to create community focal points and recreation opportunities. (Public)
• Operate a loop shuttle from the commuter rail station to development at the naval base.

Figure 5.29 shows a view looking south along Rivers Avenue at McMillan Avenue. Figure 5.30 is a conceptual depiction of that same intersection illustrating how the elements of a “complete street” can come together to transform Rivers Avenue as a transit corridor and central focal point of this catalyst area.

Figure 5.28 Long Term Phasing Plan View – Shipwatch Square Catalyst Area (McMillan Avenue and Rivers Avenue intersection)

Figure 5.29 Long Term Phasing Plan – Existing Rivers Avenue View at McMillan Avenue

Figure 5.30 Long Term Phasing Plan – Conceptual Rivers Avenue View at McMillan Avenue with introduction of transit
Olde North Charleston

Context/Setting

The Olde North Charleston catalyst area (see Figure 5.31) is a neighborhood center district. In the early 20th Century, this portion of North Charleston was laid out, with Park Circle as the center and separate areas designated for residential, commercial, and industrial uses located along streets radiating from that core green space. The catalyst area, situated between the residential lots around Park Circle and the growing industrial uses along the Cooper River, developed as the business district. Montague Avenue and several blocks to the north, primarily between Jenkins Avenue and Virginia Avenue, still function as a neighborhood commercial core, with residential and civic uses to the north and south. North Charleston High School and accompanying athletic fields, as well as CSX railroad tracks, are located west of Jenkins Avenue and industrial uses are located east of Virginia Avenue along the river. There is a large vacant parcel (Garco Property) on the northern portion of the catalyst area east of Chateau Avenue that backs up to a railroad spur.

Catalyst Opportunities

Even though this is an established area with a long and rich history, there are still catalyst opportunities along Montague Avenue that can spur new growth along this main street corridor. There are several vacant parcels that can be developed with a mix of workplace, neighborhood commercial or residential uses that can effectively complete the street face. This new development, along with other underutilized buildings, can introduce vertical mixed uses to expand housing choices and preserve needed goods and services.

Form and Development Concepts

Building sizes in this catalyst area are envisioned to be low-rise (1-3 stories) to match the existing building heights and street face or complement the neighborhood scale. Multimodal accessibility continues to be provided through local bus service, but access by other modes is enhanced by the addition of a planned multi-use trail for pedestrians and bicyclists alongside a reconfigured Virginia Avenue, as well as new sidewalks and bike lanes or sharrows. This roadway is an important “through route” for freight movement, but also will be designed to accommodate non-auto travel in a separated right of way.

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 250 residential dwelling units and 700,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area.

Phasing

The following graphics illustrate a phasing plan for the conceptual development program envisioned for this catalyst area:

- **Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.32)**
  - Provide a connection for public access to the Cooper River. (Public/Private)
  - Redesign the Virginia Avenue roadway cross section to provide separate travel routes for local and freight traffic, as well as create a shared-use path for pedestrian and bicycle use. (Public)
  - Develop vacant parcels along Montague Avenue to complete the street face. (Public/Private)
  - Begin development of the GARCO parcel as a continuation of existing
neighborhood areas; provide community open space. (Private)

Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 5.33)

- Expand the Montague Avenue retail district north along Ohear Avenue and Chateau Avenue to connect to development on the GARCO parcel. (Public/Private)
- Establish a transit stop for BRT/LRT routes at Virginia Avenue and Montague Avenue intersection. (Public)
- Begin redevelopment of existing parcels to complement the emerging mixed use character of the area. (Public/Private)
- Continue development of the GARCO parcel and begin to establish a street face along Virginia Avenue. (Private)

Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.34 thru Figure 5.36)

- Create community open space and a focal point as the terminus to Montague Avenue. (Public)
- Continue development and redevelopment of parcels to complete blocks and improve area connectivity. (Public/Private)
- Select centrally located parcels to develop parking structures. (Public)
Urban Framework

Figure 5.35 and Figure 5.36 show a redesigned Virginia Avenue looking north at Montague Avenue. The redesign shows that Virginia Avenue becomes divided into two roadways through this area. The eastern roadway (closest to the Cooper River) becomes a primary mover of freight and the western roadway becomes a local access road for the Olde North Charleston downtown area. There is a multi-use trail in the wide median that is buffered from the CSX railroad tracks.

Figure 5.35 Long Term Phasing Sketch – Olde North Charleston Catalyst Area along Virginia Avenue

Figure 5.36 Long Term Phasing View – Olde North Charleston Catalyst Area along Virginia Avenue

Amtrak Station

Context/Setting

The Amtrak Station catalyst area (see Figure 5.37) is a neighborhood district. Located off Rivers Avenue just north of Durant Avenue, this area is bordered to the north by the Liberty Hill LAMC neighborhood, which is part of LAMC; to the east by the Mixson development, a new New Urbanist development planned to include residential units, shops, and civic spaces; and to the west by CSX railroad tracks used by Amtrak’s Silver Meteor service. The historic train station and adjacent parking areas anchor the area, which also includes light industrial, commercial, and civic uses. Gaynor Street connects the catalyst area to Montague Avenue on the north and Rivers Avenue and Durant Avenue on the south.

Figure 5.37 Amtrak Station Catalyst Area

Catalyst Opportunities

With the upcoming planned relocation of Amtrak service to the new Intermodal Station, preservation of the existing historic train station site can serve as a catalyst opportunity. The structure itself can be renovated to provide much needed community meeting space, as well as office space to be used as business incubators. The outside areas, now used for parking and loading, can be converted to green spaces that can be utilized for community events and recreation, helping integrate this area into the fabric of the Liberty Hill neighborhood and reduce high speed cut-through traffic. The site would continue under ownership by CSX, and would be leased for its new purposes with separation from the rail tracks, which will remain active for freight traffic.
There has been some discussion about moving the proposed Intermodal Station from its current location near the Dorchester Road/Montague Avenue intersection to the existing Amtrak station site. In the event this happens, it clearly becomes the catalyst that drives redevelopment of this area. The mix of non-residential uses shifts from neighborhood—oriented to community-oriented that provides the retail services and amenities needed by commuters and travelers. The look and feel of the Rivers Avenue/Durant Avenue intersection and adjacent area changes since the catalyst area is now a regional gateway instead of a neighborhood center and roadway modifications may be needed to accommodate the expanded variety of transportation services that will be accessing the area. Existing neighborhood uses would need to be buffered from the impacts of the additional vehicular activities.

**Form and Development Concepts**

Building sizes in this catalyst area should be low-rise (1-3 stories) to complement the historic Amtrak station, not overpower it. This should also complement the adjacent Mixson development. However, due to the difference in elevation between Gaynor Street and Rivers Avenue, some mid-rise buildings (3-5 stories) may be needed to provide visibility and focal points. Rivers Avenue provides accessibility to the rest of the Neck area and points beyond through enhanced bus service, while improvements in local connectivity enhance the circulation between the catalyst area and the neighborhoods that surround it. The history and potential prominence of this area as a rail gateway to the Neck area can be an anchor for redevelopment.

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 400 residential dwelling units and 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area.

**Phasing**

Conceptual phasing that illustrates a transition of uses within the catalyst area is shown on the next page:

**Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.38)**

- Convert the Amtrak station to community meeting spaces and office incubator uses. (Public/Private)
- Create open space next to the station for community events. (Public)
- Provide connections from the station area, particularly open space areas, to the Felix Pinckney Community Center. (Public/Private)
- Begin mixed use development in areas adjacent to the station. (Public/Private)
- Develop a gateway element at the Rivers Avenue/Durant Avenue intersection to highlight and identify the area. (Public)
- Design crossing enhancements to make the Rivers Avenue/Durant Avenue intersection more pedestrian friendly. (Public)
- Realign Gaynor Street to reduce neighborhood cut-through traffic between Montague Avenue and Durant Avenue. (Public/Private)
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility through sidewalk improvements and the addition of bicycle lanes along Rivers Avenue and shared lane markings along Durant Avenue. (Public)

**Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 5.39)**

- Create multimodal access between the station area and adjacent Mixson development. (Public/Private)
- Establish a transit stop for BRT/LRT routes at the Rivers Avenue/Durant Avenue intersection. (Public)
- Continue mixed use development. (Public/Private)
- Begin redevelopment of uses around the Rivers Avenue/Durant Avenue intersection. (Private)

**Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.40)**

- Continue mixed use development and redevelopment to complete blocks and the street face. (Public/Private)

Given the multi-million dollar funding shortfall in CARTA’s plan to relocate the Amtrak station to the planned Intermodal Center on West Montague Avenue, it is possible that the Amtrak facility could remain and be incorporated as part of an Intermodal Center at this location, creating a more attractive use within the...
Urban Framework

- Surface parking located to transition to structured parking
- Amtrak Station redesigned and enlarged
- Residential uses integrated into vertical mixed use
- Central green removed
- Adjacent areas are still connected, but are more buffered
- Traffic patterns revised

Community while retaining and exhibiting its historic character and significance. In order for the catalyst area plan to accommodate the Intermodal Center, several adjustments would be needed that differ from the long term phasing plan shown in Figure 6.40. These development elements are illustrated in Figure 6.41 and are summarized as follows:

Context/Setting

The Mall Drive catalyst area (see Figure 5.42) is a regional district. I-26, a regional roadway that not only serves the Neck peninsula but ties the Charleston area to I-95 and the eastern seaboard, bisects the catalyst area and intersects with I-526 directly to the north. Rivers Avenue, Montague Avenue, and International Boulevard, each with exits from either I-26 or I-526 providing direct access to major area roadways, create the framework for this area. The western portion of the catalyst area, framed by International Boulevard, Montague Avenue, I-26, and I-526 and sitting directly north of the Convention Center campus, is primarily a commercial district with small lot and big box retail, hotels, and restaurants. The eastern portion of the catalyst area, loosely framed by Rivers Avenue, Montague Avenue, I-26 and I-526 with railroad tracks bisecting the area, consists of a mix of civic, commercial, and light industrial uses, including the City of North Charleston Municipal Complex.
Catalyst Opportunities

The Mall Drive area is the centerpiece of a much larger area dubbed the “Gateway Entertainment District” that encompasses the Charleston International Airport, the Coliseum, the planned Intermodal Center, Tanger Outlet Center, hotel accommodations, restaurants and North Charleston City Hall. With its regional visibility, this area presents significant opportunity to become an urban center of the region, with offices, retail, multifamily residential and related uses functioning as a well-connected district. Aviation flight path restrictions will likely keep building heights to a modest level, but there is the opportunity for substantial infill of parking areas and vacant parcels to create a true regional center of North Charleston.

There are two areas for catalyst opportunities. The first is to begin mixed use development in the North Charleston City Hall area, designed around a future location for a commuter rail station. This will not only begin a conversion from larger commercial uses with vast areas of surface parking to a more pedestrian-scaled environment, but also begin development of the mixed use core and density/intensity needed for the commuter rail stop that utilizes multimodal transportation systems and encourages a live, work, play environment. The second catalyst opportunity is located just north of the first area, where the former North Charleston City Council building sits empty. This site occupies a prominent location along Mall Drive and an adjacency to the future commuter rail station, positioning itself nicely to actively participate in the transformation of this core area.

Form and Development Concepts

Building sizes in the North Charleston City Hall area are envisioned to be mid-rise (3-5 stories), with higher elevations around the commuter rail transit core. In the Tanger Outlet area, buildings will low-rise (1-3 stories), with some mid-rise (3-5 stories) as focal points. Along Rivers Avenue and Montague Avenue, buildings will be low-rise (1-3 stories) transitioning into existing neighborhoods. Connectivity within the catalyst area will be enhanced by a new circulator street that essentially extends Mall Drive across I-26, uniting the two halves of the area. The regional access and visibility provided by I-26 and Rivers Avenue, combined with airport proximity and rail transit access, can make this catalyst area a prime target for future redevelopment.

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 2,000,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area.

Phasing

The following graphics illustrate a conceptual phasing strategy for this catalyst area:

Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.43)
- Enhance the North Charleston City Hall area with new mixed use development; design in anticipation of and in accordance with the potential commuter rail station location. (Public/Private)
- Realign Mall Drive and create a connection to Center Pointe Drive with a new bridge over I-526 to function as a multimodal “complete street” parallel to Montague Avenue. The street/bridge would be designed to function as a lower speed two-lane roadway (25-30 mph) unifying the City Hall area with Tanger Outlets and providing an important connectivity option that will help ease travel demand on Montague and the interchange merge area. (Public)
- Develop mixed uses along Center Pointe Drive to begin establishment of a street face. (Public/Private)
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility through sidewalk improvements and the addition of bicycle lanes and shared lane markings along Montague Avenue and shared lane markings along Mall Drive. (Public)

Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 5.44)
- Continue development of mixed uses in the Mall Drive and Center Pointe Drive areas and include light industrial redevelopment north of Mall Drive. Begin conversion of surface parking to structured parking. (Public/Private)
- Establish a transit stop for BRT/LRT routes at Rivers Avenue/Mall Drive intersection. (Public)
Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.45 thru Figure 5.47)

- Continue mixed use development and redevelopment in all areas to complete blocks and improve area connectivity. (Public/Private)
- Continue conversion of surface parking to centrally located parking structures. (Public/Private)
- Establish a commuter rail station. (Public)

• Begin mixed use development around the Rivers Avenue/Montague Avenue intersection. (Public/Private)
• Redesign the Rivers Avenue/Montague Avenue intersection to a roundabout configuration to improve traffic flow. (Public)
The Convention Center catalyst area (see Figure 5.48) is planned to function as a regional gateway. I-526 bisects this land and connects with I-26 about one mile to the east. With three exits from I-526 and one exit from I-26 providing direct access to major area roadways, this gateway district is easily accessible from all parts of greater Charleston as well as regional destinations. The Charleston International Airport and Boeing manufacturing plant are located directly to the north and west and are major economic drivers that influence this catalyst area. The North Charleston Coliseum, Performing Arts Center, Charleston Area Convention Center, and surrounding hotels and commercial form a campus-style core in the western portion of the area that serves as a regional draw. The proposed Intermodal Station, under early stages of infrastructure development, is located in the eastern portion of the area, accessible by both road and rail.

Catalyst Opportunities

The catalyst opportunity that will help start development and redevelopment in this area is construction of the Intermodal Station. The completion of this facility will not only bring a variety of users to this area, both those commuting locally and those coming in from all points via express bus service on Dorchester Road and I-26, Amtrak, Greyhound, or the Charleston International Airport, but adjacent properties will likely develop in response to the assortment of amenities and retail services associated with these users. This project sets the tone for the entire catalyst area and begins the transformation to a mixed use regional gateway.

There has been some discussion about moving the Intermodal Station from this location to the Amtrak Station catalyst area. In the event this happens, the Intermodal Station site can be used as an employment core without changing the basic configuration and phasing concepts shown for this catalyst area.

Form and Development Concepts

Building sizes in the western portion of the catalyst area (west of I-526) are envisioned as low-rise (1-3 stories) that transition into existing neighborhoods, with mid-rise buildings (3-5 stories) around the Intermodal Station core area. In the eastern portion of the catalyst area (east of I-526), buildings are envisioned as mid-rise (3-7 stories), complementing the mass and height of the Coliseum complex. This portion of the catalyst area will benefit from connectivity to the Mall Drive area via a new circulator shuttle bus system along the extended Centre Pointe Drive across I-26 to Mall Drive. This will link the Intermodal Station area to the regional accessibility provided by the new commuter rail and BRT/LRT transit systems running along the Neck’s multimodal spine.

The preliminary planning level program derived from the Long Term Phasing Concept Plan shows that about 450 residential dwelling units and 2,000,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed in this catalyst area.
**Phasing**

A strategy for the phasing of development and redevelopment in this catalyst area is illustrated below:

**Short Term Phasing / 1 to 5 Years (see Figure 5.49)**
- Design the Intermodal Station and create adjacent mixed uses and a parking structure. (Public)
- Begin mixed use development along a realigned Montague Avenue near the Intermodal Station, including the connection between Montague Avenue and Dorchester Avenue. (Public/Private)
- Create a plaza and open space area as an entry feature to the Convention Center campus; convert adjacent surface parking lot to structured parking and line with mixed uses facing plaza. (Public/Private)
- Fill in the street face on Montague Avenue and International Boulevard adjacent to the Convention Center campus. (Private)
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility through sidewalk improvements and the addition of bicycle lanes. (Public)

![Convention Center - Short Term Plan](image)

**Intermediate Term Phasing / 6 to 10 Years (see Figure 5.50)**
- Develop a mixed use core in the area around the Intermodal Center, including a variety of attached housing options. (Public/Private)
- Add structured parking in central locations in the Intermodal Station area. (Public/Private)

![Convention Center - Intermediate Term Plan](image)

**Long Term Phasing / 10+ Years (see Figure 5.51)**
- Continue development and redevelopment of parcels to complete blocks and improve area connectivity. (Public/Private)
- Extend Center Pointe Drive north of the Convention Center campus, create a new bridge over I-26, and tie into Montague Avenue. Create new vehicular entryways and pedestrian pathways into the North Charleston Coliseum. (Public/Private)
- Establish a transit stop on Center Pointe Drive between Montague Avenue and I-526 for BRT/LRT routes. (Public)
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

GENERAL

One of the challenges to advancing catalyst areas as envisioned in this Master Plan is the consideration of environmental conditions in the project area that have come about through decades of urbanization and commercial activity on the peninsula. These conditions may affect the ability to develop or redevelop a site or larger area or it may be the cause of a decrease in the health and quality of life for residents. Environmental sustainability is one of the important components of a revitalized Neck area.

Environmental sustainability covers a host of practices, but as related to this project will include planning scale measures that will contribute to an increase in the health of ecological systems and the corresponding quality of the environment on a long term basis. These measures are meant to improve the overall health, safety, and quality of life for residents of the Neck and further the vision and goals of this project. Environmental improvements, while evaluated on a project by project basis, should consider these larger area-wide practices:

TRANSFORM BROWNFIELD SITES

Brownfields are properties that are contaminated, or thought to be contaminated, by a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. While most brownfields in the Neck area exist in the industrial areas, some also exist in residential areas such as Park Circle on lands that once housed commercial ventures such as gas stations, dry cleaners, auto body shops, or other businesses that utilized pollutants.

While remediation measures vary based on the individual site conditions and proposed reuse, most pollution at brownfield sites is generally considered low grade that is able to be cleaned up. Contaminants most commonly discovered include solvents, pesticides, fuels, asbestos, and lead.

Brownfield property clean up promotes economic development, community reinvestment, and frees previously unavailable land for productive reuse such as new development, recreational use, or natural areas, while protecting the environment, reducing blight, utilizing existing infrastructure, and taking development pressures off undeveloped greenfield land.

IMPROVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In urban conditions such as the Neck area, where much of the land has been cleared, developed or paved, stormwater runoff contains oil, gasoline, pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals. Conventional stormwater management systems allow this polluted runoff to spill off impervious areas into stormwater drains, then directly into surrounding bodies of water. In addition, frequent flooding often results when these systems fail to drain water efficiently or are undersized or poorly maintained.

While it is not possible to restore or even recreate the original hydrology of the peninsula watershed, incorporation of natural drainage systems based on sound ecological principles can reduce stress on existing stormwater management systems. These systems capture and filter polluted runoff by mimicking natural drainage patterns and function, improving water quality, reducing the rate and volume of runoff, and reducing flooding.

Low Impact Development techniques act as natural filters for stormwater retention.

Implementation of these principles can be accomplished through an approach called “low impact development” or LID. The goal of LID site planning and design is to allow for development while still maintaining the essential site hydrological functions. Stormwater is dispersed instead of concentrating the flow in a few locations, slowing the rate at which water moves through the watershed and allowing infiltration and evaporation to occur. This reduces the total volume of surface water leaving the site, permits natural processes time to remove contaminants from the water, and results in smaller conveyance systems.
Common LID techniques include pervious pavement, vegetated swales and buffers, rain gardens and bioretention, impervious surface reduction and disconnection, rain barrels and cisterns, and disconnection of building downspouts from underground piping. By integrating these techniques into streetscapes, parking lots, open spaces, and parks, natural drainage systems become part of the community fabric, creating opportunities for awareness, education, and placemaking.

**Expand Natural Land Areas**

There has been a significant loss of natural land areas over the years due to development pressure and infrastructure operations. These losses in the green network have resulted in degradation of the varied environmental systems interwoven throughout the Neck area.

Stormwater runoff from roads, roofs, and parking lots has not only caused downstream flooding, but has impacted water quality, altered seasonal water table levels, and caused fluctuation of water temperature and oxygen levels in wetlands and tidal systems, all of which have adversely stressed ecosystem health. The loss of vegetative cover has harmed air quality, reduced the amount of shade, and contributed to the urban heat island effect.

Water pollution can be reduced through the use of natural land areas, which act as bio-filters, removing pollutants before they enter waterways and groundwater. They also act as flood control measures, absorbing and gradually releasing water from rain, and as buffers that help protect vital species habitat. Tree and shrub roots stabilize the soil, hold nutrients in the land, and prevent erosion control problems that lead to sedimentation. Leaves utilize carbon dioxide and dispose of oxygen, improving the overall air quality in the community.

**Implement Buffering**

There are many places within the Neck area where neighborhoods sit adjacent to commercial or industrial sites, as well as along rail and freight traffic corridors. The noise, light, pollution, and negative visual aesthetic of these intensive uses reduce the quality of life for residents in the neighborhoods.

While some impact reduction can be accomplished during redevelopment through site planning, architectural design, and construction techniques, the proximity of these incompatible areas will generally require the construction of buffers. A network of continuous buffers can help shield these uses from view and mitigate their negative impacts. By removing the source from view, the awareness of and level of annoyance is often reduced.

Buffer types can include berms, vegetation, walls and fences, and combinations of these materials. The choice of a particular alternative depends on considerations of space, cost, safety, aesthetics, and the level of buffering desired. The effectiveness of a buffer is dependent on a number of variables, including the mass and height of the buffer, and its location and distance between the source and receiver. The buffer should be long and continuous to prevent sounds from passing around the ends. It should be solid, with few breaks, and strong and flexible enough to withstand wind pressure.

Berms are long mounds of earth that can range in height from five to thirty feet. The higher the berm, the more land is required for its construction and stability. Because of the amount of land required, a berm may not always be a practical buffer solution in urban areas or areas where space is limited.

Vegetative buffers, such as the one shown in the accompanying illustration, should consist of both canopy trees and shrubs planted in a dense, thick strip that is
visually opaque. Evergreen species should be used to provide year-round cover. Time must be allowed after planting to allow vegetation to attain their desired mature heights and spreads.

Walls and fences not only provide visual and acoustical separation, but prevent access in undesired locations. The vertical construction and minimal width makes their use as buffers feasible in areas where space is limited.

In many circumstances, combinations of the above listed buffers are desirable. For instance, plantings can provide vertical blocking of views, allowing a lower height wall or berm to be designed. In addition to providing attenuation, the plantings provide increased visual appeal and seasonal interest.

The inclusion and consideration of buffering in this section is to illustrate a wide range of possible alternatives which should be considered in future planning processes. Figure 5.52 indicates areas where buffer treatments are recommended. Improvements will likely be made within public rights-of-way, but partnerships may be pursued with key property owners to create more detailed buffering strategies.

Vegetative buffers can reduce unwanted sights and noise and improve air quality.
OPEN SPACE NETWORK

GENERAL

Open space is one of the central organizing features of the Neck area and the Partnership for Prosperity Master Plan. The overarching goal is to distribute a connected series of open spaces and active recreation uses throughout the study area and make them accessible to all people. In addition to offering resource protection and preservation while meeting the passive and active recreational needs of the residents, open space provides a structure that helps organize and define each neighborhood, as well as provide gathering places and opportunities for interaction within the community.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

While this visioning effort does not attempt to duplicate the depth of analysis that would normally be done as part of a comprehensive open space facilities study, this Master Plan effort considered two major areas as part of a comprehensive strategy to improve access to recreational opportunities for all residents of the Neck area.

First, the Master Plan took into account issues raised by the community during focus group meetings and public workshops. Those needs as communicated included:

• Protection and restoration of wetland habitats;
• A community center in the southern portion of the study area;
• A park in the southern portion of the study area;
• Water access to both the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, including parks, trails, and piers;
• Better utilization of Park South as a recreational amenity;
• Creation of green spaces in the LAMC neighborhoods, and
• Parks and trails that tie into the waterfront park.

Second, planning efforts considered guidelines set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to determine baselines for the adequacy of existing supply of park facilities and the need for additional facilities for specific types of facilities as detailed below.

PROPOSED OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Open space fulfills many different functions within the Neck area and the Master Plan includes a hierarchy of uses that provide multiple recreation opportunities in a variety of settings. Open space planning has been integrated into the project in order to effectively and adequately provides these important community benefits. Different site designs are appropriate for different areas in the project and the actual size and configuration of the open spaces should be based on the land area needed to accommodate the desired uses, as well as any policy and code requirements.

The natural and developed open space categories described below serve as a guide in the organization of the green network for this visioning effort. In order to provide a meaningful system of open spaces that maximize the benefits of these lands, planning should allow flexibility and creativity within the site and facility design processes. It should be responsive to the needs of the community, both now and in the future, and create quality experiences that improve the well being of both residents and visitors. Figure 5.53 shows the overall Open Space Network for the Neck area.

NATURAL OPEN SPACE AREAS

The rivers on either side of the Neck area provide a number of open space opportunities.

Natural open space areas consist of landscape set aside for the purpose of preservation or conservation of natural resources, natural features, buffering, or scenic/aesthetic values. This classification may include the following open space categories:

PRESENCE

Description: A preserve is open space that protects endangered species, critical environmental features, connected wetlands, flood plains, river systems, or other natural resources.
Approximate Size: varies.

Planning Considerations: Because these areas serve a preservation function, development should be limited. Access, where allowed and provided, may include boardwalks, piers, trails, minor trailheads, educational features and site furnishings.

**RECREATIONAL TRAIL**

Description: For the purposes of these open space guidelines, trails for recreational uses include off-road multi-use trails only. On-street facilities are included in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network plan (see Chapter 6). Trails tie open space components together to form a cohesive overall system with uninterrupted and safe pedestrian and bicycle movement. They provide linkages among neighborhoods, parks, schools, transit facilities and commercial areas.

Approximate Size: length varies and trail width is generally 8’ or greater.

Planning Considerations: trails can be paved and/or unpaved surfaces, with limited trailhead parking, restrooms, picnic areas and site furnishings where appropriate.

**DEVELOPED OPEN SPACE AREAS**

Developed open space areas consist of enhanced or developed landscape set aside for the purpose of active or passive recreation. This classification may require improvements necessary to accommodate and promote higher levels of use and may include the following open space categories:

**GREENWAY**

Description: A greenway is a linear area that typically follows natural features such as wetlands or water. It serves as a transition between urban development and...
natural systems and is usually a combination of natural vegetation and landscaped or regularly maintained areas. Ideally, a greenway should provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to other open spaces in a larger green system or to destinations.

Approximate Size: varies.

Planning Considerations: A greenway should be designed for passive and unstructured active recreation. Improvements to the greenway may consist of paths, benches, landscaping and site furnishings. A road along one side of a greenway is encouraged. If access to a greenway is not continuous, frequent access points should be provided.

**GREEN**

Description: a green is an open space available for unstructured recreation, with landscaping consisting of grassy areas and trees.

Approximate Size and Service Area: varies.

Planning Considerations: A green should be designed for passive and unstructured active recreation. Improvements may consist of paths, benches, landscaping and site furnishings.

**COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Description: a community garden is space specifically programmed for gardening. It should be located in the center of a neighborhood to provide convenient and safe access. Many times it is included in pocket parks and neighborhood parks. Gardens can be a valued asset in urban areas where residential yards are often small or rare.

Approximate Size: typically up to one acre, but can be larger in appropriate locations.

Approximate Service Area: varies.

Planning Considerations: Gardens should be located on agriculturally suited ground that receives adequate sunlight for the intended growing purpose. They should not be located in prominent areas where they may detract from the aesthetics of the open space.

**GATEWAY PARK**

Description: A gateway park is a formal delineation of a neighborhood, district or feature entrance consisting of landscaping and monumentation. It creates area identity and can provide passive recreation opportunities.

Approximate Size: typically up to ½ acre.

Planning Considerations: The gateway should include unique signage identifying the area or feature, but should be designed within the overall visual identity, culture, and character of the Neck area, integrating elements of the overall wayfinding system as well. A gateway park is often a good location for display of public art.

**PLAYGROUND**

Description: A playground is designed to provide both active and passive uses, with distinct play areas for preschool (ages 2-5) and/or school age children (ages 5-12) and informal recreation for all ages. It is often located adjacent to an elementary school.

Approximate Size: typically up to 1 acre.

Approximate Service Area: ¼ to ½ mile radius.

Planning Considerations: playground design should generally follow the playspace development model, which delineates specific areas as follows: adult/caregiver area, an imaginative/creative play area, an active non-structured play area and an active equipment-based play area.

**POCKET PARK**

Description: Pocket parks are small and frequent, generally with passive recreation that ensures walkable green space access for all residents. They may contain specialized facilities that serve a limited population or group.

Approximate Size: typically up to 1 acre.

Approximate Service Area: ¼ mile radius.

Planning Considerations: pocket parks contain limited amenities such as a picnic area, small hard court game surface or half court basketball and site furnishings.
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Description: Neighborhood parks are the basic units of the Neck area open space system and serve as the recreational and social focus of each neighborhood. Parks should accommodate a wide variety of age and user groups, including children, adults, seniors and special populations, with a focus on both informal active and passive uses. It should be centrally located within the neighborhood, usually in the neighborhood center. Frequently the park will be located adjacent to a civic use. Neighborhood parks should emphasize convenient and safe access by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Approximate Size: ½ to 10 acres.

Approximate Service Area: ½ mile radius.

Planning Considerations: Facilities commonly found in neighborhood parks include playgrounds, picnic areas/shelters, non-lighted play fields, open play areas for informal activities, sports courts, limited parking (parking should be provided on street or shared with school lots), restrooms and site furnishings.

COMMUNITY PARK

Description: The focus of community parks is on the recreational needs of multiple neighborhoods, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open space features. They allow for group activities and offer recreational opportunities not feasible at the neighborhood level. They should be developed for both active and passive activities and serve two or more neighborhoods. Community parks are intentionally located on or near framework streets with the intent of minimizing the impact of organized recreational activities on neighborhood residences.

Approximate Size: 20+ acres.

Approximate Service Area: 2 mile radius.

Planning Considerations: Facilities commonly found in community parks include such facilities as lighted athletic fields, indoor recreational facilities, sport courts, concessions, picnic areas/shelters, playgrounds, open play areas for informal activities or civic activities, skate park, parking (size to avoid spillover into adjacent residential areas), restrooms and site furnishings.

PLAZA

Description: A plaza is open space usually set aside for civic purposes or commercial activity, with landscaping including pavement and formal tree plantings. A plaza is usually bordered by civic or private buildings. Plazas may range from very active places with adjacent complementary uses such as restaurants and cafes to quiet areas with only seating, formal landscape plantings and amenities such as fountains or public art.

Approximate Size: ¼ to 2 acres.

Approximate Service Area: ¼ to ½ mile.

Planning Considerations: plazas are usually spatially defined by building frontages.

SQUARE

Description: A square is generally set aside for civic purposes, with landscaping consisting of paved walks, lawns, trees, and/or civic structures. It may encompass an entire block. A square is bordered by streets and may have major civic uses located on or adjacent to it. A neighborhood square is intended as a central place for the community and should accommodate a wide variety of formal and informal gatherings.

Approximate Size: ½ to 5 acres.

Approximate Service Area: ¼ to ½ mile.

Planning Considerations: squares often serve to terminate a vista.

SPECIAL USE AREA

Description: The Special Use classification covers a broad range of recreation facilities oriented toward a single-purpose use. They fall into three general categories — cultural facilities (historical or educational), indoor facilities (community center), and unique athletic sites (golf course, marina or specialized fields).

Approximate Size: varies.

Planning Considerations: Special Use facilities should be developed to maximize their intended use. They generally do not include the same scale of...
activities as those found in other open space areas of the project.

**Recommended Master Plan Open Space Improvements**

Based on existing facilities and the proposed NRPA level of service guidelines, the existing Neck area open space system is not meeting the needs of the community. Comments from the community during the visioning process reinforce this fact.

Over the next two decades, the demand for open space and recreational facilities will increase as the population grows and development intensities increase. While it should be anticipated that new developments will contribute to the open space system by providing appropriate land and facilities, a more broad-brushed approach is needed to ensure adequate coverage of open space over the entire Neck area that provides a variety of recreational opportunities for all residents. The following recommendations will help fill gaps in the existing and projected open space system, as well as enhance the natural environment of the Neck area:

**Preserve**

These existing open space areas are located throughout the Neck and are shown as part of the Environmental Network map (see Figure 4.31). Where and when possible, land adjacent to these critical natural areas should be converted to preservation areas through either protection of upland open space, enhancement of existing areas of critical habitat and biodiversity, or restoration of function for degraded wetland or flood plain areas.

**Recreational Trail**

Recreational trails are located throughout the project area and are conceptually indicated on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network map (see Figure 7.17). This network was developed in conjunction with the Open Space Network and helps connect individual elements into a unified system that provides connectivity and access for all residents.

**Greenway**

There are three greenways shown on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network map (see Figure 7.17) that are part of the open space network; these linear systems provide both connections to other open spaces and access to a variety of environmental areas and are located as follows:

- From Park South and the Stromboli Corridor to the Cooper River Marina along Shipyard Creek and Least Term Lane;
- From Rivers Avenue to Riverfront Park along Noisette Creek; and
- From Riverfront Park to Olde North Charleston downtown area along the Cooper River.

**Green**

Greens are scattered throughout the project area and are shown on Figure 6.51, with the intent of providing open space within each neighborhood and catalyst area.

**Community Garden**

The City of North Charleston has begun a pilot program, initiating community gardens at four community centers, three of which are in the project area (Gethsemane, Liberty Hill, and Minor Crosby). They plan to expand this program if the pilot plots are successful.

Community gardens not only provide a connection to the environment, but create a sense of community and provide neighborhood beautification. With a multitude of vacant and damaged or abandoned houses/lots scattered around the project area, there seems to be ample opportunity to create positive involvement, both from neighborhoods and public entities.

The community has indicated the need and desire for a local farmer’s market, with the Amtrak Station catalyst area mentioned as a possible location. A community garden in this area would be a logical complementary use. Additionally, in catalyst areas where more density/intensity is envisioned, community gardens could take the form of rooftop gardens.

**Gateway Park**

Potential gateway locations and their function within a unified wayfinding system are indicated on the Community Identity map (see Figure 6.52). While gateways at major intersections may consist only of a monument element and minimal landscaping, gateways identifying neighborhoods will generally have more space available to incorporate green areas and other displays.

**Playground**

The goal for this type of facility is to create a network of playgrounds accessible within a five minute walk time or approximately a ¼ mile radius. This creates a situation where children have accessible recreation within a short distance of their home and usually without the need to cross a major roadway.
The southern portion of the project area, with Magnolia Cemetery generally as a northern cutoff, has a good network of playground areas. Additional facilities are not anticipated at this time.

The northern portion of the project area, generally the area north of Noisette Creek and east of Rivers Avenue, has a good network of playground areas, especially in the Park Circle area. However, there are facilities gaps, which are detailed as follows:

- Some of the residential areas on the north adjacent to I-526 are not within the five minute walk. However, these areas are within a ten minute walk (about ½ mile), which is acceptable given the numerous recreation opportunities in the area and the absence of major roadway crossings to access those facilities.
- Some of the residential areas north of Noisette Creek near Spruill Avenue are not within the five minute walk. However, these areas are within ten minute walk and the addition of a playground on the Quarterman Park site would close that gap.
- There is a gap in the northern portion of the Ferndale neighborhood, which falls outside of a ten minute walk to any adjacent playground. The addition of a playground on the Ferndale Park site would close that gap.

The western portion of the project area, generally north of Cosgrove Avenue and west of the railroad tracks, has a good network of playground areas in the core of the area, but there are facilities gaps around the periphery, which are detailed as follows:

- Some of the residential areas north of Dorchester Road and adjacent to I-26 near the Garrett Academy are not within the five minute walk. However, these areas are within ten minute walks to multiple playgrounds, which should be acceptable given the established residential character of the area and the absence of major roadway crossings to access those facilities.
- The neighborhood bounded by Cosgrove Avenue, I-26, and railroad tracks is, for purposes of this playground analysis, an isolated area without any facilities. A playground (and small green) could be located in one of what appears to be vacant lots adjacent to the power lines.
- Some of the residential areas north of Azalea Drive and west of I-26 are not within the five minute walk. However, these areas are within ten minute walks to multiple playgrounds and a playground on the southern Ferrara Drive green would close that gap.

The north central portion of the project area, generally north of Cosgrove Avenue, east of the railroad tracks, and south of Noisette Creek, has a good network of playground areas in the northwestern part, but there are facilities gaps, which are detailed as follows:

- It should be assumed that the Noisette project, or similar development on that tract, will provide needed facilities.
- There is a gap outside of a ten minute walk generally centered on the Shipwatch Square area; a playground as part of the catalyst area development will close that gap.

The south central portion of the project area, generally consisting of LAMC neighborhoods, has playgrounds on the northern and southern peripheries, but there are facilities gaps in the central part, which are detailed as follows:

- Some of the residential areas in the Chicora neighborhood near the old tank farm are not within the five minute walk. However, these areas are within a 10 minute walk and the addition of a playground on the tank farm site (in conjunction with a community park as described below) would close that gap.
- Some of the residential areas in the Five Mile neighborhood are not within the five minute walk. However, these areas are within a 10 minute walk and the addition of a playground in the Stromboli Corridor catalyst site (in conjunction with a community center as described below) would close that gap.

Pocket Park

Although pocket parks are not indicated on the Open Space Network map, there is a multitude of vacant and damaged or abandoned houses/lots scattered around the project area that provide ample opportunities to create neighborhood amenities in public/private partnerships.

Neighborhood Park

The goal for this type of open space area is to create a network of facilities that serve as neighborhood focus points, accessible within a 10 minute walk time or approximately a ½ mile radius. Using this service area as a baseline, there is good coverage of neighborhood parks in the project area; however, there are facilities gaps, which are detailed as follows:

- Some of the residential areas west of King Street and north of Mount Pleasant Street are not within the ten minute walk. A neighborhood park is proposed...
as part of the North of Mount Pleasant Street catalyst area to close this gap in service. This also addresses community input for a green space in this area.

- The area around Shipwatch Square is not within a 10 minute walk. A neighborhood park is proposed as part of the Shipwatch Square catalyst area to close this gap in service.
- A neighborhood park is proposed in the Olde North Charleston downtown area as an extension to Montague Avenue. This park not only provides water access, but as described earlier in this section, will eventually connect along the Cooper River to the Riverfront Park as part of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian network.

COMMUNITY PARK

The goal for this type of open space area is to create a network of facilities that serve the active recreation needs of the community, with a two mile radius as the service area. Using this baseline, there is good coverage of community parks in the southern and northern portions of the project area; however, there are facilities gaps in the central portion, which are detailed as follows:

- Residential neighborhoods covering an area generally from Cosgrove Avenue on the north to Haygood Street on the south are outside of the baseline service area. This Master Plan proposes a community park on the Chicora tank farm site, which would close this gap and provide overlapping coverage throughout the project area. This location is consistent with the LAMC master plan, which calls this site the LAMC community’s “central park.”

PLAZA

Plaza areas are an integral part of the mixed use environment and are conceptually shown as part of the catalyst area plans outlined earlier in this section, for example, as shown in the Mall Drive area.

SQUARE

Squares are generally set aside for civic uses. Most of the established residential neighborhoods in the project area contain squares with this civic focus; the catalyst area concept plans outlined earlier in this section show additional areas, for example, as shown in the Shipwatch Square area.

SPECIAL USE AREA

There are a number of existing special use areas within the limits of this project, mainly community centers, but also a variety of single-purpose recreational facilities. Based on community input during this visioning process, the following special use areas are proposed for the Master Plan:

- A community center is proposed as part of the Stromboli Corridor catalyst area. This facility would serve as a core of community services and provide neighborhood recreational needs, both contained within the facility and as a green space connector between Park South and the proposed Chicora tank farm community park.
- A skate park is planned near the intersection of Meeting Street and Huger Street in a triangular open space area under the raised interchange of I-26 and US-17. This addresses community input for recreational space in this area.

WAYFINDING

GENERAL

Wayfinding incorporates branding, signs, maps, and directional devices that tell people where they are, where they want to go, and how they get there. Wayfinding provides direction for people on the move. A successful wayfinding system should provide information for people to:

- Confirm they are at a certain point along a journey;
- Identify their location within an area or space;
- Orient themselves within that area or space;
- Reinforce they are traveling in the correct direction;
- Understand their surroundings and any potential hazards; and
- Identify their destination on arrival.

Successful wayfinding depends on presenting directional information in a logical and orderly manner so that people are not confused by excessive or extraneous data. Determining decision points people will face throughout their journey and identifying the hierarchy of information required at each of those decision points will allow travelers to easily recognize and interpret messages along their journey.

EXISTING ELEMENTS

Although there are several wayfinding elements scattered throughout the project
area, these elements usually promote bypass of the Neck area and direct travelers directly toward the historic downtown or beach areas. Each grouping has its own design and identity; there is no visual connection or unifying set of components between different neighborhoods or areas of the community. Existing wayfinding elements in the Neck area include:

- Directional signage at the Charleston International Airport
- School signage along Montague Avenue
- Event banners at Park Circle
- Brick entry feature at Park Circle
- Olde North Charleston indicator on street signs
- Olde North Charleston “Historic Business District” sign
- Brick entry feature at Navy Yard
- Directional signage and banners at Navy Yard
- “Visitor Center” directional signage along Meeting Street closer to downtown area

**Unified Component System**

The information presented at each decision point in a wayfinding sequence should be supported by a coordinated group of wayfinding components. The components of a complete wayfinding system should include:

**Gateways**

Gateways announce arrival to a general area. They should include not only signage, but other elements of streetscaping and landscaping. Their main purpose is to create a sense of place and boundary. Gateways are often overlooked because they do not direct people to specific locations, but they have the potential to impact perceptions of a particular area. They not only serve as an introduction to the area itself, but to the style, mood, and branding of the area and the primary visual clue to any subsequent wayfinding elements.

**Vehicular Signs** are located at key intersections and along main routes. Their main purpose is vehicular guidance to general areas and larger destinations, but they also function at a pedestrian level as well.

**Destination Signs** can be used as vehicular guidance, but they are primarily used in areas of slower traffic and tend to be more specific and smaller than vehicular signs.

**Parking and Identification Signs** familiarize people with a local area and increase awareness of available facilities and parking resources.

**Pedestrian Signs** make areas more accessible to users while enhancing a sense of place for both residents and visitors alike.

**Kiosks** provide pedestrians with specific information about history, culture, and available goods and services. They orient a user to the surrounding environment. Ideal locations for kiosks are in high traffic areas and at transition points.

**Banners** can be used in groups or individually to announce arrival to an area or promote specific events.

**Branding** should be incorporated into each of the above components to help reinforce community elements within the wayfinding system.

**Opportunities**

Residents and visitors traveling in the Neck area have common wayfinding needs: first – clear, consistent, and timely information about their destination and how to reach it; and second – what to do once they have reached their destination, such as parking locations, drop-off points, or information regarding nearby destinations or departure routes. **Figure 5.54** illustrates points of community identity where gateway elements would help define the area. Additionally, the following opportunities could help development of a comprehensive wayfinding strategy for the Neck area:

**Gateways**

- Design gateway features to identify entries/boundaries of individual neighborhoods and catalyst areas and announce arrival into important areas such as the Convention Center, Charleston International Airport, and Navy Yard. Gateway features should also be considered at exits from I-26 and US-17 that are signed routes to the cruise ship terminals. While we are not suggesting supplementation of that wayfinding system, since there is a steady stream of traffic that utilizes the cruise ship signage routing, it seems advantageous to advertise and reinforce our Neck area presence, especially as catalyst areas grow, instead of being just a pass-through to other areas in Charleston. Gateway features should incorporate components of the unified area wayfinding signage, so visitors can make an association as they encounter subsequent wayfinding elements.

- Evaluate the possibility of incorporating electronic signage into one or more of the gateway elements where information on upcoming events would be useful to residents and visitors. Riverfront Park could be a good location at the present time, but additional opportunities may emerge as catalyst areas develop. Electronic signage has high resolution text and graphic capabilities and is viewable from several hundred feet during...
both day and night. LED technology is also more energy efficient than traditional lighting.

Signage System (General)

- Create a unified set of identification components so that wayfinding signage can be easily recognized. Establish a hierarchy of elements, including such items as type size, font, and number of text lines per sign.
- Use materials and graphic elements that relate to the history of the Neck area. Consider elements that are similar (but distinct) to those used in the downtown Charleston area.
- Consider using multiple icons within the unified set of elements to identify different districts or areas.

Vehicular signs

- Create “trailblazer” signage at the edges of the project area, primarily from I-26 and I-526, but also along major surface roadways such as Rivers Avenue and Meeting Street, to direct vehicles and make other destinations easy to find and navigate within.

Pedestrian signs

- Consider additional informational signs along pedestrian routes to enhance historic and cultural opportunities.
- Evaluate using markers (dates or symbols) to identify architecturally significant buildings.
Destination Signs

• Organize destinations into three classes: primary destinations (generate greatest amount of traffic), secondary destinations (generate less traffic; signage mainly within applicable district), and local destinations (depicted on pedestrian maps only).

Parking Signs

• Create an iconic and easily recognizable “P” symbol (or similar equivalent) on parking signs so they can be easily recognized. Parking facilities should be clearly identified as “public parking”.

Kiosks

• Kiosks should be located at major transit stops and high pedestrian traffic locations such as catalyst areas.
• Evaluate different sign and structure combinations that will contain orientation maps and destination lists.

Banners

• Banner design should match that of vehicular and street signs. Design banners so they can be changed frequently to promote local and seasonal events.

Branding

• Create visual images that define the essence of the Neck area. Explore which images create recognition and how these images could be incorporated into wayfinding elements and other informational devices.

**Urban Framework Summary**

The concepts proposed in the master plan help promote the community values of connectedness, community vitality, environmental health, and economic freedom and foster the types of opportunities needed to revitalize the peninsula and position it for economic prosperity. The Neck area has always been an important part of the region thanks to its location and accessibility, but it now has the opportunity to re-emerge as a revitalized community, desired location, and destination in the Tri-County area.
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