

Item 7 - Correspondence

From: [Paul Grenier](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: feedback on proposed ESS Communities Plan (w. address)
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:01:06 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[Outlook-cid_image0](#)
[2_Careful_Density.pdf](#)
[3_Invest_in_Commercial_Core.pdf](#)
[1_Urban_Systems.pdf](#)
[Heat_Island_Map.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

May 14, 2024

Artie Harris

Chair, Montgomery Planning Board

Dear Artie,

Greetings! I very much hope you are doing well. I am writing in connection with the ESS Communities Plan that has recently gotten under way and which I understand will be discussed at the Planning Board's upcoming meeting on May 16.

The Planning staff responsible for the plan has been kind enough to provide us with a detailed review of the plan as currently conceived. There is much to like and agree with in the plan in its current condition, but with one caveat. Speaking on behalf of the small business community, and specifically the Long Branch Business League, we strongly feel that the geographic area of focus should be somewhat expanded.

More specifically, **we believe the ESS Communities Plan should include the commercial areas along Flower Ave., to include the stores on Flower Ave. from Arliss Street to the Piney Branch intersection, as well as the commercial strips along Piney Branch from Flower Ave. to Arliss Street.** Even though such an expansion would not include all the commercial areas in Long Branch, such a relatively modest geographic expansion would include a great many of Long Branch's legacy and community-serving small businesses. We think such a modest geographic expansion would represent a reasonable compromise with the current plan's scope.

The Plan's current scope, to be sure, does have its own logic, and is supported by reasonable arguments. We were very favorably impressed by the Planning team's desire to focus on areas where the residents have, by and large, lower incomes and/or live in more precarious housing conditions. We also understand that the commercial areas just noted above were already part of the 2013 Sector Plan. However, the world has

changed in some dramatic ways since then, and a new look at this area via a review of the Sector Plan seems to us more than warranted, and for the following reasons:

1. Preservation of the cultural and economic character of Long Branch in keeping with the desire to retain the less economically privileged residents of the area will be very difficult if redevelopment in this core area of commercial Long Branch takes place in a way that is detrimental to the survival of the small businesses *that serve that same population*. This Spring 2024, a group of University of Maryland faculty and graduate students in Urban Planning and Architecture documented the unique character of this commercial area as an integral component of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
2. The 2013 Sector Plan for Long Branch did not ultimately succeed in finding ways to avoid the removal of long-standing locally-owned, community-serving small businesses. Redevelopment could still easily take place in a way that drives them away, and there is a real risk of that happening, especially after the completion of the Purple Line in 2027.
3. While it is true that there is no readymade blueprint, waiting to be implemented, that will guarantee retaining these community-serving and often much-loved small businesses, if the geographic areas indicated are *a priori* excluded from the Planning Department's focus, it will be much more difficult to achieve such goals. I'd like to direct you to samples of the design work created by the University of Maryland group exploring possible futures for Long Branch. The visions range from dense development in the commercial zone to more tactical adaptive re-use investment approaches; however, all approaches emphasize the importance of carefully maintaining the character, familiarity, and accessibility of the commercial zones as part of culturally sustainable development in the residential neighborhoods. (See Long Branch design schemes 1,2,3, attached).
4. We would also encourage the Planning Department to draw inspiration from such relative successes at shaping future development as are available to us from, for example, the neighborhood of Columbia Heights in Washington, D.C. For all the ambiguity of its gains over the years, the Columbia Heights neighborhood nonetheless did manage to beautifully renovate its theater, and did pioneer such principles as protecting a significant amount of new retail space as set aside for affordable, locally-owned businesses. Undoubtedly there are other such real-world 'case studies' from which we can draw lessons. We believe that creative

use of the existing tools in the planning 'tool box' can certainly have a positive impact on shaping future development.

The literature on community economic development suggests that making real progress on complex goals of this sort depends on getting a good cross-section of the neighborhood involved in a constructive, ongoing conversation. We are delighted that the Planning Department in this county is so open to having such a conversation. The inclusion of the business community, owners, and local government in such a conversation opens up exciting possibilities for re-imagining how community planning can work. In that same vein, our 'conversation' about Long Branch has already benefited greatly from a semester-long study of Long Branch just completed by the faculty and students at the University of Maryland graduate school of architecture school (see bullet point no. 3, above, and attachments).

We believe it would be highly beneficial for the success of the entire Long Branch community to incorporate the indicated (hi-lighted) portions of the central business district of Long Branch into the action area of the ESS Communities Plan.

Sincerely,

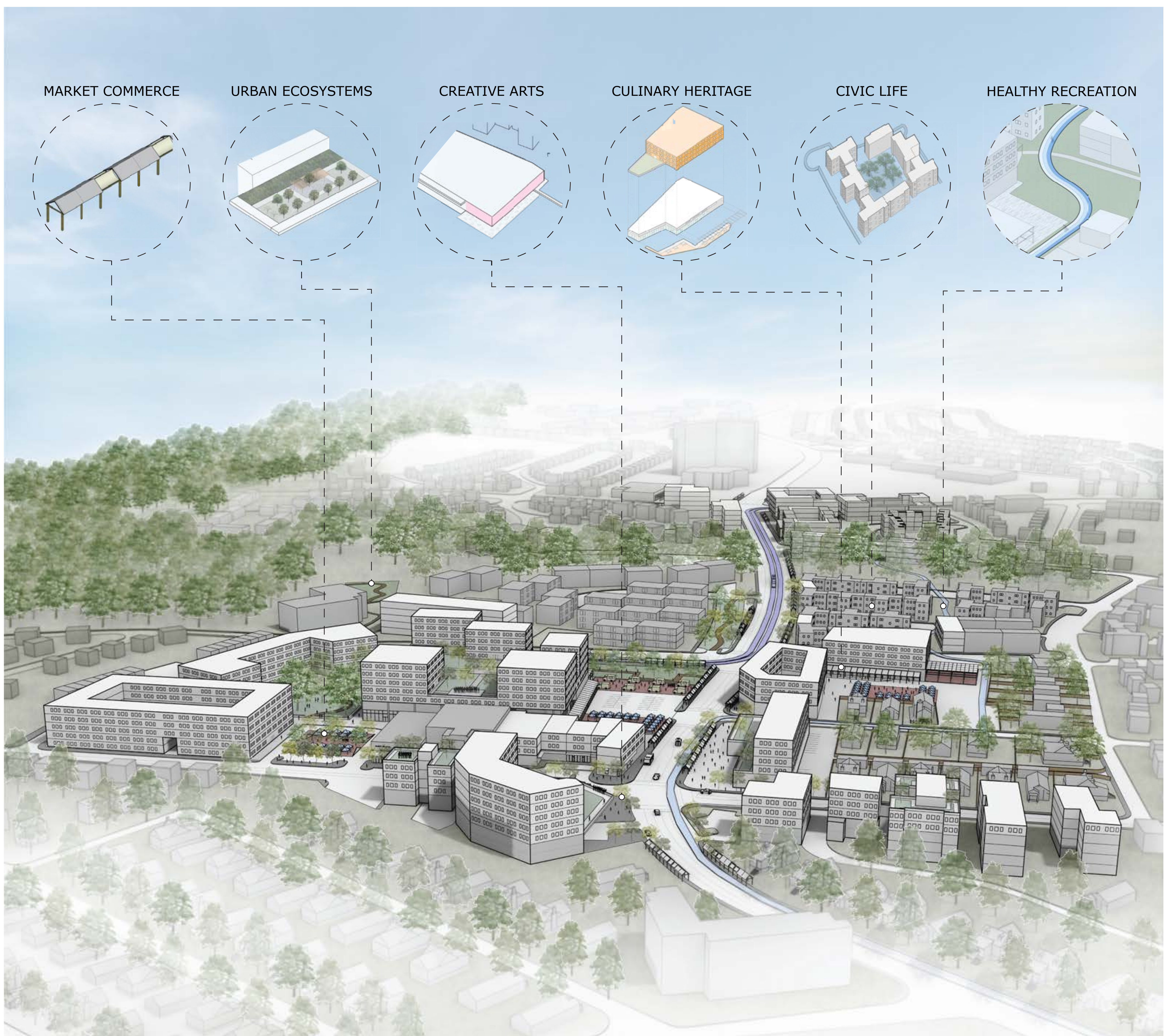
Paul

Paul Grenier
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Admin, Long Branch Business League
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Silver Spring, MD 20904
301.812.4141 | 301.622.2800 F 301 502 7184 cell
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Aerial Perspective Looking East



Phase 1 Master Plan



Phase 2 Master Plan



Phase 3 Master Plan

LONG BRANCH FUTURES: Investing in Market Commerce, Urban Ecosystems, Creative Arts, Culinary Heritage, Civic Life, and Healthy Recreation

ADREANA HAMMOND, ALEC HOWERTON, BYRON DE LA CRUZ, DONATO JIMENEZ, MATTHEW WATKINS, TSIGEMARIAM TILAYE

PROFESSOR VANDERGoot
05/08/2024



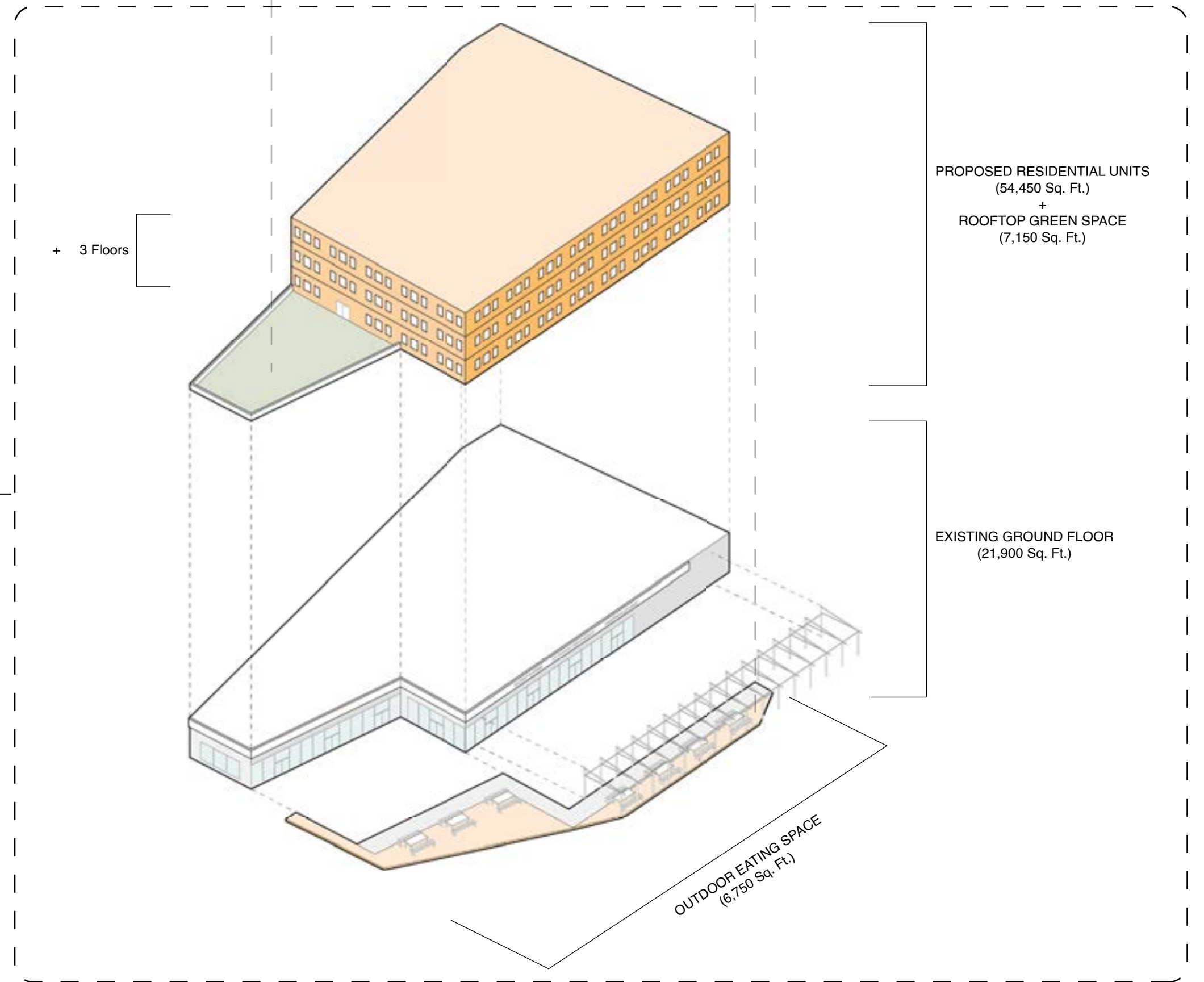
The Long Branch Futures urban plan prioritizes six Urban Systems that are important for sustaining the existing cultures in Long Branch: 1) Spaces for Market-Life 2) Place-based Ecologies 3) Creative Expressions 4) Public Food Cultures as Part of Street Life 5) Semi-public Plaza Life 6) Affordable Transit. Low cost design tactics are implemented in Phase 1, including public art, facade enhancements, public outdoor eating spaces, safe pedestrian-only spaces, and urban reforestation. Phase 2 builds upon the foundations of Phase 1, introducing a strategic adaptive reuse approach to existing building infrastructures while expanding both on public and private pedestrian-only spaces. Finally, in Phase 3, all systems seamlessly weave together, forming an urban fabric that fosters a distinct identity for Long Branch.



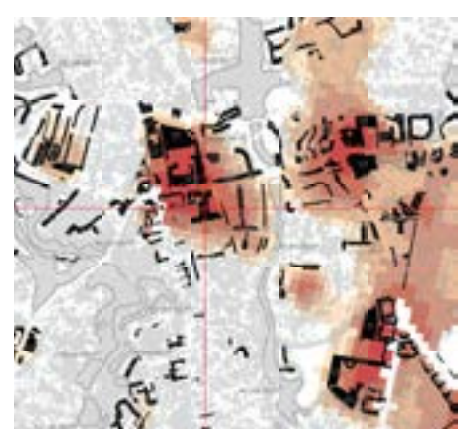
Main Approach Perspective for Central Square Plaza (Phase 3)



Proposed Plan for Central Square Plaza and North Block (Phase 3)



Adaptive Reuse and Outdoor Eating Space for Central Square Plaza (Phase 3)



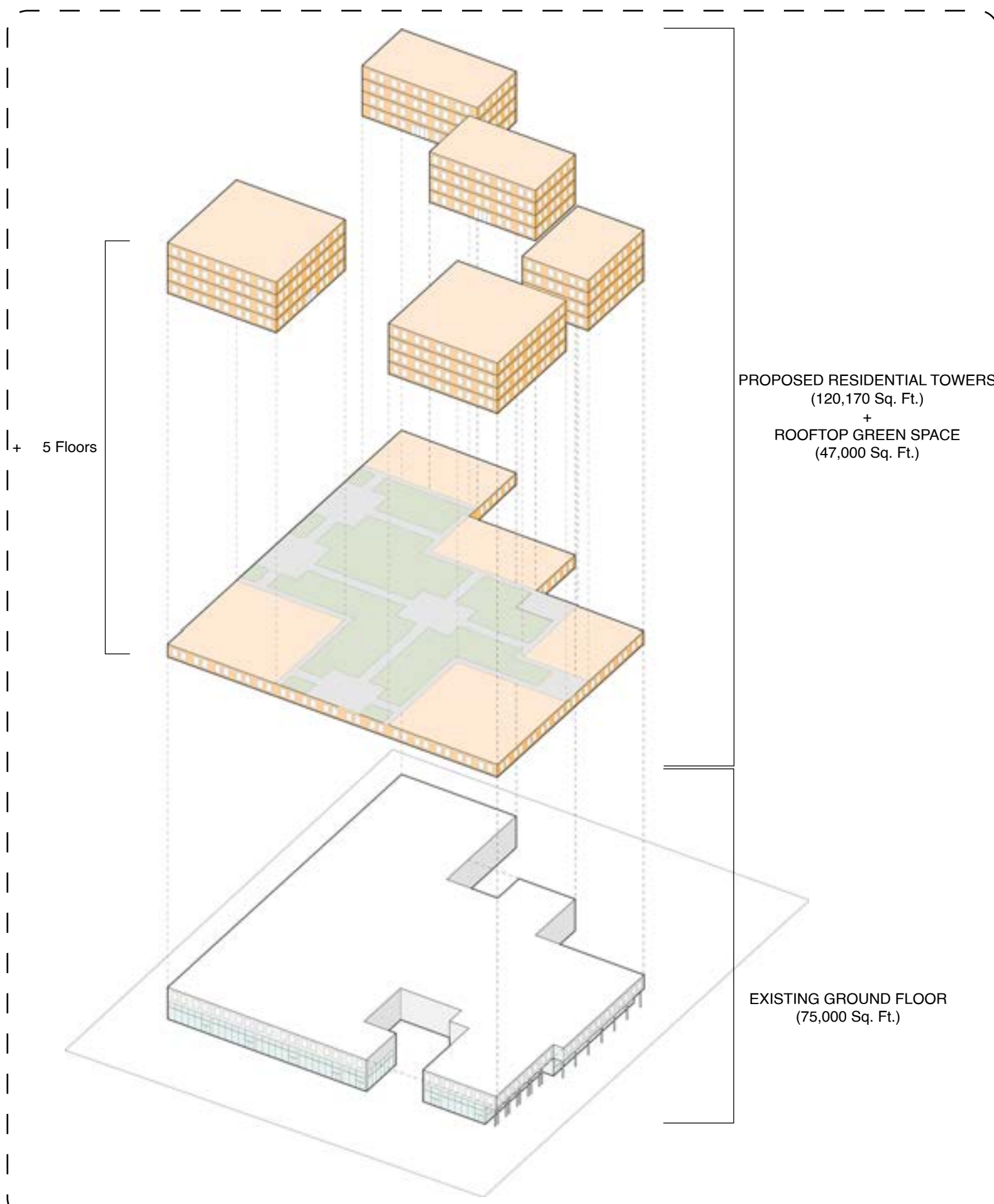
The Urban Heat Island Map above shows the extreme temperatures found in Central Square Plaza (Dashed) and the site across the street. Directly addressing this issue can alleviate high temperatures by introducing green spaces, both on ground level and rooftop terraces.



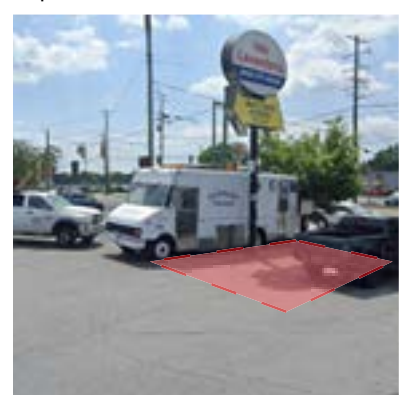

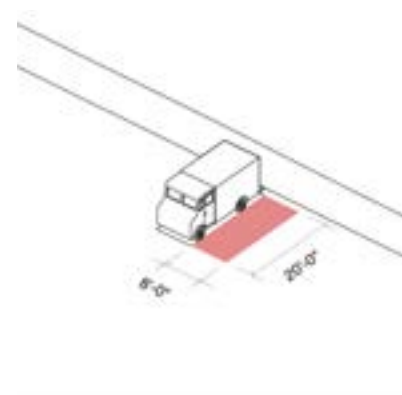



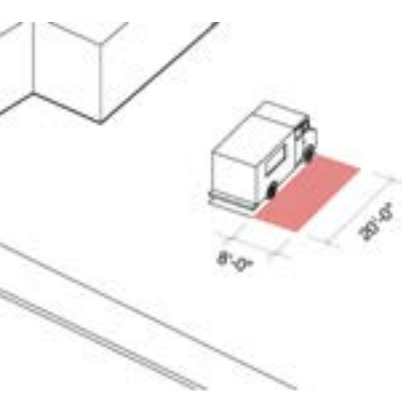
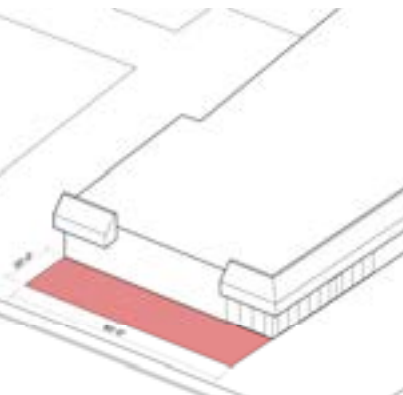


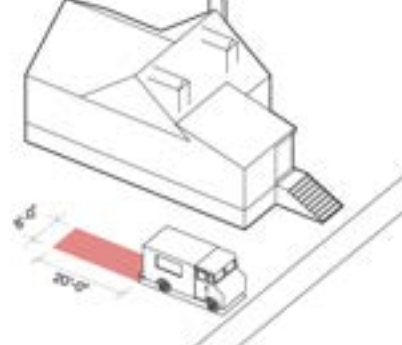
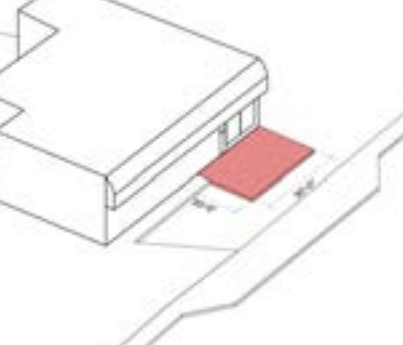
Kampung Admiralty, situated in Singapore inspired introducing a large rooftop green space with residential towers for Long Branch. Introducing more green space helps combat urban heat island currently present on site and provides residents a safe space away from the urban environment.



Star Apartments, situated in California, serves as an inspiring example of adaptive reuse. This approach leverages existing infrastructure in Long Branch, creatively repurposing it to build upon its foundations.



Adaptive Reuse Approach for Bestway/Giant (Phase 3)

Proposed Outdoor Eating Spaces (Phase 1)

CELEBRATING CULINARY HERITAGE: BRINGING EXISTING FOOD CULTURES TO THE PUBLIC EYE

ADREANA HAMMOND, ALEC HOWERTON, BYRON DE LA CRUZ, DONATO JIMENEZ, MATTHEW WATKINS, TSIGEMARIAM TILAYE

PROFESSOR VANDERGOOT
05/08/2024

By bringing the dining experience to the public realm, both the local population and new visitors are encouraged to immerse themselves in the local food culture. Expanding the footprint of food businesses also creates safe pedestrian-only spaces, and fostering social activity in these new areas can attract more visitors to the local food establishments.

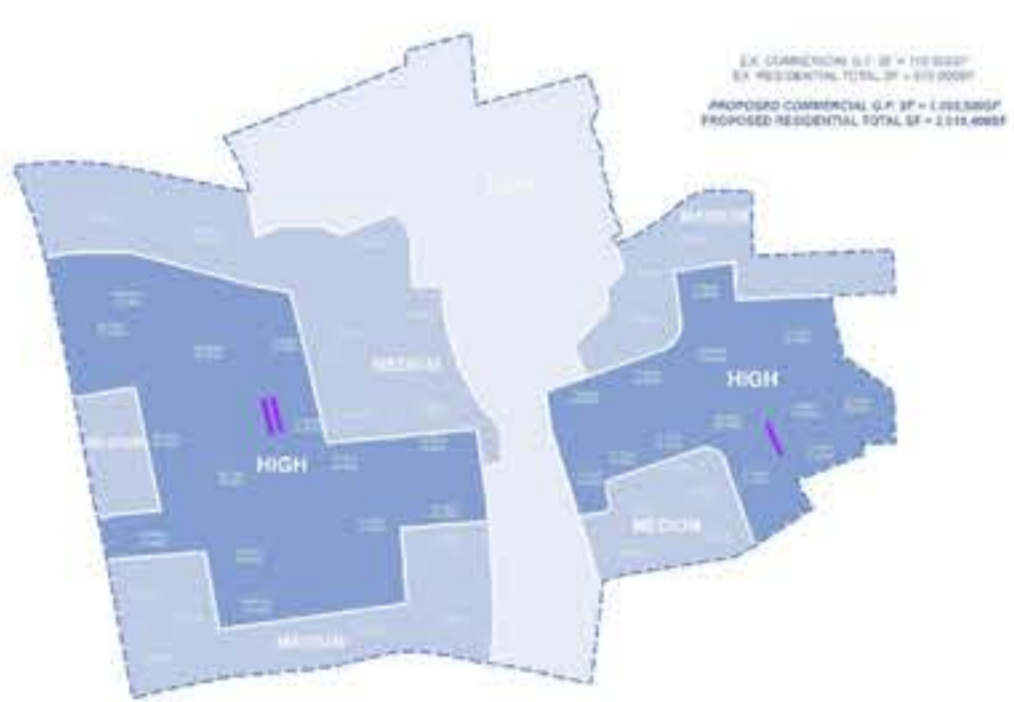
Data Sources
1. Google Earth Pro 7.3.6.9750 (64-bit). (December 22, 2022). Map of Silver Spring, Maryland. 39°00'02.83" N, 77°00'08.53" W, Eye alt 8853 ft. Imagery ©2024 TerraMetrics. <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html> (accessed March 09, 2024).
2. "Kampung Admiralty / WOHA." ArchDaily, 25 Oct 2018.
3. "Star Apartments." Architectural Record
4. "INVASION: Heat Sneaks into Parking Lots as Zones of Opportunity." Byron De La Cruz, 02/26/2024.

STEPPING UP LONG BRANCH

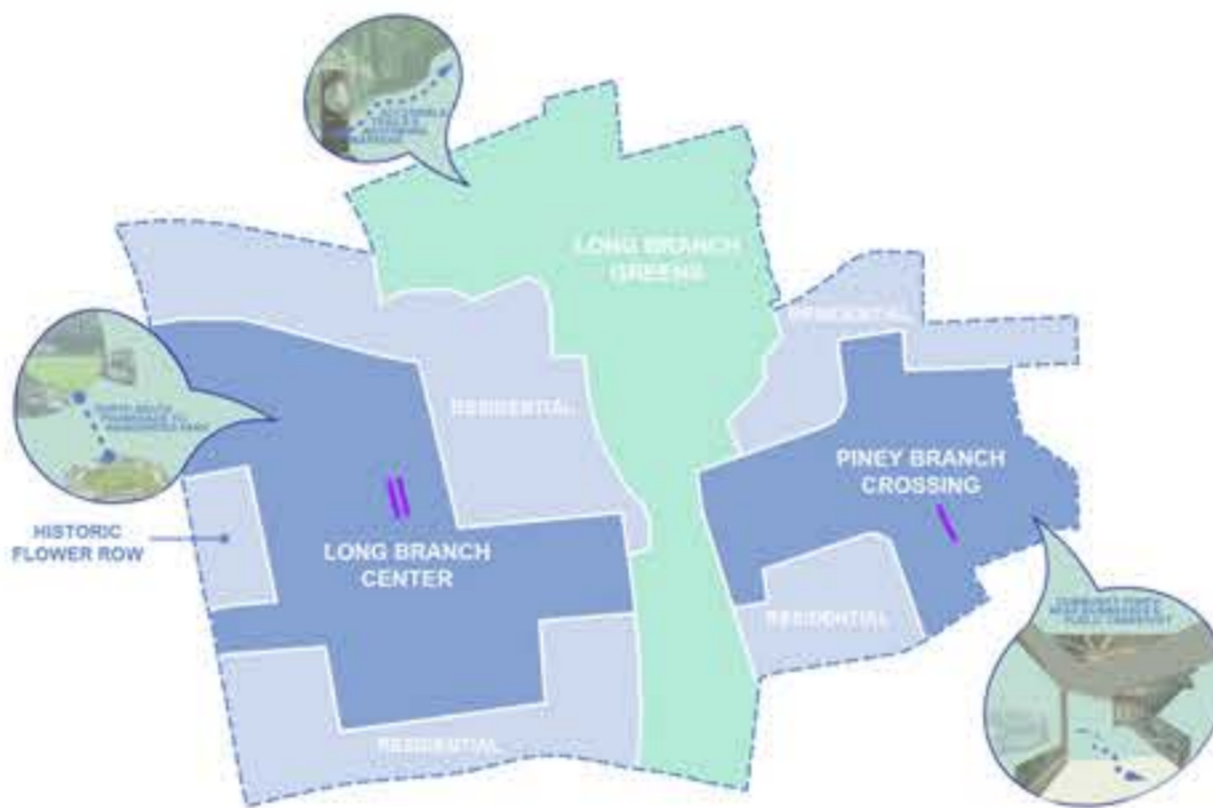
ADDING SQUARE FOOTAGE, STORMWATER MANAGEMENT & NEW PUBLIC SPACES IN LONG BRANCH



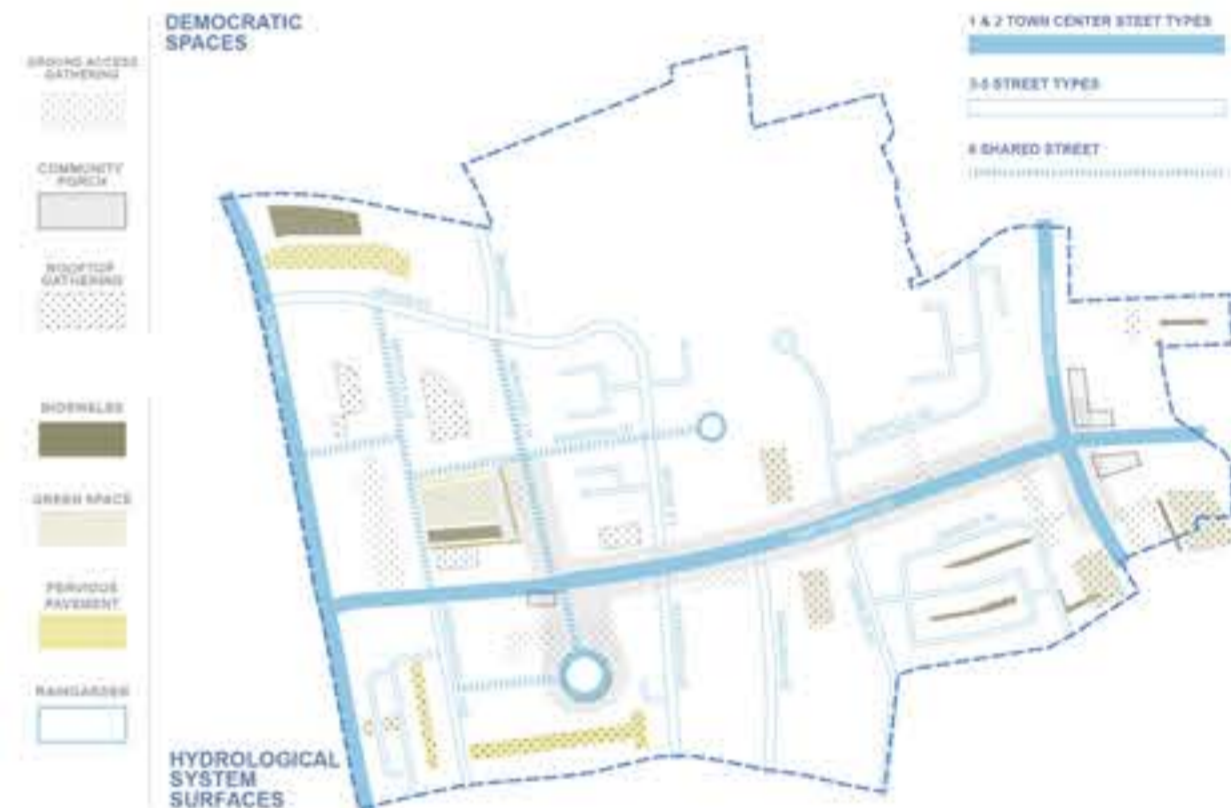
"Stepping Up Density: Adding Square Footage, Stormwater Management, & New Public Spaces to Long Branch" uses three design drivers to improve public spaces within the reality of development along two new Purple Line stations. These drivers are hydrological systems (complete with green space, bioswales, and rain gardens), complete streets with vegetation, and new typologies of public space (community porches and neighborhood patios). Two high density cores are centered on the Long Branch and Piney Branch Purple Line stations with areas of lower density radiating outwards. Over 1.5 million square feet of commercial density is added around these core hubs, branded "Long Branch Center" and "Piney Branch Crossing". The spine of Long Branch Center is a north-south pedestrian-focused corridor. The corridor, name Mercado Lane, begins at the existing Long Branch Library, bypasses "Station Green", a 50,000 square foot park, borders the Long Branch Purple Line Stop, and terminates at a storm-water processing rain garden. To the east, Piney Branch Crossing contains public porches, acting as a third space, centered around public transportation and commercial anchor tenants. These cores are connected by a vibrant commercial corridor along Piney Branch road and an extensive park system designated "Long Branch Greens".



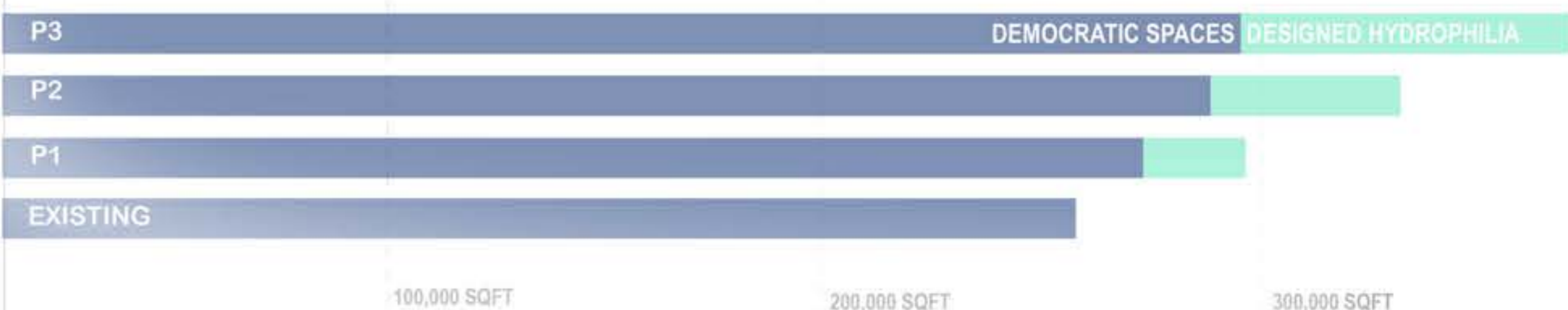
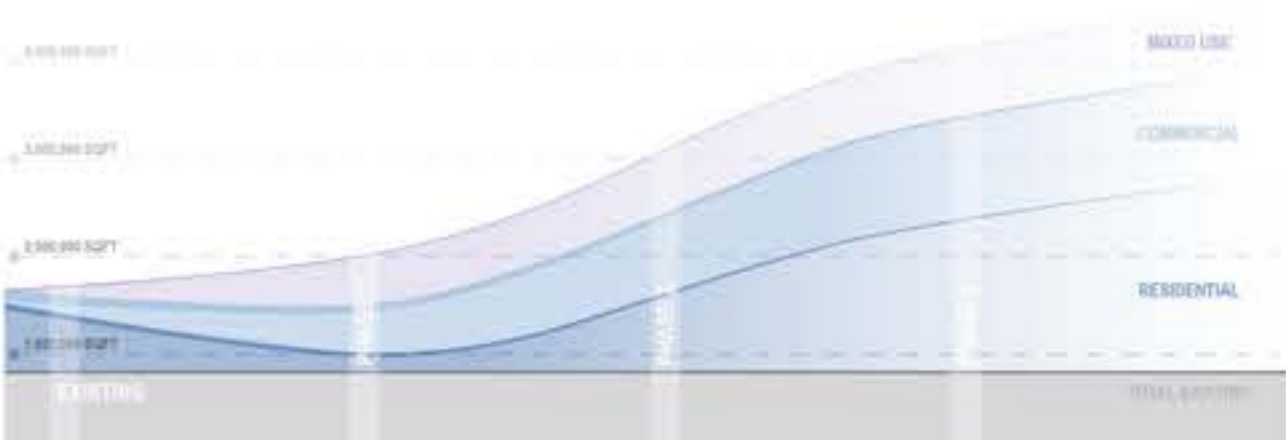
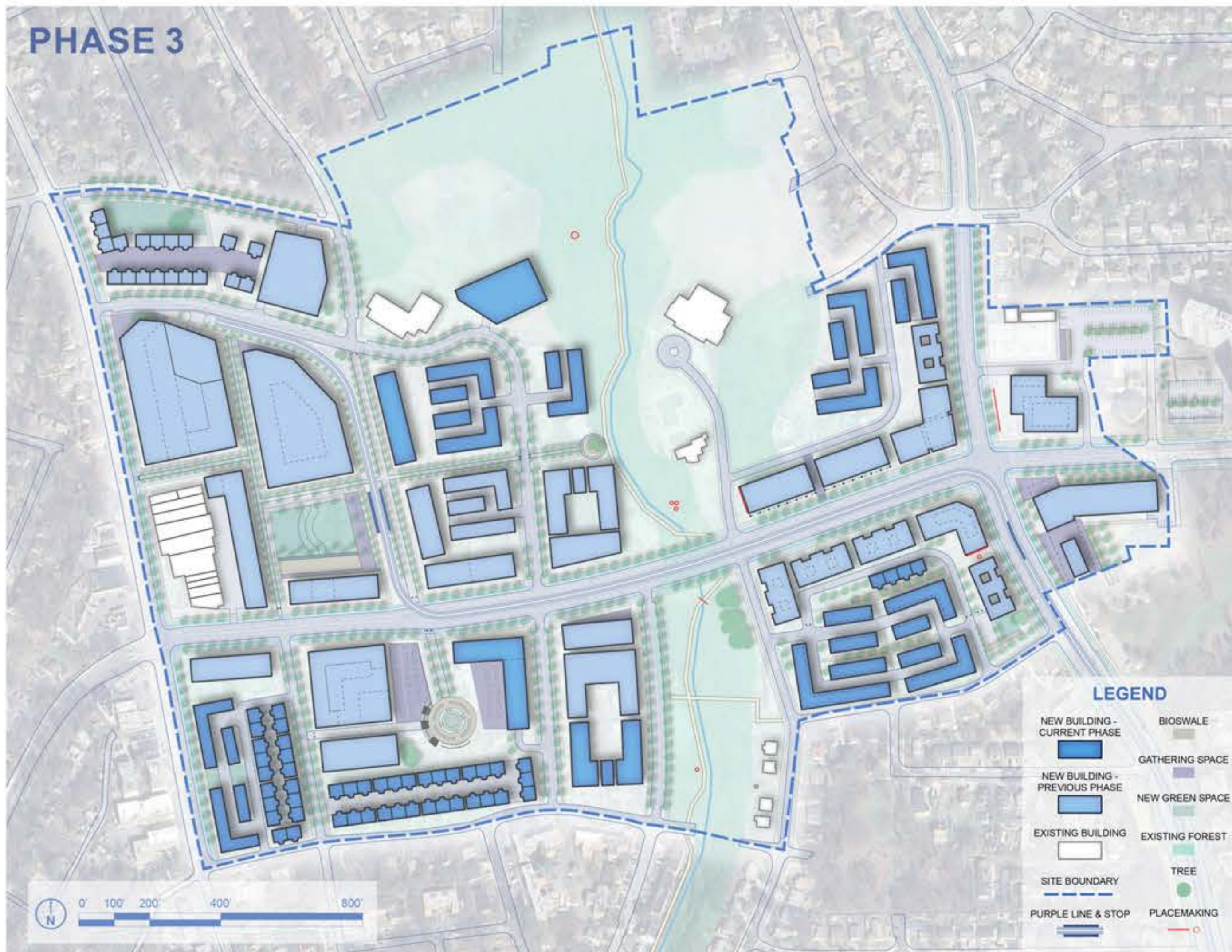
DENSITY & NEW DEVELOPMENT



DISTRICTS & KEY AMENITIES



HYDROLOGIC SYSTEM & NEW SPACES



ALI GARMCHI, ANKITA SURESH YEOLE, EVAN LEHNER, HOLLY DALEY, LAURYN HALL, RORY DAVIS

ARCH 407 | PROFESSOR JANA VANDERGROOT



FINDING FLOWER AVENUE: A Collage Approach to Neighborhood Design

Abby Chi, Dainty De Guzman, Augusto Iglesias, Dejuan Johnson, Andrew Kozy
 ARCH 407 Architecture and Urban Design Studio
 Professor VanderGoot
 May 8, 2024

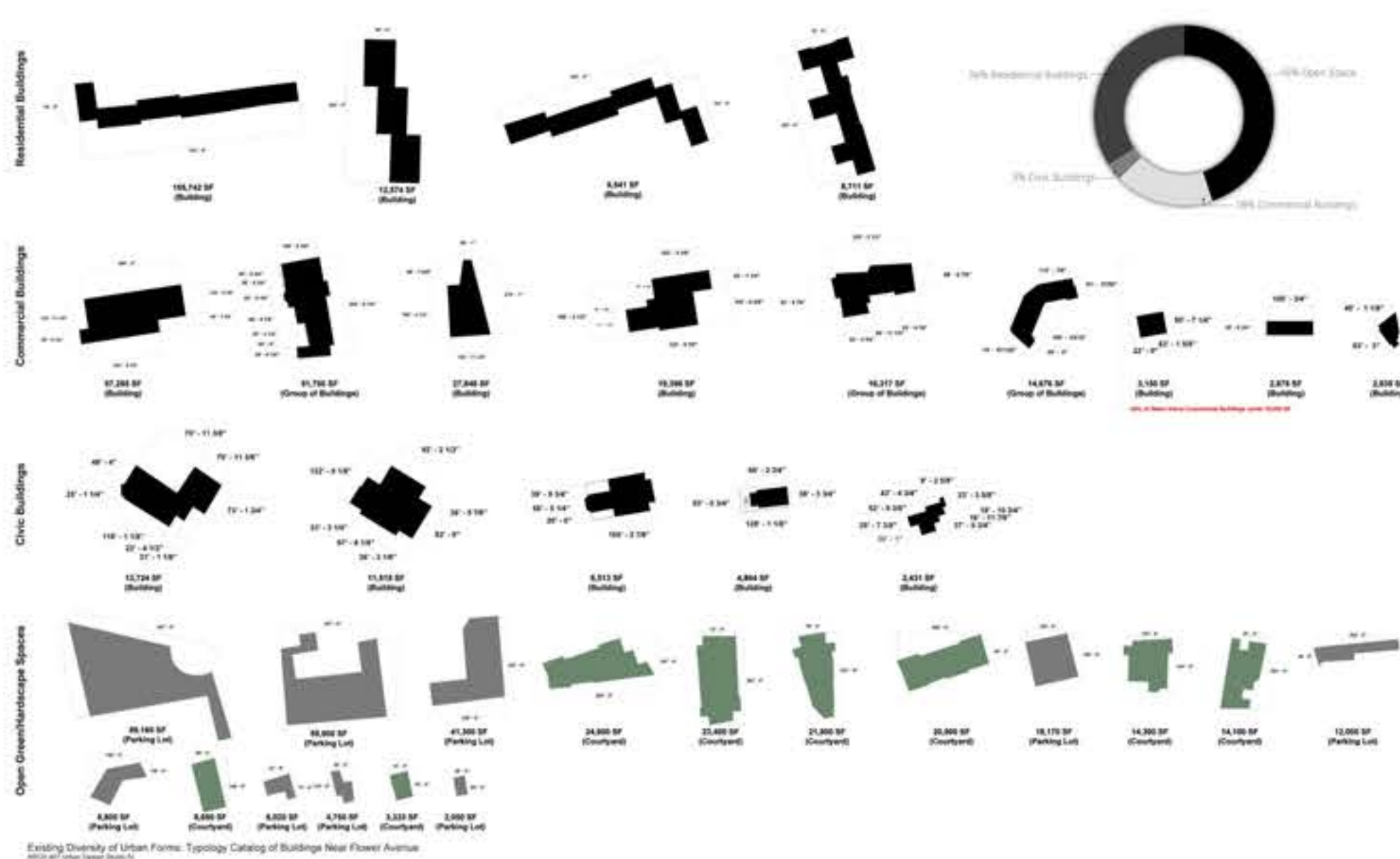
Finding Flower Avenue collages new design elements into Long Branch's existing urban fabric, drawing inspiration from the area's distinct cultural and social settings like Flower Avenue's murals, the historic theater facade, and local community parks. The project's strategy revolves around three core components: 1) A street and open space matrix that offers more public life encounters; 2) Naming what we understood as existing neighborhood places as a way to celebrate them, and 3) Adaptive re-use methods that update and expand existing facades and buildings at the scale of low to medium density development. The phased implementation plan begins with reinforcing the commercial core during the initial 10 years and accommodating the disruptions expected from the Purple Line construction with new civic spaces. The following 10-20 years focuses on residential integration and community connectivity, adding plazas and pedestrian avenues that tie into existing residential blocks. The long-term vision for the next 30 years includes vertical building additions and new residential developments which attempt to follow the urban forms of buildings, open spaces, and streets so that they remain contextual and at the same time promote commercial and residential resilience. The proposal features courtyard-style arrangements that enhance livability while preserving local natural trails. A street hierarchy system was designed to include pedestrian-only pathways as well as multimodal boulevards which aim to create a more integrated pedestrian urban experience. Additionally, the project emphasizes placemaking through strategic naming of neighborhoods and public spaces, fostering a sense of community pride and identity.



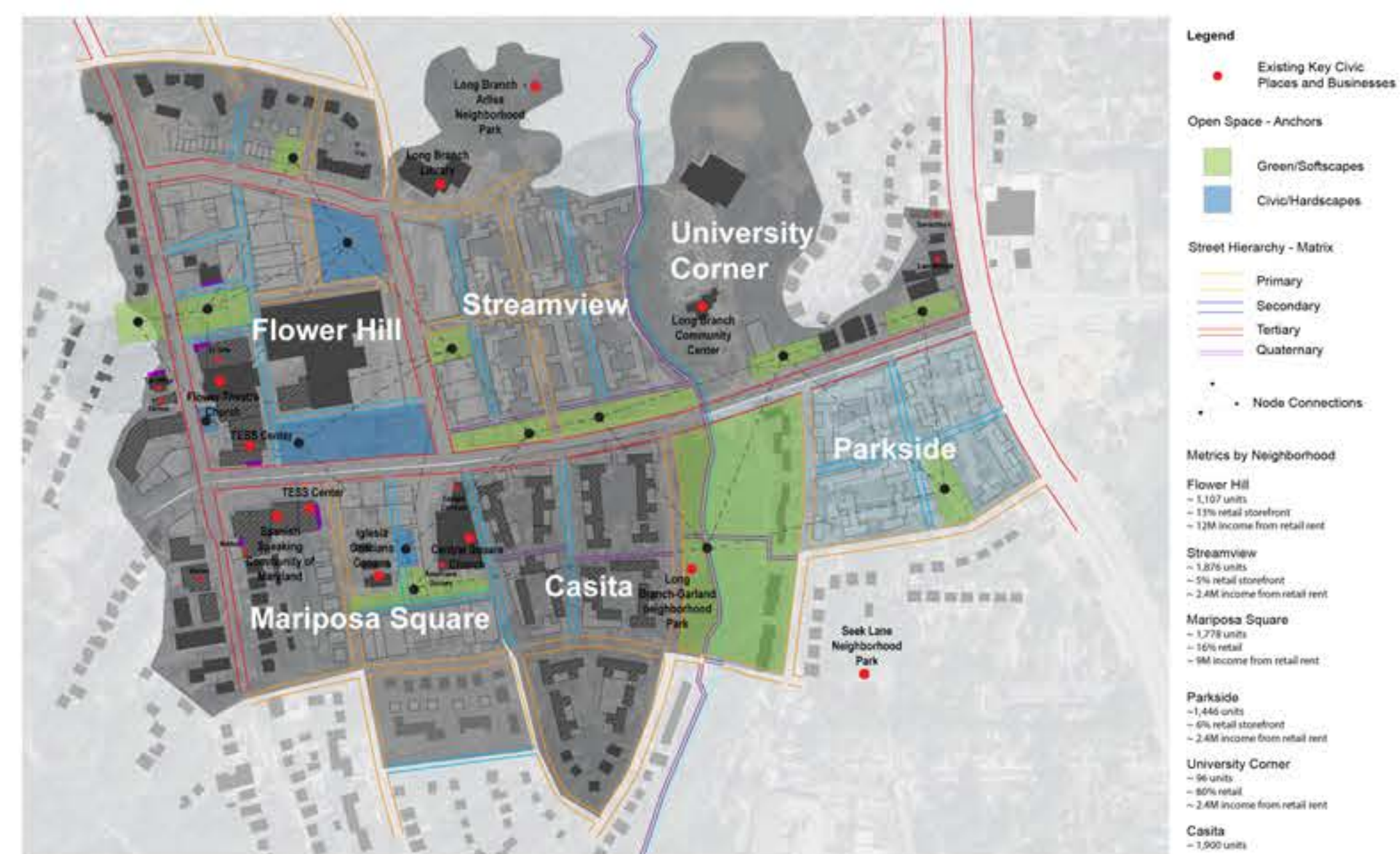
Partnership for
Action Learning
in Sustainability



DOCUMENTATION BUILDINGS & OPEN SPACES



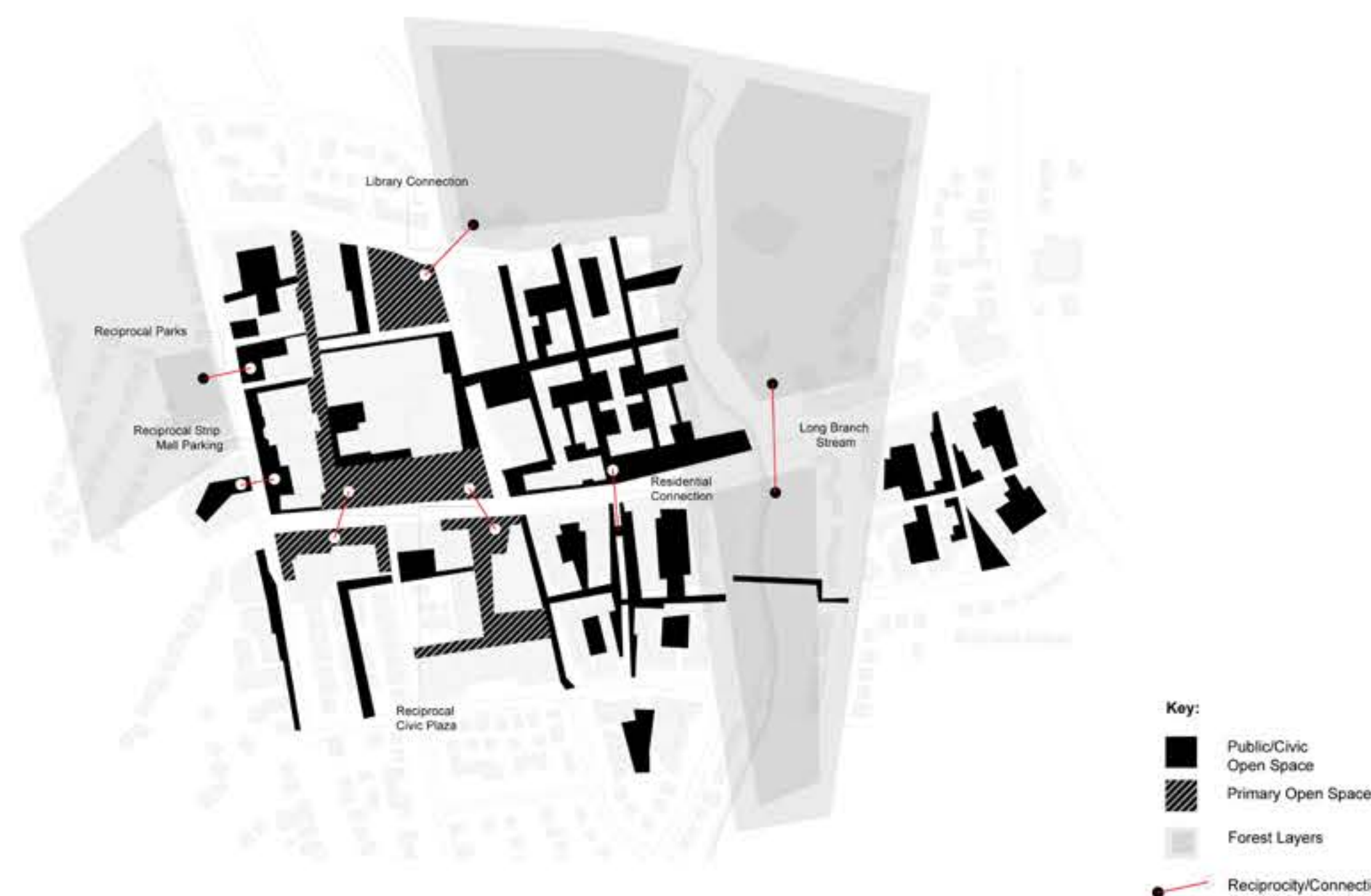
NAMING NEIGHBORHOODS



PROPOSED CHANGES



PROPOSED STREET AND OPEN SPACE MATRIX



DOCUMENTATION OF LONG BRANCH STREETSCAPES



FINDING FLOWER AVENUE: A Collage Approach to Neighborhood Design

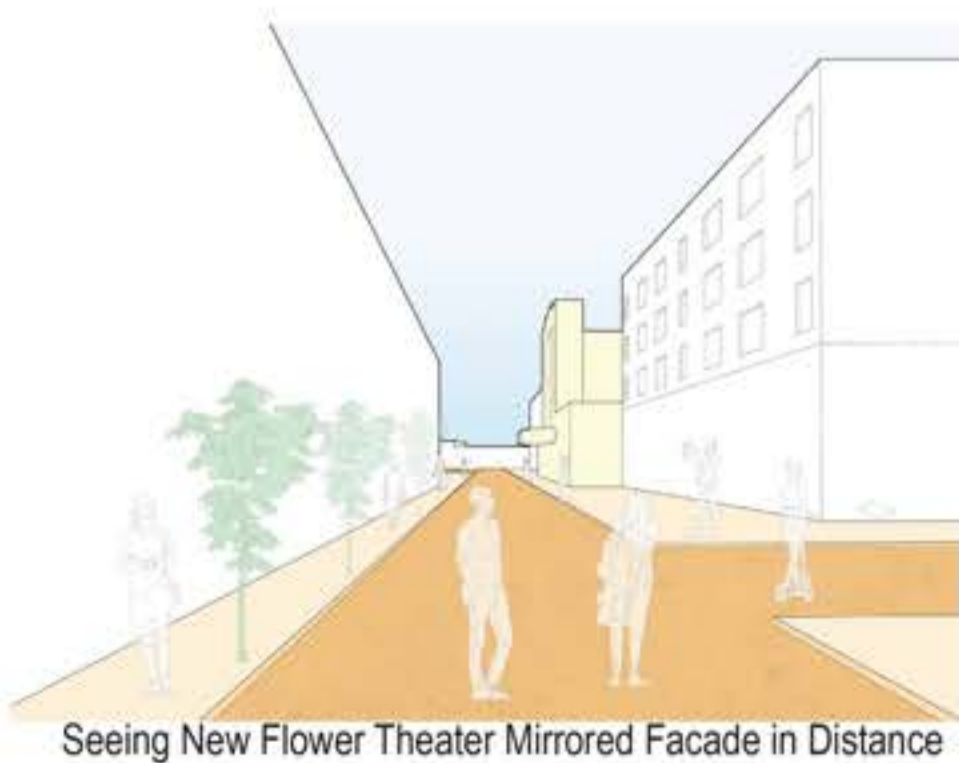
Abby Chi, Dainty De Guzman, Augusto Iglesias, Dejuan Johnson, Andrew Kozy
 ARCH 407 Architecture and Urban Design Studio
 Professor VanderGoot
 May 8, 2024



Partnership for
Action Learning
in Sustainability



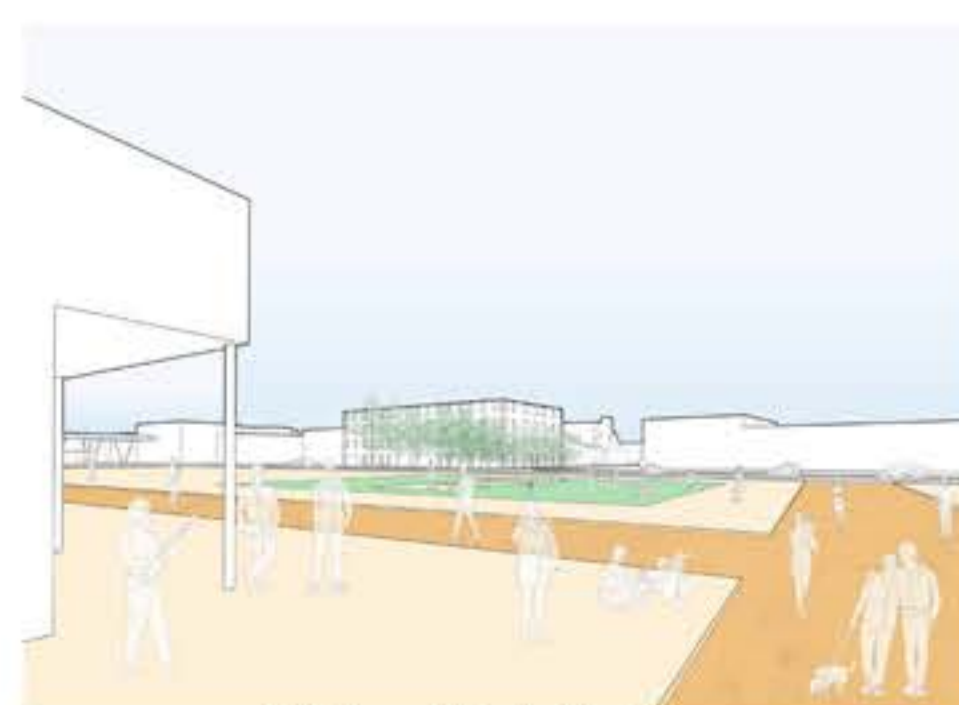
AN EXPERIENTIAL JOURNEY THROUGH OPEN SPACE



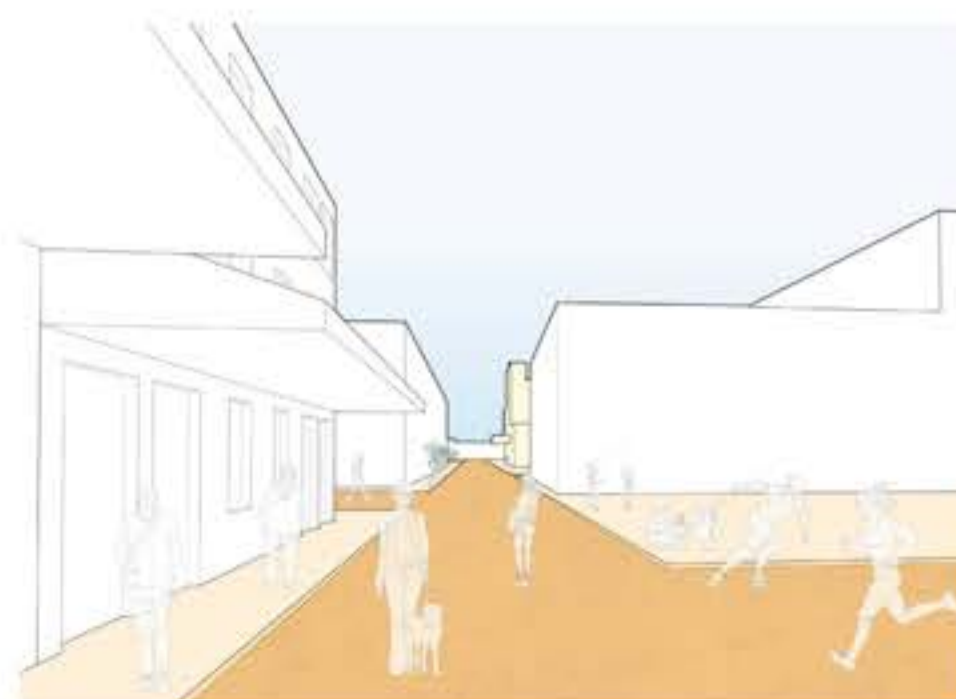
Seeing New Flower Theater Mirrored Facade in Distance



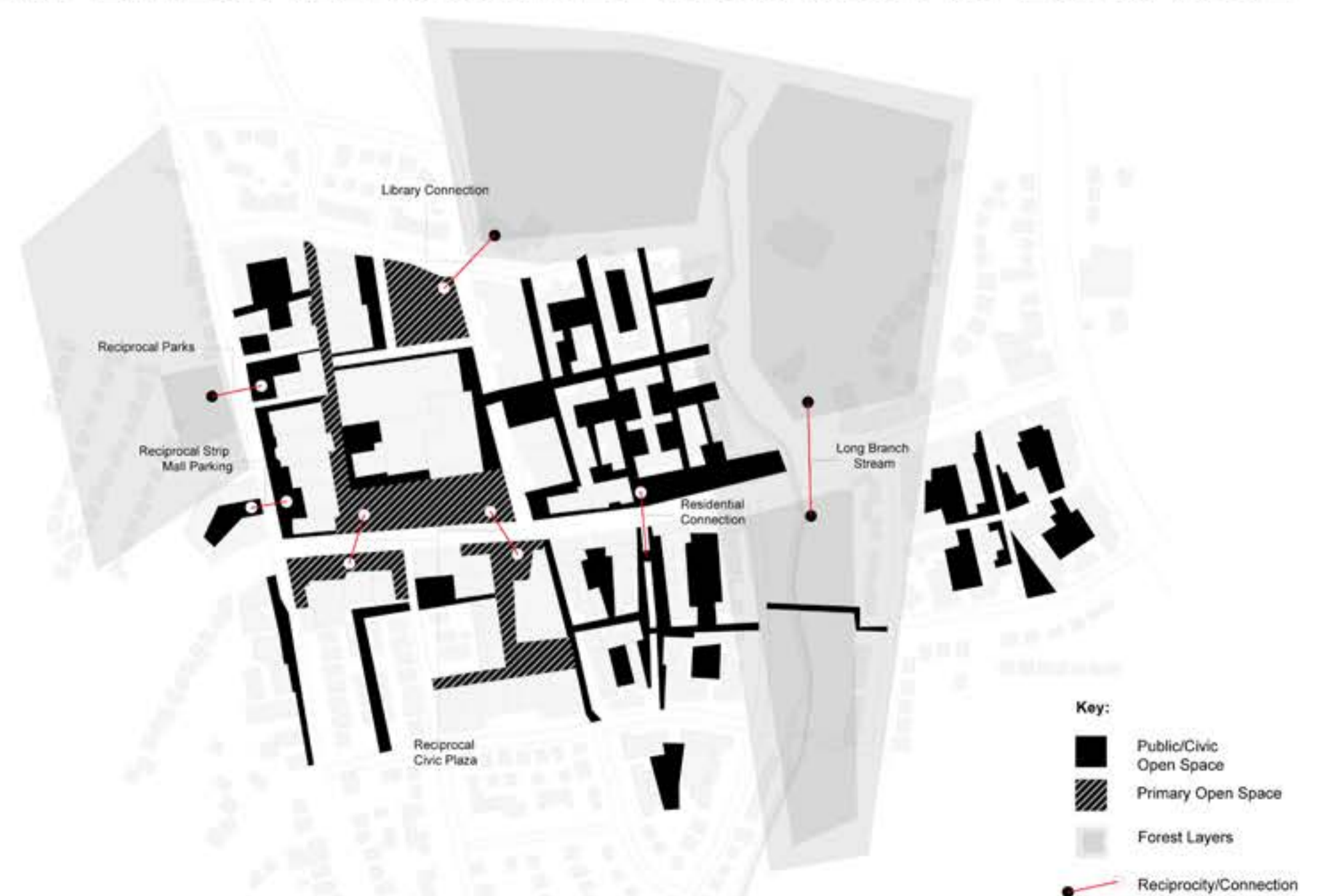
Purple Line Pavilion



5. Arrive at Purple Line Plaza



Entering Americana Market Avenue Plaza



Designing a Collage Approach

PHASE 1: Invest in the Existing Commerical Core

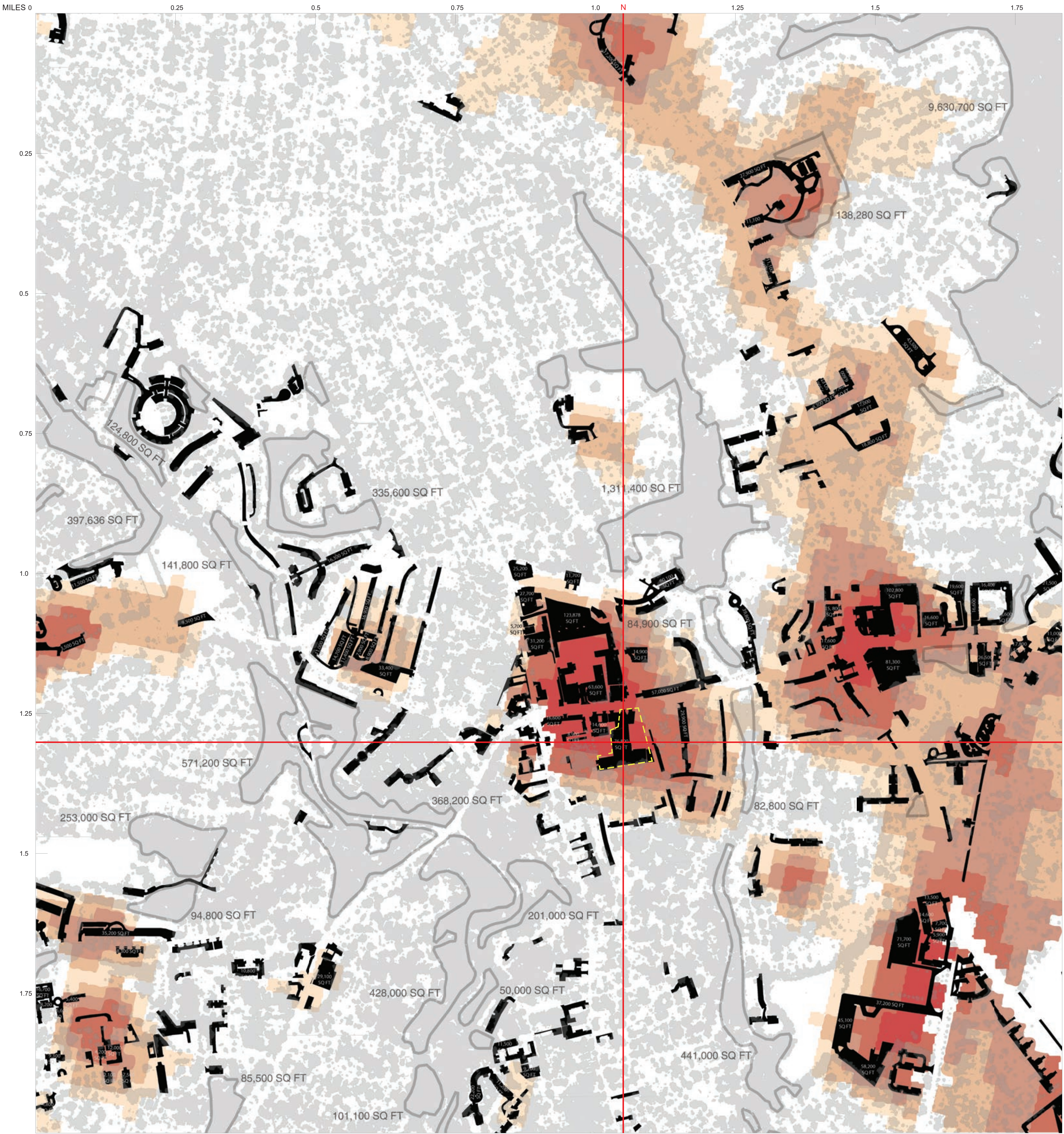


PHASE 2: Collage The Old and New



PHASE 3: Integrate Neighboring Community Spaces





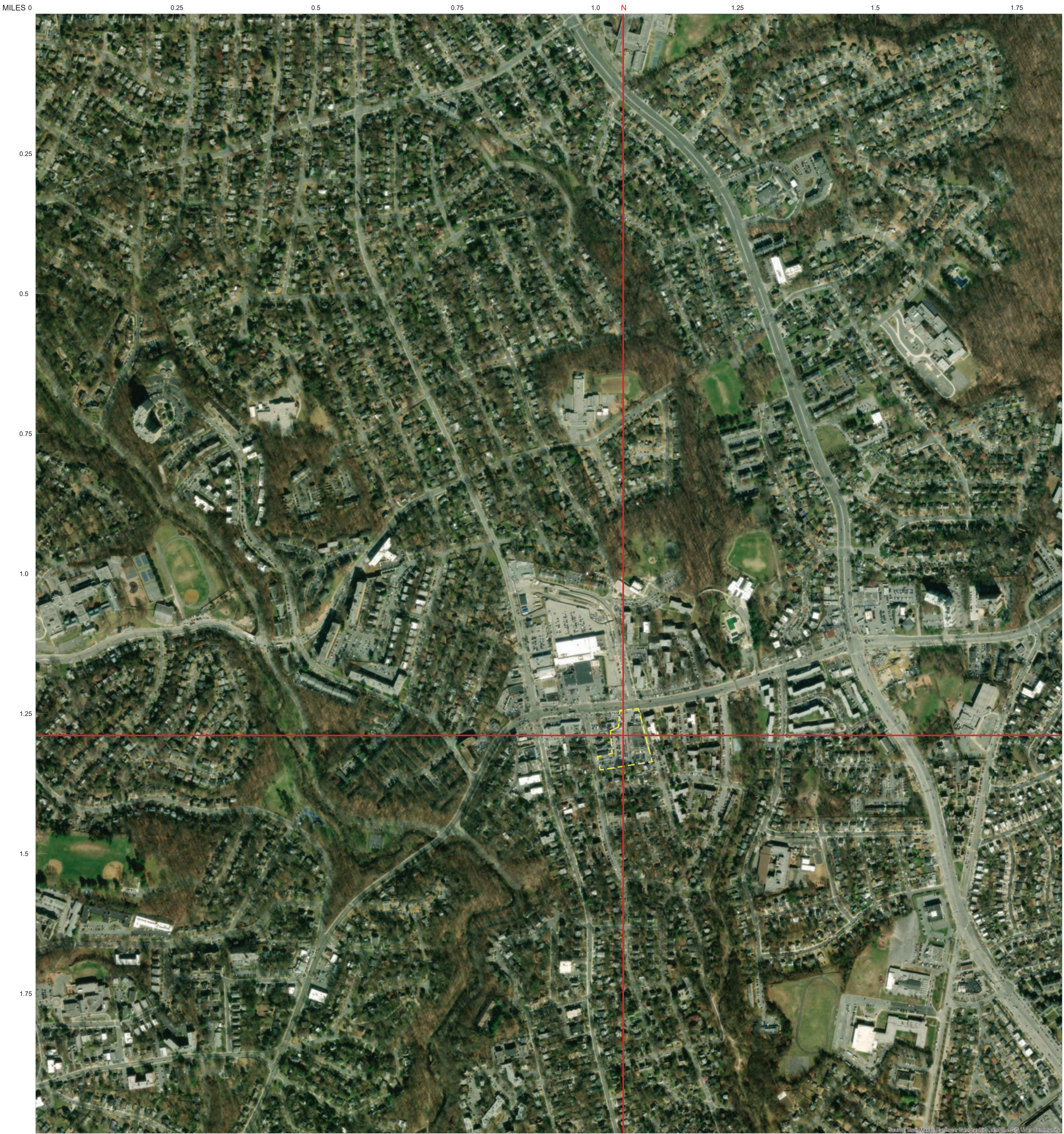
INVASION: Heat Sneaks into Parking Lots as Zones of Opportunity

ARCH 407 Urban Design Studio IV
 Professor VanderGoot
 Byron De La Cruz
 02/26/2024

This design agenda focuses on urban heat islands ([Color Legend]) found on site ([Icon]) and throughout the adjacent neighborhoods. The extent of the map is selected to emphasize the heat that is increasingly intensifying in areas with exposed parking lots ([Icon]) that lack tree canopies for shading. In addition, this map shows the forests ([Icon]) that surround the site and how its density combats the heat. The less dense tree canopies ([Icon]) that line streets and residential areas are still able to resist heat through their density, but heat finds an opportunity when this density weakens and creates pockets of open parking lots. The urban heat island effect not only creates an uncomfortable environment to be in, but it also affects the local community's physical and emotional wellbeing. With an increase of unbearable temperatures, the local population is at risk of heat stroke, stress, fatigue, and hostility. Extreme heat can harm individuals without them realizing the effects it has on them and on a greater scale can harm the ability for the community to coexist in open public spaces.

Data Sources:

1. Google Earth Pro 7.3.6.9750 (64-bit), (October 9, 2023), Map of Silver Spring, Maryland, 39°00'02.83" N, 77°00'08.53" W, Eye alt 8853 ft. Imagery ©2024 TerraMetrics. <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html> (accessed February 19, 2024).
2. Esri Inc. ArcMap (version 10.8.2). Software, Redlands, CA: Esri Inc, 2021.
3. Esri. "World Imagery" [basemap]. Scale 1:5,300. "World Imagery Map". February 19, 2022. Data accessed through ArcMap software (accessed February 09, 2024).
4. Esri. "Tree Canopy" [layer]. Scale 1:5,300. "Tree Canopy layer for Montgomery County". January 19, 2022. Data accessed through ArcMap software (accessed February 09, 2024).
5. Esri. "MoCo Urban Heat Island" [layer]. Scale 1:5,300. "MoCo Urban Heat Island". June 30, 2022. Data accessed through ArcMap software (accessed February 09, 2024).
6. "Environment_Forests." (February 5, 2024). Shapefile. Accessed on February 11, 2024. https://mcatlas.org/tiles6/00_Shapefiles/Environment/Environment_Forests.zip
7. "Transportation_Parking_Lots." (February 5, 2024). Shapefile. Accessed on February 12, 2024. https://mcatlas.org/tiles6/00_Shapefiles/Transportation/Transportation_Parking_Lots.zip
8. "Community Heat Mapping in Montgomery County" Story Map Arc GIS. August 2022. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/389babe7ce654fd87701488ae72e8b6> (accessed February 19, 2024)
9. The Cooldown. 2020. "Heat Islands and Mental Health: How Cities Affect Our Well-Being." The Cooldown. August 13, 2020. 1. <https://www.thecooldown.com/outdoors/heat-islands-mental-health-study-cities/> (accessed February 24, 2024)
10. Huang, H., Li, Y., Zhao, Y., & Zhai, W. (2022). Analysis of the impact of urban summer high temperatures and outdoor activity duration on residents' emotional health: Taking hostility as an example. *Frontiers in public health*, 10, 955077. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.955077> (accessed February 24, 2024)



DECEPTIVE AERIAL VIEW: Tree Shading Seems to be Abundant

ARCH 407 Urban Design Studio IV
Professor VanderGoot
Byron De La Cruz
02/26/2024

The scale of this base map is analyzing natural tree canopy shade on site (📍 8545 Piney Branch Road, Silver Spring, Maryland) and its adjacent neighborhoods. At a glance it may seem tree canopies are plentiful, but there are moments, like in the central square shopping plaza (📍), where there is a lack of dense tree canopy with exposed parking lots that do not have any shade. It can be observed that there are various locations that have a similar characteristic of parking lots without dense tree canopies which leads to increase in temperature and uncomfortable environments for the local population.

Data Sources:

1. Esri Inc. ArcMap (version 10.8.2). Software. Redlands, CA: Esri Inc, 2021.
2. Esri. "World Imagery" [basemap]. Scale 1:5,300. "World Imagery Map". February 19, 2022. Data accessed through ArcMap software (accessed February 09, 2024).

From: [Jacob Barker](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 12:27:32 PM

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Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan Existing Conditions and Scope of Work

Hello,

Please expand the boundaries of the ESSCP. We need it to include all the neighborhoods near the purple line and downtown Silver Spring. These neighborhoods need immediate help planning drastic improvements to our pedestrian, bike, and bus facilities. All of these communities need your guidance to safely accommodate the new pedestrians and bikers that will appear when the purple line begins service in just a few years. We need to set them up for success.

As a person who commutes between my home office Flower Avenue in Takoma Park to Woodlin Elementary, I have experienced the dearth of safe places to walk and bike in these communities. I run a bike bus for the school, and I cannot include the Woodside Forest and Woodside Park neighborhoods because there is such a lack of safe places to exist outside a car, especially while cross major roads like Colesville, Georgia, and 16th. We need more safe infrastructure to allow more of our children to safely walk and bike through these neighborhoods. **That's the goal: a place where the oldest and youngest among us can safely move around without a car.**

Please either include all the purple line communities in the ESSCP or immediately include those communities and plans for the next years master planning.

Spread the music,

Jacob Barker (he/him/his), M.Ed.
Montgomery County Public Schools
National United Methodist Church

605 Hudson Ave, Apt 322
Takoma Park, MD 20912

From: [Frank Demarais](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Eastern Silver Spring Plan Boundary
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 10:58:30 AM
Attachments: [image008.png](#)
[Outlook-cid_image0.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[Outlook-cid_image0.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[Outlook-cid_image0.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[Outlook-cid_image0](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image010.png](#)

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Montgomery Planning

I am writing to comment on the proposed boundary for an Eastern Silver Spring Plan.

A critical element of any new zoning in eastern Silver Spring is how it will impact housing affordability. The boundary includes a significant portion of the county's market rate affordable units. The Long Branch 2013 Plan specifically excepted larger affordable properties from zoning changes to reduce redevelopment incentives. With Rent Stabilization in place, redevelopment becomes even more attractive to property owners to realize value from the public's transit investments.

The Plan Area will see significant land value transfer from Purple Line and Bus Rapid Transit investments.

ESS Plan should not include the Long Branch exception properties and similar properties in the Plan Area without Planning committing to a requirement of no net loss of unit affordability at current levels. MPDU percentages will never replace affordability of units demolished, and while no net loss commitments will slow development, it can work and the alternative displacement represents abrogation of responsibility. No net loss was addressed in the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan in a very direct way, which will support community efforts to protect affordability. Planning addressed no net loss in Veirs Mill and Silver Spring properties and in the Thrive 2050 Plan.

I strongly recommend the new Plan express recognition of the obligation of land use policies to protect current residents and businesses.

Such a commitment expressed by Planning from this first stage would put the community on notice that everything developed in the Plan Area will need to address that foundation.

Frank Demarais
8006 Maple Ave
Takoma Park
Fdemarais@starpower.net

From: [Andrew Malone](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan
Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 2:55:37 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Greetings,

I am a resident of the Seven Oaks-Evanswood area. Specifically, I live approximately 200 feet from the future Purple Line station at Dale and Wayne. I am writing to ask the Planning Board to expand the boundary of the Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan to include my neighborhood and other neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Silver Spring, so that we can develop a more comprehensive and equitable master plan that includes all of Silver Spring's Purple Line stations. If this is not feasible, I request that we develop a new a master plan for my neighborhood and other neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Silver Spring, with work to start as soon as possible.

As we have seen, the Purple Line is on track for completion, but at greater cost in money and time than anticipated. Given this investment of resources, it is imperative that we make the best possible use of this invaluable infrastructure once it is developed. From my experience, I know that the walking and biking environment in this area can be difficult. Sidewalks are on only one side of the street, or not at all - my block of Queen Annes Drive, despite being the most direct route from the surrounding neighborhood to the future Purple Line stop, does not have any sidewalks at all. Stop signs are not taken seriously at many locations. We need a comprehensive plan for a mobility network that can funnel people to the Purple Line stop at Dale and Wayne.

Additionally, the neighborhood I live in is overwhelmingly composed of single-family homes. In an era where the Purple Line is running, it would be a waste not to allow for redevelopment with missing middle or multifamily housing everywhere along the Purple Line's route. A master plan is the proper vehicle for determining the parameters of such redevelopment. My family and I were lucky enough to be able to afford a house here, but not many can. In addition, when my wife and I age, it would be nice to have more options to remain in the neighborhood. Many elderly neighbors complain about the burden of house upkeep but also do not have anywhere else to go and remain in this neighborhood. A greater diversity of housing styles and types would allow for people to live here at all stages of their lives, and enjoy the easy access to schools, parks, and Downtown Silver Spring that my family currently enjoys.

The time to undertake this work is as soon as possible - we have an opportunity to set the stage before the Purple Line is completed, so that we can hit the ground running when the Purple Line is running.

Thank you for considering this request.

Best regards,
Andrew Malone
8416 Queen Annes Drive