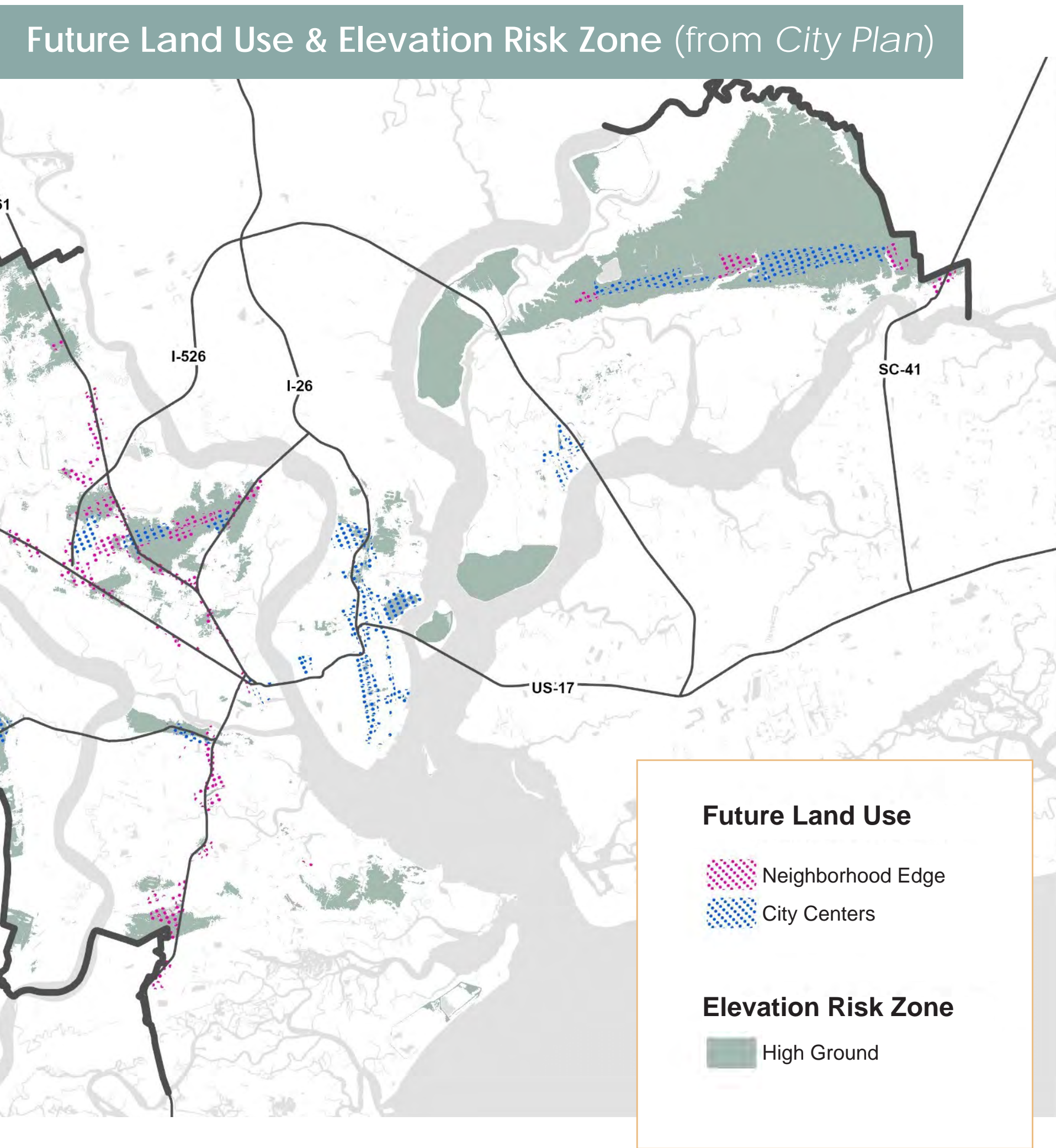
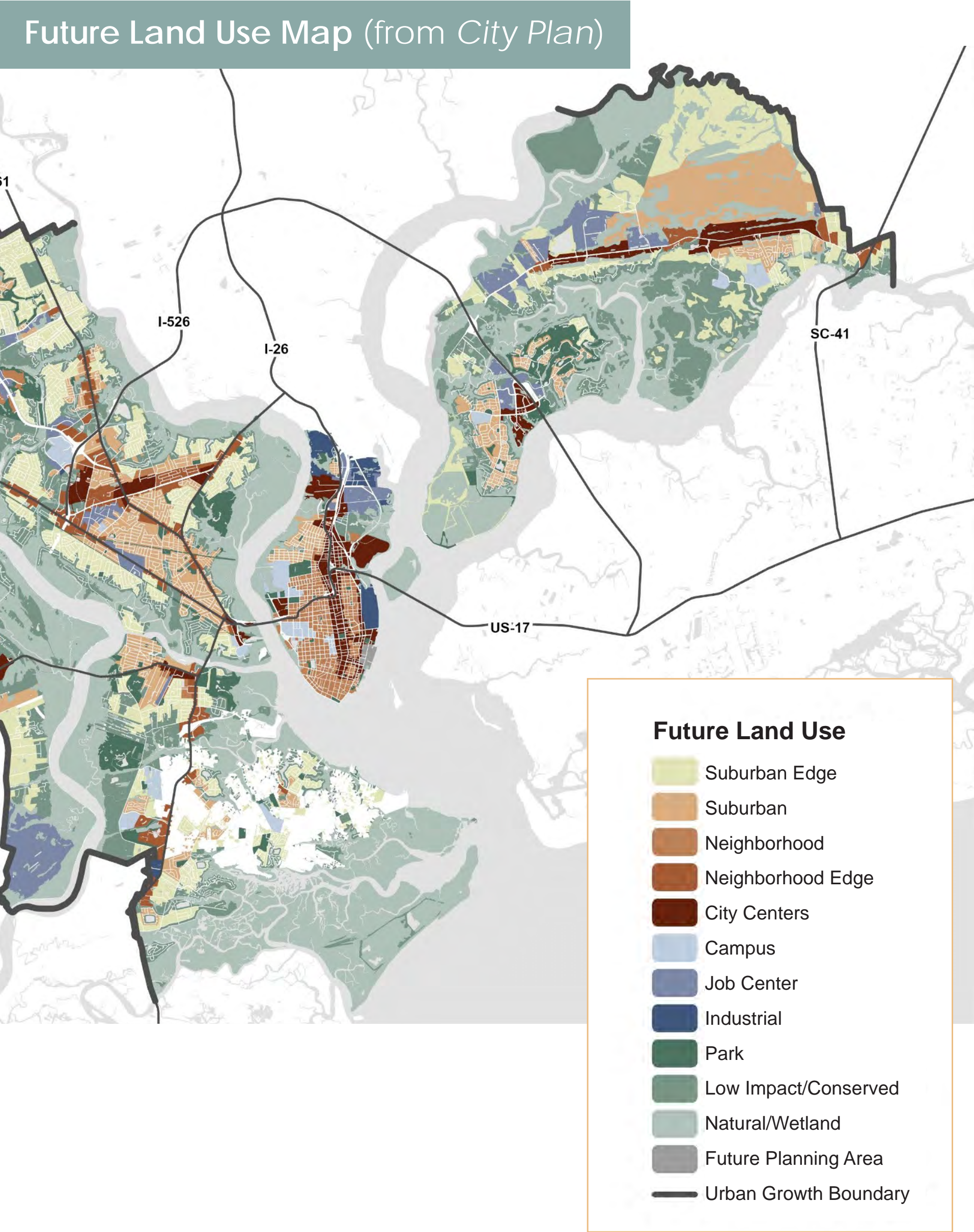




A FORM-BASED DISTRICT FOR WEST ASHLEY

About Form-Based Districts

Form-based districts are an approach to zoning that prioritize context and urban form over land uses and can be used to implement a specific community vision. Form-based districts prescribe key metrics of the City’s desired urban form for future development, such as height, setbacks, and massing, as well as basic building and site design standards such as façade composition, the arrangement of doors and windows, and the location of parking. These standards can be utilized for places where there is a community vision for a different future context, such as retrofitting a portion of a suburban corridor into a walkable neighborhood center.



Why is West Ashley being considered for a Form-Based District?

As part of the *Setting New Standards Code Assessment* completed in April 2024, potential study areas for a form-based zoning approach were identified using the following criteria:

- **Areas of Higher Elevation:** Focusing on areas of higher elevation supports the City’s long-term goals for strategic investments in areas less susceptible to flooding and storm surge impacts. The Elevation Risk Zones map in the *City Plan* was referenced as part of this exercise.
- **Future Land Use Designations:** The Future Land Use map in the *City Plan* is a visual articulation of the community vision for desired future land use and development. For this exercise, areas designated as **City Center** (envisioned to have greater density/intensity and mix of uses, and where the most infill and redevelopment is anticipated to occur over time) or **Neighborhood Edge** (areas along major roads, envisioned to transition to more urban compact design patterns, with more residential uses) were prioritized.
- **Commercial Corridors:** The City has several corridors where existing zoning permits a general mix of commercial development. These corridors were evaluated for their potential to include a greater mix of uses, including housing. Increasing the permitted mix of uses on already-developed corridors can help to meet the City’s goals to increase housing options, shorten commutes between home and work, and preserve environmentally-sensitive lands.
- **TIF District:** Parcels in the West Ashley Redevelopment Project Area and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, along the Sam Rittenberg and Savannah Highway corridors, were identified as an area where the City is seeking investment and new development, making it a primary candidate for a form-based district.
- **Small Area Plans:** In addition to *City Plan*, the City has recent small area plans that identify a community vision for future development, such as *Plan West Ashley* (2018); a form-based district can help to implement these recommendations.



Proposed Rewritten Zoning Ordinance Organization

As discussed in the **Code Assessment**, the rewritten Zoning Ordinance is proposed to be organized in the following major Articles. The full annotated outline in the Code Assessment includes complete details.

Article 1: General Provisions

Article 2: Administration

Article 3: Zone Districts

Article 4: Use Regulations

Article 5: Development Standards

Article 6: Subdivision Standards

Article 7: Non-conformities

Article 8: Enforcement

Article 9: Definitions, Rules of Construction and Interpretation, and Rules of Measurement

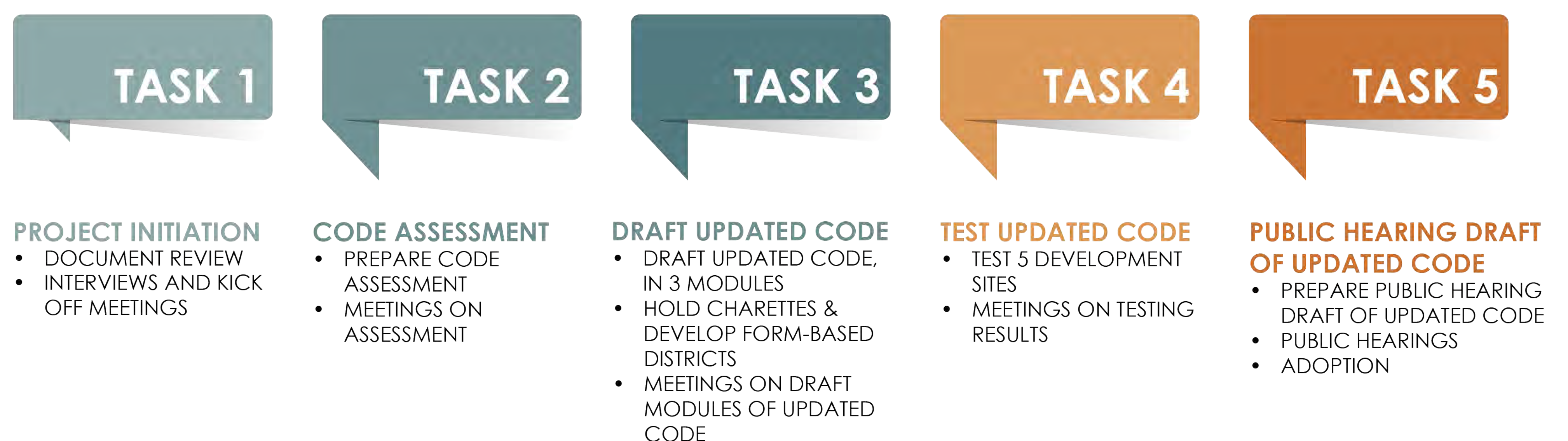
ZONING ORDINANCE REWRITE PROJECT OVERVIEW

About the Project

Setting New Standards: Rewriting the Charleston Zoning Code is an ambitious effort to rewrite the City's Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance governs how people can develop and use their land throughout the City. While the existing ordinance has served the City well, the community has identified new development goals in the recently adopted *City Plan*, and is facing increasing challenges from rising water. A key goal of the project is to develop a modernized zoning code that addresses this challenge and helps the City meet the development goals established in the *City Plan*.

Process Overview

The Setting New Standards project launched in 2023. We are currently in **Task 3**, drafting the rewritten Zoning Ordinance. Draft regulations will be developed and released to the public for review and comment throughout 2026.



Key Themes of the Code Assessment

The **Code Assessment** is a key step in the development of the rewritten Zoning Ordinance. Completed during Task 2, the Code Assessment provides a diagnosis of the existing Zoning Ordinance and makes recommendations for a new Development Code. It also includes an annotated outline that lays out the proposed organization and content of the rewritten Zoning Ordinance (summarized in the sidebar to the left).

Following a review of the current Zoning Ordinance and discussions with City staff, stakeholders, and the public, the following five key goals or themes were identified as priorities for the rewritten Zoning Ordinance.

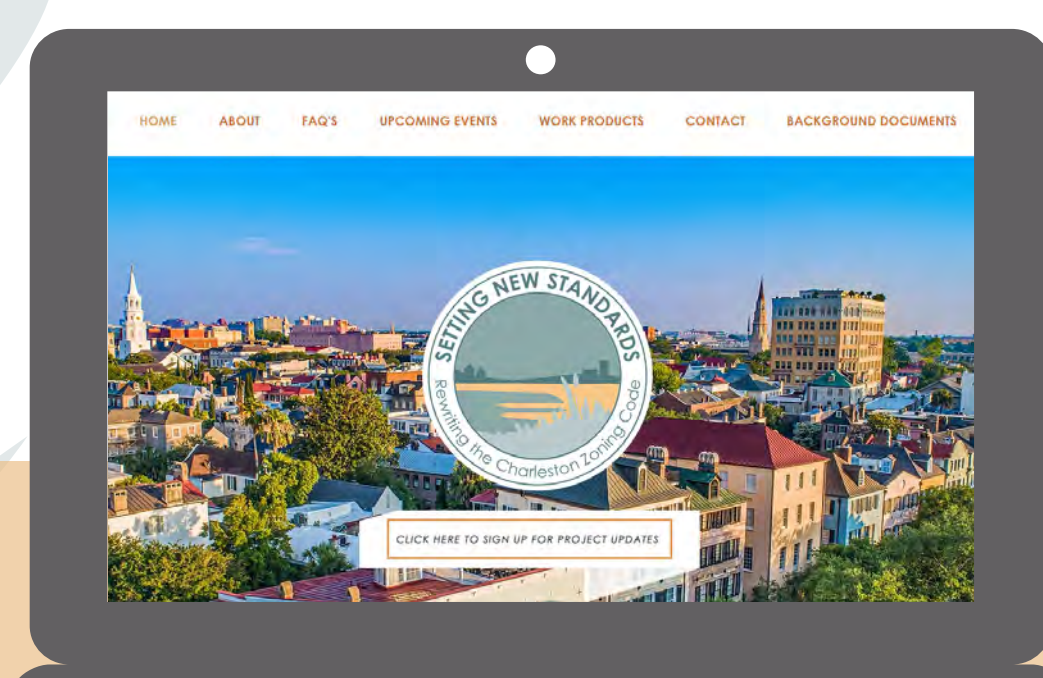
Theme 1: Make the Rewritten Development Code More User-Friendly and Streamlined

Theme 2: Update the Zone District and Use Regulations to Simplify the Regulations, Enhance Resilience, and Improve Development Form in Key Corridors

Theme 3: Modify the Zoning Framework and Improve Development Practices to Make the City More Resilient to a Rising Water Environment

Theme 4: Update Regulations to Encourage a More Diverse Array of Housing Types and Incentivize Affordable Housing

Theme 5: Modernize, Consolidate, and Make the Development Standards Consistent with the Policy Direction in the *City Plan*



visit newchsstandards.com to learn more

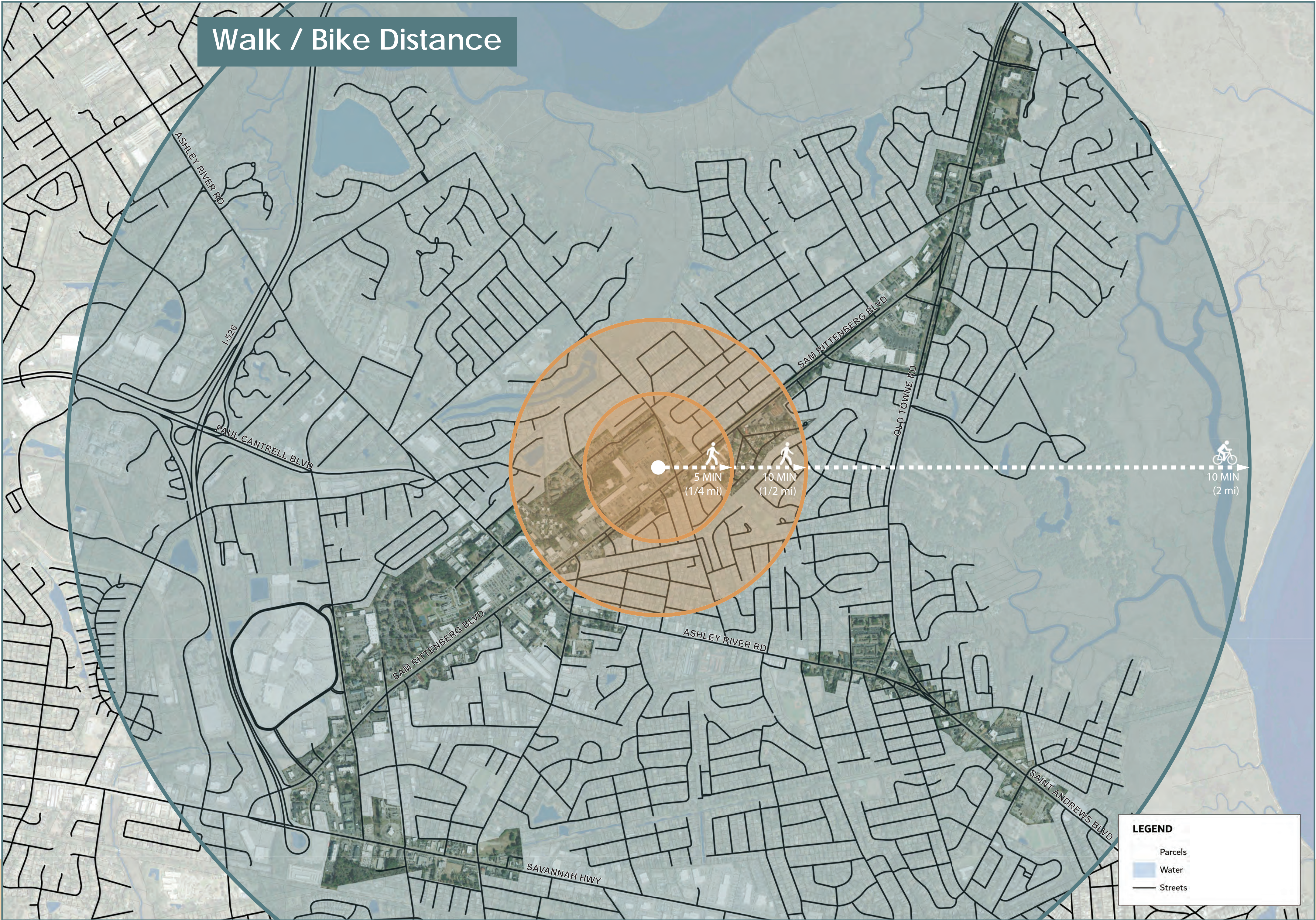


WEST ASHLEY MIXED-USE CORRIDORS EXISTING CONDITIONS

West Ashley Study Area



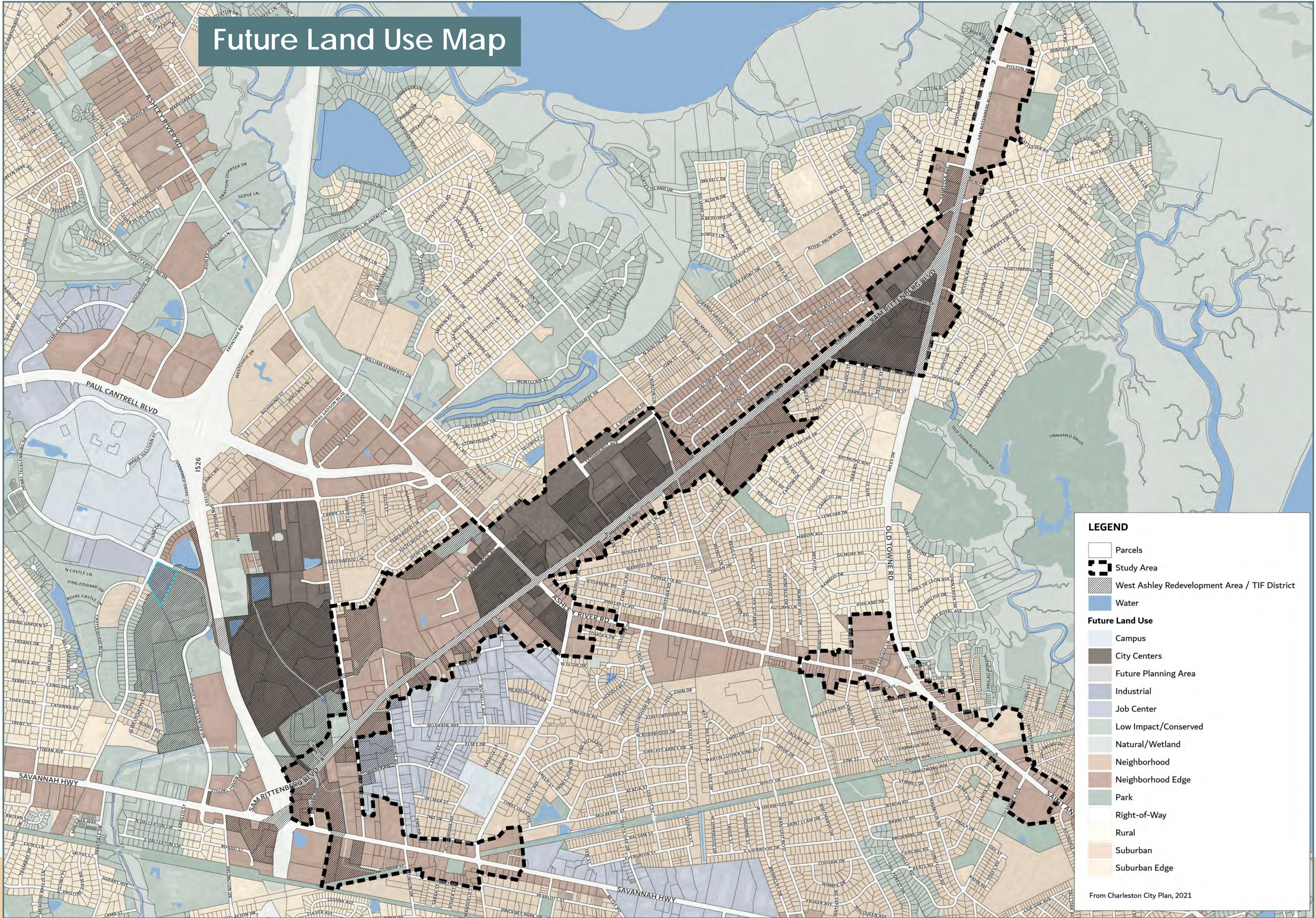
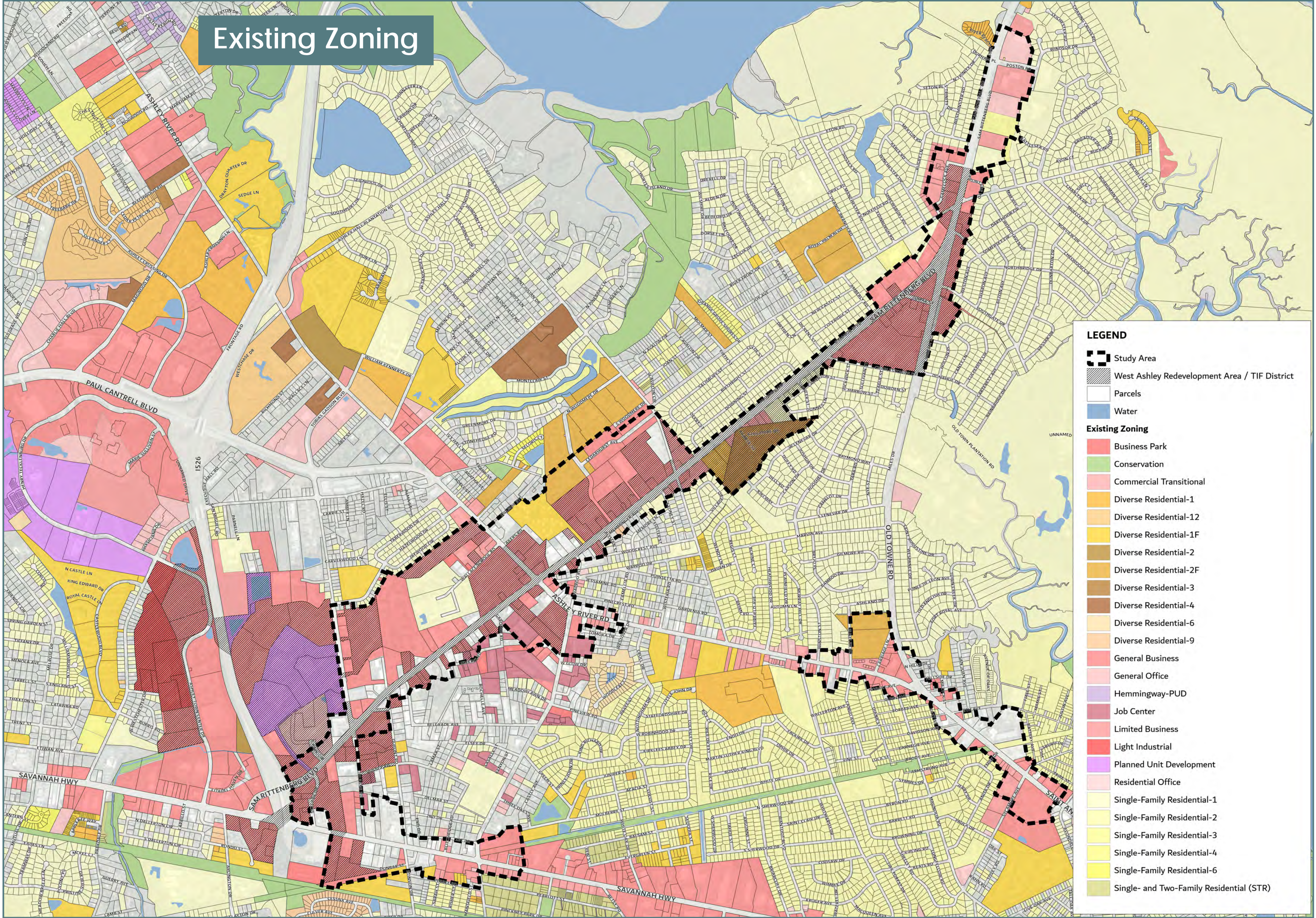
Walk / Bike Distance





WEST ASHLEY MIXED-USE CORRIDORS

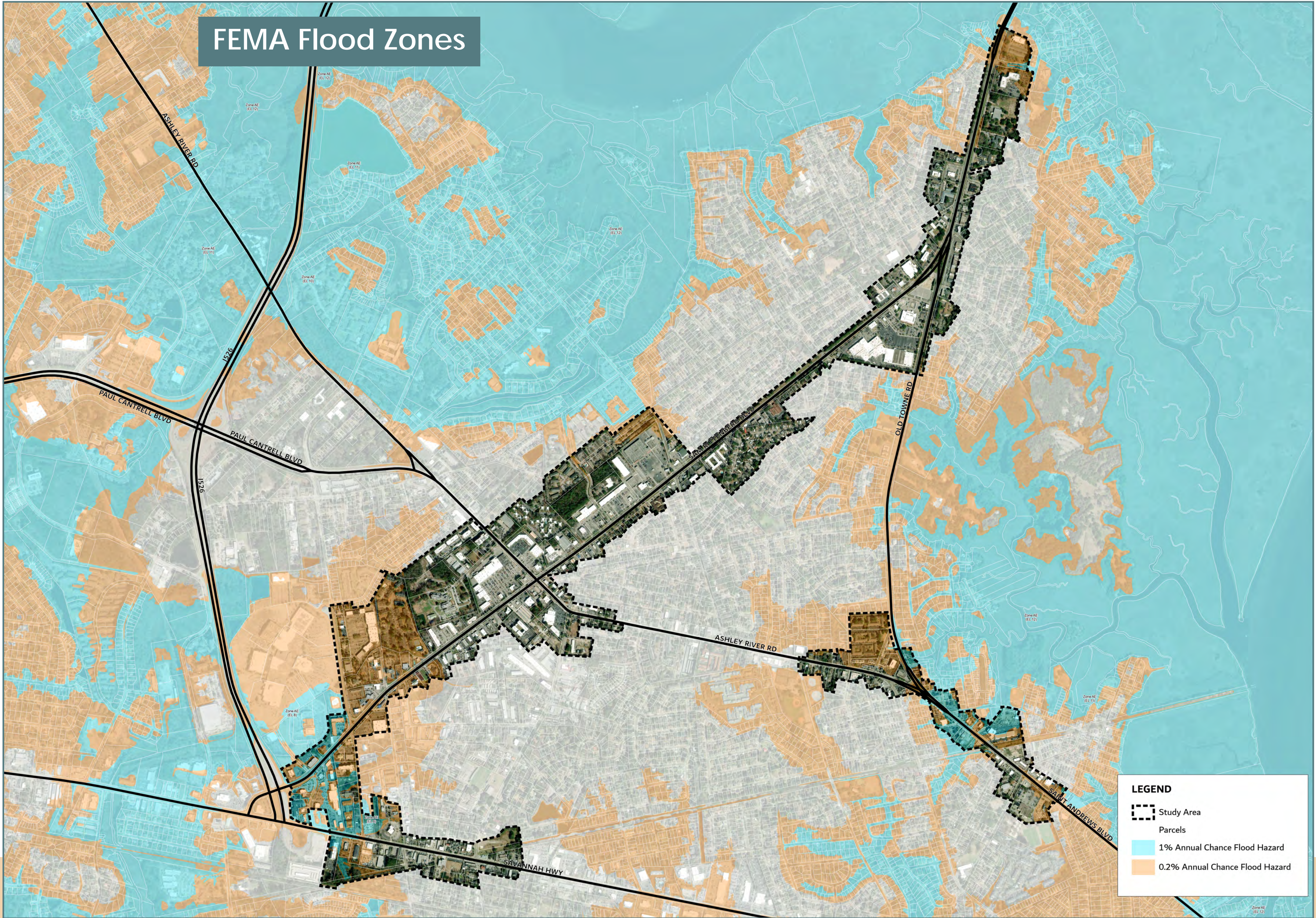
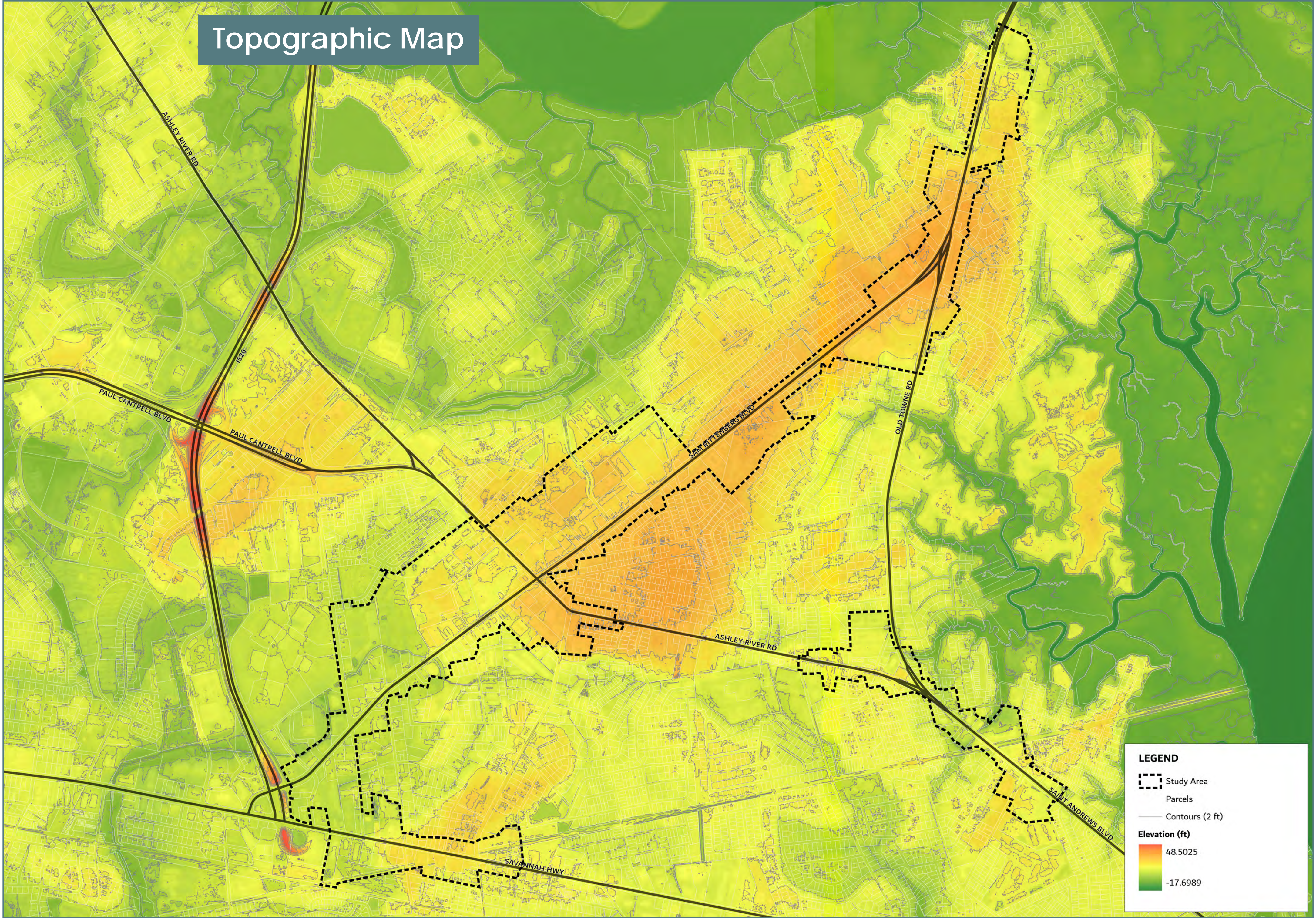
EXISTING CONDITIONS





WEST ASHLEY MIXED-USE CORRIDORS

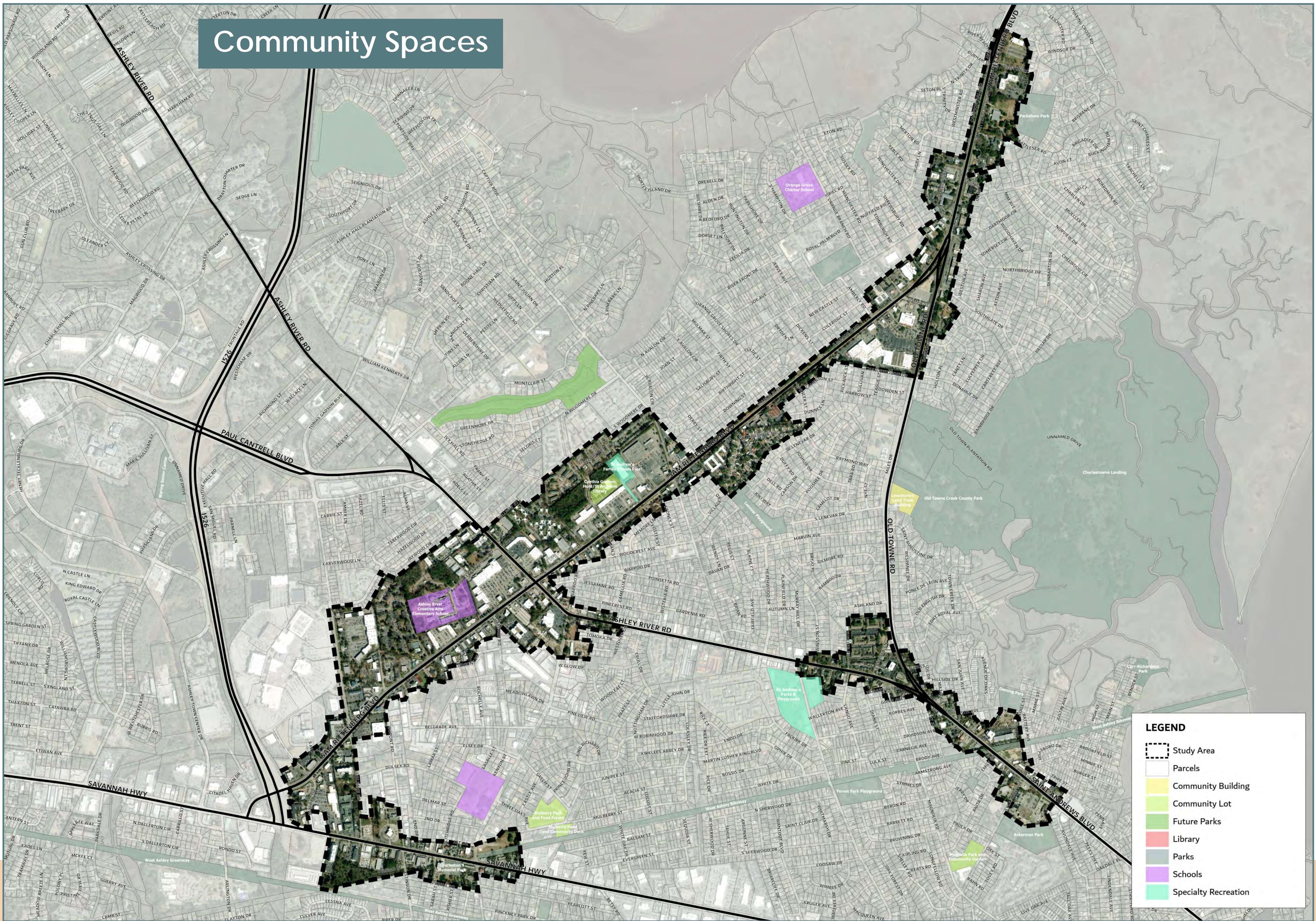
EXISTING CONDITIONS





WEST ASHLEY MIXED-USE CORRIDORS

EXISTING CONDITIONS





DRAFT CODE IDEA: WALKABLE & CONNECTED

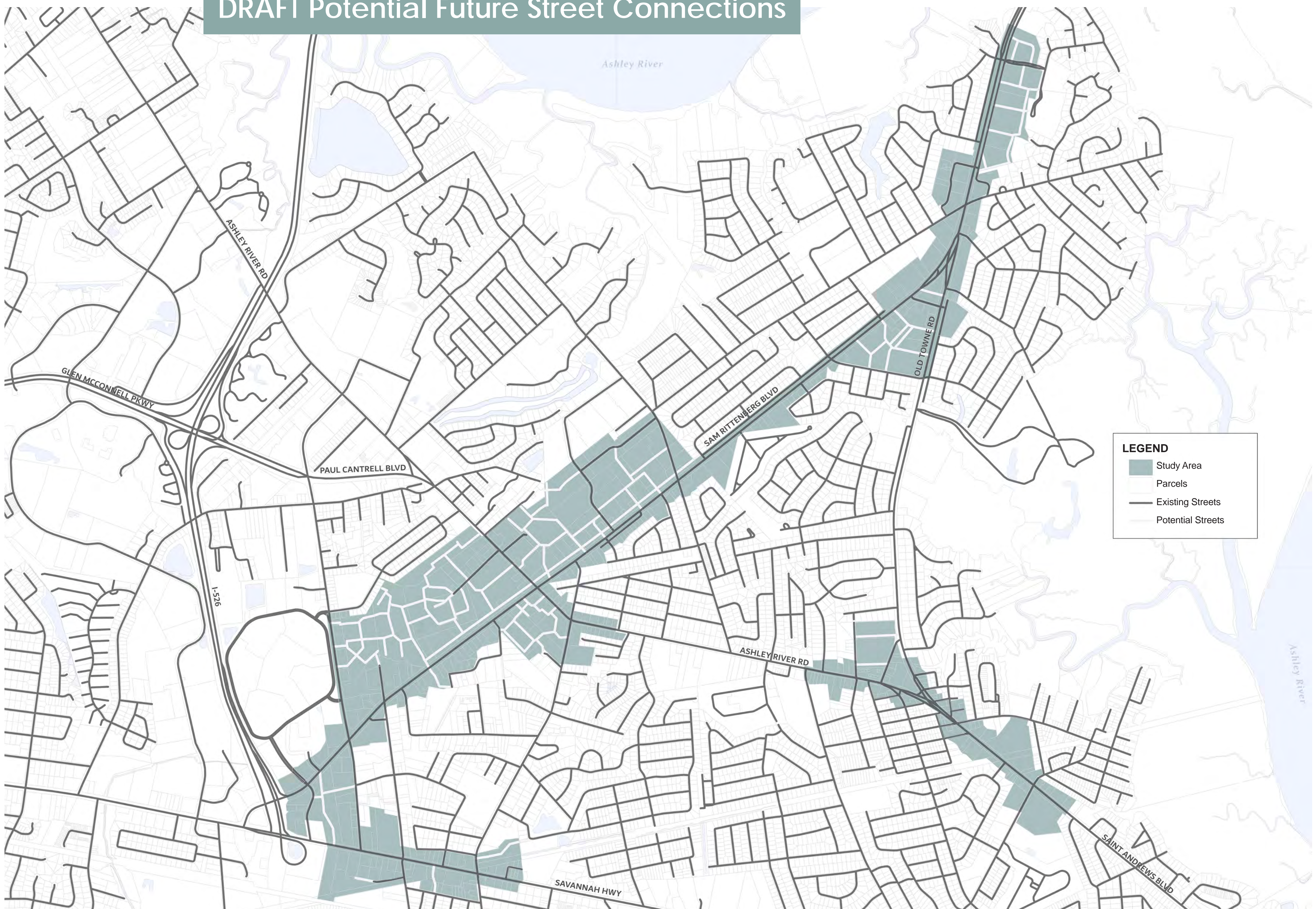


Visualizing street connections with potential future redevelopment

New standards for West Ashley's mixed-use corridors should shape development that is **walkable and connected**. Ideas include:

- Creating a street network by requiring **minimum block sizes**
- Including **street design standards** that require new complete streets
- Providing **building design standards** that support pedestrian comfort; this may include façade transparency (no blank walls); frontage standards (how buildings meet the sidewalk); and basic building proportion/massing requirements

DRAFT Potential Future Street Connections





DRAFT CODE IDEA: PREDICTABLE BUILDING FORM



Visualizing form-based sub-district areas with potential future redevelopment

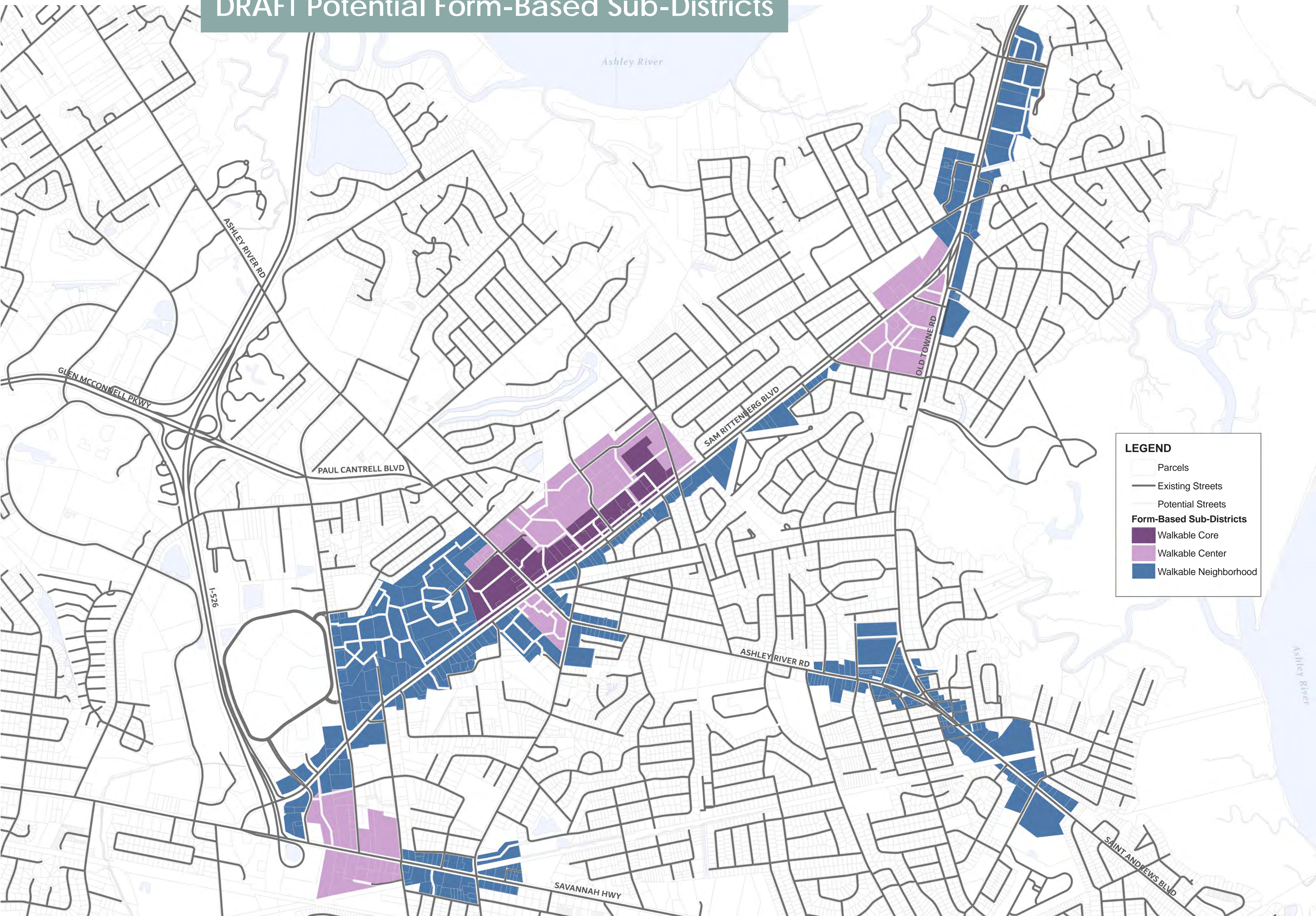


New development in walkable form-based sub-districts could vary. Some areas may allow greater intensity, a larger mix of uses and attached or detached buildings; and some areas may allow primarily detached buildings with greater setbacks and a more limited mix of uses.

New standards for West Ashley’s mixed-use corridors can shape **predictable building form** by using form-based sub-districts to specify key urban design characteristics, such as building height, building massing and setbacks, parking location, and permitted uses. All areas will allow some mix of uses, but will vary in development intensity and character. The sub-districts (in decreasing level of intensity) may include:

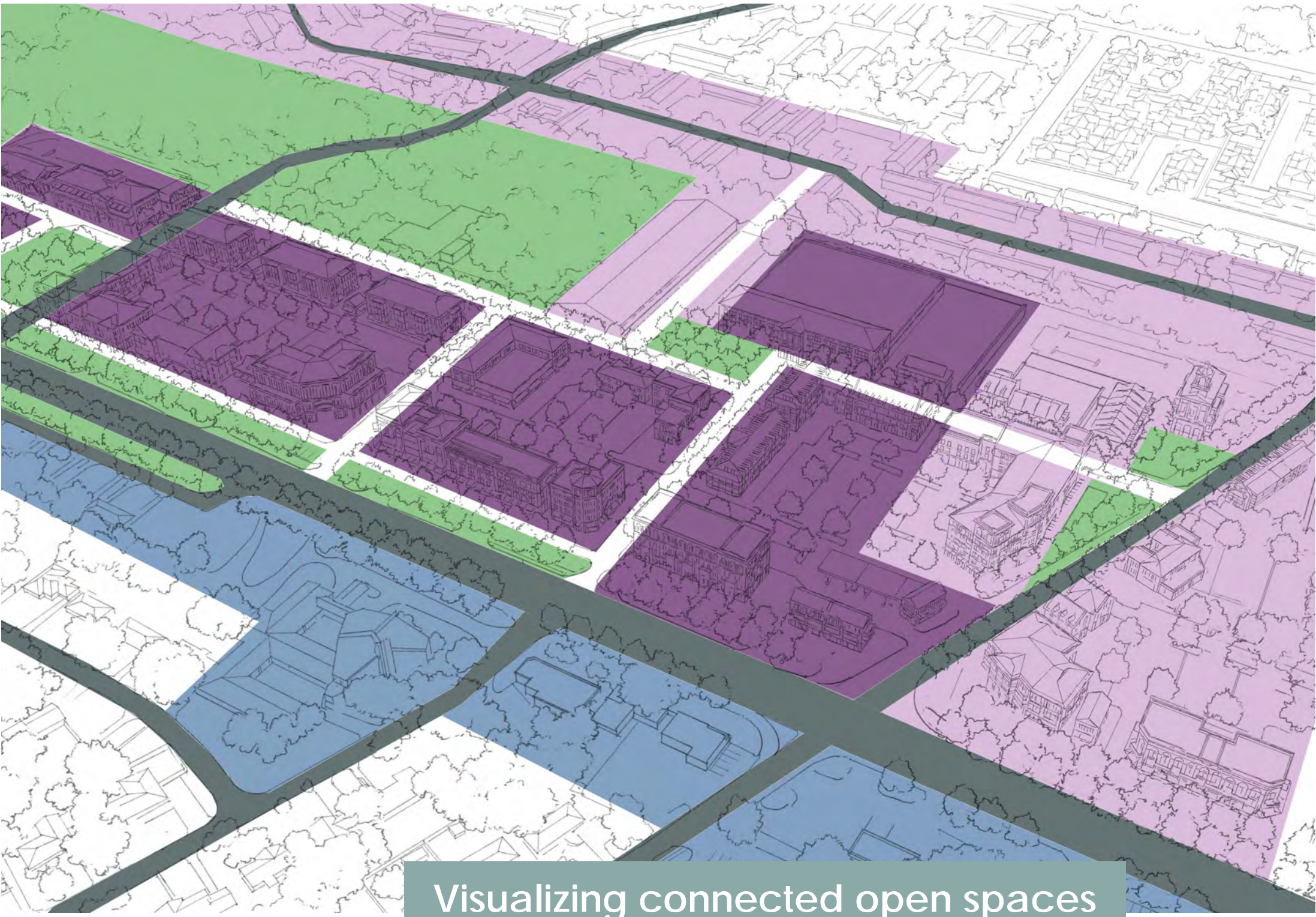
- Walkable Core
- Walkable Center
- Walkable Neighborhood

DRAFT Potential Form-Based Sub-Districts

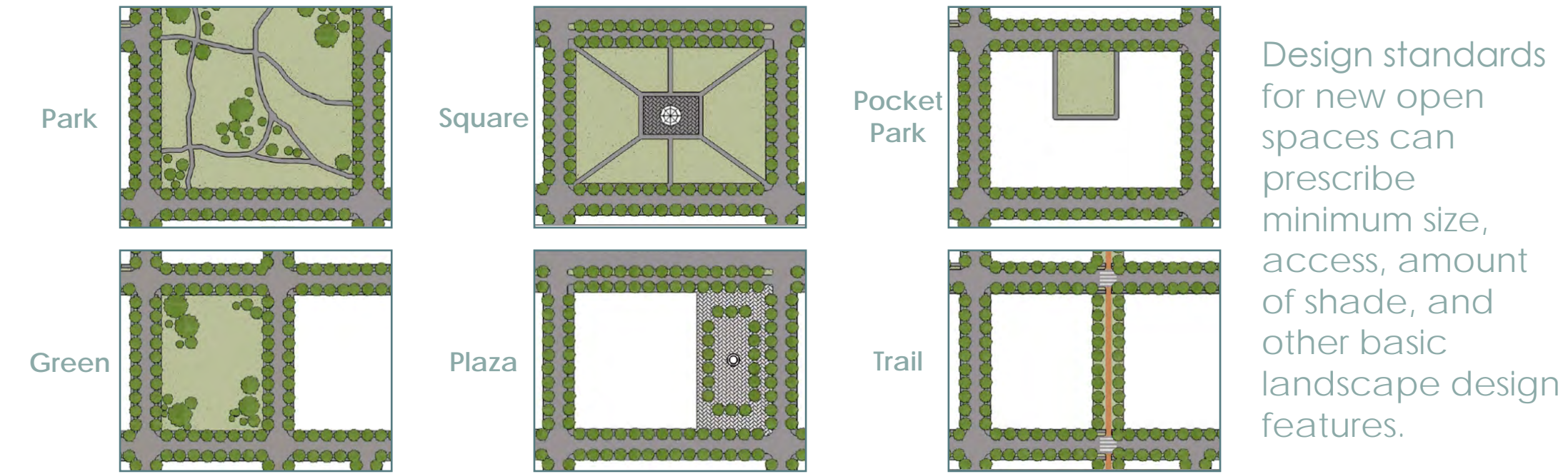




DRAFT CODE IDEA: CONNECTED OPEN SPACE



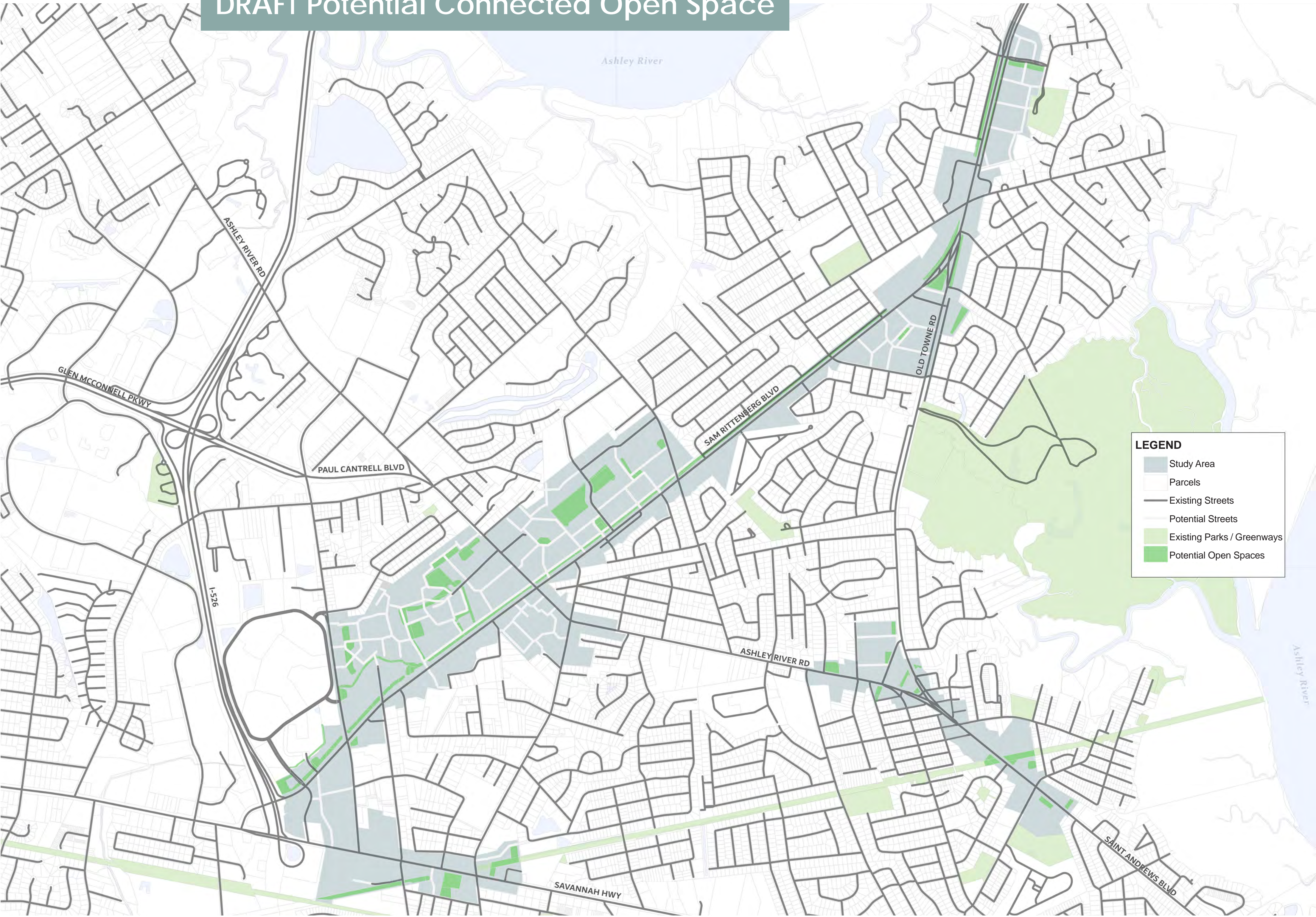
Visualizing connected open spaces with potential future redevelopment



New standards for West Ashley’s mixed-use corridors should shape development that includes **connected open space**. Ideas include:

- Requiring new development to provide high-quality, connected open spaces through **minimum percentage requirements and location standards** that consider connectivity to open space on surrounding parcels, water flow/topography, and existing public spaces
- Including design standards for: **parks, greens, squares, plazas, pocket parks/ playgrounds, and trails**

DRAFT Potential Connected Open Space





DRAFT CODE IDEA: TABLE OF CONTENTS

West Ashley Mixed-Use Corridor Overlay

1. Overview

- Purpose & Intent, Applicability
- Approval Process

2. Regulating Maps

District boundaries, sub-districts, potential street and open space networks

3. Building Form Standards

Building height, massing and placement, parking standards, and permitted uses

- Walkable Core
- Walkable Center
- Walkable Neighborhood

4. General Standards

- Building and Site Design
Building façade composition, human proportions, building frontage and design elements
- Incentives
Additional building height/size or other exceptions in exchange for community benefits?

5. Street Standards

- Required Connectivity
Minimum block size, connectivity to adjacent parcels
- Street Design
Required dimensions and typical cross sections with desired streetscape elements (i.e., street trees, landscape areas, bicycle paths, wide sidewalks)

6. Open Space Standards

- Required Open Space
Minimum percentage, location / connectivity requirements
- Open Space Design
Size and layout requirements for each open space type

Tell us your thoughts!

What else should be included as part of the new standards for West Ashley’s mixed-use corridors? What questions do you have?



SHAPING OUR CORRIDORS CHARRETTE

VISUALIZING CHANGE



Existing Conditions

Does the illustration match your vision for potential redevelopment on Savannah Highway near Wappoo Road? What would you change, and why?

Tell us your thoughts about:

- Mix of building types
- Building heights
- Front setback / relationship of buildings to streets
- Parking (location / configuration)
- New streets and open spaces
- Stormwater retention
- Other considerations?



What if? Potential Future Conditions

Some of what was heard at the charrette:

"Bring back the Dupont Crossing commercial hub"

"Orient buildings to bikeway - not parking"

"Comfortable with height, massing, feels appropriate and respectful to surroundings"

"Like parking hidden behind buildings"

"Prioritize corners at key intersection"



A vision for the Savannah Highway / Wappo Road Intersection (Plan West Ashley, pg 2.36-2.37)

Plan West Ashley illustrates reuse of this key intersection with new buildings that front streets and the Bikeway, with parking to the rear.





SHAPING OUR CORRIDORS CHARRETTE

VISUALIZING CHANGE

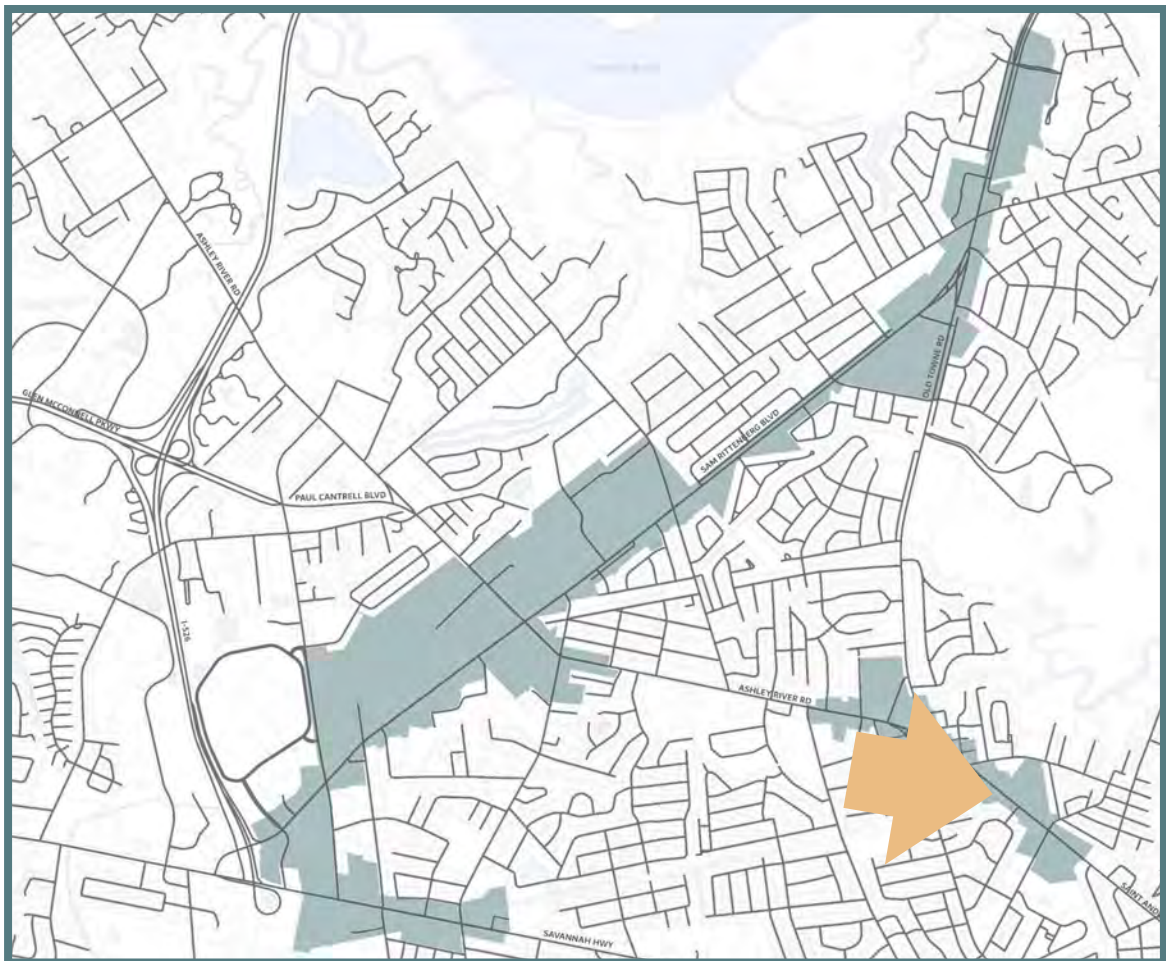


Existing Conditions

Does the illustration match your vision for potential redevelopment on St. Andrews Boulevard near the Bikeway? What would you change, and why?

Tell us your thoughts about:

- Mix of building types
- Building heights
- Front setback / relationship of buildings to streets
- Parking (location / configuration)
- New streets and open spaces
- Stormwater retention
- Other considerations?



What if? Potential Future Conditions

Some of what was heard at the charrette:

"Mixed-use good for multimodal corridor"

"Add transit stop shelters"

"Tree-lined street, bury power lines"

"Include public art"

"Density not obvious in well-designed buildings"

"Connectivity and safe crossings"

NEIGHBORHOOD EDGE

These areas are found on the periphery of existing neighborhoods and future neighborhoods. Uses vary widely but are mainly those things that residents need such as offices, stores and restaurants that are typically found along roads and transit routes forming the edges of neighborhoods rather than the centers. While traditionally threaded along major roads, over time, these areas could transition to more urban compact design patterns and contain more residential uses; especially along major transit routes. Residential densities can range from 6-20 units per acre.

Future Land Use (Charleston City Plan)

City Plan designates the area along St. Andrews Boulevard near the West Ashley Bikeway as "Neighborhood Edge"; the future land uses and development character envisioned is described above.



SHAPING OUR CORRIDORS CHARRETTE

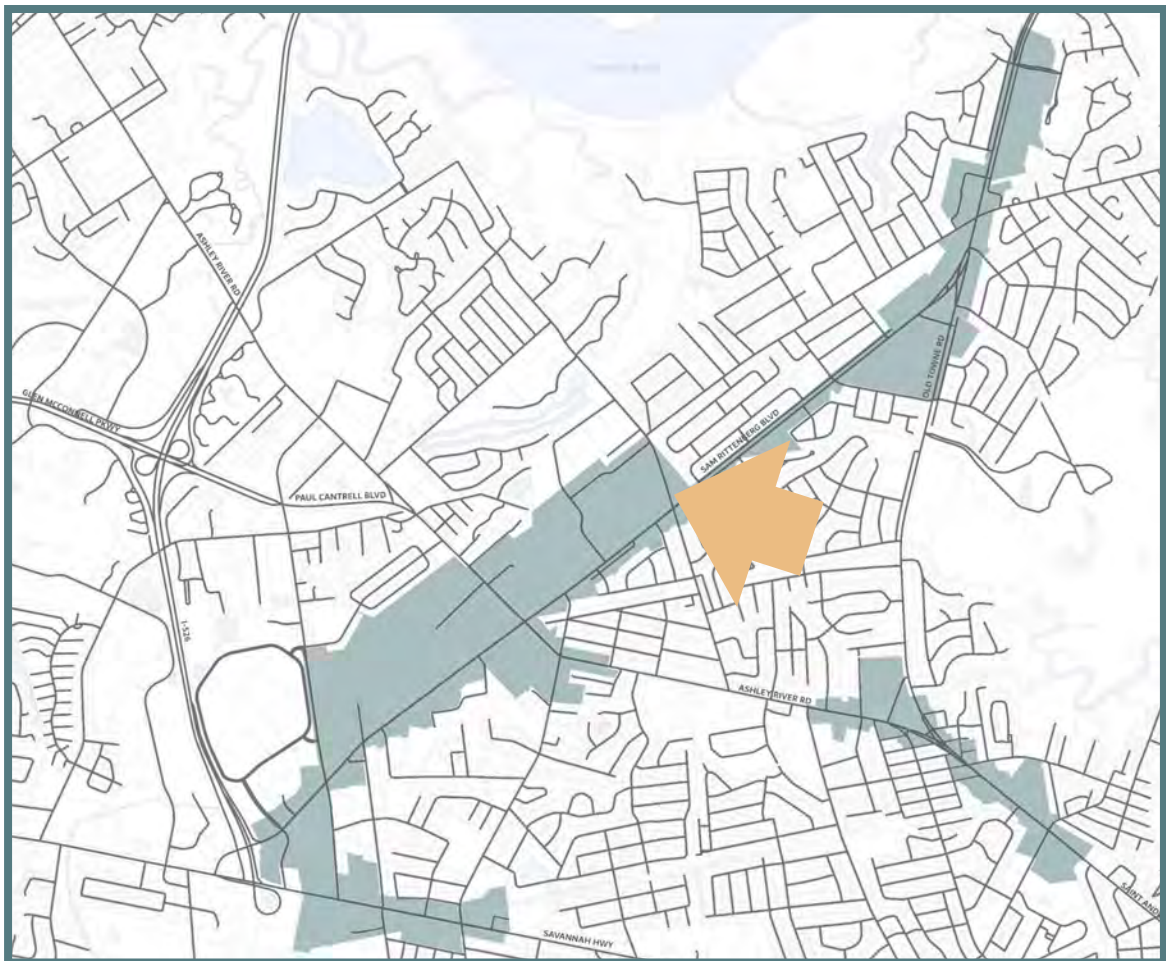
VISUALIZING CHANGE



Does the illustration match your vision for potential redevelopment along Sam Rittenberg Boulevard? What would you change, and why?

Tell us your thoughts about:

- Mix of building types
- Building heights
- Front setback / relationship of buildings to streets
- Parking (location / configuration)
- New streets and open spaces
- Stormwater retention
- Other considerations?



Existing Conditions



What if? Potential Future Conditions

Some of what was heard at the charrette:

"Bike lanes through this part of West Ashley"

"Lower speed limit"

"Encourage higher-end hotels; more restaurants"

"Maybe 2-3 stories for the next 50 years"

"Upper level setback above 3 stories"



A vision for new development along Sam Rittenberg Boulevard (Plan West Ashley, pg 2.39)

Plan West Ashley shows parking lot drive aisles converted to a network of walkable streets faced by the fronts of new buildings. New community open spaces are created; environmentally-sensitive areas are preserved.



SHAPING OUR CORRIDORS CHARRETTE COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Charrette Events

July 22-24, 2024, a multi-day charrette was held to gather input about a potential form-based district for West Ashley. At the **Community Input Session**, participants gathered around tables to mark-up base maps and illustrations of potential future conditions, describing their vision for future development. Interested community members were able to drop in to the **Open Planning Studio** from 9am to 6pm each day to talk with the planning team. Stakeholder meetings were held to discuss important topics such as Housing; Transportation; Environment; Arts, Culture and Preservation; and Economic Development.



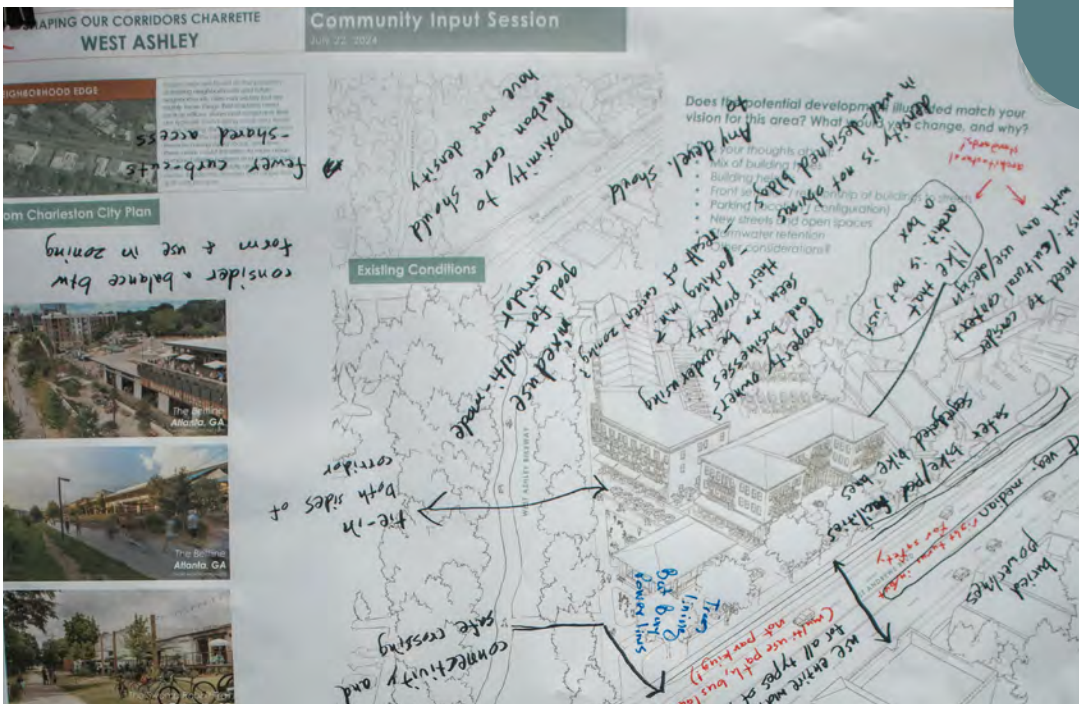
"Utilize parking areas on Sam Rittenberg that are for the most part empty of cars"

"Create sense of place; create places to linger, hangout and meet neighbors; show we care about West Ashley with good design"

"I like the ideas of having pedestrian safe areas and ways to access shopping, restaurants, trails, etc."

"The prospects of a vibrant corridor, multi-use [development] along Sam Rittenberg is exciting"

"I'm not opposed to more density – you get more tax dollars and can have more green space; also encourages public transit"



Recurring Themes from Charrette Community Input:

Housing

- Support for infill, redevelopment of commercial sites to add housing, and for mixed-use generally
- Height and density are okay, if designs are good
- Harness the “power of cute” – make it attractive
- Proximity to non-residential needs and parks is essential

Mobility

- Support for bike/walk networks and access; connect it, safely
- Eliminate or reduce minimum parking requirements
- Park-once environments (mixed-use)
- Safety is more important than traffic flow
- Walkable neighborhoods and corridors
- Street trees

Livability

- Support for mixed-use and neighborhood serving commerce; walkable convenience; small scale
- Desire to connect to the Bikeway, Greenway, market
- Desire for strengthened sense of place, better appearance
- Desire for more gathering spaces, pocket parks, trees
- Wider range of housing types, including attainable/affordable

Environment

- Support for peeling back excess asphalt (parking)
- Secure open space for conservation and active park uses
- Reduce car dependency; make corridors cross-able; connect greenways; improve transit
- Shade tree canopy / address urban heat island effect
- Increase permeable surfaces