



East Savannah Gateway

CHARTING THE COURSE

WORKING TEAM CHARRETTE | CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS PLANNING INITIATIVE
Urban Collage, Inc. | Quadel Consulting Corporation | The Communities Group | Housing Authority of Savannah | April 2013



East Savannah Gateway CHARTING THE COURSE

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IDEAS AND THEMES TO UNITE ESG AREA IN TO ONE.

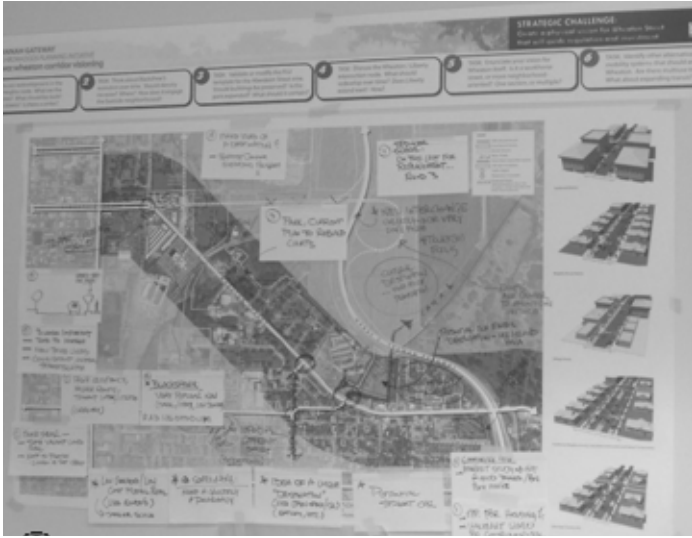


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East Savannah Gateway

CHARTING THE COURSE

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On Friday March 22 2013, a group of stakeholders was convened in the training room of the Housing Authority of Savannah to discuss issues and ideas related to physical redevelopment in the East Savannah Gateway. The goal of the work session was to map out a vision for the ESG that could inform the direction of the Transformation Plan, and guide redevelopment / revitalization planning for strategic HAS properties along Wheaton Street including Fred Wessels Homes, the Hitch Village site, and the Edgar Blackshear community. The session lasted approximately four hours and culminated in the observations and thoughts captured below.

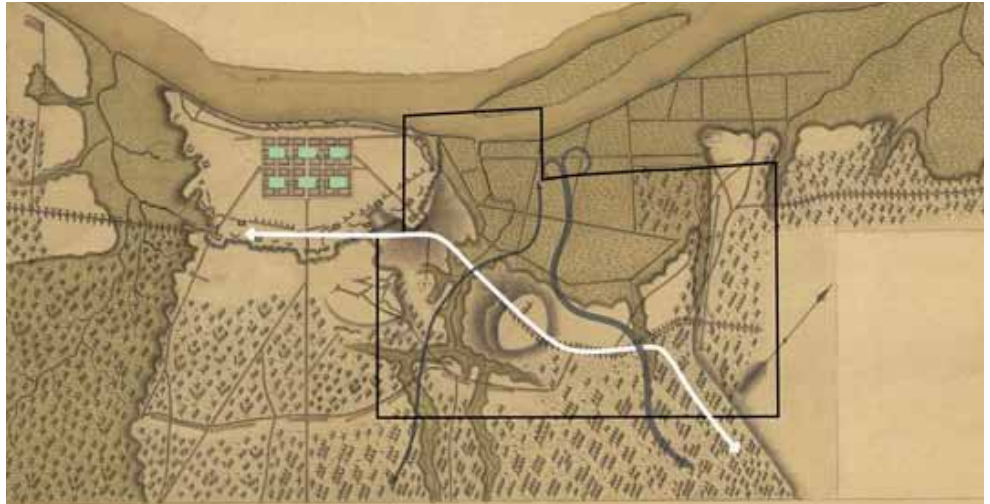
CHART 1: AREA

STRATEGIC CHALLENGE:

COME UP WITH A THEME OR IDEA THAT CAN UNITE THE VARIOUS ESG NEIGHBORHOODS INTO ONE

The first conversation

was set against the growing desire for Choice Neighborhoods to be identified as one unique place with an identity embraced by its residents, even if the planning covers several different local (sub) neighborhoods. ESG overlaps no less than ten Savannah neighborhoods; and so the group was encouraged to come up with a unifier that could transcend individual boundaries in a new construct.



RESULTING CONCEPTS

The attraction to streets and natural features as neighborhood identifiers is not surprising given that the ESG historically was not a distinct place like the Oglethorpe city, but was the meeting of two larger landscapes – the forest, and the river as embodied by wetland rice fields. Where the center is drawn now was earlier an edge, traced by the line of what used to be the “Road to Thunderbolt”. Today’s Liberty-Wheaton-Skidaway corridor overlays this road, shown in white in the 1779 map above. Through discussion, the group intuitively sensed the answer: that this road can no longer act as simply a conduit but has to be remade as a place.

As a result of this, three conceptual areas were identified:

- **Gateway (All The Way)**
- **East Side**
- **Center / Place**

THE GROUP WAS ABLE TO BETTER ENUNCIATE POSSIBLE THEMES WHEN THINKING AT A SMALLER SCALE OR IN MORE SPECIFICS:

- Water / wetlands / river (boat horns can be heard in ESG)
- Key streets including Wheaton-Liberty, President, and Gwinnett
- Intensified development around / near Spencer Elementary
- A signature “destination” or park to raise the image of Wheaton



Participants also identified other assets that the Transformation Plan could be built on, as well as challenges that need to be addressed and missing elements that might be considered:

ASSETS, CHALLENGES, & MISSING ELEMENTS

ASSETS:

- Cultural Resources including historic churches
- DFCS Facility
- Existing Enterprise Zone
- Existing Parks Including Low Park
- Future Bike Connections through ESG
- Hitch Village Site
- Natural Resources- With Amenities Like Boardwalks
- Neighborhood Resource Center
- Randy's BBQ
- River Street/ Savannah River
- Savannah Entrepreneurial Center
- Savannah Gardens
- Savannah Golf Course Market Rate Buyer/ Renter Amenity
- Savannah High School
- Savannah River Landing But Needs Affordable Housing
- Trustee's Garden Area
- W.W. Law Community Center Opportunity to expand programs

CHALLENGES:

- Atlas Waste brownfield site (no money for remediation)
- Homeless encampments
- Truman Parkway (a barrier)

MISSING ELEMENTS:



Fully Stocked Library: System interested in satellite locations. Operating expenses an issue



"Walkable" Grocery/Retail: Off Wheaton Street to serve community



Recreational Facilities: i.e.: YMCA



Jobs: Big Box Retail Sites



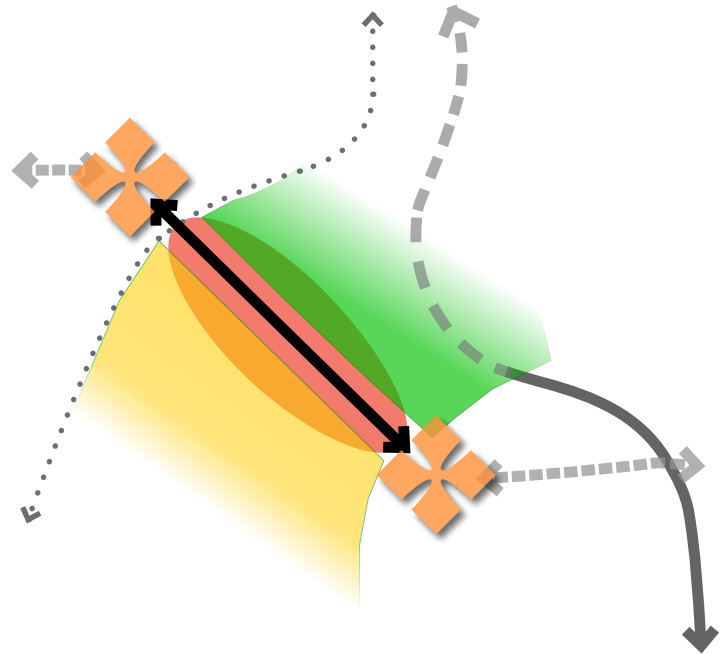
CHART 2: CORRIDOR

STRATEGIC CHALLENGE:

CREATE A PHYSICAL VISION FOR WHEATON STREET THAT WILL GUIDE REGULATION & INVESTMENT

Wheaton Street

has been a subject of revitalization initiatives for several years, but no comprehensive physical visioning has ever been undertaken. Choice Neighborhoods presents the opportunity to create this vision, particularly since the larger neighborhood narrative is also about reclaiming Wheaton Street as a center. The second conversation used the MPC's recent work on the Unified Zoning Ordinance, and the 2007 President Street Concept Study, as points of departure in creating this vision. Three topics were discussed: future land use / development, corridor mobility, and the street section.



KEY OUTCOMES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

FUTURE LAND USE/DEVELOPMENT

- Wagner Heights neighborhood as rehab / infill
- Housing focus for HAS "commercial site"
- Catalyst development site east of Spencer ES (potential non-retail destination like Islands YMCA)
- Cultural / tourism destination at old rice fields
- Preservation at Blackshear is important (popular with families, high occupancy, good return)
- Some intensification is appropriate at Blackshear along Wheaton
- Plans to rebuild courts at Blackshear basketball complex
- Grocery / pharmacy needed somewhere in corridor (or nearby)
- Liberty-Randolph-Wheaton area should evolve in to a destination over time

MOBILITY

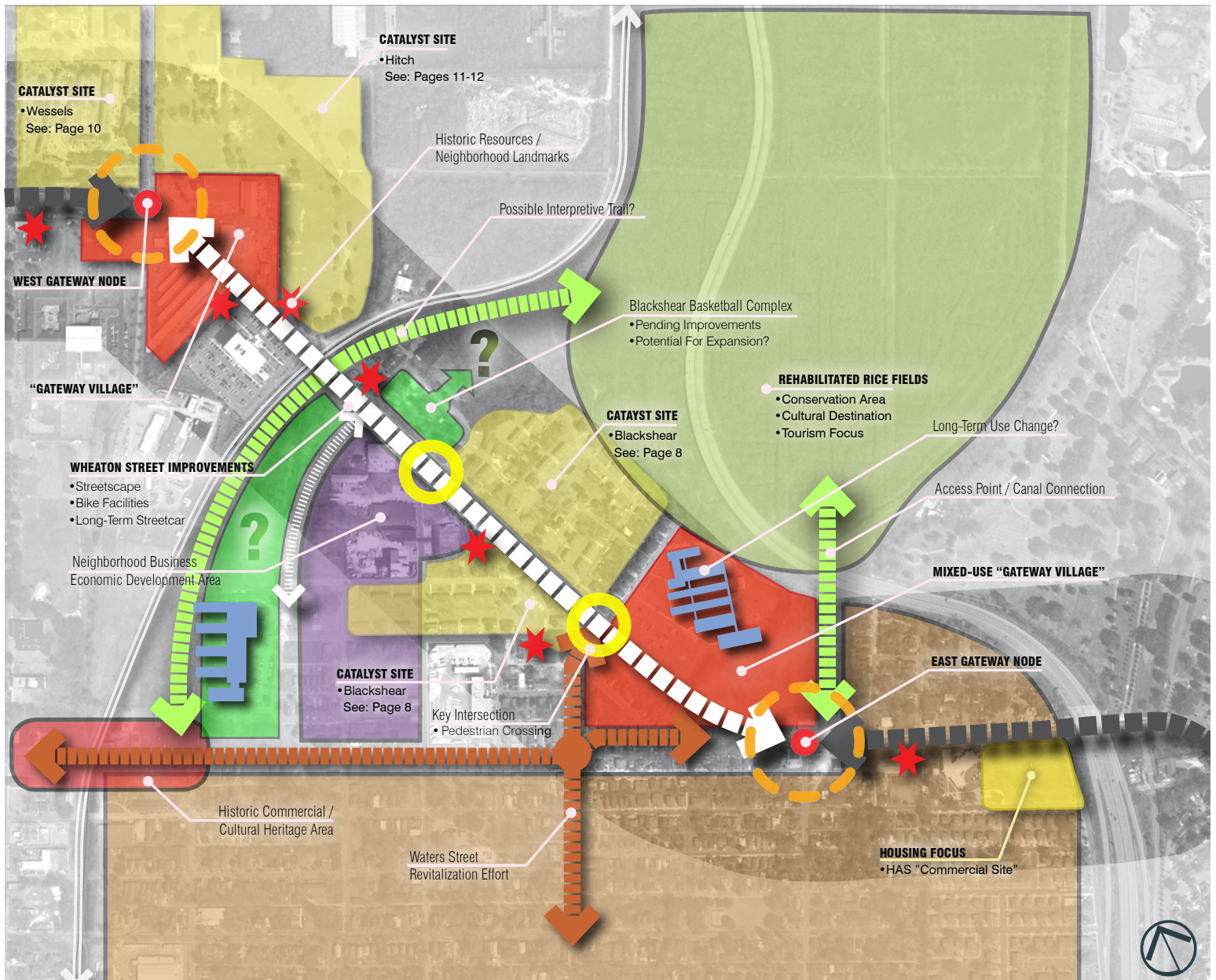
- Future bike facilities along Wheaton, President, Gwinnett, Truman
- Possible trail access to wetlands at (Cedar Street) canal
- City streetscape / revitalization initiative on Waters Avenue
- Potential (long-term) streetcar on Wheaton, Waters
- New Truman Parkway interchange unlikely (or very long-term)

STREET SECTION

- Three lanes facilitate horses (carriage tour trade) without tying up traffic
- Consistent, unifying streetscape with pedestrian / traffic separation needed
- New bike lanes needed

WHEATON STREET VISION / FRAMEWORK PLAN

The diagram below is the first cut at a development and public space framework that seeks to reorient Wheaton Street away from a traffic conduit and into a place. It features new mixed-use and residential development at two gateway nodes, and infill improvements that mediate between the wetland conservation area and the East Side neighborhood.



This concept incorporates the input of the session participants and the ideas of the design and development team.





BROADER CONNECTIONS

While the Wheaton Street Corridor, the adjacent neighborhoods and the wetland area are the defining elements of the East Savannah Gateway Choice Neighborhood, they occupy only the western half of the study area. The redevelopment of Savannah Gardens and ongoing investment along Pennsylvania Avenue makes it imperative to strengthen connections between east and west. President Street, Gwinnett Street and East Henry Street are all important links; but Gwinnett is a priority for pedestrian improvements because of its direct relationship with the Wheaton district and an emerging neighborhood commercial node at Pennsylvania.



CHART 3: SITES

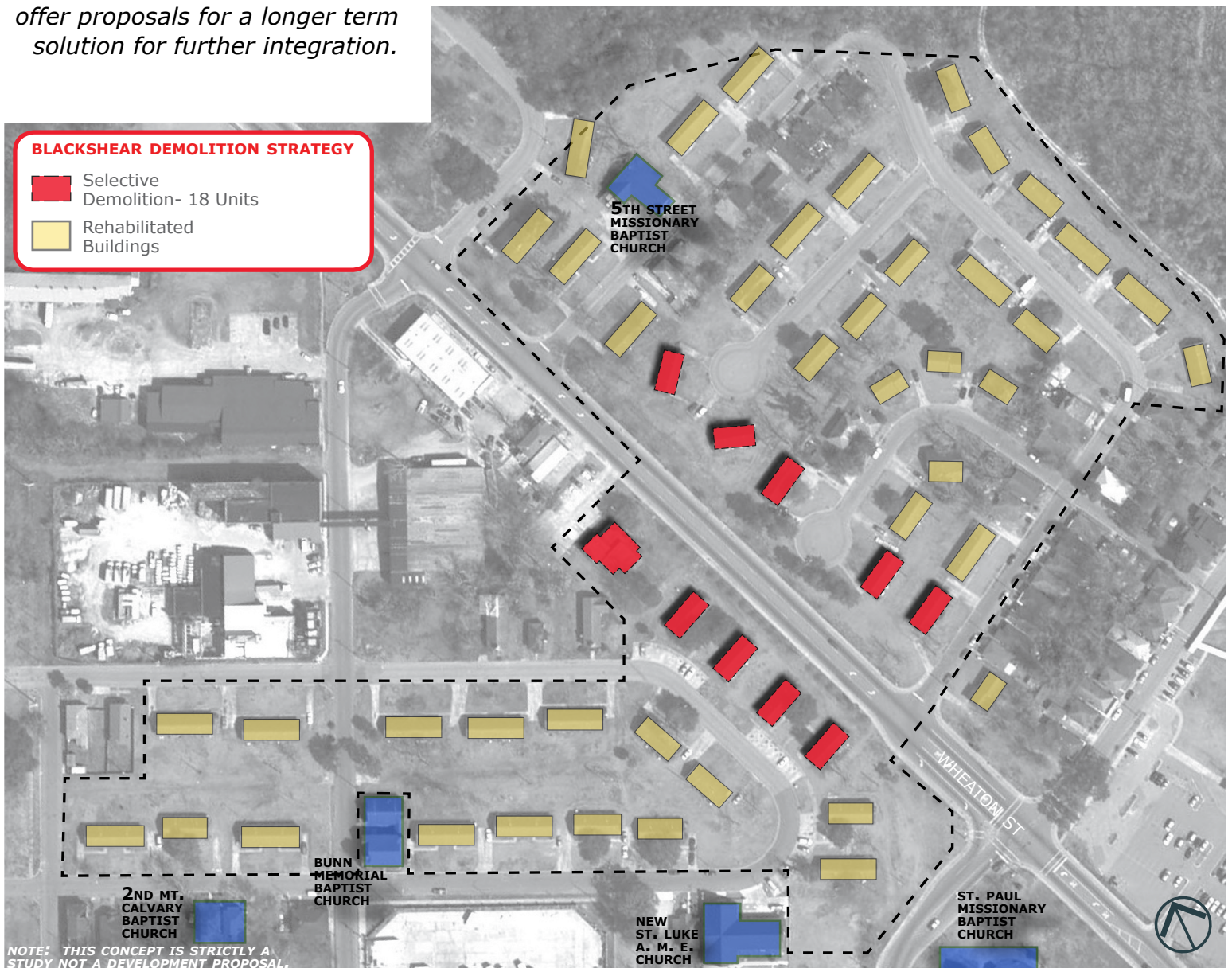
STRATEGIC CHALLENGE:

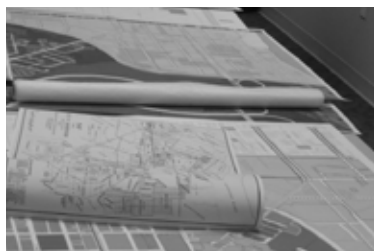
SET THE CONCEPTUAL DIRECTION FOR THE HITCH, WESSELS, & BLACKSHEAR REVITALIZATIONS

The target sites stand as the most tangible catalysts within the ESG area. The ideas for Hitch establish a fused language of connectivity to the constitutional framework of the city and its natural assets while assisting in the "branding" of the Wheaton Street corridor. Subsequently, the Wessels and Blackshear revitalization visions offer proposals for a longer term solution for further integration.

BLACKSHEAR STRATEGY

This conceptual diagram suggests that revitalizing the frontage along Wheaton street can make way for replacement units that address the street while also creating enough space for the potential introduction of new units and roads.





WESSELS STRATEGY

This concept suggests that the revitalization of Wessels can come about with strategic surgical moves. By replacing a minimal amount of units and rehabilitating the rest, it allows for greater connectivity and the implementation of new units.





CHART 3: SITES

HITCH OPTION "A"

This concept studies the possibility of small, connected blocks by utilizing offsite land as the location for the community center/ library. This creates an opening for two more housing blocks and greater connectivity to the west.



Option "A"
 Total Units: +/-388
 NOT INCLUDING OFFSITE

NOTE: THIS CONCEPT IS STRICTLY A STUDY NOT A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL.



CHART 3: SITES

HITCH OPTION "B"

This concept follows the same notion of Option "A" but maintains all development onsite. In order to achieve a unit count close to the first option, two blocks must be consolidated.



Option "B"
Total Units: +/-384

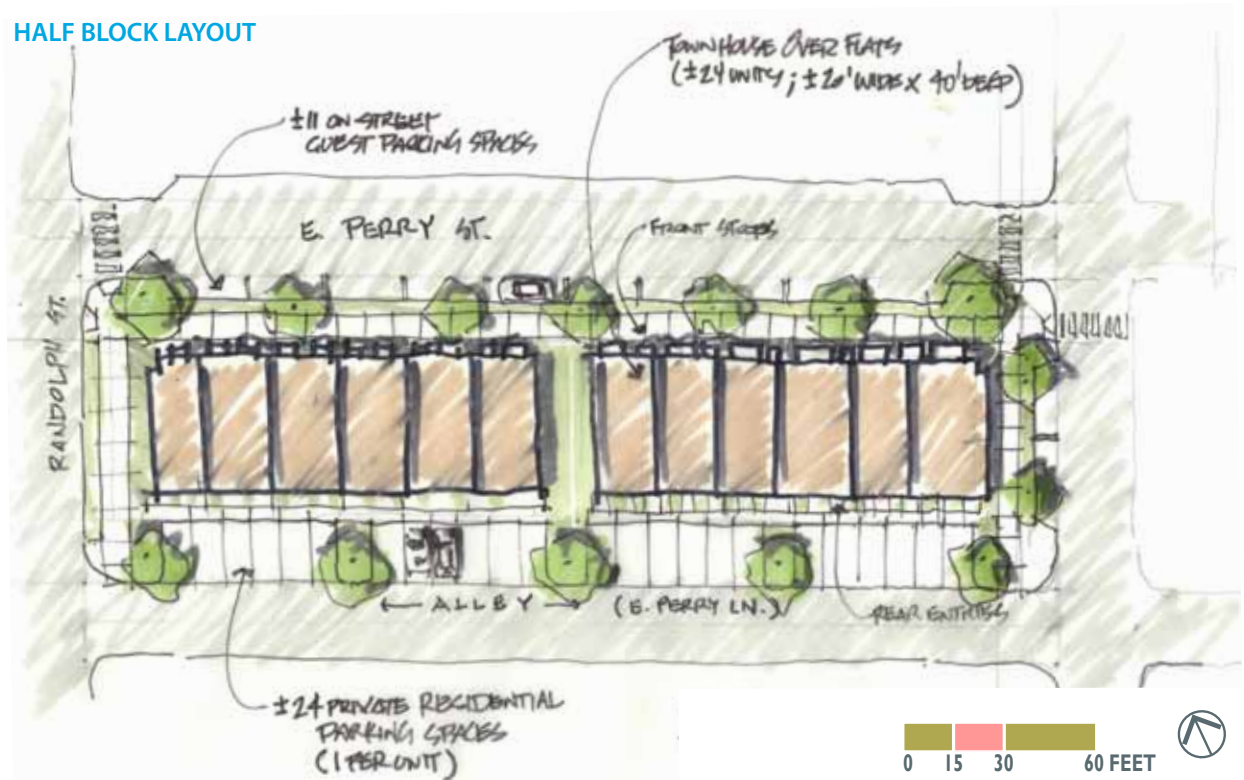
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CHART 3: SITES

SAMPLE DENSITY TESTS

HALF BLOCK LAYOUT



FULL BLOCK LAYOUT

