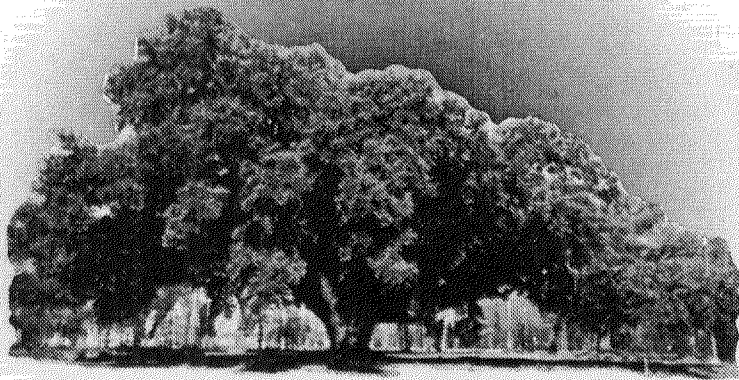


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The Glenn McConnell Parkway Workshop

March 1999

The
Glenn McConnell Parkway
Workshop

March 1999



**Glenn McConnell Parkway
Planning Area**

Glenn McConnell Parkway Planning Workshop

Introduction

On March 1-3, 1999 the City of Charleston Planning and Urban Development Department conducted a planning workshop with local residents, developers, property owners, and others interested in the Glenn McConnell Parkway section of West Ashley. The workshop was sponsored by the City of Charleston, The South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, the South Carolina Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, and the Sea Grant Consortium. This report presents the results of this workshop.

The Glenn McConnell planning workshop and the results presented here are a *first step* toward ensuring quality growth of the area. The next step will occur immediately as these ideas are integrated into the citywide comprehensive plan which will be completed in 1999.

- Workshop Sponsors -

City of Charleston
Department of Planning &
Urban Development

South Carolina
Coastal Conservation League

South Carolina Office of Ocean
& Coastal Resource Management

Sea Grant Consortium

- Acknowledgments -

Mayor Joseph P. Riley
Charleston City Council

City of Charleston
Department of Planning &
Urban Development

Yvonne Fortenberry

Tim Keane

Christopher Morgan

Teri Norris

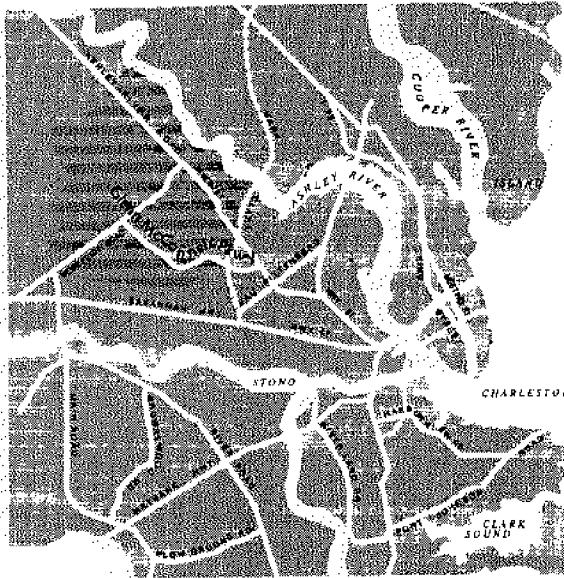
Urban Strategies Inc.

Andrea Gabor

Michel Trochme

Walter Kulash

The City of Charleston thanks
Pastor Robert L. Cox and
St. Andrews Parish United Methodist Church
for opening their church
to the community for this workshop.



Study Area



Background

In Charleston, West Ashley means the land between the Ashley and Stono Rivers. A natural connection between the rivers splits West Ashley at Church and Long Branch Creeks. Road corridors dominate the built environment; east to west, Savannah Highway (Hwy. 17) and Ashley River Road (Hwy. 61) and north to south, Sam Rittenberg Boulevard and the Mark Clark Expressway (I-526).

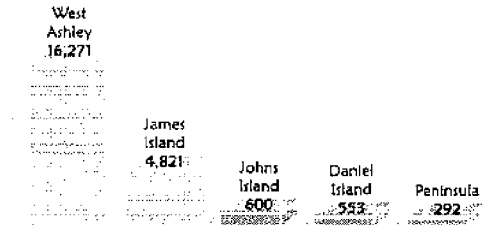
Ashley River Road is the city's most historic route, connecting Charleston to plantations on the Ashley River and beyond to Summerville. For centuries, citizens have been trying to protect the scenic beauty of Ashley River Road. In late 1986 and early 1987, the City of Charleston, Charleston County and Dorchester County adopted a management plan for the Ashley River Road corridor. This plan supported the construction of a new road, running roughly parallel to Ashley River Road, from Charleston to Summerville. The plan further recommended that this new road, not Ashley River Road, be the magnet for more intense development in West Ashley. The first segments of this new road (about 3.5 miles) have now been built from Ashley River Road, just east of I-526, to Bees Ferry Road. Plans call for the road to continue about 12 miles further west to Highway 165 in Dorchester County. Public sentiment that the road be a green corridor is reflected in its name; the Glenn McConnell Parkway

Highway 61 Corridor Growth Management Plan 1986-87

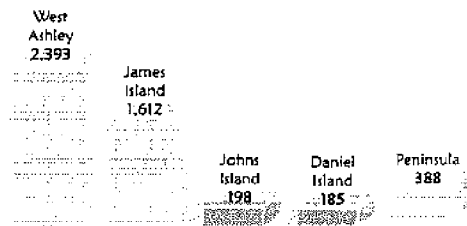
- The planned 61 parkway (Glenn McConnell Parkway) should be constructed as soon as possible up to Drayton Hall Middle School with a subsequent phasing extending up to 165 at Cooke Crossroads.
- Recommend higher densities for properties having frontage on or that are adjacent to the planned 61 parkway (Glenn McConnell Parkway).
- Commercial cores, designed with consideration given to a village character, should be restricted to major designated intersections with the planned 61 parkway (Glenn McConnell Parkway).

In 1999, suburban development has spread west along Ashley River Road about two miles west of Bees Ferry Road. Along Savannah Highway, little suburban development has occurred west of Long Branch Creek. Glenn McConnell Parkway has become the most desirable suburban location for new retail development in Charleston. New office development is also occurring, in particular medical offices attracted by a new St. Francis Hospital and the growing population of the area. New residential development includes single family homes and apartments.

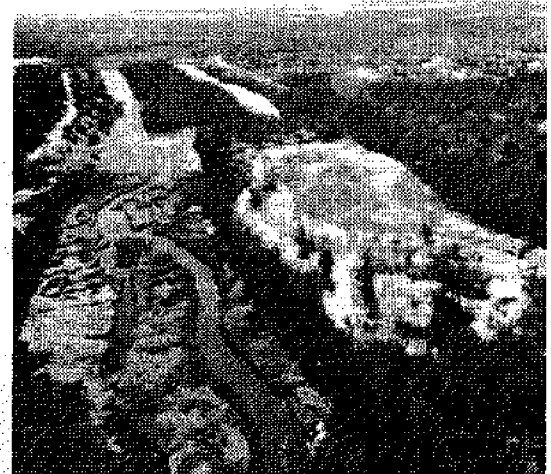
Like many parts of the Lowcountry, the natural environment of West Ashley is very sensitive. In addition to the watercourses that define the area, wetlands are abundant. Unfortunately, the very features that attract people to West Ashley are often damaged, or at least hidden, by resulting land development activities. One piece of open land which will remain visible and accessible to everyone is the 99 acre West Ashley Park (the City's largest) on the north side of the Glenn McConnell Parkway.



City Population Growth by Area 1990 - 1999



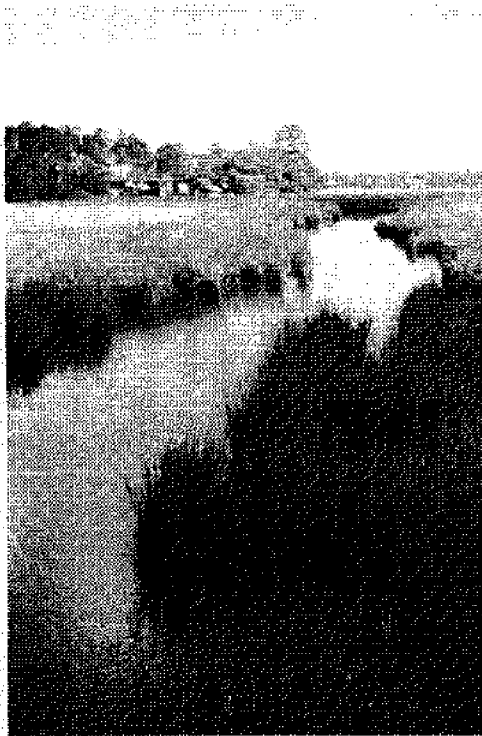
New Home Construction in Charleston 1990 - 1999



West Ashley Park

Purpose of Study & Guiding Principles

The study area for this project is the most significant sparsely developed area in the City of Charleston west of the Ashley River. The purpose of this study is to ensure that as this area develops more intensely, the quality of life for people that live in the area improves. Development must reflect (rather than conflict with) the existing fabric of the area; the area's "sense of place" should be enhanced. With this in mind, the following general principles were established during the planning workshop:



Church Creek

Protect and preserve environmental features and enhance physical and visual accessibility from all parts of the community. (We moved here for the lush, green environment.)

Enhance the public realm. Streets and parks should be cherished as important civic assets.

Ensure high quality design standards along corridors and focus on key intersections as important pedestrian and landscape areas.

Focus on connecting livable neighborhoods that serve a variety of people and allow safe walking and bike riding.

The Glenn McConnell Parkway

Sorting Out the Vision

There are quite conflicting opinions regarding the overall purpose of the Glenn McConnell Parkway; the following expectations were expressed during the workshop:

The road should serve mainly as a means of quickly travelling by car between Summerville and Charleston - ***the expressway vision.***

The road should take development pressure off Ashley River Road - ***the development corridor vision.***

The road should be a green corridor hospitable to pedestrians and bicyclists - ***the parkway vision.***



The Parkway

Remnants of each vision are exhibited on the existing section of Glenn McConnell Parkway:

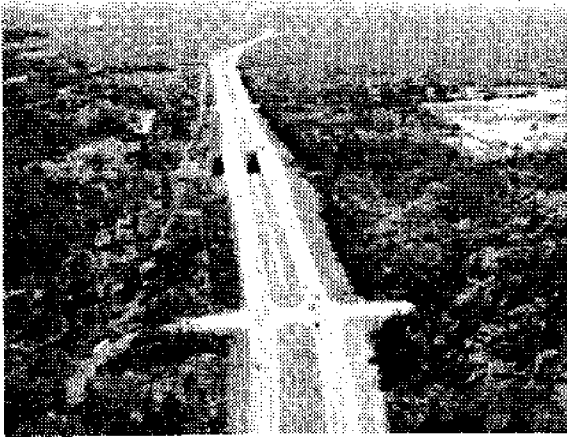
The road's engineering reflects the expressway vision. A design speed of 60 miles per hour requires a superelevated design, banking curves, and minimal vegetation. (Notice the street elevations at the Glenn McConnell/Magwood Road intersection.) The current design proposed for the Bees Ferry/Glenn McConnell intersection reflects this vision with a bridge rather than at-grade intersection. The roadway design is inhospitable to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Zoning and intersection locations reflect the development corridor vision. The amount of development permitted along the corridor and the number of eventual intersections will drop actual speeds steadily over time. This will eventually be a busy street.

The roads name, the center median, and an edge buffer requirement reflect the parkway vision. Some additional tree planting is also slated for the parkway. The conflicting expressway vision minimizes the amount of vegetation allowed by SCDOT.

The existing section of the Glenn McConnell Parkway in the long run will not be a fast moving bypass of Ashley River Road. Regardless of what happens west of Bees Ferry Road, vehicle traffic moving east will enter a heavily developed urban area once it gets to Bees Ferry Road. As a result, we recommend that from Glenn McConnell's intersection with Bees Ferry Road, east toward Charleston, the focus be on taming the parkway, making it crossable for pedestrians and bicyclists and a generally high quality urban environment.

The section of the parkway west of Bees Ferry Road has yet to be designed. We recommend that the conflicting visions expressed above be sorted out before any additional extension of the road occurs. Design of the extension should follow a public process of determining how the road can best contribute to a street network connecting new neighborhoods. This public process should occur before the South Carolina Department of Transportation begins engineering work for the parkway's extension.



The Parkway looking east

Workshop Results

The planning workshop results are presented in the following order:

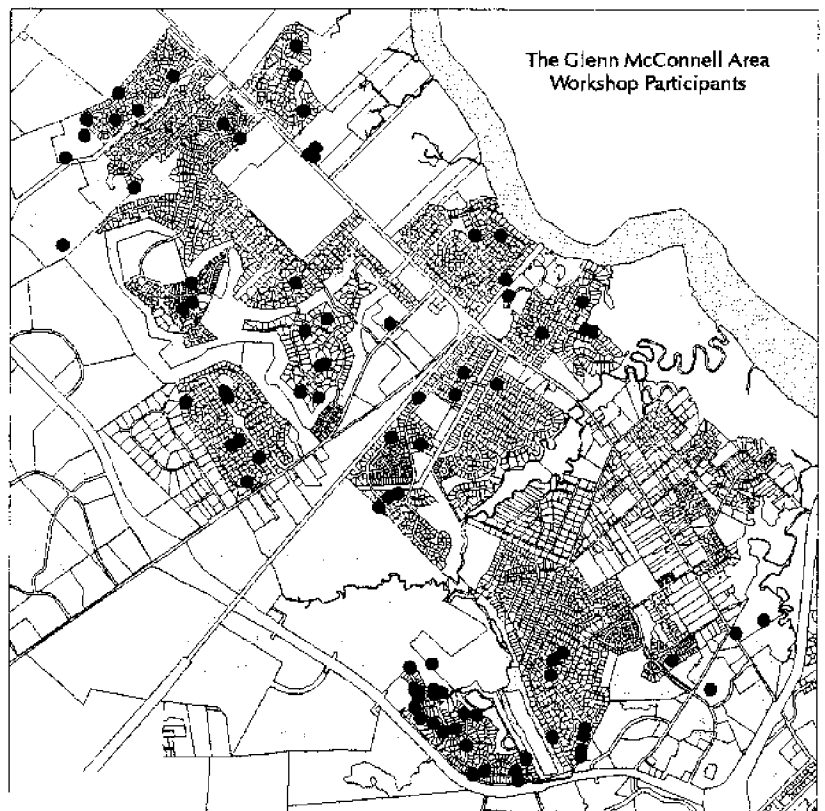
1. Citizen Comments and Suggestions pg. 8 - 11
2. The Overall Plan pg. 12
3. The Green Network pg. 13
4. The Street Network pg. 14
5. Parkway Design pg. 15
6. Traffic and Street Design pg. 16 - 19

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

(at least those that signed in)

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sheila Amos | Curtis M. Joyner |
| Terri Anderson | Mr. & Mrs. A. R. Kastner |
| John E. Baatz | Timothy Keane |
| Bob Bacon | John Kidder |
| Jimmy Bailey | James & Margaret Kilgallen |
| Anita G. Baldwin | Chris & Kay King |
| Amanda Barton | Mark Knapp |
| Don Baxley | Anne R. Le |
| Ken & Muriel Beeber | Eugene Lemieux |
| Howard & Donna Beeber | Mr. & Mrs. Linder |
| Alice H. Bianconi | Jill Lofstead |
| Jerry Bird | Craig Lovette |
| Wes Birt | Rod & Lynne Macpherson |
| John Blane | Rick & Judy Malachowski |
| Stephen Bor | Walt Martin |
| Lynn Bowers | Denver Merrill |
| Randolph Bradham | Bill Miller |
| Jim and Christy Briguglio | Danny Molony |
| Michael Bunting | Scott Moreland |
| Michael Butter | Hal Morgan |
| James L. Carew | Christopher Morgan |
| Heyward Carter | Ralph Muldrow |
| Suzanne Cattafesta | Buddy & Fran Murray |
| William C. Clark | Phillip Murray |
| Beth Compton | George M. Neil |
| Matt Compton | Teri Norris |
| Robert Cox | Gerard O'Brien |
| Jim Coyne | Joanne Payne |
| Helen Craig | Hernan Pena |
| Richard Davis | Mr. & Mrs. David Percy |
| Margaret Davis | Gail Phipps |
| Larry Duffy | Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Plichta |
| Bobby & Sarah DuPree | Katherine Campbell Powers |
| Bill Faught | Mr. & Mrs. C.H. Redell |
| John & Julie Fenime | Gary J. Regulski |
| Margorie Finegan | Ellen T. Reid |
| Jay Floyd | J. Rezeli |
| Patrick Ford | Malcolm Rhodes |
| Yvonne Fortenberry | Dorothy M. Rhodes |
| Joe Fersner | Jack W. Rhodes |
| Lisa Funston | Joseph P. Riley, Mayor |
| Robert Garvin | Mikell Scarborough |
| Lawrence & Patrisha Gordon | Marlene Schuster |
| Dick Greenlee | Larry Shirley, Councilman |
| Robert E. Griesemer, Jr. | Sam Shirley |
| Randy & Mary Grossman | Eric Schultz |
| Frank Hahne | Ken Smith |
| Tom Hamilton | Pam Smith |
| H. Brown Hamrick | Anne R. Smith |
| Greg Hart, Councilman | Kenny Snodgrass |
| Dan Hatley | B. Snyder |
| Frank Haygood | Don Sparks |
| Bill & Lyn Heidkamp | John Spearman |
| Mary Jane Hickson-Jones | Chris Sprue |
| Daniel Hill | Brian Stockmaster |
| Preston Hipp | James B. Taylor |
| John Hodge | Jesse Thigpen |
| Bill Hood | Jeff Thompson |
| H.C. & Sandra Hooper | Jay Thrower |
| Chat Howard | Betty W. Torrance |
| Matthew Hunt | Jena Wackurn |
| Claudine Imled | Jana Wadurn |
| Nancy Jenkins | David Wagner |
| Christine Jennings | Meta W. Waldon |
| Tom Johnston | Mark Welborn |
| Mr. & Mrs. Tom Johnston | Paul Wieters |
| Eleanore Jordan | Thomas E. Williams |

Area Represented by Participants



CITIZEN CONCERNS

Samples from the sessions

Heavy truck traffic on Glenn McConnell Parkway
Noise pollution from vehicle traffic and business
Over-development, reactive planning
Respecting historic sites
Status of Hwy. 61 Commission
Design review along corridors
Timing of Glenn McConnell Extension
Tying in subdivisions along Ashley River Rd. with Parkway
Accommodating transit – large vans rather than buses
Safety at Magwood/Glenn McConnell intersection – car & pedestrian
Attention to developed area before new development occurs
Definition needed for “parkway”
Glenn McConnell should be a true parkway with 100’ natural buffer
Convenient shopping is needed for residents west of Bees Ferry Road
Lowering speeds on Glenn McConnell Parkway
More landscaping on Glenn McConnell Parkway
Traffic signals are needed at busy and unsafe intersections
Traffic signal needed at Dogwood Road & Ashley River Road
Add as few traffic signals as possible on Glenn McConnell Parkway
Saving greenspace
Planning needed for civic buildings – churches
A fire station is needed in the area
The effect of growth on property values
Cut through traffic in Shadowmoss
Flooding problems from poor planning & stormwater management
Cannot safely ride bikes between neighborhoods
Remove commercial zoning districts near High School
Limit West Ashley Park development to trails
Protect Forest Lakes subdivision from light pollution



Kathy Gillespie's 5th Grade SAIL Class
from Springfield Elementary
Participates in the City Planning Process

What Do I Like About My Neighborhood ?

I like my neighbors
Near water Lots of room to ride bikes - few cars
My friends stay up late! the quiet
Feel Safe Quick drying yards! Good biking
Neighbors you can trust
Boatlandings Can play in the streets in cul-de-sacs
Animals & wildlife near pond Wide streets in Shadowmoss
Watching trains on the railroad bridge

What does my neighborhood need ?

More big parks like Six Flags Good biking
Bikepaths More kids to play with
Fewer cars to ride bikes Free pools
Connections between neighborhoods
Small playgrounds Roads need to be repaired
Sidewalks ! Public playgrounds



The SAIL class exchanged ideas with
City of Charleston's Mayor Joseph P. Riley

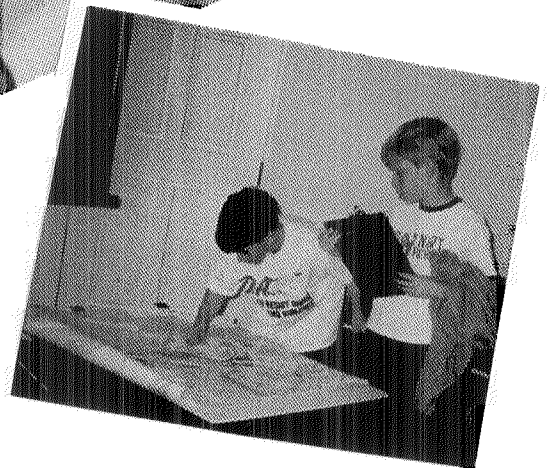
Teacher, Kathy Gillespie and Earth Force Coordinator, Jennifer Rezeli
along with parents, Becky Hickok & Nancy Fox participated in the
Glenn McConnell Charrette
with the following SAIL students:

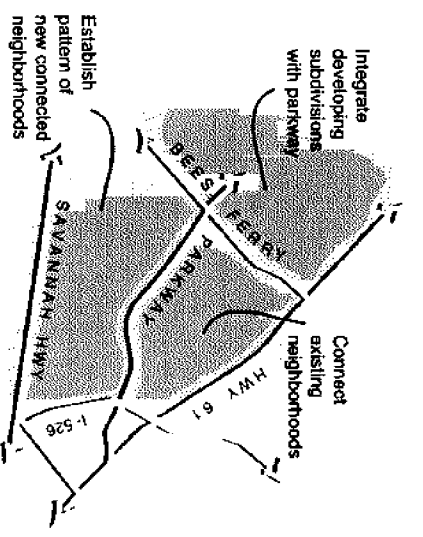
Jessica Bagley
Morgan Brown
Adam Fox
Anna Gillespie
Trey Heissenbottle
Chelsea Hickok

Ashley Jenner
Brittany Johnson
Ali Little
Tony Mastone
Rob Matsick
Andrew Newton
Suedi Walker



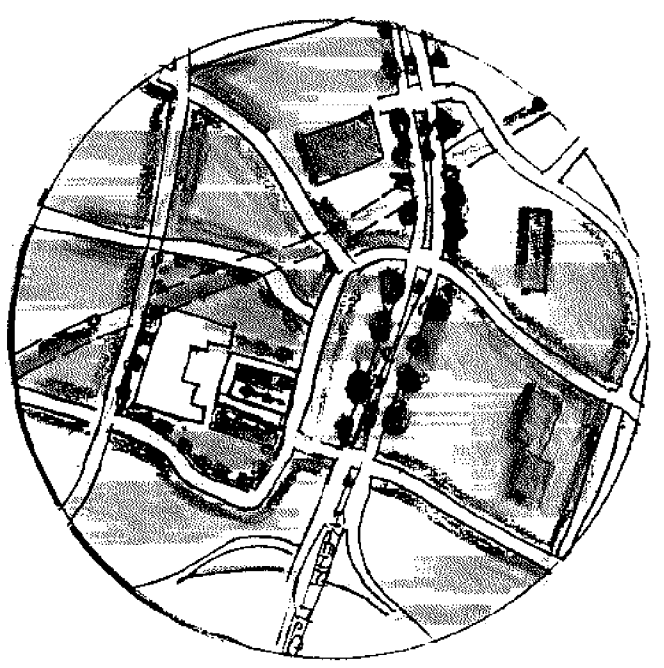
Planning Their City





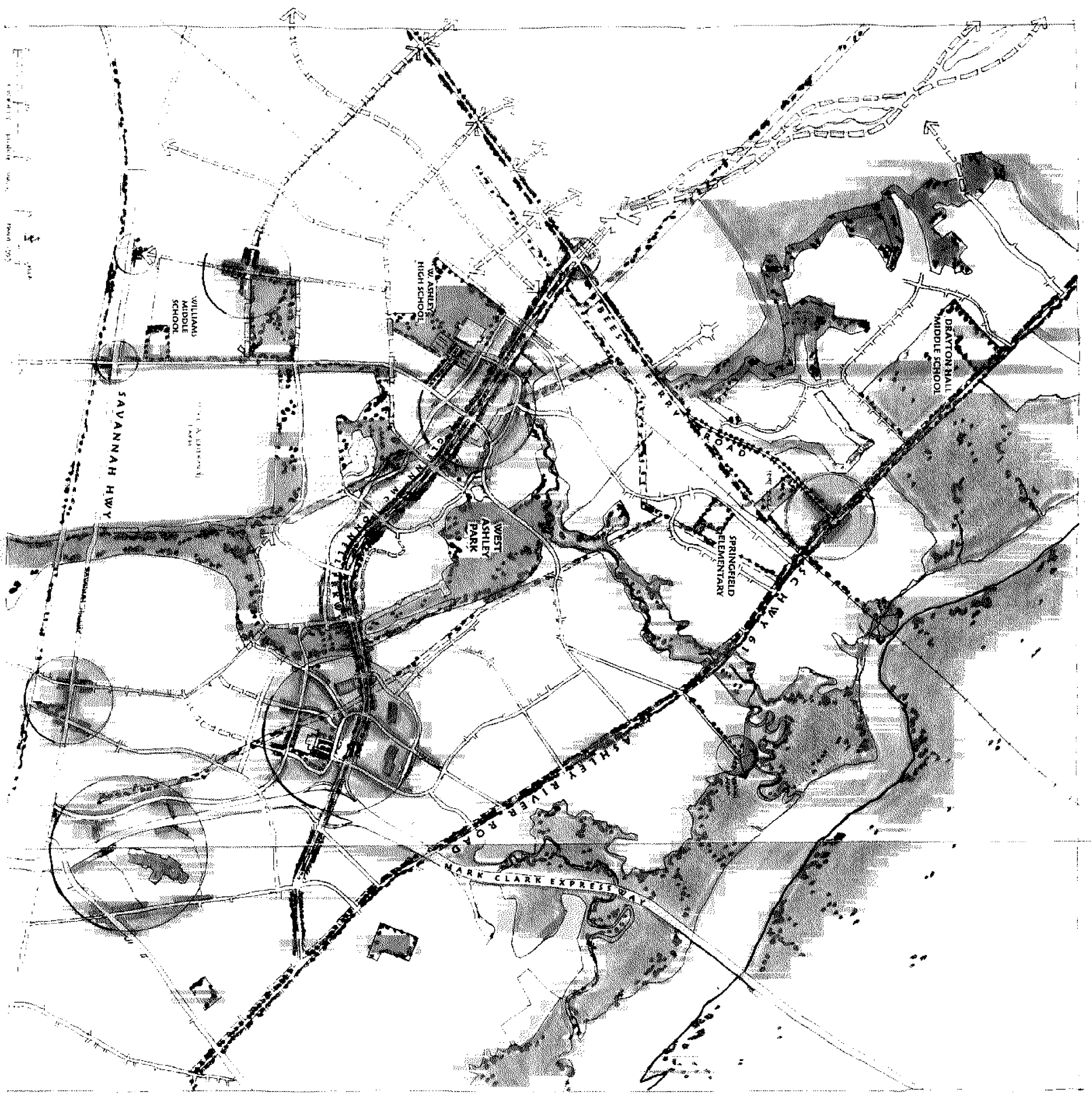
BUILD QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS

- Offer a balanced mix of dwellings, workplaces, shops, civic buildings, and parks.
- Structure building sites on a fine network of interconnected streets.
- Prioritize public space and civic buildings.



DEVELOP MIX-USE CENTERS

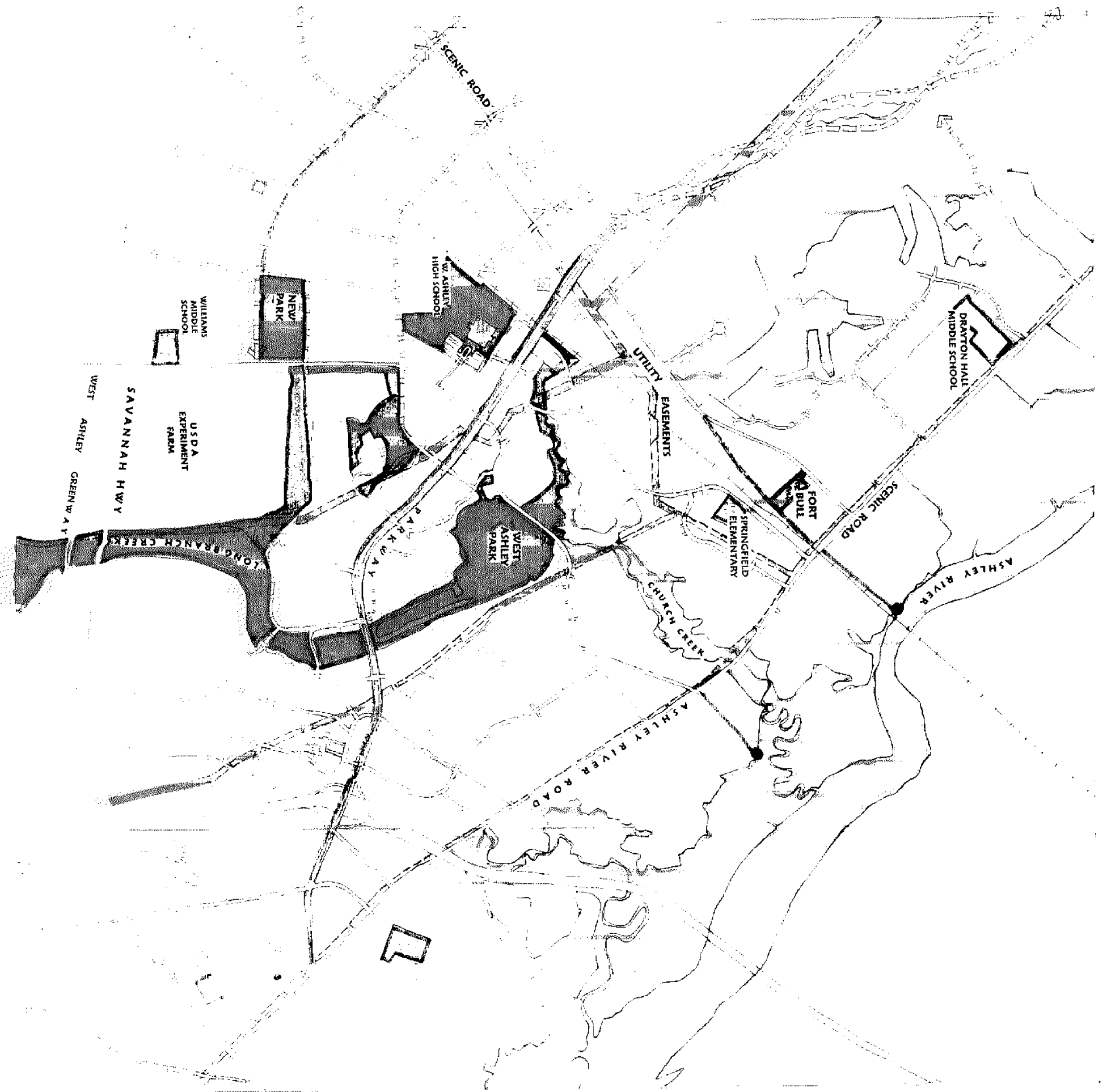
- Density and uses will vary depending upon specific location.
- Bring shopping, services, and workplaces closer to homes.
- Designed for pedestrians.
- Best location for higher density housing.
- Future transit stops.



GREEN NETWORK

(Why I moved to the area)

- Preserve environmental features and enhance physical and visual accessibility from all parts of the community.
- Protect wetlands and better manage stormwater by providing substantial buffers.
- Provide public access to Ashley River.
- Connect neighborhoods with trails and bike paths along utility corridors.
- Connect neighborhoods to West Ashley Park.
- Locate new public park between Glenn McConnell Parkway and Savannah Highway.
- Protect and enhance green corridors - Ashley River Road, Bees Ferry Road and Glenn McConnell Parkway.



STREET NETWORK

Connect existing streets in neighborhoods between Ashley River Road and Glenn McConnell Parkway.

Establish connected network in new neighborhoods between Glenn McConnell Parkway and Savannah Highway.



Glenn McCONNELL PARKWAY

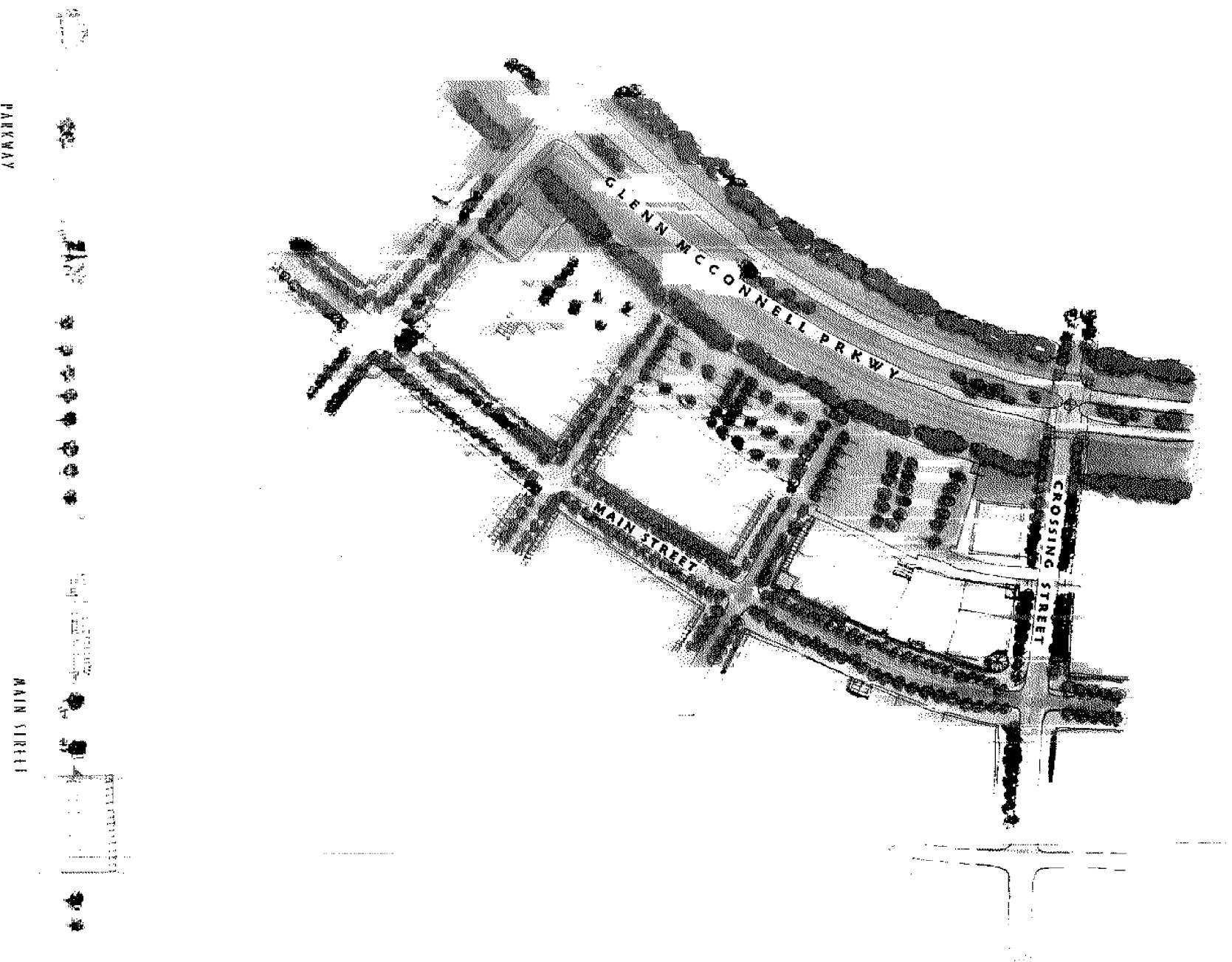
DESIGN INTENT: Create truly green parkway.
Establish pedestrian scale.

TREATMENT: *The Parkway* - undisturbed 50' buffer on both sides of existing street with plantings to create green corridor.

New Main Street - pedestrian scaled street with buildings on sidewalk and various uses, wide sidewalk, street trees, and on-street parking.

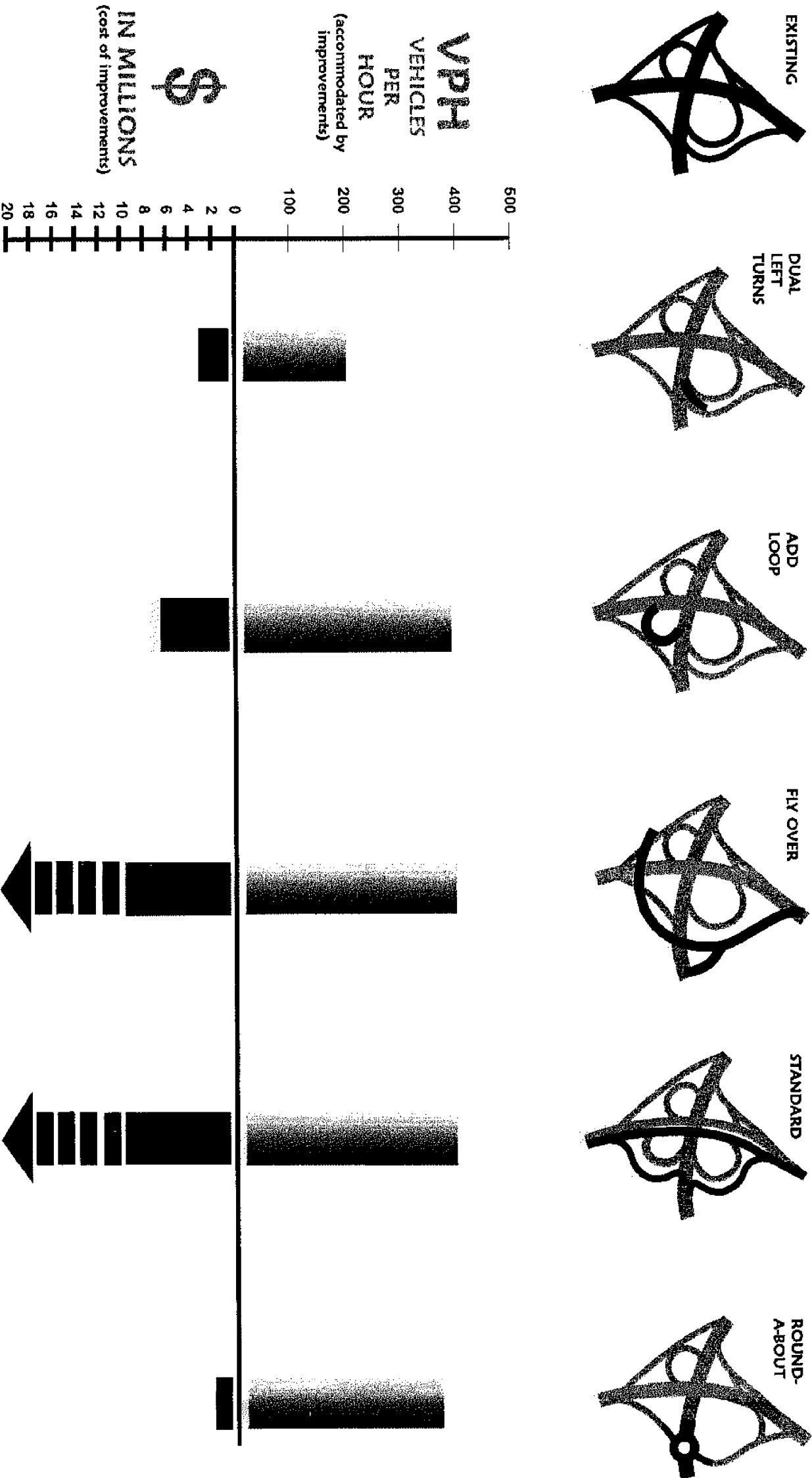
Crossing Street - designed to get pedestrians/bicyclists safely between neighborhoods and across Glenn McConnell Parkway.

LOCATION: This treatment could be used in several locations along the Parkway. Its application would be beneficial as a continuous feature for the entire corridor or in repeating segments.

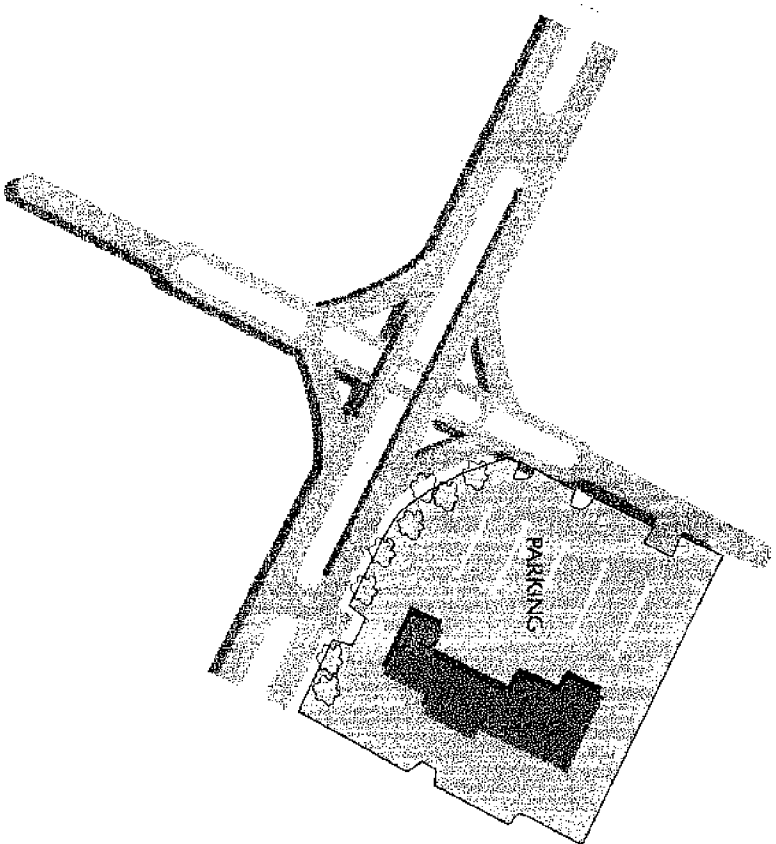


COST / BENEFIT COMPARISON OF INTERSECTIONS

Options for improving traffic flow at the Glenn McConnell / I-526 interchange

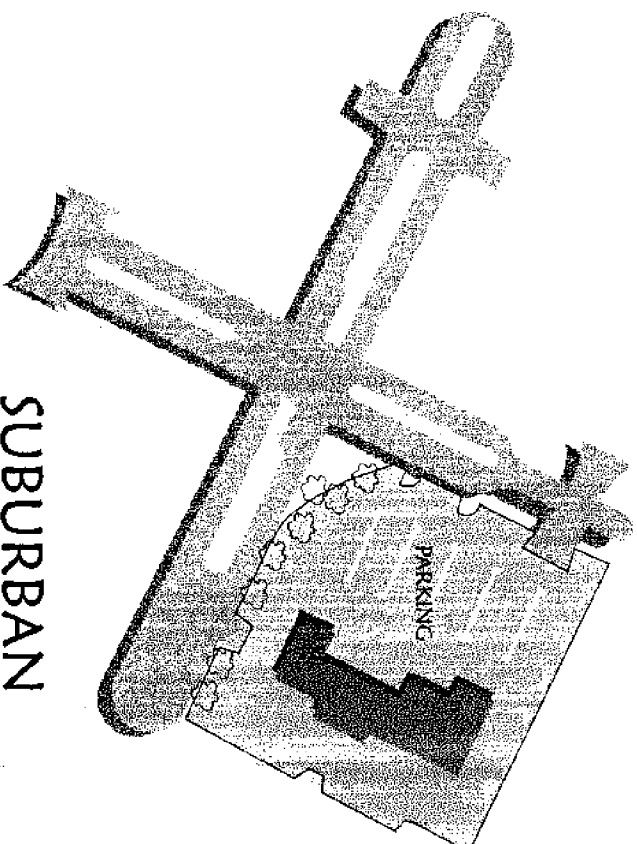


Options for design of the Glenn McConnell Parkway
& Bees Ferry Road Intersection



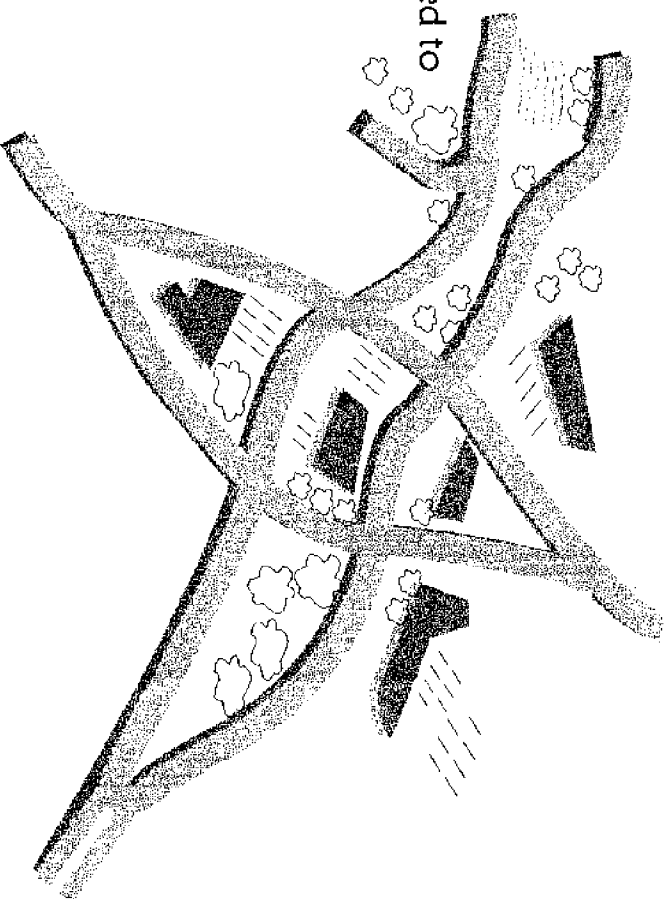
BRIDGE

- Currently planned
- Expressway design
- No intersection
- Results in conventional auto-oriented site planning



SUBURBAN

- Option # 1
- Typical urban arterial intersection
- One big intersection
- Results in conventional auto-oriented site planning

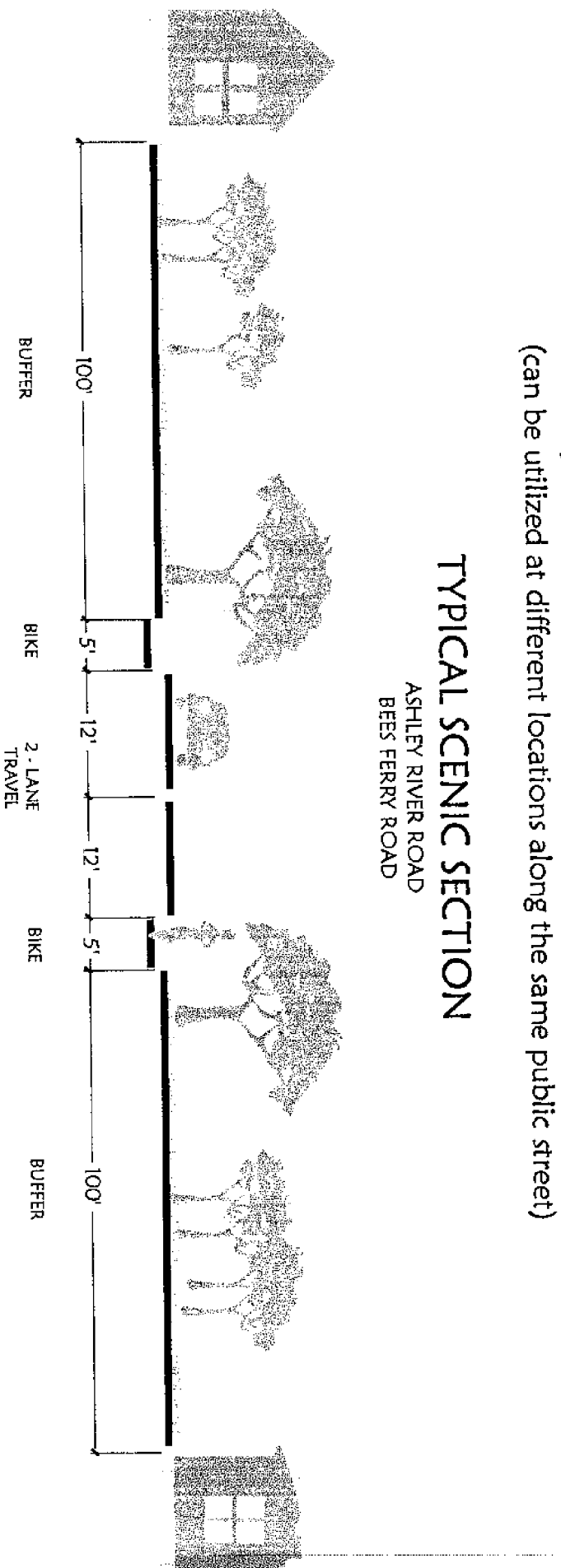


COURTHOUSE SQUARE

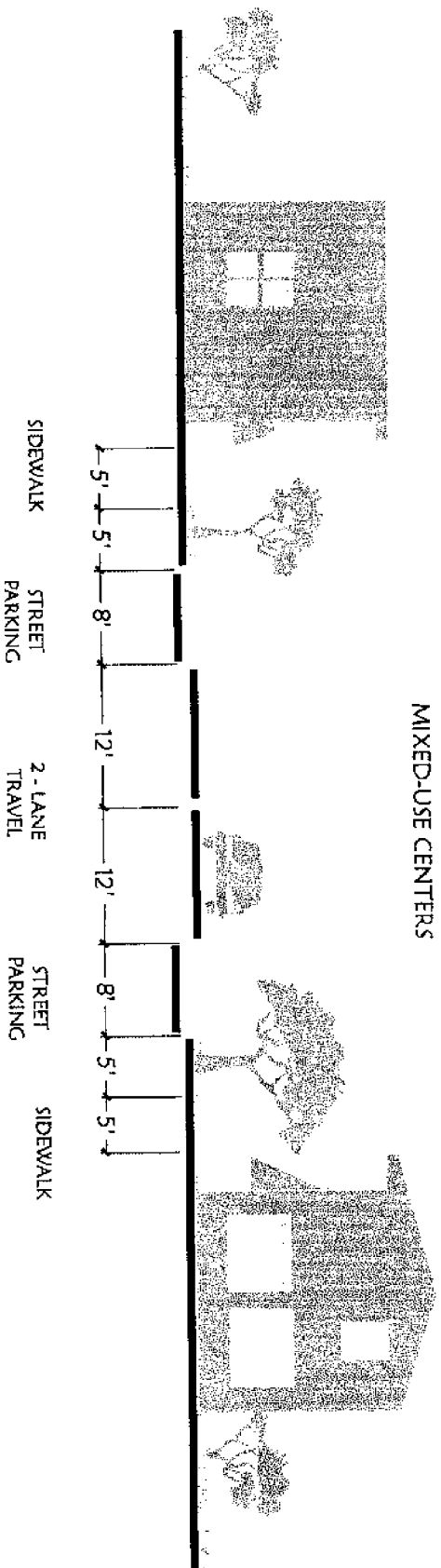
- Option # 2 (preferred option)
- More urban layout, intended to foster pedestrian-scaled mixed-use center
- Multiple intersections
- Results in building & site design balancing needs of autos & pedestrians

Important Street Sections Within Study Area
 (can be utilized at different locations along the same public street)

TYPICAL SCENIC SECTION
 ASHLEY RIVER ROAD
 BEES FERRY ROAD



TYPICAL URBAN SECTION
 MIXED-USE CENTERS



Truck Route Between I - 526 at Glenn McConnell Parkway & Hwy 17 at Bees Ferry Road

Currently, the route taking Bees Ferry Road and the Parkway is the fastest by almost four minutes. Improvements to the Hwy 17 / I - 526 interchange and a signal at the Glenn McConnell Parkway and Mary Ader Ave. will level the travel time greatly. This should relieve some of the truck traffic using the Parkway.

