



A VISION FOR CENTRAL BEACH

CENTRAL BEACH SMALL AREA
URBAN DESIGN PLAN



July 18, 2025

Dills Architects

RENAISSANCE PLANNING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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An aerial photograph of the Central Beach area, showing a mix of urban development, green spaces, and a large stadium. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark overlay to make the white text stand out.

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Over the past 20 years, a diverse range of plans, studies, and projects have been explored and proposed for the Central Beach area, each representing differing aspects of existing conditions, land use, and potential development. These prior efforts form a base of information and collective intent that connects key planning considerations and development opportunities, and signaled the need for an overall urban design strategy for the Central Beach area.

A subsequent process of community and stakeholder engagement, site analysis, urban design and planning was used to create this comprehensive Vision for Central Beach.

The purpose of this study and small area urban design plan is to provide an actionable and aspirational strategy for thoughtful growth and development over the next 30 years in Central Beach. This plan intentionally focuses on the large areas of City owned property in Central Beach to guide land use decisions, inform development and partnerships with private land owners and businesses, and to maintain a growth pattern sensitive to existing communities, quality of life, economic resilience, and the cultural identity of Central Beach.

SHARED GOALS

The following goals act as guiding principles for the Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan. These goals are a direct reflection of information taken from prior studies, planning, proposed projects, and from the collective process for public feedback, site analysis, and urban design and planning used to create this preferred plan for Central Beach.

“A vibrant, year round, inspiring destination for residents and visitors, and a place culturally and economically significant to the City of Virginia Beach.”



CREATE A VIBRANT CENTRAL BEACH

- Develop Central Beach as an integrated LIVE WORK PLAY cultural district for locals and visitors.
- Include destination venues, housing (market and attainable), parking, retail, and commercial uses to ensure day and night activation, presence, and economic resilience year round.
- Structured parking development includes housing (market and attainable), and street activation (retail, commercial, and cultural).



DEVELOP A SENSE OF ARRIVAL AND PLACE

- Unify Central Beach as a cultural district, connecting communities and visitors to culture and the Oceanfront.
- Develop Parks Avenue as the arrival gateway to Central Beach and the Oceanfront.
- Create an activated and inspiring sense of arrival from I-264 at Parks Avenue.
- Provide the ability for visitors arriving by car to park near their arrival and experience Central Beach as a walkable District.



DEVELOP COMPLETE STREETS

- Enhance and reinforce safe and easy pedestrian and multi-modal connectivity.
- Complete street and multi-modal pathways where they are now disconnected.
- Treat 19th Street as a pedestrian oriented east to west connection, allow for vehicle slowing, remove surface parking frontage.
- Develop safe and efficient north to south pedestrian connection on Parks Avenue from north of I-264 West to VA Beach Boulevard.



ENHANCE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Maintain Public Transportation connection to Central Beach close to its center at Parks Avenue and 19th Street.
- Reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.
- Enable residents and visitors to access most of their daily needs and destinations within 20-minute travel times.
- Integrate a micro-transit system for Oceanfront areas east of Birdneck road.



CREATE A CONNECTED OPEN GREEN SPACE NETWORK

- Enhance connection to existing public open space in Central Beach.
- Develop a central destination with open public green space for events, revenue programming, and outdoor day and night activation.
- Design all new streetscapes, paths, and stormwater features as parks and public amenities as part of an interconnected open green space network.
- Design green roofs to activate public space with commercial amenities where possible.

PRIMARY DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

At right is a simple list of the primary documents reviewed by stakeholders. Each document contributes valuable insights into how existing conditions, regulatory frameworks, resilience, transportation, and community/stakeholder interests intersect around similar ideas and create common desires and shared goals that inform a cohesive and representative preferred plan for Central Beach.

Appendix A includes a detailed summary and analysis of the primary documents reviewed, and their significance in shaping the Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan.*

LEGEND							
City of Virginia Beach							
Neighborhood Plans							
Outside Consultant							
	Reliable / Connected/ etc.	Sense of Arrival	Complete Streets	Transit	Open Space Network	Mixed-use / Mixed income	Infrastructure
City of Virginia Beach Comprehensive Plan	■			■	■	■	■
Active Transportation Plan - The Bikeways and Trails Component of the Comprehensive Master Plan	■		■	■	■		■
Resort Area Strategic Action Plan 2030 (RASAP)	■		■	■	■	■	■
APZ-1 / CZ Master Plan	■				■	■	■
Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ)							
Oceanfront Resort District Form-Based Zoning	■		■			■	
Resort Area Mobility Plan (RAMP)	■		■	■			■
Resort Area Parking Strategy	■						■
Headquarters Hotel Parking Analysis	■						■
VB Parks and Recreation Outdoors Plan	■				■		■
City of VB Maintenance Facility - Programming and Space Needs Study							■
17th and 18th Street Capital Improvement Projects			■				■
Supplemental Report to 17th Street Improvements Phase II Preliminary Engineering Report	■					■	■
Central Resort District Drainage Improvements	■				■		■
Resort Area Signage and Wayfinding Creative Analysis and Concepts	■	■					
VB Housing Study Update - Market Analysis and Policy Recommendations	■					■	
Updated VB Sports Tourism Market and Facilities Opportunity Study	■						
17th Street Planning Workshops	■	■	■		■	■	■
ViBe Connectivity Plan	■		■		■		■
ViBe Strategic Plan 2018-2020	■				■		
VB Sports + Convention District	■		■		■	■	■
VB Sports + Convention District Feasibility Study Report (DRAFT)						■	■
VB Beach Dome Redevelopment Shared Parking Analysis Report	■					■	■
VB Convention Center Hotel - Conceptual Plan	■						■

*Although not listed, primary City regulations and ordinances were utilized for urban analysis and planning

An aerial photograph of a city street grid, showing a mix of green spaces, trees, and buildings. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark, muted color palette, serving as a background for the text.

2. PROCESS

The Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan was developed through a phased planning process that began with an Existing Conditions Analysis, followed by the creation of Conceptual Small Area Plan options, and a Community Engagement strategy that informed the final Preferred Plan.

The Existing Conditions Analysis included a detailed site assessment, integrated with targeted stakeholder and community outreach. To ensure thinking from prior efforts was not lost, documentation and public input from earlier initiatives was reviewed and has subsequently informed this study. This comprehensive approach integrates prior work, current conditions and proposed projects, to create a long-term strategic vision for the development of Central Beach.

SITE ANALYSIS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

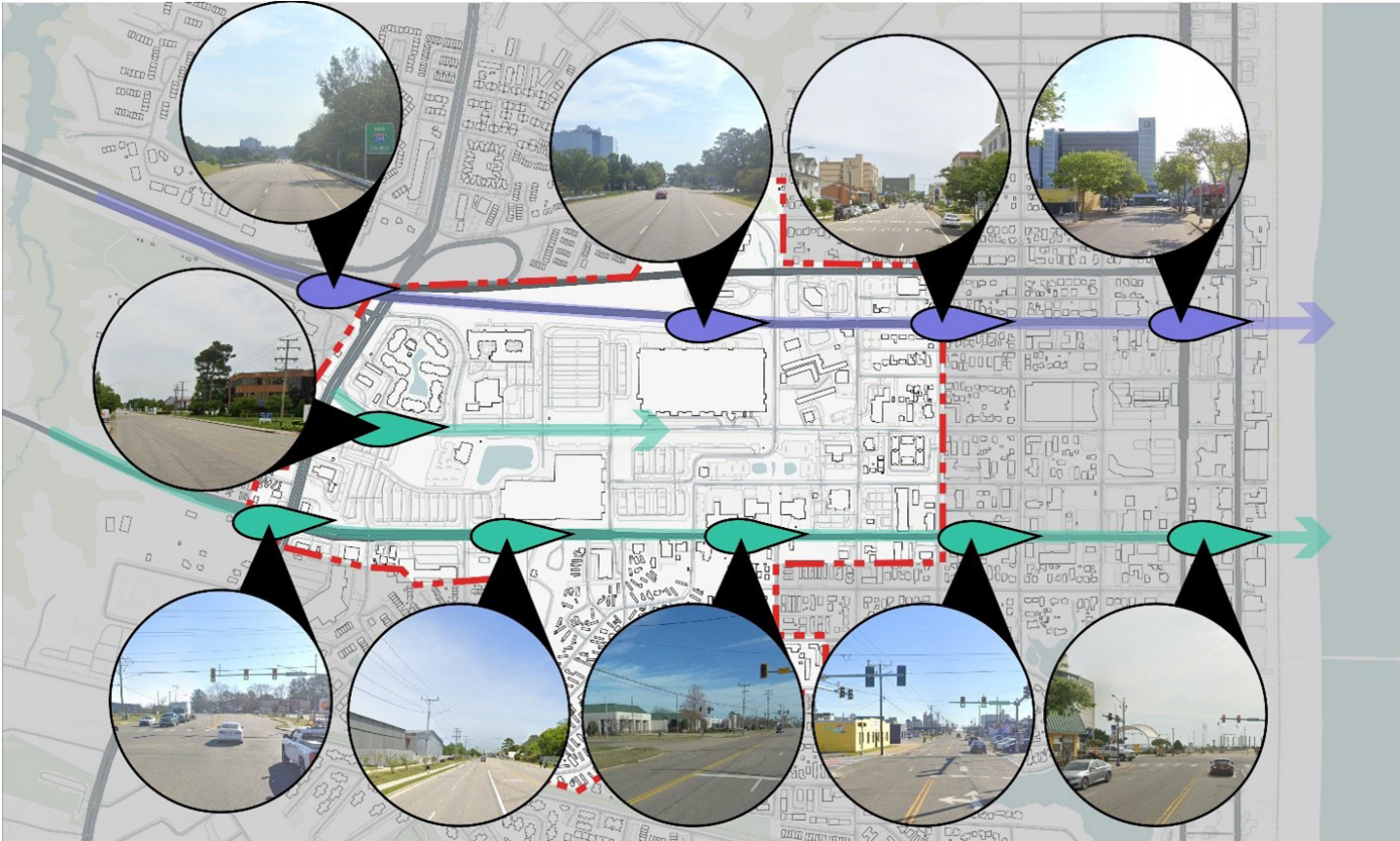
Eight key themes emerged from the site analysis and assessment of the Central Beach area, and are essential to meeting the overarching goals for Central Beach to guide thoughtful development and growth.

1. Lack of Arrival Experience
2. Barrier of I-264
3. Block Structure
4. Parking Frontage and Circulation
5. Parks and Open Space
6. Stormwater & Seal Level Rise
7. Parcel Ownership
8. Roadway Capacity



THEME 1: LACK OF ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

Entry points lack a clear sense of arrival, limiting the area’s identity and welcome for visitors and residents to Central Beach and the Oceanfront.

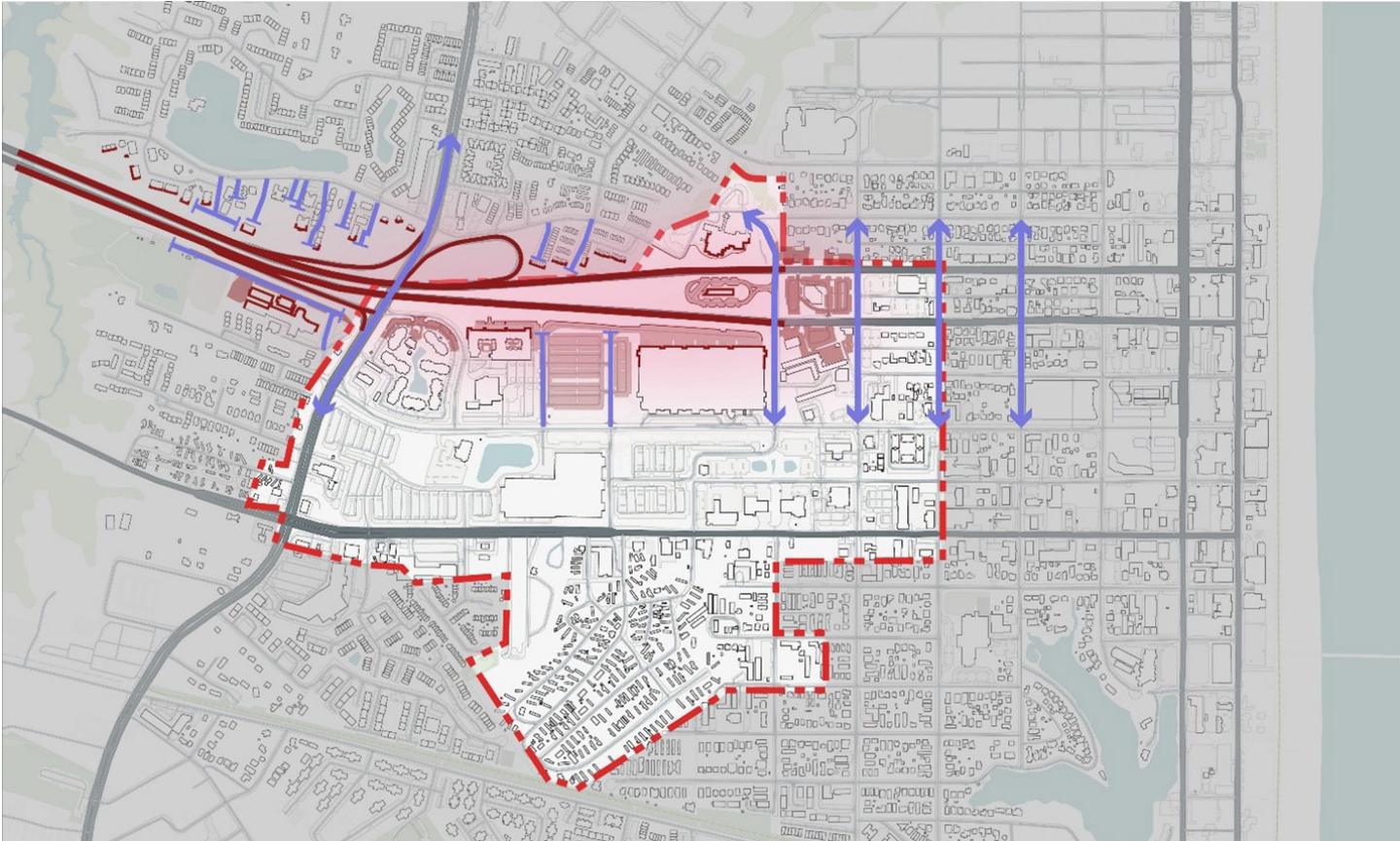


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Parks Avenue Gateway** - Develop an elevated public walkway that acts as a clear and activated gateway and sense of arrival for visitors across I-264 East and West.
- **Create Arrival Nodes** – Develop distinctive arrival nodes at key intersections and arrival points for Central Beach to anchor entry and foster a greater sense of place.
- **Intensify Development on 17th and 22nd Streets** – Focus on increased development intensification and activity along 17th Street and 22nd Street, transforming these corridors into vibrant, pedestrian-friendly spaces that connect visitors to the oceanfront.

THEME 2: BARRIER OF I-264

I-264 East and West creates a significant physical and visual barrier, disrupting connectivity across all modes of travel. A broken street grid hinders north-south movement.

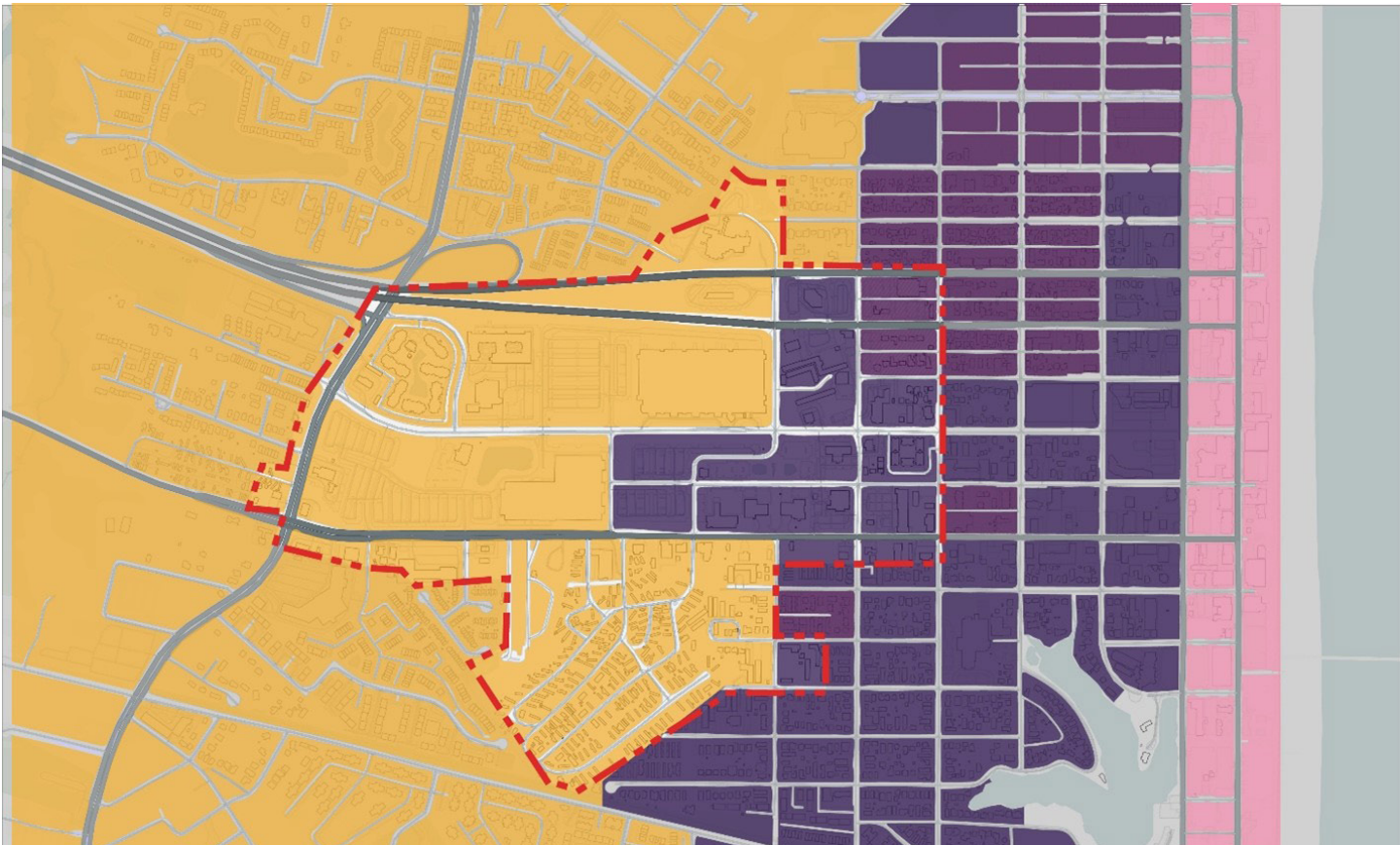


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Contextual Street Grid** - Reintroduce a finer-grain street network to create new, direct routes to key destinations that is consistent with the existing street network and block pattern.
- **Parks Avenue Gateway** - Develop elevated pedestrian walkway with associated structured parking as an public amenity from north of 22nd Street to 19th Street.
- **Realign I-264** – Begin the process of moving I-264 back to end at Birdneck Road. This lessens the impacts on north to south connection and frees valuable land for future development.

THEME 3: BLOCK STRUCTURE

The existing block layout impacts walkability, land use efficiency, and urban form, with irregular patterns limiting connectivity.

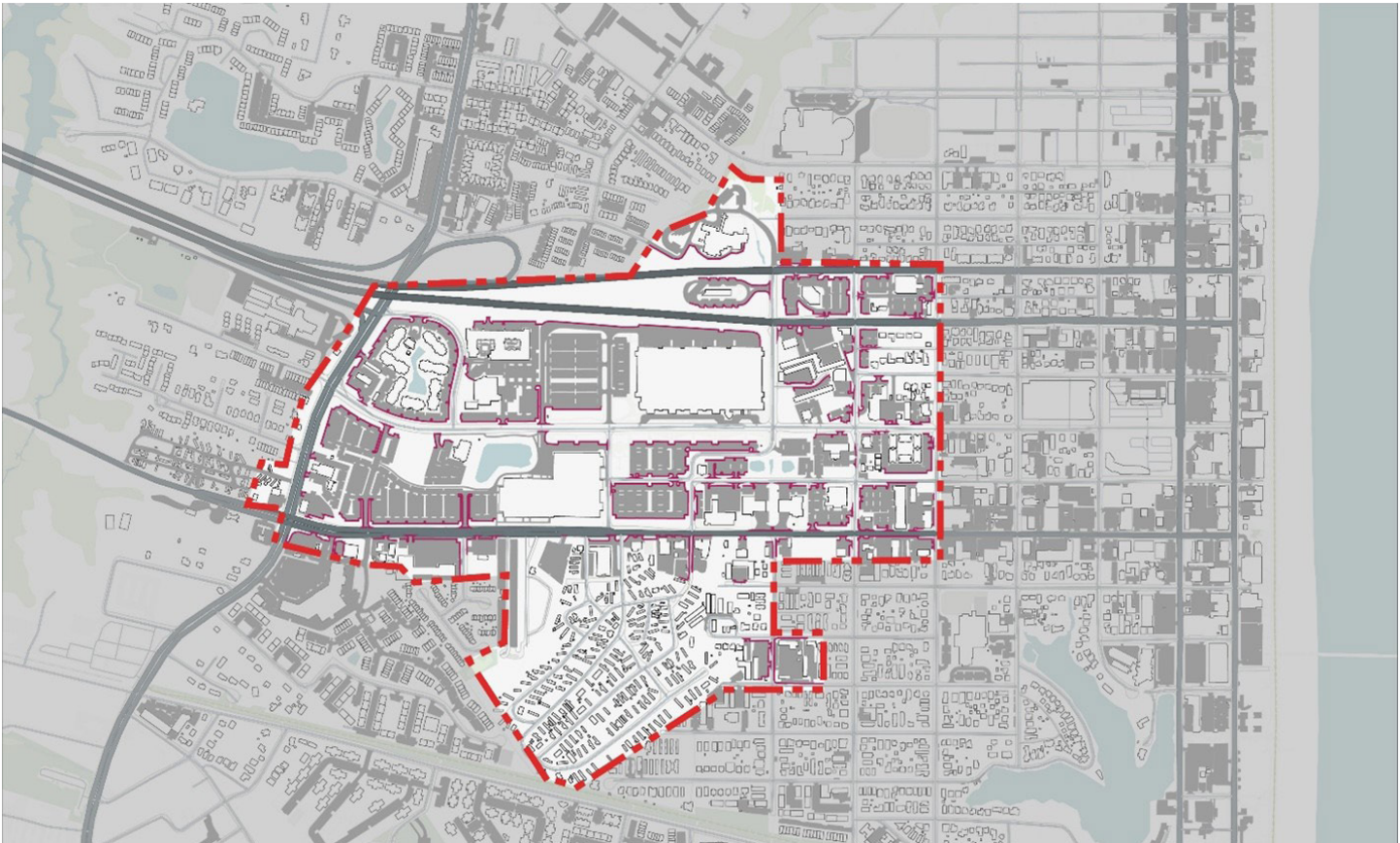


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Enhance Pedestrian Access** - Develop half block connections in high mixed-use areas as active, functional open space connections to enhance walkability and accessibility.
- **Use Existing Street Patterns** - Extending the established grid system into areas with a suburban layout would create a more connected and cohesive urban fabric.
- **Ensure Connectivity** - Integrate existing cul-de-sacs into the broader street network which would eliminate dead ends and improve overall connectivity, fostering a more seamless and pedestrian-friendly environment.

THEME 4: PARKING, FRONTAGE, AND CIRCULATION

Surface parking requirements detract from land use and value, street frontage, pedestrian experience, and weaken the visual character of the area.

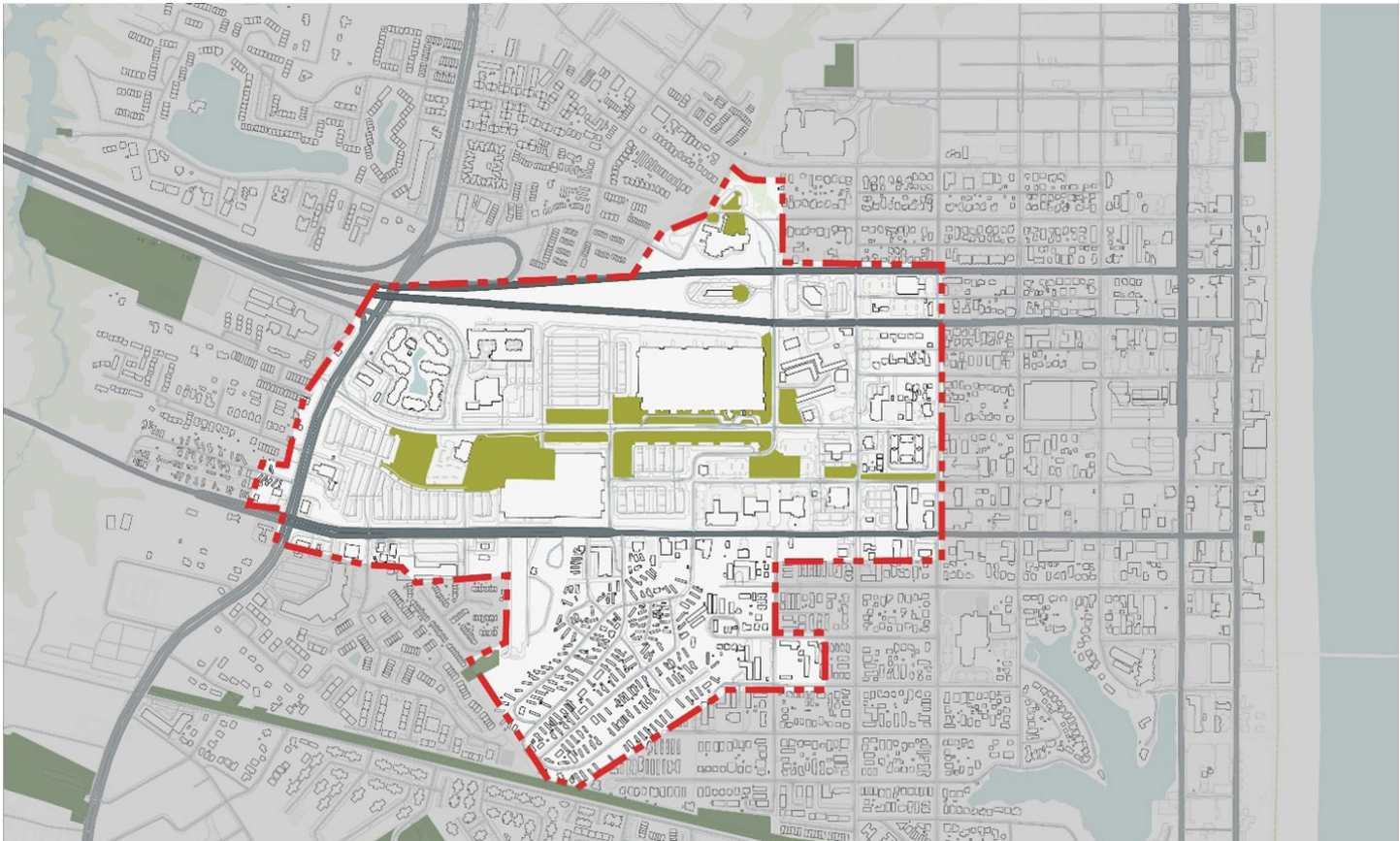


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Parking Requirements** – Reduce parking minimums to optimize land use, land value, and shift away from car-centric development patterns.
- **Consolidated Parking** – Prioritize structured and shared parking solutions for new development, and remove surface parking and encourage in-fill, following best practices such as the ULI Shared Parking Method (as outlined in the Desman-led report).
- **Surface Parking** – Eliminate surface parking for new developments and reallocate land use for development and active, pedestrian-friendly uses.
- **Form-based Zoning Alignment** – Align with parking frontage requirements of the Ocean Resort. Use form-based Zoning to create a cohesive and visually appealing streetscape.
- **Emphasize Street Experience** – Support a more walkable and vibrant activated urban environment by emphasizing pedestrian-oriented design in future development.

THEME 5: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Green space is limited and disconnected, presenting opportunities to enhance land values with recreation, programming, and a higher quality public realm.

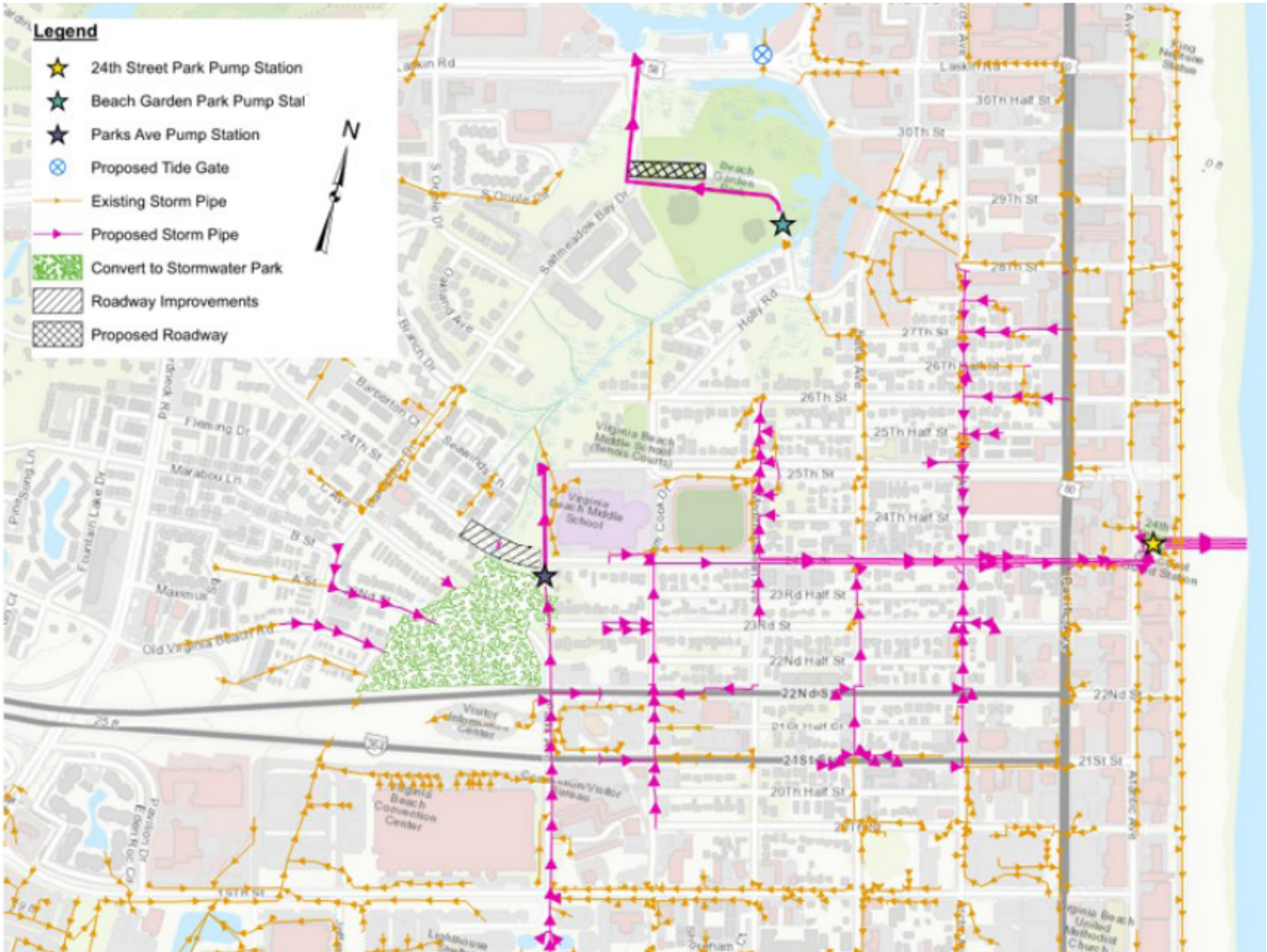


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Integrate with Parks** - The open space as part of the Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan should be integrated into the Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Outdoors Plan.
- **Plan for Open Space** - Establish a foundational framework to guide future park and green space investments that support long-term growth, connectivity, and community livability.
- **Expand the Vision** - Identify connections to existing open green spaces in the vicinity of Central Beach and establish those pathways and corridors.

THEME 6: STORMWATER & SEA LEVEL RISE

Extensive impervious land cover, low-lying and relatively flat topography, and continued development, strains existing stormwater capacity and the ability to adapt to more frequent storms and sea level rise.

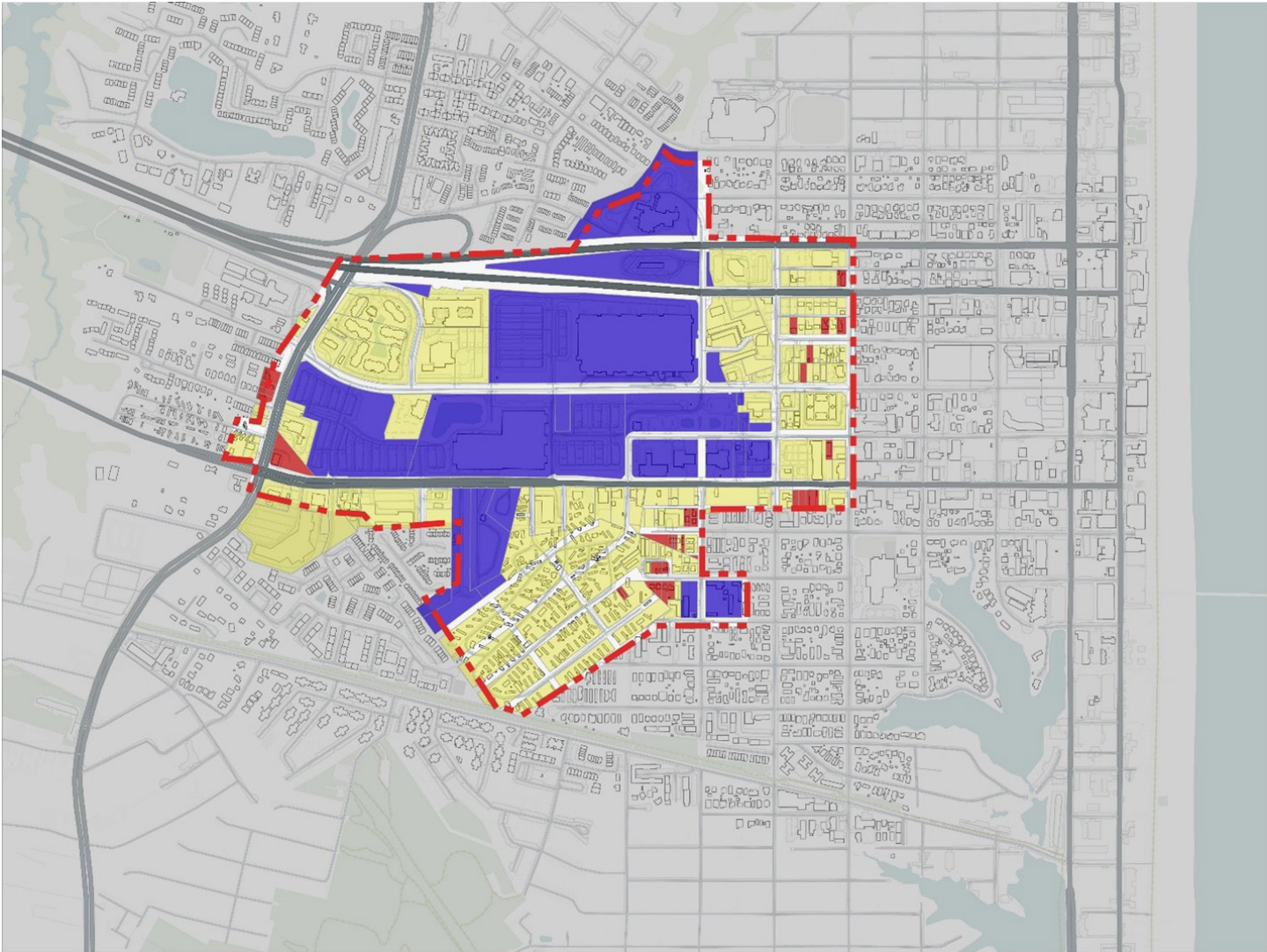


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Redevelopment infrastructure** – Explore design alternatives (Central Resort District Improvements, Preliminary Engineering Report) to guide the phased implementation of stormwater infrastructure projects as part of the strategic redevelopment of Central Beach.
- **Strategic Stormwater Improvements** – Align stormwater improvements serving areas identified for new development in this study’s Development Phasing Strategy with the resilience approach needed for associated existing communities in those areas.

THEME 7: PARCEL OWNERSHIP

Fragmented or inconsistent parcel ownership patterns may complicate redevelopment efforts and coordination.

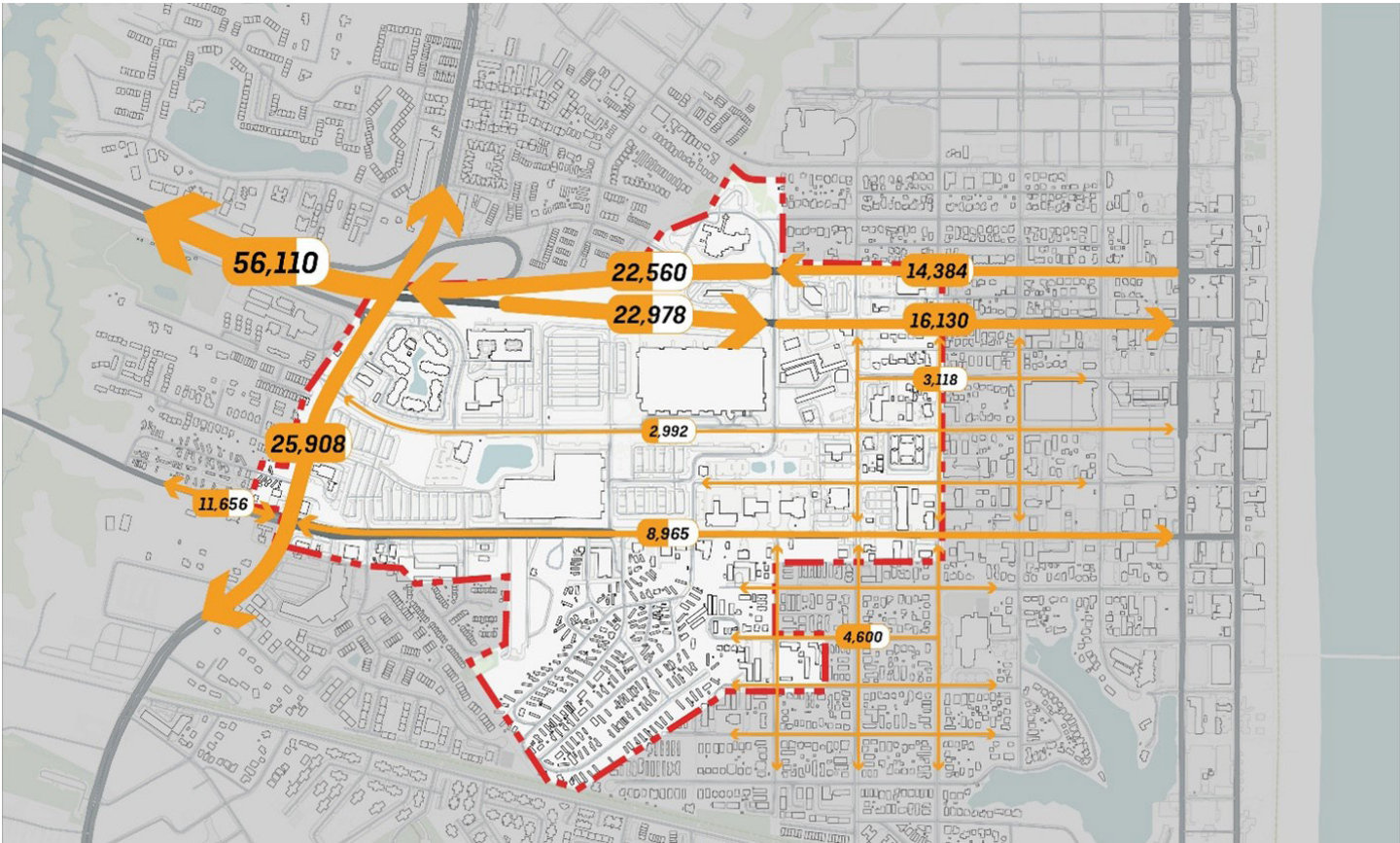


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Bring Together Land Owners** – Explore establishing a Master Option Agreement that brings together all landowners within the study area to provide a shared framework for collaborative development, aligning individual interests with a unified vision for the district’s growth.
- **Address Shared Challenges** - A master agreement can overcome shared challenges for development such as infrastructure improvements, zoning alignment, and land use coordination, and streamline implementation with an integrated approach.

THEME 8: ROADWAY CAPACITY

Streets are oversized for vehicle throughput, limiting multimodal safety and discouraging pedestrian and bicycle activity.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **RIGHT-SIZE STREETS AND CONNECTIONS** - Development and planning should use LOS (level of service) E rating as a minimum standard, shifting the Central Beach and surrounding area toward a transportation system that balances the needs of drivers with those of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, fostering a more accessible and resilient urban environment.

ENGAGEMENT

This study’s engagement strategy involved a review of the previously documented engagement, three public open house sessions, key stakeholder interviews (individual and group), and a City-hosted online survey.

The goal of this process was to further refine the vision for the study area and the most desired investment areas by the communities and stakeholders it serves.

- 1. Engagement Scope and Schedule
- 2. Engagement Outcomes
- 3. Open House - Existing Analysis and Community Visioning
- 4. Key Stakeholders
- 5. Open House - Conceptual Design Feedback
- 6. Online Survey

1. ENGAGEMENT SCOPE AND SCHEDULE

PREVIOUS PLANNING STUDY ENGAGEMENT		
PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES	June 24th, 2024, 4-8pm, @ Convention Center	
	June 25th, 2024, 12-4pm, @ Atlantic Boardroom	
KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	Associations	Atlantic Avenue Association Hotel Association Restaurant Association ViBe Creative District Old Beach Civic League Seatack Civic League Tidewater Veterans Memorial Park
	Business and Property Owners	Wave Riding Vehicles Chaplain Property Double Tree Hotel Mt. Olive Baptist Church 1081 19th Street
	Developers	Runnymede Capstone MEB
	Consultants	AECOM WSP
	City of Virginia Beach	Sports Center Convention Center Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Planning Housing Coordinator Traffic Engineering Transportation Planning Stormwater Facilities Resort Advisory Commission Planning & Design Review Committee Resort Management Office Active Transportation Advisory Committee Economic Development
CONCEPT DESIGN FEEDBACK	November 23rd, 2024, 1-3pm, @ Convention Center	
ONLINE SURVEY	December, 2024	

2. ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Common themes and desires among various stakeholders emerged through the engagement process. These desires were consistently expressed in engagement sessions and have informed the planning process as public priorities.

These shared insights inform a more cohesive and balanced design framework directly reflecting stakeholder and community input as high priority outcomes for the Central Beach preferred plan.

“Central Beach represents a great opportunity to develop something vibrant, year round, and important to the people that live and visit Virginia Beach.”



PRIORITY PUBLIC OUTCOMES:

- **MIXED HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**
- **RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION**
- **SAFE, ACTIVE, AND ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC REALM**
- **CONNECTIVITY, OPEN SPACE, AND URBAN COHESION**
- **SENSE OF ARRIVAL AND GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS**
- **SPORTS, DESTINATION VENUES, AND TOURISM**
- **PARKING SOLUTIONS AND WAYFINDING**
- **DIVERSE RETAIL, ACTIVATION, AND TOURISM**
- **CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY AND UNIQUE IDENTITY**

3. OPEN HOUSE - ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY VISIONING

Two open house sessions were held to engage residents, business owners, and key stakeholders in the planning process. The sessions were designed to foster open dialogue, ensuring that those most affected by the project were heard and considered.

Various exercises and information boards were used to facilitate public input and direct feedback from the community and stakeholders. The results produced key takeaways and engagement themes that were shared by both resident and business community members.



COMMUNITY VISIONING EXERCISE

A diagram was divided into three quadrants:

- 1. Destination for Residents
- 2. Destination for Tourists
- 3. Place to Live for Residents.

Participants were encouraged to consider the relationships between these categories and how Central Beach could achieve an appropriate balance.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

While it is clear there is a desire for all the visions provided, an active Destination for Tourists and a Place to Live for Residents is favored, indicating a common vision of “LIVE WORK PLAY” for the area.

PREFERRED INVESTMENTS EXERCISE

Eight key investment areas were presented on boards for consideration. Areas included Market Rate and Workforce Housing, Pedestrian Facilities, Parking, Open Space Network, Bike Lanes & Multipurpose Facilities, Transit, and Clear Gateways into Virginia Beach. Participants indicated their top three investment priorities by placing sticky notes (representative of dollars) on the board for the corresponding investment area and writing in comments about their choices.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This activity highlighted areas of shared concern and priorities among different stakeholder groups, offering a clear direction for the consultant team as priority outcomes for Central Beach.



WHAT’S YOUR VISION? EXERCISE

Participants were invited to share a single word or a short phrase that captured what they hoped the study area could become in the future. The collected responses were analyzed to identify recurring themes and key terms, which were then visualized in a word cloud. The size of each word in the cloud correlates with the frequency of its appearance, with larger words representing ideas that were mentioned most often by participants.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The word cloud serves as a visual representation of the community’s priorities. Active Mixed-Use for both residents and visitors was a high priority, and was a key shared understanding of the existing character of Central Beach.

4. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Multiple small group and individual meetings were conducted to engage a wide range of stakeholders, in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the study area’s needs and opportunities.

These meetings were organized into five key groups, enabling the project team to gather input from diverse perspectives with unique insights and priorities. By facilitating hands-on engagement, the engagement activities helped the project team better understand the community’s preferences, needs, and aspirations. Detailed results from each of these exercises can be seen in Appendix C.

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH DEPARTMENTS AND COMMITTEES

Representatives from various city departments provided valuable context on existing plans, infrastructure challenges, and regulatory frameworks. Their input ensured that the study aligned with broader city goals and effectively leveraged available resources.

- Sports Center
 - Convention Center
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Comprehensive Planning
 - Housing Coordinator
 - Traffic Engineering
 - Transportation
 - Planning
- Stormwater
 - Facilities
 - Resort Advisory Commission
 - Planning & Design Review Committee
 - Resort Management Office
 - Active Transportation Advisory Committee
 - Economic Development

ASSOCIATIONS AND CIVIC LEAGUES

Community organizations and neighborhood representatives shared localized perspectives on connectivity, public spaces, and the day-to-day needs of residents. These groups emphasized the importance of addressing community priorities and maintaining a strong sense of identity.

- Atlantic Avenue Association
 - Hotel Association
 - Restaurant Association
 - ViBe Creative District
- Old Beach Civic League
 - Seatack Civic League
 - Tidewater Veterans Memorial

CONSULTANTS

Consultants brought professional expertise and insights on planning, design, and market trends, helping to inform strategies that are both innovative and actionable.

- AECOM
- WSP

BUSINESS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Local business owners and property stakeholders highlighted concerns related to parking, accessibility, and economic opportunities. Their feedback underscored the need for investments that support the area’s commercial vitality while balancing residential and visitor needs.

- Wave Riding Vehicles
 - Chaplain Property
 - Double Tree Hotel
- Mt. Olive Baptist Church
 - 1081 19th Street

DEVELOPERS

Developers provided perspectives on market conditions, development feasibility, and potential opportunities for new projects. Their input helped identify strategies to attract private investment and align redevelopment efforts with the community’s vision.

- Runnymede
- Capstone Development
- MEB, Inc.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The recurring theme expressed by key stakeholders was to create a “Shared vision for an active cultural destination for locals and visitors,” highlighting the desire for a vibrant, welcoming environment that fosters connection, activity, and enjoyment. A place for events and cultural connection so that activation is year round, day and night.

Supporting the idea of a shared vision, the following themes were identified:

- Attainable housing is essential.
- Reliable, efficient transportation networks are needed.
- Ensure safe, accessible public spaces.
- Improve connections within the area and to the oceanfront
- City-owned properties and incentive partnerships for parking and infrastructure should lead to aspirational and innovative development
- Sports tourism, parking, and hotels should be market-driven partnerships
- The area lacks a clear sense of arrival at all gateways, primary to this concern is I-264 East at 21st Street and Parks Avenue.
- Parking is difficult during Convention and Sports Center events.
- The development plan should support and promote local ownership and engagement.
- Increase unique retail options beyond what’s on Atlantic Avenue.
- Change the perception that activities are limited to Atlantic Avenue and the oceanfront.
- Move away from suburban-style development.
- Create a community-oriented destination with year-round activities.
- Promote healthy market competition in retail, hospitality, housing, and more.

5. OPEN HOUSE - CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FEEDBACK

A single-day engagement session was held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center with four primary goals:

- 1. Share the draft options for Central Beach developed through prior rounds of community engagement.
- 2. Present an overview of the existing conditions analysis, which had been shaped by both technical assessment and community input.
- 3. Introduce two preliminary Master Plan concepts for consideration.
- 4. Collect feedback from attendees on those concepts to guide refinement of the final Preferred Plan.



The two Master Plan concepts were used as tools to gauge feedback and preferred ideas from both options that could then be developed into a final preferred plan.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

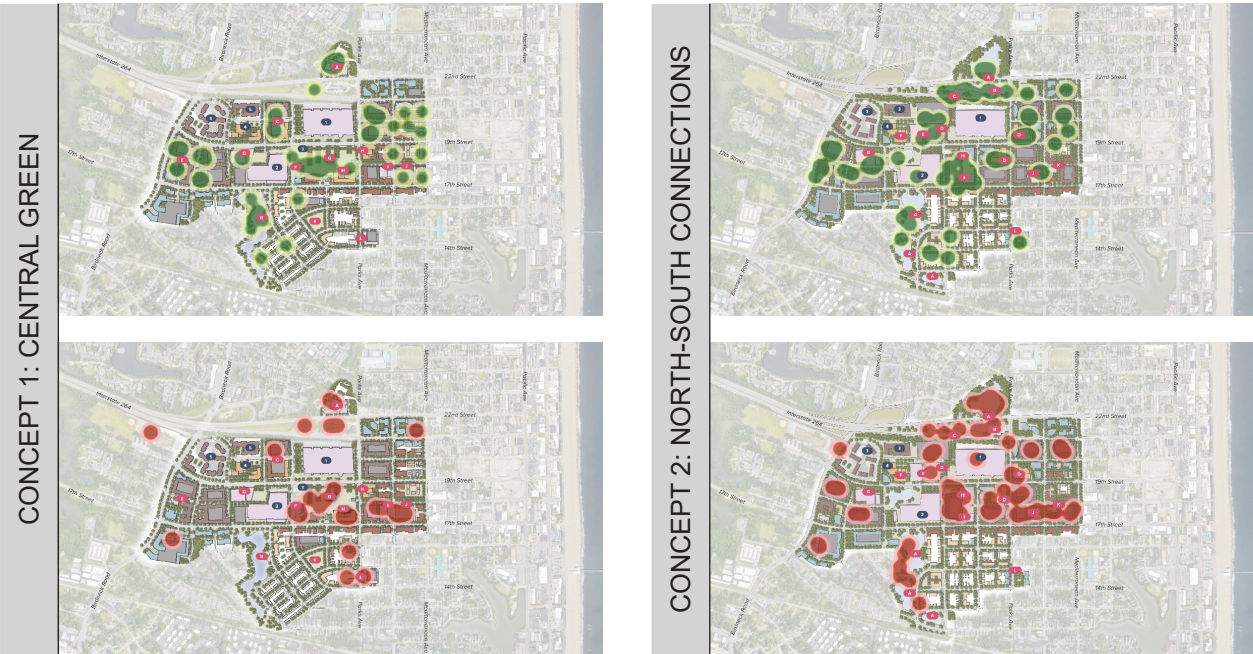
After comparing the feedback, several recurring themes emerge across both concepts, suggesting alignment in priorities. The heat maps at right show where most of the positive and negative feedback was. Appendix C provides an in-depth review of the feedback received, separated into positive and negative.

- 1. Greenspace as a Central Element
- 2. Connectivity and Mobility
- 3. Mixed-Use Development and Character
- 4. Cultural Preservation and Connection
- 5. Parking and Transportation
- 6. Stormwater Management and Resilience
- 7. Vibrancy and Community Identity
- 8. Public Safety and Activation

6. ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

The City shared a Central Beach Small Area Plan Concepts survey on their web platform in December 2024. Respondents varied in their relation to Virginia Beach, with 95% of respondents being residents, 5% of respondents being tourists, and 20% of respondents owning a business.

The north/south Connections and Central Green alternatives were included in the survey, with 45% and 55% preference respectively.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Tidewater Veterans Memorial** – Strong support for a 100-foot buffer zone to preserve the site’s reverence, protect it from encroachment, and maintain its ceremonial use.
- Green Space** – Support for maximizing green space with low-maintenance, erosion resistant landscaping, including parks and pedestrian-friendly areas for families and events.
- Tourism & Infrastructure** – Support for improved infrastructure, like parking, transit, and year-round attractions, to better serve both residents and tourists.
- Community Access** – Widespread desire for safe, well-lit, walkable, and bikeable connections from neighborhoods like Lakewood and Shadowlawn to 17th Street, with emphasis on community input in planning.
- Cultural Identity** – Calls to preserve the unique character of the ViBe District, Central Beach, and protect the historical identity of the Seatack community.
- Arts & Recreation** – Interest in expanding arts-related uses (e.g., performing arts at MoCA) and adding family-friendly features.



3. A VISION FOR CENTRAL BEACH

The Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan represents a synthesis of community and stakeholder input, technical analysis, urban planning and design. To provide aspirational and actionable means to implement this shared vision for Central Beach, the study intentionally focuses on city-owned land use and adjacent privately held properties.

This focus allows the plan to guide targeted public improvements and partnerships for economic growth along with enhancement of community and district identity. The result is a balanced and adaptable design framework that prioritizes year-round, daily activation and improved connectivity as a destination-rich culturally authentic district.

The plan establishes an overall urban design structure of campus areas within a planning strategy for growth over time. This strategy is designed to strengthen arrival and access to the Oceanfront, create public realm enhancements, and develop destination opportunities reflecting the shared stakeholder and community vision for a more welcoming, active, and connected cultural district for residents and visitors.

STRATEGIC VISION

The Central Beach preferred plan outlines an ASPIRATIONAL and ACTIONABLE vision for Central Beach, with significant potential for development that reinforces the area’s role as a vibrant, mixed-use cultural district at the Oceanfront. With large areas of land being City-owned, the City of Virginia Beach has an opportunity to lead and incentivize economic and cultural growth while establishing Central Beach as a premier destination for residents and visitors.

The plan accommodates up to (2,790) new HOUSING units, supporting a more varied residential population of daily district activity and district presence. To further activate the district and promote economic vitality, the plan includes potential for (535,000) square feet of COMMERCIAL space, (145,000) square feet of RETAIL, and (5) new DESTINATION VENUES.

A thoughtfully calibrated PARKING strategy introduces (12,880) spaces, with a net increase of (10,380), emphasizing consolidation of surface parking into structured and shared parking solutions that reduce surface parking frontage, frees up City-owned land for development, and supports district amenities and walkability.

Collectively, this development framework balances a strategy for the creation of high visitation, livability, and economic opportunity while maintaining the character and identity of the Central Beach area and surrounding communities.

DIVERSITY OF PLACE

Encourage and build on a diversity of place consistent with the character of Central Beach, creating a dynamic LIVE WORK PLAY environment that supports a wide range of activities and experiences for visitors and residents as an engine of economic activity.

EVENT AND CULTURE

Attract visitation as a year-round destination district. Our most visited places offer both event destinations and culture. Offer an authentic connection to culture and access to destination venues throughout Central Beach.

CONNECTIVITY

Connect nearby communities, link destinations, and seamlessly create a sense of arrival and connection to the oceanfront as part of the Central Beach Cultural District.

VIBRANCY

Keep the Central Beach cultural district active day and night, year round, with strategic activation and programming of public spaces, venues, integrated residential and parking, businesses, jobs, and cultural experiences.

VISITATION AND ACTIVITY

Drive market and economic development by incentivizing growth in visitation through the creation of destination venues for revenue programming, and the creation of residential, commercial and retail business activity.

3. A VISION FOR CENTRAL BEACH - PREFERRED PLAN



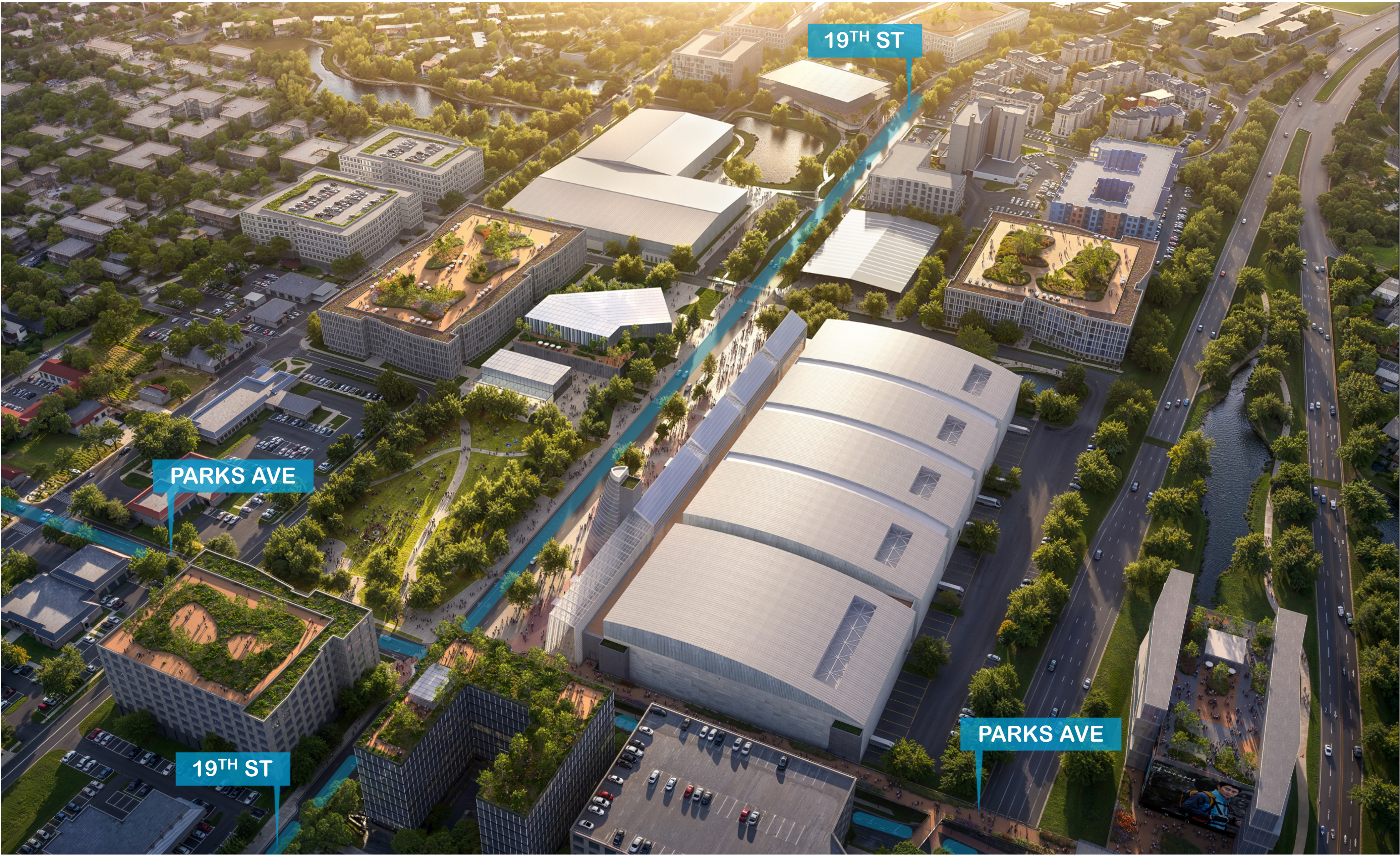




3. A VISION FOR CENTRAL BEACH - PREFERRED PLAN

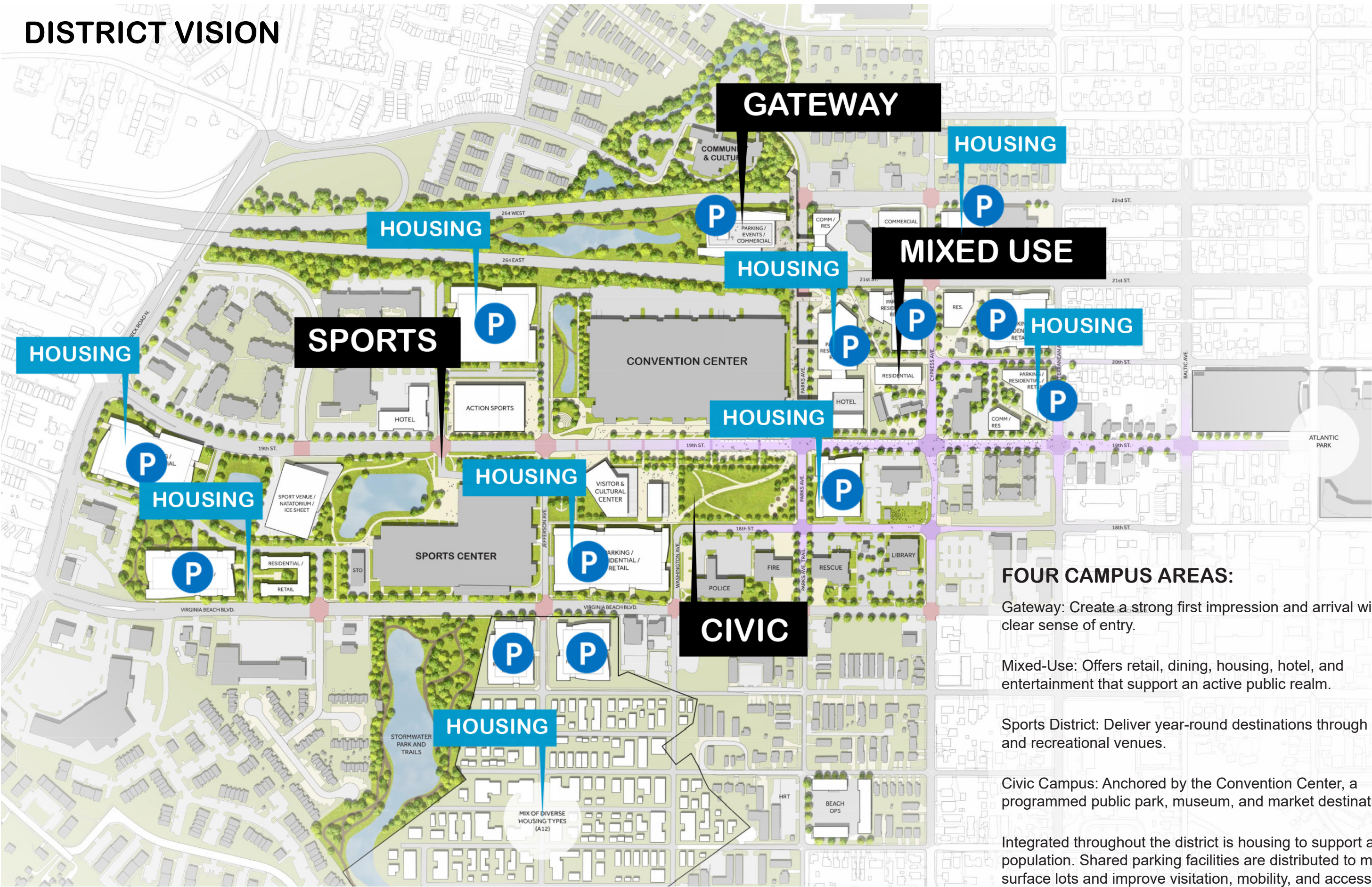


3. A VISION FOR CENTRAL BEACH - PREFERRED PLAN





DISTRICT VISION



FOUR CAMPUS AREAS:

Gateway: Create a strong first impression and arrival with a clear sense of entry.

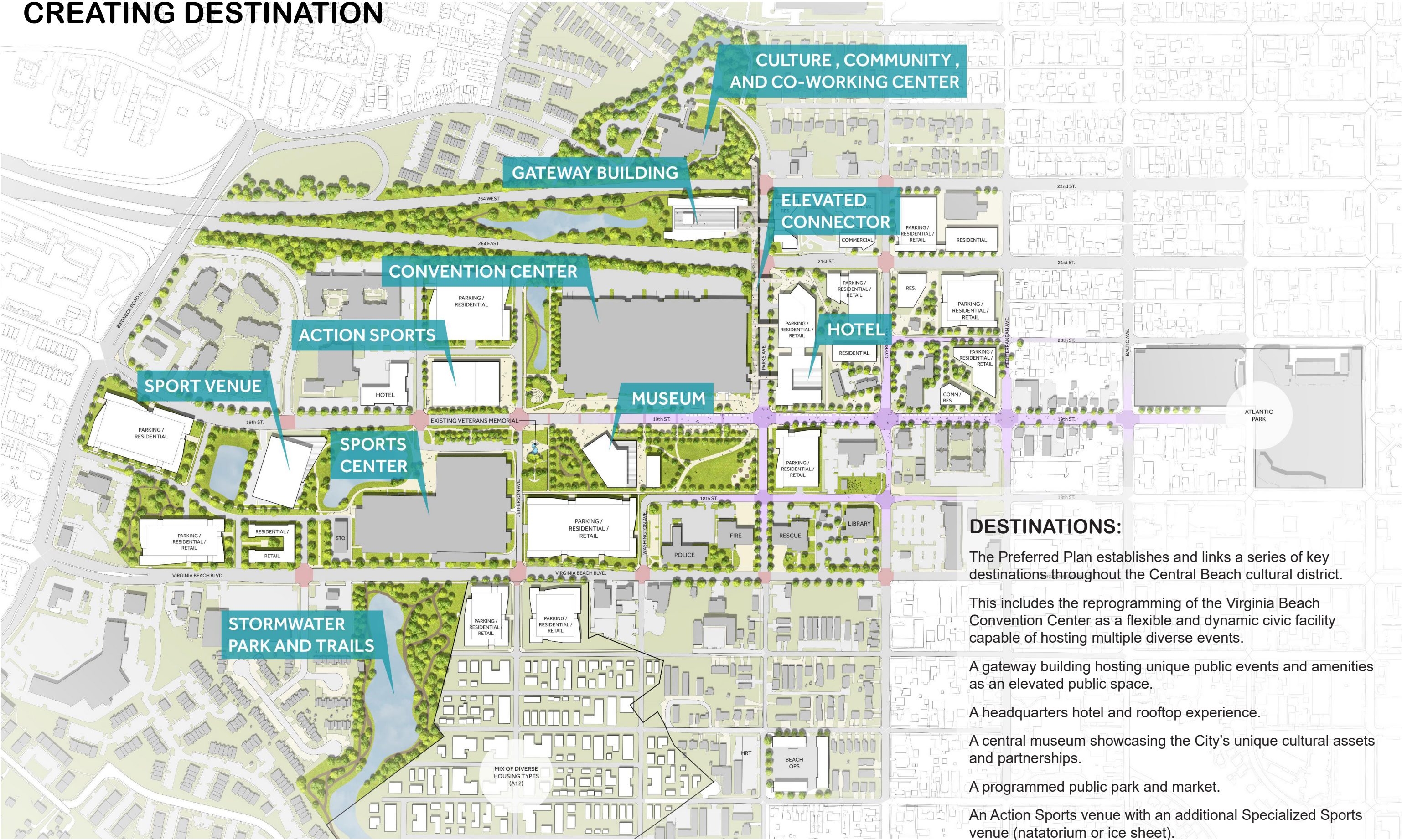
Mixed-Use: Offers retail, dining, housing, hotel, and entertainment that support an active public realm.

Sports District: Deliver year-round destinations through athletic and recreational venues.

Civic Campus: Anchored by the Convention Center, a programmed public park, museum, and market destinations.

Integrated throughout the district is housing to support a 24/7 population. Shared parking facilities are distributed to minimize surface lots and improve visitation, mobility, and access.

CREATING DESTINATION



SENSE OF ARRIVAL

The Parks Avenue Gateway serves as a clear and active entry to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. The elevated walkway connects the Gateway Building as a place to park and experience events and outdoor views, with easy pedestrian connection to the Central Beach district and its destinations and activity.



ELEVATED CONNECTIVITY

The elevated connector is an activated pedestrian-oriented structure that links the campus areas and destinations of the Central Beach district to surrounding destinations and communities by bridging across I-264. Designed to enhance safety and access, the Parks Avenue connector creates a seamless, high-profile gateway into the Virginia Beach Oceanfront and Central Beach, reinforcing the district’s identity as a vibrant, connected destination that is readily accessible.



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DISTRICT CENTER

The elevated connector also plays a key role by creating a continuous pedestrian spine that unites the district's arrival and ease of access by linking recreational areas, the Central Green, public amenities, cultural destinations, and mixed-use development at the district's center at 19th Street and Parks Avenue.



Dills Architects

CENTRAL GREEN

The Central Green serves as the public heart of the Central Beach district as an intentionally designed open space that functions as a unifying public asset for residents, visitors, and nearby businesses. Strategically located adjacent and central to the district campuses, the Central Green provides a flexible, programmable, multi-purpose space that supports community events, passive recreation, and overflow activity and relief from surrounding indoor destinations, events, and sports venues.



Dills Architects

SHARED PUBLIC REALM

Streets, pedestrian ways, and open green space across the district are designed to accommodate seasonal, weekly, and daily programming. These shared public spaces provide a place for social interaction of residents and visitors, making the public realm a vital everyday destination as well as a backdrop for larger district-wide events. As development intensifies around these public outdoor spaces, they become even more valuable, offering relief from density and indoor activities, enhancing walkability, and making public and community space central to the district's identity and daily life.



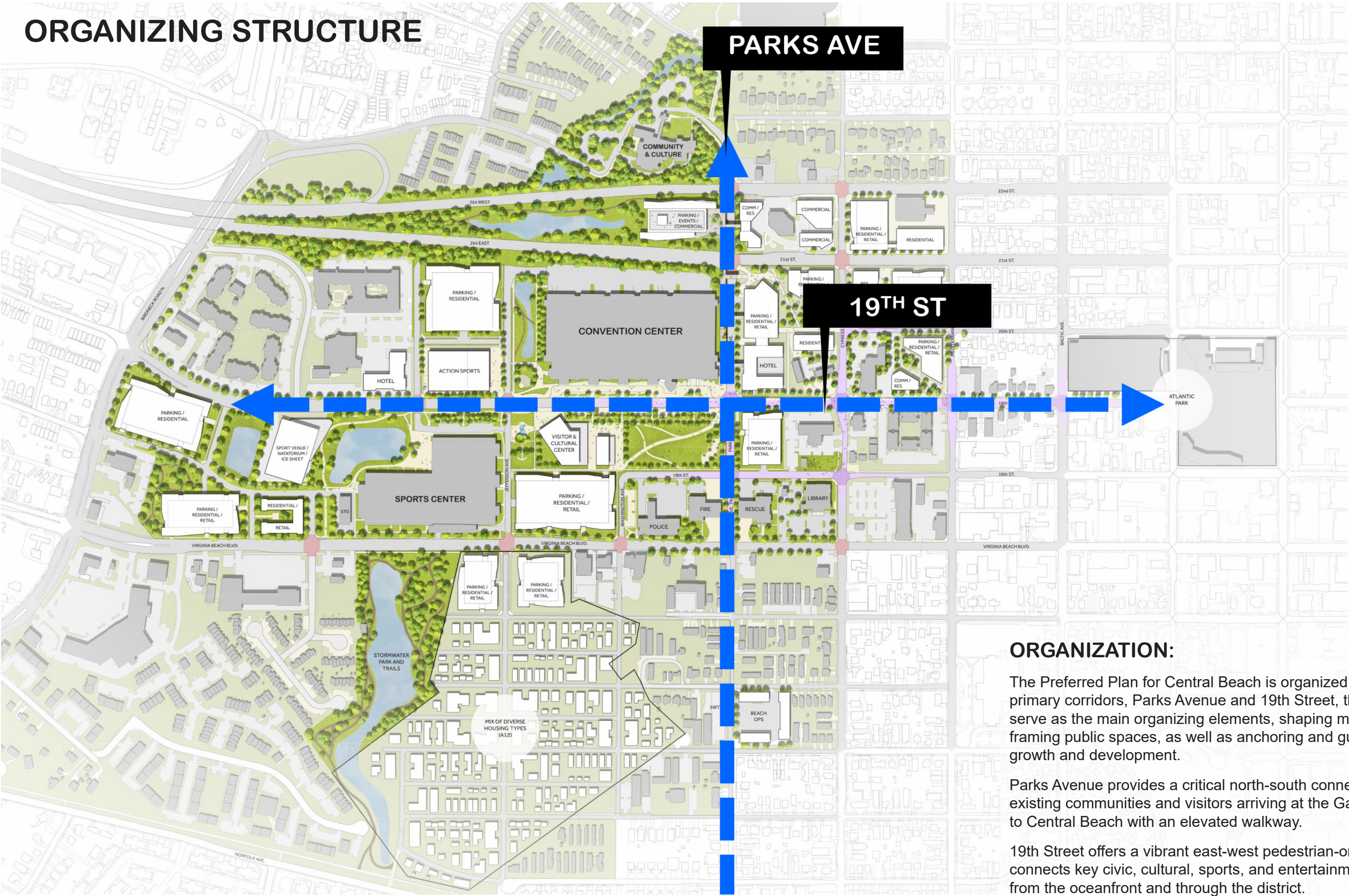
LINKING DESTINATIONS AND CULTURE

19th street serves as a pedestrian-oriented street linking the district’s destinations and the Oceanfront as a walkable experience. Museum and a public market sit along the Central Green, envisioned as a key cultural anchor that activates the public realm and strengthens the district’s cultural identity and civic campus as a sought after destination.



Dills Architects

ORGANIZING STRUCTURE



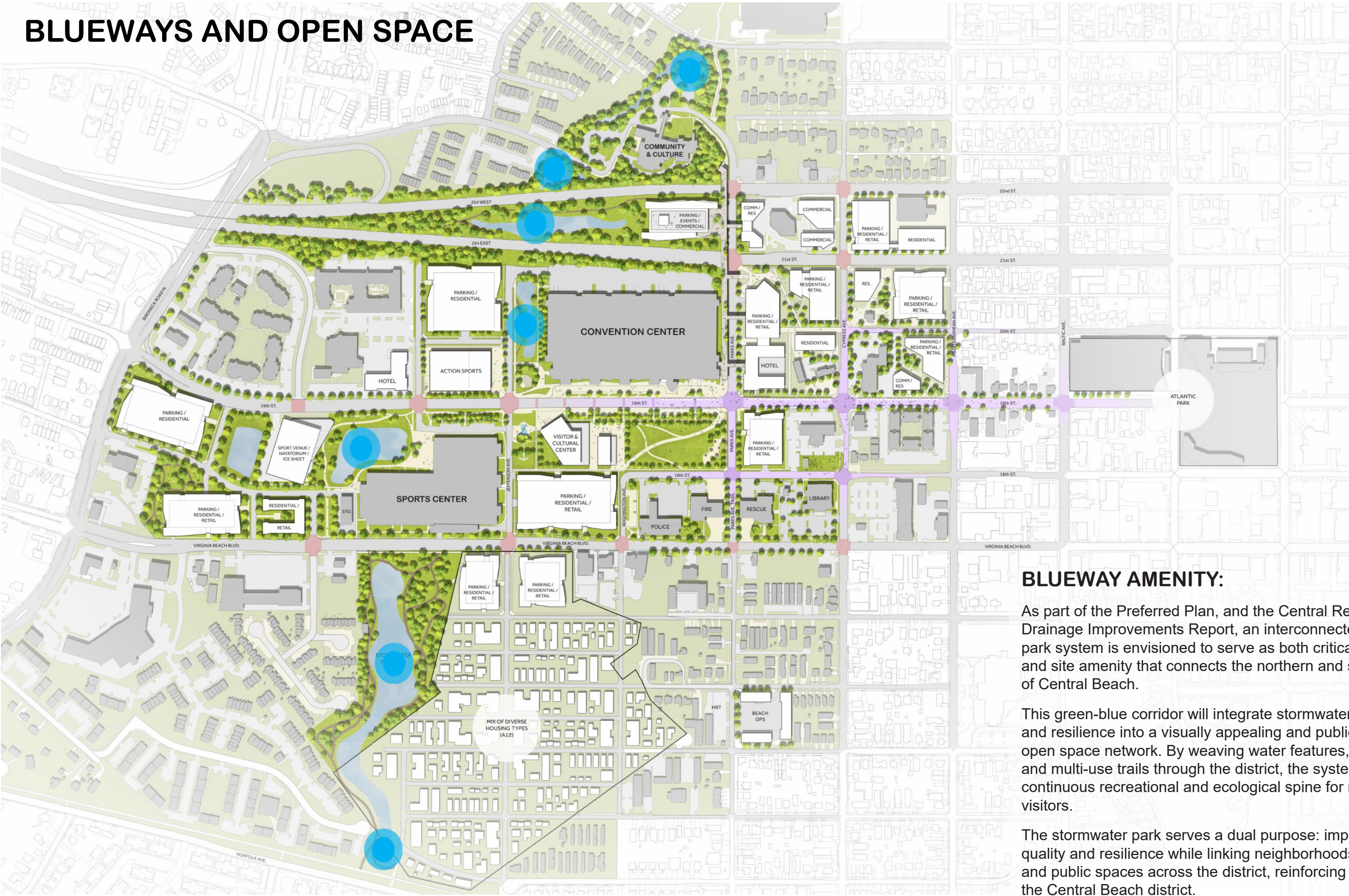
ORGANIZATION:

The Preferred Plan for Central Beach is organized around two primary corridors, Parks Avenue and 19th Street, these streets serve as the main organizing elements, shaping movement, framing public spaces, as well as anchoring and guiding economic growth and development.

Parks Avenue provides a critical north-south connection, linking existing communities and visitors arriving at the Gateway Building to Central Beach with an elevated walkway.

19th Street offers a vibrant east-west pedestrian-oriented axis that connects key civic, cultural, sports, and entertainment destinations from the oceanfront and through the district.

BLUEWAYS AND OPEN SPACE



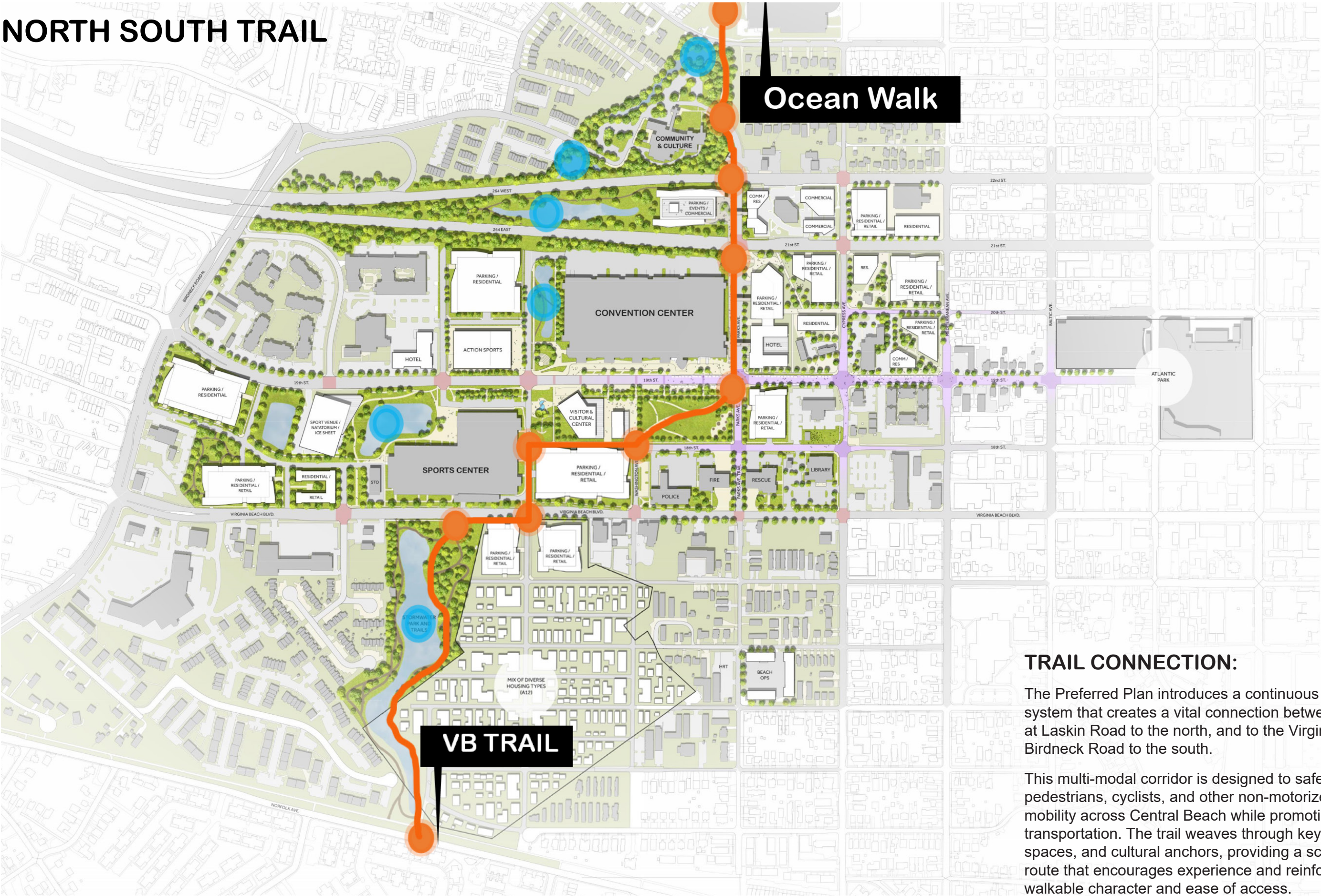
BLUEWAY AMENITY:

As part of the Preferred Plan, and the Central Resort District Drainage Improvements Report, an interconnected stormwater park system is envisioned to serve as both critical infrastructure and site amenity that connects the northern and southern portions of Central Beach.

This green-blue corridor will integrate stormwater management and resilience into a visually appealing and publicly accessible open space network. By weaving water features, native plantings, and multi-use trails through the district, the system creates a continuous recreational and ecological spine for residents and visitors.

The stormwater park serves a dual purpose: improving water quality and resilience while linking neighborhoods, destinations, and public spaces across the district, reinforcing the identity of the Central Beach district.

NORTH SOUTH TRAIL

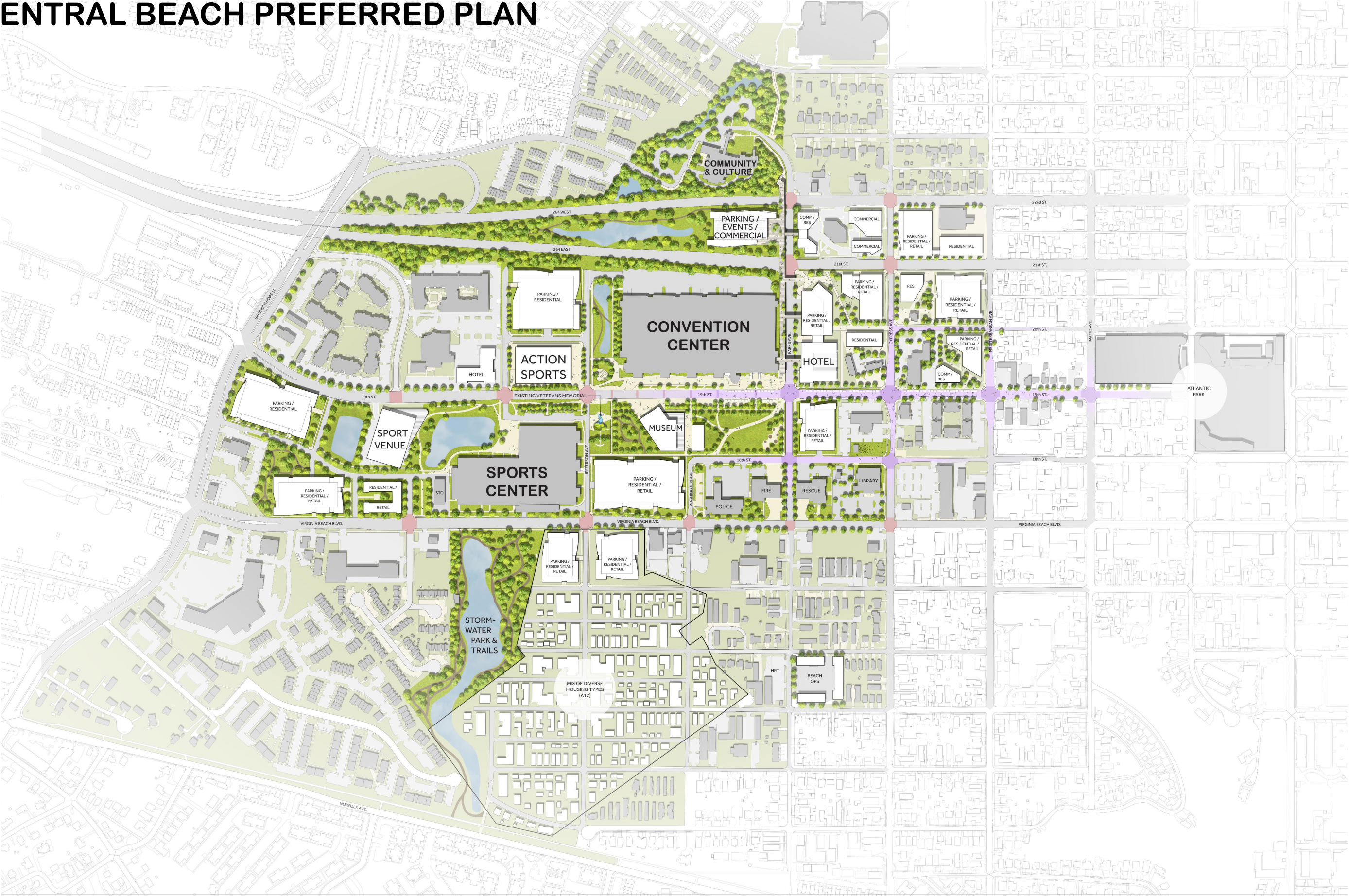


TRAIL CONNECTION:

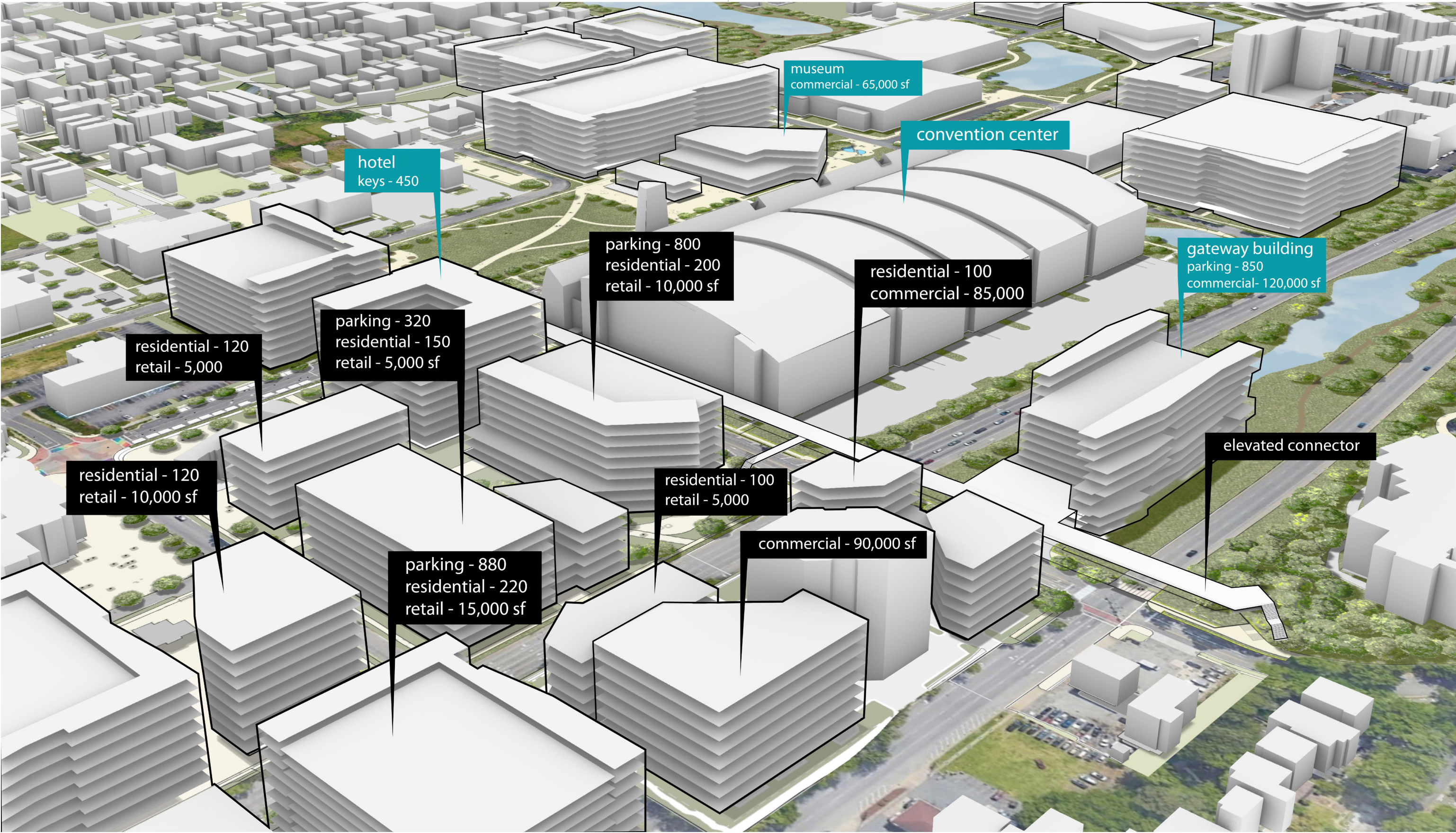
The Preferred Plan introduces a continuous north-south trail system that creates a vital connection between the Ocean Walk at Laskin Road to the north, and to the Virginia Beach Trail at Birdneck Road to the south.

This multi-modal corridor is designed to safely accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users, enhancing mobility across Central Beach while promoting healthy, active transportation. The trail weaves through key destinations, public spaces, and cultural anchors, providing a scenic and accessible route that encourages experience and reinforces the district's walkable character and ease of access.

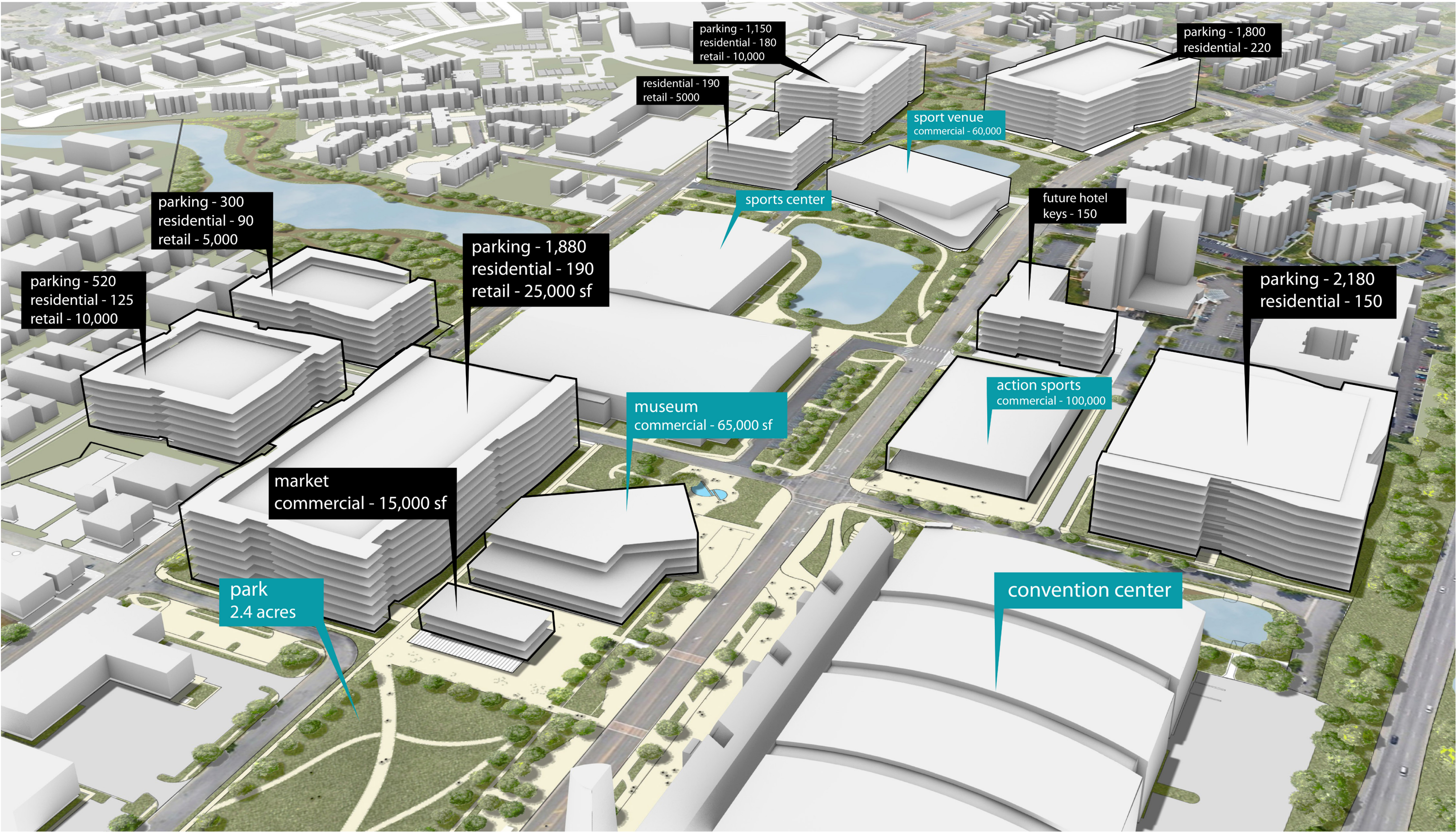
CENTRAL BEACH PREFERRED PLAN



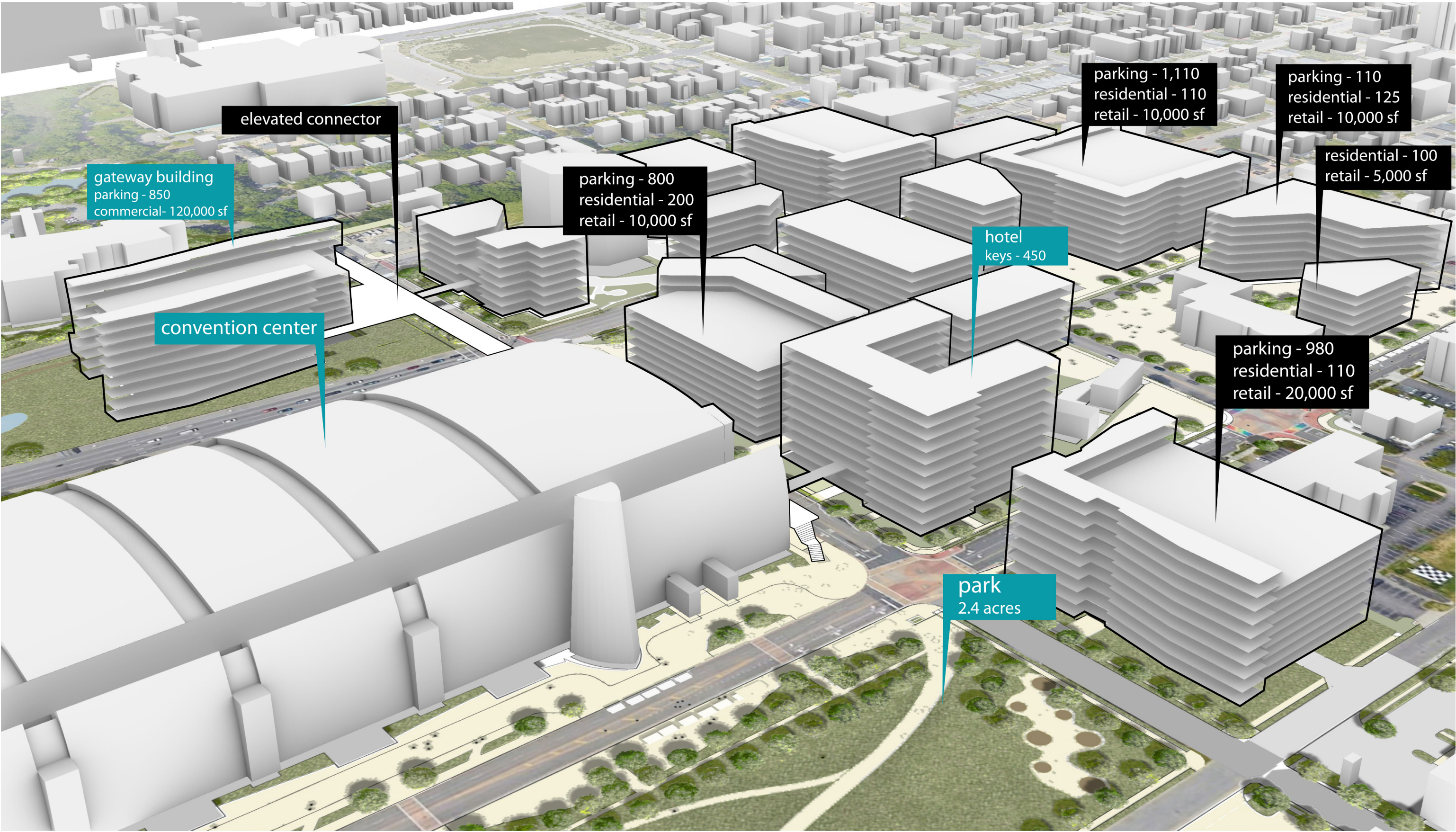
URBAN MASSING AND DATA



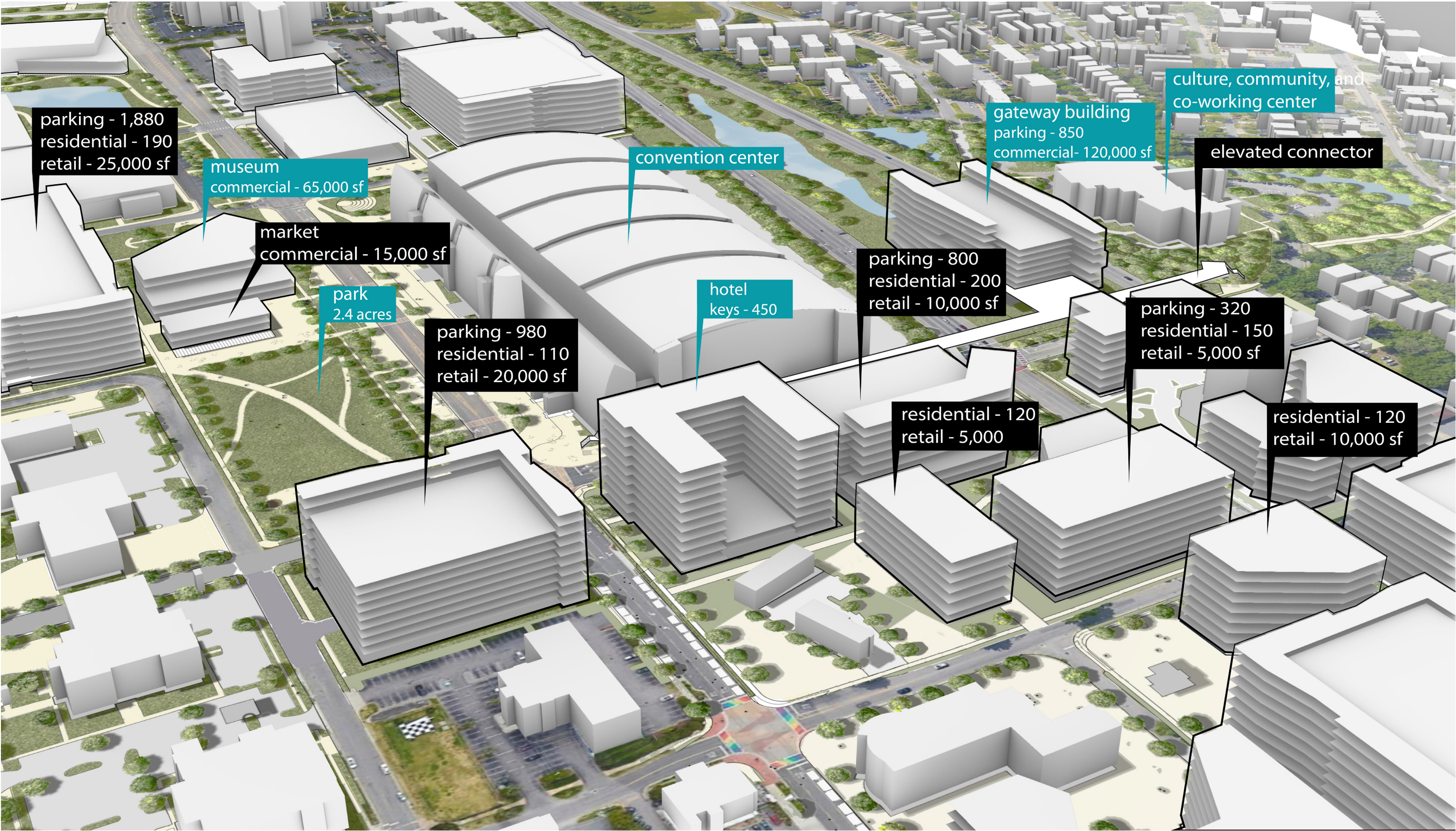
URBAN MASSING AND DATA

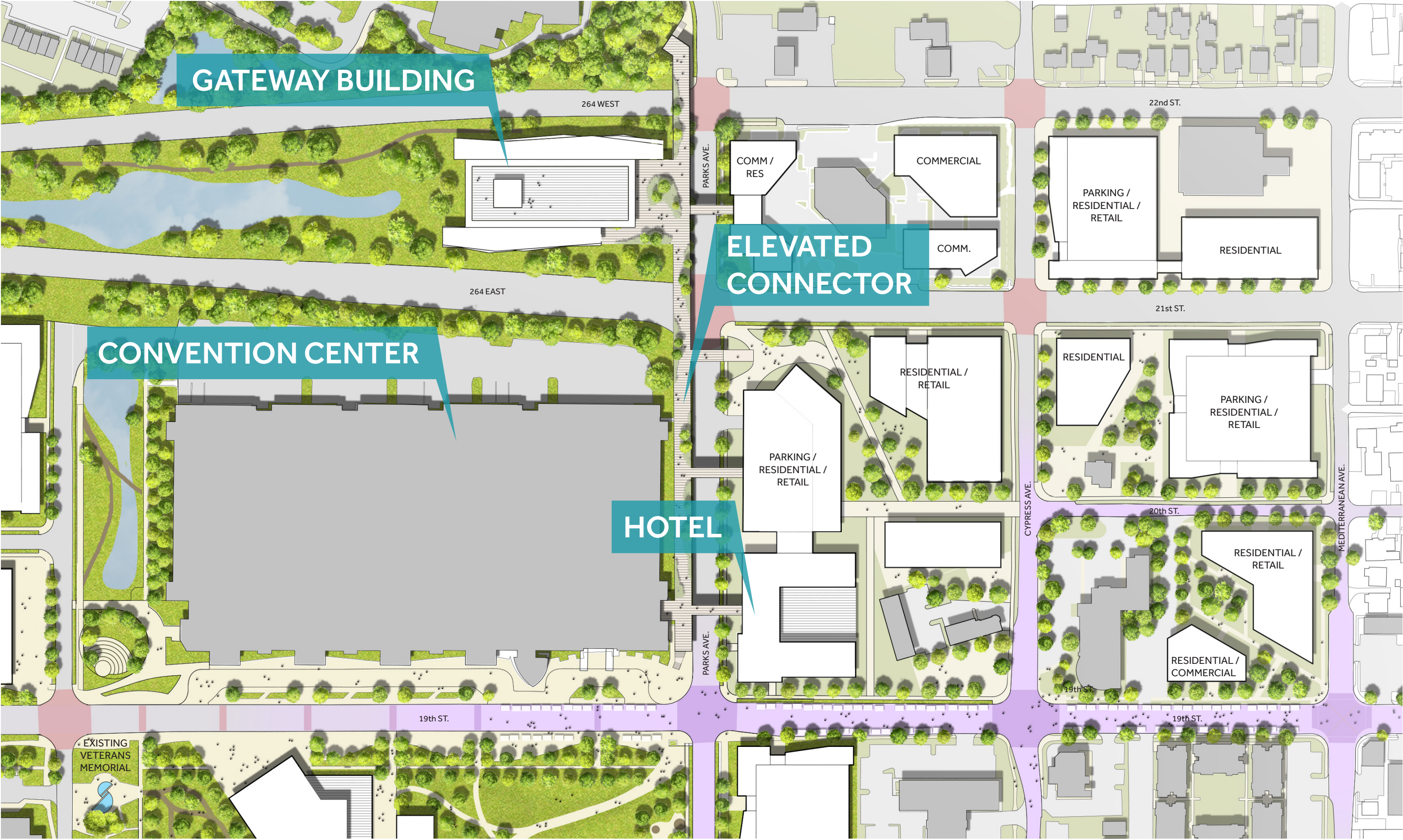


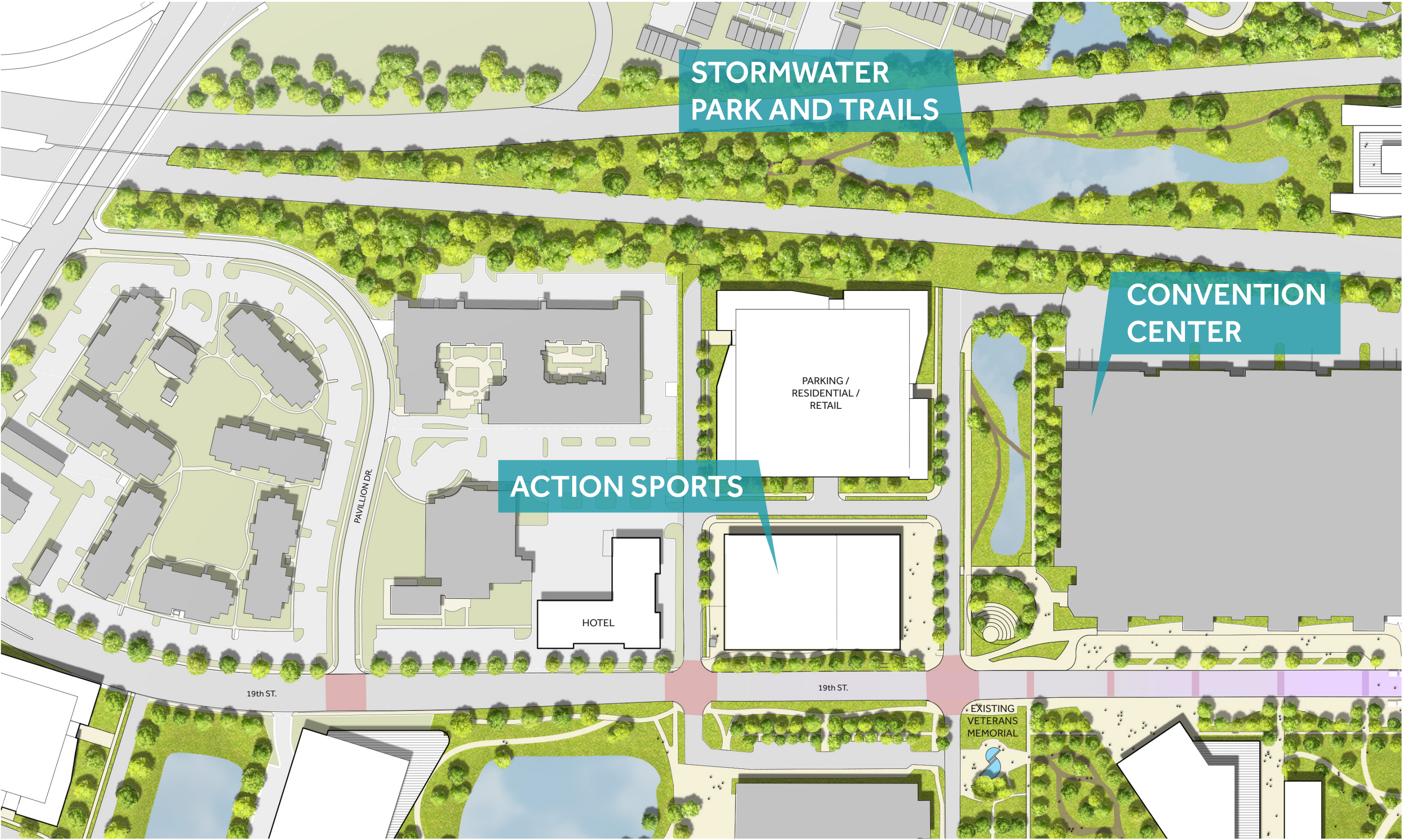
URBAN MASSING AND DATA

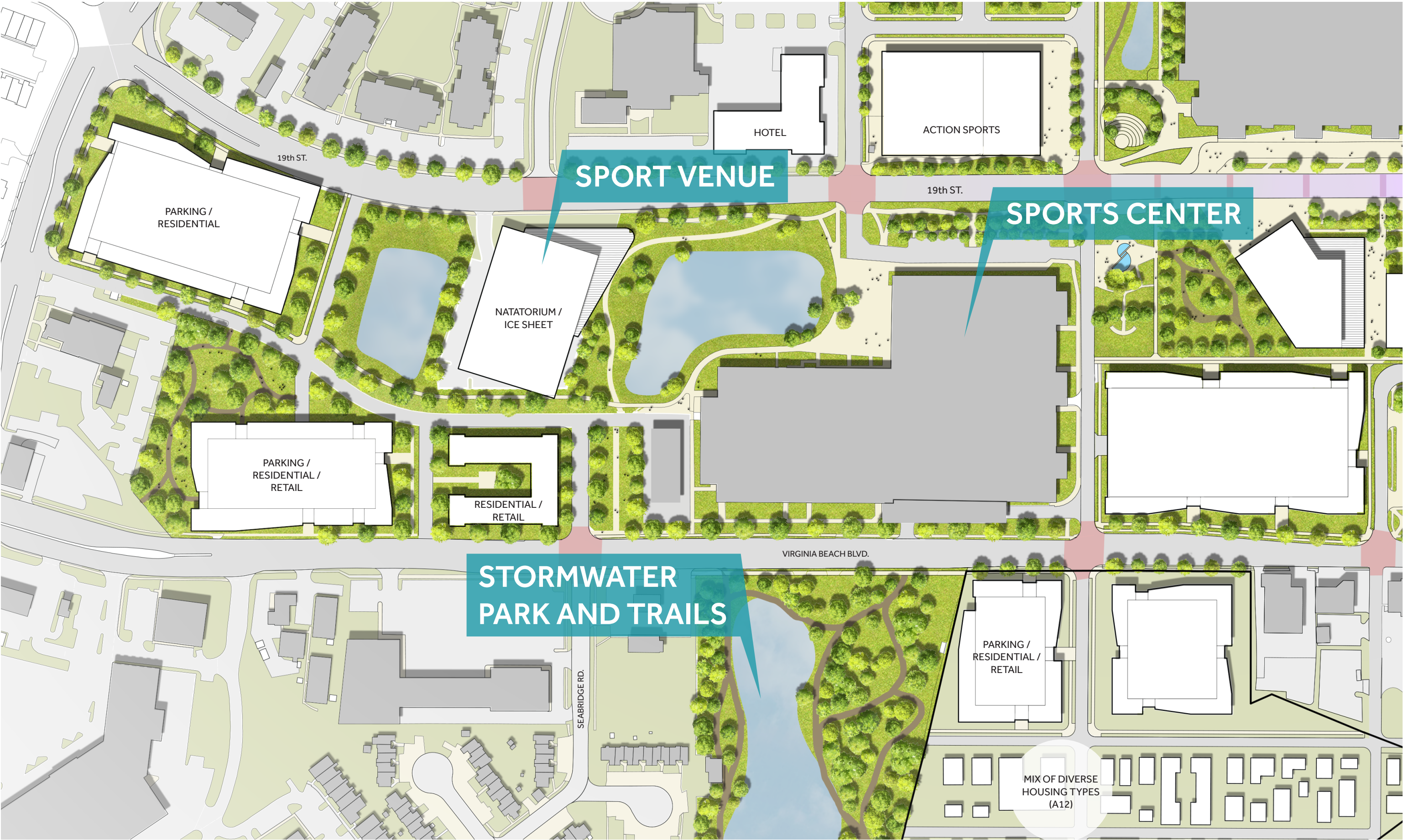


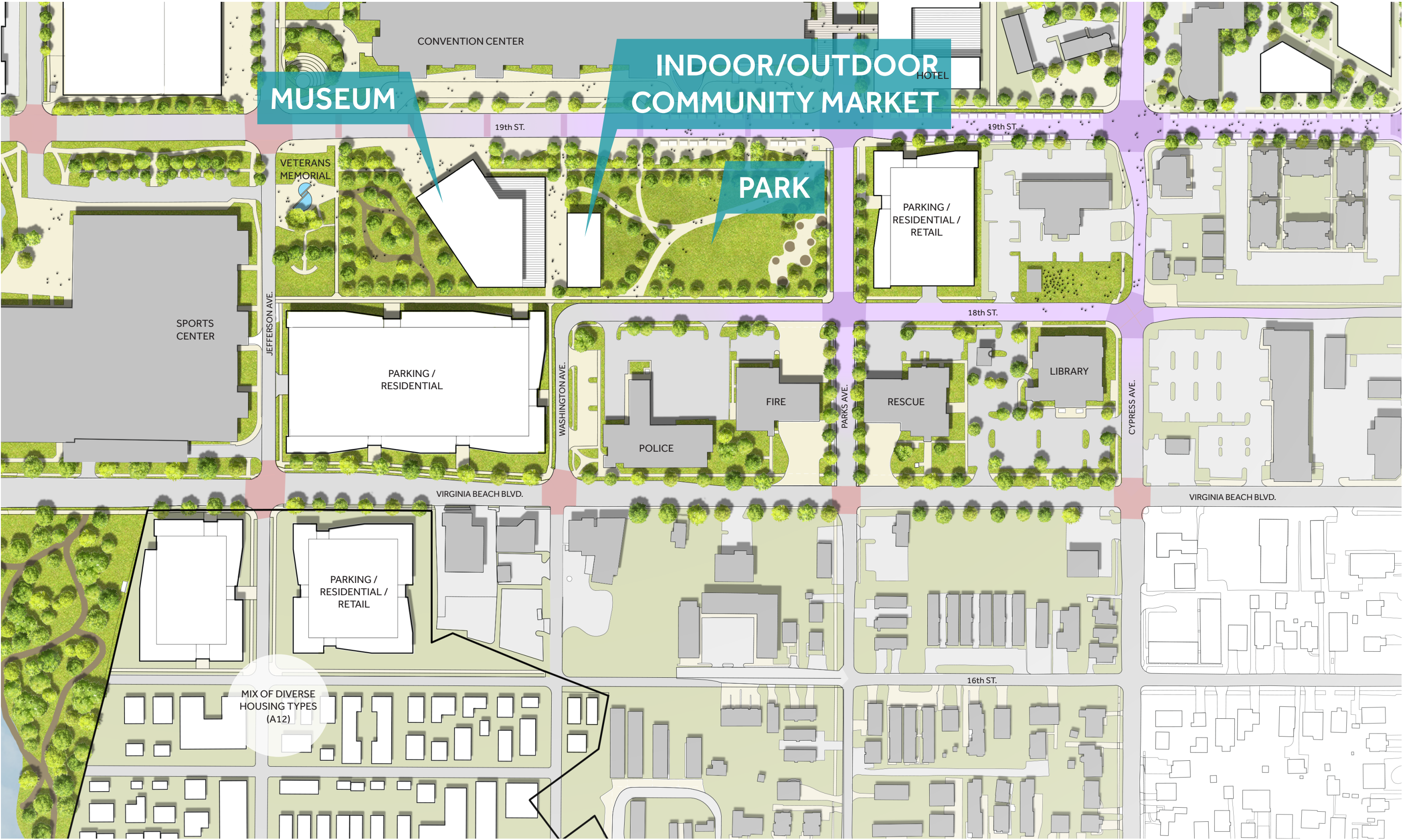
URBAN MASSING AND DATA











CITY-OWNED PROPERTY



DEVELOPMENT PHASING STRATEGY

A phased approach to development ensures that growth is implemented in a logical, coordinated, and economically resilient way without adverse outcomes for businesses, destinations, and the community.

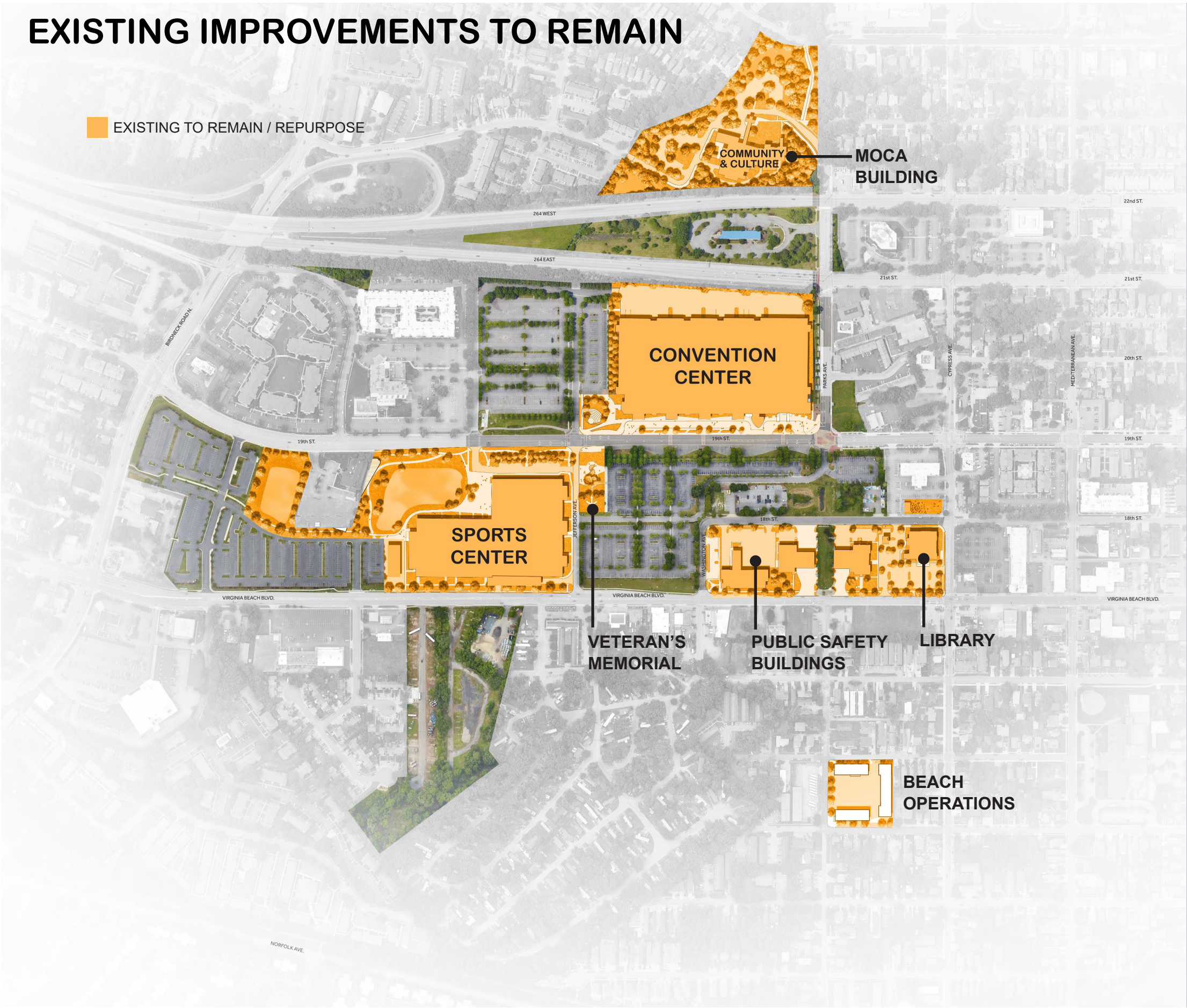
Phasing strategies help align infrastructure investments with market demand, minimize disruption to existing uses, and build momentum through early catalytic projects.

Each phase is designed to reinforce the overall vision while remaining flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions, partnerships, and community priorities.

PHASED PARKING

City-Owned land areas for development where existing surface parking exists now are sequenced with structured parking development additions to maintain access to existing destinations and businesses, and to increase parking counts and visitation over time.

EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS TO REMAIN



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDINGS AND LIBRARY

The existing Police, Fire, and EMS public safety buildings and Library have potentially 20 years of additional useful facility life, and remain as part of the civic campus area.

MOCA BUILDING

The existing MOCA building should be re-purposed, potentially under operational agreement, for cultural and community based programming.

THE CONVENTION CENTER AND SPORTS CENTER

The existing Convention Center is reprogrammed as a flexible multi-use civic facility to host more varied events and public programs in the future. The Sports Center remains in its current function and operation. Existing stormwater infrastructure features highlighted remain in support of these facilities.

TIDEWATER VETERANS MEMORIAL

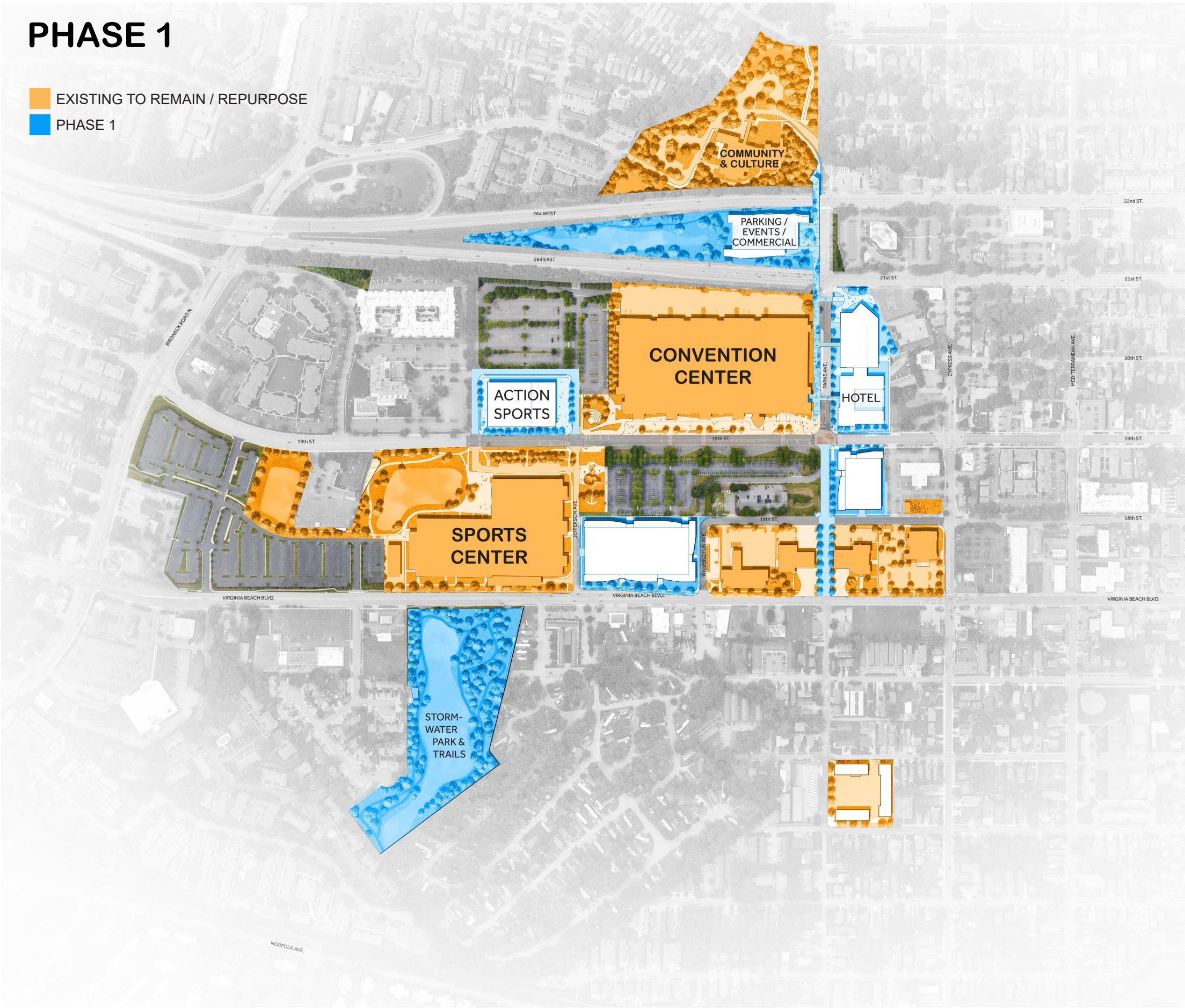
The Veterans Memorial is an everlasting homage to the men and women who have given their all so that freedom and democracy may thrive. It will remain and should be respected by any surrounding development. A 100' development buffer from the memorial's boundary will be required for any adjacent development.

BEACH OPERATIONS

The existing Beach Operations compound will remain and should be upgraded to better fulfill its use and function.

PHASE 1

- EXISTING TO REMAIN / REPURPOSE
- PHASE 1



GATEWAY BUILDING

This building replaces the existing Visitor’s Center with structured parking, commercial and hosted public event space, and an elevated pedestrian connection to the Parks Avenue Gateway Connector. It serves as a functional north-south connection across I-264 as a public amenity, with direct pedestrian access to the Central Beach District.

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL

Partially on City and privately owned property, the Headquarters hotel connects to the elevated walkway at Parks Avenue north of 19th Street, and to the Convention Center to serve events and conventions. Structured parking, retail, and housing is connected and serves the mixed-used campus area.

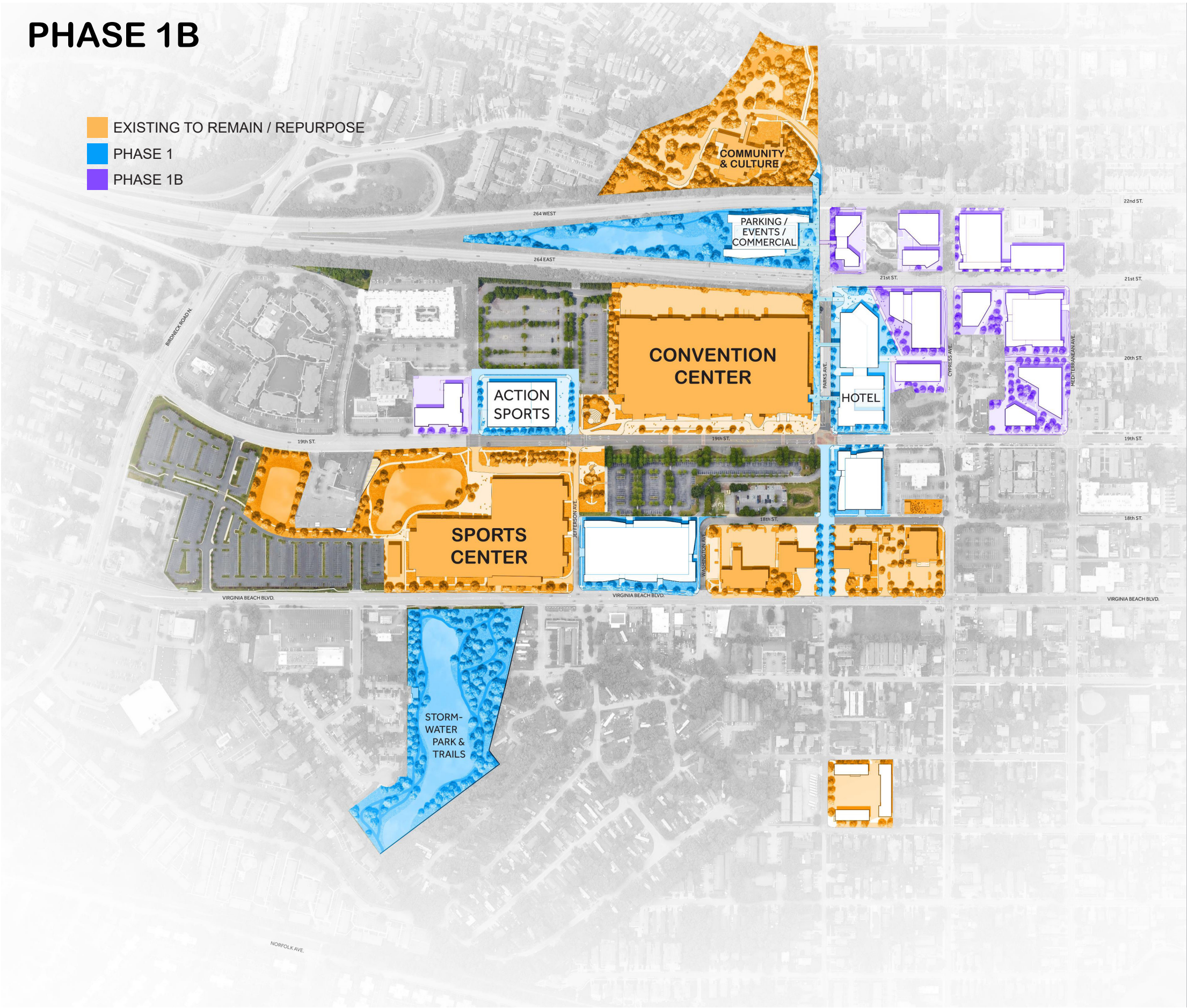
ACTION SPORTS VENUE

Replacing existing surface parking, an Action Sports venue is sited west of the Convention Center with its open outdoor training space facing the public way on 19th Street. This location allows for expansion and larger events to be co-hosted by the Actions Sports building and the Convention Center.

STRUCTURED PARKING, HOUSING, AND RETAIL

Replacing existing surface parking, new facilities are strategically located at the southeast corner of 19th and Parks Avenue, and east of the Sports Center on 17th Street.

PHASE 1B



PRIVATELY HELD PROPERTIES IN THE MIXED-USE CAMPUS AREA

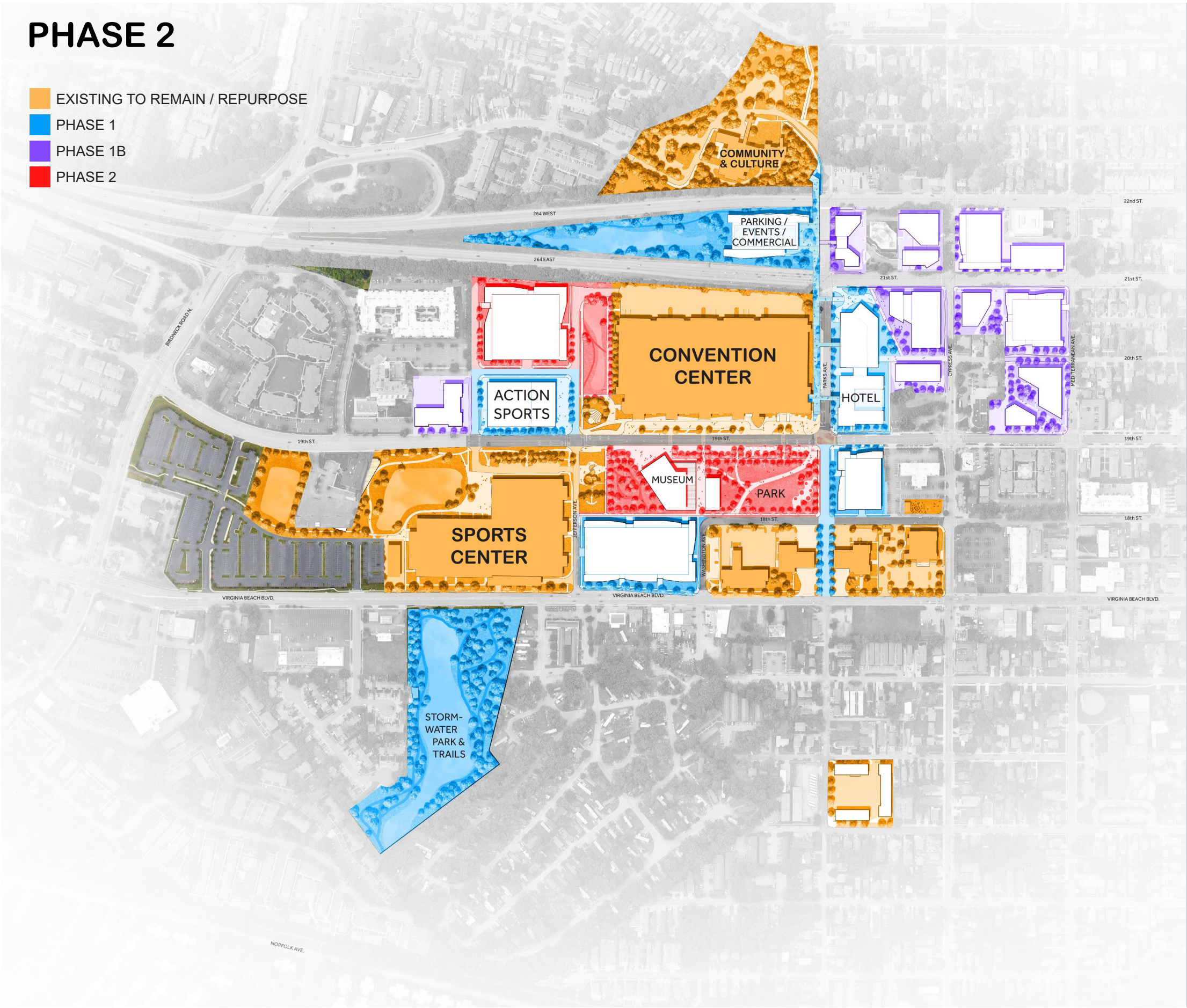
The plan is intended to guide market-driven development and public-private partnerships for the mixed-use campus area. The plan shows a combination of existing block and in-fill urban strategies that reinforce streets and massing along Parks Avenue and east towards the Oceanfront and resort destinations.

Consolidated structured parking, housing, commercial, and retail open up half-block public spaces for a more porous and finer grained pattern as development moves away from the Convention Center and the Civic campus area into The ViBe district and surrounding lower scaled residential areas.

Potential for expansion of the hotel west of the Convention Center is considered near 19th Street to reinforce pedestrian use.

PHASE 2

- EXISTING TO REMAIN / REPURPOSE
- PHASE 1
- PHASE 1B
- PHASE 2



STRUCTURED PARKING AND HOUSING

Northwest of the Convention Center, the existing surface parking is replaced by structured parking and housing. Vehicular access is maintained west of the Convention Center and the interstitial property is developed as part of the interconnected stormwater park and trail system.

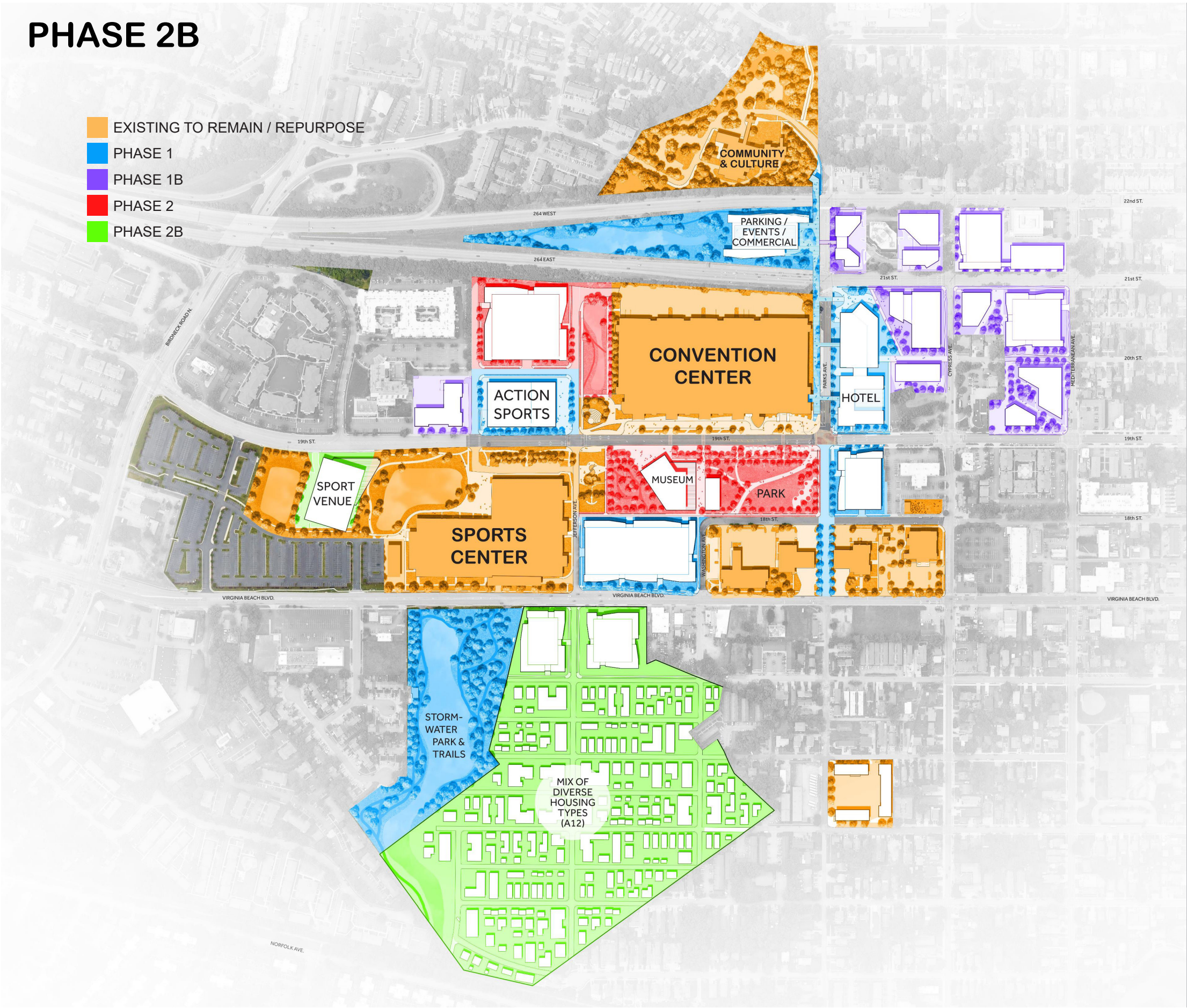
CENTRAL GREEN, MARKET AND MUSEUM

Replacing existing surface parking along the southern side of 19th Street, the Central Green serves as a unifying open public park space for social and event programming in the civic campus area.

A public market and cultural museum are developed west of the Central Green to link cultural destinations and amenities along 19th Street as a pedestrian-oriented, destination-rich, public way from the Oceanfront to Birdneck Road.

PHASE 2B

- EXISTING TO REMAIN / REPURPOSE
- PHASE 1
- PHASE 1B
- PHASE 2
- PHASE 2B



SPECIALIZED SPORTS VENUE

Replacing the existing commercial facility on private property, a new sports venue is developed west of the existing Sports Center as an addition to the Sports campus area. The venue would house an ice sheet for hockey or a future natatorium as part of the existing sports and athletic event destinations.

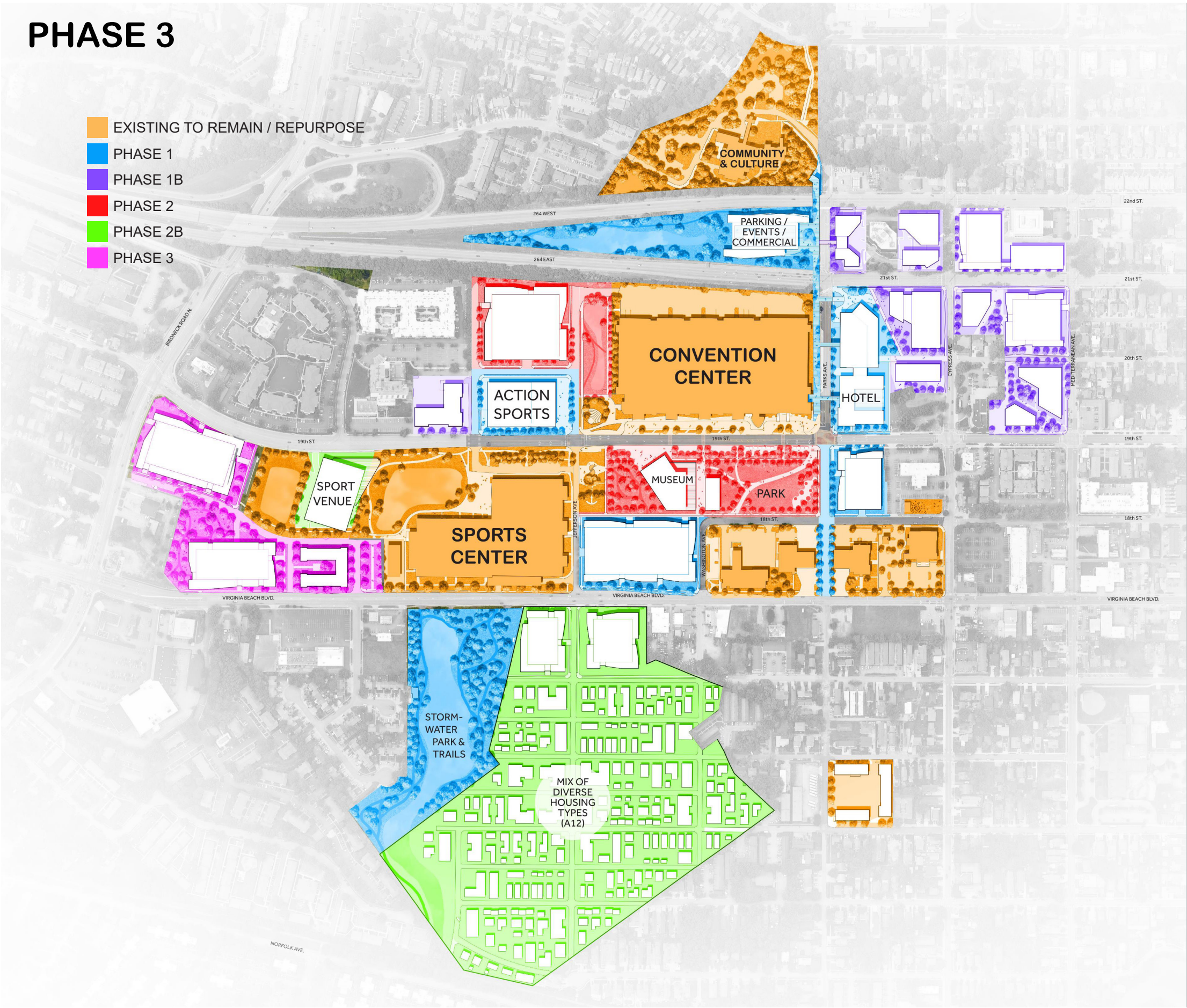
HOUSING SOUTH OF 17TH STREET

The private property south of 17th Street to Birdneck Road is shown developed by extending the existing street grid and reconnecting streets, pathways, and historic community pattern. A diverse mix of housing unit types as permitted by zoning (A12) is intended to better fit the existing residential context.

Structured parking, retail, and housing is shown along 17th Street (zoned RT-3) to reinforce the street with higher density and massing context and use with the nearby Sports Center and street front.

PHASE 3

- EXISTING TO REMAIN / REPURPOSE
- PHASE 1
- PHASE 1B
- PHASE 2
- PHASE 2B
- PHASE 3



RESIDENTIAL HOUSING, RETAIL, AND STRUCTURED PARKING

Replacing existing surface parking in the western most area of the District near Birdneck Road, housing, retail, and structured parking is developed with associated open space buffer and connectivity to the Historic Seatack community.

Intended to scale down in massing on the periphery of the district, the developed areas respond to the nearby residential neighborhoods, commercial businesses, and the re-connection of street patterns into the district while maintaining density.

An aerial photograph of a city street, likely in Central Beach, showing a mix of urban development, green spaces, and parking areas. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark overlay to make the text stand out.

4. Funding, Policy, and Implementation Strategies

Establishing a realistic and strategic implementation approach is essential to the long-term success of the Central Beach Small Area Plan. A well-defined implementation strategy will ensure that investment in infrastructure, public space, and development will be sequenced to enhance and support momentum, minimize disruption, and align with market demand and community priorities.

Implementation will rely on a combination of public and private investment. Public funding may support foundational infrastructure, open space, and mobility improvements, while private developers can play a critical role in delivering housing, commercial space, and civic amenities. Strategies like public-private partnerships, various grant opportunities, and incentives should be leveraged to maximize impact and ensure that shared goals of the Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan are realized.

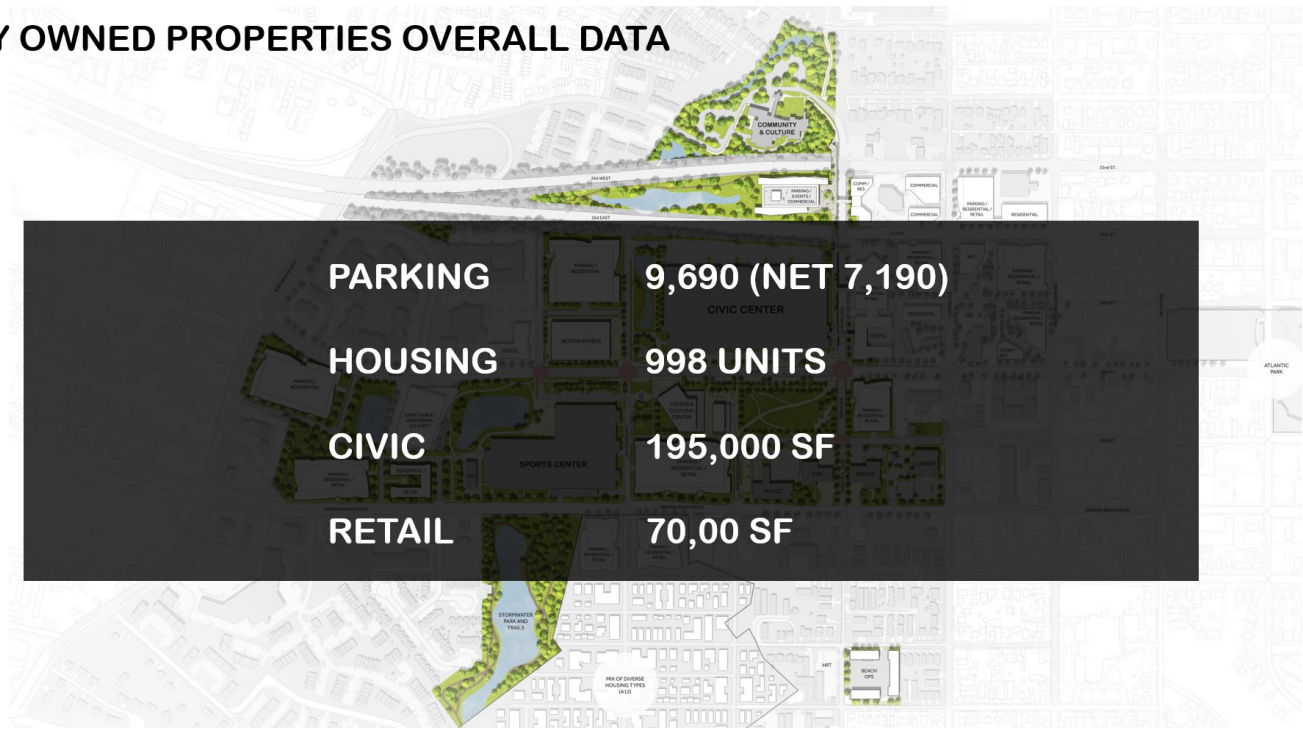
FUNDING STRATEGIES

Implementing the Central Beach Small Area Plan will require a diverse and coordinated funding approach that leverages both public and private resources. A layered funding strategy, combining tourism-generated revenues, public incentives, federal and state grants, and private partnerships, will make the plan financially viable while aligning investments with the district’s dual role as a community hub and visitor destination.

In addition to these core financial sources, there are numerous other public-driven strategies and opportunities that can be tailored to specific district elements and development projects that are in current need of funding:

- 1. Public-Private Partnership
- 2. Tax Increment Financing
- 3. Business Improvement District
- 4. Master Options Agreement
- 5. Parking Benefit District
- 6. Grants and Federal State Funding
- 7. Potential Opportunities to Explore

CITY OWNED PROPERTIES OVERALL DATA



Planned capacity for City-owned property in the Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan addressing immediate identified needs for parking and housing

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

A Public-Private Partnership (P3) is a collaborative arrangement between government entities and private sector partners to deliver a project or service that benefits the public. In a P3, each party shares risks, and rewards, with the public sector often providing land, incentives, or infrastructure, while the private sector delivers investment, development expertise, and long-term management.

Central Beach presents multiple opportunities for leveraging P3s to advance the Small Area Plan’s goals. For example:

Catalytic Mixed-Use Development – The City could partner with a private developer to transform key publicly owned parcels (such as the property adjacent to the Convention Center) into mixed-use projects that include housing, retail, and public amenities.



View into mixed-use campus from Parks Avenue Gateway Connector

Structured Parking – A P3 could deliver shared structured parking facilities that support both civic uses and private development, minimizing land used for surface parking.



View of integrated structured parking, housing, and mixed-use

Civic and Cultural Anchors – The Gateway Building, Museum, or proposed Natatorium could be developed and operated through joint public-private agreements to reduce public capital costs while enhancing public access.



View towards the Central Green, Public market, and Cultural Museum

Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements – The City could fund public infrastructure (streets, utilities, parks) to unlock private investment on adjacent sites, accelerating phased redevelopment.



View of 19th Street as a frequent pedestrian way

By aligning public goals with private sector capacity, P3s can help Central Beach deliver high-impact projects more efficiently, reduce public financial risk, and ensure development outcomes that serve both community and more broader economic interests.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public financing tool used to support redevelopment in designated areas by capturing the future increase in property tax revenues generated by new development. When a TIF district is established, the current property tax base is frozen. As redevelopment occurs and property values rise, the additional tax revenue, known as the “increment,” is redirected to fund improvements within the district.

In the context of Central Beach, TIF can be used to finance critical infrastructure upgrades, public realm improvements, parking structures, attainable housing, or site preparation needed to catalyze private investment. By leveraging future tax revenues, TIF reduces the need for upfront public capital and helps create a self-sustaining funding stream that supports long-term reinvestment in the area. When used strategically, TIF can help bridge the gap between public goals and private market conditions, accelerating implementation while maintaining local control over reinvestment priorities.



Street arrival view of mixed-use campus area, Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan

This approach could be used to finance key improvements such as:

- Streetscape upgrades and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure along Parks Avenue and 19th Street
- Construction of structured parking to support mixed-use and event-driven activity
- Stormwater park systems and trail connections to improve resiliency and connectivity
- Site preparation, utilities, and roadway realignments to support infill development
- Public amenities like the Gateway Building, Visitor Center, or Civic Center enhancements

By reinvesting the increment locally, a TIF could help bridge the funding gap for these improvements, attract private investment, and accelerate implementation of the Small Area Plan, all while keeping the financial benefits within the Central Beach district itself.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area within which property owners agree to pay an additional assessment (often a property tax surcharge or special fee) to fund services and improvements beyond those provided by the City. BIDs are typically governed by a board of local stakeholders and reinvest revenues directly into the district.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIC BID USE:

Fund Streetscape and Public Realm Improvements

A BID could finance beautification efforts such as lighting, landscaping, banners, furniture, and seasonal activations that enhance the district’s appeal for residents and visitors alike.

Support Operations and Maintenance

BIDs often fund supplemental services like street cleaning, trash collection, graffiti removal, and maintenance of public plazas or pocket parks, ensuring that public spaces remain high-quality and well-managed over time.

Marketing and Events

A Central Beach BID could promote the area through branding, destination marketing, and event programming to drive foot traffic, especially in shoulder seasons.

Wayfinding and Mobility Enhancements

BID revenues can support signage, bike parking, pedestrian safety measures, and first/last-mile mobility solutions, goals of the Small Area Plan and the Active Transportation Plan.

Stewardship and District Management

The BID can serve to advocate for policy and infrastructure investments that benefit the area. It could also help implement shared parking systems or pilot projects for innovation.

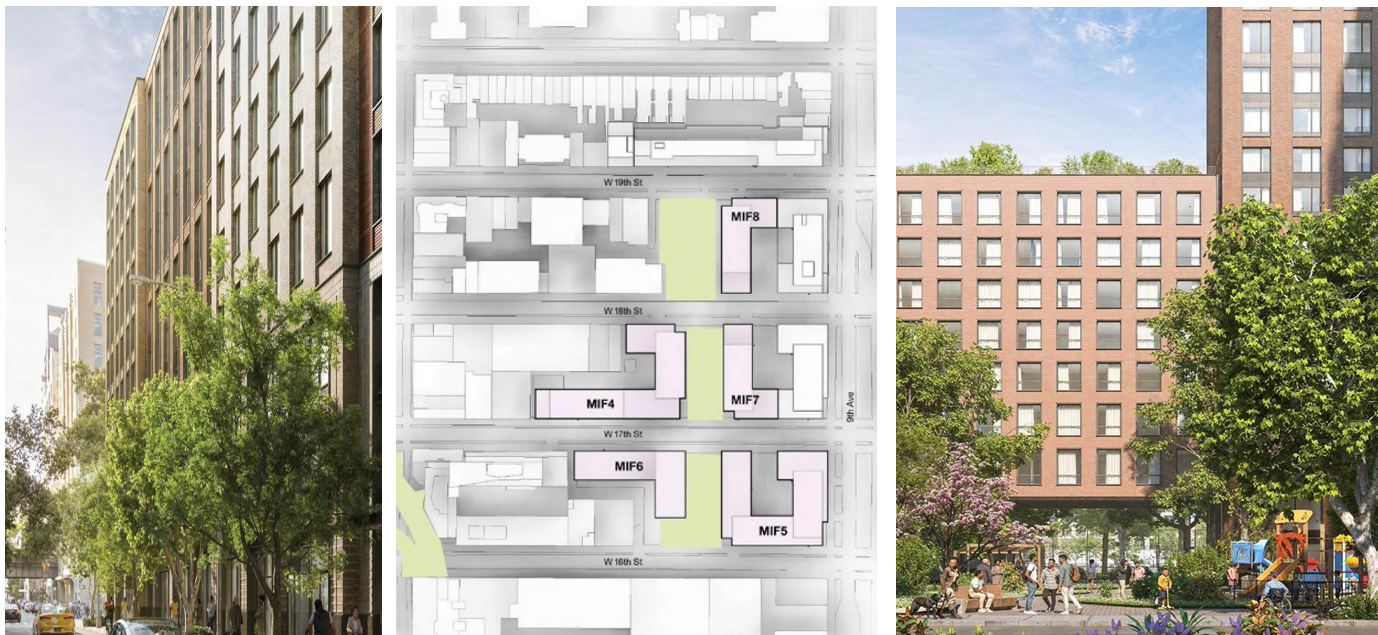
BID IS A GOOD FIT FOR CENTRAL BEACH:

- High visitation and business density create a strong base for funding and engagement.
- Tourism synergy allows the BID to amplify marketing, cleanliness, and activation strategies tied to tourism goals.
- Public-private collaboration supports long-term district management beyond capital project delivery.
- Establishing a BID would create a sustainable, locally-driven revenue source to maintain and elevate Central Beach as a vibrant, mixed-use cultural district.

MASTER OPTIONS AGREEMENT

Master Options Agreement (MAO) provides a coordinated framework for large-scale or phased development by covering multiple parcels or project phases under a single agreement. It enables staged acquisition of property as a project advances, offering flexibility aligned with market conditions, financing, or entitlements.

These agreements often include provisions for price escalation, performance benchmarks, and development timelines to ensure accountability and alignment between parties. Commonly used in public-private partnerships or long-term redevelopment efforts, a Master Options Agreement can also offer flexibility for landowners by supporting phased development, joint ventures, or shared infrastructure, while reducing conflicts and redundancies. By fostering collaboration, this tool can unlock opportunities for cohesive urban design, improved connectivity, and the strategic integration of public and private spaces, ultimately enhancing an area’s vibrancy even amongst varied property owners.



From development agreement for NYCHA’s MAO, Fulton & Elliott-Chelsea Houses Redevelopment, 2024

This approach is most useful in large-scale, phased urban developments such as the development agreement used for the **Redevelopment of the Fulton & Elliott-Chelsea Houses in New York for NYCHA**, created in 2024 and to be completed over the next decade, replacing and upgrading housing while providing attainable units and right to return.

The MAO tool is well-suited for public-private partnerships where a municipality seeks to guide phased outcomes over time, ensuring that development aligns with community goals and long-term planning and economic objectives for a district or urban area.

KEY ASPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPER

Positives

- Reduced upfront risk – Don’t need to purchase all land immediately.
- Control over site – Secures exclusive right to buy while working through entitlements, financing, or pre-leasing.
- Phased flexibility – Allows time to adjust project scope based on market demand.
- Negotiated pricing – Locks in pricing terms early, protecting against future market increases.

Risks

- Carrying costs – Option fees may be required even without immediate income.
- Uncertainty – No guarantee of future land control if terms aren’t met.
- Complex negotiation – Multiple parties, future conditions, and legal hurdles increase deal complexity.

KEY ASPECTS FOR PROPERTY OWNERS OR PUBLIC ENTITY

Positives

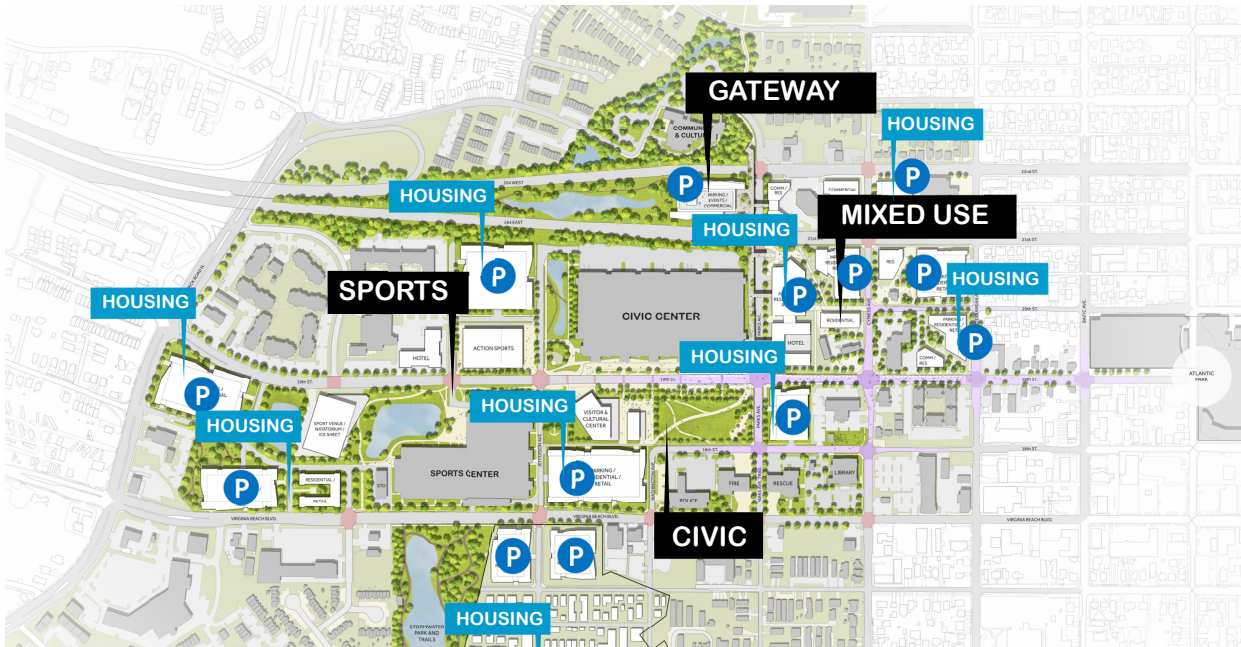
- Structured path to development – Ensures the developer has a clear plan and timeline.
- Performance-based safeguards – Only allows purchases if the developer hits key milestones.
- Strategic control – Can guide implementation over time rather than selling outright.
- Shared upside – Potential to include profit-sharing, public benefits, or community investments.

Risks

- Delayed revenue – Land isn’t sold right away, slowing fiscal or tax benefits.
- Opportunity cost – Ties up land that could be used or sold elsewhere.
- Enforcement risk – If the developer underperforms, recovering or re-marketing land can be slow and contentious.

PARKING BENEFIT DISTRICT

A Parking Benefit District is a localized parking management strategy in which revenue generated from on-street or public parking is reinvested directly into the district in which it was collected. Instead of generalizing parking revenue into the citywide budget, a **Parking Benefit District** ensures that funds support district area-specific improvements, creating a direct link between parking activity and visible community benefits.



Central Beach plan showing overlay of integrated parking structures

In Central Beach, a **Parking Benefit District** would help manage demand during peak tourism and event seasons while generating a dedicated revenue stream to support local improvements, including:

- Funding for streetscape enhancements, lighting, and landscaping near parking zones
- Maintenance and expansion of shared parking structures that reduce surface lots
- Support for signage, wayfinding, and pedestrian safety improvements
- Incentives for alternative modes of transportation, such as bike infrastructure or shuttle services
- Contributions toward civic spaces and public amenities around high-activity areas like the Convention Center and 19th Street

GRANTS AND FEDERAL STATE FUNDING PROGRAMS

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM

The **Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program** is a federal initiative established under the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). It is designed to address the legacy of transportation infrastructure that has divided communities, particularly highways and major corridors that cut through historically underserved or marginalized neighborhoods.

The program provides planning grants and capital construction grants to help communities reconnect neighborhoods, improve access, and promote equity through transportation infrastructure redesign, removal, or mitigation.



View of Central Beach with I-264 expressway shown

THESE GRANTS ARE USED FOR A VARIETY TRANSIT PROJECTS:

Planning Grants

- Feasibility studies for highway removal or modification
- Mobility and access planning to reconnect severed street grids
- Planning for transit-oriented development or multimodal corridors

Capital Construction Grants

- Removal or capping of highways or elevated roadways
- Replacing infrastructure with boulevards or multimodal streets
- Building new transit stations or pedestrian/bike bridges
- Creating public spaces and streetscape improvements to restore connectivity



Wilmington, DE Reconnecting Communities project

This project in Delaware will cap a section of I-95 through Wilmington, forming new shared public space and reconnecting communities separated by existing interstate infrastructure. Initial funding was awarded in 2024.

In Central Beach, the potential removal or reconfiguration of I-264 is a prime opportunity for the **Reconnecting Communities Grant**. The current expressway acts as a barrier, disconnecting neighborhoods and creating high-speed environments that undermine walkability and access to the Civic Center, Sports Center, and emerging mixed-use districts.

The grant could support a variety of efforts:

- A Phase 1 planning grant to study the long-term feasibility of removing or redesigning I-264, including traffic analysis, community input, and economic impact modeling.
- A future capital grant to help fund the actual removal of segments of the expressway, the construction of a multimodal boulevard, and the extension of the urban street grid.
- Improvements that enhance access to public transit, support affordable housing, and make it safer and easier to walk, bike, and roll across the district.

Benefits include:

- Reconnect fragmented parts of the district and increase development potential on previously cut-off sites, making large acreage available for development.
- Transform a barrier into a walkable, transit-oriented corridor that supports housing, civic uses, and economic activity.
- Align with broader state and federal mobility, climate, and economic inclusion goals , strengthening the City’s competitiveness for additional funding.

PILOT PROGRAM FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) PLANNING

The **TOD Planning Grant Program**, administered by the Federal Transit Administration, provides funding to support comprehensive planning efforts that integrate land use and transportation near transit corridors. Its goal is to encourage walkable, mixed-use development that enhances transit access, ridership, and community livability.

This effort has begun to explore future transit opportunities and how they could be integrated into the community. If a transit investment is pursued, the City should consider applying for the TOD Planning Grant Program, as accessible transit emerged as a consistent priority throughout the public engagement process.



Public transportation at the Virginia Beach Convention Center

Potential Uses in Central Beach

- Planning for mixed-use development around proposed or enhanced transit stops (e.g., along Parks Avenue or 19th Street)
- Integrating attainable housing, public space, and mobility improvements into transit station areas
- Identifying infrastructure needs to support compact, pedestrian-friendly development
- Coordinating land use policies and zoning to support long-term TOD implementation

Benefits

- Align land use and transit investments to maximize community and economic returns.
- Enhance walkability and multimodal connectivity.
- Attract private development through clearer development frameworks.
- Support equitable access to housing, jobs, and amenities near future transit improvements.

MANAGEMENT & POLICY EFFORTS

Several policy-related strategies have emerged to support the successful implementation of the Central Beach Plan. These include recommendations to reduce parking requirements, incentivize affordable housing, develop streets and active transportation along with development, and explore comprehensive ways of integrating resilience into land planning and development.

Together, these policies aim to remove regulatory barriers, promote economic development, and create a more flexible and context-sensitive framework that aligns with the preferred plan’s vision for a vibrant and connected cultural district

- 1. Parking
- 2. Form-Based Code
- 3. Affordable Housing
- 4. Street Design
- 5. Resilience

PARKING

CHARGE FOR PARKING

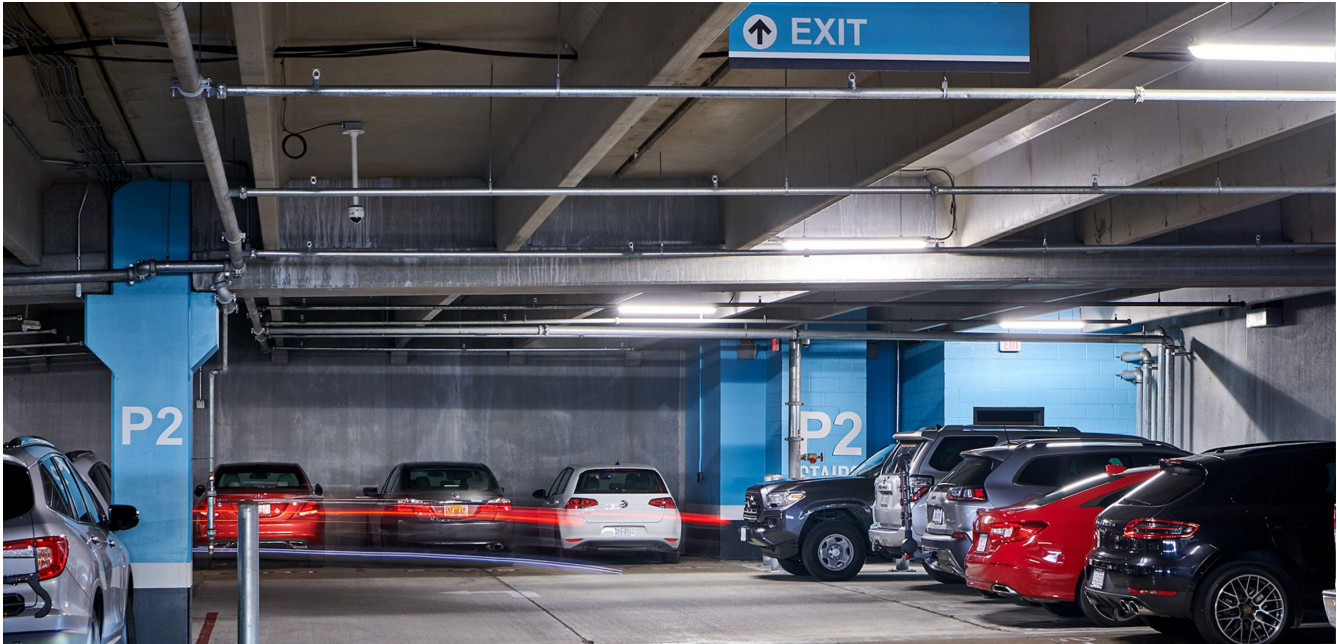
Parking fees should be charged for parking in Central Beach. This will provide a funding source for better management and maintenance of surface lots as they are converted into new development and structured parking. This is comparable to other localities and will match the parking management strategy for the rest of the resort area.

EVALUATE PARKING MINIMUMS

To support a more walkable, transit-ready, and mixed-use environment in Central Beach, the City should pursue parking requirement relief as a key policy strategy. This could include eliminating off-street parking minimums for new development, particularly in areas near transit and civic destinations, or initiating a study to establish parking maximums to prevent the overbuilding of parking. By shifting away from outdated parking mandates, the City can promote more efficient land use, reduce development costs, and encourage alternative transportation options.

SHARED PARKING OPPORTUNITIES

A more robust shared parking strategy should be explored to support the diverse mix of uses and seasonal activity patterns in Central Beach. Rather than requiring each development to provide dedicated parking, a district-wide approach would allow multiple users, such as civic facilities, hotels, event venues, and retail, to share parking resources based on complementary peak hours.



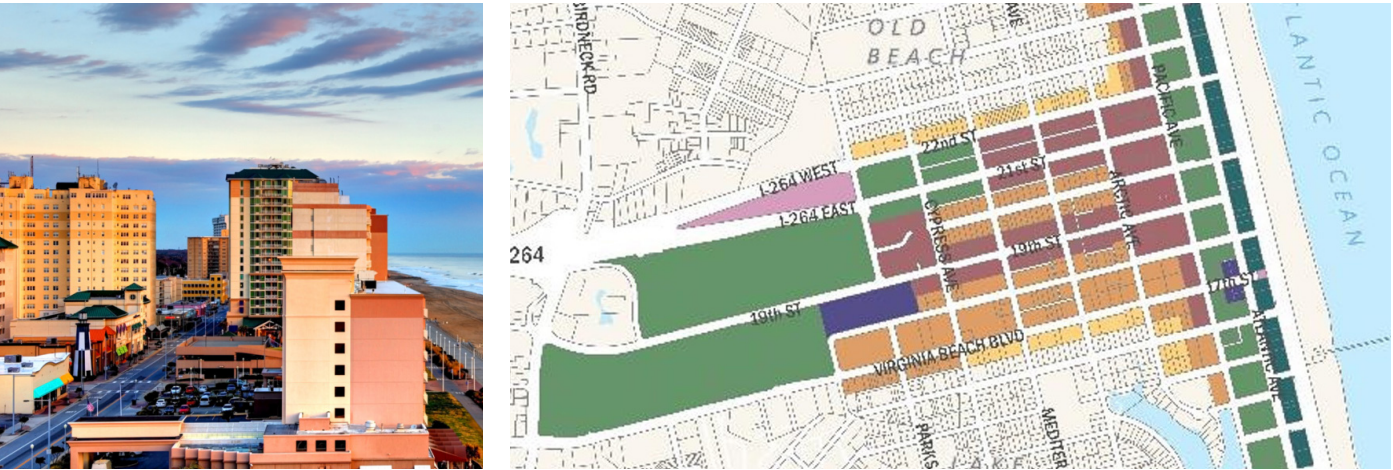
Oceanfront parking garage

OR - OCEANFRONT RESORT DISTRICT FORM-BASED CODE

ENFORCEMENT

It is recommended that future development within the Central Beach area adhere to the guidance outlined in the **Oceanfront Resort District Form-Based Code**, establishing a cohesive, walkable, and high-quality urban district. The code provides a clear framework for building form, frontage, streetscape design, and land use.

By aligning with this form-based approach, the Central Beach preferred plan can reinforce a predictable and context-sensitive pattern of growth that supports mixed-use density, enhances pedestrian connectivity, and upholds the unique identity of the Oceanfront district.



Oceanfront view and height map for the (OR) Oceanfront Resort Form-Based Code

EXPANSION

To support a cohesive and context-sensitive approach to redevelopment, the City should consider expanding the Ocean Resort Form-based Zoning to encompass the entire Central Beach study area.

By extending this framework throughout the study area:

- Ensure consistent urban form and street frontage across new and infill development.
- Encourage higher densities and vertical mixed-use where appropriate, with greater predictability for developers and the public.
- Simplify zoning complexity by replacing a patchwork of outdated and restrictive districts with a unified, character-based system.
- Promote flexibility in land use while maintaining clear expectations for form, massing, and street-level activity.

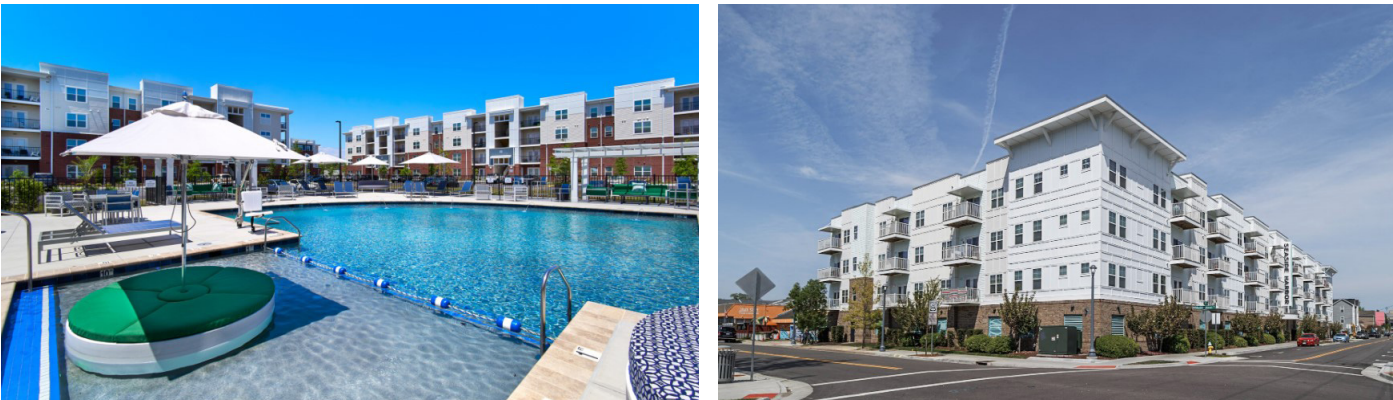
AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To address the housing needs identified in the 2024 Virginia Beach Housing Study (and Update), a diverse mix of market rate and attainable housing should be considered a key component in the development of Central Beach. With the opportunity for increased density, each property, proposed development, and location of structured parking has the potential for the integration of housing and commercial / retail space at the street front, and should be included in all development structures where public funds are used for parking, infrastructure, and property as part of an overall development strategy.

WORKFORCE HOUSING PROGRAM AND STUDY

Consistent with the City of Virginia Beach, **Attainable Workforce Housing Performance Grant Program**, development would include a percentage of new residential units, particularly within larger mixed-use, multifamily, or missing middle housing developments, to be set aside as income-restricted housing serving low-to-moderate income, and workforce households.

The Workforce Housing Program reflects the study’s findings, highlighting a growing need for workforce and attainable housing, smaller unit types, and non vehicle-dependent living options. To ensure feasibility, the policy offers flexibility through off-site provision, in-lieu fees, or density bonuses and parking relief for projects that meet or exceed affordability targets.



Recent Workforce Housing Program projects in Virginia Beach - Renaissance Apartments and Seaside Harbor

Implementing this policy would help ensure that new development contributes to filling the clear need for affordable housing in the City, and would align with broader goals to support a diverse year-round population and activation for a LIVE WORK PLAY model in Central Beach. It also positions Central Beach as a model for resilient financial and cultural growth, where economic revitalization is balanced with long-term housing stability.

STREET DESIGN

To ensure safe, multimodal, and context-sensitive street design throughout the Central Beach district, all new and existing streets should align with nationally recognized guidelines that prioritize walkability, bikeability, transit access, and high-quality public realm design, elements that are essential to the success of a vibrant, mixed-use destination like Central Beach.

BETTER PUBLIC SPACE

It is recommended that the City formally adopt **NACTO** Urban Street Design standards as a reference for citywide street design. Doing so would establish a consistent framework that supports the district’s urban character, lowers vehicle speeds, and creates safer, more inclusive environments for all users.

The Central Beach Small Area Urban Design Plan was developed following the goals and strategy of the City’s **Active Transportation Plan**. Future development and infrastructure improvements within Central Beach should adhere to this plan.



City of Virginia Beach, Active Transportation Plan, 2021



Shared use path at Rudee Inlet

This strategy in Central Beach delivers:

- Integrated high-priority pedestrian and bicycle corridors identified in the citywide network
- Reduction in car dependency, particularly in a resort and event-driven district
- Enhanced connectivity between neighborhoods, civic destinations, and the beachfront
- Improved safety and user experience through features such as protected bike lanes, enhanced crossings, and traffic-calming measures

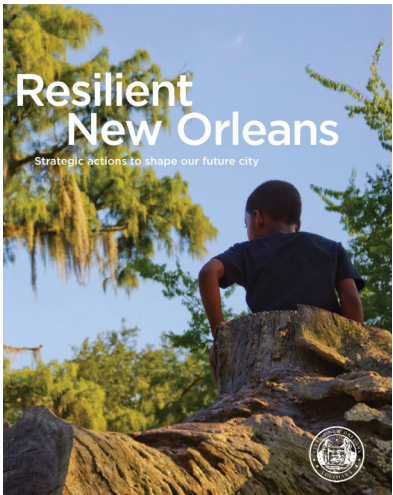
RESILIENCE

To support the integration of resilient development practices, especially as it relates to stormwater, flooding, and sea level rise, a dedicated Green Infrastructure Department or designated division within an existing department (e.g. Public Works) should be created.

This entity would lead the planning, implementation, and maintenance of green infrastructure strategies into projects citywide, including stormwater management, urban tree canopy expansion, coastal resilience, and nature-based solutions.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Similar to the **Department of Stormwater and Green Infrastructure (SGI)** in New Orleans, LA, and the **Office of Resilience’s Green Infrastructure Plan** in Norfolk, VA, the program could integrate green infrastructure solutions as part of development to address the City’s immediate resilience needs throughout Central Beach and the connecting communities (see the City’s Central Resort District Drainage Improvements Report.)



From, Resilient New Orleans, green infrastructure plan 2015



A dedicated Green Infrastructure department can:

- Coordinate the integration of green infrastructure, such as bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavements, and green roofs, into streetscapes, parks, and redevelopment projects
- Develop district-specific standards and guidelines that ensure new development supports ecological health and water quality goals
- Pursue grant funding and interagency partnerships to support pilot projects and long-term system maintenance

An aerial architectural rendering of a proposed urban development in Central Beach. The image shows a mix of building types, including large commercial or industrial structures with curved roofs, smaller residential or office buildings, and green spaces with trees. The layout is organized along a grid of streets. The overall tone is professional and forward-looking.

A VISION FOR CENTRAL BEACH



Dills Architects