

James Center North Masterplan

MAY 2019



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Executive Summary

Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) is a public housing authority focused on providing high quality, affordable housing, and supportive services to persons and families in need.

THA owns 6.92 acres of James Center North and will be exploring the opportunity to provide mixed-income, mixed-use, transit-supported redevelopment for the existing five parcels of land on South Mildred Street, between South 12th and South 19th Streets. The site is currently occupied by four retail/commercial buildings, including casual dining, medical support, a hair salon, and a Buddhist Temple.

James Center North is within a Community Crossroads Center as designated by the City of Tacoma. This will promote opportunity for a mix of uses and housing types with connections to recreational, cultural, and environmental amenities. The designation spans across three municipalities: City of Tacoma, the City of University Place, and the City of Fircrest. James Center North per the Tacoma Zoning Map is zoned as Community Commercial Mixed-Use District (CCX).

THA created an Advisory Group comprised of key stakeholders, surrounding property owners, neighborhood residents, business owners, and city officials to help guide planning decisions. The aim was to create a Master Plan guided by consultants expertise, site opportunities, client aspirations, community need, and economic feasibility.

Intent of Project

The intent of the project is to develop a model for a compact, pedestrian-oriented development pattern in West Tacoma. This will incorporate transit-oriented development standards, mixed-use strategies, and mixed-income housing opportunities through public-private partnerships.

James Center North is an ideal candidate for a transit-oriented development (TOD) due to its proximity to the existing Pierce Transit TCC Bus Transit Station and the future transit station to be developed at 19th for Sound Transit Light Rail Transit (LRT). This TOD will look to create connections to neighboring Tacoma Community College (TCC), existing retail services, Fred Meyer, regional open spaces, and residential neighborhoods.

The aim of this Master Plan is to understand the potential for mixed-use development on the site and explore potential private partnerships to collectively re-envision James Center North.



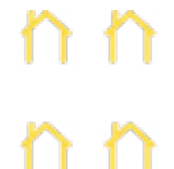


Guiding Principles



Support THA’s Mission

Tacoma Housing Authority provides high quality, stable and sustainable housing and supportive services to people in need. It does this in ways that help them prosper, while also helping our communities become safe, vibrant, prosperous, attractive and just.



Provide Diverse, Mixed-Income Housing Options

Re-frame the role of James Center North as a civic center with a variety of housing types, including student, market-rate and affordable housing.



Design Mobility-Oriented Development

Anticipate future transportation systems by integrating future mobility systems such as micro-mobility, electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, expanded bus routes, light rail and rideshare accommodations.



Prioritize Places for People

Create a unique experience and destination for the community that prioritizes pedestrian safety, walkability, health and well-being.



Strengthen Partnerships with Community Stakeholders

Pursue public and private partnerships with key stakeholders who share a common interest in realizing the vision for JCN.



Create a New Model of Development with Community Support

Respond to market demand and community input by creating a regional destination and community center that showcases transit-oriented development fundamentals, new public open spaces, and a mix of urban land-uses.



Incorporate Options for Small Commercial Tenants

Create a pathway and opportunity for the existing tenants to remain on-site while providing space for new local commercial and food/beverage tenants.



Honor the Flavor of West Tacoma

Create an authentic series of outdoor and indoor spaces that are complimentary to the ethos of west Tacoma.



Anticipate Change Over Time

Create a development plan that will anticipate changes in culture, economics, social structure and market. The phased plan will be flexible and able to shift and respond.

What We Heard

Valuable insight from key stakeholder discussions, Community charrettes, and market research.

Stakeholder Advisor Group

- Tacoma Community College
- Pierce Transit
- West End Neighborhood Council
- City of Fircrest
- CB Danforth
- Tacoma-Pierce Health Department
- Tacoma Public Schools *
- Metro Parks
- Lux Salon
- Sound Transit
- City of Tacoma
- City of University Place
- James Center Plaza
- Fit Republic
- Tacoma Police *
- Vestar *

Developers' Input

- Create a Shared Vision for James Center
- Understand Community's Needs
- Provide Urban Environments for All Ages
- Capture Views and Site Assets
- Develop the Project Over Time
- Partner with Tacoma Housing Authority
- Connections to Transportation
- Integrate Mixed-Income Housing
- Provide a Center with Activity

Aspirational Goals

- Community Park
- Safer Environment
- Create Synergies with Tacoma Community College
- Building Community
- Strengthen Connections to Neighborhoods
- Capture View to Mt. Rainier
- Integrate Public Art and Community-led Design

* Contacted agency via conference call. Participants did not attend advisory group meetings.

Community Requests

- Create a unique experience and destination for the community
- Provide diverse, mixed-income housing opportunities
- Incorporate options for small commercial tenants
- Anticipate change and allow flexibility over time
- Interest in communal spaces to attract visitors
- Need public open spaces, green spaces and parks
- Support affordable and mixed-income housing
- Many requests to use best practices in sustainability

Making a Masterplan

Testing Design Strategies that Reflect Community Needs and Create Economic Development

Community Engagement

The James Center North TOD master plan was developed with extensive public and stakeholder engagement. The outreach methods aimed to capture the largest possible audience, including TCC students, surrounding community members, and neighborhood associations, representatives from partner agencies, and local developers. A full summary of outreach methods and public input is included in the appendix. The following is a list of outcomes resulting from community engagement.

Direct Outcomes

TRANSIT

- Ride-share and Electric Vehicles
- Electric Mobility
- Electric Bike and Scooter Corral
- Electric Vehicle Charging stations
- Electric Fleet Vehicle Amenity
- Off-Street Bike Lanes
- Bike Shop + Personal Mobility Charging Garage
- Bike Storage in every building
- On-Street Parking along S. Mildred

AMENITY

- Food and Beverage Retail
- Retail Services
- Support Existing and Local Business
- Cafes and Coffee Shops
- Food Hall + Food Carts
- Roof or Common Deck Resident Space
- Community Room, Kitchen, + Lounge

OPEN SPACE

- Two Unique Community Parks
- Active Spaces for All Ages
- Overlook Vista to Mt. Rainier
- Planning for a Centennial Tree
- Resident Private Gardens
- Play Mound
- Urban Court and Field Games
- Sports Court
- Festival Street
- Stormwater Narrative
- Children's Playground
- Bike Paths and Trail Connections
- Community Spaces

MARKET DEMAND

- Anticipating a market responsive ratio of mixed-income rental units. Market rate and affordable housing may be student ready.

Community Open House



Design Drivers

Development Program

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

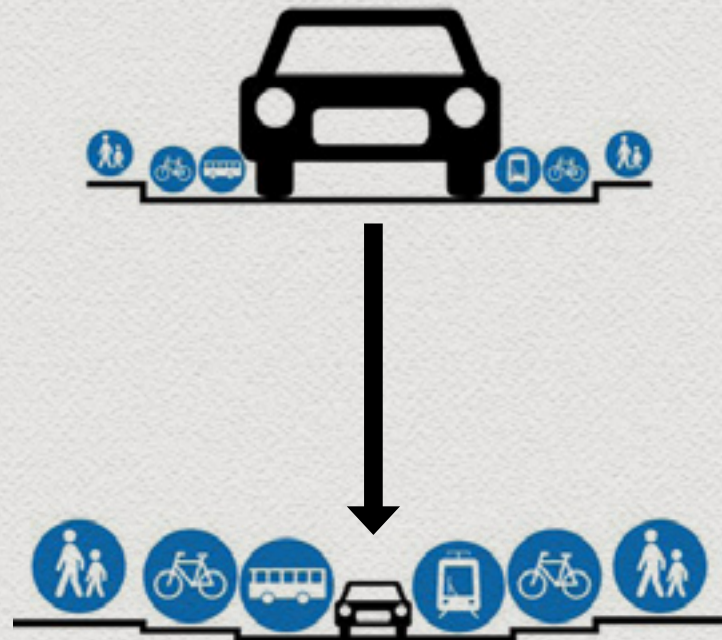
Typically, a TOD is defined as having mixed uses, walkable streets, a location within half a mile of quality transportation all within a dense urban, placemaking design.

Housing

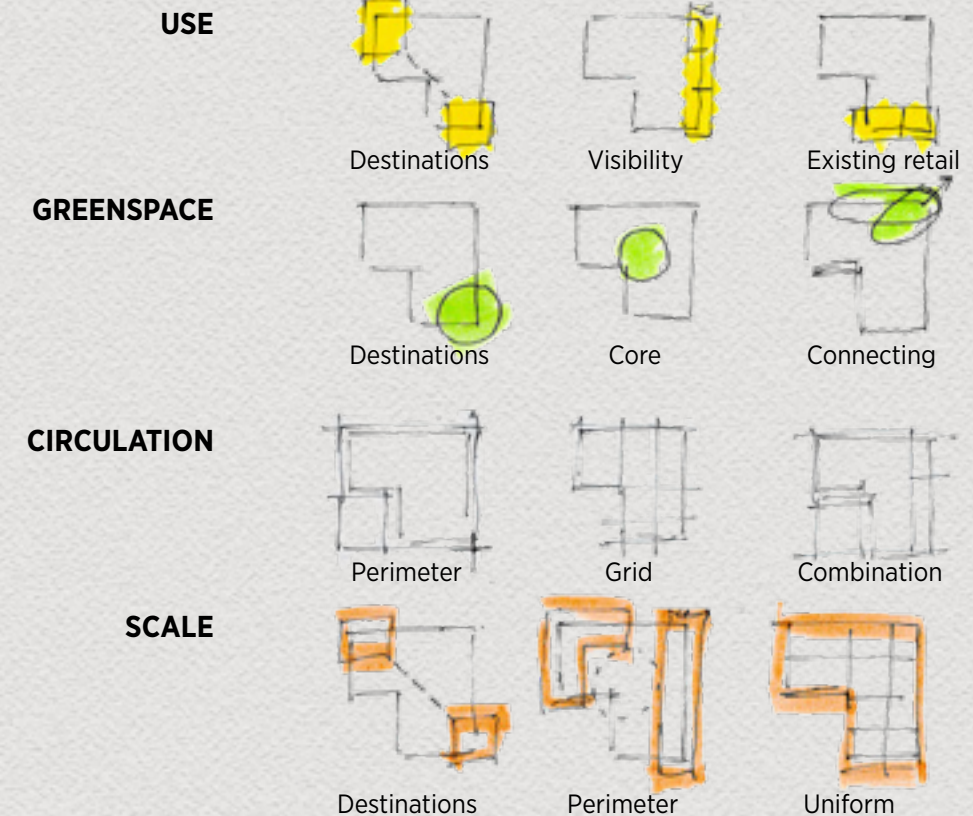
- +/- 600 dwelling units
+/- 450 market rate units
150 affordable units
- A mixed income community
- Affordable units built by THA or a third-party developer
- Affordable housing vouchers likely targeted to households at 60% of AMI or less
- Market rate housing may be student, senior or general market
- THA to partner with third-party developer(s) in a public-private partnership structure that makes most sense for market conditions.

Commercial Tenants & Community Amenities

- Retain existing commercial tenants on-site to generate rent until later phase of development. Shift current commercial residents to new locations on site where possible.
- Retain and attract additional commercial tenants that provide desired goods and services to residents of JCN and West Tacoma, reflecting the diverse populations in this area.
- Seek to provide additional and complementary amenities to the region.



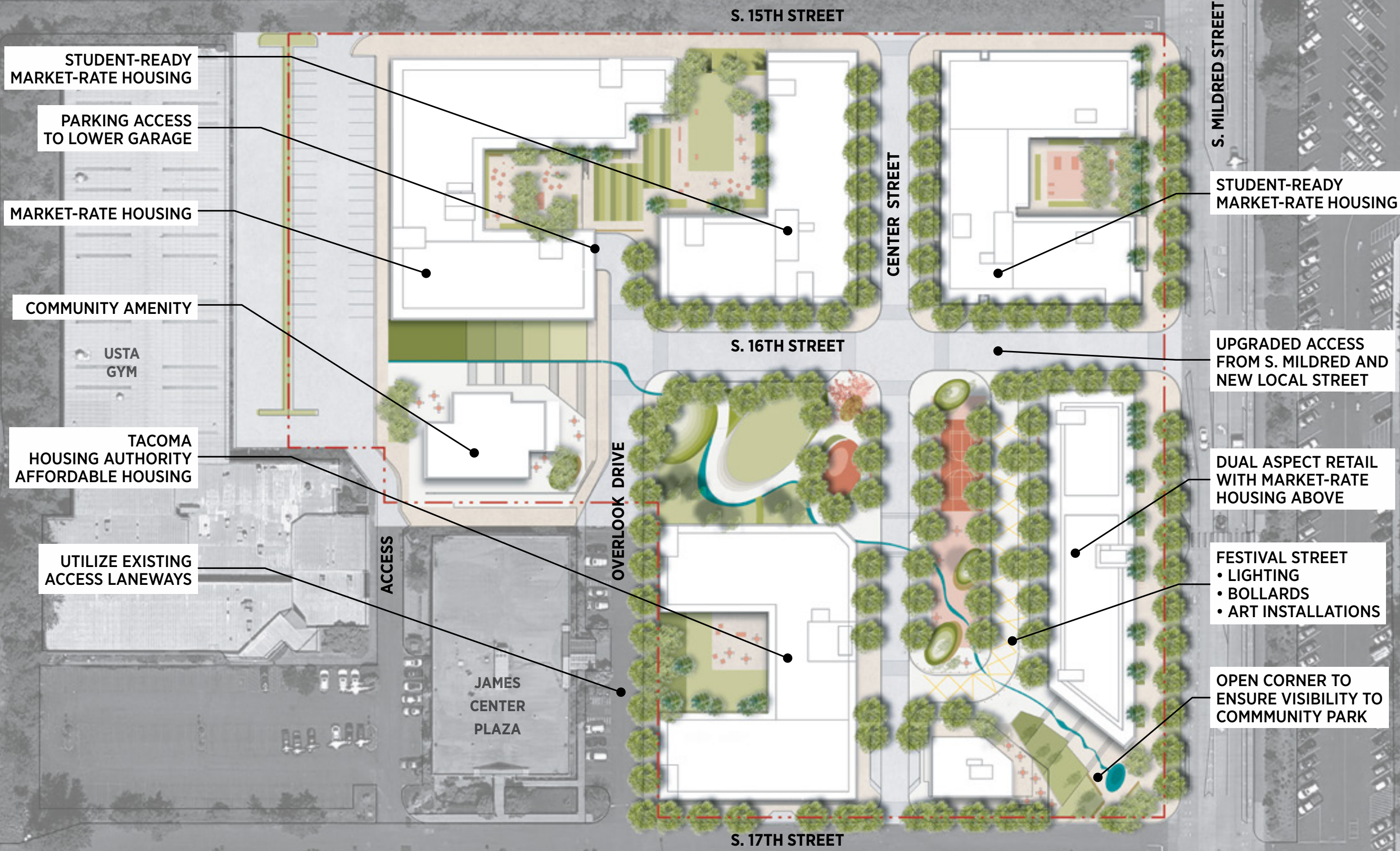
Site Considerations



Guidelines For Design Options

- **USE** There is retail to the south of the site, residential to the north and west, with a community college and fast-paced street to the east. The form and use on site can react to each of these adjacencies while promoting the necessary program and vision for future development.
- **GREENSPACE** There is greenspace at the perimeter of the site and more gardens on the TCC campus. The design options show open space as attractors to the site and also connecting to existing vegetation. An additional consideration for greenspace is the requirement to retain stormwater in open areas and/or vaulted under streets or sidewalks.
- **CIRCULATION** Each design option shows a combination of internal and perimeter circulation, with vehicular/multi-modal and pedestrian only streets.
- **SCALE** Taller buildings at the core of the site would provide a different feel and function than framing the site with larger buildings with open space at the core. Regardless of configuration, the development will initiate a new scale of heights in West Tacoma.

Master Plan



Site Access

The overall master plan proposes utilizing the existing access points along S. Mildred and the existing internal access road alignments running north/south connecting JCN to James Center South. The aim is to create an urban grid of streets that can be phased amongst the current site conditions so the evolution of placemaking and urban development will have minimum impacts on current access, circulation and existing business operations.

The development relies on two shared access drives and points along S. Mildred, one along the North property line and the other along the South edge of the property. The development

shares/has an easement which allows usage of these access points. The plan includes a proposal to upgrade an existing access point close to the center of the property. These access points allow the development to create a series of developable parcels or blocks that can accommodate a variety of mixed-use and mixed-income housing.

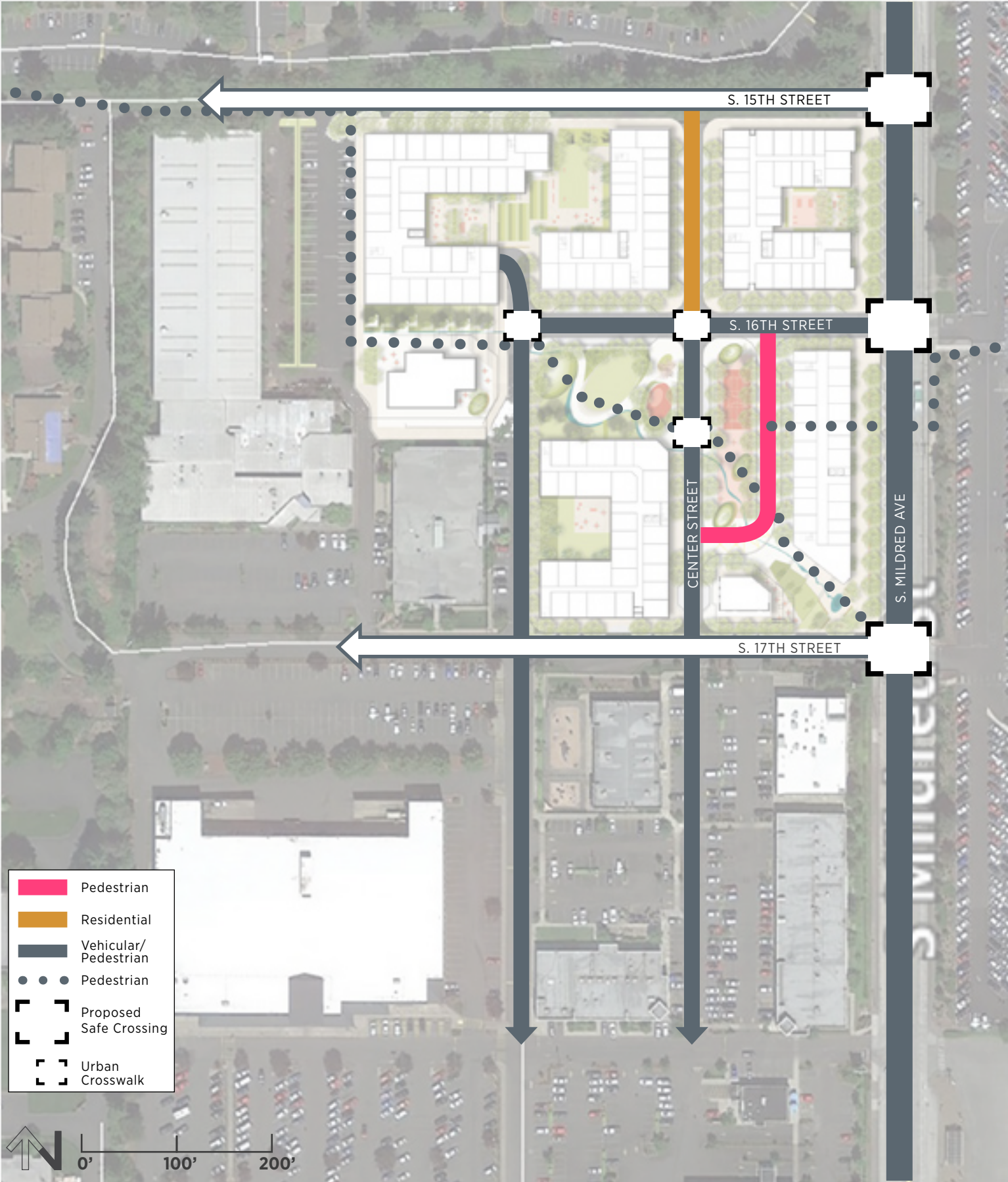
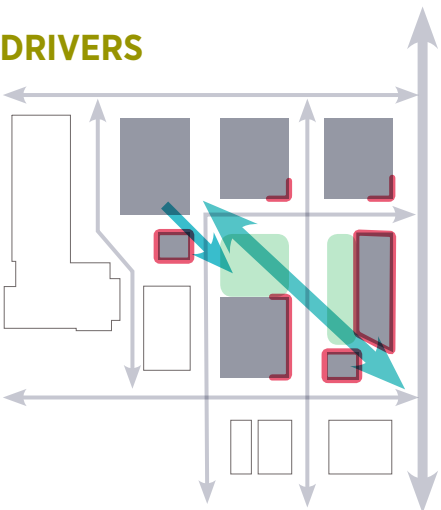
The park unifies residential and destination spaces along its length, drawing people into a core, central plaza. Public greenspace tells the story of water and people, moving stormwater, and framing views to Mt. Rainier. The massing of buildings preserves the view to the mountain.

STREET CHARACTER



- Primary vehicular street with bike lanes and sidewalks
- Secondary connector street with lower speeds
- Shared pedestrian/vehicle street with different paving
- Pedestrian/Cycle connection only

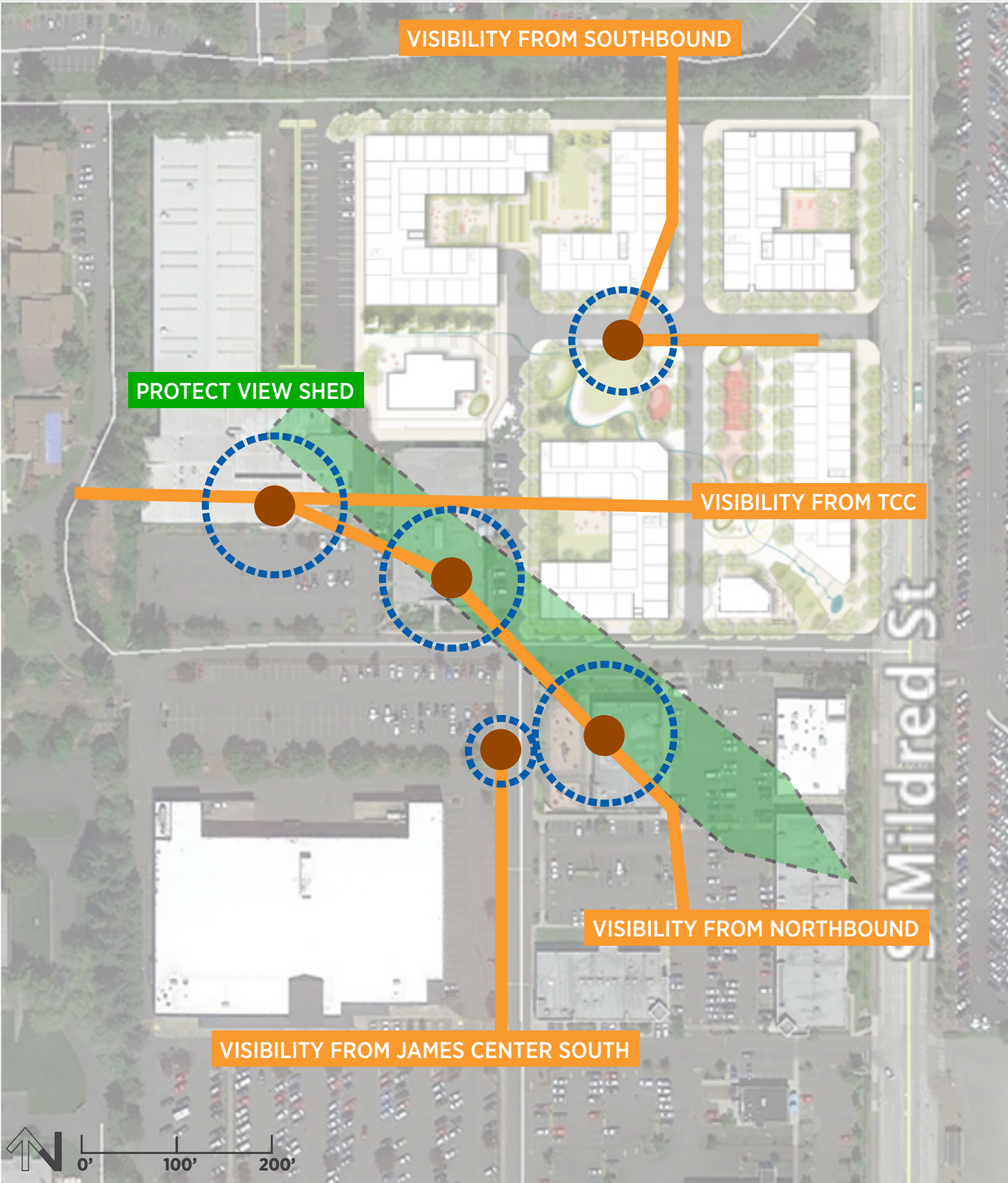
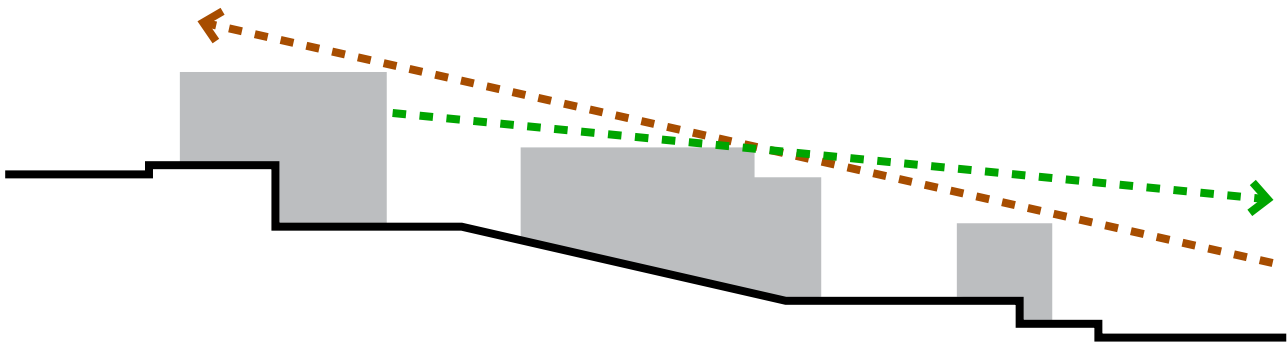
DESIGN DRIVERS



Visibility + View Shed

One of the most important aspects of a successful regional destination is its visibility and exposure from the dominant flow of people. The amount of exposure and accessibility along S. Mildred Street is key to capture flow, inviting people into the community and attracting them into the open spaces to explore the area. We heard from many key stakeholders, business owners and members of the community that business signage and ensuring potential clients and visitors visually see their operations is very important. The James Center North master plan takes advantage of

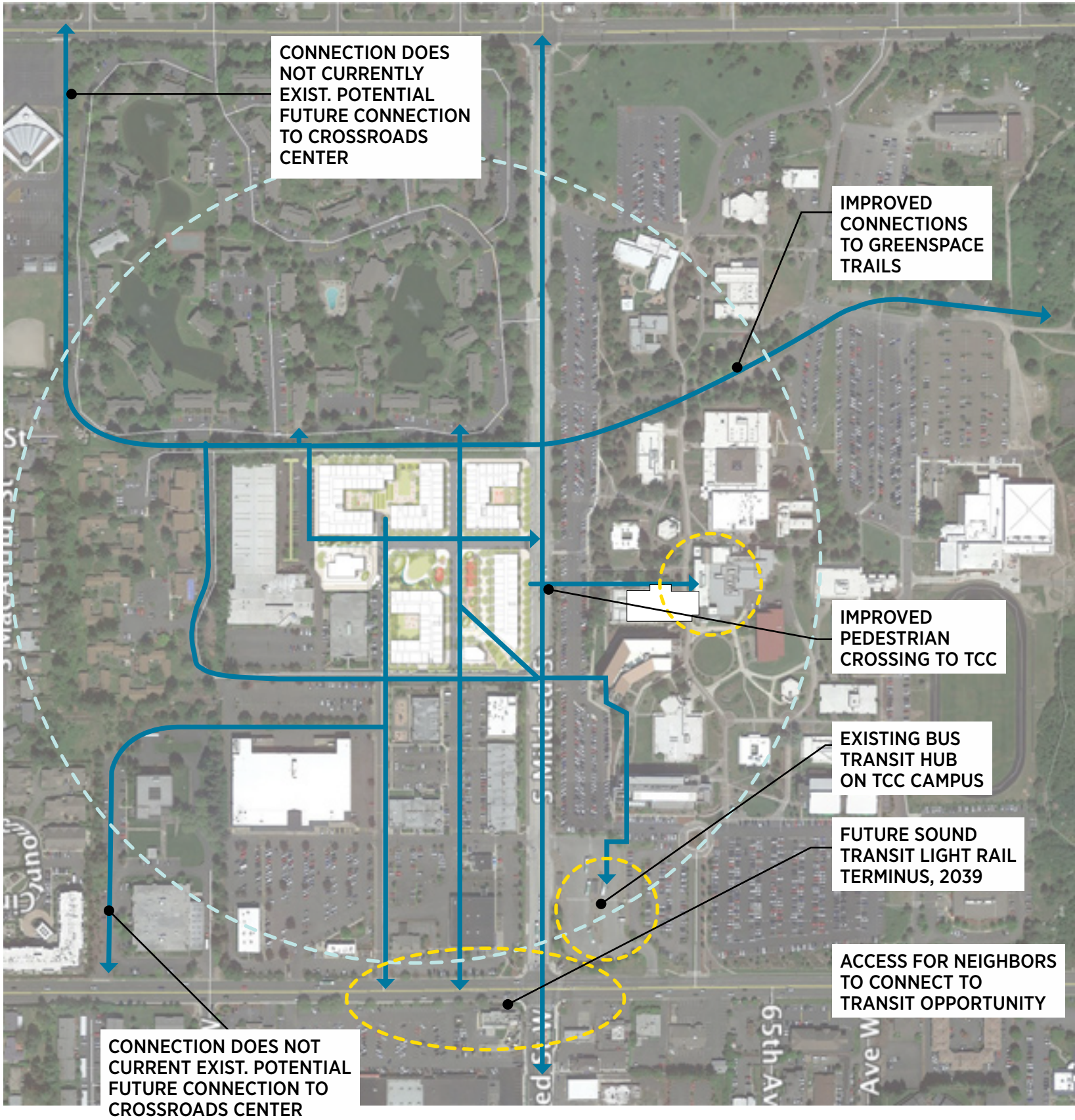
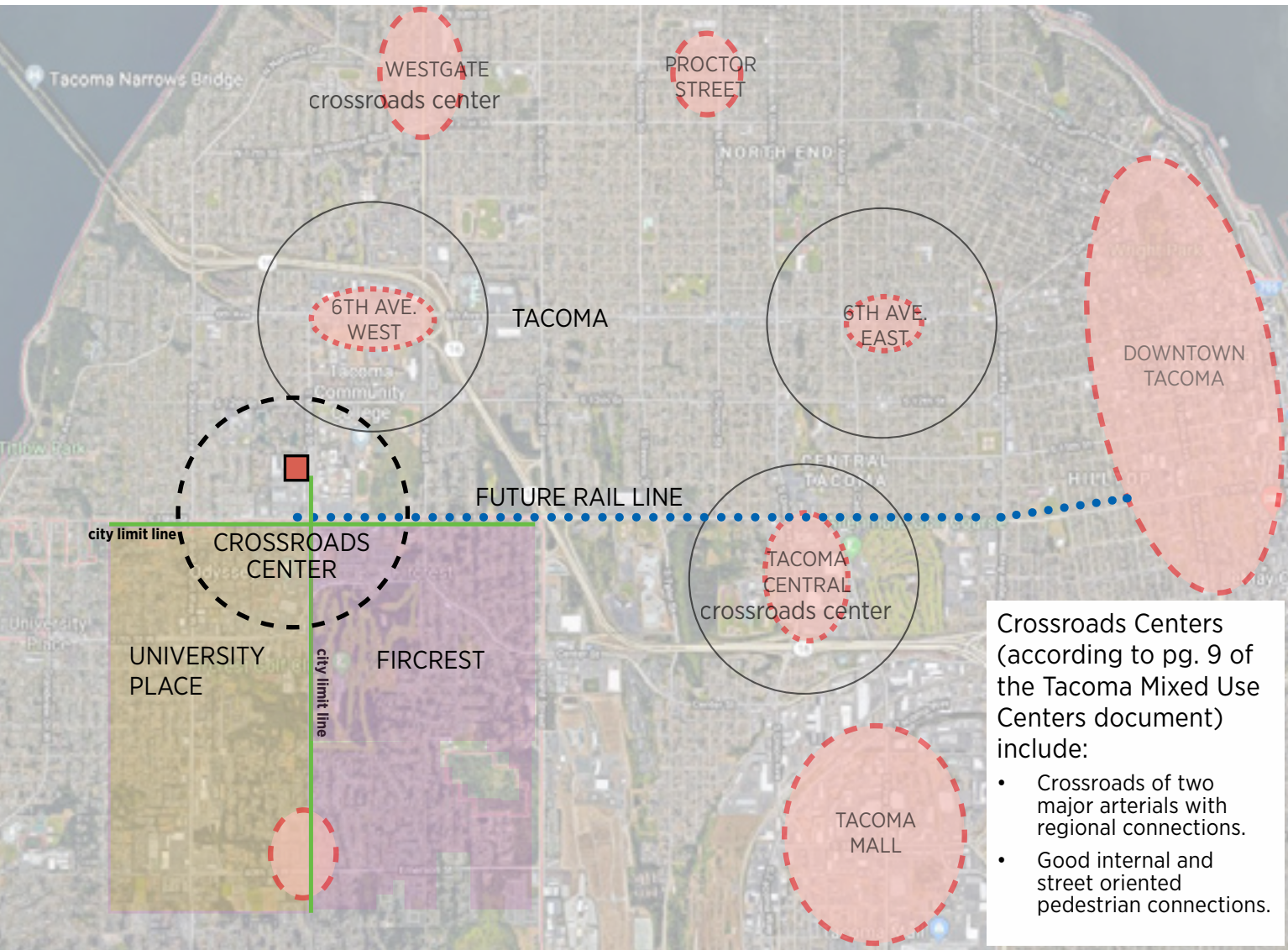
the site topography to ensure sight lines are protected. The view shed is also just as important when determining the orientation, dimension and scale of each building. The views to Mt. Rainier from James Center North are considered a huge asset and a unique aspect of the placemaking. The vista can be seen from many public spaces and residential homes throughout the site.



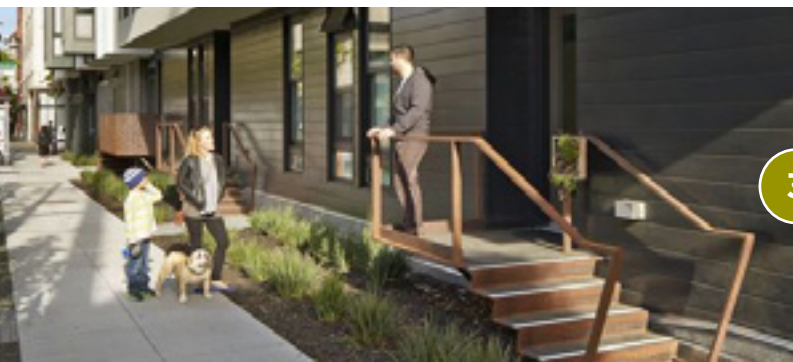
Neighborhood & Regional Connections

The aim will be to have a broadened view of the site and establish strong connections to James Center North’s neighbors and throughout West Tacoma. The City of Tacoma has designated existing crossroads centers as areas for primary growth and change over the next twenty-five

years. The aim is to focus new growth and development within these centers to promote compact, walkable neighborhoods where Tacomans can access goods, services and multi-modal transit within five-minute trips.



Types of Streets



The proposed development must adhere to a hierarchy of streets in order to support the multitude of activities within a community. The master plan outlines four unique street typologies:

1. Arterial Street [S.Mildred St]

- Dual Aspect - Retail Frontage
- Pedestrian Walk
- Tree-lined / Landscaped buffer
- Off-street, raised bike lanes
- On-Street Parking
- Bus Stop / Drop-Off

2. Local Urban Street

- Major Access from Arterial
- On-street parking
- Tree-lined

3. Residential Street

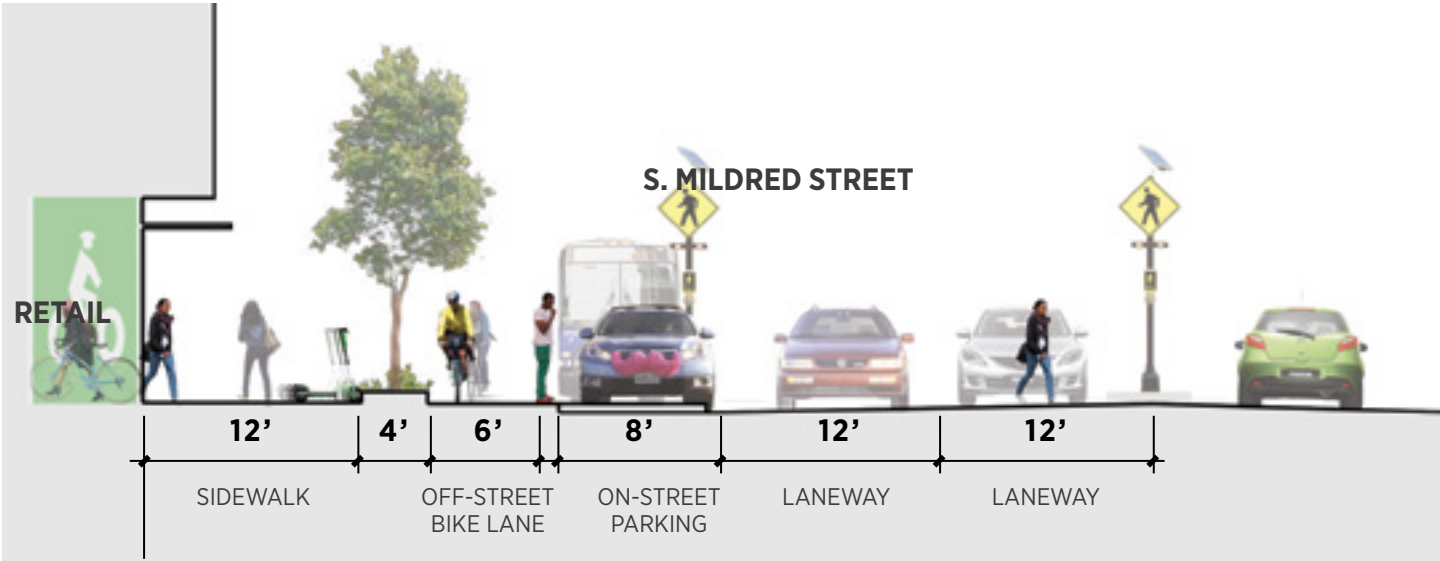
- Residential stoop frontage
- On-Street Parking
- Paving Pattern

4. Pedestrian Street

- Pedestrian and Bike Priority
- Limited Auto access
- On-street Parking
- Large Furniture/Seating Zone
- Frontages include continuous active use, community park, retail, food + beverage opportunity.



Types of Streets



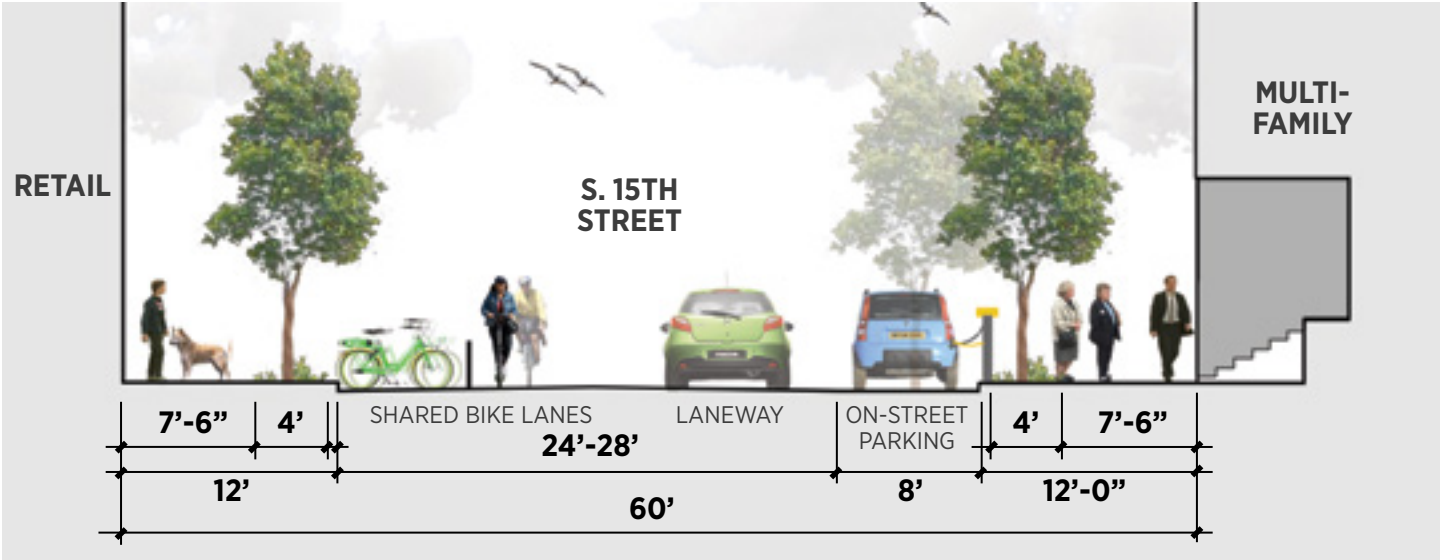
1 S. Mildred Street (Arterial)

The proposed S. Mildred Street section illustrates future opportunities to create a much safer, more pedestrian-oriented street along the east side of the James Center North property. The design allows safer crossings, circulation, access, frontages, and buffer through landscaping, generous sidewalks and on-street parking.



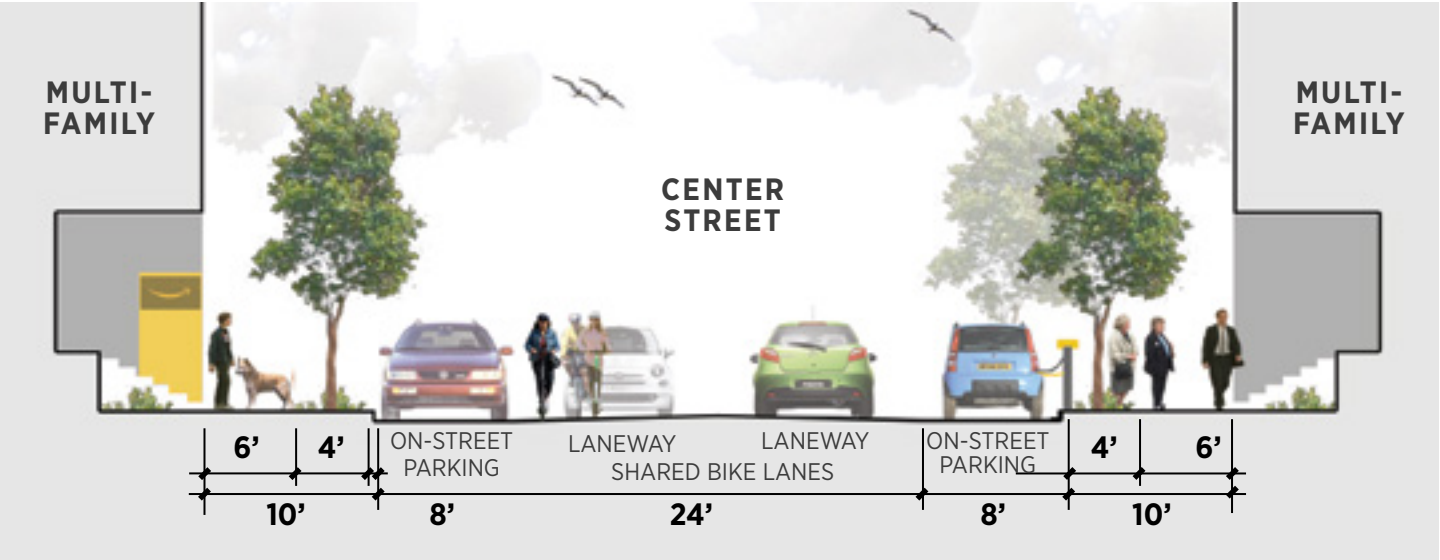
3 Festival Street

The proposed section illustrates an urban streetscape showcasing a curbsless street condition which establishes pedestrian priority along this streetscape. Festival streets are very flexible, designed as a stage to support various types of activity. These streets are typically lined with retail and opportunities for outdoor dining and seating.



2 Local Urban Street

The proposed section illustrates an urban streetscape showcasing a slow-paced laneway with on-street parking and adequate space for tree street canopy. These streets are designed to be edged with ground floor residential or active non-residential uses. The bike lanes have been designed to share the laneway (see street sections 1, 2, & 4).



4 Residential Street

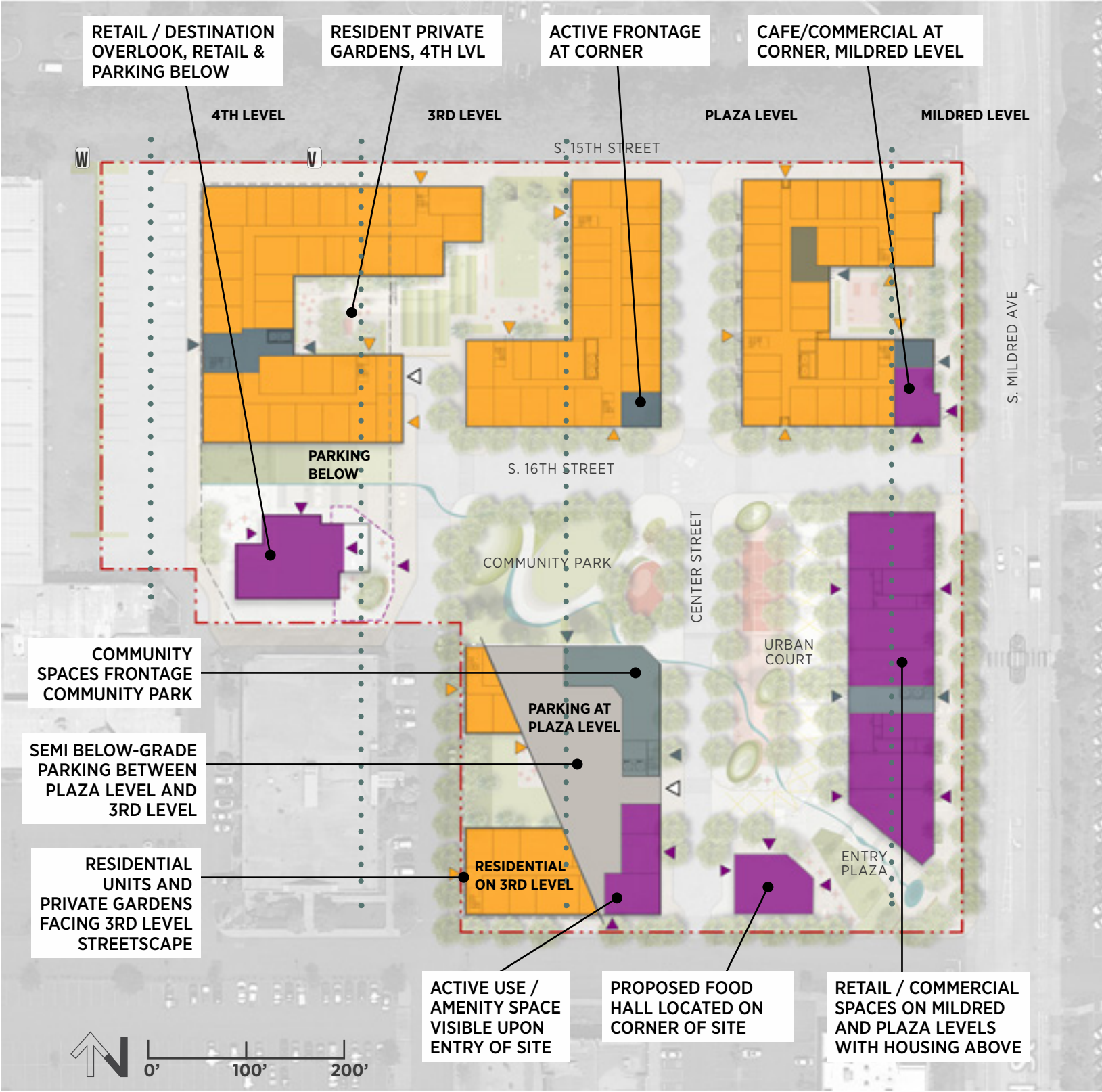
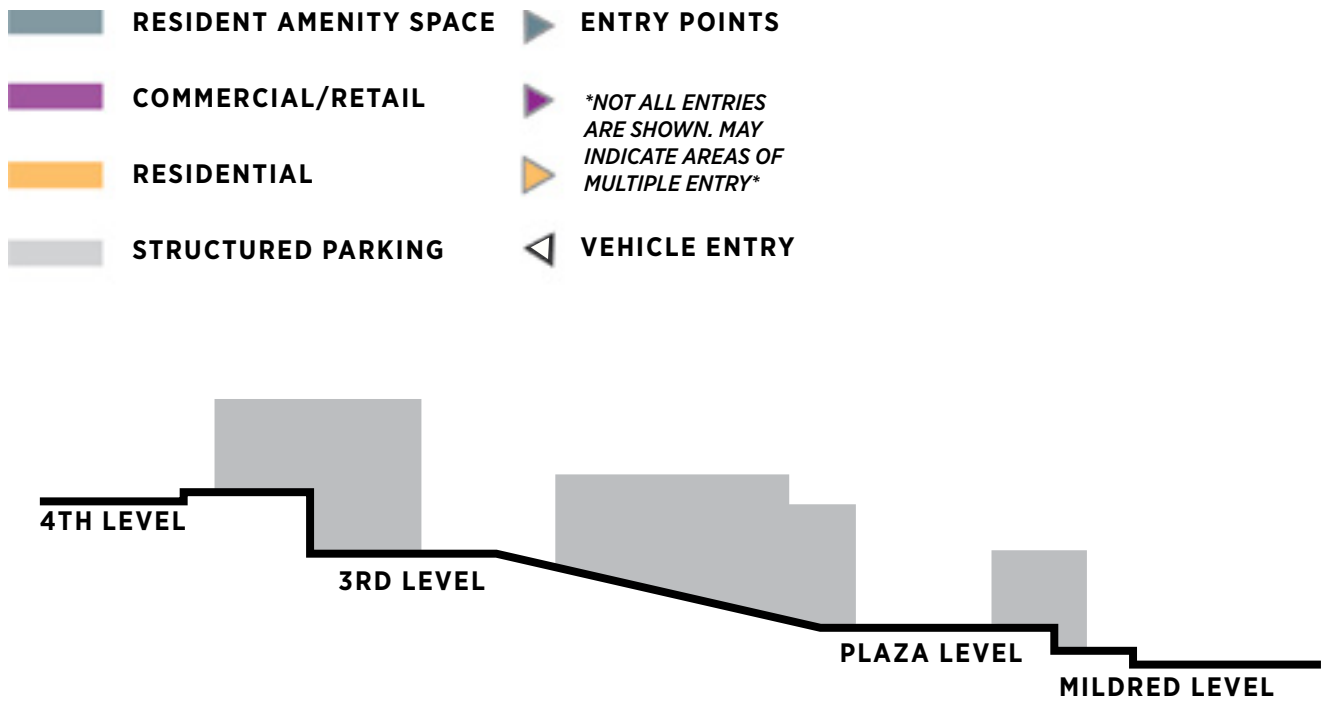
The proposed section illustrates an urban streetscape showcasing a very slow-paced laneway with on-street parking on both sides with greater landscape dimension for a street tree canopy. These streets are designed to be edged with ground floor residential in the form of stoops and adequate separation from the public right of way.

Active Ground Floor Use

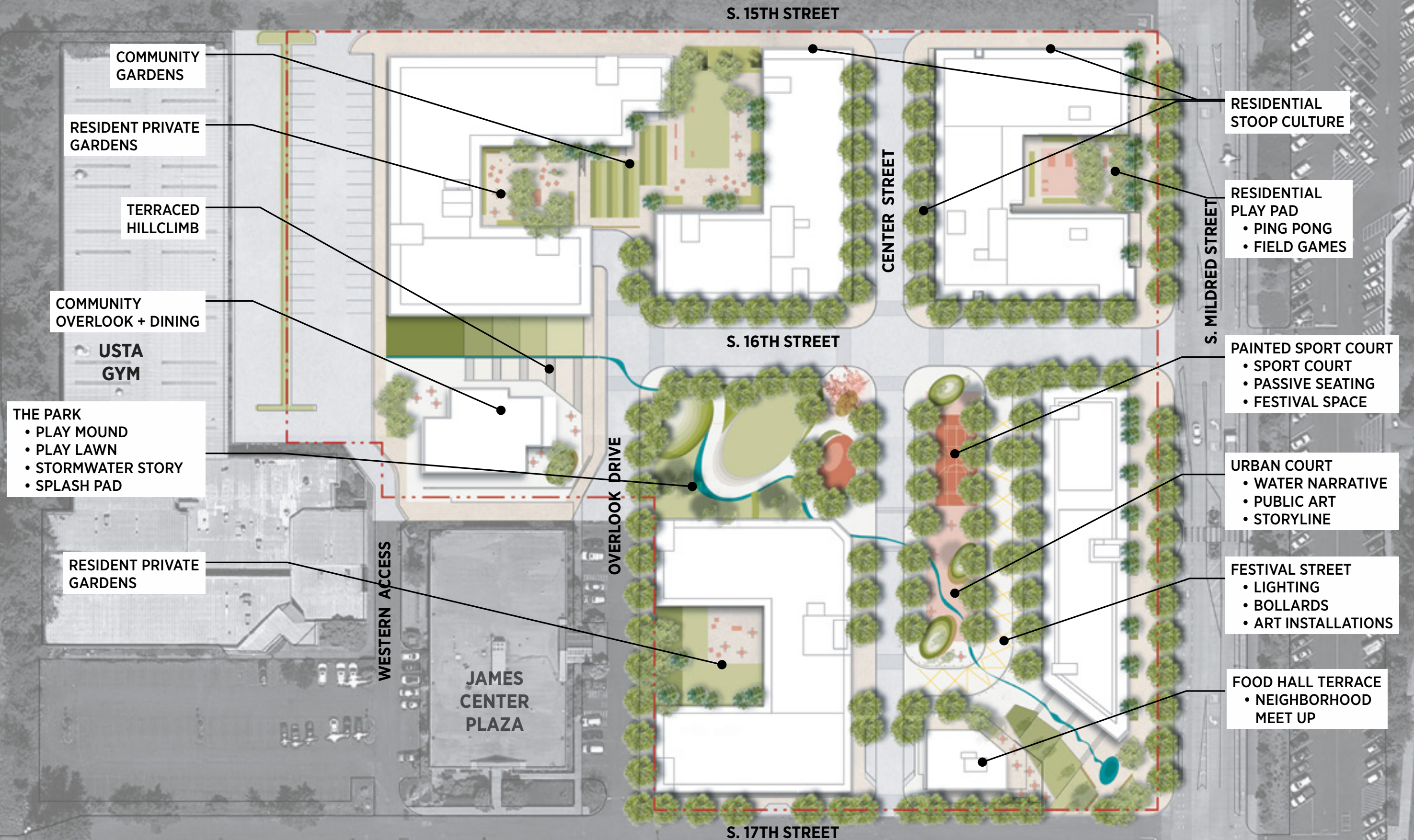
Residential Units, Commercial, Retail, Building Access and Community Amenity Spaces

The proposed master plan recommends a series of frontages and active edges with varying uses and activities. The recommended location and dimension of active edges reflect the data collected from the market opportunity study, developer interviews, aspirations from the community and insight from the advisory group. Focusing on food and beverage-use and spaces for gathering, outdoor seating and pedestrian-oriented streets is recommended.

The James Center North master plan highlights critical areas to plan for active frontages. The southeast corner of the site is the most important to activate while ensuring visibility into the site. The plan also calls for a strong ground floor activation of S. Mildred along the entire east side of the property which includes a spacious sidewalk, furniture zone, and on-street parking.



Public Spaces



Regional Attraction

James Center North is envisioned as a mixed-income, mixed-use, multi-modal community offering a variety of services, community activities and regional attractions to West Tacoma.



Sustainability

The James Center North Masterplan Project Team held a 'Sustaining Value Work Session' in September 2018, with members of the ownership and design team, representatives from city, county transit and utility departments, local residents and business owners. The primary objective of the session was to develop a shared vision of the social, economic and ecological value JCN can create in the West Tacoma community.

The session was focused on the following:

- **Healthy Community**
- **Economic Vitality**
- **Ecological Value**

Core Themes

1. Inclusive definition of stakeholding
2. Innovative transit-oriented redevelopment
3. Focus on long-term equity
4. Fostering all forms of diversity
5. Purpose-built community
6. Choice architecture
7. Exemplary housing
8. Connection with nature



Identity

The identity of James Center North will reflect and build upon the three major existing design informants which are unique to the site:

1. Its adjacency to the TCC and the **diversity of people** living in the area. While development on the site will primarily serve a demographic of students and academics, the site should also aim to be inclusive of the community at large and be an inviting place for everyone to enjoy.
2. The planned new pattern of development on the site as an **urban destination**. Multi-Mobility (see page 44) plays a major role in establishing an urban culture along with the overall scale of development, walkable block sizes, provision of outdoor dining, and public seating.
3. The view shed to Mt. Ranier and its **connection to nature**. The future 'Ranier Stormwater Park' (see page 42), which establishes a view shed to Mt. Ranier from the site will also provide community open space set within a canopy of trees.

Urban Experience



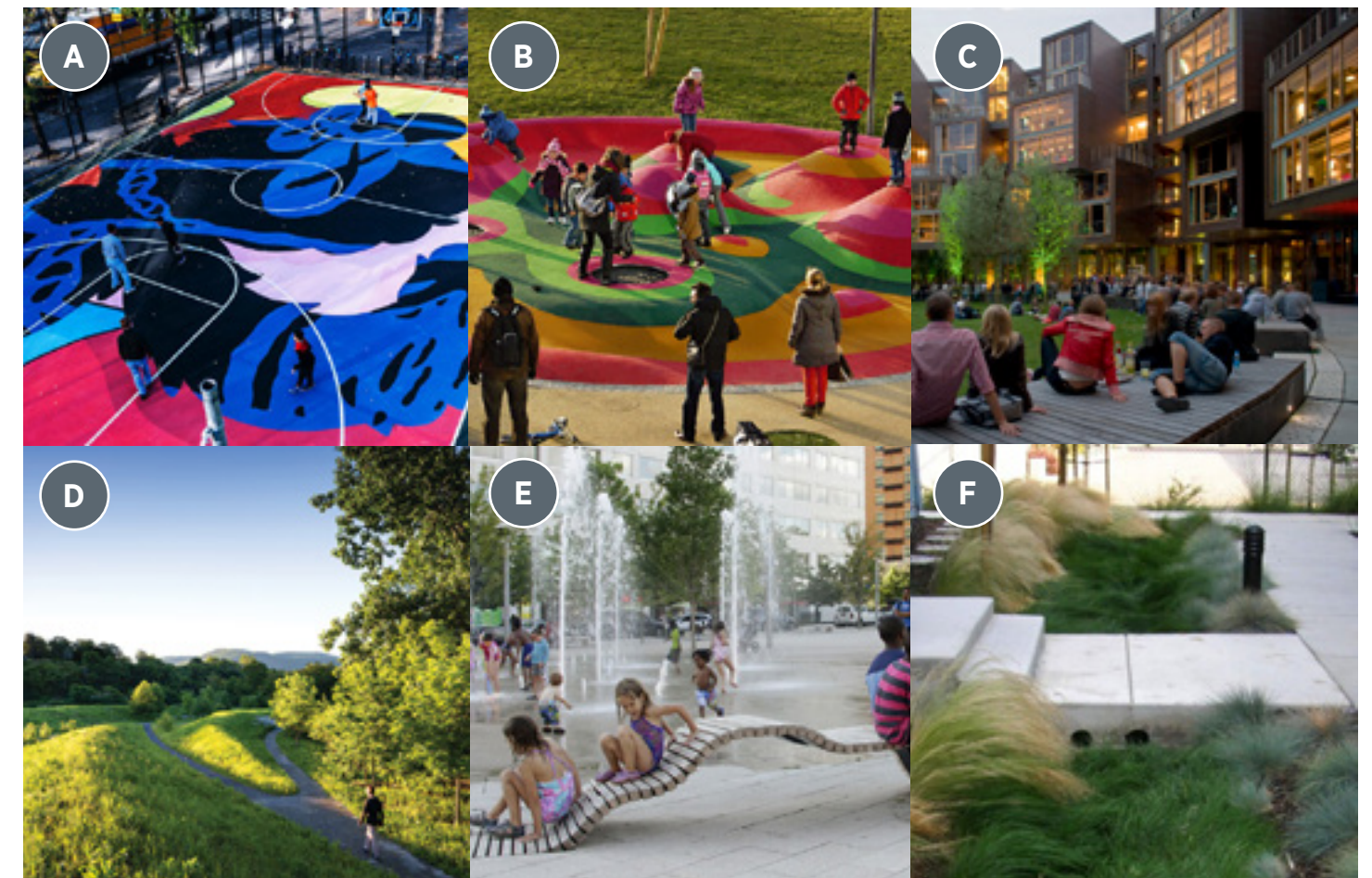
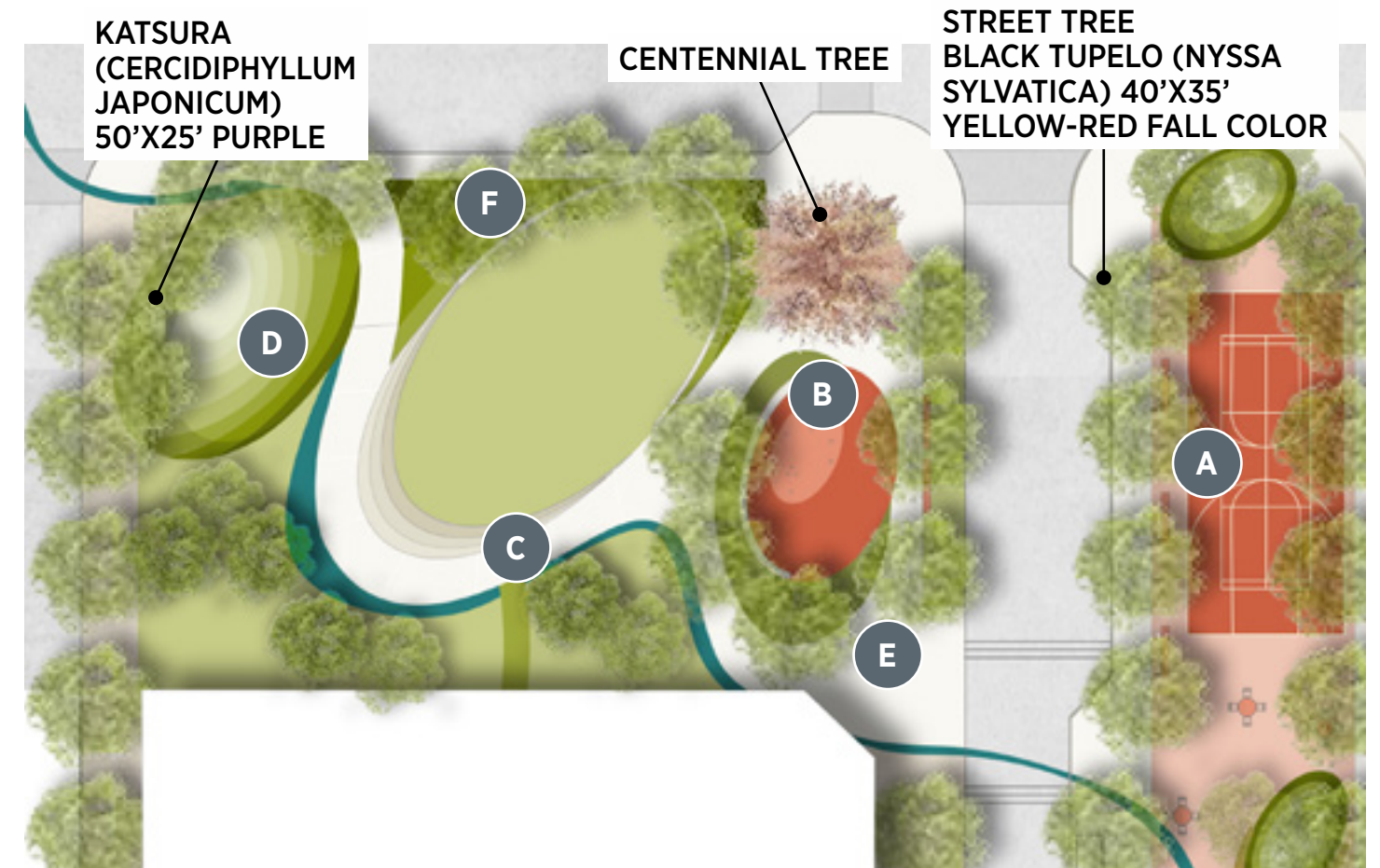
Rainier Stormwater Park

Public areas create a necessary cohesive idea and approach to connecting the architectural programs and disparate amenities of the master plan. The dramatic slope is used as an asset and interactive focus with a grand entry stair from Mildred culminating in a public deck overlook at the west to enjoy sweeping views through the community to Mt. Rainier's peak. The massing of the buildings accommodates the flow of people, outdoor amenities, and stormwater at the ground plane. The central park comprises three large moves: a climbing mound, a gathering lawn, and colorful playground. The plaza at the east offers additional seating for the food court, rest for

residents and visitors, and shaded areas as amenities to the adjacent retail. A sports court completes the programmed landscape in the center. In addition, the master plan has been designed to offer more outdoor amenities to the community and residents in each courtyard. From views of Mt. Rainier to stormwater detention, the story of watersheds, rainfall, and stormwater capture is told throughout the site. With materials, a meandering path that negotiates the grade, and the interaction of people and water at multiple points, water becomes a primary connector, i.e. a gathering lawn (D), a play area (B), terraced seating (C), and a water feature (E).

Public realm objectives include:

- Create a coherent site character
- Become a destination
- Provide a variety of types of places onsite
- Promote accessibility and safety
- Leverage connection to nature
- Foster community
- Complement use of the residential and retail



Multi-Mobility

Transportation, Parking, & Planning For Future Types of Mobility For All

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- A.** Reduce environmental footprint of transportation by encouraging public transit, ride-sharing, and micro-mobility while reducing vehicle miles traveled.
- B.** The safety and convenience of pedestrians have primacy over other modes in public space design.
- C.** Flexibility is the key to design for a changing mobility ecosystem. Consider the needs of future modes of transportation and build in flexibility.

MOBILITY DESIGN & FLEXIBILITY

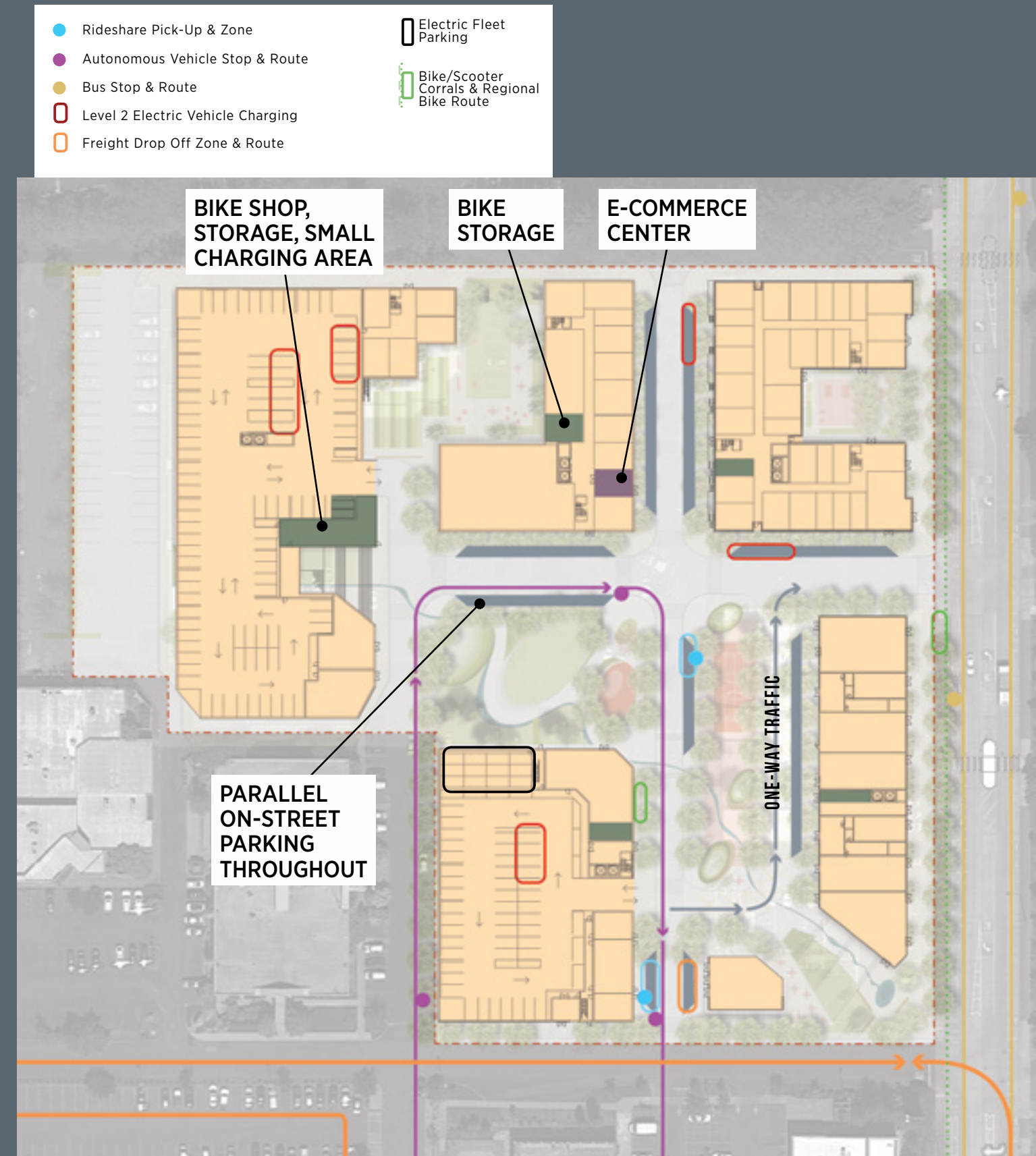
- 1.** Vehicle Electrification - build charging infrastructure
- 2.** Shared Mobility - bikes and scooters in bike lanes
- 3.** Connected/Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) loops to connect residents to transit hubs
- 4.** Design for Micro-mobility - design bike storage rooms, charging locations for micro-mobility (e-scooters), an on-site bike shop, parking areas outside of retail or park zones and design routes and signage for the safety of all modes.
- 5.** E-Commerce - provide spaces and coordination for package delivery pick-up and storage.
- 6.** Accommodate all connections to bus and train hubs
- 7.** The future includes drone delivery and Air-Uber

PARKING TO PARKS

Parallel parking spots along the street offer a flexible space for evolving transportation needs. From food trucks to bike rental stations, this buffer zone around the blocks could eventually transition to additional greenspace throughout JCN as the demand for car parking decreases. Street parking now becomes additional park space later.

SHARED PARKING

James Center North has exceptional opportunities for shared parking arrangements as a methodology to reduce the construction of new parking garages. Tacoma Housing Authority has agreements with adjacent businesses to allow shared parking, with opportunities (not yet in place) for shared parking w/ TCC.



Implementation

The following outlines a viable phasing development scenario which allows for development to be implemented within the current site that will have the least impact on existing businesses, current revenue streams and infrastructure costs.

Anticipated Phasing Plan

PHASE 1

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

PHASE 4



Project Data

SITE AREA	-	0.5 ACRES
HOUSING MODEL	-	STUDENT
HEIGHT / SCALE	-	5 STORIES
NO. OF UNITS	-	320 APARTMENTS
AMENITY	-	CAFE / COMMUNITY
PARKING TYPE	-	EXISTING SURFACE
OPEN SPACE	-	STREETSCAPE / PRIVATE GARDENS RESIDENTIAL STOOPS REC COURTYARD TREE-LINED CULTURE

Project Data

SITE AREA	-	1.0 ACRES
HOUSING MODEL	-	AFFORDABLE
HEIGHT / SCALE	-	5 STORIES
NO. OF UNITS	-	120 APARTMENTS
AMENITY	-	COMMUNITY SPACE
PARKING TYPE	-	STRUCTURED ON-STREET
OPEN SPACE	-	PLAYGROUND PRIVATE GARDENS AMENITY COURTYARD CENTENNIAL TREE CLIMBING MOUND PLANTED BEDS PLAY STRUCTURES

Project Data

SITE AREA	-	1.1 ACRES
HOUSING MODEL	-	MARKET-RATE
HEIGHT / SCALE	-	6 STORIES
NO. OF UNITS	-	165 APARTMENTS
AMENITY	-	BIKE LOUNGE OFFICE / RETAIL
PARKING TYPE	-	STRUCTURED
OPEN SPACE	-	OVERLOOK PRIVATE GARDENS PUBLIC OVERLOOK TERRACED GARDENS RESIDENTIAL STOOPS COMMUNITY GARDENS AMENITY COURTYARD

Project Data

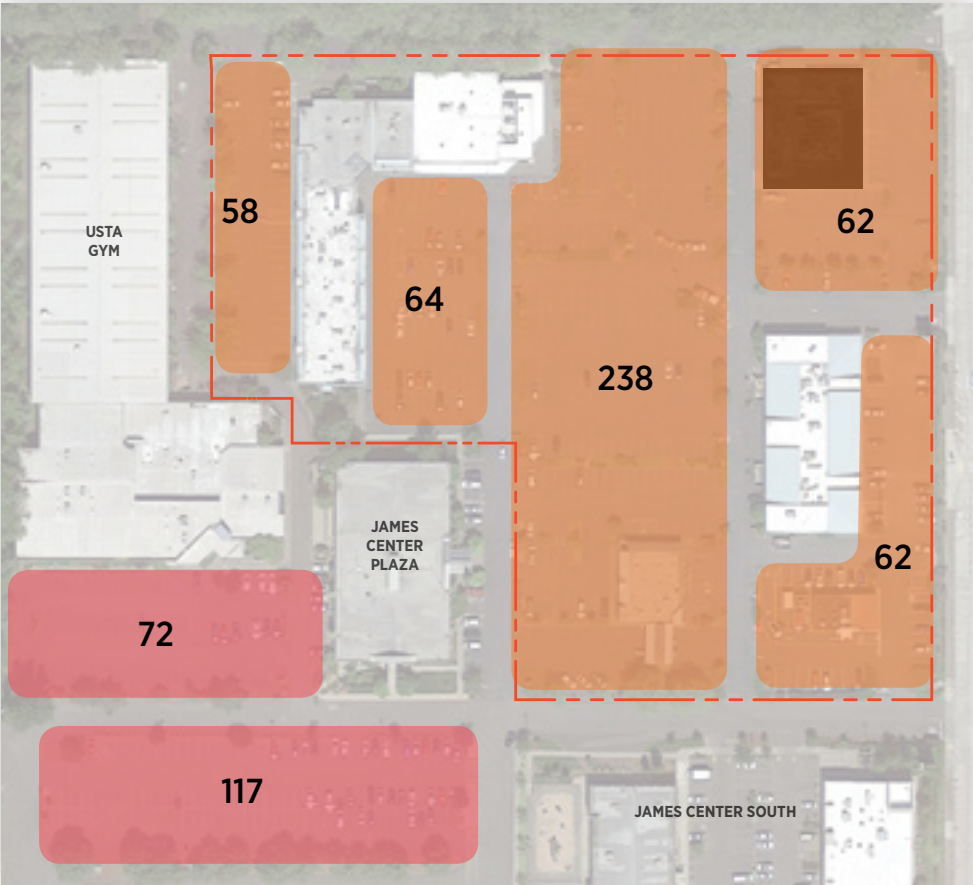
SITE AREA	-	1.2 ACRES
HOUSING MODEL	-	MIXED-INCOME
HEIGHT / SCALE	-	4 STORIES
NO. OF UNITS	-	46 APARTMENTS
AMENITY	-	RETAIL SPACE FOOD/BEVERAGE
PARKING TYPE	-	SHARED SURFACE ON-STREET
OPEN SPACE	-	URBAN PARK SPORT COURT TREE-LINED STREETS ENTRY CORNER PLAZA OUTDOOR SEATING

Parking Strategy

The current site has more square footage of surface parking than actual built structures. As James Center North evolves into a Transit Oriented Development, the demand for parking will decrease as other means of mobility become more readily available. Whether through car sharing, greater dependence on mass transit, or the development of new modes of transportation, both THA and the City of Tacoma agree that parking will be needed less with every phase built.

Additional Information:

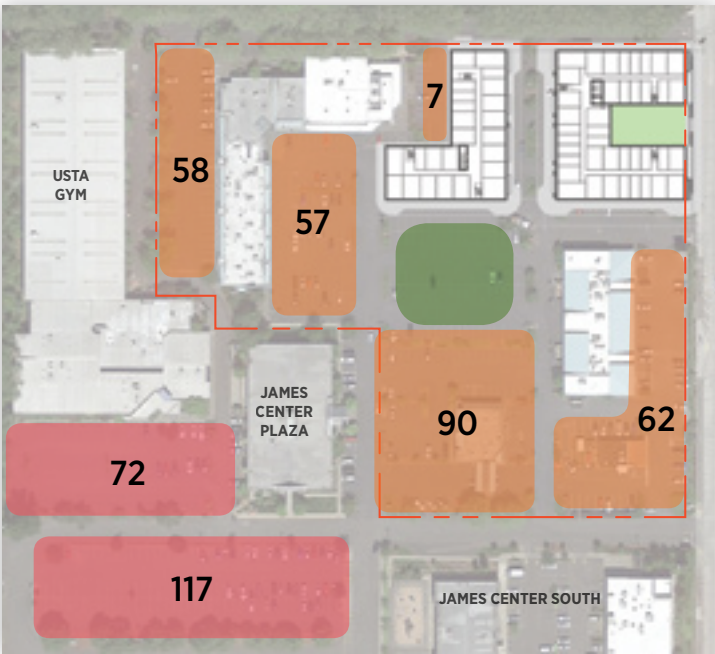
- Currently, there are agreements with adjacent owners for parking at the southwest and TCC has indicated that they would be open to discuss shared parking agreements on campus.
- A temporary stormwater detention pond will need to be installed to offset the first phase of construction until the park is built with additional stormwater vaulting capacity unless negotiated for an off-site location.
- The structured parking indicated would house fleet/carshare parking, some resident/visitor parking, electric vehicle charging, and personal mobility device charging infrastructure.



Existing Parking

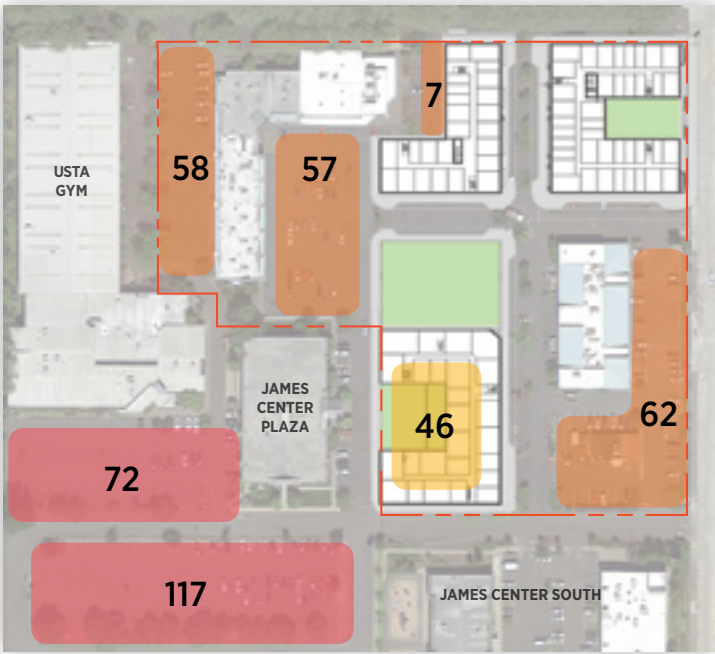
- 484 - ON-SITE PARKING
- 189 - OFF-SITE PARKING

Phase 1



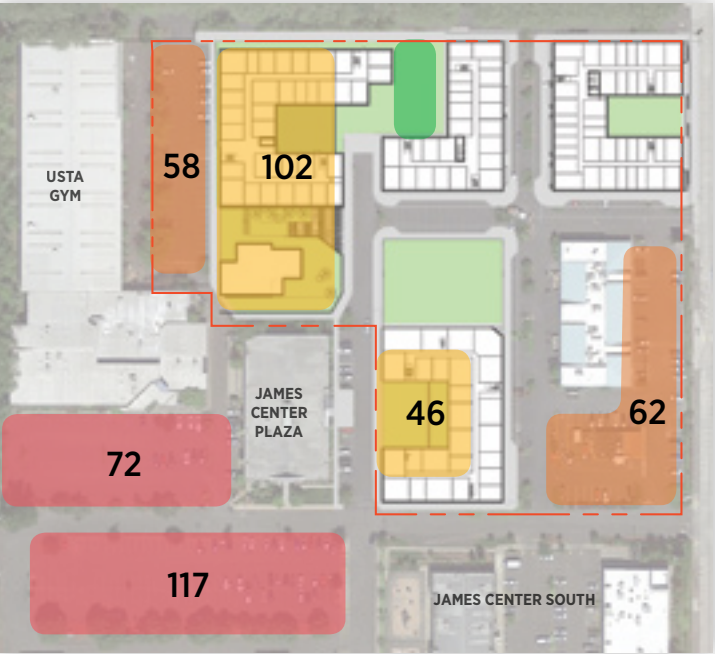
- 274 + 22 ON-STREET
- 189 - OFF-SITE PARKING

Phase 2



- 46 STRUCTURED PARKING
- 231 + 35 ON-STREET
- 189 - OFF-SITE PARKING

Phase 3



- 148 STRUCTURED PARKING
- 120 + 35 ON-STREET
- 189 - OFF-SITE PARKING

Phase 4



- 148 STRUCTURED PARKING
- 58 + 52 ON-STREET
- 189 - OFF-SITE PARKING

Conclusion

This document is a comprehensive analysis and feasibility study of Tacoma Housing Authority's vision to transform West Tacoma's James Center North retail development into a mixed-use, mixed-income, mobility-oriented development. The intent is to create a creative approach to land development that creates value and enhances livability and mobility opportunities for the community. The ideas in this document are aspirations and should be seen as sound opportunities based on economic analysis, site investigations, community input and key stakeholder interviews. Tacoma Housing Authority's aim moving forward will be to generate excitement around their mission to transform James Center North and forge partnerships and a shared vision amongst the development community.

PLACES PEOPLE THRIVE.

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