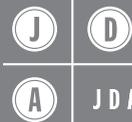
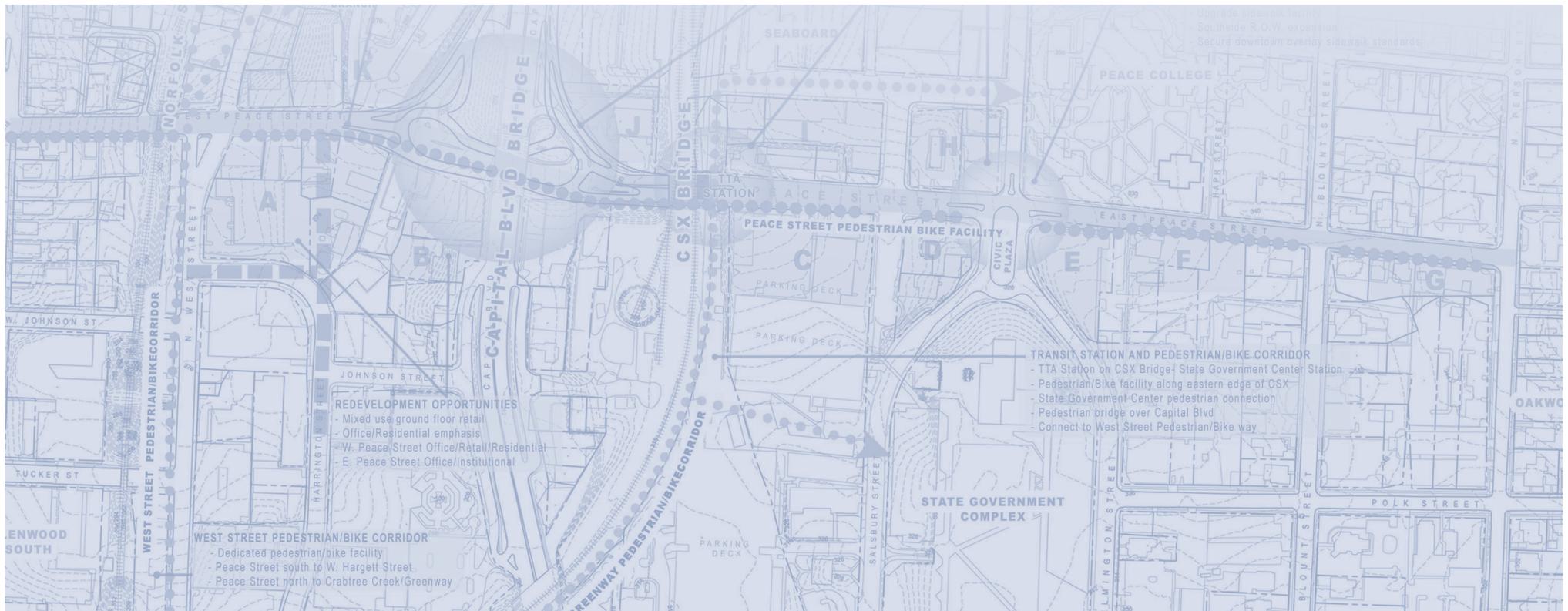


VISIONING STUDY

PEACE STREET CORRIDOR

NORTH PERSON STREET TO GLENWOOD AVENUE | RALEIGH, NC



JDAVIS ARCHITECTS

URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

MARCH 2011

PEACE STREET VISIONING STUDY

RALEIGH, NC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This design/planning effort was initiated by JDavisArchitects to support the efforts of the Department of City Planning by providing pro bono consultation to conceptualize the second phase of the Peace Street corridor revitalization project. The study's intent was to serve as a broad planning exercise to identify, envision, and propose potential improvements that would enhance the corridor's capacity to operate at the highest level of urban form and function. Consideration has been given to both private and public realms within the Corridor, with a focus on public improvements in support of private redevelopment. This report serves as a summary of recommendations and ideas from the planning consultant with informal input from City of Raleigh staff and others.

If fully realized, these strategic improvements could better position the Peace Street Corridor as a vital asset for Downtown Raleigh, anchoring Downtown's northern perimeter, and serving as a Gateway linking Downtown Raleigh and Capital Boulevard. With the City currently engaged in a Visioning Plan for the Capital Boulevard Corridor as a future mixed-use district, the timing of focused planning and visioning for Peace Street becomes more relevant. The Visioning Study recommendations and ideas will clearly need more detailed study by the City and stakeholder input to evaluate their viability. The Visioning Study recognizes and embraces the future need and value of full public input and involvement in advancing ideas for improving this strategic area of the City of Raleigh.

Peace Street has long served as a key east-west transportation corridor at the northern end of downtown linking Peace College, Seaboard Station, the State Government Center, and the Oakwood, Mordecai and Oakdale neighborhoods with the Central Raleigh retail and service centers of Glenwood Avenue and Cameron Village (figure 1). This corridor has also served as the primary gateway portal for access to the State Government Center and Glenwood South/Cameron Village from inbound Capital Boulevard, Wade Avenue, and Glenwood Avenue. However, in its current state, Peace Street is not functioning at a

high level for its users and forms a physical barrier between downtown and the northern districts. As a case in point, the next geographic through traffic corridors are Edenton/Hillsborough Streets ten blocks to the north, and Atlantic Avenue two miles to the south and one section of Peace Street lacks pedestrian access into downtown for a distance of 2,000 feet or approximately five blocks.

The corridor has served its functions quite well beginning with the construction of Capital Boulevard, formerly named Downtown Boulevard, fifty years ago. In the intervening years, as Downtown Raleigh has grown, matured and redeveloped, this one-half mile stretch of Peace Street remains remarkably static with little growth or change other than an increase in traffic intensity. The corridor is performing a yeoman's job moving traffic with surprising efficiency, but as anyone who uses this corridor regularly recognizes, it has reached or exceeded its functional capacity as an efficient traffic corridor.

Peace Street had historically served as a pedestrian route for workers employed at industrial and rail enterprises on the northern edge of Downtown. Over time the pedestrian activity diminished until the mid-1970's with the expansion of the State Government Center complex and as the City established the Municipal Service Center Complex on the site of the former Devereaux Meadows baseball stadium in the early 1970's. Recent new development in Glenwood South, Capitol Park, Seaboard Center and Blount Street Commons have collectively led to an increase in pedestrian and biking activity along the corridor. With the addition of the R-Line and expected further redevelopment, use of the corridor by pedestrians and bicyclists is expected to increase dramatically. At this time, pedestrians and cyclists are pioneering this urban landscape, braving the corridor which has seen few pedestrian/bicycling improvements over the past fifty years.

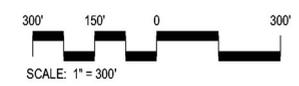
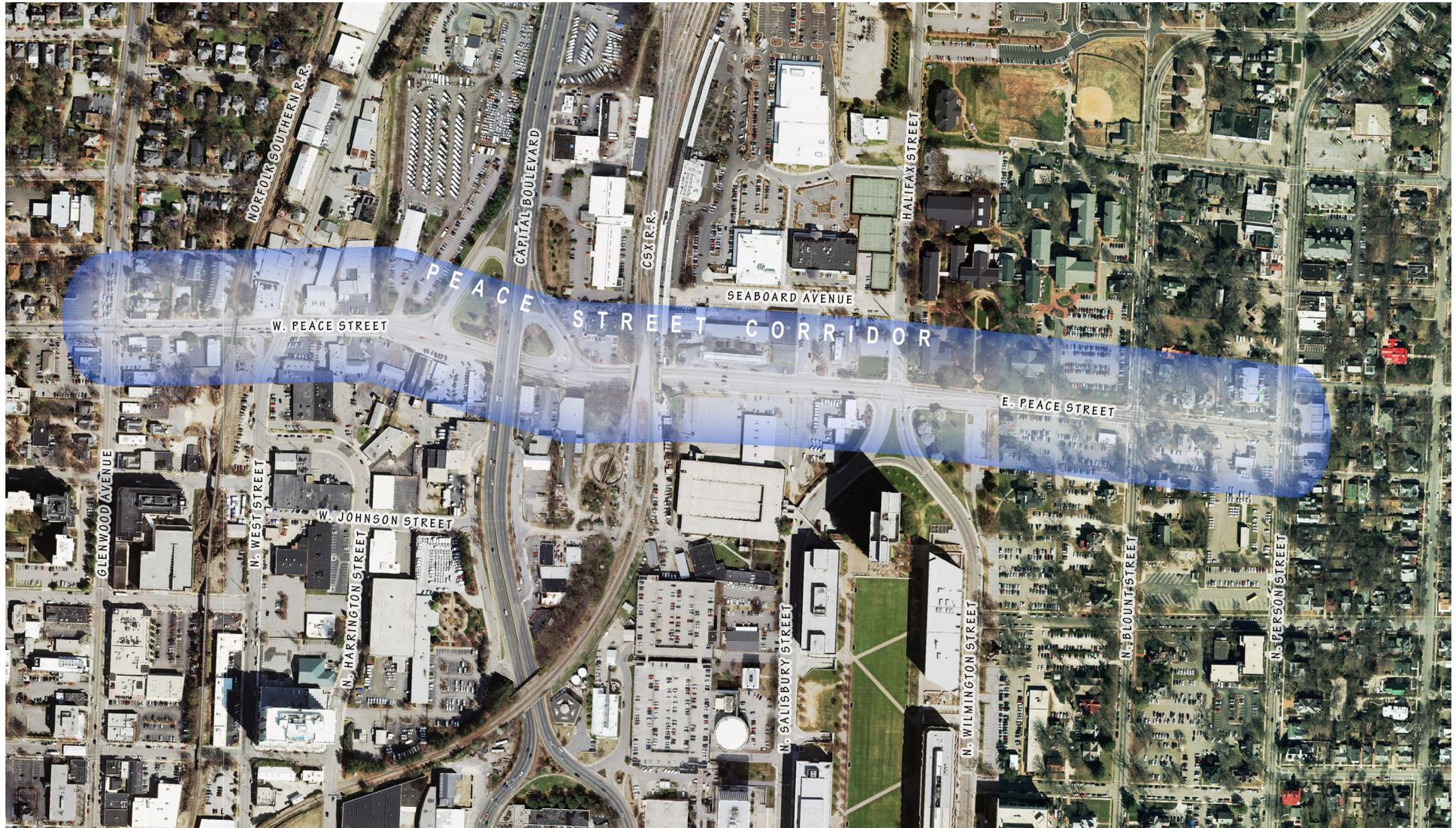


FIGURE 1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Guide the design of the planned **Capital Boulevard Bridge** replacement in a manner that both improves traffic flow and enhances and promotes safe pedestrian and cycling traffic along the Peace Street Corridor.
- Establish an integrated **Pedestrian/Bike Facility** along Peace Street from North Person Street to Glenwood Avenue.
- Encourage Triangle Transit **to locate a Downtown Transit Station** on, or in close proximity to, the CSX Rail Bridge over Peace Street.
- Explore the potential for a mid-block **Urban Greenway** with direct access from Peace Street, extending from the CSX Bridge at Seaboard south into Downtown at Harrington Street.
- Explore the potential for a **Pedestrian/Bike Corridor along North West Street** from Peace Street south to the future Raleigh Union Station and on to the Dix property.
- Explore **roadway improvements at the Wilmington/Halifax/Peace intersection**, including the prospect of a roundabout and new civic space.
- **Extend North Harrington Street** one block north to intersect with Peace Street.
- **Encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties** along the Corridor with mixed use buildings with ground floor retail and service uses.
- Undertake **near-term safety and functional improvements** along the Peace Street corridor in support of vehicular, pedestrian and bicyclist use.



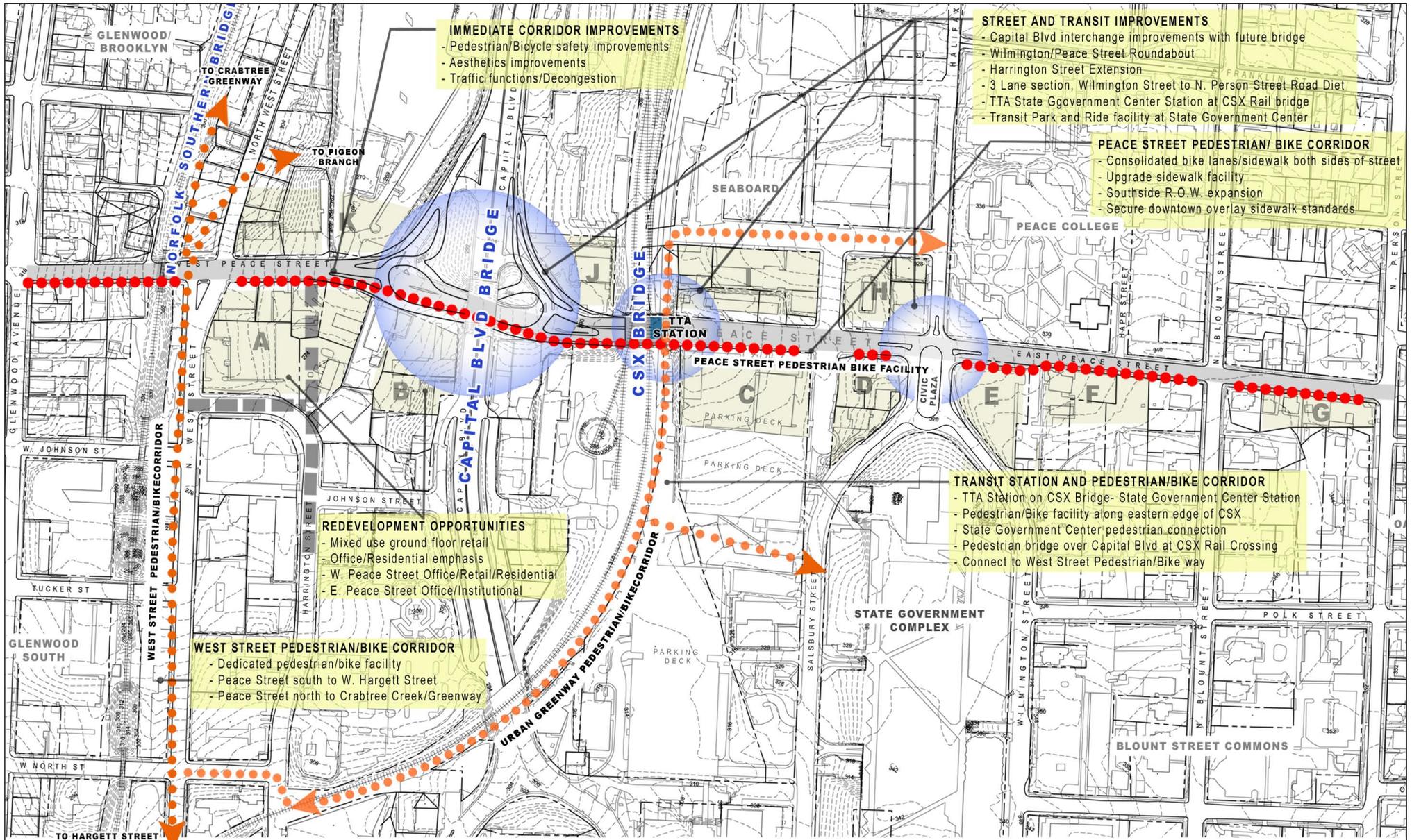


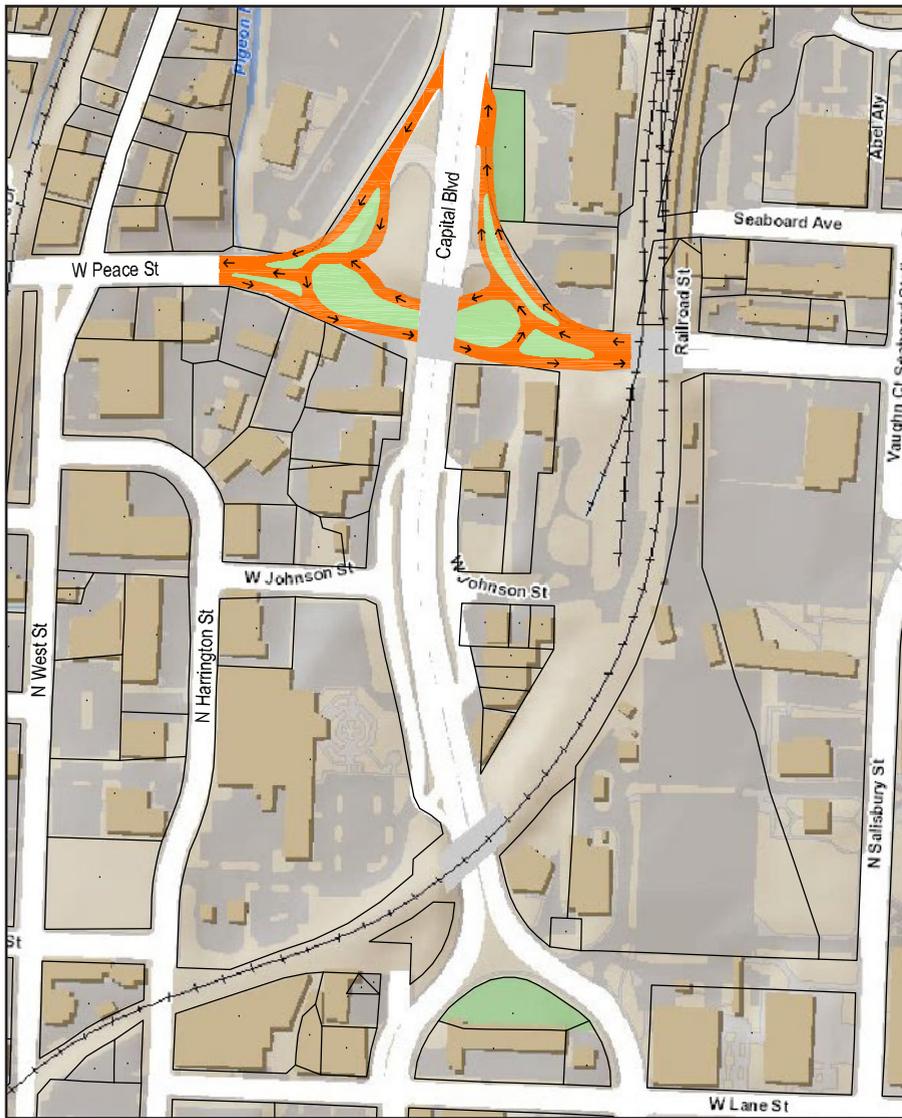
FIGURE 3

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

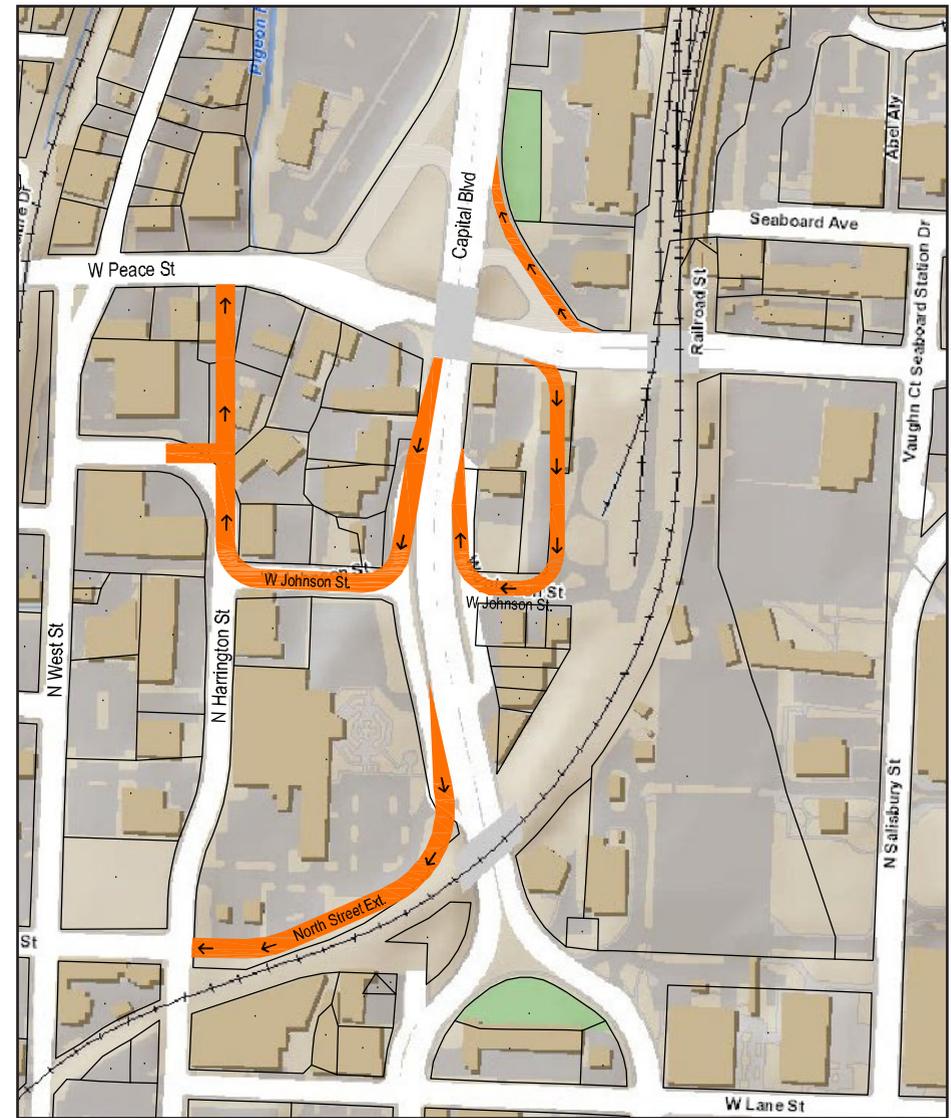
Capital Boulevard/Peace Street Interchange

The Capital Boulevard interchange in its current geometry is by all accounts at or exceeds its functional capacity given the traffic volumes it currently supports. With the prospect of a future bridge replacement by NCDOT, there will be a unique opportunity to provide creative input for an interchange configuration that is more supportive of the City's vision for the Peace Street Corridor. Any proposed interchange redesign should minimize the footprint of the public right-of-way to allow for maximum redevelopment opportunities. (FIGURE 4)

- **The Visioning Plan suggests the implementation of a modified roundabout, affectionately termed the “Dog Bone” roundabout.** If implemented, a roundabout would provide a continuous flow of traffic through this section of the corridor while establishing bike lanes and improved sidewalk facilities in keeping with the Pedestrian/Bike Corridor Concept. If a more conventional diamond or ramp solution is ultimately designed for the interchange, the City should ensure that the design is supportive and not restrictive of the Pedestrian/Bike Corridor Concept. Initial evaluation of traffic flow suggests that a roundabout might be feasible at this location.
- **An alternative geometry for a new bridge and interchange envisions the use of access and departure ramps located south of the Peace Street/Capital Boulevard interchange.** This approach would use add a deceleration lane and ramp using the existing W. Johnson Street as the receiving street with direct access to Peace Street via an extending N. Harrington Street. A new access ramp from Peace Street would be aligned east of Capital Boulevard and would provide access through the W. Johnson Street right-of-way. Of the current ramps in place, only the north bound access ramp off Peace Street would remain.
- **In the interim, we recommend that City and State transportation engineers explore the prospect of the closing the northbound exit ramp and the southbound entrance ramp as a means to reduce traffic turn movements,** relieving some congestion at this busy interface between Capital Boulevard and Peace Street. The ramp closings would also greatly improve safety and convenience for pedestrians and cyclists along the northern edge of Peace Street.



ROUNDABOUT OPTION



JOHNSON STREET OPTION

FIGURE 4

S. Wilmington Street /Halifax Street Intersection

- **The Wilmington/Halifax/Peace Street intersection represents a second opportunity to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. A two-lane roundabout is recommended for feasibility analysis by the City transportation engineers.** This intersection continues to be a bottleneck which may be improved with more conventional traffic engineering solutions. However, there is some prospect that a two lane extended roundabout might provide free-flowing traffic while establishing a signature open space at this important gateway into the state government center and downtown. The roundabout would extend south in to the Wilmington Salisbury loop, with the roadway geometry offset to the south.

North Harrington Street Extension

- **North Harrington Street lacks beneficial north-south traffic connectivity as it is currently aligned.** The extension of North Harrington Street one block north to Peace Street would improve vehicular and pedestrian access to Peace Street. The block of land in the proposed alignment is privately held with operating businesses. However, the benefits of increased urban connectivity, and the prospect of future redevelopment on the affected properties would be greatly enhanced through increased street frontage, the creation of high-value corner properties, and improved property configurations for redevelopment.

S. Wilmington Street to N. Person Street Road Diet

- **The Study recommends that the City explore the prospect of applying a road diet to this section of Peace Street.** There is limited right-of-way available and the current three lane configuration limits the accommodation of bike lanes and improved pedestrian facilities. Traffic volume and turn movements in this section of the corridor are lower than in other sections. The establishment of a three-lane street section with a center turn lane, bike lanes, and periodic median refuges, if implemented, would greatly improve the functionality of the street.

Triangle Transit Station

- **We recommend that the future Triangle Transit State Government Center Station and platform (or an additional downtown station) be planned for the CSX bridge over Peace Street.** A downtown transit station could be effectively incorporated into this design, adding additional impetus for a north-south Urban Greenway serving the State Government Center and Seaboard Complex employees and users. The concentration of SGC parking decks immediately south of the station present an opportunity for a shared use program with State Government employees and Triangle Transit Park and Ride users. That integration will likely spur additional pedestrian and biking activity. This represents a strong opportunity for the Peace Street Corridor to serve as a district transit nexus linking Downtown/Glenwood South and the State Government Center/Seaboard District.

In addition to access, capacity and safety limitations, the corridor presents a chaotic pedestrian and biking experience offering few urban design amenities and is lacking in attractive urban character. This condition is particularly acute west of Capital Boulevard, where the pavement is extremely wide and the street edges are very poorly defined. In general, without public investment, the corridor will lack the necessary conditions to attract mixed-use redevelopment supportive of a healthy urban corridor. All of these conditions diminish the corridor's ability to serve as a vibrant and capable streetscape in this important part of the city.

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Peace Street currently function in a very diminished capacity with marginal levels of pedestrian/bicyclist safety and access. Pedestrian access from Peace Street into Downtown is not available for a 2,000 foot stretch, or five blocks, between Wilmington Street and West Street.

The corridor has fixed right-of-way dimensions limiting the full realization of a "complete streets" approach. Implementation of pedestrian and bike lane improvements may require the acquisition or dedication of additional rights-of-way from property owners, particularly along the southern edge of this corridor.

The pedestrian and bike facilities could be implemented in advance of the redesign of the Capital Boulevard Bridge replacement if the design were closely coordinated with the early conceptual stages of the bridge replacement and with any associated reconfiguration and realignment of Peace Street. If not, only interim improvements should be planned and implemented prior to the Capital Boulevard bridge replacement.

The opportunity for local and regional pedestrian/bike interconnectivity within the NC3 corridor, alone or coupled with the CSX Corridor, West Street Corridor, potential Triangle Transit station, and the Peace Street pedestrian facility would create a pedestrian/bike transportation network which has the potential to transform the so-called northern frontier of Downtown.

Peace Street Pedestrian/Bike Facility

- **Our recommended approach to providing safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian through movements would be a consolidated pedestrian/bike facility concentrated on the south side of Peace Street. (FIGURE 5)**

Given the obstructions and safety issues present with the north side of Capital Boulevard access ramps, the south side of Peace Street would be more accommodating for such a facility. A dedicated two-way bike lane above the curb line and a dedicated pedestrian walkway along the corridor edge would be provided from Wilmington Street to West Street. A five lane road section would be maintained but with reduced lane widths and additional right-of-way would be needed along the southern roadway corridor to accommodate the consolidated bikeway/pedestrian facility. More conventional sidewalk improvements on the north side would be made to improve safety for more limited through movements. A more conventional alternative would be to establish bike lanes on both sides of the roadway section. An amenitized pedestrian walkway would complement bike lanes along both sides of the street. This approach might be the preferred alternative, particularly if the "square box" Capital Boulevard interchange alternative is implemented.

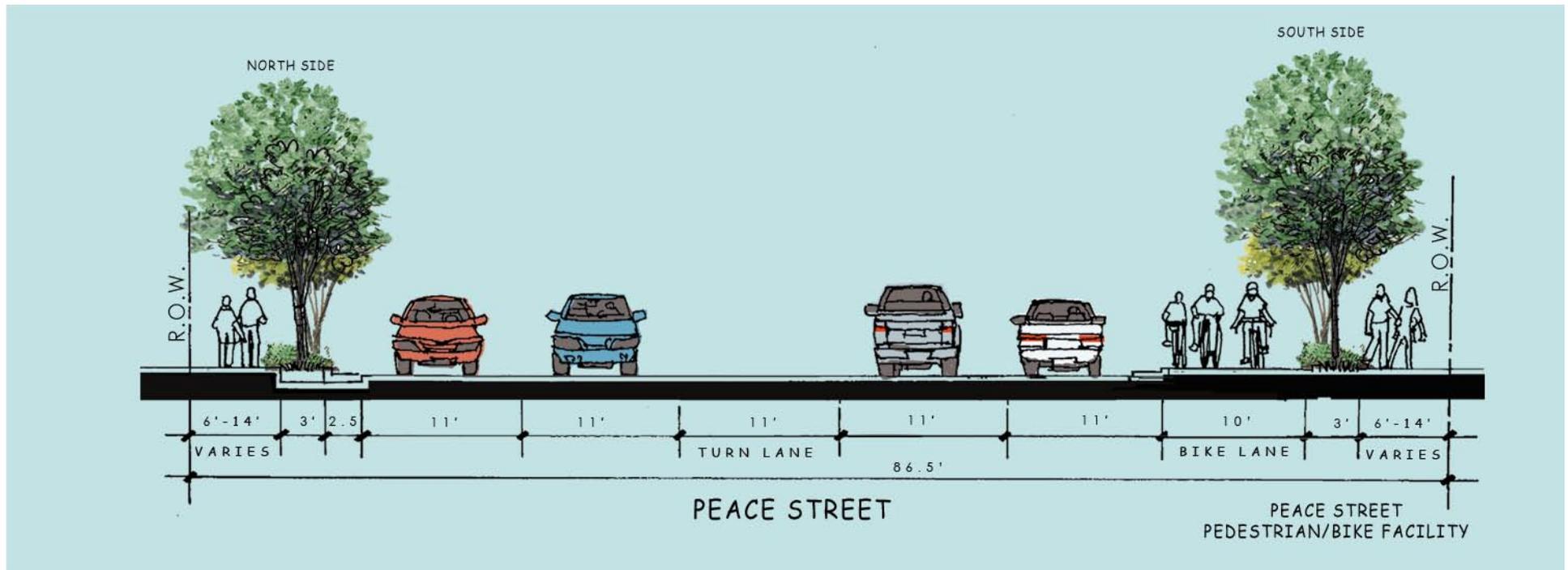


FIGURE 5

PEDESTRIAN BIKE FACILITY

Peace Street to N. Harrington Street Urban Greenway

- **An Urban Greenway supporting a pedestrian way and bike path along the eastern edge of the CSX Corridor could be established from Seaboard Drive to an at-grade connection at Harrington Street and North Street.** There are currently very limited north-south pedestrian /bike linkages from Peace Street into Downtown, a condition which severely inhibits the integration of Peace Street corridor with Downtown. The CSX corridor and the adjacent SGC property provide a logical opportunity to create a strong north-south Urban Greenway outside of the conventional street grid. Pedestrians and cyclists would access the facility from the east side of the CSX Bridge using Railroad Street, a new at-grade ramp along the north bridge abutment, or Seaboard Avenue. A decorative fence and landscape buffer would effectively amenitize and physically separate the urban pathway from the rail operations. A dedicated pedestrian bridge over Capital Boulevard at the CSX Bridge would be needed for the link to be implemented. A spur would connect the pathway to the SGC with a new pedestrian link to Salisbury Street between the SGC parking decks.

West Street Pedestrian/Bikeway Link

- **North West Street should be evaluated for dedicated bike lanes and upgraded pedestrian facilities from W. Peace Street to W. Hargett Street.** North West Street offers a second strong opportunity to improve north-south pedestrian/bike access and connectivity from the Peace Street Corridor into Downtown. Direct access from Hargett Street to Union Station and beyond to the Dix property should be addressed at the appropriate time.
- **A future pedestrian/bike facility connection north, along the Capital Boulevard corridor, should be planned to connect directly to the West Street intersection at Peace Street.** This connection would link with the City Services tract and any future Greenway/Pedestrian corridor north along Pigeon Branch, ultimately serving as a local and commuter pedestrian/biking corridor extending from the Dix property to the Crabtree Creek Greenway.
- **It is of interest to note that the SEHSR (Southeast High Speed Rail) Alternate NC3 may present a significant opportunity to establish a much needed regional north-south pedestrian/bikeway linkage.** This alternative proposes an elevated High Speed Rail adjacent to and east of the existing Norfolk Southern rail line. If the NC3 alignment or similar alternative ultimately proves to be the favored SEHSR route, the Vision Study recommends that the eastern edge of the existing rail corridor be expanded and dedicated for the construction of a north-south pedestrian/bike facility. As envisioned, the pedestrian/bike facility would be a dedicated grade-separated route from Crabtree Creek Greenway south to Peace Street and ultimately connecting to Union Station via the West Street Pedestrian/Bikeway link.

There has been little recent property redevelopment along the Peace Street Corridor between Wilmington Street and Glenwood Avenue. An improved roadway with a new Capital Boulevard bridge and interchange, along with improved pedestrian access, may provide the impetus for increased redevelopment along the corridor. Redevelopment prospects for private property will vary for different sections of the corridor in conjunction with public capital improvements. The ideas presented in this Study represent depictions of possible uses on privately held properties. The study is intended for visioning purposes only and fully recognizes that any future development decisions for private property would be made solely by the property owners. We would expect a mix of mid-story office, residential and institutional uses and some ground floor retail opportunities to emerge along Peace Street, particularly west of the Capital Boulevard Interchange, and on a realigned North Harrington Street. (FIGURE 6)

- **The State Government Center property from North Wilmington Street to the CSX Bridge presents an opportunity for public/private redevelopment.** Whether the frontage is redeveloped by the State or by a private public partnership, street level uses, either office or retail, along this section would be viable.
- **The north side frontage from North Wilmington Street to the CSX Bridge would likely have an institutional use by Peace College and the remainder has potential for a mix of office and retail uses.**
- **The corridor frontage west of Capital Boulevard would have the greatest redevelopment potential for mixed use buildings, including ground floor retail, on both frontages if on street parking could be provided.** In support of ground floor retail, the City might consider adding a “slip lane” with parking along the both sides of Peace Street in this location.
- **The City Services Center property presents a special opportunity for a more comprehensive mixed use development.** Special attention to the land use and roadway interface with Peace Street will be extremely important.
- **The extension of North Harrington Street to intersect with Peace Street would provide greatly improved street and pedestrian connectivity and would provide more desirable residual redevelopment parcels with greater visibility, access and street frontage.** A mix of residential, office, retail and parking is envisioned.
- **The Blount Street Commons frontage may not be completed with mixed-use buildings with ground level retail as originally envisioned.** However, the City should ensure that a wide pedestrian corridor in accordance with the Downtown Overlay District be with redevelopment reserved from North Wilmington Street to North Person Street. Plans for Blount Street Commons and the new AIA Headquarters property should be evaluated for opportunities to establish a fourteen foot sidewalk in accordance with the Downtown Overlay District standards.

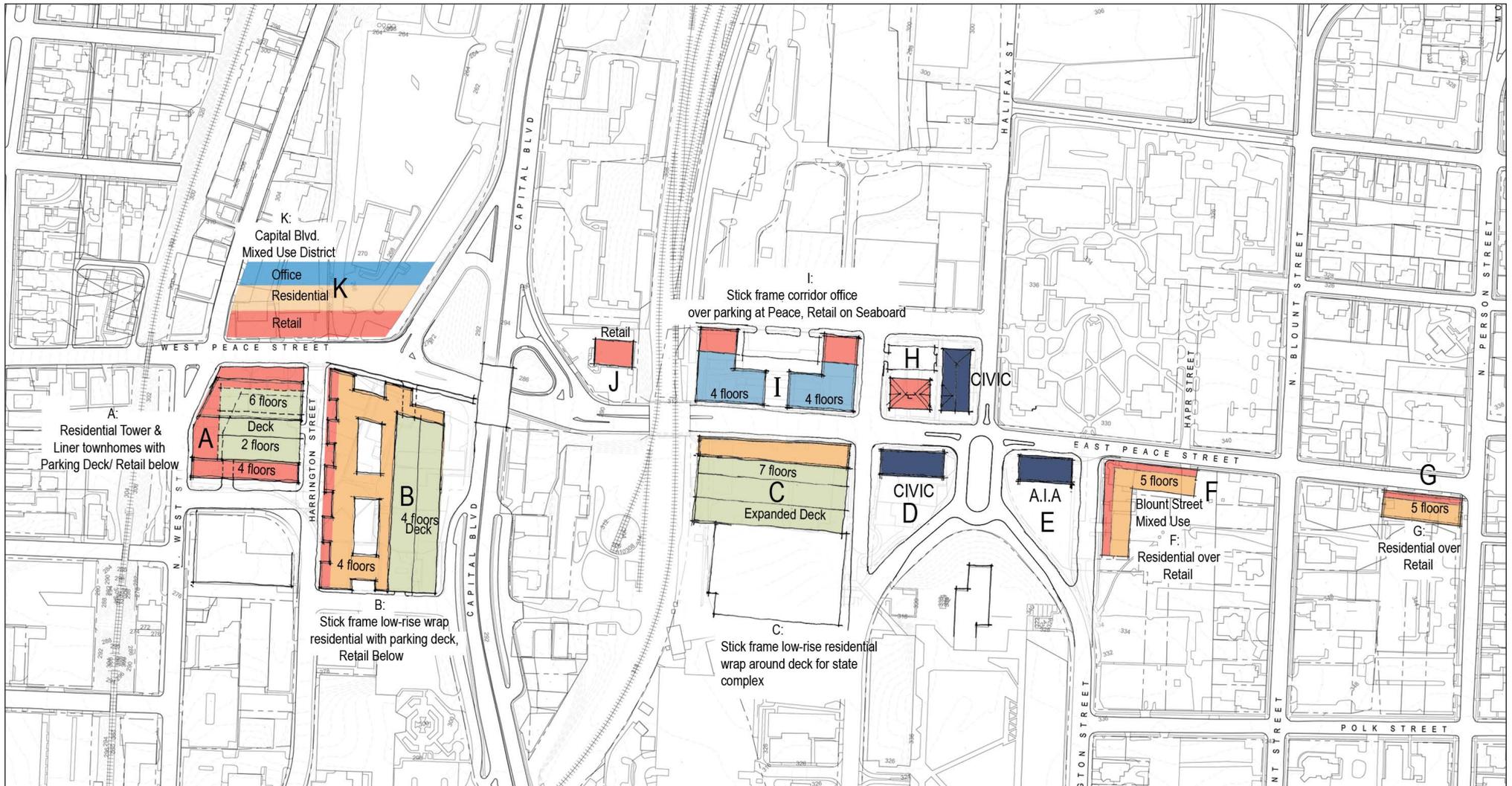


FIGURE 6

1. Capital Boulevard and CSX Bridges:

- a. Develop a lighting plan to facilitate pedestrian access and an improved sense of safety under the Capital Boulevard and CSX Railroad bridges.
- b. Install bird netting and other deterrents to prevent roosting by pigeons in the undercarriage of the Capital Boulevard and CSX Railroad bridges.
- c. Maintain adjacent landscaping and rip-rap clear of pedestrian walkways.

2. Crosswalks: Install bold-patterned crosswalks and upgrade all pedestrian-related signal amenities at the following locations

- a. Peace and Halifax Streets, north and east sides of the intersection.
- b. Peace and North Wilmington Streets, all four sides of the intersection,
- c. Peace and North Blount Streets, all four sides of the intersection
- d. Peace and North Person Streets, all three sides of the intersection.
- e. Peace at northbound ramp to Capital Boulevard; this will involve revising several ramps H/C Ramp upgrades and connections over both the on and off ramps for Capital Boulevards.

3. Sight Distance:

- a. Relocate traffic signal control box located in the landscape island at Peace and West Streets.
- b. Relocate utility pole at SE quadrant of Peace and West Streets.

4. Drive Cuts: Reconfigure access in front of retail establishments immediately west of the Capital Boulevard bridge to eliminate the undefined driveways and provide a distinct pedestrian facility.

5. Pedestrian Facilities:

- a. Repair Sidewalk throughout Corridor
- b. Evaluate Handicap Access
- c. Evaluate opportunities for implementing DOD Sidewalk Zone, particularly from Person Street to Wilmington Street.
- d. Establish an expanded DOD Sidewalk on Peace Street fronting the new AIA Building site.

6. Traffic/Transit:

- a. Establish a left turn function from center turn lane into SGC parking lot across from Shell Station or consider alternative access points for surface parking lot.
- b. Consider adding an R-Line route through Seaboard District
- c. Provide Bus Shelters along the corridor
- d. Evaluate bus stop locations with respect to keeping traffic moving through the corridor – current R-Line stop impedes flow at intersection of Wilmington and Peace.

7. Capital Boulevard Interchange:

- a. Prune evergreen trees to increase perception of safety.
- b. At bottom of south-bound exit ramp, change traffic control signage from “Yield” to “Stop”.

8. Street Trees: Designate and install a preferred street tree for the corridor.

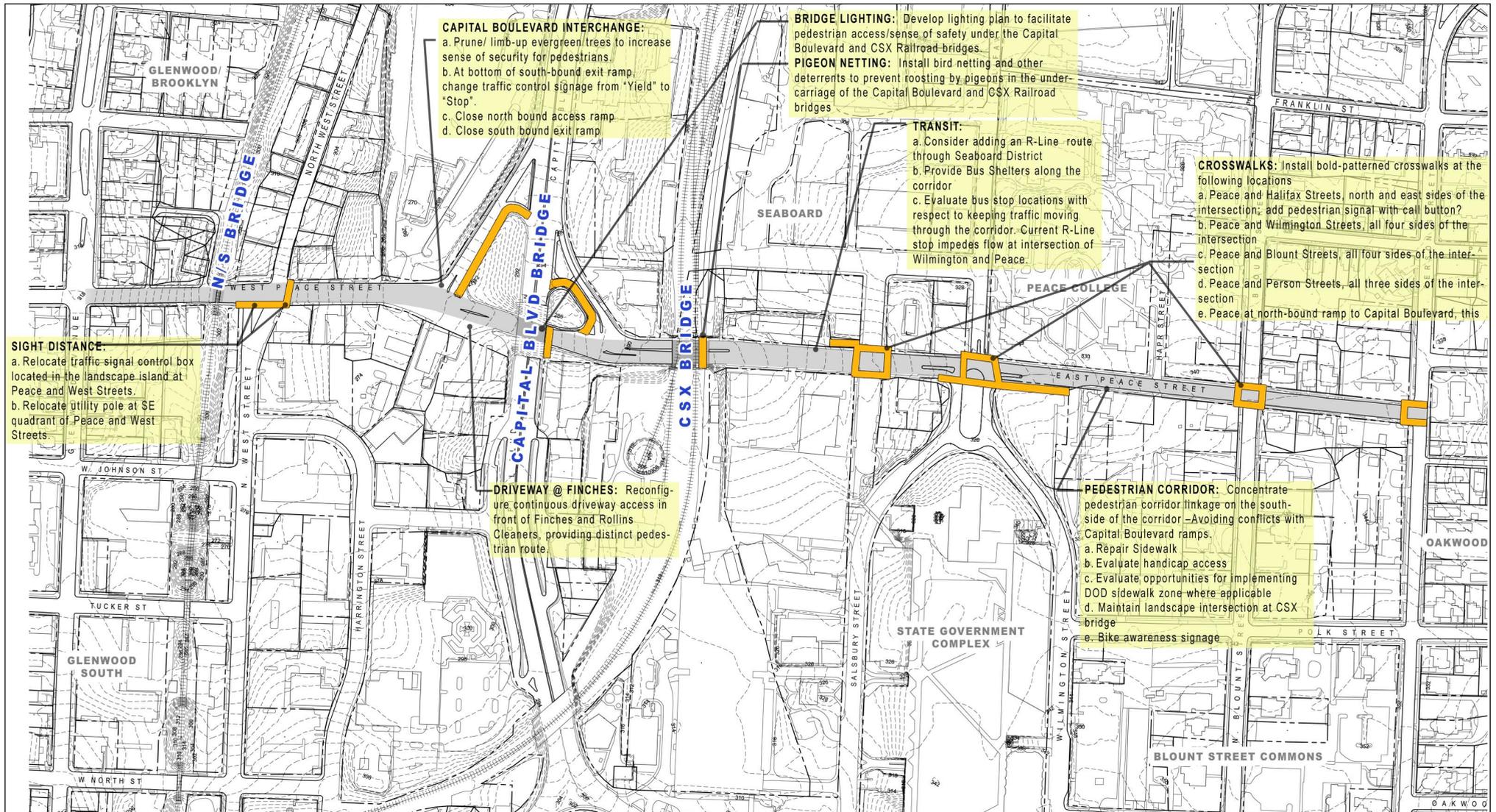


FIGURE 7