

City of Charleston

DESIGN DIVISION

REPORT 10

LOWLINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING



AUGUST 2020

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August 2020

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WELCOME

The City of Charleston acquired a small vacant parcel located along the planned Lowcountry Lowline with the intention of developing affordable housing. This report provides a simple capacity and massing study for the site. It also directs essential parking and circulation improvements around the site that will be needed to make the project work.

CITY OF CHARLESTON

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INTRODUCTION

Affordable housing on the planned Lowcountry Lowline.

Charleston is experiencing a housing affordability crisis. One of the tools the City of Charleston has to combat this crisis is by partnering with private and nonprofit entities to develop affordable housing units on City-owned property. Design Division assists in this process by conducting capacity studies, identifying critical opportunities and constraints, and developing urban design strategies to ensure the site is positioned for public-private partnership development.

The 0.7-acre Lowline Affordable Housing development site is located in the heart of the downtown peninsula adjacent to the planned Lowcountry Lowline (a robust linear park and nonmotorized transportation corridor). While this location is highly desirable, there will be essential off-site improvements needed to access the site and provide for its parking. We have developed strategies for how to achieve these improvements and have secured funding through a Tax Increment Financing district.

The City's goal is to achieve an elegant, affordable housing development of the highest quality in design, materials and workmanship. In particular, the development shall complement the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods in terms of scale, massing, and design. This report includes massing studies that show how these goals can be achieved and indicates that 55-70 units of affordable housing can be delivered with this project.

The City's selected development partner will include an architecture team that will take their building design through the Board of Architectural Review - Large review process. That process will determine the appropriate massing and design, which will then determine the final number of units that can be achieved.



Allen Davis

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City of Charleston

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FUTURE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

FUTURE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

SITE

LOWCOUNTRY LOWLINE

670 KING & 676 KING

FUTURE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

FUTURE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS

SITE LOCATION

This site is located along the future Lowcountry Lowline and will need to be accessed from King Street using Charleston Housing Authority property (670 & 676 King Street). The site is triangular and abuts an elevated highway and billboard. It is envisioned that residents would make use of the Lowline to access jobs, services and recreation.

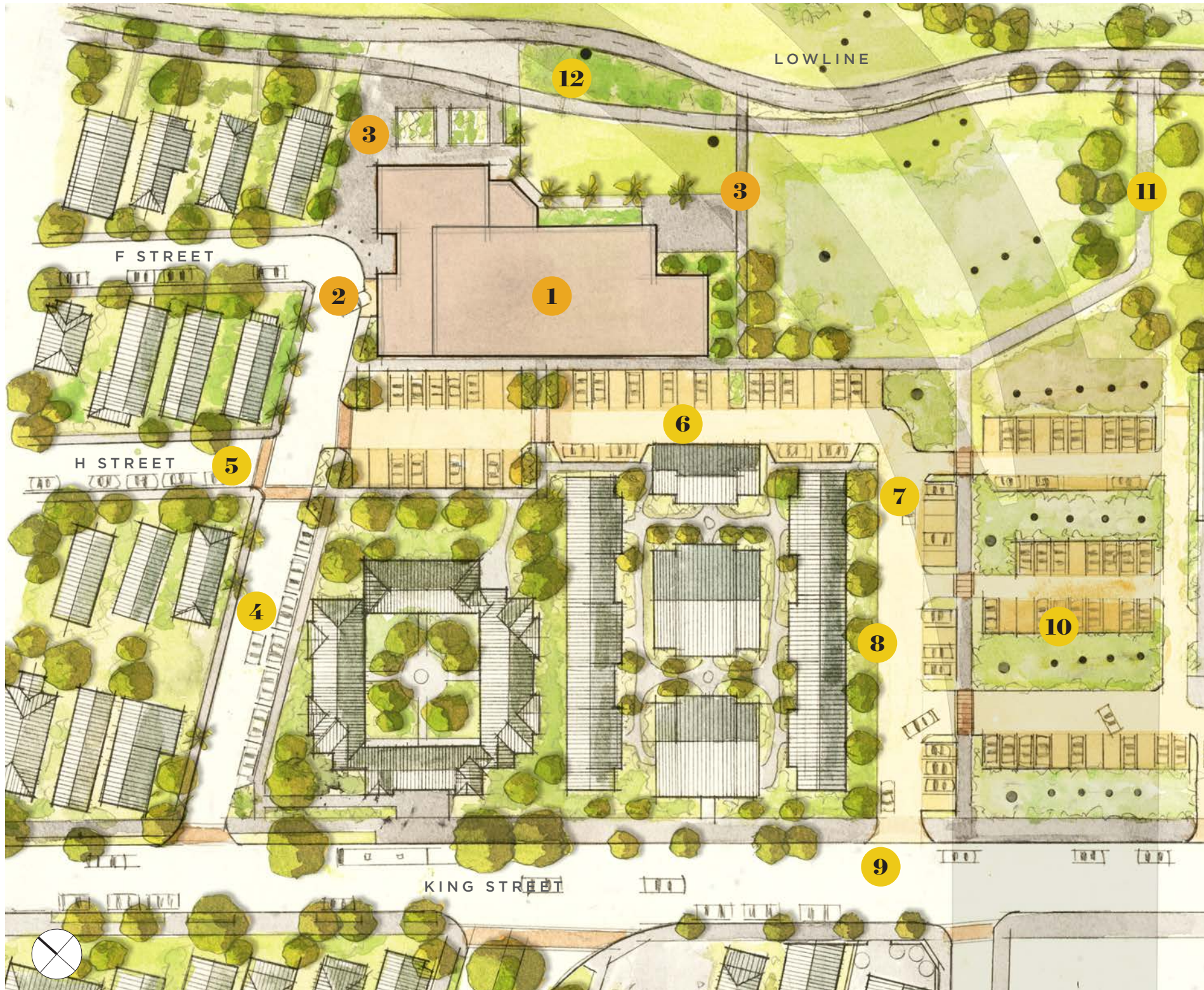


OVERVIEW

Critical Factors

- 55-70 affordable housing units on the Lowcountry Lowline
- Accessed through Charleston Housing Authority property
- Must be reviewed by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR)
- Various off-site improvements needed and funded

CONCEPT MASTER PLAN



ESSENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

ON-SITE

- 1** Lowline Housing Building
- 2** Connection to Building and F Street
- 3** Connections to Future Lowline

OFF-SITE

- 4** Driveway to street conversion, or driveway with access easement
- 5** Connection to H Street
- 6** CHA parking lot expansion
- 7** Driveway connection to CHA parking
- 8** Flip driveway and add 10' buffer
- 9** Realign driveway apron at King Street
- 10** Public parking below I-26
- 11** Connections to future Lowline
- 12** Lowcountry Lowline

PARKING PHASING APPROACH

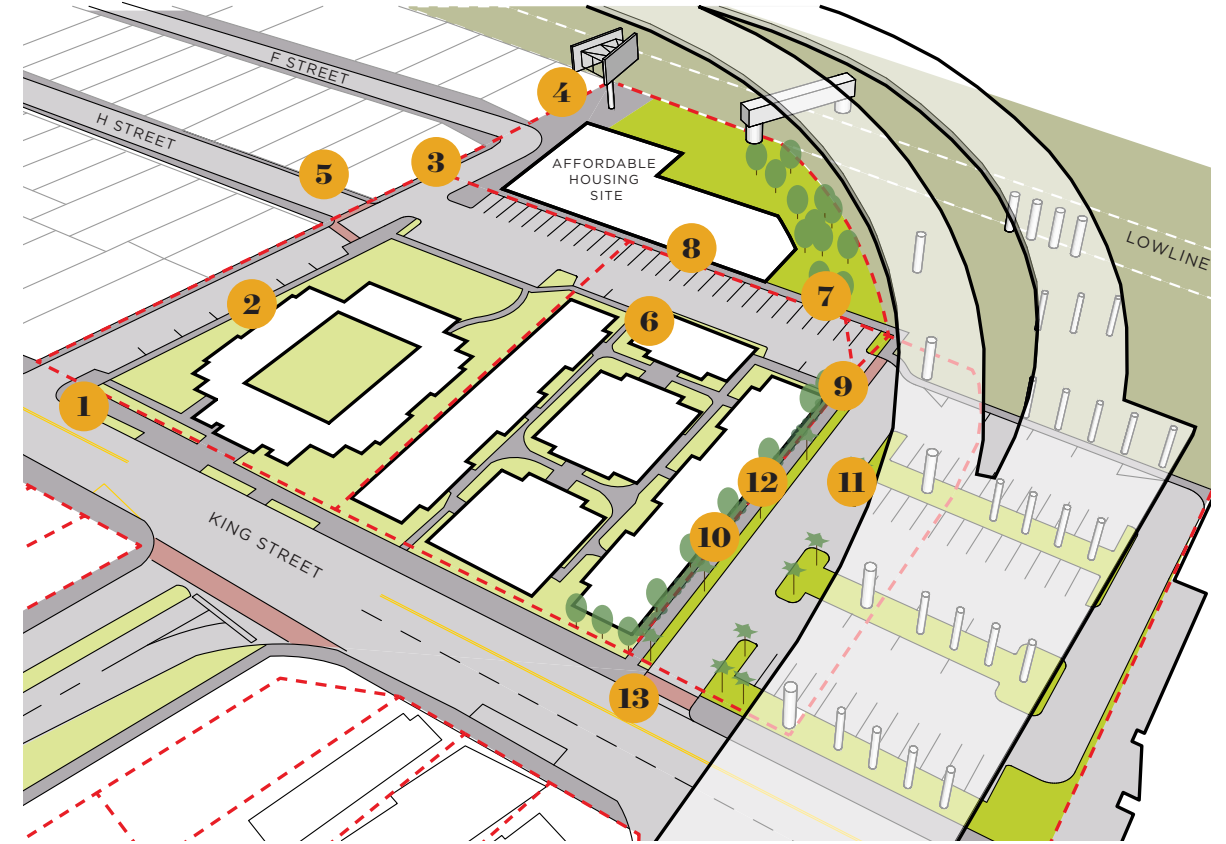


Parking in the footprint of the building is not desired by the City in order to activate the planned Lowcountry Lowline, reduce construction costs and achieve a higher unit count. The City has made agreements with the neighboring Charleston Housing Authority and South Carolina Department of Transportation to improve, expand and create shared but designated surface parking on their properties. The following phasing approach delineates the off-site improvements and parking arrangements needed to make all of this work. The City has allocated \$1.5 million to this project in order to achieve these improvements, which are beneficial for everyone involved.

PHASE 1

SCDOT to allow City to lease area below I-26 for the purposes of affordable housing (general lease agreement effort); review parking lot plans with City Stormwater Department and coordinate with Lowline improvements.

This will be governed by a master lease agreement between SCDOT and the City of Charleston.



PHASE 2

Make improvements to CHA property and some portion of SCDOT parcel 4600404034 to access affordable housing site.

CONVERT NORTH SIDE DRIVEWAY

1. Convert to at-grade; remove apron and adjust to meet grade.
2. Convert head-in parking spaces to parallel parking along south side.
3. Extend street-like driveway to Lowline housing parcel
4. Include pedestrian connection to Lowline and street connection to F Street below billboard.
5. Stub or connection to H Street.

EXPAND/IMPROVE PARKING AREA ON EAST EDGE OF PROPERTY

6. Convert spaces to parallel close to buildings.
7. Add row of head-in parking.*
8. Allocate space for sidewalk between two properties.*
9. Driveway stub to south (SCDOT) parking area.

REMOVE PARKING ALONG SOUTH BUILDING

10. Replace parking with vegetative buffer.
11. Allocate space for sidewalk connecting to Lowline
12. Include "No Parking" signage.
13. Temporary driveway alignment to existing apron onto King Street.

*Note: Some use of Lowline Housing parcel property may be needed to achieve a double row of head-in parking in this location, specifically in the parking expansion area.

PARKING PHASING APPROACH

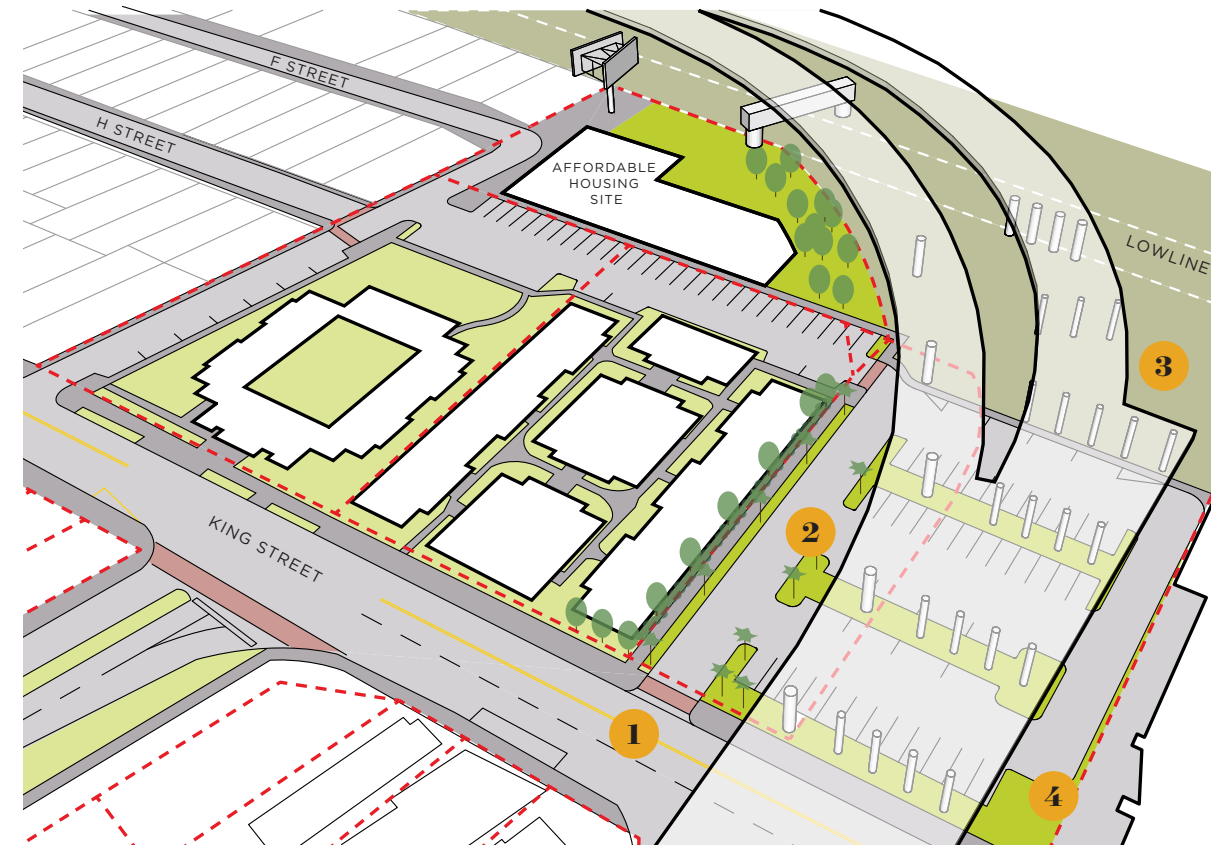


PHASE 3

CHA to grant access easements and lease spaces to City in improved areas to serve affordable housing site.

1. Access easement on north side of property
2. Agreement to connect streets
3. Lease specific spaces to City for affordable housing along east side of property (some of which will be created by the City as part of #1 above)
4. Remove parking and install a temporary vegetative buffer.

Note: SCDOT parking area (Phase 4) may be needed to shift some of CHA parking to south side of their complex depending on willingness of CHA to do so.



PHASE 4

Construct and allocate parking in SCDOT lease area below I-26, including SCDOT parcel 4600404034.

CONSTRUCT A PARKING AREA WITH PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO LOWLINE

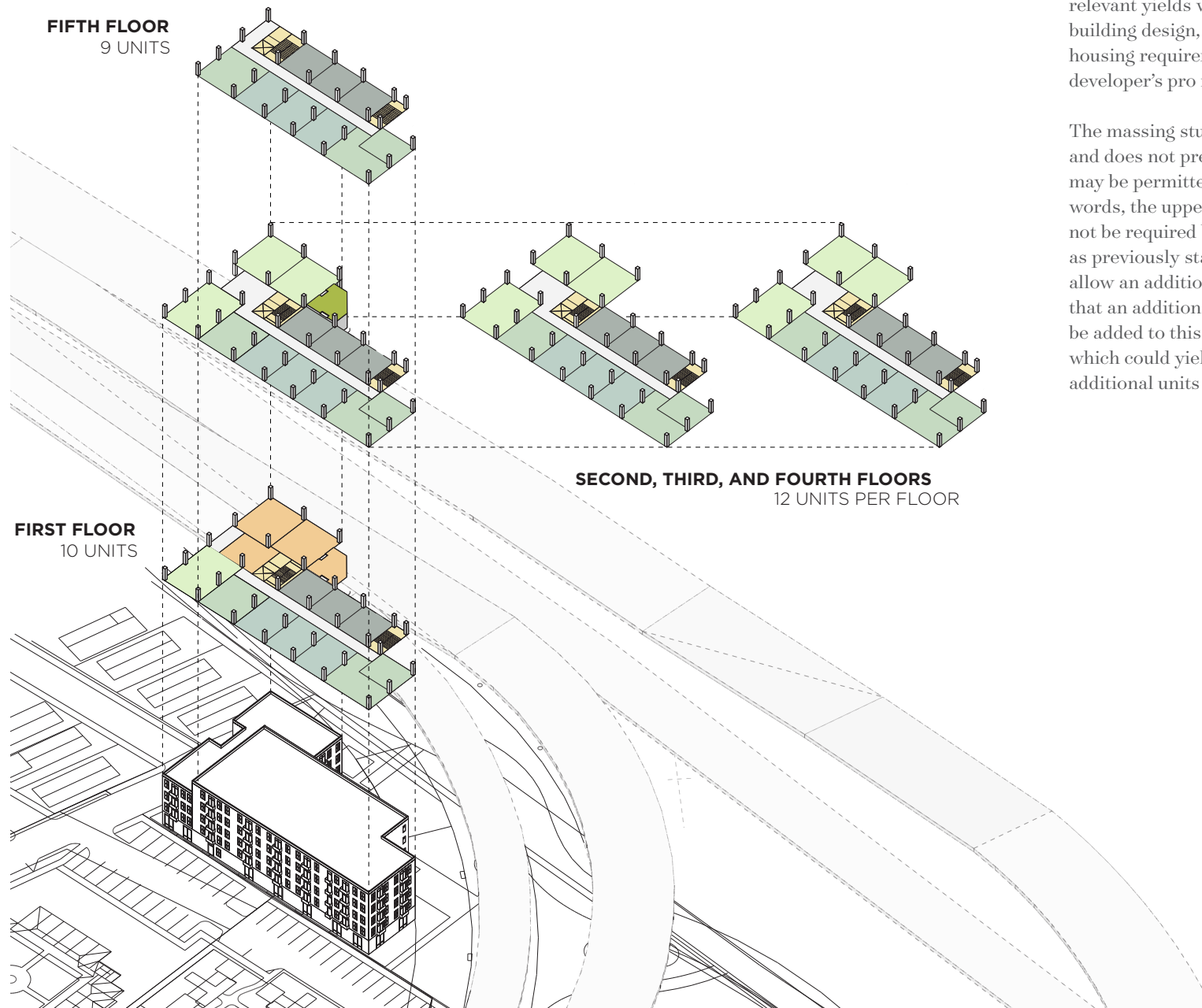
1. Realign primary driveway onto King Street.
2. Include landscaping and stormwater swales.
3. Use some of the Lowline to meet stormwater requirements, avoiding underground storage.
4. Consider second driveway access onto King Street.

PARKING ALLOCATION

Allocate remaining parking needed for lowline housing.
Allocate any parking needed or promised to CHA for use of their property. Any remaining parking will be for general public use via the Lowline.

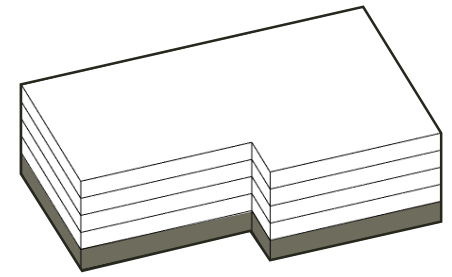
BUILDING MASSING STUDY

The Parcel is zoned: Mixed Use 1, Workforce Housing, MU-1/WH District. The MU-1/WH district is incentive based and is intended to permit high density residential uses with a mixture of housing opportunities, along with limited neighborhood nonresidential uses and services in urban areas of the city. The Old City Height district is 5, where 5 stories are allowed by right and the Board of Architectural Review may permit an additional story based on architectural merit and context. The building will need to be reviewed by both the Board of Architectural Review and the Mayor's Design Review Committee.

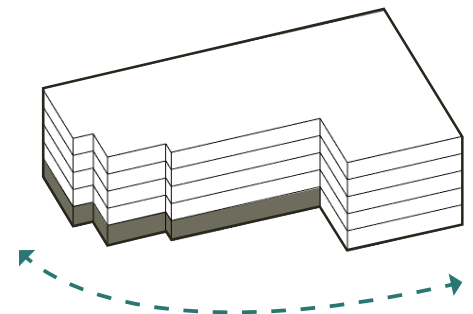


The massing study shows a 5-story building with an upper floor setback on the north side to create a scale transition to the neighboring single family residential area. With a unit mix of studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom units, including 10 on the ground floor, we estimate the building could yield approximately 55 units. (The actual unit mix, sizes and relevant yields will be driven detailed building design, state affordable housing requirements, and the developer's pro forma.)

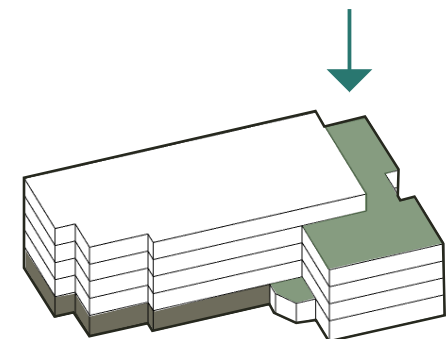
The massing study is conservative and does not predict volumes that may be permitted by BAR. In other words, the upper floor setback may not be required by the BAR, and, as previously stated, the BAR may allow an additional story. This means that an additional 1.25 stories could be added to this massing study, which could yield approximately 15 additional units (70 total).



Buildable area with ground floor amenities.



The 30-foot setback from I-26 decreases the size of the building.



Roof setback to reflect neighborhood context; roof terraces and community spaces added.

NORTH ELEVATION VIEW FROM F STREET

The building massing study as viewed from the existing ending of H Street. The new driveway from King Street may be extended to meet H Street, connecting the neighborhood to the future Lowcountry Lowline (no other opportunities exist in that residential area for such a connection).





VIEW FROM KING STREET TO LOWLINE

An access easement from Charleston Housing Authority will be up fitted to an access drive with on street parking. This drive will also connect neighboring H and F Streets. Adjacent sidewalks will serve as a direct connection to the Lowcountry Lowline.



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