

*City of Charleston*

DESIGN DIVISION

# REPORT 04

NEW KING ST SQUARE



# NEW KING ST SQUARE

October 2014

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## WELCOME

This report details general ideas and design concepts for a new public park located in the central part of the Charleston peninsula. These concepts represent initial thinking about this project and are intended to start a conversation about the expansion of public space downtown.

## CITY OF CHARLESTON

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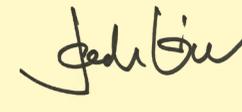
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Building the Public Realm

Over the past 37 years, Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. has undertaken a major expansion of the public realm in downtown Charleston. Among those projects is Waterfront Park, a public space that changed life in downtown Charleston for residents and visitors alike.

In that same spirit of expanding the public realm, we propose a new public square, located not on the waterfront but centrally within the city. This would be a fully public park, not belonging to any one group, but open to visitors and residents alike. At 1.8 acres, this square could be large enough to significantly improve quality of life for Charleston.

Located at the junction of King, Spring and Columbus streets, this square would serve Cannonborough/Elliottborough, the East Side, West Side and Radcliffborough. Designed properly, it will also serve to host special events periodically and offset the effects of high-density development in this area. This New King St Square has the potential to add tremendous value for all people in Charleston for a very long time to come.



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# A LEGACY OF GREAT PUBLIC SPACES

## 40 Years of building public life

From Waterfront Park to Charleston Place and the King Street streetscape, the City has undertaken a major campaign to expand our public realm.



Second Sunday on King Street.



Waterfront Park, completed in 1990.

# FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

## Nationally recognized events

These outstanding events, from Fashion Week to the weekly seasonal Farmer's Market, add life to our City but also add wear and tear to Marion Square. A new space could help distribute some of that high-traffic event use.



Events in Marion Square.

# THE PENINSULA'S NEW CENTER

## Moving on up

As redevelopment moves further up the peninsula, the Columbus/King/Spring intersection holds a key location. It ties together major east/west and north/south routes, but also occupies the near-center of the developed downtown.



## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

New mid-rise construction near this part of the peninsula is ongoing. With densities greater than traditional downtown Charleston, these developments would be balanced through the addition of a new public square.



# CASE STUDIES

## Similar squares across America and Europe

Squares of this size have a unique set of design requirements, and we have studied 5 public spaces across the US and Europe for their best qualities.

### MARKET SQUARE

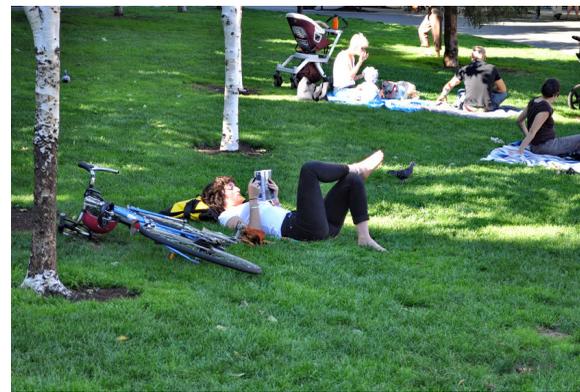
Pittsburgh, PA  
1.8 Acres

Redesigned in 2011, Market Square has revitalized this portion of downtown Pittsburgh with its outdoor seating, flush curbs and informal shade tree plantings.



### PLAZA REAL

Barcelona, Spain  
1.2 Acres



### JAMISON SQUARE

Portland, OR  
1.5 Acres

### BRYANT PARK

New York City  
6 Acres

With its street vendors, constant events and outdoor dining, Bryant Park is financially self-sustaining. We recommend adopting this model for the management of New King St Square.



### UNION SQUARE

San Francisco, CA  
2.6 Acres

As the heart of a shopping district, Union Square also accommodates a variety of special events and outdoor dining.



# A GREAT SQUARE

## Inside the Square

- 1 At the center, build a space at least 120' x 120'. This allows the space to be covered by one or two large event tents.
- 2 A grid of trees, at least 35' wide, allows for plenty of shade at the perimeter, but spaced at an interval appropriate for moving large trucks in and out of the park without damage.
- 3 A public green gives a softer surface for children and dogs.
- 4 A grand fountain, located at one side of the park, gives a focal point and brings users closer to the sound and cooling effects of water.
- 5 Outdoor dining, located throughout the square and served by nearby cafes, fills the park with passive users.
- 6 Kiosks for restaurants, vendors or public restrooms should be located within the square.

## Adjacent Development

- 7 Wherever possible, make adjacent streets easy to cross or pave them in a complementary material.
- 8 Future construction around the square should create an excellent street level experience, coordinating with the park design where possible and providing ground-level programming every 30'.
- 9 Redevelop adjacent sites so they face the park, instead of turning a back to the public space.





### REDEVELOPED RAIL

The existing, abandoned rail corridor should be rebuilt as public space. It may incorporate park elements or act as the hub for a future trolley system, but in either outcome it should be an addition to the great public realm of our city.

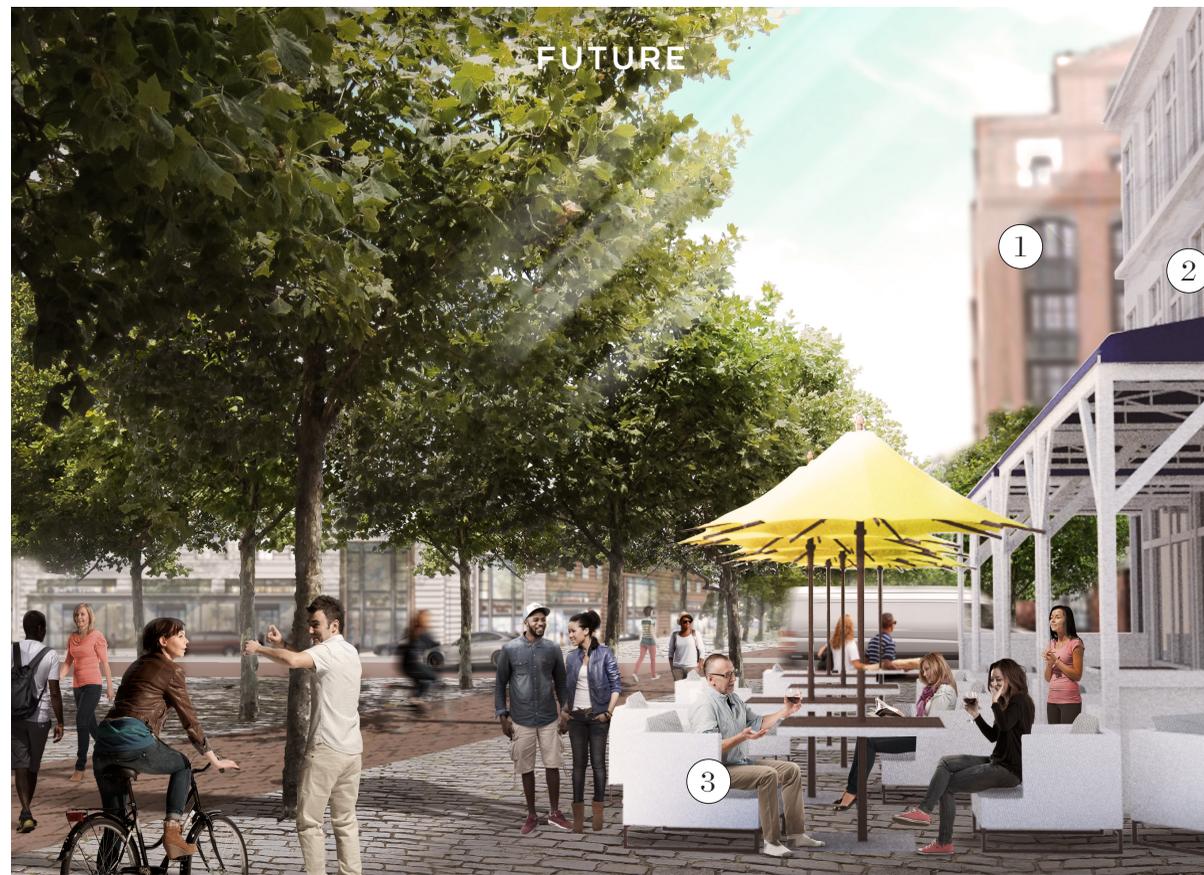
EXISTING



### GREAT EDGES

The “edge” of a public space - its perimeter bordered by buildings - should be a great place for people. We recommend that Columbus and King Streets be considered as places for outdoor dining, easy walking, and a new paving surface to slow cars.

EXISTING



### FUTURE

1 Courier Square phase one 2 New construction facing the square 3 Outdoor dining at park edge



### FUTURE

1 Large fountain near the edge. 2 Outdoor dining 3 Mid-rise, traditional architecture surrounding the square

## A SPACE FOR RELAXATION

The perimeter of this new park should be lined with shade trees and programmed with active uses and a variety of sitting options.

The open center provides expansive views to the city beyond and keeps the center open for active movement and play.



## A SPACE FOR EVENTS

The center of the space, paved across with a durable, beautiful material, should handle the heavy use of special events. These events often need large trucks and heavy equipment in addition to accommodating the foot traffic of thousands of people at once. Designed correctly, New King St Square can accommodate these events with ease.





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