

# **NRHA PARK PLACE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN**

**NOVEMBER 12-16, 1999 CHARRETTE WORKBOOK**



**BAY AREA ECONOMICS  
RHODESIDE & HARWELL, INCORPORATED  
RUMMEL, KLEPPER & KAHL**

# NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Park Place community is strategically located in the City of Norfolk, two miles from downtown, minutes from both Old Dominion University and the naval installations, and adjacent to the Norfolk Zoo. In spite of its prime location, however, "the overall impression of Park Place today is one of a once sound middle-class neighborhood where the effects of historical inner city social and economic transitions, are evident" (from the *Park Place Neighborhood Conservation Project RFP*). Since the late 1960s, residents, business owners, city officials, and the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) have worked together to reverse the deterioration of the Park Place community. More recently, the NRHA has been focusing its revitalization efforts on Park Place in sections, with the central portion addressed first, eastern Park Place addressed next, and, currently, the southeastern section being addressed in this report. The boundaries of the present effort encompass Colonial Avenue on the west, Granby/Church Streets on the east, 34<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, and 26<sup>th</sup> Street on the south.

The goals for the current Park Place Plan are as follows:

- To re-establish Park Place as a stable, mixed income, family oriented community of homeowners.
- To provide an understanding of existing and future transportation needs of the boundary arterials in order to develop strategies for the neighborhood redevelopment.
- To provide an opportunity for commercial development on the neighborhood's eastern boundary in order to provide tax base for the City and jobs for area residents.

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### **B. THE CHARRETTE PROCESS**

In general, the Community Charrette process provides an opportunity for close, intense, and creative involvement of all interested parties in the development of a plan that is responsive to community needs and concerns. The process used in developing the Park Place Plan involved a four day workshop, which was programmed to include a scoping session to identify community concerns and visions, multiple workshop sessions, and a final presentation of the Plan. The four day workshop encompassed a weekend to maximize the ability of community residents to participate in as many of the sessions as possible.

The announcement for the Charrette nicely summarized the goal of these sessions:

*Help update the master plan for the revitalization of Park Place at a four-day workshop (or charrette) that will focus on the area between Colonial Avenue and Granby/Church Street, and 34<sup>th</sup> Street and 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Appropriate land uses, transportation linkages, economic development opportunities and neighborhood beautification will be discussed. Your participation will help define and plan important elements of the community such as residential, commercial and open spaces, and street and landscape design.*

### **C. PARK PLACE CHARRETTE OVERVIEW**

The Charrette began on Friday evening, November 12, 1999, with approximately 80 people in attendance. The first event was intended to introduce both the project and consultant team to the community. In addition, the team briefly described its understanding of current physical conditions (i.e., land use, vacancies, open space, traffic, landscape, community assets, etc.) and those community members present were asked to expand upon this information. Specifically, residents were asked to describe their concerns about the community, the problems that they see occurring within the community, and their visions for its future.



Residents offering their concerns and suggestions to the consultant team during one of the charrette workshop sessions.

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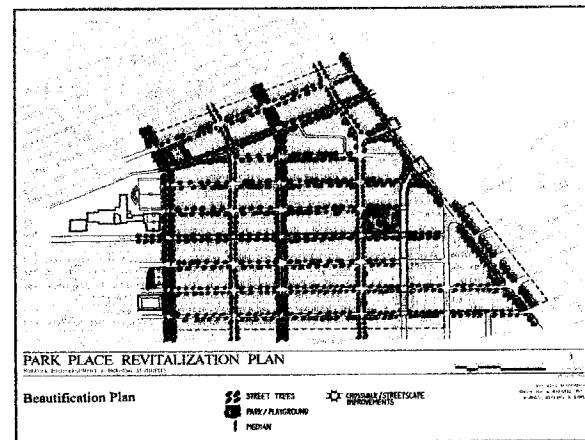
The community was asked to return on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, to work with the consultants from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM to more fully develop a strategy for action. Throughout the day, a total of 50 people attended this session, with many people remaining for the entire day. The morning session began by refining the lists of community concerns stated the prior evening. In addition, participants were asked to suggest possible ways to address each concern—the ideas presented, for both physical changes and non-physical programs, were listed and reviewed. These then served as the basis for developing several alternative approaches to addressing the concerns expressed by the participants.

While the session on Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, also began at 9:00 AM, the morning was spent in the community in order to field verify some of the recommendations that had been developed the previous day. In the early afternoon, the group reconvened at the Multi-Service Center to refine the earlier ideas, and to develop a preliminary preferred alternative. This alternative was reviewed with those community representatives present, and with several members of the NRHA staff at the end of the day.

Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, was devoted to finalizing the plan, and developing graphic materials for the evening presentation. The final presentation began at 6:30 PM, with approximately 70 people attending. The plans presented as a result of the four-day process included:

- The Land Use Plan;
- The Circulation Plan;
- The Open Space/Recreation Plan;
- The Beautification Plan; and
- The Community Plan.

These will be discussed in detail later in this report. The Plans were enthusiastically received by those present, and the general feeling was that the Charrette process had been a resounding success.



Charrette participants helping to develop a series of plans for the improvement of Park Place, such as the Beautification Plan (below).

## CHAPTER TWO: CHARRETTE VISIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS

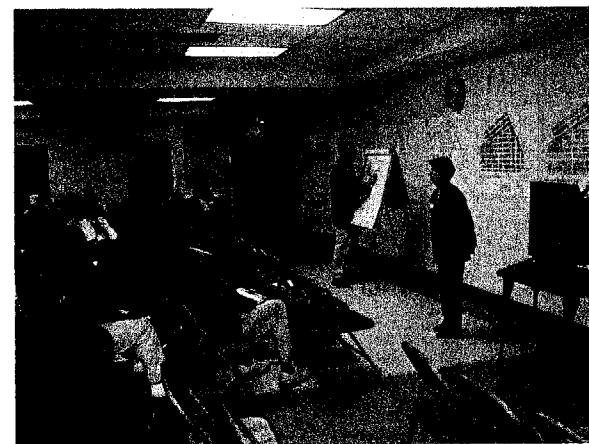
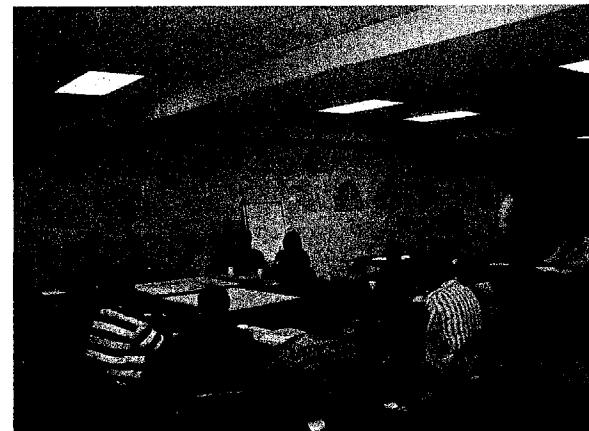
At the beginning of the charrette process, on Friday evening, participants were asked to describe several aspects of the Park Place community: its assets and visions for the future.

In addition, those attending the Saturday morning session worked with the consultant team to develop a list of suggested physical and non-physical actions to strengthen the community's assets, address identified issues, and achieve the stated visions for the future of Park Place. The items discussed at both the Friday evening and Saturday morning sessions are summarized below.

### A. COMMUNITY ASSETS

Park Place has a number of strong and significant assets upon which to develop a revitalization plan. Those interviewed prior to the Charrette, and the Charrette participants, felt that this was clearly the case. The major assets identified by members of the community are as follows:

- **Location.** Park Place is located close to downtown Norfolk, Old Dominion University and the Naval Base, and is well-positioned along major north-south and east-west transportation routes.
- **Housing stock.** The existing stock of single-family housing and historic multi-family structures is architecturally appealing and appropriate for attracting new homeowners to the neighborhood.
- **Street grid.** The neighborhood is laid out on a traditional street grid that promotes pedestrian activity and a sense of community.
- **Church presence.** There are several churches in the neighborhood, which help to build community ties. Some have large, attractive buildings that add to the community's character.
- **Multi-Service Center.** The Multi-Service Center provides residents with access to many important services, including healthcare and job training.
- **Community groups.** The neighborhood has a strong tradition of community pride and activism.



Residents working with the consultant team during the two Saturday charrette sessions.

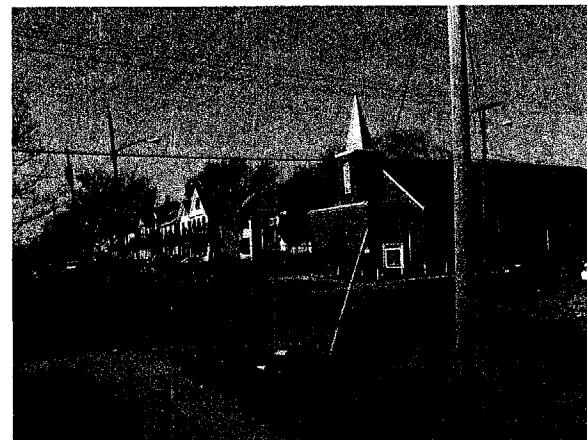
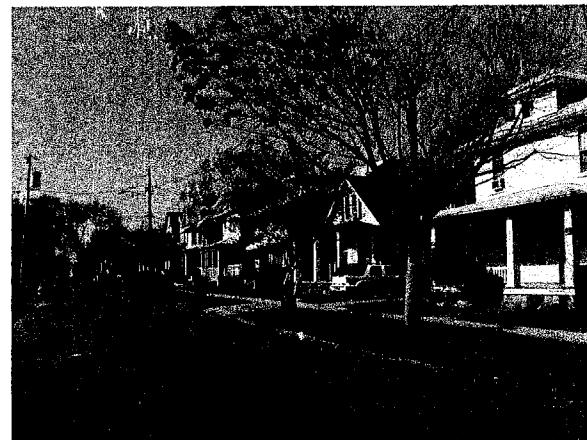
with civic groups already in place to advocate for change and to help implement it.

- **Community roots.** Park Place has a significant number of residents who have lived in the community for over 25 years, and who care about the community and its future. In addition, several individuals and families who left the community have expressed interest in purchasing homes and moving back.
- **Zoo.** Neighborhood residents and businesses benefit from proximity to the open spaces provided by the Zoo and Lafayette Park.
- **Progress so far.** Significant revitalization work has already been completed in Park Place, providing momentum and clear signs of what is possible.

### B. COMMUNITY VISIONS

Along with a strong sense of pride in their neighborhood, residents and merchants have a clear sense of what they want Park Place to become over the next decade. The following seven characteristics define this vision of Park Place's future.

- **A Diverse Community.** Park Place will be a community with a mix of residents at all economic levels and from various cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. The architecture of the neighborhood should also reflect the influence that diversity has had in the community throughout its history.
- **A Cohesive Community.** Park Place will be home to individuals of all ages, with residents who are respectful of one another. A vision for the future must include strategies for addressing needs of the community's youth, its families, its elderly, and its single residents.
- **A Safe Community.** Park Place will be free from crime. People will feel safe on the Park Place streets both during the day and at night. The speed and volume of traffic through the neighbor-



Images showing the appealing mixture of houses, as well as churches, along the streets of Park Place.

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hood will not endanger either pedestrians or drivers.

- **A Thriving Community.** Park Place will have an active housing market with homes available at affordable prices. A strong business community will serve the needs of Park Place residents and the surrounding area.
- **An Attractive Community.** Park Place will have beautifully landscaped streets, lined with well-built homes—both old and new—on properties well-maintained by their owners.
- **A Community Supported by Strong City Services.** The City will help implement the goals stated above through active infrastructure renovation and upgrade as needed, as well as through vigorous code enforcement and increased police presence.
- **A Community with Abundant Recreation Opportunities.** Park Place will be a community with numerous parks and open spaces, where planned recreational programs will meet the needs of residents both young and old.

### C. SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Those Charrette participants attending the Saturday morning session were asked to think about possible actions to address some of the revitalization needs in the Park Place community. Participants came up with a substantial list of both physical and non-physical actions to improve the quality of life for residents of Park Place. These suggestions are described below for each of the issues addressed:

- **Crime/Safety.** A community policing program should be implemented that includes an enhanced neighborhood watch and an increased police presence (bicycle and walking patrols, as well as more frequent cruisers patrols). Crossing guards should be placed around schools to protect children from traffic (other traffic suggestions are described below).

In terms of physical responses, drug-related crime should be driven from the neighborhood by



*Citizens voice their concerns, as well as their visions, for the future of Park Place.*

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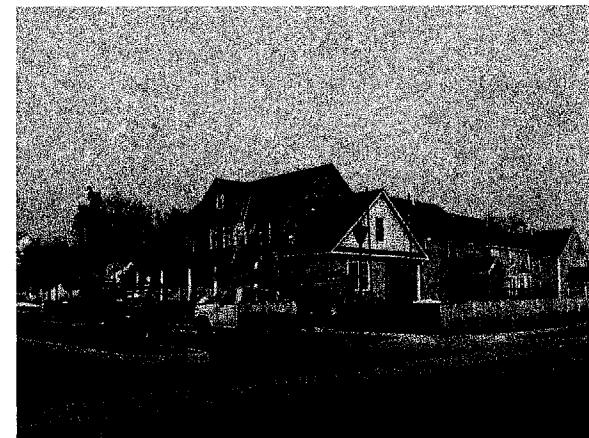
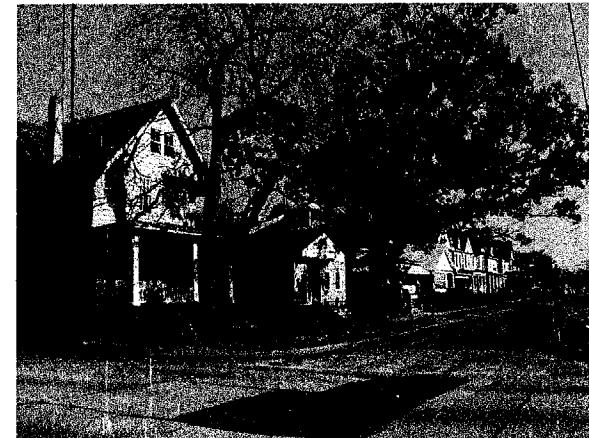
rehabilitating or demolishing vacant buildings, minimizing the presence of multiunit structures, and encouraging more owner-occupied housing. In addition, there should be a substantial increase in street lighting. Finally, to stay on top of community crime, one participant felt that crime data (GIS mapping) should be made available for citizen input and use.

- **Housing.** An effort should be made to increase home ownership in Park Place and to raise the value of the neighborhood's housing stock. In doing this, NRHA should minimize demolition, while emphasizing rehabilitation and enforcing property-owner compliance with City codes. Park Place should strive to provide a mix of housing prices and rents and a mix of renters and homeowners. Affordable housing should be an important component of this effort.

NRHA should increase the amount of funding for its rehabilitation programs and should encourage greater use of its programs by actively soliciting homeowners. Programs could also provide for less than total rehabilitation of properties, to allow owners to beautify their homes by making exterior improvements or by making necessary repairs (e.g., a new roof) without taking on high levels of debt. Grant programs could be designed to help elderly homeowners to stay in their homes.

Tax abatements available for home improvements should be marketed. Loans or grants to make homes more energy efficient should be considered. Homeowners should also be able to access funds for landscaping (with design assistance). Civic organizations should consider developing a program that allows for cooperative purchase of building materials for rehabilitation, and perhaps a tool lending library.

- **Neighborhood Appearance.** The City must take steps to improve its enforcement of city codes regarding building upkeep and trash disposal as a first step toward improving the appearance of the Park Place neighborhood. Landlords, both present and absentee, must be held accountable for the condition of their properties, whether they own buildings or vacant lots. The quality of regular trash collection service by the City in Park Place must also be improved, as should the



*Suggested actions include the rehabilitation of existing homes as well as the continued construction of new homes.*

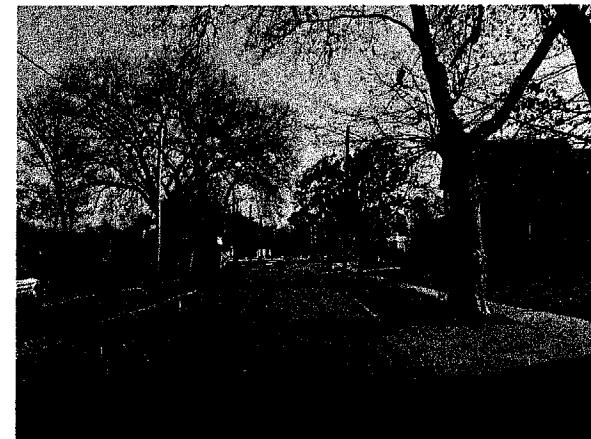
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timely response by the City to calls for bulk trash pick-ups.

Streetscape renovations should also be implemented to improve the overall appearance of the community. This would include additional landscaping (including trees, shrubs, and other plants) along streets and at "gateway" entrances to the area; upgraded lighting, paving and curbs; and the elimination of utility poles where possible. Finally, participants wanted to see the issue of parking addressed as well. This includes strategies for reducing on-street parking and parking in the front yard areas of homes. Parking should be encouraged in alleys and driveways. In addition, adequate off-street parking should be required for all churches with significantly-sized congregations.

- **Commercial Areas.** The business community in Park Place should be provided loans to improve both the exteriors and the interiors of their buildings. Technical assistance with business plans, marketing, and merchandising will also help the existing businesses to better serve the community. New retail tenants that complement the existing shops should be recruited to the neighborhood. Retail that serves both the community and those from adjoining area should be encouraged. Participants mentioned the following types of commercial uses: high quality food store, post office, entertainment facilities (movies, restaurants), Park Place museum and cultural center, laundromat, gymnasium, drug store, clothing stores.
- **Community Facilities.** Neighborhood youth should be involved in the community planning process to determine which after-school and evening youth programs are most appropriate. Regardless of which new programs are offered the City should provide additional staff for activities at the Multipurpose Center. Similarly, an effort should be made to increase staffing for the Boys & Girls Club to make more activities available. Finally, participants mentioned the need for additional space at the Multi-Service Center for program expansion, especially for the library and health clinic.

An early childhood center, as well as additional facilities for child care and after school care, should be developed specifically for younger children, while teenagers and pre-teens need additional

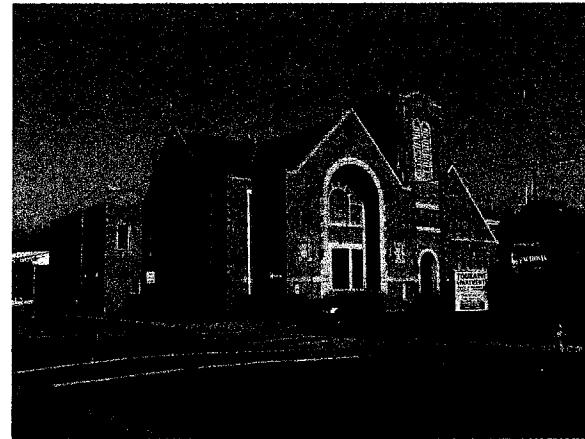


*Streetscape improvements should build upon the existing fabric of trees and sidewalks.*

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programs specifically for them. Neighborhood churches might partner with the City to establish and operate the early childhood center. Suggested youth facilities include additional basketball courts, a swimming pool, and a health club; suggested programs involve karate classes, and a recording studio. Programs such as Youthbuild would play a positive role by directly involving neighborhood youth in the rehabilitation of housing and with landscaping.

- **Seniors.** The Multi-Service Center and area churches should serve as neighborhood resources for providing services to the elderly community in Park Place. These facilities can also host programs and activities directly targeted to seniors. Participants also suggested the provision of senior citizen housing and additional open space areas for outdoor seating and enjoying the sun.
- **Parks and Open Spaces.** Charrette participants were quite vocal about the need for additional park and open space areas in Park Place. They felt such facilities were needed to serve a wide range of residents, from young children, to teens, to the elderly. In addition, they felt that these facilities could enhance the sense of community for the area. At first, participants suggested a series of small, "pocket" parks throughout Park Place. However, once they had considered issues such as use and maintenance, it was felt that one or two larger parks would probably serve as greater long-term assets to the community.
- **Traffic, Circulation, and Transit.** The impact of traffic through the community was a major concern both in terms of safety and community cohesion. Participants suggested that "traffic calming" designs be implemented to slow automobile speed, and that designs also be considered that will ensure that all of the streets throughout Park Place are at a neighborhood scale. The streets that were specifically mentioned for consideration were Llewellyn, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets. Several confusing intersections, particularly at the intersection of DeBree and 32<sup>nd</sup>/33<sup>rd</sup> Streets, at 27<sup>th</sup> and Colonial, and at 27<sup>th</sup> and Omohundro, also need simplification in order to increase safety at these locations.

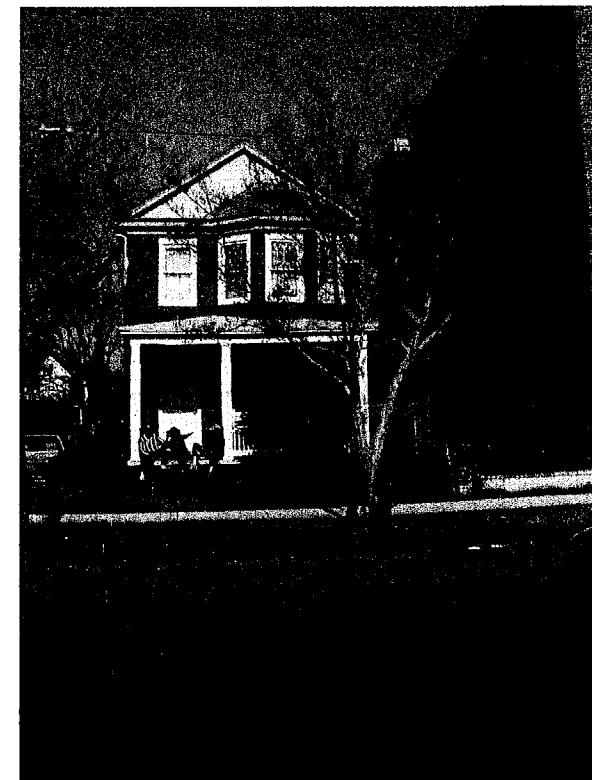


Residents underscored the role that churches should play in the revitalization of Park Place.

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Clearly marked crosswalks need to be provided at all key intersections, particularly around the school and Multi-Service Center. Finally, the City needs to consider the demand for additional bus service in the area at night to enable residents who work in the evenings to have convenient, safe transit access.

- **Infrastructure.** The need to improve the utility infrastructure within Park Place was noted, with particular regard to flooding concerns. Participants included 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> and Omohundro Streets, 30<sup>th</sup> and Llewellyn Streets, 30<sup>th</sup> and DeBree, and 28<sup>th</sup> and Debree as areas that have flooded in the past.
- **Sense of Community.** Residents of Park Place expressed the desire to be kept very well informed on community development activities and plans. Community-based organizations should be involved in all aspects of development. Any efforts to improve the housing stock in Park Place should take care to maintain a multicultural and diverse community, with residents of all income levels and ages. Activities should also be designed to encourage the involvement of all residents.
- **Resident Economic Advancement.** Norfolk Works and the Multi-Service Center should actively market their services and programs to all neighborhood residents (homeowners and renters, youth and elderly) through the schools and other neighborhood groups and institutions. Participation should be encouraged for programs that provide residents with job readiness training, job skills training, and job placement services. To help parents and other caregivers to be able to work, childcare should be provided within the neighborhood—including during late work shifts. Transportation to and from late shift jobs should also be provided, either by public buses or through some other program. To better prepare Park Place residents to take part in the new economy, schools, community centers and new homes should be fully wired for computers and Internet access.
- **Faith-based Institution Partnerships.** Churches in Park Place are an ideal resource to the community for providing such services as childcare, youth programs, senior activities, and commu-



*Sense of community is one of the most important aspects of life in the Park Place neighborhood.*

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nity beautification. Community members and the City should seek out relationships with faith-based institutions interested in playing this role.

These suggested actions served as the basis for the development of the community revitalization plan alternatives, as well as the final community plan, that were produced during the remainder of the Charette.

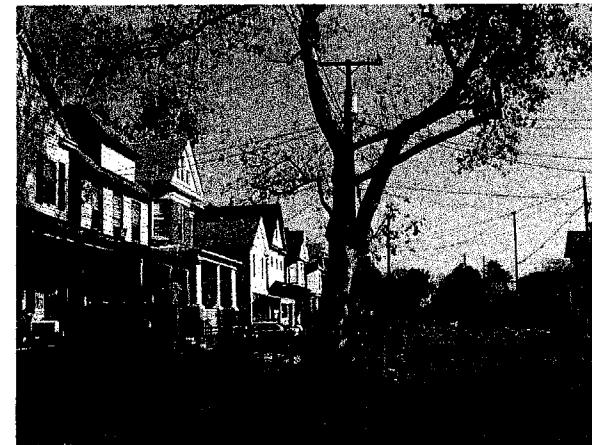
## CHAPTER THREE: EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

Park Place is a neighborhood of great variety. It is an area that has a wide range of housing types, building conditions, lot conditions, open spaces, and community facilities, all of which contribute to make Park Place a vibrant and changing community. However, the wide variety of existing conditions at Park Place also make it a neighborhood that could benefit from greater stability, investment, and improvement in the future.

### A. URBAN DESIGN CONTEXT

Park Place is a neighborhood that has many great qualities—unique qualities—that give the area its special sense of community, individual identity, and visual appeal. These unique attributes are ones that can be built upon in the future, and can serve as the backbone for the Park Place Revitalization Plan. The most outstanding attributes of Park Place include the following:

- **Overlapping Grid Pattern of Streets.** The Park Place study area is actually made up of two intersecting street grids, one between 26<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Streets, and the other between Lamberts Point Road and 35<sup>th</sup> Streets. The result of having two intersecting street grids is that along with having traditional square or rectangular blocks, the area where the two grids intersect, between 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Streets, has many interesting, non-traditional road angles and triangular blocks. While these irregular blocks pose a challenge to planning, they create an area that is visually appealing and unique to Park Place. On a larger scale, the overall grid pattern of the streets in Park Place creates a walkable environment, on a very human scale, that helps make the neighborhood the tight-knit community that it is.
- **Pattern of Existing Residential Structures.** The houses along the streets of Park Place have a relatively uniform setback from the road, which helps create a sense of consistency and visual calm that is necessary in urban neighborhoods.
- **Community Facilities as Anchors.** Community facilities such as Lafayette Park, and the Park



Top: Pattern of existing homes.

Bottom: Sunday charrette session.

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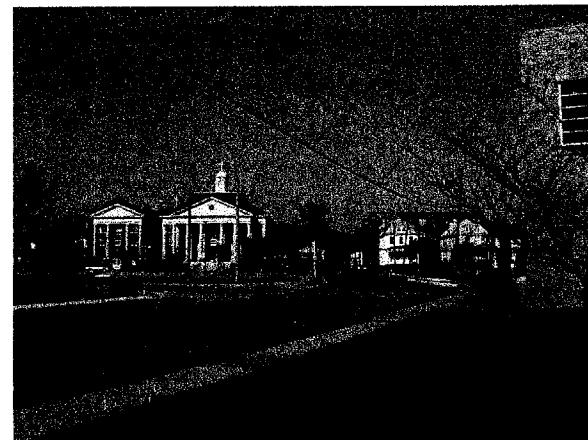
Place Multi-Service Center help to anchor the neighborhood and define its boundaries.

- **Neighborhood Scale Open Spaces.** Open areas such as Munson Park and the playing fields at the Multi-Service Center provide much needed space for casual play and organized sports. These spaces are within walking distance of many, but not all, areas of the neighborhood.
- **Important Architectural Features.** Architectural features such as houses, church steeples, and public entrances (to churches and other buildings) provide important focal points in the neighborhood.
- **Hierarchy of Streets.** There is a mixture of street types in the study area, with most streets lightly to moderately traveled, and others (such as Church Street, Granby Street, and Colonial Avenue) more heavily traveled. This hierarchy of streets helps to keep much of the heavy traffic out of the residential areas of Park Place.

## B. TRAFFIC, CIRCULATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### I. Issues to be Addressed

- **26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets.** Currently, 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Street are the east-west thoroughfares connecting Hampton Boulevard and Tidewater Drive. These streets are both one-way, three-lane principal arterial roadways that are predominantly residential. 26<sup>th</sup> Street is one-way eastbound and 27<sup>th</sup> Street is one-way westbound. During the morning and evening peak hours all three-lanes are considered to be through lanes, but during off-peak hours, one lane is designated for on-street parking. Within the Park Place study area, the signalized intersections along 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets are at Monticello Avenue, Granby Street, Llewellyn Avenue, DeBree Avenue, and Colonial Avenue. Although the speed limit is 25 miles per hour, the residents present at the charrettes reported that many motorists speed along these streets, endangering the residents who live there.

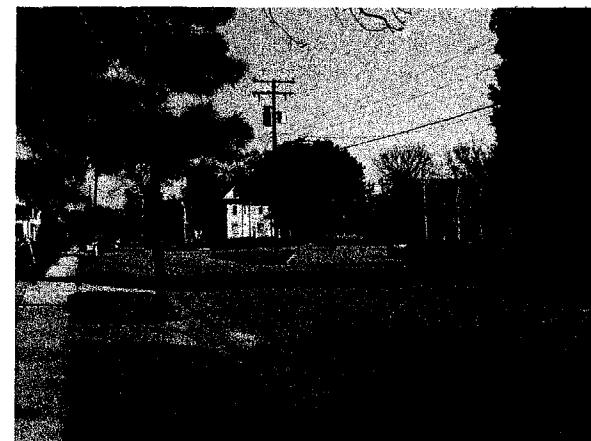


Architectural features such as church steeples, public buildings, and housing details are important to the visual character of Park Place.

- **North-South Speeding through Neighborhood.** Speeding through the Park Place neighborhood was of great concern to the residents who attended the charrettes. Of particular concern were the vehicles speeding on Colonial Avenue, DeBree Avenue, Llewellyn Avenue and Omohundro Avenue.
- **Safety along Colonial, DeBree, Llewellyn, Omohundro and Granby.** Since speeding through the Park Place neighborhood was such a great concern, residents feel uncomfortable and unsafe walking or allowing their children to cross these north-south streets.
- **Trucks.** Several of the residents who attended the charrettes who live on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets, complained about the truck traffic noise and speed along their streets. Many trucks travel the streets at night and the homes vibrate as they drive by.
- **Skewed Intersections.** The residents present at the charrettes expressed concern about the intersections where the two different City street grids meet, causing accidents and near-collisions due to inadequate sight lines and speed in vehicles. The intersections of concern are at 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and DeBree Avenue, 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Llewellyn Avenue, and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Omohundro Avenue. The existing intersections are curved, so the angles are sharp for motorists and visibility is minimal.
- **Flooding and Other Utility Issues.** The residents who attended the charrettes expressed concern regarding flooding problems at certain intersections. Some of the flooding areas are along 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Street between Llewellyn Avenue and Omohundro Avenue, along 30<sup>th</sup> Street between DeBree Avenue and Llewellyn Avenue and at the intersection of 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Llewellyn Avenue. Interest was expressed in moving the overhead utilities underground.

## 2. Schematic Traffic Analysis

To conduct a traffic analysis of the Park Place study area, a traffic model in SYNCHRO was obtained from the City of Norfolk Division of Transportation. RK&K did morning and evening peak hour traffic



*Overlapping street grids create visually interesting, but dangerous, intersections along 33rd Street.*

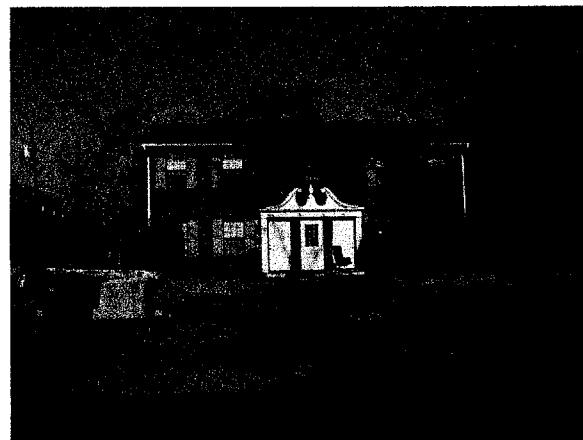
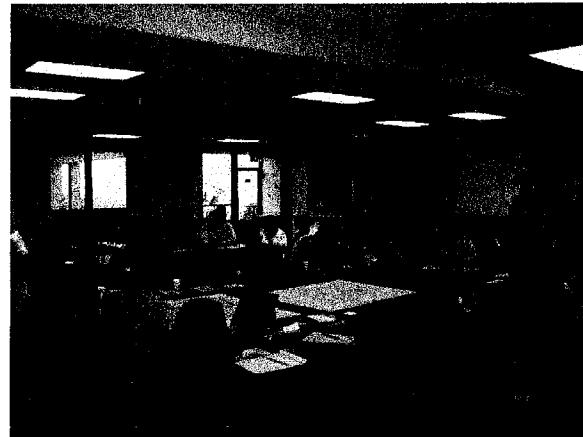
counts at key intersections to verify the City of Norfolk's model. These key intersections were at 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Colley Avenue during morning peak, 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Colley Avenue during evening peak, 35<sup>th</sup> Street and Colley Avenue during morning and evening peak, 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Monticello Avenue during morning peak, 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Monticello Avenue during evening peak, and 35<sup>th</sup> Street and Granby Street during morning and evening peak. The Colley Avenue counts were conducted on Tuesday, November 9, 1999, and the Monticello Avenue and Granby Street counts were on Wednesday, November 10, 1999. The morning peak hours were from 6 am to 9 am, while the evening peak hours were from 4 pm to 7 pm.

After comparing the City of Norfolk Division of Transportation's traffic counts with RK&K's counts, it was determined that due to their similarity, the City counts could be used to conduct the schematic traffic analyses for Park Place. The recent VDOT Church Street improvements have been incorporated into the SYNCHRO traffic model.

### C. HOUSING

As a residential neighborhood, maintaining the quality of Park Place's housing stock was a major issue for community members. Several specific housing-related concerns were raised during the charrette. These issues are:

- **Mix of housing.** It is important to maintain a mix of housing that serves the needs of both renters and owners, large families and single occupants.
- **Rooming houses.** Many single-family homes have been "chopped up" and are illegally run as rooming houses. Absentee landlords and transient tenants result in the properties becoming rundown.
- **Multi-family structures.** The higher density of multi-family structures built in the 1970s and



*Charrette participants expressed strong concerns about multi-family housing structures and their effect on the neighborhood.*

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

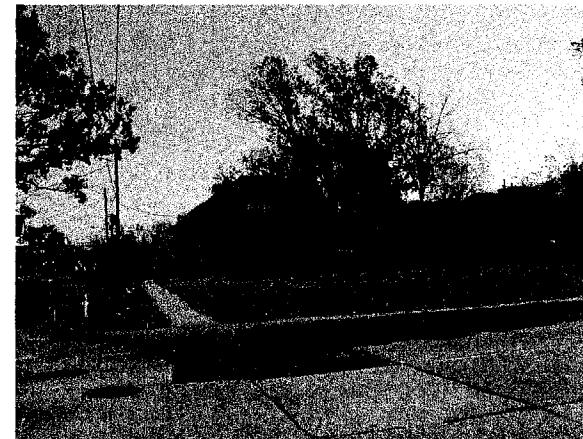
1980s, their poor design, and poor tenant screening by landlords promote crime and blight in the neighborhood.

- **Vacant dwellings.** Many structures are vacant and boarded up by their owners. This leads to deteriorated buildings and potential havens for crime.
- **Vacant land.** Several lots—both publicly-owned and privately-owned—remain vacant, resulting in overgrown lots often used for loitering and criminal activity.
- **Preservation of existing housing stock.** Structures reflecting the old style of construction should be preserved whenever possible.
- **Elimination of havens for criminal activity.** Park Place revitalization needs to focus on reducing crime, much of which is taking place in deteriorating and vacant housing structures and on vacant land.

### D. RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND STREETSCAPE

Park Place is fortunate to have several existing recreation/open space facilities located either in the study area or adjacent to it. These facilities include Lafayette Park, The Norfolk Zoo, Munson Park, the Boys and Girls Club, Monroe Elementary, and the Park Place Multi-Service Center. However, the charrette made it evidently clear that additional open spaces and recreational facilities are needed in Park Place for both youths and adults.

The same holds true for streetscape elements in Park Place. While many of the neighborhood streets have sidewalks, street trees, sidewalks, and lights, in general these elements need to be improved. In the case of some of the neighborhood streets, these elements do not exist at all and need to be installed for the first time.



*There are many empty lots in Park Place that represent excellent opportunities for infill housing.*

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

Below is a summary of recreation/open space and streetscape elements that need to be addressed:

- **Existing Park Space.** During the charrette, it became clear that while Lafayette Park is a great resource to have nearby, the heavy traffic on Church Street prevented many residents from using it. Residents agreed that a centrally located park, or several small pocket parks scattered throughout the neighborhood, should be an integral part of the Revitalization Plan.
- **Need for New Recreation Space.** As well as the need for additional park space, residents agreed that more recreation facilities are needed in the study area, including basketball courts, football fields, baseball fields, and an indoor swimming pool.
- **Beautification.** Charrette participants agreed that one of their favorite things about Park Place is the trees. However, while there are many trees in the neighborhood, most of them are located in backyards and very few are on the street. There is a definite need for more street trees, shrubs, and plantings throughout the study area, which can be located in parks, open spaces, along the streets, and in roadway medians.
- **Lighting.** There is a definite need for more adequate lighting on all streets in Park Place, to help increase safety and to add to the traditional neighborhood appearance of the streetscape.
- **Crosswalks.** While there are crosswalks located at some important intersections, there is a need for more in the neighborhood, particularly in the areas surrounding Monroe Elementary School and along Church Street in the area of Lafayette Park and the Zoo.

### E. COMMERCIAL AREAS

Community members, though focused on retaining the residential feel of Park Place, recognize the importance of having appropriate commercial development nearby. In discussing the commercially-zoned section of the study area, residents had concerns about the way in which the area would be



Potential park space at 30th Street and Omohundro Avenue.

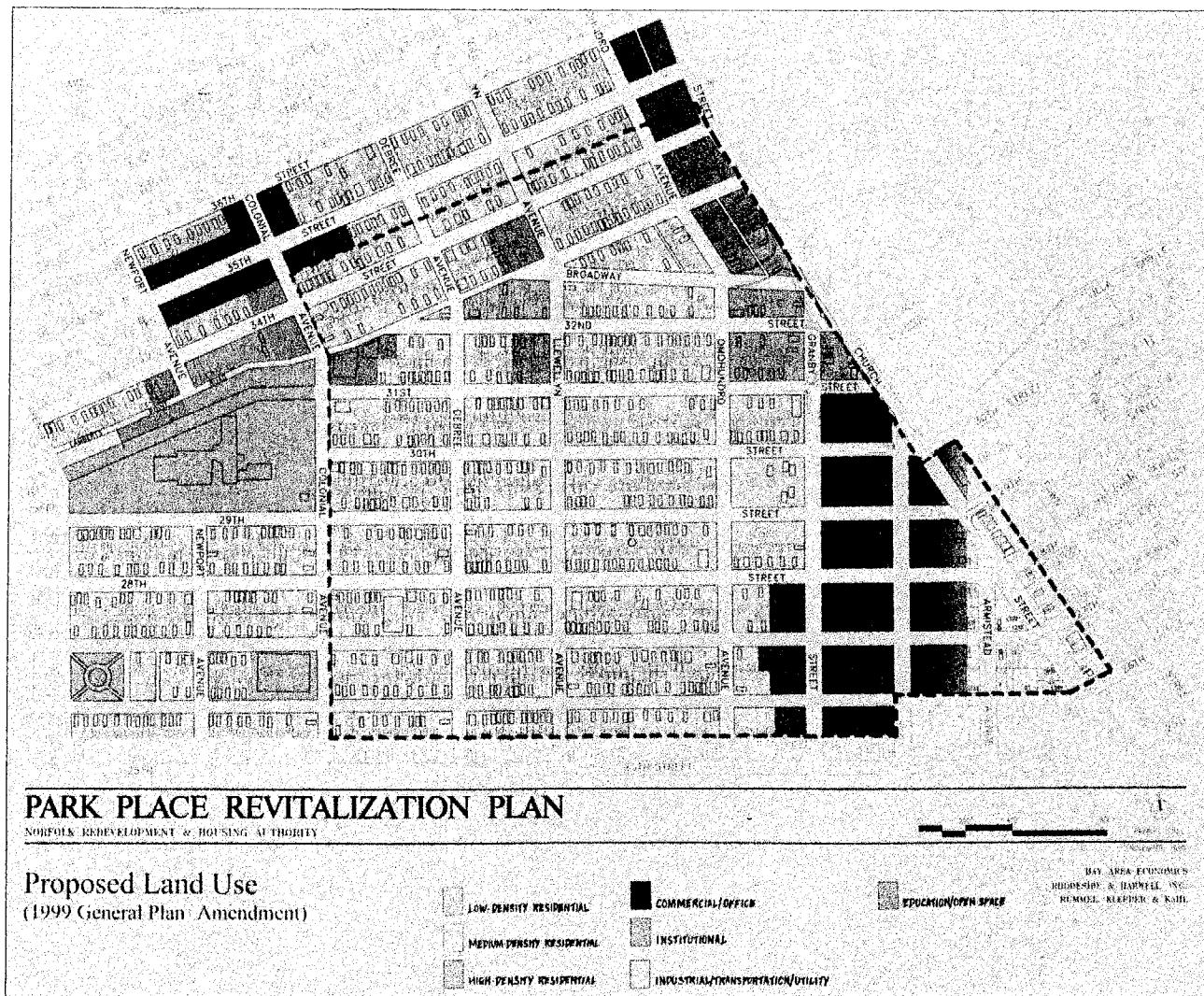
developed. In particular, participants in the charrette raised the following issues.

- **Boundaries between residential and commercial/industrial.** There should be a clear distinction between residential and commercial areas to maintain the calm, safe, residential feel of the neighborhood. Inappropriate residential uses should be removed from the commercial area.
- **Neighborhood-serving retail/institutional.** Retail, institutional, and other business uses in the commercial area bounded by Granby, Church, and 26th Streets should directly benefit residents of Park Place.
- **Design and zoning.** Because the Granby/Church commercial area borders directly on a residential area, the use, design, and scale of the commercial and institutional buildings should not detract from the neighborhood.
- **Gateway image.** Church Street and the Granby/Church commercial area will also serve as a gateway to Park Place, so the appearance of the commercial area and a smooth transition to residential uses are very important.
- **Job creation.** Commercial uses in the Granby/Church commercial area should provide employment opportunities for Park Place residents.

## **F. EXISTING CONDITIONS MAPS**

Existing Conditions Maps pertaining to Urban Design Context, Traffic/Circulation, Housing, Recreation/Open Space, and Commercial Areas in Park Place are on the following pages.

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

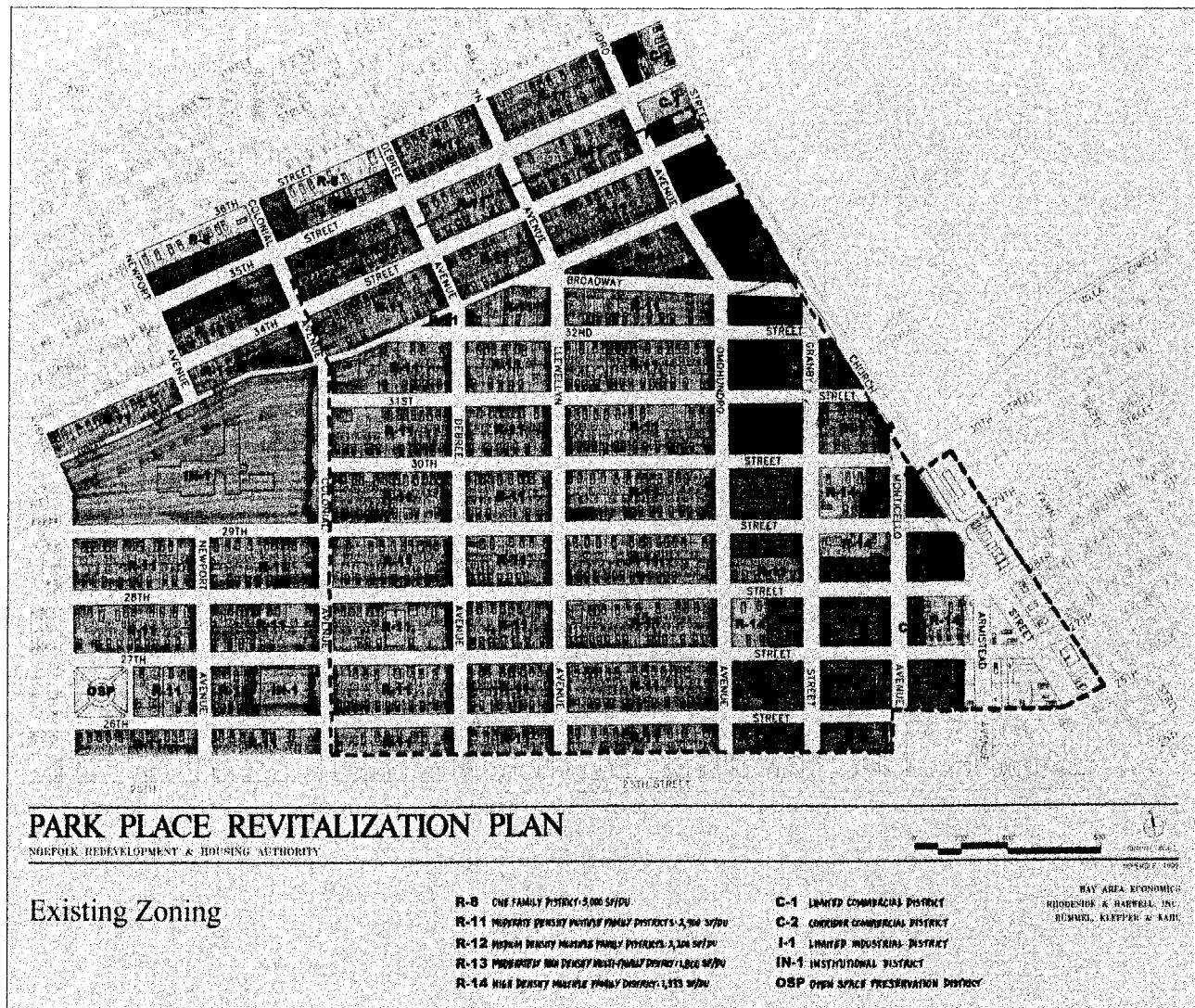


There are not any great differences between existing land use and proposed land use, except that the proposed land use map shows several blocks of high-density residential use between Church Street and Omohundro Avenue (north of Broadway). The proposed land use map also shows entire blocks of land dedicated to education/open space near the intersection of Granby and Church Streets.

## **Proposed Land Use (1999 General Plan Amendment)**

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

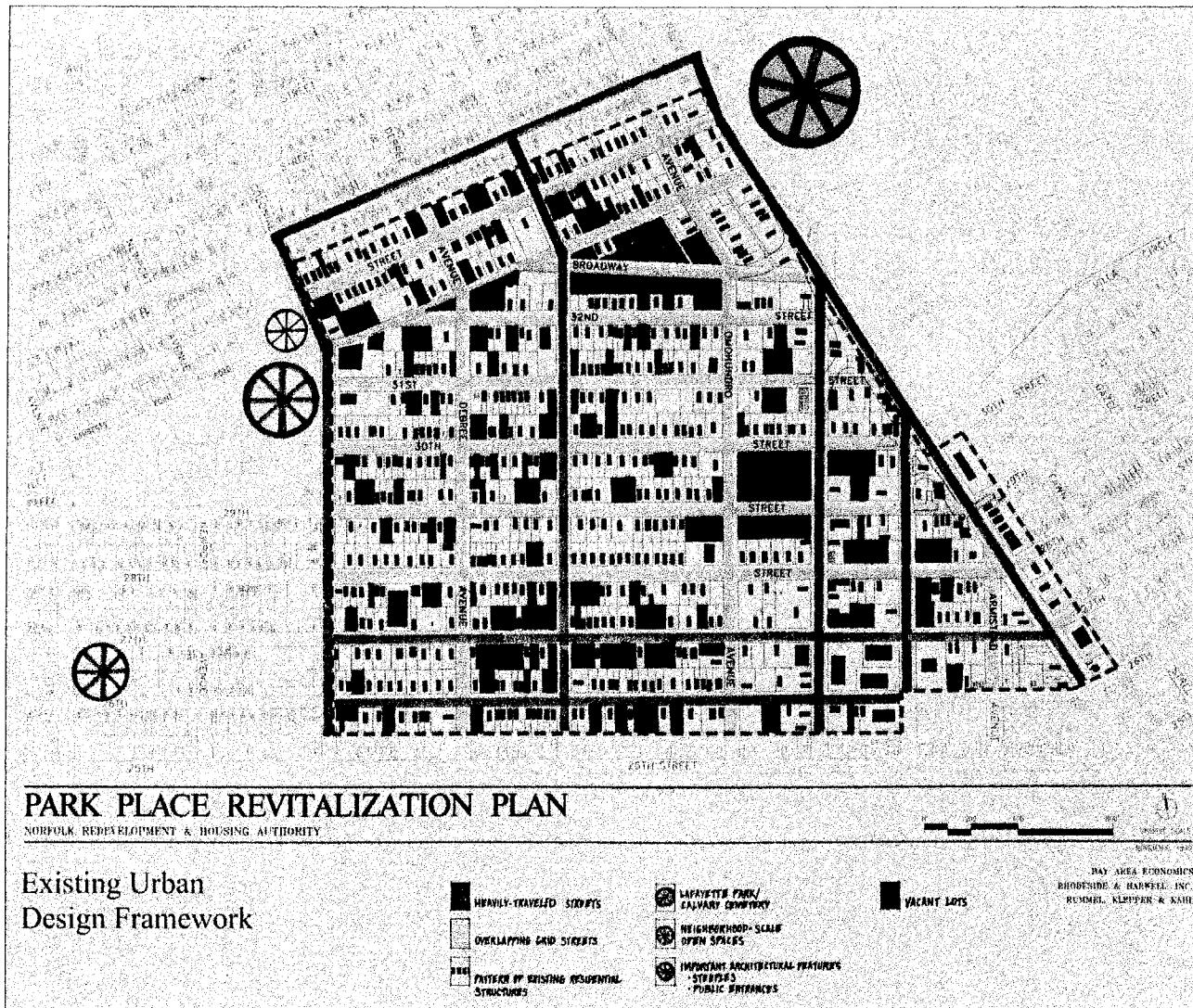


The map makes it evident that almost the entire neighborhood is zoned for moderate-density single-family housing (11 units per acre). Some medium, moderately-high and high-density family housing (12, 13, or 14 units per acre) is also allowed along Granby and Church Streets. Corridor Commercial development is permitted within the triangle formed by Granby, Church, and 26th Streets.

**Existing Zoning**

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

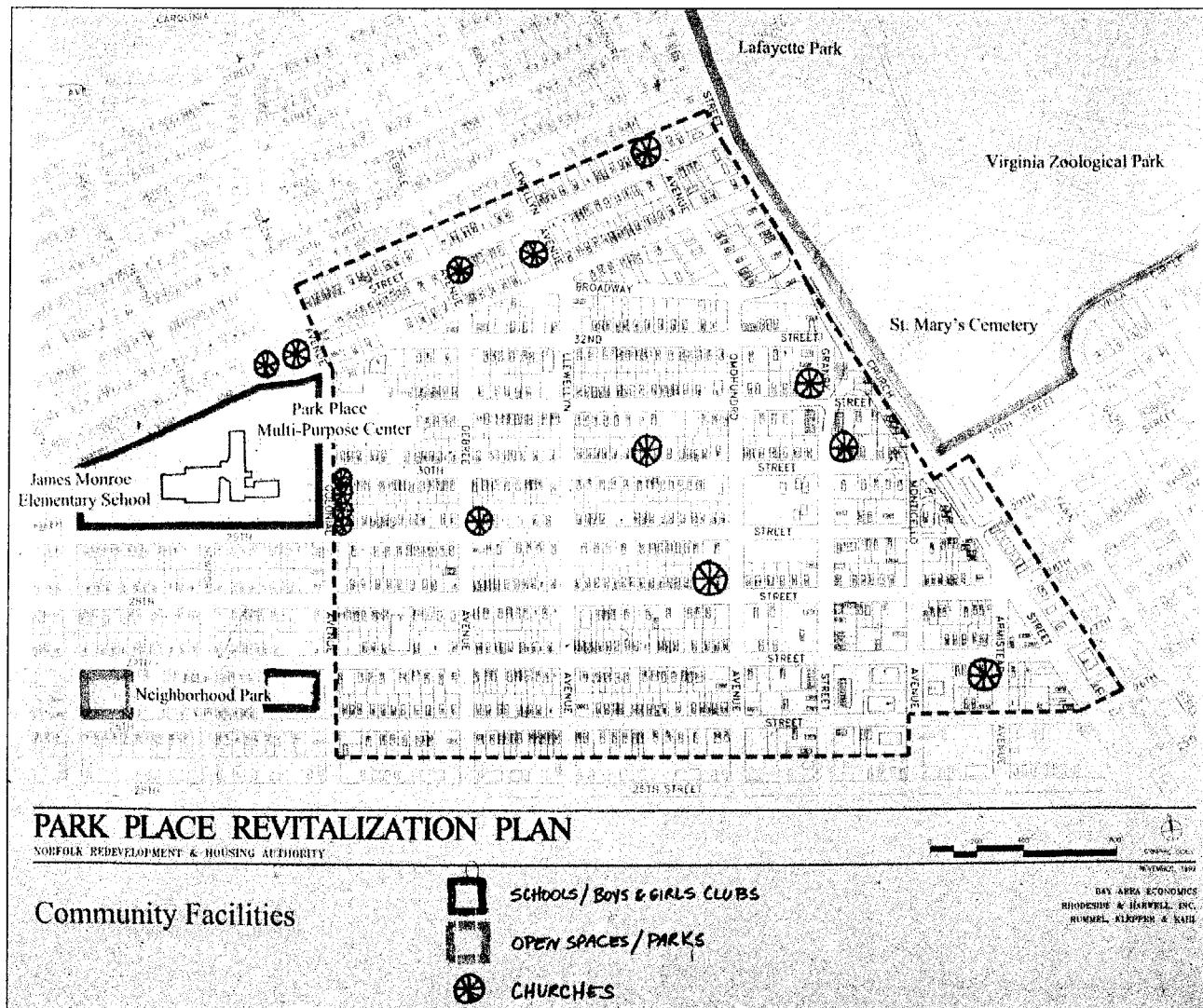


### Existing Urban Design Framework

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

This analysis shows that Park Place is a neighborhood that is laid out on a traditional grid pattern of streets; a grid pattern that helps to promote pedestrian activity and a sense of community. The map also shows that Park Place has several important community facilities, such as the Park Place Multi-Service Center and Lafayette Park, but that Lafayette Park is separated from the heart of the neighborhood by the heavy automobile traffic on Church Street. The map also shows that there are many vacant lots scattered throughout Park Place and that these vacant lots are evident as "holes" in the residential fabric of the neighborhood.

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

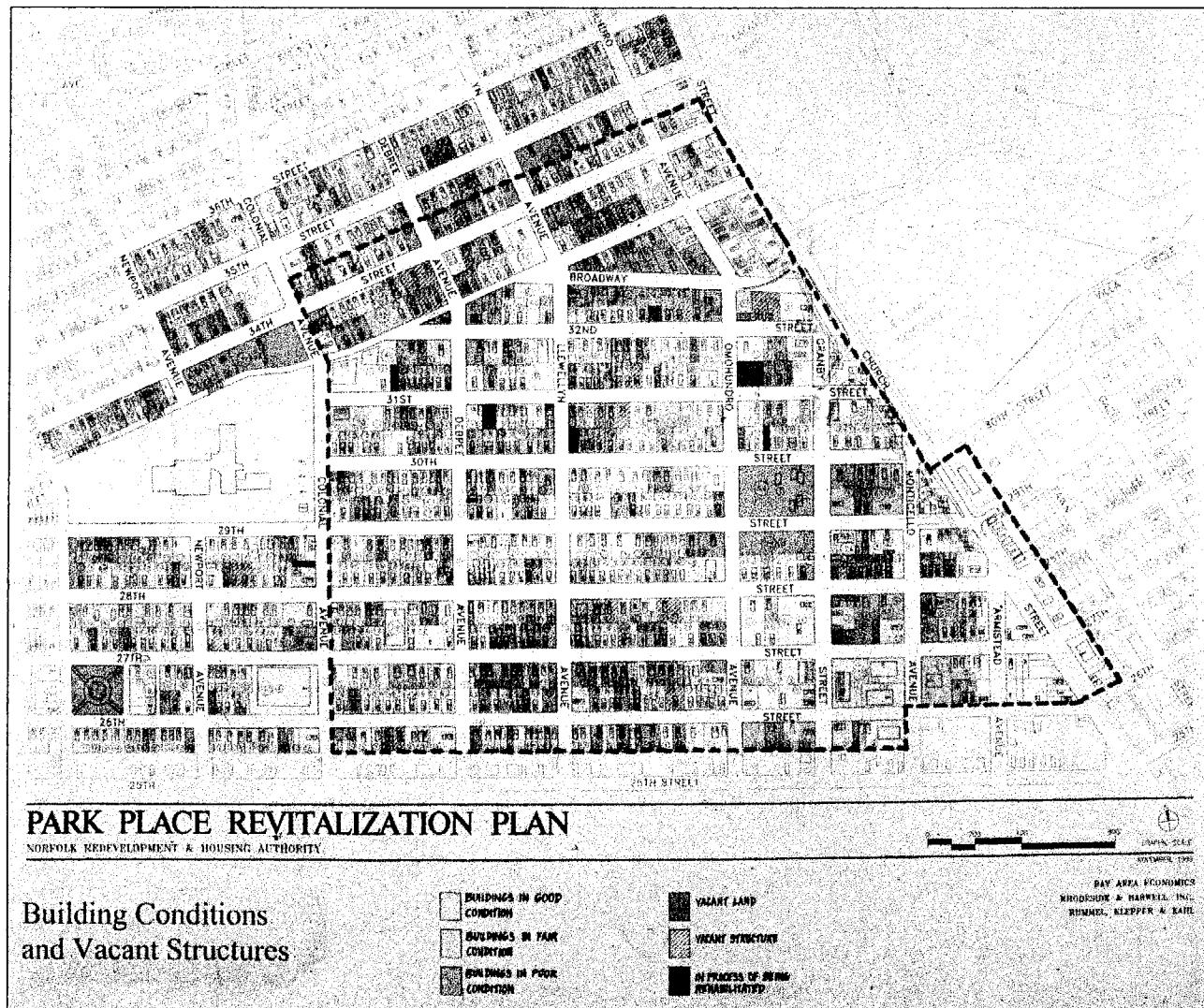


### Community Facilities

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

There are several significant community facilities on which to build the Revitalization Plan around. These include James Monroe Elementary School, the Park Place Multi-Service Center, the Park Place Boys and Girls Club, Lafayette Park, and the Norfolk Zoo. There are also a great number of churches scattered throughout Park Place that are important to the functioning of the neighborhood. Most evident on the map, however, is that there is no central park/greenspace that can be easily reached by all residents of the area.

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN



This study shows that there are roughly equal numbers of buildings in Park Place that are in good, fair, and poor condition. The map also shows that good, fair, and poor structures are spread evenly throughout Park Place, and that there are no blocks where buildings are uniformly good or uniformly poor. The map also makes evident the fact that there are many vacant (boarded up) structures, some of which could be rehabilitated, and some of which might be demolished, depending on condition.

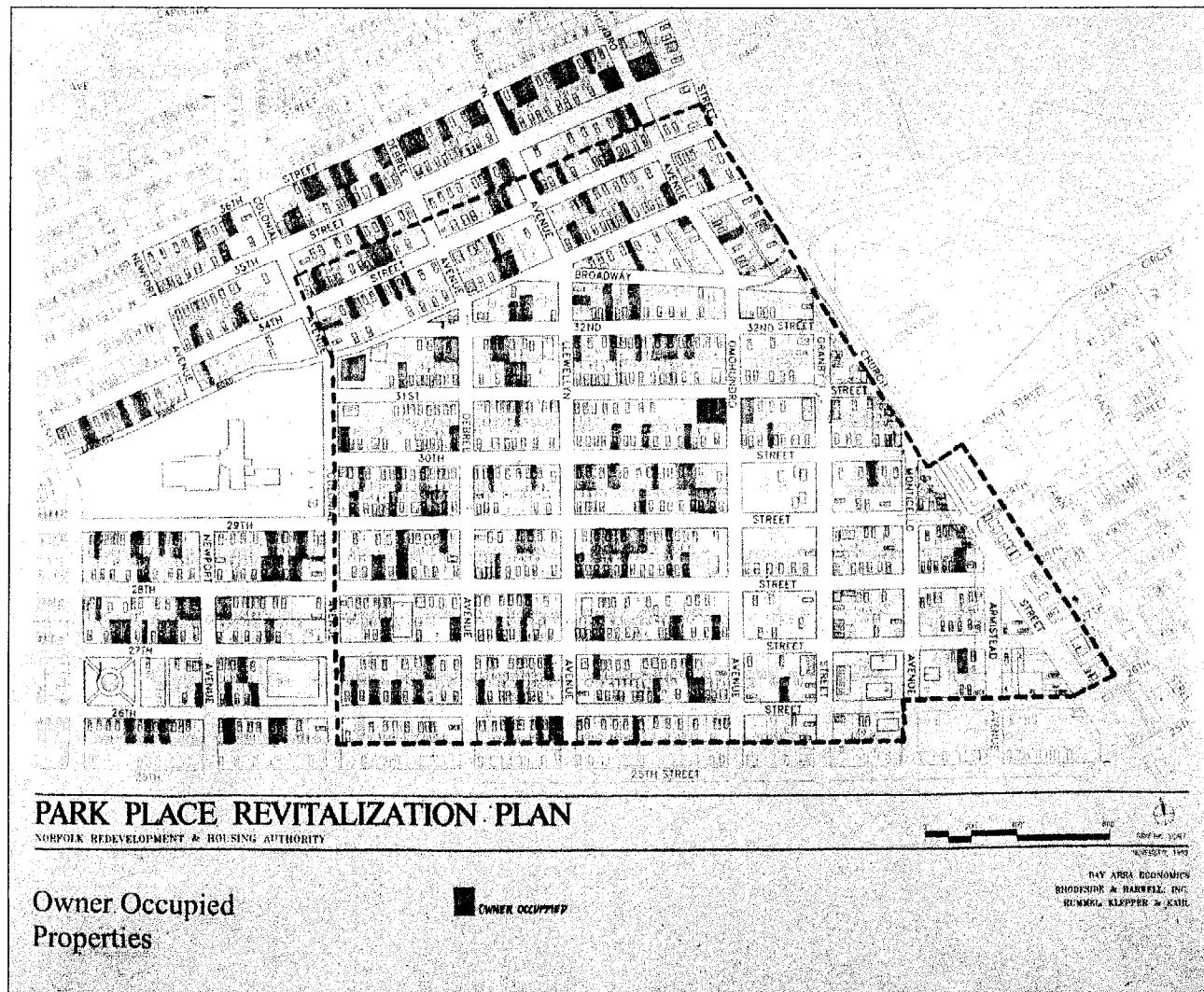
## Building Conditions and Vacant Structures

BAY AREA ECONOMIC  
NEWSLETTER & HARWELL INC.  
MANAGER, HANDBOOK OF BANK

## **Building Conditions and Vacant Structures**

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

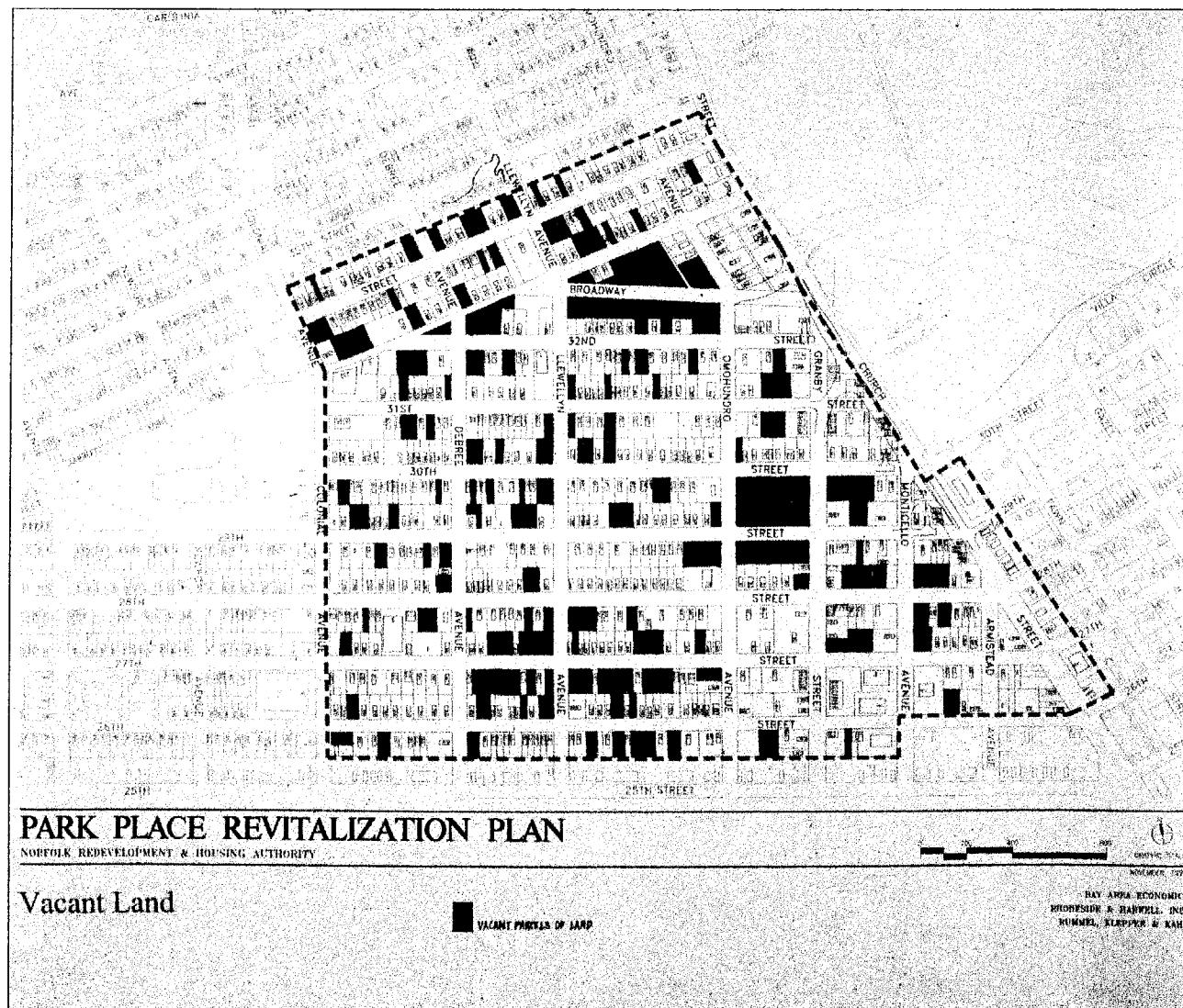


### Owner Occupied Properties

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

A study of owner occupied housing in Park Place shows that there are a number of houses scattered throughout Park Place that are occupied by their owners, but that the majority of the houses in Park Place are renter occupied. This prominence of rental properties in the neighborhood could explain the wide variety in the condition and upkeep of the structures.

# NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

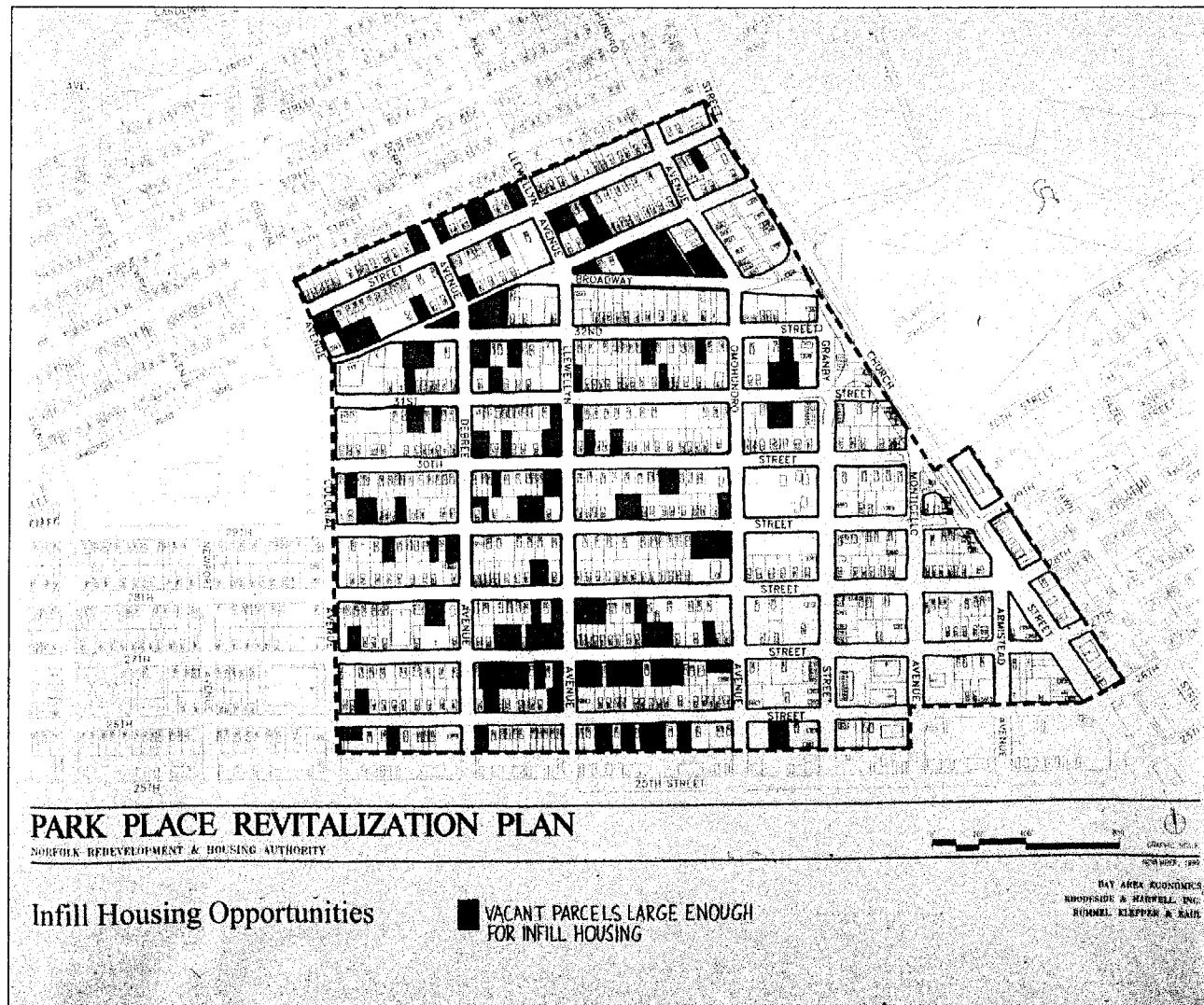


The map shows all vacant parcels of land within the study area, of which there are many. However, for practical purposes, many of these parcels may be too narrow for redevelopment. For a more accurate description of which parcels of land are large enough to be redeveloped, or where two or more vacant parcels lie adjacent to each other and could be pieced together, see **Infill Housing Opportunities**.

## Vacant Land

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

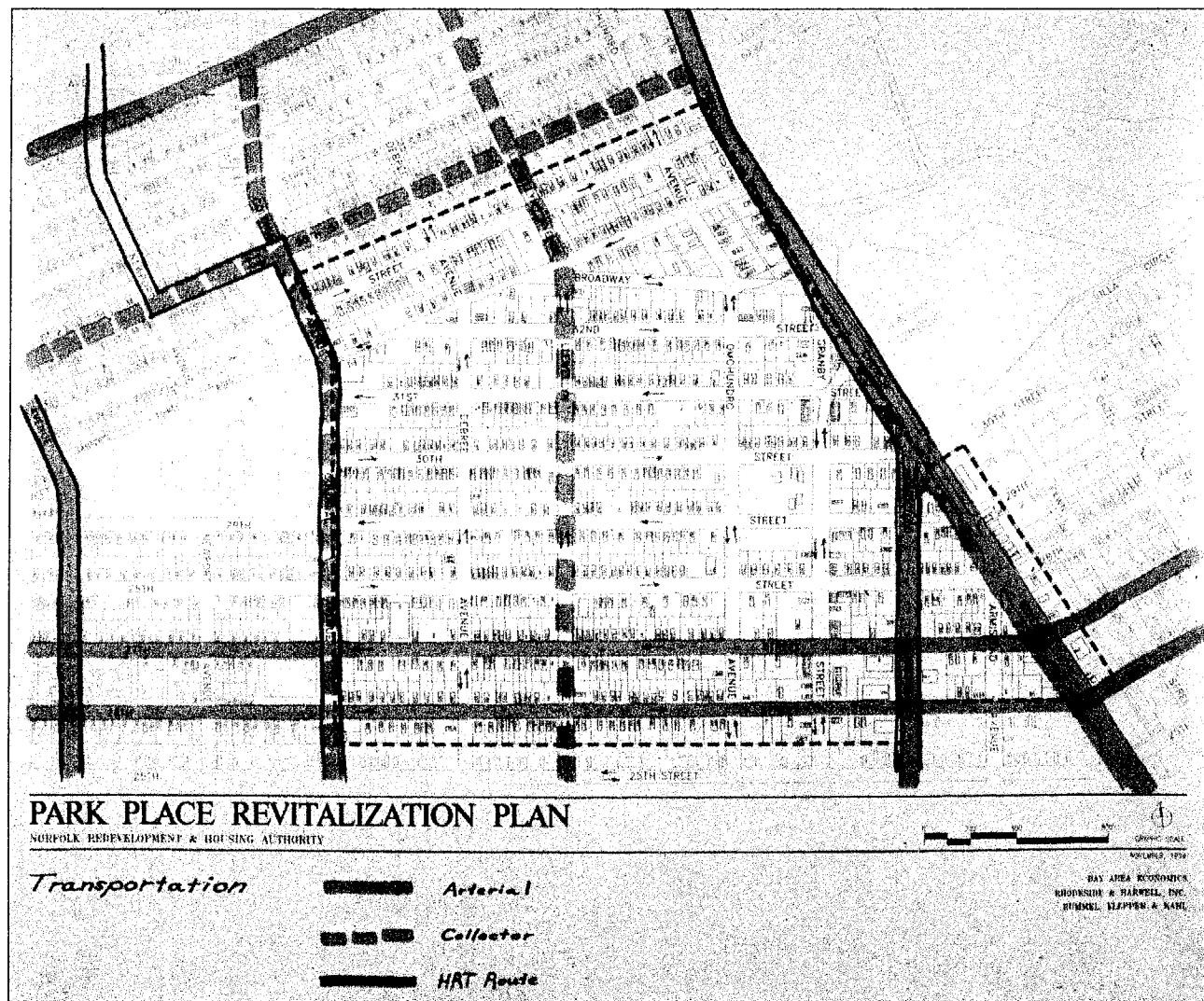


This study shows that of all the vacant parcels of land scattered throughout Park Place, only some are wide enough on their own, or can be pieced together with an adjacent vacant parcel, to be redeveloped for infill housing. The map shows that there are a great number of infill housing opportunities existing on all streets within the residential portion of the study area.

**Infill Housing Opportunities**

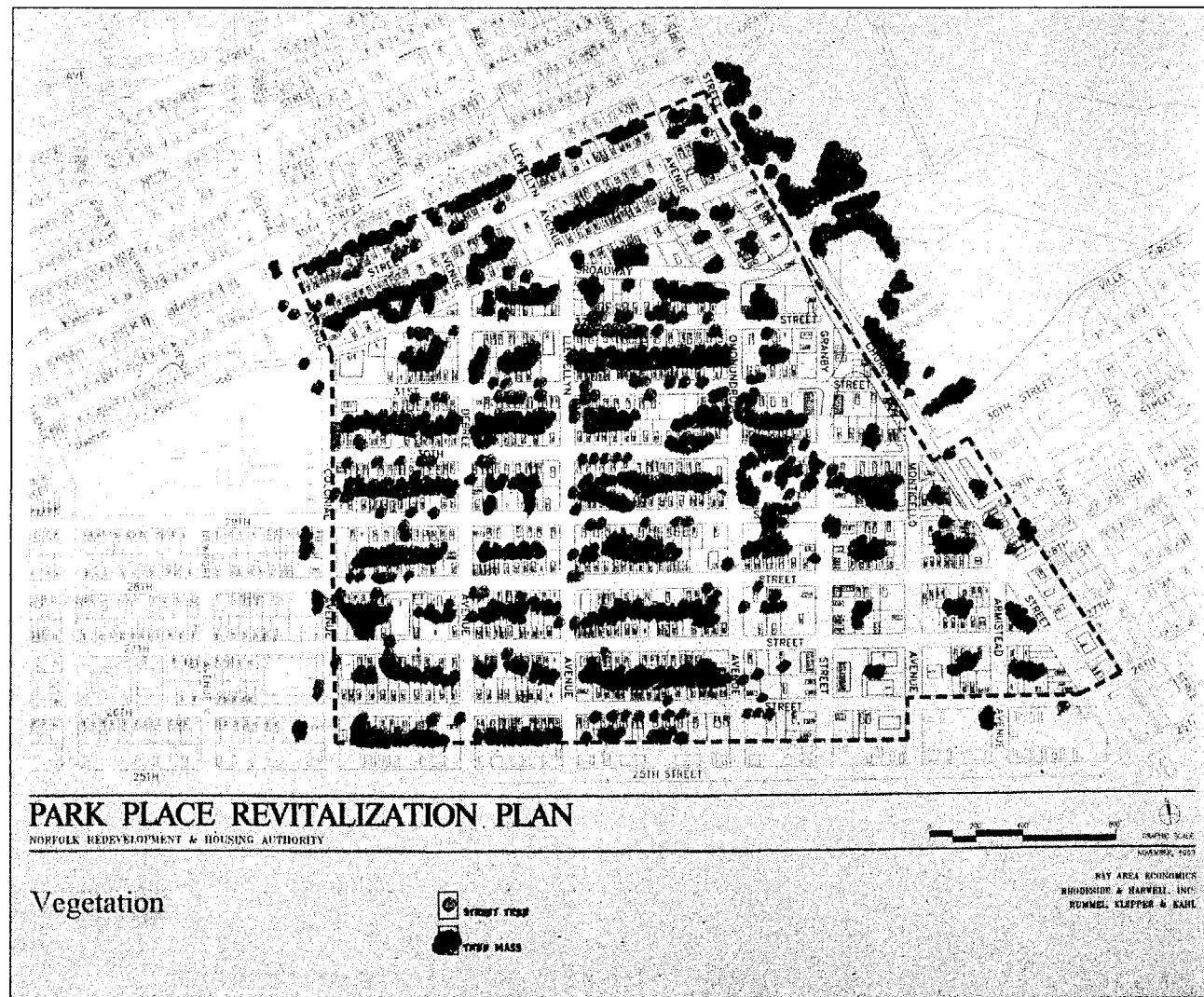
(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN



The map shows that there are several important arterial and collector streets running through the study area, including Church Street, Monticello Avenue, Llewellyn Avenue, Colonial Avenue, 26<sup>th</sup> Street, and 27<sup>th</sup> Street. Existing bus routes, along Colonial Avenue and Church Street, are also shown. The most important problem brought out through this study is that two residential streets in Park Place, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets, are also major arterial roads.

# NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN



The vegetation study shows that there are a great number of existing trees in Park Place, and that many of these trees are quite large and mature. However, the map points out that the majority of the existing trees in Park Place are in backyards, with relatively few trees along the streets themselves. The scarcity of street trees in the neighborhood is certainly a topic to be addressed in the final plan.

## Vegetation

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PARK PLACE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAN**

The major goals of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan are to increase future opportunity in the neighborhood and improve the physical appearance of the area, while preserving the mixture of housing types, mixture of income levels, and overall character already present in Park Place. To achieve these goals in the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, a series of improvements were agreed upon during the charrette; these final plan elements were then presented to the public as a series of plans. These final plans include the Community Plan, the Land Use Plan, the Open Spaces/Recreation Plan, the Circulation Plan, and the Beautification Plan. The Community Plan presents all Revitalization Plan elements together, while the Land Use, Open Spaces/Recreation, Circulation, and Beautification plans represent a break down of the individual project elements.

### **A. OVERALL URBAN DESIGN PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The basic recommendations of the final Revitalization Plan include:

- The establishment of a commercial district bounded by Granby, Church, and 26th Streets
- Several new open spaces (including a central park)
- Greenways along 29<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Streets
- Gateways at important entrances to Park Place
- A continuation of the current pattern of housing in the neighborhood with significant housing infill
- The elimination of Broadway Street between Omphundro and Llewellyn Avenues, and the establishment of additional housing on the block created by the removal of this street.
- Traffic restrictions and improvements along 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets
- Installation of planted medians along several north-south roads, including Llewellyn and Colonial Avenues.

## **B. TRAFFIC, CIRCULATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are based on the level of service (LOS) for each intersection configuration. Levels of service are defined as the vehicular operating conditions at an intersection in terms of speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience and safety. Levels of service are rated alphabetically from "A" through "F". "A" represents free flow and is the highest rating, while "F" represents breakdown flow and is the lowest and unacceptable rating.

- **26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets.** As an immediate solution to the residents' complaints of traffic congestion and speed, the proposed recommendation is to make one of the three lanes along 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets a permanent parking lane. To prevent motorists from cutting into this parking lane to pass other slower-moving vehicles, raised and landscaped islands will be placed strategically along the parking area for aesthetics and safety. (See plan-view sketch on page 49 at end of chapter.)

As a present solution to the truck traffic complaints, the proposed recommendation is to reroute trucks from 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Street. From the east, the truck traffic can be eliminated from 27<sup>th</sup> Street by heading north along Church Street/Granby Street and utilizing 35<sup>th</sup> Street to reach Hampton Boulevard. From the west, the truck traffic can be detoured from 26<sup>th</sup> Street by heading north along Hampton Boulevard and utilizing 35<sup>th</sup> Street to reach Church Street/Granby Street. Emergency response vehicles should be allowed on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets to maintain adequate response times.

- **Llewellyn and Colonial Medians.** The proposed recommendation is to convert Llewellyn and Colonial Avenues to two-lane roads with a raised median in the center and sidewalks on both sides of the street. This recommendation will create more of a "neighborhood" feel as motorists drive through these two streets and discourage through-traffic. The raised median is ideal for planting trees and shrubbery. The single through lane in each direction prevents vehicles from

passing each other and slows speeds, consequently discouraging motorists from using these streets as a shortcut to their end destination. Another positive result of this recommendation is that, while crossing these streets, pedestrian traffic will have a safety zone within the median. (See cross-section sketch on page 50 at end of chapter.)

- **DeBree and Omohundro Narrowing.** The proposed condition is to narrow DeBree and Omohundro Avenues to two-lane roads with sidewalks and open green space on both sides of the street. The open green space on both sides of the street within the city right-of-way is ideal for landscaping. This condition will create a "neighborhood" street that discourages through traffic. The one through lane in each direction prevents vehicles from passing each other and slows them down to the speed limit, thereby deterring motorists from using these streets as shortcuts to their end destinations. (See cross-section sketch on page 51 at end of chapter.)
- **Schematic Traffic Analysis for changes to 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, Llewellyn, Colonial, DeBree & Omohundro.** According to the SYNCHRO traffic model, converting 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets from three-lane corridors to two-lane corridors, converting Llewellyn and Colonial Avenues from multiple lanes per direction to a single through lane per direction, and narrowing DeBree and Omohundro Avenues to a single through lane per direction are all feasible. Utilizing this scenario in the morning peak hour, only two intersections have downgraded levels of service. At 38<sup>th</sup> Street and Llewellyn Avenue and at 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Church Street, the morning levels of service declines from an "A" to a "B". In the evening peak hour, one intersection actually has an improved level of service. At the intersection of Granby Street and Church Street, the evening level of service improves from a "C" to a "B".
- **Closing Broadway between Omohundro & Llewellyn.** The proposed recommendation is to close Broadway Street to through traffic between Llewellyn and Omohundro Avenues. The reason behind this closure is to re-develop the land surrounded by 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, Llewellyn Avenue and Omohundro Avenue as residential homes. Rear access to these new homes will be



Detail of drawing showing the proposed recommendation to close Broadway between Omohundro and Llewellyn Avenues. Under the recommendation, land between 33rd Street, 32nd Street, Llewellyn Avenue, and Omohundro Avenue would be re-developed as residential homes. Note "S" shaped alley that would allow rear access to residential lots.

established by creating a ten-foot wide "S" alley.

- **33<sup>rd</sup> at Llewellyn & DeBree.** At the intersections where the two grids meet, accidents and near-collisions occur due to inadequate sight lines and higher than normal speeds. Those intersections are at 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and DeBree Avenue, 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Llewellyn Avenue, and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Omohundro Avenue. The proposed condition is to smooth the curves at these intersections. Creating the curve will increase the sight distance and the proposed narrowing of Llewellyn Avenue and DeBree Avenue will reduce the vehicular speed. A traffic circle or rotary is not recommended due to geometric concerns.
- **Flooding and other utility issues.** It is recommended that the flooding issues be addressed by the City of Norfolk Department of Public Works as a feasibility study. As funding becomes available, the utility lines should be moved underground.
- **Traffic safety guidelines.** The residents requested that traffic calming techniques be utilized throughout the Park Place study area, such as traffic circles at the three intersections along 33<sup>rd</sup> Street where the two grids meet to reduce speed and increase visibility. The City of Norfolk Division of Transportation has traffic calming guidelines and techniques for incorporating traffic circles, speed humps and pedestrian crosswalks. The Park Place Civic League should work closely with the City of Norfolk Division of Transportation to follow the City's program (NETS) to install traffic calming elements.

### C. HOUSING PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Park Place community members offered the following recommendations to address their concerns regarding housing in the neighborhood.

- **Rehabilitate, don't demolish.** NRHA and private investors should be encouraged to rehabilitate existing housing structures (single-family and multi-family) whenever possible, rather than

demolishing them.

- **Target sites with crime.** Properties known to be havens for crime and drug abuse should be targeted for rapid rehabilitation or redevelopment (with demolition as a last resort).
- **Retain housing mix.** Zoning, rehabilitation and new construction should seek to retain a mix of housing options in Park Place at various prices and rents.
- **Require minimum lot size.** New construction of single-family in-fill housing should occur only on lots with standard street frontage, primarily 50 feet or more.
- **Demolish inappropriate multi-family structures.** Deteriorated multi-family housing should be demolished when its architecture is inconsistent with the traditional Park Place neighborhood design.
- **Continue to impose design controls.** Design controls should continue to be implemented to insure that new in-fill housing is compatible with the traditional Park Place neighborhood design.
- **No new multi-family structures.** New housing construction in Park Place should continue to be limited to single-family structures.
- **Continue to create housing fronting on North-South streets.** Houses on corner lots should continue to be designed with wrap-around porches to provide frontage on North-South streets as a deterrent to crime.
- **Continue to combine substandard lots.** When substandard lots cannot be combined to form lots large enough for new housing, they should be actively marketed to the owners of adjoining property.

**D. RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND STREETSCAPE PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Revise layout of Multi-Service Center fields to provide full-sized football and baseball fields.** This will allow for increased use of the large field that already exists on the east side of the Multi-Service Center. It will also allow these fields to be used by organized youth sports leagues.
- **Expand Multi-Service Center indoor offerings (swimming pool).** It will be beneficial to keep this new use under the roof of the Multi-Service Center.
- **Create central park bounded by Omohundro, Granby, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Streets.** A park would be located on a block of land that is now completely vacant (undeveloped). A park in this central location would be easily accessible (by foot) to most areas of Park Place, and would provide an important community focal point. The park could incorporate both passive and active recreation needs, as well as a children's playground.
- **Create smaller park with courts north of Boys & Girls Club.** A park in this location could be used as a small community gathering place. The park is also in an ideal location to be used for Boys & Girls Club activities, as well as elementary school activities.
- **Create smaller park with courts at Colonial and 31<sup>st</sup>.** Additional courts, which are needed in the neighborhood, would be situated close to Multi-Service Center and Monroe Elementary.
- **Create greenways along 33<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets.** Additional trees along 29<sup>th</sup> Street will provide an east-west greenway connection through the heart of Park Place. Additional trees along 33<sup>rd</sup> Street will provide a greenway connection between Monroe Elementary/Multi-Service Center on the west side and Lafayette Park/Norfolk Zoo on the east side.

- **Improve lighting of sidewalks and streets throughout Park Place.** Improved lighting is most important for safety and security reasons, but it will also help enhance the appearance of the neighborhood streetscape.
- **Improve streetscaping as part of street narrowing and medians on Colonial, DeBree, Llewellyn, and Omohundro.** The narrowing of streets and installation of medians on these streets is intended to help calm traffic and improve the appearance of the roadways. Streetscaping such as trees planted along curbs, trees planted in the medians, lightpoles, sidewalks, and benches will help soften the appearance of the roads, improve safety, and give the roadways a boulevard feeling.
- **Improve streetscaping as part of new parking lanes on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.** Streetscaping will help create a stronger residential feeling along these two roads, which presently have the feeling of major thoroughfare roads (because of the high volumes of traffic). Street trees, shrubs, and other plantings will also help cut down on roadway noise impacts.
- **Landscape dead ends at Church Street.** This will help improve the appearance of the recent roadwork performed along Church Street by VDOT.
- **Install streetscaping along Granby.** Because it is one of the major north-south routes into downtown Norfolk, the appearance of Granby Street (as it passes through Park Place) is very important to the neighborhood's image. In addition, because Granby Street is part of the Park Place commercial district, an improved streetscape is important for attracting shoppers to the area.
- **Install crosswalks near Monroe Elementary and along major streets (add crossing guards).** This is an important safety improvement that will help encourage pedestrian activity throughout Park Place. Crosswalks can also establish important connections across Church Street

to Lafayette Park and the Zoo.

- **Create gateways at key entrances to Park Place making it clear that the area is residential.** Signs located at key entrances into Park Place from 26<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, and Church Streets will help create a sense of special identity for the neighborhood, and will help remind motorists that the area is residential.
- **Explore community gardens and tot lots throughout Park Place only when community partnership for maintenance is assured.** For community gardens and tot lots to be successful, a regular clean up and maintenance program would have to be in place; a community partnership would be the most likely means of achieving this.

### E. COMMERCIAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve these goals, community members proposed the following recommendations to guide development of a commercial area in Park Place.

- **Focus commercial development in Granby/Church/26<sup>th</sup> Street triangle.** To preserve the residential area's integrity, commercial development should occur only in the triangle portion of the Park Place study area.
- **No commercial development beyond that fronting on the western side of Granby.** The lots on Granby's western side should be zoned as the western-most edge of the commercial triangle.
- **Alleys between commercial and residential when on same block.** Alleys should be constructed between commercial and residential uses along the western edge of Granby and other areas where commercial uses abut residential properties.
- **Design controls.** NRHA and the City Planning Department should develop specific design

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

controls regulating commercial construction in the triangle to insure that the use, design, and scale of the buildings in the triangle complement existing Park Place structures.

- **No fast food.** Fast food restaurants should not be permitted in the triangle.
- **No liquor licenses for off-site sales.** Zoning should prohibit liquor stores or other businesses that sell liquor for off-site consumption.
- **Recruit tenants that provide good jobs.** NRHA should actively recruit commercial tenants that will bring to the neighborhood quality jobs that pay a living wage.

### F. EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

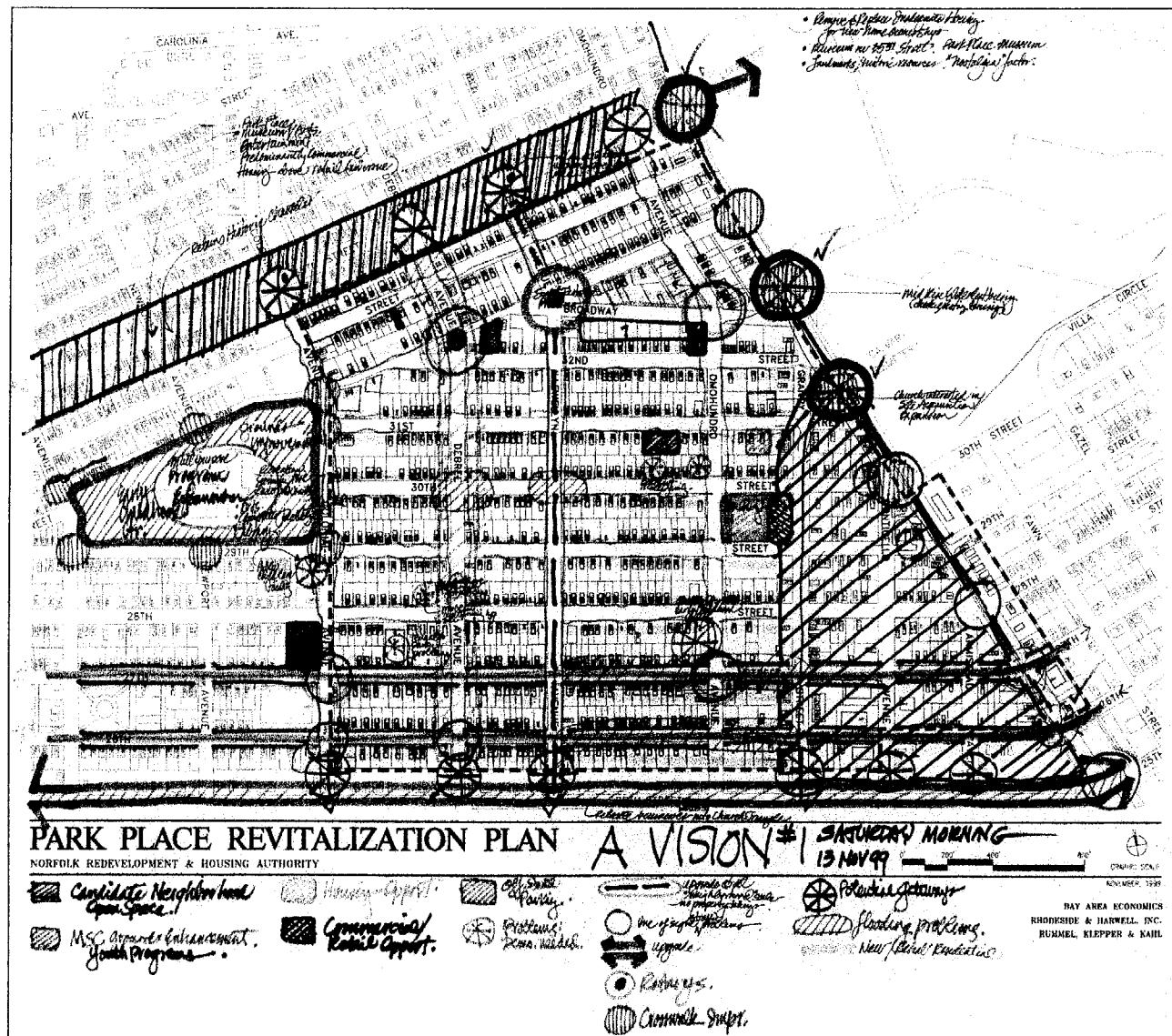
The long-term viability of the neighborhood depends on the ability of neighborhood residents to find and hold jobs.

- **Create an early childhood center.** Expansion of the school to include an early childhood center would help both the children and their working parents.
- **Market “Norfolk Works” services to neighborhood residents.** Greater outreach to Park Place residents could increase participation in job readiness and skills training.

### G. NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN MAPS AND SKETCHES

Neighborhood Revitalization Plan Maps addressing Urban Design, Traffic/Circulation, Housing, Recreation/Open Space, and Commercial Area recommendations for Park Place are on the following pages. Three proposed roadway improvement sketches are included at the end of the chapter.

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

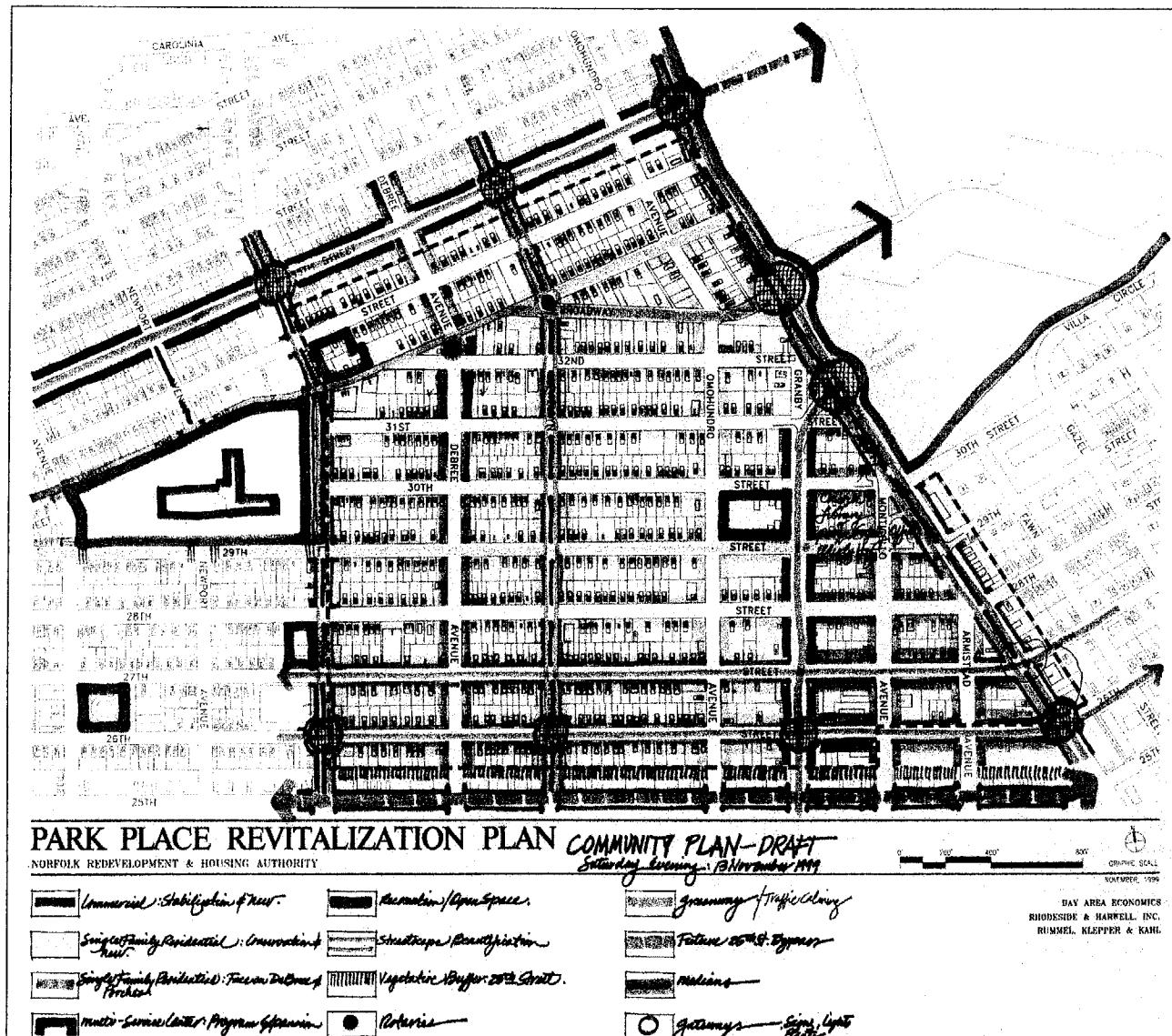


## **Vision #1 Plan**

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

39

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

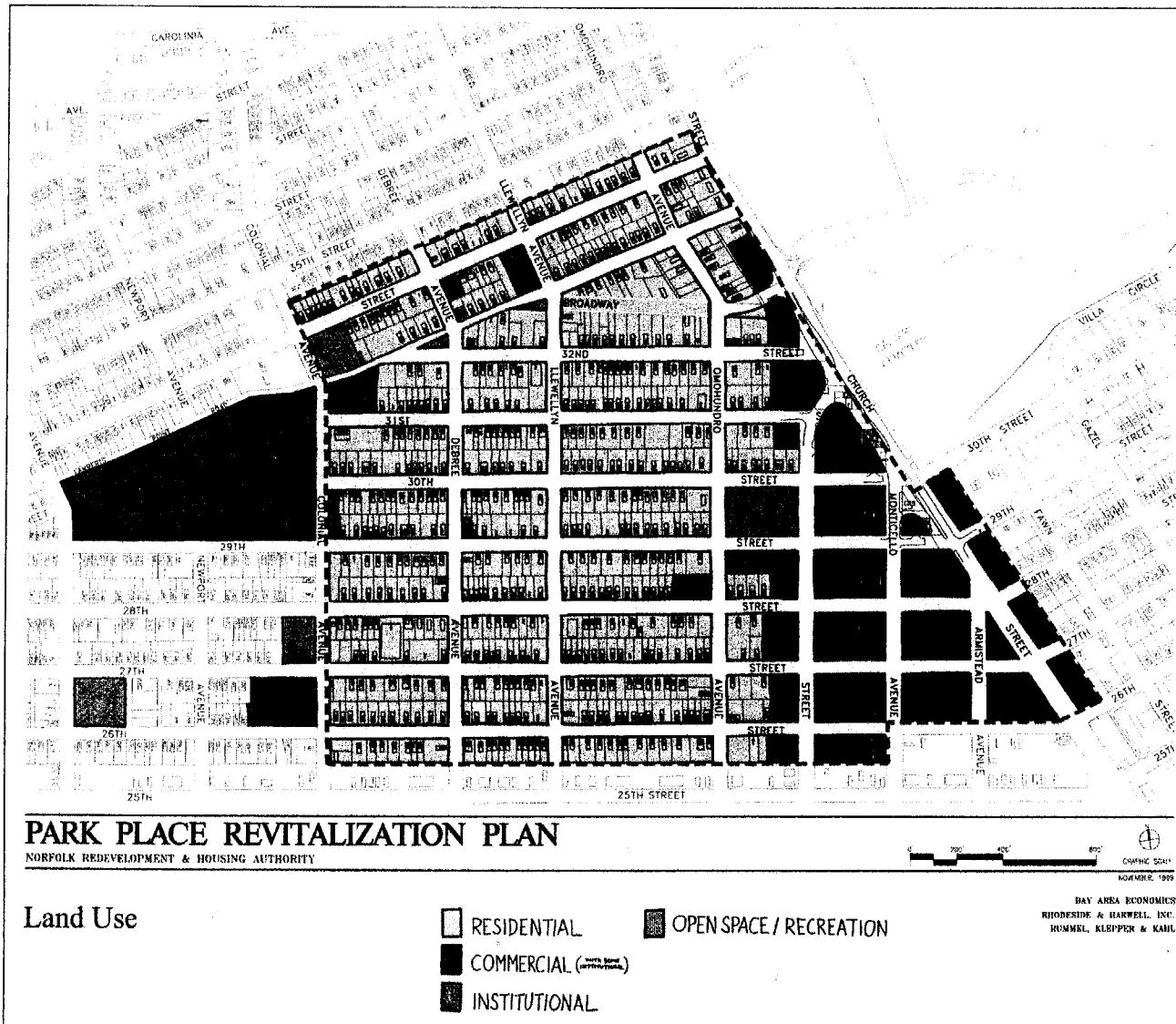


## Community Plan Draft

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

40

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

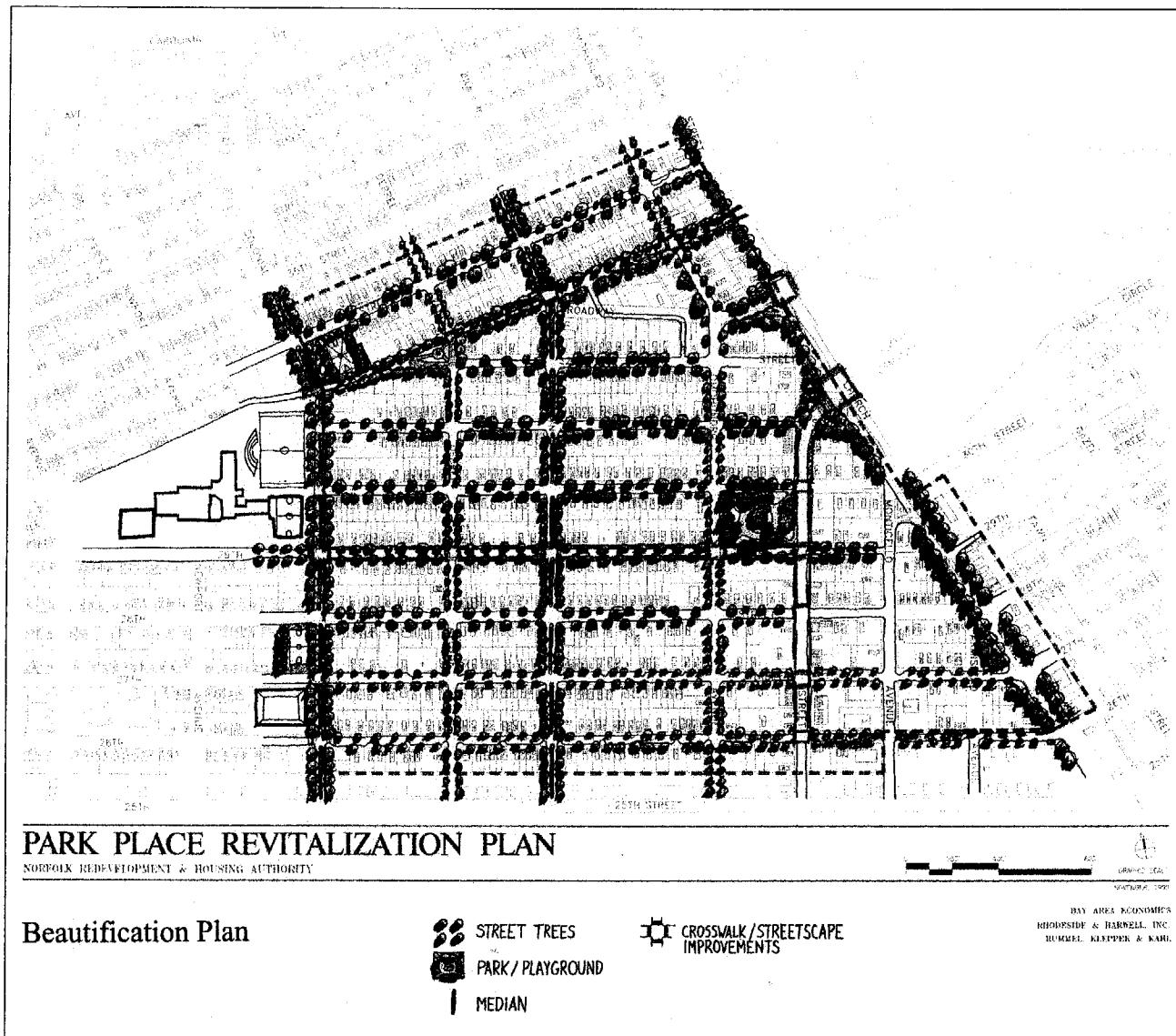


The Land Use Plan shows the recommended Church/Granby commercial triangle, existing and proposed open spaces and institutional uses, and the continuation of the existing pattern of residential development in Park Place.

## Land Use Plan

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

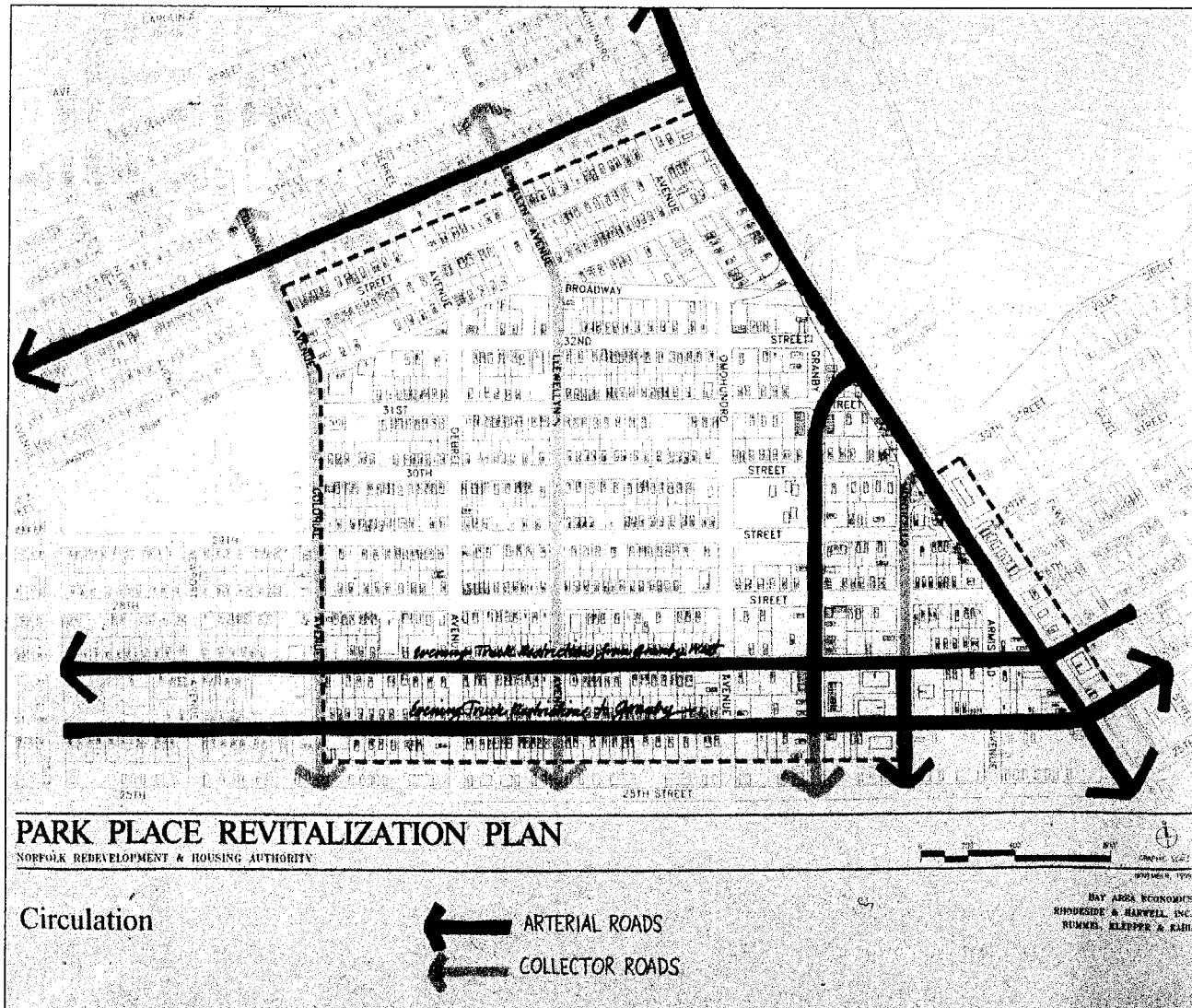


The Beautification Plan illustrates recommendations for more street trees, parks/open spaces (including a central park), crosswalks, medians, and streetscape improvements.

### Beautification Plan

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

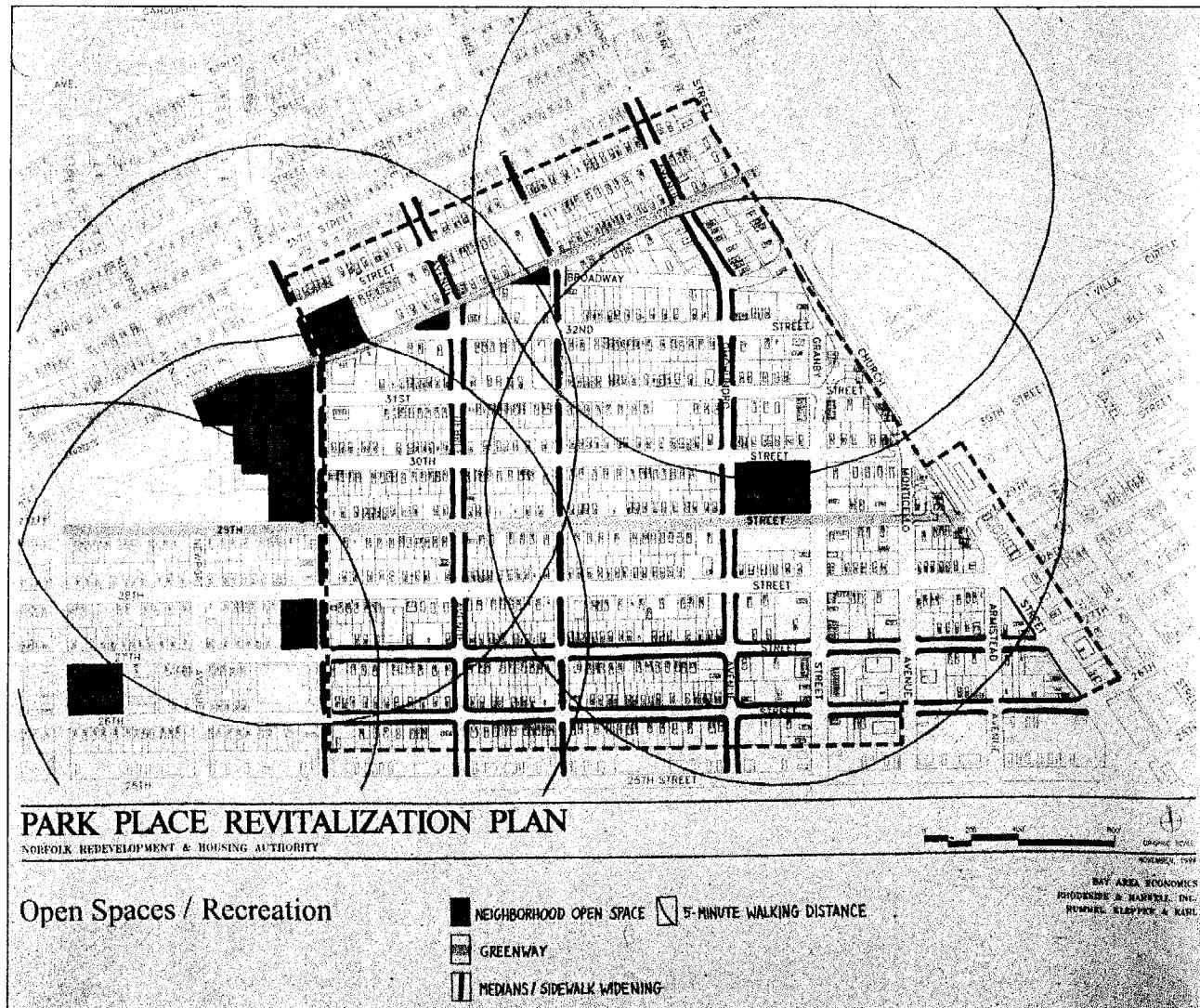


### Circulation Plan

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

This map shows truck restrictions along 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets, and Monticello, Llewellyn, and Colonial as collector streets.

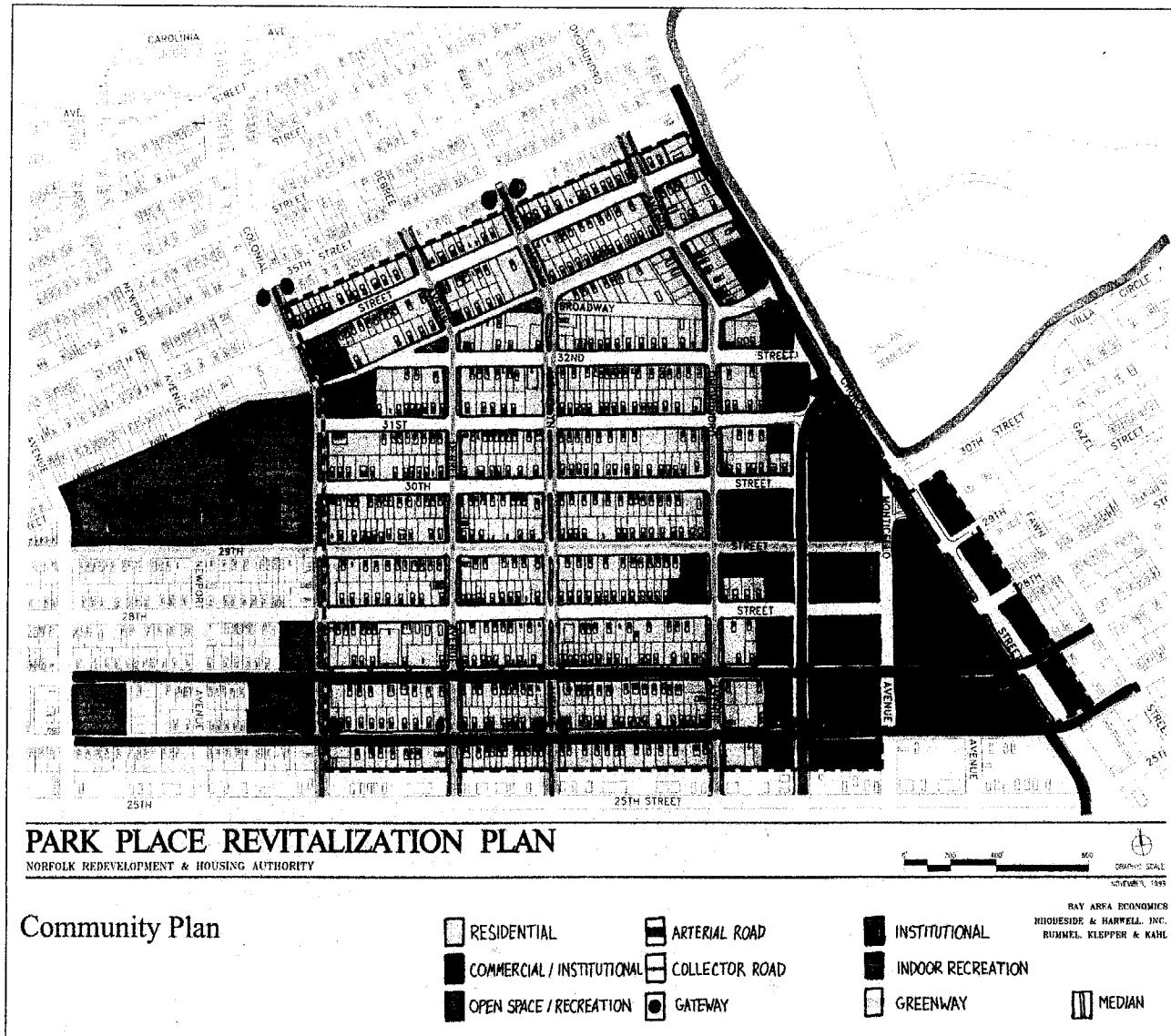
## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN



### Open Spaces/Recreation Plan

(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

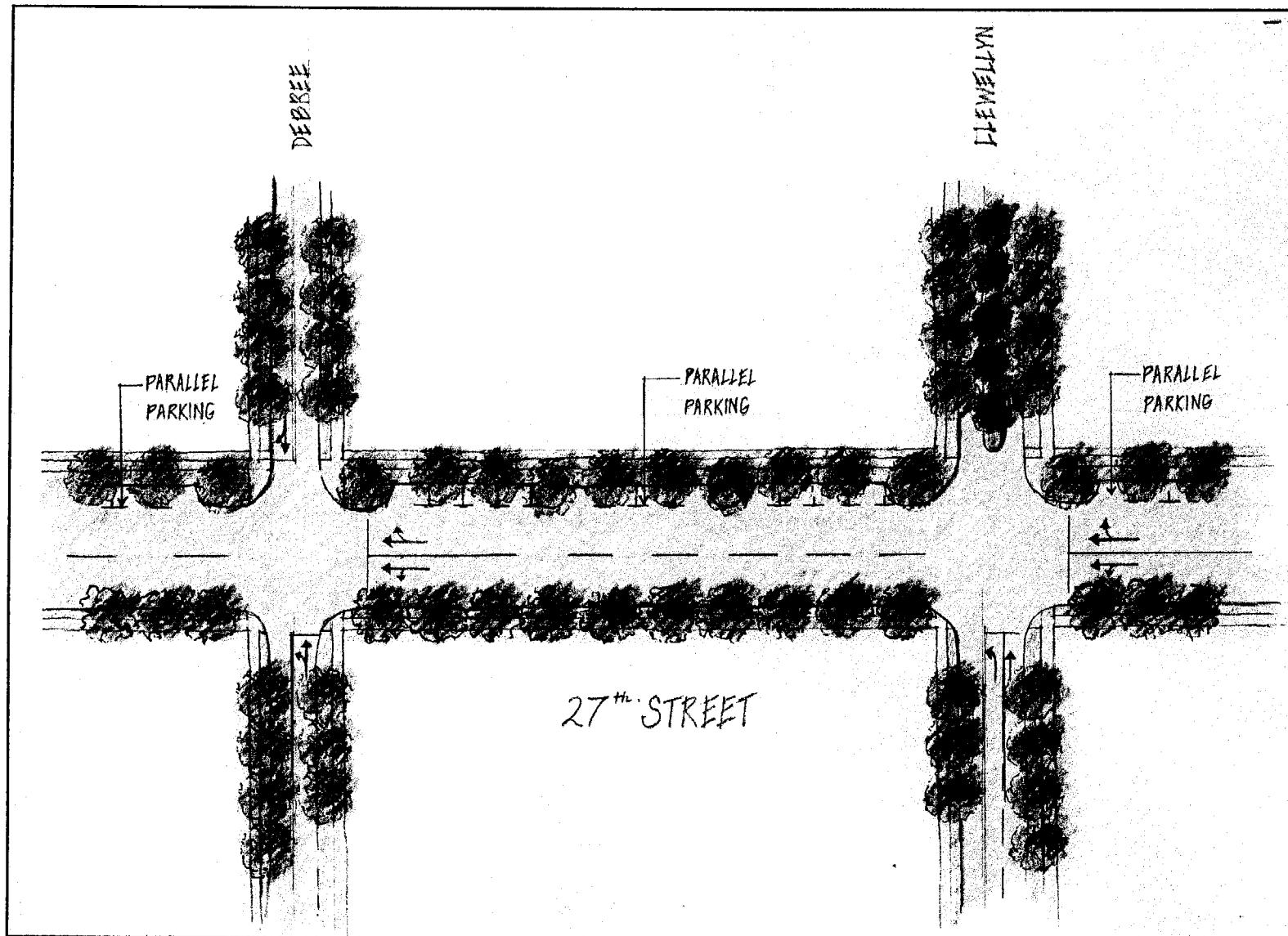


The Community Plan is the final culmination of all the neighborhood improvements discussed during the course of the weekend-long charrette. The Community Plan, which was presented at a public meeting at the end of the charrette weekend, ties together housing, commercial areas, open spaces/recreation, streetscape improvements, and transportation/circulation improvements.

**Community Plan**

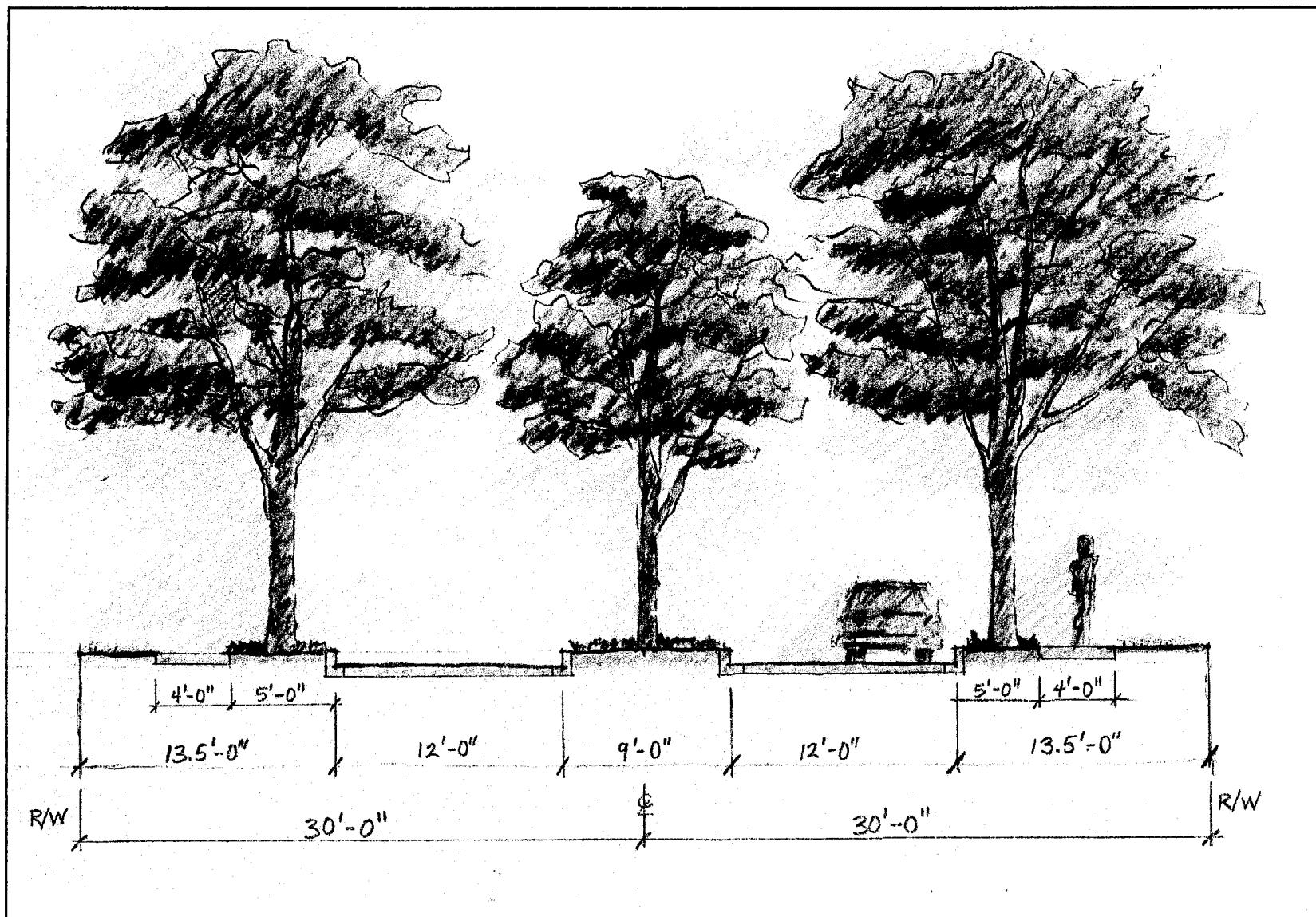
(Dashed line indicates boundaries of study area)

NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN



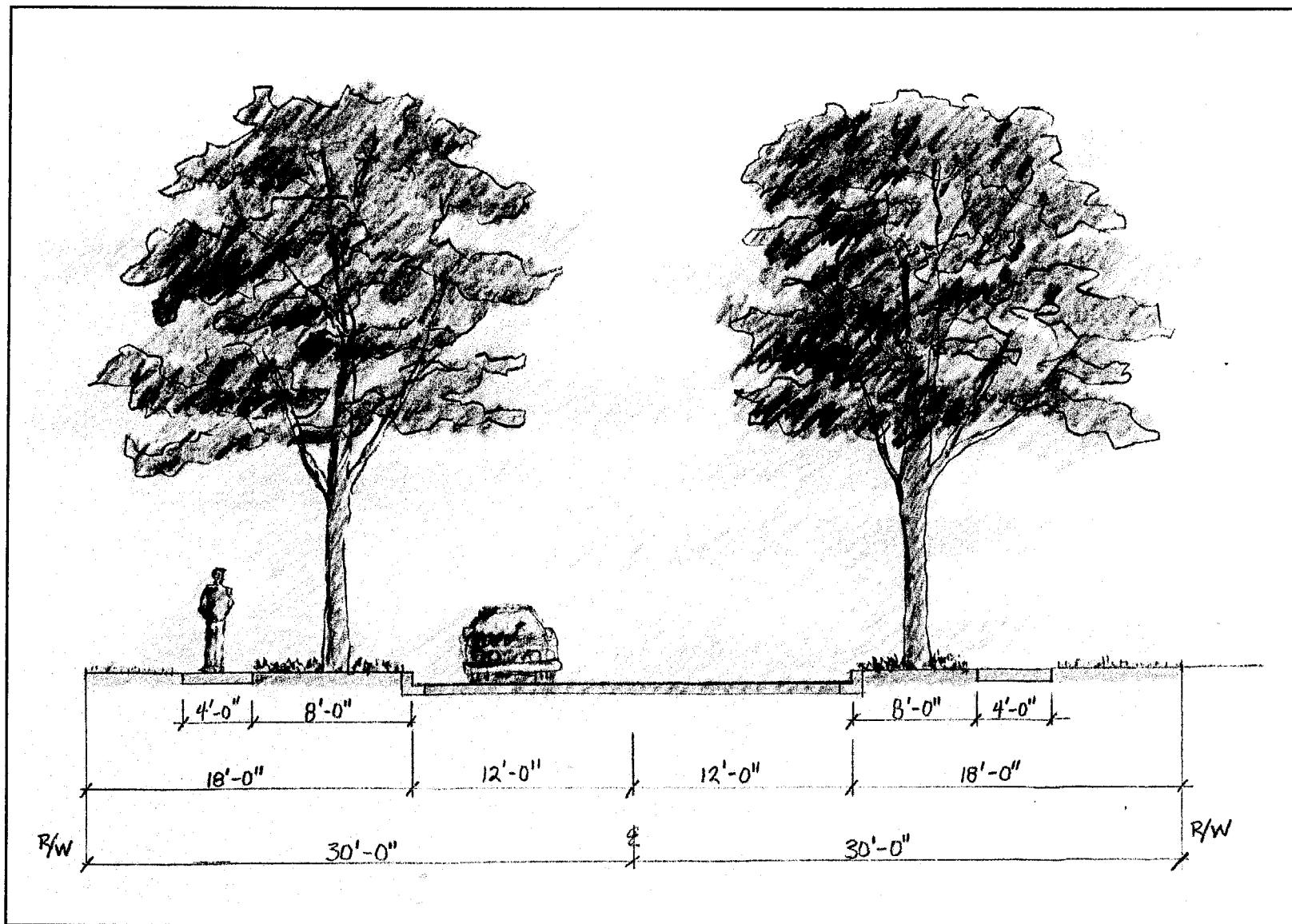
**Proposed 26th and 27th Street Improvements**

NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN



Proposed Llewellyn Avenue and Colonial Avenue Improvements

NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN



Proposed DeBree Avenue and Omohundro Avenue Improvements

## CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES AND PHASING

### A. PHYSICAL ACTIONS

Community members who participated in the charrette recognized that the process of revitalizing Park Place will take several years. The consultants recommended that the following actions be given priority for the next two to three years, as driven by cost and budget.

- 1. 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Street improvements.** To slow traffic and reduce volume along these streets, the City should move quickly to impose restrictions on truck traffic and to create a 24-hour parking lane on each street.
- 2. Llewellyn Avenue.** To slow traffic and to reduce the danger of crossing this wide road—particularly for children—the City should install a median on Llewellyn.
- 3. Central park.** To ensure that the City is able to build a centrally located park and recreation area, the City should purchase the land for the proposed park before it is purchased for private development.
- 4. Install better lighting throughout Park Place.** Public safety will improve with the installation of improved street lighting throughout the neighborhood. The current alignment of streetlights leaves the sidewalks and vacant properties in the dark.
- 5. Colonial Street park.** To improve the range of activities that can be sponsored by the Boys & Girls Club or local churches and to help beautify the area along Colonial Avenue, the City should construct a small park at one of the two sites identified by the charrette (Colonial at 31<sup>st</sup> Street or directly north of the Boys & Girls Club)
- 6. Targeted housing rehab and infill.** Housing rehabilitation and new in-fill construction should be targeted to the specific priority areas. The Park Place experience to date has demonstrated how important it is to focus rehabilitation efforts on a block-by-block basis.

7. **Traffic study.** A study of speeding and traffic accidents in Park Place should be completed as quickly as possible.

## **B. NON-PHYSICAL ACTIONS**

While physical changes to the Park Place neighborhood are important to improving the quality of life in the community, the City should also act quickly to address the non-physical issues raised by community members. The following recommendations are priority non-physical actions.

1. **More funding for and use of rehabilitation loans.** NRHA should explore and implement variations on its existing housing rehabilitation loan programs. The current all-or-nothing approach to rehabilitation is too expensive for many homeowners, even with matching funds from NRHA. NRHA should consider making smaller loans specifically for such expenses as exterior repairs or installation of a new roof. Grants to assist elderly homeowners to stay in their homes and to promote rehabilitation that makes a home more energy efficient should also be considered.
2. **Rapid replacement of broken streetlights.** To improve public safety and to demonstrate a commitment to keeping Park Place from deteriorating, the City should immediately replace any streetlights that are not functioning properly.
3. **Improved trash collection service.** Regular, effective collection of household trash and dumped items is an immediate means of beautifying the neighborhood. It is also an important indicator of the City's commitment to Park Place.
4. **Outreach to solicit homeowner use of rehabilitation loans.** NRHA should actively market its rehabilitation loan programs to Park Place property owners. This may require door-to-door delivery of information about the programs to every home in Park Place. Neighborhood residents, including youth, might distribute and explain the information.

**5. Additional staffing and programming for the Recreation Center and Boys & Girls Club.**

Although Park Place is home to a Boys & Girls Club and a Recreation Center, the lack of sufficient adult staff restricts the capacity of these organizations to meet the needs of neighborhood youth. The City, neighborhood residents and civic organizations should actively seek volunteers and paid employees to supervise youth activities in Park Place.

**6. Active pursuit of partnership opportunities.** The City, neighborhood residents, faith-based institutions and civic organizations should actively seek out opportunities to work together to

meet the needs of Park Place. Organizations with available building space should consider sponsoring childcare, youth programs, or senior activities. Individuals and groups should identify areas in which they want to help. The City should seek to make available organizational assistance to support these partnerships.

**7. Outreach by Multi-Service Center to neighborhood residents.** The Multi-Service Center

is home to numerous programs that could benefit residents of Park Place—particularly those sponsored by Norfolk Works—but many residents are not aware of these programs. Norfolk Works should actively encourage and recruit neighborhood residents to participate in its programs.

## CHAPTER SIX: NEXT STEPS

This strategic plan is only one step along the long path to revitalizing Park Place. Several additional steps were identified as questions were raised and as part of the overall city planning and budget process. The following steps will require the ongoing effort of all those who want to improve Park Place.

- **Presentation of charrette workbook to community.** This workbook represents the initial planning undertaken by the Park Place community. It will be presented back to the community for validation and acceptance.
- **Additional data collection.** Additional information is required to verify some of the concerns raised by the community and to test some of its recommendations. This data collection will involve such efforts as measuring traffic speeds and the citywide impact of proposed changes to major transportation routes. It will also involve talking directly to teenagers and younger children about the types of youth programs and facilities they feel are most important
- **Refining/detailing of community plan by NRHA and the community.** As new data is collected and community members have time to reflect on the results of the charrette, the development plan for Park Place will be refined, cost estimates prepared, and priorities established. Specific actions will be identified to implement the goals of the community. For example, the specific components and design of each neighborhood park/recreation area still must be planned.
- **Formal hearings and plan adoption.** Public hearings will be held to review and eventually adopt the finalized plan as official policy and amend the Park Place Conservation Plan.
- **Advocacy and budgeting.** Park Place is but one of Norfolk's neighborhoods. The development goals proposed by the community must compete with other programs throughout the City for funding. Responsibility for advocating on behalf of the Park Place neighborhood will fall largely to Park Place residents and business owners. Regular attendance at hearings and public support for the community plan will be necessary to compete for funding to finance the plan.

## NRHA PARK PLACE REVITALIZATION PLAN

- **Partnerships.** Part of what will make the community's plan successful—and part of what will make Park Place a wonderful place to live—is the establishment of partnerships among community-based groups. This may entail contracts between the City and civic organizations to shift responsibility for neighborhood park maintenance to the community. Involvement by faith-based institutions and other volunteers in youth programs and neighborhood beautification will also contribute to the revitalization of Park Place.