



# Brisbane



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DEFINING THE CORE PLACES IN  
DOWNTOWN BRISBANE

PLACE EVALUATION WORKSHOP  
RESULTS

Brisbane  
December 2005



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# STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report is divided into seven separate sections: The introduction provides background information on Brisbane and highlights the goals outlined in the town's 1994 General Plan, which currently is in the process of being updated and into which portions of this report will be incorporated. Next is a section that describes the September 23rd and 24th workshops which Project for Public Spaces facilitated with the City of Brisbane. This is followed by a description of the overall context in which the Place Evaluation process was conducted, and also describes the five specific areas evaluated by workshop participants. A discussion of the issues and opportunities facing Brisbane, which affect the study area, follows the description of the overall context. Section five presents the main body of the report, in which the findings from the evaluation of each site, the issues of concern, and short and long term recommendations identified are described. The recommendations section outlines short and long term ideas that began to germinate at the workshop, which PPS has taken to the level of conceptual development. A narrative describing these ideas is presented alongside preliminary concept sketches. Short-term concepts are provided for Vistiacion Avenue, the Community Park and the intersection of Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road. A long-term vision is described that would transform downtown Brisbane with a new town center and civic square. A list of specific next steps to undertake to start implementing ideas presented in the report also is included in this section. Finally, a list of potential partners who could help implement the short and long term recommendations identified, to strengthen and more clearly define the core spaces in Downtown Brisbane, is provided at the end of the report.



# I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Brisbane is nestled between South San Francisco, the San Bruno Mountains, and the San Francisco Bay. The town has a population of approximately 3,500 people and covers 20.44 square miles, only 3.44 of which is land mass. Although there had been settlers in the area since the mid-1800's, Brisbane was only incorporated in 1961 as a General Law City. Currently, about 50% of Brisbane's land is vacant, and this is found mainly in the Northeast Ridge and Baylands areas. The primary goal of strengthening Central Brisbane, a key focus of the placemaking workshops facilitated by Project for Public Spaces for the City of Brisbane in September 2005, was to enrich the downtown, so that it functions as a cohesive district that anchors the City, and becomes one of Brisbane's Ten Great Destinations. This effort is crucial at this time because the City will need the downtown to perform successfully as a district in order to thrive and support re-development of the 659-acre Baylands area in northeast Brisbane, the Quarry project, the Northeast Ridge housing development and the completion of Sierra Point.

These development projects come at the time Brisbane is updating its General Plan, the City's planning blue print which was adopted in 1994. In 2004, the City began the process of revisiting the General Plan and holding community workshops to both reconfirm and modify the original Plan goals. This update process is ongoing. The goals of the current General Plan, as stated in the Plan document itself are:

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The City of Brisbane and its Mountain will remain a place independent and distinct, with a small town quality and a volunteer spirit, where diversity is welcomed and everyone can participate in town meetings. Elected officials will carefully consider the desires and needs of the citizens and govern through circumscribed rules and regulations only as required for the public health and safety and the protection of the environment.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In Brisbane, economic development advances will: stabilize and diversify the tax base; service the community by encouraging convenient and beneficial commercial develop-

ment; provide sufficient revenues for necessary City services; facilitate employment of residents; and see sustainable growth as dependent upon the preservation and replenishment of natural resources.

## LAND USE



The City of Brisbane will preserve the Mountain for its own sake and as the symbol of the unique character and identity of the City; incorporate and reflect the natural environment as an integral part of land use; celebrate diversity as essential to the physical character of the City; incorporate a mix of land uses to best serve its citizens; and design infrastructure and public facilities to be efficient, cost-effective and to contribute to the cohesion and character of the community.

## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

The City of Brisbane will be a place where citizens can travel safely and comfortably from north to south, from the Mountain to the Bay; where vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists can access all parts of the City; where transit service is reliable and available and there is less reliance on the automobile; where parking issues have been resolved in both residential and commercial areas; where transportation well serves commercial and industrial businesses; and where there is an established relationship between land use and circulation in place to guide the City toward the future.

## OPEN SPACE



The City of Brisbane will be a place where open space lands have been set aside to protect the natural environment; where outdoor areas provide recreational open space and educational opportunities; where open space and natural areas provide respite to both residents and businesses; and where residents reciprocate by respecting and maintaining the land and the waters for future generations.

## RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Brisbane will be a place where recreational opportunities and facilities allow residents and businesses to join together for play,



health and learning; academic, recreational and artistic education and guidance of the young is valued; residents and businesses share resources and assist one another; and residents and families with special needs are supported.

## CONSERVATION

The City of Brisbane is a place where there is daily contact with the Mountain and the Bay and there is an awareness of the finite nature of resources; where the citizens are judicious in the use of water and energy, and recycling has become part of everyday life; a community that carefully manages the present to protect the future.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY

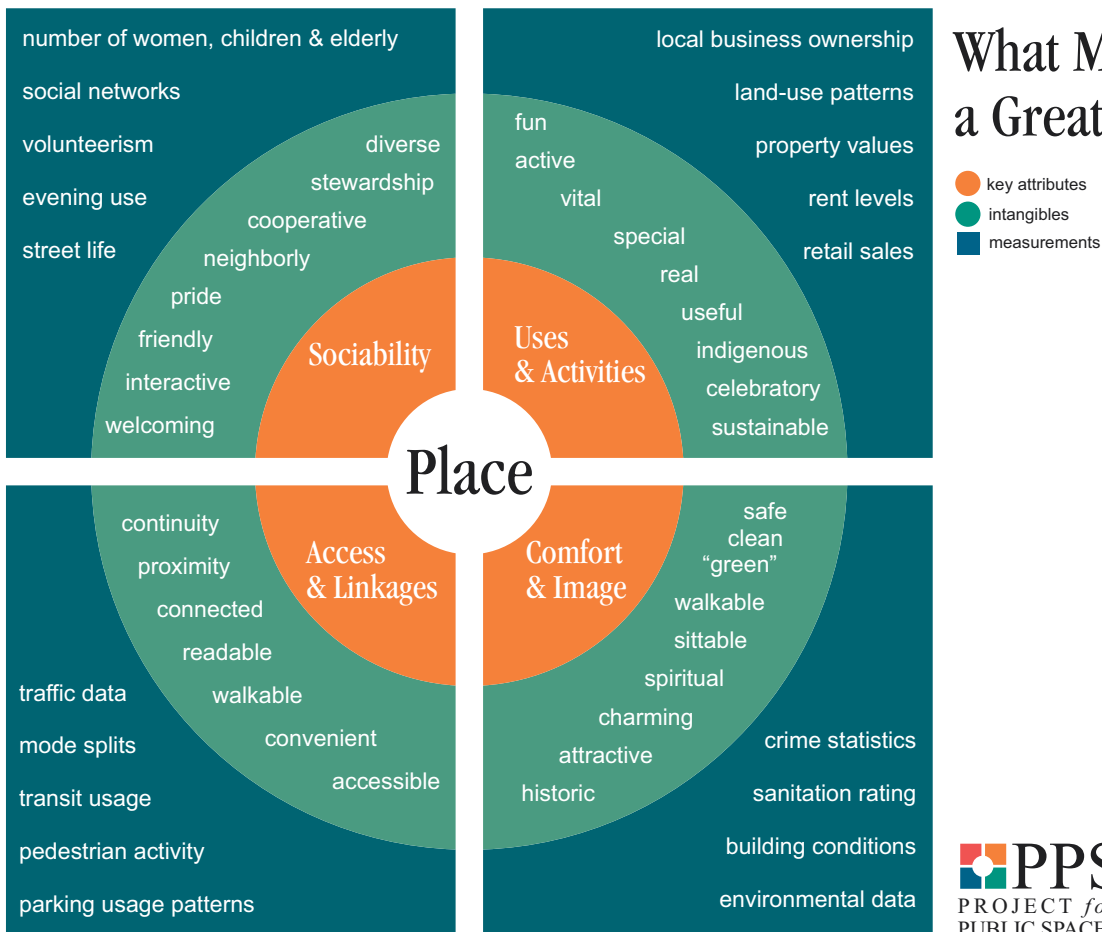
Brisbane will be a place where the community is aware of the potential for natural and man-made disaster and has made sound preparations; the City acts to prevent the loss of life and property and damage to the environment by addressing potential hazards in the use of the land; fire and police services actively prevent problems and stand ready to respond to community needs; the residents and businesses feel safe, and can freely attend to their daily lives; and there is peace and quiet.

## HOUSING

Provide opportunities for housing for the people whose daily lives are focused on Brisbane, in order to maintain and strengthen the sense of community; provide opportunities for a decent home and a clean, safe environment for all residents of Brisbane, regardless of age, race, sex, marital status, ethnic background, family composition, income or sexual orientation; provide opportunities for a variety of housing types, sizes, prices, and tenure to meet the City's present and projected housing needs; provide opportunities for adequate housing, within resource limitations, for very low, low- and moderate-income and special-needs households, including, but not limited to, the elderly, the handicapped, large households, single-parent households, the homeless and ethnic minorities; encourage efforts to improve and conserve existing housing and existing residential neighborhoods. Ensure that new residential development is compatible with existing development and reflects the diversity of the community; remove unreasonable governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement and development of housing.



# What Makes a Great Place?



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## II. WORKSHOP PROCESS

**P**roject for Public Spaces, Inc., a New York-based nonprofit that has worked on the design and management of public spaces around the world, on great parks and public spaces, and what it takes to create them, facilitated two Placemaking Workshops in Brisbane; one on Friday, September 23rd and another on Saturday, the 24th. The workshops drew approximately 35 and 45 participants respectively, who were local citizens, public officials, City staff, design professionals, members of civic and cultural institutions, and representatives from the private sector and local businesses. A number of people participated both days. The workshops were convened in the community center of Brisbane on Visitacion Avenue. Workshop participants were charged with creating a vision for what a revitalized and place-focused downtown Brisbane would look like: not only with regard to creating new places to go to and improving pedestrian access to them, but also for the kinds of uses, activities, and amenities that could be programmed in specific areas, to create excitement and draw people to these spaces. Both workshops were convened as part of the City's ongoing General Plan Update process and, therefore, were framed by the context of the General Plan. The findings described in this report will be incorporated into the General Plan update process.

The guiding principle behind the Place Evaluation workshops facilitated by PPS for the City of Brisbane is that every City needs Ten Great Places, and every public space has to have ten special places within it, with ten reasons to be there or things to do in that place. The purpose of these workshops was to begin to identify Brisbane's potential Ten Great Places. Possible great community places or destinations include schools, pocket parks, playgrounds, local stores (outdoor displays, streetscapes, cafes), mini-plazas (farmers' markets, performances, events), transit stations, religious institutions, hospitals, major streets and their sidewalks and residential streets. Although the workshop participants evaluated most but not all of the above spaces, other key places throughout Brisbane could be evaluated using the same Place Evaluation process.

After the presentation workshop participants were divided up and assigned to groups, The workshops began with a recap of the goals and successes from the 1994 General Plan, given by Bill Prince, Brisbane Community Development Director, followed by a presentation by Fred Kent, President of Project for Public Spaces (PPS), Cynthia Nikitin, Vice President of PPS and Kathleen Ziegenfuss, PPS Associate.

After the presentation, workshop participants were divided into groups, which evaluated key sites throughout the City: four key sites on Friday and five sites on Saturday. The four study areas evaluated during the first workshop focused on three sites located within the Community Park and one just outside of it, specifically:

- Site 2A - the intersection of San Francisco Avenue, San Bruno Avenue, and Visitacion Avenue and the southwest corner of the park, including the Post Office;
- Site 2B - the northern corner of the park, including the skate park and the interface with Old County Road;
- Site 2C - the eastern part of the park, including the restroom facility, picnic tables and play structures;
- Site 4 - the entrance to Brisbane at the intersection of Old County Road and Bayshore Boulevard.

On Saturday, participants focused on five larger areas in Brisbane:

Site 1 – The intersection of Klamath Street and Visitacion Avenue and south to the Library;

Site 2 - the Community Park including connections with the streets and buildings surrounding it, which includes sites 2A, 2B, and 2C from the day before;

Site 3 - Brisbane Village Shopping Center;

Site 4 - the gateway to Brisbane at the intersection of Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road; and

Site 5 - Sierra Point.

Participants conducted an on-site public-space evaluation of each of these sites, focusing on rating four key aspects of their site according to: Comfort & Image, Access & Linkage, Uses & Activities, and Sociability. In addition, each group recorded positive and negative aspects, short-term improvements, long-term solutions, and suggested local partnering agencies or groups that could help implement proposed improvements. Workshop participants brainstormed ideas for the kinds of things they would like to be able to do at their site, how they would get there, what kind of services would need to be provided, what kind of image they think the place should have and what kinds of uses they would like to see added were the site to be redeveloped. Finally, the groups reported out their observations and recommendations to the assembled participants, providing sketches of design recommendations in some instances.

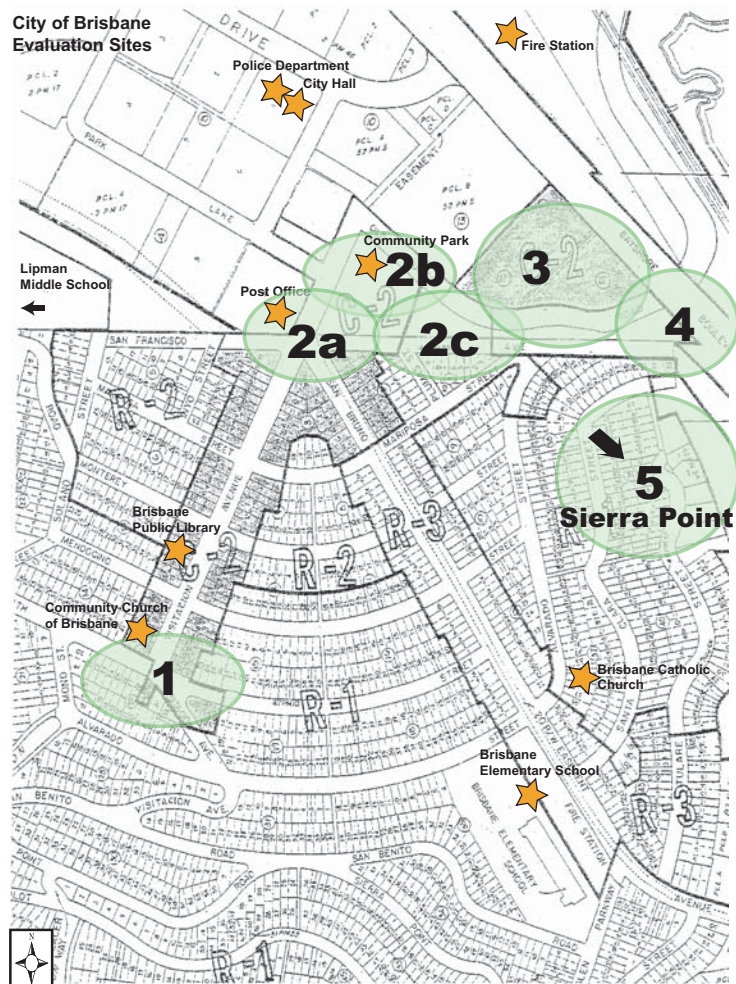
### III. OVERALL SITE CONTEXT

The majority of the City’s commercial and civic activities occur in the five larger sites evaluated by workshop participants, which also represent the bulk of the current built environment in Brisbane. With the exception of Sierra Point, which is on the eastern side of Route 101, the sites are all located within a six-block radius of one another. Their proximity is of major significance and will contribute to the creation of a future core activity hub for Central Brisbane. The workshop provided participants with an opportunity to evaluate and analyze existing conditions at these locations.

Although there are were other potential Great Places located in Central Brisbane such as Lipman Middle School, the Community Pool, Brisbane School, the Fire Department, City Hall and the Police Department, which were not evaluated during these workshops, they all are also within a short walk of at least one of the sites examined. As the sites which were evaluated are strengthened and coalesced around a well defined core area, these outlying sites also can become more fully developed as Great Places, physically and programmatically linked to the rest of the core area.

Sierra Point, which is located only a short drive from Central Brisbane, is cut off from the downtown by the Brisbane Lagoon and a series of highways and train tracks, including Bayshore Boulevard, Route 101, Sierra Point Parkway and the Caltrain tracks. Proper pedestrian and bicycle linkages to Sierra Point are crucial to the success of this area if it is to become more than just a suburban-style office park and a marina, but an integral part of the City of Brisbane.

The sites evaluated during the workshop are described in more detail below.





## SITE 1: INTERSECTION OF KLAMATH STREET AND VISITACION AVENUE, SOUTH TO THE LIBRARY

This site encompasses the intersection at the top of Visitation Avenue at Klamath Avenue, and continues along Visitation Avenue down to the library and community center, situated between Monterey and Mendocino Streets. There is a mix of commercial and single family and ground floor residential uses along this section of Visitation Avenue. The intersection at Klamath and Visitation is very wide and is flanked on two sides by parking space; as currently configured, it is difficult for pedestrians to navigate. The view down Visitation from the top of the street is stunning—you can see all of Central Brisbane, the Bay, and Candlestick Park in San Francisco.



## SITE 2: THE COMMUNITY PARK AND INCLUDING CONNECTIONS TO THE SURROUNDING STREETS AND USES

Participants studied the Community Park as a whole, including the inner park, the restrooms, picnic area, playground, gazebo and great lawn – and the outer park, including the edge facing the Post Office, the intersection of Visitation and San Francisco Avenues, and also considered the connections to all the surrounding streets and how to better connect them to the amenities within the park. The outer park areas analyzed during the Friday workshop are described below.



## SITE 2A: THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE PARK AT THE INTERSECTION OF SAN FRANCISCO AVENUE, SAN BRUNO AVENUE AND VISITACION AVENUE

This site is the 100% corner of Central Brisbane, the physical center of the downtown; when you come to this place you feel that you have truly arrived in Brisbane. The main street in town, Visitation Avenue, meets the Community Park at this spot. This intersection is flanked by some of Brisbane's most key places, including the Post Office, Teen Center, Senior Center, One San Bruno—a future mixed-use development site and the hardware store. Traffic entering Brisbane travels via San Francisco Avenue or Old County Road (both two-way, one-lane streets) and intersects with Visitation. San Bruno Avenue also begins at this intersection. A plan has been submitted to the City for the development of a mixed-use building that will include retail with housing above.



## SITE 2B: THE NORTHERN CORNER OF THE COMMUNITY PARK, INCLUDING THE SKATE PARK AND THE INTERFACE WITH OLD COUNTY ROAD

This site encompasses the northern corner of the Community Park including the area east of the bus stop on Old County Road, the skate park on the corner of Park Lane and Old County Road, and the gazebo structure in the park. The community board, or “death board” as community members refer to it, is a big draw and people come here to find out about local activities, events, and news. The City Hall and the Brisbane Village shopping center are within easy walking distance of this site, but the wall of thick trees along Old County Road completely block visibility to and from these key places. There is currently no parking on Old County Road next to this section of the park.



## SITE 2C: THE EASTERN PART OF THE COMMUNITY PARK, INCLUDING THE RESTROOM FACILITY, PICNIC TABLES AND PLAY STRUCTURES

This section of the park hosts the restroom building, the picnic tables and the playground equipment. It is directly across Old County Road from the Brisbane Village and faces the vacant lot, to the northwest of the shopping center on Bayshore Boulevard, which is owned by the State Teachers Retirement System. This area sees heavy use on the weekends by people picnicking and families using the playground equipment.



## SITE 3: THE BRISBANE VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER

Brisbane Village, the shopping center located between San Francisco Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard, was a key site evaluated by participants. The shopping center currently serves as the entranceway into Brisbane; the sign announcing the shopping center is the primary visual clue that you have entered Brisbane. Much space is devoted to parking, the storefronts are set back behind the parking with their backs facing Bayshore Boulevard. There is no real pedestrian access from Bayshore Boulevard to the shopping center, only automobile access. There is an empty lot to the northwest of the shopping center which is owned by the State Teachers Retirement System .





#### SITE 4: THE ENTRANCE TO BRISBANE AT THE INTERSECTION OF OLD COUNTY ROAD AND BAYSHORE BOULEVARD

Bayshore Boulevard intersects with Old County Road and marks the primary gateway into Brisbane. Bayshore Boulevard is a five-lane City-owned road which carries very fast-moving traffic. Walking down Bayshore Boulevard is an experience most people try to avoid, as sidewalks are intermittent or lacking entirely. While there are great views from this location no one wants to stop there and enjoy them. There are two bus stops on Bayshore Boulevard and one on Old County Road, and a new bridge will move traffic from central Brisbane to the I01. This intersection will be a key meeting point between the current town and the future development in the Baylands, which lies just to the north of the intersection and on the eastern side of Bayshore Boulevard and the Caltrain tracks.



#### SITE 5: SIERRA POINT

Sierra Point lies to the southeast of Central Brisbane, below the Brisbane Lagoon. The peninsula, a former sanitary landfill, is the site of a 102 acre office park and includes two hotels, a walking trail, and a 30 acre municipal marina. There has been much development in the area since 1980, when the City began construction on the landfill. The primary land uses here are office buildings and parking lots. More development is planned and/or under review at this time.





## IV. OVERALL ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Participants saw huge potential in each of the areas they evaluated. In general, they liked the views of the ocean and of the mountains, and the “Brisbane feel” of things, meaning it felt different than San Francisco and other outlying suburbs. There is a small-town feel to Brisbane, and workshop participants want to conserve that image and highlight uses that add to that community sense and pride of place.

Participants generated a multitude of ideas for programming, management, and urban design changes to the sites in Brisbane that would help transform them into destinations and vital public spaces; making the areas accessible and attractive to residents, tourists, employees, and other user groups alike. Funding for the design, implementation and long-term management of these improvements is an issue of concern, but a number of working partners were identified by each group at the workshop.

The potential for new or future planned residential enclaves in the Quarry and the Northeast Ridge will provide a built-in audience and customer base needed to support increased vitality and activity in the public spaces, retail and civic destinations in Brisbane. Participants highlighted the disparate population groups (residents versus employees) as a key issue when discussing opportunities for enhancing Central Brisbane; the day-time population swells with workers who tend to want different amenities than do the residents of Brisbane. The merchants and business owners are perceived as catering to employees rather than to residents. Developing a vision that builds on the resources presented by both population groups, while providing them with desired opportunities to gather, eat, relax, shop and enjoy different public spaces in town was a constant thread of the workshop discussions.

The Community Park and the gateway intersection of Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road emerged as having the greatest “place potential”: to become a Town Square and the Village Gateway. The Community Park could easily be transformed into a civic plaza/community gathering space by implementing some of the short and long term recommendations participants described below. The intersection of Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road has the potential to become a true gateway to Brisbane, the proud entrance to town, if reconfigured and redesigned accordingly. The Brisbane Village Shopping Center and Visitacion also demonstrate tremendous potential to be reborn as vibrant neighborhood retail corridors.



## V. PLACE EVALUATION SITES

### SITE 1: INTERSECTION OF KLAMATH STREET AND VISITACION AVENUE AND DOWN VISITACION TO THE LIBRARY

#### Evaluation of the Place

There are signs that the area is moving towards becoming a successful small-town Main Street that encourages street life: the mural on the side of the market, the painted fire hydrants, the seating area created outside the deli, brick-work at the crosswalks, and the angled parking on the east side of Visitacion are all signs that Visitacion has and is being designed to encourage street life and pedestrian activity. The coffee shop is already a natural gathering place, and there is the possibility of creating additional small gathering spaces or pocket parks along this corridor.

One participant eloquently described the challenges faced when assessing changes to this area, which really speaks to all changes that Brisbane faces: “People don’t want it to become a Clement Street—the intimacy gets lost. We are all challenged with the idea of change, [our] first response is usually to reject, even though the change may be beneficial. Brisbane is a colorful place, [with] a lot of opportunity that [also] presents challenges.”

Everyone agreed, however, that there is room for improvement. Participants came up with a variety of short and long term options that would help transform Visitacion into a great main street for Brisbane, with an intimate feel typical of small towns and a mix of retail uses and housing. Two key recommendations for this area were reconfiguring the parking and current roadway design to create more public areas that encourage human activity, and working with merchants and business owners to expand the range of goods and services they offer to better meet the needs of a residential population.





*Brisbane Public Library.*



*Add seating in front of the mural at the market for patrons to eat outside.*



*Create more outside space for patrons of the coffee shop and deli.*



*Introduce a farmer's market to the area.*

## Short Term Physical Improvements

Participants recommended the following:

- Visitation marks the western gateway to Brisbane; this is where the mountain meets the City. This connection can be greatly enhanced by adding trail markers along the street and maps that guide people to the trails from the town center. The corner of Klamath and Visitation could serve as a second trail head for the trail system.
- Re-stripe the church parking lot to accommodate more parking
- Plant more street trees to help soften the environment.
- Add seating in front of the mural at the market to create a place for market patrons to eat deli sandwiches.
- Make the bulletin board in front of the market an official notice board for the community, with updates on community events.
- Trim back the landscaping which blocks views to the library and community center. Activate the ground floor windows and the windows along the entrance path with exhibits, artwork, and information. Take advantage of the area behind the library, which is currently underutilized, by opening up the back entrance of the building and hosting events such as community barbeques or using it as an outdoor reading room.

## Recommendations for Managing the Space

- Use the church and its front lawn as sites for community events.
- To improve the intersection at the top of the hill, have the church, the coffee shop, and the realtor's office take stewardship of the public space surrounding their buildings, including taking care of the outdoor dining/seating area.
- Introduce a farmer's market in the church parking lot. This could be run by a local civic group (the Lion's Club runs a market in Ontario Canada) or by the City or a local non-profit. (See Appendix for more information about starting up a farmers market).

- Create a Visitacion Avenue business or merchants association to ensure proper care is given to the business district. The business association can work with the City on retail recruitment, on instituting policies (such as rent stabilization, façade improvement grants, loans to help businesses expand) to help merchants prepare to enhance their economic viability and remain competitive. They also can coordinate and offer special promotions, events, marketing campaigns, and beautification efforts.
- Establish a lunch-time shuttle bus to bring office workers from Sierra Point and Crocker Industrial Park downtown without having to deal with driving and parking.



Community event at the park.

## SITE 2: THE COMMUNITY PARK INCLUDING CONNECTIONS TO THE SURROUNDING STREETS AND USES

### Evaluation of the Place

The Community Park is seen as the lynchpin of Brisbane, the heart of the town center – the place which all others surround. The connections between the park and other key central areas can be described as a star – one of the City’s longstanding themes - with the center being the park and other places radiating towards it. This place is the pride of Brisbane, its natural gathering spot, and the place that could best define the town.



Southern edge of park, along San Francisco Avenue.

Participants rated this area as one of the most successful in Brisbane due to its location, the activities available in the park, and the views from and to the park. People like the large green openness of the meadow and the smaller, more intimate garden space behind the restroom building. The public bathroom provides an important amenity for the area. In addition, the park is very well maintained and regularly programmed with concerts and special events. It is also heavily used for picnicking, to the point that picnic tables are often unavailable at peak times.





*Delineate a crosswalk to connect the park to surrounding areas.*



*Improve the signage in the park; consider it the main information point for people entering Brisbane.*



*Add movable seating in the park.*

There was some concern that the park lacks a sense of play and vitality, that it was too formal in its design to encourage as much spontaneous use as might be desired. The climate provides ample challenges for the park; many people are dissuaded by the wind. And while the openness of the park is an asset in some instances, there is also a lack of intimate spaces where one can go and feel alone in the park. It is not large enough to support recreational activities such as soccer matches or baseball games, but feels too formal for games of Frisbee or volleyball.

## Short Term Improvements

Improvements recommended by workshop participants for implementation in the short term which would improve the inner park as well as the outer park:

## Physical Improvements

### Access and Linkages

- Delineate a crosswalk to connect the skate park, bus stop, and Community Park. Consider raised brick crosswalks with lighting. A stop sign could be added here, if traffic volumes warranted it.
- Improve connections to City Hall and Brisbane Village Shopping Center with crosswalks and by thinning out the wall of trees that currently block site lines between these areas.

### Amenities

- Manage the climate with a series of amenities such as heat lamps in the gazebo, shade trees, and wind blocks and screens. The windshield could be semi-permanent and the heaters could be turned on during different events. These changes would lengthen the season and hours of the day when the park could be used.
- Add more amenities, such as benches, moveable and creative seating, and tables with chess and checker tops, recycling bins and trash cans.
- Install an information kiosk in the park. Include information about local attractions and events, as well as maps noting

hiking trails and highlighting the key places in Brisbane. This could also serve as a telescope/mountain viewing station. It could be staffed during special events as well and used to sell tickets, as appropriate.

- Paint murals on the surrounding building walls to improve connections with the park.
- Improve the circulation paths within the park to make paths go where people want to walk, such as to the gazebo and from the gazebo to the playground.

## Programmatic Improvements

- Regrade the center lawn to create usable, flexible sport space, to facilitate badminton, croquet or volleyball games. Designate areas in the park for bocce ball, cricket and horse-shoes.
- Work with the City's Recreation Department and the Teen Center to start up a teen market Thursday or Friday nights, for teens to come and sell/exchange their goods and participate in a community activity designed especially for them.
- Introduce a food vendor to the park—anything from a popcorn or cappuccino cart to a kiosk with food. Consider both temporary and permanent options. A permanent kiosk could provide information, food and drink options. Encourage collaboration among local food merchants and assist them with setting up a cart to come to the park during lunchtime on weekdays, and during special events.
- Program weekly classes for painting, knitting, or other activities. Pair up with the senior and teen centers to find instructors and/or participants.
- Schedule movies in the park on a regular basis.
- Create more senior and adult attractions such as gaming and chess tables.
- Have the merchants association operate a cooperative lunch cart that would provide a variety of food options in the Community Park.
- Eliminate the wall of trees between the park and the State Teachers Retirement System property.
- Harness the wind in the area by installing windmills in the park, and use the energy to finance park management. Artists could be commissioned to design the windmills.



*Food vendor.*



*Program summer movies in the park.*



*Markets in the park.*



*Landscaped buffer between the park and Old County Road.*

## Long Term Physical and Design Improvements

The elements that could be incorporated in the longer term include:

- Plant the painted median along Old County Road. This also will slow cars and will make it safer for pedestrians to cross the street by providing them with a refuge where they can wait.
- Build a landscaped buffer between the park and the Old County Road to provide a protected edge for the east side of the park, making sure it is not too high to cut off sight-lines.
- Transform this area into a civic plaza by reconfiguring or removing the section of Old County Road that circles the park so that it no longer separates the park from its edges but connects it and the park to City Hall. An alternative to that is to brick the streets to slow down traffic on Old County Road. (See attached sketch on page 36).
- Reprogram surrounding buildings around new civic plaza for community use, (i.e. the warehouse next to the State Teachers Retirement System property, whose lease is up in two year) such as a new library/community center and charter high school.



*Intersection, from Old County Road looking southwest up Visitation Avenue.*



*The town Post Office.*



*Site of the future One San Bruno Development.*

## SITE 2A: INTERSECTION OF SAN FRANCISCO AVENUE, SAN BRUNO AVENUE AND VISITACION AVENUE AND THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE PARK

### Evaluation of the Place

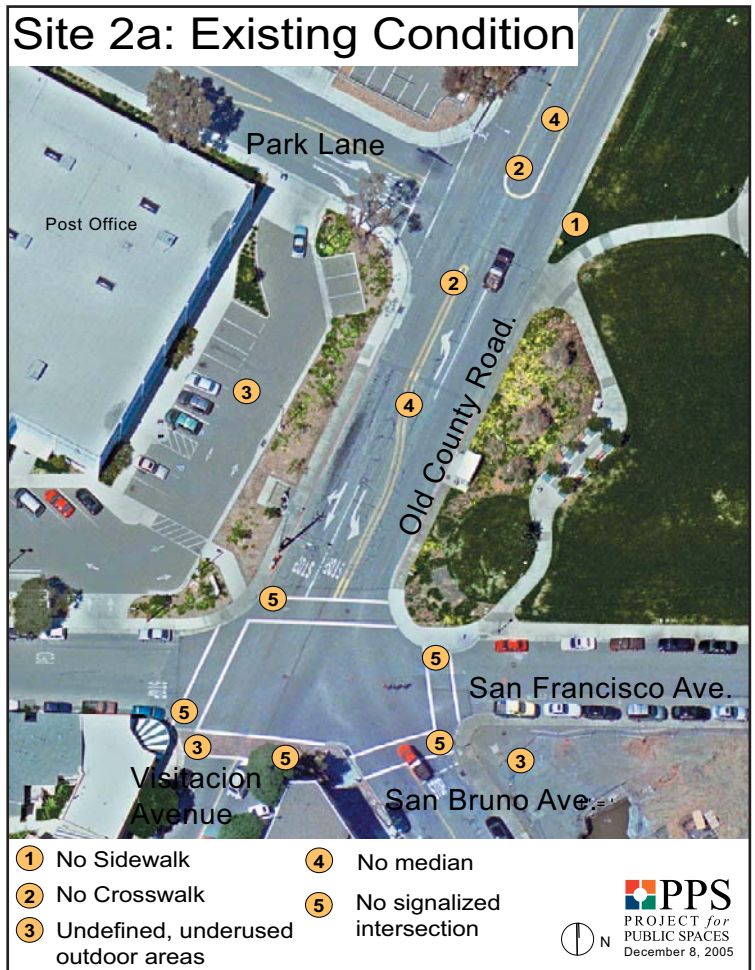
This intersection has the potential to become a true retail and entertainment “hot spot” for Central Brisbane. Here lies the confluence of the Post Office, the Community Park, a bus stop, the main commercial street in town (Visitation Avenue), the Teen Center, the Senior Center, and One San Bruno, a future mixed use redevelopment site, and a hardware store. A key issue facing this intersection is the lack of a reason to stop and enjoy the space. The Post Office is designed for a suburban setting, and does little to attract anyone on foot because the building is set back behind its parking lot. Neither the senior center nor teen center have any “front lawns” or outdoor space where patrons can gather; the narrow sidewalks, speed of cars and width of the



roadway deters seniors from stepping outside, let alone walking to the park.

Traffic and parking present key issues at this intersection. While there are some brick crosswalks at the intersection to make for safer crossing, the space is visually and physically dedicated to automobiles. There is parking on both sides of San Francisco, San Bruno and Visitacion Avenues, with angled parking on the east side of Visitacion. Most traffic currently enters Central Brisbane from Bayshore Boulevard at Old County Road, circles around the park and then enters this five-way intersection. As there are no signalized intersections, traffic often moves too fast around the park.

A number of physical design improvements that could be introduced in either the short and longer term, were identified by participants evaluating this site. Many of the same recommendations could be applied to other intersections and streets within the study area.



### Short Term Physical Improvements

- Enhance the intersection with historic-style street lighting with hanging flower baskets and more perennial flowers at the ground level.
- Improve the bus stop in the park by moving it back and making it part of the landscaped seating area behind it.
- If there is enough room, add angled parking along Old County Road. This both provides additional on-street parking and slows cars down.
- Build a planted median on Old County Road that continues through this intersection to slow traffic.
- Revisit the 20' road width requirement set forth by the fire department to ensure there are no cars parked on the sidewalk in the parts of town where on-street shopper parking is desired, such as on San Francisco Avenue at Mariposa Street. The California Fire Code (902.2.2) requires a minimum of 20 feet of unobstructed roadway. This would mean 10 ft. per lane on a two-way street. However, congested streets and limited connections and access points



Provide historic street lighting with hanging flowers.



Add angled parking on Old County Road.



Improve the newspaper stands in front of the Post Office.



One-laned street with planted median.



Consider a roundabout at the intersection of Old County Road, San Francisco Ave, Visitacion and San Bruno Streets.

can significantly increase response times. Wide, high-speed streets – particularly those in residential neighborhoods or near schools and shopping areas – also increase the risk of accidents with other vehicles and pedestrians. Moreover, as cited in “Eliminating Code Barriers to Smart Development” (School of Urban Studies and Planning, Portland State University, June 2003) “If block lengths are short, 300 feet or less, fire trucks can park at the end of a block and stretch their hoses up to 150 feet to reach a fire anywhere on the block without needing access to the street.”

- Improve the look of the newspaper stands in front of the Post Office by consolidating them into one newsbox structure with space for four to eight newspapers to be displayed.

## Long Term Physical Improvements

Reconfigure the intersection to make it into an internal gateway for the City by:

- Narrowing Old County Road and San Francisco Avenue to improve traffic flow and pedestrian access at this intersection. These streets could be reduced to one lane in each direction .
- Exploring the feasibility of installing a roundabout at the intersection of Visitacion, San Francisco and Old County road, which also would slow traffic.
- Tie the Post Office programmatically to the park by placing the parking behind the building and allowing the building to be used as a mixed-use facility, with an outdoor café and plaza up front where patrons can socialize and read their mail. Consider a country store or market next to the Post Office as well.
- Ensuring the development at the vacant site at One San Bruno has active ground-floor uses to attract pedestrians and contribute to the street life in the area.

## SITE 2B: THE NORTHERN CORNER OF THE COMMUNITY PARK INCLUDING THE SKATE PARK AND THE INTERFACE WITH OLD COUNTY ROAD

### Evaluation of the Place

Participants appreciated this part of the park as a welcoming place for residents as they come into town. They said when one sees the park, one feels like they are already home - that “everything drops away behind you as you drive by.” The activities that happen in the park make people happy, even if they do not attend. Every weekend the park becomes very active.

People liked how well maintained the park is, which evidences the town’s sense of pride. It was described as the community’s front lawn; a place people feel comfortable. It provides great views of the mountains and a great entrance feature for the City. The community board, or “death board”, was much appreciated by participants as a communication tool.

The skate park, across Old County Road from this section of the park, is a place where town kids gather. Participants were glad the City was doing something for the kids and creating places for them to hang out in. There, however, is a black chain link fence around the skate park and no crosswalks to the Community Park.

### Short Term Improvements

Participants came up with many physical and activity-related improvements for implementation in the short term, including:

### Physical Improvements

- Add sidewalks along the eastern edge of the park. Now, the sidewalks end at the path leading behind the bus stop to the gazebo. Rather than carving out six feet of space from the park to create the space for sidewalks, the space would be acquired from the roadway, which would serve to narrow Old County Road by six feet and thereby help to slow traffic.
- At the perimeter, use landscaping and plantings to serve as a buffer to the traffic. Also consider adding parking on Old County Road to slow down auto traffic around the park.



Gazebo in northern section of park.



Community death board.



Add sidewalks to edge of the park to buffer from street.



Corner bump-outs, landscaping and pavement, and stop sign as ways to calm traffic.



*Informative signage for area attractions and walking trails.*



*Farmer's market to sell fresh goods.*



*Temporary structure for performances.*

- At the skate park, landscape the site with trees, flower plantings, and grass. Paint or remove the chain link fence and replace it with something more attractive. Have more activities available for teens at this area. Add a concession where one could rent a skateboard, rollerblades or a bike at the park. Consider putting a basketball court behind the skate park, to the northwest.
- Add a mid-block crossing across Old County on the east and west sides of Park Lane to facilitate pedestrian crossing from the skate park and Post Office to the park, and to slow down traffic
- Add signage to delineate the entrance to the skate park.
- Consider adding a stop sign on Old County Road at the intersection with Park Lane.

### Programmatic Improvements

- Consider establishing a farmers market in the pavilion/gazebo.
- Start a native garden in the area that could be maintained by people at the senior and teen centers.
- Consider a temporary skating rink.
- Program the gazebo/amphitheater for concerts, dance performances, and community events.

### Long Term Improvements

The elements that could be incorporated in the longer term, and that should be included in the master planning for the redesign of the space, include:

- Renovate the gazebo to make it function as a protected amphitheater, allowing it to be used even in inclement weather.
- Relocate the gazebo entirely or replace it with a temporary structure such as a moveable stage or tent that would be set up only when events were scheduled.

## SITE 2C: THE EASTERN PART OF THE COMMUNITY PARK INCLUDING THE RESTROOM FACILITY, PICNIC TABLES AND PLAY STRUCTURES

### Evaluation of the Place

Having a central meeting place, with play structures and picnic tables to gather around, makes this spot attractive, according to workshop participants. They enjoy the openness of the area and the views of the mountain. The bathrooms and the drinking fountains are huge benefits to people who come to spend some time at the park, particularly for families with children. During the weekend, this site is heavily used as a party site.

### Short-Term Improvements

Participants suggested ways to make this space more inviting.

- Have a water play area, possibly a water spigot or other feature in the sand box.
- Fence the perimeter of the area with plantings to create more of a physical boundary.

### Long Term Improvements

Longer-term design changes that could be incorporated into the master planning for the redesigned park include:

- Regroup the benches near the play equipment to allow for better conversation.
- Add movable seating and more benches and picnic tables.



*Existing play structure.*



*Fixed picnic tables.*



*Play features for the Community Park.*



*Movable seating to provide maximum comfort and choice.*



Brisbane Village Shopping Center, from Bayshore Boulevard.



Signage for Brisbane Village Shopping Center.

## SITE 3: THE BRISBANE VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER

### Evaluation of the Place

“Knock it down!” one interviewee told participants during their evaluation of Brisbane Village. While this reaction was rather extreme, the shopping center has tremendous untapped potential to positively impact the look and feel of Brisbane. Participants were most satisfied with the location of the center, the convenience it offers, and the fact that there were economic stakeholders in town

### Short-Term Improvements

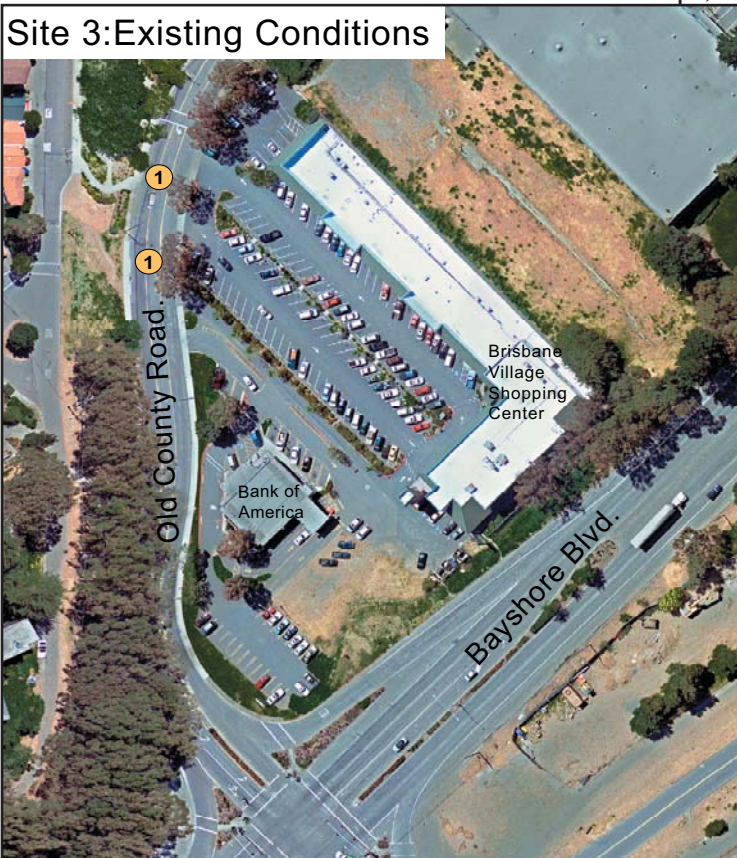
Many people interviewed in this area as part of the workshop activities offered suggestions for improvements. Participants noted that it was difficult for the center to sustain more restaurants and shops, or for the existing ones to stay open late, because

of the size of the residential population base in Brisbane. The ideas they generated included not allowing any more chain stores in the plaza, extending the hours of the businesses in the shopping center when practicable, reducing the rent to attract a larger variety of merchants (both food and non-food related), and repainting the façade. They thought it was great to have a laundromat and a bank there, but they thought the services and items sold were generally overpriced.

In general, participants suggested ways to make the shopping center more inviting and more deeply imbued with a sense of place than it currently exhibits, for both local residents and those who work in Brisbane.

- Improve the general maintenance and cleanliness of the area and its surroundings.
- Remove the fence between the shopping center and the bank to allow better and safer passageway between the two establishments by pedestrians.

### Site 3: Existing Conditions



① No Crosswalks



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December 9, 2005

- Add well-marked crosswalks across Old County Road to lead people from the shopping center to the park and vice versa.
- Recruit a greater number and variety of merchants to the plaza. Possibilities include a flower shop, a jewelry shop, an insurance company, a coffee shop, a gift store, and a pharmacy. These merchants will be heavily influenced by what type of development occurs in the Baylands.
- Crocker Park, a well-established, thriving industrial park, affects the success of this area, as it provides many of the lunch-time patrons of the restaurants and delis in the shopping center. It was suggested that a lunch-time shuttle be introduced to bring more people to the downtown area during the week without increasing the associated traffic and parking problems. A shuttle that would enable people to leave their cars at the office. The shuttle service should be designed to make it faster for people to use than to spend time driving and parking.

## Long Term Physical Design Improvements

Major physical recommendations were considered at the workshop which could be incorporated into other plans for redesigning Brisbane’s civic center area. These changes would require the cooperation of the owner of the Brisbane Village shopping center, the owner of the Bank of America building, the State Teachers Retirement System (who owns the vacant lot next to the shopping center) and the City of Brisbane.

- Construct sidewalks along the east side of Bayshore Boulevard to serve pedestrians walking from the Civic Center and City Hall to the shopping center.
- Build an outdoor café/restaurant on the second level of the shopping center, to take advantage of the magnificent views of the water and the mountains.
- Build a bridge over Old County Road to connect the plaza with the Community Park.
- Redesign and rebuild the Brisbane Village Shopping center. As part of the shopping center redesign:
  - Move the Bank of America building toward the corner of Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road. The building is currently a trailer and could be moved to make the space more open, attractive and appropriate as a major anchor at the gateway to the City.



*Improve general maintenance.*



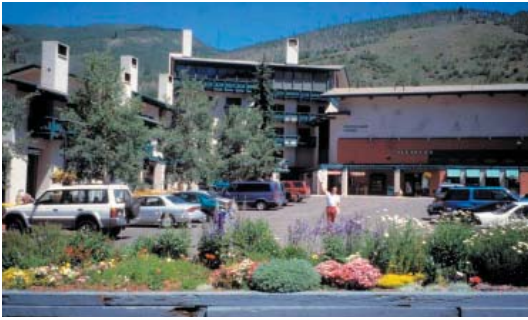
*Well-marked cross-walks across Old County Road.*



*Two-level outdoor cafe or restaurant.*



*Sidewalks along Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road.*



Reconfigure the Brisbane Village Shopping Center to be more pedestrian oriented.



Covered parking structure.



Create a piazza or grand plaza for Central Brisbane.



Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road, a key entrance into Brisbane.

- o Build stores and businesses in the parking lot of Bank of America, moving toward the edge of Old County Road and Bayshore Boulevard.
- o Relocate the shops so they face outwards towards Old County Road and Bayshore Boulevard to increase the retail presence of Brisbane Village Shopping Center.

The shops should dress up their windows with displays that would encourage window shopping, both on Old County Road and Bayshore Boulevard. This pedestrian-scaled activity will naturally reduce the speed of car traffic on these busy roads.

- o Reconfigure all parking at this site, either relocating the parking behind the buildings and away from the edge of the street or creating a covered parking structure with an outdoor space/plaza at the top level for public use.
- Undertake major renovations in the entire area to create a “piazza” type of plaza, with mixed-use buildings surrounding a new public space. The uses here would be both residential and commercial uses. (See Concept Sketch)



## SITE 4: THE ENTRANCE TO BRISBANE AT THE INTERSECTION OF OLD COUNTY ROAD AND BAYSHORE BOULEVARD

### Evaluation of the Place

This intersection generates most people’s first impression of Brisbane. The site that workshop participants evaluated was bounded by the hill on the southwest corner, the Bank of America, its parking lot, and a dirt lot on the northwest corner, the beginnings of the Baylands and the reconfigured bridge on the northeast corner, and the Caltrain park-and-ride lot on the southeast corner.

Participants like the eucalyptus trees and greenery at this intersection, the planters and the islands in the road, and the views one had while waiting at the traffic light. The landscape is well maintained. They thought the road design offered free right turn lanes which allows traffic to flow freely. There is good visibility.

Transit accessibility at this intersection was rated high—there are two bus stops and a Caltrain park-n-ride lot for commuters, with a train station nearby. It was noted that many employees of the stores in Brisbane Village Shopping Center across the street park in the park-n-ride lot while they are working.

A main concern for this site was safety—the intersection has a lot of fast moving traffic flowing through it. Because there is little pedestrian activity, there are few pedestrian amenities, like street lights and continuous sidewalks. Participants also mentioned that it was very hard for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the intersection as the light cycle timed out before many made it across. There is also a lack of bicycle trail connections to this area.

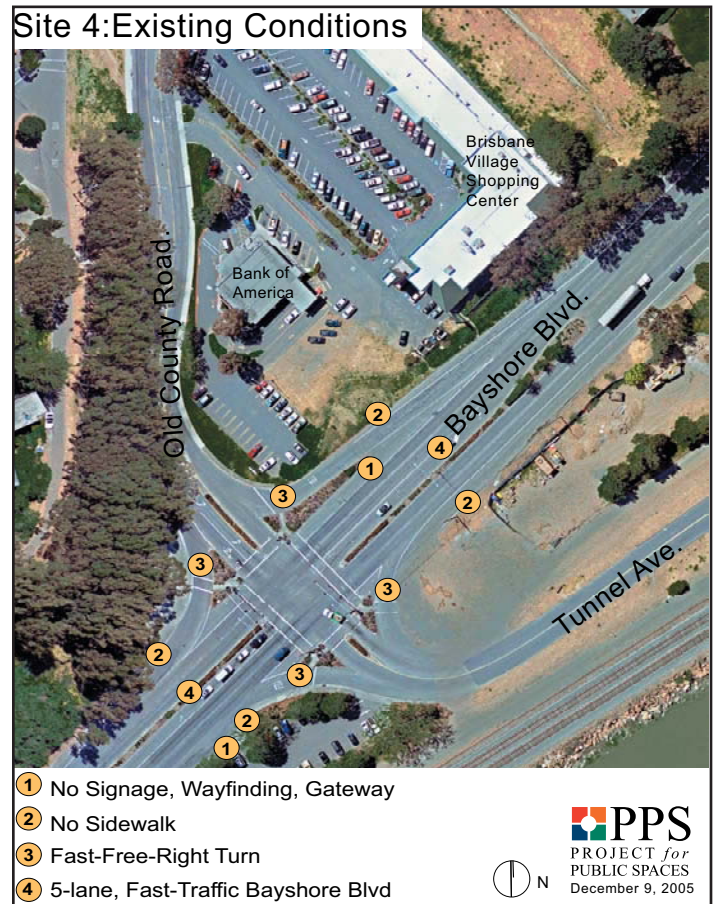
Another concern was the fact that this space currently functions as a dead zone, except for those in a car or those waiting for the bus. There is not even a sign welcoming one to Brisbane; people thought this reflected a lack of pride for the town. As one participant said, it is “hideous, noisy, busy, traffic moves too fast, [and there is] no place to gather or meet”.



Intersection of Bayshore Boulevard and Old County Road.



Bus stop on Bayshore Boulevard.





*Brick crosswalks from the park to the shopping center.*



*Improve the amenities around the bus stop.*



*Improve bus stop.*



*A buried parking garage under a park.*

Despite the issues with this intersection, it has great potential to become THE defining entranceway into Brisbane. There is not much that is built on this site already (save the road infrastructure), which provides a relatively clean slate to work with. Implementing some of the short term improvements listed below and working on a plan to develop some of the long term improvements will dramatically improve this site. The fact that Bayshore Boulevard is a locally owned road gives the City tremendous flexibility in shaping the future configuration of this intersection.

## Short Term Physical Improvements

Recommended physical improvements for implementation in the short term include:

- Narrow Bayshore to two travel lanes wide in each direction
- Add on street parking to both sides of Bayshore from Old County north to City Hall
- Close the free right turns at the intersection with Old County to force cars to slow down before they turn. This also provides more space for pedestrians and narrows crossing distances.
- Encourage developers to build retail and commercial businesses on the east side of Bayshore between City Hall and Old County Road.
- Bump-out all corners of the intersection to narrow pedestrian crossing distances.
- Extend the walk time on the traffic signal.
- Install brick crosswalks.
- Install pedestrian scaled lighting.
- Improve the amenities around the bus stops on the southeast and southwest corners of the intersection. Add lighting and sheltered seating at the bus stop.
- Define the sidewalk around the southwest corner of the intersection and make it attractive by landscaping the area all the way to the bus stop and landscaping the hillside with trees, flower plantings, and grass.

## Programmatic Improvements

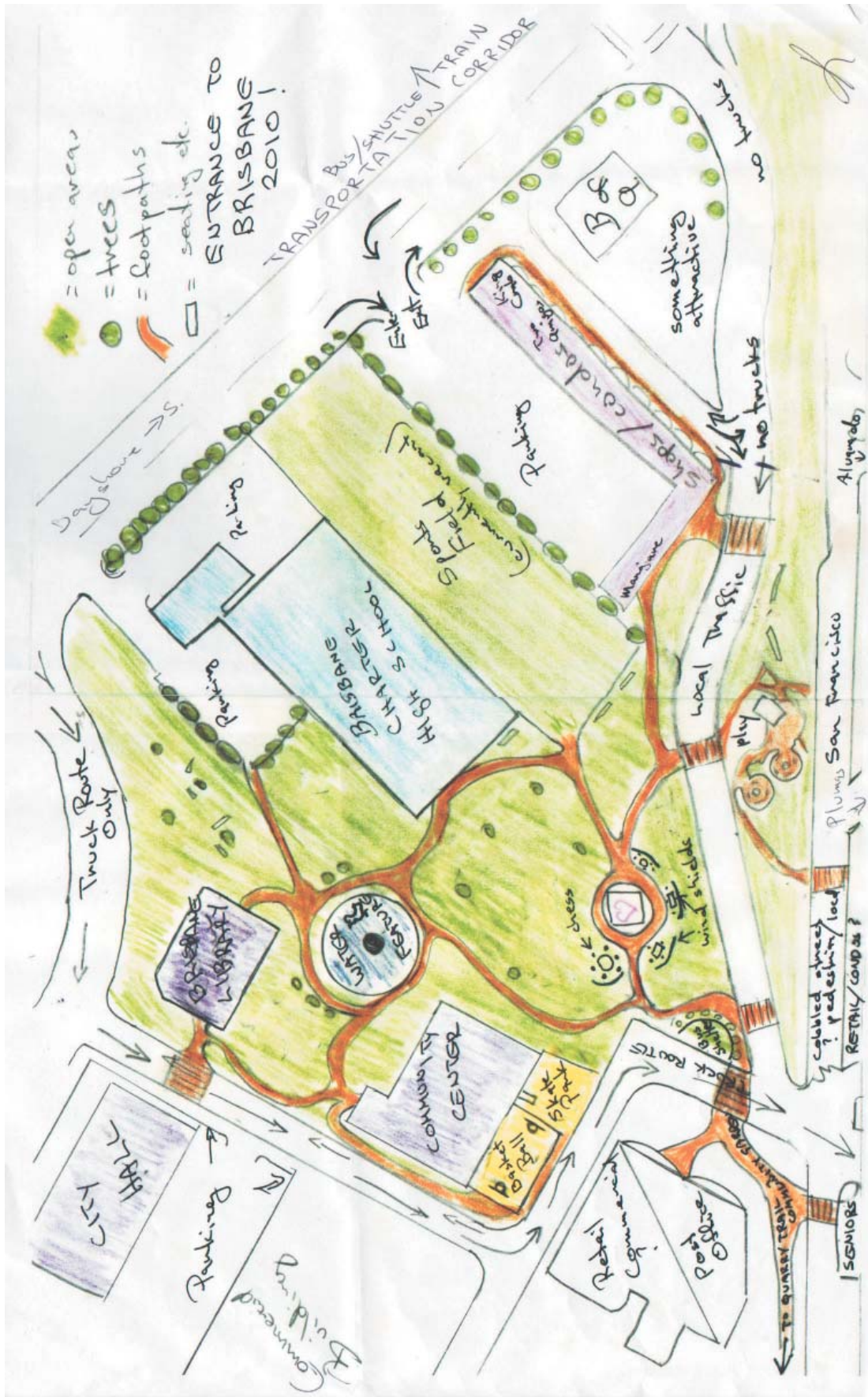
- Create a gateway at the western edge of this intersection, announcing the arrival into the Village of Brisbane, with a kiosk, more attractive and well-designed signage, lighting, and plantings. Move the “Welcome to Brisbane” sign closer to this intersection. (Ensure that there are uniform signage standards throughout town.)
- Place a symbol for the San Bruno Mountain or the City somewhere up the ridge, where it would be visible from this entrance. This could be one of the defining symbols of Brisbane, such as a star.
- The southwest corner of Old County Road and Bayshore, where the bus stops are located, could function as a mini-plaza that could host the Christmas tree sales, a farmer’s market, or other types of temporary markets or events. The Christmas tree sales area could also be located at another corner of this intersection. It could also host mobile vendors such as a hot-dog stand near the bus stop.



*Define the entrance to Brisbane from Bayshore Boulevard with a gateway.*



*Possible symbols for San Bruno Mountain.*



Civic Plaza concept plan developed by workshop participants.

## SITE 5: SIERRA POINT

### Evaluation of the Place

Participants liked the water, views, wildlife and birds, isolation, quiet, peacefulness, safety and general openness of Sierra Point. People also liked the fact that there was running water on the fishing piers which provided a place to clean fish.

This space, however, is visually and physically dominated by the presence of large office buildings that exhibit little signs of use at times other than the workday, and even then their windows are opaque and create a “blank wall” effect. There are vast open parking lots that, while densely packed during the day, are vacant at night and during the weekend, which gives the area a feeling of desolation and isolation. Workshop participants thought the Master Plan concepts for Sierra Point need redefining.

### Short Term Improvements

Physical improvements recommended by workshop participants for implementation in the short term include:

- Add basic amenities such as trash cans, drinking fountains, benches and directional and informational signage to the public spaces, street corners, and entry points of the site. An informational kiosk could be added here as well to inform visitors about what they are looking at—both on water and in the mountains. People also wanted to have more public bathrooms in the area.
- Open up opportunities to use the water by providing public boat launches, and a kayak or windsurfing rental station.
- Place picnic tables with moveable seating in outdoor sheltered areas by the water.
- Look at Granville Island (in Vancouver) as a possible role model of how a waterfront district can be financially viable.
- Improve connections to central Brisbane, both physically and programmatically. Physical changes would be more long-term but the town could start planning different events to attract people to Sierra Point. Festivals, markets, water shows or other events would connect the town to this area, which is currently underutilized as a gathering space.



*Sierra Point.*



*Existing path, Sierra Point.*



*Parking lot, Sierra Point.*



*Information kiosk to orient people, with public bathrooms.*



*Provide basic amenities such as benches.*



*Increase water activities at Sierra Point.*



*Introduce high-speed internet at no cost.*



*Improve lighting along the water.*



*Install telescopes at the fishing pier.*

- Consider providing high-speed internet connections. Several businesspeople who were interviewed on-site said they left the area because there was no DSL. One of the businesses in the area would be a likely partner to make this happen.
- Invite merchants from Brisbane Village to vend food and drinks at Sierra Point during lunch. Rather than everyone driving to the shopping center, the restaurants could come to Sierra Point. Advertise the location of the vendors at Sierra Point businesses.
- This site was seen as a good location to have a possible fish market, which could serve as a regional destination in the area.
- There is currently low lighting in the area; increasing the lighting could improve people's perception of the safety of the area and make it a more attractive place for families to go to.
- Install a coin-operated telescope at the fishing pier and possible other locations.
- Install interpretive signage along the Bay trail highlighting points of interest from a natural, ecological, geographical, cultural and historical perspective. Tell the story of the area in these interpretive signs, bringing the past, present and future alive.
- In general, people wanted to see more activities in this area. There is huge potential due to the location and waterfront access.

## Long Term Improvements

The elements that could be implemented in the longer term, and that should be included in a larger comprehensive plan for this area of the City include:

- Improve the site's connection to central Brisbane through means other than driving. There is currently no link to the town, physically or mentally. Light rail access to the area was also suggested as a way to increase the vitality of this area. Also, consider developing a water taxi from Oyster Point Ferry Terminal to shuttle ferry passengers (Sierra Point workers) to Brisbane marina.
- Introduce a "non-members only" restaurant at the marina.

- Create new sidewalks and pathways to connect the buildings to each other and to the water front to encourage people to walk to the marina during lunch.
- Work with developers and property owners on their site plans for new buildings to ensure that they contribute to the creation of urban street edge with active ground floor retail, rather than following a suburban office park site plan where buildings are set back behind parking lots. Encourage developers to build to the street edge and to limit and/or share curb cuts and driveways. Encourage new development at the water's edge to interact with the water in a suitable way, paying respect to sight lines and water-related ground floor uses.
- Identify options for shared parking among facilities and buildings to limit the amount of asphalt and paving.
- Transform the roads in Sierra Point into landscaped boulevards, with wide sidewalks.
- Infill parking lots with retail uses along the street edges.
- Configure the new development to create a square that would surround a new public space or small “town green.”



*Create a non-members restaurant at the marina.*



*Improve connections to Central Brisbane.*



*Develop a water taxi service from Oyster Point Ferry Terminal to Brisbane Marina.*





## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is easy to focus one's attention on the new development planned for Brisbane, as it is quite extensive, and it seems that new projects are coming on line every day. Focusing on improving what already exists in Brisbane, however, provides the added advantage of being able to make changes, in both the short and long term, that could immediately improve the quality of life of Brisbane residents. The five sites evaluated above form the core of great potential public spaces in Brisbane. Their evolution into destinations and beloved community places will depend upon their consideration in the context of the spaces around them, the uses that they support, and the activities that they provide. In undertaking a comprehensive review of the General Plan, it is recommended that the City focus on identifying steps that can be undertaken to improve these spaces in both the short and the long term.

Ideas for both short term and long term improvements that would enhance the overall quality of central Brisbane were formulated during the September workshops. PPS has taken these ideas to the level of conceptual design and programming. These ideas for creating great places are described in the following section.

### SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

#### VISITACION AVENUE

##### The Intersection of Visitacion and Klamath (see Site I sketch)

Clearly, the intersection of Klamath and Visitacion is over-designed in that it is very wide, difficult to cross, yet doesn't carry the volumes of automobile traffic warranted by its configuration. This space could function much more effectively for residents, shoppers, and patrons of the businesses located here. To that end, we recommend:

- Bump-out the corners at all intersections
- Allow for short term, turnover parking (10 to 20 minutes) on the street to enable

people to patronize these businesses without requiring the provision of private parking by merchants.

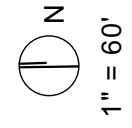
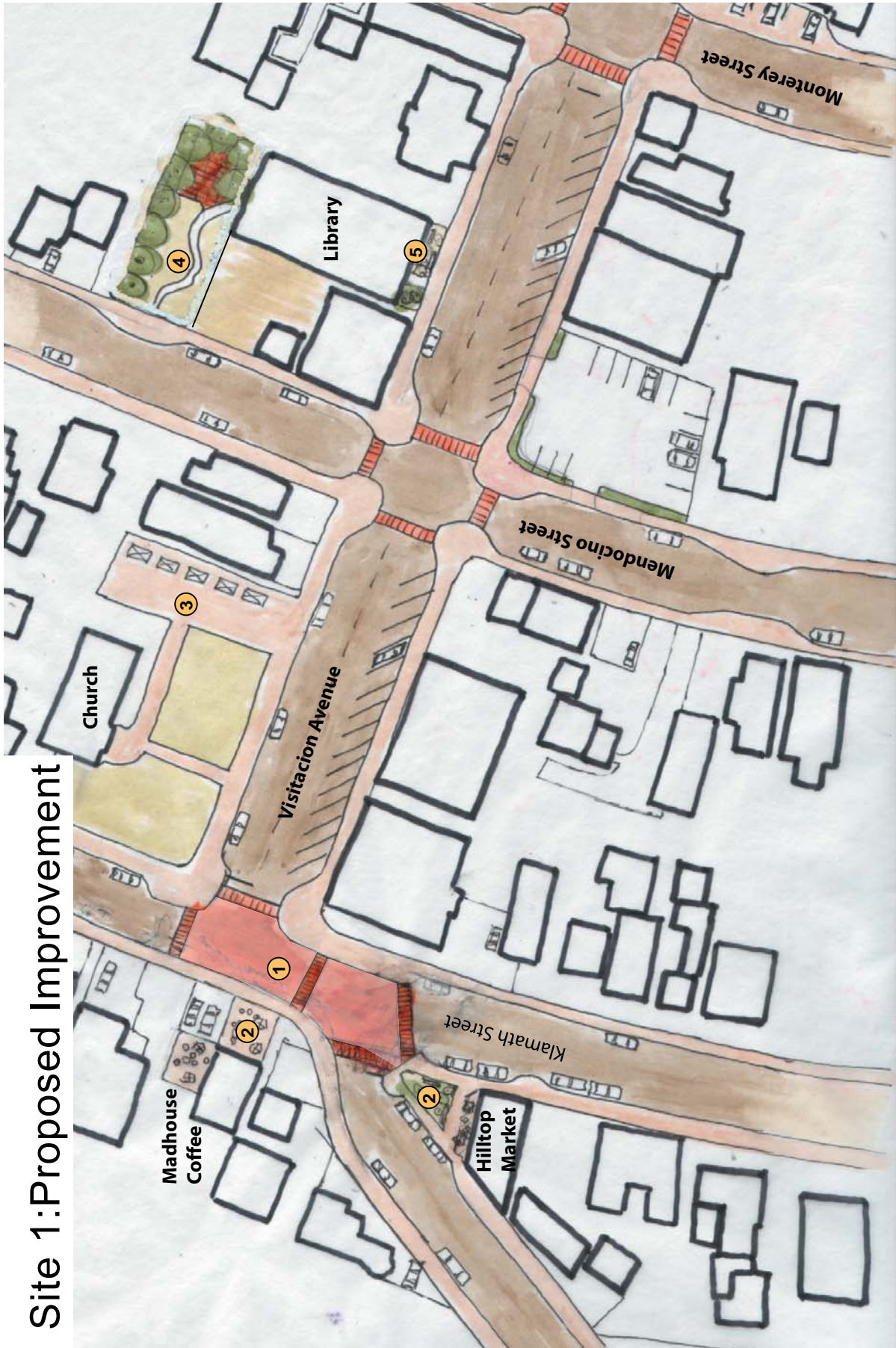
- Add bricked crosswalks across Klamath and Visitacion at all four corners of the intersection.
- Close the free southbound right turn and join it to the existing traffic island to create a new outdoor public space in front of the market.
- If the free right turn cannot be closed, because of the acute angle that it would create for turning vehicles, then it should be cobbled and flanked with bollards to make it more comfortable for pedestrians.
- Were the five angled parking spaces at the market to be closed, four parallel parking spaces could be provided and a usable public space created that would connect the coffee shop with the hilltop market, that could be used as the trailhead amenities, and for outdoor seating and dining.
- Madhouse Coffee could brick or terrace the triangular space in front of its building and create a space for outdoor seating. At the same time, the two parking spaces could remain but should be screened from the new seating area by landscaping. (See Concept Sketch)

## The Library and Community Center on Visitacion (see Site I sketch)

The library and community center are hard to find due to the landscaping which blocks one's view, the fact that one of the entrances is down a ramp and around the back of the library, and that the building is set back from the street. To enhance visibility to the library and strengthen its presence as a community institution on Visitacion:

- Remove the ramp and replace it with an elevator
- Use the new space where the ramp was to create a public space/pocket park with a fountain and seating
- In the long term, move the building closer to the street - increasing the presence of the building and its uses. To open up the front of the building, build an elevator for access and remove the ramp, or rebuild it entirely to make it accessible if an elevator is not an option. As an alternative, the library

# Site 1: Proposed Improvement



- ① Traffic-calmed intersection with through traffic on Klamath Street
- ② Outdoor Seating
- ③ Events in church parking lot
- ④ Flexible space behind library
- ⑤ New library entrance with elevator

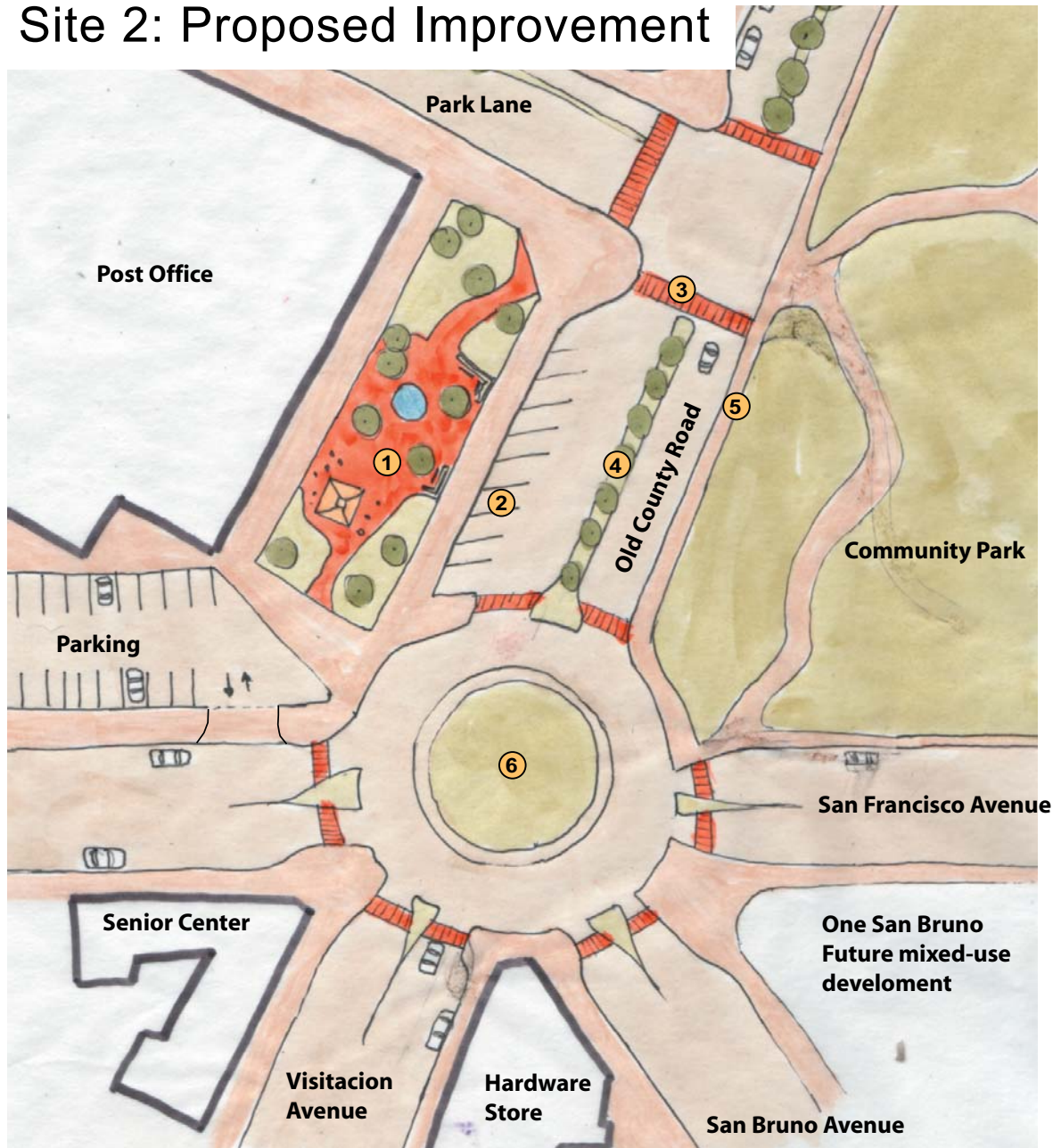
and community center could be relocated to the properties that face onto the park, which have leases that are set to expire in two years.

- Existing backyard of the library should be redesigned as a more flexible space for performances, lectures and gatherings.
- Look at the possibility of purchasing the white house next to the library and using it as a community building with a community garden to expand the of the current library and community center. An art center also could become a part of this new community facility.


### Five-Cornered Star Intersection at Visitacion, Old County Road and San Francisco Avenue (see Site 2 sketch)

- Design a roundabout at the five pointed intersection of Visitacion, Old County Road and San Francisco Avenue. The roadway would be one lane wide. This would create a gateway at the bottom of Visitacion, slow vehicular movements at this key downtown intersection, and provide the public space for a major focal point of gateway feature.
- Move the parking in front of the Post Office onto Old County (or the new Visitacion extension described in the sketch). Angled customer parking could be located around the outer edge of the Post Office Parking lot. Retain parking along the side of the post office for staff parking.
- Redesign the current Post Office parking lot as a public plaza with postal services, café seating, coffee cart, and a staffed newsstand. A structure, such as a retail kiosk, could be built on one half of the parking lot or the entire space could be treated as a plaza.
- In the new mixed use building, One San Bruno development, at San Francisco and San Bruno Avenues, include outdoor space for a plaza, fountain and outdoor seating.

## Site 2: Proposed Improvement



- ① Plaza in front of Post Office
- ② Angled parking
- ③ Add crosswalk
- ④ Planted median
- ⑤ Add sidewalk
- ⑥ Roundabout

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 1" = 60'

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 December 12, 2005

## COMMUNITY PARK

(See site 3 sketch)

Participants at the workshop used the Power of Ten concept and applied it to identifying key destinations within the Community Park. They came up with potential destinations within the park and the areas proximate that, if linked together, would help make the Community Park a great destination for Brisbane. PPS has expanded upon these ideas, which are described in more detail below and rendered in a conceptual sketch (see Site 3 sketch). Some of these ideas mentioned here were also suggested by workshop participants.

### Pocket park with bus stop

- Move the bus stop back from the street to create a larger waiting area and to allow the bus stop seating also to be used by park visitors. Spruce up the landscaping and add more benches.
- Add moveable tables and chairs
- Provide temporary carts for concessions that could be stored here as well
- Heat lamps and wind screens to provide a more climate controlled environment
- Magazine and book cart with sale books, supplied by the Library.
- Water feature such as a bubble fountain or small river running through the park

### Playground Area

- Include a play fountain, age-specific equipment and a café cart.
- Replace the fixed benches with removable seating.
- Redefine the role and enhance the prominence of the garden at the back of the restroom building in the park as a garden for strolling.
- Add a concession, such as a coffee cart or vendor serving tea
- Manage this as showcase garden, with changing plantings and

# Site 3: Proposed Redevelopment



- ① Pocket Park with Bus Stop
- ② Playground Area
- ③ Northern Corner
- ④ Flexible Performance Area



holiday displays, examples of native plantings and xeriscaping, garden classes, etc.

- Expand the Picnic area
- Add more picnic tables and moveable tables with umbrellas.

### Northern corner (current gazebo area)

- Add an information kiosk or death board here.
- The gazebo and park could serve as a trail head of sorts; a map of all the trails through the mountains that connect to the town center, and from the town center to the lagoon and beyond could be installed here. A telescope could be placed here, or higher up at Klamath and Visitacion. This place could be denoted as the starting point for the San Bruno mountain trail system.
- In the longer term, rethink the location and design of this structure so that it can enjoy expanded use, for more than just concerts but for larger performances, providing space for covered seating, lighting, and a back stage area.
- Ultimately, the structure could be flexible, such as a tent with a moveable stage that could be set up and taken down as needed, leaving the rest of the park area for passive recreation, games, strolling, and picnicking.

The end result would be an enlarged Community Park, bordered on the east and west by active retail and narrow streets with slow moving traffic, centers of civic life to the north of the park (a library, community center, art center, high school), and ending (or beginning) at the City's doorstep at Bayshore.

### Flexible Performance Area

- An open area of lawn where a temporary stage can be set up for performances and public gatherings.
- This green space can be a multi-purpose field for recreational and social events.



## THE GATEWAY AT OLD COUNTY ROAD AND BAYSHORE BOULEVARD

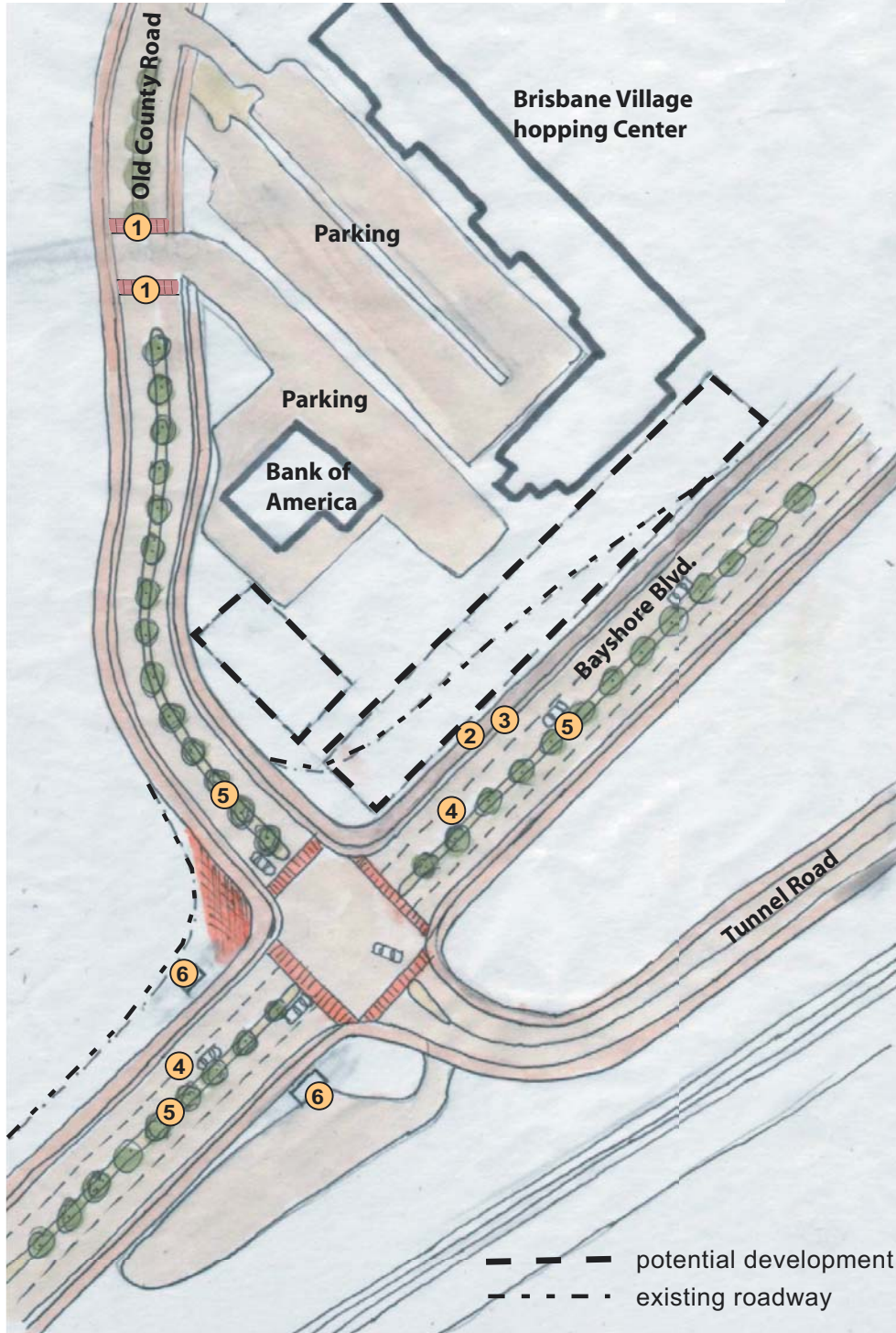
(see Site 4 sketch)

PPS recommends that the intersection of Old County Road and Bayshore Boulevard be redesigned to create a more attractive and pedestrian friendly entrance to Brisbane.

The elements that could be incorporated in the longer term, and that should be included in the updating of the General Plan, include:

- Reduce the width of Bayshore Boulevard as it approaches Old County Road to four lanes, with a median and bike lanes. Free-right turns should be removed.
- Add sidewalks along Bayshore Boulevard on both sides down to the trailer park, making connections with the bridge into the Baylands.
- Improve the bus stops on Bayshore Boulevard by adding benches, newspaper stands, trash cans and colorful flowers.
- Put the power lines underground to improve the appearance of the intersection.
- Slow down north-south traffic on Bayshore Boulevard; explore a variety of traffic-calming measures such as curb bulb-outs at the intersection, divided planted medians in the road, adding on-street parking and a dedicated bike lane.
- Improve the site's connection to the Baylands by adding pedestrian access across Tunnel Avenue. Extend the streetlights on the bridge down to the intersection in the same style as the ones on the bridge.
- Work with MUNI to connect the light rail line through this area, bringing more public transportation access to Brisbane. Construct a new station at this intersection.
- Construct a promenade or beach between the Caltrain tracks and the Lagoon out to Sierra Point, giving access to the Lagoon and also improving pedestrian connectivity between two distinct areas in Brisbane.

# Site 4: Proposed Redevelopment



- ① Add crosswalk
- ② Add sidewalk
- ③ Add Bike lane

- ④ Reduce roadway to four lanes
- ⑤ Planted median
- ⑥ Bus stop

 N  
 1" = 100'

 **PPS**  
 PROJECT for  
 PUBLIC SPACES  
 December 12, 2005

## LONG-TERM VISION

### BRISBANE COMMONS: A NEW TOWN CENTER

(See concept sketches A and B)

Redefining the future of Brisbane by creating a new town center and organizing existing uses around a central square is a key idea to emerge from the workshop. This has the capacity to completely transform the City of Brisbane and link the old town center to Bayshore Boulevard and with new development to the east.

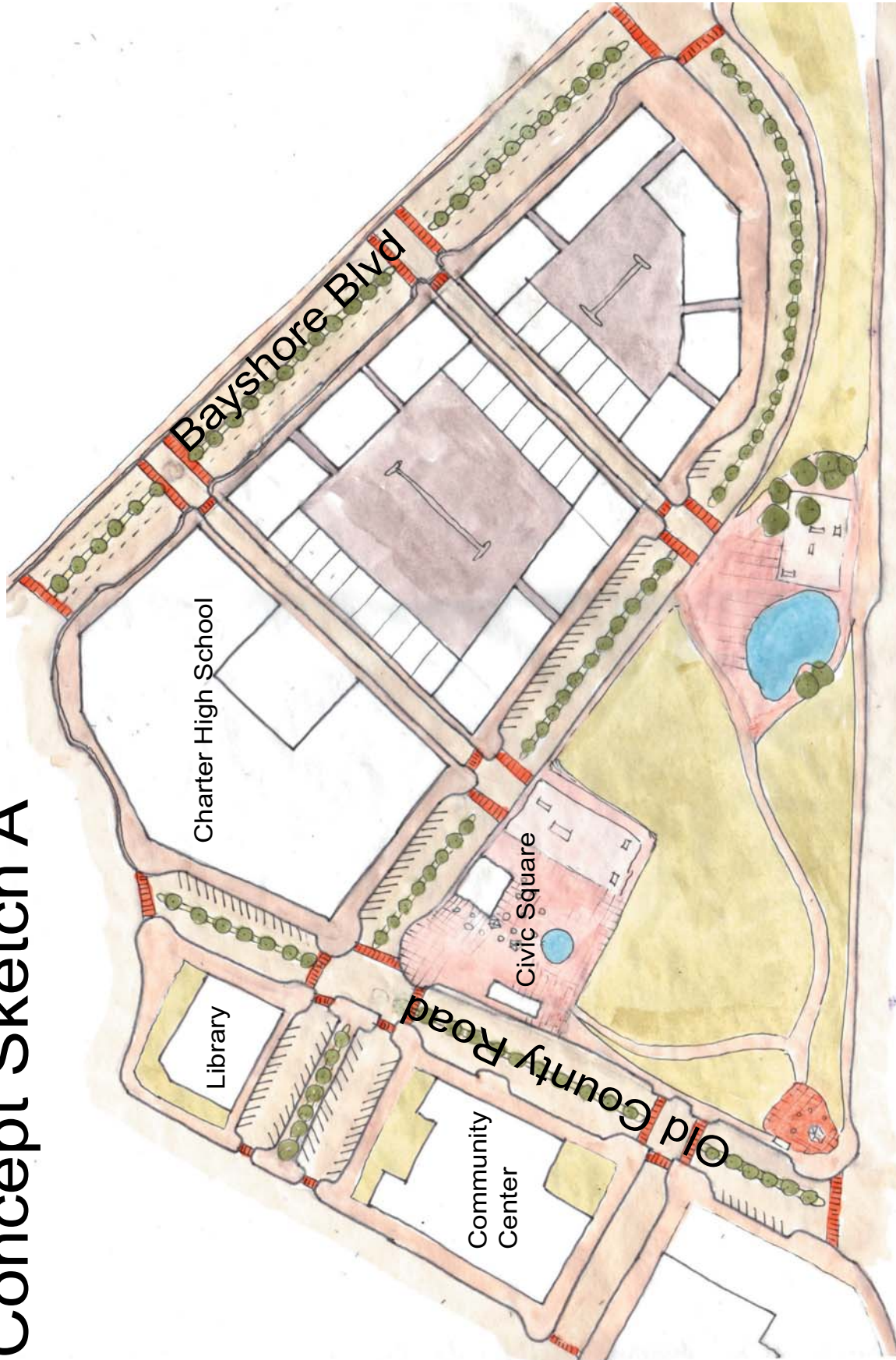
This new town center would have the Community Park (Brisbane Commons) at its center, extending to Bayshore Boulevard, and replacing the Brisbane Village Shopping Center shopping center with a pedestrian scaled mixed-use town center. Flank the park to the east with a new retail street, to the north by community buildings.

The following changes to the area surrounding the Park would be needed to begin to shape this town center:

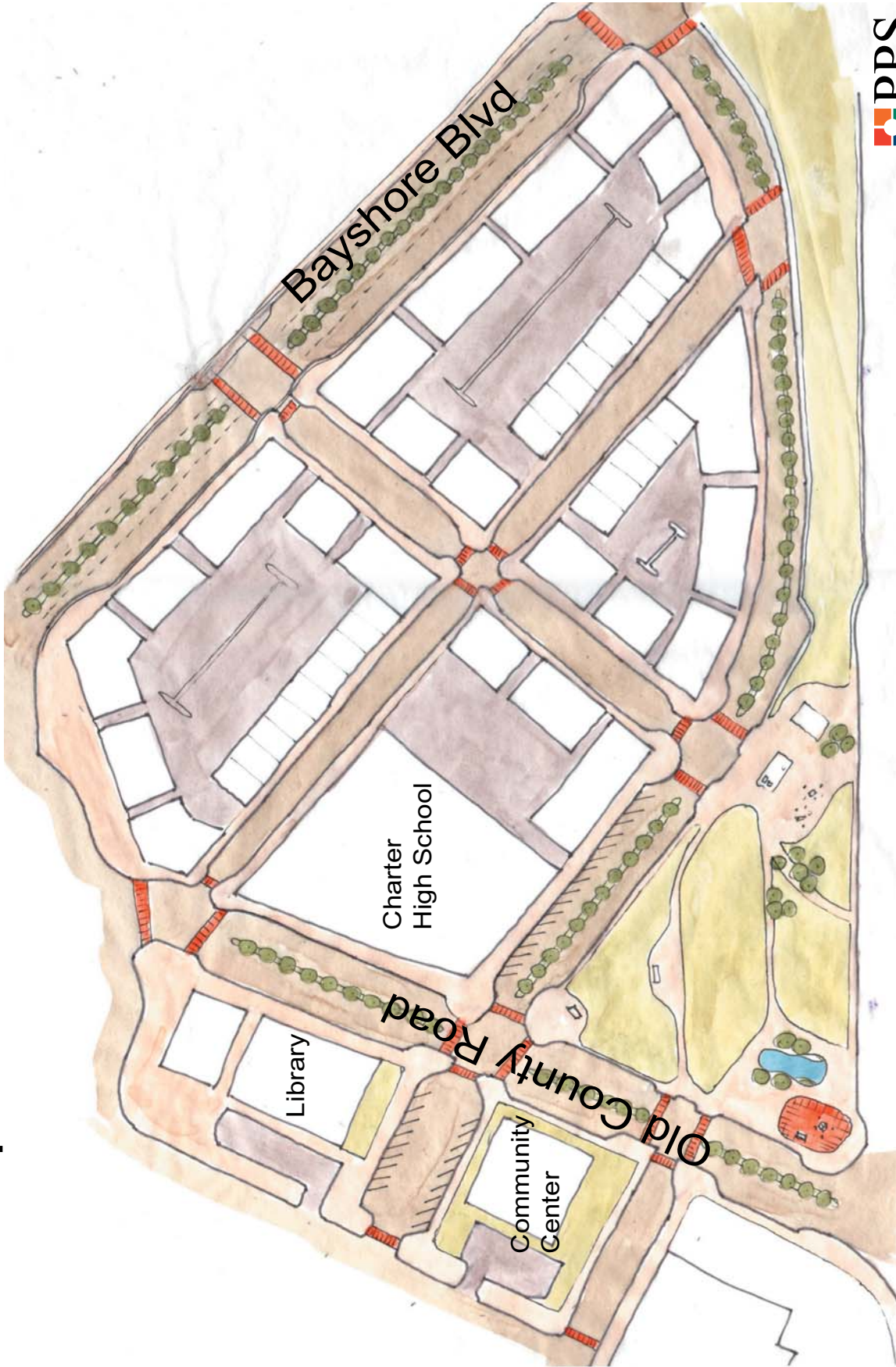
- Purchase the building and property owned by the State Teachers Retirement System and potentially make them the new home of the library, community center, new art center, or a charter high school. A charter high school was called for in the 1994 General Plan, in place of the State Teachers Retirement System building.
- One option (concept sketch A) is to shift Old County Road to the northeast, creating a new small retail street that links the new commercial area with the community buildings to the north. Visitacion Avenue would continue north to Valley Drive.
- The second option (concept sketch B) is to end Old County Road at the extended Visitacion Avenue, creating a new northern corner in the park.
- New development would have active ground floor uses, such as retail and restaurants that would align with the sidewalk, with second story offices or residences.

- Parking would be hidden behind the building structures as well as on-street.
- Calming traffic through this area will be of paramount importance to making it work as a town center. Delineating one specific truck route to limit the amount of truck traffic through the area, improving way finding for truck-traffic into Brisbane, and even specifying Old County Road for “residential access only” are three recommended measures. Introducing a shuttle to reduce the lunch-time traffic and cobbling or bricking streets around the Park area to reduce vehicular speed are also recommended.
- Additional streets could provide access points off of Bayshore Boulevard through the new town center.
- Retail uses should also face outwards towards Bayshore Boulevard on the east side, transforming Bayshore Boulevard into a main street environment.
- Two-story townhomes could be built, facing onto the enlarged Town Green or along a new mews street within the new development.

# Concept Sketch A



# Concept Sketch B



## NEXT STEPS

The citizens of Brisbane seek to strengthen and improve the key places of the town to reflect the character of their community, and the City is striving to ground the community as it takes on new development challenges, to ensure that the goals of the General Plan are carried through, and to guide all facets of the City's growth, its urban design, and land use planning.

A number of next steps clearly presented themselves as outcomes of this workshop, which could be explored concurrent with the research into funding mechanisms and sources:

- Research the feasibility of and develop a series of traffic circulation guidelines and goals geared toward decreasing speed on Bayshore Boulevard, increasing connections between Central Brisbane and Sierra Point, and public transportation connections with the regional systems in the Bay area.
- Establish a Visitacion Business Merchants Association to maintain and improve the main business corridor in town. They could have a hand in setting up community events in the park and providing a lunch-time vending cart with a number of options for people to enjoy at the park.
- Undertake a master planning effort for creation of a Central Square in Central Brisbane that would focus on relating all major public institutions to one another; the possible creation of a charter high school, the redevelopment of Brisbane Village Shopping Center into a more pedestrian-scaled shopping area, and the success of local business partnerships with merchants on Visitacion Avenue. This would require marketing, education, and partnering with existing and potential property owners.
- More attention needs to be focused upon guiding the build-out of Sierra Point through the development and implementation, by the City, of urban design guidelines and a site plan framework describing a series of desirable alternatives for creating a walkable mixed use community circumscribed around a new, vibrant public park or central square. At the same time, the ideas presented here need to be analyzed in terms of their feasibility for implementation and prioritized.





## VII. PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A number of partners – individuals, public agencies, private corporations, civic associations, community groups, professionals and municipal authorities – were cited as key to the successful implementation – in both the long and short term – of the recommendations presented in this report. The tasks which accompany each partner, where provided, were either suggested by workshop participants themselves or recommended by Project for Public Spaces and are meant to be the starting point for the conversation, and the beginning of the effort to win the commitment of each partner to this initiative to improve Brisbane’s key public spaces.

- Arthur Court Design
- Bakers of Paris and Potsticker People (businesses in Crocker Park) —to sell goods in park
- Bébé
- Brisbane creative community
- Business leaders
- State Teachers Retirement System —to develop the vacant lot next to the shopping center into a larger civic plaza/center
- Caltrain
- Chamber of Commerce
- Church, for farmers market and landscaping
- City of Brisbane
- City of Visitacion Valley
- Developers of One San Bruno site
- Eagles club
- Eoro Makela (realtor and owner of white house)—for improvements around the library and community center, Visitacion Avenue in general
- Hardware store
- Hitachi
- John Greenley—landscape designer, grass gardener

- Library
- Lions club
- Local businesses—to establish a lunch cart in the park during the week and to donate benches and tables for plaza in Community Park
- Local residences
- Madhouse coffee—for improvements at the Klamath Street/ Visitacion Avenue intersection, to have tables and chairs outside
- Merchant association on Main Street
- Mid-town market and bamboo gardens—Visitacion improvements
- Monster cable
- Mountain Watch for planters, boxes and flowers and plants and trees
- MUNI
- Owners of Brisbane Village Shopping Center and Bank of America—reconfigure the gateway into Brisbane
- PG&E—putting the utilities underground
- Post Office—create a square in front of the building
- San Bruno Mountain Lodge
- San Francisco public market/Alemanay and Bayshore (public transit connections)
- Sam Trans—for bus shelter/bus stop improvements
- Save the Bay
- Senior center—to engage in park programs
- Sierra Point businesses
- State and federal funds—road improvements
- Teen center—to program the park
- UPC
- Women’s Club