



Solomons Island Village Core

Design Plan and Workshop Summary



Prepared for:
Calvert County Planning Commission

Prepared by:
EDAW | AECOM

December, 2007

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Table of Contents

1.0	Purpose	5
2.0	Process.....	5
3.0	Evaluation of Strengths and Challenges	5
4.0	Solomons Island Village Core Vision	5
5.0	Recommendations.....	6
	Operational Priorities	6
	Policy Priorities	7
	Physical Priorities	7

Appendix

Figure 1:	Solomons Island Village Core Study Area	A.2
Figure 2:	Design Workshop Process Diagram	A.2
Figure 3:	Existing Land Use and Building Footprint	A.3
Figure 4:	Activity Generators	A.4
Figure 5:	Context and Sense of Arrival.....	A.5
Figure 6:	Existing Vehicular Use Areas	A.6
Figure 7:	Critical Area Buffer	A.7
Figure 8:	Perceived Public and Private Realm	A.8
Figure 9:	Existing Challenges	A.9
Figure 10:	Vision Discussion Diagram.....	A.10
Figure 11:	Potential Park and Open Space System	A.11
Figure 12:	Sites with Near-Term Development Potential	A.12
Figure 13:	Existing Pavilion Setting	A.13
Figure 14:	Potential Pavilion Setting.....	A.14
Figure 15:	Existing Parking and Waterfront Condition.....	A.15
Figure 16:	Potential Parking Condition with Landscape Buffer	A.16
Figure 17a:	Existing Parking Lot Island Plantings	A.17
Figure 17b:	“Double” Amount of Parking Lot Island Plantings.....	A.17
Figure 18:	Potential Landscape Buffer along Riverwalk.....	A.18
Figure 19:	Cross-section Option for Landscape Buffer along Riverwalk where Riverwalk is At-Grade with Parking Lot	A.19
Figure 20:	Cross-section Option for Landscape Buffer along Riverwalk where Riverwalk is Elevated	A.19
Figure 21:	Potential Coastal Planting Species for Use Along Solomons Island Riverwalk	A.20
Figure 22:	Existing Sidewalk Condition (non-existent)	A.21
Figure 23:	Potential Sidewalk Condition	A.21
Figure 24:	Tide Box Area Suggested Improvements.....	A.22
Figure 25:	Potential Development Template – Double Lot Layout.....	A.23
Figure 26:	Potential Beach Expansion Opportunity.....	A.24
Figure 27:	Overall Solomons Island Village Core Concept Plan	A.25

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

1.0 Purpose

The Calvert County Planning & Zoning Department is in the process of updating the master plans for the County's seven Town Centers over the next three years. The Town Center Master Plans were adopted between 1986 and 2003. Updating the master plans will include reorganizing them into the same format as the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, conducting special area studies, refining the visions, establishing new goals, and updating the content of the master plans. The master plan update process involves citizens, businesses, civic organizations, Town Center architectural review committees, county staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners. The special planning area studies are intended to focus on design issues within a defined area of a town center and have a goal of developing concept plans and recommended actions for implementation. The town center study for the Solomons Town Center focused on the island's village core. The study, hereafter referred to as the Solomons Island Village Core Design Plan, was the first such study for the Town Centers. The study addressed an area of approximately 16 acres, (Village core) in the heart of the island. Refer to Figure 1 in the Appendix for a map the study area.

2.0 Process

The planning process for addressing the Solomons Island Village Core area was an open and collaborative three-day design workshop held November 6th through 8th, 2007 at the Solomons United Methodist Church on Solomons Island. Over the course of the three days residents, business owners, community activists, local leaders, county staff and consultants collaborated to develop creative and exciting ideas and design concepts for the village core. Refer to Figure 2 in the Appendix for a diagram of the design workshop process.

3.0 Evaluation of Strengths and Challenges

Solomons Island is a distinct place with many inherent assets and clear character. However, there are also some emerging issues and opportunities that need to be addressed. These features include:

Strengths

- Water views – water surrounds the island and provides an attractive setting, particularly at sunset
- Authentic history – the Island has desirable character and genuine history
- Sense of place – the Island resonates with a sense of place
- Riverwalk amenities – the river edge of the Island is generally open to the public because of the Riverwalk and the Pavilion

Challenges

- Seasonal conditions – peak demand during summer weekends; challenges are particularly acute during evenings; businesses experience winter lull of tourism activity
- Connectivity gaps – the sense of arrival is lacking, sidewalks are not continuous, trash dumpsters interrupt the experience
- Behavior control – there is a growing sense that the Island is becoming too dependent on nightclubs and bars
- Parking concerns – more than 1/3 of the Island is dedicated to automobile usage, including surface parking lots and roadways

Refer to Figures 3 through 9 in the Appendix existing conditions and analyses.

4.0 Solomons Island Village Core Vision

The stated vision of the community for Solomons Island is that of a maritime village; a place with a strong water orientation where people live, work and visit. Refer to Figure 10 in the Appendix for a diagram on the vision discussion. To help achieve this vision, several themes were identified, including:

- Make the Island family friendly – encourage activities and events for children and ‘take back the evening’; extend daytime shopping opportunities to reduce the prevalence of drinking establishments
- Increase year-round activities – offer more things to do for residents and visitors to increase the year-round population and extend the length of visits during the season
- Balance vehicular/pedestrian needs – provide opportunities for pedestrian circulation and reduce the dominance of the automobile on the island
- Encourage cooperation – supplement the strong independent nature of the Island residents with opportunities to contribute to the common good
- Improve appearances – restore the physical look of the Island and enhance the public realm

5.0 Recommendations

During the course of the design workshop a great number of ideas and suggestions were discussed and considered. This section of the report provides the recommendations that were thought to offer the greatest opportunities for strengthening and enhancing the Island. The identified recommendations have been organized into operational, policy and physical priorities and assigned priority levels (immediate, near term, and long term). Refer to Figures 11 through 26 in the Appendix for illustrations and photographs of existing situations, illustrations of potential improvements, and a list of potential coastal plants for use along the Solomons Riverwalk. Figure 27 illustrates the overall Solomons Island Village Core Concept Plan.

Operational Priorities

The operational priorities are recommendations related to programmatic and everyday issues. These priorities generally involve changing the way things are done so that residents and businesses can co-exist cooperatively.

IMMEDIATE FIRST ACTIONS

1. Facilitate the development and monitoring of community report cards on the enforcement of laws and regulations, including those related to liquor, noise, behavior, speeding, and zoning.
2. Encourage business owners to cooperate on operations such as more frequent trash removal, coordinated recycling, consistent business hours, augmented security, and maintaining the public realm.

NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Support the residential building community with the identification and increased awareness of programs, services, and grants that facilitate maintenance, first-time homeownership, and other housing initiatives.
2. Assist business owners to help strengthen the local economy through increased business training, formalized collaboration, and coordinated marketing and events.

LONG TERM

1. Promote multiple modes of transportation to reduce dependence on automobiles within Solomons Town Center, and connect the Town Center with adjacent communities through the encouraged use of water taxis, car pools, a trolley system, bicycle routes and storage, segways, and electric carts.

Policy Priorities

The policy priorities are recommendations related to land use and the development process. These priorities generally address Calvert County ordinances and regulations to encourage preferred uses and compatible development.

IMMEDIATE FIRST ACTIONS

1. Allow a development bonus for desired public benefit, such as public access, preferred uses, design changes, etc.
2. Encourage a mix of uses and require ground floor retail/dining to face the street.
3. Establish build-to lines and reinforce the vernacular architecture and existing character of the Island.

NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Green the Island with solar orientation, Low Impact Development (LID) design, bio-filtration, green roofs, and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for new development.
2. Clarify and illustrate the review process; modify inconsistent policies.
3. Restrict the height of free-standing signs to a maximum of 4' above the ground within the village core.

LONG TERM

1. Identify and protect a preferred location for an underground utility right of way to eventually remove above ground power lines.

Physical Priorities

The physical priorities are recommendations related to aesthetics and public realm improvements. These priorities are cost-effective measures to preserve the character of the Island, strengthen the quality of life, and enhance the visitor experience.

IMMEDIATE FIRST ACTIONS

1. Celebrate the pavilion by providing a special park setting connecting the new Pavilion Park to the Harbor through the Comfort Station courtyard.
2. Establish an entry identity and improve the arrival experience by expanding Waterman's Park to include the tide box area and install special treatments for the roadway and bridge railings/pylons to convey the historic feel of the entry; modify the green edge of the first parking lot along the riverfront to align with Alexander Street so that the initial view towards the water is greatly improved and the existing pump house is less prominent.
3. Buffer the Riverwalk and screen the parking lot with low, native shrubs, and reorganize the parking spaces to be more efficient.

NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Repair the gaps in existing infrastructure, including breaks in the Riverwalk at the pier and missing sidewalks near the Oyster House.
2. Connect Waterman's Park east with the Harbor and the Oyster House through the old federal building site and open the rear yard of the Oyster House to the public so that oysterman artifacts can be accessed.
3. Implement the walking trail along the Narrows from the remote parking lot behind Our Lady of the Sea Catholic Church to the tide box area.

LONG TERM

1. Expand the existing beach to provide water interaction opportunities and to take advantage of the Island's best asset.
2. Establish a harbor walk by acquiring easements over time.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX



Figure 1: Solomons Island Village Core Study Area

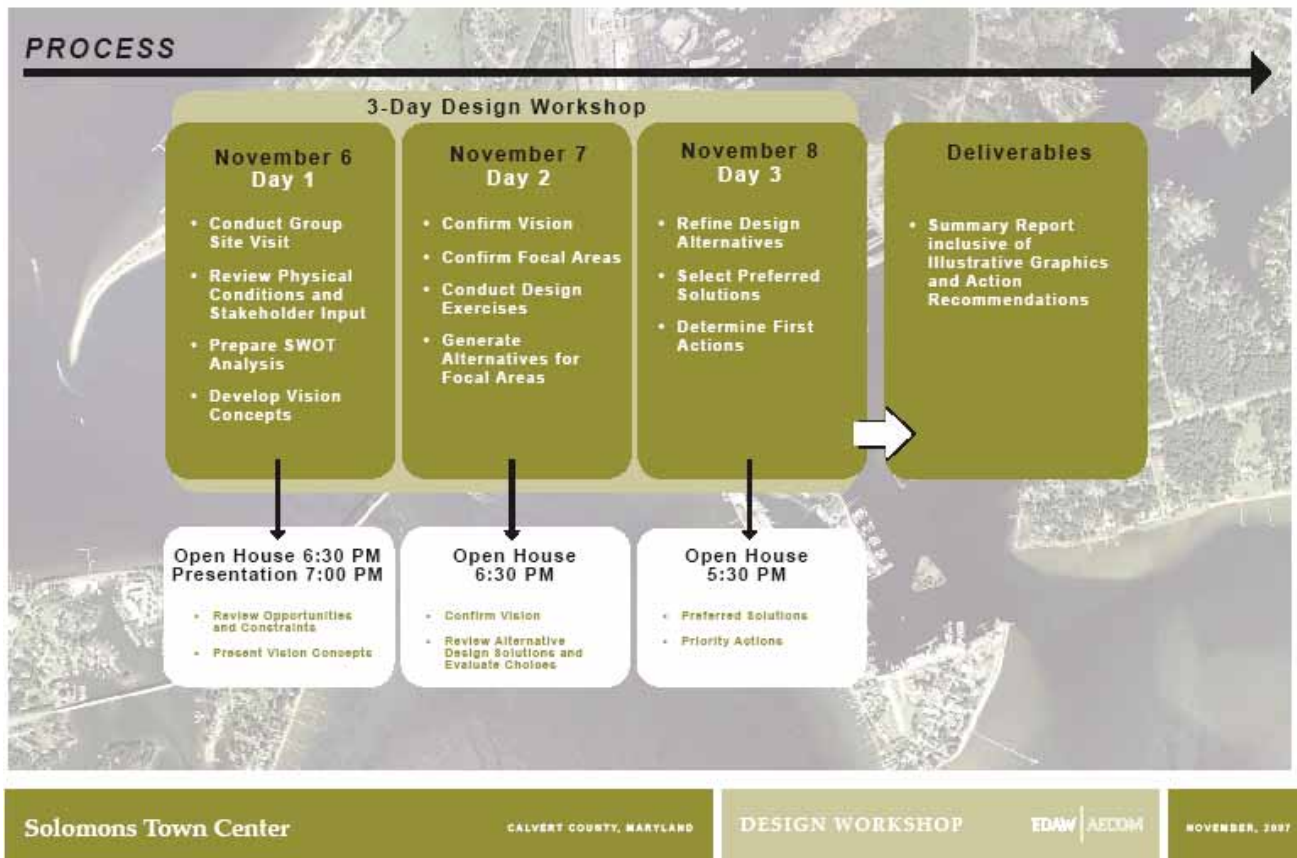


Figure 2: Design Workshop Process Diagram

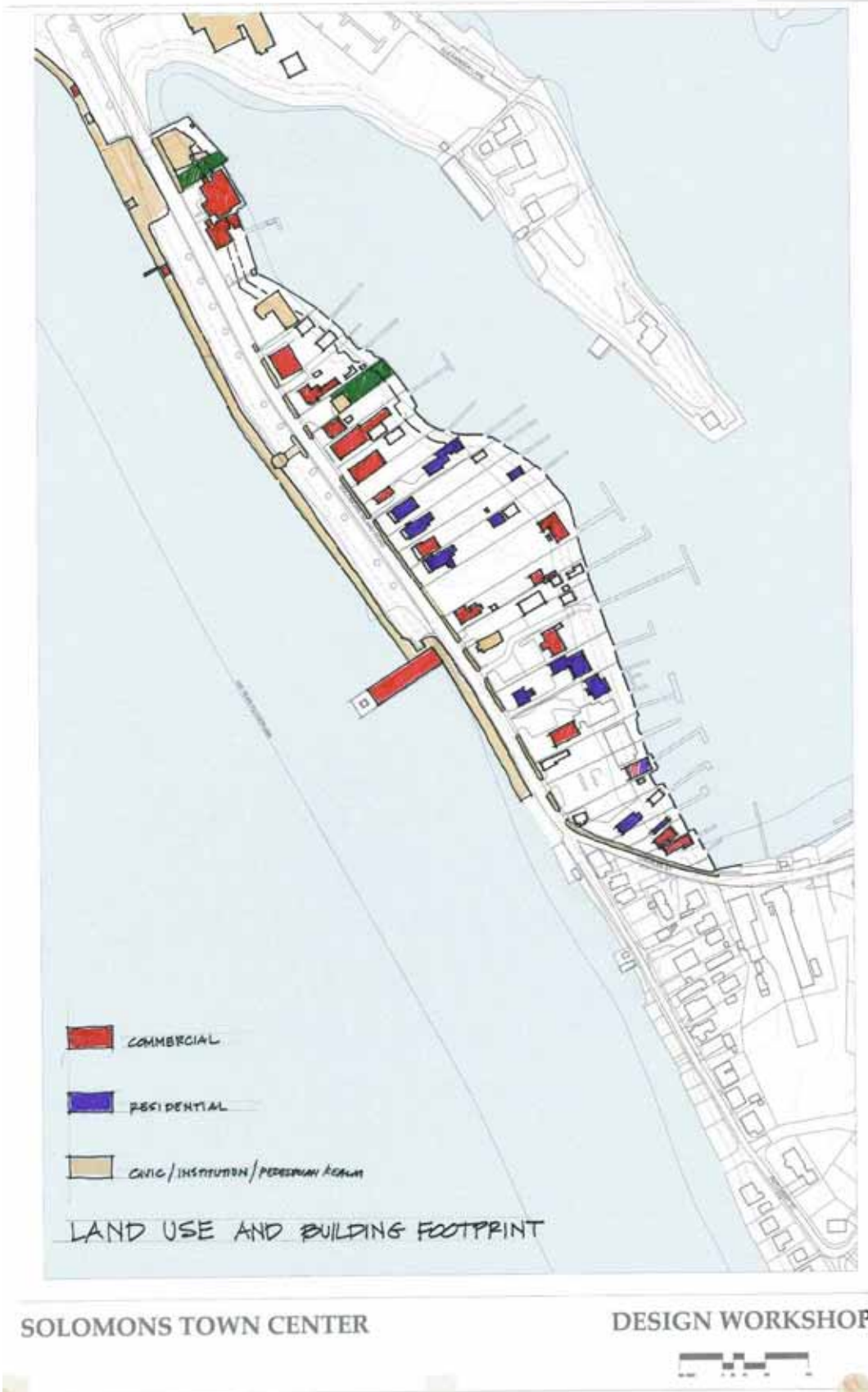


Figure 3: Existing Land Use and Building Footprint



SOLOMONS TOWN CENTER

DESIGN WORKSHOP



Figure 4: Activity Generators



Figure 5: Context and Sense of Arrival



SOLOMONS TOWN CENTER

DESIGN WORKSHOP



Figure 6: Existing Vehicular Use Areas



SOLOMONS TOWN CENTER

DESIGN WORKSHOP



Figure 7: Critical Area Buffer

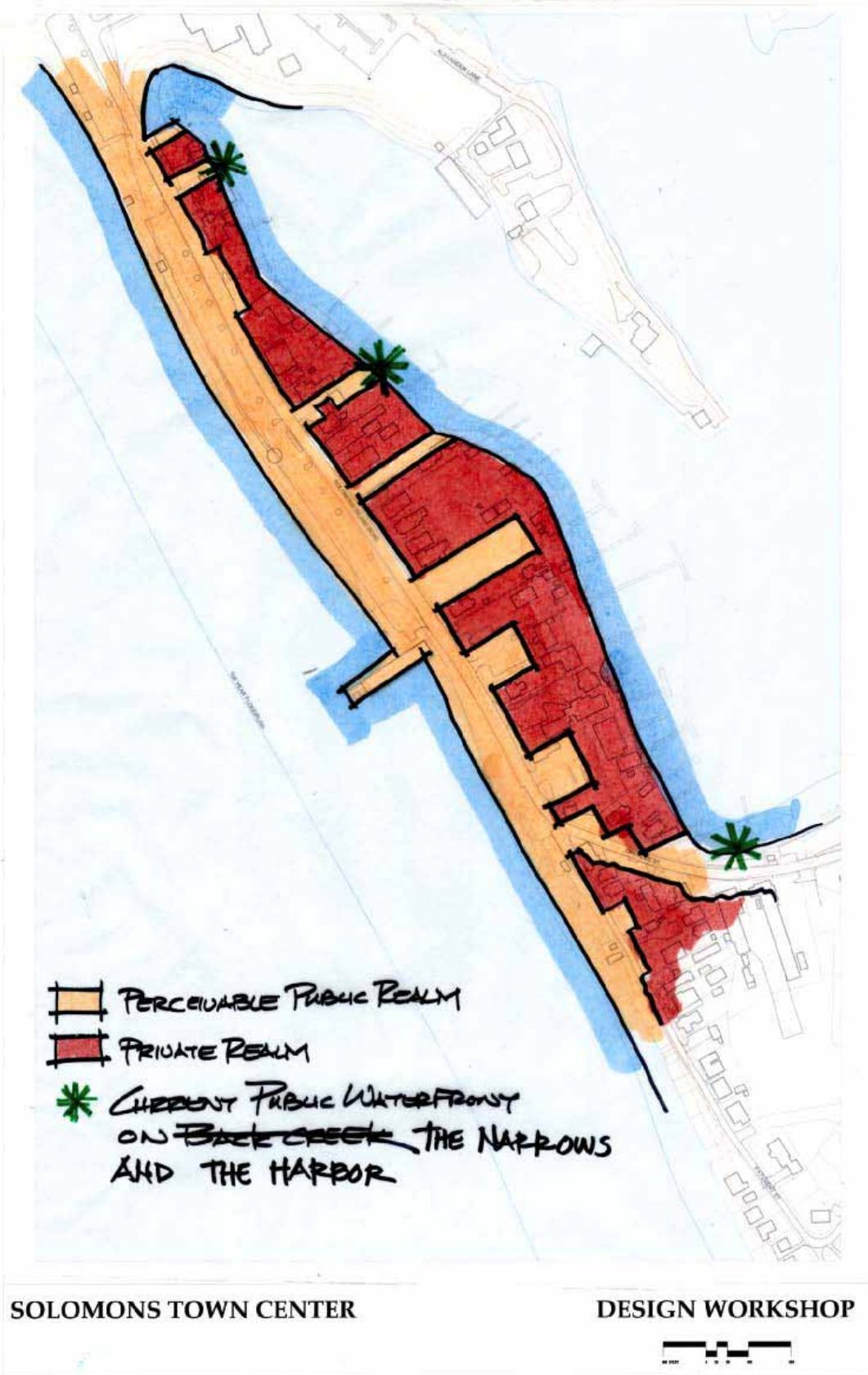
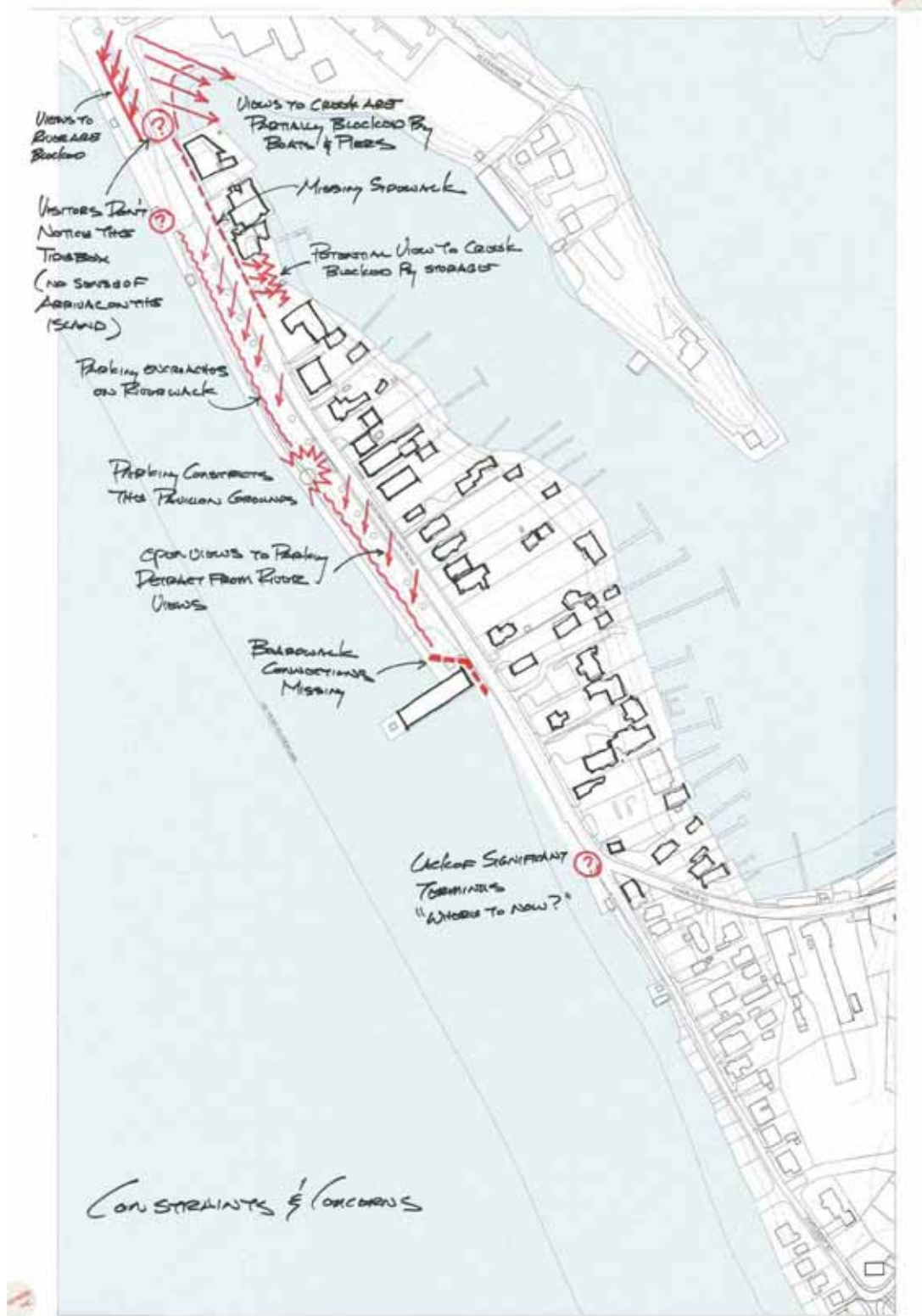


Figure 8: Perceived Public and Private Realm



SOLOMONS TOWN CENTER

DESIGN WORKSHOP



Figure 9: Existing Challenges

WHAT WILL HELP SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES?

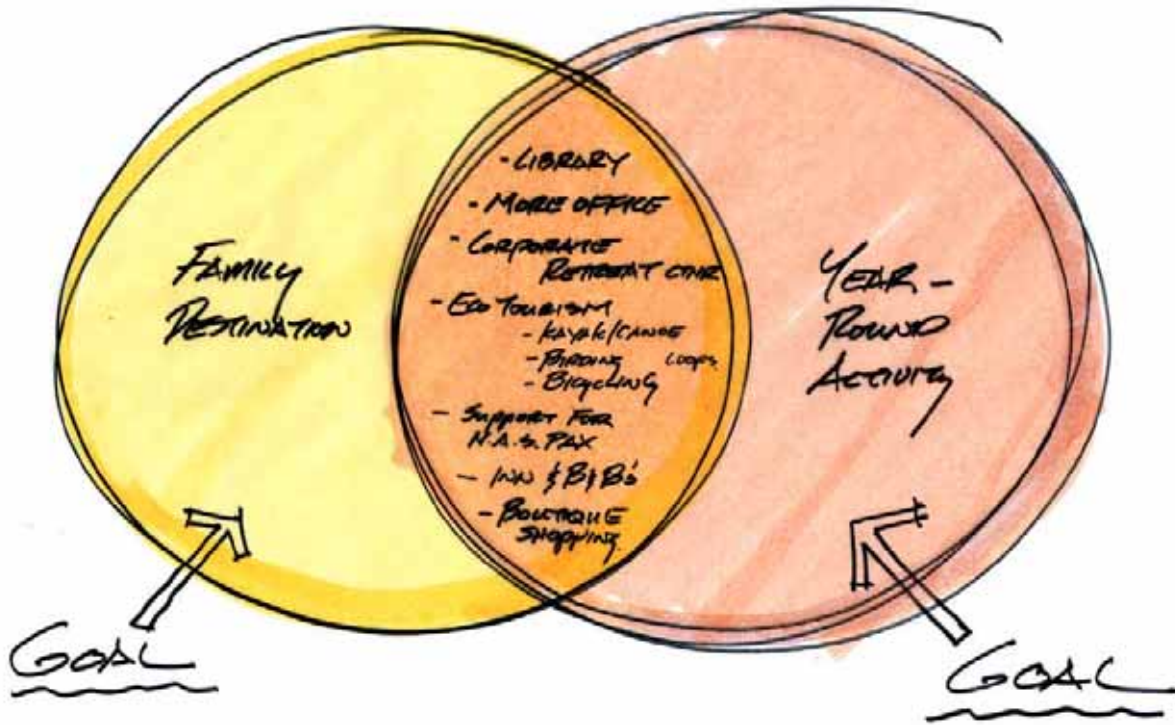


Figure 10: Vision Discussion Diagram

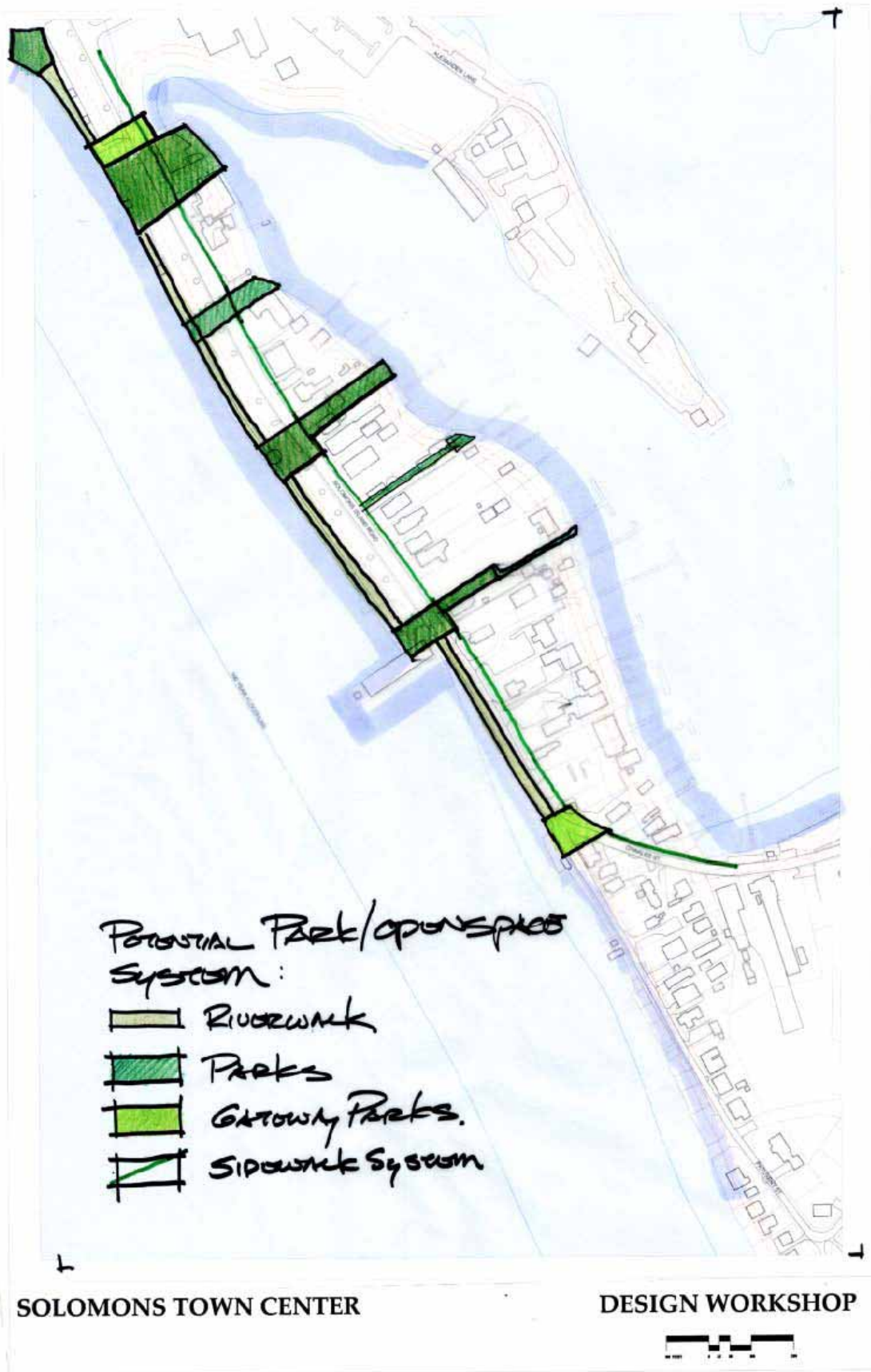


Figure 11: Potential Park and Open Space System

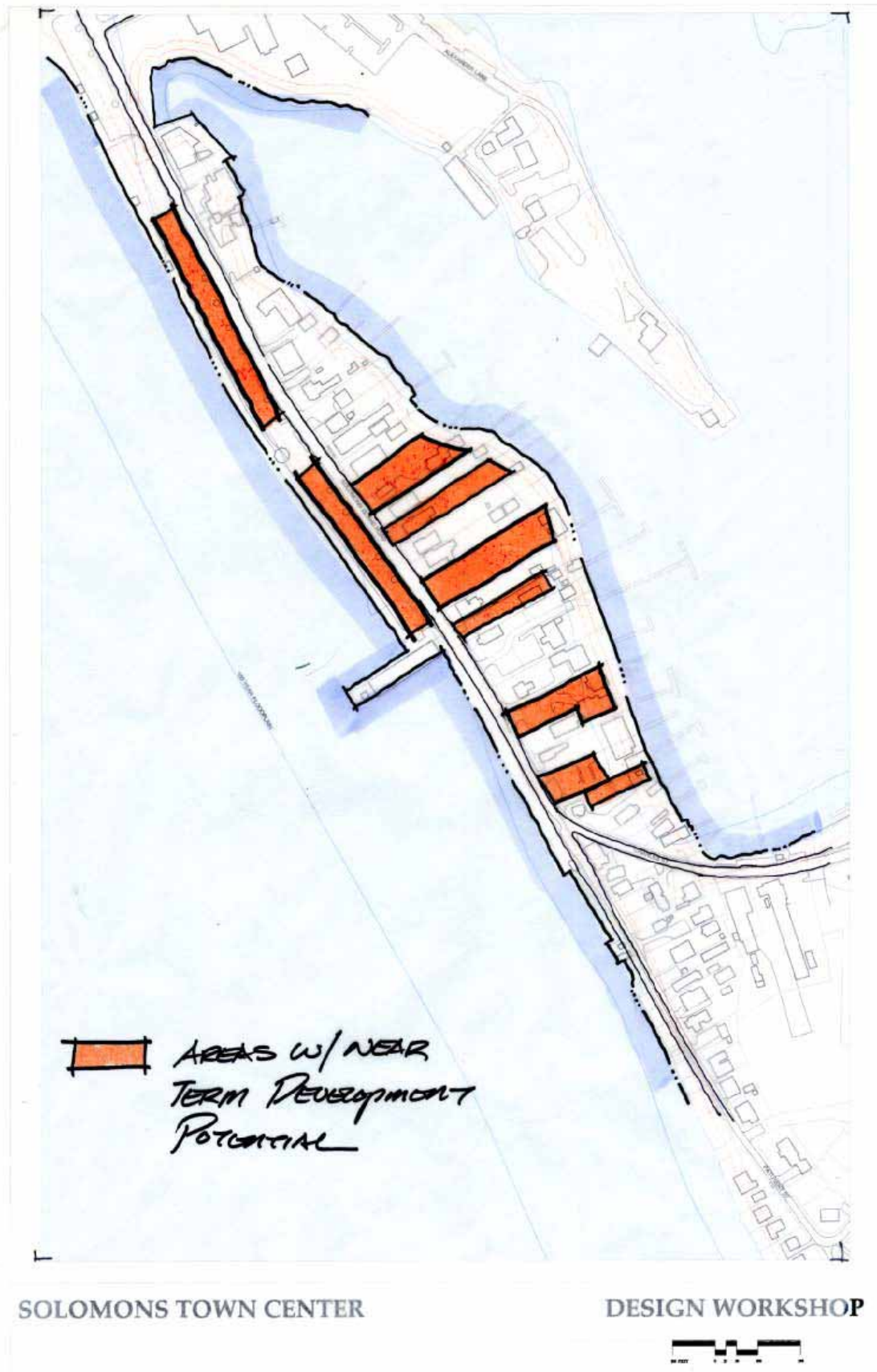


Figure 12: Sites with Near-Term Development Potential

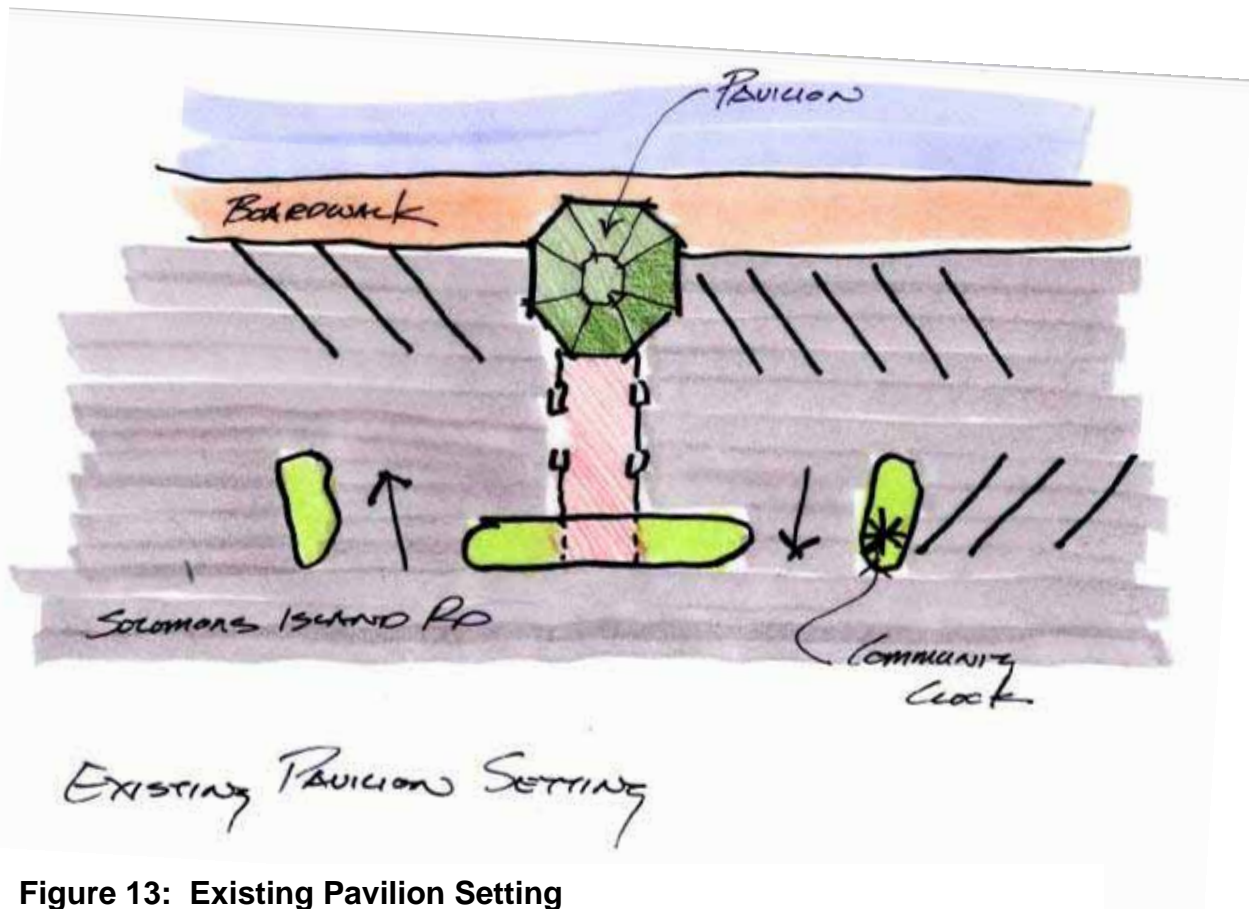


Figure 13: Existing Pavilion Setting



POTENTIAL PAVILION SETTING

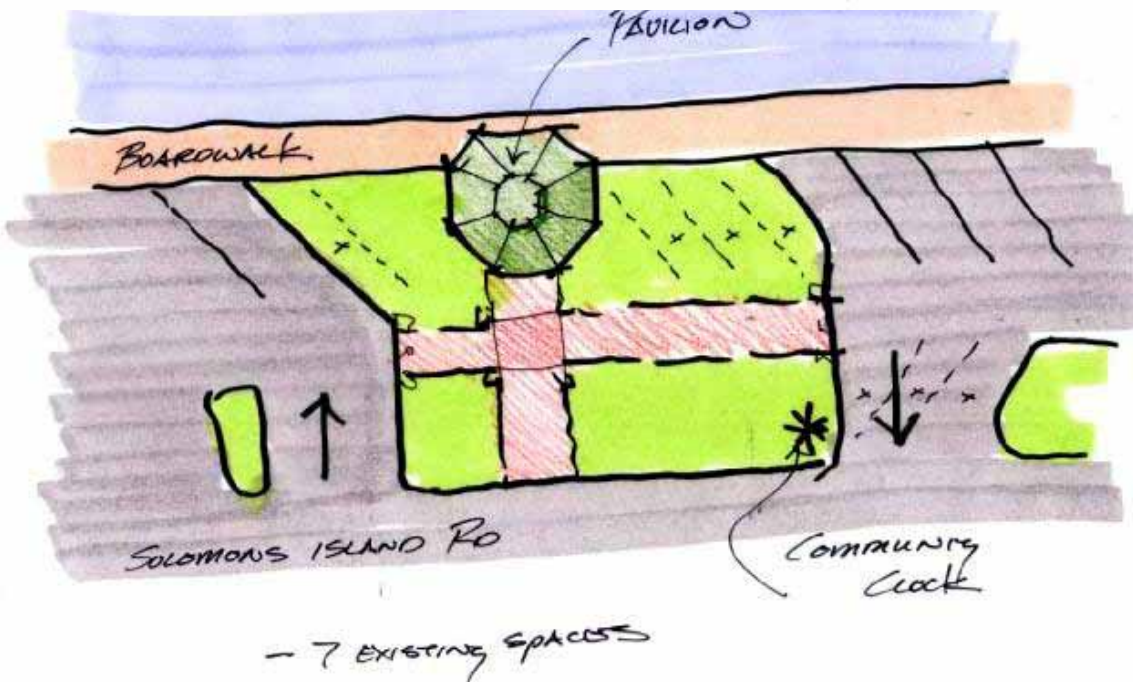


Figure 14: Potential Pavilion Setting

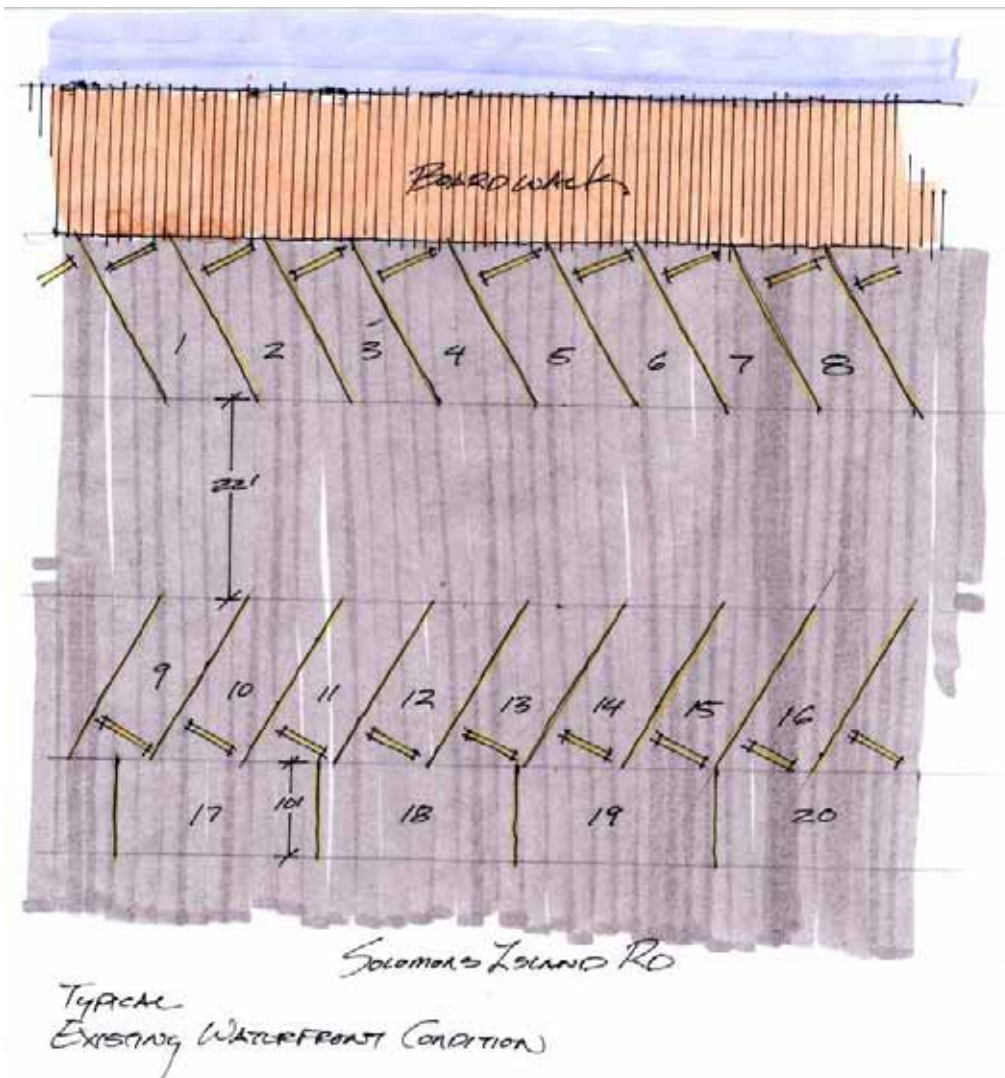
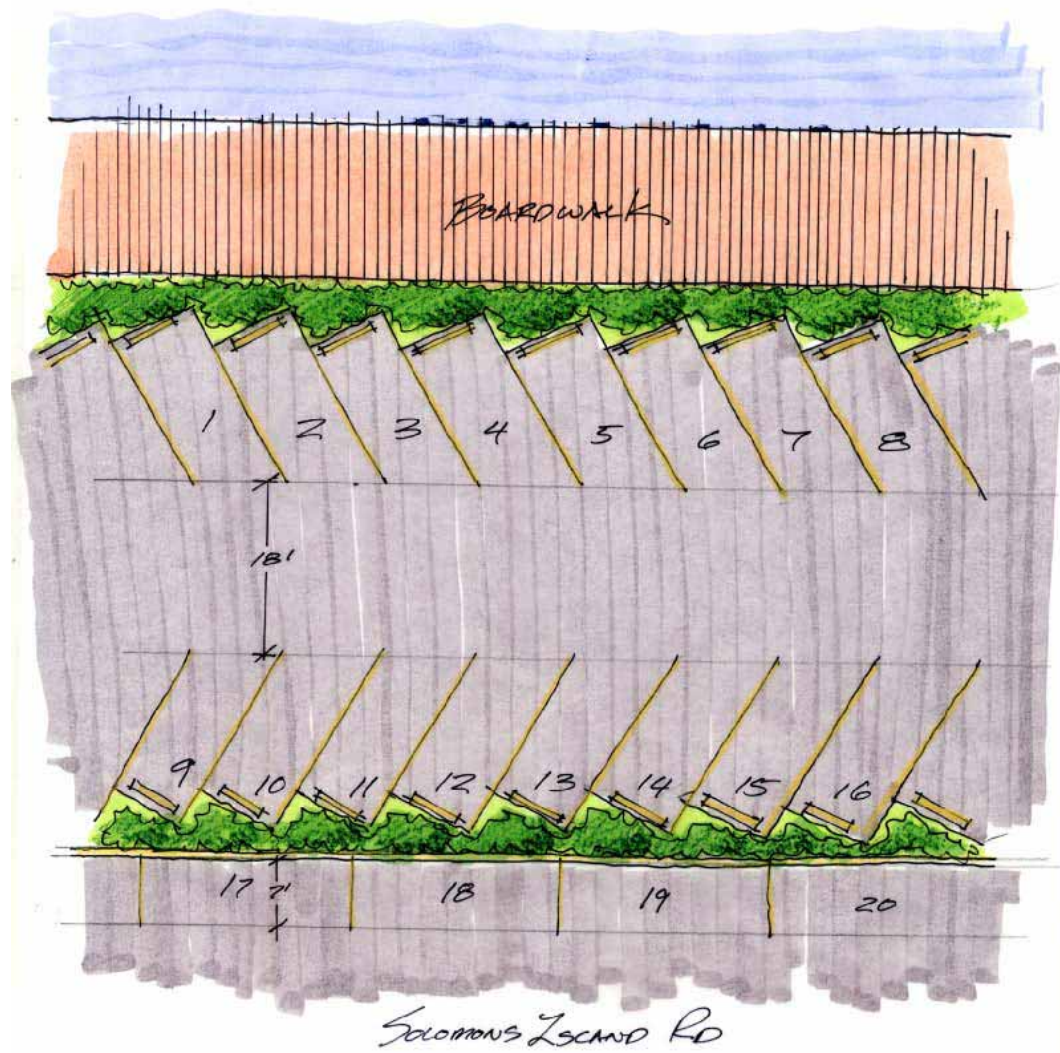


Figure 15: Existing Parking and Waterfront Condition



POTENTIAL
TYPICAL WATERFRONT CONDITION



Figure 16: Potential Parking Condition with Landscape Buffer



Figure 17a: Existing Parking Lot Island Plantings



Figure 17b: “Double” Amount of Parking Lot Island Plantings



Figure 18: Potential Landscape Buffer along Riverwalk



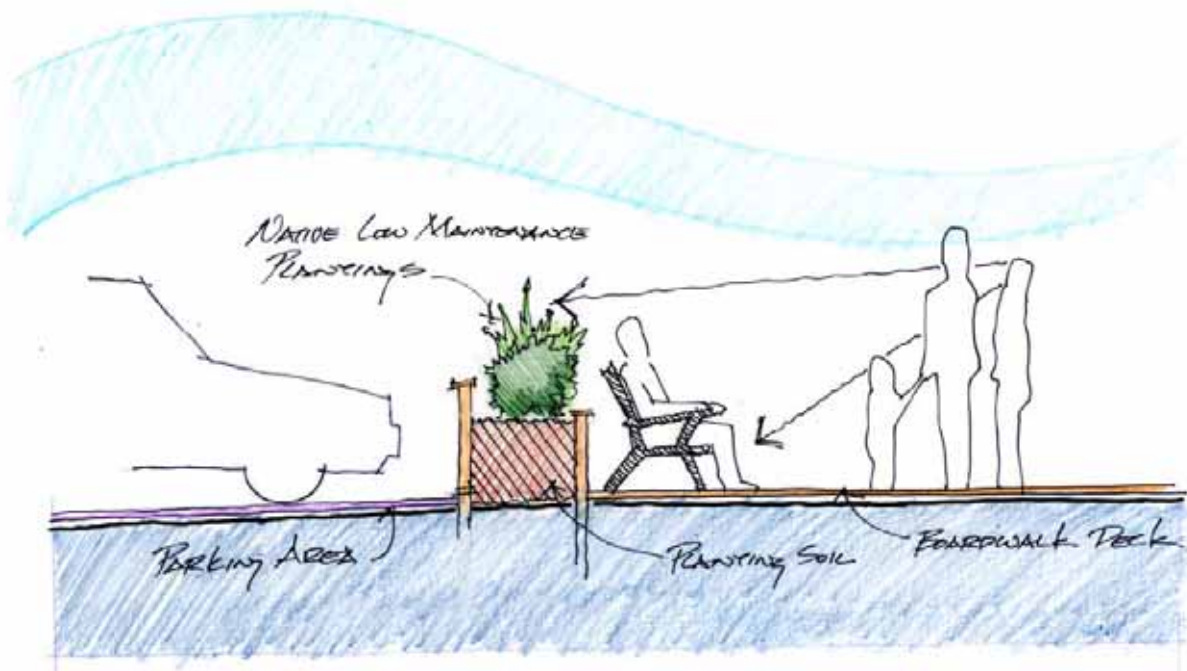


Figure 19: Cross-section Option for Landscape Buffer along Riverwalk where Riverwalk is At-Grade with Parking Lot

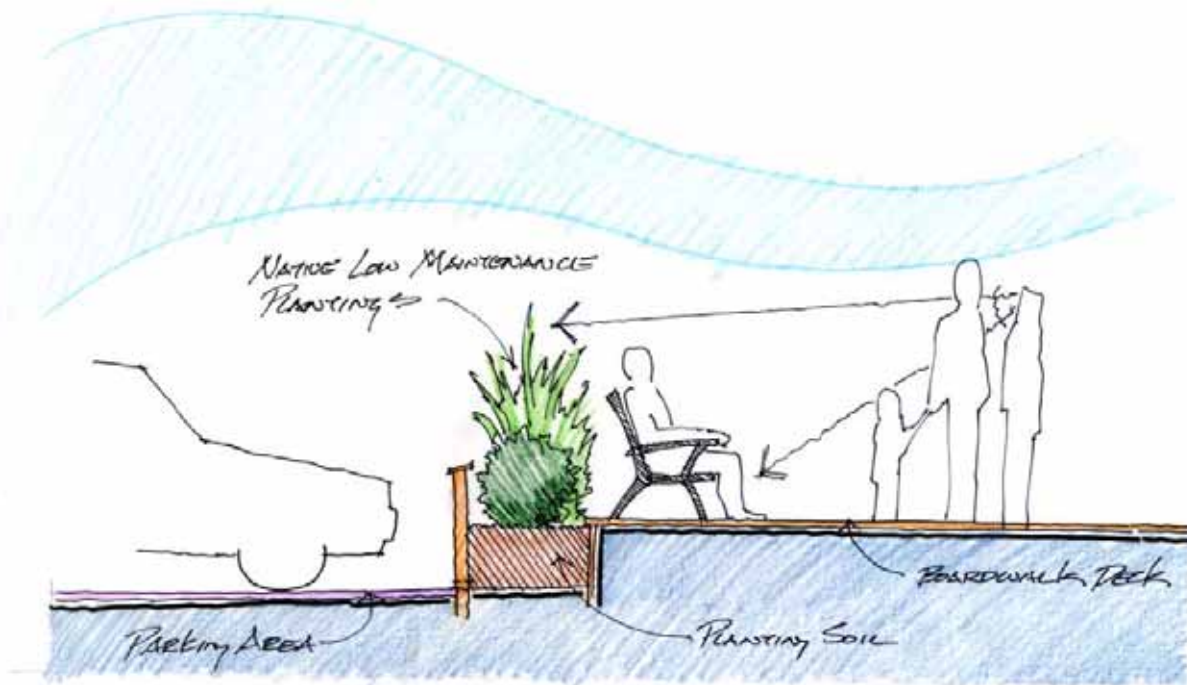


Figure 20: Cross-section Option for Landscape Buffer along Riverwalk where Riverwalk is Elevated

Figure 21: Potential Coastal Planting Species for Use along Solomons Island Riverwalk

Shrubs

<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	Groundsel Tree
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Beautyberry
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> sp	Summersweet Clethra
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Stem Dogwood
<i>Ilex glabra</i> sp	Inkberry
<i>Myrica (Morella) pennsylvanica</i>	Bayberry
<i>Rhododendron viscosum</i>	Swamp Azalea
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Fragrant sumac
<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Highbush Blueberry

Perennials

<i>Limonium carolinianum</i>	Sea Lavender
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Beardtongue
<i>Phlox subulata</i>	Creeping phlox
<i>Yucca filimentosa</i>	Yucca

Grasses

<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Northern Sea Oats
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> sp	Switchgrass



Figure 22: Existing Sidewalk Condition (non-existent)



Figure 23: Potential Sidewalk Condition



Figure 24: Tide Box Area Suggested Improvements



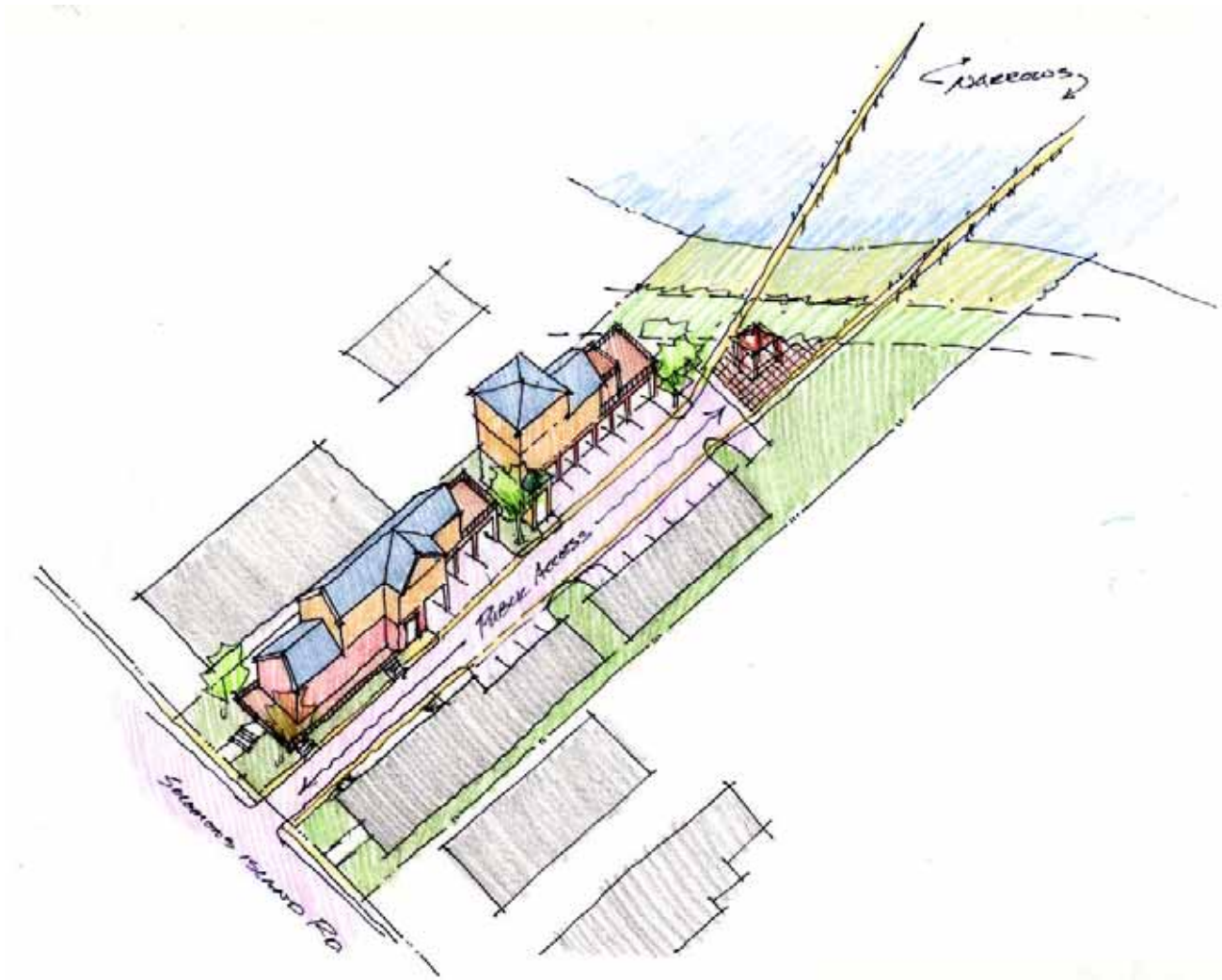


Figure 25: Potential Development Template – Double Lot Layout



Figure 26: Potential Beach Expansion Opportunity

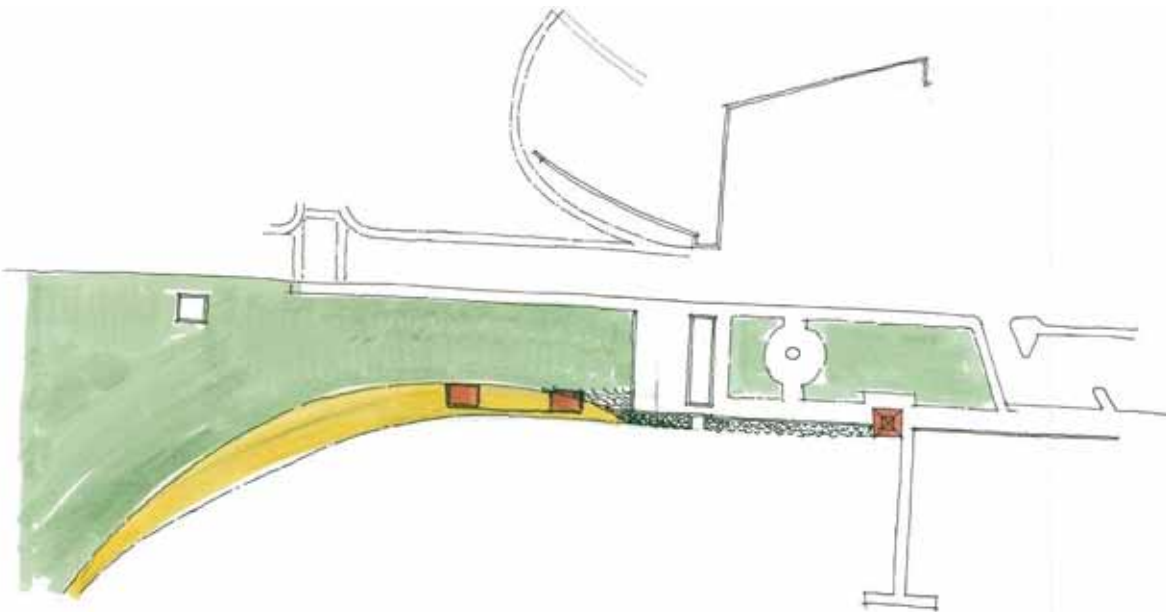




Figure 27: Overall Solomons Island Village Core Concept Plan