



ENTERING SURFSIDE AT 96TH STREET AND HARDING AVENUE

CHARRETTE METHOD 1.4

- 1.4.1 INTRODUCTION - REACHING A CONSENSUS**
- 1.4.2 EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS**

REACHING A CONSENSUS

The charrette is a method of planning which the team members have adopted and utilize in their design and planning practices, which actively encourages and facilitates public participation. The term is derived from the French term for “little cart” and refers to the final intense work effort expended by architects to meet a project deadline: at the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, proctors circulated with little carts to collect final drawings, and students would jump on the “charrette” to continue putting finishing touches on their presentations as the deadline approached, hence the term “on charrette.”

The charrette, as a design process, provides an iterative forum for expressing and evaluating concepts and ideas, and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers while ensuring mutual authorship of the plan by all those who participate. During these intensive sessions, many goals are accomplished:

1. *all those interested in the project develop a vested interest in both the design and the support of its vision;*
2. *multiple disciplines are able to work in a complimentary versus competitive fashion to produce a set of comprehensive documents that address all aspects of the vision;*

3. *this collective framework structures the input of all the participants in a more focused way that eliminates the tendency toward prolonged discussions, which typically lengthen the process for conventionally planned projects; and*
4. *a better end-product is produced more efficiently and more cost effectively because of this iterative and collaborative process.*

A primary feature of the charrette is that it is specifically organized to encourage the participation of everyone with a stake in the project, whether they represent the interests of the client, the regulators, the elected officials, the immediate neighbors, or the general public. Base project data, preliminary development programs, and building/zoning regulations are all collected and reviewed. A strategy is devised to include all the regulatory agencies, elected officials, and the community’s citizens into the charrette process. The charrette itself is usually held on or near the project site, with a temporary studio set up to approximate a full working office, complete with drafting equipment, computers, copiers, printers, faxes, phones, etc., in which a team of designers and expert consultants, including architects, planners, engineers, environmental consultants, CAD designers, public officials, and interested citizens will assemble and work for the approximately one week length of the typical charrette.



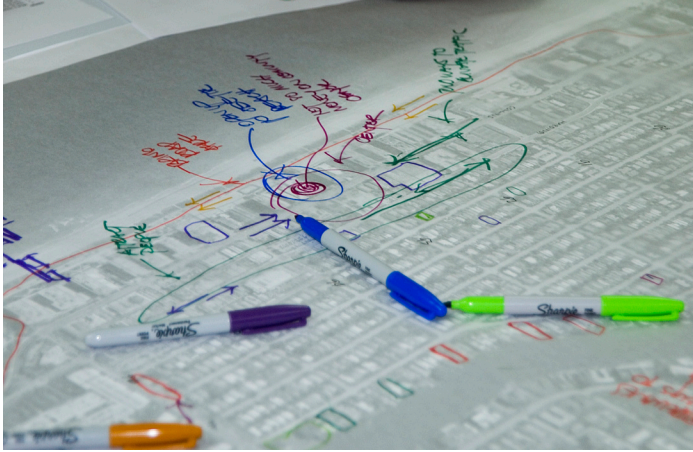


The charrette often opens on the first evening with an introductory lecture on the principles of urban design and sustainable communities, followed immediately by a citizen's design workshop. The next morning, the charrette starts in earnest with formal and informal meetings with various agencies and interest groups, on a variety of specific topics, while design proceeds apace. Throughout the charrette, separate tasks and mini-projects are undertaken individually or in small groups, while at other times, larger caucuses or simultaneous meetings may occur.

The real value of the charrette process is that the finished product which emerges is a true consensus representation of the community's vision, its goals and objectives, developed and articulated in a credible and comprehensive package, that is easily conveyed and understood, in a way that both ensures community support, and facilitates both regulatory approval and efficient implementation.

Periodically, interim briefings or presentations (pin-ups) are held, in which both the team and the community review the progress to date, and offer input and feedback, as well as internal critiques of the specific proposals and/or resolution of the various issues and concerns under consideration. During the charrette, a number of comprehensive documents are typically produced, including sketches, rendered plans, and perspectives, as well as various studies and observations (see following pages). At the end of the charrette week, the team presents their urban design concepts and detail resolutions to the public in a formal public presentation, revisiting the process and the iterative explorations that led to the final design proposals, overall findings and specific recommendations represented in the final presentation.

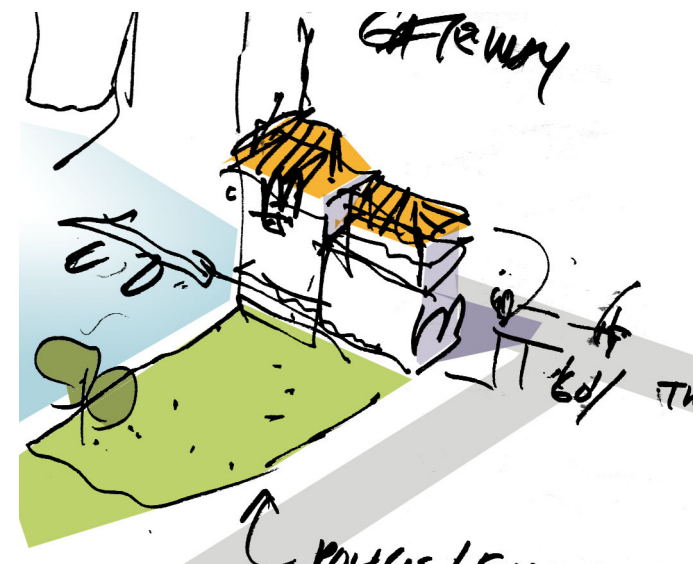
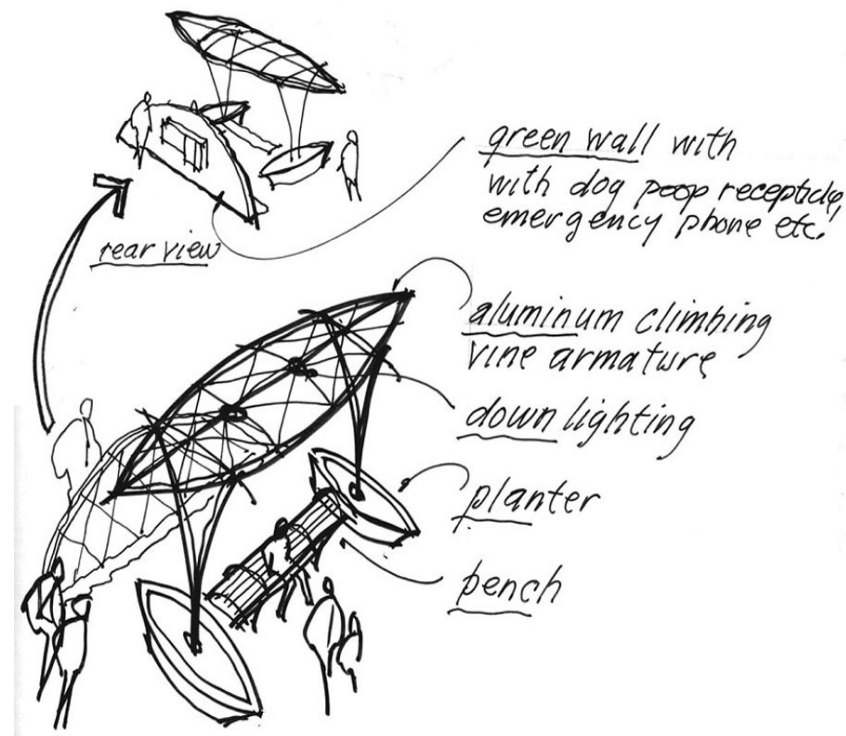
In the case of Surfside's charrette, all of the citizen participatory events were well attended, which usually means that the concepts developed and presented were well-vetted, and representative of the desires and objectives of the community as a whole.



Early Design Concepts

The single most significant attribute of the charrette process is its ability to both propose, and credibly evaluate, a broad spectrum of conceptual ideas through an efficient, publicly-vetted process. The end result is a final design proposal or recommendation that is both technically feasible and publicly supported.

The key means by which this is accomplished lies, not only in the ability to clearly articulate the salient points relating to any particular issue, but to quickly respond with credible concepts and ideas, both verbally and graphically, effectively conveyed those ideas such that they are easily synthesized and understood by all of the relevant parties, such that a consensus resolution is quickly established. A few key issues and concepts that were addressed during this charrette are outlined in the next few pages:



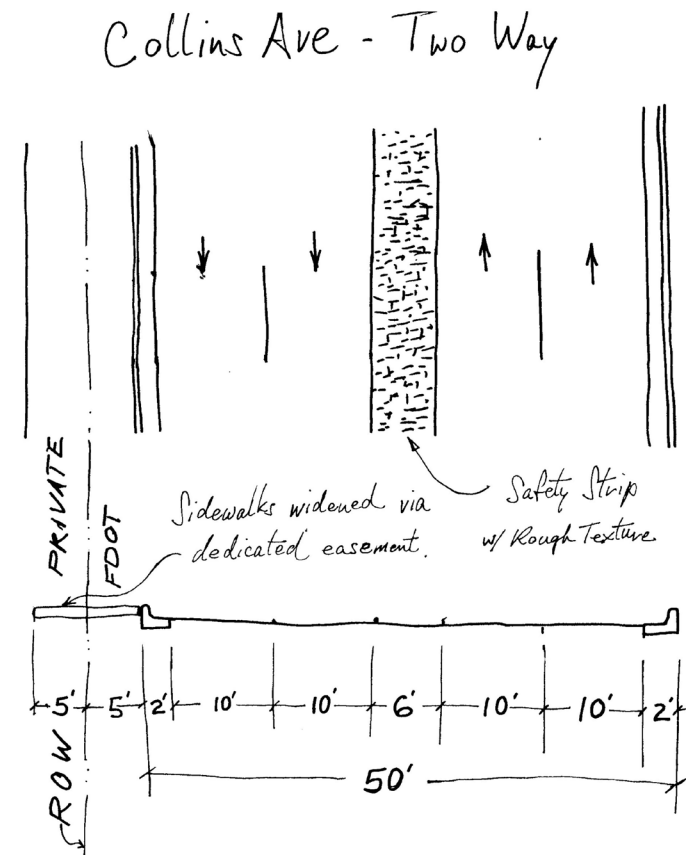
The charrette process engages community members in a real-time iterative design process that allows key issues to be conceptually explored quickly and efficiently with direct community input.

Early Design Concepts - Traffic Related Issues

One of the most important ideas to be put on the table right up front in the discussion of strategies for improving the quality of life in Surfside, was the question of A1A's present configuration and it's impact on both the downtown commercial core, as well as the spill-over effects the corridor has had on adjoining neighborhood streets and overall walkability.

Significant effort was expended on testing the idea of reverting Harding and Collins back to two-way operation, both from a practical viewpoint, as well as a political one. Initial concept sketches and photomontage "make-over" images were used to communicate the validity of the idea to both the community as well as regulatory and elected officials, with favorable results on both fronts.

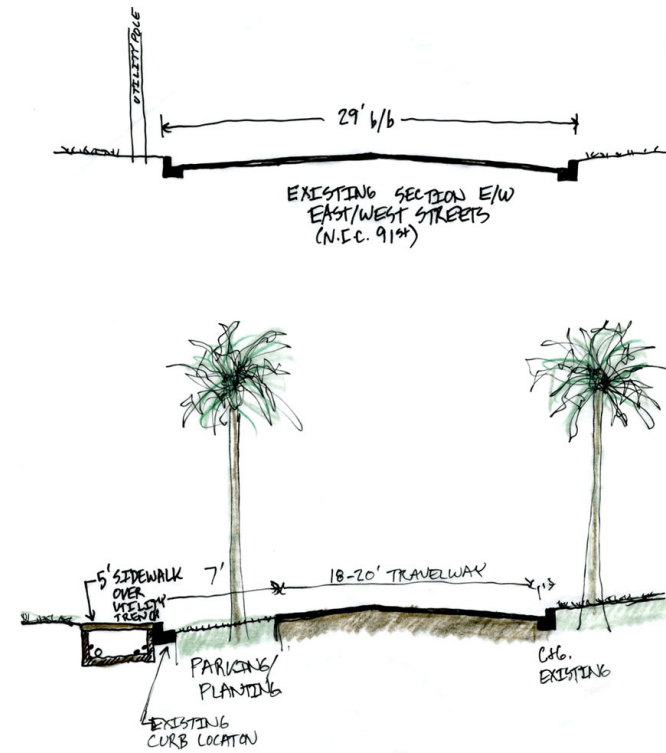
Although only a preliminary engineering analysis was undertaken, sufficient investigation was pursued to confirm the merits of the idea, and no specific impediments were identified that would absolutely disqualify the concept.



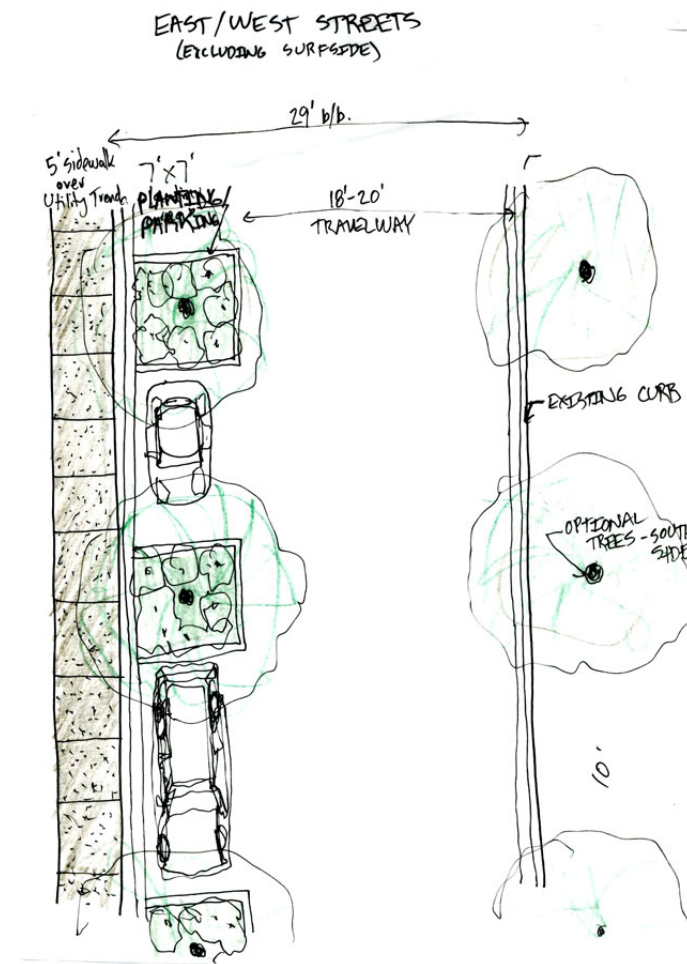
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR RETURNING A1A HARDING/ COLLINS TO TWO-WAY TRAFFIC

The idea to revert A1A to two-way traffic on Collins Avenue comes from the desire to create a pedestrian-friendly downtown in which local businesses can thrive, where pedestrian access to the beach can be made safer and dramatically more pleasant. At the same time, greater efficiency can be brought to the role of A1A within the regional transportation thoroughfare network.

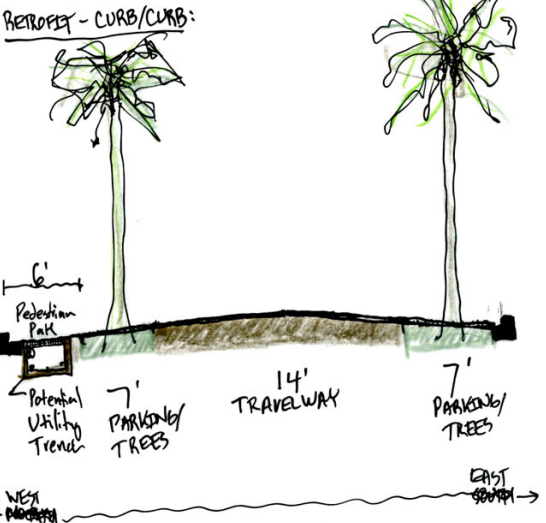
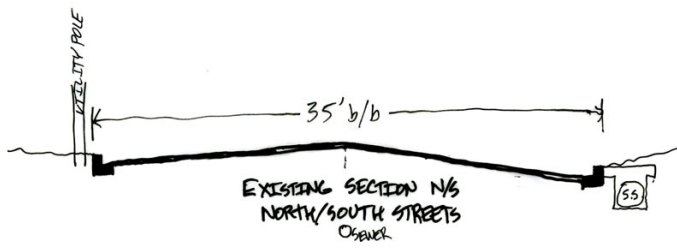
EARLY SKETCHES OUTLINE PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS FOR REVERTING A1A AND HARDING TO TWO-WAY TRAFFIC



- EAST/WEST STREETS**
(Excluding Sunside)
- PARKING: ONE SIDE
 - TREES: ONE OR TWO SIDES
 - WALKING: 5' SIDEWALK
 - UTILITIES: UNDERGROUND

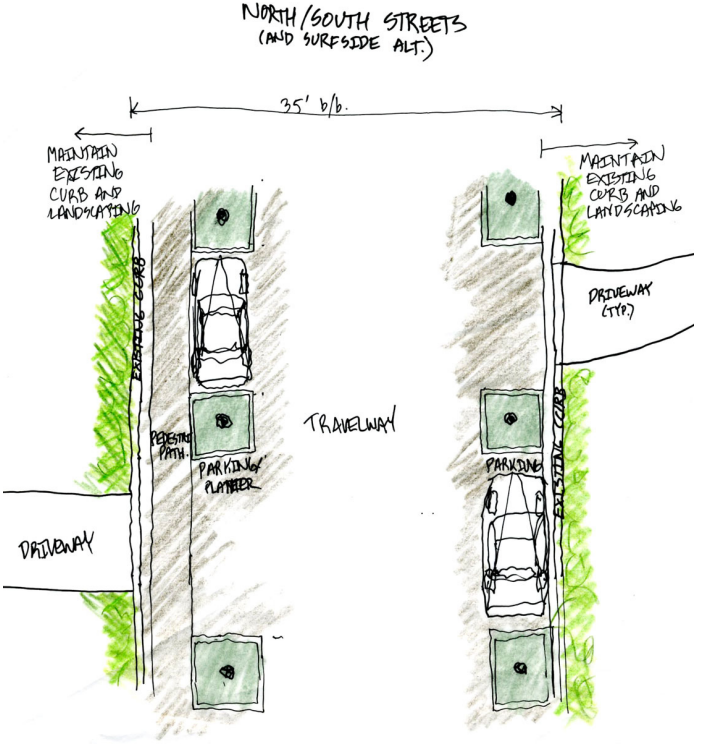


EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR EAST/WEST STREETS
East/West streets are very important to facilitating convenient and direct resident access to the beach. Residents want a safer and more pleasant walking environment on neighborhood streets, translating into a desire for sidewalks and street trees, wherever possible and appropriate.



Proposed NORTH/SOUTH YIELD STREET

- PARKING: TWO SIDES
- TREES: TWO SIDES
- WALKWAY: ONE SIDE
- UTILITIES UNDERGROUND



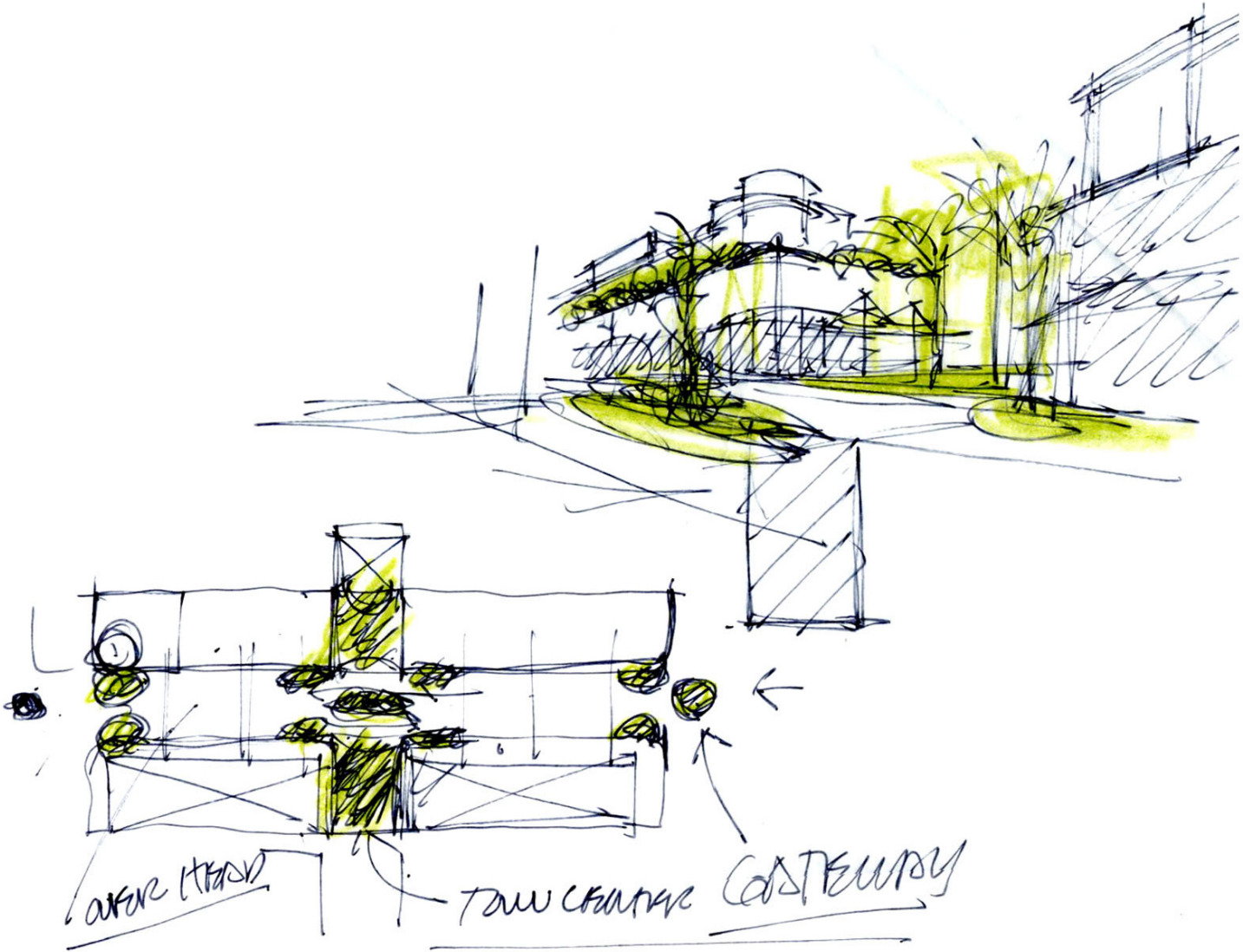
EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR NORTH/SOUTH STREETS
 North/South residential streets received a good share of community discussion, given the impact of “cut-through” traffic and high traffic speeds through the neighborhoods in the North/South direction. Discussion centered around calming traffic and creating a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Early Design Concepts - Downtown Commercial & Tourism

Conceptual ideas for downtown commercial and tourism focused on improving the public realm to enhance competitiveness, and exploring innovative means of mitigating lower tax revenue due to condo conversions.

Ideas for improving the public realm centered on more pedestrian-friendly thoroughfare design, including the previously mentioned reversion of Harding to two-way traffic and other streetscape enhancements, and the strategic introduction of small parks and plazas throughout the downtown area.

Several innovative ideas were introduced to replace the lost bed tax, the most credible and attractive being the idea of a "horizontal hotel" -- a comprehensively marketed and operated network of new residential units incorporated into the new mixed-use downtown commercial buildings encouraged by the proposed form-based code.



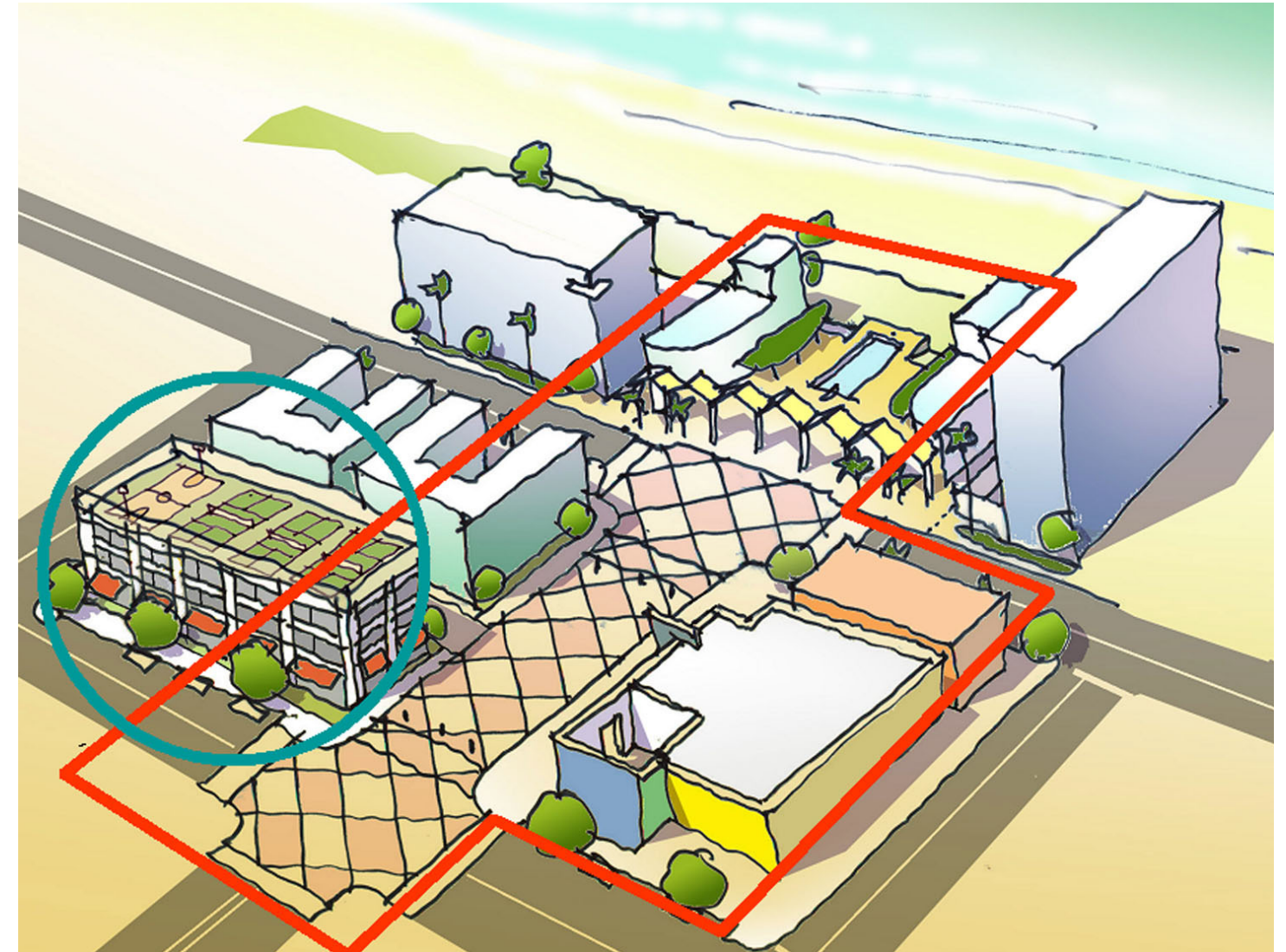
EARLY CONCEPTUAL SKETCHES EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTRODUCING NEW PUBLIC REALM WITHIN THE MIXED-USE TOWN CENTER DISTRICT

Early Design Concepts - Community Center

Easily the single most sensitive and closely scrutinized part of the entire charrette effort, the conceptual explorations relating to Community Center encompassed all of Surfside's goals and objectives into a single entity, which seeks to be both the spiritual heart of the community, as well as the functional embodiment of all that Surfside aspires to, as a community.

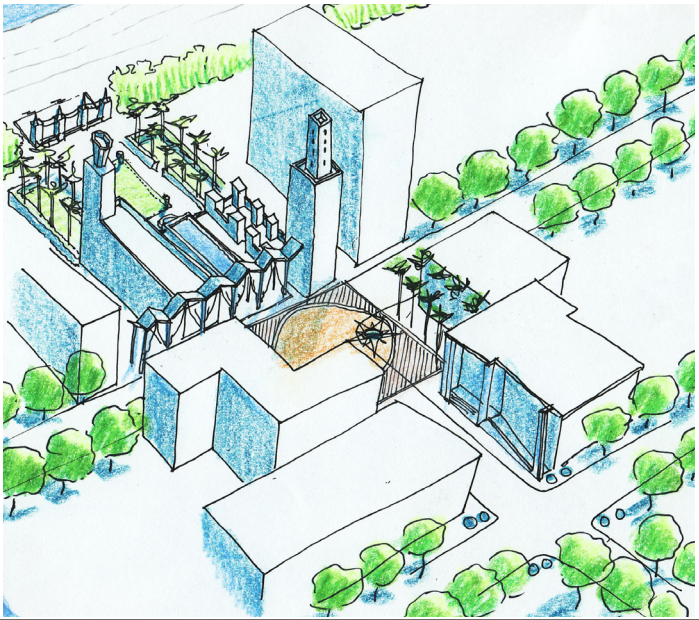
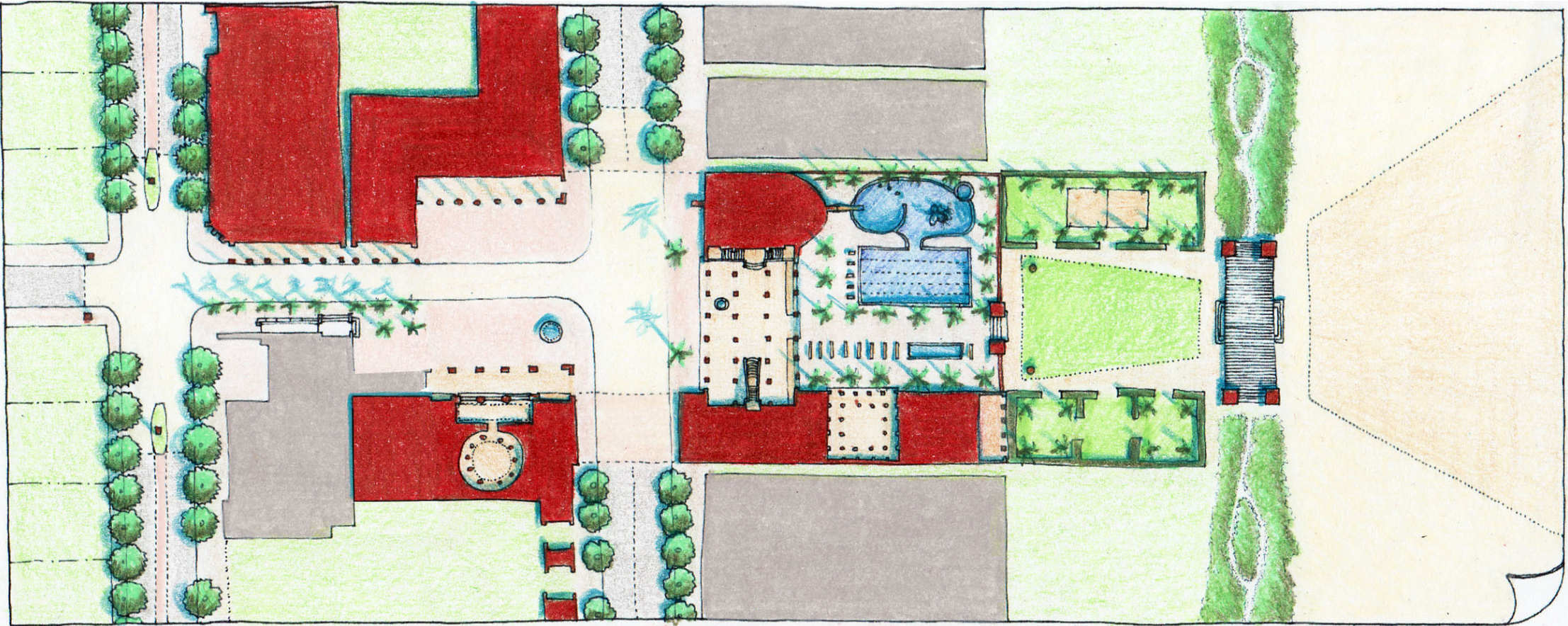
Specific issues for consideration were numerous and keenly pursued. While there was some diversity of opinion regarding the inclusion and location of several proposed programmatic functions, the concept of creating a single comprehensive community complex was heavily endorsed.

The earliest conceptual sketches illustrated a unified civic complex, tied together programmatically and urbanistically, into one convenient and walkable collection of both civic and recreation functions, dramatically linked to the beach through an iconic beach-front gateway structure.



EARLY CONCEPT DRAWING OF POTENTIAL NEW CIVIC CENTER

It is recommended that the existing Community Center and Town Hall be urbanistically reconstituted as a single, comprehensive civic center.

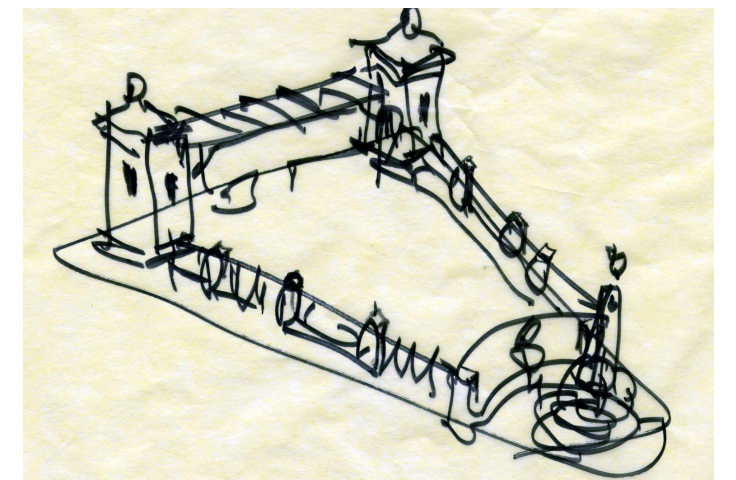
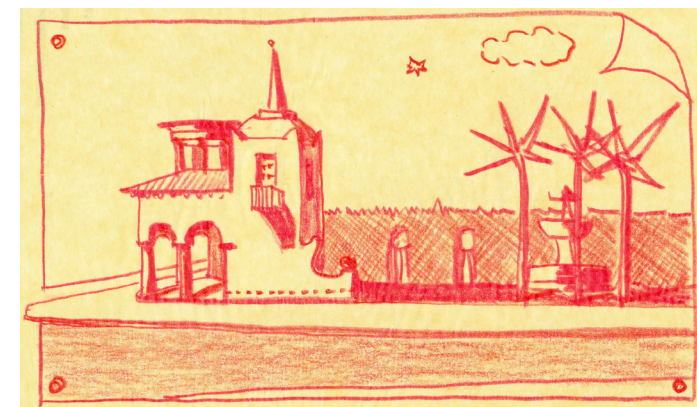
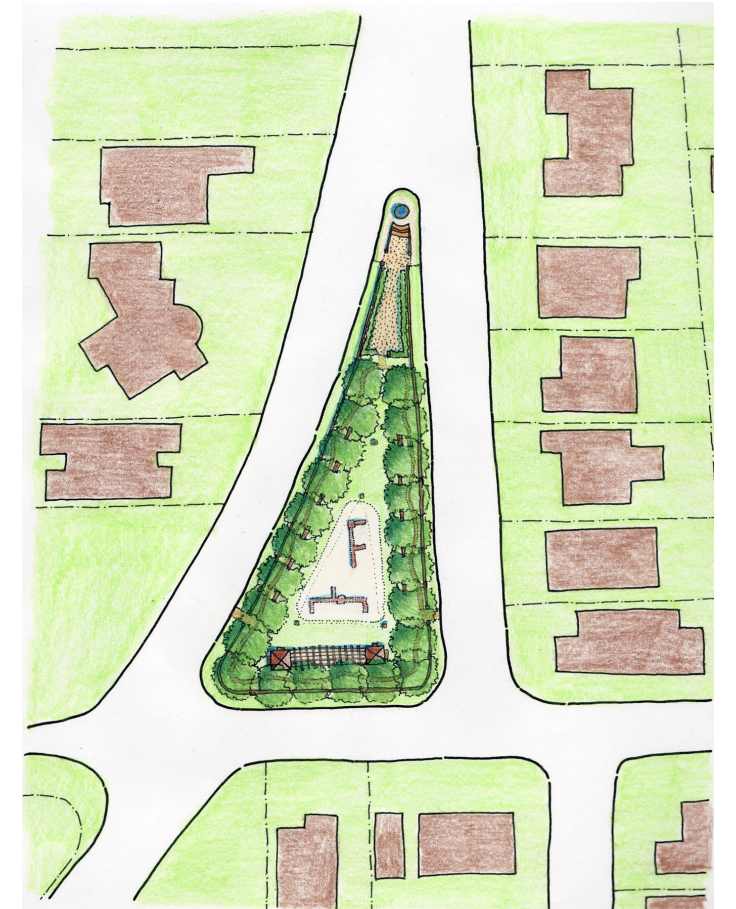
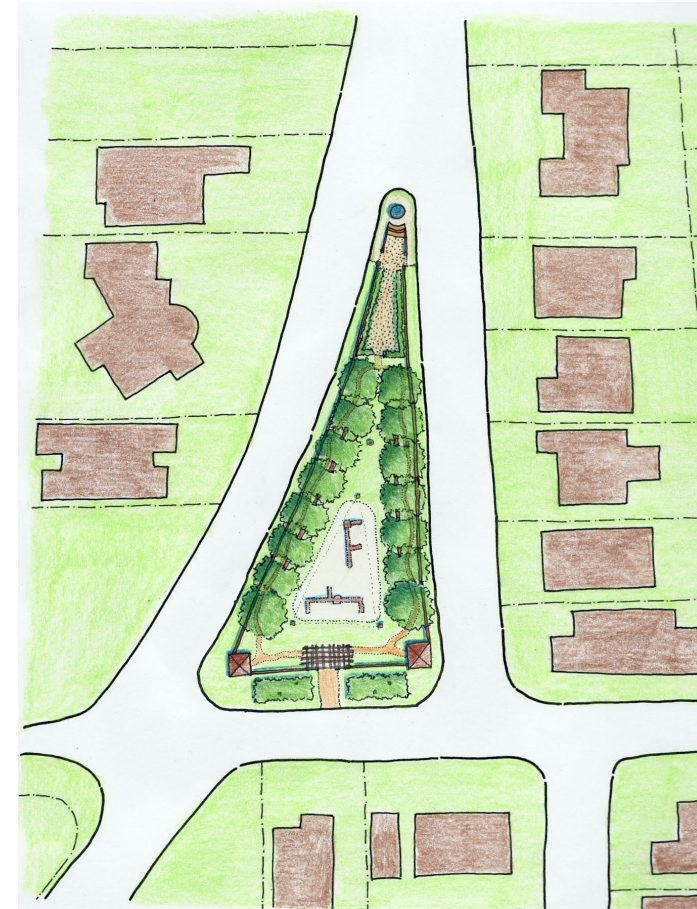


SCHEMATIC DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY CENTER
An early scheme for the Community Center was designed around a plaza which created a formal open space and a visual connection to the beach.

Early Design Concepts - Parks And Recreation

Neighborhood parks and recreational areas play an important role in building community by providing pleasant and convenient places for neighborly interaction. Ideally, neighborhood parks should be evenly dispersed throughout the neighborhood fabric, such that every residence within the community has safe, pedestrian-friendly access to a park, within short walking distance.

Furthermore, a well connected network of parks and recreational amenities can provide a range of programmed and unprogrammed activities and events, which can add significantly to the quality of life in any community. The challenge in Surfside was in identifying and improving latent opportunities already imbedded in the community. Specific concepts explored included the redevelopment of existing under utilized town properties, repositioning/enhancement of existing facilities, and streetscape improvements to more effectively access and connect various recreational venues.



TOP: Two options for developing the South end of the Tot Lot, one incorporating public facilities in a more formalized design, and one not.

RIGHT: Early design ideas for Veterans Park, looking at the idea of using architecture to create a new entry feature for Surfside, as seen when entering the Town from the South.

FAR RIGHT: Schematic sketch for giving the Tot Lot a more civic presence with a more formal entry and public plaza taking advantage of the terminated vista from the North.