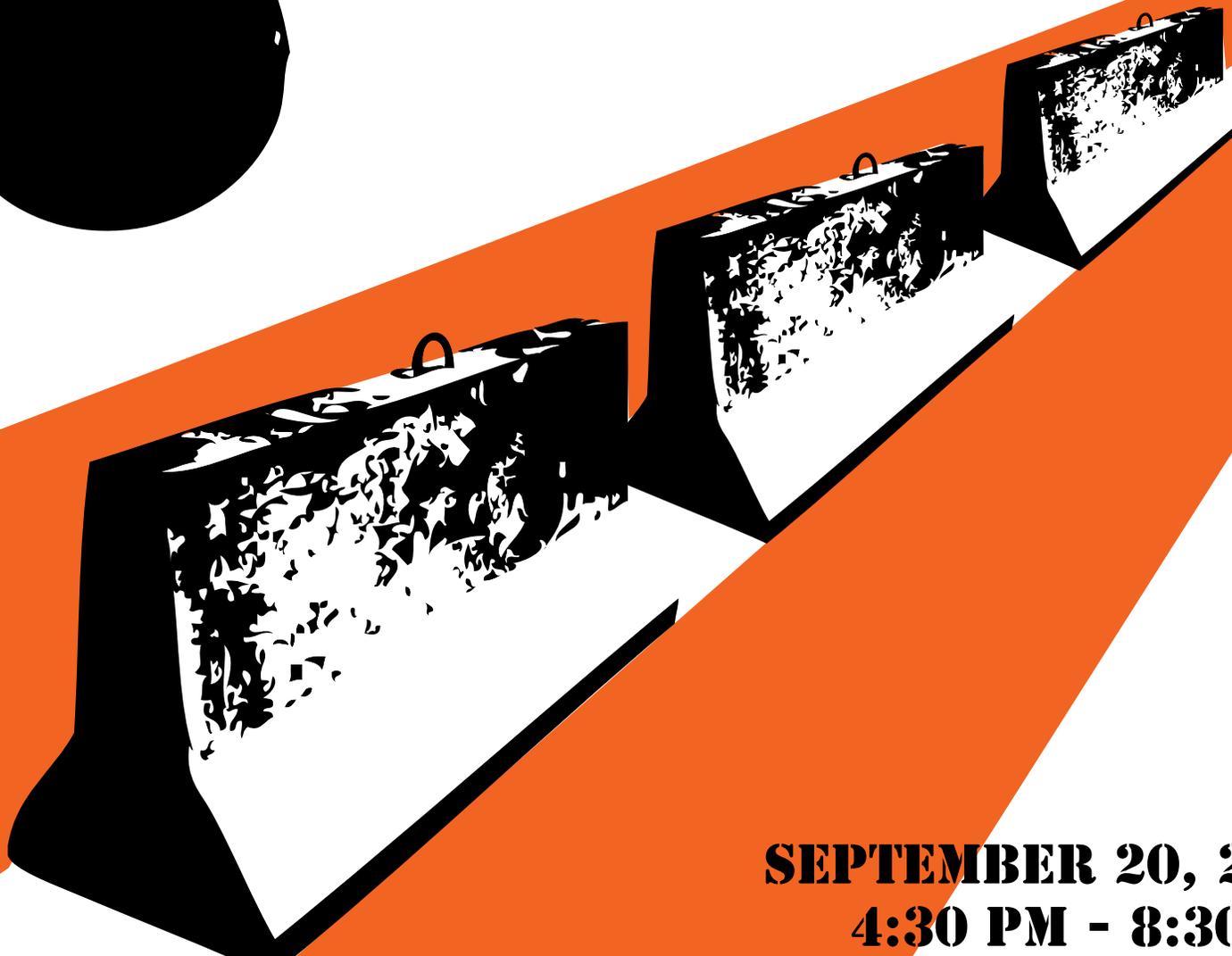


# LIBERATE SPRING STREET!



**SEPTEMBER 20, 2011**

**4:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CIVIC CENTER**

# Portland Society of Architects

The Portland Society of Architects (PSA) is a non-profit membership organization founded in 2006 to promote the progress and economic development of Greater Portland by encouraging innovation and vision in design and planning.

PSA Advocates for design excellence in the Greater Portland built environment while promoting fellowship within the local design community

# A Short Introduction to Spring St.

Spring St. is an odd, unique piece of urban infrastructure. It could be described as a short stretch of highway, a little less than a half mile long, dropped inexplicably right in the middle of portland's downtown. Which begs the question, how did it get there?

As it turns out, Spring St. is something of an orphan, the result of a sprawling, ambitious plan by Victor Gruen put into motion nearly a half century ago to turn a half-mile section of Congress St into something like an outdoor pedestrian shopping mall (disallowing automobiles on Congress St but providing direct car access by way of a ring of new highway construction, serving to isolate the area). The underlying approach to urban planning, very much in line with the thinking of time, has since been nearly completely discredited. The widespread damage which occurs when a highway system

is directly imposed on an existing downtown (a tragedy widespread in the 60's) can be seen in a great multitude of cities across america today.

Thankfully, however, the plan was abandoned. Spring St was one of only a few small pieces which were actually built. An archeological artifact, it is a minor fragment of a greater whole which was never finished. And quite significantly, without the context for which it was designed, it simply doesn't make sense.

Spring St, in its current configuration, is problematic. It is a barrier, splitting two halves of portland's downtown. It is desolate, unoccupied, barren. It is too fast, too unfriendly, and out of context. Why, in the middle of a city known for its vibrant, bustling and active street life is there a half mile stretch which is absolutely empty? Why, in such a prime, central location is there no better use for the land than parking lots?

The goal of this event was to ask: Is there anything that can be done to bring a little vibrancy to Spring St? Could the area be made friendlier for pedestrians and bicyclists, encouraging the kind of diversity of uses which fosters city

vitality? If automobile traffic is calmed and cross street connections are emphasized, might the pedestrian be invited back? If the excess road capacity is reduced, could something positive be done with the extra space? A linear park, providing additional public amenities in the middle of the city? Might new construction introduce a healthier mix of residential, commercial, and public space?

An event such as this cannot provide definitive answers, but can suggest beginnings. Improvisational by nature, it is not the final word, but rather the first step. It is a group of volunteers trying to generate some fresh thinking. A bullet point summarization of common ideas follows directly, while the charette participants work is presented on the pages following.

# Summary

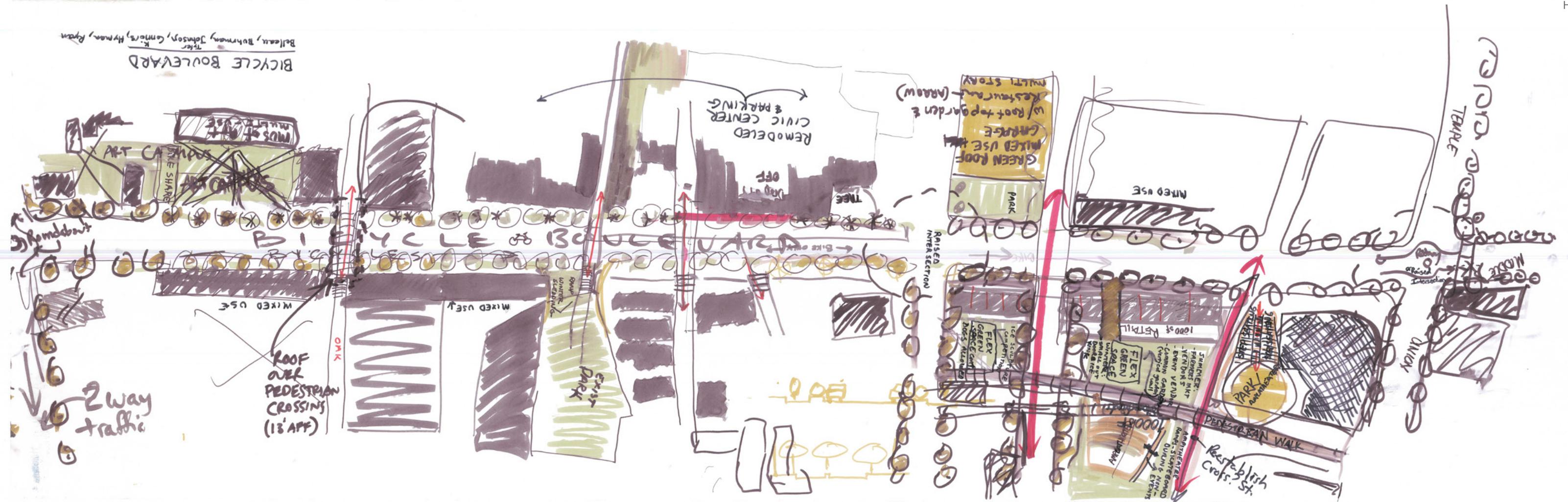
Admidst a great variety of ideas, a few stood out as being held in common by a majority of the participants:

- 2 way traffic in 2 lanes (currently 4 lanes)
- Increase pedestrian connectivity to waterfront / Pleasant St (cross peninsula)
- Connect to Pleasant St park below Spring St
- Zone for lower scale buildings and encourage new construction on the south/downhill side
- Shift the road location to free up real estate (solar access, community scale building)
- Give “identity” to Spring St and promote it as a visual corridor
- Walking = sun, connectivity
- Unlock doors in Cumberland County Civic Center to allow passage from Free St to Spring St

TEAM: **BICYCLE BOULEVARD**

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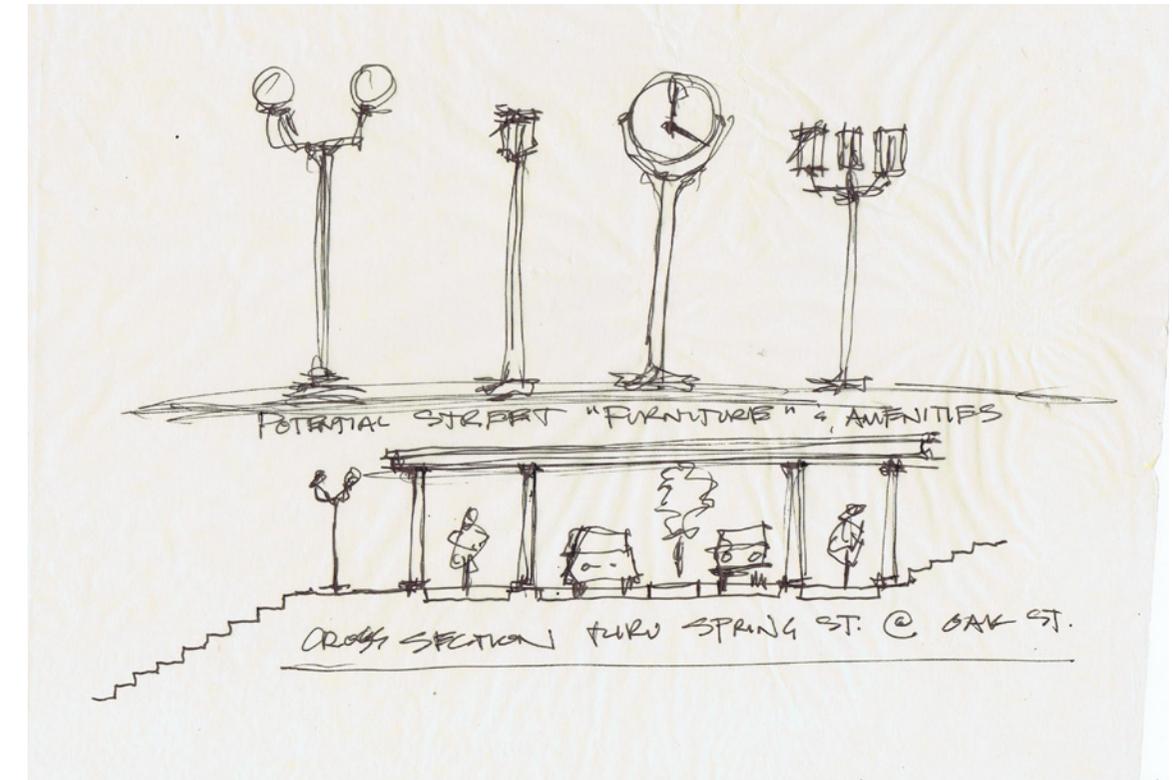
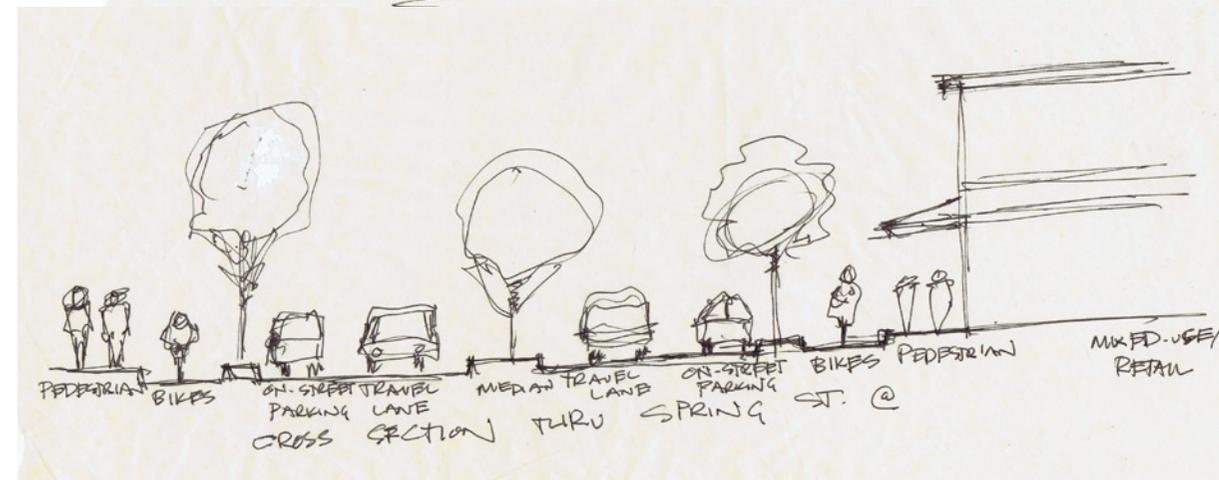
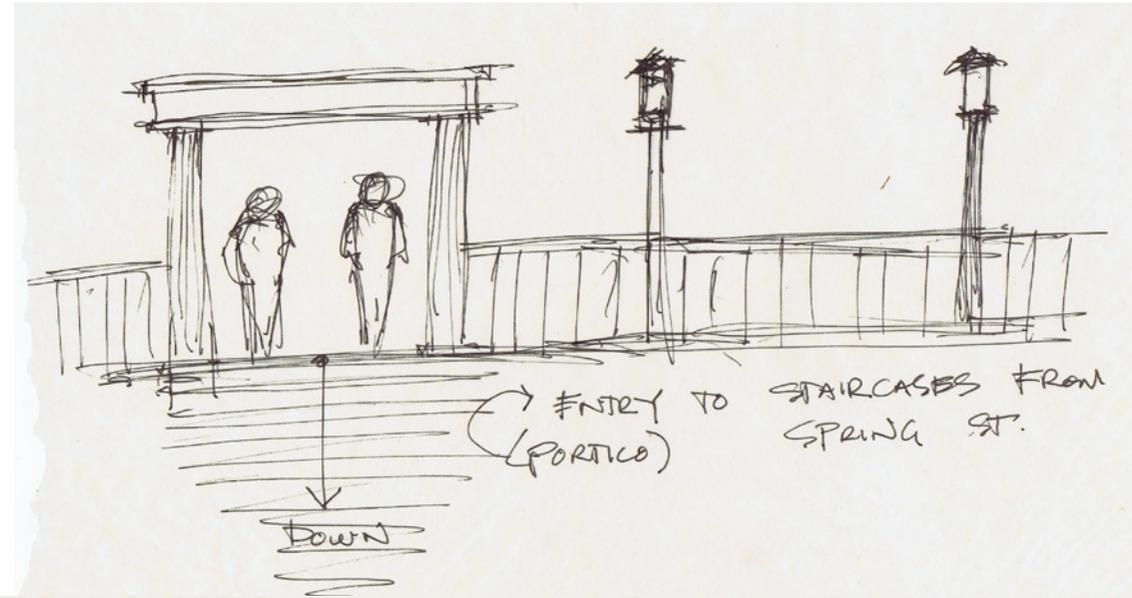
(as signed)  
Belleau  
Buhrman  
Tyler Johnson  
K. Conners  
Hyman  
Ryan



BICYCLE BOULEVARD  
Belleau, Buhrman, Johnson, Conners, Hyman, Ryan

(2 BIKE LANES, ON-ST. PARKING, 2 AUTO LANES, TREE-LINED SIDEWALKS & MEDIAN)

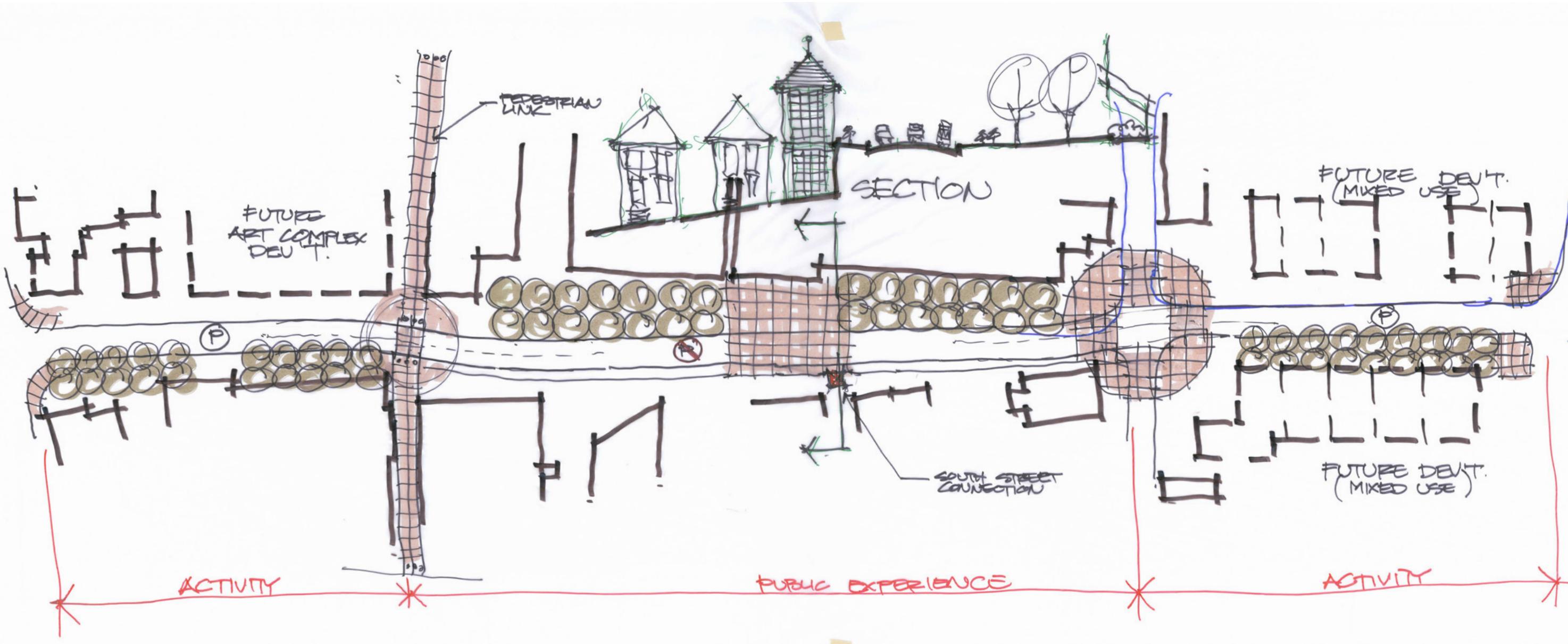
- CONNECTION TO CROSS STREET NEIGHBORHOOD (ENTRY PORTICOS ANNOUNCING ENTRY)
- SMALL-SCALE RETAIL
- ART CAMPUS
- <sup>ADDED</sup> SEASONALLY-FLEXIBLE GREEN SPACE & AMPHITHEATRE
- RE-ESTABLISH CROSS ST.
- MODERATE AUTOMOBILE SPEED THROUGH RAISED WALKWAYS/SPEED TABLES & TRAFFIC CIRCLES,



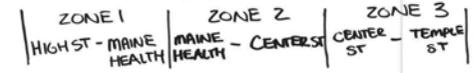
TEAM: **THE MISSING LINK**

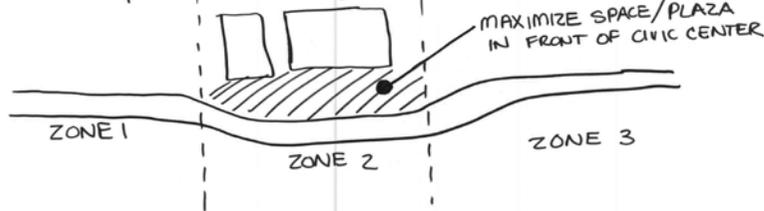
TEAM: THE MISSING LINK

(as signed)  
Aiello  
Ted Oldham  
Mark Johnson  
Jaime  
Hillary  
Jim Sterling  
Mark Bessire



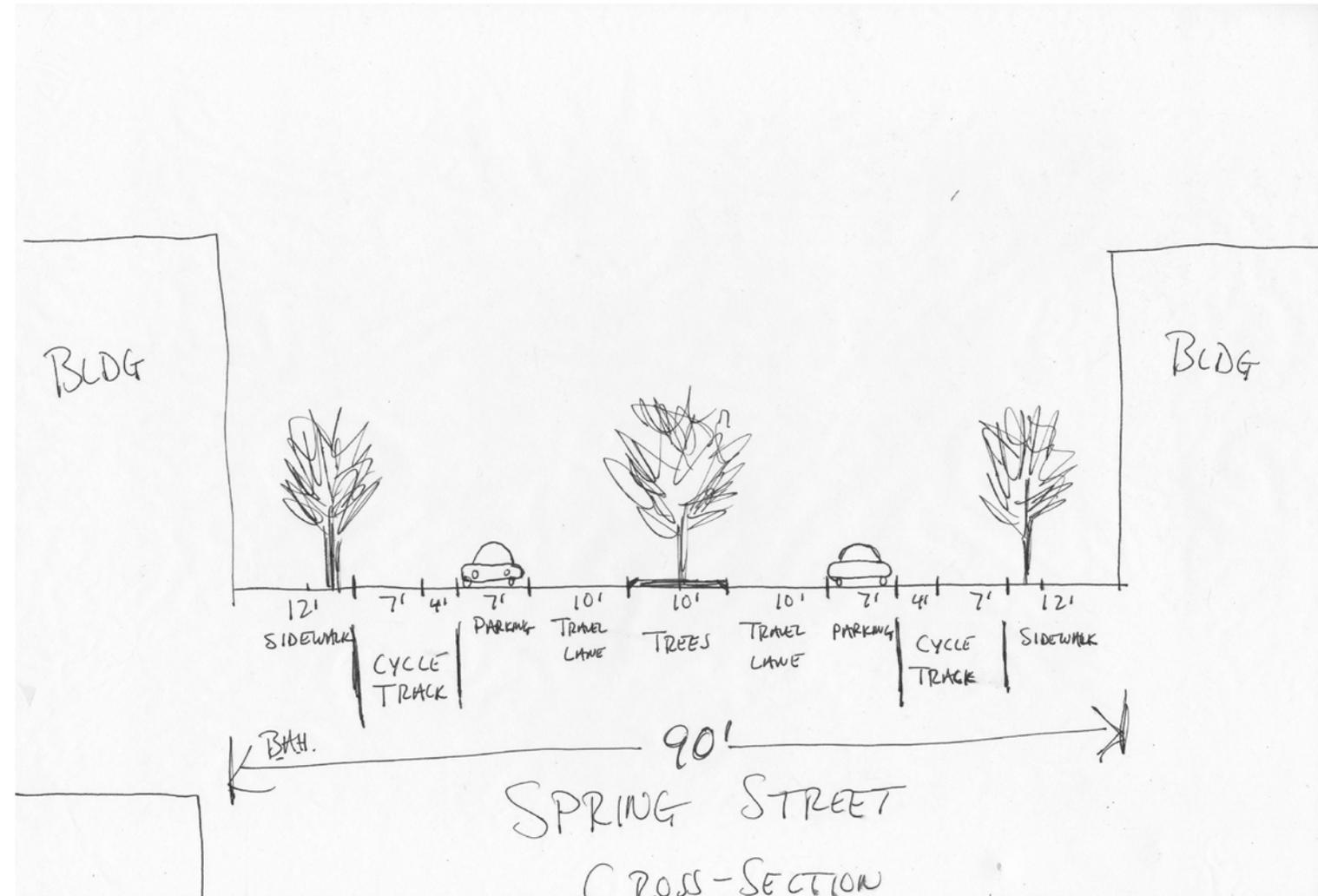
CONCEPT: 3 ZONES (based on 700 ft pedestrian scale)



- ① Remove median + 2 traffic lanes
- ② Reuse space as pedestrian / green space / developable building space
- ③ 
- ④ Reconnect old street grid through pedestrian access + plantings (N/S permeability)
- ⑤ Work with pre-determined areas (ZONE 1 + ZONE 3) that are prime for future development (art museum, large surface parking)

GOALS:

- housing
- temporary vendors
- public transportation (drop off zone)
- green space
- public art
- parking garages redeveloped OR consolidated



TEAM: **BLUE SKY**

TEAM: **BLUE SKY**

(as signed)  
Jenn Classner  
Markos Miller  
Graham Vickers  
Seth King  
Constance Bloomfield  
Herb Semple  
Eric Stark



### Temple / Middle / Spring / Union

Pedestrian walkway follows old Middle Street - Reorient lobster market as Plaza crossing up to Monument Sq., Defined by materials, raised table, rhythm (lights, bollards, trees)

Spring - Narrows to 2 lanes of travel creating development / open space opportunities along new roadway

Entrance / Plaza to Civic Center on Spring spills across street, leading down to Street Park - Reinforced by materials, texture, etc.

Tabletop Ped Intersection at High / Spring  
Spring St. Corridor lined by expanding / contracting facades

### LARGER MASSING Upslope

More porous on down slope  
Encourage Movement (Ped) Across Street  
Connecting to Pleasant, Danforth, Commercial

Horizontal & Vertical shifting Along Corridor

Lower level Commercial  
Upper level Residential  
Arts Space relating to PMA

## SETTING THE PEDESTRIAN TABLE

