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# The Norfolk **Downtown Arts and Design District** CHARRETTE II RESULTS

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# Norfolk

## Downtown Arts and Design District

### CHARRETTE II RESULTS

*Prepared for*  
City of Norfolk

*Consultant Team*  
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*Design Charrette*  
10 October 2014

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# Review of 2013 Charrette

## INITIATIVES DEVELOPED IN THE 2013 CHARRETTE:

Five initiatives were recommended for coordinated efforts among property owners, institutions and the city. A shopping list of ideas was identified for each.

### GRANBY STREET:

Build on the Better Block Program to create a lively pedestrian and bike friendly street between Brambleton Avenue and Virginia Beach Boulevard as the heart of the district.

### OLNEY ROAD:

Create a green art walk between the museum and Granby Street as part of re-establishing an east-west bicycle-friendly connection through the city.

### VIRGINIA BEACH BOULEVARD:

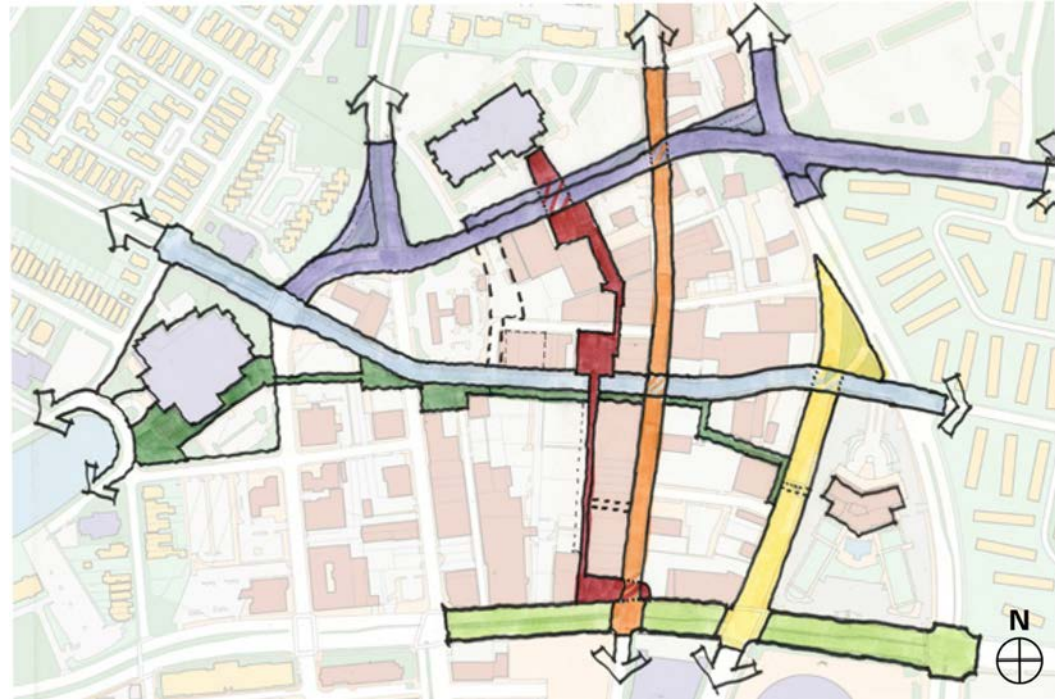
Transform a bleak, high speed road into a green civic address with parking for the district between St. Paul's Boulevard and Olney road.

### MAGAZINE LANE:

Transform a back alley into a lively small scale market street and central square for the district between Brambleton Avenue and Virginia Beach Boulevard.

### MONTICELLO AVENUE:

Transform an under-utilized highway into a destination address with parking for the district.



# Accomplishments since the 2013 Charrette

In this first year, efforts were concentrated in the center of the district and built upon the efforts already underway.

## GRANBY STREET:

- street lights installed
- gateway sculptures created
- murals on Decker and Bob's Buildings
- Zed's acquired and demolished with the PLOT developed for outdoor performances
- Texaco Building acquired for conversion to housing and retail
- Parlor restaurant and performance venue developed; Alchemy in place
- planters installed as test case at PLOT.

## OLNEY ROAD:

- street paved with bike lane and parking
- new sidewalks in process on Olney and Wilson
- Virginian Pilot landscaping
- Cofer Building demolished: Skate Sculpture installed
- Chrysler Museum purchased \_\_\_\_\_ building for retail outlet for the Glass Studio
- Chrysler Museum expansion and first part of Art Walk completed
- New restaurant on Grace Street.

## MAGAZINE LANE:

- Several Buildings were purchased along the privately owned open space which would be the "lively market street and square" called for in the charrette.
- These include the \_\_\_\_\_ Building purchased by Hurrah Players and the \_\_\_\_\_ building purchased by Tom Morissette for loft apartments.



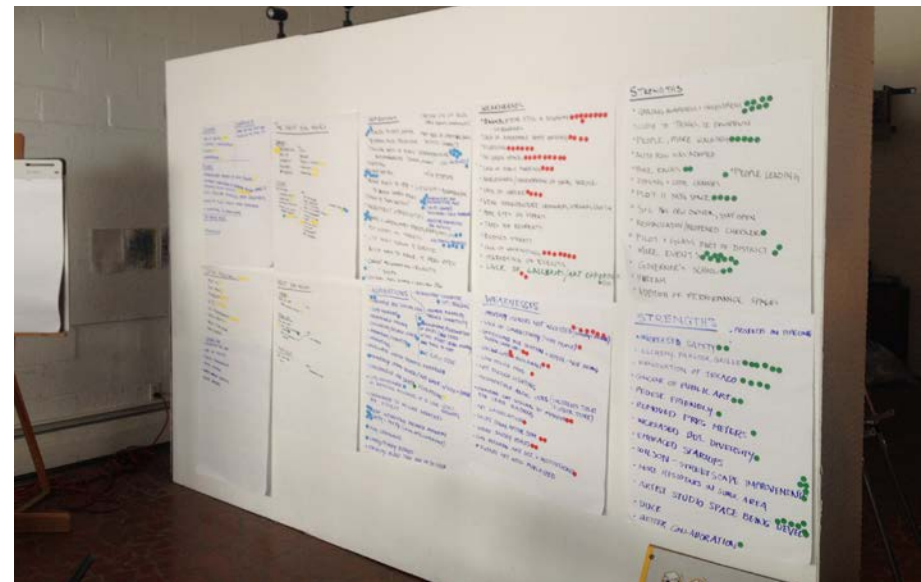
Mural on the South face of the Bob's Gun Shop building





# Step 1: The Charrette

Charette participants met at Studio Co-Lab on Granby Street to discuss the Downtown Arts and Design District and to help plan for future growth.



# Step 2: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Aspirations

In order to determine how the attendees view the current state of the Art and Design District they were asked to participate in a Strengths-Weaknesses-Aspirations exercise. Participants identified the areas which are currently the Strongest, the Weakest, and also the areas where they would most like to see something happen.

## STRENGTHS

1. More events have happened (like First Friday)
2. Growing awareness and investment
3. A greater number of people present and walking down the street
4. Artist studios currently being developed
5. Wilson streetscape improvements
6. PLOT 2.0 meeting space
7. Renovation of the Texaco building is underway
8. Addition of permanent bike racks
9. The Virginian Pilot and the Chrysler Glass Studio are part of the District
10. The close proximity of the Governor's School for the Arts
11. Increased feeling of safety
12. A high concentration of public art
13. Better collaboration among tenants, residents, property owners, and the City.
14. The creation of art in the form of murals, the soon-to-be Texaco art space, and the performances that have been held at the Parlor on Granby
15. Parking Meter removal
16. Alchemy
17. Parklets and the PLOT 2.0
18. The demolition of the Zedd's building

## WEAKNESSES

1. Brambleton Avenue still a highway/uncomfortable intersections
2. Little to no green space in the District
3. Lack of affordable housing
4. Lack of wayfinding aids
5. Regular flooding (Lake Olney)
6. Some property owners and tenants are not invested in a future vision
7. Lack of a grocer
8. Lack of public parking
9. Weak infrastructure (sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting)
10. Lack of galleries/art opportunities
11. Lack of connectivity
12. Greyhound Station & Crowne Plaza Hotel not cared for
13. Owners not willing to improve for-lease buildings
14. Little activity after 5pm
15. Weak entry points
16. The skate sculpture

## ASPIRATIONS

1. Keep interesting balance between gritty & pretty
2. Include arts in public infrastructure
3. Add wayfinding
4. Opportunities for interactive art
5. Child/family friendly events and businesses
6. Parks and Landscapes: streets, roofs, empty lots, storm water management
7. Management and coordination of public spaces
8. Art supply store
9. Places to eat and drink





# Step 3: Generate a Shopping List of Priorities

## SHOPPING LIST OF PROJECTS FROM THE 2014 CHARRETTE:

The focus of the charrette was to support the successful efforts of the first year of the DADD and link the efforts together.

### A. LINK BETWEEN ART MUSEUM AND THE COFER SITE:

The Art Walk Concept will run eastward on Grace Street from the Glass Studio, north on Boush Street to Olney, and eastward on Olney to the Cofer Site. To make this irregular route legible, it is proposed to add a series of landmark elements at the end of vistas and to provide special treatment for the crosswalks along the way.

### B. COFER SITE AND WILSON STREET:

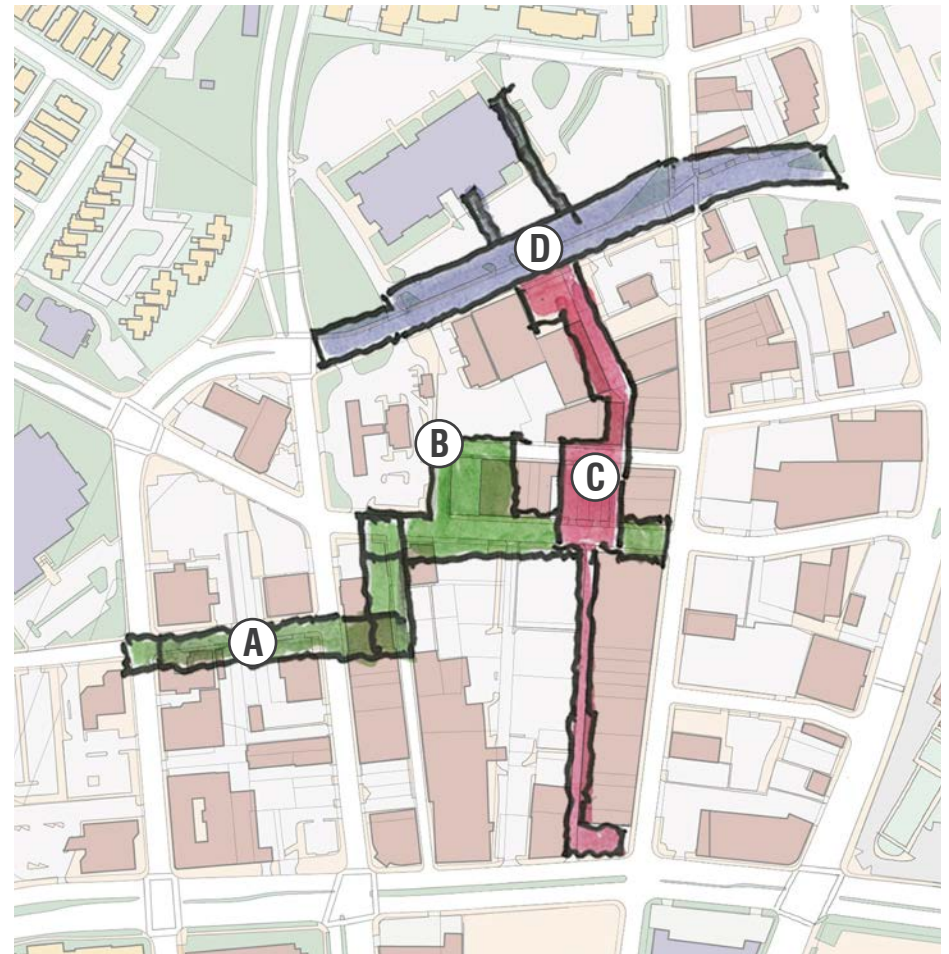
The Cofer Site is designed as a demonstration of sustainable landscape techniques, as a pedestrian cross roads and as the site for complex of shops and artist studios built with containers. The sidewalk contract will be modified accordingly to provide a landscaped edge along the two sides facing Wilson a planted verge along Olney created by removing half of the width of the present sidewalk. Two options for the sculpture were discussed: removing it or modifying it to become a bike storage and maintenance point. Subsequent analysis and discussions concluded that it would be best to remove it and replace it with a landscape element.

### C. MAGAZINE LANE

The plan calls for the creation of a POPS (Privately Owned Public Space) in the space between the backs of buildings on Granby Street and empty industrial buildings. With the restoration and re-use of these empty buildings as arts related housing, retail, studios and production/rehearsal spaces, the space can become the focus of the DADD by providing outdoor seating and performance spaces as well as providing a good pedestrian link.

### D. VIRGINIA BEACH BOULEVARD:

The 2014 Charrette successfully demonstrated a way in which the portion of Virginia Beach Boulevard between Llewellyn and Monticello could be modified to provide two through lanes for traffic and parking along both sides as well as a bike lane. The next step will be to provide planters at the locations that future bump-outs would be placed as well as painted crosswalks. The HOA parking lot should be re-stripped and modified as illustrated.





# Step 4: Develop Initiatives

## 2014 DOWNTOWN ARTS AND DESIGN DISTRICT PLAN

### E. Granby Street:

There should continue to be efforts to tame traffic with the use of painted crosswalks, planters and parklets.  
Facade Restoration programs should be implemented.  
More Green Space should be provided.  
The crossing at Brambleton still needs to be made more pedestrian friendly.  
The "Greyhound" sculpture should be restored, lit and made part of the experience.

### F. Monticello Avenue:

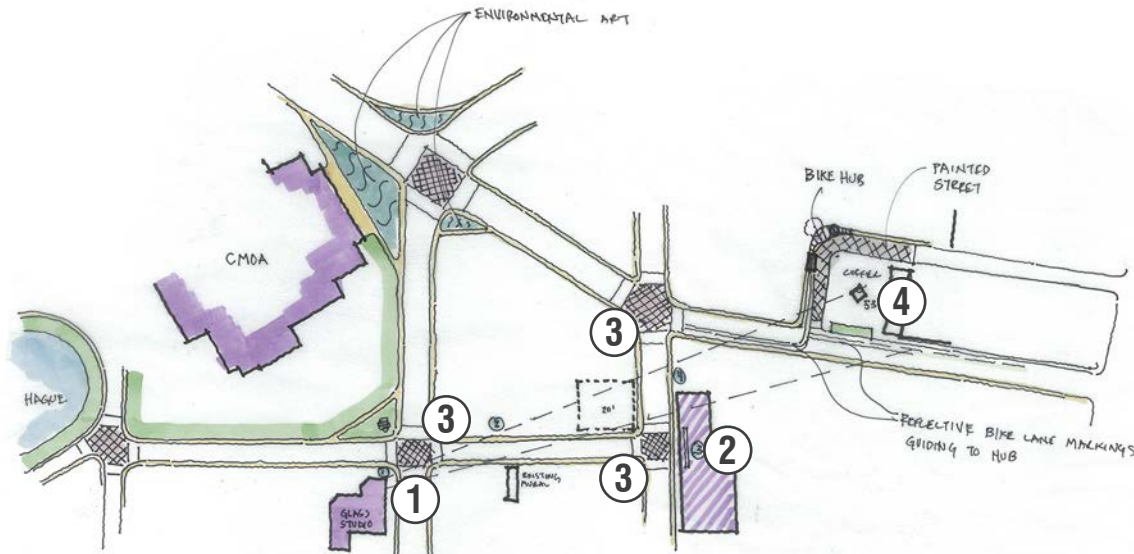
It was agreed that the concept of using Monticello Avenue as both parking and market square should be deferred until more activity is taking place in the district.



## A. OLNEY ROAD INITIATIVE

1. Grace Street Connection
  - Path from the Chrysler buildings to the heart of the DADD
2. Cofer Site Improvements
  - Storm water management
  - Recreation
3. Public Graffiti Wall

Reinforce and re-conceive the connection between the Art Museum and the DADD by using a series of small landmarks to serve as way finding along Grace and Boush Streets; Modify the skate sculpture to resolve legal issues; Develop the Cofer site as PLOT III with a project that demonstrates the use of containers and sustainable site design;

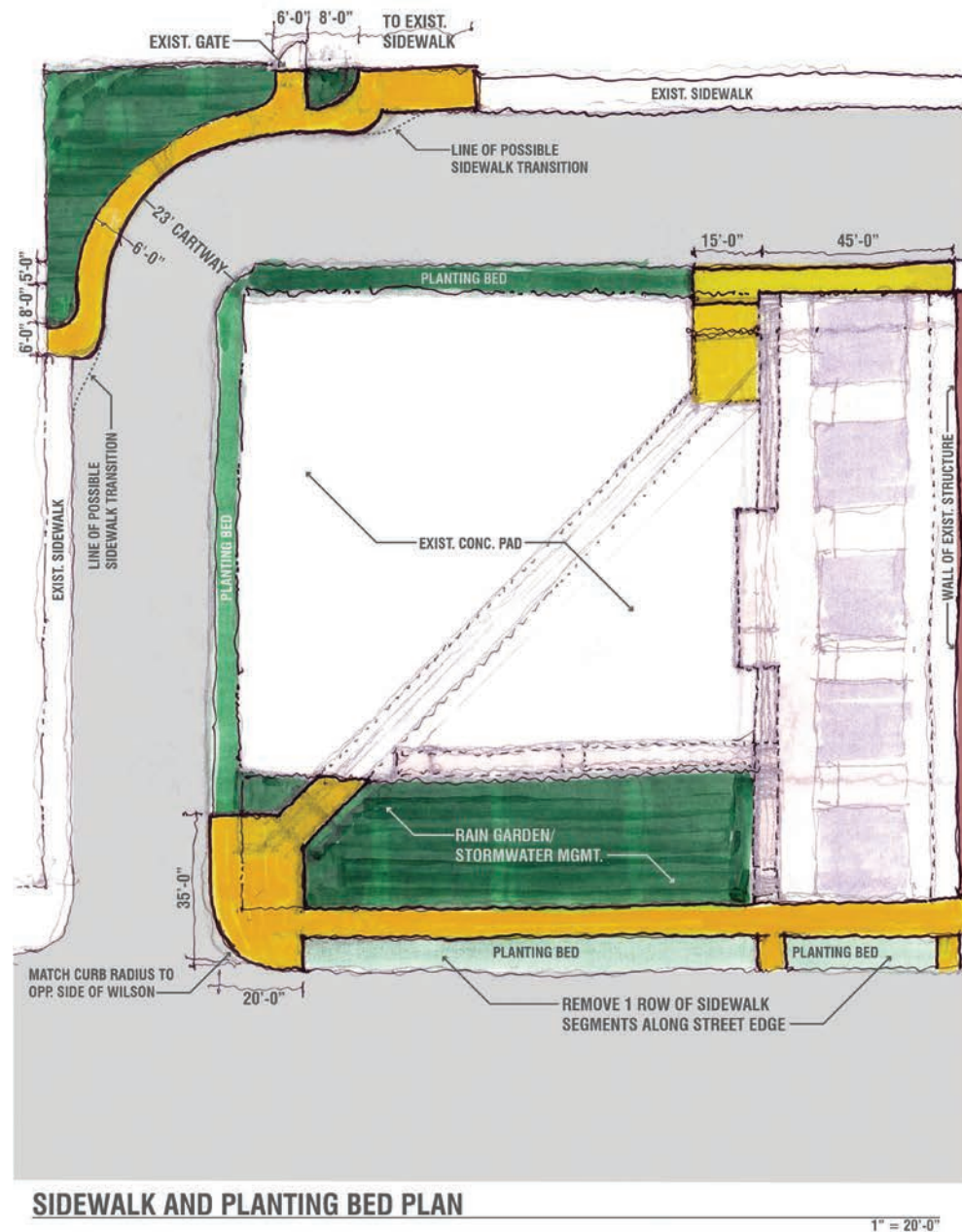


A path from the Hague to the Heart of the DADD would encourage Chrysler Museum and Glass Studio visitors to walk to the DADD. The charrette recommended that the route run eastward from the glass studio along Grace Street, to Boush Street and then to Olney Road and the Cofer site. To make it legible, a series of "stepping stones" would be placed to assure visitors that they are walking towards a desirable destination. These would include:

1. Directional signage
2. Graphic way-finding devices including art and graphics on existing buildings
3. Special treatment for key intersections
4. The Cofer site Public Space which includes a "container" tower that would be visible from the glass studio.

## B. COFER SITE INITIATIVE

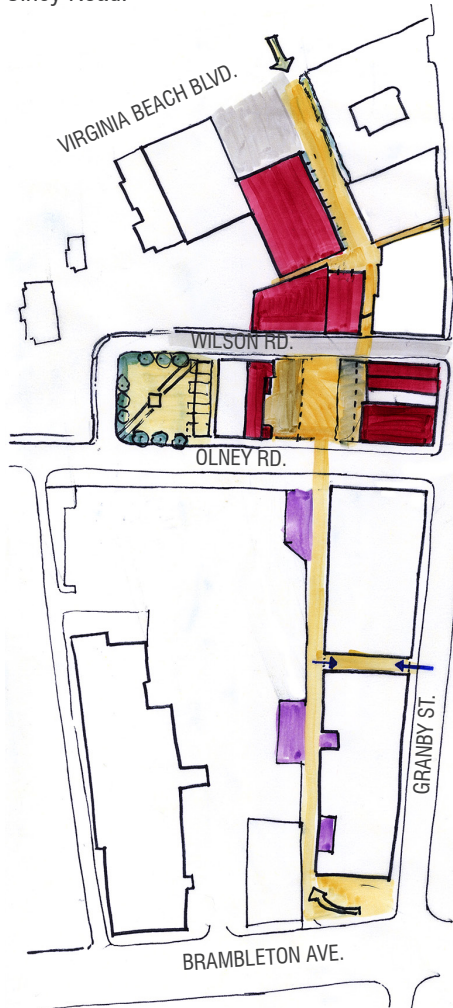
The sidewalks around the cover site would be modified to provide green space for a demonstration water management design. This could include commissioning artists to design sculpture integrated with landscape to make the water management techniques visible. The hard surface area of the site would be developed as open space with a diagonal path from the corner of Olney and Wilson. The east end of the site would be developed with retail space and artists studios built with shipping containers.





## C. MAGAZINE LANE

This is the DADD's best opportunity for creating a unique arts oriented public open space. The portion north of Olney is privately owned, therefore the concept should be developed in collaboration with the property owners. It may include unified paving materials, landscaping, sitting areas, graphics, and traffic calming on Olney Road.



## D. VIRGINIA BEACH BOULEVARD

The City of Norfolk Tested the addition of parking on Virginia Beach Boulevard by narrowing it to one lane in each direction and recommended revising parking in the Harrison Opera House lot.







