

# AIKEN CORPORATION MIXED-USE FEASIBILITY STUDY

09.27.2023



# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary ..... 2
- Proposed Building Program ..... 3
- Conceptual Building Floor Plans ..... 4
- Rough Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate ..... 5
- Evaluation of Potential Sites ..... 6
- Site Massing Studies ..... 15
- Final Recommendation ..... 16





# Executive Summary

In late 2022, the Aiken Corporation engaged McMillan Pazdan Smith (MPS) to conduct a feasibility study for a potential project in Aiken, South Carolina. At the time, the Aiken Corporation was attempting to attract a \$20 Million investment in the form of a grant from the PU Settlement Fund from the South Carolina General Assembly. The proposed project concept was to build a mixed-use building in Downtown Aiken that would support the growth of the region's knowledge economy. The new facility was targeted to serve as a workplace for 75-100 jobs and be located on land owned by the City of Aiken in the heart of Downtown, thus also serving as a catalyst for further economic development. Furthermore, the building was conceptualized as having a ground floor "public" space that could be used by the tenant for public-facing events as well as by the City for community engagement.

The feasibility study began with an open-microphone listening session with members of the public to give citizens an opportunity to voice their concerns about a potential project downtown. Following the listening session, MPS engaged several potential project stakeholders to discuss needs, wants and opportunities for the project. Those stakeholders included: the Aiken Corporation, the City of Aiken, a potential tenant, Aiken Tech, USC Aiken and Aiken County Schools. The resulting program included about 12,000 square feet for public meeting space and 24,000 square feet of office and collaboration space for a potential tenant.

From a site perspective, the initial focus of the study was an assemblage of parcels referred to in the study as the "Richland Avenue" site adjacent to Hotel Aiken. Adjacent to that site is a collection of culturally significant properties at the corner of Richland and Newberry referred to as Johnson Pharmacy. The study was expanded to include the documentation of existing conditions for those parcels. During the study, the team was made aware of a potentially historic façade beneath the current façade for Taj Aiken. The team worked with City staff to remove the current façade to expose the original brick façade. The team's historical consultant, Glenn Keyes, was consulted and determined that the façade itself was not historically significant but did contribute to the historical fabric of downtown Aiken. As the existing conditions of the site were being explored, the team developed a test fit and then conceptual floor plans for the Richland Avenue site. Because the Richland site involved the relocation of Taj Aiken, the design team created a conceptual design for the relocated restaurant and a proposed phasing strategy for construction.

While the focus of the study was originally on the Richland Avenue parcel, the Aiken Corporation requested that the design team also study the suitability of three other potential sites for the project in an effort to be thorough in their due diligence. Those sites are referred to in the study as the Chesterfield Street Site, the Newberry Street Site and the Laurens Street Site. Confident that the proposed usages could fit appropriately on the original site (Richland Avenue), the design team conducted subsequent site test fits on the three additional sites. In addition to the site test fits, all four of sites were evaluated based on 13 criteria and given a score to indicate whether each site has a benefit, obstacle or was neutral to those criteria.

At the recommendation of several citizens, the study was also expanded to include the Old County Hospital Site, although it is currently owner by Aiken County and under contract for sale to Turner Development, a private developer. The design team was initially unaware of Turner Development's proposed master plan and evaluated a portion of the site to the rear of the property. Upon being notified of the site master plan's existence, MPS reached out to Turner Development to request a copy of their master plan. Because the master plan called for a commercial office building on the site, the design team did NOT test fit the proposed building on the County Hospital site in the same way as the other sites.

Two public input sessions were held to help to gather community input. The first session was dedicated to individual conversations and the submittal of comments via comment card or web site. The original comment cards were scanned and posted to the project web site as well as being posted along with the design team's responses to those comments. The second public input session was a panel-style format where community members were allowed to make brief statements or ask questions of members of the Aiken Corporation Board.

Upon completion of all activities summarized above, the design team presented their findings and recommendations to the Aiken Corporation Board. That Board subsequently voted to endorse MPS's findings and recommend that the City in their Council meeting on 25 September 2023 proceed with the Project on the Newberry Street site for the project. Please refer to the Final Recommendation Letter at the end of this document for the rationale behind that recommendation.



# Mixed Use Building Space Needs Summary

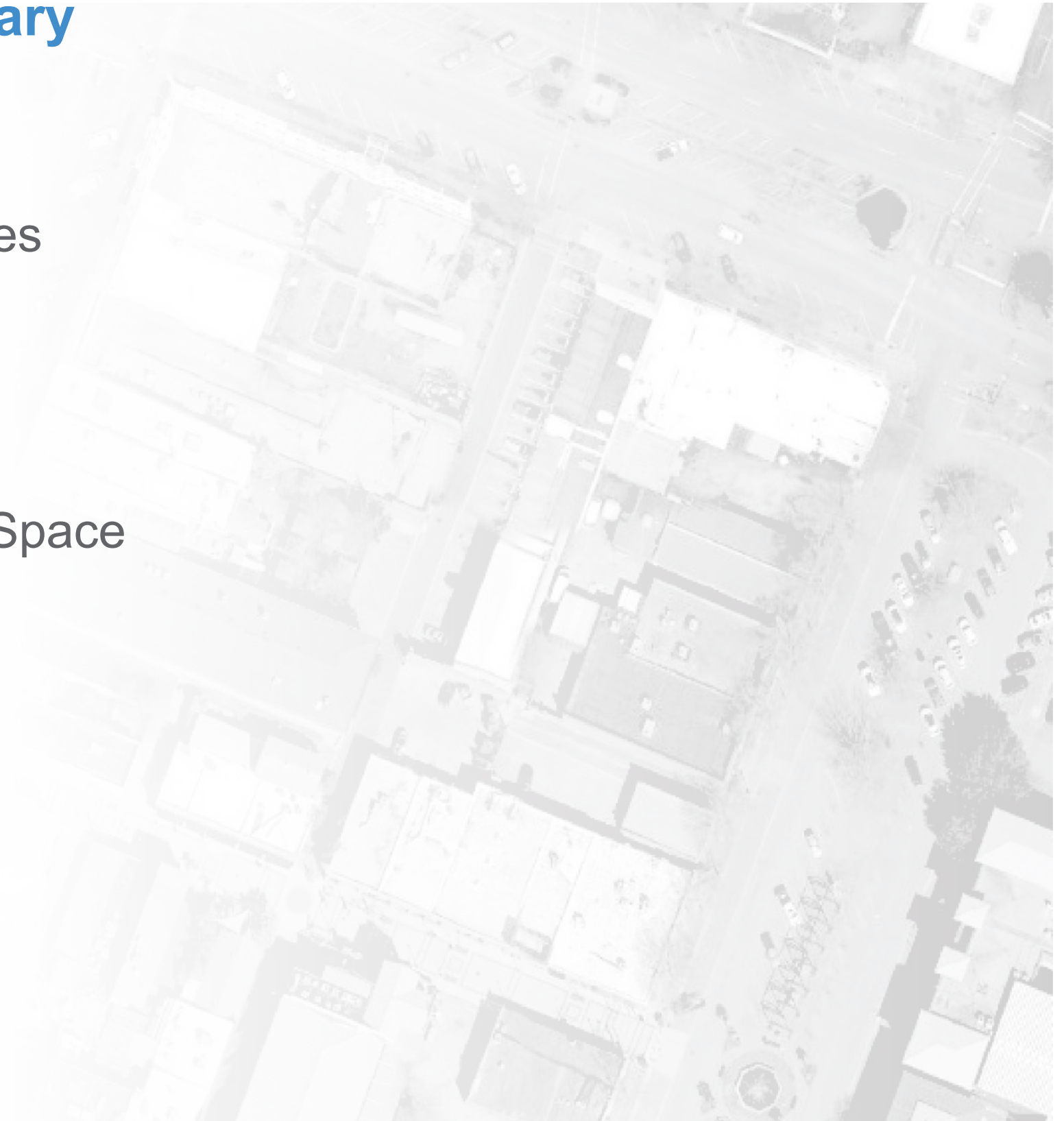
## Potential Tenant Office Space: 24,000 sf

- Private + Open Office Space
- Conference + Meeting + Training Spaces
- Demonstration + Collaboration Spaces

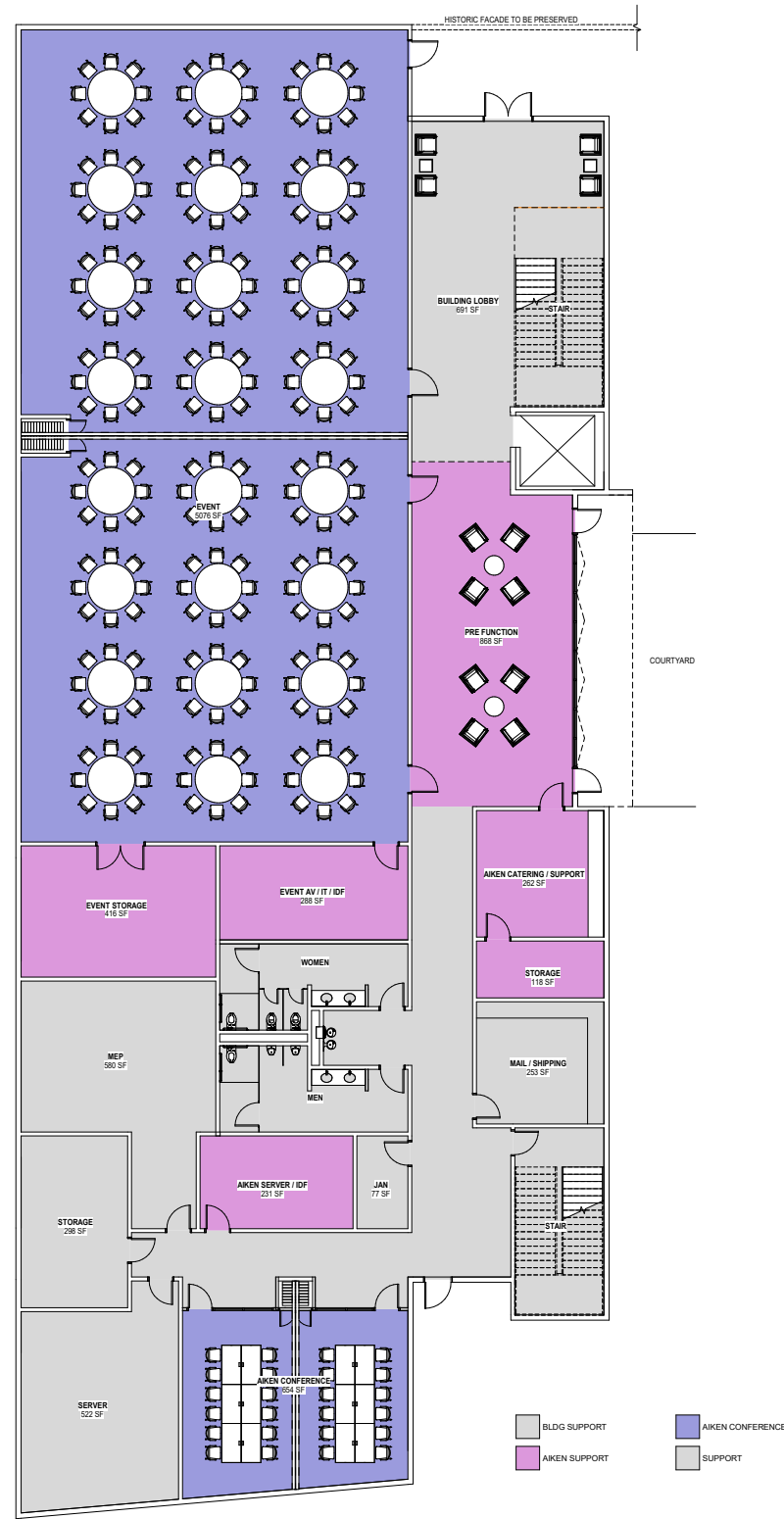
## Conference/Meeting Space: 12,000 sf

- Lobby + Pre-Function Space
- +/- 5,000 sf Main Conference/Meeting Space
- Breakout Meeting Rooms
- Storage + Catering + Support Spaces

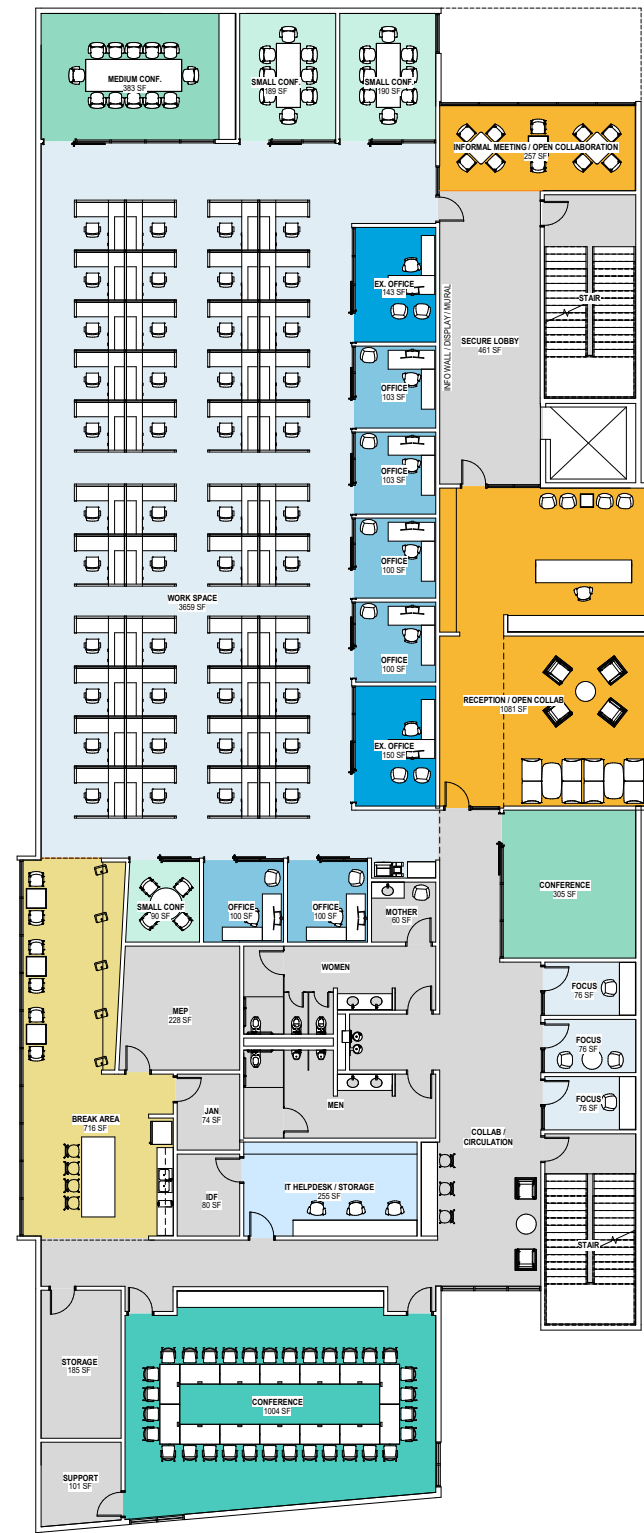
## Total Building Square Footage: 36,000 sf



# CONCEPTUAL FLOOR PLANS



1 LEVEL 01 - FLOOR PLAN  
0.300 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 LEVEL 02 - FLOOR PLAN  
0.300 1/8" = 1'-0"



3 LEVEL 03 - FLOOR PLAN  
0.300 1/8" = 1'-0"

- BREAK
- CONFERENCE\_MEDIUM
- IT
- BLDG SUPPORT
- COLLABORATION
- CONFERENCE\_SMALL
- OFFICE
- SUPPORT
- CONFERENCE\_LARGE
- EXECUTIVE OFFICE
- OPEN WORK



# Mixed Use Building Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate

<b>Demolition + Site Work:</b>	\$ 1,500,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demolition of Existing Structures</li><li>• Grading + Site Work</li><li>• Landscape + Hardscape</li></ul>	
<b>Building Construction Cost:</b>	\$ 15,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Core + Shell</li><li>• Interior Upfit</li></ul>	
<b>Project Soft Costs:</b>	\$ 2,500,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design Fees</li><li>• Testing + Inspections</li><li>• Permits + Fees</li><li>• Builder's Risk + Performance/Payment Bond</li></ul>	
<b>Contingency:</b>	\$ 1,000,000
<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$ 20,000,000

# Site Evaluation Criteria

- **Historic Preservation** - How will the proposed project affect the historic character of downtown Aiken? Are there buildings or other structures of historical or cultural significance that will be impacted by the new building?
- **Sensitivity of Massing/Design** - Is this site in a location that is sensitive to the scale, massing, proportion and overall architectural character?
- **Required Demolition** - Are there existing structures or infrastructure on site that will need to be demolished to make way for the new project? Is anyone or anything being permanently displaced as a result of the new construction?
- **Disruption/Impact to Adjacent Properties** - Will this development have a negative short-term impact on adjacent property owners? If so, can the impact be reasonably mitigated?
- **Site Development Complexity** - How complex is the existing site relative to its development for the new building? Are there on site utilities such as domestic water, stormwater, natural gas and/or electricity that will need to be relocated? Will mature trees or other vegetation be impacted?
- **Budget Impact of Site** - Will the complexity of the proposed site have a negative impact on the project budget?
- **Availability of Parking for Building Users** - Is the appropriate amount of parking for building users reasonably accessible in the site's vicinity?



# Site Evaluation Criteria

- **Impact to Downtown Parking** - Will the increased parking demand for this building negatively impact the availability of parking for the general public, retail, etc.?
- **Economic Impact to Downtown** - Will this site maximize the project's economic impact on the Central Business District?
- **Hotel Aiken Site Redevelopment** - Will this project have a positive impact on the marketability of the Hotel Aiken Site through a forthcoming Request for Proposals by the City of Aiken?
- **Walkability of Site** - Are downtown amenities reasonably walkable from this proposed site?
- **Accessibility to Other Meeting Amenities** - Is this site in close proximity to other existing meeting venues (e.g. Amentum Theater, Newberry Hall) that will complement, enhance, and economize the proposed meeting facilities in this project?
- **Office Tenant Criteria** - Does the proposed site offer easy access to existing downtown amenities? Does it encourage and promote the tenant's general visibility in the Aiken Community? Does this site meet the prospective tenant, or future tenant's, goals regarding location downtown?



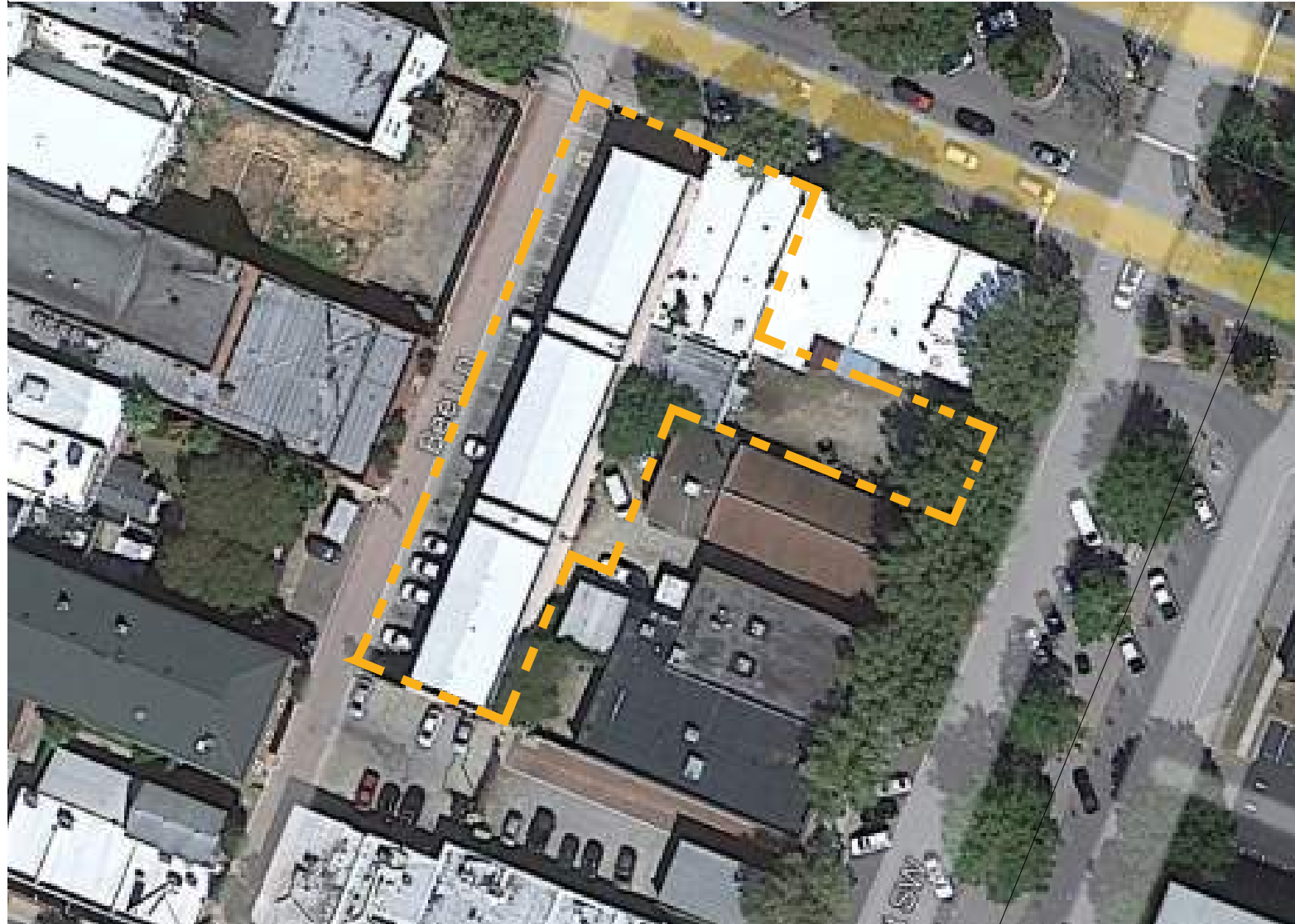
# SITE LOCATIONS



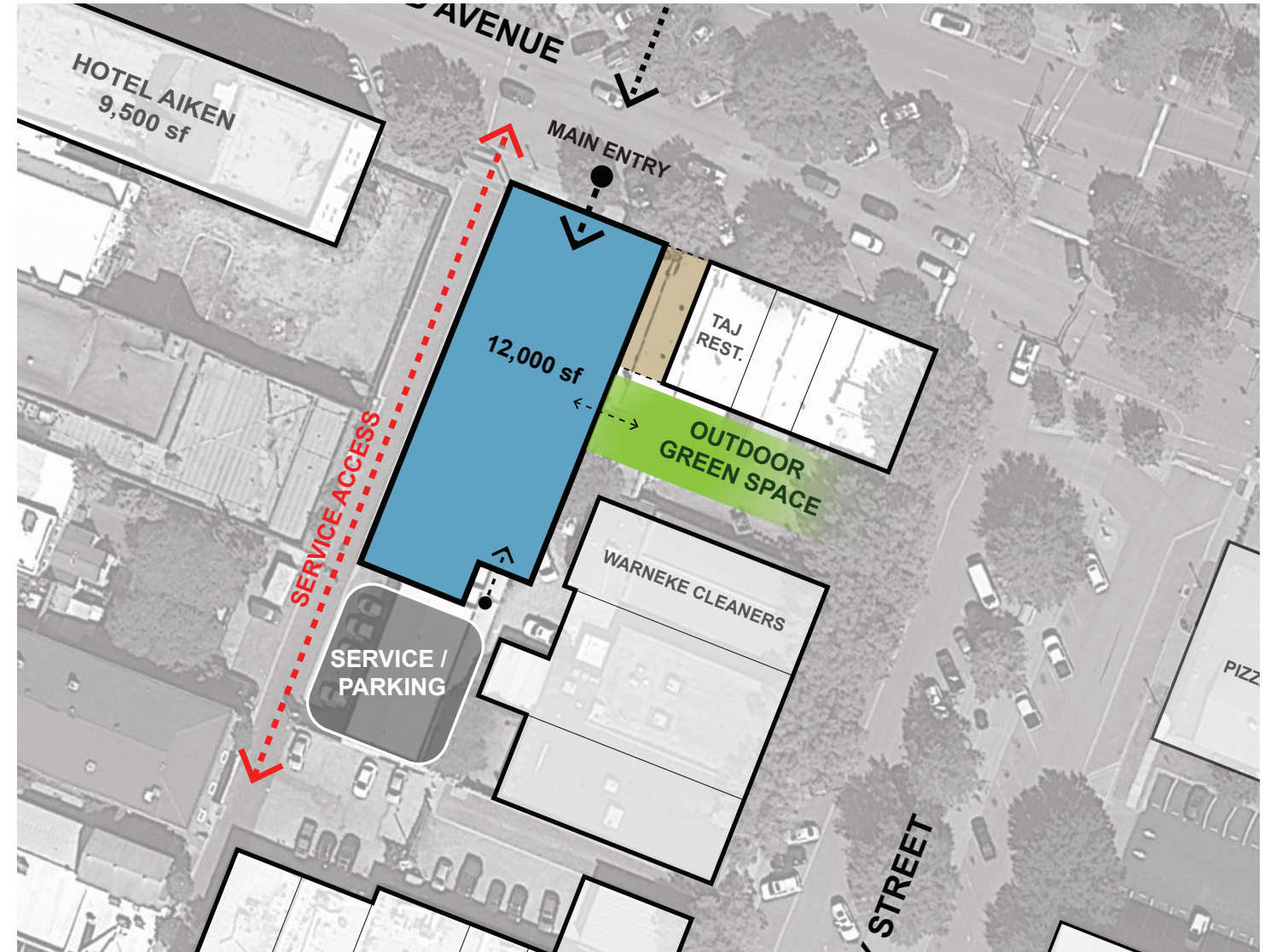
- 1. RICHLAND AVENUE SITE
- 2. CHESTERFIELD STREET SITE
- 3. NEWBERRY STREET SITE
- 4. LAURENS STREET SITE
- 5. OLD COUNTY HOSPITAL SITE



# RICHLAND AVENUE SITE



EXISTING



NEW



## RICHLAND AVENUE SITE ADVANTAGES

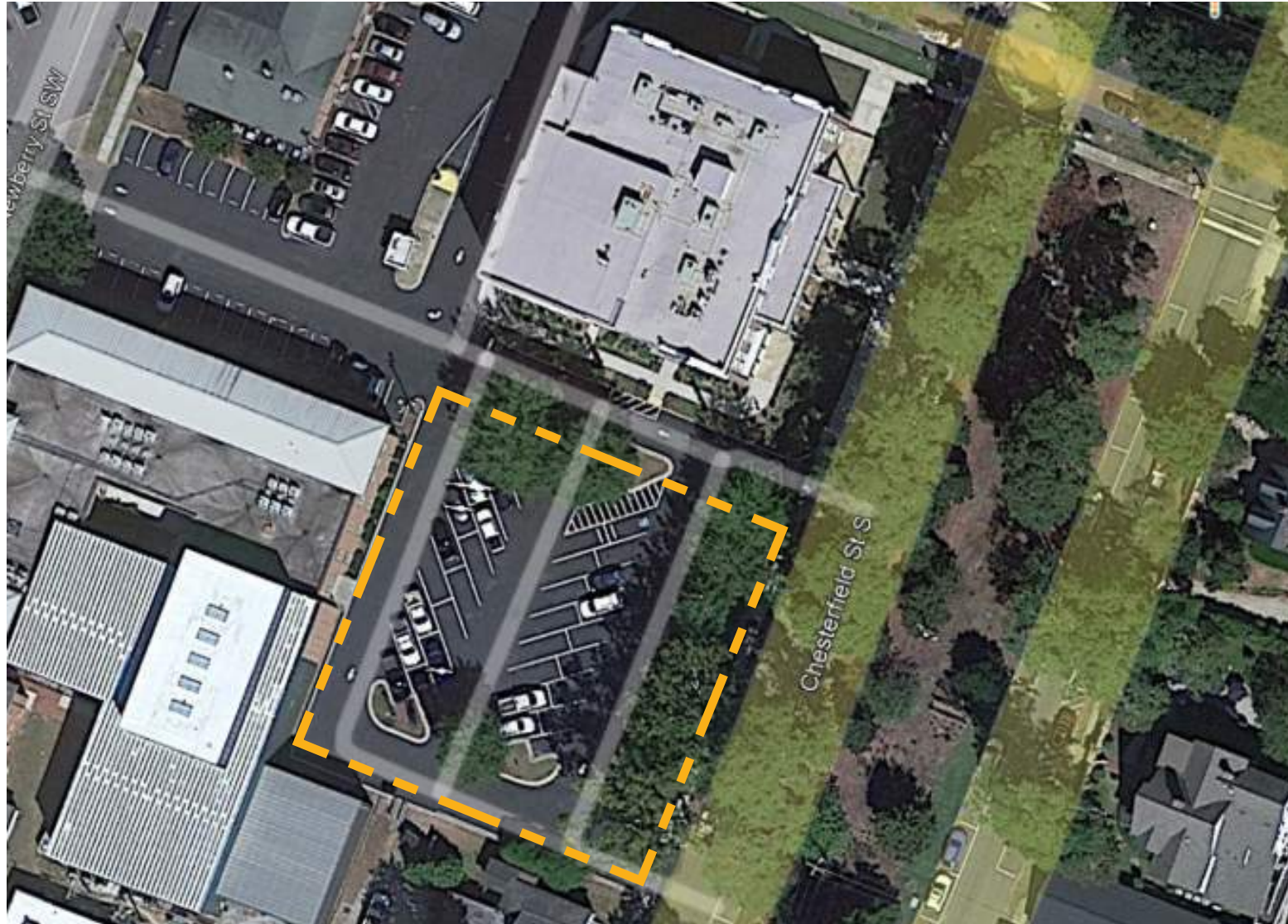
- Greatest synergy with existing development within the Central Business District.
- Centralized conference + meeting spaces benefits all existing and new assets and increases marketability of Hotel Aiken site redevelopment.
- Urban infill project will enhance an already active pedestrian/retail area.
- Courtyard/Plaza adds green space to further enhance downtown core.
- 1970's Motel / Motor court structure to be removed as a part of this project.

## RICHLAND AVENUE SITE DISADVANTAGES

- Requires significant demolition of existing structures.
- Requires relocation of one restaurant tenant.
- Design Review Board approval will be required.
- Design needs to address the existing facade of the Aiken Standard building that contributes to this historic fabric.
- Limited on-site parking.

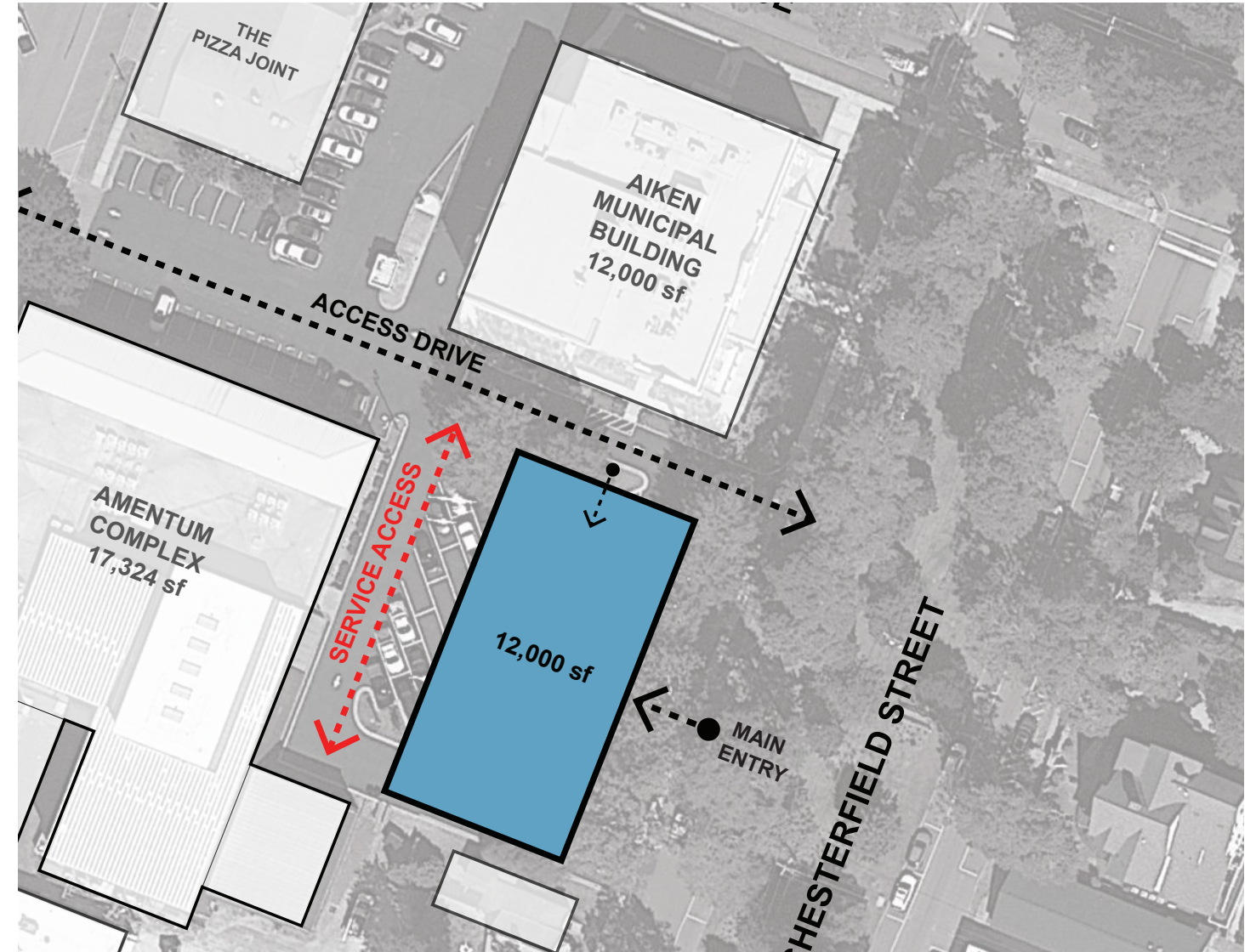


# CHESTERFIELD STREET SITE



EXISTING

SCALE 1:30



NEW

SCALE 1:30



## CHESTERFIELD STREET SITE ADVANTAGES

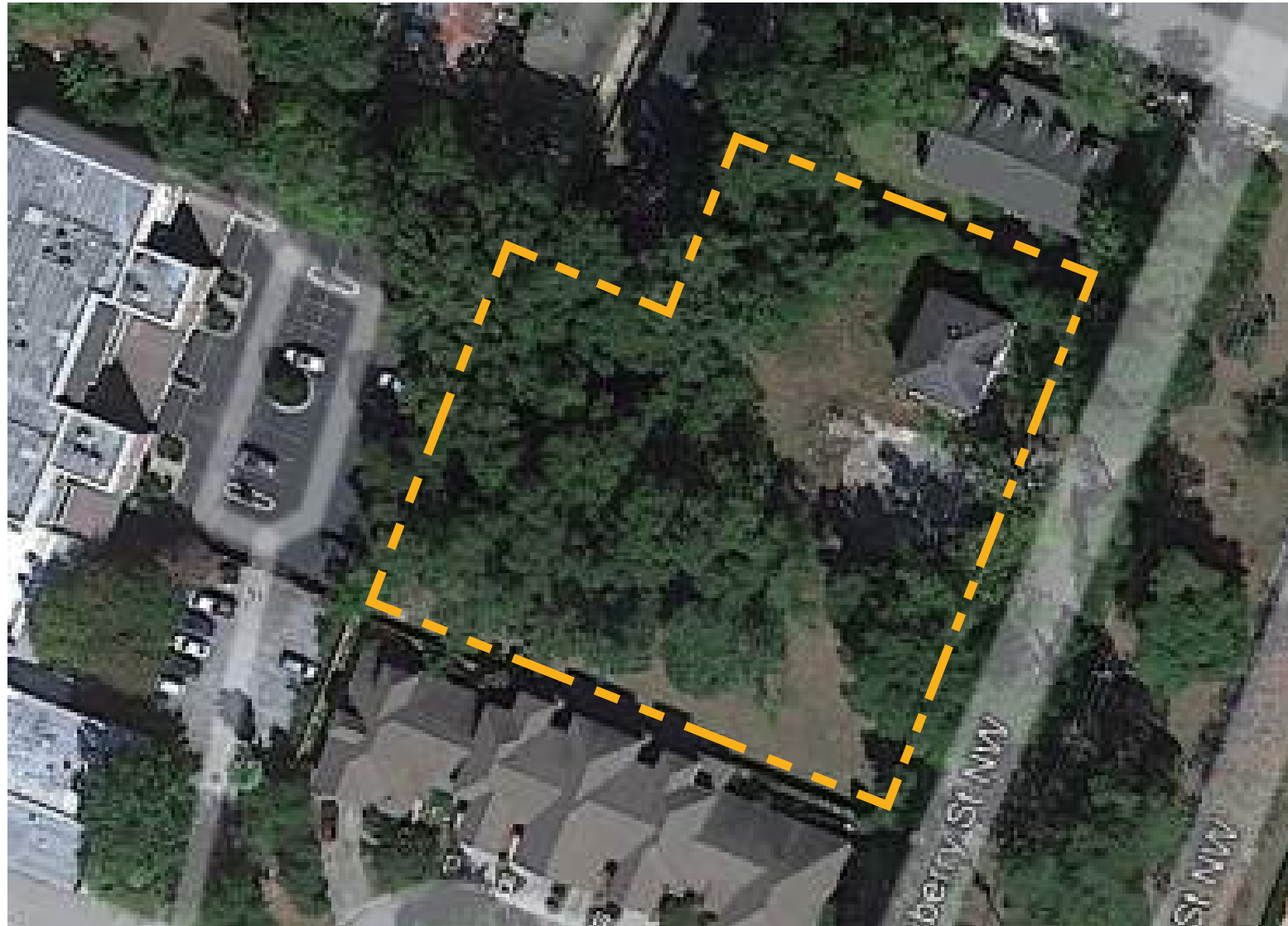
- Located in close proximity to Central Business District.
- Adjacent to Municipal Building and Amentum Theater with close proximity to Newberry Hall.
- Urban location appealing to potential office tenant.

## CHESTERFIELD STREET SITE DISADVANTAGES

- Very small site that offers no opportunity for green space.
- Displaces existing surface parking lot.
- Requires demolition of parking and potential utility relocation.



# NEWBERRY STREET SITE



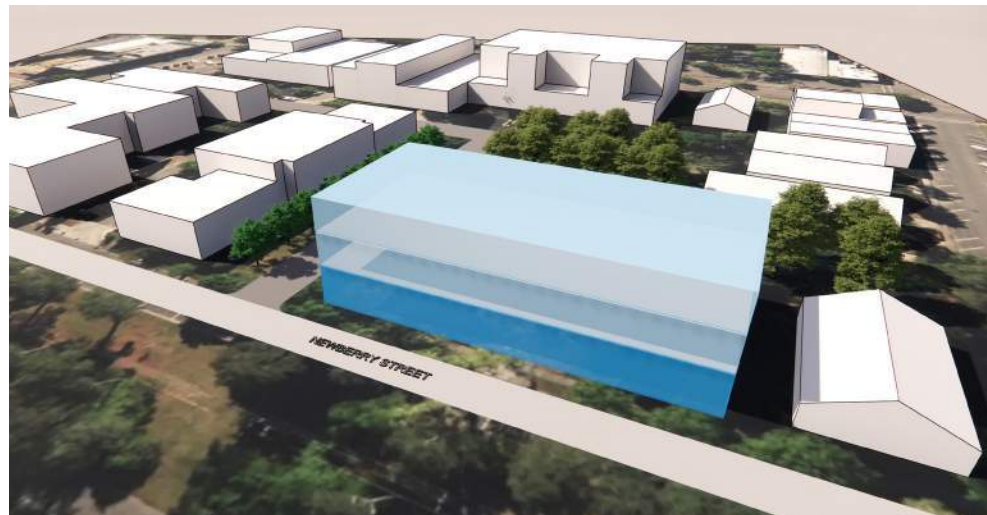
EXISTING

SCALE 1:30



NEW

SCALE 1:30



## NEWBERRY STREET SITE ADVANTAGES

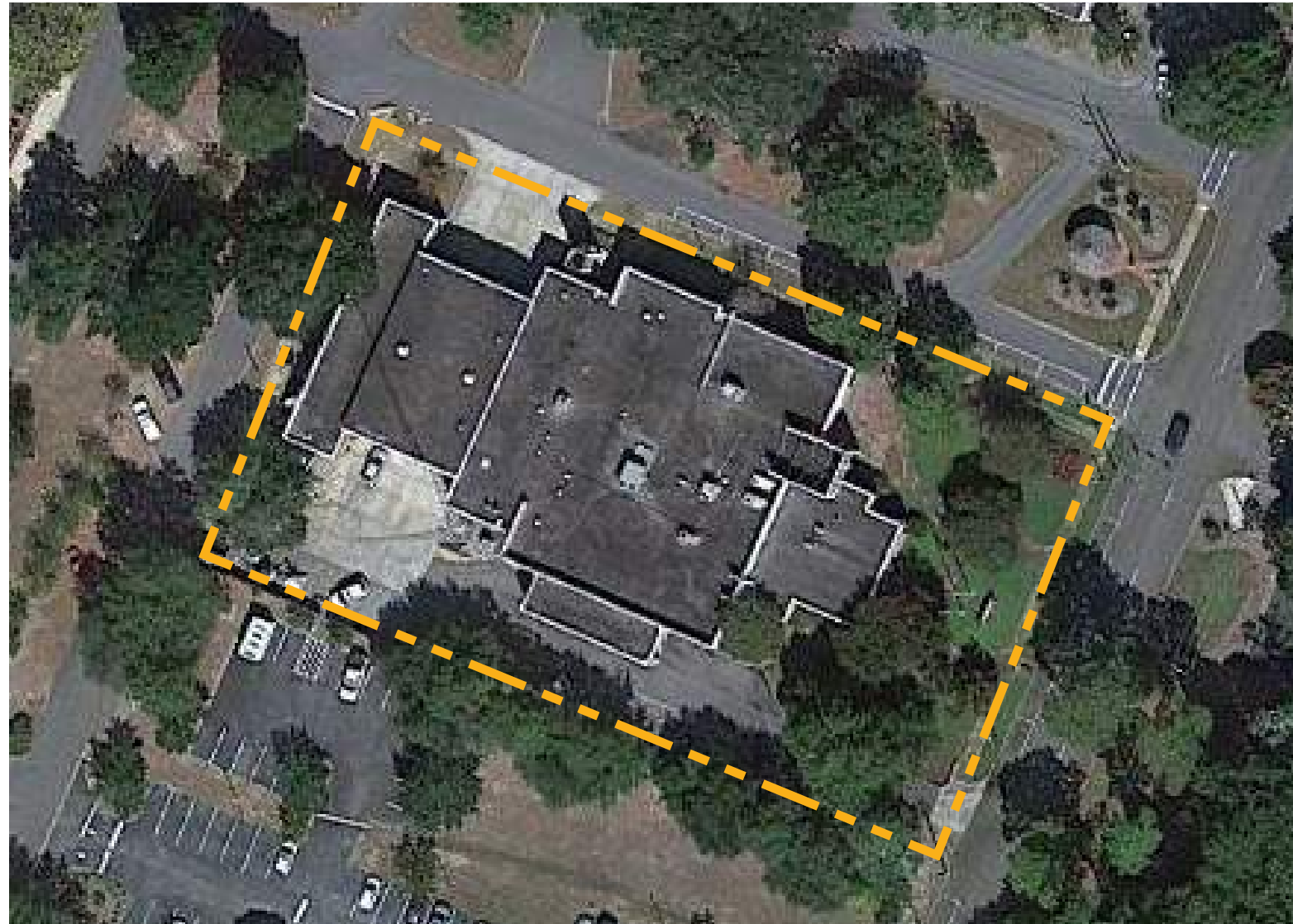
- No building or significant site demolition required.
- Parcel is of an adequate size for building and opportunity for small green space and to preserve existing grand trees
- Limited on-site parking available.
- Walkable to Central Business District + other meeting spaces.
- Existing adjacent structures allow for more flexibility in exterior design.
- Fewer design constraints due to location just outside of CBD.

## NEWBERRY STREET SITE DISADVANTAGES

- Less visible from Central Business District + limited existing pedestrian activity provides low visibility.
- This site takes the place of a proposed surface parking lot to support the project + general downtown parking.
- Adjacent to existing residential uses.

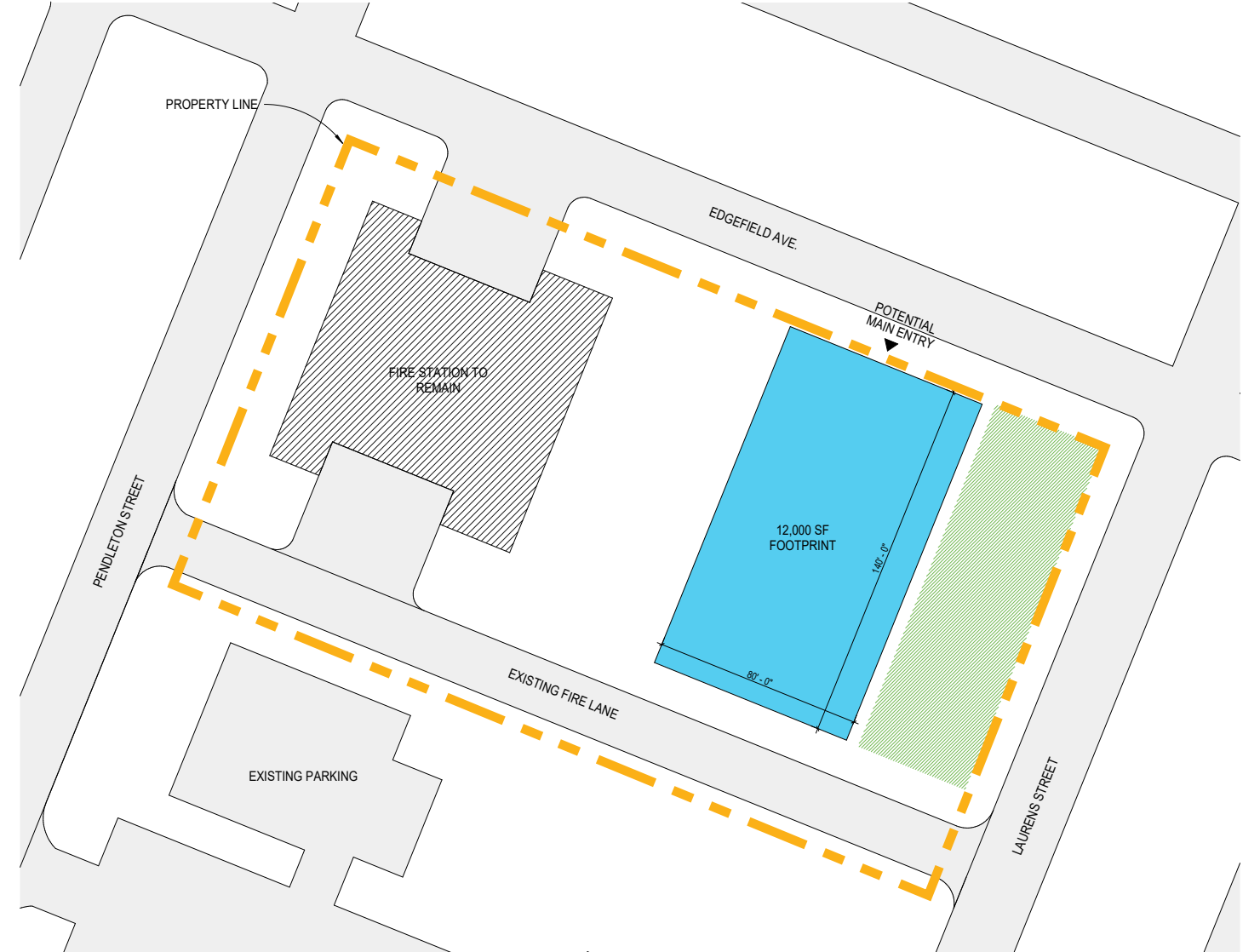


# LAURENS STREET SITE



EXISTING

SCALE 1:30



NEW

SCALE 1:30



## LAURENS STREET SITE ADVANTAGES

- Parcel is of an adequate size for building and opportunity for small green space.

## LAURENS STREET SITE DISADVANTAGES

- Significant building, site + utility demolition and/or relocation is required.
- Portion of building to remain will be a design constraint.
- Not in or adjacent to Central Business District.
- Limited visibility + pedestrian activity.
- Proposed parking is very remote with limited on street parking availability.
- No on-site parking.





# Old Aiken Hospital Site Plan

Aiken, South Carolina



\* SITE NOT CONTROLLED BY THE CITY OF AIKEN OR ONE OF ITS SUBSIDIARIES. SITE MASTER PLAN PRODUCED BY TURNER DEVELOPMENT.





# SITE EVALUATION MATRIX

EVALUATION CRITERIA	RICHLAND SITE	CHESTERFIELD SITE	NEWBERRY SITE	LAURENS SITE	OLD COUNTY HOSPITAL SITE*
Historic Preservation	—	N	+	N	N
Sensitivity of Massing/Design	—	—	+	N	N
Required Demolition	—	+	+	—	+
Disruption/Impact to Adjacent Properties	—	—	—	—	+
Site Development Complexity	—	N	+	—	—
Budget Impact of Site	—	N	+	—	—
Availability of Parking for Building Users	N	—	N	—	N
Impact to Downtown Parking	N	—	—	N	N
Economic Impact to Downtown	+	+	+	N	—
Hotel Aiken Site Redevelopment	N	+	+	N	N
Walkability of Site	+	+	+	—	—
Accessibility to Other Meeting Amenities	+	+	+	—	—
Office Tenant Criteria	+	+	+	—	N

 SITE CONSTRAINT    
  NEUTRAL IMPACT    
  SITE BENEFIT

\* SITE NOT CONTROLLED BY THE CITY OF AIKEN OR ONE OF ITS SUBSIDIARIES.



# MASSING STUDY \*

RICHLAND SITE MASSING



CHESTERFIELD SITE MASSING



NEWBERRY SITE MASSING



\* CONCEPTUAL BUILDING MASSING SHOWN FOR FEASIBILITY ONLY. FINAL BUILDING MASSING, MATERIALS AND DESIGN WILL BE SITE SPECIFIC AND WILL COMPLY WITH ALL BUILDING CODES AND ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICTS THAT APPLY.



# Final Recommendation

Dear Buzz,

Thank you again for the opportunity to work with the Aiken Corporation on this Feasibility Study. As you know, our engagement began with the assignment to study the feasibility of constructing a mixed-use building containing office and meeting/event space on a collection of parcels owned by the City of Aiken on Richland Avenue (“Richland Avenue Site”). As the study evolved, the Aiken Corporation asked McMillan Pazdan Smith (MPS) to expand our study to include three additional sites that are also controlled by the City of Aiken or one of its subsidiaries: the existing surface parking lot adjacent to the City’s Municipal Building (“Chesterfield Street Site”), a vacant parcel on Newberry Street between Richland Avenue and Barnwell Avenue (“Newberry Street Site”), and a site at the corner of Laurens Street and Edgefield Avenue currently housing a fire station and the former Aiken Department of Public Safety (“Laurens Street Site”). Due to several public comments regarding the Old County Hospital property on Richland Avenue (“Old County Hospital Site”) that is owned by Aiken County but under contract by a private developer, the Aiken Corporation asked MPS to include this site in our study as well.

Given the fundamental difference in the deal structure for the Old County Hospital Site, and the fact that it was the only privately held parcel to be considered, our Team has eliminated that site from consideration in this study. This elimination is not a critique of the merits of that site and/or its associated proposed redevelopment plan, it simply falls outside the directive of this assignment. Its inclusion in our study was done in an effort to be more, rather than less, inclusive in this process. Furthermore, any inclusion of privately-held sites in the selection process should be more comprehensive to ensure that all relevant private properties are considered.

Of the four remaining sites, our team has concluded that neither the Chesterfield Street nor the Laurens Street site are appropriate locations for this proposed facility. Both the Richland Avenue and Newberry Street sites, however, have strong positive attributes that make them compelling sites for the project. Both sites also have drawbacks and constraints that require careful consideration. However, our team believes that the Newberry Street site represents the Aiken Corporation’s best alternative to move forward with the project expeditiously and in a way that mitigates overall risk.

Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can provide any additional information related to our study.

Sincerely,



K.J. Jacobs, AIA, LEED AP

Principal