

**DESIGN CHARGE  
MILL CREEK PILOT WORKSHOP  
SUSTAIN SOUTHERN MAINE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2013**

**Objectives**

Enhance Mill Creek as a vibrant, mixed-use commercial center, as called for by South Portland's updated Comprehensive Plan.

Understand the design requirements of property owners, tenants, and investors and how growth of the Mill Creek district can fit those requirements.

In addition to these objectives, we wish to get insights on the following:

- the potential for job and residential growth in this pilot center – can it be designed to accept significant growth?
- the kinds of activities, goods and services that people living and working within this pilot center could access without having to leave the center
- the relationship of this pilot center to other centers in the region and the choices of transportation people would have to get from this center to others
- whether this center can accommodate housing for residents of different incomes

**Growth Targets**

*Jobs:* Consider feasibility of accommodating about 10% of South Portland's projected job growth over the next 25 – 35 years, or between 300 and 350 jobs. Depending on the mix of retail, food service, and office space, this may translate to 150,000 to 175,000 square feet of commercial space.

*Housing:* Consider feasibility of accommodating 5% -10% of South Portland's projected household growth over the next 25-35 years, or between 120 and 240 households. The housing should accommodate a mix of incomes. The pilot area may be well positioned to serve young and senior markets with modestly sized units.

**Design Challenges**

*Intensity/Density of development:* Strive to increase the non-residential floor area ratio in the pilot area from the current 0.27 to at least 0.4. Consider how much off-street parking will be required for the existing plus new development and how it can be accommodated with a FAR of at least 0.4.

Residential densities need not be artificially limited. The number and design of units should be guided by companion elements of the plan, including the target of 120 to 240 households, parking needs, and the provision of green space to manage storm water and provide an amenity for residents. (For reference only, if housing for 120 to 240 households occupied, say, 5 acres in the pilot area, the residential density would be between 24 and 48 units per acre. Under South Portland's zoning ordinance, the Knightville Design District allows 24 units per net acre. On Portland's peninsula, maximum residential density standards range from 36 to 100 units per acre.)

*Land use mix:* Strive for a mix that can share traffic, customers, and parking; and that will allow customers and residents to meet a reasonable number of needs within walking distance of homes and job locations. The mix can build on the substantial array of convenience goods and services (food, hardware, drug stores, banking and other personal services, etc.) already in the Mill Creek shopping area and the uses along Waterman Drive and in the adjacent Knightville. In Table 1, note the synergies between activities as rated by Urban Land Institute:

<b>Table 1. Synergies between major land uses</b>				
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Degree of Support/Synergy</b>			
	<b>Residential</b>	<b>Hotel<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Retail/ Entertainment<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Culture/Civic/ Recreation</b>
Office	◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Residential	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆◆
Hotel	◆◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆
Retail/Entertainment	◆◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆
Cultural/Civic/Rec	◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆◆◆	◆◆◆◆

Bullets: ◆=very weak, ◆◆=weak, ◆◆◆=moderate, ◆◆◆◆=strong, ◆◆◆◆◆=very strong  
<sup>a</sup> Synergy is strongest between high end hotels and condominiums, less for mid-priced hotels and other residences.  
<sup>b</sup> Restaurants and food services are the main source of benefit for offices.  
Source: *Mixed Use Development Handbook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC, 2003, p. 85.

*Circulation:* Improve vehicular and pedestrian connections within the pilot area, to Knightville, and to the pedestrian path behind Mill Creek Shopping Center. Consider whether and how at least one additional east-west and/or one additional north-south connection can be made through the pilot area. For example, is there a way to extend Erskine Drive to Ocean Street (as was suggested in the 2005 charrette)?

*Stormwater management:* The engineering of stormwater management is beyond the scope of the pilot workshop, but participants should be aware that South Portland is subject to stormwater management standards for the treatment of runoff from developed sites. It should be assumed that management will require a combination of vegetated surfaces for bio-retention, treatment chambers under parking lots, and similar measures. (Note: it may be worthwhile considering whether the area in the CMP power line right-of-way provides an opportunity for bio-retention.)

*Urban design:* Set a course toward urban edges and streetscapes, with the placement of buildings along frontages – or, given the limitations of the CMP transmission line, as close as is safe and practical – while preserving view corridors to anchor tenants in the existing centers. Consider appropriate landscaping as a way to enhance the image and brand of the area, both within public rights-of-way and within the development parcels.