



## OVERVIEW

As part of the City of Lancaster's East End Small Area Plan's Phase 2 Engagement Strategy, the consultant team of WRT and Kimley-Horn facilitated a 1.5-day Visioning Charrette on June 25-26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 that included two (2) design charrettes, a real estate developer roundtable, and a meeting with the East End Small Area Plan project team. The schedule for the Visioning Charrette is outlined below:

### **June 25-26, 2025: East End Small Area Plan Visioning Charrette**

*Day 1: June 25<sup>th</sup> – Design Charrettes* (two timeframes were provided, with both charrettes covering the same agenda/topics; see Attachment A – Design Charrette Agenda)

- Charrette #1, 3-5pm
- Charrette #2, 6-8pm

*Day 2: June 26<sup>th</sup> – Developer Roundtable, Consultant Team Work Session, and Project Team Briefing*

- Real Estate Developer Roundtable, 8:30-10am
- Consultant Team work session, 10-12pm
- Project Team Briefing, 1-3pm



Figure 1 WRT Principal Woo Kim facilitates a sketching exercise during the Design Charrettes.



Figure 2 WRT Project Manager Hannah Clark provides an overview to Design Charrette participants of key opportunities and challenges based on existing conditions.

The purpose of the Visioning Charrette was to develop and iterate on initial conceptual site designs for the prison site and primary study area (PSA) based on the synthesis of findings from the East End Small Area Plan's Existing Conditions Analysis (see Attachment B) and Phase 1 Engagement (see Attachment C). Participants in the Visioning Charrette activities included City and County staff, Planning Commission members, representatives from community organizations, nonprofits, and local institutions, and local/regional real estate developers.

The initial site design concepts identified in the Visioning Charrette provide preliminary framing for the land use, infrastructure, placemaking, and redevelopment priorities in the East End Small Area Plan. The next step in this process will be to bring a version of these initial design concepts and priorities to the public for collaborative discussion and feedback to build a shared vision for the future of the East End, the prison site, and the larger community.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following are takeaways from the two design charrettes, developer roundtable, and project team briefing:

- **The Redevelopment of the prison site is a chance to break up the ‘superblock.’**

A frequent comment from Visioning Charrette participants pertained to the existing granular scale and density of the East End neighborhood. In contrast, the prison site is a large, impenetrable ‘superblock’ that lacks the neighborhood-scale and community activity of the surrounding area. Participants commented that future development on the prison site should better reflect and complement the existing

neighborhood scale and design. An extension of Grant Street, and/or a north to south connection would break up the superblock while better accommodating pedestrian access within, as well as entering/leaving the site.

- **Housing that is affordable, attainable, and scaled to the surrounding neighborhood is a priority for this site; however, achieving these priorities may not be economically viable.**

There was widespread recognition that the prison site could bring new housing to the community and help to address the larger housing crisis in the city and region. However, when presented with renderings of housing developments at the scale and size to be economically viable on the site, Visioning Charrette participants felt that type of housing was too dense and out-of-place with the scale of the neighborhood. Participants in the developer roundtable felt that affordable homeownership could be an option on the site, though again, the preferred scale for this type of development may not be



*Figure 3 Sketch from Design Charrette #1 that highlights opportunities to break up the superblock and create connections East to West and North to South through new interior pathways that connect to the adjacent streets.*



economically viable. Striking this balance should be an ongoing conversation, and one that should be brought to the larger community for input and discussion.

- **Redevelopment and investment in the neighborhood should complement Reservoir Park:**

Reservoir Park, one of the largest green spaces in the city, is underutilized by the neighborhood and larger community. Redevelopment of the prison site focused on enhancing connections and providing complementary uses to Reservoir Park, could help re-activate the Park, bringing more activities, programming, and park users to a citywide destination.

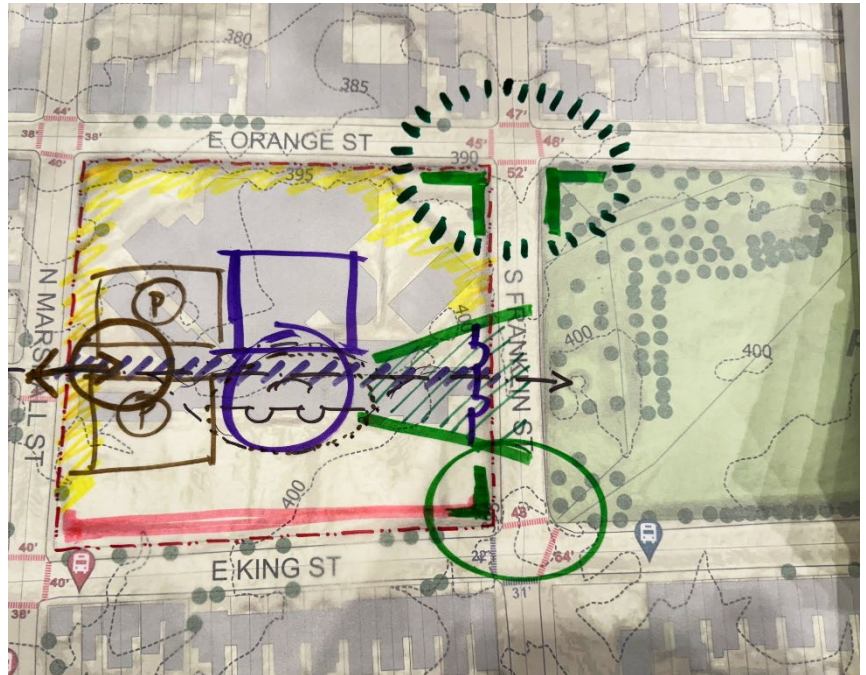


Figure 4 Sketch from Design Charrette #2 that emphasizes the importance of connecting to Reservoir Park and having the redevelopment of the prison site be oriented toward the Park to create more 'eyes on the Park' as well as celebrate it as a citywide asset.

- **For the prison site to be viable**

**and attractive for redevelopment, it must be delivered as a clean and buildable site.**

Many discussions during the Visioning Charrette activities centered on how the site will be delivered once the prison is decommissioned and the County moves to offload the site. If the prison buildings and infrastructure are not demolished and the site is not remediated, participants in the developer roundtable estimated the site will be worth a negative \$8-12M. For redevelopment of any type to occur on the site, it must be delivered as a clean and buildable site.

- **Parking will be a challenge for any redevelopment.**

Whether the future redevelopment of the prison site includes housing, recreation, commercial, institutional, or community uses, providing sufficient parking will be a challenge. Podium parking is likely too costly for this site and surface parking may take up too much valuable land area. It was suggested during the developer roundtable that the Parking Authority be consulted about an agreement for shared parking. It was stressed that if residential uses are part of the site, it should have sufficient parking as this part of the East End is not necessarily considered 'walkable' to key sites and services.



- **Historic preservation can be considered but it is not a priority.**

Visioning Charrette participants did not view the preservation of historical elements of the prison façade as a key priority for the site’s redevelopment. While there was some interest in exploring if the facade could be preserved (and potentially moved to a different location on the site), a larger priority was given to the site being redeveloped in a way that benefits the existing community. Additionally, the importance of a trauma-informed approach that is sensitive to the existing carceral use of the site was emphasized, particularly in the context of empirical data that shows how incarcerations disproportionately impact communities of color. The redevelopment should enable residents who have lived in the ‘shadow’ of the prison for over 100 years to reclaim this property.

- **The redevelopment of the prison site should be a welcoming space and provide community benefits to the East End neighborhood.** The redevelopment of the prison site is anticipated to be an economic engine for the larger East End community and will likely catalyze additional redevelopment and reinvestment in the neighborhood. There was strong agreement and alignment among Visioning Charrette participants that the redevelopment needs to include community benefits, such as programmed open spaces/plazas, community-facing services, and amenities. The existing community must have easy access and feel welcome within the redevelopment of the site. This might be accomplished via public rights-of-way, such as an extension of Grant Street or a pedestrian plaza that connects the site north to south.

*The Project was financed [in part] by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development’s Municipal Assistance Program (MAP), a program funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*