

# Chapter 9: History, Culture, Arts & Education

## Chapter Overview

History, culture, the arts and education exert an important influence on Lynchburg’s quality of life. The City’s image and unique sense of place, as well as its attractiveness to visitors and newcomers, are inextricably tied to the condition of its historic resources, the vitality of its arts and cultural institutions, and the quality and diversity of educational opportunities. These assets can help attract and retain businesses that seek cities with a high quality of life.

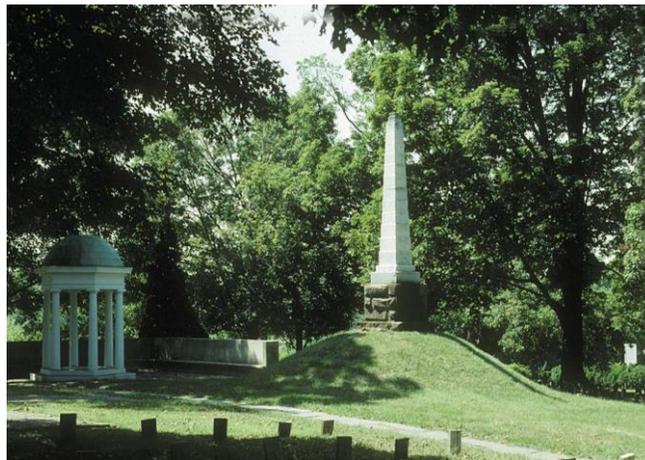
The City should identify and conserve its sensitive historic and cultural resources, expand local preservation incentives and educational programs, and require the sensitive treatment of public spaces and facilities in historic areas. The City also should engage in active promotion of heritage tourism and the expansion of efforts to strengthen local networks of arts, cultural, and educational organizations.

## History & Culture

### Preservation Threats & Challenges

Lynchburg is fortunate to have a significant collection of historic sites, buildings, and neighborhoods—from the Downtown and the City’s early residential districts to special sites like the Old City Cemetery, Point of Honor, and the Anne Spencer House—as well as areas recognized for their special architectural and urban character. These places provide a strong foundation for future planning, offering tangible symbols of the City’s colorful past and enduring models for the creation of new buildings, neighborhoods, and commercial areas.

Old City Cemetery



As one of the Commonwealth's older independent cities, Lynchburg is home to an impressive number of pre-World War II residential and commercial structures (see Exhibit 9-1). According to tax assessment data, nearly half of the City's houses are at least 50 years old, and 1,742 were built in 1900 or earlier. Downtown and surrounding historic neighborhoods contain the highest percentages of houses in the City constructed prior to 1850 (81% of the City's total), between 1851 and 1900 (75% of the City's total), and between 1901 and 1925 (40% of the City's total).

### Exhibit 9-1: Age of Housing

Year of Construction	Number of Houses	Percent of Total
1850 and prior	104	0.4%
1851 to 1900	1,638	6.5%
1901 to 1925	3,472	13.8%
1926 to 1950	5,533	22.0%
1951 to 1975	9,163	36.4%
1976 to 2000	2,851	11.3%
2000-2010	2,431	9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,192</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: American Community Survey

The presence of older neighborhoods and the commercial areas that grew up to serve them presents both opportunities and challenges, especially for a city experiencing growth pressures at its edges, but not closer in. Some of the most pressing issues include:

- Uneven maintenance and upkeep of properties with pockets of significant deterioration;
- A generally weak market for investment in older areas of the City that are not historically designated;
- The absence of mechanisms in areas outside of historic districts to ensure sensitive renovations, infill development, and public improvements;
- Inappropriate zoning and inflexible building code provisions, some of which may serve as barriers to preservation; and
- Limited knowledge of existing preservation assistance programs.

Since the completion of the first major survey of historic resources and the adoption of the Historic District Ordinance in 1978, City regulation has played a central role in supporting the preservation of locally significant historic sites and districts. The Historic District Ordinance provided for the designation of sites and districts, the creation of a review board, the development of design guidelines, and the establishment of review procedures. Revisions to the Ordinance were adopted by City Council in July 2001.

Under the ordinance, individually designated properties and those located within historic districts are protected from inappropriate or insensitive alteration. The Ordinance requires the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness either

administratively or by the Historic Preservation Commission before a building can be erected, reconstructed, restored, demolished, or altered in any way that affects its external appearance.

Currently, there are seven locally designated historic districts and fifteen individually designated historic properties in Lynchburg. The historic districts— Court House Hill, Daniel’s Hill, Diamond Hill, Garland Hill, Federal Hill, Pierce Street Renaissance, and Rivermont—contain approximately 750 of the City’s most significant historic buildings. Individual sites include the Academy of Music Theater, the Anne Spencer House, and the Old City Cemetery (see Exhibits 9-2 and 9-3). With few exceptions, these districts and properties are listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the U.S. Department of the Interior’s National Register of Historic Places.

Several areas have been identified as eligible for local historic district designation, including the Downtown, the Lower Basin, and the Diamond Hill South and College Hill neighborhoods, among others.

**Garland Hill  
Historic  
District**

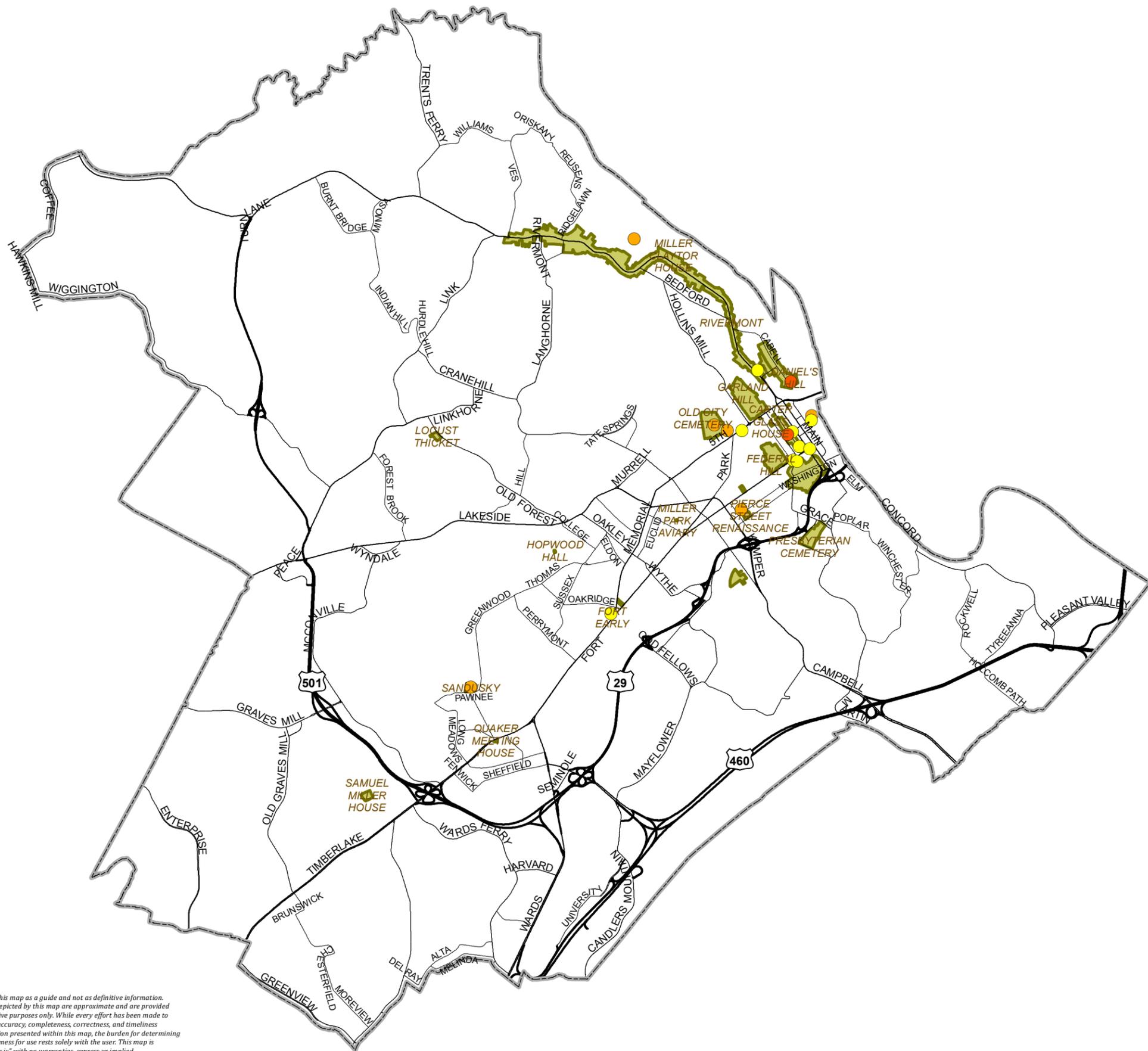


**Exhibit 9-2: Historic Sites**

<b>Individual Properties</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>National Register of Historic Places</b>	<b>Virginia Landmarks Register</b>	<b>Local Register of Historic Places</b>
<b>Academy of Music</b>	522-526 Main Street	06/11/69	11/05/68	02/14/78
<b>Allied Arts Building</b>	725 Church Street	12/19/85	04/16/85	
<b>Anne Spencer House</b>	1313 Pierce Street	12/06/76	09/21/76	02/14/78
<b>Bragassa Toy Store</b>	323-325 12th Street	01/11/91	08/22/90	
<b>Carter Glass House</b>	605 Clay Street	12/08/76	02/15/77	02/14/78
<b>College Hill Baptist Church</b>	1101 Floyd Street			05/08/84
<b>Court Street Baptist Church</b>	523 Court Street	07/08/82	06/16/81	09/08/81
<b>First Baptist Church</b>		09/09/82	04/21/81	09/08/81
<b>Fort Early</b>	3511 Memorial Avenue			08/11/98
<b>Hopwood Hall, Lynchburg College Campus</b>	Lakeside Drive			09/09/80
<b>Jones Memorial Library</b>	434 Rivermont Avenue	10/30/80	07/31/80	
<b>Kentucky Hotel</b>	900 Fifth Street	12/11/86	06/17/86	
<b>Locust Grove</b>	US 501 South Side	12/17/92	10/92	
<b>Main Hall, Randolph College</b>	2500 Rivermont Avenue	06/19/79	02/26/79	
<b>Miller-Claytor House Treasure Island Road</b>	Miller-Claytor Lane	05/06/76	10/21/75	04/11/78
<b>Miller Park Aviary</b>	402 Grove Street	07/30/80	04/15/80	05/22/79
<b>Montview (Carter Glass Estate)</b>	Liberty University Campus			
<b>Old City Cemetery</b>	Taylor & Fourth Street	04/02/73	09/19/72	
<b>Old Court House</b>	901 Court Street	05/19/72	04/18/72	02/14/78
<b>Point of Honor</b>	112 Cabell Street	02/26/70	12/02/69	02/14/78
<b>Rosedale</b>	Old Graves Mill Road	07/07/83	10/82	
<b>Saint Paul's Vestry House</b>	308 7th Street	02/21/97		
<b>Sandusky House</b>	757 Sandusky Drive	07/26/82	02/16/82	
<b>South River Meeting House (Quaker Meeting House)</b>	5810 Fort Avenue	08/28/75	05/20/75	04/11/78
<b>St. Paul's Episcopal Church</b>	605 Clay Street	09/09/82	04/21/81	09/08/81
<b>Samuel Miller House</b>	1433 Nelson Drive	11/12/92	1992	07/14/92
<b>VA Episcopal School</b>	400 VA Episcopal School Rd.	10/28/92	1992	
<b>Warwick House</b>	720 Court Street	12/06/96		
<b>Western Hotel (Joseph Nichol's Tavern (NRHP))</b>	501 Madison Street	07/22/74	06/18/74	02/14/78
<b>J.W. Wood Building</b>	23-27 Ninth Street	02/17/83	05/18/82	

# Exhibit 9-3 Historic Sites

September 2013



- Street Centerline**
- Highway
  - Major Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
  - Collector
  - Historical Site
  - Museum - Private
  - Museum - Public
  - Local Historic Districts

*Please use this map as a guide and not as definitive information. The areas depicted by this map are approximate and are provided for illustrative purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, completeness, correctness, and timeliness of information presented within this map, the burden for determining appropriateness for use rests solely with the user. This map is provided "as is" with no warranties, express or implied.*

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## Design Advisory Districts

In addition to locally designated historic districts and sites, the City has established Historic District Advisory Areas along Church, Main, Commerce, Jefferson, Fifth, Cabell and Court Streets in the Downtown. All proposals to erect, reconstruct, restore, demolish, or alter the external appearance of a building within the Advisory Area are reviewed by the Design Review Board for compliance with guidelines published in the report *Commercial Historic District Guidelines: Lynchburg, Virginia*. Upon completion of their review, the Board prepares an advisory finding of conformity or non-conformity with the guidelines. Applicants are required to submit plans for review—building or demolition permits may not be issued until the Board issues its recommendations—but compliance with the Board’s recommendations while strongly encouraged is not required.

Questions have been raised about the utility of an “advisory only” process for the Downtown, arguably the most visible of the City’s areas of distinctive character. Although some applicants follow the Board’s recommendations, several projects have not.

City staff should assess compliance with the recommendations of the Design Review Board for the Historic District Advisory Areas. Working with the Design Review Board and Downtown stakeholders, staff should develop measures of effectiveness, evaluate conformance with recommendations, and offer recommendations for appropriate changes to the program.

**Aviary in Miller Park**



## Historic Preservation Incentives, Advocacy & Education

In partnership with local and regional preservation, tourism development, and community improvement organizations, the City actively promotes preservation and resource conservation and educates the community about existing assistance and incentive programs and initiatives. A recent collaboration between the City of Lynchburg

Department of Community Development, the Lynchburg Historical Foundation, Inc., and the Diamond Hill Historical Society, Inc. resulted in the publication of the report, *Incentives and Assistance for Real Estate Rehabilitation*, a thorough resource for owners and developers of older properties.

Expanding the pool of incentives and increasing awareness of the benefits of preservation can help build community support for further work and the development of new partnerships. For example, local lending institutions may be willing to develop products tailored to support the purchase and rehabilitation of historic structures or a small-scale loan program targeted to low- and moderate-income homeowners in historic areas that may provide the means for modest renovations and repairs.

The City should expand its ongoing efforts to raise awareness of preservation-related regulations and financial incentives. Such a program, involving workshops, brochures, web-based outreach, and other efforts, should help developers, realtors, homeowners, and potential property owners better understand the benefits of preservation and the resources available to support it.

## **Building Codes & Zoning Standards Affecting Historic Preservation**

The City is currently enforcing the 2009 Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and its referenced standards, as adopted on March 1, 2011. These referenced standards include the 2009 International Existing Building Code, which provides building officials with a high degree of flexibility in handling renovations and alterations to existing buildings. The Zoning Ordinance should also provide a degree of flexibility regarding the requirements for older structures. The City anticipates adoption of the 2012 USBC in the Spring of 2014.

In addition, Chapter 10, Neighborhoods & Housing, includes recommendations for the creation of a new Traditional Residential Overlay district that recognizes the unique physical character of the City's older residential areas and promotes sensitive infill development.

## **Historic City-Owned Properties**

The City should also develop and follow design guidelines for City-owned property and public facilities located in and around the City's Historic Districts and potential conservation areas. Citizens who participated in development of the Plan goals felt strongly that the City should set a good example by preserving and protecting City-owned buildings and properties.

Heritage tourism is a central element in the region's economic development efforts. According to research conducted by the tourism industry, the typical heritage tourist shops more, spends more, stays in hotels more often, travels longer, and visits more destinations than typical travelers. These tourists are often referred to as "high-yield" tourists; fewer tourists spending more money and providing a high economic return. Communities that have preserved their historic buildings and rural landscapes—which

tell compelling stories about their history and culture and provide opportunities for “outsiders” to experience the uniqueness of a region—are particularly successful at attracting heritage tourists, often for repeat visits.

The City is a logical destination for the heritage tourist. Central Virginia is home to an impressive array of important historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources. Lynchburg’s location on the James, its wealth of local resources and special events, and its proximity to nationally significant historic sites, such as the National D-Day Memorial, Appomattox Courthouse National Historical Park, Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest, Patrick Henry’s Red Hill, and the Booker T. Washington National Monument, make it an especially attractive place from which to experience the region’s special places.

**Legacy Museum**



An expanded emphasis on heritage tourism efforts offers genuine opportunities for both the cultural and tourism industries to work together and, over time, to build business, stimulate economic growth, showcase resources, and encourage visitors to explore the City and the region.

Several projects provide excellent models of collaborative action:

- Venues like the Legacy Museum of African American History will deepen appreciation for local history and heritage;
- The Region 2000 Commission’s wayfinding study, along with recommendations in the Downtown & Riverfront Master Plan 2000, lay the groundwork for a new system of signs guiding locals and visitors to important destinations; and
- The Lynchburg Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau’s new publications provide excellent introductory information on the City’s historic districts and the region’s African-American Heritage.

A collaborative approach is required to expand understanding of the City’s history and heritage and to increase local and regional appreciation of the important role culture

and the arts play in supporting the City's livability and economic vitality.

## Arts

Lynchburg contains a vibrant arts community from individual artists, to performing arts groups, to galleries, to performing arts presenters. Citizens enjoy the opportunity to participate in and attend performances of the Lynchburg Symphony, the Dance Theatre of Lynchburg, the Lynchburg Regional Ballet Theatre, the Renaissance Theater and the Jefferson Choral Society, for example. They can visit many local galleries, including the Daura Gallery at Lynchburg College, and the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College. Citizens can take classes in the arts at the Virginia School of the Arts and other venues, as well as through the City's Department of Parks and Recreation. The City hosts many arts performances at E.C. Glass High School, though the City's major presenters are Lynchburg College, Randolph College and The Academy of Music.

The Academy of Music is the City's historic theater. Opened in 1905, it closed in 1958. In its heyday, the theater hosted such artists as Will Rogers, Sarah Bernhardt, Eubie Blake and George M. Cohen. The Academy of Music Theatre, Inc., formed to renovate and bring performances back to the theater.

**Academy of Music in  
Downtown**



During the planning process, community leaders emphasized the importance of building a strong network of allied organizations—City and regional agencies; community—based arts, heritage, and preservation groups; and local schools and colleges—to encourage on-going communication, improve access to information, open lines of communication, and leverage resources. Expanding partnerships and collaborations, and strengthening existing networks of support for the advancement of local and regional heritage tourism, arts, and cultural initiatives is also essential. The City's efforts should involve the James River Council for the Arts & Humanities and other stakeholders.

The City is in the process of developing a public arts policy to promote the provision and maintenance of art in public places.

## Education

Quality educational opportunities must be provided for youth at the secondary school level and college level and for adults as part of continuing education. Many expressed an interest in having the City promote a community culture of life-long learning. Maintaining and improving the quality of the Lynchburg Public Schools' education program is essential because school quality has an impact on so many other aspects of Lynchburg, including the skill level of the workforce, the stability of neighborhoods, and the availability of recreational and educational facilities, among others. The City supports education by providing a public school system that strives for excellence.

The City School System's physical plan is described in Chapter 14, Public Facilities, where the need to renovate and update school facilities is highlighted. So that these schools play a role in adult life-long learning, Chapter 11, Parks & Recreation, discusses the importance of City school facility availability for evening continuing education classes sponsored by the Parks & Recreation Department for both adults and children.

The City is fortunate enough to have five institutions of higher learning: Central Virginia Community College, Liberty University, Lynchburg College, Virginia University of Lynchburg, and Randolph College. These institutions offer opportunities to earn advanced degrees, for career training, and for general continuing education. The City places high value on these educational resources and will continue to support their presence within the City and to work with them in coordinating City planning with campus master planning and facilities development. In addition, the faculties of these schools bring a wealth of knowledge and skills that the City hopes to continue to tap. To facilitate the ongoing growth and development of these institutions, the City recently adopted two institutional zoning districts -- an IN-1 district intended for institutions that are smaller in scale and located primarily within or adjacent to residential areas and an IN-2 district intended for large scale institutions primarily located within or adjacent to non-residential areas.

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