

Lynchburg

DOWNTOWN & RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN 2000



DECEMBER 2000

PREPARED FOR

CITY OF LYNCHBURG

LYNCH'S LANDING, INC.

PREPARED BY

SASAKI ASSOCIATES, INC.

ECONOMICS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

CRADDOCK CUNNINGHAM ARCHITECTURAL PARTNERS

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Sasaki Associates, Inc.
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Craddock Cunningham Architectural Partners

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	page 1	6. Gateways	page 49
1. Ninth Street Corridor	15	6.1 John Lynch Bridge	49
1.1 Lower Ninth Street	18	6.2 Rivermont Avenue and Fifth Street Gateway	50
1.2 Upper Ninth Street	19	6.3 Route 29 Expressway Gateway	51
1.3 Monument Terrace	20	7. Signage	53
2. James Riverfront Park	21	7.1 Advance Guide Sign	56
2.1 Canal Park at Amazement Square	23	7.2 Exit Sign	56
2.2 Jefferson Street Promenade	25	7.3 Downtown Directional	57
2.3 Upper/Lower Basin Lawns and Park Features	26	7.4 District Street Sign	58
2.4 Overlook Terrace	27	7.5 Public Parking Identification	59
2.5 James Riverwalk	28	7.6 Visitor Information Kiosk	60
2.6 Riverfront Activities and River Crossings	30	7.7 Pedestrian Directional/Trail Markers	61
3. Stairs, Bluffs, and Overlooks	31	7.8 Interpretive and Historic Signage	62
3.1 Lower Bluff Walk	31	8. Public and Non-Profit Development Initiatives	63
3.2 Upper Bluff Walk	34	8.1 Human Services at J. W. Ould Building	63
3.3 City Hall Plaza	35	8.2 Amazement Square	64
3.4 Cobble Street at Tenth Street	37	8.3 The Academy of Music	65
3.5 Downtown Staircases	38	8.4 Riverviews Artist Lofts	68
4. Vehicular Circulation System	41	8.5 Community Market	69
4.1 Truck Routes	41	8.6 Central Virginia Criminal Justice Academy	70
4.2 Other Streetscape Improvements	44	8.7 Downtown Center	70
5. Parking Structures	45	8.8 James River Welcome Center	71
5.1 Jefferson and Eighth Street Parking Garage	45	8.9 The Old Court House Museum and Other City Museums	71
5.2 Commerce Street Parking Garages	47	8.10 Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court	72
5.3 Main Street Parking Garages	48	8.11 General District Court	72
5.4 Church Street Parking Garage	48	8.12 Circuit Court	73
5.5 Facade Improvements on Existing Garages	48	8.13 US District Court	73
		8.14 Redevelopment of Former Industrial Sites	74

9. Private Development Projects	page 75
9.1 Jefferson Street Housing	77
9.2 Twelfth Street Housing	79
9.3 Court Street Housing	81
9.4 Ice Skating Rink	82
9.5 Multi-Screen Cinema	83
9.6 Bluff Walk Center	85
9.7 Corporate Center	86
9.8 Retail Strategy	86
9.9 Renovation Opportunities	87
10. Policy Initiatives	89
10.1 Balanced Public and Private Investment	89
10.2 Phasing and Costs	91
10.3 Economic Benefits and Private Investment	93
10.4 An Entity for Downtown Development	97
10.5 Defining Downtown's Niche in the Regional Market	99
10.6 City Property: Disposition and Acquisition	100
10.7 Existing and Proposed Historic Districts	101
10.8 Facade Improvement Program	101
10.9 Membership in Virginia Main Street Program	102
10.10 Creation of a Downtown Foundation	102
10.11 Downtown Investments: Past and Projected	102

Appendices
Building Survey
Parking Survey and Analysis
Transportation
Economics
Stakeholders

Bound Separately

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Illustrative Master Plan	page 7
Figure 2. Open Space Framework Plan	33
Figure 3. Pedestrian Circulation: Sign Types and Locations	40
Figure 4. Vehicular Circulation Plan	42
Figure 5. Potential Parking Sites	46
Figure 6. Phasing Diagram	92
Figure 7. Renovation and New Development	96

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of Typical Funding for the Arts	page 66
Table 2. NCDS Impact Study Findings	67
Table 3. Civic Improvement Costs	91
Table 4. Summary of Downtown Investment	94
Table 5. Economic Benefit Criteria	95

INTRODUCTION

The City of Lynchburg, in conjunction with Lynch's Landing, Inc., engaged Sasaki Associates to further develop and complete the Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan. The Master Plan encompasses the area from the Route 29 Expressway to Fifth Street (Business Route 29), and from Clay Street to the riverfront. The surrounding neighborhoods are central to the success of downtown, and include Daniel's Hill, Garland Hill, College Hill, Federal Hill, and Diamond Hill. Across the riverfront, Amherst County is designing park improvements to the north bank of the James River, which will greatly enhance visibility of the Lynchburg side. For downtown to succeed, the historic core must be viewed within the context of the region, serving the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors by offering unique uses in the realms of culture, entertainment, housing, retail, and professional and government services.

An implementation strategy is integral to the current study and includes several early-action projects that will signal public interest in downtown. At the same time, the plan establishes a long-term direction for the downtown district in order to provide a framework for decision-making as implementation proceeds. The City will have to focus its efforts on a few strategic projects that will make a significant impact, setting the stage for subsequent private investment. From the outset of the study, the Ninth Street corridor and the riverfront have been designated as high-priority public improvement projects, and economic development has been a priority objective.

Several factors preceded the plan and set the stage for a new Downtown and Riverfront Plan for Lynchburg:

- Existing riverfront festivals and events created and managed by Lynch's Landing.



River Festival on the James

- Preliminary riverfront improvement concepts prepared by LDR International, Inc.
- Existing pedestrian and bike access to Percival's Island; added parking and streetscape improvements in the immediate area; and the ongoing design and construction of regional trails and recreational parks on the Amherst County riverfront and Blackwater Creek Trail.
- The opening of Amazement Square in March 2001, a children's museum on the riverfront.
- The success of the existing Community Market.
- An Army Corps of Engineers study of a sewer interceptor to replace the combined sewer overflow along a seven-mile stretch of the James River (CSO Study) led by Wiley & Wilson Engineers.



Aerial of Existing James Riverfront

- The need for direction and policies to address historic preservation goals while providing additional parking in key downtown locations.
- The need for key projects, such as the Riverviews Artists' Lofts and the Academy of Music, to come to fruition.
- The potential for a new Federal Courthouse.
- The need for a James River Welcome Center in the downtown area to complement the possible relocation of the Visitor Center to Kemper Street Station.

- Downtown Lynchburg's unique identity and two-hundred-year history, including the extensive investments made in infrastructure, buildings, civic institutions, businesses and private residences.

While the above conditions were readily apparent, the downtown also faces a number of other issues that are addressed in the Master Plan. The extent of vacant historic buildings in the downtown area is sizable and affects the pedestrian environment and public perception. Over the last several months, a few new restaurants and other businesses have enlivened Main Street, yet there continues to be a lack of critical mass in the commercial office, retail, housing, and entertainment markets. The riverfront has become a popular space for concerts and festivals taking advantage of the undeveloped riverfront. Over time, the programming of this space needs to evolve to be compatible with open space and development improvements. Finally, the image and the function of the downtown will be greatly improved

with a coherent and attractive signage system that highlights gateways, key destinations, and the interpretation of historic and environmental features.

After initial interviews with stakeholders in Lynchburg, opportunities for the downtown quickly became apparent. Not only does the downtown have a rich history, but also the adjoining neighborhoods, the entire City, and the region offer many complementary historic resources that could attract a tourist base. The proximity to the natural and recreational attractions in the region also suggests a high quality of life that gives Lynchburg a competitive advantage over other locations. Although the City is not



Overall Perspective of the Downtown and Riverfront Plan

located on an Interstate, it has good highway access and an airport. In addition, many colleges are located in and around Lynchburg. With the river flowing adjacent to downtown, this part of the City can become the nexus for regional trail systems and urban waterfront activities.

Revitalization of the downtown and riverfront is not without challenges, however. Downtown is struggling to compete with the City's suburbs, where retail, industry and corporate businesses have relocated. With easy access and extensive available land, residential preferences are weighted toward the outskirts, although a committed group of residents has reclaimed and improved the historic neighborhoods downtown. Filling the extensive vacancies downtown will involve a significant change in perception for people to realize the advantages of the culture,

recreation and history of the downtown environment. A plan for downtown and the riverfront must address the remaining industrial uses, including active rail lines along the riverbank and truck routes that traverse the downtown area. Parking demand in the downtown area must be satisfied to meet tenant requirements, particularly for office space, without destroying the architectural fabric of the downtown. The steep grades along the bluffs create wonderful opportunities for scenic views, but they restrict pedestrian access, making connections between downtown and the riverfront a special challenge. Planning for the riverfront must contend with the 100-year floodplain and the design and construction schedule for the proposed sewer interceptor.

Process

The plan has developed through the input of a broad cross-section of people vested in downtown. This input provided vital background information, offered unique ideas for the future, and ultimately grounded the plan in reality. To this end, the process has involved a combination of focus group meetings and open public forums. Lynch's Landing has been an important partner throughout the process, bringing continuity from previous planning efforts and representing downtown and riverfront interests. Discussions with these groups have been sustained through the planning period by a series of stakeholder and public meetings at each project milestone:

- Initial Project Kick-Off: interviews with stakeholder groups (June 1999)
- Analysis Presentation: stakeholder meetings and a City Forum (September 1999)
- Alternatives Presentation: stakeholder meetings and an Open House (December 1999)
- Draft Master Plan Presentation: City Forum (April 2000)

The focus groups engaged the following constituencies:

- Lynch's Landing Board Members and City staff
- Non-profit organizations and neighborhood associations
- Downtown businesses
- Regional interests, including county and local governments, and regional organizations
- Open space, landscape design and riverfront advocates

- Parking and transportation interests

- City Council

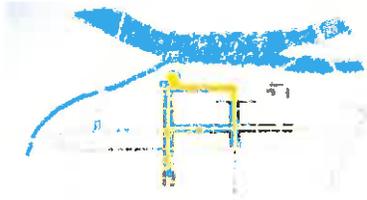
Coordination with other ongoing planning and design efforts has been a critical element of the Downtown and Riverfront Plan process. These efforts include:

- James River Sewer Interceptor (CSO) Study
- Amazement Square Children's Museum
- Amherst County Riverfront Park at the Smiley Block site
- Courthouse expansions and relocations
- Regional Renaissance planning
- J. W. Ould Building reuse and renovation for the Human Services Department
- Percival's Island and Blackwater Creek trail improvements and expansion
- Kemper Street Visitor Center
- Downtown festivals and special events
- Riverviews Artist Lofts
- The Academy of Music

Based on the initial interviews with the focus groups and the site analysis, a series of design principles was developed to shape the overall plan.

Design and Planning Principles

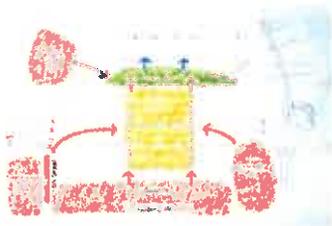
The design principles are the framework for moving forward and building on the great strengths and assets of the downtown.



Create pedestrian circulation loop.



Establish visual connections between the bluffs and to the river.

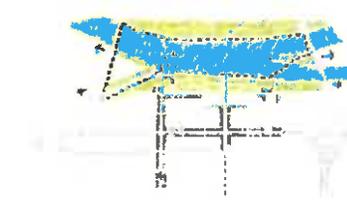


Connect downtown and neighborhoods to the riverfront.

1. *Create a Downtown Walking Loop:* Concentrate efforts on improving and expanding the retail businesses, street-level activities, and streetscape environments along Ninth Street, Main Street, Twelfth Street and Jefferson Street.

2. *Celebrate Stairs:* Establish a system of stairs and bluff walks that emphasizes the stunning topography, views, and historic resources from the top of the hills down to the riverfront.

3. *Connect Neighborhoods with Downtown:* Strengthen pedestrian connections among the historic neighborhoods, downtown and the river. Extend the residential fabric from the historic neighborhoods into the heart of downtown.



Reinvent the river as a place.



Acknowledge gateways; keep parking at the edges of the pedestrian loop.

4. *Reinvent the River as a Place:* Interpret the City's founding at the ferry crossing and the 19th-century industrial development around the Kanawha Canal, and incorporate this history into site improvements, civic institutions, new housing, and programming. Along the riverfront, develop water-related activities, such as boating and fishing, supported by recreational uses in the riverfront park and a linked trail system on both sides of the river.
5. *Acknowledge Gateways:* Define gateways and create a sequence of arrival experiences for visitors leading from the bridges and regional highways to the downtown streets, parking, sidewalks and key destinations.
6. *Intertwine Programmed Activities, Park Design and Economic Development:* Develop a strategy that balances these elements over time, with initial energies focused on programmed activities, such as festivals, and long-term efforts focused on capital investment that will trigger sustainable redevelopment.

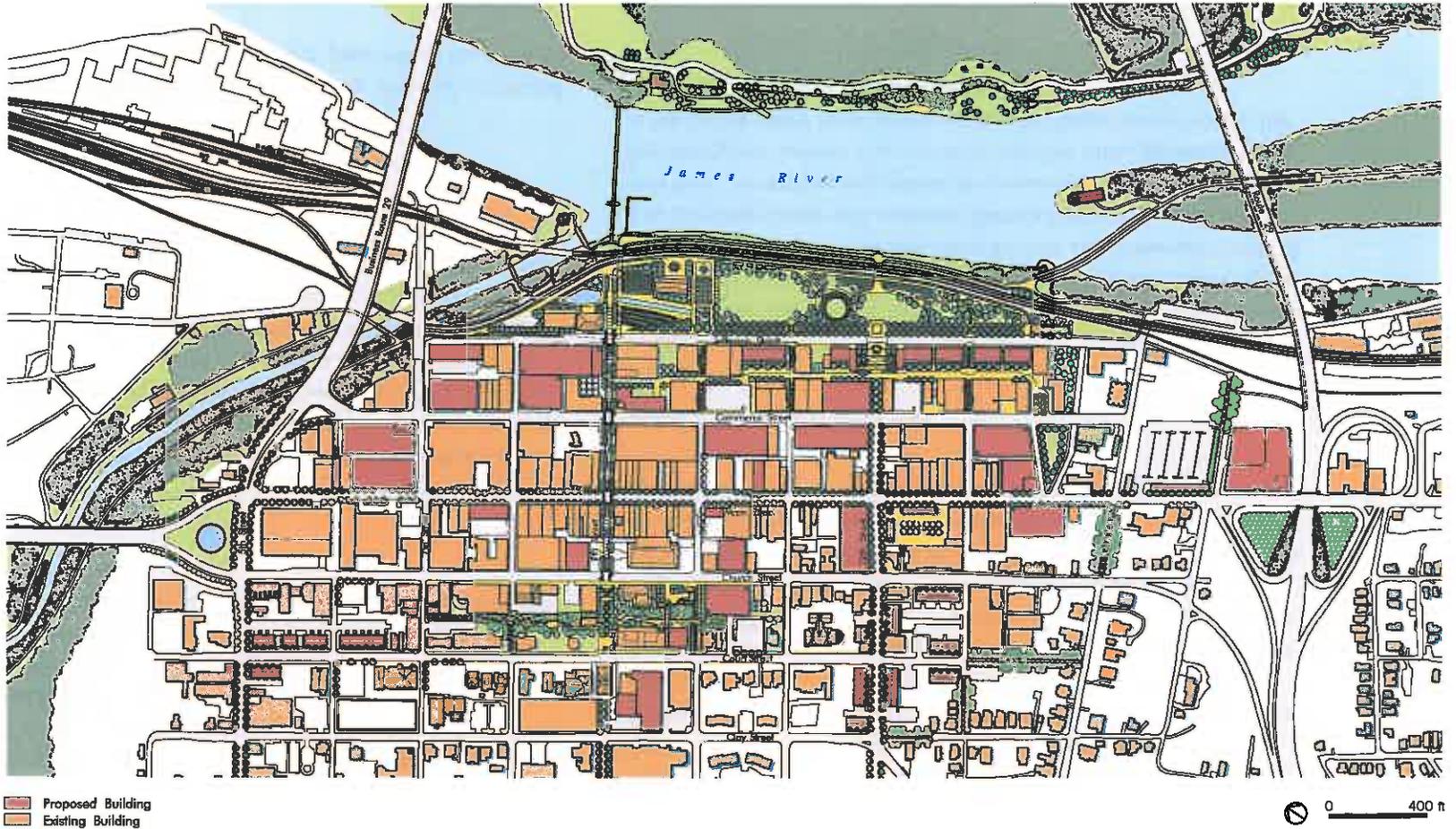


Figure 1. Illustrative Master Plan

Downtown and Riverfront Vision

Downtown Lynchburg will be a vital district enlivened by additional residents, employees, shoppers, tourists, and other visitors from the City, the surrounding region, and beyond. This part of the City will be the cultural hub for the region, offering unique attractions such as the Amazement Square children's museum, the Academy of Music and other performing arts venues, the Community Market, and possibly recreational ice-skating. Complementing these attractions will be a variety of restaurants, a possible movie theater and retail shops along Main Street, with other destinations in key locations along the riverfront. The history of Lynchburg will be woven into all aspects of downtown, embracing the Old Courthouse Museum, the historic hill neighborhoods, notable architecture, interpretive markers and signage along the riverfront, and gateways into downtown. New residences on the bluff overlooking the river and throughout downtown will provide critical mass that complements the historic hill neighborhoods and engenders an 18- to 24-hour city.

Ninth Street

Ninth Street will make a sweeping descent to the river from the renovated Monument Terrace down a tree-lined street to the lively activity around Amazement Square at Ninth Street and Jefferson Street. The children's museum, Riverviews Lofts, and the Department of Human Services in the J. W. Ould Building will lead people down toward the riverfront. From the elevated vantage point at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Ninth Street, the new riverfront park will extend across the entire area of level land between the riverbank and the line of loft buildings along Jefferson Street.

James River Park

The new park will continue to accommodate a host of special events and performances, both large and small. This civic space will be the gathering

ground for the entire City—a place to enjoy music, art, history or nature in the very heart of the urban area. A destination playground will attract families and will complement Amazement Square, as will the Model Boat Basin and the restored Kanawha Canal. Broad open lawns will provide flexible space for large events or for casual play. Many people will enjoy sitting on the Great Steps along the canal to relax in the sun while watching and listening to the play of water in the fountain. While the canal will recall the former waterway in this area, certain features will actually be restored, including the original bridge over the canal and the nearby train tunnel. A gracious promenade along the length of Jefferson Street will be a place to stroll, meet, sit, enjoy lunch and watch other people. Housing and retail uses along the bluff will further enhance these activities and will provide the necessary "eyes on the park" that make open space areas feel more secure at all times of the day and evening. The former N&W Depot will be restored as retail and/or recreational use. The magnificent Overlook Terrace will provide a direct connection up to Twelfth Street and the Community Market area, and also accommodates quiet seating areas beneath trees, ornamental plantings, and a vantage point for viewing the river and activities in the James River Park.

James River and the Riverwalk

For those interested in reaching the river's edge, two underpasses will extend beneath the newly consolidated rail lines: one at the foot of Ninth Street and one aligned with Twelfth Street. Bike rentals and boat rentals on the waterfront will provide mobility for people interested in exploring the James River and the trail systems along the river and Blackwater Creek. A new pedestrian bridge will reconnect Daniel's Hill to downtown and the riverfront. In the long run, pedestrian connections between downtown Lynchburg and Amherst County can be achieved with a pedestrian bridge at the foot of Ninth Street and/or a pedestrian bridge inserted within the piers of the Route 29 Expressway Bridge.

Topography

Lynchburg's topography will be celebrated by a series of stairs throughout the downtown and by two bluff walks that provide overlooks for the whole City. Each stairway will be memorable and distinctive, enticing people to seek out each one and explore the many hills and overlooks in the City. The stairs will make vital connections, as well, between the riverfront and the downtown, and between the downtown and the hill neighborhoods. The bluff walks—one above Jefferson Street and one above Church Street—will offer a continuous walk along the crest of the high ground in each location, with long-range views along the way. The green, landscaped character of the Church Street bluff will complement the more urban character of the Jefferson Street bluff with its narrow pedestrian-scaled street framed by brick loft buildings.

Gateways

For first-time visitors, the gateways into downtown will be clearly marked with beacons, lights, landscape plantings, and a graphic signage system. This signage system will involve a hierarchy of signs to lead a visitor from the regional routes to the local streets, from the streets to parking and on foot to key destinations. At either end of downtown, new landscape plantings will highlight the gateways on the west (Rivermont Avenue and Fifth Street with Church Street and Main Street), on the east (Main Street with the Route 29 Expressway), and on the north (along Twelfth Street).

Catalyst Projects

Major new projects will provide catalysts for other new development. The opening of Amazement Square, the Academy, Riverviews and the renovation of the J. W. Ould Building, future home of the Department of Human Services, will create an active zone along the Ninth Street Corridor between Commerce and Jefferson Streets. The new Federal



Gateways define a sense of place.

Courthouse will be the first infill building to be constructed downtown in several years, providing an impetus for others to follow. Its site selection and design will be critical for success. A recreational ice-skating rink and movie house will further enhance the active corner of Main Street and Twelfth Street next to the Community Market. A James River Welcome Center and the new Bluffwalk Hotel will support visitor activities along the riverfront and at the east gateway into downtown. The newly restored Academy of Music will anchor the west end of Main Street across from the Holiday Inn. Membership in the Main Street Program will assist in the renovation and restoration of the original façades and will promote new retail businesses along Main Street, Church Street and Ninth Street.



Historic architecture creates a unique character downtown.

Housing

In the long term, new market-rate housing with home-ownership opportunities will provide additional life to the downtown, add a sense of downtown ownership, and improve the transition from the hill neighborhoods to downtown. In addition to Riverviews, a new residential area along Twelfth Street below Diamond Hill will improve neighborhood connections and enhance the gateway between the rest of the City and downtown. Along the western end of Court Street, infill housing will strengthen the connection to Fifth Street and Garland Hill beyond. In addition to Riverviews Artists Lofts, new and renovated loft buildings along the Jefferson Street bluff will provide residents with views of the river and the park, as well as close proximity to downtown features. Housing on the upper floors of retail buildings will also generate a

more lively environment and enhance the use and activities on downtown streets.

Building Reuse and New Parking Structures

A major objective will be to fill the one million square feet of vacant space downtown, converting the historic structures with additional residential lofts, offices, and ground-floor retail and restaurants. To support these renovations and new infill development, new parking will need to be added to the downtown supply. New parking decks can be built into the hillside, taking advantage of the multi-level access points afforded by the sloping streets. A series of smaller parking structures at strategic locations will allow for incremental development.

Circulation and Truck Routes

Commerce Street will continue to serve as a major service corridor for parking access and as a primary truck route. A key objective should be to minimize truck traffic on Jefferson Street, Ninth Street, Main Street and Church Street, all heavily used now by trucks. Removing trucks from the lower basin will minimize conflicts on Ninth Street near the children's museum at Amazement Square. In the short term, a traffic signal is recommended for the intersection of Main Street and Washington Street to improve truck-turning movements and enhance the direct connection between the Concord Turnpike and the Route 29 Expressway. With enforcement, trucks could be directed to follow a marked route along Commerce Street using a short segment of Main Street to access Washington Street. In the long term, the extension of Commerce Street back to Washington Street will provide the most direct truck route through downtown, connecting with the Concord Turnpike, Route 29 Expressway and Route 29 Business.

Economic Issues

In order for downtown and riverfront redevelopment in Lynchburg to be successful, public investment policies are required that reinforce downtown Lynchburg's role as a viable address in the regional marketplace. A committed, experienced private sector is also essential, including developers, lenders, and business leaders. Downtown redevelopment efforts should also recognize that architectural character, cultural anchors, and unique parks are distinguishing factors that will give downtown Lynchburg a competitive advantage over nearby suburbs and other cities and towns in the region. Moreover, public policy initiatives focusing on the redevelopment of downtown should be viewed as ongoing, multi-year commitments by the City and supported by aggressive public management and marketing over a ten- to twenty-year period. All of these are critical factors for success.

At present, downtown Lynchburg is at a competitive disadvantage compared to suburban locations because of low rents relative to development costs, and the physical and functional obsolescence of its building stock. The strongest redevelopment opportunities are also the most problematic: large buildings with high capital requirements. While existing public investment has helped stem the tide and has raised downtown's profile in the region, **real change downtown will require that the public sector assume a degree of financial risk** in specific projects and to maintain these commitments over time to invest in downtown's future. In short, the economic future of downtown Lynchburg is in "real places."

In order to move forward, housing is a critical element, and is one of the most important strategies for downtown over the near term. Retail, on the other hand, is not the lead element, but will continue to play a key role in the early stages of the development process. Other basic economic development principles are as follows:

- Protect and reinforce existing downtown constituencies.
- Concentrate efforts in specific projects that anchor the downtown and create destinations.
- Concentrate activities to achieve more drawing power within market area.
- Create logical districts with clear identities.
- Use public resources (including real estate) strategically.
- Use cultural anchors to enhance prospects for private investment.

General economic testing has been conducted for a series of catalyst projects to establish overall feasibility and to outline the expected levels of public participation required for each project. These projects include a parking garage on Jefferson and Eighth Street, the Academy of Music, an ice-skating rink/family recreation center, a multi-screen cinema, and several hundred units of housing in the form of loft conversions and new construction.

Implementation

Implementation addresses the timing of strategic and long-range projects, the organization of entities to lead the development effort, and the role of the public, the non-profit, and the private sectors.

Public/Private Partnership

In order to take advantage of downtown's assets and to reap the potential economic benefits there, **the public sector must demonstrate a willingness to lead with public investment.** A carefully considered strategy for public investment is required to leverage private investment and thus maximize the benefits. This investment in public infrastructure and the participation



Model of the Downtown and Riverfront Plan

in catalyst projects will signal the necessary confidence in the market potential. The commitment of consistent public-sector incentives, policies and investment is required to realize the recommendations in the Downtown and Riverfront Plan. In the private sector, additional development capacity should be pursued from other parts of the region to provide experience and financing credibility for urban residential and commercial projects.

Downtown Entity

Leadership will be a critical ingredient to the future of downtown. This objective can be met by creating an entity that can focus on downtown development, with a director in a leadership position who brings a broad set of professional skills to the job. This position should be supported by a Downtown Council and ultimately a more formal board that represents the municipal government and its key departments, Lynch's Landing and other non-profits, and the local business community.

Public Sector Initiatives

Some of the initial tasks that the City must undertake include the following:

- Begin sewer separation in the lower portion of the Ninth Street Corridor, working with the Army Corps of Engineers CSO Study.
- Complete the design and begin construction of the lower Ninth Street streetscape near Amazement Square.
- Secure funding and complete the design for the remainder of the Ninth Street improvements, including sewer separation and streetscape.
- Complete the design and begin renovation of the Human Services facilities at the J. W. Ould Building and construction of the adjacent parking garage.

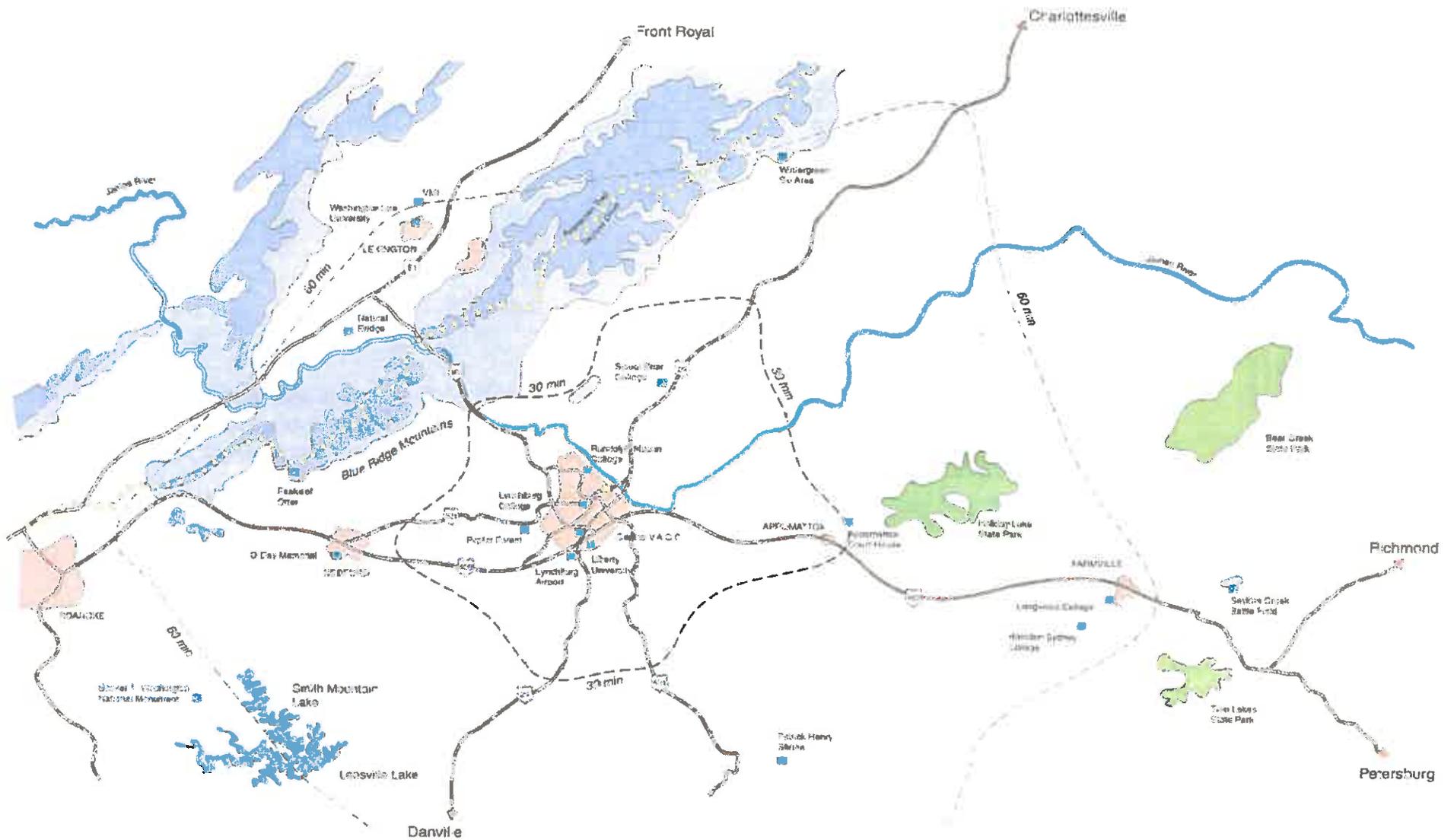
- Design Monument Terrace improvements and use public investment to leverage private funds to support renovation.
- Participate in financial packages for Riverviews Lofts and the Academy of Music (including Sixth Street utility relocation).
- Work with the GSA to site a new Federal Courthouse downtown.
- Negotiate with railroads, then design and fund rail line relocation.
- Begin truck route improvements with a signalized intersection at Main Street and Washington Street, with long-term planning for an extension of Commerce Street.
- Secure funding and begin the construction of the pedestrian bridge at Blackwater Creek.
- Acquire key properties, especially along bluff walks.
- Prepare signage scheme/design for entire downtown and begin installation at key locations (gateways, key tourism destinations, and public parking garages).

- Create a local historic district and implement design review based on existing design guidelines.
- Redevelop or sell city-owned buildings on Main Street adjoining the Community Market.

With City leadership and the proper downtown development entity in place, the downtown can become a unique and distinguished place in the heart of the region. Working through a dedicated downtown entity, the City must invest in streets and open spaces, participate in initial catalyst projects to close the financial gap, direct the location of key projects, and continuously seek out appropriate tenants, businesses, and development partners. In return, the City will reap the return on its investment in the form of an increased tax base, additional jobs, strong office and retail market, and a committed constituency of downtown residents and civic pride.



The Twelfth Street corridor will lead directly to the riverfront from the Community Market.



1. NINTH STREET CORRIDOR

The Ninth Street Corridor is the historic spine of the downtown. From the original ferry landing on the James River, Ninth Street extends up the hill to Monument Terrace. These grand stairs lead up to the Old Court House Museum at the top of the hill. As a cross-section of downtown, the Ninth Street Corridor connects the activities on each of the main cross streets: riverfront activities and future residential uses along Jefferson Street; offices and parking along Commerce Street; retail and offices along Main Street; City and other offices on Church Street; and court and other administrative functions on Court Street.

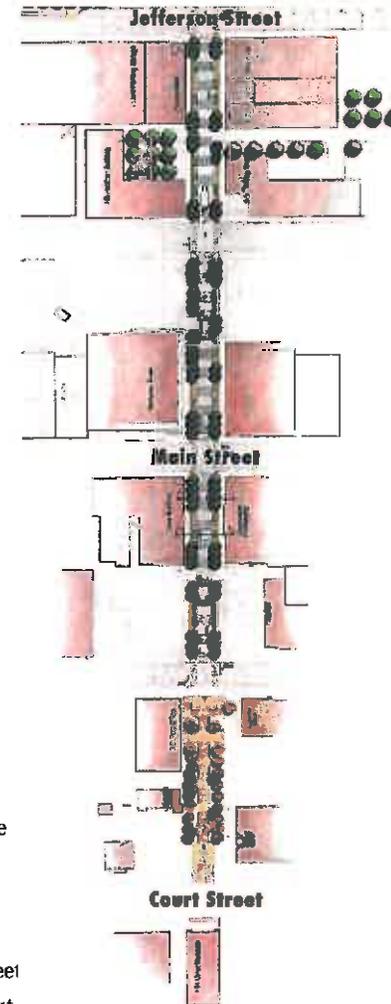
Several private and public initiatives are underway on the Ninth Street Corridor today. The City of Lynchburg has committed to renovating the historic J. W. Ould Building on Ninth and Commerce Streets to accommodate the Human Service Department. Adjacent to this building, the City could build a parking garage with ground-floor retail. A new children's museum, Amazement Square, opens March 2001 in the J. W. Wood Building at the foot of Ninth Street at Jefferson Street. The former Craddock Terry warehouse on the opposite corner of this intersection is being considered for housing and artist space as the Riverviews Artists' Lofts. The City has committed funding to improve Monument Terrace and Ninth Street.

The width of the street corridor is typically 60 feet from building face to building face. Currently the street has narrow 8-foot sidewalks, which allow only a 5-foot clear zone after accounting for trees, poles, and signs. The existing street has continuous on-street parking on both sides and one travel lane in each direction on Ninth Street. At the Main Street intersection, a left-turn lane is provided for westbound traffic.

The grade along Ninth Street averages 12%, which is relatively steep but not prohibitive for vehicles and pedestrians. Few doorways actually open

on to Ninth Street. While the existing holly trees along the length of the street are green year-round, they do not provide the large spreading canopy that would create shade or a sense of grandeur.

With the renovations to Monument Terrace and the implementation of a consistent streetscape between Church Street and the Kanawha Bridge, the Ninth Street corridor will become a walkable, attractive link between the top of the hill and the river. In the future, the street will have wide sidewalks on both sides with a minimum dimension of 11 feet. At the intersections and at intervals along the street, the sidewalks will "bump-out" to be a total of 18 feet wide, allowing street tree planting and shady rest areas with benches. Public art or historic signage could be incorporated within the zone of tree planting, continuing the theme established by the memorials on Monument Terrace. Some on-street parking will remain on either side, but these spaces will be contained in small

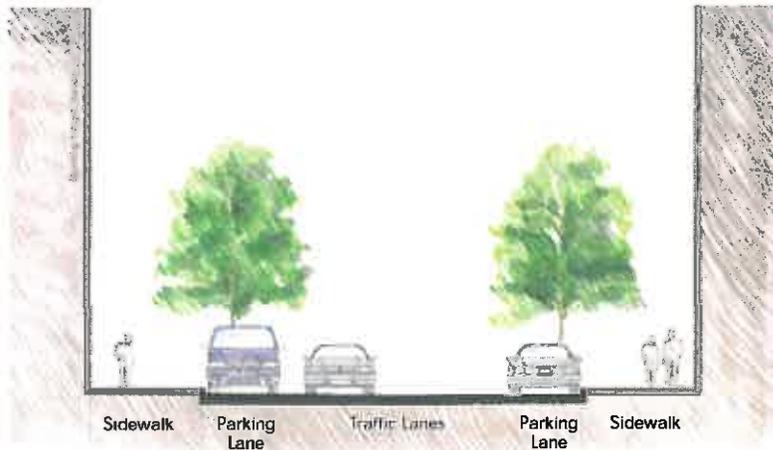


Ninth Street Rendered Plan

two- or three-car zones set between the street trees. One travel lane in each direction will be maintained.

Monument Terrace will be renovated to address structural and restoration issues and to increase the visibility of and the views from this key civic landmark. The lighting, planting, and furnishings along the Ninth Street Corridor will complement Monument Terrace and reflect the historic character of the downtown.

The public investment along the Ninth Street Corridor will positively affect all of downtown by strengthening the significance of Monument Terrace and by providing badly needed pedestrian connections down to the Human Services Building, Amazement Square, Riverviews, and the riverfront. Since this project will occur in phases, the following pages describe the implementation of each key segment of the corridor.



Ninth Street Typical Section



Ninth Street Corridor Existing Conditions



W.G. Hook

Rendering of Ninth Street Improvements Looking Toward Monument Terrace

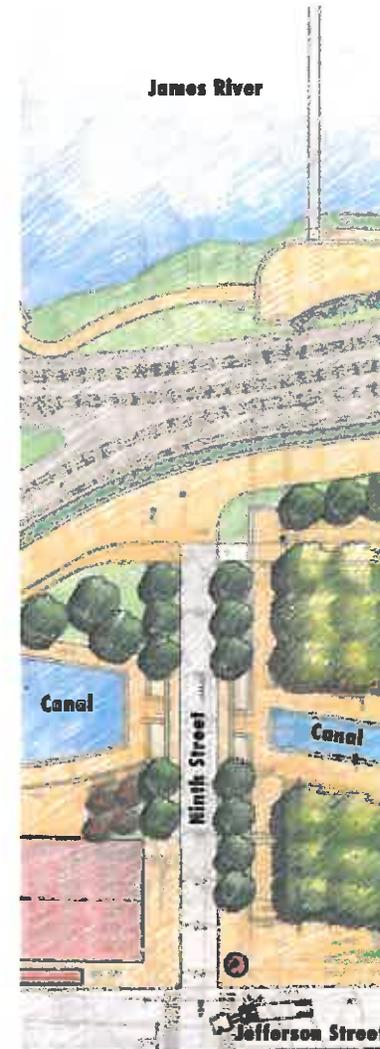
1.1 Lower Ninth Street: Kanawha Bridge to Commerce Street

The lower portion of Ninth Street is a high-priority project because of the imminent opening of Amazement Square, which is currently scheduled for early 2001. Before streetscape improvement can occur, the necessary separation of the sanitary sewer and storm drainage system will be completed as part of the larger sewer interceptor project. The schedule for streetscape improvements in this zone must also be closely coordinated with the programming, design and construction of the J. W. Ould Building renovation, courtyard and parking area. Construction on this project is scheduled to be complete in 2003.

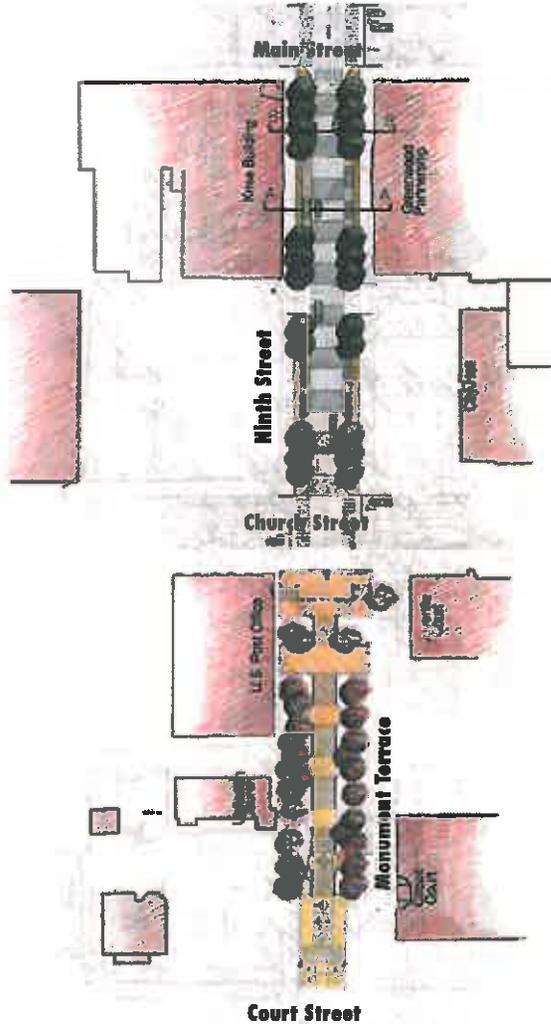
The segment of Ninth Street between Jefferson Street and Commerce Street will continue to function as a truck route providing a key connection between the Concord Turnpike and Commerce Street leading to Business Route 29 and Rivermont on the west. Although the goal will be to relocate this truck route in the long term, the design of this portion of Ninth Street must reflect adequate turning radii for this east-west movement in the foreseeable future. To support Amazement Square, buses will be arriving via Ninth Street and turning left onto Jefferson Street to drop off, before turning in the lower level of the future garage and exiting back onto Jefferson Street. Because of the steep grades and the projected truck and bus activity on this particular segment of Ninth Street, vehicular access to the J. W. Ould Building and possible future garage should be located on Commerce Street (upper levels of garage), Eighth Street, and/or Jefferson Street (lower levels of garage).

Summary of Implementation Steps

- Complete construction documents.
- Secure funding for construction.
- Separate sanitary and storm sewers.
- Coordinate with J. W. Ould Building and garage projects.



Detailed Plan of Ninth Street
Connection to Waterfront



Ninth Street Detail: Main Street to Court Street

1.2 Upper Ninth Street: Commerce Street to Church Street

Given the importance of the overall corridor, streetscape improvements for Upper Ninth Street should be started as soon as the sewer separation project is complete.

Truck movement should be discouraged on Ninth Street between Commerce Street and Church Street through the use of signage, narrow turning radii, and a vigilant enforcement program. Local trucks serving businesses on Main Street are expected to arrive via Main Street from the east and west, suggesting little need for truck use on upper Ninth Street. This suggests that the curb radii at the Main Street and Church Street intersections can favor pedestrian crossings and allow more room for near-street trees and street furnishings.

Based on a traffic study commissioned by the City, proper timing of the signals in the Ninth Street Corridor will mitigate the need for any left-turn lanes. This signal timing is critical in order to maintain adequate sidewalk widths where pedestrian use is highest while minimizing peak-hour congestion on the street.

Implementation Steps

- Separate sewers.
- Change signal timing.
- Complete construction documents.
- Secure funding for construction.



Monument Terrace

1.3 Monument Terrace

Monument Terrace is the preeminent civic landmark in downtown Lynchburg and has tremendous symbolic and historic significance. Today, however, it is underutilized as the civic park it was designed to be. The design and use of the structure, which includes stairs, landings, walls, memorial plaques, war monuments, and fountains, must be maximized. The current landscape plantings, which were installed in the 1950s to replace the original poplar trees, are now overgrown and may be causing structural damage to the walls. Their growth has taken over the architecture of the monument and is obscuring the view to the Old Court House Museum, which is the focal point of the Ninth Street Corridor.

The City is just beginning the design process for the restoration of this key feature; Versar Greenwood has been selected as the architect. This process will involve community outreach to solicit concerns and ideas and to inform the programming and design of the space. The project also will address the structural repairs to the walls and stairs, as well as the replacement and/or restoration of and improvements to paving materials, lighting, furnishings, fountains, memorials, and landscape plantings.

Implementation

- Ensure community outreach during design process.
- Use City funding to leverage private contributions.

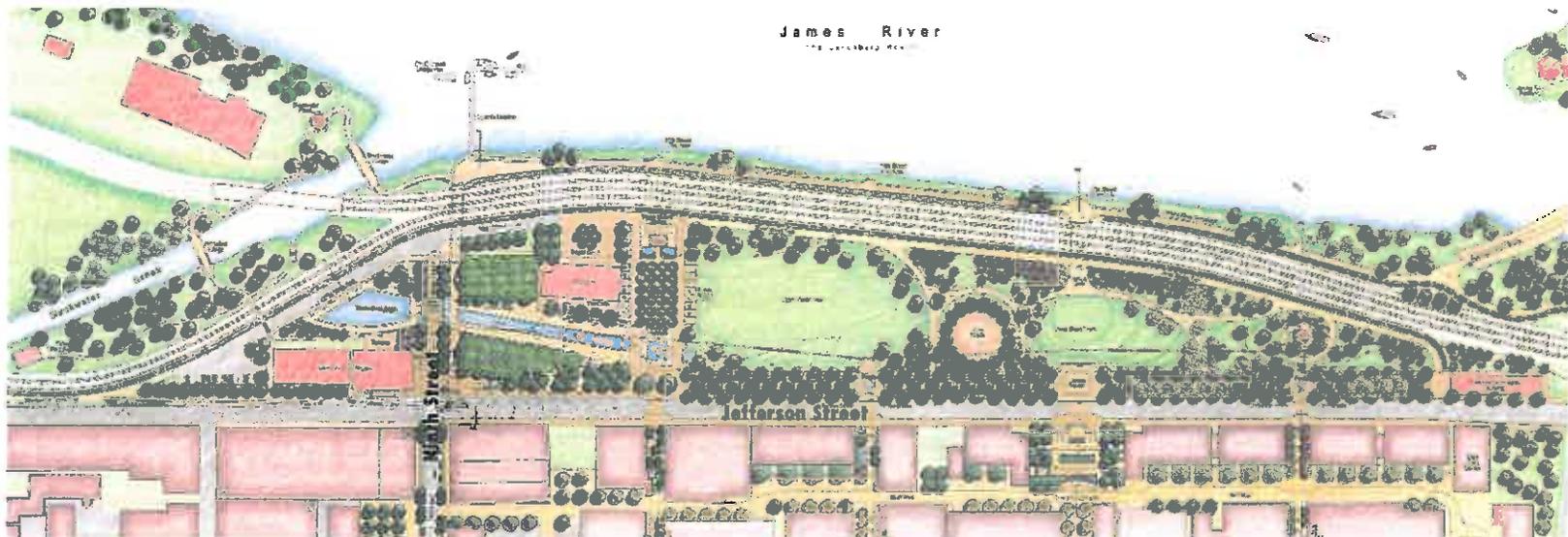
2. JAMES RIVER PARK

The James River is a unique attribute of downtown Lynchburg and should be celebrated as a natural, historic, and cultural resource for all citizens. A well-designed, high-quality civic space along the riverfront area will strengthen the downtown's image to visitors and residents alike and will provide a large civic gathering space for downtown festivals and events. As a distinct feature of Lynchburg, the history of the riverfront will be incorporated into the park elements, including the canal, the canal bridge, the train tunnel, and a landing for small boats at the foot of Ninth Street.

The riverfront area is envisioned as a park and open space that provides a significant amenity for new and renovated warehouse buildings along the length of the south side of Jefferson Street. Four historic buildings will sit within the park space to provide unique destinations, services,

and activities. These include Amazement Square children's museum, the depot building as a possible restaurant, the train switching station relocated to provide rest rooms and/or bicycle rentals, and the existing office building of Craddock & Cunningham Architectural Partners and McBrattney/Sisson.

While the park will be in the 100-year floodplain, no new buildings are planned in the floodplain area. The two that will be restored (the N & W Depot and the Switching Station) will be used for commercial and not residential uses. Plantings and materials will be chosen with the floodplain in mind to ensure durability during flood events. The N.B. Handy Metal building, the Conner Produce building, the J.W. Wood Produce building, and the former Pride of Virginia Meats building may be removed, allowing the north side of Jefferson Street to be predominantly open space.



Rendered Plan of James Riverfront Park

The programming of the park space must account for use by a range of people at different times of the day and evening and at different seasons of the year, including schoolchildren visiting Amazement Square, families, the elderly, lunchtime employees, downtown neighborhood residents, and tourists. People will use the park for active recreation such as running, bicycling, and rollerblading along the trail systems, and boating and fishing along the river. A variety of large and small spaces within the park will allow people to relax, stroll, and, at times, watch informal performances. Programmed special events might include small concerts, art shows, cultural festivals, and street fairs that will draw people to the waterfront and complement nearby activities. Several Citizens have discussed the possibility of a George Stewart Memorial Park in the riverfront area.

The 13-acre riverfront area is situated on a broad terrace approximately 25 feet above the water level and is currently separated from the water's edge by three active rail lines. One of these rail lines needs to be relocated to run parallel to the other two, thereby consolidating the rail corridor and gaining more parkland. The majority of the warehouse buildings along the south side of Jefferson Street are vacant and several have been lost over the years. Within this former industrial environment, a series of programmed festivals and events have been held including:

- The James River Extreme Festival, featuring athletic competitions (triathlons, skateboarding, etc.)
- The Cultural Connection, featuring food and entertainment
- Amazement Square Cultural Festival for Kids featuring multicultural activities, music, crafts, food and performances
- Something Big, featuring food, music and children's workshops
- Hill City Music Festival, featuring food, music and children's workshops

- The Fair by the James, featuring rides, amusements, concerts, and food
- A River of Time, featuring Lynchburg history and launching of the *Bateaux*
- Blues by the James, featuring music and food
- 5Ks on Percival's Island, featuring seven monthly races from April through October
- National Trails Day, featuring education about and promotion of outdoor and environmental issues

While most of these festivals and entertainments have minimal impact on the grounds and infrastructure of the riverfront, others, such as Fair by the James, are high-impact events and may require new locations when the new Riverfront Park is built (see Section 8.14 for possible relocations).

A major sewer interceptor is located in the old canal bed. As part of the Army Corps of Engineers' study to replace combined sewer overflows along the James River (CSO/Sewer Interceptor Project), the interceptor is scheduled to be replaced by a 72-inch-diameter line in the next five to seven years. Currently, Jefferson Street is used as a truck route for local industries and for through-traffic to and from the Concord Turnpike and the regional highway system. While some of this truck traffic can be reduced in the near term, the reconnection of Commerce Street and Washington Street will be required to reroute it completely.

The distinctive areas within the park are described on the following pages. Each area is planned as a separate implementation project in order to respond to funding opportunities and the phasing of the CSO replacement.

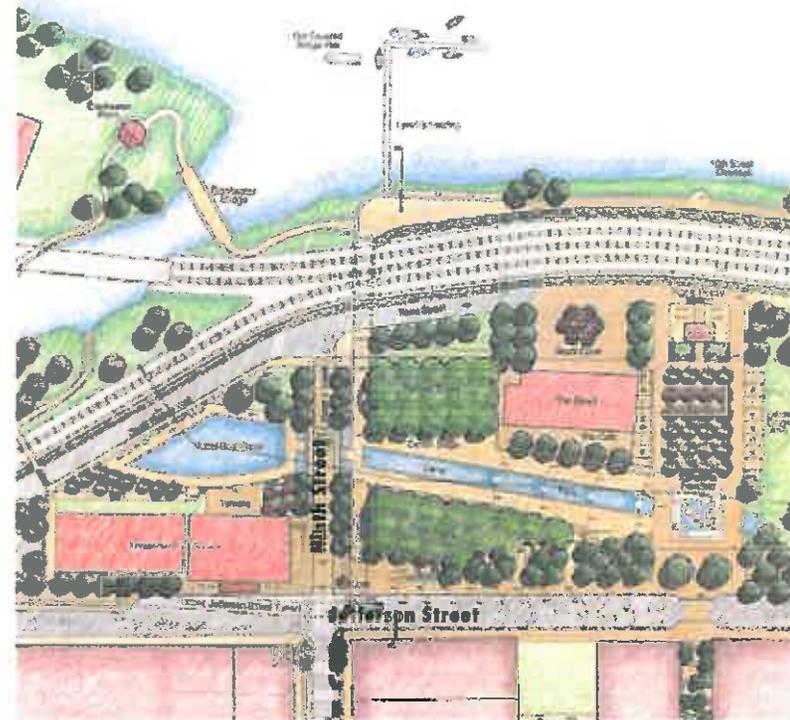
2.1 Canal Park at Amazement Square

The foot of Ninth Street will be a very active and exciting zone where the City engages the riverfront. At this location, the industrial infrastructure of the past will come together, and the urban character of the park will incorporate these historic references. The historic structures in the riverfront park also will be concentrated in this area, framing the open space and providing activity. Amazement Square will house a first-rate children's museum; the Depot building could have a destination restaurant with offices above; and the relocated Signal House is programmed for rest rooms and perhaps for bicycle rentals or other visitor services.

A portion of the canal will be restored, anchored by a fountain at one end flowing down to a Model Boat Basin near Amazement Square. At Ninth Street, the canal and pedestrian walkway will pass underneath the restored stone bridge. Along the canal, the land will rise up in a series of terraces and steps to meet the grades at the corner of Ninth and Jefferson Streets and along the railroad bed, forming a small bowl or amphitheater for informal outdoor performances. Shade trees will grace the levels of the stairs and terraces as respite from the hot summer sun.

The historic railroad tunnel extends under Jefferson Street along the length of the Amazement Square property and will daylight into the Canal Park area. With proper lighting, security and interaction with Amazement Square exhibits, this tunnel could provide a unique pedestrian and/or bicycle link from the Blackwater Creek trails directly into Canal Park.

Vehicular access will be maintained across the Kanawha Bridge to serve truck-loading functions at Amazement Square and to serve visitor drop-off and truck-loading functions at the restaurant targeted for the Depot building. The bicycle path connecting the Blackwater Creek trails to the



Detailed Plan of Canal Park

James Riverfront will follow parallel to the railroad track along this access drive until Ninth Street, where bicyclists can choose to go to the riverfront, to Jefferson Street, or up Ninth Street to downtown. Ultimately, a wide, graceful underpass beneath the railroad tracks at the foot of Ninth Street is needed to connect the park to the water's edge.



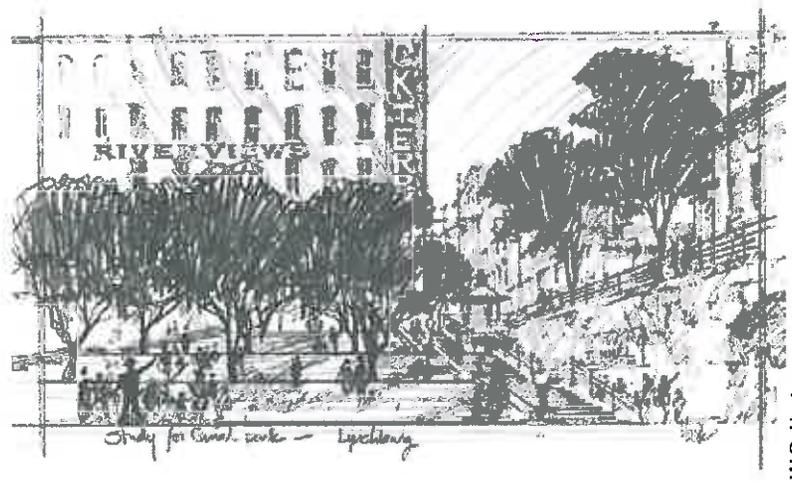
Sketch of Canal Terraces and Steps Looking West Toward Ninth Street Bridge



The canal terraces can be used for formal events or informal recreation.

Implementation Steps

- Coordinate with Amazement Square on the final design of the open space around the children's museum.
- Begin site preparation by negotiating with railroads and identifying funds for track relocation.
- Establish a definitive work limit line and schedule for the CSO/Sewer Interceptor project. Review those plans as they develop to maximize site preparation for the park and to ensure the feasibility of special park features, particularly the critical elevations under the Kanawha Bridge.
- Complete final design of the park as the sewer interceptor construction nears completion.



Sketch of Canal Park Looking South Toward Riverviews

W.G. Hook

2.2 Jefferson Street Promenade

The areas and activities within the James River Park will be organized along the spine of the Jefferson Street Promenade. Jefferson Street will become a narrower street serving the adjacent residential and mixed uses and accommodating on-street parking for park visitors. The street corridor will be defined by the warehouse and loft buildings on the south and a grand allée of trees along the edge of the park to the north. Under the shade of the trees a generous sidewalk with benches will allow for strolling, relaxing, and watching other park activities.

Three rows of trees will create a large area of shade and create a bold scale in keeping with the industrial scale of the loft buildings. The trees will be more successful if planted in continuous trenches. The overall promenade dimension will be 45 feet wide, with areas of ground cover planted over the tree trenches providing a soft contrast to the walking surfaces.

Along the length of the Promenade, the cross streets of the City grid (Tenth Street, Eleventh Street, etc.) will be marked with a special pavement design or a piece of public art. At the foot of Twelfth Street and the Overlook Terrace, a small plaza area will serve as a gateway into the park and could be used as an audience area for small events staged from the Overlook Terrace.

On the south side of the street, the existing warehouses and new infill loft buildings will create an edge to the park. Wherever possible, active ground floor uses, such as retail, should be encouraged. As residential buildings,

the upper floors will provide the "eyes on the park" that promotes a feeling of safety for people in the park and also ensures a constituency that will advocate for the park and its maintenance over the long run.

On weekends, Jefferson Street could be closed to provide additional room for bicycling and rollerblading. The street could be closed during special events to allow gatherings or to accommodate street fairs, art shows, or other booths and venues under the trees.

Implementation Steps

- Purchase remaining land and buildings.
- Remove N.B. Handy Metal building and Pride of Virginia building.
- Complete construction documents for the streetscape, which could be implemented as an early phase of the park prior to the sewer interceptor.
- Relocate truck route off Jefferson Street as soon as feasible.



Sketch of Jefferson Street Looking West



Detail of Jefferson Street Promenade



Detail of Upper and Lower Basin Parks

2.3 Upper/Lower Basin Lawns and Park Features

The grand lawns of the Upper and Lower Basins are named to recall the site's historic canal functions. They will provide broad open spaces that could be used for casual lawn seating, informal games, or as a seating area for music events. The Upper Basin will be a large, level space that will spill out from the Canal Park and the adjacent grove of trees. A band shell or stage at the northern end of this lawn could be either temporary or permanent, but should have the full electric service needed to host musical events.

The Lower Basin will open off the plaza at the foot of the Overlook Terrace. The gently sloping lawn and pathways will connect to an underpass under the railroad that leads directly to the river's edge at this key location.

The area between the Lower Basin and the Upper Basin is envisioned as a destination playground that will draw families to the James River Park.

This playground will complement Amazement Square as well as other park activities in the basins and along the river's edge.

At the eastern end of the James River Park, a small knoll will rise up above the height of the railroad tracks. A gazebo or other small structure at this location will allow views across the tracks to the river and to Percival's Island. The structure will also be visible from Percival's Island and other parts of the park and will serve as a point of reference and a destination for all parts of the James River Park area.

Implementation Steps

- Seed area in the short term to allow for interim uses such as festivals.
- Site preparation requires negotiation with the railroads and the identification of funds for track relocation, as described under Canal Square.
- Similar to Canal Square, establish a definitive work limit line and the schedule for the CSO/Sewer Interceptor project in this area. Review those plans as they develop to maximize site preparation for the park.
- Complete final design of the park as the sewer interceptor construction nears completion.

2.4 Overlook Terrace

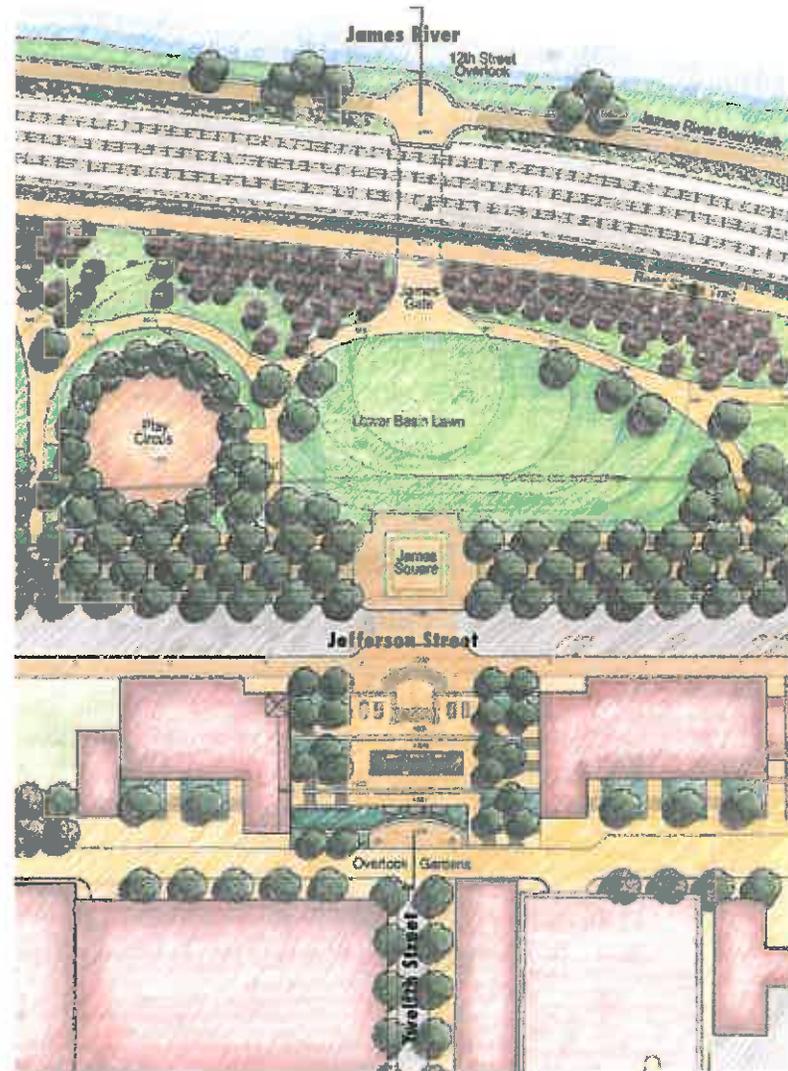
The Overlook Terrace will be built into the steep bluff overlooking the James River Park. The scale and detailing will recall the civic character of Monument Terrace, making a pair of landmarks that define Lynchburg. At the same time, the Overlook Terrace will provide the vital pedestrian connection between Twelfth Street and the riverfront, linking the upper city and the Community Market activities to the James River Park activities.

The Terrace will feature sets of stairs winding through planted landscape beds. Places to sit and rest under the shade of trees will be a key element. Public art could be integrated into the different landings, just as Monument Terrace incorporates war memorials.

New residential loft buildings will frame either side of the Overlook Terrace. A public elevator should be integrated into the massing of one of these new buildings to enhance access up and down the steep slope and to provide handicap access.



Sketch of Overlook Terrace Looking Toward Twelfth Street



Detail of Overlook Terrace Plan

2.5 James Riverwalk

The river's edge is a special zone that should be made more accessible in order to promote water's-edge activities, such as small boating and fishing. This will begin a new era in Lynchburg's riverfront—from an industrial past to a family recreation area in the future. The James Riverwalk also will become a significant link in the regional trail system that extends up Blackwater Creek and across to Percival's Island. While trail connections will be possible along the Jefferson Street Promenade and the upland portion of the James River Park, the river itself is a unique environment that can be experienced and interpreted in many ways as part of the local and regional open space system. The riverbank itself is quite steep and parallels the railroad tracks, with almost 25 feet of elevation difference between the water and the top of the bank.

Crossing the railroad tracks is the critical challenge for gaining access to the river's edge. The plan recommends two underpasses, one at the foot

of Ninth Street and one at the foot of Twelfth Street. The two underpasses will need to be designed as broad, spacious areas that permit views through to the water and create a sense of light and safety for those using them. They should be perceived as bridge underpasses rather than tunnels. The two underpasses will permit emergency and service vehicles to enter into and exit from the Riverwalk.

Bridge overpass structures were explored as an option, however, they were ruled out because such structures would have to rise up approximately 25 feet above the tracks to provide adequate clearance for trains. On the water's edge they would need to descend approximately 50 feet to reach the water's edge. In order to meet handicap accessibility requirements, extensive ramping would be required (350 feet on the land side and 700 feet on the river side) or two elevators would be required. The objectives of emergency vehicular access could not be achieved with overpasses.



Large, open underpasses will lead to the riverfront.



The riverfront edge should be a magnet for different activities.

The Riverwalk will be approximately 12 feet wide with broader overlooks positioned at the point where the street grid would meet the water's edge. Benches, interpretive signs, and elements of public art could be accommodated at these points of rest along the trail. The interpretation could address the historic role of the river for transportation and industry, the history of the *bateaux* and other boats, the impact of the railroads, dramatic flood events, and the fish and wildlife found within the river environment.

Ninth Street will be a landing for small boats, recalling the original ferry landing in this location. The pier structure will extend over the gravel beach and out into deeper water and will be designed around the remnants of the bridge abutments. Interpretive material here could highlight the original ferry and the history of bridges over the river. The pier also will enhance fishing opportunities in the river.

Implementation Steps

- Compete final design of the Riverwalk and implement as funding is available. The river's edge walkway could be an early project that precedes the CSO/Sewer Interceptor project, and could also be separated from one or both of the railroad underpasses. In the latter case, the pedestrian connection from Percival's Island path would extend along the riverfront and end in a space wide enough for a turnaround at the foot of Ninth Street.
- Coordinate with the railroads and/or the US Army Corps of Engineers as necessary.



Sketch of Riverwalk Looking West



Bridges add character to the river as shown in this photograph of the original Ninth Street Bridge.

2.6 Riverfront Activities and River Crossings

Gaining pedestrian access to the Amherst County riverbank will create a sense of place in the riverfront zone, where people can enjoy activities on both sides of the river. In the short term, small boats and water taxis could provide a solution with minimal capital investment while also enlivening the waterfront. Alternatively, a longer route for pedestrians and bicyclists now exists with the new bridge between Percival's Island and the Amherst County side of the river.

Over the longer term, several other possibilities should be considered singularly or in combination to enhance these connections. The Business Route 29 Bridge has adequate space to include a pedestrian sidewalk/ bicycle route with a safety guard on the east side making the loop from Commerce Street to the access drive to the new Amherst County Park. This link will be particularly effective for bicycle access given the distances and the grades up and over the river.

Another possibility is to add a pedestrian/bicycle pathway within the bridge abutments underneath the Route 29 Expressway Bridge. This link is closer to the water and park level and will allow for access points from the south bank, the north bank, and Percival's Island. The structure of the highway bridge is in place and will require the design of the walkway system within this framework.

The third opportunity will be to construct a pedestrian bridge across the river near the foot of Ninth Street where the original covered bridge stood. This bridge will need to be designed to withstand flooding and/or to rise above the height of the 100-year floods. A bridge in this location will need to be designed to the highest standards given the visual prominence of this location at the foot of the Monument Terrace/Ninth Street corridor. Since the bridge could obstruct views of the water, an alternative location offset from the street right-of-way might be considered.

3. STAIRS, BLUFFS, AND OVERLOOKS

As a river city situated along the bluffs, Lynchburg has a series of terraces and rock cliffs that give it a distinctive character. The proposed Upper and Lower Bluff Walks and the series of stairways throughout the downtown will capitalize on these unique features. The two Bluff Walks will parallel the hillside, with the Lower Bluff Walk taking on the character of a narrow urban street and the Upper Bluff Walk characterized by an improved landscape with long-range views out to the hills across the river and west toward the Blue Ridge Mountains. The staircases will extend the cross streets (Tenth Street, Eleventh Street, etc.) with pedestrian routes where vehicular circulation is impossible. Each staircase will exhibit a different theme that complements Monument Terrace and creates a related set of downtown elements.

3.1 Lower Bluff Walk

Between Jefferson Street and Commerce Street, a steep bluff rises up approximately 65 feet, limiting access to the broad, level riverfront area below but providing wonderful views to the river itself, the entire riverfront terrace, and the green hill beyond. Historic brick warehouses are built into the side of the bluff where they can take advantage of the upper-level access to Commerce Street and lower level access to Jefferson Street.

The Lower Bluff Walk will extend for one-third of a mile between the existing and new buildings on Jefferson Street and Commerce Street, creating an entirely new environment in downtown Lynchburg. This new pedestrian-scaled street will be as narrow as 15 feet and no wider than 25 feet. On either side of the Bluff Walk, brick buildings will be two to three stories, giving the space an intimate feeling. The new buildings on the north side of the walk will be two to three stories above the Bluff Walk and approximately seven stories above Jefferson Street as they face the



Lynchburg could be known as the "City of Stairs."



The Lower Bluff Walk will have a narrow, urban character.

riverfront, replicating the scale of the existing warehouse buildings.

The paving materials on the Bluff Walk will be brick and/or unit pavers that convey a sense of pedestrian scale. Some limited access by vehicles will be necessary, however, to access front doors on the north side of the Bluff Walk and to access lower-level parking areas on the south side. Lighting should be pedestrian in scale and should complement the historic warehouse buildings in this area.



Plan of Lower Bluff Walk

The Lower Bluff Walk will extend along the length of the bluff from the Ninth Street Corridor to the new hotel, park, and Welcome Center near Horseford Street. The new J. W. Ould courtyard on Ninth Street will provide a terminus on the west just as the new park and hotel will serve as a terminus on the east. Vehicular access will be primarily from the two ends because of the steep grades above and below the Bluff Walk. Twelfth Street is the only other point where vehicular access should connect between Commerce Street and the Bluff Walk. The design and signage along the Bluff Walk should discourage through-traffic, limiting vehicular access to local businesses, residents and their guests and promoting pedestrian access by many.

The dramatic Overlook Terrace at the end of Twelfth Street will be a key feature along the Lower Bluff Walk. At each cross street, a more modest set of stairs should connect between Commerce Street and the Bluff Walk, and if possible, between the Bluff Walk and the riverfront. The overall effect will be a lively pedestrian zone and a new experience for residents and visitors to Lynchburg.

Implementation Steps

- Acquire land along Lower Bluff Walk route and/or acquire access easements.
- Prepare a detailed site survey to indicate all site structures, building locations, property lines, contours, and spot grades.
- Conduct more detailed design based on the survey to determine the exact location and grading of the Bluff Walk, to detail the necessary construction techniques along the bluff, and to refine the cost estimate.

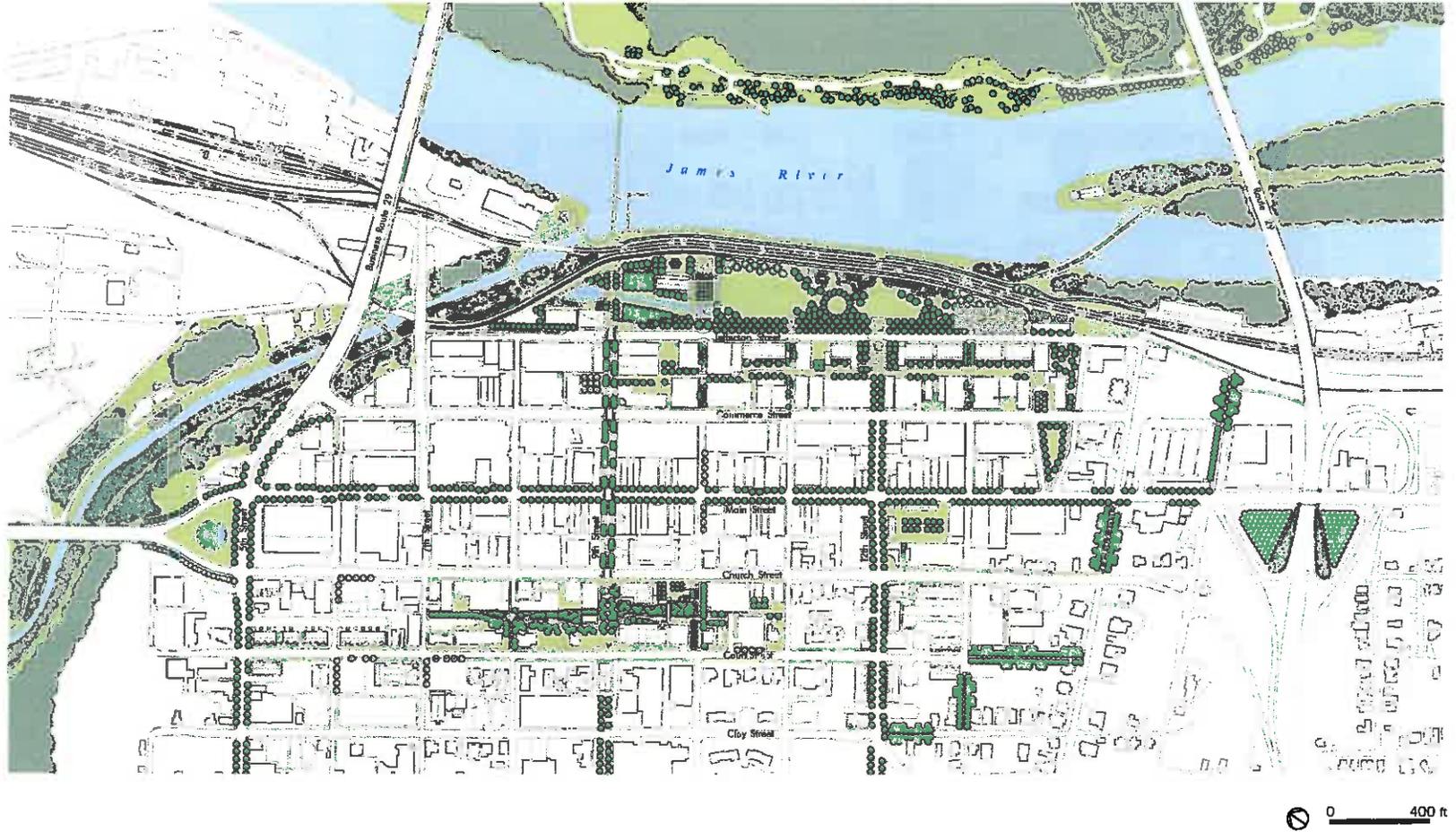


Figure 2. Open Space Framework Plan

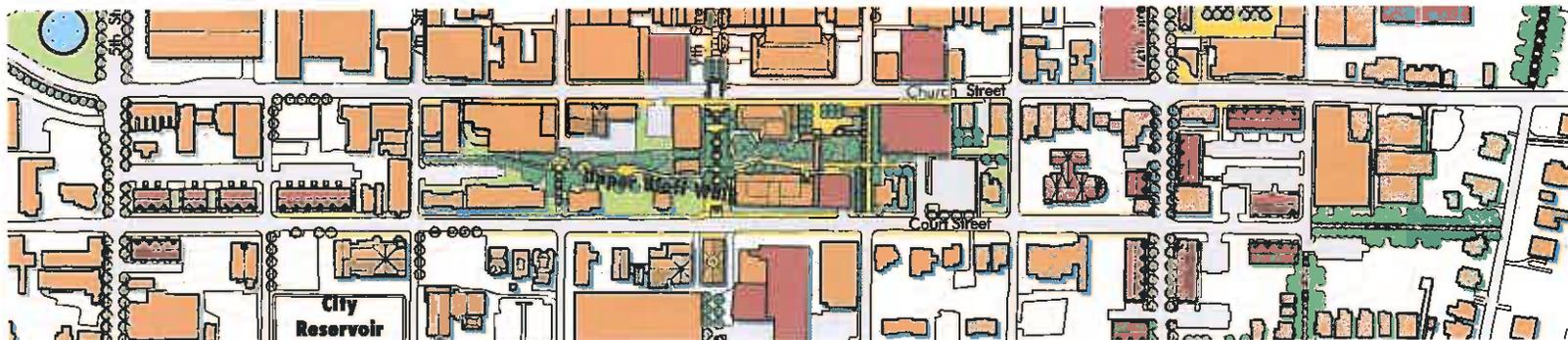


The Upper Bluff Walk offers sweeping views.

3.2 Upper Bluff Walk

The Upper Bluff Walk parallels the Lower Bluff Walk but occupies the high ground between Church Street and Court Street. This one-quarter-mile pedestrian pathway will extend the existing Mr. Elder's Rose Garden walkway, which intersects Monument Terrace. The green and open aspect of the Upper Bluff Walk will provide a distinct contrast to the Lower Bluff, making each one a special destination. Quiet sitting areas and landscaped gardens will pick up on the theme of some of the existing character of the bluff today.

The Upper Bluff Walk will thread its way past the Unitarian Church and continue along the shoulder of the slope to Seventh Street. Overlooks and small seating areas can be incorporated into the landscape, marking key points such as the intersection with the Eighth Street stairway and special views out over the valley. One block south of the Upper Bluff Walk is the City Reservoir, which is still active. This beautiful structure still maintains its original green stone base, ornamental iron railings and sculpture. The return to exposed water and fountains would once again make this waterworks an integral part of the Court House Hill neighborhood.



Plan of Upper Bluff Walk

The pedestrian route will extend east beyond the public elevator tower to connect to the cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street. Continuing on to Eleventh Street, the Bluff Walk will provide pedestrian access to the new public garage built into the hillside on Church Street.

Implementation Steps

- Acquire land along the Upper Bluff Walk and/or acquire access easements.
- Prepare a detailed site survey to indicate all site structures, building locations, property lines, contours, and spot grades.
- Conduct more detailed design based on the survey to determine the exact location and design elements of the Bluff Walk, and to refine the cost estimate.



Reservoir Adjacent to the Upper Bluff Walk

3.3 City Hall Plaza

The small courtyard (parking lot) at the foot of the City Elevator Tower offers a unique opportunity to provide necessary open space downtown, to improve the experience of using the elevator tower, and to make an important visual connection between the Courthouse Square, the Upper Bluff Walk and City Hall. This 10,000-square-foot site lies at the front door to City Hall and should be treated as a special space that reflects the importance of the City. A park at this location also will complement the unique character of the adjacent cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street.

A small white building marks the corner of Church Street and Tenth Street at the foot of the cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street. This historic building should remain as a feature within the plaza and could offer ground-floor uses that complement the open space, such as a small cafe or restaurant. One alternative is to remove the brick building (925



Sketch of City Hall Plaza on Church Street Looking East

Church Street) to allow for a larger park and a direct connection to the cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street. If funds are limited, the other alternative is to retain the building for use as a cafe or other public function to work in conjunction with the park. The park could feature a stepped garden, with shady seating areas and a stairway up to the cobblestone street. With either scenario, the plaza area will complement the historic City Hall building and will be enhanced by the architecture of the adjacent buildings.

The Elevator Tower is a key access element that provides an alternative to Monument Terrace for those climbing the steep slope of the Upper Bluff. The lower-level entrance to the elevator lacks significance and grace and should be redesigned as part of the plaza improvements. At some point in the future, the skin (facade) of the Elevator Tower could be replaced to integrate better with the architecture of the surrounding buildings.

This site currently accommodates approximately 21 parking spaces, which are used by the Juvenile and Domestic Court (7), City Hall visitors (7) and

City Hall staff (7 behind the 927 Court Street building). Although this use is convenient, replacement spaces should be identified for the public and City staff parking to free up this special site for public use. A proposal has been made to site a multi-level parking garage on this site in order to maximize convenience for the expanding Courthouses. However, a garage will overwhelm this site, ruin the views to and from the Upper Bluff, and preclude the opportunity for open space in this key location. Alternative sites for a convenient garage serving the Courthouses and City Hall are on the other side of Tenth Street along Church Street or at the corner of Ninth and Church Streets.

Implementation Steps

- Ensure that the new parking garage is properly sited east of Tenth Street.
- Obtain a site survey.
- Remove red brick building (Alternative 1).
- Prepare design documentation for the plaza area.

3.4 Cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street

The cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street is one of Lynchburg's unique features, celebrating the history and the topography in the City. With a slope of 22%, Tenth Street connects Church Street and Court Street, and is a key feature in the overall landscape of the Upper Bluff Walk, the City Hall Plaza, and the new parking garage on the bluff between Tenth and Eleventh Street. While it may once have been used for carts, it is too steep for automobiles today. Paved with cobbles, the street has a concrete stair along its length for pedestrian use, although it is little used today. In order to become a vital link and an attractive landmark in the downtown, this cobblestone street needs stair and railing improvements as well as interpretive signage that will make the pedestrian passage more enticing.

Implementation Steps

- Obtain a survey of the Tenth Street area.
- Design the improvements to the street within the context of the City Hall Plaza and the Upper Bluff Walk, exploring different planting treatments and stair and rail detailing.



The City Hall Plaza (in foreground) will connect to the cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street.



Photo of Cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street

3.5 Downtown Staircases

Lynchburg should be known as *the City of Stairs*, promoting this distinctive feature as an asset—not a liability. Throughout the downtown, there is a series of stairways climbing the hills of Lynchburg (see Figure 3). The existing stairs can be improved and new ones added to create a set of linked features related to the strong civic image of Monument Terrace and the proposed Overlook Terrace. Each staircase should be unique in its design or theme, drawing from its setting or its context, whether it is Diamond Hill, Courthouse Hill, or the different street endings on the riverfront bluff. A common signage system will provide wayfinding for pedestrians while tying the staircases together into a series of destinations that visitors might seek out. While these minor staircases will not be handicap accessible, the system of existing streets provides handicap access to the top and bottom of each of these locations.



Hidden staircases climb many of Lynchburg's hills.

The Diamond Hill Stairs currently descend from the top of Church Street straight down the hill along the axis of Washington Street, passing through an overgrown thicket and offering wonderful views of the riverfront and a sense of open space in the city. In order to make these stairs more useable as a pedestrian link in the downtown, some improvements are recommended. New stairs will be wider, with a series of landings and a continuous rail. Pedestrian lighting will call attention to this feature in the landscape and will improve safety for those using the staircase in the evening hours. Landscape planting can be informal and natural, but should maintain open views out and allow views toward the stairs from below.

Behind the YMCA, an informal passage could be transformed into a beautiful pedestrian path and staircase up to Washington Street along the axis of Court Street. This new stair will link the Diamond Hill neighborhood into the new residential area along Twelfth Street, and continue up to Courthouse Hill. The pedestrian connections up to Diamond Hill will also be enhanced by another stair climbing from the intersection of Thirteenth Street and Court Street to Clay Street. An existing stair provides the means to climb Diamond Hill along the Clay Street axis.

A number of pedestrian routes now exists between Church Street and Court Street, yet each route should be improved and enhanced. The improvements to Monument Terrace, the public elevator, and the cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street have been mentioned previously. The other route that should be improved is the Eighth Street stairs (adjacent to the Allied Arts Building), and in particular, the upper segment between the Upper Bluff Walk and Court Street.

The downtown's steepest bluff rises up from the riverfront, between Jefferson Street and Commerce Street. Ninth Street, Horsford Street, and Washington Street are the primary means for pedestrians to walk between Main Street and the riverfront area. A new wooden staircase

and bicycle ramp now make it possible to walk from the foot of Eighth Street down to the riverfront and the Blackwater Creek Trail. At the foot of Twelfth Street, the Master Plan recommends a major staircase, the Overlook Terrace, which will echo the significance of Monument Terrace as a civic landmark. To supplement these access points, a series of smaller staircases is recommended at the foot of Tenth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Streets. At the easternmost portion of the bluff, another staircase will connect the high ground at the Corporate Center site to the system of riverfront trails.

Implementation Steps

- Obtain topographic surveys of each location and conduct design studies to determine the exact length and location of each stair, and to refine costs.
- Obtain necessary ownership or easements.



Each staircase could become a unique adventure.

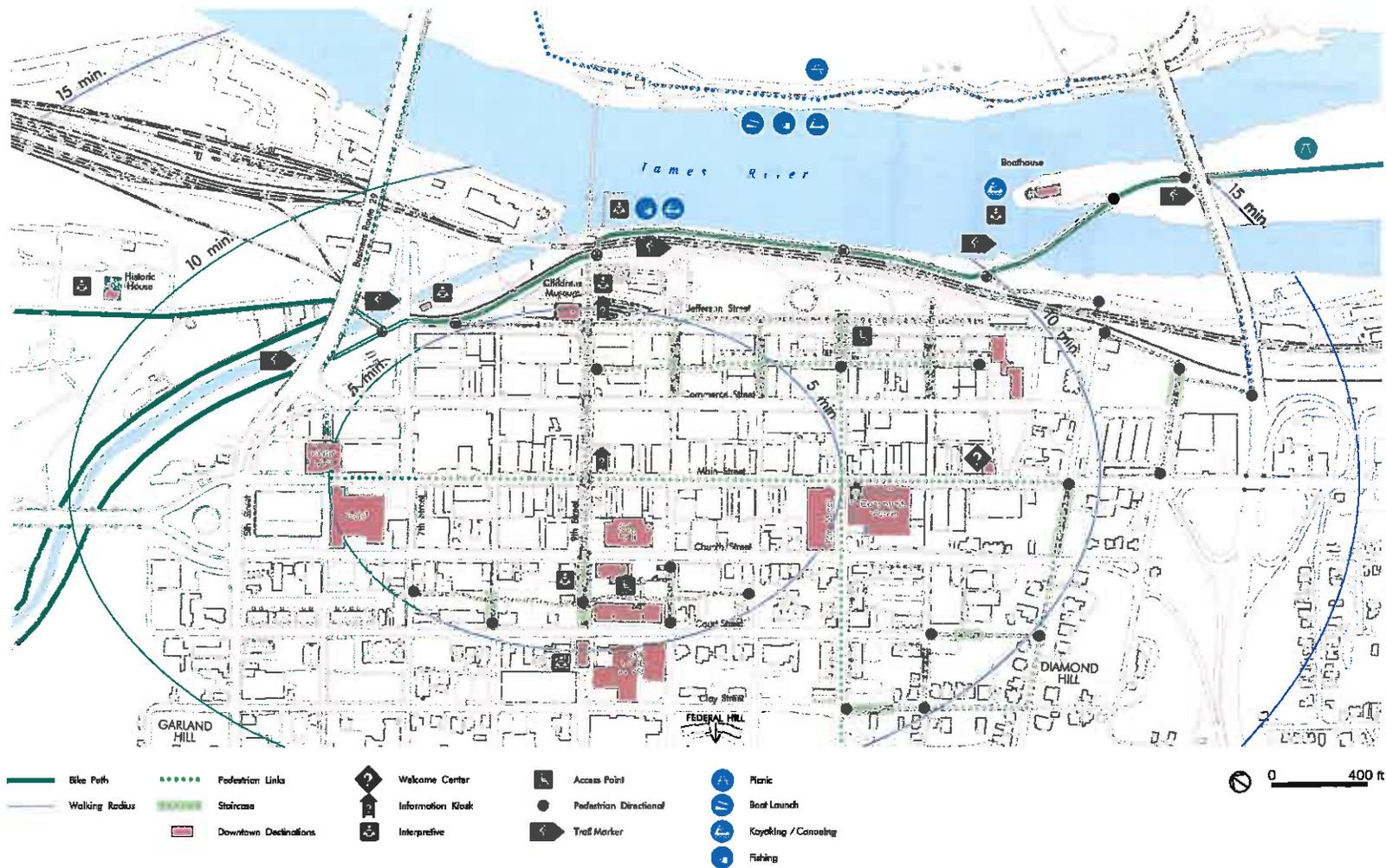


Figure 3. Pedestrian Circulation: Sign Types and Locations

4. VEHICULAR CIRCULATION SYSTEM

During the master planning process, De Leuw, Cather & Company of Virginia conducted a Downtown Circulation Study for Lynchburg. The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of improvements to Ninth Street and Jefferson Street on vehicular circulation in the downtown. The study also identified current routes for internal and cross-town traffic, especially truck traffic, and made recommendations regarding appropriate routes in the future (see Figure 4). The study concluded that downtown intersections operate at an acceptable level under existing and proposed future conditions. Given this, the existing northbound and southbound right-turn lanes on Ninth Street can be eliminated in the proposed street corridor improvements. Developing a suitable truck route across downtown will require short-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions, however. The Appendix includes a series of technical memoranda relating to the circulation issues downtown.

Two-way traffic in lieu of the current one-way system was requested by retail merchants on Main Street to (1) slow traffic, and (2) double their exposure. In addition, stop signs can be used in lieu of traffic lights to prevent speeding through yellow lights and to save the cost of installing and maintaining lights. These are future decisions to be made by City staff (traffic engineer, DPW director, and planning director) in conjunction with businesses and citizens.

4.1 Truck Routes

The objectives of the Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan are to discourage truck traffic along Jefferson Street and Ninth Street, and more generally, to identify the most appropriate truck route across town. Jefferson Street will become the spine of the Riverfront Park, and Ninth Street will become a key pedestrian corridor, especially between Main Street and Amazement Square. The De Leuw, Cather study determined that under existing conditions, most trucks emanating from the Concord Turnpike prefer using this route along Jefferson Street and Ninth Street whether they are eastbound to the Expressway or westbound to Business Route 29. The poor sight distance and lack of signalization at the intersection of Washington Street and Main Street is a major deterrent for trucks turning left to reach the Expressway.

While truck traffic generated by the Riverfront area may decrease over time, the plan acknowledges that businesses along the Concord Turnpike will continue to generate truck traffic for the foreseeable future. The future Route 29/Madison Heights Bypass will provide a better link to the regional highway system for these trucks; however, the Bypass may not be completed for ten years or more.

Short Term

According to De Leuw, Cather, the narrowed travel lanes and other streetscape improvements along Jefferson Street and Ninth Street will deter only a small percentage of trucks and other traffic from this well-traveled route through downtown. Recognizing the need for through-truck traffic in the short term, the new streets need to be designed to accommodate some truck traffic until improvements can be made for more suitable routes. The design plans for the Ninth Street Corridor maintain the primary truck routes through downtown as follows:

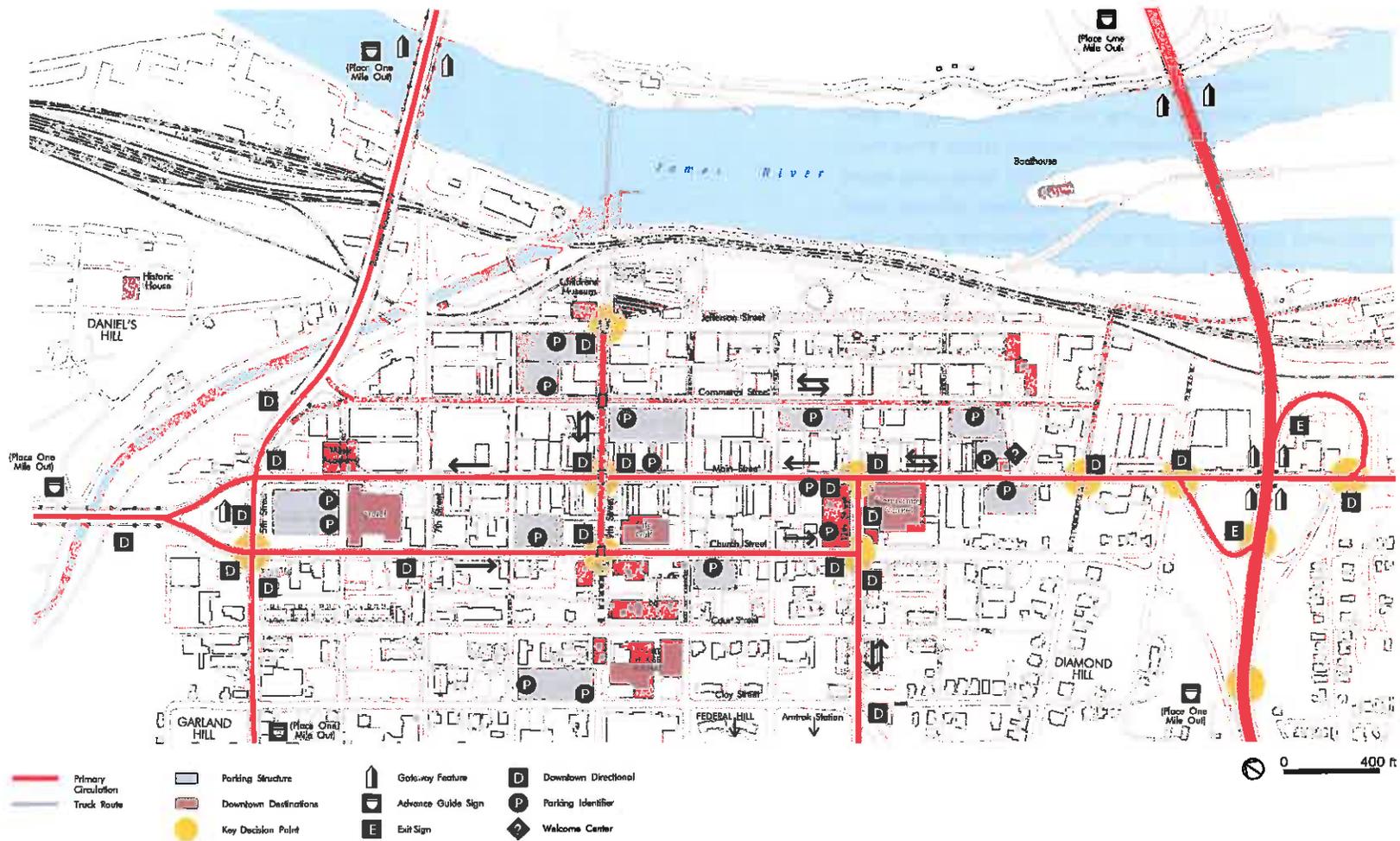


Figure 4. Vehicular Circulation Plan

- The uphill route: A left turn from westbound Jefferson Street onto Ninth Street and then a right turn from southbound Ninth Street (uphill) onto westbound Commerce Street.
- The reverse downhill route: A left turn from eastbound Commerce Street onto Ninth Street and then a right turn from northbound Ninth Street (downhill) onto eastbound Jefferson Street (see Appendix).

Midterm

In the midterm, geometric and signalization improvements should be made to the intersection of Washington Street and Main Street. These improvements will allow better truck turning movements into and out of Washington Street in all directions and will address the poor sight distance along Main Street to the east. By enhancing turning movements at this location, trucks will be less likely to follow their current circuitous routes. With signage and an enforcement program, westbound truck traffic could be directed along Washington Street, to Main Street, to Commerce Street, which was designed as a truck corridor.

Long Term

Ultimately, the installation of a well-designed and efficient truck route will reduce the need for enforcement and will minimize the amount of trucks using well-traveled pedestrian routes in the heart of downtown. Ultimately, the extension of Commerce Street to Washington Street, on its old alignment, will provide the simplest and most direct route for trucks crossing downtown (see Figure 4). Washington Street, which is narrow but has acceptable grades of 11% (Ninth Street is at 12%), will become a direct link for trucks traveling from the Concord Turnpike to the Expressway via eastbound Main Street. For trucks moving west-

bound across downtown, the easiest route will be Washington Street, turning westbound onto Commerce Street and continuing directly to the intersection with Business Route 29. In order to extend Commerce Street, a bridge will be required over Horseford Street due to grade considerations in this area.

Discouraging through-truck traffic through downtown will require a clear signage system and a rigorous enforcement program. All through-truck traffic, which now uses Church Street (eastbound) and Main Street (westbound), should be directed to Commerce Street (with the exception of deliveries). Enforcement of truck prohibitions represents a cost, and the vigor of enforcement may significantly affect the effectiveness of the program. At the same time, the establishment of truck restrictions is a relatively low-cost measure that will improve conditions even if sporadically enforced.

Implementation Issues

- The geometry of Ninth Street has already been revised to accommodate the necessary truck movements.
- Funding should be sought as soon as possible for a signal at Washington Street and ideally for intersection geometry improvements as well.
- Every effort should be made to maintain the option to extend Commerce Street, although this is likely to be a long-range solution.
- Signage should be installed for truck routes and a program of enforcement instituted.

4.2 Other Streetscape Improvements

To complement the new street corridor improvements along Ninth Street, the City should program improvements for Main, Twelfth and Fifth Streets in the future. All of these street corridors function as key gateways into and out of the downtown and should reflect a positive image and attitude about the City. The Ninth Street Corridor is envisioned as a major public space in the heart of downtown, linking key pedestrian destinations along a minor vehicular route. The Main, Twelfth, and Fifth Street Corridors, on the other hand, should be organized and improved to serve as arterial vehicular routes while creating generous and attractive pedestrian routes. If possible, bicycle lanes should be incorporated into the Twelfth Street right-of-way since it connects the downtown/riverfront area directly to the Kemper Street area and surrounding neighborhoods.



Streets corridors should provide elegant gateways from residential areas into the downtown.

In the downtown area, Twelfth Street is a key axis that will link the riverfront, the Overlook Terrace, the Community Market, and residential areas. In general, Twelfth Street should be designed to accommodate one lane of traffic in each direction, bicycle routes, on-street parking, a continuous planting strip for street trees, and a wider sidewalk. At key intersections such as Main Street, left-turn lanes may be necessary in place of on-street parking.

Coming from the south, the Fifth Street corridor has a distinguished character as it climbs the hill passing through neighborhoods with its continuous line of street trees. At the top of the hill, however, this character changes dramatically. Since Fifth Street was realigned to meet the new John Lynch Bridge, this once-thriving commercial street was transformed into a highway that is now a barrier between Garland Hill and downtown.

The objective of the new streetscape improvements on Fifth Street should be to discourage high-speed traffic south of Commerce Street and to facilitate pedestrian character and pedestrian crossings. Fifth Street should be designed with improvements that emphasize its character as a downtown street, which provides a setting for commercial businesses and which allows pedestrians to cross back and forth from Garland Hill and other neighborhoods to the downtown.

While many improvements have been made to Main Street over the years, this important corridor needs to be constantly cleaned and maintained to send a positive message about downtown. Brick sidewalks, new signage, trash cans, benches, lighting and trees should be considered.

Implementation Issues

- Continue the corridor study and community development effort along Fifth Street. Based on this study, prioritize first phase improvements and establish funding.
- Establish funding for Main Street and Twelfth Street improvements and initiate design studies.

5. PARKING STRUCTURES

In downtown Lynchburg, there is a perceived shortage of parking, yet vacant spaces can be observed in many lots. Looking forward, parking is an important factor in redevelopment, since renovation and new construction are often difficult to finance without a commitment of assigned parking spaces. However, it is important to note that new parking garages alone do not revitalize downtowns—residential, retail, entertainment and business activities do. People will be attracted to downtown for these reasons, not for new garages. People don't avoid a desirable area or setting because of tight parking (i.e., people attending Friday Cheers at the Community Market park as far away as Ninth and Commerce Streets). Having said that, new parking must be located carefully to be sensitive to the historic fabric and to the gateway views of the city from the bridges.

The parking study reveals that certain zones downtown have shortages, while other areas have surpluses (see Appendix). The projections for future parking account for all proposed Master Plan land use changes, including new development, renovation and reuse of vacant space, and the removal of surface lots for new construction. New parking spaces are proposed to satisfy demand within each zone, and these parking structures and lots are incorporated into the final Master Plan.

The analysis addresses the relationship between parking demand and parking supply. The parking study also addresses the fact that steep slopes affect people's perception about convenient parking. Similarly, the street environment can affect people's perceptions so that vacant ground-floor buildings or extensive surface parking lots can make a journey seem longer. Shared use of parking, between nighttime and daytime, and between weekday and weekend, is accounted for in the parking generation estimates. The overall goal for downtown is to encourage more active ground-level uses (particularly in retail), renovate vacant buildings, and infill new buildings whenever possible.

The key locations for new parking structures are identified on Figure 5 and the economics and siting issues are discussed as follows.

5.1 Jefferson and Eighth Street Parking Garage

The proposed parking garage at Eighth and Jefferson is a strategic first-phase project that will enhance redevelopment of the J. W. Ould Building, Amazement Square, Riverviews Lofts and the Wachovia Tower. The structure could range from 200 to 675 spaces, and be built into the hillside to minimize visual impact, especially from the John Lynch Bridge and from Amazement Square. Adjacent to Amazement Square, the structure should not be more than four levels. The upper levels should be set back to allow the retail section and parking entry along Ninth Street to stand out. This will provide lower-cost space as an incentive for retail uses in the initial phases.

As an economic model, we have analyzed a prototypic 450-space, above-grade parking garage. In addition, this parking facility has the potential to generate revenue through retail leases at the ground level.



Garages should contribute to the character of the street.

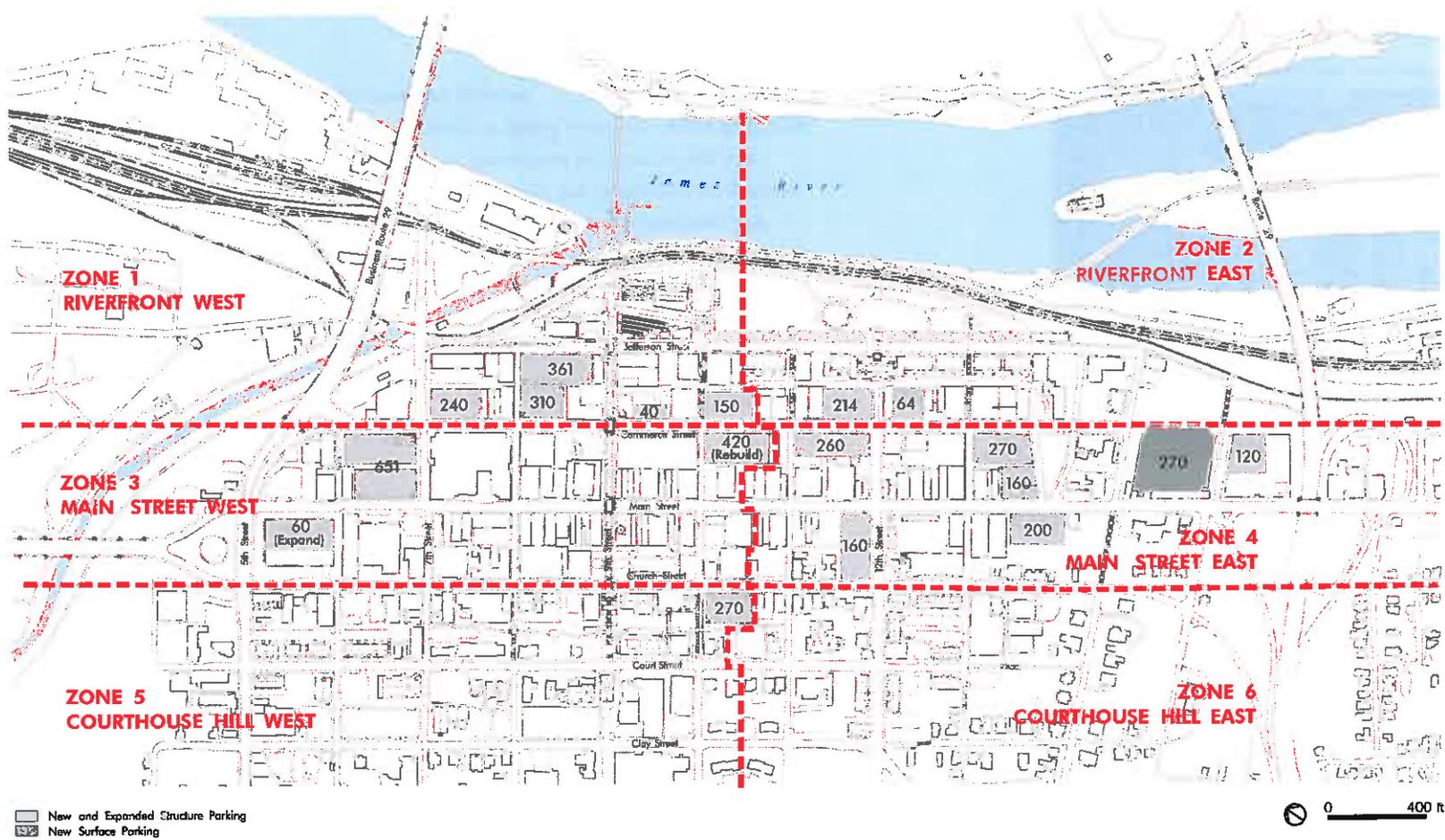


Figure 5. Potential Parking Sites

Program and Operating Assumptions

- Assumes construction by public sector (Parking Authority) using below-market interest rates through financing mechanism such as Industrial Revenue Bonds.
- Estimated development costs of \$10,000 per space, or \$4.5 million with a maximum cost per space of \$13,250 to break even.
- Assumes daily parkers use 35% of spaces, with 65% used by those who contract for parking on a monthly basis.
- Assumes achieving a rate of \$50/month for monthly parking and \$8/day for daily parking to break even or be profitable (current rates are \$40/month and \$3/day).

Feasibility and Economics

- Estimated annual revenue potential of \$358,000 supports a development cost of about \$6 million, or \$13,250/space to break even. (Retail rents at this stage are expected only to cover operating expenses and amortize tenant improvements, not contribute to net operating income.)
- Increasing the proportion of spaces allocated to monthly parking leases will negatively affect the project's financial feasibility. Daily parking is the primary revenue generator.
- If monthly parking rates cannot exceed \$40/month, and daily rates cannot exceed \$3/day, then a higher annual utilization will need to be achieved (90% instead of 70%) to break even.

5.2 Commerce Street Parking Garages

Commerce Street will continue to serve as a major service road, providing good access to a series of parking structures on both sides of the street. On the south side, larger structures can be built into the hillside and connect directly to the back of buildings along Main Street, where parking demand is heavy. On the north side of the street, different types of structures are proposed to provide parking for the residential and mixed uses along Jefferson Street and the Lower Bluff Walk. Approximately 2,800 additional parking spaces could be accommodated in this corridor in a number of new structures that are sited to replace surface parking lots with more efficient use of downtown land. This is a twenty-year goal.

The Master Plan proposes that the existing garage at 1001-1021 Commerce Street (Webb Parking) be considered for redevelopment at some point in the future to maximize the use and the aesthetics of this prime parking site behind Main Street. The current garage contains 250 spaces on three floors, while a newer garage will accommodate 420 spaces on five floors, similar to the adjacent City parking structure.

In order to satisfy the demand from GE Financial Assurance and other offices on Main Street West, the Master Plan proposes a 650-car garage between GE Financial Assurance and the Academy of Music. This structure will replace 180 surface-parking spaces and will allow for street-level retail uses on Main Street and 3½ levels of parking that step up the hillside. Since they will operate at different times of day, the office uses and the Academy of Music offer opportunities to share parking.

5.3 Main Street Parking Garages

Along Main Street, most of the vacant lots are too small to accommodate a reasonable-size parking structure and the existing buildings should be retained to promote the historic character of downtown. The primary opportunities for new parking along Main Street are an expansion of the existing structure adjacent to the downtown hotel and new structures at the east end of downtown where grades drop off near Horseford Street.

The Holiday Inn parking structure was designed for half a deck more of parking, which would add 60 cars in this critical location where parking demand is highest. At the eastern gateway into downtown, two new parking structures can be accommodated on either side of Main Street near Horseford. One of these garages could house the new James River Welcome Center so that visitors arriving in downtown could see an immediate destination, park their cars before entering the heart of downtown, and continue their explorations on foot. The ice rink proposed at Twelfth and Main Streets could hold as many as 160 cars on the lower level if this structure is built at least partially into a hillside.

Along Main Street, it may be possible to remove the back portion of some of the retail buildings to provide parking and service in the center of the block. The facade and valuable retail frontage would remain (see Section 9.8).

5.4 Church Street Parking Garage

To satisfy parking demand generated by City Hall and the Courthouse expansions, a new parking garage is proposed for the 1000 Block of Church Street. This 270-car parking structure will be built into the hillside with four levels, maintaining visibility of some of the historic buildings on Court Street. The site is currently occupied by a vacant office building that will need to be removed. The design of the Church Street structure must respond to the presence of the cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street, exploring opportunities to make pedestrian connections from the various garage levels. This garage would replace the garage that has been proposed next to the City Elevator, providing an alternative location that is larger in size and that preserves opportunities to create a pocket park at the base of the elevator.

5.5 Facade Improvements on Existing Garages

Certain garages in the downtown require aesthetic improvements. These improvements will integrate the parking structures into the character of the surrounding historic buildings, look friendlier and safer, and send a message of pride and care in the downtown. In some cases these improvements are cosmetic, while in others the long-term solution should be redevelopment to maximize the amount of parking spaces while also upgrading appearance. Cosmetic changes involve the replacement of chain link fence with ornamental fence, tree planting to mitigate the scale of garage structures, and the application of paint on concrete and railings, using a palette of colors that is compatible with the brick and wrought iron character of the historic buildings. The key garages downtown requiring these aesthetic improvements include the City-owned garage on Commerce Street, the Webb parking garages on Commerce Street and Tenth Street, on Church Street between Tenth and Eleventh Street, and the YMCA parking garage.

6. GATEWAYS

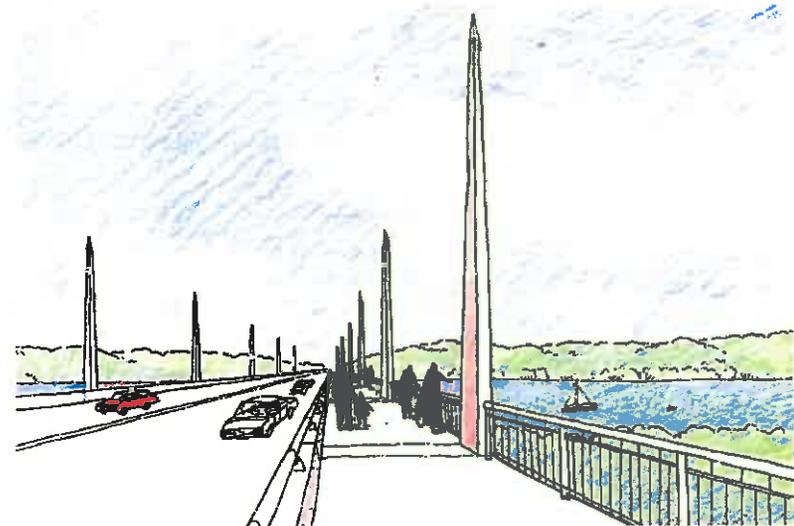
Downtown is experienced from the initial points of entry, along the major entry corridors, and into the heart of downtown. Every aspect of this arrival sequence should be addressed, with special attention given to the first impression created at the gateways. The primary gateway points into downtown are at the Route 29 Expressway exit at Main Street and at the Fifth Street intersection with Rivermont, Church Street, and Main Street. Twelfth Street is a gateway corridor and improvements to this corridor are discussed in Section 4.2. In addition, three bridges are also key elements to the arrival sequence: the John Lynch Bridge (Business Route 29), the Expressway Bridge, and the Rivermont Bridge. Of these bridges, the John Lynch Bridge is the highest priority for improvement given its current lack of character and opportunities for improvement, the vital pedestrian/bicycle link that it will provide, and the views of downtown and the riverfront that it offers. In all cases, the gateway improvements should be planned and coordinated with a comprehensive signage system, which is discussed in Section 7.

6.1 John Lynch Bridge

The John Lynch Bridge provides a dramatic entry into Downtown Lynchburg with views of the river and the historic buildings climbing the hill. The bridge and its roadway (Business Route 29) are designed to highway standards, however, and provide little in the way of character, aesthetics, or a sense of gateway or arrival. The bridge is also highly visible from the downtown and from the riverfront area. The wide cross section of the bridge (75 feet) encourages high-speed travel (in comparison, the Expressway Bridge is only 60 feet wide), yet this traffic needs to decelerate to match the speeds that are appropriate for an urban street such as Fifth Street.

The Master Plan recommends streetscape elements on the surface of the bridge that will dramatically improve its character and its function as a gateway with minimal capital expenditures. Four vehicular lanes of traffic with shoulders will occupy between 50 and 60 feet of the cross section width, leaving as much as 15 feet that can be defined as a pedestrian and bicycle pathway. This pathway will be separated from the travel lanes by a low, landscape barrier system and could also be raised above the roadway level by 6 to 18 inches, if feasible structurally.

This pedestrian/bicycle link will be vital in joining the north and south banks of the James River, until additional bridges are added at the level of the riverbanks. Given its visibility, the bridge should be illuminated with new lights that define the span as a landmark in the City while orienting the arriving visitor and improving safety for pedestrians. These lights should be designed as special features that reflect the historic character of

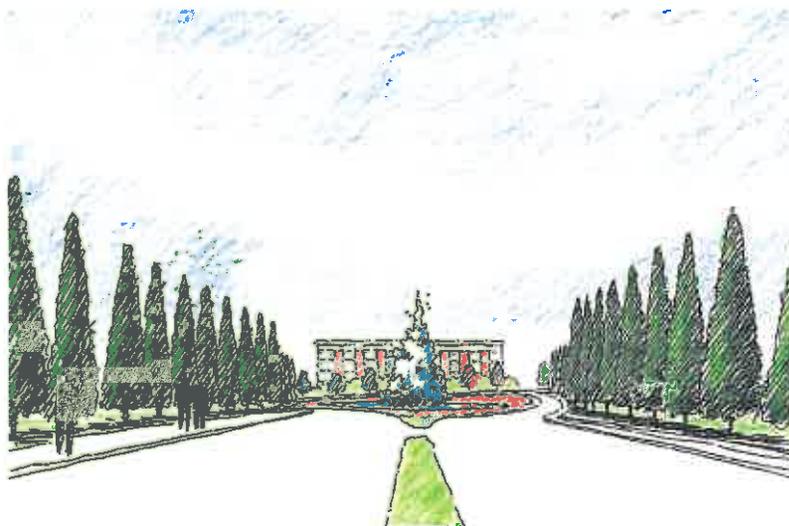


Sketch of Bridge Improvements.

the downtown. Additionally, pillars, columns, or other vertical elements could be added to mark the segments of the bridge that actually pass over water. The “concrete barrier”-style railing should be replaced with open, ornamental, wrought-iron-style fencing to afford James River views for pedestrians and car passengers alike.

Implementation Steps

- Coordinate with VDOT regarding the provision of a designated pedestrian/bicycle lane on the bridge.
- Identify potential state funds for lighting the bridge and replacing Jersey barriers with open railings.



Rivermont Avenue and Fifth Street Gateway Sketch Looking East Toward Downtown

6.2 Rivermont Avenue and Fifth Street Gateway

The primary gateway on the west side of downtown is the intersection of Rivermont Avenue with Fifth Street (Business Route 29), Church Street, and Main Street. Through this gateway pass all motorists on Business Route 29 as well as those arriving from Rivermont to the west (18,000 cars per day). These travelers should have a sense of arrival appropriate for a downtown location, with landscape and streetscape improvements that complement a new signage system.

As mentioned in Section 4.2, Fifth Street should be improved with continuous street trees and more thought for pedestrians walking along the edge of the roadway or trying to cross it. These improvements will be punctuated with a new fountain within the Rivermont and Fifth Street island (“The Morrison Garden”). The fountain must be significant in size, with a vertical water element so that it will be easily visible from the roadway. With a continuation of pear trees on Fifth Street, the point of intersection and arrival at the traffic island will be highlighted with cedar trees that line the entrance roads to the Rivermont Bridge, recalling traditional landscape design elements found in the area. The Rivermont Bridge would benefit from aesthetic improvements similar to the John Lynch Bridge (i.e., pylons, historic lights and railings). A bold move to one lane in each direction would allow for slower traffic, bike paths and wide pedestrian walkways.

Implementation Steps

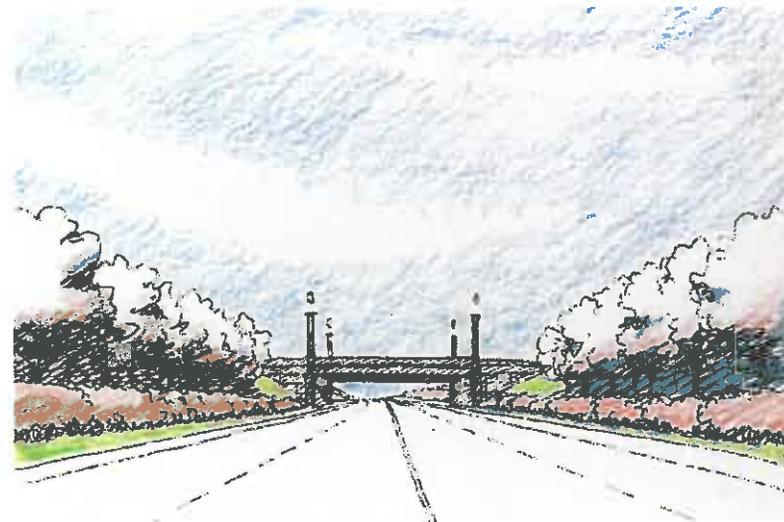
- Coordinate with VDOT regarding improvements in and around Business Route 29 and identify potential state funding.

6.3 Route 29 Expressway Gateway

Landscape design improvements in the area of the Route 29 Expressway exit at Main Street will signal the presence and quality of downtown, complementing the system of advance signs and downtown directional signage. Within the partial cloverleaf at the south side of Main Street, a bold planting design will bring color and beauty to this site. With minimal intervention, two masses of flowering ornamental trees will provide remarkable spring colors and a structured green landscape that signifies downtown. At the Main Street Bridge over the Expressway, vertical elements combined with bridge illumination will call attention to the sense of arrival and the location of the exits.

Implementation Steps

- Coordinate with VDOT regarding funding for highway landscape improvements.
- Identify funding for bridge elements.



Landmark planting and bridge improvements will mark the downtown exit on the Route 29 Expressway at Main Street.

7. SIGNAGE

In conjunction with well-designed gateway features, a signage system clarifies the entrance and arrival sequence for people visiting the downtown. The signage system also highlights key destinations, which are targeted to different user groups. The implementation of a clear and consistent visitor wayfinding system is intended to increase user friendliness, reinforce downtown identity, and attract more visitors to the downtown and riverfront.

Several core principles inform the guideline strategy:

- Clear wayfinding should be provided for the first-time visitor and the local community.
- The system should build awareness and a positive image of downtown Lynchburg and should function as a marketing tool for downtown.
- Historic sites should be promoted and linked throughout the system.
- The sign elements and graphics will reinforce downtown identity and help create a sense of "place."
- The signs and environmental graphics should be unique, attractive, and complement the physical environment, both built and natural.

User Groups

The signage system must consider its audience in order to be effective. The following groups have been identified as the primary user groups or audience, and are ranked in order from least familiar to most familiar with Downtown Lynchburg:

1. Area tourists, especially historic tourism, drawing from nearby regional historic sites.

2. City and regional residents visiting for government business and/or entertainment.
3. Business and commercial users.
4. Employees and workers, especially City Hall and Courthouse.
5. Downtown neighborhood residents.

Destinations and Nomenclature

A list of visitor destinations and public amenities must be agreed upon and approved for inclusion on signage. Final nomenclature, especially destination names, should be reviewed for clarity and strictly enforced to minimize visitor confusion. The signage system is essential for revealing key destinations that would not be immediately obvious, such as the river, and for wayfinding on one-way streets that require circuitous routes.

Information should be restricted to public destinations. It is not recommended that private business, aside from major hotels and transportation centers, be identified on the majority of public signage. Individual commercial enterprises such as restaurants and shops, however, can be listed on the changeable directory maps of information kiosks.

From their cars, visitors should be able to find the general location of major destinations and nearby parking. Major destinations appear on Downtown directional signs, and certain major destinations may appear on advance guide signs and exit signs on the Expressway. Once on foot, visitors are directed to specific locations and to secondary destinations. Secondary destinations appear on pedestrian directional signage and on visitor information kiosks. The following is a suggested list of destinations and information for inclusion on downtown Lynchburg signage.

Major Destinations (Downtown Directional Signage)

- Downtown Lynchburg
- James River Park
- Public parking
- City Hall
- Old Court House Museum
- Amazement Square
- The Academy of Music
- Riverviews
- Hotels
- Courthouse Hill Historic District
- Community Market
- James River Welcome Center
- Garland Hill Historic District
- Diamond Hill Historic District
- Federal Hill Historic District
- Daniel's Hill Historic District/Point of Honor
- Blackwater Creek
- Percival's Island
- Regional routes/downtown egress
- Truck routes

Secondary Destinations (Pedestrian Directional Signage/Visitor Kiosks)

- Restaurants and shopping
- Historic and interpretive areas
- Public transit stops
- Park areas (Canal Park, Overlook Terrace, Upper and Lower Basin Parks, and James Riverwalk)
- Bike trails
- Boat access
- Public parking
- Cinema/Ice Rink
- Historic/interpretive areas
- Scenic vistas
- Public facilities (toilets, telephones, information, police)
- Accessible pathways (wheelchair accessible)

Downtown Identity

The signage system is first a functional wayfinding and information system. As it features prominently on the urban streetscape, however, it also is an opportunity to reinforce the positive aspects of the downtown character. Materials, scale, form, and proportions should be harmonious with other streetscape elements such as lighting, benches, planting, architecture, setbacks, and sidewalk and curb design. Sign graphics themselves can contribute to the overall image—whether the look is utilitarian, historic, or contemporary. It is important to consider all these elements and formulate a "design vision" for the downtown streetscape prior to advancing signage designs. The consistent use of these graphic elements on signage structures will help the user to recognize the signage as a useful information system, and will contribute to the identity of the district. The identity system can extend across the full spectrum of media: printed materials, exterior streetscape, and downtown websites.

Visitor Circulation and Destinations

The vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems for the riverfront and downtown are shown on Figures 3 and 4, respectively. Based on visitor circulation, information needs, and physical context of various site conditions, a series of decision points and identity corridors is identified. From this, a sequence of information has been developed and organized into the following hierarchy of sign types proposed for the district:

- Advance guide signs (arterial)
- Exit signs (arterial)
- Gateway landmarks (combined landscape and graphic feature)
- Downtown vehicular directional
- Street signs
- Public parking identification
- Visitor information kiosk
- Pedestrian directional
- Historical/interpretive signage
- Trail markers

The different sign types are described in the following pages, using examples of each sign and specific criteria for function, audience, content, placement, and design.

7.1 Advance Guide Sign

- Function:** Wayfinding from major roadways such as Route 29 Expressway and Business Route 29; identifies in advance the downtown and associated major destinations within; identifies appropriate exit number; organizes and consolidates information along the Expressway
- Audience:** Vehicular
- Text & Graphics:** Downtown name, exit number, major attractions, route number icons
- Content Criteria:** Permanent destinations; visitor attendance (typically 200,000 visitors per year) and traffic generated warrants this type of sign; typically three attractions per sign; subject to VDOT approval
- Placement Criteria:** Along highway roadside or on overhead structure; typically one mile in advance of exits; 400 feet away from other guide signs
- Design:** Conforms to VDOT standards



Example of Advance Guide Sign

7.2 Exit Sign

- Function:** Clearly identifies correct exit for the downtown and attractions; reinforces association of exit with the downtown
- Audience:** Vehicular
- Text & Graphics:** Downtown name, exit number, directional arrow
- Content Criteria:** Same as Advance Guide sign; subject to VDOT approval
- Placement Criteria:** Located at exit ramps
- Design:** Conforms to VDOT standards



Example of Exit Sign

7.3 Downtown Directional

- Function:** Provides directions to specific attractions and public parking within the downtown; provides direction between Expressway exit ramps and downtown portals and other adjoining destinations
- Audience:** Primarily vehicular visitors; also pedestrian
- Text & Graphics:** Downtown identity header, downtown attractions, parking
- Content Criteria:** Downtown-specific attractions and parking; destinations should be tourist oriented, major traffic generators, or have events that are major traffic generators
- Placement Criteria:** At intersections of exit ramps and arterial streets and along primary downtown access routes; along primary downtown streets where a key decision is involved such as Ninth, Twelfth, Main and Church Streets; located mid-block, or just in advance of turn; located on light poles or freestanding
- Design:** Downtown-specific, incorporating district identity, color, symbol, and typographic palette



Typical Examples of District Directional Signage



Typical Examples of District Street Signs

7.4 District Street Sign

- Function:** Identifies street names; reinforces district identity; increases legibility of street name
- Audience:** Vehicular and pedestrian
- Text & Graphics:** Street name; can also include district name, graphic, or color system
- Content Criteria:** All downtown streets; can include sub-district information such as historic neighborhood name (e.g., Diamond Hill, Court House Hill)
- Placement Criteria:** Intersections, on far side facing approach direction; attachment and poles can be district-specific
- Design:** Utilize highly legible font on contrasting color background



7.5 Public Parking Identification

- Function:** Identifies public parking facility; eliminates confusion for visitors over public versus private parking; can also list nearby attraction(s)
- Audience:** Primarily vehicular
- Text & Graphics:** Standard district-wide parking "P" symbol and color field; identify nearby attractions; operator name

- Content Criteria:** Attractions must be major public destinations; parking symbol "P" to be prominently featured over operator name
- Placement Criteria:** Freestanding or mounted to building or parking structure façade
- Design:** Downtown standard design elements; ideally illuminated for nighttime legibility; can provide "lot full" variable message signage



Typical Examples of Public Parking Identification

7.6 Visitor Information Kiosk

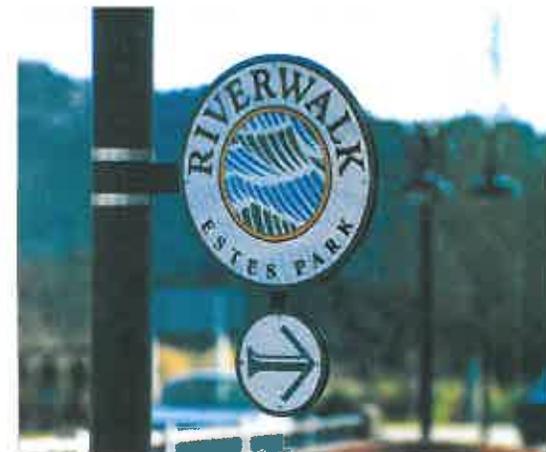
- Function:** Provides downtown information and links surrounding neighborhoods; reinforces downtown identity; provides public transit information; encourages walking and links to other area destinations
- Audience:** Pedestrian
- Text & Graphics:** Downtown identity header; "you-are-here" downtown guide map; larger geographic area map; historic maps; transit system diagram and event poster display cases; allow information access for the disabled; possible historic interpretive panels; interactive systems (CD-ROM, web site access, voice line)
- Content Criteria:** All downtown attractions and public amenities; pedestrian walking routes; location of staircases and overlook/vista points; commercial enterprises (restaurants and shops) can also be listed on changeable directory and keyed to map
- Placement Criteria:** Placed near downtown activity core areas, near intersections of major pedestrian routes, transit hubs, and parking garages
- Design:** Custom design indicative of downtown identity; accessible to the disabled; illuminated, requires power and possible data connection



Typical Examples of Visitor Information Kiosks

7.7 Pedestrian Directional/Trail Markers

- Function:** Provides pedestrian direction to downtown attractions, public amenities, transit options and regional trail systems; encourages walking and linking to other area destinations
- Audience:** Pedestrian
- Text & Graphics:** District identity header; directions to primary and secondary public destinations; displays walking times to destinations; accessible route information
- Content Criteria:** Downtown attractions, public amenities, regional trail systems
- Placement Criteria:** Near intersections of pedestrian routes where kiosks are not required, along longer pedestrian promenades for directional reassurance; use to trail blaze fitness paths
- Design:** Custom design indicative of downtown identity; accessible to the disabled



Typical Examples of Pedestrian Directional Signage



Typical Examples of Interpretive Signage

7.8 Interpretive and Historic Signage

- Function:** Tell a story about site-specific historic or environmental themes to engage and inform the pedestrian
- Audience:** Pedestrian
- Text & Graphics:** Downtown identity header; written narrative accompanied by illustrations and/or graphic symbols incorporated as public art into the environment
- Content Criteria:** Educational information about specific site (history of early transportation and industry; flooding, local birds and wildlife etc); can be linked to other interpretive signage along a walking trail for a complete experience
- Placement Criteria:** Near specific site or feature; sign panels or integrated into the environment such as pavement, walls, or other landscape features
- Design:** Custom design consistent with downtown identity and other interpretive signs; accessible to the disabled including possible use of Braille and/or audio features

8. PUBLIC AND NON-PROFIT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Investment by the public and institutional sectors in new development will serve as a catalyst for private investment. These catalyst projects signal public confidence in the downtown and send a positive message to financial lenders and private investors. Just as importantly, public and institutional projects are often key destinations, drawing people downtown, generating foot traffic, and producing spin-off economic benefits for nearby shops and restaurants. Amazement Square and the Academy of Music will be significant cultural attractions that add to existing resources, such as the City museums and the Community Market. As significant employers and as places to conduct business, City government and County, State, and Federal Courthouses are anchors for the downtown economy. By relocating the Human Services Department into the J. W. Ould Building on Ninth Street, the City is strengthening and expanding this economic base. In some cases, the public initiatives take the form of gap financing, which makes a project financially feasible, as in the case of the Riverviews Artists' Lofts.

8.1 Human Services at J. W. Ould Building

The City has purchased the J. W. Ould Building at the corner of Ninth Street and Commerce Street for use by the Human Services Department. Plans are underway for the building renovation and for the design of a new parking area on the adjacent site to accommodate employee, visitor, and service vehicle parking demand. The project will also include a public courtyard on the Ninth Street corridor, with retail uses planned for the lower level of the building facing onto the courtyard. The entrances to the building will be on Commerce Street and the Ninth Street courtyard.

Improvements to public transit service in the downtown are being considered to serve the needs of Human Services clientele, including the relocation of some routes. The building is scheduled for completion in 2003 and will accommodate approximately 200 employees.

The City is investing nearly \$9 million to renovate the 60,000-gsf building and provide surface parking.

The relocation of this department into the J. W. Ould Building signals the City's interest in downtown and is a substantial investment in its future. This project will benefit from the proposed improvements to the Ninth Street corridor and will serve as a catalyst for other development along the corridor and in the riverfront area.



Lower Ninth Street will connect new developments to the river.

8.2 Amazement Square

Amazement Square is a multidisciplinary, hands-on children's museum that will open its doors in early 2001. Also known as the Rightmire Children's Museum, the facility is located in the historic J.W. Wood building along the riverfront at the corner of Ninth and Jefferson Streets. Amazement Square will enliven this key corner, anchor the lower Ninth Street corridor, and serve as a gateway into the James River Park. Annual attendance is estimated at 30,000 to 50,000 people. Programmed outdoor exhibits and activities at Amazement Square will complement the civic open space in the James River Park.

Amazement Square will provide the family entertainment spark that downtown needs and will serve as a catalyst project for private develop-



Amazement Square Children's Museum is on the riverfront.

ment, such as family-style restaurants, shops, and other entertainment. As the first cultural institution for children in the six-county region, Amazement Square will play an important role in the lives and the life-long learning of children in this area. In addition to regional needs, a primary goal is to serve inner-city children and to complement the public school curriculum. For the past two years, the Museum has provided its surrounding communities with outreach programs and an annual multicultural festival for children. Amazement Square has been designed to enrich the lives of children of all backgrounds through eight educational exhibits and programming opportunities that will inspire, excite, and stimulate each child's potential.

The special events programming, changing exhibits and the permanent facility will become a significant attraction that will draw schoolchildren and families to downtown Lynchburg. On weekends, Museum visits can be combined with other downtown activities such as recreational use of the James River Park and trails, and shopping and dining in local establishments. Because of the off-peak use of cultural facilities, parking can be shared with adjacent office uses. A bus drop-off area will be necessary, especially for school buses, and should be designed to address children's safety at this busy intersection and to accommodate adequate bus turn-around and stacking.

The project was first conceived by the Junior League of Lynchburg in 1992 and evolved into an institution with a volunteer board of directors and a full-time executive director. The implementation of the project has involved a concerted effort by the board, the executive director, and hundreds of volunteers over an eight-year period. The funding for the project has come from private individuals, foundations, corporations, and members of the board of directors. The Museum has raised more than \$5.2 million of its \$6.6 million goal.

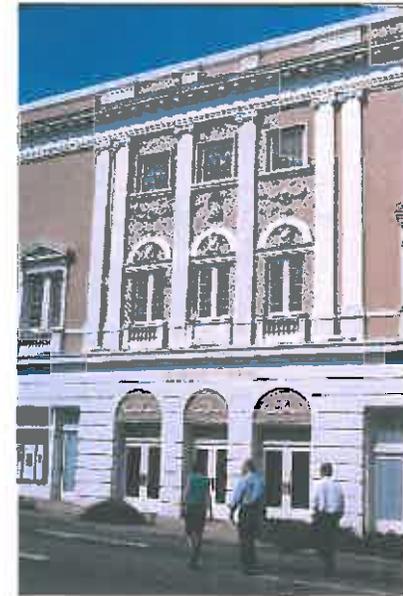
8.3 The Academy of Music

The Academy of Music Theatre is a classical-style building, constructed in 1905, that is listed on both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The Academy and the former City Auditorium (Main and Twelfth Streets) are the only remaining historic theaters on Main Street, where there once stood five theaters. Major plans are underway for its restoration as a multipurpose facility with the capacity to seat 850 people. In addition to performing arts productions, the facility will be suitable for receptions, conferences, and other community functions. The capital budget for the theater restoration is \$9 million. In addition, \$5 million is budgeted for a new lobby and restoration of the former Commonwealth Gas Co. building, which will house support facilities for the Academy. Plans call for Sixth Street to be closed between Main Street and half-way down the block towards Commerce Street, provided underground utilities can be relocated. This will allow the linking of the Commonwealth Gas Co. building to the Academy building with a new glass-enclosed lobby and outdoor garden space. With the recent purchase of the Price-Clements buildings on Commerce Street and Sixth Street, the Academy has nearly full control of the block, which will allow them flexibility for future expansion. The former Price-Clements building will become the Arts & Education building, including a "black-box" theater with a budget of \$1 million. Located on the western end of Main Street, across from the Holiday Inn Select, the Academy will become a major regional attraction for the downtown and an important anchor on the Main Street corridor.

The Academy of Music Theatre, Inc. (AMT) is a non-profit organization that has an executive director and a board of trustees. The board was formed in 1995 and the executive director was hired in September 2000 to (1) complete the capital campaign, (2) begin the restoration efforts and (3) open and operate the theatre. AMT, Inc. has long advocated the revitaliza-

tion of the Academy as a community center for the performing arts and is moving closer to its goal with receipt this year of a million-dollar gift and the selection of its executive director. The Academy has conducted extensive independent research, including a three-part feasibility study conducted by AMS Planning & Research, a well-respected arts consulting organization. In addition, the Academy hired National Community Development Services (NCDS) to explore fund-raising capability in the Lynchburg region and conduct preliminary economic analysis.

The AMS study concluded that sufficient market support exists in regional Lynchburg to justify the renovation of the facility (target area population: 306,152). NCDS concluded that significant regional fundraising potential also exists. The various reports note that a key component in the support of such projects is state and local government support, either as a capital cost contribution or as an operating subsidy. To date, the City has donated \$104,000 in CDBG funds (FY 1996-FY 2000) and \$269,000 (FY 2000) through the donation of a City-owned building. The State of Virginia has donated \$575,000 between 1997 and 2000. The Academy of Music's board has recently announced the "Show Me!" capital campaign by committing to \$2 million in cash and pledges over the next five years. State and federal tax credits are estimated to yield nearly \$3 million when the project is



The Academy of Music will anchor the west end of Main Street.

complete in 2003. Foundation participation is estimated at \$3.5 million and public funding is estimated at \$1.5 million. The board has issued a \$5 million capital campaign challenge to the region.

Other localities in Virginia and throughout the nation have contributed significantly to cultural and performing arts facilities. Indeed, many of the most vibrant downtowns are in cities where support for the arts is institutionalized and consistent, often in the form of dedicated tax-revenue streams or other similar policy mechanisms. In certain localities, the municipality even owns and operates the facility. Examples of government contributions to performing arts centers in Virginia are listed below.

Table 1. Summary of Typical Funding for the Arts

Locality	Facility	Local Donation	State Donation	Total Budget
Hampton	American Theatre	\$750,000	\$50,000	\$2 million
Hampton	VA Air & Space Center	\$19.4 million (bond)	\$5 million	\$29.7 million
Harrisonburg	Court Square Theatre	\$1 million* (loan)	\$0	\$2 million
Hopewell	Beacon Theatre	\$1.3 million	\$450k	\$4 million
Norfolk	Chrysler	\$6 million (bond)	\$6 million (bond)	\$12 million
Norfolk	Harrison Opera	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$10 million
Norfolk	Wells Theatre	\$2 million (bond)	\$.5 million	\$3.5 million
Portsmouth	Children's Museum	\$6 million	\$0	\$6 million
Richmond	Carpenter	\$500,000	\$0	\$12.5 million
Richmond	Theatre IV	\$240,000	\$240,000	\$2.3 million
Roanoke	Center In the Square	parking garage	\$4.1 million	\$8.9 million
Virginia Beach	GTE Amphitheater	\$10.7 million (bond)	\$0	\$17.5 million

*\$500,000 of the loan was from the Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

Source: City of Lynchburg

Clearly the renovation and active programming of the Academy is consistent with the objectives of this plan and with the fundamental economic strategy described in this chapter. First, it will attract a regional audience to downtown Lynchburg, which is demonstrated by the AMS survey research and interviews. Second, it will reinforce Lynchburg as a visitor destination. Third, it productively uses a highly visible historic building and, fourth, it provides an activity center in an area that is largely dormant after dark, but which offers supporting adjacent uses, including the hotel, restaurant, and nearby parking.

A broad-based study conducted by the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies in 1990 established some useful planning factors to estimate the benefits of non-profit arts organizations. For cities such as Lynchburg with populations of less than 100,000, local spending by non-profit arts organizations had the following impacts (per \$100,000 of spending and adjusted to Year 2000 dollars):

- 4.61 jobs
- \$101,357 in additional personal income
- \$2,817 in local government revenue
- \$4,443 in state government revenue

AMS has estimated the operating budget of the Academy at \$1,271,500 per year. Applying this budget to the above factors yields the following ballpark estimate of the likely impact of the Academy:

- 59 jobs
- \$1,288,754 in additional personal income
- \$35,818 in local government revenue
- \$56,493 in state revenue

According to the NCDS study, for every dollar spent on a theater ticket, \$3.10 is spent in collateral goods and services. Therefore, with a \$29.00 ticket, a patron will make purchases of parking, meals, lodging, etc., of over \$90. A performance drawing 850 people means a primary economic impact of \$76,500.

Other benefits outlined in the NCDS study include:

- The Academy will serve as a catalyst for other economic development by increasing downtown sales volume by 30 to 50%, increase property upgrades by 30 to 50%, decrease downtown vacancy rates by 20 to 30%, increase tax revenues by 10 to 20%, and be a trigger for over \$35 million in new construction in the downtown area.
- An anticipated 300,000 visitors are expected to experience the Academy by 2006, generating over \$25 million in projected new revenues. This means over \$1.5 million in tax revenues will be created for the renovation of the downtown area.
- By providing over 120 annual events and 50 annual education outreach programs to regional schools and colleges, student test scores will be increased and inner city crime will be lowered.

Table 2. NCDS Impact Study Findings

2001	Year 1	Construction Capital Investment Impact	\$ 5,045,500
2002	Year 2	Construction Capital Investment Impact	25,905,250
2003	Year 3	Construction Capital Investment Impact	6,877,500
		9 FTE Jobs with total payroll of \$390,300 annually yields \$29,550 in deposit potential and personal expenditures of	219,323
		Maintenance Impact After 2003 Per Year	315,855
		10 FTE Jobs in community with total payroll of \$468,360 annually yields \$34,460 in deposit potential and personal expenditures of	263,188
		Optional Impact Per Year	
		Ticket Revenues and Per Diem Revenues	4,568,228
		Classes/Rental Revenues	279,035
		Total Impact	\$43,473,879

8.4 Riverviews Artist Lofts

Riverviews Artist Lofts is a project that has been planned over the last several years and is currently seeking financing. Located in the historic Craddock Terry building, the renovated structure will include 63,700 gross square feet of mixed residential, studio, and retail spaces. Located at the corner of Ninth and Jefferson Streets, this housing will further enhance the lower Ninth Street corridor and will contribute to the critical mass of activities in this area, including Amazement Square and the Human Services Department in the historic Hill Brothers building. The lofts will have views over Canal Square in the James River Park and will provide activity in this key gateway area to the park.

The top four floors of Riverviews include 36 residential units with a net rentable area of 29,140 square feet. Units range in size from 390 to 1,450 square feet and average 809 square feet. Proposed rental rates at the start of the five-year compliance period average \$0.60 per square foot on the third floor to \$0.63 per square foot on the sixth (top) floor of the building. Rental rates vary by location within the building (e.g., upper floors and river views command the highest rental rates). Of the 36 dwelling units, 22 are currently reserved with refundable deposits.

The lower three floors will include ground-floor retail, studios, performance space, gallery, catering business, kiln, and foundry. According to the project's current pro forma, annual rental rates for the commercial spaces will range from \$6.00 to \$8.25 per square foot.

Parking for Riverviews should be shared with nearby office uses to the extent possible and should be incorporated into the proposed garage on the opposite side of Ninth Street. Additional parking can be secured through the use of a resident-only parking sticker program on portions of Jefferson Street and the nearby side streets.

The project's developer estimates total development costs of \$4.5 million, or \$98/square foot for income-generating space. The use of historic tax credits is expected to reduce total development costs by approximately \$1.1 million. Financing is expected from multiple sources, including the City's Industrial Development Authority (IDA), which has committed a \$600,000 loan to support this landmark project. The project may still require more than \$100,000 to close the financing gap between sources and costs. If downtown residential development in this location is to be realized, that gap must be closed through additional private investment and/or credit enhancements from the City.



Riverviews Artists' Lofts will occupy the historic Craddock Terry building.

8.5 Community Market

The Community Market is an essential element of downtown Lynchburg and occupies an important gateway location at the corner of Main Street and Twelfth Street. The Market features outdoor shade structures and an open paved area for a farmer's market, as well as an indoor component on the ground floor of the adjacent Armory Building. Seventy-five vendors operate within the Market, with 45 indoor stalls, 23 outdoor stalls, and 10 permanent stores. These locations are in great demand as evidenced by the waiting list for 20 new businesses. At the Market, one can find a variety of homemade crafts, food and other local products, which are available from Monday through Saturday.

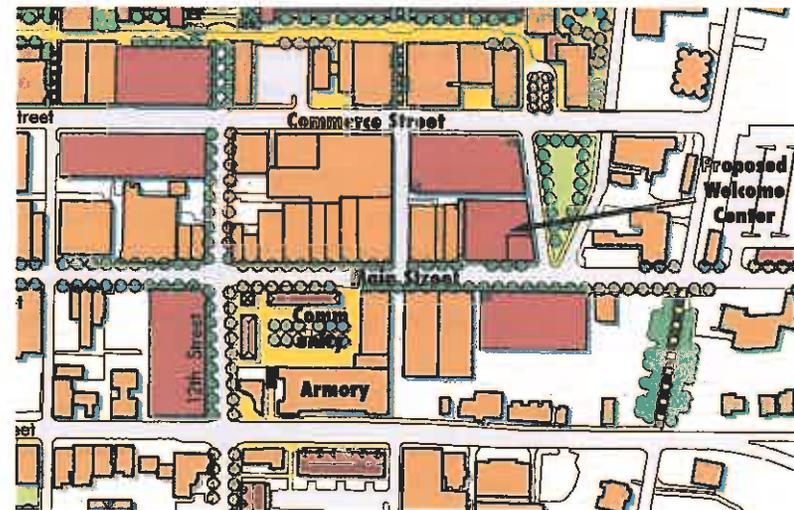
Every year, the Community Market hosts over forty-five special events, and leases the Armory for dozens of activities (sports events, teen dances, etc.). It is estimated that over 300,000 people visit the Market/Armory each year, generating over \$2 million in sales for the City.

In the future, the Community Market area could be upgraded to move the shade structures to the edge of Main Street, allowing the trucks to back up within the paved area and customers to buy produce from the sidewalk. This reorganization would result in a more multi-purpose plaza area that could also be used for festival gatherings and other programmed events when the outdoor stalls are not in use.

Below the plaza area is a vacant basement parking area that could be upgraded for use by the Community Market. An architectural study should be conducted to explore the feasibility of this use and to explore the best locations for both pedestrian and vehicular access.



The Community Market is a tremendous draw for downtown.



Detail Plan of Area Around Community Market

8.6 Central Virginia Criminal Justice Academy

In 1994, the Central Virginia Criminal Justice Academy (CVCJA) relocated to downtown Lynchburg by leasing a portion of the City Armory located at 1200 Church Street. Prior to this, CVCJA leased space from the Ramada Inn on Odd Fellows Road. They now occupy the second floor of the Armory for offices and classrooms and use the gymnasium on the first floor on an as-needed basis. This gym is shared with various community groups throughout the year. There are six full-time staff under the direction of the Executive Director. CVCJA hires on average five visiting faculty per week to teach classes. Approximately 700 students attend each year and stay an average of two weeks for various types of training. Some students reside in commercial lodging located throughout the City during their visits. Parking is provided at 1313 Main Street in the City-owned parking lot adjacent to the former Piggly Wiggly building.

CVCJA is interested in leasing dormitory-style housing in one of the downtown buildings to allow students to be closer to their classrooms and to prevent the need to rent commercial lodging in remote areas. The City is working with a private developer to provide housing on the upper floors of the James T. Davis building (1225 Main Street). CVCJA students, staff and faculty are a positive addition to the downtown, adding life to the streets and supporting downtown businesses.

8.7 Downtown Center

Adjacent to the Community Market, a small structure occupies the corner of Twelfth Street and Church Street. In recent years, this building has served as the Lynchburg Visitor Center, which is operated by the Chamber of Commerce, and as the offices for Lynch's Landing, Inc. Next year, the Visitor Center may be relocated to the Kemper Street Train Station, however.

The 2,000-gross-square-foot building could be renovated into a Downtown Center, which could serve as the administrative office for Lynch's Landing and the Downtown Executive Director, and as a community meeting room. From this location, basic downtown, riverfront and historic district information and literature also can be distributed to visitors.

The back facade of the building should be redesigned to present a public face to the Community Market outdoor area. This redesign includes new signage, display windows, and public entry. The stronger connection between the market area and the Downtown Center will make it easier for visitors to use, supplementing the current access on Church and Twelfth Streets.

8.8 James River Welcome Center

The James River Welcome Center should be located in a prominent position near the gateway to Downtown. This facility will complement the City's recently relocated Visitor Center. The James River Welcome Center will be focused on downtown and the riverfront, providing maps, brochures, historical information, downtown business directories, and information about festivals and other programmed events.

An ideal location for the Welcome Center is along Main Street just beyond the Horseford Street intersection. The Welcome Center could be incorporated into a parking structure at this gateway location where visitors first arrive into downtown from the Route 29 Expressway exit ramps. Visitors will be encouraged to park, explore the Welcome Center and then continue on foot to downtown destinations. From this strategic location, visitors will have easy access to the Community Market and other shops along Main Street, down the bluff to the James River Park and connecting trail systems, or up the staircases to visit the historic downtown neighborhoods such as Diamond Hill.

Once Commerce Street is reconnected to Washington Street, a new downtown park adjacent to the Welcome Center will provide a place to rest, read over material, and orient oneself before beginning walking tours or other excursions. The nearby hotel and restaurants at the Bluff Walk Center will also enliven this area of downtown and will help bridge the grade differences on the bluff.

8.9 The Old Court House Museum and Other City Museums

The City owns the historic Court House building on Court Street at the top of Monument Terrace, and uses this facility to exhibit the City Museum collection. The City has contemplated reorganizing the collection to take advantage of a building on lower Ninth Street, closer to the James River Park. One proposal is to use the Old Court House Museum to interpret local political and civic history, while expanding into the Ninth Street building to exhibit interpretive material related to the riverfront and its role in transportation and industry.

The City may build a fire-fighter museum at the Kemper Street Station and has discussed the possibility of a Tobacco Museum in the Riverviews Museum on Ninth Street. The interpretive Tobacco Museum could describe the importance of tobacco in the economic development of Lynchburg, tracing its path from agriculture, to warehouse, as a source of jobs, and transport along the James River canals and later railroad systems.

The City Museum operates Point of Honor, located across Blackwater Creek in Daniels Hill Historic District. Plans are underway for a covered bridge to connect the Riverfront to Daniels Hill, allowing direct pedestrian access.



The Old Court House anchors the top of Monument Terrace and the Ninth Street corridor.



Detailed Plan of Court House Hill

8.10 Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (J&DR) is currently located on the main floor of the Monument Terrace Building on Church Street. The J&DR Court, Clerk, and Court Services Unit will move to a newly constructed facility in 2005. The new facility will be built between the present School Administration Building and the Public Safety Building on Court Street. Long-term plans are to link this building with a secure tunnel to the new Regional Jail to the south and the Circuit Court to the north.

To accommodate needs through 2010, the projected floor area for the Court is 31,100 gross square feet including three courtrooms. Funding for the J&DR District Court project is pending. Once the Court moves out of the Monument Terrace Building, this building could be used for the expansion of City Hall offices.

8.11 General District Court

The General District Court is located on the main floor of the Public Safety Building on Court Street. The Court will expand in this location, adding an additional story, or move south toward Clay Street. This next planned expansion is scheduled for 2005 at the earliest and will provide one new courtroom for a total of three in the facility, as well as additional Clerk's space and a new Police Staff entry facing Ninth Street. The Public Safety building will be connected physically to the new construction for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court so that the two courts can share a common lobby and holding cells.

8.12 Circuit Court

The Circuit Court is scheduled for the addition of a fourth courtroom in 2006. The addition to the Courthouse will be constructed in the parking lot adjacent to the present building on the north side of Court Street. The projected floor area is 8,000 gross square feet at the main level with secure parking below. The existing secure parking at the ground-floor level will be converted to the Clerk's record storage. Plans call for a new two-story lobby for the Clerk of Circuit Court to provide a handicap access via elevator from Court Street. The new lobby for the Circuit Court will face Monument Terrace.

Parking for the Circuit Court and other courthouses should be accommodated in a new parking structure between Tenth Street and Eleventh Street. This parking structure would replace an existing vacant building and is ideally located to meet parking demand at the courthouses as well as City Hall. The four-level structure will be built into the hill so that the upper level will meet the level of the Upper Bluff Walk allowing pedestrian connections across to the courthouses and Monument Terrace. Additional pedestrian connections could be made from each level of the garage to the adjacent cobblestone-surfaced Tenth Street, bringing new life to this unique historic feature.

8.13 U.S. District (Federal) Court

The US District Court is currently located in a building on Main Street, but the lease expires in July 2003. The Court is actively involved in selecting a downtown site on which to build a new Federal Courthouse.

Projections for the year 2003 call for a total floor area of 37,744 gross square feet for US District Court, Bankruptcy Court, Probation Office, Pre-trial Services, US Attorney, US Marshal, US Trustee, and General Services Administration (GSA) space.

Three sites have been explored: the parking lot at Church and Ninth Streets, the 1100 block of Main Street, and the 1100 block of Court Street. Each site has been reviewed for financial and design feasibility. The Court Street location, currently owned and occupied by the Lynchburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority (LRHA), appears to be the most feasible site and negotiations are underway for its purchase. The block includes a historic school building now occupied by LRHA and parking lots. Plans are to renovate the building to meet the Court's needs and add an adjoining structure. A new courthouse at this location would greatly improve the Twelfth Street gateway into downtown.

8.14 Redevelopment of Former Industrial Sites

Outside of the Central Business District, to the east, are former industrial sites on the riverfront that the Lynchburg Foundry occupied for nearly a century. These properties, while out of Sasaki's scope of services, are important for the City to explore in the future for redevelopment opportunities.

In 1995, Intermet Company (formerly named Lynchburg Foundry) closed its operations on the riverfront and in 1996 demolished all of its foundry buildings situated between the Concord Turnpike and the CSX railroad tracks. The six-acre site was then filled and seeded and is now a flat, grassy field. Recent discussions have taken place between the City and Intermet exploring the possibility of City purchase or lease of the property. Citizens have expressed interest in seeing the land redeveloped for recreational purposes and/or festivals. As the Riverfront Park between Ninth and Washington Streets is developed, it may no longer be suitable for high-impact festivals such as the Fair by the James. The foundry site is a classic "brownfield," which, if developed, would require at minimum environmental assessment of contaminants. The property is currently assessed for \$65,300. Intermet also owns a narrow piece of land directly across the Concord Turnpike (1.75 acres) adjoining the James River. A simple pedestrian bridge from this site to Percival's Island should be considered, which would allow direct access to the island without backtracking to the existing bridge which is located over a half-mile away.

Directly west of the foundry site is the Lynchburg Public Storage Warehouse property, formerly owned by Intermet and then Campbell Brothers salvage company. The property was purchased in 2000 at auction for \$53,000. The owners plan to use the buildings and

grounds for storage leasing (indoor and outdoor). There are three metal structures and one brick structure on this two-acre site, totaling 24,436 square feet. The buildings are in fair condition and if sold in the future would best be used for commercial riverfront activities (i.e., kayak, bike, or raft rentals). Alternatively, given that the structures have little architectural or historic value, the buildings could be demolished for additional riverfront recreational use and/or parking.

Further west along the Concord Turnpike is the Antique Building Products site. This is 3.3 acres and has a two-story brick structure built in 1899 containing 51,110 square feet. The property is assessed at \$179,200. Should the property become available for sale or lease, this structure should be preserved and used for commercial riverfront activities in the future, similar to those listed above. In addition, this could serve as an office building such as that renovated by Craddock Cunningham Architectural Partners on Jefferson Street. Residential lofts would be an appropriate reuse of this structure as well.

The last piece of riverfront property before reaching the railroad crossing to Washington Street is the Ferebee-Johnson Company site. The property straddles Concord Turnpike, where the portion along the James River encompasses approximately 1.5 acres and one small structure. On the other side of Concord Turnpike is a 0.5-acre site that contains a two-story brick structure of 27,156 square feet, built in 1905 and assessed at \$116,100. Ferebee-Johnson is a long-term occupant of the riverfront and is not expected to relocate, but were this to occur, the property would be best suited for reuse as riverfront activity, office and/or residential use.

9. PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

A number of specific project initiatives were identified during the planning process. General economic testing has been conducted for a selected group of these catalyst projects to establish overall feasibility, to identify the expected economic benefits to the City, and to outline the extent to which public participation is required for each project. These projects include a parking garage on Jefferson and Eighth Streets, an ice-skating rink/family recreation center, a multi-screen cinema, and several hundred units of housing in the form of loft conversions and new construction. Program assumptions and implementation strategies for catalyst projects are highlighted below.

The planning team notes that it is important to distinguish between marketability (i.e., the amount of market demand for a project), financial feasibility and economic benefit. Marketability is defined as the degree to which various factors (e.g., population expansion, and employment growth) will drive *demand* for certain real estate such as housing or office space. In other words, how much market is available to *support* such uses. Financial feasibility—from a developer's perspective—concerns itself with the capacity of a project to be financed by defining an annual revenue stream in the form of rents and operating expenses to arrive at a builder's profit margin and amount of annual income available for debt service. Last, economic benefits include both direct (e.g., construction and permanent jobs created by the new development, property tax revenues generated for a municipality) and indirect (e.g., additional retail spending generated by those households occupying the new housing units).

Riverviews is an excellent illustration of the distinction between these three economic models. While the market for new downtown housing in Lynchburg is as yet untested on a large scale, Riverviews is intended to serve as a catalyst to establish (or position) downtown Lynchburg as a viable location for market-rate housing in the future. Its recent pre-leasing



Residential reuse and new infill on Jefferson Street will provide "eyes on the park" for increased safety.

success (i.e., refundable deposits have been made on 22 of 36 units) demonstrates that the project has achieved overall credibility in the marketplace and bodes well for future, more significant efforts for new downtown housing.

Moreover, in markets nationwide where new downtown housing is developed, market-rate rental product is commonly introduced before any for-sale product. In general, this reduces a developer's level of risk, allows the marketplace to respond (e.g., young professionals are more willing to live in an untested location than are other market segments), and builds the foundation for diversifying product—such as for sale—and mix at future points in time.

On the other hand, Riverviews' financial feasibility appears more difficult—primarily as a function of the limited rental rates that are currently achieved in the region's apartment market. As a result, according to the project's developer, the current pro forma has identified an operating gap requiring participation in the form of public funding from various sources.

Third, Riverviews also illustrates the variety of spin-off benefits likely to accrue as a result of the project. For example, the project will generate an estimated 60 person-years of construction employment, and construction income, as well as new permanent jobs and state income taxes. In addition, 36 new households in downtown will provide disposable income for nearby retailers. The project's commercial components will generate direct impacts such as jobs and retail sales taxes and indirect impacts such as the purchase of supplies to conduct business.

As noted below, the planning team has outlined the general market and financial feasibility characteristics of other catalyst projects as well as the expected economic benefits each will generate for the City.

In order to test the economic characteristics of the plan, the team outlined a prototypic structure for a variety of land uses in the study area. We note that some of these uses will require significant public interven-

tion; others will be undertaken by the private sector in accordance with the plan. With new development, the increased property values in the area will generate a revenue stream that can become the basis for public investment in infrastructure—such as parks—and other necessary improvements to the civic realm.

The economic analysis illustrates the residual value of each of the priority projects. Residual value measures the likelihood of feasibility based on the capacity to support the costs of land acquisition and/or to potentially offset a portion of the costs of public improvements. The model outlines total development costs for buildings, estimated on a gross basis from various sources (including local developers and brokers) and independent sources (e.g., Marshall & Swift). The model does not account for any costs associated with environmental remediation. Next, estimates of annual gross revenues (e.g., rental rates) and operating expenses are made for each use based on actual (or potential) market activity in Lynchburg. The third step in the model then capitalizes this "snapshot" of net operating revenue into an indicated value, or an estimate of what the project is worth. The resulting difference between total development costs and indicated value is the estimate of residual value.

9.1 Jefferson Street Housing

Overlooking Jefferson Street and the James River Park, new housing will be accommodated in renovated warehouse buildings (107 units) and new loft construction (174 units). These 281 units will enliven Jefferson Street and the James River Park, while providing the important "eyes on the park" that make urban open spaces feel safer at all hours of the day and evening.

Some of the housing will face onto the new Bluff Walk framing this walking street with three-story structures and multiple building or unit entrances. With some limited vehicular access along the Bluff Walk, residents of these units will have the ability to drop-off at the doorstep as necessary. Parking will be provided nearby in a series of low parking structures (ground level and one deck) along Commerce Street. On the Jefferson Street side, the new housing and the renovated loft buildings may have as many as seven stories providing dramatic views of the riverfront area. The ground floor, which is subject to flooding, will be reserved for lobby space, community rooms, and ground-level retail uses where economically feasible.

General development economics of housing in downtown have been tested, with the understanding that specific characteristics of individual projects will vary. This analysis provides a general assessment of the degree of feasibility based on order-of-magnitude development costs and stabilized year revenues and operating expenses in order to arrive at a residual value, again, an indicator of project feasibility.

The analysis indicates that a financing gap associated with the development of market-rate, for sale and rental housing in downtown Lynchburg



Jefferson Street and the riverfront park can be enlivened with residential uses in the historic warehouse buildings.

exists. While the consultant team believes that sufficient market demand exists for new downtown housing in Lynchburg, current market pricing levels appear insufficient to support feasibility. Thus, public participation in financing or land assembly (or some other incentive mechanism) is likely to be necessary to ensure feasibility and project initiation.

The following analysis addresses the economics of all proposed housing downtown including the 281 units on Jefferson Street, 36 new units on Court Street (Section 9.3) and 64 units on Twelfth Street (Section 9.2). The total number of units shown in the Downtown and Riverfront Plan is 381 plus the proposed 36 units at Riverviews.

Program Assumptions

- New housing development on Jefferson Street includes 174 units of new construction in four- and eight-floor structures along the Lower Bluff Walk between Jefferson and Commerce Streets. In addition, another 107 units are proposed in the renovation of loft buildings along Jefferson Street.
- For purposes of illustration, we analyzed market-rate rental housing product for the 107 loft conversion units on Jefferson Street and market-rate for sale product for the 174 loft units at Bluffwalk. The average unit size of all units is assumed to be 1,350 square feet on a gross basis.
- For the rental product, the model assumes order-of-magnitude development costs of \$90 per square foot, or \$13 million. By comparison, Riverviews development costs are estimated at \$98 per square foot for the 36,400 gross square feet of residential space. This assumes that costs are all in, inclusive of site work and surface parking for good- to excellent-quality construction. Land costs are excluded.
- For the for-sale product at Bluffwalk, the model assumes order-of-magnitude development costs of \$120 per square foot, or \$28.2 million. Again, this assumes that costs are all in, inclusive of site work and surface parking for good- to excellent-quality construction. Land costs are excluded.

Annual Revenue Potential and Operating Expenses

- This analysis assumes that the 107 units on Jefferson Street are high-quality, market-rate rental, with estimated supportable annual rents (on a gross basis) of \$0.85 per square foot for loft conversions. We note that this is an above-market rental rate in Lynchburg today. Total annual rent at 95% stabilized occupancy, based on successful

housing revitalization projects in urban areas, is estimated at \$ 1.4 million. Net of operating expenses at 28%, annual net rental income is \$1.0 million, or about \$9,400 per unit.

- For the for-sale product, the estimated average unit price (as defined by residential brokers in Lynchburg for market-rate for sale units) is \$150,000, or \$111 per gross square feet of building area. This yields gross sales revenues of approximately \$26 million; less the cost of sales at six percent, \$24.5 million in net sales revenue is estimated for the sale of 174 new loft units.

Feasibility and Economics

- For the 107 market-rate rental units, net operating income of \$9,400 per unit capitalized at a rate of 10% yields supportable development costs of about \$94,000 per unit. By comparison, the estimated average development cost is \$121,500 per unit. This indicates a financing gap of about (\$27,000) per unit. This finding is consistent with downtown housing economics in many smaller cities. In some cases, cities have established housing development funds that offer low-cost second mortgage financing to projects that meet their strategic objectives and are otherwise supportable by the market (i.e., sufficient demand exists to occupy units).
- Similarly, new construction of a for-sale loft product also indicates a shortfall when comparing market pricing to overall supportable development costs. In this case, the gap for 174 loft units is estimated at (\$3.6 million) or (\$21,000) per unit.
- Certain loft conversions and rehab projects may show better project economics, and tax credits can help capital formation, but the fundamental problem is that rents (and current market pricing of for-sale products) in Lynchburg today are relatively low. For example, mini-

mum pricing that would have to be achieved for the for-sale loft product at Bluffwalk to generate positive residual value (i.e., to be financially feasible) is estimated at \$172,000.

We believe that the first few successful projects, even if modest in scale, will have the effect of demonstrating a market and establishing credibility, which should, therefore, result in stronger rents and sale prices.

However, some form of public incentive for housing development is necessary based on this analysis.

Economic Benefits

- Direct and indirect economic benefits include an additional 420 new residents from new households residing in downtown Lynchburg in these two prototype projects. Assuming average annual household incomes of \$35,000 in 281 new units, of which 30% is disposable, yields approximately \$3.0 million in disposable income, a portion of which will be spent downtown in retail stores, restaurants, and on services. In addition, these two prototype projects are expected to generate the following:
 - More than \$450,000 in net new annual property taxes (assuming development costs and assessed values are the same).
 - Approximately \$46,000 in annual state wage taxes based on \$1.0 million in annual permanent wages.
 - \$16 million in construction income generated by an estimated \$41 million in new development.

9.2 Twelfth and Court Street Housing

New housing at the foot of Diamond Hill will extend the residential texture of this neighborhood closer to the downtown. This five-acre site occupies a key gateway into downtown along Twelfth Street and will accommodate approximately 64 units. Three- to four-story townhouses in this five-acre area will face onto Twelfth Street, Church Street and Court Street with parking and terrace areas behind the units.

The scale of the housing will be similar to the existing downtown housing found along Church Street across from the YMCA and along Church Street at the intersection with Fifth Street. The existing residential building at the corner of Twelfth and Church Street establishes the appropriate scale for new development. The former supermarket building on this site should be studied for possible conversion to housing or other compatible use. Additional stories may be warranted, however, in order to provide sufficient critical mass of new housing in this location.

Pedestrian connections through this new residential development also will improve the connections between downtown and the Diamond Hill neighborhood. A pathway and stairs will follow the axis of Court Street to Washington Street and another path and stairs will follow the axis of Thirteenth Street to Clay Street. These stairs can become part of a linked walking trail throughout the downtown area, and suggest that each staircase should incorporate unique design features or planting themes.

The Twelfth Street housing is projected for development in a later phase since several existing businesses are located in this area, including Babcock Auto Service.

Program Assumptions

- The site on Twelfth Street can accommodate approximately 64 units of new townhouses. These townhouses would be typical of this type of development downtown, including the 36 units illustrated on Court Street (see Section 9.3). The average unit size of the townhouse units is assumed to be 1,350 square feet on a gross basis.
- For the for-sale product at both Court and Twelfth Streets, the model assumes order-of-magnitude development costs of \$105 per square foot, or \$14.2 million. This assumes that costs are all in, inclusive of site work and surface parking for good- to excellent-quality construction. Land costs are excluded.

Annual Revenue Potential and Operating Expenses

- The estimated average unit price (as defined by residential brokers in Lynchburg for market-rate for sale units) is \$125,000, or \$105 per gross square foot of building area. This yields gross sales revenues of approximately \$12.5 million; less the cost of sales at six percent, \$11.7 million in net sales revenue is estimated for the sale of 100 new loft units at both locations.

Feasibility and Economics

- The model indicates that new townhouse construction results in a shortfall when comparing market pricing above to overall supportable development costs. In this case, the residual value to develop 100 townhouse units yields a financing gap estimated at \$2.4 million or \$24,250 per unit.

- Minimum pricing that would have to be achieved for the for sale townhouse product at both Court and Twelfth Streets to generate positive residual value (i.e., to be financially feasible) is estimated at \$150,000. As a result, some form of public incentive for housing development is necessary based on this analysis.

Economic Benefits

- Direct and indirect economic benefits include an additional 150+ new residents from new households residing in downtown Lynchburg in the Twelfth Street and Court Street locations. Assuming average annual household incomes of \$35,000 for the 100 new units, of which 30% is disposable, yields approximately \$1.0 million in disposable income, a portion of which will be spent downtown in retail stores, restaurants, and on services. In addition, new townhouses on Court and Twelfth Streets are expected to generate the following:
 - More than \$157,000 in net new annual property taxes (assuming development costs and assessed values are the same).
 - Approximately \$16,500 in annual state wage taxes based on \$367,000 in annual permanent wages.
 - \$5.7 million in construction income generated by an estimated \$14.2 million in new development.

9.3 Court and Fifth Street Housing

In order to strengthen the connection between the residential neighborhood on Garland Hill and the downtown, additional housing has been proposed along Court Street near Fifth Street. These three- to four-story townhouse units will be built into the hillside so that the front doors open onto Court Street, and parking is accommodated underneath the buildings. On the upper side of Court Street, the parking will be accommodated behind the buildings. Approximately 36 units will be accommodated on a two-acre site.

Residential use in this part of downtown will complement the surrounding churches and the adjacent residential uses on Church Street. It also suggests that other opportunities for infill should be explored in this part of downtown. New market-rate housing is likely to follow other housing development downtown, once confidence is established in the market. This development will replace surface parking lots and may involve replacement of parking spaces.



Existing Residential Townhouses on Court Street West



Existing Residential Townhouses on Church Street East

9.4 Ice Skating Rink

The proposed ice-skating rink and entertainment center is an exciting prospect that could generate activity and draw families and other users from the region into the downtown. The facility will also complement and support other downtown uses such as restaurants. The program includes 35,000 gross square feet on one level, including an enclosed, year-round, regulation-sized ice rink (suitable for youth/high school hockey, Liberty University's hockey team and tournaments), concessionaire, pro shop, arcade, and bleacher seating. The dimensions of this type of facility typically measure 250 feet (length) by 110 feet (width) in order to accommodate all program elements.

The ice-skating rink requires a relatively large and level site, which constrains the possibilities in downtown Lynchburg. The Master Plan locates it between Main Street and Church Street in close proximity to the Community Market and the proposed cinema in the old City Auditorium. If this site is not available, alternative locations include the eastern end of Main Street across from the Horseford Street intersection, where it would complement the Welcome Center, the new park and the Bluff Walk Center, as well as the Community Market.

The rink could also be accommodated near the YMCA in place of the proposed housing, although this site is somewhat removed from the activities on Main Street. Another possible site is the corner of Ninth Street and Commerce Street near Amazement Square and Riverviews. In this location, some program elements would have to be accommodated in adjacent buildings, and the Bluff Walk may be compromised. Depending on the final siting, the possibility of incorporating parking on a lower level built into the hillside below street level should be explored.

We have assumed new construction structured as a public-private partnership (turnkey deal) by a fee-based, third-party developer, operation/management by an experienced rink operator, and public contribution in the form of land on a largely City-owned site at 1117 Main Street (near the Community Market).

Program and Operating Assumptions

- Estimated development costs of \$60 per square foot, or \$2,100,000, not including land costs.
- Potential users include (1) contract or charter rentals (e.g., lessons or programs); (2) general admissions/public skating; and (3) in-house/programmed hockey leagues. The operating season is assumed to be 50 weeks per year.

Annual Revenue Potential and Operating Expenses

- Based on national participation rates in ice hockey and figure skating, assumes annual revenues generated by contract rentals (1,600 hours x \$150 per hour = \$240,000); general admissions (40,000 x \$4 per person = \$160,000); and in-house league play (20,000 x \$8 per person = \$160,000). Other potential revenues include those generated by concessions (40% of gross) and pro shop (30% of gross).
- Total annual gross revenue potential estimated at \$950,000.
- The model assumes annual operating expenses for salaries, cost of goods sold, general and administrative, building maintenance, utilities, insurance, capital expenditures and taxes totaling 80 percent of gross revenues, or \$760,000.

Feasibility and Economics

- This preliminary analysis yields net operating income of \$190,000, representing an operating margin of approximately 20%.
- Capitalizing net income at 10% yields supportable development costs of \$1,900,000, or a shortfall of (\$200,000) below estimated development costs. This financing gap will need to be filled by other sources. Public participation could take the form of land acquisition and a below-market ground lease to a developer. In addition, the City should consider providing gap financing and low-interest secondary financing.

Economic Benefits

- An ice-skating rink could expect to generate employment for up to four full-time staff and approximately 23 full-time-equivalent employees, generating \$583,000 in permanent wages and more than \$26,000 in state income taxes.
- Other economic benefits include \$840,000 in estimated construction income and \$23,300 in net new annual property taxes if the facility is under private ownership. In addition, employees will have disposable income to support nearby retailers and restaurants.

9.5 Multi-Screen Cinema

A multi-screen cinema is suggested for the vacant City Auditorium building on Main Street, which contains approximately 48,000 gross square feet on three floors. The cinema is conceived as a destination to complement the ice-skating rink across the street and nearby restaurants and bars. A building this size could accommodate about 500 seats in addition to back-of-house, circulation, and areas for concessions. Our program assumes a facility with up to four screens. Logical programming to distinguish the facility from nearby and regional multi-plex cinemas might include art films and independent first-run feature films.

Our current assessment of the cinema market in Lynchburg suggests that additional growth in demand, as well as some additional redevelopment progress downtown will be required to support this initiative. It is better thought of as a late-phase project.



Historic image of the City Auditorium on Main Street

Program and Operating Assumptions

- Estimated development costs are on the order of \$500,000 per screen, or \$2 million.
- Our analysis assumes that the City acquires the building and enters into a long-term lease agreement with a third-party developer/operator.

Annual Revenue Potential and Operating Expenses

- The model assumes that net growth in the regional theater market generates annual attendance of 50,000 per screen, or 200,000.
- Estimated annual revenues from ticket sales plus concessions (at 40% of gross) yields gross revenues totaling almost \$1.7 million.
- Estimated annual operating expenses (assuming stabilized operations) of 87% results in net operating income of \$218,400, or an operating margin to a private operator of 13% (including lease payments to the City for the use of the building).

Feasibility and Economics

- The operating expenses include annual rent to the City (assumed to be 10% of gross revenues), or \$170,000 per year. This translates into a rental rate of approximately \$3.50 per square foot for this City-owned building.
- Capitalizing net income at 10% yields an indicated value of \$2.18 million, indicating feasibility. Again, however, we believe this project is not yet supportable by the market given that Lynchburg can support 23 screens and there are currently 22.

Economic Benefits

- A four-screen multi-plex could expect to generate employment for up to four full-time staff and approximately 18 full-time-equivalent concession employees generating \$484,000 in permanent wages and almost \$22,000 in state income taxes.
- Other economic benefits include \$800,000 in estimated construction income and \$22,200 in net new annual property taxes assuming private ownership. In addition, employees will have disposable income to support nearby retailers and restaurants.

9.6 Bluff Walk Center

The Bluff Walk Center, which has been proposed for the eastern end of the bluff overlooking the James River Park, will be a significant catalyst for the downtown. The reuse of the brick warehouse structures for hotel, restaurant, and entertainment uses will complement the community market and other shops that have been opened along Main Street and Commerce Street at the eastern end of downtown. The Bluff Walk Center will also provide a bridge between downtown and the new parklands along the river below the bluff. The proposed Bluffwalk will provide a pedestrian link between the Bluff Walk Center at one end and Amazement Square, the Riverviews project, and the Human Services Complex on Ninth Street at the other end.

The Bluff Walk Center includes the following features:

- James River House, a 54-room boutique hotel
- Jefferson Street Family Restaurant and Microbrewery, a 150-seat family restaurant
- Virginia Wine Center Cafe, Bakery and Coffee House, a 75-seat wine cafe celebrating Virginia's growing wine industry and specialty coffees and teas
- Performance space, theater, and auditorium, a 150-seat theater for business conferences and weekend productions by local theater groups.

The project, which is being developed privately by Riverfront Development, LLC, is projected to have a construction cost of \$8 million. There are several public actions that will greatly enhance the feasibility of this project including the following:

- Bluffwalk easement acquisitions and improvements.
- James River Park improvements.
- Construction mitigation of the sewer interceptor installation in the lower basin.
- Participation in the provision of parking for the Bluff Walk Center, which could be shared with other downtown uses.
- Connection to the fiber optic line along the river.
- Assistance in state and federal grant or loan applications.
- Improvements to historic warehouse buildings along Commerce Street.

In September 2000, the City of Lynchburg received an Economic Development Initiative (EDI) grant in the amount of \$800,000 from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for the hotel. In addition, the City is applying for an accompanying Section 108 loan from HUD for \$3,200,000 on behalf of the Bluff Walk Hotel. To date, private investors have pledged over \$1 million.

9.7 Corporate Center

A new Corporate Center could be developed at the prominent hilltop site near the interchange of Route 29 Expressway and Main Street. While somewhat removed from the activities of downtown, the site has excellent highway visibility and access as well as long views of the James River. The site will be competitive to a suburban office site, yet would have the added amenities of downtown and a riverfront location.

At a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.8, the five-acre site could accommodate approximately 108,000 gross square feet on three floors. Parking will include 380 spaces at a ratio of 3.5 spaces per thousand square feet of building, with about one-third of the parking built into the hillside below the first floor of the building.

Approximately 8,000 gross square feet of retail floor area will line Main Street, establishing the urban character of the street at this key gateway location. The Corporate Center site will be bisected by a pedestrian pathway that leads to an overlook on the edge of the bluff and a set of stairs leading down to the riverfront area.

The development should be implemented by the private sector, which would need to assemble the property and finance it privately. The site now has a motel and other mixed uses on it. The City could assist in land assembly by providing low-interest construction loans and an expeditious permitting and approvals process.

Although a convention center has been proposed for this site in the past, redevelopment should not hinge on this possibility. A convention center requires substantial public investment, which in this case would be beyond the likely return on investment. Typically, convention centers strive to break even on their operating costs and must be competitive in the regional market. Given the size of the market in Lynchburg and the presence of a similar facility in Roanoke, feasibility of a convention center is not likely.

9.8 Retail Strategy

Every opportunity should be taken to develop new buildings on surface parking lots throughout the downtown, but particularly on Main Street and on Ninth Street. These new in-fill buildings should have ground-floor retail that will activate the streets. Ideally, any new buildings should have sufficient height to frame the street corridor, and should be at least two stories high. The upper floors could be used for professional offices or housing.

Retail uses value frontage real estate rather than depth back from the street. The new buildings should be only 60 feet deep maximum, which would allow for some parking and service behind the building. As a comparison, many of the existing retail buildings are 130 feet deep, which is substantially more floor area than is necessary for many tenants. Since the facades of the historic buildings are so important to the character of downtown, it may be possible to remove the back of some downtown buildings, which would accommodate the functional needs of parking and service deliveries.

Existing retail uses in the downtown area are estimated to occupy over 200,000 gross square feet, although much of this floor area is probably warehouse, storage, industrial supply, and underutilized space. An analysis of the market indicates a demand for only 82,000 gross square feet of retail space in downtown. Future projections for visitors, new employees, and residents in the downtown area suggest the ability to support an additional 27,000 gross square feet of retail space for a total of 109,000 gross square feet.

9.9 Renovation Opportunities

With over one million square feet of vacant space downtown, renovation of existing buildings is a high priority—to increase property values and add 24-hour life to the area. The challenge for developers is in obtaining up-front capital costs for building systems (i.e., heat, air, water, electric and elevator) that are particularly expensive for the large vacant warehouses scattered throughout the downtown.

Current assistance through historic tax credits, Enterprise Zone incentives and Facade Improvement Program reimbursements are apparently not enough to spur redevelopment of the larger historic warehouses. Additional incentives in the form of grants, loans or loan guarantees, or other appropriate incentives or mechanisms, are needed from the City, Industrial Development Authority, Lynchburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority and/or a Community Development Corporation. Their assistance would close the “financial gaps” that are now apparent between development costs and return on investments.

The smaller properties downtown (10,000 square feet or less) are more feasible to renovate given their lower up-front capital costs. It is for this reason that several smaller structures in the downtown have been renovated and occupied. One example is the 1200 block of Main Street where four structures were renovated in 1995 and now house eight apartments (fully rented) and five commercial units (fully leased). At the same time, several smaller properties in the downtown with retail occupants at ground level have not been renovated on the upper floors and therefore remain vacant. Attention should be given to these as well.

A major focus of the two newly created downtown positions with Lynch's Landing and the City's Economic Development Office (see Section 10.4 below) will be to address this challenge of filling vacant structures and finding the creative means to close “financial gaps” as identified in this plan.

10. POLICY INITIATIVES

In order to realize the improvements recommended in the Downtown and Riverfront Plan, consensus on the major policy initiatives must be achieved. In particular, the role of the public sector and its local non-profit and business partners must be structured to define clear leadership and specific responsibilities within that leadership framework. Policies for implementation must recognize the capacity of different organizations and the overall strengths of downtown Lynchburg within the regional market. Based on the phasing strategies recommended by this plan, the City should refine its priorities and define early-action projects. Ultimately, the vision of the plan will be achieved by tackling one step at a time and keeping a clear vision of the long-term objectives.

10.1 Balanced Public and Private Investment

In order for downtown and riverfront redevelopment in Lynchburg to be successful, public investment policies are required that reinforce downtown Lynchburg's role as a viable address in the regional marketplace. Downtown must reach a regional marketplace to be successful. Downtown no longer has a broad competitive advantage for the location of most workplaces and retail stores. Most businesses will continue to locate outside the downtown area. However, downtown can be highly competitive in key sectors: financial and other professional services, entertainment, specialized retail, and culture. In addition, the character, history, pedestrian scale, and riverfront location give downtown a competitive advantage over outlying areas. Smaller downtowns around the country, especially those with a strong historic fabric, are also finding a ready market for downtown housing.

Amenities and cultural anchors are distinguishing factors that will give downtown Lynchburg a competitive edge over nearby suburbs and other



The Downtown Riverfront Plan was informed by stakeholder meetings as well as larger public forums.

cities and towns in the region. Moreover, public policy initiatives focusing on the redevelopment of downtown should be viewed as ongoing, multi-year commitments by the City and supported by aggressive public management and marketing over a ten- to twenty-year period. All of these are critical factors for success.

At present, downtown Lynchburg is at a disadvantage compared to suburban locations because of low rents and sales prices relative to redevelopment costs and the physical and functional obsolescence of its building stock. The strongest redevelopment opportunities are also the most problematic: large buildings with high capital requirements, and relatively weak demand for space. While existing public investment has helped stem the tide and

has raised downtown's profile in the region, substantial positive change downtown will require that the public sector assume a degree of financial risk in specific projects and maintain these commitments over time to invest in downtown's future.

The implementation of key projects will act as a catalyst for sustained downtown development activity, including the renovation of vacant space, conversion of underutilized space, and new infill development. In the Master Plan, a number of key projects have been targeted, including:

- Riverviews Lofts
- The Academy of Music
- New and renovated housing
- Parking garage(s)
- Ice-skating rink
- Movie theater
- Public parks and streetscape improvements
- Bluff Walk Hotel
- Amazement Square

These projects fall into three basic categories, but all require some form of public participation or intervention at this point in time:

- Some projects are inherently private real estate projects that need some targeted public investment to become feasible in the current downtown market and to establish the future market (e.g., market-rate housing, ice-skating rink, movie theater).
- Other projects are cultural, non-profit projects that require some form of public participation in recognition of their economic benefits and contribution to the quality of life in the downtown and the larger city and region (e.g., Amazement Square, the Academy of Music).
- Finally, projects such as parks, streetscape improvements, and parking garages are the basic building blocks of public infrastructure, which prime the pump for private investment. With strategic public participation, the resulting private investment in all of these projects will ultimately increase property values and the City's tax base, create jobs, and more effectively use existing infrastructure.

The planning team strongly believes that a healthier downtown is a regional asset, and that it will help the Lynchburg economy grow. A thriving downtown will attract new visitors, will be more attractive to prospective employers, will help the region retain existing employers, and will retain and attract a larger, stronger workforce.

10.2 Phasing and Costs

Because Lynchburg's public resources are limited, it is imperative that public dollars be used wisely to leverage the greatest possible private investment. The role of public dollars is to create and enhance downtown's amenities and to help establish the footing for subsequent private investment. Public dollars should be earmarked for those facilities that cannot otherwise be implemented with purely private dollars: parking, parks, streetscape improvements, cultural facilities, and infrastructure.

The Master Plan suggests many different projects that can be implemented to improve the civic environment in downtown Lynchburg. By outlining a full range of projects and recommending a phasing strategy, the City can work towards its goals and take on projects over time, incrementally transforming the image of the downtown. Based on the experience of many other cities, both large and small, the time frame for accomplishing the recommendations in the Master Plan is likely to be twenty years or more. As a first step toward defining short-term versus long-term projects, the Master Plan recommends a phasing strategy, fully recognizing that priorities and opportunities will change over time (Figure 6).

For each individual project, the estimated construction costs are provided in Table 3. Indirect costs are in addition, and are estimated at 20% to 25%, include design fees, testing, legal counsel, project management, and environmental approvals. The project costs are intended to establish budgets and priorities and therefore show a range of costs that should be refined as projects move into final design. The high end represents high-quality materials and design, and establishes the highest standards for civic improvements, whereas the low end of the range suggests that some compromises may be made in the selection of materials or the ratio of hardscape (plaza area) to softscape (green lawn and planted areas). In general, hardscape areas are significantly more expensive than softscape. Wherever possible, the City should aim for the highest quality, which will create environments that are long lasting and memorable.

Table 3. Civic Improvement Costs

	Low	High
Years 1-5		
Lower Ninth Streetscape	\$1,240	\$1,670
Upper Ninth Streetscape	1,240	1,670
Monument Terrace	1,500	2,300
Lower Bluff Walk	2,000	3,560
Subtotal Construction	\$5,980	\$9,200
Years 6-10		
Jefferson Street Promenade	\$1,750	\$2,680
James Riverwalk	3,050	4,110
J. Lynch Bridge Improvements	940	1,260
Fifth Street Streetscape	1,020	1,380
Subtotal Construction	\$6,760	\$9,430
Years 10-20		
Overlook Terrace	\$930	\$1,260
Canal Park	6,490	8,760
Upper/Lower Basin Park	5,310	7,170
Route 29 Gateway	340	470
Twelfth Streetscape	960	1,290
Rivermont Gateway	1,020	1,380
Upper Bluff Walk	520	710
City Hall Plaza	410	560
Subtotal Construction	\$15,980	\$21,600

Note: Indirect costs are not included and are estimated to be between 20% and 25% construction costs. Costs associated with civic improvements exclude land assembly.

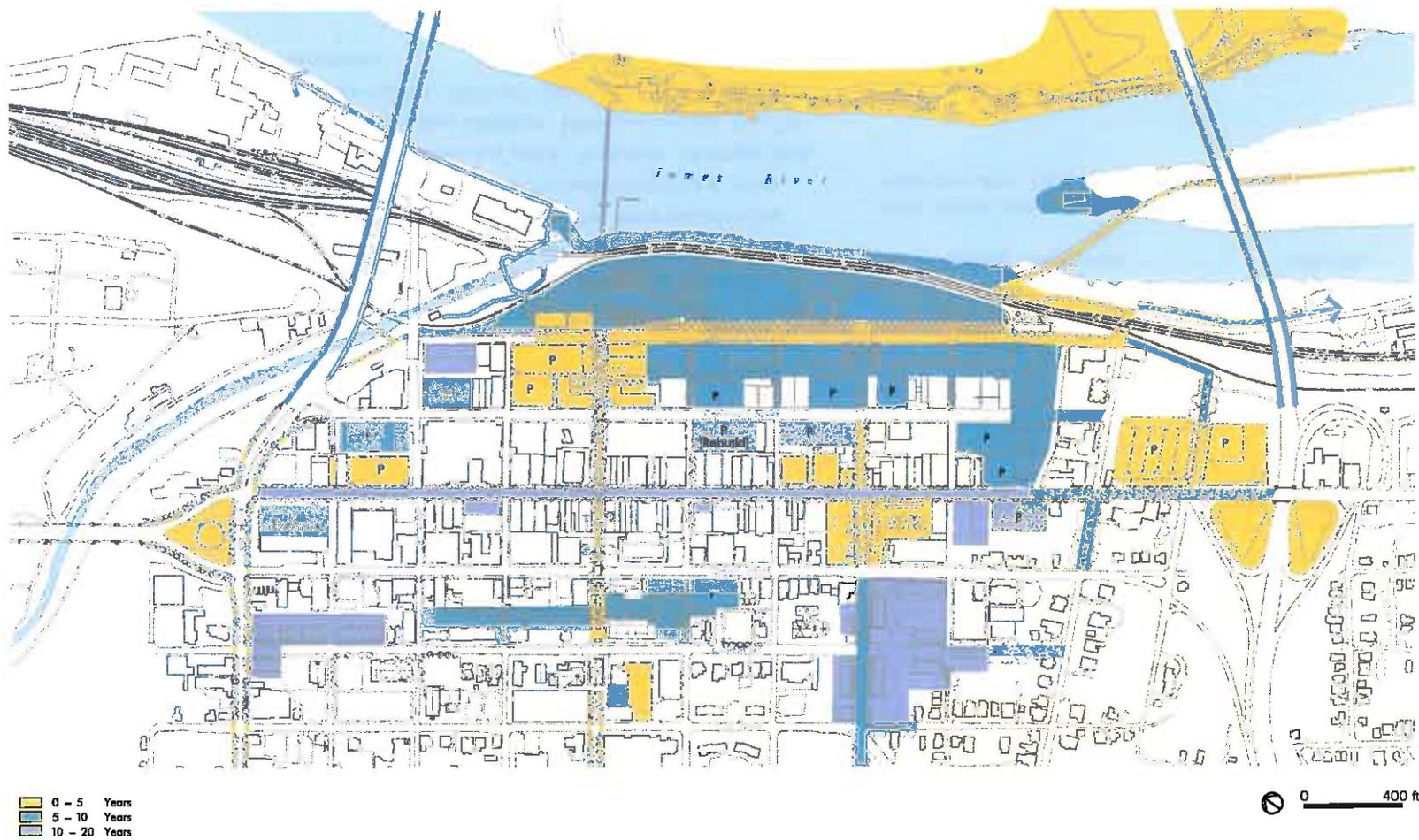


Figure 6. Phasing Diagram

10.3 Economic Benefits and Private Investment

A fundamental principle of the plan is that public investment in new amenities and infrastructure will help to reposition the downtown and riverfront and attract—and in some cases, induce—new private development. A major component of this public investment will therefore be to fund the capital improvements and build the necessary public amenities.

We recommend the following principles to guide public decision-making for implementing the projects as outlined in the plan. These include the following:

- The City should focus its public investment in new infrastructure (such as amenities, streets and parks) to leverage subsequent private investment. The overarching goal here is to induce, but not necessarily move ahead of, the market. For example, phased public improvements such as Jefferson Street Promenade and Ninth Street should create value for subsequent private investment of the historic warehouses. Similarly, the Route 29 Gateway project is intended to enhance marketability of the corporate center site.
- The City should build on the strengths of existing entities. For example, rather than embark on new endeavors such as the ice-skating rink or movie theater, initial public investment should support initiatives that are already underway and close to achieving their goals, such as Riverviews and the Academy of Music.
- Public investment should be strategic in location. Public decision-making with respect to civic improvements should be prioritized to include those sites or projects that are located adjacent to or near parcels that will maximize opportunities for private investment.
- Public investment should be strategic in scale. The City should be judicious in the use of public dollars. The project seeking a significant level of public monies may not necessarily generate the greatest impacts.
- Opportunities for federal and state funding for civic improvements should be maximized. Examples include the Army Corps of Engineers, TEA-21, open space acquisition grants, parks and public space funding mechanisms and the like. We recommend targeting approximately 20-50% of capital improvements from federal and state funding sources.
- City officials must recognize that downtown investment benefits the entire region. Downtown investment reinforces the strength of the entire region's economy and should not be evaluated only on immediate local impacts within the downtown.
- Investment in high-quality design and materials will distinguish downtown streets and parks. In order to be strategic with public investment, the amount of park area or special features within any one park may need to be phased in over time.

Public Investment and Private Leverage

The economic analysis has outlined the expected order-of-magnitude costs and private investment generated for the series of target projects (see Table 4). As specific projects are completed with the investment of public dollars, the amount of private investment leveraged will grow over time. For example:

- In Phase 1 (years 1-5), municipal investment is estimated to be on the order of \$7.4 million and is expected to generate \$32.2 million in private investment. This equates to a ratio of approximately 1 to 4.4 in public-to-private investment.
- In Phase 2 (years 6-10), the planning team estimates that civic improvements will total approximately \$5.4 million. This is expected to generate upwards of \$33.6 million in private investment in loft conversions, development of the corporate center site and other projects. This yields a public-to-private ratio of approximately 1:6.
- In the third phase (years 11-20), various public improvements are estimated to require approximately \$8.66 million in local funding. As momentum has been created over time, the marketability for private-sector uses is strengthened substantially. As a result, private projects identified in the plan include new housing on Twelfth Street and Court Street and other renovations of existing empty buildings totaling \$84 million. Notably, the leverage of public dollars to private investment increases to over 1:9.7 in Phase 3.

Table 4. Summary of Downtown Investment (thousands) Date: 12/2000

	Estimated Project Costs	Private Investment ²	Municipal Investment	Federal/ State Investment ⁴
Years 1 - 5				
Amazement Square	\$ 6,800	\$ 6,195	\$ 205	\$ 200
Parking Garage (city staff/vis)	\$ 3,000	-	\$ 3,000	-
The Academy of Music	\$ 15,000	\$ 13,500	\$ 400	-
Riverviews	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,300	\$ 200	-
US District Court	\$ 8,500	-	-	\$ 8,500
BluffWalk Center	\$ 8,000	\$ 7,200	-	\$ 800
Civic Improvements	\$ 5,980	\$ 1,000	\$ 3,580	\$ 1,400
Subtotal	\$ 61,580	\$ 32,195	\$ 7,385	\$ 10,700
Ratio 1:4.4				
Years 6 - 10				
Juvenile & Domestic Court	\$ 7,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,000
General District Court	\$ 2,200	-	-	\$ 2,200
Circuit District Court	\$ 1,800	-	-	\$ 1,800
ice Skating Rink	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	-	-
Loft Conversions	\$ 13,000	\$ 13,000	-	-
Corporate Center	\$ 16,200	\$ 16,200	-	-
Cinema	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,300	-	-
Civic Improvements	\$ 6,800	-	\$ 5,400	\$ 1,400
Subtotal	\$ 51,300	\$ 33,600	\$ 5,400	\$ 12,400
Ratio 1:8				
Years 11 - 20				
New Lofts	\$ 28,200	\$ 28,200	\$ -	\$ -
Twelfth Street Housing	\$ 14,200	\$ 14,200	-	-
Court Street Housing	\$ 5,100	\$ 5,100	-	-
Other Renovtns (400,000 gsft+)	\$ 36,000	\$ 36,000	-	-
Civic Improvements	\$ 16,000	\$ 500	\$ 8,665	\$ 6,835
Subtotal	\$ 99,500	\$ 84,000	\$ 8,665	\$ 6,835
Ratio 1:9.7				
GRAND TOTAL			\$ 21,450	

Notes

¹ Federal/state participation targeted at 20% - 50% for civic improvements.

² Total project costs for private development projects do not always include land, which is assumed to be written down by the City for certain projects.

³ Civic improvement costs are construction costs only.

⁴ Estimates are in constant 2000 dollars and do not account for inflation.

⁵ JW Out Building is a significant public investment downtown, but is considered money that would have been spent anyway.

Property Taxes Generated for Bonded Debt

The significant new tax base generated by the uses envisioned in the plan implies that a key source of the required public investment may be the new increment of taxes generated by new development. Tax-increment financing (TIF) approaches essentially borrow from future tax revenue streams needed to induce market opportunities and generate the new taxes.

Our analysis estimates the net tax increment for each phase (i.e., the amount of property taxes generated by private investment to the City on an annual basis). If applied to the debt service on bonded debt issues to fund capital improvements, this revenue stream could provide a key piece of funding for the plan. These are illustrated, by phase, in Table 5.

The amount of net tax increment is expected to increase over time as private investment increases. Over the plan's three phases, private investment is expected to yield more than \$1.6 million in annual property tax revenues (at the City's current tax rate of \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed valuation). Assuming that this revenue stream can be bonded at a current rate of 5.5% and generates bonding capacity to fund public improvements on the order of \$29.2 million, this amount would cover all of the projected construction costs for civic improvements over the next 20 years. Benefits such as property taxes generated are, of course, phased in over time.

Table 5. Economic Benefit Criteria

	Floor Area (gsf)	Net New Emp.	Annual Attendance	Number of Dwelling Units	Number of Residents	Property Tax/Year \$
Years 1-5						
Amazement Square	30,000	36	50,000			\$73,300
J. W. Ould Building	60,000	200				0
Parking Garage	146,000	4				
The Academy of Music	56,000	36	50,000			155,400
Riverviews	64,000	75		36	54	49,900
US District Court ¹	38,000	0				0
Bluff Walk Center	54,000	50				88,800
Civic Improvements						0
Subtotal	448,000	401	100,000	36	51	\$367,400
Bond @5.5%						\$6.68 million
Years 6-10						
Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court	31,000	93				0
General District Court	10,000	30				0
Circuit Court	8,000	24				0
Ice Skating Rink	35,000	27	25,000			23,300
Loft Conversions	144,000	18		107	160	144,300
Corporate Center	108,000	432				179,800
Cinema	48,000	22	200,000			22,200
Civic Improvements						0
Subtotal	384,000	646	225,000	107	160	\$368,600
Bond @5.5%						\$6.72 million
Years 11-20						
New Lofts	235,000	29		174	261	\$312,900
Twelfth Street Housing	86,000	11		64	96	103,800
Court Street Housing	49,000	6		36	54	53,500
Other Renovations						
Office/Commercial	200,000	800				199,800
Residential	200,000	25		150	225	199,800
Civic Improvements						0
Subtotal	770,000	871	0	274	836	\$869,800
Bond @5.5%						\$15.85 million
Totals	1,602,000	1,986	325,000	417	850	\$1,606,800
						\$29.2 million

¹ No new employees: replacement building
 Note: Renovations total 712,000 gsf (50% of total).

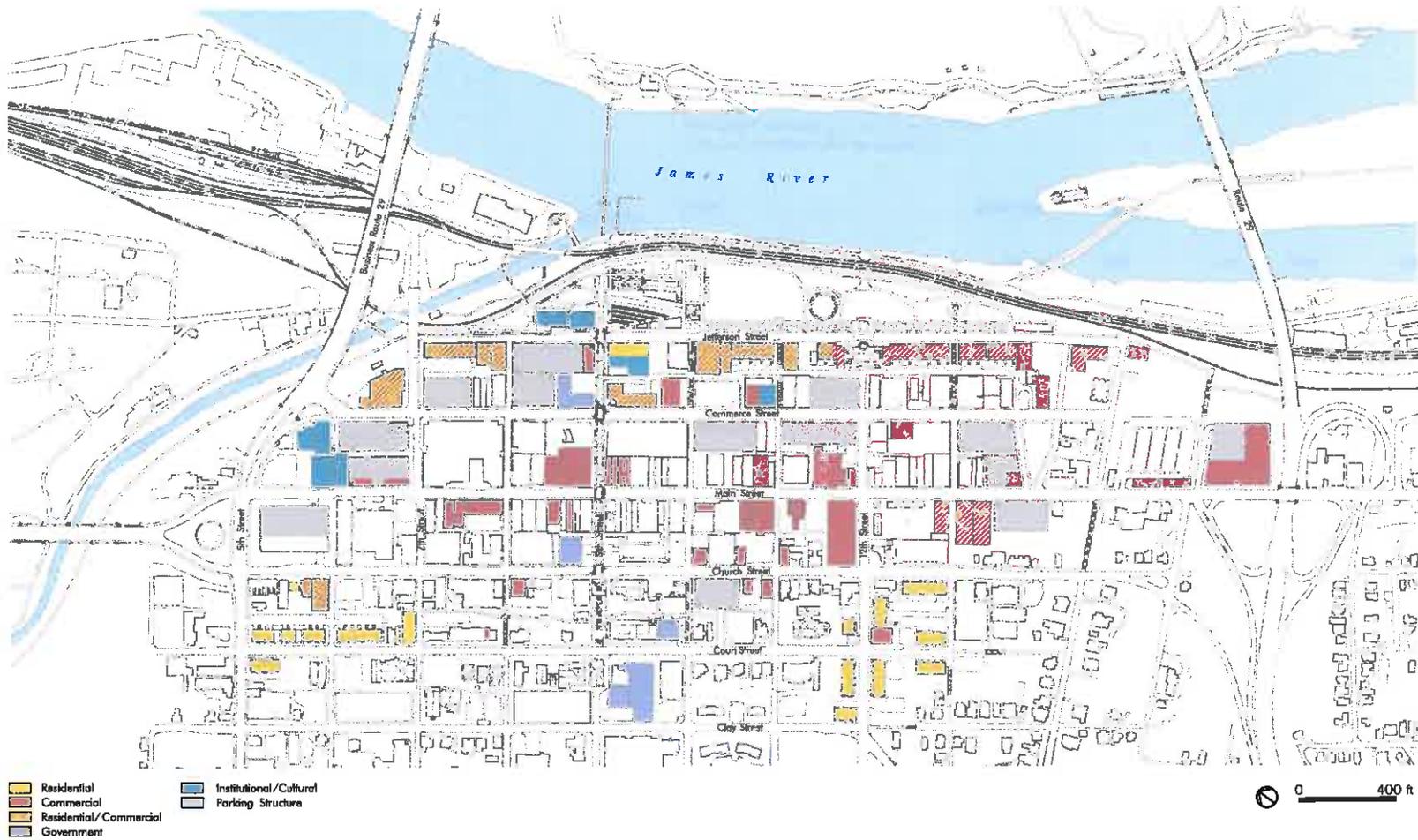


Figure 7. Renovation and New Development

Building the Market: The Impacts

Beyond direct impacts such as private investment and property taxes, the plan is also expected to generate other direct impacts, including new employment, new visitors to downtown and new residents (Table 5). These markets, of course, will spin-off other—indirect—impacts, such as retail sales, and entertainment and business licensing taxes. We estimate that, at buildout, the plan will generate:

- 2,000 new employees working in the downtown and riverfront area adding substantially to the existing 4,000 employees downtown;
- 300,000 visitors to downtown entertainment and cultural venues such as the Academy of Music, Amazement Square, the ice-skating rink and cinema complex; and
- 850 new residents in almost 600 new housing units. Assuming that these residents have annual incomes of \$35,000 (of which 30% is discretionary income available for spending on consumer goods), this generates approximately \$8.9 million in disposable income.

The increases in employees, visitors, and residents translates into demand for approximately 27,000 square feet of retail space in the downtown. New residences and active street-level uses will further enhance the quality of place in downtown, making it feel like a safer, more exciting destination and fundamentally changing perceptions about the walkability of downtown streets (Figure 7).

10.4 An Entity for Downtown Development

Downtown Lynchburg has substantial existing assets, and an important principle of the plan is to build on these strengths. Lynch's Landing, Amazement Square, and the Community Market are all significant assets that are further complemented by downtown's antique stores, restaurants, banks, courthouses, numerous law offices, and other successful businesses. The opening of the Academy of Music will have a tremendous effect on the vitality of downtown. What is needed is a City-initiated or coordinated system to integrate the activities of institutions and businesses in a way that reinforces the overall appeal of downtown.

A central challenge will be the definition of roles and responsibilities to implement the Master Plan. Within the City, a number of different departments will continue to be actively involved in downtown development, including the City Manager's Office, Community Planning and Development, Economic Development, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation. Lynch's Landing has led the downtown and riverfront promotional events over the last 15 years with the help of City funding. This organization should continue to lead the effort in downtown promotion while working closely with the City departments listed above.

Lynchburg recently has been named a member of the Virginia Main Street Program. A central feature of the Main Street program is a full-time professional downtown manager, who operates at the public-private interface and who is capable of dealing with issues of design and planning, finance, and management. The City Council recently approved funding for three new positions that are key to future downtown development efforts. These include a Downtown Executive Director under the

Main Street program with Lynch's Landing, a Downtown Economic Development Manager with the Department of Economic Development, and a Business Manager to handle special events for the Parks and Recreation Department.

To maximize the effectiveness of existing and proposed staff, we strongly recommend the creation of a Downtown Council or Steering Committee to direct Downtown/Riverfront redevelopment efforts. The Downtown Council should include representatives of the City, Lynch's Landing, private businesses, and civic non-profit organizations, and should be staffed with the leadership of the Downtown Executive Director. This entity must be able to focus its attention on the downtown and riverfront district, serving as both champion and advocate, and ensuring the implementation of the Master Plan recommendations.

Leadership and experience in downtown development will be critical factors in the plan's success. Over the course of the next several years, the Committee could evolve into a more formal entity such as a Downtown Development Corporation with a board and an executive director. The board would have a similar composition to the Downtown Council, including public, private and civic (non-profit) representatives. The executive director and staff, working under either the Downtown Council or ultimately a more formal board, should possess the following qualifications:

- Financial expertise and the ability to negotiate deals with new and existing businesses.
- Close working relationship with City staff.
- Credibility with the City Council.

- Understanding of the basic principles, design concepts, implementation strategies, and economic recommendations of the Downtown and Riverfront Plan.
- Ability to manage the design process, including procurement of design professionals and design review for urban development projects.
- Ability to coordinate with Public Works in the construction phase of infrastructure projects.
- Ability to promote downtown and to target appropriate businesses and tenants, in coordination with Lynch's Landing.
- Fundraising experience in both the private and public sectors.
- Ability to work with various citizens groups, from historic district residents to business owners.

The downtown development strategy can be built on the successful organizational model of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), while recognizing the distinguishing physical and political characteristics of the downtown environment. Through the IDA, the City invested in roads and other infrastructure, targeted industries, assembled land, offered cash incentives, and in some cases constructed building shells as an incentive for development. In return, the City has reaped a return on its investment, which may have involved some initial risk, but now includes a solid and diversified employment base, strong industrial market and numerous spin-off benefits throughout the region.

10.5 Defining Downtown's Niche in the Regional Market

As noted above, downtown needs to clarify its role in the regional economy. Public investments should be targeted toward uses that reinforce this role. The role should center on the following basic notions:

- Downtown is a regional center for government, professional services, and financial services.
- Downtown is a regional center for arts and culture.
- Downtown is a regional center for entertainment, specialized shopping and large-scale events.
- Downtown is the most tangible expression of Lynchburg's history. Because of its historic fabric and character, for some, downtown is an appealing place to live in unique loft-style housing as well as in more traditional townhouses and apartments.

Viewed through this prism, specific actions or ideas about downtown can be evaluated. Should, for example, the City create new financial incentives for retail development? Should housing be a higher priority? What is the role of art?

Short-term public actions should focus on clear, tangible results and should target those projects most likely to generate positive momentum for downtown in the eyes of the regional marketplace. However, an equally critical second pillar is noted: existing downtown employers must perceive that they are valued.

Retail often receives a disproportionate level of attention in downtown revitalization studies and plans. Retail is a highly visible component of the downtown economy. A vibrant retail scene can dramatically—positively—affect attitudes toward downtown. A weak retail supply, with marginal operators and high vacancy rates, can erode confidence in even a relatively

healthy downtown economy. Downtown Lynchburg clearly has some bright retail spots: strong operators, attractive storefronts and signs, and strong customer bases. However, downtown retail is a shadow of what it used to be due primarily to the decentralization of population, income, and jobs in the Lynchburg region, coupled with the explosion in the region's competitive retail supply.

As long as positive momentum exists downtown, entrepreneurs will continue to be attracted. However, the primary, early revitalization efforts in downtown Lynchburg should continue to focus on building demand for retail by developing housing, arts and cultural destinations, parks, and other initiatives that will re-attract a regional audience to downtown.

As these initiatives are established, targeted retail opportunities will follow: family-oriented impulse food, snacks, and retail near Amazement Square, additional galleries near Riverviews, a cafe or wine bar near the Academy.

Clearly, some latent demand exists. The major employment concentration west of Ninth Street on Main, for example, is capable of supporting additional restaurants and service retail geared to the daytime workforce. Over time, the Community Market should begin to support higher-end retail dealing in antiques, specialty home improvement and home furnishings, and eating and drinking places. Part of the job of a Downtown Manager will be to assist Lynch's Landing and the City in their recruitment efforts to identify and attract suitable retailers to the downtown. These candidates are likely to be local entrepreneurs who have been successful elsewhere in Lynchburg or in other nearby cities and who are receptive to Lynchburg's revitalization story. Lynchburg is not yet ready to pursue national franchises downtown because of the relatively small market share, nor are these businesses necessarily the most consistent with the overall strategy.

10.6 City Property: Disposition and Acquisition

The City Council is interested in minimizing the amount of properties the City owns in the downtown area. However, there are “strategic properties” that the City should consider acquiring to ensure that downtown development follows the Master Plan. Two areas that are of particular importance regarding City control/acquisition are (1) the 1100 block of Main Street and (2) the 1000 block of Church Street.

In the 1100 block of Main Street is a fast food structure with an adjoining parking lot at the corner of Twelfth and Main Streets, currently occupied by Blimpies. This is an important site given its visual prominence and adjacency to the Community Market, City Armory, antique district and the former City Auditorium. A synergy has already been created in this part of downtown with various leisure activities during day and evening hours and weekdays and weekends. The Master Plan calls for an ice-skating rink to complement current activities, but if this does not happen, public ownership will still be necessary to control future development of this site.

In the 1000 block of Church Street stands the former Cooperative Bank building, which is now vacant. The Master Plan calls for a new parking garage on this site to serve City Hall, J & D Court and nearby buildings such as the Ward Building that have limited parking. In addition, this garage would add activity to this underutilized block creating a better connection to Benchmark Co. and the Community Market further beyond. BB&T Bank now owns the property and is interested in selling to the City if parking can be provided to their downtown branch at Tenth and Main Streets.

Concurrently, there are ten vacant structures that the City owns, most of which are planned for sale to the private sector. These properties are planned as follows:

1. The N&W Depot (10 Ninth Street): The Master Plan calls for commercial use with retail/restaurant on first floor and offices/residential on second floor.
2. The Conner Produce Building (12 Ninth Street): The Master Plan calls for demolition to create more parkland.
3. Pride of Virginia Meats Building (1000 Jefferson Street): The Master Plan calls for demolition with the creation of the park, unless a private developer is interested in purchasing and renovating the structure for retail or housing.
4. The Switching Station (near Blackwater Creek): The Master Plan calls for relocation to the new park and used for retail or City function.
5. James T. Davis Building (1225 Main Street): The Master Plan calls for commercial use with retail on the first floor and housing on the upper floors.
6. The Old Tobacco Warehouse (1301 Main Street): The Master Plan calls for commercial use with retail on the first floor and housing on the upper floors.
7. Piggly Wiggly Building (1307 Main Street): The Master Plan calls for commercial use with retail on the first floor and housing on the upper floors.
- 8-10. GE Buildings-718, 720, 724 Commerce Street:
Sold and under renovation for mixed-use development.

10.7 Existing and Proposed Historic Districts

The City currently has five local historic districts surrounding the Central Business District. These include Diamond Hill, Federal Hill, Courthouse Hill, Garland Hill and Daniels Hill. Two are directly linked to the downtown (Diamond Hill and Courthouse Hill), two are within three blocks (Federal Hill and Garland Hill), and one is across Blackwater Creek (Daniels Hill). In order to tie these districts together, it would be important to designate the downtown and riverfront as a local historic district. At present, the area known as the Lower Basin is designated as both a state and national historic district, with the remainder of downtown expected to be designated in January 2001. These designations allow property owners to obtain Historic Tax Credits. Only local designation, however, regulates demolition and design revisions. Given the high number of demolitions in the downtown since the 1950s (nearly 500), it is important to add local designation to the state and national designations. The area has already been professionally surveyed for historic value and has been recommended for local approval by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. City Council is the governing body that approves this designation. Some of the other localities in Virginia with local historic district designation in their downtowns include Fredericksburg, Lexington, Charlottesville, Staunton, and Roanoke. All of these cities have had significant private investments since they were designated as local historic districts and have not experienced "too much government control" in their redevelopment efforts.

10.8 Facade Improvement Program

The City began the Facade Improvement Program in 1997 allocating \$12,000 per year in CDBG funds. Property owners could receive 25% reimbursement with a maximum of \$2,000 per property, as an incentive for facade renovation. In 1999, that figure was increased to \$100,000 per year and funded through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Property owners can now receive 30% reimbursement, with a maximum of \$25,000 per property, for facade renovation costs. To date, nearly \$85,000 has been paid to private investors who have improved their downtown facades.



Lynchburg's facades reflect a rich architectural heritage.

Occupied properties that are a priority for facade restoration in the downtown

include 902 Main Street (leased by CVS), 904 Main Street (leased by CVS), 906 Main Street (leased by Fashion Plus), 812 Main Street (former Baldwin's Department Store), 1026 Main Street (Starlett's Antique Mall), 1023/1027 Main Street (Schewel's Furniture), 911 Main Street (leased by Uptown Fashion), 919 Main Street (leased by The Vault Entertainment Store), 1000 Church Street (Imperial Colliery Co.), 918 Commerce Street (Advertising Design), and 920 Commerce Street (leased by Trevillians Auction Co.).

10.9 Membership in Virginia Main Street Program

For the first time in its fifteen-year history, the Virginia Main Street Program allowed cities with populations over 50,000 to apply for membership in the year 2000. With a population of 66,000, Lynchburg applied and was accepted into the program in June 2000. There are no outright funds provided to the City, but technical and professional expertise on downtown revitalization is provided to the City at no cost to Lynchburg. The four points of the program are based on the National Main Street program and include (1) Design, (2) Economic Restructuring, (3) Promotion and (4) Organization. It is estimated that the City will receive the equivalent of \$150,000 per year in free consulting services from the Virginia Main Street Program staff.

The program requires the hiring of a downtown Executive Director who will work for Lynch's Landing, Inc. and be paid by the City. City Council has committed funding for this position for a minimum of five years, which is the amount of time the City and Lynch's Landing have committed to the Main Street program.

10.10 Creation of a Downtown Foundation

In order for the private sector, individuals, and philanthropic groups to contribute to the downtown/riverfront revitalization effort, a tax-deductible donation vehicle is necessary. This can be done in one of two ways: (1) the creation of a Downtown Foundation, as has been done in other localities such as Staunton, Virginia or (2) the creation of a partnership with a non-profit such as the Lynchburg Historical Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, where donations are channeled for preservation/redevelopment purposes. For downtown/riverfront redevelopment to succeed, clearly donations from non-government sources are going to be a critical component.

10.11 Downtown Investments: Past and Projected

Significant investments have been made in the downtown in the past five years with even more investments planned for the next five years. They are as follows:

1995-2000

- Amazement Square: \$6 million
- Holiday Inn Select: \$2 million
- High Peak Sportswear: \$500,000
- Main Street Eatery: undisclosed
- Craddock-Cunningham: \$500,000
- 1200-1208 Main Street: \$500,000
- Estate Specialists: \$450,000
- Anthony's Salon: \$300,000
- 1222 Main Street: undisclosed
- Lyn-CAG: \$300,000
- Baby B's store: undisclosed
- Circuit Court: \$2.5 million
- Monument Terrace Bldg: \$1.3 million
- General District Court: \$2 million
- Benchmark: \$300,000
- Renaissance Theatre: \$100,000
- 1022 Commerce Street: \$300,000
- 1023 Commerce: \$200,000
- 1100 Commerce Street: \$400,000
- 1104 Commerce: undisclosed
- Dance Theatre of L'burg: \$200,000
- Percival's Is. improvements: \$1.7 million
- TOTAL \$20 million (estimated)

2000-2005 (Projected)

- J. W. Ould: \$9 million
- Parking Garage: \$3 million
- Monument Terrace: \$1.5 million
- Ninth Street: \$2.5 million
- Riverviews: \$4.5 million
- Academy of Music: \$15 million
- Federal Courthouse: undisclosed
- J&D Courthouse: \$7 million
- 723 Jefferson Street: undisclosed
- Bluffwalk Hotel: \$8 million
- Courtland Building: \$2.8 million
- Benchmark: \$500,000
- 1225/1301/1307 Main Street: \$2 mil
- 718, 720, 722, 724 Commerce St.: \$500,000
- \$65 million (estimated)