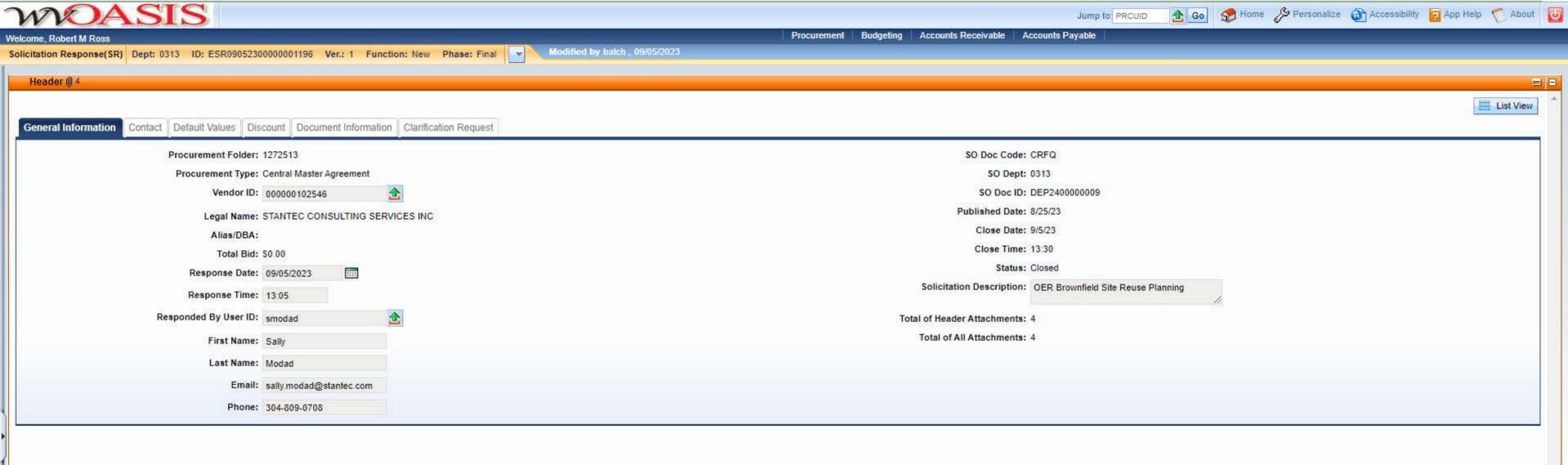


2019 Washington Street, East Charleston, WV 25305 Telephone: 304-558-2306 General Fax: 304-558-6026

Bid Fax: 304-558-3970

The following documentation is an electronically-submitted vendor response to an advertised solicitation from the *West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin* within the Vendor Self-Service portal at *wvOASIS.gov*. As part of the State of West Virginia's procurement process, and to maintain the transparency of the bid-opening process, this documentation submitted online is publicly posted by the West Virginia Purchasing Division at *WVPurchasing.gov* with any other vendor responses to this solicitation submitted to the Purchasing Division in hard copy format.





Department of Administration Purchasing Division 2019 Washington Street East Post Office Box 50130 Charleston, WV 25305-0130

# State of West Virginia Solicitation Response

Proc Folder: 1272513

Solicitation Description: OER Brownfield Site Reuse Planning

Proc Type: Central Master Agreement

 Solicitation Closes
 Solicitation Response
 Version

 2023-09-05 13:30
 SR 0313 ESR09052300000001196
 1

**VENDOR** 

000000102546

STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC

Solicitation Number: CRFQ 0313 DEP2400000009

Total Bid: 0 Response Date: 2023-09-05 Response Time: 13:05:19

Comments:

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT THE BUYER

Joseph E Hager III (304) 558-2306 joseph.e.hageriii@wv.gov

Vendor Signature X

FEIN# DATE

All offers subject to all terms and conditions contained in this solicitation

 Date Printed:
 Sep 5, 2023
 Page: 1
 FORM ID: WV-PRC-SR-001 2020/05

Line	Comm Ln Desc	Qty	Unit Issue	Unit Price	Ln Total Or Contract Amount
1	Brownfield Site Redevelopment Plan				0.00

Comm Code	Manufacturer	Specification	Model #	
77101700				

# **Commodity Line Comments:**

# **Extended Description:**

Development of Site Reuse Planning for potential redevelopment opportunities at brownfield sites throughout West Virginia

 Date Printed:
 Sep 5, 2023
 Page: 2
 FORM ID: WV-PRC-SR-001 2020/05





Wellsburg Bridge Quality Assurance Management (QAM) Services Wellsburg, West Virginia



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ATTACHMENT A: SAMPLE SITE REUSE PLANS (3)

Clear communication builds strong relationships, ones where we are all moving in the same direction to ensure a project's success.



Highmark West Virginia Parkersburg, West Virginia



September 5, 2023

Department of Administration Purchasing Division 2019 Washington Street East Post Office Box 50130 Charleston, WV 25305-0130

RE: Proposal for Brownfields Site Reuse Planning Solicitation No. CRFQ 0313 DEP240000009

Dear Mr. Joseph E. Hager III and Selection Committee,

Stantec appreciates the opportunity to submit our response to the request for qualifications (RFQ) for the State of West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP), Office of Environmental Remediation (OER), for the Site Reuse Planning project. We understand that this RFQ will establish authorized vendors to reply to requests for bids for the development of Site Reuse Planning for potential redevelopment opportunities at brownfield sites throughout West Virginia. We further understand the established terms and conditions described in Solicitation No. CRFQ-0313-DEP2400000009 issued August 16, 2023.

The state of West Virginia has a proud history of redevelopment .....and resilient people .....Our team brings a variety of experience in West Virginia redevelopment with a comprehensive skill set to tackle any site challenge. We have brought together a team of qualified and experienced staff to work with the West Virginia Office of Environmental Remediation who are committed to supporting brownfields revitalization for communities left behind by declining industry; focusing on sites impacting disadvantaged communities in areas that lack resources or capacity to pursue brownfields funds.

**We have the experience.** Our team is made up of highly diverse and qualified professionals who provide a multi-disciplinary approach in delivering architectural and engineering services. We have successfully performed a wide variety of services for public- and private-sector clientele throughout the nation.

**We are local:** Our Bluefield, Virginia office has been serving West Virginia clients for over 30 years, including providing environmental assessments for OER's brownfield program since 2021. Our Bluefield office is supported by our offices in Charleston and Bridgeport, West Virginia, 10 additional offices in Virginia, three in Kentucky, and nine in Pennsylvania. Additionally, we can offer supporting staff from outside of the local region, as needed. We understand the local regulatory drivers, environmental factors, and community needs and the unique challenges they present.

We are confident you will see in our approach and project experience that we are the right team to assist you. We know many of the communities, we know the region, and we understand your brownfield redevelopment and economic development goals. We also understand the important role these projects will play in accessing and securing future federal funding. Thank you for considering our team for this important effort.

Sincerely,

**Stantec Consulting Services Inc.** 

1-141 Mas

Joe Morici, P.E.

Project Manager Brownfields Redevelopment Cell: (803) 960-2069 joseph.morici@stantec.com **Vince Alaimo** 

Principal Business Unit Leader

Office: (804) 412-6538 | Cell: (804) 240-1352

vince.alaimo@stantec.com



West Virginia University - Advanced Engineering Research Building Morgantown, West Virginia



# **Executive Summary**

# WHO WE ARE

### A Team of Professionals Assembled Just for You!

# A global firm with a strong national and local presence

Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec) is a publicly traded/owned Top 10 Global Design Firm (ENR, 2023) with exceptional local strength, knowledge, and relationships. Established in 1954, the Stantec community unites approximately 28,000 employees working in more than 400 locations across six continents. Our work—environmental sciences, engineering, architecture, planning, project management, and project economics, from initial project concept through design, construction, and management—begins at the intersection of community, creativity, and client relationships. With a long-term commitment to the people and places we serve, our staff can connect to projects on a personal level and through these projects, work towards advancing the quality of life in communities across the globe.

In 2021, Stantec acquired Cardno, a renowned environmental consulting firm that was a local market leader in Brownfield Grant assistance, brownfield site assessment, and reuse planning. Joining Stantec has allowed local former Cardno staff to integrate significant additional resources, increasing both our capacity and expertise. Stantec is now a leading consulting firm in brownfields and asset transformation locally, regionally, and nationally.

We collaborate across disciplines to bring environmental, community development, architectural, and infrastructure projects to life. We offer seamless integration of design disciplines to transform communities and enhance their economic competitiveness, livability, and resilience.

Our project implementation approach is focused on results-oriented brownfields redeveloopment planning. We incorporate lessons learned from over 25 years of experience with the EPA Brownfields Program and decades of experience in planning and design.

We have the experience needed to meet and exceed the OER's goals for this contract. Stantec has experience working on hundreds of asset transformation program EPA brownfields projects throughout the United States, most of which included site reuse and/or area-wide planning activities. **Figure 1** shows where Stantec has performed these EPA Brownfield Grant projects.

**Joe Morici, P.E.** will serve as Stantec's Primary Manager for this contract. His contact information follows:

Primary Contact: Joe Morici Cell: (803) 960-2069 joseph.morici@stantec.com

**Vince Alaimo** will serve as Stantec's Emergency contact for this contract. His contact information follows:

Emergency Contact: Vince Alaimo Office: (804) 412-6538 | Cell: (804) 240-1352 vince.alaimo@stantec.com

Vince understands that the emergency contact is responsible for any staffing issues that may arise outside of normal business hours. He also understands that any calls must be answered or responded to within 2 hours on any given day or time.



# **Qualifications**

Communities are fundamental. Whether around the corner or across the globe, they provide a foundation, a sense of place and of belonging. That's why at Stantec, we always design with community in mind.

At Stantec we know that strong communities don't just happen. They are creatively visioned and collaboratively planned to realize their fullest potential. We take our promise to design with community in mind straight to the hearts of cities and towns. Whether we're bringing new life to a rural setting, transforming a brownfield site into a valuable asset, or developing a new place for families to grow, we balance the needs of today with a passion for the future. Our approach is focused on revitalization opportunities and helping our clients to form a clear vision for redevelopment and reuse. We transform land into places that feel like they belong there. We create spaces that respond to the land and the people who use them. We do this because we're a part of the community too, and we care about the places where we live as much as you do.

Our local strength, knowledge, and relationships, coupled with our national expertise, allow us to meet our clients' needs in more creative and personalized ways. We are results driven, so keeping a project on time and on budget from the outset is the way we like to work. From long-range planning to actionable step-by-step plan development, we treat each community's needs as our own.

Your project manager, **Joe Morici, P.E.,** has been helping communities in West Virginia solve brownfield challenges since 2018. He is a professional engineer with over 28 years of experience

in engineering and project management. He leads the regional efforts to collaborate with local governments to develop Brownfield programs in their communities. He understands the value of reuse planning and the ability well-crafted plans can assist communities in identifying and securing additional funding to accomplish their goals.

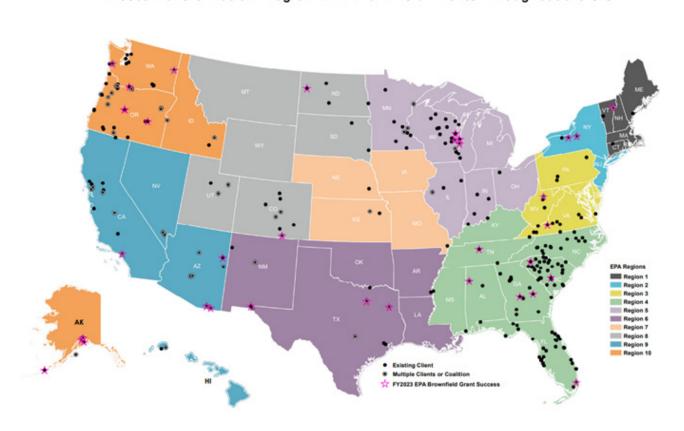
Our team knows that Brownfields Redevelopment planning is an integral tool in community revitalization and has a depth of experience and skill sets to help meet each communities unique revitalization goals. Our project team will bring the following qualifications to each project and challenge presented to them:

# **Brownfield Site Reuse Planning**

The ultimate goal of reuse and redevelopment is the core mission of the EPA Brownfields program. Combined, our team has 25 years of experience implementing successful brownfield grants through out the country, most of which include brownfields site reuse planning services. Your lead brownfields redevelopment planner, Kaitlyn Woolard, brings 11 years of design experience and 6 years of direct brownfields redevelopment planning **experience** to her projects. Project types include small site specific redevelopments, large assemblage redevelopment master plans, corridor redevelopment plans, and area wide redevelopment plans. Brownfield site reuse planning begins with a comprehensive understanding of existing conditions, site due diligence, and analysis to understand constraints and redevelopment opportunities. The community and/or stakeholders are then engaged to gain project support and guidance to ensure the design best serves the community need. Once we understand the feasibility of the project site for the intended use, our team will

Figure 1

# Asset Transformation Program EPA Brownfield Clients Throughout the U.S.



design and vision the proposed project through site layout design and supporting graphics. Our team understands that each project is unique and presents its own set of both environmental and community challenges, and as such we have put together a team with expertise that can tackle any redevelopment planning need.

# Graphic Design and Landscape Renderings

Vibrant project graphics communicate the redevelopment vision to the community and are important in gaining stakeholder/ community support as well as advancing projects for additional funding and implementation. Our team includes planners and landscape architects proficient in producing graphics that effectively communicate redevelopment design intent. Combined, the design and planning team bring decades of graphic production and landscape rendering experience to each project. Kaitlyn Woolard will lead the design team on site specific redevelopment renderings. Renderings may include illustrative site plan concepts, section and elevation renderings, ground level perspective renderings, birds eye perspective renderings and 3D model fly through renderings as necessary to best communicate the design intent of the project. Other graphic documents produced by our team include, but are not limited to brochures, flyer's, planning reports, and project websites to support community engagement and individual project needs.

### **Historical Research**

Revitalization often involves the redevelopment of historic places and buildings. Your historical research team will be led by Historian, Lucy Jones, and Architectural Historian Christopher Quirk. Christopher is a registered architect with over 33 years of experience in design, construction, and project development. Mr. Quirk will bring his experience in detailed historic preservation investigations, building condition audits, and historic structure reports to meet the needs of each brownfield redevelopment project. Lucy Jones brings 25 years of experience researching local history and the built environment to brownfield projects and meets the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications standards in architectural history and history. She evaluates the significance of buildings, subdivisions, designed landscapes, bridges, and other

historic resources in support of project planning and permitting. Her project experience includes cultural resources surveys as part of low-income housing tax credit program environmental effects reports, National Register nominations for federal historic tax credit applications, and mitigation of adverse effects to historic properties for EPA Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program's Cleanup Grants. As a historian, she regularly prepares historic contexts and land use histories for environmental permitting of redevelopment projects. She also works with Stantec's archaeologists to identify and delineate abandoned African American cemeteries for clients that include developers, municipalities, and transportation agencies.

# **Community Outreach and Involvement**

A comprehensive community engagement plan is integral to the successful implementation of any brownfields planning project. Effective engagement throughout the planning and design process ensures successful project implementation and long term community support. Our team has worked to refine the most effective tools to support community engagement in our brownfields and planning projects. Your project manager, Joe Morici has nearly 20 years of experience engaging the community in the implementation of brownfield grants for communities. Your lead redevelopment planner, Kaitlyn Woolard, has 11 years of **experience** engaging stakeholder, focus groups, and community members in the design and planning process for both site specific and area wide brownfield redevelopment plans. Our preferred methods of engagement include both in person and virtual tools to ensure all community members have an opportunity to provide input. Virtual platforms, such as SocialPinpoint have served our clients as an online engagement platform for use in surveys, mapping exercises, and community visioning. Additionally, we use platforms like SocialPinpoint to also function as the project websites in which the community can stay informed throughout the lifecycle of the project.







# City of Bluefield 400 Block Redevelopment

City of Bluefield WV

Stantec assisted the City of Bluefield, WV with establishing a brownfield program in coalition with the Town of Bluefield Industrial Development Authority and the Town of Bluefield, VA. The goal of the brownfield grant was to address multiple blighted properties, environmental contamination and overall community revitalization needs. The highest priority for the City of Bluefield,WV was to revitalize their 400 block, which sits at the heart of the downtown core. Entire city block included 6 blighted vacant building with contamination and structural issues

As a key catalyst property in heart of downtown Bluefield, WV, Stantec worked with the city Economic Development staff to develop concept sketches to aid in the redevelopment visioning of the 400 block. The main needs identified by the city were to preserve a public space the currently sat at the north end of the property, while offering much needed surface parking, and create an aesthetically pleasing space that was inviting and helped foster new business growth in the surrounding properties. Five concept iterations were developed for the cities consideration. Concept A preserved the existing park space and developed the remaining site into a parking lot. Concept B removed the existing park and proposed the entire property for parking and flexible event space, and Concept C offered a structured parking opportunity which included mixed use development with new commercial spaces.

The redevelopment Concepts were presented to and approved by the City of Bluefield Economic Development Board and the City is taking the next steps toward implementation including obtaining a\$500k EPA Cleanup Grant for asbestos abatement in 2022. Additionally, they leveraged the

work completed under the Assessment and Cleanup grants to win a \$500k Shott Foundation Grant, paired with \$500k of ARPA funding, to demolish the building and put the site back into productive reuse.





Project Schedule: 2020 - ongoing

**Project Owner:** City of Bluefield, West Virginia **Project Team:** Joe Morici, Kaitlyn Woolard



# Nassawadox Redevelopment Plan

Northampton County, Virginia

Since 2017, Stantec has provided brownfield consulting services to Northampton County, Virginia, including supporting two EPA Brownfield Assessment grants, several grants from the Virginia Brownfields Assistance Fund, and others sources. In 2023, Stantec completed the Northampton County Revitalization Project Feasibility Study for the Town of Nassawadox, which was funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. The study focused on an in-depth analysis of the former Shore Memorial Hospital site, which closed in 2016. The brownfield site has been vacant since the closure, and the owner recently decided to demolish the existing buildings to prepare the site for reuse. The Stantec study is intended to help inform the owner and the County on potential viable redevelopment options, which also fit within the community's needs and goals.

The analysis included desktop research and site visits to help gather insight into the existing conditions of the property and surrounding area. More specifically, the analysis examined the following:

- Physical conditions of the site, including water capacity.
- Nearby properties and associated uses (i.e., residential, commercial, and industrial uses).
- Market conditions of the Town and surrounding area (i.e., jobs, housing demands, and retail market).
- Demographics to help determine population trends in the Town and surrounding area.

The study was developed over a two-month period and included a robust engagement process with residents, property owners, elected officials, and community stakeholders. The project team used the existing conditions information and input gathered from engagement efforts to layout the vision for the future site. Stantec created illustrative design layouts of the site, including recommendations for the different types and location of future land uses (i.e., residential, recreational/open space and retail), future infrastructure and road networks.

Project Year: June - August 2023

Project Owner: Northampton County, Virginia

Project Team: Joe Morici, John Bachmann, Jason Beske, Andrew

McCray, and Jay Demma



# **Bluefield Redevelopment**

Bluefield, Virginia

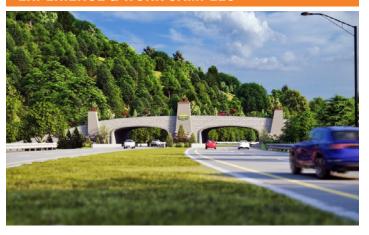
Stantec assisted the Town of Bluefield (pop. 5,000) with establishing a brownfield program to address multiple brownfield sites in the area. We secured a state grant in the amount of \$42,500 to complete Phase I and II environmental site assessments immediately on the Town's priority site – the former Bluefield Iron and Metal property. The VBAF grant allowed the Town to complete the due diligence and continuing care obligations under CERCLA while acquiring the property for future economic development. Meanwhile, we facilitated the development of a successful EPA Brownfields Coalition Assessment grant application for \$600,000 with the City of Bluefield, West Virginia, and the Bluefield Industrial Development Authority as partners.

Under the Brownfields Coalition Assessment grant Stantec completed a master plan for the revitalization of the downtown district in the Town of Bluefield, VA. Stantec began the project with a kickoff meeting to establish project goals and stakeholders. A steering committee of community and business leaders was formed to guide Stantec's team in the planning process. Stantec's team met with town staff and the steering committee, completed a physical assessment of downtown, understand challenges and opportunities, and identify key catalytic redevelopment sites. A townhall meeting was held after the kickoff meeting to inform the community of the project and obtain initial feedback. Additionally, several stakeholders were interviewed included elected officials and business owners, to gain context for the current state of downtown needs. The existing conditions and community engagement were used to drive physical redevelopment concepts the address the needs of the public realm. The redevelopment concepts addressed streetscape and catalyst redevelopment sites, informed by community input and market needs.

These concepts were presented to the public in an open house style format at the local coffee shop, one of the most successful downtown businesses. The team conducted a comprehensive market analysis that identified market-based opportunities for downtown business support, expansion, and recruitment, as well as opportunities for investment, and related funding sources. The team also reviewed land use and organizational hurdles that hinder downtown development.

Project Year: January - August 2023 Project Owner: Bluefield, Virginia Project Team: Kaitlyn Woolard, Joe Morici

# **EXPERIENCE & WORK SAMPLES**



# Red River Gorge Regional Tourism Strategy

Powell, Lee, Menifee, and Wolfe Counties, Kentucky

The Red River Gorge of Eastern Kentucky is an area of incredible beauty, unique geology, and rare biological diversity. In recognition of the region's tourism potential and economic challenges, Red River Economic Development charged Stantec with developing a regional tourism strategy for the four-county (Lee, Menifee, Powell, and Wolfe) area. The strategy reflects the belief that future tourism development in the Gorge should be driven by principles based on sustainable economic development, natural resource protection, creating better job opportunities for residents, consistency with the character of the region, and achieving balance between carrying capacity of the land and facilities with the demands of tourism. Additionally, the strategy highlights the understanding that cooperative partnerships between the county tourism boards, city and county governments, utilities, federal and state agencies, and advocacy organizations will be essential to achieving success on a regional scale.

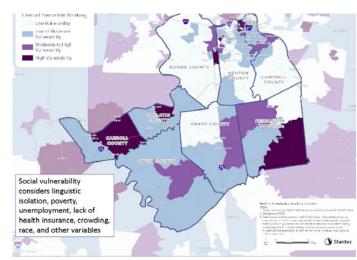
Development of the Regional Tourism Strategy was based on the results of the Preliminary Analysis and Opportunities Report. Serving as a foundation for the Regional Tourism Strategy, this report detailed current conditions for transportation, utility infrastructure, telecommunications and broadband, geology, and environmental features. The report also includes a market and economic analysis that highlights key economic and tourism drivers in Eastern Kentucky and the four-county study area as well as the existing market conditions in Red River Gorge area. This analysis informs an understanding of the gaps in the market as well as the role a destination resort could play in supporting economic growth in the four-county study area.

Implementation of the Regional Tourism Strategy will be the responsibility of key stakeholders engaged throughout out the planning process. This project was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic which required extensive on-line engagement that relied heavily on Zoom meetings and webinars as well as Social Pinpoint for surveys, interactive mapping, and public forums. The Regional Tourism Strategy and supporting documents can be found at <a href="http://www.redriverky.com/regionaltourismstrategy">http://www.redriverky.com/regionaltourismstrategy</a>.

Project Year: 2019-2021

**Project Owner:** Red River Economic Development, LLC

Project Team: John Bucher



# **Northern Kentucky Housing Analysis**

Northern Kentucky Area Development District

Northern Kentucky needed an impartial and in-depth analysis of their housing stock deficiencies in light of a rapid population and employment growth. The client consists of 8 counties that range from urban to suburban to rural, each with their own characteristics and needs. To create a detailed picture of the housing supply and population demographics, the team employed big data resources, including ReplicaHQ, Census, ACS, PUMS, Warren Group, Woods & Poole, CoStar, Apartments.com, Padmapper.com within a sophisticated yet transparent methodology.

The analysis' results and recommendations point the way towards housing gaps at certain income levels and housing size by bedroom, as well as preferred locations for future development that leverage existing services and infrastructure and a toolkit of policies and strategies to advance housing development.

We analyzed the housing market and demographic trends to understand the current needs of the community. We forecasted housing demand based on employment and population growth and evaluate the future housing supply needs. We identified high priority locations for housing development based upon existing services and infrastructure as well as known hazards and undevelopable land. We identified the factors that contribute to the housing gap and develop strategies to address them.

Based on our analytical findings and input from stakeholders and the community, we developed a broad menu of candidate strategic opportunities, identified case studies and best practices to communicate what the opportunities are, how they build on work that is already being done, what resources they may require, and what impact they might have. These strategies are now the subject of further research and stakeholder engagement yielding an action agenda for each strategy, paired with examples of case studies or best practices from other locations We are working with the NKADD, community, and key stakeholders to elevate the most immediately impactful and urgent strategies into an action plan for near-term implementation. These top-priority strategies will be documented in more detail.

Project Year: 2023 - ongoing

Project Owner: Northern Kentucky Area Development District

Project Team: Nels Nelson



# Tarboro Area Wide Plan

Tarboro, North Carolina

In 2021, Stantec was engaged by the Town of Tarboro (pop. 10,000) to provide land use planning, urban design, and environmental planning services under their EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. The project was an Area Wide Planning effort, focusing on the revitalization and redevelopment of its downtown commercial core and adjacent areas. The area wide planning project aimed to address brownfield site redevelopment needs, identify adaptive reuse opportunities, improve the public realm to support business growth and identify areas for both public and private investment. Tarboro is a rural community, located approximately 60 miles east of Raleigh, with rich history and character, but struggling with population and business decline. In the past several years, new investment opportunities have come to Tarboro due to the growth of neighboring areas, but the town lacked a vision and strategy to move forward.

Through the Area Wide Plan project, Stantec developed a community engagement plan, including town hall meetings, design workshops, stakeholder interviews, and a steering committee to help guide the plans decisions and progress. The community engagement plan also encouraged online participation to reach a broader community group through tools such as Social Pinpoint and the use of social media for feedback and surveys. Through thorough engagement and analysis of existing conditions, the team drafted urban design concepts to address the needs of the public realm, prioritize public investment, and activate existing public space. The design concepts were presented to the public for input and feedback prior to the final presentation for Town Council. The final report offers a unified vision for the Towns future growth and investment, redevelopment design concepts, and a recommendation strategy board for use in tracking progress during plan implementation. The strategies identified timeframes, priorities, partners, and funding sources to ensure a successful implementation.

**Project Year:** May 2022 - May 2023 (est.) **Project Owner:** Town of Tarboro, NC

Project Team: Kaitlyn Woolard, John Bachmann, and Andrew

McCrav



# **Headwaters Nature Preserve**

College Park, GA

Stantec worked with the City of College Park to obtain an \$800,000 multipurpose grant to assess and cleanup a blighted green space with great potential on the edge of the city. City staff along with their development partners Finding the Flint and the Conservation Fund, developed a vision to convert a former MARTA detention basin into a Nature Preserve and Park to serve the south metro-Atlanta community.

Originally a cotton mill, the site was redeveloped to a stormwater detention facility for a nearby MARTA station, and then left untouched for many years. The project site, located on 8 acres of vacant land, was inaccessible to the public and full of invasive species. Our brownfields redevelopment project team was tasked with taking an underutilized stormwater facility and transforming it into the College Parks first nature preserve, an urban oasis for an undeserved community.

The proposed park included restoration of 960LF of the Flint River headwaters stream, removal of 3 acres of invasive species, environmental restoration, and the creation of wetlands, native meadows, and a pollinator garden. The park program included walking trails, a multi-use path, wetland boardwalks, wildlife viewing platforms, parking facilities, and an outdoor classroom. The park design was informed by community engagement and collaboration with local stakeholders. Community engagement included numerous site tours, a neighborhood desigin workshop, and neighboring high school design charrette, and a local college on site engagement event, At 30% design development, the project team is assisting College Park to pursue the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship grant program to fund final design and construction, for project completion in 2025. In addition the project has gained national support at the House Appropriations Committee level for implementation and is awaiting funding to kickoff the first phase of development including concrete channel demolition and stream restoration.

Project Year: 2020 - ongoing

Project Owner: City of College Park, GA

Project Team: Kaitlyn Woolard, Amy Worsham, and James Douglass

# **Project Team**

The organizational chart below lists our team's key personnel who will be involved with this project. You'll find brief resumes for the individuals listed starting on the following page.





**Joe Morici,** P.E.
Project Manager
Brownfields Redevelopment

"I am excited about the opportunity to assist communities across West Virginia with vital site reuse and area-wide planning projects. I have seen firsthand how creating a consensus around a community-based vision can lead to beneficial changes in a community. Whether it's a new community amenity or a private mixed-use development, the projects are always unique to each community. I look forward to helping each community create their own vision."

### **Education**

M.S., Industrial and Systems Engineering, University of Florida

B.S., Mechanical Engineering, Virginia Polytechnic and State University

### Registrations

Professional Engineer #02966, State of Georgia Joe is a professional engineer with over 28 years of experience in engineering and project management. He leads the regional efforts to collaborate with local governments to develop Brownfield programs in their communities. This includes identifying potential project sites, developing community support, authoring successful grant applications, developing work plans, and identifying, obtaining, and leveraging multiple sources of funding. Once awarded, Mr. Morici actively manages the Brownfield projects, which include identifying and prioritizing potential sites, completing environmental site assessments, conducting community outreach and public involvement activities, developing clean-up and remediation designs, overseeing clean-up and remediation activities, and facilitating redevelopment planning. For each project, he partners with the client to develop a tailored solution to ensure the project meets the both the short-term and long-term needs of the client.

# **Relevant Project Experience:**

 Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Brownfields Assessment Projects | Richmond, Virginia | Project Manager

Stantec has been working with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality as their Brownfields Project Manager since 2018. Stantec completed a \$400,000 brownfields assessment project focused on the six-county area of the Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission, where over \$500,000 of additional funds were leveraged for cleanup and redevelopment. Our team also supported community engagement and redevelopment planning activities under the project. Stantec is currently supporting VDEQ with the implementation of a \$300,000 grant focused on the three-county area of the Southside Planning District Commission and a \$2 million statewide grant. Stantec is again providing support with community engagement, redevelopment planning, and environmental site assessments.

Danville Brownfields Assessment Projects | Danville, Virginia | Project Manager

The City hired Stantec to assist with a wide range of brownfield environmental assessment and planning services, including pursuing and implementing various state and federal brownfield grants. Stantec pursued and won a \$300,000 fiscal year 2019 U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant for Danville. These funds have been instrumental with the successful redevelopment of the former Dan River Mills, White Mill and Schoolfield sites. The funds were used to perform Phase I and II environmental site assessments, which provided developers clarity regarding the environmental conditions of the sites. The projects that came to fruition are large transformative projects for the community. Caesars Entertainment selected the Schoolfield site for a \$500 million casino, hotel, convention center, and entertainment venue. The White Mill site is being redeveloped into a \$85 million mixed use residential/retail development that will serve as a focal point for the City's riverfront redevelopment. Stantec assisted the IDA and developer with guiding the White Mill site through the Virginia Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP). Stantec completed additional environmental site assessments, including soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment sampling as well as sub-slab soil gas and vapor intrusion assessments. Stantec then completed a quantitative human health risk assessment and a remedial action plan to implement engineering controls over areas of soil contamination to ensure the safe reuse of the site. Stantec also developed a Soil and Groundwater Management to guide construction contractors.

- Bluefield Coalition Brownfields Assessment Project | Bluefield, Virginia | Project Manager
- Southwest Virginia Brownfields Assessment Project | Blacksburg, Virginia | Project Manager
- Altavista Brownfields Assessment Project | Altavista, Virginia | Project Manager
- City of Salisbury Brownfields Assessment and Grant Assistance Implementation Project | Salisbury, North Carolina | Project Manager
- Town of Robbins Brownfields Site Assessment and Grant Assistance Implementation Project | Robbins, North Carolina | Project Manager
- Guest River Coalition Brownfields Project | Virginia | Project Manager



**Kaitlyn Woolard,** PLA Landscape Architect Brownfields Asset Transformation

# **Education**

BLA, Landscape Architecture (Minor in Public and Urban Affairs), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia

# Registrations

Landscape Architect #0406002190, Commonwealth of Virginia LA registration in West Virginia underway

Landscape Architect Kaitlyn has an extensive background in planning, design, and implementation of projects throughout the mid-atlantic and southeast. She collaborates with teams of landowners, surveyors, planners, engineers, and municipal staff for project types spanning from single-family and multi-family residential development, commercial development, and parks and recreation to brownfields redevelopment planning and community visioning. Her professional experience has equipped her with a skill set to proficiently conduct due diligence, site analysis, site feasibility studies, and yield sketch plans that help guide many clients' key project decisions. She is proficient in preparing sketch plans, rezoning plans, street corridor studies, future land use plans, and downtown master plans as well as at conducting community meetings for municipalities.

# **Relevant Project Experience:**

- Downtown Master Plan | Town of Bluefield, Virginia, USA | Landscape Architect
- Jamestown Redevelopment | College Park, Georgia | Landscape Architect
- Greenwood Foundry Park | South Carolina | Landscape Architect
- Commercial Mixed-use Master Plan | College Park, Georgia | Landscape Architect
- City of Allendale Revitalization Plan | Allendale, South Carolina | Landscape Architect
- 400 Block Redevelopment | Bluefield, West Virginia | Landscape Designer
- Long Street Corridor Study | East Spencer, North Carolina | Landscape Designer
- City of Abbeville Downtown Revitalization Plan | Abbeville, South Carolina | Landscape Architect
- Marks Creek Industrial Park | Hamlet, North Carolina | Landscape Designer



**Amy Worsham,** AICP Brownfields Asset Transformation Leader

### **Education**

M.A., Urban and Regional Planning, University of Florida B.S., Sustainability and the Built Environment, University of Florida

# Registrations

Certified Planner #30963, American Institute of Certified Planners

Amy Worsham is a Principal and the Brownfields Asset Transformation Leader for Stantec's South Region. She is a Certified Planner, and her educational and professional background in sustainability, urban planning, geology, grant writing, and grant management makes her uniquely qualified in assisting public and private sector clients with planning and redevelopment, particularly in environmentally impacted areas. Amy guides development from the initial planning and due diligence process through engineering and securing grant funding to help make projects a reality. She knows that community support, resiliency, sustainability, infill, and transit are key complementary components to ensure successful redevelopment. As such, she works as a liaison between clients, the community, environmental regulatory agencies, and design professionals to guide projects to the construction stage. Amy has assisted public and nonprofit clients in securing and implementing federal funding, and has assisted both private and public sector clients in securing state and local funding.

- State of Florida Brownfields Program\* | Florida | Project Manager
- Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments\* | Florida | Project Manager
- Brownfields Assessment, Programmatic Support, and/or Management Services\* | Florida | Project Manager
- Superfund Site Management\* | Tampa, Florida | Project Manager
- Superfund Site Management\* | Tarpon Springs, Florida | Project Manager
- Assessment/ Remediation/ Regulatory Closure\* | St. Petersburg, Florida | Project Professional for the design, management, and implementation



**John Bachmann,** AICP Planning and Land Use

### **Education**

M.A., City Planning, University of California M.A., Architecture, University of California B.A., Architecture, Yale University

John is a city and regional planner specializing in the integrated of spatial and infrastructure planning in urbanizing districts. Much of his experiences focuses on creating walkable, vibrant mixeduse places that promote quality of life and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. John has prepared affordable housing policies and programs that promote the development of a broad range of multifamily housing types scaled to the surrounding urban context. He has led the preparation of urban infrastructure investment programs comprising over US\$4 billion in roads, transit, water supply, sewerage, stormwater, and district energy improvements.

# **Relevant Project Experience:**

- Technology and Connectivity Chapter, Prince William County Comprehensive Plan\* | Prince William County, Virginia | Smart Cities Policy Specialist
- Lee Highway Planning Study\* | Arlington, Virginia | Project Director/ Housing Specialist
- Triangle Small Area Plan\* | Prince William County, Virginia | Project Director/ Urban Planner
- Ningbo New Countryside Development Project\* | China | Urban Development Specialist
- Pimlico/Park Heights Redevelopment Project\* | Baltimore, Maryland | Urban Planner
- District of Columbia Schools Master Facilities Plan\* | District of Columbia | Project Director
- Green Cities Action Planning\* | Vietnam | Team Leader
- NEOM\* | Saudi Arabia | Delivery Planner



**Jason Beske,** AICP Planning and Land Use

### **Education**

M.S.C.R.P. , Community and Regional Planning, Iowa State University

B.S., Community and Regional Planning, Iowa State University

# Registrations

Certified Planner #020374, American Institute of Certified Planners

A senior urban designer focused on the opportunities and challenges facing suburbs in North America, Jason has managed projects ranging from large-scale comprehensive plans and civic engagement initiatives to neighborhood master plans and site plans for high-profile sites. His extensive experience in planning for the federal and local governments offers comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the planning and urban design process from multiple perspectives. Jason serves as Adjunct Professor at Virginia Tech's National Capital Region campus and authored "Repurposing Retail Centers: Profiles in Adaptation, Repositioning and Redevelopment" (NAIOP Research Foundation - 2019) and "Suburban Remix: Creating the Next Generation of Urban Places" (Island Press - February 2018), which examines the rise of walkable urbanism in the new suburban era. Community engagement, placemaking, and social equity are the core of his planning and urban design practice and teaching.

- Farmers Branch | Texas | Land Use/ Design Lead
- West Annapolis Master Plan | Annapolis, Maryland | Project Manager
- Lyndale Avenue Suburban Retrofit Strategy | Bloomington, Minnesota | Project Manager
- Lee's Summit Comprehensive Plan | Annapolis, Maryland | Project Manager
- Moorhead Center Mall Master Plan | Moorhead, Minnesota | Land Use Lead
- Annapolis Ahead On-Call Planning Services | Annapolis, Maryland | Urban Planner/ Urban Designer
- Ignite! Lee's Summit Comprehensive Plan | Lee's Summit, Missouri | Senior Urban Designer



# **Andrew McCray**

Urban Planner

### **Education**

M.S., Urban and Regional Planning, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University B.S., Civil Engineering, South Carolina State University

### Registrations

Certified Planner #34572, American Institute of Certified Planners

Andrew McCray is an Urban Planner in Stantec's Urban Places Arlington, VA office and a native of Paterson, NJ. Before joining Stantec, Andrew spent most of his professional career working for local municipalities, including emerging rust belt cities like Pittsburgh, PA, and growing suburbs like Prince George's County, MD. His work experience includes developing comprehensive long-range plans that address challenges related to Suburban Retrofit, Downtown/Neighborhood Revitalization, and Transit-Oriented Development. Andrew also has an extensive background in affordable housing policy and public engagement. During his tenure with the City of Pittsburgh, he helped advance critical planning efforts, including developing an Inclusionary Zoning Interim Planning Overlay District and a Public Engagement Guide and Toolkit to improve the city's public engagement efforts. Overall, he believes that planning efforts should be equitable and focused on creating places that help elevate the lives of the people there.

### **Relevant Project Experience:**

- Petersburg Pocahontas Island | Petersburg, Virginia | Urban Planner
- Downtown Tarboro Area Wide Plan | Tarboro, North Carolina | Urban Planner
- Adelphi Road University of Maryland Global Campus -University of Maryland Sector Plan | Maryland | Senior Planner
- Bowie-Mitchellville and Vicinity Master Plan | Maryland | Deputy Project Manager
- Northampton County Revitalization Project | Northampton County, Virginia | Urban Planner
- East Frederick Form-Based Code | Frederick, Maryland | Urban Planner

# George Robertson, LRS

Brownfields Remediation Planning

### **Education**

M.S., Geomorphology, Louisiana State University B.S., Geology, James Madison University

# Registrations

Remediation Specialist #62, West Virginia Class B UST #B276, West Virginia Monitoring Well Driller, #268, West Virginia

George Robertson has extensive success performing all phases of environmental investigation and remediation at industrial and commercial sites including pipeline, transportation, bulk storage, retail, mine, chemical and manufacturing facilities. He has planned, managed, and performed numerous Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments including due diligence investigations for potential property acquisitions. George has extensive experience developing human health and ecological risk assessments, site assessments, and corrective action plans. His experience encompasses the remediation of volatiles, semivolatiles, metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, and herbicides. His expertise includes fate and transport modeling of impacted groundwater, vapor, and leachate. George has extensive experience working within and navigating through regulatory programs.

- West Virginia Voluntary Remediation Program, Bulk Oil Storage Facilities | Huntington and Charleston, West Virginia | Project Manager/ Hydrogeologist/ Licensed Remediation Specialist
- Chemical Leaman West Virginia Voluntary Remediation Program, Chemical Lagoon | Scary Creek, West Virginia | Hydrogeologist/ Lead Remediation Specialist
- Environmental Remediation Projects at Bulk Storage Facilities | Huntington, Charleston, Boomer, Westover, and Parkersburg, West Virginia | Project Manager/ Hydrogeologist
- Norfolk Southern Railway Company: West Virginia DEP Voluntary Remediation Program, Lease Facility | West Virginia | Project Manager/ Hydrogeologist
- Risk Based and Non-Risk Based Closure of Leaking UST Sites | Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky | Project Manager/ Hydrogeologist



# John Keczan

Brownfields Remediation Planner

# **Education**

B.S., Architectural Engineering Technology (ARET), Bluefield State College (University)

John Keczan manages and oversees remediation and construction projects and conducts field activities for environmental remediation projects with an emphasis on incorporating corporate and client safety requirements in all activities. He has performed all activities related to the removal of underground storage tanks at various sites in Virginia and West Virginia, and all phases of commercial and residential building and construction projects, including project supervision, design and design modification, carpentry, electrical wiring, plumbing, woodworking, and equipment operation. He has also provided construction and site management at wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater system upgrades, locomotive fueling platform upgrades, fueling delivery systems, and installation of remediation recovery trenches. John coordinates with contractors and subcontractors on construction and environmental projects, serves as a liaison between design engineers and owners to address field changes that affect construction process and costs, and ensures that specifications and plans are followed and schedules are maintained, while also reviewing and managing change order requests. He regularly prepares proposals and bid packages.

### **Relevant Project Experience:**

- West Virginia DEP Brownfields Environmental Assessment Services | West Virginia | Project Manager
- Knox & Son Oil Company | Wise, Virginia | Site Work Technician
- Blue Ridge Discover Center | Troutdale, Virginia | Site Work Technician
- Millwald Theater | Wytheville, Virginia | Abatement Oversight
- Sun Motors | Russell County, Virginia | Site Work Technician
- Saltville Old Town Shop | Saltville, Virginia | Site Work Technician
- Clincho Fire Department | Clincho, Virginia | Site Work Technician

# Miranda Basconi

Remediation Planning

### **Education**

B.S., Environmental Geosciences, Concord University B.S., Psychology, Concord University

### Registrations

Certified Responsible Land Disturber, Commonwealth of VA

Miranda Basconi has three years of experience in the environmental services industry. She has conducted 50+ Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, as well as underground storage tank (UST) closures, remediation system operation and maintenance (0&M), lead-based paint and asbestoscontaining material assessments, and environmental compliance services.

- West Virginia DEP Brownfields Environmental Site Assessments | West Virginia | Site Characterization
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality-Brownfields Assessment Projects | Virginia | Grant Administration/ Site Characterization
- Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission Brownfields Assessment Project | Mt. Rogers, Virginia | Programmatic Support/ Community Outreach/ Field Team Lead
- Bluefield Economic Development Authority-Brownfield Assessment Project | Community Outreach/ Team Planning/ Site Characterization
- Bluefield Coalition Regional Brownfields Grant Project | Bluefield, Virginia | Grant Administration/ Site Characterization
- Guest River Brownfields Coalition Assessment Project | Virginia | Site Characterization
- City of Bristol Brownfield Assessment | Bristol, VIrginia | Grant Administration/ Site Characterization
- Town of Tarboro EPA Community-Wide Assessment | Tarboro, North Carolina | Programmatic Support
- Knox & Son Oil Company | Wise, Virginia | Site Characterization
- Tazewell Hybrid Energy Center | Tazewell, Virginia | Environmental Compliance Coordinator



Christopher Quirk, AIA

Historic Architect

### **Education**

M.A., Architecture, Washington & Lee University B.A., Independent Work in Historic Preservation, Washington & Lee University

# Registrations

Registered Architect #5484, Kentucky

Christopher is a registered architect with over 33 years of experience in design, construction, and project development. Christopher has conducted numerous detailed historic preservation investigations, building condition audits, and historic structure reports with an emphasis on materials and technology including historic hardware. He has served as project manager for a wide variety of rehabilitation and restoration projects from physical investigation through construction. Christopher is comfortable working in a highly interactive process including public presentations to diverse user groups to develop project programs. He exceeds the qualifications in Architecture and Historic Architecture as defined by 36 CFR Part 61, Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards.

### **Relevant Project Experience:**

- Mann-Simons Cottage Condition and Chronology
   Assessment\* | Columbia, South Carolina | Project Architect
- Renovation of the Woodrow Wilson Family Home\* | Columbia, South Carolina | Project Architect
- Robert Mills House and Outbuildings Building Assessment, Repairs, and HVAC Replacement\* | Columbia, South Carolina | Project Architect
- Berry Hill Mansion Window Repair\* | Frankfort, Kentucky | Project Architect
- Locust Grove Structural Repairs & New Roof\* | Louisville, Kentucky | Project Architect



# **Lucy Jones**

Cultural & Historical Resources

### **Education**

M.L.A., Florida Studies, University of South Florida at St. Petersburg
MEd, Elementary Education, University of Florida
B.S., Biology, Texas Christian University

# Registrations

Lucy Jones is an experienced project manager meeting the Secretary of the Interior's standards as an architectural historian and as a historian. She has over 25 years' experience in cultural resource management in the southeastern United States, most recently as a senior project architectural historian for Stantec. Over the years, Lucy has directed multiple large and small-scale projects implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as well as other local and state laws and regulations concerning historic resources. Clients she has worked for include federal, state, and local agencies, as well as publicly traded corporations and private landowners. Her experience includes transportation, energy, parks, residential development, military, and telecommunication projects.

- Tuckahoe Mansion Seawall Mitigation | Martin County, Florida
   | Architectural Historian
- New Location of the Albany Museum of Art | Dougherty County, Georgia | Architectural Historian
- Tampa Streetcar Extension and Modernization Feasibility Study | Hillsborough County, Florida | Lead Architectural Historian
- North Greenwood Cemetery Project | Clearwater, Florida | Historian
- Ashbury Pointe, Snellville Apartments, Wendover Housing Partners | Gwinnett County, Georgia | Architectural Historian
- North Ward Elementary School White Paper | Clearwater, Florida | Historian
- Oakland Parkway Project | Maury County, Tennessee | Senior Architectural Historian
- Smith County Industrial Park Project | Smith County, Tennessee | Senior Architectural Historian



**James Douglass** 

Infrastructure & Engineering

### **Education**

M.S.C.E., Water Resources & Environmental Engineering, North Carolina State University B.S., Geology, University of Alabama

### Registrations

Professional Engineer #24619, West Virginia
Professional Engineer #30484, Commonwealth of Virginia

Jim has decades of experience in multidisciplinary environmental and engineering projects with widely varying technical requirements. His projects have involved unique retrofit stormwater management and water intrusion repair designs; groundwater and water supply systems design; hydraulics, hydrology, and hydrogeology; soil, groundwater, and environmental investigations; risk assessments, corrective action planning, and remediation system design; National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and other environmental permits compliance; best management practices (BMP) planning and design for construction and industrial sites; and Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) preparation. He also has experience in project management, safety planning, contractor supervision, regulatory agency coordination, client relations, and expert witness testimony. In addition, Jim has experience in specialized software such as HEC-RAS, HEC-HMS, PondPack@, and EPANET 2.0.

# **Relevant Project Experience:**

- Alexandria Manufactured Gas Plant Remedial Actions -Virginia Voluntary Remediation Program | Virginia | Senior Engineer
- Canonie Atlantic Contaminated Soil Remedial Action Plan
   Virginia Voluntary Remediation Program | Virginia | Senior Engineer
- College Park Golf Course Methane Ventilation System Design, EPA FY 2020 Brownfield Cleanup Grant | College Park, Georgia | Project Engineer
- Virginia Department of Transportation Culpeper District HQ Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Corrective Action | Virginia | Senior Engineer
- Tasley Energy Center Fuel Oil Spill Containment Control Berm Extension Design-Build | Tasley, Virginia | Senior Engineer

# Stephen Kloecker

Infrastructure & Engineering

### **Education**

B.S., Civil & Infrastructure Engineering, George Mason University

Stephen Kloecker, EIT, is a water resources engineer with experience in water supply, HEC-RAS modeling, stormwater design, and land development projects. He has worked on projects involving stormwater management design, stormwater modeling, erosion and sediment control, and site grading. Additional, Stephen has experience working on water/ sanitary system design and modeling projects.

- Cement Kiln Dust Remediation/ Redevelopment | Flagler County, Florida | Staff Engineer
- Bay Coast Remedial Action Plan | Cape Charles, Virginia | Staff Engineer
- Farms of New Kent | New Kent, Virginia | Staff Engineer
- Anniston Army Depot Flood Study | Anniston, Alabama | Project Engineer
- National Guard SIte & Stormwater Design | Project Engineer
- Farms of New Kent Water Modeling & VDH Permitting | New Kent, Virginia | Staff Engineer
- Montross Water Modeling & VDH Permitting | Montross, Virginia | Staff Engineer



**Thomas Leighton** AICP, EDFP Housing and Market Analysis

# **Education**

MA, Design Studies (MDesS) in Real Estate and the Built Environment, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Cambridge

Master of Arts (MA) in Public Affairs, University of Minnesota Humphrey School, Minneapolis

BA, Natural Science, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota

# Registrations

Certified Planner #018262, American Institute of Certified Planners Economic Development Finance Professional #1216-024, National Development Council

Tom believes that community development plans and strategies must be both aspirational and achievable, and set a foundation for real world change. As part of his career in implementation-oriented planning and community development, Tom has developed analytical methodologies and processes that illuminate the real world market and development context, while paving the way for implementation. Informing his consulting work is his prior experience as Minneapolis's lead planning staff in the economically-challenged North Minneapolis area. In this capacity he led large-scale, transformative initiatives for its neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and riverfront.

# **Relevant Project Experience:**

- Plaza West Area Wide Plan | City of Manhattan | Manhattan, Kansas
- Highway 169 Small Area Plan (December 2020) and Jefferson Quarry Redevelopment Master Plan (January 2023) | City of Mankato | Mankato, Minnesota | Project Manager
- Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis and Recommended Strategies Relative to King Plant Closure | City of Oak Park Heights | Oak Park Heights, MN | Project Manager
- Elk River EDA Strategic Plan | City of Elk River | Elk River, Minnesota | Project Manager
- New Brighton Housing Study | City of New Brighton | New Brighton, Minnesota | Project Manager
- Janesville Housing Study | City of Janesville | Janesville, Minnesota | Project Manager
- SWLRT Land Use Planning Master Contract | Metropolitan Council | Minnesota | Market Analysis



Jay Demma AICP Housing & Market Analysis

### **Education**

MA, Urban and Regional Planning, University of Minnesota BS, Geography, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

# Registrations

Certified Planner #018262, American Institute of Certified Planners

Jay has an 18 year background in demographic and economic analysis, and has held a variety of staff and executive positions at leading research firms in the Twin Cities and Philadelphia. At Stantec, Jay directs all research projects in the Upper Midwest relating to the demographic and economic impacts of land use change. He has worked on hundreds of research and consulting assignments throughout the United States, providing research expertise on virtually all land use types, especially housing, commercial/mixed-use, and urban redevelopment.

- Comprehensive Housing Study | Forest Lake, Minnesota
- Rental Housing Inventory and Needs Assessment | Richfield, Minnesota
- Condominium Market Study | St. Paul, Minnesota
- Downtown North St. Paul Multifamily Housing Study | North St. Paul, Minnesota
- Green Manufacturing Reuse Study | St. Paul, Minnesota | Project Manager/Lead Researcher
- Greater Minnesota Housing Fund Iron Range Housing Study | Project Manager/Lead Researcher
- Economic Impact Studies | Various Locations, Minnesota
- Green Manufacturing Reuse Study | St. Paul, Minnesota | Project Manager/Lead Researcher
- Demographic and Economic Analysis | Various Locations, Minnesota



**Heidi Peper**Project Funding & Financing

### **Education**

BA, Community Development/Public Relations, Saint Cloud State University, Saint Cloud, Minnesota

# Memberships

Board of Directors (2007-2016), Economic Development Association of Minnesota

With 27 years of experience in community and economic development, Heidi works on solving complex funding problemsher experience ranges from pedestrian trails to highways, wastewater to drinking water projects. Heidi is one of the US leaders for Stantec's North American Funding Program, a coordinated network of more than 150 funding specialists across the country. Throughout her career, Heidi has successfully secured more than \$200 million in grants for clients' projects. Her experience in project development and securing affordable financing packages—including grants, legislative appropriations, and other financial incentive programs—has been a valuable resource in moving projects to a successful conclusion. This experience includes securing funding from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and similar federal agencies such as USDA Rural Development and securing multiple funding sources on projects.

# **Relevant Project Experience:**

- Rapid Recovery Planning Program | Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development | Funding Specialist
- Neighborhood Stabilization Fund Grants\* | Buffalo and Elk River, Minnesota
- Downtown Revitalization City of Sauk Rapids | Sauk Rapids, Minnesota | Project Funding Specialist
- Utilities and Road Reconstruction City of Richmond, Minnesota | Project Funding Specialist
- Sauk Rapids Single Family Housing Rehabilitation\* | Sauk Rapids, Minnesota | Project Funding Specialist
- Business Development Public Infrastructure Grant Program\*
   | Pelican Rapids, St. Joseph, Rockville, Freeport, Hanover, Richmond, Cambridge, Minnesota
- Community Development Block Grant Program\* | Akeley
   Cold Spring Sauk Rapids (2) Freeport Spicer Richmond (2) Lester Prairie, South Haven, St. Joseph,
   Onamia, Emily, Belgrade, Howard Lake, Minnesota



Katy Shackleford
Project Funding & Financing

# **Education**

M.A., Urban and Regional Planning, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University B.A., Architecture, Ball State University

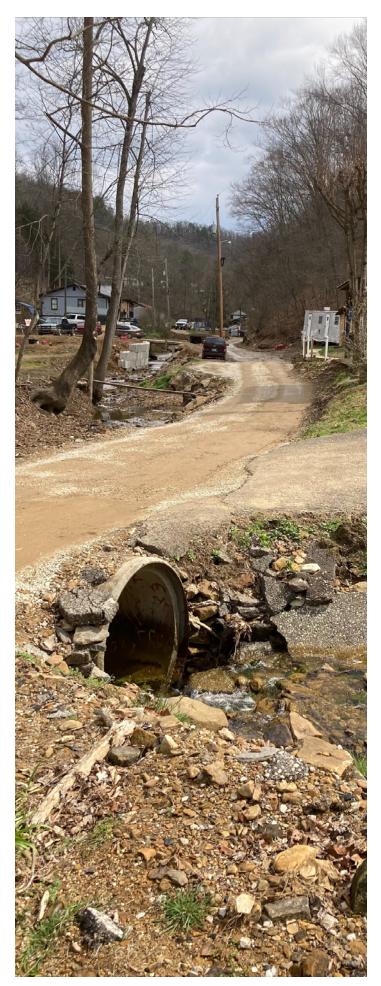
# Registrations

Certified Planner #29647, American Institute of Certified Planners

Professional Transportation Planner #760, Institute of Transportation Engineers (US & Canada)

Katy is an innovative urban planning professional and funding specialist with over ten years of experience. She specializes in transportation planning, economic development, and public policy for distressed and disadvantaged communities. As a member of Stantec's North American Funding Program, Katy helps clients navigate complex funding programs and position their projects for maximum community benefits. Katy is passionate about building places people love and has helped communities and clients secure over \$240M in federal, state, and private funding to bring their ideas to life.

- Brickline Greenway: Fairground Park to City Foundry Connector, Great Rivers Greenway\* | St. Louis, Missouri | Grant Writer
- 2nd Avenue Complete Streets Funding Roadmap | Siler City, North Carolina | Funding Planning & Support
- Six West Funding Strategy | College Park, Georgia | Funding & Planning Support
- Wastewater System Modernization & Rehabilitation Program | Bloomington, Illinois | Funding Specialist
- Valparaiso Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade | Valparaiso, Indiana | Funding Specialist
- Riverfront Commons RAISE Grant | Northern Kentucky | Grant Writer
- Red Lake Falls Recreation Trail Rehabilitation | Red Lake Falls, Minnesota | Grant Writer
- Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 for Southeast Metropolitan Planning Organization (SEMPO)\* | Cape Girardeau, Missouri | Land Use & Environmental Analyst
- Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 for Columbus Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)\* | Columbus, Indiana | Public Engagement Lead



# Approach & Methodology

Based on our experience working with brownfields clients on a variety of brownfields redevelopment planning projects, the Stantec team recommends the following scope of work to accomplish the Brownfields Site Reuse Planning tasks. We welcome the opportunity to discuss modifications to better meet your expectations.

# **Project Management**

Successful projects adhere to a clear, specific, and targeted project management plans that are developed to meet each projects unique need. All Stantec PMP's adhere to a 10-point project management framework, which is compliant with ISO industry standards for project management. One example of our robust project management approach includes internal quality assurance processes requiring at least two levels of review for any deliverable.

# Stakeholder & Public Engagement

A comprehensive community engagement plan is integral to the successful implementation of any planning project. Elected officials, staff, community leaders, business owners, and the public should be not only informed of the planning efforts, but engaged in the vision, recommendations, and empowered as the champions of its success. The project team will begin by developing a community engagement strategy that best fits the project and community need. Our main goal to community engagement is to create an inclusive design process, engaging both residents, business owners, and stakeholders to identify needs and gain support for redevelopment planning projects, and to foster project support in developing funding strategies for project implementation.

Successful engagement should include a mix of methods to effectively reach a broad community. The Stantec team proposes an engagement strategy that includes multiple methods of engagement. Depending on project needs, each community engagement strategy may include one or more of the following options:

 Online Engagement Platforms - In addition to in person, online platforms will offer project engagement to residents with limited mobility and scheduling constraints. Online platforms, such as Social Pinpont, will be used for sharing information, meeting schedules, surveys and interactive maps.

Examples of on-line engagement platforms for previously completed brownfields redevelopment projects can be explored at these below links:

https://engagestantec.mysocialpinpoint.com/79th\_street\_visioning https://engagestantec.mysocialpinpoint.com/tarboro-area-wide-plan

2. A Steering Committee - To guide the project, we will develop a steering committee comprised of staff, officials, stakeholders, and community leaders organized at project conception. The steering committee will guide the project throughout its entirety to ensure it continuously reflects community vision, goals, and values.

- 3. Community Open Houses The open houses will provide the public with an opportunity to meet the project team, ask questions, and share their ideas for a vision for redevelopment projects. We also recommend setting up booths at community events to hand out project information and meet the community where they are.
- **4. Stakeholder Interviews** Stakeholders can assist with project visioning, project development, funding/financing, and understanding requirements for grant compliance, approvals, and permitting, etc..
- **5. Design Workshops** Workshops will be used to test development concepts and gain new ideas from the community. Design workshops are an effective way to create a sense of community ownership in redevelopment planning project and to have a platform to discuss the future of their community and share their vision for the next generation of growth and investment. Workshops are intended to be highenergy, inclusive, and engaging visioning sessions.

# **Existing Conditions Analysis**

Existing Conditions Analysis will be conducted for every project to understand exiting site characteristics. These may include, but are not limits to identifying flood risk, existing infrastructure, utilities and easements, land uses, adjacent land uses, topography, drainage patterns, hydrology, and vegetation, and environmental buffers. Site context maps, utilizing both GIS and CAD, will be developed to understand area context as well. If provided our team will review and utilize the existing site survey, to be provided in PDF and DWG formats, to understand existing conditions and prepare a project base map. If survey is not available, the project team will develop one utilizing publicly available GIS base data and aerial imagery. The purposes of the existing conditions analysis will be to inform site design, proposed uses, and understand overall opportunities and constraints for development.

# Land Use and Permitting Assessment

For each redevelopment site a land use assessment will be conducted to review current policies and plans that relate to land use and development requirements, including but not limits to local state regulations, local comprehensive plan, zoning codes, land development ordinances, and building codes. Understanding regulatory constraints for each project site helps understand potential hurdles to development and inform project timelines based on the permitting necessary for project design and implementation. The assessment will also consider environmental permitting constraints to inform project timelines for implementation.

# **Cultural & Historical Analysis**

Prepare a desktop review of known and potential archaeological and historic resources at or nearby the project area including a search of the West Virginia Historic Property Inventory, the National Register of Historic Places, historic maps, and other appropriate sources.

# **Economic Market Analysis**

The economic market analysis will provide background and insights about the areas economic foundation, and what opportunities exist for strengthening it. Throughout our analysis, we will evaluate a broad range of approaches to economic development and job growth, including the following:

- Workforce development and training
- Business retention and expansion
- Land availability analysis and acquisition strategy
- Place-making and retail vibrancy
- The role of catalyst projects
- Tourism, branding and marketing
- Business retention and attraction
- Infrastructure sufficiency
- The creative economy (fostering arts/cultural communities and branding)
- The innovation economy (entrepreneurial, incubators, etc.

# **Housing Market Analysis**

The housing market analysis will provide an understanding of existing housing inventory to include the range and number of housing options that are available. Additionally, the analysis will seek to understand the drivers of housing demand represented by population, employment, and demographic shifts. The Stantec team will analyze and describe the demographic characteristics of each areas residential population with respect to characteristics such as:

- · Age/life stages
- Household/family types
- Race/diversity
- Education
- Income
- Home values
- Tenure
- Housing cost burden

The Stantec team has an existing Housing Solutions Library, assembled from our experience in previous housing study work, that will be the source of some candidate housing strategies as applicable to the project. Strategies will also originate from the interest and suggestions of each individual projects staff, stakeholders, and community members to meet each unique project need.

# Infrastructure Analysis

Our project team includes civil engineering professionals equipped with the skill set to review an evaluate the short and long term availability of infrastructure necessary to support the redevelopment of the brownfields site. Infrastructure may include utilities water, sewer, electrical, gas, and stormwater. The purposed of evaluation will be to identify necessary improvement and priority investments in infrastructure upgrades to support brownfield redevelopment.

# **Brownfields Site Reuse Plan**

Utilizing the findings of the above mentioned tasks, our project team will develop brownfield site reuse plans that are informed by community engagement and meet the unique programmatic needs of each site. Brownfield site reuse plans may explore a targeted reuse or a variety of mixed uses to understand redevelopment potential. Brownfield site reuse plans will include preliminary concept sketches to help communicate ideas to staff and stakeholders to understand different design alternatives. Once a design alternative is agreed upon, our team will develop final reuse concepts for the proposed reuse. Final concepts will include plan view site layout, building reuse if applicable, and section and perspective renderings to effectively communication the resue design. If applicable, a site design may be modeled using 3D design software to understand site massing and aesthetics. Brownfield site reuse plans may be computer or hand drafted and color rendered and may include visioning imagery to help understand the intended character, materials, and vision of the design. Site reuse plans will be drafted to a level necessary to develop an opinion of probable cost from, necessary to pairing each project with applicable funding opportunities.

# Area Wide Reuse Plan

Brownfields area-wide 26+ helps identify cleanup and reuse opportunities for key brownfield sites that can serve as catalysts for revitalization of the surrounding area. An area wide plan begins with an inventory of the brownfield sites within a defined study ares in need of revitalization, sometimes a neighborhood, corridor, downtown, industrial area or overall blighted area. An area wide plan will include most elements outlined in this project approach as necessary to feet the needs of the individual area being studied

including community engagement, existing conditions, historical analysis, housing and market analysis, and infrastructure analysis. Through the area wide planning process brownfield catalyst site are identified as high priority redevelopment opportunities in which their reuse and remediation are best positioned to catalyze area wide revitalization. Area wide plans will include implementation strategy board complete with strategy teams, timelines, partners, and funding tools.

# Funding and Resource Road mapping

If applicable, each project will develop a detailed implementation plan identifying a step by step path to funding and implementation. Elements of the resource road map may include the following:

- Time frame for completion and key milestones
- · Responsible individuals, offices, or agencies
- Stakeholders
- Cost estimate overall and for specific activities
- Funding and financing strategy
- most applicable and likely funding sources based on timing, eligibility, and competitiveness
- · application requirements and milestones
- source of local match
- financing options (is applicable)
- permitting agencies and requirements

The funding and financing section of the implementation strategy requires the expertise from Stantecs experienced project staff. Our collective knowledge and experience with the various funding agencies and the rules governing eligibility and the local match will allow our team to put together realistic funding strategies for each redevelopment project.



Pine Ridge Industrial Park rendering from Red River Gorge Regional Tourism Strategy



# I, Mac Warner, Secretary of State of the State of West Virginia, hereby certify that

### STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC.

a corporation formed under the laws of New York filed an application to be registered as a foreign corporation authorizing it to transact business in West Virginia. The application was found to conform to law and a "Certificate of Authority" was issued by the West Virginia Secretary of State on June 25, 2007.

I further certify that the corporation has not been revoked by the State of West Virginia nor has a Certificate of Withdrawal been issued to the corporation by the West Virginia Secretary of State.

Accordingly, I hereby issue this Certificate of Authorization

# **CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION**

Validation ID:6WV6D\_WCD7R



Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia on this day of

Mac Warner

September 05, 2023

Secretary of State

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# University Area Community Development Corporation (UACDC)

Moat Site Redevelopment

(Parcel: 035579, 035580, & 035581)

Site Feasibility Report



# **Document Information**

Prepared For University Area Community Development Corporation (UACDC)

Project Name Moat Site Redevelopment – Site Feasibility Report

Project Number 0002399013

Project Manager Miles Ballogg / Kaitlyn Woolard

Date November 3, 2020

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# 1 Introduction

The following due diligence report was prepared for the University Area Community Development Corporation (UACDC) to identify site constraints and address the site feasibility of a proposed development on the Moat Redevelopment project site. The Moat site is located in Hillsborough County, Florida, and is bordered by East 139<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the south, North 19<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, and East 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north. The site includes 3 parcels, folio numbers 035579, 035580, 035581, and totals 1.82 acres (Figure 1). The purpose of this Site Feasibility Report is to perform a due diligence investigation into the potential land use, stormwater, utility, and environmental site constraints that may impact a proposed development on the property. The following report outlines general site conditions, zoning and land use requirements, required stormwater and utility improvements to support the proposed development, and findings of the wetland investigation. This report, in addition to the conceptual master plan prepared for the proposed development, and Phase I ESA documents, will best position the property for redevelopment. The results of this effort are presented below.

# 2 Environmental

# 2.1 Soils Descriptions

According to the Hillsborough County Soil Survey (US Department of Agricultural Web Soil Survey) the project site contains two different soil types for consideration during development. The first soil type, Zolfo Fine Sand, 0 to 2% slope, covers 10.9% of the site and is found on the southeast and northwest corners of the site. The remainder of the site, covering 89.1% of the property, is Basinger, Holopaw and Samsula soils, depressional (Figure 2).

# 2.2 Floodplain

According to FEMA flood map number 12057C0204H, effective 08/28/2008, the majority if the project site is located in Zone X (0.2 Percent Annual Chance Flood Hazard Zone). A small portion of the site, located along the northern property boundary in line with the existing drainage ditch is located in Zone AE (Special Flood Hazard Area with Base Flood Elevation). If the drainage ditch along the norther property boundary is realigned to accommodate development, the developer will be required to coordinate changes to the flood area with FEMA the Southwest Florida Water Management District may include a cursory review of floodplains during that process as well (Figure 3).

# 2.3 Wetlands

Cardno delineated the landward limit of wetlands on the property per the Florida state wetland delineation methodology (FAC 62-340). The wetland boundaries were field verified and approved by staff of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) as part of Formal Wetland Determination No. 801338. Per the results of the wetlands survey, 0.69-acre of the project site is SWFWMD and Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) jurisdictional Wetland (Figure 4). It is not certain, but it appears that the wetland would not fall within the federal jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers because it appears to have been historically isolated, and is only connected to waters of the US via upland-cut drainage ditches that only flow in response to rainfall.

Any impact to the wetland, or the wetland setback, would require approval by both the SWFWMD and the EPC. The SWFWMD requires a 15-foot minimum/25-foot average wetland setback, and the EPC requires

a 30-foot wetland setback. The following language is provided as guidance for allowable activities within the wetland setback:

No filling, excavating or placement of permanent structures or other impervious surfaces shall be allowed within a required setback except for: the installation of a sprinkler system, utility line, or landscaping; or except as specifically approved for the construction of a road essential for access, wetland recreation access no greater than 20 feet wide, construction of a stormwater retention or detention basin or other stormwater-related structure, construction of a boardwalk or other stilted structure, grade finishing to provide a gradual slope between the setback line and the environmentally sensitive area, the limited use of semi-pervious paving material, construction of a retaining wall, recreational trail, or golf cart path; or except as specifically approved for construction of a swimming pool provided there is no encroachment within 15 feet of a Conservation Area and 25 feet of a Preservation Area. (Ord. No. 04-27, § 2, 6-10-04).

The combined area of the wetland and required setback (wetland buffer) results in approximately +/- 1.10 acres of the project site that cannot be developed without approval from both the EPC and the SWFWMD and would require some form of wetland mitigation. Because of the large percentage of site acreage consumed by wetlands and wetland setback, Cardno considered reasonable mitigation options for the site to increase developable area.

The regulatory approval process of both agencies follows a two-step approach. Step one is demonstration that the wetland impact is required in order to make reasonable use of the property. Once step one has been accomplished, the ecological functions currently provided by the wetland must be quantified and then mitigated. In order to determine the amount of mitigation required, the ecological functions provided by the portion of the wetland to be impacted are quantified by conducting a Unified Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) analysis. This analysis results in the number of functional units that will be lost. The analysis must be reviewed and approved by the SWFWMD.

On a relatively small parcel, the only feasible mitigation alternative for the impact of the entire wetland is to purchase credits (i.e. functional units) from an approved mitigation bank that is located in the same drainage basin as the project site. The project site is located in the Hillsborough River Basin. There are two approved wetland mitigation banks in the basin; the Two Rivers Ranch Mitigation Bank (TRRMB) and the Boards Head Ranch Mitigation Bank (BHRMB). The cost for one full credit from the TRRMB is \$180,000. Cardno conducted a preliminary UMAM analysis of the project wetland and estimates that impacting the entire 0.69-acre of on-site wetland would result in the loss of approximately 0.41 functional units, requiring the purchase of 0.41 credits from a mitigation bank. Based on this analysis the cost to mitigate the impact is therefore estimated at \$73,800.

Another option, rather than the complete elimination of the wetland, would be to impact only a portion of the wetland. This would not only not only reduce the amount of functional loss, it would also provide the opportunity to enhance the remaining portion of the wetland, thereby further reducing the amount of migration credits that would need to be purchased. Our preliminary analysis indicates that approximately 0.16-acre of the on-site wetland could be impacted and mitigated on-site.

## 3 Land Use

## 3.1 Summary of Proposed Development

Cardno completed four preliminary redevelopment concepts for community input and consideration (Appendix A). The proposed redevelopment concepts included the following options:

> Concept A – Single Family Cottage Lot

Proposes 10 cottage lots on the project site. Each unit is 800SF and proposed to be one story targeted for home ownership. There is opportunity to make some or all of these two story to increase the square footage to 1,600SF a unit. The cottages are larger than your traditional Tiny Home concept, which typically come in at closer to 500SF. These units will utilize a common parking lot, common trash and recycling facilities, and maintain common open space through a management organization. This project type would require a rezoning to PD district to allow for reduced setbacks and reduced density.

#### > Concept B - Townhome

 Proposes an all single family attached townhome product and includes 13 proposed units at 1,500SF a unit, and targeted for home ownership. This concept that would be permitted by right in the RMC20 zoning district and would not require a rezoning to achieve the proposed use.

#### > Concept C - Townhome & Neighborhood Market

Proposes a mixed-use for the site with townhomes proposed on the north west corner and commercial proposed on the south east corner of the site. This concept provides 6 single family attached townhomes units at 1500SF a unit. The south east corner of the site proposes a small to mid-size 5,000SF neighborhood market space. This proposed design would require a rezoning to PD district to allow for reduced setbacks and for the commercial use, which is not permitted in RMC 20.

#### > Concept D - Multi-Family Apartments and Bodega

Proposes a mixed-use commercial and multifamily development for the site. The north west corner provides a two story apartment building with eight one bedroom apartment units, and the required parking. The south east corner of the site provides a two store mixed use building. The first floor of the building would include a 3,000SF Bodega style neighborhood store/market and a parking garage. The second floor of the building would include 8 apartment homes, 4 two bedroom and 4 one bedroom units. This proposed layout includes garage, on site, and on street proposed parking to meet the parking needs of this mixed use. This proposed design would require a rezoning to PD district to allow for reduced setbacks and for the commercial use, which is not permitted in RMC20.

The UACDC conducted extensive community engagement over the course of several months to receive feedback on the redevelopment concept most desired by the community. Community engagement activities included presenting the above mentioned concepts at the Bower/ Whitley "Back to School Night" event, at the drive through food pantry event at Mort Elementary School, and the Santa Maria Food Pantry. In addition, a community leaver volunteered their time to present the concepts at an informational table adjacent to Harvey Hope Park to collect additional input over the course of a week. The project was promoted via social media, email blasts, the UACDC Newsletter, and on the UACDC website. An online survey was also developed and shared over social media and the website to gather additional input and feedback. Through their comprehensive community engagement efforts, the UACDC collected 347 responses on the desired development direction for the site. Through the responses it was evident that Concept A – Single Family Cottages, targeted for home ownership, was the desired direction for development and would be a re-use that would best serve the community. The following zoning and land development summary outlines the requirements to achieve the proposed development:

## 3.2 Zoning & Land Development Standards

Single-family housing use is allowed in the existing zoning district of RMC 20 zoning district. The RMC 20 district permits a range of multi-family dwelling options, up to a maximum density of 20 units per acre and a minimum density of 75% of the maximum (Figure 5). In addition, the site is located under the unincorporated Hillsborough County Future Land Use category RES-20, which does not list a minimum lot

size and supports the concept of clustering and preservation of open spaces (Figure 6). The site is located within the limits of the University Area Community Plan (Figure 7). All Community Plans can be found in the Livable Communities Element: <a href="http://www.planhillsborough.org/livable-communities-element/">http://www.planhillsborough.org/livable-communities-element/</a>.

The proposed redevelopment concept will not achieve the minimum density required per the RMC 20 district and Future Land Use designation due to large percentage of area that is undevelopable due to the presence of wetlands on site. In addition, to achieve the redevelopment concept of single family cottage lots, a reduction in site setbacks would be recommended for a denser more urban feel to the development.

As a result, the proposed redevelopment should pursue a rezoning application to a PD designation. The rezoning application will need to demonstrate how it facilitates the vision and intent of the Comprehensive Plan Elements 16 and 22 and the University Area Community Plan. The following table outlines development standards per the PD zoning designation:

Minimum lot area	7,000 SF
Minimum lot width	70'
Minimum lot depth	NA
Maximum height	35' – every additional 1' in height over 20' height requires an additional 2' to setbacks or buffers per code
Minimum front setback	30'
Minimum side setback	TBD
Minimum rear setback	TBD
Minimum area per du	NA
Maximum Building Coverage	20%
Maximum impervious surface	60%
Maximum floor area ratio	.20
Parking Requirements	1 bedroom = 1.5/du 2 bedroom = 2.0/du
Parking Space size	9' wide x 18' deep, 24' 2-way drive aisle
ADA Parking	1 per 25 spaces, 2 per 50 spaces, 3 per 75 spaces
Landscape Area	MF >12 du/acre = 6 tree/ga

# 4 Landscaping

The County requires that there be landscaping and buffering to ensure that the development is improving the overall area character and aesthetic as well as promoting and maintaining a desirable environment. A landscaping plan is required and a landscape architect registered in Florida must prepare it. An automatic irrigation system is also a requirement.

#### 4.1 Trees

The County does not have a protected trees list, but the tree replacement requirements shall preserve all trees having a DBH of five inches or greater, and shall replace 50% of the total DBH of any tree having a DBH of 24" or greater. A tree survey should be conducted on the project site as credit shall be given for the retention of existing trees where a minimum number of trees are required to meet landscape regulations. A minimum of 50% of the required trees shall be native species.

Multi-family > 12 du/ac = 6 trees/ga Minimum species = 2

Multi-family < 12 du/ac = 8 trees/ga Minimum species = 2

Commercial neighborhood = 6 trees/ga Minimum species = 2

It is anticipated that the provided conceptual site plan can meet the code minimum landscape requirements for the City including the minimum number of trees and the minimum variety of tree species.

## 4.2 Parking Lot Landscaping

Where a new parking lot is proposed, a minimum 8-foot wide buffer strip is required if it abuts a right-of-way and a 6-wide buffer strip is required if it abuts an adjacent property (unless the adjacent property is already screened), or land that is zoned or used for residential. New parking lots are also required to have interior landscaped islands of at least 17-foot widths containing 1 shade tree every 10 parking spaces and terminus parking islands of at least 6-foot widths with 1 shade tree. Another option is to provide a 6' wide divider median between head-to-head spaces with 6' wide divider and terminus islands.

#### 4.3 Screening

A development needs to provide screening depending upon the proposed use and the use and zoning of the surrounding properties. For proposed use of multi-family > 12 du/ac, no screening is required abutting multi-family > 12 du/ac, a 5' screening Type A is required when abutting multi-family < 12 du/ac and a 20' screening Type B is required when abutting single-family.

# 5 Utilities

Based on available utility information, there is limited potable water and sanitary sewer infrastructure near the subject property. Within E 139<sup>th</sup> Avenue right-of-way, an 8-inch water main and 8-inch sanitary sewer main are located within the roadway section. The water main extends east past the subject property to N 19<sup>th</sup> Street where it turns and travels south. At this intersection, there is a branch north to serve a fire hydrant assembly near the southeast corner of the subject property. Sanitary sewer infrastructure in E-139<sup>th</sup> Avenue includes a terminal manhole and service lateral to the subject property. This gravity system flows west towards N 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Along N 19<sup>th</sup> Street between E 139<sup>th</sup> Avenue and E 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue, there is no water or sewer infrastructure. Along the north side of the subject property, E 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue includes a 6-inch water main that extends near the northwest corner of the property.

Potable, fire and sanitary sewer available capacity will be realized through a utility commitment letter issued from the City of Tampa. Potential off-site water improvements could include extending the existing water main on N 19<sup>th</sup> Street from East 142<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to East 139<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Sanitary sewer improvements could include extending the existing 6-inch sewer main on East 142<sup>nd</sup> avenue south down Carmen Ct. to the subject property.

Electric, gas and communication utilities should be available to support development of the subject property. Refer to Figure 8 and Figure 9 for additional utility information.

# 6 Stormwater Management and Topography

For the subject property, stormwater management is regulated by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Environmental Resource Permit (ERP); the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Hillsborough County including the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC). All required stormwater permits are required before beginning any construction activity that affects surface water management including wetlands, altering surface water flows or contributes to water pollution.

For the SWFWMD, issuance of an ERP allows for the construction and modification of new and existing stormwater management systems. The review criteria specifies that post-development peak discharge rates for new development not exceed pre-development peak discharge rates for the 25-year, 24- hour event. Water quality treatment (minimum ½-inch of runoff from the subject property) and recovery are also required for a specified runoff volume with additional treatment needed for discharges to impaired water bodies and Outstanding Florida Waters. In closed watersheds post-development discharge volumes must not exceed pre-development discharge volumes for the 100-year, 24-hour event. In addition to regulating water quality and quantity, SWFWMD also restricts floodplain encroachment by requiring compensation storage for fill placed within the 100-year floodplain.

For FDEP, the NPDES Stormwater Program regulates point source discharges from construction activities. The Construction Generic Permit (CGP) is required for discharges from construction activities that disturbs: (1) five acres or greater of land (Larger Construction Activity) or (2) disturbs equal to or greater than one acre and less than five acres of land (Small Construction Activity). Operators of construction activities must obtain coverage under an NPDES stormwater permit and implement appropriate pollution prevention techniques to minimize erosion and sedimentation and properly manage stormwater.

Hillsborough County manages stormwater through their Site Development Regulation as provided in the Land Development Code Sections 5.02.00 and 6.03.00. These design criteria are supplemented by requirements presented in the Stormwater Management Technical Manual; both combined criteria are applicable to stormwater management system design. All new development shall be designed such that post-development stormwater runoff from the site shall be substantially similar to or better than predevelopment runoff in terms of rate and shall meet applicable state and SWFWMD water quality standards. In addition to the pertinent requirements contained in Technical Manual Sections 7 and 13, the specific stormwater management system design requirements for "new development" are described in Section 4.0 Development Requirements and Section 5.0 Design Criteria for small sites (less than or equal to 10 acres). The Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County has additional requirements for developing adjacent to wetlands, see Section 2.3 Wetlands of this report.

To meet the requirements for stormwater management, development of the subject property will require some form of a retention / detention collection system. This will include a control structure that likely discharges to the existing on-site wetland at a regulated rate.

Based on the project's Special Purpose Wetland Survey, elevations range from 38 feet to 42 feet NAVD88 across the subject property. The property generally slopes from the back of streets towards the on-site wetland which is located in the north central and northeast areas of the property.

# 7 Permitting Process, Timeline, & County Staff Review

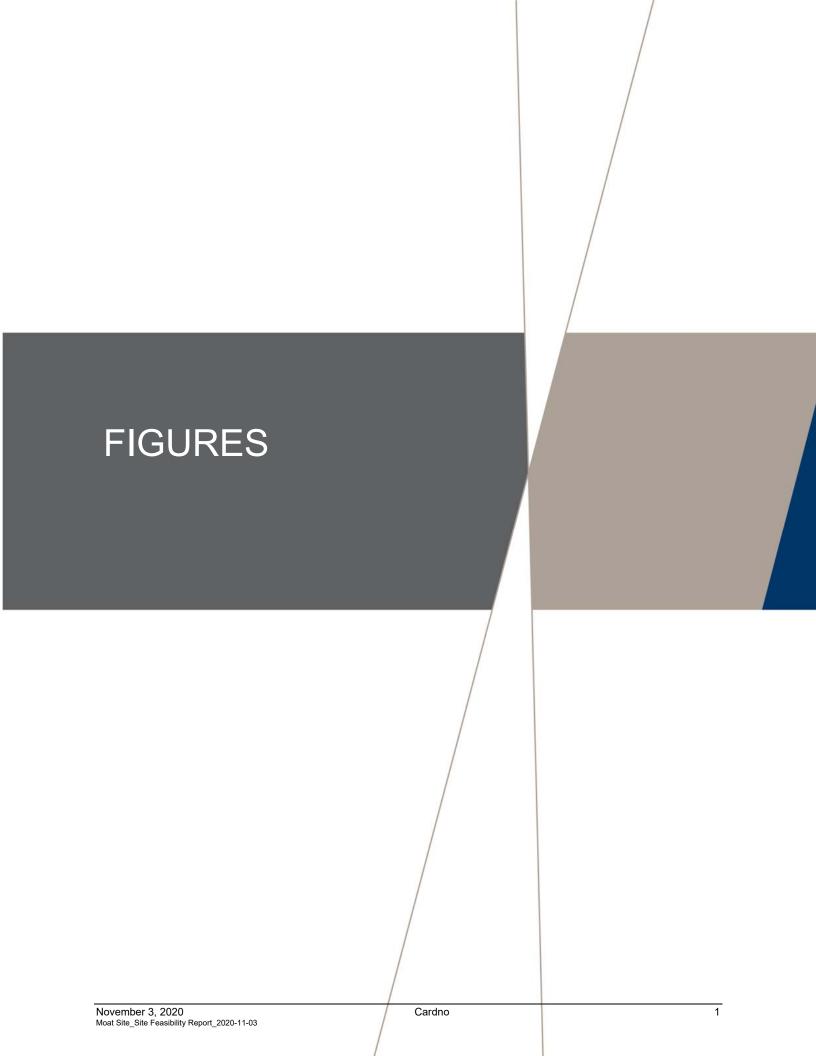
The County recommends a free of charge, informal pre-submittal meeting to review the proposed concepts before moving to the site development review process. After revisions are made from the pre-submittal staff comments, plans will be submitted for site plan development review process which is an administrative review 2-3 month timeframe prior to construction plan review. If a rezoning is requested to PD for the redevelopment concept, this is a 5-6 month process, which would include a zoning (public) hearing and a Board approval.

On November XX, 2020, Cardno staff conducted a pre-submittal meeting with County Staff to review the proposed development and rezoning option. The following outlines the feedback received during that meeting.

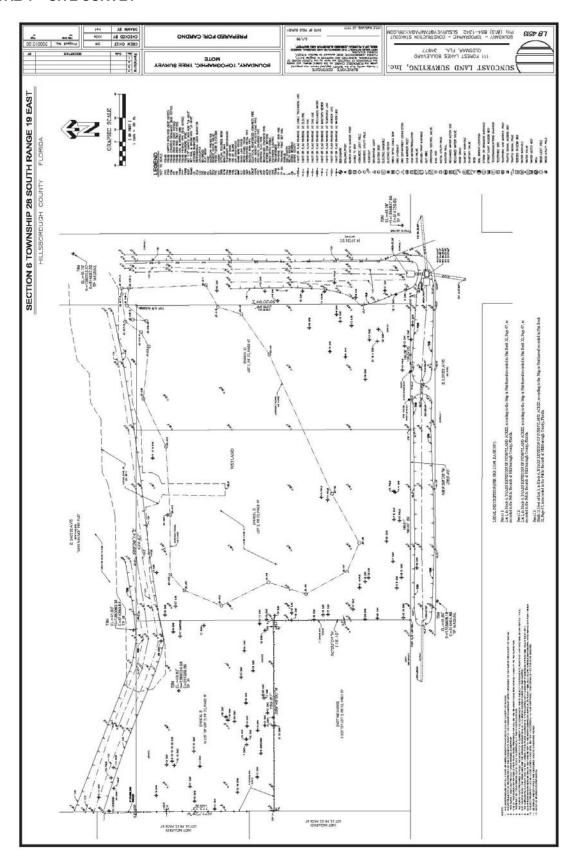
## 8 References

Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Flood Insurance Program. 2008 Floor Insurance Rate Map, Hillsborough County, Florida.

U. S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). 1989. Soil Survey for Hillsborough County, Florida.

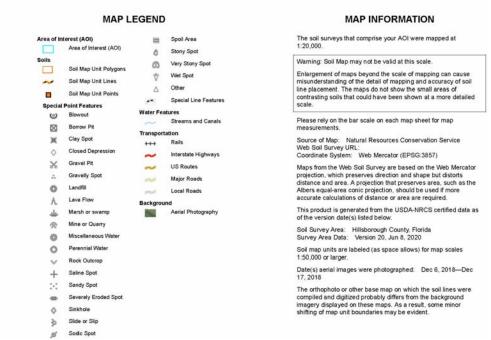


#### FIGURE 1 - SITE SURVEY

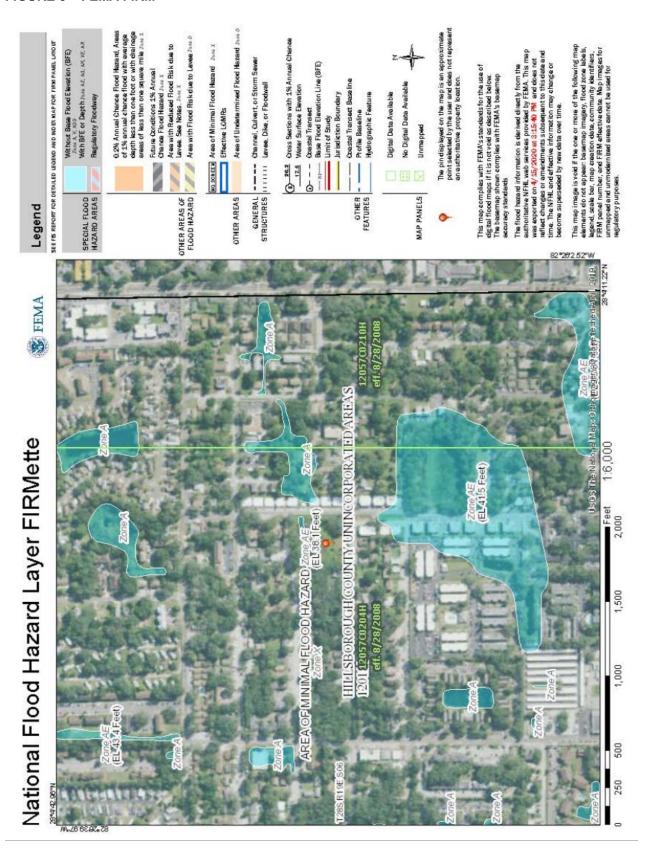


#### FIGURE 2 - SOIL MAP

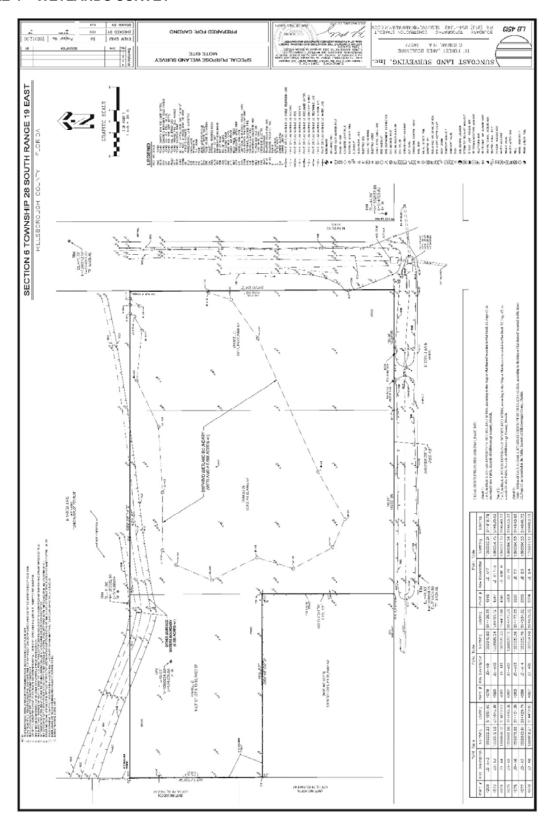




#### FIGURE 3 - FEMA FIRM

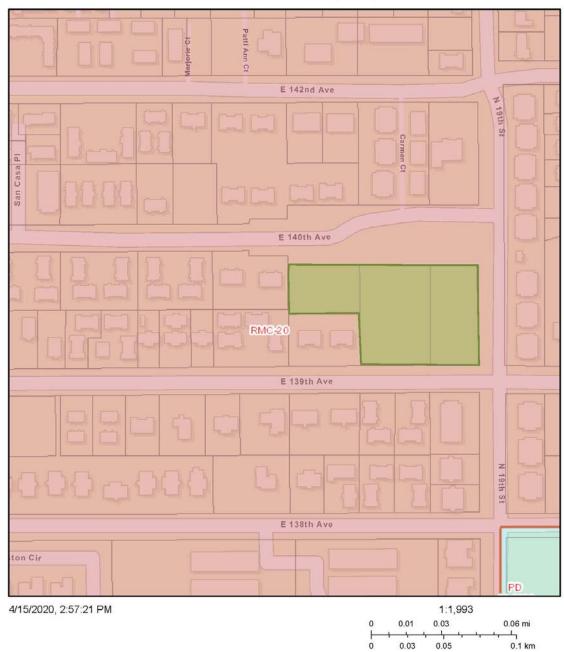


#### FIGURE 4 - WETLANDS SURVEY



## FIGURE 5 - ZONING MAP

# Moat Site - Zoning Map



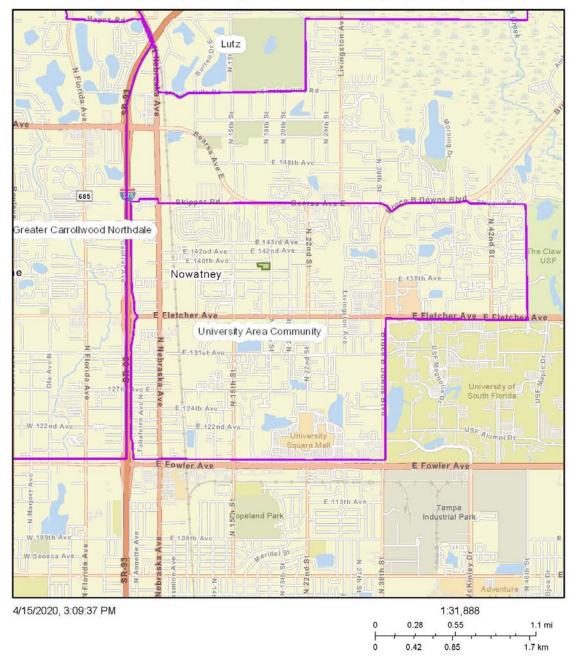
#### FIGURE 6 - FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Moat Site - Future Land Use Map

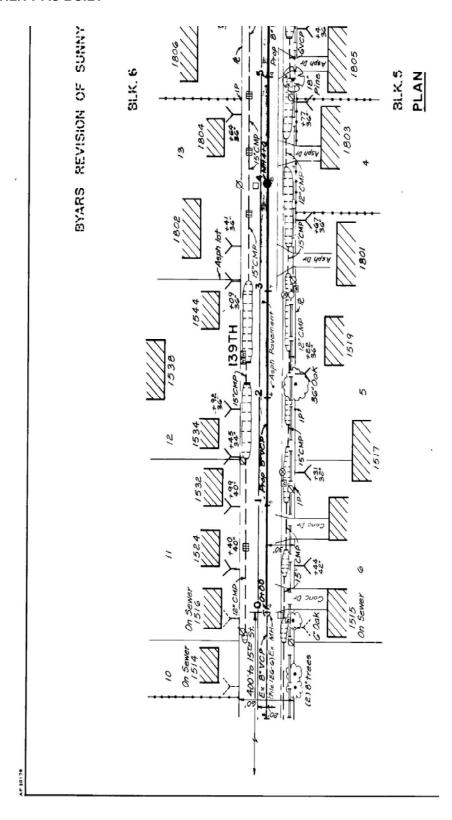


#### FIGURE 7 - UACDC PLANNING AREA

# Moat Site - University Area Community Planning Area



## FIGURE 8 - UTILITY AS BUILT



## FIGURE 9 – UTILITY AS BUILT



#### - Preliminary Concept Plans Appendix A

1

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160 Scale 1" = 20' @ Arch D

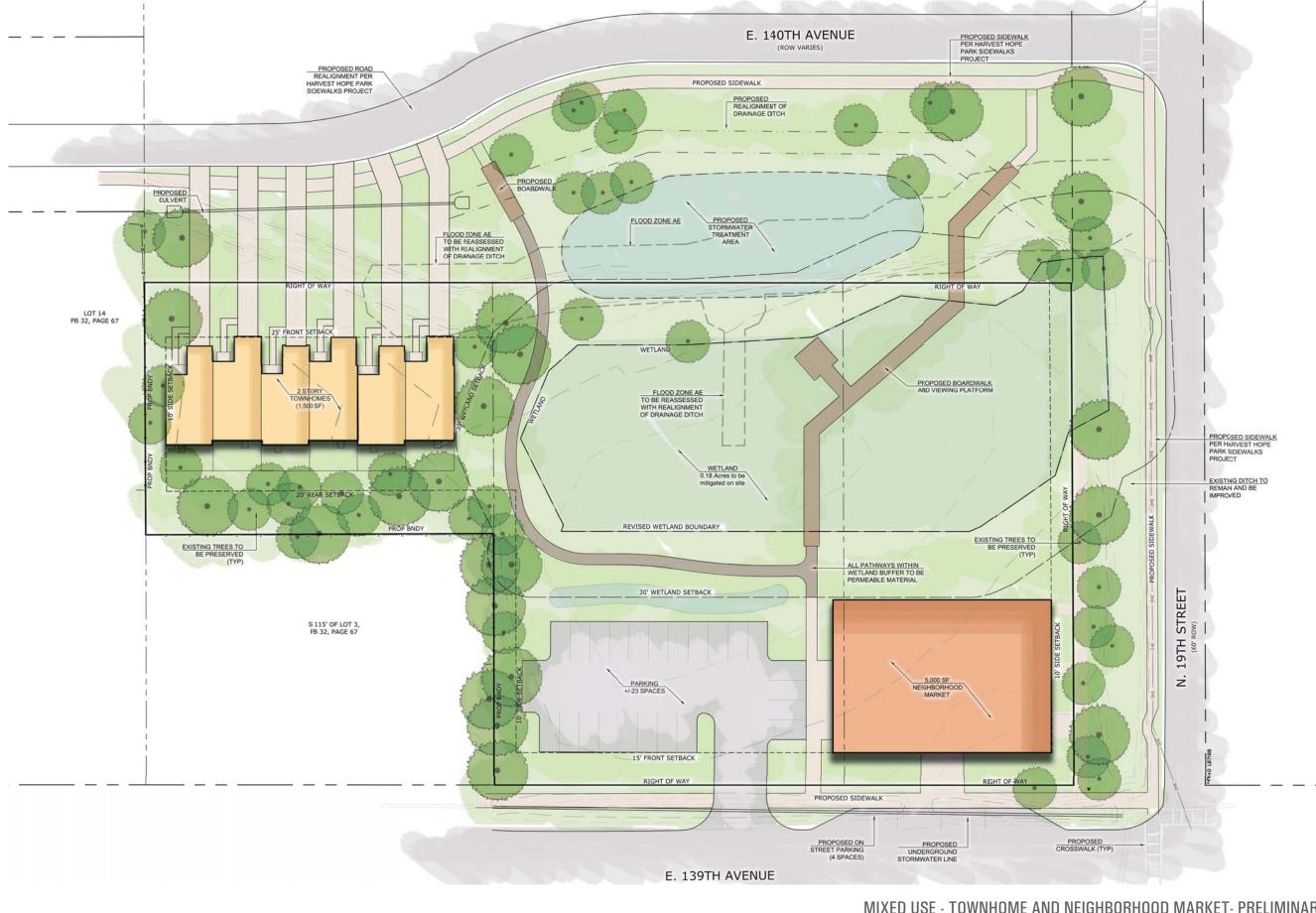


TOWNHOME - PRELIMINARY CONCEPT B

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MIXED USE - TOWNHOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET- PRELIMINARY CONCEPT C

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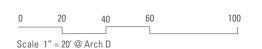
# Appendix B - Final Concept Plans

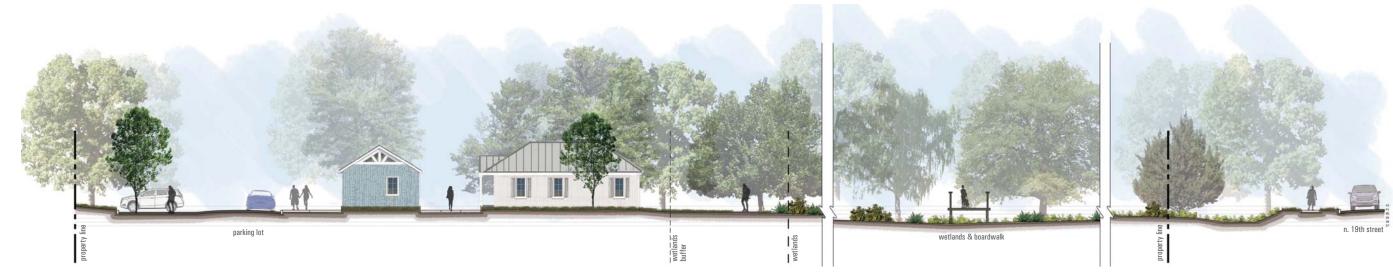


## SINGLE FAMILY COTTAGE LOT CONCEPT - PLAN VIEW RENDERING

MOAT PROPERTY REDEVELOPMENT, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

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SECTION A · NORTHERN SINGLE FAMILY COTTAGES, WETLAND & BOARDWALK



SECTION B - SOUTHERN SINGLE FAMILY COTTAGES - VIEW FROM E. 139TH AVENUE



SECTION KEY







AUGUST 2023

# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY REVITALIZATION PROJECT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## **Acknowledgements**

#### Client

- Northampton County, Virginia
- Town of Nassawadox, Virginia

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- Jason Beske, Project Manager/Urban Planner
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- Jay Demma, Urban Economist
- Maggie Connor, Urban Designer
- Isabel Oyuela-Bonzani, Urban Designer
- Tom Leighton, Financial Analyst

The project was funded as part of the Department of Housing and Community Development Industrial Revitalization Fund Planning Grant. The Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) leverages local and private resources to achieve market-driven redevelopment of vacant and deteriorated industrial and commercial properties. The grant is targeted toward vacant non-residential structures whose poor condition creates physical and economic blight to the surrounding area in which the structure is located.

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## **Executive Summary**

The Northampton County Revitalization Project Feasibility Study for the Town of Nassawadox, Virginia focused on an in-depth analysis of the former Shore Memorial Hospital site. The analysis included desktop research and site visits to help gather insight into the existing conditions of the property and surrounding area. More specifically, the analysis examined the following:

- Physical conditions of the site, including water capacity.
- Nearby properties and associated uses (i.e., residential, commercial, and industrial uses).
- Market conditions of the Town and surrounding area (i.e., jobs, housing demands, and retail market).
- Demographics to help determine population trends in the Town and surrounding area.

The study was developed over a two-month period and included a robust engagement process with residents, property owners, elected officials, and community stakeholders. The project team utilized the existing conditions information and input gathered from engagement efforts to layout the vision for the future site. Also included are illustrative design layout of the site, including recommendations for the different types and location of future land uses (i.e., residential, recreational/open space and retail), future infrastructure and road networks.

The study concludes with specific recommendations and next steps to help revitalize the property into the most viable use. Future recommendations for developing the site includes:

- Regulatory/land use changes needed to create the future vision.
- Exploring a public-private partnerships with the property owner
- Potential incentive and financing options
- Future Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Requests for Proposals (RFP) process considerations

## 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 Project Overview

In early 2023, Northampton County, Virginia initiated a visioning and site re-use planning effort for the former Shore Memorial Hospital property in Nassawadox, Virginia. The goal of this project is to provide redevelopment guidance for the former hospital property so that it can contribute to local economic growth and contribute to the quality of life of local residents. The purpose of the study is to ascertain the feasibility of redeveloping the site and identifying a potential roadmap for promoting and achieving its transformation into a community asset. The deliverables of this study include:

- Assessment Report, include Site and Context Analysis and Market Analysis.
- Final Feasibility Study, including concept design plans, feasibility analysis and implementation roadmap.

#### 1.2 Background and History

The former hospital opened in 1928 and was renovated in 1971. For many years it was one of the County's largest employers. The hospital closed in 2016 and has remained vacant since then. The closure resulted in loss of social services, employment, and fiscal revenue.

Approximately 17 acres in area, the property is currently owned by Northampton Accomack Memorial. The zoning is commercial. The owner intends to demolish all structures except the water tower and storage facility. The Eastern Shore Family Medicine site will become a separate parcel and is not considered part of the redevelopment area. This change will reduce the amount of developable land on the site to approximately 13 acres.



Figure 1-1: Vicinity Aerial Map

#### 1.3 Demographic Profile

Approximately 431 acres in area, the Town of Nassawadox is located along Lankford Highway (U.S. Route 13) in Northampton County, Virginia. This Virginia Eastern shore town serves as one of the social and economic focal points of the County with a median household of income of \$72,784 and a total population of 637 residents. Nassawadox's predominant industry types include the educational services, and health care and social assistance service industry, which accounts for 26% of jobs in the town, and manufacturing, which accounts for 21.9% of jobs. These two industries combine for almost half of the jobs in Nassawadox (Table 1-1).

In comparison, Northampton County has a resident population of just under 12,300. Since 2000, the county's resident population has declined over -6%. This is in sharp contrast to the State of Virginia, which has experienced a population growth rate of almost 22% between 2000 and 2020. (Table 1-1)

The resident population in Northampton County is significantly older than that of the state. The county's median age is 49 years old, while the statewide rate is just over 38 years old. Despite having an older population, the racial and ethnic diversity of the county is similar to the state's diversity. Roughly 44% of the county's population are people of color compared to 41% statewide. An older population, though, does translate to more people living alone. Over one-third of the county's population lives alone, while the statewide rate of those living along is 27%.

Table 1-1: Population Characteristics

#### **Northampton** County Virginia 8,631,393 2020 Population 12,282 Change 2000-2020 -6.2% 21.9% Median Age 49.0 38.2 % Age 55+ 40% 29% % Age 65+ 25% 16% % People of Color 44% 41%

35%

% Living Alone
Source: US Census

Table 1-2: Employment Breakdown in Northampton County and Nassawadox (2010-2020)

27%

	Northampton County, Virginia		Town of Nassawadox, Virginia	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	13.4%	6.3%	5.1%	4.1%
Construction	7.4%	7.3%	5.5%	7.7%
Manufacturing	5.5%	7.4%	6.7%	21.9%

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Data website. <u>Census Bureau Data</u>

	Northampton County, Virginia		Town of Nassawadox, Virginia	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
Wholesale trade	7.1%	4.7%	7.5%	6.1%
Retail trade	8.0%	13.4%	5.9%	9.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.7%	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Information	0.7%	1.3%	0.8%	0.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.5%	3.2%	1.6%	5.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6.1%	7.0%	0.0%	7.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	26.1%	24.9%	34.4%	26.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.0%	9.7%	16.6%	1.5%
Other services, except public administration	4.1%	2.8%	11.5%	1.5%
Public administration	3.5%	7.5%	4.3%	8.7%
Total Employment	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: US Census Data

#### 1.4 Market Context

Strong locational factors are an essential foundation to successful real estate redevelopment. Therefore, an understanding of these factors can help prioritize both public and private investments that will catalyze redevelopment of the Subject Site.

Figure 1-2 shows the location of the subject property in relation to existing commercial development in the town of Nassawadox as well as traffic volumes along roadways. Within a block of the subject property, there are eight commercial properties totaling more than 100,000 square feet of space. Five of the buildings are currently vacant; most had been, until recently, occupied by medical uses. The closure of Shore Hospital and many nearby medical uses has reduced traffic volumes along Hospital Road to 1,300 vehicles per day.

Further eastward closer to the intersection of Lankford Highway (US-13) and Rogers Drive there is a concentration of older and newer commercial buildings that serve as the retail center of Nassawadox. This area currently contains about a dozen businesses, including a restaurant, gas station/convenience store, art supply shop, independent insurance agents, funeral home, lumber supply business, a garden center, and a US Post office. In total, these businesses occupy roughly 25,000 square feet of space. Most of these businesses have direct access to or visibility from Lankford Highway, which has approximately 13,000 vehicles per day.

Also shown on the map is the outline of a 32-acre site that is currently for-sale for \$499,000. It is located on the west side of Lankford Highway. According to the current listing agent, several businesses have

looked closely at the site for both retail and housing development. However, the property still remains for sale.

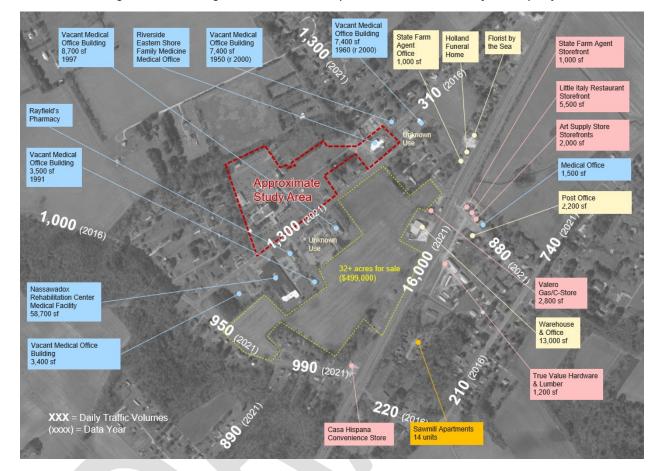
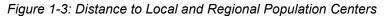


Figure 1-2: Existing Commercial Development Proximate to Subject Property

Figure 1-3 shows the distance from the subject property to the two main population centers in Northampton County and the nearest major metropolitan areas in the mid-Atlantic. Exmore has about 1,500 permanent residents and is 4.5 miles north of Nassawadox. Meanwhile, Cape Charles has just over 1,200 permanent residents and 17.5 miles south of Nassawadox. The closest major metropolitan area is the Hampton Roads, which has 1.8 million people and is 55 miles south of Nassawadox. Other major metros within 200 miles of Nassawadox are Richmond, Washington-Baltimore, and Philadelphia-Wilmington. These areas have a combined population of nearly 17 million.





# 2.0 Site Analysis

## 2.1 Site and Community Context

On the site there are several existing structures, including the 130,000-sf vacant hospital building, Riverside Eastern Shore Family Medicine building, a small warehouse, and two residential structures. In addition to being in the groundwater Aquifer Recharge Area, the site contains 18,000 gallons of diesel and kerosene underground storage tanks (3) (Town of Nassawadox Comprehensive Plan, 2000). However, recent reports from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality identify those storage tanks as being "inactive". There is an existing wetland located directly north of the site that feeds into Warehouse Creek located less than ¼ mile west of the site along Franktown Road (see Figure 2-1 below).

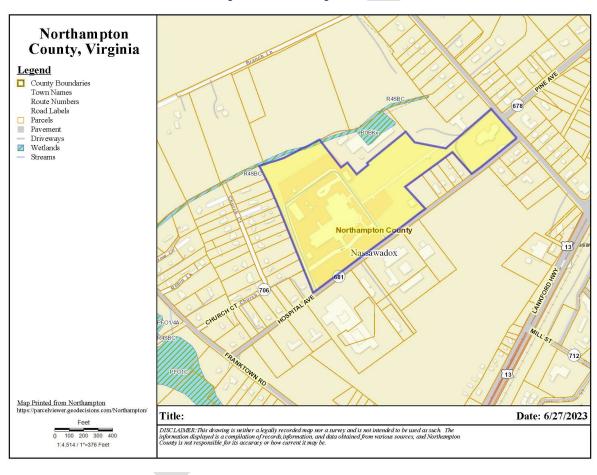
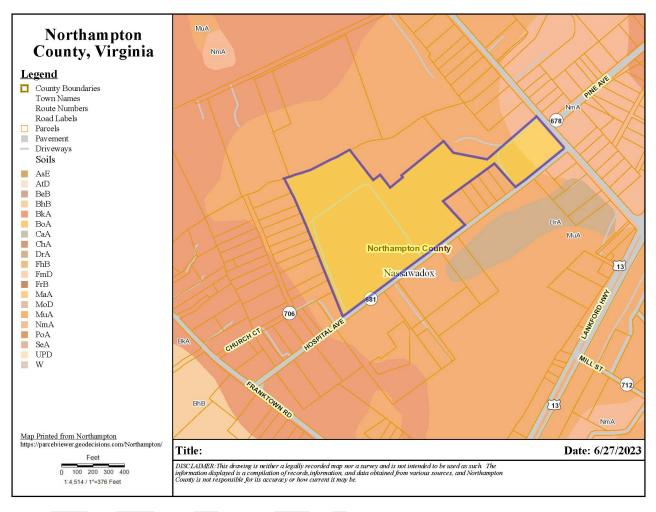


Figure 2-1: Existing Wetland

Source: Northampton County GIS Mapping Tool, 2023

According to the Nassawadox Comprehensive Plan, all soils in Nassawadox are either hydric or highly permeable, with a depth to groundwater of 0-36 inches. Highly permeable soils are identified as extremely susceptible to pollutant leaching and have a high potential for groundwater pollution. Hydric soils are primarily wet and poorly drained. The site is primarily comprised of a highly permeable soil (Munden Sandy Loam) and a hydric soil (Nimmo Sandy Loam) is identified on the eastern portion of the site (see Figure 2-2 below).

Figure 2-2: Existing Soils



Source: Northampton County GIS Mapping Tool, 2023

Table 2-1: Building Site Development Limitations Summary

Soil Type	Dwellings Without Basement	Dwellings With Basement	Small Commercial Buildings	Septic Systems	Roads
Munden Sandy Loam, MuA	Moderate: wetness	Severe: wetness	Moderate: wetness	Severe: wetness	Moderate: wetness
Nimmo Sandy Loam, NmA	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness poor filter	Severe: wetness

Source: Town of Nassawadox Comprehensive Plan, 2000

Table 2-2: Northampton Site Summary

Tax Lot Identification Numbers	21A1-A-46
Address	9507 Hospital Avenue, Nassawadox, VA 23413
Site Size	17.926 acres
Jurisdiction	Nassawadox, Virginia
Zoning	C-O, Commercial-Office
Nassawadox Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Designation	Commercial Office
Soils	Munden Sandy Loam, MuA
	Nimmo Sandy Loam, NmA
Groundwater	Aquifer Recharge Area

The site is surrounded by a single-family residential property to the east and west, commercial/medial office uses to the south, and large tracts of undeveloped land to the north. Highlighted below are the existing health care facilities near the site (see Table 2-3 below).

Table 2-3: Nearby Healthcare Facilities

Business	Industry Type	Address
Nassawadox Rehabilitation and	Educational services, and health	9468 T-681, Nassawadox, VA
Nursing	care and social assistance	23413
Rayfield's Pharmacy	Educational services, and health	9502 T-681, Nassawadox, VA
	care and social assistance	23413
Fresenius Kidney Care	Educational services, and health	9550 T-681, Nassawadox, VA
Nassawadox	care and social assistance	23413
Riverside Shore Surgical Associates	Educational services, and health	10111 Rogers Dr, Nassawadox, VA
	care and social assistance	23413

Figure 2-3: Nassawadox Rehabilitation and Nursing Facility



Figure 2-4: Riverside Shore Surgical Associates

The existing on-plot water supply system served the former hospital and some of the adjacent parcels, including the dialysis facility and Heritage Hall, the nursing home across the street. The system includes one well serving a water tower, another well for back-up, and water storage tanks. Historically, water pressure was low on the upper floors of the hospital.

Ground water is generally available in the area. Water supply is not likely to be a constraint under a redevelopment or intensification scenario at the hospital. Data on water quality are, however, unavailable at this time.

Prior to hospital closure, the pipes at the well head exhibited some corrosion. The system was functioning adequately but was in need up maintenance and perhaps upgrading. It is likely that the system has experienced some deterioration since the closure of the hospital. The engineering firm Bowman was hired in 2017 to prepare a study of options for water system improvements. As part of this feasibility study, we requested a copy of the study but have not received it.

### 2.2. Existing Plans and Zoning Regulations

### Northampton County's Comprehensive Plan 2040

The Comprehensive Plan is the County's primary long-range planning document that establishes local policy relating land use, transportation, and public facilities. The Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map designates the site as Town, which signifies that Nassawadox has zoning authority. Therefore, the future land use is determined at the local jurisdiction and not Northampton County. However, the Comprehensive Plan does designate the Town of Nassawadox as a preferred development area for future growth in the County.

### Nassawadox Comprehensive Plan (2000)

Nassawadox's Comprehensive Plan (2000) plans Future Land Use Map designates the property as Commercial Office (C-O). This land use category is intended to promote the health services industry and commercial development within Town limits. The Comprehensive Plan states, "land uses are to be consistent with the needs of the community in promoting the health services industry and providing the flexibility to provide economic growth. Such land uses would include medical offices/complexes, expansion of the hospital or nursing home facilities, pharmacies and other lands uses related to the health services industry."

### 2.2.1 - Property Zoning & Allowable Land Uses

The Northampton County site is subject to the Town of Nassawadox Zoning Ordinance (1993) which establishes the allowable land uses and development standards for the town of Nassawadox. The site is located within the Commercial-Office (C-O) District, which is intended to promote health and professional service industries by providing appropriate locations for health service-related commercial activity and professional services.

The following table (Table 2-4) summarizes the allowable uses within the C-1 zone as they relate to the preliminary reuse ideas for the Northampton site. The following table focuses on open space, mixed-use, and community services – see the Code for additional land uses. Uses listed as "permitted" (P) are allowed in the zone, whereas uses listed as "conditional" (S) require a special use permit. Special Uses are normally allowed on a case-by-case basis including compatibility provisions and require a public hearing before the Planning Commission. Uses not listed as permitted principal or permitted accessory uses require determination by the Zoning Administrator.

Table 2-4: Allowable Land Uses Summary

P = Permitted S = Special Exception Blank = Not Allowed	Current Zone	
Land Use	C-O Zoning District	
Medical offices and complexes, pharmacies, and all uses	Р	
Professional offices	Р	
Ambulance services	Р	
Public utilities: Poles, lines, transformers, pipes, meters, and similar facilities; water and sewer distribution lines	P	
Drainage, erosion, and flood control devices	Р	
Condominiums	Р	
Educational institutions, public and private	Р	
Hospital medical centers	S	
Nursing homes	S	
Day care centers	S	
Multi-family housing, up to four units per building	S	
Public Utilities	S	

### 2.2.2 - Development Standards

The following table (Table 2-5) summarizes the development standards for the C-O zone as they relate to the preliminary reuse ideas for the Northampton site. This table focuses on residential, open space, mixed-use, and community services.

Table 2-5: Development Standards Summary

	Current Zone		
Standards	с-о		
Minimum Lot Size (min.)	None required		
Minimum Lot Width	100 ft		
Setbacks	Primary	Accessory	
From U.S. Route 13	100 ft	100 ft	
From other roads	None	None	
Rear yard	None*	None*	
Side yard	None*	None*	
Shoreline	75 ft	None	
*Except where a permitted use abuts a residential district where the			

Chesapeake Bay/Atlantic Ocean Preservation Area Overlay District

requirement will be 25 feet for side yards and 35 feet for rear yards.

The property is located in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, Resource Management Area for Northampton County. This zone is intended to protect water quality, prevent pollution, and reduce existing pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean and consequently the quality of life of residents in Nassawadox, Northampton County and the State of Virginia. See specific standards below:

- **Use Regulations**. Permitted uses, special permit uses, accessory uses, and special requirements are established by the underlying zoning district.
- **Lot Size**. Lot size is determined through the requirements of the underlying zoning district, provided that any lot shall have sufficient area outside the RPA to accommodate an intended development, in accordance with the performance standards.
- Redevelopment Areas. The zoning code states that areas designated as redevelopment areas shall comply with all erosion and sediment control requirements and the performance standards for redevelopment.

### 3.0 Market Analysis

This section summarizes key findings and conclusions regarding the market and economic conditions related to the potential redevelopment of the former Shore Hospital site. Findings from the analysis were used to inform project stakeholders throughout the planning process of the potential to prioritize and/or implement elements of the final plan based on their market and economic feasibility.

### 3.1.1 Site Strengths

- 15-acre site is large enough to accommodate a variety of development types.
- Property owner is very supportive of redeveloping the site.
- Located within an Enterprise Zone, which increases the potential for outside investment.
- Sewer and water availability.
- Cluster of vacant medical buildings located near the site represents opportunity for new uses.
- Site is within 3-hour drive of four major metro areas with a combined population of nearly 20 million.
- Nearby site with over 30 acres for-sale, if developed, may be catalyst opportunity for subject property.

### 3.1.2 Site Challenges

- The subject site does not have direct access to or is visible from US Hwy 13 (Lankford Hwy), which is the primary roadway for Northampton and Accomack counties.
- Subject site is four miles from Exmore, which is the primary commercial center for Northampton County. This distance limits the potential to support larger retail uses that would serve a population that lives beyond the Nassawadox area.
- Cluster of vacant medical office buildings may enhance the perception of blight in the neighborhood surrounding the subject property.

### 3.2 Demand Drivers

Given the size of the Subject Property and the likely need to phase development over many years, macro-level data was gathered and analyzed in order to better understand the demographic trends that impact demand for new development in Nassawadox and Northampton County. As discussed in Section 1, Northampton County has a resident population of just under 12,300, according to the 2020 US Census. Since 2000, the county's resident population has declined over -6%. The resident population in Northampton County is significantly older than that of the state.

### 3.2.2 Household Characteristics

The proportion of households that own their housing in Northampton County is about 65%, which is nearly the same as the statewide ownership rate. However, household incomes in the county are much lower than statewide incomes. This is not surprising since Northampton County is mostly rural and does not an employment base with high paying jobs typically found in large urban areas.

The housing stock in Northampton County is dominated by single-family homes. Over 90% of owner-occupied units and nearly 60% of renter-occupied units are single-family homes. This is a very high percentage, especially among renters. Although higher proportions of single-family housing are common in rural communities, it does affect the overall affordability of housing because single-family homes tend to be larger and have more land than most multi-family types of housing.

Housing in Northampton County tends to be older than what is found in other parts of the state. Overthirds of the housing stock in the county is more than 60 years old. Although older housing is the most common type of natural occurring affordable housing, it is also means a significant proportion of the housing stock is at risk of deferred maintenance.

Table 3-1: Household Characteristics

	Owner Households		Renter Households	
	Northampton		Northampton	
	County	Virginia	County	Virginia
% Owners/Renters	65%	66%	35%	34%
% HH Inc <\$50k	42%	26%	70%	51%
% HH Inc \$50k-\$99k	32%	29%	24%	30%
% HH Inc \$100k+	24%	46%	6%	19%
% Single-Family Unit	92%	80%	58%	28%
% Units 60+ yrs old	34%	19%	36%	21%
Avg HH Size	2.15	2.67	2.44	2.48

Source: US Census

### 3.2.3 Housing Occupancy

Although Northampton County's resident population declined over -6% between 2000 and 2020, the percentage of housing units increased 12.5% during this time. This is likely related to the county's very high percentage of vacant 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes and Other Homes, which mostly consist of short-term rentals (e.g., Air BnB). Combined, these two categories account for over 27% of all homes in the county compared to only 6.4% of all homes statewide. This means a very large percentage of homes in the county are not available to households that want to live permanently in the area.

Table 3-2: Housing Occupancy

Northampton		
	County	Virginia
2020 Housing Units	7,364	3,596,100
Change 2000-2020	12.5%	24.0%
Owner Occupied	45.1%	60.2%
Renter Occupied	26.8%	30.1%
Total Vacant:	28.1%	9.7%
Vacant - For rent	0.0%	2.2%
Vacant - For sale	1.0%	1.1%
Vacant - 2nd Home	12.1%	2.2%
Vacant - Other	15.0%	4.2%

Source: US Census

### 3.3 Housing Market Analysis

### **3.3.1 2022 Housing Study**

In 2022 the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission conducted a regional housing study for the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The study evaluated the existing housing stock for its age, condition, style, tenure, and costs, and then compared that against the needs of the existing household base (e.g., age, income, size, and family structure) to determine any significant mismatch/gaps and best to overcome those supply issues.

The conclusion was that there is a substantial lack of supply for housing throughout the region for all income levels regardless of tenure (i.e., own or rent). The key barriers to increasing hosing supply were identified as followed:

- · Regulatory issues, such as restrictive zoning.
- High construction costs due to land prices and shortages of materials and labor.
- Demographic changes, in particular an aging population and forecasted declines in younger age groups.
- · Landlord issues.
- Inadequate or poor infrastructure.
- Limited resources to cover construction/affordability gaps.

# Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA REGIONAL HOUSING STUDY March 2022 This planning study was funded in whole or in part to Northampton County by a Community Development Block for

### 3.3.2 Housing Development

Figure 3-1 shows the number of housing units that have been permitted for construction in Northampton County between 2000 and 2023. Cape Charles was excluded from the numbers because of recent a construction boom that has been concentrated within the city limits. The chart shows strong development of single-family homes during the early- and mid-2000s. After the 2008-10 recession, housing construction remained very low until 2020, though current development rates are still one-half to one-third of the rate of growth from 20 years ago.

Development of multi-family development has been even more sluggish. There have not been any multi-family units permitted for construction in Northampton County outside of Cap Charles since 2003.

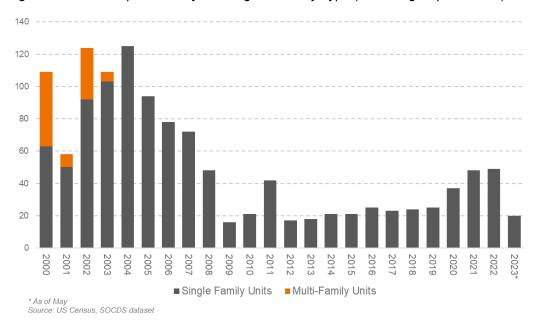


Figure 3-1: Northampton County Housing Permits by Type (Excluding Cape Charles)

### 3.3.3 Multi-Family Market Conditions

A review of existing multi-family rental properties in Northampton and southern Accomack counties was conducted to learn about the range of options, pricing, and availability to residents. Below is a breakdown of the supply:

- 19 properties with a total of 600 units.
- Five properties have 40 or more units.
- Two properties are age-restricted (i.e., seniors) with a total of 134 units.
- 11 properties are income-restricted with a total of 451 units. [Includes the two age-restricted properties.]
- 8 properties are market rate with a total 149 units. One property that is a recent renovation of motel accounts for 101 units or 75% of all market rates units.

Figure 3-2 shows the vacancy and rent trends since 2013 for the market rate rental units in Northampton and southern Accomack counties. After declining consistently since 2016, the vacancy rate is currently below 1%. When vacancies are this low, it indicates a severe shortage in housing. The lack of available units for rent has resulted in consistent rent increases over the last 10 years. Currently the average asking rent per square foot is over \$2.75. Such low vacancies coupled with high rents often has impacts the local labor market as many younger households and low-wage workers are unable to find adequate housing.



Figure 3-2: Market Rate Rental Vacancy and Rent Trends 2013-2023

### 3.3.4 Housing Market Findings

There is a severe shortage of housing for all types and price points. Key issues and barriers to improving housing choices are:

- Lack of new housing construction, especially in northern Northampton County.
- The second home market, either for seasonal/recreational use or short-term rentals, has bottled up a lot of potential supply for permanent residents.
- Limited economic opportunities, dominated by lower-wage jobs (i.e., service workers), has driven down incomes and the ability to pay for housing.
- A population base with a high proportion of older and/or retired adults also contributes to low turnover and the ability of younger households to access housing.

### 3.4 Retail Market Analysis

This section addresses the condition of the retail market in Northampton County and southern Accomack counties and the potential of the Subject Property to capture current and future retail demand.

### 3.4.1 Retail Market Overview

- 129 existing properties.
- 824,000 total square feet.
- 27,000 square feet built since 2005 (3.2% of total).

Important retail districts:

### **Downtown Cape Charles**

• 28 properties, 160,000 square feet

### Lankford Hwy and Hwy 184

- 7 properties, 76,000 sf
- Food Lion, Dollar General, McDonald's

### **Exmore**

- 44 properties, 410,000 sf
- Food Lion, Walgreens, Ace Hardware, McDonalds, Dollar General, Family Dollar

### 3.4.2 Retail Market Conditions

Average rent per square foot for retail space in Northampton and southern Accomack counties has generally oscillated between \$6 and \$10 per square foot over the last 10 years. Despite recent inflation, asking rents for retail space have not appreciably increased.

Figure 3-3: Retail Rent Trends – Northampton and Southern Accomack Counties



The retail vacancy rate differs significantly depending on where you are in Northampton County. In the northern part of the county, where the Subject Property is located, several large vacant spaces have resulted in an overall vacancy rate around 22%. In the southern part of the county, vacancy has been at or below 1% since 2019.

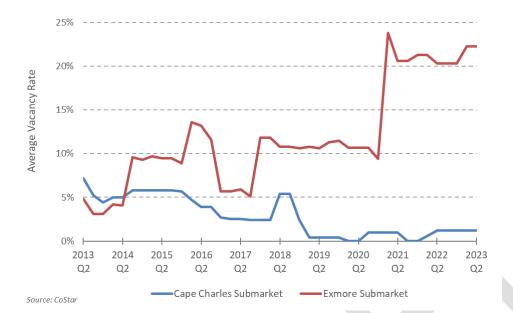


Figure 3-4: Retail Vacancy Trends - Cape Charles and Exmore Submarkets

### 3.4.3 Retail Market Findings

The subject property is not ideal for retail for several important reasons:

- 1. Visibility and accessibility from Lankford Hwy (Hwy 13) is poor, especially for retail businesses that are highly dependent on transient customers.
- 2. The largest concentration of retail in Northampton and Accomack counties is located less than five miles away in Exmore. Moreover, this retail district has a very high vacancy rate due to several large vacant spaces.
- The existing retail node in Nassawadox has demonstrated some resilience. However, most of that
  resilience is due to its historic character and affordable commercial rents, relative to new retail
  construction.

### 3.5 Hotel Market Analysis

This section addresses the condition of the hotel market in Northampton County and southern Accomack counties and the potential of the Subject Property to capture current and future hotel demand.

### 3.5.1 Hotel Market Overview

- 17 existing properties.
- 566 total rooms.
- 9 properties have fewer than 30 rooms.
- 14 are independently owned and operated.
- 3 are franchised all located in Exmore (218 total rooms) Hampton Inn, Holiday Inn Express, and Quality Inn.
- Most recent hotel development was in 2009.

### 3.5.2 Hotel Metrics

Hotel occupancy declined dramatically during the covid pandemic but rebounded to pre-pandemic levels by the middle of 2022. Despite a strong improvement in occupancy post-pandemic, the overall occupancy rate is around 57%. Based on industry standards, occupancy rates need to be consistently above 65% to signal pent-up demand in the market and the potential for new development.

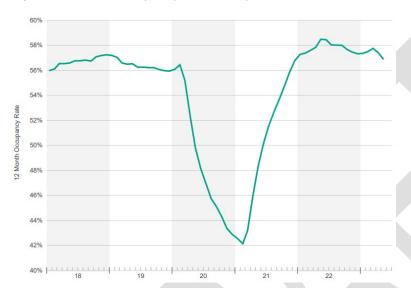


Figure 3-5: Hotel Occupancy - Northampton and Southern Accomack Counties

Another metric used to gauge the condition of the hotel market is the average daily room rate (ADR). Prepandemic, ADR increased about 1-2% per year. During the pandemic, ADR dropped dramatically but rebounded quickly. Post-pandemic, ADR has been increasing at about 10% per year. However, this coincides a period of strong overall inflation and does not necessarily indicate an increase in demand.

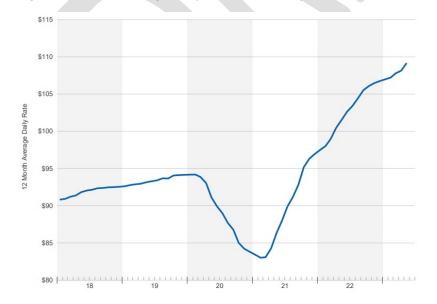


Figure 3-6: Hotel Average Daily Rate - Northampton and Southern Accomack Counties

A key measure used in the hotel industry is Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR). Pre-pandemic RevPAR was averaging about \$53. Not surprisingly, it dropped significantly during the pandemic. Post - pandemic, RevPAR then increased well above pre-pandemic levels and has been averaging around \$62 over the last 12 months. Although RevPAR is influenced by broader inflationary issues, it also impacted by occupancy.

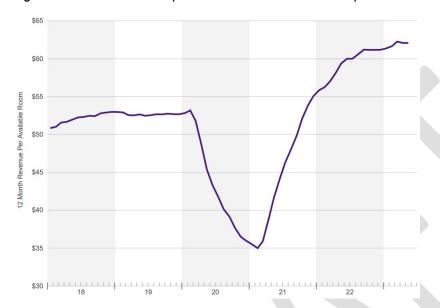


Figure 3-7: Hotel Revenue per Available Room – Northampton and Southern Accomack Counties

### 3.5.3 Hotel Market Findings

Despite improved post-pandemic market conditions, the site is not ideal for lodging for two important reasons:

- 1. Visibility and accessibility from Lankford Highway (US-13) is poor. Although prominent signage along Lankford Highway with wayfinding may mitigate some of the accessibility/visibility issues, there are too many other alternative sites that would be preferrable.
- 2. The largest concentration of competitive lodging is located less than five miles away in Exmore. These properties would likely need to be full before customers would consider the Nassawadox location.

### 3.6 Market Supportable Program Recommendation for the Subject Property

Based on the previous findings from the market analysis, it is not recommended to include a traditional hotel or retail space as part of the conceptual site plans.

Due to pent up demand for a variety of housing types, it is recommended that the site concepts include multiple options for complementary residential uses. Moreover, any site concepts should also be designed to be developed in phases given that the depth of pent-up demand is tempered by the limited economic growth of the area.

30-40 units in single-level townhomes targeted to empty-nesters and early retirees.

20-30 units in 2-story townhomes targeted younger families.

50-70 units in several small 2- to 3-story general occupancy apartments or one building for older seniors.

### 4.0 Public Participation

The public engagement process for this feasibility study included a robust dialogue with the Town of Nassawadox about the future development opportunities at the site. The process included traditional and electronic media for gathering and disseminating information with key stakeholders, as follows:

- Focus Group Meetings (two total)
  - o (1) Local residents including property owners and other civil society groups
  - (2) Business community including real estate professionals and business owners
- Survey Questionnaire
  - o Approximately 20 completed surveys
- Community Visioning Workshop
  - o August 23, 2023. Approximately 25-30 attendees



Figure 4-1: Community Workshop

Figure 4-2: Virtual Engagement



Figure 4-3: Community Workshop - Mapping Exercise



### **Key Engagement Takeaways**

The planning process for the study was designed to obtain and respond to detailed comments from as many area stakeholders as possible. The key stakeholder takeaways identified below include information and feedback gathered during the process. Note: The takeaways are not all encompasses and only include the highlights of some of the more common themes.

- There is excess demand for affordable housing, including apartments and workforce housing.
- Many residents utilize the former hospital's open space for other recreational activities.
- The area lacks retail and quality dining options.
- Extensive short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb) is putting downward pressure on the supply of rental housing.
- Participants are interested in amenities like a swimming pool, community center, and other recreational facilities.
- There is a stated need for more public open spaces, including green space.
- Residents would like to see new commercial/retail facilities in order to boost job creation.

### 5.0 Concept Site Plan

### 5.1 Foundational Design Approach and Site Context

The redevelopment of the Hospital site began with an assessment of the existing conditions through mapping and working with the county to identify specific conditions. A few key components were decided on as the foundation of the design:

- Maintain infrastructure and existing shelters, such as the water tower, medical office facility on Hospital Ave and Rogers Drive, and landscaped buffer of the wastewater treatment facility.
- Prioritize retention of as many existing trees on the site as possible
- Enhance and retain the wetlands and creek area towards the Western border of the site.
- Respect the neighboring single-family housing areas by including additional buffer zones near the
  property lines through landscape strategies (additional plantings and trees) and new construction
  setbacks from these edges.
- Maintain accessibility and develop a discreet entrance to the wastewater treatment facility.
- Maintain street frontage setback of approximately 30ft on Hospital Ave. for consistency with existing building setbacks.

Additionally, through the community feedback process mentioned above the plan would also take into consideration the existing density of the surrounding neighborhoods while balancing future demands, market potential, and potential of generating new employment through the site's redevelopment.



Figure 5-1: Design Concept Plan

### 5.2 Conceptual Plan Design

In the conceptual plan design of the Hospital Site's redevelopment, the primary ambition is to generate a new housing fabric that creates a neighborhood experience to serve both future occupants and the existing Nassawadox community.

### **Public Space & Parks**

The primary organization of the plan is developed around a "central public park" at the entrance of the site on Hospital Ave. This park is surrounded by higher-density housing so it would become a well-used, welcoming, and accessible park. The central public park location is also designed as a visual welcome point for residents to pass along, much like a town square, as they enter the rest of the site. From the central park, a tree-lined promenade serves as a key road that would bring people back toward the North-Western "nature park".

The nature park is on the North-Western border of the site, at the top of the map in the plan. It incorporates the natural landscape of the trees and wetlands that exist while also creating the potential for additional native landscaping to promote a healthy ecological habitat. While the central park on Hospital Road serves as a more public and formal park design with a community service center at its border, the park tucked along the creek is of a different character. The nature park is able to embrace a more natural and reflective atmosphere due to its tucked-away location. This park could accommodate functions that are geared more towards the immediate neighborhood residents, such as a children's playground, dog park, tennis courts, or small trails and native fauna gardens.

### Housing

The plan incorporates a variety of housing types that would attract a diversity of people to live in this redevelopment. To do so, three housing types have been suggested: single-family houses, townhomes, and senior living options in both cottage style and within a 2-story apartment building. The composition of the housing is organized in general zones with greater density towards and along Hospital Road, a zone for various kinds of senior living (independent, age-in-place, and assisted) with a neighborhood community center/club for amenities and activities incorporated into the apartment building. The Western portion of the site is suggested for single-family housing due to its more secluded location. Secondly, all housing sites would have off-street parking accessed through alleyways where possible, dedicated parking lots, or shared driveways that would allow for the need of street parking to be minimized. Third, all the street frontages would be tree-lined, and landscaped to enhance the environmental qualities, appearance, and character of the neighborhood while also allowing for each housing plot in the homes and townhomes to have private space for gardens and small yards.

### Street Network

The road network of the site is a semi-linear grid with a few curved portions to create a more picturesque experience as residents either drive or walk along the path network. Each block has a walkable dimension of approximately 200ft. and allows for a diversity of building type options while maintaining an intimate scale for a neighborhood. Two alternative housing density options are included in the appendix for review and maintain the same infrastructure network. One of the key benefits of the current street grid shown in Figure 5-1 is that all parts of the site can be accessed through both vertical and horizontal circulation loops. Additionally, primary access in this first phase of the redevelopment is from four different points along Hospital Ave. In the future, if the neighboring plots on Rogers Ave. redevelop or the existing office plot changes there is potential to connect the street network directly to Rogers Ave. to provide another entry option.

### 6.0 Financial Analysis

To be included in final report.

### 7.0 Implementation Recommendations

The recommendations for implementation—like the development program and the concept site plan—are influenced by the relatively narrow set of market-viable uses for this property. While there is excess demand for some types of housing, there are few other uses that could generate an adequate financial return in this location<sup>2</sup> and therefore attract private investment in new real estate projects at this site. There aren't enough people living nearby to support new retail uses. And the regional hotel market is dominated by chain properties in Exmore. The Town could consider building, owning, and operating a community center or a park in this location, as a complement to residential investment.

In this context, it is recommended to develop and implement a redevelopment project at this site by structuring a partnership with a private developer. The steps are:

- Prepare and issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify and shortlist developers qualified
  to implement a project at this site. Include this feasibility study as an appendix to the RFQ. Reach
  out informally to known developers in the region prior to the issue of the RFQ in order to drum up
  interest in the project.
- 2. Shortlist up to three developers and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a public-private partnership to develop the site. Use the development program recommendations from this

<sup>2</sup> The financial analysis to be included in the final report will provide more specific information on the anticipated levels of return.

feasibility study to "semi-structure" the project. Define the development program with core and optional elements. For example, include a minimum and maximum number of dwelling units on the property, but not a specific number. Define a minimum threshold for the percentage of total units that are "workforce" (to serve the households with incomes in the 80%–120% range of Area Median Income) or "affordable" (approximately 30%–80% of Area Median Income). Consider specifying the size of a senior living facility on the property.

- 3. Consider what incentives the Town or the County could offer. Consider whether it is necessary for the Town to purchase the land and then partner with developer. Also consider the possibility of public realm improvements—such as construction of new streets or public open spaces—to be undertaken by the Town. Also consider the possibility of the Town developing complementary civic facilities such as a community center or a public park.
- 4. Consider the possibility of accessing additional financing through federal or state grant programs. Under the IRA and IIJA there are programs that will financing multimodal transportation projects, including complete streets. Hospital Boulevard could be redeveloped as a complete street. The County or the Town could apply for grant financing to secure additional "low-cost" financing that would make the project more feasible from the developers' point-of-view.
- 5. Evaluate the bids received from the developers and select 1-2 developers for further negotiations. Using the financial analysis undertaken as part of this study, estimate the extent to which their offers are capable of achieving normal profit without any government subsidy (grant projects such as those in #4 notwithstanding). Where the Town/County want to include specific amenities that make it harder for the project to achieve a return on investment acceptable to the developers, then consider introducing some of the incentives listed under #3 above.
- 6. Conclude the negotiations and agree with the developers the contractual framework for implementation of the project. Conclude a contract with the winning offeror for a joint venture agreement or standard form real estate partnership, including the creation of a Limited Liability Company (LLC) that is specific to the project. The contract will stipulate the responsibilities and authorities of each of the parties. The period of performance of the contract should extend from contract signing through to occupancy and include the operations phase of the project, especially if some of the residences will be rental properties.
- 7. Modify the regulatory framework (Town/County) as required to facilitate project design and implementation. This may involve amending the comprehensive plan and the zoning ordinance to allow residential mixed use at the subject property.

### **Appendices**







**MAY 2023** 

### OUR TOWN BLUEFIELD DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN MAY 2023



### PREPARED FOR:

TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA



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- Kim Hernandez, Interim Town Administrator/ Town Clerk
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- Trent Crewe, Former Town Administrator
- Kim Hernandez, Interim Town Administrator/ Town Clerk
- Kris Williams, Town Zoning Administrator
- Cathy Payne, Council member
- Lee Riffle, Council member
- A J Robinson, Tazewell County Tourism
- Jeff Disibbio, Chamber of Commerce of the Two Virginias
- Dave Bowers, Business Owner
- Lecia Smith, Resident/ Community Leader

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### 1. Introduction

### **BACKGROUND**

Known as Virginia's Tallest Town with an elevation of 2,389 feet, Bluefield lies at the northwestern corner of Tazewell County just across the state line from Bluefield, West Virginia. Bluefield has remained a key center of commerce and culture to the nearby region, and with nearly 5,100 residents, the town's population has remained stable over the past fifty years, even with the decline of the area's coal and railroad industries. Bluefield is the proud home of Bluefield University and the Bluefield Ridge Runners baseball club, and enjoys a quality of life defined by family, small town values, and activity.

Downtown Bluefield is the heart of this activity with long-time vibrant businesses, a full slate of events that bring locals and visitors to the community, and key destinations such as the Bluefield Farmers Market and Jack Asbury Square, among others. Downtown is not only the heart of the Bluefield community, but also serves Tazewell County and surrounding micropolitan area. The Town has been working to revitalize its downtown, beginning with a Downtown Master Plan completed in 2008. The town effectively implemented a great deal of that plan, while other strategies outlined it its vision remain relevant today. This 2022 plan seeks to build off that plan and other ongoing efforts of the Town and its partners.

### **PLAN PROCESS**

This Downtown Master Plan is a part of a larger project funded by a 2019 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. That effort is a coalition of the Town of Bluefield, City of Bluefield West Virginia, and the Bluefield Industrial Development Authority and focuses on the shared economic challenges of the region, but also the revitalization of both community's downtown core. A steering committee of community and business leaders was formed to guide the consultants in the planning process and the project kicked off in May of 2022. During this kickoff, the consultants met with town staff and the steering committee, completed a physical assessment of downtown and key opportunity sites, and conducted photography. Several stakeholders were interviewed, and an open public meeting was held to get input on both challenges and opportunities that present themselves in downtown Bluefield.

The plan also included a comprehensive market analysis that identified market-based opportunities for downtown business support, expansion and recruitment, as well as opportunities for investment. This data helped inform the physical design strategies of the master plan. The team returned to Bluefield in mid-July to conduct an urban design workshop. Stakeholders, business owners and citizens continued to be engaged to share their "big picture" ideas on downtown activity, development opportunities, and vibrant downtown spaces. In September, the team once again returned to present the draft plan recommendations and gather additional input from the public on direction.



### **PLAN FORMAT**

The plan presents all of the public input, data, market research and urban designs on the pages that follow, divided into the following sections:

- **Public Input** An overview of the community engagement process including the on-line survey, stakeholder interviews and resulting themes that guided the direction of the plan.
- Market Analysis Summary A synopsis of the market research conducted as part of this plan.
- **Physical Assessment** A summary of the existing conditions related to the physical environment of downtown, followed by key findings and opportunities presented in an urban design framework diagram.
- Downtown Master Plan Plan strategies including urban design, connectivity, placemaking, and catalyst site opportunities. This section also includes wayfinding signage strategies for Bluefield and downtown, as well as business development and marketing recommendations.
- Implementation Strategies to achieve the long-term vision of the Downtown Master Plan including project phasing, potential funding, and implementation strategy board.

### **PLAN BRAND**

In order to drive public input, the Our Town Bluefield project brand was developed. It reflects the current star logo that the Town of Bluefield has systematically implemented over the years and gives ownership of the plan to Bluefield's citizenry. The logo was used on all project documents, public meeting fliers, the Downtown Bluefield Facebook page, and this document.





# 2. Public Input Summary

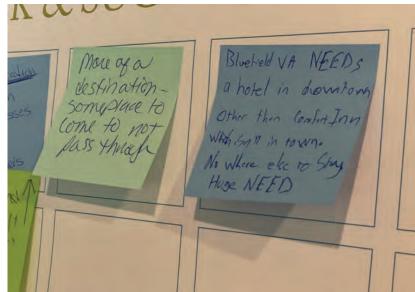
### **OVERVIEW**

The Our Town Bluefield master plan process incorporated a high level of public engagement to ensure that the plan reflected the vision and desires of the community. All told, there were over 400 public engagements through multiple community outreach methods including:

- Public Kickoff Meeting
- Online Survey
- Downtown Design Open House
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Draft Plan Presentation
- Steering Committee and Staff meetings



Downtown Park Design Mini-Charrette



Downtown Design Open House



Downtown Design Open House

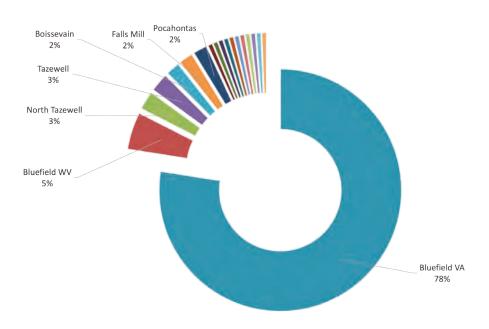


### **ONLINE SURVEY**

An online survey was utilized to solicit feedback from a wide audience regarding desires for downtown and opportunities for urban design, placemaking, economic development, activation, and beautification. The survey received 179 responses from residents, employees, business owners, visitors, and stakeholders in Downtown Bluefield.

Over three quarters (78%) of the survey respondents live in the Bluefield VA Zip Code. 93% of participants live in Virginia with 6% living in West Virginia. This included students and faculty at Bluefield University, as well as people who grew up here, but live away.

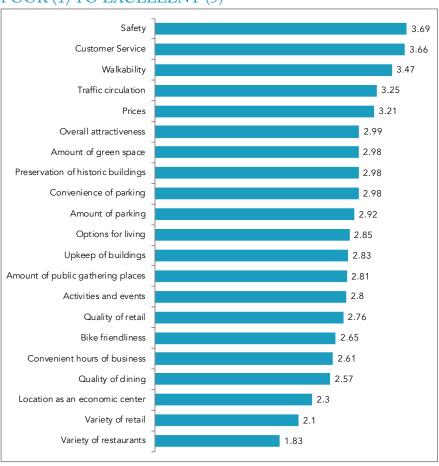
### HOME ZIP CODE



Home Zip Code of Online Survey Participants

The online survey asked participants to describe Bluefield's character, perceptions, assets, and needs. When asked to rate the current downtown environment, safety and customer service ranked the highest, while variety of retail and restaurants were the lowest. People noted that the slate of events held in downtown drive activity, and that more events are desired.

### RATE DOWNTOWN BLUEFIELD ENVIRONMENT FROM POOR (1) TO EXCELLENT (5)



Online Survey Results: Rate the Downtown Bluefield Environment



When asked about their favorite places in Downtown, common responses included both public spaces as well as private businesses.

The survey asked about specific needs including retail, services, residential, and public spaces. Family friendly restaurants and entertainment ranked very high, including fine dining, and brewery. Community event and meeting spaces ranked high as well, and people desire more creative businesses and the presents of arts. Residents value the active events held by the town and desire more events and active uses such as murals and art walls, food trucks, splash pads, etc.

Participants were very excited about this master planning process and were thankful they were being asked to provide input. Some key final thoughts included:

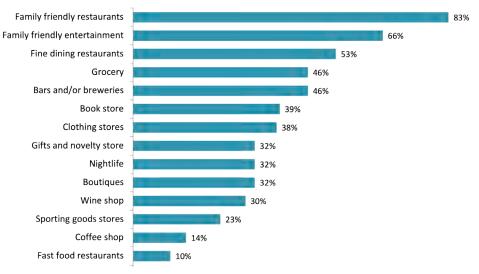
- Need more interaction between businesses, community and local leadership to recognize importance of revitalizing our downtown and make it more of a community gathering place for all Bluefield.
- Need to makeover our downtown to build pride of place, much like Wytheville, Tazewell, Marion, Blacksburg & others. Outside gathering, active uses such as a brewery and dining will not only draw people in but give locals a place to come together.
- Need to focus on supporting businesses, building entrepreneurship, and creating jobs through small, unique businesses in downtown.
- We need to take back our Main Street and realize its full potential.
   Downtown can be unique within the region and deserves to be our priority through implementation.

Detailed results of the online survey are provided in the appendix.



Online Survey Results: Favorite Places in Downtown Bluefield

### TYPES OF RETAIL AND RESTAURANT BUSINESSES NEEDED IN DOWNTOWN BLUEFIELD



Online Survey Results: Types of Retail and Restaurant Businesses Needed in Downtown Bluefield



### **THEMES**

Based on the ongoing community engagement, design workshop, market assessment and existing conditions study, the follow common themes emerged that drove the development of the Downtown Master Plan:

- Market: The population in the region continues to decline even with the Town's population remaining stable. While businesses should continue to support local market needs which will always be the primary base, the contracting market points to a need to attract more destination businesses and activities to bring in regional customers and visitors.
- Activity: Bluefield has great events that drive activity in downtown.
   Stakeholders felt this asset can be enhanced with outdoor dining, a brewery, additional events, and businesses that cater to the regional outdoor recreation experience.
- Existing Businesses: Downtown Bluefield is fortunate to have some great, long-standing businesses as well as active new businesses. It was felt however that existing businesses reach a narrow market, and here is a lack of diverse types of businesses. It was also noted that inconsistent hours and lack of variety limits downtown's potential.
- **Urban Design:** Stakeholders see a need for enhanced streetscaping that not only improves the appearance of downtown, but also creates better accessibility and prioritizes pedestrian safety.
- Connectivity: Creating connections to the Farmers Market and Visitor Center across the creek and down College Avenue to Bluefield University are priority. These were both identified as needed in the 2008 plan and are still relevant today.

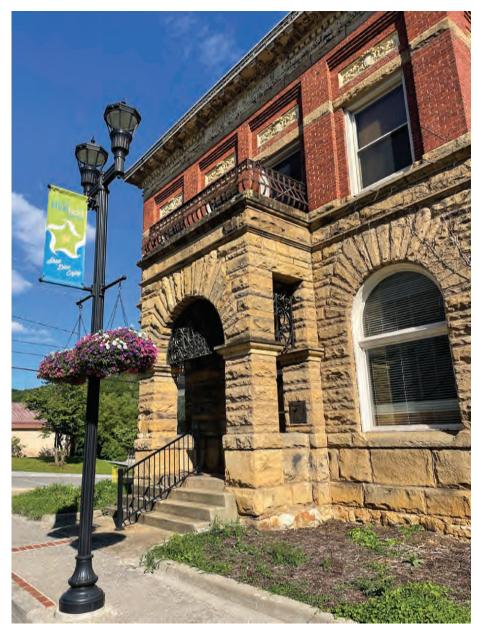
- Parking: Downtown Bluefield has plenty of surface parking as well as on-street parking spaces. However, lack of awareness, access and convenience make parking confusing and inefficient. Better defined and organized parking would result in more spaces being used, as well as improved safety for pedestrians.
- Placemaking: Jack Asbury Square and the creekfront provide great potential for Downtown Bluefield to have the nicest public space in all of the region. In addition, the downtown needs more vibrant spaces for year-round gathering and activity, both outdoor and indoor. Bluefield can increase vibrancy through unique design, artwork, and experiences designed in its public spaces.



Jack Asbury Square Walking Path



- Potential Downtown Catalysts: Stakeholders noted a number of
  potential catalysts that could energize downtown and spur continued
  economic investment. This could include destination businesses
  such as a brewery or restaurant with outdoor dining, a boutique hotel,
  market-rate residential above stores or in infill sites, and meeting and
  gathering places.
- **Key Sites:** Opportunity sites that may be receiving areas for this investment could include the Logan Street School on Tazewell Avenue, the First National Bank across from Jack Asbury Square, the Bank of Graham on Virginia Avenue which is owned by the IDA, warehouses on Virginia, and the area surrounding Bluestone Interiors. Each opportunity is noted in the plan.
- **Downtown Promotion:** The Town of Bluefield has down a great job of implementing its logo and creating activity through events in Downtown. There is still a need to improve awareness of and promote downtown through wayfinding, expanded branding and marketing tools.
- Framework for Implementation: In order for this plan to be successful, there must be a framework for implementation that accomplishes two key goals, among others. Local leadership and stakeholders must understand the value of downtown and its true potential, and there must be a private-sector downtown-focused partner to expand capacity of the Town. Stronger partnerships between the Town and business community are critical.



Brownfield Redevelopment Site: Historic Bank Building

# 3. Market Analysis Summary

### **INTRODUCTION**

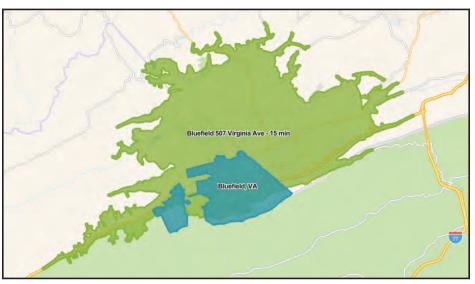
A market analysis for Bluefield examines local and regional demographic, housing, employment and commercial data to better understand Bluefield's existing market trends and future opportunities. The market data informs opportunities for future development, businesses recruitment, marketing and promotions. The results of the market analysis are summarized on the following pages. The complete market assessment is provided in the appendix.

### **MARKET DEFINITION**

In order to fully understand Downtown Bluefield's market, it is important to place it in the context of the region. It is also important to identify the different nodes of commercial activity. For instance, Downtown Bluefield has a unique character and mixture of businesses while Highway 460 serves as a main corridor of commerce with numerous national retailers. Neighboring Bluefield, West Virginia and nearby Princeton also have strong market pulls in the region.

Therefore, Multiple study areas were included in the market analysis in an effort to understand the demographic and commercial patterns of Bluefield's market in the context of the larger regional market. The following geographies formed the multi-layered approach to the study:

- Town of Bluefield;
- 15-Minute Drivetime Area;
- Tazewell County;
- Bluefield WV-VA Micropolitan Area (Tazewell and Mercer Counties);
- Primary Trade Area (24605 Bluefield, 24613 Falls Mills, 24635 Pocahontas) and Secondary Trade Area (24366 Rocky Gap, 24630 North Tazewell, 24701 Bluefield, WV, 24715 Bramwell, 24724 Freeman) identified in a 2007 zip code survey; and
- Surrounding Towns and Counties.



Map 1: Town of Bluefield (Blue) and 15-Minute Drivetime Area (Green)



### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

A demographic profile of Bluefield and the surrounding region examines key indicators including population growth, household income, age, and educational attainment. Overall, the key indicators in Bluefield mirror regional demographic trends including an aging and declining population. However, Bluefield has slightly higher household incomes, lower poverty rates, and higher levels of educational attainment than the surrounding region.

### **Population**

The estimated 2022 population of Bluefield is 4,866. Across the region, population decreased from 2010 to 2022. Bluefield's population decreased by 10.2% from 2010 to 2020, similar to the population decrease experienced in Tazewell County. Population is projected to continue to decrease over the next five years. Approximately 21,771 people live within a 15-minute drive of downtown Bluefield.

### Age

The median age in Bluefield is 44.3, compared to 46 in Tazewell County. Baby Boomers represent the largest generation in Bluefield, with 27% of the population age 55-74 years old.

### Education

In Bluefield, 21.8% of people 25 years old or older has a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to just 15% in Tazewell County. 88% of Bluefield's population has at least a high school diploma.

#### Income

The median household income in Bluefield is \$48,723, slightly higher than median household incomes in Tazewell County at \$46,886. Approximately 1 out of 6 households in Bluefield have income less than \$25,000 and 1 out of 6 households have incomes over \$100,000.

### **BLUEFIELD DEMOGRAPHICS**

4,886



2022 Population -10.2%



Percent Population Change 2010-2022

44.3



Median Age

21.8%



Age 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

\$48,723



Median Household Income 9.3%



Families Below Poverty

Key Demographic Indicators for Bluefield (Source: Environics Analytics)



### **MARKET SEGMENTATION**

The market segmentation study examines the makeup of Bluefield's existing and target markets by analyzing the behavioral traits and consumer patterns of various "segments." The segments, as defined by the market research firm Claritas, are based on demographic data including age, income, education, family structure, and urbanization. A segmentation analysis was conducted for the town of Bluefield as well as the 15-minute drivetime and the Bluefield WV-VA Micropolitan Area.

### Life Stage

The Life Stage analysis classifies households as Younger Years, Family Life, or Mature Years. The analysis confirms findings of the demographic analysis, that Bluefield and the surrounding region have a more mature population. 52% of households in Bluefield are classified as Mature Years, 27% Family Life and 21% Younger Life.

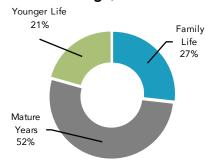
### **Social Group**

Social Groups are categorized by urbanization (urban, suburban, second city or town & rural) and affluence. Households in Bluefield and the micropolitan area are all classified as Town and Rural.

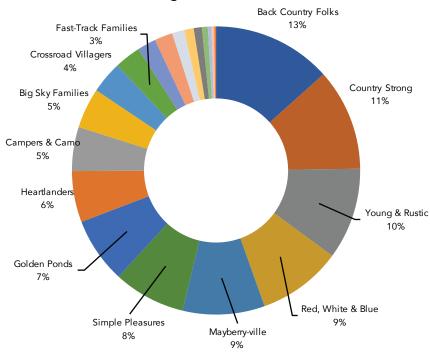
### **Overall Segmentation**

Claritas defines 68 unique segments. 21 of these segments are represented in Bluefield and 23 are represented in the 15-minute drivetime and micropolitan area. The largest segments in Bluefeld include: Back Country Folks (13%), Country Strong (11%), Young & Rustic (10%), Red White & Blue (9%) and Mayberry-ville (9%). More detail on segmentation is provided in the Market Analysis Appendix and a full description of all individual segments can be found at www.mybestsegments.com.

### Life Stage, Bluefield



### Market Segmentation: Bluefield



Market Segmentation for Bluefield (Source: Environics Analytics)



### RESIDENTIAL MARKET

### **Housing Type and Tenure**

Bluefield's housing stock is predominantly owner-occupied single-family housing. 73% of the housing units in Bluefield are owner-occupied and 27% are renter-occupied. 76% of the housing units are single-family detached homes, 2% are single-family attached homes such as townhouses, 12% are multifamily homes, and 10% are mobile homes or trailers.

### Age of Housing Stock

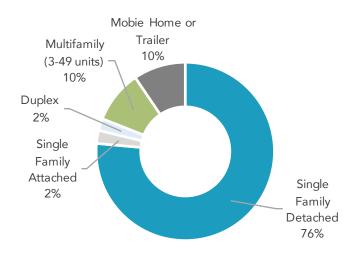
Overall, Bluefield has an older housing stock. The median year built for housing units in Bluefield is 1962. Three quarters of the housing units in town were built prior to 1980 and there has been limited new construction since 2010.

### **Housing Values**

The median value of owner-occupied housing in Bluefield is \$142,562 compared to \$129,322 in Tazewell County and \$122,864 in the micropolitan area. 30% of homes in Bluefield are valued under \$100,000, 45% of homes are valued between \$100,000 and \$200,000, and 25% are valued over \$200,000.

The Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) for the Bluefield Zip Code was \$105,898 in May of 2022, a 9.1% increase over the previous year and up from a low of \$77,000 in 2013.

### **BLUEFIELD HOUSING TYPE**



Housing Types in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

### MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING



Median Housing Values in Bluefield and the Region, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)



### **COMMERCIAL MARKET**

### **Employment**

In 2019, there were approximately 2,840 jobs in Bluefield. The largest employment sectors in Bluefield are:

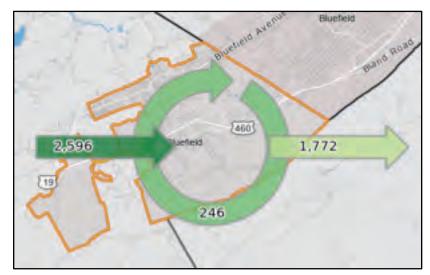
- Retail Trade (35%);
- Accommodations and Food Services (13%);
- Educational Services 12%); and
- Healthcare and Social Assistance (9%).

Bluefield is a net importer of jobs, meaning that more people commute into the town for work than commute out. 98% of workers employed in Bluefield commute from outside of the town.

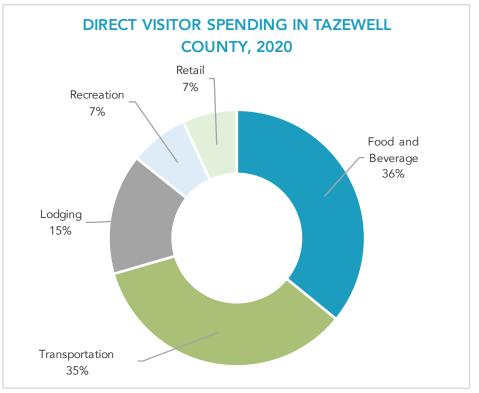
### **Tourism**

Bluefield and the surrounding region draw in tourists that want to experience the area's natural beauty and stunning mountain views. The region offers outdoor recreation (ATV, hiking, cycling, etc), a unique history and heritage, museums, and cultural institutions including Bluefield University.

In 2020, tourism in Tazewell County brought in \$29.12 million in direct visitor spending and employed 394 people. Additionally, this visitor spending generated \$1.5 million in local taxes.



Inflow and Outflow of Workers To and From Bluefield, 2019 (Source: US Census On the Map)



Direct Visitor Spending in Tazewell County, 2020 (Source: VA Tourism Commission)



### Retail Leakage Analysis

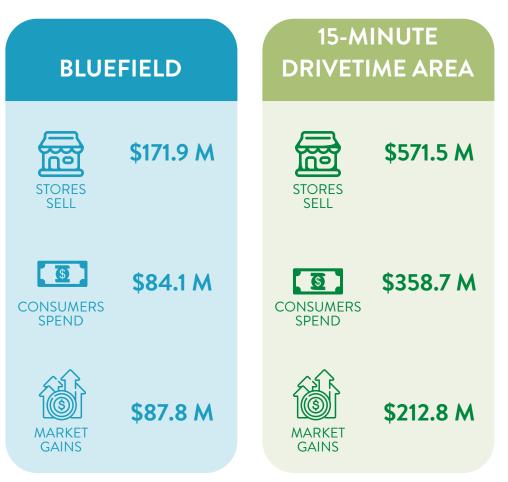
A retail analysis provides insight into the retail patterns (consumer expenditures, retail sales, and retail leakage or gain) in Bluefield, its trade areas, and the surrounding region. The retail leakage analysis confirms that Bluefield and the Bluefield micropolitan area serve as a regional retail center, serving not only locals but also neighboring rural communities and visitors

Stores in Bluefield had retail sales of \$171.9 million over the past year. During the same time period, Bluefield residents spent \$84.1 million, indicating a retail gain of \$87.8 million. Stores in the 15-minute drive time area sold \$571.5 million over the past year while residents spent \$358.7 million, resulting in retail gain of \$212.8 million. The Bluefield WV-VA micropolitan area had over \$1.9 billion in retail sales.

Although Bluefield and its trade areas all experience overall retail gain, a detailed look at the retail leakage analysis identifies individual categories that experienced retail leakage. This leakage translates directly to market demand, presenting opportunities for retail expansion. It is important to note that some of this demand may be accommodated within the larger region or through online sales.

Key opportunities in the 15-minute drivetime area include:

- Hardware stores
- Pet and pet supply stores
- Snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars
- Specialty food stores
- Specialty retail such as gift and novelty stores, hobby stores, and children's clothing)



Retail Sales, Consumer Expenditures and Market Gains Over a One Year Period in Bluefield and the 15-Minute Drivetime Area (Source: Environics Analytics)



# 4. Physical Assessment

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

A study into the physical conditions of downtown Bluefield began by defining the limits of the downtown study area. For the purpose of this plan, downtown is defined through a combinations of existing destinations, catalyst redevelopment sites as defined by the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant, concentrations of commercial land uses, and environmental constraints.

As shown in Map 2, the study area is bordered to the south by Appomattox Street, South College Ave., and Stockton Street. The study area extends to the west where is it bordered by Logan Street and by steep topography, approaching the properties along Franklin Street and Price Street. To the north, the study area is bordered by the railroad and includes Warhawk Park, the vacant property south of the fire station, and includes the industrial parcels along Tower Street to the west. The east study area boundary extends along Virginia Ave. towards the existing properties of Stitch N' Print and Memorial Baptist Church.

An existing conditions assessment of the study area, conducted as a high level desktop exercise and in person visual survey, resulted in the following findings:

**Parks and Public Open Space** - The presence of public park space within the downtown limits is one of downtown strongest assets as many users look to park space for events and gathering. Jack Asbury Square is centrally located in downtown at the intersection of Virginia Ave and South College Ave.. Jack Asbury Square includes a walking path, seating, and a multi-use lawn. Diagonally across from Jack Asbury is Graham Square, an updated urban public space which include masonry walls,

### **BROWNFIELD SITES**

The EPA provides funding and technical assistance to local communities to address brownfield conditions and to advance redevelopment activities in neighborhoods, corridors, and districts that have a history of blight, abandonment, and disinvestment, as well as the potential presence of environmental hazards and liabilities linked to brownfield sites. A brownfield is defined by the EPA as "a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." Former industrial sites, abandoned properties, and structures with potentially hazardous building materials are included in the EPA definition of brownfields. Brownfields are particularly challenging for small businesses and property owners given the associated costs. Therefore Brownfields add another layer of complexity for small downtown communities in efforts towards reinvestment and revitalization. Through the awarded EPA Assessment grant, several properties within downtown have been identified and assessed for contaminants. This planning effort aims to further advance the goal of reinvestment in these specific properties, revitalization of downtown, and growth and development of the greater Bluefield community.





Map 2: Downtown Boundary



Virginia Ave. Commercial Buildings

seating, a small water feature, and the iconic LOVE sign, part of the VA LOVEworks program. Graham Square also includes public parking and a gazebo, one of two covered gathering spaces downtown. For large, covered gatherings and events, downtown includes a Farmers Market pavilion at the corner of Tazewell Ave. and Walnut Street. The structure is a community asset for large events and fairs, however, the structure has limited permanent seating or pedestrian infrastructure to support daily use. The pavilion is only used late spring through early fall and not used during winter months. The pavilion also feels disconnected from downtown due to its location across the creek. Warhawk Park is located withing the study area, just north of the railroad along Depot St. This large park, nestled between a residential neighborhood and downtown offers seating, play equipment, and a full basketball court. While close in proximity, this park has limited connectivity to downtown due to lack of sidewalks along Depot Street or way finding signage directing users to the park from downtown. Capitalizing on the improvement and expansion of existing park space is one of the downtowns biggest opportunities. Investment in parks, trails, and public open space are well known economic development tools, spurring reinvestment in nearby properties.

**Streetscape** - The streetscape of downtown Bluefield meets the minimum need providing sidewalks to the downtown users in locations necessary to support the current businesses. Sidewalks exist on both sides of the main commercial streets including Virginia Ave., Spring Street, and South College Ave.. Sidewalks exist on one side of Spruce Street, Walnut Street, and a portion of Graham Ave.. Overall the sidewalks are not wide enough to provide user with a safe accessible route due to the presence of street lighting and trash receptacles, which impeded on the minimum ADA required wheelchair access width of 4'. The downtown provides crosswalks in most locations, however most paint lines have faded so crosswalk visibility is weak. Walk signage exists

at signaled intersections, but there is limited signage at non-signalized intersections. This leaves pedestrians vulnerable and makes crossing the street an uninviting experience, especially for those of limited mobility. Through observations and noted in community engagement, significant truck traffic exists along Virginia Ave. and has been an issue of safety, noise, and property damage.

**Parking** – While adequate parking exists in downtown Bluefield for the current needs of commercial business, there is room for improvement to parking efficiency and enforcement. Additionally, new parking will be necessary to support future business growth. The town currently has one formal public parking lot within the study area located in Graham Square. The parking lot has 2 hour limits, but is not enforced. On street parking is available along Virginia Ave., Spring Street, and a portion of Spruce



Public Gravel Parking Lot

Street. Additionally, several 90-degree on-street parking spaces exist off of Walnut Street adjacent to the visitors center and restroom facility. These spaces do not have time limits, but are underutilized due to their distance from commercial businesses. Three public gravel parking lots existing in downtown along South College Ave., surrounding the Farmers Market Pavilion, and along North College Ave. under the railroad overpass. Each lot includes ample space for parking but lacks physical lot structure or signage directing vehicular flow and designating parking spaces within the lot. Therefore, a lot of usable space becomes underutilized and maximum parking capacity is rarely achieved. Formalizing these parking lots can maximize parking efficiency, while opening up new urban public space and pocket park opportunities to enhance the downtown experience.

The majority of parking is located on the west side of downtown, with the exception of few public on-street spaces along the streetscape on the east side of Virginia Ave. and Spruce Street. The slope from the public parking lots to reach these commercial businesses is challenging, especially for those with limited mobility. Strategic parking opportunities to support the east end of the downtown commercial areas can be explored. At a minimum, some parking supporting these businesses may be designated as accessible parking spaces to support patrons with limited mobility.

It was evident that one of the largest parking issues currently affecting downtown exists when long term parking occurs within spaces and lots intended to support commercial businesses and short term needs, which can be remedied with better parking designation and enforcement. The above mentioned conditions have led to a perceived parking problem in the study area that may deter residents and visitors alike.

**Mobility** - Similar to many small downtowns in this region, complete streets, trails, and multi-modal transportation options are limits due to population size, infrastructure, and environmental constraints. However,

the presence of a small university, including faculty and student populations, present a user base that is largely untapped due to limited mobility options between the downtown and campus area. Currently a small sidewalk exists along South College Ave. heading south towards Highway 460, however does not provide enough width for a safe user experience along a main thoroughfare. A plan is currently in place by VDOT to expand the sidewalks along this road. Bike lanes do not exist along any roads leading to or within the downtown study area. Multi-use paths, nature trails, or greenways also do not connect to anything within the study area, however the presence of City Park between downtown and the university provides opportunity for connections. Topography is the main challenge to trails and connectivity for the region, however the Beaverpond Creek stream corridor may present a feasible solution to trail implementation. Multi-modal transit options are limited to the downtown area as well. One bus stop for Graham Transit is located in front of the Treasurers office, but with limited marketing of the regional transit system, usage is low.

Land Use and Redevelopment – Downtown Bluefield is predominantly commercial/ light industrial, and religious, with some single and multifamily residential throughout. Different from many downtowns in this region of VA, downtown Bluefield has limited vacancy of existing commercial properties and many successful established businesses within downtown. As such, the focus of redevelopment will be on few vacant properties, identified in the EPA Brownfields assessment grant as high probity redevelopment sites. These sites include the former Logan Street School building, former Bank of Graham Building, the Art Riley properties located at the corner of Depot St. and Virginia Ave., the First National Bank building, and the industrial property at the intersection of Tower Street and North College Ave. These sites have high redevelopment potential due to site locations, architectural significance, and/or historical significance. The redevelopment of any



Brownfields Redevelopment Site



Spring Street and Creek Crossing



of the above-mentioned sites would be integral in the revitalization of downtown and therefore make them high priority redevelopment catalysts. Additional vacant properties, or opportunity sites within study area include the former Dairy Queen and the warehouse property on Spring Street. Other opportunities exist within the downtown area by way of underutilized residential properties, underutilized parking lots, and sites with moderately challenging topography. As such, creative partnerships between the Town, private landowners, and developers could open up additional opportunities as downtown progresses and grows to meet future needs.

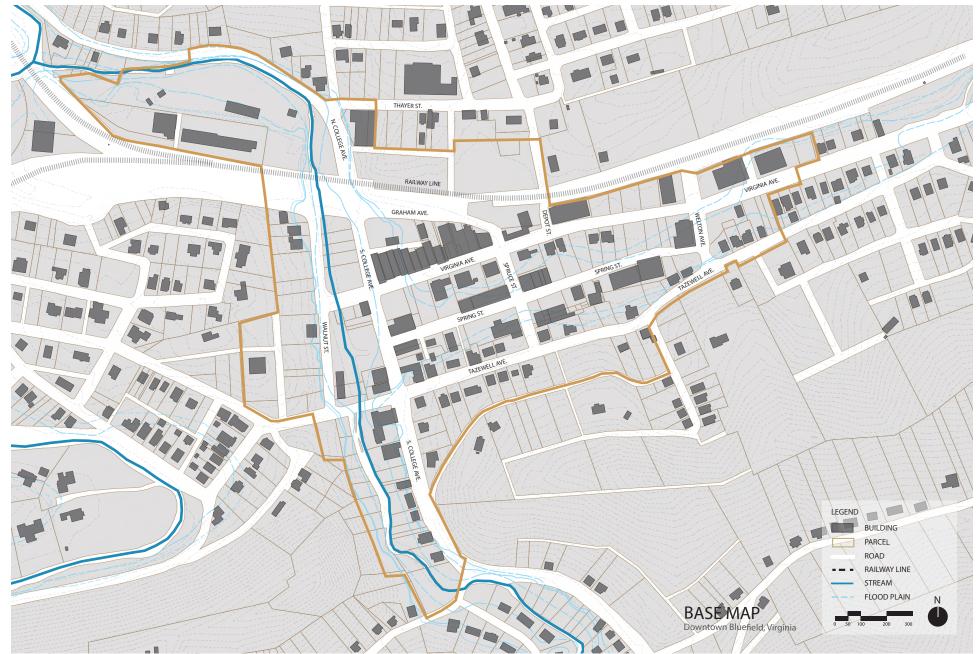
**Environmental** – The downtown area is shaped by its environmental constraints. Steep topography limits development to both the northeast, southeast and southwest. Due to the topography, many sites provide challenging conditions for new development, or prohibit development all together. Beaverpond Creek parallels South College Ave. and crosses through downtown between the Farmers Market Pavilion and Jack Asbury Square, running north and eventually west where it merges with Bluestone National Scenic River. Additionally, a stream tributary runs west, just north of Virginia Ave., crossing under the road where is stays underground below Spring St. were it eventually sees daylight in front of the former Dairy Queen building, crossing again below South College Ave. and daylighting into Beaverpond Creek. Theses streams in the downtown area are a significant challenge to development and redevelopment due to historic flooding and FEMA permitting of new development in the floodplain. Flood mitigation is a barrier to some development and is a primary concern for the prosperity of downtown businesses. While a great challenge, the streams are also an environmental asset that sets Bluefield apart from many similar downtowns and could be a draw for users seeking outdoor recreation. Future flood mitigation measures could be an avenue to new park and recreation opportunities downtown.

# KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

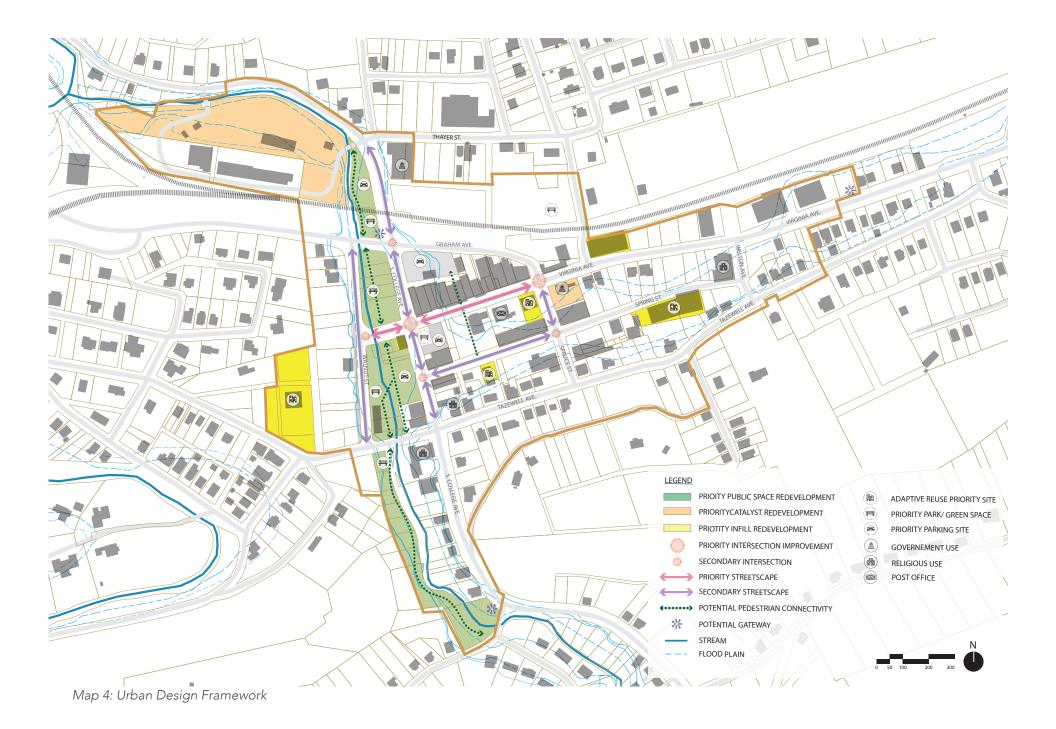
A synthesis of the existing conditions analysis and community engagement yielded an Urban Design Framework that sets the stage for the development opportunities public realm improvement needs in downtown Bluefield to make downtown a vibrant, active, and engaging space for residents and visitors alike. Map 2 graphically depicts the necessary improvements that should become priority investments in the effort to advance downtown development and growth. Through this exercise we found that the following were physical design priorities for the future of downtown:

- Activate public space through art, vibrancy and creative placemaking
- Redevelop the streetscape to prioritize the pedestrian experience
- Identify pedestrian infrastructure improvements that can best serve existing businesses and new business growth
- Invest in park expansions, trails, and public gathering spaces
- Redevelop priority infill sites and catalyst sites to spur growth in downtown blue-field

These community priorities are further broken down through the following strategies and recommendations outlined in the master plan design.



Map 3: Downtown Existing Conditions





# 5. Downtown Master Plan



# ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

The Downtown Bluefield Illustrative Master Plan concept is a high-level vision for the future of Downtown. Well designed public space that include shade, seating, dining, art, and experiential opportunities are inviting destinations. Downtown Bluefield should be a space that attracts the local and regional community to share in these vibrant experiences reflective of the town culture and history. Downtown Bluefield should be a space that calls groups small and large to gather in community with one another. The goal of this illustrative downtown master plan is not to change the existing assets that make downtown unique, but build upon and enhance the way people use downtown in a way that fosters future growth and prosperity. Through this illustrative master plan, the following physical design recommendations have been derived, broken down through five categories of improvement areas.



#### 5.1 DOWNTOWN DESIGN & VIBRANCY

The community expressed a strong desire to create a vibrant and attractive downtown experience. The existing downtown infrastructure presents ample opportunity for place-making initiatives that will activate public space, bring color and art to the streetscape, reflect history, and create a unique downtown experience. As a result, vibrant communities develop a strong sense of place, a sense of ownership, and a sense of pride for their downtown space. Through community engagement, the vibrancy and downtown design initiatives that the community felt most appropriate for downtown include murals, public art, historical signage, live events, outdoor dining and retail, and seasonal landscape installations.

#### Recommendations:

- 5.1.1 Educate Property Owners of existing Façade Improvement Program to be better utilized.
- 5.1.2 Identify mural opportunity sites and pursue grant funding for implementation.
- 5.1.3 Incorporate art installations and interactive play elements into downtown streetscape and parks.
- 5.1.4 Develop Downtown Beautification Committee to guide public art, downtown banners and seasonal planting.
- 5.1.5 Amend town maintenance strategy to improve downtown upkeep and cleanliness.





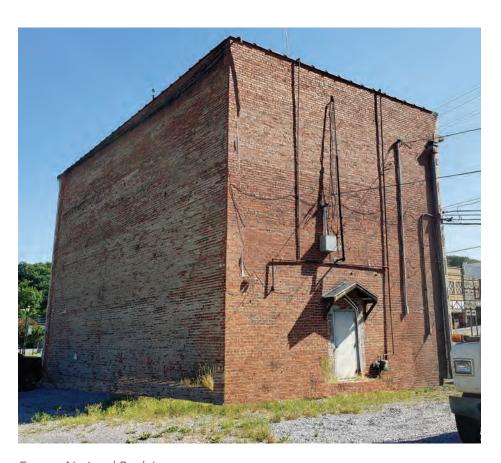






Placemaking Theme Images





Former National Bank Improvements: Before



Former National Bank Improvements: After

# **5.2 STREETSCAPE**

An inviting streetscape is part of the foundation of successful downtowns and often looked to as one of the first step to downtown revitalization. During engagement the community felt satisfied with the presence of sidewalks connecting downtown, however the condition did not meet the needs of the current businesses. As a trucking route, it is even more important to create a downtown streetscape that is accessible, attractive, and prioritizes the pedestrian experience. After review of the existing streetscape conditions, several sections of streetscape have been identified for redevelopment including a three and a half block section of Virginia Ave., one block of Spring Street, one block of Spruce Street, and one block of South College Ave.. The intent of the selected street sections is to support existing businesses, promote future business growth, create a sense of arrival to the downtown commercial center and visually designate a shopping, retail, and entertainment center.





## Virginia Ave. Redevelopment

Virginia Ave. is the main commercial thoroughfare through downtown in which the most historic downtown storefronts are located. In addition to redeveloping this section of streetscape, it is recommended to extend the streetscape improvement area west to the intersection of Walnut Street and east just past the intersection of Depot Street to the Dollar General. In doing so, the improvement areas will create a greater sense of arrival into downtown, draw visitors in, and will open up additional parking opportunities, seating opportunities, and dining opportunities to encourage future business growth. The proposed streetscape improvements, shown here in plan and section view, include relocating the southern side on-street parking, widening the southern sidewalk to include area for street furniture and landscape, and widening the norther sidewalk to include space for outdoor dining, seating, and landscape. The improved streetscape should also include curb bump outs for traffic calming and high visibility crosswalk material to encourage increased pedestrian safety.



Virginia Ave. Streetscape Improvements: Section View



Virginia Ave. Streetscape Improvements: Plan View





Virginia Ave. Streetscape Improvements: Before

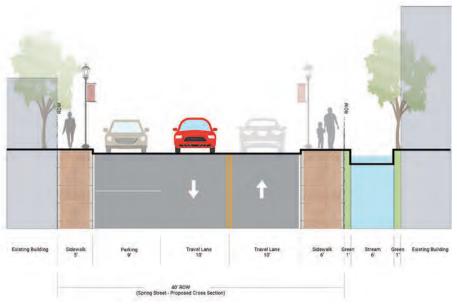


Virginia Ave. Streetscape Improvements: After



## Spring Street, Spruce Street, & South College Ave. Redevelopment

Spring Street, Spruce Street, and South College Ave. streetscapes have potential to be improved with simple aesthetic changes that will not interfere with the current traffic and circulations patters that exist today. Along Spring Street, parking can be realigned on the north side of the road, streamlining the vehicular flow. All three street should include curb bump outs, high visibility crosswalks, street trees, landscape beds, and improved sidewalks. Additionally, several underutilized urban public spaces exist along Spring Street, including behind The Grind and in front of the former Dairy Queen building. Activating these spaces with seating, shade, lighting, and public art will energize the streetscape and promote further business reinvestment. Elevating the streetscape of these secondary streets will reinforce the commercial center of downtown, guide patrons to more retail, dining, and entertainment opportunities outside of Virgina Ave. and spur additional business growth in these commercial areas.



Spring Street Streetscape Improvements: Section View



Spring Street Streetscape Improvements: Plan View



#### **Streetscape Design & Materials**

Through engagement it was evident that the community desired a classic aesthetic for their streetscape. Primary materials should include a mix of brick and concrete hardscape. Street furniture materials should be powder coated metal, either black or maroon to match the existing metal work downtown today. Outdoor dining and trash receptacles can be created to match benches for a cohesive look to downtown. Landscape material should include columnar canopy trees to fit the tight urban spaces, with soft landscape material within planing strips including small evergreen shrubs and ornamental grass. Where possible, planting beds should be included between sidewalk and vehicular area to offer further pedestrian safety. Street furniture and street tree grates can be customized to reinforce the town brand throughout downtown. Additionally, the proposed design recommends enhancing

the intersection of Virginia Ave. and Spruce Street and Virginia Ave. and South College Ave. with the Town logo integrated into stamped concrete or asphalt. This detail will create an impactful sense of arrival to downtown. This will also heavily prioritize the pedestrian through these two high traffic intersections.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 5.2.1 Redevelop Virginia Ave. streetscape per the design recommendations of this section (5.2).
- 5.2.2 Redevelop Spring St. streetscape per the design recommendations of this section (5.2).
- 5.2.3 Increase outdoor dining, seating, and streetscape furniture along streetscape.
- 5.2.4 Reinforce brand awareness and placemaking through incorporating logo into streetscape furniture.















Streetscape Theme Images



# 5.3 PARKING & CONNECTIVITY

The downtown infrastructure provides sufficient parking opportunities for both customers and employees that come downtown on a daily basis. The concern with parking downtown lies within the location and overall organization of parking opportunities. What users struggle with mostly is the location of available parking and efficiency in which existing parking is designated and regulated. This proposed parking opportunity plan shown shows several options that can be entertained to solve issues with parking downtown today. The first opportunity, reflected in the streetscape concept, is to extend on-street parking east along Virginia Ave. to support businesses in that area of downtown. The second opportunity is to convert the parking lot around the Treasurers office to a shared public parking lot, also in support of additional parking on the east side of downtown. The third opportunity is converting the existing gravel lots to formal parking lots. Doing so will better direct users to parking spaces, yielding higher efficiency in the existing



lots. Concepts for both the existing gravel lots around the Farmer Market Pavilion, along South College Ave. and along North College Ave. are included in the catalyst redevelopment concepts. As downtown business growth occurs, and the need for more parking increases, there are additional opportunities to explore private sites for shared public/private parking agreements or new parking lot developments. Such future improvement should be studied for feasibility and need. Due to current flooding concerns, it would be preferable to not increase the amount of hardscape present downtown for new surface lots, rather work strategically in partnership with public and private properties to best utilize what is currently available today.

Connectivity is a challenge for downtown, specifically due to lack of infrastructure as well as physical and environmental constraints. There is limited connectivity present between downtown Bluefield, the existing commercial area near Highway 460, city park, and Bluefield University. The only connectivity, outside of vehicular access, is through small sidewalks that offer poor pedestrian safety. Connecting downtown to the Bluefield University user group through increased multi-modal transportation will tap into a large user group that has limited access to downtown today. Multi-use paths, bike lines, and expanded sidewalks should be entertained to enhance connectivity between the two areas. The existing city park and Beaverpond Creek corridor enhance the feasibility of such a connection. Additionally, methods exist to provide those without alternate forms of transportation, the ability to move from one location to the other. A small scale bike share program with racks both downtown, at the university, and the park, could allow users the flexibility to access each location one way or round trip.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 5.3.1 Redevelop existing gravel parking lots on South College Ave., North College Ave., and around the Farmers Market for higher efficiency parking opportunities.
- 5.3.2 Enforce two-hour parking windows on all streetscape spaces and marked off-street spaces.
- 5.3.3 Identify new parking opportunities and shared parking opportunities to support business growth.
- 5.3.4 Conduct Greenway Feasibility Study to connect downtown to Bluefield University and commercial shopping center.
- 5.3.5 Partner with University to implement a bike share program scaled to fit needs of community.



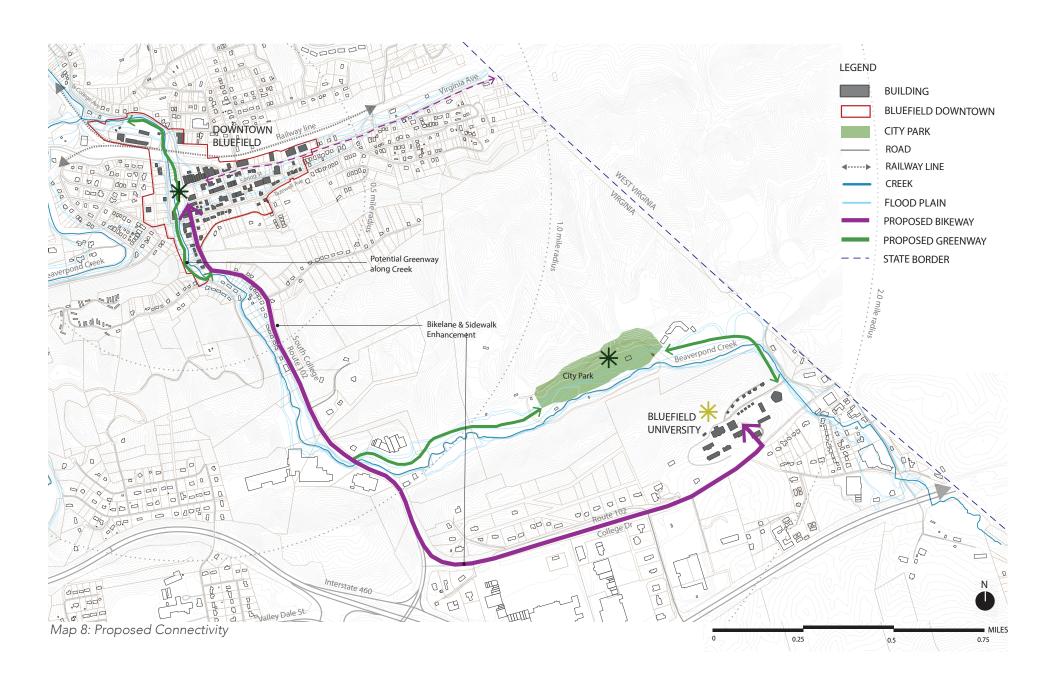






Connectivity Theme Images





#### **5.4 PUBLIC SPACE & PARKS**

The community of Bluefield desires public space for small gatherings, for large gatherings, and event programming. The existing public spaces in the heart of downtown currently are Bluefield's largest downtown asset. Building upon the existing, these spaces can be improved for better connectivity, seating, dining, recreation, and event programming opportunities. Implementing the design recommendations will create a destination downtown that is not only a local, but a regional draw and will serve as an important catalyst for redevelopment of downtown and spur future business growth. Further design recommendations are included in the following catalyst site design section.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 5.4.1 Prioritize Jack Asbury Park for special event programming, above other park locations as appropriate for the event
- 5.4.2 Explore options to retrofit farmers market pavilion to support four season gathering space.
- Implement recommendations from following catalyst site design for Park improvements

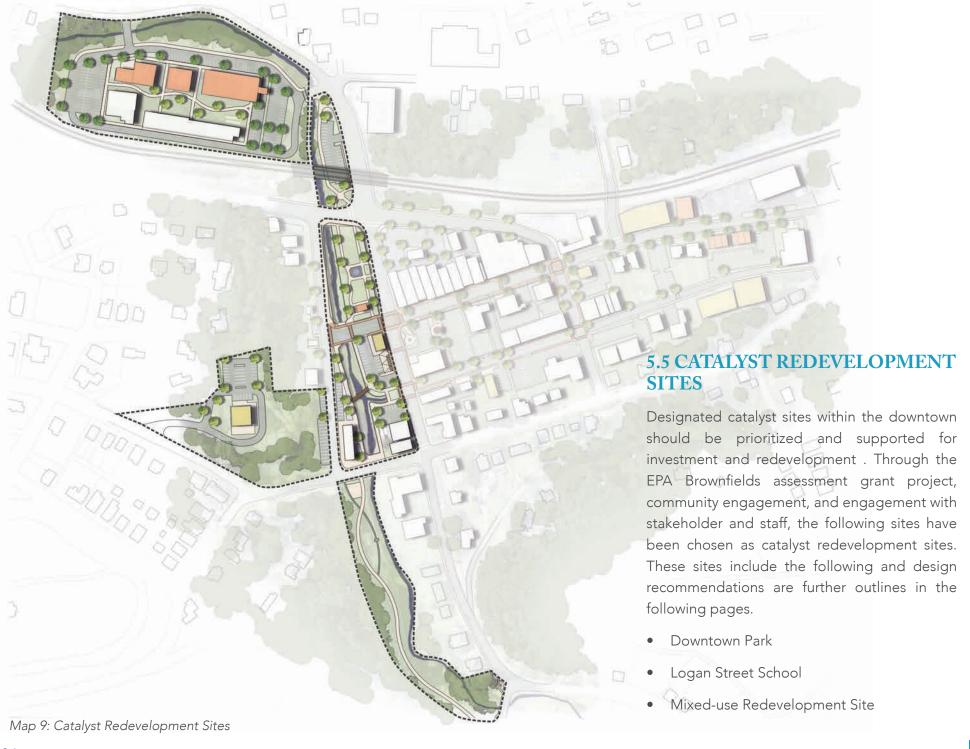


Graham Square and Virginia Ave.



Existing Town Property Adjacent to Beaverpond Creek







Catalyst Site: Mixed Use Redevelopment Site





Catalyst Site: Former Logan Street School



Catalyst Site: Jack Asbury Park and Railroad Underpass

#### **Downtown Park**

At the heart of downtown is a greenspace that hold unlimited potential to become a destination that serves both the local and regional community. The current uses should remain, but reworked in a way that accommodate additional uses, activate more energy, and serve a larger community. The following areas within the proposed park limits have been broken down as the following:

- Northern Trail Extension and Parking this section of park redevelopment north of Virginia Ave. includes a portion of railroad easement and a portion of the mixed use catalyst development site, just east of the Beaverpond Creek. This 0.67 acre site should rework the existing parking lot to yield a more efficient permeable paving parking lot to serve downtown. This property may serve as trail head for the proposed Beaverpond Creek Trail. In addition to the parking lot and trail, this space may be activated through a public art installation, creative lighting, and/or murals on the underside of the railroad underpass. Lighting this space will also promote a sense of safe crossing through the underpass and better connect the northern residential area and future developments to downtown.
- Jack Asbury Square Redevelopment the current function of the park should remain, but expand to include a multi-function permanent stage that can offer entertainment of multiple scales in both north and south orientation. The park should include an interactive play element that attracts families to enjoy downtown with children of all ages. Through community engagement it was evident most felt a splash pad, interactive fountain, or natural play feature may meet that need. To support play within Jack Asbury Square, a masonry wall should be installed along the South College

Ave. streetscape, similar to the existing across from The Grind, to provide a more enclosed space for children and family activities. The streetscape surrounding the stream in this location should be expanded enough for a multi-use path to surround the stream fence-line for ample circulation. Another recommendation desired from engagement is to activate the stream itself. The stream, which makes downtown unique, should be the shining star of this park. As such, activating the stream channel will ensure its prominence within the park. Ideas for activating the stream include creative lighting of the water and surrounding masonry walls or fountain installations throughout the street corridor.

- beaverpond Creek Plaza & Parking This space should redevelop the permeable parking lot and urban public plaza space adjacent to the former National Bank building. This space provides a great space for outdoor dining, cafe lights and small garden. Additionally the Bank facade should be activated through a mural installation reflective of the community culture and history. The town should pursue its current initiative to install a bridge to provide better circulation to the farmers market, one of downtowns only large outdoor event spaces. As such, the farmers market may also have potential for winter use through minor retrofit, as four season gathering space. The streetscape around the stream to should redeveloped to accommodate a sidewalk around the entirety of the fence line for circulation and maximum creek viewing.
- Beaverpond Creek Trail and First Methodist Outdoor Classroom this space, tucked mostly away from public view has great potential
  to continue the Beaverpond Creek Trail, provide space of intimate
  outdoor gathering, outdoor classroom, and nature trail/educational
  opportunities.





Downtown Park Concept Plan















Downtown Park Theme Images



#### The Logan Street School Catalyst Redevelopment

This historic building and prominent location overlooking downtown, and the bluestone National Scenic River, makes this 1.2 acre property a priority site for redevelopment within downtown. Its location well situates this site for a use that has a component of tourism and hospitality with its beautiful vista. While a steep grade change will challenge the redevelopment of this site, relocating the access point further up Logan

St. will provide a more accessible drive. A more moderate slope at the top of the property allows for expanded parking opportunity at the top of the property. With minimal landscape maintenance and pruning, expanded views of the downtown would be realized. The three story building provides over 9,000 SF of interior space, with opportunities to expand porch and patio spaces to support events or outdoor dining.



Logan Street School Concept Plan







Logan Street School Theme Images



#### **Mixed-Use Catalyst Redevelopment:**

Due to challenging topography, downtown has few flat properties for redevelopment. This property was chosen as a catalyst site due to it size, topography, proximity to downtown, potential trail connection to Jack Asbury Square, and setting along Beaverpond creek. Identified through the EPA brownfields grant as a priority redevelopment site, this property could have big potential for a larger scale mixed-use development, that would not be feasible elsewhere in the downtown study area. The property is a five acre parcel has potential to fit multiple building, supporting parking, and site amenities. Additionally, the property site just north of Bluestone Interiors, and established anchor business for downtown Bluefield. Providing additional mixed use commercial buildings in this are creates an opportunity to cluster like minded businesses and create a shopping destination. The property size also is well suited to support pedestrian space for small and large gatherings between buildings.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 5.5.1 Implement downtown park improvements per the recommendations of the catalyst site design.
- 5.5.2 Conduct feasibility study for boutique hotel; event/ wedding venue; multi-family residential; restaurant
- 5.5.3 Conduct feasibility study for medium size hotel, student housing, mixed-use commercial, multi-family residential, senior housing





Mixed-use Redevelopment Concept Plan

#### **5.6 WAYFINDING**

Promoting a downtown includes providing attractive and branded signage that directs locals and visitors to the various civic, cultural, and recreational destinations that exist in a community. This section of the Downtown Master Plan provides the Town of Bluefield with guidance for it to incrementally implement a wayfinding system over time.

This plan provides a wayfinding signage typology that meets the standards of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) used by VDOT to oversee local wayfinding. In addition, it incorporates the Bluefield brand as an important tool to direct visitors and locals in and around the community, while also helping build a positive perception of the place, particularly if it is implemented with the other placemaking strategies of this downtown plan.



Town Monument Sign on South College Ave.

# FOCUS OF WAYFINDING STRATEGY

The focus of the wayfinding strategy is to:

- Bring awareness to the civic, recreation, visitor, and cultural destinations within the community and downtown;
- Encourage effective circulation patterns throughout the Bluefield community;
- Strengthen Bluefield's community identity with strategic gateway entrances and signage systems;
- Design a platform for a signage system that can grow as new destinations are added; and
- Provide a framework for implementation that can be conducted in the most efficient manner.



## **Sign Typology**

These are the basic types of signs in an effective wayfinding system. Their use, content, and potential sign locations are shown on the following pages.

- **Vehicular Trailblazers.** These signs provide directional information for motorists to at key decision points and are designed for both high speed traffic (>35mph) and low speed traffic (< 35mph).
- **Gateway Signage.** These signs are often located at the entryway to the community, a character district like Downtown Bluefield, or at destinations. They notify the motorist of their arrival, and can either be monument signs, or pole-mounted gateways. Bluefield currently has an excellent branded gateway sign at the intersection of College Avenue and College Drive.
- Banners. While not a directional sign, banners can be part of a gateway sequence that draws motorists from Highway 460, along College Avenue, and into downtown. Bluefield has used banners effectively in downtown.
- Pedestrian Directional. These would be located in the downtown environment and are smaller-scale signs providing information for pedestrians to get to walkable destinations like the Farmers Market, Post Office, Jack Asbury Square, etc.
- Parking Signs. These can be stand alone or added to an existing wayfinding sign and provide both awareness and preferred circulation to pubic parking resources.
- **Kiosks.** These signs can provide a greater deal of information for the pedestrian including maps, destination information, interpretive information, and sometimes print brochures.



Bluefield Wayfinding Signage System

#### **Destination Mapping**

Mapping and ranking qualifying destinations provides an overview of which destinations will require signs as well as less prominent destinations that may be included in a sign system when space permits.

The first step in creating a comprehensive wayfinding system is to identify all of the destinations that will be included in the sign system. Arnett Muldrow has created a simple map that identifies a number of locations for consideration in Bluefield. The box to the right presents key criteria that should be observed when evaluating destinations that would be included in the wayfinding system. MUTCD standards contains much more detailed information regarding these recommendations.

For example, if a destination or attraction is a private for-profit business or fails to conform to one of the included categories, it should be excluded for consideration as a qualifying destination. The list to the right is for planning purposes to help map out and rank destinations.

It is important to note that not all of these destinations would be represented on directional signage. Many of these destinations may require a gateway entry sign (neighborhoods, schools) or monument sign (certain government buildings). Others may be incorporated into a system with street sign toppers (historic districts) or simply included in visitor mapping collateral and brochures. Some of these destinations (libraries, visitor center, hospitals, airports) would be included by using standard icon signage.

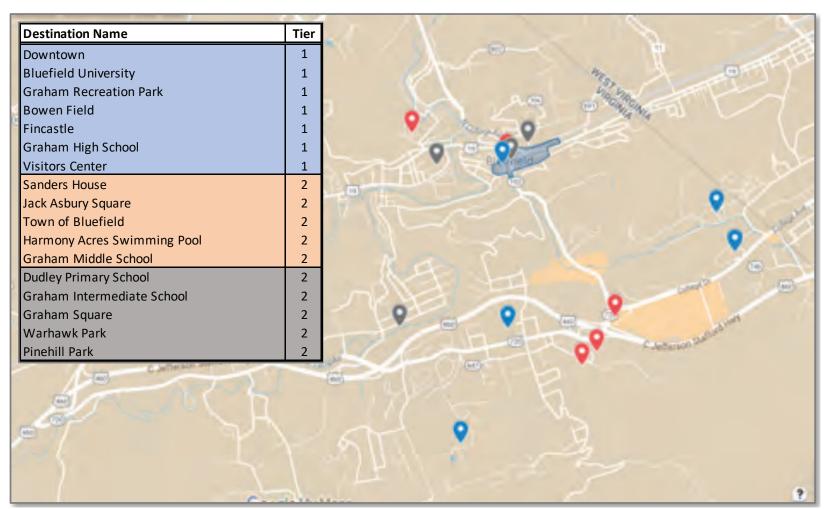
To be considered for inclusion into a community wayfinding system a destination or attraction should conform to one of the following categories:

- Architectural or Historical Significance;
- Commercial: Farmers Markets, Shopping Districts, Industrial Parks, Zoos, Botanical Gardens;
- Character Districts: Downtowns, Entertainment Districts;
- Cultural & Institutional: Arenas, Colleges and Universities, Convention Centers, Courthouses, Government Buildings, Health Care Centers, Libraries, Museums, Schools, Theaters;
- Recreational: Boating Access, Campgrounds, Golf Courses, Hiking/ Biking Trails and Routes, Equestrian Facilities, National/State/Regional Parks/Forests, Parks and Recreational Facilities, Sports Facilities;
- Transportation: Airports, Historic Routes, Parking Resources, and Transit Centers; and
- Visitor Services: Hospitals, Visitor Information Centers.

#### **Destination Ranking**

Once all of the eligible destinations have been identified, they should be ranked into 2 or 3 separate tiers of importance. These tiers, based on local or regional significance, seasonality, accessibility, etc., further help refine how to structure the sign schedule to most efficiently and effectively orient motorists in Bluefield.

Higher ranked destinations should be on directional trailblazers located at prominent decision points. Lower tiered destinations should be included on relevant signs where panel space permits. Destination ranking is important to determine which locations will be included on a sign, particularly since a vehicular trailblazer is limited to just three locations.

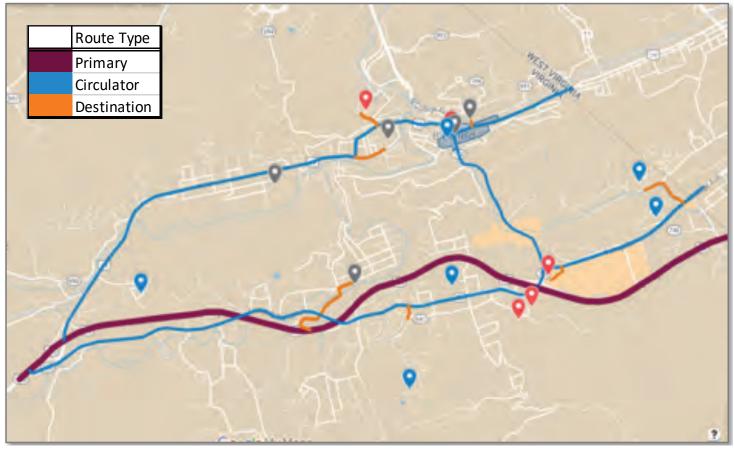


Map 10: Potential Destinations and Destination Tiers in Bluefield

## **Route Mapping**

After all of the eligible destinations have been identified, ranked, and mapped, identifying the primary and secondary routes people travel will ultimately help determine where signs will be located. VDOT traffic figures as well as local understanding of traffic patterns should be used to identify primary traffic routes. These routes will be the core of the wayfinding plan as they will establish the key decision points for motorists. Routes are often classified as primary, circulator, or destination.

Primary Routes are those that bring the majority of traffic into the community. There are often more Circulator Routes as they connect the primary routes to the more destination-dense areas of the community. Destination Routes are those roads that connect to destinations that aren't located directly on an primary or circulatory route. Based on this guidance, it is recommended that the Town of Bluefield review, amend and add to the preliminary mapping of destinations, including destination ranking and route mapping.



Map 11: Bluefield Routes



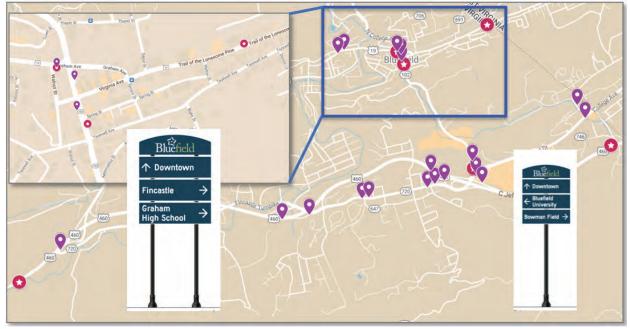
## **Sign Locations**

Once the Town has identified the destinations, ranked them, and established a route network, sign locations can be assigned to key decision points. These decision points are determined by combining the route map with the destination map. Any intersection where a decision must be made or a motorist needs reassured of their direction should ultimately be signed.

The map to the right shows key decision points and potentially identify locations where future wayfinding signs would go. It is recommended that Town review the guidance of this plan including preliminary mapping, and determine its own locations and content for signs that would be included in the sign schedule. Ultimately, the Town and its sign installer would coordinate with VDOT on sign location, including acquiring the necessary permits, location of utility conflicts, etc.



Map 12: Potential Gateway Locations



Map 13: Potential Directional Signage Locations



#### Sign Schedule

The last step in creating the wayfinding system is to populate a sign schedule, usually a spreadsheet, with all of the signs and their content. From the earliest phase of system design, this document will provide a constant overview of all signs included in the system and will be the primary tool for implementation. Each directional trailblazer sign would be numbered and classified as either high speed or low speed. All destinations would be listed, as well as their corresponding direction. Their approximate physical location would be listed as well as any relevant notes about the specific sign are included.



Sample Sign Schedule for Wayfinding Plan in Fort Mill, South Carolina

#### SELECT MUTCD STANDARDS FOR DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

- No more than 3 destinations per sign.
- 6" capital letters for speed limits above 25 mph. (MUTCD 2D.06:03)
- 4" capital letters for speed limits 25 mph and under. (MUTCD 2D.06:03)
- Panel height will vary based on number of destinations, directional changes.
- The base of the sign should be no less than 7' from ground level. (MUTCD 2A.18:05)
- Breakaway posts and decorative post features should be constructed of MUTCD-specified, VDOT-approved materials including decorative slip jacket, if used.

- MUTCD Standards for vehicular directional signage require destinations be listed in order of direction first:
  - » Straight ahead
  - » Left (veer)
  - » Left (turn)
  - » Right (veer)
  - » Right (turn)
- Destinations sharing the same directional arrows should be listed from top to bottom in order of distance from the sign locations. (MUTCD 2D.37)
- It is important to note that shades of red, yellow, orange, purple, fluorescent yellow-green or pink may not be used as vehicular sign backgrounds, as these colors may resemble regulatory signage and may confuse and endanger motorists. (MUTCD 2D.50:18

## Wayfinding Implementation

After creating its sign schedule, the Town would be ready to move into the implementation phase. It is not necessary, and typically not feasible, to install an entire wayfinding system at once for it to be effective. However, it is important to have the completed sign schedule to provide a robust overview of what the wayfinding system should consist of, ultimately. Project phasing will dependent entirely on budgeting for the Town and its funding partners, including identification of potential funding tools. In fact, most system's phasing is determined by how much money can be appropriated in the initial implementation. This process is often completed over the course of multiple budget cycles. For Bluefield, an ideal phasing based on budgeting consideration and most important signage would be:

- Phase 1 Downtown pole-mounted gateways. Directional signage and bannering from Hwy 460 to Downtown.
- Phase 2 Gateway signage on Hwy 460 at West Virginia border and western entry into town. Gateway sign at West Virginia border on Virginia Avenue.
- Phase 3 Remainder of directional signage, any monument style gateway sign at key destinations (i.e. Graham Recreation Park).

#### **Permitting**

This system suggested here is based on MUTCD standards and approximate locations as identified in the map. It is recommended that the Town of Bluefield complete its plan based on the guidance of this wayfinding strategy, then submit it to VDOT for feedback and address any potential issues before proceeding. Upon final guidance from VDOT, Bluefield would then develop a bid package seeking a vendor for sign fabrication and installation work, including final permitting from VDOT. While separate vendors can be utilized, engaging a company to both fabricate and install the signs often helps with final costs, but also limit responsibility of damage that may occur in transportation, handling, and installation.

The selected fabricator/installer should be required to seek permits through VDOT to ensure precise final sign locations and that final sign schematics meet all applicable MUTCD and VDOT standards.

#### Cost

Ultimately, final costs for the fabrication, installation, and maintenance of the signage system will be determined during the construction phase. Based on recent project estimates in other communities, Bluefield can calculate implementation costs by multiplying the number of vehicular trailblazers by \$5,000 - \$8,000 to get a potential range of costs. Monument signs can vary greatly depending on final size, materials, lighting and other factors which are not accounted for in this document. It is recommended that the Town budget 5% of the total cost of sign fabrication/installation on an annual basis for ongoing maintenance, repair, and replacement.



# STEPS TO CREATE A WAYFINDING PLAN

- Design System of Signage incorporating the Bluefield brand
- Map destinations
- Rank destinations
- Establish destination route network
- Create sign schedule with sign locations and content for vehicular, pedestrian, parking and specialty signage.
- Obtain review from and coordinate with VDOT on wayfinding plan
- Adopt plan
- Estimate costs for implementation, including ongoing maintenance.
- Identify funding streams and budget for phased implementation of system.
- Develop bid package and issues RFQ/RFP for design, fabrication, and installation of signage, including permitting from VDOT.
- Using selected contractor, install signage.
- Continue to maintain and update system.



Town of Bluefield Branded Banner



#### **5.7 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Business development strategies for Downtown Bluefield are based on the opportunities detailed in the comprehensive market analysis, the overall economic climate of the downtown market, and the vision of the community established in ongoing input.

#### **Current Business Climate**

- The market for Downtown Bluefield and the Town in general is contracting. While the Town's population is roughly the same as it was 20 years ago, the micropolitan region has lost nearly 9% of its population in the last 12 years. This is a trend seen throughout most of Southwest Virginia, but particularly in Coalfield communities.
- While the market is losing population, Bluefield is an important commercial magnet and continues to draw in customers from a larger regional market. Last year, the Town of Bluefield gained \$87.8 million in retail sales above local demand. Within a 15-minute drive of Downtown Bluefield, stores gained \$212 million above local demand, illustrating that the retail in both Bluefield VA and Bluefield WV are serving a large regional market, and perhaps benefiting from proximity to I-77.
- Even with this significant gain, there are key categories in Bluefield's 15-minute drive market that show opportunity for growth based on local demand. General merchandising, hardware stores, electronics & appliances show potential. There are several specialty categories that show opportunity for growth including pet stores, specialty foods, luggage, office supplies, gifts, antiques, etc. Each of these could be accommodated in Downtown Bluefield perhaps as a new business or expansion of existing business.

- As the market continues to contract, it will be important for Bluefield to expand its customer base by creating a unique downtown experience, or by connecting with those experiences outside of downtown. For example, other communities in Tazewell County and throughout Southwest Virginia have taken advantage of the region's cultural and outdoor recreation resources. Outdoor recreation in particular is growing within SWVA, and has become a significant part of the evolving economy of the region. Examples include Spearhead Trails in Pocahontas and Hatfield-McCoy ATV trails in Bramwell, among others.
- Another key market for Bluefield and its downtown is Bluefield University, its student body, faculty, as well as visitors. Stakeholder engagement suggested a need to recruit businesses that attracts students and faculty, stage events, and otherwise provide active spaces that relate to the University.



Virginia Ave.



#### **Business Development Strategies**

# **5.7.1 - Form a Downtown Development Organization:**

This is critical to the success of downtown and the implementation of this plan. Bluefield's biggest challenge when it comes to accomplishing its goal of downtown revitalization is capacity. The Town of Bluefield simply cannot implement the plan on its own and must have the help of the private sector and its partner agencies. Virtually all the successful or improving downtowns in the region and throughout Virginia have a private, non-profit group aimed at downtown revitalization – from Tazewell Today, to Marion Downtown Revitalization Association, to Onancock Main Street. Each works hand in hand with the local government to create active economic centers of their communities.

One thing missing from Bluefield's previous downtown planning is a private sector champion of downtown. This can be a bridge between the local government and business community. It is recommended that the Town work with a partner agency (Tazewell County Tourism, Two Virginias Chamber, etc.) to gather downtown businesses and property owners to educate them on what an organization would entail, explore structures based on the successful models of other downtown groups in Virginia, and assist them in forming a dedicated downtown organization.

While it's not mandatory, the ultimate goal should be for the Downtown Bluefield group to evolve over time into a Main Street Community designated by Virginia Main Street (VMS). The Main Street Model is a tried-and-true national model for downtown revitalization. Groups like St Paul Tomorrow and Tazewell Today started with a grass-roots downtown organization, that ultimately was designated as Main Street. For Bluefield, this could simply begin adopting a structure that follows a work plan that focuses on the four points: Design, Promotion, Economic Vitality, and Organization.

The Town should also contact Virginia Main Street to become an Exploring Main Street Community. This opens up the Main Street network services to the town, but also VMS would provide training and assistance in forming a downtown group.

#### 5.7.2 - Recruit a destination business:

An active business that attracts customers and users from Bluefield and beyond could become an anchor to downtown and the catalyst for future investment. This business or businesses could be tied to one of the region's key assets (Bluefield University, Outdoor Recreation, ATV trails, etc.), or a business that would support those assets. The Town can work with the IDA to determine a location and potential incentives for such a business, then reach out to businesses within the region and beyond to recruit an outfitter, restaurant, tap room/brewery, ATV dealer, or sporting goods store that sells BU gear.

# **5.7.3 - Target business recruitment based on opportunities identified** in market research:

While it has been established that the population in the Bluefield region has been declining, market research still shows there is current demand for new business in the local market. In addition, there is an opportunity to capitalize on regional outdoor recreation activity and tourism with complementary businesses. Bluefield's recruitment efforts should begin with the businesses that show demand and would enhance the downtown experience.



# 5.7.4 - Focus recruitment efforts on catalyst development sites identified in the master plan:

This plan illustrates several key sites that provide the largest opportunity for investment and development - either as a significant mixed-use project, or a signature development site. Each of these sites can be an anchor in downtown, bringing in additional economic development. Bluefield should work with property owners and potential investors focusing on these catalyst sites:

- Logan Street School
- Graham National Bank
- First National Bank
- Bluefield Interiors Property

### 5.7.5 - Establish a Tourism Zone:

Tourism zones allow a town to establish incentives and regulatory flexibility for tourism-based businesses and employers and could be a key incentive to recruit a destination business mentioned above. Incentives could include BPOL gross-receipt tax incentives, permit abatement, fees reduction, etc. Virginia statutes permit communities to establish parameters via local ordinance with most requiring capital investment and job creation thresholds. The Town of Bluefield and IDA should consider the program and determine what incentives could be implemented to attract and grow visitor-based businesses. There are currently 75 tourism zones across the state, with four located in Tazewell County.

#### 5.7.6 - Create Market One-Sheets:

One-sheets are single-page, graphic focused promotional tools used to recruit investment. They could highlight key opportunity sites or target desired businesses. They would be part of a larger business recruitment package provided on the Town's website or sent to potential prospects detailing market opportunity, available sites, desired businesses, incentives, etc.



Sample Marketing Sheets



### 5.7.7 - Build a small business ecosystem:

The Town should work with its partners to build a system of small business support and development, with dedicated programming for training, incentives etc. These efforts have been successfully deployed throughout SWVA and even considered in the past in Bluefield. They could include tools such as:

- Produce a best practices toolkit for local businesses looking to expand or new businesses wanting to invest in Downtown.
- Work with Two Virginias Chamber or other partner to provide E-Commerce training for existing businesses.
- Partner with Bluefield University, Opportunity SWVA or other partner to conduct a business planning challenge grant.
- Work with the future Downtown Development organization to create an empowerment program that is a platform for sharing ideas and knowledge base with peer businesses. Similar to "The Brew" in Anderson, SC or "1-Million Cups" in Robeson County, NC.

# **5.7.8 - Create small vibrancy incentives:**

Often in small towns, it can be a challenge for local business or property owners to take full advantage of façade grants. They may be too complex, or the match to acquire the grant may be too large. Some communities have found that breaking up their façade grant programs into façade elements that focus on aesthetics and awareness can achieve a broader impact. These "vibrancy grants" could be as small as \$500 and focus on activating spaces and businesses with color, outdoor seating, flowers and small-scale landscaping, signage, awnings, etc.



Vibrancy grants can fund color enhancements, outdoor seating, flowers, temporary active spaces, etc. Source: Community Design Solutions



# **5.7.9 - Nominate Downtown District for National Register of Historic Places Designation:**

National Register designation is first and foremost an honorary designation that affirms the district's historic architecture has national significance as defined by the National Park Service. It does not come with inherent restrictions on the property that would be part of a local historic zoning district. However, it does come with significant rehabilitation tax credit incentives that can be used to improve a contributing historic structure in the district. Buildings like the Bank of Graham, Logan Street School and many others in downtown would likely be contributing to the district and thus ultimately eligible for these incentives.

The Town should contact the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to inquire about the application process and determine the need to utilize a preservation consultant to assist with the research. When designated, contributing properties in the district could receive up to 20% tax credit from the federal government and 25% from the state. If the project qualifies under both programs, the owner could receive 45% credits on their eligible rehabilitation expenses!

# **5.7.10 - Conduct Feasibility Study for Logan Street School:**

The Logan Street School is a key catalyst opportunity and anchor for Downtown Bluefield. Potential uses mentioned have included boutique lodging, residential, destination restaurant, and mixed-use. The site's potential is highlighted by the historic structure, acreage, and unique position overlooking downtown. The Town should partner with the property owner to study the potential of the site for adaptive reuse as a catalyst for Downtown Bluefield.

### **5.7.11 - Pursue Community Business Launch Grant:**

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) facilitates the Community Business Launch (CBL) program that helps communities develop and recruit small business. The program includes a systematic process to define a community's vision and implementation of a local business competition to develop entrepreneurs that meet that vision. Communities receive up to \$45,000 from DHCD to conduct the business planning competition and the funds can be used for training, mentoring, and grant awards given to winning entrepreneurs. DHCD does not limit the program to large places, and has awarded CBL grants to small rural communities including St. Paul, Buchanan, Norton, Blackstone, and others. Bluefield should apply for the CBL grant and tie the development vision of downtown to target businesses identified in this report.



Sugar Hill Cidery in Norton, Virginia, Participant in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Community Business Launch Program (Source: Virginia Main Street)



### 5.8 MARKET POSITIONING

Market positioning seems simple, but it is very important to targeting new investment that will create a vibrant downtown. In a sense, the Market Position for Downtown Bluefield is a vision for the future and should be the foundation for any recruitment or development effort moving forward. Positioning Downtown Bluefield as a place to do business, be active and invest is an extension of the current downtown marketing and programming being conducted by the Town. Simply stated, the market position for Downtown Bluefield should be based on:

- Businesses that create activity;
- Catalyst projects that focus on key, underutilized or vacant buildings;
- Expanding the market to include Bluefield residents but also regional consumers and users; and
- Continuing to activate downtown through active programming.

# **MARKET POSITION**

Downtown Bluefield seeks a diverse mix of active uses, from events and destination business to vibrant public spaces. Our independent businesses and active events will continue to welcome visitors while supporting the needs of its residents in a dynamic downtown.

# **Market Positioning Strategies**

## 5.8.1 - Expand Bluefield's brand as Virginia's Tallest Town:

Bluefield has done a great job of implementing the logo and tag line established in the 2008 Downtown Master Plan, using it on the Town's website, gateway signage, banners, and even the downtown LOVEworks sign. The existing logo and tag line will add to its brand equity as the Town incorporates it into social media, expanded signage, event logos, and marketing collateral.

### 5.8.2 - Incorporate into the Town's social media strategy:

The town currently utilizes a Facebook page and has a dormant Twitter and Instagram page. All links to social media on the Town's website are currently dead links and should be updated with active sites. The Town should also designate an employee with managing the pages. Twitter, and particularly Instagram will be effective in engaging the public and driving activity to downtown. Create a content calendar of topics to post to each platform. Cultivate content development with local businesses. Utilizing hashtags such as #virginiastallesttown, #downtownbluefield or #bluefieldva will allow businesses and residents to promote downtown. Connecting to regional visitor efforts including #visittazewellcounty will also drive users to downtown.



### 5.8.3 - Extend Brand to Downtown Events:

Bluefield has a number of great and well attended events including Field Fest, Autumn Jamboree, Bluefield Farmers Market, and other. It is important that Bluefield expand its brand footprint by using event logos that while entirely unique, connect to the established brand for the town.







Examples of Brand Extension to Downtown Events

### **5.8.4 - Create Branded Marketing Collateral:**

Similarly, the town should produce branded marketing collateral to promote the community and downtown, but also allow local businesses to deploy the brand. Collateral such as t-shirts, hats, coffee mugs, stickers, etc. are easy to produce through local or online vendors. The town can produce and sell at local events or produce for local businesses to buy from the town at cost, selling them for profit in their local shops.



# **5.8.5 - Expand Environmental Graphics Utilizing the Brand:**

The town has done an excellent job of placing banners in downtown, and even using the star logo on the LOVEWorks sign at Graham Square. Expanded bannering along South College Avenue from Highway 460 will create a gateway sequence that will draw people into downtown.

Applying to downtown furniture will enhance the public streetscape. Even incorporating into a paver treatment at the Virginia/College Avenue intersection will solidify the brand and help define a unique public space.



Proposed Intersection Improvements Rendering



Banner Concept Design

# 5.8.6 - Create Testimonial Ads to Highlight Small Business:

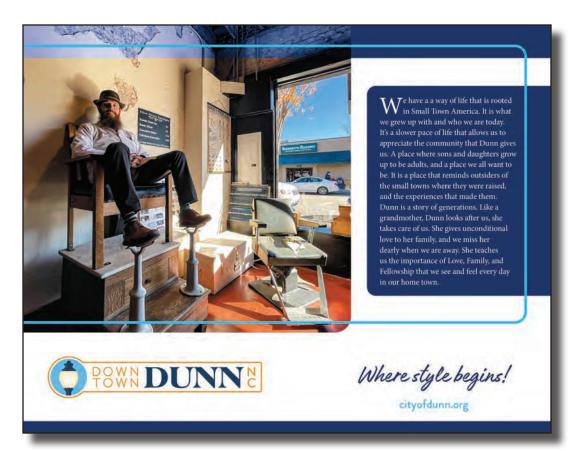
Ads using the Downtown Bluefield brand promoting small businesses can be used to market local businesses, but also illustrate the value of investing in downtown. Key businesses such as Graham Pharmacy, Margaret's Country Corner, the Tux Man, as well as newer businesses can all be highlighted with ads deployed via social media.

# 5.8.7 - Consider and ATV Expo Event:

This would likely be organized by the newly created downtown organization and independent of the city. It would be focused on tapping into the regional ATV trail system, and could include an ATV parade, vendors and local businesses that support the ATV experience, and representation from Spearhead Trails, Hatfield McCoy Trails, and Pocahontas.



Examples of Brand Extension to Downtown Events



Example Testimonial Ads



### 5.9 ORGANIZATION

Bluefield has accomplished much in downtown with its Farmers Market, Jack Asbury Square, Graham Square, lighting & banners, etc. Still, Bluefield's biggest challenge for implementation continues to be the capacity to achieve each task. The town is small with limited resources, both with staffing and money. It must not only have its partner agencies and private sector share some responsibility in plan implementation, but also needs a framework for implementation within Town government.

### **Organization Strategies**

# 5.9.1 - Identify Project Manager from Town to Lead Downtown Master Plan

Bluefield recently hired a Communications Director who will be responsible for, among other things, planning and promoting community events, marketing Bluefield and its downtown, etc. Similarly, the town recently hired a full-time town administrator after several years of that positioning being part time. Both of these hires provide additional capacity for Bluefield to lead the town into the future. It is recommended that the town designate a staff person, potentially the communications director, to spearhead the downtown master plan, coordinate with private sector partners, help establish a downtown development organization, etc.

# 5.9.2 - Pursue DHCD Downtown Revitalization Planning & Construction Grant:

The original downtown master plan in 2008 utilized DHCD's CBDG grants to fund the plan. The current 2022 plan was able to use brownfields grant to pay for the project. The Town of Bluefield is favorably poised to again go after DHCD downtown revitalization funding not only for continued planning, but also for implementation funds. Much of the current plan satisfies the requirements of the DHCD process, which calls for a master plan with economic restructuring and business development. The Town

could leverage this plan to acquire funding to continue planning efforts to focus on façade design and building improvements, and perhaps opportunities for downtown housing. A successful plan and construction grant application could result in \$700,000 or more to fund implementation, including many of the projects identified in this plan.

# 5.9.3 - Conduct Leadership Visits:

It is common in small towns like Bluefield, where leaders in the business community and local government are busy focusing on day-to-day business, that they may not see the value of downtown revitalization, or appreciate the potential to achieve catalyst projects. By the same token, small towns throughout SWVA have accomplished great things and can be used as a resource to learn best practices for ongoing downtown planning and implementation. Bluefield should identify key projects in the region that match some of the initiatives called for in this plan, and organize leadership visits with that municipality. This could include projects like the adaptive reuse of the Old Jail in Tazewell, downtown brewery in St Paul, outdoor recreation events and businesses in Norton, or Pop Up Marion Entrepreneurial Boot Camp.

# **5.9.4 - Formalize Town Gown Relationship with Bluefield University:**

One of the goals of this master plan is making Downtown Bluefield more relevant to Bluefield University's students, faculty and visitors. This is a continued goal from the original master plan, and while events targeting students have seen success in the past, and a local business currently has a connection to the University, downtown still has limited offerings to support one of the town's greatest assets. It is recommended that the Town and University pursue a formalized town/gown committee that meets quarterly to discuss common issues and examine opportunities to accomplish shared goals.



# 6. Implementation

The Strategy Board Matrix that follows summarizes all of the projects and recommendations included in the Bluefield Downtown Master Plan, as summarized above. The table is a working document for benchmarking and ongoing management of the implementation process.

The Strategy Board Matrix is organized by strategic categories and includes:

- Unique coding for each strategy (5.1.1, 5.1.2...).
- Name of each strategy in that category.
- Timeframes which show the year for the strategy to BEGIN. Note that some have already begun, and several will be accomplished over multiple years.
- Lead agency for each strategy. This plan is intended to be cooperatively implemented with the Town working with its partner agencies and the private sector to accomplish each task. Some tasks will be solely the Town's responsibility, many will have the Town lead with assistance from its partners, and some will be led by the Town's partners.
- Partners column includes those other agencies or stakeholders who will play a role in each task.
- The notes column is to provide space for the Town to add notes during implementation as it reviews each task.
- Progress is intended to be the benchmarking section of the plan, as the Town reviews its progress during implementation. Most is left blank at the moment, but as tasks commence or are ultimately completed, the status of that strategy can be input here.

The Strategy Board matrix represents a dynamic document that should evolve over time. It should be evaluated on an annual basis, allowing for completed projects to be identified, new projects to be added, and responsible partners to shift if needed. While each strategy is outlined in the strategy board, it is important to remember the planning and development that each support, which is described in detail in the master plan document.

In the Lead and Partner columns, each agency is coded in this manner:

- BF Town of Bluefield
- IDA Industrial Development Authority
- BU Bluefield University
- PS Private Sector
- TCT Tazewell County Tourism
- TVC Two Virginias Chamber
- DDO Downtown Development Organization (future)
- DHCD Department of Housing & Community Development
- VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation
- HOA Heart of Appalachia
- PDC Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission
- VTC Virginia Tourism Corporation
- OSWVA Opportunity Southwest Virginia
- CON Consultant
- THS Tazewell County Historical Society
- DHR Virginia Department of Historic Resources
- VMS Virginia Main Street



# **Downtown Bluefield VA - Implementation Strategy Board**

The strategies below represent the framework for the Downtown Master plans. Strategic areas show core actions, timeframes, lead partners, and progress towards completion.

Strategies		Actions	Timeframe	Lead	Partners	Estimated Costs	Notes	Progress
<b>5.1 -</b> Downtown Design & Vibrancy	5.1.1	Educate Property Owners of existing Façade Improvement Program to be better utilized.	2023	IDA	BF, DDO		Grant funding may be restructured to include vibrancy intiiatives.	
	5.1.2	Identify mural opportunity sites and pursue grant funding for implementation	2023	BF	TC, VTC, DDO			
	5.1.3	Incorporate art installations and interactive play elements into downtown streetscape and parks.	2024	BF	TC, VTC			
	5.1.4	banners and seasonal planting.	2025	BF	TC, VTC			
	5.1.5	Amend town maintenance strategy to improve downtown upkeep and cleanliness.	2023	BF	DDO		Need to identify & appropriate budget for ongoing maintenance	
	5.2.1	Redevelop Virginia Ave. streetscape per the design recommendations of this section (5.2).	2027	BF	DHCD	\$ 1,100,000.00	Streetscape improvements will be phased as funding allows.  Virginia Ave Improvements are higher priority.	
	5.2.2	Redevelop Spring St. streetscape per the design recommendations of this section (5.2).	2027	BF	DHCD	\$ 750,000.00	Streetscape improvements will be phased as funding allows. Virginia Ave Improvements are higher priority.	
<b>5.2</b> - Streetscape	5.2.3	Increase outdoor dining, seating, and streetscape furniture along streetscape	2023	DDO	BF		Special Event programming for outdoor dining and retail can be a short term strategy. Supporting streetscape for such programming is long term.	
	5.2.4	Reinforce brand awareness and placemaking through incorporating logo into streetscape furniture.	2025	BF, DDO			Phase out old furniture, replaceing with new as funding is available.	
	5.3.1	Redevelop existing gravel parking lots on South College Ave., North College Ave., and around the Farmers Market for higher efficiency parking opportunities.	2027	BF			Parking lot improvements will be phased as funding allows.	
	5.3.2	Enforce two-hour parking windows on all streetscape spaces and marked off- street spaces.	2023	BF				
<b>5.3</b> - Parking & Mobility	5.3.3	Identify new parking opportunities and shared parking opportunities to	2025	BF			As growth determines necessary. A parking study may be required to determine need.	
	5.3.4	University and commercial shopping center.	2025	BU,	BF, VDOT, TCT			
	5.3.5	Partner with University to implement a bike share program scaled to fit needs of community.	2027	BF, BU	BU, VDOT, TCT			
<b>5.4</b> - Public Space &	5.4.1	Prioritize Jack Asbury Park for special event programming, above other park locations as appropriate for the event	2022	BF	тст			
Parks	5.4.2	Explore options to retrofit farmers market pavilion to support four season gathering space.	2025	BF	DDO			
	5.5.1	Implement downtown park improvements per the recomendations of the catalyst site design.	2023	BF	TCT	\$ 1,400,000.00	All park elements may be phased based on need	
5.5 - Catalyst	5.5.2	Conduct feasibility study for boutique hotel; event/ wedding venue; multi- family residential; restaurant	2025	BF, PS				
Redevelopment Sites	5.5.3	Conduct feasibility study for medium size hotel, student housing, mixed-use commercial, multi-family residential, senior housing	2025	BF, PS			Overlap Strategy with 5.7.11	
	5.6.1	Design Sign Typology incorporating the Bluefield Brand	2022	BF	VDOT, TCT			Completed as part ofthis plan.
<b>5.6</b> - Wayfinding	5.6.2	Design System - Destination Ranking, Route Mapping, Sign Locations, Sign Content, Sign Schedule.	2023	CON	BF, VDOT, TCT	Estimated \$10-15k for plan.	Will need to deterimine if consultant is needed, and budget for planning.	Initial wayfinding strategies of this plan will provide foundation.
	5.6.3	Obtain review from VDOT	2024	CON	BF, VDOT		VDOT should be included in the planning process to mitigate any potential issues in design, location, and implementation.	
	5.6.4	Adopt Wayfinding Plan	2024	BF				
	5.6.5	Identify funding streams and budget for phased system	2024	BF	TCT, HOA, VTC, PDC, VDOT	TBD depending on # of signs. Per unit directional wayfinding can range from \$2,500 - \$6,000.		
	5.6.6	Develop bid package and issue RFQ for design, fabricatin, installation, permitting	2024 -	BF	VDOT, TCT		Any wayfinding program is implemented over MULTIPLE phases. Potential phasing detailed in report. Downtown signage first.	
	5.6.7	Continue to update system.	2026 -			Budget 15% of total cost of system for maintenance.	Maintenance ongoing. New signage as new destinations emerge.	Ongoing



# **Downtown Bluefield VA - Implementation Strategy Board**

The strategies below represent the framework for the Downtown Master plans. Strategic areas show core actions, timeframes, lead partners, and progress towards completion.

Strategies	Actions	Timeframe	Lead	Partners	Estimated Costs	Notes	Progress
	5.7.1 Form a Downtown Development Organization	2024	BF	PS, TCT, TVC		DDO will take over many of the responsibilites of plan implementation.	
	5.7.2 Recruit destination business(es)	2025	DDO, BF	PS, TCT, TVC			
	5.7.3 Target business recruitment based on opportunities in market research	2023	BF	IDA, TVC			
	5.7.4 Focus recruitment of catalyst development sites in plan	2024	IDA	BF, PS			
	5.7.5 Establish a Tourism Zone	2024	BF	TCT, VTC		Resources at https://www.vatc.org/tourismzones/	
<b>5.7</b> - Business	5.7.6 Create Market One-Sheets	2025	DDO	BF, TVC			
Development	5.7.7 Build a small business ecosystem	2025	DDO	TVC, DHCD, OSWVA, BU		Each agency currently has certain business support effort that can be enhanced through partnering.	Ongoing
	5.7.8 Create small vibrancy incentives	2026	BV, IDA	DDO	Programs in similar communities have ranged from \$5k to \$25k	Funding source would need to be identified.	
	5.7.9 Nominate Downtown for National Register District Designation	2025	DDO	THS, TCT, DHR		Would likely require preservation consultant to conduct survey and nomination. DHR will have contacts for consultants.	
	5.7.10 Pursue Community Business Launch Grant	2025	BF	DDO, DHCD	DHCD Grant recipients often get \$45k	Application process opens in March and ends in September each year. Resources at https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/cbl	
	5.7.11 Conduct Feasibility Study for Logan Street School	2025	BF, PS	CON		Property owner and Town of Bluefield would partner.	
	5.8.1 Expand Bluefield's brand as Virginia's Tallest Town	2022	BF	DDO, TCT, PS			Began 2008, Ongoing
	5.8.2 Incorporate into the Town's social media strategy	2023	BF	All partners			Hired Communication Director
	5.8.3 Extend brand to Downtown events	2023	BF	DDO		Eventually could be taken over by DDO	
<b>5.8</b> - Market Positioning	5.8.3 Create branded marketing material	2023	BF	DDO		Eventually could be taken over by DDO	
	5.8.4 Expand environmental graphics utilizing the brand	2024 -	BF	DDO, VDOT, TCT			
	5.8.5 Create testimonial ads to highlight small businesses	2023	BF	DDO, TVC, TCT			
	5.8.9 Consider an ATV Expo event	2025	DDO	TCT, HOA, VTC, PS			
<b>5.9</b> - Organization	5.9.1 Identify Project Manager from Town to Lead Downtown Master Plan	2023	BF			Critical to implementation of this plan as this staff person would lead the Town's responsibilities of in this plan.	Communication Director and full-time Administrator hired. Communications Direct can potentially guide implementation of plan.
	5.9.2 Pursue DHCD Downtown Revitalization Planning & Construction Grant	2024	PDC, BF	DHCD, DDO, PS	Planning Grant up to \$50k. Construction Grant up to \$700k	PDCs in VA often assist communities with grant writing and management of these project. DHCD Planning Grant application open from April to December. Planning Grant precedes construction grant.	
	5.9.3 Conduct leadership visits	2024	BF	All partners			
	5.9.4 Formalize Town-Grown relationship with Bluefield University	2023	BF, BU				



# **APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS**

### Introduction

An online survey collected input from Bluefield residents, businesses, visitors, and stakeholders to inform the Downtown Master Plan. The survey asked participants to provide input on Bluefield's community character, quality of life, strengths and weaknesses, needs and desires, and vision for the future. The survey generated 184 responses between May and July, 2022. The results of the survey are described on the following pages.

# Question 1: What is your home residence zip code?

The majority of survey respondents live in Bluefield. Approximately 78% of survey respondents live in the 24605 Bluefield zip code, 5% live in the 24701 Bluefield WV zip code, 3% live in the 24630 North Tazewell zip code and 3% live in the 24651 Tazewell zip code.

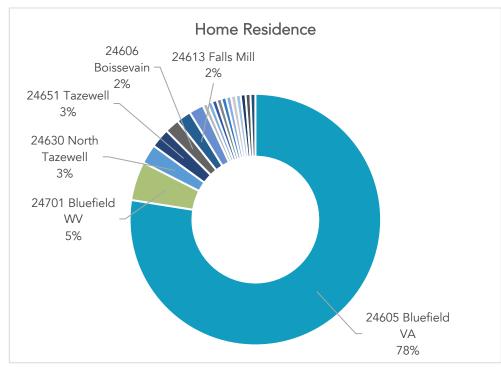


Figure 1 Home Residence Zip Code of Survey Respondents

# Question 2: Mark all below that describe you (Connection to Bluefield).

Three quarters of the survey respondents live in Bluefield while 40% work in Bluefield. Survey respondents are very engaged in community life in Bluefield, with 89% shopping or dining in town and 77% going to events in Bluefield.

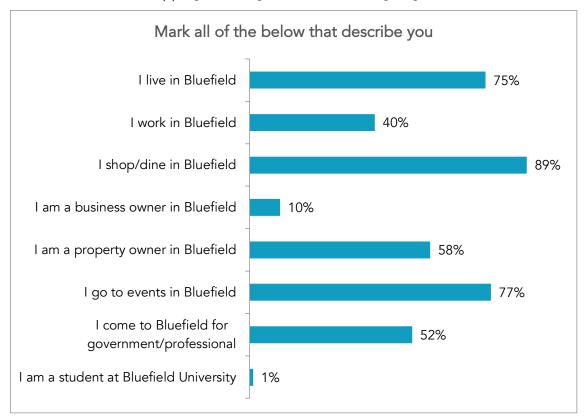


Figure 2: Survey Respondents' Connections to Bluefield.

# Question 3: Downtown Activity. I think Downtown Bluefield...

Respondents agreed that Downtown Bluefield is a great place to live and has a unique history and culture. The aspects of Downtown Bluefield that rated the lowest concerned the variety of options for shopping, dining and entertainment. Comments included desires for additional businesses, especially restaurants, as well as making improvements to reach the town's full potential.

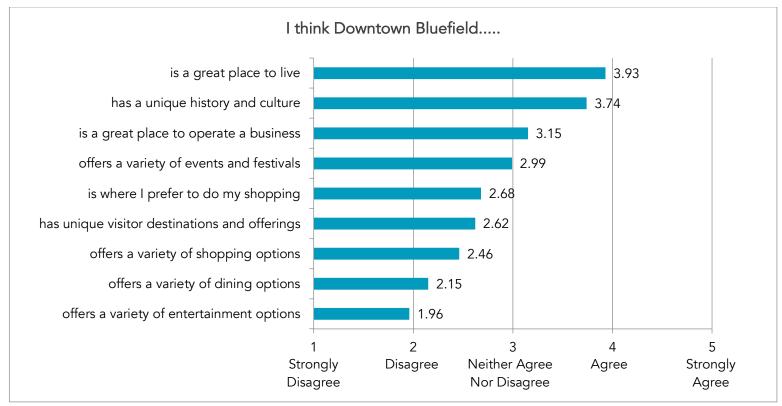


Figure 3: Ratings of Downtown Bluefield Activity

## Question 4: Downtown Environment. Rate Downtown Bluefield on the character of the environment.

When asked to rate elements of Downtown Bluefield's environment, respondent's rated safety, customer service, and walkability highest. Variety and quality of retail and dining, as well as convenient business hours, rated the lowest. Comments included the need for new businesses, beautification, and events to bring people downtown.

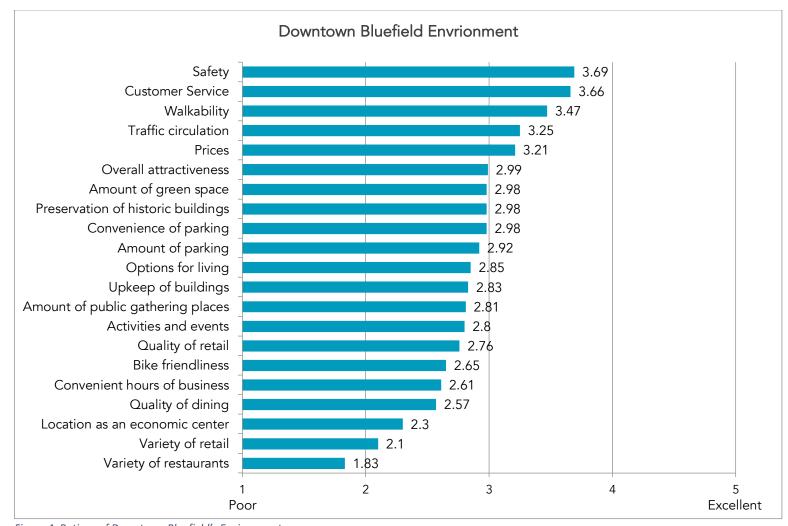


Figure 4: Ratings of Downtown Bluefield's Environment

# Question 5: Name your three favorite places in Downtown Bluefield. These can be businesses, parks, public spaces, institutions, etc.

Top responses include: The Grind, Jack Asbury Square, Corner Store, Farmers Market, Nancy's Boutique, the Post Office, Dairy Queen, Downtown Park, New Graham, and Double J's Prowl Around Shop.



Figure 5: Word Cloud Depicting Survey Responses to Favorite Places in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 6: How often do you come to Downtown Bluefield for the following?

Respondents come to Downtown Bluefield most often for dining and professional services (bank accountant, attorney, etc) and special events. Respondents seldomly come to Downtown Bluefield for personal services (hair salon, etc) and recreation.

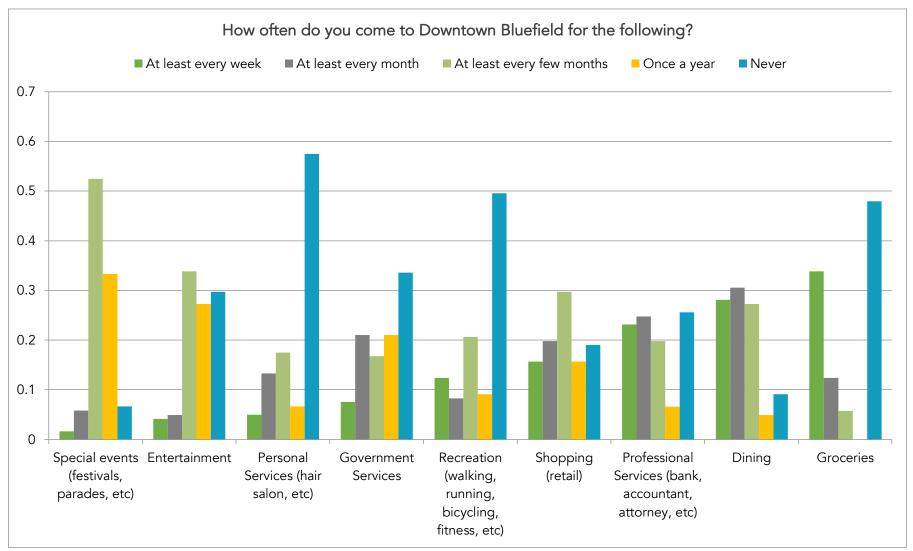


Figure 6: How Often Respondents Go to Downtown Bluefield for Various Activities

# Question 7: What types of retail and restaurant businesses are needed in Downtown Bluefield?

Family friendly restaurants and family friendly entertainment received the most votes for the types of retail and restaurant businesses need in Downtown Bluefield. Comments included other businesses such as a wine bar, healthy food options, bakery, movie theater, and craft store.

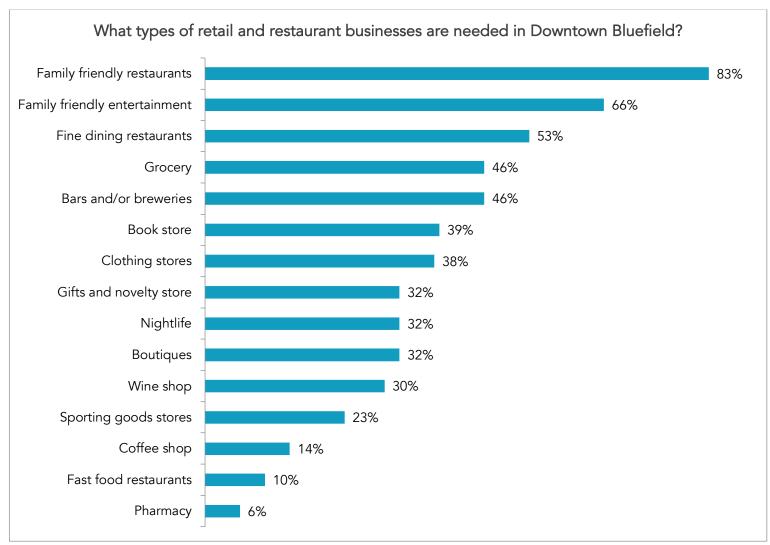


Figure 7: Types of Retail and Restaurant Businesses Needed in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 8: What types of services are needed in Downtown Bluefield?

Survey respondents identified meeting spaces and medical services as the top two services needed in Downtown Bluefield. Comments included additional needs included space for classes and groups to meet.

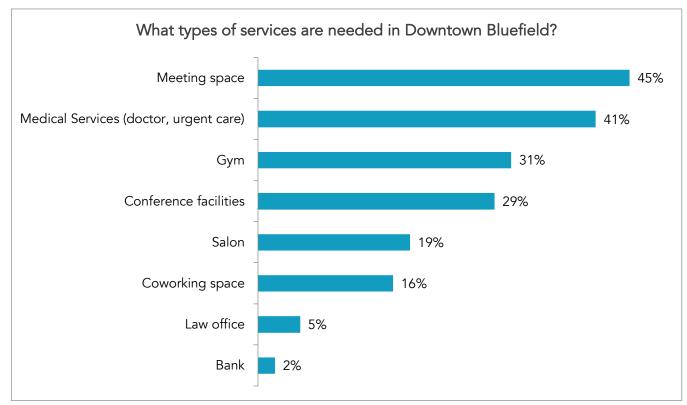


Figure 8: Types of Services Needed in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 9: What types of residential development or lodging is needed in Downtown Bluefield?

Survey respondents identified hotels and mixed-use developments as the top types of residential development or lodging needed in Downtown Bluefield.

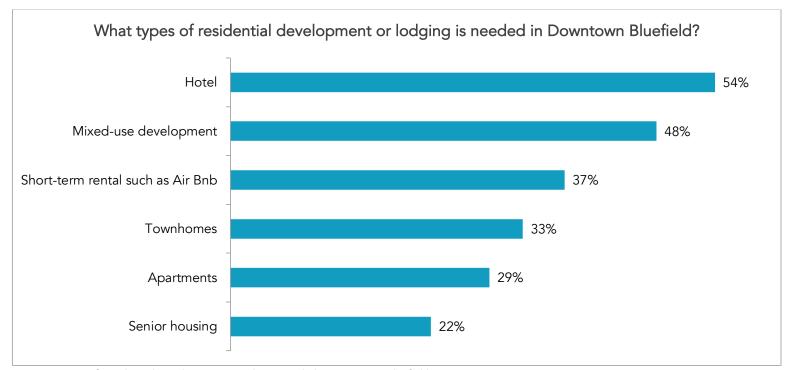


Figure 9: Types of Residential Development or Lodging Needed in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 10: What types of public spaces, activities, and cultural components are needed in Downtown Bluefield?

Survey respondents identified live music and events as the top types of public spaces, activities and cultural components needed in Downtown Bluefield. Comments in the survey also identified murals, car shows, movie theater, outdoor seating, string lights, food trucks, pop-up or seasonal shops, street dances, more cultural activities from Bluefield University, and a splash pad.

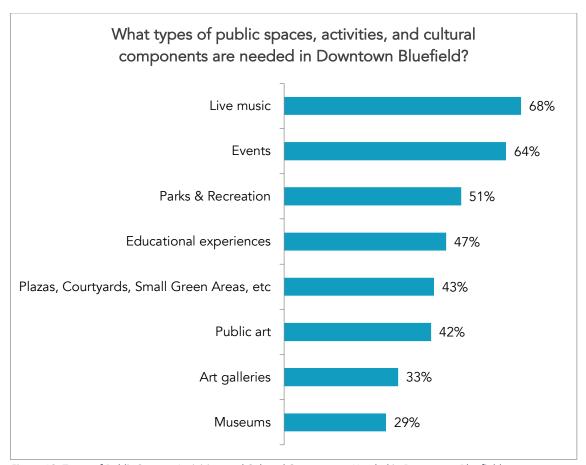


Figure 10: Types of Public Spaces, Activities, and Cultural Components Needed in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 11: What other activities are needed in Downtown Bluefield to create a better business environment and overall quality of life?

Survey respondents indicated that more regularly scheduled events are needed in Downtown Bluefield. In the comments, respondents also noted a need for bicycle lanes, outdoor movies and better quality signage.

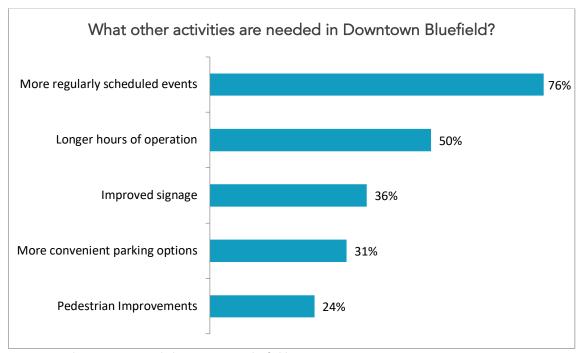


Figure 11: Other Activities Needed in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 12: Do you have any additional thoughts or comments regarding wants and/or needs in Downtown Bluefield?

Sample responses include:

- The town needs to find a balance of getting all generations downtown but there has to be a focus on the younger generation to grow the population here. There are 2 bigger colleges here and you need to draw the young crowd in. The young people need somewhere to hang. I would love to see something like a "Smash Park" that is in Des Moines Iowa brought to this area. (Pickle ball, entertainment areas, game areas) you can Google it to see but such a cool concept that could really go over well here.
- Stop sending families out of town for weekend activities! Pilot Mt has car shows monthly with wonderful bands! We have no movie theater forcing families to go to Bristol or Christiansburg
- Look at Wytheville VA
- Just make it look clean and inviting. Update old buildings and tear down the ones that are falling. Add outdoor activities (better walking track) to get others interested in being downtown, add bistro lights from the top of streets to make it lively.
- Just as easily as downtown bluefield could be as bustling as wytheville or Blacksburg, it could also be Welch. We need action
- The town needs a clean/renovation of the buildings. It needs someone with an eye for beautification. The town needs a place for evening gatherings such as a brewery or something that locals can gather to mingle.
- Tazewell has many events planned for the Main Street. Bluefield, VA should explore these options.
- Be more business friendly. Take all those open empty lots and build

- single or two-story buildings to create living space as well as retail space on the main floor. What good does parking do when there is nothing to do once you get there?
- It would be nice to have a local craft gathering. Something along the lines of leather workers, wood crafting, smiths
- Could there be some type of program to encourage and generate support from the community members?
- Stop making hard for businesses, support the DDC, get new leadership for DDC, have more events, and provide a nightlife for 21-45 y/po folks. Look at downtown Tazewell
- Look at the towns around us and grow with them
- I hope to see more local folks with ties to the community opening businesses.
- I feel you need to be more inclusive and understanding of the needs of the small businesses in our community by visiting them and talking to them about their needs.
- Bluefield needs to attract the younger generation and encourage them to want to stay, rather than move away. The events and live music that happen are geared toward older generations. Aim for people in their 30s and 40s. We need more entertainment for that generation.
- Work with WV more. What is good for one us good for the other Bluefield.
- It makes no sense to have the Farmers market on Friday. Most people are working then. Why not Saturday.

# Question 13: What is your preferred building style for Downtown Bluefield?

The majority of survey respondents identified classic/historical as their preferred building style for Downtown Bluefield.

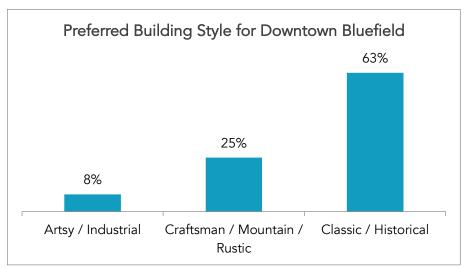


Figure 12: Preferred Building Style for Downtown Bluefield

# Question 14: How interested are you in the following placemaking elements for Downtown Bluefield?

Survey respondents expressed interest in all of the placemaking elements listed on the survey, especially outdoor events and live music.

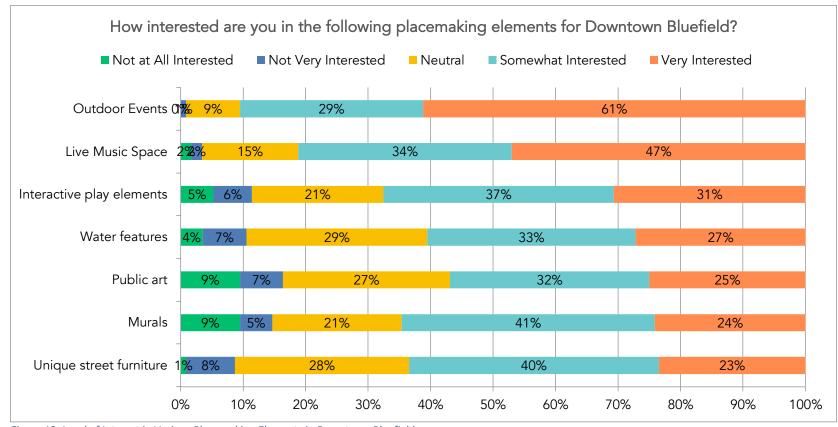


Figure 13: Level of Interest in Various Placemaking Elements in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 15: Rate the following physical downtown elements in Downtown Bluefield based on their need for improvement.

When asked about the physical elements in Downtown Bluefield, survey respondents indicated that outdoor dining, outdoor seating, urban plaza space, and building architecture are all in need of improvement.

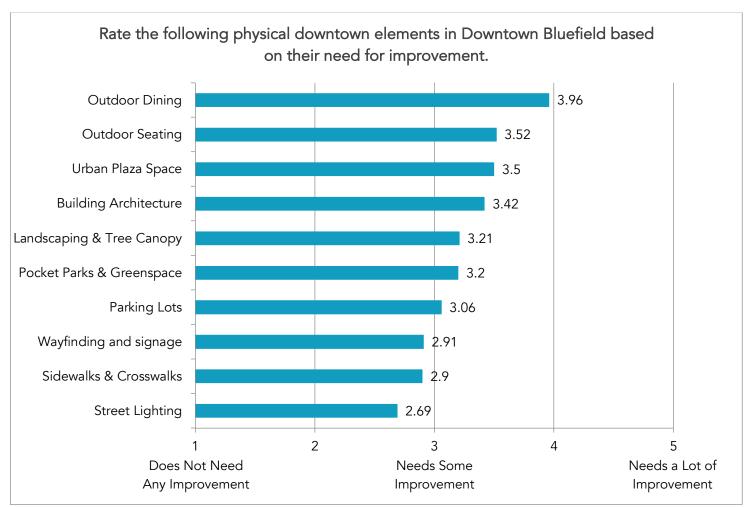


Figure 14: Ratings of the Physical Elements in Downtown Bluefield Based on Their Need for Improvement

# Question 16: Which of the following should be the highest priority for public investment in Downtown Bluefield?

Survey respondents overwhelmingly identified redevelopment of vacant properties as a priority for public investment in Downtown Bluefield.

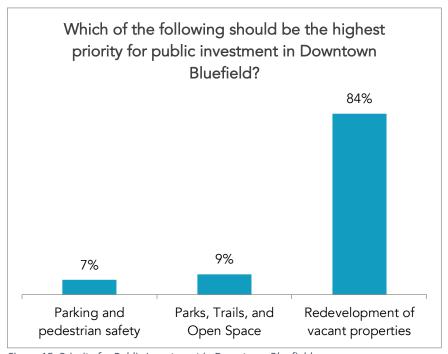


Figure 15: Priority for Public Investment in Downtown Bluefield

# Question 17: Thank you for completing the Downtown Bluefield Community Survey. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to provide?

Sample responses include:

- More community interaction to think of ways to help others and support the growth of the town. Find businesses or individuals that see the importance of keeping the historic structures the same but can make them fit the businesses they want to succeed and bring Bluefield back into the busy town it once was. More activities for children especially during the summer months.
- Trails and a greenway
- We need to draw people in to our town and I think it's starts with a makeover. Look at the towns around us, Wytheville, Tazewell, Marion and Blacksburg. All town are beautiful and take pride in the buildings to the sidewalks and streets. Then begin to build from there with an entertainment and gathering spot. A brewery and/or an evening spot such as a sports bar where the locals can gather. Outsiders will research and search out those types of places and when they see a beautiful town they will want to come back over and over.
- If you want to develop live music space, we have an amphitheater promote the Graham Rec park there is plenty of parking. Please develop downtown for unique business, create jobs and opportunities for business. Please stop tearing down buildings and making parking lots. We have parks. We have parking. We need business and retail space, we need to be business friendly, we need to create jobs, and we need to work with budding entrepreneurs that will want to open a business and stay and build a life in Bluefield. If you want restaurants downtown, offer up spots for food trucks to come park and put in some seating along the river for

- people to sit and eat. Use some of the vacant spaces to build units that can be used for businesses, even seasonal businesses, to create jobs and income for our town.
- Follow the revitalization models for Bluefield West, Tazewell,
  Bramwell, and even Princeton. As historical and family friendly as
  you can make it and have reasons for people to come at all hours of
  the day (not just 9-5) for entertainment and dining. Downtown kind
  of feels like one row of buildings, several huge ugly gravel lots, and
  a train track. It's not a center of culture...yet!
- It's time for our town to be prioritized above the WalMart area. If we
  don't take back our Main Street and revitalize the area we will miss
  an opportunity to breathe fresh air into a beautiful place to do
  community
- Highlight the character of downtown and variety of business
- Support from the Town of Bluefield to local downtown businesses is essential.

# **APPENDIX B: MARKET ANALYSIS**

### Introduction

This appendix provides the full market analysis conducted as part of the Bluefield Downtown Mater Plan process. The examination of demographic, housing, employment and retail data aims to develop a greater understanding of Bluefield's existing market trends and future opportunities. The market data informs many of the strategies identified in the Downtown Master Plan.

The market analysis includes the following sections:

- Market Definition: Identification of trade areas relevant to Downtown Bluefield.
- Demographics: Demographic profile of Bluefield and the surrounding region.
- **Segmentation:** Analysis of the makeup of households in Bluefield and the region to better understand the current market and potential future target markets.
- Housing: Examination of current housing market data and trends.
- **Employment:** Jobs by employment sector and commuting patterns.
- Retail Analysis: Retail leakage analysis and examination of commercial real estate market trends.
- **Tourism:** An overview of visitor spending and tourism in the region.

# **Market Definition**

Multiple study areas were included in the market analysis in an effort to understand the demographic and commercial patterns of Bluefield's market in the context of the larger regional market. The following geographies formed the multilayered approach to the study:

- Town of Bluefield
- 15-Minute Drivetime
- Primary Trade Area (24605 Bluefield, 24613 Falls Mills, 24635 Pocahontas) and Secondary Trade Area (24366 Rocky Gap, 24630 North Tazewell, 24701 Bluefield, WV, 24715 Bramwell, 24724 Freeman) identified in a 2007 zip code survey
- Tazewell County
- Bluefield WV-VA Micropolitan Area (Tazewell and Mercer Counties)
- Surrounding towns and counties

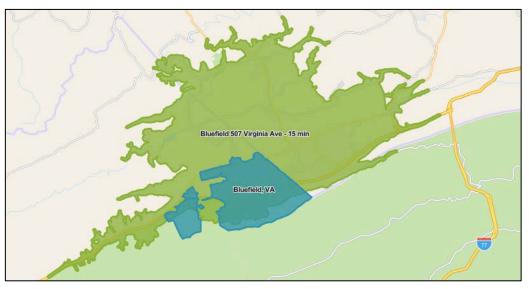


Figure 1: Bluefield, VA (Shown in Blue) and 15-Minute Drivetime Area (Shown in Green)

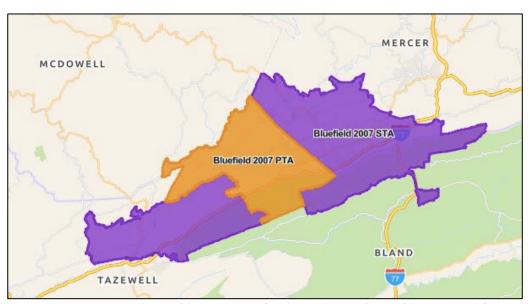


Figure 2: 2007 Primary Trade Area (Shown in Orange) and Secondary Trade Area (Shown in Purple)

# **Demographics**

A demographic profile of Bluefield examines key indicators including population growth, household income and age. Overall, indicators in Bluefield mirror regional demographic trends including an aging and declining population. However, Bluefield has slightly higher household incomes, lower poverty rates, and higher levels of educational attainment than the surrounding region.

BLUEFIELD DE	MOGRAPHICS	15-MINUTE DRIVETME DEMOGRAPHICS				
<b>4,886</b> 2022 POPULATION	<b>-10.2%</b> POPULATION CHANGE 2010 – 2022	<b>21,771</b> 2022 POPULATION	-11.4% POPULATION CHANGE 2010 – 2022			
	Ĭii.		Ĭi.			
21.8% BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER	44.3 MEDIAN AGE	19.4% BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER	43.2 MEDIAN AGE			
	Ť		Î			
\$48,723 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	9.3% FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY	\$43,180 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	13.6% FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY			
\$		\$				

Figure 3: Summary of Demographic Indicators in Bluefield and the 15-Minute Drivetime Area (Source: Claritas and Environics Analytics)

### **Population**

The estimated 2022 population of Bluefield is 4,886. Although Bluefield experienced slight population growth from 2000 to 2010, population declined from 2010 to 2022, mirroring regional population trends. Population in Bluefield decreased by 10.2% from 2010 to 2022, similar to the population decline experienced in Tazewell County over the same time period. The population in Bluefield is projected to decrease by an additional 2.2% between 2022 and 2027. Approximately 21,771 people live within a 15-minute drive of Downtown Bluefield, representing the potential market base for the town.



Figure 4: Population Change in Bluefield and Region, 2010-2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

	Population				Households			
	2000 Census	2010 Census	2022 Estimated	2027 Projected	2000 Census	2010 Census	2022 Estimated	2027 Projected
Bluefield, VA	5,255	5,444	4,886	4,779	2,185	2,212	1,967	1,919
15-Minute Drivetime	25,134	24,567	21,771	21,145	10,917	10,574	9,409	9,150
Bluefield Wv-VA Micropolitan Area	114,449	114,166	104,146	101,978	47,354	47,618	43,825	43,011
	Pe	Percent Change in Population			Percent Change in Households			
		2000-2010	2010-2022	2022-2027		2000-2010	2010-2022	2020-2027
Bluefield, VA		3.60%	-10.25%	-2.19%		1.24%	-11.08%	-2.44%
15-Minute Drivetime		-2.26%	-11.38%	-2.88%		-3.14%	-11.02%	-2.75%
Bluefield Wv-VA Micropolitan Area		-0.25%	-8.78%	-2.08%		0.56%	-7.97%	-1.86%

Figure 5: Population and Households in Bluefield, the 15-Minute Drivetime, and the Bluefield WV-VA Micropolitan Area, 2000-2027 (Sources: US Census, Environics Analytics)

### Age

The median age in Bluefield is 44.3, compared to 46.0 in Tazewell County and 45.0 in the Bluefield WV-VA micropolitan area. Baby Boomers (age 55-74 years old) are the largest generation in Bluefield, representing approximately 27% of the town's overall population.

### **Educational Attainment**

Approximately 22% of the population age 25 years and older in Bluefield has a bachelor's degree or higher, as compared to 15% in Tazewell County. Of the population age 25 years and older in Bluefield, 88% has at least a high school diploma.

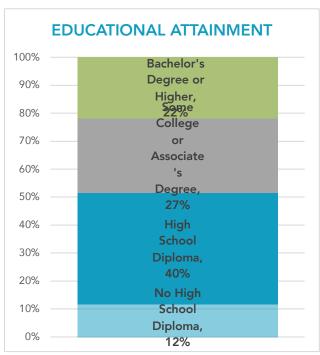


Figure 8: Educational Attainment of the Population Age 25 Years or Older in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

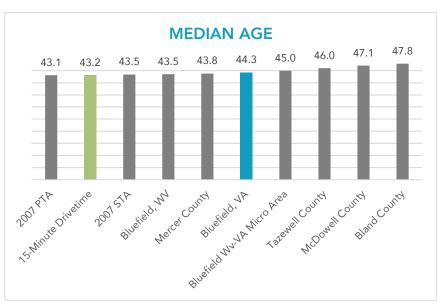


Figure 6: Median Age in Bluefield and the Region, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

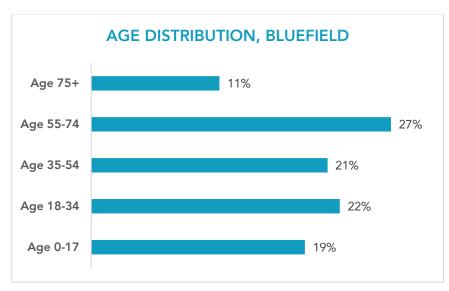


Figure 7: Age Distribution in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

### Household Income

The median household income in Bluefield is \$48,723, which is on par for the region. Approximately 17% of households in Bluefield have annual incomes of less than \$25,000 and 17% of households have annual incomes of \$100,000 or more. Poverty rates are lower in Bluefield compared to the surrounding region, with 9.3% of Bluefield families living in poverty, 12% in Tazewell County and 12.5% in the micropolitan area.

# **Demographic Findings**

Key takeaways from the demographic analysis include:

- Population declines seen across the region are also occurring in Bluefield, though to a lesser extent.
- Bluefield has an aging population, with a median age of 44.3 and Baby Boomers making up the largest percentage of the population.
- Residents of Bluefield generally have higher educational attainment than residents of the surrounding region.
- Bluefield households have slightly higher median incomes and lower poverty rates than households in the surrounding region.

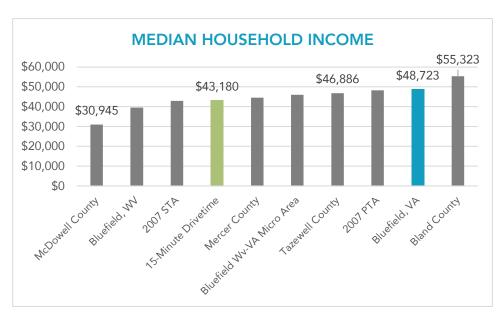


Figure 9: Median Household Income in Bluefield and Surrounding Region, 2022 (Source: Environics, Analytics)

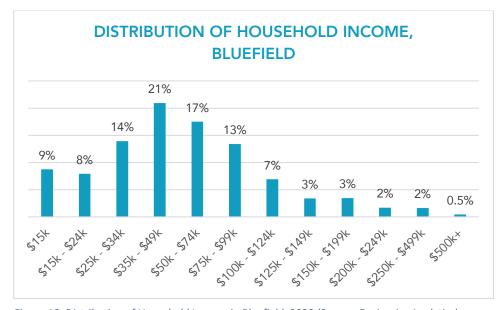


Figure 10: Distribution of Household Income in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

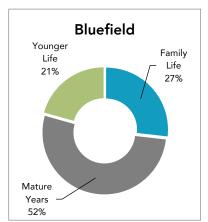
# Segmentation

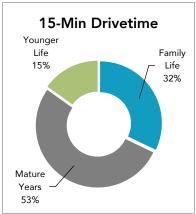
The market segmentation study examines the makeup of Bluefield's existing and target markets by analyzing the behavioral traits and consumer patterns of various "segments." The segments, as defined by the leading national market research firm Claritas, are based on demographic data including age, income, education, family structure, and urbanization.

A segmentation analysis was conducted for the town of Bluefield as well as the 15-minute drivetime and the Bluefield, WV-VA Micropolitan Area. Segmentation shows the overall makeup of the market and indicates the potential customer base for local businesses. The data is important for these businesses to understand as they look to meet the needs of the regional market as well as to target and grow underrepresented segments.

# Life Stage

The Life Stage analysis breaks down households into three classes – Younger Years, Family Life, and Mature Years. The segmentation analysis confirms findings of the demographic analysis, that Bluefield and the surrounding region have a mature population. 52% of households in Bluefield are classified as Mature Years, 27% Family Life and 21% Younger Life. The 15-minute drivetime area and micropolitan area have similar life stage breakdowns as Bluefield, but with slightly less of a percentage of Younger Life. This suggests that Bluefield may have a higher concentration of young professionals than the overall micropolitan area.





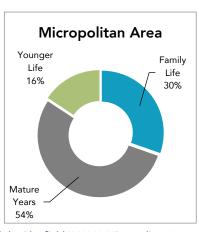


Figure 11: Life Stage Segmentation in Bluefield, the 15-minute Drivetime Area, and the Bluefield WV-VA Micropolitan Area (Source: Environics Analytics)

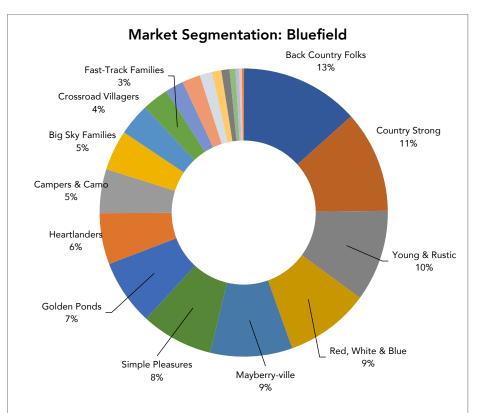
# Social Group

Social Groups are categorized by urbanization (urban, suburban, second city or town & rural) and affluence. Households in Bluefield, the 15-minute drivetime area and the micropolitan area are all classified as Town and Rural.

## **Overall Segmentation**

Claritas defines 68 unique segments. The number of segments in Bluefield, the 15-minute drivetime area and the micropolitan area are limited due to the fact that all of the households are classified as Town and Rural. However, of the 68 unique segments defined by Claritas, 21 are represented in Bluefield and 23 are represented in the 15-minute drivetime and micropolitan area. The largest segments in Bluefield include: Back Country Folks (13%), Country Strong (11%), Young & Rustic (10%), Red White & Blue (9%) and Mayberry-ville (9%).

The segments represented in Bluefield make up the immediate market, while the segments in the 15-minute drivetime area represent the expanded trade area and potential customer base. In the 15-minute drivetime, the largest segment is Gold Ponds (16%). Key segments in Bluefield and the 15-minute drivetime are described on the following page. A full description of all individual segments can be found at <a href="https://www.mybestsegments.com">www.mybestsegments.com</a>.



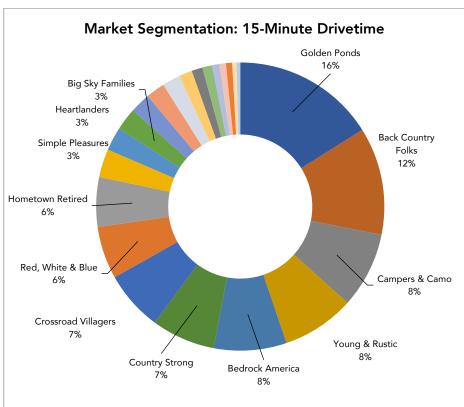


Figure 12: Overall Market Segmentation in Bluefield and the 15-Minute Drivetime Area (Source: Environics Analytics)

## 57 - Back Country Folks

#### Downscale Older Mostly w/o Kids

Strewn among remote farm communities across the nation, Back Country Folks are a long way away from economic paradise. The residents have below average incomes and live in older, modest-sized homes and manufactured housing. Typically, life in this segment is a throwback to an earlier era when farming dominated the American landscape.



# 44 - Country Strong

### Lower Midscale Middle Age Family Mix

Country Strong are lower middle-class families in rural areas that embrace their day-to-day lives. They are focused on their families and prefer hunting and country music to keeping up with the latest technology.



# 65 - Young & Rustic

### Low Income Middle Age Mostly w/o Kids

Young & Rustic is composed of restless singles and young families in the nation's rural areas. They enjoy the outdoors by hunting and fishing and also follow rodeo and bull riding, NASCAR, and monster trucks.



### 55 - Red, White & Blue

#### Low Income Middle Age Mostly w/o Kids

The residents of Red, White & Blue typically live in rural areas. Middle-aged, with high school educations and lower incomes, many of these folks are transitioning from blue-collar jobs to the service industry. In their spare time, they attend community activities and enjoy hunting and fishing in their country setting.



## 18 - Mayberry-ville

### Upscale Older Mostly w/o Kids

Like the old Andy Griffith Show set in a quaint picturesque burg, Mayberry-ville harks back to an old-fashioned way of life. In these small towns, upscale couples prefer outdoor activities like hunting and boating during the day and stay home and watch TV at night. Overall, their use of technology trails that of others at their same asset level.



#### 58 - Golden Ponds

#### Downscale Older Mostly w/o Kids

Golden Ponds is mostly a retirement lifestyle, dominated by downscale singles and couples over 55 years old. Found in small bucolic towns around the country, these high school-educated seniors live in small apartments on less than \$30,000 a year. Daily life is often a succession of sedentary activities such as reading, watching TV, playing bingo, and doing craft projects.



### 51 - Campers & Camo

#### Downscale Middle Age Family Mix

Primarily found in more rural areas, Campers & Camo families enjoy the outdoors. They enjoy outdoor activities and attending motorsports events. Despite their age, they are below average in their use of technology, but they visit WWE.com and enjoy social networking sites.



Figure 13: Segment Descriptions (Source: Claritas)

# Housing

### **Housing Type and Tenure**

Bluefield's housing stock is predominantly owner-occupied single-family housing. 73% of the housing units in Bluefield are owner-occupied and 27% are renter-occupied. 76% of the housing units are single-family detached homes, 2% are single-family attached homes such as townhouses, 12% are multifamily homes, and 10% are mobile homes or trailers.

# Age of Housing Stock

Overall, Bluefield has an older housing stock. The median year built for housing units in Bluefield is 1962. Three quarters of the housing units in town were built prior to 1980 and there has been limited new construction since 2010.

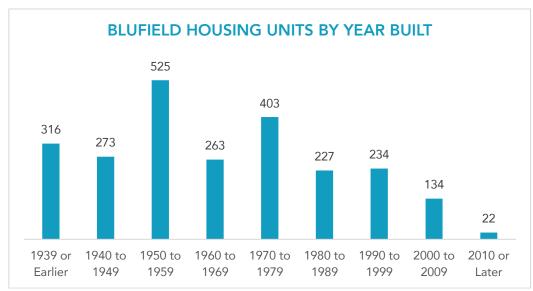


Figure 14: Housing Units by Year Built in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

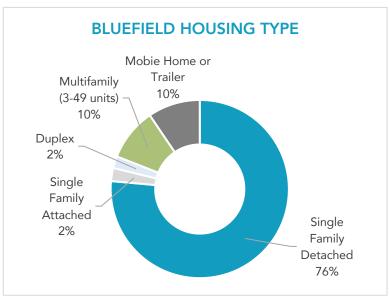


Figure 16: Housing Units by Type in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

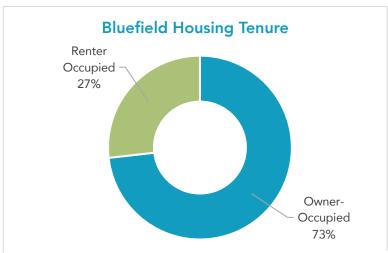


Figure 15: Housing Tenure in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

# **Housing Values**

The median value of owner-occupied housing in Bluefield is \$142,562 compared to \$129,322 in Tazewell County and \$122,864 in the micropolitan area. 30% of homes in Bluefield are valued under \$100,000, 45% of homes are valued between \$100,000 and \$200,000, and 25% are valued over \$200,000.

The Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) for the Bluefield Zip Code was \$105,898 in May of 2022, a 9.1% increase over the previous year and up from a low of \$77,000 in 2013.

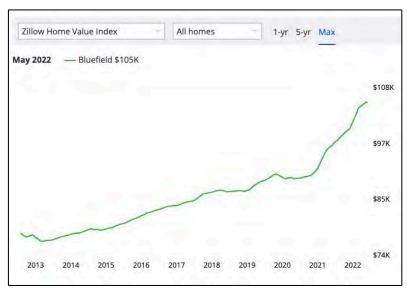


Figure 19: Zillow Home Value Index for the Bluefield Zip Code, 2013-2022 (Source: Zillow)

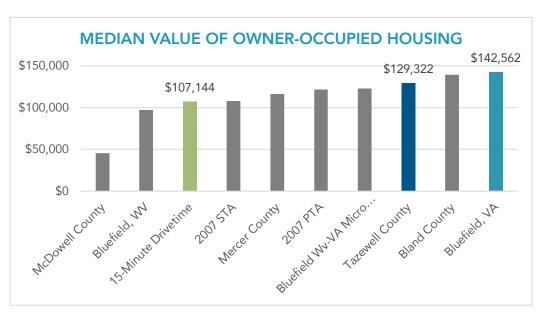


Figure 17: Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing in Bluefield and the Region, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

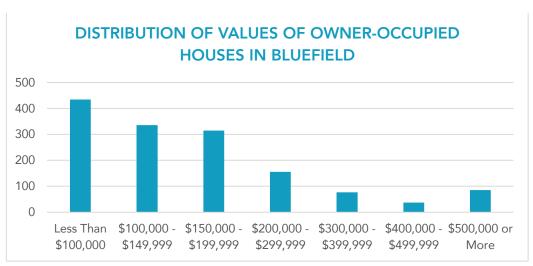


Figure 18: Distribution of Values of Owner-Occupied Housing in Bluefield, 2022 (Source: Environics Analytics)

# **Employment**

In 2019, there were approximately 2,840 jobs in Bluefield. The largest employment sectors in Bluefield are:

- Retail Trade (35%);
- Accommodations and Food Services (13%);
- Educational Services 12%); and
- Healthcare and Social Assistance (9%).

Bluefield is a net importer of jobs, meaning that more people commute into the town for work than commute out. 98% of workers employed in Bluefield commute from outside of the town.

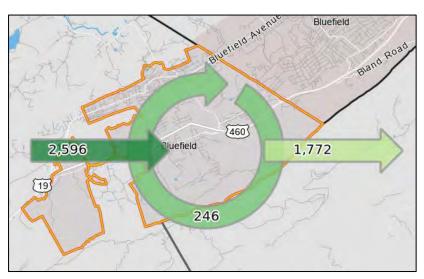


Figure 21: Inflow and Outflow of Workers To and From Bluefield, 2019 (Source: USE Census On the Map)

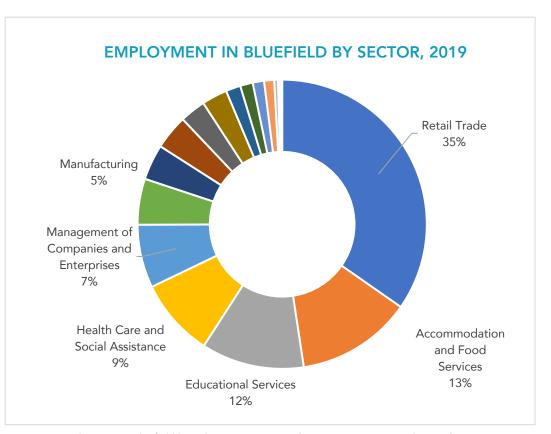


Figure 20: Employment in Bluefield by Industry Sector, 2019 (Source: US Census On the Map)

# **Retail Analysis**

# Retail Leakage

A retail analysis provides insight into the retail patterns (consumer expenditures, retail sales, and retail leakage or gain) in Bluefield and the surrounding region. "Retail Leakage" refers to the difference between the retail expenditures by residents living in a particular area and the retail sales produced by the stores located in the same area. If residents are purchasing more than the stores are selling, the dollars spent outside of the area are said to be "leaking." If stores are selling more than area residents are spending, the market area is said to be "gaining." The retail leakage analysis was performed on Bluefield, the 15-minute Drivetime Area, the primary and secondary trade areas established by a 2007 zip code survey, Tazewell County, and the Bluefield WV-VA micropolitan area.

The retail leakage analysis confirms that Bluefield and the Bluefield micropolitan area serve as a regional retail center, serving not only locals but also neighboring rural communities and visitors.

Stores in Bluefield had retail sales of \$171.9 million over the past year. During the same time period, Bluefield residents spent \$84.1 million, indicating a retail gain of \$87.8 million. Stores in the 15-minute drive time area sold \$571.5 million over the past year while residents spent \$358.7 million, resulting in retail gain of \$212.8 million. The Bluefield WV-VA micropolitan area had over \$1.9 billion in retail sales.

	Bluefield, VA	15-Minute Drivetime	2007 PTA	2007 STA	Tazewell County	Bluefield WV-VA Micropolitan Area
Retail Sales	\$171,886,954	\$571,529,016	\$265,696,188	\$533,803,232	\$881,544,510	\$1,933,075,291
Consumer Expenditures	\$84,078,793	\$358,698,590	\$164,323,899	\$446,228,916	\$678,368,666	\$1,748,843,125
Retail Leakage/ Gain	\$87,808,161 Gain	\$212,830,425 Gain	\$101,372,289 Gain	\$87,574,316 Gain	\$203,175,844 Gain	\$184,232,166 Gain

Figure 22: Retail Sales, Consumer Expenditures, and Retail Leakage/Gain in Bluefield, Trade Areas, and the Region (Source: Claritas/Environics Analytics)

# **Opportunities**

Although Bluefield and its trade areas all experience overall retail gain, a detailed look at the retail leakage analysis identifies individual categories that experienced retail leakage. This leakage translates directly to market demand, presenting opportunities for retail expansion. It is important to note that some of this demand may be accommodated within the larger region or through online sales.

Key opportunities in the 15-minute drivetime area include:

- Hardware stores (\$1.3 million in leakage)
- Pet and pet supply stores (\$1.2 million in leakage)
- Snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars (\$1 million in leakage)
- Specialty food stores (\$950k in leakage)
- Specialty retail such as gift and novelty stores, hobby stores, and children's clothing)

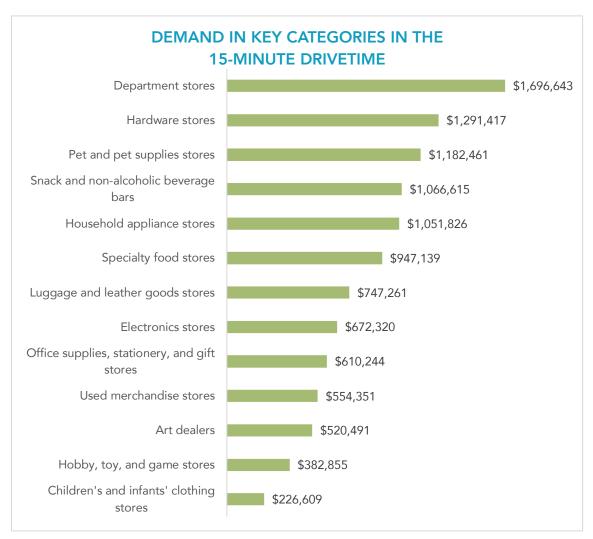


Figure 23: Retail Leakage in Select Categories in the 15-Minute Drivetime Area (Source: Environics Analytics)

### **Tourism**

Bluefield and the surrounding region draw in tourists that want to experience the area's natural beauty and stunning mountain views. The region offers outdoor recreation (ATV, hiking, cycling, etc), a unique history and heritage, museums, and cultural institutions including Bluefield University.

In 2020, tourism in Tazewell County brought in \$29.12 million in direct visitor spending and employed 394 people. Additionally, this visitor spending generated \$1.5 million in local taxes.

As shown in the chart to the right, the largest categories of visitor spending in Tazewell County were Food and Beverage (36%) and Transportation (35%).

Challenges for Bluefield when it comes to tourism, are limited lodging and competition from neighboring Bluefield, WV.

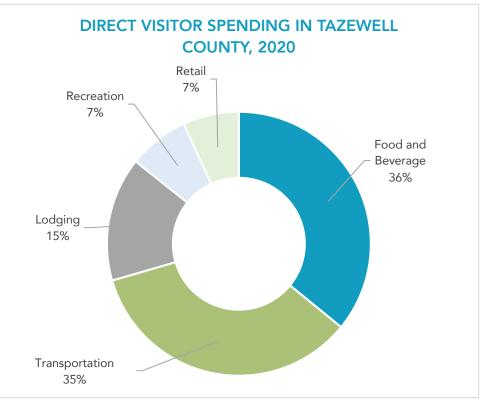


Figure 24: Direct Visitor Spending in Tazewell County, 2020 (Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation)