UNIONTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

STAUNTON VIRGINIA

Acknowledgements

A Uniontown Steering Committee met six times throughout the planning process. These meetings occurred in City Hall but offered a call-in option for those that could not attend in-person. There was no formal process for identifying membership, which consisted primarily of property owners and long-term residents. Other stakeholders and partners attended, based on the meeting agendas. The groups scope included:

- Defining goals for Uniontown,
- Overseeing the development of community actions and recommendations,
- Helping the consultant team identify and reach important stakeholders, and
- Reviewing and editing the Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan.

While there was no formal membership of the Steering Committee, all attendees were welcome to participate. The following were core members that contributed to the process.

- Cynthia Easterling
- Abraham Crawford
- Ophie Kier
- Kenneth Venable
- Amy Tillerson-Brown
- Barbara Lee
- Robert Stuart
- Cynthia Crawford
- Mabel C. Wilson
- Saint Crawford III
- Stuart Gaines
- James Crawford
- Clinton Davis
- Elaine Crawford Jordan
- Joe Crawford
- Jessica Crawford
- Latricia Crawford
- Trasonya Crawford
- Sharon Crawford
- Nathaniel Burress
- John Stuart
- Torri Wilson
- Millicent Stuart
- Edward Jordan
- Carolyn Wallace
- Claudia Gaines
- Zach Lewis
- Julius Jones

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the eastern portion of Staunton, Virginia, the Uniontown neighborhood lies hidden behind the commercial properties along Richmond Avenue (US 250). Most locals are unaware of its story, encompassing over 150 years of African American history in the Shenandoah Valley. The community was once a thriving place for families that found support in times of great struggle. However, numerous factors contributed to its long, steady decline. Today, the current version of Uniontown is the product of decades of disinvestment, mismatched land use regulations, and other variables that created its current condition.

In recent years, the City of Staunton began to refocus on Uniontown, listing it as one of its priority areas. Using ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding, City Council commissioned this Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan process in 2022. The City, working with consultants from EPR, P.C., partnered with a Steering Committee of residents and property owners to create this document and its 19 recommended actions. This effort was the first holistic planning process for the neighborhood. The plan details community goals and specific actions that are Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). The Uniontown Steering Committee guided this community-driven process, and:

- Guided the overall planning process,
- Organized a dialogue with neighborhood residents and property owners,
- Developed community goals and actions, and
- Reviewed planning materials.

The study area encompasses approximately 80 acres, north of Richmond Avenue. Rather than being a forgotten neighborhood hidden behind Richmond Avenue's commercial strip, this plan envisions a renewed Uniontown that will help set a new example for this eastern entrance corridor into the City of Staunton.

The Community's vision, goals, actions include the following:

Vision: Create a thriving and resilient Uniontown that embodies its historic sense of community, provides families with a healthy place to call home, and honors its proud past.

Goal A. Reinvestment: Pursue efforts to spur public and private reinvestments that help Uniontown thrive and grow while preserving its past.

- Action A.1: Extend water and sewer infrastructure into Uniontown.
- Action A.2: Improve the internal roadway network conditions and provide streetlights.
- Action A.3: Develop a property owner education program to inform Uniontown's owners of their rights and opportunities.
- Action A.4: Survey lots to improve property boundaries and records.

Goal B. Sense of Community: Reintroduce Uniontown's sense of community, where residents can raise a family and be part of a meaningful place.

- Action B.1: Update the Zoning Map to Reflect Uniontown's Vision for single-family residential.
- Action B.2: Partner with Housing Groups to construct new, quality, affordable homes on existing lots that are comparable in size and scale to what existed previously.
- Action B.3: Evaluate the condition of remaining vacant structures to determine what can be repaired and what might need to be removed.
- Action B.4: Organize Regular Community Clean-Up Events and Beautification Efforts.
- Action B.5: Preserve natural habitats to maintain the rural feel.

Goal C. Preservation: Document, promote, and effectively communicate Uniontown's history to foster community pride and preserve the neighborhood's remaining historic resources.

- Action C.1: Re-establish access to the Uniontown Chapel Cemetery.
- Action C.2: Develop a Pamphlet (or similar promotional material) to Communicate Uniontown's History.
- Action C.3: Create an Online Presence that Documents Uniontown's History.
- Action C.4: Install Historical Markers and Plaques that Communicate Uniontown's History and the Stories of its People.
- Action C.5: Ensure every school library has a copy of "Old Uniontown Glances Backwards" and other books/references that document local history.

Goal D. Reestablished Connections: Reestablish Uniontown's physical connections within the neighborhood and the Richmond Avenue Corridor, connecting to reinvestment in the larger area.

- Action D.1: Examine Options at the former National Avenue Bridge Site.
- Action D.2: Examine Gateway Treatments on National Avenue that Makes Uniontown Visible from Richmond Road.
- Action D.3: Update the City of Staunton's Comprehensive Plan to Show Uniontown as an Essential part of the Richmond Road Corridor.
- Action D.4: Redesign Uniontown's Commercial Properties on Richmond Road to Reflect the Neighborhood.

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Staunton, working with consultants from EPR, P.C., partnered with a Steering Committee of residents and property owners to create a Neighborhood Action Plan for the historic community of Uniontown. This effort was the first holistic planning process for the neighborhood, whose recorded past began soon after the Civil War. The plan details community goals and specific actions that are Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). The Uniontown Steering Committee guided this community-driven process, and:

- Guided the overall planning process,
- Organized a dialogue with neighborhood residents and property owners,
- Developed community goals and actions, and
- Reviewed planning materials.

Purpose

The Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan aims to set a clear vision and path forward for this historic community. A core objective was to create consensus among residents, property owners, and local officials. This document should serve as an achievable list of actions that will accomplish neighborhood goals, highlight Uniontown's historic significance, and help strengthen Staunton one neighborhood at a time.

During the planning process, participants defined four main community goals. These statements guided the development of various actions listed under **Section 9**. Goals include:

- Reinvestment: Pursue efforts to spur public and private reinvestments that help Uniontown thrive and grow while preserving its past.
- Sense of Community: Reintroduce Uniontown's sense of community, where residents can raise a family and be part of a meaningful place.
- Preservation: Document, promote, and effectively communicate Uniontown's history to foster community pride and preserve the neighborhood's remaining historic resources.
- Reestablished Connections: Reestablish Uniontown's physical connections within the neighborhood and the Richmond Avenue Corridor, connecting to reinvestment in the larger area.

History Call Out

Staunton National Cemetery initially attracted African Americans to this location after the Civil War. An 1880 news article by the Staunton News Leader described a march, which functioned as a pilgrimage by local African Americans to the National Cemetery to honor those who fought and died for the Union cause.

Location and Context

The Uniontown Neighborhood is an approximately 80-acre area in the City of Staunton's east end, along the Richmond Avenue (US 250) corridor. Most City and Shenandoah Valley residents are unaware of Uniontown or its historical significance, especially because a strip of commercial property shields the

neighborhood from the main thoroughfare. Rather than being a forgotten neighborhood hidden behind Richmond Avenue's commercial strip, this plan envisions a renewed Uniontown that will help set a new example for this eastern entrance corridor into the City of Staunton.

Uniontown Study Area Boundaries

The Uniontown community never had official borders because it was never incorporated. However, historical records hint to how residents identified the neighborhood's limits. Staunton National Cemetery initially attracted African Americans to this location after the Civil War. An 1880 news article by the Staunton News Leader described a march, which functioned as a pilgrimage by local African Americans to the National Cemetery to honor those who fought and died for the Union cause. The old Smart and Byers tracts, south of the existing railroad, continually served as the core of Uniontown. Betsey Bell Mountain, just south of the existing Richmond Avenue (US 250) was the traditional southern limit to the neighborhood. North of the railroad track, built in 1854, Uniontown included the Union Church, named after a union of two congregations, that had to share the building. While the church building burned sometime between 1912 and 1915, the cemetery remains but is overgrown. The northern portion of Uniontown also included a school, near the intersection of Anthony Street and National Avenue.

Today, there are practical boundaries to Uniontown. The area between Richmond Avenue and Betsey Bell Mountain is narrow and built out. Land east of Staunton National Cemetery is commercial, including a car dealership and big box grocer. North of the railroad tracks, once called "the cut," a rock quarry and associated operation sets a clear edge. A scrap yard further defines a clear northern boundary. A mini storage may have once been part of Uniontown but is no longer associated with the neighborhood. To the west, Statler Boulevard and Valley Building Supply close the loop that defines Uniontown for the purposes of this plan.

Planning Process

This community-driven process officially began in February 2023. City staff and its consultants spent the next month recruiting a Steering Committee of residents, property owners, and

Uniontown Study Area

interested stakeholders. This group held its initial meeting in March 2023 and guided the process, which concluded in August 2023.

Uniontown Steering Committee

The Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan was a community-driven process led by various residents, property owners, and other interested stakeholders. Several members represented historic Uniontown families, like the Crawford and Gaines family trees. Attendance steadily increased as the planning effort progressed. Later in the process, over 30 people participated in person or virtually. The group met six times between late March and July 2023. Refer to **Appendix A** for the Committee's makeup and meeting schedule.

April 29 Building Bridges Event

Members of the Steering Committee, including Ophie Kier and Barbara Lee, manage a separate organization, called "Building Bridges for the Greater Good." This group is "an anti-racist organization working to dismantle racism and all forms of oppression through education, dialogue, and action to make our community more inclusive and equitable." On April 29, they held a public event at Booker T Washington Community Center to honor Uniontown's past, a significant piece of the Shenandoah Valley's African American story. At this event, past and present residents told their stories about the neighborhood and helped raise awareness of personal stories, discrimination, and ideas about the future. EPR staff were present to raise awareness of the planning effort, promote a public survey, and gather feedback from participants.

Uniontown Survey

At the Building Bridges event, the City's consultants distributed a community survey that identified concerns, vetted goal statements, and asked for specific ideas for moving Uniontown forward. Hardcopy surveys were on-site, and a QR code helped participants access an online version. In addition, consultants mailed hard copies to all property owners and residents within the project study area. The mailing included a link to the City's website, which included the online version. The survey was open from April 29, 2023 – May 31, 2023. Refer to **Appendix B** for a full report of survey results.

Adoption

The City Council reviewed the plan at its August 2023 meeting, capping off an intensive seven-month schedule.

BACKGROUND

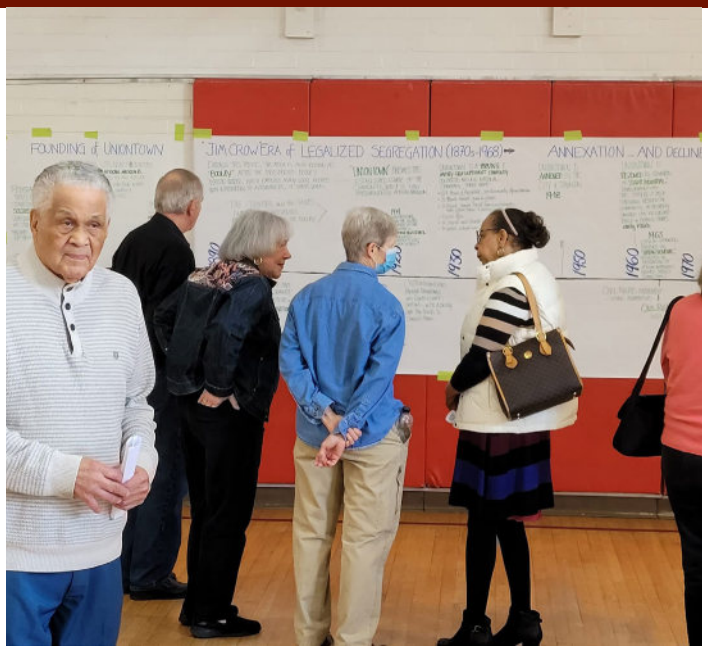
Uniontown's recorded history began shortly after the Civil War, when African Americans began to settle in this location to be near the National Cemetery, called the Yankee Cemetery by some at the time. This sacred site commemorates fallen soldiers that fought for the Union cause. At its height, Uniontown was a self-sufficient community with more than 60 homes. It included interconnected roads, two stores, a church, neighborhood cemetery, a school, and several industries. Dr. Julius Gaines, Jr., who grew up in Uniontown, recorded its early history in his publication, **Old Uniontown – Glances Backwards: Commentary and Oral History Through 1920**. While Dr. Gaines passed away since this 2005 publication, his work remains as the primary historical source for this neighborhood. The following timeline reflects his research and accounts. This process aims to honor his work. The following also pulls from the Building Bridges event, which occurred on April 29, 2023.

Uniontown Timeline

Uniontown's story spans over 150 years and is an essential part of the Shenandoah Valley's African American history.

1854: The Railroad Cut

Before the Civil War, builders cut a railroad line through the area. It would be the Virginia Central Railway, then the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway (C&O) by the 1880s, and later part of the CSX system. On the eastern part of what would become Uniontown, the rail created a 100-foot-wide ravine, called "the cut." The arrival of the railroad (and the telegraph) transformed Staunton into a center of communication and commerce, making it a vital transportation crossroads and Confederate headquarters for many generals during the Civil War.



1864: Union Occupation in Staunton

On June 6, 1864, Union general David Hunter occupied Staunton for four days, destroying much of the town by setting fire to warehouses, mills, factories, workshops, stores, houses, and the railroad depot. Confederate soldiers were told to evacuate less than three months later by Confederate general Jubal A. Early, who was being forced from the Valley and could not come to its defense. Union General Alfred Torbet and his troops occupied Staunton again in September 1864. Union General Philip Sheridan and his men drove Confederate generals Fitzhugh Lee and Jubal Early out of their Staunton headquarters in March 1865.

1868: National Cemetery

The federal government designated land approximately one mile east of Staunton for a National Cemetery, to commemorate Union soldiers that died during the Civil War. African Americans in Staunton and Augusta County would soon revere the site and take marches to this symbol of freedom and sacrifice.

1870: Settlement

According to Amy Tillerson-Brown, the Black fore-parents of Uniontown established their homes near the "Union" cemetery partly as a form of resistance to the Confederate cause of the war and because this was a place where land ownership was an option. The budding community consisted of two primary properties, platted by land developers Smart and Byers, which they subdivided and sold to African Americans. The plat depicted streets and properties present today. This would later become Uniontown's central core, with the highest density of homes.

In 1872, the federal government completed work on the stone wall that still surrounds the Staunton National Cemetery. This wall would become a major landmark in the community and would be the backdrop to countless family portraits.

1880: March to the Cemetery

Just as African Americans started to settle into the Smart and Byers plats, the Staunton News Leader printed a story about local African Americans marching from Staunton to the National Cemetery. This was a one-mile pilgrimage to commemorate their freedom and those that died for it. This march highlights the cultural importance of the cemetery and area that would later become Uniontown. It was part of the larger African American consciousness and an honored site of pilgrimage.

Circa 1906: The State Convict Camp

In the early 1900s, there was a State Convict Camp somewhere north of the railway, within the Uniontown area. The camp site would later become the quarry, now called Rockydale – Staunton Lime and Belmont Quarry. The limestone operation started early in Uniontown's history.

Circa 1910 to 1914: The Name Change to Uniontown

People initially called this area Bodley, after a store in this vicinity. However, people started referring to the community as Uniontown sometime before World War I. No one knows for sure how the name came to be. It may have originated from the Union Cemetery, which African Americans so revered. However, the name could have arisen from the neighborhood church, called Union Church, because two

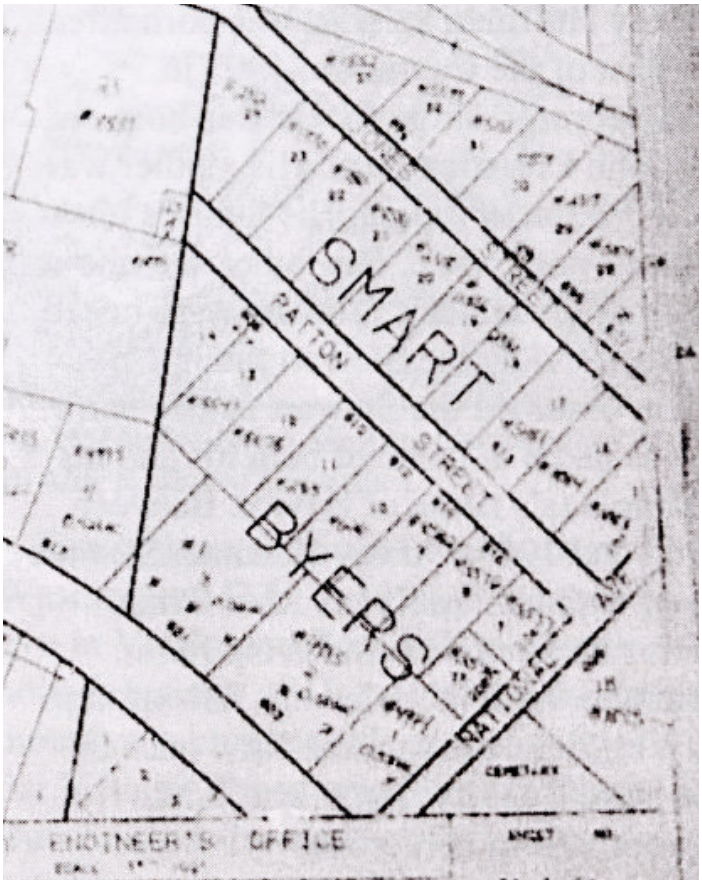
denominations had to share the same building. While the area had white and African American residents, the neighborhood shifted to predominately African American around this time.

Circa 1912 to 1915: Union Church Burns Down

Dr. Julius Gaines, Jr. indicated that the Union Church burned down sometime before World War I. However, the neighborhood cemetery continued until the 1940s. The neighborhood cemetery would be the final resting place for Uniontown's residents. The site is now overgrown.

Circa 1920: A Community Arises

In the 1920s, there were at least 64 households, clustered mostly on the Smart and Byers plats, in Uniontown. There were local stores at the rail crossings. The neighborhood was a true community with prosperous homes.



1948: The Annexation of Uniontown

The City of Staunton slowly expanded its municipal boundaries outward. Its biggest annexation occurred in 1905, growing Staunton into a circular shape. In 1948, the city made its first significant annexation, widening its borders in all directions, including Uniontown. This small Augusta County village was now incorporated into a larger city and subject to new land use laws and local policies. A northern portion of Uniontown would remain in Augusta County until 1986.

1960s: The Rezoning to Industrial

In the 1960s, Staunton worked with out-of-town consultants to update the City's zoning map, which depicts zoning districts that regulate land use. Seeing the Richmond Avenue corridor as a commercial and industrial corridor, the city adopted industrial zoning for the Uniontown area. The industrial designation prohibited new residential construction and limited renovations to existing homes. This lack of residential zoning contributed to the slow but steady decline of Uniontown ending with the current dilapidated condition.

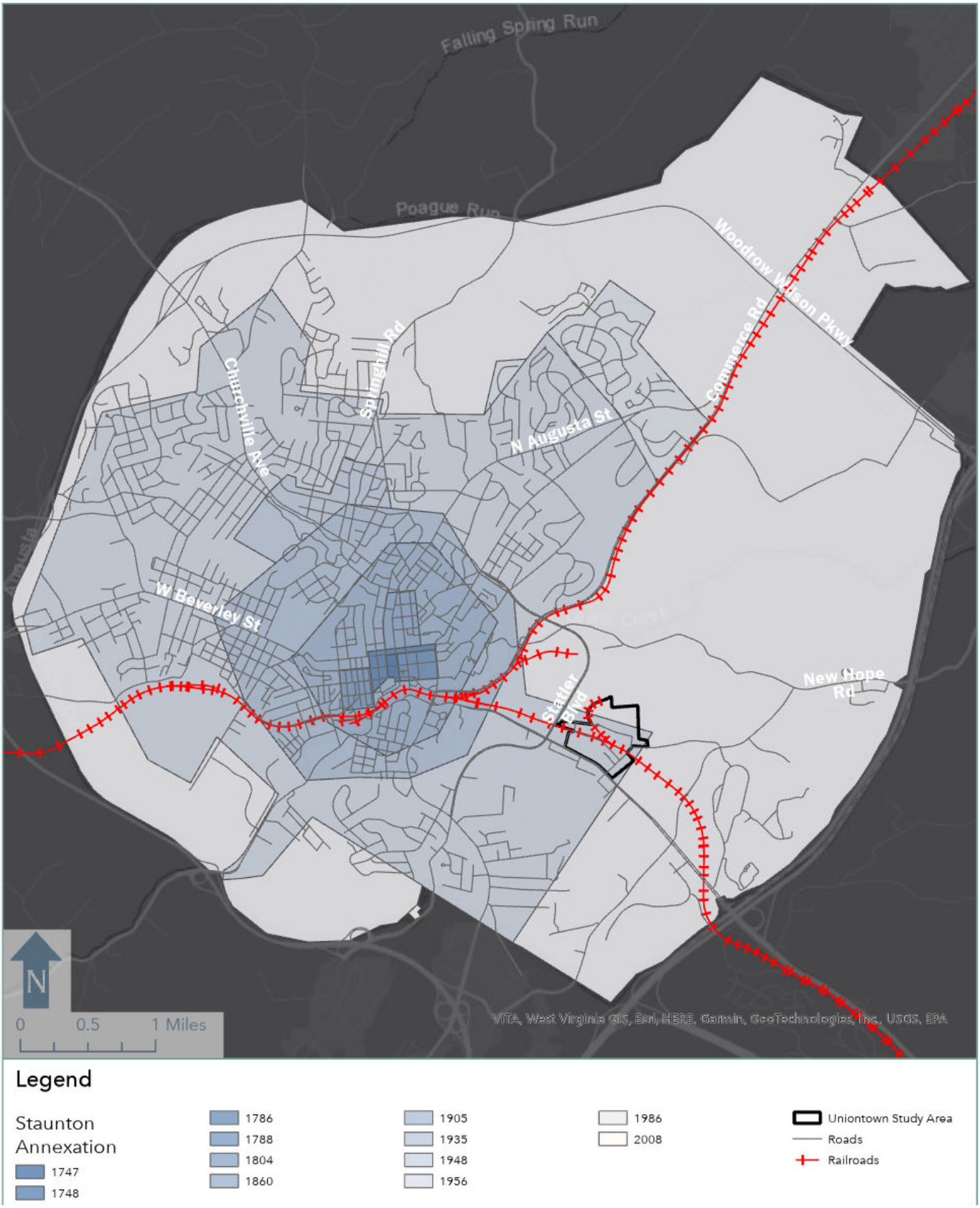
1986: The Second Annexation of Uniontown

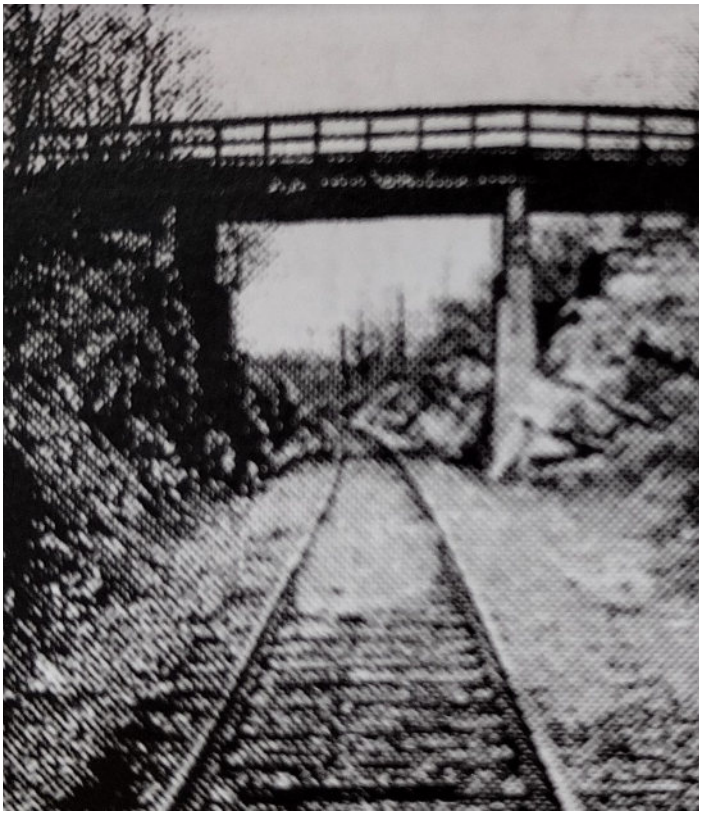
Nearly forty years after the initial annexation of Uniontown, Staunton adopted another massive expansion, which primarily affected the City's northern and eastern borders. The north portion of Uniontown that had remained in Augusta County would be included in Staunton's municipal boundaries.

2001: The Bridge Came Down

The National Avenue bridge had spanned "the cut" over the railroad since the late 1800s, until its removal in 2001. While there were discussions about converting the structure into a pedestrian bridge, those plans never came to fruition. Many residents in the community saw this event as the final death nail, as the railroad suddenly became a physical barrier through

Staunton Annexation





the neighborhood's center. Without the bridge, the neighborhood's decline continued or even accelerated.

Additional Research

This Neighborhood Plan recommends more research and analysis into Uniontown's history to bring greater context to Uniontown's future. Refer to Part 9 and the actions under Goal C.

National Avenue Bridge

During the Neighborhood Planning work, the Uniontown community frequently discussed the National Avenue Bridge, its importance, and how its absence physically divided the neighborhood. In addition, Department of Public Works staff expressed the challenges of providing water service once the bridge came down (a water pipe was previously attached to the bridge to provide circulation of the water system). For additional information, City staff pulled records to document the issue. The following is a brief timeline of events leading up to the bridge demolition.

- CSX Railway owned the National Avenue Bridge at the time of demolition.
- Staff found a reference to a 1942 letter that discussed a maintenance agreement between C&O (now CSX) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). City staff could not locate the letter but could assume that the bridge was likely reconstructed about that time (1942).
- CSX first paved the bridge in 1979 to respond to a City complaint.
- In 1983, CSX documented structural problems. They temporarily closed the bridge for repairs, and then applied a 7-ton weight limit. CSX's position was that they would only maintain the bridge up to that threshold, rather than construct a more robust bridge.
- After setting the new weight limit, police had difficulties with enforcement, which would have required 24/7 surveillance. CSX requested that new truck routes be established to eliminate overloaded vehicles from using the bridge.
- There were documented concerns about school buses using the bridge. Another apparent concern involved the intersection at National and Richmond Avenues. There were higher counts of traffic accidents and

no means of addressing the issue because of the lack of right-of-way at the National Cemetery.

- In 1993, a VDOT report described the structure as “a 1-lane substandard bridge over railroad”. The City and VDOT conducted discussions that year about potential options to replace the bridge, including two alternate locations.
- The City and VDOT selected an alternative location for a new bridge at Frontier Drive. Part of this decision involved geometric issues, as a new vehicular bridge (built to modern standards) at National Avenue would likely require the condemnation of private properties and impacts at the Richmond Avenue intersection.

Past Efforts and Resources that Reference Uniontown

While there had been various community discussions related to Uniontown, this Neighborhood Action Plan is the first comprehensive effort to assess and plan the community’s future. However, this process draws from past efforts, including the Dr. Julius Gaines, Jr. book. Members of the Uniontown Steering Committee referenced other past efforts but there were no known records or documentation.

Past efforts included:

- 2021: Uniontown Water and Sewer Extension Study
- 2015: Uniontown Cultural Landscape Report – This effort included a community tour. The Neighborhood Action Plan includes photos, historic sites, and other information that arose from that dialogue. However, documentation from 2015 was limited.
- 2005: The Dr. Julius W. Gaines, Jr. Publication – The Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan draws heavily from this publication.

GENERAL SITE CONDITIONS

Site conditions influenced Uniontown's development and continue to affect its options for moving beyond decades of disinvestment. First, topography fundamentally shapes Uniontown's identity and opportunities for redevelopment. The railroad line is part of this landscape and is a permanent fixture that physically divides the community. There are three cemeteries that are critical cultural considerations. Historic resources are also essential to Uniontown's identity and its story.

Topography

On the south side of Uniontown, the highest point is along Richmond Avenue, as the topography slopes up to Betsy Bell Hill and Wilderness Park, located across US 250. Elevation decreases towards the rail line – hiding Uniontown from the main thoroughfare. On the northside, topography slopes up again. The eastern end of Anthony Street and the Crawford house are high points in this area. These elevations create a V cross section, with the rail at the bottom point. For the proposed sewer improvements, this topography would present challenges to gravity flow systems. Refer to Action A.1, in **Part 9**. The lowest elevations on the west end of the study area, at the end of Summerson Row.

Buckingham Branch Railroad

This rail line functions as a boundary in Uniontown, physically dividing the neighborhood in half. It also limits development potential, restricting the space allowable for new construction. CSX owned the National Avenue Bridge and demolished it, due to structural issues that threatened safety to rail traffic. Newer standards require 23 feet of clearance above the rail, which would require any new bridge to be constructed higher than the old structure. This requirement makes a vehicular span at this site unlikely, as it would result in condemnation of several properties to meet the properties elevation.

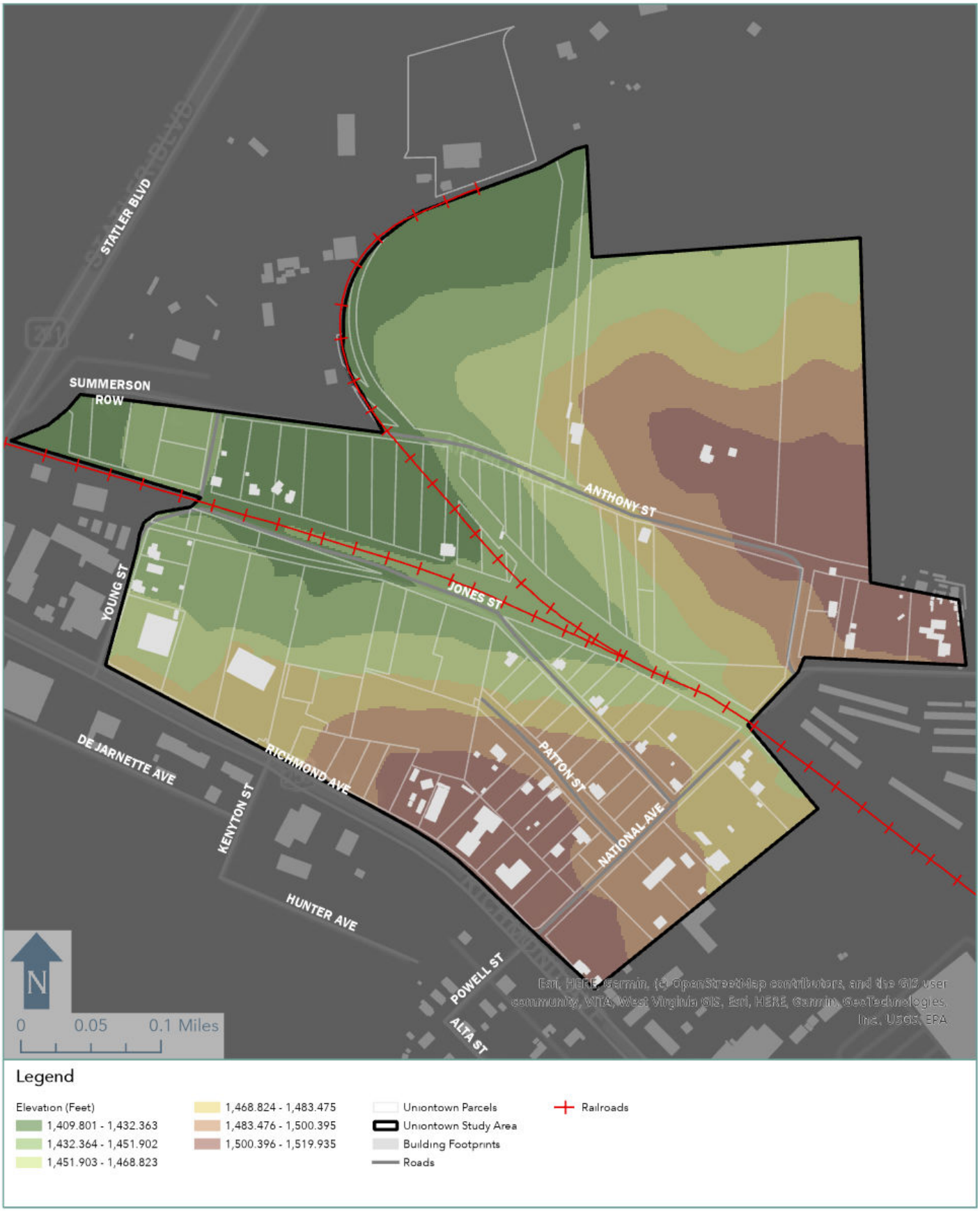
This rail segment is one of nine "shortline" (Class III) tracks crisscrossing Virginia. Its technical name is the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, now owned and operated by Buckingham Branch. The Virginia Statewide Rail Plan states that "shortline railroads are local railroads that primarily engage in freight haulage or line haul services or terminal switching services. The shortline railroads in Virginia typically operate on lines once owned and operated by the Class I railroads; when the Class I railroads decided to discontinue service on the line, the shortline railroad assumed ownership and/or operation of the route." Trains on this line carry freight, including corn, soybeans, fertilizers, propane, food and beverage products, industrial commodities, and other goods. Amtrak and CSX have rights to use the line. To the east, it connects with Waynesboro, Charlottesville, and the Town of Gordonsville. To the west, it curves south and eventually connects with Clifton Forge.

There is a rail spur on the northern side that accesses the limestone operation. Buckingham Branch owns this line, which traverses less than half a mile. This spur creates additional challenges with redevelopment on the northern side of Uniontown.

Cemeteries

There are three cemeteries in the Uniontown area that are permanent fixtures. The Staunton National Cemetery is the most visible, at the corner of Richmond and National Avenue. It is the resting place for nearly 1,000 Union veterans from the American Civil War. Many of these buried soldiers died in 1862 during General "Stonewall" Jackson's Valley Campaign. In the post-war era, the federal government established this national cemetery in 1866. As stated, local African Americans revered the site and moved to this area, forming what we call Uniontown.

Elevation in Uniontown



Virginia Shortline Railways

Less well-known is the Uniontown Neighborhood Cemetery. It was once part of a 100-acre farm, purchased by Catherine Crawford sometime after the Civil War. The Crawford family recorded a one-acre property for the Union Chapel. This small lot was the neighborhood's cemetery and is the final resting place for many Uniontown residents and family members. Unfortunately, residents identified burial sites with impermanent markers due to a lack of resources. The cemetery is now within a larger property owned by the quarry. Long-time residents report that there was an access road to the cemetery, but debris from the quarry now blocks the path. The cemetery is overgrown, and maintenance is difficult with no way to access it. There are no records of the exact number of people buried on this site. Refer to **Part 9**, action C.1.

There is also a smallpox burial ground somewhere in the study area. This site was the final resting place for soldiers that contracted and died from smallpox. This plan does not document the exact location of this site.

Historic Resources

History is an essential part of Uniontown's identity. It was one of the Steering Committee's focus areas and one of the four community goals. In addition to the background information in Part 2, the following map documents historic resources, including old family homes of long-time residents. These records can feed into the historic markers action (C.4), located in **Part 9**.

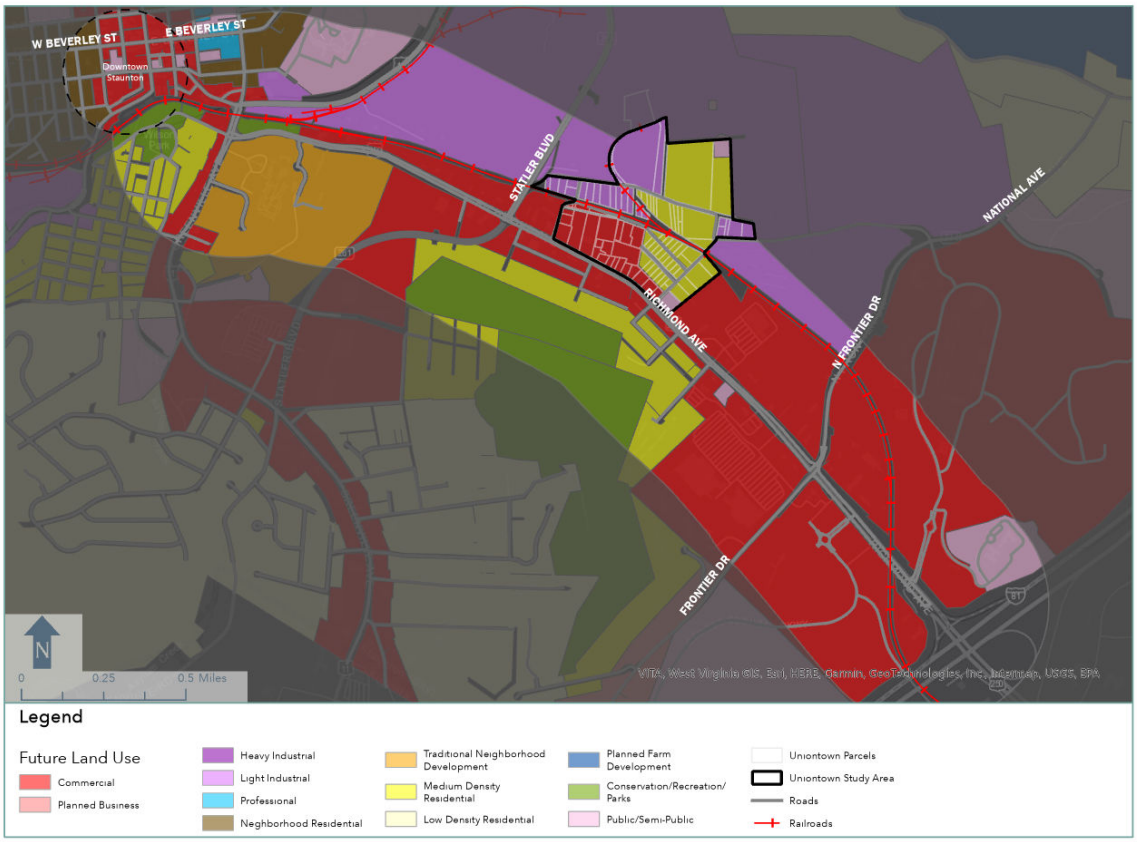
Historic Sites in Uniontown

Key:

1. National Cemetery
2. The former National Avenue Bridge (demolished)
3. The former Uniontown School
4. The Uniontown Neighborhood Cemetery
5. Saint A. Crawford House
6. Robert Brown House
7. Charley Jackson House
8. Edgar Dyer House
9. Rose Argenbright House
10. Watson Stuart House (demolished)
11. Robert H. Gaines House
12. John Gundy House
13. Paul Marshall Store (demolished)
14. Bodley Wagon Works
15. Walter Smith House
16. S.A. Crawford Store
17. Uniontown Community Well
18. Higgs and Young Barrel Factory (demolished)
19. James A. Gaines Truck Farm (demolished)
20. R. H. Gaines Store (demolished)

LAND USE

Richmond Ave Future Land Use



Land use is a core consideration in neighborhood plans, as the use of land defines how the community looks and functions. It also constitutes a central function of local government because jurisdictions set growth policies in their comprehensive plans and adopt land development codes, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances. The following also considers existing uses within and around the Uniontown neighborhood as a baseline.

Neighborhood Context

Along the Richmond Avenue corridor, the Uniontown neighborhood is the approximate midpoint between Interstate 81 and downtown Staunton. Uses adjacent to this principal arterial consists mostly of strip commercial businesses, such as chain restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, banks, small retailers, big box retailers, a self-storage, and hotels by the interstate exit. There is also an agricultural industry on the eastern end of the corridor, behind the August Co-op Bureau. There is precedent for residential, but that is mostly limited to the southern side of US 250, east of Betsy Bell Hill. This area consists of multiple family developments – Big Sky Apartments, Frontier Ridge Apartments, and Clarion Pointe.

Limiting Factors

Several factors restricted past development in this area. On the south side of Richmond Avenue, Betsy Bell Hill is an imposing topographical feature allowing only about 700 feet of developable space from the road. Further east, a former institutional use (DeJarnette Sanitarium) dominated large land tracts. Consequently, the most intensive development is between the old Sanitarium and Betsey Bell Hill. On the north

Other Plans

In 2009, the region commissioned a "Richmond Road Multimodal Corridor Study" in cooperation with Augusta County, the City of Staunton, and VDOT. This effort focused on transportation recommendations for Richmond Avenue, along with context-sensitive design guidelines. However, the 2008 recession limited growth over the ensuing years. In March 2019, consultants submitted updated corridor alternatives and recommendations for the areas closest to the interstate.

In 2018, the City adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which outlined proposed bicycle and pedestrian recommendations within the City. Near Uniontown, that plan envisioned sidewalks and a shared-use path along Richmond Avenue.

Existing Land Uses

The Uniontown study area is approximately 80 acres, consisting of mostly vacant land, accounting for over 50 properties. There are approximately twenty dwelling units, predominately single-family detached homes. Most of those houses are on the southern side of the railroad line, around Patton Street and National Avenue. There are five properties with commercial uses along Richmond Avenue. Those operations include a military recruiting station, a fuel station, a pawn shop, a chain restaurant, and an auto parts store. In the southeastern corner, the Staunton National Cemetery remains a landmark. Within the study area, there are properties with single-family homes that may be offices or storage for industrial operators, shown in purple.

Immediately adjacent to the study area, there are intensive industrial uses. To the north, there is a limestone operation, the rock quarry, a scrap yard, and a ministorage. While not within study boundaries, these uses significantly affect those northern properties and limit development potential in those areas.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map reflects the community's desires for the City's future development pattern. Within the study area, the parcels fronting Richmond Avenue are envisioned as commercial, while the areas along Jones Street, Patton Street, and National Avenue are Medium Density Planned Residential. North of the railroad tracks and along Anthony Street and National Avenue, the City envisions a mix of residential and light-industrial uses. There are two parcels identified as Public/Semi–Public – National Cemetery and a smaller square located on the north side, thought to represent a historic neighborhood cemetery within Uniontown.

Below is a description of the Future Land Use Categories from the 2019 Comprehensive Plan:

Medium Density Planned Residential:

This category is designated for the planned development of multi-family uses. These uses would include two-family (duplex) dwellings and single-family attached dwellings (townhouses and condominiums).

Business:

Commercial uses include retail, wholesale, or service functions. These areas are found along the major travel corridors, in the Central Business District of the City, and in neighborhood-commercial service areas.

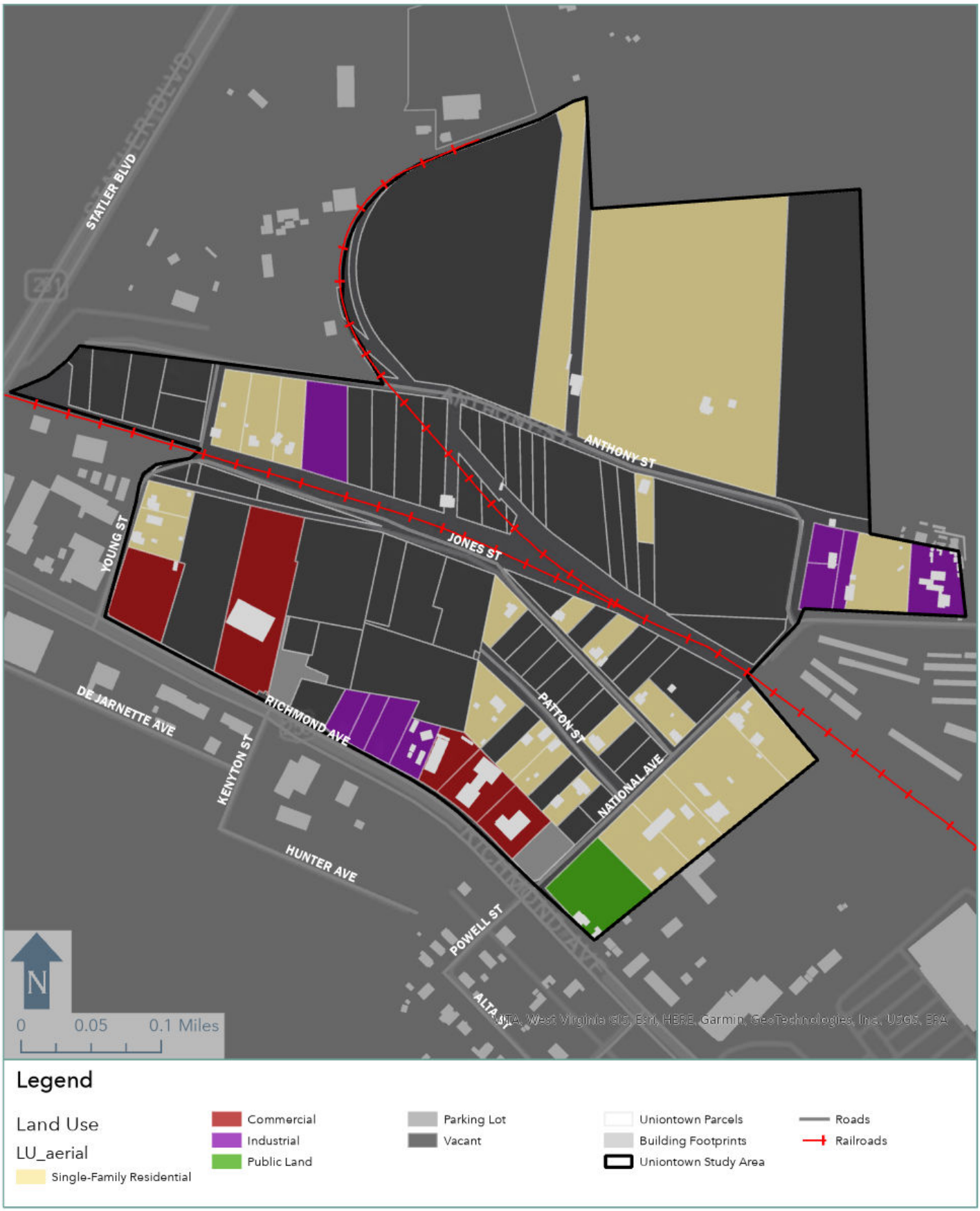
Light Industrial:

These areas include land and structures used for light manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, and other suitable uses where the use and its operation do not adversely affect adjacent uses.

Public/Semi-Public:

These lands include educational uses and lands owned or leased by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Federal government, the City of Staunton, other governmental organizations, and private educational institutions.

Land Use in Uniontown



Zoning

The comprehensive plan sets City policies, the zoning ordinance represents local land use laws. Under the current code, Uniontown is zoned primarily for industrial and commercial districts. Heavy Industrial is the study area's main zoning district (shown in light blue), while the parcels with frontage along Richmond Avenue and Young Street are zoned as commercial (shown in red). There are also some light industrial parcels along National Avenue and Patton Street. One lot is zoned as Low-Density Residential R-2. The City rezoned this lot at the property owners request in January 2016.

During the Uniontown Steering Committee meetings, the study team presented the allowed uses under the current laws, and participants expressed concern about the industrial districts, especially the I-2 Heavy Industrial zoning. Conversely, the Steering Committee expressed their support for residential zoning and requested that it apply to most properties. Below is a summary of each district depicted in the zoning map.

B-2: General Business District

The City Code lists the B-2 district under section 18.60.010. These districts are composed of land and structures that furnish a broader range of retail goods and services to satisfy all household and personal needs of residents of a group or community of neighborhoods. Usually located on a thoroughfare or near the intersection of two thoroughfares, these districts are large and are within convenient driving distance of the group of neighborhoods they will serve. The district regulations are designed to permit the development of the districts for their purpose in an open, spacious arrangement by requiring certain minimum yard and area standards to be met, standards that are comparable to those called for in residence districts. To protect the abutting and surrounding residential areas, certain restrictions are placed on uses. It is intended that additional general business districts will be created in accordance with the amendment procedure set forth herein, as they are needed to serve groups of new neighborhoods. Allowable uses include:

- Retail Commercial,
- Commercial Services,
- Restaurants, and
- Similar operations

Refer to Code Section 18.60.020 "Uses permitted."

I-1: Light Industrial District

The Code states that these districts are composed of land and structures used for light manufacturing or wholesaling or suitable for such uses, where the use and its operation do not directly adversely affect nearby residential and business uses. These districts are usually separated from residential areas by business areas or by natural barriers. The district regulations allow a wide range of industrial activities subject to limitations designed to protect nearby residential and business districts. The Steering Committee expressed concerns about allowable uses, which include:

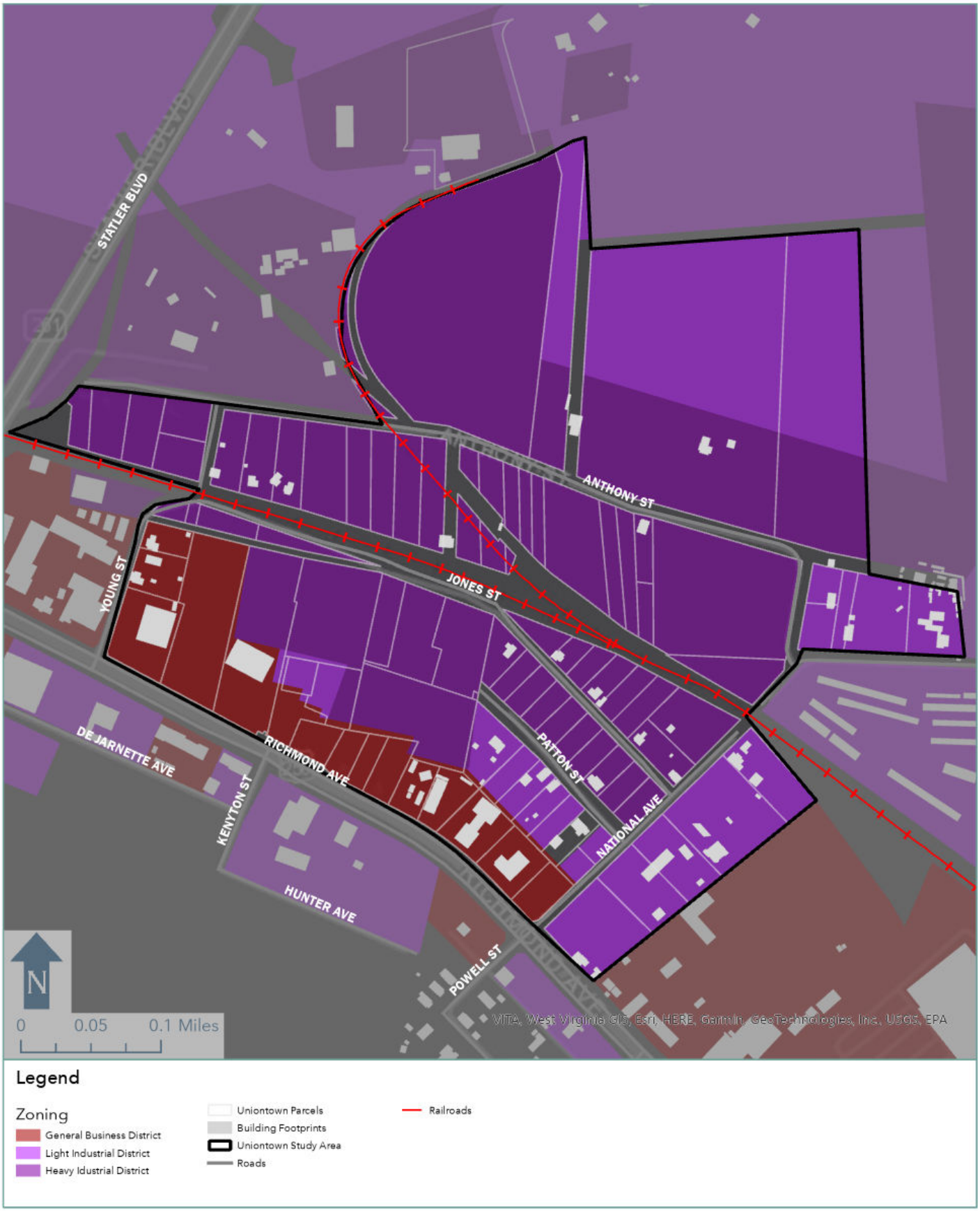
- Commercial Retail and Service from Industry,
- Lumber Yards,
- Freight or Trucking Yard,
- Outdoor Storage,
- Manufacturing,
- Foundry Casting,
- Adult Businesses,

Refer to Code Section 18.75.020 "Uses permitted."

I-2: Heavy Industrial District

The code states that these districts are composed of land and structures used for heavy manufacturing and related activities or suitable for such uses. Located for convenient access from existing and future arterial thoroughfares and railway lines, these districts are in many instances, separated from industrial areas by business or light industrial areas or some artificial separation may be required. The district regulations are designed to permit the district's development for almost any industrial uses, subject to the minimum regulations necessary for the mutual protection of the uses. Allowable

Zoning in Uniontown



uses include:

- Uses from I-1 Light Industrial,
- Gas (illuminating or heating) Manufacturing (power plant),
- Oiled Rubber or Leather Goods Manufacture,
- Petroleum Storage,
- Sausage Manufacturing,
- Soda Manufacture,
- Automobile Wrecking and Junk Yards, and
- Mining.

Refer to Code Section 18.80.020 "Uses permitted."

R-2: Low Density Residential

These districts are intended to be used for single-family residential development with low to moderate population densities. Additional permitted uses, by review of the planning commission, include educational facilities normally required to provide the basic elements of a balanced and attractive residential area. Allowable uses include:

- Single-Family Detached Homes,
- Limited Agriculture,
- Home Occupations, and
- Various civic uses after City review.

Refer to Code Section 18.25.020 "Uses permitted."

Proposed Zoning

Members of the Steering Committee and the public expressed a fervent desire to allow residential uses within the Uniontown study area consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. To enable that development, properties in Uniontown will need to be rezoned. At two steering committee meetings in May and June of 2023, participants discussed the boundaries of a future proposed rezoning to residential uses. The map below reflects that discussion. Refer to Action B.1 under Part 9.

Proposed Residential Rezoning in Uniontown

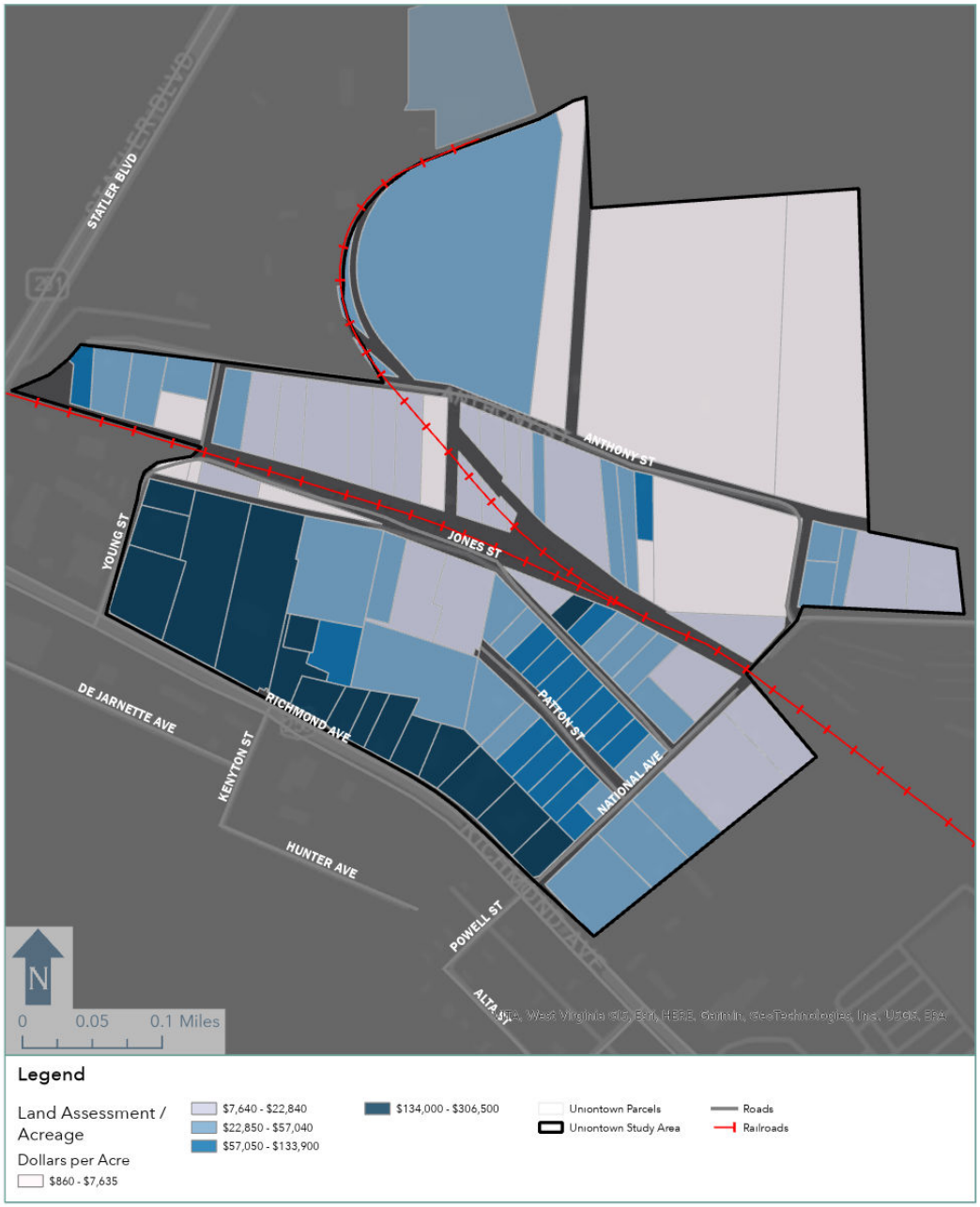
EXISTING STRUCTURES AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

During the planning process, the Steering Committee set a vision for redeveloping Uniontown as a residential neighborhood, recalling its previous single-family layout of over 60 homes. The proposed residential zoning would help foster that vision. However, other conditions influence development potential and overall feasibility.

Existing Structures

There are approximately 20 residential homes in the study area. However, two to three structures located on Jones Street appear to be blighted and vacant. Other houses may serve non-residential purposes because the property owner is associated with adjacent industrial operations. These may be offices or storage. Existing homes pre-date 1960 due to the industrial zoning applied around that time that prohibited residential construction. With an aging housing stock and restrictions on home renovation, few homes remain in good condition. A quarter of the homes appear to be in good condition, according to observations from the public right-of-way. The remaining stock is in fair or approaching poor condition, requiring some level of property maintenance to avoid structural issues and blighted status. Uniontown's redevelopment should include reinvestment and renovation to roughly a dozen homes. Refer to Action A.5, under **Part 9**.

Land Cost in Uniontown

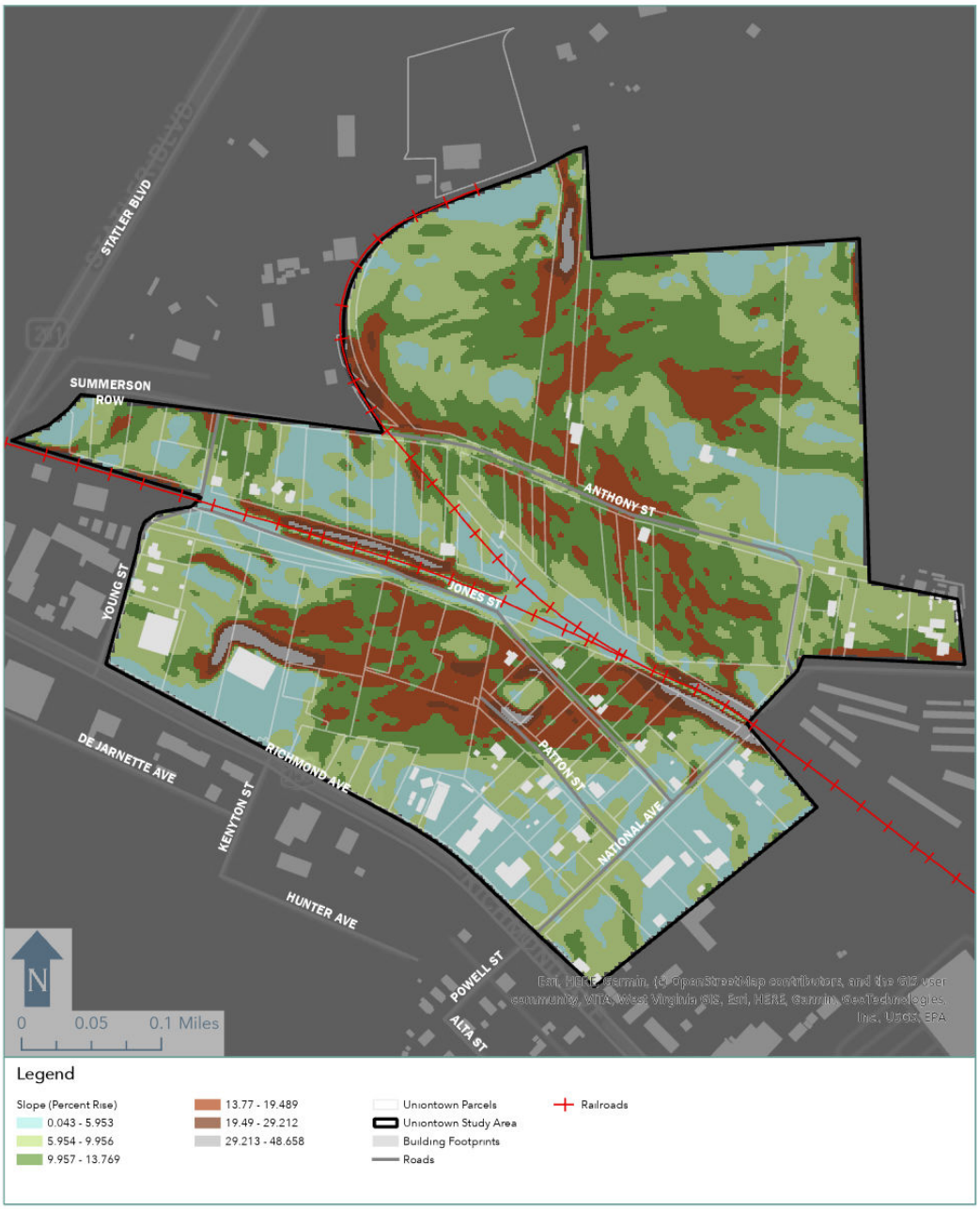


Land Assessment

The City of Staunton's assessment records indicate land values for each property to determine property taxes. Examining assessed land values per acre (excluding structures) helps to determine development potential. The highest property values are the commercial areas along Richmond Avenue. Those assessments tend to decrease farther away from the main road due to several factors, such as access, existing zoning, lack of utilities, and likelihood of reinvestment. Those per acre values continue to decrease on the northern side, across the railroad tracks. Surrounding industrial uses likely contribute to these lower values.

Note that new zoning and utility improvements would influence these assessments. The most likely area for redevelopment is south of the Buckingham Branch line, around the original Smart and Byers Plats.

Slope in Uniontown



Percent Slope and Buildable Land

Slopes can significantly influence development potential and present obstacles for reinvestment. The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code has regulations for areas with steep slopes. The code requires structures to maintain minimum setbacks from both the bottom and top slopes of more than 33.3%. While Uniontown has variable topography, there are limited restrictions on possible development. Steep slopes generally occupy small areas, such as the dark red space behind the commercial strip (chain restaurant), refer to the map. There are minimal steep slopes in the Smart and Byers Plat area.

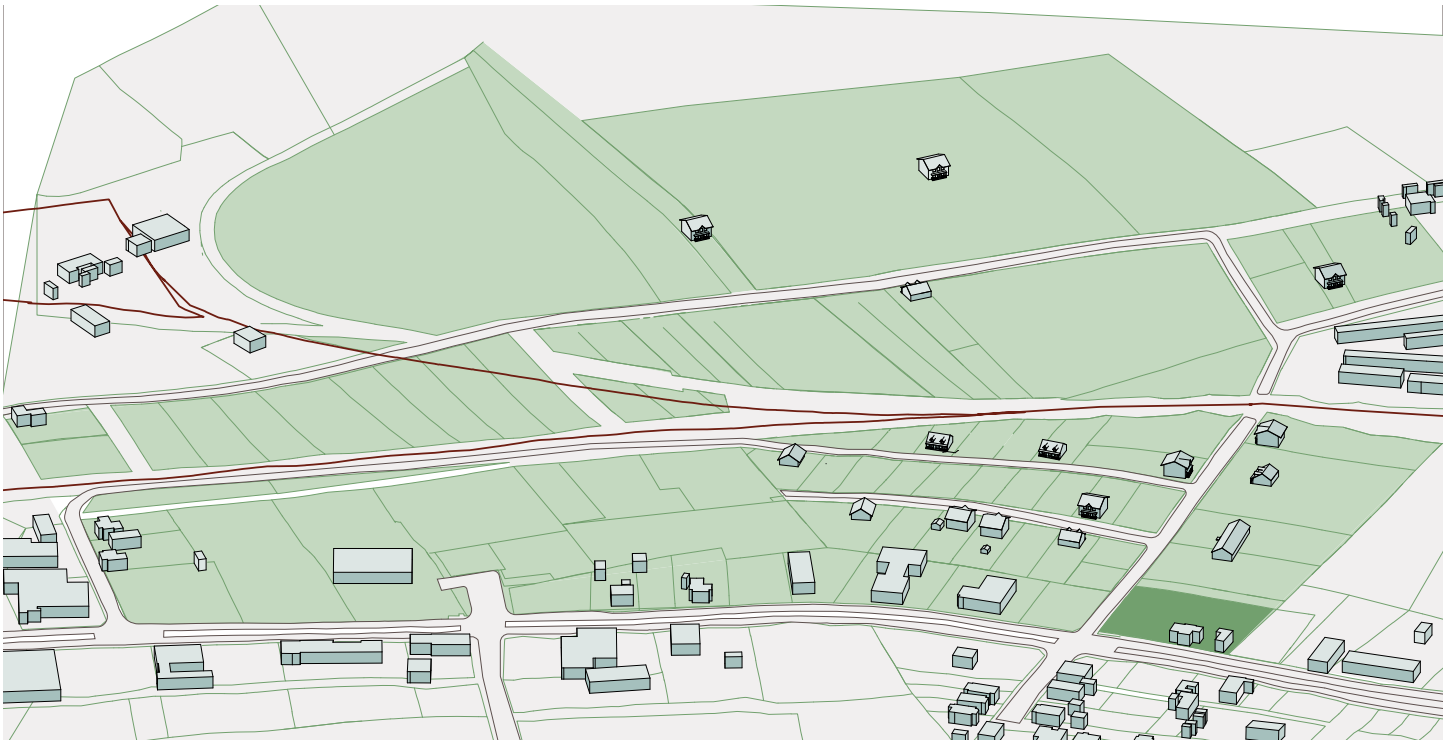
Parcels Layout and Size

The community had requested (R-2) residential zoning earlier in the planning process. However, existing lot lines and layouts would create nonconformity issues on several parcels. Section 18.25.040 of the R-2 Zoning Ordinance states, "for each dwelling and building accessory thereto, there shall be a lot area of not less than 8,750 square feet." Generally, most properties meet this requirement. However, others do not. The R-2 regulations also set lot frontage requirements. The code states that "for all dwellings there shall be a minimum lot width of 70 feet at the front building line, such lot shall abut on a public street for a distance of not less than 25 feet." The City's property records (from the Geographic Information Systems – GIS) indicate that most of the properties of the Smart and Byers Plat have just under 70-foot road frontages. Several lots on Anthony Street appear to have less than 70 feet. However, the City's mapping (GIS) layers are not necessarily survey accurate.

To accommodate the community's request for R-2 zoning while complying with the code requirements, the recommendation under Part 9 is for the City to adopt a new residential zoning district, tailored to address these needs and ensure conformity.

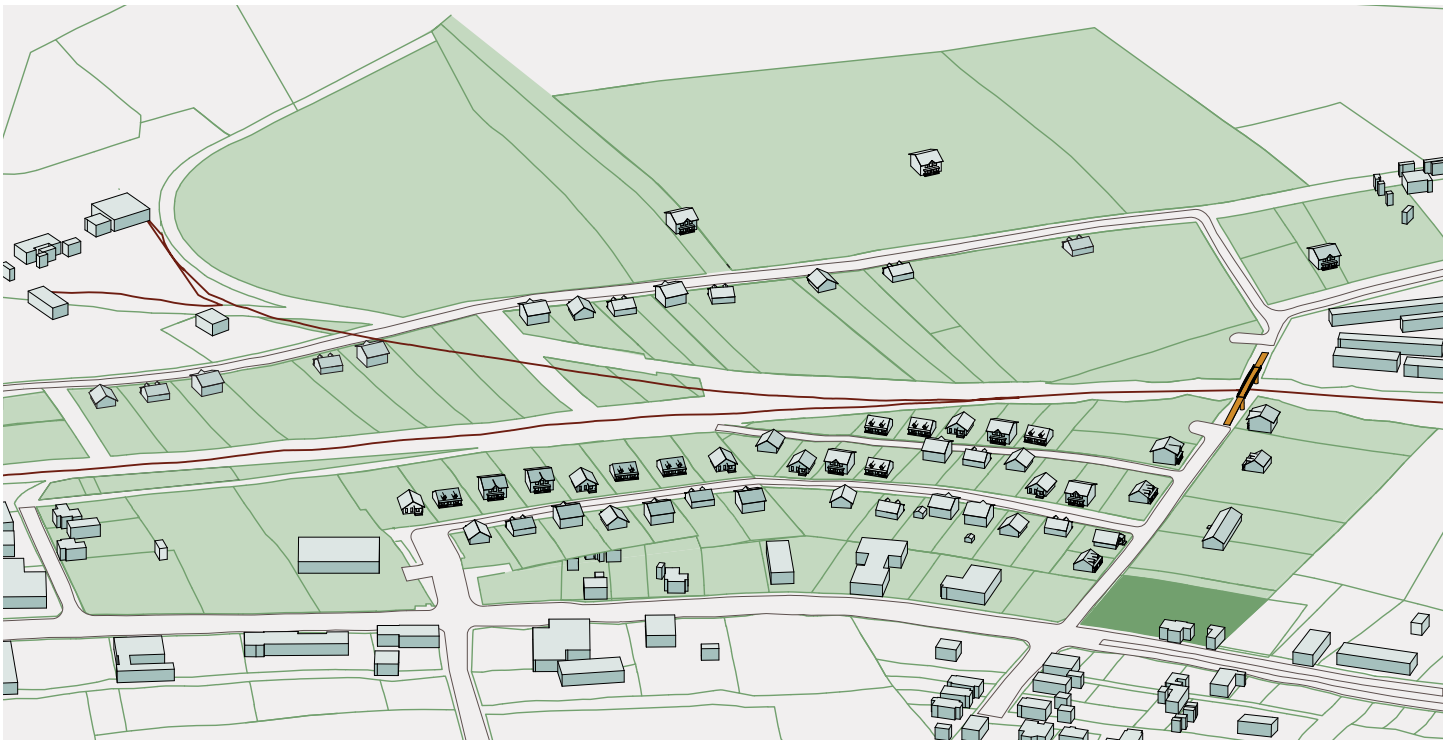
Parcels Under R-2 Minimum Lot Size

Parcels Under R-2 Minimum Frontage Lot Width



Concepts for Redevelopment

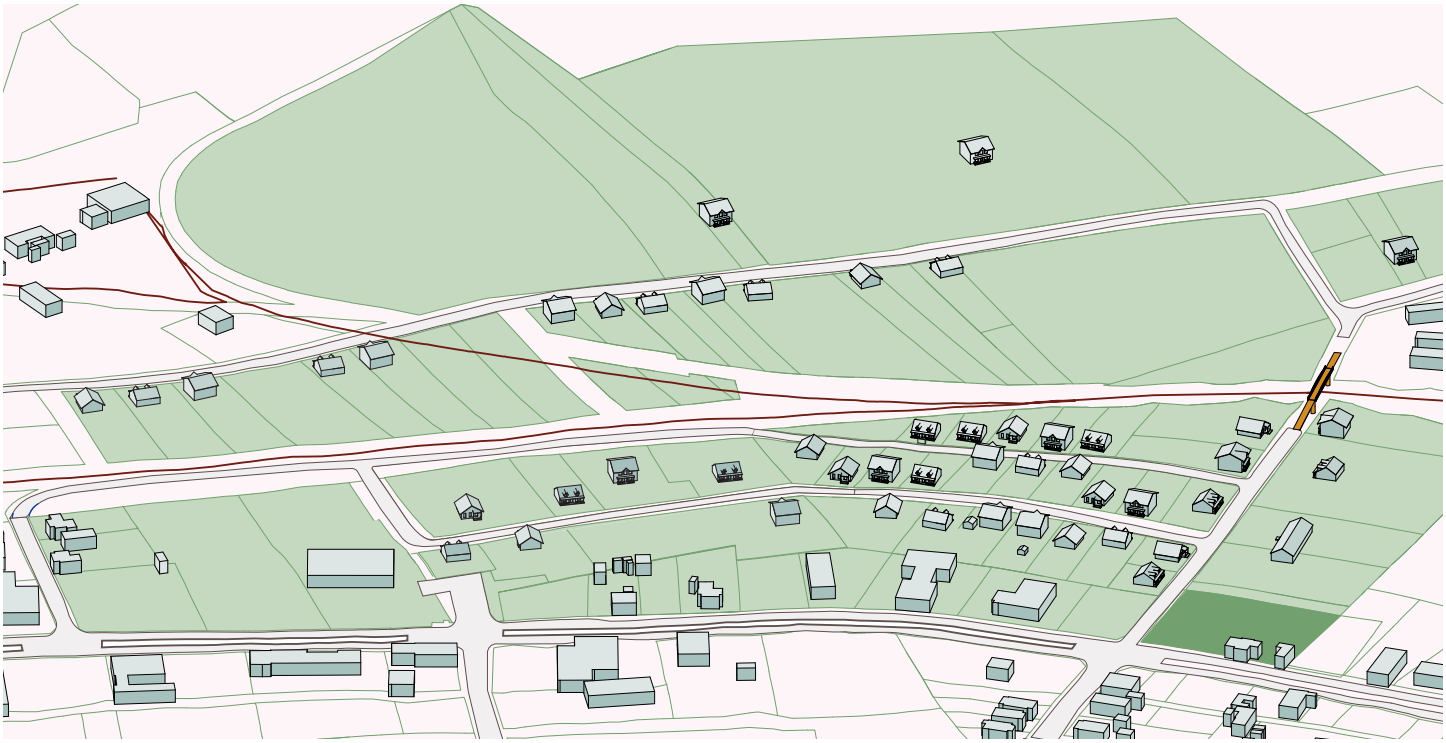
Three conceptual examples for redevelopment are visualized in the following section. All examples depict existing lots and structures, existing lots in the proposed R-2 zoning with street frontage with new residential buildings, and reconnection of National Avenue over the railroad. These examples provide only visualization and recommendations rather than what will happen within Uniontown. There are 16 existing housing units within Uniontown. If the existing lots with street frontage are developed with new homes, then 25 additional residential units may be added to Uniontown. The following examples focus on improvements on Patton and Jones Street. The examples are considered the first phase of potential redevelopment in the neighborhood and could lead to further investment throughout the rest of Uniontown.



Example 1: Patton Street and Richmond Avenue Connection

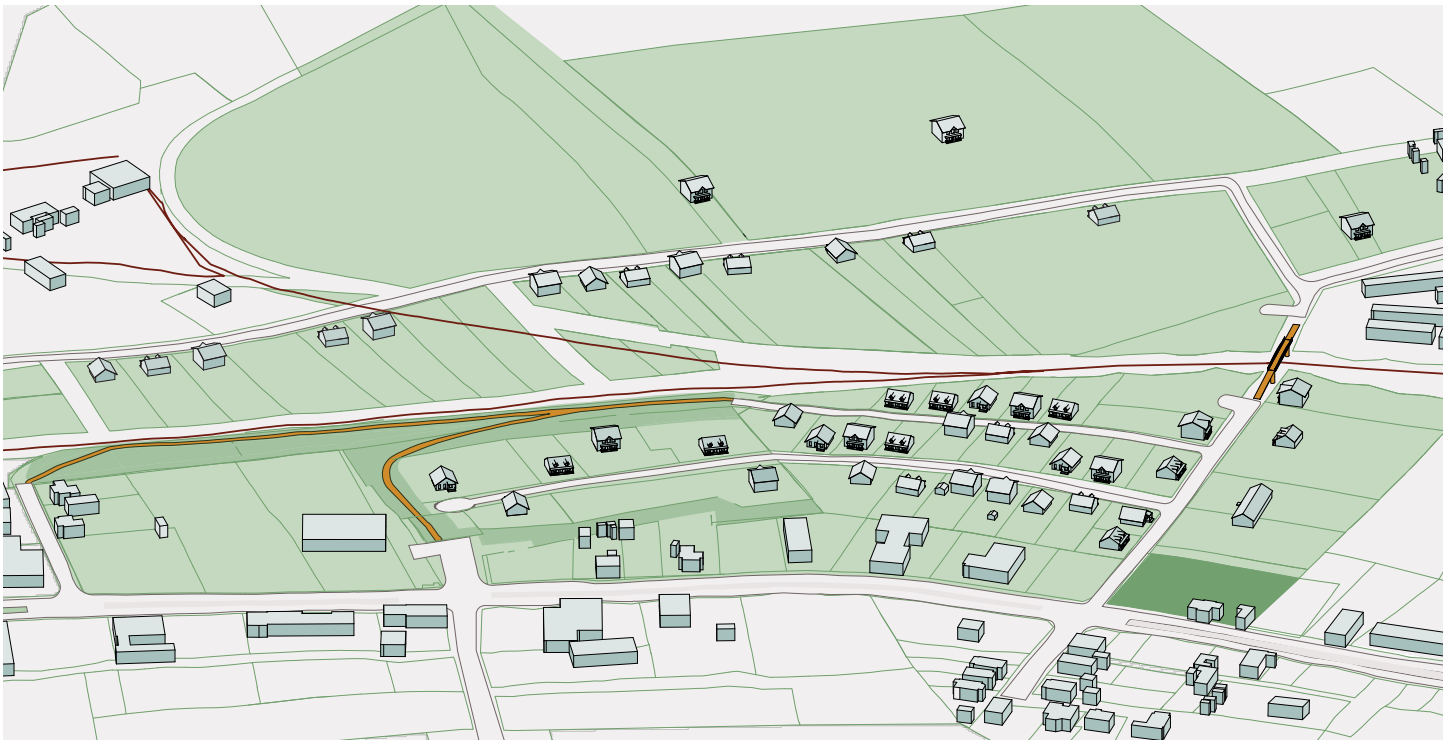
The first example visualizes Patton Street extending through the existing parcels to the left of Patton and Jones Street and connecting to an existing intersection at Richmond Avenue and Kenyton Street. The Patton Street connection increases neighborhood visibility creates more water and sewer connections for Patton Street, National Avenue, and Jones Street residents, and increases connectivity to the 250 corridor. Jones Street would not be a street frontage for newly subdivided lots.

Additionally, the existing parcels to the left of Patton and Jones Street are subdivided into smaller lots that correspond with the existing lot on Patton and Jones Street. The new lots have 70 feet of road frontage and range from 130 feet to 250 feet deep. The subdivision into R-2 lots will result in the development of 15 additional single-family detached units. This will create 56 total residential units within Uniontown.



Example 2: Patton and Jones Street Connection

The second example visualizes connecting Patton Street and Jones Street. Patton Street is extended through existing parcels. Jones Street is realigned and extended to Young Street. This example creates a connection within Uniontown and provides street frontage to more existing parcels. The realignment of Jones Street would result in the loss of the parcels at the connection of Jones and Young Street. The existing parcels Patton Street extends through will accommodate the development of seven new single-family detached units. There would be 48 potential total residential units within Uniontown.



Example 3: Buffer and Bike/Ped Path

The third example visualizes the extension of Patton Street into a cul-de-sac and a natural buffer accommodating a shared use path. The buffer is 50 feet wide on newly developed properties touching lots zones for commercial. The buffer is intended to protect the rural feel of the neighborhood by reducing noise and disrupted sightlines from the Route 250 corridor land uses. Within the buffer, a shared-use path extends from Jones Street and connects to Young Street and the Kenyton Street and Richmond Avenue signalized intersection. The shared-use path creates a connection to the proposed pedestrian bridge and a potential connection to the future bike and pedestrian trails in the area. The trail could also be extended to the Uniontown Chapel Cemetery if the proposed pedestrian bridge is developed.

If the existing parcels adjacent to the Patton Street cul-de-sac are developed, they will result in six new single-family detached units. The total potential residential units within Uniontown could be 47 units. The cul-de-sac has a radius of 30 feet compliant with VDOT regulations on a low-density street that is less than 0.25 miles.

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

In the community survey, nearly 90% of residents and property owners said a lack of infrastructure was a concern. This includes neighborhood streets and utilities, like centralized water and sewer service. Throughout the process, the Steering Committee discussed infrastructure and developed two goals (goals A and D) related to this topic.

Transportation

Uniontown is generally bounded by Richmond Avenue to the south, National Avenue to the east and Young Street to the west with Anthony Street running along the northern portion of the study area. The railroad bisects the northern and southern sections of the neighborhood.

Existing Streets

There are four main streets within Uniontown. They include:

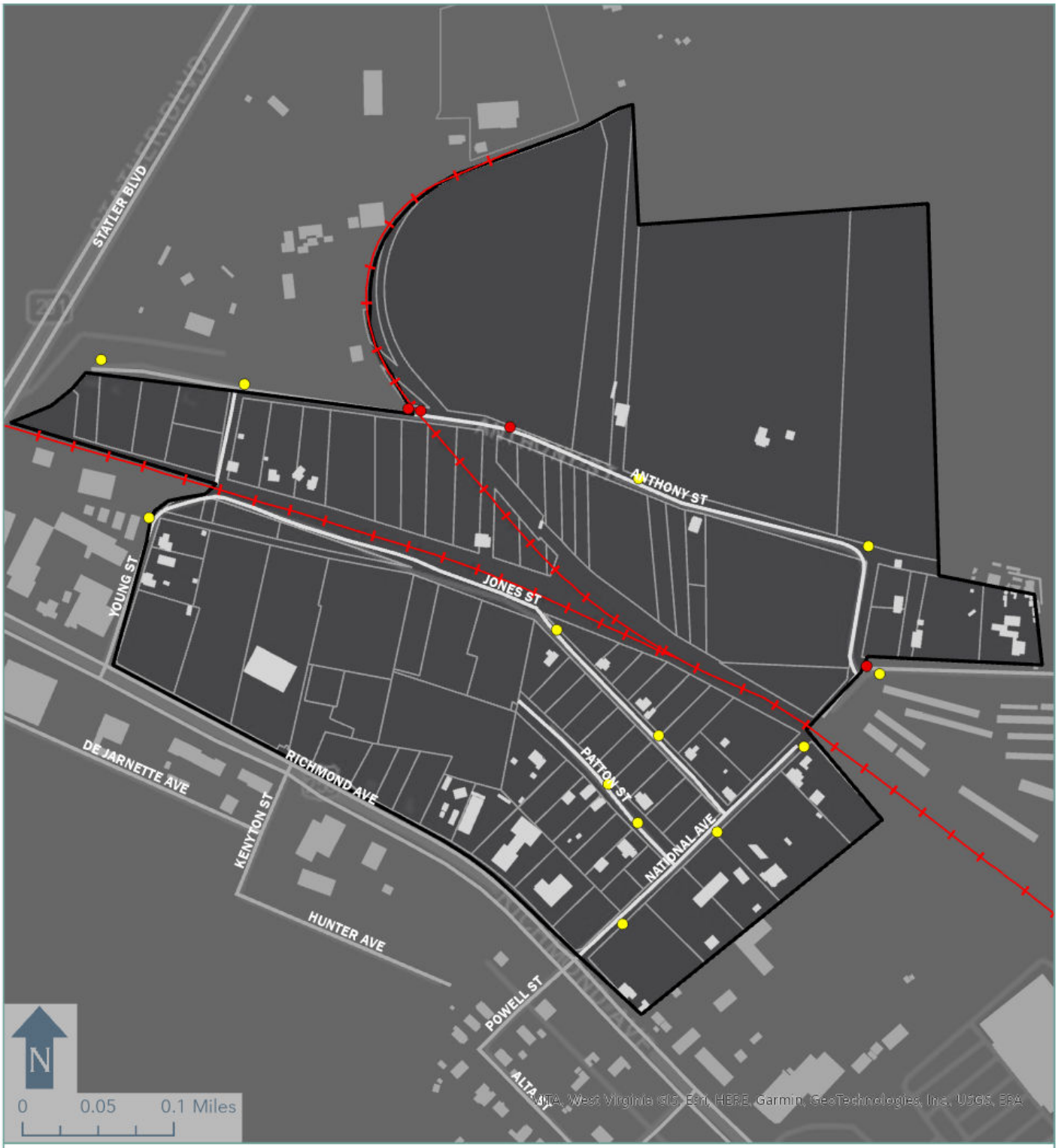
- **National Avenue:** National Avenue is a local, two-lane roadway with a double-yellow centerline, no curb and gutter, and is approximately 20 feet wide. The National Avenue Bridge once connected both sides of the neighborhood over the railroad until around 2001, but CSX removed it due to structural deficiencies. On the south side of the railroad, the roadway serves low-volume residential uses. On the north side, the road connects residential and industrial services to Frontier Drive.
- **Patton Street:** Patton Street is a dead-end, low-volume, local street serving two-way traffic neighborhood traffic. The pavement width is 16-17 feet, and no curb or gutter exists.
- **Jones Street:** Jones Street is a local street that connects National Avenue to Young Street. It is the narrowest of Uniontown's streets at 10-11 feet and serves just one inhabited residential property. The actual roadway follows its platted location as it parallels Patton Street but diverges from the platted right of way as it approaches Young Street. The western portion of the roadway appears to cross onto the railroad right of way.
- **Anthony Street:** Anthony Street is a local street that connects National Avenue to Summerson Row with an at-grade railroad crossing and serves both residential and industrial uses from Staunton Machine Works. There is no curb or gutter, and the pavement width varies from 15-20 feet.

Street Improvements

The community repeatedly expressed a need for improved road conditions. Fieldwork revealed that the existing pavement conditions have patches, cracked asphalt, and overall wear and tear. However, improving streets to VDOT standards would require additional right-of-way to meet width requirements. Several structures are just within a few feet of the existing road pavements. Widening would require property condemnation, which the community wanted to avoid. There may be options to pave-in-place,

Building Footprints Setback

Public Resources in Uniontown



using rural standards. Refer to Part 9, Action A.2.

Streetlights and Signs

The map below documents the location of streetlights and signs in the neighborhood. Throughout the planning process, Steering Committee members expressed concerns about the lack of streetlights in the neighborhood. This plan recommends improved streetlights to help safety and visibility.

Water and Sewer

Water and sewer utilities currently exist near the study area but do not serve all properties within the neighborhood. The existing water distribution infrastructure includes a 6-inch water main along National Avenue, fed from the 6-inch water mains along Richmond Avenue (south side) and Frontier Drive (north side). Two-inch galvanized water mains exist along portions of Patton Street, Jones Street, and Anthony Street. In addition, a 6-inch water main along Young Street extends north to Anthony Street to serve the concrete plant. An automatic flushing valve is installed at the end of the water main on National Avenue to periodically flush water from the system and maintain adequate water quality.

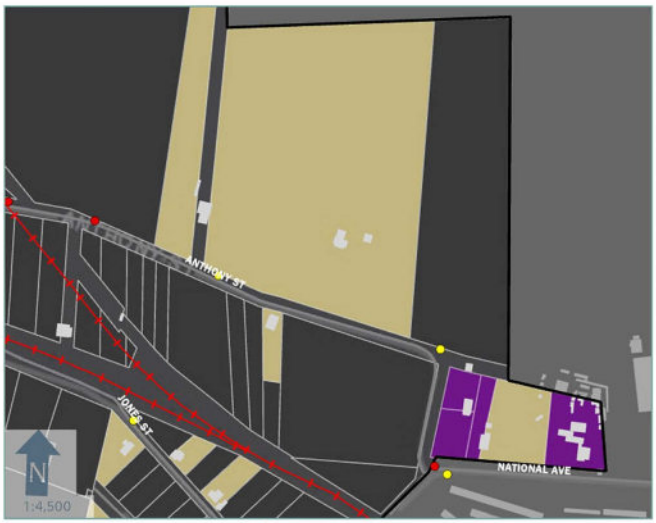
During the Steering Committee meetings, multiple residents expressed that quality drinking water was a top priority. Removal of the National Avenue bridge severed a link in the waterline that would other help circulate water through the system. With that link broken, drinking water can sit in the pipes, creating a smell from the tap.

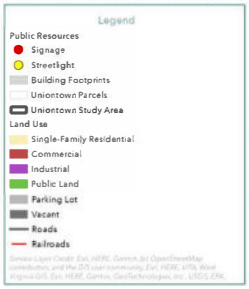
The existing sanitary sewage facilities near the project area include a 6-inch gravity sewer along Richmond Avenue and an 8-inch gravity sewer west of Statler Boulevard. Still, they do not extend into the study area. Privately owned septic systems primarily serve existing residences.

Under **Part 9**, a recommendation to include water and sewer service into Uniontown references the 2021 Water and Sewer Extension Study. This previous study includes a report on needs, alternatives for installation, cost estimates, and next steps. The Uniontown Steering Committee listed this recommendation as a top priority.

Utilities in Uniontown

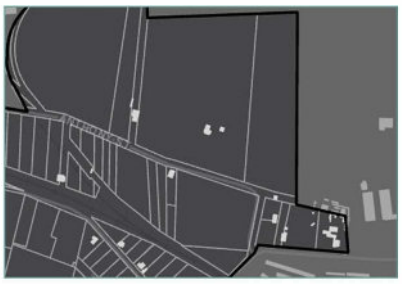
Uniontown Neighborhood: Northeast Quadrant





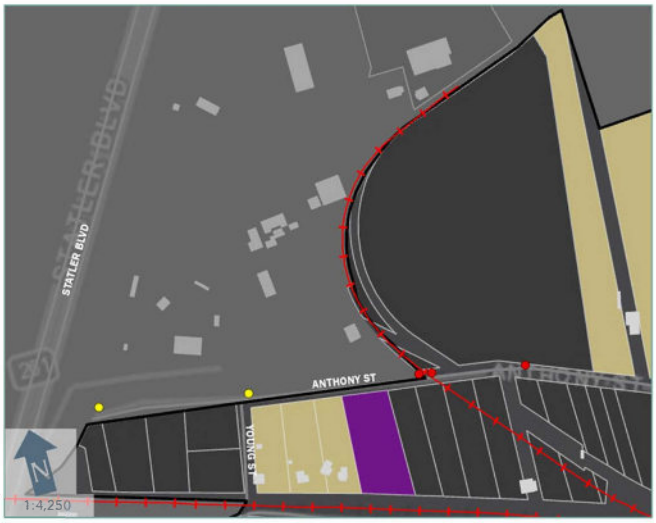
The Northeast Quadrant of Uniontown contains three single-family homes and industrial parcels. Staunton Wrecking separates the quadrant from Rockydale Quarry. Roadways in the area are Anthony St and National Ave. The railroad separates this quadrant from the Southeastern portion of Uniontown. This quadrant does not have direct access to Richmond Ave, it connects to N Frontier Dr through National Ave.

Building Footprints



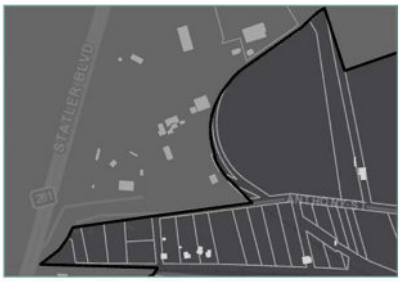
Transportation Infrastructure

Uniontown Neighborhood: Northwest Quadrant

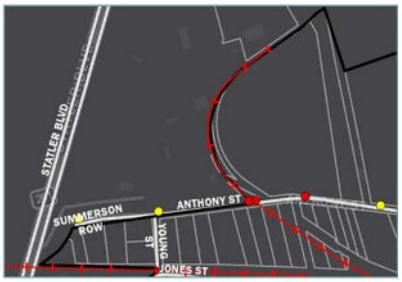


The Northwest Quadrant of Uniontown contains four single-family homes an industrial parcel, and a vacant field. Roadways in the area are Anthony and Young St as well as Summerson Row. The railroad separates this quadrant from the Southwestern portion of Uniontown. This quadrant does not have direct access to Richmond Ave as the Young St bridge was torn down and Summerson Row was converted to a dead end.

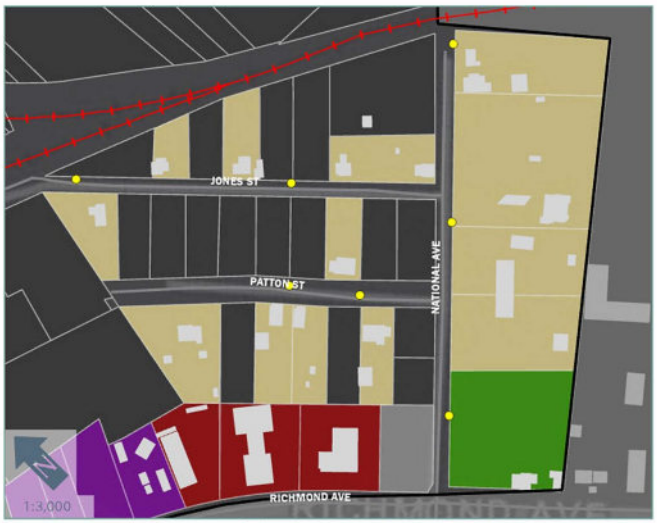
Building Footprints



Transportation Infrastructure

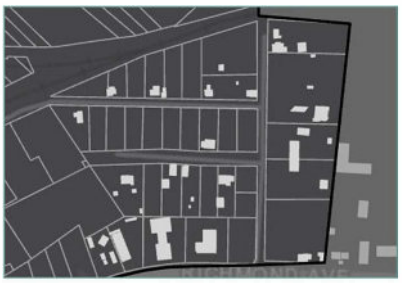


Uniontown Neighborhood: Southeast Quadrant

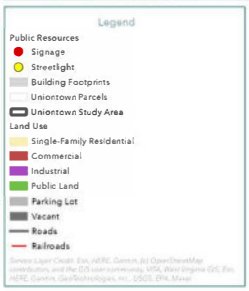


The Southeast Quadrant of Uniontown contains the most homes, as well as commercial industry along Richmond Ave, and the National Cemetery. Roadways in the area are Patton and Jones St and Richmond and National Ave. The railroad separates this quadrant from the Northeastern portion of Uniontown. This quadrant has direct access to Richmond Ave as well as North Frontier Dr, both from National Ave

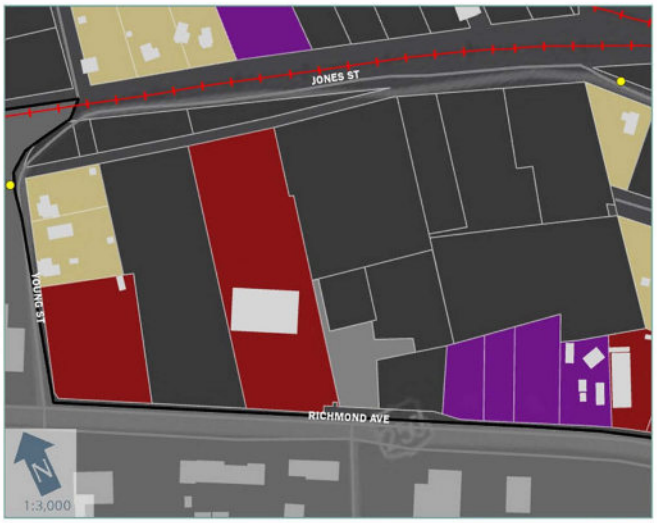
Building Footprints



Transportation Infrastructure

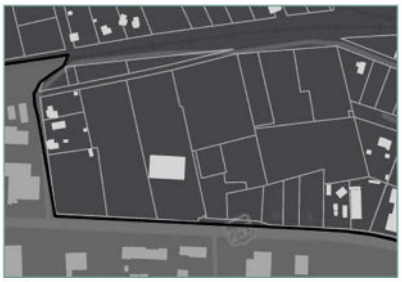


Uniontown Neighborhood: Southwest Quadrant



The Southwest Quadrant of Uniontown is mostly vacant, with two single-family homes and some commercial and industrial industry along Richmond Ave and Young St. Roadways in the area are Jones and Young St and Richmond Ave. The railroad separates this quadrant from the Northwestern portion of Uniontown. This quadrant has direct access to Richmond Ave from Young St.

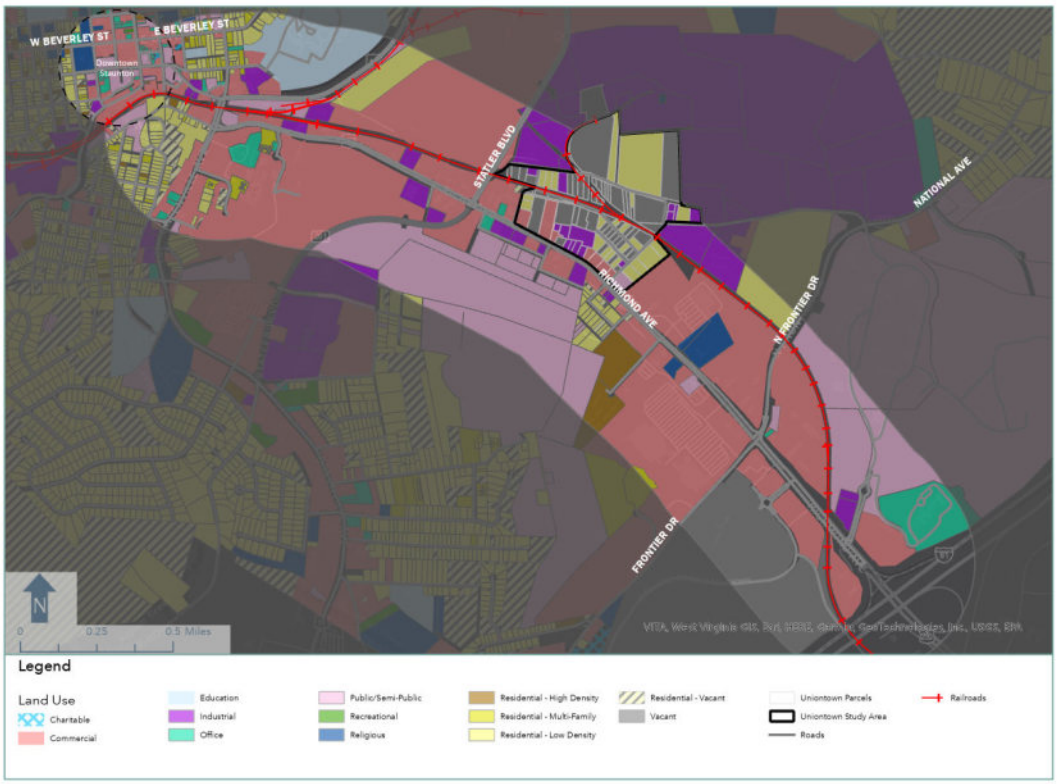
Building Footprints



Transportation Infrastructure

SWOT Analysis

Richmond Ave Existing Land Use



The neighborhood planning process included an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, also known as a SWOT analysis. These items arose from various sources, including consultant site visits, the City's mapping data, discussions with local officials, interviews with community stakeholders, work with the Uniontown Steering Committee, and the community survey. The following lists helped form the recommendations under **Part 9.**

The primary intent of a SWOT analysis is to help the community determine how to:

- Build on its existing strengths and assets,
- Overcome its existing weaknesses and obstacles,
- Take advantage of existing and future opportunities, and
- Mitigate against possible threats.

Strengths

Despite its long and steady decline, the Uniontown neighborhood still maintains certain assets that the community could leverage. These are characteristics that make Uniontown a unique place.

Historical Significance

Uniontown's historical significance is the most obvious strength. As discussed in Part 2, this location is essential to the area's African American history and Staunton's story. Unfortunately, many resources are lost as structures fell into disrepair over the decades. However, Uniontown has a compelling story that would help with accessing potential funding sources.

General Location

Uniontown's proximity to Richmond Avenue provides easy access to downtown and the commercial amenities along the corridor.

Several redevelopment efforts and investments exist along this corridor between Interstate 81 and downtown Staunton. Richmond Avenue (US 250) is a Principal Arterial with high traffic volumes. The main road provides easy access to the southern portion of Uniontown – improving the market potential for new housing and commercial developments.

Housing Demand and Supply

There continues to be a housing shortage in the Shenandoah Valley. With easy access to Interstates 81 and 64, there may be market demand for new housing in this vicinity, as opposed to industrial space. Changing the existing zoning from industrial to residential would help the community take advantage of these conditions.

Sense of Community

During the planning process, consultants noted that there was a strong sense of community among the long-time residents. The Steering Committee attendance increased with each meeting, as dozens of stakeholders joined in-person and virtually. This enthusiasm will be the key to Uniontown's success, if the group can maintain that momentum.

Weaknesses

The Neighborhood Plan gives more attention to Uniontown's weaknesses, as it suffers from decades of decline. While the community can build on existing strengths, the bigger challenge will be overcoming the following obstacles.

Steady Decline

As is described in Part 2, Uniontown experienced a steady trend of disinvestment over the decades as the industrial zoning from the 1960s contributed to various obstacles to reinvestment. After over 60 years of decline, recovery will require time and resources to reverse the trend.

Existing Industrial Zoning

The existing industrial zoning is a primary reason for Uniontown's decline. While the general location may be conducive to industrial

uses, the property lines and other features would make those operations infeasible. Also, the existing land use regulations prohibit new residential development and prevent existing property owners from renovating their homes. Changing the zoning to residential is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and would be the first necessary step to reinvestment.

This proposed rezoning is one of the community's top priorities. Refer to Part 9, Action B.1. Uniontown property owners and residents ask that the City Council adopt their proposed zoning changes as soon as possible.

Lack of Centralized Sewer

In 2021, the city commissioned the Uniontown Water and Sewer Extension Study, which inventoried the neighborhood's existing water and sewer infrastructure and proposed alternatives to better serve the study area. Uniontown currently lacks centralized sewer access, as homes rely on individual septic systems.

In the community survey, over 60% of respondents stated they were "highly concerned" about the lack of infrastructure. Extending centralized water and sewer infrastructure into Uniontown is one of the community's highest priorities. Property owners and residents ask that the City Council pursue the improvements documented in the 2021 Water and Sewer Extension Study as soon as possible. Without public water and sewer, reinvestment in Uniontown would be limited and complicated.

Existing Water Quality

The 2021 Water and Sewer Extensions Study included a section on water quality with the existing system. When the railroad removed the National Avenue Bridge, this demolition also severed a waterline offering better circulation in the Uniontown area. During the neighborhood planning process, participants discussed their concerns with the water and asked to emphasize those issues in this document as an immediate need.

Road Conditions and Right-of-Way

Various sources identified poor road conditions in Uniontown. Consultants documented issues during site visits. The Uniontown Steering Committee discussed their concerns, and the community survey highlighted these issues. The existing road surfaces are cracked and deteriorated, and committee members expressed a desire to improve conditions by repaving. Ideally, new water and sewer lines would be installed before any significant roadway repaving. In some locations, road widths present challenges to redevelopment, as right-of-way requirements for upgrades would negatively affect existing homes, requiring condemnation if they were reconstructed to City or VDOT standards. Uniontown would need to pursue an alternative standard to avoid eminent domain for upgraded streets.

Blighted Properties

The planning process documented multiple blighted properties – primarily former homes that fell into disrepair and are now structurally unsound. Several complex factors led to those conditions and this general decline. In the community survey, approximately 40% of respondents stated they were "highly concerned" about blighted properties.

The Railroad (Bridge Demolition)

The railroad pre-dates the settlement of Uniontown and always functioned as a barrier. The National Avenue Bridge was the primary link between the north and south halves of the neighborhood and facilitated delivery of water service to the neighborhood. When the railroad removed the bridge in 2001, it created a deep divide that cleaved Uniontown into two inaccessible parts. With the replacement bridge at Frontier Drive, there is little chance of eventually replacing the National Avenue Bridge at its previous location. A new vehicular bridge at that location would also require eminent domain and the removal of several existing homes. With these challenges, there are no straightforward ways to bridge the railroad.

The Steering Committee would prefer a vehicular bridge over the railroad. However, the community also wants to avoid condemnation of homes. One alternative could be to install a bike and pedestrian bridge that may provide access while limiting the effects on private property. A bike and pedestrian bridge could also facilitate a reconnection of the waterlines between the north and south sides.

The Railroad Layout

The railroad also limits development potential, due to the awkward layout that it imposes on the neighborhood. On the southern part of Uniontown, there is less than 700 feet between the commercial properties along Richmond Avenue and the railroad – limiting development potential. A spur of the rail line makes other properties unusable for residential investments. Unfortunately, there are no ways of addressing these conditions, as the railroad and Richmond Road are permanently fixed in those locations.

Existing Industrial Uses

Existing industrial uses significantly undermine the community's vision for redevelopment. Specifically, the quarry, limestone operation, and scrap yard limit residential development potential. While Anthony Street offers attractive vistas of the surrounding areas, these surrounding uses could deter many investors. Additionally, the American Mini Storage property limits land available for home construction.

Existing Commercial Uses

The commercial uses along Richmond Avenue block Uniontown from view and have no apparent connection with the neighborhood. Hidden from view, the larger community (citywide) is likely to be unaware of Uniontown. The "out of sight, out of mind" issue contributed to the neighborhood's long decline. Without a notable gateway or acknowledgement of Uniontown from the main road, the neighborhood will continue struggling to gain attention and resources. **Part 9** has two recommendations (**D.2 and D.4**) that address these challenges. One member of

the Steering Committee used signage at Gypsy Hill Park as an example of a desirable gateway.

Opportunities

The planning process also identified opportunities that Uniontown could leverage to achieve its vision. These are essential considerations that will make recommendations in **Part 9** possible.

The City's Current Commitment

In recent years, the City of Staunton refocused on Uniontown, listing it as one of its priority areas. Using ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding, City Council commissioned this Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan process in 2022. The Council initiated the Uniontown Water and Sewer Extension Study the previous year (2021). With that effort, the City attempted to rezone Uniontown from industrial to R-2 Low-Density Residential. Unfortunately, some in the community spoke out against the zoning changes at that time. Despite growing demands on local government, the City of Staunton prioritized Uniontown. With the City's current focus and commitment, this is an ideal opportunity to identify a plan for the neighborhood's future.

A Reenergized Community

The Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan started with a small group of stakeholders that participated in Steering Committee meetings. Only one of those attendees had a direct family connection to the community. As the effort progressed, many more individuals joined the process. By the end, dozens of property owners, residents, and other partners frequented the Steering Committee meetings. With this renewed involvement, the Steering Committee should continue meeting regularly and focus on maintaining this momentum.

Vacant Properties

Most of Uniontown's parcels are vacant (over 50 properties). These lots offer new home construction opportunities under a revised zoning map. Specifically, the best potential is in the area south of the railroad, but there is redevelopment potential in the northern areas, as well. These vacant properties offer a unique opportunity for a clean slate, which is more likely to attract development partners.

Reinvestments along the US 250 Corridor

Overall, there is reinvestment along Richmond Avenue, between Interstate 81 and Greenville Avenue. The corridor is also a significant gateway to Staunton and will only grow in importance. As the eastern portion of Staunton develops, there will be more opportunities for Uniontown to be part of that renewal.

Possible Partnerships

During the Neighborhood Action Plan process, several partners expressed interest in Uniontown. Members of the "Building Bridge for a Greater Good" served as members of the Steering Committee and hosted a large event to document Uniontown's history. The Staunton-August-Waynesboro Habitat for Humanity spoke with the Steering Committee about possible partnerships. Other housing funders unofficially stated that they could help support housing redevelopment work. Public Works attended Steering Committee meetings and indicated their interest in staying involved. These are essential partnerships that the community should leverage to achieve its goals.

The City's Comprehensive Plan

The Code of Virginia requires that every local jurisdiction in the Commonwealth adopt a Comprehensive Plan, which serves as a locality's primary policy document. It carries significant weight with local decisions on laws, capital investments, programs, initiatives, and other government actions. The City's current Comprehensive Plan generally supports Uniontown's proposed zoning changes, making those amendments more likely. The Code of Virginia also requires that localities update their plans every five years. With a 2019 adoption date, the City should review the plan in 2024, and could include new sections from the Neighborhood Action Plan to help strengthen the recommendations listed in Part 9. Refer to Action D.3.

Threats

A list of potential threats arose mostly from the public and stakeholder engagement process. The Uniontown Steering Committee identified concerns about future issues, which the community verified in the survey (**See Appendix B**).

Threat of Commercial and Industrial Development

In the community survey, almost 70% of residents and property owners stated that encroaching commercial and industrial development was a concern. With vacant commercial property along Richmond Avenue and lenient industrial zoning, people were concerned about what could overwhelm the neighborhood. This encroachment would directly conflict with the community's vision for a residential, family-friendly future.

Gentrification

Some survey respondents highlighted gentrification as a possible threat. If the public and private sector reinvested in Uniontown, the community would want to ensure that existing property owners and residents would still benefit. The neighborhood would need to retain its past and make sure that African Americans continue to be part of the community's future.

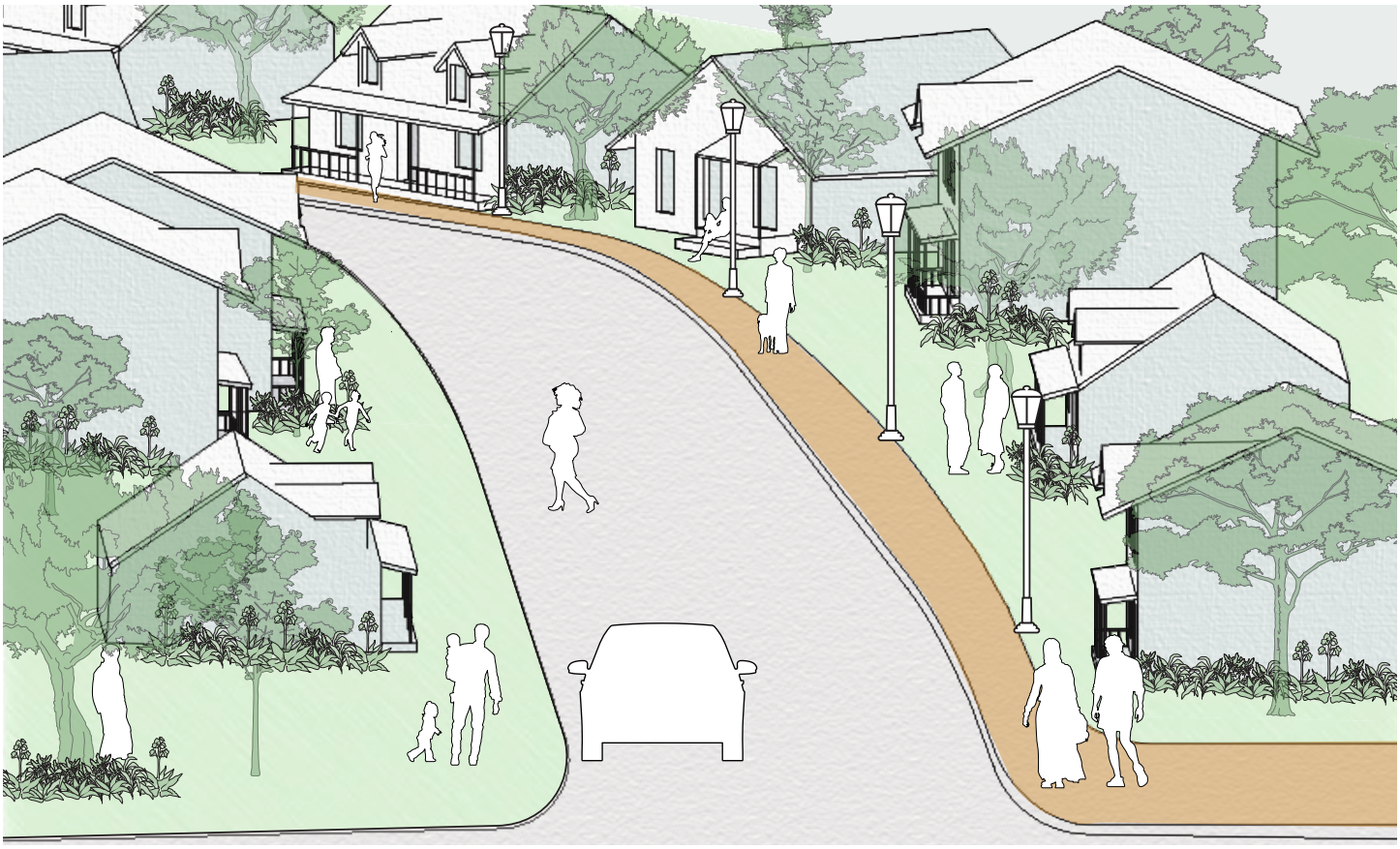
Water and Sewer Connection Fees

If the City extended public water and sewer improvements into Uniontown, the local code states that existing homes would need to connect within five years. The City also sets connection fees that would be costly to existing property owners. In some cases, existing households will not be able to afford those fees. Given the long-term disinvestment in the neighborhood, the community requested some sort of financial assistance with connections.

Available Funding

While the community identified various low-cost actions, many recommendations represent significant capital costs. The Uniontown Water and Sewer Extension Study sites estimated expenses that total millions of dollars. Roadway improvements would be a multimillion-dollar investment. Connecting the north and south portion of Uniontown would also involve multimillion-dollar options. The Uniontown community will need to work closely with City Hall to identify potential funding sources and raise resources to make this plan possible.

COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS



A community-driven process produced a neighborhood vision and four main goal areas. These statements arose primarily from the Uniontown Steering Committee, through their early meetings. Consultants converting meeting notes into the four goals and vetted the draft language with the Committee. Next, the community responded to the goals through the survey from Appendix B. After seeing that the public and stakeholders overwhelmingly supported these statements, consultants developed an overarching vision that captured the four themes: Reinvestment, Sense of Community, Preservation, and Reestablished Connections.

Vision Statement

Create a thriving and resilient Uniontown that embodies its historic sense of community, provides families with a healthy place to call home, and honors its proud past.

Goals

The four goals are critical to this process because they serve as a framework for the neighborhood's recommendations and actions. The Steering Committee and project consultants created tactics, seen in Part 9, designed specifically to achieve each of the following statements. To maintain a focused effort, the community excluded any recommendations that did not explicitly serve these four themes.

The four goals are not in priority order. The community interprets each area as equally important, which is why the goal titles include letters (A, B, C, and D), rather than numbers (1, 2, 3, and 4).

Goal A. Reinvestment

Pursue efforts to spur public and private reinvestments that help Uniontown thrive and grow while preserving its past.

This reinvestment theme arose even before the

first Steering Committee meeting. Early in the process, project consultants began to interview stakeholders to encourage involvement with the planning effort. Every interview pointed to this core topic – "there needs to be reinvestment in Uniontown." As the Steering Committee started to convene, participants continued to emphasize the need for City Hall to upgrade infrastructure and put resources back into the neighborhood. Later, the community survey reflected these themes, calling for public investment in infrastructure. The community believes that public improvements will help to spur private reinvestment – specifically with home renovations and new construction.

High-Priority Action

The highest priority action under this goal is extending public water and sewer infrastructure into Uniontown. The Steering committee unanimously supported this investment and asked that the City proceed with the Uniontown Water and Sewer Extension Study recommendations and next steps.

Goal B. Sense of Community

Reintroduce Uniontown's sense of community, where residents can raise a family and be part of a meaningful place.

During the Steering Committee meetings, attendees would introduce themselves and express what they hoped would arise from this Neighborhood Action Plan process. When long-term residents began participating, there was a consistent response to this question. Life-long families wanted to see a vibrant, family-oriented community that brought back what they lost as the neighborhood steadily declined. Abraham Crawford, a life-long resident, vividly described his hopes to see children back in the neighborhood, playing in the streets and continuing Uniontown's story. On April 29, Building Bridges hosted a well-attended event, focused on presenting Uniontown's history and describing what was lost. This goal is a core element of the community's vision.

High-Priority Action

The highest-priority action under this goal is rezoning properties from industrial to residential. The existing zoning map directly contradicts the community's vision and Goal B. The Steering Committee asked that the City initiate these zoning map amendments as soon as possible.

Goal C. Preservation

Document, promote, and effectively communicate Uniontown's history to foster community pride and preserve the neighborhood's remaining historic resources.

The Steering Committee was passionate about Uniontown's past and wanted to reconcile its decades of struggle. First, the community wanted to acknowledge the various barriers thrown at them. Second, participants highlighted a desperate need to document and publish Uniontown's history while life-long residents are alive to tell these stories. The Building Bridges event also emphasized the neighborhood's history and revealed information that directly influenced the actions in **Part 9**.

GOAL D. Reestablished Connections

Reestablish Uniontown's physical connections within the neighborhood and the Richmond Avenue Corridor, connecting to reinvestment in the larger area.

As described in the SWOT analysis, while Uniontown lies along a busy, important corridor, it also feels isolated. There are few connections to the neighborhood and broken links within. Specifically, the Steering Committee were focused on the National Avenue Bridge and the railroad that divided the community.

High-Priority Action

The National Avenue Bridge issue is complicated. The Committee believes there must be some sort of linkage that connects the north and south

sections of Uniontown. However, construction of a vehicular bridge would likely require property condemnation that would affect several homes. There would need to be further engineering to determine right-of-way needs. This work may conclude that the only feasible connection would be a bike and pedestrian bridge.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

The following section documents the community's 18 recommended actions, which serve to achieve the four Uniontown goals and the overarching vision statement. These actions arose from the community-driven process, including the SWOT analysis, the Steering Committee, the Building Bridges event, Interviews, and the community survey. The Uniontown Steering Committee should continue to meet regularly to maintain progress on these activities and treat this plan as a living document.

- **Goal A. Reinvestment:** Pursue efforts to spur public and private reinvestments that help Uniontown thrive and grow while preserving its past.
  - Action A.1: Extend water and sewer infrastructure into Uniontown.
  - Action A.2: Improve the internal roadway network conditions and provide streetlights.
  - Action A.3: Develop a property owner education program to inform Uniontown's owners of their rights and opportunities.
  - Action A.4: Survey lots to improve property boundaries and records.
- **Goal B. Sense of Community:** Reintroduce Uniontown's sense of community, where residents can raise a family and be part of a meaningful place.
  - Action B.1: Update the Zoning Map to Reflect Uniontown's Vision for single-family residential.
  - Action B.2: Partner with Housing Groups to construct new, quality, affordable homes on existing lots that are comparable in size and scale to what existed previously.
  - Action B.3: Evaluate the condition of remaining vacant structures to determine what can be repaired and what might need to be removed.
  - Action B.4: Organize Regular Community Clean-Up Events and Beautification Efforts.
  - Action B.5: Preserve natural habitats to maintain the rural feel.
- **Goal C. Preservation:** Document, promote, and effectively communicate Uniontown's history to foster community pride and preserve the neighborhood's remaining historic resources.
  - Action C.1: Re-establish access to the Uniontown Chapel Cemetery.
  - Action C.2: Develop a Pamphlet (or similar promotional material) to Communicate Uniontown's History.
  - Action C.3: Create an Online Presence that Documents Uniontown's History.
  - Action C.4: Install Historical Markers and Plaques that Communicate Uniontown's History and the Stories of its People.
  - Action C.5: Ensure every school library has a copy of "Old Uniontown Glances Backwards" and other books/references that document local history.
- **Goal D. Reestablished Connections**: Reestablish Uniontown's physical connections within the neighborhood and the Richmond Avenue Corridor, connecting to reinvestment in the larger area.
  - Action D.1: Examine Options at the former National Avenue Bridge Site.
  - Action D.2: Examine Gateway Treatments on National Avenue that Makes Uniontown Visible from Richmond Road.
  - Action D.3: Update the City of Staunton's Comprehensive Plan to Show Uniontown as an Essential part of the Richmond Road Corridor.
  - Action D.4: Redesign Uniontown's Commercial Properties on Richmond Road to Reflect the Neighborhood.

Goal A. Reinvestment - Action Tables

This goal involves five recommended actions, mainly focused on public infrastructure improvements. The highest priority action is A.1, the extension of centralized water and sewer service. This action would need to conclude to progress to A.2, improving the internal road network. Otherwise, the City would need to excavate new pavements for the water and sewer lines. The remaining actions are lower-cost recommendations aimed at helping existing property owners.

Action A1: Extend water and sewer infrastructure into Uniontown

In 2021, the City of Staunton worked with on-call consultants to develop a plan for expanding public water and extending new sewer lines throughout Uniontown. The study included several alternatives for new water and sewer investments. Staff presented a preferred alternative to the City Council in December 2021.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Water and Sewer Extension Study (2021)
Community Feedback	The Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation. The Steering Committee listed this as a high-priority action.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	The 2021 Study listed costs for water and sewer at approximately $2.98 million for sewer line extension and $2.22 million for waterline extensions. Note that construction costs would have increased since this report.
Resources:	The local Capital Improvements Program
Primary Point of Contact:	Public Works, City of Staunton
Support:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Anticipated Benefits:	Extending water and sewer infrastructure will address a significant sewer service shortfall in Uniontown and improve the functionality and resiliency of water distribution in the Richmond Avenue/Staunton Crossing area.
Steps/Phases:	• Complete a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) • Initiate system design • Talk with property owners • Construct system
Timeline:	The rezoning action would need to occur first. City staff could pursue a PER (bullet #1) at Council's direction shortly after the rezoning. Construction would be a multi-year timeline.

Additional Comments:

The community strongly requests a release from future connection fees. The Uniontown Steering Committee believes that the water and sewer improvements should have occurred decades ago, warranting a waiver for connection. They believe this is a unique situation that does not set a precedent for other areas of the City.

Action A.2: Improve the internal roadway network conditions and provide streetlights

During the engagement process, the community identified the need to improve the roadways in Uniontown and expressed a desire for improved streetlights. During the June Steering Committee meeting, participants clarified a desire for roadway maintenance to improve the poor surface conditions.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Consultant Site Visit • Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	The Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation. The Steering Committee listed this as a high-priority action.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Cost estimates vary depending on the condition of the roadway sub-surface. This action may require a roadway reconstruction, which would significantly increase the cost. This would be a multi-million-dollar investment. Additional engineering is needed to develop a reliable cost estimate.
Resources:	• Capital Improvements Program • VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation) Roadway Maintenance Reimbursement Program
Primary Point of Contact:	Public Works, City of Staunton
Support:	• Community Development Department, City of Staunton • Dominion Energy • Uniontown Residents
Anticipated Benefits:	Improved safety and quality of life, as well as aesthetic improvements
Steps/Phases:	• Conduct borings to determine structural integrity of roadways • Identify the scope of the improvements. • Determine the cost associated with the project. • Present findings to elected and appointed officials. • Develop timing with other improvements, such as public water and sewer. • Adopt a capital budget with these improvements. • Pursue right-of-way acquisition, engineering, and construction.

Action A.2: Improve the internal roadway network conditions and provide streetlights	
Timeline:	The timeline depends on public water and sewer improvements, making this a long-term improvement.
Additional Comments:	
Given the limited right-of-way, there are limited options for widening the road surface or adding sidewalks. The Community requested improved road surfaces and wanted to avoid condemnation of existing homes. The following rendering depicts concepts for new development and streets.	

Action A.3: Develop a property owner education program to inform Uniontown's owners of their rights and opportunities.

Many property owners in Uniontown are not aware of the implications of the local zoning code and what they can and cannot do with their land. A property education program would provide basic information about current and future zoning and the value of homeownership and wealth building. This could be a printed document that explains property rights and opportunities.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	The Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low (staff and volunteer time)
Resources:	• Habitat for Humanity, • HomeAid America, • Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP) • Virginia Housing
Primary Point of Contact:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Support:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Anticipated Benefits:	• Raising awareness about the ability to make home improvements. • Improving literacy about homeownership and wealth building.
Steps/Phases:	• Identify someone to lead this effort. • Accumulate online property owner education material for distribution.
Timeline:	Immediate - within 6 months

Additional Comments:

The Community Survey indicated that approximately 35% of respondents with Uniontown affiliations needed more information on proposed rezonings. Additionally, this action could include materials beyond zoning to help with general property education.

Action A.4: Survey lots to improve property boundaries and records.

The Uniontown area was settled since the late-1800s. Many property records are inaccurate, using outdated monuments such as large trees or other natural features to mark parcel boundaries. These limited records can make property redevelopment more difficult. This issue can also be a challenge with infrastructure investments, if there is uncertainty with property lines, easements, and rights-of-way. Additionally, the City's GIS records appear to have errors with property boundaries.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	Uniontown Steering Committee

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	The cost to inventory property records could be low if the effort relied on staff and volunteer time. However, if this action required surveying work, costs would dramatically increase.
Resources:	• Courthouse property records • Smart & Byers subdivision records
Primary Point of Contact:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Support:	• Community Development Department, City of Staunton • Public Works, City of Staunton • Mary Baldwin College
Anticipated Benefits:	• An updated property survey can help ensure that property lines are current and accurate. • Accurate records can assist with property sales. • This action helps define developable areas.
Steps/Phases:	• Research existing property records to determine what properties need updated surveys • Communicate with Staunton City Engineering Department to request surveying.
Timeline:	An inventory of property records could occur within the next year (12 months).

Additional Comments:

This action may include various parts. First would be an inventory of properties and their existing records. There should be coordination with Mary Baldwin College to determine if this could be a class project. This could also be an intern project from City Hall. Next, this effort should identify which plats are inaccurate or determined by outdated monuments. Finally, the City's GIS division should update the parcel boundaries using the most updated information from this research.

Goal B. Sense of Community – Action Tables

There are five actions under Goal B. The first recommendation is the highest priority action for the complete set of 18 tables. Action B.1 should be the most immediate action, with overwhelming community support. The following two recommendations are underway as the community began discussions with the local Habitat Chapter and the planning process started evaluating existing properties. Action B.4 involves community cleanup events and is a low-cost option for the neighborhood to build momentum for longer-term efforts. The rural character table (B.5) will require additional coordination with the City's Planners.

Action B1: Update the Zoning Map to Reflect Uniontown's Vision for single-family residential.

Uniontown has been a primarily residential community since its early settlement. However, the current industrial zoning has prevented homeowners from improving their property. In response, the City should develop a new residential zoning district, tailored to Uniontown's specific and unique needs. The City would then apply that zoning to the properties identified in the proposed zoning map.

Background Information:

Sources:	• The City of Staunton – attempted rezoning in 2021 • Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	The Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation. The Steering Committee listed this as a high-priority action.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low - Staff Time
Resources:	Staff Time
Primary Point of Contact:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Support:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Anticipated Benefits:	• A rezoning to residential would allow property owners to make home improvements and build residential uses. • Foster home improvements and new home construction.
Steps/Phases:	• Develop a new zoning district • **Notify owners and adjacent properties of proposed zoning change** • Hold public hearing
Timeline:	Immediate (within 6 months)

Additional Comments:

The Community Survey indicated that approximately 35% of respondents with Uniontown affiliations needed more information on proposed rezonings. Some property owners may decide to retain their existing zoning.

Zoning Map

Proposed Residential Rezoning in Uniontown

Action B.2: Partner with Housing Groups to construct new, quality, affordable homes on existing lots comparable in size and scale to what existed previously.

Housing-related organizations can assist with residential development targeting existing residents, property owners, and lower to moderate-income households. While some organizations (such as Habitat for Humanity) specialize in construction, other groups (like Housing Virginia) can assist with financing. During the Neighborhood Action Plan process, consultants contacted potential partnerships.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation.

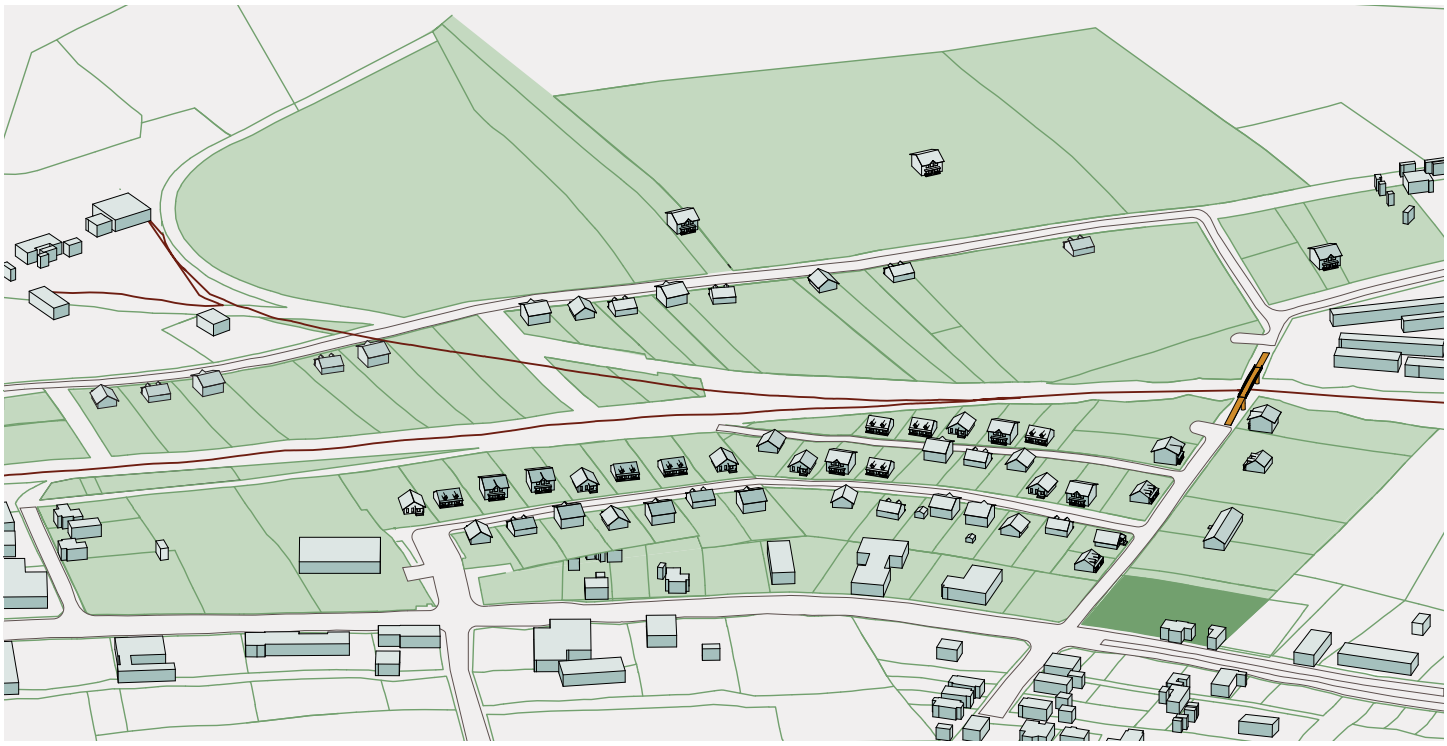
Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low - Staff Time
Resources:	Staff Time
Primary Point of Contact:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Support:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Anticipated Benefits:	Financing a project through a public-private partnership can allow a project to be completed sooner or make development possible.
Steps/Phases:	• Meet with affordable housing organizations that provide funding or sweat equity services. • Although not a Staunton area organization, meet with the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP) to gain some strategies for home repair. • Identify local builders that have a record of accomplishment for building affordable housing.
Timeline:	Staff should continue to coordinate with potential partners over the next year. Redevelopment of the site will require the rezoning action (B.1) and likely the water and sewer extensions (A.1).

Additional Comments:

Action B.2: Partner with Housing Groups to construct new, quality, affordable homes on existing lots comparable in size and scale to what existed previously.

This action represents work on developing partnerships and the beginning of a development plan. It does not include the actual redevelopment work that would arise from this effort. Habitat for Humanity attended a Steering Committee meeting and expressed interest. However, those statements did not constitute a formal statement. Other housing funders expressed informal interest in getting involved. The following renderings represent concepts for residential redevelopment.



Action B.3: Evaluate the condition of remaining vacant structures to determine what can be repaired and what might need to be removed.

The Neighborhood Action Plan recorded property conditions to assess the existing conditions. This action includes removing structures beyond repair and records to help with redevelopment.

Background Information:

Sources:	SWOT Analysis
Community Feedback	The Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low - Elements of this are complete with the Neighborhood Action Plan. However, blight removal requires additional funds.
Resources:	Refer to materials from the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP) for home improvements. Blight removal may require local funds.
Primary Point of Contact:	Building Services Division, City of Staunton
Support:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Anticipated Benefits:	• Allow the community to gain awareness of the extent of repairs needed. • Identify opportunities to preserve elements of the community. • Remove blighted structures to help with reinvestment.
Steps/Phases:	• Identify programs to assist with the removal of blighted structures. • Coordinate with partners on property records to identify redevelopment opportunities. • Identify programs to assist with home repair.
Timeline:	Immediate to Long-term (one to two years)

Additional Comments:

The Neighborhood Action Plan provides the first initial steps for this action. With residential zoning, private property owners may have incentives to remove blighted structures with redevelopment. Several property owners expressed their intentions to renovate or remove structures and rebuild. Refer to Actions B.1 and B.2.

Action B.4: Organize Regular Community Clean-Up Events and Beautification Efforts.

The condition of homes and properties is a central concern for the neighborhood. Several lots have overgrown vegetation. Many structures have deterioration on building components, such as roofs, windows, foundations, and exterior walls. Several properties have clutter and garbage stored on-site. Regular clean-up events and beautification efforts will enhance the sense of neighborhood pride of homeowners and residents.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	The Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low
Resources:	Volunteer Time
Primary Point of Contact:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Support:	• Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts • Local High School Community Service Groups
Anticipated Benefits:	• Help build community pride. • Provide a low-cost way of improving the community. • Improve beautification and potential for reinvestment.
Steps/Phases:	• Inventory maintenance issues • Coordinate volunteers, especially young people, such as scouting groups or high school service organizations • Conduct a community clean-up day
Timeline:	Immediate

Additional Comments:

The Steering Committee can organize community clean-up activities at any time. Consider a list of requests if property owners need help with property maintenance, such as removing debris or managing vegetation. This type of action is essential to help maintain momentum for long-term and expensive recommendations.

Action B.5: Preserve natural habitats to maintain the rural feel.

During the Building Bridges event on April 29, 2023, attendees identified Uniontown's rural feel as an asset. People described how the neighborhood is in the City but retains a natural aesthetic. While the Neighborhood Action Plan calls for Uniontown's redevelopment to be consistent with its historical development patterns, there are opportunities for preserving rural elements. This action calls for keeping some properties as wooded areas, maintaining vegetative buffers along the railroad, retaining rural roadway and development standards, and creating an appropriate residential scale.

Background Information:

Sources:	Building Bridges Event
Community Feedback	Uniontown residents at the Building Bridges Event discussed this idea.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Costs may include staff time for developing requirements for buffers and preserved areas. If the City created natural park space, then costs would include the purchase of property and long-term maintenance. Any sale of private property should be purely voluntary.
Resources:	Staff time
Primary Point of Contact:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Support:	• Development Partners • Uniontown Steering Committee
Anticipated Benefits:	• Maintain the neighborhood's character. • Allow for environmental features that support overall community well-being.
Steps/Phases:	• Coordinate with development partners to maintain rural elements with new construction. • Work with property owners to preserve select parcels as wooded areas. • Coordinate with Public Works on sustaining rural roadway standards on appropriate streets.
Timeline:	Medium to Long-Term

Action B.5: Preserve natural habitats to maintain the rural feel.

Additional Comments:

This action consists of multiple parts with different timelines and costs. Coordinating with development partners of specific standards would be an immediate action at a low cost. Working with property owners to preserve natural areas would also be a short-term and cost-effective effort. Staff could also include tree buffers and other standards in the new residential zoning district. Roadway improvements would be a long-term project with higher potential expenses.

Goal C. Preservation – Action Tables

There are four actions under Goal C. These low-cost activities can help maintain the community's momentum as it works with the City on longer-term efforts. Mary Baldwin College would be an important stakeholder and resource in developing these history-based materials.

Action C1: Re-establish access to the Uniontown Chapel Cemetery.

The Uniontown Chapel Cemetery is a one-acre lot within a larger parcel, owned by the quarry operation. The cemetery is a resting place for generations of Uniontown residents. However, quarry debris currently blocks the path to access these burials. The Uniontown Steering Committee should work with the City to research this access and identify ways of restoring a path.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	Uniontown Steering Committee

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Staff time
Resources:	Staff and volunteer time
Primary Point of Contact:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Support:	• Community Development Department, City of Staunton • Mary Baldwin College
Anticipated Benefits:	• Preserve and maintain the resting place of dozens of Uniontown residents. • Help connect the community with its past.
Steps/Phases:	• Conduct property research into legal access to the cemetery. • Coordinate with the quarry operation to reestablish access to the site. • Identify ways for long-term maintenance of the graves. • Research the cemetery and identify individuals buried there.
Timeline:	Immediate to long-term.

Additional Comments:

There are several elements to this action. Property research began during the neighborhood planning process. The Uniontown Steering Committee can work with City staff to identify easements and access to the one-acre site. City staff may need to help coordinate with the quarry operation. Mary Baldwin College or a City intern could help research the cemetery and document its history. If the community can reestablish this access, then the Committee should identify strategies for maintaining the grave sites.

Action C.2: Develop a Pamphlet (or similar promotional material) to Communicate Uniontown's History.

The Shenandoah Valley Black Heritage Project has self-guided African American history tours throughout the region. Uniontown can celebrate its significance and invite the community to learn more about its underappreciated past by participating in this project. The Building Bridges event focused on this action.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Old Uniontown Glances Backward • Roots Run Deep - www.rootsrundeep.org
Community Feedback	• Uniontown Steering Committee • Building Bridges Event

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low (volunteer hours for research, costs for printing)
Resources:	National Trust for Historic Preservation: https://savingplaces.org/african-american-cultural-heritage
Primary Point of Contact:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Support:	• Mary Baldwin College • August County Historical Society • Historic Staunton Foundation • Roots Run Deep - www.rootsrundeep.org
Anticipated Benefits:	• Greater appreciation of its history will help support reinvestment in the neighborhood's future. • Materials from this action may also support grant applications and other funding programs to achieve the neighborhood's reinvestment.
Steps/Phases:	• Review "Old Uniontown Glances Backward" for neighborhood history • Coordinate with property owners, residents, and Staunton Historical Society to gather historic photos of the neighborhood. • Develop a list of significant sites and structures to highlight in materials. • Consider including information on the cemetery and those buried there. • Consider working with Mary Baldwin University
Timeline:	Immediate

Action C.2: Develop a Pamphlet (or similar promotional material) to Communicate Uniontown's History.

Additional Comments:

The Uniontown Steering Committee was focused on the neighborhood's history during the planning process. The group should build relationships with the groups listed under supporting cast. There may be opportunities for grant funding. Refer to the National Trust for Historic Preservation resource. The community can also coordinate with the Roots Run Deep effort.

Action C.3: Create an Online Presence that Documents Uniontown's History.

The Shenandoah Valley Black Heritage Project has self-guided African American history tours throughout the region that can be downloaded online. Uniontown can celebrate its significance and invite the community to learn more about its underappreciated past by participating in this project.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Old Uniontown Glances Backward • Roots Run Deep - www.rootsrundeep.org
Community Feedback	• Uniontown Steering Committee • Building Bridges Event

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low (volunteer time)
Resources:	https://savingplaces.org/african-american-cultural-heritage https://aaslestad.com/index.html
Primary Point of Contact:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Support:	Mary Baldwin College
Anticipated Benefits:	• Greater appreciation of its history will help support reinvestment in the neighborhood's future. • Materials from this action may also support grant applications and other funding programs to achieve the neighborhood's reinvestment.

Action C.3: Create an Online Presence that Documents Uniontown's History.

Steps/Phases:	• Review "Old Uniontown Glances Backward" for neighborhood history. • Coordinate with property owners, residents, and the Staunton Historical Society to gather historic photos of the neighborhood. • Develop a list of significant sites and structures to highlight in materials. • Consider including information on the cemetery and those buried there. • Consider working with Mary Baldwin University
Timeline:	Medium-term

Additional Comments:

This action would precede Action C.2. The Steering Committee should explore ways to develop an online presence that effectively communicates its history.

Action C.4: Install Historical Markers and Plaques that Communicate Uniontown's History and the Stories of its People.

Uniontown believes historical markers and plaques that communicate its history of people and place are essential to neighborhood preservation and other related goals. Historic markers, plaques, and other informative displays along neighborhood streets and Richmond Avenue could raise awareness of the history.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	• Uniontown Steering Committee • Building Bridges Event

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Medium (less than $1 million dollars)
Resources:	Local Funds
Primary Point of Contact:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Support:	• Community Development Department, City of Staunton • Public Works, City of Staunton
Anticipated Benefits:	• Greater appreciation of its history will help support reinvestment in the neighborhood's future. • Materials from this action may also support grant applications and other funding programs to achieve the neighborhood's reinvestment.
Steps/Phases:	• Review "Old Uniontown Glances Backward" for neighborhood history. • Coordinate with property owners, residents, and the Staunton Historical Society to gather historic photos of the neighborhood. • Develop a list of significant sites and structures to highlight in materials. • Consider including information on the cemetery and those buried there. • Consider working with Mary Baldwin University
Timeline:	Two or more years

Action C.4: Install Historical Markers and Plaques that Communicate Uniontown's History and the Stories of its People.

Additional Comments:
Signage would occur with the redevelopment of the neighborhood. Installing markers before that time may be counterproductive, as developers may need to move signage. Signage may also create issues for new roadwork if done before that action (A.2). Development partners could agree to include historic markers with new construction.

Action C.5: Ensure every school library has a copy of "Old Uniontown Glances Backwards" and other books/references documenting local history.

The Staunton Public Library has two copies of "Old Uniontown Glances Backwards" by Dr. Julius Gaines, a primary source for the Neighborhood Action Plan process. The Uniontown Steering Committee wanted to raise awareness of the community, and having additional access to this comprehensive historic resource would help achieve that aim.

Background Information:	
Sources:	SWOT Analysis
Community Feedback	Local Funds
Action Detailing:	
Estimated Cost:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Resources:	• City of Staunton School System • African American Heritage Festival Foundation
Primary Point of Contact:	There were no direct comments on this action.
Support:	Low (cost to purchase additional books)
Anticipated Benefits:	Fosters greater appreciation and awareness of Uniontown's history, especially among local youth
Steps/Phases:	Contact the African American Heritage Festival Foundation to obtain additional copies and/or request permission to reprint.
Timeline:	Immediate

Additional Comments:
During the neighborhood planning process, the group had trouble accessing a copy of this book. Given its importance, consultants thought there should be additional copies available.

Goal D. Reestablish Connections - Action Tables

This goal involves four actions, including a high-priority recommendation (D.1). The community wants to examine further alternatives to spanning the railroad, to reconnect the north and south sides of Uniontown. The second action would be a lower-cost effort to help identify the neighborhood and tie it to the surrounding corridor. Action D.3 is another lower-cost effort that would tie into the City's required five-year Comprehensive Plan update. The final recommendation is one of the more complicated actions, which will require close coordination with the Planning Department.

Action D1: Examine Options at the former National Avenue Bridge Site.

In 2001, the railroad removed the National Avenue Bridge due to its poor condition and replaced it with a new connector road along Frontier Drive. The National Avenue bridge was a critical connection between the northern and southern portions of Uniontown. During the Neighborhood Action Planning process, residents expressed a desire for a new link to promote connectivity among residents. Consultants coordinated with Public Works to develop considerations, including roadway approaches, right-of-way needs, and costs. However, there would need to be additional work on alignments, engineering, and costs to determine feasible options.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	The Uniontown Steering Committee and community survey supported this recommendation. The Steering Committee listed this as a high-priority action. Attendees at the Bridging Bridges event also supported this connection.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	High (exact cost depends on alternatives) • A vehicular bridge would likely cost over $15 million, not including right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and future public engagement. • A bike and pedestrian bridge could cost less than $10 million. Note that there are numerous variables that would influence costs. The City would need a design and engineering to determine exact finances.
Resources:	• Local Capital funds • Transportation Alternative funds
Primary Point of Contact:	Public Works, City of Staunton
Support:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Anticipated Benefits:	• Easy access to both sides of Uniontown by pedestrians or potentially emergency access vehicles. • Further reestablish a sense of community. • Support redevelopment on both sides of the railroad. • Reestablish the waterline connection that would improve circulation and water quality.

Action D1: Examine the construction of the National Avenue Bridge.

Steps/Phases:	• Explore options for spanning the railroad and improve cost estimates. • Contact the railroad to begin discussions about potential crossing options (inquire about previous bridge design plans and documentation about bridge removal) • Contact VDOT to discuss minimum design requirements • Produce conceptual drawings to show project impacts • Discuss project impacts with property owners and residents • Explore funding options for bridge construction
Timeline:	Long Term (multi-year)

Additional Comments:

A vehicular bridge would likely be infeasible. It would require the condemnation of several properties on National Avenue and the removal of several existing homes. The restored connection would also affect the Richmond Road intersection. The National Cemetery would limit the space needed to improve that location. With no documented transportation needs, the state would not help fund vehicular access, given the required standards and available funding. However, a bike and pedestrian bridge would be more feasible and have fewer impacts on adjacent properties. This option could also help reconnect the waterline to the northern and southern systems, improving water quality. Under any scenario, the City would need to coordinate with the railroad. That coordination would likely take at least three years before any progress on a design.

Action D2: Examine gateway treatments on National Avenue that makes Uniontown visible from Richmond Road.

Members of the Uniontown Steering Committee mentioned that there was limited awareness of the neighborhood. There were no markers that honored its past nor official recognition of its boundaries. Gateway treatments, like signage and landscaping, would recognize Uniontown, improve community pride, and bring general awareness.

Background Information:

Sources:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Community Feedback	Members of the Uniontown Steering Committee mentioned this idea.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Medium (in the range of $50,000). Refer to the Gypsy Hill Park signage project for approximate costs.
Resources:	Local funding
Primary Point of Contact:	Public Works, City of Staunton
Support:	• Uniontown Steering Committee • Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Anticipated Benefits:	• Provides a visually appealing entrance. • Fosters reinvestment in the neighborhood. • Honors unique heritage and History.
Steps/Phases:	• Develop concepts for gateway treatments on National Avenue. • Develop a budget for signage and other improvements. • Coordinate with property owners if additional right-of-way is needed. • Approve a budget for installation.
Timeline:	Mid Term (one to two years)

Additional Comments:

The Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan includes initial concepts as a starting point for further study. The major challenge will be space for treatments.

UNIONTOWN

Action D.3: Update the City of Staunton's Comprehensive Plan to Show Uniontown as an Essential part of the Richmond Road Corridor.

The City of Staunton last updated its comprehensive plan in 2019. This plan is the City's primary policy document and the basis for all land use regulations, capital investments, and initiatives. The current plan mentions Uniontown once, under a timeline of Staunton's history. The future land use map depicts the rezoning application attempted in 2021, which would have designated much of the neighborhood as Residential (R-2). To better support the Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan, the City should incorporate this document into the comprehensive plan and update the future land use map. The State of Virginia requires that localities review their comprehensive plans every five years. With a 2019 adoption date, the next update would be 2024.

Background Information:

Sources:	SWOT Analysis
Community Feedback	There were no direct comments on this action.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low (staff time)
Resources:	Comprehensive Plan
Primary Point of Contact:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Support:	Uniontown Steering Committee
Anticipated Benefits:	Allows for future development to promote the protection of this historically significant neighborhood.
Steps/Phases:	• Initiate a comprehensive plan review. • Incorporate Uniontown into the plan update process. • Adopt elements of the Neighborhood Action Plan into the comprehensive plan.
Timeline:	2024

Additional Comments:

Members of the Steering Committee thought that the existing comprehensive plan conflicted with the community's vision. Staff should reevaluate the future land use map, per the proposed zoning in Action B.1. The plan should also incorporate the recommendations in these action tables.

Action D.4: Redesign Uniontown's Commercial Properties on Richmond Road to Reflect the Neighborhood.

Currently, commercial properties along Richmond Avenue have no connection with the Uniontown neighborhood. There may be opportunities to redevelop these properties to acknowledge the neighborhood. This action may include exploration of new zoning standards to address commercial development in this area. It could also involve economic development efforts.

Background Information:

Sources:	SWOT Analysis
Community Feedback	In the Community Survey, there were comments about developing new commercial properties.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Low (staff time)
Resources:	Staff time
Primary Point of Contact:	Community Development Department, City of Staunton
Support:	Economic Development, City of Staunton
Anticipated Benefits:	• This action will foster a sense of place. • This action will also enhance the visibility and attractiveness of local businesses. • Improving the commercial properties along Richmond Avenue could also help set the tone for future development on the corridor.
Steps/Phases:	• Review City of Staunton's Corridor Analysis Report (2022) to ensure proposed design guidelines meet neighborhood desires. • Explore possible zoning approaches along the corridor. • Identify redevelopment opportunities at this mid-point of the Richmond Road corridor. • Explore changes to the comprehensive plan that could help connect commercial uses with their adjacent residential areas.
Timeline:	Mid-term (one year)

Additional Comments:

Currently, this action is relatively vague. Redeveloping these commercial properties to connect with the Uniontown neighborhood would require an integrated approach, including comprehensive plan revisions, zoning approaches, and economic development programming.

Appendices

Appendix A. Steering Committee Report

Appendix B. Community Survey Results

APPENDIX A: Steering Committee Report

The Uniontown Steering Committee met six times throughout the planning process. These meetings occurred in City Hall but offered a call-in option for those that could not attend in-person. There was no formal process for identifying membership, which consisted primarily of property owners and long-term residents. Other stakeholders and partners attended, based on the meeting agendas. The groups scope included:

- Defining goals for Uniontown,
- Overseeing the development of community actions and recommendations,
- Helping the consultant team identify and reach important stakeholders, and
- Reviewing and editing the Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan.

Meeting Schedule

The Steering Committee conducted six meetings. Project consultants prepared 90-minute agendas and packets for each meeting. Gathering dates included:

- **Meeting #1:** Thursday, March 23, 2023.
- **Meeting #2**: Thursday, April 6, 2023.
- **Meeting #3:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023.
- **Meeting #4**: Wednesday, May 17, 2023.
- **Meeting #5**: Wednesday, June 7, 2023.
- **Meeting #6:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023.

After their July 12th meeting, the Committee spent two weeks reviewing the draft Neighborhood Action Plan. The group reconvened for a conference call to discuss any remaining comments and items.

Recurring Participations

While there was no formal membership of the Steering Committee, all attendees were welcome to participate. The following were core members that contributed to the process.

- **Cynthia Easterling**, Retired City Staff and Family Relation to Uniontown
- **Abraham Crawford**, Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **Ophie Kier**, Former City Council and Building Bridges Representative
- **Kenneth Venable**, NAACP
- **Amy Tillerson-Brown**, Mary Baldwin College
- **Barbara Lee,** Building Bridges Representative
- **Robert Stuart**, Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **Cynthia Crawford**, Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **Mabel C. Wilson**, Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **Saint Crawford III**, Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **Stuart Gaines,** Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **James Crawford**, Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **Clinton Davis**
- **Elaine Crawford Jordan**
- **Joe Crawford**
- **Jessica Crawford**
- **Latricia Crawford**
- **Trasonya Crawford**
- **Sharon Crawford**
- **Nathaniel Burress**, Property Owner and Former Planning Commissioner
- **John Stuart,** Long-Time Resident and Property Owner
- **Torri Wilson**
- **Millicent Stuart**
- **Edward Jordan**
- **Carolyn Wallace**
- **Claudia Gaines**
- **Zach Lewis**
- **Julius Jones**

Staff participants throughout the process included:

- Rodney Rhodes, Senior Planner
- Tim Hartless, City Planner

Other City staff that assist with this effort include:

- Jeff Johnston, Director of Public Works
- Lyle Hartt, City Engineer
- Charles Haney, City Assessor

APPENDIX B: Community Survey Results

As part of the Uniontown Neighborhood Action Plan, a community survey collected public comments on Uniontown (concerns, goals, and strategies to improve the neighborhood). This survey is one component of a larger engagement effort to develop a vision for this historic part of Staunton. After opening the survey, consultants collected responses for over a month, and then assembled results in this report.

Survey Background

There were several groups involved with the survey development and distribution. The City of Staunton contracted with consultants (EPR, P.C.) to facilitate the planning process. A Uniontown Steering Committee (composed of residents, property owners, and interested parties) reviewed the survey, and helped with distribution. In April, "Building Bridges for the Greater Good" held a community meeting to discuss Uniontown and directed attendees to the survey.

Distribution

The project team and Steering Committee used various channels to distribute the survey.

- **Mailing:** Consultants sent a mailing that distributed a hardcopy version to every property owner and every property address in the neighborhood study area. The mailing included a QR code that directed people to an online version.
- **City website:** City staff posted an electronic version of the survey to the City of Staunton website.
- **April Event:** Members of the Steering Committee attended a "Building Bridges for the Greater Good" event, where long-term residents spoke about what was lost over Uniontown's past. Consultants provided hardcopy surveys at the well-attended event.
- **Uniontown Steering Committee:** Steering Committee members responded to the survey and helped with distribution to other residents, property owners, and interested parties.

Response Data

- There were 86 total survey responses.
- The completion rate was 87%, meaning that 13% did not respond to all the questions.
- The average response time was 12 minutes and 26 seconds.

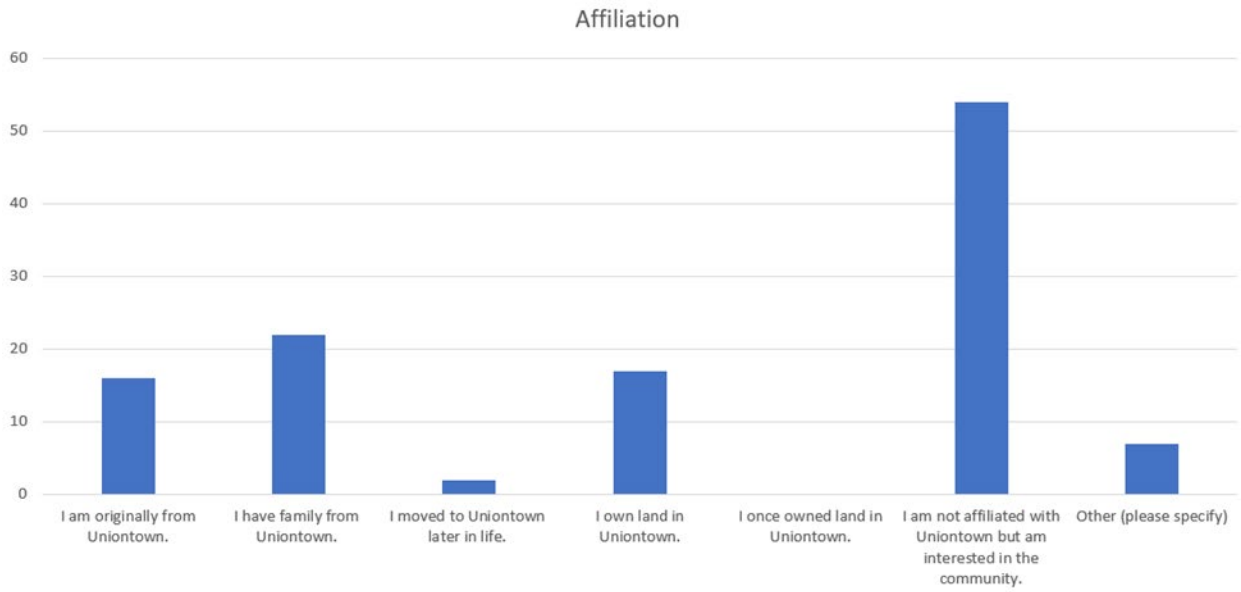
Survey Questions and Results

The survey consisted of 23 questions, which focused on identifying needs, vetting a community vision, and identifying strategies for achieving goals.

Question 1: Affiliation

Describe your affiliation with the Uniontown community. (Select all that apply)

Almost 63 percent of respondents had no affiliation with Uniontown. Many of those responses appear to be tied to the April "Building Bridges" event. The following questions include a breakout of results by category from this first question.



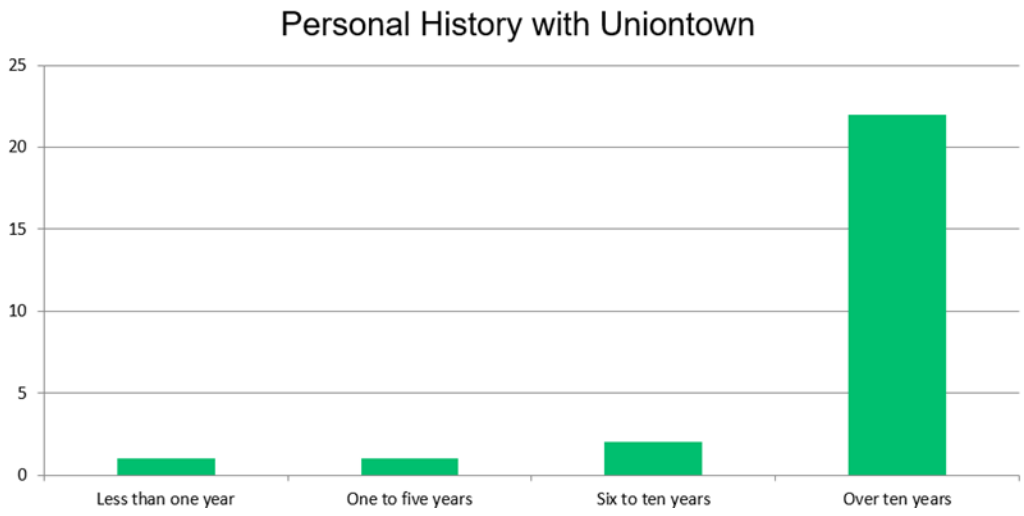
Other Responses:

- I just moved to Staunton.
- WE OWN MULTIPLE LOTS THROUGHOUT UNIONTOWN
- I'm a realtor and sold a property in Uniontown in 2022
- Close family friends for over 60 years
- Staunton resident
- I helped with gathering the information for the timeline.
- Real estate agent. Lots of land zoned industry. Surrounding would is and could be a nice neighborhood.

Question 2: Personal History with Uniontown

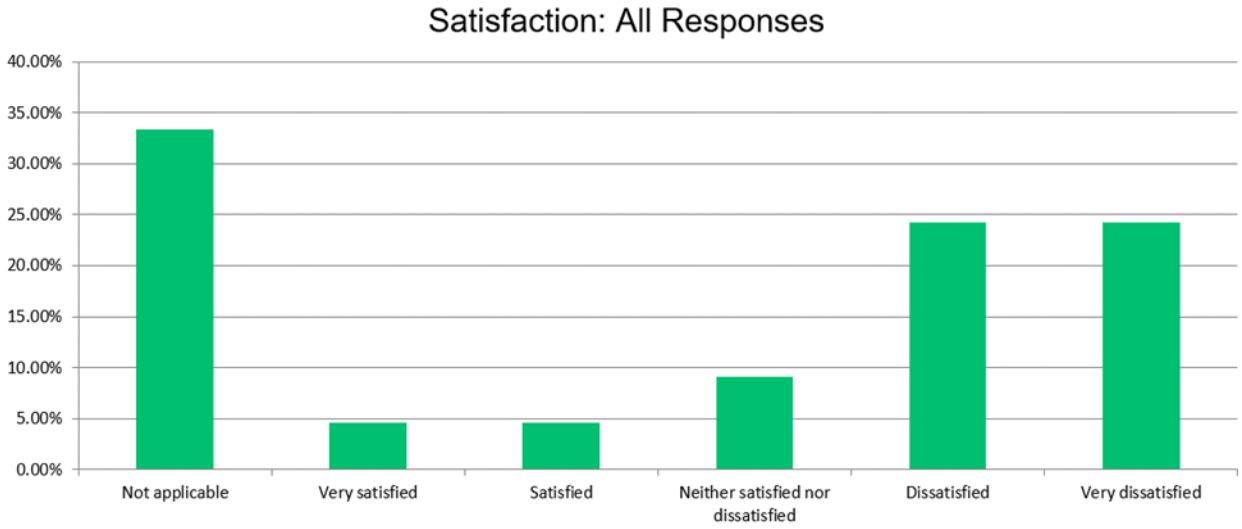
If you live or own property in Uniontown, describe how long.

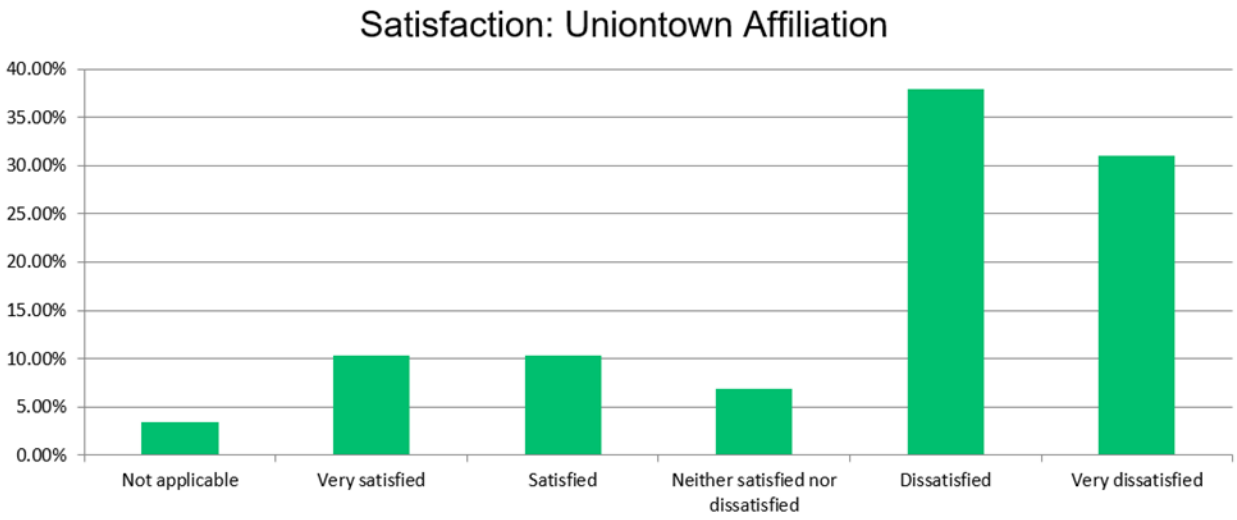
There were 26 people that responded to question 2.



Question 3: Satisfaction

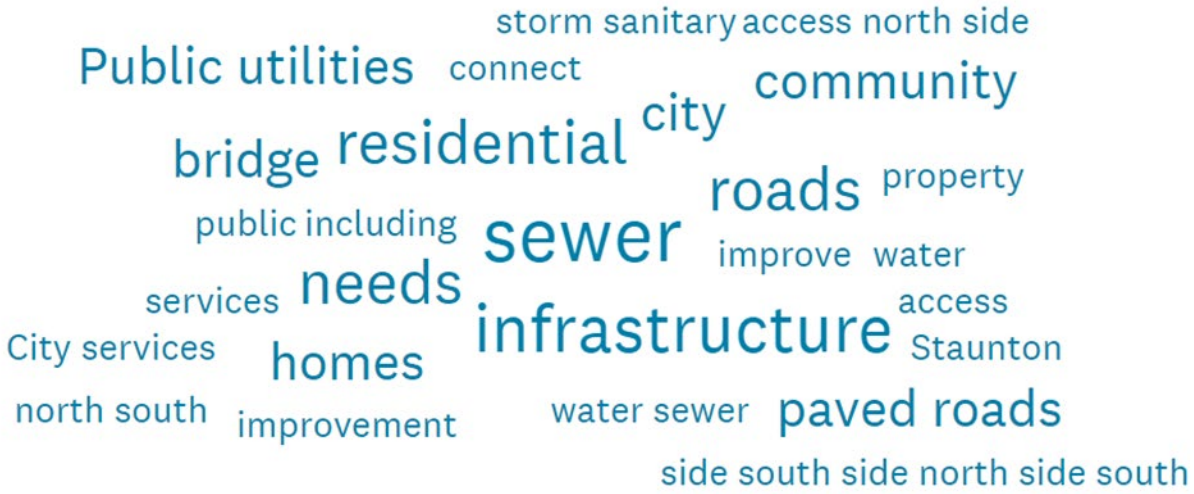
Are you satisfied with the overall quality of life in Uniontown?





Question 4: Recommended Improvements

What is needed to improve the overall quality of life in Uniontown?



Individual Responses

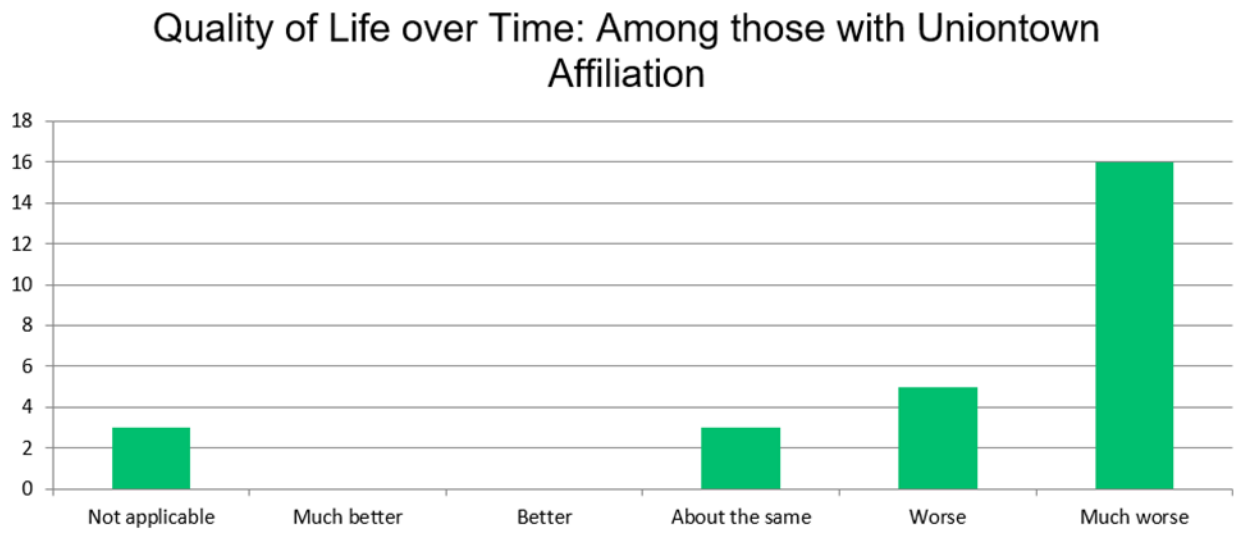
- A water and sewer system. The right to have their homes renovated.
- improved and or added infrastructure and services compatible and equitable to other city locations. Including water, sewage, garbage, pavements, signs, etc.
- rezoning, sewer, paving roads, improving homes.
- Underserved community needs to be rezoned to be able to maintain their homes. They need roads, sewer and water. Some of this area should be a park.
- very dissatisfied
- Over the years, I feel that National Ave and Anthony St have been neglected and not serviced.
- Sewer, rezoning, paved roads, improvement of homes
- Need public roads and sewer, paved roads.
- Public - private investment

- The bridge should be rebuilt to connect both sides of Staunton. Owners should be assisted to improve or rebuild properties including the sewer system.
- The northside of the RR tracks should stay industrial. The southside should continue discussions about rezoning to residential. The railroad tracks divide two very different tracts of land which are no longer connected to each other.
- Sewer system for small lots
- Same amenities the rest of Staunton has
- Home revitalization.
- re-zoning as residential; water/sewer connections; financing of housing and business development
- Development
- Public utilities, access to the north side from the south side.
- city water and sewer and replacement of bridge.
- Give this part of Staunton the access to water and sewage pipes, electrical lines, paving, streetlights, and any other infrastructural elements common to Staunton residents at no charge to them for installation, hardware, software, etc., They can pay for ongoing services like the rest of us.
- Public Utilities, access to north from south and from south to north, City services, paved streets.
- City planning to clear property and establish property boundaries so owners may assist in future planning ideas.
- in this order sewer/h20 $$commitment + compensation for original (annexation date) property owners - rezone - update infrastructure/open space walk paths trees - restore bridge to Anthony St. - Identify Uniontown's historical ref Historical society/Dr. Brown Mary Baldwin College
- To make the homes in Uniontown residential zoning instead of industrial and be hooked up to city sewer.
- Please help this part of Staunton become a dignified part of Staunton- roads and sewer support.
- Rights to reserve, sustain, build upon and enjoy historical and residential infrastructures.
- "The zoning needs to be changed from industrial to residential.
- Public sewer needs to be ran to the area, no excuse that it has been done considering all the commercial and apartment development within a mile.
- Lots are already divided per a plat map.
- This is a perfect opportunity for affordable single-family housing. Maybe team up with Habitat to create affordable single family under $250K.
- Updated utilities and a bridge for easier access to shopping and businesses.
- Repairing infrastructure
- Sewer is needed
- Connecting to city services, public utilities, city maintained paved roads with better access to the Richmond rd.
- A tighter community. Better access to community resources.
- Public utilities: Water, storm & sanitary sewer, electric, gas, roads. Access to the north side from the south side
- Public utilities able to south to north or north to south on national Ave pave roads
- Public utilities ,gas, storm and sanitary sewer, electric, internet, paved roads trash collection, access to north side from south side both directions. All infrastructure
- Infrastructure. Public utilities- water, sewer storm & sanitary. electrical. Paved Roads. Bridge. Access from north to south.
- The bridge needs to be repaired or replaced for cars and people to cross.

- What Mr. Kier is proposing sounds great.
- Good and reliable water and sewer systems.
- How about a code in code enforcement officer that goes around and makes people clean up their crappy properties
- Public-private investment, infrastructure repairs/restoration at a price that residents & landowners can afford.
- I don't know, I don't know enough about it, like who lives there, how many live there, and how long they live there under what conditions.
- The city needs to improve all aspects of that area. They have let that area just die.
- A thru road is a bare minimum.
- Restore the residential community, through rezoning and basic services that are equitable with the rest of the city's residential communities. Ensure those who are historic landowners have tax breaks and access to capital to restore their homeplaces.
- water, sewer, roads, streetlights, help residents get back on their feet.
- City services, zoning, a bridge, and protection from over development.
- Infrastructure including better roadways, sewer, water, and street lights.
- Infrastructure investment
- Improved connectivity (there's only one way in and out; removed the railroad; phase out adjacent industrial and business uses and zoning; provide public sewer and bring all roads up to standards including sidewalks. Enforce property maintenance codes.
- Sewer and water would be nice. Is this 2023?
- Grants to assist property owners in home improvement, restore bridge connection, community events, community garden
- Thriving businesses
- infrastructure improvements, including utilities, roads, bridge replacement or walkway
- "Water + Sewer Connections
- Rezone to Residential + build the bridge"

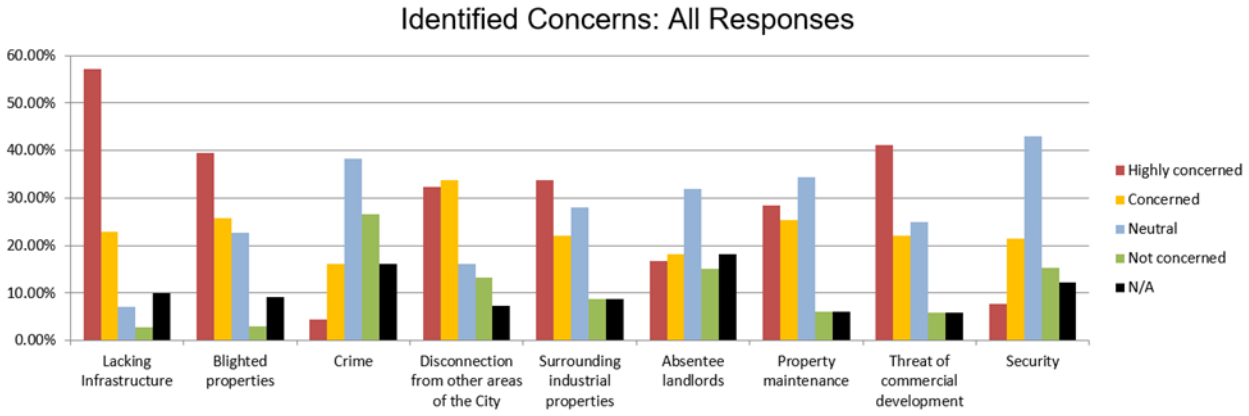
Question 5: Quality of Life over Time

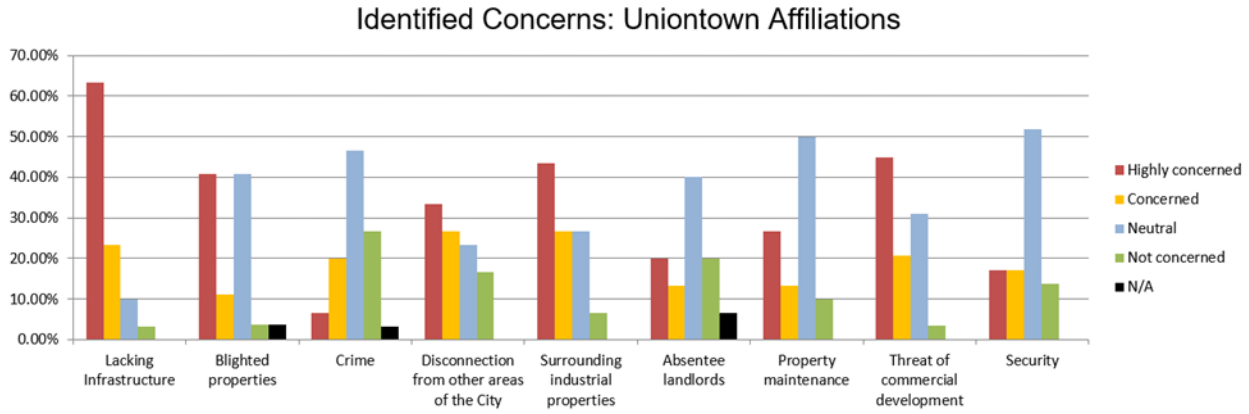
How does Uniontown's current quality of life compare to your earlier memories of the community?

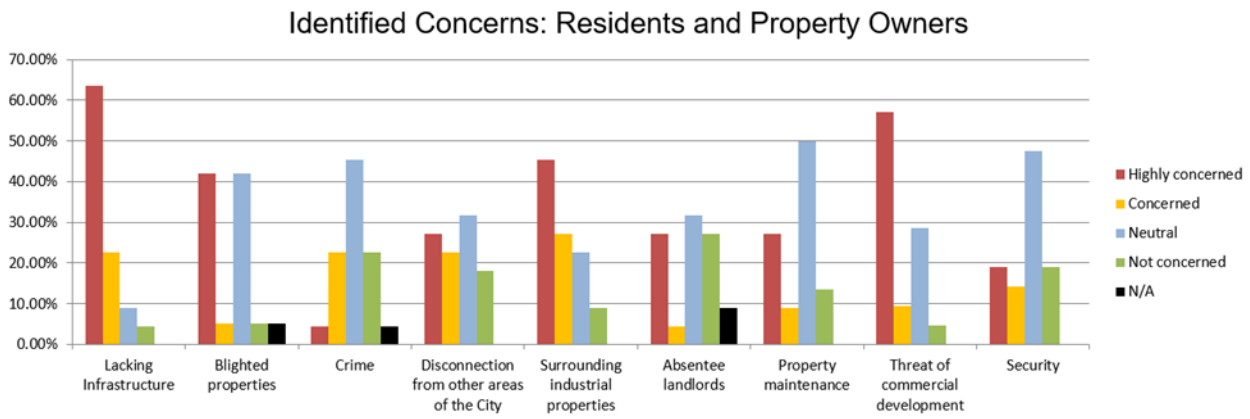


Question 6: Identifying Threats

What is the biggest threat to the viability of your neighborhood? (Indicate your level of concern on a scale of 1-5)







The main concerns are:

- Lacking Infrastructure,
- Threat of Commercial Development
- Threat of Industrial Development
- Blighted Properties

Question 7: Additional Threats

Are there other neighborhood threats that should be considered?

Individual Responses:

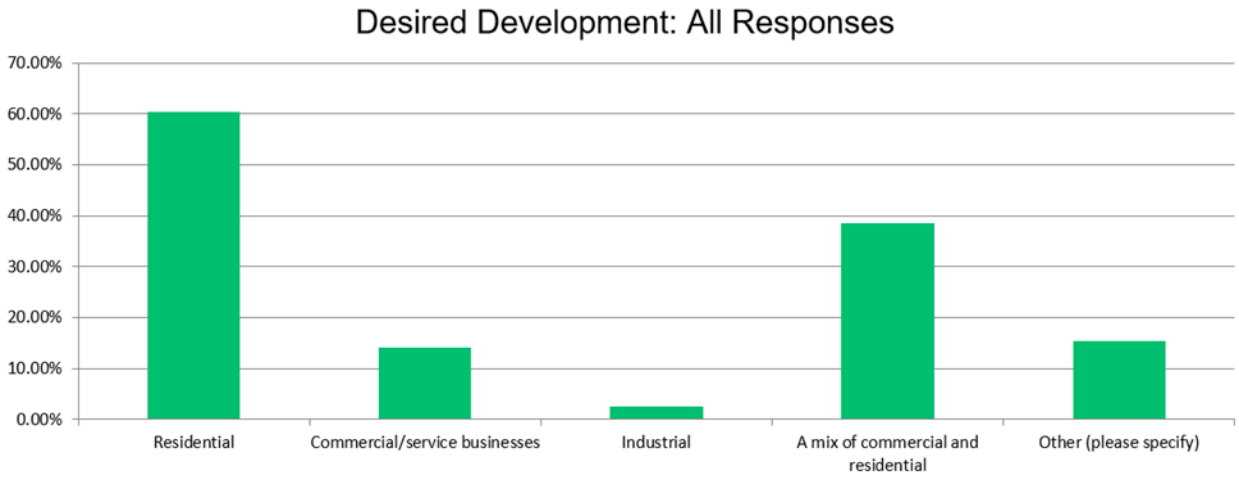
- Railroad and city coordination on property maintenance and improvements
- The people living there should not be displaced or priced out by the plan.
- Railroad expansion and thru traffic on Rt 250
- Commercial encroachment into residential spaces
- The possibility that owners and their descendants will not benefit from improvements.
- Rezoning property which will cause residential traffic to access through existing industrial areas. Residential will prevent other zoned industrial properties further down Anthony St. from being developed because of egress.
- And roadway improvements should be designed to prevent the road being easily used as a cut through. If it is a cut through, enough impediments (speed bumps, stop signs, a

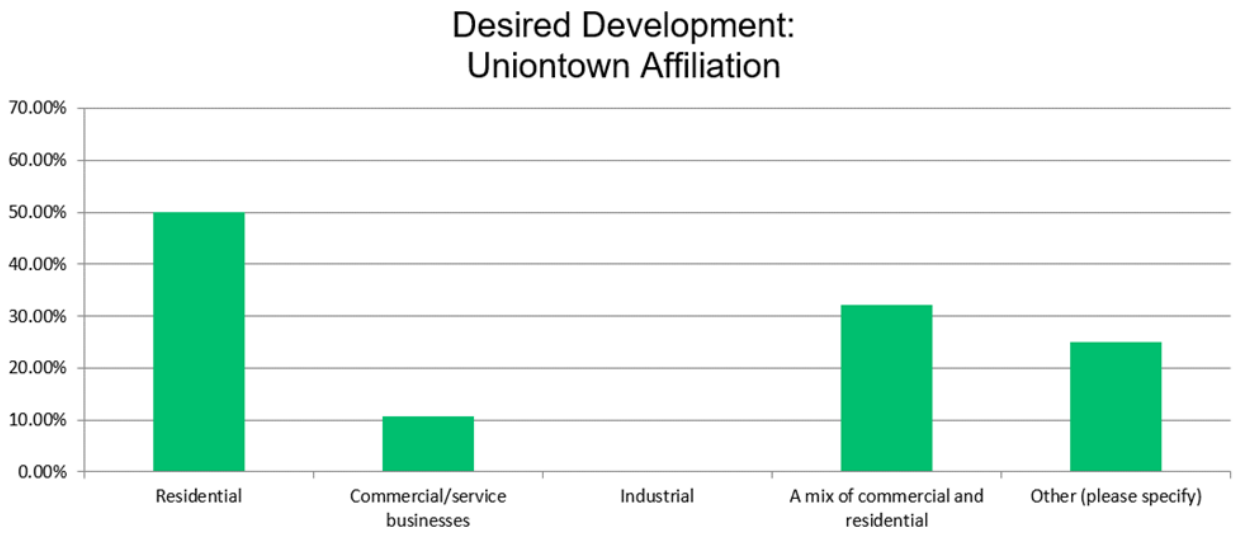
detour element, deterrent signage) should be employed to minimize cut throughs that would unnecessarily add to traffic in the residential area.

- The major threats are related to lack of attention/zone industrial from city since annexation == resulted in impossible for owner to build on their property = younger family members leave - land sold to investors who have no interest in its residential use
- The potential of homeless people squatting in the abandoned properties.
- Possible gentrification
- Illegal hunting bow and gun.
- Keeping property well cared for. Upkeep.
- This is for residents to address.
- I hope gentrification doesn't threaten the neighborhood.
- Flooding?
- I can't afford 20k to put in a sewer.
- Due to history of City undermining the community, conditions are created in which they feel forced to sell to a large developer.
- the number of people who have partial ownership of the lots in that area. hard to get a consensus on what to do with the property. People so poor they can't afford to keep their property up.
- Fear that things have been neglected for so long that the tipping point has passed == can the neighborhood realistically be saved after years of neglect (and worse)?
- Gentrification is a threat to the community. Commercial development is a threat to the community if it makes housing less affordable to current and historic residents.

Question 8: Desired Development

What types of development would you like to see in Uniontown? (Check all that apply)



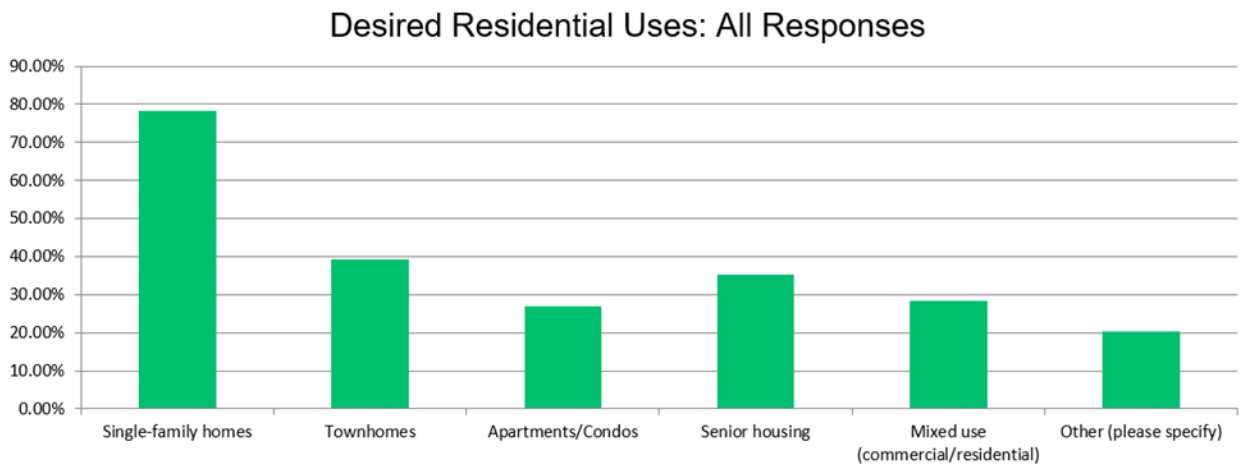


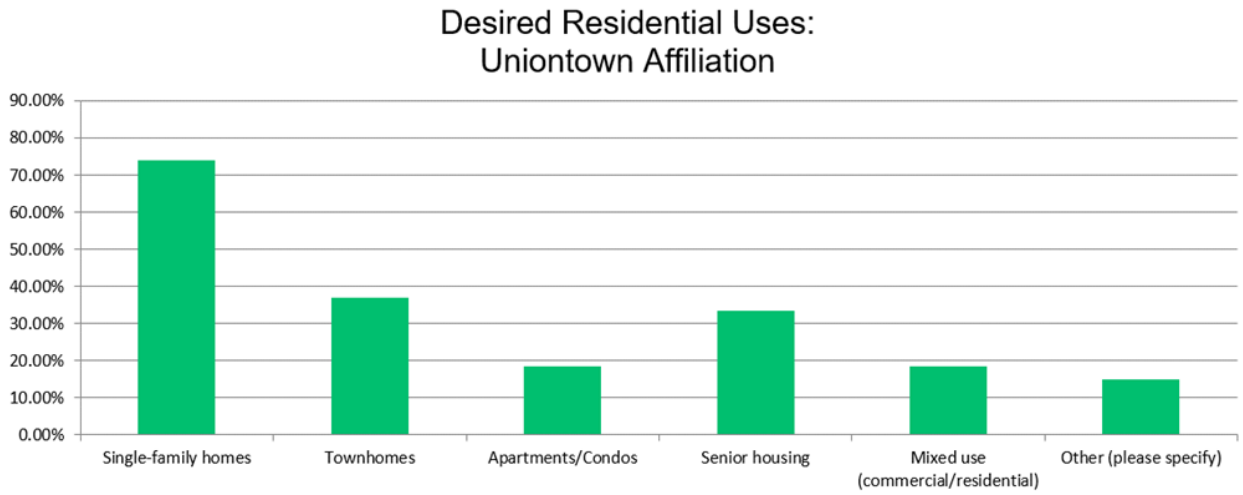
Other Responses:

- A planned walkable community with open green space, local shops. Any industrial needs to be in small, specific areas. No industry that is dirty, noisy, or will downgrade the area.
- The industrial side industrial. The residential side residential
- Need more detail
- Tiny home community
- If there is any commercial, it should have historic signage mandates, low light allowances, and be focused on Mom and Pop type establishments.
- Open space semi park-- walking paths appropriate trees/ plants
- Light commercial
- Build homes repair
- Single family Residential and remodel and repair existing homes. Businesses on Richmond Rd area.
- Voices of the historic landowners should be a guide, as well as needs of current and future generations
- Community event outdoor pavilion

Question 9: Desired Residential Uses

If you would like to see new residential development in Uniontown, describe your preferred housing types. (Check all that apply)





Other Responses:

- Commercial property must be in a separate neighborhood, away from residents.
- None for the north side, neighborhood appropriate on the southside.
- Any kind of affordable housing, preferably with ownership
- Need more detail.
- New Urbanism style design or single-family homes. Also a small park with playground for sure.
- Two -family, commercial area
- Affordable housing
- We need details on what Staunton means by mixed.
- Mixed residential, some single-family homes (maybe also with light agriculture?), and affordable housing
- Workforce and affordable housing.
- Affordable and appealing-consistent generally with the past community not necessarily a replica.
- Workforce housing
- Affordable housing

Question 10: Undesirable Uses

What things would you NOT like to see in Uniontown in the future?

Individual Responses

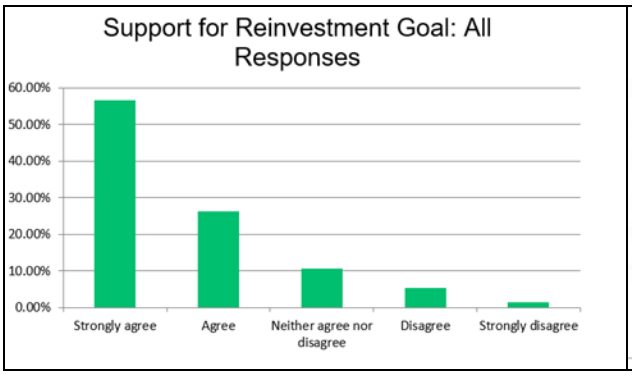
- More industrial
- Large complexes and large industrial operations
- commercial or industrial
- I would not like the current residents to become displaced or priced out of the area. 1) I would not like any heavy, dirty industries allowed. 2) I would not like all green space to be destroyed. 3) I would not like crime to become a problem by introducing only low-income housing
- Commercial/Industrial
- Commercial development not needed, what's there is enough
- An increase in commercia space
- Industrial facilities that produce dangerous waste or correctional facilities.
- Rezoning property that will hinder the ability to develop or use property that belongs to others.
- More automotive stores or industry
- Big Business
- More public funds sunk into it.
- Interests fade away.
- high-rise apartment/condo buildings, chain stores/restaurants
- The City of Staunton wasting limited financial resources to try to recreate what was a neglected area on the fringes of the city limits for its' entire history. Limited financial resources would be much better spent in other areas on other places that are equally important to Staunton's African American community.
- Industrial
- Billboards, flood lights, commercial or franchise chains.
- Industrial properties, Heavy commercial,
- "All commercial property
- Low-income housing
- Apartments"
- section H or Government subsidized housing
- Industrial or commercial businesses.

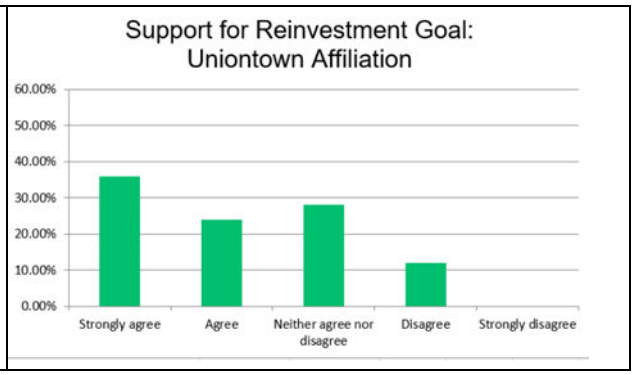
- Displacement of the current residents.
- Huge apartment complex, items that would attract the wrong crowd to the neighborhood such as huge playgrounds, pools and sport courts
- Industrial businesses taking over Union Town.
- More Industrial and commercial development
- "Low-income housing
- Landfill
- Heavy industrial equipment and manufacturing facilities "
- No more industrial businesses.
- Industrial of any kind.
- Heavy industrial
- "Stores taking over. Ore family living is needed
- Ot's a beautiful place. "
- Continued ignorance and neglect on the part of the City of Staunton. The City failed this neighborhood when it didn't kick in whatever it took to NOT sever water and sewer from this historic neighborhood.
- More rentals
- Private developers swooping in to buy land cheap & realize all the upside as the neighborhood improves.
- Industry
- No commercial
- Homeowners pressed to sell to commercial developers and the history of this historic town wiped out.
- Only large 'McMansion' development or only industrial. Would hate it if the historically Black community was forced out.
- Industry. Commercial development.
- turned into an industrial area or leave it the way it is.
- cookie cutter large scale apartments
- Pushing out the people who live there or making out of reach for those who want to come back.
- industrial and pure commercial development
- Industrial
- Apartments
- Blight.
- Industry
- no industrial development or heavy industrial
- Gentrification!
- More industrial
- Unaffordable housing

Questions 11-15: Community Goals

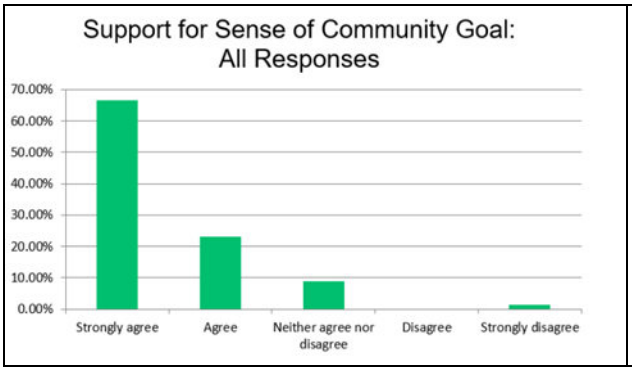
A steering committee of residents, property owners, and stakeholders drafted FOUR tentative goals statements to guide the action plan. In the following questions, please indicate your agreement (or disagreement) with these statements.

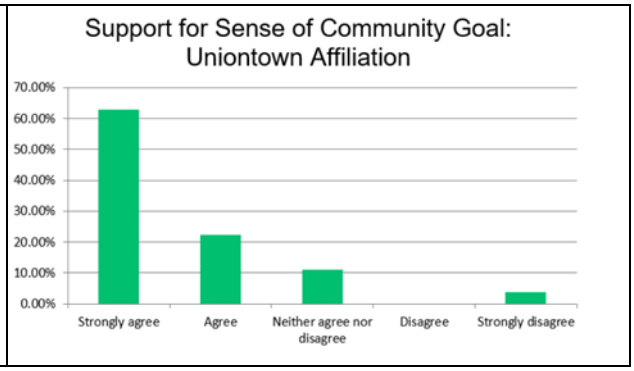
Q 11: Reinvestment: Pursue efforts to spur public and private reinvestments that help Uniontown thrive and grow while preserving its past.



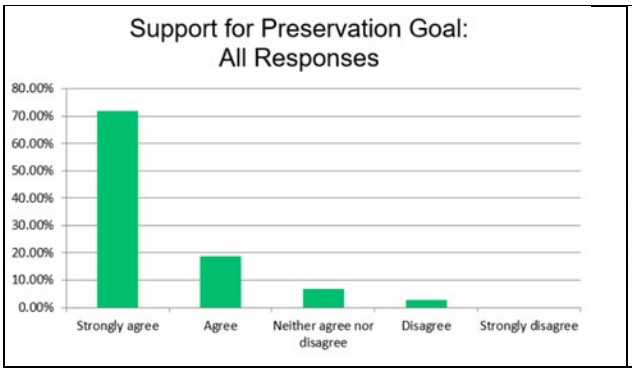


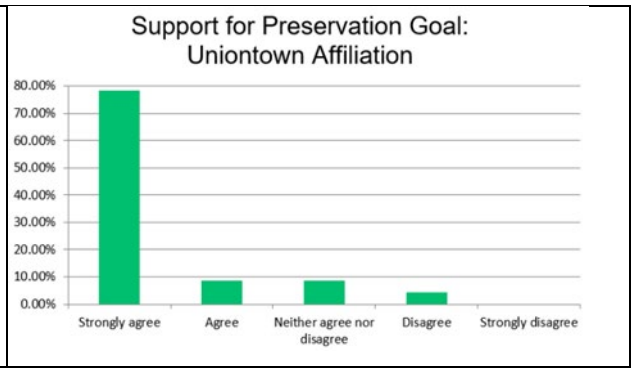
Q 12: Sense of Community: Reintroduce Uniontown's sense of community, where residents can raise a family and be part of a meaningful place.



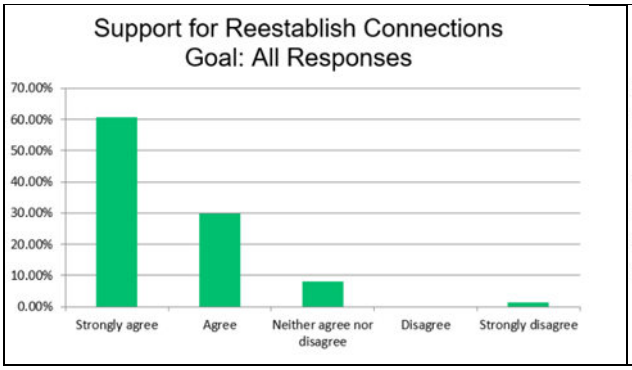


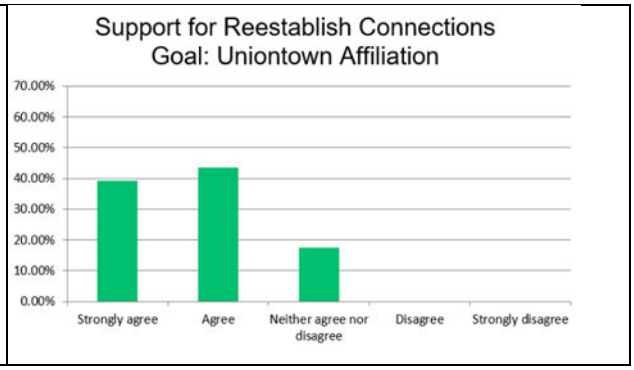
Q 13: Preservation: Document, promote, and effectively communicate Uniontown's history to foster community pride and preserve the neighborhood's remaining historic resources.





Q 14: Reestablish Connections: Reestablish Uniontown's physical connections within the neighborhood and the Richmond Avenue Corridor, connecting to reinvestment in the larger area.





Q 15: What is missing from these goal statements?

- Racial equity and inclusion + diversity overall
- Make sure the current residents can afford to stay and don't have their property confiscated by imminent domain. Out of town landlords must cooperate with the residents living there and invest in the community.
- Action
- Hardly anyone lives there anymore. How do you rectify that?
- "Property ownership is mixed and will have different goals
- Money or the lack of will drive the solution "
- Greenspace between the current commercial development and the residential lots.
- An attempt to contact owners who abandoned properties due to failing infrastructure.
- The separation of the two different areas. The National Avenue bridge was removed. The access through the industrial park off of Statler Blvd was closed off by the city a couple years ago.
- Walkability and connecting the neighborhood to downtown Staunton and retail areas
- Feasibility
- Communication to get things started and follow through.
- Community Land Trust that would help make housing affordable while preserving the character and history of the neighborhood for future generations

- It seems that there is an effort here to correct past issues. I am not sure you are not in some way trying to create an African American museum. The money would be better spent in other historic AA communities in the city.
- City services
- That character be maintained as development is pursued. Connect while buffering.
- Upgrade the National Ave entrance - restore the original entrance at Young St. which looking at the map would be the west end of Uniontown
- The evaluation of zoning restrictions and how it affected the neighborhood
- Connecting to city services, public utilities, city maintained paved roads.
- City services. Comparable to other city areas.
- Amenities other neighboring areas have; city services ,city maintenance of roads. Etc., Street lights and cleaning, and repair.
- Restitution for the property owners who had their major asset (their house and property) degraded because of the City's neglect.
- Reparations.
- Develop an entrance arch as you enter off Richmond Road noting Uniontown as an historic community.
- Opportunity for a revitalized community to be built on the values that sustained it originally: more self-sustaining community enterprises and gathering spaces, green spaces, neighborhood feel...
- Provide the infrastructure needed to attain these goals, find a way to do this that acknowledges the fact that the City left Uniontown behind and failed this community in the past. Assist the owners financially regarding hooking up to new water and sewer
- help people who live in Uniontown now to be able to stay there
- an understanding that communities grow strong organically; for example, "reintroduce sense of community" implies that this can be accomplished by just saying so. A sense of community develops; it's not introduced or reintroduced.
- Rezoning and grants for development. Incentives for development and landowners to sell to developers.
- Community space for outdoor events (produce stands, music, etc.)
- public utilities, replacing bridge or walkway
- The people closest to the problem need to be deeply involved in the solution. Community participation is an essential goal.

Question 15: Proposed Actions

Thinking about the draft goals, what actions would you like to see considered as part of this effort? Please consider actions that could be implemented in the short term, as well as the long term.

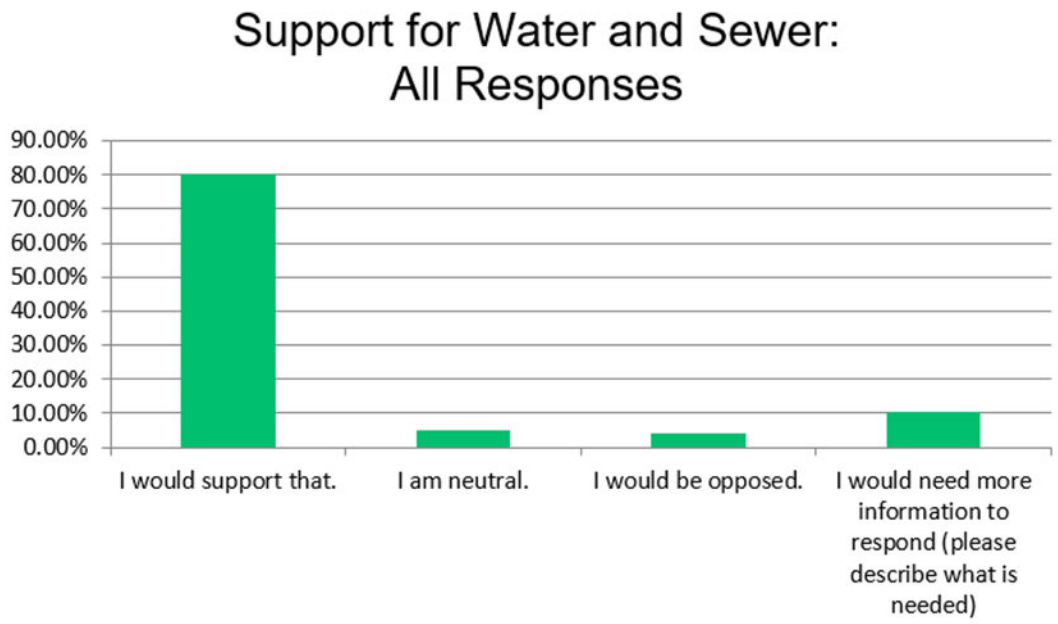
- Rezoning
- Racial equity and inclusion
- Establish long term plan for walkable, affordable, safe community . Rezone the area. Built appropriate roads and infrastructure. Consider nearest schools, shopping, churches. Local churches could consider sponsoring each of the local residents to advocate for them and support them. Allow habitat for humanity to receive some of the available lots.
- Reinvest in the area (1-3)
- 10+ Sewer"
- Sewer, rezoning
- Help property owners clear land to accommodate utilities and life lines
- Public conversations with a clear presentation of how Uniontown got into its current state.

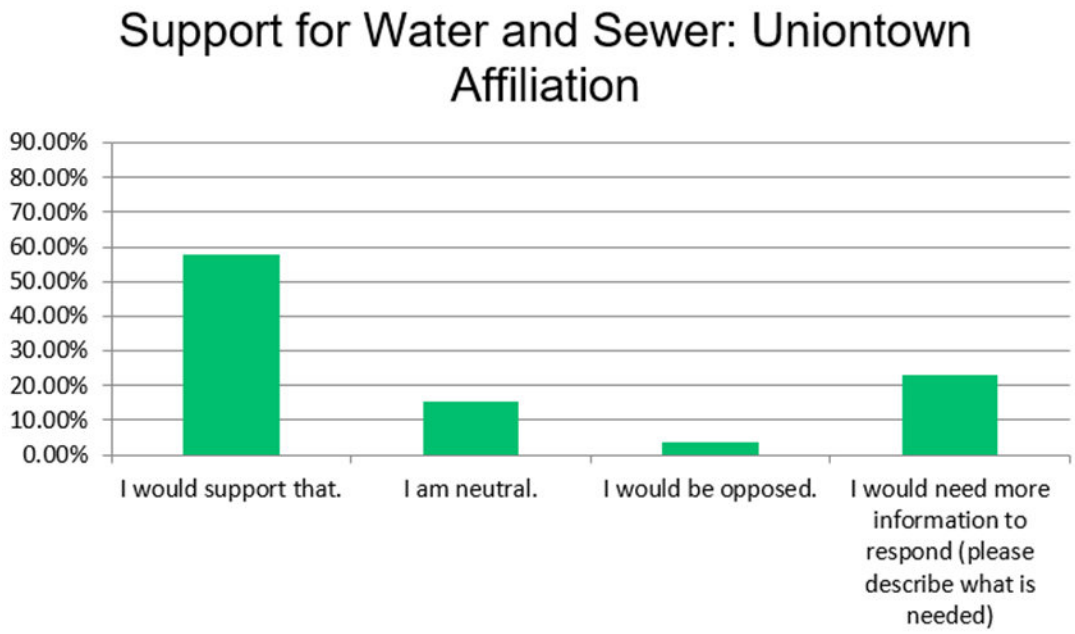
- My family has been steadily purchasing lots throughout the area for approximately 40 years. Properties that were purchased specifically because of the industrial zoning that we have spent a considerable amount of money and time cleaning up and maintaining in hopes of possible future development. Our actions have been based on what had been outlined by the city through various plans, discussions, and meetings that have taken place over decades.
- Walkability and connecting the neighborhood to downtown Staunton and retail areas
- "Raise awareness to encourage private investment, NOT tax dollars, to improve the area.
- We Staunton residents are tired of diminishing services while taxes are being increased for special projects. "
- Follow through with residents on update information
- rezone as residential/business; sewer/water connections; establish a community land trust for the area
- help to clean up blight.
- Need more detail
- rezoning and putting in the water and sewer and replacing the bridge.
- city services
- 11-12 but city /steering committee requires guidance with professional landscape/land developers
- Service learning opportunities for children and college students. This will help spread knowledge of local history and help young people feel involved in the diversity and wellbeing of Staunton community.
- Interactive signs or markers showing the history and why the neighborhood is there.
- Direct emergency access road to Richmond road, connection to city services, public utilities, city maintained paved roads.
- Parks, greenery, homes
- I'm too ignorant to comment. I just wanted to voice my support.
- Linking the neighborhood to businesses and help that would build it back better, with solar, inventive water and sewer systems. These property owners should be helped!
- Create an affordable hook up plan for sewer & water.
- 1. City Council change Uniontown to residential. 2. Setup a city wide cleanup campaign during the summer months that includes all residents and city departments coming together to get this done. 3. Make sure that all hookups for water and sewer are done for property owners at no cast. 4. Make sure that a new bridge is installed to re-connect that community. 5. Public Works needs to grind up the old streets and re-pave all streets. 6. Install historic street lighten throughout the community. 7. Plant new trees and scrubs and flowers to enhance the community."
- Rezoning residential; suspending residential taxes to enable renovation and repair (like was done in other historic districts in Staunton); historical landowners have access to credit for rebuilding / renovating their homeplaces.
- In the short term, provide micro grants or other assistance to property owners needing property improvements
- We need water, sewer and roads in the area before we can do anything else. Financial aid to help people who live in the community
- Support for family living, parks etc.
- Infrastructure that would support and attract residential
- Bridge!
- Allow homeowners to improve their properties
- Rezoning. Grant money to developers and property owners who developer or sell to a developer.

- Restore bridge connection and pedestrian access
- rezoning to allow housing repairs, building homes
- Rezone to residential; provide water/sewer affordability to current residents
- Grandfather current owners tax base for as long as their family lives there when the area is rezoned as residential.

Question 17: New Water and Sewer

How would you respond to the city extending new water and sewer infrastructure into Uniontown?





Of respondents that opposed water and sewer improvements: One moved to Uniontown later in life; One currently owns property in the neighborhood; and two have no affiliation.

Individual Responses:

I would need more information to respond (please describe what is needed)

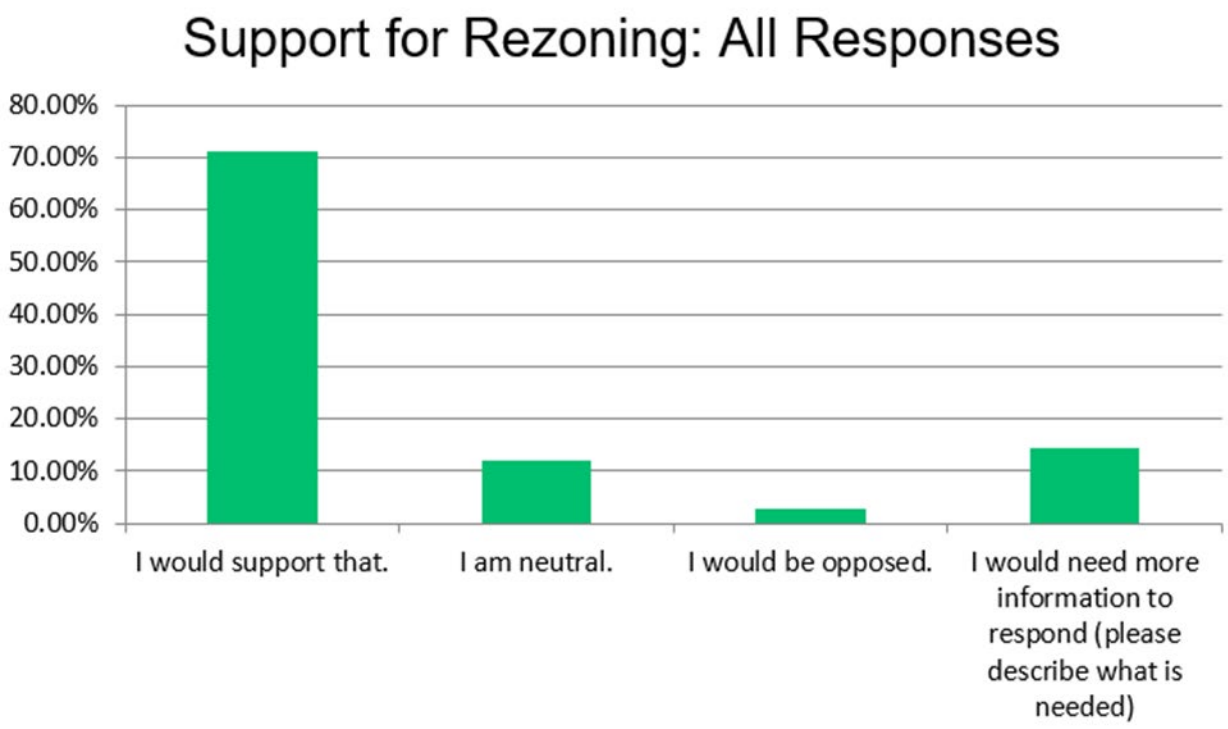
- Need to determine what is feasible to accomplish the wants of the community.
- Once again, it depends on which side of the tracks. The residential side or the industry/quarry side.
- Need cost estimates, may need to take place over a period of years.
- Details
- How will it affect current properties in Uniontown?
- Report the current condition.
- What is currently wrong with current water and sewer lines and device. Provide a report

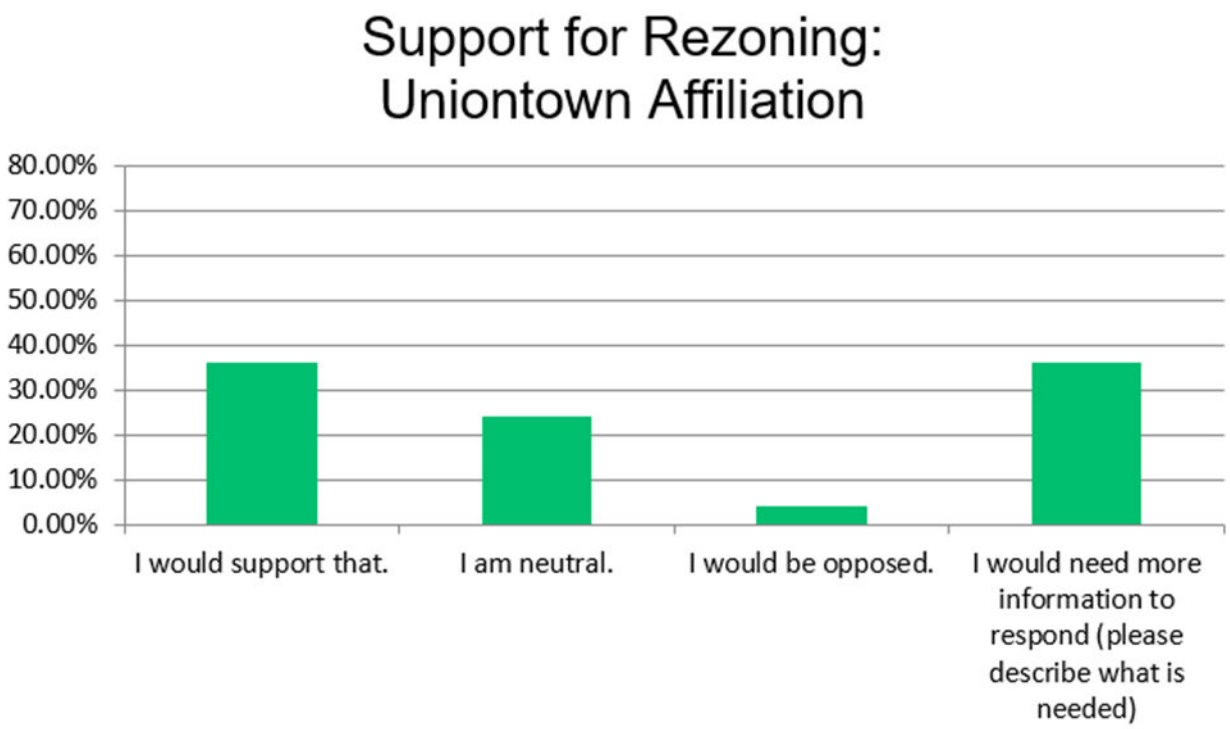
The following is a breakdown of those that responded, "I would need more information."

- I am originally from Uniontown – 3 Respondents
- I have family from Uniontown – 5 Respondents
- I own land in Uniontown – 4 Respondents
- I am not affiliated with Uniontown but am interested in the community – 2 Respondents
- Other (please specify) – 1 Respondent

Question 18: Rezoning

How would you respond to the city rezoning property to align with the community's vision?





Individual Responses:

I would need more information to respond (please describe what is needed)

- Depends on community "vision"
- Which properties and what type of zoning changes
- Unfortunately, these two separate areas with different needs have been lumped into one.
- Detail
- This subdivision should have never been zoned industrial!
- How would it be rezone? Would the current people be forced out if the zoning changed is determined by income.
- I need more information on the rezoning vision before answering this question.
- As stated above. All improvements.
- What is the current vision?
- Stated above
- well some of the problems have been the people living there opposing water and sewer hook up which make it hard to revitalizes the area

Questions 19: Community Improvements

What types of improvements or efforts would you recommend for Uniontown?

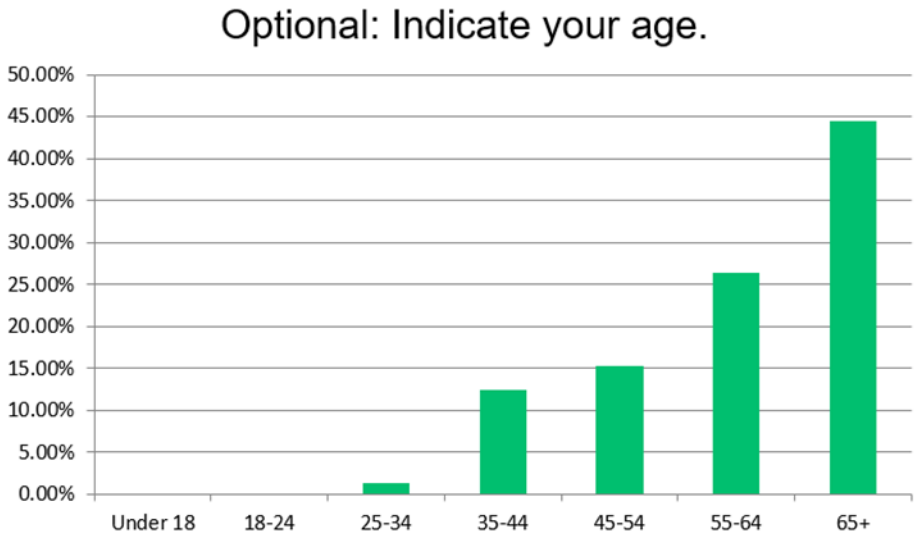
- Water and sewer established, and the citizens decide on how it should be designed
- To ensure Uniontown is equivalent to the rest of Staunton!!
- sewer and improvements of homes
- This has already been covered.
- Sewer, improvement of homes
- Clear property delineations for utilities. Road improvements
- Extend bus route to run down National Avenue

- Appropriate measures for the northern side of Uniontown which do not reflect what is appropriate for the southern side of Uniontown
- Walkability and connecting the neighborhood to downtown Staunton and retail areas
- Equal amenities
- Perhaps tax incentives for private investors
- Collaborate with the city of Staunton.
- As stated above
- Improvements needed as stated above
- It could become a thriving tiny home community for low-income seniors.
- Road construction, land debris clearance, train track removal if not in use. Streetlights when developed.
- sewer/water upgrade - infrastructure to support a safe & economically desirable place to live/build houses invest in. This would include open space semi park - walking path with appropriate plants/trees
- The landlords need to keep up with their properties better. (Mowing their yard, not having homes boarded up.) especially on Jones St.
- Planning can be done in phases to approve and raise funds. Local organizations and charities can take on specific tasks and fundraising.
- I believe there is a new shuttle stop going in on Richmond Ave near I-81. I hope there could be a bike / pedestrian path that better connects this shuttle location (re: public transportation connecting our community with Charlottesville, Waynesboro, etc.) with downtown Staunton (or somehow linking Union town in better with non-car) transportation options.
- "Public sewer. Affordable single-family housing. Consider teaming w/habitat to build houses.
- Consider establishing a historic sign like they have in the Port Republic area of Waynesboro and writing the history/webpage/etc."
- A walking trail, picnic/community area. Streetlights.
- Water and sewer improvements
- Connecting to city services, public utilities, city maintained paved roads as stated previously in survey.
- Stated above
- All. As stated above.
- Fixing what is broken or out dated
- Water, sewer and a voice in their future.
- Ask the residents & honor their requests.
- Already listed
- see previous
- All needed infrastructure. Bridge, water, sewer, lights, paving....
- water and sewer would be the 1st thing. and building a bride to unite both sides of Uniontown over the railroad tracks
- Start with the basics: help property owners accomplish basic cleanup, brush removal, painting
- Bridge, park
- opt in zoning would be a disaster. Either Uniontown is zoned residential or residential/commercial or leave it as it is.
- Reinstall bridge
- Allow home improvement
- Water sewer and Rezoning are all very important
- public utilities, road improvements including National Ave., Paxton, and Jones St and Anthony

- Improved water; sewer; lighting; rebuilding the bridge
- Put the bridge back

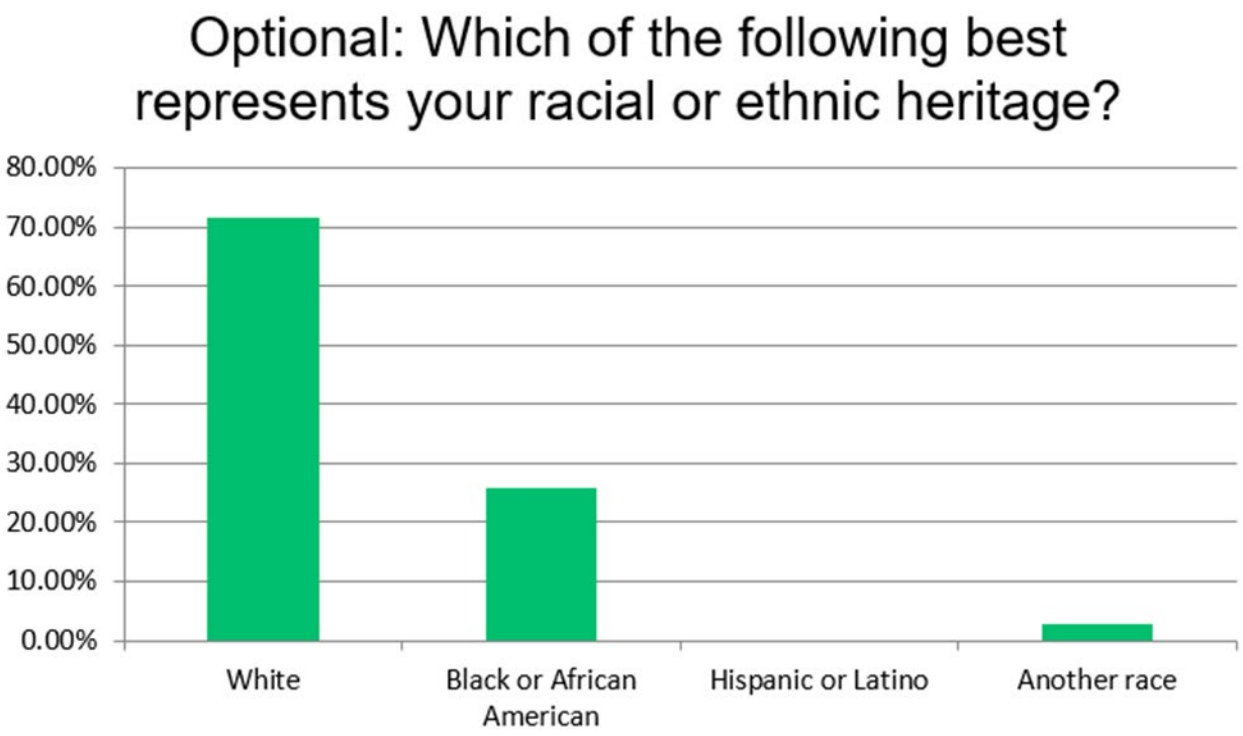
Question 20: Categorical – Age

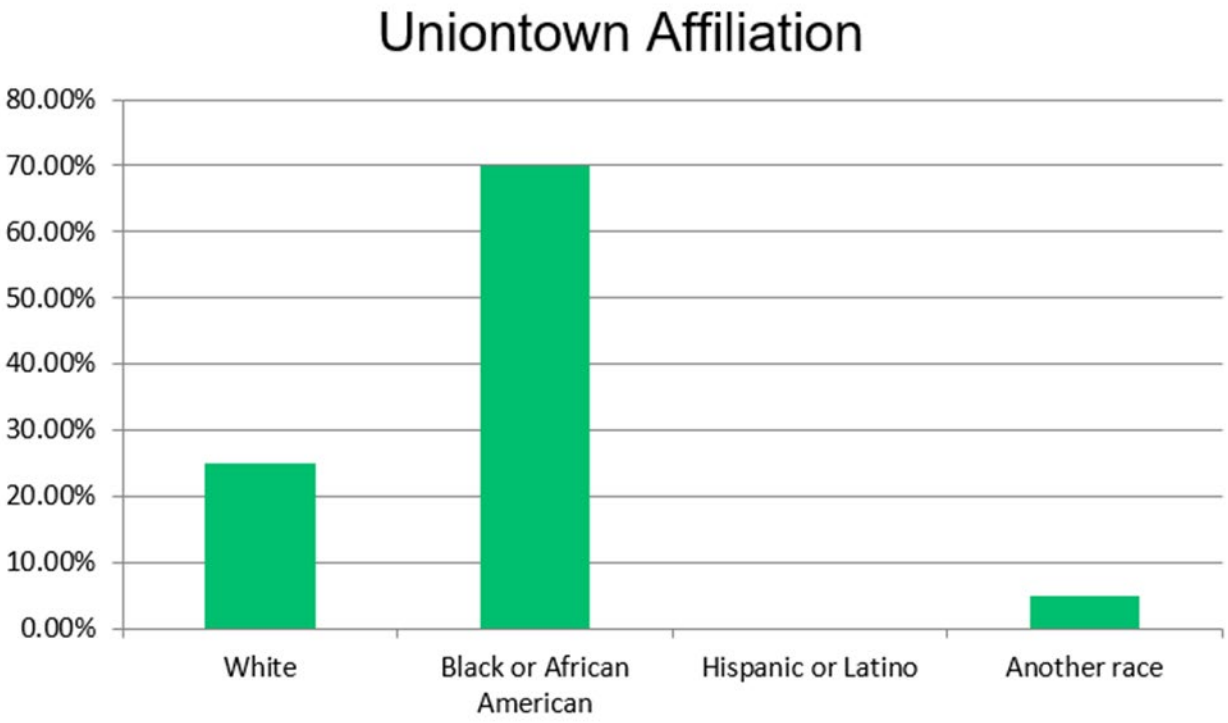
Optional: Indicate your age.



Question 21: Categorical – Race

Optional: Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic heritage?





Question 22: Other Opinions

Do you have any other opinions, ideas or suggestions for Uniontown that have not been addressed in these survey questions?

- Improvement is years late now that we've all moved away. It should have happened when it was a viable and thriving community in spite of the city's neglect. I'm not optimistic much is going to be done. Who will benefit?
- "10th and Page Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative in Charlottesville (there was a book written on this) is a possible roadmap. 6 million dollars from 14 fund sources resulted in rehabbing a neighborhood with 38 dwelling.
- I don't see the commitment and leadership from the City of Staunton to facilitate this. 5 studies in 20 years is proof.
- Also, the homeowners in Uniontown have no reason to trust their participation in another process will result in solutions.
- After several visits to Uniontown I don't believe replacing the bridge reconnecting the neighborhood would be in the best interest of the "Northern" side. The "Southern" side has morphed into industrial - service - warehouse businesses. Replacing the bridge would result in a huge traffic increase disrupting the solitude that the current residents said they enjoy. "
- The commercial areas that were designated in the 2018-19 plan (behind the O'Reilly's and other commercial establishments on Richmond road) need to be rezoned residential.
- Look at how things looked 25 years ago and compare them to now. Recognize that there are very few residents on the northside because of the existing industry. Totally different set of circumstances than what is found on the southside.
- Provide tax relief and fee waivers for developers
- Consult with Dr. Brown & investigate the interest of author of book From slave to statesman by Robert Heinrich former PhD candidate of Dr. Henry L. Gates - Book was about former slave in Augusta co during reconstruction email. Consult with Dr. Brown on need or feasibility. He gave a book signing at Staunton city Hall
- Continue to survey the residents for feedback on what's needed?
- Always have people from the neighborhood at all meetings and decisions. Black and white. Have them feel like they matter since the city has ignored them for so long.
- Uniontown's future should be driven by that community's preferences.
- I feel the overall history and background of ALL the citizens of Staunton need to be taken into consideration when decisions are being made. The people who have lived here and who have lived here and have been a part of the city are as important or more important than people who just moved here - and it seems too often, the new people and tourists are considered more important in the decisions. Remember the people who brought Staunton to this point and the families who BUILT this area! That includes many people and not just the big names that everyone has heard of - lots of us can trace our families back over a hundred years or a hundred and fifty years or more.
- I would hope there is HUD money and grants that could fill in some of the holes for the residents that live there

Question 23: Email

Provide your email address if you want to stay informed about the process.

There were 46 people that responded and provided their email addresses.