

WEST END

Revitalization Strategies Plan

Adopted: December 12, 2024



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Executive Summary

The West End Revitalization Strategies Plan (RSP) is the first holistic plan for Staunton's western neighborhoods. This initiative comes after residents and businesses requested attention to disinvestment trends and other community concerns. In response, City Council identified the West End as a priority and began various efforts to revitalize the area.

The RSP was a community-driven process that involved approximately 300 residents and stakeholders. Its vision and goals come directly from public comments, and participants unanimously approved those statements, listed below. The community also brainstormed the recommended actions in this plan and prioritized those ideas. In this way, the RSP aims to reflect the West End's voice, expressing its vision, concerns, and ideas.

The City and its consultant team also conducted technical work in parallel with engagement efforts. Transportation planners explored ways to improve the multimodal transportation network. Economic experts studied the types of businesses that can be successful in the West End and reported on the local economy. Other professionals collected demographic data, conducted site visits, and developed a mapping analysis to better understand the West End's issues and hopes. The following plan for Staunton's western neighborhoods combines the community's ideas with data.

Vision Statement

The West End will be a vibrant, diverse, and multimodal community, where residents can safely and conveniently access their thriving commercial corridor, consisting of local shops and services that function as a proud gateway to Staunton's western neighborhoods.

Vibrant Commercial Corridor

Foster a vibrant commercial corridor along West Beverley Street, which will be an active center of local businesses that serve the diverse needs of the West End's neighborhoods and the surrounding areas of Staunton.

Strategy: Program & Financial Support

- Action: Expand the Enterprise Zone
- Action: Explore Tax Increment Financing
- Other Action: Continue to Raise Awareness of Existing Programs

Strategy: Upkeep & Beautification

- Action: Support Upkeep through Public-Private and Other Partnerships
- Other Action: Implement Entrance Corridor Overlay
- Other Action: Establish Pop-Up Events

Healthy & Safe Connections

Shape a healthy and beautified West End that creates a safe and comfortable environment for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

Strategy: Maintain & Improve Connections

- Action: Repair and Maintain Sidewalks and Roads
- Action: Implement Bike and Pedestrian Improvements
- Other Action: Add Bus Shelters

Strategy: Improve Public Safety

- Action: Install High Visibility Crosswalks
- Action: Identify Street Lighting Improvements
- Action: Regular Communication between the Police Department and the Community
- Other Action: Prevent Crime through Environmental Design
- Other Action: Study Traffic Safety Measures

Green Neighborhoods

Preserve and strengthen the West End's environmental assets, promote green infrastructure, and offer enhanced city parks and community spaces.

Strategy: Improve Access to Parks

- Action: Improve Pedestrian Connections to Parks
- Action: Create a Public Square at the J&DR Site
- Action: Update Zoning to Require Common Space Amenities
- Other Action: Make School Amenities Available After Hours

Strategy: Incorporate Beautification

- Action: Facilitate the Planting of New Street Trees
- Action: Create a Streetscape Beautification Program

Strategy: Preserve Natural Systems

- Other Action: Encourage Native Plantings
- Other Action: Improve Stormwater through Natural Features

Reinvestment & Affordability

Foster reinvestment in the West End's neighborhoods and homes while maintaining affordable living and homeownership opportunities.

Strategy: Support Home Renovations

- Action: Connect Residents to Existing Resources
- Other Action: Develop a Home Conditions Program

Strategy: Support Neighborhood Advocacy

- Action: Provide Renter Education Programming
- Other Action: Organize Active Neighborhoods

Strategy: Reinvest in Community Centers & Resources

- Action: Reimagine Booker T. Washington as a Community Center through Private Partnerships
- Action: Develop Neighborhood Arts Initiatives
- Other Action: Reuse Brownfield Sites

How to Use the Plan

This document takes a different approach than most plans and reports. The following chapters follow the four main goal statements. Rather than presenting extensive background language in the early pages of the document, the reader can find existing conditions and other data under the applicable goal chapter. Information on the economy is under the Vibrant Commercial Corridor chapter. Transportation analysis is under Healthy and Safe Connections. Parks and green infrastructure are under Green Neighborhoods, and other property data is under Reinvestment and Affordability. The appendices are extensive and help to keep the narrative relatively streamlined. They offer more information on study boundaries, engagement, the economy, and other topics.

Under the goal chapters, the document lists the goal statement, strategies, and actions. Strategies are objectives that provide additional detail to the goals. This structure also helps organize the recommendations. Various actions fall under each “strategy.” The community prioritized these ideas at their last public open house event and online survey. The higher-priority recommendations include “action tables” that provide additional information and guidance. The plan lists lower-priority actions or other active initiatives as “other actions.” This language is more general and intended to act more as guiding activities than concrete recommendations.

Approximately 300 residents and stakeholders contributed to defining the West End’s vision and subsequent actions. With nearly 1,300 comments collected, the following documents refine and detail Staunton’s next steps and how to reinvest in these areas in the West End.



This icon indicates a community member’s quote from the engagement process.

City Snapshot

- City Snapshots include existing conditions, data, and statistics about Staunton and the West End.
- This information is provided to contextualize the goals, strategies, actions, and community feedback in the chapter.

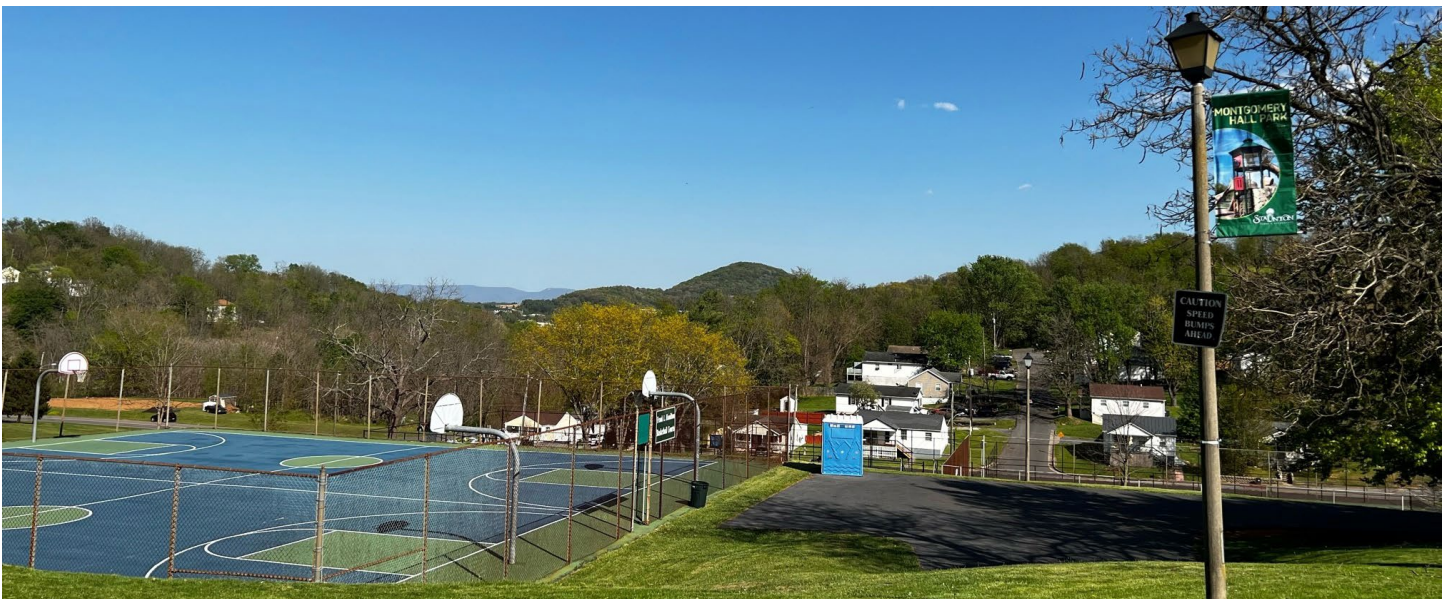


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Introduction

In recent years, the City of Staunton designated its West End neighborhoods as a high-priority zone, recognizing community needs and opportunity areas. In the fall of 2020, members of the Staunton City Council attended a West End Community meeting and gathered comments on community needs. In subsequent months, City Council held a retreat to develop the *Staunton Plan*, which identified the West End as a strategic focus area and committed to providing resources “to promote this community as a vibrant area that has diverse business opportunities, cultural offerings, and great potential for economic growth and stability.” Various initiatives began advancing a West End effort in the ensuing years, but the city still needed a holistic plan to establish a cohesive vision. As a next step, local officials pursued a new initiative in 2023 that would establish a West End Revitalization Strategies Plan, which aims to:

- ➔ Develop a cohesive vision that bridges livability & economic development.
- ➔ Develop achievable approaches to revitalize the commercial corridor.
- ➔ Improve the overall quality of life in the West End.



The West End

Plan Overview

The *West End Revitalization Strategies Plan* (RSP) is a holistic and guiding document for Staunton's western neighborhoods. A vision statement sets a direction for the community, the City's revitalization efforts, and actions to improve quality of life. This document also presents detailed, step-by-step directions for:

- Amendments to the local development code,
- Capital investments,
- Initiatives, and
- Recurring programs.

This RSP is structured to highlight the goals developed through a community-focused process. The first two chapters give background on the project, statistical data, and the history of the West End. The plan then jumps into the **cohesive vision** and **achievable approach** with a vision chapter and four goal chapters. The goal chapters reflect what we have heard throughout the engagement and data analysis process. The goals are not listed in a specific order and go hand in hand with each other. The goal themes are as follows:

- **Thriving Commercial Corridor,**
- **Safe and Healthy Connections,**
- **Green Neighborhoods, and**
- **Reinvestment and Affordability.**

The actions in each goal chapter are informed by the community's needs expressed by the community throughout the engagement process. The participants had the opportunity to prioritize the actions at the final community open house and a following virtual survey for those who did not attend. The prioritized actions are detailed and are paired with a case study. "Other Actions" are lower-prioritized recommendations and have less detail.

Multiple appendices at the end of the plan document the process's public engagement summaries and results, study area boundary methodology, case studies, and funding opportunities.



West End Boundaries

Determining study area boundaries was an initial step of this planning process. Locally, city officials and residents commonly refer to the West End, but there were no official boundaries. Consultants worked with local staff to identify a methodology that defined the study's limits, aiming to determine:

- How residents identified themselves and their community,
- What areas would be the focus of revitalization efforts, and
- A more precise definition of the West End's boundaries.

However, the recommendations presented in the *West End Revitalization Strategies Plan* will benefit residents, property owners, and businesses outside these boundaries. Some programs apply to businesses specifically in the West Beverley Street corridor area, and other recommendations call for amenities available to everyone in the surrounding areas. The study boundaries do not necessarily serve as a final say on what the West End is. Regardless of this plan, there will be residents and property owners who identify with the West End or believe they should not be included within the boundaries. The following methodology was thorough and the best attempt at creating a study area for the purposes of this planning effort.



The Study Area

Identifying a study area is a challenging and serious task. The following factors were meticulously considered to determine the West End boundaries:

Public Feedback

In 2021, the city initiated a survey and community meetings that actively sought participants' views on the West End's borders. The consultants carefully reviewed and applied this valuable feedback, underscoring the community's active role in shaping the study area.

Census Geographies

The two western census tracts of the city were previously identified as Opportunity Zones, a federal economic development and community development tax benefit program established in low-income census tracts to spur investment, in 2018. This geography set the base boundary for the entire West End area.

Brownfield Sites

The city's previous Brownfield Study identified sites that could be redeveloped and be part of the area's revitalization efforts.

Historic Resources

Consultants referred to historical documents, landmarks, historic resources, and historic districts as a reference.

Refer to **Appendix A** for more details on identifying the boundaries of this plan.

Land Use and Design

The city's consultants conducted field visits, identified common building characteristics, and logged existing land uses to determine the community's identity. They also referred to the city's future land use plan.

Businesses and Community Facilities

The consultants documented the local businesses, identified neighborhood services, and considered other destinations in the West End that defined the community.

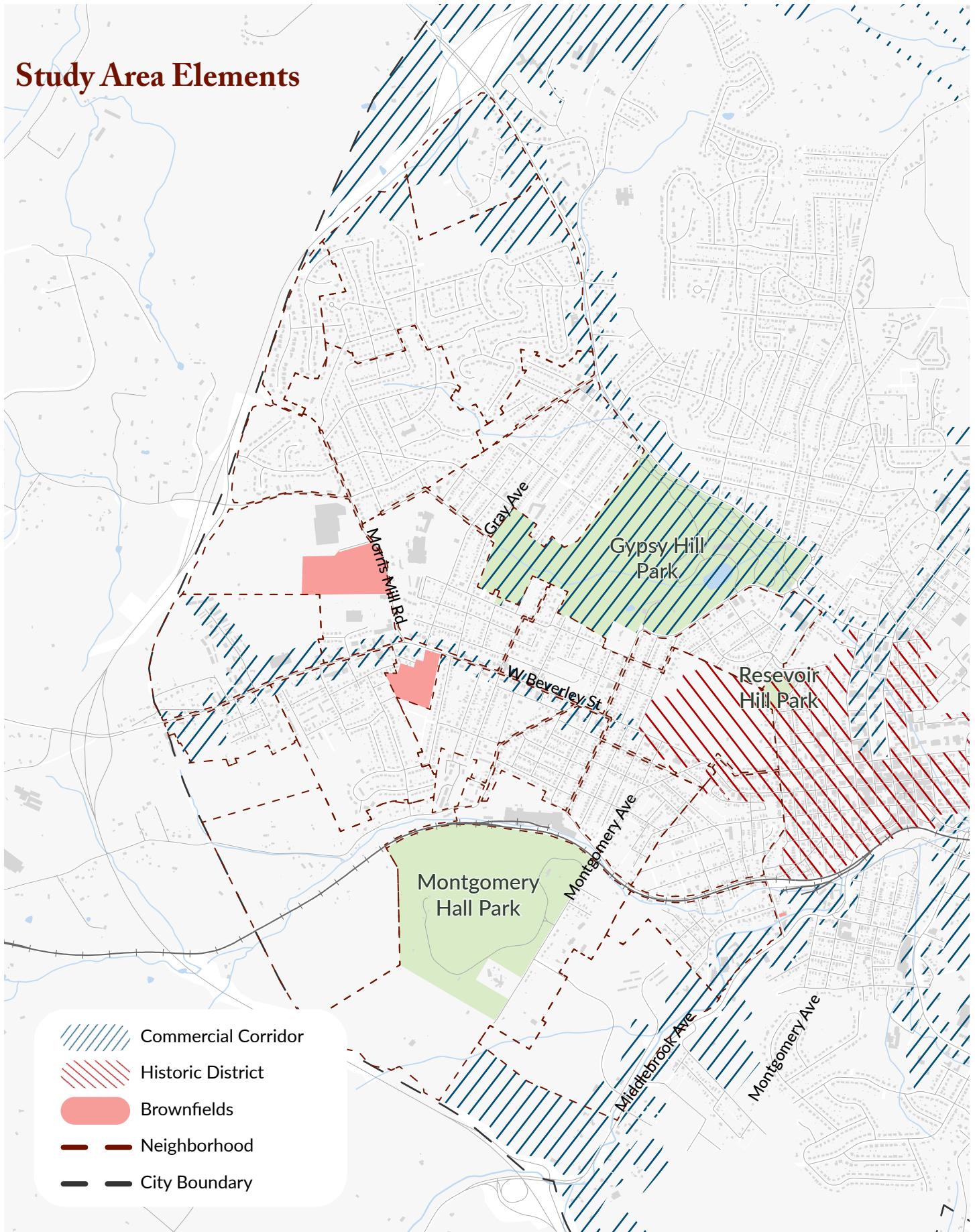
Community Need

The city's consultant team reviewed census data, including household income, and documented areas with the greatest need.

Neighborhood Boundaries

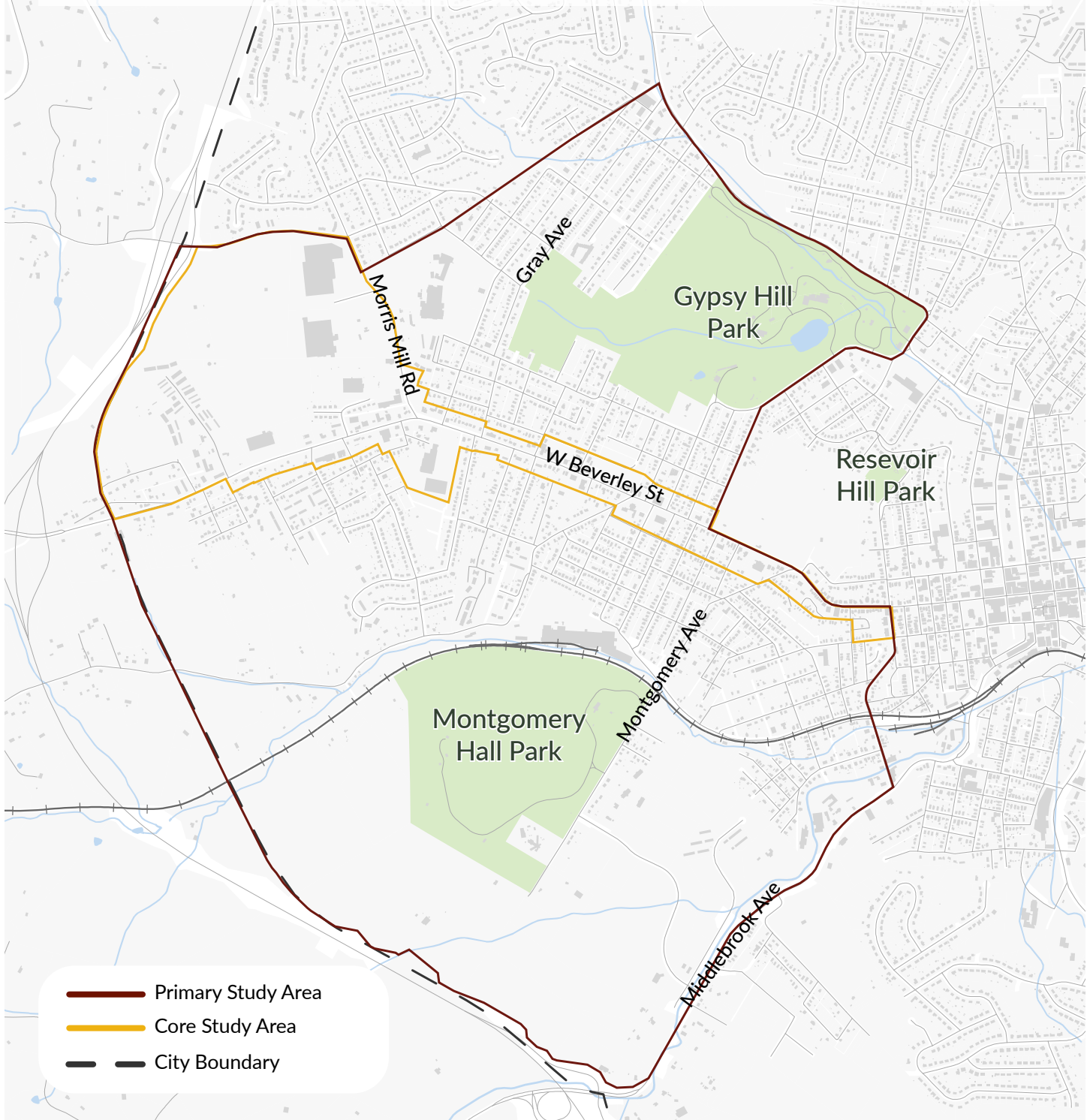
The study team also referred to past neighborhood boundaries and worked with residents who grew up in the West End to identify those areas.

Study Area Elements



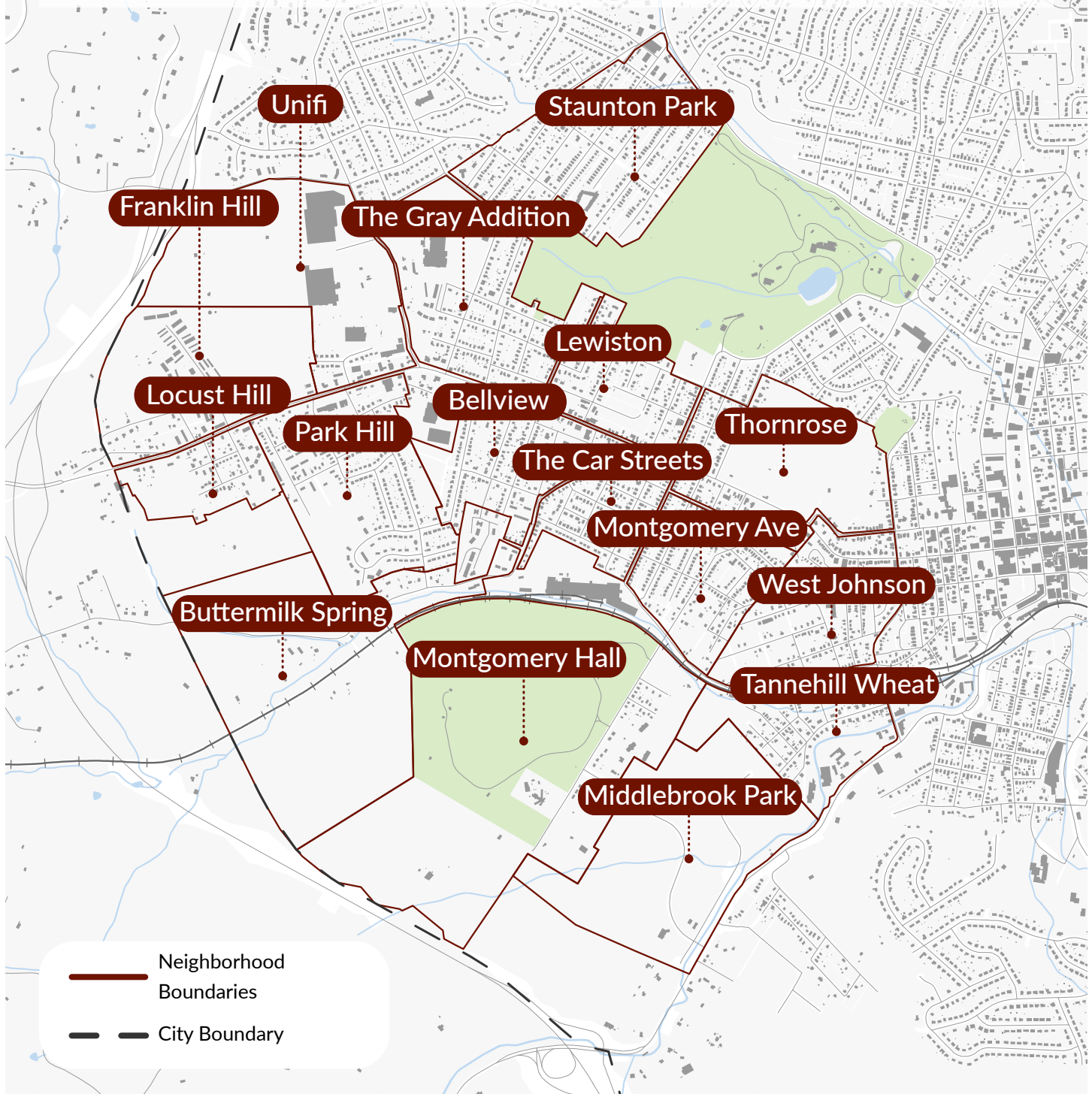
Primary and Core Study Areas

After combining the different layers of data, two study areas were identified. The Primary Study Area represents the area where West-End-wide analysis and recommendations are applied. The Core Study Area focuses on commercial development, primarily following the commercial corridor overlay and opportunities related to the brownfield locations.



West End Neighborhoods

Staunton's West End is a collection of neighborhoods with unique histories and characteristics. Life-long residents identified a total of 14 neighborhoods, though none have official designations. The RSP uses the following names and terminology throughout this plan to better explain community needs, assets, and recommendations. Refer to **Appendix B** for a detailed description of each neighborhood shown below.



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Background

By examining the historical context, previous studies, and plans related to the West End, we can identify the root of the neighborhoods' existing challenges. The following sections contain the West End's timeline, displaying key points in the history of the area, as well as past efforts that helped inform the beginning phases of this process.



West End History

Staunton's West End is rich with a history that dates to the early 1800s and before some communities were part of the city. A series of annexations in the mid- to late- 1900s incorporated the study area into Staunton's municipal boundaries. The following is a brief timeline of this story. The Staunton Historic Society has extensive records and was a primary source throughout the RSP process.

1732

Staunton is settled and named after Lady Rebecca Staunton, wife of colonial governor Sir William Gooch.

1700

1801

Staunton is formally incorporated.

1822-1824

John Howe Peyton builds Montgomery Hall Mansion on several hundred acres southwest of Staunton.

1840s

The Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike (now West Beverley Street) is built, turning Staunton and subsequently the West End into a western frontier gateway.

1800

1865

Members of the Allen Chapel AME Church built the first African American Church in Staunton at 921 West Beverley Street (now relocated to 936 Sudbury Street).

1890

Gypsy Hill Park is established as the area between Churchville Ave and the then Baldwin Fair Association grounds.

In 1892, the city acquired the fairgrounds and increased the size of the park.

1850

1918

The Queen Miller Orphanage, then named the Hayes Memorial Industrial School and Orphans Home, opens at Franklin Hill.

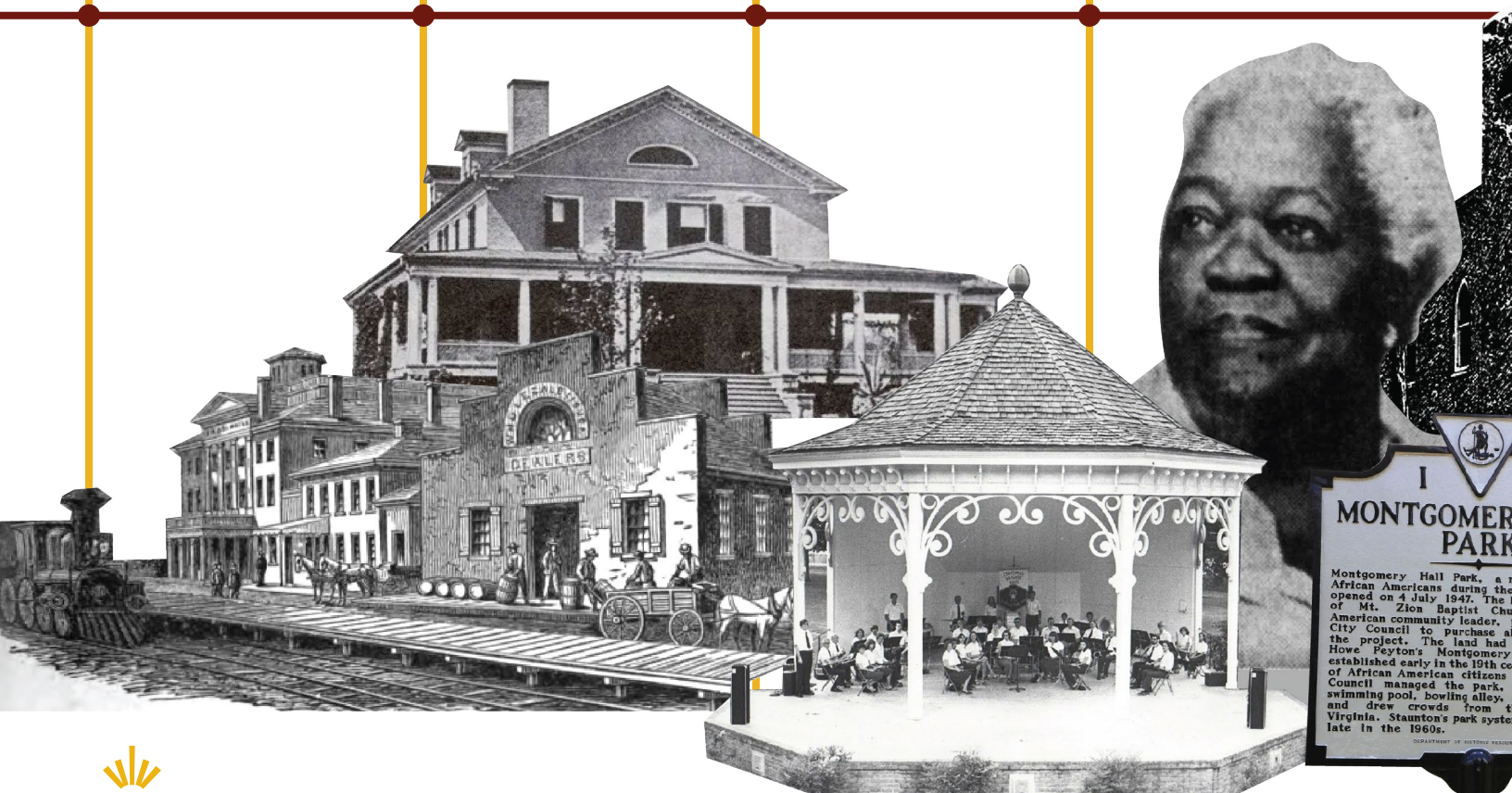
1932 + 1936

Gypsy Hill Park pool is constructed, followed by the golf course four years later.

1936

Booker T. Washington High School is built in the West Johnson neighborhood as the only high school for People of Color in the Staunton area and the only meeting place for Black organizations until integration of the city's public facilities.

1900



1946

Montgomery Hall Park becomes one of only two Virginia parks dedicated to African American use.

1948

\$10,000 is left to Montgomery Hall Park to construct a swimming pool for the Black community of Staunton and surrounding areas.

1948

Plunkettsville is incorporated into the City of Staunton.

1940

2006

The two segments of Route 262 that had the greatest impact on the West End were completed (Middlebrook Ave. to W. Beverley St. and W. Beverley St. to Churchville Ave), reducing traffic on West Beverley St and contributing to the decline of corridor businesses.

2000

2014

Booker T. Washington High School is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

2017

Montgomery Hall Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

2010

2020

The City of Staunton secures the Brownfield Grant to identify sites for redevelopment.

2023

The City of Staunton announces they will relocate the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court complex to West Beverley St.

2020



Past Efforts

The city's consultant team reviewed 15 studies, plans, or presentations from private and public organizations to identify potential gaps within the West End area and to inform the West End RSP. Past efforts serve as a base at the beginning phases of the planning process. They give context to historic and existing conditions and help inform the process along with extensive community engagement. The following boxes summarize each past effort that informs this plan with check marks to show what the effort informed in this process.

Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Facility

Approved 2023

City of Staunton

In May 2023, Staunton's City Council officially approved the purchase of the Chestnut Hills Shopping Center located on West Beverley Street for the new Juvenile and Domestic Relations (J&DR) Court Facility. The J&DR Facility is expected to be an economic catalyst for the corridor and could incentivize private sector growth in the area.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



10 PSI Intersections Improvement Study

Completed 2022

VDOT, City of Staunton

In 2022, the Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) intersection improvement study was completed for ten intersections within the City of Staunton. The top three concerns for these studies were congestion, safety, and multi-modal accessibility. Three of the ten intersections were located within the Primary Study area: West Beverley and Jefferson Street, West Beverley and Hays Avenue, and West Beverley and Grubert Avenue.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Cole Avenue Stream Restoration

Start Date 2022

The Cole Avenue Stream Restoration Project consists of about 1,050 linear feet of channel restoration stretching from a culvert outlet on Garland Drive and ends at Cole Avenue. The stream infrastructure is severely eroded, and the study recommends retrenching, expanding the channel, or reinforcing the stream bank.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

Approved 2020

Stanton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO)

In 2020, the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organizations (SAWMPO) adopted its 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP identified needs for the SAWMPO planning area which included: pedestrian and bicycle connection improvements, transit service improvements, multi-modal travel options for an aging population, congestion and safety strategies, and multi-modal infrastructure as an economic development tool.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Proposal for USEPA's Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant

Start Date 2020

The USEPA's Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant was awarded to the City of Staunton in 2021. It is an ongoing study that targets the City's West End. The priority sites in the West End area are: the UNIFI Manufacturing site located on Morris Mill Road, the Chestnut Hills Shopping Center site located on West Beverley Street, and the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) Warehouse located on Bridge Street. These sites have the potential to catalyze revitalization in the West End.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Greenways Plan

Approved 2020

City of Staunton

The vision of the City of Staunton's Greenways Plan is to expand recreational opportunities and make more accessibility for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles. The Greenways Plan proposes developing four greenways, two of which are in the Primary Study Area.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Gypsy Hill Stream Restoration

Start Date 2020

This project will remove the underground stormwater piping within Gypsy Hill Park and expose the underground stream. The project will reinforce the exposed stream with natural features and aim to improve the park's ecology.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



West Beverley Street Flood Analysis

Start Date 2019

In 2019, the city conducted its first flood analysis for West Beverley Street since 1987. The analysis identified the primary stormwater conveyance systems along the corridor. FEMA mapped the conveyance and identified Peyton Creek from Morris Mill Road to Gypsy Hill Park as a “Zone A,” meaning this area is at high risk for flooding.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Approved 2018

City of Staunton

The City of Staunton’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan emphasizes the importance and opportunity of connecting resources within Staunton through a pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle network. This Plan recommends several bike and pedestrian routes throughout the West End and provides a framework for recommendations in this RSP.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Comprehensive Plan

Approved 2018

City of Staunton

The City of Staunton’s Comprehensive Plan identifies goals and objectives encompassing open space and environment, community character, neighborhoods and housing, rehabilitation and re-use, transportation and parking, public service and government, public safety, public services, utilities and infrastructure, and economic development.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Approved 2018

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)

The CSPDC’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is an economic development plan created as a roadmap for regional economic development. By analyzing existing conditions and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), the Strategy aims to help the region increase wages, increase quality of life, create a workforce prepared for the future economy, enhance visitor experiences, and become a place for innovation and asset-based economic development.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Opportunity Measurement Reports: Census Tract 2 & Census Tract 3

2018

In 2018, Census tracts 2 and 3 within the city were identified as an opportunity zones. To obtain this designation, the census tracts received low scores on their opportunity outcomes scorecards, which encompass housing stability, education, health and wellbeing, economic security, and mobility.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Economic Growth and Diversification Plan

2017

GO Virginia 8

The GO Virginia 8 Economic Growth and Diversification Plan is a road map to help build resilient economies by utilizing existing assets and creating goals. The Plan recommends that localities follow framework initiatives that focus on talent development, growing existing businesses, start-ups/innovation/commercialization sites, and other opportunities for successful economic growth.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



The Economic Impact of Bicycling in the Central Shenandoah Valley

2016

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)

In 2016, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) published the Economic Impact of Bicycling in the Central Shenandoah Valley study to determine the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of bicycling within the region. The study found the bicycle tourism industry in the region has had a total economic impact of \$13.6 million and supported 184 jobs in 2015. The study recommends bicycling residents and tourists as a factor in economic development improvements.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



Booker T. Washington Community Center Study

2007

A study conducted by Frazier Associates, in collaboration with community members highlighted, the Center's potential to better serve the public by transforming the vacant first floor into a hub for community events and services. The study recommended upgrades and potential space designations.

Engagement



Background



Vision



Goals



Actions



By the Numbers

Demographic data is a key factor in understanding the general makeup of the West End's neighborhoods and can often point to needs and opportunities for better community conditions. Population size, age, race and ethnicity, home value, income, and poverty rate are the baseline data points used for this data-driven approach.

Community Snapshot

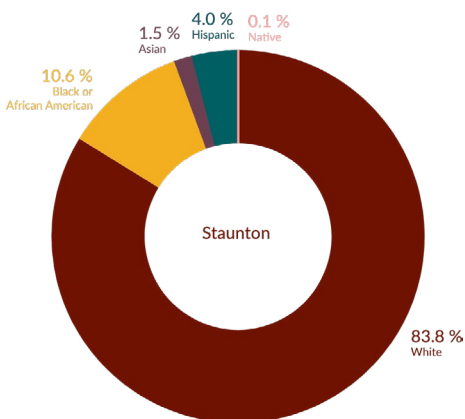
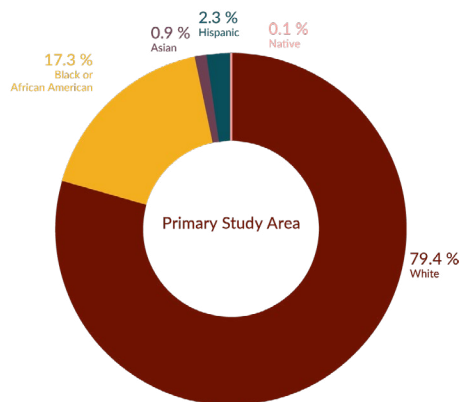


6,361

Residents in the Primary Study Area (2022)

44.4 years
Median Age

Ethnicity & Race



Demographics

The Primary Study Area has 6,361 residents, about 26% of Staunton's total population (25,949). The Primary Study Area's median age is 44.4 years, and the city's is 41 years. Both are slightly older than the state's median age of 38.7 years. Age can impact the opportunities available to community members. Younger community members are affected by the ability to walk and bike to school safely, and having gathering spaces is essential for an aging community to maintain a social network.

In the Primary Study Area, most residents (79.4%) are White, while 17.3% are Black or African American, and 3.2% identify as another race. In the entire city, the majority (83.8%) are White, while 10.6% are Black or African American, and 5.6% identify as another race. In the Primary Study Area, Black or African American residents make up about 41% of the total Black or African American residents in the entire city. Race significantly affects community members' lives, with historical patterns of segregation still impacting opportunities today. Minority communities have historically been underserved in terms of access to services and involvement in decision-making.

Income & Housing

Home value is a direct affordability indicator. The Primary Study Area has more affordable housing than the city. The Primary Study Area's median home value is \$139,850, while Staunton's overall median home value is \$219,000.

Median household income indicates housing affordability, poverty, and opportunity. Individuals with restricted incomes may have more difficulty providing for themselves and their families, which limits their purchasing, disposable income, and upward mobility. The Primary Study Area's median household income is \$39,567, which is \$14,454 less than the City's (\$51,021) (ACS, 2021).

In the Primary Study Area, 17% of residents live below the poverty line. Poverty is a key indicator of opportunity and community well-being. It significantly impacts a person's ability to own a home or have a stable living situation, access food, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and access health services. While this plan focuses on revitalizing the West End, it also aims to implement strategies to help uplift impoverished individuals.

Community Snapshot

Home Value



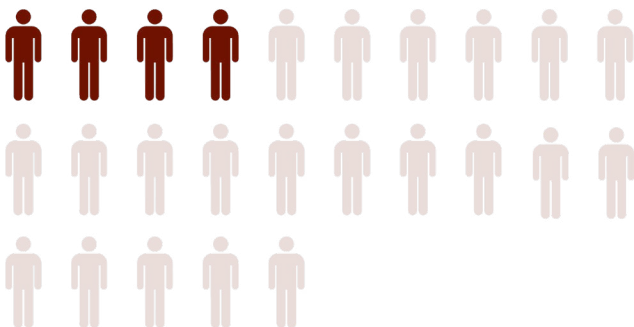
Comparison of home value in the Primary Study Area and Staunton.

Median Income



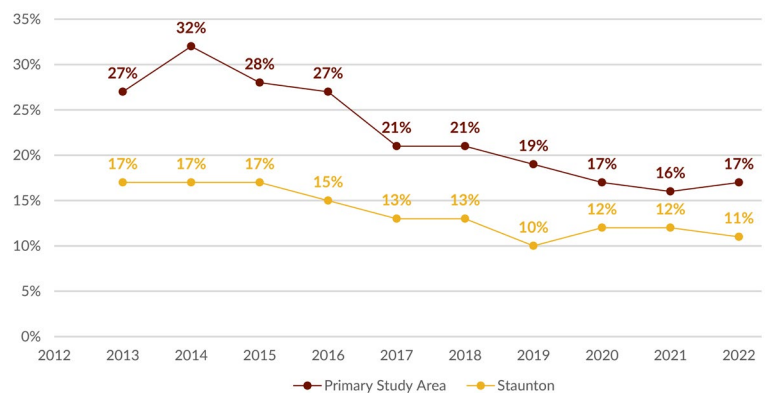
Comparison of median income in the Primary Study Area and Staunton.

Poverty



In the Primary Study Area, 4 out of every 25 people (17%) lived below the poverty line in 2021.

Individuals living below the poverty line in the Primary Study Area.



Percentage of residents living in the poverty line over time.



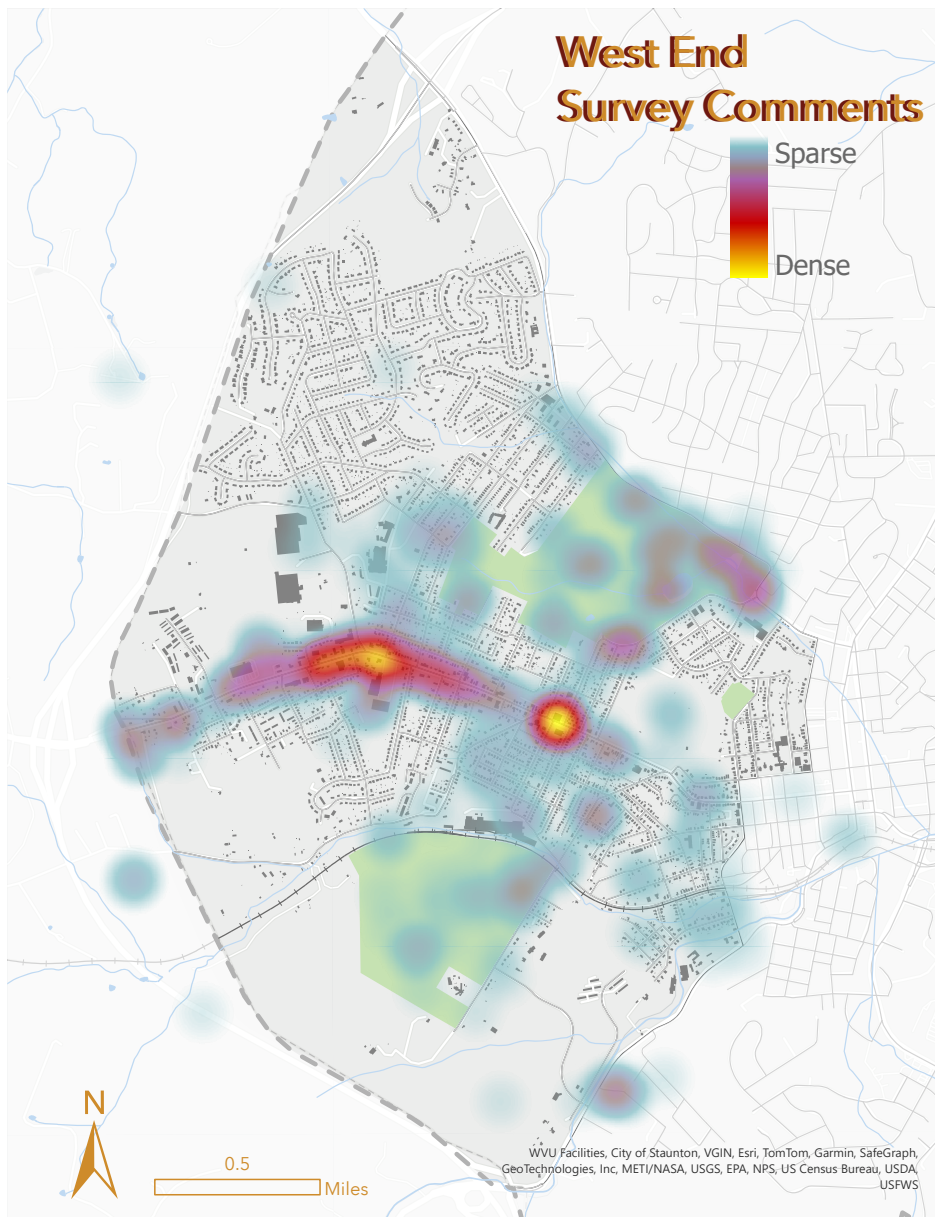
Defining West End's Future

The West End RSP was a community-driven process that detailed a holistic vision for Staunton's western neighborhoods. Residents, businesses, and stakeholders gathered through meetings and surveys to provide the input needed to craft a **cohesive vision** with four supporting goals. Despite its diversity, the West End found consensus on these statements and identified **achievable actions** to pursue each goal.



The Community-Driven View

Community engagement was the driving force of this planning process and the final RSP document. Participants identified concerns, needs, challenges, and assets. Public feedback led to the vision statement, goals, and recommendations. This engagement took place before the RSP effort began, including comments from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment from 2021. The initial process provided a baseline from an earlier series of meetings and a community survey. Under the RSP effort, public involvement included two online surveys, a virtual mapping activity, two open houses, and a workshop. Several other informal opportunities helped to guide the direction of this plan. The following graphic displays the engagement timeline and data on the number of participants and comments throughout the engagement process.



Timeline

In the Summer of 2023, the City of Staunton contracted with consultants to begin work on the West End RSP. In the initial months, consultants began data collection and analysis efforts and prepared for upcoming public and stakeholder engagement. This process was built on community feedback from the 2021 West End Brownfields effort and focused on continuing to collect guidance from residents and stakeholders.



About **290** people participated throughout the RSP process

4% of the Primary Study Area population

Fall 2023

Staunton and its consultants begin stakeholder discussions.

Winter 2023

The broader public engagement process begins with an Open House Event and community survey.



1,290 unique comments received

79 from the January Open House

1,011 from online survey and map survey

84 from May Workshop

56 from Open House (60 Virtual follow up)

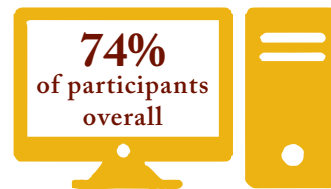
2021

Staunton begins the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant. The process included a community survey and meetings, laying the foundation for future engagement.

Summer 2023

The West End RSP process begins.

213 took online survey in the Winter of 2023/2024



74% of participants overall

Spring 2024

Staunton and its consultants continue to build visioning statements, recommendations, and plan elements. This season also includes two community meetings.

- March – Community workshop
- May – Community Open House
- June – Video and a second survey

Summer 2024

The process yielded significant data and public insights, which go into the draft plan for review by the local Planning Commission and Council.

Vision

The West End will be a vibrant, diverse, and multimodal community, where residents can safely and conveniently access their thriving commercial corridor, consisting of local shops and services that function as a proud gateway to Staunton's western neighborhoods.

This vision is carefully worded and arose from various public comments throughout the planning process. The statement highlights several essential ideas that the community expressed. Elements include:

Vibrance

The local narrative is that the West End feels “run down.” This theme was persistent during the engagement process. A core reason for this planning effort was to revitalize the area. The concept of vibrance implies reinvestment, activity, and thriving households.

Diversity

The West End is a diverse collection of neighborhoods and streets. It includes households from various income brackets, backgrounds, ethnicities, and views. Yet, despite those differences, the community came together and agreed on a shared vision, where their diversity is a strength.

Multimodal

Public feedback highlighted transportation needs. West End residents should have access to high-quality sidewalks and pedestrian routes. The streetscape, especially along West Beverley Street, ought to have well-maintained features for those walking and biking. Transit is another essential service that helps West End residents reach downtown and other destinations around Staunton.

Local Shops

Local business was a primary and consistent theme in all public interactions. There was total consensus in encouraging and supporting locally owned stores, restaurants, and services.

Safety

Residents highlighted this issue as a high priority, which was emphasized during community meetings and surveys. As described throughout this document, several community improvements can address those concerns. Safe access includes pedestrian security from vehicles, proper crosswalks, and a well-maintained sidewalk.

Convenience

Many West End residents feel disconnected from the rest of Staunton and must leave their neighborhoods to access food, goods, and services. As authentic communities, residents want to see more businesses, services, and opportunities closer to home and within walking distance.

Commercial Corridor

West Beverley Street falls into the commercial corridor overlay zoning district and is also the primary corridor through the West End. This effort aims to support and improve the existing commercial corridor.

Proud Gateway

The West End is a primary entrance and should reflect that. Currently, it does not have specialized gateway treatments for transitioning into the city.

Goals

The four goals to achieve the West End's vision became apparent during the public engagements. These goals follow thematic feedback and needs based on existing conditions. Within each goal, the community and consulting team work together to create achievable actions. The goal statements go hand in hand with each other, and one does not take priority over another. Implementing each action and aiming to achieve each goal will help implement coinciding goals and actions. The remainder of this plan focuses on these four statements, the assets and challenges associated with each, and the strategies and tactics for accomplishing the West End's desired future. The goals are as follows:

Vibrant Commercial Corridor

Foster a vibrant commercial corridor along West Beverley Street, which will be an active center of local businesses that serve the diverse needs of the West End's neighborhoods and the surrounding areas of Staunton.

Photo credit: Staunton Downtown Development Association



Healthy & Safe Connections

Shape a healthy and beautified West End that creates a safe and comfortable environment for people walking, biking, and taking transit.



Green Neighborhoods

Preserve and strengthen the West End's environmental assets, promote green infrastructure, and offer enhanced city parks and community spaces.



Reinvestment & Affordability

Foster reinvestment in the West End's neighborhoods and homes while maintaining affordable living and homeownership opportunities.





Vibrant Commercial Corridor

Foster a vibrant commercial corridor along West Beverley Street, which will be an active center of local businesses that serve the diverse needs of the West End's neighborhoods and the surrounding areas of Staunton.





Creating a Vibrant Commercial Corridor was a theme throughout the planning process and a core topic in the original project scope. West Beverley Street serves as the commercial corridor throughout this goal. Community members and stakeholders described a vibrant commercial corridor with mom-and-pop shops, smaller grocery stores, coffee shops, family-friendly activities, beautification, and overall promotion of businesses in the West End. The community envisions the corridor as walkable, thriving, and a destination for the surrounding neighborhoods and city residents. A **Vibrant Commercial Corridor** will help support **Healthy and Safe Connections**, **Green Neighborhoods**, and **Reinvestment and Affordability** throughout the community. This section lists three detailed actions, and three additional recommendations:

Strategy: Program & Financial Support

- Action: Expand the Enterprise Zone
- Action: Explore Tax Increment Financing
- Other Action: Continue to Raise Awareness of Existing Programs

Strategy: Upkeep & Beautification

- Action: Support Upkeep through Public-Private and Other Partnerships
- Other Action: Implement Entrance Corridor Overlay
- Other Action: Establish Pop-Up Events



“Absolutely agree that more retail - hardware store, coffee shops, more restaurants, additional small businesses and entertainment - is needed in the West End. Who wants to drive to Lowe’s or Home Depot outside Waynesboro every time West End homeowners need supplies. Retail used to exist in the West End back when it was thriving.”

Assets & Challenges

Historically, West Beverley Street was a thriving gateway primarily focused on travel to and from the western neighborhoods and through traffic downtown. After the construction of the two segments of Woodrow Wilson Parkway (Route 262) in 2006, the focus shifted off the West Beverley Street corridor, and business activity began to decline. Yet, the western neighborhoods still retain numerous assets that lay a foundation for new commercial revitalization.

The following assets and challenges surfaced during the engagement process and data collection. These helped determine the goal and actions for the commercial corridor.



"This is a great area for business. Enhance the small town feel of this mini-Main street."

Assets

- **Existing businesses:** In the survey and online mapping activity, community members identified specific existing businesses as assets. Community members would like to see more businesses similar to those that already exist, but they would also like to see a wider variety of businesses. Further support for the existing businesses is essential for maintaining a thriving commercial corridor.
- **The Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA):** This association is the official voice of West End commerce, addressing the needs and concerns of over 85 small businesses. Its mission is to improve the success of the association's members while highlighting the unique character of the West End and its enduring appeal as a vibrant commercial and residential corridor. This organized group must be a central stakeholder in accomplishing the actions in the RSP.
- **Potential for business development:** The entire city currently has an unmet demand for food and beverage stores, furniture and home furnishing retailers, and clothing retailers, with a spending gap of about \$60,000,000. The city can support 80 new stores that fulfill these demands. The West End has the potential to provide 23 percent of the food and beverage store demand and 15 percent of clothing and furniture retailer businesses. Refer to **Appendix D** for an analysis on the retail gap and market opportunities within Staunton and the West End.
- **Proximity to Route 262 & Downtown:** The corridor is a primary connector for West End residents to Route 262 and downtown. Community members valued the easy car access that West Beverley Street provides for these two assets.
- **Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courthouse (J&DR):** Throughout the engagement process, participants identified the new J&DR facility as an asset and catalyst for the community. The new facility is located on a brownfield site and is an example of the potential for redevelopment.

Assets

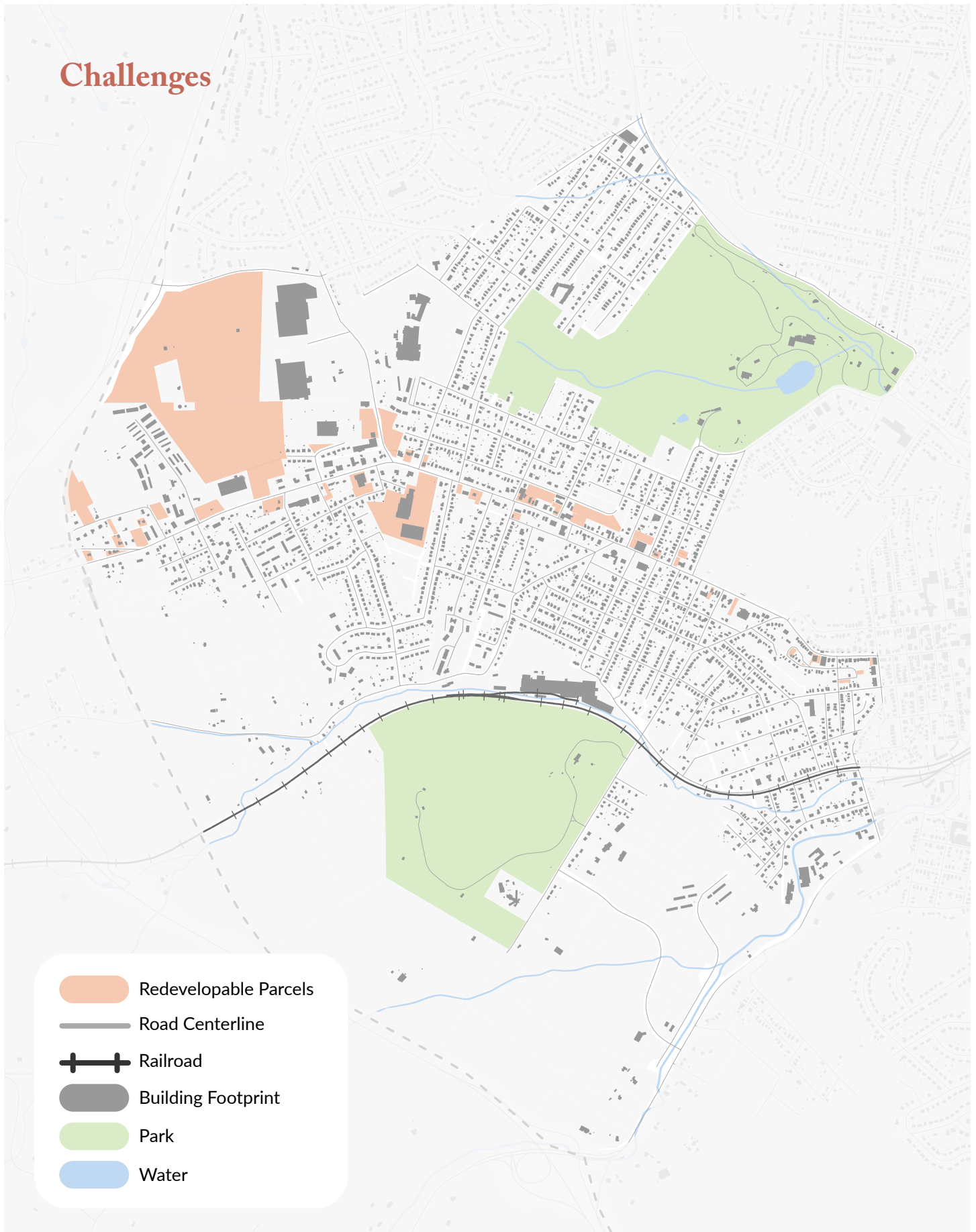




Challenges

- **Vacant and run-down buildings:** Vacant and run-down buildings can detract from the character of the corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods. They may contribute to the perception of safety issues, fewer visitors to businesses on the corridor, limited private investment, and perception of the West End. Throughout the engagement process, community members expressed concern about vacant and unmaintained properties and believed these affected the corridor's appeal. Community members do, however, see these properties as potential for adaptive reuse and investment in their community.
- **Limited options:** Community members want more business options along the corridor, such as coffee shops, specialty grocery stores, and mom-and-pop shops. They also expressed interest in additional goods, services, and entertainment in the West End.
- **Funding:** A consistent challenge across all goal areas is funding and limited resources to implement recommendations.

Challenges



Strategy: Program & Financial Support

Local government funding is a challenge in nearly all communities, especially where revitalization efforts are needed. However, strategies exist for leveraging federal and state programs, taxing tools, and other designations. Actions include two detailed recommendations and a third suggested recommendation.

- Expand the Enterprise Zone
- Explore Tax Increment Financing
- Continue to Raise Awareness of Existing Programs



"We should support small local businesses instead."

Action: Expand the Enterprise Zone

The Enterprise Zone unlocks incentives and grants to encourage new businesses and expand existing businesses. Incentives that best fit the community's needs include the creative class/entrepreneurship incentive, the minority business incentive, the property tax exemption incentive, and the incentive for increased property tax exemption for low-impact development.

Expanding an enterprise zone can attract more businesses, leading to increased investment, job creation, and economic growth across the city. It can revitalize underdeveloped areas, enhance infrastructure, and improve the quality of life for residents. A larger zone can diversify the economic base by attracting a wide range of businesses, fostering resilience against economic downturns. Increased economic activity can also improve community services and amenities, enhancing the area's overall attractiveness. However, expanding an enterprise zone to encompass expansive areas, such as an entire city, could dilute the impact of incentives, increase costs, and create uneven development, presenting challenges for local governments in terms of policy implementation and resource management. Therefore, enterprise zone expansion should be limited to targeted areas of need.

City Snapshot

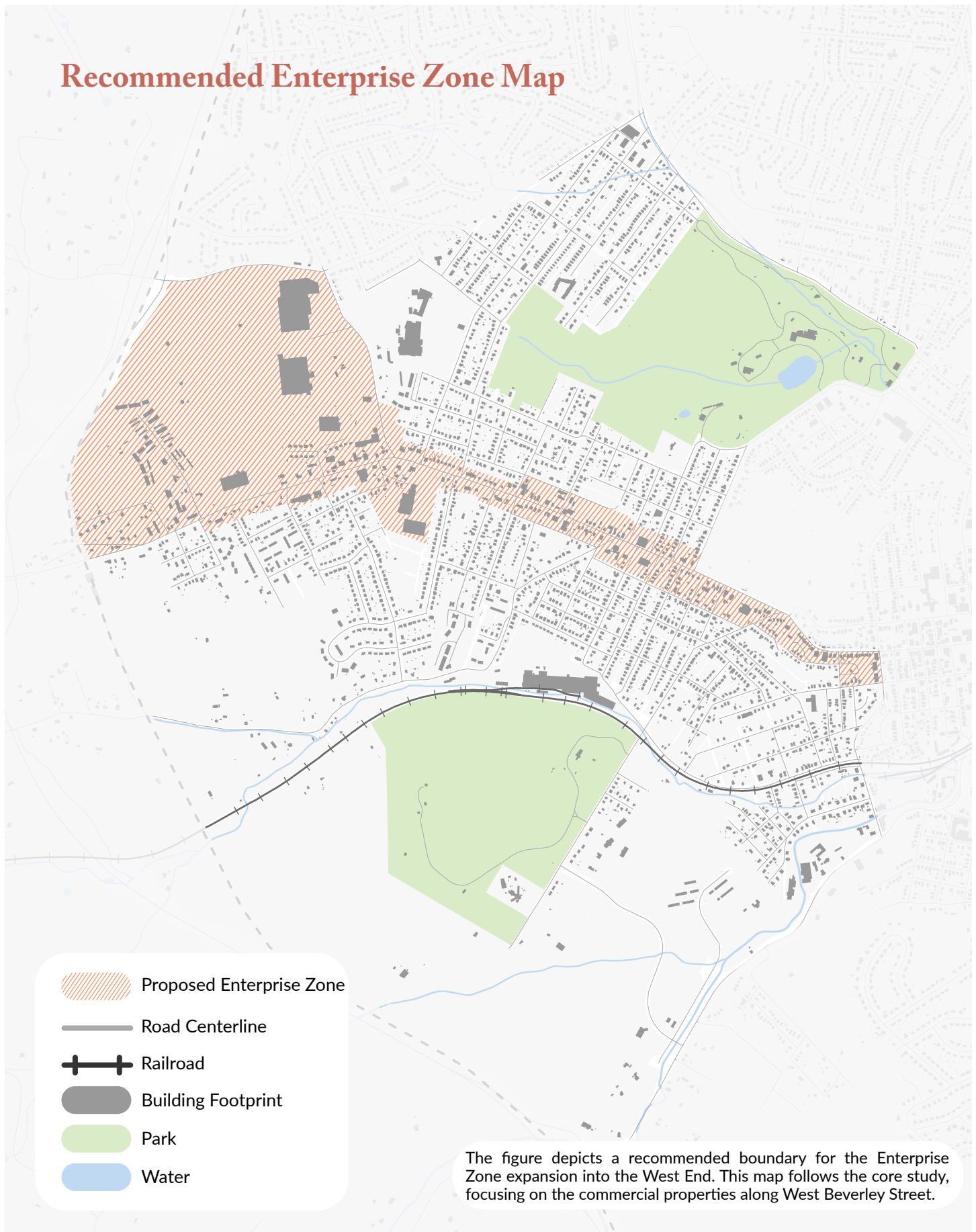
- Citywide, the top unmet demand exists in Food and Beverage Stores, with an unmet demand spending gap of \$22,801,285, meaning an additional 13 Food and Beverage Stores could be supported within the city.
- Based on the unmet retail demand for Food and Beverage Stores, the West End area could support additional food and beverage purveyors. It could capture approximately 23% of the overall city's unmet demand. This could include small specialty food groceries. Given the proximity to Staunton's Farmer's Market and the Staunton Winter Market, there is an opportunity to provide locations on West Beverley Street for market businesses to do pop-ups or for a food-based business incubator.

The City of Staunton employs an Enterprise Zone for downtown and areas along multiple corridors, accounting for approximately 700 acres. In the West End, the Enterprise Zones overlap with three neighborhoods (West Johnson, Tannehill Wheat, and Middlebrook Park). However, the city's program does not reach most of the West Beverley Street corridor, and the program is in the process of being revised. However, the city documented limited applications in the Enterprise Zone program. The City of Norfolk provides a case study example of a more active program that could apply to the West Beverley Street commercial properties.

City Snapshot

- The opportunity for retail along West Beverley Street is extensive given the unmet demand in Clothing, Accessories, Shoe, and Jewelry Retailers as well as Furniture and Home Furnishings Retailers. There is an opportunity to support up to 15 of these businesses, providing new retail and retail (vintage) resellers. Given the unmet demand, there is an opportunity to support several of these businesses and create a district that could position the West End as a retail shopping district. Further, given the West End's history and West Beverley Street's architecture, stores specializing in Mid-Century Modern items could do exceptionally well, further defining the area's brand identity.

Recommended Enterprise Zone Map



Case Study | *Norfolk, Virginia*

Local & State Enterprise Zone Incentives

The City of Norfolk established a local program with State Enterprise Zone Incentives to provide a framework to increase economic development in targeted areas. These incentives include utility and business license tax relief, building permit fee relief, and tax abatement for renovations. The program encourages construction and development by removing financial barriers to new businesses. The Enterprise Zone provides non-cash benefits such as training, technical assistance, and meeting space. With state-level incentives like the Real Property Investment Grant and Job Creation Grant, Norfolk's Enterprise Zone program aims to attract private sector investment, create more jobs, and uplift economically disadvantaged areas. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

Key Takeaways

- Promotes economic Development through business supports, reducing start-up costs job creation and property investment
- Encourages development in targeted commercial areas



Photo credit: City of Norfolk

Expand the City's Enterprise Zone to the West Beverley Street commercial corridor.

Adding West Beverley Street to the City's Enterprise Zone will provide incentives to new and existing business owners, vacant commercial properties, and brownfield locations.

Community Engagement & Past Plans Background:

Sources:	• USEPA Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant Survey • Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA) meetings • Community Survey • January Open House • March Community Action Workshop
Community Feedback:	Throughout this process and past outreach, the community has repeatedly expressed its desire for new small businesses and asked that current business owners have access to resources. An Enterprise Zone along the West Beverley Street corridor will provide incentives for entrepreneurs and existing commerce.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	• City staff time • Involvement from stakeholders
Resources:	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Fourth Economy Data (Refer to Appendix D)
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Staunton Department of Economic Development
Support:	• Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) • EDA • City Council • Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA)
Anticipated Benefits:	Enterprise Zone incentives unlock state and local funding and support to encourage business improvements and private investment along the corridor. These improvements will revitalize the commercial corridor and stimulate economic growth in the area.
Steps/Phases:	• Identify incentives that would benefit local businesses and encourage new businesses within the Enterprise Zone • Finalize and formally adopt a map of the expanded Enterprise Zone, including the West Beverly Street expansion • Continue to coordinate with the Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA) and other commercial stakeholders to promote incentives.
Timeline:	Short-Term (under 12 month) Ongoing

Additional Comments:

The USEPA's Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant was awarded to the City of Staunton in 2021. In that process, the priority sites in the West End area were: UNIFI Manufacturing site located on Morris Mill Road, Chestnut Hills Shopping Center site located on West Beverley Street, and National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) Warehouse located on Bridge Street. In 2024, the City still has resources remaining from that process to evaluate sites with potential for redevelopment. This resource can help leverage Enterprise Zone efforts.

Action: Explore Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public funding tool to promote economic development and redevelopment in designated areas. It has been used with success throughout Virginia since 1988. TIF captures the future increases in property tax revenues generated by the rise in property values due to redevelopment and uses those funds to finance the necessary improvements. This powerful tool can help provide the resources needed for infrastructure upgrades, public amenities, and other key elements for revitalization.

The Code of Virginia allows localities to employ TIF districts under Chapter 32, Article 4.1 (refer to <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/>). The Code states that “the governing body of any county, city or town may adopt tax increment financing by passing an ordinance designating a development project area and providing that real estate taxes in the development project area shall be assessed, collected and allocated.” These funds can help pay bonds for capital improvements for infrastructure and amenities.

Case Study | *Greenville, South Carolina*

Tax Increment Financing

Greenville implemented Tax Increment Financing districts to rejuvenate its downtown, transforming it into a destination with shops, restaurants, and entertainment and sports venues. Between 1987 and 1998, Greenville established three TIF districts. This tool helped fund streetscape enhancements, public art installations, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Infrastructure improvements spurred private investments ranging from \$1 million to \$150 million. The city identified major anchor projects, including Greenville Commons, the Peace Center, and Fluor Field Baseball Stadium, which led to smaller revitalization surrounding these projects. Public and private investments contributed to the success of the decades-long project. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

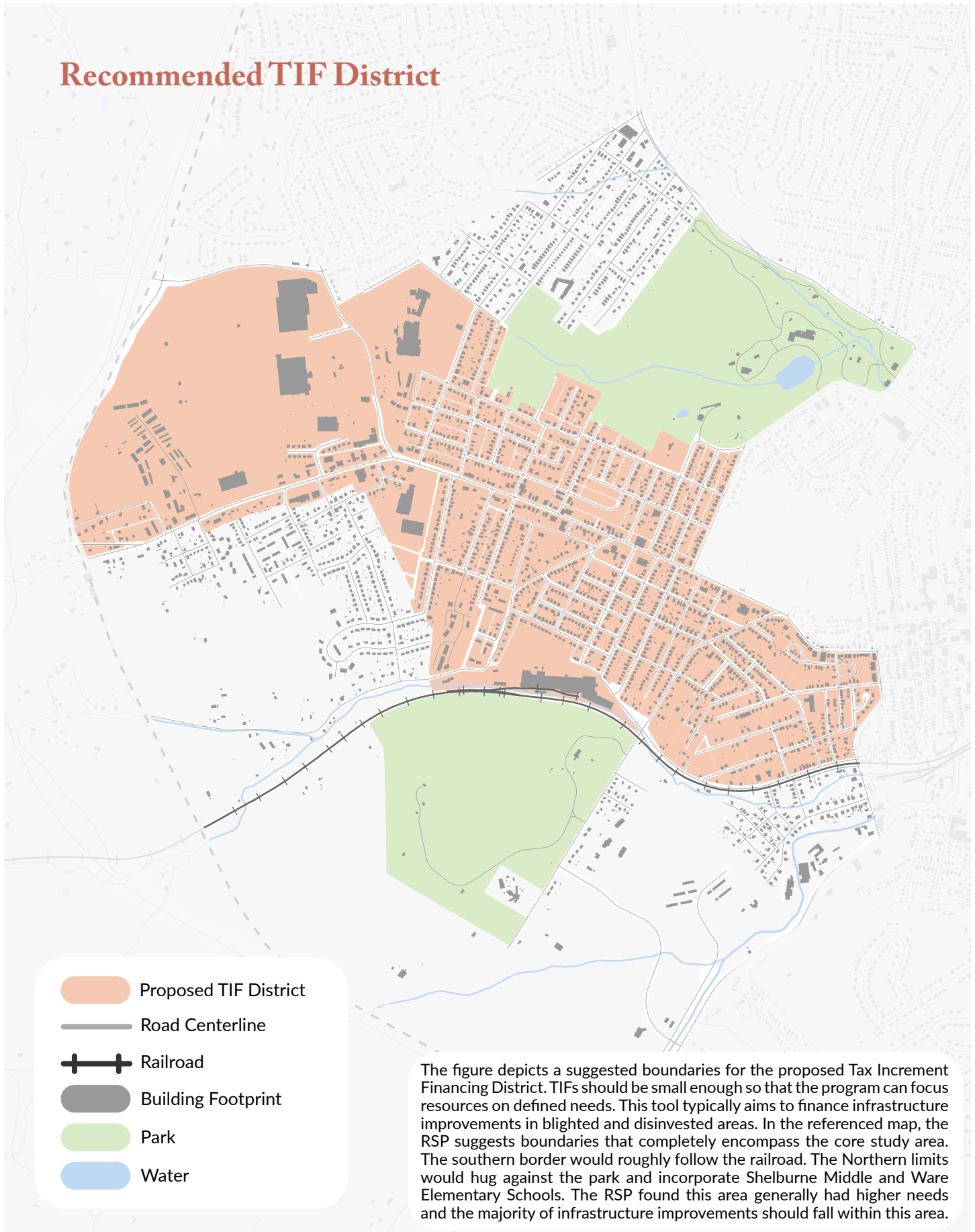


Photo credit: City of Greenville

Key Takeaways

- Overtime, TIF funds were used to reinvest in infrastructure, public art, and streetscape improvements
- Reinvestments draw more businesses, lead to more private investments, and become the “catalyst for more improvements”
- TIF funds can be combined with other funding sources to support a flexible range of projects
- Public and private partnership is key to success
- TIF is a long-term investment that gradually brings about community and infrastructure improvements

Recommended TIF District



Explore Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to support infrastructure investments.

The City should research and establish a TIF district encompassing the Core Study Area to finance infrastructure needs and improve public amenities. A TIF district can financially support other strategies recommended in this plan, including sidewalk and roadway maintenance, sidewalk and bike route additions, street tree installation, and other beautification efforts.

Background Information:

Sources:	March Community Action Workshop
Community Feedback:	Business owners and community members have emphasized the need for improved infrastructure throughout the West End.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	• City Staff time • Possibly local funds for professional services
Resources:	Code of Virginia: Chapter 32, Article 4.1
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Staunton's Department of Economic Development, and City Manager's Office
Support:	• Director, Community Development Department • City Assessor • City Attorney • City Council
Anticipated Benefits:	With limited local funds, TIF districts create additional tax revenue that should be reinvested in the community. Research shows that improved infrastructure investments in walkability attract more customers to stores, reduce pedestrian injuries, and improve health.
Steps/Phases:	• Define the need for a TIF to address blight and infrastructure. The district boundaries are formalized in a detailed study. The West End RSP helps to address this step. • Create a redevelopment agency by a resolution or ordinance. The City Council may be able to serve this function, or it may appoint a new agency. The redevelopment agency would be responsible for managing the TIF zone, encouraging economic development, enhancing infrastructure, and attracting private investment. • The redevelopment agency and/or the City Council prepare and approve a development plan. • After adopting the development plan, the redevelopment authority declares a base year. • The redevelopment agency takes the initiative to solicit developers and then enters into development agreements with them to implement the necessary improvements.
Timeline:	Mid-Term (12 to 24 months)

Additional Comments:

This effort would establish the first TIF district in the City of Staunton if adopted. Refer to Code of Virginia: [Chapter 32, Article 4.1](#) for a more detailed step by step process for approval and implementation.

Other Action: Continue to Raise Awareness of Existing Programs

The public and stakeholders identified the need for new resources during the planning process. However, several of those programs already exist. The city should continue to promote existing programs and help raise awareness of those resources. City staff can do this by regularly presenting updates to the Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA). This plan also recommends establishing neighborhood groups with which City staff can meet regularly. Note that local officials regularly attend SWEBA meetings and should continue this practice. Additionally, the formation of community connection points as discussed in the Revitalization and Reinvestment goal chapter can be an additional avenue to access these resources.

City Snapshot

- The City of Staunton's Economic Development Department contributes funding to the Shenandoah Community Capital Fund (SCCF), the Staunton Downtown Development Association and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). "The Shenandoah Community Capital Fund aims to connect people, cultivate ideas, and provide access to capital." Entrepreneurs can talk through their ideas in "one-on-one counseling, getting concepts on paper with SCCF's 8-week business planning course, getting connected with a mentor, or learning practical business skills through a Tuesday Tips workshop. You can also sign up for one-on-one training tailored to your business idea with the Director of Education and Marketing." The SCCF also offers other capital assistance. Visit the City's Economic Development webpage to learn more about programs.



Strategy: Upkeep & Beautification

A welcoming and well-maintained entrance corridor will attract customers and new businesses. Throughout engagement process, community members have emphasized wanting a beautified corridor that reflects their neighborhood's character and is more welcoming. Actions include a detailed recommendation and two additional items for consideration.

- Support Upkeep through Public-Private and Other Partnerships
- Implement Entrance Corridor Overlay
- Establish Pop-Up Events

Action: Support Upkeep through Public-Private and Other Partnerships

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and similar coordination can serve as another strategy for financing revitalization and redevelopment. These approaches may include less structured collaboration with non-profits and other community groups, such as the Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA).



"I'm wondering if an emphasis could be placed on beautification of West Beverley Street. Although not the most trafficked, it is a gateway to historic downtown. It would be great to not only see bike/ped accommodations and road improvements, but also street trees and landscaping in key locations to "draw out" the beautiful of Beverley Street."



"Beautification is sorely needed along West Beverley st... Flags and lights and more than a paltry banner saying Merry Christmas for the holidays. Year round beautification! Green up this area!"

Case Study | *Rocky Mount, North Carolina*

The Historic Douglas Block Project

The Historic Douglas Block Project in Rocky Mount represents a redevelopment effort to revitalize a historically African American business district. Initiated by the city in 2003, the project focused on a 3-block area designated as a Redevelopment Area, encompassing 16 parcels across approximately 15 acres of land. The redevelopment plan included renovating six buildings as part of Phase 1, completed in 2011. Rocky Mount's approach involved creating a public-private partnership to spearhead the redevelopment efforts, emphasizing preserving historical integrity and creating usable public spaces. Financing for the project, totaling approximately \$8 million, came from various sources, including a Section 108 HUD Loan, Brownfield Grant, Historic Tax Credits, and New Markets Tax Credits. This phase aimed to preserve the district's historic character while enhancing its economic viability. An important aspect of the success of this project in attracting visitors was street improvements, including wider sidewalks and human-scale lighting. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

Highlight

- Streetscape enhancements to lighting and improved pedestrian access have increased foot traffic and patronage to local businesses
- Collaboration between the city, non-profits, local organizations, and businesses is key to success
- The downtown revitalization project was done in several phases, making the project more feasible with enhancements are ongoing today



Photo credit: City of Rocky Mount

Use Public-Private and other partnerships to help upkeep and beautify the commercial corridor.

A group or organization of community members and business owners should work together to upkeep and beautify West Beverley Street through events or volunteer days. These could include trash clean-up days, tree and flower planting days, and mural painting. Implementing other strategies included in this plan will support this action. While the city can encourage investment, like the other actions in this chapter, it cannot make private property owners change their properties as long as they comply with local ordinances. A community organization can work with private owners and spur low-cost beautification projects along the corridor.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA), • March Community Action Workshop
Community Feedback:	West Beverley looking rundown and unattractive was a recurring theme throughout discussions with community members and in surveys. Community members want the corridor to reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and look more welcoming.

Action Detailing:

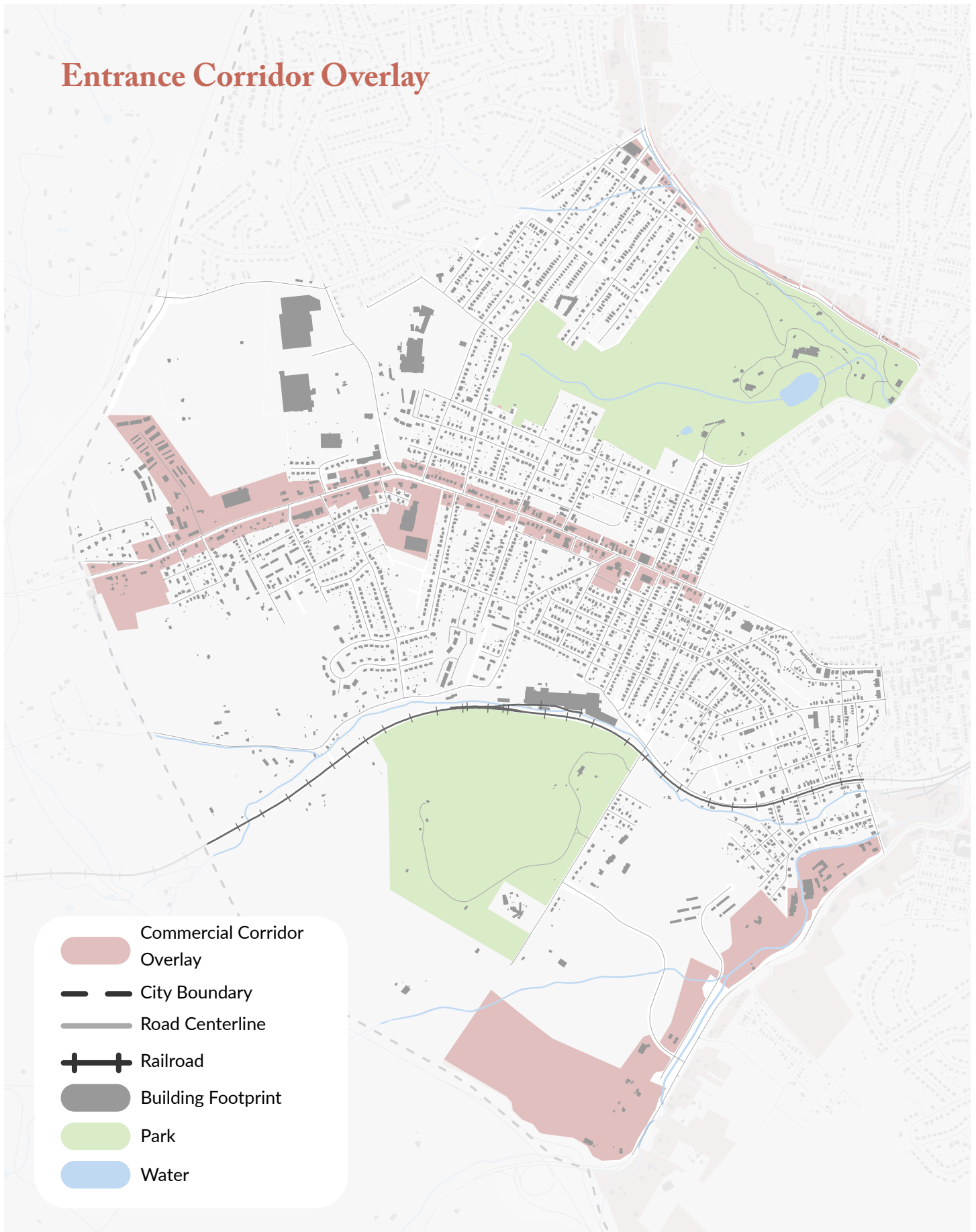
Estimated Cost:	Volunteer and staff time, low cost
Resources:	Keep America Beautiful Individual Action Center & Grant Program
Primary Point of Contact:	Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA)
Support:	• Director, Staunton's Department of Economic Development • West Beverley Property Owners and Business Owners • The Beverley Garden Club • Augusta Garden Club • Public Works • Parks and Recreation • Building Services
Anticipated Benefits:	A corridor with aesthetic investments and qualities attracts private investors and encourages more people to visit local businesses. It also instills community pride and identity, creating stronger social connections and a thriving community in the long run ¹ .
Steps/Phases:	• Document potential partners and funding programs. • Begin regular coordination with possible partners and funders.
Timeline:	Short Term/Ongoing

Additional Comments:

Refer to the appendix for a list of resources.

¹ <https://www.nlc.org/article/2023/06/09/the-power-of-community-beauty-transforming-small-cities-for-success/>

Entrance Corridor Overlay



Other Action: Implement Entrance Corridor Overlay

During the RSA process, the Community Development Department was updating the Corridor Overlay Design Guidelines, including the West Beverley Street corridor. A well-designed corridor will attract more businesses and visitors to the West End. It will also identify the West End as a place to establish community identity and build neighborhood pride. Updates to the overlay district can help support the West End's vision.

Other Action: Establish Pop-Up Events

A pop-up market allows business owners to sell products and test their viability without renting or owning a storefront. Additionally, pop-up markets repurpose underused spaces, creating a community destination. A pop-up market would also attract people from surrounding communities to the West End. Note that this will be privately driven and not run by the City.



"Host annual antique show for smaller vendors. Coffee/small restaurants to follow. Refer to Round Rock Texas."

Case Study | *Tionesta, Pennsylvania*

Micro Markets

The Market Village occupies a town block that was destroyed by a 2003 fire. The grand opening was June 14, 2013, and represented a local effort to build community and create opportunity. It offers a unique shopping experience with entertainment options for residents and visitors alike. The surrounding community has supported the effort, and several contributors have offered their talents and services. The local Industrial Development Authority developed the pop-up storefronts idea. The goal was to support micro enterprises to build businesses for permanent brick & mortar space. Sheds rent for \$50 to \$70 per month. Tenants pay electric costs. Downtown traffic increased, up to 1,000 visitors on a busy day. The programming includes concerts.



Photo credit: City of Tionesta

Key Takeaways

- Utilize vacant lots or parking lots with business and a public space
- Introduces beginning businesses a low start-up cost opportunity for new ideas



Healthy & Safe Connections

Shape a healthy and beautified West End that creates a safe and comfortable environment for people walking, biking, and taking transit.





Health and safety were primary themes throughout community feedback and data analysis. The West End has limited multimodal options, with many sidewalk gaps, worn sidewalks and roadways, and few alternatives to travel. Additionally, residents have expressed pedestrian safety concerns related to possible vehicle conflicts and crime perceptions. However, the community's vision of a well-connected West End, linked to Downtown, the commercial corridor, and its various neighborhoods, is a powerful motivator. These connections, safe for all users, not only enhance the community but also attract visitors. Improved health and safe connections within the community go hand in hand with a Thriving Commercial Corridor and Reinvestment and Affordability. This section lists two main strategies, five detailed actions, and three other suggestions.

Strategy: Maintain & Improve Connections

- Action: Repair and Maintain Sidewalks and Roads
- Action: Implement Bike and Pedestrian Improvements
- Other Action: Add Bus Shelters

Strategy: Improve Public Safety

- Action: Install High Visibility crosswalks
- Action: Identify Street Lighting Improvements
- Action: Regular Communication between the Police Department and the Community
- Other Action: Prevent Crime Through Environmental Design
- Other Actions: Study Traffic Safety Measures



"My daughter and her family have lived [here] for over 20 years. It would be wonderful if the people in the neighborhood had sidewalks to walk on instead of down the city street. It's also very dangerous, I'm surprised that there hadn't been some bad accidents involving pedestrians."

Assets & Challenges

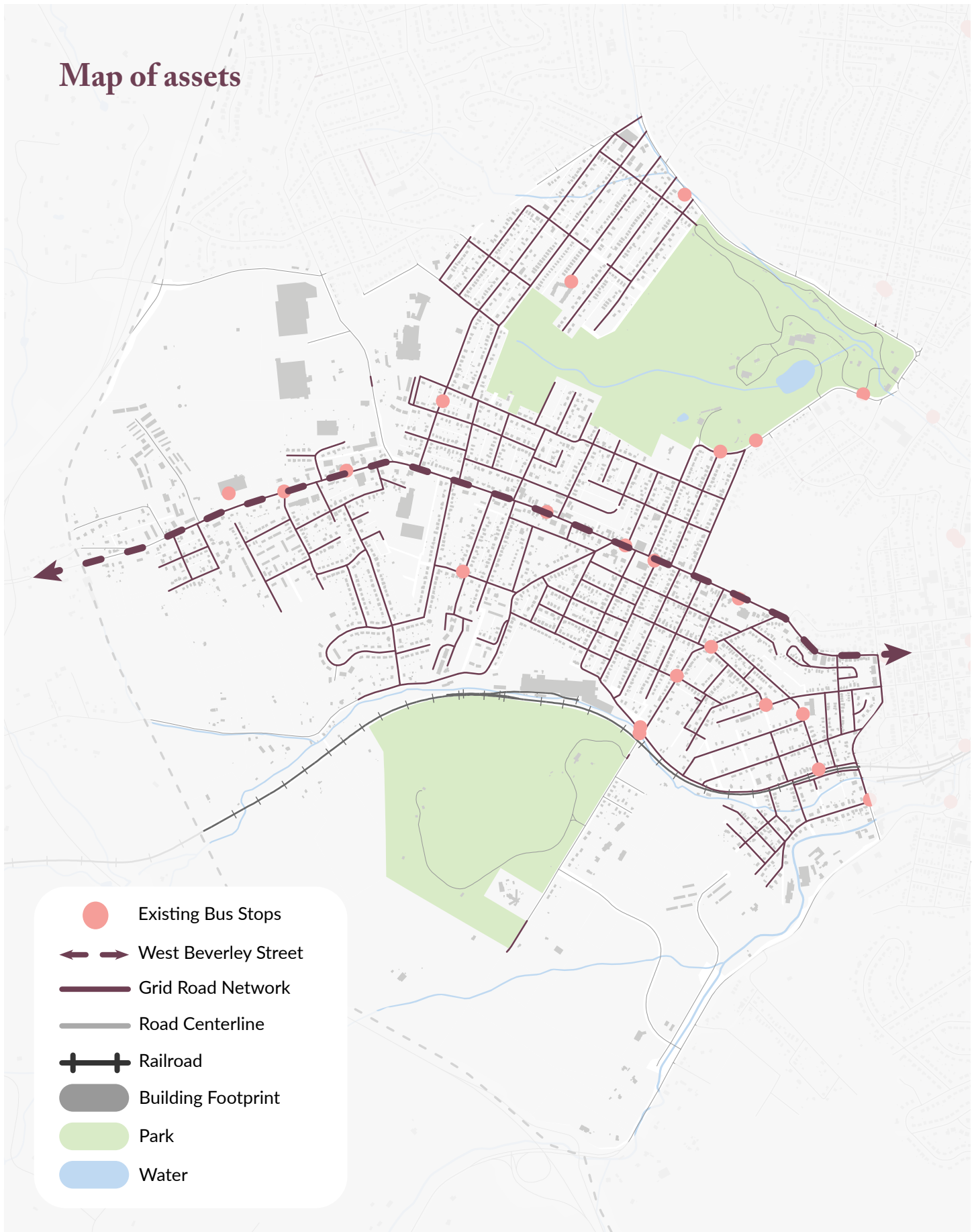
The community and existing conditions analysis, including fieldwork, played a crucial role in identifying connection assets and challenges in the West End. These efforts helped pinpoint connection strengths such as proximity to Route 262 and the Downtown, the neighborhood grid network, and transit availability. The process also highlighted challenges, including limited sidewalks and crosswalks, a lack of biking facilities, safety concerns, and street maintenance. The following assets and challenges helped determine what actions must be taken to fulfill the healthy and safe connection goal.

Assets

- **Proximity to Route 262 & Downtown:** The West Beverley corridor is a primary connector for West End residents to Route 262 and Downtown. Participants liked West Beverley's easy access to these two assets and described this access as an excellent opportunity for the community.
- **Grid Network:** Most neighborhoods flow through the street grid network, making travel between city blocks and other destinations easier. Grid networks are the most resilient and convenient street design.
- **Transit Access:** Two BRITE bus routes travel through the West End: The West Loop and the Downtown Trolley. Additionally, the Saturday Night Trolley travels along Churchville Avenue on Saturdays. Bus stops are in prime locations and connect the West End to the rest of the city. Community feedback emphasized the need to improve sidewalks to the bus stops and improve amenities.



Map of assets

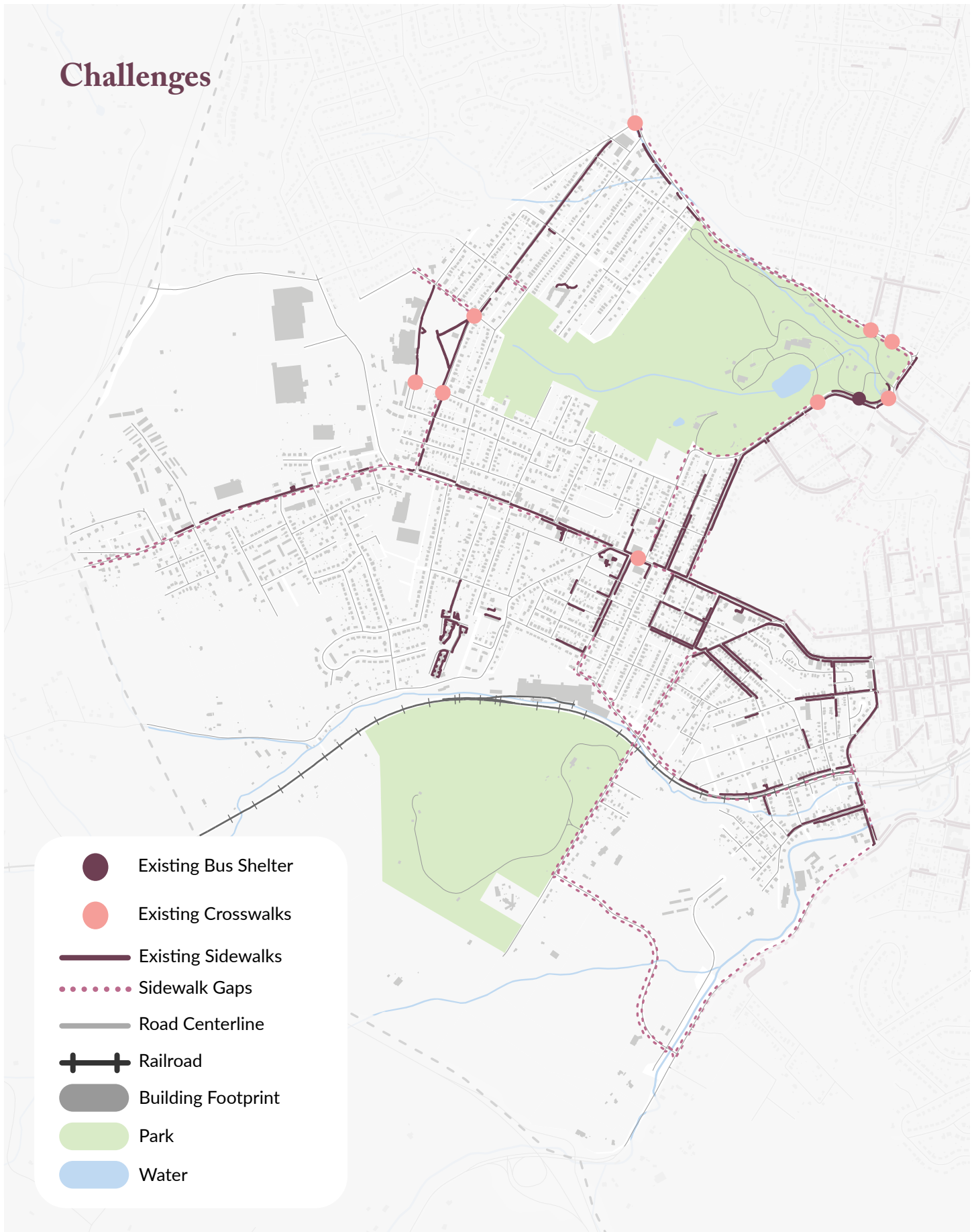




Challenges

- **Sidewalks and Crosswalks:** The West End lacks sidewalks in many areas and has few crosswalks within the Primary Study Area. Existing sidewalks are in fair to poor condition, narrow, and lack ADA features. According to VDOT crash data from 2019 to 2024, ten pedestrian-related crashes occurred in the Primary Study Area. Four of these crashes resulted in severe injury, and two involved visible injuries. However, limited sidewalks can reduce pedestrian safety and commercial activity, which is an obstacle to areas trying to revitalize their commercial assets. The Green Neighborhoods Chapter discusses how the limited pedestrian network prevents park access.
- **Biking Facilities:** Currently, the West End neighborhoods lack biking facilities. In 2018, the city adopted the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which identified several possible bike routes for the West End. The community commented on wanting to be able to ride bikes safely to the parks and downtown.
- **Safety Concerns:** Community members have expressed safety concerns throughout this process. Issues include pedestrian safety and crime prevention.
- **Street Maintenance:** Roadways currently require repaving and restriping. Roadway maintenance is costlier as infrastructure ages. Poor roadway conditions increase the risk of accidents and roadway hazards.
- **Bus Shelter:** Public comments included a desire for bus shelters to shield riders from the weather. Currently, there is only one shelter.

Challenges



Strategy: Maintain & Improve Connections

Transportation connections and conditions are essential to meeting the community's goals and vision. This strategy includes two detailed action and a lower-priority recommendation..

- Repair and Maintain Sidewalks and Roads
- Implement Bike and Pedestrian Improvements
- Add Bus Shelters

Action: Repair and Maintain Sidewalks and Roads

The West End neighborhoods requested additional attention to street maintenance, including sidewalks and roads. The West Beverley corridor (east of Grubert Street) accounts for much of the sidewalk network. However, Thornrose Avenue and Grubert Street have relatively consistent pedestrian accommodations. The three eastern neighborhoods (Thornrose, Montgomery Avenue, and West Johnson) have the most complete sidewalk networks due to their proximity to downtown. Most of the other residential areas lack pedestrian accommodations. Most residential areas have lower traffic volumes, and residents are concerned about losing yards and trees for streetscape improvements. Of existing sidewalks, the City's consultants documented numerous condition issues throughout the study area. The following summarizes those most common characteristics.

- **Damaged Concrete:** Several segments have cracked concrete with vertical separation. One example is at 2309 West Beverley Street, with a 2-inch vertical difference between surfaces. Other areas include broken curbs.
- **Weathered Concrete:** Most sidewalk surfaces are weathered and worn, giving a rough or uneven appearance.
- **Vegetation Overgrowth:** Depending on the time of year, vegetation overgrowth protrudes through cracks or over the sidewalk from adjacent properties.
- **Pedestrian Obstacles:** Most sidewalks have obstacles that can block wheelchairs. On West Beverley Street, utility poles and mailboxes are frequently in the middle of the walkway. These issues go beyond general maintenance and represent more substantial, fundamental issues.
- **Outdated Standards:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) are employing the newly adopted Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), which affects sidewalk standards. None of the West End sidewalks meet PROWAG and its guidelines for sidewalk width, curb ramps, and slopes. If the City accepts federal dollars for transportation projects on a segment, local officials may be required to replace the sidewalks on that segment, according to PROWAG.

The “Implement Bike and Pedestrian Improvements” action recommends new pedestrian projects, including replacing existing sidewalks on key corridors, such as West Beverley Street. However, immediate action would be to employ maintenance and fixes, especially on West Beverley Street, which has the most documented issues. The city should focus on evening surfaces, especially cracks that present vertical separation.

During the public engagement process, participants also discussed road and pavement conditions. The City’s consultants did not document any immediate issues. However, a regular paving schedule would help address aging, uneven, and cracked asphalt.

Repair and maintain sidewalks and roads in the West End.

Walking comfortably and safely within the West End is vital to connectedness. Repairing and maintaining sidewalks and roads makes the West End a safer place to travel. Obstructed and damaged sidewalks cause difficulties for those with limited mobility. Well-maintained sidewalks also attract visitors and customers to local businesses.

Background Information:

Sources:	• USEPA Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant Survey, • Community Survey, • January Open House, • March Community Action Workshop
Community Feedback:	The community consistently emphasized the streetscape conditions and needs for repair. These improvements are vital to addressing the “rundown” look of the western neighborhoods.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	To be determined. The city would likely develop small maintenance projects in different areas throughout the study area, which would also be ongoing expenses.
Resources:	• Capital Improvements Program • Operating Budget
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Public Works
Support:	• Staunton Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee • Director, Community Development Department
Anticipated Benefits:	Improvements would benefit pedestrian safety, spur reinvestment in private properties, and support business activity.
Steps/Phases:	• Continue to identify spot improvements. • Coordinate with the community on most urgent needs. • Continue to conduct maintenance on problem areas.
Timeline:	Ongoing – repairing and maintaining infrastructure is a regularly occurring process.

Additional Comments:

West Beverley Street would be the highest priority, especially given sidewalk conditions. However, residential areas will also need attention.

Action: Implement Bike and Pedestrian Improvements

Bike and pedestrian routes arose from public input, data analysis, observation, and existing conditions. In 2018, the city passed the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. There is a one-to-one overlap between this 2018 effort and the RSP. Each recommendation relevant to the West End within this plan should be implemented to increase healthy and safe connections throughout the community. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommends pedestrian and bicycle improvements on:

Pedestrian Routes:

- 4th Street,
- 5th Street,
- Churchville Avenue,
- Grubert Avenue,
- Hays Avenue,
- Lacy B King Way,
- Middlebrook Avenue,
- Montgomery Avenue,
- Park Boulevard,
- Stuart Street,
- Thornrose Avenue, and
- West Beverley Street.

Bicycle Routes:

- Bridge Street,
- Churchville Avenue,
- Grubert Avenue,
- Hays Avenue,
- Middlebrook Avenue,
- Montgomery Avenue,
- Stuart Street,
- West Beverley Street,
- Thornrose Avenue,
- Park Boulevard, and
- Circle Drive.

Additional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommendations include street furnishings, such as benches, water fountains, trailheads, shade trees, pet stations, and trash bins. Lighting and wayfinding are other essential features. Refer to the transportation profiles that highlight the high-priority projects.

Case Study | *Chicago, Illinois*

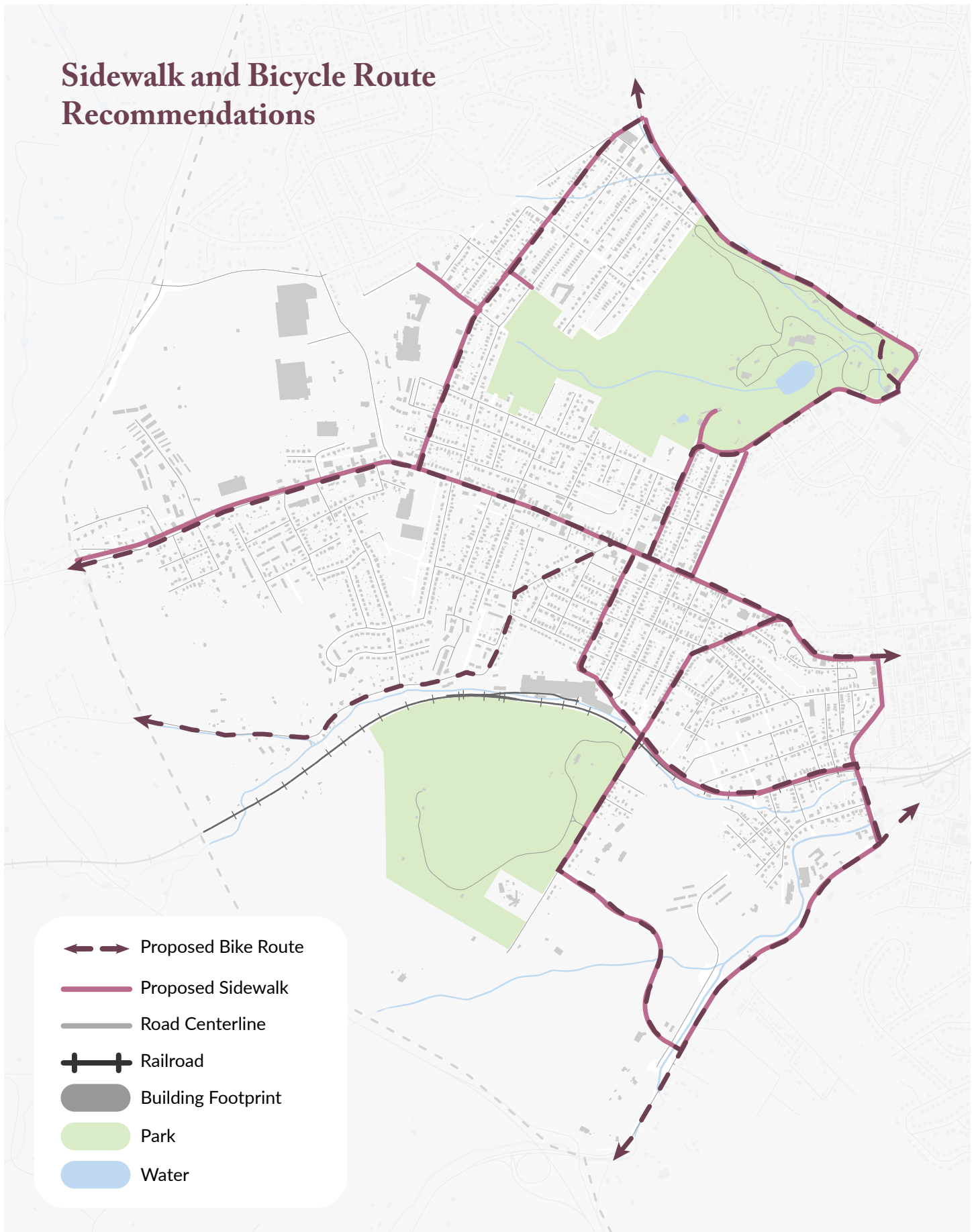
Drop-in Dining by Bike

Installing a protected bike lane outside “694 Wine & Spirits” helped increase visibility and customer traffic for the bar. The updated streetscape included new bike lanes and reclaimed parking that allowed for a sidewalk café space. The project expanded seating and improved curb appeal. The business owner, Chris Dunstatter, noted that the steady stream of cyclists has increased window shopping and quick drop-ins, which boosted their public profile. Dunstatter recommends that small business owners advocate for such traffic-calming measures despite initial parking challenges, as they bring slower, more attentive traffic. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

Key Takeaways

- Less parking increases space for pedestrians, cyclists, and outdoor dining and enhanced the streetscape aesthetics and experience
- Multimodal access to shops and restaurants increases foot traffic and sales
- A recent study found that people who traveled to a shopping area by bike spent 24% more per month than those who traveled by car.

Sidewalk and Bicycle Route Recommendations



Sidewalk Recommendation Details

Overview:

Ensuring pedestrian accessibility to public spaces like parks and schools is a crucial asset that the West End can provide its residents. Current sidewalk conditions in schools and parks are limited and do not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) standards. Providing continuously compliant sidewalks to schools and parks connects neighborhoods to the public amenities and assets of the West End. The RSP process identified four high-priority corridor improvements that are consistent with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan: West Beverley Street, Montgomery Avenue, Thornrose Avenue, and Grubert Avenue.

Recommendations:

- Improve existing sidewalks to meet ADA and PROWAG compliance
- Relocate utility poles, signs, fire hydrants, mailboxes, and other obstructions present on existing sidewalks
- Improve existing sidewalks with curb cuts and even transitions where necessary
- Connect existing sidewalk infrastructure with new sidewalks to improve connectivity
- Provide pedestrian access to Montgomery Park on Montgomery Avenue.

Virginia Transportation Plan Identified Needs



Pedestrian Infrastructure



Safety Features



Intersection Design



Traffic Calming



Sidewalks

West Beverley Street (West Segment) Sidewalks

Description: The west segment of West Beverley Street is the main access road for Woodrow Wilson Parkway, Ware Elementary, and Shelburne Middle School on Grubert Avenue. According to VDOT 2022 data, West Beverley Street is classified as a minor arterial road and one of the busiest in the study area, with an average of 7,360 daily trips. Therefore, pedestrian safety and sidewalk improvements are a priority.

Source: Fieldwork, Public Engagement, 2018 Staunton Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Summary of Details: (1.3 Miles, 6,864 Linear Feet) Woodrow Wilson Pkwy to Highland Avenue

Current Condition and Connectivity: Sidewalks are present on one side of the street, but there are significant gaps. Where sidewalks are provided, multiple obstructions prevent compliant access. Fieldwork shows evidence of utility poles and mailboxes impeding a six-foot-wide path. Additionally, there are no crosswalks for pedestrians to cross West Beverley Street.

Community Input: The public emphasized the need for these improvements. Attendees voiced the need for sidewalks on both sides of the street to get to and from downtown.

Possible Funding Sources: Transportation Enhancements, SMART SCALE, SS4A

West Beverley Street (East Segment) Sidewalks

Description: West Beverley Street is a collector road connecting Woodrow Wilson Parkway to Downtown Staunton with multiple points of interest along the West End Neighborhoods. The east segment leads to downtown Staunton and connects roads to Gypsy Hill Park and Montgomery Hall Park. It's in the core study area, and the main commercial thoroughfare is through the West End. West Beverley Street is one of the busiest roads in the study area, with an average of 6,900 daily trips, according to VDOT 2022 data; therefore, pedestrian safety and sidewalk improvements are a priority for this road.

Source: Fieldwork, Public Engagement, 2018 Staunton Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Summary of Details: (0.8 Miles, 4,224 Linear Feet) Highland Avenue to North Jefferson Street

Condition and Connectivity: Sidewalks are primarily present on both sides of the street but are inconsistent. Where sidewalks are provided, multiple obstructions prevent ADA-compliant access. Fieldwork shows evidence of utility poles and mailboxes impeding a six-foot-wide path. Portions of sidewalks abut against four-foot retaining walls, further restricting pedestrian accessibility. Crosswalks are also limited.

Community Input: The addition and improvements of sidewalks were emphasized throughout the open house event. Attendees voiced the need for sidewalks on both sides of the street to get to and from downtown. Attendees also noted power lines and light poles should be moved or buried since they take up most of the sidewalk.

Possible Funding Sources: Transportation Enhancements, SMART SCALE, SS4A

Montgomery Avenue

Description: Montgomery Avenue connects to West Beverley Street and is the only road providing access to Montgomery Hall Park. This road currently serves as a neighborhood street, providing on-street parking and a small right-of-way for through traffic. Pedestrian access on neighborhood roads and improved access to Montgomery Park are priorities.

Source: Fieldwork, Public Engagement, 2018 Staunton Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Summary of Details: (0.8 Miles, 4,300 Linear Feet) West Beverley Street to Lacey B King Way

Condition and Connectivity: Current sidewalk conditions do not provide pedestrian access to Montgomery Hall Park. Due to the railroad's location, the only way to access the park is via Montgomery Avenue. The park is an asset to the West End, and pedestrian access should be provided. Montgomery Hall Park was identified as a strength for the West End, as it is one of the largest parks in Staunton. Pedestrian access is limited, with a quarter-mile stretch of road with no pedestrian accessibility, requiring community members to walk on Montgomery Ave and cross railroad tracks with no sidewalks or crosswalks.

Community Input: During the open house for the study of the West End, sidewalks were identified as a need for neighborhood streets.

Possible Funding Sources: Transportation Enhancements, SMART SCALE, SS4A

Thornrose Avenue:

Description: Thornrose Ave provides access to Gypsy Hill Park and Thornrose Cemetery while providing a connection between West Beverley St. and Churchville Ave. Due to its access to Gypsy Hill Park and Thornrose Cemetery, this street is classified as a major collector by VDOT and has an average of 5,200 daily trips, according to VDOT 2022 data. Crosswalks and improved connectivity of sidewalks on this road have been identified as a priority.

Source: Fieldwork, Public Engagement, 2018 Staunton Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Summary of Details: (0.7 Miles, 3,800 Linear Feet) West Beverley Street to Churchville Avenue

Current Condition and Connectivity: Sidewalks are on one side of the street or the other, requiring pedestrians to cross where no crosswalks or curb cuts are provided. The sidewalks present similar disparities in the study area, with utility poles, fire hydrants, and street signs obstructing clear access.

Community Input: Common themes of the community meeting included “improving walkability with new and improved sidewalks” and “improving roadways and bike amenities.” A consistent issue in community surveys was a lack of access to existing parks. Gypsy Hill Park and Thornrose Cemetery were noted as favorite places to walk and bike.

Possible Funding Sources: Transportation Enhancements, SMART SCALE, SS4A

Grubert Avenue:

Description: Grubert Avenue provides Shelburne Middle School and Ware Elementary School access. Grubert Avenue also connects West Beverley Street and Churchville Avenue, the two minor arterial roads in the West End. There is an average of 4,000 daily trips, according to VDOT 2022 data. With the increase in pedestrian activity on this road during school drop-off and pick-up times, pedestrian access and safety improvements have been identified as a priority.

Source: Fieldwork, Public Engagement, 2018 Staunton Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Summary of Details: (0.9 Miles, 5,100 Linear Feet) West Beverley Street to Churchville Avenue

Condition and Connectivity: Sidewalks are present along the majority of Grubert Avenue; however, there are multiple obstructions. Improving existing sidewalk conditions to meet ADA compliance and connecting the gaps in pedestrian access to the school will provide a safe pedestrian route for families and children to school and connect to the recommended pedestrian access along West Beverley Street and Churchville Avenue.

Community Input: Community members identified topics like “walkability and sidewalks,” “walking access to schools,” and “feeling disconnected from the rest of Staunton” as challenges for the West End. When asked about areas that need improvement, community members focused on better walking routes to schools, with Grubert Avenue being the primary route.

Possible Funding Sources: Transportation Enhancements, SMART SCALE, SS4A

Case Study | *Pikeville, Tennessee*

Streetscape Overhaul

The Pikeville, Tennessee, Streetscape Overhaul and Downtown Farmers Market project occurred in response to the diversion of traffic from Downtown Pikeville following the construction of a bypass by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TNDOT). Recognizing the need to attract tourism and revitalize the downtown area, the city embarked on a comprehensive redesign of Main Street. The streetscape overhaul aimed to enhance the aesthetic appeal and pedestrian experience along Main Street. Key features of the redesign included 48 ornamental streetlights, textured brick crosswalks, and 1,600 linear feet of sidewalk. This effort beautified the streetscape and created a more welcoming environment for residents and visitors. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

Key Takeaways

- Despite the diversion of traffic through the bypass, Pikeville's streetscape overhaul has rejuvenated its downtown business district.
- Streetscape enhancements to lighting and improved pedestrian/bicycle access have increased foot traffic and patronage to local businesses.
- The downtown revitalization project was done in several phases, making the project more feasible with enhancements still ongoing today.
- Pikeville used multiple federal, state, and local grants and funding sources.



Photo Credit: Tennessee Region Round Table Case Study

Implement bike and pedestrian improvements identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle access throughout the community also benefit local businesses, increasing foot traffic and inviting visitors outside the community to eat and shop. The implementation process should be phased, prioritizing major community connection points, schools, businesses, and parks. Implementing actions discussed in previous chapters (TIF and Enterprise Zones) are opportunities to fund these projects. The city may also consider pilot programs in specific areas that do not require permanent and expensive materials.

Background Information:

Sources:	• 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan • USEPA Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant Survey, • Community Survey, • January Open House, • March Community Action Workshop
Community Feedback:	The community consistently emphasized the need for bike and pedestrian improvements.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Refer to the transportation profiles. The city would likely develop phased projects in different areas throughout the study area. These would also be ongoing expenses.
Resources:	• Capital Improvements Program • Virginia Safe Routes to School Grant Program • VDOT's SMART SCALE
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Community Development Department
Support:	• Staunton Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) • Director, Public Works
Anticipated Benefits:	A bike and pedestrian network will present numerous benefits, including private reinvestment, improved business activity, safety, community well-being, and other effects.
Steps/Phases:	• Conduct engineering and costing. • Pursue funding.
Timeline:	• Immediate: Formally define prioritize projects • Pursue Safe Streets and Roads for All funding to detail features: Immediate (Due August 2024) • Pursue SMART SCALE and Transportation Enhancement Funding: Mid-Term (12-24 months) • Construction and additional phases: Long-Term (greater than five years)

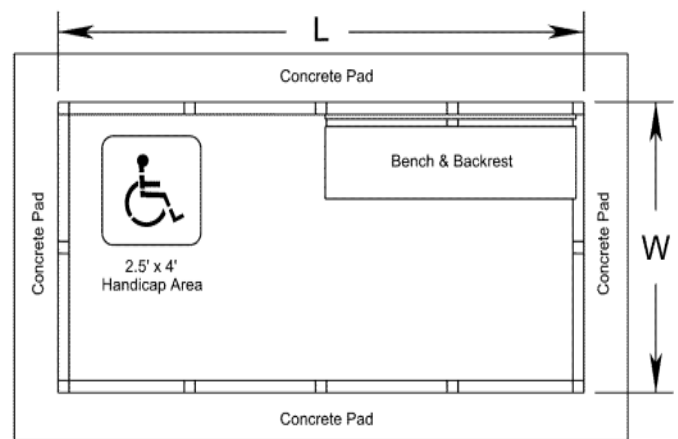
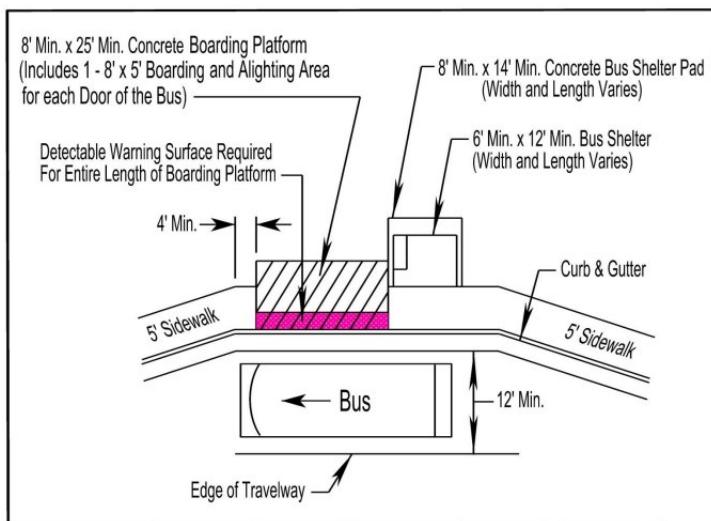
Additional Comments:

To address this, the 2018 plan identified specific routes and corridors for creating a multimodal network and developed a toolkit and design guide for best practices. This toolkit draws on guidelines from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Other Action: Add Bus Shelters

Bus shelters provide a safe and comfortable waiting area for public transportation riders. These shelters offer protection from the weather, such as rain, snow, and extreme heat. Moreover, they provide a sense of security, especially at night when visibility is limited. Bus shelters also contribute to the overall accessibility of public transportation, making it more attractive for all community members, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families with young children. In addition, they serve as a hub for important transit information, such as route maps and schedules, enhancing the overall rider experience. Therefore, the presence of well-maintained bus shelters is essential for promoting public transit usage and accommodating the needs of riders.

BRITE Transit bus service to the study area includes the West Loop route and trolley. The study area has sixteen bus stops, including six along West Beverley Street. Only one (Gypsy Hill Park) offers a bus shelter. Two (Food Lion and Gypsy Hill Apartments) have adjacent structures that function as unofficial shelters. Many sites need sidewalk access, lighting, and other basic amenities for riders. The RSP recommends new shelters for stops on West Beverley Street (except for the Food Lion location) and the Churchville Avenue location. These improvements should be part of other West Beverley streetscape improvements. Other stops should include a bench and lighting. The per unit cost of a bus stop is \$15,000.

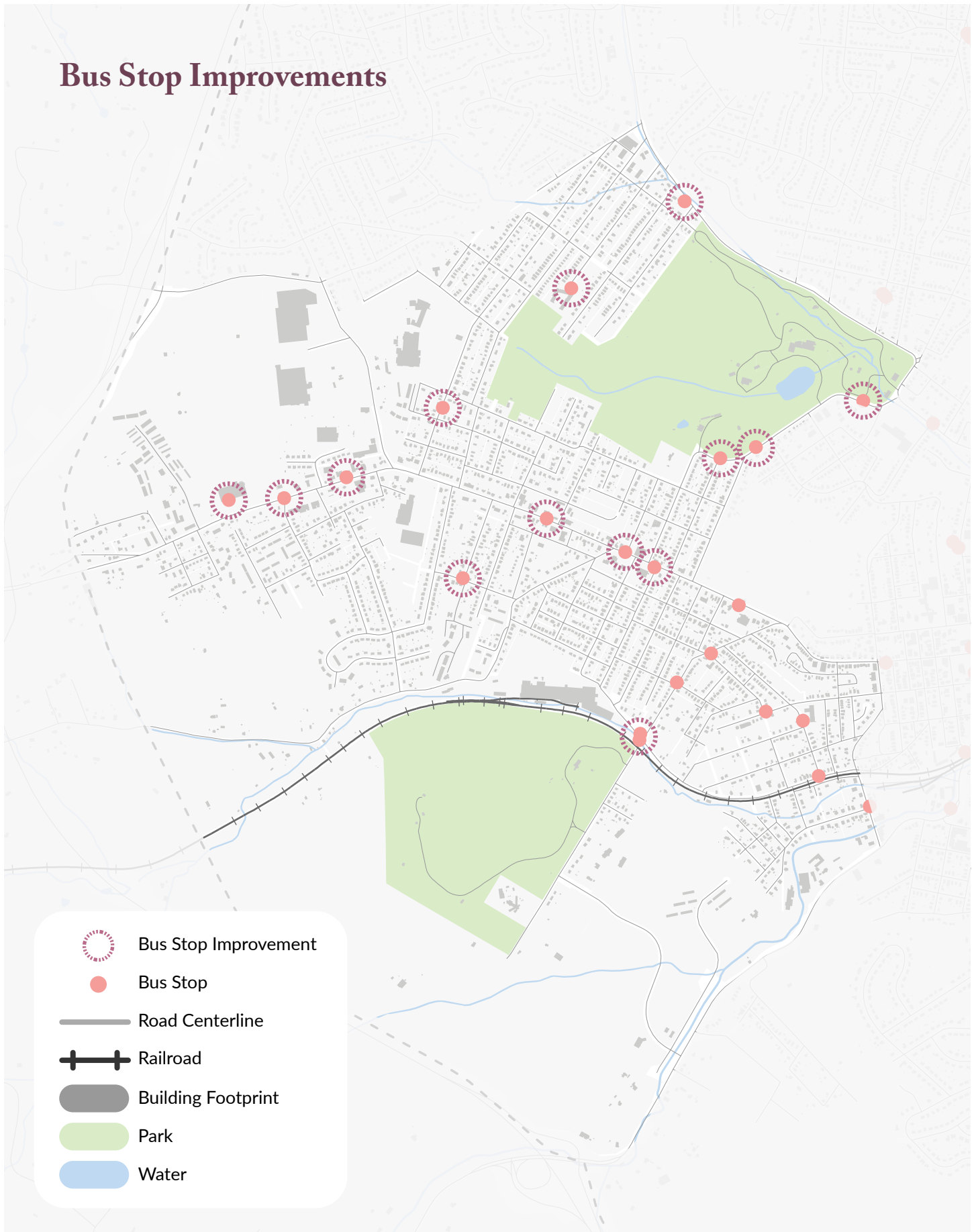


FLOOR PLAN

Image credit: VDOT.

- **Food Lion:** The West Loop service stops at the Food Lion on West Beverley Street. It operates at this location for twelve hours, with one-hour headways. The commercial building has an overhang that functions as a shelter. This location is not an official stop and relies on cooperation with the grocer.
- **West Beverley Street/Mulberry Westbound and Eastbound:** These two bus stops are on the West Loop route and provide easy access to a gas station market and residential area. The westbound stop has a sidewalk in front of the gas station, where overhead lighting is available. The eastbound stop lacks sidewalk access.
- **West Beverley Street/Dollar General:** There is a bus stop at the Dollar General. This location includes a bench, trash can, and lighting. It is also on the West Loop route.
- **Salvation Army:** The Salvation Army stop is also on West Beverley Street, on the westbound lane. It has sidewalk access and overhead lighting, but the stop is exposed between ingress/egress points to an auto service operation.
- **Valley Mission:** This next West Loop stop provides westbound access to Valley Mission. There is sidewalk access and overhead lighting.
- **West Beverley Street/Austin Avenue:** This last stop on the eastbound lane of West Beverley Street includes a bench and sidewalk access. However, this location is darker at night, with no overhead lighting. The downtown trolley runs to this stop with 30-minute headways and seven daily service hours.
- **Bellview Street/Ranson Street:** This bus stop serves the Bellview neighborhood with the West Loop route. The location is in front of a residence. There is no sidewalk and limited lighting.
- **Grubert Street/3rd Street:** This West Loop stop is about a block from Shelburne Middle School and serves the Gray Addition neighborhood. The location has sidewalk access but no lighting.
- **Churchville Avenue/A Street:** The West Loop and trolley serve this location. The site includes sidewalk access but no lighting. Riders can access adjacent restaurants and the Staunton Park neighborhood.
- **Gypsy Hill House:** This location at Gypsy Hill Apartments serves the West Loop route and the Saturday night trolley. The sidewalk access and an overhang at the apartment building function like a shelter.
- **John Moxie Stadium:** This stop is on the downtown trolley route and needs sidewalk access.
- **Thornrose Avenue:** There is a second trolley stop on Thornrose with sidewalk access but no lighting.
- **Gypsy Hill Park:** This trolley stop is the only bus shelter in the study area.
- **Montgomery Hall Park:** These two stops are at the intersection of Montgomery Avenue and Peck Street. They are on the West Loop and trolley routes. The site lacks sidewalks, lighting, or other amenities. To access the park, using this stop, it also requires a quarter mile walk to the park on a road without sidewalks.

Bus Stop Improvements



Strategy: Improve Public Safety

Throughout the RSP process, multiple community members described public safety as a core issue, including crime and pedestrian safety. National case studies show that environmental and community-driven changes can address these concerns. The following strategies complement the others in this chapter and throughout this plan. Implementing safer pedestrian and bicycle routes, attracting new business development, enhancing existing businesses, beautifying, and fostering critical community connection points all facilitate solutions. The following actions add to these recommended improvements:

- Install High-Visibility Crosswalks
- Identify Street Lighting Improvements
- Regular Communication between the Police Department and the Community
- Prevent Crime Through Environmental Design
- Study Traffic Safety Measures

Action: Install High Visibility Crosswalks

High visibility crosswalks make walking safer from vehicle and pedestrian collisions. According to VDOT crash data from 2019 to 2024, ten pedestrian-related crashes have occurred in the Primary Study Area. Two of these crashes resulted in visible injuries, and four resulted in severe injuries. Adding high-visibility crosswalks to critical intersections and community connection points makes the West End safer and more walkable. The biggest challenge for crosswalk installation is the lack of proper curb ramps. Most of the existing sidewalks lack the proper areas to receive people in wheelchairs.

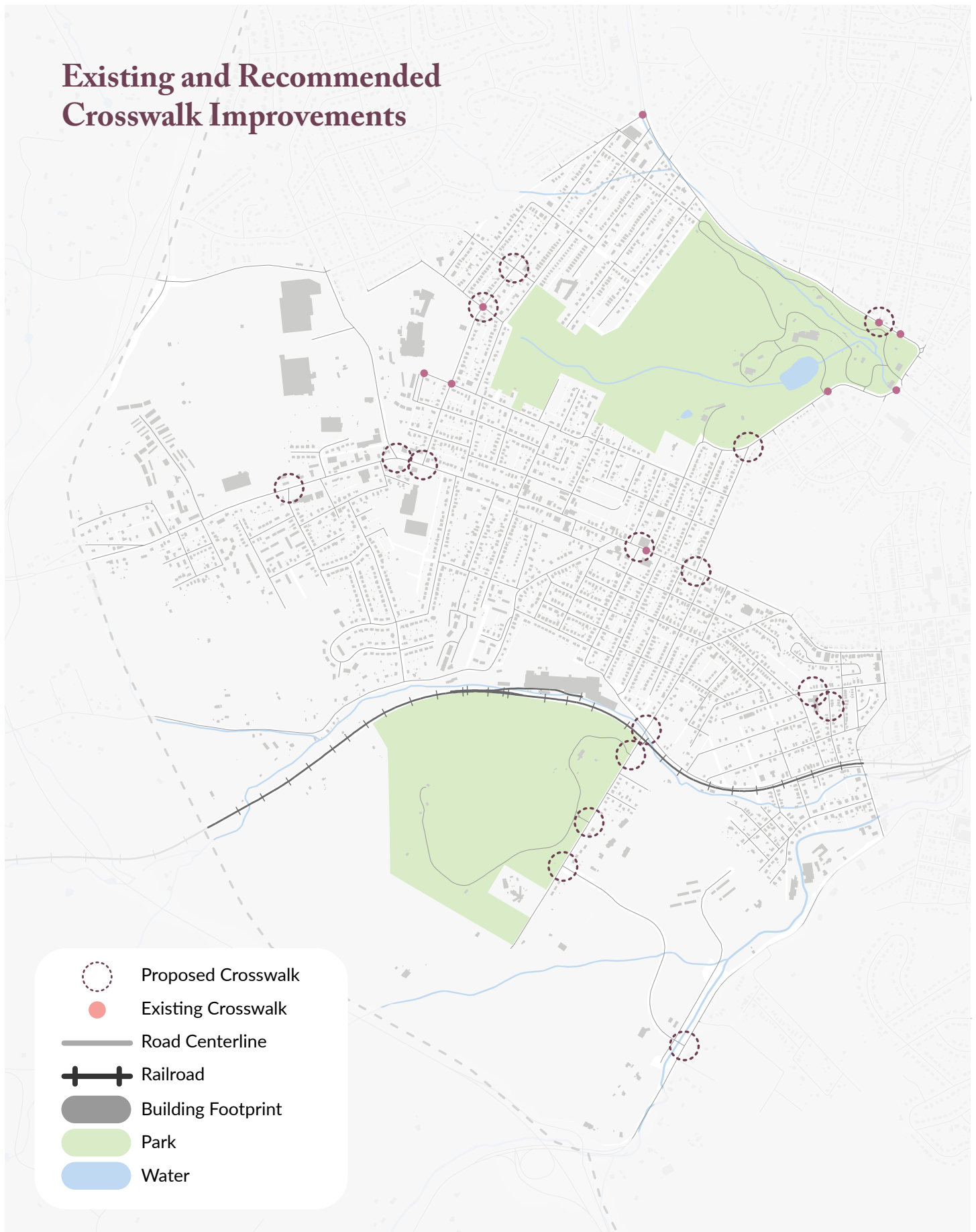
The following are locations with past pedestrian-related crashes. The list also includes intersections that the public highlighted during the engagement process and other locations that would create essential pedestrian connections. This list is not prioritized, but the city should focus on the Core Study Area as a more immediate need.

- **Churchville Avenue & Spring Hill Road:** An existing crosswalk provides access to Gypsy Hill Park. However, the crosswalk markings are faded, and the location lacks proper sidewalk connections and curb ramps.
- **West Beverley Street & Thornrose Avenue:** A crosswalk could provide a formal link across Thornrose Avenue. However, the sidewalks across West Beverley Street (on the south side) would need receiving ramps.
- **West Beverley Street & Hays Avenue:** An existing crosswalk allows pedestrians to cross West Beverley Street. However, there are no markings to cross Hays Avenue. A crosswalk would require curb ramps at both corners.
- **West Beverley Street & Grubert Avenue:** An existing crosswalk allows access across Grubert Avenue. This location includes a pedestrian walk sign to cross West Beverley Street. However, this

crossing lacks road markings. Additionally, there are no sidewalks on the southern side to receive pedestrians.

- **West Beverley Street & Morris Mill Road:** This intersection marks a noticeable bend in the corridor. An alternative intersection design could serve as a gateway and complement the new Staunton Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court project. Currently, there are no sidewalks at this location.
- **West Beverley Street & Mulberry Street:** This location includes two bus stops. A crosswalk on West Beverley Street would provide safer access for Park Hill residents to sidewalks on the north end of the corridor. However, there are no sidewalks on the south side of West Beverley Street, and curb ramps would also need to be installed on the north side.
- **Grubert Avenue & 3rd Street:** This intersection includes a crossing for Grubert Avenue. However, there should also be a crosswalk for 3rd Street. Given the school's location, more artistic elements could draw further attention to the intersection and help slow travel speeds. Refer to the case study for additional details.
- **Grubert Avenue & 5th Street:** This intersection already includes crosswalks connecting the schools. However, the markings are worn. Also, artistic approaches should be considered consistent with the intersection on 3rd Street.
- **Thornrose Avenue & Circle Drive:** This location includes a trolley stop. There are no existing crosswalks, and any proposed markings would require ramps.
- **Montgomery Avenue & Peck Street:** This critical intersection lacks sidewalks, blocking pedestrian access to Montgomery Hall Park. Crosswalks would coincide with the pedestrian improvements recommended in this chapter.
- **Montgomery Avenue & Kenneth Jones Drive:** Montgomery Hall Parks lacks pedestrian access, and this site would also require sidewalks.
- **Montgomery Avenue & Lacy B King Way:** Sidewalks and crosswalks would give residents from the growing Middlebrook area access to Montgomery Hall Park. However, there are no sidewalks, and existing guardrails would pose possible challenges with design options.
- **Booker T. Washington Community Center:** Improvements around the Booker T. Washington building would provide access to the site and could also help improve overall reinvestment in this essential location.

Existing and Recommended Crosswalk Improvements



Case Study | *Bexley, Ohio*

Moose Tracks to Montrose

In Bexley, Ohio, alleys and crosswalks off Main Street provide direct access to the local elementary school, city library, and downtown businesses. Residents of all ages use these paths to access these spaces. Informal and unmarked paths were not always safe for pedestrians or street crossings. To counteract this problem, the alleys and sidewalks were painted with colorful “moose tracks” and bright, creatively designed patterns. These designs helped calm traffic, make pedestrians more visible, and create a fun walking and biking environment. This community-based project enhanced local walkways, making them safer and more appealing for pedestrians. The project was embraced by residents, businesses, and city officials, becoming a source of regional pride. Since the alleys and crosswalks were painted, there has been increased usage and engagement, with kids hopping on the “moose tracks” and more residents opting to walk. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

Key Takeaways

- Grassroots citizen-led initiative made immediate and affordable change to make their neighborhood safer
- The painted lanes and crosswalks made travel safer for pedestrians and cyclist as well as providing traffic calming
- This project increased public engagement and community pride
- Community groups such as Safe Routes Bexley organize volunteer maintenance of the paths



Photo Credit: Project for Public Spaces

Add high-visibility crosswalks and the appropriate facilities to all community destinations and heavily traveled intersections.

Pedestrian safety is a priority. Various tools and tactics exist to create high-visibility crosswalks at critical locations, like park entrances or schools. Implementation should identify where the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2018) recommends pedestrian routes to better connect the community. The Bexley, Ohio case study could be an appropriate, lower-cost approach at the two intersections near the schools.

Background Information:

Sources:	• March Community Action Workshop • May Open House Event
Community Feedback:	Pedestrian connections and safety were a theme throughout the planning process. The process also identified the need to create walkable connections to parks, including Montgomery Hall and Gypsy Hill.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	To be determined. These crosswalks can occur incrementally and with repaving. Costs include staff time and materials.
Resources:	• Capital Improvements Program • Virginia Safe Routes to School Grant Program • VDOT's SMART SCALE • Local arts and community groups • Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Community Development Department
Support:	• Staunton Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) • Director, Public Works • Police Department
Anticipated Benefits:	High-visibility crosswalks will improve safety and contribute to the beautification of the West End neighborhoods.
Steps/Phases:	• Pursue Safe Streets and Roads for All funding to detail features: Immediate (Due August 2024) • Pursue SMART SCALE and Transportation Enhancement Funding: Mid-Term (12-24 months) • Refer to the intersection options to prioritize options. • Coordinate with VDOT to determine allowable standards. • Coordinate with local arts and community groups. • Implement with road repaving.
Timeline:	• Immediate: Apply for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant. • Mid-Term: Pursue funding for engineering at higher-priority areas (12 to 24 months). • Long-term: Begin to make crosswalk improvements.

Additional Comments:

Action: Identify Street Lighting Improvements

The community identified the need for better lighting to improve pedestrian safety at night as a top priority. Three out of twelve pedestrian-related accidents occurred at night in the West End. Survey respondents also expressed concerns about near misses with individuals walking during these times. Although streetlights are near businesses and parks with well-lit internal roadways, residential neighborhoods and identified pedestrian routes have limited visibility at night.

According to the FHWA's 2023 Lighting Handbook, identifying street lighting improvements can significantly enhance public safety. Improved lighting increases visibility for pedestrians and drivers, reducing the risk of accidents and enabling better hazard detection. Studies show that enhanced lighting can significantly reduce crime rates by facilitating better surveillance and deterring criminal activities. It also boosts community confidence, increasing pedestrian activity and fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents. Adequate lighting at crosswalks and intersections is critical for pedestrian safety, allowing drivers to see pedestrians in time to stop safely. Additionally, lighting improvements should consider the needs of all community members, including underserved communities, to ensure equitable access to safe and well-lit public spaces. Implementing these improvements can create a more vibrant, secure, and livable environment in the West End.



Image Credit: NJ Conservation Light Pollution Infographic.

Improve street lighting throughout the West End.

Street lighting may include a more comprehensive lighting plan for the West End neighborhoods or could involve spot improvements. Consider the appropriateness of streetlight styles. On auto-oriented streets, bulbs are on taller structures with booms highlighting travel lanes. On more pedestrian-scaled streets, light structures are shorter and include detailed elements.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Community Survey, • March Community Action Workshop • May Open House
Community Feedback:	Residents discussed lighting throughout the process, and consultants noted possible issues with nighttime visibility.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	To be determined. The cost of improvements is variable, depending on the type of structure. A comprehensive approach and lighting plan will be more expensive. However, the city can opt for spot improvements, such as adding singular lights in strategic areas. The lighting can also coincide with the recommended pedestrian improvements for the core study area.
Resources:	• Capital Improvements Program • Operating Budget
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Public Works
Support:	Director, Community Development Department
Anticipated Benefits:	Lighting will help improve pedestrian safety and comfort during nighttime hours. These improvements will also mitigate the perceptions of time.
Steps/Phases:	• Identify and prioritize unlit areas. • Determine the treatment and styling of the lights. • Pursue engineering and construction processes. • Integrate lighting into the pedestrian improvements slated for the Core Study Area.
Timeline:	• Mid-Term: Define and prioritize projects(12 to 24 months) • Long-Term: Construction and additional phases (greater than five years)

Additional Comments:

Street lighting can be a substantial part of redesigning and revitalizing a corridor. Along West Beverley Street, treatments should be consistent with the area's desired look and feel. This plan recommends a design that evokes Staunton's historic character. Smaller, stylized lights will be spaced closer together than larger auto-oriented treatments. Refer to the downtown area for the recommended approach.

Action: Regular Communication between the Police Department and the Community

Regular communication between the police and the community is vital for creating a sense of safety and trust. This ongoing conversation helps close gaps, provide direct feedback, address shared concerns, and work together to solve local issues. By keeping communication channels open, police can understand community needs, respond quickly to incidents, and improve crime prevention strategies. Encouraging community involvement with safety measures also helps prevent crime and strengthens community relations, ultimately enhancing the overall well-being of neighborhoods. Ongoing partnerships exist between the police and private landowners, including landlords for multifamily areas. Additionally, more robust community involvement in community safety can connect individuals needing health-related resources.

Formalize regular communication between the Police Department and the West End Community.

The Staunton Police Department already maintains relationships with residents and landlords in the West End neighborhoods. Landlord relationships provide greater ease for accessing properties and resolving issues. This action recommends a more structured relationship where the police hold a biannual community meeting with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to collect feedback on concerns, document issues, and discuss approaches to improving safety.

Background Information:

Sources:	Staunton Police Department
Community Feedback:	Public safety was a consistent theme in all community interactions. While crime data does not indicate issues with personal safety, other statistics support concerns with drug and alcohol use.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Staff time
Resources:	No additional resources
Primary Point of Contact:	Captain, Staunton Police Department
Support:	Director, Community Development Department
Anticipated Benefits:	Regular meetings will help to document issues, identify police actions, and continue to build trust.
Steps/Phases:	- Identify a regular meeting schedule. - Schedule community listening sessions.
Timeline:	Short-term (6 months) and ongoing

Additional Comments:

Consider scheduling these regular meetings at the Central Shenandoah EMS Council. One of the two annual meetings may involve attending a regular Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA) meeting.

Other Action: Prevent Crime Through Environmental Design

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is an approach that deters criminal behavior by strategically designing the physical environment. This method aims to reduce crime and the fear of crime while enhancing the quality of life by making environments less conducive to illegal activities.

Natural surveillance is one of the primary ways to achieve this. By increasing visibility and oversight through strategically placing windows, lighting, and open spaces, potential offenders feel observed and are thus deterred from committing crimes. CPTED strategies emphasize placing physical features and activities to maximize visibility and foster positive social interaction among users of private and public spaces.

Territorial reinforcement is another key component, which involves creating a sense of ownership and responsibility among residents and users through physical design. This can be accomplished with fences, signage, landscaping, and pavement designs that delineate private and public spaces, making it easier to identify strangers or intruders.

Access control is also crucial to regulate who can enter or exit a space. This can be achieved with barriers like fences and gates and strategic placement of entrances and exits, creating a risk perception for offenders. Additionally, regular maintenance and prompt repair of the environment signal that the space is monitored and cared for, deterring vandalism and other crimes. The “broken windows theory” suggests that maintaining well-ordered urban environments can help prevent crime.

Lastly, encouraging legitimate activities in public spaces increases the number of “eyes on the street” and reduces opportunities for criminal behavior. This can be facilitated through urban design that supports events, markets, and community gatherings, enhancing surveillance and territorial reinforcement.

The city should consider applying land use and design standards incorporating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards to enhance the West End and reduce crime. The Police Department can also explore opportunities for someone to become CPTED certified.

Case Study | *Paterson, New Jersey*

Paterson CPTED Project

In 2010, Paterson, New Jersey was ranked among the top 10 most unsafe cities in New Jersey, with a crime rate nearly four times higher than that of the state. The city created the CPTED Project to improve community safety and reduce crime rates through a community-based approach. To concentrate their efforts, Paterson audited and identified six corridors that struggled with high rates of violence and drug-related crimes. Recognizing the need for a collaborative approach and external funding, Paterson partnered with consulting firms, the Paterson Police Department, the Division of Planning and Zoning, the Neighborhood Assistance Office, and the Department of Public Works, as well as non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity, the New Jersey Community Development Corporation, and Rebuilding Together New Jersey (RTNJ). Additionally, the city received \$110,000 from the Local Government Capacity Grant through Together North Jersey (TNJ), a regional planning initiative, to support their efforts.

The process included forming a multi-stakeholder CPTED team, extensive community engagement, and training programs led by experts like Gregory Saville. The multi-stakeholder team participated in an 8-week intensive CPTED and SafeGrowth workshop to learn about CPTED principles, audit the six corridors' current conditions, and organize a community survey. The participants helped gather and analyze community input and solutions, deciding to implement street and park clean-ups, improve lighting, remove commercial window coverage, enforce permitted business operational hours, and create the Green Acre Community Garden in a vacant lot. These solutions addressed issues such as defensive or unwelcoming separation between the sidewalk and storefronts and addressed late-night store operations near vacant lots. As of 2019, this project engaged over 370 volunteers who worked over 1,100 hours to improve their community. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

Key Takeaways

- Close community partnerships are key to understanding the community's perspective on crime and creating effective environmental design
- Paterson shows that targeted, practical, and low-cost interventions can significantly impact community safety



Figure 11. Crime hotspots overlaid with vacant/abandoned properties and specific uses such as liquor stores on North Main Street. (Source: Paterson CPTED Audit report)

Other Action: Traffic Safety Measures

Public feedback has pinpointed streets in the West End as hotspots for speeding and traffic safety concerns. Participants have highlighted West Beverley Street as a critical area of concern. While speed enforcement and studies are part of routine police operations, additional funding programs can support a more comprehensive analysis of traffic safety issues. The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program could provide Staunton with invaluable insights into potential traffic issues, leading to safer streets for all.

SS4A is a federal program that “provides financial support for planning, infrastructure, behavioral, and operational initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users and operators, personal conveyance, micro-mobility users, motorists, and commercial vehicle operators” (USDOT). Local governments are eligible for the planning dollars, which fund the development of comprehensive safety action plans. The program offers resources for two types of grants:

- Planning and Demonstration Grants
- Implementation Grants

The specific focus should be the most vulnerable populations. These efforts typically recognize that some communities are disproportionately affected by unsafe street designs and policies, particularly communities of color and people in low-income areas. SS4A grants emphasize safety investments in Historically Disadvantaged Communities. Pedestrian interactions with motor vehicles bring safety risks, which are amplified for persons with disabilities, including those who use mobility devices, have low or no vision, or are Deaf-Blind.

Staunton would qualify for additional federal resources by participating in the Planning and Demonstration Grant. The city should focus on deploying a complete package of low-cost, high-impact strategies, primarily in the West End but not exclusive to the study area. Strategies may include evidence-based interventions such as protected bicycle lanes, sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and traffic calming tools like speed cushions in the highest-need areas to improve all travelers’ safety.

“The SS4A program is authorized at \$1 billion in competitive grants per year through FY 2026. There is no statutory minimum or maximum but expected award sizes in fiscal year 2024 are between \$100,000 and \$25 million depending on the scope. Federal cost-sharing for planning grants is 80 percent; applicants must provide the remaining 20 percent using non-federal funds (in-kind contributions are allowed)” (USDOT).



Green Neighborhoods

Preserve and strengthen the West End's environmental assets, promote green infrastructure, and offer enhanced city parks and community spaces.





During the planning process, West End residents and stakeholders described a future when the community could improve and enhance its environmental features. The West End benefits from two expansive, historic city parks with substantial green space. Feedback also included natural assets, such as trees and stream preservation. Additionally, Staunton's topography contains hills and valleys that present challenges for stormwater management and drainage.

The community envisions enhanced parks and the promotion of environmental assets throughout the West End. There is an emphasis on adding more trees, better access to parks, and open space options. Creating green neighborhoods will enhance livability, attract customers to the commercial corridor, improve home values, and make walking to and from locations more comfortable.

This section lists three main strategies, four detailed actions, and four other recommendations.

Strategy: Improve Access to Parks

- Action: Improve Pedestrian Connections to Parks
- Action: Create a Public Square at the J&DR Site
- Action: Update Zoning to Require Common Space Amenities
- Other Action: Make School Amenities Available After Hours

Strategy: Incorporate Beautification

- Action: Facilitate the Planting of New Street Trees
- Other Action: Create a Streetscape Beautification Program

Strategy: Preserve Natural Systems

- Other Action: Encourage Native Planting
- Other Action: Improve Stormwater through Natural Features

Assets & Challenges

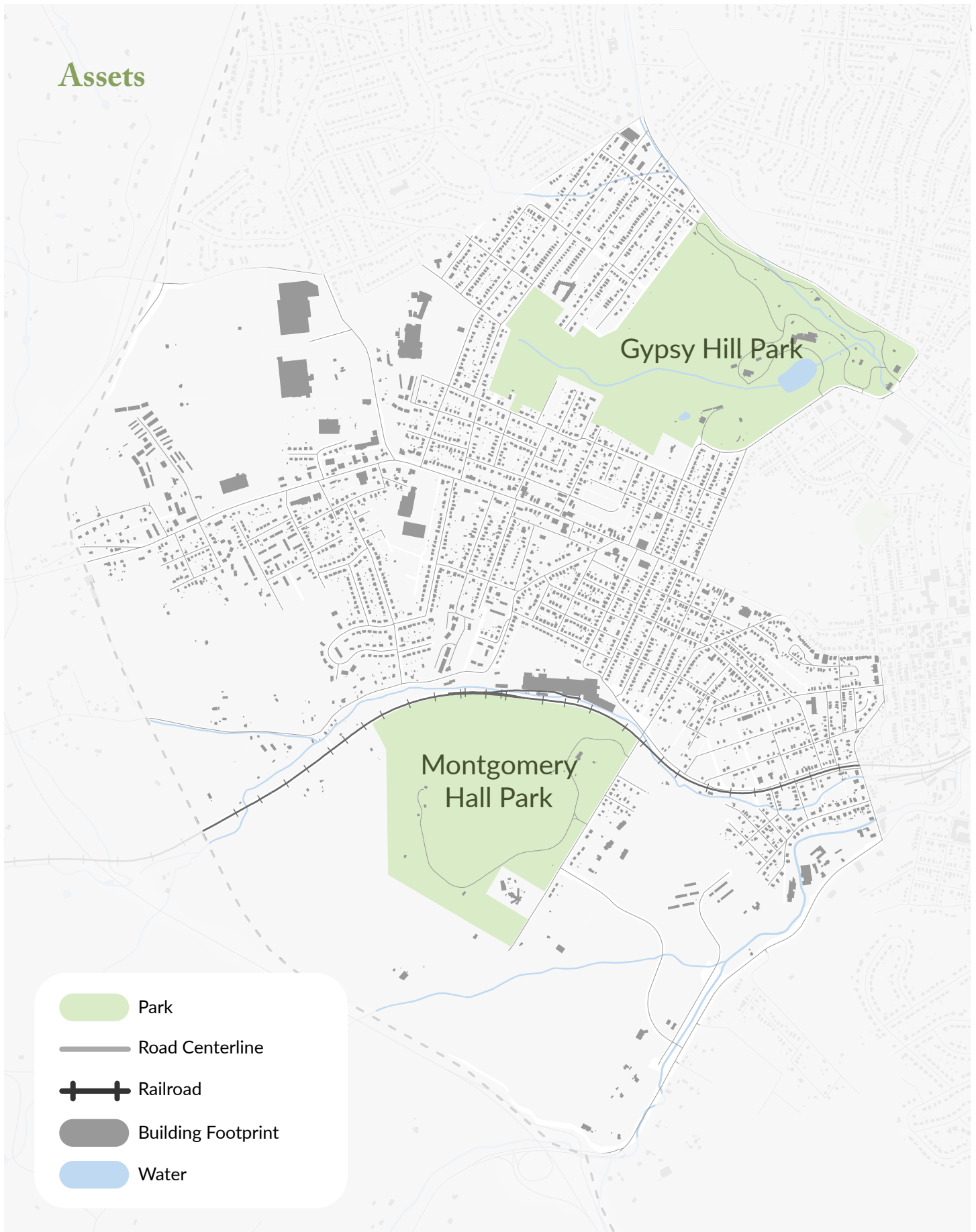
The most extensive green fixtures of the West End are the two city parks, Gypsy Hill and Montgomery Hall. These sites have been historically significant to the city and are still primary assets. The parks and other open spaces in the West End provide a base for creating Green Neighborhoods. However, several challenges still need to be addressed to enhance the green quality of the area. The following assets and challenges surfaced throughout the engagement and analysis of existing conditions.

Assets

- **Montgomery Hall Park:** Established in 1946, Montgomery Hall Park was the only one of two recreational facilities in Virginia open to African Americans. The park is 148 acres and has many amenities, including multiple sports fields and courts, a natural playground, picnic shelters, a swimming pool, and hiking and biking trails.
- **Gypsy Hill Park:** The City established Gypsy Hill Park in 1890 and was originally the local water supply source. It is a 243-acre park with amenities, including a bandstand, a skate park, a dog park, an 18-hole golf course, multiple sports fields and courts, a stadium, a gymnasium, a swimming pool, and a fishing lake.



Assets

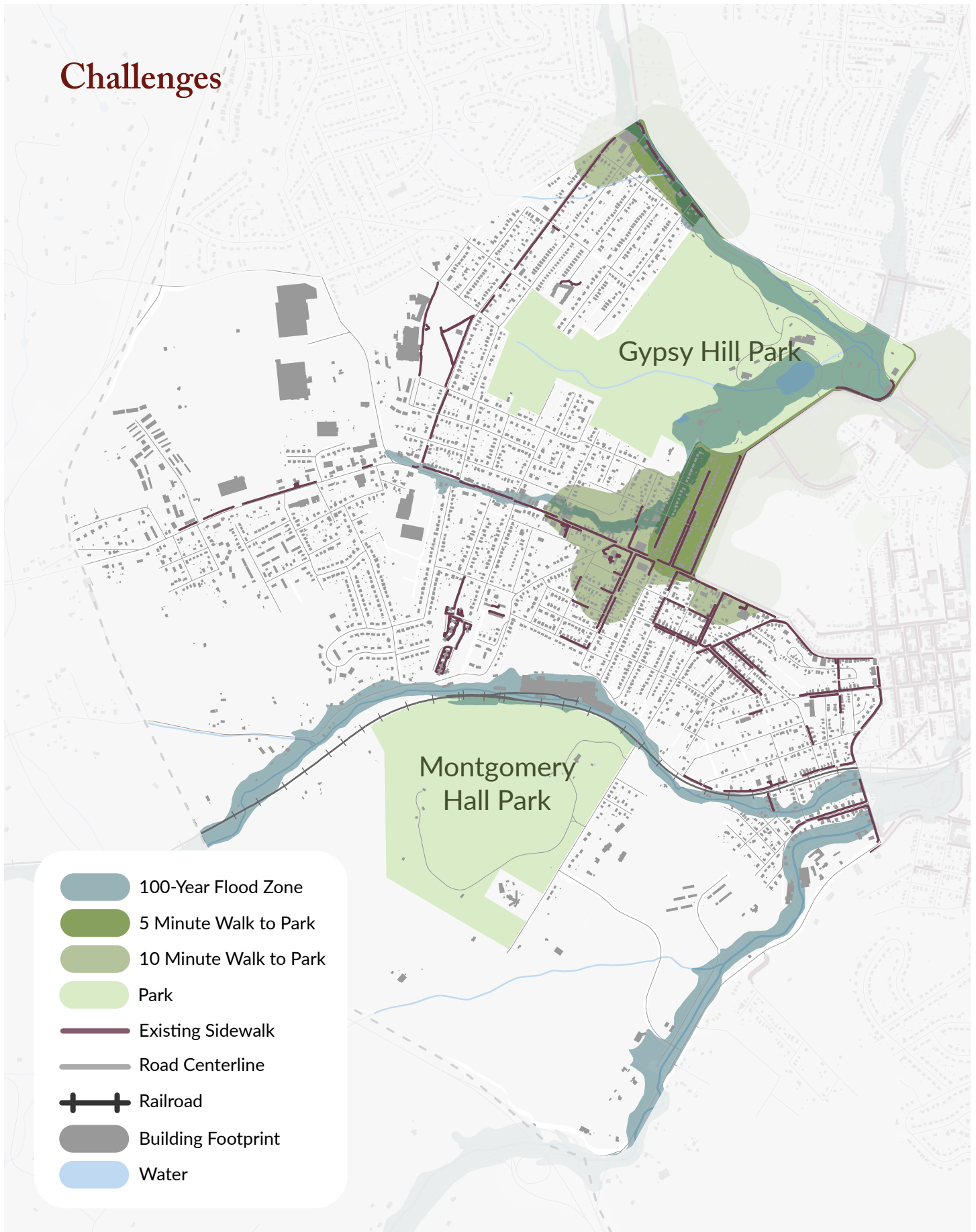


Challenges

- **Street Trees and Landscaping:** Community members expressed a need for street trees and general landscaping along major walking corridors. However, street trees and landscaping are challenging to plant in the limited public right of way, and if planted incorrectly, they can become a maintenance issue. Additionally, encouraging private property owners to plant trees can be difficult.
- **Access to Parks:** Despite having two large city parks within the West End, many neighborhoods are disconnected from these amenities. People who live next to Gypsy Hill Park may have more than a 15-minute walk to the nearest park entrance. Many surrounding blocks also lack sidewalks and crosswalks to get inside the park safely. Montgomery Hall Park is also cut off from its surrounding neighborhoods. The only access is from Montgomery Avenue, which does not have sidewalks or crosswalks.
- **Flooding:** There are three primary stream beds (Peyton Creek, Lewis Creek, and Buttermilk Spring Run) in the Primary Study Area. Stream conditions can impact stormwater management and increase the risk of flooding. As mentioned in the background chapter, two ongoing stream restoration efforts aim to reduce erosion and flooding. The primary stream locations mirror the 254 flood-risk properties within the study area. In the Core Study Area, 23.5 percent of the properties are in the 100-year flood zone, and 3 percent in the Primary Study Area are in the 100-year flood zone.



Challenges



Strategy: Improve Access to Parks

While most West End neighborhoods are near at least one of the parks, proximity does not mean easy walking access. A green and healthy neighborhood should have residents within a 10-minute walk of the nearest park or recreational space. Only a few neighborhoods are within a 10-minute walk from a park entrance, not including if those walks have sidewalks or crosswalks. Improving and maintaining walking access to both parks is crucial to making West End neighborhoods greener. The following actions support improving access.

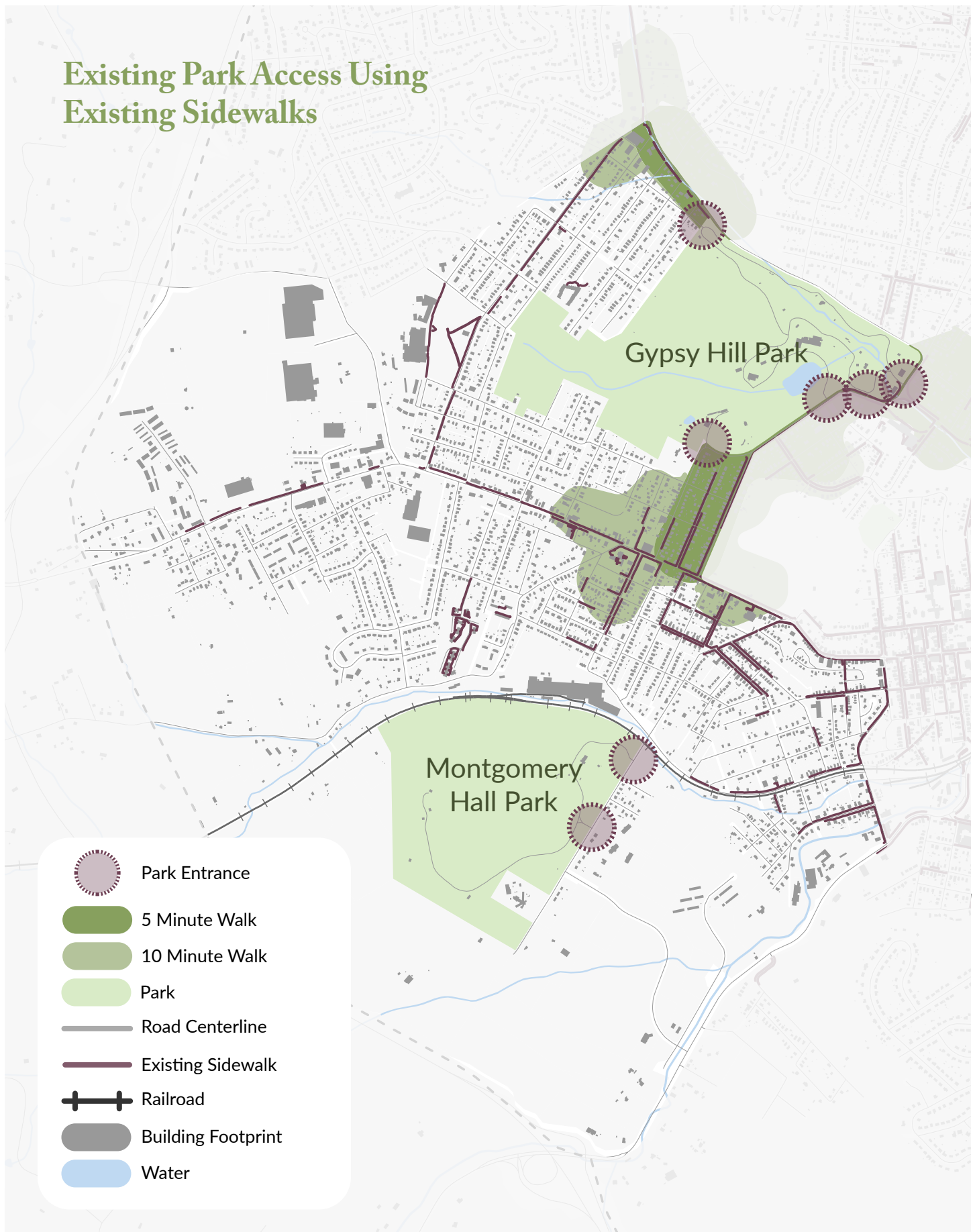
- Improve Pedestrian Connections to Parks
- Create a Public Square at the J&DR Site
- Update Zoning to Require Common Space Amenities
- Make School Amenities Available After Hours

Action: Improve Pedestrian Connections to Parks

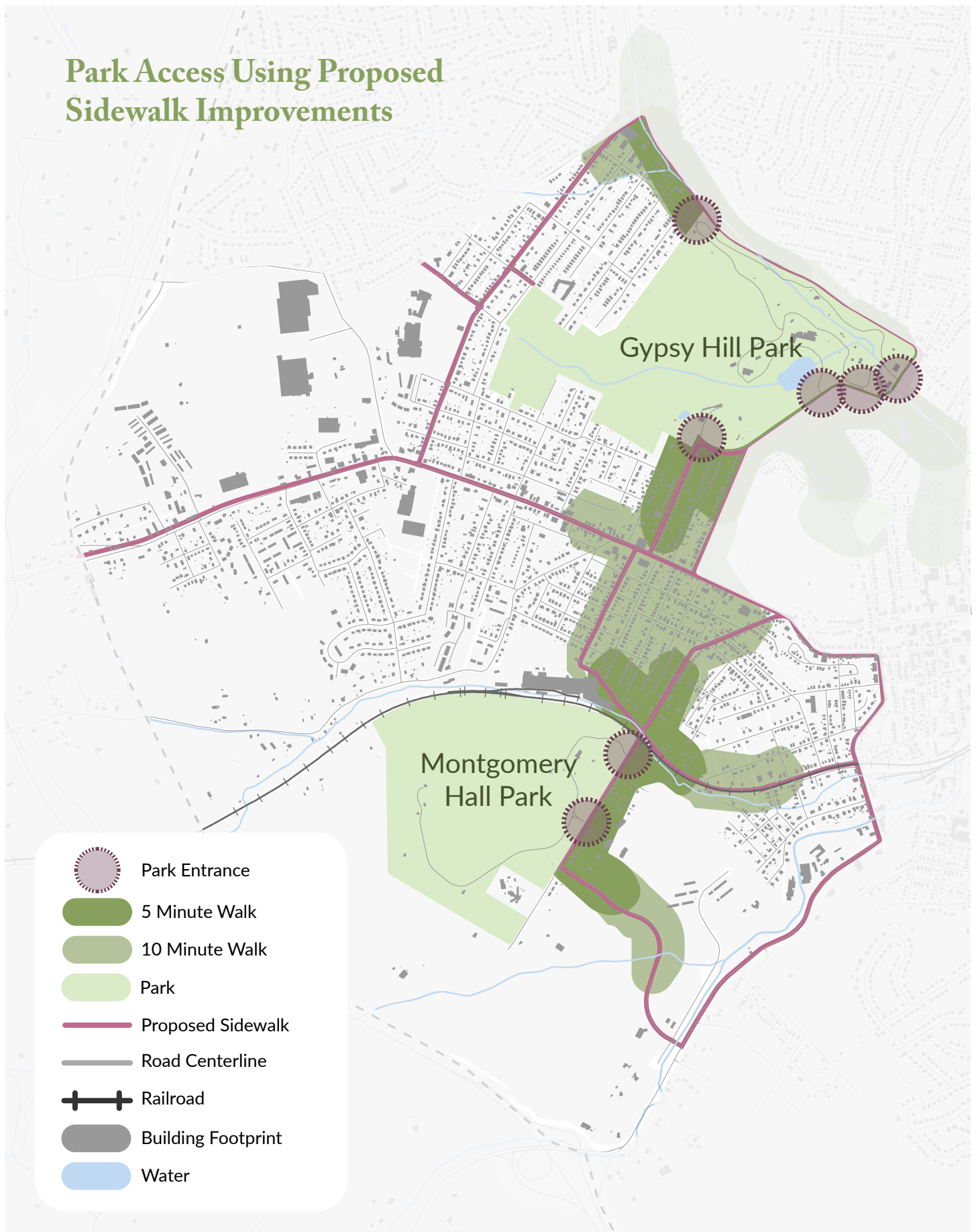
Montgomery Hall Park currently has two park entrances along Montgomery Avenue. Neither entrance has crosswalks or sidewalks leading to the entrances or within the park. Gypsy Hill Park has five park entrances: one on Park Boulevard, three on Thornrose Avenue, and one on A Street. Only two out of the five entrances have crosswalks. The neighborhoods on the western sides of Gypsy Hill Park and Montgomery Hall Park do not have access to their respective adjacent amenities. The city should make the existing park entrances safe and accessible by installing crosswalks at all entrances and having sidewalks leading to each park entrance. In the long term, the city should identify new pedestrian-only entrances to the parks with the appropriate infrastructure to increase the number of neighborhoods within a 10-minute walking distance of a park entrance.

The following map series describes the current walkability to the two parks in the Primary Study Area and the potential increase in walkability with improved sidewalks and crosswalks. The walkability is described by a 5 minute and 10 minute walking buffer. A 10 minute walk is considered accessible, accounting for aging populations, those with disabilities, and younger populations. The first map uses the existing sidewalks in the Primary Study Area and the second map uses the proposed sidewalks from the **Healthy & Safe Connections** chapter. These maps show that proximity to a park does not equal access; and even when access is provided these large parks still do not accommodate walking from all of the neighborhoods in the West End.

Existing Park Access Using Existing Sidewalks



Park Access Using Proposed Sidewalk Improvements



Create safe walking routes and connection points to both parks in the West End.

Currently, only a few neighborhoods are within a 10-minute walking distance of a park entrance, and most do not have a safe way to get to either park.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Community Survey, • January Open House, • March Community Action Workshop • May Open House
Community Feedback:	While the community values the two large parks in the western neighborhoods, there were frustrations with access

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Refer to the transportation profiles in the previous chapter. The city would likely develop phased projects in different areas throughout the study area. These would also be ongoing expenses.
Resources:	• Capital Improvements Program • Safe Routes to School • VDOT SMART SCALE • Virginia Outdoors Foundation
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Community Development Department
Support:	• Director, Public Works • Director, Parks and Recreation
Anticipated Benefits:	A bike and pedestrian network connecting the parks will increase park usage, physical activity, and safety as people travel to these destinations.
Steps/Phases:	• Identify recommended sidewalk and bike routes in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan (2018) that connect neighborhoods to the parks and prioritize them. • Identify recommended crosswalks in the high-visibility crosswalks action that connect neighborhoods to the parks and prioritize. • Identify new pedestrian access points to the parks. • Conduct engineering and costing required to add appropriate sidewalks, entrances, and crosswalks. • Pursue funding
Timeline:	• Define and prioritize projects: Mid-Term (12 to 24 months) • Construction and additional phases: Long-Term (greater than five years)

Additional Comments:

Refer to the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Those recommendations are broadly consistent with this action.

Action: Create a Public Square at the J&DR Site

As depicted in the park access map, the West End has abundant open space and limited pedestrian access. With eastward-facing park entrances, western neighborhoods are outside of walking distance. Additionally, the community pointed to the Morris Mill Road and West Beverley Street areas as essential places. With those considerations, the new Juvenile and Domestic Relations (J&DR) site would be ideal for a public square that allows residents to gather, sit outside, and be present in the corridor.

Public squares are essential for many reasons. They serve as gathering places for the community, providing a space for people to come together, socialize, and engage in various activities. These sites also contribute to a city's overall aesthetic and liveliness, often featuring green spaces, seating areas, and sometimes fountains or artwork. These spaces can host events, markets, and performances, adding vibrancy and cultural richness to the community. Additionally, public squares can serve as focal points for civic identity and pride, offering a space for public demonstrations, celebrations, and commemorations. Public squares play a crucial role in fostering community and belonging among residents and visitors alike.



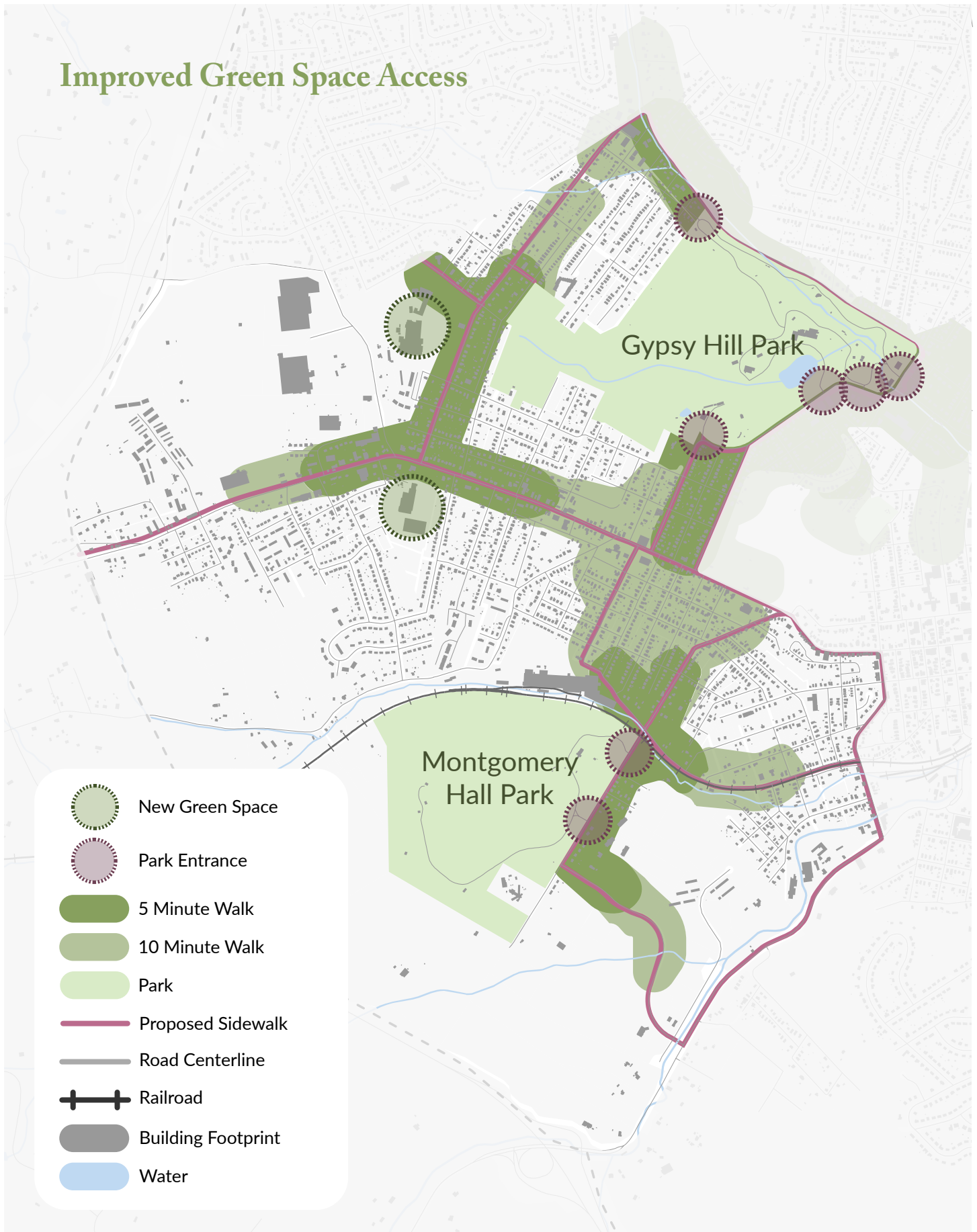
"I hope the new courts will eliminate at least 50% of this parking."

In 2023, the city decided to relocate the J&DR Court facility to the West End at the old Chestnut Hills Shopping Center site. The City Council approved the purchase of Chestnut Hills, and construction began in 2024. This site offers many benefits. It provides a flexible path to meeting this facility's three important and complicated requirements: circulation, security, and accessibility. The location also provides ample room for parking, supports the timeline to have a functional J&DR court facility ready by fall 2025, already has access to public utilities and public transportation, and has reasonable proximity to existing City facilities.

The choice of this site demonstrates that the city is serious about investing in the West End. The City's investment in a court project at the Chestnut Hills site will serve as an economic catalyst for revitalization, incentivize private sector growth in the West End, and extend the downtown economic vitality into a currently under-utilized area of the city. This site has the added benefit of potential expansion and relocation of city services in the near term and other court services in the longer term. This would make these services more accessible and convenient for citizens and others who need them. A future project phase could include a small public square serving as a central space on the West Beverley Street corridor.



Improved Green Space Access



Create a public square in a future phase of the J&DR project.

In 2024, the city began construction on the J&DR Court facility, the first phase at the old Chestnut Hills site. In the future, the site could include a small public square that would draw people to the location and solidify the project as a central element of the West End community.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Community Survey, • January Open House, • March Community Action Workshop • May Open House
Community Feedback:	While the community values the two large parks in the western neighborhoods, there are frustrations with access. Creating a small public square at this location would help address this issue.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	The cost would vary depending on the features. A grass area with street furniture would be a lower-cost option. However, a small paved urban square with trees and landscaping would help reset the West End narrative.
Resources:	Capital Improvements Program
Primary Point of Contact:	City Manager's Office
Support:	• Director, Public Works • Director, Community Development Department
Anticipated Benefits:	Additional community space would increase access and property values in the adjoining area.
Steps/Phases:	• Continue progress on the J&DR site. • Develop a concept plan for a small square on the site. • Conduct engineering to develop costs. • Set aside funding and coordinate with future phases.
Timeline:	• Mid-term: Develop a concept plan and conduct engineering (12 – 24 months) • Long-Term: Set aside funds for construction (beyond three years)

Additional Comments:

The square should leave room for other plans for expansion at the site.

Action: Update Zoning to Require Common Space Amenities

The city's current zoning ordinance requires "Unusable Open Space" for multifamily uses on parcels zoned R-3 and R-4. However, these open space requirements are vague and can lead to unusable areas that offer no amenities to residents in those residential developments. R-3 parcels require open space of not less than 400 square feet for each dwelling, while R-4 requirements for multifamily uses are based on the number of stories. The city should consider defining 'Usable Open Space' to increase public visibility of these areas and include language to require defined amenities such as benches, swings, or slides. Establishing a definition of Usable Open Space also provides an opportunity to define the space for residential use only and not accessible to the larger public.

The potential development of larger parcels may require further consideration for common areas. The city may consider requiring additional open space amenities for more significant residential developments. Additionally, the city should consider requiring pedestrian connections to public spaces adjacent to the property, such as parks, schools, and community centers. Pedestrian connections to parks and schools improve walkability and accessibility.

Update Zoning to Require Common Space Amenities.

Currently, only a few neighborhoods are within a 10-minute walking distance of a park entrance, and most do not have a safe way to get to either park.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Walkability Analysis • City of Staunton Zoning Ordinance
Community Feedback:	While the community values the two large parks in the western neighborhoods, there were frustrations with access. Creating additional small community spaces, limited to residents in those communities, can help improve access issues.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Staff time
Resources:	Staff time
Primary Point of Contact:	Director, Community Development Department
Support:	City Attorney's Office
Anticipated Benefits:	Additional community space would increase access.
Steps/Phases:	• Analyze Usable Open Space requirements for R-3 and R-4 Districts • Adopt a definition of Usable Open Space • Appropriately adjust open space requirements for R-3 and R-4 Districts based on analysis
Timeline:	• Analyze and Draft Zoning Text: Mid-Term (12 months) • Implement Zoning Ordinance Revision: Mid-Term (12 – 24 months)

Additional Comments:

Review other locality regulations for outdoor amenity requirements.

Other Action: Make School Amenities Available After Hours

The park access map illustrates how the western neighborhoods are outside the walking distance of Gypsy Hill and Montgomery Hall Parks. However, Ware Elementary School and Shelburne Middle School have open spaces, including a playground, which are unavailable to the public after school hours.

Opening the school playground and outdoor space to the public can offer several benefits. First, the site is located within a residential area, making it easily accessible. Allowing public access outside of school hours provides valuable recreation space. Additionally, opening school property to the public can foster a sense of community and social interaction. Families and neighbors can come together in these shared spaces, increasing social cohesion and a stronger sense of belonging within the neighborhood. For these reasons, it is common practice for communities to allow this access when school activities are out of session.



Photo credit: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Strategy: Incorporate Beautification

Incorporating beautification, such as adding street trees and native plants, is crucial in placemaking and community-building efforts. The West End needs to prosper economically and create an inviting and aesthetically pleasing environment that reflects the community's desire for a vibrant and welcoming neighborhood. Beautification also provides ecological services to the area, like creating cleaner water and air. Trees protect pedestrians from the Sun and extreme heat, and plants support local wildlife. These considerations may be incorporated through the following actions.

- Facilitate the Planting of New Street Trees
- Create a Streetscape Beautification Program



"So much opportunity along this stretch for rehabbed gas stations and repair shops. Again, need to reduce asphalt and increase green space."

Action: Facilitate the Planting of New Street Trees

There is a noticeable absence of street trees in the West End, particularly along the existing walking routes. While the right-of-way near the Downtown area on West Beverley Street is narrower, there are wider areas where new sidewalks should include tree infrastructure. Business parking lots would greatly benefit from general landscaping, bioswales for stormwater retention, and the installation of trees. Research has shown that street trees can enhance property value and attract more local business visitors. In residential neighborhoods, there is limited space to plant trees on public property; however, private property owners should consider planting trees near the street to compensate for the lack of right-of-way.



Plant street trees along West Beverley Street and encourage property owners to plant more trees.

West Beverley Street lacks trees or vegetation to shade and soften the impervious asphalt and concrete surfaces. However, the right-of-way is variable in width, leaving limited room for plantings. Community members suggested that the City could coordinate with property owners to place trees adjacent to the right-of-way.

Background Information:

Sources:	• USEPA Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant Survey, • Community Survey, • January Open House, • March Community Action Workshop • May Open House
Community Feedback:	The community values trees and wants the West End to incorporate wooded features.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	To be determined. In the western segments of West Beverley Street, the right-of-way is wider, leaving room for traditional street trees. However, the eastern segments may require coordination with property owners. The City could consider program funds to supply resources to property owners to compensate for costs.
Resources:	• Arbor Day Foundation • Department of Forestry, Urban Forestry Grant
Primary Point of Contact:	Parks and Recreation Department
Support:	• Director, Public Works • Urban Forester, Virginia Department of Forestry • City Horticulturist
Anticipated Benefits:	Street trees offer various benefits for cities and revitalization efforts. Shade can help lower street temperatures and improve foot traffic to businesses. Evapotranspiration can also reduce the urban heat island effect. In some instances, plantings can contribute to stormwater management by absorbing rainwater and reducing the burden on drainage systems. They also provide habitat for wildlife, improve the aesthetic value of neighborhoods, and increase property values.
Steps/Phases:	• Coordinate with the Virginia Department of Forestry's urban forester. • Apply for the Department of Forestry Urban Forestry Grant • Include trees with street improvements and projects along West Beverley Street. • Explore options for installing trees where the right-of-way is limited.
Timeline:	• Define and prioritize projects: Mid-Term (12 to 24 months) • Construction and plantings in additional phases: Long-Term (greater than five years)

Additional Comments:

Potential issues include underground utilities, overhead wires, sightlines, and snow removal. The appropriate tree species and location are directly related to the amount of maintenance and removal and should be considered when implementing this action.

Other Action: Create a Streetscape Beautification Program

Create a streetscape beautification program or association comprised of community volunteers that host clean-up days, native plant planting days, and invasive species removal days. This group can also be responsible for street tree maintenance and connecting private property owners with the education and resources to plant and maintain newly planted trees. Community input has consistently maintained a theme of wanting a more inviting and green community. Having community-led groups that are responsible for planting and maintaining the streetscape will help build community buy-in and create a beautified West End.



Strategy: Preserve Natural Systems

During public engagement, participants expressed the need to preserve the natural environment, trees, and a “green” feel. The city is also active in daylighting a stream in Gypsy Hill Park and exploring ways to manage stormwater with Staunton’s challenging terrain. Additional suggestions include:

- Encourage Native Planting
- Improve Stormwater through Natural Features



“If ever there were a place to slow water and install green infrastructure. It is here!”

Other Action: Encourage Native Planting

Encouraging native planting in urban areas is crucial for preserving natural features. Native plants are well-adapted to the local climate, soil, and ecosystems. They support local wildlife by providing food, shelter, and breeding grounds, thereby maintaining biodiversity. Planting native species can create green corridors that connect fragmented natural areas, allowing wildlife to move freely and maintain genetic diversity.

Native plants also promote water conservation as they require less irrigation than non-native species, reducing the strain on urban water supplies. They help maintain natural hydrology by facilitating groundwater recharge and reducing runoff, preventing erosion, and mitigating flooding effects. Additionally, native plants contribute to healthier soils by promoting a diverse soil microbiome. Their root systems help prevent soil erosion while improving soil structure and fertility. Leaf litter from native plants enriches the soil, promoting nutrient cycling and supporting other plant and animal life. Additionally, native plants are generally more resistant to local pests and diseases, reducing the need for chemical pesticides and herbicides, which can harm the environment. Their resilience to local conditions also means they are less likely to become invasive and disrupt ecosystems.

Native plants also enhance the aesthetic value of urban landscapes by reflecting the natural beauty and unique character of the local environment, fostering a sense of place and community pride. They also have cultural significance, often being part of the area’s historical and natural heritage, which helps preserve this heritage for future generations. Economically, native plants reduce landscaping and maintenance costs as they require fewer resources like water, fertilizers, and pesticides, leading to significant savings for municipal budgets and private property owners.



“So much asphalt, so little green. There is great opportunity to promote and provide incentives for green infrastructure... street trees, planted swales, permeable paving”

Other Action: Improve Stormwater through Natural Features

Participants consistently raised concerns about flooding and stormwater management throughout the engagement process. According to feedback, flooded basements and standing water are common problems. In 2019, the Timmons Group completed a “West Beverley Street Flood Study” that documents some of these issues. In the ensuing years, the city began efforts, like the 2024 stream restoration project in Gypsy Hill Park, exploring ways to manage stormwater through natural features. This daylighting project of Peyton Creek will unearth an underground pipe, bringing the natural streambed to the surface. After the restoration, this low-lying area in the park should be able to manage flooding better. Additional green infrastructure approaches would help to advance these goals.

In streetscapes, the city should refer to the National Association of Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Stormwater Guide when making improvements described in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommendations. Currently, stormwater measures on West Beverley Street involve open drains that can be easily clogged, provide no water filtration, and act as bicycle hazards, where tires can get caught in the open slits. New streetscape improvements should include biofilter planters to collect water, filter runoff through soil media, and channel treated runoff through an underdrain (perforated) pipe. This approach can provide water quality treatment, reduce runoff volumes, and may be applied in more limited rights-of-way. Other tools include bioretention planters, bioretention ponds, bioswales, stormwater tree plantings, permeable pavement, stormwater curb extensions, floating island planters, improved inlet design, and similar measures.



“There’s flooding in this area regularly”



Photo Credit: NACTO Urban Street Stormwater Guide



Reinvestment & Affordability

Foster reinvestment in the West End's neighborhoods and homes while maintaining affordable living and homeownership opportunities.





While this plan assumes reinvestment in the commercial corridor will lead to reinvestment throughout the rest of the West End, revitalization still needs to be made on private properties, residences, and community spaces. These themes were persistent throughout the public engagement process. The community envisions a thriving West End that is attractive and an ideal place to live. Additionally, the community wants to maintain affordability while revitalization occurs throughout the area. This section lists three main strategies, three detailed actions, and three other recommendations for consideration.

Strategy: Support Home Renovations

- Action: Connect Residents to Existing Resources
- Other Action: Develop a Home Conditions Program

Strategy: Reinvest in Community Centers & Resources

- Action: Reimagine Booker T. Washington as a Community Center through Private Partnerships
- Action: Develop a Neighborhood Arts Initiative
- Other Action: Reuse Brownfield Sites

Strategy: Support Neighborhood Advocacy

- Other Action: Provide Renter Education Programming
- Other Action: Organize Active Neighborhoods

Assets & Challenges

The West End has the foundation for reinvestment while still being affordable. The existing assets can help get the ball rolling for tangible change throughout the neighborhoods. However, challenges such as vacant properties, underutilized facilities, and “run down” buildings still need attention.

Assets

- **Booker T. Washington:** Booker T. Washington Community Center was originally the Black and African American high school located in the West Johnson neighborhood. It is a connection point that can play an essential role in uplifting the West End community.
- **Community Services:** Multiple organizations provide housing and property maintenance services for the entire city. These services are essential for helping residents reinvest in their neighborhoods.
- **Community:** Survey participants listed the “people of the West End community” multiple times as an asset. Participants liked the feel of the neighborhoods surrounding West Beverley Street and cited the area as a desirable place to live.



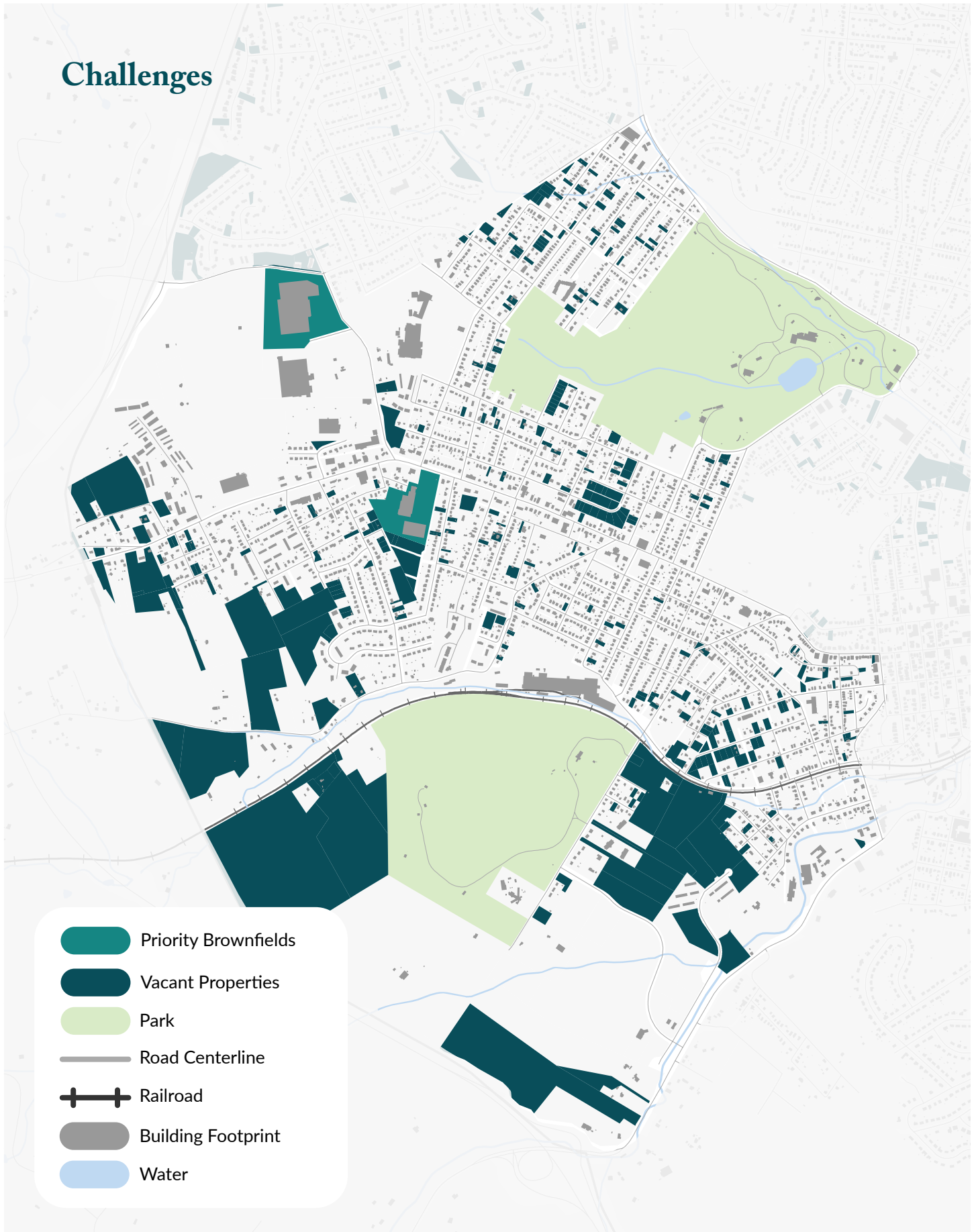
Assets



Challenges

- **Brownfields:** A brownfield is a property that may have a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant from prior use. These pollutants can impact the ability to redevelop a property and sometimes pose a risk to the surrounding community. Investing in brownfield properties increases the local tax base, can contribute to job growth depending on future land use, improves and protects the environment, uses existing infrastructure, and takes development pressure off undeveloped land. The USEPA's Community Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant (2020) identified sites in the West End. The Grant focused on three priority properties: the Unifi Manufacturing site on Morris Mill Road, Chestnut Hills Shopping Center on West Beverley Street, and the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) Warehouse on Bridge Street. The Chestnut Hills Shopping Center will be the new location for the J&DR Courthouse. The other brownfields are opportunities for reinvestment and redevelopment. Note that the resources from this grant are also an asset.
- **Vacant Properties:** Vacancies and property maintenance issues can detract from the character of the neighborhoods. These issues may contribute to perceptions of safety, fewer visitors, and limited private investment. Throughout the engagement process, community members expressed concern about vacant or unmaintained properties and believed they were reducing the West End's appeal. Community members do, however, see these properties as potential for adaptive reuse and investment in their community. Additionally, those participating in the meetings expressed concern for absentee landlords and renters' rights violations.

Challenges



Strategy: Support Home Renovations

Community members voiced concerns about the expenses of renovating their homes and the appearance of homes in their neighborhoods. Another concern is the preservation of historic home features. Providing support and resources for home renovations can assist property owners in addressing these issues. Actions include:

- Reimagine Booker T. Washington as a Community Center through Private Partnerships
- Develop a Home Conditions Program

Action: Connect Residents to Existing Resources

The Housing Programs Division in Staunton advises and leads the city's housing activities, policies, and initiatives, focusing on affordable housing and housing for working families. This division also administers the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program, funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Housing is crucial in providing residents shelter, safety, and financial security and is a significant economic development driver.

Staunton residents can access various local, state, and federal programs and services for housing needs. Homeownership resources include the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Habitat for Humanity, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeownership programs, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and Virginia Housing. For affordable rental housing, residents can seek assistance from the Staunton Redevelopment and Housing Authority, HUD Rental Assistance, and DHCD Landlord Tenant Handbook. Home repair and accessibility assistance are available through Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta, Universal Design Resource, and DHCD.

For housing insecurity services and supportive housing, resources include the Corporation for Supportive Housing, National Alliance to End Homelessness, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Valley Community Services Board, Valley Homeless Connection, Valley Mission, Valley Supportive Housing, and the DHCD Virginia Homeless Solutions Program. Additional housing support resources are available through Blue Ridge Legal Services and the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Housing Summit.

An identified need is to connect residents to these programs and resources, specifically to neighborhoods in the West End. The Booker T. Washington Community Center could serve as a center to assist this action by providing residents with a direct, in-person connection to these resources.



"Important historic houses need help to retain their value and to protect historic characteristics."

Case Study | *Northeast Kingdom, Vermont*

RuralEdge

RuralEdge works with local governments, other nonprofits, and community members to develop affordable housing and education (purchasing a home, financial counseling, home repair). Other programs include support for landlords to bring vacant units back on the market, eviction prevention, and homeless advocacy. They offer housing for low-income families, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, case management, and access to healthcare and employment resources.

Some of their successful initiatives include:

Homeownership Center:

- **Home Buyer Education Workshop:** This monthly workshop assists first-time home buyers by giving them the knowledge and tools to navigate the home-buying process successfully.
- **Budget & Financial Empowerment Counseling:** Rural Edge offers one-on-one counseling sessions that include personalized financial plans, assistance finding available financial aid, and strategies for achieving financial stability.
- **Home Repair Program:** This program provides low-interest loans and grants to income-eligible homeowners for making health and safety repairs.

Rental Assistance and Property Management:

- **Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP):** This program helps landlords bring vacant rental units up to code, make repairs,

or create new units by providing grants of up to \$50,000. In return, landlords must offer these units at fair market rent for ten years.

- **Landlord Repair Program:** Through low-interest loans, landlords can repair their units' necessary Housing Quality Standards (HQS) or code violations issues. This initiative ensures that rental units are safe for tenants and can bring vacant units onto the market.

Supportive Housing:

- **Support and Services at Home (SASH):** SASH provides tailored support services to seniors and individuals with disabilities to help them live independently. These services include medical service coordination, food security, and access to health and wellness programs.
- **Community Building & Engagement:** Rural Edge encourages community involvement through resident leadership development, gardens, playgrounds, and public spaces for community-building events.

For more details, refer to Appendix E.



Photo credit: RuralEdge

Key Takeaways

- Affordable housing can be supported in many forms: education, rental assistance, maintenance incentives, housing construction, community support, or senior care
- A robust network of partnerships and funding sources including city, state, federal, nonprofit, and private sector is important to connecting residents to resources

Continue to connect the community to existing resources that will assist homeowners with renovating their homes to address building and property maintenance code violations.

Other actions in this plan include regular communication with the community through events and regular attendance at neighborhood meetings. Housing can be a regular topic in these communications.

Background Information:

Sources:	• USEPA Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant Survey, • Community Survey, • January Open House, • March Community Action Workshop • May Open House
Community Feedback:	The community requested additional housing rehabilitation resources, but City staff noted several programs already exist.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Staff time
Resources:	Existing Programs
Primary Point of Contact:	Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator, Community Development Department
Support:	• Director, Community Development Department • All Providers/Organizations • SAW Consortium
Anticipated Benefits:	Awareness of existing resources will help homeowners improve and maintain their homes better. Property maintenance was a core part of community feedback.
Steps/Phases:	• Package information on existing programs. • Identify events and groups to present information. • Continued outreach in the West End.
Timeline:	Short-term (6 months) and efforts currently in progress, "ongoing."

Additional Comments:

In the Fall of 2024, the city will begin an eight-month planning process to create its first Housing Strategy. The purpose of the City of Staunton Housing Strategy is to provide a framework that comprehensively describes the approach that the city plans to take to meet its housing objectives. By establishing a centralized framework, the Housing Strategy could streamline the dissemination of information about various programs and resources available to homeowners, including financial assistance, grants, and low-interest loans from local, state, and federal sources.

Other Action: Develop a Home Conditions Program

The city currently does not have a program that helps homeowners and landowners improve their properties' sustainability, health, and affordability. A program that works with homeowners and landlords to improve housing conditions is vital for a thriving community to invest in revitalization and maintain an affordable place to live. Renovation efforts should also follow HUD's Healthy Homes Program standards, which focus on childhood health. Refer to the information box for additional background on the Healthy Homes Program and the two grant opportunities listed there.

This action should span the West End study boundaries and would be better served in a non-profit with a consortium of partners. The Raleigh, North Carolina, case study exemplifies a non-profit stepping in to play a critical housing need. This effort can build on existing regional programming and give particular focus to the West End area. The city's role would be to continue a dialogue with non-profit organizations, express the West End's needs, and coordinate any targeted efforts in the study area.

City Snapshot

In 1999, HUD launched its Healthy Homes Initiative (HHI) to protect children and their families from housing-related health and safety hazards.

The Healthy Homes Program addresses multiple childhood diseases and injuries in the home. The Initiative takes a comprehensive approach by focusing on housing-related hazards, addressing multiple hazards at once. The HHI addresses a variety of environmental health and safety concerns, including mold, lead, allergens, asthma, carbon monoxide, home safety, pesticides, and radon.

Their grants focus on low-cost home hazard assessment and intervention methods and on public education that stresses how communities can mitigate housing-related hazards. The Healthy Homes Demonstration Program and Healthy Homes Technical Studies are the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OHLHC's) two grant programs. Eligible activities may include:

- Developing low-cost methods for hazard assessment and intervention
- Evaluating the effectiveness of interventions
- Building local capacity to educate residents and mitigate hazards
- Developing and delivering public education programs

Healthy Homes grants are awarded to non-profits, for-profit firms, state and local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and colleges and universities in the United States. HUD does not award individuals directly. Information about applying for these grants is available at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

From the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Case Study | *Raleigh, North Carolina*

Builders of Hope and HUD

Builders of Hope, a nonprofit affordable housing developer based in Raleigh, North Carolina, uses Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding to transform aging and deteriorated properties into energy-efficient, healthy homes for families earning below the area median income. Through their Extreme Green Rehabilitation Process, Builders of Hope rehabilitates homes, provides green construction jobs to residents, and utilizes a work mentor program.

In Raleigh, Builders of Hope rehabilitated a 40-unit apartment complex, retrofitting units to meet energy efficiency standards and LEED criteria. Their partnership with AT&T provided wireless internet service to each unit, and the green improvements guaranteed \$25/month in heating and cooling. In Charlotte, Builders of Hope will rehabilitate 23 vacant townhouses and single-family homes and utilize their Work Mentor Program to provide green job training and opportunities to individuals with barriers to employment. For more details, refer to Appendix E.

Key Takeaways

- Utilizing nonprofit, private, and HUD partnerships funded and initiated a local Home Conditions Program
- This program refurbished existing housing and prioritized residents, preventing displacement and reducing construction costs



Photo credit: HUD

Strategy: Reinvest in Community Centers & Resources

The city should reinvest in community centers and resources to connect the community with resources and build community buy-in, as recommended throughout this plan. Community centers serve as a primary community connection point where access to resources and services can be achieved.

- Reimagine Booker T. Washington as a Community Center through Private Partnerships
- Develop a Neighborhood Arts Initiative
- Reuse Brownfield Sites

Action: Reimagine Booker T. Washington as a Community Center through Private Partnerships

The Booker T. Washington Community Center is a cultural and historical landmark housed in the former Booker T. Washington High School. Built in 1937, Booker T. Washington served as a high school for African American students during segregation. The building closed as a school in 1966 and later became the Staunton Police Station until 1986. After lying vacant for 15 years, the building was repurposed in 2001 as a community center. Staunton's Department of Public Works reported approximately \$300,000 in repairs and upgrades between 2001 and 2003. In collaboration with community members, a later 2007 study by Frazier Associates highlighted the Center's potential to better serve the public by transforming the vacant first floor into a hub for community events and services.

The Booker T. Washington Community Center is already a valuable community asset. Currently, the community center supports an after-school program, recreation, and sports through the indoor gym and outdoor courts, as well as community events like fundraisers, banquets, and receptions. The 2007 study proposed improvements to help Booker T. Washington expand its support to the surrounding area.

A vital component of the study was to designate space for community groups and a local African American history museum. Suggested upgrades would include a commercial kitchen, allowing the center to provide meal services for after-school programs, Meals on Wheels, and community events like fundraisers, banquets, and receptions. The building's aging mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems require modern upgrades, and additional first-floor bathrooms are necessary to accommodate these new uses if pursued. Combined with current community needs and inputs, making upgrades to the Booker T. Washington Community Center can enhance the functionality and accessibility of the facility while ensuring it continues to be a valuable resource for engagement and support in the West End community.

Communities commonly reuse and redevelop historic schools nationwide and across Virginia for new purposes. Typically, the local government builds a consortium of non-profits, government entities, and other organizations to pursue such efforts. The case study from Charlottesville explores an example of redeveloping the Jefferson School. Other Virginia examples include the Calfee School in Pulaski and the Prices Fork redevelopment in Montgomery County. The city can transfer ownership to another party but remain a core stakeholder or retain ownership and work with other groups. In Charlottesville's case, the city facilitated a process that transferred ownership to the Jefferson School Foundation.

Case Study | *Charlottesville, Virginia*

The Jefferson School

Jefferson School Heritage Center, located in Charlottesville, Virginia, offers educational programs, exhibits, and events that highlight the rich heritage of African Americans in Charlottesville and beyond. Their programs include educational tours, lectures, workshops, and youth programs designed to engage visitors of all ages and backgrounds. They host events such as heritage festivals, cultural celebrations, and community dialogues that provide dialogue, reflection, and celebration opportunities. Additionally, the center serves as a venue for artistic and cultural expressions, featuring performances, art exhibitions, and storytelling sessions that showcase African American artists' and performers' talents and creativity. For more details, refer to Appendix E.



Key Takeaways

- The Jefferson School exemplifies the importance of preserving history and heritage while repurposing for modern use
- Collaboration between the city, non-profits, local organizations, and businesses is key to success
- Developing flexible multi-use spaces can maximize the impact of the project



Photo credit: Jefferson School African American Heritage Center

Adapt Booker T. Washington Community Center into a community connection point and a multi-use site.

Booker T. Washington is an essential historic and cultural resource for African American residents and the larger community. Past community discussions have involved ideas about converting this landmark school into a more complete community center with a robust resource offering.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Booker T. Washington Community Center Study (2007), • Community Survey, • January Open House, • March Community Action Workshop • May Open House
Community Feedback:	The community expressed a need to create a community center with more offerings. Comments included Booker T. Washington as an option.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	At this time, the city can focus on identifying partners to move forward with a plan for the school.
Resources:	Staff time to coordinate and define a plan.
Primary Point of Contact:	City Manager's Office
Support:	• NAACP • Director, Parks and Recreation • Director, Economic Development • Director, Community Development Department
Anticipated Benefits:	This underutilized building can be a space for community resources and events.
Steps/Phases:	• Meet with potential partners. • Refer to past efforts and plans to determine an approach for reuse.
Timeline:	• Long-Term: Identify possible partners (within 12 months) • Mid-Term: Form a plan for possible reuse (two to three years)

Additional Comments:



"Booker T Washington Community Center is already a gem. But, given that the City only rents it out in its entirety (ie the whole building) and the minimum charge is 60 dollars/2 hours, its use is limited. Many groups search for a place to meet, at low or no cost, and would like to do it on the West End. There should be a way to use just a classroom or portion of the building for less money or free. There could be a room or two that has technology for zooming etc."

Action: Develop a Neighborhood Arts Initiative

Neighborhood arts programs are a cost-effective way to beautify public spaces and local neighborhoods. Citizen-led initiatives can be immediate, low-cost, and offer temporary changes that can test placemaking concepts before committing to permanent upgrades. Critical considerations for successful arts-oriented placemaking include identifying and highlighting local assets, preserving historical elements, enhancing local character, and promoting cultural tourism such as mural walks. Additionally, murals and street art can improve public safety by calming traffic and making crosswalks and intersections more visible. Direct community engagement to create art that reflects the West End's unique culture, history, and identity can foster a strong sense of place and community pride. Additionally, this will complement the "incorporate small public spaces" theme in public feedback.

Typically, community groups run these efforts, though local government can help to facilitate the process. The biggest challenge is finding a group willing to take the initiative. The neighborhood activation action provides possible approaches. Also, consider starting with the Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA) as a group to incubate the effort.



"We are fortunate to have a global muralist who lives in Staunton. She has created murals all over the world and they are developed with and through community building and consensus... It would be wonderful to create a mural on what the residents in have lived through and want the West End to look like in the future."



Photo credit: Project for Public Spaces

There are various national examples of effective arts initiatives. In Somerville, Massachusetts, the Somerville Arts Council reused a 2.2-acre, city-owned site for an ArtFarm, which provides space to cultivate social innovation through art, urban agriculture, and cultural diversity. Macon, Georgia, employed arts-oriented placemaking with an artists-in-residence village in East Macon. The city provided live-work space and studios. The effort includes a public-private and non-profit collaboration with Macon Arts Alliance and Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority. Wilson, North Carolina, developed Whirligig Park, an Industrial Artisan District that includes dozens of sculptures by a local artist. The community established a non-profit to operate the park. Clarkdale, Missouri, created the Griot Arts Center, where a non-profit runs an after-school arts and community service program and the Meraki Job Training program. This arts education builds skills and confidence in a community with 54% graduation rates.

In the West End, Booker T. Washington could serve as an arts center that provides space for local artists. For example, Charlottesville converted the historic McGuffey school into the McGuffey Arts Center, which also offers training and courses to the community. In the long term, the city could help to facilitate a new non-profit to operate this type of programming.

Case Study | *Montclair, New Jersey*

Community Street Art Quilt

Initiated by parents, children, local businesses and schools, the Montclair Community Street Quilt, a series of painted intersections, was created in 2015. Inspired by the Intersection Project in Portland, OR, high school freshman Haley Winstead spearheaded the street mural painting event, including food and live music. Nearly 100 volunteers participated in the event, creating a community asset and fostering community bonds. Residents were concerned about speeding at an intersection near a local school. The mural improved pedestrian safety, provided traffic calming, and inspired further community-led placemaking projects across Montclair. The project was cost-effective and quick, relying entirely on donations and grants for materials and labor. For more details, refer to **Appendix E**.

Key Takeaways

- Grassroots citizen-led initiative made immediate and affordable change to make their neighborhood safer
- The intersection provided traffic calming and community pride
- Community groups have taken on the maintenance of this project and initiated similar projects in the surrounding area



Photo credit: Project for Public Spaces

Develop a neighborhood arts program with murals and other installations beautifying the West End.

Citizen-led art initiatives that reflect the West End's unique culture, history, and identity provide a cost-effective way to enhance placemaking and foster community pride.

Background Information:

Sources:	• Community Survey • May Open House
Community Feedback:	West Beverley and surrounding neighborhoods looking “rundown” and “unattractive” was a recurring theme throughout discussions with community members and in surveys. Community members want the corridor to reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and look more welcoming.

Action Detailing:

Estimated Cost:	Volunteer and donation-based
Resources:	Local artists
Primary Point of Contact:	Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA)
Support:	• West End Property Owners and Business Owners • Director, Community Development Department
Anticipated Benefits:	Neighborhoods with aesthetic investments and welcoming qualities are more attractive to private investors, encouraging more people to visit local businesses and inhabit public spaces. It also instills community pride and identity. Local beautification improves public safety through community care and safer traffic patterns.
Steps/Phases:	• Initial Assessment and Planning • Begin to form a coalition with the arts community • Funding and Resources • Community Engagement • Design and Approval • Site Preparation and Artist Engagement • Installation and Promotion • Launch and Maintenance
Timeline:	• Short-term: Begin to coordinate with the arts community (6 months) • Mid-term: Determine a long-term organization to house this programming (12 months) • Ongoing

Additional Comments:

Other Action: Reuse Brownfield Sites

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the city a Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant 2021 that evaluated several sites across the West End. The process examined potential contamination and would provide resources that could assist with redevelopment. Consultants evaluated the following West End properties:

- The former Unifi Site
- The Chestnut Hill Shopping Center
- The former Krispy Kreme Distribution Warehouse
- A former gas station on West Beverley Street
- The Valley Mission
- A former Rite Aid site
- The Livia Warehouse
- A commercial property on Grubert Avenue

In 2024, resources were still available to conduct additional site analysis as part of the redevelopment of properties with potential contamination. The city can use those funds to help leverage the potential reuse of properties in the West End.

Strategies: Support Neighborhood Advocacy

Participants in the process discussed the importance of promoting an active community. One challenge for the West End is the lack of direct communication between city and resident representatives. Creating a more formal structure may help to identify concerns and solutions sooner. This approach can also help the western neighborhoods feel heard. Refer to the Longmont, Colorado, case study for ideas on how the city can facilitate strong neighborhoods.

Other Action: Provide Renter Education Programming

Renters in Staunton can access support from the Staunton Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the HUD Rental Assistance, and the DHCD's Landlord Tenant Handbook. Create informational materials for homeownership that list resources for City programs, grants, loans, and education to increase homeownership, particularly among low-income aspiring homeowners. During the March Community Workshop, participants proposed providing renter education programming to inform renters about standard living conditions and Virginia renters' rights.

Other Action: Organize Active Neighborhoods

During the May Open House event, participants commented on the importance of having ongoing community meetings to monitor the West End RSP. The city could help organize the neighborhoods into more structured groups. Regular meetings help identify issues and serve as partners for the plan's actions. These groups can also report problems and needs directly to the City Council and Manager.



"The amazing part of the amount of trash in this area and all down W Beverley is that the West End Business Association already organizes quarterly trash pick up days and we haul away tons of trash...and we still have a problem. More needs to be done...a big we love our city, keep it clean campaign would be a great idea. And hold business accountable too."

Case Study | *Longmont, Colorado*

Neighborhood Group Leaders Association

Longmont, Colorado, is a city about 15 miles northeast of Boulder. It runs the Neighborhood Group Leaders Association (NGLA), a partnership between the City of Longmont and a network of over 50 registered community groups. Longmont created this program to develop relationships and communication between neighborhoods and the municipal government. The NGLA is a forum for community leaders to collectively identify concerns, discuss issues, resolve conflicts, and implement solutions to create healthy neighborhoods with a strong sense of community.

The network provides the knowledge and resources for engaged residents to enhance their quality of life by building upon their neighborhood's community capital (existing assets). Community groups must register with the city to participate in NGLA and access unique benefits, including:

- Access to informational monthly meetings and regular updates from various city departments or relevant organizations about current topics and issues affecting neighborhoods, including police, planning, public works, natural resources, the school district, and others.
- Access to funding for community-building activities and use of free resources, including canopies, chairs, a PA system, and community meeting space.
- Access to funding for large-scale neighborhood improvement projects (NIP)
- Assistance with creating, printing, and distributing outreach materials and newsletters
- Community leader skills training and development tailored to neighborhood improvement
- Networking with other community leaders

Key Takeaways

- Longmont offers grants and resources to registered community groups.
- The program defines a six-step process to organize your neighborhood.
- The neighborhood groups create an effective dialogue between the community and local officials.
- The program also offers a neighborhood leadership training series.



Photo credit: City of Longmont, CO