

DOWNTOWN | MASTER PLAN



Master Plan

Understanding

The master plan is a graphical and textual documentation of the physical framework of the Downtown and recommendations for its redevelopment. This document, along with relevant public policy and committed stakeholders, will help guide growth and development in the City of Charleston. It is long range in vision, yet leverages current and upcoming opportunities that will help to achieve the vision. The master plan section includes a series of maps and graphics for the Downtown Area as well as the focus areas that have been targeted for future development.

To best illustrate the growth and development potential within the area of influence, this section is organized in the following topics that will help to reflect the community values and create a framework for reinvestment and revitalization:

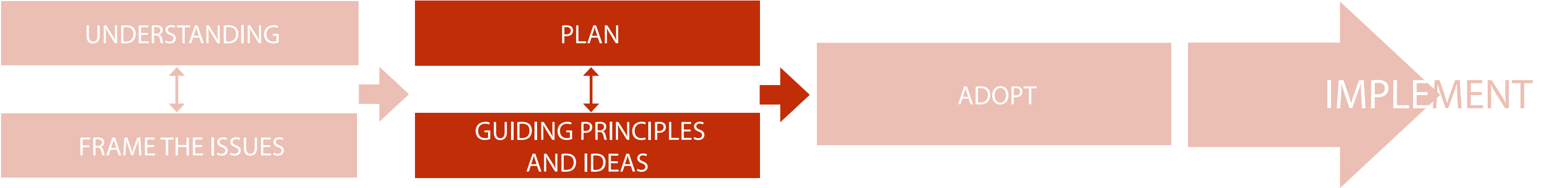
- Sustainable Guiding Principles
- Big Ideas - Overview [showing relationship to goals and sustainable guiding principles]
- Big Ideas - Individual Ideas with Action Items
- Action Plan Matrix - Exhibits Action Items and corresponding potential responsible aganecies, funding and timeline for implementation of the respective items

Plan Process Diagram

The following graphic shows a flowchart of the process of the downtown plan and its context to the different sections of the plan. The second column is highlighted to show its relevancy to creation of the plan and how it is being guided by ideas in this section.

A comprehensive plan is intended to guide public policy and resource allocation for compatible land development and must be rooted in an understanding of the physical, social, and demographic characteristics of a community. The Municipal Planning Commission is charged with reviewing and updating the plan every 10 years. To that end, the following work was undertaken in 2022/2023:

Compiled new data to gain a better understanding of current conditions—Analyzed economic and social trends and industry best practices—Conducted a thorough review of the action plan—Indicated work completed during the last 10 years and adjusted for future action items to address current conditions accordingly.



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Sustainable Guiding Principles

A More Sustainable and Economically Feasible Future

Urban planning and design practices are some of the most effective tools by which to achieve sustainability. Other factors include public policy, maintenance, use, development and partnership, and are also necessary to achieve this goal.



Organized Initiative

- Organized effort for redevelopment between City and stakeholders
- Collaboration to perform simultaneous efforts
- Clear and continuous communication between interested stakeholders for efficient use of resources and to focus on priorities



Water Quality

- Promote water quality enhancement features: rain gardens, bio-swales, porous pavements
- Encourage blueways and greenways program



Air Quality

- Improve air quality by promoting green space and landscaping
- Promote the reduction of vehicle emission to EPA standards
- Promote renewable energy usage
- Promote the use of clean fuel
- Reduce building emissions



Open Space

- Create interconnected network of parks and green spaces
- Connect with trail systems
- Promote development of parks within walking distance (1/4 mile radius) of a parcel
- Create conservation land to protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Encourage community gardening



Culture & Diversity

- Elevate Charleston as the center of culture, recreation and business in the Appalachian Mountain region
- Expand the brand to appeal to a wider audience
- Enhance the aesthetic outlook
- Provide amenities for different market segments



Alternative Transportation

- Promote walking and biking
- Provide sidewalk accessibility
- Promote street connectivity
- Encourage road-diet and accommodate all forms of transportation



Sustainable Site

- Promote higher density development and mix of land use within core
- Promote low impact development
- Provide appropriate buffer and minimize curb-cuts
- Promote shared parking behind commercial buildings
- Promote brownfield and greyfield remediation and reuse



Housing Mix

- Opportunities for housing diversity - different income ranges and market niches
- Higher density within core/Downtown with lower density in bordering areas
- Life cycle housing to meet needs for all ages
- Universal design to provide accessibility options and support aging in place



Building Character

- Adaptive re-use of existing buildings
- Promote infill buildings that fits into the character of the block/area
- Maintain building lines and setbacks except to add landscape courts in front of buildings
- Encourage creative use of massing for passive solar heating and natural cooling
- Promote the use of reflective roofs and roof gardens
- Promote the use of natural light



Energy Efficiency

- Promote efficient usage of existing infrastructure
- Utilization of available capacity of utility infrastructure
- Encourage waste recycling practices
- Explore renewable and alternative energy generation systems: solar, wind, geothermal, biomass
- Promote the use of LEED standards and energy star appliances

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Big Ideas - To guide and Shape Downtown Charleston

The big ideas presented here does not exhibit any hierarchy of implementation. Downtown goals (DB or DL) from Introduction section (page 12) and sustainable guiding principles' icons are represented for cross-referencing purposes.

1

COMMIT LOCAL RESOURCES FOR A SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- Identify public-private partnering opportunities, collaborate with quasi-public organizations and explore creative implementation vehicles
- Engage local financial institutions, community foundations, liturgical institutions and institutions of higher learning as partners
- Establish an effective relationship with the State of West Virginia for mutual real state

DB1

DL2

2

RESHAPE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF DOWNTOWN CHARLESTON

- Create niche districts (Civic, Regional Commercial, Historic Core, Cultural) within Downtown
- Create context-sensitive urban design standards to shape future development
- Elevate the architectural character of new buildings through high quality design standards that embrace urban design qualities and principles
- Adopt the "complete streets" approach to enhancing the street network and support pedestrian zones and activity areas

DB1

DB3

DB4

DB5

DL2

3

UTILIZE CHARLESTON'S IMPRESSIVE HISTORY AND RIVER CITY LOCATION TO LEVERAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Embrace historic preservation as an important economic development tool and the value of history as an important asset to enhance the urban environment and marketability of the urban core.
- Re-engage the Kanawha and Elk Rivers for public access, pedestrian activity areas and high quality mixed use development.
- Promote sustainable development practices that will help environmental stewardship, social interactions and financial benefits

DB2

DB3

DL4

4

DEVELOP A DISTRICT IDENTITY SYSTEM FOR THE DOWNTOWN AND CONTIGUOUS RETAIL & ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATIONS

- Develop a district identity program that begins to link major destinations such as the Town Center, City Center at Slack Plaza, Capitol Street, Capitol Market, Hale/Quarrier/Dickinson Streets, The Clay Center and the Warehouse District. The system should will delineate key pedestrian / alternative transportation corridors and support potential mixed use development opportunities.

DB2

DB4

5

TREAT THE URBAN CORE AS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT CHARLESTON NEIGHBORHOOD

- Establish and implement a public relations campaign that promotes Downtown's livability, improves the public's perception of Downtown, and represents Downtown as a safe environment [refer to BID below].
- Explore opportunities and alternatives for developers, tenants and lending institutions to promote Downtown housing and encourage mixed use development.

DB2

DB4

DL1

DL3

6

ESTABLISH A PROFESSIONAL URBAN CORE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

- Establish a Downtown Management Authority (DMA)
- Develop a Business Improvement District [BID] to garner commitment and financial support from property owners to provide professional targeted management efforts in the urban core
- Continue to support the City Center BID. Look for ways to expand the BID or create additional BIDs where appropriate.

DB2

DB4

DL1

DL3

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Framework Development

The following images illustrate key redevelopment opportunities and show how they can leverage the existing activity areas and connections through:

- Strategic occupancy
- Creative building design (existing and new)
- Public realm improvements (streetscapes, sidewalks, public plazas, parks, etc)

While many improvement projects have been completed and/or are underway, additional catalytic projects, as shown here, will assist in creating a revitalized Downtown. Priorities for the catalytic projects will need further discussion during the implementation phase. The catalytic projects will help to strengthen the core over time through the commitment of public-private partnerships.

Additional projects will follow, filling in the gaps in the fractured urban framework and resulting in a more cohesive Downtown.

SEQUENCE OF FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

- A. Activity Areas
- B. Opportunity Sites
- C. Catalytic Projects
- D. Connectivity and Final Framework

- Activity Areas
1. Haddad Park/ Schoenbaum Stage

2. Capitol Street Historic Core

3. Clay Center

4. GoMart Park

5. Capitol Market

6. Town Center Mall

7. Coliseum & Convention Center & Municipal Auditorium

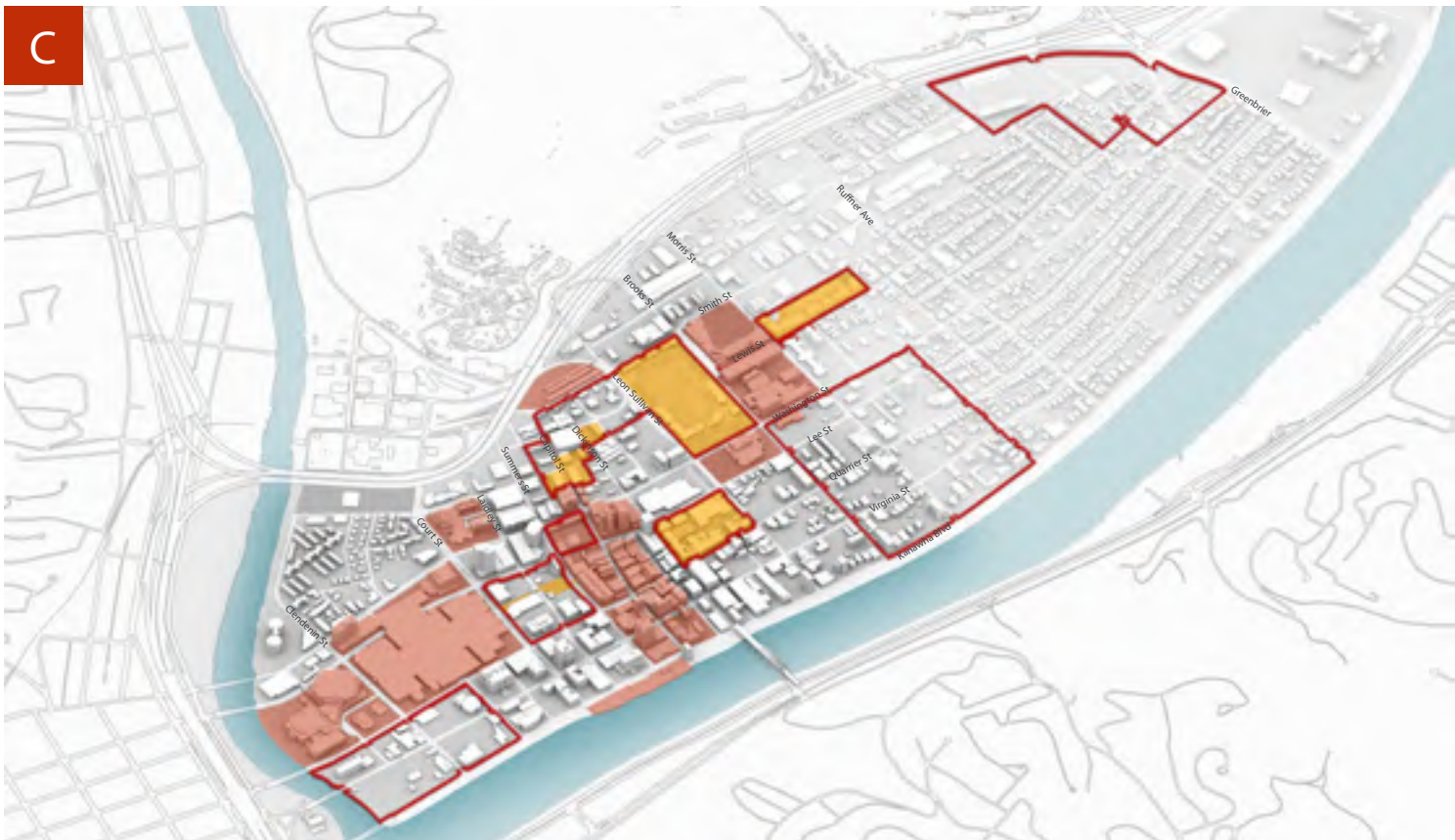
8. CAMC General Hospital

9. St Francis Hospital
- Opportunity Sites (refer to lower left diagram)
- Catalytic Projects (refer to lower right diagram)

Activity Areas | areas with most visitorship



Catalytic Projects | stimulate economic growth & extend vibrancy of activity areas

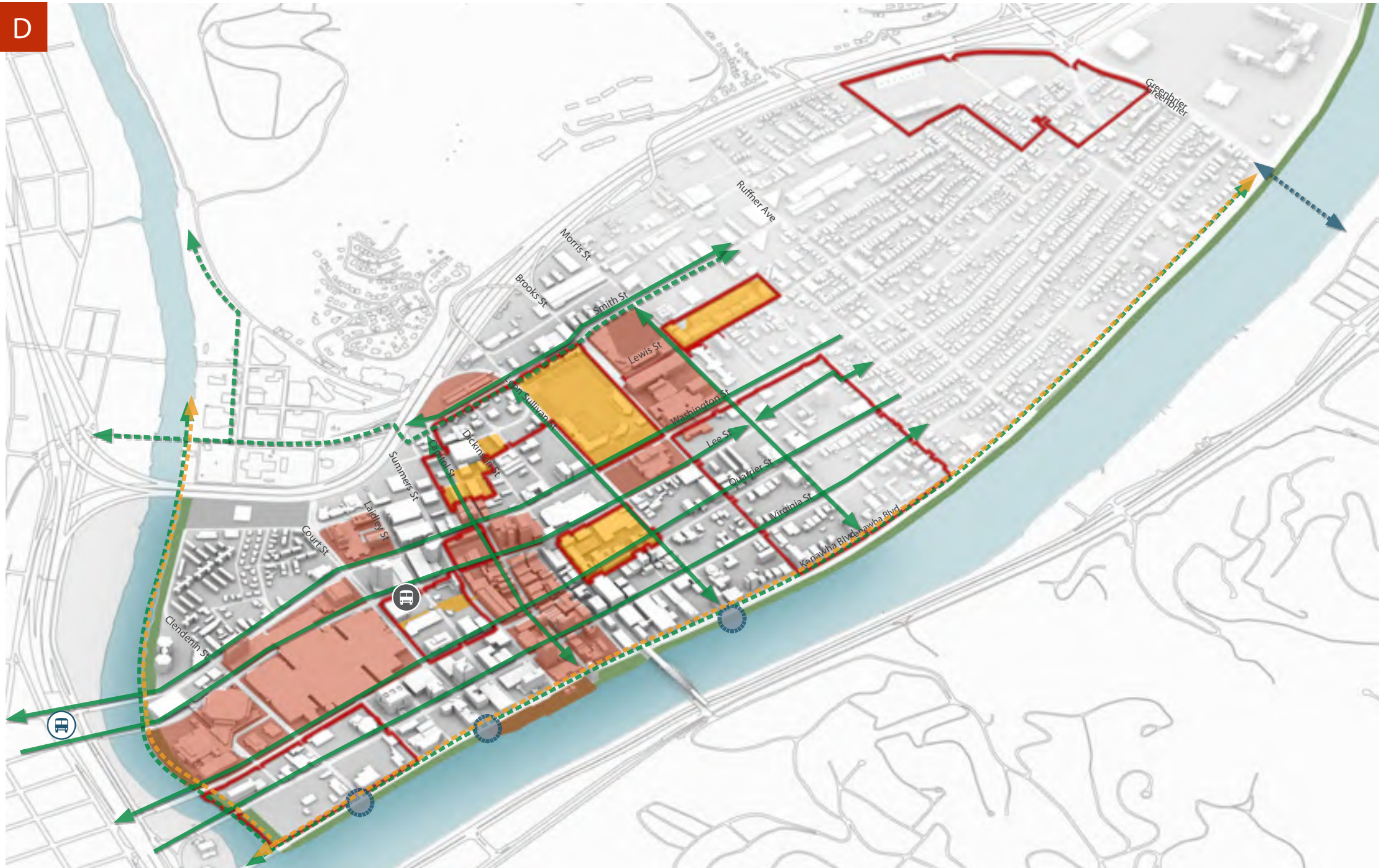


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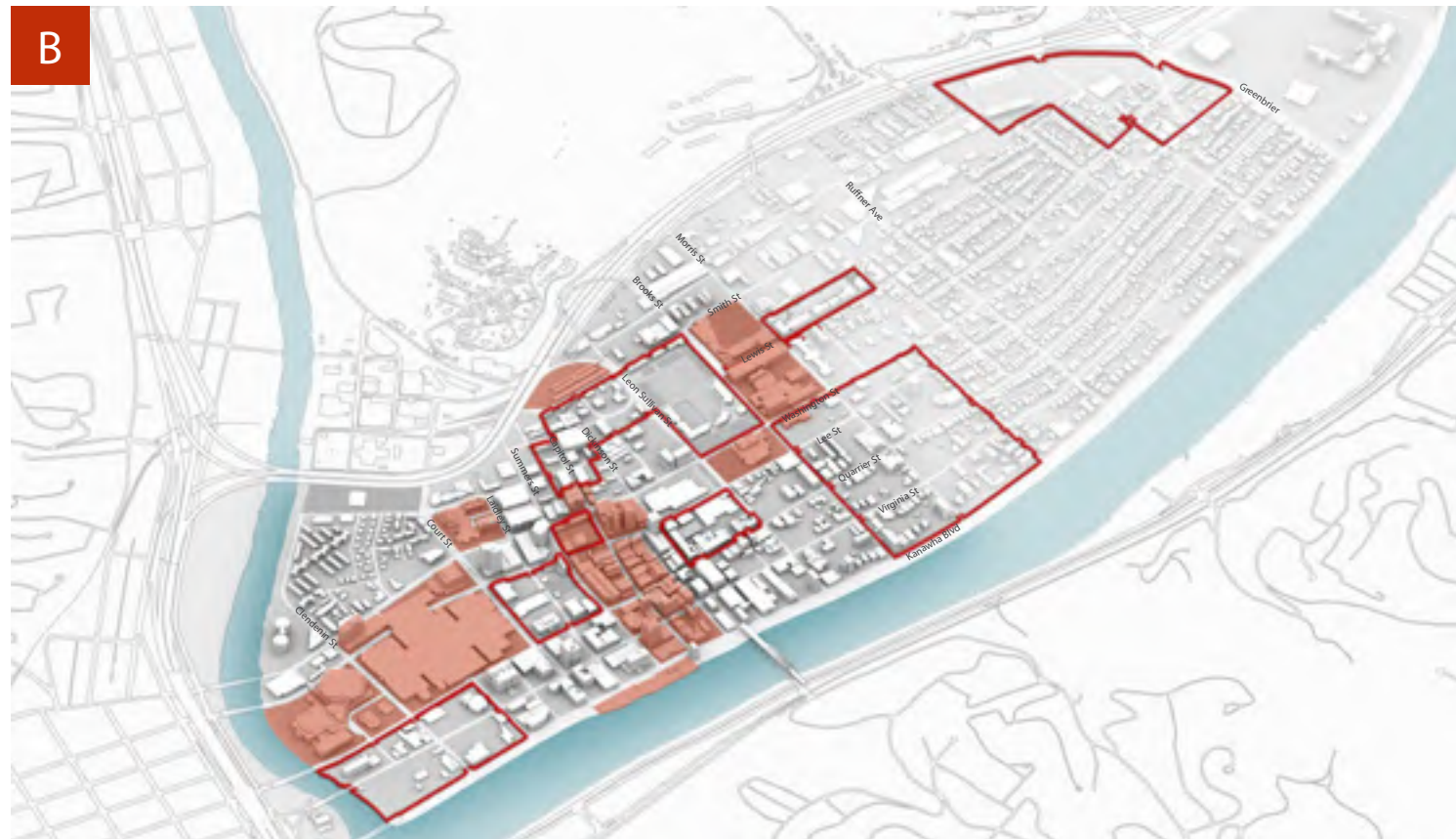
Framework Development

- Activity Areas
- Opportunity Sites
- Catalytic Projects
- Complete Streets
- Trails (Existing and Potential)
- Potential Pedestrian Bridge
- Potential Transit Hub
- Alternative Transit Hub
- Riverside Overlook (Existing and Potential)

Connectivity and Final Framework | to connect activity areas and catalytic projects



Opportunity Sites | sites for further development potential near activity areas



Master Plan
Big Idea 1

1 COMMIT LOCAL RESOURCES FOR A SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- Establish an effective relationship with the State of West Virginia for mutual real estate

Charleston's physical character is dependent upon a unified vision between the City and the State. Charleston's "personality" represents a visitor's first impression of the state's urbanized communities.

Capitol cities have a unique opportunity to combine local & state vision and resources to create a high quality built environment that represents the ingenuity, creativity and pride inherent throughout the states that they serve. This unique relationship can be a strong marketing icon for the entire state while contributing to the livability and economic vitality of Downtown.

- Identify public / private partnering opportunities and explore creative implementation vehicles

This Comprehensive and Downtown Redevelopment Plan initiative has resulted in the identification of many of the potential community partners with interest in the Downtown. Their engagement is a critical first step toward a healthier and economically successful Downtown. These banks, foundations, institutions, corporations, alliances and developers should be brought into discussions to determine what conditions need to be met for them to invest in the redevelopment of Downtown. Economic partnerships such as a For-Profit LLC can bring individuals and/or corporations together to combine resources and share the risks (and rewards) of focused real estate redevelopment investing.

Not-for-profit community development vehicles can also provide public improvements and select types of mixed-use development when immediate return on investment is not as critical.

Historic renovation is a tool that should not be ignored in these initiatives. With Charleston's arsenal of historic properties, historic tax credit building renovation should become a major redevelopment tool.

- Engage local financial institutions, community foundations, institutions as Downtown redevelopment partners

Every community's financial institutions have Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requirements. Investing in Downtown or urban districts that have developed strategic plans is something every lender wants to be involved with rather than blindly throwing money into troubled areas.

In addition, Charleston has a unique situation in that several well-endowed private & quasi-public community foundations call Charleston their home. For example, the Great Kanawha Valley Foundation has a demonstrated history of encouraging economic growth and enhanced quality of life for Greater Charleston and the Kanawha County region.

The University of Charleston and Sacred Heart Catholic Parish are strategic partners by default. Both institutions have invested heavily into the urban core of Charleston through numerous real estate investments on their own campuses. A vibrant urban core will strengthen both of these campuses while broadening the demand for business start-ups, selective urban housing and public spaces that encourage livability for everyone.

ACTION STEPS

- Create a collaborative environment with banks, foundations, institutions, corporations, alliances in order to determine how to overcome barriers for reinvestments into the urban core
- Public-private partnerships need to be forged to create a healthy investment opportunity
- Work collaboratively with State and County agencies to better position Downtown Charleston as an environment to attract investment that will be guided by the comprehensive plan and the Downtown redevelopment, benefiting all parties

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Big Idea 2

2 RESHAPE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF DOWNTOWN CHARLESTON

- Create niche districts within Downtown to drive the redevelopment of the built environment

The idea surrounding the five district concept is to develop distinctive personalities and characteristics for each of the districts, which will cater to appropriate retail / entertainment / neighborhood services specific in each district yet creating the niche for the entire Downtown business district as a whole. Each district would have a unique personality created by carefully crafted design guidelines for storefronts, facades, lighting, and signage. Streetscape improvements would be designed to reinforce the district identity while acting as a common thread woven through all five districts.

Some uses, such as eating and drinking establishments, professional offices, and upper story housing, should be common to all five districts. Also the idea of green connections should be implemented to physically connect the adjacent neighborhoods with the Downtown area. Follow the Overview Design Standards (page 52) to create detailed development guidelines.

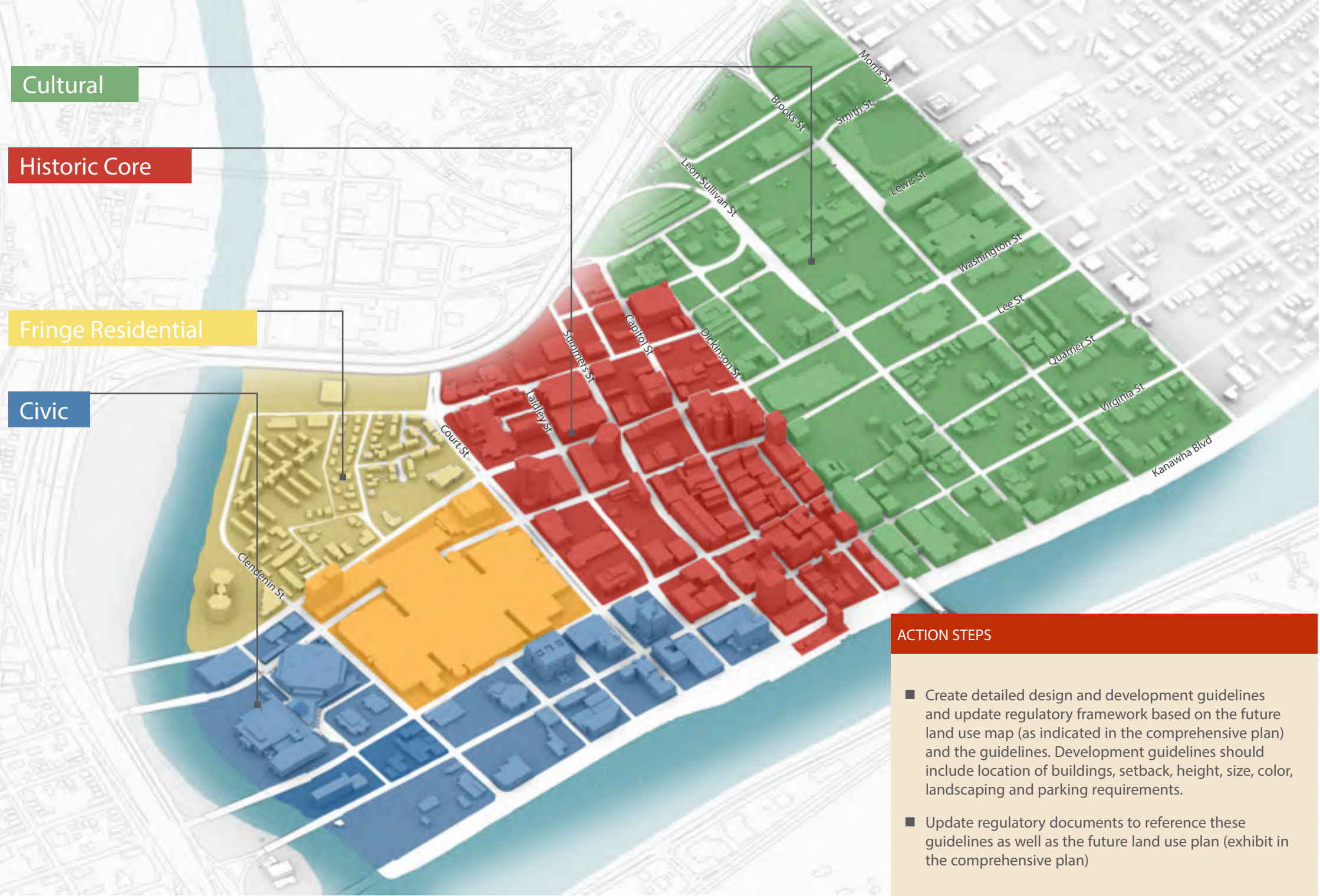
- Create context-sensitive urban design standards to shape future development

Context sensitive design standards will allow for development to be respectful of existing architecture and public realm spaces. For example, careful consideration should be given to allow for the massing and height of new buildings to be in similar character as those existing predominantly in that specific district yet providing flexibility in design and aesthetic outlook.

Developing an urban framework strategy and plan that allows both entities to contribute to the overall success of the Downtown is paramount. The framework plan can provide the foundation for the creation of important design principles that can guide and shape projects to drive successful district development. Context-sensitive design that balances individual project goals and objectives with strategic development opportunities for a successful Downtown should become a standard practice for all public development projects.

The guidelines should be crafted in a way to preserve historic features while allowing commercial building owners to creatively market their properties.

CREATE FIVE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS OF DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT: CIVIC, REGIONAL COMMERCIAL, FRINGE RESIDENTIAL, HISTORIC CORE, CULTURAL



ACTION STEPS

- Create detailed design and development guidelines and update regulatory framework based on the future land use map (as indicated in the comprehensive plan) and the guidelines. Development guidelines should include location of buildings, setback, height, size, color, landscaping and parking requirements.
- Update regulatory documents to reference these guidelines as well as the future land use plan (exhibit in the comprehensive plan)

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Big Idea 2 | Overview Design Standards

DISTRICTS	LAND USES	DENSITY & MASSING	CONNECTIVITY & STREETScape	OPEN SPACE	PARKING
CIVIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Civic center and related uses, hospitalityCity and Federal officesRestaurantsProfessional office spacesProposed Capitol Sports ComplexRe-imagined Town Center Mall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium density with strong urban characterHeight: 3-7 storiesGround Coverage: 40%Promote massing and massing modulation to utilize optimum energy requirements and remove the monotony of unvarying surface facades.Some mall uses such as restaurants to have some street presence to encourage walkability; also add public artwork, trees etc. to soften the harshness of the superblock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote streetscape improvements that will encourage walkability - sidewalk setback from automobile travel lanes, tree lines, etc.Context sensitive lighting, banner program, road signage and wayfinding elements showing destinations and parking - signage to have some consistent branding elements that will tie the signages from different districts together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide some relief to the frontage of buildings with lawn pads and trees to introduce open space15% for commercial areas; or as guided by zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Off-street shared parking behind and side of buildings in commercial areas; if parking is located to the side of buildings, it is recommended to provide appropriate landscaped screeningEncourage installation of bike racksPotential for electric or natural gas car charging stations in future at locations with extended parking permitted (i.e. not 2-hr restrictions)
FRINGE RESIDENTIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Multi-familySenior livingLimited small scale hospitalityLimited neighborhood commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Height: 3-5 storiesPromote massing and building modulation to utilize optimum energy requirements and remove the monotony of unvarying surface facades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote streetscape improvements that will encourage walkability - sidewalk setback from automobile travel lanes, tree lines, etc.Context sensitive lighting, banner program, road signage and wayfinding elements showing destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide some relief to the frontage of buildings with lawn pads and tree lines to introduce open spacePotential for neighborhood pocket parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Off-street shared parking behind and side of buildings in commercial areas; if parking is located to the side of buildings, it is recommended to provide appropriate landscaped screeningEncourage installation of bike racks
HISTORIC CORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regional/local-serving commercial (higher quality and maintained look)RestaurantsProfessional office spacesMixed Use (commercial, professional office spaces with residential above)Adaptive reuse of historic buildingsMedical facilities to the northeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Height: 3+ storiesPedestrian-scale features (such as entrance canopies, storefront awnings, landscaping, lighting and signs) should be incorporated on the first floor of buildings and at entrances to help relate buildings to the streetscape.Minimum of 50% of first floor facade to have clear glass/doorway for any commercial uses; 30% - for upper floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote streetscape improvements that will encourage walkability - sidewalk setback from automobile travel lanes, tree lines, curb bump-outs at intersections, etc.Context sensitive lighting, banner program, road signage and wayfinding elements showing destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Redevelop Slack Plaza and Brawley Walkway to have better connectivity of the core with the mall and adjacent usesRedevelop Davis Park to provide appropriate amenityConnect green spaces, riverfront parkProvide some relief to the frontage of buildings with lawn pads and tree lines to introduce open space, whenever redevelopment occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Off-street shared parking behind and side of buildings in commercial areas; if parking is located to the side of buildings, it is recommended to provide appropriate landscaped screeningOn-street parking with electronic metersEncourage installation of bike racksShort term parking
CULTURAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Performing centers, library, recreational usesInstitutional UsesOffice commercial, studiosLiturgical uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Height: 1-7 storiesPromote massing and massing modulation to utilize optimum energy requirements and remove the monotony of unvarying surface facades.Minimum of 50% of first floor facade to have clear glass/doorway for any commercial uses; 30% - for upper floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote streetscape improvements that will encourage walkability - sidewalk setback from automobile travel lanes, tree lines, etc.Context sensitive lighting, banner program, road signage and wayfinding elements showing destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Connect green spaces - Mary Ratrie Park, green space in front of Clay Center, potential Library relocation area, Ball park, riverfront etc.Provide some relief to the frontage of buildings with lawn pads and tree lines to introduce open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Off-street shared parking behind and side of buildings in commercial areas; if parking is located to the side of buildings, it is recommended to provide appropriate landscaped screeningOn-street parking with electronic metersEncourage installation of bike racksShort term parking

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Big Idea 2 | Target Areas

Existing



Six Target Areas For Redevelopment Opportunities



- TARGET AREAS
- A. GoMart Park Area
 - B. Quarrier Street Mixed Use Infill
 - C. Capitol & Hale Streets
 - D. City Center at Slack Plaza & Brawley Walkway
 - E. Civic District
 - F. Kanawha Boulevard - Capitol Connector Project
 - G. Capitol Sports Complex

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Big Idea 2 | Target Area - Capitol & Hale Streets

- Elevate the architectural character of new buildings through high quality design standards that embrace urban design qualities and principles

Infill development and redevelopment is recommended to create the distinct character, which will complement the existing structures in the Downtown area. Redevelopment of the Downtown area should create an environment that is inviting and walkable. There should be mixed-uses within buildings to create strong synergy of multiple uses with 24-hour activity.

Also, infill and/or redevelopment can be phased to allow for efficient use of resources, including funding. The visualizations on the right highlight how under-utilized parcels can support phased development to create a sense of place, encourage walkability, promote sustainability and creation of overall healthier environment.

These recommendations should be applied throughout the historic core, though two locations should be given priority. Capitol Street north of Washington Street requires both infill and public realm improvements to draw visitors to Capitol Market. Additionally, the successful revitalization of Capitol Street has spurred some investment on Hale Street. Rehabilitation of historic structures covering the full length of Hale Street is to be encouraged, with a focus on ground-floor transparency for retail space. Improvements along the east side of Hale Street are necessary to provide visual interest, encourage pedestrian activity, and screen parking garages and surface parking.

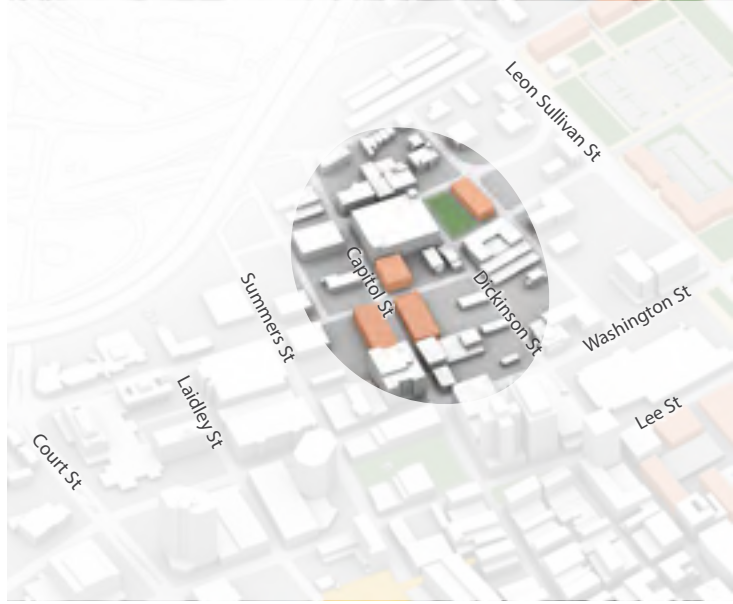
ACTION STEPS

- The development of design standards for new buildings as well as rehabilitation/renovation standards need to be integrated with design and development guidelines.
- Incorporate the Secretary of Interior Standards for historic preservation into design and development guidelines.

PHASED APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS | CAPITOL STREET NORTH OF WASHINGTON STREET - CONNECTION TO CAPITOL MARKET



Existing | Capitol Street



PHASE 1

- Sidewalk paving
- Parking lot screening
- Electronic parking meter to consolidate several on-street parking meters
- Light poles with energy efficient light fixtures
- Banner program for branding of Capitol Market District
- Murals (market related) on facades of existing buildings
- Parking garage architectural screens
- Signage on parking garage - Capitol Street

Potential Concepts & Phasing

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Big Idea 2 | Target Area - Capitol & Hale Streets

PHASE 2

- Phase 1 improvements (completed)
- Potential infill building in existing off-street parking area
- Commercial use in first floor with office/residential in upper floors
- Outdoor dining / pedestrian amenity

PHASED APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS | CAPITOL STREET NORTH OF WASHINGTON STREET - CONNECTION TO CAPITOL MARKET



PHASE 3

- Phase 2 improvements (completed)
- Potential full build-out with infill buildings along Capitol Street in off-street parking areas
- Parking behind buildings
- Commercial use in first floor with office/residential in upper floors
- Outdoor dining / pedestrian amenity
- Potentially replace existing on-street parking on one side of Capitol Street with extended curb (tree lawn area, sustainable stormwater features) and bike lane
- Bike lane [Exhibit showing single bike lane on north bound lane is an example of complete streets strategy (pg 48) not necessarily a solution for Capitol Street]



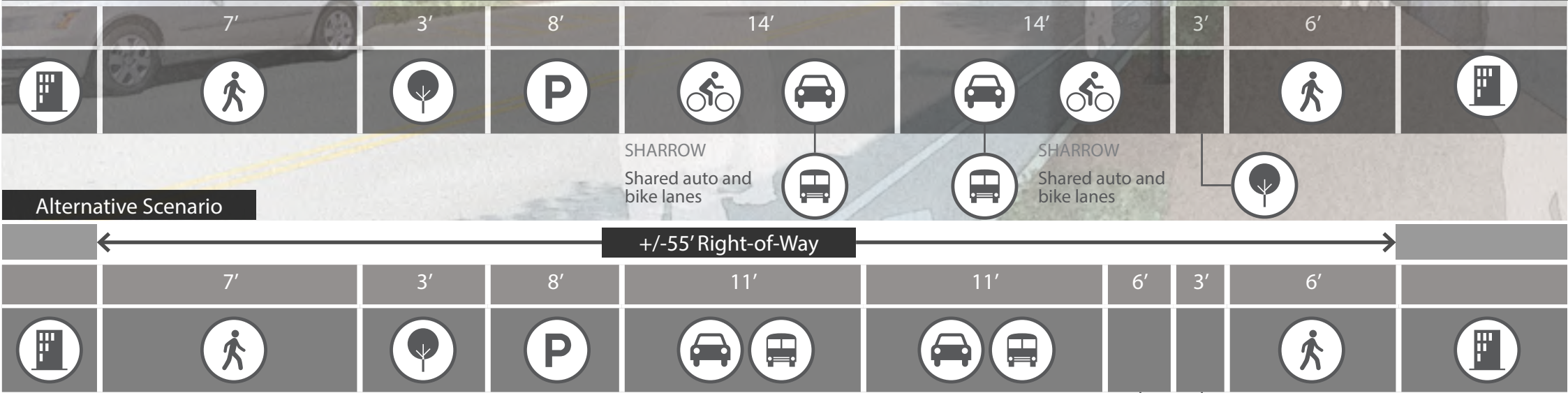
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Big Idea 2 | Target Area - Capitol & Hale Streets

DESIGN GUIDELINES | STREET SECTION



- PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR
Walkways connecting destinations
- BIKE LANE
Alternative mode of transportation which encourages healthy living
- CAR LANE
Travel lanes connecting destinations
- BUS
Mass transit connecting destinations
- ON-STREET PARKING
Amenity for uses alongside roads; uses should be limited by parking meters
- TREE LAWN/UTILITY CORRIDOR
To create buffer between pedestrian and automobile lanes; potential utilities underground
- BUILT-FORM
Buildings along corridors with different land uses



NOTE: The alternative scenario exhibits 1-way bike lane to align with complete streets strategy and not necessarily for Capitol Street. In this scenario, the return lanes should be coordinated with adjacent parallel streets. Ultimately, bike traveling (dedicated bike lanes or sharrow) is recommended for all downtown local streets.



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Big Idea 2 | Target Area - Capitol & Hale Streets

DESIGN GUIDELINES | SIDEWALK AMENITIES & BUILDING CHARACTER



- SIDEWALK AMENITIES
TREES
To create a buffer between pedestrian and automobile lanes; also provides shade and creates cooler micro-climate for healthy living; improves air quality
- LIGHTING
Contemporary light poles with energy efficient light fixtures
- BRANDING
To create a 'sense of place' and identity of the district/area - depicted here by banners for Market as a gateway to the Capitol Market area
- PARKING METERS
Electronic parking meters to consolidate multiple standalone meters
- SUSTAINABLE STORMWATER SYSTEM
Best management practices for better water quality standards - depicted here by raingardens; also helps to lessen hardscape with landscaping for aesthetic considerations
- PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR
Safe and secure walkways connecting destinations



- BUILDING CHARACTER
CHARACTER
Architectural character of buildings are transitional - between the existing historic character and contemporary/modern outlook
- UPPER FLOORS
Massing/proportion of buildings should be context-sensitive of existing buildings
- GROUND/FIRST FLOOR
Should be designed to cater to pedestrian traffic/walkability - transparency, storefront glass, canopies, outdoor dining etc.

STREET CROSS-SECTION VIEW

The design guidelines, as depicted by the street cross-sectional views illustrate public realm and building character. These design thoughts can be applied to other areas of Downtown.

INTENT OF GUIDELINES

- Increased awareness and appreciation of design considerations with respect to enhanced urban placemaking.
- Coordination on the overall development vision and implementation.
- Communicate the development patterns and provide consistency with public and private sector design matters.
- Provides a clear understanding of Charleston's expectations for its urban development framework.

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Big Idea 2

- Adopt the “complete streets” approach to enhancing the street network and supports pedestrian zones and activity areas

What is the Complete Streets design approach?

The National Complete Streets Coalition characterizes “Complete Streets” as streets that are designed and operated to provide safe, attractive and comfortable access for users (vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians and transit users) and of all ages and abilities. Streets built utilizing “Complete Street” principles encourage social interaction, provide a unique sense of place and have a positive influence on adjacent land values.

Streets that were widened or changed to 1-way travel to carry more cars and higher volumes of traffic in the late 1950s through the 1970s did an excellent job of moving cars in and out of Downtown. Unfortunately the net effect of that strategy contributed significantly to the exodus of the Downtown shopper and night-life. Improvements to make driving through the city faster caused a gradual and progressive decline in the quality of Downtown streetscapes and the public realm, specifically for the pedestrians that are so vital for a vibrant Downtown. Stores, restaurants and entertainment venues lost patrons to suburban shopping centers and districts that offered the ambience, safety and convenience that Downtown had lost.

Fortunately, Charleston’s historic core area (specifically between Capitol and Dickinson Streets, Virginia and Lee Streets) has preserved the place and quality of the road corridors and public realm that encourages walkability and provides a sense of place. Outside of this core, walkable street grids were combined for creation of superblocks that house large footprint buildings, which are accessed predominantly by automobiles. Efforts should be made to reintroduce streets and alleys along with strategic redevelopment of under-utilized lots to promote walkable grids. Multi-use streetscape enhancements should also be implemented at strategic locations along with redevelopment of adjacent blocks. Such enhancements should potentially include renovated sidewalks, tree lawns, bikepaths (dedicated or shared use), opportunity for bus shelters and pull areas for mass transit, sustainable stormwater management practices, lighting, street furniture, etc., based on appropriate needs and available resources.

ACTION STEPS

Streetscape/Road Network

- Create a hierarchy of street connections (mostly pedestrian oriented streets to high automobile traffic corridors) that will facilitate multiple modes of transportation.
- Explore opportunities to re-engage alleys and other streets that will help to minimize the effects of superblocks both within and outside of historic core. Enhanced connections mean shorter travel time, optimal infrastructure layout costs and emergency response time shortening.

- Explore road diet (technique where the width of roads are reconfigured/minimized for transportation efficiency) and slower “design speeds” which will help in promoting walkable environment to accommodate the needs of all ages.
- Based on street hierarchy, typology and character, lane dedications will enhance the optimal use of the roadway.
- Explore the feasibility of 2-way conversion of select 1-way pairs within Downtown for better and faster connections as well as incentives for first floor commercial spaces or to make those streets more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

- Implement traffic calming measures within higher density areas - with curb-extensions at intersections and possible mid-blocks, potential raised mid-block crossings, introduction of pavers in pedestrian crosswalks, electronic lighting systems that activate when pedestrians are at crosswalks, etc.

- Minimize and consolidate curb cuts into off-street parking areas.
- Promote a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system
- Create a streetscape master plan for Downtown that will take into account principles of Complete Streets and other amenities as described above.

- Implement a cohesive streetscape design along with redevelopment of under-utilized lots and/or buildings.

Sidewalks and Walkability

- Utilize the overview design standards and visual design guidelines (within this section) as guide to redevelop sidewalk areas for catalytic improvements.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate sidewalk dining areas while maintaining a clear zone for pedestrian traffic.
- Promote curb-extensions at intersections and mid-block to encourage safer sidewalk connections.

- Promote sidewalk redevelopment with ADA accessibility requirements.

- Tree plantings are encouraged to enhance visual and environmental quality of the public realm areas - they will help to create greenways within urban core as well as provide relief from heat-island effect.

Biking

- Incorporate bikepaths within Downtown roads whenever the right-of-way and pavement width allows the opportunity; otherwise promote shared access lanes.

Parking

- Conduct a parking study as density of development grows within the Downtown area - it will help to justify requirements of different forms of parking (on-street, off-street lots, parking garages).
- Parking should be identified with the comprehensive signage and wayfinding system including directions to parking structures as well as technology to give motorists more information on available parking.
- Add bike parking to select on-street spaces or sidewalks and on the 1st floor of parking garages

On-street:

- Identify streets which have sufficient width to add on-street parking. Follow recommended strategy of lane subdivisions [page 56 (with sharrow), 76 (with bike lane)] to create additional parking spaces. It will generate new revenue for parking systems while making the area more user-friendly for visitors and customers. Also consider increasing parking rates for generating parking revenues to assist in downtown improvements.

- Enforcement of time limits will help customers and store owners with higher turnovers. Discontinue enforcement on weekends to entice visitors.

- Relocate loading areas from on-street parking areas if alternative location is available. Utilize appropriate signage, such as ‘15-Minute Pick-Up/Delivery Only’ at limited locations to free up valuable parking spaces for visitors/customers.

- Modern techniques of parking fee payment is recommended to be installed that adds to the character of core areas (individual parking meter, consolidated and electronic payment systems, etc.).

- Either on the meters, with signs, or both, clearly and with limited words, state the rules of parking, preferably highlighted with a bright color.

- Adjust parking meters to allow for additional time in busiest areas; encourage employees to park in garages that will help to free up space for customers.

Off-Street:

- Majority of off-street parking spaces that are not in a garage should be located behind the buildings when infill development occurs.

- Parking lots should be well illuminated, signed and nicely landscaped with green parking aisles with opportunities for stormwater management.

Parking Garages

- Conduct design study to explore parking garage design aesthetics .The city’s recent investment into LED lighting has provided much needed security enhancements.
- Construct parking garages that will support large developments and/or cluster of smaller developments.

- Explore innovative financing solutions, TIF and public-private partnerships to build garages.

- Parking garages should be designed with high bay grand floor (with commercial uses) along main business streets to allow for the garages to be integrated within the urban framework.

- Promote design solutions that creatively mask the facades of the parking garages - screens, architectural features, etc.

- Provide easily accessible short term parking spaces in parking garages, specifically on lower floors. Reserved parking is recommended to be provided on upper floors. Add bike parking on 1st floor as well as short-term visitor parking.

- Provide appropriate signage leading towards parking garages.

Transit

- Work with Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KRT) to improve the bus service as density of development increases within Downtown area - for connections within Downtown destinations as well as linking to greater Charleston neighborhoods.

- Implement car-sharing and bike-sharing programs as needs arise.

- Work with taxi-cab services and other forms of transit alternatives to allow for visitors and residents to park once and visit multiple destinations within Downtown.

Master Plan

Big Idea 2 | Potential Connectivity

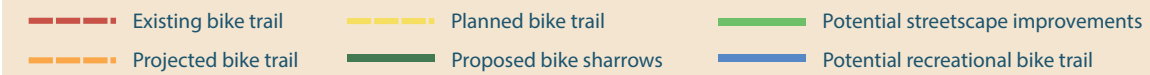
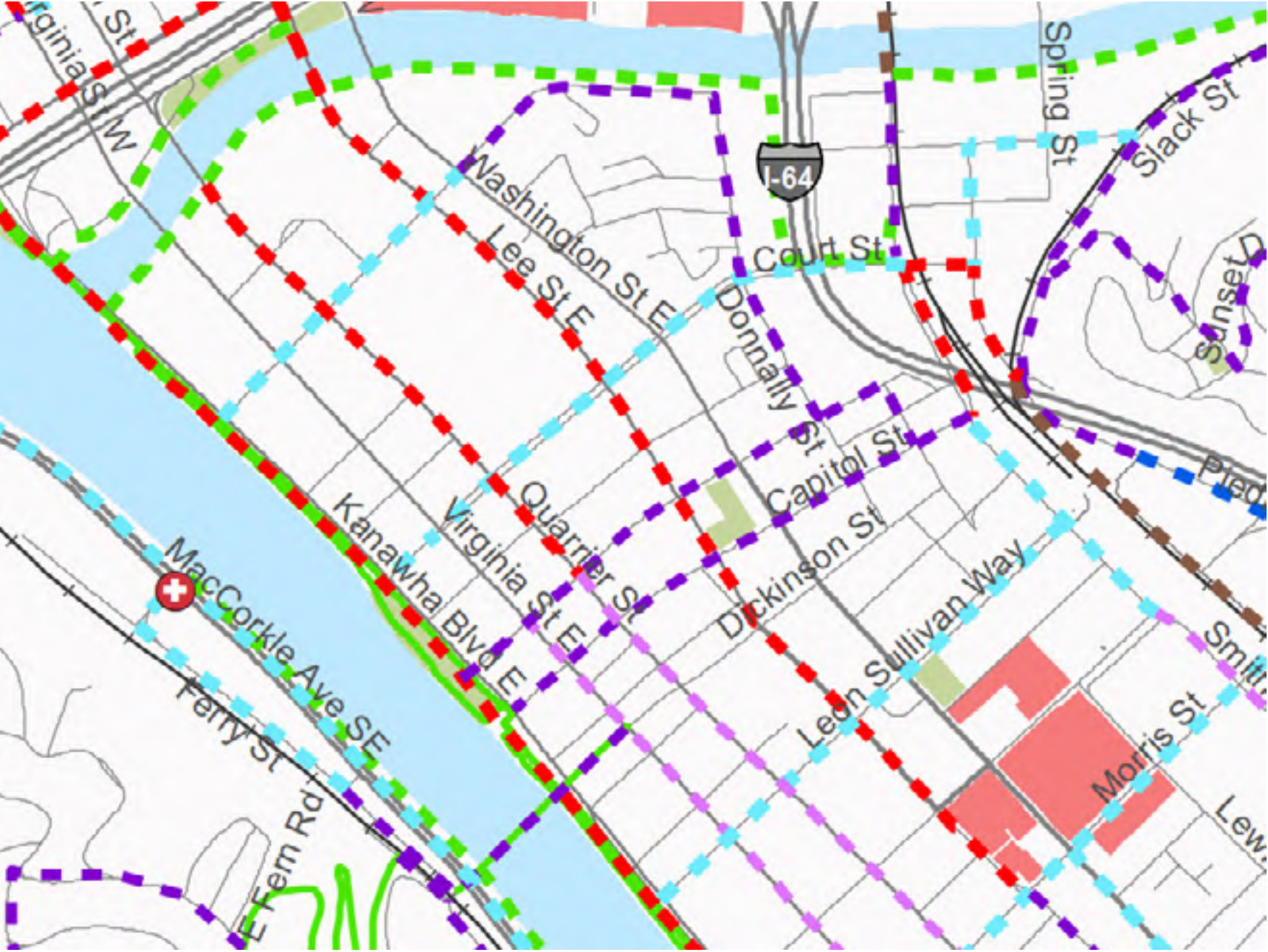
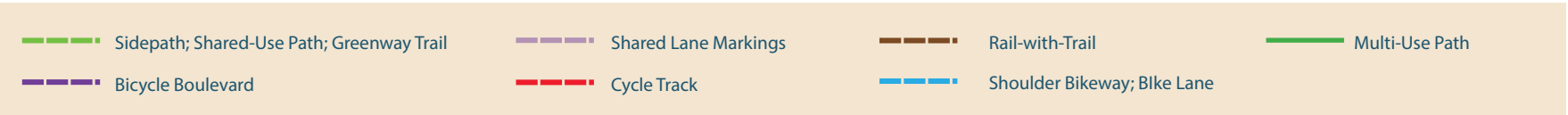
In order to provide better connectivity and mobility throughout the Downtown area, the map below combines the street network with planned and proposed improvements at the time of plan adoption.

A bikeway has been implemented along Kanawha River - from Kanawha City Bridge to Patrick Street; expansion of that bikeway along the Elk River to create a recreational bike trail is recommended.

Bike sharrows are proposed along Quarrier and Virginia Streets. Important connectivity corridors should receive streetscape improvements to stimulate pedestrian circulation, such as Washington, Lee, Capitol, Leon Sullivan and Morris streets. A pedestrian bridge is proposed by the Capitol Campus at Greenbrier street connecting with the University of Charleston on the other side of the river.

In 2015, the City of Charleston worked with Alta Planning & Design to develop a Bike & Trail Master Plan that would address some of the challenges initially identified during the development of Imagine Charleston. The plan is to be used as a tool for implementing infrastructure improvements to connect all parts of Charleston by safe and comfortable bicycle linkages. These connections will benefit Charleston’s economy, sense of community, and public health. Recommendations for the downtown from that plan are indicated in the map on the right.

The Capitol Connector Project, detailed on page 20, will serve as a catalyst for much of the connectivity proposed here.



Master Plan

Big Idea 3

3 UTILIZE CHARLESTON'S IMPRESSIVE HISTORY AND RIVER CITY LOCATION TO LEVERAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Embrace historic preservation as an important economic development tool. Promote Charleston's history as an important asset to enhance the urban environment and marketability of the urban core.

Downtown's rich history, National Register Historic District status, and significant historic building stock indicate the importance of integrating historic property redevelopment into future economic development strategies for the Downtown area. Iconic buildings are recommended for redevelopment and repurposing to bring new life into the Downtown while providing a lucrative investment vehicle for economic development. Federal and State historic tax credit programs provide significant investment benefits to those individuals and/or institutional investors developing historic buildings. With a 20% federal tax credit combined with a 25% state tax credit, the developer is provided an approximate 45% investment tax credit on the real estate project when following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

Enlightened property owners understand that investment in their properties can be a benefit to them and the community as a whole – resulting in increased value of real estate, supporting the city's tax base, acting as a catalyst for additional investment, and spurring economic development and job creation.

Downtown has a large number of vacant upper floors of buildings. These spaces could be adapted to housing, which is an income-producing use and could qualify for use of historic tax credits. The intended market for any new housing should be students, young professionals and empty-nesters. An increase in the Downtown resident population could lead to more vibrant pedestrian activity and the demand for new businesses.

In 2014, the City adopted a 90-day stay of demolition for any contributing structure in any historic district. This allows time for educating the property owner about tax credits and preservation grants and identifying potential developers for a rehabilitation project. Lack of other appropriate preservation policies can result in decay of the existing built form that is worth restoring and preserving. Historic preservation techniques were required by overlay design guidelines in a redevelopment plan under the guidance of the Charleston Urban Renewal Authority. These guidelines expired, bringing about a need to create specific policies that will keep preservation of place and buildings as the central focus. A new development guide should follow the essence of the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

ACTION STEPS

- It is recommended to continue to collaborate with stakeholders, private sector, independent organizations and citizens to promote awareness regarding preservation and its benefits.
- Appropriate preservation policies should be developed in cooperation with other local initiatives such as the East End guidelines/policies. The policies should relate to overall growth management strategies promoting compact Downtown and economic development.
- The City and related historic preservation entities should discuss adoption of such policies with the State and regional departments for appropriate implementation.
- In the interim, all potential development should be reviewed with historic and cultural preservation values in mind. Adopt a policy to temporarily delay the alteration and/or demolition of cultural resources until preservation policies are in place.
- Research and secure funding for historic preservation initiatives. Apply different preservation tools/techniques that broaden the scope from individual buildings through façade enhancement and tax incentives to conservation design and land banking to preserve under-utilized lots for future redevelopment. These efforts should be managed by DMA, CURA, and CLRA as primary land banking organization.
- Implement a "Rehabilitation Program" sponsored by the DMA and Charleston Area Alliance. This would be an excellent way to achieve dramatic improvements in the Downtown's appearance with assistance from federal dollars. Preservation/rehabilitation grants are available from State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to a select number of properties and these grants will cover fifty percent of the cost of the enhancement up to a fixed dollar amount of a few thousand dollars per facade. The main intentions of the grants are structural stability, safety and security, roofs, window treatments and design, etc.
- Alternative building codes should be followed for adaptive reuse within existing structures.
- Create and adopt an adaptive reuse ordinance in concert with other neighborhood revitalization projects.

Historic Districts within Downtown



A African American Local Historic District

B Downtown Historic District

Master Plan

Big Idea 3

- Re-engage the Kanawha and Elk Rivers for public access, pedestrian activity areas as well as high quality mixed use development.

The Kanawha and Elk rivers, the trails and greenways along Kanawha River's banks and the bridges connecting the Downtown area with the residential neighborhoods from the south and west creates a powerful gateway into Downtown area. Enhancements to these gateways are recommended to improve the appearance of these unique entrance points into Downtown for an enhanced visitor experience. The by-product of this effort is to create value in the surrounding real estate bordering the river and to encourage investment into these dormant sites along the riverfront.

One of the impediments to connection of the Downtown area with the riverfront is the presence of the high speed corridor of Kanawha Boulevard. Although it provides good access and a scenic drive along the riverfront, creative reconfiguration of lanes and possible introduction of a bikepath will help to better connect the riverfront to the rest of Downtown (refer to the transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan for additional details).

Since the adoption of Imagine Charleston, the Kanawha Boulevard west of the Elk River was redesigned to provide separate bicycling and walking trails and to include significant improvements in traffic calming and landscaping. The Capitol Connector Project has been funded and is explained in more detailed on the next page. The project will extend similar improvements along the riverfront through the Downtown and East End.

The development of Haddad Riverfront Park has provided opportunities for connecting portions of the riverfront with the Downtown, as well as an opportunity for public gathering space. Although there are two different trails (upper and lower) with other intermittent opportunities (such as the steps that connect the different levels of trails), the condition of the infrastructure needs to be freshened for aesthetics and structural stability of the banks.

Opportunities exist to creatively carve out public realm spaces and provide pedestrian access to the river. Creating appropriate resting areas for viewing pleasure of the river would create a special signature amenity for Downtown. The greenway and trail should be extended along Elk River northward to connect with residential areas and parks northeast of Downtown. Interplay of mixed use built form with green open spaces along the Kanawha Boulevard will create an urban fabric that will help to balance the differing needs of the community whether it is

ACTION STEPS

- Explore opportunities to beautify bridges above the Kanawha and Elk rivers with lighting, artwork, cultural plaques, and other potential aesthetic treatments to create gateway to and from Downtown area.
- Redevelop Kanawha Boulevard according to the recommendations of the transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan and the Capitol Connector Project.
- Follow the Riverfront Master Plan (adopted in 2006) to implement additional public gathering areas, opportunity for pedestrian access to river, public viewing and resting areas along trails, landscape treatments. Coordinate with connectivity and streetscape improvements.
- Downtown Management Authority to work with local and federal agencies for design and stabilization measures of the banks
- Research available federal grants and subsequently apply for applicable grants
- Allocate other available local grants and capital improvement funding towards riverfront redevelopment
- Streetscape and green connection along major north south corridors from Downtown will terminate in public viewing areas and vistas on the banks that will help create a pleasant visual and physical connection from Downtown to riverfront. The canopies adjacent to Haddad Park are great examples and some form of the same overlook treatments should be replicated in other viewing areas to create a unifying theme along the riverfront

for retail-commercial demands or for upper story residential units or simply for recreational uses. Bridges are recommended to be aesthetically treated with lighting (Virginia Street bridge as example)and street furniture such as memorabilia/plaques depicting the river's history.

Since the adoption of Imagine Charleston, the Southside Bridge across the Kanawha River, the Kanawha Boulevard Bridge at the mouth of the Elk River, and several bridges crossing the Elk River further north have received structural and aesthetic upgrades. Color-changing LED lighting was applied where appropriate. Other bridges were improved with lighting retaining the historic character of the bridge.



Potential Overlook

Overlook

Potential Overlook

Master Plan

Big Idea 3 | Capitol Connector Project

- Re-engage the Kanawha and Elk Rivers for public access, pedestrian activity areas as well as high quality mixed use development.

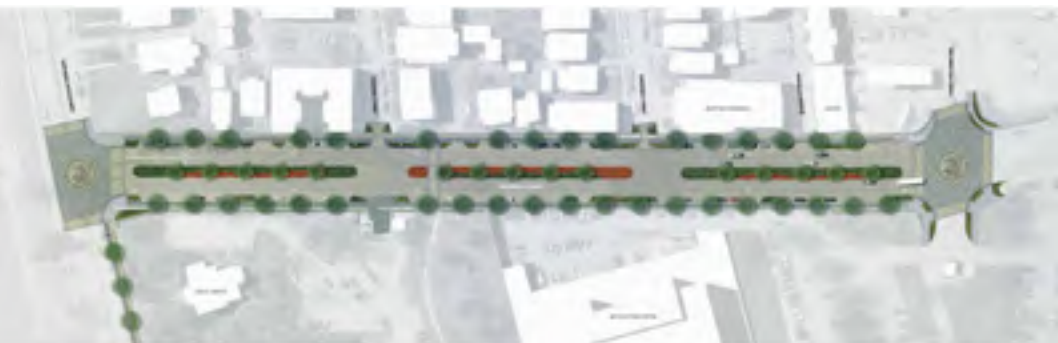
The Capital Connector Project will enhance safety, pedestrian and bicyclist accessibility, transportation efficiency, and streetscapes along Kanawha Boulevard through downtown Charleston. The project will transform the overly wide, high-speed Kanawha Boulevard into a ‘complete street’ highly efficient for vehicle travel, but also safe and effective for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit. This complete street/road diet project will include:

1. Expansion and addition of sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic calming, & pedestrian safety facilities
2. Dedicated bike lanes, streetscaping & street furniture, street trees & green infrastructure , and new LED lighting
3. Wayfinding signage to job, educational, civic, social service, arts, cultural, parks, and downtown economic hubs
4. Design and install a cantilevered bridge deck extensions on the South Side Bridge & 35th Street Bridge dedicated for bicyclists, creating a loop on both sides of the river as envisioned in the Charleston Bike & Trail Master Plan
5. The project will also assess feasibility of a surface streetcar along Kanawha Boulevard to provide better transit options and accessibility for workers & tourist traveling downtown.

When completed, the Charleston Capital Connector will bring major positive benefits to the downtown, boosting its vitality by:

- Providing better access to Charleston’s civic, cultural, artistic, educational, and commercial hubs
- Connecting tourists to top attractions and destinations
- Connecting pedestrians and cyclists to the urban riverfront
- Supporting sustainable development by shifting modes to walking, biking, and public transportation
- Creating gateway and riverfront transportation corridors which are beautiful and befitting of a Capital City.

Potential enhancements and traffic calming measures for Kanawha Boulevard and Greenbrier Street are shown here. Images provided by GAI Consultants.



Master Plan

Big Idea 3

- Promote sustainable development practices that will help environmental stewardship, social interactions and financial benefits

“Sustainability” has become a catch-phrase for practices that meet ecological, economic and social needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The ethics of sustainability call for an integrated approach to planning and design that requires consideration of impacts (from capital improvement projects) on the natural environment and quality of life. This plan has been developed with a commitment to considering the sustainability of the design of every element of the Downtown area. Good design and best practices alone will encompass many factors of sustainability but it is important to highlight some actions that will assist towards a more sustainable future.

Site Development

- Low Impact Development (LID) is achieved through better site design, minimal site disturbance, conservation design practices and installing “green” infrastructure (bio-retention, pervious pavement, green roofs, rain barrels etc.)
- LID helps in protection of native landscape, habitat, water quality and quantity (less flooding), reduction of impervious surfaces, replenishment of groundwater.
- Green streets incorporates multi-modal transportation (pedestrian, bike, cars, buses, etc.) that helps to provide amenity for different needs; reduces CO2 emissions, reduces the number of car trips and vehicle miles traveled.
- Green streets also include stormwater management features (rain gardens, porous pavements, etc.) that allows for gradual recharge of groundwater, while reducing stormwater runoff from urban areas thereby helping to improve water quality.

Buildings

- A mix of housing options encourages social interaction between people of different income ranges and market niches and thereby contributes to a vibrant Downtown.
- Life cycle housing provides a range of housing options that meets people’s needs at all stages of life.
- Universal design advocates for housing to provide accessibility options to accommodate all people regardless of age or ability (eg. wider interior doorways and hallways, door levers in lieu of handles, etc.)
- Infill development and adaptive reuse take advantage of under-utilized and available lands and buildings for development as highest and best uses that are connected to existing infrastructure.

- Building designs include orientation, height and massing to utilize optimum energy, access to natural light, etc.
- Green roofs helps in energy efficiency by absorbing solar heating, adds to aesthetic quality, reduces stormwater runoff.
- LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is an internationally accepted benchmark for design, construction and operation of high performance sites and buildings. It is third-party verification that improves performance metrics for a wide variety of factors - site design, energy consumption, water efficiency, improved indoor environmental quality, recycling and reuse.

ACTION STEPS

- Develop comprehensive ‘green strategy’ that will encourage green site development, infrastructure and building practices for both public and private sectors
- Work collaboratively with City departments and stakeholders to create the green strategy
- Promote educational awareness regarding the environmental, financial and social benefits of implementing green practices; utilize local green initiative successes such as the WVDEP building and the New Edgewood Elementary School
- The design and development guidelines (discussed before) should incorporate green design guidelines
- Prepare a list of programs and implementation measures for green initiatives and explore funding/incentive packages for such measures
- Finance green enterprises and technology set-ups. Create “green” financial products and seek out appropriate investors.

Parks & Recreation

The downtown includes approximately 23 acres of public gathering space, including GoMart Park, the MLK Jr Community Center, and City Center at Slack Plaza. Providing additional green space and opportunities for public gathering drives economic development. Commercial uses want the pedestrian traffic generated by green spaces and residential uses want green space as a ‘room to breathe.’ These aesthetic considerations in the dense urban core are an asset to be preserved and enhanced with the City Center BID and Charleston Land Reuse Agency’s Conservation Division playing key roles in expansion efforts.

ACTION STEPS

- Continue current initiatives to program City Center at Slack Plaza and Brawley Walkway to better connect the Capitol Street historic core and the Town Center Mall
- Continue efforts to implement City Center BID Plan
- Create mini parks and public viewing opportunities along Kanawha and Elk riverfronts that will help coalesce the riverfront greenway
- Redevelop Davis Park to open views and provide additional amenities
- Work collaboratively with city departments, CURA, CAA and other parks and recreation related organizations to prioritize new parks and green spaces throughout Downtown area to provide amenity for existing and new residential and commercial uses
- Require provision of green space as part of any major development - whether it is provided within the building setback area along the streets, interior courtyards, green parking spaces, etc
- Ensure appropriate programming and maintenance of all public gathering areas

ACTION STEPS

Utilities

- Continue to implement stormwater management practices as per City of Charleston Stormwater Manual
- Assess the feasibility of incorporation of stormwater management practices along streetscapes
- Promote the utilization of available sewer and stormwater credits to developments in locations with existing infrastructure
- Explore renewable energy generation systems (geothermal systems within parks or other large development initiatives, solar power for lighting, small scale streetscape heating etc.) to reduce the need for fossil fuel and thus reducing carbon footprint
- Assess the opportunity to bury overhead utility underground in strategic locations that ties with current initiatives or potential future development areas - Quarrier Street Mixed Use Infill, redevelopment west of GoMart Park, etc.

Arts and Culture

- Continue to support, expand/promote and fund current events and festivals such as Live on Levee, FestivALL, Clay Center events, Charleston Sternwheel Regatta, Holly Jolly Brawley, etc.
- Expand the role of public art along riverfront areas integrated with potential expanded greenway system
- Murals, paintings, plaques, signage, wayfinding, etc. should be integrated with streetscape design to help link the major destination areas within Downtown

Master Plan

Big Idea 4

4 EMBRACE A DISTRICT IDENTITY SYSTEM FOR THE DOWNTOWN AND CONTIGUOUS RETAIL & ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATIONS

- Develop a district identity program that begins to link major destinations such as the Charleston Town Center, Slack Plaza, Capitol Street, Capitol Market, Hale/Quarrier/Dickinson Streets, The Clay Center and the Warehouse District. The system should delineate key pedestrian / alternative transportation corridors and support potential mixed use development opportunities.

Retail and Downtown Principles	
There are several key principles with respect to creating a quality retail environment in Downtown Charleston. These are divided between good retail principles and Downtown development.	
1.	Short Blocks
2.	Mix Convenience and Destination
3.	Hierarchy of Retail Streets and Shopping
4.	Preserving Key Locations for Retail
5.	Design Elements
6.	Culture and Experience Clustering
7.	Multi-level Retail
8.	Dog-Leg Retail
9.	Parking
10.	Double Loaded Retail is Strongest
11.	Concentration Breeds Power—Amount and Appeal
12.	Retail Follows Residential
13.	Build Off Strengths
14.	Create Linkages
15.	Management

1 SHORT BLOCKS
Outdoor retail works best when the blocks are short. This keeps consumer interest piqued as there is new stimulus at shorter intervals. It also increases the number of corner locations. This is the model for similar capital cities with a regional destination focus. In such places, retail is primarily located along the short blocks of the avenues. The streets feeding into them are typically longer, and are residential. The result is that more potential consumers are fed into these retail areas. In the typical short block grid pattern, the avenues are just over 200 feet long and the streets are approximately 400 feet. This creates a situation whereby the residential along the streets is funneled into the retail areas on the avenues. The short blocks are approximately 200 feet on each side with retail fronting on all sides.

2 MIX CONVENIENCE AND DESTINATION
A great neighborhood provides a combination of convenience retailing and destination retailing. To have longevity, good convenience retail that responds to the needs of the local residents will ensure that a large portion of the retail activity remains productive through changing economic conditions and trends/fads. The complementary destination retail creates atmosphere and experience. A neighborhood solely built on destination suffers when tastes change or during economic slowdowns.

3 HIERARCHY OF RETAIL STREETS AND SHOPPING
For retailing to succeed there needs to be focus, intensity, and concentration of goods and services into specific streets. This creates critical mass and draws consumers to particular areas. There needs to be an overall hierarchy or retail streets that have these elements. While retail may locate on other streets, the overall aim will be to steer retail to these higher visibility and traffic areas.

4 PRESERVING KEY LOCATIONS FOR RETAIL
Services such as banks often prefer corner locations and will pay higher rental rates for them, but some of the corner locations need to be preserved for retail including eating and drinking. Some municipalities have enacted legislation to preserve corner locations for traditional retail or eating and drinking (not professional services or banking). In addition, consideration may be given to entire blocks being preserved for retail.

5 DESIGN ELEMENTS
Design elements will build a unique, noticeable character for a neighborhood. Important elements such as paving, benches, planters, trees, lighting, public transit shelters, and utility covers all need to be thought of in terms of reinforcing the overall character and personality of the place. A coordinated plan for public art and overall design that matches the commercial (retail and office) and residential themes of the area is important.

In addition, design should be flexible enough to accommodate different uses throughout the construction period. The ideal tenants may not be found during the initial period and alternative/temporary tenants may be sought out to fulfill the function of enlivening the street until full residential build-out.

6 CULTURE AND EXPERIENCE CLUSTERING
Arts, entertainment, culture, and experience based retailing is becoming ‘the’ driving force in urban district development. Programs, policies, incentives, and regulations have been used to encourage the development of more of these anchor type uses in revitalized areas, in addition to creating the linkages for businesses such as restaurants, cafés and leisure retail to capture increased sales. However, arts is not a panacea for all neighborhoods.

7 MULTI-LEVEL RETAIL
Retailers that occupy more than the ground level will always be challenged to make either the upper levels or basement (lower levels) highly productive in terms of sales volume. While there are successful multi-level retailers (there are ample examples of high producing multi-level retailers in major cities), the retailer must have a good retail concept on the ground floor first and a strong connection to the next level. Very few retail businesses thrive with a second-level-only location (especially outside of the Downtown area); businesses that are successful in this context include those that make appointments (e.g., beauty salons, higher-end restaurants, medical offices), have well established clientele (fitness clubs and recreation), or those that provide added value.

Master Plan

Big Idea 4

8 DOG-LEG RETAIL
Larger format retailers can be accommodated on retail streets in behind smaller scale retail. This is referred to as a dog-leg retail space due to layout that resembles a small leg connecting the main retail area at the back of the development with the major retail street.

9 PARKING
The availability of parking is vital. While public transportation is important, a retailer's location decision can be consumed with parking characteristics such as the amount of parking, its pricing, and its location.

10 DOUBLE LOADED RETAIL IS STRONGEST
Retail streets and Downtown streets that have retail on both sides of the street are stronger due to the concentration of retail and the ability for visitors to see a greater range of retailers. Capitol and Quarrier Streets are able to provide double-loaded retail environments that should be strengthened. This should be encouraged on the other secondary retail streets such as Lee, Virginia, Hale, and Summer Streets to help draw customers and create critical mass. The average business will find it difficult to survive as lone operators in this environment.

11 CONCENTRATION BREEDS POWER—AMOUNT AND APPEAL
There is an impressive amount of retail in Downtown Charleston located at Charleston Town Center Mall, and on Capitol and Quarrier Streets. By developing a significant amount of retail with a consistent appeal (e.g., fashion for the malls, restaurants for Capitol, convenience retail for office employees, leisure and eclectic on Quarrier) creates appeal for regional residents to visit Downtown and increases capture rates. Smaller niche clusters (e.g., high end restaurants, casual restaurants and pubs, home furnishings, and art galleries) can create regional appeal due to the creation of critical mass of the combined effect. In this situation, the combined retail businesses create synergy and a branded image in addition to making the retailers more successful and the individual sub-districts stronger. For the potential visitor it no longer becomes a decision about visiting a specific retail business in Downtown but about visiting a Downtown retail district. As an example, there is critical mass developing along Lee Street for quality, more high end businesses, but it has not yet reached its potential. Similarly, Brawley Walkway could be enhanced.

12 RETAIL FOLLOWS RESIDENTIAL
Retail rarely leads. More often retail development occurs as a result of residential growth. In terms of Downtown revitalization work, the one common element that has spurred retail growth has been residential development.

Just as retailers benefit from intensity and focus of their stores, there is a benefit to grouping residential developments in close proximity to one another so that the local residents will have more of an impact on retail businesses (i.e., a concentration of residential buildings will be able to support an urban grocer).

The situation of diffused residential development throughout the entire Downtown would diminish the overall effect on retail sales potential.

13 BUILD OFF STRENGTHS
There are many retail strengths in Downtown Charleston from which to build. Downtown Charleston is fortunate to have a well-functioning mall system in the core. The continued reinvestment has strengthened the mall and added new and improved retail anchors to the core and kept the mall relevant and fresh in consumer's minds. Given that Charleston does draw visitors from a very wide trade area throughout West Virginia, there are opportunities for unique, flagship-type retailers that are able to draw visitors to Downtown. In addition, the Capitol Market is a significant draw to Downtown. However, there is a challenge of linking it for pedestrian movement. Enhancing the retail in identified major and minor retail corridors will build critical mass and branded appeal for the Downtown overall. By building on the strengths of the retail districts and intensifying the impact, the image of the whole area will improve and become more cohesive.

14 CREATE LINKAGES
The power of Downtowns in general is rooted in their diversity (of activities and people). Unless pedestrian traffic flows between the various sub-districts, Downtown's diversity is compartmentalized and stifled (e.g., a visit to Town Center Mall rarely includes a visit to elsewhere in Downtown). For example, the situation may be one whereby a visitor will have a restaurant or a store in mind before he begins his Downtown Charleston visit. Alternatively, the goal is have people decide to visit a District or node of Downtown (e.g., Brawley Walkway) before they actually arrive and to determine which businesses are well suited to their needs once they get there.

For this reason, it is crucial to ensure that linkages be established not only from a physical design perspective but also with respect to retail economic development and marketing. These linkages need to be enhanced and maintained on a continual basis. Actions that promote a more cohesive feel should be encouraged:

- Physical design:
 - Development regulations related to creating cohesive Districts with design guidelines related to look, height, setback, materials, etc.
 - Gateway projects at key intersections
 - Linkages with office towers to ensure that when workers leave the buildings they are funneled into high retail corridors
 - Connections between retail commercial areas and sporting, arts, and entertainment venues to the west (Coliseum & Convention Center) and the east (theatre)
 - Other visual clues that allow the Downtown visitor to continue their Downtown experience (unique streetscaping that include light standards, poles, banners, public art, benches, bus shelters, community boards, trash receptacles, and a physical design that incorporates elements of safe design principles and that are unique to Downtown Charleston's image).

- Retail economic development:
 - Retail continuity
 - Infill development
 - Retail clustering that is mutually supportive (e.g., steakhouses and high end restaurants grouped together for the common benefit thereby creating critical mass of retail in one category, home furnishings and complementary businesses, and tourism related businesses)
 - Extended hours of operation (e.g., bookstores open late in the evening to take advantage of performing arts target markets)
 - Enhancing and developing a package of incentives and regulations to help property owners and businesses to succeed especially where gap financing is required
 - Provide temporary infill such as lining a street edge of a parking lot or vacant lot with food trucks.

- Marketing:
 - Signage and banners
 - Website that offers solutions for what to do in Downtown (see example from Brussels on providing ideas based on who you are or what you are looking for)
 - Systematic symbols for parking
 - Wayfinding programs
 - Cross-promotion of businesses, arts, culture, and special events with a consistent branded focus.

15 MANAGEMENT
Management is an issue—not everything can be accomplished by regulation: the strength of any planning development program is based upon effective communication. Regulation alone will not be enough to ensure that the desired retail development outcome will be consistent with the City of Charleston's Downtown Master Plan.

Active communication with stakeholders is required to ensure there is two-way dialogue between the City and the stakeholders (i.e., retailers, property owners, developers, etc.). Communication is facilitated by having a strong Downtown organization that has a clear mandate and vision. The organization creates a broad-based partnership among both the public and private sector interests to provide leadership to maintain and propel the goals and objectives.

The City of Charleston needs to coordinate with a private business organization to ensure there is buy-in from the development community. In turn, the Downtown Business Association (BID) will need to have clear goals and objectives reflective of their stakeholder interests and partner with the other organizations and agencies to achieve results. These goals and objectives need to be communicated back to the City.

Master Plan
Big Idea 4

ACTION STEPS

Overall, to manage Downtown Charleston's growth, there needs to be focus and intensity in its planning. Investment should start by growing blocks of retail commercial strength. The process should lead to building them up to impressive levels and minimizing development diffusion. This will be more productive than trying to do a little bit everywhere, only working on the fringes or by trying to fix the big problems first. The primary pedestrian oriented retail corridors include Capitol and Quarrier Streets along with Charleston Town Center Mall. The minor retail corridors include Lee, Virginia, Summer, and Hale Streets along with Brawley Walkway.

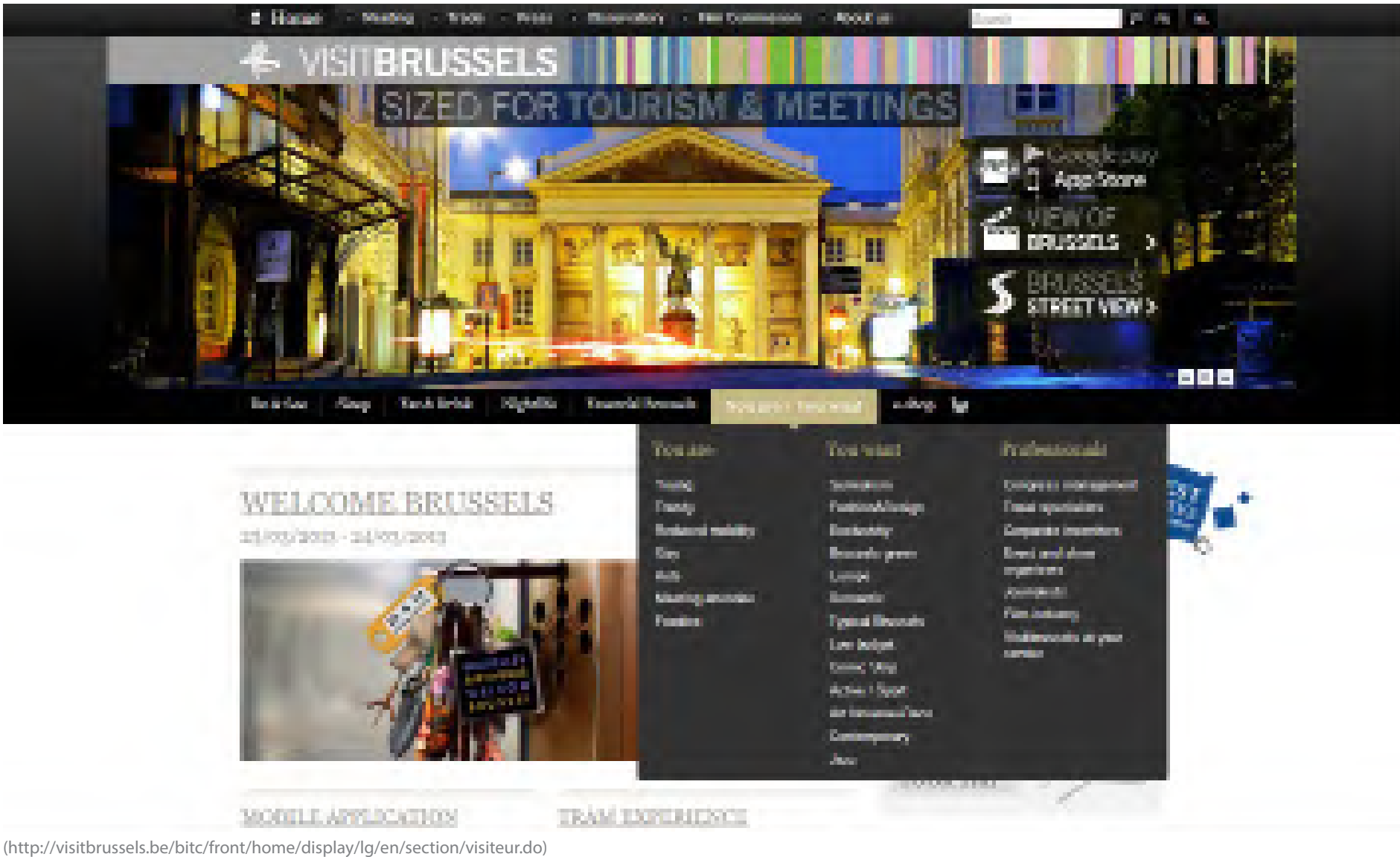
The focus on creating a stronger retail commercial sector in the core area does not mean that retail development will not occur in other areas; it does mean that resources will be directed to actively search out methods to improve upon the vision of creating viable retail commercial businesses on these retail streets.

The development opportunities in the Cultural District centered on Leon Sullivan are equally important.

The focus should be on the following:

- Increase visits of current visitors—the goal will be to develop and/or enhance the retail offerings in Downtown Charleston to satisfy their unmet needs. This includes competitive convenience oriented goods and services such as grocery, drug store, alcohol, beauty, and other personal services.
- Intensify residential development—attracting more residents to Downtown Charleston will not only provide a stronger base for Downtown goods and service retailers but also it continues to send a very strong message that Downtown Charleston is a sought-after place to live and visit.
- Encourage office development – the core strength of Downtown is the office workers. Providing better working spaces and environments as well as an economic development strategy that focused on bringing in more employers into Downtown Charleston will spur retail sales but also will spur residential development.

- Develop commercial concepts that draw people—the range of retail options can be programmed so that Downtown Charleston is busy throughout most of the year. Mediocre businesses will no longer be acceptable. Downtown retailers must rise to the challenge of providing a superior product and service offering to draw people for the experience.
- (Re)Development of sites that create an attractive, urban aesthetic with retail at grade and at lot lines for a consistent retail experience (other factors high ceiling heights, large windows, quality features, signage regulations, entrances at corners where linkages are required, etc.).



Master Plan
Big Idea 4

Civic District Retail Recommendations

Civic

Target Markets

- Government employees
- Government building visitors
- Civic arena events (Coliseum and Convention Center, Municipal Auditorium, Schoenbaum Stage at Haddad Riverfront Park, Little Theatre)
- Hotel visitors (Embassy Suites, Marriott, Holiday Inn, Hampton Inn, Courtyard by Marriott)

Retail Characteristics

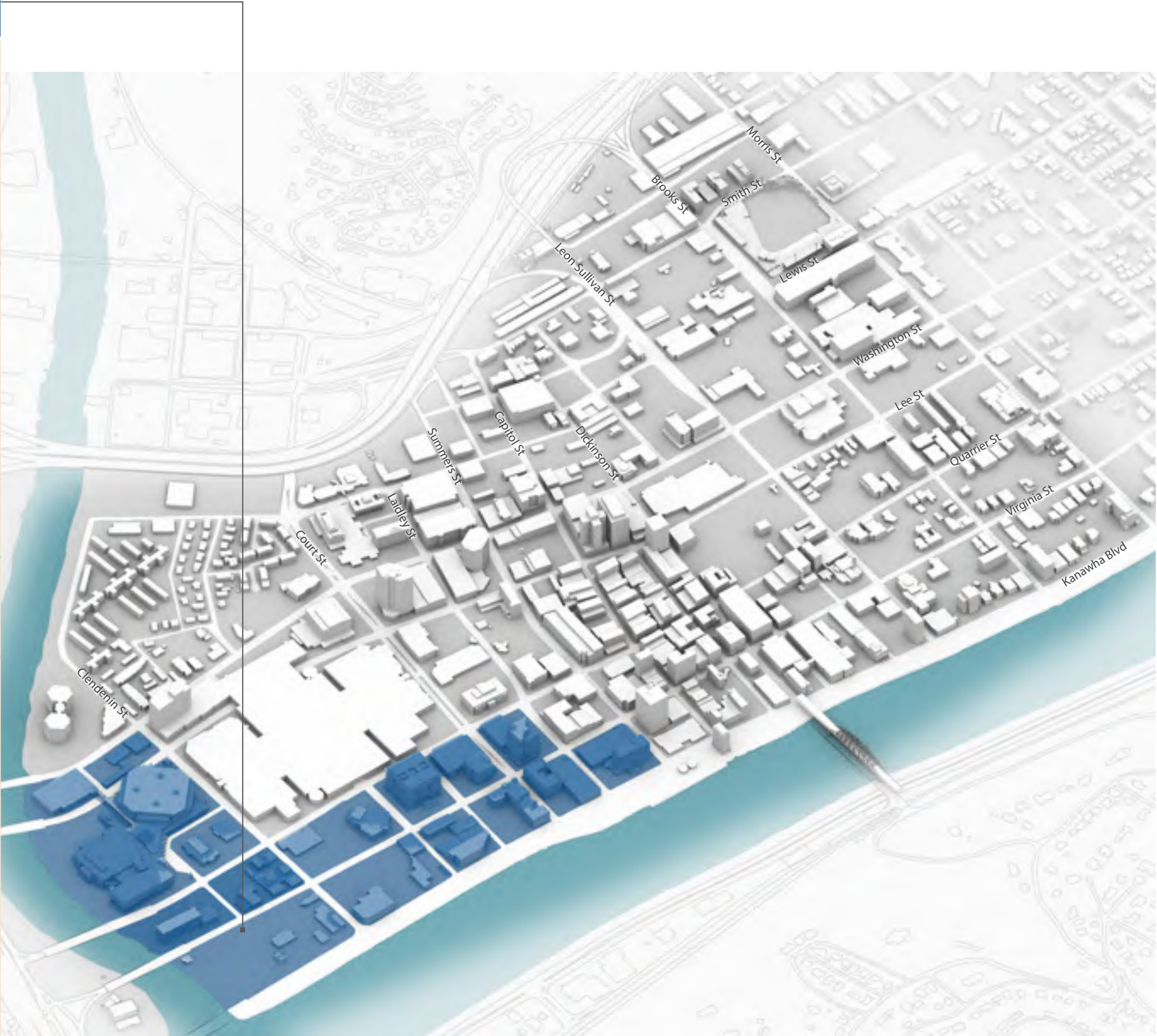
- Includes Charleston Town Center Mall, restaurants such as Chop House and Tidewater
- Major institutional buildings that cannot be altered
- Creates a sense of civic grandeur including park spaces
- Charleston Town Center Mall serves as the main destination for quick food service needs or for taking clients to lunch/dinner
- Serves as gateway to Downtown
- Major parking garages attached to Charleston Town Center Mall and other buildings

Anchors

- Charleston Town Center Mall

Retail Mix

- Quick service eateries for employees, government office visitors, and small events
- Restaurants for important lunch meetings, major events, after work dinner/drinks
- Personal services (hair, dry cleaning, travel, shoe repair) for employees
- Small merchandise for employees (book store, lingerie, office apparel)
- Traffic moves very fast and buildings lack ground level experience
- Creates a barrier to access Elk River (no recreational opportunities at Elk River's edge and Elk River does not connect to Kanawha River)
- Beautiful ground level with sidewalks, planters, tree planting - civic grandeur
- Connect the dots but having pedestrian traffic from buildings flow towards Charleston Town Center Mall



Master Plan

Big Idea 4

Cultural District Retail Recommendations

Cultural

Target Markets

■ Visitors to The Clay Center, Capitol Market, houses of worship, education/learning, GoMart Park, gay bars, art galleries, hotels, etc.

Retail Characteristics

■ Limited retail opportunities at present but can grow in future

■ Primarily food service related for evening dining and drinking

■ Difficult to create a significant stretch of retail or restaurants due to the large uses that interrupt the streets (churches, schools, performing arts, hotels, library, park spaces, hospital, etc.)

■ Capitol Market is a draw and there are opportunities near Appalachian Power Park

■ Leon Sullivan has some existing retail focused on food and late evening activity

Anchors

■ Arts, culture, sporting, education venues

Retail Mix

■ Food service dining and late evening activities

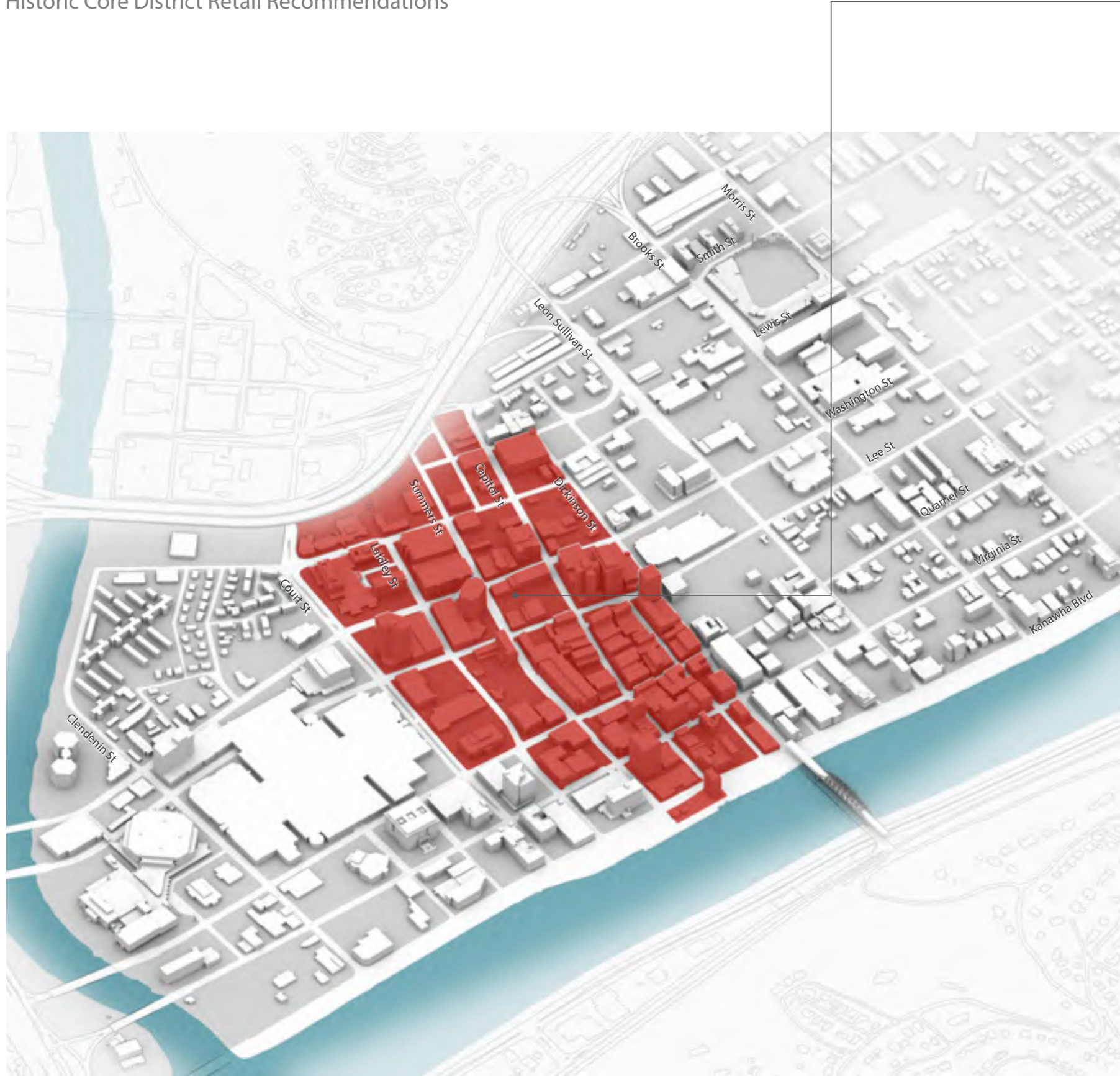
■ Mix of large format and small format restaurants (flexible space such as BOB in Grand Rapids MI) so that they can handle large crowds during events but during days when there are no events it doesn't look deserted (use patios, multiple levels, and the large set backs to accomplish this)



Master Plan

Big Idea 4

Historic Core District Retail Recommendations



Historic Core

Target Markets

■ Financial core workers including private sector and government

■ Downtown visitors for arts, culture, and sporting events

Retail Characteristics

■ Major retail streets are Capitol, Quarrier, and Brawley Walkway

■ Using grid pattern, funnel pedestrian traffic to these major retail corridors

■ Good quality restaurants that primarily cater to office market, secondary focus on regional visitors

■ Gaps created by office buildings, professional services, vacancies, parking garages disrupt retail continuity

■ Some destination businesses in fashion, leisure and apparel (e.g., Taylors Books, Purple Moon, etc.)

■ Those residents with higher incomes and time will venture to Ohio or Virginia for shopping

■ Summer and Hale Streets along with Virginia and Lee Streets are secondary retail streets

Retail Mix

■ The redevelopment of Brawley Walkway and City Center at Slack Plaza have created opportunities for retail and a restaurant row experience connecting Capitol Street to the Charleston Town Center Mall.

■ Develop policies that restrict professional services from Capitol and Quarrier Streets in the historic core

■ Focus on policies that encourage more office development in Downtown including rehabbing older buildings (note the lack of Class A space in Downtown)

■ Office workers require quick service eateries for lunch and restaurants for company meetings and after work events as well as small retail merchandise offerings

■ Retail merchandise stores in Downtown need to be able to cater to very short lunches - most office workers have a set idea of what they want to buy before shopping as they have researched it extensively prior to buying. Need ample change rooms to handle high volumes of visitors for a very short period.

■ Offer additional programs such as bag drop off / holding, loyalty cards, etc.

■ Add an urban grocer to Downtown for choice at lunch hour and for after hour purchases

■ Capitol Market can cater to office employees

Master Plan

Big Idea 4 | Target Area - City Center at Slack Plaza

Renovated in 2022, City Center at Slack Plaza is a greenspace and outdoor venue connecting Capitol Street to the Charleston Town Center via Brawley Walkway and Shonk Plaza. An aerial view of the park's design is shown here. Features in the space include a stage for live performances, a splash pad, a living wall and multiple public art installations.

Programming the space is a high priority for the City of Charleston and the City Center Business Improvement District. During warmer months, food trucks may use the space for the lunch hour or to complement events occurring in the downtown. The space is the home of City Center Live, which offers a unique blend of live entertainment featuring local talent. Other events, like the City's Glow in the Park event pictured here, are also hosted in the space. Folks often gather for yoga sessions and impromptu drum circles at the park. A row of large bench swings lends a front porch feel to the space.



Conceptual Understanding

City Center at Slack Plaza was designed and implemented with the following guidance from Imagine Charleston in mind. This conceptual understanding, too, has and will continue to guide the work of the City Center Business Improvement District, which is detailed on the next page.

- Functional and visual connection from Capitol Street core to Charleston Town Center Mall through Brawley Walkway and Slack Plaza
- Reduction of compartmentalized spaces as it exists today so that it is flexible to host any event while providing visual and functional link
- Creating multi-purpose/functional space with flexible programming opportunities to cater to diverse populace
- Screening of adjacent parking spaces and creating a definition of the space by repositioning of storefronts and existing built-form - creating a place!
- Reduce the depth of the existing strip commercial center to the west of the plaza to open view corridors
- Possible entertainment district option; also, vision of relocating the cinema and integrate it with a parking garage
- Patio for restaurants
- Management program for marketing



Master Plan

Big Idea 4 | Target Area - City Center Business Improvement District

Charleston's first BID, City Center, was created by vote of City Council in September 2021. The BID includes properties fronting Court, Laidley, and Summers Streets between Virginia Street and Washington Street, East. A Board of Directors was appointed by Mayor Amy Goodwin and property owners agreed to assess themselves a fee based on a combination of lot size and building square footage. The BID includes 37 commercial properties that are owned by taxable entities.

The City Center BID is supported with part-time staffing from Charleston Area Alliance. Additionally, the BID has hired a full-time ambassador and developed a distinct district identity. A strategic master plan is under development by GAI Consultants and Community Solutions Group. It will include an economic analysis, site-specific redevelopment recommendations, and public realm improvements.

The plan will promote district continuity through the use of materials and design practices that work best for downtown Charleston. The material palette will be drawn from existing elements so that all new installations will tie to the existing character in the district. Traffic patterns may be altered with lane reductions and parking reconfigurations designed to make the BID more accessible to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Public art installations will be encouraged to add visual interest to the district. Phased implementation strategies and potential funding streams will be included in the plan as well.



CITY CENTER BID | VISION

Downtown Charleston, WV is the region's most vibrant center of culture, business and entertainment for all residents and visitors.

CITY CENTER BID | MISSION

Collaborate with all stakeholders to provide an outstanding downtown that is active, thriving, and inclusive. This downtown district will be a destination for shopping, entertainment, recreation and services. The City Center BID will achieve this through its leadership, investments in sound, sustainable infrastructure and civic amenities and will build an enhanced economic vitality while supporting and encouraging historic preservation.

Master Plan

Big Idea 5

5 TREAT THE URBAN CORE AS AN IMPORTANT CHARLESTON NEIGHBORHOOD ALSO

- Establish and implement a public relations campaign that promotes Downtown's livability, improves public's perception of Downtown, and represents Downtown as a safe environment.

Promote Downtown area as an exciting, convenient, place to live among target population groups including, young professionals and aging local residents. Downtown, with its historic architecture, and proximity to amenities, offers a tremendous opportunity to create a unique and appealing living and working environment.

Development of promotional activities for Downtown and marketing the initiatives to the local and regional market is paramount. This effort has to be coordinated with city-wide efforts. Local marketing will provide an understanding of Downtown's transformation as a neighborhood and encourage potential residents and additional visitors to frequent Downtown.

Safety and security measures are recommended as part of the guidelines mentioned within the 'Quality of Life' chapter of the comprehensive plan.

- Explore opportunities and alternatives for developers, tenants and lending institutions to promote Downtown housing and encourage mixed use development.

Based on the analysis of the Downtown area, there is a huge opportunity for infill housing and adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings to create for sale and rental housing products. While there are already some housing units within the Downtown area, additional opportunities can be created if all possible grants and tax credits are accessed. This will help lending institutions and investors to reduce their risk with upfront capital and create an opportunity for greater return on investment as supply and demand rises. To increase the saleability of the housing choices, Downtown provides a mixed-use environment that will provide an amenity to would-be buyers/renters. New housing should be integrated with commercial, retail, restaurants and green space, much like the recent redevelopments of the Atlas Building and 900 on Lee.

ACTION STEPS

- Leverage existing events and promotional items along with expanding on-going public relations campaign (Imagine Charleston) to spread the perception of Downtown Charleston's livability amenities.
- Promote safety and security measures - lighting, ground floor occupancy, police patrol, opportunities for pick-up and drop-off services (public-private), etc. (Refer to safe and secure design guidelines as mentioned within the comprehensive plan).
- Vacant upper floors should be inspected by authorized personnel for compliance with applicable codes, including Alternative Building Code, to ensure they are appropriately maintained by the property owner.
- Example pro-formas should be developed (CURA in collaboration with city) to evaluate the benefits of applying several incentives, such as historic tax credits and other incentives, for rehabilitation of a building to make way for housing mix with retail on first floor space. The cost of improvements should be tallied with expected rent rates to evaluate the investment potential of upper floor housing.
- The Downtown management authority along with City and CURA should enter into discussions with property owners to pass along benefits (financial and otherwise) for renovation of the upper stories.
- Explore funding and financing options as well as opportunities for tax increment financing for public improvements, parking garages etc.
- Contact different lending institutions to create a collaborative environment where all potential resources are evaluated and applied to retrofitting upper stories into housing as appropriate. Promote public-private partnership in propagating housing opportunities.
- Explore possibilities of additional neighborhood-oriented retail within Downtown, such as grocery, within established niche market areas.
- Provide different housing choices that will help in attracting a wide variety of residents with varying for-sale and rent rates.

Green Spaces

Proposed Buildings

Potential



Existing



Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - Mixed Use and Quarrier Housing

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT | QUARRIER STREET HOUSING AND POTENTIAL LIBRARY RELOCATION



Existing Area

Conceptual Understanding

- Comprehensive vision of the potential for the block bounded by Lee, Dickinson and Quarrier Streets and Leon Sullivan Way, CURA owned property and existing uses - how it all connects with adjacent context, post-office complex, streetscape, signage and wayfinding, character of development, scale/massing/proportions and enhanced architectural quality

Programming

Uses:

- Residential 84 units
- Retail 24,500 sq ft

Parking Demand:

- Residential 127 spaces
- Retail 74 spaces

Total 201

Potential Parking Supply:

- Parking Below Residential 80 spaces
- Parking Garage 107 spaces
- Surface Parking 34 spaces

Total 221 spaces



- Program
1. Residential above Retail (Quarrier Street)
 2. Residential above Retail (Dickinson Street)
 3. Quarrier Diner
 4. Plaza
 5. Office, Residential above Retail
 6. Office above Retail
 7. Parking Deck
 8. Amenity Deck above Parking
 9. Rehabbed Housing

Example of pro-forma for building 1 - Residential above retail along Quarrier Street

Quarrier St Mixed-use Project						
Floor	Description	Gross sq ft	Quantity	Cost per sq ft	Cost per unit	Total Cost
1st	Retail	14,000		\$100		\$1,400,000
	Covered Garage	24,000	80 spaces		\$12,000	\$960,000
2nd	Residential	26,400		\$110		\$2,904,000
	Amenity Deck	12,400		\$50		\$620,000
	Pool		1 unit		\$25,000	\$25,000
3rd	Residential	26,400		\$110		\$2,904,000
4th	Residential	26,400		\$110		\$2,904,000
TOTAL						\$11,717,000

Potential Development Concept

Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - Mixed Use and Quarrier Housing

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT | QUARRIER STREET HOUSING AND POTENTIAL LIBRARY RELOCATION



Proposed | Quarrier Street North View



Proposed | Quarrier Street North View



Proposed | Quarrier Street View



Proposed | Quarrier Street South View

Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - Mixed Use and Quarrier Housing

QUARRIER STREET HOUSING AND POTENTIAL LIBRARY RELOCATION



Existing | Quarrier Street



Potential | Housing, Streetscape Enhancements

Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - Mixed Use and Quarrier Housing

DESIGN GUIDELINES | CONCEPTUAL STREET SECTION



- PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR
Walkways connecting destinations
- SHARED BIKE LANE
Alternative mode of transportation which encourages healthy living
- CAR LANE
Travel lanes connecting destinations
- BUS
Alternative transportation that assists in mass transit and connecting destinations
- ON-STREET PARKING
Amenity for uses alongside roads; uses should be limited by parking meters
- TREE LAWN/UTILITY CORRIDOR
To create buffer between pedestrian and automobile lanes; potential utilities underground
- BUILT-FORM
Buildings along corridors with different land uses

STREET CROSS-SECTION VIEW
The design guidelines, as depicted by the street cross-sectional views illustrate public realm and building character. These design thoughts can be applied to other areas of Downtown.

INTENT OF GUIDELINES

- Increases the City's awareness and appreciation of design considerations with respect to enhanced urban placemaking
- Coordinate the overall development vision towards effective implementation
- Help to communicate the development patterns and assist in consistency of design for both the public and private sector
- Provides property and business owners, public officials and design professionals a clear understanding of Charleston's expectations for urban development framework

Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - Mixed Use and Quarrier Housing

Design Guidelines | Sidewalk Amenities & Building Character



- SIDEWALK AMENITIES
TREES
To create buffer between pedestrian and automobile lanes; also provides shade and creates cooler micro-climate for healthy living; improves air quality
- LIGHTING
Contemporary light poles with energy efficient light fixtures
- BRANDING
To create a 'sense of place' and identity of the district/area - depicted here by banners for Cultural district
- PARKING METERS
Electronic parking meters to consolidate multiple standalone meters
- SUSTAINABLE STORMWATER SYSTEM
Best management practices for better water quality standards - depicted here by raingardens; also helps to lessen hardscape with landscaping for aesthetic considerations
- PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR
Safe and secure walkways connecting destinations



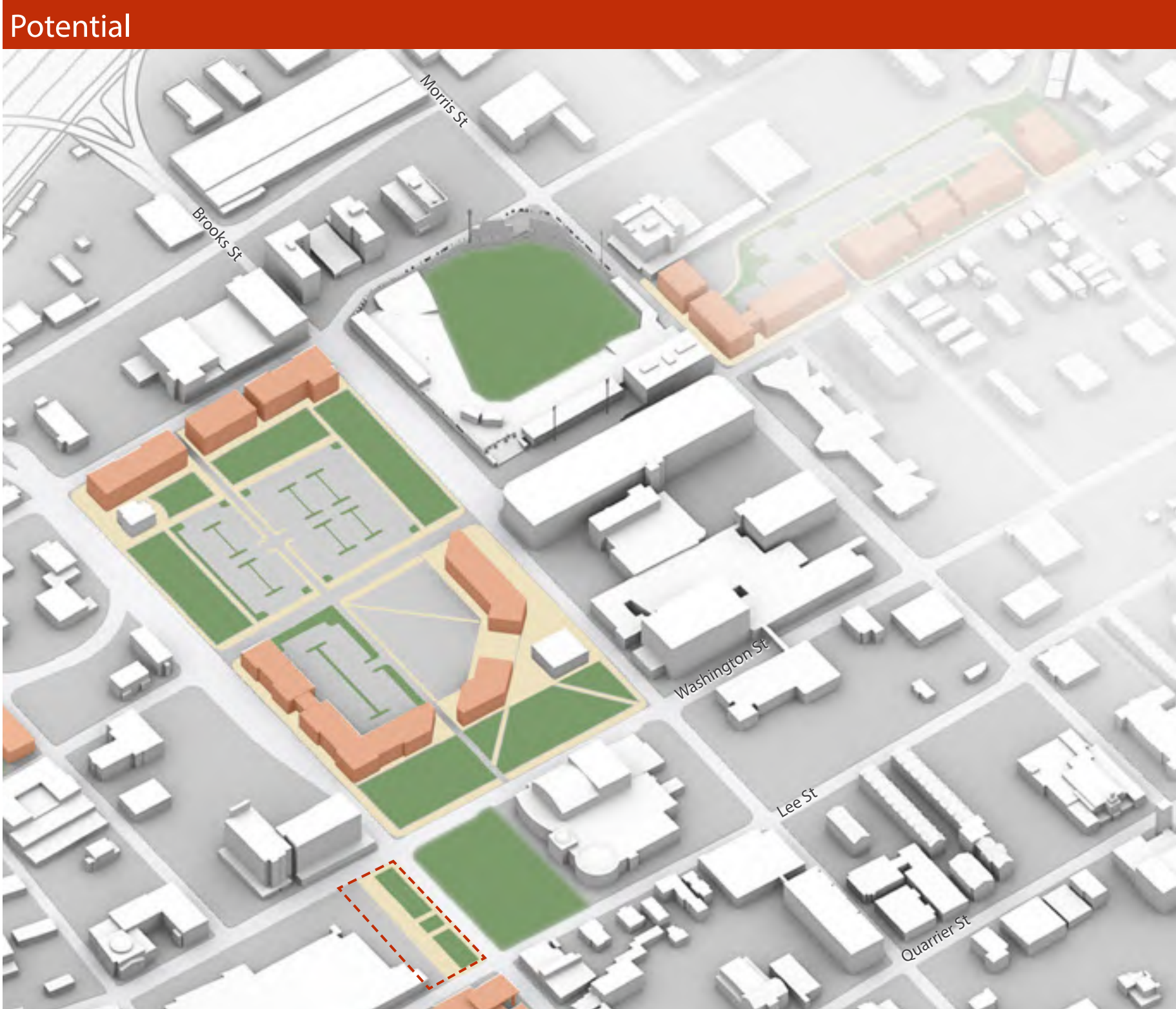
- BUILDING CHARACTER
CHARACTER
Architectural character of buildings is suggested to be transitional - finding balance between the existing historic character and contemporary/modern architecture
- UPPER FLOORS
Massing/proportion of buildings should be context-sensitive of existing buildings
- GROUND/FIRST FLOOR
Should be designed to cater to pedestrian traffic/walkability - transparency, storefront glass, canopies, outdoor dining etc.

Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - GoMart Park Area



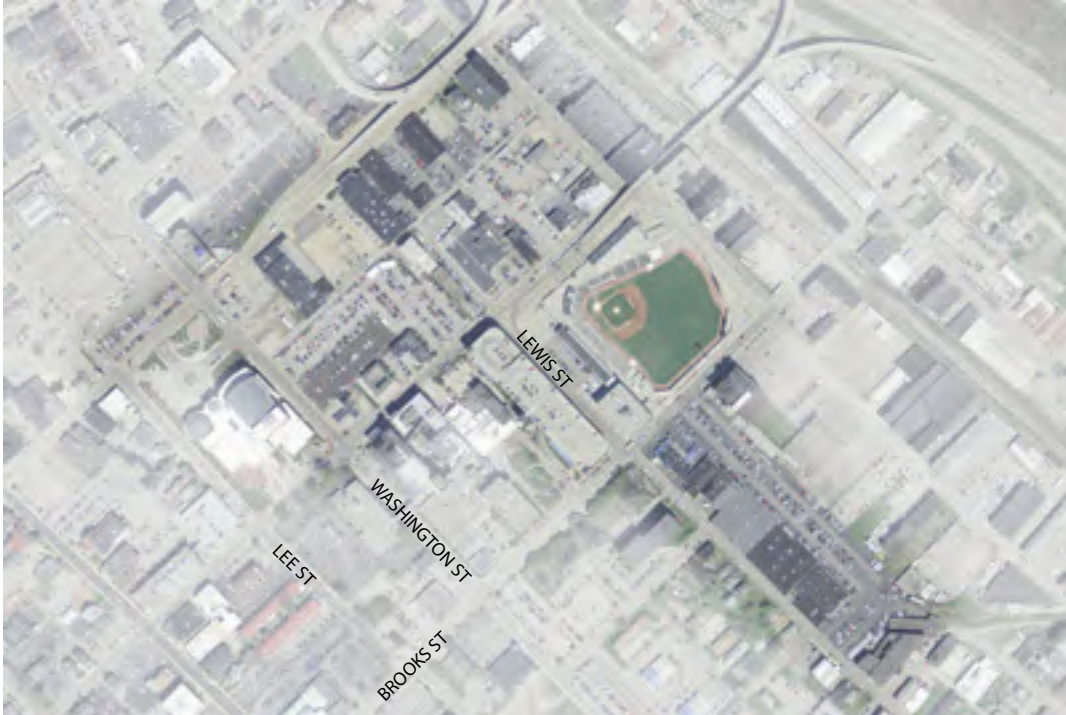
- Green Spaces
- Proposed Buildings
- Potential Parking Garage for Clay Center with Mixed-Use (Residential/Office)



Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - GoMart Park Area

Conceptual Development



Existing Area

Conceptual Understanding

- Bolster the warehouse district for the transition around GoMart Park, through streetscape, signage, wayfinding, architectural character and quality
- Leverage existing Clay Center, CURA-owned property, African-American Heritage District, Charleston Area Medical Center, and GoMart Park into a new, well-defined district
- Provide a transition from more intense uses and building heights in Downtown to lower intensity towards East End
- Provide more “urban living” housing options close to Downtown
- Promote connections to nearby Warehouse District, which can be an eclectic mix of reuse buildings, lofts, and live/work units
- Celebrate the historic home (Elizabeth Harden Gilmore House) near the intersection of Leon Sullivan Way and Smith Street
- Extension of existing Mary Price Ratrie park at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Leon Sullivan Way and Washington Street - creating a green edge along Washington Street
- Visual/functional connection between The Clay Center and GoMart Park to integrate the ballpark with the rest of Downtown
- Improve post office site streetscape to provide green edge echoing the Clay Center Plaza
- Retrofit Plaza East - strip commercial center - for higher and better use - with commercial buildings facing Morris Street and integrating residential development south on Lewis Street



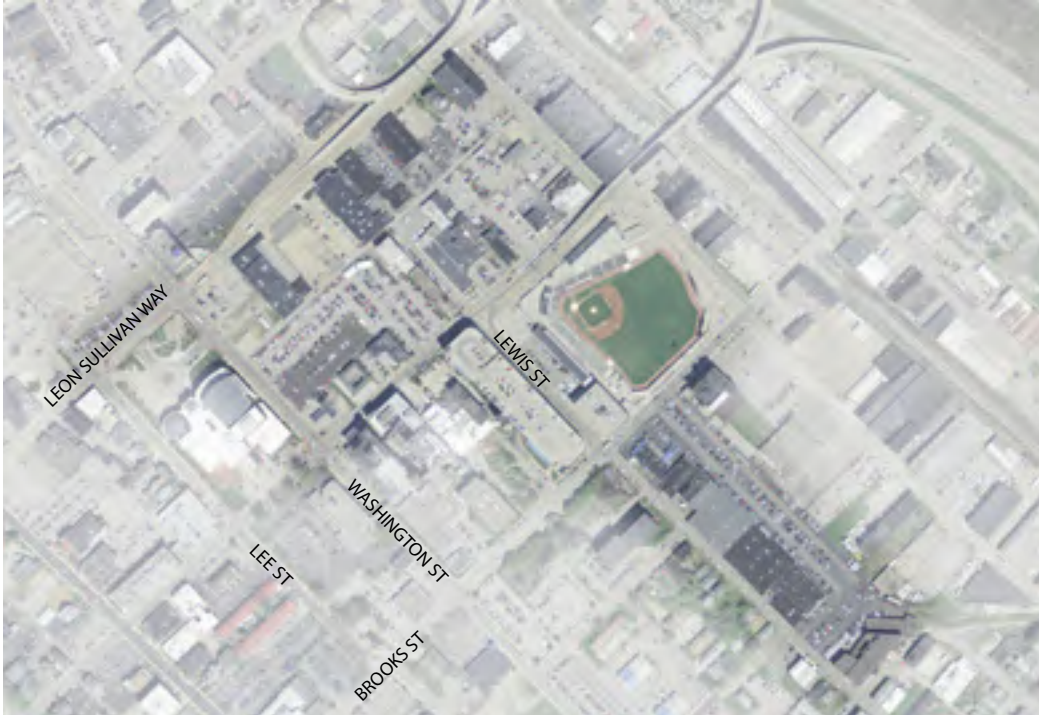
Potential Development Concept

Alternative 1

Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - GoMart Park Area

Conceptual Development



Existing Area

Conceptual Understanding

- Denser development pattern west of GoMart Park
- New urbanist style single-family to replicate adjacent residential character; potential employee housing related to hospital



- Program
1. Single-Family Housing
 2. Existing GoMart Park
 3. Existing Buildings
 4. Proposed Built Form
 5. Surface Parking
 6. Existing Park
 7. Green space/ Open space
 8. CAMC General Hospital

Potential Development Concept

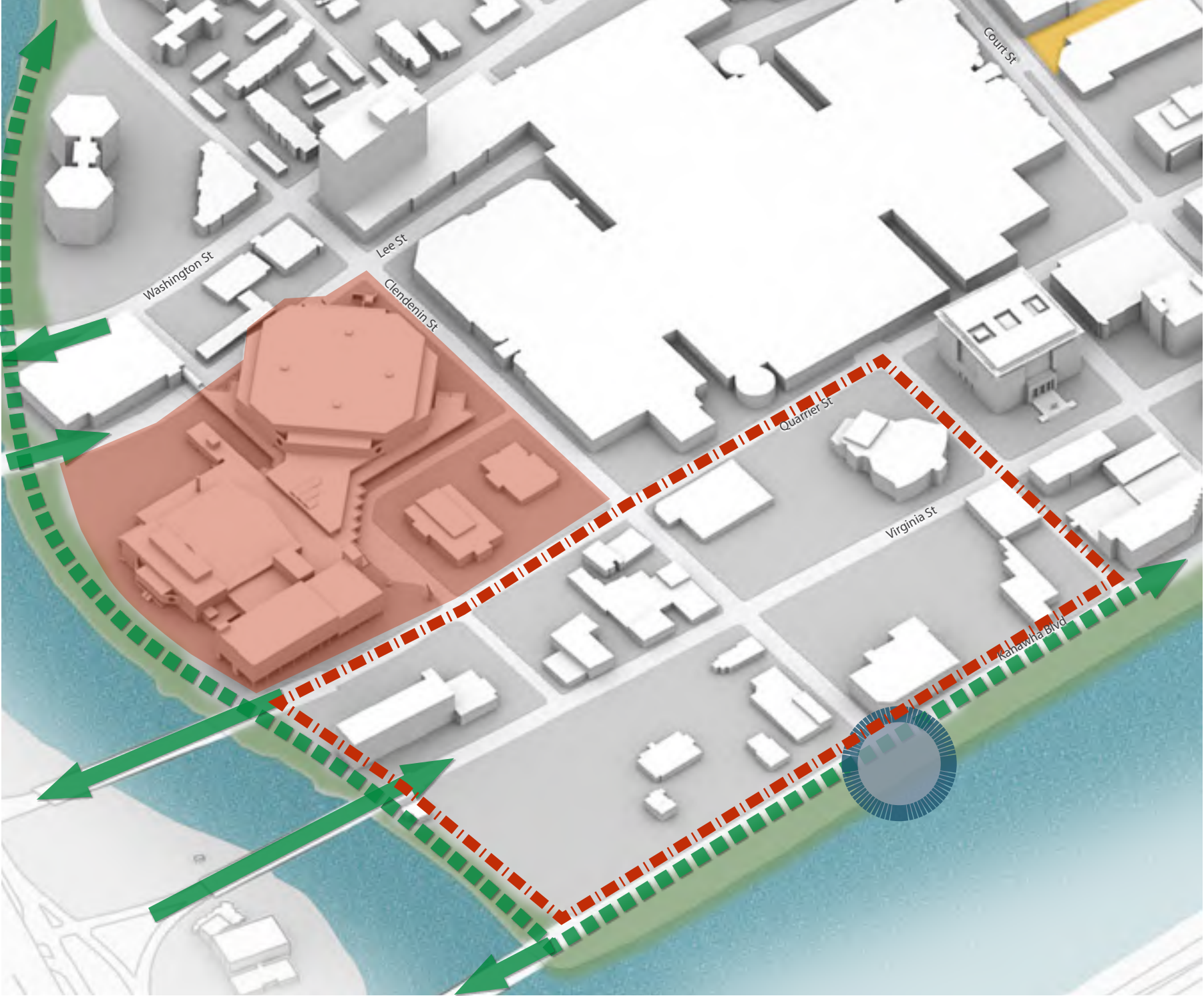
Alternative 2

Master Plan

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - Civic District

During the development of the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Redevelopment Plan, efforts to renovate the Coliseum and Convention Center were already underway to better accommodate and attract conventions. Potential hospitality related uses are also being proposed to further enhance the viability of the area as the gateway to Downtown with appropriate uses along the interstate highways.

Ultimately, the improved outlook generated through the renovations and planned future developments should be leveraged towards further revitalization of the potential Civic District area and further creation of a gateway feel to Downtown. Infill development opportunities should be explored along with streetscape and public realm improvements that will help set that stage for further revitalization to occur, specifically in the area south of Quarrier Street and near the Kanawha and Elk rivers. Attention should also be given to better connectivity of this area — not only with rest of Downtown, but also with the West Side. This can be achieved through pedestrian, bike and trail connections along roads connecting these areas, specifically Quarrier and Virginia Streets. Potential outlook areas are recommended along the potential river trail/bikeway system.



- Riverfront area
- Renovated Coliseum & Convention Center
- Proposed Capitol Sports Complex
- Potential Enhancement Area - Infill, Public realm improvements
- Proposed recreational trail
- North-South Access
- Potential overlook along river

Big Idea 5 | Target Area - Capitol Sports Complex

Concept



During the development of the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Redevelopment Plan, efforts to renovate the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center were already underway to better accommodate and attract conventions and performances. The new facility has since hosted more than 650 unique events, welcomed more than one million visitors, and sold over \$27.1 million in tickets.

In October 2021, the City of Charleston and the Kanawha County Commission announced plans for their largest financial joint venture to date—the Capital Sports Center. This new facility will build upon the economic impact of the Coliseum & Convention Center by providing adequate indoor space for large regional and national sporting events.

The proposal follows recommendations resulting from a study of sports tourism work in the region and an analysis of the area's sporting venues. Funded through Charleston's ARPA allocations, the study identified facility enhancement and development as an opportunity to grow sports tourism in Charleston, noting the importance of tournament-friendly facilities to attract "top tier, participant focused championships and their related tourism dollars."

As proposed, the 247,000 square foot facility will be located in the building formerly occupied by Macy's Department Store and a portion of the attached parking garage, serving as an anchor for both a reimagined Charleston Town Center and a regional sports tourism program. The facility will feature an aquatic center, six basketball or 12 volleyball courts, an indoor turf field, two wrestling mats, eight pickleball courts, an elevated walking/running track, a rock climbing wall and more.

The City of Charleston and Kanawha County Commission partnered with ZMM Architects & Engineers to develop the site analysis and conceptual renderings shown here.

Master Plan

Big Idea 6

6

ESTABLISH A PROFESSIONAL URBAN CORE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

- Establish a Downtown Management Authority (DMA)

Different Charleston agencies have provided focus on development of Downtown in different areas such as:

- The city departments – Administration, policy making, regulations, enforcement measures, public works, etc.
- Charleston Urban Renewal Authority (CURA) – Land development, land banking, Town Center Mall development
- Charleston Area Alliance (CAA) – Economic, community and business development
- Downtown Charleston Association (DCA) - special events and business promotion
- Other public and private organizations

These agencies/organizations have provided strong leadership and advocacy for Downtown through their policies and plans. While the efforts of these individual organizations has created a platform for further redevelopment, it is important to harness the resources of a professional urban management authority to best leverage appropriate action:

- Create a Downtown Management Authority (DMA).
- Policy, labor, financing resources will have to be pooled so that there is a coordinated initiative toward redevelopment.
- This will in no way replace any current organizational efforts. Rather, it will create an environment for a focused approach.
- Different resources will be available at different times; it would be the prerogative of this management authority to prioritize accordingly and make strategic decisions on the allocation of these resources for the best case scenario.
- Political will, in most cases, drives growth and development. This agency will work closely with the city administration to implement the recommendations of this plan as well as any subsequent policy and development efforts.
- There are many recommendations in this plan that will require careful consideration of financing and catalytic effect on further growth and redevelopment.
- This agency will evaluate needs, resources and priorities and drive the strategic implementation process.

This agency can be created with support from CURA and CAA to have access to available funding to implement necessary actions. Alternatively they should have the borrowing power

to acquire funds and/or place options on properties for future development along with CURA.

- Develop a new or extend the existing City Center Business Improvement District (BID) to garner commitment and financial support from property owners to provide professional targeted management efforts in the urban core

As the Downtown is gradually revitalized, consideration should be given to the creation of additional Business Improvement Districts to sustain the improvements. BIDs should be explored in other areas of Charleston such as Kanawha City and West Side neighborhood business districts as primary targeted areas. Charleston leaders should identify the most appropriate business district to initiate the BID program.

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a quasi-public organization formed by property owners who have agreed to an assessment on their property in order to generate revenue for services and capital improvements provided within a defined district. BIDs provide a long-term financial base for marketing, capital improvements and management programs. They spell out the services and improvements to be delivered in a contract between the property owners and the organization charged with managing the BID. This contractual arrangement increases accountability and keeps the focus of the organization on achieving the stated goals of property owners.

It has been proven throughout the country that Business Improvement District (BID) forms of management raise the quality of Downtowns or districts. BID management contributes to the health and success of the districts they serve. Reasons include:

- Full-time attention by trained urban district management staff (In case of Charleston, it will be the DMA)
- Financial resources directed toward management, leasing & promotions efforts
- Strategic business recruitment & retention
- Pro-active real estate development focus
- Strong district advocacy programs to solidify authority, alliances and trust

Sixty percent of property owners, or those representing roughly seventy-five percent of the linear footage, must

agree to the assessment (amount to be determined by local area). The process of recruiting the property owners to agree to an assessment and how it will be spent is a time consuming effort requiring a high level of commitment from leadership at all levels in the Downtown.

Other responsibilities such as streetscape maintenance, litter control, sidewalk snow removal and parking enforcement and lot management, could also be placed under the Business Improvement District.

Charleston's first BID, City Center, was created by vote of City Council in September 2021. The BID includes properties fronting Court, Laidley, and Summers Streets between

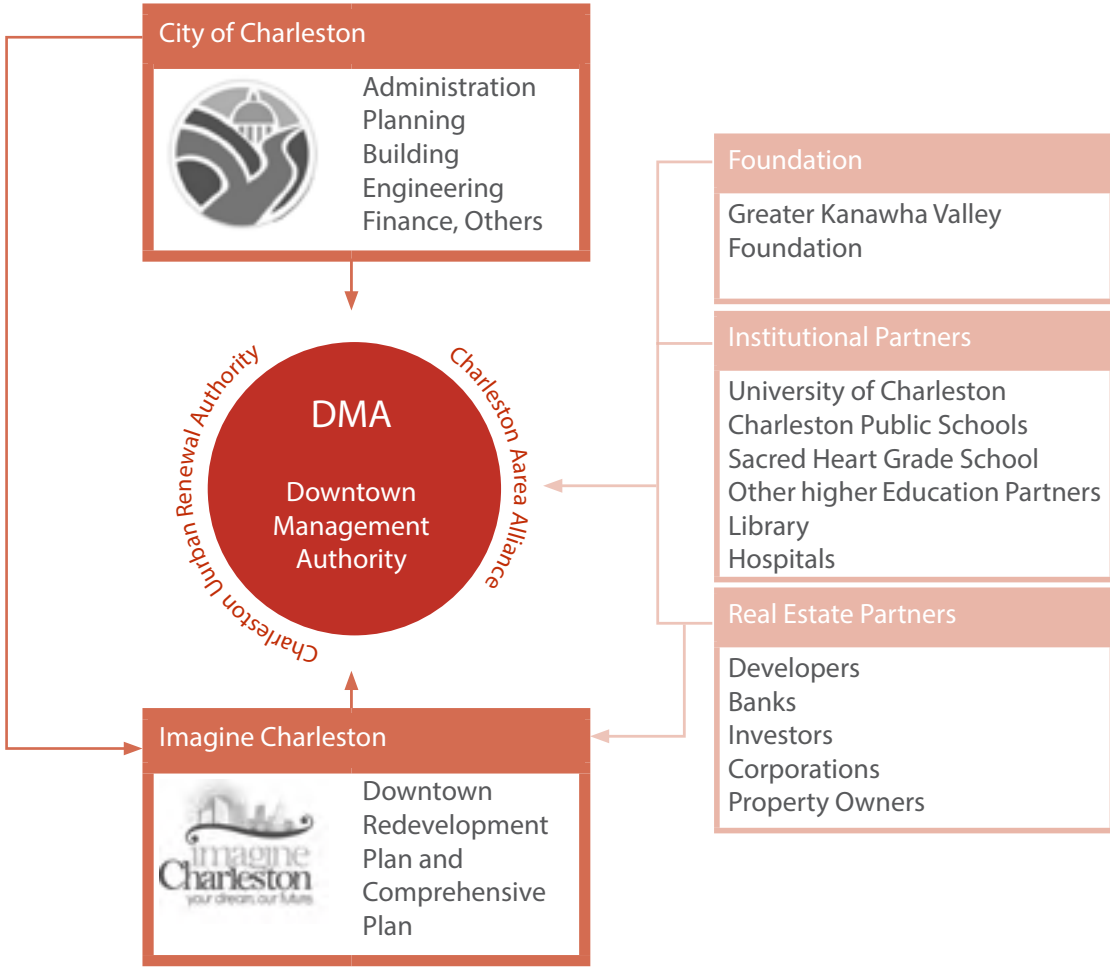
Virginia Street and Washington Street, East. A Board of Directors was appointed by the Mayor and property owners agreed to assess themselves a fee based on a combination of lot size and building square footage. The City Center BID is supported with part-time staffing from Charleston Area Alliance.

The CCBID's vision statement is as follows:

Downtown Charleston, WV is the region's most vibrant center of culture, business and entertainment for all residents and visitors.

Details regarding public realm improvements, traffic calming, and district identity outlined in the CCBID's strategic plan are shown on page 29 of this document.

FRAMEWORK FOR NEW DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



Master Plan
Big Idea 6

BID Best Practices

BID Public Realm Improvements

BID structure example
(Covington, KY BID)

MECHANICS

- 51% of property ownership must sign the petition. Not signing means “no.”
- 51% of the total property value in the district must be represented
- City drafts and considers/approves a local ordinance authorizing the assessment collection
- Nominating committee selects board of 7 to 11 representing owner of different property sizes, business owners and a current Covington Business Council board member.

FINANCING

- An assessment methodology is proposed that includes the street frontage, value and square footage of Downtown properties. There is a differential in the assessment for commercial and non-profit (including government) properties.
- The BID would have its annual budget geared toward public realm maintenance and for economic development and beautification.

STREETSCAPE



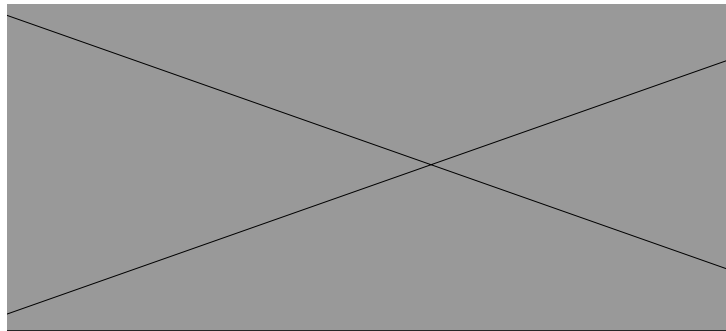
BRANDING & SIGNAGE



GATHERING SPACES



EVENTS



PUBLIC ART



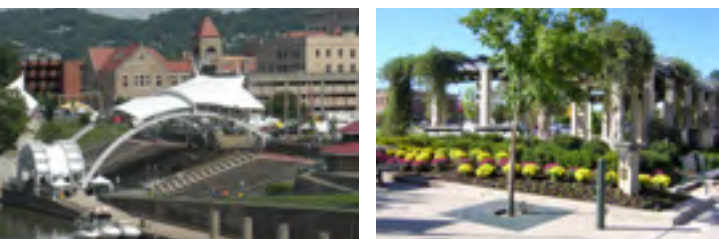
MAINTENANCE & SAFETY



Master Plan
Best Practice

URBAN PARKS

- Connect with sidewalks, trails
- Variety of amenities
- Welcoming and maintained look
- Safe & secure - lighting, appropriate screening & visibility
- Appropriate signage and wayfinding
- Adequate maintenance - trash/garbage collection, weed/overgrown vegetation trimming, paint any structures, etc.



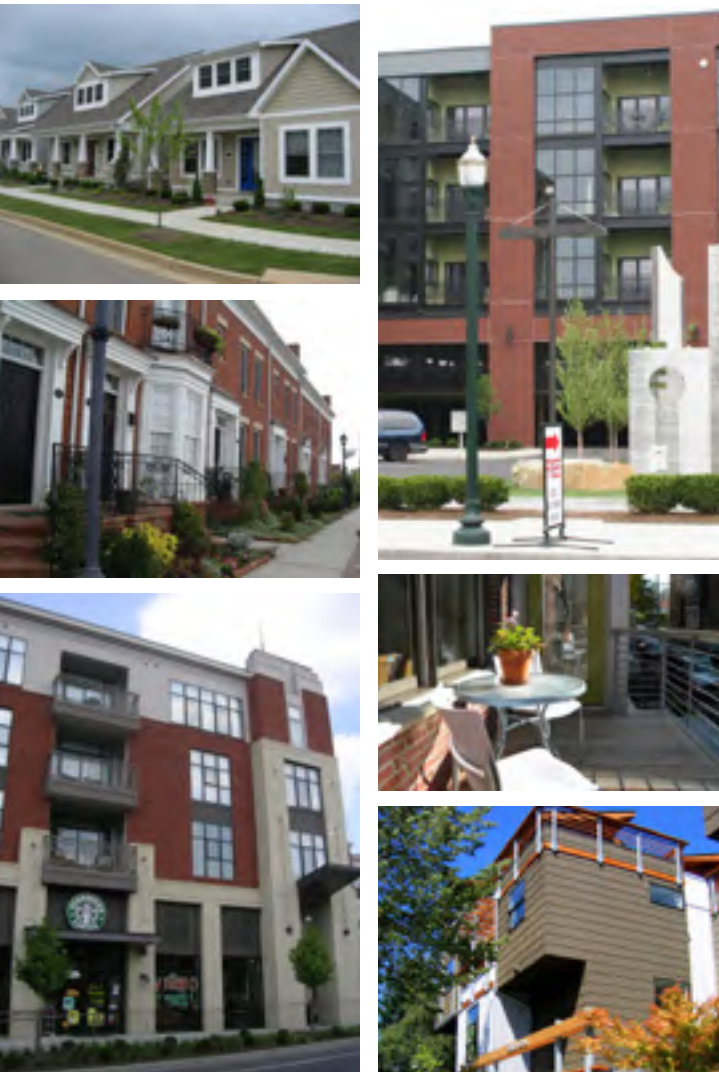
RETAIL

- Concentrated retail areas - daytime and nighttime activities
- Higher quality building design and materials (facade, pavements)
- Landscaping, screening
- First floor storefronts - transparent glazing, arranged items, graphic boards in place of vacant storefronts, etc. - to encourage pedestrian activity
- Safe & secure - lighting, attract people
- Signage and wayfinding
- Convenient parking
- Sidewalk connectivity



HOUSING

- Higher density housing mix - apartments, condos, row houses, lofts, housing above retail, residential communities, etc.
- Different price points and amenities
- Connectivity - sidewalks, trails, retail areas, recreation/parks, waterfront
- Higher quality design and materials



PARKING

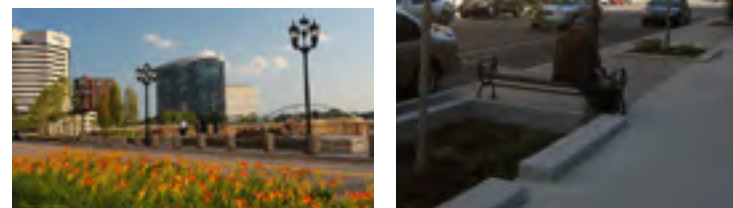
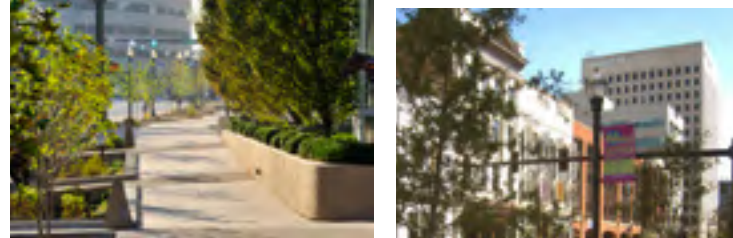
- Appropriate screening from roads and adjacent buildings
- Landscaped islands
- Signage & wayfinding to lead to parking areas
- First floor of parking garages to introduce retail uses, if possible; otherwise add architectural treatments for pedestrian activity
- Upper floors of garages to have architectural treatments
- Adequate maintenance



Master Plan
Best Practice

STREETS

- Vibrant mixed-use environment
- Pedestrian activities
- Streets that accommodate pedestrian, bicyclists, bus transit and other form of automobiles
- Landscaping and lighting
- Amenities - benches, trash cans, etc
- Signage and wayfinding to direct all forms of traffic



RIVERFRONT

- Activities - daytime and nighttime
- Variety of amenities, vibrant
- Connection with Downtown - retail, housing
- Trails, bikepaths
- Landscaping and seating



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Sustainable stormwater management systems - raingardens/bioswales
- Alternative energy generation - solar, geothermal, wind, natural gas, etc.



SIGNAGE | WAYFINDING

- Higher quality placemaking and branding
- Unifying theme of branding, wayfinding, signage
- Consolidation of business and directional signage
- Create hierarchy of signage elements - eg. primary/secondary/tertiary, road names, business names



Master Plan
Strategy Plan Matrix

6 BIG IDEAS		STRATEGIES	REFERENCE PAGE	RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP	FUNDING & FINANCING	TIMEFRAME
1	COMMIT LOCAL RESOURCES FOR A SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	■ Identify public-private partnering opportunities, collaboration with quasi-public organizations and explore creative implementation vehicles	50	■ City / CAA / CCBID / DCA	■ Appropriate Funding Mechanisms	●
		■ Engage local financial institutions, community foundations and institutions of higher learning and liturgical institutions as partners	50	■ CURA / CAA / Foundation / CCBID / DCA	■ Appropriate Funding Mechanisms	●
		■ Establish an effective relationship with the State of West Virginia for mutual real estate	50	■ State / City / CURA / CAA / CVB / CCBID / DCA	■ Appropriate Funding Mechanisms	●
2	SUPPORT PRIVATE INVESTMENT BY RESHAPING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF DOWNTOWN CHARLESTON THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY	■ Create niche districts (Civic, Regional Commercial, Historic Core, Cultural) within Downtown to drive the redevelopment of the built environment	51	■ City / CVB / CAA / CCBID / DCA	■ City Funds	●
		■ Create context-sensitive urban design standards to shape future development	51	■ City (Planning) / CURA	■ City Funds	●
		■ Elevate the architectural character of new buildings through high quality design standards that embrace urban design qualities and principles	54	■ City (Planning) / HLC	■ City Funds	●
		■ Adopt the “complete streets” approach to enhancing the street network and supports pedestrian zones and activity areas	58	■ City (Engineer, Planning, Traffic Engineer) / County Engineer / Land Trust	■ City Funds, Federal & State Funds	●
3	UTILIZE CHARLESTON'S IMPRESSIVE HISTORY AND RIVER CITY LOCATION TO LEVERAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	■ Embrace historic preservation as an important economic development tool and the value of history as an important asset to enhance the urban environment and marketability of the urban core.	60	■ City / HLC / CVB / Kanawha Valley Historical & Preservation Society	■ Historic Tax Credits, City Funds, Historic Grants, Facade Grants, Development Grants	●
		■ Re-engage the Kanawha and Elk rivers for public access, pedestrian activity areas as well as high quality mixed use development.	61	■ City (Planning, Engineer) / Land Trust / Private Land Owners	■ City Funds, Federal & State Funds, Grants	●
		■ Promote sustainable development practices that will help environmental stewardship, social interactions and financial benefits	62	■ City (Planning, Engineer, Parks & Recreation, Traffic Engineer) CURA / CAA	■ City Funds, Federal & State Funds	●

- CAA - Charleston Area Alliance

■ Foundation - Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation

■ CVB - Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- HLC - Historic Landmarks Commission

■ CURA - Charleston Urban Redevelopment Authority

■ DMA - Downtown Management Authority
- CCBID - City Center Business Improvement District

■ DCA - Downtown Charleston Association

- Short Term
(1-2 Years)
- Medium Term
(3-5 Years)
- Long Term
(5+ Years)

6 BIG IDEAS		STRATEGIES	REFERENCE PAGE	RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP	FUNDING & FINANCING	TIMEFRAME
4	DEVELOP A DISTRICT IDENTITY SYSTEM FOR THE DOWNTOWN AND CONTIGUOUS RETAIL & ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a district identity program that begins to link major destinations such as the Town Center, Slack Plaza, Capitol Street, Capitol Market, Hale/Quarrier/Dickinson Streets, The Clay Center and the Warehouse District. The system should will delineate key pedestrian / alternative transportation corridors and support potential mixed use development opportunities.	63	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City / CURA / CAA / Main Street Wayfinding Commission, CVB, Major Property Owners / DCA / CCBID	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City Funds, Federal & State Funds	<div><div></div></div>
5	TREAT THE URBAN CORE AS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT CHARLESTON NEIGHBORHOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish and implement a public relations campaign that promotes Downtown's livability, improves public's perception of Downtown, and represents Downtown as a safe environment [refer to BID below].	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CURA / CAA / CVB / DMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City Funds	<div><div></div></div>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explore opportunities and alternatives for developers, tenants and lending institutions to promote Downtown housing and encourage mixed use development.	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City (Building, Planning) / CURA / CAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City Funds, public-private partnerships, other financial programs	<div><div></div></div>
6	ESTABLISH A PROFESSIONAL URBAN CORE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish a Downtown Management Authority (DMA)	82	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City / CURA / CAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appropriate Funding Mechanisms	<div><div></div></div>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to support the City Center Business Improvement District [BID], look for ways to expand the CCBID, and/or create new BIDs in the downtown to garner commitment and financial support from property owners to provide professional targeted management efforts in the urban core.	82	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DMA / CURA / CAA / City / CCBID	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appropriate Funding Mechanisms	<div><div></div></div>

PARTNERSHIP AND FUNDING/ FINANCING RESOURCES

- Federal Resources
 - Transportation Alternatives – WV Division of Highways Grants Administration
 - National Endowment for the Arts
 - Appalachian Regional Commission
 - Federal Environmental Protection Agency – Sustainable Communities, Energy Efficiency
 - Federal Economic Development Agency
 - Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grants
 - Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh
- State Resources
 - West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection – Sustainable Communities, Brownfields, Energy Efficiency
 - West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office – development grants, planning grants, tax credits
 - West Virginia Division of Culture and History – arts and preservation grants
 - West Virginia Sustainable Communities Grants – West Virginia Community Development HUB
 - Land and Water Conservation Funds – West Virginia Development Office
 - West Virginia Brownfield's Assistance Center
 - West Virginia Community Participation Funds – legislatively directed
- National and Regional Foundations
 - Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
 - Kellogg Foundation
 - Ford Foundation
 - Local Foundations
 - Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
 - BB&T Foundation
 - Chase Foundation
 - Kanawha Valley Council on Philanthropy
 - Private Foundations – Daywood, Jacobson, Herscher, Schoenbaum, etc.
 - Other Financial Programs
 - Tax Increment Financing
- Business Improvement Districts
 - New Market Tax Credits
 - Historic Preservation Tax Credits