

EAST MAIN

DOWNTOWN PLAN



RADFORD **VA**

THE NEW RIVER CITY

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Our team is extremely grateful to all the community members who participated in the surveys, provided valuable feedback, and informed us regarding the various issues and opportunities within the area. We appreciate all the residents, businesses, property owners, and community leaders and City staff that participated in the stakeholder meetings that led to gathering of valuable insights and information. Special thanks to Pastor Renee Hidalgo and Community Life Church for providing us with space to hold the stakeholder meetings.

Historically, the East Main Street area had been the principal business district surrounding the Central Depot Railroad Station that was built around 1854. The station served as a shipping point for products such as tobacco, salt, meat and lumber¹. Around 1883, a few years after the end of the Civil War, railroad activity increased resulting from a new spur that was built to connect to the coal fields¹. In the 1920's, with completion of the Lee Highway, Radford flourished even more due the growth of industries and businesses. East Main Street was previously known as the East Norwood Street and was the site of many commercial buildings.



Historical photo of East Main Street Radford, VA
Courtesy of Radford Heritage Foundation

Today, East Main Downtown features a number of the traditional brick commercial buildings that were constructed more than 100 years ago. Most are well maintained and have businesses present along the ground floor and apartments on upper floors. A few are lacking in maintenance, vacant and/or otherwise underutilized buildings. The city recognizes that a comprehensive vision, design, and planning effort is required to secure a path towards strong economic growth, retention, and vitality of the area, which ultimately led to initiating the East Main Downtown Plan.



Historical photo of East Main Street Radford, VA
Courtesy of Radford Heritage Foundation

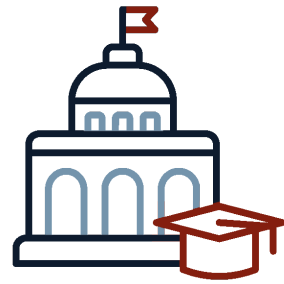
With a well-established community fabric, historic buildings, proximity to the natural landscape and universities, and availability of active residential commercial uses, East Main Downtown has the potential to become an attractive and vibrant destination once again. East Main Downtown Plan recognizes the valuable assets while also capturing the key issues and opportunities facing the area. The Plan strives to provide a vision and framework to attract new businesses, encourage downtown living and create economic opportunities within the area. The Plan also explores ways to influence the overall aesthetics through planning policies, modifications of regulations, guidelines, and different types of physical improvements. Examples of such improvements may include narrower travel lanes, landscaping, well-designed streetscapes elements, restored lighting fixtures, and high-quality renovations of public parking lots. Throughout the planning process the community was actively engaged through multiple outreach efforts such as online engagement platform, stakeholder meetings and community events.

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

LOCAL SETTING
INVENTORY
VACANCY + CONDITION
PARKING

The East Main Downtown Plan area is approximately 37 acres and primarily includes properties along East Main Street. It is bounded by Tyler Avenue to the east, West Street to the north and Grove Avenue to the south. It also includes properties having frontage on Harrison Avenue and 3rd Street. It is walking distance from Radford University, and is in the vicinity of natural landscapes such as Bissett Park, Wildwood Park, and the New River.

LOCAL SETTING



Analysis of existing conditions can provide insights about the strengths and opportunities to city leadership, city staff, residents, and businesses alike. This section provides a summary of various types of data collected. The existing conditions analysis have been divided into four categories: 1) Land Use, 2) Vacancy, 3) Building Inventory, and 4) Building Conditions. The City of Radford zoning ordinance defines various types of zoning districts, categories of uses of property, and regulations within each district. It includes standards for lot sizes, setback requirements, building size and height, accessory uses, parking, landscape, signage, and other site development regulations. The East Main Downtown study area falls under the Central Business District (B-3) as shown in the map below. Adjacent to this district to the south and west are residential districts R-3 (Single-Family Residential) and R-4 (Multifamily Residential). It is recommended that better connections between these neighborhoods and the East Main Downtown area are provided by improving the pedestrian environment.



BISSET PARK



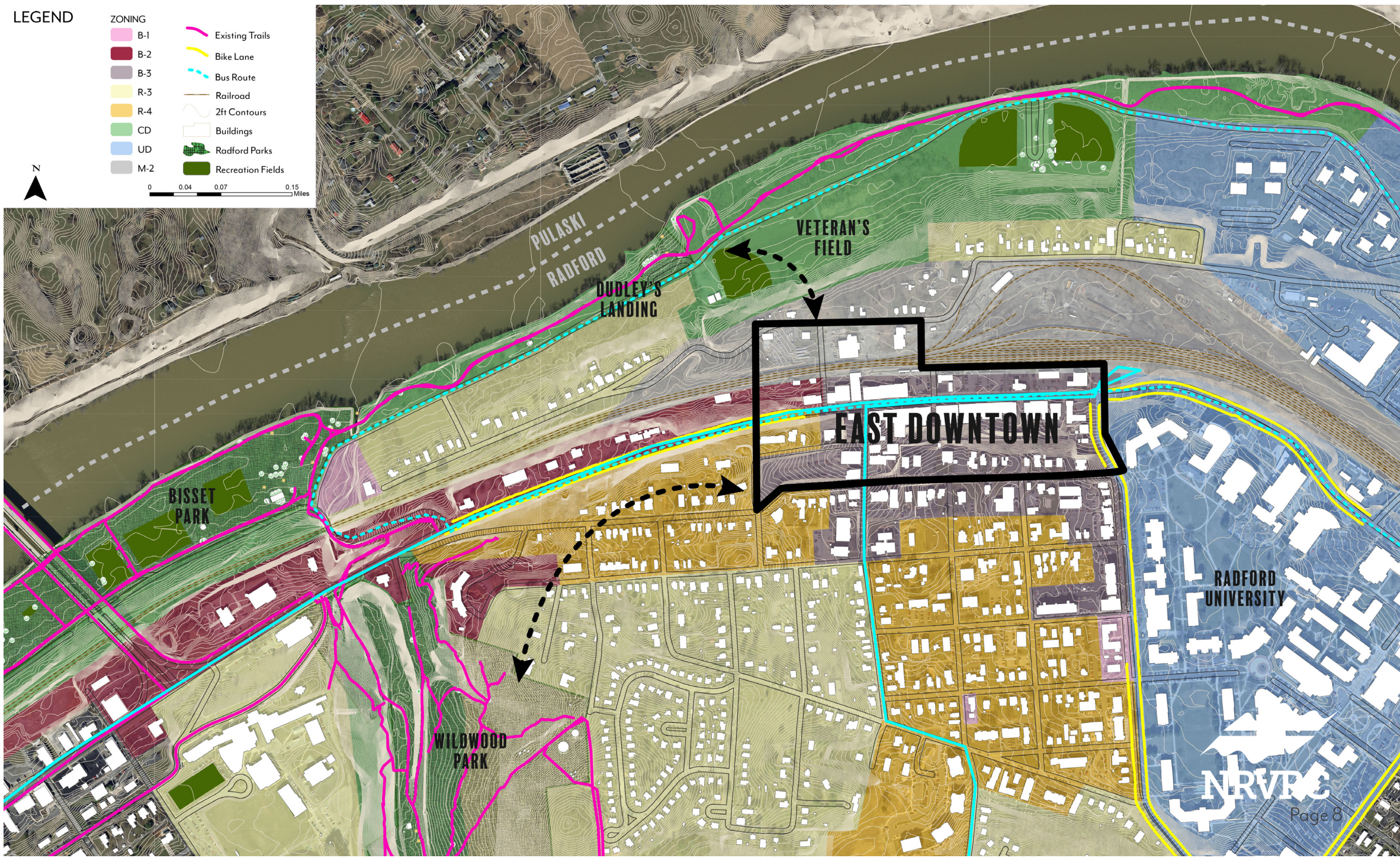
WILDWOOD PARK



RADFORD UNIVERSITY

LEGEND

ZONING	Existing Trails
B-1	Bike Lane
B-2	Bus Route
B-3	Railroad
R-3	2ft Contours
R-4	Buildings
CD	Radford Parks
UD	Recreation Fields
M-2	



INVENTORY

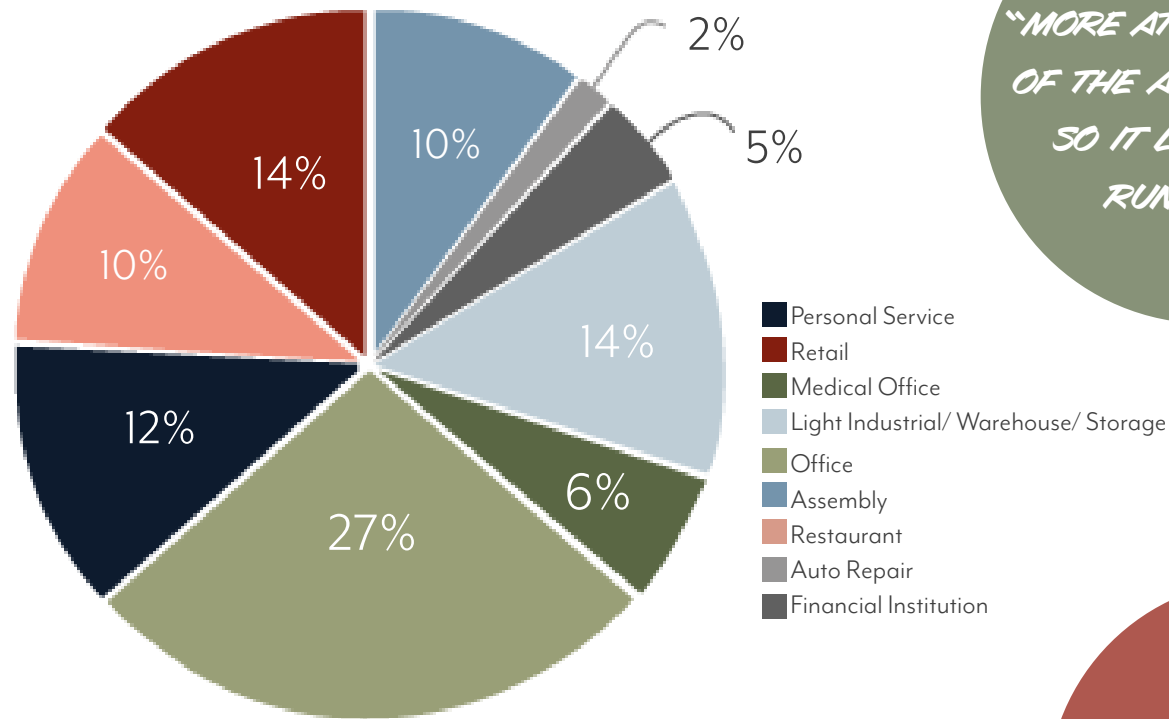
The inventory is intended to assist stakeholders understand the economic conditions, market distributions, gaps, and future opportunities of the downtown.

1] LAND USE

The most common land use along East Main Street and Third Avenue is predominantly mixed-use: 1st floors: offices, personal services, retail and restaurants. 2nd and 3rd floors: residential apartments

Land use along Grove Avenue is mainly residential use, but with some offices and a funeral home interspersed. The northern part of the study area along Harrison and West Street has primarily industrial use.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMERCIAL AND CIVIC USES



"MORE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE AREA OVERALL, SO IT LOOKS LESS RUNDOWN"

"DELI, BOOKSTORE, A REASONABLY PRICED CLOTHING STORE, MUSIC SHOP, (LIKE WE HAD)"

"BETTER PARKING, MORE SHOPS, TRAIN ACCESS"

BUILDING USE TYPE	UNITS
Single Family Dwellings	6
Multi-Family Dwellings	104

Table 1. Distribution of Residential Building Uses

VACANCY + CONDITION

2] VACANCY

The existing vacancy rate can be an important economic health indicator of a downtown economy. Vacancy information was collected as part of the building inventory effort and the following observations were made within the study area:

- The area has about 58,000 square feet of vacant properties, which accounts for about 25% of the total square footage in the area.
- There was an increase in vacancy rate in the last one year, resulting from the closing of two banks (10,336 sqft) and small retail uses in the area.

3] BUILDING CONDITION

Building conditions within the downtown have a significant role in attracting/retaining businesses, residents, and visitors. Observations made during the survey and analysis of building conditions while conducting the building inventory:

- Few properties are vacant and in poor condition, which are contributing factors that lead to community blight and deterioration.
- Some structures are underutilized, and maintenance is likely overdue. These structures have good bones and can contribute to the history and fabric of the community.
- There are 11 buildings that have ratings of very good or good.

BUILDING USE TYPE	TOTAL SQ FT.	% SQ FT.	ESTABLISHMENTS	% OF TOTAL
Assembly	17,819	10%	3	6%
Auto Repair	3,132	2%	1	2%
Financial Institution	7,923	4%	1	2%
Light Industrial/ Warehouse/ Storage	24,231	14%	5	10%
Medical Office	10,892	6%	2	4%
Office	48,066	27%	13	25%
Personal Service	21,880	12%	10	20%
Restaurant	18,255	10%	6	12%
Retail	24,041	14%	10	20%
TOTAL	176,239	100%	51	100%

Table 2. Existing Building Uses Distribution (Commercial, Medical and Civic categories)

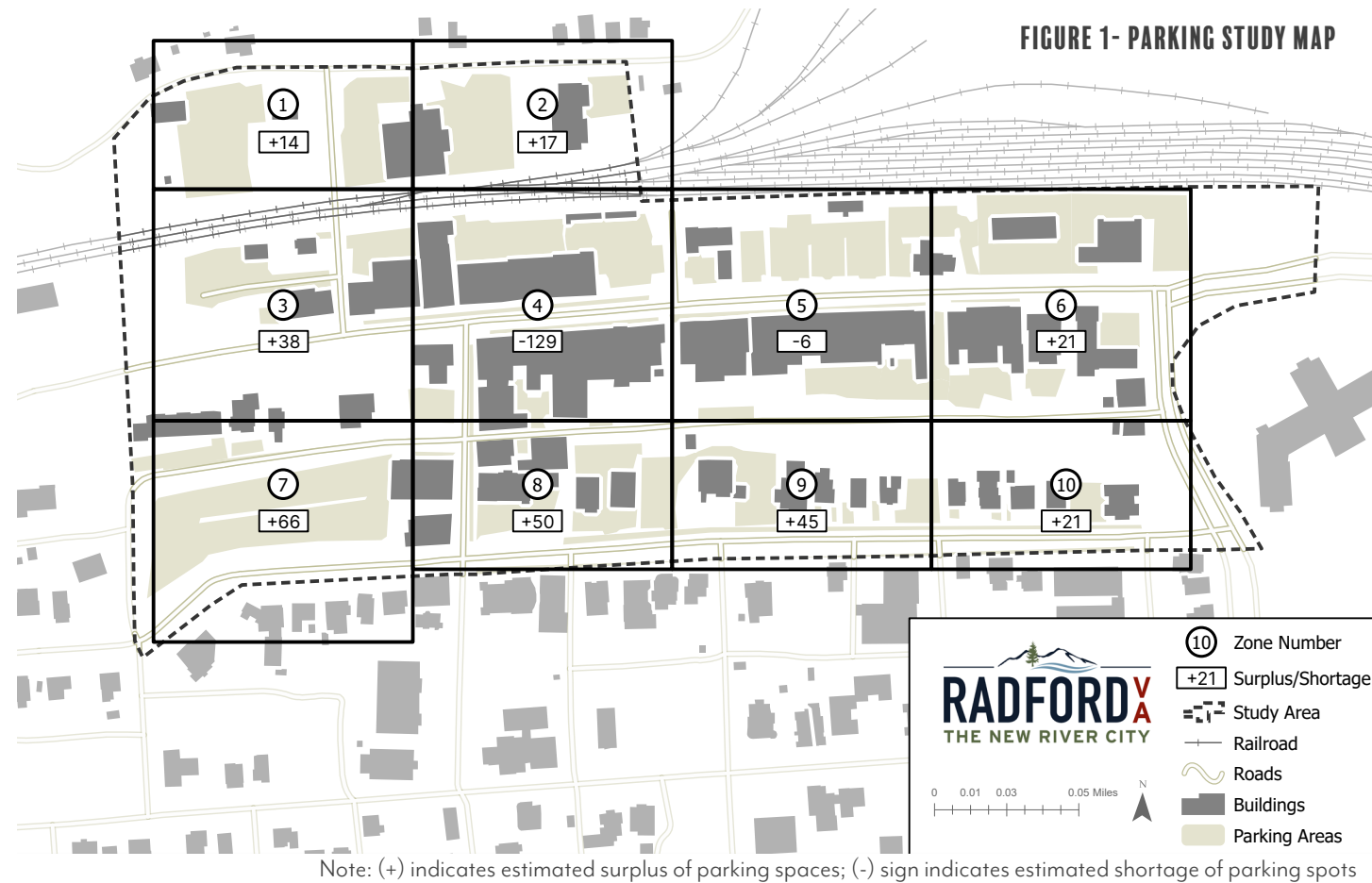
PARKING STUDY

Parking facilities play an important role in the success of downtowns. Understanding the supply and demand of parking helps cities support the needs of businesses, employees, residents, and visitors.

As part of improving the downtown experience and promoting economic growth in the area, the City of Radford incorporated the parking inventory and analysis in the East Main Downtown Plan. The details of the study and the analysis can be found in the appendices.

A different approach was taken in studying the parking supply and demand as the project coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. Parking numbers were extracted from the building and land-use data in the area.

The East Main Study area was subdivided into ten zones, which are shown in Figure 1.



The following approach was taken:

- Parking generation of each building and land use was considered.
- Projects that are in the planning phases and potential projects for vacant buildings were also included.
- For vacant buildings:
 - 2nd and 3rd floors were assumed to be residential apartments
 - 1st floor was assumed to have businesses such as retail, restaurants, and offices
- Inventory data of parking spaces included:
 - Number of spaces
 - Type of parking spaces: on-street, off-street, public/private, handicapped
 - Time limits of parking spaces, when applicable

EXISTING DEMAND

Parking demand analysis was conducted for all zones within the study area. After evaluating the parking availability in the East Main Downtown area, the following were observed:

- There are approximately **958** parking spaces available in the study area
- Parking demand for all the existing uses is approximately **766** parking spaces
- Overall, there is a surplus of approximately **190** parking spaces

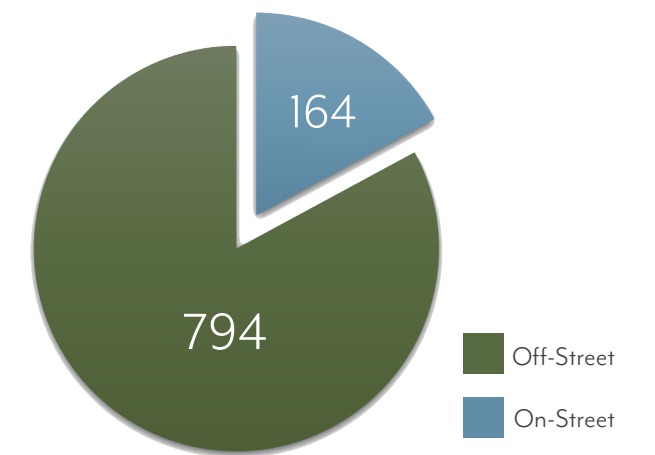
Analysis was also conducted for each of the individual zones within the study area, and the findings indicate the following:

- There are potentially parking deficiencies within two zones: Zone 4 (129 spaces), and Zone 5 (6 parking spaces).
- Some deficiencies can be mitigated by the surplus of spaces that are in adjacent zones.
- Multiple uses within same zone having different peak demand periods can reduce the overall deficiency in a zone.

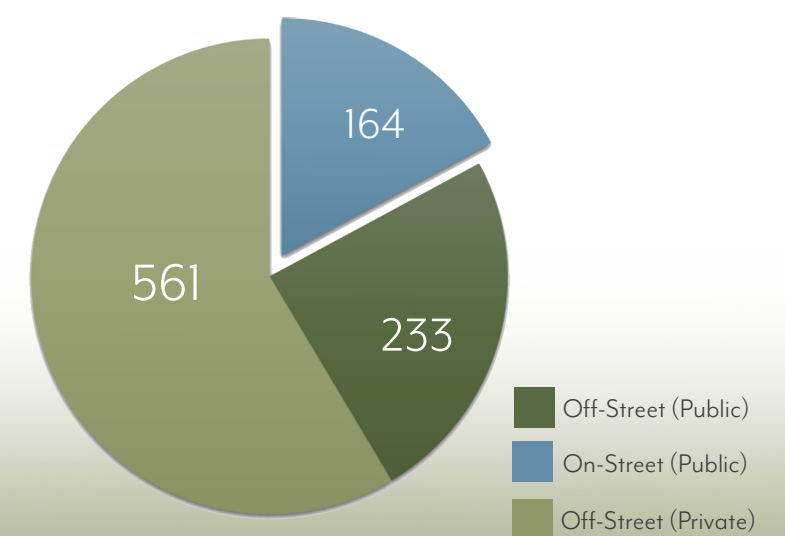
FUTURE DEMANDS

Two redevelopment projects are currently underway in the area, and the vacant commercial and residential units are expected to be filled. Assuming that these areas will contain a mix of retail, personal service, office and restaurant on the ground floor and multifamily in the upper stories, there will be a need for 124 parking spaces. This does not mean that there will be an overall lack of parking spaces, but there could be some localized deficiencies that the city should monitor. Improvements and redesign of existing public parking can help increase parking availability and foster ease and efficiency of its use.

TOTAL PARKING SPACES BY TYPE



TOTAL PARKING SPACES BY TYPE AND OWNERSHIP



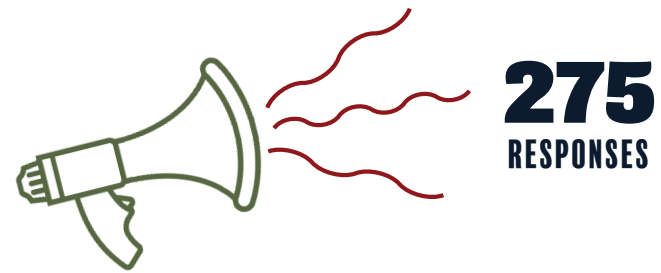
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- SURVEY RESULTS**
- INTERACTIVE MAP**
- QUICK POLL RESULTS**
- IDEA BOARD**
- RU ENGAGEMENT**
- STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**
- MAIN TAKEAWAYS**

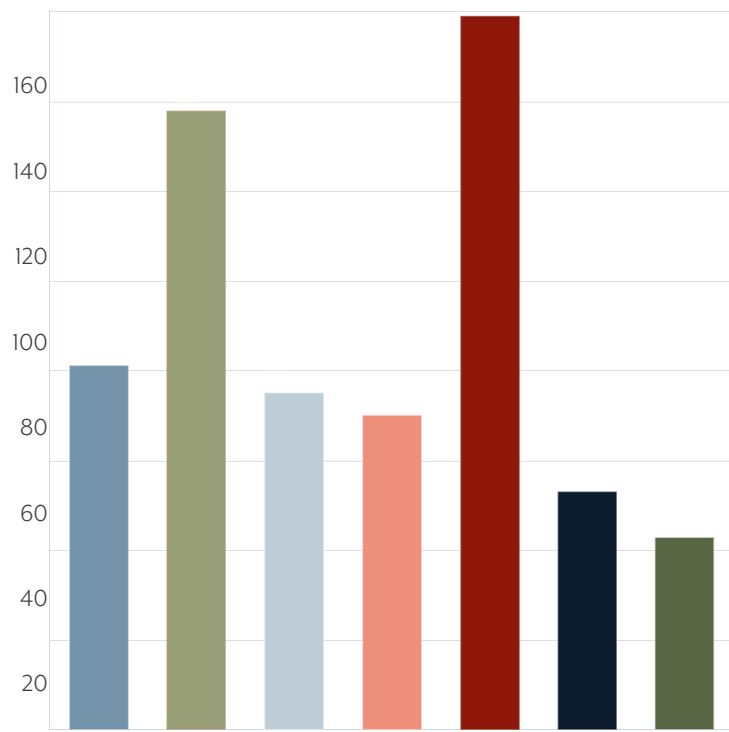
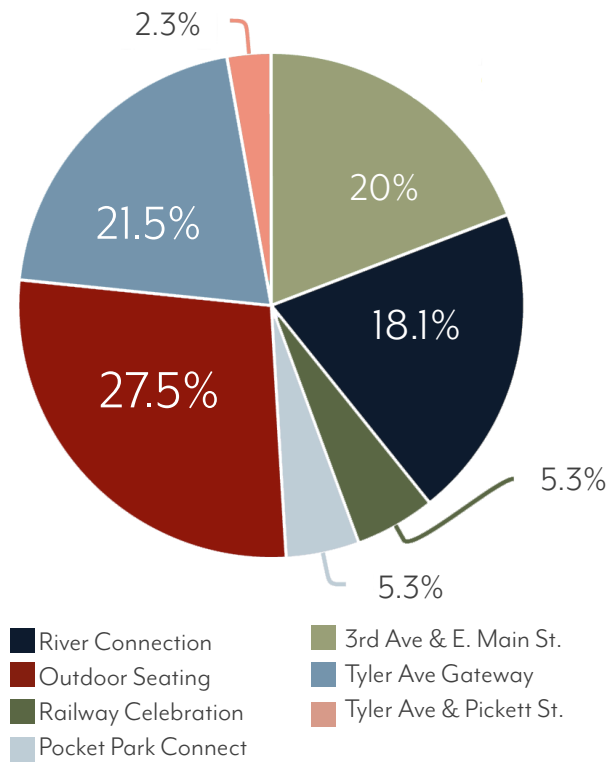
In pursuit of an effective plan for East Main Downtown, significant effort was made to capture the perceptions and experiences of businesses, property owners, residents, and visitors of the area. An online engagement platform was launched to collect various types of community feedback, along with paper surveys being made available at various City locations and booths being setup at two Radford University events. Multiple stakeholder engagement meetings were also conducted.

Community Engagement SURVEY RESULTS

This survey was designed to gauge the community's preferences on improvements and preservation. The majority of survey respondents either live, work or own property in Radford, VA.



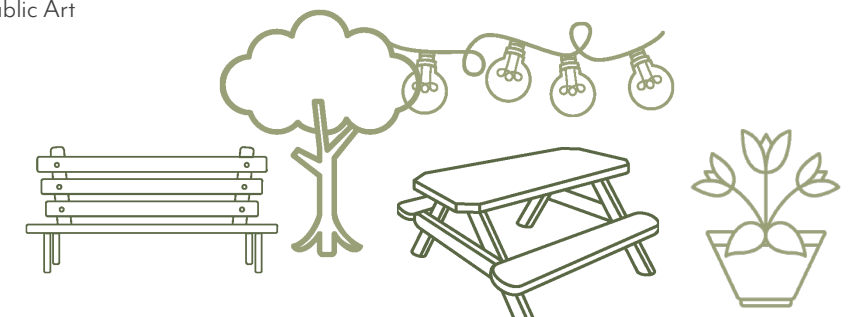
What area should we focus on?



What changes would help improve the pedestrian environment of East Main Downtown?

- Bike Facilities
- Outdoor Seating/ Dining
- Wayfinding Signage
- Street Lighting
- Improvements and Beautification/ Streetscaping
- Crosswalks
- Murals or Public Art

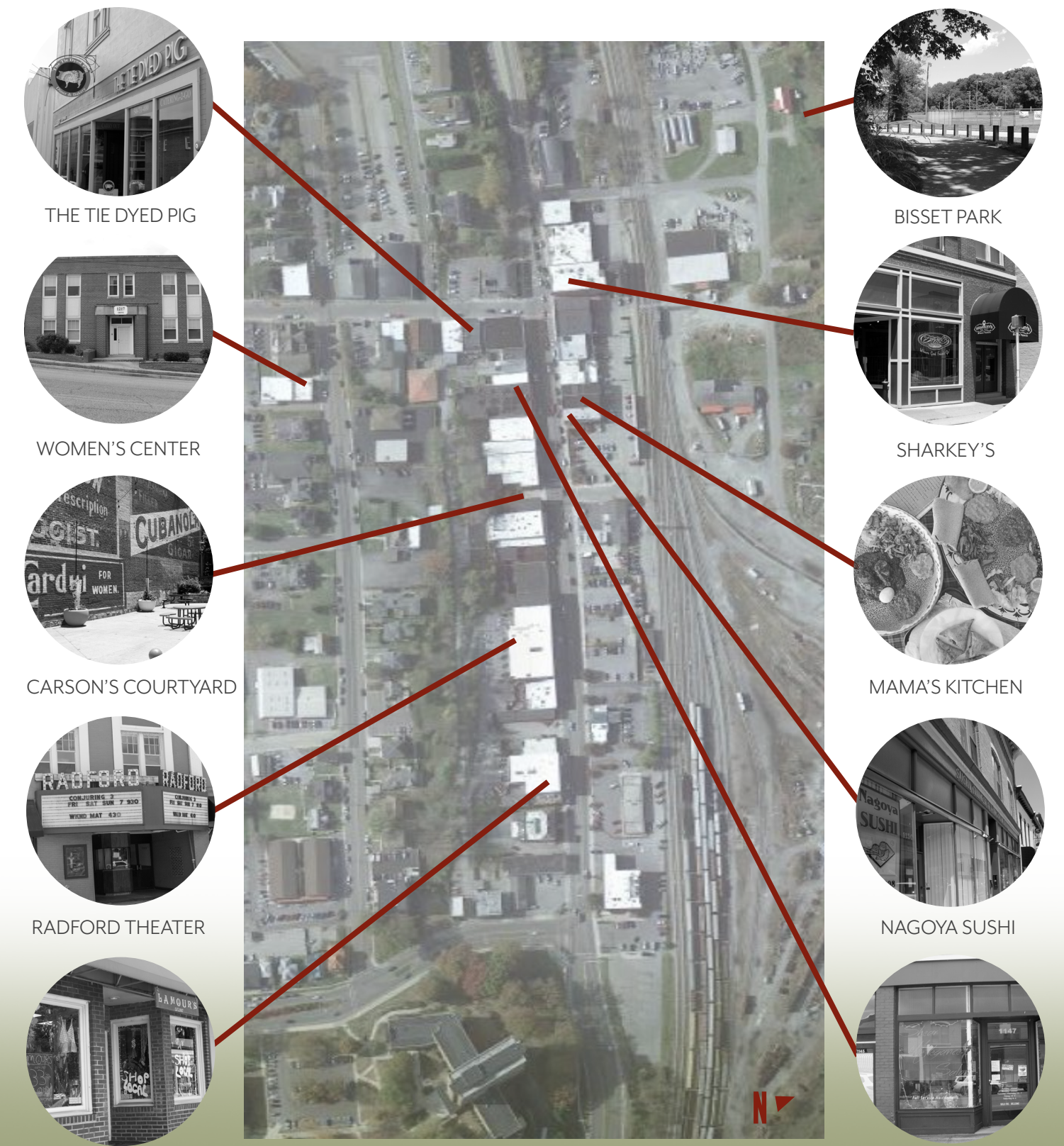
Priority Areas



Outdoor Seating/ Dining + Beautification/ Streetscaping

INTERACTIVE MAP: THE PLACE I VISIT MOST DOWNTOWN

To enhance the community engagement experience, participants were able to utilize an interactive map to share ideas. The mapping option allowed survey participants to respond by selecting a geographic location and dropping pins on precise locations in the community.



INTERACTIVE MAP: PARKING INQUIRY

To enhance the community engagement experience, participants were able to utilize an interactive map to share ideas. The mapping option allowed survey participants to respond by selecting a geographic location and dropping pins on precise locations in the community.



“Needs a repaint and repave.”

City has recently improved lot aesthetics.

“Seems a redesign of this space could make it more user friendly - getting trapped in the dead-end area is annoying. Also, nicer walkways for helping people cross the street is badly needed here.”

Many folks are unaware of public parking here.

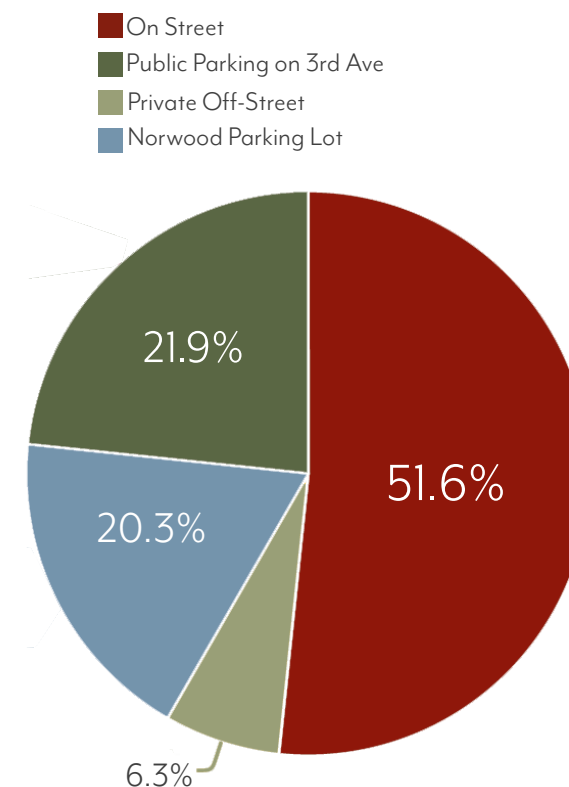
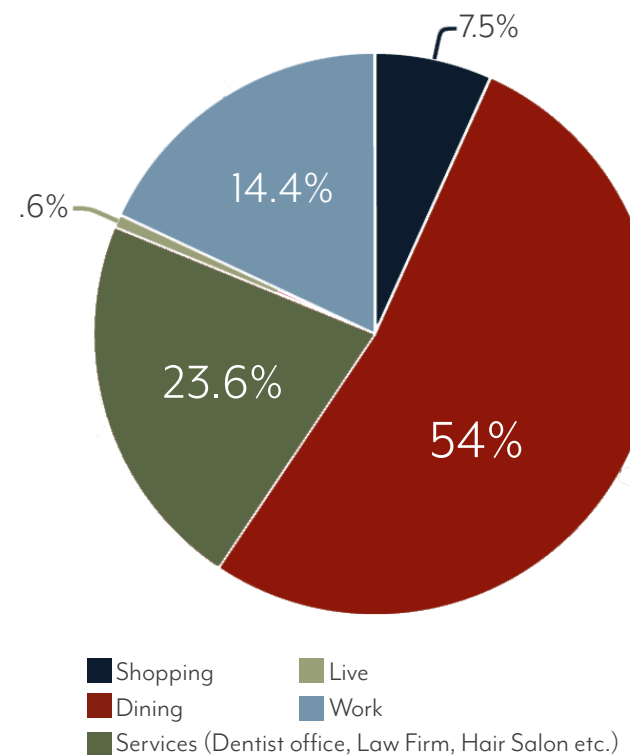
“All public parking spaces need to have signs. It is difficult to tell if it is private or public parking or what the parking rules are.”

“The back fence could use some paint and repair. There is always garbage in the parking lot and weeds growing in the middle planters.”



QUICK POLL RESULTS

The quick polls are short single-answer multiple-choice questions. They are limited in number, and each takes less than a minute to complete. The following quick poll questions were asked:



What is the most common reason you visit the East Main Downtown?



Where do you park when visiting East Main Downtown?

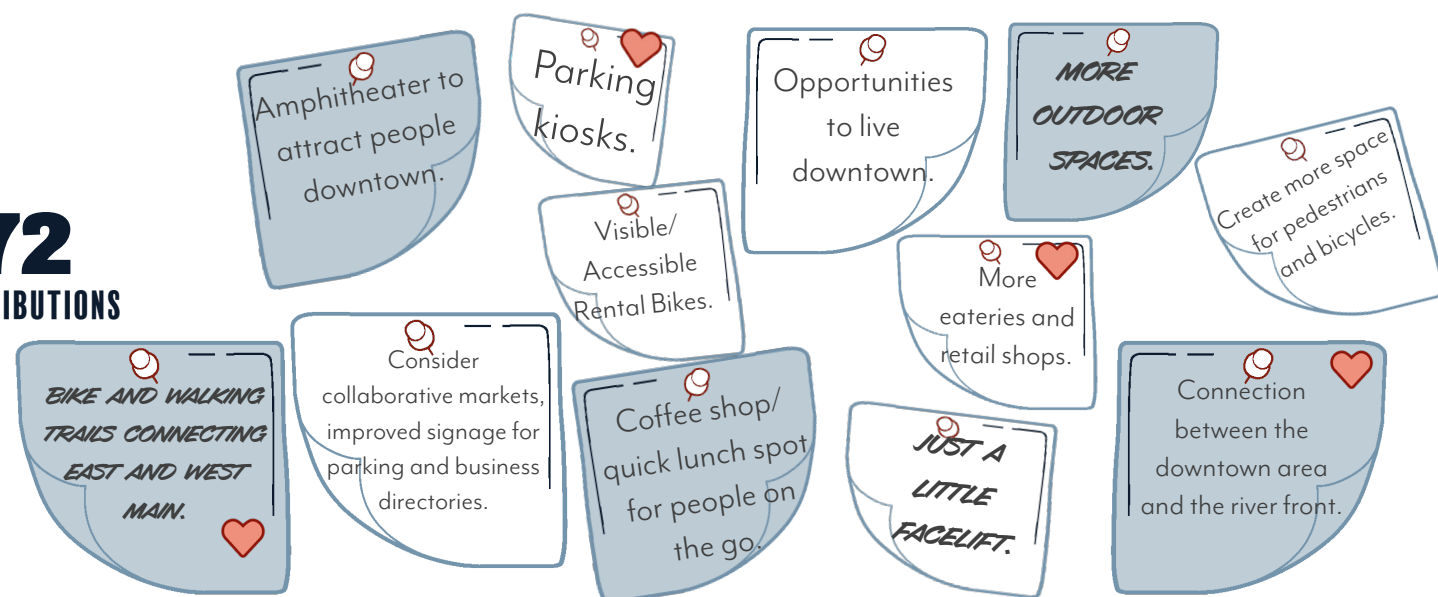


IDEAS BOARD RESULTS

Community members were asked to share their ideas about various questions and topics. Users could see what other community members think about an issue or topic, respond with their own views, or simply “like” the input provided by fellow contributors.

What type of businesses and amenities do you want to see more of in East Main Downtown?

72
CONTRIBUTIONS



What future changes would help East Main Downtown improve visitor's experience?

7
CONTRIBUTIONS



What do you like most about the East Main Downtown area?

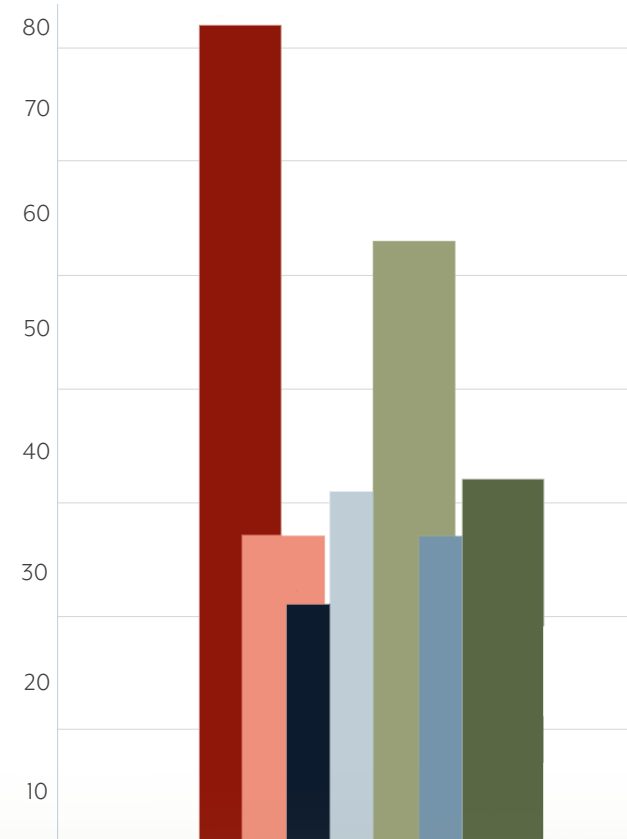
3
CONTRIBUTIONS



RADFORD UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

As Radford University students are a significant part of the city, they were also given the opportunity to contribute their ideas. Several student engagements were carried out at the start of the 2021 Fall semester that included the “5 questions” online and printed surveys, and set up booths at campus events. **100** participants responded to the online survey, while **137** students responded at the event booths. Participants were asked to identify their top priorities that would attract them to the downtown, for which the top responses were dining options, attractive buildings, green spaces, longer store hours and free Wi-Fi.

100 RADFORD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS + RADFORD RESIDENTS PARTICIPATED
THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS (84.5%) HAVE VISITED EAST MAIN
USUALLY FOR SHOPPING OR DINING!



What improvements would encourage you to visit downtown?

- Longer Store Hours
- Dining Options
- Better Pedestrian System
- Incorporation of Artwork
- Attractive Greenspaces
- Better Lighting
- Community/ University Organized Activities

Priority Areas



Outdoor Dining, Free Public Parking + Attractive Buildings

Stakeholder engagement activities are essential for any successful downtown plan. Business owners and key organizations help to identify issues and opportunities that are critical in guiding strategic investments toward successful revitalization activities. The City partnered with the Community Life Church to conduct two stakeholder meetings.



Through a series of online surveys, stakeholder meetings, booths at Radford University events and paper surveys distributed in the community, we were able to hear from the community about their vision for the future for East Main Downtown. During the five-month period of community engagement for the East Main Downtown Plan, we had nearly **3000** people visit the project page and total of **800** people provide their input.



2.1k
AWARE VISITORS

(Visited Project Page)



1000
INFORMED VISITORS

(Interacted with Project Page)



509
ENGAGED VISITORS

(Contributed to Project Page)

WHAT WE HEARD:

- CROSSWALKS**
- WAYFINDING**
- AESTHETICS**
- ACCESSIBILITY**
- CELEBRATE HISTORY**
- ANNUAL COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP**
- RENEWED STREETSCAPES**
- CONNECTIVITY (BETWEEN EAST + WEST DOWNTOWN, ACROSS + TO THE NEW, BIKE/PED)**
- VARIETY OF LOCAL RESTAURANTS + RETAIL**
- IMPROVE PARKING CLARITY**
- INCREASE DENSITY**
- ADAPTIVE USE OF DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS**
- LIVE/WORK PROXIMITY TO DOWNTOWN**
- MAIN ATTRACTION (AMPHITHEATER, PEDESTRIAN MALL, MUSEUM)**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

OVERALL CONCEPT
VISION STATEMENT
CONCEPTS
FACADE RECOMMENDATIONS
STREETSCAPING
STREET ACTIVATION
THIRD AVE
GATEWAY MURALS
WAYFINDING
LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Community and stakeholder engagement activities, along with analysis of existing assets and conditions, were key to understanding the next steps of plan development. The driving themes that emerged from community input are:

1. **HISTORY** – build on historical character and assets of the area
2. **DISTINCT** – Develop a distinct identity by improving the area’s visual aesthetics and leveraging natural and historical assets
3. **ECONOMIC VITALITY** – attract/ retain businesses, customers, and residents
4. **CONNECTIVITY** – improve experiences in connections to destinations, navigation, walkability, and parking

With these themes as the driving factors, the following key recommendations emerged which are further detailed in this plan:

- Create an overall design concept
- Identify focus areas for revitalization efforts
- Create façade concepts and façade improvements
- Enhance lighting
- Establish wayfinding and signage
- Improve infrastructure

OVERALL CONCEPT

VISION STATEMENT

East Main Street in downtown Radford is well poised to be a bustling commercial hub nestled between Radford University, Bisset Park and the New River, and West Radford. The conceptual designs reflect opportunities to introduce more public spaces, improve material aesthetics, and incorporate attractive landscaping elements. The existing width of the roads and availability of parking, offers a tremendous amount of flexibility to reimagine and repurpose underutilized spaces throughout the downtown area. As an example, the addition of curb bump-outs lend themselves to opportunities for shade trees, benches, dining, and stormwater water processing, all which create a stronger sense of place.



- A** Trail to Bisset Park
- B** Multi-purpose trail
- C** Parking lot refresh
- D** Transit hub
- E** West gateway mural
- F** Curb bump-outs
- G** East gateway mural
- H** Parking lot refresh
- I** Entrance redesign
- J** Streetscape improvements

CONCEPTS

The East Main Street Business District is already rich with history and details. The enhancements to the building façades will help to reactivate and reinvigorate the pedestrian experience and create a destination for the surrounding population. The retail façades present a unique challenge in preserving the historical elements that give the street its charm while introducing new contemporary designs to create a dynamic modern façade.



COOPER CARRY

ADJACENCIES – Understanding the existing and future retail mix as well as their use adjacencies will contribute to the adaptability of the retail environment. For example, pairing a café with a public amenity that can be shared will contribute to the success of the retailer as well as elevate the public space.

AMENITY – Retail becomes an amenity for local residences, the students at the university as well as local professionals and businesses. The enhanced main street will address the needs of these populations and bring unique options to an already historically beautiful fabric.

ENVIRONMENTS – From the public realm to private, these relationships are cohesive and integral to one another; successful retail can elevate the surrounding area.

LEASING – Providing flexibility with tenant sizes allows for the best mix through the design of storefronts, graphics, infrastructure, service and loading.

ACCESS – How do people get to and travel through the main street? Focusing on vehicular travel and elevating the pedestrian experience provides ease of access for traffic and a comfortable and safe experience for pedestrians.

FAÇADE RECOMMENDATIONS

A successful downtown district hinges on the retail experience with the right mix of food and beverage, entertainment, commodity, and service retailers. To help facilitate the right environment, the fabric of the street should draw in unique and local retailers, increase dwell time for visitors, and create an experience.



STREETSCAPING



A

B

C

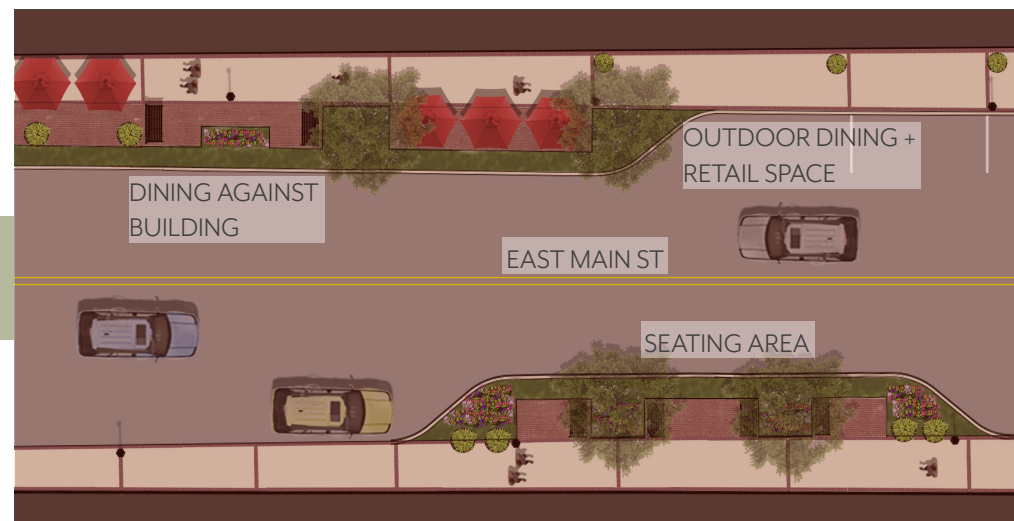


PLACEMAKING + ACCESSIBILITY

OUTDOOR SEATING + DINING

STREET TREES + STORMWATER CONTROLS

**MATTERN & CRAIG/
HILL STUDIO**



STREET ACTIVATION

By embracing key spaces that already exist along the corridor of the East Main Business District, the revitalization seeks to introduce new destinations. The design will take the alleys between buildings and turn them into vibrant outdoor dining areas with plantings, lighting, and public art for both the retailers and public to use. Parking lots will be able to be programmed for outdoor festivals, markets, concerts, and public movie screenings. Rear spaces are adapted to be discoverable and can be used for additional outdoor wine and beer gardens. These moments paired with the upgraded facades, already rich with character, will further create interest and draw a more vibrant mix of tenants that will help bring activation and energy to the street.



THIRD AVE

Third Avenue, which intersects with East Main Street and extends to Grove Avenue, is also home to a number of local businesses. The City's largest public parking lot is located adjacent to Third Avenue, which serves as longer term-parking for downtown residents and additional parking for visitors. Third Avenue boasts multiple well-maintained historic buildings, currently home to a popular restaurants and small retail shops. In this section of Third Avenue, the roadway is relatively wide and could allow for a wider sidewalk, extending the entire duration between Grove Avenue and East Main Street. Similar to Main Street, a wider pedestrian plaza could create more opportunities to introduce tree plantings, seating areas, and stormwater processing.



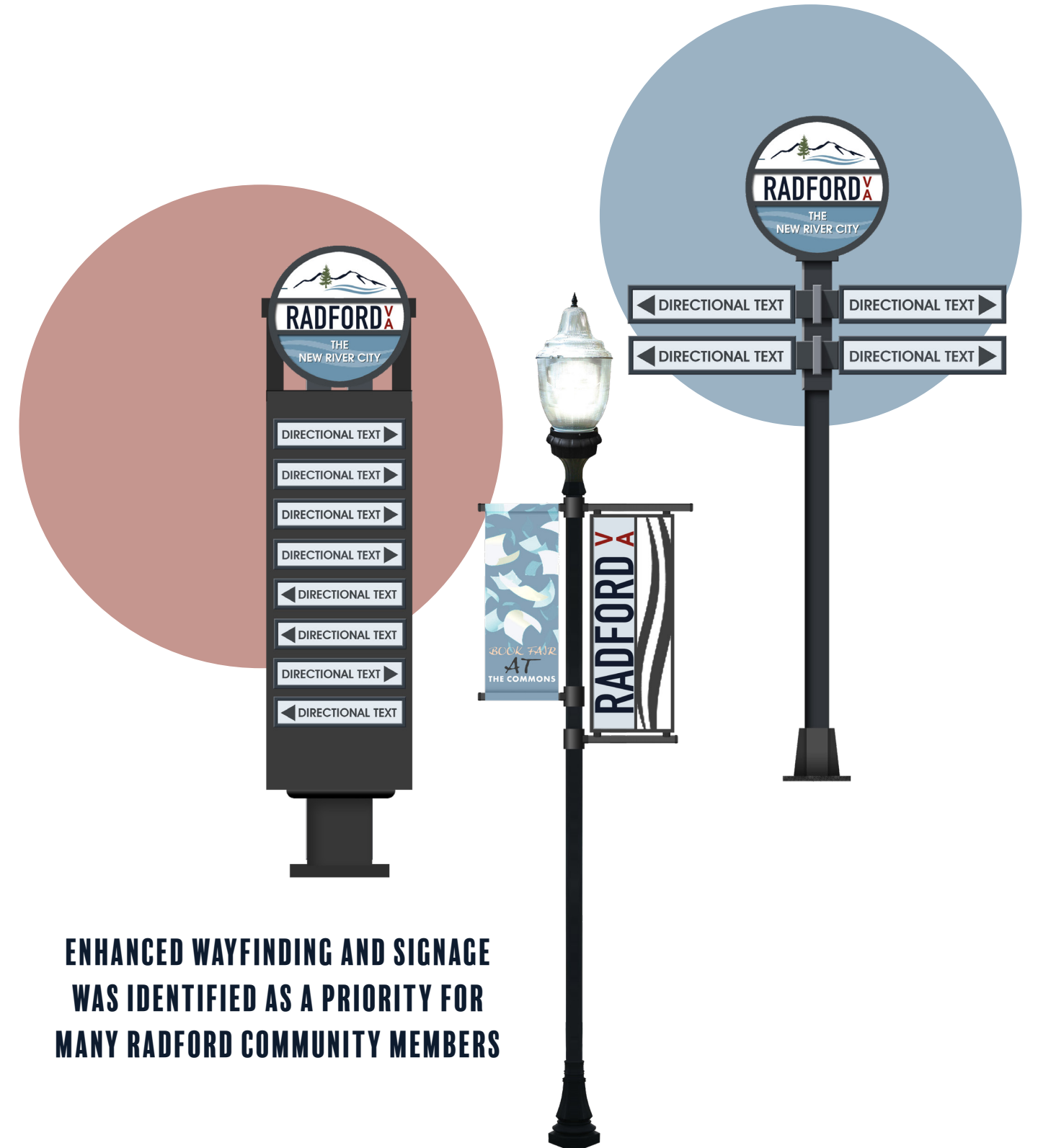
GATEWAY MURALS

Introducing murals could act as gateways to downtown revitalization and are an important part of placemaking for East Main Street in Downtown Radford. Radford is known as the New River City and the Western Gateway Mural is an opportunity to highlight the presence of the New River and Bisset Park – both of which are anchor destinations in the community. The Eastern Gateway Mural provides an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate being home to Radford University. This mural serves as a welcome to students coming into downtown for shopping, dining, studying and participating in social activities throughout the City.



WAYFINDING

Wayfinding systems provide visual assistance to visitors and motorists to easily reach their destinations and to navigate around unfamiliar locations. They include usage of directional, informational, gateways and logo trailblazer signs. Cooper Carry recommends attractive signage and city branding helps with promoting the area and reinforcing the City's image.



ENHANCED WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE WAS IDENTIFIED AS A PRIORITY FOR MANY RADFORD COMMUNITY MEMBERS

LANDSCAPE FEATURES



UNIQUE SIGNAGE

"STOREFRONT BEAUTIFICATION AND MODERNIZATION WOULD CREATE A MORE WELCOMING DOWNTOWN AREA."

- Community Survey Feedback

"...honestly what a lot of these buildings need is just a simple overall coat of paint or some power washing. I DO LOVE WHAT THEY DID WITH THE COUPLE BUILDINGS ON THIRD STREET WITH A LITTLE PAINT AND SIGNAGE (BUILDING NUMBERS IN A MORE MODERN FONT... Keep the vintage/industrial vibes of the buildings, just make them look cleaner and more cheerful."

- Community Survey Feedback



DYNAMIC LIGHTING

Lighting provides safety to pedestrians and extends main street activities through the evening hours. Attractive lighting infrastructure improves the visual appearance of the area and highlights nearby businesses, outdoor activities, community art and architecture, signage, walkways, parking, and landscaping features. Lighting also enhances the sense of safety and belonging to residents and visitors. These factors contribute to the increased number and duration of downtown visits - which helps the local economy to thrive.

"LIGHT UP THE DISTRICT"

"SOFTER LIGHTING (STRING LIGHTS)"

- Stakeholder Engagement Feedback



INTERACTIVE SIDEWALKS

Attractive and wider sidewalks improve the overall experience of downtown visitors. They can also accommodate outdoor dining, street performances, and public art displays. More robust assets for pedestrians also helps to create a welcoming environment and sets the community stage for enjoying local food, music, and togetherness. Complementing sidewalks with comfortable and well-designed seating areas, trees, planters, and other visual accents also influence the visitor mood and experience.

"HAVING AVAILABLE SPACES FOR NEW BUSINESSES THAT HAVE CURB APPEAL, ETC WOULD ENCOURAGE NEW SERVICES AND RESTAURANTS TO OPEN"

- Community Survey Feedback

IMPLEMENTATION:

POLICIES NEXT STEPS

The East Main Downtown Plan is full of inspirational ideas and information that will help to guide the City of Radford's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and commercial district property owner investments for the next several years. The City is actively partnering with consultants and community representatives to evaluate the existing infrastructure, available parking, building occupancy, retail leakage, property conditions, and so much more. The surrounding community is genuinely excited about the possibility of reimagining how public spaces can be utilized and how the distinctively historic buildings can accommodate a diverse offering of housing, retail, and office spaces.

Planning concepts and preliminary designs emerged through an active community engagement exercise and are intended to be both practical and achievable. Too often a community plan can miss the mark by considering solutions that are simply not realistic, based on a community's scale and its available resources. This plan is intentional and intended to be achievable through ongoing community collaboration and annual public, private, partnership investments.

The City of Radford does not intend to waste any time and is committed to implement capital improvements and necessary policies to achieve the community's vision. The City will collaborate with local property owners to improve building facades and public parking conditions; activate downtown streetscapes to expand pedestrian circulation and better accommodate outdoor dining and retail uses; and continue to engage the local community to adapt policies that incentivize entrepreneurial activity throughout the greater Appalachia economy.

POLICIES

Implementation

The following recommendations can be incorporated into the City's policies and strategies to meet the goals of the East Main Downtown Plan. The list of recommendations is intended to be considered in future projects, plans, design guidelines, and policy documents. Furthermore, the recommendations can be incorporated in important regulatory tools such as the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and economic development strategic plan.

- Develop incentives to attract and expand the range of downtown businesses to include a variety of entertainment, dining, gallery, artist spaces, youth center, retail incubator and non-retail uses.
- Identify and dedicate public funding to support cost sharing for physical improvements of downtown buildings.
- Develop programs and incentives for vacant and underutilized buildings and floor spaces to be filled or used more intensively. Assist existing property owners with marketing of underutilized spaces (monthly features, accessible interactive map, etc.).
- Address current infrastructure needs, including sidewalk reconstruction, addition and improvement of lighting, and introduction of outdoor dining and gathering spaces.
- Installation of Public Art and Murals, especially at community gateways and around vacant properties.
- Explore creating an overlay district and design guidelines to establish consistency and meet other expectations for the area.



- Partner with local businesses to conduct regular special events to draw people to the area and promote the local economy.
- Encourage businesses to improve storefront transparency, display of products and services, and attractive signage to attract customers and enhance curb appeal. Examples and guidelines can be developed and provided to businesses for reference to enhance East Main Downtown's image.
- Review parking regulations as part of the zoning ordinance and update to address policies that are barriers to meeting development and redevelopment goals.
- Redesign public parking areas along Main Street and 3rd Avenue to foster more efficient use and accessibility to downtown.
- Continue to improve and enhance landscaping around parking facilities to enhance visual appearance of the streetscape.
- Improve wayfinding signage by incorporating new City branding elements.
- Improve pedestrian environment and lighting to encourage walking.
- Continue current policy of free parking as it is desirable to many survey respondents.

NEXT STEPS

The City of Radford is committed to investing in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen its downtown and the greater surrounding Appalachia economy. The purpose of developing the East Main Downtown Plan was to engage the local community, explore ideas, and develop tools that can be integrated into a future capital improvements plan. Hundreds of public ideas were gathered from a multitude of engagement activities intended to gain input from the entire community. The most popular ideas helped to shape priorities for conceptual planning visualizations, architectural renderings, and preliminary design work.

The City recently completed a multi-year initiative on West Main Street and is excited to replicate successful initiatives throughout local business districts. Next steps for East Main include:

1. **PRIORITIZING** and phasing public infrastructure investments (architecture and engineering firms are collaborating to develop phase recommendations and estimates)
2. **FORMALIZING** policies to address blighted, vacated and/or underutilized properties (incentivize and collaborate with good stewards of property maintenance)
3. **DEVELOPING** new financial incentives to encourage business retention and attraction (identify public/private approach to make façade improvements and coordinate more social gathering activities as a community)
4. **CREATING** a stronger connection to historical, natural, and cultural community assets (incorporation of artwork, landscaping, accent lighting, wayfinding signage, activity areas)



The timing for this plan is ideal, given that the pre-pandemic top priority of City Council was placed on downtown revitalization. Ideas within the downtown plan will serve as a guidebook for City leadership – ensuring that investments encourage future economic development activity and create more of a community driven destination. The City intends to make significant financial investments to the East Main Downtown area over the next 5-10 years. Improvements will be phased such that local funding can be directed towards the highest project priorities on an annual basis. The pedestrian-built environment will include improvements for street crossings, sidewalk rehabilitation, and aims to reduce traffic speed by introducing raised medians and landscaping features. The City will partner with local business owners to improve building facades, create sidewalk bump outs for dining and retail, and improve community parking and wayfinding.

On behalf of the City of Radford, thank you for your contributions towards the East Main Downtown Plan!



