Tuesday, January 17, 2012

Winchester Virginia

# Winchester City Council Work Session

## Council Goal

Make the downtown the "IT SPOT IN VIRGINIA"
- increase residency and decrease vacancy.

Economic Development Authority
Old Town Development Board
Parking Authority
Planning Commission

Winchester
city manager's office Virginia

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**To:** City Council

**From:** Craig S. Gerhart
Interim City Manager

**Date:** January 12, 2012

**Subj:** City Council Work Session on its Downtown Goal

**Background:**

The entire Council agenda for its work session on January 17, 2012 is devoted to a joint work session to advance the Council's goal to "Focus on Downtown". The Council will be joined by members of the Planning Commission, the Economic Development Authority, the Old Town Development Board and the Parking Authority. Each of these entities has a major public sector role to play in guiding the implementation of the Council's goal. The location of the meeting is the fourth floor Exhibit Hall at City Hall. We expect the meeting to last about two hours.

**Work Session Purpose:**

The purpose of the work session is to generate ideas, objectives and inputs for the development of a strategic plan guiding the City's efforts related to downtown. While no decisions are expected at the meeting, the session should generate sufficient information for City staff to develop an action based plan containing measureable strategies and objectives for Council's consideration at a later, but soon, date.

**Information Provided:**

The notebook that follows this memorandum contains information relevant to the work session. You will find information previously presented from the Comprehensive Plan and the Economic Development Master Plan. You will also find a staff report on Residential Living in Downtown done in 2009 but not presented formally to Council. A very recent work by the National Main Street organization for the Old Town Development Board is included as well. We will include some preliminary results from the recent citizen satisfaction survey on matters relating specifically to downtown. You will also find information from the Parking Authority related to downtown parking issues, the Police Department on downtown safety and crime, and a brief

partial environmental scan identifying some of the downtown's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

**Process:**

We will break the meeting into two main parts. The first will involve a brief highlight of key points of the materials contained in the meeting notebook and a quick review of the SWOT analysis to set the stage for the ensuing brainstorming session. Part two of the meeting will involve facilitated small group brainstorming and reporting out. The brainstorming will center on major strategy areas culled out of the vision responses many of you provided. Some examples of strategy areas include: Infrastructure and parking, events and activities, branding and marketing, business and retail development, expanding residential opportunities and safety. Ideally, we will reach consensus around five major strategy topics after a brief discussion with all in attendance.

**Agenda:**

- Welcome and Introductions – President Buettner
- Summary presentation of key materials and environmental scan – Interim Manager & Staff
- Expansion of Environmental scan – All
- Small Group round robin brainstorming exercise – All
- Report out of small group – Staff facilitator
- Priority Selection Exercise (Optional) – All
- Summary and Next Steps – Interim Manager
- Council, Authority, Commission and Board comments

# Winchester City Council Work Session

**Tuesday, January 17, 2012 @ 6:00 pm**

**Council Goal:** **Make the downtown the "IT SPOT IN VIRGINIA" – increase residency and decrease vacancy.**

**Joint meeting with:**
**Economic Development Authority**
**Old Town Development Board**
**Parking Authority**
**Planning Commission**

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WINCHESTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS & MASTER PLAN
FINAL REPORT March 28, 2011

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**I. Introduction and Overview**

This report is an analysis of economic development market opportunities and a master plan for action to seize those opportunities. It examines the City as a whole, but gives special focus to six key "catalyst" sites that offer particular opportunities for economic development and revitalization.

This Master Plan clarifies the City's vision of its economic future, and supports that vision with a program of strategic actions for both short-term and long-term horizons. This plan has been done in parallel with the City's update of its overall Comprehensive Plan, which provides the broader, long-term, land use policy framework for the City.

This Master Plan provides a sound analytical basis for the implementation of projects through public and private initiatives and collaborations, as well new ideas and opportunities for economic development implementation. In particular, it provides:

- ***An analysis of existing and potential markets*** that identifies regional, Citywide, and area-specific development and re-development opportunities;
- Examination and evaluation of the viability of ***individual project site opportunities*** that are defined as key catalyst projects for economic development;
- ***An action program*** to achieve the City's goals for enhancing the overall quality of life of City residents and businesses through increased economic development opportunities; and
- ***Coordination with the City's Comprehensive Plan*** update process.

The six catalyst sites that were studied in detail are:

- Ward's Plaza
- Meadow Branch corridor extended
- Berryville Avenue (financial analysis focuses on the Apple Valley Square)
- Pleasant Valley Road extended
- National Fruit Products Company
- Downtown (historic core area)

Fig. 1. Map of Catalyst Site Locations within the City

**II. Trends and Expected Changes – Global to Local**

**III. Current Conditions**

**1.0 Primary Assets, Amenities and Opportunities**

Listed below are the City's principal assets that can be leveraged as part of the overall plan for action for future economic development.

*Regional Economic Center*

Historical and continuing role as a majoreconomic, cultural, financial, legal, real estate, political/government and social center of the northern Shenandoah Valley.

*Historic Community Character*

Historic downtown core, with a traditional grid street network, substantial historic architectural fabric, and a long history of active preservation and restoration initiatives.

**2.0 Current Constraints and Liabilities**

## IV. Summary of Demographic & Market Analysis

**1.0 Demographic and Employment Trends Analysis**

**2.0 Current Market Analysis**

*In summary, current trends suggest that new housing development can occur and that new apartment unit development, senior housing, and for-sale townhouses are feasible. The most viable development sites are Ward Plaza, Meadow Branch, and the downtown Mall.*

2.1 Summary of Apartment Market Analysis

2.2 Summary of For-Sale Housing Market

Winchester does not have sufficient land area to compete with the large amenity-oriented Planned Developments in the County. Thus, products with good urban design and site planning will need to be built so that the City can attract its share of the market. Townhouses are one type of product that can be successful, particularly in a marketplace where home prices will continue to be an issue for project success. Renovations of historic downtown properties are also a viable option.

2.3 Summary of Age-Restricted Housing Market

The age-restricted market is expanding, but for project success, City sites must attract seniors from Frederick County, or from outside of the market area. The Meadow Branch area is a likely location, as are some downtown locations.

2.4 Summary of Assisted Living Facilities Analysis 1

2.5 Summary of Office Space Analysis 1

Executive Order No. 12072 (entitled "Federal Space Management"), issued in1978, requires all federal executive agencies that have a mission requirement to locate in an urban area to give first consideration to locating federal facilities in central business areas (CBAs), and/or adjacent areas of similar character, to use them to make downtowns attractive places to work, conserve existing resources, and encourage redevelopment.

2.6 Summary of Retail Space Analysis 1

2.7 Summary of Hotel Room Demand 1

**3.0 Identification of Potential or Emerging Markets** 1

**Business:**

3.1 Existing Businesses – Retention, Expansion 1

3.2 Health-Related

3.3 University-Related

3.4 Technology Entrepreneurs

Winchester offers many of the key resources desired by emerging and start-up technology businesses – economical work and living space, convenient access to regional transportation linkages, proximity to the large northern Virginia technology community, and a vibrant, historic, walkable downtown. To an increasing degree, an expanding network of technology entrepreneurs is emerging, which creates a self-reinforcing momentum for continued expansion. The Bright Cowork Center is an example of a program directly supporting technology start-ups in the City.

3.5 Federal Agency Facilities and Spin-offs/Support

3.6 Entertainment-related

**Residential:**

3.7 Retirees and "empty-nest" households

3.8 Young, "creative class" households

The other demographic segment with particular potential for Winchester's future are the young professionals – those with higher education levels who want to live and work in a vibrant downtown

**V. Strategic Vision**

**1.0 Citywide Vision**
**2.0 Housing Stock Enhancement**
**3.0 Future Industry Sectors**
**4.0 Labor Force Enhancement**
**5.0 Quality of Life and Built Character**
**6.0 General Implementation Recommendations**

Medium Term (2-5 years):

- Improve pedestrian crosswalks and connections between key sites, the downtown and the City-wide trail system;
- Establish trolley service to connect select areas with downtown;
- Transition all signals downtown that hang from wires to signal arms,
- Replace light fixtures and street furniture with elements of a more historic character.

Long Term (5-10+ years):

- Develop the Green Circle trail segments and tie into a sidewalk/trail system that links all the catalyst sites to each other and the downtown;

Adjust Zoning Regulations

*Market-based Regulatory Adjustments* to allow activity that meets the City's revitalization objectives. Examples include…allowing accessory apartments in dwelling units in or close to downtown, and allowing existing downtown uses to expand without triggering additional parking requirements.

**VI. Analyses and Concept Plans for Catalyst Sites**

**1.0 Overview of Site Analyses and Concept Plans**

Following are site analyses and conceptual land use and development plans for five of the six key catalyst sites (downtown is addressed mainly through comprehensive plan policies). These are sites… were selected based upon: The inherent potential of these sites for redevelopment due to geographic location and the relationship to key economic drivers within the City such as the Hospital, the University, and Downtown

**2.0 Citywide Analysis/Context of the Catalyst Sites**

Fig. 2. Map of Existing Economic Activity Centers and Corridors

The City is anchored by key activity centers, including the downtown pedestrian mall, Shenandoah University, the Valley Health Medical Center, the Pleasant Valley commercial areas and the Valley Avenue commercial corridor.

Fig. 3. Map of Proximity of Catalyst Sites to Major Transportation Corridors

Each of the catalyst sites has excellent road access and transportation connections to other activity centers within the City; and most have good access to the road network surrounding the City. Of special importance are the linkages between Downtown and the Winchester Medical Center to the west, and Shenandoah University to the east.

Fig. 4. Map of Open Space Parks and Natural Areas

Fig. 5. Map of the Primary Transportation Network

The City continues to plan, promote and execute improvements to its transportation network, including the return to two-way traffic on key downtown streets, as well as a planned overpass of I-81, the completion of Meadow Branch Parkway, and improvements to Jubal Early Drive.

Fig. 6. Composite Map of Citywide Analysis and Catalyst Sites

**3.0 Individual Catalyst Site Analyses and Concept Plans**

3.1 Overview of Analysis and Findings

***Downtown Area*** – The historic downtown area is the core of the City and the focal point around which the other areas and sites revolve. It contains the most prominent civic buildings of the City and the County, as well as most of the significant historic architectural fabric. Due to the fragmentation of ownership and the extensive land coverage, this study does not look in detail at the Downtown area as a single development site, but references the most recent policies and site improvement concepts developed through the recent comprehensive plan update process, which has been conducted in parallel with this study. *With its traditional human-scale streetscapes and mix of uses, it has excellent potential for additional residential development to serve the "emptynester" and "young professional" housing markets.*

3.2 Site-Specific Analyses and Concept Plans for Action

Ward's Plaza
Meadow Branch
Berryville Avenue
Pleasant Valley
National Fruit
Downtown

**Downtown Area Site**

*This site is significantly different from the other catalyst sites, due to its size, complexity, and multiple ownership. The line on the map below indicates the extent of the existing Historic District. Recommendations for development initiatives in this area are consistent with those that have emerged through the Comprehensive Plan update process. The historic Downtown Pedestrian Mall is a focal point, particularly the proposed improvements and redevelopment of several adjacent properties, including the Taylor Hotel site. Improvements to enhance the appearance and functionality of the mall should include thinning the tree canopy to "open up" the walkway and brighten the space.*

**Summary of Conclusions**

**VII. Citywide Marketing Plan**

**1.0 – Overview**

1.1 – Marketing Objectives

**2.0 – S.W.O.T.**

2.1 – Strengths

**Unique setting and environment** (*like a Norman Rockwell hometown)*

- Downtown historic district with human-scale streets, mixed uses, historic architecture and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.
- Historic character of the City and its surrounding area, particularly the rich Civil War history.

2.2 – Weaknesses
2.3 – Opportunities
2.4 – Threats

**3.0 – Market Position**

3.1 – Primary Benefits
3.2 – Secondary Benefits
3.3 – Primary & Secondary Markets

**4.0 – Infrastructure Assets**

**5.0 – Economic Catalyst Sites**

Historic Downtown Area

- The historic core of the city, with its substantial historic structural fabric, includes some very significant buildings such as the Handley Library and the Rouss City Hall
- Portions of the area are in an adopted historic district that provides architectural review to ensure compatible development.
- The streetscape is pedestrian-oriented and walkable.
- Mix of uses
- Substantial public parking available.
- Substantial amount of public and private civic improvements underway or recently completed.

**6.0 – Branding Strategy**

6.1 – Product Name: Winchester, Virginia, Economic Redevelopment
6.2 – Top Marketable Benefits
6.3 – Competitive Sensitivities
6.4 – Branding Value and Accessibility
6.5 – Messaging
6.6 – Visual Identity

**7.0 – Marketing System**

7.1 – Logo
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7.5 – Presentation Folder and Inserts

**8.0 – Approach and Tactics**

8.1 – Traditional Marketing
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8.3 – Social Media Marketing
8.4 – Partnerships & Affiliations
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**9.0 – Sources**

## VIII. Citywide Implementation Strategy

**1.0 Physical Assets**

Establish and foster the development of downtown student housing.

**2.0 Partnerships and Collaboration**

**3.0 Promotion and Incentives**

- Targeted Incentives – grants, tax rebates, loans – for Downtown Façade Improvement, Downtown building rehabilitation, Downtown technology employment.
- Promote events, festivals, etc. – provide grant for new events in downtown.

## Appendix

A - Detailed Demographic and Market Analysis
B – Alternative Concept Development Plans for the Catalyst Sites

Winchester
economic redevelopment Virginia

# Economic Development Analysis & Master Plan

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Extended)

*Final Report - March 28, 2011*

## Purpose and Overview of the Analysis and Plan

This Master Plan analyzes economic development market opportunities for the City, and offers a plan for action to seize those opportunities, including specific conceptual designs for six key "catalyst" sites that offer particular opportunities for economic development and revitalization.

This Plan clarifies the City's vision of its economic future, and supports that vision with a program of strategic actions for both short-term and long-term horizons. It parallels the City's update of its overall Comprehensive Plan, which provides the broader, long-term, land use policy framework for the City.

The current economic conditions present serious challenges to the City, but also important opportunities for enhancing local economic vitality, overall quality of life, and for capitalizing on the basic forces that will drive the 21st century economy - while also preserving the essential community character of Winchester. *In fact, contemporary economic trends indicate that Winchester's assets are advantageous.*

This Master Plan provides a sound analytical basis for the implementation of projects through public and private initiatives and collaborations, as well new ideas and opportunities for economic development implementation.

## Challenges and Opportunities for Winchester

The City faces challenges, yet it has assets and opportunities that indicate the potential to overcome those challenges if the opportunities are seized.

The City has lower incomes and education levels relative to surrounding jurisdictions and faces regional competition from Frederick County and neighboring jurisdictions for employment growth and retail sales. It has higher rates of crime in some categories than surrounding jurisdictions. It has a relatively high proportion of group home facilities, and it has a substantial amount of relatively low-value/under-maintained housing stock.

However, Winchester has some good assets that offer opportunities for the future. *Regional Location and Accessibility.* The City's location on the fringe of the northern Virginia region is an asset as well as a constraint. It is within easy commuting to the east with multiple routes; it is outside a 70-mile zone surrounding the nation's capitol which fits well with the trend toward dispersal of federal government facilities; it is on Interstate 81, with two major interchanges directly into the City and two additional interchanges just to the north and south of the City; and it has a historical and continuing role as a major economic, cultural,

financial, legal, real estate, political/government and social center of the northern Shenandoah Valley.

*Shifts in Demographics and Market Demands.* The two biggest emerging markets are aging baby boomers and the millennial generation. Both of these groups tend to prefer smaller houses and walkable, convenient lifestyles, and a sense of place.

*Health and Higher Education Center.* The Winchester Medical Center, and Shenandoah University, are key components of the region's future economic base.

*Energy Costs.* Increasing costs of transportation as a percentage of household expenses will underpin centralization of jobs and services.

*Infrastructure Improvements* While the City has various infrastructure deficiencies, it has also made significant recent improvements including converting several one-way streets to two-way and increasing the parking supply downtown.

*Historic Character.* The historic downtown core, with a traditional grid street network, substantial historic architectural fabric, and a long history of active preservation and restoration initiatives.

*Existing Industry and Retail.* Several major, diverse industrial employers. Substantial retail sector that serves the City and surrounding market service area.

## Summary of Findings of Market Analysis

The market analysis looked at existing as well as emerging and potential markets for land use and development, originally in 2008-09, and updated during 2010.

*Residential. Current trends suggest that new housing development can occur and that new apartment unit development, senior housing, and for-sale townhouses are feasible.* The most viable development sites are Ward Plaza, Meadow Branch, and the downtown Mall. Rental housing is currently the strongest land use within the market area. Based on the current pent-up demand and demographic trends, the market area is estimated to support 200 to 250 new, upper-rent units every five years, and a market currently exists for 150 to 200 units.

*Commercial.* Retail space, office space and hotel room development are primarily longer-term potentials. The need is for planning for upgrading key sites into planned environments for new retail and office space, possibly new hotel development, in conjunction with "town center" type housing.

The market area population continues to increase, albeit at a very slow pace. Building permit activity as well as employment and jobs declined in 2008 and 2009, although growth in at-place jobs prior to the recession was also modest.

These trends suggest that although short-term development opportunities are limited, there is a real need and opportunity to make the City more competitive for new development in the medium to long-term, by capitalizing on the City's inherent assets.

The positive feature of the office market analysis is that the 8± percent vacancy rate for the greater Winchester office space market is a modest total given the sizable amount of recent development. Secondly, the market area attracted two large federal government users and that trend could continue. The office space market should continue to expand, but probably not at the same level as during the past five years prior to the downturn. The key is to attract more technology sector and federal government tenants and this in turn could generate the demand for government contractors.

The current market area annual hotel room occupancy is now under 60 percent. The desired rate is approximately 65 percent, or slightly lower with mature hotels. To reach 65 percent occupancy for the market area under current inventory, including 2009 properties, would require an increase in 47,500+ occupied room nights, which is equivalent to another 85-room hotel. The data suggest that based on past trends in hotel room demand, the current market (2009) is only marginally oversupplied, given the significant amount of new rooms recently placed on the market, and that after 2010/11, additional hotel rooms would be supportable. The share that can be captured in the City would be dependent on the quality of the site. It is plausible that a new market area hotel could be built every other year (depending upon size) and that with quality sites, half of this demand could be located in the City.

*Existing Businesses – Retention, Expansion.* The primary target for most economic development efforts begins with retaining existing businesses, and fostering expansion and spin-offs of existing employment sectors. However, due to a constantly changing economic environment no locality should rely solely on its existing sectors.

*Health-Related.* One of Winchester's largest economic entities is the medical center. Expansion of the medical center, as well as support services, offers excellent long term potential. Expansion of this sector would have synergistic benefits for housing, retail and personal service establishments, among others.

*University-Related.* Like the health industry, higher education is expected to be an important growth industry in the 21st century. Further, the university and the medical center can be mutually reinforcing, to the extent that the university's curriculum can be further shaped to produce graduates that are qualified to fill the kinds of jobs that are part of the medical center's activities as well as the adjunct services that support the medical center.

*Technology Entrepreneurs.* Winchester offers many of the key resources desired by emerging and start-up technology businesses – economical work and living space, convenient access to regional transportation linkages, proximity to the large northern Virginia technology community, and a vibrant, historic, walkable downtown.

*Federal Agency Facilities and Spin-offs/Support.* Several major federal facilities have located to the Frederick County/Winchester market area, due to the desire to disperse various federal functions, as well as to achieve cost efficiency. These facilities account for not only the direct federal jobs, but also produce some "spin-off" employment to support the basic federal functions. Due to its location, Winchester offers a significant potential for additional expansion of federal facilities, and the related support services.

*Entertainment-related.* In part due to the potential for the younger adult demographic, the potential for food, beverage and entertainment businesses also holds good long-term potential for Winchester. The City remains the only significant urban place in the region, which gives it "gravitational" force to add to this segment of the economy.

*Retirees and "empty-nest" households.* The aging "baby boom" population, particularly retirees and "empty-nest" households, tends to have higher than average incomes. Many of those in this segment – especially the "empty-nesters" - are independent or part-time workers, as well, and would thus directly enhance the local employment base and labor force. Research indicates that this "age-wave" will focus on many of the amenities - such as walkability, easy access to services and cultural resources and transportation choices - that Winchester either already has or can strengthen to capitalize on this impending change.

*Young, "creative class" households.* The other demographic segment with particular potential for Winchester's future are the young professionals – those with higher education levels who want to live and work in a vibrant downtown, yet also wish to have a relatively convenient and less congested life style, with better access to active recreational amenities like the rivers, national parks, trails, etc.

This population segment tends to be very mobile, with flexibility for a wide range of locational decisions that meet their lifestyle preferences. Here too, the City can again capitalize on the embodied assets in the character of its existing built fabric to attract this class more easily than many surrounding suburban or rural areas.

## Strategic Vision

**In the near to medium term (1 to 5 years),** the City should focus on creating and strengthening the assets that it will need for economic success in the future, while also promoting its existing assets.

**In the longer term (5+ years),** the City will be able to implement strategies and tactical actions to capitalize on new and improved assets for better economic health and vitality.

Specific actions recommended to achieve both the near-term and long-term strategic visions are included in the analyses and plans for each catalyst site. The vision is further detailed below in a series of overall recommendations for enhancements to the current conditions in the City.

***Housing Stock Enhancement.*** Improve and expand the overall housing stock, to provide for and attract both older and younger age household populations, thereby raising the average household income in the City.

***Future Industry Sectors.*** Increase the synergy between the medical center and the university, including both economic and physical linkages; Establish and grow technology businesses, especially small, start-up companies that can benefit from Winchester's unique setting and environment; Gradually add retail space that capitalizes on the new, higher income residents and employees, as their numbers increase; Establish and grow businesses that support federal facilities that expand or relocate into the Winchester/Frederick County market area.

***Labor Force Enhancement.*** Create programs that improve educational attainment at all levels, in order to provide a more skilled and better educated labor force in the area; Create new housing types and improve the existing housing stock in the City so that it can attract the younger and older demographic groups with higher education levels and income expectations

***Quality of Life and Built Character.*** Develop mixed-use neighborhood centers and corridors that combine housing (for young and old households), retail, and office/employment uses, integrated within a compact, walkable area that will create the kind of urban amenity environment sought by the "creative class" and "empty nest" demographic sectors (the six catalyst sites offer special opportunities for this type of development)

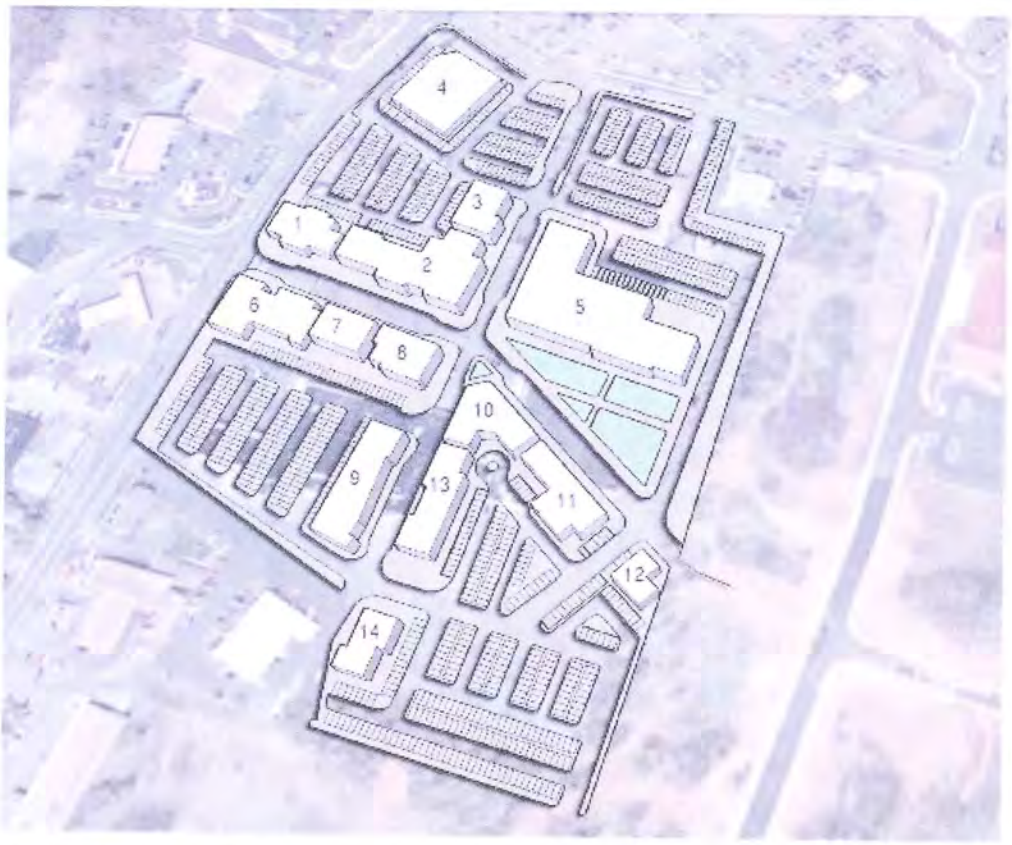
## Conceptual Plans for Catalyst Sites

***Six "Catalyst Sites"*** that offer particular opportunities for development and redevelopment were selected for detailed analysis and design. For the first five sites, the team prepared an analysis of opportunities and constraints, alternative development scenarios, and a final conceptual site development plan, shown in this report. Pro forma feasibility analyses were also prepared for key sites. The catalyst sites are:

- Ward's Plaza
- Meadow Branch corridor extended
- Berryville Avenue
- Pleasant Valley Road extended
- National Fruit Products Company
- Downtown (historic core area)

**Catalyst Site Locations**

## Ward's Plaza - Conceptual Redevelopment Site Plan




***Ward's Plaza*** – This is a mature retail center with considerable vacant space and no recent investment. The center is no longer fully competitive for the retail space market due largely to the large number of new, more upscale centers that have been built elsewhere in the region. Future use is likely to be residential, with *potential for a mixed-use development including some new commercial space. Redevelopment of the site will likely need to be done in phases.*

The conceptual site plan shows a mixed-use development with 14 distinct building envelopes, designed as an interconnected, pedestrian-friendly area. The site would be expected to develop in phases, with the first phase consisting of buildings 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8, as indicated in the drawing above. Phase I would include 51,670 square feet gross for retail/office on the first floor level, and 83,890 square feet gross for residential. At an average of 900± square feet gross per unit, 100± apartment units would be in the five-buildings of Phase I.

The pro forma analysis "tests" project feasibility and indicates that redevelopment for Phase I would to be positive, particularly if Building 3 is included. Inclusion of commercial space is key to project feasibility. Future development on the remaining land is likely to be

mainly residential. The financial test was positive, assuming the land price and ability to develop the site in phases. New Market Tax Credit financing was assumed.

**Meadow Branch - Conceptual Site Plan**

*Oblique view of the site looking to the west*

***Meadow Branch*** – This site is a roadway corridor located on the west side of the City near the Winchester Medical Center. Currently, Meadow Branch Avenue runs north from Handley Avenue to approximately Buckner Drive. The roadway is proposed to be extended north to U.S. Route 50, near Merriman's Lane but is not yet extended north from Buckner Drive, and the land along the future roadway corridor is vacant. *The concept plan for the Meadow Branch Corridor is a phased mix of new medical office space, age-restricted housing and new subdivisions.*

The concept plan shown above for the Meadow Branch corridor calls for a mix of medical office space, some commercial space, age-restricted housing and family housing, primarily townhouses. This plan clearly is a long-range development opportunity, as Meadow Branch Avenue is not yet extended and will be required for project development. That could likely be at public expense. Development of this plan will likely attract a wide range of developers; phasing would be a likely necessity.

The team studied one vacant parcel along the corridor, a 33.4-acre vacant parcel with an assessed land value of $3,340,000, or $100,000 per acre. If developed for townhouses at a density of eight units per acre, the land cost would be $12,500 per townhouse unit. With no major off-site development costs, that price readily would allow for townhouse development. At four units per acre it would also allow for single-family home development. Site development for attached, single story homes would also be feasible.

Age-restricted housing, such as an independent living facility, would generate the same land values as standard apartment units, or $8,000± per unit. The Meadow Branch land values would be fully supportive of this type of development. An assisted living facility

(ALF) could generate higher land costs, so that land use also is feasible. This is true for commercial uses that generate much higher land values compared with residential.

### Berryville Avenue - Conceptual Redevelopment Site Plan

This is a mature retail strip corridor along Route 7 from the I-81 interchange west to Pleasant Valley Road. This area contains a wide variety of commercial uses, including discount retail uses, ethnic stores, and a wide range of free-standing commercial buildings, including fast food restaurants. Redevelopment of the defined corridor area is very complex due to the large number of sites that need to be assembled. For this effort, the Apple Valley Square strip retail center was selected for detailed study, as this mature retail site represents a sizable development parcel. It has some of the same issues as Ward's Plaza, reflected in increased vacancies and deferred maintenance. *A new catalyst project will help "jump start" new investment along this corridor.*

The concept plan for the corridor calls for the redevelopment of mixed-uses on the underused sites, including residential, office and retail, and the addition and/or extension of key roadways to enhance connectivity and a clear system of blocks. The plan also calls for a new parallel road corridor to the south of Berryville Avenue which would allow for higher value infill redevelopment in that area.

**Oblique Aerial View of Berryville Avenue Conceptual Plan** (looking north)

## Pleasant Valley - Conceptual Site Plan

This is a 25.92-acre area located along the east side of Pleasant Valley Road, from Cedarmeade Avenue/Paper Mill Road south to Summit Avenue. A large portion of the site is vacant. North of the site is the Apple Blossom Mall and Corners Shopping Center, plus a wide range of other retail stores. The Windy Hill Industrial Park is also on the north side, but east of I-81. The Winchester industrial park is on the south. A railroad right-of-way runs parallel to the west side of Pleasant Valley Road. The closest interchange to I-81 is at Millwood Avenue/U.S. Route 50 on the north side of Apple Blossom Mall. *The site is identified as a potential office/business center. If developed, this location will likely be a land development with finished lots sold for office or industrial development.*

A conceptual plan for development of the Pleasant Valley site as a business park was prepared. If developed for that use, the site will likely be developed as a land sales project, with each user purchasing a finished lot. The entire site shown is nearly 26 acres. It has vacant land on the north half and some development on the south. Assemblage is required for the entire 26± acres, but the market does not support enough office and industrial space demand for the entire site at this time. Thus, development phasing will be required. For the vacant land at this location, once the market improves, development will be feasible.

*Oblique view of Pleasant Valley plan looking north*

Market support for business park development may be three or more years in the future. The Pleasant Valley property is well located, but not viable for retail uses given the large cluster of retail space at and near the mall. At the assessed value of the vacant land at this location, residential development could occur. Thus, there are likely to be various development options for this location.

## National Fruit Products - Conceptual Site Plan

This is former industrial land located on the northwest side of the City on the west side of U.S. 522 Business and along Strothers Lane. The buildings are three- and four-story brick industrial buildings formerly used for processing for the apple industry. This is the largest potentially available site in the City. General market support was not identified for this large property, as other industrial sites are more readily available. However, *this site has potential for future development, possibly as a secure site for a government agency or government contractor.*

*Oblique view of the concept plan looking to the north*

The National Fruit Products Company site is 67.6 acres. It is assessed at $3.05 million for land and $11.54 million for improvements. The land value is at a moderate $45,100 per acre for M-1 zoned land. The improvement value is high due to the large number of buildings on site. The reuse of some of the existing buildings on the site has not been studied. Redevelopment of this site for a wide range of uses will be feasible, if the improvement costs are reduced or removed. Given the current industrial space market, the National Fruit Products Company land is not viable for traditional industrial development and this condition will likely not change for several years. These are buildings that could be reoccupied; however that would require further study. At the land value only, the site could be developed for residential use, but it is zoned M-1 and near a railroad track. Preparing the property for high security government/contractor use would be viable, especially if some of the existing buildings could be reused.

If the City identifies a prospective user that needs the security and proximity features offered by this site, the City may want to prepare a more detailed master plan for redevelopment, showing the buildings that are reusable and with a large development parcel identified. The master plan would need to show how best to "handle" security if a government agency/contractor can be secured. Marketing of this site for this type of use is essential.

### Downtown Area

*This site is significantly different from the other catalyst sites, due to its size, complexity, and multiple ownership. Recommendations for development initiatives in this area are consistent with those that have emerged through the Comprehensive Plan update process. The historic Downtown Pedestrian Mall is a focal point, particularly the proposed improvements and redevelopment of several adjacent properties, including the Taylor Hotel site. Improvements to enhance the appearance and functionality of the mall should include thinning the tree canopy to "open up" the walkway and brighten the space.*

The historic downtown area is the core of the City and the focal point around which the other areas and sites revolve. It contains the most prominent civic buildings of the City and the County, as well as most of the significant historic architectural fabric. *With its traditional human-scale streetscapes and mix of uses, it has excellent potential for additional*

*residential development to serve the "empty-nester" and "young professional" housing markets, and to provide a link between the Medical Center on the west and the University on the east.*

## Marketing Plan

A Marketing Plan was prepared as part of the master plan effort. The purposes included to outline the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; identify key markets and audiences; and develop specific strategies to support and enhance the City's economic development efforts. The marketing program will aim to create a new image for the City that helps target, attract and retain businesses and people. In order to meet the objectives, an adaptable theme will be developed for communication pieces, which includes a new Winchester Economic Redevelopment logo, tagline, collateral (a multi-purpose pocket folder with inserts) and microsite for the City.

*Marketing Objectives:*

- Create a brand identity for City of Winchester Economic Redevelopment
- Establish a marketing system that reflects and supports the *Citywide Vision* and goals – near-term and long-term
- Increase awareness of the City of Winchester's key benefits and assets
- Promote the idea that the City is an outstanding place to do business, live & visit.
- Highlight the new City of Winchester Master Plan with a particular emphasis on the six new catalyst sites

**Branding Strategy.** After a thorough review of the available information and competitive landscape, the four top marketable benefits of Winchester are:

- Value (or Affordability)
- Accessibility (or Connectivity)
- Economic Stability
- Sense of Belonging (Community)

*Winchester can benefit most by "owning" the market for value and accessibility,* something that other competitive cities within the region, or larger cities simply cannot do. If Winchester is branded as a smart choice that provides residents and businesses with a *high quality of life and low cost of living/business,* it can fill a *unique niche.*

**The Marketing System.** In support of the branding approach, the development of a core set of *integrated system of marketing tools* that spans *digital, print and other media* will establish a cohesive look and feel for Winchester.

The goal is a collection of tools, unified by the Winchester branding message and visual identity that provide the flexibility to be combined in a variety of ways to suit a specific application and target audience.

**Approach and Tactics.** All marketing materials and tools should focus on generating awareness and increasing communication between the City and its customers – both existing and prospect businesses, residents and visitors. In addition the core set of marketing tools (logo, microsite and presentation folder), Winchester can further its efforts by combining other traditional and digital strategies. A summary of suggested media and tactics for implementation includes.

***Print Advertising.*** A branded *advertising campaign* can be developed that promotes the overall strengths of Winchester while *targeting specific audiences or niche industries.* A general ad should run initially to launch the campaign, followed by a rotation of three to five targeted ads, each crafted to fit the primary business markets – Healthcare, Education, Technology and Government – as well as the region and publication in which it runs.

***Collateral and Marketing Materials***

- Media Kit or New Business Package
- Outreach cards or pamphlets for distribution at trade shows & business events
- Flyers for distribution at historic and cultural events

***Other Branded Items.*** Various items or tchotchkes can be branded with the new Winchester. These promotional freebies can be dispensed at events, trade shows and conventions or sent out as part of a marketing kit. These items can help broaden the reach of the Winchester identity by making the brand portable and convenient.

***Search Engine Marketing.*** Promoting the microsite by increasing its visibility in search engine result pages (SERPs) will be a goal of search engine optimization and the use of paid placement, contextual advertising and paid inclusion.

***Social Media Marketing.*** One of the biggest opportunities for the City to engage with its audiences is through social media and social networks. These tools can increase awareness, develop loyalty and create additional ways to communicate between the City, businesses, residents and the general public. Social media is also a cost-effective means of marketing. Tactics for social media engagement include

- **Facebook** - a social network that allows members to connect and share just about anything.
- **Twitter** - a platform that allows participants to share thoughts in 140 characters or less.
- **LinkedIn** - a business oriented social network.
- **PRWeb** - an online press release distribution system.
- **Meetup** - an online social networking portal that facilitates offline group meetings.

# CITY OF WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2011
## May 2011
## TABLE OF CONTENTS w/ 'Downtown' excerpts


1) INTRODUCTION
a) PLAN HIGHLIGHTS
b) PLANNING HISTORY
Since 1874, Winchester has been an independent city. Frederick County surrounds the city and has its offices downtown, but the city is a separate political unit. This Plan does not assume any outright merging of Winchester and Frederick County. However, it does anticipate partnership, cooperation, and consolidation of certain services where it makes sense to do so.
c) PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE PLAN
d) PLAN UPDATE PROCESS
e) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS
There was substantial general agreement among participants on many ideas, including:

- The need for revitalization and redevelopment of various key sites, especially Ward's plaza, and other older, underused commercial and industrial sites
- The need for continued efforts at historic preservation and rehabilitation, especially in the downtown area, including new uses, mixed uses, and somewhat greater intensification

f) SYNTHESIS OF INPUTS
g) PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT

2) PLANNING STUDIES
a) SUMMARY
b) DATA ANALYSIS
i) Population Change
ii) Racial and Ethnic Diversity
iii) Income, Poverty, and Education
iv) Housing
v) Transience
vi) Workforce and Commuting
vii) Existing Land Use in Winchester
c) EUCLIDEAN ZONING
Today, Winchester suffers some negative effects of Euclidean zoning. Residents and visitors rely on cars for most movement around the city. Additionally, reliance on cars tends to push new development to the edges of Winchester, where wider roads and bigger parking lots make driving easier. This pattern neglects the downtown area, which may become increasingly blighted.
d) MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
e) URBAN AND SUBURBAN GROWTH

3) VISION, PRINCIPLE, GOALS & OBJECTIVES
a) CITY VISION STATEMENT
b) OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE- SUSTAINABILITY
i) Three forms - Environmental, Economic, and Social
c) 'COMMUNITY OF CHOICE' VALUES
d) CITYWIDE GOALS FOR ACHIEVING THE VISION
e) CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES
i) Design
ii) Economic Development

Preserve the vitality of the downtown as a major economic center.
iii) Education
iv) Environment
v) Health and Human Services
vi) Housing
vii) Land Use
viii) Mobility
ix) Parks and Recreation
x) Public Safety
xi) Public Utilities

4) ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY
a) SWOT ANALYSIS
Participants agreed on many economic issues, including the need for revitalization and redevelopment of older, underused commercial and industrial sites like Ward Plaza and Zero Pack. Citizens found consensus on the need for continued historic preservation and rehabilitation work, especially in the downtown area, which could benefit from new uses, mixed uses, and greater residential density.
b) CITIZEN SURVEY FINDINGS
c) EMPLOYMENT
d) COMMUTING PATTERNS
e) WAGE & INCOME ANALYSIS
f) POVERTY STATUS
g) EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
h) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN
i) Catalyst Sites
The sites are examined more closely from a Comprehensive Plan perspective in Chapter 11 which focuses in on key redevelopment sites within each of the ten geographic planning areas. The six key redevelopment sites that were identified as catalyst sites in the Market Study were:
1) The Downtown Area
2) Meadow Branch Avenue
3) National Fruit Area
4) Berryville Avenue Area
5) Ward Plaza Area
6) S. Pleasant Valley Road Extended Area
ii) Revitalization Principles
Medium Term (2-5 years): Improve pedestrian crosswalks and connections between key sites, the downtown and the City-wide trail system; Establish trolley service to connect select areas with downtown; Replace light fixtures and street furniture with a more historic character.
Long Term (5-10 years): Develop the Green Circle trail segments and tie into a sidewalk/trail system that links all the catalyst sites to each other and the downtown;
Market-based Regulatory Adjustments: Revisions that would expand property rights while advancing the goals of this plan include… allowing accessory apartments in dwelling units in or close to downtown, and allowing existing downtown uses to expand without triggering additional parking requirements.
i) CITYWIDE ECONOMIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES
Preserve the vitality of the downtown as a major economic center.
5) ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
Building on a floodplain presents dangers to the builder and to the broader community. A flood may destroy one property, but the debris may also pollute waters and threaten other families and businesses. About seven percent of the city's area is at risk of a 100-year flood event. That also means that in any given year, there is a one percent chance of flooding in the orange area shown in the map on the left. It includes sections of Old Town.

a) CITYWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

6) MOBILITY
a) A WALKABLE COMMUNITY VISION
Being able to get around Winchester is a key part of quality of life. Having mobility choices means residents, workers, and visitors can drive, ride a bus, bike, or walk around the city... Tourists experience the city's rich history and architecture along with the modern sights, sounds, and smells of a vibrant downtown business district... Upper-story apartments downtown provide convenience to vibrant afternoon and evening businesses in walking distance. Some students walk or bike between Shenandoah University and the downtown while others catch a bus from the city to Lord Fairfax Community College. Winchester did business by foot, horse, and train. Today's sustainable vision recaptures that bustling downtown, without the horses. A balanced blend of mobility choices will help invigorate the city's economy and culture while reducing stress on government services caused by over-reliance on the car.
Even under the MPO Plan, traffic congestion will remain in several areas of Winchester: Berryville Avenue, Pleasant Valley Road, Jubal Early Drive, parts of Amherst Street and Valley Avenue, and some downtown streets.
b) CITYWIDE MOBILITY OBJECTIVES
*3. Encourage the use of alternate modes of mobility including walking, bicycling, and public transportation by all sectors of the population to reduce the dependency upon private automobile use.*- Winchester should complete the Green Circle Trail. This project combines bike lanes, trails, and quiet sections of street to create a loop around the central and downtown neighborhoods. Spurs will extend to the south and west. Winchester should implement and support the recommendations of the MPO's 2007 Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan. Studies should focus on connecting dense suburban developments to downtown Winchester.
Winchester currently operates four small buses to serve the Winchester Transit (WinTran) system in the city. All the routes meet downtown, near City Hall.
*4. Encourage the growth and sustainability of the urbanized area of the City by providing adequate and convenient parking and a comprehensive system of sidewalks and walking paths.*
Sidewalks, paths, and parking facilities shape the pedestrian environment and may promote or discourage daily walking. Closed to cars, the Loudoun Street Mall may be Winchester's signature pedestrian feature, but many other elements contribute to a walkable downtown. Pedestrian connections from parking to destinations are helpful, and they should be pursued in conjunction with redevelopment of the adjacent private properties. A new north-south alley between Loudoun and Cameron Streets is one possibility. Four parking garages and several surface parking lots provide convenient public parking for the Old Town area. The City Code exempts property owners from providing off-street parking in the historic core area. Churches own most of the private parking lots downtown, and some lease out parking during the weekdays. On-street parking spaces also add convenience for drivers while preserving lot space: downtown land is more productive as homes and businesses than as parking lots.
7) HOUSING
a) CITYWIDE HOUSING OBJECTIVES
b) PRESENT CONDITIONS
c) FUTURE TRENDS
What kinds of housing does Winchester need for the future? Students- Shenandoah University plans to grow enrollment without matching construction of dormitories. So more undergraduate and graduate students will seek rental housing close to the campus and the social life of downtown.
More quality apartments downtown and near the university.
Apartments near, or even above, downtown offices and businesses.
d) EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Redevelopment efforts catering to growth demographics should focus on vacant and blighted structures in areas designated forredevelopment or revitalization/infill as depicted on the Character Map in Chapter 9 of this Plan. They should increase density in appropriate neighborhoods and include adding apartments above downtown businesses. Redevelopment should not be a blunt instrument that damages any stable neighborhood.

8) COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES (City Wide)

a) EDUCATION

i) Public K-12 Schools

ii) Private K-12 Schools

iii) Higher Education

SU's current strategic plan echoes this comprehensive plan. City government should foster strong physical and administrative connections between the city and campus facilities where the relationship is mutually beneficial. SU should be a partner in efforts to enhance the downtown and East Central Planning Area

iv) Job Training

v) Education Goals and Objectives

RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND CULTURE

i) City Parks and Recreation Facilities

ii) Future Park and Recreation Needs

New parks may help catalyze walkable mixed use redevelopment, in part by signaling to the private sector a public commitment to change. Adding public recreation space to the downtown and underdeveloped areas should be a high priority

iii) Bike Routes

iv) Cultural Facilities

v) Recreational Goals and Objectives

c) PUBLIC SAFETY

i) Police, Fire, and Rescue

ii) Preparing for Emergency

iii) Courts and Detention

iv) Public Safety Goals and Objectives

d) HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

i) Healthcare

ii) Human Services

iii)

iv) Childcare

v) Elder Care

vi) Other Facilities

vii) Health and Human Services Goals and Objectives

e) UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATION

i) Water System

ii) Sewer System

iii) Stormwater Management

iv) Public Utilities Goals and Objectives

v) Landfill

vi) Animal Shelter

vii) Electricity

viii) Gas

ix) Telephone

x) Internet

xi) National and Local Television

xii) Radio

xiii) Newsprint

9) FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

a) CITYWIDE LAND USE OBJECTIVES

b) FUTURE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
c) CHARACTER MAP
i) Neighborhood Stabilization Areas
ii) Neighborhood Revitalization/Infill Areas
iii) Commerce Centers/Corridors
iv) Commerce Revitalization/Infill Areas
v) Civic, Institutional, and Park Areas
vi) Redevelopment Sites
vii) Redevelopment Scenarios
viii) Old Town Revitalization Area

The oldest part of Winchester has unique character, assets, and needs of its own. This special designation recognizes Old Town's place as the City's center and its potential for mixed use growth. Key growth demographics may be attracted downtown, but special city policies will be needed for parking, flood control, architecture, and many other issues.

d) CHANGES TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The historic downtown core retains its character and opportunities for other core areas are identified, the benefits to which include: ease of transportation; sustainability; neighborhood identity, autonomy, and self-preservation; and, direct community input for the future development and desired character of the area.

e) THE FREDERICK COUNTY LAND USE PLAN

10) HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND URBAN DESIGN
a) CITYWIDE HISTORIC AND DESIGN GOALS

Protect significant public and private architectural and historic resources in the City.
Efforts to continue relocating overhead utilities to underground should be coordinated with Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) as the City and large-scale private developers undertake projects impacting the public rights of way. The City has included provisions for SVEC to work with the City as part of an updated franchise agreement.
Old Town never lost the traditional compact mixed use development. Within a few blocks, there are single-family homes, townhouses, and upper-story apartments. Businesses range from convenience stores to boutique shopping and professional offices, with a wide array of dining. The downtown also includes core civic buildings.
The City should continue to maintain the historic character of the downtown area while guiding redevelopment efforts. Regular review of the historic district's boundaries should consider neighborhood needs and a specified Period of Significance. Some changes to the boundaries of the local or national historic districts may be justified following completion of an updated inventory of more than 1,200 structures currently situated within the historic district. A Historic District Design Guidelines Committee was established this past year to examine the manner in which certificates of appropriateness are processed and what, if any, changes should be considered to the boundaries of the local and national historic districts.

b) IMPLEMENTATION

11) THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS
a) BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF AREAS AND MAP
b) NORTH
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concept
(1) North Cameron/North Loudoun Corridor
c) NORTHEAST
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concepts

(1) Berryville Ave Corridor
(2) Baker Street Revitalization Plan
d) EAST CENTRAL
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concepts
(1) West Side of S. Pleasant Valley Rd
SOUTHEAST
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concepts
(1) Apple Blossom Mall
(2) S. Pleasant Valley Rd/Battaile Dr
f) SOUTH CENTRAL
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concept
(1) Ward Plaza
g) SOUTHWEST
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concept
(1) Virginia Apple Storage
h) WEST CENTRAL
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concept
(1) Meadow Branch Avenue Extension
i) NORTHWEST
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions
iii) Site Redevelopment Concepts
(1) Frederick County Middle School
(2) National Fruit
j) OLD TOWN/NORTH CENTRAL
i) Key Features
ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions

The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Economic Development

8. Make property owners, developers and prospective new businesses aware of financing options available.

*Action: Work with the Department of Historic Resources and grassroots organizations such as Preservation of Historic Winchester to assist private redevelopers by providing grants to cover the upfront expenses until tax credits are realized.*

9. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum potential.

*Action: Facilitate redevelopment of the Taylor Hotel site downtown and the National Fruit Corp. office site in the northwest corner of the area.*

*Action: Per the 2009 downtown residential study, enter public-private partnerships to develop residences or mixed use structures on the city-owned parking lots at 103 S. Loudoun St. and 30 N. Braddock St.*

*Action: Per the 2009 downtown residential study, facilitate redevelopment of residences or mixed use structures on the church parking lots at 109 S. Cameron St. and 29 Wolfe St.*

10. Preserve the vitality of the downtown as a major economic center.

*Action: Aggressively solicit a high-end grocery chain to locate downtown, either as a stand-alone facility or as part of a larger mixed use project.*

Mobility

6. Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider gradeseparated crossings.

*Action: Investigate connecting N. Cameron St and N. Kent St over the CSX rail yard.*

8. Employ a hierarchy of functional street categories including thoroughfare streets for major traffic movements through and within the community at higher speeds; collector streets to channel major traffic movements into and out of separate areas of the community at moderate speeds; and, local streets to provide access to individual properties at lower speeds.

*Action: Retain and expand upon the traditional grid of streets in the Old Town area.*

*Action: Establish public alleys to provide improved rear access to properties.*

*Action: Improve Wyck St. between Fairmont Ave. and N. Cameron St. to serve as a major entry corridor into the downtown from U.S. Route 522.*

Design

2. Protect significant public and private architectural and historic resources in the City

*Action: Continue updating the 1976 Historic Structures Survey by completing the effort undertaken with Preservation of Historic Winchester and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.*

3. Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading in to the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

*Action: Enhance the Route 11 (N. Loudoun St & N. Cameron St) corridor identity. Determine contributing/noncontributing status of structures in the Historic District.*

*Action: Attempt to relocate overhead utilities underground on a block-by-block basis.*

Housing

2. Provide opportunities for new mixed-income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density settings that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.

*Action: Promote the City's 10-year tax abatement program and the use of State and Federal tax credits to incentivize maximum use of existing multi-story structures for residential use on the upper levels.*

*Action: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate, where safe, the infill of underutilized rear yard areas next to existing and proposed public alleys with accessory dwelling units.*

4. Actively pursue code enforcement to eliminate blight and undue overcrowding in residential areas to improve the quality of housing stock.

*Action: Pursue code enforcement and blight abatement measures to ensure that properties which do not contribute to the vibrancy of Old Town and the key corridors adjoining it are not allowed to continue having a detrimental impact on the long-term sustainability of the City.*

6. Promote decent affordable housing, particularly to serve targeted populations such as young professionals and retirees.

*Action: Seek public-private partnerships to redevelop underutilized surface parking lot sites in Old Town to a mix of business and dense housing for targeted populations.*

Land Use

6. Locate public land uses in locations that enhance the livability of the City and facilitate the placement of institutional uses in locations that support the social, spiritual, and health needs of the community.

*Action: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to limit uses serving dependent populations where the uses might have a negative impact on residences or businesses in the area, while preserving a city-wide network of social services.*

*Action: Relocate the detox and court services from the old jail to less disruptive sites. Reuse the historic building for a public or private use more compatible with the area.*

7. Reduce the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses.

*Action: Discontinue the practice, where legally allowable, of granting real estate tax exemption or other public financial incentives/ waivers to non-profit organizations which relocate to or expand operations in the Old Town area to the detriment of established City goals and objectives.*

Environment

2. Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on downstream areas.

*Action: Secure funding to 'green up' the portions of Town Run where existing concrete channelization can be removed.*

*Action: Provide incentives such as bonus densities to developers who employ green roofs and other LEED-type green building techniques.*

Parks & Recreation

1. Develop quality recreational facilities that meet the growing recreational and fitness needs of all age groups, particularly those helping to address the growing national health concerns related to obesity and those identified as critical needs in the
Needs Assessment included in the City Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

*Action: Implement the Washington Square Park proposal for the surface parking lot adjacent to the Joint Judicial Center and the Kurtz Building.*

*Action: Work with private developers to incorporate green spaces at key access points to the Old Town pedestrian mall including:*

*1. the blighted property (146-148 N. Loudoun St) along the east side of the mall north of the alley beside the former Solenberger Hardware Store which provides a visual connection between the walking mall and the G.W. Parking Garage;*

*2. the lots situated across from the Old County Courthouse where a westerly extension of the courthouse lawn would connect the historic center of the mall with an elevator/stairtower at the south end of the Braddock Street AutoPark; and,*

*3. the southerly portion of the Taylor Hotel site which would expand the visual connectivity between the existing Braddock Street AutoPark and the mall.*

Public Safety

1. Provide the highest quality of police, emergency preparedness, communications, and fire and rescue services available, with properly-trained personnel who are prepared for a wide variety of emergencies, and who serve the community in an effective and coordinated manner.

*Action: Relocate the Rouss fire company to a new facility farther west to improve response times. Preserve the historic fire hall for public or private use compatible with the downtown character.*

iii) Site Redevelopment Concept

(1) Downtown Courthouse Lawn Extension

k) CENTRAL

i) Key Features

ii) Planning Area Objectives & Actions

iii) Site Redevelopment Concept

(1) Block Opposite John Handley High School

12) IMPLEMENTATION

a) UNDERSTANDING TIME AND COST

b) IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

i) Civic Participation

ii) Intergovernmental Cooperation

iii) City Code

iv) Engineering Standards And Specifications

v) Zoning Ordinance & Map

vi) Land Subdivision Ordinance

vii) Historic District Design Guidelines

Special land use and design rules apply in the city's historic district. Winchester's historic core contains many fine old buildings; it is a unique place to live or do business. Design guidelines for the district seek to preserve the area's best qualities without stifling improvements. There are additional regulations for the streetscape and for how to renovate or convert a home or business. The appointed Old Town Development Board and Board of Architectural Review apply and interpret the design guidelines, with City Council ruling on appeals. Changes to the guidelines will play an important role in advancing the goals for downtown, with ripples affecting the entire city.

viii) Capital Improvement Program

c) CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS-not otherwise tied to specific geographic areas in Chapter 11

d) MONITORING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

e) UPDATING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

APPENDICES

1. State Enabling Legislation
2. Plan Update Process
3. Public Participation Process

# PROMOTING RESIDENTIAL LIVING IN DOWNTOWN WINCHESTER
## October 2009
## TABLE OF CONTENTS w/ selected excerpts

**Introduction**

**Goal**
To proactively attract a large segment of the market for a variety of upscale, high density residential units with modern amenities for sale and for rent along the Loudoun Street Pedestrian Mall and in an area up to a 10-minute walking distance from the Old Town district boundaries.

**Targeted Market**
The targeted market for upscale downtown housing includes people who are seeking the conveniences and amenities of an urban lifestyle such as access to their place of work, social and cultural opportunities, and typically have more disposable income for luxury items, to include:
1. young professionals who just entered the workforce;
2. active seniors and empty nesters who want to shed the maintenance requirements of rural or suburban single family living; and,
3. dual-income or dual-professional households with no children who have little interest in the single-family lifestyle.

**Area of Focus**
The ***area of focus*** is generally bounded by North Ave to the North, properties fronting along the west side of Braddock Street to the West, properties fronting along the east side of Kent Street to the East and Germain Street to the South, with the ***primary area of focus*** being the Old Town Pedestrian Mall and the four block area contiguous to the Mall. The primary area presents the opportunity for the conversion of upper levels of existing building for new housing opportunities, and the potential for new infill projects on parking lots or underutilized land parcels in the area. The outlying area presents opportunities for rehabilitation of existing residential structures, and the conversion of older industrial or commercial property into housing opportunities.

**Overview of Old Town Special Taxation**

**Overview of Current Zoning**

**Challenges**

**Proposed Strategies**

**Details of Proposed Strategies**
**1. Maximize the use of existing tax incentives as well as other incentives including loans and public/private partnerships:**

**2. Improve the perceived security and safety of both the primary and secondary areas:**

**3. Discourage the concentration of social service centers and establishments serving dependent populations, both private and public, in the area:**

**4. Prepare a general schematic/concept plan for development in the focus area that identifies opportunities for the desired types of development on specific parcels:**

- **NORTHEAST** - N. Loudoun St Mall, E. Piccadilly St, N. Cameron St, & E. Boscawen St
- **SOUTHEAST** - S. Loudoun St Mall, E. Boscawen St , S. Cameron St, & E. Cork St
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- **NORTHWEST** - N. Loudoun St Mall, W. Boscawen St, N. Braddock St & W. Piccadilly St

**5. Detailed development plans for selected underutilized publicly owned properties and larger institutional properties:**

There are a number of publicly owned properties in downtown. Properties such as the old Social Services offices on E. Boscawen Street could lend themselves to some upper-story residential use. The study team elected to identify opportunities on two specific publicly-owned properties that lend themselves to "ready-to-go" prototypical residential or mixed use redevelopment. These two properties are identified as:

- 103 S. Loudoun St - former Palace Hotel lot (now WPA parking lot)
- 30 N. Braddock St - front portion of the Braddock Street AutoPark lot

The study team also elected to identify opportunities on two specific church-owned properties that serve as illustrative examples of prototypical mixed redevelopment assuming that the owners would be interested in maximizing the use of the sites instead of retaining them solely for off-street parking. These two properties are identified as:

- 109 S. Cameron St - First Presbyterian Church surface parking lot
- 29 S. Braddock St - Braddock United Methodist Church parking lot

**6. Creating a sense of place or an identity for the Area of Focus using special treatment of the public realm where necessary to express community identity and provide for community social life:**

**A Look At What Other Downtowns Are Doing**

# Promoting Residential Living in Downtown Winchester

October 30, 2009

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## Introduction

The following report was developed by a team of City staff upon the request of the Interim City Manager. The team was charged with the responsibility of researching and presenting different incentives, tax credits etc. to help stimulate growth, particularly residential in the downtown area. The team was also asked to look at existing zoning provisions for residential downtown. This report outlines a goal for downtown housing with a defined target market and geographic focus area. It summarizes current challenges to additional residential and analyzes current zoning provisions. A strategy is spelled out and details for implementing the strategy are offered. Also included are brief samples of what other localities offer to attract people to live in their downtowns.

## Goal

To proactively attract a large segment of the market for a variety of upscale, high density residential units with modern amenities for sale and for rent along the Loudoun Street Pedestrian Mall and in an area up to a 10-minute walking distance from the Old Town district boundaries.

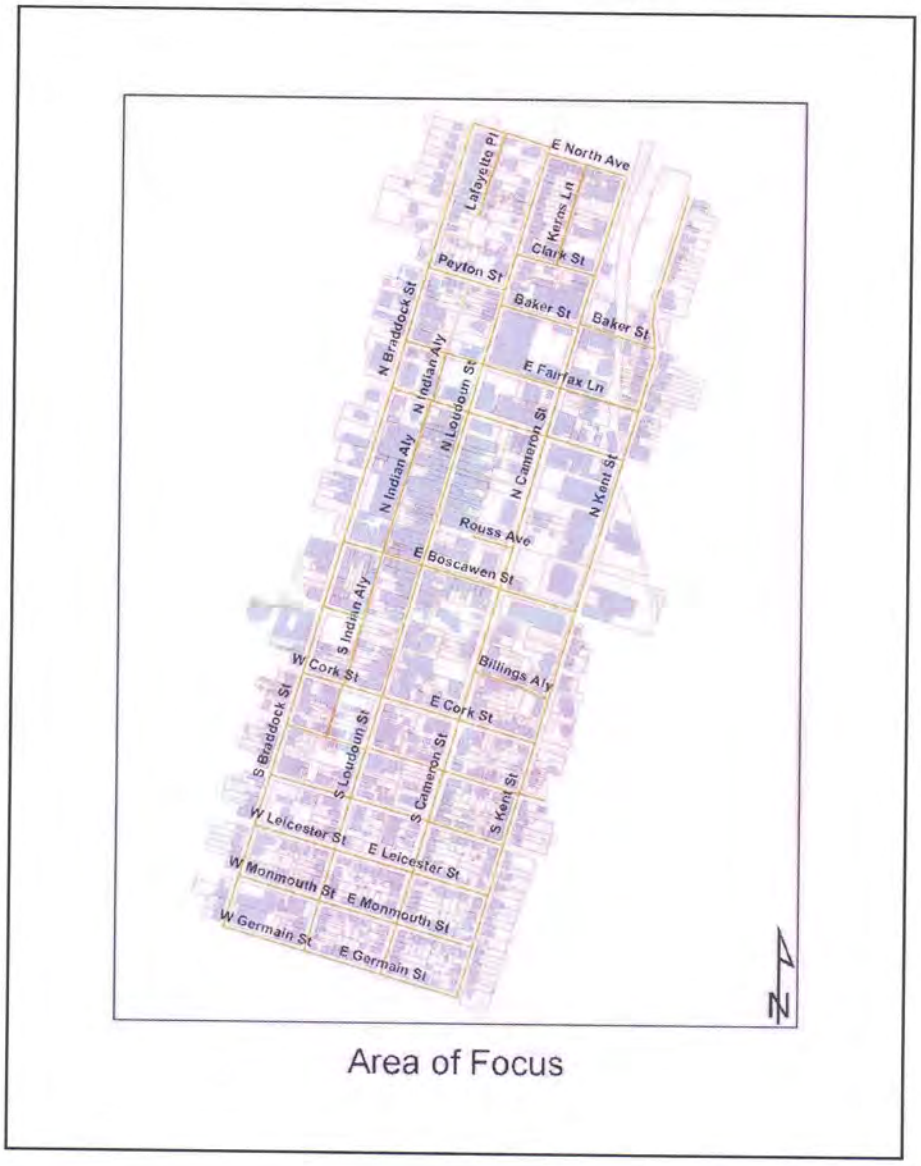
## Targeted Market

The targeted market for upscale downtown housing includes people who are seeking the conveniences and amenities of an urban lifestyle such as access to their place of work, social and cultural opportunities, and typically have more disposable income for luxury items, to include:

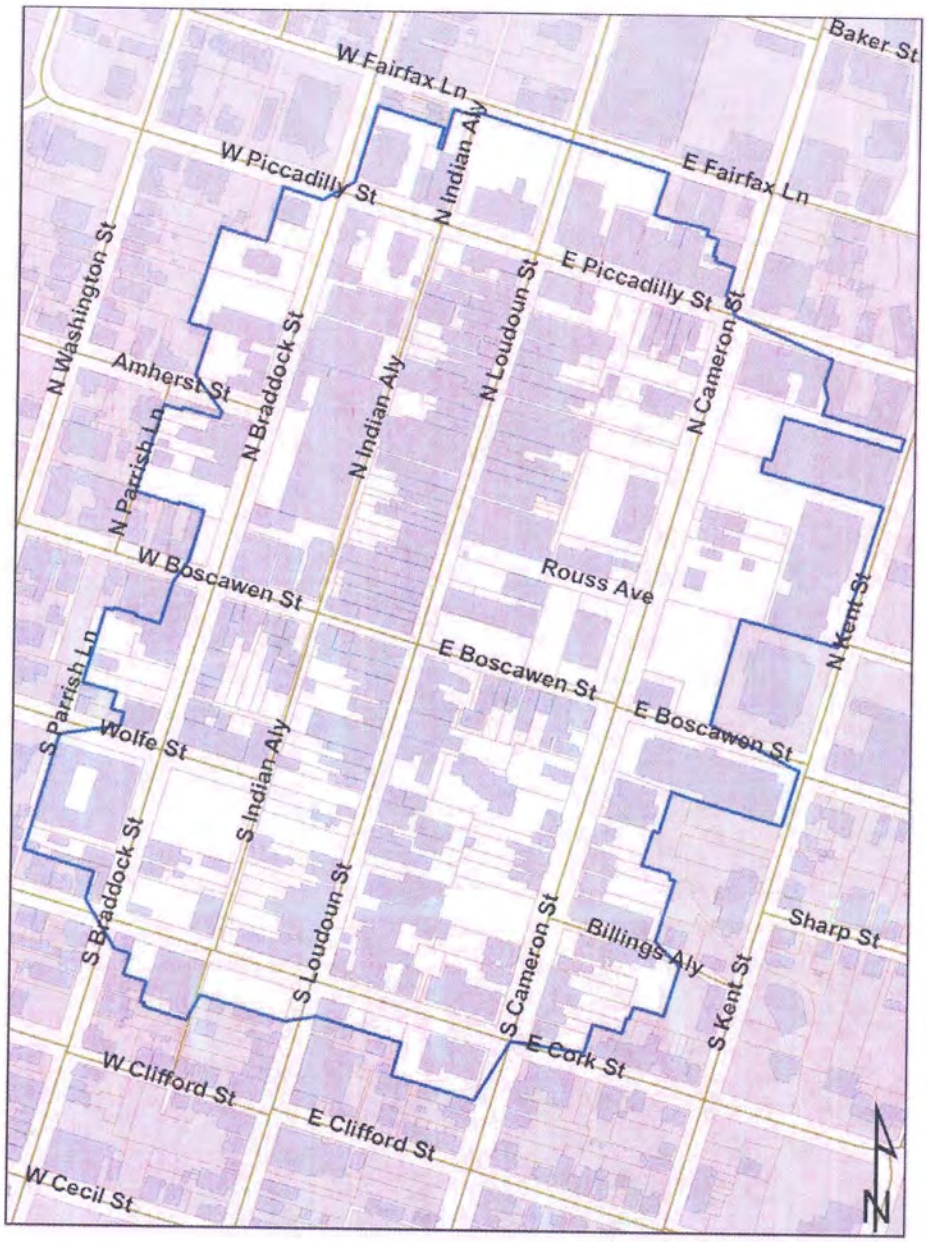
1. young professionals who just entered the workforce;
2. active seniors and empty nesters who want to shed the maintenance requirements of rural or suburban single family living; and,
3. dual-income or dual-professional households with no children who have little interest in the single-family lifestyle.

## Area of Focus

The ***area of focus*** is generally bounded by North Ave to the North, properties fronting along the west side of Braddock Street to the West, properties fronting along the east side of Kent Street to the East and Germain Street to the South, with the ***primary area of focus*** being the Old Town Pedestrian Mall and the four block area contiguous to the Mall. The primary area presents the opportunity for the conversion of upper levels of existing building for new housing opportunities, and the potential for new infill projects on parking lots or underutilized land parcels in the area. The outlying area presents opportunities for rehabilitation of existing residential structures, and the conversion of older industrial or commercial property into housing opportunities.




Area of Focus




Primary Area of Focus

## Overview of Old Town Special Taxation

Winchester's core downtown commercial district utilizes a special tax assessment for the improvement, maintenance, development, planning, and promotion of Old Town Winchester (REF: Winchester City Code; Chapter 25 - Special Assessments). The Old Town Development Board operates as a department of the City of Winchester and serves as the management and permitting office for the primary and secondary Old Town assessment districts.

The additional taxes paid by property owners in the primary district (commercial properties abutting the Loudoun Street Pedestrian Mall) are $0.23 per $100 of assessed value. The secondary district commercial properties are abutting on the surrounding Cork, Cameron, Piccadilly and Braddock streets, inclusive of Indian Alley, Boscawen and Wolfe streets, which pay $0.13 per $100 of assessed value. For FY09, the special tax assessment districts collected about $145,000.

No additional tax assessments are made on any properties whose use is exclusively residential or governmental. In addition, there are several properties in the district which have been designated tax-exempt by Council such as church buildings, educational institutions or museums.

## Overview of Current Zoning

Extensive amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance over the past couple of years have eliminated most, if not all, of the real or perceived zoning constraints to residential redevelopment and infill in and around the downtown area. Recent amendments include changes that eliminated the need for Conditional Use Permits (CUP) for new residential as well as converted residential use. The only form of residential still requiring a CUP is when a nonresidential use on the ground floor of a commercial building is proposed for conversion to residential use.

Residential density standards were significantly modified recently to permit at least 43 dwelling units per acre with add-on performance density bonuses allowing for well over 100 units per acre in the central downtown area zoned B-1 where property developers meet certain qualitative standards that help to fulfill the stated goal of quality upscale housing. Current provisions allow for up to 85 dwelling units within a single structure in the B-1 District by right.

Height restrictions are set at a maximum of 75 foot in the central downtown area (elevator penthouses are exempt from the limit). This permits at least six-story construction and perhaps 7-story development if English basements are incorporated into the plan or if low floor to ceiling heights are used as was done with the 7-story Winchester House project. In the surrounding RB-1, HR and HR-1 zoned neighborhoods, the height limit is set at 35 feet.

Parking requirements within the core downtown area have been exempt for many years. In October 2009, the Zoning Ordinance was further amended to extend the limits of the 100% parking exemption district and to establish a 50% parking exemption district beyond that.

Green area standards are also spelled out in the Zoning Ordinance. Generally, residential developments outside of the Historic Winchester (HW) Overlay district are required to include up to 45% of the gross land area to be green. Within the HW Overlay District (i.e. almost all of the focus area identified herein), a maximum of 30% green area requirement applies. However, sites along the Pedestrian Mall and other sites that have historically contained little or no green area have not been required to introduce green area in conjunction with residential intensification projects. Examples include the Weaver Building project at the SW corner of Boscawen and the Pedestrian Mall as well as the Kramer Building at the NW corner of Cork St and the Pedestrian Mall. The Zoning Ordinance specifically provides language whereby the City Board of Architectural Review (BAR) can recommend and the Planning Commission can then waive all or part of the green area requirement.

In return for partially or fully waived green area, the City has encouraged developers to contribute funds for landscaping improvements on public property such as the Old Town Pedestrian Mall or Timbrook Park. A number of years ago, City Council also discussed having developers who could not practically provide green area to consider contributing funds for public art.

## Challenges

There are barriers that will need to be addressed to achieve the stated goal for increased upscale housing, some of which are common to both the general downtown area and primary area, while others are more specific to barriers to the primary area include: parking availability; limited development sites; constrained ownership; and relatively small buildings.

Ownership constraints may be of three major types: unmotivated property owners (e.g. no debt and therefore no motivation to maximize return); out-of-town/absentee ownership; and, financially constrained owners.

The barriers in the northern, eastern, and southern outlying areas include more social type challenges which negatively impact the perception of security and safety. The areas to the west generally provide the quality of housing we seek, thus attracting residents that currently patronize downtown businesses and are engaged in many city-wide cultural activities.

## Proposed Strategies

Six major strategies are proposed for consideration. In the next section, the details for implementing these strategies are outlined.

1. Maximize the use of existing tax incentives as well as other incentives including loans and public/private partnerships.

2. Improve the perceived security and safety of both the primary and secondary areas. This is to be achieved through increased community policing and public relations activities designed to increase the awareness of the safety of the areas. Also, additional street lighting on the secondary district streets would heighten a sense of security during the nighttime. It should be noted that the Loudoun Street Pedestrian Mall does have adequate street lighting, however, the walkways to and around the Mall do not have adequate nighttime street lighting to provide downtown patrons/residents a feeling of security.

3. Discourage the concentration of social service centers and establishments serving dependent populations, both private and public, in the area.

4. Prepare a general schematic/concept plan for development in the focus area that identifies opportunities for the desired types of development on specific parcels.

5. For underutilized publicly owned properties and larger institutional properties (e.g. downtown church parking lots), prepare detailed development plans that establish specific incentives for each development scenario. These incentives could include both state and federal historic tax credits (and assistance in obtaining the same); local property tax exemption for substantially rehabilitated properties, reduced land cost through public-private partnerships on properties owned by the city or agency thereof; and low interest or forgivable loans.

6. Create a sense of place or an identity of the Old Town Neighborhood District. Use and special treatment of the public realm are necessary to express community identity and provide for community social life. Examples include sidewalk beautification, street art, pocket parks and unique styles of lighting and signage. The principle is that sidewalks must become the effective living rooms of the neighborhoods.

## Details of Proposed Strategies

1. **Maximize the use of existing tax incentives as well as other incentives including loans and public/private partnerships:**

   a) Historic tax credits are available from both the state and federal government, the state tax credit equals 25% of the qualified rehabilitation expenditure and the federal credit equals 20%. In order to obtain these credits the property must be a contributing property in a historic district or eligible for designation as historic landmark and the rehabilitation must be done in accordance with the Department of the Interior standards. It would be recommended that the federal historic district be expanded to include the entire focus area.

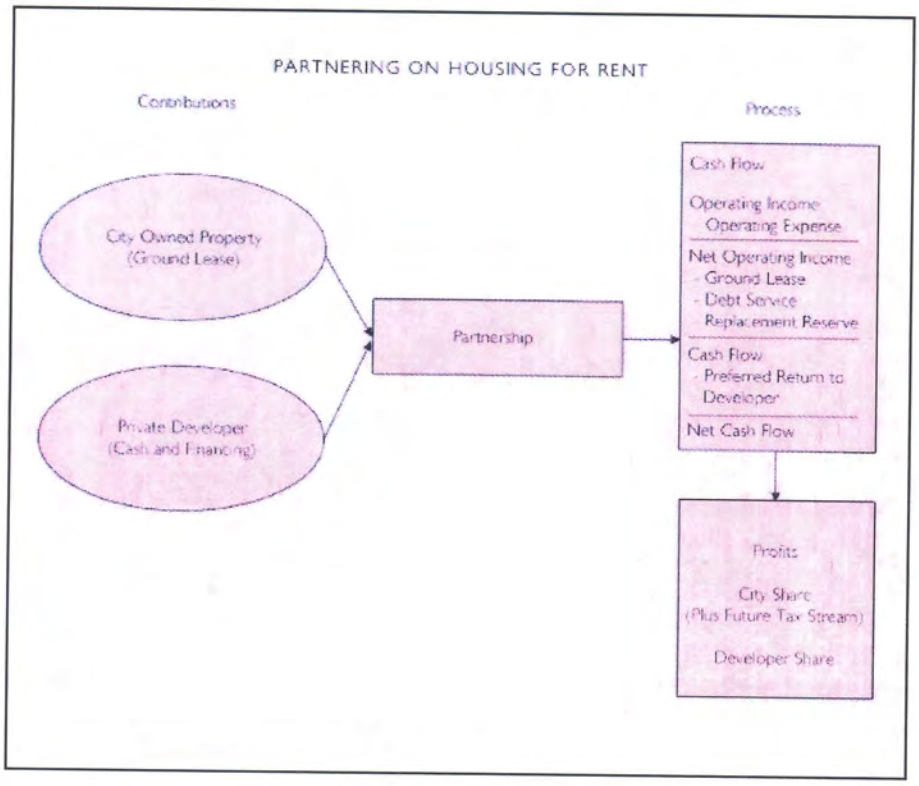
   b) Substantially rehabilitated property tax exemption freezes the taxable value of the improvements on the property at the pre-rehab value for a ten year period. (See APPENDIX 'A' for existing and proposed language)

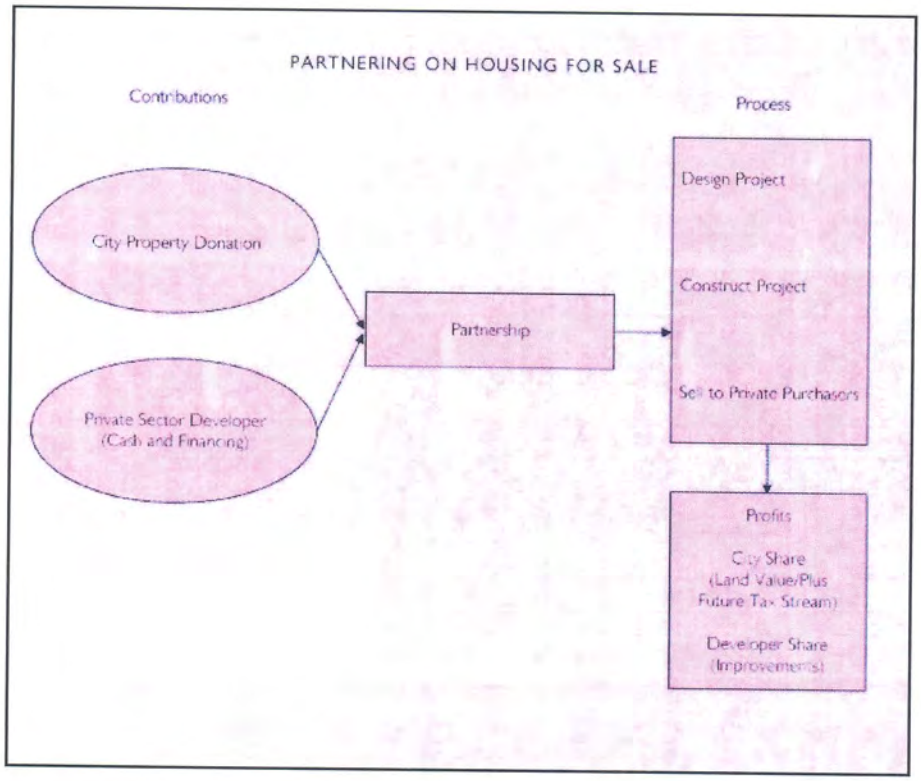
   c) Low interest and/or forgivable loans could be made through the Economic Development Authority. These loans would be limited to construction lending or gap financing.

   d) Lease guaranties would be for up to one year and would greatly reduce the risk on the part of the private developers developing rental property. These guaranties could be made through the Economic Development Authority.

   e) Blight Abatement Tax Incentive

   f) Public/private partnerships. The following are examples:


PARTNERING ON HOUSING FOR RENT
Contributions
Process
City Owned Property
(Ground Lease)
Private Developer
(Cash and Financing)
Partnership
Cash Flow
Operating Income
Operating Expense
Net Operating Income
- Ground Lease
- Debt Service
- Replacement Reserve
Cash Flow
- Preferred Return to Developer
Net Cash Flow
Profits
City Share
(Plus Future Tax Stream)
Developer Share


PARTNERING ON HOUSING FOR SALE
Contributions
Process
City Property Donation
Private Sector Developer
(Cash and Financing)
Partnership
Design Project
Construct Project
Sell to Private Purchasers
Profits
City Share
(Land Value/Plus
Future Tax Stream)
Developer Share
(Improvements)

2. **Improve the perceived security and safety of both the primary and secondary areas:**

Downtown Winchester is actually much safer than people think. Statistically, downtown has a relatively small amount of the city's overall crime. Since that is the case, the City of Winchester needs to focus on not just crime prevention but also on making sure the public has an accurate perception of downtown safety.

1. Increase police presence and visibility, particularly on nights and weekends, with bike patrol units. This would be in addition to the existing downtown foot patrol officer who provides a dedicated presence during traditional business hours and special events.

2. Activate an Old Town Neighborhood Watch program to promote direct communication and information sharing on criminal activities and problem areas with both businesses and residents.

3. Address specific safety and environment issues using crime prevention through environmental design principles of downtown public spaces, to include:

   - Uses that generate pedestrian activity in the evening, such as cultural and entertainment activities that bring vitality after business hours, will attract more people and tourists to the restaurants, shops and hotel; thus creating a "natural surveillance" with more eyes on the street.

   - Enhancement of the pedestrian environment and pathways to the Loudoun Street Mall from the secondary district, parking garages and nearby residences. More sufficient lighting is necessary for people to see and be seen and should be strategically placed to reduce the fear of crime.

   - Increasing the number of surveillance cameras which are monitored along concealed or isolated routes that are prone to crime

3. **Discourage the concentration of social service centers and establishments serving dependent populations, both private and public, in the area:**

The team assembled to look into tax incentives and analyze zoning provisions associated with downtown residential living did not believe that it was best suited to fully address this sensitive issue. One of the draft Comprehensive Plan objectives pertaining to Health and Human Services reads: "Ensure that the health and human needs of the local population are adequately served while reducing, where feasible, the attraction of the City to transient dependent populations." Where the City has controls over the expansion of uses such as Edge Hill Recovery Center and other service centers through Conditional Use Permits, City Council should consider the potential detrimental impacts that such expansions may have on quality downtown residential growth. Taxing policies, such as the recent decision to not grant tax exemption to CCAP, may also reduce the attractiveness of downtown to organizations seeking to concentrate operations in the core area.

4. **Prepare a general schematic/concept plan for development in the focus area that identifies opportunities for the desired types of development on specific parcels:**

A concept plan for development in the larger area of focus is beyond what could be prepared in the limited time established for this report. However, strategies for infill and new high density residential have already been investigated for the northern portion of the area of focus as part of the Mixed Use and Mixed Income (MUMI) Study that was prepared by a consultant for the City under a VHDA grant funded project in the Fall of 2008. (See APPENDIX 'B' for the Illustrative Master Plan for Strategic Development)

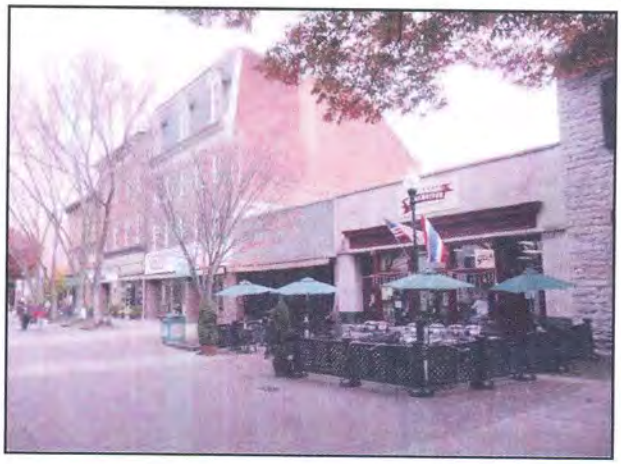
To comply with the Interim City Manager's directive to focus primarily on and near the Old Town Pedestrian Mall, a fairly detailed inventory of properties and structures in the four major superblocks fronting along the pedestrian mall was undertaken. These superblocks include the following defined geographic areas:

- **NORTHEAST** - N. Loudoun St Mall, E. Piccadilly St, N. Cameron St, & E. Boscawen St
- **SOUTHEAST** - S. Loudoun St Mall, E. Boscawen St , S. Cameron St, & E. Cork St
- **SOUTHWEST** - S. Loudoun St Mall, W. Cork St, S. Braddock St, & W. Boscawen St
- **NORTHWEST** - N. Loudoun St Mall, W. Boscawen St, N. Braddock St & W. Piccadilly St

Note: Wolfe St is the only public street that extends partially into any of the four superblocks. Rouss Ave was vacated as a public street and subsequently conveyed to private ownership in conjunction with the City-County Voluntary Settlement Agreement in the mid-1990's. The Southwest and Northwest blocks include lots on both sides of Indian Alley.

This inventory included both a mapping exercise examining the presence of underutilized spaces (e.g. rear paved areas and accessory buildings, including garages and single-story additions). The analysis also included a photographic inventory wherein single-story commercial structures along the pedestrian mall were identified along with non-contributing structures of any height that could provide opportunities for demolition and/or vertical expansion in a manner that would be sensitive to the historic fabric of the downtown streetscape.

**Single story structures fronting on the Mall may offer opportunities for vertical expansion.**

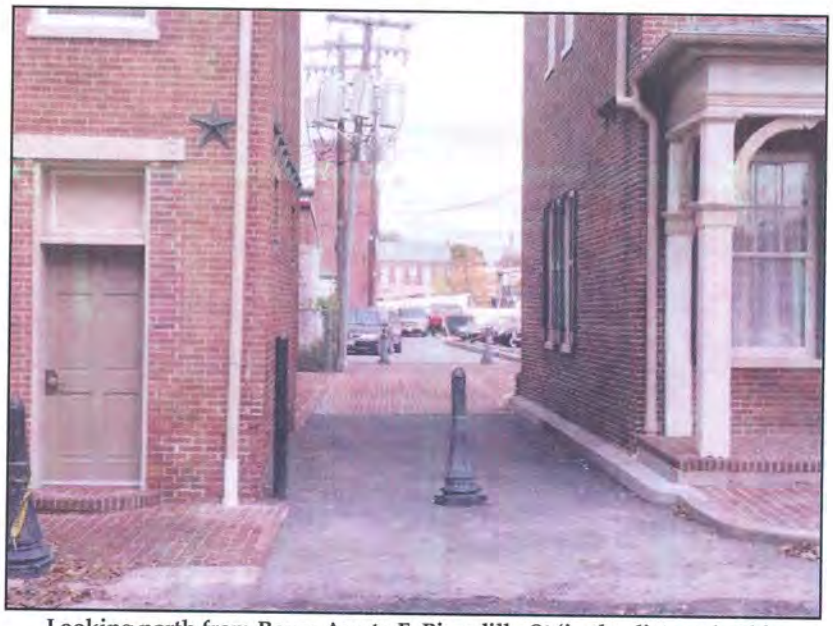


**Inefficient rear parking areas, accessory structures, and single-story additions may offer redevelopment opportunities.**

**A dilapidated accessory structure was removed from the rear of this property fronting on S. Braddock St to make way for this 3-story infill residential project underway along S. Indian Alley.**

The assumption used in the concept plan was that any new or vertically expanded structures fronting out along the public streets (including the Loudoun St Pedestrian Mall) should not exceed four stories and that redevelopment that is proposed in behind the front bay of 3-4 story development could extend upwards of 5-7 stories, but not beyond the 75-foot height limitation which relates to the ability of firefighters climbing the ladder of a 100-foot tall ladder truck to rescue a person at or near the top of a 75-foot tall structure.

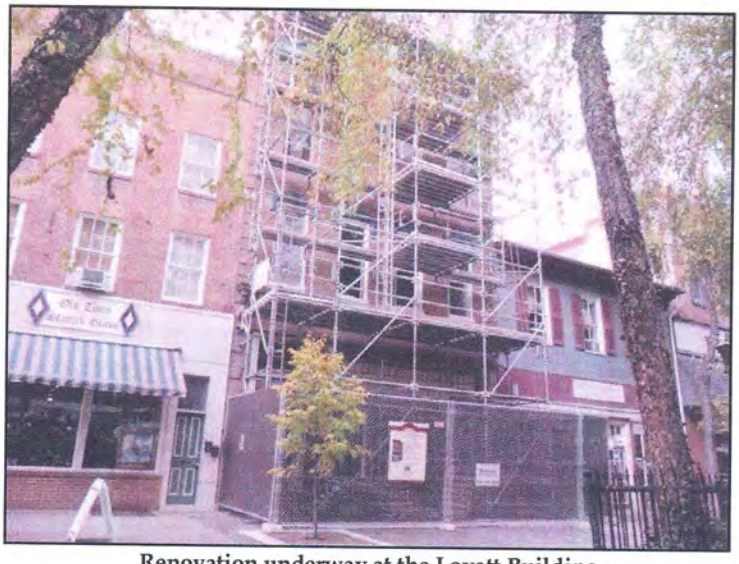
The schematic concept plans for each of the four superblocks is included in APPENDIX 'C' of this report. Staff looked for opportunities where common or shared access could be provided along the rear of the properties along the east side of the pedestrian mall where, unlike the west side (where Indian Alley extends between the Mall and Braddock Street), there does not exist a continuous north-south service alley. Because of the absence of such alley, numerous driveways extend in from Cameron Street further to the east to provide rear access to the buildings along the east side of the Mall. This creates inefficient use of properties along Cameron Street. With the exception of the Southeast superblock, where the seven-story Winchester House structure and uninterrupted row of buildings along the south side of E. Boscawen St obstruct a north-south alley, the rest of the east side of the Mall properties could be served by a public or privately owned alley. A few accessory structures would need to be removed or relocated to accommodate the proposal.



**Looking north from Rouss Ave to E. Piccadilly St (in the distance). This alleyway could connect through with the removal of a few barricades and accessory structures.**

In general, the concept plan for infill and residential redevelopment calls for converting to residential the upper floors of existing commercial structures, most of which are two- or three-story historic buildings fronting directly along the public right-of-way. Most of these structures already have separate entry foyers connecting to staircases from the Mall to the underutilized upper stories of the buildings. Recent interest in upper-story residential development includes eight apartments in the Weaver Building at the southwest corner of the Mall and Boscawen St and five apartments in the Lovett Building at 163-165 N. Loudoun St on the west side of the Mall across from Brewbakers.

**The recently renovated Weaver Building**



**Renovation underway at the Lovett Building**

The concept plan for the four superblocks also identifies a number of locations where multi-story residential development could be constructed either as high-rise additions to existing structures or as freestanding structures toward the rear of the 180-200-foot deep properties fronting along both sides of the Mall. Additionally, a few opportunities for high-rise residential development were also identified on the properties fronting along Cameron Street and Braddock Street. These opportunities would depend heavily upon the property owners' willingness to eliminate off-street parking areas or to replace the existing surface parking with lower level parking (as recently done with the 63-unit luxury apartment development at Westminister Canterbury) or by designing carraige house or townhouse residential units where all or part of the ground floor becomes garaged parking and the residential units are situated on the upper levels.

5. **Detailed development plans for selected underutilized publicly owned properties and larger institutional properties:**

There are a number of publicly owned properties in downtown. Properties such as the old Social Services offices on E. Boscawen Street could lend themselves to some upper-story residential use. The study team elected to identify opportunities on two specific publicly-owned properties that lend themselves to "ready-to-go" prototypical residential or mixed use redevelopment. These two properties are identified as:

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The study team also elected to identify opportunities on two specific church-owned properties that serve as illustrative examples of prototypical mixed redevelopment assuming that the owners would be interested in maximizing the use of the sites instead of retaining them solely for off-street parking. These two properties are identified as:

- 109 S. Cameron St - First Presbyterian Church surface parking lot
- 29 S. Braddock St - Braddock United Methodist Church parking lot

Detailed Concept Plans for each of these four sites are provided in Appendices D1 through D4 of this report. The Concept Plans outline the targeted market and unique locational aspects of each site. Descriptions of the residential and nonresidential components of the redevelopment scenarios are provided along with graphic illustrations of the new structures. Density yields and square

footages of commercial development are spelled out for each site. Also noted is the present and resulting quantity of off-street parking.

Briefly, the proposed number of units and square footages of commercial development for each of the four sites are as follows:

- 103 S. Loudoun St – 19 apartments and 7,125 s.f. commercial
- 30 N. Braddock St - 7 townhouse units (option: basement apt in each)
- 109 S. Cameron St - 20-24 apartments and 5,040 s.f. nonresidential
- 29 S. Braddock St - 34 apartments and 12,836 s.f. commercial

6. **Creating a sense of place or an identity for the Area of Focus using special treatment of the public realm where necessary to express community identity and provide for community social life:**

Examples include sidewalk beautification, street art, pocket parks and unique styles of lighting and signage. The principle is that sidewalks must become the effective living rooms of the neighborhoods.

Amenities for urban dwellers need to be incorporated in order to facilitate a life experience even more exciting and convenient, yet equally as safe and secure, as that offered in the suburbs. Going to concerts and theatre, being minutes from a host of great restaurants and shops, taking an evening stroll, biking to work, and connecting with all kinds of people is what the urban lifestyle is all about. For Winchester, this can become a powerful attraction for an ever-widening cross-section of citizens.

Public enhancements to the Old Town streetscape with outdoor summer concerts, public sculpture displays, art parks, and walkable historic neighborhoods will be crucial as amenities for the viability of downtown as a residential district. The creation of these public gathering spaces and public arts should be done in a manner that preserves the character of Winchester that blends business and living in an innovative way to appeal to those seeking to work and live near cultural and social activities. Opportunities currently exist for publicly owned open spaces and green linkages that will bring both cultural amenities and image to the area of focus.

Completion of Winchester's Green Circle, a spectacular walkway/bikeway system for recreational use, could bring people into the area of focus to work and attend events. When completed, this civic initiative will stretch over six (6) miles, including through the city's historic core.

## A Look At What Other Downtowns Are Doing

The City of Pittsburgh recently implemented three main strategies to entice particularly young working adults to the downtown area. The incentives consist of:

1. A condo tax abatement program
2. More animal friendly apartments and condos
3. Vacant upper floor loan fund. Residential developers will create a diverse, lower cost supply of housing that will attract residents to Downtown. This program offers free architectural consulting to business owners through the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh. Building owners can receive architectural consulting regarding building codes and potential layouts for renovating vacant upper floors into a mixed use with a residential component.

The City of Charlottesville, VA used public-private partnerships to complete many new building projects in their downtown. They also developed land currently owned by the City for private use such as meeting and office space.

*The committee, which spent much time and effort to compile the information for this important project, consisted of Mary Blowe, Jim Deskins, Karen Helm, Will Moore, Will Rice, Jay Russell and Tim Youmans.*