



PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

15



PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Building on the essential elements of the land use component, this preferred development area component considers special target areas in the City where development and new investment are particularly important. Typically, these are places where development incentives may be used to encourage development, infill, or redevelopment, or may be areas where special land use regulations are warranted.

““The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

—Stephen Covey

15.1

INTRODUCTION

Four separate preferred development areas (PDA's) have been identified and studied as part of the comprehensive planning process. These are areas that warrant special attention

for different reasons. In all cases however, they are places that are very important to the economic future of Beckley and its overall livability.



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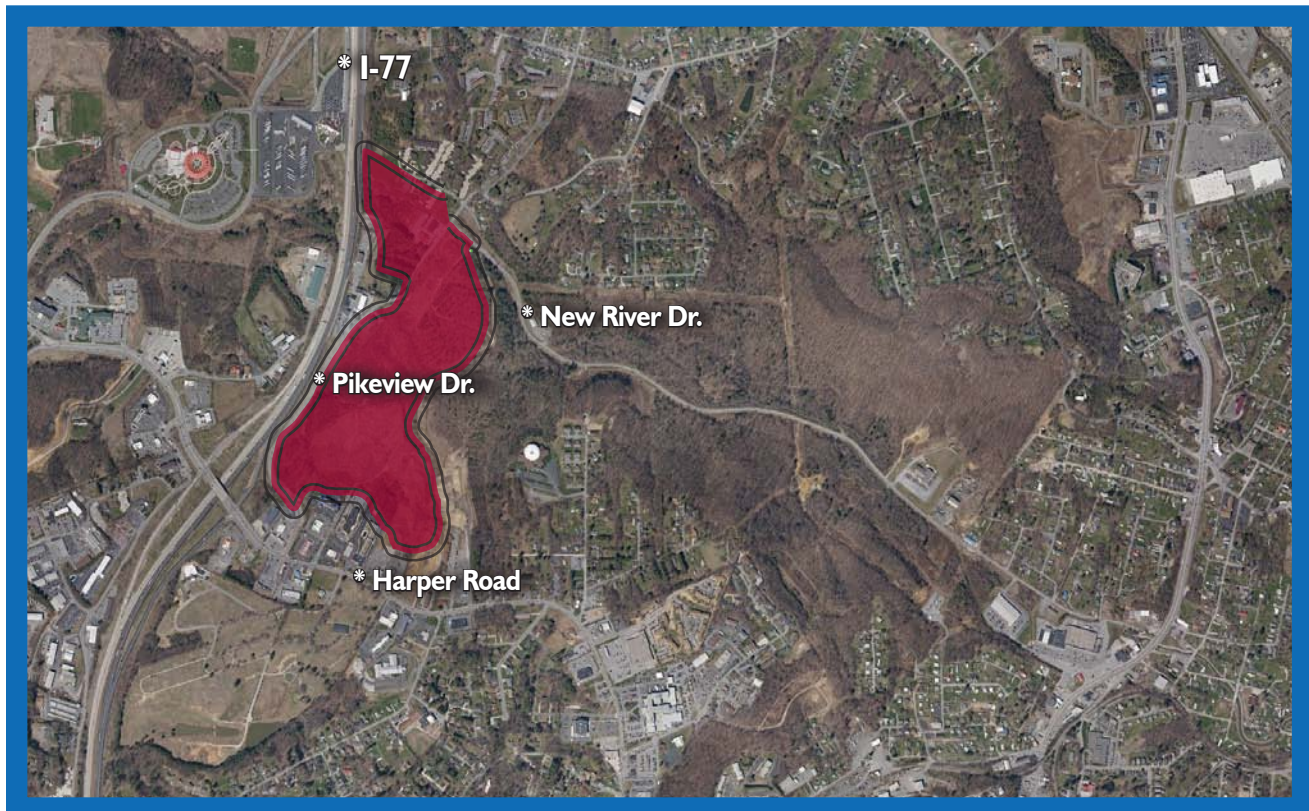
PIKEVIEW DRIVE

The Pikeview Drive PDA is generally shown below. Exact boundaries are not critical, but this PDA points to a general area that is proximate to I-77 and includes some potential highway visibility. This location is significant, given the considerable traffic flow on I-77 and the potential exposure from thousands of passing cars. Insights gained from the 2013 Market Study indicate that land uses involving visitor attractions would be ideal activities in this area. To some, the local economic benefits of Tamarack are not felt to a large degree in Beckley, as many visitors can exit and enter I-77 and never enter the City itself. What is desired is for people travelling on the interstates (and perhaps stopping at Tamarack) to see Beckley as a place with varied and extensive attractions that warrants a longer stay.

The City of Beckley is believed to be “leaking” expenditures in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry sector, mainly because its residents are patronizing venues that are

located in other parts of Raleigh County. A strategy for Beckley (as described more fully in Chapter 13) is to not only draw more visitors, but also to intercept “leakage” out of the market by motivating area residents to recreate locally, while also drawing more tourists. Based on the Market Study results, there is a significant upside opportunity to add a variety of arts, entertainment, and recreation venues in Beckley that would appeal to both residents and visitors. Some of this demand could be met elsewhere – but some demand can be met in this area of Beckley. There is also a smaller gap and opportunity for new hotels and overnight accommodations.

The Pikeview Drive area can be promoted as a place offering new visitor destinations that feed off traffic generated by Tamarack and the many interchange-related businesses clustered near I-77. Uses in this area should be year-round, and could include a wildlife habitat, zoo, and/or game ranch; family indoor activity center; a cycling bike track; a resort hotel with a water park; a discovery,



nature, and/or science center; or a simulation arcade center featuring extreme adventure sports. Actual adventure sports in this area could include activities such as zip-lining, obstacle courses, motorsport tracks, archery ranges and indoor climbing walls. Some of these uses may also be appropriate in New River Park (See Chapter 12). Further, a resort hotel with an indoor water park would be a tremendous asset in this area. Such facilities often include not only rooms and suites, but also space for parties, meetings and conventions. As indoor facilities, they operate and are active year-round. Ideally, several of these types of uses could be located next to each other (or at least nearby) to help create a cluster of unique venues with critical mass.

The objective is to create another destination in Beckley that is marketed aggressively to interstate traffic. Signs can begin north of Charleston to entice tourists to come to Beckley and stay overnight. Once staying overnight in Beckley, visitors are more inclined to visit places such as New River Park and the downtown district, where they can shop or have lunch at a downtown restaurant.

More intensive development in and near Pikeview Drive should be predicated on efforts to deal with existing traffic flow problems and the road geometry of Pikeview Drive. Its intersection with Harper Road, which is already congested, together with steep slopes along parts of Pikeview Drive, combine to create a series of issues that need serious attention if more development is to occur nearby. At the same time, there may be an opportunity to extend the private road, called Hylton Lane, to the north and open up access to land north of Harper Road. This road includes a signalized intersection near McDonalds and Applebee's at the northern corner. A public or private study to investigate the possibility of converting this road to a public road and improving its design characteristics is warranted. If feasible, Hylton Lane could be upgraded to provide access to the land to the north, and potentially intersect New River Drive. Many acres of land could become developable given this scenario. This could also help to relieve traffic pressure on Harper Road as New River Drive becomes an even better east-west option (especially during peak traffic flows).

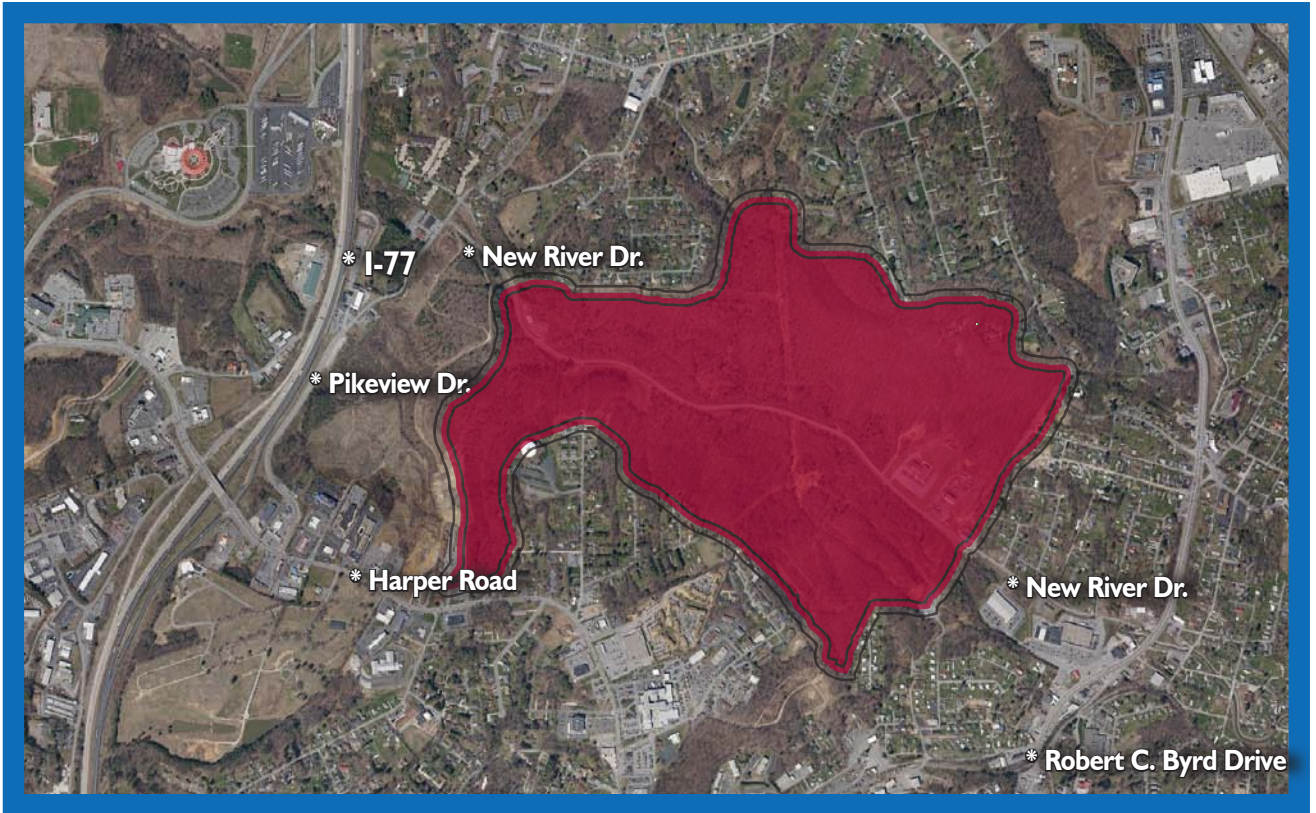
15.3

NEW RIVER DRIVE CORRIDOR

New River Drive is an important area because it represents the City of Beckley's only remaining large area available for development (and physical outward growth of Beckley is questionable given various characteristics of surrounding areas). The 2001 Comprehensive Plan addressed the issue of development in this area, as plans to build the "cross-town connector" were developing. As originally proposed, this "cross-town connector" was envisioned to include a four-lane road with bike trails on either side. As built, however, the cross-town connector became New River Drive, a two-lane road without bike lanes. While traffic volumes on New River Drive are low, a common complaint is that the intersection of New River Drive and Robert C. Byrd Drive is dangerous due to inadequate sight distances and traffic speeds on Robert C. Byrd Drive. This intersection was identified in Chapter 8 as one that requires attention.

As anticipated in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, the construction of New River Drive opened up a considerable amount of land for development. This land generally remains undeveloped today, as recent economic conditions have resulted in significantly reduced interest in construction and real estate development. Today, interest in real estate development has begun to gather strength, and we have new insights into needed housing types. Market research conducted as part of this planning process points toward an upscale housing market in Beckley that is underserved. Upscale housing is associated with people who can afford homes in the \$250,000-\$400,000 range. People in this income category are not necessarily interested in large homes on large suburban lots, but rather home choices that include upscale condominiums in an "Alpine" format.

Empty nesters and active seniors often want to avoid maintenance chores, but



don't necessarily want to live in senior apartments. They can be drawn to smaller, but very high quality homes in an exclusive neighbourhood with highly desirable views and amenities (tennis courts, fitness centers, community facilities, etc.) This group is small, representing only 5.7% of the total population in Beckley, but it is also an important demographic to retain in town. Some individuals near retirement age and beyond have much to offer the community. They can be socially engaged and active volunteers in community projects.

Future development of the New River Drive corridor should include space for this type of housing development.

Flatter areas along this corridor can be ideal locations, especially if surrounded by natural spaces and scenic views dedicated as permanent open space. Similarly, space for active recreation and a network of bike and/or walking trails would be desirable (especially if ultimately connected to New River Park and the Rail Trail).

Achieving such a more innovative development pattern calls for more innovative zoning tools than are currently available in Beckley. This issue was addressed in Chapter 6 in the context of needed zoning code updates. Regulatory mechanisms utilized in master planned communities and more innovative larger-



Conservation Design Subdivision Example. Homes Are Clustered Together to Provide Room For Common Open Space and Shared Site Amenities



Individual Lots May Be Reduced In Size To Provide For Common Site Amenities Such As Walking Paths, Recreation Facilities and Natural Spaces.

scale developments include planned unit developments (PUD's) and/or Cluster Developments. PUD's and clustering options can be created in multiple ways in a zoning code, often allowing residential types and densities to vary, as well as permitting mixed uses. This allows new development to be concentrated in places best suited for it, while wetlands, steep slopes and other significant natural features are included in

areas set aside as permanent open space for the enjoyment of residents. Since the number of residential units permitted per acre remains the same as conventional development practices, developers reap the same number of units and install less infrastructure for lower costs. Often PUD's require an internal network of open spaces and pedestrian and/or bike connections.

Going forward, more advance planning is needed by the City to help provide a general framework for development along New River Drive. Specifically, there is a need to consider and investigate the following:

1. Identification of land ownership and holdings
2. A thorough evaluation of site conditions (identification of developable areas, and areas that ought to be preserved)
3. Development of an optimum vehicular circulation pattern with potential road intersections
4. Development of a non-motorized transportation network with potential linkages; and
5. Creation of a new zoning tool to encourage and support a more innovative development scenario

15.4

EAST BECKLEY BYPASS AREA

The East Beckley Bypass area is a significant area of the City that has been years in the making. Phase two of the plans to develop the Woodlands Pinecrest Business and Technology Park was just completed, and represents the culmination of efforts that began in the early 1990's. Completed in the fall of 2013, Phase 2 includes 700 acres of land supported by new infrastructure that are ready for development.

The East Beckley Bypass provides outstanding access to this area, and will soon be extended further to the north (as described in Chapter 8). Much of the

existing development in this area includes "office park" type uses. The 2013 Market Study, suggests that attracting industries in the wholesale trade, manufacturing and commercial/industrial machinery sectors will continue to be challenging, as competition among communities to lure new businesses can be fierce. However, this same research suggests that there may be greater opportunities for development in the categories of professional services, financial and insurance companies.

Some areas may also be well-suited for multi-family residential units such as condominiums

and senior aging-in-place housing complexes. For this reason, it makes sense to consider new (or amended) zoning for this area so that zoning does not become an obstacle for future development activity. Presently, this area is zoned M-1. This zoning category does not include a range of permitted land uses that are desirable uses for this area. A future zoning code update should address this, and carefully consider either modifications to the existing M-1 (paying attention to the fact that many other areas in Beckley are also zoned M-1), or the development of a special zoning district that is uniquely oriented to the desired development of the Woodlands Pinecrest Business and Technology Park.



East Beckley Bypass Area

15.5

DOWNTOWN

Downtown is regarded as the heart and soul of Beckley, and it continues to receive considerable attention, as it did during the 2001 planning process. Downtown development and redevelopment issues were the subject of a focused planning workshop on October 15, 2013.

With the completion of the BIG project, and subsequent efforts to develop a local transit system, downtown seems poised for positive change. Attention to the issues of downtown Beckley commenced with an analysis of the market forces that create demand for activity and various land uses. Highlights of this analysis include the following:

Housing Strategy - Preferences for urban, downtown living choices are on the upswing nation-wide, and communities are placing more emphasis on the importance of placemaking principles and quality of life amenities to draw people to downtown living. Downtown residents add life and activity to downtowns, and help support downtown businesses. Downtown housing units are often sought by young professionals who are sometimes inclined to start business ventures.

The 2013 Market Study identified a number of lifestyle clusters that should be targeted for new housing products, especially in the downtown. Households across the United States are generally classified among 70

different “lifestyle clusters” that are given creative and illustrative names. One target market is the “Colleges and Cafes” market. More broadly speaking, there are other relevant lifestyle clusters that are target markets for those interested in developing downtown living choices (and in adjacent inner ring areas around downtown). These are:

Lifestyle Cluster Code	Share of City Population	Typical Setting	Share of CBD Pop
Colleges and Cafes 053	0.0%	Downtown	0%
Diapers and Debit Cards M45	9.2%	Downtown	70%
Soul Survivors S69	7.8%	Downtown	18%
Small Town Shallow Pockets S68	6.0%	Downtown	12%
True Grit Americans N46	46.8%	Inner Ring	0%
Gospel and Grits N48	4.6%	Inner Ring	0%
No Place Like Home E20	7.8%	Outer Ring	0%
Family Fun-tastic B09	6.5%	Outer Ring	0%
Platinum Prosperity A02	5.7%	Outer Ring	0%
Aging in Place J34	5.6%	Scattered Country	0%
Total	100.0%	City of Beckley	100%

Source: Synergos Technologies, DemographicsNow, and PopStats demographic vendor providers; analysis by LandUse | USA.

Economic Development Strategy - Some key considerations emerged from the 2013 Market Study that form the basis for a retail strategy for downtown. The essential elements of this strategy include the need to focus on developing stores that would serve as anchors that would generate the necessary shopper traffic to support smaller tenants and merchants. Downtown anchor stores are typically 3,000 to 14,000 square feet, whereas smaller tenants could be as small as 500 square feet, and seldom exceed 3,000 square feet.

Anchor store recruitment should focus on several specific categories including a) a downtown grocery store and/or expanded international foods market; b) furniture gallery with home design (window treatments, illumination, electrical supply, etc.); and c) motorsports dealership in niches like classic cars, or club cars / golf carts.

Along with anchors stores being a priority, other categories that can be targeted include:

a) hobby and model supplies; b) toys and magic novelty; c) sports memorabilia / trophies; d) equestrian livery; e) embroidery / silkscreening; f) sports team apparel; and g) brand apparel shops like Redwing Shoes or Carhartt. In addition, the City could acquire a vacant retail building in the downtown and convert the space into an artisan’s bazaar or market. The space could be divided into merchant booths, stalls, or kiosks, and could accommodate a mix of small businesses and cottage industries.

There are a number and variety of small business entrepreneurs throughout Raleigh County that could be targeted as potential tenants for the artisan’s bazaar. Many of them are currently in rural and scattered locations, often occupying space that lacks a retail presence. The objective is to help these businesses grow by providing them with affordable options for small space. Ideally, such uses would be located in the downtown art district illustrated on page 11.

A number of non-retail services should be anticipated for the downtown, but should not be allowed to occupy street level retail space that is clearly intended for the traditional merchants listed above. Traditional retail space typically has larger bay windows that are ideal for displaying merchandise. There is also a market opportunity in the downtown for the several types of non-retail services that could emerge as potential tenants to fill vacant space. These include a laundromat with a wifi café; an office for a physical, occupation, and/or speech therapist; veterinarian office and pet grooming services; computer and electronic repair services; yoga, dance, and/or martial arts centers; and a signage company specializing in banners, flags, and printing services.

Themed restaurants with brands like Nascar, Harley Davidson, or Legoland should be targeted for downtown. Such restaurants offer a unique experience and are built around a concept that often relates to an experience that transcends just the food offerings. Uniqueness is the key, and large-scale, familiar examples in large cities include Hard Rock Café, Planet Hollywood and Rainforest Café. This was touched on in Chapter 13. Beckley does not have the population base to support such chains – but variations on this theme are possible and could be made uniquely Beckley, with perhaps an emphasis on outdoor adventures.

Demand for upper level spaces in downtown can increase after a few anchor stores are recruited. Buildings occupied by retail tenants on the first level are more likely to attract tenants interested in occupying residential and/or office suites on the upper levels. Upper level spaces can be used for a mix of residential, office, or live-work purposes, and may vary from building to building. Building owners can adapt the use according to building formats, preferences, and demand by demographic group. Some buildings will be more conducive for office tenants, and others will appeal more to residential tenants.

Over time, office suites could be converted to apartments, and vice versa. Building owners and developers are encouraged to design the upper level space as flexible units. They should include open floor plans; kitchens as a focal point; one bathroom for every

bedroom; bedrooms that do not share interior walls; and balconies and patios wherever physically possible. New building materials should include ceramic tiles (rather than vinyl); countertops with man-made products other than Formica; stainless steel but small appliances; ceramic, wood, and concrete flooring rather than carpet or vinyl; and quality window blinds. Wherever the building size make it practical, developers and building owners should strive to offset the costs for the quality materials by designing smaller, more compact units that have hard-loft elements intact (exposed ducts, rafters, concrete floors, brick walls, etc.) and open floor plans.

It should be noted that unique bed & breakfast accommodations in the downtown, in historic buildings and/or in other unique settings, should be targeted. Potential for these types of uses exist mostly along the outskirts of downtown – but could help to support downtown businesses.

Finally, there are reasons to consider a banquet / meeting facility in downtown Beckley. Caution is expressed here, as there are other existing local facilities that partially serve this market, and little is gained if a new facility cannibalizes existing business activity. Still, a new downtown banquet / meeting facility and hotel are attractive concepts that could provide an additional boost to downtown helping to support existing downtown businesses and restaurants. A location near the BIG project would be logical and attractive, as it would provide easy access to future transit services and ample parking, while also being walkable to most of downtown.

General Physical Development Strategy

A considerable amount of attention was devoted to the physical development of downtown Beckley. The results of this work are articulated in the following material that updates the previous planning strategies described in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan.

Downtown Districts

Downtown Beckley was divided into districts in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan as a means to provide an organizing framework. It is also

a way to help draw attention to the value of synergies between certain land uses. Similar land uses and similar activities can often draw strength from each other when they are close.

Six downtown districts were identified and are illustrated below. The Gateway District is the “front door” to downtown Beckley and it is the site of the BIG project. Most people who visit downtown Beckley for the first time will form a first impression here. This area is targeted for significant future development. The BIG project was designed to accommodate a new municipal complex and this location may be suited for a banquet facility (pending further study as mentioned). If such a banquet facility is not found to be feasible, other private development is anticipated (see rendering on the following page prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff). In either case, expectations for prominent and high-quality development exist for this area.

The Uptown District is located on the far east side of downtown. It contains a mixture of office, retail and public uses. Kanawha St. is the center of this District.

The Civic District is found at the heart of Downtown Beckley and it includes the Raleigh County Courthouse, the US District Courthouse, and related office spaces.

The Downtown District is found along the south side of downtown along Neville. It has a solid downtown “feel” and the fact that Neville “dead ends” at Heber creates a terminal vista and sense of arrival.

The Arts District is defined more out of a sense of potential than the existing land use and character of development. Presently, there are few if any artists located in this district – but the potential of this area has been recognized and there is a strong desire to encourage artists to live and work in Downtown Beckley. Such activity would not only provide a needed draw for downtown, but a viable cluster of artisans would help create jobs and build tax base. A live-work unit is generally defined as a unit where residential and nonresidential spaces are combined where the proprietor can both live and work. Live-work units provide a number of benefits to the community including the provision of affordable space for small businesses and/or artists. There are locations along Prince Street that seem to be ideal for this, offering both first floor retail exposure and upper floor living space.

The University District represents an area that includes university buildings – or surrounding areas that are highly influenced by university-related activities. Future physical growth of the campus can occur here.





Birds Eye View of Potential Future Commerical Development from Robert C. Byrd Drive looking East. Rendering Prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff



View of Potential Future Commerical Development from the South Side of Neville Street Looking North. Rendering Prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff

Development Opportunities

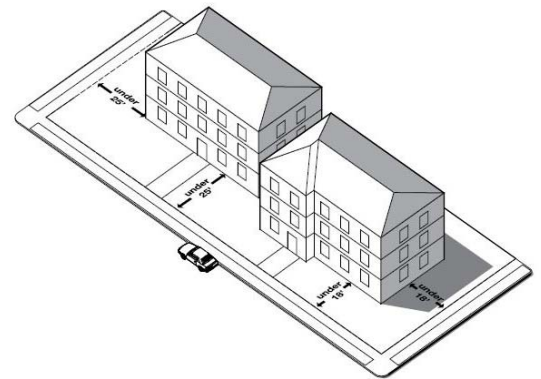
Downtown Beckley currently offers several areas with more obvious development opportunities. Two opportunities exist near the BIG project and were described previously. To the east, the area shown on Neville Street is the potential location of private development, while the area along Robert C. Byrd Drive is the location of a future municipal building(s). Another development opportunity exists next to the surface parking lot just east of the BIG project. This is a long narrow site that would have frontage on Neville. Two other development opportunities exist at the end of Neville Street at the intersection with Heber. There are also a number of adaptive reuse opportunities - meaning an existing building could be repurposed and redeveloped.



Downtown Opportunities Framework Plan

Development Opportunities and Building Massing

Several of the areas of development opportunity are illustrated in the context of future building massing and placement. It is important that future infill development complement the existing fabric of buildings and public spaces. New buildings should be located at or near the public right-of-way, and building heights should be similar to adjacent structures. The placement of buildings close to the right-of-way is so important that it should be embodied in the zoning code in the form of a “build-to” line. Exceptions to this requirement should be made in cases where there is clear and demonstrable development phasing plan – or in cases where significant public spaces are planned. Public spaces could include small “pocket parks” or places of significant public art that warrant breaking up the street wall.





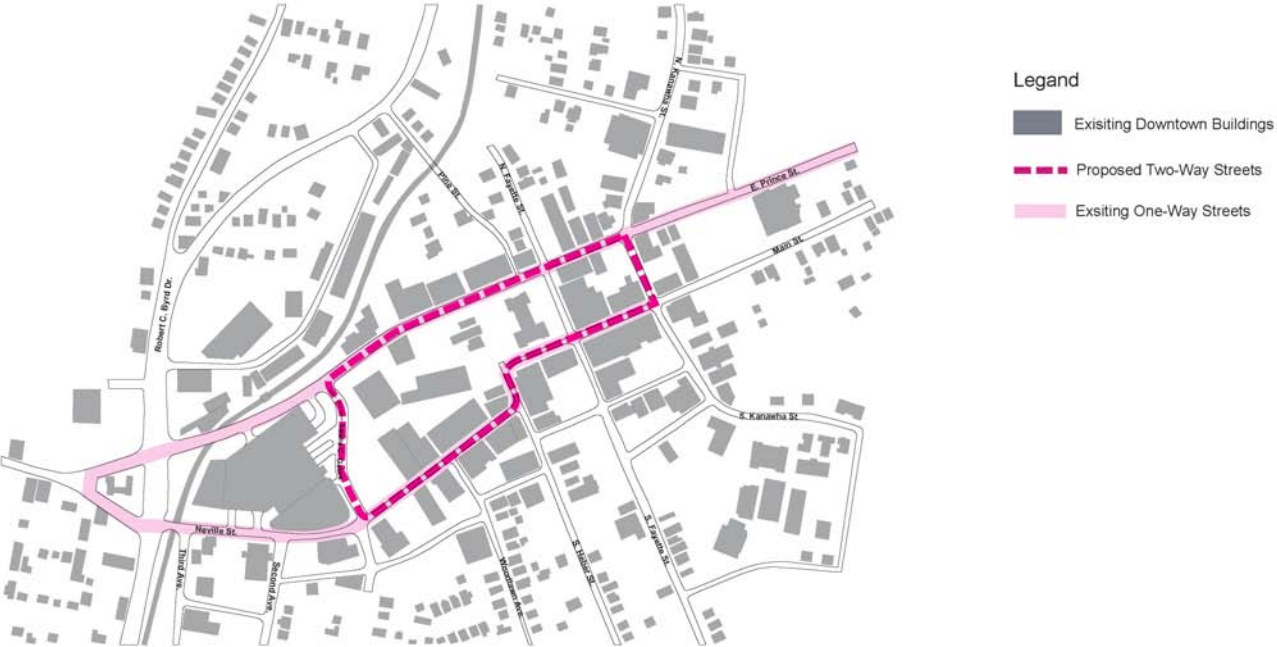
Buildings shown in purple are potential future structures with appropriate massing and placement



Buildings shown in purple are potential future structures with appropriate massing and placement

Downtown Vehicular Circulation

As mentioned in Chapter 8, there is a trend toward eliminating one-way streets in downtowns. In Downtown Beckley, the opportunity to do this presents itself on Neville, Prince and Kanawha Streets. As illustrated below, a two-way traffic pattern could be created to slow traffic movement and help restore the balance between vehicular traffic movement and pedestrian movement. More study is needed before this concept is implemented, but future efforts to re-establish two-way traffic downtown is a sensible and low-cost step toward improving downtown.



Downtown Vehicular Circulation Map

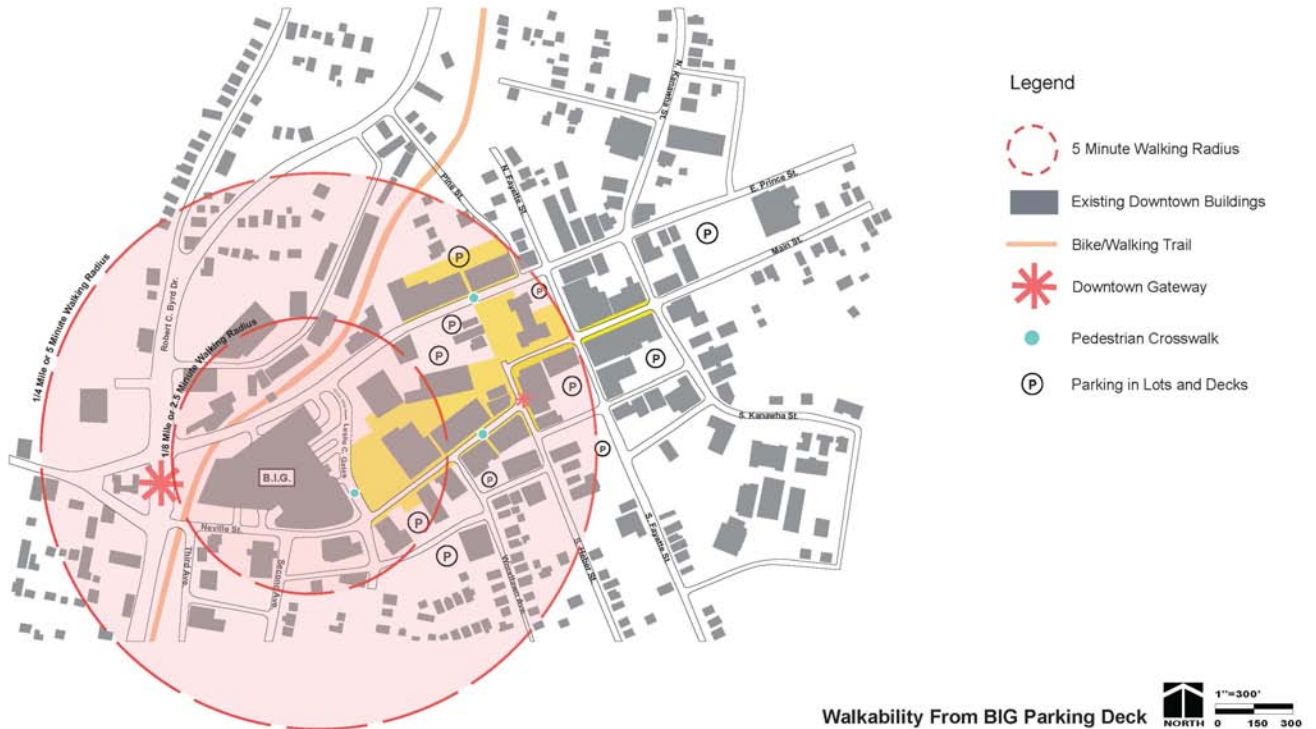


This two-way concept is simulated below on Prince Street. This area is particularly well-suited for the artist live-work units described above. This two-way concept is also illustrated near the corner of Main and Fayette St.



Pedestrian Circulation & Walkability

As shown previously on the Downtown Opportunities Framework Plan, and below on the map depicting a 5-minute walking distance from the BIG project, Downtown Beckley is highly walkable. A 5-minute walk is often used as the benchmark for a comfortable walking distance. In Beckley there are some slope issues that come into consideration when considering walking distances, but for the most part, a person can easily walk between most destinations downtown in a reasonable time.



The Pedestrian and Public Spaces

The fact that Downtown Beckley is compact enough to be walkable, is only part of the equation when it comes to providing a safe and inviting pedestrian experience. Pedestrians must feel safe and comfortable. Two-way traffic is one important step in this direction along with the following steps and measures to help make Downtown Beckley a more human-scale environment. This issue is also discussed in Chapter 8.

There is a significant amount of “public realm” in Beckley that consists of public parks and private spaces that are extensions of interior buildings. One of the largest areas among the various public realms in Beckley is the top of the BIG project. This area provides tremendous opportunity for large events. Undoubtedly, as the BIG project becomes a more significant and active place in downtown, with a future transit system and adjacent development, there will be greater opportunities to formalize and activate the event space. The illustration on the following page offers ideas on how the festival space and other key features can be enhanced as demand grows. This drawing also shows future construction of commercial space along Neville.



Rendering Prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff

Not all public spaces are as large and significant as the BIG project. Public parking lots can serve dual purposes in communities. The parking lot off Neville Street and next to Word Park can be improved with awnings similar to what is shown below. This is often done to inexpensively support farmers markets or art fairs where vendors can display their goods and be protected from sun and rain. The parking lot remains a parking lot, but can double as a place for a farmers market or art fair.

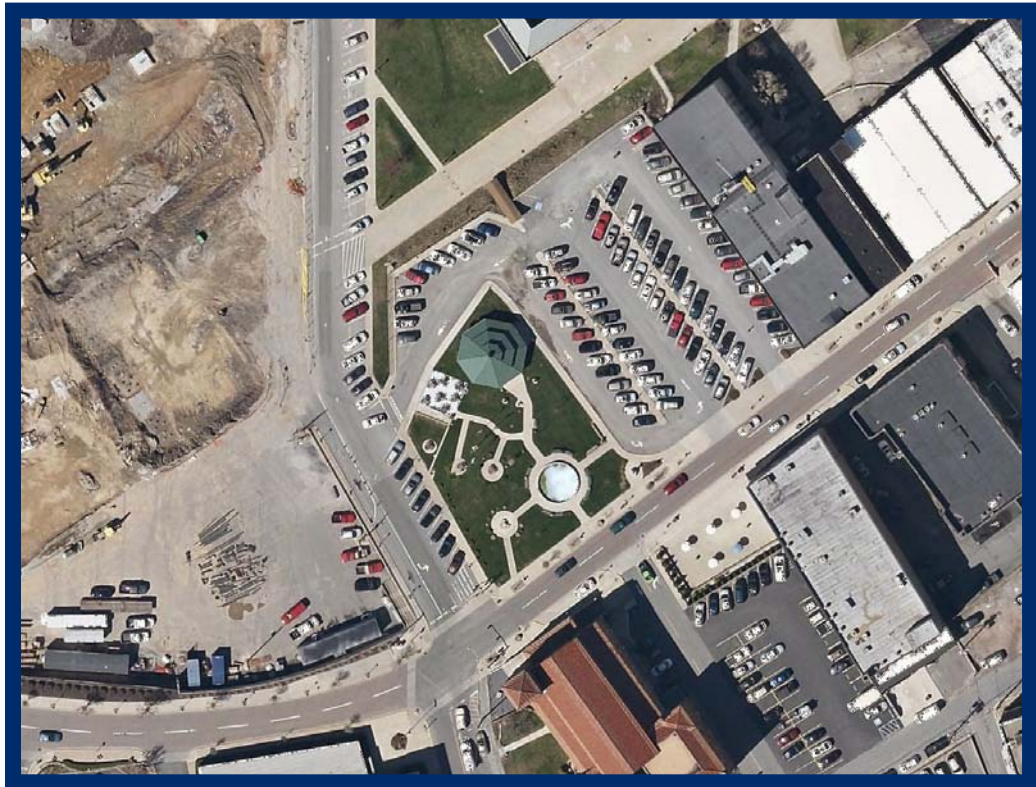


Existing Parking Lot On Neville St., Next to Word Park



Dual Purpose Parking Lot That Supports Farmers Markets and Art / Craft Shows

Among the more prominent public spaces in Downtown Beckley is Word Park. This area has considerable potential to be redeveloped as shown below. This plan is offered as a starting point for more conversation about how to make Word Park a more significant public space that supports downtown activities.



Existing Word Park (Showing the Big Project Under Construction)



Concept Plan For Word Park

Public Art & Memorials

Public art and memorials add significantly to the local character of any community. Downtown Beckley has many historical markers, statues and memorials that help tell the story of local residents and historical events. These existing features are essential elements of local culture and should be enhanced by better defining spaces for these features. In some cases, existing memorials seem somewhat lost as they are framed by only parking lots, or large open spaces. For example, landscape backdrops for memorials or statues could help better frame these features and draw attention to them. In some

cases, relocation of these features to more prominent places may have benefits that outweigh relocation costs. It may also make sense to bring features together, or add additional features to make them more prominent.

The opportunity to provide more public art also provides an opportunity to help define Beckley as a unique place and to make a strong statement about the City of Beckley and its residents. Images on the following page illustrate potential paths the City can take. One option illustrates a mural that makes a strong statement about Beckley's proximity to the New River Bridge that would be seen upon entering downtown. Secondly, the sculpture of the deer in the pond implies natural amenities and action. Third, the planted wall highlights natural elements and a certain connectedness to nature. It is not proposed that any one piece of art, or sculpture can represent the sum total of the identity of Beckley – but it is suggested that the City can choose public art deliberately and use it as a form of communication and a means to associate Beckley with a desirable brand and identity.



Some Existing Public Art Appears Isolated And Could Benefit From More Landscape Treatments To Better Frame Each Item



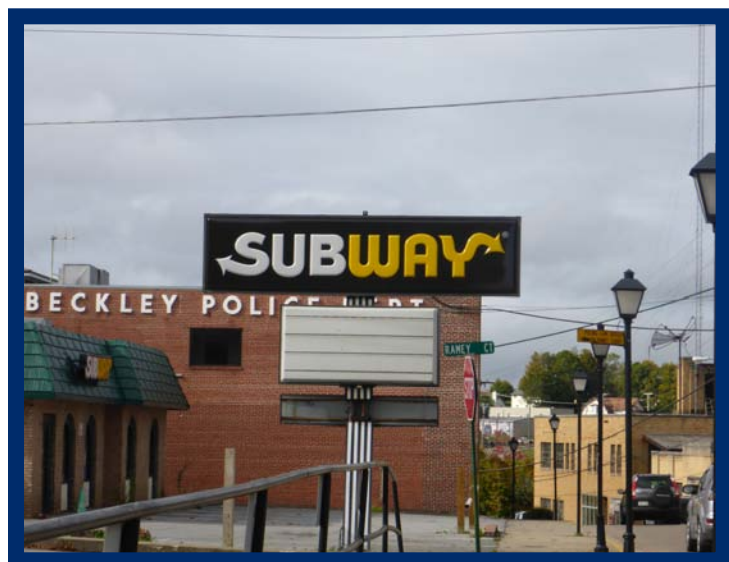
Wayfinding

Wayfinding issues are touched on briefly in other Chapters, but in downtown this issue takes on significant weight and meaning. Following the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, a wayfinding system was created for Beckley. The development of this system can be viewed as an initial and important step along a process to not only provide directions, but also help define place and local character. Presently, the downtown signage system consists of inexpensive signs on poles illustrating directions toward various features. While this is certainly functional, it misses opportunities to help define place and local character. Future development and updates of the signage system should consider more decorative elements and the creation of a “family” of signs that look similar, but are functionally different (as shown below). This design task should be done in concert with other urban design decisions related to street lights, street furniture and lighting. As stated elsewhere, Beckley has the opportunity to build on the design decisions made as part of the BIG project. These decisions boil down to choosing between a more contemporary design style and a more historical feel. These steps are considered to be necessary future steps for Beckley as they require more focused attention and deliberate choices of material, style and color.



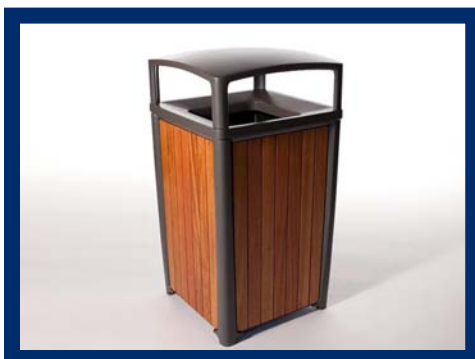
Private Signage

Downtown should have separate and distinct signage regulations that prohibit or severely restrict free-standing signs. Large free-standing signs are generally associated with suburban commercial corridors where traffic flows at high speeds, and larger sign area and lettering is needed to capture attention. Downtown environments have both pedestrian and vehicular traffic and typically have signage standards that require signs to be affixed to structures like canopies or building facades.



Physical Improvement Strategies

Along with signage features, there are many other elements of downtown that blend together to form a cohesive urban space. Details such as benches and trash receptacles are functional, but also communicate loudly in an unspoken language about how a place feels. These elements contribute to sense of place in important ways. Presently, in some locations, benches and trash receptacles offer perceptions of neglect and indifference. Updated benches and trash receptacles would help greatly to improve appearance at low cost.



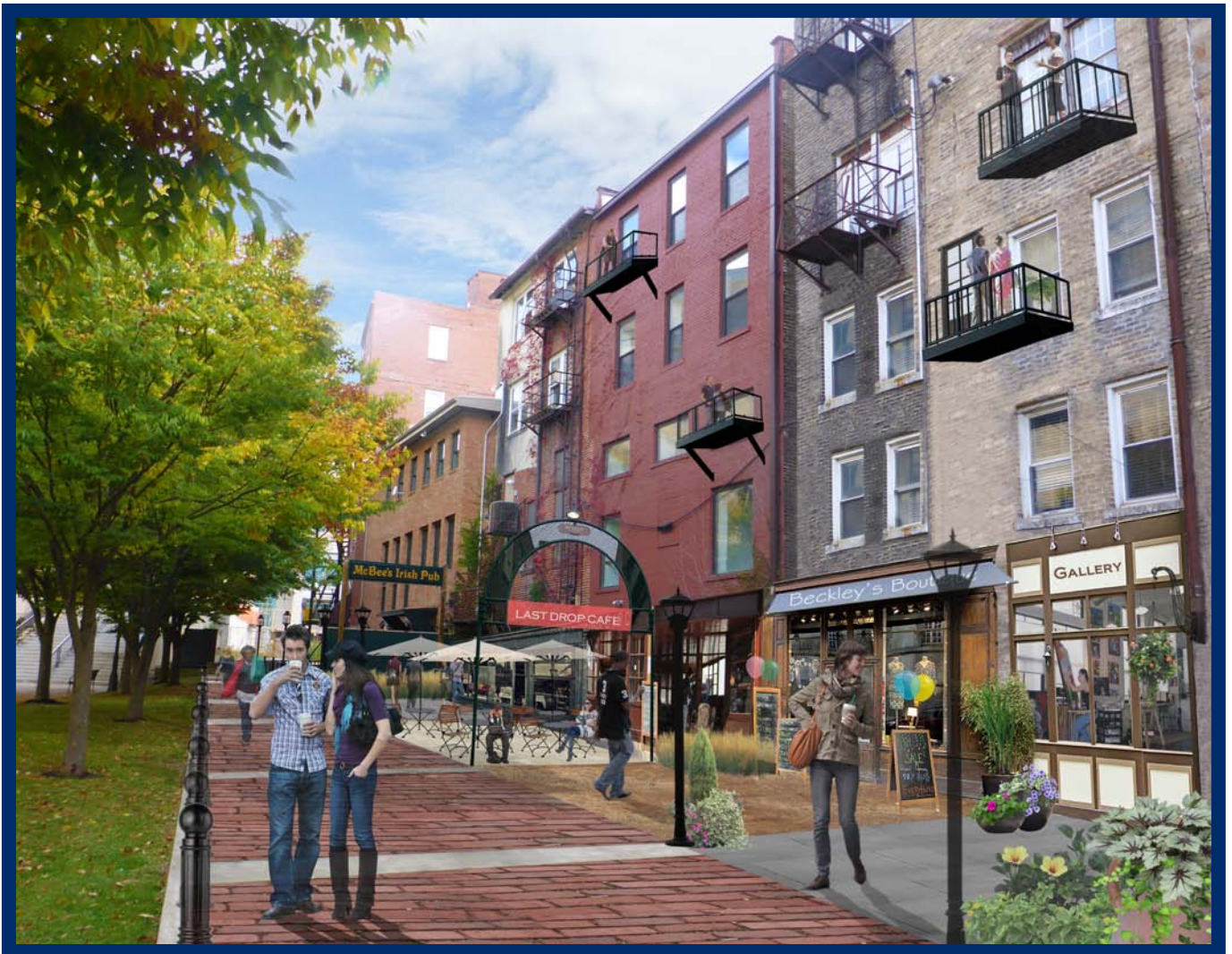
In some cases, there are opportunities to enhance public spaces at low cost. For example, an enhanced alley on Neville Street would not be costly, but would help create a more inviting connection between Neville Street and a more private and human-scale space between the backs of buildings and the federal courthouse. The space behind the buildings was identified previously as a public realm that could be further enhanced significantly. Owners of McBee's Restaurant were the first to see this opportunity and their investment in outdoor amenities helps to set a precedent for similar activities and improvements. If adjacent buildings follow this lead, a more significant and inviting private space can be created. The City of Beckley should be a strong partner in efforts to help create this unique space. Specifically, the City can encourage not only casual outdoor dining, but can provide additional plantings, site furnishings, unified lighting and formalized pedestrian spaces. Private business owners can add balconies (as shown) and more inviting rear entries as a way to more formally define the connection between indoor and outdoor activities.





Existing

Potential



Rain gardens help to define public space in some circumstances and are appropriate in Downtown Beckley. Increasingly, communities are seeing opportunities to create a rain garden as a way to not only provide functional storm water management, but also as a way to enhance the downtown streetscape with greenery and plant material. In some cases, funding can be provided for storm water management in downtowns that helps to dramatically enhance the streetscape. Downtown rain gardens can also help separate spaces intended for vehicles from pedestrian spaces. This adds a measure of safety and comfort for pedestrians.

Sample Rain Gardens



Existing Rain Garden Near The BIG Site





Existing






To summarize the intended direction for downtown streetscape improvements, the following graphic is presented to illustrate before and after images of desired improvements. While not all proposed improvements are shown, the following graphic illustrates:

- Utilizing rain gardens for storm water management
- Updating signal poles with black paint
- Basic Improvements to street signage and banners
- Planting Street Trees
- Adding hanging baskets
- Adding an outdoor café
- Updating site furnishings



Potential

PLAN KEY

-  New Infill Buildings
-  Lawn Areas
-  Pedestrian Areas
-  Art & Statuary
-  Proposed Trees & Landscape



- ① Expanded Word Park (Farmer's Market Pavilion)
- ② Pocket Park (New Landscape & Amenities)
- ③ Hidden Park (Joint Venture w/U.S. Courthouse & Federal Bldg.)
- ④ Alley Promenade
- ⑤ Heber Plaza (New Bldgs. & Intersection Streetscape)
- ⑥ Shoemaker Square (New Landscape & Amenities)
- ⑦ Streetscape Rain Gardens
- ⑧ Reconfigured Parking Lot
- ⑨ Artist Live/Work Studios
- ⑩ New Surface Parking Lot (Condemned Bldg.)



Conceptual Master Plan

Downtown Beckley
City of Beckley, West Virginia
December 2013

