

**The Evolution of an American Small Town;
An Intervention Focusing upon Re-centralization and Diversification.**

by

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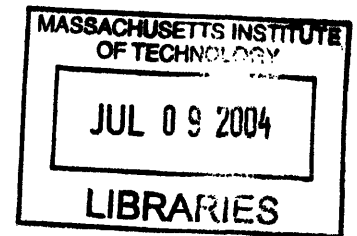
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture
on June 4, 2004 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for a Degree of Master of
Science in Architecture

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ABSTRACT

A research and design thesis exploring the evolution of a small southwest Virginia farming town named Christiansburg. The first section of this work focuses on the original crossroad community that aided the surrounding county farmers with their monthly business and civic needs. This thesis researches the town's origin form and follows its growth after the introduction of the automobile, the connections brought by *U.S. Highway System*, the effects *Industrial Revolution*, movement away for an agrarian based economy, and the aftermath of being bypassed by the *Interstate*. This initial step is in hopes of understanding the current landscape of many of our nation's small towns, how they lost much of their civic identity, and to establish the problems which they face within today economy.

The second step of this thesis is to create an urban design intervention which helps redevelop Christiansburg's civic identity. This design project replies to the town's history, existing and past urban form, programming of open space, and the community's current needs by creating a proposal that both stabilizes the community and acts as catalyst for growth. This new master plan responses to earlier research by re-centralizing many of the town's civic institutions, currently lost to land flanking the highway, and by diversifying the existing amenities and resources offered within the downtown core. The hope is by re-centering and diversifying the core many existing perceptions of downtown will change and businesses, recreation, and housing with return.

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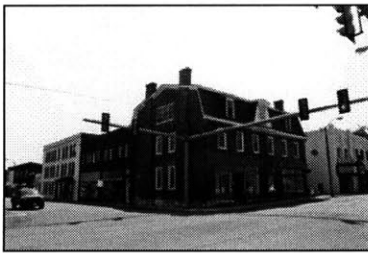
01 - INTRODUCTION

Fig 01.1 - Pearisburg, Virginia

The American landscape is scattered with thousands of towns, each with its own individual history, identity, and charm. Towns in the United States have various origins. Many grew up as satellite communities within a day's horse ride of larger cities, some began as settlers moved west grew tired of living out of a wagon, still others grew up along side the railroads, and there are even a handful of newer towns settled around industrial plants or originating from suburbs. A great number of these towns have been settled around interesting physical landscape elements, whether this be small New England towns, gritty West Virginia mining towns, or sunny Indiana farming towns. In many ways American Town captures a snapshot of what makes our country unique, they form the soul of the United States and they are where the *'American Dream'* comes true. The American town, not the busy, densely populated city, is where the majority of the everyday man will find the opportunity to purchase land, build a home, and raise a family. We chase our dreams of wealth and fame in the city but we dream of retiring with our family, riches, and social independence within a quaint American town.

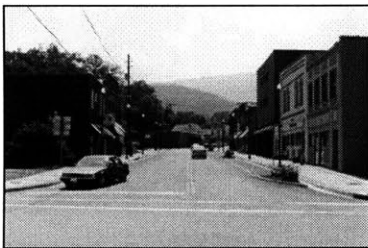


Fig 01.2 - Narrows, Virginia

Today towns seem to have evolved away from their early origins. For decades towns were seen as communities where you knew your neighbors, could enjoy evenings of sitting on the front porch, barbecue in the backyard, and escape the hectic pace of the city. This town image is connected to thoughts of Mayberry from *'The Andy Griffith Show'*, Sinclair Lewis's *'Main Street'*, Thornton Wilder's *'Our Town'*, and songs from John Cougar Mellencamp and Bruce Springsteen. They are reminiscent of simpler, more innocent times, in which the neighborhood children played stickball in public streets and where you did not have to lock your doors at night. Yet towns of today are no longer as simple as they once were. Their economic layout is no longer singularly focused, the landscape faces many of the same problems as cities, while residents are demanding more public services. Since the days of the Industrial Revolution towns have existed as a mixture of small businesses, medium-scale industries, and service positions. The twenty-first century town must perform a balancing act, providing a mixture of jobs for its citizens while still holding onto its original roots and appearances. This is an extremely hard task, which many communities are failing at, causing a great number of their residents to commute outside of the town for work, thus robbing their town of revenue and opportunities. Adding to this problem is the development of commercial/retail business areas that lay just outside the town limits, typically near the local interstate-highway intersections.

The urban landscape of American towns varies as much as their origins. Many exist as *'Main Street'* communities, some as small *'grided'* communities, while others follow natural elements such as rivers, waterfronts, mountainsides, or railway lines. The majority of these communities have downtown areas with only a handful of blocks,

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little continuous urban fabric, and they have historically contained local civic institutions, businesses, and retail shops. Generally these downtown areas hold few outside chains stores but businesses such as drugstores, fast food restaurants, and gas stations. This downtown district is normally surrounded by suburban neighborhoods; not the type that you drive thirty minutes to reach but the type where it takes five to ten minutes to walk from the downtown ice cream parlor to your home. Most such towns have some form of green space whether it be the town square, municipal park, or public green. This is the area where many of the community's local festivals, celebrations, and events are located. These social - communal activities are seen as opportunities for the town's population to gather to interact, to build community, and to share activities. The identities of these towns is deeply connected to what they can offer their residents, what types of amenities and resources they hold, the way their elements are articulated both architecturally and at the urban scale, and if this identity connects to its history. But, this identity has recently suffered. Many towns have been forced to change with the introduction of the automobile. The wide open spaces needed for the car are not compatible with the tight, pedestrian friendly town streets. The forced introduction of parking, drive-in and drive-thru businesses, and the evolution of travel has created vast problems for small American towns.

The United States has a long history of towns, but over the last century many of these have experience dramatic changes. They have been faced with losing residents to the surrounding suburbs while their businesses are losing revenue to the strip areas outside the town limits. Many of the problems of today's towns may be traced to the United State dependence on the automobile and the incurring problems that followed it. Lewis Mumford once wrote, "*The right to have access to every building in the city by the private motorcar in an age where everyone possesses such a vehicle is actually the right to destroy the city.*"¹ As town officials made more space for the car, they sacrificed the street, the pedestrian environment, and the community. The defining element of many towns is their balance between the small, intimate, and private and the public and communal. These downtowns are filled with public space, such as their main streets, the town squares, municipal parks, and Town Halls. These are the activity nodes where you play, interact with your neighbors, and build community. These nodes are also where the local citizens meet for town events, celebrations, and seasonal festivals. "*The street is the community's living room, public space our stage to live our lives as neighbors. Buildings enframe these settings. ... Public Space is where the principles of equality of citizenship rule. But public space, the stage of social life, is destroyed by our auto-oriented design that nullifies walking and intermingling.*"² Jane Holtz Kay continued by saying streets are made for, "*symbolic, ceremonial, social and political roles, not just those of movement and access.*"³ Nowhere is the statement more evident then within the American small towns.

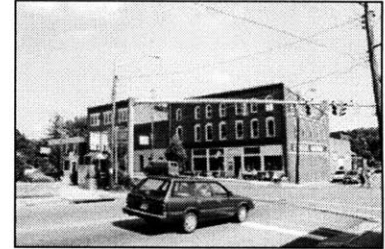


Fig 01.3 - Floyd, Virginia

1. Kay, Jane Holtz;
Asphalt Nation; pg 67
quoting Lewis Mumford



Fig 01.4 - Pulaski, Virginia

2. Kay, Jane Holtz;
Asphalt Nation; pg 71
3. Kay, Jane Holtz;
Asphalt Nation; pg 330
quoting Allan Jacobs



Fig 01.5 - Radford, Virginia

Today many of these towns have allowed many of their civic institutions and retail businesses to relocate out of the downtown. They have become singularly focused, marketing themselves as central business districts or historic downtowns. They are faced with finding ways to offer varied housing types to keep the downtown core populated. Towns must provide jobs for their citizens so that they will not commute away and spend their money in other places. They are burdened with creating solutions for parking problems, while developing retail and commercial spaces that can compete with the growing strip containing regional malls, chain restaurants, mega-stores, and corporate offices. The individuality that once marked so many towns as special places has been sacrificed to create acres of asphalt parking lots and bland, poorly renovated buildings, unoccupied public spaces, and local museums that hold little civic history.

The goal of this thesis is to research the evolution of a small southwest Virginia town named Christiansburg. The early sections of this work focuses on the original crossroad community that quickly became the county's Municipal Seat, aiding the surrounding farmers with their monthly business and civic needs. This thesis will research the town's original form and follow its growth after the introduction of the automobile, the connections brought by *U.S. Highway System*, the effects of the *Industrial Revolution*, movement away for an agrarian based economy, and the aftermath of being bypassed by the *Interstate*. I will also explore the town's current role within Montgomery County, the downtown's relationship with the two flanking commercial/retail areas, and potential opportunities for renovation. The regional and town planning aspect of this thesis are in hopes of exploring a new network of connections that strengthen, not only, the identity of Downtown Christiansburg but also aids the development of the New River Valley.



Fig 01.5 - Pulaski, Virginia

The second step of this thesis is to create an urban design intervention which will help redevelop Christiansburg's identity. This section will address the problems brought by the automobile, the highway, and the interstate including: relocation of downtown businesses, retail shops, and civic institutions which caused the downtown area to become under used and began its decay. This thesis will explore potential opportunities to renew the downtown by capitalizing on its small town southern charm, its Appalachian surrounding, and its connections to neighboring towns with their universities, hospitals, research jobs and industrial employment. This design project replies to the town's history, existing and past urban forms, programming of open space, and current community needs to create a proposal that would both stabilizes the town and act as a catalyst for growth. This proposal will attempt to recenter civic institutions, introduction festivals and social events, redeveloped small retail shops and business, and increased housing within the downtown core. The hope is by re-centering and diversifying Main Street and expanding on the resource and amenities offered, perceptions will change and citizens will return.

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02 - FARM TOWNS

Some of the earliest American towns were settled upon the basis of farming. These towns were constructed at the crossroads of two or more primary travel routes and were a central location for neighboring communities to travel for their needs. Farming towns grew up as resource and service areas for the surrounding rural county. These were settlements where local farmers could purchase seed, supplies, and other materials. Generally, the communities offered a well stocked general store and could order other needed materials. In the early days, before the automobile, farm families would travel by horse and cart into town once a month to buy the materials and supplies that were not home grown or that needed to be ordered from the manufacturer. This would be a time for family activities and may have been coordinated with town festivals and celebrations, such as a dance, banquet, fair, circus, or church revival. Even if there was not an event to join, it was an opportunity for the family to see and be seen, interact with others, and enjoy the amenities the town offered. These towns typically held market places to sell the farmer's produce and livestock. Many of these communities also held the county's doctor and dentist. Because of their large population they also doubled as the county seat or municipal head. Many of these farming towns held the largest urban population within the county, allowing them to support small hospitals, hotels, or a small rural university. If they were the municipal seat, they would hold the County Courthouse, the Sheriff's Office and the County jail, along with the mayors, judges, and lawyers that work within those buildings. Christiansburg has acted as the Municipal Seat for Montgomery County since 1792 and for over two centuries its economy has been based on farming. It was the largest community in the county until Blacksburg and Virginia Tech began to boom in the mid-1950's. Christiansburg did not develop a large enough population to support a hospital and a university, but both of these institutions flourished in Blacksburg while a second college and hospital developed in Radford.

Before the turn of the nineteenth century and the introduction of the automobile, many rural families spent their whole lives in one location; some never traveled more than fifty miles from home. In 1900, approximately half of the American population lived in the country. This type of lifestyle usually meant that the nearest neighbor lived a few acres away, not to mention that the nearest town, city, or urban area were hours away. Mass transportation for rural areas at this period typically meant a team of horses hitched to a cart. Farmers usually would market their produce in town, secure supplies and attend social functions, all with the knowledge that horses were needed to work in the fields the next day. For long distance travel many rural areas had access to the railroad but



Fig 02.1 - African American Farm Workers



Fig 02.2 - Farm Work After the Automobile

routes were specific and schedules were fixed and controlled. When the automobile first entered the countryside, it was seen as a toy for the rich, an item of conspicuousness and leisure that scared the horses with its noise, stirred up clouds of dust, and destroyed fences.

The first major use of the car in rural areas was by doctors and veterinarians who benefitted from the faster mode of transportation. But “After 1908, the American farmer went on an auto-buying spree, spurred by an improved agricultural economy, the improved dependability of the motor cars, and the growing knowledge of their practicality in a rural environment.”⁴ Most farmers had worked with machinery for years and were familiar with technological advancements. After the purchase of the car, traveling to town for business became more of a family affair. The whole family could go shopping, especially on Saturday nights when small towns were crowded with farm folk who voyaged out to meet friends. The automobile also allowed for the farm wife to travel and visit friends and family during the workweek. She could easily fix breakfast and lunch together while placing a roast in the oven for that night's dinner, giving her time to visit while her husband was working in the fields. “Suburbanites used cars for work and consumption. For the farmer, the car was more strictly a means of consumption. ...by providing a separate vehicle for trips into town, [it] relegated the horse to the field.”⁵ Automobile uses did not encourage longer trips but more frequent ones. Families that traveled once a month to a nearby crossroad center, which by this time were already beginning to disappear, now traveled to town every two or three weeks. “Rural space was not so much enlarged with automobile use as it was reshaped into centralized and hierarchical form.”⁶

In 1916, the *Federal Road Act* set aside \$500,000 for rural road improvements. This federal legislation was enacted to promote home to market transportation. This act, along with the evolving rural landscape caused crossroad centers across America to lose their general trade and service functions to neighboring towns creating longer commutes for the rural inhabitant. Many mid-sized towns diversified by introducing institutions and services such as Education, health care, postal services, department stores, gas stations, and auto dealerships. When doctors owned the first cars, they drove into the countryside to practice medicine; when the rural family later brought automobiles, they drove to doctors in offices in these small towns or to local county hospitals. These relocated businesses and institutions were the final nail in the coffin for numerous crossroad communities. Goods, such as seed, fabric, machinery parts, that the family once purchased from the crossroads stores could now be purchased in mid-sized towns for cheaper prices or delivered from mail order catalogs.

“Family activities outside were also affected by the size of the village center and the kinds of services which it offered to the surrounding community.”⁷ The increased mobility aided Sunday church attendance in these smaller towns. This increase was especially

4 - Lewis, David L. & Goldstein, Laurence; *The Automobile and American Culture*; pg. 40, of Early Automobile and the American Farmer by Reynold M. Wikinson

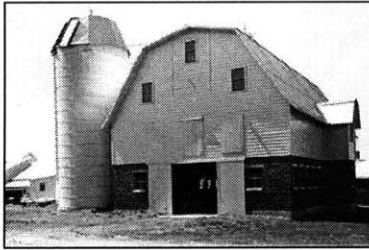


Fig 02.3 - Typical Southern Barn

5 - Lewis, David L. & Goldstein, Laurence; *The Automobile and American Culture*; pg.96 of The Road to Autopia by Joseph Interrante

6 - Lewis, David L. & Goldstein, Laurence; *The Automobile and American Culture*; pg.96 of The Road to Autopia by Joseph Interrante

7 - Lewis, David L. & Goldstein, Laurence; *The Automobile and American Culture*, pg.103 of The Road to Autopia by Joseph Interrante

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true for the elderly or shut-ins, who now could arrange to be picked-up by a passing church member driving a car. Many community churches ran bus services to pick-up and return the poor, elderly, or downtrodden to church activities. The improvement of transportation also allowed the traditional one-room schoolhouse to move into the town and consolidate with several other schools to produce new county school systems. Larger schools improved attendance, increased budgets for libraries books and educational materials. Many counties purchased school buses to transport students to one location. Many farm students could stay home in the morning for chores and be driven to town for afternoon classes. No longer were farm youths trapped, restricted by the limitations of farm access. They could now meet other youths from county schools, and were able to attend church activities and town festivals. These increased interactions created new dating patterns. Young men and women were now able to save up money to purchase a car or buy a bus ticket and leave the farm for college or for the promise of wealth and adventure within the big city.

The introduction of the United State Highway System to the American landscape helped to reduce the time of travel and enhanced the ease of movement between the places they connected. In many instances this ease of convenience harmed the American town. Originally the National Department of Transportation designed the U.S. Highway System as a network that connected a large number of individual towns and cities to one another. Many times these connections involved renaming a portion of the existing downtown Main Street as a small part of a larger U.S. highway system. Many of these small towns and communities were then faced with many new problems. The new reality of the automobile changed how drivers viewed time and distance. Communities that once existed a day's horse-ride apart were now only hours away and towns which were a train ride away were now at a day's drive. As early as the mid-1920's the footprints of towns began to grow. Individual towns located too close to one another were absorbed into a new locality that existed under a single name but offered the amenities of both. Aristotle labeled this act of several villages coming together as a single town, *'synoecism.'*⁸ Many times the smaller of the two communities retained its name as a district or suburb of the larger area, but it hardly had any political power. Still other small towns that either refused to band together as one or lacked the option began to wilt and die away. When driving along the old U.S. highways today many of their skeletons remain forgotten along its side, isolated like a ghost town from an old spaghetti western. This forced evolution of towns has continued throughout the twentieth century. With the 1956 introduction of the Interstate Highway many small to mid-sized communities were again forced to adjust.

As time passed, earning an income as a farmer became less practical, less respected, and was understood to be full of hard work and low pay. Many farms were lost to banks during the depression.

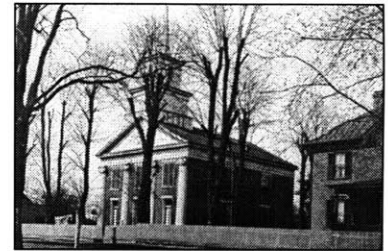


Fig 02.4 - Blacksburg United Methodist Church

8 - Kostof, Spiro;
The City Shaped, pg. 59

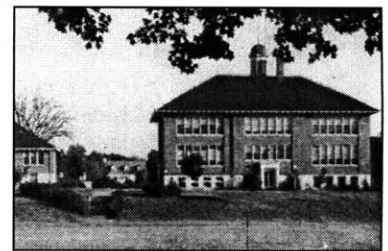


Fig 02.5 - Old Blacksburg High School

Still more were foreclosed after farmers mortgaged their land to buy more equipment, in hopes of maximizing their time and effort in the farming. More farm land was sold to enable children to go to college or by the younger generation to fund their lives, dreams, and families. What happened to the farmland? Much of it became today's newer suburbs, the Federal Government brought a large amount to create both the U.S. highway system and the Interstate systems, and much was absorbed by urban areas as they grew outward in what we typically have labeled sprawl. What happened to the former crossroad towns? Many lay forgotten alongside their original highways, which also lost their importance to today's interstate. Others have been absorbed into the commercial/retail and suburban areas of the every expanding urban landscape. The only urban crossroad towns that still exist with strong identities are centralized towns that continue to act as a county seat, that have gained train stops, that diversified by adding new industries, or that have evolved into service towns, tourist communities, or suburban areas.



Fig 02.6 - Truck Shipping of
Farmed Goods

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03 - IMPORTANCE OF MAIN STREET

Through three centuries of existence the American small town has taken various urban forms. The most common of these forms originated within communities that evolved along the sides of a well traveled paths, trails, or roads. In their earliest forms, these communities existed as travel hubs for settlers moving west, as crossroad towns for the surrounding farming region, or as whistle-stop train communities with the majority of their urban fabric running parallel to the path. Historically the strip of road that passed through the center of the community was seen as the most important portion of the town. As time proceeded and more continuous urban fabric was built, the local citizens within these towns began to define this area as Main Street. Many times the Main Street of one town would be directly connected to others towns by roads and routes that soon would become the U.S. Highway. Typically these small towns were spaced a day's horse ride apart and were totally self sufficient, with many of these communities in competition for respect, businesses, and funding. As states divided their territories into smaller areas, many of these towns were bound together within the same county. This connection created a level of sibling rivalry, generally expressed at town festivals and local high school sporting events. The competition was healthy and aided in defining the civic identity of the community. The most successful town was typically the County Seat.

Small town Main Streets were typically less than a half of a mile in length. They usually included only a handful of blocks containing a Town Hall or Meeting House, a few churches, a sheriff's office with a jail, post office, and numerous businesses including banks, a grocer, a tailor, a hardware store, possibly a department store and an inn. There were few repeated business types and very little competition for local business. Originally Main Street was designed to be quite wide with raised sidewalks to keep pedestrians out of the mud and away from filth created by horses on the unpaved street. For centuries parking consisted of hitching posts for horses and spacing to temporarily store a horse and cart; possibly a stable was nearby. Parking was already a problem in the early years, for horses and carts took more space than the automobile. As time passed and debris from the growing number of visitors increased, Main Street was covered with stone pavers. The new paved surface along with shove-boys decreased mud and filth allowing the raised walk to move down towards the street. But the pavers also increased the noise from iron clad horse hooves and rickety wooden carts. Pollution, both noise and environmental, that we so commonly associate with the automobile and the twentieth century was also a problem produced by the horse.

If a small town were successful, it typically expanded not by adding length to Main Street but by flanking the street from each side with new blocks thus taking on a grid pattern.

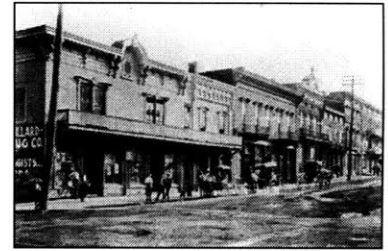


Fig 03.1 - Main Street Salem, Va



Fig 03.2 - Main Street Marion, Va

These new streets and blocks were seen as secondary to Main Street. Often these streets were built with a mixture of free-standing buildings holding service businesses and private detached homes. In some communities a secondary street running perpendicular to Main Street began to rise in importance. This secondary street generally connected the core of downtown with other communities. Its also opened more undeveloped land to the community which they could use for farming, housing, or simply to expand the town core for future growth. A large number of these crossroad towns increased in importance because they connected four communities. Many Municipal Seats developed with this crossroad layout connecting surrounding towns and allowing them to fulfill their monthly business and to visit civic institutions. Christiansburg is this type of community; it originally connected Blacksburg, Radford, Floyd, and Roanoke, as much of the county's surrounding farmland was dependant on Christiansburg for its civic amenities and resources.



Fig 03.3 - Main Street Norton, Va

Originally Main Street was just as much a civic space as it was a path for travel. In many communities Main Street had some form of public space adjunct to it. This civic space may have taken the form of a town square, a town green, or a town plaza. This civic space combined with the street became the platform for many community events, celebrations, and festivals, such as Independence Day festivities, street fairs, street bazaars, or parades. As a civic space Main Street was greatly improved after being paved in the mid-to-late nineteenth century since paved streets slowly put an end to raised wood planked sidewalks, allowing pedestrians to move downward closer to street level. This one to three foot change in height, dramatically affected the aesthetic of the Main Street facades, and many shops were modified to allow visitors to see inside from the street. Main Street also gained a greater civic function in the decade after the introduction of the automobile. Parades with their fire trucks, ambulances, and police cruisers excelled within many small communities. But as the automobile exploded in popularity, Main Street became primarily a transportation artery and less of a civic space. This evolution has continued, with today's street being used as a civic space three or four times a year.

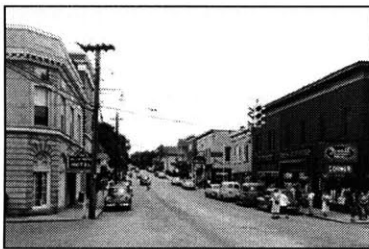


Fig 03.4- Main Street Blacksburg, Va

As the number of automobiles expanded within small American towns, the problem of retrofitting the community's landscape to fit the new needs of its citizens was quite evident. The earliest of moves focused on parking along Main Street, which held the majority of the town's retail shops and service businesses. The first solution was pull-in parking, typically designed at a 30-45 degree angle pulled in from the street. Streets were two single lanes running in opposite directions and space was abundant. Pull-in parking was dangerous but efficient. The second move was parallel parking along Main. This relieved traffic flow problems and often allowed for the development of a turning or delivery lane. The third move was parking behind the Main Street shops.

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Towns with narrow streets fell victim to the most problems. Many had little width for true sidewalks, used dangerous narrow lanes for large delivery trucks, or had wide sidewalks with little to no parking. Many owners of downtown property chose to remove older buildings and replace them with paved parking lots. These new lots did little for the urban fabric of a community or for the character of the town. Thus began a long slow process in which the towns began to lose civic identity.

As space and parking along Main Street continued to grow tighter, store owners, developers, and investors began to move out of Main Street toward newly opened land. The majority of this open land was found beside the newly introduced highway. Soon the majority of the retail shops and important businesses left the town to rebuild outside the downtown area. A number of the local civic institutions also needed to be expanded. They also selected sites outside of the historic Main Street area. The evolution continued and soon towns existed with plenty of parking but few businesses, activities, shops, or restaurants for people to visit, not to mention the lack of downtown housing, few opportunities for social interaction, and fewer reasons to visit the town core.



Fig 03.5 - Courthouse Pearisburg, Va

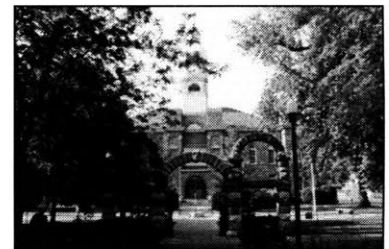


Fig 03.6 - Town Hall Pulaski, Va

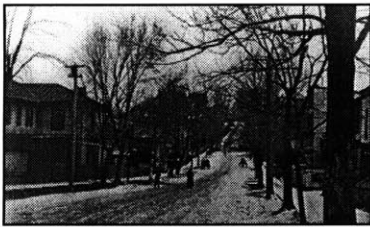
**04 - HISTORY OF
CHRISTIANSBURG**

Fig 04.1 - 1905 Main Street

9 - Perry, John; [The Wilderness Road and Westward Migration](#); website



Fig 04.2 - 1905 Main Street

10 - Roberts, Dan; [ehistory - Daniel Boone](#); website

During the late 1600s, explorers from eastern settlements took what they called the *'Trader's Path'* into the west there they trapped and traded animals for their fur. They crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains not far from present-day Floyd and made their way into the New River Valley. This area was well adapted to support wild game, and animals were in abundance. The area was one vast forest stretching from the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the crest of the Cumberland Mountains. Hunters, trappers, and traders were generally ahead of the settlers and home seekers. They realized a greater income could be earned from furs, pelts, and hides than from farming because of the labor it took to clear the surrounding landscape of its numerous trees. Before European settlers trickled in from places like Eastern Virginia and Pennsylvania, the *Wilderness Road* was an important artery of travel for local Native Americans. The route was known as *Athawominee*, which means *'The Path of the Armed Ones.'* It connected the Iroquois Nation of the north to the Cherokee tribes of the south.⁹

In 1671, General Abraham Wood sponsored an exploration party that relied on the Native American knowledge of these trails. With the help of their Native guides, the Wood Expedition crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains and continued west. What the expedition did not expect to find was a large river which they would have to cross. They named the impressive waterway Wood's River after their benefactor. Wood sponsored two more expeditions along the *Warrior's Path*, both of which plunged deeper into the wilderness of western Virginia as they discovered more about the terrain of southwest Appalachia. One team of Wood's frontiersmen who had been working their way across the mountains, found The Cumberland Gap. This proved to be the easiest route to cross the formidable mountain barriers which had restricted travel and trade for most of the 17th century. Wood's men labeled this trail the *"Great Road."* It opened the west to thousands of settlers who were awaiting their future.¹⁰

A second crew was led by the historic adventurer Daniel Boone. This group traveled down the Ohio River through Kentucky along the trail that would become the northwest path of the *Wilderness Road*. In 1775 Boone and his explorer party from the Transylvania Company began the massive task of clearing this trail. His road partially followed the old *Trader's Path*, much of it needed to be cleared and reconnected. But between 1675, when Wood's series of expeditions ended, and 1775, when Boone extended the *Wilderness Road*, the New River Valley became a noted locality along the *Great Road*. It was during this period that both Draper's Meadow, today's Blacksburg, and Hans Meadow, presently Christiansburg, were settled. Because of Daniel Boone's

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famed work along the route, the military maneuvers that the war with England required, and with the number of settlers moving through the area, the path that was once only six feet wide became extremely busy.¹¹ After Kentucky became a state in 1792, the road was widened to accommodate wagons. Shortly after the turn of the century, private contractors were authorized to keep up sections of the road; many began charging tolls for its use.

The end of the American Revolution marked the beginning of a great migration period for the new nation. Many families pushed southwest from Pennsylvania seeking land of their own. The area that is currently Montgomery County had plenty of land, natural sources, and a reasonable climate but settlement still unfolded slowly. By the 1750s, scattered settlements could be found across the area. Most of the people who entered the region had first gone to Pennsylvania as indentured servants, intent on coming to America but unable to pay their own way. They worked off their time, gained their freedom, and went in search of the land that had originally drew them to the New World.¹²

The Montgomery County Court moved into James Craig's house at Hans Meadow, one mile east of present day downtown Christiansburg on March 4, 1790. By May, the Court had decided that "*a place for erecting the public buildings for the County of Montgomery shall be the Mile Branch on the land of James Craig.*"¹³ 175 acres of land located on a plateau deep in the heart of the Allegheny Mountains was purchased from James Craig for one dollar by Francis Gardner and the other town trustees. A survey was made on May 21, 1790 and the unnamed town came into being, originally named Christiansburgh after a local patriot-hero William Christian famed for his Indian fighting and Revolutionary War leadership. The town was incorporated on November 10, 1792 and with little neighboring competition it quickly became Montgomery County's municipal seat.¹³

Of the many early visitors and residents to Christiansburg, the legendary adventurer Daniel Boone was the most important. Among the records in the courthouse is a warrant issued for the arrest of Boone for money owed. It is generally thought that he borrowed the money to pay his axmen and purchase supplies while they cut the *Wilderness Trail* through the area. The second important resident was Davy Crockett, who lived in Christiansburg for a time and worked at John Snider's Main Street haberdashery as an apprentice. Crockett made several trips out of the area, some of these were to drive cattle out of the Shenandoah Valley and into Tennessee. Crockett and his wife, Polly, parented a large family before leaving the area.¹⁴

In the 1820s and 1830s man overcame the great wall of the Appalachian Mountains. The west could now be reached easily by the Erie Canal, the Pennsylvania railroad, along the Chesapeake and Ohio Rivers, or even by steamboats going up the Mississippi. Cumberland Gap and the trails that feed through it declined in importance.¹⁵

11 - Freeman, Alan C.
[Daniel Boone](#); website

12 - unknown author at Rowan
Roots; [The Old Wagon Road](#);
website

13 - Wingfeild, Randy;
[Christiansburg Bicentennial
Celebration Booklet](#), pg 6

14 - Wingfeild, Randy;
[Christiansburg Bicentennial
Celebration Booklet](#), pg 6

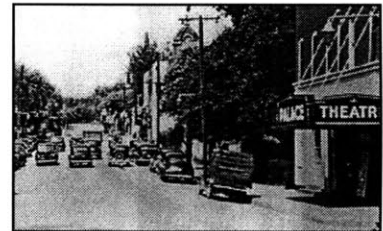


Fig 04.3 - 1930 Main Street

15 - unknown author from National
Park Service; [The Wilderness
Road](#); website

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The paths of the *National Road* and *Wilderness Road* were neglected during the 1830s and they were nearly abandoned by the mid-1840s. Just after the turn of the 20th century, the first major realignment and modernization of the *Wilderness Road* over Cumberland Gap was initiated. Under the umbrella of the United States Department of Agriculture, The Office of Public Roads was created in 1893. They appointed an officer from the Federal Highway Administration Board to take charge of this route. His idea was to demonstrate the efficacy of improved road building techniques by paving the trail with a smooth, hard, and water-resistant surface. The construction of this highway was hoped to build support and gain funding for the continued road construction programs. It succeeded.¹⁶



Fig 04.4 - 1940 Main Street

16 - unknown author from National Park Service; Object Lesson Road; website

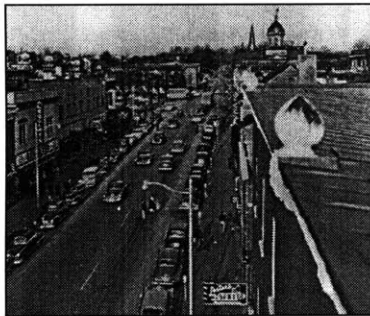


Fig 04.5 - 1940 Main Street

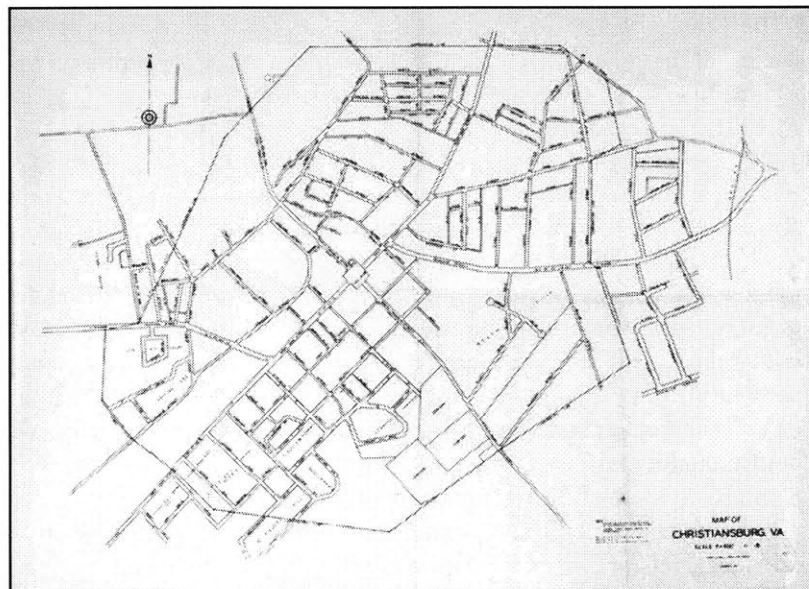


Fig 04.6 - 1941 Map

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05 - TOWN LAYOUT

The Town of Christiansburg is located on the western headwaters of Crab Creek. In 1790 the County Court of Montgomery purchased 175 acres of land along "*The Great Wagon Road*" from the Craigs as the site for a new community and shortly thereafter a town and public square were plotted. Most of these lots were drawn by Francis Gardner's survey in 1790 or by William Taylor's additional work in December of 1793. The plan of Christiansburg is tilted 40 degrees from due south. The major elements of the town's form were an east-west main street and a crossing north-south street that intersected at a public square. As plotted, *Main Street* and *Cross Street* (now Franklin Street) were 66 feet wide and the *Public Square* was 264 feet square. The public square is situated on a slight rise between two creeks. Around the square were four odd-shaped blocks made up of 13 lots of quarter and half acre. Five springs were shown flowing into the square, four of them clustered at Main Street; it has been said teams of horses and livestock were watered there.¹⁷

Main Street and Cross Street were labeled on the plat according to the destinations of the four roads as they radiating out from the town square. West Main was originally labeled "New River," East Main was "Roanoke," and Cross Street was labeled "Little River" to the south, and "Toms Creek" to the north. Lots for the town were sold at the July and September courts of 1790. Founding father John Preston, who purchased lot 14 of the new town, listed beside him under securities, "*The County.*" Lot 14 was the second lot on the north side of West Main; on that plat Preston identified the space as "*Court House.*" By March 1, 1791, Preston had erected a temporary court house. On April 6, 1791, the county's jail and stocks were completed. And in March 1834, a commission was formed "*to contract for a new court house and to select a site for it.*" The site was in the east corner of the *Public Square*. The new courthouse was completed by March 7, 1836.¹⁸

During the 1800s, livestock were driven to a the downtown market, which was held on Main Street in the *Public Square*. Local farmers, with which the town was filled, sold swine, cattle, and sheep within the square. Located along its edges were a feed store and a general hardware store. It was within these stores that supplies that could not be grown or made were purchased. The nearest railroad connection was built about four miles east of the Town Square through a small community named *Cambria*. The town was the main shipping point for Montgomery County. Much of the livestock sold at the Town Square would be driven up Main Street to Cambria's train station where they would be shipped to their new owners, many of whom were settlers in the western territories. In its prime Cambria held a handful of shops, restaurants, and most importantly was "*The Louellyn Hotel.*" This small area was served by

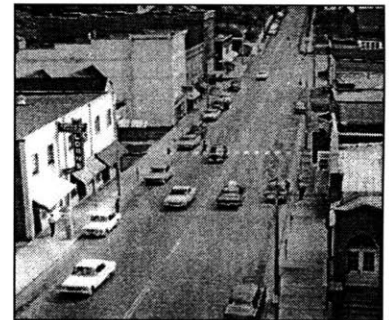


Fig 05.1 - 1950 Main Street

17 - Wingfeild, Randy;
[Christiansburg Bicentennial
Celebration Booklet](#), pg 6

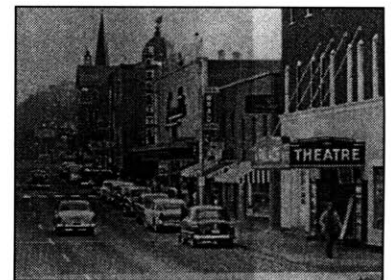


Fig 05.2 - 1950 Main Street

18 - Wingfeild, Randy;
[Christiansburg Bicentennial
Celebration Booklet](#), pg 6

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two passenger trains as early as May 1, 1856. Much of the surrounding country's long distance travel and shipping and receiving happened at the train station. Cambria was later absorbed as North Christiansburg.¹⁹

19 - Wingfeild, Randy;
Christiansburg Bicentennial
Celebration Booklet, pg 6



Fig 05.3 - 1967 Main Street

20 - Wingfeild, Randy;
Christiansburg Bicentennial
Celebration Booklet, pg 6

In the 1820s, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations were formed and churches were built. In 1852, the new Presbyterian Church, built on Hickok Street, was completed. The old Presbyterian church was used by the Montgomery Female Academy and later by the Masons. The Methodist Church on North Cross Street was dedicated in 1856. St. Paul Methodist Church was located behind the Courthouse; on the site of the present courthouse, facing East Main Street. The church moved to its current site near the Kyle Cemetery in 1856 opening this site for other uses. Eventually it was this site that was selected for the most recent Courthouse built in 1979.²⁰

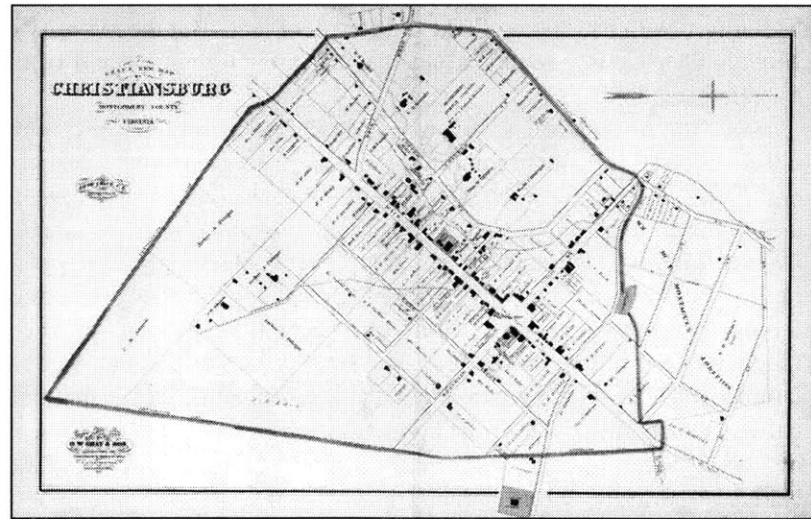


Fig 05.4 - 1950 Map

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06 - INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The beginning of the twentieth century brought many changes to the nation. By the early 1900s most of the nation's communities had electricity. Many were developing fresh water and sewer systems while others were beginning to diversify by adding new factories and businesses. As the nation began the long journey from an agrarian-based economy towards an industry, much of the growth was focus upon large urban areas and cities. Industrialization was aided by ease of transportation from the railroad, innovations in the extraction of metals, coal, oil, and other precious materials, and industrial revolution in the production process. Factories perfected assembly line work, built massive warehouses to stock materials and finished goods, and excelled at shipping massive amounts of products. Many smaller communities scrambled to attract major factories that could employ the majority of their residents. These towns in the initial relocation wave, needed to offer open space for large linear factories, storage for raw materials and finished products, a source of water, and a location close to a railway for ease of transporting goods and near large amounts of employable labor. Towns that met these standards quickly increased in national importance. After many existing city-based factories recovered from the Depression years, a second wave for relocation began. Christiansburg was hardly affected by either wave. The town gained only a furniture factory, an electrical power company, a few textile-based industries, and a handful of other short-lived factories. Many local residents did find employment by moving towards other nearby towns which developed industry, such as Radford with its Casting Plant and Powder Plant. But the majority of Montgomery County remained unchanged through the first half of the twentieth century.

One of the earliest effects of the industrial revolution was the introduction of the automobile into the American landscape. "In 1916, the 'Federal Road Act' set aside \$500,000 for rural road improvements and federal legislation was enacted to promote home to market transportation."²¹ This was the first completed blacktopped inter-state highway in America. On November 27, 1926, Christiansburg celebrated the completion, when the last dirt surface of U.S. 11 was paved. A raucous crowd of over 200,000 people from nearby states and counties jammed into Christiansburg to celebrate the paving of U.S. 11, commonly called *Lee Highway*. This new highway absorbed part of the 150 year-old '*Wilderness Road*,' which had been a trail traveled by buffalo, Native Americans, white settlers, and even Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. The completion was commemorated with a celebration that included the addition of a marble block placed on the Town's *Public Square*, sent from the people of Tennessee to celebrate the "*last unfinished gap of the Lee Highway*,"²² and the revealing of a painting, in



Fig 06.1 - 1800 Horse-n-Buggy

21 - Lewis, David L. Goldstein, Laurence; *The Automobile and American Culture*; pg 40 of *Early Automobile and the American Farmer* by Richard M. Wikinson



Fig 06.2 - 1800 Horse-n-Buggy

22 - Wingfeild, Randy; *Christiansburg Bicentennial Celebration Booklet*, pg 6

23 - Wingfeild, Randy;
Christiansburg Bicentennial
Celebration Booklet, pg 6



Fig 06.3 - Electric Streetcars

the lobby of the town's Post Office, showing the road in pioneer days. This new highway, a street by today's standards, easily connected the town with Radford and Roanoke continuing onward to Tennessee and Richmond. Drove of proud Americans came to hear Governor-elect Harry Byrd speak about the significance of the event. The completion *Lee Highway* was a difficult task, especially when the work crews tackled Christiansburg Mountain. Workers and engineers probably had no idea of the irony of making Christiansburg and the New River Valley the site of celebration. For centuries, the New River Valley was a crucial stop along the 700-mile route known as the *Great Road* or *Wilderness Road*. Estimates of the number of travelers who have used this road are in the hundreds of thousands. A large portion of the *Wilderness Road* also exist as U.S. Route 25, locally referred to as the *Dixie Highway*.¹⁶ Less than a decade later Route 11 was crossed at the Town Square by U.S. 460 which absorbed Franklin Road and connected the town northwest to Blacksburg.²³

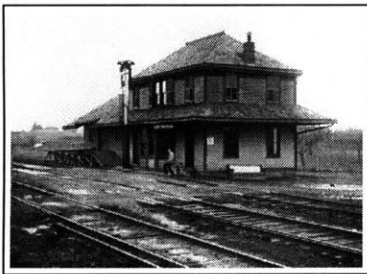


Fig 06.4 - Electric Streetcars

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07 - WARS, PROGRESS, AND TECHNOLOGY

Unlike many small industrial towns across the nation, the period surrounding World War One did not bring a booming war economy to Christiansburg. Unlike neighboring Radford whose box plant, the ribbon mill, the textile mill, and Lynchburg Foundry and Casting created a population and employment boom, Christiansburg stayed relatively the same. Though many local residents did gain jobs by commuting to Radford, many more relocated there to be closer to their jobs. This influx of workers, who moved into areas surrounding industrial factories and plants from out laying areas, created a suburban boom which continued after the end of the First World War with the return of the formerly enlisted servicemen. The technology created during the war made significant improvements to the ways the inhabitants of the period lived their lives. The use of construction techniques and advance in materials allowed for physical growth while the radio, telephone, electric trolley, automobile and highway augmented the horizontal expansion of many areas.

The 1930s proved to be trying times for the nation with the Great Depression, Christiansburg was no different. Many local businesses, farms, and families found that money was tight and jobs were thin, even though a good number of local residents found work building the U.S. highway system. Even with the completion of the Lee Highway in 1926, there was still much more work to be done. Virginia needed to be connected to the northern and southern states, and many local and county road still needed to be paved. Many male farmers went to work constructing roads while their wives and children worked the land.

The Depression decade was followed by the Second World War. The 1940's were a difficult period for Christiansburg, which was greatly overshadowed by Radford. The coming of the Radford Arsenal and the reopening of the Lynchburg Foundry brought a rapid influx of population, employment, and problems of urban and suburban development. Radford Arsenal was the region's largest major employer during World War II. Thousands of workers flooded into the area to fill temporary living quarters as they waited for permanent housing. Many found suitable housing within Christiansburg and traveled the thirty minute drive to Radford. As the United States emerged from the Great Depression and World War II, the suburban boom which began after the First World War peaked. Even though the rate of increase slowed during the Depression it remained impressive when contrasted with the absolute decline of population in the central cities areas during the same period. Because of this massive population boom many of the nation's towns also gained new public parks, sports facilities, and recreation halls created by the 1940s United States "*Public Recreation, Parks, and Playground Commission.*"



Fig 07.1 - Early Roads



Fig 07.2 - Many Roads Needing Horses to Pull Vehicles Out

24 - Owen, Wilfred; *Cities in the Motor Age*, pg 58



Fig 07.3 - Postwar Suburbs

By the mid-1940s, it was clear that American cities were experiencing a severe shortage of housing and most cities were bursting at the seams. After many years of urban growth the population spilled over into the suburbs and surrounding townships. Widespread automobile ownership and the increased development of the highway system were catalysts of this move. In a trend that has continued to this day, cities were increasingly losing population to the more open undeveloped land just outside the city limits. The federal government was aware of that situation and passed the *Housing Act of 1949*, which in part stated as its goal, "...a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family."²⁴ There were some substantial hurdles to clear. With the real estate industry dedicating all attention to wartime efforts, there had been limited private development activity. Residential development had been concentrated in areas surrounding defense-related plants and factories, such as Radford and the areas surrounding the Arsenal and Foundry. The thin housing market was combined with a massive influx of veterans returning to civilian life. Beginning in the mid-1940s through the early 1950s, almost 11 million men and women were released from the armed services. Many decided to settle in homes near friends and family; Christiansburg population grew as did much of the New River Valley.

Entering the 1950s, real estate markets in general – retail, office, industrial and residential – were all entering a period of sustained growth catalyzed by massive demand and a surging economy. The years following World War II saw two pronounced trends: suburbanization created by the expanded network of roads and the post-war demand for new housing. Following the surreal images of WWII, the country desperately desired a return to safety and living the '*American Dream*' – get a job, buy a house, marry and raise a family. The return of servicemen anxious to settle down, after five or more years of separation from their wives and children, created an acute shortage of residential housing. Many American couples, were young and of modest means, could afford very little for the housing they needed. An extraordinary effort was put forth to meet this demand. Empowered with government-insured loans that had low down-payment requirements and thirty-year terms, veterans were ready and able to buy housing. Civilians were also well positioned to buy. Family incomes were at their highest in history, most households had saved their money during the war, and billions of federal dollars had been allocated for *Fannie Mae* and *Federal Housing Administration* programs. With the encouragement of the *FHA* and *Veterans' Administration*, builders gave special attention to satisfying this demand. Home building in America was put on a mass-production basis for the first time. Speed and volume meant using raw undeveloped land, typically farmland, because it was cheap, easy to manipulate, and accessible to most automobiles. Americans built too fast and without adequate attention to community

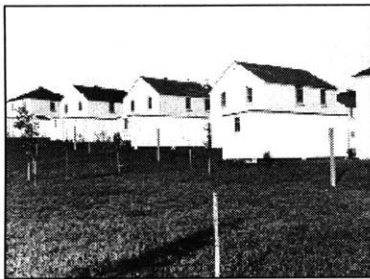


Fig 07.4 - Postwar Neighborhood

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planning and land-use. Many of Christiansburg's older neighbors were built during this period and they too fell victim to this reality.



Fig 07.5 - Post-WWII Track Housing



Fig 07.6 - Late Twentieth Century Neighborhood

08 - LAST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

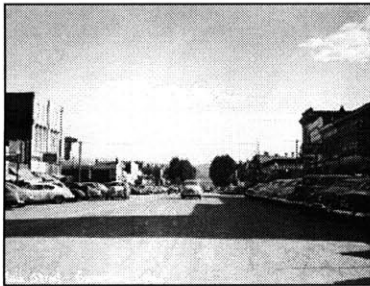


Fig 08.1- Main Streets Parking

Also See:

Chapter 10 - Regional Planning
and Town Planning

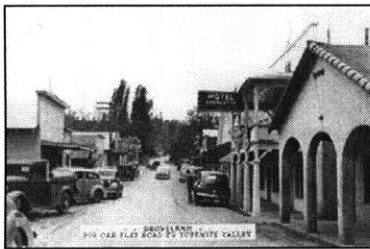


Fig 08.2- Main Streets Parking

The introduction of the Interstate to the American landscape helped to reduce travel time but increased the amount of automobiles and travelers on the roads as it enhanced the ease of movement between the places connected. The Interstate was designed to connect major American cities by the most straightforward route. The route was designed mostly to cut through inexpensive farmland and undeveloped forest areas. But in hindsight, it proved to be harmful to many small communities. Between the 1925 creation of the U.S. highway and the 1980 completion of the Interstate, numerous communities had grown dependant on the amount of traffic passing through their towns for this traffic brought very important revenue into their communities. Whether it was the lunch crowds, patrons for local grocery stores, or other, many towns had developed a need for these visiting drivers. As the Interstate opened, it removed automobiles and their users from the older U.S. routes and allowed them to bypass many towns. The economic base that many communities had depended upon for fifty years was now removed. In a desperate attempt to bring people back into downtown, many towns and counties used their precious tax dollars to extend the existing highway routes to connect downtowns to the interstate system. This did not help. This stretch of highway began the strip that undercut downtown businesses even further.

The new undeveloped land opened by the Interstate was inexpensive and had little to no design guidelines or town codes to dictate its uses, design, or aesthetics. Many developers within local communities found that the areas near to the Interstate could supported the construction of mid-sized manufacturing plants, large retail stores, and auto dealerships. These businesses could take advantage of inexpensive land and construct spacious one-story steel-framed buildings that had ample parking and space for loading and unloading. Interstate highways gave many smaller communities an opportunity to gain manufacturing, warehousing, and retail business, so increasing their local employment and tax base. Christiansburg was not unsuccessful in bringing in new industries. What the community did receive was a few department stores, new office space, and a one mile auto dealership proudly label the '*Shealor Motor Mile.*'

In the last quarter of the twentieth century many towns, including Christiansburg, were faced with major problems. A continued shift in employment from farming to industry and cutbacks within the local job market produced numerous citizens in the need of income. They needed employment badly. Many residents decided to continue living in the community but to travel to jobs outside the town. This meant they spent part of their hard-earned money away from town businesses causing a

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drop in local revenue. Others families simply relocated away from town into areas near their new jobs. Many towns were forced to diversify and bring in new businesses that could employ their population before they moved away. Many communities acted too late. Christiansburg was one of them. Currently the town is still struggling with low employment. As manufacturing and farming declined, many of these communities tried to increase the proportion of communication, finance, management, clerical and professional service jobs in the area. This, in turn, created a need for office space. Sadly, because of the perceived parking problems within many downtown areas, these offices were built in areas near the highway and interstate, on undeveloped lots that facilitated travel. The majority of these new office parks was once again built on former farmland. Many towns with singularly focused origins diversified by adding jobs such as, light technologies manufacturing, white collar office jobs, positions in commercial/retail sales, and healthcare employment.

The American reality was that the automobile allowed residents of a town to commute back and forth to work: many times the work journey was up to an hour in length. Residents now bypassed the downtown to save travel time by using the nation's highways and interstates. The areas where the two travel paths crossed became the newly valued retail and commercial center. This was the area of grocery stores, department stores, new car lots, and chain restaurants. As time pasted the strip continued to evolve with the addition of new regional malls, super and mega stores, isolated office buildings with acres of surface parking and no sidewalks. There areas had no civic structure, no public institutions, and no public or green space. This new American reality is what Joel Garreau's labels 'edge city,' in his book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. For the needs of this paper, we will look at Garreau's work at a smaller scale than the five million plus square feet of leaseable office space and six hundred thousand square feet of leaseable retail space that he uses as his definition. He described this place as having more jobs than bedrooms and was not perceived as a "city" as recently as forty years ago.²⁵ In today's market-driven economy this area is the most desirable. Generally located at nodes where two transportation corridors cross, its proximity to the highway gives it high visibility and accessibility. The surrounding land originally had few zoning restrictions and could easily be built upon without the problems faced within the constraints of the downtown area. These locations can reduce the cost of production, expand the available labor pool, and extend the range of customers who can access the location. Retail areas have followed the piecemeal development of the earlier suburban communities from as far back as the 1920's. Downtown Christiansburg is currently trapped between two 'edge cities.' One to the northwest between the town and Blacksburg; this is the retail area holding the New River Valley Mall, Walmart, Target, Home Depot, etc. The second is to the east and holds the Shealor's Motor Mile, numerous hotels, gas stations, restaurants with skeletons of former department stores.



Fig 08.3 - Early Gas Stations

25 - Garreau, Joel; *Edge City, Life on the New Frontier*; pg 10

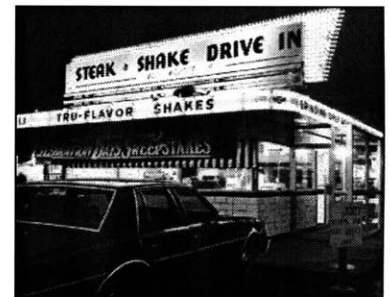


Fig 08.4 - Drive-In Restaurants

Many downtown areas like Christiansburg continue to exist but with few visitors, consumers, and inhabitants. The retail/commercial strip continues to beat Main Street businesses, not just in ease of parking and 'in - out' shopping, but in selection, inventory, and prices, thus forcing more downtown businesses to fold. As the office job market grew in surrounding regions more families moved into the town's suburban neighborhoods. Many communities has slowly moved toward suburban commuter towns in which the outlying residential neighborhoods held importance then the downtown Main Street areas. The civic institutions within the downtown still existed but were hardly visited. School-age youth and seniors were the only frequent visitors to town parks, libraries, recreations centers, and public spaces. Most of the adult population lost interest and reasons for going into town, a problem which Christiansburg still faces today.

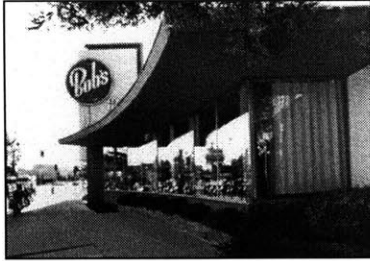


Fig 08.5 - 1960s Restaurants

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09 - THE AUTOMOBILES EFFECTS UPON THE TOWN LANDSCAPE:

By 1920 the automobile was no longer merely a pleasurable pastime - it was a practical necessity. To serve the car, the nation had to create an entirely new architectural infrastructure. Gasoline stations, bus terminals, roadside diners, motels, fast food restaurants, and parking lots were all introduced into the urban landscape. One of the earliest retail/commercial elements that bypassed the urban environments of downtown and headed directly to the early commercial strips were hotels and motels. Most early hotels were located either in resort areas or in the middle of cities. Tourist courts, motor courts, or motels were generally looked upon as seedy (a phrase coined in the 1950s) places that rented by the hour. After World War Two motel chains began to appear alongside limited access highways, taking advantage of the new movement of professionals who now owned automobiles and drove between cities and towns. In 1952 Holiday Inn "motor courts" because the first of the big chains to clean up the suburban roadsides with more family oriented, cleaner, modestly priced alternatives to the roadside motels. (See figure 09.1) Holiday Inn was not alone in trying to provide consumers with more respectable lodging; soon other hotel companies began to focus upon the area, creating inroads in today's suburban environment. Christiansburg's first hotel was the *Christiansburg Motor Lodge*, currently a *Budget Inn*. A handful of motels were also were built near Interstate 81 to capitalize upon drivers needing a rest from travel. But unlike Blacksburg and Radford, Christiansburg had no university, thus no returning alumni, visitor parents, or excited sports fans to fill rooms.

During the 1930s, most urban areas went to parallel parking along their Main Street; Christiansburg was no different. During 1940s parking lots behind stores were typical. By the 1960s businesses like *Leggett's* searched for extra parking by placing it on their roofs. By 1965 the Town Square had been converted into a parking area removing most of its civic importance. Throughout most urbanized areas, the majority of retail development followed a traditional pattern of building with the front facade built along the sidewalk's edge parallel to well traveled streets and roadways. The introduction of the automobile and the early urban population boom created a greater amount of urban congestion. Parking quickly became a problem along streets that were not originally designed for the of the car. *"The volume of traffic, combined with its rapid pace, rendered many sites, once considered prime retail locations for street-oriented populace, of lesser value"*²⁶

The first large scale retail business to explore new typologies was the drive-in market, this was the forerunner of the grocery store. They chose relatively large lots allowing them to create a forecourt built on the three sides opposite to the street, and divided the leaseable space to various shops. (See figure 09.3) Each compartment was leased to an



Fig 09.1 - Early Roadside Motel

Also See:

Chapter 10 - Regional Planning
and Town Planning



Fig 09.2 - Early Roadside Motel

26 - Wachs, Martin & Crawford, Margaret; *The Car and the City*; pg. 143 of [The Perils of Parkless Town](#) by Richard Longstreth

individual merchant but the entire retail area was designed to operate as a whole unit. The forecourt allowed motorists to park right next to the store rather than search for a curbside space. These drive-in markets were the early ancestor of today's strip mall, shopping plazas, and mega-stores. The change in configuration that the drive-in market represented seemed radical at the time; most of the valuable frontage area was given to over parking, and the building itself straddled the rear of the lot on one or more sides. This step of the building/parking evolution skipped Christiansburg and most of the New River Valley.

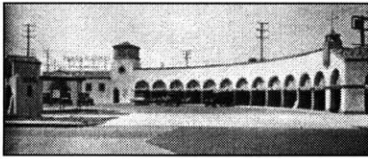


Fig 09.3 - Early Drive-In Markets

27 - Wachs, Martin & Crawford, Margaret; *The Car and the City*; pg. 152 of *The Perils of Parkless Town* by Richard Longstreth

Once the drive-in market typology demonstrated its proficiency, it became the standard and was utilized for the idea of one-stop shopping. Many popular retail and commercial businesses left the cramped, tight environment of the urban Main Street areas to settle just outside the city where space was abundant and parking problems could be more easily solved. Following the lead of the local drive-in markets, developers and owners built new buildings set towards one-side of the lot with one facade still addressing the street and sidewalk to attract patrons and still standing as a prominent local landmark to pedestrians and motorists alike. The facade was generally the only portion of the structure to receive architectural treatment to emphasize the store's importance within the community. The side entrances led directly to abundant parking towards the side and back of the building. The design of the parking was seen as a secondary question solved within the residue space surrounding the store rather than as a primary design question. The predecessor to the drive-in market, the supermarket capitalized upon this typology. The street orientation reflected a common outlook of the period. *"On a whole, merchants showed a persistent reluctance to abandon their traditional sidewalk orientation."*²⁷



Fig 09.4 - Current Supermarket

Generally most retail centers of the period were anchored by a grocery store with at least one facade designed to address the street. The first grocery store within Christiansburg to fit this description was the former *Agee's Grocery* which had parking to the side and behind in the addition to the parking lots beside and behind the numerous churches located on Main Street. By the 1950s the planning of much larger and more centrally organized shopping complexes helped erode local street patterns. The evolution of the supermarket continued; as the demand for parking grew, so did the parking lot. The design solution of the period was to push the now larger building to the back of the lot allowing ample space for truck deliveries and creating larger lots with more parking toward the street, parking that typically made no attempt to address its surrounding. In Christiansburg's case it came with the introduction of Kroger, Family Dollar, and Wades.

As more Virginians purchased automobiles, the need for parking along Main Street increased. Much of the town's historic fabric was removed in response to the ever expanding need for more patron parking. Town officials did little: no introduction of municipal parking garages and few amendments to town codes to govern the

The Evolution of an American Small Town;

An Intervention Focusing upon Re-centralization and Diversification

aesthetics of parking lots, which might have forced owners, developers, or designers to pay attention to the addition of plant life, separation of parking lot from the Main Street sidewalks, and quality of design. Retail businesses were evolving; they had begun to diversify by offering more services. Grocery stores added pharmacies, delicatessens, and video retail sections; all needing more space. Department stores increased the amount of electronics and appliances, thus needing more space for loading docks and delivery truck parking. As more commercial chains were introduced to the downtown fabric, local mom-n-pop businesses began to struggle, and some to closed their doors. As soon as these businesses went under, the chain stores relocated out of downtown to spaces along the highway where parking was abundant, where they could build new stores two or three times their original sizes. Now, Main Street and downtown were faced with the loss of both the small mom-n-pop business and the commercial store chain. At first the smaller leaseable spaces left behind by the closing of mom-n-pop shops were easily filled with service businesses and speciality shops. But, the larger spaces left behind by grocery and department stores, remained empty for years. In the case of Christiansburg, these were the empty spaces of Leggetts, Roses, A&P grocery, CVS, and most recently Kroger.

Developers, realtors, and owners who watched the evolution of motel design and the success of drive-in businesses like banks, restaurants, and grocery stores, basically conceived the commercial strip. More commercial chains entered the Christiansburg area during the late 1970's, most locating themselves along the highway away from downtown. At first they sought sites between the downtown area and the U.S. 460 Business Bypass but they quickly changed their focus to the open land nearer to the interstate and Blacksburg. (See Pg. 37) Yet it was the introduction of the regional shopping centers that wounded downtown the most. While the highway allowed drivers to bypass downtown, shopping malls allowed them ease of parking, more shops, and a larger selection at lower prices. These new malls were aimed towards a central, air-conditioned pedestrian corridor; basically a privatized Main Street with all the amenities of downtown. This street was complete with furniture, music, and many of the same activities that once were offered downtowns. The mom-n-pop businesses that inhabited the traditional downtown could not afford the overhead demanded of the mall, which enabled only franchise and chain stores to enter. Using interior-driven advertising to attract numerous walk-by customers, the mall captured the nation's youth allowing store profits to boom. But this sapped the traditional downtown centers. Community activities that once were programmed within the town square, on Main Street, or at the city center were now carried out in the mall. The mall and retail/commercial stores along the strip continued to beat main street businesses, not just in ease of parking and 'in - out' shopping, but in selection, inventory, and prices, which forced the remaining downtown retail businesses to be abandoned.



Fig 09.5 - Surface Parking lot Strip Mall



Fig 09.6 - Modern Parking Garages



Fig 09.7 - Signage along the Commercial Strip

The Christiansburg case study of the *New River Valley Mall* is an example. In 1982 the county received its first mall. It was anchored by Sears, Leggetts (which unified two stores formerly located on Main Street of both towns), J.C. Pennys, and the largest cinema in the county. It was built on former farmland an equal distant from Blacksburg and Christiansburg and a thirty minute drive from Radford. The mall area quickly established itself and began to expand. The mall was the catalyst that brought other big-box chain stores like Walmart, Goodys, Lowes, Kmart into the New River Valley. Mega-chains restaurants like Red Lobster, Applebees, and Outback followed. Once the area proved profitable to these original businesses, new chains moved in. During the late 1990s this area gained a Mega-Walmart, Office Max, Target, Home Depot, Barnes and Noble, and countless other speciality shops. The increased success of the regional mall-Walmart-Target area with its department stores, cinemas, bookstores, restaurants, and numerous retail shops undercut, underpriced, and outdrew many downtown businesses.

As the new retail area boomed, a second wave of downtown closings took place. The speciality stores which had replaced shops during the initial closing wave losing their competition to the new trendy chain stores near the mall. Again the local downtowns had to diversify and find replacement businesses. Blacksburg and Radford downtowns were able to shift the focus towards their universities, infilling empty space with college bars, clubs, coffee shops, and speciality shops marketed to the 18-21 demographic. Many students within this category were pedestrians who simply walked from campus or from nearby housing. Downtown Christiansburg on the other hand had no university, little downtown urban housing, and trouble finding ways to diversify.



Fig 09.8 - Signage along the Commercial Strip

Beginning in the early 1970s, local retail businesses moved away from the downtown core, and followed the U.S. highway moving towards Interstate off-ramps and the centralized land nearer to Blacksburg. As businesses relocated, so followed the decentralization of the community's civic institutions. As the Lee Rt. 11 and the subsequent U.S. 460 passed through the town square the community lost many of the daily resources that once brought citizens into town. Town Officials has allowed the high school, recreation center, school board offices, the Montgomery County Government Offices to leave the downtown. They have also missed opportunities to receive a new Post Office and the new Department of Motor Vehicles for the county. Most recently town officials allowed the middle school to relocate not because of lack of space on the currently site but to avoid design costs by capitalizing on the same design that neighboring Blacksburg utilized. With the completion of this new middle school, the downtown has lost 725 teenage students and over fifty staff members, who had access to the remaining town resources, such as after-school activities at the town library and National Guard Armory. Currently the young, the stay at home-parent, the unemployed, the disabled, and the retired, have little

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to no presence within this community, the majority of these occupants have been removed from the downtown core with little reason to return.

After the majority of retail and a high number of civic institutions relocated out of downtown, the area was left with an overabundance of parking lots, a handful of drive-thru businesses, too few restaurants, and little reason to go or stay within the downtown. Adding to these problems is the fact that currently there are limited programmed civic activities, few opportunities for social interaction, no venues for mass entertainment, and little public recreation to attract citizens back downtown. The community no longer contains a downtown theater; there has never been an amphitheater, or lecture hall, and there is little defined public space for such uses. Yes, there is the Town Square, but it is used for parking not social gathering and communal activities. Commerce has replaced entertainment in this region. Shopping, both purchasing and browsing, has replaced concerts, theater, lectures, and large-scale social gatherings. Hardly anyone goes downtown because there is nothing to do there nowhere to shop, and no venues for entertainment. Acres of parking downtown but nothing to do. Even less after most businesses close their office doors at five a clock.



Fig 09.9 - Interstate Cloverleaf

10 - REGIONAL PLANNING

CITY OF RADFORD
population: 15,859
plus 16,000 univer. students

Amenities:

- Radford University w/ Libraries, Staff, and Arts Program
- Liberal Art univer.
- Art, Music, and Entertainment connected to Univer.
- Regional Hospital & Medical Offices
- Connection to Railroad
- Connection to Interstate 81
- Connection to New River
- Numerous Industrial Plants
- Numerous Parks along river
- Two Movie Cinemas

TOWN OF BLACKSBURG
population: 39,573
plus 25,000 univer. students

Amenities:

- University of Virginia Tech w/ Libraries, Staff, and Research Programs
- National Ranked Hokie Sports originating from univer.
- Art, Music, and Entertainment connected w/ Univer.
- Small Airport
- Hospital and Medical Offices
- Large Centralized population
- Close to National Forrest
- One Movie Theater
- Professional Golf Course

TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG
population: 16,947

Amenities:

- Municipal Seat of Montgomery County w/ Courthouse and Lawyers, Judges, and staff connected institutions
- Numerous Churches along Main St.
- Direct Connection to I-81
- Large amount of undeveloped land (urban and rural)
- Large amount of empty downtown urban fabric
- Overabundance of downtown parking

13 minutes (7.8 miles) to Blacksburg

19 minutes (13.3 miles) to Radford

40 minutes (36.8 miles) to Roanoke

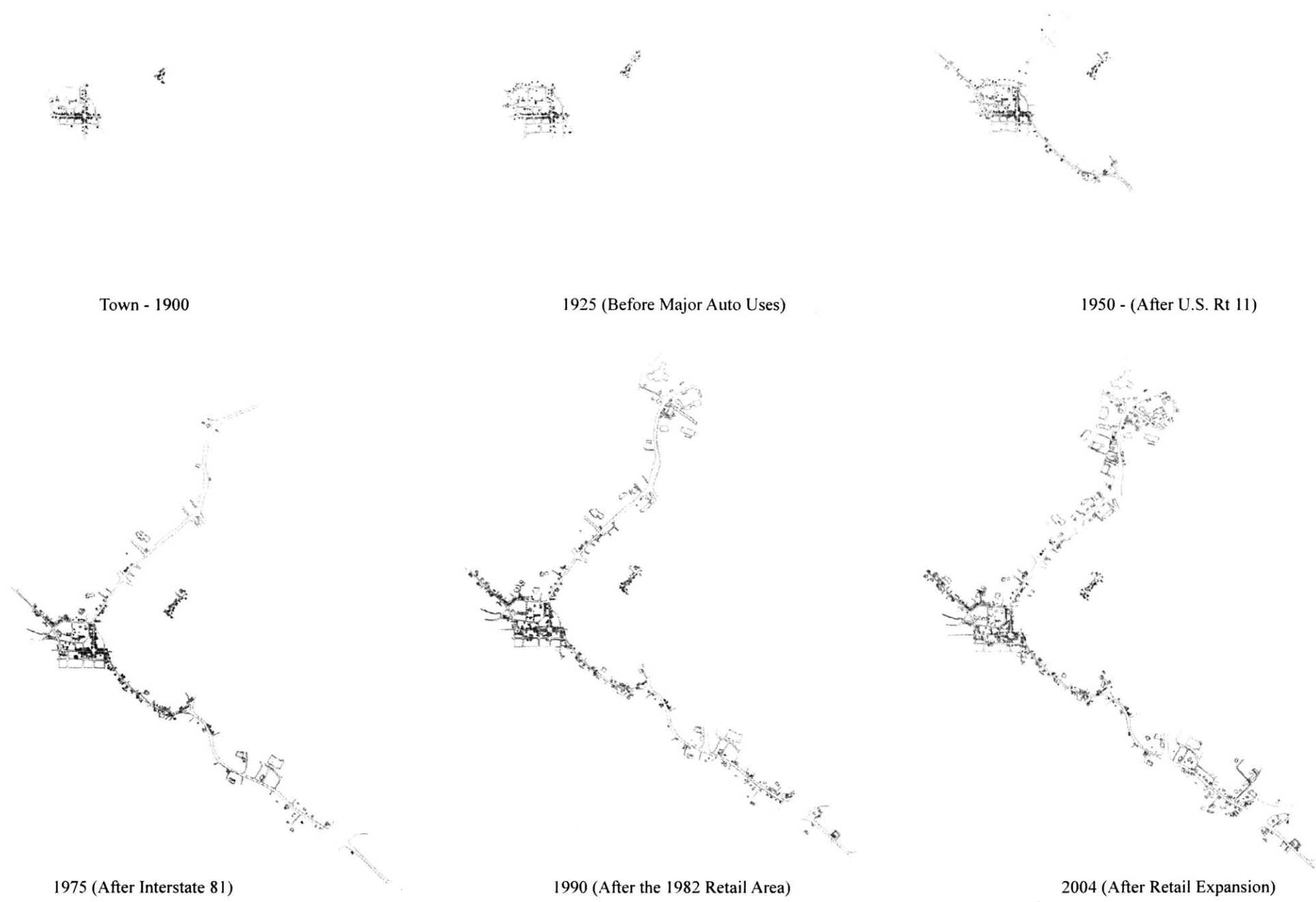
33 minutes (20.8 miles) to Floyd

Regional Study

Why live in Christiansburg, Va?

1. Location:
 - Connections to neighboring towns with numerous regional amenities and job opportunities. Such as Blacksburg with Virginia Tech and the technology businesses originating from university's research. Radford with its own university, industry, and regional hospital. Christiansburg is also only a forty minute drive to Roanoke, the regions largest city.
2. Expense:
 - The land value, real estate expense, and local taxes for the two neighboring towns have continued to raise over the last ten years. Many of the local families currently can not afford to live within their original community.
3. Housing:
 - Currently the town has a large amount of available housing stock within a 'five minute walk' to downtown. (see later housing board)
 - Currently the town has over one hundred acres of potential open land for housing growth within a 'ten minute walk' to downtown. (again see later housing board)
4. Other Reasons:
 - a ten minute drive to regional shopping area.
 - a thirty minute drive to the Blue Ridge Parkway

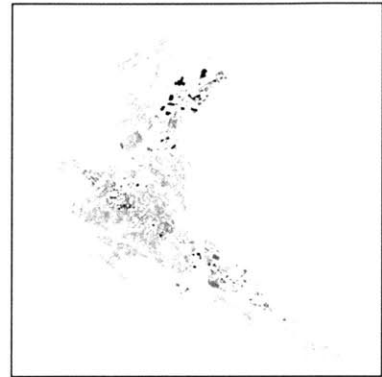
10 - REGIONAL PLANNING



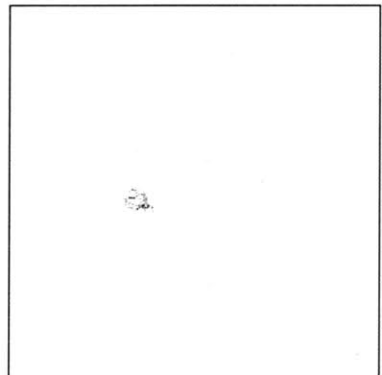
One of the biggest keys in the renovation of Christiansburg is changing its regional definition. The surrounding towns of the New River Valley are fiercely competing with one another for revenue, taxes, employment, and increase in population. The new U.S. 460 commercial/retail area is dominating in the revenue, tax, and employment categories. Most of the local towns cannot offer enough jobs for their population, so numerous residents now commute out of town, currently over half of Christiansburg population are employed elsewhere. Christiansburg's location becomes valuable because it is well connected to the surrounding towns, thus residents have access to employment, amenities, and resources provided by neighboring communities. For example; Blacksburg holds the University of Virginia Tech, the technology jobs, and businesses that originate from the school's research. And the City of Radford has its own university, a handful of industrial plants, and a regional hospital with its associated medical offices. Downtown Christiansburg is only a thirteen minute drive to Blacksburg and a nineteen minute drive to Radford. Christiansburg also has the luxury of only being a forty minute drive to the City of Roanoke, the region's largest urban area. The highway and interstate connections which historically have harmed the downtown, can also redevelop it. The opportunities lie within the downtown's abundance of inexpensive land and empty fabric which is currently open to redevelopment, and by the town offering entertainment, activities, and events which are marketed towards adults and families. These two elements will be discussed thoroughly in later chapters. Because of Christiansburg's location residents would have less than a hours commute back-and-forth to work. But more importantly they would not need the commute for their evening shopping, dining, and entertainment, this could be provided within a five-to-ten walk to downtown. These elements would also be marketed to adults and families of neighboring towns increasing opportunity for visitors, revenue, and interaction.

The first reason to relocate to Christiansburg is land value. Real estate expenses, local taxation, and public service cost have continued to steadily raise over the last ten years within Blacksburg and Radford. This is especially true for Blacksburg with the university continuously finding success in its different venues of activity. Currently many of the local groups can not afford to continue living within the community in which they work or originally settled. Groups such as young families, non-tenured professors, the retirees, and those with low-incomes are relocating, most moving into the surrounding rural county. Within this problem lies the opportunity for Christiansburg to renovate its downtown. Currently Christiansburg has a large amount of available housing stock within a 'five minute walk' of downtown. (See pg. 41 & 45)

10 - REGIONAL PLANNING

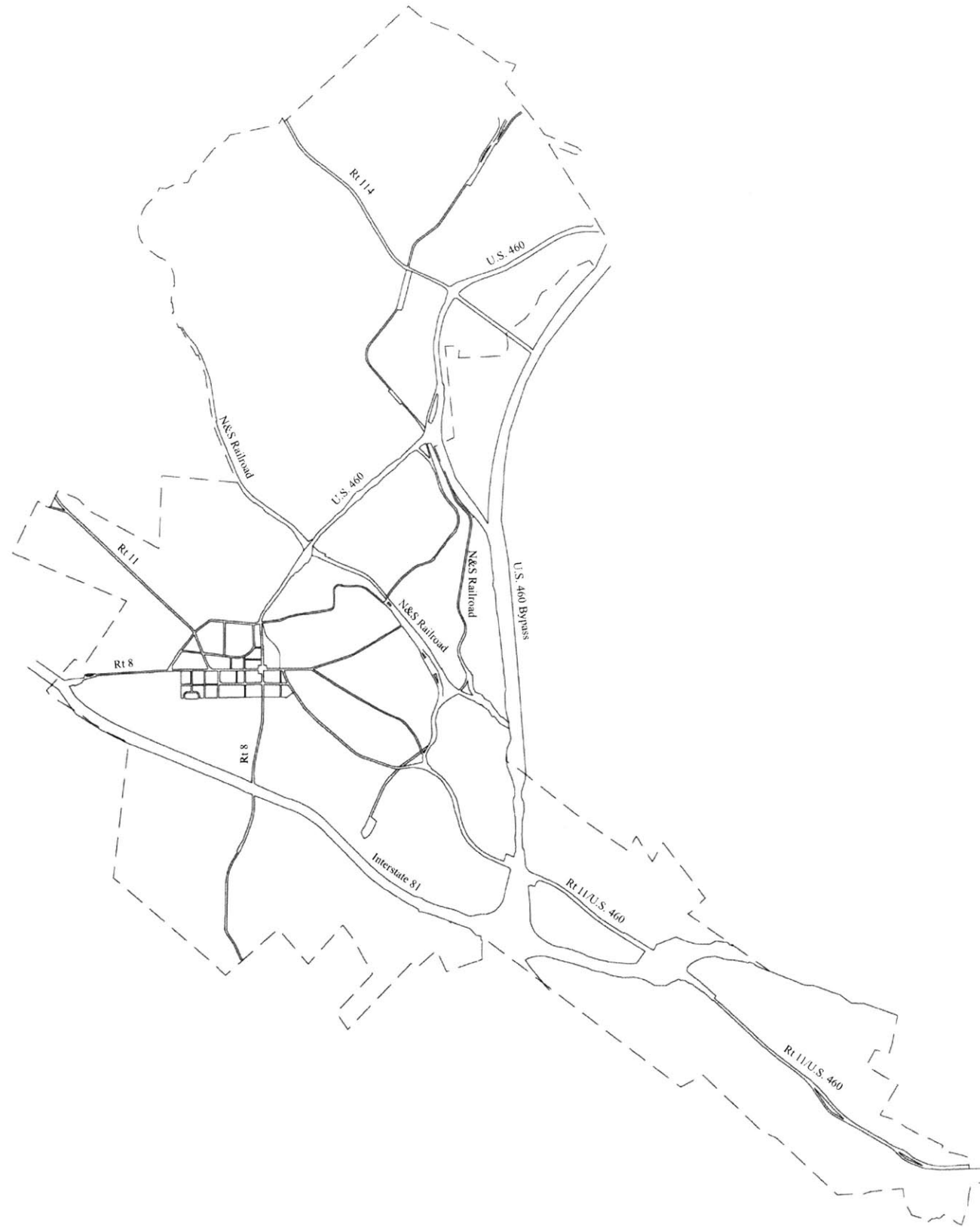


Town Limits



Downtown Core

Town Transportation



It also has over one hundred acres of potential open land for development within a 'ten minute walk.' (See pg. 41 & 45) The downtown area currently offers little housing variety, the majority of the dwellings within this ten minute walk are single family detached homes. The area needs to introduce more apartments and rowhouses, thus attracting other demographics.

Currently, the expensive of creating new start-up businesses within neighboring towns is quite high. Typically, because of the start-up price many new busenesses close within six months of opening. Christiansburg could encourage these retail shops and businesses to settle along Main Street by offering inexpensive land, low property taxes, abundance of free parking, and possible financial support during their first year.

Regional planning for these area continues beyond employment, housing, and retail. The opportunity to renovate Christiansburg lies within offering social entertainment and activity to the surrounding county. Of the four main areas: Blacksburg, Radford, the 'New River Valley' shopping area, and Christiansburg all currently attract and market towards different demographics. Being that a third of Blacksburg's population is connected to the University, the majority of the town's evening and night social activities are orientated towards college age students. Though there are a few marketing towards the adult demographic students still dominant the town. Blacksburg's venues include a movie theater, University's amenities, a few parks, and the *Steppin' Out* street bazaar. Radford's demographics is different. For centuries the town has been defined by duality, East Radford holds the University and West Radford contains the town numerous industrial plants. Like Blacksburg social activities of the east is dominated by college students, but the west has more of a 'blue-collar baptist-belt' origin with few bars and little opportunity for social interaction. Radford's venues include a movie theater, University's amenities, a numerous parks, and a summer *River Festival*. The 'New River Valley' shopping area not a true civic entity, it is contain with Christiansburg's town limits but is populated by the county. It contains no housing, no religions institutions, few civic institutions, and majority of its buildings are of retail or service nature. The populating demographic is mixed, no one group domains. There are no venues for social interaction, only the mall's cinema and store for shopping. Within this layout lies opportunity to re-establish Christiansburg as a center for family oriented activities. This proposal defines five activity nodes within the downtown fabric. (Chapter 12 - New Activity Nodes) Each node has the ability to be programmed with different activities allowed the community to market to the entire family. For example the new amphitheater on a Friday night may have bands playing music for adults, teens, and seniors, while children are observed in an adjacent area, and families dine together in a nearby restaurant. (See Chapter 13 - Social Activities Plan)

TOWN PLANNING

Commercial/Retail I Node:
New River Valley

Approx. Number of Existing Units within a Five Minute Walk: 80

Potential Units within a Five Minute Walk:
1/4th Acre Lot - 37 (or)
1/8th Acre Lot - 73 (or)
1/16th Acre Lot - 147

Approx. Number of Existing Units within a Five Minute Drive: 315

Potential Units within a Five Minute Walk:
1/4th Acre Lot - 1,915 (or)
1/8th Acre Lot - 3,829 (or)
1/16th Acre Lot - 7,655

Commercial/Retail II Node:
Shealor Motor Mile

Approx. Number of Existing Units within a Five Minute Walk: 208

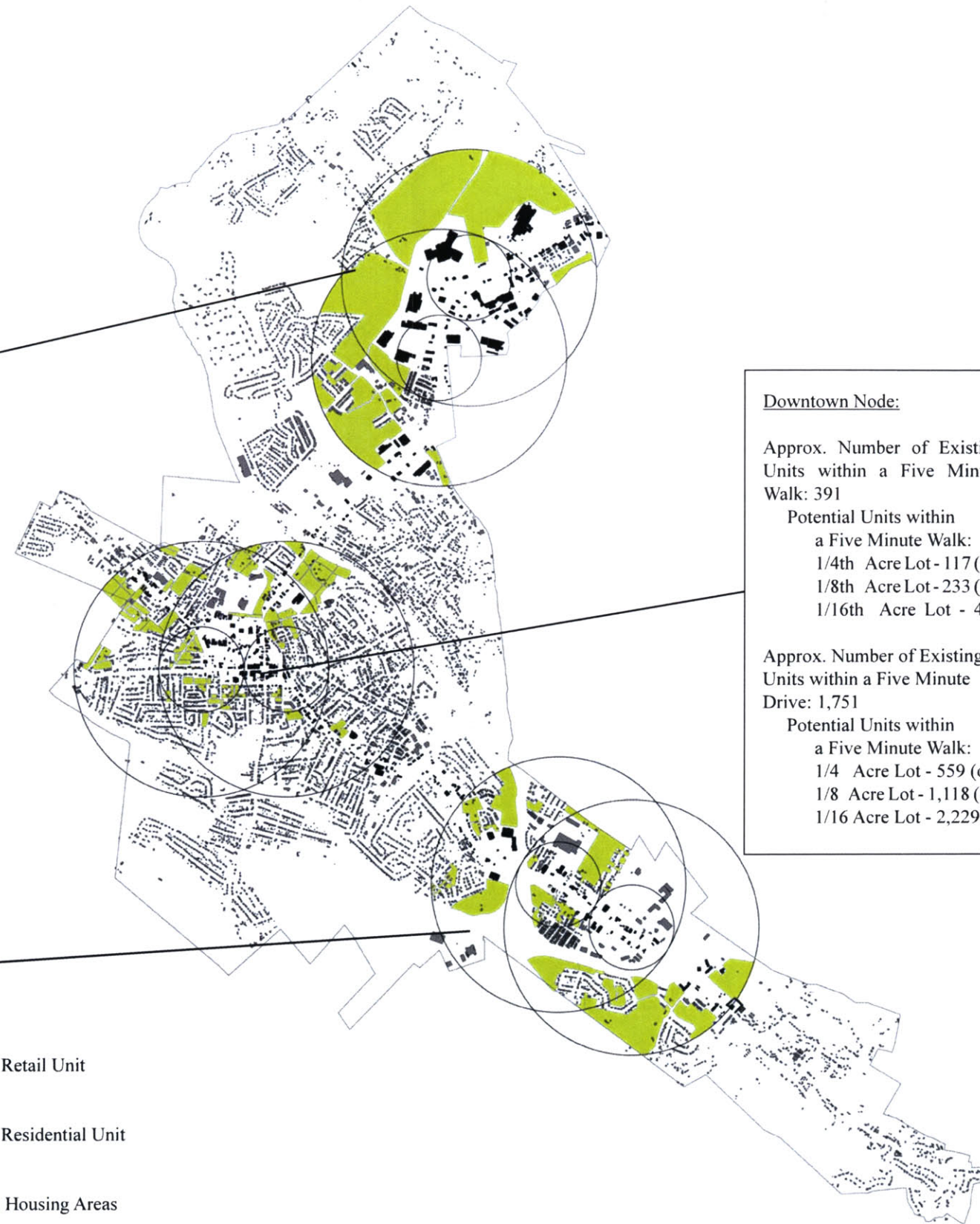
Potential Units within a Five Minute Walk:
1/4 Acre Lot - 125 (or)
1/8 Acre Lot - 248 (or)
1/16 Acre Lot - 497

Approx. Number of Existing Units within a Five Minute Drive: 658

Potential Units within a Five Minute Walk:
1/4 Acre Lot - 936 (or)
1/8 Acre Lot - 1,867 (or)
1/16 Acre Lot - 3,737

Map Key:

- Existing Retail Unit
- Existing Residential Unit
- Potential Housing Areas



Downtown Node:

Approx. Number of Existing Units within a Five Minute Walk: 391

Potential Units within a Five Minute Walk:
1/4th Acre Lot - 117 (or)
1/8th Acre Lot - 233 (or)
1/16th Acre Lot - 468

Approx. Number of Existing Units within a Five Minute Drive: 1,751

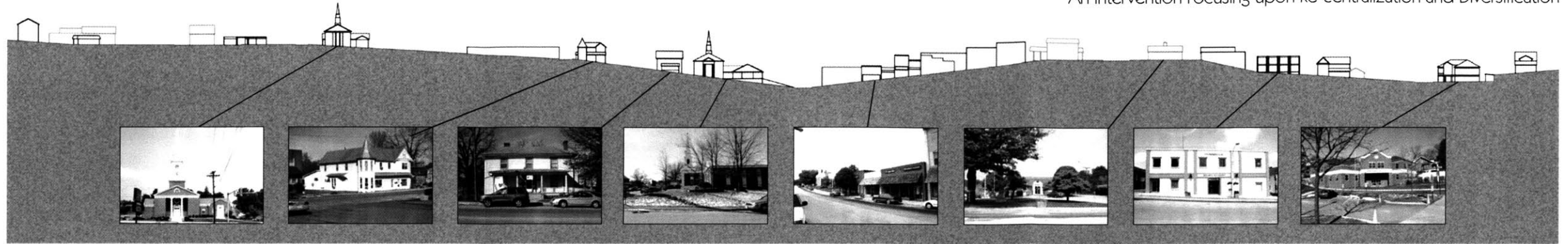
Potential Units within a Five Minute Walk:
1/4 Acre Lot - 559 (or)
1/8 Acre Lot - 1,118 (or)
1/16 Acre Lot - 2,229

Christiansburg is currently defined by three major urban nodes. These nodes consist of two commercial/retail areas and one historic/civic downtown area. The first retail node is to the northeast of downtown. It is the largest node and contains the regional mall, numerous department stores, countless speciality shops, and restaurants. Typically called 'New River Valley' this shopping area contains little civic power but provides the majority of the sales tax and revenue for the town. The area also provides a large portion of the community's minimum-wage employment.

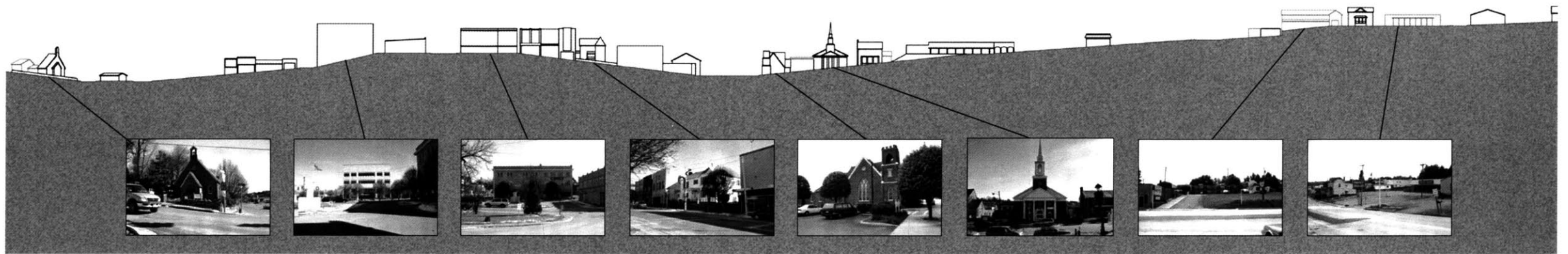
The second retail node is located to the southeast of downtown adjacent to Interstate 81. This area contains the 'Shealor Motor Mile,' the town's *Industrial Park*, fast-food restaurants, motels, and countless gas stations. This area also holds little civic power but provides a steady income through property, sales, and gas taxes. Both commercial/retail areas can be defined as 'strip developments' holding little housing, little to no civic or religious institutions, and have little programming other than consumer sales and services.

The third node is the most important to the community. Through this area currently lies in a weakened state, a shadow of its former uses and level of prestige. The node still remains endeared to the residents and more valued but less visited than the commercial/retail nodes. The downtown/civic node holds most of the town's history, civic and religious institutions, continuous urban fabric, and block structure. Once the area held the majority of the community's housing, businesses, shops, and institutions. Currently two-fifths of the area lies empty, used, unprogrammed, and unvisited. It is within this downtown area that this design intervention will focus. The area holds extreme potential within its historical fabric, remaining civic and religious institutions, and the number of open areas along Main Street with low amounts of building fabric, decaying structures, and numerous unused parking lots.

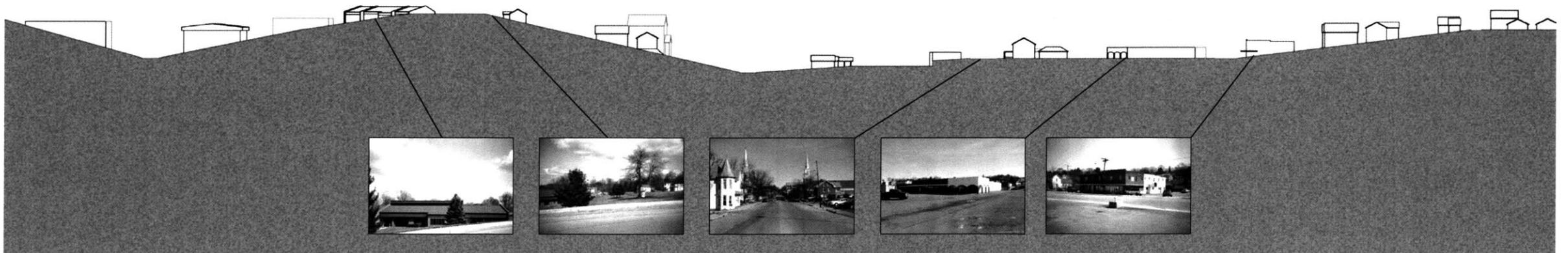
EXISTING
TOWN SECTION



North Section of Main Street

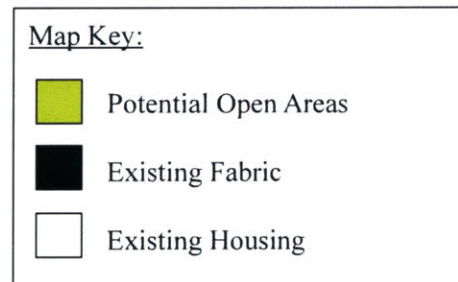
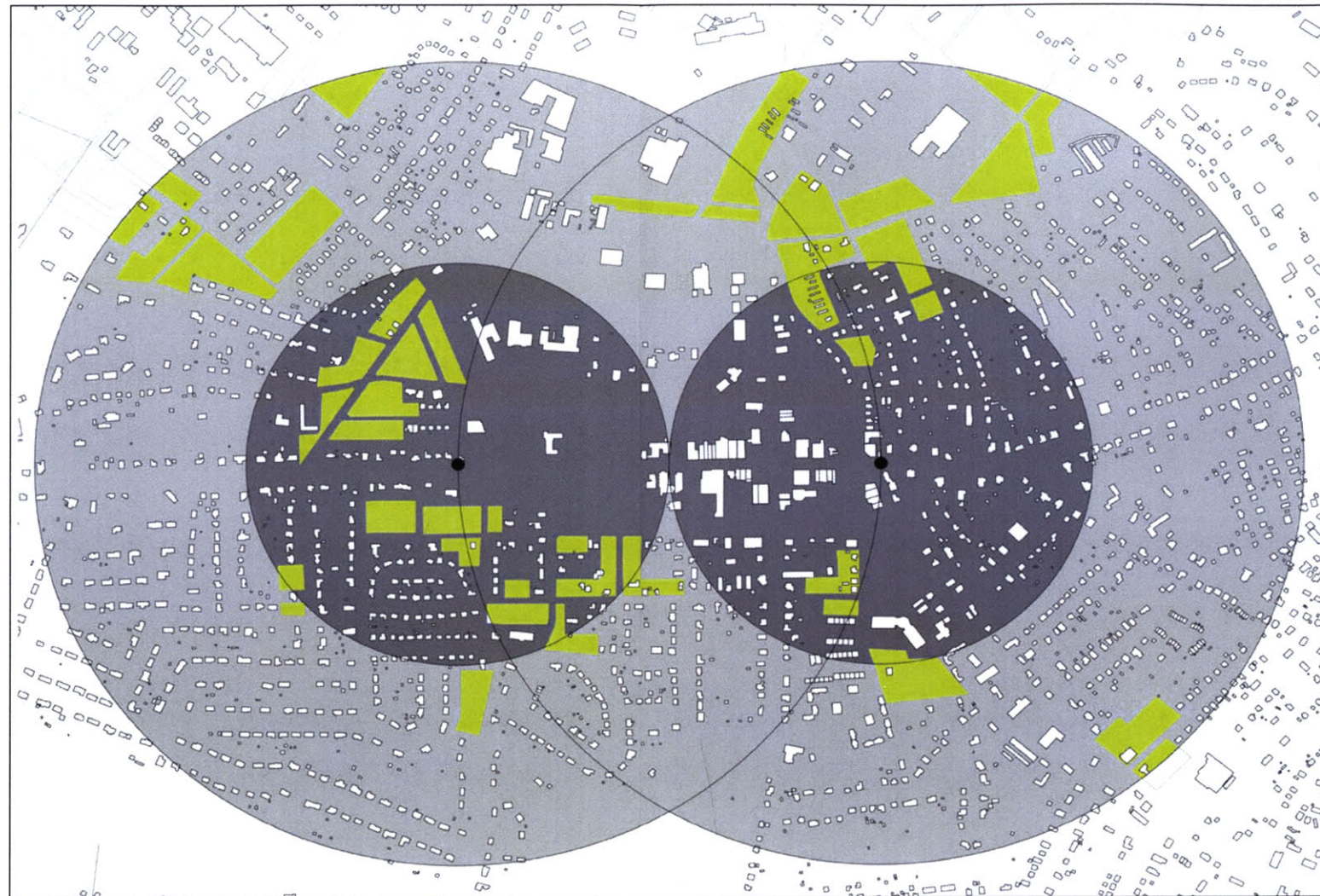


South Section of Main Street



Section through Hillside

TOWN LAYOUT



Existing Housing Units

1,751 single family units currently exist within a ten minute walking distance to the downtown core. The majority are detached homes with only a few roll houses and very little apartments. If an average of 2-3 people live within each unit, the area would approximately yield a total of 3,502-5,253 people with the ability to easily walk to town. This walking ability is currently an amenity that the downtown area is not taking advantage of.

Potential Housing Expansion

There is roughly 99 acres of existing undeveloped open land within a ten minute walking distance.

If divided into quarter acre lots this would yield - 391 new units
 If divided into eighth acre lots this would yield - 792 new units
 If divided into sixteenth acre lots this would yield - 1,583 new units

If an average of 2-3 people live within each unit, the area would produce:

At quarter acre lots - 782 - 1,173 people
 At eighth acre lots - 1,584 - 2,376 people
 At sixteenth acre lots - 3,166 - 4,749 people

The ideal goal would be to add 750 units at a mixture of lots sizes. If the ideal goal is to add 750 units could yield between 1,500 - 2,250 people.

STRONG
ARCHITECTURE



1 - Courthouse



3 - Sheriff's Office



Former Furniture Store



Urban Fabric



9 - Main Street Baptist Church



12 - St. Thomas' Episcopal



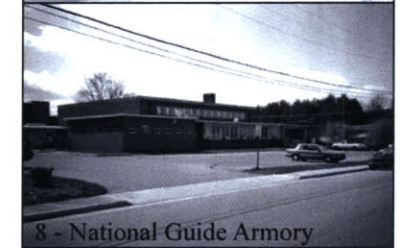
2 - Post Office



4 - Town Hall



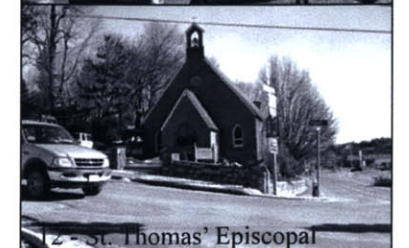
6 - Urban Fabric



8 - National Guard Armory

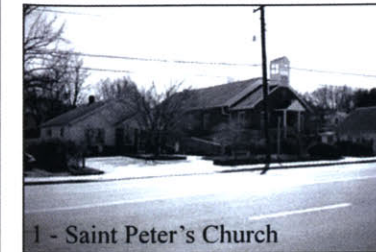
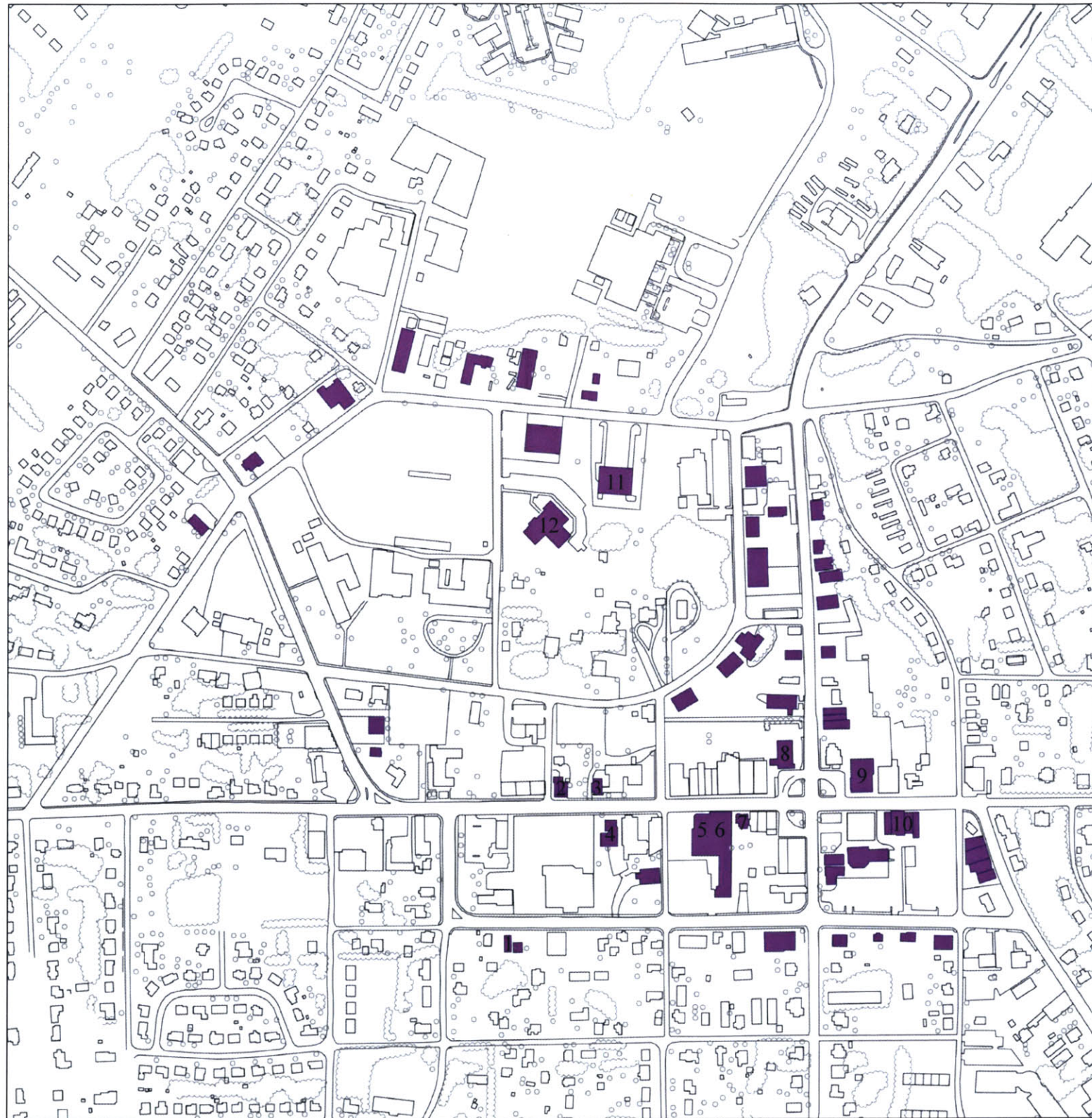


Main Street Baptist Church

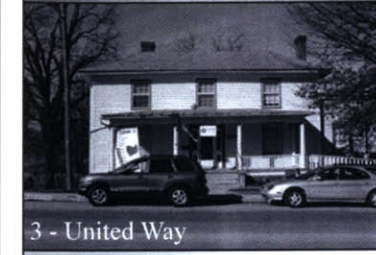


12 - St. Thomas' Episcopal

GOOD
ARCHITECTURE



1 - Saint Peter's Church



3 - United Way



5 - Former Drug Store



7 - Historic Residence



9 - Local Bank



11 - Fire Station



2 - Historic Residence



4 - Church Parsonage



6 - Urban Fabric



8 - Local Bank

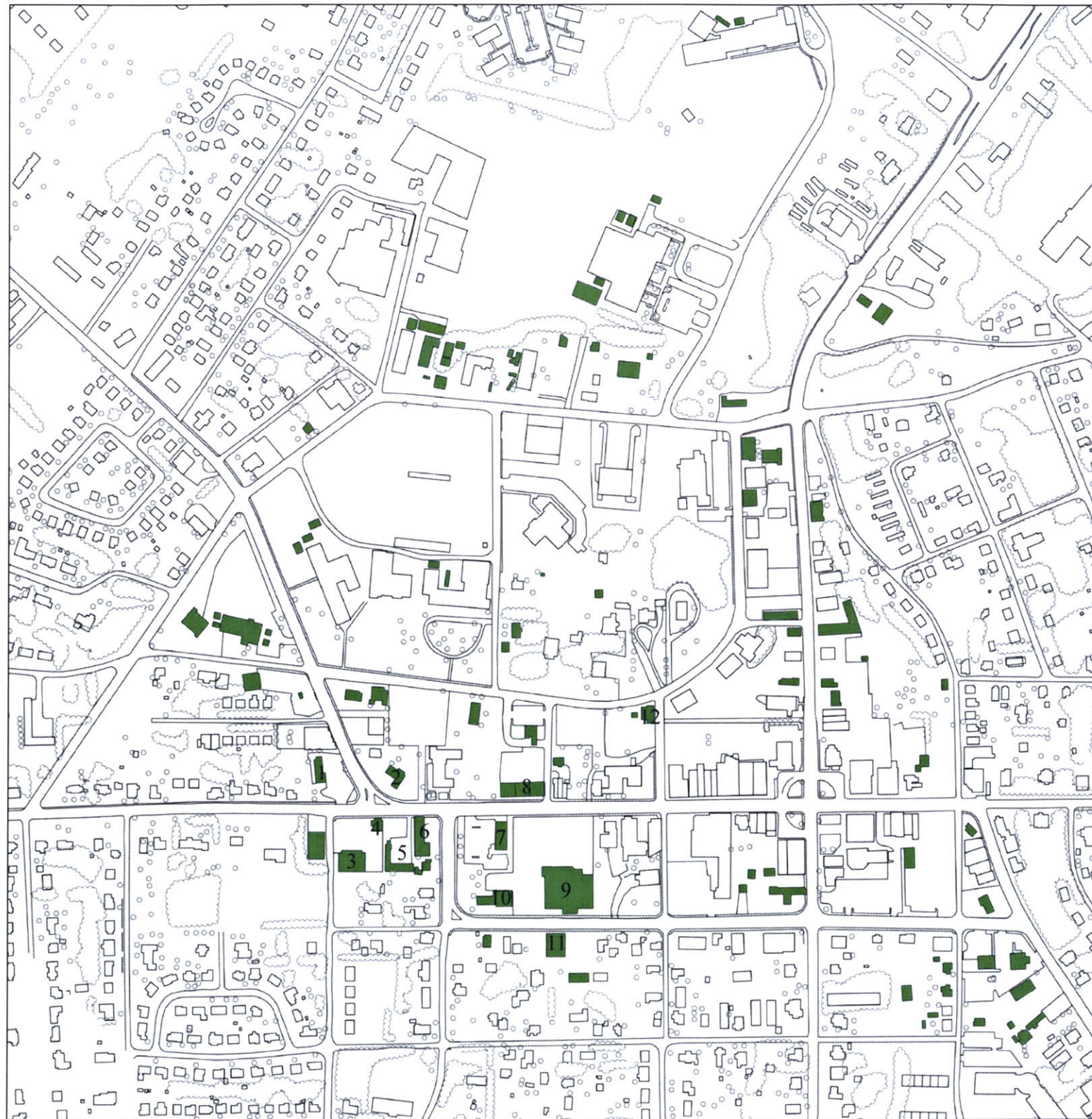


10 - Existing Fabric



12 - Public Library

WEAK
ARCHITECTURE



1 - Restaurant



3 - Local Store



5 - Local Motel



7 - Restaurant



9 - Former Grocery Store



11 - Local Laundry



2 - Service Station



4 - Former Residence



6 - Restaurant



8 - Office Space



10 - Business Space



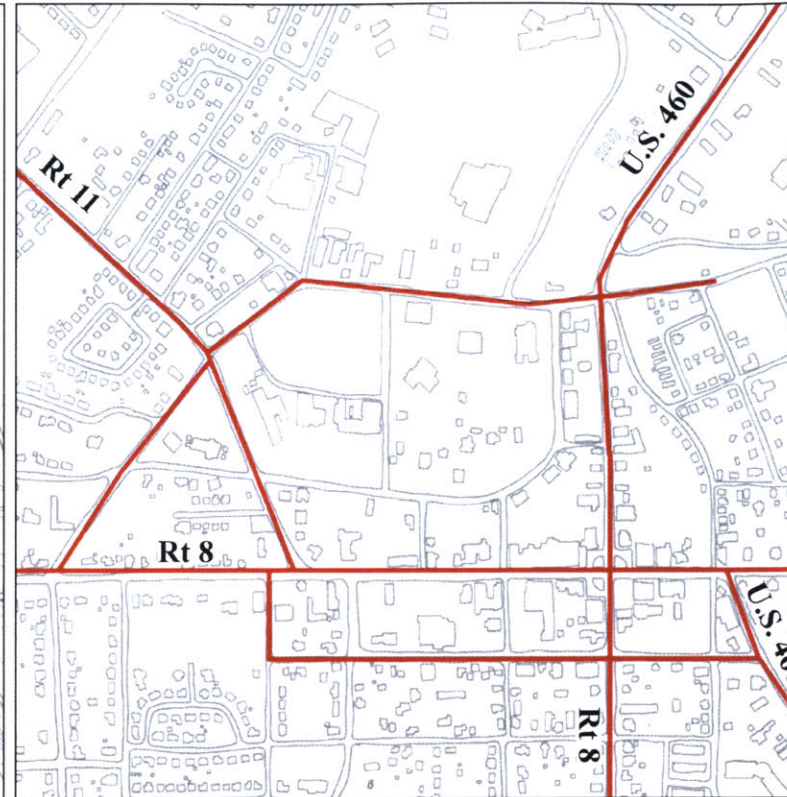
12 - Private Structure

TOWN STUDY

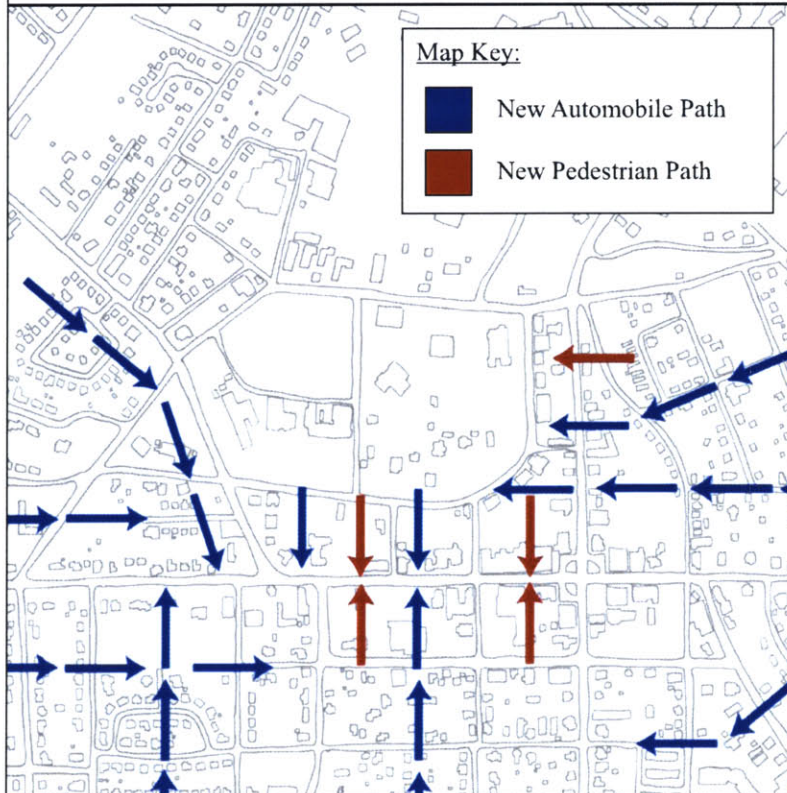
Topographical Study



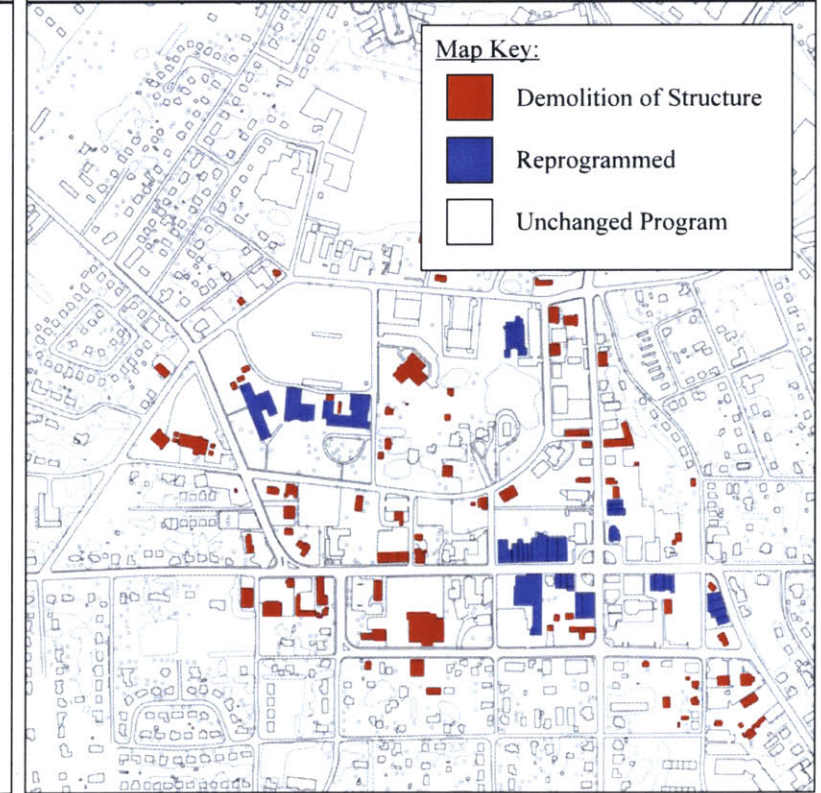
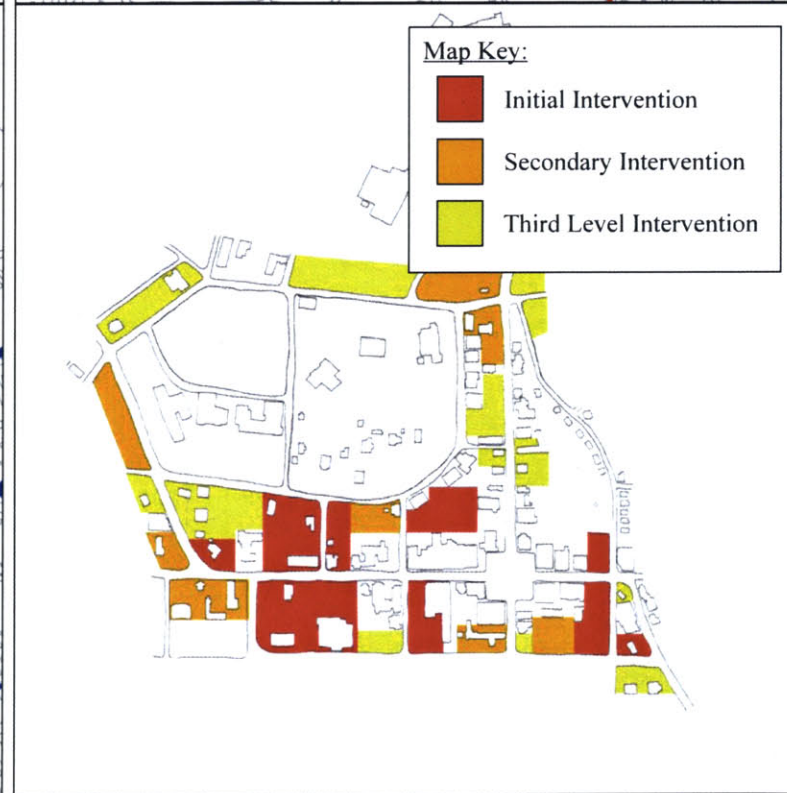
Downtown Travel Path Study



Downtown Parking Areas



Proposed Connection to Downtown

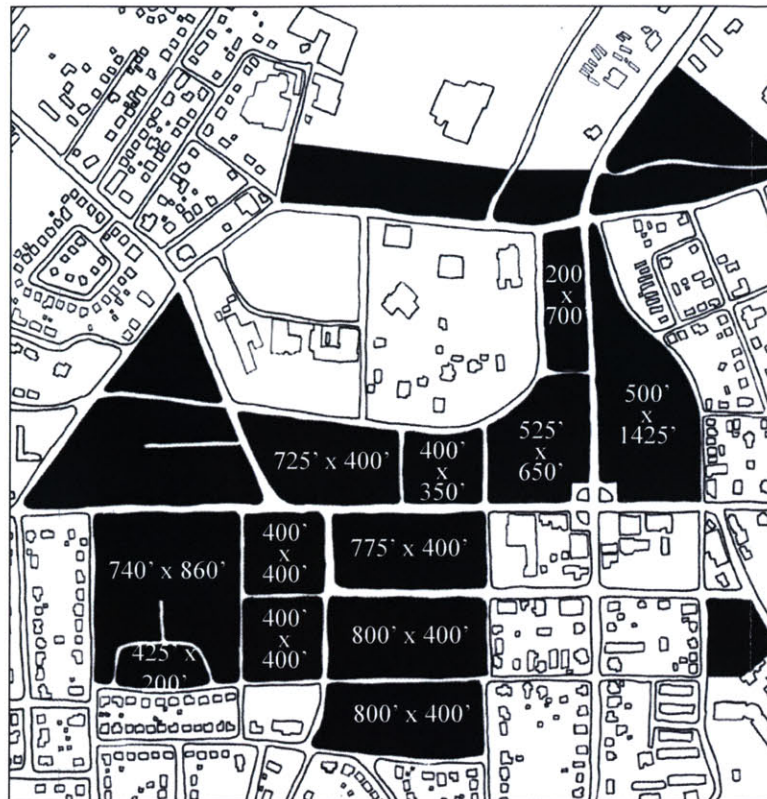


Areas of Needed Renovation

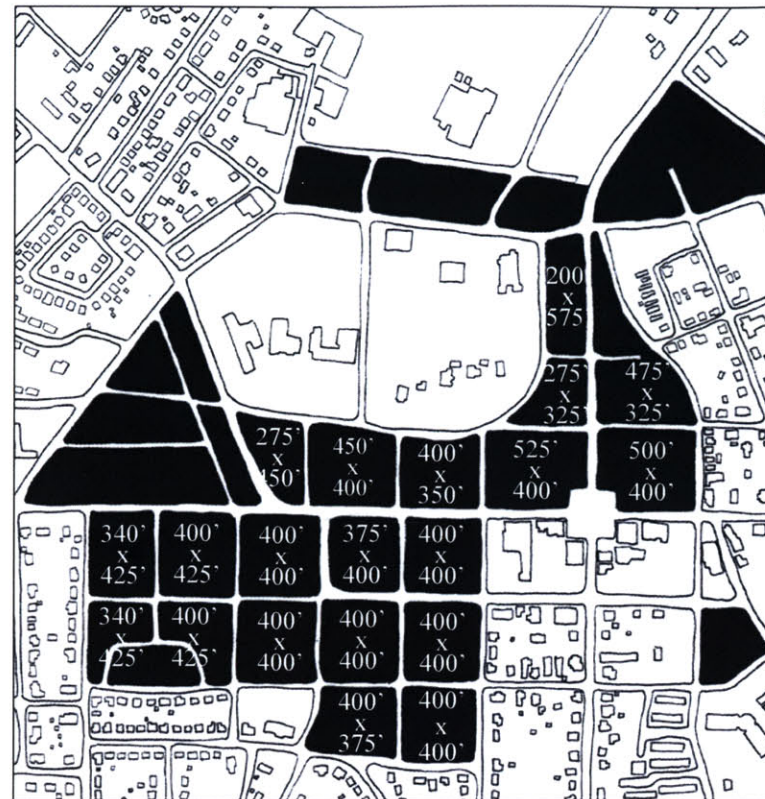
Demo and Reprogrammed Buildings

DESIGN APPROACH

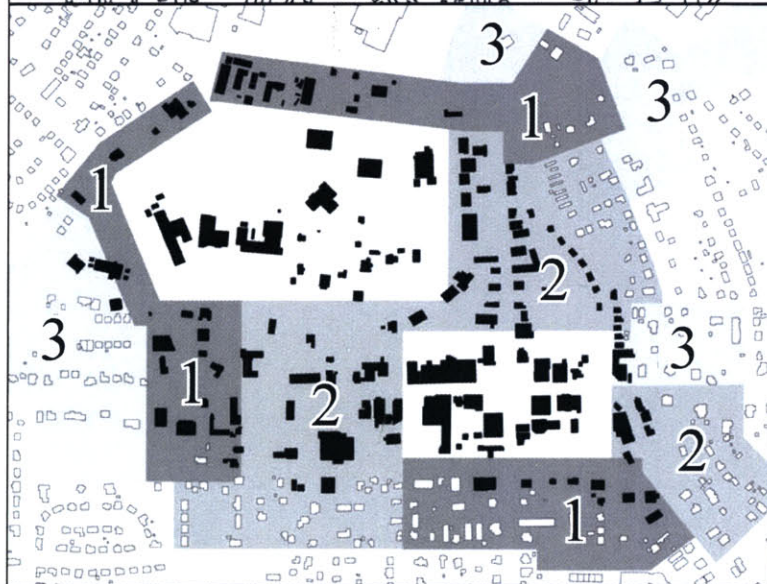
Existing Downtown Block Layout



Proposed Downtown Block Layout



Downtown Housing Placement



Map Key:	
	Zone 1 - High Density
	Zone 2 - Suburban-Office Density
	Zone 3 - Suburban Density
	Existing Downtown Fabric
	Existing Suburban Fabric

Three Types of Housing Zones

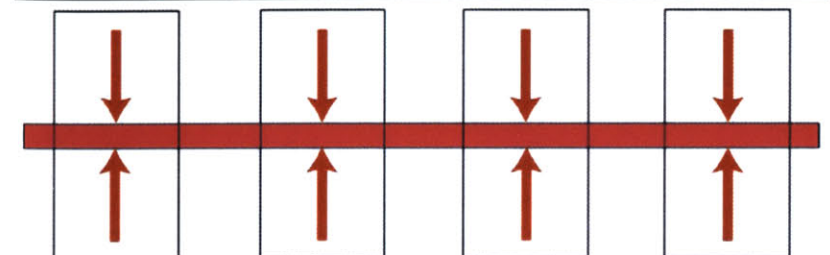
Zone One (High-Urban Density) - The propose of this housing zone is to increase the urban population within a five minute walking distance to the Downtown Core. This area of the proposal has the highest housing density and should allowing the most residents to populate the Main Street area. This zone should be considered the most urban with the housing structures within consisting of: large-scale three to five stories apartments of 8 to 20 units. FAR yielding 2.5-3

Zone Two (Suburban Density/Office) - The majority of this zone is within a short five to ten minute walk to the Downtown Core. This is the area in which the density of housing should be at suburban density. This zone should be built with high quality detached single family homes that could be converted into business offices. FAR yielding 1.5-2.5

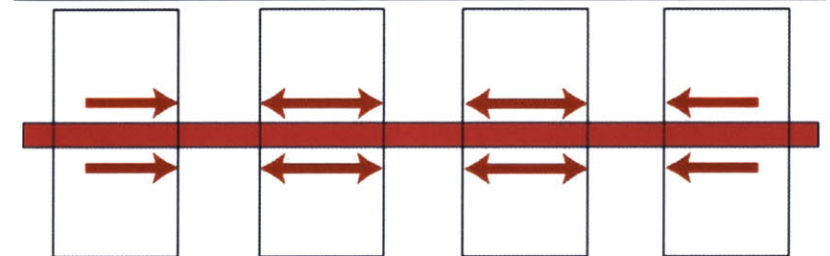
Zone Three (Suburban Density/Residential) - A large portion of the housing within this zone is closer to the ten minute walking distance to the Downtown Core. This is the area in which the density of housing should be low allowing for individual lots with yards for citizen desiring large amounts of privacy. This zone should be considered very suburban with the housing within consisting of: detached houses on single lots FAR yielding 1-1.5



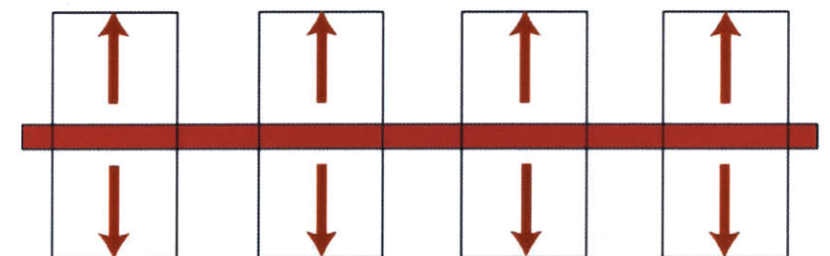
Rebuild and Renovate the Four Major Low Fabric Areas



Initial Intervention - Main Street Infill



Secondary Intervention - Horizontal Re-Growth



Third Intervention - Backfill of Main Street Blocks



Program Four Potential Town Activity Nodes

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11 - DIVERSIFICATION AND RE-INTRODUCTION

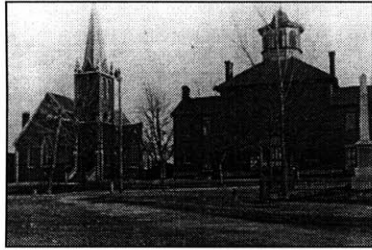


Fig 11,1 - Old Christiansburg's
Town Square

The goal of the thesis is to repair the existing community by capitalizing on the town's potential and existing opportunities. These opportunities include the community's small town Southern charm, its Appalachian surrounding, and its connections to neighboring towns with their Universities, hospital, research jobs and industrial employment. This proposal choreographing five main design elements: *regional identity, recentering civic institutions, introducing festivals and events in the town's fabric, redevelopment of downtown shops and businesses, and increasing downtown housing.* These elements would need to be introduced together to quickly changes existing community perceptions. The five elements would be orchestrated together in an attempt to balance the focus of the renovation, not allowing any of the five to dominant. The choreography would be a result of phasing of the projects, procurement of funding, procuring the land, and need to replace existing civic institutions. The earlier phases would be more exact and dictated, for example remove the former Krogers building to replace with a new Community Center. Later phasing would be less precise allowing developers and owners to filling open lots and increase the urban fabric. (See Chapter 14 - Phasing Approach)

In theory the County Seat of an area has the civic responsibility to increase the quality of life of its residents. It should contain places for the young, the stay-at-home-parent, the unemployed, the disabled, and the retired. Currently downtown Christiansburg only markets to two demographics groups the 9:00 to 5:00 businessperson and those needing governmental/court services. A County Seat should also offer amenities and resources that increase cultural awareness, promote social and civic interaction, aid community and individual development. It should value recreation and exercise and support its citizens when they are in need. These goals should be seen within the landscape of the downtown. The civic institutions within the town should present a character that sets them apart from the typical urban fabric and be grander than the institutions of the surrounding county. What the last twenty-five years have shown Christiansburg is that, if a County Seat allows the majority of its civic institutions to spread themselves too far apart, the community will lose all perceived connection, lowering its civic value and weakening the community's identity. This civic identity is the most powerful tool in defining 'place.' Christiansburg's roots lay in being 'a place to get things done,' but today you go to the regional mall-Walmart-Target area to get anything done. If the town wants to compete it must evolve and diversify by beginning to once again offer the daily amenities and resources that county citizens need.

One of the opportunities that the Town of Christiansburg has to resurrect itself lies with designation as the Montgomery County Seat. The community must return to its origin by offering the county residences the resources and amenities they need to fulfil their daily lives. The *Montgomery County Government Center* must return to the downtown area to a site along Main Street so that the importance

Also See:

Chapter 12 - New Activity Nodes

Chapter 17 - Pattern Book

Chapter 18 - Design Guidelines

Chapter 19 - Events Catalog

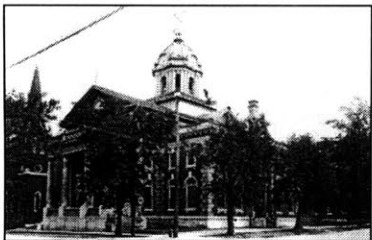


Fig 11.2 - Old Christiansburg's
Courthouse

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of downtown is reinforced. The introduction of a new large-scale *Post Office* that can perform today's mailing tasks must replace the historic facility, which currently is too small to function using modern techniques. The *Montgomery County School Board Offices* must return to downtown along with a new *Public Library* that holds up-to-date technologies allowing for research and internet capabilities. Finally, the county *Department of Motor Vehicles* must relocate within the core community. Also Christiansburg's existing institutions must continue to expand and update their facilities.

The opportunity that the town of Christiansburg has to resurrect and renovate itself lies within its ability to nurture the community's future businesses. Space within the downtown along Main Street should be renovated to create a new *Business Incubator*, allowing young office/service businesses to establish themselves within the local environment. This incubator would help small businesses lower their daily overhead by sharing the cost of resources such as copiers, faxes, printers, and typically sharing a single receptionist who transfers all incoming calls. According to an old theory if a business can survive its first year, each following year becomes dramatically easier. A government subsidized incubator would help introduce jobs and businesses into the downtown core. As these businesses expand and outgrow the incubator, they would then infill the downtown fabric increasing the resource that the community can offer its residences.

With the designation of Christiansburg as the County's Seat, the question of the role of art within the community must be addressed. Currently there is no major venue to exhibit local artwork, no theater to present plays or recite music, and no centralized location for young artisans to be nurtured till they are discovered. Within these problems lay the opportunity for Christiansburg to diversify and renovate itself. The town should also establish an Art Incubator. Much like the businesses incubator, it would be a facility where artists can share resources such as metal shops, wood shops, lighting equipment, dark rooms, digital print hardware, and gallery space to present their work. If the art community is embraced by the residents of Christiansburg, this incubator would act as a catalyst to establish more gallery spaces with the downtown core. The community should then invest in a small '*black box*' theater. This theater needs to be no bigger a 50'x50' room with no fixed seating: a simple place to present artists' work. Currently the New River Valley is not renowned for being an artist community, though the Town of Floyd and the neighboring universities would argue this point. It is my belief that in redefining Christiansburg, art should be a prime focus.

Currently one of the largest problem that many small towns are faced with is that citizens lack both knowledge of and connection with the area's history. This statement suggests another opportunity to aid the renovation of Christiansburg. Along with the possible introduction of an arts community into the downtown fabric, the community should find and exhibit the history of the Wilderness Trial. There is an existing

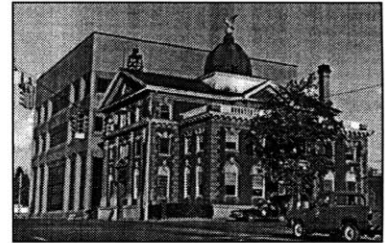


Fig 11.3 - Old and New Town Courthouse

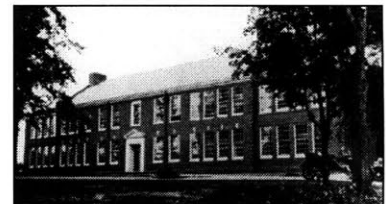


Fig 11.4 - Old Christiansburg's High School

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museum on Pepper Street, but an institution of the type should be more prominent. The reconnection and acceptance of the town's Appalachian roots would allow for opportunities to strengthen community identity. Town archives, artifacts, images, and stories about its history should be stored at one accessible centralized location. The reestablishment of local history could be orchestrated by the installation of a new *Appalachian Cultural Museum*. The design proposal places the museum and new town library together as one civic institution and locates it at the corner of First Street and Pepper Street.

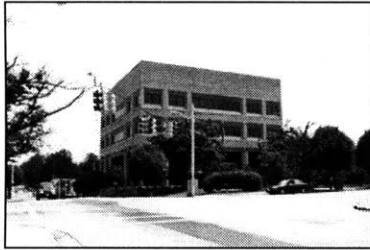


Fig 11.5 - New Town Courthouse

Another opportunity that the town of Christiansburg has to resurrect itself lies within education. As vocational classes are cut from local high schools, university tuitions continue to steadily rise, and adults realize they need to develop new skills, the importance of a local center for learning become clearer. I propose that the old high school, most recently used as a middle school, be renovated into a new community college. This could involve relocation of New River Community College's existing satellite campus or an entirely new organization. This institution would not be only a college but a hybrid school that acts as a vocational school, Montessori school, art school, and community college. The public school age students between ages of 12 and 18 could enroll in after-school classes for college credit. It could teach adults, knowledge hungry children, transient students aiming for other universities, and bored retirees looking to fill their day. The college would use many of the town's new resources like the Recreation Center and Art Incubator, and work along side with the Community Center. The school would be developed as a community partner, connecting itself to many local programs, events, and activities. It's student body could also work to staff for town events, and create festival decorations, and would help rebuild the local vocational job market.

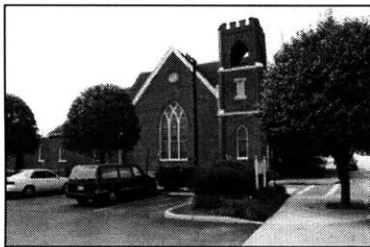


Fig 11.6 - Existing Main Street Baptist Church

Another opportunity that the town of Christiansburg has to resurrect itself also lies within its ability to entertain and promote recreation. With reestablishment of the downtown as a place for the young, the stay at home-parent, the unemployed, the disabled, and the retired, the community needs a place for these groups to meet, interact, and communicate. This requires the introduction of a large-scale Community Center with numerous classrooms, lounges, areas for communal dining, a small lecture hall, and a large amphitheater. This center would offer classes and lectures of various types to be taught by members of various social groups. For example, a retired accountant might offer tax classes, a high school student might teach seniors to surf the internet, an unemployed musicians could instruct middle school students in playing an instrument, and a stay at home mother of teens could aid a young parent in caring for infants. The amphitheater is a key element of this intervention and downtown's social communal activity plan. (See Chapters 13) The introduction of a community Recreation Center and Aquatic Center within the downtown fabric would show the town officials' commitment to the improvement of the

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health and fitness of the community. This facility would hold exercise rooms for aerobics and yoga, a weight room, handball courts, indoor basketball and volleyball courts, an Olympic-size swimming pool, sauna, whirlpool, and locker rooms. It would also include a game room with video games, pinball, foosball, pool, air hockey, and ping-pong.

The opportunity that the town of Christiansburg has to resurrect itself lies within its ability to protect downtown retail activity. For this to return to Main Street first people must return, not only during the 9:00 to 5:00, workday but during weekends, evenings, and nights. So this phase of the renovation of the downtown area can not be only based on the re-centralization of civic institutions and the introduction of new office/service businesses. Much of the existing continuous downtown fabric is currently empty, so a few major catalysts must be introduced to activate the area. I propose the reintroduction of a cinema on the corner of Main Street and Hickok Street. A single movie screen will not be effective so a chain cinema holding six to eight movie screens would be preferred. This would give Main Street a year round anchor that would pull evening and nightly visitors into the core of the town. This cinema would open to a plaza which would face Main Street and contain enough square footage to be programmed with activities. (See Chapters 12 and 13) The second intervention within the retail area is the installation of a year round Indoor Market which would sell fresh fruit, vegetables, flowers and plants, meat, fish, poultry, and dairy products. This Market Place would stay remain open till after dinner so town residents could purchase fresh ingredients for their meal. The market would be placed behind Main Street on the corner of New Commerce and Hickok Street. Like the cinema, the market place would share parking with the existing continuous downtown fabric. The installation of these two retail businesses are set forth with the hope that visitors picking fresh cuts of meat for dinner or those waiting to see a movie would become wandering pedestrians and that wise developers, realtors, and building owners would see them as potential customers for returning retail to the businesses downtown core.

Another opportunity that the town of Christiansburg has to resurrect and renovation itself lies within the ability to offer diversify in housing. The existing *Social Services* must be expanded to offer temporary housing units to help county citizens who are in a transient position, those who are down on their luck, those who are starting over, and/or those who are rebuilding their lives. These units would include *Community Housing*, *Women's Resource Center*, and *County Shelters*. These units should be offered in different categories from one room efficiencies, one room apartments, two room apartments, and townhouses all with subsidized rent based upon their renters monthly income. This transient housing should be located near Social Services and the Court House/Government Center/Town Hall area giving the occupant the ability to walk to civic institutions. This placement is also within walking distance to the newly introduced Community College,

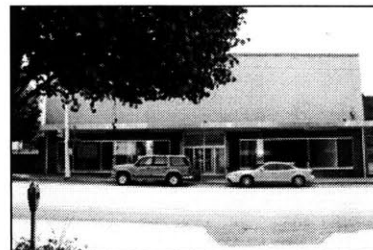


Fig 11.7 - Former Legget
Departement Store



Fig 11,8 - Former Main Street
Residence

**PROPOSED
MASTERPLAN**

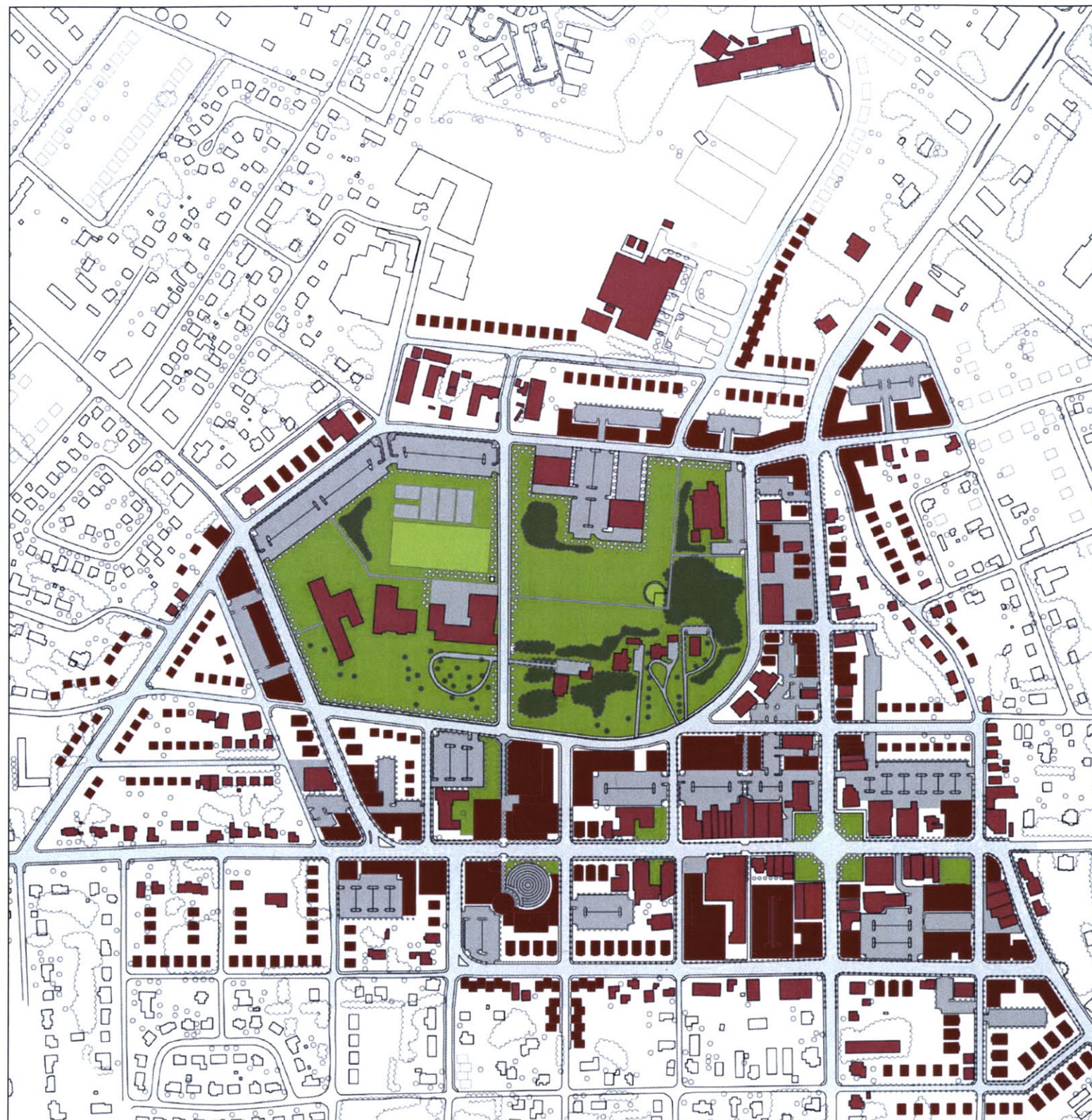
Community Center, and Recreation Center. This would hopefully allow for occupants to improve themselves and reestablish good habits. Christiansburg should also introduce a *Retirement/Assisted Living Community* within the heart of downtown. This is an opportunity to reestablish downtown housing by including a social groups who, for the past twenty years, have been pushed outside to retirement housing along the highway corridor and away from the core community. The housing stock should include hospital style rooms, one room efficiencies, one room apartments, two room apartments, and rowhouses. These units should be phased with a different amount of support from full nursing assistance to a simply daily phone call. The senior community are a viable, wise resource that we simply forget and choose to usher off to one side. If they were established as a key element within the downtown fabric they could populate the area and be resources within the new civic institutions like the Community College, Community Center, Business Incubator and Library.

The new businesses, retail shops, civic institutions, incubators, and activities will hopefully create a need for new housing within the downtown area. This new housing should take the form of apartments and townhouses, two typologies of which Christiansburg currently has too few. These new apartments should be built within a five minute walking distance of the downtown Main Street thus increasing the daily and nightly visitors. The current average age for Christiansburg is 35.2 years. This is a relatively young population; many have young children averaging 8-12. The town is currently filled with three groups looking for social activities, community interaction, and social opportunity. The youngest are teens looking for inexpensive activities; the second are single adults looking to meet people, romantic or otherwise, and the last are couples/families looking for something wholesome and entertaining to do. For these reasons I believe that a few hundred of these citizens would be interested in apartment or townhome living if they knew they could walk to work, small-scale shops, entertainment, dining, and recreation. Many in this demographic would also be interested in low maintenance housing. Thus, if two hundred units of housing were introduced into the downtown fabric in the form of urban apartments and townhouses, the community would make inroads to repopulate its core.

Christiansburg has the opportunity to offer the surrounding community civic activities and social events. People want to interact and participate with other the people. But Christiansburg and many other small towns lack venues for social interaction. Currently Christiansburg and many other small towns lack venues for social interaction, both platforms to hold activities and programs to facilitate communication must be introduced. Town Officials have to change existing perceptions and redevelop Main Street to bring the community together for large-scale community activities. (See Chapters 13)

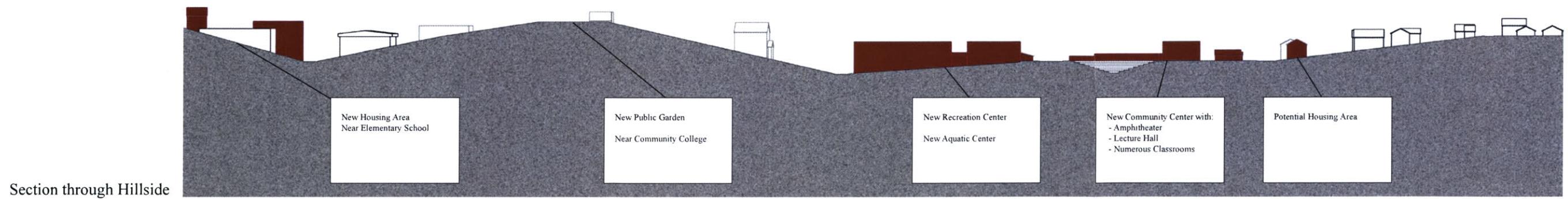
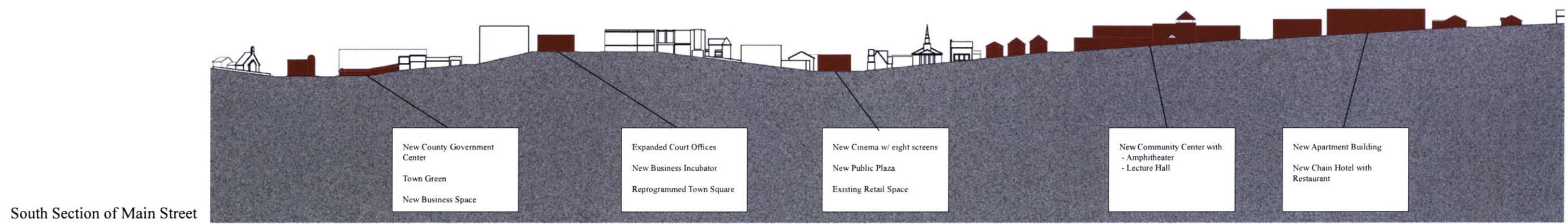
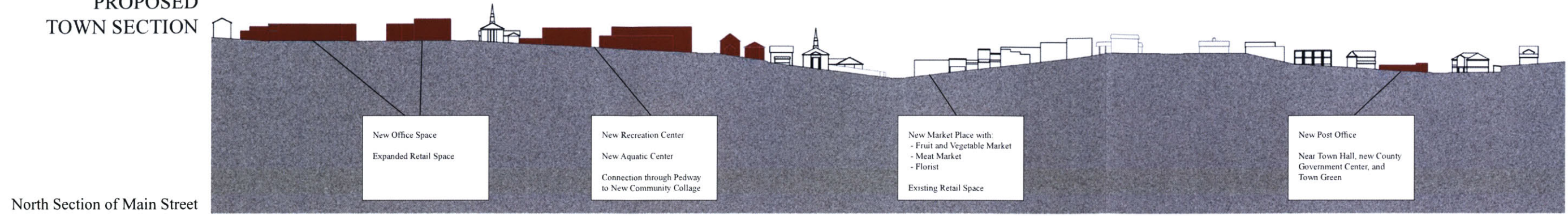
Map Key:

- Existing Structures
- Proposed Structures
- Parking
- Green Space
- Unmapped Structures



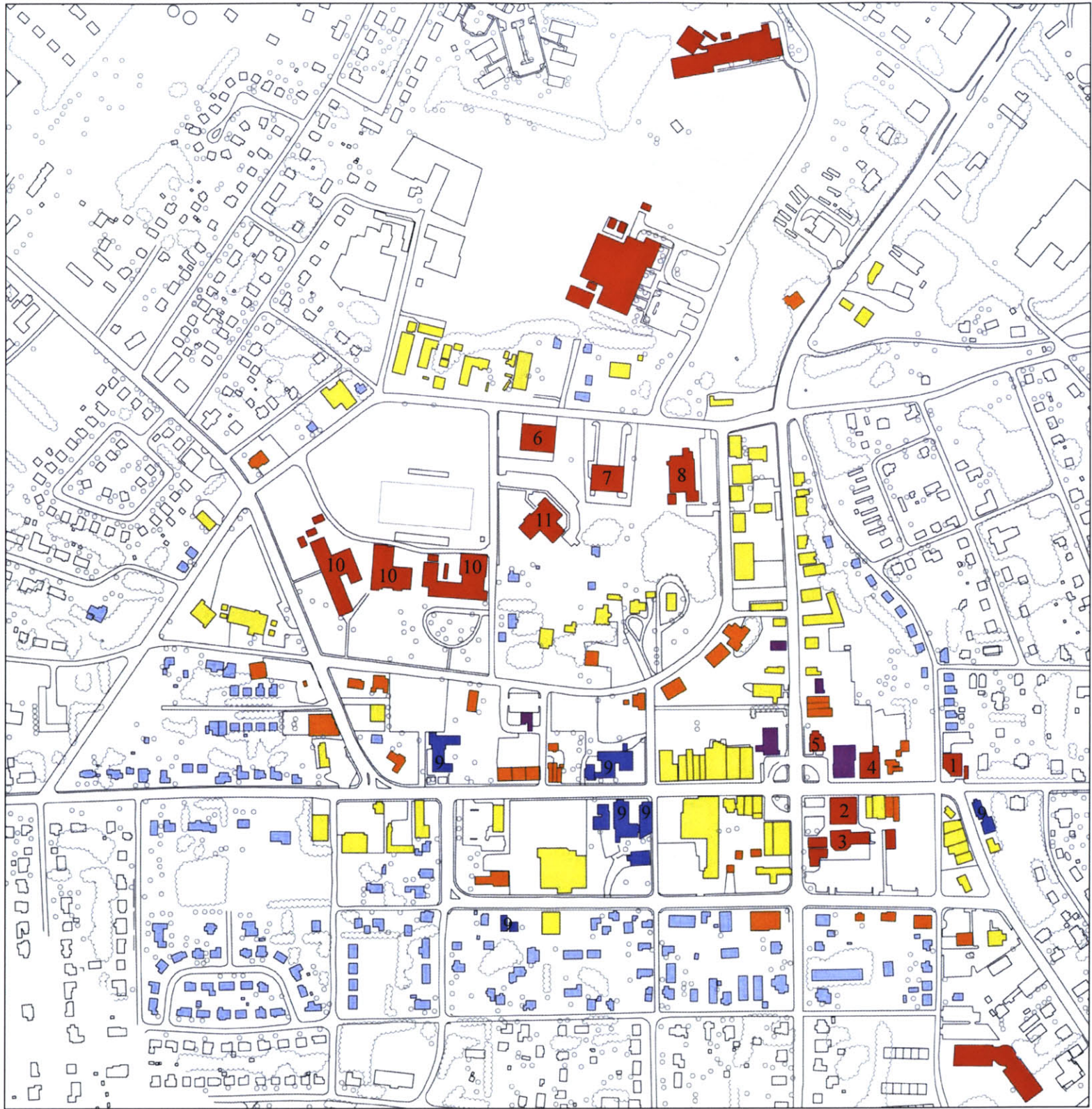
Proposed Masterplan

PROPOSED
TOWN SECTION



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**EXISTING
 BUILDING USAGE**



Existing Layout for Town of
 Christiansburg, Virginia

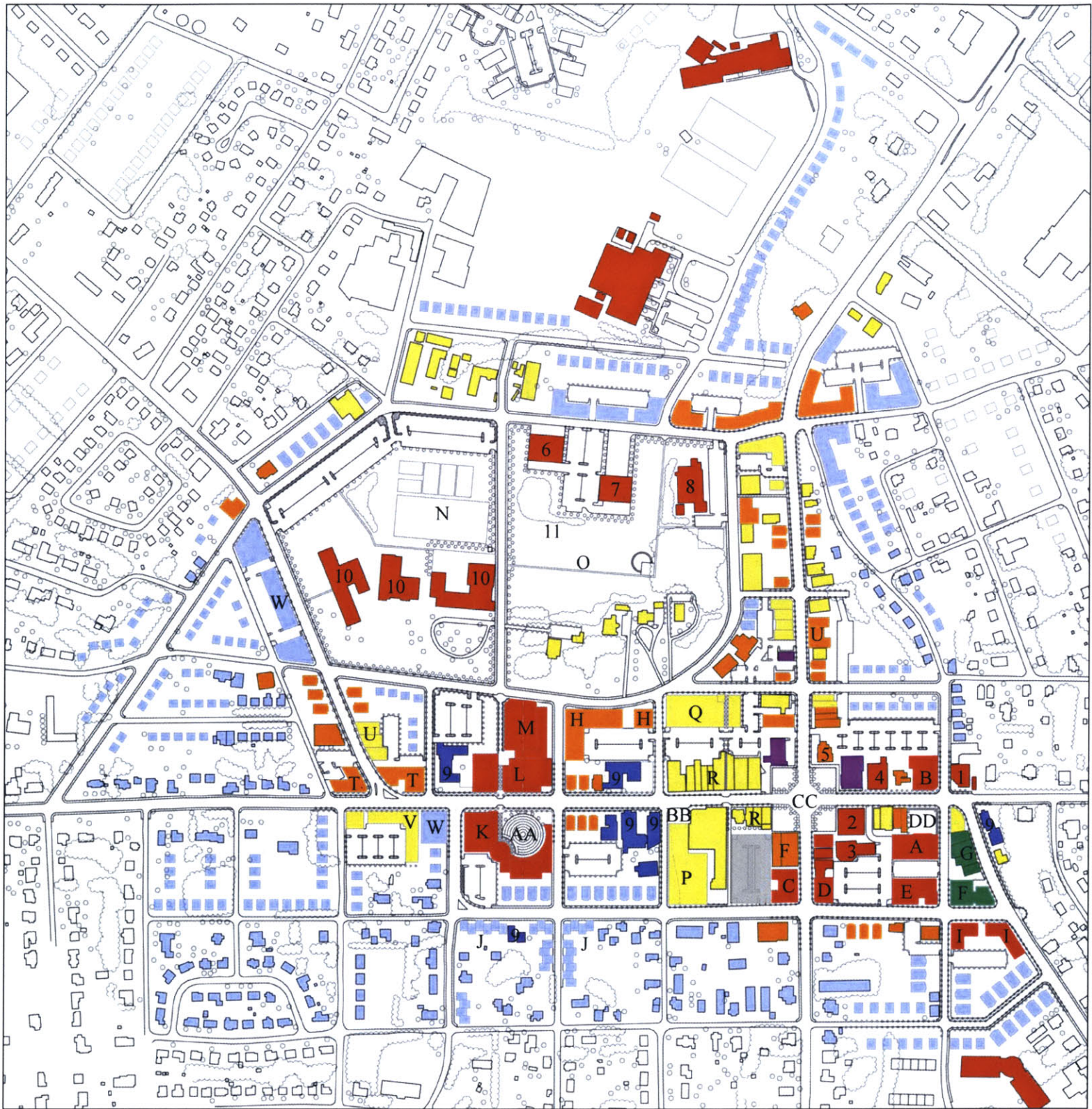
Existing Amenities:

- 1 - Town Hall
- 2 - Court House
- 3 - County Jail
- 4 - Sheriff's Office
- 5 - Post Office
- 6 - EMT Station
- 7 - Fire Station
- 8 - National Guard Armory
- 9 - Church
- 10 - Former Christiansburg Middle School
- 11 - Town Library

Map Key:

- Civic Institution
- Religious Institution
- Bank
- Service Business
- Retail / Commercial Space
- Residential Structure
- Art Institution
- Parking Structure
- Unmapped Structures

PROPOSRD
BUILDING USAGE



Map Key:

- Civic Institution
- Religious Institution
- Bank
- Service Business
- Retail / Commercial Space
- Residential Structure
- Art Institution
- Parking Structure
- Unmapped Structures

Proposal for the Town of
Christiansburg, Virginia

Existing Amenities:

- 1 - Town Hall
- 2 - Court House
- 3 - County Jail
- 4 - Sheriff's Office
- 5 - Former Post Office
reused as office space
- 6 - EMT Station
- 7 - Fire Station
- 8 - National Guard Armory
- 9 - Church

Existing Re-Use Intervention:

- 10 - Introduction of New River
Community College
- 11 - Former Library
reused as park land
- 12 - New Business Incubator

New Recreation Interventions:

(Civic)

- A - County Government Center
- B - New Post Office
- C - Department of Motor Vehicles
- D - New School Board Office

(Cultural)

- E - New Library & Cultural
Museum
- F - Art Incubator
- G - Gallery Space
- H - Senior Housing
- I - Community Housing
- J - Low Maintains Housing

(Recreation)

- K - Community Center w/
Amphitheater and Lecture Hall
- L - Recreation Center
- M - Aquatic Center
- N - Athletic Fields
- O - Public Gardens

(Entertainment)

- P - Cinema
- Q - Market Place
- R - New Shop or Restaurant
Space

(Commercial)

- S - Parking Garages
- T - Potential Office
- U - Potential Retail
- V - Potential Hotel
- W - Potential Apartments

AA - Amphitheater

BB - Palace Plaza

CC - Town Square

DD - Town Green

**12 - NEW ACTIVITY
NODES**

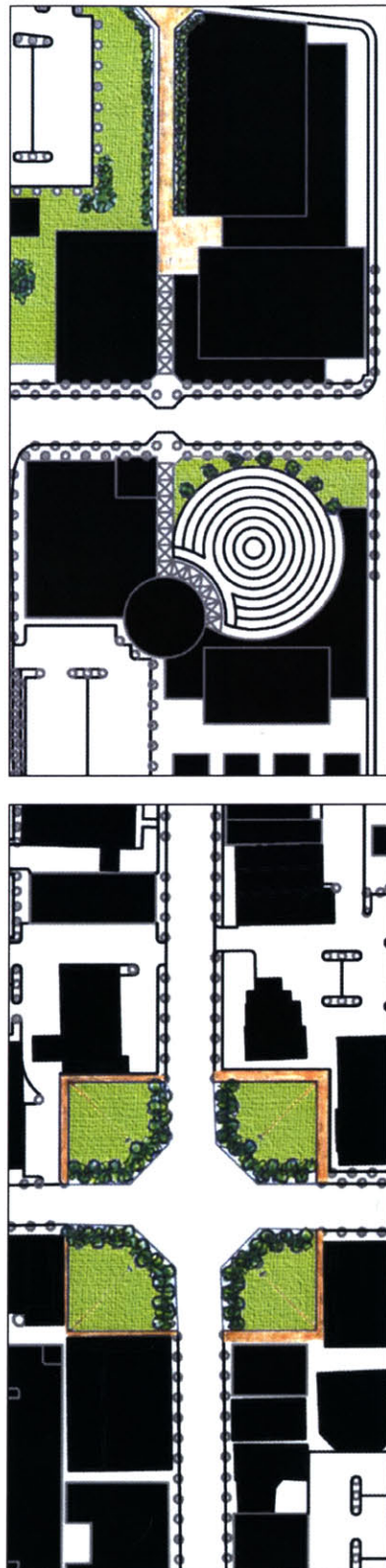


Landscape Masterplan

My approach in this thesis to the renovation of the downtown Main Street is to focus upon five main civic nodes. These five nodes will be used to stabilize the existing town economy and community landscape, and act as catalyst for urban growth. The first node is the *Town Square* which is to be programmed with a mixture of civic institutions, office, and service jobs. The Square is anchored by the County Courthouse, two banks, and the new Business Incubator. The second node is the new *Amphitheater* which is basically a recreation/entertainment node. The amphitheater is connected to the new Community Center and supported by the new Recreation Center. The third node is the *Town Green* which is a secondary civic node programmed with retail, art galleries, and town institutions. It is anchored by the new County Government Center, New Post Office, and the existing Town Hall. The fourth node, *Palace Plaza*, is sandwiched between two town churches and existing retail space and is anchored by the new cinema. The final node is the new *Hillside Gardens*, the town's largest open space. This node is near the new Community College and new area of housing. Each of these spaces should be seen as platforms where social communal activities can be programmed. Four of the five nodes are located along Main Street. By focusing early effort and funding on four equally spaced nodes along Main the remainder of the street will later be infilled with retail shops and businesses creating a vibrant area with a definite identity and a strong character.

The only currently existing civic node is the historic *Town Square*. The square is the existing downtown's public open space. This area has a rich history which is deeply connected to the town's identity, currently the area is poorly used. The Town Square should be addressed as public/civic space and reprogrammed as an area where social communal activities can be held. The existing square is programmed for parking and light aesthetic decoration, basically a handful of trees and three stone monuments and a tower. Currently its faces inwardly view towards a traffic intersection with an uninteresting stoplight and countless waiting automobiles. Using the Town Square should be a key element in the town's new Social Communal Activity Plan. This means the square's aesthetics, useability, and perception must be changed. The renovated square should be designed as a green space with no parking, numerous trees at its edge to screen the quarter sections of useable space from the highway. The Town Square should face outward towards the building facades and the flanking edges of the space should be pedestrian friendly with paved surfaces to travel on, street furniture to rest on, good light, and subtle signage. The existing monuments should remain where they are in the corners of the space nearest to the traffic light. They will focus visitors' attention and draw their focus when looking inward to the traffic light. All social activities programmed within this space should face outward and turn their back to the intersection. This space should be used once a month for *Dinner and Dancing on the Square*. It should also be programmed with activities during all other major festivals and celebrations. (See Chapters 13)

12 - NEW ACTIVITY NODES



Amphitheater - Activity Node

Palace Plaza - Activity Node



Public Garden - Activity Node

Town Square - Activity Node

Town Green - Activity Node

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The *Town Amphitheater* would be located at the corner of Main and Dunkley Street. It is one of the two key elements of the downtown's Social Communal Activity Plan. The amphitheater would be connected to the new Community Center and across the street from the new Recreation Center. The amphitheater would be separated from Main Street by a brick wall but is open to the public for daily uses as a place for lunch, conversation, and relaxation. The importance of the brick wall is to reinforce the continuous urban corridor of Main Street. This activity node would be the venue for bi-weekly musical events held on the first and third Fridays of the month. This event would offer a variety of free acts to the community. (See Chapters 13)

The *Town Green* would be located at the corner of Main and Pepper Streets. It is the second of the two key elements in the introduction of the downtown's Social Communal Activity Plan. The green would be connected to the new County Government Center and located near the Town Hall, Sheriff's Office, and new Post Office. The green would be separated from Main Street by a brick arcade but would be open to the public for daily uses as a place for lunch, conversation, and relaxation. The importance of the brick arcade is to reinforce the continuous urban corridor of Main Street. This activity node would be the venue for bi-weekly events held on second and fourth Saturdays of the month. This event would offer an alternate with Downtown Music at the amphitheater and free movies to the community. (See Chapters 13)

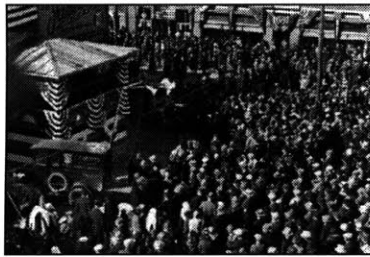
The *Palace Plaza* would be located at the corner of Main and Hickok Street on a site which once held the old Palace Theater. The plaza would be anchored by the new Cinema, the existing downtown retail shops, and the new Market Place. The concept behind this plaza is basically the idea of a open waiting room allow visitors to the cinema opportunities to explore local retail shops, visit restaurants, and energize Main Street. This activity node would be the platform for weekend street performers, musicians, artisan, and small- scale vendor booths. (See Chapters 13)

The *Hillside Public Garden* would be located behind the Fire, EMT station, and National Guard Armory. Currently the existing town library is located on the site, along with a few private homes. This space used should be reprogrammed as a large public garden. The garden would offer numerous plots of land for private individuals, groups, for both the professional and the novice to cultivate. The public garden is another key element in the development of the downtown's Social Communal Activity Plan. This public green space should also have unprogrammed space for lounging, play, and celebration. This centralized green space is an area that town residences can use for recreation and local communities groups can use for large activities. A 'Hillside Festival should be programmed at the height of spring before the heat of summer arrives. Within this festival the community should participate in garden expositions in which individual and group plots are judged and awards are given.(See Chapters 13)

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13 - SOCIAL ACTIVITY PLAN



13.1 - The 1926 celebration marking the opening of U.S. Route 11

Also See:

- Chapter 12 - New Activity Nodes
- Chapter 19 - Events Catalog
- Chapter 20 - Existing Wilderness Trail Festival
- Chapter 21 - Redesigning the Wilderness Trail Festival



13.2 - The 1926 celebration marking the opening of U.S. Route 11

It is my belief that social and communal interaction should be the catalyst for any major small town intervention. The opportunity that the town of Christiansburg has to reinvent itself lays within its ability to offer its residents and visitors social events, community interaction, and civic activities. The second leading reason that malls and mega-stores are so popular is that they are currently the leading platform for social interaction within many communities. Churches, social clubs, and other activity groups have been weakened within today's society. Suburban living, eight-hour work days, and two-hour commute have isolated much of today's population. People want interaction and participation with other people. In today's world with its weakening family ties, growing dependence on technology, and disconnection to community, large-scale events, festivals, and celebration are growing in importance. Christiansburg should capitalize on this need with its new activity nodes and its existing and new fabric also the programming of these new nodes with weekly, monthly, and seasonal events.

The two main bi-weekly events proposed to be held along Main Street are *Downtown Music* at the Amphitheater and *Movies on the Town Green*. *Downtown Music* would be programmed for the new Community Center's Amphitheater. This bi-weekly musical event would be held on the first and third Friday of the month. The event would offer musical bands to the community for free. *Movies on the Town Green* would be at the green space in front of the new Country Government Center. This would be a bi-weekly events held on second and fourth Saturday of the month. The event would offer an alternate to Downtown Music at the amphitheater by showing free movies to the community. This event along with local retail, restaurants, and street performer activating Main Street would create a platform for interaction. If this thesis is correct, and people within the New River Valley and Christiansburg are looking for any social venue that allows for communing with others, the town will have many with opportunities for business, retail, and housing. (See Chapters 18 for examples of other social events)

Along with the everyday, in this case the every week activities of *Downtown Music* and *Movies on the Town Green*, the community must also define the special. These are monthly or seasonal events such as: *Dinner and Dancing on the Square*, *the Appalachian Cultural Festival*, and the *Main Street Bazaar*. (See Chapter 21 for a catalog of other major events.) *Dinner and Dancing on the Square* would be bi-monthly event, bringing citizens and town officials together for communal dinner and dancing and held on the second Friday of the month. The Town Square would be blocked off to travel and reclaimed as a civic space and programmed with food booth, music, and other entertainment.

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The new *Appalachian Cultural Festival* would be an early June event which would celebrate Appalachian culture, arts, music, and history. The event would be programmed on West Main Street near the Art Incubator and new gallery space. Finally the new *Main Street Bazaar* would be a mid-summer event that would close Main Street remakes it as a retail flea market/street bazaar, selling local merchandise, goods, and showcasing local restaurants and businesses. There are other potential events such as: First Night (a family oriented New Year celebration), Downtown Trick-or-Treating, and Downtown Fourth of July Celebration

The most important of the large-scale special events would be a retooled existing *Wilderness Trail Festival*. Currently this is an early September event which celebrates the community's origins, the history of the Wilderness Trail, Daniel Boone, and the early settlers which traveled through the area. Chapter 20 explores the existing festival's program, footprint, and community's perceptions. The following chapter (21) proposes changes to the existing festival that try to reconnect the event to its history, the place in which it is held, and shifts it away from its existing commercial/retail nature towards a participatory event



Fig 13.3 - Downtown Parade

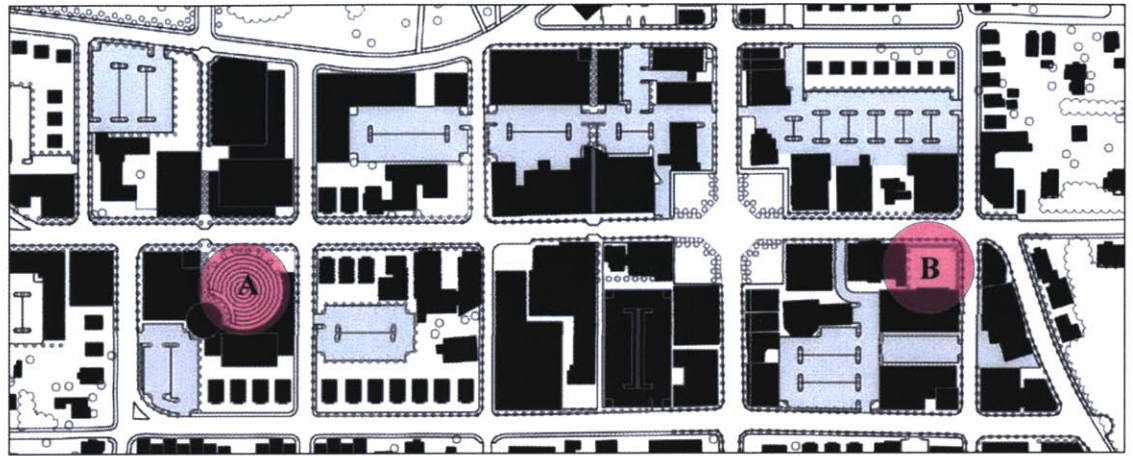
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<i>After Church Activities</i>					<i>Music (see A)</i>	
<i>After Church Activities</i>					<i>Dinner & Dancing (see C)</i>	<i>Movies (see B)</i>
<i>After Church Activities</i>					<i>Music (see A)</i>	
<i>After Church Activities</i>						<i>Movies (see B)</i>

Fig 13.4 - Social Calender

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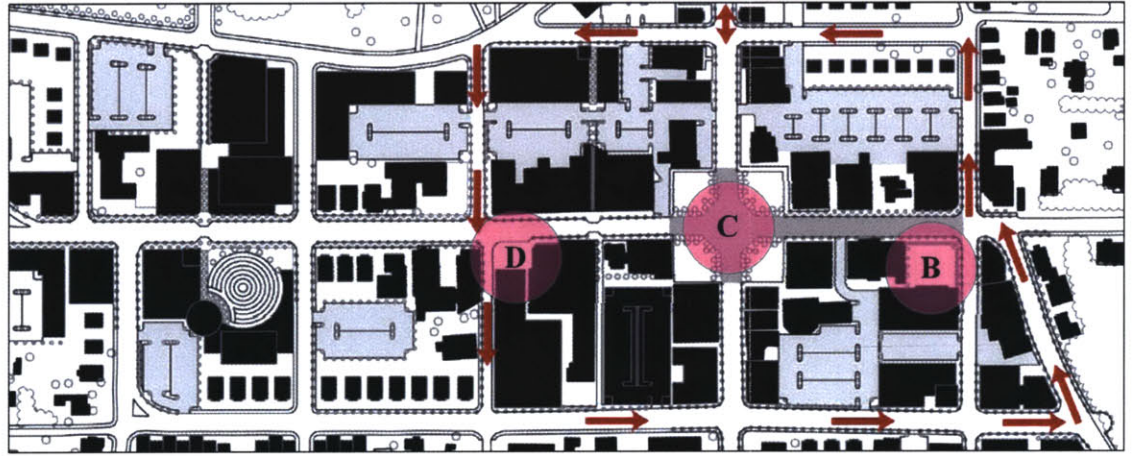
13 - SOCIAL ACTIVITY PLAN

Use of Amphitheater and Town Green: During the weekly activities of 'Downtown Music' and 'Movies on the Green' Main Street traffic would be left unchanged

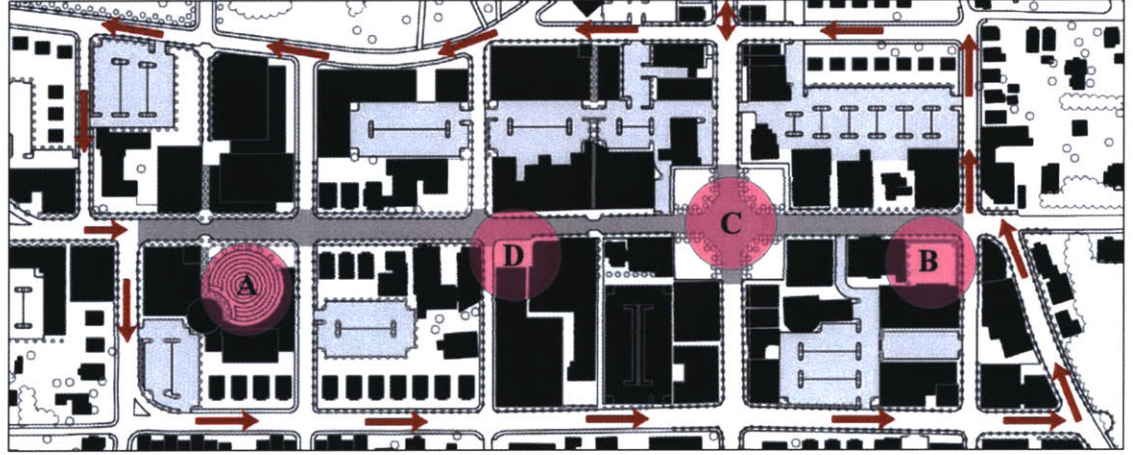


Map Key:
 A - Town Ampitheater
 B - Town Green
 C - Town Square
 D- Palace Plaza

Opening of Town Square: During the monthly activities like 'Dinner and Dancing on the Square' traffic would be redirected allowing the square to be programmed for social activities.



Opening of Main Street: During the large-scale seasonal activities like the 'Wilderness Trail Festival' or 'Main Steet Bazaar' Main Street traffic would be redirected allowing it to be programmed for social activities.



Map Key:
 Buildings
 Parking Lot
 Activity Nodes
 Traffic Movement

Major Activities and Events

Downtown Music at the Amphitheater

A free by-weekly Friday evening event which brings three music bands to the Community Center Amphitheater. (Space A)

Movies on the Green

A free by-weekly Saturday evening event which alternates with Downtown Music. This event shows free movies to the community and is held on the Town Green flanking the New Library and New County Government Center. (Space B)

Existing Redesign of the Wilderness Trail Festival

An early September event which celebrates the community's origin, the history of the Wilderness Trail, Daniel Boone, and the early settlers which travel through the area. Programmed upon Main Street and using all activity nodes along it. (Space A,B,C, and D)

Dinner and Dancing on the Square

A bi-monthly event, bring citizens and town officials together for communal dinner and dancing. Held on the second Friday of the month. The Town Square is blocked off to travel and reclaimed as a civic space and programmed with food booth, music, and other entertainment. (Space C)

New Appalachian Cultural Festival

An early June event which celebrates Appalachian culture, arts, music, and history. This event would be held within the community's larger indoor spaces such as: Community Center, Main Street Churches, Galleries, and Art Incubator. It would show the town's commitment to nurturing the arts. (Space B and C)

New Main Street Bazaar

A mid-summer event that closes Main Street and remaking it as retail flea market/street bazaar, selling local merchandise, goods, and showcase local restaurants and businesses. Local on Main between the Town Green and Community Center. This event is less about the community's history and civic identity of a place and more of a catalyst for retail and commercial sales. (Space B,C, and D)

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14 - PHASING APPROACH

The initial phase of renovation would include the placement and construction of a new Community Center, a Recreation Hall with connected Aquatic Center, a larger Post Office, and the renovation of the former Middle school to a Community College. The construction of the civic institutions would be funded with Federal and State dollars, along with Virginia Main Street and Community Development Grants. It is during the construction of the Community Center that the amphitheater should be created, along with the renovation of the Town Square. Phase one is also the appropriate time the renovation the streetscape adding more trees, street furniture, improving lighting, paving, and creating signage restrictions. The first phase would also include privately funded retail businesses such as the new cinema, market place, and office space and housing. Many businesses who relocating back to Main Street could possibly receive property tax cuts and be subsidized through their first year of operation. During the construction of the cinema the Palace Plaza would be created, giving the community three of its four social activity nodes.

The second phase or five year plan would include the construction of the new Country Government Center, the Art Incubator, and the renovation of the former 'Furniture Building' as a new Business Incubator. These elements would be funded by Federal and State dollars, along Rural Development, and Main Street Block Grants. This second phase should include the fourth activity node, this is the Town Green created during the construction of the Government Center. The private elements of a downtown Retirement Community, increase apartments and office space could also be subsidized depend upon their connection to Main Street.

Also See:
Chapter 11 - Diversification and
Re-introduction
Chapter 17 - Funding Sources

Phase three or the ten years should see the need to relocate existing civic institutions whose facilities are outdated. The Federal and State funding which typically is budgeted to renovation or rebuilt these facilities should be partnered with Main Street Block Grants, Community Development Grants, and Appalachian fund sources to relocate these institutions back to downtown. By this time period the Public Library, the county's Department of Motor Vehicles, and Social Service's Community Housing should need to be replaced. Phase three is also the appropriate time to redesign the streetscape from phase one. By the period the character of street life should be clear and street uses should be well defined, thus it is time to research the uses of street furniture, quality lighting, lifespan of pavers, and character created by existing signage restrictions. At the point town officials should encourage the construction of a new privately fund hotel with restaurant to entice travelers down from the western exit of I-81. New privately funded retail and office space should also be constructed.

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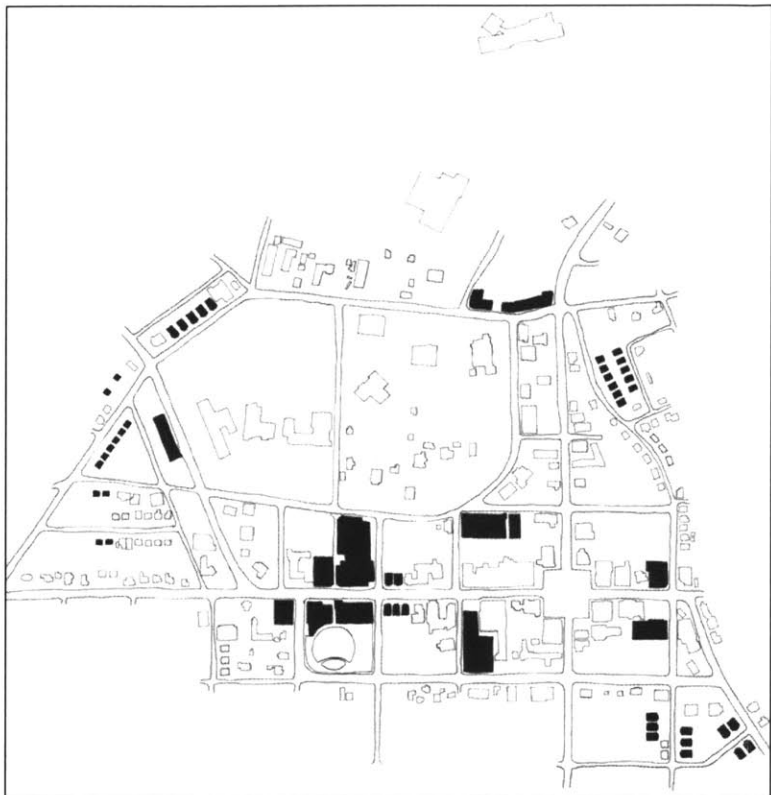
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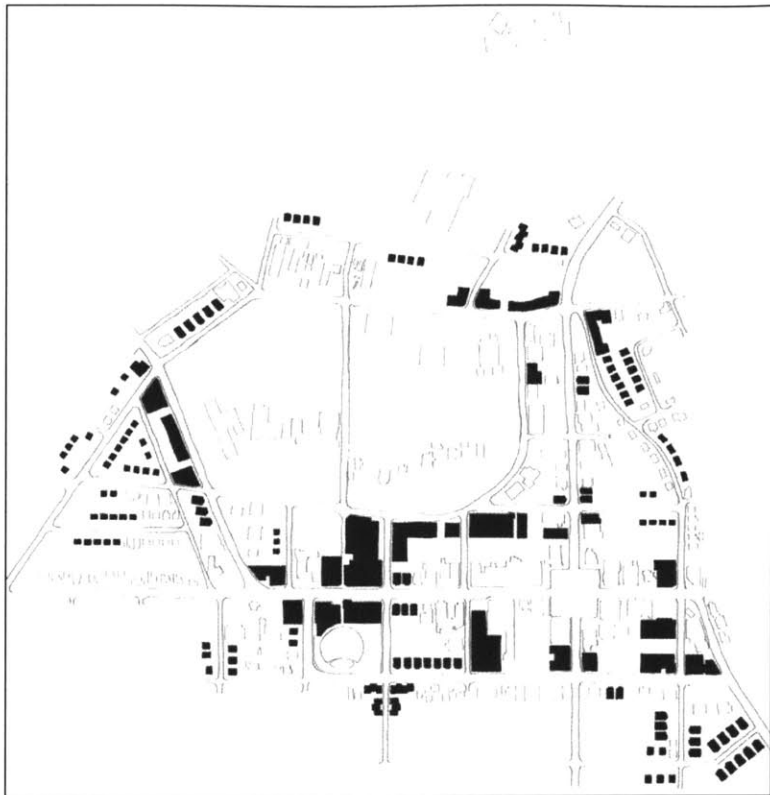
The last of the four proposed phases is at the fifteen years mark. It is still trying to capitalize on the need to replace the existing civic institutions by relocating them to downtown. This phase expands the Montgomery County Court Offices, relocates the School Board Office and adds new downtown parking structures. The construction of civic institutions would be funded with Federal and State dollars, along with Virginia Main Street and Community Development Grants. New privately funded retail and office space should also be constructed during this phase.

**14 - PHASING
APPROACH**

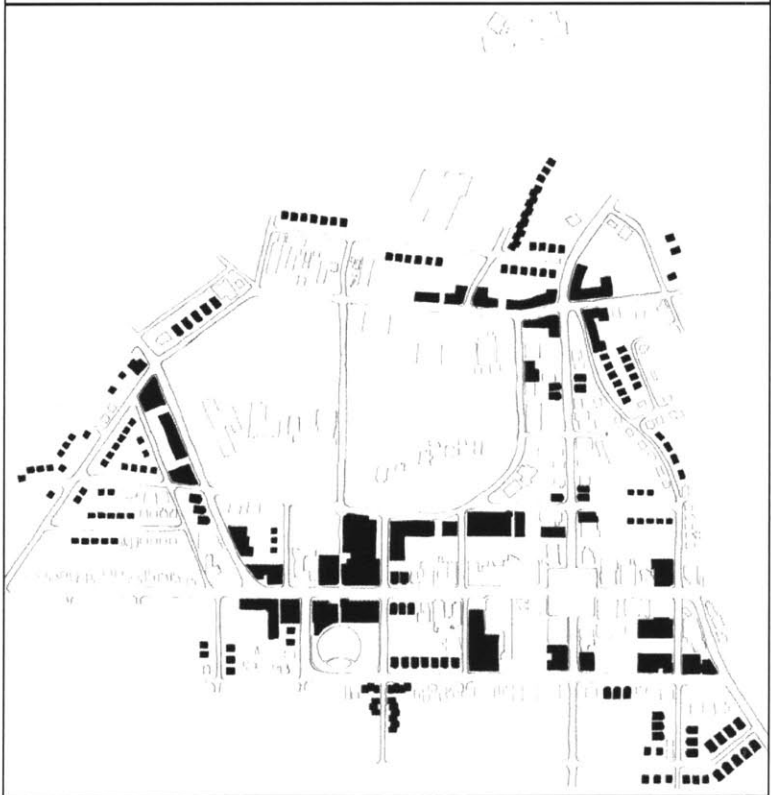
Phase One - Today



Phase Two - Five Years



Phase Three - Ten Years



Phase Four - Fifteen Year



Existing Business/Retail

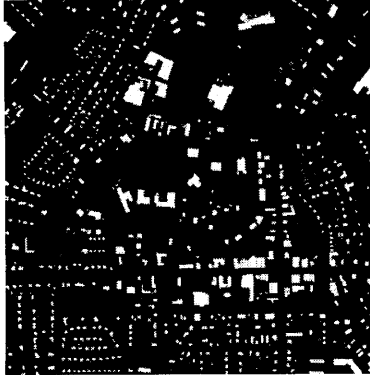


Proposed Business/Retail

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15 - CONCLUSION



15.1 -Existing Figure
Ground

After a short period removing buildings to create parking, construction within many small towns stopped. The evolution within these communities shifted focus towards the land opened by the highway. This created a reality where many downtowns have not retooled their urban fabric for decades. The character and quality of good, well designed settlements whether they be village, town, or city are created over decades, possible even centuries, of design, redesign, renovation, and reprogramming. A single masterplan, urban renovation, or revitalization cannot instantly create well designed, highly defined, vibrant areas that are well used and deeply connected to their citizens. What is needed is an encouraged evolution, a stepped process of renovation, increased uses, and reprogramming. An initial intervention that begins to change perceptions and increases uses must be introduced. After its completion designers, town officials, and event planners should explore this new space, researching how it connects to its surroundings, how people inhabit it, missed opportunities, and the problems contained within it. A second, third, and fourth intervention that solves the problems, accepts the successes, and continues to change existing perceptions must be introduced. Design at the urban scale should not be done with a single attempt but a incremental evolution of buildings, spaces, and programmed uses.

Also See:

Chapter 17 - Pattern Book
Chapter 18 - Design Guidelines
Chapter 19 - Events Catalog

Repairing the Town of Christiansburg begins by choreography of five elements. These five elements maybe also help the renovation of other small towns, but each should be explored on their own character, potential, and to solve their unique problems. First renovation elements is a *regional approach* that expects the automobile and the ease of travel that town residents now hold. This force communities to move beyond their define borders and work as partner for the success of a region or county. The second element is *recentralization of civic institutions*. Customers will continue to travel to commercial/retail rather they hold civic institutions or not. The civic amenities are the only anchoring point for numerous downtowns. By allowing both sets of elements to relocate outside of the core community, towns now have little resources and amenities to offer. It is quite hard to stop retail developed; and with the jobs, taxes, and revenue it brings to a region, one is wise not to try. But the relocate of civic institutions is controlled by Town and State Officials. The third element is the *reintroduction small retail shops and businesses* into the downtown fabric. With the outside competition of commercial/retail areas this is quite hard, thus officials must be creative in finding a catalyst that attracts visitors. Within many towns this opportunity lies within cinemas, the arts, and social events. If the catalyst brings people back, retail businesses will follow but they with need tax breaks and possible subsidies early on.

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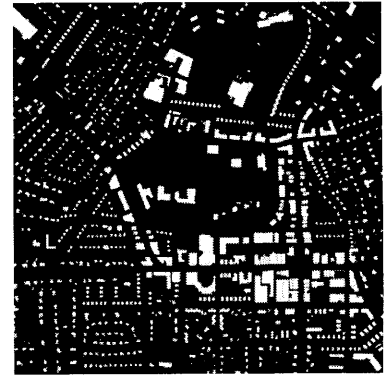
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The fourth element is *increased downtown housing*. Currently, many small towns do not offer enough diversify within their housing stock. There are too few apartments and rowhouse in many communities and what is typically offered is of a low quality and condition. Increasing the stationary population of the downtown will increase visitation and street life, especially if marketed toward young adults and singles who have high disposable income and are looking to meet people. The fifth element is the *introduction of a social activity plan*. People want interaction, conversation, and to share activities. Currently this is an opportunity that many communities hesitate or neglect to take advantage of. In the early stages of a renovation when land is inexpensive and open space is abundant the community should develop a few activity nodes which will act as catalyst points for redevelopment.

In the redevelopment of a small town one may ask questions about future character and charm. This design proposal does not elaborate upon these issues, but they are important. I believe that most communities have an existing character, even in their current state of neglect. This existing character is easily seen within the remaining fabric, civic and religious institutions, and urban landscape. The landscape is currently full of holes, the quality and character of the new buildings that are placed within these holes is important. I do not believe the style or aesthetic of these buildings should be predetermined. But, their responsibility to the street corridor should be enforced through uses of design guidelines. (See Chapter 18) Also, their construction and choice of materials should be long-term and built to stand for the fourth generation, but their style and aesthetic should not be restricted.

Overseen this redevelopment are the traditional Town Officials, Designers, Engineers, Developers, and Private Owners along with the non-traditional committee members such as Event Planners, Sociologists, Advertisers, and Sponsors. Town Officials must create strong design guidelines for parking lots and the urban corridor. They also need to find programming for civic open spaces. Most communities do not focus on this, so planning boards and design committees should include *event planners*. Downtowns need civic leadership and not left to be designed by developers, owners, investors, and real estate officers. Designers must share the responsibility of educating the population and creating the vision of what could be. They must be proactively involved themselves early in the decision-making process when creativity and opportunities are the highest. Owners, developers, investors, and real estate officers must share the vision of the downtown. Without their backing and support, no matter how many civic institutions that relocate back downtown, when the clock strikes 'five' everyone will continue to leave the area. The repair and renovation of small towns does not have a quick solution, there is a large amount of trial-and-error to it. But if all groups with a community focus their energy together to improve their surroundings, inroad toward this repair will be quickly seen.



15.2 - Proposed Figurefore Ground

16 - LOCAL STATISTICS

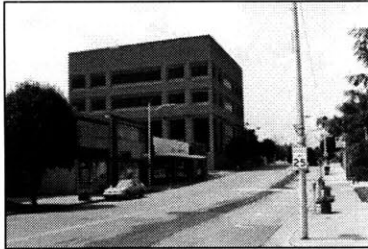


Fig 16.1 - Hillside towards
Courthouse

I. Location:

1. Geographic
 - a. Size - 13.7 square miles
2. Economic
 - a. Connection - 35 miles southwest of Roanoke served by U.S. 460 and Route 11, and Interstate 81, Connection to Norfolk Southern railroad
 - b. 7,8 miles to Blacksburg
13.3 miles to Radford
1. Management - Council including Mayor/Town Manager
2. Work of departments
 - a. Police - 32 full-time
 - b. Fire - 8 full-time and 23 Volunteer fire department
 - c. Health - 3 Clinics with over 60 local doctors, 6 Full-time
40 Volunteer Rescue Squad, between New River Valley Medical Center and Montgomery Regional Hospital
 - d. Recreation and parks - 6 parks, Town Recreation Center
3. Utilities - offer water, sewage, electrical, and telephone within the town limits
4. Financial -
5. Reformatory and eleemosynary - uses Montgomery County Jails and Adult and Juvenile Court Systems; Christiansburg is the County SeAt

III. The Population

1. Population - The 2000 census reported Christiansburg's population as 16,947 approximately 12.95 percent higher than reported in 1990
2. Race - 93.1% white, 4.8% Africa American, .4% Native American, .6% Asian, 1.1% other
3. Standards of living and wages - in 2000 average income was \$19,579 Per Capita and \$47,425 for MediAm Income

4. Employment

- Ecostar is the Town's major employer.
- County of Montgomery is the Town

IV. Social Institutions

1. Recreational Events
 - a. Outdoors - Wilderness Trail Festival, Back to School Parade, Christmas Parade
 - b. Indoor - no cinema or theater
 - c. Coordination and direction of these places - weak
2. Social
 - a. Clubs - no dance clubs downtown
 - b. Restaurants, Bars - 60 - 10 of which are downtown
 - c. Lodges, labor unions - ???
 - d. Entertainments and amusements - High School Sports

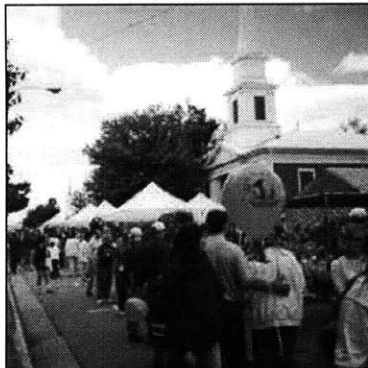


Fig 16.2 - Main Street Festival

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16 - LOCAL STATISTICS

3. Educational
 - a. Schools - 4 elementary, 1 Middle School, 1 High School
 - b. Higher education - near Radford University and Va Tech, with a satellite location of New River Community in town limits
 - c. Libraries - 1 public library
 - d. Lectures, institute - none
 - e. Newspapers, periodicals and publications - 3 Newspaper, 2 local television stations
 - f. Mail - 1 Post Office
 - g. Fine arts - none
 - h. Museum - one
4. Religious and charitable organizations
 - a. Churches - 40 churches
 - b. Charitable work carried on - Salvation army, etc.



Fig 16.3 - Public Library

17 - PATTERN BOOK

Fig 17.1 -Town Hall
 - Floyd, Virginia



Fig 17.2 -Town Hall
 - Pearisburg, Virginia



Fig 17.3 -Post Office
 - Radford, Virginia



Fig 09.9 -Post Office
 - Blacksburg, Virginia

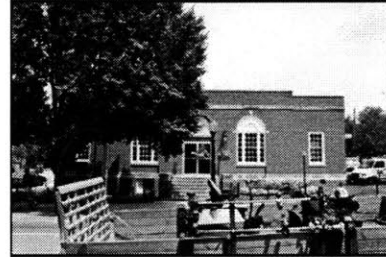


Fig 17.4 -Large Fabric
 - Pulaski, Virginia



Fig 17.5 -Large Fabric
 - Pearisburg, Virginia

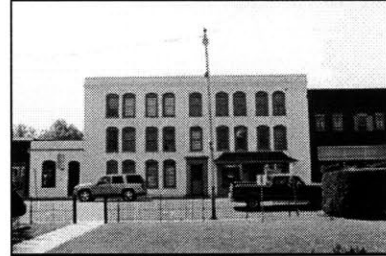


Fig 17.6 -Large Fabric
 - Floyd, Virginia



Fig 17.7 -Large Fabric
 - Radford, Virginia



Fig 17.8 -Small Fabric
 - Radford, Virginia

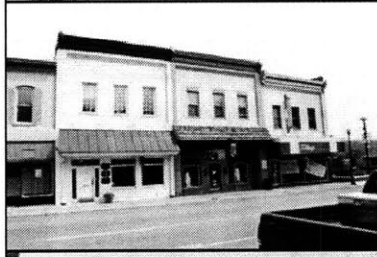


Fig 17.9 -Small Fabric
 - Radford, Virginia



Fig 17.10 -Theater
 - Pulaski, Virginia



Fig 17.11 -Theater
 - Radford, Virginia



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17 - PATTERN BOOK



Fig 17.12 - Corner Fabric
- Blacksburg, Virginia



Fig 17.13 - Corner Fabric
- Pulaski, Virginia



Fig 17.14 - Corner Fabric
- Roanoke, Virginia

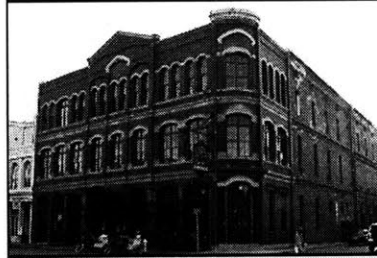


Fig 17.15 - Fabric
- Charleston, S.Carolina



Fig 17.16 - Community Center
- Blacksburg, Virginia



Fig 17.17 - Community Center
- Charleston, S.Carolina



Fig 17.18- Community Center
Harrisonburg, Virginia



Fig 17.19 - Community Center
Worcester, Massachusetts



Fig 17.20 - Apartments
- Harlem, New York



Fig 17.21 - Apartments
- Harlem, New York



Fig 17.22 - Apartments
- Chicago, Illinois



Fig 17.23 - Apartments
- Philadelphia, Penn.

17 - PATTERN BOOK

Fig 17.24 - Residence
- Blacksburg, Virginia



Fig 17.25 - Residence
- Manassas, Virginia



Fig 17.26 - Residence
- Whiting, Indiana



Fig 17.27 - Residence
- Whiting, Indiana



Fig 17.28 - Residence
- Whiting, Indiana

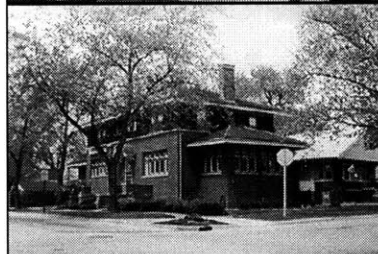


Fig 17.29 - Residence
- Whiting, Indiana



Fig 17.30 - Residence
- Blacksburg, Virginia



Fig 17.31 - Residence
- Pearisburg, Virginia



Fig 17.32 - Residence
- Christiansburg, Virginia



Fig 17.33- Residence
- Christiansburg, Virginia



Fig 17.34 - Town Homes
- Chicago, Illinois

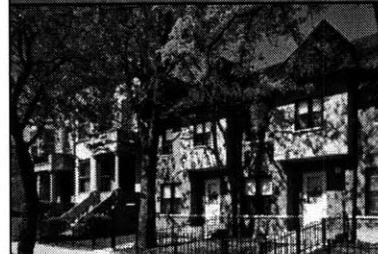


Fig 17.35 - Town Homes
- Port Dover, Ontario

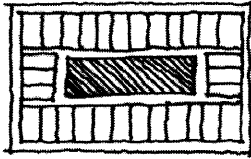


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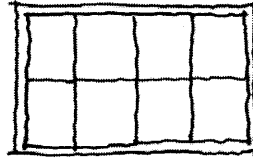
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18 -DESIGN GUIDELINES



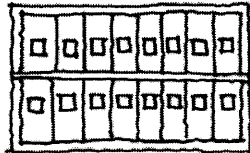
DOWNTOWN PARCELS

are composed of 50'x variable parcels of which only three lots may be purchased in succession. The flexibility of center open space should remain a decision of the community.



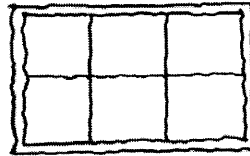
MIXED-USE PARCELS

are composed of 100'x variable parcels of which only two lots maybe purchased in succession. The handling of the leftover space in the interior of the block is a decision left to the owner.



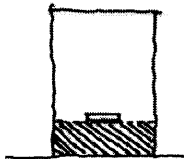
RESIDENTIAL PARCELS

are composed of 75'x variable parcels with a 50' setback for a frontyard and 20' back easement.



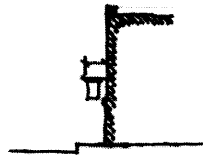
LARGE PARCELS

are composed of 150'x variable parcels and divided as need but first must be reviewed by the Town's Planning Board.



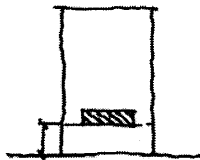
SIGNAGE PERCENTAGE

may not exceed 2% of the overall square footage of the facade from the total of the bottom two commercial/retail floors.



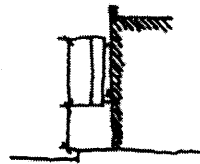
PROJECTIONS OF SIGNAGE

Commercial/retail signage and building awnings may project outward no farther than 3'-0" in depth.



SIGNAGE DATUM

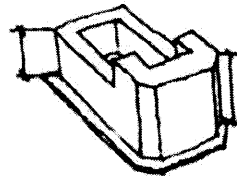
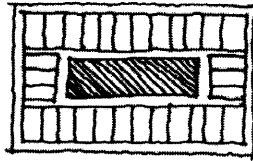
Commercial/retail signage and awnings may not be below 8'-0" creating semicontinuous datum lines across the street facades.



PROJECTIONS HEIGHT

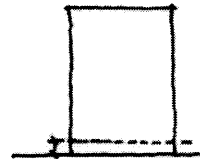
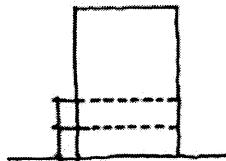
Facade attached signage may not be placed below a 12'-0" head height and may not exceed a 36'-0" height.

**18 -DESIGN
 GUIDELINES**



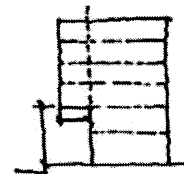
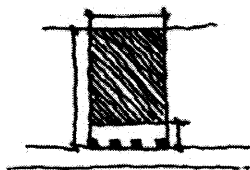
CONTINUOUS PARCELING
 of building lots that address Main and Franklin Streets are limit to 75'-0" of continues facade.

BUILDING HEIGHT
 for lots which address Main and Franklin Streets must fall between two and a half to six stories height limitation.



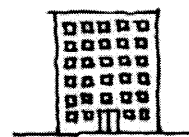
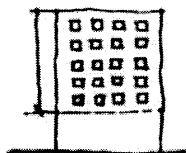
DIATOM
 Continuous diatom lines will be created at the heights of 12'-0" and 22'-0"; they no shorter than 25'-0" in length and no longer than 75'-0".

RESIDENTIAL STEP-UP
 Residential buildings must maintain a 3'-0" set-up above the sidewalk of the street to preserve the privacy of the inhabitant.



BUILD TO LINE
 the ground floor theshold of a building set back to a maximum of 8'-0" but the upper floors of the building must still address the lot's building line.

OVERHANG
 buildings may overhang the theshold of the mains floor but this no deeper than 8'-0" and no higher than two stories.



GLASS FENESTRATION
 Mixed-use buildings with residence above the second floor facade may not have more the a 35% glass surface but must also meet all accessiblity codes.

RESIDENTIAL FENESTRATION
 Residential building facade may not have more the a 35% glass surface but must also meet all accessiblity codes.

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19 - SOCIAL EVENTS

“AHA! (Art, History & Architecture) is New Bedford’s free Downtown Gallery Night program. AHA! started in July of 1999 and is now in its fifth year. Held on the second Thursday of each month from 5:00 - 9:00 PM, AHA! is more than just a gallery night program since our events are put on by a collaborative team of more than 15 New Bedford museums, galleries, arts organizations, merchants, restaurants and the National Historical Park. In addition to offering monthly free arts and culture nights, AHA! is devoted to arts and culture advocacy and is working to make New Bedford the best it can be and continue to revival of our downtown.”²⁸

AHA! Night always gives new and repeat visitors alike the chance to explore something new. Whether it be our cobblestone streets and historic buildings, live music, theater or fine art, visitors delight that AHA! has something for everyone. Each month the AHA! partners decide on a theme that highlights different aspects of Art, History and Architecture.”²⁸

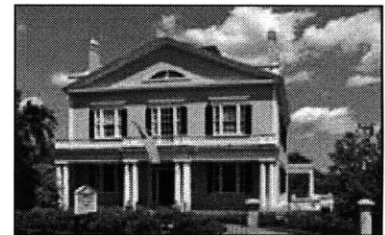
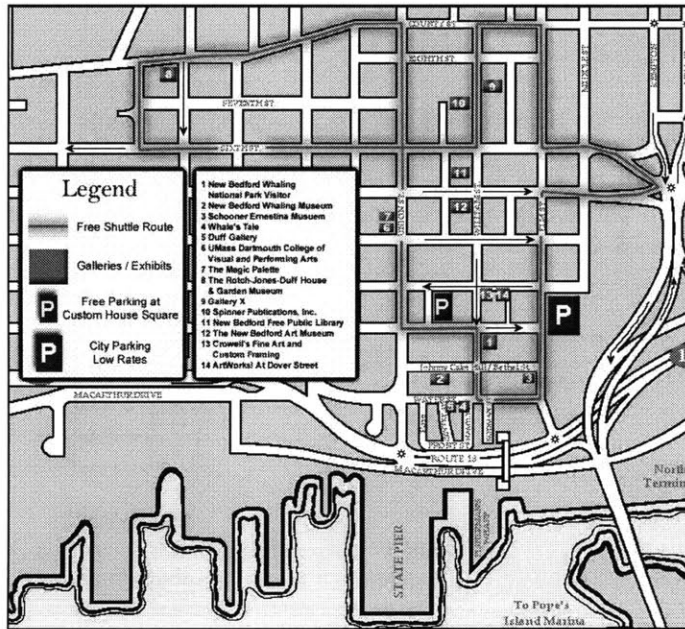


Fig 21.1 - One AHA Venue

28 - Author Unknown;
aha!; website

Fig 21.2 - New Bedford Map

What: Thursday Evenings
in the Park
Where: New Bedford’s Visitor
Center Garden
When: Every Thursday Early June
thru Late August at 7:00 - 8:00

“On Thursday evenings throughout the summer, beginning July 10, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park will host a series of free **Thursday Evening Concerts in the Park**. This year’s concert series is supported, in part, by a grant from the New Bedford Area Cultural Councils, local agencies supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

The Thursday evening concerts will begin at 7:00 p.m. and last approximately one hour. Performances are free and will take place in the visitor center garden at 33 William Street. Performances during AHA! (Art, History Architecture) –Downtown New Bedford’s Art and Culture Night – will take place across from the visitor center at the Custom House Square parking lot or the New Bedford Whaling Museum Plaza. Limited seating is available and people are invited to bring lawn chairs. In case of rain, concerts will be moved to the Jacobs Family Gallery at the New Bedford Whaling Museum.”²⁹

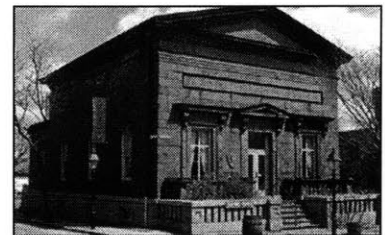


Fig 21.3 - Building on Park

29 - Gonsalves; Jennifer; New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park; website

19 - SOCIAL EVENTS

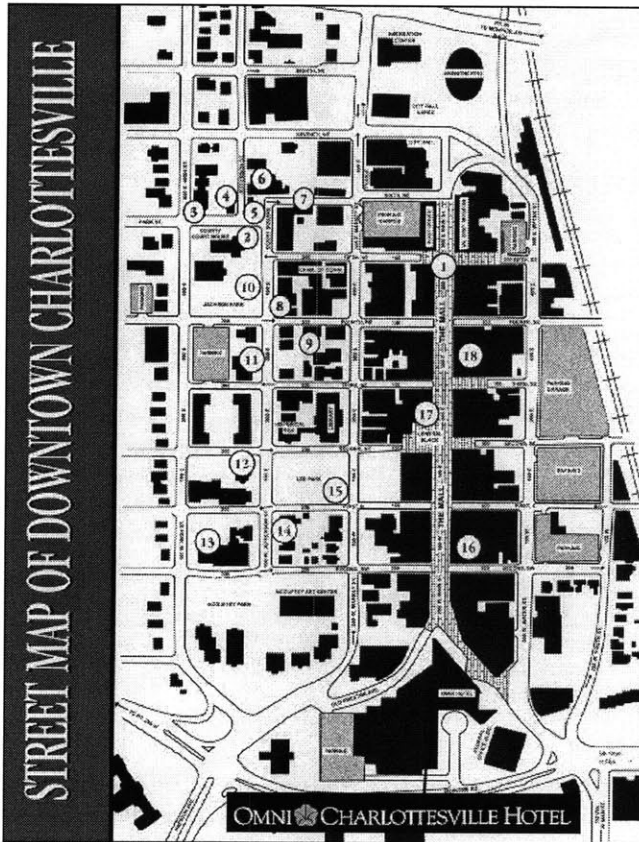
What: Charlottesville's
Downtown Promenade
Where: Downtown Mall &
the Downtown Amphitheater
When: Open year around; busiest
April 25 – October 10



Fig 21.4 - Charlottesville's Mall

30 - Weakley, Derek A.; [Come On Down](#); website

Fig 21.5 - Charlottesville Map



What: Charlottesville's
Fridays after 5
Where: Downtown Mall &
the Downtown Amphitheater
When: April 25 thru October 10;
5:30-9:00 pm



Fig 21.6 - Downtown Amphitheater

31 - Weakley, Derek A., [Fridays After Five](#); website

“Our Mission: To promote the Charlottesville Downtown area through quality special events and activities that showcase the culture and heritage of this region; contribute to the economic well-being of the community; and instill increased pride in the people of Charlottesville.”³⁰

The space functions as an eight block long car-free central plaza, both intimate and expansive, complete with mature trees, sidewalk vendors, musicians, tourists, and townspeople. An amphitheater at the Mall’s eastern end serves as a venue for weekly free concerts during the summer which can attract upwards of 5,000 people.

“For 15 years, the Charlottesville Downtown Foundation has presented **Fridays after 5** on the Charlottesville Downtown Mall. What began as a relatively small get together held with a makeshift stage over 8 weeks has grown into a heavily-attended, extremely popular 24-week long event held in a permanent venue, the Downtown Amphitheater (which was funded, in part, by the Charlottesville Downtown Foundation). “

“Fridays After 5 is a perennial winner of many local “Best of” awards. Most recently, C-ville readers voted the event as the Best Place to be Seen, Best Concert, and the Best Singles Event.

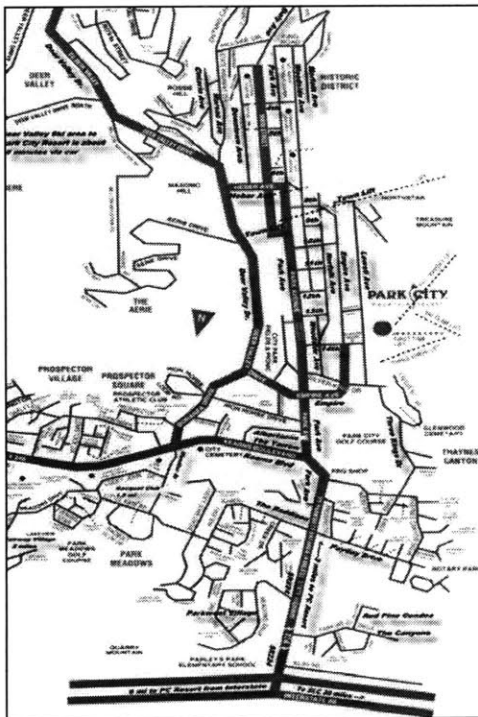
“Fridays” attracts over 150,000 people to the Downtown Mall each season, and generates enough revenue to allow the Charlottesville Downtown Foundation to donate tens of thousands of dollars annually to local charitable organizations, plus fund the majority of CDF’s non-revenue generating events.”³¹

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“In 1978, the Utah/US Film Festival, an annual cinematic exhibition, was created in Salt Lake City. During its early years, the **Film Festival** focused primarily on the presentation of retrospective films and filmmaker seminars. However, from its inception, the Film Festival featured a national competition aimed at drawing attention to emerging American films made outside the Hollywood system-independent cinema. The United States Film Festival moved to Park City, Utah in 1981 and included documentaries and short films along with its program of dramatic features.

The Film Festival has expanded from 15,750 seats sold in 1985 to more than 142,000 in 2001. For the 2001 Film Festival, 390 documentaries, 854 dramatic features, 515 international films, and 2,174 short films were submitted, from which 112 feature-length films and 64 shorts were selected for exhibition to an audience of more than 20,000. The number of films submitted continues to increase each year.”³²



“The **Park City International Music Festival** has developed into a major chamber music festival. Renowned for its excellent programming and dynamic artists, the Park City Festival follows the same basic chamber music format as the Aspen, Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood and Casals Festivals. Classical solo artists from around the world are gathered together in-residence, creating a super-charged musical atmosphere, producing unique, once-in-a-lifetime performances. The Festival makes its home at the spectacular Canyons Resort, presenting chamber concerts in the area’s favorite chamber music venues located at the base of the resort: the Park City Community Church and St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church. Another favorite venue is the Richard Thomas Gallery on Main Street in Park City. New this summer will be five intimate concerts in the beautiful Dumke Recital Hall on the University of Utah Campus in Salt Lake City.”

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19 - SOCIAL EVENTS

What: Sundance Film Festival
Where: Downtown Park City and Sundance Village, Utah
When: Last week of January

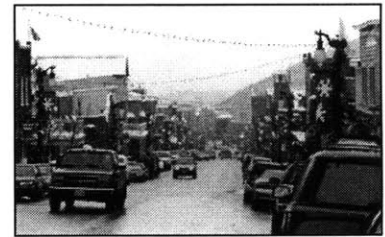


Fig 21.7- Park City's Main Street

32 - Hubley, Patrick; [Sundance Film Festival](#); website

Fig 21.8 - Park City Map

What: Park City International Music Festival
Where: Canyons Resort, Park City, Utah
When: Mid June thru Mid August

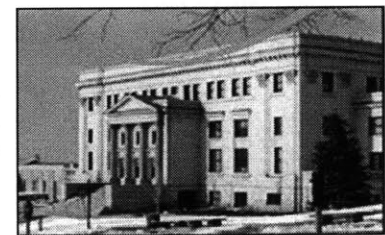


Fig 21.9 - Music Festival Venue

33 - unknown author; [Park City International Music Festival](#); website

19 - SOCIAL EVENTS

What: Spoleto Festival
 Where: Downtown Charleston,
 South Carolina
 When: Late May thru Mid June;
 Times varies

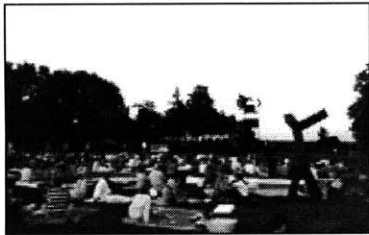


Fig 21.10 - Charleston Amphitheater

34 - unknown author; [Spoleto Festival](#); website

“For 17 days and nights each spring, **Spoleto Festival USA** fills Charleston, South Carolina’s historic theaters, churches, and outdoor spaces with over 120 performances by renowned artists as well as emerging performers in disciplines ranging from opera, theater, music theater, dance, and chamber, symphonic, choral, and jazz music, as well as the visual arts.”

“Spoleto Festival USA produces its own operas, which are often rarely performed masterpieces by well-known composers, as well as traditional works presented in new ways. The festival also presents theater, dance, and music theater with a strong emphasis on music ranging from chamber and symphonic to choral. The festival conducts nationwide auditions for its resident ensemble, the Spoleto Festival Orchestra. Spoleto permanent fixtures include distinguished chamber music, new music and jazz series.”³⁴

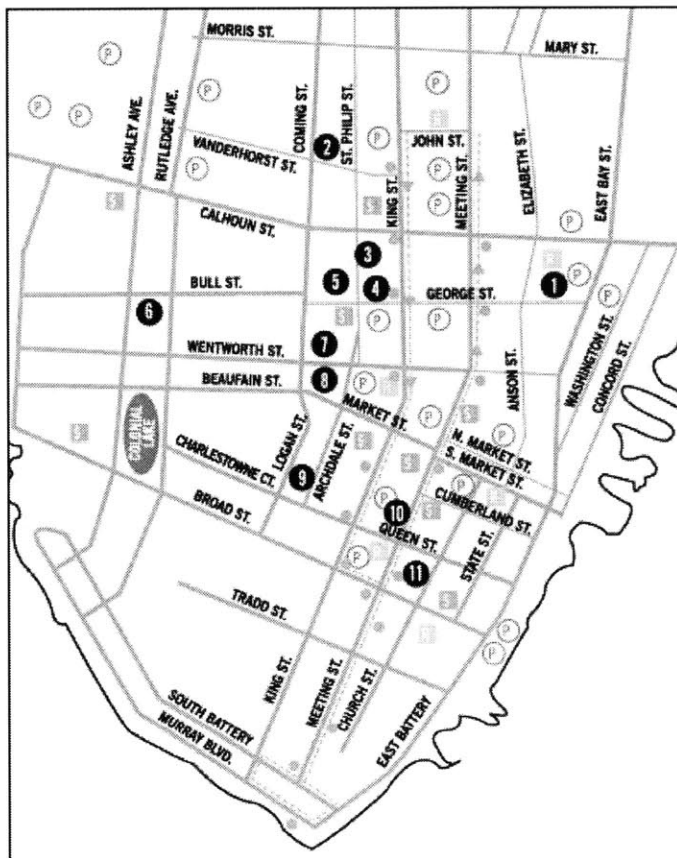


Fig 21.11 - Charleston Map

What: MOJA Arts Festival
 Where: Downtown Charleston,
 South Carolina
 When: Late Sept thru Early Oct;
 Times varies



Fig 21.12 - Charleston’s Main Street

35 - unknown author; [MOJA Festival](#); website

“The **MOJA Arts Festival** is a multi-disciplinary festival produced and directed by the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the MOJA Planning Committee, a community arts and cultural group and the MOJA Advisory Board, a group of civic leaders who assist with fund raising and advocacy. MOJA, a Swahili word meaning “One,” is the appropriate name for this festival celebration of harmony amongst all people in our community. The Festival highlights the many African-American and Caribbean contributions to western and world cultures. MOJA’s wide range of events include visual arts, classical music, dance, gospel concert, jazz concert, poetry, R&B concert, storytelling, theatre, children’s activities, traditional crafts, ethnic food, and much, much more.”³⁵

The Evolution of an American Small Town;

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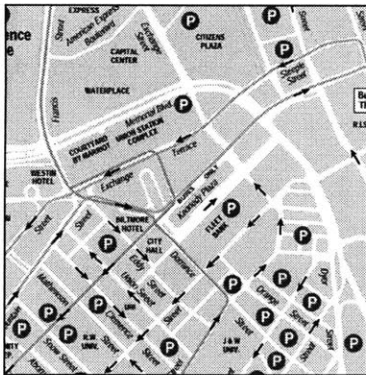
Plaza Ballroom -

-“Located in the heart of the financial district on the cobblestone circle on Westminster Street directly in front of the Rhode Island Headquarters of Sovereign Bank.

-The polished black dance floor, sixty-one feet across, seems to hover just above the cobblestones while hundreds of dancers enjoy the night air, the beautiful music and the breathtaking architecture.

-Admission to the Sovereign Plaza Ballroom is free for everyone, courtesy of Sovereign Bank.

-Each evening will feature dance lessons before sunset, followed by free dancing until midnight. Demonstration at around 10 or 10:30 pm.”³⁶



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19 - SOCIAL EVENTS

What: Sovereign Plaza Ballroom

Where: Westminster Street, Providence, R.I.

When: May thru August; opposite to WaterFire

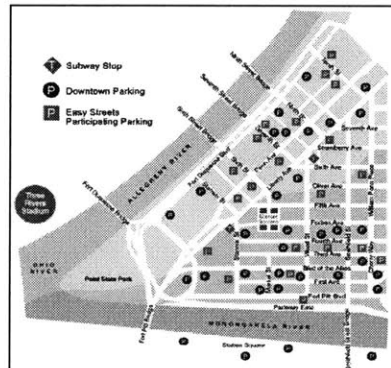


Fig 21.13- Sovereign Plaza

36 - unknown author; [WaterFire Providence website](#)

Fig 21.14 - Providence Map

Fig 21.15 -Pittsburgh Map



What: M - Squared

Where: Market Square, Pittsburgh, Pa

When: Friday's June thru Sept. 10:00 - 11:00

“The Market Square Association helped define the Pittsburgh Revolution in the early 90’s. While Market Square has become the hip place to dine, fiesta, and attend outdoor concerts featuring the best of Pittsburgh’s music scene, it still holds its roots through retail shops and restaurants that portray the history of Market Square. MSA is most famous for the hundreds of events we produce each year, including the St. Patrick’s Day Festival, Luncheonette Al Fresco and **M-Squared**.” (<http://www.marketsquare.org/>)

“The formula is simple. Put a handful of Pittsburgh’s most popular bands on stage after work on Friday’s during the summer, rescind the open-container law and pack ‘em in. Depending on the band and the weather, the M2 crowd can grow to pretty serious proportions, occasionally taking on somewhat of a “meat market” atmosphere.”³⁷

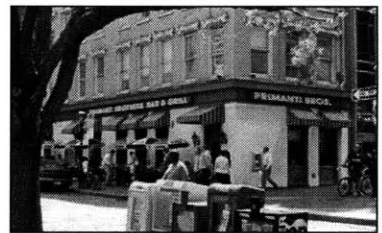


Fig 21.16 - Edge of Square

37 - Braughler, Bob; [City Search - M Squared](#); website

19 - SOCIAL EVENTS

What: Britt Festivals
 Where: Downtown Jacksonville, Oregon
 When: April thru Aug. Friday and Saturdays from 8:00 - 11:00



Fig 21.16 - Jacksonville Amphitheater

38 - unknown author; [Britt](#); website

Fig 21.17 - Jacksonville Map

Fig 21.18 - Fort Worth Main Street Map

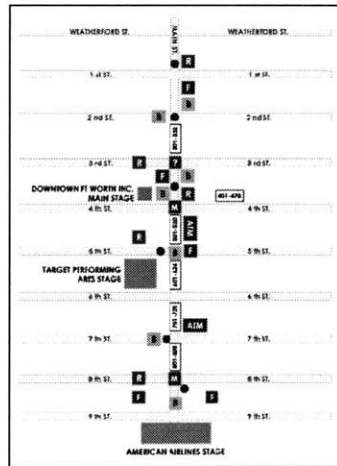
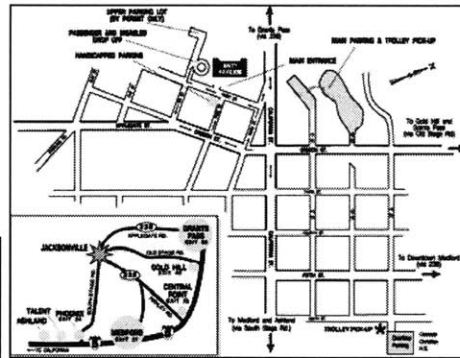
What: Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival
 Where: Fort Worth, Texas,
 When: April 15-18 from 11:00a.m. - 11:30p.m.



Fig 21.19 - Fort Worth's Main Street

39 - unknown author; [MAIN ST. Fort Worth Arts Festival](#); website

“Now in its 42nd year, **Britt Festivals** is the Pacific Northwest’s premiere outdoor summer performing arts festival. Located in the historic 1850s gold rush town of Jacksonville, Oregon (USA), Britt presents dozens of summer concerts, featuring world-class artists in classical music, dance, jazz, blues, folk, bluegrass, world, pop and country music. Britt’s performance venue is a naturally formed amphitheater set among majestic ponderosa pines and native madrones on the beautiful hillside estate of 19th century photographer Peter Britt. Viewing a map of the facility will give you clearer picture of how we have combined stadium seating within this natural setting. Tens of thousands of music lovers travel from all over the West to enjoy Britt’s world-class performances, spectacular scenery and casual, relaxing atmosphere.”³⁸



“**Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival**, the Southwest’s largest, free, four-day visual arts and entertainment festival, is ranked one of the top 30 festivals in the nation ...and by the Harris List - The top show in Texas and one of the top 20 fine arts and crafts shows in the Midwest, which includes Texas. The Harris List recognizes shows nationwide with outstanding support of the arts, exceptional potential sales for participating artists and excellent artist hospitality. The festival is presented and produced by Downtown Fort Worth, Inc.

Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival celebrates:

- 1 - visual arts of more than 200 artists
- 2 - performing arts through more than 300 performances; 3 - culinary arts of the finest eateries

All on historic Main Street, from the Courthouse to the Fort Worth Convention Center.”³⁹

20 - EXISTING WILDERNESS TRAIL FESTIVAL

*"Festivals are ultimately community affairs. Indeed they provide the occasion whereby a community may call attention to itself and, perhaps more important in our time, its willingness to display itself openly. It is the ultimate public activity, given its need for preparation and coordination of effort."*⁴⁰

Roger D. Abrahams

An American Vocabulary of Celebrations

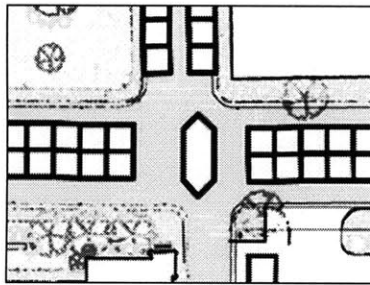


Fig 20.1 - Booth Layout
for Festival

40 - Falassi, Alessandro; Time out of Time: Essays on the Festival; article by Abrahams, Roger D.; *An American Vocabulary of Celebrations*; pg 181

The existing *Wilderness Trail Festival* opens at ten a.m. with little ritual or fanfare. The retail booths simply begin to sell their goods and the scheduled entertainers begin playing their music. No mayor's speeches, no town council to greet visitors, and no lighting of a ceremonial fire with shared stories or hymns. Not much of a celebration at all, this characteristic remains through the day's events. An outside traveler who wandered across the festival would not know what was being celebrated, would not find plays, stories, or pamphlets to inform them about the town's origin and the history of the *Wilderness Trail*. What they would find are countless booths stocked with numerous items, some dealing with the history of the area, some simply created within the area, and others having no connection to the place at all. The festival concludes with the same lack of celebration around ten p.m. with individual retail booths and the band slowly packing up and leaving. There is no defined beginning or end, no schedule of events other than the musical activities on the main stage. Nothing to reward visitors for coming early and staying late, no event to cause visitors to feel a sense of loss about missing the opportunity to see something special. The festival is truly not much of a celebration at all!

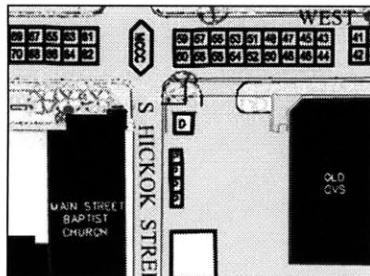


Fig 20.2 - Stage Area for
Festival

The existing *Wilderness Trail Festival* is currently held on West Main Street between the *Town Square* and the intersection of Dunkley Street to West Main. The layout contains one hundred and ninety-six twelve foot square retail booths that sell arts and crafts, food, services, and regional products, and hold an art show sponsored by the local museum. The majority of these booths are placed back to back along the center of Main Street creating two separate rows going down. This temporary corridor is defined by the building facades on one edge and retail booths on the other. This layout is in hopes of allowing the shops along Main Street to maintain access to the street. Note that this decision favors the few retail shops located within the downtown area, an element that the community currently has very few of. (See Figure ??) The booths are separated by type, a zoning sorted by activity. The booth categories include: *non-profit business displays, business and community organizations, children's area, entertainment area, food areas, and retail*. This crisp zoning creates festival areas that are less

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traveled. For example, the *business and community organizations* are avoided by children and teens but they are the exact group who bring high levels of energy and excitement to the event. The live *entertainment area* consists of a single temporary stage placed in the parking lot of the former CVS pharmacy.

The current festival is fairly successful in evaluating the spirit of its visitors by creating opportunities for play, interaction, conversation, and the sharing of common experiences. "*Festivity is a human form of play through which man appropriates an extended area of life, including the past, into his own experience.*"⁴¹ This type of play allows people to liberate themselves from the strict behavioral codes of work and everyday life. It allows visitors and citizens alike to lower their inhibitions and to begin to interact freely, communicate, and be socially open. This free interaction and social communication helps us to rebuilt and strengthen the community's identity, thus making neighborhoods, villages, towns, or cities a better place to live. Activating a civic space with an event allows new connections to place and memories. The largest currently problem with the *Wilderness Trail Festival* is its lack of connection to the history it supposed is celebrating.

41 - Cox, Harvey; The Feast of Fools, pg 7

Frank Manning states in his book *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance* that celebrations have four distinct elements. First, *celebrations are performances* that involve dramatic presentations acted upon public streets, stages, or in stadium; this could be as simple as the retelling of a history, a fable, or a myth. Second, *celebrations are entertainment and created for the enjoyment of the masses*; they should be fun despite the work and effort behind their planning, organization, and fabrication. Celebrations provide free admission and are open to all of societies' classes, races, and religions. Third, *celebrations are public*; meaning they are open to personal opinion and criticisms. Fourth and finally, *celebrations are participatory that involve the viewers*, not simply shows put on for a spectator.⁴² Yet in today's world many festivals have lost their identities, whether by losing connection to visitors, spreading the elements of the day's event too thin, or by succumbing to the commercial/retail present so prevalent in today's society. Communities need festivals to help their residents reconnect their civic character and redefine the identity of the place. For example, many towns and festivals are identified with one another; think of Mardi Gras - New Orleans or Pamplona, Spain's - San Fermin Festival; a.k.a. 'The Running of the Bulls.' Many communities realize that these events allow for building a stronger community's voice, raise civic interest, and increase governmental presence.

The goal in redesigning the *Wilderness Trail Festival* is to create a more participatory event and to move it away from its current retail, driven nature. This should result in a more celebrative festival with a defined opening and closing; an event that states the reason for the

21 - REDESIGN OF THE WILDERNESS TRAIL FESTIVAL

42 - Manning, Frank E.; The Celebration of Society; pg 4

celebration in numerous ways, one that has a schedule of activities that helps to build social interaction, strengthen community and redefine the identity of the Town of Christiansburg. It should have an opening that needs to be seen and a closing that you should not miss. It should have something that the community talks about for weeks and that does not leave residents and visitors feeling empty: a festival with a celebration that is unique and special to this place, its history, and its people.

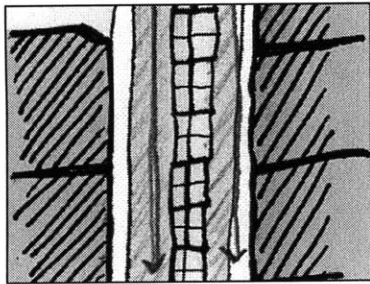


Fig 21.1 - Existing Booth Layout

The largest problem in the renovation of the festival is in finding a creative and entertaining way of telling and retelling the story of the *Wilderness Trail*, the narrative of Daniel Boone's clearing the trail, and the settling of the Town of Christiansburg. One could also argue that this narrative should extend to the modern paving of the trail as U.S. Route 11 and the importance of such a highway in the evolution of American culture. These stories should be at the heart of the celebration and should be told in ways that will captivate both children and adults. The knowledge should be repeated numerous times throughout the day's festivities: at the opening of the celebration to directly connect the day's activities to the town's history, at the closing to remind visitors why they have gathered, and within pamphlets handed out throughout the day, these pamphlets tell the schedule of events, the festival's sponsors, and thank its volunteers. The retelling of the history should be in a form that involves many and is capable of being repeated. For example, through creating a play that is acted out by the local children of the community. This play could be used as an after school program that educates local youth about the town's history and invests them in creative activities that produce a stage set, costumes, and props. A second example of retelling the area's history would borrow from the many festivals and parades that involve large puppets, such as the *New York City Halloween Parade* or *Bread and Puppet Theater*. This example would use large puppets to reflect the key figures in the town's history such as Boone, a handful of his axemen, a Native American or two, and possibly a horse, a buffalo, and a few trees. The puppets could be designed by community youths and volunteers in coordination with local artists, this could be done within the new art incubator. They would be constructed out of wood substructures, wire mesh, and painted paper mache. These large puppets do not need a conventional stage; they can exhibit their story in the town streets using the local facades as a backdrop; thus they would be able to move along Main Street during the festival, retelling the story and reminding the visitors of the town's past.

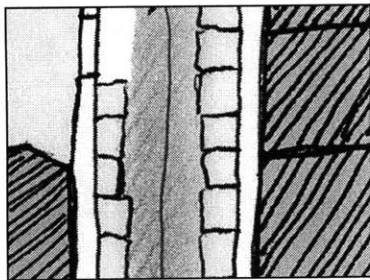


Fig 21.2 - Proposed Booth Layout

The second major problem with the *Wilderness Trail Festival* lies within the programming and use of the existing space. Yes, the current event does reclaim the town's main street for civic and communal activities, but it does not include a couple of important historic areas. The first space within the current event program is the area with the most historic and civic importance: the *Town Square*. Christiansburg's Town Square has existed since the settlement of the community. It is a place to which war veterans returned, and where animals had been stored for the

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market, and it has held many celebrations. The town square no longer exists as it once did. The introduction of the automobile has changed how the square is used, viewed, and enjoyed. For only one day of the year, the *Wilderness Trail Festival* should reclaim the space and traffic should be re-routed. Because of the size of the space, 264 feet square, it can act as the largest social gathering space of the festival. (See Figure ??) Reclaiming this space is extremely important. It should be programmed with the largest temporary stage, a good sound system, and bright lighting. This area should be used for the festival opening and closing; its edges should be surrounded by food vendors with numerous tables for shared eating and conversation; it also needs areas for dancing and possibly a bonfire. The bonfire would be lit at dusk reestablishing the themes of wood and wilderness. Bands would play and dinner could be purchased. Within this area one could have the opportunity to share a table with a civic leader; this could be the Mayor, a judge, or fire captain. This could be an opportunity to dine and converse with a respected townleaders, a reflection of life in a simpler, earlier time when you knew most officials personally. The closing would follow the dinner and be concluded with a small fireworks show over the new public garden.

Currently the festival runs a horse-drawn wagon ride from the former Kroger's parking lot. I have proposed to inset a new Community Center within this space, so in the renovation of this festival the starting point for horse drawn wagon rides should be moved to beside the new amphitheater adjunct to the new community center on Dunkley Street. With the idea that this festival should try to diversify and expand its services, the festival should offer a variety of different types of wagons and horse-back rides. With this animal use already programed into the festival, the event should include a petting zoo that could hold animals that were typical during the eighteenth century. This would be another opportunity to educate the festival's visitors about the town's history and to show people creatures such as buffalo, deer, oxen, horses, etc. The Town Square should be blocked off between Franklin between and First Street; this is a good place to exhibit these animals reconnecting the space to its history.

Earlier in this proposal the empty space across from the Town Hall was reprogrammed with a new County Government Center and Town Green, thus giving the workers a place to eat lunch while enjoying the sun. Getting back to the *Wilderness Trail Festival* this same area could hold a major activity. The *Wilderness Trial Games* should be initiated, a series of competitions focused on pioneer life. With games like 'Timber Cutting, Timber Stacking, and Timber Throwing;' all to be competed in as individuals and in teams. Followed by the 'Timber Trail' in which teams race carrying a ten foot long eighteen inch deep timber through an obstacle course. With the day's main event being a 'Homemade Wagon Race,' an event which pits groups that originate in neighborhoods, offices, social clubs, schools, etc. in a race down Main Street, pushing or pulling their previously constructed 4'-0" x 8'-0" (the

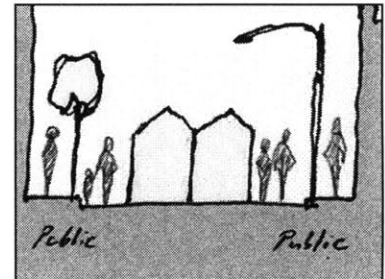


Fig 21.3 - Existing Booth Layout

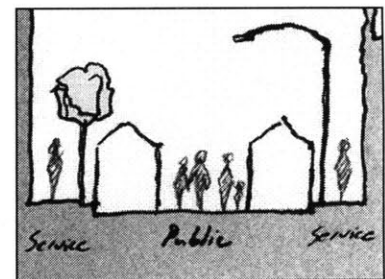


Fig 21.4 - Proposed Booth Layout

size of the sheet of plywood used for the base) wagons. Winners would be selected by the order of their finish, best design of wagons, most original wagon, and best team spirit.

The addition of the *Wilderness Trail Games*, the petting zoo, dinner and dancing on the Town Square, and a defined opening and closing, would be attempts to infuse the festival with a higher level of celebratory energy, connecting the event back to its history. The additions would also address one of the major goals of this redesign, the introduction of more participatory events, helping to move the current festival away from its existing retail driven nature. The inclusion of these activities would permit groups and teams to represent the people of the community in competition, would allow others to create social alliances a.k.a. 'rooting for a team,' helping to build community involvement and interaction. The current *Wilderness Trail Festival* is too passive, too uneventful, and too focused on retail booths and consumerism. The goal of this redesign is to increasing the current festival's celebratory energy, participation, and overall event scale, thus allowing visitors to create cherished memories, change perceptions of the existing community, and redefining the town civic identity.

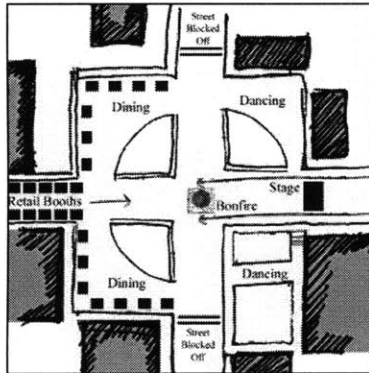


Fig 21.6 - Example Layout for Town Square Use

The second major goal is to weaken the overpowering presence of the retail booths so that the festival's visitors may focus upon the celebration and less upon purchasing local products. The goal of this project is not to remove the retail opportunities for the local businesses, but to add more subtlety, by dispersing the same number of retail booths over a larger area, thus keeping them from dominating the event. The *Wilderness Trail Festival* is currently a street-bazaar style which is in line with neighboring Blacksburg's *Step-in Out Festival*. But Blacksburg's event is not a celebration of the town's history. The very nature of Christiansburg's event should remove it from being just a simple street-bazaar. This could be done by intermingling the retail booths over a larger area with other events and activities; areas holding games for all ages, and educational areas giving brief lectures, exhibitions, and tutorials about the lives of early settlers and the axemen. The booths would no longer be set back to back thus dividing the Main Street in to two separate travel paths; they would be pushed to the sides along the facade edge, creating one central corridor. The current booth design divides the festival visitors depending on what side of the retail booth wall they choose to walk along, thus decreasing opportunities for social interaction, conversation, and shared experiences. (See Figure 50-53) One central travel path allows for the festival visitors to see one another and not miss anything. Many people go to these type of events to be seen and to see others, some people you may pass are friends that you have not spoken to in years. Allowing everyone to travel upon the same path opens the opportunities for social interaction and strengthens visitors, connection to place.

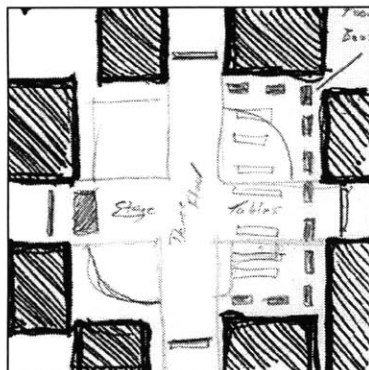


Fig 21.7 - Example Layout for Town Square Use

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VIRGINIA MAIN STREET

“Since 1985, Virginia Main Street has been helping localities revitalize the economic vitality of downtown commercial districts using the National Main Street Center’s successful Main Street Approach. Main Street is a comprehensive, incremental approach to revitalization built around a community’s unique heritage and attributes. Using local resources and initiatives, Main Street helps communities develop their own strategies to stimulate long term economic growth and pride in the traditional community center -- downtown.” (<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet>)

“Virginia Main Street communities, like thousands of communities across the country, have used the Main Street Approach™ effectively to address the complex and changing issues facing the downtown business environment. The Main Street Approach™ provides a flexible framework that puts the traditional assets of downtown, such as unique architecture and locally-owned businesses, to work as a catalyst for economic growth and community pride.” (<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet>)

“The program was designed to address the need for revitalization and on-going management of smaller downtowns, but aspects of the Main Street Approach™ may be applied successfully in other commercial settings. Communities just starting downtown revitalization and those with more experience are creating lasting economic impact with the Main Street Approach™.” (<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet>)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PLANNING GRANTS

“The Department of Housing and Community Development’s *Community Development Building Grant (CDBG) Planning Grant* program is designed to aid those communities with the greatest community development needs in developing clearly articulated strategies for addressing these needs following meaningful citizen participation. Planning Grant assistance is available to Virginia Community Development Block Grant eligible localities.

- The total amount of funding available for Planning Grants in 2004 is \$500,000. Planning Grants are available on an open basis through September 30, 2004 or until all funding is obligated.

Project Planning Grants - *Project Planning Grants* of up to \$25,000 are available for needs analysis and prioritization, preliminary design, and strategy development activities in preparation for a future Community Improvement Grant proposal.

Planning Grant activities should be oriented towards the development of products which directly relate to a future Community Improvement Grant project. These products should detail community development problems and present realistic solutions for treatment of these problems. All Project Planning Grant recipients must submit complete Community Improvement Grant proposals following completion of all planning activities unless otherwise negotiated with DHCD. (<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/CD/CDBG/Planning%20Grants.htm>)

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Business District Revitalization – Project Planning Grants - Because thorough preparation for *BDR* construction projects is necessary to ensure the desired community outcome of improved overall economic vitality, DHCD is offering a tiered grant process for this project type. It often takes a number of years of appropriate planning and development efforts for these projects to be successful and the following grant levels are designed to recognize and accommodate this.

Community Needs Assessment/Economic Assessment Planning Grants - *Community or Economic Assessment Planning Grants* of up to \$10,000 are available for a locality to conduct a single objective general needs analysis and prioritization of community or economic conditions and future direction.

Community Organizing Planning Grants - *Community Organizing Planning Grants* of up to \$10,000 are available for activation and organization of community residents to develop strategies for future social and physical improvements.”

(<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/CD/CDBG/Planning%20Grants.htm>)

**APPALACHIAN AREA DEVELOPMENT
(SUPPLEMENTAL AND DIRECT GRANTS)**

Objectives:

To help the regional economy become more competitive by putting in place the building blocks for self-sustaining economic development, while continuing to provide special assistance to the Region's most distressed counties. This program focuses on activities which support ARC's mission to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life in the region. Activities funded must advance ARC's strategic plan. Specific program goals are: (1) Appalachian residents will have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the world economy in the 21st century; (2) Appalachian communities will have the physical infrastructure necessary for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life; (3) The people of Appalachia will have the vision and capacity to mobilize and work together for sustained economic progress and improvement of their communities; (4) Appalachian residents will have access to financial and technical resources to help build dynamic and self-sustaining local economies; and (5) Appalachian residents will have access to affordable, quality health care. Specific objectives were developed for each goal. Grants are made either directly by the Commission or grants may supplement other Federal grants.

Uses and Use Restrictions:

The grants may be used for providing supplemental funds under any Federal grant-in-aid programs. To be eligible for special basic grants, projects must be of high priority in the State's Appalachian development plan and be either of critical importance to a phased investment and development program for a multicounty area, or of unusual economic benefit to such area. Refer to "General Provisions for Area Development Program" of the Appalachian Regional Commission Code for additional use restrictions.

- Range and Average of Financial Assistance: The range is from \$4,742 to \$1,500,000.

(<http://www.cfda.gov/public/viewprog.asp?progid=679>)

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