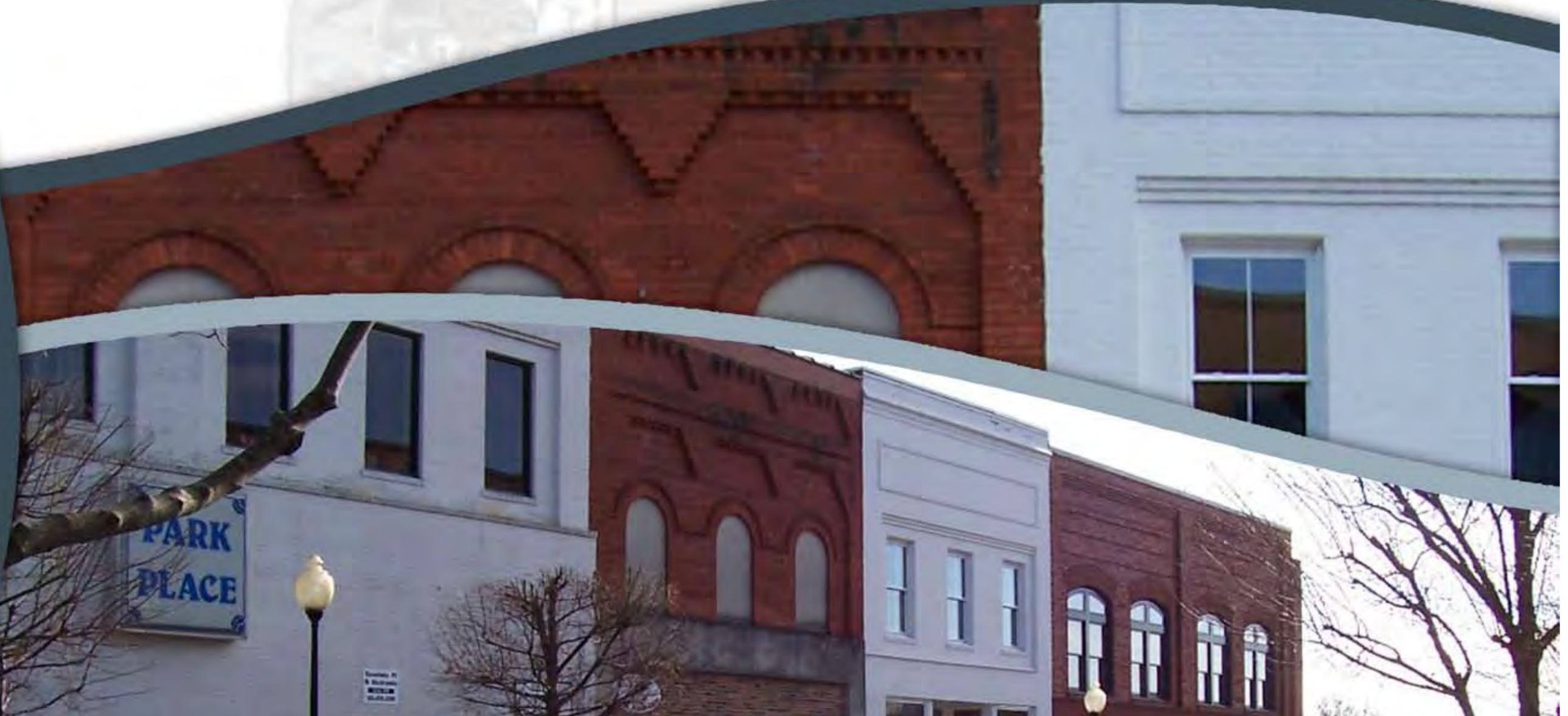




Downtown Streetscape Master Plan ²⁰¹⁰

Town of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina

McGill
ASSOCIATES
ENGINEERING · PLANNING · FINANCE



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

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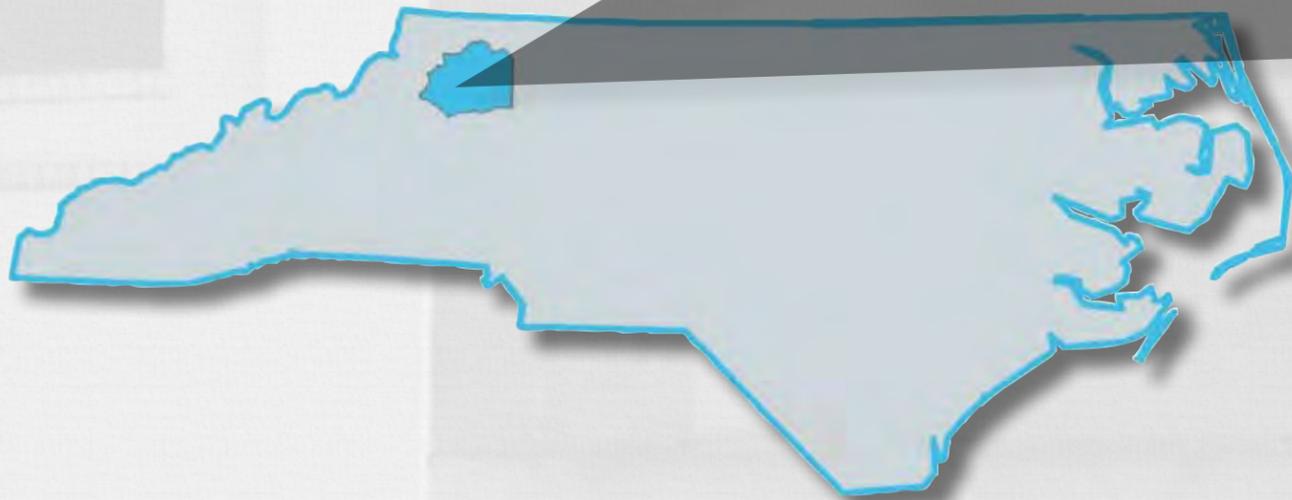
Acknowledgements

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Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

The Town of North Wilkesboro is centrally located in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Due to the Town's proximity to the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains and the numerous tourist venues there, North Wilkesboro for many years was nicknamed the "Key to the Blue Ridge".



Location



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Downtown North Wilkesboro is located in Wilkes County, North Carolina. The downtown area is situated on hilly terrain, which provides residents and visitors with spectacular views of downtown, the Yadkin Valley, and the Brushy Mountains. The core of downtown North Wilkesboro is Main Street.

The downtown business district of North Wilkesboro became a recognized Main Street Town in 2000. The “Historic Downtown North Wilkesboro” organization, a non-profit group that has worked to revitalize the downtown business district, led the effort to have the Town recognized as a Main Street Town. The “Downtown North Wilkesboro” group is also the founder of the annual ‘Shine to Wine Festival’. The festival traces the historical development of Wilkes County liquor from moonshine to wine.

North Wilkesboro is also the home of the annual Brushy Mountain Apple Festival, which is held to celebrate the apple harvest from the nearby Brushy Mountains.

North Wilkesboro’s Yadkin River Greenway is a popular attraction that connects to multiple destinations. The Greenway contains biking, jogging, and walking trails which follow the Yadkin River and Reddies River for several miles between the towns of North Wilkesboro and Wilkesboro.

DOWNTOWN NORTH WILKESBORO, NORTH CAROLINA



Introduction



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*



North Wilkesboro was founded in 1891 when the Norfolk and Southern Railroad built a railroad line into Wilkes County. The line ended at the northern bank of the Yadkin River opposite to Wilkesboro, the County Seat. The Town of North Wilkesboro quickly developed around the railroad station and tracks.

As years passed, the traditional Main Street (as we see today) became the heart of the community for residents, visitors, and surrounding communities. The human scale of buildings, the variations in architectural styles, the diverse commercial and entertainment offerings - all attracted people within walking distances for decades, and they still do today. Downtown remains the cultural, financial, and governmental service center of the community. Today attractive design, strategic new renovation, thoughtful planning, and a focus on the Town's unique identity can pay off in investment, diversification, and competitiveness. The adaptive reuse of structures and the rediscovery of natural features and pedestrian friendly design that built the downtown initially can bring back vibrancy, energy, and attention.



One key to attracting patrons and passersby is to have a visually appealing and aesthetic downtown. "Curb appeal" includes buildings, storefronts, signage, landscaping, activities, window displays, and graphic promotional materials, and other attractions. These types of items are critical to creating a community brand and a destination for residents and community visitors. Being a destination translates to people traveling farther than one sense) their greatest asset. Rather than depending on must be willing to invest in the renovation and enhancement of their structures that are, (in more vision of the downtown as a whole in making their individual their individual tastes and styles, it is more beneficial and productive to participate in a common programming. improvements. In addition, the Town should continue to reinvest in the downtown through enhancement and



The history of each community stamps a unique character on the streets, buildings, natural features, and other resources that created it. The character provides a sense of place that is appealing to longtime residents and intriguing to first-time visitors. It evokes and maintains a sense of discovery or rediscovery that brings people back. The character may come from local landmarks, geographic features, buildings, and regional products. It is the result not of uniformity of appearance, but of individuality and identity of the community. This identity is the result of community consensus and is not imposed by single individuals. The established identity forms the brand that can be used to promote "downtown" to existing and potential community residents and businesses, visitors, and tourists. Using the brand in marketing and promoting the downtown is almost endless, with opportunities ranging from publications to mass media to websites.

The importance of the resulting economic growth from downtown revitalization cannot be overstated; but, the sense of pride and attitude of confidence it can instill for the citizens of North Wilkesboro may be more important. The desires to visit, promote, and/or serve as ambassadors for the downtown are optimal outcomes.



Introduction



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

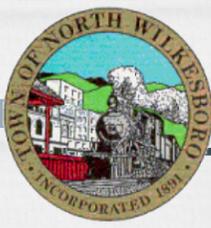
The purpose of this Master Plan is to provide a framework and vision for Downtown North Wilkesboro, while maintaining an accessible, navigable human scale environment. Following an analysis of existing conditions, design decisions highlighted the elements of downtown preservation and revitalization - which characterize successful commercial districts. Typically they are...

- Prominent employment centers
- Reflection of the town's heritage, history and culture
- Significant portions of the community tax base
- Ideal locations for independent businesses and individual entrepreneurs
- Overnight tourist destination
- Concentrations of diverse development (reducing suburban sprawl)
- Protectors of surrounding property values
- Convenient venues for pleasant shopping experiences
- Host of governmental and/or private service centers
- Central areas for gatherings, events, and/or entertainment

With these features in mind, the Master Plan will include recommendations for the revitalization of Downtown North Wilkesboro - in terms of both aesthetics and economic opportunities; but also, it will emphasize how such factors as accessibility, traffic flow, and safety are critical to the success of commercial districts in general.



Purpose



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

The overall objective for this planning document is to guide North Wilkesboro in the enhancement of its downtown area; by creating a vibrant atmosphere in an aesthetic environment, which will attract more people - both residents and tourists. The downtown revitalization should get passersby to stop and take notice; become a hub for area attractions and activities as well as an overnight destination; and encourage people to return for visits. The following items contribute to a more successful and attractive downtown.

- Increase the number of gathering places that would result in higher frequency of downtown utilization.
- Create a safer pedestrian environment.
- Create a more uniform and unique identity that will result in a “sense of place” for the community.
- Increase marketing effectiveness of the current and future downtown and community assets.
- Create more diversity in the fabric of the downtown in the categories of:
 - Retail Business
 - Residential Living Units
 - Professional Offices
 - Tourism
 - Overnight Lodging
 - Community Events
 - Governmental Facilities
 - Conference/Meeting Facilities
 - Relevant Support Services



The objectives of the master planning process center on the enhancement and diversification necessary for the continued strength of the place in the community of the Downtown area.

Objectives

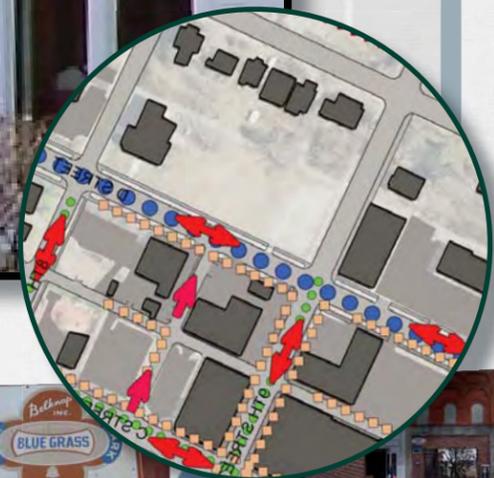
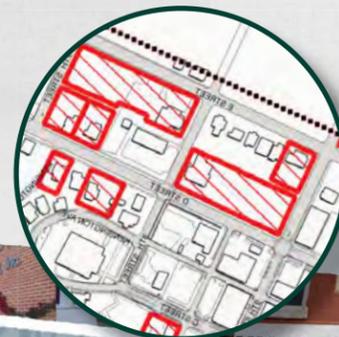
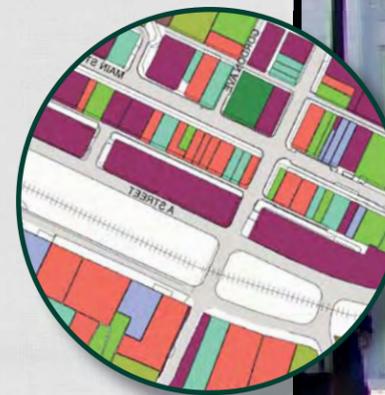


Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Identifying existing conditions is critical when accessing opportunities for design, amenities, and activities that could serve the public and energize Downtown North Wilkesboro. An understanding of current conditions is also helpful in anticipating future land-use patterns, roadway conditions, population trends, and other infrastructure-related issues. A thorough inventory and evaluation of existing conditions is vital as an initial step in the master planning process for Downtown North Wilkesboro. Ultimately, the final assessment will directly affect the planning decisions and recommendations that evolve from the Master Plan and that will benefit the municipal district – now and in the future.

An overview of the factors which determine the current conditions within the downtown planning area is summarized below and is presented in the following pages by means of maps, graphs, and/or detailed explanations, with examples. These factors include:

- Open Space
- Historic Structures
- Land Use
- Parking Inventory
- Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
- Case Studies



Existing Conditions



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Open space in Downtown North Wilkesboro consists of large parking lots, undeveloped properties, and small pockets of mostly green space. There are numerous large parking lots downtown, which account for most of the open space in the Town. The Town should evaluate these existing parking lots to determine what improvements should be considered. Subsequently, these spaces should be landscaped with vegetation in order to soften their “hard” look and feel. Other undeveloped areas should be maintained, as well, to reflect a positive, pleasant appearance.



Parks and open space add to the diversity of destinations within a downtown. These areas often act as gathering places for informal activities such as picnics, athletic games, and people-watching. Existing park spaces should be renovated to increase their usage by residents and visitors.

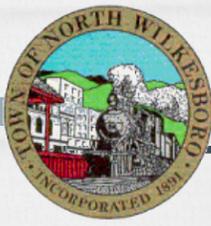
Incorporating small public open space into downtown will improve the visual and environmental quality of the Town of North Wilkesboro. Small open spaces can be used for a variety of group or individual functions, as well as simply provide a quiet place for pause and respite within the daily hustle of a lively downtown. Areas that can be transformed into small open spaces include undeveloped green areas, vacant properties, and alleys.



LEGEND	
	Existing Park Land
	Existing Open Space
	Existing Building
	Existing Pavement
	Existing Asphalt Road



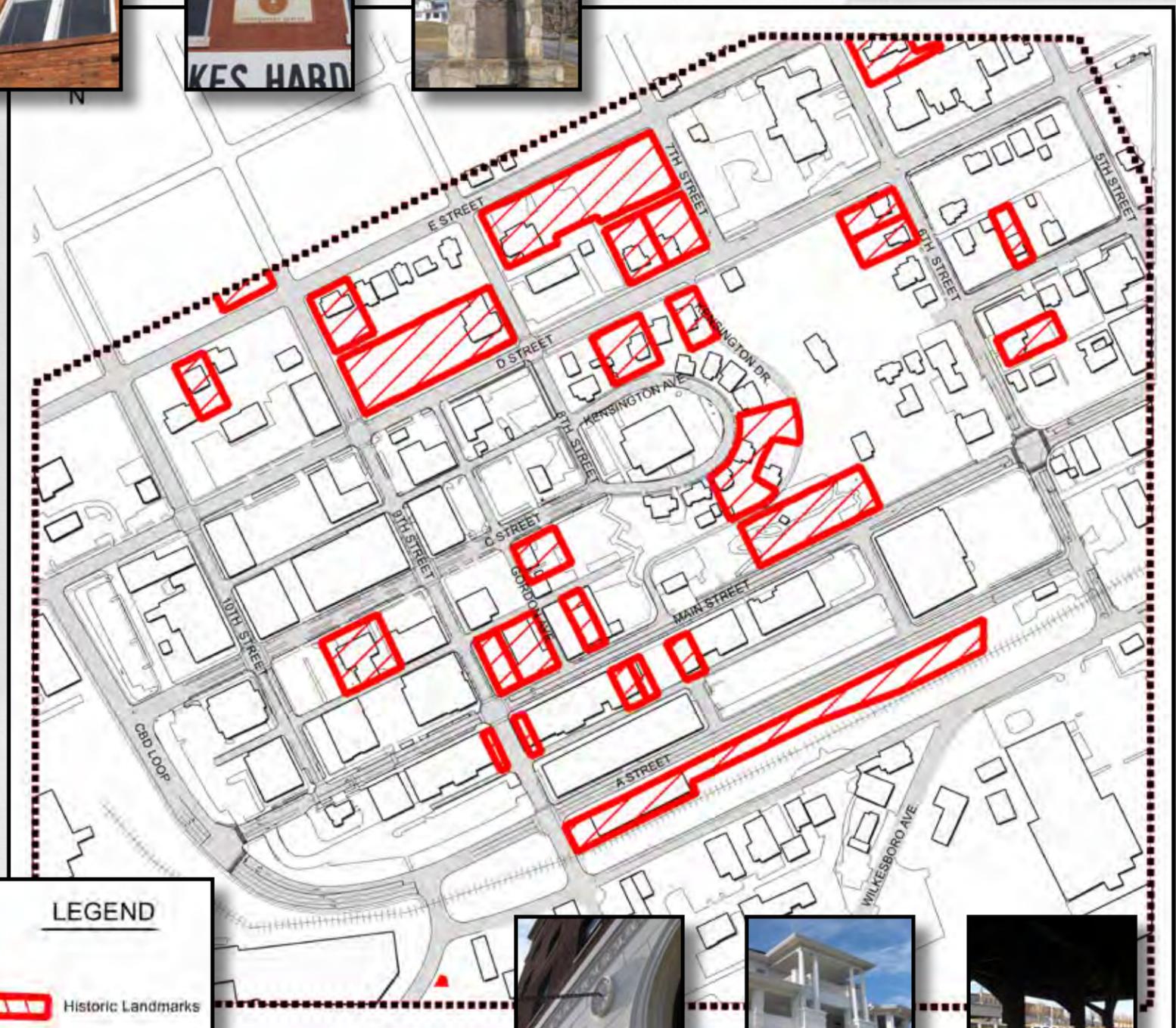
Existing Conditions
Open Space



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Today, there are a significant number of historic buildings in the downtown area - most of which pre-date the World War II era and some of the 19th century. Downtown North Wilkesboro contains numerous historic buildings and structures, which should serve to firmly root the Town to its cultural origins and provide an attractive, aesthetic perspective for future growth.

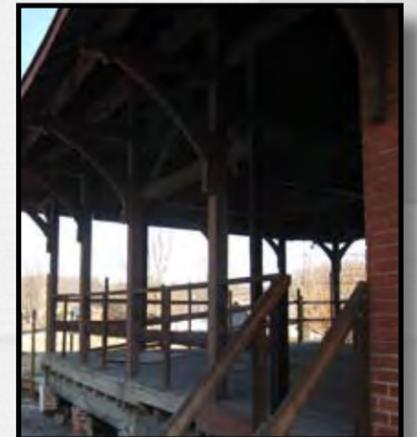
The diagram on this page shows the locations of Downtown Historic Structures and also includes photographs which convey the local vernacular of the architecture. In addition, the photographs on the next page of this Master Plan depict notable characteristics of some of the architecture, streetscapes, and/or decor in Downtown North Wilkesboro - the identities of which are to be preserved. One notable architectural characteristic of Downtown North Wilkesboro is the parapet step down along the roof tops. There are numerous buildings in the downtown area that have this unique architectural element.



Existing Conditions
Historic Structures



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*



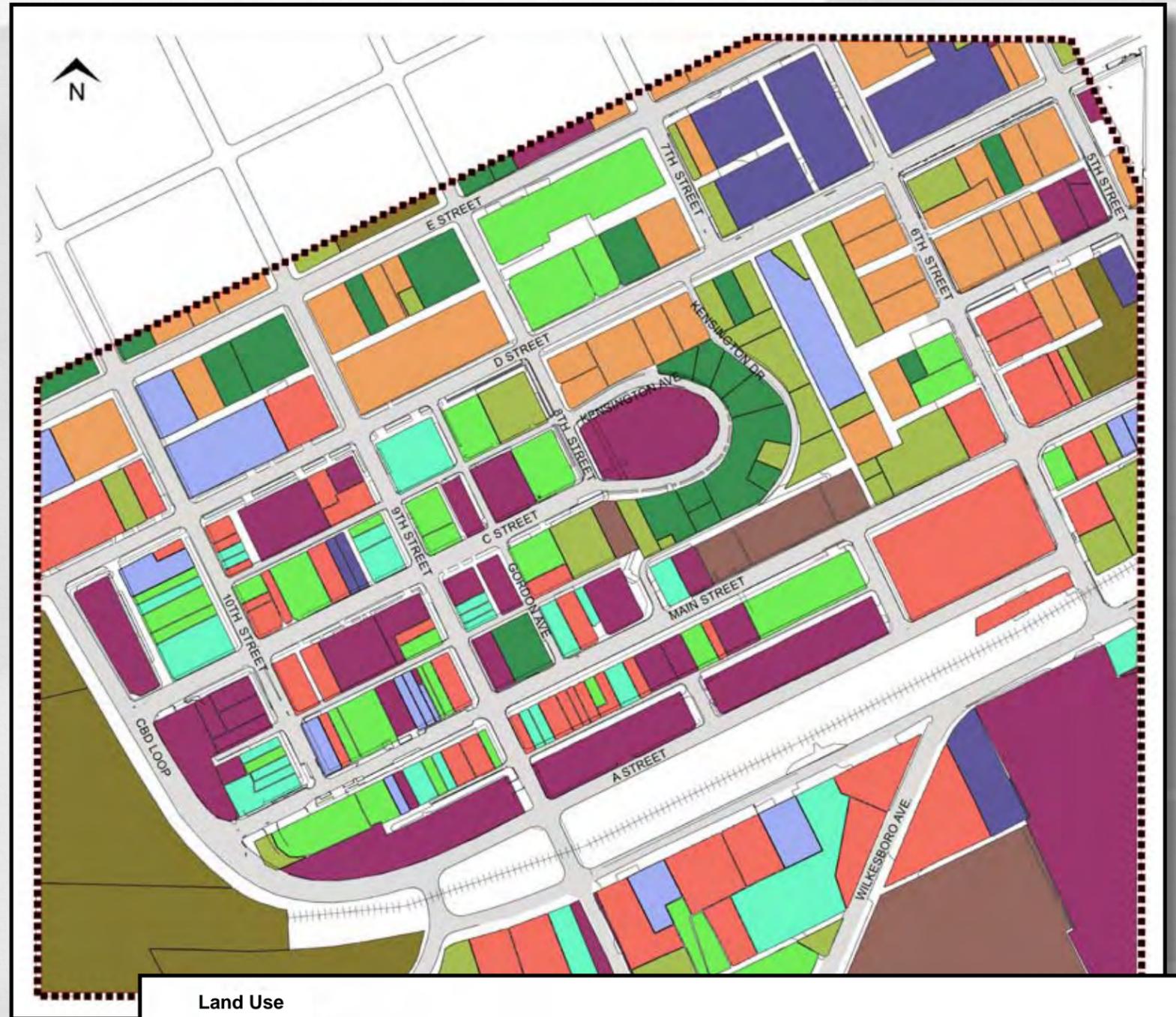
Existing Conditions
Of Notable Character



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

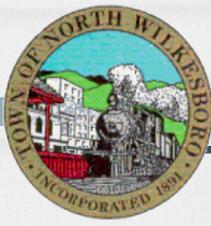
Downtown North Wilkesboro has a mixture of uses including commercial, residential, and institutional. However, the organization of these land uses is not optimal. The pattern of land use does not support a lively, accessible, and economically thriving downtown to its maximum potential. Single family homes are the primary residential type and are mainly located outside the confines of downtown, limiting the number of people living in the downtown area. It is recommended that opportunities should be explored to convert under-utilized downtown spaces to residences, such as apartments, condominiums, etc., or develop infill areas that incorporate a residential component.

Currently, Downtown North Wilkesboro has very few entertainment and dining opportunities during evening hours. At the close of regular business hours, there are few reasons to remain in the heart of North Wilkesboro. By encouraging additional varieties of entertainment and dining businesses to locate downtown, people will have more opportunity to frequent them during the evening hours. Not only does this result in more patrons for businesses, it also increases the safety of areas previously avoided by the citizenry.



Land Use			
Agricultural	Institutional	Public	Urban Mixed Use
Commercial/Retail	Multi-Family Residential	Recreation	Unknown
Executive/Office	Mobile Home	Single-Family Residential Attached	Utilities
Industrial	Mobile Home Mixed Use	Single-Family Residential Detached	Vacant

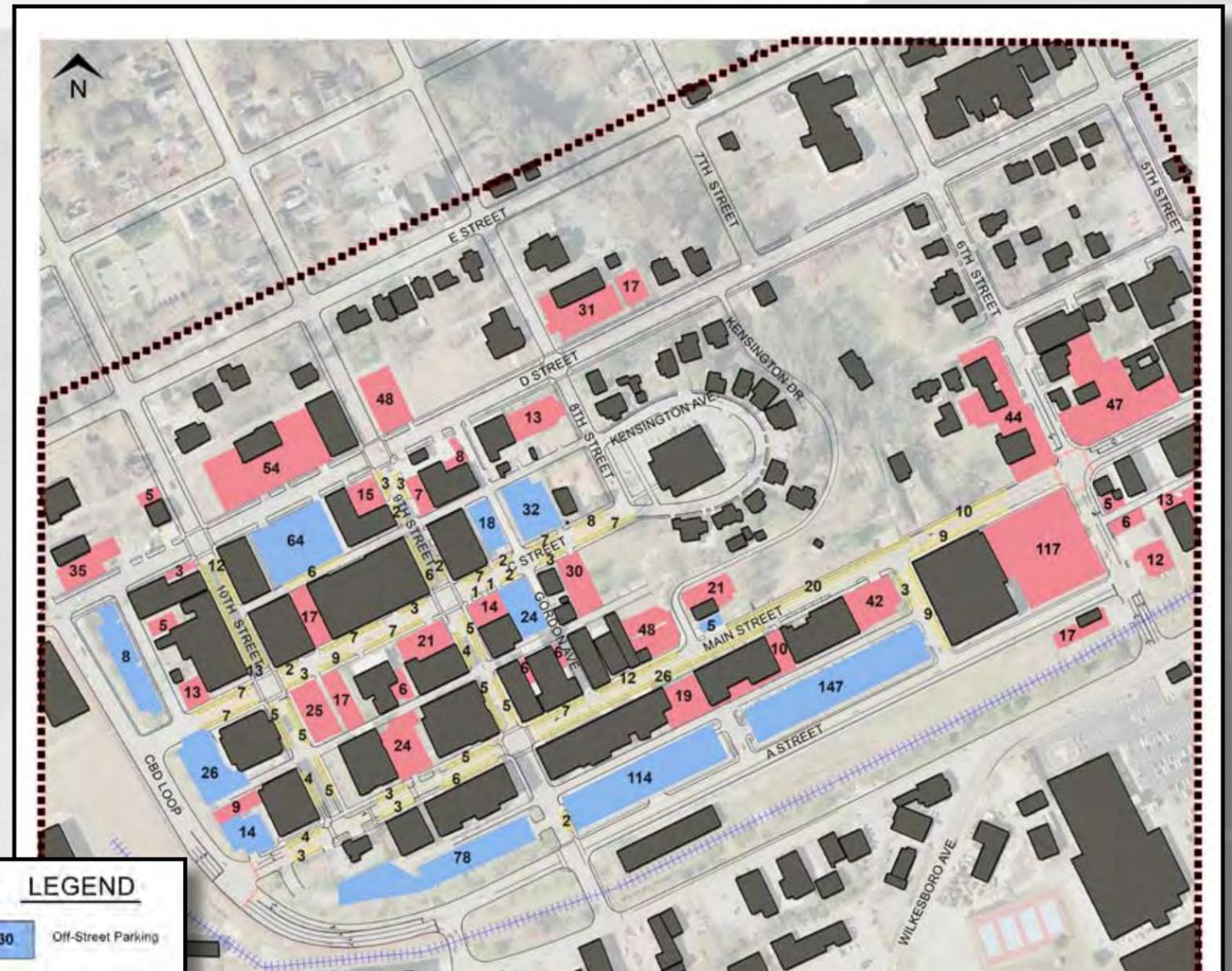
Existing Conditions
Land Use



Downtown North Wilkesboro

Driving is the dominant mode of transportation to and from Downtown North Wilkesboro. Subsequently, any information regarding parking opportunities, the designation of different parking types, alternate locations, and required payments (if required) should be clear and well placed. Such signage should be placed at entrances to parking lots with highly visible and easily understandable operational information.

North Wilkesboro has a large amount of parking. The available parking is a mixture of on-street parking and off-street parking lots. Existing parking lots could be more clearly marked and have directional wayfinding signage, which can direct visitors and residents to available parking locations. It is recommended that the parking signs be consistent in design and of prominent dimensions to have the best opportunity of being noticed.



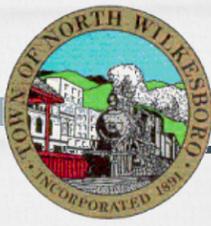
LEGEND	
530	Off-Street Parking
830	Private Parking
291	On-Street Parking
1651 approximate # spaces	

Strategies for Consideration

- Wayfinding & Signage
- Add on-street parking where possible
- Parking Enforcement Program
- Parking Promotion
- Shared Parking
- Introduce Angled Parking



Existing Conditions
Parking Inventory



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

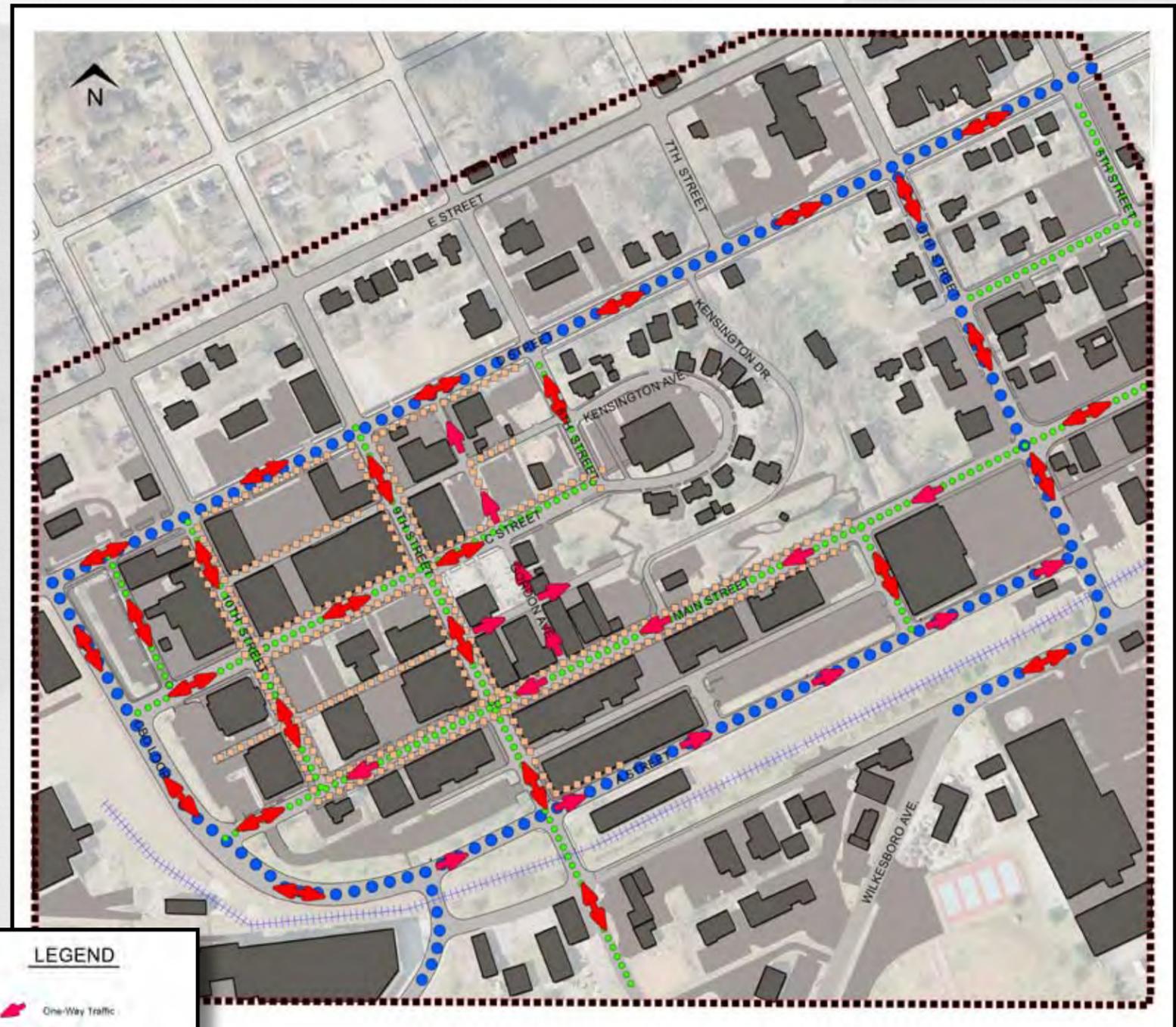
Examining the traffic patterns and corridors within North Wilkesboro reveals that the downtown is organized by a grid system of blocks. All streets provide two-way vehicular traffic with the exception of a portion of the Central Business District Loop, Gordon Avenue, and Main Street. It is recommended that Main Street be restored to two-way traffic. Although the current one-way traffic on



Main Street has worked efficiently for motorists for decades, the Town should consider converting this street to two-way.

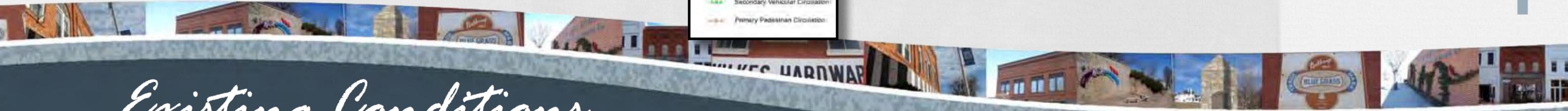
According to the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) at www.pps.org, two-way streets are preferred over one-way streets because they are more traffic calming and provide the following benefits:

- There is less driving, less confusion, and better traffic access.
- It eliminates the need to drive blocks and blocks out of the way.
- There is no need to make extra turns to get to nearby destinations.
- It increases commercial traffic and business.
- It decreases the speed of traffic.

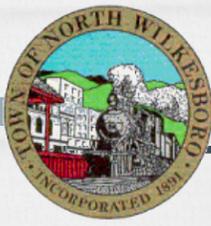


LEGEND

- One-Way Traffic
- Two-Way Traffic
- Primary Vehicular Circulation
- Secondary Vehicular Circulation
- Primary Pedestrian Circulation



Existing Conditions
Vehicular & Pedestrian Circulation



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

CASE STUDIES

Lenoir, North Carolina

- Main Street that was converted has gained five businesses since the conversion in 2006.
- West Avenue, which still has one-way traffic, has the highest vacancy rate of any street in downtown Lenoir.
- Dire predictions for problems for emergency vehicles and increased traffic accidents have not materialized.
- Pull-in parking versus parallel parking has been especially successful in calming traffic and encouraging pedestrian travel downtown.
- Over-all the 2-way conversion has been very well received
- Increased parking downtown and traffic calming has occurred by using easier to access “pull-in” diagonal spaces.
- Redirected in brand lanes slowed traffic and made it more pedestrian friendly
- Business could promote more direct access to their shops for customers.

Vancouver, Washington - Main Street conversion from 1-way to 2-ways (Nov. 16 2008)

- Strategies included painting yellow lines down middle of the road, updating signage, installation of new traffic lights.
- Twice the reported Main street traffic and twice the number of people shopping in Main Street businesses.
- Most importantly, there were no traffic jams or serious congestion.

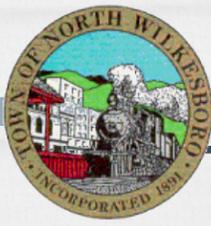
Cincinnati, Ohio

40% of businesses in this economically depressed downtown corridor closed after the street was converted from a two-way to a one-way street.

Pros and Cons

- The frequency of traffic accidents on two-way streets vs. one-way are largely based on very old research.
- Accidents on two way streets are typically less severe than on higher speed one way streets.
- Emergency vehicles take slightly longer to reach the scene of trouble on two-way streets vs. one-way
- One way streets provide a 2-5% increase of traffic capacity.
- Travel time on one-way streets is only minutes faster than two-way.
- Two-way street network are more capable of supporting short trips to local businesses than one-way street networks.
- One-way streets have a negative impact on storefront exposure businesses dependant on pass-by traffic.





Downtown North Wilkesboro

On June 20, 2009, McGill Associates took advantage of an excellent opportunity to interact with citizens of the Town of North Wilkesboro and the surrounding area at their first annual OliverFest (a festival celebrating the accomplishments of hometown singer, Oliver Swofford). McGill Associates set up a tent and table amid the other booths on the streets of Downtown North Wilkesboro to encourage community participation in the formation of the Downtown Master Plan.

McGill Associates' staff invited passers-by to take part in a series of exercises designed to gain public opinion with regard to the Downtown North Wilkesboro Enhancement process. The devices used (and a short description herein) include:

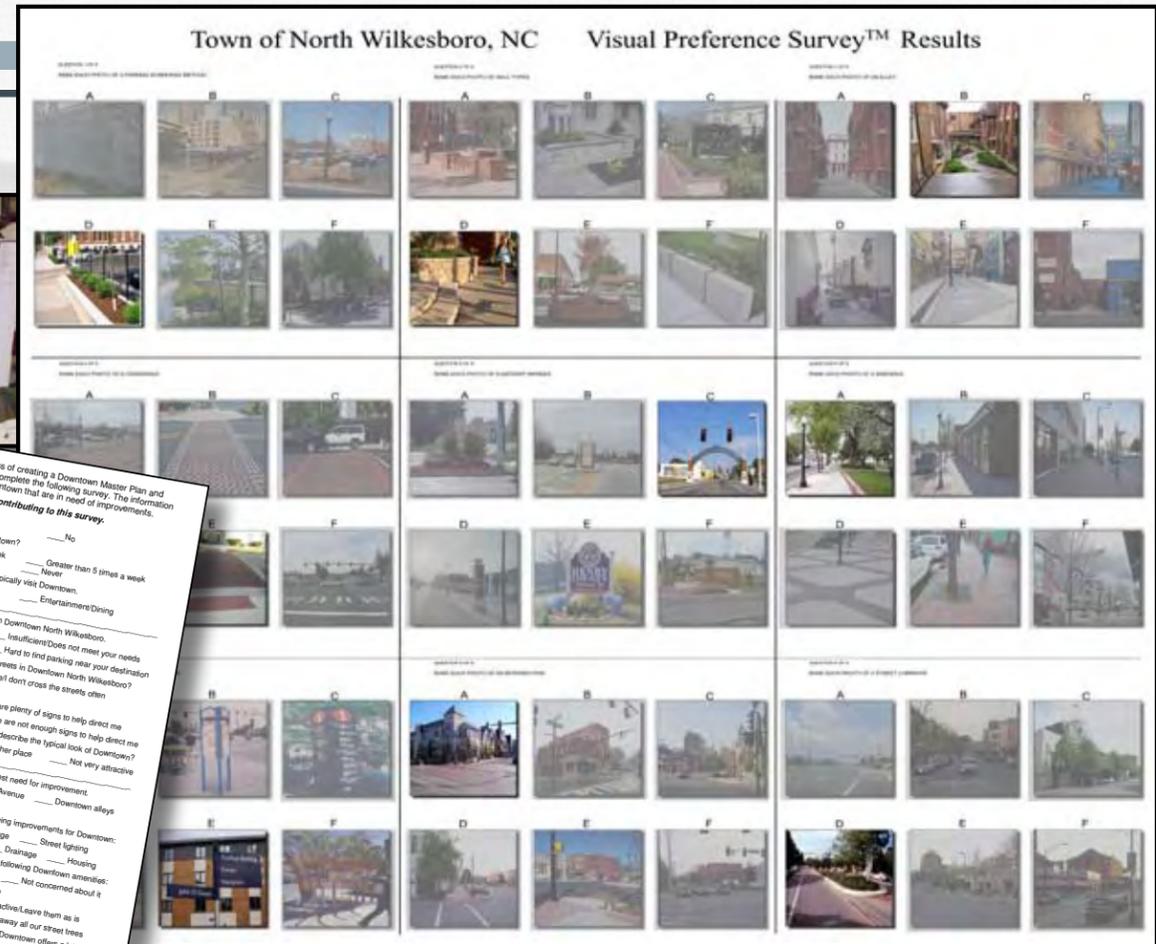
- **Surveys:** Participants were given questionnaires/pens and asked to complete a series of questions that ranged from their age - to their current use of the downtown area - to their ideas for downtown enhancement and entertainment.
- **Map Exercises:** Maps of the downtown area were available on the table and on tripods. Residents were asked to sketch or show "what and where" they saw problem areas in Downtown North



The Town of North Wilkesboro is in the process of creating a Downtown Master Plan and would like your input. Please take a moment to complete the following survey. The information that you provide will help determine areas of downtown that are in need of improvements.

Thank you for your time and your interest in contributing to this survey.

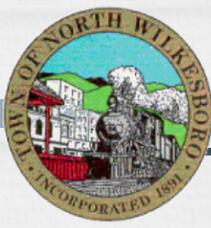
1. Are you a resident of North Wilkesboro? Yes No
2. What choice best describes how often you visit Downtown? 0-2 times a week 3-5 times a week Greater than 5 times a week
3. Please select the choice that best describes why you typically visit Downtown. Rarely Often
4. Please select the choice that best describes why you typically visit Downtown. Shopping Entertainment/Dining
5. Please select the choice that best describes the parking in Downtown North Wilkesboro. Sufficient/Meets your needs Insufficient/Does not meet your needs
6. How easy is it for you to find your way around downtown? Easy Difficult I don't know
7. Please select the choice(s) that best represent how you would describe the typical look of Downtown? Beautiful/Attractive Typical/Like any other place Not very attractive
8. Please select the Downtown street corridors that are of the greatest need for improvement. Main Street 10th Street D Street Forester Avenue Downtown alleys
9. Please rank from 1-8 (1 highest priority - 8 lowest priority) the following improvements for Downtown: Sidewalk maintenance Landscaping Crosswalks Signage Street lighting
10. Please select the choice that best expresses your opinion about the following Downtown amenities:
 - Parks/Open-space:** Poor/Need more parks or open space Good/Need no more parks or open space Not concerned about it
 - Street Trees:** Unattractive/Replace with new ones Attractive/Leave them as is
 - Downtown Entertainment:** Downtown offers little to do Take away all of our street trees
 - Downtown Gateways:** Clearly defined/Attractive Downtown offers a lot to do
 - Downtown Dining:** Not clearly defined/Unattractive Clearly defined/Attractive
 - Downtown has many dining opportunities Not aware of Downtown gateways
 - Downtown needs more dining opportunities



Wilkesboro, as well as pointing out areas that needed improvements and their ideas for these improvements.

- **Open Forum:** Citizens were given the opportunity of asking questions about the proposed downtown enhancement as well as being able to make comments or suggestions about needed improvements. Their thoughts, ideas, and concerns were very useful during the planning stages of the master plan process.
- **Visual Preference Survey:** Residents participated in the "dot" exercise (shown here), which is a tool used to gather public opinion of desired visual streetscape elements. In this case, they were shown nine (9) groups of downtown images – each containing six (6) variations and were asked to place a colored sticker on their preference for what the feature should be or look like. The rankings were then ordered and the results can be found on the next page of this document.

Community Involvement



Downtown North Wilkesboro

McGill Associates' staff found that (overall) the participants in the activities were interested in increased dining and entertainment opportunities that would bring them to (or keep them in) the downtown area after business hours. They were also very interested in the Visual Preference Survey in that they would like to see some of these enhancements in Downtown North Wilkesboro.

WALL TYPES



Walls may be used in different areas of a downtown – primarily for aesthetic reasons. Wall materials should visually compliment the overall look of the downtown area.

PARKING SCREENING METHOD



Downtown parking can visually detract from the overall aesthetic of a streetscape. As a result, various screening methods can be used as a way to mitigate the sight of parking areas.

ALLEY



A variety of different levels of enhancement can occur within downtown alleys - from simple improvements in lighting and safety, to making the alley a pleasant pedestrian corridor.

CROSSWALK



Crosswalks not only serve as a safety feature for pedestrians, they visually represent the pedestrian space on the streets of the downtown. An eye-catching, aesthetic crosswalk is important in streetscape design.

GATEWAY MARKER



Gateways serve to mark the downtown limits and also set the precedent for the downtown's look and feel. Materials and colors used for gateways are often repeated in the downtown streetscape design.

SIDEWALK



Sidewalk width, lighting, and level of ornamentation serve as the visual foundation for the downtown streetscape.

WAYFINDING DEVICE



The downtown navigation of pedestrians and vehicular traffic is largely dependent on familiarity and unique signage.

INTERSECTION



Intersections offer great opportunities for marking prominent downtown gathering areas as well as serving to visually enhance downtown nodes.

STREET CORRIDOR



The perceived safety, walkability, and character of the downtown can be affected by the look and feel of downtown street corridors.

Community Involvement



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

The approach to the planning process for the Downtown North Wilkesboro Master Plan included the interactive involvement of downtown representatives (such as business owners, etc.), Town Staff, the North Wilkesboro community, and other stakeholders in the future success of the downtown area. A Project Oversight Group was formed to assist with the planning process. This group was composed of Town Leadership, Town Staff and the Consultants. The group met on a regular basis to develop and discuss various thoughts and ideas for the enhancement of Downtown North Wilkesboro.

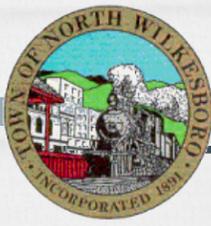
The Project Oversight Group was selected from a list of persons expressing interest in downtown planning and representing various perspectives of the downtown area. The Project Oversight Group met in 2009 to provide input and insight toward the enhancement of the municipal district. Once the Project Oversight Group had identified areas of improvement, they discussed alternative actions that would produce the desired solutions. This draft planning document has been prepared for the purpose of review and comment by the Project Oversight Group, Town Staff, other stakeholders (who are not involved in the Project Oversight Group process), and other interested citizens and business owners. After review by the aforementioned entities, a final Downtown North Wilkesboro Master Plan will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

The Master Planning process includes these overall key elements:

- A comprehensive assessment of existing conditions both within and adjacent to the downtown area
- Community involvement through the use of written surveys, map exercises, visual preferences, and open forum
- The identification of guidelines and elements involved in the successful enhancements of municipal districts
- Recommendations for specific improvements to increase the appeal and aesthetics of the downtown area
- Conducted meetings with the Project Oversight Group to review, discuss, and develop recommendations for the Master Plan



Planning Approach



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

In studying the current conditions in Downtown North Wilkesboro and projecting the needed improvements, McGill Associates examined the presence/absence of these eight extremely important factors, which are characteristic of successful municipal districts:



1. MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Successful downtown districts consider mixed-use developments to be critical components of the downtown environment. A combination of shops, restaurants, lodging, offices, government buildings, activity centers, and parks attract a diverse group of people of all ages, income levels, cultures, and races.

2. ENTERTAINMENT

A vital inner-city component, entertainment extends the life of the downtown from the daytime into the evening with an assortment of shopping, dining, movies, performing arts, sports activities, and recreation opportunities. These activities should also be in walking distance of one another.

3. PUBLIC CENTERS

Downtown facilities must be available to support business and entertainment. Structures which generate activity consist of museums, conference centers, schools, government offices, performing arts centers, parks, arenas, etc., and bring a diversity of residents and visitors to the downtown area.

4. WALKABILITY

All walking areas should have a pedestrian-friendly design. Destinations should be within ten (10) minutes walking time. Interconnected street and sidewalk networks ease walking - creating a vibrant downtown environment - where retail sales also increase.

5. NEIGHBORHOODS

Successful urban areas have very strong, established residential neighborhoods, which advocate the support of local downtown businesses. Residential areas are an important market for mixed-use development (housing, apartments, condominiums, etc.) in the downtown area.

6. INVESTMENTS

Downtown areas are commonly known for their business entrepreneurs; but successful downtowns should not be completely dependent on individual businesses. There must be public, sustained investments in the management of public facilities and infrastructure, such as streets, sidewalks, parking, public buildings, and community centers/activities.

7. SAFETY

Customers and business owners want a sense of safety and security when they are working, shopping, living, or enjoying entertainment. To enhance the safety of residents and visitors, the downtown area and surrounding community must be well-policed; the buildings and streets must be well-maintained; and the sidewalks and streets must be well-lighted and well-marked.

8. PRIDE

A successful downtown must be beloved by the citizenry. Its structures and amenities are a continued source of local and regional pride and they reflect the culture of the community. The enhancement of a downtown area must preserve the heritage and integrity of its population.

Development Principles



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Eight extremely important factors, which are characteristic of successful municipal districts:

1. Mixed-Use Development
2. Entertainment
3. Public Centers
4. Walkability
5. Neighborhoods
6. Investments
7. Safety
8. Pride



The 10 + 10 + 10 Rule

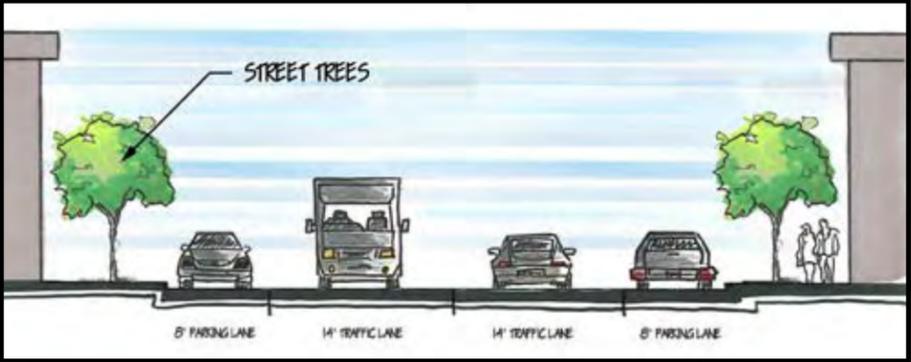
In a two to three lineal block downtown:

- Ten destination-retail shops
- Ten dining/treat shops
- Ten things open after 6 pm; entertainment is preferable



The number one diversion of visitors is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting, and where most of the visitors' spending takes place.

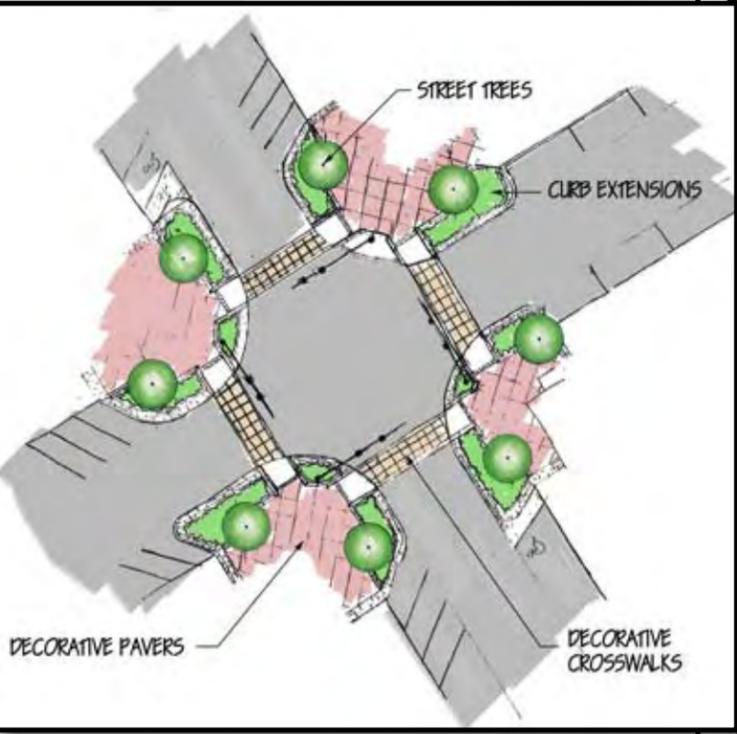
Development Principles



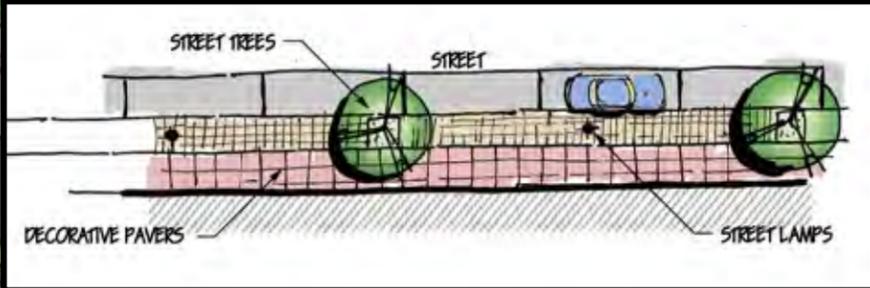
TYPICAL STREET CROSS SECTION



TYPICAL SIDEWALK SECTION



TYPICAL INTERSECTION DETAIL



TYPICAL SIDEWALK PLAN



Master Plan



PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS WITH LANDSCAPING AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS



PARK REDEVELOPMENT



PROPOSED FARMERS MARKET AT FORMER PARKING DECK



MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT AT FORMER PARKING DECK



MIXED-USE INFILL AT FORMER INDUSTRIAL SITE



PLAZA

ADAPTIVE REUSE AT EXISTING TRAIN DEPOT

The goal for redeveloping Downtown North Wilkesboro is to encourage reinvestment(s) in the places and things that are desirable to its citizens and visitors. People will enjoy living, working, and visiting in a thriving, energetic downtown area. It is recommended that the Town of North Wilkesboro work closely with property owners, financial institutions, developers, realtors, builders, businesspersons, and investors to promote opportunities for beneficial redevelopment. Downtown North Wilkesboro should become an area that has unique restaurants and shops, historically recognized and preserved buildings, and attractive public parks. In addition, redevelopment should include the renovation of existing homes and buildings for residential purposes; as well as, perhaps, the new construction of residential facilities.

Recommendations

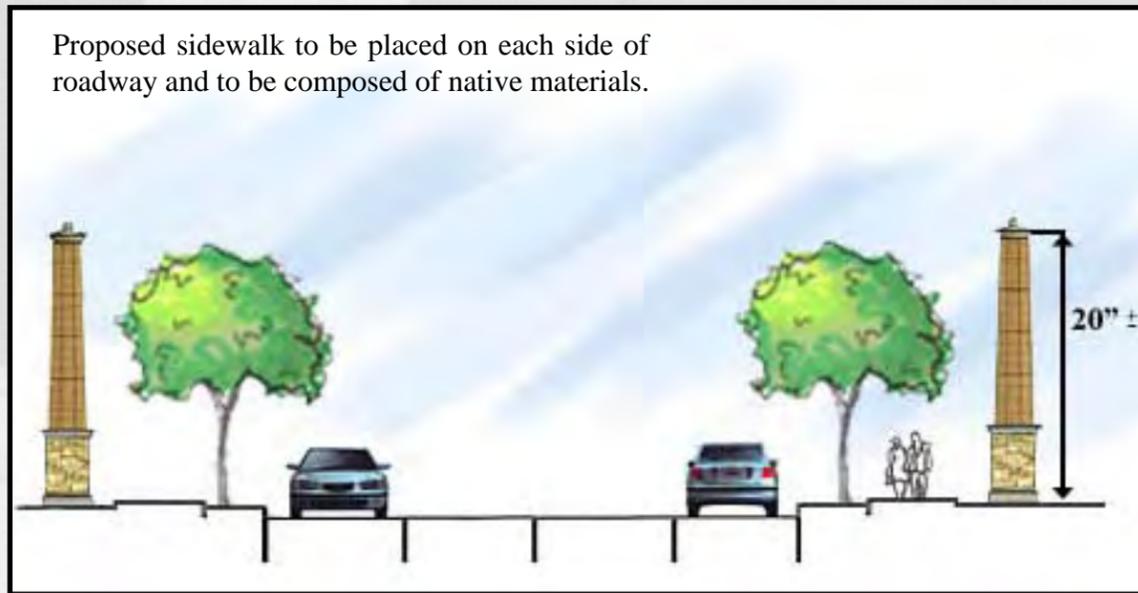
Areas of Opportunity



Downtown North Wilkesboro

To enhance the image of the downtown, gateway elements help to identify the entrance to the downtown district. Gateway elements may also serve to provide a hierarchy of entry through the downtown area. A series of primary and secondary gateways should be developed and placed at the periphery of the downtown limits. These gateway markers should identify major and minor elements within Downtown.

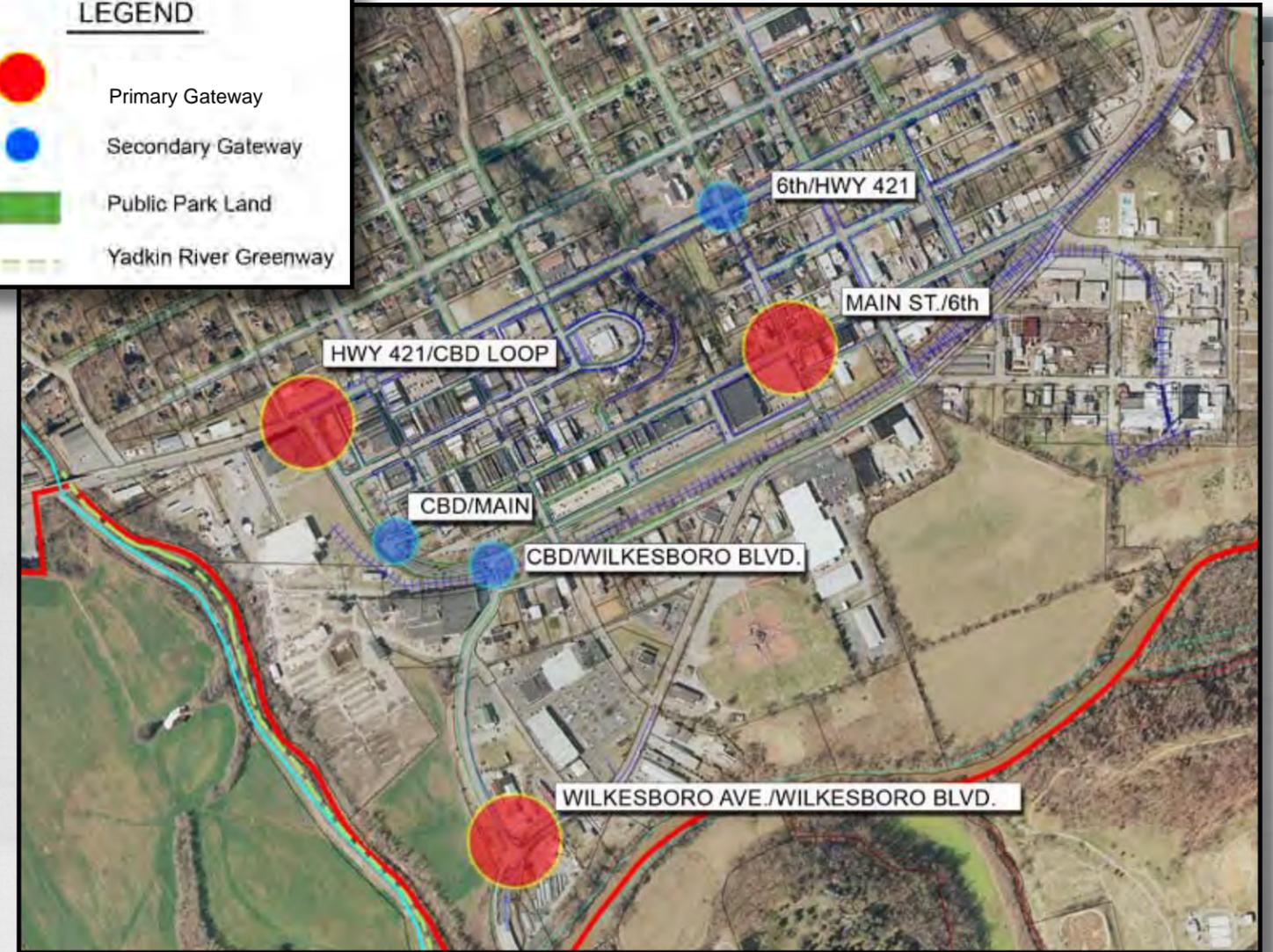
Proposed sidewalk to be placed on each side of roadway and to be composed of native materials.



A typical Primary Gateway will consist of a stately entrance sign accented by a variety of flowering and evergreen plant material. The entrance signs will announce the Town of North Wilkesboro and will welcome residents and visitors into the Town.

LEGEND

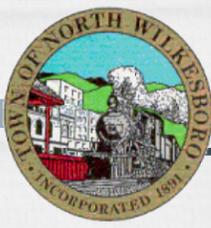
- Primary Gateway
- Secondary Gateway
- Public Park Land
- Yadkin River Greenway



A typical Secondary Gateway will consist of a slightly smaller, yet still elegant and effective, entrance sign with similar plant material. Plant material and signage will be less elaborate but will still welcome people into the Town.



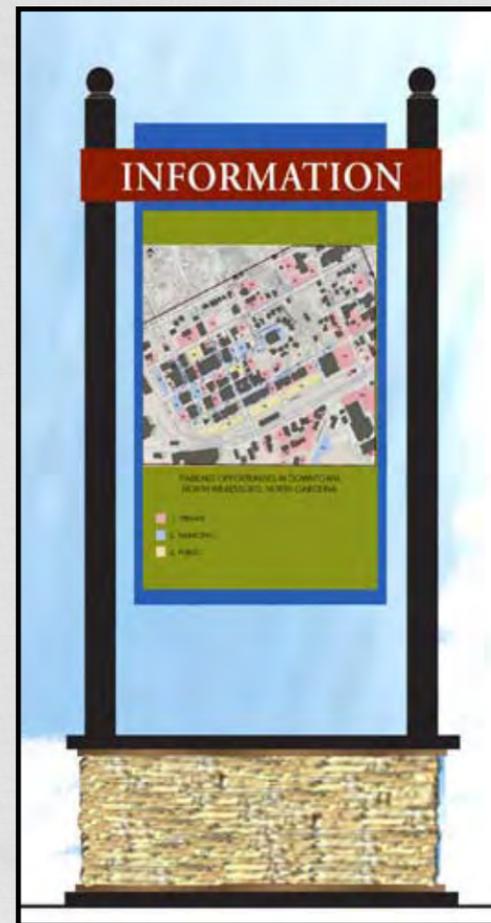
Recommendations Gateways



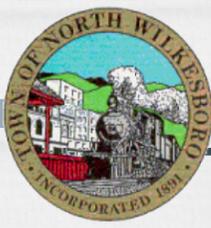
Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Wayfinding relies on clear and understandable communication as well as a succession of communication clues delivered through our sensory system of visual, olfactory, audible, and tactile elements. There are four primary wayfinding elements: architectural, graphic, audible, and tactile communication. Any visual wayfinding system is more than just signs; it encompasses architecture, landscape architecture, lighting, landmarks, and orientation points. The primary elements of wayfinding for downtowns consist of directional signage, proper signage placement, and interpretive signage.

Wayfinding should provide clear, sequential, vehicular, and pedestrian directional information for important destinations throughout the downtown and the surrounding areas. The directional sign system should work from the macro scale – public transportation routes and vehicular roadways to parking key drop-off points, key visitor destinations – to the micro scale – orientation in the downtown area along pedestrian pathways completed by well-signed destination areas.



In addition to signage, wayfinding may be accomplished through a combination of architectural elements, lighting features, and visible identification of buildings and pathways. Enhancements such as paving patterns, banners, interpretive events, and donor recognition opportunities are often integrated into various different downtown architectural elements.



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Pedestrian Orientation

Downtown areas should provide a systematic set of signs and other elements. They should provide effective path-finding orientation to key cross roads called decision intersections and other major activity areas like transportation hubs. These elements can perform the additional function of helping to stitch the Downtown together into a legible whole.

Interpretative Enhancements

The Town should consider adding unique features such as interpretative murals, graphic patterns, and quotations to blank any unused walls that might complement and animate a prominent intersection or major activity area. Features such as these help to make these important junctions memorable for those trying to navigate to or through them.

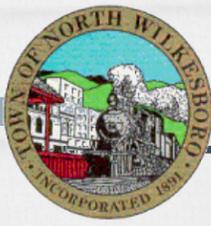
Local Roads

Local roads need directional information signs on the periphery of Downtown as well as on interior Downtown streets. Smaller tertiary or local road names need to be identified so as to link them into the overall wayfinding system.

Highways

On highways and major routes, destination signs should be highly visible and well located to alert motorists to the appropriate exits for Downtown. The signage should prepare motorists to select the desired exit, as well as confirm the selected





Downtown North Wilkesboro

Public space, particularly street rights-of-way, can provide a framework for Downtown improvements – creating the Town’s streetscape. A main component of streetscape improvements is “trees”, which soften architectural lines and create an urban forest. Valuable cooling mechanisms, urban forests provide visual interest and serve as ceilings for outdoor spaces. Urban tree canopy highlights all four seasons – providing shade in the summer months. Street trees enhance downtown areas by reducing noise, conserving energy, improving air and water quality, controlling stormwater, and defining pedestrian and vehicular zones.

Healthy trees provide visual interest and reduce the impact of other less desirable visual elements. Various other factors (such as power lines, poles, sidewalks, signs, and pavement) also enhance a streetscape. Studies show people consider trees to be of therapeutic value.

Proper tree selection is as critical as determining location. Considerations should include height at maturity, drought tolerance, foliage color, crown shape, and overall hardiness.



Flowering Dogwood



Red Maple



Zelkova



Laurel Oak



Carolina Silverbell



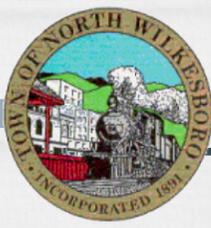
Flowering Cherry



Crape Myrtle

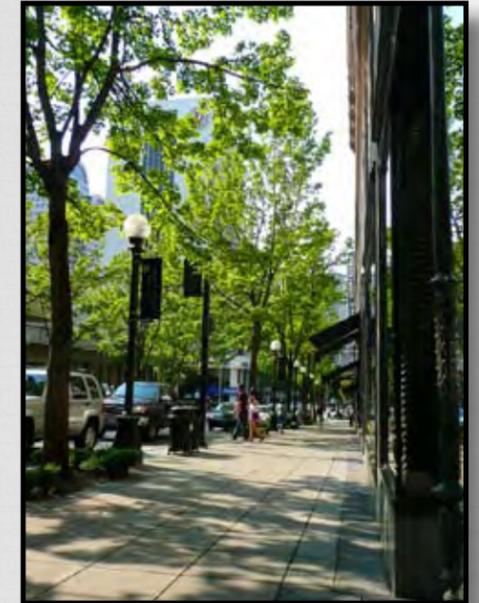
LEGEND	
	Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus kousa</i>
	Red Maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>
	Zelkova <i>Zelkova serrata</i>
	Laurel Oak <i>Quercus hemisphaerica</i>
	Carolina Silverbell <i>Halesia tetraptera</i>
	Flowering Cherry <i>Prunus x yedoensis</i>
	Crape Myrtle <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>

Recommendations Street Trees



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

- Use native vegetation whenever possible to reduce maintenance and reflect the character of the area.
- Incorporate vegetation along roadways and in open spaces.
- Use planters along street corridors to define streetscape and reduce visual clutter.
- Redevelop existing parking lots by incorporating tree islands to delineate parking spots and soften hard elements.
- Implement alternate tree species for street corridor to provide distinction for individual streets and prevent disease.
- Select plant material which is adaptable to its intended location.



Recommendations
Landscape Enhancement



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

The streetscape of Downtown North Wilkesboro should provide an attractive atmosphere to residents, visitors, and potential businesses. An inviting streetscape begins by having appealing public amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, and the like. It is recommended that North Wilkesboro's downtown public amenities exhibit a consistent pallet of color, materials, and design.



Traffic and pedestrian signals should be metal with black finish and be consistent throughout downtown.



Street lamps should be the antique Acorn topped style and be metal with black finish or other acceptable material. Street lamps should incorporate banner frames for seasonal and special event signage.



The Town has selected quality trash receptacles, planters and benches for downtown. The Town should continue to add these furnishings in areas as needed that compliment each other with regard to color, durability and style. Variations to these should attempt to reflect the existing streetscape furnishings.



Suggested pedestrian crossings within downtown should be a minimum of 8' in width and incorporate stamped concrete pattern or decorative pattern pavers with a 12" concrete border edge.



Alleys provide a chance to enliven downtown corridors. Look for opportunities to convert dark under utilized alley spaces into well lit pedestrian oriented with landscaping or pocket parks.



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Corner of 10th Street & Main Street



Streetscape improvements to include updating the sidewalks with new street lamps, and a 24" wide decorative paver utility strip, crosswalks to have decorative paving, planted areas to be landscaped with hardy shrubs and uniform street-trees, area buildings to have historic ad murals "restored" where appropriate.

Recommendations
Before & After

DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE MASTER PLAN



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

B Street Park



Park to receive updated landscaping, lighting, handrails, and bench swings.

Recommendations
Before & After



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

Town of North Wilkesboro Public Parking Lot

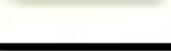


Parking lot improvements to include planted landscape islands and improved lighting.

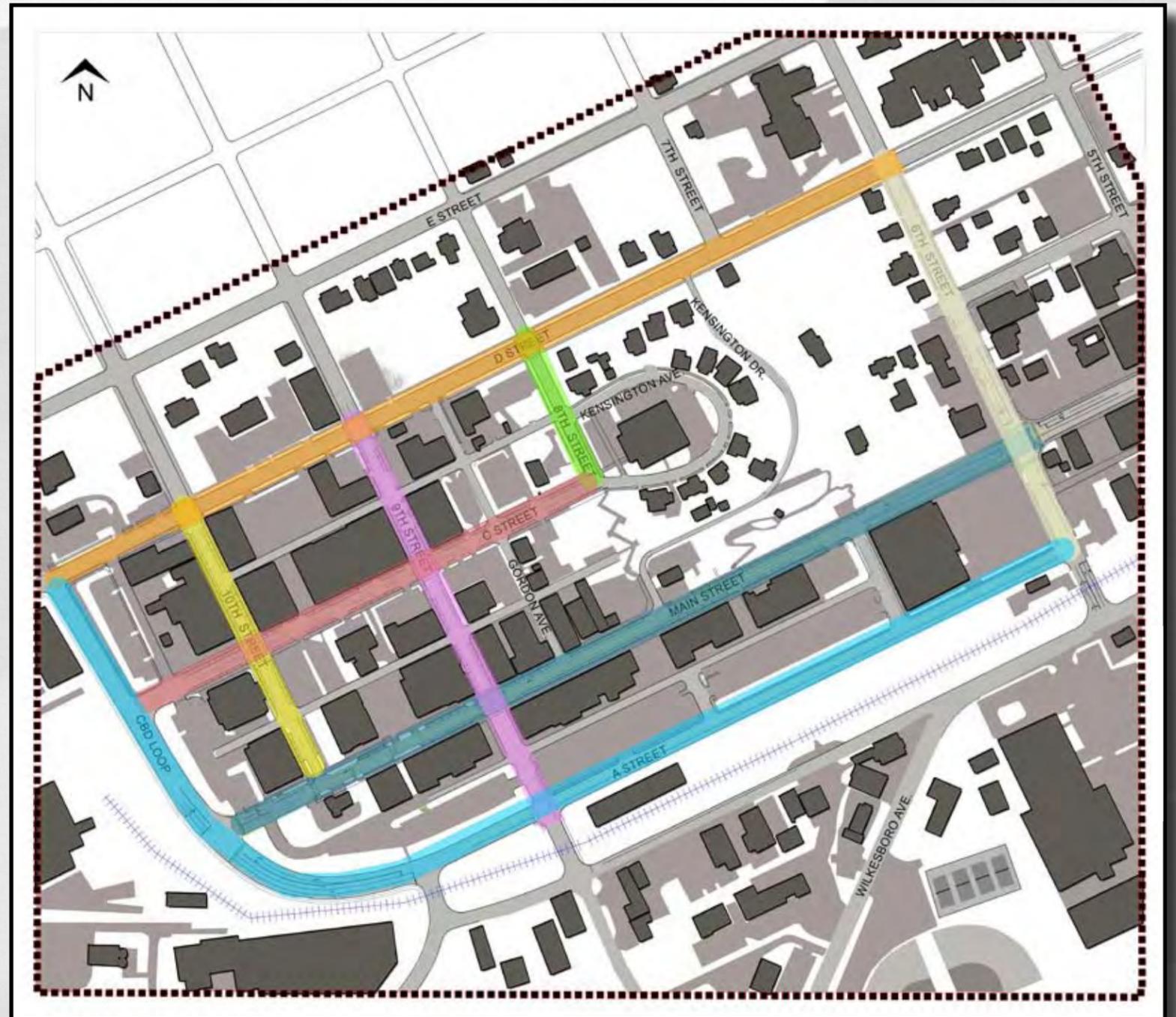
Recommendations
Before & After



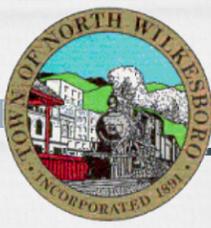
Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

	A STREET	\$263,742
	MAIN STREET	\$1,435,132
	C STREET	\$870,755
	D STREET	\$235,400
	10TH STREET	\$502,830
	9TH STREET	\$641,437
	8TH STREET	\$156,700
	6TH STREET	\$545,032

Project areas & opinions of probable costs



Project Phasing



Downtown *North Wilkesboro*

McGill Associates, P.A. would like to thank the Project Oversight Group and Downtown North Wilkesboro for their participation and leadership in the initiation and preparation of the Downtown Master Plan. The following individuals volunteered many hours to participate in the meetings and discussions necessary in the downtown planning process:



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Joshua Harrold
Frieda Matthews
Kelly Pipes
Neil Shepherd

Town Board

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Debbie Ferguson
Bert Hall
Bart Hayes
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Acknowledgements